

Reflections of a Gay Jewish Boy

**by
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Characters:

All characters are sixteen years old except for the minister

Marc - Sexually confused; thin and wiry

Paul - Feminine; slightly overweight

Peter - Straight nerdy boy

Mary - Religious girl.

Minister - Early forties; ornery, self-effacing,

SCENE 1

Fairfax High School, 1968. PAUL, a 16-year-old with a girlish quality is on stage. We hear laughing and shouts of faggot, queer, sissy. Another slightly feminine boy MARC comes out of the classroom. He's thin and wiry.

MARC

Hey, are you from Bancroft Junior High? I don't remember you.

PAUL

No, Burroughs. Do you know where the bathroom is? It was stuffy in the classroom. I need to pat my face dry before I start melting.

MARC

Here I've got a handkerchief. Use that.

PAUL

I'm Paul. Thanks.

PAUL has makeup coloring his face. Covering acne. As PAUL wipes his face, the white handkerchief turns colors. He hands it back to MARC. MARC looks confused but sticks it back in his pocket.

MARC

Do you live nearby?

PAUL

No. My parents usually pick me up after school. Why?

MARC

I'm just seven blocks away. I have the new 45 by The Supremes. You've got to hear it.

PAUL

Oh yes. I love them! I can't believe they fired Mary Ballard.

MARC

Diana wanted her out. Now we have Cindy Birdsong.

MARC and PAUL walk offstage as the lights dim.

SCENE 2

A month later. When the lights come up, MARC and PAUL walk into the apartment where MARC lives with his mother. They sit on some chairs.

PAUL

Hey Marc, where's your mom?

MARC

She's at work. My mom works for Playgirl Magazine. She just started working there about two months ago. Have you heard about it? Just like Playboy except the centerfolds are men. It's *so* groovy, just like the Supremes. Do you remember when you first saw the Supremes on The Ed Sullivan Show? We were living on Long Island then.

PAUL

Oh god, yes! I couldn't believe Diana's bulging eyes. The wigs and dresses! I was in heaven! Have you ever tried on your mom's high heels?

MARC

No. I wouldn't want to get caught.

PAUL

I love putting on my mom's dresses. We're the same size. We lived in New York too before we moved here to Los Angeles.

MARC

My father died right after my Bar Mitzvah. Mom wanted to be with her family here on the West Coast. It was difficult taking care of our Cape Cod on Long Island. The blizzards were horrible.

PAUL

How did your father die?

MARC

He had cancer of the spine. He'd had this pain on the right side of his chest for years. They kept telling him it was in his head. Then when he had a spinal tap, they discovered a tumor. You know, he was in a wheelchair at my bar mitzvah, and he died two months later.

PAUL

I'm sorry. You know, I didn't have a Bar Mitzvah. I was afraid to be in front of all those people, and my parents didn't push it. And I hated the thought of going to Hebrew School. Did you go?

MARC

Yeah. At first, I thought it would be okay since it was all Jewish, but they were just as bad about making fun of me. And I went for four years! My grandfather was very orthodox, so I think that's why my dad made me go. My mother said that my dad, knowing that he would see me become a man, was why he stayed alive. Didn't want to miss it.

PAUL

And you went to the funeral when your father was buried?

MARC

The funeral was so awful. All the crying. And people coming up to me saying, 'Your father died so young. I am so sorry. Your poor mother. A widow at thirty-six.' The part that really made me cry was when everyone had to throw dirt on top of the coffin. There was this pile of dirt and we couldn't leave until all the dirt was put on the coffin.

PAUL

I can't imagine what it felt like. So was it hard moving out here?

MARC

I had no friends back in New York, so I was glad we moved here. We were the only Jews in the neighborhood. I felt so isolated. And Dad's family wasn't very helpful. At least my mom has a brother here in Los Angeles. You know another reason we moved? My grandfather told my mom that in the Jewish tradition, the widow is supposed to marry the brother of the deceased.

PAUL

Eeww! I can see why you moved. Fairfax High is so Jewish, but they are awful to me.

MARC

Oh, it's a little better, but you're right. There are all these cliques, and again I don't have any friends. Where did you find those socks?

PAUL

At Orbach's. And don't you love the way they match my pink shirt. We should go shopping. You need a new look.

MARC

Uh, okay. Do you like movies? I want to see *Valley of the Dolls*.

PAUL

Of course! Let's go this weekend. I just finished the book.

MARC

Great! Who do you have for Physical Education?

PAUL

Mr. Bain. I hate sports! And gym class is the worst. On Long Island, we only had gym once a week because of the weather. Here it's every day! It's awful running around the track in the early morning. I wish I had a broken arm or a broken leg. Then I could be excused.

MARC

And the showers are disgusting. It smells awful, and I am always getting towel whipped.

PAUL

And it hurts my butt.

MARC

And I hate having to climb ropes. I never get it right, and when I slide down it burns off the skin on my hands. It's torture! And I'm always picked last for baseball or basketball. I can't catch or throw a ball. My father kept hounding me every weekend. When he was throwing the ball at me, I was afraid I would get hit. Have you told your parents about being made fun of?

PAUL

No. I'm afraid they'll think I'm sick. My mom had a breakdown and stayed in a mental rehab hospital for a couple of months. I don't want to upset them.

MARC

And I thought *my* life was filled with drama. Since my dad died, my mom remarried twice, but it was a disaster. She had both marriages annulled. But the worst is when I hear whispers when I enter a classroom. 'Hey girlie, faggot, queer.' They think I can't hear them.

PAUL

I can't wait to graduate. It must be better in college.

MARC

Yeah, I bet when we're adults, everything will be okay. Come on, let's listen to the new song by The Supremes. Then we can play my Funny Girl original Broadway cast album. You know, I saw the musical on Broadway before we moved out west.

The beginning of the song, Reflections, plays.

PAUL

Oh, that's so scary, like aliens are arriving from Mars.

MARC

But wait till you hear Diana sing. Do you want to dance?

PAUL

It's a slow song. I don't know how to dance.

MARC

It's easy. Haven't you ever seen your parents dance?

MARC puts his arms around PAUL. They listen to the rest of the song as they are dancing. At the end MARC starts tickling PAUL.

PAUL

Stop it!

MARC

You're so ticklish.

PAUL starts tickling back.

PAUL

You're just as bad.

They both fall to the floor laughing. They start to wrestle. During the wrestling, PAUL and MARC freeze and we hear their inner thoughts.

MARC

Why am I getting an erection? This is wrong. I'm supposed to get turned on by girls. I can't believe I am doing this. I don't understand. It's like I've become a different person when I am with Paul. I'm all mixed up. I should be happy, but I'm not, but he feels so good. I hate it! And he's grabbing my cock. Oh god, I feel something wet. Did I just piss? It feels like when I jack off, but not really. I want to stop, but I can't. I didn't realize I was so much stronger than him. It feels great to pin him down and he's squirming. I've got power over him. Just like the beginning of the song *Reflections*. Paul's right, I *do* feel like an alien at school because I don't act like anyone else. It was only when I met Paul that I saw a sort of reflection of me.

PAUL

I wish he would kiss me. He's so cute. I don't care that it hurts. It's a good kind of hurt. I think he's enjoying it. I imagine him hugging me. I want him to trap me and keep me pinned to the floor. He's so different from me. I can feel his cock getting hard and it's damp. It's like those times when I'm in gym class, and I have to hide the fact that I have an erection from looking at all those guys. I stay hard for such a long time that it feels like my dick is leaking.

MARC and PAUL unfreeze. PAUL tries to kiss, but MARC looks scared and moves away from PAUL. Black out.

SCENE 3

MARC's apartment the next day. There's the sound of a doorbell, and MARC opens the door. PETER enters the apartment. He has nerdy looking glasses, multiple pens, and is more masculine than MARC. He walks with a limp.

PETER

Want to go to the Natural History Museum near USC? They've got this science exhibit.

MARC

Sure, why not?

PETER

I saw you hanging around with Paul. Why are you friends with him? He acts like a girl. Always swishing when he walks. He's weird.

MARC

Let me get my coat so we can leave.

PETER

You didn't answer my question. You're not a fag, are you?

MARC

No. I hardly know Paul. He was helping me with Spanish.

PETER

I saw you eating lunch with him yesterday.

MARC

He's tutoring me. I'm not queer.

PETER

You're going to get a reputation if you're seen with him.

MARC

You should talk. You don't have a girlfriend. You don't play sports. We're always picked last for baseball.

PETER

Don't remind me. That's how we met. Both of us in the outfield and not having a clue what to do. But you brought it on yourself by sticking your hands out. It looked like you were afraid the ball was going to hit you. Didn't your father teach you anything?

MARC

You know my father's dead. And for your information he *did* try to teach me, but I was so uncoordinated. I tried swimming, but I kept swallowing water. I got a pain in my chest when I ran the track. I couldn't even play ping-pong.

PETER

Well at least you're good with the bicycle. That's something. Anyway do you like my new glasses? I don't look too nerdy, do I?

MARC

No. You look like a ...

PETER

Like a what? You creep. They love my look in the Math Club. And they are letting girls join. Hey, you should get Paul to join. He'd fit right in. Or maybe you're going to sneak into Home Economics with him. You'd both look great in aprons.

MARC

Let's go to the museum before it closes.

PETER

You see my limp, don't you? One leg is a little shorter than the other. There's a surgery they can do to correct it, but my parents say it's too expensive and risky. What if it doesn't work and makes things worse? I try to

disguise it at school. It's really hard to do, but I don't want anyone bullying me and shouting, 'cripple'. When I was in grade school, I had it rough. So that's why I mentioned Paul. Stay away from him. You don't want to give anyone an excuse to put you down.

SCENE 4

A month later at MARC's apartment. PAUL is wearing a purple paisley shirt.

PAUL

What do you think about this shirt?

MARC

It's so loud.

PAUL

It's a perfect color that goes with my red hair. And I found this purple jacket for you. It goes great with your coloring.

MARC

I've been thinking about our friendship. You know, I've never had a best friend before. I love going to the movies with you. And talking on the phone every day. And the best part, I don't have to watch what I say to you. I hate being on guard.

PAUL

Me either. It's nice having someone to talk to. You're lucky you can look masculine if you want. I don't have that choice.

MARC

So you think it's an act when I'm more feminine?

PAUL

Yes. Your body type is way more masculine than mine.

MARC

I've been having these strange feelings about you.

PAUL

What do you mean?

MARC

I don't know. I'm very confused. I think this is something like falling in love. I'm not used to talking about this. I'm embarrassed to tell you. Sometimes I stare at guys. I want to be like them. Popular. Have lots of friends, I think. And I want to be with them. If I could work out and have muscles. And they all have this perfect hair. Don't you want that?

PAUL

No, I can't see that for myself. I feel close to *you*. Like I could tell you secrets. And I do love you, Marc. I think about you all the time.

MARC

You don't have any secrets. We've told each other everything, right?

PAUL

Well, there is this one thing. I'm not supposed to talk about it, but I want to tell you. It was when we first moved to Los Angeles. I was thirteen and went to the dentist. I was getting braces. I would take my bicycle. My mom didn't need to drive me. So while the dentist attached the braces, he would start touching me. You know, down there. I got scared, but it sort of felt good. And every time I saw him, he started doing other things to me. He

would unzip my pants and play around with my thing.

MARC

Really? I don't believe you. Why would a dentist do that?

PAUL

He must have been homosexual or something. And then he put his mouth on my cock, and I giggled. He told me to stop giggling. That it wasn't funny. He thought I would like it. And he seemed angry, and he said he was going to tell my parents that I was a bad boy. I knew something was wrong. I ended up telling my parents.

MARC

No! I can't believe you told your parents! What did they do?

PAUL

I don't know. I mean they found me a new dentist, and I had to go to therapy. They said they were worried that I was *traumatized*, and I should talk to someone about it.

MARC

What did you tell them?

PAUL

I didn't want to go, so I went and just told them, 'I'm okay now.' So I only went that one time, and my parents never talked about what happened. They did say I shouldn't tell anyone.

PAUL and MARC awkwardly kiss.

MARC

I've never done that before. Does this mean we're homosexual?

PAUL

I don't know.

MARC

Your lips felt so mushy. I didn't even know where to put my tongue.

PAUL

It's called 'French kissing'. Where you use your tongue.

MARC

Can we try it again?

They try kissing again. MARC caresses PAUL.

PAUL

Have you ever had sex?

MARC

No. I don't even know what we would do.

PAUL

We could masturbate.

MARC

I'm afraid.

PAUL

Of what?

MARC

I don't know. This is so scary. Is it okay, or are we sick?

PAUL

I like you.

MARC

Sometimes I wish I had a girlfriend so no one would make fun of me.

PAUL

I don't like girls. I can't imagine being with a girl. I would never want to get married or have kids.

MARC

Just think. It would be so easy. I'd be popular. I wouldn't worry about guys screaming 'faggot' at me. Don't you hate it?

PAUL

I'm used to it. I just ignore them.

MARC

But I *want* to get married when I grow up. I would cook and clean just like my mom, vacuum and dust. And I would do the gardening, too. Sometimes I sit in the living room in our apartment and just stare at the beautiful furniture. It is perfect; everything in its place. My mom sprays Lemon Pledge on the coffee and end tables, and it smells wonderful. And I want to be a father. I'd do a better job than my own father. And if it was a boy, I wouldn't push him into sports or into walking a certain way. If it was a girl, I don't know what I'd do!

PAUL

You're crazy! Don't you want to get a job and make lots of money? That way you could buy really neat orange bell bottoms and black and white checkered platform shoes. And get a special haircut.

There is a knock at the door.

MARC

Who's that? I didn't expect anyone.

He goes to the door and looks through the peep hole and shouts.

MARC

Oh, Peter. I didn't know you were coming over. Hold on a minute.

MARC runs back to PAUL.

MARC

You've got to hide, Paul. Go inside the closet until Peter leaves.

PAUL

Why? What's wrong?

MARC pushes PAUL into the closet.

MARC

Just listen to me. Stay in there and keep quiet.

MARC goes back to the door and lets PETER in.

MARC

What's going on? I didn't think we were doing anything today.

PETER

It's a gorgeous day. Grab your bicycle.

MARC

I'm doing homework.

PETER

Bo-oring. Come on!

MARC

No, I've got to do a book report, too.

PETER is wandering around the apartment. MARC nervously follows him. PETER notices the purple jacket on the chair.

PETER

Whose faggy jacket is this?

MARC

It's my mom's.

PETER sees the Funny Girl Broadway cast album. He pulls the LP out of the jacket.

PETER

Why do you listen to this crap? You told me you only listen to The Rolling Stones.

MARC

Careful with the record. It's brand new. Look, Peter, this isn't a good time. I'm busy. We'll do something tomorrow.

After he leaves and slams the door, MARC goes back to the closet where PAUL is hiding.

MARC

You can come out now.

MARC takes PAUL's hand and leads him out of the closet.

PAUL

I can't believe you made me hide.

MARC

It's nothing. I don't want Peter to think we're friends. He's a jerk sometimes. I want to listen to *Reflections* again. It's going to be Number One next week.

PAUL looks confused and lights fade out.

SCENE 5

Fairfax High, outside the classroom door. MARY, a chubby girl with acne leaves the classroom. She walks briskly. MARC follows her. He sees her sitting down. She opens a book and starts reading. She stops, closes her eyes and is talking to herself. MARC is intrigued. Suddenly as if coming out of a trance, she looks up and sees MARC.

MARY

Hey. You're in my history class. Did you write down the homework assignment?

MARC

Something about how the Cold War began. Hey, haven't seen you around. The history teacher, Mr. Franklin seems like a hippie-communist. I was surprised that he mentioned that he's against the war in Vietnam. Do you like him?

MARY

I don't know, I just transferred from Hamilton High because we moved. My name is Mary.

MARC

I'm Marc.

MARY

Want to have lunch?

MARC

I bring my lunch, but I can sit with you. What are you reading?

MARY carries a book in her hand with lots of scraps of small paper used as placeholders.

MARY

It's a new version of the Bible. It's The New Testament. I read it every day and use it to pray.

MARC

What is it?

MARY

It's just a continuation of the Old Testament -- the story of Jesus told by different disciples. You should read it. There are lots of groovy parables. Have you ever thought about becoming a Christian? Have you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

MARC

I'm Jewish.

MARY

Jesus was a Jew.

MARC

When I was growing up on Long Island, the kids at school told me that the Jews killed Jesus.

MARY

Do you ever go to temple?

MARC

No, I haven't been since I had my Bar Mitzvah. I don't even know if I believe in God. My grandfather was very orthodox. Grandpa supposedly put a lock on the refrigerator on the Day of Atonement when Jews fast for twenty-four hours.

MARY

I don't think Jews believe in the New Testament, that Jesus is the son of God. But it's really true. It changed my life. When my parents got divorced, I was so angry at both of them. I was in detention, getting grounded all the time and fooling around with guys. But then I found Jesus. Well, actually it was this born-again Christian group. I had a complete turn-around. You should come to church with me. They have this really cool band at the Presbyterian church in Hollywood. We'd have fun.

MARC

I guess so. I don't have much fun being Jewish. I used to enjoy the holidays -- Chanukah and Passover, but since we moved to Los Angeles, my mother never mentions it. But once my father died, she probably stopped believing in God.

MARY

Everyone is friendly, and if you became Christian, you could invite Jesus into your head. He would save you from your sins.

MARC

No one ever talks about religion here. I guess because most people are

Jewish. Have you always been Christian?

MARY

I wasn't religious. We never went to church, except on Christmas Eve and Easter. My parents never sent me to Bible study. I was unhappy, and I didn't know why.

MARC

You seem happy.

MARY holds MARC's hand. MARC looks surprised, but doesn't do anything about it.

MARY

You know there's a group called Jews for Jesus. You can come with me this Saturday night. The band is fantastic.

MARC

Yeah, okay. I guess it's a date.

SCENE 6

MARC's apartment. He is opening the door and lets PETER in who is cradling his arm and has a bandage on his face.

MARC

What happened to you?

PETER

I fell off my bike. I was worried that I would hurt my leg, but I just got banged up a little. My arm took most of the fall.

MARC

Why did you fall? That's not like you. I've never fallen off my bicycle and you know what a klutz I am. You look kinda' weird. What's going on?

PETER

That guy, Rich, jumped me. I'm embarrassed to tell you.

MARC

Why?

PETER

He was making fun of how I walk, and I shouted back, 'you shithead'. He threw me off my bike and he was going to kick me but one of his friends was driving by, and Rich just got in the car and left me alone.

MARC

I can't believe you talked back to him. That was stupid. You should've just ignored him.

PETER

But if you don't fight back, these guys just keep doing it.

MARC

I've never been in a fight. I wouldn't know what to do. But listen, I've met this girl named Mary. I want to have sex with her. She seems to like me.

PETER

Amazing. I haven't even gotten to second base with a girl.

MARC

She's beautiful and smart. Maybe we'll go steady.

PETER

Don't get carried away, fool.

MARC

I've always wanted a girlfriend.

PETER

Do you even know how to have sex?

MARC

How hard could it be?

PETER

You have to use a rubber or you'll get her pregnant.

MARC

Where do I get a rubber?

PETER

I have some; I carry them around for an emergency.

MARC

You said you've never even gone to second base.

PETER

You never know. Here, I can give you one, and you can experiment with it.

MARC fidgets with the rubber trying to break the seal and open it.

PETER

Here let me do it.

MARC

Now, how do I get this on my dick?

PETER

You've got to be hard, or it won't work.

MARC

I need to concentrate. Turn away.

MARC tries to get stimulated. He turns around and tries to get the rubber on his penis. He squirms and dances around without success. Then the rubber flies out of his hand.

PETER

Now you've ruined it. It will be dirty from landing on the floor. You are so uncoordinated.

MARC

Where did you buy it?

PETER

Come on, I'll show you. Let's go to the drug store.

SCENE 7

Saturday night at MARC's apartment.

MARY

So, what do you think?

MARC

It's all right. I like Motown music. The Temptations and The Supremes.

MARY

Didn't you like the way the band did Norman Greenbaum's "Spirit in the Sky"? It was a big top thirty hit. Here, I brought you a copy of the New Testament. I want you to read it. And then we can discuss it. It's a great book.

MARC

Are you going to test me?

MARY

Laughing. MARC tries to hold her hand, but she moves away.

MARY

I want you to meet the pastor. Maybe you'll come to Sunday services tomorrow morning.

MARC

Am I allowed?

MARY

Why not? I like spending time with you. I'm kinda lonely at school. I keep

thinking people are staring at my face
because of my acne.

MARC

You look very pretty to me. You have
a beautiful face. I don't notice the
acne.

MARY

Thank you. I've been praying that it
will go away. That Jesus will cure my
pimples.

MARC

I can't remember the last time I
prayed.

MARY

Oh, I pray every day. Jesus helps me
with tests at school. When I feel
depressed, Jesus cheers me up.

MARC

Wow. That sounds nice.

*MARC starts kissing MARY and his hands try to get to her breasts. He
starts to unbutton his shirt.*

MARY

Oh, Jesus!

MARC

No, I'm Marc.

MARY

Hey wait a minute. No so fast. I want
you to accept Jesus as your Savior.
You know that when the end of the
world comes those who haven't
accepted Him will go to hell.

MARC keeps kissing her and moves his hands towards her breasts.

MARY

You've got to convert.

MARC

But I brought a rubber with me.

MARY

I'm a good Christian girl. I can't have sex with someone who isn't Christian.

MARC takes the rubber from his pocket and starts unbuttoning his pants.

MARY

My body is my temple.

MARC

I went to church with you. Isn't that enough? Why do I need to convert? Aren't Jews the chosen people?

MARY

They just need to accept Jesus as the Son of God and receive the Holy Spirit.

MARC

You make it sound so simple.

SCENE 8

It's a week later. MARC is facing a set of stairs at the church. We hear the beginning of the Moon landing in 1969 from the television at the church. The sound of MARC's inner voice is heard as he ascends each step. He's carrying a piece of paper.

MARC

What will grandma say when she hears I'm converting? My parents paid for four years of Hebrew school and a Bar Mitzvah, and this is how I pay them back? And I had a bris. I'm circumcised. My dad and orthodox grandpa will be flipping in their graves. Will I have to grow back my foreskin? How am I going to get baptized? While Neil Armstrong is stepping on the moon, I'm going to be putting my feet in holy water. *Oy vey!* What kind of Jewish boy am I? And I hope I pass the Jesus Pop Quiz. One of the questions is easy. It's about stations of the cross. That's a bakery

where you buy hot cross buns. I am going to nail this test. Mary really likes me, and we can have sex if I convert.

When MARC gets to the top of the stairs, he knocks on the door

MINISTER

Come in, my boy. Don't worry I'm not going to bite you. Just kidding.

MARC

I'm so nervous, but I'm ready to accept Christ.

The MINISTER appears and leads MARC into the room.

MINISTER

Hello, Marc, right? Mary told me you wanted to convert. Did you bring the pop quiz with you?

MARC

Yes. Here it is. Mary said if I convert then I won't go to hell. Does it matter that I'm a Jew? Do I need to do anything special?

MINISTER

I want to know why you really want to convert. We don't get many young Jewish boys asking for salvation.

MARC

I like Mary. I'm sad at school. Kids make fun of me. Mary says that if I believe in Jesus, I'll be happy all the time. I don't go to temple anyway.

MINISTER

Did you get Bar Mitzvahed?

MARC

Yes, but why does that matter? I really want to believe in Jesus. I want to change.

MINISTER

And you are sure there isn't another reason. Does this have anything to do with Mary?

MARC

No. I mean, I like her, and I think it would be better for me to be a Christian. Well actually, I am confused about my sexuality. I'm sure you can't relate to that though.

The MINISTER is startled and changes the subject.

MINISTER

Do your parents know you are doing this?

MARC

Not really, I may have told them I went to church with a girlfriend.

MINISTER

I hope you didn't give them the address and especially not my name.

The MINISTER puts his hand on MARC's shoulder.

MINISTER

Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Are you ready to accept the Holy Spirit? Do you believe in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost?

MARC

I want to say yes, but I don't understand everything about being Christian. I have been taking the sacraments, the wine and a special wafer. You didn't even look at my test. Did I pass?

MINISTER

Oh, for Christ's sake! Sorry, let's see how you did. Not bad. Except what is this about the Virgin Mary being vodka and tomato juice? That's a *Bloody Mary!*

MARC

Do I need to be baptized?

MINISTER

Not unless you want to. But I do have a bathtub in my office. We really should get it out of the way. You want a clean body before you let the Holy Spirit in. And this is special holy water. Why don't you get ready? You should take off all your clothes.

MARC

Really? Can't you just dunk my head in water?

MINISTER

Oh, you have been watching too many movies. Remember cleanliness is godliness. Don't be shy. I'm not going to be looking at you. Okay, I will just put your head under water and say a few prayers.

MARC

Please, I want to be Christian. I need it. I'll do whatever you say.

The MINISTER and MARC walk off stage. The audience hears the sound of water. MARC reenters dressed but with a shower cap on his head.

MINISTER

You are lucky I had a shower cap. I hope the baptism works. I guess Jesus would understand that you didn't want to get your hair wet.

MARC

How many times do I have to say that I believe Jesus is the Messiah. I believe in holy ghosts too. I'm not sure about the virgin birth. By the way, is this going to cost me anything?

MINISTER

Just give me everything you've got.

MARC looks confused.

MINISTER

Okay. I believe you. You've convinced me. So, I'll ask you again. Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior? Are you ready to accept the Holy Spirit?

MARC

Yes. Yes. Yes.

MINISTER

Perfect! You are now a trueblood born again Christian. Congratulations.

MARC

How do I prove to Mary that I'm straight? . . . Oh no, I mean Christian.

MINISTER

Don't worry. She'll know when she sees you.

MARC

I don't feel different. Am I really going to be changed? Are you sure it worked?

MINISTER

I promise you that Jesus is in your heart. He will take care of you. You won't go to Hell, and you'll have eternal life.

MARC

You mean like a vampire? I'll never die?

MINISTER

Look, I would love to talk, but I'm exhausted. I need to take a nap, and I have a line of people wanting to convert.

The MINISTER lies back in his chair and goes to sleep. As MARC leaves the office, he sees a large cross on the wall. He looks at it and decides to remove it from the wall and take it with him.

MARC

I know I shouldn't be stealing, but it's for a good cause. I didn't see a price tag; maybe it's free.

The lighting changes on the stage so the audience realizes the MINISTER is dreaming. He picks up a phone.

MINISTER

Hello, can I help you? Oh, you are Marc's father? A Hasidic Jew? Oh, sorry! Oh, I thought you knew what Marc was doing? You are going to kill me if I make him convert? I am sorry. What do you mean you don't care? Wait a minute! You are coming over here now? With a gun? Can't we talk about this? Maybe Marc can be converted back? How about a colonic to get the wine from the blood of Christ removed from his system. No, he didn't eat the wafer. He said he was gluten free.

The MINISTER wakes up and leaves the office, telling his secretary (offstage)

MINISTER

I'm not feeling well, and I'm going home. Be careful if an angry parent comes by.

SCENE 9

At Fairfax High. MARC is wearing the large crucifix around his neck. It covers his chest down to his stomach. He runs up to MARY.

MARC

Well, I did it! I converted!

MARY

Oh, I'm so proud of you. I can tell you look different. We should celebrate at church.

She throws her arms around MARC

MARC

You're the first person I've told.

MARY

Ouch, that's an awfully big crucifix. Where did you get it? Oh, my god. I'm bleeding. The cross must have stabbed me. Get me a band aid.

MARC

I took it off the wall. There were so many crosses, I figured they wouldn't mind if one was missing. It's awfully heavy around my neck. I was thinking about wearing the crown of thorns to prove to you I was Christian, but it looked dangerous.

MARY

Let's go someplace private. I need to talk to you.

MARC

Okay.

SCENE 10

At MARC's apartment. They are dancing.

MARY

Why did you pick this song?

MARC

I don't know. I love Diana Ross. You know it used to make me feel like I was an alien because I was alone. I didn't have any friends. But then when I met you and became Christian, all that changed.

MARY

I am so happy for you. I told you it would change your life. You know, *reflections* are very important. We are supposed to step back and reflect on our hearts. If we don't preserve our

health, then it might interfere with relationships with others and even God.

MARC

I had no idea that's what the Supremes were singing about.

MARY backs away from MARC.

MARY

I saw you hanging around with Paul.

MARC

What do you mean? How do you know about Paul?

MARY

Well it's pretty obvious he's a homosexual. You can tell by the way he walks and talks. You will never be saved unless you break off your friendship. He is the Devil. You'll burn in Hell if you continue to associate with him. You've got to tell him immediately.

MARC

But he's a good friend.

MARY

It doesn't matter. He's evil and will destroy you. The Old Testament says homosexuality is a sin.

MARC

So, I have no choice?

MARY

Please do it for Christianity and for me.

MARY leaves the apartment.

SCENE 11

Later. MARC's apartment with PAUL.

PAUL

I haven't seen you for weeks. We used to go to the movies every week. What's wrong? Why are you wearing that cross around your neck?

MARC

I'm Christian now. Mary says we can't be friends anymore. She says you're a homosexual.

PAUL

I don't understand! You're not Jewish anymore? And who is Mary?

MARC

I met her a few months ago at lunch. We've gone out a few times. Yes, I converted to Christianity.

PAUL

Does she know we've fooled around?

MARC

No, maybe I'm bisexual. You're a bad influence. Look, I am so tired of being harassed. I hate it. I want to be like everybody else. And Mary can be my girlfriend. No one will talk behind my back. Just think if you had a girlfriend.

PAUL

But I don't like girls. I like *you*, Marc. I thought we were best friends. You kept saying you never had a friend before. Someone you could really talk to and not be afraid of what you said. And didn't you say something about love?

MARC

You have to leave. I don't want to be friends anymore.

PAUL

You can't shut me out! Don't do this.
You said you loved me!

MARC

Stop it, Paul. I didn't know what I was
feeling. I was stupid.

PAUL

Come on. Please! I don't have any
other friends.

MARC

I'm sorry Paul. I can't continue. This is
it. Goodbye.

*MARC pushes PAUL out of the apartment. PAUL stands outside the door
and does not leave. He knocks on the door hoping that MARC will answer,
but MARC ignores the knocking. PAUL keeps knocking while he is crying.*

SCENE 12

Fairfax High School quad the next day.

MARC

Well, I broke off my friendship with
Paul. I felt awful doing it, but I know
you're right. I shouldn't have friends
like that.

MARY

Oh, thank God. I was worried that
Paul would ruin your life. That you
would never be allowed into heaven.
You would be considered a heathen. I
am so happy. This is going to change
your life. And you know, now that
you're born again, you should try to
get other people to convert. It is such a
wonderful feeling to save somebody. I
feel like it is my mission to do this.
That this is something Jesus would
want me to do.

MARC

I've been thinking about us. I really like you, Mary. I've never had a girlfriend before. And you have helped me so much. I even told my mom, and about being born again. She said I was crazy, but she was okay with it. She's not religious. In fact, I think after my father died, she doesn't even believe in God anymore. We've gotten really close since he died. I think she just wants me to be happy whatever I want to do.

MARY

You are so lucky you have that kind of relationship with your mother. My mom doesn't care about whether I'm happy or not. I don't understand her. She never talked about being Catholic before, and then just because I went to a Presbyterian church, she goes off on me!

MARC

Listen, I've got some tickets for the Donny and Marie concert this Saturday. I want to take you. Here, I'd like you to wear my ring so we can go steady.

MARC takes his ring off his finger and tries to slide it onto one of MARY's fingers.

MARY

Wait! I just want to be friends with you. I'm not interested in you romantically.

MARC

What are you saying?

MARY

I'm not going to be your girlfriend.

MARC

But Mary, I've changed my religion. I dismissed my best friend.

MARY

You should be grateful I saved your soul. You should thank me. I've got another class. Got to run.

MARC looks stunned. He takes off the crucifix and throws it in the garbage can. Lights dim. MARC is back in his apartment with PETER.

PETER

I got the most amazing news. My parents took me to this new orthopedic doctor and he thinks shortening my longer leg will solve my problems. And it will be good for my whole body.

MARC

Yeah, you're lucky.

PETER

You don't really seem that excited for me. Do you want to go play miniature golf? Oh, and guess what, the math club is going to compete with Hamilton High. They've won the last four years, but I think we have a good chance to beat 'em this time. And there's this one girl on the team named Susan, and I think she likes me. I haven't asked her out yet, but we've talked on the phone. She's really smart, and she's taller than me, but I don't think that matters.

MARC

I'm happy for you, Peter, but I don't feel like playing golf. Maybe another time.

PETER

Oh, I forgot to ask you about your girlfriend, Mary. Have you done it with her yet?

MARC

No, she isn't my girlfriend.

PETER

What happened? Last time we talked about her, it sounded like she was really into you.

MARC

I don't feel like talking about it.
Maybe another time.

PETER

Okay, I get it. Well, I think I'm going to call Susan and ask her to play golf. Wish me luck.

MARC puts on the Reflections record. He listens to the song. but halfway through the song, he takes the needle off the record. He looks across the stage and sees PAUL. MARC looks at his telephone contemplating whether to use it. Finally, he dials.

MARC

Paul, I need to talk to you. I was wondering if you wanted to see the film, *The Gay Deceivers*, and I am sorry. I was a real shit the way I treated you.

THE END

