FRAMED: A New Musical

By Adam Fried

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499) Advised by

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Ball State University
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FRAMED: A NEW MUSICAL

By Adam Fried

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A Note from the Director

When I began this process, I decided to write a new work that could break the pattern of musical theatre where many shows are driven by song and dance entertainment. Over the course of my education in musical theatre, I have found it difficult to find musicals that have substance to them; in both character and plot, many of the shows of this genre of performance are lacking, for lack of better word. *Framed* started out from an Art History Class I was lucky enough to take in London. I was inspired to see paintings in a different way, and realized how much I enjoyed this newfound personal perspective. I then thought about how I could contribute to my craft by making some of the best known masterpieces come to life with the voices of my perspective. I think we all have become a little used to appreciating art from the perspective of others; we are often told what to see when we look at new works. *Framed* is my attempt to change this pattern, and to instill a sense of personal perspective when you look at any work of art, whether it is paintings, sculptures, literature, film or theatre. What's far more interesting than what the artist intended is what you see, and many people forget that step. So, I invite you to see this workshop, and interpret as you will. Please note that we are very early in development, and this is solely intended to allow my writings to get heard, over a performance that is, for lack of better word, picture perfect.

Adam Fried
**FRAMED: A New Musical**  
The Company

Nikolai  
Florence  
Venus  
David  
Mona  
Lisa  
Olga  

**Thursday:**  
Alessander  
Natasha  
Charles/ Dorian Gray  
Kristof Malade  
Lawrence Bradbury

**Friday/ Saturday:**  
Alex Frew  
Amanda Hummer  
Jeffrey Dexter  
Mark Whetstone  
Tommy Bullington

Assistant Director  
Stage Manager  
Costumes  
Written, Directed and Conceived by

Martin Blumberg  
Laura Smith  
Patricia Atherton  
Adam Fried

**SPECIAL THANKS**

Bill and Claudia Fried  
Nick Hussong  
Stevie Hahn  
Dr. Michael O’Hara  
Patricia Atherton  
Tony Sirk

I would like to personally thank the cast, crew and anyone else that helped make this possible!
By Adam Fried

April 20th, 21st and 22nd at 7:30 pm and 23rd at 2:30 pm
The Music Room in the Fine Arts Building
Ball State University
### FRAMED: A New Musical

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**FRAMED**: A New Musical

The Artwork:

- *Song of the Nightingale*
  By William Adophe-Bourgereau

- *The Village Blacksmith*
  By Mihaly Von Munkacsy

- *David*
  By Michaelangelo

- *Mona Lisa*
  By Leonardo Da Vinci

- *Venus De Milo*

- *The American Gothic*
  By Grant Wood
The Portrait of Dorian Gray  
By Vincent Van Gogh

The Sacrifice of Flowers  
By Mihaly Von Munkacsy

Thank you all for coming and Enjoy the show! 😊
When I began this process, I started with the single notion that I wanted to write about a love story from paintings, but really had no clue where to begin. Being from Dayton, Ohio, I decided to start with artwork that would have personal significance for me. I therefore made the venture to the Dayton Art Institute, and caught my inspiration like love at first sight. There they were: *The Song of the Nightingale* and *The Village Blacksmith* staring at one another right before my eyes. I immediately responded to their chemistry and the rest was all history, so to speak.

So I had my main characters set, but now needed to build a framework of characters into my story. I knew I would invoke a greater audience reaction if I spoke the voices of well-known masterpieces. The importance for their familiarity was crucial to emphasize my point of “personal perspective.” I still very much wanted to tie in works that I had a personal relation to. During the spring of 2004, I was lucky enough to make the trip abroad to study in London and travel through many of Europe’s renowned art capitals: Paris, Venus, Florence, and Rome. The rest of my characters: Venus (*Venus de Milo*), David (Michelangelo’s *David*), Mona, Lisa (Davinci’s *Mona Lisa*), Olga and Alecander (The American Gothic) were all from pieces that I myself have actually seen in person. Natasha’s piece: *The Sacrifice of Flowers* was the only character I had never seen before. Her story was necessary to bring out the “artistic class” notion out of paintings that are promised to each other because they were from the same artist. Olga and Alecander were the perfect examples of paintings that supported Nikolai to stick to his own country and to forget about others who were different. It was only when they saw his love was real that they knew they could not stand in his way.

I next introduced *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* because it was a universal story that would span my artistic spectrum to literature. I knew that if I only stuck to paintings and sculptures I would limit my ability to impact my audiences. Therefore, I thought it important to include mixed media to assist in telling the story so that I would be able to address film, theatre, art, and literature – all areas of artistry. I chose each of these characters because I knew they would be recognizable and that each character would speak to different audience members. I brought these characters to life, but ultimately was going to have to overcome audience member’s pre-conceived notions about these pieces. Fortunately, my story was facilitated by the cast and the wonderful convention of theatre where audiences suspend their disbelief.

I have learned many great lessons over the course of this year but most of all how to tell a story that not only fits a universal framework but speaks a personal voice. Though no performance is ever perfect, I cannot but help thinking how well this experience has **FRAMED** my educational work ethic and four year journey into the theatre. The door has now been opened, my voice been heard; I only think my own future is going to be, from here on out, *Picture Perfect.*
April 20th, 21st, and 22nd at 7:30pm and 23rd at 2:30pm
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FRAMED: A NEW MUSICAL
By Adam Fried
COMPLETE SONG LIST

ACT ONE
Prologue
Back in my Youth
I Will Find You
Friendship
One of Your Own Kind
Each Night I Look for Your Face
Mona Lisa Smile
Dorian Gray
I Will Find You REPRISE
One Step Closer

(Full Company)
(Lawrence Bradbury)
(Nikolai, Florence)
(David, Venus, Mona, Lisa, Florence)
(Natasha, Olga, Aleksander)
(Florence)
(Mona, Lisa)
(Olga)
(Nikolai, Florence)
(Nikolai, Florence, David, Full Company)

ACT TWO
A Night with my Nightingale
Stuck on You
Journey of Love
Our Ageless Song
One Step Closer REPRISE
Tormented Living
Serendipity
Picture Perfect

(Kristof Malade)
(David)
(Natasha)
(Olga, Aleksander)
(Nikolai)
(Dorian Gray)
(Nikolai, David, Kristof, Florence)
(Full Company)
Framed: A New Musical

Act I: Scene I

Overture (Full Company)

*The Overture is completely a capella singing performed by the full company. The basis of some of the major musical themes will be covered in harmony, and towards the end of the opening, the open vowel sounds will gradually transcend into the words: “Look inside. Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder. See, Look in side, what do you see? Tell you’re story…”*

Overture fades into a museum display with sculptures and paintings and various people walking about. This museum is ideally one similar to the Tate Britain, however since most of the characters come from well known art masterpieces from all over the world, it is indeed a fictitious location. Lawrence Bradbury, the museum curator and art historian enters the room followed by a group of students as the music dies down.

BRADBURY: Careful! Do try to stay quiet; this is a museum after all! Now, gather round quickly so I can tell you about two of my most favorite pieces of our entire collection. The painting to the left, entitled The Village Blacksmith, dated 1875 is by Mihaly Von Munkacsy, a renowned Hungarian artist born 1844, died 1900. Munkacsy was one of Hungary’s best known painters of realism. Look at the detail and thought put into the structure of this painting. His face is almost haunted as he seems somewhat unhappy with his life; almost
as if he was missing something. Notice how Munkacsy was very genuine to his true form of realism as he gave our blacksmith a very muscular arm for such a job would require, and his tattered, worn clothing seems very appropriate as well, almost as if he’d just finished a job. My favorite part about this room, however, is the way in which this painting seems to “Interact” with the one next to it. He seems to gaze at this fine lady, the focus of William-Adolphe Bouguereau’s The Song of the Nightingale. This beautiful young girl, posed perfectly on this park stone bench seems to gaze back at the blacksmith just as longingly as he does. She seems, if you will, a bit removed from herself. Now of course this is ridiculous, her painter Bouguereau is French and she was painted 20 years later; but still, it almost seems as if these two paintings if it were possible, were alive with two souls captured out of their own love story. A story very familiar to my own...

(Song - Back in my Youth)

Lawrence:  *Back in my youth I had found*
             *A girl her name was Isabel.*
             *She came and turned my world around.*
             *And soon in love with her I fell.*

             *Yet we had dreams that could not be.*
             *Her family moved her away.*
             *From the on, I swore to cherish her,*
             *And thus my heart began to swell.*
And I longed for
Her to return.
And then I knew that
I had to find her.
I searched for her all day.
I missed her day and night.

Though I found love.
I still remember
What it felt
To be in her arms
Holding her....

Yet I lost her.
I lost her. Lost her....

Yet when I look at these two loves
I feel as if I'm with her still.
In them I see my little dove.
And hope my broken heart would fill.

Through these years I see it well. My unforgotten, Isabel....

Alright, enough with the crazy romantic ideas of an old man. Now let us move onto the next room where we will focus more on European realism in the twentieth century.

The students begin to exit the room as Lawrence Bradbury turns to the paintings and says:

Goodnight, my mystic love birds, until tomorrow.
SCENE II.

In this gallery, The European Realism Wing, we find Florence (Song of the Nightingale), and Nikolai (the Village Blacksmith). Among them are their rather well known friends, Venus (Venus de Milo), David (Michelangelo’s David), and the unbeknownst twins Mona and Lisa (DaVinci’s Mona Lisa). They have all been working the crowds of the patrons, listening to every word being said about them. Once the coast is clear – that is once Florence and the students leave - the paintings and sculptures all simultaneously unfreeze.

ALL: Whew!

FLORENCE: It’s about time they left. I cannot stand it when they just sit there and stare, mindlessly like they need to figure something out. I don’t know how you do it Nikolai. You just sit there and put up with all the awful things he says about you. He thinks he knows us so well. But how can he, Nikolai? He couldn’t possibly understand could he?

NIKOLAI: Darling, calm down. I know those things he said may have upset you but I assure you he is just a kind wise old man that likes to lead by his mind. He is just trying to inspire Art history to the students, don’t be so upset. We should be so lucky; his words keep us all alive. His words can’t hurt us, my darling.
FLORENCE: But Nikolai, he is catching onto us. Somehow he knows how we feel about each other. But of course he does: I cannot hide my feelings. How can I remain calm when I am trapped in this permanent torture? I long for you, my love, and though I am blessed to see you each day, the fact remains I am prisoner to my home miles away. How can I be comforted by one I cannot touch? My home is France, and yours is Hungary. Two hearts separated by a world between us; it is so hard, Nikolai. Too hard, maybe...

NIKOLAI: But my love, please don’t say such things. It is not so bad is it? Every night your beautiful face comforts mine, and greets me in the morning when I wake.

FLORENCE: You are too kind. I just wish somehow I could join you and together we can make a home together.

DAVID: Will you two calm the lover talk down? Some of us have been stuck here a bit longer than you have and we don’t want to hear your lovers quarrel.

NIKOLAI: Give her a break David. She just gets upset and nervous when the curator comes by. The last time he moved the exhibits around she felt lost for weeks. Try to cut her some slack. If you remember, she was the new girl once.
DAVID: Fine, fine but just know that you two have it easy. It must be SO comfortable living in a painting when I can’t even move. I’ve had an itch on my toe since November. Do you even know what that feels like? And I think I’m starting to crack! Oh God. There it goes!

VENUS: At least you have arms to itch David; I’ve been helpless for years.

MONA/LISA: There’s always something to smile about!

FLORENCE: Did anyone ever mention to you that you’re not the REAL David.

DAVID: What did she just say?

NIKOLAI: Nothing- she didn’t mean it.

VENUS: Here we go again!

FLORENCE: Well he’s not. The real David is at the Academia Gallery in Florence. He is just a cast reproduction.

VENUS: Please be gentle, dear. You know how he gets – he’s very sensitive.

DAVID: Oh and so you are so much better-

MONA/LISA: Oh boy!

DAVID: -The original masterpieces. Excuse me for not graveling at your feet. You know you are talking to a Michelangelo here, not that it matters. You know ever since he moved you here Florence, you and your nightingale have
been so happy that you would think life was just perfect. God, you’d think that racism and inequality would be excluded in an Art museum but I guess we’re just the material proof of that. I’m still not good enough and I am supposed to be the perfect man for god’s sake. What are you two smirking about anyways?

MONA: Is he being negative again?

LISA: Look on the bright side; you have more space than any of us paintings.

MONA: We have to share a canvas and no one even knows that we’re twins.

VENUS: And must I reemphasize the fact you are allowed to use ALL of your body parts? Now Florence, you upset him too much. We’re going to be fine. The curator said there won’t be another exhibition for months. Do please try to keep it down, we’re trying to get some rest; we have another long day at the Museum tomorrow.

FLORENCE: Maybe David’s right. I mean ever since I’ve found you I haven’t thought of moving or anything else for that matter. My mind has been elsewhere with you like some sort of dream; perhaps a fantasy too good to be true. Now I’ve been dreading the thought of being alone. I don’t know what I would do Nikolai if I can’t stay next to you.
NIKOLAI: Shh, relax my sweet. Did you not hear him say that we are his
most favorite paintings in the Museum? I think he finds comfort in our loving
glances towards one another. Why would he separate us if he enjoys what we
share? I promise we will be always be together.

FLORENCE: But what if we do get separated?

NIKOLAI: I will find you.

FLORENCE: How?

(Nikolai song /duet - I Will Find You)

Nikolai: People always stop and stare and Look at us.
But I don’t mind. Cause they don’t matter.
Do you ever stop and wonder what’s the fuss?
Or if their jealous that their dreams might shatter?

Don’t you understand that you’re the light of my life?

I look at you, and feel love.
You fill me up to the brim each day.
Our souls have been joined from heaven above
And that mean’s you’re mine, to stay....

AND I will find you
In my arms.
There isn’t an ocean to deep
There isn’t a mountain to steep
I’ll make it to you through these charms
I will find you in my arms.

Florence: I remember the first day I arrived.
I was terrified. But I survived.
Because of you, you helped me through.
And I realized, how much I love you.

But what if our dreams are shattered apart?
If separated, my life would be only art
You give me life and make me feel safe.
You’re confidence makes you seem so brave.

Together:

AND I will find you
In my arms.
There isn’t an ocean to deep.
There isn’t a mountain to steep.
I’ll make it to you through these charms
And I will find you in my arms.

Nikolai: Don’t you understand that you’re the light of my life?
Till the end of time…
Now go to sleep, my love. We have another big day tomorrow.

Fades to Blackout.

Scene III.

Lights come up, gradually. It is a brand new day - the next morning - and Nikolai is gone. A few other paintings are missing as well. David wakes up first.

DAVID: Wonderful. Well somebody is going to freak out. Great this will make my splitting headache that much better.

VENUS: Shh don’t wake her! Just allow her to keep her dreams for as long as she can. Her happiness may go away as soon as she finds out.
FLORENCE: Mmm morning my love. Finds out what? My love?

NIKOLAI? What's happened? I do not understand? Where's Nikolai?

We've been separated! But he promised! Who did this?

DAVID: Venus you have to do something. I can't work under her psycho-nervous conditions. Her voice is giving me a migraine!

VENUS: Florence honey, you have to calm down.

DAVID: Yeah I can't tell you anything till you shut your trapper.

MONA: David that is no way to handle the situation. You have to smile at her.

DAVID: Right, the way you two have the same sort of creepy smirk. I don't think so – if I COULD move my face I don't think I would be going for that expression. It might scare away the customers.

LISA: How rude!

FLORENCE: Where's Nikolai? I can't live without him. I am going to be so scared, alone. Who did this? It was you wasn't it! What did you do!?

DAVID: Why am I always the bad guy? Now seeing that I have been in this position since the BEGINNING OF TIME, I would say I could hardly be the one to do this. Calm down Frenchy so I can explain. Last night our beloved curator, Lawrence Bradbury passed away in his sleep. Or at least that's what I
heard. My ears are getting a little dusty. Apparently we got a new Curator who is making some changes. His name is either Baryshnikov or Batman. I couldn’t quite make it out.

VENUS: Kristof Malade, thank you very much. That’s his name.

MONA: How did you know?

LISA: Yes, Did you see him?

VENUS: Keep your panties on girls. I just happened to overhear the same conversation.

FLORENCE: But he was such a sweet, dedicated man. I feel awful about the way I spoke of him yesterday.

DAVID: Yes I know, it’s touching. A Kodak moment. But for whatever reason, your precious Nikolai and a few other pieces have been removed from this section of the gallery.

FLORENCE: But how can he do this? He hasn’t even properly examined the way we were arranged. I need him next to me. He’s my knight in shining armor.

LISA: Hey Sister, you gotta turn that frown-

MONA: -Upside down!
DAVID: Ladies, easy on the happy talk. Florence, you have got to get a grip and realize that everything is going to be okay. You want protection? No Problem! You want strength? Hey, there's nothing better than a solid rock friendship.

(SONG – Friendship DAVID, VENUS, MONA, LISA, FLORENCE.)

David: Princess, *The time has come to open your eyes.*  
*And let you know, much to your surprise*  
*That the happiness you had once felt whilst with him,*  
*And the emptiness that now makes you seem so grim,*  
*Can be overturned by your friends who will fill you to the brim!*

Oh there's nothing like a Solid Rock Friendship.  
The kind that will last you for centuries.  
Through thick through thin, or rain or snow  
Can't you see that Florence, there's so much more to know?

Venus: A friend will always care for you no matter what!  
*And help you through the times you find you're in a rut.*  
*We're there for you and will cheer you up when you are down.*  
You can count on us the ones who love you all around!

Mona: The people who are there for you…

Lisa: You're Friends!  
The one's who will care until….

Mona: The End!

Both: You know we're going to be around for a long long while  
So why not turn that frown, right upside down, and SMILE?

All: When you're feeling low…  
*And you need Protection.*  
*We're your core connection!*  
To help you know… that
Oh there's nothing like a solid rock Friendship.
We'll help you through your loneliness and make you smile.
If ever in pain and need we are your mendship.
If put to the test, for you we'll go the extra mile.
We're here for you, so no more blue!

David: So fear no more, not like before. Florence, we're going to be around, a while.

Fades to Blackout.

Scene IV.

Lights come up in the East Wing. Nikolai wakes up in a darker room with completely new paintings around him. Now accompanying him is the well-known American Gothic (Olga and Alecsander) and the Sacrifice of Flowers (Natasha).

NIKOLAI: What? Where am I?

OLGA: Greetings. You are in the East Wing. What's your name?

NIKOLAI: What happened? Why was I moved? For what exhibition?

ALECSANDER: No specific exhibition. Word has it we have a new curator. Look calm down, everything's alright. My name is Alecsander and this is my wife Olga.

NIKOLAI: But you sound Russian.

OLGA: That's right, yes.

NIKOLAI: But I thought your title is called –
ALECSANDER: THE AMERICAN GOTHIC yes we know- it’s a long story that we don’t want to get into right now.

NIKOLAI: I’ll bet. I’m Sorry; I don’t mean to be rude. My name is Nikolai. I come from Hungary. I am by Munkacsy and was hung in the European Realism Wing, until this morning that is. I just felt very disoriented waking up and not having her there.

OLGA: Uh oh, who might that be?

NIKOLAI: (Sigh) the love of my life. Her name is Florence. She is a painting by Bougereau from France. I cannot believe we were separated. How ironic, I was just assuring her last night that this would never happen.

NATASHA: Who is this?

ALECSANDER: Good morning Natasha. This is our new neighbor, Nikolai. He is also Munkacsy. Natasha comes from a Munkacsy entitled The Sacrifice of Flowers.

NATASHA: Please call me Tasha. We have heard rumors about a lost painting from our side of the collection. Welcome home Nikolai – I have been expecting you.
NIKOLAI: Please, thank you all for your kindness and hospitality. But I still have many questions. Can you tell me why we have a new curator? What has happened to Lawrence?

ALECSANDER: He died in his sleep. Poor man.

OLGA: God rest his soul. Now, tell us about this Florence.

NATASHA: Please, Olga. Don’t be nosey; don’t bother the man about a silly city in Italy. Let our guest have a few minutes to gather his thoughts.

NIKOLAI: She is the most beautiful thing in all of the world. She has a voice like her nightingale and yet she is so fragile alone. I must find her— I assured her I would.

NATASHA: It is impossible. You must stay here with us, where you belong. This is your home Nikolai. We’ve been missing something here. Why not try to cheer up and not spoil your homecoming. You must be excited about your new life here. I can assure you I will make you very happy. Perhaps you would like some tea?

OLGA: I hate to say it dear, but she is right. You would be advised to try to forget her. We have no indication of any rearrangement with this new curator. It may be a very long time before you see her again.

NATASHA: If you see her again.
NIKOLAI: I’ll die.

ALECSANDER: Nikolai, you must cheer up. You must miss your sense of Western culture. Don’t you long for Hungary and people who treat you like family? You are better off with your own kind; you need people who come from your roots. In Russia life is a festival waiting to happen. Why not spend some time with our Natasha, eh? Give her a chance. She will show you what living is about.

(Song – One of your Own Kind – Natasha.)

Natasha:  
Forget about your troubles, my strong Blacksmith.  
You’re life before was nothing but a sweet prologue.  
It’s time to know yourself and your kind, the people with  
The sense of life and culture to lead you through the fog.  

Do you think we have the fortune to choose whom we want?  
We have an obligation to pass on our tradition.  
Enjoy the ones who know you best without a front!  
Our western life and discipline always raises our coalition.  

Forget about her! An Frenchman with no real love to give-  
She’s much too different for you to be so culturally blind.  
A fish my love a bird but tell me, where will they live?  
It’s time to see, my dear sweetie that one should always be…  
   With your own kind.  

One of your own kind.  
Be with your own kind.  
The ones who’ll love you for being you, the man you are.  

And if you don’t mind.  
Or if you know pine,
We stick together 'til the end just ask the Czar!

One of your own kind.
The kind you won’t find,
Just simply sitting on a bench with a blank look out!

Until you have dined,
With us your own kind,
You’ll erase the very last trace you that have of doubt.

Nikolai, just give us a chance!
Then maybe, we could have a dance?
You’ll never have to look behind,
Once you’ve loved one of your own kind!
ONE of your own KIND!

(Olga and Aleksander sing back up vocals – repeating “One of your Own Kind” in rhythmic Russian sounding patterns!)

Song fades to Blackout.

Scene V.

Lights come up viewing the interior of a very sterile office. This is the office of Kristof Malade. He is extremely filthy and his home is both barren of style and a good cleaning. KRISTOF: (On the phone) Yes, I said by tomorrow. Don’t you get it, Charles, I am now the HEAD of the museum and by that fact when I say a deadline is near I want some ACTION! I’ve waited eight miserable years for that old man to wither up and die just so I can get some goddamn order in that nutshell he calls a Gallery. When I’m through with my few changes, it will be the talk of the town and the greatest money maker too. Now I want you to
remove the free admission sign from the front doors immediately. How are we supposed to make any money if people are walking their little rugrats for free? Charge five, ten pounds if you have to but I want an admission fee! Oh and also cancel all of those stupid art history tours- I don’t need to bring more stupid people around my gallery if they can’t figure it out themselves, we won’t do it for them! Do it NOW! [pause] Charles? What are you doing still talking to me I said NOW! Thank you goodbye you idiot!

*Lights fade to Blackout.*

**SCENE VI.**

*Lights fade in on Florence, who sings as if the others don’t even exist around her.*

**Song – Florence Each Night I look for your Face**

Florence:  
*Each Night I look for your face.*  
*The very face I once knew.*  
*I seem long for your warm embrace.*  
*I only want to see you.*  

*Whatever happened to my might?*  
*I used to do so well on my own.*  
*Without you I feel such fright.*  
*I cannot handle being alone.*  

*You were my knight in shining armor.*  
*You were the bravery of this team.*  
*Where have you gone into the night*  
*Without a single trace of sight?*  
*You used to make me smile and beam.*
Each night I look for your face.
Longing to feel you're touch.
Yearning to see your eyes.
To feel you're strong and warm embrace.

How can our love be true?
Why does it hurt me so?
Don't you know how I miss you.
Why did you ever let me go?

Do you ever stop and think what makes us live on?
Have you ever known what it's like to never be touched.
I wish I could live a life the life that I have yearned to clutch.
A life that would give such joy. A love of a handsome boy.

Were you just a dream a dancing fantasy?
My Nikolai, I miss you so much....

VENUS: She still looks really upset.

DAVID: Oh and I'm supposed to care? I mean I don't even understand how she can be upset after today. I'm the one who had the little kids point and laugh at me for about fifteen minutes 'til their parents finally pulled them away. Don't they know that I'm Art? I've never been so embarrassed in my life! (beat) Alright, I mean I did try telling her to move on and embrace her friends but she won't listen to me.

MONA: That's because your approach is a little bit...

LISA: Rough around the edges.

MONA: Stiff?
LISA: Stone Cold? (laughs) Maybe we could try to cheer her up.

MONA: Yeah we love to make people laugh and smile. Did you know that we have an act?

LISA: Well it's not really an act but we like to perform it anyway. We think it's great.

MONA: Can we?

DAVID: Oh boy.

VENUS: Sounds nice girls, why don't you give it a try.

DAVID: Goodbye peace and quiet, hello migraine!

LISA: Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. We would like to command your attention please!

Florence is still crying, not paying attention.

MONA: Um, Yes we need everyone's attention for the Mona and Lisa world renowned show of entertainment! Do something Lisa.

LISA: Uh, We need a fine female volunteer to help participate in this magic defying act!

VENUS: Me! Pick me! (Mocks another voice) Please me! Me!

DAVID: Oy vey.

VENUS: (coughs) Florence.
MONA: Did I hear someone say Florence? Thank you so much, you pretty maiden.

FLORENCE: What?

LISA: You’re the lucky winner of a European cruise for two.

MONA: Well not really, but you *can* look around you and see half of the delights of EUROPE!

FLORENCE: I don’t get it.

LISA: Wait - I’ve got a good one. What do you call a beautiful maiden who’s alone with her nightingale on display in a museum?

MONA: A beautiful maiden who’s alone with her nightingale on display in a museum.

LISA: Trapped! Get it? We’re all trapped inside our paintings.

DAVID: I’d much rather hear a Hard Rock concert.

VENUS: Give her a break.

FLORENCE: I don’t understand how you two share the same painting.

MONA: How else do you think we could keep that smirk up for so long? We take turns with who is on display.

FLORENCE: Is there really no way I could see my Nikolai?

LISA: Honey, you need to look on the brighter side of life.
(SONG – MONA LISA Smile)

Mona: If ever life has made you feel like you are down.
Lisa: We look on the bright side and resist the frown.
Mona: If life throws you lemons, don’t just let them hit!
Lisa: Make freshly squeezed lemonade without the pit!

Mona: Once Lisa and I had felt so very blue.
Lisa: Because that there were two of us, nobody knew.
Mona: Then suddenly bright ideas began to pile.
Lisa: And we decided to stump ‘em with our SMILE!

Together: Mona Lisa Smile
It’s not really a smirk, but it certainly works awhile!
Go the Extra Mile
And fight away your sorrows with a SMILE!

If fighting your troubles is what you would want
There’s nothing better than to put on a happy front!

Mona: Once you’ve started the feeling it’s really quite contagious
Because when people are smiling, they really feel courageous!
So you’ve got to swim the Nile? So what!
Put on a Mona Lisa SMILE!

Lisa: No manly man would ever want a frumpy wench.
So help yourself look happier there on your bench!
At face value you will start to feel good from within!
Because happiness has overcome you with one big gracious Grin!

Together: Mona Lisa Smile
It’s not really a smirk, but it certainly works a while!
Go the Extra Mile
And win him back with one great beautiful, slappy happy SMILE!

Mona: Feel better?
Lisa: I knew you would!

Blackout.
Lights dimly come up back in the East Wing, in the evening. Everyone is asleep save one. There is a repetitive pounding sound.

ALECSANDER: Nikolai? What is that sound? What are you doing at such an hour? You should be resting for tomorrow.

NIKOLAI: But how can I possibly rest when I promised?

ALECSANDER: What did you promise?

NIKOLAI: I promised her I would never let this happen. I assured her if it did I would definitely find her. I’m a man of my word Alexsander. I must find her. Wait someone’s coming! Freeze.

Kristof Malade enters with a Lantern followed by his little assistant, Charles.

KRISTOF: Mmm Yes. I don’t really think this room needs any attention. It’s perfectly hideous. And they call this art. I would like to add some sculptures to this room in addition to removing him. This Munkacsy. He is too much a downer to the energy of this room. Maybe we can give him to good will or even better Camden Market! Haha! Got it? Come come quickly Charles, we still have much to do.

CHARLES: But your honor, why do we have to do this now? Can’t we wait until morning?
KRISTOF: Oh you really are such a lovable... idiot. The answer, my stupid monsieur is because I work better at Night- the daylight ruins the true essence of these paintings- it makes them all look far more cheerful than they really are. I need to see them at their raw state. Besides, I hate dealing with people. If you come during the day there will be smelly children everywhere and I would lose my lunch. Now, as I said earlier come quickly -I'm losing time- we still have three more wings to go. And I must go see that Nightingale piece. It is absolutely exquisite. You know it is true what they say; the French definitely know their art. I am thinking about removing her from the gallery for my more personal collection.

CHARLES: But isn't that illegal, oh brilliant one?

KRISTOF: In this gallery I am the rule maker, Charles. You know what that means?

CHARLES: That you can do what you want, when you want it your Great-ship?

KRISTOF: Precisely! Now onward I say! We haven't got all night.

Kristof and Charles exit the East Wing.
NIKOLAI: That was a close call. I really hate that man. He is no curator at all. He doesn’t even appreciate our value and what it means to share us with the children.

ALECSANDER: You need to open your eyes to the greater reality. You are here, and you really should try to make the best of things. Did you not hear what he said about you? He was thinking about removing you from the gallery because of your negativity. He can see that.

NIKOLAI: But Alecsander. More importantly did you hear what he said about Florence? He wants to remove her from the gallery -to someplace I will never see her again. Forgive me, but I must get back to work- there’s no time!

_Resumes hammering on his metal._

ALECSANDER: What are you doing, dear friend?

NIKOLAI: I am a village Blacksmith. In my country, I am known as a strong man- one of the strongest. Surely I must be able to break free from my boundaries. There must be some way to escape this frame and get to her.

ALECSANDER: You really love her, don’t you?

NIKOLAI: More than anything in the world.

ALECSANDER: You are lucky, my friend. I can see by your passion she must love you eternally. Olga and I used to be very much like you and your
Florence. Now she seems to be a bit tired of me – but to be honest I think she resents…

NIKOLAI: Your love?

ALECSANDER: I was going to say being trapped in our label.

NIKOLAI: What do you mean?

ALECSANDER: Perhaps, my friend it is time to tell you why two foolish Russians would be preserved in a painting entitled THE AMERICAN GOTHIC. Years ago, I was very much like you. I was in love with a beautiful young maiden, my lovely Olga, but we too were separated by the boundaries of our own worlds.

NIKOLAI: You mean you weren’t always together? But how?

ALECSANDER: I’ll get to that, my friend. Please, have some patience. Let me see. Olga was originally a painting from one like your self another Nikolai– Nikolai Alexeev of Russia. Her title was A Young Girl in Russian Costume, 1837. I was just a young boy from a fresh painting by Orest Kiprensky entitled Alexander Pushkin; and every day I was lucky enough to look at my Olga in her costume from across the room. We were just like you: two lovers who fell in love at first sight. But our love grew so that we were torn not to be in each other’s arms. Even worse than ROMEO AND
JULIET, our love was forbidden by boundaries that we could, in fact break. I had to find a way to join her. I had heard a rumor that there was indeed a way to leave your painting but it was extremely dangerous and would have a terrible price to pay.

NIKOLAI: So you did figure out the key to traveling outside our world.

ALECSANDER: Yes. But you do not understand. Olga and I were foolish—we were so eager to join each other we did not care at what price. We nearly lost our lives. You see, we were both very beautiful young paintings when we were separate. And when you leave your world, you age very quickly. If you are not careful, you will not survive in time to even make it to the next world. We were so grateful to find each other we inhabited the nearest painting we could find and assumed we could make a home out of it regardless. Yet, we have forever been punished by our mistakes. Olga hates being labeled the American Gothic. You see, before, she was so young, beautiful and full of Russian spirit and pride. But more importantly, she was happy. When we arrived here, we were trapped in our new home. Olga was prisoner to her old maid look and to be placed as an American on top was torture. Of course we had each other to make the best of our new life, but we were both old and so unhappy with being placed as citizens of a country we new nothing about. We
did not want to be stripped of our Russian culture, our roots and our beautiful ancestry. We were made the model citizens of a barren farm culture in the middle of nowhere. The poster faces of a lie; we could never represent something we were not. We still love each other so, but we miss our families and our country. We sometimes wonder if it was worth the price to be so foolish. I am sorry for not telling you sooner, but you see I was trying to protect you from making our same mistake.

NIKOLAI: I do not care if I Florence is a hundred years older; I believe she would still be the love of my life and the most precious thing I had ever seen. I would give anything to be with her. Surely you must remember how it felt? Please, Alec, you must tell me how I may join her before Kristof takes her away for himself forever.

ALECSANDER: I can see that you have made up your mind. I must say I admire your courage and devotion to this lady. She must be very lucky. However, for you it will be particularly difficult. There is another fly in the ointment.

NIKOLAI: What do you mean?

OLGA: You must pass through the most terrible of painting's to get through to your Florence's room.
ALECSANDER: My darling, how long have you been awake?

OLGA: Long enough, my prince. Aleksander Pushkin, you should be ashamed of yourself. Do you not know how every day I am proud to be a citizen of your home? With you, I am still in Russia, with you I am home. A silly title, maybe, a little ironic, perhaps. But I have never been so lucky than to call you mine. Would you deny this to our new young friend? You should not have assumed he would want his fate any different than our own.

NIKOLAI: So you can tell me how I may get to my Florence?

OLGA: But of course I can.

ALECSANDER: There is an important danger you must be aware of, Nikolai. Your journey is filled with even greater dangers than ours was.

NIKOLAI: There is nothing that can stop me from going.

OLGA: Please, you must listen first.

(Song – DORIAN GRAY)

Olga: There’s a legend, a mystery, a story long beguiled
Of the haunting myth by Mister Oscar Wilde.
His tale is of the beautiful master Dorian Gray.
Whose horrible painting still survives today?
And you must pass through his painting much to our dismay!
To reunite with Florence, you must take heed of what I will say...

There was a man, who was beautiful named Dorian Gray
With many dark secrets, which he kept inside.
Who once had a portrait done of him because he was vain
By a mystical artist with dark magic which he provided.

Of his horrible corruption his portrait was known to display.  
And if ever he viewed it his beauty would soon fade away.  
He would transfer his beauty for a horrible exterior  
Of his monstrous character that could handle no mirror.

Oh Dorian Gray. 
The wrath and display  
You must not view his face  
Or he will permanently trade your place.

Few have survived this gruesome quest  
You have to bravely face the test  
If you can outwit his wrathful spirit  
And over come your need to fear it.

Oh Dorian Gray  
He's such a horrid disgrace  
With many tricky things to say  
You must not ever let him make you see his face.

You must be brave to face that face and all for love,  
He'll try to make you help him erase his history of,  
His horrible corrupt and haunting name which even to this Day  
Has filled the Artist world with shame, the wrath of Dorian Gray!

Song fades to Blackout.

Scene VIII

Lights fade up to Morning. Venus is frantically attempting to get Florence's attention.

VENUS: Florence, honey! You have got to wake up. This news can't wait.  

Florence? Oh, come on. Florence? Hey little birdie, a little assistance please?

The nightingale squawks as loudly as possible.
FLORENCE: What is it? My goodness you gave me such a fright?

VENUS: I'm sorry for waking you but you must hear this news. Well -

MONA: We've heard that your man Nikolai is going to come to rescue you.

LISA: He's found out the secret to traveling outside paintings and he's going to head this way!

DAVID: *(Sarcastic)* Hurray! Great. That's just so wonderful. I couldn't be happier. Hit the snooze will ya? I'm going back to bed.

VENUS: Shh, David don't spoil the good news.

FLORENCE: My goodness, he is so brave. He said he would find me. I hope it is not dangerous.

DAVID: It's actually very dangerous. He probably won't survive just so you know.

MONA/LISA: DAVID!

VENUS: Don't listen to him honey, he's just got a stiff neck. Well I suppose a stiff everything. You know what I mean.

DAVID: Well it's true, I just don't want her to get her feelings crushed if he doesn't make it to rescue her.
FLORENCE: Why are you being so cruel to me David? I am so happy at this news but of course terrified that my love will be hurt. What kind of friendship are you offering? I don’t need this negativity right now.

MONA: That’s right Florence. You tell him girl.

LISA: Make sure he knows nobody’s raining on your parade today!

DAVID: I, I’m sorry Florence. I’ll just shut up, I don’t want to ruin your special day.

(Song – NIKOLAI, FLORENCE I WILL FIND YOU REPRISE and ONE STEP CLOSER – add David (TRIO)).

Nikolai and Florence:  
**AND I will find you**  
*In my arms.*  
*There isn’t an ocean to deep.*  
*There isn’t a mountain to steep.*  
*I’ll make it to you through these charms*  
*And I will find you in my arms.*

David:  
**One step closer from losing her.**  
*She was happy with him not me, though.*  
*She doesn’t even know how much I yearn.*  
*Oh I wish I could tell her so.*

Nikolai and Florence:  
**One step closer to our happiness.**  
**One step closer to having our embrace.**

David:  
**One step closer to realizing my place!**  
*I cannot let her go without having her know.*

All Three:  
**One Step closer, to pure paradise!**  
**One step closer, to paying the price.**
I love, I do, I want, I Knew,  
I’ll do it all for you, oh how I feel.

David:  
I fear I’m nothing but a lone third Wheel!

Full Company:  
One step closer, to happiness!  
One Step Closer to knowing what’s right.  
We’ve got the hope we need to find our might.  
This ending might have joy within our sight.

David:  
One step closer from being ignored!

Full Company:  
To ever after, to love and laughter!  
To ending up with ones that we adore!  
To finding hope in obscure places, second chances,  
smiling faces, friends and faith in every step we take.  
One Step More!  Hope won’t break!  
One Step Closer! Ahh.

Blackout.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT II: SCENE I

Lights fade up, and the Entr’acte bleeds into:

(SONG – KRISTOF’S “A Night with my Nightingale”)

Kristof:  
One Night with My Nightingale  
Whose beauty does prevail.  
A maiden not a wench.  
Who lures me to her bench  
And makes me feel so very male.

One evening with my bride.  
Who’s proudly by my side.  
She knows my every wishes  
And gladly does the dishes.
I would for her gladly provide!

My little Frency girl
That makes me feel a whirl
And want to dance a dance that fills desire
She makes me realize my inner fire.

Is this perfection? My little wife with me.
She'd be my core connection. The only girl I see
Well sort oj makes me feel so bright
Yearns for day and night.

She must be mine. I'll charm her with my wine.
The French do wine so well you know
She'll think I'm swell and So
We'll live with peace and joy
And maybe have a boy
We can call him little Kris...
Oh the life we'd leave with bliss!

One Night with my Nightingale
She'd sing my ever respectable praise.
I feel without her so very pale.
I look forward to our endless days.

La la, la la, la la.. my nightingale!

KRISTOF: Now, come with me my little sweet bon bon. You will gaze at me from my office until I can bring you home to my private collection in my house. I think I would put you in my bedroom, n'est-ce pas?
At the conclusion of Kristof's song, he removes Florence from the wall and takes her to his private collection within his office until the end of the day where he can remove her from the gallery permanently.

VENUS: What are we going to do? He's taking Florence away permanently! Even if Nikolai can indeed travel from painting to painting to get her, he would never find her outside the walls of this gallery! Oh dear is me.

DAVID: I guess it's up to me. I've got to save Florence. I'm her only hope now.

VENUS: And how exactly do you propose to do that David? You are a sculpture- a statue: YOU CANNOT MOVE.

MONA: She's right, but we believe in you David.

LISA: If you dream it, nothing is impossible.

DAVID: I just don't want to lose her. Even if she's not mine to have, I couldn't bare the thought of her having to see that horrible man day to day. She would be so frightened.

VENUS: You know that everything will be fine, David. Just as long as Nikolai can rescue her before the end of the day. Anyways since when have you been so concerned about Florence? I thought you were always the bearer of bad news.
DAVID: Don’t you get it Venus, I am in love her! Turns out the grumpy stone man you all know me to be has been touched by our little French songbird. I just haven’t been the best at showing my emotions. I’m used to being a little...

MONA: Stiff?

LISA: Stone- cold?

VENUS: Rough?

ALL THREE: A JERK!?

DAVID: ALRIGHT! It’s not easy for me to admit defeat; you know I’m used to being the perfect man. Not perfect enough, apparently.

(SONG – STUCK On YOU – David)

David:  
How do you speak when you have no words? 
What can you say that would change our chances. 
I feel so trapped inside my cage just like a bird. 
You seem immune to my most forward glances.

I’m stuck on you, with no place to go. 
I cannot even tell you what you need to know. 
If I’d had luck with you, you would come to see 
That for all these years the one who’s loved you was me.

What is it that he does for you? 
What kind of man do I have to be? 
I feel your happiness through him like a lonely fool. 
All I need is for you to be happy.

I’m stuck on you, but for real this time.
I think we could together make the perfect pair.  
If only we were one our love would be sublime.  
The problem is he's the only one for whom you care.

Oh, oh I'm Stuck on you but without much hope.  
Sometimes I admit you make me act just like a dope.  
If you only knew how strongly I felt.  
There's nothing I wouldn't do to make your sweet heart melt.

I'm stuck on you  
Woah woah  
Stuck on you  
Woah Woah  
Stuck on you...

(Venus, Mona and Lisa sing back up vocals as do-op girls.) Song fades to Blackout.

Scene Two

Much like the subway scene from GHOST, Nikolai is trying unsuccessfully to “move” out of his painting.

NIKOLAI: I'm so frustrated. I cannot do what you are asking.

ALECSANDER: (Laughs) Of course you can, you just have to concentrate.

You are still under the assumption that you are physically able to escape your painting. This is not true; you have to remember that you must travel WITHIN your world into the next painting over.

NIKOLAI: How? I have lost my sense of imagination ever since I lost Florence.
NATASHA: You haven't lost her, you just got separated, that's all.

NIKOLAI: Natasha? But I thought you were opposed to my returning to Florence.

NATASHA: Don't you get it Nikolai? I just want you to be happy, and if you are happiest with her, than nothing can stop me from helping you get there.

OLGA: This is very admirable of you, dear.

ALECSANDER: You make us both very proud, Natasha.

NATASHA: Will you both stop making me feel that an act of kindness is such a surprise for me?

OLGA: (Ashamed) She's right, Alec no more spectacle. What can she do to help?

ALECSANDER: She might be exactly what we need to help get Nikolai in the right mindset. Natasha, please close your eyes. Now, Nikolai look at Natasha. Visualize that she IS Florence.

NATASHA: Don't push it! I-

OLGA: Please dear, just try to cooperate and let Alec do what he must.

ALECSANDER: Thank you, darling. Nikolai, try to imagine that you are going to touch her. See Florence in Natasha, just look at her and believe you
can do it. That's it- keep remembering her face, her voice- see her in front of you, - with you. Yes you're doing it!

*Nikolai is now next to Natasha- he has disappeared from his painting and moved into hers.*

OLGA: My god.

NIKOLAI: I can touch her. I am with her!

NATASHA: You mean you're with me.

NIKOLAI: *(Opens his eyes)* What? How did this- I did it!

NATASHA: Wow, it's nice to really see someone.

ALECSANDER: Well done Nikolai! Now time has become your enemy. The longer you spend outside your painting, the faster you will age. You must hurry to get to Florence.

NATASHA: But can’t he just stay a little while – I’ve never touched anyone before.

OLGA: I’m sorry dear, you have to let go.

ALECSANDER: GO Nikolai! And be BRISK! You haven’t got much time- and the last painting is the worst. Don’t look at Dorian’s face- or you won’t live to regret it! GOOD LUCK!

OLGA: We wish you all the best!
ALECSANDER: GOOD BYE!

(Nikolai closes his eyes and disappears again.)

NATASHA: I can’t believe you just did that.

OLGA: What do you mean, dear?

NATASHA: You just took him away before I could even say good bye or anything. I didn’t even get to spend anytime with him. He was the man of my dreams- the one I was always waiting for. You took him from me.

ALECSANDER: My dear, you are like a daughter to me. I would never have intended to hurt you my darling. We did what we had to. Nikolai is going to be lucky to survive, let alone to find Florence. He must make the best use of what time he has.

NATASHA: You don’t understand, do you? I love him Alec, he is the one that I will never get to be with. I’ve accepted that but did you have to take away the only man I’ve ever thought of without a kiss, a glance, or a … goodbye? (She cries).

OLGA: Please don’t cry my Tasha. There will be others.

NATASHA: Please just leave me alone.

(Song – NATASHA - Journey of Love)

Natasha: He loves her, more than anything, but not me. If he knew, what I know, then maybe he would see.
That for love there are no boundaries,
Nor distance that I won’t go.
If he only knew I’d do anything
Then there would be no challenge
Or no test for me to show.

The Journey of Love.

I know that this is his dangerous quest.
But the time has come for little old me to invest
In taking chances, and start working for the better.
Oh My God, And I haven’t even met her!

The Journey of Love
Is a distance immeasurable
It’s a hope that is possible
That good things come true.

The Journey of Love
Is a strength that’s unbreakable
Or a deed that’s unthinkable
For someone other than you.

Nikolai, I love you and no matter what.
I’ll help you get her if that’s what you want.
Your happiness is my soul concern.
I’ve given a whole new meaning of how it feels to yearn.

The Journey of love
Is the path I must lead.
The Journey of love
Help me protect him and hear my plea!
There’s nothing that will stand between us
come push or shove.
For him I would do anything and that’s the honest power
of the endless journey of LOVE!
In the conclusion of her song, she disappears from her painting as well. Fades to blackout.

**Scene III:** KRISTOF'S office.

*Lights come up and Kristof is on the phone with a friend, muttering in French and laughing to himself.*

KRISTOF: Yes, you know I will. She is so beautiful I cannot wait to show you. I think I will put her in the bathroom. No? You think the bedroom? Perhaps. Wait until you see what I’ve done with the Museum. You wouldn’t recognize it!

CHARLES: Excuse me sir, your highness.

KRISTOF: No you have the best taste. No you. YOU! STOP. You’re embarrassing me.

CHARLES: KRISTOF!

KRISTOF: What? You idiot -why do you have to speak; you give me a migraine just by talking.

CHARLES: Pardon the interruption sir but you might want to check this out on the monitor. The security camera shows the East Wing in a complete wreck. Someone must have vandalized the artwork- everything is out of place.

KRISTOF: But I wanted to leave soon. Do I have to?
CHARLES: SIR!

KRISTOF: Alright I'll do it! I was only joking. Look, Louis, I have to go—you know duty calls! Well I'll see YOU later Mister...(Hangs up.) Oy this is going to take hours! Do you have any idea how heavy those piles of concrete are?

CHARLES: I just don't get how this happened- I never saw anyone enter that part of the museum today.

(The two men exit Kristof's office)

Scene IV:

OLGA: ALECSANDER! Wake up!

ALECSANDER: What? What is it?

OLGA: Something has happened to Natasha! She is missing from her painting. What could have happened?

ALECSANDER: Do you not understand my love?

OLGA: Can it be?

ALECSANDER: She was only doing what we've always told her. To follow her heart. She must have attempted the travel herself.

OLGA: I am so worried- what if something happens to her, or Nikolai, or BOTH?
ALECSANDER: There is no point in worrying now, we only must believe in the power of love.

OLGA: What do you mean by that, Alec? Do you think your own wife a fool? How can you say a cheesy line like that when we are stranded alone now?

ALECSANDER: (Laughs) My sweet, you misunderstand me. I mean we can only believe that love will guide our beloved Tasha and Nikolai to safety by the courage they both feel in their hearts.

(Song – Our Ageless Song – Duet OLGA and ALECSANDER)

Alescsander: For you, my dear, I'd do, my dear almost anything.
Olga: Almost?
Alescsander: I'd cross the plains, and go through pains for you.
Olga: Probably gas.
Alescsander: But for all these years, my dear
You haven't aged a single year
We've laughed, we've cried
We've loved, we've lied
But most of all we've sung our endless song.

Olga: We've danced, well tried, we've almost died, for happiness.
Alescsander: Oh so happy.
Olga: I've left my home, to farm and roam a broad
Alescsander: To our spirits we should applaud.
Olga: But after all theses years, my dear
You've filled my life with cheer.
We've lived, we've smiled
We've given, we've beguiled.
Alescsander: Gone Wild?
Olga: But most of all we've sung our endless song.