The Journey

Based on the parable of the Prodigal Son

By Linda Rose

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Act One

Song 1:	**The Factory Song**	*Factory workers, Dad, Matt*
Song 2:	**I've got a world inside of me**	*Nathan, Ruth*
Song 3:	**No-one understands**	*Matt*
Song 4:	**Once Upon a Time**	*Dad*
Song 5:	**Love Song**	*Ruth, Nathan, Matt*
Song 6:	**Don't Go!**	*Nathan, Matt, Ruth, Dad*

Act Two

Song 7:	**the Fun Factory**	*Casino Owner, Friends, Nathan*
Song 8:	**Strength of the powder**	*Teri*
Song 9:	**Pay day**	*Nathan, creditors*
Song 10:	**Where am I now? Part One**	*Nathan*
Song 11:	**Cowboy's Song**	*Cowboy*
Song 12:	**Where am I now? Part Two**	*Nathan, Dad*
Song 13:	**The reconciliation**	*Dad, Nathan*
Song 14:	**All I've done for you.**	*Matt, Dad*
Finale:	**Welcome to our love!**	*Everyone*

Characters:

Nathan	Teri
Matt	Sev
Dad	Casino Owner
Ruth	John
Factory workers	Cowboy
Friends	Waiter

Storyline:

Nathan is the younger brother of Matt. They live with their father who owns a large factory - their mother having died seven years before. A close family friend of Nathan's age, Ruth, had been encouraged to spend time with them both as companionship, and also to replace the female part of the family. She and Nathan have been best friends since this time. They have both recently left school and begun work in the factory, which Matt has worked in for several years as assistant manager. Nathan is now trainee manager. The factory is the father's pride and joy.

Act One

Scene One

Factory workers come on and group together making up sections of a great machine. They each make movements and machine noises which they repeat throughout the song, except for the chorus, when they break out of the 'machine'. The song is energetic.

Song 1: The Factory Song

Workers A: um-cha um-cha
um-cha um-cha

Workers B: Tse Tse
Tse Tse

Workers C: Brrrn chichi Brrrn chichi
Brrrrn chichi Brrrrn chichi

Workers D: schuweeee
Schuweeeee

Workers E: Bom Bom Bom Bom
Bom Bom Bom Bom

Matt: Every day the factory workers
Start the process making goods.
Pulling handles, switching levers,
Packing boxes as they should.

Chorus: My, my - It's a job -
Pulling levers, packing boxes!
Sigh, sigh, What a job!
Aches and pains - it's quite obnoxious.

Matt: Making, baking, still creating
Everything you need to live.
Things in string, things in tins -
All you need to live like kings.

Chorus: My, my - It's a job -
Pulling levers, packing boxes!
Sigh, sigh, What a job!
Aches and pains - it's quite obnoxious.

Matt: The factory is the place to be for the
Expectations of society
Who need their household simplicity.
The story of the factory!

altogether:

Chorus: My, my - It's a job -
Pulling levers, packing boxes!
Sigh, sigh, What a job!
Aches and pains - it's quite obnoxious.

Matt: It is quite a job!
Making, baking, still creating!
Such a worthwhile job -
Needed for Society!

Everybody bustles off to work.

Lights up on one side of the stage on a small office. Matt is working away busily at a stack of papers when Nathan rushes in.

Matt: Come on Nathan - you're late again. Dad'll kill you if you carry on like this. You've been late every day and you haven't finished your first month yet.

Nath: Give me a break! It's only twenty past eight. No-one in their right mind should be working at this time.

Matt: ***(gently)*** I know you find it hard - but this is your life now. You've got to pull your weight.

Nath: You know how much I hate it here.

Matt: You have to make the best of it. You've left school now - welcome to the world of responsibility. I've done all I could to ease Dad off you. And I can tell you - it doesn't do me any favours with him. Now hurry up - Dad's coming. I lied for you all this week - don't expect me to today aswell.

Nath: Go on bruv - he listens to you. ***(he collects a clipboard and white coat)***

Matt: As if! Go on with you! Get out of here. ***(thumps Nathan good-naturedly)***

Nathan leaves
enter Dad from opposite side

Dad: Was that Nathaniel I just saw arriving?

Matt: Er..no... He's out checking the stocks.

Dad: I think it was. You shouldn't lie for him - it doesn't suit you. I really must speak to him about the importance of punctuality and setting a good example. It's never good for a manager to be late. Maybe you could have a word with him too, Matthew - as his older brother. You're both very close.

Matt: I'll have a go - though he doesn't listen to me as much as he used to. I'm a bit worried about him.

Dad: Have you got those papers I need?

Matt: They're here - I came in at 6 to finish them.

Dad: Thanks - I'll deal with them after I've spoken to Nathaniel.

Dad leaves. Matt looks disappointed.

Matt: Don't know why I killed myself. Oh well - plenty still to do.

Lights down on office area, and up on other side of stage

Nathan walks through with his clipboard. Ruth enters walking by, sees Nathan and comes over.

Ruth: Hi Nathan!

Nath: Hello. ***(warmly)***

Ruth: How are you getting on? I thought I'd see more of you since we both started here. It feels funny both of us working in the same place - I suppose

its not funny you should be here - in your Dad's factory. But its really nice he gave me a job too.

Nath: Yes.

Ruth: Are you going to Sarah's party on Saturday?

Nath: Is it this week? I hadn't thought about it.

Ruth: It should be fun - everyone from school will be there. Do say you'll come. It wouldn't be so fun without you.

Nath: I don't feel so much fun right now.

Ruth: You know what I mean. I'd like you to go.

Nath: Okay then. Are you coming to our house first?

Ruth: No - you come to mine. It's not the same since I started for your dad, it feels different now somehow.

Nath: You shouldn't see it like that. It's no big deal. It's only a factory - I mean It's not like he's the Mayor or a politician or anything.

Ruth: Don't let him catch you saying that. You know the factory means the world to him.

Nath: Yeah - too much. More than his sons. We're only there to carry on the name. It really does my head in - I want more than this! I can't use my whole life in a factory - stocks, orders, materials, goods.... I've a whole life ahead of me and I want to do something - to *be* someone. I'll not stop here long if I can help it.

Song 2: I've got a world inside of me. *(Nathan and Ruth)*

Nath: I've got a world inside of me
And I know I cannot stay here all my life.
Father's name
Father's game
I am just another product moving on
Moving on - With no control.
Moving on, moving on
I've no control at all.

Ruth: I wish I knew how I can help.
I see the dreams you hide inside your heart.
I don't know
What to say
What to do - or what to offer.

But I'm here when you want.
When you need me I am here.

Both: I've got a friend I need in you.
And I know I trust the things you want to do.
And I know that you care
And I know you're really there
when I share my dreams with you.

Nath: I've got a world inside of me.
And I need someone to share it and to see.
that I cannot stay here
I must leave it and keep moving.
My world just keeps on spinning
To have a chance of winning

I must go.

Ruth: You've got a friend you need in me
and I need you there to be my company.
I will always be here
When you need me
I trust you will be there too
When I have need of you,
I know the world inside you -
So go.

Dad walks in.

Dad: Nathaniel.

Ruth leaves quickly

Nath: Oh - hi Dad.

Dad: Was that Ruth running off?

Nath: Yeah.

Dad: She shouldn't run in the factory. It's not safe. Have you just arrived?

Nath: Oh no - I've been here ages - just working down at the office on the stock-taking.

Dad: ***(pause)*** I see - okay then.

Nath: I know how important punctuality is in the factory.

Dad: ....yes. Right then - ***(leaves)***

Nath: Phew! That was close! ***(exits whistling)***

Scene Two

Lights up on a table set for dinner, representing Nathan's house. Dad and Matt sit down for dinner.

Dad: Matthew - did you lock the labs as I requested?

Matt: Yes Dad - one of the technicians was finishing off some tests so I had to wait for another hour.

Dad: Right.

Nathan enters

Nath: Dad - I need to change my Saturday shift to an earlier one. I'm going out.

Matt: With Ruth?

Nath: Yes.

Dad: It's not good practice to be seen socially with one of the employees - it shows favouritism.

Nath: Dad - this is Ruth! She's been part of the family for ever. After Mum died you welcomed it. Said it was good for us to have female company.

Dad: Yes well now you're older, and you've got responsibilities at work. You've got to protect the company name.

Nath: It's a family name.

Dad: Its the same thing.

Nath: It makes us seem like one of the products.

Dad***: (trying to make a joke)*** You *are* one of my products.

Nath: Not much of yours! Mum produced us. You did your bit then left her to raise us, care for us, while you produced other things.

Dad: Now lad, I don't want to go into this again. I thought you'd dealt with this when you agreed to take your place in the factory. It's understandable to grieve your mother's loss, believe me - I've missed her in my own way....

Nath: Pah!

Dad: I know I've not always been there for you boys - especially you, Nathaniel - ***(Matt looks up sharply)*** - You needed your mother more than your

brother. He's cool-headed - more like me. No- you're a dreamer, impractical, soft at heart - like your mother was, God bless her. I know you miss her. But now you've got to be a man - take the world by storm - show 'em what you're made of - that you're worthy of your name.

Nath: That's what I'm trying to do. - and I can't do it in your prison.

Dad: ***(gently)*** It's not a prison, lad.

Nath: It is to me. It's all right for Matt - he loves it; organisation, precision, numbers, calculations! It's all he's ever dreamt about! But it's a prison for me. I sit at the desk, my mind floating out of the window to the world outside -

Dad: So like your mother

Nath: - and I feel like suffocating. *(walks out)*

Dad: Nathaniel - Nathan!

Dad follows Nathan out and Matt is left alone at the table.

Song 3: No-one understands *(Matt)*

Matt: I am so tired of people who say
"It's okay for Matt, he's fine!"
How do they know? What do they think
goes on in this private mind of mine?
When my mother left me
I was just a young boy growing up.
I was told to be
Strong for my family.
What else could I do?
There wasn't room for a little boy
who missed his mum and wanted to die -
I had a baby brother
Who always came first in line.
My father hid himself in work,
and I was left to raise the kid.
I had no time to mourn her loss.
I had to show - who gives a toss! -
While inside I was crying.

And inside I am crying. ***Matt exits***

Scene 3

Outside the party.

Nathan dressed smart/casual paces across the stage, and leans on wall etc. He is clearly annoyed. Ruth follows seconds later holding two drinks.

Ruth: What was all that about? You completely snapped her head off.

Nath: She deserved it.

Ruth: No-one deserved what you just said. How come if a boy comes on to a girl - it's normal, and she has got to get out of it without either becoming a tart if she says 'yes', or frigid if she says 'no', but if a girl fancies a lad, she's automatically a raving slag! Sexist pig!

Nath: ***(shrugs apologetically)*** Comes from having no sister or mother, I suppose!

Ruth: ***(angry)*** You can't use that excuse all your life! You've got to grow up sooner or later - preferably sooner!

Nath: Not you as well! Everyone's on my back at the moment - I don't know why.

Ruth: Maybe it's because you're acting like a spoilt brat who can't have a new toy. I really don't know what's got into you recently.

Nath: ***(turning away)***Well no-one's chaining you here!

Ruth: No-one's chaining you either. You act like working in the factory is the worst thing that could ever happen to you. It's just a job! Could be anything else. It just happens to be your Dad's factory. You're lucky to have a job at all these days.

Nath: You don't understand.

Ruth: Excuse me! I'm only the one who visited you day after day when your mum was ill and died - for years! ***(Nathan becomes white-knuckle angry)*** Held you, sat with you while you cried!.....Oh - I'm sorry - me and my big mouth.

Nath: That was a long time ago. You don't have to drag that up all the time.

Ruth: I think I've drunk too much. I'm sorry. But I know something's going on in your head. I think I know what you're feeling - but until you talk to me, I can't really understand.

Silence. Nathan puts his head in his arms. Ruth strokes his head. He moves his head away sharply. She continues and slowly he relaxes.

Nath: I can't explain. I really need to escape - to get out of here. I can't stay bottled up in that place - I feel like a fish struggling to breathe air. It's just impossible.

Ruth: ***(gently)*** So get out.

Nath: It's not that easy.

Ruth: Tell me.

Nath: All my life its been leading to this moment. I am my father's Name! My very being is in that factory - it's my destiny. Something tells me...

Ruth: What?

Nath: I could..., well I could be good at it, not the organization, and everything, but the parts that might suit me, like the people side of things.

Ruth: Then why fight it?

Nath: I'm not ready. Not now! I need some space! ***(suddenly unsure)*** Am I wrong?

Ruth: Nathan - you've got your whole life ahead of you. Maybe you need to see the world to really know your place in it. ***(aside)*** And I hope that's here with me.

Nath: I think you're right. I can't carry on like this.

Ruth: Well - one things for sure - you'd not have many friends left if you did. Come on - walk me home.

They hug.

Reprise of Song 2: I've got a friend in you

Both: I've got a friend I need in you.
And I know I trust the things you want to do.
And I know that you care
And I know you're really there
when I share my dreams with you.

They kiss tenderly.

Both: Goodnight.

Nathan alone sings **Reprise of I've got a world inside of me.**

Nath: I've got a world inside of me.
And I need someone to share it and to see
that I cannot stay here;
I must leave it and keep moving.
My world just keeps on spinning.
To have a chance of winning

I must go.

Scene Four: The Office

Matt is working. Ruth passes by, he sees her and jumps up.

Matt: Ruth!

Ruth turns and comes back.

Ruth: Oh hi Matt***. (pause)*** Did you call me for something?

Matt: ***(officiously)***Yes - hem - come into the office a minute would you.

Ruth: ***(baffled)*** OK - but we're short on belt 5 - I just ran to the loo ***(sitting)*** and Sarah's off sick today. ***(she waits expectantly)***

Matt: Er... well... after an employee's first month we like to check everything's OK.

Ruth: Oh. ***(silence)***

Matt: Well - is it? How are you finding working here?

Ruth: It's fine.

Matt: It's not strange then - having been so close to us... I mean particularly Nathan of course.

Ruth: It was at first - I'm getting used to it now.

Matt: Oh good. ***(Ruth gets up)*** Well - ***(she sits)*** You know if you have any requirements - or anything....

Ruth: Yes?

Matt: ***(quickly and dismissively, hiding embarrassment)*** You know where I am.

Ruth:***(getting up)*** Yes. ***(pause)*** Thanks.

Matt: You'd better go if you're short-staffed.

Ruth is leaving as Nathan rushes in. They smile warmly at each other, and Matt looks away.

Matt: You're even later than usual. Someone steal your mo-ped?!

Nath: Never mind that - where's Dad?

Matt: In his office of course - why what's cracking off?

Nathan rushes off but almost bumps into Dad coming in

Nath: Dad - I need to talk to you!

Dad: I've a meeting at half past nine, I could see you for five minutes before that if it's urgent.

Nath: Dad - I need to see you now.

Dad: Now? Well.... I suppose if it's quick.

Pause. Nathan looks at Matt, pleading with him to leave. Matt takes the hint.

Matt: I'll go and check the deliveries. ***(leaves)***

Dad: Well, what is it that can't wait till supper-time?

Nath: Dad. ***(breathes deeply to slow down and calm down)*** Dad. I've been thinking -

Dad: No - not this again. This is the right place for you. It's your father's firm - I've worked hard for this. Built it up to something big for you. Years of sweat and toil.

Nath: ***(firmly)***Dad. It's no good. It's not right - not now. I can't do it.

Dad: What do you mean - you can't do it?

Nath: Dad - I'm leaving.

Dad: Leaving - what do you mean? You can't leave! You've got nowhere to go!

Nath: I need to see the world. I'm going no matter what you say. I've got my own life to lead. I can't live your life. You created your own one - I've got to make mine.

Dad: What would you do? You don't know anything else.

Nath: That's exactly why I've got to go. It's doing my head in this place. I don't know who I am.

Dad: ***(angry)*** What do you mean - don't know who you are?! Your name's all over the country - on every supermarket shelf!

Nath: ***(Despairing)***That's not *my* name - that's *your* name!

Dad***: (shouting)*** It's the same name!!

Nath: ***(almost in tears)*** It's *your* name - I need to find *me* - Nathan!

Dad: What would your mother say?

Nath: It's mum who's given me this chance.

Dad: ***(strong)*** What?

silence

Nath: I need her money.

Dad: ***(louder)*** What?

Nath***: (nervous but persists)*** I need the money she promised to us when she died.

Dad: I don't believe I'm hearing this!

Nath***: (firmly)*** Dad. I need it - I want to go abroad - to see the world. She promised us that money in her will. It's my right.

Dad: Rights?! Rights?! What rights did I have when your mother died and left me with two boys to bring up? ***(Matt slowly comes back, keeping in the background)*** What rights did I have when I fought off competitors to keep the factory going through thick and thin, when all the others around were going under in the eighties depression - just to keep a roof over our heads. What rights have I got when my son turns his back on his inheritance - on all that I've built up.

Nath: I need that money, Dad. It is mine.

Dad: You can't have it. ***(pause)*** It's in the factory. It all went into the factory.

Nath: ***(getting hysterical)*** I need it! I'm not stopping here. You've controlled me all my life and I want to get out now. I need that money! ***(crying)*** It's mum's money - her last gift to us! And you put it into this filthy, stinking, hell of yours! You get it back! Do you hear?! You get it back!!

Nathan runs out.

Dad: I was only doing my best. ***(He slumps into a chair)***

Matt leaves quietly.

Song 4: Once Upon a Time *(Dad)*

Once upon a time there was a happy family.
A father, mother and two brothers lived in harmony.
Is it just dreams -
Or was it how it seems?
I cannot tell -
I lost my guiding star.
Where are you now, my wife?
You were my all, my life,
I cannot tell what I should do!

I look to you to show me -
To cross the gulf below me.
Should I hold on - or let him go?
All I know is that I loved and lost you -
Never again, I vow!
But the question is
Which way to keep or lose him?
Please show the answer now!
Please show the answer now!

I look to you to show me -
To cross the gulf below me.
Should I hold on - or let him go?
All I know is
I can't force a wild bird to stay -
I must set it free.
I must set it free!
I know now what I must do!
Perhaps he'll fly to me -
If I set him free!

Scene 5

Nathan sits outside - leaning on a wall, crying angrily. Matt enters looking for Nathan, sees him and pauses, wondering what to do. He calls softly

Matt: Nathan?

Nathan doesn't hear him. When Ruth comes out, Matt hides in the shadows.

Ruth: ***(softly and hesitantly)*** I saw you..... what's wrong? .....Nathan?

Nath: ***(sniffing)*** You should be working.

Ruth***: (trying to laugh)*** You sound like Matt.

Nath: ***(turns angrily)*** Don't ever say that! I'm nothing like him! He's the good boy in the family!

Matt flinches.

Ruth: OK - OK - it was a joke!

Pause.

Nath: ***(bitterly)*** Well - I did it.

Ruth: What?

Nath: Told my dad where to stick his factory!

Ruth: ***(nervously proud)*** And?

Nath: It's all ruined! All a stupid cock-up. He used the money - my mum left us some money - from her insurance pay-out. ***(fiercely)*** It was our money. How dare he get his grubby hands on it. How dare he! I needed that money to go to America. I had it all planned. Now its all ruined. ***(he kicks something hard)*** Told him where to stick it ***(laughs bitterly)*** and I can't even leave. The jokes really on me now! I've really done it this time! I bet the old git's laughing on both sides of his face! Bloody stupid cretin I am! ***(kicks again)***

Ruth: Oh Nathan - I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry.

Silence

Nath: Oh well - at least I've got a job! I can't believe he'd sack me! He's got me licked. He must be laughing. Just when I really thought I had it sorted.

Ruth: Oh Nathan - it's my fault.

Nath: How do you make that out?

Ruth: I put all those ideas into your head. I said 'go for it!' I only made it worse.

Nath: Ruth - no! You've been the light - the only thing that's kept me sane all these years - I don't know what I'd have done without you.

He kisses her head. Matt turns away in the shadows.

Ruth: Oh Nathan....

Nathan: Don't say it. Don't make it worse. Go now - get back to your work. I don't want you to get in trouble as well.

Song 5: Love Song *(Nathan, Ruth and Matt)*

Ruth: I've watched you for, oh so long
since we were young

Matt: Since we were young;

I've watched you for, oh so long
since we were young

Ruth: Since we were young

Matt & Ruth: I saw the things you thought you'd hidden.
I know the things you meant to do.
When you hid the pain and anger,
I saw it, I knew
You thought no-one saw your struggle.
I saw, and prayed you'd come to me.

Matt: I've loved you for, oh so long,
Since we were young.

Ruth: Since we were young;

I've loved you for, oh so long,
Since we were young.

Nath: I can't be all you want or need from me..
You don't know all the world inside of me.
I'm not the person who you love.
I'm not a person who could love -
Please understand me now.

Ruth: I've loved you for oh, so long

Too long to change.

Matt: I've loved you for, oh, so long -

Too long to change

Ruth: Too long to change

Both: Too long to change

Too long!

Matt leaves distressed. They haven't noticed him at all.

Ruth: You can't get rid of me that easily, you know. I'll still be here, however hard you push me away. I'll still be here.

Nath: I know. ***(He takes her hand and holds it)***

Dad enters. Ruth steps back, but they still hold hands.

Dad: Nathan.

Nath: ***(Holds head up defiantly)*** Yes.

Dad: Nathan - I need a word with you. Come into my office.

Nath: I don't know what there is to say. I can't take anything back.

Dad: Just come, Nathan. Please.

They walk a short way. Ruth strains to hear.

Dad: Nathan.

Nath: Dad.

Dad: I've been trying to sort through all of this - to make sense of it - to feel.... to try to feel how your mother would have handled it.***(Tense pause)*** And I can't. I can't - I wish to God that I could, but I can't. I can only do what I - a tired old factory owner...

Nath: A father! Dad - you're a father!

Dad: ...factory owner who loves his son more than he knows how to show it.

They speak together not hearing the other:

Nathan: ***(impatient)*** Yes - I will! I'll have to. I can't do anything else. Of course I'll carry on working for you in your stupid old factory. There's nothing else to be done - is there?

Dad: I know how you need to fight your own corner. I know I had to when I started all this. Maybe there's more of me in you than I give credit for. So I've talked to the accountant, and worked out how to get your money for you. Not all of it straight away, mind, but enough for you to start out on.

Nath: What did you say?

Dad: Even when I say what you want to hear, you still don't listen to me!

Nath: I said I'd work for you.

Dad: *I* said ... You don't have to.

Pause

Nath: Why?

Dad: Your mum had a picture. It said. "If you love something, let it free. If it comes back to you it's yours - if it doesn't, it never was." She loved it. I guess it reminded me of that.

Nath: ***(choked)*** Dad... I.... Dad.... I...

Dad: Don't back down now, lad. You've won. The passion of youth - it's grand. Don't lose it. Us tired old ones - we should listen to you more - before we sink - stuck in the mud.

Nath: Dad...

Dad: I can't be happy - you'll have to make the best of that. I can't be pleased. But I'll not struggle any more.

Nath: But the factory? The money?

Dad: As I said - you can't have it all straight away - but I can provide monthly amounts - until it's all paid off. A year or so it'll take. ***(tiredly)*** It would only be yours someday anyway - why not now.

Nath: Dad - thank you! Thankyou!! ***(sees Ruth waiting)*** Ruth! I'm off! I'm really going!! ***(Matt comes on)*** Matt! I'm off to find my world - I'm going to see the world!

Song 6: Don't Go! *(Nathan, Matt, Ruth and Dad)*

Nath: I must go, before I'm sent
I must go - it's time I went.
I can't stay in this prison full of tyranny -
It's time I discovered my destiny.

Matt: What are you going to do?
This is all the life you knew!
You can't desert us now just cos you got you're pride.
You go off like this and you'll never survive.

Nath: Why? Why won't you celebrate?
I'm off to see the world, my own path to make.

Matt: Why?Why must you be so blind?
You've only seen our Father and he's really quite kind!

Both: You don't understand what it is to see life!
The world N: inside here / M: outside there
is so full of strife!

Matt: Don't go, my brother!
I've been your mother - and I can't let go right now!

Nath: Dad - please give me what I'm due!
I have stayed because of you!
But now I need to go out to discover me -
and I can't do that without money!

Dad: You must do what you need to.
I'll stand back to let you through.
But please know that I love you just as father's do -
I won't turn my back even if you do.

Nath: Please. Please - won't you celebrate?
I'm off to see the world - my own path to make.

Dad: You must make your own sweet way.
If your mother saw you, I don't know what she'd say.

Both: You don't understand what is inside me.
The love that I feel you don't seem to see!

Dad: Don't go, my son now! You don't have to run now -
We can work things out how.

Nath: We have talked about this time.
I must find this world of mine!
I can't stay in this prison full of tyranny -
It's time I discovered my destiny.

Ruth: You must do what you need to.
I'll stand back to let you through.
But if you ever need me I'll be here for you -
You'll be in my heart, I'll pray for you.

Nath: Please. Please - won't you celebrate?
I'm off to see the world - my own path to make.

Ruth: Yes - I will celebrate
Even though my heart is beginning to break!

Both: You must see the pain that I hold in my heart.
I can't let you see that I dread to part!

Matt/Dad: We don't want you to go right now.
We think you've missed the point of family.
You shouldn't go off like this
We think you're leaving rather hastily.

Ruth: I love you
I'll wait for you.

Nath: It's time to go - I love you so.
I need to grow. It's time to go.

Nathan takes his leave of everyone. He speaks to each in turn ; Matt, fondly and familiarly - although Matt is reluctant ; Dad - both are tense and formal. Then Nathan walks forward away from the others to Ruth who stands alone. Ruth is choking on tears.

Nath: ***(gently. He takes both of her hands)*** Ruth. ***(she can't speak.)*** Ruth - my dearest friend.

They hug tightly, and Ruth sobs openly. Nathan is crying too. Nathan kisses her head, her tears, then he lifts her head and they kiss. Matt cannot watch.

Nath: Come with me***. (She looks at him)*** I mean it - come with me!

Silence, as Ruth cries again.

Finally

Ruth: ***(sobbing)*** I can't.

Nathan backs away holding both her hands, until the fingertips part. Ruth stands with her hands outstretched to Nathan, as Matt slowly comes forward to stand next to her and put his arm round her. As Nathan turns away slowly and leaves, she puts her head down and sobs into Matt's shoulder. He holds her tightly.

End Of Act One

Act Two:

Scene One: Las Vegas.

During this song, Nathan comes on dressed extravagantly with a large entourage including a bodyguard, and is welcomed profusely by the casino owner. As the song ends he is seated playing, winning and losing with equal enjoyment, drinking heavily. There is a glamourous woman leaning on one side of him, and a handsome young man leaning in on the other.

During this time slides of holiday snaps taken on his world tour are shown above. These illustrate his slide into decadent extravagant behaviour throughout his journey, and start showing his particular entourage in larger and larger numbers. The photos illustrate all the exotic locations of the world.

Song 7- the Fun Factory *(owner, Nathan and friends)*

Chorus: *Oh welcome to the fun factory*
Where all your thoughts and dreams come true
Oh, come, come, come to the fun factory
Where dreams are made for you.

Loved ones and relatives -
they're such a bore - worries galore!
They can take care themselves.
It's time to live for *you*!

Chorus: Oh, welcome.....

You mustn't think of them -
What they might do - without you!
Leave all those thoughts behind.
It's time to live for *you*!

Chorus: Oh, welcome...

Come - where's your sense of fun?
Don't be so glum - let's have some fun!
You need to shake off *them.*
It's time to live for *you*!

Nathan: I've struggled long in my Dad's factory
Without no joy, or recompense.
It's time I did something for me
While I still have my sense!

Owner: Only a tiny price
It's really quite nice - that will suffice
Money buys everything
To make your dreams come true!

Chorus: Oh, welcome...

Drinks are served to all in champagne glasses, and it is noticeable that powder is mixed into some of the drinks.

While Nathan is gambling, a dance routine may occur.

Finally Nathan stands up supported on each arm by the young glamourous woman, Teri, and the young handsome man, Sev. They go to the back of the stage where there is a staircase up to a plush bedroom with a gigantic bed. The woman takes off her wig, and it is hard to know now if this is a man or a woman.

Teri: ***(flops onto the bed)*** Phew! That was a ball, darlings!

Sev: Didn't I say it would be! You haven't been anywhere if you've not been to Las Vegas!

Nath: ***(pouring another drink)*** Well, we've been everywhere now!

Sev: Wasn't I right about Delhi - and Bangkok.

Teri: You're always right, Sev - tediously right!

Sev picks up a silk pillow and whacks Teri with it. She laughs and picks up another. They have a pillow fight, ending with Teri falling off the bed.

Teri: Really Sev! You'll ladder my silk stockings!

Sev: Take them off then!

Teri: I'll just have to buy some more!

Sev: Show me the ladder

He takes her leg and lifts it high to inspect it, and tips Teri onto her back at the same time.

Teri: Oh - you do drive me mad!

She pushes back and Sev falls over. They struggle together.

Teri***: (from underneath Sev)*** Nathan Gorgeous - are you joining us?

Sev muffles her with a pillow and they laugh together.

Nath: Maybe later - I'm going to see the sights.

Teri: Plenty of sights here!

Nath: No - you two carry on!

Sev: We will!!

They start to romp and giggle as Nathan walks down the stairs. The lights follow him and go down on Teri and Sev.

Nathan is joined by John, his bodyguard, and they walk slowly looking at the sights.

John: Well sir - what do you make to this place?

Nath: I suppose - its as bright as Bangkok without any of the squalor. No street urchins, prostitutes, beggars. At least I haven't seen any.

John: Oh they're there all right. In the richest city on earth there is always extreme poverty, hunger - desperation - it's just hidden away. Everything and anything can happen here behind closed doors. You need money to survive. And people will do anything to get money. You're fortunate to have your inheritance, but ...

Nath: What is it ,John?

John: Well - I was only going to say that money doesn't last long here, like it might in other places. What'd give you a month in India, you'd spend here in a day. But I'm sure you know what you're doing.

Nath: Here, have a smoke.

John: No thanks - I don't touch the stuff.

Nath: This isn't tobacco. I discovered it on our Travels. It'll really mellow you out.

John shakes his head. Nathan shrugs and takes some for himself.

John: Did Sev get you into all this?

Nath: Not really. They didn't ask me. I saw Teri with some, and wanted to try it.

John: They're bad news those two. I wish you hadn't picked them up.

Nath: I picked you up more than a year ago, didn't I?

John: ***(offended)*** That's different. I'm paid to do a job. I don't just live scrounging off you. What do those two do, except spend all your money?

Nath: ***(sighs)*** They show me a good time, that's what! I have fun with them! More than with you - Jimmney Cricket!

John: Look - you pay me to protect you from other people! Who's gonna protect you from yourself?

Nathan looks at him seriously, then laughs suddenly. They wander off.

Scene 2: The bedroom

Nathan is in the shower off stage. Teri is up and dressed. She looks ill, and is shaking. She glances off towards the shower, then turning away, she injects with difficulty, the back of her leg. Afterwards she closes her eyes, while she pulls herself together.

Teri: Aaah - that's better! Mmmmm.

Song 8: Strength of the Powder *(Teri)*

How have I come down to this
When I was so far away?
I don't know how I could live
Without the power this stuff gives,
But I know that this powder
Holds the key to life and death within it -
And death within it!

Once, I knew how to hold a hand
Without stealing from its grasp.
But now I know that I've sunk this low,
And I have nobody's trust.
I don't deserve their - !

Every evening
I vow I'll kick it but then
Every morning,
Dawns a new day!
And I need the strength that
It gives me or I couldn't face the
Truth that is me!
I need it more each day!
I need it more each day!

One day I will
Really kick it -
Then my life will be
Free as the air!

Until then
I am it's servant,
And my friends must
Always beware!

Nathan coughs and the shower is turned off. Teri tidies away her works. Nathan enters in a bath robe, groaning.

Teri: Morning, darling!

Nath: Is it already?! ***(flops on to the bed)*** I feel terrible.

Teri: You look terrible!

Nath: Got anything for it?

Teri: What did you have in mind? This place has got everything for a price!

Nath: I need something strong to pep me up.

Teri: I'll put the coffee maker on!

Nath: You know what I mean! But I want something stronger than usual.

Teri looks intently at him.

Teri: Try a bit more.

Nath: I want something better.

Teri: Are you sure?

Nathan look at her to try and read her thoughts.

Nath: Try me!

Teri: Then I've got something that'll blow your socks off!

She fetches her injecting equipment, looks for a clean needle, can't find one. She opens with difficulty her sharpsafe box, and brings out a used needle.

Teri: You really want to try it?

Nath: Never say die!

Teri: ***(goes out to bathroom to prepare injection. She calls)*** You won't tell Sev? He thinks I've stopped this stuff.

She injects Nathan in his arms, so the audience cannot see.

Nath: Where did you get this stuff from! Ahh! Why didn't you introduce me before?! Some friend!

Teri: More friend than you know!

Sev comes in and sees them. He explodes.

Sev: You swore you'd given this all up when we got back together. You stupid cow!

Teri: I have - Nathan just....

Sev: And now you get him hooked onto it too. You drag everyone down with you!

Sev pulls her by the arms and throws her viciously onto the bed, where Nathan is lying. She just laughs hysterically.

Sev: Just get lost! Go and kill yourselves if you want to - I've better things to do.

Sev storms out. Nathan and Teri start to embrace. John comes in worriedly.

John: What's up with Sev?

He sees the needle and syringe, looks at Nathan and Teri, and is disgusted.

John: I'm not sticking around for this. I resign! It's not a bodyguard you need - it's a guardian angel!

He leaves.

Nath: John!

Teri pulls him back onto her, and soon all is forgotten, as they begin to make love as the lights come down.

Scene 3: The casino

Nathan walks down the stairs with Teri on his arm, and Sev sulking behind. The owner comes up and draws Nathan away. Teri and Sev exchange glances.

Nath: What is it?

Owner: ***(not so polite)*** I'm afraid you're cash has run out. We don't accept credit, I'm afraid.

Nath: That's no problem - I'm expecting a cheque any day from my father.

Owner: From your father for your inheritance?

Nath: Yes - ***(impatiently)*** it's my mother's inheritance. My father is administering it.

Owner: Unusual for a mother's inheritance not to go to your father.

Nath: Unusual maybe, but nevertheless none of your business.

Owner: However, the position of your credit is very much my business. We do not offer credit here.

Nath: ***(making to leave)*** Well of course if you don't want my lucrative business here, then I already have credit with a number of other places who would be most happy....

Owner: I don't doubt that you have been lucrative as you put it. On rare occasions we do accept some credit, but I must warn you that the terms are extremely stringent.

Nath: That's no bother to me. I shall be getting a payment any time now.

Owner: Well come into my office then, and we'll draw up an agreement.

They exit.

Sev: What do you think this is all about?

Teri: I don't know - but I don't like it.

Sev: I hope our little party isn't coming to an end!

Teri: It's been a laugh, but maybe the well is dry. He did tell me once when he was stoned that his payments wouldn't last forever.

Sev: How many has he had?

Teri: I don't know, but I don't think we should pack just yet. I think it's time for some last minute shopping!

They both laugh together conspiratorially as they leave.

Scene Four: Casino office

Nath: I don't understand it - it's never been late before.

Owner: ***(frosty)*** I'm afraid it has been ten days now. The rules of the credit agreement have been stretched to ... and beyond their limit. I cannot offer any further leniency.

Nath; It's just a few days late, that's all.

Owner: You must take your things and move out. You have a hefty bill to pay. Don't make it worse.

Nath: I...I can't pay until the allowance comes.

Owner: That is no longer my concern. This is an adult city for adult people, not for sniveling little boys whose Daddies send them spending allowances! The sooner you see that the better it will be for you! Maybe your 'friends' will help. They've sponged off your naiveté for long enough! As for me, I am selling your debt to a collection company I use to regain my losses. I have to get my money, you see. Nothing is for free in the real world. Now go back to your friends and clear my room.

Nathan leaves and goes to his room. The room is empty. Teri and Sev have cleared out taking everything with them. Nathan sits on the bed head in hands.

The creditors queue up waving bills at him, and gradually circle the bed.

Song 9: Pay Day (*Nathan and creditors)*

Nath: Why are you just staring at me
Like a hound that is hunting it's prey?
I will pay you after tomorrow
Now just leave - you'll get your pay - not today!
Now just leave and go away!
What can I do when I haven't any pounds
And I sold all that I owned?
Where can I go they'll catch me if I run
And I have no place to go.
And I have no place called home.

Creditors: You must think we are so stupid!
We have gone a month without pay!
You must give us what you owe us -
We'll not wait another day -nother day!
You must pay us now today - yes today!
We want our pay - we'll not wait another day
Cos we've given you too long!
We will teach you not to mess with those like us!
You must pay us what you owe.
You must pay us what you owe!!

repeat both groups together, ending with additional line:

Nath: But I can't stay here, I know!

Nathan runs off

Man: He's running!

Man 2: Quick after him!!

They all run after Nathan. Music is a raucous version of 'Welcome to the Fun Factory . Sounds offstage as if they have caught him, but he escapes. Finally he runs back onto stage with torn clothes and out of breath. He doesn't know where to turn, but as he is running off a group come on and face him. He turns back but some others are there. Nathan tries to get past, but they close in on him and beat him up. The audience can only see the backs of the men.

A police siren sounds

Man: Come on - he's got the message! Let's go!

They run off. Nathan is lying on the floor with blood soaked shirt and ripped clothes. He lies still for a long time in silence until you wonder if he might be dead. Finally he lifts his head., and coughs up some blood. Eventually he struggles to sit up.

Song 10: Where am I now? Part One *(Nathan)*

Where am I now?
What shall I do?
I had it all -
Now it's all through!
Must I admit that they were all right
When they said I wouldn't make it?
Oh now what am I to do?
Where am I to go?
I don't want to end like this now!

Slowly, painfully, Nathan gets up. Other people begin to gather at a distance, as he looks for his jacket, and checks his injuries.

I must go now!
I must find work!
I have my pride -
I'll show them now
I'll prove my worth!
I am still strong -
I have my youth -
I will not let them beat me low -
They will not say "I told you so"!
I must find work!
Who'll give me work?

I must find work!
Please give me work!

Nathan addresses the people, who slowly turn away or shake their heads. Finally he approaches a man who looks like a cowboy, who stands hands on hips watching him arrogantly. He looks him up and down.

Cowboy: You, boy - you want work?

Nath: Yes, sir!

Cowboy: You running from someone?

silence

Cowboy: Look, boy - I can see that you are! Got a work permit?

Nath: ***(hesitantly)*** ...No.... No, sir.

Cowboy: Good. Worked with animals before?

Nath: No - but I'll learn.

Cowboy: You will, son - you will! The pay's poor and it's hard graft.

Cowboy turns to go. Nathan doesn't move, unsure if he has a job or not.

Cowboy: Well boy! You coming or what?!

Nath: ***(enthusiastically)*** Yes, sir!

They exit together.

Scene 5: The Yard

The Yard consists of a scruffy outbuilding, with a lantern and a pile of hay in one corner. There are also several large chemical barrels used as seating etc.

Cowboy and Nathan enter. Cowboy fetches some overalls from a hook, and throws them at Nathan.

Cowboy: Here, boy - put these on so you don't ruin your fancy duds***. (laughs nastily)*** This is your pad now. What little time you're not working, you'll spend here - sleeping. Your grub will be what's left from the Big House so you can fetch it at 9 o'clock when you're done for the day. They throw what's left out to the pigs - not the prize ones, they get special grub - at 10 so make sure you're not late. If you want breakfast you have to save it from the night cos you won't get no more. Dinner's brought out to you on the

ranch - bread and water if you're lucky! Not quite Caesar's Palace ain't it?! Well water out there to wash in - I don't advise drinking it unless you're desperate - too many chemicals soaking through the ground to be healthy. ***(laughs and wipes mouth with back of arm)*** You understand all this? You speaka de English?! ***(laughs)***

Nath: Yes, sir. I understand.

Cowboy: Get changed now - then report to me at the stables. Don't be long. The boss don't stand no nonsense 'specially from new boys. Any trouble and you're out on your fanny - with the 'pigs' after you, most like. ***(turns away, then back)*** Don't expect no favours neither. This is man's work - not for lilly-livered, toffy-nosed mammy's boys. You gotta be tough to survive it - cos no-one'll take pity on you if you don't fight for yourself. Last farmhand didn't last the week. Ran away to God knows where. Still, that's the best advice I can give you. Now look sharp ***(turning away)*** and don't talk so much - you're giving me a headache!

Nath***: (determined to succeed)*** Yes, sir.

Song 11: Cowboy Song

sung very relaxed and lazy in contrast to the words, accompanied by the harmonica.

Cowboy: Some folk describe me

A bitter man.

I can't deny it -

Tis true I am.

I'll use all round me

So far I can.

My life is naught but

Pig-swill and ham.

I tell the truth, son,

Make no mistake.

This aint no party -

You'll eat no cake.

You'll do some grafting;

Your back will break!

So with your maker -

Your peace you make.

Harmonica interlude

I tell no lies, boy,

I'll make it plain.

There are some men, son,

Who do complain.

If you don't like it

Aint that a shame!

Cos now you're here, boy -

You're here to stay!

The cowboy saunters off; Nathan looks around himself dejectedly and sits in a heap.

Lights down.

Scene 6: England

Matt and Ruth sit at a cafe table romantically set for two. They are looking at the menu, and seem very comfortable with each other.

Matt: ***(enthusiastically)*** Mmmm! they always have such a good selection here. Do you know what you want yet?

Ruth: Well - the vegetarian lasagna looks good...

Matt: You could be a bit more adventurous than that! Look over the page - there's venison; salmon; grouse! Whenever I come here, I have the steak pie. It's always very good. ***(Expansively)*** Have whatever you like!

Ruth: Oh - thank you! But... aren't things a bit tight at the factory since - well at the moment?

Matt: Since Nathan took his share out, you mean. Well I feel like splashing out tonight! Sort of a special occasion.

He smiles at her and she smiles warmly back. They look at each other for a minute and then she turns back to the menu.

Ruth: The salmon looks good.

Matt: Then the salmon it shall be!

He calls the waiter over and orders, while Ruth looks around her interestedly. the waiter leaves and for a while they sit not uncomfortably together; Ruth fiddling with the cutlery, Matt sipping his wine.

Matt: So!

Ruth smiles at him. Silence.

Matt: Isn't there a new girl working on the line next to you - do you get on OK?

Ruth: Yeah - she seems fine. ***(pause)*** I thought we promised not to talk about work.

Matt: ***(sighs, smiling)*** Sorry! It's hard not to. We never used to have this problem. I remember boring you for hours with all my petty problems all those years ago.

Ruth frowns slightly trying to remember.

Matt: We never had problems with what to say then!

Ruth shrugs slightly, not remembering.

Matt: I suppose it's working together at the factory that does it - it puts a wedge between us.

Ruth: I don't really feel that.

Matt: ***(brightly)*** Don't you?

Ruth: No. ***(Matt is pleased)***

Silence

Ruth: It was lovely of you to bring me here.

Matt: I enjoy being with you... er... we don't get much time to talk in the factory and I don't want it to feel awkward for you talking to me.

Ruth: It's OK - I don't.

Silence

Matt: ***(purposefully)*** Ruth. ***(Ruth looks up)*** I know you and Nathan have always been close. He's been gone so long now, and I wondered...

Ruth: Have you heard from him recently?

Matt: No. Not since Las Vegas - months ago. You?

Ruth: Same. He called me once. He seemed odd. Well...

Matt: Drunk?

Ruth: ***(pause then nods cautiously)*** Maybe. ***(pause)*** I worry about him.

Matt: ***(sighs)*** Don't. He'll be doing OK wherever he is.

Ruth: I hope so. I really hope so.

Matt: You miss him, don't you.

Ruth: ***(She crumples a bit)*** He's my life. ***(pause)*** I love him.

(She covers her face. Matt touches her hand reassuringly. She takes his hand and keeps it)

Ruth: What were you were going to say?

Matt: It's OK. Nothing important.

They stay holding hands as the lights dim.

Scene 7: Back in the USA

Darkness. Terrible coughing in the darkness. Sound of someone being sick; groping around - a match is struck and the lamp is lit. A small light shows Nathan lying in squalor on the hay pile, now dirty, obviously very ill. Coughs. Spits blood onto dirty handkerchief. He looks gaunt.

Cockerel crows.

Nath: Damn! I'm late - and no breakfast cos I was late in last night. ***(coughs and picks up bucket of pig meal)*** These prize pigs have better food than me***! (He coughs and staggers off)***

Lights off.

Darkness. First light of dawn streaks through. A cockerel crows. Then slowly the morning light comes up on the Yard, and Nathan is lying on his straw, fully clothed and comatose. No movement.

Cowboy enters with a lantern, looks at him for a minute, then kicks him awake, who immediately starts coughing.

Cowboy: What do you call this? It's not the Las Vegas Hilton, you know! It's past dawn and you're late.***(Nathan is getting up, coughing.)*** you're a poor example of a farm-hand, boy! I thought you had promise - but look at you! You're letting me down.

Nath: ***(coughing)*** It's these chemicals I have to use.

Cowboy: Watch your mouth or you'll be out! No work permit - people after you! I would watch my step if I were in your place, boy!

Nath: I'm not...

Cowboy: Still, more'n 9 months now - you're holding the record for illegal immigrants - you got stamina - I'll say that for you! Stamina, or desperation!

Nathan takes a bun out form his pocket and starts to eat.

Cowboy: No time for breakfast now! Those pigs need their grub! ***(He shoves a bucket at Nathan)*** Get going, boy!

They both leave.

Lighting changes to late afternoon. Nathan returns with empty pail. He flops down onto his pile of straw, exhausted and still coughing.

Song 12 - Where am I now, Part Two *(Nathan and Dad)*

Nathan: See what I am!
Nothing but bone!
I have no food,
I'm so alone!
Even my father's workers
Have more than I could ever get here!
So why am I here, not there?
I must swallow pride!
I don't want to end like this now!

Nathan takes out a scrap of paper and begins to write to his Dad. On the other side of the stage a spotlights lights up on Nathan's father receiving a letter, and reading it. The lights gradually fade on Nathan.

Dad: It's from my son!
I thought him gone!
I'll take him back no matter what the things he's done!
I must go now!
I'll fetch him home -
I'll wrap him in my arms and say
"You will not fear another day!"
It's from my son -
My younger son -
It's from my son!

Lights off.

Scene 7: The Yard

Nathan walks into his 'corner' with an empty pail - coughs blood and spits it into a dirty handkerchief. He wipes his face with it, and pockets it again. He flops down onto the straw. He sits head in hands - in despair and emptiness.

Cowboy walks in, acting in a strange manner.

Nathan doesn't look up.

Cowboy: Well, boy er... Nathan. I brought you some new duds.

Silence

Cowboy: Well, er... Nathan. Aren't you gonna say anything?

Nath: Thankyou.

Cowboy: That's better! Here - put them on. ***(Nathan doesn't move)*** And I brought you some tucker. ***(embarrassed)*** It was going spare in the kitchen, and I thought you might like it.

Nathan looks at him strangely, but doesn't say anything. Cowboy is uncomfortable.

Cowboy: Reckon that straw is ready for a clean out too about now. ***(Nathan looks surprised)*** I'll help you with it later.

He turns, hesitates, turns to go, and turns back just before leaving

Cowboy: Oh - and you've got a visitor.

Leaves quickly.

Nathan is stunned. He throws the clothes down and runs to the 'door'. As he reaches it, Nathan's Dad enters determinedly pushing past Cowboy who is trying to deter him.

Nathan and Dad stand facing each other, both shocked. Cowboy backs away and exits quickly.

Long silence.

Song 13 - The Reconciliation *-(a capella - Dad and Nathan)*

Nath: Father!

Dad: No!

Nath: I know what I am!

Dad: Stop!

Nath: I can't ask for your love.

Dad: Oh, my son.

Nath: All I can plead for

Dad: Nathan!

Nath: is to be given some work.

Dad: Listen! I don't care what you've done!
You're still my son!

Nath: I am your son?!

Dad: You are my son!

Nath: That cannot be!
Why can't you see
All that is me?
I am not worthy to be
Called your name!

Dad: You are, and always will!

They fall into each others arms, both crying together.

Nath: Dad! Dad! I'm so sorry!

Dad: Hush, son! Nathaniel - Nathan! It's all right now! It's all right!

Nathan looks around him, and at himself, and begins to laugh and cry. His laughter turns to coughing, and he eventually collapses on the floor. Dad tenderly picks up Nathan and gently carries him off. (If this is not possible, he orders Cowboy to carry Nathan off carefully.)

Scene 8: The Homecoming in the Factory

Loud raucous music.

The factory has a big banner stretched across saying "Welcome home! Nathan". Ruth is giving orders to workers to put the finishing touches up, but frequently looks nervously towards the 'door'.

Finally, Dad enters exhaustedly, and Ruth rushes up to greet him with a hug. They seem very familiar now, often touching . Ruth takes his coat and case. Dad looks around (for Matt) and Ruth shrugs her

shoulders and shakes her head. She questions Dad, and he nods and looks behind him. Nathan stands in the 'doorway' - looking gaunt, nervous and hunted expression. He avoids eye contact, especially Ruth's, and she is also nervous, not knowing what to do. She goes up to him hesitantly, and finally takes his hand and leads him to the centre of the stage. The workers all cheer and crowd around him.

As he is surrounded and lost to view, Ruth comes forward to where Dad is still standing.

Ruth: Is he OK?

Dad: He will be.

Ruth: He looks ... terrible.

Dad: He's been to hell and back.

Ruth: I don't know what to say to him.

Dad: You will. ***(He puts his hand reassuringly on her shoulder)*** Give him time. ***(pause)*** I must find Matthew.

Ruth: He must be in his office.

Dad: He should be here.

Ruth: I know. It's difficult for him. He ... he was so hurt when Nathan left. It took him a long time to learn to cope without him. Now he doesn't know what to feel.

Dad: I know. I'll go to him.

Dad exits.

Ruth looks at the crowd around Nathan. She stands hesitantly, watching. The lights come down on this part of the stage.

The lights come up on the office at one side of the stage where Matt sits head in his hands.

As Dad enters, Matt busies himself with work.

Dad: ***(softly)*** Matthew - aren't you coming to welcome your brother back from the dead?

Matt slams the filing cabinet drawer.

Dad: He is your only brother. He deserves some of your attention.

Matt: I think he used it all up when he walked out on us.

Dad: He's been through some rough times.

Matt: ***(bitterly)*** So have we all.

Dad: He's back now - it's time to start again.

Matt: It's that easy isn't it! Just turn back the clock and pretend nothing ever happened. It's what you've always done!

Dad: Matthew?

Matt: It's not *all* about Nathan, Dad! What about me?!

Dad: I don't understand....

Song 14 - All I've Done for You *(Matt. and Dad)*

Matt: Why should he just walk in here and get
Everything I've worked for years?
I have slaved for you
Sacrificed for you!
What has Nathan done?
He went off and took your money
And spent buying friends and fun!
How does he deserve
All your best reserve
When you've given me none?!

Dad: My son, don't forget
All the things I've given
All throughout your life!
I know that I haven't always been there
After the death of my wife.

Matt: That isn't it, my Father -
Can't you see?

Dad: Then tell me son,
Explain to me!

Matt: I can't say clearer than I have.
When Nathan left
I felt at last that I was worthy of your love.
But then he comes
Back into your embrace
And it's Matt who gets the shove!

Dad: My son do not
Think you understand it

When you are all wrong!
Can't you see -
I thought Nathan was dead now,
He'd been gone so long.

Matt: Why did he go off and leave me
When I had done so much for him?
I had cared for him
Even lied for him!
Love is in the bin!

Dad & Matt together:

Dad: Do not think I love you any less, Matt.
Than my younger son.
If it had been you I had to search for,
I would do the same!

Matt: Why should he just walk in here and get
Everything I've worked for years?
I have slaved for you
Sacrificed for you!
What has Nathan done?

Matt stands with his back to Dad.

Dad: ***(gently)*** Matthew. ***(pause)*** Come down to the party.

Matt: I...I can't.

Dad goes up to Matt and puts his hand on Matt's shoulder.

Dad: Matthew. I know I haven't said this aloud before...

Matt: ***(hunches shoulder)*** Don't, Dad.

Dad: I love you Matthew. You are my firstborn. You have many wonderful qualities. you're not Nathan -

Matt: ***(pulls away.)*** see! You say it yourself!

Dad: You're not Nathan - but I love you no less for that. You two are different! Different personalities, different qualities. How could I love one above the other?

Matt: ***(turning round to face him)*** But you've always made a deal about Nathan - it's always felt like I was around all the time, like a spare part -

Dad: Not a spare part. A crucial part. If I didn't make you see my need for you, my love for you, then I am sorry. But I have always been there for you. Its just that you and Nathan had different needs; needed different responses.

Matt: Nathan is a bit dramatic.

Dad: Some people are! But it doesn't mean I love him more. I know where I am with you - you're solid, steady, dependable - that's crucial to me! You must see that, Matthew!

Matt: ***(slowly)*** I think so. I don't want you to love Nathan less than me - only I don't want to feel taken for granted.

Dad: You're not. If everyone was as flighty as Nathan - nothing would ever get done!

Matt: And if everyone was as 'solid' as me - nothing would ever change!

Dad: Exactly!

pause

Dad: I need to get back. They're waiting for me to make the toast. ***(pause)*** Will you come - please.

silence

Matt: ***(small voice)*** Is he okay? I mean - you had to take him to hospital for a while - is he all right now?

Dad: He's very hurt - inside and out, and feeling very small. He found his world - and it wasn't very nice. He just needs a safe place to heal now.

Matt nods thoughtfully.

Matt: Is Ruth with him?

Dad: Yes.

Matt: She loves him, you know.

Dad: I know.

Matt: And I love her.

Silence. Dad puts his arm around Matt.

Dad: ***(sadly)*** Oh Matthew.

Silence. Matt finally pulls himself up.

Matt: Come on, Dad. We're missing the party!

They exit slowly.

Lights come back up on the factory floor. People are milling around with drinks. Nathan stands alone to one side. Ruth is on the opposite side watching him. Finally she goes up to him slowly.

Ruth: Hi.

Nath: Hello, Ruth.

Ruth: ***(looking round)*** Bit different to the last party we went to, remember?

Nath: Yes. I remember I made the usual pratt of myself.

silence

Ruth***: (meaningfully)*** How are you, Nathan?

Nath: I... I don't know!

Ruth: You did it!

Silence

Nath: Are you going to say 'I told you so' - it's what everyone's thinking!

Ruth: No-one's thinking that - they're just ....sorry. Anyway - you've been further than anyone else in this place!

Nath: To hell and back.

silence

Nath: I wrote to my dad.

Ruth: I know.

Nath: Asked him for a job! ***(pause, smiles)*** *Asked* him for a job - do you hear me! *Asked* for a job in his factory! I.... I didn't know what else to do. ***(low voice)*** I stayed until my pride ran out. Then I had nothing left. ***(pause)*** I would have died if I stayed.

Ruth: Your Dad came and fetched you.

Nath: I only asked for a ticket home.

Ruth: He loves you. He missed you.

Nath: ***(choking on a sob, face in his hands)*** I know.

Ruth: *I* love you. *I* missed you.

silence. Nathan slowly looks up.

Nath: "I'm not a person you could love". Remember?

Ruth: I can love you. Could you love me?

Nathan touches her face and her hair.

Nath: You have always looked inside me and seen me for what I am - no pretenses, no masks. What do you see in here? ***(touches his heart)***

Ruth: ***(softly)*** I see - that you have a heart full of love. I see a heart bruised - but not quite broken, that needs love to bind it, hold it, nurture it, and caress it. ***(She takes his hands)*** I know you have always loved me in one way or another, since those early days. But now only you can say whether your love is enough for us.

Nath: ***(brokenly)*** Oh Ruth - I've done such terrible things! I can't let you love me now!

Ruth: ***(she lifts his face to hers and kisses it tenderly)*** Nathan, I love you - as deeply as I can. I cannot love you more. I want you; I need you. I waited for you to come back to me. I've known this time would come - I'm prepared for your dreams - and your nightmares.

Nath: Oh Ruth.***(he holds her tightly)*** Ruth! Ruth! Ruth! How I've needed you! I've missed you so much!

He kisses her hair, her eyes, her cheeks. He reaches her mouth,

Nath: I love you.

They kiss passionately.

As they relax into a cuddle, Dad and Matt come in. Matt goes over to Nathan and Ruth steps back.

Matt and Nathan stand looking at each other for a moment, and then they hug tightly for a long moment. Ruth moves in and Matt hugs around them both.

Everyone has drinks passed to them. The workers crowd around. Nathan stands with an arm around Ruth, who also takes Matt's hand and squeezes it tenderly.

Dad: A toast to my two sons!

He and Matt exchange smiles.

Matt: To Nathan!

Dad: To Nathan! He was lost and now he is found! He was dead and now he is alive!

Everyone cheers.

Finale: Welcome To Our Love! *(everybody)*

Matt: We welcome you back to our lives
Ruth: We wish you health and happiness
Dad: We're glad you saw when you're alone
It's better to come back home.

All: Welcome to our love!
It had never gone away;
It was waiting for the day
You needed it.
Welcome to our love!
We are pleased to take you home.
You will never be alone
Within our love.

Nath: I thank you for your love for me.
I think I know my destiny -
I know my place is here with you.
Your love will help me to pull through.

Thankyou for your love!
If I'd never gone away,
I would never know this day -
How I need you!

All: Welcome to our love!
We are pleased to take you home.
You will never be alone
Within our love.

(optional verse:

Matt: The moral of this story is
To tell you of God's love for us.
Whoe'er you are; whatever you've done -
You'll find God's healing in His Son.

All: Welcome to God's love!
It had never gone away;
It was waiting for the day
You needed it.
Welcome to God's love!

He is pleased to take you home.
You will never be alone
Within His love.)

Welcome!! Welcome!!
To our *(God's)* love!
Welcome!! Welcome!!
To our *(God's)* love!!

The End