

**Brooklyn Bridge**

**By Gill Yue**

First performed **15.02.20**

Original cast

SEBASTIAN 'BASTI' FRANCO BIANNCHI – Molly Raine

JERRY 'MIRACLE' MILLER – Lily Ball

MARK 'LASSIE FAIRE' – Melissa Cartwright

CARINA BIANNCHI – Jessica Dale

ELENORE BIANNCHI – Charlotte Hammond

... indicates trailing off/loss of thought

// indicates the next line overlaps the above line

- indicates interruption

[...] indicates translations

(...) indicates actions integrated into speech

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## SCENE ONE

MIRACLE, a 50-year-old masculine presenting drag queen, sits on a bench on the stage. Cell bars are projected on the back of the stage. MIRACLE isn't quite comfortable in the space but has confidence like THEY'RE used to it. THEY go to speak to the audience when there is a huge commotion from offstage. MIRACLE whips THEIR head around, just as BASTI, a 15 year old Italian-American kid, is pushed into the space and falls on the cell floor.

BASTI            LET ME OUTTA HERE. I DIDN'T DO NOTHING. You got the wrong guy, officers!

POLICE            (OFFSTAGE) You gonna give us the names of who did then?

BASTI            C'mon you cain't make me give up my boys.

The sound of a cell door closing. BASTI groans, closing HIS eyes as HE leans against the wall and sits on the floor. HE opens them and looks up at MIRACLE who gives HIM a small wave.

MIRACLE            Howdy.

BASTI freaks out and runs to the 'cell bars,' banging on them.

BASTI            Officers! Officers! Please! Ya gotta let me out ya got me locked in here with some kinda... thing!

MIRACLE            (SOUTHERN BELLE VOICE) Where? What sorta thing?!

BASTI            Officers! Officers!

A bang on the cell bars. BASTI walks away with HIS hands up.

BASTI            (CONT.) I get it, I get it. I'll stop.

BASTI goes to sit on the bench but notices the smiling MIRACLE and sits on the floor as far away as he can get. HE looks around, bored. Every time he catches MIRACLE'S eye HE looks away as quick as he can. MIRACLE pulls a pack of cigarettes from under THEIR dress. BASTI looks at THEM through the corner of HIS eye, clearly itching for one. MIRACLE notices.

MIRACLE            Nothing like a long drag of some cancer sticks after a hard day, huh?

BASTI tries to ignore THEM.

MIRACLE (CONT.) I suppose you won't be wanting one, ya look bout 12

BASTI I ain't

MIRACLE Oh?

BASTI You offering us a smoke?

MIRACLE raises an eyebrow, before extending their hand out with the packet. When BASTI doesn't move towards THEM, THEY chuck the packet towards HIM with a lighter.

BASTI Ain't they gonna- (GESTURES TO PRISON GUARDS)

MIRACLE Don't make a fuss and they won't. They don't like dealing with us – we be quiet, they be quiet

BASTI How'd you get them in?

MIRACLE They don't like to check under skirts

BASTI Huh

A couple moments as THE TWO take drags from their cigarettes. BASTI looks at MIRACLE.

BASTI So, uh, whaddya do?

MIRACLE (DRY CHUCKLE) Exist.

BASTI How'd ya mean?

MIRACLE Ya ever heard of three article rule, kid?

BASTI shakes his head no.

MIRACLE (CONT.) There's a law kid – we all gotta have three clothing pieces that match our assigned baby makers or we get slammed away. Cops showed up to my bar in Franklin and they managed to catch me

BASTI I guess it makes sense

MIRACLE How?

BASTI Well, a guy should look like a guy

MIRACLE Who says?

BASTI It's just... natural

MIRACLE Ah, yeah, natural. Just like these cigs we're smoking?

BASTI That ain't the same

MIRACLE It ain't?

BASTI Nah, the bible say-

MIRACLE The bible say ya cain't wear two different fabrics. Ya got denim, cotton I'm guessing – and that's leather right?

BASTI Stop staring. Ya cain't take that seriously

MIRACLE So, why ya taking that seriously?

BASTI It just ain't how it's meanta be

MIRACLE Again, where ya getting' this from?

BASTI We're goin' in circles

MIRACLE      Ya telling me

MIRACLE and BASTI take drags off their cigarette. BASTI coughs. MIRACLE chuckles.

MIRACLE      (CONT.) Ya sure ya ain't 12?

BASTI          (SHARPLY) Fifteen

MIRACLE      Why ya in a cell?

BASTI          Wrong crowd? I don't know

MIRACLE      Ya still young kid – ya don't wanna be getting mixed up in this kinda lifestyle

BASTI          Says who?

MIRACLE      Says me, kid. If ya don't wanna be 50 sat in jail don't start sitting in jail at 15

BASTI          Ya don't know anythin' bout me

MIRACLE      I know ya 15

BASTI          Right-

MIRACLE      I know ya in with the wrong crowd

BASTI          I don't mean stuff// you just found out

MIRACLE      An' I know ya in wit' the wrong crowd 'cause they let ya take the fall for somethin' I'm guessing ya didn' even do. (PAUSE) It's a lot to know before a name though, I will admit that. I'm Miracle

BASTI bursts into laughter.

BASTI That ain't your name

MIRACLE Oh I'm sorry I didn't realise ya had my birth certificate in your possession

BASTI Who names their son Miracle?

MIRACLE What makes ya think I ain't red blood woman?

BASTI I can see ya beard

MIRACLE That don't mean I'm a man

BASTI Ya a chick then?

MIRACLE Not that either

BASTI What are ya then?

MIRACLE Now ya wanna be chatty huh?

Pause.

BASTI Basti

MIRACLE Gesundheit

BASTI No ma name – Basti

MIRACLE And ya laugh at Miracle?

BASTI It's a short ok. A nickname. Short for Sebastian

MIRACLE Why don't ya just go by Sebastian?

BASTI 'Cause I don't feel like no Sebastian. It was name given t' me but I feel more like a Basti – Basti is who I actually am

MIRACLE Yeah. I understand that. I understand that a lot

BASTI and MIRACLE engage in a smile. Suddenly there's a commotion from outside the cell. The cell door unlocks. LASSIE FAIRE, a more feminine presenting drag queen, enters the space.

LASSIE (SICKLY SWEET) Yes, thank you so much officers! You handsome boys betta make sure ya getting some rest – ya been working so hard on our streets (DROPS THE SWEET TONE) Miracle, I swear ya gotta start to run faster we cain't afford to keep bailing ya out

MIRACLE If we weren't doing it for me, we'd be doing it for another queen

MIRACLE exits the cell and goes to leave with LASSIE, but THEY turn around and look at BASTI

LASSIE Miracle? This ain't a hotel we ain't got all night

MIRACLE How much ya got, Lassie?

LASSIE pulls out a wad of cash and places it into MIRACLE'S outstretched hand. MIRACLE counts the bills.

MIRACLE Hey, officers! He's getting out too

MIRACLE gestures their head towards BASTI who looks confused but hopeful

LASSIE What the Hell are ya doin'

MIRACLE If it ain't for me... it'd be for another

LASSIE Ya heart of gold is too expensive

MIRACLE Ay, fellas! Lassie'll throw in a free lap dance if it'll make ya hurry up! (TO BASTI) It's ya lucky day, kid



BASTI            Why?

MIRACLE        Don't mention it, kid. Just return the favour sometime, yeah?

BASTI looks between the two queens, then races off stage before anyone can change their mind. The lights go down and we transition to...

## **SCENE TWO**

BASTI'S family home. A table with two chairs at opposite ends. The home is sparsely decorated – not in a modest way but in a 'can't afford' way. CARINA, a pretty 14 year old Italian-American, and her Italian Mother, ELENORE sit at the table, ELENORE is mixing while CARINA is toying with a block of cheese. ELENORE reaches a hand out.

ELENORE        Formaggio. [*Cheese*]

CARINA doesn't react. ELENORE continues to have her hand outstretched.

ELENORE        Formaggio. [*Cheese*]

CARINA still doesn't react. ELENORE looks up.

ELENORE        Carina!

CARINA jumps.

CARINA        Ma- what?

ELENORE        Formaggio. Subito. [*Cheese. Now*]

CARINA passes her the cheese. ELENORE grates it into the bowl and mixes.

ELENORE        (POINTING) Mescolare. [*Stir*]

ELENORE stands up and goes to look at the herbs shelf. CARINA reluctantly sits in ELENORE place and starts mixing. ELENORE returns to CARINA.

ELENORE Più veloce. [*Faster*] You need a much heavier hand.

CARINA I don't wanna, Ma.

ELENORE (SARCASTIC) Oh, "I don't wanna" poor baby

CARINA groans, catching BASTI 'climbing through the window.' SHE cranes her neck around ELENORE.

ELENORE Carina, what's that marchio [*Bruise*] on your neck?

CARINA (PANICKEDLY) Basti! Why ya climbing through the window?

ELENORE whips around as BASTI glares at CARINA.

ELENORE Ah, thank you for gracing us with your presence. What? Bed too hard for you here?

BASTI Don't start, Ma.

ELENORE Dove sei stato la notte scorsa? [*Where were you last night?*] Huh? Where?

BASTI No where! Leave me alone, Ma!

ELENORE stares at BASTI before pulling him by the shirt collar.

BASTI (CONT.) Ma!

ELENORE What's this? Is that blood? Tell me you haven't been fighting, Sebastian!

BASTI Get off me, Ma!

ELENORE What is it?

BASTI Strawberry syrup, Ma.

ELENORE Strawberry- strawberry syrup. This boy comes home with blood on his shirt and he tries to tell me it's strawberry syrup

BASTI It ain't blood!

ELENORE How do you know – do you know what blood looks like?

BASTI groans.

ELENORE (CONT.) No, tell me, how do you know what blood looks like?

CARINA It is blood. I saw him and Martin and some of the other guys roughing up the guys who work at the arcade.

ELENORE Sebastian Franco – you get back here!

BASTI Ma! Leave me alone!

ELENORE grabs a towel and starts to chase BASTI.

ELENORE Why are you like this Basti? You think we came here so you can beat up people? Why can't you be like your cousin? He's got a job.

BASTI Frank's thirty and works for the mob, Ma!

ELENORE Hey, that was disproven in court!

BASTI You're kidding me right...

ELENORE Anyway, even if he was working with them, at least he'd be getting *paid* to beat people up, not doing it for the thrill

BASTI We got 15 cents out the guy, does that count?

ELENORE Ti ucciderò. [*I will kill you*] Get here!

BASTI No way, ya crazy!

ELENORE Crazy- pazzo? [*Crazy?*] How's this for crazy? Find somewhere else to sleep tonight!

BASTI Ma! You ain't serious!

ELENORE      Andare! [*Now!*] Go! You'll see how serious I am!

BASTI exits. CARINA grabs an apple off the table, a smirk on her face. ELENORE leans on a chair, and glances at CARINA.

ELENORE      Ay. What's that bruise on your collo [*Neck*] then?

CARINA looks up at ELENORE, then races away offstage. ELENORE whips a towel after her.

ELENORE      Bambini stupidi! [*Stupid kids!*] (SHE SITS ON THE CHAIR) Why? My husband. He tells me, "Elenore, we're gonna be rich in America, love." We're gonna be at the best parties with the best clothing and the heaviest jewellery that makes you unable to breathe – y'know, like Gina Lollobrigida wear. He tells me a lot of things. When we first start dating, he tells me I am the only girl he ever sees – I say "But what about when you close your eyes?" He tells me "Yes, of course my Mother loves you!" She chased me out with a broom the third time I met her. He tells me "America will be the best option for us." Now look at me. I never see him. "The factory, it's the best money for us" Well time is money! And I've got no time with you. All these people, the way they look at us. They think all Italians – we be violent, fat, angry. Do I look fucking fat to you? And my husband, he isn't violent. He makes pillowcases in a factory! And the kids – Carina is off every night, probably with some boy. I mean, I can't blame her. She does have her Mother's looks. But, these boys. They're so rough. I worry. And Basti. Rough boys, you wanna ask him. That boys gonna end up in trouble. He already is. How do you stop something that's already happening?

As ELENORE finishes, the table and chairs are taken off stage and we transition to on the streets outside the family house.

### **SCENE THREE**

BASTI            What was that about?!

CARINA        What? I was telling the truth

BASTI            You was getting me in shit that's what you was

BASTI grabs the apple out of CARINA'S hand.

CARINA        Hey!

BASTI            Consider it (MISPRONOUNCES) reparations

CARINA        You don't know the meaning of the word

BASTI takes a bite of the apple. A wolf whistle is heard off-stage. BASTIE and CARINA direct their next dialogue towards the audience, the policeman imagined there.

CARINA (LAUGHING) You keep on walking Joe, I ain't doing it today neither!

BASTI How you know that officer?

CARINA He been trying to court me

BASTI What? You ain't allowed!

CARINA Whaddya mean I ain't allowed? It's my decision not yours, Basti I'm my own person. Ya don't own me

CARINA grabs the apple back and takes a bite.

CARINA (SPRAYING APPLE) (CONT.) Anyway, I don't wanna be with him-

BASTI Good.

CARINA But even if I DID... That's my choice, not yours. (BEAT) It's obvious he's after one thing anyway.

BASTI That's disgusting

CARINA Well I already tolds him I don't wanna

BASTI What he say?

CARINA He's... persistent. But I can handle myself

CARINA goes to exit.

BASTI Hey... You know I could tell Ma, right?

CARINA Ma ain't gonna listen to ya after that – didn't ya hear, ya ain't staying here tonight.

BASTI Wait- c'mon convince her she cain't

CARINA Just go stay with Luca

BASTI I cain't

CARINA What – did ya fall out?

BASTI He needs me to lay low after being in the slammer last night-

CARINA You were in jail last night? Oh, Ma is gonna flip out-

BASTI Carina, c'mon!

CARINA (EXITING) I cain't hear ya I'm too far away...

BASTI Bitch!

CARINA skips off-stage. MIRACLE enters, carrying a bag.

MIRACLE Basti? Hey, Basti!

BASTI Huh? Who you?

MIRACLE I guess ya wouldn't recognise me

BASTI (REALISATION) Wait! Ya that Queen from the cell the other day

MIRACLE One and only

BASTI What ya doing here?

MIRACLE Queen's gotta eat too

BASTI What ya doing *around* here?

MIRACLE Cheapest store by a mile, only downside is the police patrolling. What can ya expect when they house all the immigrants in one place, though

BASTI You're telling me

MIRACLE What you doing here?

BASTI They house all immigrants in one place, right?

CARINA enters, carrying a bag. SHE eyes MIRACLE suspiciously.

CARINA Ma said give this to ya

BASTI What is it?

CARINA Bag for tonight

BASTI Ya said ya would talk to her!

CARINA I neva said that!

BASTI You got anything else, there's barely anything in 'ere.

CARINA pauses, glances down at the half-eaten apple and then throws it to BASTI.

CARINA Don't say I don't do nothing.

BEAT.

BASTI Ya didn't!

CARINA exits again.

MIRACLE      What's that about?

BASTI          Why you care?

MIRACLE      Hey, c'mon, I bailed ya out of jail, least ya could do is be courteous

BASTI          Came home covered in blood, Ma got angry, I ain't stayin' 'ere tonight

MIRACLE      Right... What ya doin'?

BASTI          What's it look like I'm doin'?

MIRACLE      Looks like ya tryin' to throw an apple at a cop

BASTI          Bingo

MIRACLE      Basti!

MIRACLE grabs BASTI'S arm and pulls HIM back, taking the apple.

BASTI          What ya doin'!

MIRACLE      What does it look like, I'm stoppin' ya from being a dunce! Why would ya do that?

BASTI          Have somewhere to stay for the night? I got too many people not wanting me around to stay on the street!

MIRACLE and BASTI are both shocked at the outburst.

MIRACLE      C'mon kid

BASTI          What?



MIRACLE I know what it's like to have nowhere to go, you can stay at mine a night

BASTI Why?

MIRACLE I'm just tryna help out kid

BASTI stares at MIRACLE. HE looks down at the apple. HE drops it and follows MIRACLE offstage.

#### **SCENE FOUR**

MIRACLE and BASTI walk through the streets of Brooklyn, eventually reaching MIRACLE'S apartment.

MIRACLE And here's where the other half... stay very far away from

BASTI Hey, Miracle – why those people staring at me? Are they gonna.... Yanno?

MIRACLE What?

BASTI Yanno... try and solicit or summat.

MIRACLE laughs heartily.

MIRACLE Listen kid, ya don't have to worry about that – we're not into cradle snatching round here.

BASTI Oh, so they're not into me?

MIRACLE What – ya want a bunch of men perving on ya ass?

BASTI No! Just, yanno, who wouldn't want this?

MIRACLE Lotsa people, now help me with this bag – I'm getting too old and these stairs are killer

BASTI           Miracle, how old are ya?

MIRACLE        Don't ya know ya never ask a lady her age?

BASTI           I'll ask again? You a lady?

MIRACLE        No

BASTI           Well you a guy?

(Pause)

MIRACLE        Fifty

BASTI           Huh?

MIRACLE        Fifty. Last September.

BASTI           Five years off ma Nonna

MIRACLE        Nonna?

BASTI           Grandmother

THEY'VE reached the apartment and MIRACLE takes the bag off BASTI and sets it on the table.

MIRACLE        You born in Italy?

BASTI           How'd you know-

MIRACLE        When you work the clubs you meet all sorts of people – they teach you a lot as well. I knew an Italian queen once

BASTI           You friends?

MIRACLE        The bitch stole my boyfriend, not a chance

BASTI            (CHUCKLES) Nah, they moved over while Ma was still pregnant, had Carina a year later

MIRACLE        She the pretty one from earlier?

BASTI            Very same

MIRACLE        How come they came over?

BASTI            Promise of opportunity – reason a lot came over I guess. What bout you?

MIRACLE        Whaddya mean?

BASTI            Even I sound more BK than you and I got constant Italian yapping in my ear. You ain't from around here.

MIRACLE        Feels ironic a papers telling me that. (PAUSE) I grew up in Texas. Rural, Texas. Could've made firewood out ma town we so far in the sticks. Mom fixed the dresses of all the Church women. Dad – he taught.

BASTI            When'd you leave?

MIRACLE        1930. I was 14. Ma found some letters between me and a boy from church. She confronted me with ma Da and I thought if I confessed it'd all be okay

BASTI            They freak out on ya?

MIRACLE        Freak out? (CHUCKLES) I don't think any of us will ever get the ringing outta ears. Screamed.

BASTI            What happened then?

MIRACLE        Now don't ya start – my story ain't some torture fan'asy for ya to feel betta bout yaself

BASTI            Sorry

MIRACLE        Don't worry about it (PAUSE) Anyway, I hopped on a train and never looked back. I'd helped Ma with the sewing plenty of times, so I set up shop fixing clothes. But where I was, there were a lotta people around like me. I'd help them fix their dresses and made some money on the side teaching secret sewing classes to other young pansies like me. I found clubs and bars and offered ma services there.

BASTI            Like... (WHISPERED) gay bars?

MIRACLE        Nah hoedown honkey tonks – of course gay bars! Where else ya expect drag queens to perform? Anyway, I planted myself right in the community and refused to move. I'd already been kicked out 'nother family, I weren't letting this one kick me out too. Took advice from the other queens on the best way to paint-

BASTI            Paint?

MIRACLE        The face, Basti – with makeup. Where was I? Oh, and I haven't left since. 34 years strong on the club scene and I ain't stopping till I drop dead.

BASTI            Was there a big... group of you?

MIRACLE        There was enough. There's always more like you then ya think – ya just gotta know where to look and keep an open mind

BASTI            Never thought about it like that

MIRACLE        Lotta people have their ideas of us. Don't bother to look past what they think. Now, ya like hot dogs?

BASTI            What the f-

MIRACLE holds up a pack of hot dog sausage and buns.

BASTI            Oh. Actual hot dogs

MIRACLE        What did ya think I meant – man you're a dumbass

BASTI Nothing more New York than hot dogs

MIRACLE Hey, sometimes stereotypes ring true – not often though

MIRACLE and BASTI prepare the food.

MIRACLE (CONT.) Ya know, knowing ya the next generation – makes me scared

BASTI Whadya mean?

MIRACLE You kids – ya all obsessed with violence

BASTI Says who?

MIRACLE Basti, I met ya with blood on ya collar

BASTI And? Ya cain't make a decision 'bout me like that – ya don't know// me

MIRACLE I weren't making a decision bout// you

BASTI something- "Bout ma generation." That involves me. What if I said all gays are diseased or

MIRACLE Diseased?!

BASTI Or something!

MIRACLE That ain't the same-

BASTI Ain't it? When people say all Italians are.... Forget it.

MIRACLE What?

BASTI Forget it, it don't matter

Pause. MIRACLE has an idea.

MIRACLE        Ya know, Basti. I have a show tonight. I could do with having someone help me carry things around backstage. Help set up. In my age it's hard – ya know? Ya could also watch the show for free.

BASTI            A drag queen show?

MIRACLE        It's free, kid

A pause. BASTI chuckles slightly.

BASTI            Why not?

#### **SCENE FIVE**

LASSIE enters, the opening "Its In His Kiss" by Betty Everett plays. LASSIE lipsyncs, playing on THEIR sexuality and being cheeky and playful with the audience. At the end, THEY stand back and gesture off stage.

LASSIE           Ladies and gents and in between – last and certainly least-

MIRACLE throws a shoe at LASSIE from offstage.

LASSIE           My drag sister, Miracle!

MIRACLE enters, and lipsyncs to "Don't Tell Mama" from Cabaret. BASTI joins the applause. The set changes to that of a dressing room backstage.

BASTI            Wow, that was something.

MIRACLE        Ya liked it?

BASTI            I think... I think I did

MIRACLE (WINKING) More than one kinda entertainment, kid

BASTI How do ya do it?

MIRACLE What?

BASTI Get on stage in front of everyone? Perform?

MIRACLE I'm performing every day, Basti. We all are. Performing on a stage is easier – ya cain't see the faces of the audience when the spotlights in ya eyes

LASSIE (OFFSTAGE) Miracle, ya done yapping yet?

MIRACLE (YELLING) Can ya wait five seconds?

LASSIE (OFFSTAGE) No!

MIRACLE Cunt!

LASSIE (OFFSTAGE) Bitch!

BASTI He was the one who got us out the jail right?

MIRACLE (CHUCKLES) Sure was

BASTI (TENTATIVELY, THIS IS STILL NEW TO HIM) He your boyfriend?

MIRACLE Lassie? Never – I taught him everything he knows. He won't admit that though.

BASTI So, you're like a mentor?

MIRACLE In this life, it's more than a mentor. We look out for each other – we're the only ones who know how the other feels. There's a solidarity there you just can't fake

LASSIE (OFFSTAGE) Miracle, I'm locking this club in five seconds and if ya boy toy ain't out he's getting locked in

MIRACLE Would ya calm down ya moody bitch

LASSIE (IMPROVISED COMEDIC SOUND OF REFUSAL)

MIRACLE Sorry kid, we gotta go

BASTI It's okay. I been gone a day Ma should let me back now

BASTI goes to leave.

MIRACLE (HESITANT) Basti. Ya know I'll help ya out when ya need. Ya could have a future round here.

BASTI I ain't a drag queen-

MIRACLE I don't mean performing. I mean in general. We're a community, but ya don't have to be gay to fit in this community. Plus, ya know what it's like to be discriminated for summat ya cain't change. Ya could fit in here eventually.

BASTI I'll think about it. Thank you, Miracle.

MIRACLE Anytime kid

BASTI exits. As HE walks through the streets of Brooklyn, he allows himself to relax for the first time in a long time. A skip developing in his step. Eventually he reaches home. A physical scene, of BASTI arriving home, running into CARINA, the two engage in an argument with CARINA storming off. BASTI sits at his kitchen table.

BASTI I met a guy called Cam through ma cousin, Luca. Cam and Luca were four years older than me, and I thought they were so cool. They had leather jackets that were so heavy. Luca let me wear his when he came round once. I was 11, he was 15. But to me, he seemed like such a man. Whilst running around in this jacket that swamped me and swallowed me whole, I begged Ma for ma own jacket just like it. Ma wouldn't pay me proper attention – kept telling me “Va via – go play with your other toys, eh?” Luca looked at me and Ma and was like “Ey, Zietta, I can get him a giacca, easy!” Then Ma told him off – in Italian so I couldn't understand entirely – and she told me to go bed. Luca climbed through ma window later that week and told me t' follow him. He took me to meet the boys – The Jonah's. It may not sound threatening but, believe me, we didn't need t' compensate.



Luca told Cam I wanted to be just like them and have ma own jacket. Cam's girlfriend made it – and made it slightly big too, sayin' I'd grow into it. I came home so excited to show everyone. (PAUSE) Ma went white when she saw me and spent the rest t' night prayin' in her room. The Jonah's, we neva did anything that bad. Mostly we stole – at first. I was small so I could be quick and crawl and not get caught. And if I was caught, I'd just cry. Sometimes, wit' really old guys, I'd pretend I was a girl 'cause ma hair was so long. That was at first. Then, as I got older, the boys started bringing me along to rough other guys up. People that owned businesses that supported rival gangs – actual rival gangs. But *they'd* back me up, whenever I needed. One time a lower guy in Elijah's Fire – a rival gang – was tryna chat up Carina – me and the boys roughed him up outside the arcade. I neva really enjoyed those times, but ya have t' put up with the bad times, along with the good. And at least with the boys, I was included. Most of us were Catholic, but all were Italian. Or Polish. But most of all, we all weren't from here. Sure, a lot been born here – Hell I was born at Kings County! But we weren't American. We weren't the apple pie, checked apron families. We had our roots in different places. So we was inclusive with each other. It was the first time I felt I belonged. But even then, I still had t' be this tough guy. This guy who weren't scared. Who had violence in an everyday routine. But maybe I don't have to be that? I dunno, Miracle, he- they're weird. They dress like ma Nonna at afternoon church and like to be with men. It ain't natural – but to some I ain't natural. And the only time I fit in is with people who appreciate what it's like to not be natural. Maybe I have a home somehow?

BASTI sits back, the revelation filling HIM with hope. CARINA enters. SHE stops and stares at BASTI.  
HE notices HER after a bit.

BASTI (CONT.) Carina? What do ya want? (NOTICES THE TEARS, GENTLER) Carrie?  
What is it?

CARINA collapses into BASTI'S arms. SHE is shaking. There is an incoherent babble, quiet but emotional. BASTI stares ahead, HIS posture stiffening.

CARINA Basti?

BASTI gently but firmly pushes CARINA off and pulls a box out, pulling out a switch blade. HE goes to exit. CARINA pulls him back gently.

CARINA (CONT.) Basti, please, you're scaring me.

BASTI stares blankly at CARINA and pushes her away, exiting the stage. CARINA sits at the table with HER head in HER hands.

## **SCENE SIX**

That night. There's banging on the door. CARINA enters weary. ELENORE enters a bit after.

ELENORE Che cosa sta succedendo? [*What is going on?*] Che cosa succede

CARINA Non conosco [*I don't know*] mamma. It's Basti.

ELENORE Why is he outside at this time?

CARINA (HORRIFIED) Mamma

ELENORE Che cosa? [*What?*] (SEES BASTI) Blood. Again

CARINA What do we do?

Long pause.

ELENORE Leave him.

CARINA What?

ELENORE È tardi. [*It's late*] Go back to bed, Carina.

CARINA Mamma we have to help. Mamma. Ma! Ya always say fam'ly's most important – we gotta help// him

ELENORE Some people are past helping. Survival is the most important, Carina.

ELENORE exits. CARINA stares at the door a bit longer before following ELENORE.

## **SCENE SEVEN**

LASSIE FAIRE is stood on stage – smoking outside their club. THEY have a robe on and no wig but a full face of drag makeup. Into the audience, BASTI comes running on. HE is covered in blood and clearly in a panic. HE sees the club name and stops, knowing HE is in the right place. HE sees the figure and starts to shout up to them, the illusion that LASSIE is above them on a balcony, checking HE hasn't been followed.

BASTI (HISSING SHOUT) Miracle! Miracle! I know you can hear me man!

LASSIE can hear HIM, but chooses to ignore HIM, looking straight at the city ahead of THEM.

BASTI (HISSING SHOUT AGAIN) Miracle!

HE looks around to check the coast is clear.

BASTI (PROPER SHOUT) Miracle!

HE panickily swoops the street with his eyes. LASSIE sighs and glances at the kid through THEIR peripheral.

LASSIE Look, kid. Do I look like a cheap painted whore?

A LONG PAUSE. BASTI stares up at LASSIE.

BASTI What?

LASSIE I ain't Miracle, (GRUNTLED) I actually know how to paint my face-.

BASTI What does it matter, man? (PAUSE, THINKING) Lassie! You're Lassie right? I know we never really met but please I need Miracle! I need// help!

LASSIE What, she stole you watch after a hook up?...

LASSIE finally looks fully at BASTI standing under the 'streetlamp', the sight of the blood causing them to trail off.

LASSIE Ho-ly shit... (HUSHED SHOUTING) Miracle! Miracle! (DEEP VOICE) Jerry!

MIRACLE (OFF STAGE) What the- I'm coming, I'm coming!

MIRACLE comes on stage, joining LASSIE. THEY are completely de-dragged, wearing a pair of pyjama trousers and vest top.

MIRACLE (CONT.) What is it? I was sleeping

LASSIE Yeah well, some kid covered in blood is wanting to talk to you

MIRACLE leans over the railing, BASTI stands shock still in the streetlight.

MIRACLE Basti. Fuck.

LASSIE Kid got named after his parentage?

MIRACLE What? No, Basti, not Bastard you dumb cunt. It's his nickname

LASSIE Seems like he should be nicked to me.

MIRACLE Shut up you Dumb Blonde.

LASSIE (STARING MORE AT BASTI) Where's he from?

MIRACLE Italian land

LASSIE No, I mean how'd you know the kid?

MIRACLE He's the one we bailed out. (HISSED SHOUT) Basti! Wait there, I'll let you in.

LASSIE You and that heart of Gold.

MIRACLE turns and glares at LASSIE for a good few seconds before heading back offstage. LASSIE stubs out their cigarette and gives a worried glance out into the world. We set the stage to reveal the inside of the DRAG QUEEN'S flat – dresses and unfinished sewing projects are strewn around. Wigs in bags hang from ceilings. BASTI enters, dazed and shaking, with a cautious MIRACLE following a few steps behind, now wearing a dressing gown. THEY walk past BASTI and pull out a chair.

MIRACLE The blood dry?

BASTI What?

MIRACLE The blood (GESTURES) is it dry? I ain't ruining the fabric with blood.

BASTI rubs a hand on his top, a thin smear comes off. HE shakes his head no. MIRACLE sighs and pulls a carrier bag down, shaking the wig onto the table and placing the bag on the chair.

MIRACLE Sit. On the edge!

BASTI tentatively sits as LASSIE enters.

LASSIE How'd you find us?

BASTI Was on the bail forms. I kept running till I found.

LASSIE Were you followed?

BASTI I don' think so, ma'am- sir- I- it?

LASSIE (BORED) Why don't you find out?

MIRACLE Ignore her she's a racoon with nowhere to scavenge

LASSIE And you're two cents short of a quarter but don't see me complaining

MIRACLE All ya do is complain, you ditsy cunt.

LASSIE Old bag!

MIRALE Bottle blonde!

LASSIE feigns offence and flops on the sofa, crossing their arms and pouting.

MIRACLE And why you still got your makeup on?

LASSIE You know it's easier to get off after a shower!

MIRACLE Ya know where the bucket is

LASSIE I was gonna before ya boy toy showed up

The joking-insult tone shifts as both QUEENS focus their attention on the shaking BASTI, who stares at a spot ahead of him, eyes glazed.

LASSIE (STAGE WHISPER) Is he high?

MIRACLE I don't kno-

LASSIE (SHOUTS AT BASTI LIKE HE'S A CHILD) Are. You. High?

MIRACLE You'd be better off as an egg. At least when you got dropped you would've cracked.  
(THEY TURN TO BASTI) Who's the blood, kid?

Pause.

BASTI (SPIT) Pig's.

Long pause.

LASSIE That ain't so bad! Pigs ain't-

MIRACLE What kinda pig?

An even longer pause. Tense.

BASTI (AS THE SPEECH GOES ON HIS TALKING PACE GETS FASTER AND MORE FRAZZLED) He had her. Grabbed her as she walked home. She went out for fags. Was craving 'em. Knew she could walk around at night – it was our turf. I- I told her it was our turf. No one would get her. She pissed me off, I didn't wanna walk with her – plus it was down the road. Five, ten. At most. Not just our turf. Pig's turf. What kinda right. Scum. She was my sister; I couldn't let it... I couldn't stop myself. Saw red. Blood in my eyes. The boys came, backed me up. It was gonna be some roughing up. But the blood was in my eyes. I couldn't stop. Then the blood was in my eyes and I wouldn't stop. Blood in my hair, my hands. Taken it too far, the boys cain't help me. Family won't look at me. I have nowhere-

LASSIE Why are you here?

BASTI looks up at MIRACLE for the first time.

BASTI            Look, 15 bucks is// all I need

LASSIE           15 bucks?! Nerve of this guy! Ya know what 15 bucks is! Rent and food and water...

BASTI            (CONTINUING TO TALK OVER LASSIE) Is all I need, I know it ain't little but it ain't a lot – enough to get me away and in a new life. I ain't got nothing here and you said you'd help me

MIRACLE        Help educate you and get you on your feet in an honest way – not help you jump town after killing a cop! I meant sweepin' our floors, wipin' our tables and watchin' our shows. Not stabbin' a cop 'cause he raped your sister!

BASTI            I got nothing here!

MIRACLE        What you got out there?!

A long pause. BASTI pulls out a switch blade.

BASTI            Ya gotta help me or I'll make you help me.

MIRACLE        You're better than this.

BASTI            I ain't better than whatever they think of me. Can never be better than what they see me as.

MIRACLE        There's living proof you can.

THE TWO stare each other down. LASSIE peers through the window.

LASSIE           Miracle, the cops are outside.

MIRACLE        Is it 'nother raid or they here for-

LASSIE           I don't know but we gotta get all this out-

POLICE (OFFSTAGE) Jerry Miller! Open up we have a warrant!

MIRACLE Found a new Maggie already- fuck me.

LASSIE We're gonna be fucked-

BATSI flicks his blade, drawing THEIR attention.

BASTI Where's the cash, Miracle?

THE POLICE'S knocking gets louder and louder, deafening the theatre as our three characters stand in a stand-off, before blackout.

POLICE (OFFSTAGE) Sebastian Franco Biannchi. You have chosen to accept a plea deal for aggravated manslaughter without the intent to kill. You will serve 10 years with a chance for parole on good behaviour.

A spotlight on BASTI. HE stands centre stage, his face in a state of toxic masculine anger. HIS breathing quickens, and then HE screams a deep, masculine "No."

### **SCENE EIGHT**

MIRACLE How you been holding up?

BASTI You ask' me that a week ago

MIRACLE And I'm gonna keep askin' 'til you gimme an answer

BASTI I answered

MIRACLE An answer that resembles the truth?

Pause.

BASTI How's things outside?



MIRACLE They're going okay. (Beat) Lassie sends her love-

BASTI No she don't

MIRACLE Nah she don't (PAUSE) Basti – have you got a plan? How you're gonna (GESTURES) survive this place?

BASTI Yeah. (POINTS) You see 'im?

MIRACLE The guy who looks big enough to bear hunt with a matchstick?

BASTI I'm gonna fight him

MIRACLE (CHUCKLES) Right

BASTI I'm serious. It's what everyone say – take down the biggest guy in the yard

MIRACLE You're serious? Boy, I cannot tell if you're dumb, stupid or have a very specific death wish to die painfully

BASTI What?

MIRACLE You ain't gonna do that at all. What ya gonna do is keep your head down, you're gonna be a model prisoner. You will not say boo, you will not talk back – you do what the guards say, you don't upset the system round here and you don't get your ass in any sorta trouble. You do that you might just survive and even get time off your sentence for good behaviour. (HUSHED) You're in here for killing a cop, Basti. They don't take that lightly here. Ya needta convince the guards you're on their side and you're sorry.

BASTI What the fuck. Who the fuck are you?

MIRACLE Basti-

BASTI No, I... I wanna know. What the fuck happened to the Miracle who – one of the first times we met – you told me only way you got by is causing a stink, by making everyone around uncomfortable and forcing yaself into their way. Ya have never been quiet about who you are and what ya want

MIRACLE Basti, it's different-

BASTI Different? Oh, I see. It's different 'cause I don't take it up my ass-

MIRACLE Basti!

BASTI (TALKING OVER) It's different 'cause people don't like me and make their mind up about me based on summat I cain't change. Oh wait, but, that's the same for you. So how are we different? Huh, Miracle? Is it 'cause you can walk round the streets and nobody stares at ya different 'cause ya look different? Is it 'cause you're not instantly put in a box when people see you – call ya guappo, wop, ask ya if ya work for the mob. Ask how many people ya family killed. Ya wanna know how many people been killed by my family? One. That pig that touched ma sister. He's the first person killed by someone in ma family name.

MIRACLE Basti, ya have to// calm down

BASTI My name is Sebastian. Sebastian Franco Biannchi.

MIRACLE Okay, Sebastian look-

BASTI Ya think ya ma dad or something, Jerry? Ya think just 'cause ya fed me hot dogs one time ya getta say in my life?

MIRACLE That ain't what it is Ba- Sebastian

BASTI Ya have some sick kinda fantasy, Jerry? Wanna fuck me, Jerry? Like them young?

MIRACLE That ain't what this is and ya know it! Don't be angry at me Sebastian 'cause I'm the closest thing ya got t' family right now! Where's ya family, Basti? Why ain't they never here visiting you? Why's it only me? Huh?

BASTI Get out.

MIRACLE I-

BASTI Get out. Don't visit me again.

MIRACLE Basti-

BASTI exits.

### SCENE NINE

MIRACLE stays sat at the visiting table centre-stage. BASTI enters and delivers his monologue as he circles around THEM, occasionally pausing.

BASTI           1931. A lot happened in history that year, probably, but I ain't gonna educate ya. Grab a book. What they won't tell you is Elenore Greco. Had parents, like anyone would. 20 years later she meets Franco Sebastian Biannchi – hey, the irony ain't lost on me. He says he can get her in a better life. She believes him and hey – she was pregnant with his child. What's she got to lose?

TANNOY        Biannchi to visitation.

BASTI stops and stares at the back of MIRACLE, who sits, waiting desperately for BASTI to arrive. Eventually THEY give up and leave. BASTI continues pacing.

BASTI           They arrive in Brooklyn. City of opportunity. For some. Franco gets a job making pillowcases. He dodges jokes about the mob and the mafia, the irony never leaving him that while he's making things that let people sleep at night, he's awake every night, constantly terrified for his family. People are scared of things that are different. And scared people are trigger happy. He's so worried, he don't realise what's happening to his family from the inside.

MIRACLE enters and sits at the visiting table again.

TANNOY        Biannchi to visitation.

BASTI stops and stares at the back of MIRACLE, who sits, waiting desperately for BASTI to arrive. Eventually THEY give up and leave. BASTI continues pacing.

BASTI           What Franco don't realise, is his family weren't living the American dream like he thought. Ya see, it can be hard to want to be better when everyone's telling ya, ya never gonna be better. Ya don't have a hope of being different when everyone says ya the same thing. What's the point?

MIRACLE enters and sits at the visiting table again.

TANNOY        Biannchi to visitation.

BASTI stops and stares at the back of MIRACLE, who sits, waiting desperately for BASTI to arrive. Eventually THEY give up and leave. BASTI continues pacing. HE grows more agitated.

BASTI            Ya see, people think they know ya. They don't. Ya can't assume ya know me 'cause ya know someone like me. We all got different... stories, different lives.

CARINA enters and sits at the visiting table.

TANNOY        Biannchi to visitation.

BASTI            I ain't wanna talk to ya, Miracle!

HE turns around and sees CARINA.

CARINA        Sebastian.

### **SCENE TEN**

BASTI            Carrie. It's been a while.

CARINA        You know I hate that name.

BASTI            It's just a nickname, Carina. We been saying it since we were kids.

CARINA        We ain't kids no more Sebastian.

Pause.

BASTI            Well. Why you here? I been here three years and you show up one day? Was I finally good enough to grace with you showing up?

CARINA        Don't do that

BASTI            Do what?

CARINA Act like you're the victim here, Sebastian.

BASTI I'm victim of circumstance

CARINA (MUTTERED) Dio santo ... [*Oh my God...*]

BASTI What?

CARINA Sebastian. We come from the same family. Ya think I don't know about that?

BASTI Course

CARINA Yet I ain't sat in a jail cell

BASTI I'm in this place 'cause I was protecting you-

CARINA From something that already happened?

BASTI What else was I meant to do? Let the fucker go? Let him get away with what he did to// you

CARINA You didn't once ask me what I wanted. Maybe I wanted to make the fucker pay. Maybe I wanted to cut his dick off. Maybe I wanted to stick his head on a fence with a sign that told everyone exactly what he was. Maybe I wanted the finishing fucking blow. Did you ask me? No. You thought you knew what was best for me. You thought you could handle everything. You thought I was some damsel in distress.

BASTI I was... I wanted...

CARINA Exactly.

BASTI So you just here to tell me how terrible I am? Coulda dragged the whole family here for that. Ma would love to tell me what I'm doing wrong.

CARINA Ma's dead, Basti.

A moment of silence. The siblings share in a moment of quiet solidarity that still feels wrong and disjointed. BASTI goes to reach for CARINA'S hand but thinks better of it.

BASTI Well... shit

CARINA has a dry chuckle

CARINA Yeah. (PAUSE) Funerals in a week

BASTI Whadya want me to do?

CARINA Thought ya might be able to get parole. Been speaking to the guards. They say you're a model prisoner. (PAUSE) Other than skipping visitation. Every time Jerry Miller visits.

BASTI How'd you get these kinda facts?

CARINA (SADLY) What can I say – officers love me (PAUSE) Why ya ain't been talking to Jerry?

BASTI Why you care? You don't know that fairy-

CARINA Basti, we been called names so much. What's the point of adding to that? (PAUSE) We're delaying the funeral for ya – apply for parole, Sebastian.

BASTI You're just leaving like that? You barely been here, Carina.

CARINA Whadya want me to say, Sebastian?

BASTI Pretend it's gonna be okay? Pretend we're gonna be okay? That life is gonna be okay?

CARINA Basti...

CARINA exits. BASTI is left alone on stage. HE takes a moment, then has a long-anguished crying scream. It's on the other side of the same coin of his scream from his arrest. It's a desperate cry of knowing what's happening, and powerlessness to stop it.

## SCENE ELEVEN

MIRACLE and LASSIE sit at adjoining dressing tables facing out into the audience, doing their makeup. As MIRACLE goes to grab a hairbrush, she notices LASSIE placing a wig on her head.

MIRACLE Miss. Lassie

LASSIE Yes?

MIRACLE Wanna explain why my red-haired wig is on your head?

LASSIE This is my one-

MIRACLE No// it ain't

LASSIE Yes it is

MIRACLE You haven't had a red haired thing on your body since February

LASSIE That officer sure was hunky

MIRACLE Give it back you ditsy slut

BASTI (OFFSTAGE) I thought she was a bottle blonde

LASSIE and MIRACLE both turn slightly, MIRACLE raising slightly in hope. BASTI walks on from offstage.

LASSIE Ho-ly shit... it's like seeing a ghost

MIRACLE Lassie, give us some time. (PAUSE) please

LASSIE goes to leave.

MIRACLE Leave ma wig

LASSIE pauses, whipping her head back around to glare at MIRACLE before throwing the wig onto a nearby chair and walking out.

BASTI            Hey Miracle (PAUSE) Long time no see.

MIRACLE busies THEMSELVES with sorting out the dressing room, distracting themselves.

BASTI            (CONT.) I'm sorry I stopped showing up to our visitation (PAUSE) And I didn't reply to your letters

MIRACLE        How come you're out?

BASTI            Parole. Got a funeral to attend.

MIRACLE        Oh. I'm sorry to hear. (PAUSE) Someone close?

BASTI            Mi ma. (PAUSE) It was funny... no one ever visited me in there. Except you, of course. But my family never did. But last week, I get called to visitation. And I walk past like I always do, gonna keep walking 'cause walking is what keeps ya sane. Keeps ya mind working despite it all. But I look in. And there's my sister. Wearing the only thing, good we own. I dunno what you'd call it with your fancy names but to me it's a blue dress. Mia Nonna made it. She's sitting there, in this good blue dress. And it makes sense she is. Since, she's the only good thing to come out this family. So I walk in and we sit down and she tells me. I applied for parole.

MIRACLE        Sure. Makes sense.

Awkward pause.

BASTI            Did... did ya hear what I said earlier? My apolo//gy

MIRACLE        Oh, I heard

BASTI            Right.

MIRACLE        What were ya expecting?



BASTI I dunn-

MIRACLE 'Cause y'know – the last time I saw you in the real world you had me at knife point demanding cash.

BASTI I know... I'm sorry (PAUSE) I came here to-

MIRACLE Shoot me instead?

BASTI No! Miracle, I... I don't know what t' say

MIRACLE Ya expecting me t' say it for ya?

BASTI 'Course not

MIRACLE Don't know why ya here then.

BASTI Miracle, can ya stop acting like I'm the bad guy-

MIRACLE I didn't make ya the bad guy, Basti!

BASTI So I am the bad guy?!

MIRACLE Sebastian, ya know life ain't black and white. That's not what I meant. Ya seeing yaself as the bad guy, punishing yaself. The only times ya help yaself is when someone makes ya – I told ya to not get yaself in trouble in the slammer; I gave ya a place to stay when ya got kicked out; I offered ya a job and a way out of the path ya were on – I'm guessing Carina is why ya actually bothered to apply for parole? (BEAT) Would ya have bothered without her? (BEAT) Would ya-

BASTI Miracle! Please. I- I'm sorry-

MIRACLE If that's all ya got t' say ya can save us the sappy shit, kid

BASTI But I-

MIRACLE Save it. You ain't been soft for 18 years why start now

Awkward pause. MIRACLE applies makeup while BASTI stands awkwardly.

BASTI            You got a show?

MIRACLE        Not quite. (PAUSE) Show of force, I guess you could say

BASTI            What?

MIRACLE        (DEEP SIGH, FIND THE STRENGTH) Bar on Christopher Street, it got raided last night. Lassie's seeing a guy who was there. (MOURNFAL PAUSE) We're gonna march later. In the street. Show them they can't push us around

BASTI            Miracle you'll get arrested

MIRACLE        Like I haven't been before? There are a lot of constants in life. Lassie will always be a dumb bitch, the farms will always grow food, the city will always be crowded. But somethings... somethings get to change

BASTI            Like?

MIRACLE        Like hate. Hate can turn to love easily.

BASTI            That's not how hate works// Miracle

MIRACLE        That's 'cause you been raised on hate. You let hate make your decisions. Run your life

BASTI            And you ain't?

MIRACLE        I use spite, kid, there's a difference.

BASTI            Whaddy mean spite?

MIRACLE        That spite of how the world is, there's change. I know there's change. It's always coming. (LOOKS AT AUDIENCE) And we can help

BASTI            You're crazy

MIRACLE        (MATTER OF FACTLY) And you're a coward. Killing people don't make you no hero kid, running around with knives and spitting off piers is chicken shit. Spitting back in the face of those who want nothing more than you to just not be (MIRACLE PUTS ON THEIR WIG) Now, that's brave

BASTI            I did it in my own way

Pause.

MIRACLE        Why don't you try our way?

MIRACLE stands up and reaches an outstretched hand to BASTI

BASTI            What?

MIRACLE        March with us.

BASTI            What- I- No offence but I ain't one of you-

MIRACLE        You ain't been kicked down your whole life?

BASTI            If I get nicked again my parole-

MIRACLE        You ain't been told you shouldn't exist?

BASTI            You don't understand Miracle it's my chance-

MIRACLE        (PASSION) You ain't been told you ain't natural, you don't belong here – you ain't no good? You ain't been judged for something you cain't change?

BASTI            Of course!

MIRACLE        Then you are one of us. Even if you don't see it

LASSIE walks back on stage

LASSIE (TENTATIVELY) Miracle? We gotta go – the train's at Norstrand already. (PAUSE)  
Miracle?

MIRACLE continues to stare at BASTI

MIRACLE You gotta chance, kid. To be a part of something. What'll it be?

The lights go down as cheers and sounds of marching and protesting fills the theatre. Images flicker on the back of the theatre, footage from pride events and riots.

Blackout.

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