

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**PARSLEY** RĂM, preteen, Rau's son

**RAU** (rau) RĂM, adult, Parsley's mother and the owner of Salonetro

**PYRUS** (π-rus) CRABAPPLE, older teen, Malus's nibbling

**MALUS** CRABAPPLE, adult, Pyrus's uncle and the owner of FigLeaf

## Orchestra

**DJ CAULIFLOWER**, the alias for the production's music director, who briefly interacts with the performers /// *Malus may double*

✿ Androgyny Botany: Each character resembles the androgynous nature, with open-ended vocal requirements

✿ Queer People of the Global Majority most represent the experiences of these flowers and herbs; cast accordingly

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. "Move the Plot Forward" Malus, Rau
2. "A Natural" Rau
3. "Amount to Anything" Pyrus
4. "Grow a Pair" Pyrus, Parsley
5. "Test the Water" Parsley
6. "Photosynthesis" Parsley, Pyrus
7. "Crop Top" Pyrus, Parsley
8. "Soiled (The Family Name)" Rau, Malus, Parsley
9. "Fertile" Parsley, Pyrus
10. "Dirt on You" DJ Cauliflower, Pyrus, Parsley
11. "Fig Leaf" Malus
12. "Green Card" Rau, Malus
13. "Turnover (A New Leaf)" Parsley, Rau, Pyrus, Malus

SCENE 1

DIRTY CITY

Dirty City is if Grand Rapids was entirely Frederik Meijer Gardens. The city is scaled down so that a single block takes a single step. Empty plots of land scatter about. It is between seasons. Any season.

RAU enters. Her hair is unearthly. Her tan gleams. She is expecting a new seed. She tries to plant herself in an empty plot of dirt.

A picket that reads "Curb the Herbs" projects upon that plot.

RAU moves to another empty plot of land. The same message projects. RAU repeats. The message repeats.

The sun sets.

RAU collapses on the concrete with her body facing the sunset. She feels her belly.

RAU

Sun... A leaf is not meant to turn from this light.

MALUS enters, opposite of the sunset. They are barely clothed.

MALUS

Turn over to the night.

RAU turns away from the sunset.

RAU

*Chào. Aren't you an angel?*

MALUS

*Hello. Aren't all Figs?*

RAU

*Hell! Any Fig is a malice!*

MALUS

Dat's my name: Malus Crabapple. I am a Fig-

RAU

Figment of my imagination.

MALUS

Does ya imagination include a better life for yaself here?

RAU

Any plant can imagine. A Cilantro can dream! This city needs its garnishes. Imagine Dirty City's first-ever beauty salon. I *dream* of a better life for my family here...

MALUS

Ya immigrants got wild dreams. *But imaginations*. Ya cannot imagine people like me living by ya family, let alone amongst yours, wherever ya come from.

RAU

You don't know where I come from.

MALUS

Like a leaf, my kind of people are open to flying all over the world. Ya accent ain't like a brussels sprout.

RAU

*Klootzak (Dutch: An Insult).*

MALUS

Watch ya Dutch.

RAU

Watch what you say. I do not have an accent!

MALUS

Okay, well ya *look* like ya took a leave from Southeast Asia? All ya last names are like... *Weed (re: Nguyen)?*

RAU

Răm. Rau Răm. There are more family names out there in Vietnam. And no. You don't know the daily life I came from.

MALUS

Well Rau, I won't judge ya days if ya don't judge my nights.

RAU

I don't know where your nightlife comes from.

MALUS

It stems from birth.

RAU

You chose this light. This lifestyle you have, it is not something you are born with.

(MORE)

RAU (CONT'D)

You are not natural. I cannot imagine a life without light.

MALUS

Ya keep this up and ya salon stays an imagination.

RAU

I cannot keep my stems up. No plot of land in Dirty City will ever let me plant myself. I moved this far for what? I move... what?

1. "MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD"

MALUS

(Repeating)

MOVE THE PLOT...

FORWARD...

MALUS steps onto a colorful plot of land. They push aside an adjacent block of concrete to unveil untouched soil.

MALUS (CONT'D)

MAKE YOUR ROOTS AT HOME.

RAU

THIS IS YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD?

MALUS

*ROOT FOR ME...*

RAU

*IM LANG (Vietnamese: "Shut up").*

MALUS

(Puzzledly)

MAKE YA BED.

A tanning bed rolls out.

RAU

*SHUT UP.*

MALUS

I WASN'T BORN WITH LIGHTHEARTEDNESS.  
*I HAVE CHOSEN IT!*

NOW YA CHOOSE:  
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...

RAU

OR...?

MALUS  
LEAVE THE PLOT HOLE...  
(Repeating)  
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...  
LEAVE THE PLOT HOLE...

RAU reluctantly plants herself  
next to MALUS.

RAU  
WHOLE...

RAU & MALUS  
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...

RAU  
FORWARD!

MALUS  
YOU'RE WHOLE!

## SCENE 2

SALONTRO

The plot grows thick. The tanning  
salon magically moves forward,  
lightly transforming the heart of  
Dirty City. An Open/Closed sign  
hangs. It faces "Closed."

RAU  
Im lang. Im lang. Im lang! Im lang!

Malus touches the tanning bed.

MALUS  
Imagine a better plot device.

RAU  
*Im lang.* The sun is more than anything, but a  
tanning bed will do.

MALUS  
(Sarcastically)  
*Shut up. I cannot take more of your deep  
gratitude, foreigner.*

RAU  
We bleed the same eukaryotic cells...

MALUS  
Indeed, then treat me like I do.

RAU  
Blood does not mean you got poop on you!

MALUS  
Ya got a dirty mind dat needs soaping.

RAU

We Cilantros have good tastes! I meant to say:  
do you have bullshit on you?

MALUS

My business adheres to the capital and makes  
profits. So yes. What's ya worth?

RAU

*That'd be ten bullshits, please...*

MALUS

*Dat's a start of a plot.*

MALUS hands a manure-laced bill to  
RAU. They lie in the tanning bed  
and close the lid.

RAU

IT'S THE TURN OF AN ERA!  
I WAS DEALT A BAD HAND.  
THIS AREA HAS NO REGARD.  
THEY TREAT ME AS AN ALIEN.  
I HAVE GROWN THESE LEAVES THAT COULDN'T EVER HOLD THIS WATER.  
I WAS GONNA COME APART.  
BUT I GUESS YOU DO HAVE A HEART.  
I HAVE A NEW START.

MALUS gets out of the tanning bed.  
They inspect themself.

RAU (CONT'D)

TURN AROUND.

NICE TAN.

MALUS

NOT A FAN.

RAU

NOTHING FANCY.

MALUS

YA WILL SEE DAT FANCY GETS THE FANS.

RAU goes out and gets a potted  
herb. She puts it on a shelf then  
turns the "Closed" sign to "Open."

Crickets chirp.

MALUS (CONT'D)

I'll try to get my pals en root. You're on your  
own in this soil. It is all ya turn from here.

MALUS exits.

RAU  
THIS PLACE PLOTS AND LEAVES ERROR...  
I CAN'T EARN MY GREEN CARD  
IF I DO NOT STAY ON MY GUARD.  
MY LEAVES HAVE COME SO FAR.  
YOU CAN'T MAKE ME LEAVE!  
I DO NOT HAVE THE HEART TO BELIEVE...  
I KNOW MY ROOTS, BUT...  
STEM!  
IT DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO PLOT FOR-  
I MISS YOU, BROTHER.

RAU hugs the potted herb. She sits on the tanning bed. She pulls out a bottle of body oil and rubs her belly with it. It gleams with her tan.

**Audience Engagement:** The crew blows in fresh leaves that AUDIENCE MEMBERS wrote on.

RAU reads the fresh leaves aloud.

RAU (CONT'D)  
The greatest maternity gifts a mother could receive are the turning leaves.

Lights move in and out. Positive whispers are audible.

RAU (CONT'D)  
My body oil? You like this foreign stuff?

Lights are positively responsive.

RAU (CONT'D)  
This is no fertilizer! This oil is not found here in Dirty City. This oil is from my dirty ol' village!

RAU sprays body oil about.

Either animated silhouettes or a colorful light show demonstrate that business is booming with patrons coming in and out. Financial quarters roll by with the rising and setting sun.

RAU (CONT'D)  
TURNOVER!  
THE WORLD IS NOT OVER.  
WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND.

RAU (CONT'D)

TURN AROUND!

I NOW HAVE A NEW BUSINESS VENTURE.

AFTER GOING THROUGH WHAT I CAN KINDLY PUT: AN ADVENTURE.

I'VE SHED EUKARYOTIC CELLS.

NO ONE CARED WHAT I HAD TO SELL.

I WAS STUCK IN THE GREEN CARD PRISON.

THE ONLY LIGHT THROUGH THE BAR WAS OUR SUN.

I'VE MADE MY BED, BUT NOW I CAN FLIP IT AROUND TO THE COOLER SIDE!

TURNOVER!

TURN AROUND!

Business is booming. Several tanning beds roll out. Bullshit rains down on RAU.

MALUS steps in. They do not seem too happy about RAU's success.

RAU (CONT'D)

(Deceptively)

THIS IS THE START OF A FLORAL FRIENDSHIP.

MALUS

(Doubtfully)

THIS IS THE START OF AN HERBAL FRIENDSHIP.

MALUS gathers bullshit and leaves the rest to RAU. They exit.

RAU turns the "Open" sign to "Closed." RAU lies in a tanning bed and closes the lid.

A seedlike object transfers from RAU's tanning bed to another.

RAU (CONT'D)

BUT THE BEST TURNOVER I'VE EVER HAD...

RAU opens the lid. Her belly is no more.

Direct sunlight lands on a distinct soiled tanning bed.

PARSLEY leaps out of the lit tanning bed.

RAU (CONT'D)

IS MY SUN!

MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD!

End of "MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD"



RAU (CONT'D)

Turn around... You missed a spot. But son, do you shine...

PARSLEY turns around.

PARSLEY

*Me (Vietnamese: "Mom")*... Don't embarrass me in front of the sneezeworts!

(to the AUDIENCE)

Don't worry, loyal customers. We'll open up the salon on the first light of dawn. Now, try not to fight over our complimentary moisturizers!

PARSLEY tosses moisturizers into the AUDIENCE. He gets to work sterilizing the place.

RAU

Us Cilantros are all about presentation. Parsley Răm is a natural.

### SCENE 3

It is night.

RAU takes out a pair of scissors, so PARSLEY sits on a tanning bed.

RAU (CONT'D)

But your trichomes getting unnaturally long.

(Cutting PARSLEY's hair and repeating)

I love you... I love you lots...

PARSLEY

I love you... I love you more...

RAU

How many trims are needed for all the love?

PARSLEY

Odd... Mom... For once, please no math-

RAU

What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen dandelion seed?

PARSLEY

Thirty centimeters per second. Last math probl-

RAU

Thirty seconds. Square root of a boxwood tree?

PARSLEY

I'll learn square roots when I start middle school in the fall.

RAU has PARSLEY face a mirror.

RAU

Is this worthy to a Flores Elementary graduate?

PARSLEY

Gym class would have a good laugh.

RAU

With this cut, they'd actually pick you before the Cherries.

PARSLEY

Dodgeball is an Apple's sport anyways.

RAU

Speaking of Apples, how was your last class before the ceremony?

PARSLEY

Fruitful! Ms. Red's partner visited.

RAU

That's delightful. Who is he?

PARSLEY

Her name is Golden Delicious. She is an archaeologist.

RAU

Oh, she is... *She...*

PARSLEY

Ms. Red's last lesson was that Fig weddings are more fabulous than any other kind.

RAU

Schools should not be teaching minors that! Schools should be teaching kids major subjects, like math and science.

PARSLEY

History!

RAU

Here's a story: seedlings exist only because stamens and pistils love one another.

PARSLEY

A kid at recess once told me that is like the legendary tale of the bird and the bee.

RAU

Kids fall for so many rumors these days. Plus, that does not add up. Birds and bees don't go together. It's bird plus bird. Bee plus bee.

Dance music distantly echoes, so  
PARSLEY go perches by the window.

PARSLEY  
Something's buzzing at FigLeaf.

RAU  
The Figs are hosting another party. You can  
always count on that.

RAU uses a tanning bed as a desk  
to do taxes and count bullshit.

PARSLEY  
Mom... Who goes out at night?

RAU  
A light with no sense of direction, son.

PARSLEY  
But the sound sure likes going our way.

RAU  
Sounds don't feed us.

PARSLEY  
A light with no sense of direction... So, there  
is light. They are just lost.

RAU  
Their light is artificial. They chose not to  
follow what is natural.

PARSLEY  
But our tanning beds... Its light don't come  
from the sun?

RAU  
*They* paint skins with UV. It is like if you  
split the spectrums of sunlight onto a palette.

PARSLEY  
What is a spectrum?

RAU (CONT'D)  
I don't know... But don't ask  
Malus. Malus...

PARSLEY & RAU  
Has malice intent.

PARSLEY  
I know... But they—

RAU  
He and his customers paid our rent for a while.  
But we paid off our plot of land. Salontro is  
independent of FigLeaf.

PARSLEY

Yet, Salontro is still dependent on FigLeaf.

RAU

Depends on the years to come.

PARSLEY

We would go under without them.

RAU

We will never overturn our views for them.

PARSLEY

You see new business models everyday.

RAU

Well, their bullshits are unnatural.

PARSLEY

*Yeah, the money's unreal.* What's natural to you?

RAU

Biodiversity like your class of plants. It makes for a healthy garden.

PARSLEY

What makes more diversity?

RAU

Less homogeneity.

PARSLEY

Homo-

RAU

Figs need more sun on their skins. Sons in their lives. The sun's what grooms all things nature.

## 2. "A NATURAL"

RAU

NATURE...

NURTURED FROM THE LIGHT OF OUR SUN.

IT'S NATURAL.

PLANTING THEIR HOT FEET ON OUR GROUND.

THEY'RE NATURAL.

BUT IT'S NOT AS WARM AS A MOM'S HUG.

RAU hugs PARSLEY.

RAU (CONT'D)

COMES NATURAL.

WHAT'S NOT? THAT WOULD BE THE TICKLES!

RAU tickles PARSLEY.

RAU (CONT'D)  
(Repeatedly)

A NATURAL.

SON. YOU ARE A... NATURAL!

End of "A NATURAL"

PARSLEY  
Will the sun always be around?

RAU  
The sun will never turn over to the dark side.

PARSLEY  
What about during an eclipse?

RAU  
What?

PARSLEY  
Ms. Red taught us that the moon can sometimes  
get in the sun's way.

RAU  
The moon sounds unnatural... Anywho like you,  
even the sun has a bedtime.

PARSLEY  
Ugh.

RAU opens a tanning bed and plants  
a blanket in it.

RAU  
Your planter is made. Now go lie in it.

PARSLEY points at the outlet.

RAU plugs in a nightlight.

PARSLEY lies in bed.

PARSLEY  
*I am a natural at lying.*

RAU  
You speak the truth, my son.

PARSLEY  
Mom. I wonder who'll be my moon...

RAU  
*Ngu ngon (Vietnamese: sleep well), my son.*

RAU exits.