

Edgar, Alan and Poe

Nathaniel Potty is a writer living in the last home of Edgar Allan Poe. And he loves his ravens. As he prepares for his own demise, he relates to his three ravens that there is magic in the mirror and each can have his chosen wish from three perches. Naturally, Potty dies and the ravens each express their choice of wishes - to become human.

Through the course of the play, the now human ravens find that life can be fulfilling no matter who you are and the grass is not always much greener on the other side.

9M, 3F, 3 FLEX
Some doubling possible

Great Stage Publishing

Edgar Alan and Poe



book, music and lyrics by
Michael L. Ricciardi
and
John D. Nugent

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EDGAR, ALAN AND POE

by

Michael Ricciardi

(ASCAP)

and

John D. Nugent

(ASCAP)

The script and score to this musical:

EDGAR, ALAN and POE

is dedicated to

David Marc

An amazing actor without ego, self purpose or agenda. He supports theatre and playwrights with an august dignity. We are grateful for his love, faithfulness and total support during this and all other productions with which he has been associated with us.



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11702-B Grant Rd. #602
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www.greatstagepublishing.com
greatstage@comcast.net

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PRODUCTION**

EDGAR, ALAN AND POE received its premiere on Monday, November 1, 2010 at the ACTORS GARDEN THEATRE, Hollywood, California. The producing Company was Tenacity Players. The production was directed by John D. Nugent. Assistant Directors were Michael Ricciardi and Perry Sites. It included the following cast, in order of appearance:

NATHANIEL POTTY – Perry Sites

LENORE – Cat Deobler

EDGAR – John D. Nugent

ALAN – Bryce Kidman

POE – Zane Allen Grogan

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN – Robb Conner

FARMER BROWN – Cat Deobler

BURT THE BARTENDER – David Marc

CUSTOMER #1 – David Marc

CUSTOMER #2 – Cat Deobler

CUSTOMER #3 – Michael J. Liles

STRONG ARM MAN – David Marc

FATHER MURPHY – Michael J. Liles

MAGNOLIA THORNBOTTOM – Cat Deobler

KING GEORGE III – David Marc

"EDGAR, ALAN AND POE"

ACT ONE
SCENE ONE

(1899, the library in the last known house of Edgar Alan Poe. A fierce THUNDERSTORM rages outside. Prominent in the room are a cluttered desk C.S. and a large antique mirror S.L. Slightly behind the desk, on the side toward the mirror, are three perches, as one uses for pet birds. Another sets on the opposite end. At the desk sits NATHANIEL POTTY, an elderly eccentric. He is deep into writing what appears to be a dozen short stories. A gust of WIND almost blows the candles out, and THUNDER cracks outside. Three large RAVENS fly through the window and land on the perches. POTTY notices them and glances up from his writing.)

POTTY

Ah, there you are my lovelies. Such a terrible storm tonight. I worried about you. But you'll forgive me dear friends: I do love thunderstorms. They help me to write.

(The RAVENS caw loudly, as if they understand the eccentric old man.)

POTTY (CONT'D)

Yes, yes, they are simply divine. They stimulate the imagination. Yes, yes, my lovelies there's food in the usual spot for you all.

(laughs jovially)

What's the story about? Well, my friends, the story is all about you.

(The RAVENS caw again.)

POTTY (CONT'D)

Yes, yes, it's all true. Well, after all, there's great magic in this old house you know. It was once owned by a fine writer named Edgar.

(A single RAVEN caws. This must be Edgar.)

POTTY (CONT'D)

No--Not you, dear friend. Why that's why all of you fine creatures of flight bear his names. And if

(MORE)

POTTY (CONT'D)

anything should happen to me the magic of his spell takes over.

(There is excited cawing from all three birds.)

POTTY (CONT'D)

Just go in front of that mirror and make one wish-and it will all come true.

(beat)

But you must use that wish wisely, birdies. There's no taking it back. Not ever! Not possible! You must all understand that very carefully! Now you have actually three choices. If something happens to me, at the moment you learn of it, each of you must fly and perch yourselves one on one of those perches in front of that mirror. There is room for all three of you right there. Do you understand?

(The RAVENS caw again in acknowledgement.)

POTTY (CONT'D)

Good. Good. Now pay attention, birdies! You need to know that there is a wish attached to each perch. Which ever of those perches you fly to-why that is the particular wish that will come true for each and all of you. The first wish possibility will give you this fine old house to live in peace in until you die. The second possibility will give you eternal life, but this grand old house will disappear. You'll be ravens for as long as the world lasts. There will be no heaven for you.

(A RAVEN lets out a slight lament.)

POTTY (CONT'D)

And attached to the third perch is the third wish possibility. A bit exciting, but also a bit frightening! It will turn you into humans to live a normal human life. But as I said you must choose wisely. You are not bird-brains.

MUSIC #2: "ANYTHING YOU DARE"

POTTY

I've trained you well all these many years.

(sings)

YOU CAN ACHIEVE MOST ANYTHING
YOU CAN BE THE KINGS OF THE WORLD,
THE MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE,
PLAN YOUR DREAMS AND MAKE THEM FIRST
CAUSE YOU CAN BE...

POTTY (CONT'D)

ANYTHING YOU DARE,
 ANYTHING YOU DREAM
 YOU HAVE HOPES TO SHARE
 TIME TO PLAN YOUR SCHEMES
 THOUGH CRAZY AS IT SEEMS.
 YOU MUST GO TO ANY MEANS
 THEN YOU CAN BE |
 THE MASTERS OF THE WORLD
 SO FREE

ANYWHERE YOU FLY
 HERE'S A THING TO KNOW
 DON'T FEAR WHAT YOU MAY TRY
 FOR WHATEVER LIFE MAY SHOW
 NEVER DOUBT YOUR WINGS
 YOU MUST NEVER DO THOSE THINGS
 THEN YOU CAN BE
 THE MASTERS OF THE WORLD
 SO FREE

ANYWHERE YOU GO
 DO NOTHING JUST FOR SHOW
 THEN SOMEDAY YOU WILL FIND
 THE THUNDER OF THE WONDER
 THE WONDER OF YOUR LIVES
 THE WORLD HOLDS NO PERFECTION|
 AND SOMETIMES LACKS DIRECTION
 CHOOSE WISELY WITH SELECTION
 AND THE TRUTH WILL COME TO YOU

ANYTHING YOU DARE
 WHEN LIFE MAY GO AWRY
 OH DON'T BE ASKING WHY
 NEVER DOUBT A GOOD DECISION
 WHEN YOUR HEART IN ITS DIVISION
 CHOOSES THE ROAD
 THAT FATE HAS BESTOWED
 BECAUSE DOWN DEEP INSIDE
 YOUR HEART HAS REALLY TRIED

(spoken)

But now it's time my lovelies for the application of
 what I've taught you. The time has come when
 everything in your lives is going to change. And
 change, my dear friends, is something every heart
 requires.

*(LIGHTNING - BOOM! POTTY is no more.
 The lights slowly fade as we hear
 LENORE.)*

MUSIC #3: EDGAR, ALAN AND POE (I)

LENORE

(sings)

EDGAR, ALAN AND POE
NO, NOT THE AUTHOR YOU KNOW
BIRDS OF A FEATHER
AND ALL RAISED TOGETHER
AND NAMED FOR THE SAKE OF SOME SHOW

EDGAR ALAN AND POE
ARE VERY ALONE AND SO
NOW THEY MUST CHOOSE
WHICH WISH THEY CAN USE
AND THE CHOICE MAY COST THEM SOME WOE

EDGAR ALAN AND POE
NEVERMORE RAVENS, OH NO
WHEN THEY MAKE THEIR WISH
PUT THEIR CHOICE ON A DISH
TELL ME, WHERE IN THE WORLD WILL THEY GO?

EDGAR ALAN AND POE
THE CHOICES THEY HAVE REALLY BLOW
WILL FATE FORGIVE THEM,
OR WILL IT JUST GIVE
ALL THESE VERY ODD CHOICES TO CROWS.

(In the dim lighting, the RAVENS fly to the set of perches in front of the mirror. There is an extra loud crack of LIGHTNING. The lights fade, as if the power in the theatre suddenly went out.)

LENORE (CONT'D)

THREE VERY FINE FELLOWS TO KNOW
MEET EDGAR, ALAN AND POE!

(On the last line, the LIGHTS return, strong and fast. EDGAR, ALAN and POE are standing on stage, right in the place where the perch was.)

MUSIC #3A: "A CHANGE IN THE AIR"

(This is the first human moment for Edgar, Alan and Poe. All three look one another over. How did they suddenly take on these human forms? Suddenly, a figure forms in the mirror. This is BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, just as you'd expect him. He is reading the Declaration of Independence. He notices the birds. When he speaks, the MUSIC cuts off.)

FRANKLIN

Well, gentlemen, let's get on with this. You have three questions each, so let's not dally here.

(EDGAR, ALAN and POE are startled by Franklin, and they react appropriately and - if possible - comically.)

EDGAR

(cockney accent)

Are you addressing one of us?

FRANKLIN

Well, I'm not talking to Thomas Jefferson!

ALAN

(also cockney)

Who's he?

FRANKLIN

Good grief, you've never heard of... oh my, you haven't been human beings that long at all. You probably don't know anything of this magic spell, but you three...er... former ravens... you birds are the beneficiaries of the enchantment of this old house. A house that once belonged to Edgar Alan Poe.

(More THUNDER.)

EDGAR

Edgar Alan Poe... Those three names sound very familiar.

FRANKLIN

Well, they should, dear ones, because they are your names. The three names that your master Mister Nathaniel Potty gave to each of you: Edgar-- nice to meet you, Edgar.

EDGAR

Charmed, I'm sure.

FRANKLIN

And of course - there you are, Alan.

ALAN

That name seems a bit lame, if you ask me.

FRANKLIN

And last, but not least - Poe.

POE

(another cockney)

No last names?

FRANKLIN

'Fraid not.

POE

And all of this means what, exactly?

FRANKLIN

Well, now, you three, well what shall we say --oh why not-- "gentlemen," just for the moment. At this point you three fellows were the three ravens that once belonged to Nathaniel B. Potty. All in your previous lives, that is. Oh my, mad old King George the Third would eat this up.

EDGAR, ALAN AND POE

Our previous lives?

FRANKLIN

Yes, of course.

EDGAR

Beg pardon, guv'nor, but why do we no longer have them lives?

FRANKLIN

Your master did not want you to be harmed after he died.

ALAN

So what did he do?

FRANKLIN

He made a wish.

EDGAR

Isn't that the foolish thing that humans make and nothing ever happens?

FRANKLIN

Well, that "foolish thing" - as you call it - just came true for the three of you.

POE

But I loved being a raven.

ALAN

I did too!

FRANKLIN

Has any one of you ever foraged the countryside for his own food?

ALAN

No, guv'nor, the master always supplied our food.

FRANKLIN

How about shelter? Warmth and comfort from a storm?

POE

Never wanted for anything, I suppose! Except once in our lives: Just before Master Potty found us: In the days when a great Maple tree once looked after us.

(ALAN gives Poe a sad look.)

EDGAR

The Empress herself.

(ALAN shoots another look toward Edgar.)

FRANKLIN

A maple tree Empress? What silly nonsense! Your gibberish, gentlemen, exactly proves my point. Master Potty was very wise making these provisions for you three. And now that he's no longer here, the wish that he made is going to protect you.

POE

Why couldn't we have stayed ravens? We were happy then.

FRANKLIN

You could have. But you were told that you had to choose which part of the miracle you wanted to come true.

POE

And we didn't?

FRANKLIN

Afraid not. You all rushed to the perch that had the most food-- greed, I'm afraid. Now, as we former humans might say: "you have made your nest--now, you must sleep in them."

EDGAR

Guess we were stupid. The master truly loved us, I guess.

POE

But that's not the way of humans. Humans usually don't care about birds like us.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Potty did-- he loved every animal.

ALAN

But why? Once he died, he owed nothing to us.

FRANKLIN

True--

((POOF-- a classic stage illusion.
THE ENCHANTED MIRROR disappears and
at the same instant BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN appears CS in all of his
glory.))

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(spoken)

But some people are different.

MUSIC # 4: "WHEN YOU'RE REALLY LOVED"

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(Sings)

WHEN YOU'RE REALLY LOVED
AND THAT LOVE IS REALLY STRONG
YOUR LIFE WILL SOMEHOW DEMONSTRATE
THAT WHEN YOUR LIFE GOES WRONG
THOSE WHO REALLY CHERISH YOU
WILL MAKE THE JOURNEY SMOOTH
THEN YOU'LL GROW AND YOU WILL KNOW
THERE'S NOTHING MORE TO PROVE

WHEN YOU'RE REALLY LOVED
A HUMAN HEART WILL MAKE
A LIGHT WHERE ONCE THERE NEVER WAS
AND A PATH A SOUL MAY TAKE
A LOVE THAT LIFE CAN'T KEEP FROM YOU
CHASES SADNESS EVERY DAY
AND THAT LOVE WILL LAST FOREVER
IN YOUR HEART A STOWAWAY

WHEN YOU'RE REALLY LOVED
AND IT'S MUCH MORE THAN YOU FEEL
THERE'S NO OTHER HEART IT WANTS
BECAUSE IT'S YOURS AND REAL
NEVER DOUBT A LOVE EXPRESSED
YOU CAN TRY TO MAKE IT MORE
WHEN SOMEONE REALLY LOVES YOU
YOU CAN EVEN UP THE SCORE
MAKE THEIR LOVE FOREVER
LAST FOREVER, EVERMORE

((POOF! -- FRANKLIN disappears.))

POE

We can do that.

ALAN

We have a fine house to do it in.

FRANKLIN

(in the mirror again)

I'm afraid not, gentlemen. The wish had a choice. Only
with the third choice could you turn human. Only with
(MORE)

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

the first two wish choices could you remain as ravens
and keep this fine house. You've made your choices.

ALAN

Based on greed.

FRANKLIN

Yes, my fine ex-feathered friends. Greed.

ALAN

What do we know about being human?

FRANKLIN

You have human hearts now, gentlemen. Let them guide
you. Listen to the message they tell you.

EDGAR

And we'll only starve in the meantime.

FRANKLIN

If you're greedy again. So think. The brains you have
will grow wiser and the hearts you now possess will
become stronger.

*(There is a blackout. The voice of
LENORE is heard in the darkness.)*

MUSIC #5: "PLAYOFF/EDGAR ALAN AND POE (II)

LENORE

(sings)

NOW WHERE IN THE WORLD WILL THEY GO?

EDGAR ALAN AND POE

ACT ONE
SCENE TWO

(EDGAR ALAN AND POE have found a huge oak tree. It dominates the set. The tree has mighty branches and looks very majestic. The three contemplate it from the ground.)

EDGAR

What an amazing tree!

POE

Indeed it is.

ALAN

Why couldn't we have found this magnificent oak while we were ravens?

POE

Short memory again! We had a tree of our own, don't you remember?

EDGAR

Of course I remember. Too bad that gent in the mirror didn't believe us! But this is here, and this is now!

POE

And the Empress-- why she was so...

ALAN

Poe, before I start crying again, let me remind you that You promised us birds, faithfully, mate, that you would never forever mention her again. And you've done it twice since we've been human already!

(ALAN plops onto the ground and begins weeping profusely.)

POE

I'm sorry-- but her memory when you can actually describe her in real words and not bird talk makes keeping quiet about her very hard right about now.

EDGAR

*(indicating Alan,
almost patronizing
him)*

When we lost her, it was like losing the whole world!

ALAN

I cried for days.

EDGAR

(to ALAN, patronizing)
God love the Empress.

ALAN

We never truly appreciated her until she was gone.

POE

She's not gone. We're just gone from her.

EDGAR

Same thing.

ALAN

We were never impulsive and foolish while she protected us. We thought of everything before we ever acted because we acted like her.

POE

A bird can not act like a tree.

EDGAR

She was no ordinary tree and you know it!

ALAN

We're just not the same without her.

POE

What makes you say that, mate? We look different, but down deep we all have the same heart. Now a human heart!

ALAN

I'm beginning to doubt that a lot.

EDGAR

(pulling POE aside)

My dear, Poe-- Look how quickly we picked that third wish back in Master Potty's old house. We could have owned that house. Oh no! We had to go and pick the wish that was attached to the perch with the most food. Why did we ever do that?

POE

Well that's what a bird thinks with, guv'nor. With what he's got at the time he's got it! A raven is a bird with damn little brain.

ALAN

Smarter than crows we are -- or were, should I say?

EDGAR

*(indicating ALAN
behind his back)*

That wouldn't take much.

(ALAN turns on him.)

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Well, you know how stupid a crow can be.

POE

But we're men now. So we gotta stop crying over great trees that were more than trees and lost feathers and misspent wishes. Look on the bright side. What did that old mirror say? We're gonna get smarter every day.

EDGAR

Brains ain't feathers, guv'nor -- those things are gonna take a little longer to -- what's the word...

(ALAN)

Grow?

POE

Not grow you idiot-- Blossom.

ALAN

Like a flower?

POE

I would hope certainly better than a flower.

ALAN

Besides bugs go after flowers.

POE

I would guess that dear crazy old man in the mirror has a few bugs himself that he'd never like to mention out loud.

ALAN

He looked very important in that mirror, holding that declaration whatever it was. Like he stood for a big important cause or something.

POE

And the cause got tired of waiting for him and picked up it's parade and left!

(A BEAT)

Look at me-- I'm starting to talk fancy. Maybe the whole new thought process has really started to happen.

EDGAR

I'm thinking of a better word to describe our new brains-- spread--

POE

Spread? Edgar, dear boy, I hare to break this to you, but brains are not jam.

ALAN

I just love jam.

(Unnoticed by the other two, EDGAR goes over and repeatedly attempts to

"fly up" to the branches of the mighty oak.)

POE

Will you shut up please? When these brains really arrive we're gonna have to learn how to really use them.

ALAN

Don't men use their brains right away?

POE

That's a big part of their problem.

ALAN

So how do we get up there?

POE

It can't be that difficult.

((EDGAR saunters over to the other two with a disappointed look on his face.))

EDGAR

I've got some disappointing news for you.

ALAN

And what is that?

EDGAR

Just a brief reminder about the wings that we don't have any more.

ALAN

Can't forget that.

EDGAR

Big thing to forget.

ALAN

So we're doomed.

POE

Doomed! Why are you always the pessimist in this group, guv'nor? What else did the enchanted mirror say?

ALAN

Am I supposed to remember that?

POE

Yes, bird brain. You are. We all are! Think back and remember what he said? Only if we're not greedy again. The brains we have will grow stronger. The hearts we now possess will become wiser.

(POE does a double-take. Did he say that right?)

ALAN

Nice sentiment.

POE

I have no reason to doubt him.

ALAN

And I have no reason to trust him. Who trusts a reflection?

EDGAR

Man does -- Potty did -- first thing ev'ry morning. He'd primp like an aristocrat for hours in that mirror. And if you remember our dear master's appearance-- well --there was absolutely nothing to look forward to and no hope that anything would ever change.

POE

And the only thing that was more sour than his puss was his bloody posterior.

ALAN

I hated when he primped in the glass in that altogether of his!

EDGAR

So what do we do now? We can't go and eat what we birds used to eat.

POE

Very true.

EDGAR

Need a new type of nourishment.

POE

So we have to act smart until the smart part arrives.

MUSIC #6: "BE A LITTLE WISER"

ALAN

And do what?

POE

(sings)

BE A LITTLE WISER THAN WE'VE BEEN
AND A COMPROMISER NOW AND THEN
TAKING THE ADVANTAGE ONCE AGAIN
BE A LITTLE WISER
AND AN IMPROVISOR
BE A LITTLE WISER THAN WE'VE BEEN

BE A LITTLE SMARTER
INSTINCT DOES FOR STARTERS

MAYBE WE CAN BARTER
 NOW AND THEN
 BE A LITTLE SLICKER
 AND A LITTER QUICKER
 HAVEN'T TIME TO BICKER
 HERE AND NOW
 FIGURE OUT SOLUTIONS
 TRY SOME SUBSTITUTIONS
 YOU CAN FIND SOLUTIONS
 YES, SOMEHOW

IF WE PASS LIFE'S LITTLE TEST
 TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE REST
 START DEFEATING DOOM WITH ZEST
 WE WILL WIN
 HIDDEN BLESSINGS BLESS THEM ALL
 HIDDEN BLESSINGS GREAT AND SMALL
 HIDDEN BLESSINGS START RECALLING THEM
 THEY SAVED US BIRDS FROM FALLING WHEN
 WE THOUGHT THE WORLD HAD TURNED ITSELF
 SO VERY UPSIDE DOWN

EDGAR

(spoken)

I'm feeling smarter already!

ALAN

Likewise.

POE

Me too! Very much smarter! My goodness gracious.
 So....

(sings)

BE A LITTLE CLEVER
 ENCYCLOPEDIA NEVER
 LEAVE A LITTLE HUMBLE IN YOUR SOUL
 PRETEND YOU NEED SOME ANSWERS
 CAUSE EVERY CON'S A DANCER
 LEAVING THAT OLD HUMBUG IN CONTROL
 FIGURE OUT SOLUTIONS
 TRY SOME SUBSTITUTIONS
 YOU CAN FIND SOLUTIONS
 YES, SOMEHOW

UNTIL OUR BRAINS ARRIVE
 THIS IS HOW YOU MUST SURVIVE
 I'M TELLING YOU
 BIRDS OF COMMON FEATHER
 SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS ALL TOGETHER
 IN SHINE OR RAINY WEATHER ANY DAY
 IN SHINE OR RAINY WEATHER EVERY DAY.

ALAN

You are definitely getting smarter.

POE

The words just popped into my head.

ALAN

They can pop?

EDGAR

Very nice. We use the brains we're developing. That part's okay.

POE

And look for hidden blessings.

EDGAR

Stop-- what's a blessing?

POE

Remember what Master Potty told us? That he was our "hidden blessing"-- that little thing that the Creator gives to everything and everybody to make it advantageous to other things. In this case --other trees.

EDGAR

Okay, guv'nor, What hidden blessing does that particular tree possess?

POE

What's it made of?

ALAN

Well, bobs-your-uncle, even I know that one. It's a real tree.

EDGAR

And your a real bird brain. Maybe there's nothing brewing in that new skull of yours, after all!

*(slapping Alan across
the head)*

Of course it's a real tree!

(to POE)

Now, as you were saying, this tree's hidden blessing is what?

POE

There's three words coming into my mind that answers your question. They're forming quite nicely.

EDGAR

And those three words are?

POE:

Three words are all the same. Something called "location, location and location"

ALAN

I don't think being smart means repeating yourself.

POE

Maybe you're dumb if you don't repeat yourself enough!
Why do you think a raven cries out before he flies?
Lots of times before he flies?

EDGAR

Can we back-up on the subject, here please? What in
blue blazes do those three words mean?

POE

How many full sized trees do you see?

EDGAR

One. That tree.

POE

And if there is only one full sized tree within sight,
might there be someone willing to buy this wood from
this one single tree-- giving them what humans use to
survive?

ALAN

We'd have to cut it up first.

POE

Not necessarily. My brain is beginning to kick in here.

EDGAR

That could be dangerous.

POE

Look, bird brain. We pretend we own this tree.

EDGAR

And then what?

POE

We try to sell it. But we have two prices. One for the
wood as it sits on that tree and one if we three cut
it up.

EDGAR

We have nothing to cut it up with. I'm not even sure I
could if I did.

POE

You know that and I know that, But the farmer coming
up the road yonder doesn't.

EDGAR

Brilliant!

MUSIC #7: "YOU GOT POSSIBILITIES"

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Those brains the mirror promised are really kicking in now.

ALLAN

Mine too.

((EDGAR begins to sing "YOU'VE GOT POSSIBILITIES"))

EDGAR

(sings)

YOU'VE GOT POSSIBILITIES
YOU'RE NOT FULL OF BIRDIE BREEZE
YOU'RE HOT WHEN YOU REALLY NEED TO BE
OH, YOU'VE GOT POSSIBILITIES
JUST MIGHT TURN OUR LIVES TO EASE
DON'T STOP THINKING HERE OH PLEASE
CAUSE YOU'VE GOT POSSIBILITIES NOW

I'M NOT SURE WHAT WERE IN FOR
JUST CAN'T PREDICT THAT FAR
BUT IF WE STICK TOGETHER
WE'LL FIND US SOON THAT WISHING STAR

YOU'VE GOT POSSIBILITIES
SOME REAL POSSIBILITIES
WITH YOU WE MIGHT WANT TO BE BOLD
WE JUST MIGHT LIKE
SOME GREAT STREAK OF LIGHT
WE JUST MIGHT BE THE BEST, OH YES
COULD REALLY MEAN SUCCESS

EDGAR & ALAN

(sing)

YOU'VE GOT POSSIBILITIES
BOLD PRICELESS POSSIBILITIES
YOUR SWEET POSSIBILITIES
YOUR NEAT POSSIBILITIES
ARE JUST AS PURE AS ANY BIRD'S GOLD

ON ALL YOUR POSSIBILITIES
ON ALL YOUR POSSIBILITIES
ON EVERY ONE OF THEM WERE SOLD

(And immediately, the voice of LENORE holds sway over all.)

MUSIC #8: "EDGAR ALAN AND POE (III)

LENORE

EDGAR ALAN AND POE
THE CHOICES THEY HAVE REALLY BLOW
WILL FATE FORGIVE THEM?
PERHAPS IT CAN GIVE THEM
THESE ODD CHOICES TO CROWS
EDGAR ALAN AND POE
GREED THEY'RE BEGINNING TO KNOW

EDGAR, ALAN AND POE

POE
Now you birds let me do the talking.

EDGAR
We can talk just as well as you.

ALAN
Of course we can.

POE
Look chaps, I think my brain is developing faster than yours

EDGAR
You don't say.

POE
I do.

EDGAR AND ALAN
Quoth the raven --nevermore.

POE
Where did you two birds pick up that garbage?

EDGAR
(sarcastic)
Oh, I don't know. Just "popped" into me skull.

POE
That could be dangerous --remember you birds ain't crows made human.

EDGAR
I wouldn't be a crow if they paid me.

ALAN
(TO EDGAR)
Do they pay crows?

POE
They get great pay-- if you're counting bird seed!

ALAN
We used to love bird seed!

POE
Your bird days are yesterday's poopie!

ALAN
Which I was always very considerate about.

EDGAR
Shut your beaks.

POE

Okay, okay.

(FARMER BROWN enters.)

POE (CONT'D)

Good morning, ma'am.

FARMER BROWN

It's afternoon.

POE

Oh so it is. These overcast days fool you sometime.

FARMER BROWN

Why, yes, I suppose that is true.

POE

You're with a carriage-- be you needing supplies?

FARMER BROWN

Well I will. I was going for a little libation, first, but...

(THUNDER - CRASH!)

POE

Ah-- thunder. Could be a storm.

FARMER BROWN

Could be. But usually with thunder there comes some lightning if we be having a true bout of inclement weather.

ALAN

What's inclement...

EDGAR

(quietly to him)

A storm, stupid.

POE

But what be you a needing?

FARMER BROWN

Firewood mostly. But I'm sick and tired of paying that wood merchant his very high prices.

POE

A pirate is he?

FARMER BROWN

A thief if you ask me! I do wish there was a way around that scoundrel.

POE
Ah, but there is.

EDGAR
Indeed there is.

POE
Edgar...

EDGAR
Sorry guv'nor.

FARMER BROWN
What way?

MUSIC #9: "OPPORTUNITY/POSSIBILITY"

POE
A simple word.

FARMER BROWN
What word is that?

POE
Even a bird could catch this word.

FARMER BROWN
You don't say?

POE
But I do.

FARMER BROWN
Let's hear it.

POE
It's a grand word --it just popped into me skull.
Blimey! A lot of things are popping into me skull.

FARMER BROWN
I'm all ears.

POE
(sings)
O-P-P-O-R-T-U-N-I-T-Y

FARMER BROWN
(spoken)
Opportunity.

POE
(sings)
P-O-S-S-I-B-I-L-I-T-Y

FARMER BROWN
(spoken)
Possibility.

POE
 EACH OPPORTUNITY HAS POSSIBILITY
 EVERYTHING YOU NEED REQUIRES THESE
 SO WHAT YOU SIR REQUIRE
 YOU CAN FILL THAT BRIGHT DESIRE
 AND PROVIDE THE VERY FIRE OF
 O-P-P-O-R-T-U-N-I-T-Y.

FARMER BROWN
 But opportunity for what?

POE
 MAYBE A TEMPEST IS COMIN'
 YOUR POOR OLD HOUSE NEEDS WARM
 NOW YOU'VE GOT THAT POSSIBILITY
 A FIRE FOR THAT STORM.

FARMER BROWN
 But what are you offering?

POE
 P-O-S-S-I-B-I-L-I-T-Y.
 WHAT YOU, SIR, DESIRE
 IS TO BUILD A SIMPLE FIRE
 DON'T PAY THAT PIRATE ON THE ROAD AHEAD
 WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY
 NOT TO MENTION POSSIBILITY
 IT'S REALLY RUDIMENTARY
 AND SIMPLE FOR THE HEAD

EDGAR AND ALAN
 Rudawhat?

POE
 Rudimentary.

MRS. FARMER BROWN
 I'm glad you think so.

POE
 SEE THAT TREE THAT'S NOW IN VIEW
 THERE IS WOOD UP THERE FOR YOU.
 IT'S WHAT YOU SEEK WITH UNIQUE
 POSSIBILITIES

EDGAR AND ALAN
(sing)
 TWO POSSIBILITIES

ALL THREE
 OPPORTUNITIES

MRS. FARMER BROWN
 So you sell me the tree and throw in the quarter acre
 around it?.

POE

Dead on!

FARMER BROWN:

Deal!

MUSIC #9A: "OPPORTUNITY PLAYOFF"

Perusal
Only
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION

ACT ONE
SCENE THREE

(A tavern. A fireplace burns a small cozy fire. A few tables and chairs are scattered throughout, where other PATRONS enjoy a glass of stout. EDGAR, ALAN and POE enter.)

POE

I just can't believe that. It was so easy.

EDGAR

Worms from a baby bird.

ALAN

It really was.

POE

And it's easier to think of these things all the time.

EDGAR

Well, mate I agree with you. We must be getting smarter. That poor dumb farmer bought our tree story so easy. All those funds he gave us.

ALAN

I think humans call it "hook line and sinker."

POE

Are all humans that easily fooled?

EDGAR

I'm beginning to think that's true.

POE

How can people be stupid if they've got themselves brains?

EDGAR

One of life's great mysteries.

ALAN

Maybe the Creator knows.

EDGAR

I think man baffles even Him.

POE

So what's the secret here, mates?

EDGAR

Something we're missing.

ALAN

Look at the great beasts on the wall: they were caught
at severe disadvantage themselves

(beat)

You know what, boys, I'm beginning to think here that
life is simply a matter of great timing.

POE

Timing-- yeah, that has to be it. To get what you
want, to get the money that you need: its all about
great timing.

EDGAR

Back when we were birds, it always seemed to be that
way.

MUSIC #10: "A MATTER OF TIMING"

POE

I totally agree.

EDGAR

(sings)

THE SECRET OF LIVING BEING HUMAN, YOU SEE
HAS ONE VITAL SECRET IN ORDER TO BE
THE REASON THAT PEOPLE GET ALL THAT THEY WISH
IT'S A MATTER OF TIMING
LIVING PUTS ON THEIR DISH

LUCK IS VERY IMPORTANT
BUT GOOD TIMING IS TOO
SO TO BE ON THE TOP, BOYS,
HERE'S WHAT TO DO

TIMING IS EVERYTHING, EVERY BIRD WILL TELL YOU
THOUGH SOME SOULS WILL SELL YOU
A DIFFERENT APPROACH
GOOD TIMING IS GENIUS, NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT
AND THIS IS THE SECRET WHEN YOUR FINANCE IS FLAT
TIMING IS EVERYTHING, ANY FOOL WILL TELL YOU
THOUGH SOME SOULS WILL SELL YOU
A DIFFERENT APPROACH.

(The PATRONS get into the act.)

PATRONS

TIMING IS EVERYTHING, EVERY BIRD WILL TELL YOU
THOUGH SOME SOULS WILL SELL YOU
A DIFFERENT APPROACH
GOOD TIMING IS GENIUS, NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT
AND THIS IS THE SECRET WHEN YOUR FINANCE IS FLAT
TIMING IS EVERYTHING, ANY FOOL WILL TELL YOU
THOUGH SOME SOULS WILL SELL YOU
A DIFFERENT APPROACH.

(BURT is seen eating a piece of
frostless cake, which he holds in

his hands, and waving a small French flag in time with the song, enjoying himself immensely.)

POE

(spoken)

But how can we make it fly for us?

EDGAR

It's a piece of cake.

ALAN

I love it when people drop cake.

(BURT drops the cake onto the floor. ALAN zooms in on it like a hawk, but BURT, who is embarrassed by dropping the cake in the first place, quickly sweeps up the cake onto a piece of cardboard, which denies ALAN of his favorite treat. ALAN whimpers. EDGAR gives him a disgusted look.)

EDGAR

THE SECRET OF LIVING AND HOW YOU SURVIVE
IS SIMPLY NOT WAITING FOR CASH TO ARRIVE
FOR IF YOU JUST SCAVENGE, THEN ALL THAT YOU GET
IS SIMPLY A SOMETHING A BIRD CAN FORGET.

SO GATHER ROUND, PEOPLE
HERE'S WHAT WE MUST DO
WORK UP AN ADVANTAGE
OPPORTUNITY TOO.

DO EVERY STEP PRUDENT
FOR ADVANTAGE WE SEEK
WE MUST BE A STUDENT
SEE BEYOND OUR OWN BEAKS

THERE
IS

PATRONS

TIMING IN EVERYTHING, EVERY BIRD WILL TELL YOU
THOUGH SOME SOULS WILL SELL YOU
A DIFFERENT APPROACH
GOOD TIMING IS GENIUS, NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT
AND THIS IS THE SECRET WHEN YOUR FINANCE IS FLAT
TIMING IS EVERYTHING, ANY FOOL WILL TELL YOU
THOUGH SOME SOULS WILL SELL YOU
A DIFFERENT APPROACH.

*(EDGAR, ALAN and POE sit at the bar.
BURT approaches them.)*

BURT

Good afternoon, gents-- what'll it be?

POE

What'll what be?

BURT

What drinks can I bring you?

ALAN

I love water.

*(THE PATRONS react to the word
"water"-- laugh and walk away.)*

BURT

We don't serve water here, boys. You take up space at my tables, you order something to drink. You do have money don't you?

POE

Money?

BURT

Yeah, birdbrain-- money: that's moolah, cash, green tender.

ALAN

Oh you mean this stuff?

*(ALAN shows Burt a coin. BURT grabs
Alan's hand - hard!)*

ALAN (CONT'D)

Ow!

*(BURT takes the coin from Alan's
hand. He releases the hand and bites
the coin.)*

ALAN (CONT'D)

Why does everyone hurt me?

BURT

Oh yes, gentlemen that will do nicely.

POE

Quite good.

BURT

What'll it be, boys? A good man knows what to order in my place.

EDGAR

Does he now?

BURT
Absolutely required. Don't want bums in here who can't
tell what a great drink is all about. We have the
finest libations in the county.

POE
Libations?

BURT
Beer.

POE
Beer, you say?

BURT
And whiskey.

EDGAR
And what might be your... oh what is that word...

BURT
Recommendation?

ALAN
That's the word, guv'nor.

BURT
An English beer.

POE
We're all for that.

BURT
Good. That'll be three stout.

EDGAR
Three stouts it is.

POE
Perfect.

*(BURT walks away, and the trio
converse.)*

POE (CONT'D)
What is this thing called Stout?

EDGAR
Beer.

POE
Beer? And what be that?

ALAN
How should I know?

POE

Well all the humans at this place appear to be
enjoying it.

ALAN

Should that include everybody?

POE

Except birds and we ain't birds no more, Alan. We've
been promoted.

MUSIC #11: "BEING HUMAN"

ALAN

Promoted?

EDGAR

I like that. Promoted.

POE

(sings)

BEING HUMAN
IS A BRAND NEW PHASE
IN OUR LIVES TOGETHER, COME WHAT MAY
BEING HUMAN MAY BE ODD IT SEEMS
NOW THERE'S HOPE AND DREAMS TO DEAL WITH

BEING HUMAN
MAY BRING STRESS I GUESS
BUT WE MUST ACCEPT IT NONETHELESS
BEING HUMAN WE CAN'T FLY AWAY
BUT ONE DAY WE'LL FIND A SCHEME
THAT SUITS US

BEING HUMAN
MAY BE FINE
MAYBE SOMEDAY
YES THEN WE'LL SAY
BEING HUMAN IS OKAY.

ALAN

BEING HUMAN
COULD TAKE YEARS TO BE
ALL THAT LIFE EXPECTS OF MEN YOU SEE
BEING HUMAN MAY BE ODD
IT'S TRUE WHAT TO DO
WHEN THERE'S NO EASY ANSWER

ALL THREE

BEING HUMAN MAY BE FINE
MAYBE SOMEBODY WE WILL SHINE

POE

BEING HUMAN...

ALAN & EDGAR

BEING HUMAN...

POE
MAYBE SOMEDAY...

ALAN & EDGAR
MAYBE SOMEDAY...

ALL THREE
WE WILL SAY
BEING HUMAN IS OKAY

*(BURT brings the stout to the table
and serves it.)*

BURT
Thanks, Gents, I think we're gonna get along just
fine.

(BURT walks away.)

POE
(sings)
BEING HUMAN MAY BE FINE
MAYBE SOMEDAY...

ALAN & EDGAR
BEING HUMAN...

POE
SOMEDAY, ONE DAY...

ALAN & EDGAR
BEING HUMAN...

ALL THREE
MAYBE SOMEDAY, WE'LL BE FINE.

*(The THREE take a sip of the stout.
It is obviously an acquired taste.)*

ALL THREE (CONT'D)
WHAT DO YOU SAY, BOYS?
BEING HUMAN IS OKAY,
BEING HUMAN IS FINE,
MAYBE DIVINE

POE
BEING HUMAN
IS ABSOLUTELY, POSITULEY FINE.

*(The THREE toast one another as the
LIGHTS fade to black.)*

ACT ONE
SCENE FOUR

(A crossroads. EDGAR hammers furiously at a sign on the ground. ALAN and POE look on.)

POE
What are you doing, Edgar?

ALAN
Yeah, what's the big plan?

(EDGAR stops hammering, dusts his hands, and looks up at them.)

EDGAR
You know, that enchanted mirror was right. I feel smarter with every passing hour.

POE
You too?

ALAN
Smarter? Does that include a plan for us to be birds again?

(EDGAR looks at Alan with a "what a stupid thing to say" look.)

EDGAR
Alan, I worry about you sometimes.

ALAN
That's a pretty short "sometimes" guv'nor!

EDGAR
Maybe it is. I think Poe is dead right

POE
Well of course I am!

(EDGAR stands and dusts himself off.)

EDGAR
Okay so we are getting smarter. Now I know, and you all should know, that there is going to be no going back to being birds. Our bird life is over. Kaput.

ALAN
How depressing.

EDGAR
It's not-- it's a whole new opportunity!

POE

I taught you that word.

ALAN

To walk around the world and not fly anymore is exactly what kind of opportunity?

EDGAR

Maybe now, we can see what's on the ground faster?

ALAN

But we're not picking up what we used to pick up!

POE

Boy is that a loaded line.

ALAN

If you're referring to the female of the species, I used to attract some pretty amazing...

POE

The word is coming to me. Oh yeah-- broads.

(Dead stop.)

ALAN

Humans call their women what?

POE

Broads-- sounds just as good as anything. As I said, now we don't have to settle for just being birds.

ALAN

And the creepy crawlers we used to pick up?

EDGAR

Hey! I happen to like little creepy crawlers.

(ALAN shoots Edgar a disgusted look.)

EDGAR (CONT'D)

Well, they did taste mighty delicious.

POE

Why do I have this feeling that I'm gonna be using all the brains we three get together?

ALAN

I wouldn't mind if you managed things at all. I don't think I'd like doing it-- not in the least.

(EDGAR, who hitherto thought he was the group leader, looks to Alan as if to say, "What about me?" POE notices and approaches him.)

POE

Okay, What scheme did you come up?

ALAN

I would like to hear this myself.

EDGAR

Well now, what can birds do that humans could use?

ALAN

Cry when there's the smell of prey?

POE

Humans do that. Especially lawyers.

ALAN

How do you know about lawyers?

POE

I used to "poopie" on them all the time.

EDGAR

But humans don't need to do that.

POE

But they're missing all the fun.

(EDGAR is already annoyed at the tangent. ALAN notices.)

ALAN

Guess again.

POE

Let's scavenge everything. Why should the vultures have all the fun?

EDGAR

Dense, that's what you are guv'nor, and bobs your uncle if I know why. What's worse-- you were dense as a bird too!

POE

Dense? Listen bird-brain.

EDGAR

Who you calling a bird brain?

(EDGAR and POE begin to fight -- as birds, not as humans. ALAN steps between them and attempts to force them apart.)

ALAN

Let's not fight-- what's your plan?

EDGAR

Ever hear of the phrase, "Fifty miles as the crow flies"

POE

Even as a bird, I knew that.

ALAN

But were not crows.

POE

Thank goodness!

ALAN

What has that got to do with us?

EDGAR

Remember how we fooled the farmer?

ALAN

Yeah-- that was pure inspiration.

POE

And timing.

ALAN

Okay good timing,

EDGAR

We can do it again.

ALAN

We're fresh out of farmers.

(a beat)

Worse. We're fresh out of stupid farmers.

POE

And not many trees in these parts, neither.

ALAN

We have to depend on stupid farmers and unwanted trees?

POE

I certainly hope not!

EDGAR

Remember what we over heard in that tavern?

ALLAN

A lot of dirty words. I never liked it. Birds never swear.

EDGAR

Would you, birds forget about the swearing?

ALAN

It was offensive.

EDGAR

So what? You're not a bird any more.

ALAN

In my heart, I will always....

EDGAR

What can I put in that beak to shut you up?

ALAN

Worms would be nice.

EDGAR

If you don't shut your beak...

ALAN

All right-- okay! If you say so.

EDGAR

Look, the thing that everyone came in there for...

ALAN

Besides stout.

EDGAR

Yes, besides stout.

ALAN

Was what?

EDGAR

You're trying my patience, Alan, you really are.

ALAN

Don't get your feathers in a wad, Edgar

EDGAR

You say you're getting smarter-- so ACT like you're getting smarter. Don't you remember all those people coming in this joint and saying, "How do you get here?" and "How did you get over there?" And "how far to the nearest Inn?"

POE

I recall that now. What a rude bartender!

ALLAN

Dear Burt! We should teach him some manners.

POE

Not too classy I agree.

EDGAR
Pay attention here!

ALAN
To what?

(EDGAR crosses to the large sign he was hammering earlier. He picks it up and holds it where everyone can see. It reads, "Direkshuns As Thu Croe Flyiees." Some of the letters are in reverse.)

EDGAR
(with an insane-type grin)
To our new method of livelihood, mates.

ALAN
What is?

(EDGAR has no patience left for Alan. He throws the sign back to the ground and advances upon the two.)

EDGAR
The thing that bartender refused to give for any price -- were directions!

POE
I thought human men hated asking for directions not giving them,

ALAN
I think that's true.

EDGAR
Of course it's true. When we were birds we used to watch married people fight about it all the time from those treetops.

POE
That bartender wouldn't give up anything. But people need directions To the nearest town, to the Blacksmith shop, to the nearest hotel.

ALAN
And that does what for us?

EDGAR
(extra-condescending)
We-- that's Edgar, Alan and Poe-- give those directions at that cockamamie crossroads over yonder: the road not taken-- for cash money.

ALAN

Interesting.

EDGAR

Directions: as the crow flies-- I'd say raven, but nobody would marvel at the distinction.

POE

Or pay extra for.

MUSIC 12: "AS THE CROW FLIES"

EDGAR

That too.

(sings)

SO YOU'RE LOST IN LIFE ALONG THE ROAD
AND YOU JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT FATE'S BESTOWED
OR HAS IN STORE FOR YOU
DEAR SOUL, OH MY, YOU'VE GONE AWRAY
AND THE ANSWER TO YOUR PRAYER IS JUST AHEAD
SO YOU TRAVEL ON: WHERE ARE YOU NOW?
YOU'RE MORE MISTAKEN THAN YOU KNOW
YOU'LL NOT FIND YOUR DESTINATION
AND DOWN THE ROAD YOU'LL FIND ANTICIPATION
A SERVICE THAT THREE BIRDS LIKE US PROVIDE
HOW LOVELY!

DIRECTIONS AS THE CROW FLIES COULD BE GENIUS, MATES
IT COULD TEMPT THE FATES, WE COULD CELEBRATE
BOUT DIRECTIONS THAT WE'RE SELLING
WITH POTENTIAL THAT IS SWELL
THE ART OF GOING NOWHERE, ABSOLUTELY NOWHERE
BLOODY BLOODY NOWHERE STRAIGHT DOWN THERE TO HELL

ALL THREE

SELLING WHAT THE CROW SEES COULD BE BRILLIANT, BOYS
YES, WE'LL BE EMPLOYED, WITH GOOD LUCK ENJOYED
FOOLS HAPPY WHAT WERE SELLING
THE SOLUTIONS OF LIFE'S COURSE
THE ART OF GOING NOWHERE, ABSOLUTELY NOWHERE
BLOODY BLOODY NOWHERE
THEY'RE THE BACK END OF THE HORSE

NOBODY'LL EVER CATCH UP TO US FOR YEARS
AS THE CROW FLIES, AS THE CROW FLIES
WE BIRDS FLYING HIGH AGAIN
OH MY WORD, WE'LL BE FLYING HOME AGAIN.

*(EDGAR puts up the sign as the LIGHTS
fade.)*

ACT ONE
SCENE FIVE

(The Potty Mansion. POTTY enters, still in the same costume, and walks to the Enchanted Mirror.)

POTTY

(overly dramatic)

Mirror, mirror, I need to know what has become of Edgar, Alan and Poe! Come forward, I command you!

MUSIC 12A: "THE ENCHANTED MIRROR RETURNS"

(FRANKLIN once again appears in the mirror. He is so busy writing with a quill and parchment that he is painfully unaware he was even summoned.)

FRANKLIN

(writing)

"A penny saved is a penny earned" -- Oh my, that's good. -- "The only sure thing in life is death and taxes."-- That's even better.

POTTY

Benjamin.

FRANKLIN

Sometimes I amaze even myself.

POTTY

(at the top of his voice)

Benjamin Franklin, front and center.

(POOF -- In the same effect as before, FRANKLIN disappears from the mirror and reappears C.S.)

FRANKLIN

Who told you I was Benjamin Franklin?

POTTY

It's me, Ben.

FRANKLIN

Who's me?

POTTY

Look closely.

FRANKLIN

You look frightful whoever you are.

POTTY

Damn you-- it's me!

FRANKLIN

Nathaniel? Nathaniel Potty? But why? You should be happy and content in eternity.

POTTY

You aren't.

FRANKLIN

Blame John Adams. I could be wrong, but I think the old boy was jealous. Took the Presidency too far, if you ask me!

POTTY

Would you leave that poor Founding Father alone?

FRANKLIN

Besides, I have unfinished business on Earth. The Constitution is in big trouble.

POTTY

Well I have a problem too.

FRANKLIN

A problem? What kind of problem can you have in eternity?

POTTY

It's the birds.

FRANKLIN

The birds? Heavenly birds keeping you awake?

POTTY

The birds-- Edgar, Alan and Poe.

FRANKLIN

They're not birds any more.

POTTY

That's what I've just discovered. So I need your help.

FRANKLIN

You made the wish. You made the conditions. You died, and the birds chose their destiny. I can't do anything more about that.

POTTY

I always defended you before your critics, Ben.

FRANKLIN

Yes, indeed you did, Nathaniel.

POTTY

So here's where you can pay back the favor.

FRANKLIN

How do you expect me to do that?

POTTY

You've got to watch over them.

FRANKLIN

But why me?

POTTY

You helped me devise the wish and it's conditions.

FRANKLIN

Did I?

POTTY

Your memory is worse than when you were alive.

FRANKLIN

Well, that wouldn't take much.

POTTY

They're going the wrong way. They sold a farmer a tree they didn't own -- even the land around it.

FRANKLIN

Oh my. Sounds like something that Adams might have tried. I remember this one time...

POTTY

Now they're selling directions.

FRANKLIN

Nothing wrong with the map business.

POTTY

Without a map, Ben?

FRANKLIN

Oh my!

POTTY

Directions as the crow flies.

FRANKLIN

But they're ravens. Or were ravens. They know nothing about crows.

POTTY

Precisely.

FRANKLIN

But I shouldn't leave my unfinished business here. I have letters to write. Ears to whisper in. Politicians to haunt.

MUSIC #13: "GIVE A HELPING HAND"

POTTY

(sings)

THINK OF ALL THE TIMES YOU CAME TO PEOPLE'S AID
DISPLAYED A WONDROUS SPIRIT I RECALL
MADE THE CONSTITUTION POSSIBLE
AS YOU STOOD AT FREEDOM'S DOOR
SAID WE SHOULD DOUBT OUR OWN CERTAINTY
A LITTLE BIT MORE

FRANKLIN

(spoken)

Using sentiment is not playing fair.

POTTY

(sings)

GIVE A HELPING HAND ANY WAY YOU CAN
EVEN THOUGH YOUR DISTANCE IS FAR AWAY
MAKE AN EFFORT TO BE
THE PERSON WHO YOU WERE.

THOUGH IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE
EVEN FOOLISH DREAMERS KNOW THAT WELL
EVERY THING THE HEART CONCEDES
IS WHAT GOOD PEOPLE REALLY NEED
THAT ISN'T VERY HARD TO SEE
EVERYTHING YOU DO IN LIFE
DOESN'T END WHEN THAT LIFE
PASSES FROM THE WEARY WORLD ONE DAY.

(FRANKLIN begins to cry.)

POTTY (CONT'D)

GIVE A HELPING HAND ANY WAY YOU CAN
EVEN THOUGH YOU THINK YOUR WORK IS THROUGH
MAKE AN EFFORT TO BE THE PERSON WE REMEMBER.
YES, REMEMBER
THAT MIGHT BE THE PERFECT THING
THE OH SO VERY PERFECT THING
THE VERY PERFECT THING FOR YOU TO DO.

FRANKLIN

Oh, very well. I'm such a fool for sentiment. I once
said "A fool and his money are soon parted." Having
too much sentiment can be just as foolish.

POTTY

What can you do?

FRANKLIN

We can't change the wish.

POTTY

I was hoping for that.

FRANKLIN

Absolutely not a chance!

POTTY

You could be their guardian angel.

FRANKLIN

I should have been Jefferson's guardian angel. What was he thinking of?

POTTY

Could you?

FRANKLIN

Be the guardian angel?

POTTY

Look after them. Guide them. Help them to be good citizens. Ben, these men are the only family I've ever known.

FRANKLIN

I'm perfectly aware of that.

POTTY

Please, Ben.

FRANKLIN

But leaving this mirror...

POTTY

Ben, the house is invisible to any human eyes. No one will ever call upon you for wisdom ever again.

FRANKLIN

Never?

POTTY

You're a prisoner of this mirror for a reason.

FRANKLIN

I never thought of it that way.

POTTY;

You are lacking one last good deed. That's your unfinished business, Ben. John Hancock let me in on the secret.

FRANKLIN

Hancock-- always making something clearer.

POTTY

So what do you say?

FRANKLIN

You've got the way to get me out of here.

POTTY

It's been arranged-- you only have to will it to be so.

MUSIC #14: "NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE"

POTTY & FRANKLIN

(sing)

THOUGH IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE
EVEN FOOLISH DREAMERS KNOW THAT WELL
EVERY THING THE HEART CONCEDES
IS WHAT GOOD PEOPLE REALLY NEED
THAT ISN'T VERY HARD TO SEE
EVERYTHING YOU DO CAN BE
IN LIFE DREAMS NEVER DIE
WHEN IN YOUR LIFE YOU STILL BELIEVE
IT'S POSSIBLE, QUITE POSSIBLE TO FLY

(FRANKLIN turns and exits to the outside world. POTTY fades once again from existence. The lights fade.)

MUSIC #14A: "1:7 PLAYOFF"

Perusal
Only
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION

ACT ONE
SCENE SIX

(Back at the crossroads. EDGAR, ALAN and POE are laughing about the crooked deals they have made in the directions racket. Suddenly, they are accosted by three very angry former CUSTOMERS.)

CUSTOMER #1

Listen you three birds, do you have any idea how lost you made my wife and I?

ALAN

He knows were birdsq! The jig is up!

POE

Would you shut your beak?

CUSTOMER #2

You had us go up some mountain for the love of everything sane and charged us twenty-five dollars!

ALAN

How much is that?

POE

Alan, please.

CUSTOMER #3

He charged me fifty! I think its time for a little tar and feathers.

ALAN

I'd love feathers again.

POE

Not with what they're going to mix them with, you bird brain!

CUSTOMER #2

String 'me up boys. Let's make them pay.

CUSTOMER #1

Really pay.

CUSTOMER #3

Which one do we start with?

CUSTOMER #1

Let's do them all at once.

(The CUSTOMERS grab the struggling Edgar, Alan and Poe and begin to drag them off. FRANKLIN appears.)

FRANKLIN

What's all the fuss around here? What's all the commotion?

CUSTOMER #1

These three... gentlemen are about to get a little-- no make that a lot of tar and feathers.

ALAN

Oh somebody save us.

POE

Shut up, I think I recognize this guy. And I'm not sure why!

FRANKLIN

Tar and feathers? Oh my goodness gracious, I haven't heard of that being done since the Revolution. Gentlemen, gentlemen. In this wonderful country of ours every soul is innocent until proven guilty.

POE

Are we a soul?

EDGAR

I'm hoping we are!

CUSTOMER #1

These birds cheated each and every one of us.

ALAN

Birds? They still think we're birds.

FRANKLIN

In what way, gentlemen, in what way?

CUSTOMER #1

They sold us directions "as the crow flies" for up to fifty dollars cash money. And those directions were bogus.

CUSTOMERS

Bogus! Bogus! Bogus!

FRANKLIN

Fifty dollars? Good grief.

CUSTOMERS

(ad lib)

That's what we say! Let's hang 'em and tar and feather them.

FRANKLIN

Now just wait a moment. Patience is a virtue.

CUSTOMERS

(unison)
Patience our backside!

FRANKLIN

Well they couldn't be all wrong.

CUSTOMER #3

You don't say.

FRANKLIN

I do. Why these gentlemen gave me excellent directions to Philadelphia.

ALAN

We did?

CUSTOMERS

They did?

FRANKLIN

Yes, yes, yes. And I'm a member of the government. Or I was. Ambassador to France at one time.

(The CUSTOMERS unhand the ex-birds but keep them under cover.)

CUSTOMER #1

You were?

CUSTOMER #2

And what did they charge you?

FRANKLIN

Why nothing at all!

CUSTOMER #2

Nothing?

FRANKLIN

Zero-- no dollars.

EDGAR

(staring accusatorily at Alan)

OK, who gave directions away for free?

CUSTOMER #2

Why?

FRANKLIN

Well, they weren't charging at all and I came along and asked them for directions, and I asked each of them how much they were charging.

ANGRY CUSTOMER #2

And they said they weren't charging nothing?

ALAN

I think there must be an angel for ex-Ravens!

FRANKLIN

And I told them they needed to charge a fair price for great directions. People would expect that.

ALAN

They would?

POE

Alan, please shut up!

CUSTOMER #1

The problem is, they was not good directions.

FRANKLIN

They were as the crow flies

CUSTOMER #1

So what?

FRANKLIN

My dear fellow, "as the crow flies" are the directions from a bird's eye view. If you were not looking for things as a bird would see them, you would never understand the directions you needed.

CUSTOMER #2

Now wait just a minute, here. How would I understand how a bird flies?

FRANKLIN

Why, I do.

CUSTOMER #2

You do.

FRANKLIN

Oh no, oh my friends, I assure you, I'm not. Only a fool would not understand how a crow flies.

CUSTOMER #2

Well, I'm no fool.

BEN FRANKLIN

Neither am I.

CUSTOMER #3

Nor me.

CUSTOMER #2

Or I.

(FRANKLIN smiles. He's got them.)

POE

I love this guy!

FRANKLIN

Well then? Politicians can be fools. They don't see anything in perspective.

CUSTOMER #2

I refuse to think like a politician.

CUSTOMER #1

Me neither.

CUSTOMER #3

Or me-- politicians are crazy.

FRANKLIN

More than you know, gentleman, more than you know.

CUSTOMER #3

So we have no grief against these birds?

FRANKLIN

Not unless you're a foolish politician.

CUSTOMER #2

Don't curse us with that!

FRANKLIN

Not unless I need to.

CUSTOMER #2

I guess we should apologize.

FRANKLIN

Yes, politicians never apologize.

CUSTOMER #3

They don't, do they?

FRANKLIN

No, they just create a roundabout excuse that goes around and around and goes absolutely nowhere.

CUSTOMER #3

I don't want to go absolutely nowhere in life.

CUSTOMER #1

And I don't want to be a fool.

CUSTOMER #3

And I know how a crow flies. Whatever the hell that is.

CUSTOMER #1

And me also.

FRANKLIN

Well then, you should all apologize and compensate these three gentlemen for their business being disrupted. Only a politician wouldn't care about the disruption of business. They'd only blame it on the other party.

CUSTOMER #2

They would, wouldn't they?

FRANKLIN

They would and still do.

CUSTOMER #1

(to the ex-birds)

I want to apologize to you, sir, I've done you and your friends a terrible disservice.

POE

Indeed you have. But let bygones be... whatever.

CUSTOMER #1

Here's fifty dollars as an apology. I won't be a politician for even one day on Earth.

(He hands Poe a fifty dollar bill. EDGAR grabs it and puts it in his pocket "for safe keeping.")

CUSTOMER #2

Or me-- never a politician!

(He hands POE another fifty dollar bill. EDGAR will pocket this one too.)

FRANKLIN

Excellent, excellent.

CUSTOMER #3

And not to be undone. I'm gonna make mine one hundred dollars, I'd rather fall over dead than be considered a politician.

(CUSTOMER #3 hands POE a one hundred dollar bill. But as CUSTOMER #3 hands POE the bill, he notices that the portrait of the bill matches the Franklin before them, and he reacts.)

CUSTOMER #3 (CONT'D)

This bloke on this bill. He looks a lot like you.

FRANKLIN

Why, yes he does. He's my twin brother.

(can't help being wry)

A politician.

CUSTOMER #3

A politician on money?

FRANKLIN

A politician is on money like a bee is on honey, dear boy.

CUSTOMER #3

Oh, that's right.

FRANKLIN

They're always beating around the bush.

CUSTOMER #2

They really are.

FRANKLIN

Just like the letter "W" -- why the way it's constructed, you would never know where it will go next.

(CUSTOMER #3 finally hands Poe the bill. EDGAR grabs it as before.)

CUSTOMER #2

Well, guess we should just go.

FRANKLIN

We aren't going to be one of those sneaky politicians.

CUSTOMER #1

Oh, let's not be one of those.

FRANKLIN

Especially one named Adams.

CUSTOMER #1

Okay, we'll look out for him.

FRANKLIN

You do that. He'd so appreciate being alive today!

CUSTOMER #2

Well, it's been wonderful meeting you, sir.

FRANKLIN

A delight.

CUSTOMER #1

Yes, indeed. Well goodbye

FRANKLIN

Yes, goodbye.

CUSTOMER #2

Sorry we doubted your friends.

FRANKLIN

Doubt is an important part of thinking.

CUSTOMER #2

You mean "trust but verify?"

FRANKLIN

Well, not exactly at this moment, but yes that principle is very very sound.

CUSTOMER #2

Goodbye

FRANKLIN

Goodbye.

CUSTOMERS

Goodbye!

(And they all leave.)

BEN FRANKLIN

Well, well, well, boys, it looks like I have collectively saved your backsides.

POE

Oh oh.

ALAN

He wants the money we've just been handed.

EDGAR

Just like a politician.

FRANKLIN

Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! I do not want any of your ill-gained money.

EDGAR

That's what all politicians say.

FRANKLIN

Don't you recognize me, yet, boys?

EDGAR

Should we?

FRANKLIN

That would be nice considering that I was the very
(MORE)

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

first human image you three birds saw when you were no longer ravens.

EDGAR

There's the "R" word.

ALAN

He knows all about is.

POE

The jig is up.

(ALAN flings himself to Franklin's feet.)

ALAN

Be merciful, kind sir, we're only birds of a feather.

FRANKLIN

Who was in the Enchanted Mirror?

EDGAR

The enchanted what?

POE

Oh my goodness.

ALAN

(rising)

Was that you?

FRANKLIN

No, it was Thomas Jefferson.

EDGAR ALAN & POE

Who?

FRANKLIN

Never mind, But he'd never save your hides like this. He's too full of principles.

POE

And you aren't?

FRANKLIN

Alive -yes--I was one of the greatest men of principles who ever lived, but as the one trapped in that confounded old mirror, I'm doing this, with much protest, as a favor to your old master, Nathaniel Potty.

EDGAR

Potty?

POE

Potty who?

FRANKLIN

Nathaniel Potty, you bird brains!

POE

It's coming back...

ALAN

I remember Potty-- But he's dead.

FRANKLIN

So am I, you three idiots! Potty and I are spirits with unfinished business.

ALAN

I think when blokes drink they have a lot of this unfinished business.

FRANKLIN

You need to get away from here. Take the money my little masquerade has provided you and scatter.

ALAN

Where do we go?

FRANKLIN

In pursuit of honest work.

ALAN

Honest?

EDGAR

What's that?

FRANKLIN

You know perfectly well what that is.

EDGAR

I guess we do.

ALAN

No more cheating other blokes.

(FRANKLIN will remove the money from Edgar's pocket and re-distribute it amongst the ex-birds.)

FRANKLIN

And do this without taking advantage of another.

POE

Oh, yeah, that too.

FRANKLIN

Now, get going all three of you. Leave this town, and try to find some work.

POE

What's that?

FRANKLIN

I'm sure if you apply yourselves you will find it.

MUSIC #15: "HONESTY"

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(sings)

HONESTY, A LITTLE BIT OF HONESTY
CAN MAKE ALL OF YOU THREE
THE FINEST OF MEN
HONESTY, GEORGE WASHINGTON HONESTY
CAN JUST HONESTLY
CHANGE ALL OF YOUR LIVES.

POE

(spoken)

Who's George Washington?

FRANKLIN

In this country, he was the first president and a great friend of mine. He was a leader and a great general and always kept his promises.

(sings)

SO HONESTY
GO OUT AND FIND SOME HONESTY
AND THEN ACTUALLY
YOU'LL CHANGE ALL YOUR LIVES
DON'T TELL THAT BIG FISH STORY
TO MAKE UP GLORY
A LIE WILL ONLY BITE YOU IN THE END
SO JUST USE HONESTY,
OLD FASHIONED HONESTY
BECAUSE MOST HONESTLY
WHY MUST YOU PRETEND?

EDGAR ALAN POE, THAT GREAT AUTHOR
SAID IT BEST DEAR FELLOWS
I WOULD SAY
WHAT A TANGLED WEB WE WEAVE
WHEN WE PRACTICE TO DECEIVE
ADVICE THAT ALMOST ALWAYS
LEADS THE WAY

HONESTY, A LITTLE BIT OF HONESTY
CAN MAKE ALL OF YOU THREE
THE FINEST OF MEN
HONESTY, GEORGE WASHINGTON HONESTY
CAN JUST HONESTLY

CHANGE ALL OF YOUR LIVES.

POE

Ok, guv'nor, whatever you say.

FRANKLIN

Promise?

POE

Oh yeah, as long as we're not politicians, the sky is wide open.

FRANKLIN

Me and my big mouth!

Perusal
Only
NOT FOR
PRODUCTION