

Excerpt from
BAIL OUT THE MUSICAL

A Play with Songs

by

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Music & Lyrics

by

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ACT 1

Scene 1

SETTING: An empty Off-Off Broadway theater.

AT RISE: SEPT EMBER walks into the theatre in awe. She looks around.

Oh, wow!

VIOLET ENTERS FROM BACKSTAGE.

VIOLET
Hey, blondie, how'd you get in here?

SEPT EMBER
Oh, er, I'm sorry. I was just...
(She stares at VIOLET
unable to speak)

VIOLET
Well, spit it out honey.

SEPT EMBER
You're Violet Parfait.

VIOLET
That's right. If you're here for the show carrot cake,
you're about three months too late. We're all washed up.

SEPT EMBER
Washed up? That's impossible. You're the greatest burlesque
performer since Tempest Storm.

VIOLET
Some would say greater.

(Pause.)

SEPT EMBER
Oh, oh, Yes, some would.
(Thrusts her hand out
to VIOLET)

My name is Sept Ember. I'm an avant-garde performance artist. I just got off the bus and I want to be in an Off-Off Broadway show.

VIOLET

Where you from cupcake?

SEPT EMBER

Wisconsin.

VIOLET

You want some advice? Forget the dream. Forget the East Village. Get back on that bus and go home to Utah.

SEPT EMBER

Wisconsin. And I can't!

VIOLET

There ain't nothin left here brownie! Downtown's been shut down. The Off-Off has turned off its lights. We've been tossed out and torn up. Nobody wants to see 9-hour productions of the Orestia performed by transgendered clowns anymore. People are hungry and it ain't for the avant-garde, lemon square. They don't wanna think or be inspired. They want heat and a hot meal, and so do I.

SEPT EMBER

It can't be true. You're giving up.

VIOLET

I hear Karen Finley is doing a non-equity tour of Mama Mia. It's over twinkie!

(Yells off stage)

Gert!

(To SEPT EMBER)

Cheer up lollipop, you probably got a real nice farm fella waiting for you in Idaho...

SEPT EMBER

(Under her breath)

Wisconsin.

VIOLET

...with a smile and future. That's more than most of us.

(Yells off stage)

Gert, hurry it up; Cash for Trash closes at two.

GERT JANA

(From off stage)
I'm coming-
(A fumble and a crash
is heard from backstage)
-just packing up the last of it.

SEPT EMBER
Even if I could give up on my dream of being the world's
greatest tap dancing expressionist fire spinner, I don't
have the money to get home. I spent my last five dollars
getting here.

VIOLET
Those are the breaks.
(Yells off stage)
Don't forget to grab my box Gert, I'll be out front.
(To SEPT EMBER)
See ya, kid.

VIOLET EXITS

(SEPT EMBER sits on the
stage and begins to cry.)

GERT JANA ENTERS
FROM BACKSTAGE
CARRYING BOXES OF
PROPS AND COSTUMES.
SHE TRIPS AND
FALLS. SEPT EMBER
HELPS HER.

GERT JANA
Clumsy. Thank you so much. I'm not centered today; my first
and fourth chakras are unbalanced.

SEPT EMBER
I know just how you feel.

GERT JANA
I hope nothing broke. Violet will kill me. We're selling
our props and costumes so we can pay...Hey, are you crying?
(She hands SEPT EMBER
a piece of fabric from
the box.)

SEPT EMBER
No.
(Bursts into tears)

GERT JANA
What's your name?

SEPT EMBER
Sept Ember

GERT JANA
Nice to meet you September.

SEPT EMBER
Sept Ember

GERT JANA
September?

SEPT EMBER
Sept Ember

GERT JANA
I'm Gert J...

SEPT EMBER
(Crying)
I know who you are. I've read "Burning Bush; poetry from the Jewish Female Eco-Terrorist Movement" a hundred times.
(Fighting back tears)
And I once saw a bootleg copy of you performing "Daughter of Esther: unmasking the misogyny of Purim." It (sob) was so (sob) inspiring.
(Bursts into tears again.)

GERT JANA
Hey it's going to be okay.

SEPT EMBER
No, no it's not.
(Blows her nose in the fabric and looks at it. She realizes it is a thong and politely returns it to GERT JANA who even more politely tosses it aside.)

I just spent my life savings to move to New York so that I could become the world's greatest tap dancing expressionist fire spinner only to find out that the avant-garde is dead.

GERT JANA

Oh, it's not dead; it's just gone dark.

SEPT EMBER

Dead, gone dark, what's the difference? My career is over before it even started. I'm going back to Wisconsin.

GERT JANA

All right, go back! Forget Off-Off Broadway. Forget your talent – your incredible talent – and go back to the hostess stand at the TGI Fridays. You aren't big enough for Off-Off Broadway. It takes guts and drive and black eyeliner. You've gotta claw and scratch and fight every inch of the filthy way. How do you think the others did it? The great ones? Look at Coco Fusco. Look at Guillermo Gomez-Peña. Look at The Wooster Group.

SEPT EMBER

Oh, Gert Jana, what should I do?

GERT JANA

You still want to spin fire?

SEPT EMBER

Oh, Yes!

GERT JANA

You still want to create subversive art?

SEPT EMBER

Oh, Yes!

GERT JANA

Then that's what you have to do. You have to keep fighting.

SEPT EMBER

You're right Gert Jana, I can't give up, I won't give up I,
I

(She faints and GERT JANA
struggles to support her.)

GERT JANA

Hey hey.

(SEPT EMBER comes to)

SEPT EMBER

Gee, I'm sorry. It's just I haven't eaten in three days.

GERT JANA

Sit here sweetie. I think I have a piece of fruit in the back.

(GERT JANA goes back stage)

VIOLET ENTERS

GERT JANA

It's a little bit bruised, but if you eat around the brown spots.

(Phone rings)

Oh, hold on.

GERT EXITS
BACKSTAGE.

VIOLET

Gert, what the willy is taking you so long? I'm freezing my pasties off.

(To SEPT EMBER)

You still here?

(GERT JANA sticks her
head out from backstage
with her ear to an old
phone.)

GERT JANA

It's Cecelia.

VIOLET

That's a real phone? I've always thought it was a prop.

GERT ENTERS
FROM
BACKSTAGE WITH
OTTO.

GERT JANA

That was Cecelia. She's down at the bailout office. We've gotta get over there immediately. She heard from red sweater guy, who heard from small ankles guy that they may

have theatre on the list this time. It's gonna be a mad house, a real fight for the funding.

VIOLET

Otto you stay here. You can't afford to lose your squatter's rights. We'll come back when we know more. Let's go Jana.

VIOLET EXITS

GERT JANA

(To SEPT EMBER)

This is your shot, are you coming?

(SEPT EMBER looks at OTTO who mimes encouragement.)

SEPT EMBER

You bet I am.

END OF SCENE