

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PARSLEY RĂM* (ra-men), herbal preteen Asian American boy, Rau's son
Intelligent, Naïve, Zealous

RAU (rah-ow) **RĂM** (ra-men), herbal Asian woman, Parsley's mother
and the owner of SalonTro after emigrating from Vietnam
Invasive, Calculative, Studios

PYRUS (π-rus) **CRABAPPLE***, pear-like teen, Malus's nibbling
Self-loathing, Indulgent, Mischievous

MALUS (malice) **CRABAPPLE***, apple-like adult, Pyrus's aunty/uncle
and the owner of FigLeaf
Grandiose, Wise, Dubious

Supporting Characters

MAYOR CANNA BLOMQUIST* (ka-nuh bloom-qwist), the flowering mayor
of Dirty City who pops in as the narrator
Superficial, Rotten, Unserious

DJ CAULIFLOWER*, the hip-hop and coolest Cruciferous on tour
Funny, Observant, Pernicious

✿ 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 fruits and herbs; cast accordingly

✿ The character has **green palms*** or wear **green ribbons***
around their wrists. It means that they hold a Green Card.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. "Move the Plot Forward" Malus, Rau, Parsley, Mayor
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, Mayor
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
14. "Bow - Photosynthesis" Company

PRESHOW

MAYOR CANNA BLOMQUIST enters,
perhaps reading a leafy script.

MAYOR

(to the audience)

Wildflowers and manures. This is your dirty
Mayor Canna Blomquist speaking. We'd like to
thank theatre for planting our garden titled
Turnover: A New Leaf. Before we plot along, I
must give you tourists some pointers. You need
to trade in your bills...

The MAYOR holds a dollar bill,
then switches to a brown bill.

MAYOR

For our currency called *bullshit*. Which you all
have done a fruitful job at the box office.
There will be items on sale during the tour.
So, keep your bullshit safe-

The MAYOR drops the bullshits.

MAYOR

Crap! Poop! Pardon my foul fucking language. We
don't say the C or P words here. That unenforced
law is fucking shitty, I know. Oh, and X- Exits
are located there in case of a forest fire.

The MAYOR points to the exits.
Optional: The MAYOR singles out
audiences who have no Green Card.

MAYOR

Speaking of fired... Who here has their Green
Card...? Hmm. It looks like most of you did not
raise your appendages. You must be transplants.
Your roots have no place in our soil. No
porosity or permeability will ever help you
earn a Green Card here. Oh poor tourists. You
need to learn science words like *porosity*!

The definition of "porosity" is
displayed.

MAYOR

Well, how about that? This may happen a few
times throughout the tour. Also, in our program
is a reference guide to help you translate our
plant language. The tour is a bit over an hour.
Now, welcome to Dirty City!

The MAYOR exits.

SCENE 1

TERRACOTTA CUSTOMS AND SOIL PROTECTION OFFICE

A polaroid camera snaps and prints a photo. The photo is of RAU RAM, a Cilantro whose earthly hair and tan gleam, but vermilion hands. Pregnant, she expects a new seed.

RAU

Smile for the camera...

RAU pulls the photo off the camera.

RAU (CONT'D)

Oh... a photo...

RAU is in a biometric office. She is underneath a banner that reads: "Photosynthesis."

A CSP OFFICER takes the photo off RAU's hands and puts it in RAU RAM's case file. RAU has them display RAU's case file for us to see through the camera.

This 1995 Woodwork citizenship application shows that RAU was born in Paddy Kingdom (Vietnamese: "Garden"), age 30s, a Cilantro ethnicity, a red leaf fingerprint, and a pending green card.

RAU extends a hand. The OFFICER dismisses the handshake and exits.

RAU turns the camera to reveal...

DIRTY CITY

...the welcome sign of Dirty City, Woodwork. She clumsily adjusts the camera and runs to the welcome sign. She positions herself, trying to look cool as the locals walk by with scorn eyes.

RAU

Photosynthesis!

SNAP! RAU turns the camera to...

DIRTY CITY - TOWN SQUARE

...a town square. She poses.

RAU

Photo-

CRACK! Someone knocks over the camera.

DIRTY CITY - STREET

RAU carries around the broken camera with a protruding photo. She walks past sheer disapproval. RAU sees the locals put up signs that read: "Curb the Herb." With each unwelcoming gesture, she sinks lower. She does not belong on this soil.

EXT. FIG LEAF

The sun sets as RAU collapses. RAU is too exhausted for tears. She pulls the photo out the camera.

The photo is her pregnant belly. She is here for one reason.

RAU

My seed...

MALUS (O.S.)

Mercy?

RAU turns away from the sunset to face a vibrant nightclub.

The door opens, revealing an apple in their 40s named MALUS CRABAPPLE. Their red attire is fabulously angelic.

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-

MALUS extends a hand. RAU slaps away MALUS.

RAU
Figment of my imagination. Get your appendages off me!

MALUS
Reality! Gotta hand it to you. You are no angel. You ain't owed a safe haven. You don't belong on our soil.

RAU
Heavens. Your kind soiled safety.

MALUS
And your kind of soil is mud.

RAU
Mud is where you're most safe...

MALUS
Dirty or clean... **A green card ain't green on the other side.**

RAU
Already better than growing up playing red cards I'm dealt with.

MALUS
But, the other side of the sea had the right conditions for you. There ain't no unconditional love here.

RAU
The Woodwork dream...

MALUS
Is this what you imagined it to be?

RAU
This Cilantro dreams! *Bleeds!* This city needs its garnishes. Imagine Dirty City's first-ever salon. A better life for my family is here.

MALUS
You immigrants got wild dreams. *But imaginations.* Your people cannot imagine peace with the likes of me.

RAU
You don't know where I come from.

MALUS
Ya tone ain't a *brussels* sprout's.

RAU

I do not have a tone! I went to a Woodworkan-sponsored school to get the Paddish out of my system...

MALUS

Well you *look* like you took a leave from another continent? All your last names are weed (re: *Nguyen*)?

RAU

Răm. Rau Răm. There are lots more last names in Paddy Kingdom.

MALUS

Rau, I won't judge your days if you don't judge my nights.

RAU

Your fruity "nightlife."

MALUS

It stems from birth, egotistic herb.

RAU

No one is born with it. You chose this lifestyle. You are unnatural.

MALUS

Keep this up and your story will end here.

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? My story will... What?

1. "MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD"

MALUS walks over to the empty plot of land next door. They pull the tarp away to unveil fresh soil.

MALUS

MOVE THE PLOT... MOVE THE PLOT... FORWARD...

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 YOUR BED.

A tanning bed rolls out. Over
time, a seedling grows nearby.

RAU

SHUT UP.

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

NOW YOU 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.

RAU

WHOLE...

RAU & MALUS
MOVE THE PLOT FORWARD...

RAU
FORWARD!

MALUS
YOU'RE WHOLE!

SALONTRO, DAY

The plot thickens. The salon takes
over 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

Shut up. I cannot take anymore of your deep gratitude, foreigner.

RAU

We bleed the same **eukaryotic cells**...

The definition of "eukaryotic cells" is displayed.

MAYOR (OFFSTAGE)

I told you this would happen.

MALUS

Indeed, then treat me like I do.

RAU

But... how much does your wallet weigh?

MALUS

Greedy... You've got morals that need cleansing.

RAU

Greens! It's not greed for us Cilantros to have good taste! Do you have bullshit on you?

MALUS

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

RAU

That'd be ten bullshits, please...

MALUS

Dat's the start of a plot.

MALUS hands a manure-laced bill to RAU. They hide in the tanning bed.

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.

RAU (CONT'D)

Turn around. Nice tan. Nothing fancy.

MALUS

Not a fan. You 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."

MALUS (CONT'D)

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

MALUS exits. The MAYOR, dressed as a tumbleweed, dances in and out.

RAU

I CAN'T EARN MY GREEN CARD
IF I DON'T STAY ON MY GUARD.
MY LEAVES HAVE COME SO FAR.
YOU CAN'T MAKE ME LEAVE!
ALL THAT REMAINS ARE MY ROOTS, FAMILY...

I MISS YOU, BROTHER.

RAU hugs the pot. She sits on the tanning bed. She pulls out body oil and rubs her belly with it.

Audience Engagement: Before the show, audience members wrote their answers on paper leaves to the prompt: "Describe how you truly feel about Cilantros." The MAYOR drops leaves with negative answers for RAU to read aloud, allegorical to how society describes migrants.

RAU (CONT'D)

Seems the most proper maternity gift is reality.

PARSLEY (OFFSTAGE)

(Echoing from the great beyond)

TURN AROUND!

Positive whispers are audible. The colorful light show demonstrates FigLeaf patrons coming in and out. With the rising and setting sun, financial quarters roll by.

RAU

My body oil? You like this foreign stuff...?
Well, it's no fertilizer! This oil is not found in Dirty City. It's from my dirty ol' village!

YOU HAVE MADE IT.
TURN AWAY FROM YOUR OLD LIFE.
YOUR BED IS MADE.
TURN AWAY FROM THEIR WILD NIGHT.

THIS DIRTY CITY IS OUR HOME.
THE NEIGHBORS, THEY'LL KNOW
TO STAY IN THEIR ZONE UNLESS THEIR TONES...
TURN OVER AND CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

Business is booming. More tanning
beds roll out. Bullshit rains down.

MALUS steps in, unimpressed with
RAU's success.

RAU (CONT'D)
(Deceptively)
THIS IS THE START OF...
A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP.
A "FRIENDSHIP" WHERE I CAN'T
KEEP MY GUARD DOWN.

MALUS
(Doubtfully)
THIS IS THE START OF...
A BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP.
A "FRIENDSHIP" THAT SOWS MAD
SEEDS IN OUR GARDEN.

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

RAU turns the sign to "Closed."
She places the seedling in a lit
tanning bed and closes its lid,
then hides in another tanning bed.

RAU (CONT'D)
BUT THE BEST TURNOVER I'VE EVER HAD...

RAU gets out. Her belly is no more.

Direct sunlight lands on a
distinct tanning bed, leading to
PARSLEY leaping out of it.

RAU (CONT'D)
IS MY SUN!

PARSLEY
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!

Audience Engagement: PARSLEY
tosses moisturizers or squirts
them into the audiences' hands. He
gets to work sterilizing the place.

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

RAU holds PARSLEY's green hands.

SCENE 2

SALONTRO, NIGHT

RAU has PARSLEY sit on a tanning
bed. She clips his hair.

RAU
But your trichomes getting unnaturally long.
(Repeating, interspersing)
I love you. I love you lots.

PARSLEY
I love you. I love you more.

RAU
What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen
dandelion seed?

PARSLEY
30 cm/s. No more math problems-

RAU
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 of a Rootimentary graduate?

PARSLEY
Gym class would have a good laugh.

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

PARSLEY
Dodgeball's an Apple's sport anyway-

RAU

You need your root canals checked. Speaking of Apples, how is ceremony planning looking?

PARSLEY

It's been fruitful! Ms. Red's partner treated us to CO2.

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-

RAU

Schools shouldn't be teaching that to minors! They should teach major subjects like math or science.

PARSLEY

History!

RAU

Here's a story: seedlings exist cause stamens and pistils love one another-

PARSLEY

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

RAU

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

Dance music is heard outside, so
PARSLEY sits by the window.

PARSLEY

Ugh, math. FigLeaf is buzzing.

RAU

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

PARSLEY

Mom... Who goes out at night?

RAU

A light with no sense of direction. But, your
light needs to go to bed. Your planter's made.
Now lie in it.

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

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? *You're talking like those Venus flytraps.*

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.

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)

(Repeating)

A NATURAL... IS TRUE TO THEMSELVES.

SON. YOU ARE A... NATURAL!

END OF "A NATURAL"

PARSLEY

I am a natural at lying... in bed.

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 goes and watches the TV.

SCENE 3

SALONTRO, DAY

ANCHOR (TV)

Breaking news out of Woodwork. Every transplant is illegal...

INT. SALONTRO - DAY

RAU intently watches WoodTV8 news on the TV. They show footages of migrant TRANSPLANTS thrown into CSP vehicles.

ANCHOR (TV)

...under the Weed Out Act that's now ratified and set in motion. Any transplant not carrying a Green Card will have to get one soon.

By the end of the summer, CSP - Customs and Soil Protection - will even start detaining those with pending applications.

The TV shows successful applicants whose non-green hands turn green when they obtain their Green Cards.

RAU

It's been 12 years... This has got to be an April Fool's Day joke.

RAU is irked by the TV chyron that reads: "This is April 2."

The MAILPERSON enters and hands RAU the envelop.

It is from Customs and Soil Protection and marked: **URGENT.**

On TV, RHIZO is at the podium,
speaking to REPORTERS.

RAU (CONT'D)

That's the government plant that never shook my
hand...

REPORTER (TV)

Secretary of Garden Security, Woodwork is home
to thousands of unadapted transplant-

SECRETARY (TV)

Woodwork's government has made clear that the
statutory term is "invasive species."

REPORTER (TV)

Woodwork is home to invasive spec-

SECRETARY (TV)

Woodwork is no home to invaders. That answers
that. Now, I ask the questions. What's your
paper?

REPORTER (TV)

Noticias de El Arbol.

CSP agents surround the REPORTER.

REPORTER (TV) (CONT'D)

Yo yo yo! I'm on a journalism visa!

SECRETARY (TV)

Woodwork citizens are protected by the Leaf of
Rights. You are not a citizen.

REPORTER (TV)

Por favor, I got two kids born here-

RAU watches PARSLEY sweep the
salon floor.

SECRETARY (TV)

Too bad too sad. Those two orphans will find
loving homes away from law-breaking invasive
species. With no Green Card, you have no place
on our soil. You do not belong-

RAU turns off the TV with a green
remote. She looks at her hands,
compared to the green remote.

PARSLEY

What's wrong, mom?

RAU freaks out and flings the
remote, shattering it.

RAU

Umm... *The delivery person forgot a package.*
It's a... NEW REMOTE!

MAILPERSON

You're speaking to a seasoned veteran of New Leaf Delivery. I ain't never forget nothing.

RAU

You sure you didn't delivery it to the wrong address?

MAILPERSON

What other place is named *Salontro*?

RAU

Can you play along? I don't want my son to worry.

MAILPERSON

Look, cilantros. I'd play ball with a plant who has a Green Card. But, I ain't complicit in no crime with the likes of you, transplant.

MAILPERSON nears the exit,
moisturizing themself.

MAILPERSON (CONT'D)

I worry about you, Rau. I'll miss your scented moisturizers. These make carrying them paper cutters worth it.

RAU

That's the missing moisturizer I had shipped from Paddy Kingdom months ago!

MAILPERSON runs away.

INT. SALONTRO - DAY

PARSLEY is cleaning. They notice PYRUS enter FigLeaf.

RAU steps in front of PARSLEY's sight.

RAU

Delivery messed up. I'll be back.

RAU exits. PARSLEY looks back at the bus driving away.

PARSLEY

This delivery is perfect... I'll have your back.