REFERENCE GUIDE

**Scene Word/Phrase Meaning**

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|  | Răm | A near homophone for Pham. |
|  | Rau Răm | Vietnamese coriander. |
|  | Pyrus | The pear tree and shrub are a species of genus Pyrus. |
|  | Malus | The genus of small deciduous trees or shrubs in the family Rosaceae, including the domesticated orchard apple, crab apples and wild apples. |
|  | DJ Cauliflower | A cauliflower referencing a famous disc jockey and performer. |
|  | FigLeaf Nightclub | In culture, a "fig leaf" or "fig-leaf" is a literal or figurative method of obscuring an act or object considered embarrassing or distasteful with something of innocuous appearance. |
| 1 | Grand Rapids | The second largest city in Michigan. Pham’s birthplace. |
| 1 | Fredrick Meijer Gardens | Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, 158-acre botanical garden, art museum, and outdoor sculpture park in Grand Rapids, Michigan. |
| 1 | Curb the Herbs | A phrase close to ”Curb Your Dog” |
| 1 | Chào | ”Hello” in Vietnamese |
| 1 | Figs | A soft pear-shaped fruit with sweet dark flesh and many small seeds, eaten fresh or dried; in the musical *Turnover*, it is repurposed to be a near homophone for Fags |
| 1 | Klootzak | An insult in Dutch |
| 1 | Weed | In *Turnover*, a common Asian American surname |
| 1 | Stems | An allegory for the body and perhaps spirit |
| 1 | Im lang | ”Shut up” in Vietnamese (eem laang) |
| 2 | Eukaryotic cells | Plant ”blood” |
| 2 | Poop | A profanity. |
| 2 | We Cilantros have good tastes | Some people have a variation in a group of olfactory-receptor genes that allows them to strongly perceive the soapy-flavored aldehydes in cilantro leaves. |
| 2 | Bullshit | Currency in Dirty City. |
| 2 | Green Card | An immigration card and imaginary card for who is a true plant or not. |
| 3 | Sneezewort | A daisy. |
| 3 | Trichomes | Plant ”hairs”. |
| 3 | What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen dandelion seed? | A *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* reference for ”What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow?” Pham acted as King Arthur in *Spamalot* in 2013. |
| 3 | Boxwood tree | Pham should have said cubed root. |
| 3 | Flores Elementary | ”Flores” is flower in Spanish. |
| 3 | Pick you before the Cherries | Cherry picking joke. |
| 3 | Apple’s sport | Apples connect to the dental point in root canal. |
| 3 | Root canal | Teeth and play-on of botanical ”root” |
| 3 | Golden Delicious | A species of apple. Parsley’s teacher Ms. Red’s wife. |
| 3 | Fig weddings | A gay wedding. |
| 3 | Stamens and pistils | Reproductive organs of plants; plays on of “when a man and woman love each other.” |
| 3 | Their light is artificial | Basically: ”where straight people get their light is natural while where gay people get their light is unnatural.” |
| 3 | UV | Ultraviolet light. Very violet light. |
| 3 | Spectrums of sunlight onto a palette | Lights come in spectrums in the order of: radio waves, microwaves, infrared, visible light, ultraviolet, X-rays, and gamma rays. Like gender. |
| 3 | Biodiversity | Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area. |
| 3 | Homogeneity | Rau appreciates conformity for her own survival. |
| 3 | Grooms | A hypersensitive word nowadays to mean ”immoral exploitation” |
| 3 | Ngu ngon | ”Sleep well” in Vietnamese |
| 4 | Aldehyde | Aldehyde is a chemical acting as defense mechanisms and protects the plants from environmental stressors and herbivores. It is the plant’s brain and mind. |
| 4 | Cantaloupe Outlets | Cantaloupe is a type of true melon (Cucumis melo) from the family Cucurbitaceae. Cantaloupe Outlets is based on Tanger Outlets in Michigan. It is getting more popular to visit an outlet than a mall. |
| 4 | Celery Mall | Celery is part of the Apiaceae family, which includes carrots, parsnips, parsley, and celeriac. It is a low calory, lame food. Celery Mall is based on Rivertown Mall in Grandville, MI. |
| 4 | Apple Blossom | Apple blossom is the flower of the apple tree, which Crabapples also dwell on. |
| 4 | Houseplants | Houseplants have been domesticated to survive in households but are fragile as outdoor plants. |
| 4 | Mountain out of a molehill | ”Making a mountain out of a molehill” is an idiom referring to over-reactive, histrionic behaviour where a person makes too much of a minor issue. |
| 4 | Morsal | ”Morsal” is a small slice or mouthful of food |
| 4 | …susceptible to sunburns. The Cherrys and Maples | Some young trees with thin bark are at greater risk of sunburn damage such as flowering cherry, maple, and many fruit trees. |
| 4 | Cilantros: ya can spice up my skin, but it ain’t ever spice up my life. | Cilantro has a complex flavor with hints of pepper, sage and lemon. A versatile herb, it's used in everything from traditional Indian curries and Asian stir-fries to Mexican salsas. |
| 4 | Tetra High Center of Learning | Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the principal psychoactive constituent of cannabis. |
| 4 | THC, in the U P? | ”U P” is how Michiganders abbreviate Michigan’s Upper Peninsula |
| 4 | They get under my membrane. | A plant’s skin. The plasma membrane, also called the cell membrane, is the membrane found in all cells that separates the interior of the cell from the outside environment. |
| 4 | Mudwrestling and singing in the rain! | Probably a plant’s favorite game or sport |
| 4 | Rose and thorn | Rose is a highlight, success, small win, or something positive that happened. Thorn is a challenge you experienced or something you can use more support with. |
| 4 | Nucleus | Plant’s core or heart. All plant cells contain a nucleus, a structure that stores DNA and acts as a cell's command center. |
| 4 | Poop head | Plant’s profane insult |
| 4 | Fertilizer popsicles | Fertilizer are nutrients. Without fertilizers, nature struggles to replenish the nutrients in the soil. Note to Pham: Write popsicles into lyrics. |
| 4 | Carbon-dated | Old-fashioned |
| 4 | Barley piss | Barley has been used as a source of fermentable material for beer for thousands of years and whiskey for hundreds of years. |
| 4 | Wash your mouth out with soap | A reference to cilantro tasting like soap amongst some in the population |
| 4 | Glucose is clear | Homophone of ”The coast is clear.” Glucose is a sugar with the molecular formula C₆H₁₂O₆. |
| 5 | Fungal infection | Pathogenic fungi cause plant diseases such as anthracnose, leaf spot, rust, wilt, blight, coils, scab, gall, canker, damping-off, root rot, mildew, and dieback. |
| 5 | Bees’ knees | The Cilantros probably got some literal bees knees from the black market. |
| 5 | Indoctrinating the kids | A reference to the national discourse around teaching kids LGBTQ history in schools. |
| 5 | Discounts are handouts. | Asian Americans often speak in white supremacy talking points in order to grow in affluency. |
| 5 | It is allowed under national law | Some businesses are allowed to discriminate against one’s sexuality in some states. |
| 5 | You were born this way! | Lady Gaga is an icon to the queer community. |
| 5 | Moms for Canopy | A reference to Moms for Liberty, an American conservative group that is getting schools to ban books that teaches real history like slavery, LGBTQ identities, feminism, and even STEM. |
| 5 | *Lotus* | A reference to *White Lotus*, a television show. |
| 5 | Garnish | Garnish has two meanings: to add pizzazz to something or to take the wages away from someone. |
| 5 | Modelled plant | Dirty City does not take 2D photos but 3D |
| 5 | Butcher: Someone’s got to split water into oxygen. | Plant butchers splice water molecules rather than meat. |
| 5 | Ivy League Junior High | Ivy League Junior High is the middle school that Parsley is going to go to after graduating from Flores Elementary School. |
| 5 | Cruciferous | The Broccoli family who are lame to Parsley. |
| 5 | Gravity created the Universe. | A reference to *Ellipses*, another science musical by David Quang Pham. Gravity the dog with their friend HD unintentionally created the Universe. |
| 6 | Photosynthesis | 6CO2 + 6H2O → C6H12O6 + 6O2. |
| 6 | *Rotten Tomatoes* | *Rotten Tomatoes*, the fictional critically acclaimed film, is a reference to Rotten Tomatoes, a real-life critics awards for poorly reviewed movies. |
| 6 | Raspberries | Raspberries is a reference to the Razzies, an raspberry-shaped award for the worst films. |
| 6 | ...kids’ fruits of labor, they ended up diced tomatoes | The typical arc of a movie where the central characters face the consequences in the end for their actions throughout. |
| 6 | Quit the sour face, sour grapes. No whining about wine either. | Grapes make wine. |
| 6 | ... flowers like me. | Crabapples are part of the floral family and it’s an allegory for queerness. |
| 6 | Asparagus | A plant that smells bad like many parties that get out of hand. |
| 6 | Summer solstice | June 21, the most daylight in a day per year. This hints the plot takes place between May and June. |
| 6 | Mari Juana, the security guard | Marijuana |
| 6 | Grounds rule | Parsley and Pyrus are partially aware that they live in a musical. Parsley sees theatrical elements around more than others. Pyrus states that there is “no time” for another musical number, indicating that Pham is too lazy to write it. |
| 6 | Stomata | Plant’s lungs. |
| 7 | Seed funding | Incremental funding from the public. |
| 7 | Grassroot Organizations | Public and community driven organizations. |
| 7 | Transplant | A foreigner in a new place. Wordplay for “trans” and “plant.” |
| 7 | *Soil and Green* | A reference to *Solvent Green*, a disaster movie. |
| 7 | Eggplant | A foxy species of plants and emojis. |
| 7 | Homogenous | Conformity. |
| 7 | Horseshit | A mix of profanity and alternate currency. |
| 7 | Me (Vietnamese) | “Mom” in Vietnamese (meh) |
| 7 | Đo vô hoc | “An uneducated person” in Vietnamese (Doh voh oh) |
| 7 | Con đĩ | “Bitch” in Vietnamese (con di) |
| 7 | Thang chó đe | “Son of a bitch” in Vietnamese (Than cho de) |
| 7 | How did “Parsley” slither into your mind? If you did not want me to conform to the ecosystem... | This is based on an argument that Pham and his mom had when she declared that Pham was inadequate as a Vietnamese person. Ironically, she named David Quang Pham a non-Vietnamese name in order to conform to society. |
| 7 | Anh thanh niên | “Young man” in Vietnamese (Anh thanh nien) |
| 7 | Xylems | Plant’s nerves |
| 7 | Invasive species | An invasive species is an introduced, nonnative organism (disease, parasite, plant, or animal) that begins to spread or expand its range from the site of its original introduction and that has the potential to cause harm to the environment, the economy, or to human health. It is like calling an immigrant “illegal.” |
| 7 | Our family’s natural garden could have shocked him out of his truth that no other therapy and their biochemicals could have! | A reference to conversion therapy with electric shock. |
| 8 | Fertile | Fertile means to be capable of producing offspring, seeds, or fruit or capable of developing into a complete organism; fertilized. |
| 9 | Pesto | Cilantros are the primary ingredients of pesto. |
| 9 | If water reaches our stems, we in trouble. | Plants can drown if you overwater them. |
| 10 | Winter solstice | Malus’s birthday. Queer (odd) for any plant. |
| 10 | Orange | An orange helps an apple haha. |
| 10 | The Orange was an agent | Agent Orange is a reference to Agent Orange, a chemical herbicide and defoliant, one of the tactical use Rainbow Herbicides during the Vietnam War. Herbicidal warfare is a form of chemical warfare in which the objective is to destroy the plant-based ecosystem of an area for the purpose of disrupting agricultural food production or destroying plants which provide cover to an enemy. |
| 10 | Swarms of herbs | The Vietcong’s battle tactics comprised a flexible mix of guerrilla and conventional warfare battle tactics to defeat their American and South Vietnamese opponents during the Vietnam War. |
| 11 | I have every politician in my closet. Politics be nasty. You Cilantros are indoctrina- | This is a reference to politicians abusing their power with salon workers. |
| 11 | Dirty City did me dirty. They already lined my pockets with tax cuts for small businesses. | Rau has been playing politics with the local governments around them. |
| 11 | Olive branch | A branch of the olive tree is used as a symbol of peace. |
| 12 | Soap | The soapy taste of cilantro is caused by the presence of aldehydes, which some people are more sensitive to than others. |
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