

Galatea

Music & Lyrics

by

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Book

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Prologue

The Dawn of Time

The beginning: darkness, silence. Then, a bright burst of light — the Big Bang. Then, music.

1. THE OVERTURE

As the music plays, light and color swirl before our eyes, and the universe comes into existence. The vacuum gradually takes shape, creating a giant picture frame. Now confined to the frame, the colors continue to ripple and dance, forming brief impressions of images.

The overture ends, and the light fades away. We hear the sound of static, interrupted every so often by a burst of music or an unintelligible speaking voice — the great cosmic radio is tuning. Finally, as it arrives on a clear channel, the voice of a newscaster rings out.

RADIO (V.O.)

It's the first day in the history of time, and this is your hourly news update. The Creator brought the Universe into existence today, shifting the empty formlessness of eternal nothing into the beautiful, boundless chaos of something. So far, the Creator has enacted night and day, land and sea, and traffic and weather on the eights. When asked about the nature of the Divine Plan, the Creator said, quote, "We'll see." You're listening to 1010 WINS. You give us 22 minutes, we'll give you the cosmos.

A burst of static punctuates the end of the sentence, then dissipates. A new image appears on the canvas in an instant: Michelangelo's The Creation of Adam. A nude figure reclines on the newly formed land, while a god in a flowing pink dress, floating regally, extends a sacred finger to the nude figure's limp wrist. THE CREATOR with CREATION.

Music swells, angelic and rapturous.

2. IN THE BEGINNING

The Creator's head turns suddenly, looking out of the painting at us.

CREATOR

*IN THE BEGINNING,
THE WORLD WAS FINE,
I HAD MADE
ALL THINGS TO BE DIVINE,
THERE WAS BALANCE IT SEEMED,
IN THIS WORLD I HAD DREAMED,*

CREATOR (cont'd)

*IN THE BEGINNING,
LIFE WAS GRAND,
EVERYTHING
WAS GOING AS I'D PLANNED,
BUT THEN I LOST MY WAY,
I FEEL FOOLISH TO SAY,*

The Creator rises and steps out of the painting.

CREATOR (cont'd)

*SOMETIMES YOU GO TOO FAR
WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO DO GOOD,
WHAT A HUGE MISTAKE,
ONE I NEVER THOUGHT I'D MAKE,
HERE IN THIS PLACE UP ABOVE,
IT WAS FOOLISH AT THE START,
SHOULD HAVE GUARDED MY OWN HEART,
WHY WOULD I EVER MAKE 'LOVE'?*

The Creator gestures toward Creation, who comes to life, also leaping down from the painting and out into the world.

CREATION

*IN THE BEGINNING,
WELL, YOU MADE ME,
BECAME THE MAN
YOU WANTED ME TO BE,
OH, THE WAYS THAT YOU'D SPEAK,
AND HOW YOU'D STROKE MY CHEEK,*

*AND, DON'T YOU KNOW IT,
WE WENT TOO FAR,
COMPLICATED
EVERYTHING WE ARE,
AND YOU CAN'T TAKE IT BACK,
ONCE YOU'VE GONE THERE...*

*WHAT A HUGE MISTAKE,
ONE I NEVER THOUGHT I'D MAKE,
HERE IN THIS PLACE UP ABOVE,
IT WAS FOOLISH AT THE START,
SHOULD HAVE GUARDED MY OWN HEART,
WHY WOULD WE EVER MAKE LOVE?*

CREATOR & CREATION

*LOVE IS THE DOWNFALL,
OF ALL
OF THE GREATEST CIVILIZATIONS,
AND TRUST ME,
WE'RE LUSTY,
BUT IT'S THE CAUSE OF ALL OUR FRUSTRATIONS,
WOULDN'T LIFE BE SO GAY,
IF LOVE COULD JUST GO AWAY?*

*IN THE BEGINNING,
LOVE WAS NOT DEFINED,
YOU COULD BE YOU,
AND PEOPLE WOULDN'T MIND...*

Creation ascends back into the picture frame.

CREATOR

In the beginning,
I made
you.

*With another gesture, The Creator beckons the curtain to close in front of the frame, and
Creation disappears. The Creator turns back to us.*

CREATOR (cont'd)

In the beginning,
it was 1963,
and there were no homosexuals at all in Upper Sandusky, Ohio.
Until
one day,
when Bernard is born!

*In one smooth gesture, The Creator rips off the pink robe, revealing nothing but a diaper on
underneath.*

Scene 1
1963 1983

A giant bassinet rolls in front of The Creator, who gracefully leaps into it — now as BERNARD.

BERNARD

WAAAAAAAAAAAAAH

WAAAAAAAAAH

WA

Hello!

I am a homosexual baby.

I do not yet know that I am a homosexual.

I am not fully aware that I am a baby.

I am only aware that life is *hard*.

It is 1963, and I am in Ohio.

I do not know that it is 1963,

but I am keenly aware that I am in Ohio,

which is why I am crying,

because even in my infancy,

I am aware that Ohio is a drab, horrible place.

My mother and father named me Bernard,

and every time I start to cry-

WAAAAAH WAAAAAH WAAAAAH-

like that,

my mother picks me up and says,

“There, there, *Bernard*,”

which exacerbates my crying,

because it is a drab, horrible name.

My mother is a homemaker, and my father is a bricklayer

but he calls himself a “mason,”

because it has more pizzazz.

Both my parents dedicate their lives to giving me what they think is a better life.

But things take a turn one summer,

when my father catches me in the toolshed,

fellating a boy from my high school,

BERNARD (cont'd)

who had also been, at one time,
 a homosexual baby,
 but was now the captain of the football team.
 And, in that moment,
 with the tight end's erect penis in my mouth,
 and my left pinky in his tight end,
 and my father's jaw hanging nearly as low as mine,
 it suddenly becomes untenable for me to remain in Upper Sandusky.
 So, I haul off to the big city Columbus, the gay capitol of the midwest,
 which is the saddest place a gay capitol can be.
 Scoff if you must, but while I'm there,
 I really
 find myself!
 I find myself so broke that I take a job posing nude for an art class.
 The instructor tells me I'm beautiful and he loves my huge
 heart.
 When he asks my name, I tell him, and he says:
 "*Bernard Bickel?!?* That's awful.
 No one ever had a muse named *Bernard*.
 If you want to inspire, you're gonna need something better than that."
 In that moment, I become
 myself.
 But I don't just want to settle for being a muse,
 oh no,
 I want to be
 an artiste!
 So, at 20 years old,
 I pick up and haul off to the magical isle
 of Manhattan
 and introduce myself to the world as
 Mason
 Hart!

Bernard (now MASON) leaps out of the bassinet, now fully dressed and carrying two suitcases.

3. MASON'S HOME

MASON

*STRAIGHT OFF THE BUS,
ONE FOOT ONTO THE ISLAND,
HOW COULD I HAVE GUESSED
THAT MY TRUE PATH
COULD LEAVE ME SO DAMN DEPRESSED?*

*NOBODY SAW
ME FOR THE TALENT I WAS,
NO ONE REALLY COULD—
OR MAYBE I
WAS NOT THAT GOOD...*

*BUT THEN ONE DAY
I CAME ACROSS
A BARTENDER NAMED FRED,
WHO BESTOWED UPON ME WISDOM YET UNKNOWN,*

*HE SAID, OH SIR,
I MEAN, WITH LEGS LIKE THAT, HELL,
WELL, YOU'VE GOTTA KNOW,
THAT YOU WOULD KILL,
IF YOU COULD DO A DRAG SHOW...*

*AND THAT RIGHT THERE IS WHEN NEW YORK CITY
BECAME MORE THAN A MONOCHROME,
THAT RIGHT THERE IS WHEN NEW YORK CITY
BECAME BABY MASON'S HOME!*

Mason opens the suitcases and begins getting into drag.

MASON (cont'd)

*THE FIRST TIME I PUT ON A PAIR OF STOCKINGS,
'COURSE THEY RIPPED IN HALF,
AS I LOOK BACK,
I MEAN, I'VE GOTTA LAUGH, BUT
I THEN RAN OUT TO GET NEW HOSIERY IN
HALF MY MAKEUP STILL,
THE LADY THERE,
I SWEAR IF LOOKS COULD KILL, WELL—*

*I'D NO LONGER LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY,
I'D BE SLEEPING UNDERNEATH A GARDEN GNOME,*

MASON (cont'd)

*I'D BE BURIED HERE IN NEW YORK CITY,
BABY MASON'S HOME!*

*I WISH THAT I COULD TRAVEL BACK IN TIME
TO SEE MY FIRST FEW SHOWS,
I PROBABLY WAS A GENIUS,
MAYBE, WHO KNOWS?
IT'S FUNNY HOW
NOSTALGIA WORKS ON ME,
IT REALLY TAKES ITS HOLD,
REMEMBER BACK BEFORE YOUR STORY
WAS TOLD...*

*I NEVER THOUGHT
I'D STAND HERE ON
THE OTHER SIDE OF THINGS,
AND EVERYTHING
IS CLEARER THAN IT'S BEEN!*

*I FOUND A LIFE,
I FOUND A FAMILY AND
I LOOKED LIKE A STAR,
IF I THINK BACK,
IT DOESN'T FEEL TOO FAR...*

*BACK TO WHEN NEW YORK CITY
WAS A BETTER-WORSER PLACE TO ROAM,
BACK TO WHEN NEW YORK CITY
BECAME BABY MASON'S HOME!*

AND MASON'S HOME!

Scene 2
December 2001

A spotlight rises on a digital clock RADIO. Static buzzes from it, then gives way to pop music, which is abruptly interrupted by a breaking news alert.

RADIO (V.O.)

This is Ralph Howard for 1010 WINS. It's two minutes after the hour, and we are monitoring the ongoing, tragic, terrorist crisis here in New York.

There is another burst of static.

W. BUSH / RADIO (V.O.)

These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos.

Another burst of static.

POWELL / RADIO (V.O.)

You can be sure that the American spirit will prevail over this tragedy.

Another burst of static.

RADIO (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the one, the only Mason Hart.

The spotlight snaps down on the radio and another snaps up on Mason, sitting at a grand piano, in drag.

MASON

Bless you, darlings!

It's so wonderful to be back on the bandstand, performing for you all.

Since I was born,

back in nineteen-none-of-your-business,

I've had one goal, one mission in life:

to make you gay.

Which I mean in a purely Victorian sense!

To make you *happy*.

It's been a hard three months.

MASON (cont'd)

And while you may not be feeling happy in this moment,
I can promise you
that whatever it is you are feeling,
you're not feeling it
alone.

And so,
in the spirit of
togetherness,
feel free to join me in singing this next song,
which we've all been singing these last few months...

He begins to play and starts to sing:

MASON (cont'd)

*O BEAUTIFUL FOR SPACIOUS SKIES,
FOR AMBER WAVES OF GRAIN,
FOR PURPLE MOUNTAIN MAJESTIES
ABOVE THE FRUITED —*

*Mason suddenly jumps up from his seat. The curtain parts on the picture frame, revealing
Mason's brownstone in the West Village. There's SOMEONE standing and urinating on the
front steps.*

MASON (cont'd)

Hey, that's-
That's my house!
That's my stoop you-
you punk!

The offender, GAL, still peeing, turns to face Mason abruptly:

GAL

Get back!

Mason leaps back in horror:

MASON

Stop it, stop it, stop that!

GAL

I can't stop midstream.

MASON

Point that thing somewhere else, or I'm calling the police!

GAL

Whoa are you a guy?

MASON

I'm a fucking artist, is what I-

Gal's stream of urine dissipates. Gal looks up at Mason, then down, then back up at Mason. Gal zips up and starts to run for it.

MASON (cont'd)

Kid, wait!

Mason picks up a backpack from the sidewalk, which Gal has left behind.

MASON (cont'd)

You forgot your-

Gal runs back and tries to grab the bag out of Mason's hand, but Mason hops up a few steps toward the door, holding the bag out of Gal's reach.

MASON (cont'd)

Listen, I'm not gonna call the cops this time,
but if you ever-

GAL

I won't, I swear!

Mason throws the bag at Gal, who catches it.

MASON

I wasn't finished.

MASON (cont'd)

If you ever need a place to pee around here,
just knock, alright?
If I'm home, you can use my latrine.

GAL

Thanks.

MASON

You're welcome.
You can use it now, if you want,
to wash up,
take a hot shower,
or something.

GAL

I don't do that shit no more.

MASON

Do what? Shower?

GAL

You fucking know what.
I'm not a-
I'm not a fucking hustler.

MASON

Oh honey, I'm happily married.

GAL

Yeah right.

Mason holds up his left hand, revealing a ring on his finger.

GAL

Whatever.

GAL (cont'd)

I know your type.

MASON

Do I look like a closet-case to you?

GAL

What are you then?

MASON

I
am a nice person,
trying to offer you a little human kindness.

GAL

Why?

MASON

Because I want to!
Everyone's helping each other these days,
and if Rudy Giuliani can act like a halfway decent person,
I better rise to the occasion.

Mason realizes he's standing in Gal's urine.

MASON (cont'd)

Oh, sonofabitch! These are Givenchy pumps!

GAL

Sorry about that.
Can I still come inside?

Mason softens.

MASON

Yes.

The façade of the brownstone fades away, revealing the inside of Mason's home. It's nothing short of decadent — the 2000s' equivalent of Mame's house on Beekman Place. Once inside, Mason takes off his shoes.

MASON

Why on Earth would you pick *my* house to pee on?
Is it a political statement?

Gal snorts a laugh.

MASON (cont'd)

What's funny?

GAL

I'm, uh, not really a *political* person.

MASON

Well.

I guess I should be relieved that it's not an attack.
Are you from around here?

GAL

Sorta.

MASON

I don't mean to pry — I'm just curious.
You've got that accent, so-

Mason takes off his wig. Gal sees him and is a little startled.

MASON (cont'd)

That grimace isn't especially polite.

GAL

I just-
I thought that was your real-

MASON

I'm flattered you thought Rita Hayworth's hair could sprout from my head.

Mason sets the wig on a wig form on his vanity.

GAL

What is all this stuff?

MASON

Oh, just my livelihood.

Mason takes off the beautiful diamond necklace he's been wearing and sets it down on the vanity.

GAL

Wow. That's-
That's real nice.

MASON

It was a gift from my husband.

GAL

You're really married to
a *man*?

MASON

Got a problem with that?

GAL

I just... didn't know you could do that.

MASON

We're not really ones to wait around to get permission to do what we want to do.

GAL

Where is he?
Your

GAL (cont'd)

husband?

MASON

Pierce.

He's working.

He's a lawyer he's been pretty busy lately;
his firm's handling this ugly corporate bankruptcy scandal-

GAL

Like Enron?

MASON

...yes.

GAL

Fuck.

MASON

And you said you weren't political.

Gal shrugs. Mason takes off his earrings and sets them down.

MASON (cont'd)

I'll go see what I can get you to eat.

The bathroom's just through there,

if you want to wash your hands...

and face.

Mason exits into the kitchen. Gal looks around the room, and then, satisfied that Mason is gone, grabs the diamond necklace and earrings and runs out.