

THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF BOOGEDY BOOGEDY

A new version for the Victory Gardens Theater production

Twenty-fifth Anniversary Season Fall 1998

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PROLOGUE to ACT ONE

ANGEL

Welcome to the Sovereign State
Karma Kismet and Fate
Of Boogedy Boogedy Boo
Your cousins bros sisters and you
I'm your Angel cherubic
My soul's so big it's measured in cubic
In the Sovereign State we take the scat out of scatology
We don't psych you
We Like you
No Psychology
You got it - Like-ology
We want you to have the final causes
Instead of death judgment heaven hell without pauses
We hope to give you pleasure supreme
We entertain you like you the Emperor of Ice Cream
But one note of warning
Lest there's perjury suborning
We seek the hole in the whole doughnut Truth
We got conjurers and necromancers and all sayers of sooth
What you're about to see
is Shadrach Meschach Adeb-nego and me
we boys and girls were thrown headlong
by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar headstrong
we got pile-driven into a fiery furnace
'cause we refused to bow down, we said, come on, mutha, burn us
we do not believe in your golden statue
we worship the Lord God on high
you got us bound but we say, right back atchoo
we shall survive
we shall prevail
the dream's alive
all false gods fail
If you never been stopped for D W B - Driving While Black
I got to reveal in the Sovereign State - W Y B -
Watch Your Back.

(MESHACH enters as the ANGEL exits.)

MESHACH

Everything is true and false. A merchant goes bankrupt. He sends his son to a wealthy man who may or may not owe him a favor. The man is known for his hauteur and keeps the son three days waiting. When he finally grants the audience, he deigns not to look at the youth, who, growing impatient, speaks. "Sire, my father you know. He has lost his wealth and sent me to you to beg a loan of three camels laden with silver so that he might once again be prosperous." "Out of my sight, worm!", says the man. As the son leaves, the servants of the man give him the reins of 30 camels laden with silver. The merchant deals wisely and becomes rich beyond his dreams. "Go to the wealthy man, my son, and return him three-fold what he has given us." The son obeys, but the man's hauteur is more extreme than before. "Be gone, cretin, you do not understand hauteur and generosity." Everything is true and false.

(SHADRACH offstage sings "Iz You Iz Or Iz You Ain't Mah Baby." He enters.)

SHADRACH

"Iz You Iz Or Iz You Ain't Mah Baby."

Pardon me, boys
I' dat de Chabanooba Choo Choo
Track 29
Boy you can gib me a shine

Ah'd like to hab a baby
A lass or a little laddie
But when it saw its mommy
Wouldn't it say "Daddy"

Iz you iz, Or iz you ain't, Mah baby

Ah, say dere, Princefish, does de name o' Rubah Begonyah ring a bell

Is you iz, Or iz you ain't, Mah baby

Judge Solomon Skybumskybum has ruled dat de fathah is de chile to de man. In de appellate procedyah, Justice ChooChoo Justice has found dat de man is de chile to de fathah. In de suuperior court o' de firs' districk o' de Districk o' de gem o' de Ocean Judge Jud Judge has declared dat de chile is de fathah to de man. In de suupremest body o' de most exalted division o' de Prime Movah o' all Poobahs i' de liberated emirate o' Boogedy-Boogedy Justice Leaner Hot Dog has decreed dat de man is de fathah to de chile.

(A bell rings.)

SHADRACH (cont'd)

Does de name o' Rubah Begonyah ring a bell?

Iz you iz
Or iz you ain't
Mah baby

Ah'd like to hab a baby
A lass or a little laddie
But when it saw its mommy
Wouldn't it say "Daddy"

Pardon me boys
I' dat de Chabanooba Choo Choo
Track 29

Boy ... are you mah boy

Boy ... are you my boy

--Dr. Pullmotah, may Ah hab a word wid you?

--Sorry, son, Ah'm in fo' a hard day o' labah in de paternity ward.

--Son? You called me Son?

Boy ... you ... can ... gib ... me ... a ... shine ... boy ... iz you mah boy?
Justice Feline Braunschweiger has decided

I' de uppest halls o' Justice Blindness dat de muthafrigger he not only NOT de
fathah o' de chile he not de man eiddar.

Iz you iz
Or iz you ain't
Mah baby

(ABED-NEGO enters.)

ABED-NEGO

Give me some sugar, a beso, la muchachita chiquita, my nina, beso y abrazo fuerte fuerte grande now suave suave, kiss your mommy, good night, my sweet thing, muy de noche, Mommy's here, no no, I'm not going anywhere, go to sleep, no no I don't go out, I'll just be outside la puerta, si si, I'll hold your mano, I won't let you go, sleep, darling, take off your zapatas, off with your patos, one more beso uno uno, no no dos, uno what you mean, your colita hurts, chica, my niña, I check, don't touch, now where?, don't scratch, my baby, you have a piojo?, no no piojos, we'll wash your hair manana, don't scratch, darling, sleep, mamacita's aqui, I'll be right outside la puerta, de nada, buenas noches, chica -

Edouard, light me up, skinny ass crackman, s'il vous plait, do it por favor, por una noche, imbecil

Good night, muchachita chiquita, give me a beso, suave suave abrazo, crack-child, she not a crack-child, pobrecita muy bonita

ANGEL

All rise for the honorable Judges Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

(The three Judges dress in robes and wigs and take their positions.)

ABED-NEGO

Call King Nebuchadnezzar to take the oath before the Court.

ANGEL (with Good Book extended)

Do you solemnly swear ...

ABED-NEGO

Will the witness place his right hand on the Good Book extended?

ANGEL

Do you solemnly swear ...

ABED-NEGO

Will the witness do as directed or be cited in contempt of court?

DANIELLE

Give me your right hand.

(She parts his robe, then throws it open.)

DANIELLE

A strait jacket! Your Honors, not one hour ago my client was unbound.

ABED-NEGO

He is not *your* client. That implies an adversary relationship with the Court. That is not what you have. You are here merely to advise the client.

DANIELLE

The what?

ABED-NEGO

The client, not *your* client. He is the client, the ward, if you will, of the state.

SHADRACH

Dese n' dose distinckshuns distinkly distink if you gittin' mah draft n' if you ain't den git me i' de bottle fo' Ah die frob dry, yeh hunnggga hunnggga ...

ABED-NEGO

The distinction is this. Call him what you will ...

SHADRACH

What you will.

ABED-NEGO

But know that he is not to be defended, only presented.

DANIELLE

Beside the point. Binding him as if he were a dangerous psychotic is patently illegal.

SHADRACH

Ah's heard o' de bald eagle, but de ill-eagle, dat's a mighty sick bird. You say you got a patent on dis disease?

Ah'm calling de U.S. Reg. Pat. Off.

(He pulls out a toy phone.)

Hello, Reggie?

ABED-NEGO

He is a dangerous *felon* and needs restraining.

DANIELLE

Felon, you call him! The man has not yet been tried. Judge Abed-nego, I demand you remove yourself from this case.

ABED-NEGO

Disqualify myself? Never!

MESHACH

Tilt.

ABED-NEGO

Not even if I have tilted. This pinball remains.

MESHACH

Pinhead. How many angels can dance on the ball of a pin?

DANIELLE

Judge Meshach, may I get a ruling?

MESHACH

Why do hummingbirds hum?

DANIELLE

Because they've forgotten the words.

MESHACH

Release the prisoner.

(ANGEL takes off HIS robe and unbinds HIM. HE growls at HER.)

DANIELLE

Stop your growling. You're being tried for the most serious crimes. Don't make it harder on yourself. Please keep calm.

(HE stops growling. DANIELLE once more extends the Good Book.)

Do you solemnly swear ...

ABED-NEGO

Your right hand.

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR puts his right hand on the Good Book, throws it down and stomps on it. HE stops.)

DANIELLE

It is the Good Book, your Honors, but it is not his.

ABED-NEGO

This shall be added to the list of charges.

DANIELLE

Your Honors, is not one of the charges that this King tried to impose his religion on those with different beliefs? If he is forced to swear on *our* Bible, would not we be open to the same charge?

MESHACH

Why is it that men are not such sots as they were in days of yore?

DANIELLE

We are no longer indefatigable toppers.

MESHACH

The charge is dropped. Proceed, Judge Abed-nego.

ABED-NEGO (reading)

The charges are as follows: "NEBUCHADNEZZAR the King made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits ..."

SHADRACH

Threescore dat Cupid, hey? He doin shitten well for hisself he shot an arrow he knew damn well where and it landed in de middle o' dis burnin birdbush right where dey loves it.

ABED-NEGO

"... and the breadth thereof six cubits."

SHADRACH

Six Cupids scorin three times Ah's confused tho Ah duz right fine mahselfs shack-up Shadrach shack in the rack.

ABED-NEGO

"He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon."

SHADRACH

Abed-nego. Dat's a-bed-nego nega to bed nigga a bad niggah ah's a bad niggah ...

ABED-NEGO

"Then Nebuchadnezzar the King sent to gather together the satraps ..."

SHADRACH

Satraps Meshachs and Abed-neggahs.

ABED-NEGO

"... the deputies and the governors, the judges the treasurers the counsellors the sheriffs ..."

SHADRACH

On Comet on Cupid on Donner on Blitzen.

ABED-NEGO
" ... and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image
which Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up. Then the satraps ..."

SHADRACH
Satraps satraps dem dry traps ...

ABED-NEGO
" ... the deputies and the governors, the judges and the treasurers, the
counsellors the sheriffs ..."

SHADRACH
Ah passes.

ABED-NEGO
" ... and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together unto the
dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up."

SHADRACH (sing-song)
... the image that Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up.

ABED-NEGO
"And they stood before the image ..."

MESHACH
... that Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up.

ABED-NEGO
" ... that Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up."

SHADRACH
Tatatatatatatatata

(SHADRACH, ABED-NEGO and MESHACH break into an
Irish jig.)

ABED-NEGO (having stopped)

Irish jig.

DANIELLE
Judge Meshach, may we hear the rest of the charge?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR growls.)

Your headaches will be worse. You will not dream. Then I cannot tell you what your dreams portend.

(HE stops growling.)

MESHACH
Portend you are green and wear a mask. What are you?

DANIELLE
The Lone Lime.

MESHACH
Let us hear the rest of the charge.

ABED-NEGO
"Then the herald cried aloud ..."

SHADRACH
My daddy's name was Harold.

ABED-NEGO
" ... to you it is commanded, o peoples, nations and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut ..."

SHADRACH
De sackbutt, say hey?

ABED-NEGO
"Psaltery ..."

SHADRACH
Peppery.

"... and all kinds of music ..."

SHADRACH
Wid de spoons on de cheeks n' de sacks on de butts, baby, you n' me gonna
exhume Major Bowes.

ABED-NEGO
 “Ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the King hath set up.”

One mo' time.

ABED-NEGO
 "And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into
 the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

(NEGUHADNEZZAR growls. DANIELLE stares HIM into silence.)

SHADRACH (professionally)
Herodotus speaks of a great golden statue of Zeus in the temple of Belus in Babylon and Nestle in the Marginalia reminds us of the mention in Ammianus Marcellinus of a colossal golden statue erected by Antiochus Epiphanes in the temple of Daphne at Antioch.

Really? I mean, really.

SHADRACH

Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattman of a personal God quaquaquauqua -

And you thought Ah just one mo' hung snowball.

I will now continue with the prosecution.

DANIELLE
Objection, your Honors, if an adversary relationship does not

DANIELLE (cont'd)
exist in this court, if the King is not *my* client, if I am not his *defense* attorney,
neither you nor anyone else can *prosecute*.

SHADRACH

Cute.

ABED-NEGO
"And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into
the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

(NEGUCHADNEZZAR growls. DANIELLE growls HIM
down.)

DANIELLE (staring HIM into silence.)
I will have an answer to my question!

ABED-NEGO
One more outburst and the ape's teeth will be wired shut.

DANIELLE
An answer!

SHADRACH
Why is a woman like a frying pan?

DANIELLE
I'm sure I don't know.

(MESHACH snaps a switchblade under SHADRACH's
chin.)

SHADRACH
Ah withdraws de question.

MESHACH
Continue the reading of the charge.

DANIELLE
Let the record show the unanswered objection.

MESHACH
What record?

DANIELLE

I can't answer that.

MESHACH

Let the record show that the attorney has refused to answer.

ABED-NEGO

"Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the cornet flute harp sackbut psaltery and all kinds of music, all the peoples the nations and the languages fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up."

DANIELLE

Objection. The charges, not the entire account as we have it from the Book of Daniel.

ABED-NEGO

Overruled. The scene must be set.

DANIELLE

Simply, what is the charge against this man?

(DANIELLE snatches a document from a court table and reads.)

"Nebuchadnezzar who calls himself King ..."

ABED-NEGO

Counsel is out of order.

DANIELLE

I object to the statement in the charge, who *calls* himself King.

ABED-NEGO

Will counsel cease and desist?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

KNRI--King Nebuchadnezzar Rex Judaeorum.

ABED-NEGO

He claims to be Babylonian, but he quotes Latin. He is a tool of the Romans and nothing more.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

KNRI--Koffin Nails Running In.

DANIELLE

The implication is that he calls himself King as do no others, when in fact all Babylon recognized him as sovereign.

MESHACH

Babylon no longer exists.

DANIELLE

He may call himself what he wishes.

MESHACH

He may call himself what he wishes.

SHADRACH

What he wishes.

DANIELLE (reading)

"Nebuchadnezzar is charged with willfully directing the three known as Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego to be placed in the fiery furnace and there to be consumed as punishment for refusal to bow down before the golden idol. Charge 2: Nebuchadnezzar is charged ...

SHADRACH

Hunnggga hunnggga hold it, sweet mah basil, you is extendin beyon' de boun' o' justiticial proprietude. Ah means n' Ah mean what Ah says, da's mine, boobie, nice ones you got, fine on de uppah's dere, de lift iz not all hunnggga hunnggga positibely patrician, Patricia, Ah say dere ...

MESHACH

Ah say dere, I mean, the second charge belongs to Shadrach. Abed-nego will finish before he will begin.

ABED-NEGO
I'll not finish before I begin, thank you.

MESHACH
You're welcome.

DANIELLE
No matter what the crime, the same meal's served to all.

ABED-NEGO
"Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near and brought accusation against the Jews. They answered and said to Nebuchadnezzar the King, O King, live forever."

MESHACH
No matter what the crime, the same meal's served to all.

ABED-NEGO
May I ask my leanéd and hungryed colleague to refrain?

MESHACH
Ah, yes of course.

ABED-NEGO
"Thou, o King, hast made a decree ..."

MESHACH (not fooling, off somewhere)
Of course, the course is the same for us all.

ABED-NEGO
"That every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet flute harp sackbut psaltery and dulcimer and all kinds of music shall fall down and worship the golden image."

MESHACH (still off)
What do people never eat at breakfast?

DANIELLE
Lunch and dinner.

ABED-NEGO

"And whoso falleth not down and worshipping shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

SHADRACH

You may tell me to go to hell, but Ah ain't nevah goin' back to Missippissi da's M-i-s-s-i-p-p-i-s-s-i.

ABED-NEGO

"There are certain Jews whom thou hast appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon--Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego."

SHADRACH MESHACH & ABED-NEGO

We are the boys of furnace
We grew up in Judea
We sapped the milk and honey stands
We've never more been freea
Then to our land came old King Nebuch
With eunuchs and Chaldeans
He snatched us off to Babylon
Like slaves not human beins

(What follows is simultaneously presented.)

ABED-NEGO

To see to speak, voir dire, your Honor.
Give me some sugar, a beso, la muchachita chiquita, my nina, beso y abrazo
fuerte fuerte grande now suave, kiss your mommy, good night, my sweet thing,
muy de noche, Mommy's here

SHADRACH

Iz you iz
Or iz you ain't
Mah baby
Pardon me, boys
I' dat de Chabanoob Choo-Choo
Track 29
Boy, you can give me a shine
Dr. Pullmotor, may Ah hab a word wid you?
Sorry, son, but Ah'm in fo' a hard day o' labor i' de paternity ward.
Son?

MESHACH

Everything is true and false. Everything is true and false.

MESHACH (cont'd)

Everything is true and false Everything is true and false everything is trueandfalseeverythingistrueandfalse.

(THEY stop together. THEY are soundlessly embarrassed at this loss of control. MONKEY GAG.)

MESHACH

Judge Abed-nego shall procede.

ABED-NEGO

"These men, o King, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up. Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego."

DANIELLE

Objection. Rage and fury is an interpretation.

ABED-NEGO

This is how the text reads.

DANIELLE

What text?

ABED-NEGO

The Book of Daniel.

DANIELLE

May I once again point out that the Court should present the charges only, not an embellished scenario.

ABED-NEGO

You are telling the Court how to conduct?

DANIELLE

I am.

MESHACH

She is.

SHADRACH

High-heel sneakah.

MESHACH & DANIELLE

We beg your pardon.

SHADRACH

Beg it, baby. Put on your high-heel sneakahs 'cause Ah'll be down to get ya in a pushcart, Beckie, bettah be ready 'bout half past eight, now Becky don't be late

...

ABED-NEGO

"Then they brought these men before the King."

SHADRACH

We're gonna be there when the band starts playin!

MESHACH

May I call you Shad or Mr. Rach?

SHADRACH

Call me Sir.

ABED-NEGO

"Nebuchadnezzar answered and said unto them ..."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Is it of purpose, o Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego that ye serve not my god nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

DANIELLE

Stop.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Now if ye be ready at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet flute harp sackbut psaltery and dulcimer and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have set up, well.

DANIELLE

May I ask the Court for a short recess?

SHADRACH

Recess! Goodie gumshoes, Ah's playin "Ring Roun' De Rosy Begonia." Jus' fit yore ring roun' mah rosy begonia, as de bishop said to the actress.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace and who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?

ABED-NEGO

"Shadrach Meshach and Abed-Nego answered and said to the King."

SHADRACH MESHACH & ABED-NEGO

O, Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. For our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and if he wishes he will deliver us out of thine hand, o King. But if it is not His will, be it known unto thee, o King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

DANIELLE

Your Honors, is it not clear that your special involvement in this case demands that you disqualify yourselves?

ABED-NEGO

Who better to try one's enemy than oneself?

SHADRACH

We hab seen de enema n' he iz thru us ober n' out.

DANIELLE

Judge Meshach, is it not clear?

MESHACH

If your enemy prospers, do not be vexed, but even pray on his behalf that he may prosper to the full.

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR is calm throughout the following.)

ABED-NEGO

"Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury and the form of his visage was charged against Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego."

DANIELLE

I want to know why a woman is like a frying pan.

ABED-NEGO

"Therefore he spake:"

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR does not speak.)

"Therefore he spake:"

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR does not speak.)

Will counsel instruct the defendant?

DANIELLE

The what?

ABED-NEGO

The King.

DANIELLE

The what?

ABED-NEGO

Speak, snake.

DANIELLE

I will not allow this man to suffer more abuse.

ABED-NEGO

What do you propose to do about it?

SHADRACH

Ah proposes molasses toasts wid de El Monico white port to drown me all down.

DANIELLE

A change of venue.

SHADRACH

If'n Ah duzn't hab me a booze n' watah chaser hol' de watah, Ah's a goosed cook widout no paddle.

(MESHACH hands SHADRACH a flask. SHADRACH loves it and goes from it. MESHACH takes it back.)

ABED-NEGO

Motion denied. Where would be this new venue?

DANIELLE

Proceed.

ABED-NEGO

The Court directs counsel to answer. Where would be this new venue?

DANIELLE

The motion has been denied.

ABED-NEGO and SHADRACH

Answer.

DANIELLE

I have none. Had none in mind. The case must be heard here now before you three.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

I command that the furnace be heated seven times more than it is wont to be heated. I further command certain mighty men in my army to bind Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego and (my emphasis) to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

ABED-NEGO

"Then these men were bound in their hosen their tunics and their mantles and their other garments and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery."

SHADRACH

Furnace.

ABED-NEGO

The Court calls time-out.

DANIELLE

Does the Court rest?

ABED-NEGO

Time-out.

SHADRACH

Shadrach, he's our man, if he can't do it Meshach can. Meshach, he's our man, if he can't do it Abed-nego can. Abed-nego, she's our man, if she can't do it the team can. Yea team yea team yea!

(SHADRACH produces a basketball and starts passing it around. ALL make a circle and do the Globetrotter bit.)

Enuf dis henanigans, Ah's goin' back to playin' brown ball, as de actress said to de honky.

ABED-NEGO

Time-in.

DANIELLE (she is not reading)

"Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent and the furnace exceeding hot the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego."

ABED-NEGO

Verify your statements please.

DANIELLE
I quote from the same account, your Honor, the Book of Daniel. You saw fit to leave off at the crucial point, but no matter, I will complete the picture.

ABED-NEGO
How is it you have the same account as I?

DANIELLE
How is it? It's just fine, o Justice.

SHADRACH (screaming)
YOU OWES MAH MONEY!

DANIELLE
"And these three men Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

SHADRACH
Dat was George C. Scott in De Hus'lah.

DANIELLE
"Then Nebuchadnezzar the King was astonished ..."

SHADRACH
A-stonied. Ah asmokin n' atokin.

(HE inhales deeply.)
But Ah ain't no token you call me token Ah gonna charco' your apartheid.

DANIELLE
"... and rose up in haste. He spake and said unto his counsellors:"

SHADRACH
Uhuru!

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?

DANIELLE

"They answered and said unto the King:"

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire and they have no hurt and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods.

SHADRACH (singing)

O-o-o yes I'm the Great Pretender.

(MESHACH, ABED-NEGO and ANGEL form behind SHADRACH in song line. During the presentation by DANIELLE & NEBUCHADNEZZAR, THEY will do with total authenticity "The Great Pretender" by the Platters. The two camps vie for our attention.)

DANIELLE

"Then Nebuchadnezzar came to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace. He spake and said:"

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth and come hither.

DANIELLE

"Then Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego came forth out of the midst of the fire. And the satraps the deputies and the governors and the King's counsellors being gathered together saw these men, that the fire had no power upon their bodies nor was the hair of their heads singed, neither were their hosen changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said:"

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Blessed be the God of Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego who hath sent his angel and delivered his servants that trusted in him and have changed the King's word and have yielded their bodies that they might not serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree that every people nation and language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego shall be cut in pieces and their houses shall be made into a dunghill, because there is no other God that is able to deliver after this sort.

(The JUDGES finish their song as NEBUCHADNEZZAR finishes declaiming. Now the light is on HIM only. HE begins to recount.)

I am steering a car around a circular driveway of fine gravel. A woman in a pleated nightgown stands in the way thirty feet around the curve. I keep slowing. The slower I drive the harder it is to turn. She sees me. I touch the horn. She does not move. If she remains, she will be hit. I turn the wheel more than before but the wheel does not turn as much as before. I will hit her I will hate her I will sob I will want to love her. I let go the wheel. My arms are loose, I close my eyes, the car stops.

(STOP)

I am in a stadium filled with people. From the other side someone is throwing pencils as if they are darts. It is not known for certain who the thrower is aiming at. The pencils come in a continual flurry driving all of us away from our seats. Then it becomes clear. I move to the right, everyone else to the left. A woman wearing an enormous hat held on by a pin as large as a sabre is running at me, throwing the pencils at my forehead but never hitting. I leap over a wall and into a courtyard. At the other end in front of me is the woman. I close my eyes in surrender but I do not think that is what she wants.

(The light expands to include DANIELLE.)

DANIELLE

In the first dream you have control, but not enough. You can slow the car but not stop it altogether. The woman will not move out of the way. You want to hit her hate her sob and love her. You will do all those things, but first you must let go before you can have her. Remember, when you let go the wheel, the car stopped. In the second dream you seem to have no control. You are being attacked. No one will defend you; everyone moves away. The hatpin-sabre terrifies you. You try to run away. It doesn't matter to her. Both enrage her. She is crying with love-hate for the hurt you and she have done to her. Give it up, pack it in. When you let go the wheel, the car stops.

(Lights out. We go to SHADRACH, MESHACH & ABED-NEGO down and bound in the midst of the fiery furnace. A FOURTH MAN moves among THEM.)

SHADRACH (about the FOURTH who is untying HIM)

Who dis dude?

FOURTH MAN

M'man, don't ya knows me? Ah here's Richie the Itch.

SHADRACH

Well scratch my mouth, Richie m'man!

FOURTH MAN

Ah's springin' you, baby.

(sings:) "Music fress your soul...."

(HE finishes untying HIM and moves to ABED-NEGO.)

ABED-NEGO

Who are you?

FOURTH MAN

Don't you know me?

ABED-NEGO

Yes. No.

FOURTH MAN

I'm from the Legion.

ABED-NEGO

The Legion hates me.

FOURTH MAN

May our enemy prosper.

(sings:) "Music fress your soul...."

(HE finishes untying ABED-NEGO and moves to MESHACH.)

MESHACH

I don't want to be untied last. I don't want to be untied at all.

FOURTH MAN

Everyone will be untied.

MESHACH

I don't want it. I came here but I will not go.

FOURTH MAN

If you think you come or go, that is your delusion. Now accept this.

(sings:) "Music fress your soul...."

SHADRACH MESHACH & ABED-NEGO

Praise the Lord!

SHADRACH

N'pass the amontillado!

(The Fiery Furnace becomes the Courtroom. The JUDGES back in position. NEBUCHADNEZZAR & DANIELLE before THEM.)

DANIELLE

Nebuchadnezzar is charged with forcing his religion on **those** who hold another God sacred. There is no **doubt** he did this and he **seems to** deserve punishment, but who among you will mete it out ...

ABED-NEGO

I.

DANIELLE

When the Lord God on High did not see fit to **destroy the King**. In fact, your Honors, the Lord forgave him and the King prospered for **many years** after. Would you in the name of Justice pretend to do what the Lord would not? Are you saying the Lord is unjust?

MESHACH (to NEBUCHADNEZZAR)

Do you wish to speak before I ask the question?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR is silent and does not move.)

Very well. Are you guilty or not?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR takes a flute from inside his robe. HE blows one note.)

Not.

End ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

ANGEL

Now that you done spent your penny
Had you some candy, you bring me any?
I just foolin', I wouldn't take your sweets
Bad for my chompers I brusha brusha after each eats
Now what was that you just saw
Something about the law?
In the uppest halls of justice blindness
A king goes on trial for his misdemeanors and crimes high
The high hard ones he does in his heart and mindness
The low soft ones he handles on the fly
Which comes worse
The ones ^{of} co-mits
Or the sins of O-mits, remember 'sin'?
To the better of your recollection
Good and evil, what a bore
We got metal detectors for morality
Just check your conscience at the door
Now it's brother Shad's turn
And he doin' a burn
He's gonna lay it all out
Like the thrilla in manilla
Make the devil twist and shout
It's barrister Rach 'gainst old NebZilla

MESHACH

Two monks, Akito and Kim, both of an Asian persuasion, were walking down a road after a recent rainfall. Ahead of them stood a beautiful young woman. Her bare feet were dry and her dress was pressed. Before her lay a large puddle. Without asking if he might help, Akito picked her up and carried her across the water and mud. He then set her down and without a word continued on his way. Kim followed. That night the monks found shelter in a monastery. Before retiring, Kim, who had been silent since the incident on the road, spoke. "Akito, you know we monks must have nothing to do with women. Yet you took that girl in your arms and carried her several yards." Akito replied, "Kim, I left her back on that road. Are you still carrying her?"

SHADRACH (à la Louis Armstrong)

Pops, did you hear the story of Long John Dean
A bold bank robber from Bowling Green
Was sent to the jailhouse yesterday
But late last night he made his getaway
He was long gone from Kentucky
Long gone ain't he lucky
Long gone what Ah mean
Long John Dean from Bowling Green

Ah's be on a lekcha gig all's obah de bigra
Nigra collegiums i' de deepes' down home.
Ah goes to Frisk U. in Memphisk, Fivesessee,
den Ah goes to George Washington Cardboard i' de Elephuntkegee Institute fo'
Highah Earnin' specializin' i' Abribadabra
Abriculcha n' LowBotany big on greens all de teache's grabbin' yub golk by de
collards n' wringin' turkah necks 'til dey's gobbled de 101 abuses fo' de peanuts
n' de miscegenation nuts discovered by G. W. Carpetbaggah

They caught him in Frisco to seal his fate
At San Quentin they jailed him one evening late
But out on de ocean John did escape
'Cause someone forgot to close de golden gate
He was long gone
Frob Kentucky
Long gone
Ain't he lucky
What Ah mean
Long Gone John frob Bowling Green

Den de Prebident o' dese bigra Nigra collegiums put his ham on mah shouldah
n' say, "Son, you're a credit to the riot." N' Ah says, "Fathah Prebident, yo all be
mah daddy? Las' time Ah saw you, you chantin' 'Wha's de word Thundahbird',
n' you rolls obah in de broken glass n' de blood pour down on de floor o' de
paddy wagon n' Ah stan's dere n' Ah's weepin' alligatah big ones, daddy, yo
mah daddy?

Iz Ah iz, Or Iz Ah ain't, Yo baby

N' de Prebident say, "My boy, you're not to present these stereotypes. They tear
down the image we here at G.W.B. Dublanche try so hard to maintain." "Zat
where Ah iz, papah?" N' de Prebident say, "I am your spiritual father, your
development comes from the spirit of my loins. But I am not your real father, I
am your Dean and your Doctor." Papa Dean Doctah, yo say dis is G.W.B.
Duvalier hoodoo boodoo, Ah's burnin' a pin-pricked doll on yo' front lawn,
sawbones. Now Ah knows it. Ah iz yo baby. Yo be mah natural, no,
processed, daddy. You iz daddy bank robber become Prebident o' de bigges'
nigres' collegium i' all de down home."

SHADRACH (cont'd)

Long gone frob Kentucky
Long gone ain't he lucky
Long gone
What Ah mean
Long Gone John frob Bowling Green
Yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk

ABED-NEGO

Why should I be allowed to take back my niña, excuse me, my girlbaby? If it please the court, Señora Lopez, I mean your Honor, I am Dominican, you are. I am sorry. I never harm a hair, not uno pelo. Edouard who? No more, in rehab, yes. I'm in rehab. I read about these gorditas, throw their babies down chutes, off los techos, crack-babies, poor babies, I protect my niña, I work at a salon de belleza, hair-dresser, si, yes, I go to school two nights a week to get my GED, God Equivalency Damn if I don't, one day I own my own salon, thank you, you have the power to let me have my baby back, I am clean, you can't go wrong señora, you have mucha carisma, via con Dios cada santo dia.

Beso y abrazo, my pobrocita, we study, we become las abogados inteligente?

ANGEL

All rise for Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego.

SHADRACH (holding a piece of paper)

Now Neb, Ah has here in mah hand a point o' disordah n' disjustice. Ah ain't comin' crawlin', no suh, you sees dat plain 'nuff. No crawlin' but wheelin' cuz Ah gots mah pride n' Ah gots mah porgymobile, bes' way a double ampuknee gits hisself roun'.

DANIELLE

I object to this sick joke. You are no more without legs than I am.

SHADRACH

Le's see dem fancy walkin' wheels.

DANIELLE

See all you're going to.

SHADRACH

Dat thing o' yores ain't no good unless yo' usin' dat thing. It ain't nessa ain't nessa ain't nessa ain't nessa now Nessa Neb massa' Neb on Jewlie de 8t' did you o' did you not ...

DANIELLE

I demand the purpose of this grandstanding.

SHADRACH

Gran' standin', dis iz de point o me o my o weeo would be gran' standin' but Ah gots me de peculyah particularity o' not bein' able to do no standin' gran o' othahhow.

DANIELLE

The Judge is obfuscating.

SHADRACH

Well, wash mah mouf if Ah evah duz dis offuskatin', dis Rockefeller Center Attica Jailhouse skatin', dis Soul Death on Ice, Gubnah, wid yo' pinstripes down 'roun' yo' ankles, Happy Deathday Blowjob, Massa' Nelson.

DANIELLE

The Judge has eyes, hands and legs.

SHADRACH (Shylockly)

Has not a Judge eyes ... yeh, we heard dis rummagin' 'bout i' de fancy Jewlie literachur fo' de ofayskatin' reeferences befo'.

Gib me de Bible n' de historickal records n' de res' iz garbage, dat remin's me, Neb, wha' kind of grub dey feedin' you?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Garbage.

SHADRACH

Grubbage like you gibs all us folk.

MESHACH

You're getting ahead of yourself.

SHADRACH

How can Ah be ahead o' mahself when Ah is right chere?

DANIELLE

Judge Meshach, may we have your opinion?

SHADRACH

We don' wan' no pinions, we want de hot hard facks. On Jewlie de 8t', did you or did you not ...

MESHACH
When a tulip's two lips press another tulip's two lips.

DANIELLE
There's joy in Mudville when Shadrach's at the bat.

MESHACH
Press your point.

SHADRACH (waving the paper)
... sign dis ordah pressin' me into de service o' yo' country?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
I already signed it.

SHADRACH
Did you or did you not?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
I dead I did.

SHADRACH
Ah has you where Ah wants you.

ABED-NEGO
As de bishop said to de actress.

SHADRACH
Da's enuf out of character frob you dere, Pawnfish.

ABED-NEGO
Carpe diem!

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
Diem was assassinated by the Costume Intelligence Agency. On that score my blood is clean.

SHADRACH
Into de service o' yore country 'gainst de midget high yellers o' Outdo China.

DANIELLE

Judge Shadrach, the name of Nebuchadnezzar on this order called you into war. If you were so against the fighting, why didn't you resist?

SHADRACH

Resist?

DANIELLE

Object? Dodge? Evade?

SHADRACH

Da's jus' like you, skirt, runnin' roun' de issue.

DANIELLE

No one's running around except you.

SHADRACH

Ah trus' de bad taste o' dat remark do not go unnoticed.

DANIELLE

Did you expect the battlefield to be another fiery furnace from which you would emerge unharmed?

SHADRACH

If Ah be put in harm's way twice, Ah gonna be harmed 'cuz when lightnin' strikes you twice, you be double dead.

DANIELLE

Yet you're alive and walking when you're not playing games.

SHADRACH

De games Ah gonna play when we iz alone gonna show whether you be into stumps.

DANIELLE

Stump the stumps.

SHADRACH

Cuz stumps iz into you.

(MESHACH snaps a switchblade under SHADRACH's chin.)

As Ah looks down de blade o' dis knife Ah sees mah personal Leggageddon. Twas undah such knife Ah lost de appendages appropos to de runnin' 'n' de jumpin'.

(MESHACH removes the blade and returns to his spot.)

Ah was de bigges' basketball freak de eas' side o' de Hudson. On de playgroun' 'fore dawn drivin' fo' de bunny shots, switchin' han's like some dudes switchin' blades Frazer behin' de back through de legs all two o' dem fas' breakin' top o' de key leap you jungle bunny off de rim up fo' de tip swisshhh Dr. J. all de way red white blue b-ball bounce hit de open man run n' shoot grab de boards Alcindor-block Kareemin' off de iron de Big O jam n' stuff WILLIS read Ah barely learned to Clyde yo' mah man wid de Rolls n' de mink covah fo' de rebolbin' bed Ah was doin' all nevah suspek get me no Royce lil maroon Riviera style 'nuff fo' me got me through de 12f grade n' Marquette want me! But Neb want me first so off's Ah goes marchin' n' asteppin' goosin' n' aduckin' when BAM! landmine no mine o' mine Ah's lucky to crawl away frob dose legs wanted me back but no use nobody gots no b-ball scholarride fo' no double amputee.

(SHADRACH has his head in his hands.)

DANIELLE

Your Honor?

MESHACH

A minute please.

SHADRACH

Nono, Ah's alright. Yo all jus' wait here, Ah be right back.

(HE wheels off. HE is wheeled back on immediately, but HE's no longer playing the cripple. HE's before a piano and wears dark glasses. HE plays and sings the refrain from Ray Charles' "Georgia".)

DANIELLE

The charade continues.

SHADRACH

Quiets down dere, Sapphire.

(HE starts waving that piece of paper again.)

Ah has here in mah hand a point o' disorder n' disjustice. Now Neb, Ah ain't comin' lookin' fo' you. Ah sees you plain enuff cuz behin' dese black eyes ...

(HE points to his black lenses.)

... iz mo' black eyes n' behin' dose mo' black eyes.

DANIELLE

The Court knows Judge Shadrach is not blind.

SHADRACH

Who said anythin' 'bout blindness?

DANIELLE

You're posing as a blind musician, are you not?

SHADRACH

Posin', huh? Posey, be mah posey, Sapphire.

DANIELLE

That's not my name.

SHADRACH

Wha's in a name? A posey by any othah name n' Ah'd sniff you jus' de same.

(SHADRACH sniffs all around HER.)

Say dere, Rubah, when's de las' time ...

MESHACH

That's enough. Move on to what's at hand.

ABED-NEGO

What Judge Shadrach thinks is at hand is something he hasn't touched for years.

SHADRACH (to ABED-NEGO)

Who you be touchin' dese days, is the pipe still an extension of the hand?

DANIELLE

The charge?

SHADRACH

On de 9t o' Jewlie did you or did you not, Massa' Neb ...

ABED-NEGO

I object to the pronunciation of July.

SHADRACH

I's about time, On de 9t o' Augus' did you or did you not ...

DANIELLE

One second. Is it July or August?

SHADRACH

On de 9t o' Jewlie ...

ABED-NEGO

July.

SHADRACH

... did you or did you not sign dis ordah pressin' Ruthie Begonyah into de service o' Mabel Lee Cartwright o' Tuscaloosa, Alabama?

MESHACH

Where do you find elephants with dentures?

DANIELLE

In Alabama where the tusks are loosa.

SHADRACH

Did you or did you not?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

I die I did.

SHADRACH

Now Ruthie Begonyah performed her duties for twenty years 'til

SHADRACH (cont'd)

one day she was found collapsed i' de pantry. Tryin' to keep herself frob fallin' she grabbed onto de nearest thing.

ABED-NEGO

What was that thing?

SHADRACH

An old cocoa jar it was.

ABED-NEGO

Now Missa's lyin' i' de coco groun's.

SHADRACH

Ah notices when de convenience iz wid de Justice fo' de full-scale interrupshun o' de cause o' true Justice ...

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Did I or did I not? Yes!

SHADRACH

At de ebent o' de fallin' o' Ruthie Begonyah aforesaid Ruthie was carryin' chile. Dat chile was Sapphire P. Divine.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Father Divine of Philadelphia.

SHADRACH

He was de fathah o.k. frob de city of brotherly Rizzo n' Wilson B. Badde.

DANIELLE

Your Honor, I would not be allowed to make political references.

SHADRACH

Too bed fo' you, step-sister.

DANIELLE

Judge Meshach?

MESHACH

We have practically everything on the menu.

DANIELLE

I see. Could you bring me a clean one?

MESHACH

Shadrach will refrain from political therefore extraneous references.

SHADRACH

Say. Where duz you get off tellin' me wha's extranus?

MESHACH

Where duz you get off tellin' me what's extranus?

SHADRACH

Sapphire P. Divine was an incubatah doll dere's de apprentice-baitah n' de journeyman baitah n' de incubatah. She too fell into de service o' de Cartwright family dis time undah de titelage o' Margo Sue Cartwright o' Talahatchet, Loseiana. Habin' hatchied frob de incubatah, Sapphire was a chick o' de uncommonest desire fo' poppin' out many a chillun but alack n' alas fo' dis po' brown lass, she had de fertility mange.

DANIELLE

The point, the point.

SHADRACH

Ah promises you, stick to de point n' de point will stick you.

ABED-NEGO

What is the point?

SHADRACH

Gangin' on me, hey?

MESHACH

Bang! What's the charge?

SHADRACH

Hol' back or Ah's callin' de NAAJB 'n if you doesn't know what JB stan's fo' you knows knowthing.

ABED-NEGO

'Bout Jungle Bunnies.

SHADRACH

We knows mo' dan you thinks 'bout you n' de flamin' P-I-P-E, 'n da's much mo' dan you thinks.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Sapphire P. Divine bore one child. During early pregnancy she contracted disease from Robert Lee Cartwright. The circumstances are unclear.

SHADRACH

Rapel

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

The child, called Ray Wonder, was born blind.

SHADRACH

Did you or did you not on Jewlie de 9t sign dis ordah pressin' Ruthie Begonyah into de service o' Mabel Lee Cartwright dereby direckly leadin' to de blindness o' me Ray Wonder?

DANIELLE

He has already answered the question. Will the Justice proceed?

SHADRACH (going off stage and returning in a wheelchair)

Mah pleasure.

ABED-NEGO (reading)

"I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth.
The tree was grown and had become strong
And the height reached unto heaven
And the sight to the end of all the earth
The leaves were fair and the fruit much
The beasts of the field had shadow under it
And all flesh was fed by it"

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

My dream!

DANIELLE

"The tree that you saw whose height reached unto heaven, it is you, o King, that has grown and become strong, for your greatness reaches to heaven and your dominion to the end of the earth."

SHADRACH

So it's time, is it?

MESHACH

Time.

SHADRACH

"A holy one came down from heaven. He cried aloud and said thus: Hew down the tree and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit; let the beasts get away from under it and the fowls from its branches so that all the living may know that the Lord God Most High rules in the kingdom of men."

(again waving the paper)

I has here in mah hand a point o' disordah n' disjustice. Now, Massa' Neb, is it true you is de owner n' de operator o' Hun City?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Hun City? I did own Sun City and Fun City.

SHADRACH

Fun City Ah calls Gun City. Saturday night's a very special night 'specially when you Massa' Neb iz de bigges' manufacturah. No, dis iz Hun H-U-N City.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

I've never heard of it.

SHADRACH

You nevah heard o' de Duke County Rehabilitation n' Maintenance Center fo' de Aged n' Infirm?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Why, yes.

SHADRACH

N' will you still tell me you nevah heard o' Hun City?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

To the better of my recollection, perhaps I have heard of it.

SHADRACH

Iz you aware dat yo' wife's name iz on de deed fo' de Duke County Rehabilitation n' Maintenance Center fo' de Aged n' Infirm?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Yes, I am aware.

SHADRACH

Den, iz you also aware dat de head honcho, de man who administrates de Center you own is one S.S. Reichmann de T'ird, known to dose who dare raise dere breaths as Attila de Hun?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Reichmann der Dritte, ja.

SHADRACH

N' dat he hisself iz proud o' de name n' refers to de center as Hun City?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

No, I didn't.

DANIELLE

He has answered the question.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

I no longer own it, I gave it up.

SHADRACH

Iz you aware dat on Jewlie de 10t a woman confined to a wheelchair was beaten wid de ibory cane o' dis Reichmann?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
I believe I did hear something about it.

SHADRACH
All becuz an attendant forgot to apply the brake.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
As I heard it the wheelchair rammed into the head administrator.

SHADRACH
Obah de tip o' his boot iz de eyewitness account. What did you do about dis matter?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
I considered firing him.

SHADRACH
You considered deprivin' yo'self o' de best moneyrakah dis side o' Gun City, de man so skillful at skimmin' off de top dat de National Milk Producers of which you was head awarded S.S. de Croix o' de creme de la Creme?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
Those are wild accusations.

SHADRACH
Dey was wild profits.

DANIELLE
"O King, it is the decree of the Most High that thou shall be driven from men and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field and thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen and shall be wet with the dew of heaven and seven times shall pass over thee til thou know that the Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men and giveth it to whomsoever He will. Wherefore, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee and break off thy sins by righteousness and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor if there may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

SHADRACH
Break off thy sins by righteousness, show mercy to the poor. Massa' Neb, did you clean up Hun City?

I tried. NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Gun City? SHADRACH

Yes. NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Sun City? SHADRACH

A little. NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Yo' poppy fields? SHADRACH

Which ones? NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Yo' munitions plants? SHADRACH

I don't recollect. NEBUCHADNEZZAR

To de best. Yo' pharmaceutical monopolies? SHADRACH

You go too fast. NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Stop! DANIELLE

Yo' speed factories? SHADRACH

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Pills?

SHADRACH

Yo' preservative laboratories doin' research on de elmination o' de misfits, de marginal misfits n' anybody anywhere doin' anythin' you don' like or considahs a threat to what you hold profane. Profanity, Massa' Neb, you iz de one who puts polysorbate 80 in my Velveeta n' de BHA in mah Mazola n' knows its gonna kill me befo' Ah learns to pronounce mono-polydiglycerides. You iz de god o' Triage, baby, but it's endin' here n' now.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

My poppies!

SHADRACH (HE's off somewhere)

Poppy? You mah Pops?

MESHACH

"All this came upon the King Nebuchadnezzar."

(SHADRACH snaps out of it.)

SHADRACH

Justice Abed-nego, will you do the honors?

ABED-NEGO (reading)

"At the end of twelve months he was walking in the royal palace of Babylon. The King spake and said ..."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Is this not great Babylon which I have built for the royal dwelling place by the might of my power and the glory of my majesty?

ABED-NEGO

"While the word was in the King's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven saying, 'The kingdom is departed from thee.' The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar and he was driven from men and did eat grass as oxen and his body was wet with the dew of heaven 'til his hair was grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like birds claws."

MESHACH (to NEBUCHADNEZZAR)
Do you have anything to say before I ask the question?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR remains silent.)

Are you guilty or not?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR produces his flute and blows two identical notes.)

Not.

End ACT TWO.

(Lights down on all except NEBUCHADNEZZAR.)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

I am running on a foot track and carrying a basket in my right hand. The basket is filled with goods and on top is a small animal I can't identify. The animal falls off. I stop and pick it up. It is then I am aware of a woman running with me. She asks me questions. I can't answer them. "Why are you running like an elephant from the plum trees?" I start running again and for a full revolution the animal does not fall off and the woman does not make herself known. Then it begins again.

(STOP.)

I meet a woman I have not seen for a year. I have lusted after her since we met, but nothing has come of it. Tonight there will be a climax, sexual or otherwise. We are in a cafe at a table with many people. A brute and a boor sits across and tries to monopolize her. She is neither interested in him nor me but another man next to her. I announce that I am going. She says, "Go." I do not. We are on the floor of her apartment. I am over her but not on top of her. The rug must be coarse on her back for it is rough on my hands as I continue to suspend myself above her. She twirls veils in front of me teasing me with glimpses of her body. I keep my distance.

(DANIELLE enters his light.)

DANIELLE

You have trouble steering an auto at a curve. A woman will be hit. You can't run on a track without your progress halted. You try to stop; you try to go. You persist in thinking there's a difference. Put the animal down. Leave the basket. It will no doubt eat the contents and be delighted without you. Go on your way. If the woman makes herself known, tell her to run the other way for one revolution. You continue on your way also for one revolution. When you have both returned to the same point, think if there's anything to be said for coming and going.

She twirls veils in front of her body teasing you with glimpses and you keep your distance. But there is no distance, you deceive yourself. You have possessed her often and deeply enough. Did you not say you lusted after her? Give it up, pack it in. When you let go of the wheel, the car stops.

(LIGHTS OFF them and up on SHADRACH MESHACH &

ABED-

NEGO, unbound ungagged relaxing in the midst of the fiery furnace. The FOURTH MAN is among THEM.)

JUDGES

Praise the Lord!

SHADRACH

N' pass de Remy Martin.

(The FOURTH MAN passes HIM the Remy Martin.)

Yassah, Richie de Itch, las' time Ah saw you you was tryin' to git me to come in on dat drycleanin' stick-up.

FOURTH MAN

"No, m'man, Ah's clean," you said.

SHADRACH

So's you went ahead n' hit de place widout me.

FOURTH MAN

Den Ah took me de cash back to mah pad n' went out fo' some celebration. When Ah got back, some nigger'd done rifled all dat bread.

SHADRACH

Cain't nevah 'magine who dat nigger was.

(HE passes the bottle to ABED-NEGO.)

ABED-NEGO

I don't remember you from the Legion.

FOURTH MAN

You're not trying hard enough.

ABED-NEGO

They disbarred me, you know.

FOURTH MAN

Reinstatement is possible.

ABED-NEGO

My crime, misdeameanor, was a misunderstanding.

FOURTH MAN
No it wasn't, and if you admit it you will be forgiven.

(ABED-NEGO passes the bottle to MESHACH.)

MESHACH
I would be better off in chains. Freedom does not become me.

FOURTH MAN
You are not free.

MESHACH
What am I?

FOURTH MAN
Released.

HIM
(SHADRACH begins the last chorus of Ray Charles' "Unchain my heart." MESHACH and ABED-NEGO back up as the fiery furnace becomes the Courtroom. The FOURTH MAN has disappeared as the JUDGES take their positions.)

DANIELLE
Nebuchadnezzar has been charged with causing crippling, blinding and cruelty for maximum financial profit. By his own admission he has at least contributed to those crimes. He seems to deserve punishment, but who among you will mete it out ...

SHADRACH
Ah.

DANIELLE
... when the Lord God on High saw fit to raise Nebuchadnezzar to his former glory. Would you in the name of Justice pretend to do what the Lord would not? Are you saying the Lord is unjust?

SHADRACH
It was not the Lord God on High who was maimed n' blinded n' beaten wid an ibory cane!

MESHACH (to NEBUCHADNEZZAR)
Do you have anything to say before I ask the question?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR remains silent.)

Are you guilty or not?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR produces his flute and blows two
identical notes.)

Not.

End ACT TWO.

ACT THREE

ANGEL

Picnic time, I'm spreading my blanket
And putting out a few pickles
This time we 8-Balls's going to bank it
'Cause it's Maestro Meshach's nickel
With a bucket of biscuits and a load of jerk chicken
A pot of mashed potatoes and some fat-back kickin'
The Big Enchilada ain't nothin' to the Tamale
Hang on to your plastic surgery
Here come the Finale.

(MESHACH enters.)

MESHACH

Some people work; others tell stories. Workers call story-tellers shirkers. The story-tellers think the workers fools, though they don't think this aloud for the workers have the strength to destroy them. If pressed, the word-people envy workers their activity, so much that word people have taken to work, not that they like it much, but want to speak about it with some authority. In turn, workers--policemen, firemen and soon sanitationmen--now write about their work for they think making words is easier than doing work. Thus, the distinction between worker and worder becomes blurred. A man calling himself a poet met a woman calling herself worker at a demonstration for more food at lower costs. When some of their demands had been met, the two shared a meal. At the end of the food, he broke his pen and she threw down her hammer. Looking for the rest of the answer, they then built a fire with his notes and made love in the bed she had built. As they spoke to each other in loving ways, he remembered driving the nails and she the oaths she had cried.

(MESHACH leaves the light. SHADRACH enters.)

SHADRACH

So's de aldermanic association o' greatah Jekyll n' Hyde Park comes to me n' sayz "Rastus, how's you like to run 'gainst de Mayah o' dis burg Richard M. Weakly? N' Ah sayz, "Shit on a Good Humah stick man, Ah's de feline to takes him on." So's Ah starts campaignin' on de weed roots platform. Populist, Ah iz n' Populist Ah remains. Populist Daddy-u-list, u dig? Who mah daddy no matter, who Richard M. Weakly's daddy everybody care. Ah's walkin' along one night n' all dese limolemonsines dey's parked double quadruple roun' de Courthouse seems Richard M.'s nephew he habin' a biggesh blast 'cuz he's marryin' de daughtah o' Sam de Fun Goolah Matz membah extraordinaire o' de mamafias n' de mamaCIAs so Ah gets me mah camera snappin' away a' dese illegal parked Sisillyan cherryots when dis Policeman biggesh black mutha dude he got so many chins Ah say, "Chin yo'self" n' he says "Which one?" den he bust me 'cross de lens n' de greasies' shiny-suited Evil-atra evah he bust me a good one den jump in his Monte

SHADRACH (cont'd)

Carlo and gun down de Lake Shore Drive wid police sirens escortin' him home
to de onyx bathtubs he numbahs frob de numbahs rackets tennis elbow anyone
dat cop broke both mah funny bones thought Ah'd die laughin now back in de
South Side gin mills Ah gets me some tv coverage n' duz de hungah strike n' de
vegetarian bit n' Ah gets all o' two hunnerd votes what wid Richard M. Weakly's
cronies handin' out de two dollar bills n' de diseased chickens at ebry pollin'
place. What could Ah gib de votah 'sides de uncertain heritage of de

Iz Ah iz
Or iz Ah ain't
Yo' baby

(ABED-NEGO enters.)

ABED-NEGO

Torts Civil Offenses Good Lord
Taxes Constitutional Law
Party of the First Part
Contracts Moot Court
Officer of the Court
Cross-Examination Re-Direct
Real Estate Wills Probate
Immigration and Naturalization Service
INS Iron Nails Si
Don't tell me you can't keep this baby in this country
You send her back where?
Tegucigalpa, Columbia, Cap Haitien?
She's been plucked off a mountaintop in Honduras
from the jungles of Sri Lanka
out of the dustbins of Haiti
Now her brother brother brother, a year later,
three months old, thirteen children
for this mother this mother this mother

ABED-NEGO (cont.)

You want to suffocate these children, niños, bebes,
Got to find a Sri Lankan word for baby
Drown them rather than send them back

Sweet baby sugar, where are you? Who is he?
Where are you going? Bring him home.
You won't bring him home? Why not? His name?
Sasha? Kiss and embrace me.
I go to trial tomorrow.

Mio Dio

Fuerte grande

Suave pobrecita

Soft, my love.

(We are now in the courtroom.)

ANGEL

All rise for Justices Shadrach Meshach and Abed-nego.

(SHADRACH MESHACH & ABED-NEGO take their places.
NEBUCHADNEZZAR and DANIELLE on their feet.)

DANIELLE

Your Honors, I move for a mis-trial.

ABED-NEGO

On what grounds?

DANIELLE

The only charges have proved after the fact. Must I repeat that Nebuchadnezzar has been forgiven by the Almighty? Sons of men have dubious right to consider punishment of other sons of men.

SHADRACH

Sunny beaches, son o' man, da's who Ah iz.

ABED-NEGO

If you are right, ms. Counsel, then the Almighty will punish the would-be punishers. You will have nothing to say.

DANIELLE

I will have had my say.

ABED-NEGO

Two charges have been brought against this man; the third is this:

(ALL are silent as a hand appears and writes the words "Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin.")

DANIELLE

Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Now if thou canst read the hand-writing on the wall and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold about thy neck and shalt be the third ruler in the Kingdom.

DANIELLE

Let thy gifts be to thyself and give thy rewards to another. Nevertheless I will read the writing unto the King and make known to him the interpretation. Mene: God hath numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end.

MESHACH

What do you know about classical music?

DANIELLE

There was a man known for his simultaneous hauteur and generosity.

MESHACH

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CLASSICAL MUSIC?

DANIELLE

My great-uncle Casimir used to tickle Galla-Curci.

ABED-NEGO & SHADRACH (under each other's chin)

Curci Curci Curci!

DANIELLE

There was a man known for his simultaneous hauteur and generosity.

MESHACH

Silence.

DANIELLE

Suplicants waited for weeks for an audience. When finally they gained entrance the man refused to look at them and told them to get out of his sight.

MESHACH

Sores for sightless eyes.

DANIELLE

As they left the castle, his servants gave them more than they had come for.

MESHACH

Who understands generosity?

DANIELLE

Your Honor, the third charge.

MESHACH

Ms. Danielle, may I call you such?

(DANIELLE does not answer.)

Now, Ms. Such, is it true? Is it false?

DANIELLE

Everything.

MESHACH

That you are a prophet that you are a prophet true or false?

DANIELLE

True *and* false.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

God hath numbered my kingdom and brought it to an end.

DANIELLE

Tekel: thou art weighed in the balances.

MESHACH

Counsel shall answer only what is asked.

DANIELLE

Hauteur and generosity. One masks the other.

MESHACH

Cease.

DANIELLE

If one is only generous, one is thought a fool.

MESHACH

Who cares what *one* thinks? Desist!

DANIELLE

If one is only haughty, one is despised.

MESHACH
Who cares if one is despised? If one is haughty and generous one is a despised fool.

DANIELLE
Is it true I am a false prophet?

MESHACH
Is it false?

DANIELLE
I am not strictly speaking a prophet.

MESHACH
Strictly speaking, spare the rod and spoil the honeydew.

SHADRACH (singing to "Do do that Voodoo")
Honey do do that voodoo that pin pricks so well.

MESHACH
As the actress said to the bishop.

DANIELLE
I interpret, I do not prophesy.

MESHACH
I have you where I want you.

SHADRACH
As the ... oh, forget it.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR (angrily)
Who is on trial? I want the third charge of the Bible Brigade and if you don't give it to me I might as well just leave.

ABED-NEGO
The court considers everything you say and then some.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

And then some what? I ask you, is your wife better? You say, better than what?

MESHACH

Quiet!

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

I WANT MY OWN JOKE!

MESHACH

At the end of the day we'll give you the leftovers.

(To DANIELLE)

Is it not so you have dreams which you believe forecast the future?

DANIELLE

I have no dreams. Others have them. I interpret them, I am dreamless.

MESHACH

Then what is it you have? Visions? Jeanne D'Arc?

DANIELLE

Obfuscation. We demand the third charge.

MESHACH

We?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Wel Remember we?

SHADRACH

Shush on you, bucky boo, or we gonna' strangle you wid de bedsheets frub de Klan!

MESHACH

Seizures? Fits? Are you subject to?

Subject <i>and</i> object. My order ...	DANIELLE
Disorder?	MESHACH
Has nothing to do ...	DANIELLE
With everything.	MESHACH
Is true and false.	DANIELLE
You lay on the ground.	MESHACH
And was ill.	DANIELLE
And did not know ...	MESHACH
What anything meant.	DANIELLE
Though it had been revealed.	MESHACH
Something.	DANIELLE
Upharsin.	MESHACH
Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin.	DANIELLE

(As MESHACH proceeds, SHADRACH goes into the lead number of The Temptin' Temptations album.)

MESHACH

We offer you now while they last--stones, large stones. A bright young lassie would turn these jobbies into a truckful of bread. Throw yourself down on the mercy of the Court, sweetlungs, and we'll pick you up, minister to you, angel neck, why are you waiting do not hesitate to be the first on your block all this and there's more where this comes from the knees darling the knees bend thou art and to bend thou shalt return genuflect and kiss my flour sack my ashes and tan all the kingdoms of the world!

(ANGEL, MESHACH, SHADRACH, ABED-NEGO and NEBUCHADNEZZAR go into an all-out blast of the same Temptations number. At its end ...)

DANIELLE

Get behind me, Temptations.
God hath numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end; thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting; thy kingdom is divided.

MESHACH

Two charges have been brought against this man; the third is this:

(HE looks about. Silence. HIS gaze rests on DANIELLE.)

Counsel, do you know the third charge?

DANIELLE

It was held from me.

MESHACH

How did you know the others?

DANIELLE

They came to me, that is, I was handed the charges, typed, as part of the Court's business.

Typed? In what way?

MESHACH

Without mistake.

DANIELLE

Without mistake. And the third charge?

MESHACH

It did not come, that is, I was not handed the third charge.

DANIELLE

Typed.

MESHACH

Or at all.

DANIELLE

Could it be ...

MESHACH

Could it be what?

DANIELLE

Do you know what I was going to say?

MESHACH

No.

DANIELLE

You cannot foresee?

MESHACH

I do not foresee in the sense of prophecy. Only in the sense of interpretation. I am presented with, signs come to me, I am able to grasp the meaning of the signs and by this I ...

DANIELLE

Tell the future.

MESHACH

DANIELLE

I do not tell the future how to be, I simply expose what the signs reveal to me.

MESHACH

Forehear foresee forespeak.

DANIELLE

Dreamless.

MESHACH

That is next. You are so involved in the fantasy and dream life of others, including the Lord God on High I presume, that you have no fantasies, you have no dreams yourself.

DANIELLE

My clients, if you will, do that for me. But I am other things besides a repository. In this Courtroom I am foremost a judicial animal.

MESHACH

Judicious?

DANIELLE

You heard me.

MESHACH

The third charge against the King is that he threw you into the den of lions. "Then this Counsel was distinguished above all and the King thought to set Counsel over the whole realm. Those jealous sought occasion against Counsel but could find no fault. Then said those jealous, 'We shall not find any occasion against her, except concerning the law of her God.' Then they went to the King and said, 'Whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, o King, she shall be cast into the den of lions.' "Now, o King, establish the interdict and sign the writing. Wherefore the King did so. And when Counsel knew that the writing was signed, she went into her house where the windows were open toward Jerusalem."

DANIELLE

And I kneeled upon my knees three times a day and prayed and gave

DANIELLE (cont'd)
thanks before my God, as I did aforetime.

MESHACH
"Then those jealous assembled together and found Counsel making petition and supplication before her God. They went to the King and said 'That child of the captivity of Judea maketh petition three times a day.'"

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
Then the King when he heard these words was sore displeased and set his heart on Counsel to deliver her and he labored until dusk. But the jealous demanded that he keep his word.

MESHACH
"Then the King commanded and they brought Counsel and cast her into the den of lions."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
Thy God whom thou servest continually will deliver thee.

MESHACH
"And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the King sealed it with his own signet and with the signets of his lords that nothing might be changed."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
Then I went to my palace and passed the night fasting as all sleep fled from me.

MESHACH
"Then the King arose very early in the morning and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came near he cried with a lamentable voice."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR
O servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

DANIELLE
My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths.

SHADRACH

Well, shut ma mouf.

DANIELLE

And they have not hurt me for innocence was found in me.
And also before thee, o King, have I done no hurt.

MESHACH

"Then was the King exceedingly glad and Counsel was taken up out of the den
and no manner of hurt was found because she had trusted in God."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

And the King commanded.

DANIELLE (dispassionately)

And they brought those men who had accused me and they cast them into the
den of lions, them, their children and their wives; and the lions had the mastery
of them and brake all their bones in pieces before they came to the bottom of
the den.

MESHACH

Where were you when the lions "had the mastery of them"?

DANIELLE

Where were we, o King?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Above, looking down.

MESHACH

Into the den?

SHADRACH

Mutha.

DANIELLE

Them, their children and their wives.

Do you have nightmares? MESHACH

I am dreamless. DANIELLE

Entirely? MESHACH

Completely. DANIELLE

Snap. MESHACH

And the lions had the mastery. DANIELLE

Entirely? MESHACH

Absolutely. DANIELLE

Crackle. MESHACH

A mouse in the mouth of a cat. DANIELLE

Tail wriggling. MESHACH

(Simultaneously MESHACH and DANIELLE make the noise
of a cat sucking in a mouse tail.)

A child's foot -

(MESHACH and DANIELLE make the same noise.)

MESHACH (cont'd)

The last of the child, the child's toe -

(Same noise.)

The last of Danielle, Danielle's soul -

(No noise.)

Entirely?

DANIELLE

Completely.

MESHACH

Absolutely?

DANIELLE

Devastatingly dreamless.

MESHACH & DANIELLE

Dreamless.

SHADRACH

Pop.

(Lights down on all but NEBUCHADNEZZAR)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Late at night I am in a deserted area of a large city. For a moment I try to think why I am there, but I cannot take even the moment. I must concentrate on getting out. The circus is in town. The clowns, the bareback riders, the trapeze artists, the family of midgets, the fire-eaters, the parade of elephants, the bearded lady, the giant, the fat man and the tiger-tamer. The children are squealing, the mothers are sweating, the fathers are drinking and the performers are praying their last, paying their last respects to the living they think soon-to-be dead runner who in a moment--here she is!--will be racing up over the tails and down the noses of the proudest and proudest of lions--there she goes cracking their backs as she balancingly bends down into their mouths inviting them to chop her off at the neck--bravada,

NEBUCHADNEZZAR (cont'd)

bravissima, signora signorina--hundreds of thousands of escapes as her head comes forth split-secondly before the snap of the jaws.

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR growls.)

Round and round the Biggest of Tops she races as the children squeal, the mothers sweat, the fathers drink when suddenly the pride of lions break out of their cage as big as the universe and set out to devour the stampeding body. Chills and shrieks, thrills and squeaks from the beasts as everyone in and out of the circus is devoured with the loveliest and most extraordinary exception of the runner herself who now stands before us a wonder, a survivor, the wonder of her spirit to behold.

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR moves out of the light.)

DANIELLE

As for me my spirit is grieved and the visions of my head torment me. I long to fall into a deep sleep with my face toward the ground.

(Lights off DANIELLE. Up on the fiery furnace.
The JUDGES restless.)

SHADRACH

Can you dig it? I here now invent me a cliché. I say, dis iz where it's at. De Fiery Furnace, you got it all? Dig? Dug, duggest.

FOURTH MAN

You got it, let's open a club.

SHADRACH

A soul spot.

ABED-NEGO

We'll call it ...

SHADRACH, ABED-NEGO & FOURTH MAN
The Fiery Furnace!

SHADRACH

Shadrach's F.F.

MESHACH

Show me the ordinary womb.

SHADRACH

Not Ah, said de big fat hen. Ah comes frob extra-ordinary innards. Shadrach's F.F. serving innard greens.

MESHACH

The fiery furnace. An ordinary womb?

ABED-NEGO

We have to call it The Fiery Furnace, not The Womb, ordinary or not.

MESHACH

But do you suppose ...

SHADRACH

Ah wears me de supp-hose, keeps mah splendiferous legs such n' such.

ABED-NEGO

That Saturday night's the loneliest night of the week?

SHADRACH

Not at the F.F. Come on down and do the Baked Potato.

FOURTH MAN

We barbecue on the spot.

SHADRACH

On de spit. Bring an ocean of friends.

ABED-NEGO

Try our F.F. Fries.

SHADRACH

N' shake to de sounds o' Gumbo Pie n' de Chick Peas.

MESHACH

... that all sorts of things start in the womb? The fiery furnace, featherbedding, gerrymandering, the negative income tax? Then why not Gumbo Pie and the Chick Peas?

ABED-NEGO

Watch for our grand opening.

FOURTH MAN

Come on down to de F.F. 'n get yo'self de hots.

(The sound of the Weather Report as we go back to the courtroom.)

DANIELLE

Nebuchadnezzar has been charged with throwing me into the den of lions. False. I went in of my own accord and put my head in the mouth of each lion.

MESHACH

And having broken off your sins by righteousness your mouse tail was not swallowed. Your child's foot -

DANIELLE

Was not swallowed.

MESHACH

Your child's toe -

DANIELLE

Was not swallowed.

MESHACH

Your child's soul -

DANIELLE

My child's flat-back tomato head, my idiot soul.

(DANIELLE is a-buzz with the JUDGES' monologues
that open the Acts.)

DANIELLE

I am your nina, your muchacita chiquita, I gave you besos fuerte fuerte grande
now suave suave and si my coliota hurt and I knew you washed the piojos right
out of my hair and I knew, your probrecita, knew you were right outside la puerta
and I knew you were lighting up my life.

Judge Solomon Skybumskybum, Justice Choo-Choo Justice, Judge Jud Judge
n' Justice Leaner Hot Dog has all decreed i' de suupremest body o' de most
exalted division o' de Prime Movah o' all Poobahs i' de sovrin' state o' Boogedy-
Boogedy dat you haz no fathah but you iz mah baby.

The stories you tell of others are not about others.
My bare feet are dry and my dress is pressed.
Pick me up and carry me over the water and mud.
Make a fire with your notes and make love to me
in the bed I have built.
You are the monk who must have everything to do with women.

MESHACH

How does Counsel plead?

DANIELLE

Counsel?

MESHACH

And they had brought those men who had accused you and cast them into the
den of lions, them their children and their wives; and the lions had the mastery
of them and brake all their bones in pieces before they came to the bottom of
the den.

(Lights on DANIELLE only.)

DANIELLE

Apoplexy - the breakage of a blood vessel in the brain. Apocalypse - the
breakage of a blood vessel in the brain of the future/the future standing still on
the Eliot point prescience pre-science revelation elation be elated it is revealed
as the future lies before me/children and wives brake all their bones lions
overpowered them me with my head in their mouths my whip and my chair back
you devils Beatty Clyde circus three-ring Judge's three/trainer Danny/Danielle
dreamless lions snoring dreaming of shepherd's pie/flyies shivering about their
manes pussycats brake all their bones/children and wives grieve my
spirit/trouble my head of visions in pieces/before they came to the bottom of the
den/as the future lies before me it and my soul are paralyzed.

(Lights on the whole Court.)

MESHACH

Do you have anything to say before I ask the final question?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR is silent.)

Are you guilty or not?

(NEBUCHADNEZZAR hands the flute to DANIELLE.
DANIELLE breaks it in two.)

You have only yourselves to thank. You have broken the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer and all kinds of music. Ye rise up and worship the living God of Shadrach Meshach and Abed-Nego.

ABED-NEGO

What? No celebration?

SHADRACH

You mean we ain't gonna gig it up?

MESHACH

What have you got to celebrate?

ABED-NEGO

The dispensation of Justice.

SHADRACH

De scales has been weighed unsealed n' delivered.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

'Tis time fo puttin' on de booze bag.

SHADRACH

One mo' crack, Kingie, n' Ah's gonna arrest you fo' impepleanatin' an Officer of de Court.

DANIELLE

N' Ah's be pullin' on some Tina spikes as de preparation fo' de plantin' o' mah begonyah smack on yo' rubah.

SHADRACH

Well kiss mah hide n' Zippahdeedoodah, sistah, Ah's been waitin' fo' you to admit dat dat thing ain't no good 'less you usin' it.

ABED-NEGO

Yeh, Mama, what good dat thing 'less you usin' it?

MESHACH (stripping to his nightclub
finery and blowing a whistle)

Alright, everybody into the Fiery Furnace.

(HE leads THEM in and THEY dance to the Weather
Report.)

This presentation comes to you courtesy of and is known in the trades
Backstage Showbiz Variety hix nix stix plays and pix you pays us money and we
gives you choice grade A number 1 high detergent 10 W 50 entertainment
brought up here and now with the sound of Orange Julius and the Garbanzos
Polish Power best believe it we'll Cracow your hams and suck your gelatin dry.
Make us all lovely, mah honies. Verily, I say to you – A'Men –

ALL (RESPOND)

A-MEN!

MESHACH

-- and A-Women --

ALL (RESPOND)

A-WOMEN!

The Epilogue →

ANGEL

We right chare at the Epicenter of the Epilogue
We been havin' us a time
Dabblin' in rhyme
Slippin' into some Biblical skinny
Gettin' the sinny on some Bibilical dippin'
Double lippin' and entendre' flippin'
But now it's time to count the day's noses
These are the days of lies and poses
Photo.ops campaign stops
Prayer breakfasts invoking the Testaments Old and New
The Torah the Koran
Allah and Yahweh
Of Muslim Christian Rastafarian and Jew
But none of it means
A Capitol Hill of beans
All these crocodile tears
And cries for forgiveness
Fall on deaf ears
'cause it's usual bidness
It's just this - it's Just - tice
Gardens whose rosebush pricks draw blood from us all
The Republic the State the Commonweal all set up for a fall
We knew you chomped on a big one when you dumped Lani for speaking the
truth
Right then and there we should have kicked your cracker butt right out of the
broadcast booth
Yet if Blacks in Alabama can forgive that redneck Wallace George
What's the big problema when it comes to this Prez engorged
'Course we Black folk are magnani - mous
We raise our children to be loving
We don't let what others do to us
Stop the Raisin in the Sunning
It's just this - it's Just - tice

ANGEL (Cont.)

But what we need now is NOT blame and recrimination
But a great big old fashioned bath in a rusty metal tub in the woodshed
with a rough scrub brush and some harsh lye for those lies to the nation
Every time you got the bads
You want us to hold the goods
'Fess up from the start, Bubba
Feel the pain for real in what's left of your heart, RubbaTubba
Anything less and it's - duh, this dog don't hunt
We here at the Sovereign Ship of State
Send you our urgent Boogedy Booged eee - mail
Blow some female power in these sails
Your Honors, mah pleasure
Mercy mercy, Lordie, Lordie
It's just this - it's Just - tice
It's just this - it's Just - tice
It's just this - it's Just - tice

The End.