

Stone Soup
A Musical

Book by
Damon Brown and Allen Robertson

Music and Lyrics by
Allen Robertson

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Played by a cast that takes on multiple roles as necessary)

ALEX – A young man with the charm and good natured enthusiasm of Jimmy Fallon and the childlike wonder of Willy Wonka. He's a triple threat - singer/dancer/explorer . . .oh, and a modern thinker. Fine, a quadruple threat.

NADIA – a young woman, around 17 or 18 who lives in the Stone City. She lost her parents long ago, but they taught her many wonderful things before they disappeared. She's suppressed all their lessons about hope and ingenuity behind a wall of skepticism and mistrust.

MAYOR IMPERIA – For a person who is always smiling, she sure is aloof, scary, manipulative and creepy. A woman with a high collar, a high-minded view of herself, and a rock solid plan to rule her little corner of the world. Kevin Spacey will play her in the "all-male" version.

TADD– An anxious fellow who cast his pitiful lot with the MAYOR instead of with his neighbors. He's the yes-man sidekick the Mayor so desperately needs to feel self-assured.

WINKIN', BLINKIN' and NOD – Respectively, a tough blue-collar fellow (perhaps from New Jersey) wearing an eye patch, a simple-minded big fellow with thick aviator glasses and a Narcoleptic. It's the Three Stooges meet a steam-punk Tim Burton Barber shop trio. Owners of House #1 they are deeply fearful of thieves, unknown, strangers, future, each other etc.. The Wall Project Foreman, a Butcher, and the town Banker.

MOTHER HUGE of the HUGE FAMILY (pronounced Hue - gay) - A woman with 20 children (played sincerely by a man). She carries up to 10 babies at a time and has another few in a series of wagons behind her. Stingy - afraid they won't have enough - all her children share a single pair of giant shoes that they continually pass off to the next person. Owners of house #2

CITY WORKERS - Almost Robotic in their movement of shovels, rock, rope/pulleys/buckets and wheelbarrows

TRUNCH - A fierce and proud young bully of a girl. Working in the mines has made her grow up too fast. She's rough around the edges. They say kids shouldn't talk to strangers - well, strangers shouldn't talk to Trunch.

IVAN - Trunch's brother. He'd be the village bully if it weren't for his sister and his horrible allergies.

KAT - -The youngest and most frightened of the children - with the largest heart. Always wearing headphones to isolate herself. Perhaps she makes the grandest transformation and largest impact of all.

CLARA - A girl waiting to shine. Always the helper - the slightest spark of hope/joy can make her glow like a lighthouse.

OTHER CHILDREN and ASSORTED VILLAGERS

Everyone except ALEX and MAYOR IMPERIA is filthy, grey, and looks trod upon for most of the show. The setting is vaguely Eastern European and has the look of Dostoevsky if Dostoevsky were a hipster with great hair doing street performances outside a Baltic Coffee House. Modern feel, but with Eastern Orthodox throwbacks. Perhaps the only stuff these kids could find to wear at the Goodwill was from 19th century Romania.

PROLOGUE

ALEX enters from the lobby. He talks to a few people on the front row.

ALEX

Have any of you seen a map? I left a map here earlier. No? I'm sorry, what was your name? Tim. Hi, Tim, I'm Alex. Where are you from? Austin? Nice to meet you. *(Alex moves down the aisle speaking as if to draw more attention.)* Hi, I'm Alex. What's your name? Sarah? It's nice to meet you, Sarah. What city do you live in? Austin? What are the chances? Do you know Tim? He's from Austin. Really? *(addressing the whole crowd now)* Anyone else here from Austin? Wow. Do you all know Tim? He's from Austin too? *(Looks at the audience members nearby.)* Well, I would expect YOU to; you're right beside him. Get to know your neighbors and you'll always have someone to wave back at you, I say. Sorry, we were looking for my map. *(Gesturing with his hands.)* 'Bout yea big and kind of off-white... actually if you could just look around. Check under your seat. Wait a minute. I remember. Tim, when I signal you, clap your hands twice - really loud. *(Tim does. Suddenly the map drops down with a thud and is hanging on the stage)* It's behind me isn't it? Yes, that's it. Why is it blank? What did you do to my map, Tim? It's fine. We'll get it going again. *(Selecting another audience member.)* Hi, I'm Alex, can I get your help for a moment? Do you know Tim? Tim, this is... *(She provides a name)* Olivia. Olivia, Tim. Sarah, Olivia, Tim. *(Gesturing to himself)* Alex. *(Gesturing to the rest of the audience)* And here's everyone else and now we're all introduced! Olivia, I don't mean to point fingers but when I left it here there was - you know - a MAP on this map. On my signal can you give me a double clap? That would be 3 claps - real loud. Wait . . . Go!

The claps cause a drastic sound and light shift. A light comes on behind the screen and there is a mechanical and whimsically important sound. MUSIC starts.

There, now, that's done something hasn't it? Let's see if it works.

ALEX claps three times and yells "Go!" - a DRAGON puppet flies across the screen.

Wanna try, Sarah? Just clap 3 times and yell "Go!"

She does and the DRAGON comes back, dances in a circle and disappears again.

Very nice. Now everybody. Ready . . . and . . . 123 Go! *(Another fly by.)* But I bet you've never seen anything like this.

He removes an old book of "Lost Cities" As ALEX sings the next, shadows appear on the map curtain to act as icons for his story.

SCENE ONE

As ALEX sings shadow puppets appear on the blank map behind him - creating the cities he describes them.

ALEX

I TRAVEL ALL AROUND THE WORLD
SO MANY PLACES TO EXPLORE
IN A RICKSHAW, TRAIN,
ON A BOAT AND PLANE
I'VE WALKED ON EVERY SHORE
AND I'VE READ ABOUT FOUR CITIES
IN THIS BOOK OF CITY LORE
IF WHAT IT SAYS IS TRUE
MY MIND JUST BLEW
AND I HAVE TO SEE ALL FOUR

BECAUSE I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS

Have you? Me neither.

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS

City #1!

IT SAYS THAT THERE'S A CITY THAT'S BUILT UP IN A CLOUD
SEE THE CASTLE FLOAT LIKE A GIANT BOAT
'CAUSE NO GRAVITY'S ALLOWED
YOU NEVER NEED A HORSE THERE - YOU TRAVEL BY BALLOON
OR YOU SKY DIVE DOWN TO THE NEAREST TOWN
AND I HAVE TO GET THERE SOON

BECAUSE I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT

I mean Skydive commuting. Awesome.

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT

City #2!

THERE'S A CITY UNDER WATER
WHERE NO ONE NEEDS A POOL
YOU CAN GET WET WITH YOUR DOLPHIN PET
THAT YOU'RE RIDING OFF TO SCHOOL
EVERY HOUSE IS MADE OF GLASS THERE
SO YOU CAN WATCH THE FISH SWIM BY
YOU HEAT YOUR MEALS WITH ELECTRIC EELS
NOW THAT I'VE GOT TO TRY

BECAUSE I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT

City #3 --- Oh no . . . no . . . no . . . no . . .

CITY NUMBER THREE
WOULD HAVE BROUGHT THE GREATEST JOY
A WONDROUS SIGHT, LIT UP AT NIGHT
THE WHOLE CITY WAS A TOY
THE MAN THAT BUILT THE CITY DIED
THE CITY WENT AWAY
AND NO ONE'S EVER COME ACROSS IT'S RUINS TO THIS DAY

WILL I EVER SEE ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

ALEX reads from the book.

City #4.

ON SOME LONG AGO DAY, IN A LAND FAR AWAY
A CITY WAS BUILT ALL OF STONE
AND YOU BETTER BEWARE OF THE VILLAGERS THERE
FOR THEY WANT TO BE LEFT ALL ALONE
SO THEY SPEND ALL THEIR TIME
IN A DARK DUSTY MINE
WHERE NO RAY OF SUNLIGHT IS FOUND
FOR THEY'RE BUILDING A WALL
THAT'S A THOUSAND FEET TALL
FROM THE STONE THAT THEY MINE UNDERGROUND

SCENE TWO

Music shifts to a percussive factory beat in a minor key, panels fall revealing the workers, including NADIA, with lit mining helmets, pick axes and wheelbarrows full of stone. They begin to chant as they work.

WORKERS

KEEP DIGGING DEEPER
KEEP DIGGING DEEPER

HAMMER IN THE DARKNESS
WITH A SHOVEL AND PICK
CARVING OUT THE STONE BELOW
TO MAKE ANOTHER BRICK
DIGGING THROUGH THE WINTER
THROUGH THE SUMMER AND FALL
THERE'S NO REST AT ALL
FOR WE NEED A MILLION ROCKS
TO BUILD A WALL
TIL IT'S A THOUSAND FEET TALL
THAT WILL KEEP OUT THEM ALL
THERE'S NO ONE SAFE
SO WE WON'T STOP UNTIL
WE'VE BUILT A WALL

SOLO 1 (GRAY)

I'M HERE BEFORE THE SUNRISE
AND STAY TIL IT'S SET

SOLO 2 (JACOB)

FOR 20 YEARS OR MORE
IT'S BEEN SO LONG THAT I FORGET

WINKIN

SHE TOLD US THERE WAS DANGER
YES, THE DANGER WILL COME

ADD MORE VOICES

SO KEEP UP WITH THE DRUM

ADD MORE

WHEN THERE'S NOWHERE LEFT TO RUN

ALL WORKERS

YOU BUILD A WALL
TIL IT'S A THOUSAND FEET TALL
THAT WILL KEEP OUT THEM ALL
THERE'S NO ONE SAFE

SO WE WON'T STOP UNTIL
WE'VE BUILT A WALL

MAYOR IMPERIA and her assistant, TADD, enter above, examining the workers. TADD is mostly a bookish yes-man but also serves as the MAYOR's body guard wearing a ceremonial sword in a scabbard.

TADD
Welcome, Mayor Imperia.

MAYOR
Wall height?

TADD
803 feet and rising. Ahead of schedule.

MAYOR
That's what I like to hear Tadd. But don't tell them that. Tell them I'm deeply dissatisfied.

TADD
Of course.

MAYOR
I love that sound. Nice beat. The chink - chink of the shovel. It's like money in my pockets.

THE SOUND OF ALL THEIR AXES
MEANS THEY'LL ALL BE PAYING TAXES
WHAT KEEPS ME IN STITCHES
IS IT ALL BECOMES MY RICHES
THEY'RE MY STRINGLESS PUPPETS
AND THEY LOVE ME ONE AND ALL
I'M THE ONLY PERSON DANCING AT THE BALL

SO KEEP ON BUILDING MY WALL
(KEEP DIGGING DEEPER)
TIL IT'S A THOUSAND FEET TALL
(KEEP DIGGING DEEPER)
AND IT WILL KEEP OUT THEM ALL
THERE'S NO WHERE SAFE
SO PLEASE BE A DOLL
AND BUILD MY . . . OUR . . WALL

ALL but NADIA suddenly go into slow motion. As NADIA sings the MAYOR notices that the GIRL has stopped working and sends the TADD to address it.

NADIA

I'M SURE THEY ALL JUST THINK I'M LAZY
 BUT I THINK THAT MAYOR'S CRAZY
 BUILDING THIS WALL JUST MAKES NO SENSE
 BUT THEY'RE AFRAID TO SAY IT
 LIFE IS MORE THAN PUNCHING CLOCKS
 AND BEING SCARED AND STACKING ROCKS
 IT'S NOT THE WAY MY FATHER RAISED ME
 I MEAN THAT MAN AMAZED ME
 HE MADE SURE I UNDERSTAND
 THE WORLD IS FULL OF WONDERS
 AND I SHOULDN'T REST UNTIL I'VE SEEN THEM ALL
 SO I CAN NOT BUILD A WALL

TADD grabs the GIRLS shoulder - sending everyone out of Slo-mo - and instructs her to resume work.

WORKERS

TIL IT'S A THOUSAND FEET TALL
 THAT WILL KEEP OUT THEM ALL
 THERE'S NO ONE SAFE
 SO DIG ONE MORE ROCK
 ONE MORE ROCK
 ONE MORE ROCK
 TO BUILD A WALL

TADD pushes a button on his remote control. A horn blast from the Sound Funnel™ above!

TADD

All rise for the Honorable Mayor Imperia!

They do. MAYOR IMPERIA sweeps in from one of the high walkways. The Mayor is not burdened with gear like the others.

MAYOR IMPERIA

(Addressing the crowd)

Friends... neighbors... children I only remember by smell... you may remember that when I was voted in as your Mayor, the decision was “unanimous” which means, “everyone agreed.” Since the day you gave me the golden keys to the city I have worked tirelessly – “without becoming tired” – with a single goal in mind; your safety and security!

ALL

Hear, hear!

MAYOR IMPERIA

Do you hear that sound?

WINKIN

An evil wind?

WORKER #2 (JACOB)

Very quiet monsters?

NADIA

(Sarcastically)

Nothing?

MAYOR IMPERIA

I assume by "nothing" you mean the sound of isolation .. of safety. Safe from the "evil winds" and the "quiet monsters". Keeping everything for ourselves. Keeping the strangers out. Which is why, in my great wisdom I designed ...

WORKERS (EXCEPT NADIA)

The Wall!

MAYOR IMPERIA

The only thing that will keep us safe is . . .

WORKERS (EXCEPT NADIA)

The Wall!

MAYOR IMPERIA

So we MUST not rest until we've finished ...

NADIA

Our lunch . .

WORKERS

Angry with Nadia.

The Wall!

MAYOR IMPERIA

This one-eyed guy gets it. He knows what's out there in the dark, right?

WINKIN

Unspeakable danger?

WORKER #2 (JACOB)

Extremely quiet monsters?

NADIA

Nothing?

They all look at her.

I mean... I don't know?

MAYOR IMPERIA

Exactly my point! We don't know what's out there ...equals ... we should fear what's out there. Fear is good! Only by being afraid can we know we are truly, truly alive! We erect this wall...

EVERYONE

To keep the monsters out and our fear inside!

TADD leads applause.

TADD

Applaud. Not too much.

MAYOR IMPERIA

Build my city of stone and the future will be bright. Yes, adorable inferiors, follow me and we will soon be living in the... STONE .. AGE!

TADD

Enthusiastic Applause!

ALL applaud. TADD pushes remote button. A blast from the Sound Funnel™

TADD

End of mandated break! Back to work, everyone!

MAYOR IMPERIA

Turning to address NADIA so no one else can hear.

Nadia, I don't care who your father was. This is MY city now. I think you need a little time out. Tadd, take Nadia to the ...

AUTHORITATIVE VOICE FROM THE FUNNEL

Mayor Imperia! Message from the lookout!

WORKER BELOW (RONAN)

Message from the lookout!

TADD

Message from the lookout? What can that be?

MAYOR IMPERIA

Tadd, the keys!

TADD turns a key in the key pad. They all run to the end of a long tube that stretches up offstage. There is a clank, a clunk and a thunk and a bonk. Everyone follows the sound with their heads along the "tube". Finally, with a clatter, a scroll pops out of the tube landing right in TADD's hand.

TADD

There hasn't been a message from the lookout since...

MAYOR IMPERIA

Read it.

He unravels the scroll.

TADD

A stranger approaches.

General murmuring.

MAYOR IMPERIA

Spyglass!

TADD turns another key a spyglass emerges. The Mayor peers into it like a sub captain searching the surface for enemies. Several Workers move the tube and The Sound Funnel™ begins to pan around as the Mayor scans.

MAYOR IMPERIA

OH YES, I SEE HIM NOW
A STRANGER
AND HE'S COMING CLOSER
BUT CAN HE PENETRATE OUR WALL?

TADD

HA! THE ANSWER'S - "NO,SIR"
UNLESS HE FINDS
THE SECTION THAT'S BECOME UNSTABLE

WORKER #1

(Looking in the spyglass)

HE CRAWLS

HE FALLS
HE'S INSIDE OUR CITY WALLS

NADIA
MAYBE HE'S HARMLESS
JUST A VISITOR WHO'S HERE FOR PLEASURE

TADD
MAYBE HE'S COME TO STEAL
OUR CITY'S PRICELESS, SACRED TREASURE

MAYOR IMPERIA
THIS STRANGER CLOAKED IN SHADOW
CLEARLY COMES TO DO US HARM

TADD
CODE BLUE
STAGE TWO

ALL
SOUND THE ALARM

MAYOR AND TADD
LOCK EVERY DOOR
CLOSE THE SCHOOLS
AND BRING THE CHILDREN INSIDE

MAYOR IMPERIA
Very nice, Tadd. Now in harmony.

MAYOR AND TADD
HE'S SURE TO GO AWAY
IF WE GIVE HIM NO PLACE TO HIDE
YEAH!

MAYOR IMPERIA
BOARD THE WINDOWS
DRAW THE SHADE
HIDE YOUR MANGO MARMALADE
DON'T SHARE A CRUMB
DON'T SHARE A BITE
WE'LL STARVE HIM
TILL HE'S OUT OF SIGHT
THERE'S TWO WORDS HE WILL HEAR US SAY
ONE IS "GO"
TWO. "AWAY"

This danger will pass! Like a shadow in the noonday sun.

NADIA

And if it doesn't?

MAYOR IMPERIA

Then he shall meet with the same fate as all other strangers here. It will not be fair.

NADIA

You mean it won't be "pretty."

MAYOR IMPERIA

Of course. I meant that as well. Now put your faith in our beloved city motto!

ALL

TRUST NO ONE

MAYOR IMPERIA

I WILL BE PROTECTING YOU

ALL

TRUST NO ONE

MAYOR IMPERIA

I WILL BE PROTECTING YOU

ALL

TRUST NO ONE

MAYOR IMPERIA

I WILL KEEP YOU SAFE
IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOUR FAMILY
THE ONLY PERSON YOU CAN TRUST IS ME

The MINERS exit leaving MAYOR, TADD and NADIA in a pool of light.

TADD

Mayor, what do we do with Nadia?

MAYOR IMPERIA

Nadia, we have a special place for you. Very deep. Very Dark. A magical place. It makes you . . disappear.

Darkness.

SCENE THREE

ALEX comes to the middle of the stone town, book in hand. VILLAGERS pass by. No one will meet his eye as they are clearly afraid of "The Stranger".

ALEX

A Stone City. It's true . . . Oh, hello. Hi there.

EVERY WHERE I TRAVEL
EVERY STRANGER SHARES A SMILE

VILLAGER 1(JACOB)

Go away.

ALEX

EACH KIND SOUL BRAVES TO RETURN A WAVE
AS I WALK ANOTHER MILE

VILLAGER 2 (JENNA)

Leave!

ALEX

EVERY DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN (SLAM!)
EVERY CITY FEELS LIKE HOME
BEFORE THE DAY CAN END
I'LL HAVE MADE A FRIEND
SO I NEVER FEEL ALONE

Everyone has gone.

BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY PLACE LIKE THIS

ALEX spies KAT on her scooter. She is watching him from a distance. She slowly rolls away. A door rolls in. It is covered in locks, chains, and other fanciful security measures. It looks formidable. If Davy Jones and Scrooge built a door together, this would be that door.

ALEX

Wonder where everyone is? Well, it is lunchtime and . . . *(Checks his bag.)* . . . I'm out of food - *(He turns and sees the door closely for the first time.)* Now THAT is a door. *(He looks down)* Huh, I don't think I've ever seen an UNwelcome mat before. Home of Winkin - the Wall Worker, Blinkin - a Butcher of renown, and Nod - The President of the Bank.

As he introduces them they rush to the door on the other side. WINKIN, with an eye patch, pressing his one good eye to the peephole, behind him is BLINKIN wearing aviator goggles and finally NOD. WINKIN, the smallest, stands on a box full of things so he might look through the peep hole and pass information to the others..

Winkin!	NOD
Winkin!	BLINKIN
What?	WINKIN
What?	BLINKIN
Who's there?	NOD
Who's there?	BLINKIN
Who's there? The stranger!	WINKIN
The Stranger!	BLINKIN
The Stranger!	NOD
	WINKIN
And as sure as the wall is tall, he's looking for a handout.	
	FIRST HE'LL WANT A PENNY
	BLINKIN
	THEN A NICKEL
	NOD
	THEN A DIME
	BLINKIN
	AFTER THAT HE'LL WANT A QUARTER

WINKIN
SEEN IT HAPPEN EVERYTIME

NOD
THEN A DOLLAR

WINKIN
THEN A TWENTY

BLINKIN
OR A HUNDRED

NOD
OR A GRAND

ALL THREE
YES HE'S COME TO ROB US BLIND
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO TAKE A STAND

NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER TRUST A STRANGER
STRANGER RHYMES WITH DANGER
HE'S A DANGER IN DISGUISE
AND HE'S CLEARLY COME
TO TAKE AWAY EACH PRECIOUS THING WE PRIZE
SO JUST LIKE THE MAYOR TOLD US
WE'LL BE SAFER WHEN HE DIES

ALEX
I wonder if anyone is home?

NOD
What's he doing?

BINKIN
What's he doing?

WINKIN
What's he doing? He's talking.

BLINKIN
I knew it! Is that bad?

NOD
Well, if he's talking to himself he's insane. If he's talking to someone else , then ...

WINKIN

... he's not alone.

WINKIN
 FIRST IT'S ONE,
 NOD
 THEN TWO
 BLINKIN
 THEN THREE?
 ALL THREE
 FOUR.
 FIVE.
 SIX THOUSAND DIRTY STRANGERS
 WINKIN
 THE WHOLE TOWN'S CRAWLIN' WITH THEM
 BLINKIN
 EVIL STRANGERS EVERYWHERE
 WINKIN
 AND WHEN STRANGERS NEVER LEAVE
 WHAT YOU END UP WITH IS ...
 BLINKIN
 NEIGHBORS?
 WINKIN
 GREEDY, ROTTEN NEIGHBORS!
 WHO WILL ALL WANT US TO
 SHARE!

NOD plops off to sleep.

BLINKIN
 Winkin, You know that "S" word makes Nod pass out.

WINKIN
 Sorry Nod.

BLINKIN
 He hates that word.

NOD is rousing.

You're awake again!

There is a knock. They freeze.

And not a moment too soon. WINKIN

What are we going to do? BLINKIN

The only thing we can do. WINKIN

Answer the door? BLINKIN

NO! WINKIN AND NOD

They start stuffing cash, sausages, anything they can find of value into BLINKIN's clothing.

NOD
HIDE THE MONEY IN THE MATTRESS

WINKIN
HIDE THE BARLEY IN THE CELLER

BLINKIN
AND THE SANDWICH IN MY POCKET?

WINKIN
YOU SHOULD HIDE IT NOW AND QUICK

BLINKIN starts stuffing the sandwich in his mouth.

NOD
HIDE THESE CARROTS IN YOUR CLOTHING

WINKIN
HIDE THIS PENCIL

NOD
HIDE THIS STICK

WINKIN
OR THE STRANGERS GONNA STEAL IT

BLINKIN

Mouth stuffed with sausages.

NOW I THINK I MIGHT BE SICK

There is a knock. They all freeze, pockets stuffed with papers, meat, and money.

WINKIN

Whispering

Maybe he'll think we're not home.

ALEX
Hey guys singing in there, I'm searching for a lost city. Have you seen one?

BLINKIN
(Mouth still stuffed) No one is home.

ALEX
I didn't quite catch that. I am a weary traveler seeking a shed, shelter, or stable for some sound slumber.

WINKIN
He's trying to charm us with alliteration

NOD
That treacherous trickster.

ALEX
Or perhaps you have a sweet or savory snack to share?

NOD falls.

BLINKIN
Oh dear.

WINKIN
He said it. He said the "s" word.

NOD begins to rouse.

ALEX

I said several "s" words. Snack. Shelter, shed, savory. Share.

NOD FALLS

WINKIN

You did it again

ALEX

Did what?

WINKIN

You said. . . sh . . . You know what you said . . .

ALEX

Share?

Nod head falls back down just as he was coming to.

BLINKIN.

You're doing that on purpose. That word makes Nod. . . nod.

WINKIN.

I knew he was a beggar and thief . . . but a murderer.

BLINKIN

So cruel. So cruel.

ALEX

Ookay? I apologize. I'll just move on, then?

ALEX exits.

NOD

What did he want?

WINKIN.

He wants food and shelter. But the fiend will never have any of our share.

NOD falls.

WINKIN

NEVER , NEVER, NEVER,
NEVER GIVE THINGS TO A STRANGER,

BLINKIN

IT'S BETTER JUST TO KEEP YOUR THINGS,
IT'S SAFER IN THE END.

WINKIN

THEY SAY, "IT'S HOT."

BLINKIN

THEY SAY, "I'M TIRED."

NOD

"I JUST NEED A BED"

ALL THREE

BUT DON'T GIVE THINGS TO STRANGERS
UNTIL THE STRANGERS
DEAD

They exit. The door turns. Alex enters.

ALEX

That was quite possibly the strangest conversation I ever had with a door. And I've actually talked to more doors that you might think. I wonder who is behind this one?

SCENE FOUR

Alex arrives at the next door which is the same set piece as before simply rolled past him and around again. This time, however, instead of locks and chains the door is covered with vines and plant material. Squash, tomatoes, and even grapes hang off the vines that seem to form part of the door itself. Alex reads the name plate, this time leaving the door facing us.

ALEX

The HUGE family. Well, how big can they be, I wonder? This door seems normal size, enough. And by the looks of all these fruit trees in the yard, I imagine they have plenty of food to share.

There is a little cry from inside, like a sweet baby voice. It's joined by another, and another, and another, each one growing a little more shrill until there's a harmonic dissonance of baby chorus member all crying at once. Frantic Gypsy Music joins the cry as the door spins revealing Mama Huge, covered in babies (in the form of dolls and hand puppets) riding in all manner of slings on her body and she totes several more in wagon cradles behind her that she rocks with her feet. CLARA helps her manage the brood. Mama Huge takes a large bullhorn and aims it at the kids. She activates it and a canned lullaby blares out. Within seconds, the babies are silent. She sighs. Alex knocks on the door and the chaos begins again. The frustrated Mama Huge repeats the ritual. Silence.

MAMA HUGE

(whispering)
Who is it?

ALEX

(whispering)
My name is Alex!

MAMA HUGE

Felix?

ALEX

Alex!

MAMA HUGE

Chex Mix?!

ALEX

ALEX!!

MAMA HUGE

This will never do. One moment .

She opens the top half of a dutch door.

MAMA HUGE

What do you want?

ALEX

I'm looking for a lost city. Have you seen one?

MAMA HUGE

Now when would I possibly have time? You think it's easy raising this many children?

A baby threatens to cry. She blares the bullhorn briefly. It shuts up.

ALEX

Wow. That's a lot of kids.

MAMA HUGE

You Think?

THERES CLARA AND NATASHA
THERE'S BORIS AND THERE'S MASHA
THERE'S FREDERICK AND THERE'S SASHA
AND SVET HIMSELF WHO WET HIMSELF
THERE'S PETER WHO IS SNEEZING
AND KATERINA'S WHEEZING
AND VLADIMIR IS TEETHING
AND NOW THEY ALL WANT FOOD

Chorus of cries.

Don't you bite me. Don't bite!

She frantically tries to satisfy them. Bullhorn.

ALEX

I can see you have your hands full. I'll be on my way. But before I go, would you mind terribly if I borrowed some of your fruit?

MAMA HUGE

What fruit?

ALEX

Right here, on your door. You have...

As he speaks, one of the Huge Children pokes out through a hole in the door and snatches away the grapes.

MAMA HUGE

Don't be ridiculous. I don't have fruit growing on my door. I barely have enough food in here to feed this family.

ALEX

My mistake. But there do seem to be tomatoes here.

MAMA HUGE

Tomatoes are not a fruit.

ALEX

Debatable. Nevertheless I wonder...

Again, a Huge Child pokes out through a hole in the door and snatches away the tomatoes as Alex speaks.

MAMA HUGE

Even if tomatoes were a fruit...

ALEX

Which they might be.

MAMA HUGE

Even if they WERE! *(A small cry. A quick blip from the Lullaby Bullhorn. Silence.)*

I NEED EVERY TOMATO
I NEED EVERY POTATO
THESE BABIES EVERY DAY GROW
AND WHO KNOWS WHAT TOMORROW BRINGS

ALEX

YOUR YARD IS FULL OF FRUIT TREES
THERE'S BARRELS FULL OF GOAT CHEESE
YOUR HOUSE IS LIKE A DEEP FREEZE

IT'S ALL MADE OF FOOD

MAMA HUGE

CALL ME SELFISH
 CALL ME STINGY
 CALL ME CAUTIOUS
 CALL ME GREEDY
 BUT RAISING TWENTY KIDS ALONE
 MAKES ME THE ONE THAT'S NEEDY

I'D SHARE IF THINGS WERE BETTER
 BUT THERE'S SPIT UP ON MY SWEATER
 AND SVET IS GETTING WETTER
 I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE

QUIET!!!!!!!!!!!!

LOOK I LOVE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS
 THEY'RE ALL AS CUTE AS OTTERS
 BUT I'M DROWNING IN THE WATERS
 OF ALL THE THINGS THEY NEED FROM ME
 SO THOSE THAT ARE PROFESSING
 THAT CHILDREN ARE A BLESSING
 SHOULD KNOW THAT THEY'RE DISTRESSING
 THEY'RE DEPRESSING AND THEY'RE CRUDE

Children begin to wake and cry.

IT LOOKS LIKE I HAVE PLENTY
 BUT I AM FEEDING TWENTY
 SO I CAN'T SPARE A PENNY
 NO- WE HAVE NO FOOD FOR YOU

Natasha, don't pull hair. That hurts mama. And no biting. No Biting!

MAMA HUGE and family all exit.

SCENE FIVE

Once again, the door rolls around and ALEX arrives at Door Number 3. This time the door is covered in an ornate keyhole panel. There are key slots of every design, some labeled and some not. It looks like this door is the control panel for every wind-up toy and curious souvenir clock in the entire county. There's a name plate again and a small mail slot as well.

ALEX

(Reading the name plate)

Who lives here? Let's see... "The city father and his daughter." City father? Looks like he was really into locks. And this part of town seems so nice. I guess if anyone would know where to get some lunch it'd be this guy.

He knocks. There is a faint musical jingle, almost as though something is loose inside a music box.

Did anyone else hear that?

He knocks again, it jingles again, a little louder.

There's something definitely stuck in there.

Knock. Jingle, Harder! Jangle! BAM goes Alex's fist on the door and CLANG CLONG! There's a chime like he's awakened Big Ben's brother.

ALEX

(Peeking in the mail slot)
Hello?

A musical and lilting series of tones answer him. Almost as though it's saying "Hello."

I'm talking to a musical door. Okay. Not the strangest thing I ever did. (To the door) What's the deal with all the keyholes?

A beckoning tone.

Read the signs? Ok. This one says "Insert Key 4 to turn on the Colored Lights."

There is a musical sound of moderate excitement.

Seems straightforward enough. I don't have key 4, though.

Disappointment.

"Insert Key 18 to activate the Dancing Water Display." Now that I'd like to see.

A chime of anticipation.

But I don't have the key. I don't have any keys.

More disappointment.

“Insert Key 67 to Rotate the City-Wide Carousel.” There’s a city-wide carousel?!

Excitement and joy and calliope tunes!

Maybe I misjudged this town. Is there anyone inside?

Another tone, down beat and sad.

I see. No one home. Where is everyone?

A series of instrumental tones kick off, almost as though it’s starting to tell an epic story.

Wait, wait! I don’t really speak musical door that well.

A sad tone again.

You know, there’s a lot of keyholes here, but nine times out of ten folks leave a key right under the mat.

A suspenseful set of tones underscores Alex as he slowly moves toward the mat and... WHIPS it up to reveal...

ALEX

A piece of paper? I think with that musical buildup I was expecting a little more.

The door chimes “Eh.”

ALEX

(Reading the note.)

“The master has faded - his city is stone.

The little girl stays but is left all alone.

Time only moves forward, you will soon disappear.

But you can leave a message so we’ll know you were here.”

Would you please tell the person who lives here, “Sorry I missed you; it sounds like you could use a friend. I came in through a little hole in that big stone wall out there and I assure you, on the other side there’s a bluer sky and a sweeter smell in the air. If I got in, those things can too. I hope we meet someday. I wish you well.

The clock door starts to ding and chime excitedly. It takes off down the street and ALEX follows.

What? Was it something I said?

SCENE SIX

THE WELL. A hard shaft of light directly down on to a circular kid's pool creates the inside of a wishing well. NADIA is alone at the bottom of the well. Just outside the light, 4 girls serve as her echo/backup singers. Kate, Jenna, Monica and Hannah.

NADIA

I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 FROM THE BOTTOM OF A WISHING WELL
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 THAT THE WELL DIDN'T HAVE SUCH AN AWFUL SMELL
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 THAT THE SMELL FROM THE WELL IS A MILDEW SMELL
 NOT THAT POOR DEAD RAT BUT IT'S HARD TO TELL
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)

(Closes her eyes) I wish I was out of this well. *(Opens her eyes)* And . . . it's broken just like everything else in this dumb stone city.

IF THE BOTTOM OF A WISHING WELL
 IS GOING TO BE MY PRISON CELL
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 TOMORROW MORNING I WILL FIND
 THAT CRAZY MAYOR CHANGED HER MIND
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 SHE'LL PULL ME OUT
 ASK HOW I FEEL
 I WILL SAY "IT'S NO BIG DEAL"
 SHE'LL APOLOGIZE AND KNEEL
 THEN SHE'LL COOK MY FAVORITE MEAL
 BUT CLEARLY NONE OF THIS IS REAL
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)

BEFORE I'M GONE WITHOUT A TRACE
 I HAVE A LITTLE TIME TO WASTE
 ON WISHING (ECHO)
 I WISH FOR WINGS SO I COULD FLY
 I WISH I WASN'T GOING TO DIE
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 I WISH FOR ONE MORE DAY TO SPEND
 WISH THAT THIS WAS ALL PRETEND
 WISH I HAD A SINGLE FRIEND
 WISH TO SEE MY DAD AGAIN
 WISH THAT I COULD COMPREHEND
 WHY I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 I'M WISHING (ECHO)
 WHAT GOOD IS WISHING (ECHO)

OH

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT THIS WOULD COME ABOUT
 SHOULD HAVE NEVER SPOKEN OUT
 I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M UPSET
 I SHOULD KNOW THAT'S WHAT YOU GET
 BUT THERE'S PART OF ME THAT NEVER GIVES UP
 ON WISHING

Hello?

ECHO

Hello?

NADIA

Hey

ECHO

HEY

NADIA

Whatcha up to?

ECHO

Whatcha up to?

NADIA

Me? I'm ...

WISHING.

ECHO

WISHING

Blackout.

SCENE SEVEN

ALEX sits in the town square on the edge of a dry well. A villager passes by pushing a wheelbarrow.

ALEX

Hello!

NADIA'S ECHOING VOICE

Hello?

ALEX

To the villager.

Wait, did you just...?

The villager sees ALEX and speeds up to get by him.

VILLAGER (MONICA)

Chanting under his breath

Codebluecodebluecodeblue...

ALEX

Do you happen to know...

VILLAGER (MONICA)

(He never stopped chanting) Codebluecodebluecodeblue...

ALEX

Trying to sneak a word in between.

Where... I ... could... get something to eat?

VILLAGER (MONICA)

Chanting and dancing back and forth as Alex keeps heading off his escape.

Codebluecodebluecodeblue...

ALEX

Code blue?

VILLAGER (MONICA)

Speeding around ALEX

Stage two!

Two more villagers enter - one pushing another wheelbarrow and one carrying a large sack of something heavy. They're talking to each other in hushed tones.

VILLAGER PUSHING (JACOB)

I don't know, I don't know... stop talking he's right there!

ALEX

Excuse me, would either of you happen to know...

VILLAGER CARRYING (GRAY)

Making nonsensical shushing sounds in Alex's general direction

Shah!

ALEX

But I just...

VILLAGER PUSHING (JACOB)

Making "shut up" nonsense sounds to drown out Alex's speech

Juhjuhu...zzz!

ALEX

I'm sorry are we speaking in code?

VILLAGER CARRYING (GRAY)

Tossing his bag in the wheelbarrow and sticking his fingers in his ears.

Nuhnunuh!

ALEX

Hotel?

VILLAGER PUSHING (JACOB)

Nayh!

ALEX

Roadside diner?

VILLAGER CARRYING (GRAY)

FehFEH!

ALEX

Oh, uh... hang on... *(As though speaking a foreign language for the first time, accompanied by broad gestures)* Nayh! Feh FEH! *(Thumping his chest to indicate himself)* Alex! *(Miming eating)* Nuhnuh *(miming opening a door)* juhjuh *(miming sleeping)* ZZZZ!

A small crowd has gathered to watch this display. They stare at him in stunned silence, all their fears seemingly confirmed.

ALEX

Or maybe just a bag of chips for the road?

The villagers instinctively move away from him like magnets of opposite polarity.

ALEX

Calling after them.

At least point me towards some water? *(Looking at the well and trying to make a friendly joke with some other villagers who have crept in)* Nothing in this well but an old bucket and some dusty wishes, eh? *(Calling softly into the well)* My wish is for a bite to eat and a bed for the night, if you're still in operation. *(He tosses a coin in.)*

NADIA'S VOICE

OW!

ALEX

What?

NADIA'S VOICE

Could you not throw hard things down at me, please?

ALEX

I'm sorry, I didn't know it was possible to hurt a wishing...

The Mayor and TADD sweep in, interrupting Alex. The citizens run to her side for protection.

MAYOR IMPERIA

Well, well. well. What have we here?

TADD

It appears to be a "stranger" your royal mayor-ness.

MAYOR IMPERIA

I see. *(To crowd)* Is this man a guest of any resident? Anyone housing the ogre? Will anyone claim him as a friend or relation?

ALL the citizens shake their heads.

No. Then our laws are clear. You must leave.

ALEX

What peculiar laws. Perhaps you should consider revising them . . .

MAYOR IMPERIA

Perhaps you should consider keeping your mouth shut. Tadd, read City Code 919 section O.

TADD

Any unclaimed stranger must depart our city wall by the time the sun has set on the day of his arrival. If not, he will face life imprisonment . . . or worse.

MAYOR

You had your one shot - no one claimed you or wanted you here. So you can leave or are face the dire consequences.

ALEX

But if we had a chance to get to know each other.

MAYOR

Golly, that's sweet. But I'm sorry. My hands are tied. It's the law.

ALEX

That's crazy. Who made up this law?

MAYOR IMPERIA

I did.

ALEX

Oh.

MAYOR IMPERIA

YOU GET ONE SHOT

Tadd, I'm going to need backup . . . singers.

YOU GET ONE SHOT

TADD organizes the VILLAGERS into a backup group and coordinates them throughout the song.

ALL

IMPERIA!!

IMPERIA!!

MAYOR

THE LAWS OF THE CITY ALL CLEARLY STATE
 EVERY STRANGER'S WELCOME HERE
 BUT ONLY FOR THE BRIEFEST TIME
 AND THEN THE COST IS DEAR
 WHEN THE SUN HAS SET THEN YOU'RE FINISHED
 THAT'S THE DANGER OF THIS DANCE
 YOU'LL BE BEGGING
 AS WE'RE SLAMMING THE DOOR ON YOUR CELL
 BUT THERE IS NO SECOND CHANCE
 YOU ONLY GET ONE SHOT
 YOU ONLY GET ONE SHOT

JOY IS OVERRATED
 AND HAPPINESS PASSÉ
 THERE IS NO GREATER FOLLY THAN A JOLLY HOLIDAY

She takes a doll gently from the GIRL.

WHAT BRINGS US ALL TOGETHER IS NOT THE LOVE WE FEEL
 WHAT BRINGS US ALL TOGETHER IS A COMMON FOE TO KILL

*She pulls the head off the doll and gives it back to the GIRL - patting her on the head.
 She travels from child to child pointing out ALEX's quirks*

JUST LOOK AT HIM HE'S DIFFERENT
 HE'S NOT LIKE YOU AND ME
 HIS SKIN, HIS FACE IS DIFFERENT
 WE ALL KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS
 THIS MAN COULD BE A MONSTER
 A MONSTER IN DISGUISE
 AND WHO WILL YOU NEED
 IT'S GUARANTEED
 WHEN YOU'VE SEEN THROUGH ALL HIS LIES?
 YOU'RE GOING TO NEED ME
 YOU'RE GOING TO NEED ME

ALL

IMPERIA!!
IMPERIA!!

MAYOR IMPERIA
AND I'LL ONLY NEED ONE SHOT

TADD

Sounding good, Mayor.

MAYOR
I'LL ONLY NEED ONE SHOT

ALL

IMPERIA!!
IMPERIA!!

MAYOR IMPERIA
A little softer. A little softer. Tadd, do you have my bullet?

Tadd takes a vial from his coat pocket that contains a single bullet.

TADD

Right here.

MAYOR IMPERIA
Just in case. A little louder. Big Finish.

MAYOR sweeps out. Everyone follows her.

SCENE EIGHT

ALEX

Ok. THAT... was intense. And maybe a little bit awesome.

NADIA'S VOICE

Really? Awesome?

ALEX

(Not really completely hip to the fact he's talking to a person in a well, yet.)

Well, in that it was somewhat awe-inspiring – then yes. Awesome is appropriate here. Wait a minute - who am I talking to?

NADIA'S VOICE

Did you just call me a well?

ALEX

No, I just said “well” earlier to casually begin my sentence... and (looking at the well) what would you prefer to be called, anyhow?

NADIA'S VOICE

I'd prefer Nadia since that's my name.

ALEX

A wishing well named Nadia. It's the second time today I've had a conversation with a landmark but I didn't get the name of that door back there.

NADIA

Wait, what?

ALEX

Wait, what?

NADIA

Are you mocking the echo thing?

ALEX

Mocking the echo thing?

NADIA
You are, aren't you?

ALEX
Well, what are we talking about?

NADIA
Stop saying that, I'm not a well – there's a person down here!

ALEX
That makes no sense at all. Why would there be a person in this well?

NADIA
Why is our city made of stone? Why is everyone afraid of the dark? Why is the sky grey?

ALEX
A well that does rhetorical echoes? Awesome!

NADIA
Stop using that word! Here just take your money back and get out of town.

The coin flies back up and Alex catches it.

ALEX
Well, well, well. I like you, Nadia. I like your bold choice to live in a well.

NADIA
Sure, it's cozy if you don't mind the rats and mildew.

ALEX
Can I get you anything?

NADIA
A rope would be nice.

ALEX
No problem!

A tiny length of rope falls at Nadia's feet.

NADIA

I was thinking maybe a little longer rope – and that you would hold one end while I climb out. I don't live here. I don't know where I live, anymore.

ALEX

Well, that is a problem. But rope? BAH! Why climb when you can float?

NADIA

Float?

ALEX

There's that echo again. All this well needs is a little water and BAM! Instant elevator! You'll float right to the top!

NADIA

WAIT! Does that mean you're about to start dumping...

She's hit right in the face with a splash of water.

Could you, like, count to three or something before you...

Splash!

Seriously, ok, it seems funny but just give me some warning before...

SPLASH!

Hold it! Stop! Wait, time out!

Pause.

SPLASH!

REALLY!?

ALEX

Ok, ok, totally my bad there. You were saying count to three so... ok, so we'll do that. You ready?

NADIA

Sure.

Because you don't sound ready. ALEX

I'm ready! NADIA

Fair enough. Ok, on ONE! ALEX

One. NADIA

TWO! ALEX

Two. NADIA

THREE! ALEX

NADIA tenses in preparation for a splash. Nothing happens.

What happened? I thought we said on "three..." NADIA

Splash!

Sorry, I was waiting for you to say it. Are we not doing that? ALEX

Never mind! NADIA

And is it one, two, three, (*SPLASH!*) – or one, two, (*SPLASH!*)? ALEX

We said "ON THREE!"

NADIA

SPLASH!

You're really enjoying this, aren't you?

NADIA

Not as much as you'd think. This is going to take forever with this little bucket.

ALEX

Well, maybe I could help you there...

NADIA

Don't call me well, well. My name's Alex. Hang on, we have company.

ALEX

Better not tell them I'm here.

NADIA

A Girl, TRUNCH, has been spying on Alex as he tosses water into the well. She emerges confidently from the shadows when ALEX spots her.

SCENE NINE

ALEX and the KIDS. TRUNCH steps up and begins interrogating ALEX.

Hey! Stranger Monster!

TRUNCH

Stranger than what?

ALEX

What?

TRUNCH

What?

ALEX

I asked you first, Monster! Whatcha doin'?

TRUNCH

Uh. I have this bucket... here. And I am... filling this well. With water. From the bucket. This one.

ALEX

That's backwards.

TRUNCH

You're right.

ALEX

I'm CORRECT. That's a synonym. And you're a scawny monster.

TRUNCH

(Ready to get back to it) Ok. Well, I need a LOT of water, here. In this well. So...

ALEX

Why?

TRUNCH

Why what?

ALEX

Why do you need a lot of water?

TRUNCH

ALEX

(Yeah, he's definitely making this up as he goes.) Because... I'm cooking. (Trunch looks unconvinced) No one had any food to share so I thought I'd make some . . . soup.

TRUNCH

In a well? That's a lot of soup.

ALEX

Yes it is. Enough to share.

TRUNCH laughs as though ALEX just said something inappropriate

TRUNCH

Share!?

ALEX

Sure.

TRUNCH

That's weird.

ALEX

It shouldn't be. *(He spots KAT who is still hiding)* Hi, little kid in the shadows. I'm really not a monster.

TRUNCH

My sister, Kat. She's scared of you. We're all supposed to be.

ALEX

But you're not.

TRUNCH

I wouldn't tell you if I was.

TRUNCH's brother IVAN runs in barefoot. He is forever with a sucker in his mouth and those horrible allergies.

IVAN

Hey, Trunch, it's my day to wear the shoes.

TRUNCH indelicately puts her hand directly in IVAN's face. IVAN keeps rattling on even through her fingers and they talk over each other.

BUSY! NOT NOW SNIFFY FACE --!
TRUNCH

Is that the monster --?
IVAN

Just a regular stranger, Flint-Brains.
TRUNCH

Thought he'd be ... hairy-er --
IVAN

-- Scarier --?
TRUNCH

-- Hairy-er. More hair.
IVAN

WHAT? You make no sense. And your head is full of rocks.
TRUNCH

Flint-Brains, Trunch, nice to meet you. I'm Alex.
ALEX

It's Ivan, actually.
IVAN

Quiet, gabby pants. (To Ivan) Scum-shirt here says he's making soup.
TRUNCH

Mayor says stranger-monsters always scurry off like a shadow at noontime.
IVAN

Funny thing. Those shadows always come back in the afternoon. Usually bigger than before.
ALEX

KAT scoots in on her scooter, whispers in her sister's ear and scoots off backward.

ALEX

Bye, little kid in the shadows!

TRUNCH

She wants to know what kind of soup you're making.

ALEX

That's a great question.

IVAN

Because we thought you didn't have anything.

Other children, including CLARA, have gathered. They're getting a little rowdy.

TRUNCH

He obviously stole something. Just like the mayor said.

ALEX

No no no --

IVAN

I wanna see in the well!

ALEX

NO! No, listen -

TRUNCH

There's no soup, rock head!

CLARA

Then what's he doing?

ALEX

Uh -

IVAN

I don't know. He's a really disappointing monster.

TRUNCH

I bet he'll scurry, though!

ALEX

I'm MAKING STONE SOUP, OKAY?!

TRUNCH

Stone soup?

ALEX

Ever had it?

TRUNCH AND IVAN

No.

ALEX

Good. I mean... Glad I'm making enough to share then. Now I just need to find a stone.

TRUNCH

Seriously?

She looks around and opens her arms as if to say "Welcome to our city, dimwitted fellow."

IVAN

We live in a town made of stones.

TRUNCH

We have a thousand-foot stone wall.

ALEX

I'd say 800 feet at best. A-plus for effort! Didn't keep me out.

TRUNCH

That's because you came in through the breach.

IVAN

You mean the hole.

TRUNCH

That's a synonym. (She slugs him.)

ALEX

That's all it takes. Besides, those are all just rocks. I need . . . a stone.

TRUNCH

What's the difference?

ALEX

Eh... I... you know, that's such a good question. I don't know! "Rock" just sounds all gritty and pointy like: *(making a grumpy face and spitting the word out)* "rok." But "stone" sounds like it's something special. Something ancient. It's a *(endowing the word with magic)* "stohne." The particular one I need is for making soup.

TRUNCH

Here's a stone right here.

ALEX

Quartz. No good for soup.

IVAN

Here you go

ALEX

Nope. Chalk. Soup would be unbearably bitter.

Kids begin to gather bringing stones.

Hold on, Hold on. Alright let's see what you have. One at a time.

Too rough. Next.

Too smooth. Next.

Way too big. Next.

Too Small. Is there even a rock there? Next.

Too Slimy . . . Too Grimy

Too stocky . . . Too chalky

Too Heavy . . . Too light

Too dull . . . Too bright

Sandy, Dusty. Crusty, Rusty

DON'T WANT A BOULDER OR A PEBBLE OR SLAB
 THAT ONE'S TOO SHINY
 YES AND THAT ONE'S TOO DRAB
 I WON'T BE THE FIRST TO CAST ONE
 BUT I KNOW IT'S NOT THAT LAST ONE
 LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE

IVAN hands Alex a stone that is clearly covered with whatever he has been eating.

Too sticky.

IVAN

Too picky

ALEX

Whaaa?

IVAN

Nothing.

ALEX

I KNOW I TAKE THE RISK OF SOUNDING ABSURD
 I NEED THE FABLED STONE YOU USE FOR KILLING TWO BIRDS
 IT'S THE RECIPE I LEARNED

AND I WILL LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED
I HAVE TO FIND THE PERFECT STONE

A STONE SO FULL OF FLAVOR IT WILL THICKEN THE SAUCE
YOU COULD ROLL IT FOR A YEAR AND IT WOULD GATHER NO MOSS
IT'S CARVED IN STONE
IT'S SET IN STONE
THE CHILDREN I JUST MET INTONE

ALL
WE HAVE TO FIND THE PERFECT STONE

KIDS
YOU DON'T WANT GRAVEL, OR THE LAVA WE FIND

ALEX
THIS ONE'S KINDA CRAGGY

TRUNCH
COME ON MAKE UP YOUR MIND

ALEX (TO TRUNCH)
IF YOUR HOUSE IS MADE OF GLASS
YOU MIGHT GIVE THROWING STONES A PASS
I'M LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE

DON'T WANT A CORNER STONE
OR COBBLESTONE
A BIRTH STONE
OR A STEPPING STONE
A PUMICE STONE
A PRECIOUS STONE
A HEART OF STONE
OR KIDNEY STONE
I JUST NEED TO GET A STONE
AS RARE AS THE ROSETTA STONE
I'M LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE

KIDS
LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE

ALEX

spying a rock - he examines it

Wait!

TRUNCH

Yes?

IVAN

Yes?

ALEX

No.

KIDS

LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
 LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
 LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
 LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
 LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT STONE
 LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT

KAT picks up a stone. ALEX sees it and slowly approaches her in awe.

ALEX

Wait a minute - what do you have there?

IT'S SMOOTH ENOUGH
 IT'S SMALL ENOUGH
 IT MIGHT JUST FEED US ALL ENOUGH
 THE PERFECT WEIGHT
 THE PERFECT TONE
 YOU FOUND THE PERFECT STONE
 MY MOMMA TOLD ME "SON,
 TAKE YOUR TIME AND PICK THE RIGHT ONE"

ALL

WE JUST FOUND THE PERFECT STONE
 WE JUST FOUND THE PERFECT STONE.

IVAN

So now what?

TRUNCH

We put the stone in the well, cork-brain?

CLARA
How long til this soup's ready?

ALEX
Not so fast. We can't put the stone in until the well is full.

TRUNCH
That's going to take you a long time.

ALEX
Not if you help.

TRUNCH
What?

ALEX
There are plenty of buckets. It won't take anytime if we all work together. If we cooperate.

TRUNCH
You cooperate?

ALEX
Sure.

TRUNCH
That's weird.

ALEX
That shouldn't be either.

TRUNCH
Alright, I'll try it. But it's not the way we do things here - all this helping other people stuff.

TRUNCH signals to the kids with her whistle and they start organizing the buckets - except for KAT.

ALEX
You're not gonna help?

KAT
I'm afraid.

ALEX
Afraid to help?

KAT

Afraid of water. Afraid of the dark. Afraid of cats. Afraid of the other kids. Afraid . . .

ALEX

Oh I see. That's OK. Nothing wrong with a kid being afraid of the dark. It's adults that are afraid of the light that you have to worry about.

KAT

Adults aren't afraid of anything.

Children use wagons, pipes and buckets and begin to fill the well with water

ALEX

Sure they are. They just don't tell anybody. Let me tell you a secret . . .

NOBODY KNOWS
 BUT REALLY EVERYONE'S AFRAID
 JUST NOBODY KNOWS
 BECAUSE THEY'RE TOO AFRAID TO SAY
 BUT BY KEEPING IT IN THAT WAY THE FEAR JUST GROWS
 JUST 'CAUSE NOBODY KNOWS

NOBODY KNOWS

KAT

NOBODY KNOWS

ALEX

BUT REALLY EVERYONE'S AFRAID

KAT

EVERYONE'S AFRAID

ALEX

JUST NOBODY KNOWS

KAT

NOBODY KNOWS

ALEX

BECAUSE THEY'RE TOO AFRAID TO SAY

KAT AND ANOTHER KID
 BECAUSE THEY'RE TOO AFRAID TO SAY

ALEX
BUT BY KEEPING IT IN THAT WAY

ALEX AND 3 KIDS
THE FEAR JUST GROWS
JUST 'CAUSE NOBODY KNOWS

ALEX
BUT WHAT IF ALL ORDINARY DAYS
WERE DAYS YOU NEVER FELT AFRAID
THE THINGS THAT MADE YOU RUN AWAY
WERE NOW JUST SILLY GAMES TO PLAY
AND IF YOU WEREN'T SCARED OF EVERY DAY
WOULD YOU LOOK AT LIFE A DIFFERENT WAY?

KAT
So you think sharing our fears will make them go away?

ALEX
Not go away - you just won't face them alone anymore. Sad thing, most people have a fear of sharing their fears. It takes someone pretty brave to . . .

KAT
But how can I be brave when I'm so afraid?

ALEX
That's the only time you can be brave.

A child tugs on his coat.

CLARA
I'm afraid of the dark.

KAT
Happily - hugging the other girl. They are now BFFs.
So am I!

ALEX
Most people are.

ALEX pulls a tablet and pencil from his bag and begins to write.

Afraid . . . of . . . the . . . dark. Take this. Go on. Now close your eyes. And rip it up. Better?

CLARA

I don't know, it's not dark. I'll probably find out tonight.

ALEX

Fair enough.

TRUNCH

I'm afraid of clowns.

IVAN

Afraid of clowns. . . oh brother.

IVAN sticks his tongue out at TRUNCH. She grabs it.

I'm afraid of her.

KID #2 (RONAN)

I'm afraid of sea monsters and cows and . . .

CLARA

The woods.

KID #3 (MONICA)

The ocean.

KID #4 (NOAH)

Parrots . . . I'm afraid of parrots.

KAT

Taking a lot of paper.

I'm afraid of everything.

YOU MAKE EVERYTHING SEEM SO RIGHT
AND YOU MAKE ALL MY TROUBLES JUST TAKE FLIGHT
LIKE A BULLET
OUT OF SIGHT

YOU MAKE
IT RIGHT

The kids all start to joyfully fill the well using game-like movement

ALEX
NOBODY KNOWS
BUT REALLY EVERYONE'S AFRAID

KIDS
YOU MAKE EVERYTHING SEEM SO RIGHT

ALEX
JUST NOBODY KNOWS

KIDS
AND YOU MAKE ALL MY TROUBLES JUST TAKE FLIGHT

ALEX
BECAUSE THEY'RE TOO AFRAID TO SAY

KIDS
LIKE A BULLET OUT OF SIGHT

ALEX
DON'T KEEP IT IN THAT WAY
JUST LET IT GO

KIDS
YOU MAKE IT ALL RIGHT

ALL
EVERYONE KNOWS
LET'S MAKE ALL OUR ORDINARY DAYS
THE DAYS WE NEVER FEEL AFRAID
TURN THE THINGS THAT MADE US RUN AWAY
INTO SILLY GAMES WE ALL CAN PLAY
AND WE WON'T BE SCARED AT ALL TODAY
SINCE WE LOOK AT LIFE A DIFFERENT WAY
AND MAKE FEARS GO
TILL EVERYONE KNOWS

ALEX

And now it's time to add the stone.

With a magical musical flourish he drops the stone in the well. Pause.

TRUNCH

Now what do we do?

ALEX

We wait . . . for the flavor to come out of the stone . . . make a broth.

IVAN

A broth?

ALEX

A delicious stone soup broth.

The kids don't seem impressed.

Trust me. It will be good. Of course it would be better with carrots, onions, cabbage and some salt and pepper. But no one has any to spare . . . so . . . broth . . .

TRUNCH calls the kids into a quick huddle. They break.

TRUNCH

We're on it.

The CHILDREN exit. KAT scoots back and removes a pear from her pack. She gives it to ALEX. He is sincerely surprised and touched by the simple gesture.

KAT

Here. You shouldn't be hungry.

KAT Exits.

ALEX

Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.

NADIA - wet and exhausted pulls herself out of the well.

SCENE TEN*NADIA and ALEX SCENE*

Did you see that?

ALEX

What?

NADIA

The kids. They're going to get food for the stone soup.

ALEX

Right.

NADIA

And look at you - out of the well. Nice. Are you OK?

ALEX

I was until you threw that last rock on my head.

NADIA

It's a stone.

ALEX

Whatever. Thanks . . . I suppose. But I'm going to go ahead and scoot away before the Mayor finds out I escaped and tries to execute me.

NADIA

I didn't realize you were in prison. You don't look the prison-type. Anyway, you can't leave now. The kids will be back any second now with the food.

ALEX

Yeah. A couple of things. 1.) There's no such thing as stone soup.

NADIA

Debatable.

ALEX

NADIA

2.) No one is going to give those kids any food to share with you because they all think you're a monster. 3.) I'm an escaped convict - so I'm going to go ahead and exit this horrible town through the same weak spot in the wall you came in. And go to some other part of this crummy world.

ALEX

The world's not crummy. Little bits of it maybe. But that can change.

NADIA

You start with "magic soup" and then you're gonna save the world?

ALEX

Sure. Well . . . I wasn't planning on doing it alone. But maybe you and I could save the world. And if we can get those kids to help.

NADIA

(Sarcastic) Good plan. Get the children to save the world.

ALEX

Probably the best ones for the job - they'll be around the longest to enjoy it.

NADIA

Yeah. You're crazier than I thought you were. Farewell . . .

She starts to leave and pauses.

If you're going through with this soup thing you should know that the well has a heater. And with the stuff I saw down there it would be good to bring your soup up to a nice strong boil.

ALEX

A heater. How awe . . . (Catches himself) . . . ingenious. Could you point that out before you go on the lam?

NADIA rolls her eyes and walks back to the well. Looks for a switch.

NADIA

Should be right here if it still works . . . let's see . . .

ALEX

Who put a heater on the well?

NADIA

My dad. Designed the whole city. Thousands of surprises. Brilliant really. Or used to be. *(She starts the heater)* There we go. Something actually still works. I guess the mayor didn't get to this one. Didn't even need a key.

ALEX

Wow. It must have been astonishing. Maybe your dad could help us out saving the world.

NADIA

Yeah, That's not going to happen.

ALEX

And you'd be handy... knowing where the heaters are and such.

NADIA

No, thanks. I've had about enough of this place, these people.

ALEX

They could use a little more faith and trust is all. They aren't fighting famine - just fear.

NADIA

You spend enough time at the bottom of a well and your faith and trust dry up and fear is pretty much what your left with. Fear and moldy clothing. It's best not to remember the way the city was - because it's not coming back. Bye.

ALEX

I KNOW YOU FEEL THAT YOU'RE UNDER ATTACK
 BUT I KNOW WHAT GOES AWAY CAN COME BACK
 IN WINTER YOUR GARDEN HAS COME TO AN END
 YOU TEND IT, IN SPRING IT WILL COME BACK AGAIN
 YOU THINK YOU'LL JUST DISAPPEAR
 YOU THINK YOU'LL FORGET IN A YEAR
 BUT I THINK YOU HOLD EVERYONE OF THEM DEAR
 WHY ELSE WOULD YOU BE STANDING HERE?

NADIA

YOU THINK EVERYTHING'S SUNNY AND BRIGHT

ALEX

I CHOOSE TO THINK IT'S ALL SUNNY AND BRIGHT

NADIA
YOU THINK EVERYTHING TURNS OUT ALL RIGHT

ALEX
IF IT'S NOT THEN LETS MAKE IT TURN RIGHT

NADIA
YOU SEE A WORLD WHERE THERE'S NO ONE ALONE

ALEX
THERE'S NO REASON TO BE ALL ALONE

NADIA
I SEE A WORLD THAT IS MADE ALL OF STONE

ALEX
THEN LET'S CHANGE IT
AND MAKE IT THE WORLD THAT YOU WISH

NADIA
I WISH I COULD SEE IT YOUR WAY
I WISH THAT IT MADE SENSE TO STAY

ALEX
I KNOW YOU WON'T GO AWAY

NADIA
BUT I KNOW THERE'S SOME THINGS THAT JUST GO AWAY
THEY'RE GONE AND THEY JUST STAY AWAY

A father dies and he's gone. No wish brings him back.

ALEX
I'm sorry. I didn't know.

NADIA
I SAY LIFE HAS A COST
I SAY THERE'S UNSPEAKABLE LOSS
I SAY SOMETIME'S LIFE GIVES YOU PAIN
AND YOU JUST HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE PAIN

And I can tell you right now, there is no one in this scared, selfish Stone City that is going to show up with food for your little Stone Soup. The world just doesn't work that way. You may want it to. But, Alex, it just doesn't.

As NADIA was speaking as MOTHER enters behind her with a wheelbarrow full of food.

SCENE ELEVEN*STONE SOUP SCENE***MOTHER HUGE**

Did someone need some produce?

ALEX checks with NADIA to see that she is alright. She gives him a puzzled half-grin and he goes to talk with MOTHER HUGE whose children are bringing in produce by the sack, bucket, wagon and barrel full. Her infants are lovingly tucked in among the produce.

KAT

I brought the carrots.

CLARA

Onions.

TRUNCH

Potatoes.

IVAN

Cabbage.

TRUNCH

Cabbage . . gross.

IVAN

It's not gross.

KID (MONICA)

Tomatoes.

ALEX

This was unexpected.

MOTHER HUGE

Stone Soup? I'm intrigued.

ALEX

What made you change your mind?

MAMA HUGE

I worry about my children growing up in a town of Stone. Helping you is the first thing they've agreed on in ten years. Don't disappoint them.

ALEX

Yes, ma'am.

MAMA HUGE

And besides, I can't get them to eat any of these vegetables at home.

ALEX

I'm still pretty sure that the tomato

MAMA HUGE

Is indeed a fruit. Who knew?

KAT

So what do we do?

ALEX

Everyone washed up?

They present hands for inspection. TRUNCH's hands are of questionable cleanliness.

You probably shouldn't touch any food with these. You'll be the stirrer.

YOU STIR
YOU SLICE
YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF ADDING ALL THE SPICE.
I THINK 50 POUNDS OF CARROTS SHOULD SUFFICE
BE PRECISE
MEASURE TWICE

The KIDS all take their positions and fall into a simple dance as they stir and slice

DO IT RIGHT
BY TONIGHT
WE'LL BE SLURPING DOWN A GALLON BEFORE WE'RE DONE
THERE'S GONNA BE ENOUGH HERE FOR EVERYONE
GO TELL EVERY FAMILY TO JOIN THE FUN
NOT TOO SALTY OR SWEET

A GASTRONOMICAL TREAT

KIDS

NOT A DROP IS WASTED
IT'S THE BEST YOU EVER TASTED

ALEX

MAKING SOUP

WINKIN, BLINKIN and NOD are drug in by KAT. THEY carry in a bag of Barley, a milk can and a bag of chickens.

WINKIN, BLINKIN AND NOD
CAME UPON THIS LILLIPUTIAN
SHE ASKED FOR A CONTRIBUTION

ALEX

(Clearly surprised)

Welcome, Winkin, Blinkin and Nod. Nod because he's always falling asleep. Blinkin because of his goggles and you're Winkin because of the ...

WINKIN

The what?

ALEX

You know. The ...

WINKIN

What?

ALEX

The ...twinkle in your eye?

WINKIN

Nod was really against sh ...sh ... you know the S word.

ALEX

That's right.

WINKIN

But the little one said you just needed a few ***small*** things and we'd get ***big*** bowls of delicious stone soup in return.

ALEX

That's the plan.

BLINKIN

(Trying to mimic the moves the kids are doing.)And I like the dancing.

ALEX

Me too, Blinkin. Gotta love the dancing.

ALEX

WE'LL DRINK IT DOWN BY THE PAIL
YOU CAN TELL BY THE SMELL

KIDS

NO ONE HERE HAS EVER SEEN
SUCH AWESOME STONE GOURMET CUISINE

KAT approaches NADIA who has remained seperate from the group and pulls her into a huddle with the others. NADIA is clearly surprised and touched.

MAKING SOUP
MAKING SOUP
MAKING SOUP
STONE SOUP

The entire group begins to assemble all of the ingredients into the well under ALEX's skillful direction. NADIA is amazed.

ALEX

TO MAKE RESPECTABLE SOUP
INTO DELECTABLE SOUP
WE'LL ADD YOUR VEGATABLE GROUP
TO OUR DIGESTABLE SOUP
AND THEN OUR EDIBLE SOUP
BECOMES INCREDIBLE SOUP
UNCONVENTIONAL SOUP
MULTIDIMENTIONAL SOUP

ALEX - SLOWLY ADDING VOICES

NOW IF WE JUST HAD A SCOOP
OR TWO OF BARLEY FOR SOUP

THEN THOSE APPRAISING OUR SOUP
 WOULD BE AMAZED AT OUR SOUP
 AND THERE'S SOME MILK FOR OUR SOUP
 TO MAKE THE SILK OF OUR SOUP
 OUR SUPER SAVORY SOUP
 OUR FULL OF FLAVORY SOUP

YOU ADD THE WHOLE CHICKEN COOP
 TO OUR REMARKABLE SOUP
 AND EVEN PRINCES WOULD STOOP
 TO GET A SIP OF OUR SOUP
 BECAUSE IT TOOK THE WHOLE TROUP
 TO MAKE OUR MIRACLE SOUP
 OUR ODERIFEROUS SOUP
 FULL OF DELICIOUSNESS SOUP
 STONE SOUP

KIDS

NA NA NA NA NA NA NA

MOTHER HUGE

Oh, Nadia. Your father would be so proud.

NADIA

Yes. Yes I think he would. I know he would.

ALEX

WHAT A WONDEROUS SIGHT
 A CULINARY DELIGHT

KIDS

TELL ME THAT IT'S READY SOON
 I'M DROOLING ON MY BOWL AND SPOON

ALEX

MAKING SOUP
 MAKING SOUP
 MAKING SOUP
 STONE SOUP

NADIA

I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EYES
 I NEVER REALIZED
 NO ONE SHOULD GO HUNGRY WHEN WE KNOW

ALL (ECHOING NADIA)
NO ONE SHOULD GO HUNGRY WHEN WE KNOW
THAT WHEN WE EACH GIVE SOMETHING SMALL
AND THAT GIFT IS FOR US ALL
WE CAN WATCH THE BLESSINGS OVERFLOW

ALEX

Now who will be the first to give it a taste?

KIDS

ME. ME! I brought the potatoes. Etc.

ALEX

No. No. It needs to be someone really special.

ALEX hands the spoon to KAT - they are clearly all excited to taste the soup but instead pass the spoon down til it is given to the mother.

MOTHER HUGE

I'd be honored.

She is just about to taste the soup when . . .

SCENE TWELVE

MAYOR suddenly sweeps in. NADIA hides on opposite side of well. She tries to stay out of sight throughout the scene.

MAYOR IMPERIA

I wouldn't do that if I were you. Now don't let me stop the party. I'm just a little surprised is all. What exactly is happening?

KAT

We're making stone soup.

MAYOR

Stone? Soup? That's a thing?

TRUNCH

I brought the carrots.

MOTHER

(Backing down a little) I only brought the spices and onions.

WINKIN

(Him too.) Just... just 50 pounds of potatoes.

IVAN

(The kids are still full-on proud) A tomato!

BLINKIN

Barley and 15 gallons of cream. Nothing, really.

KAT

Everybody brought something!

ALEX

I bet it'll be the best soup we've ever had.

KAT

Delicious!

ALEX

And Mother Huge was about to take the first honorary taste -

MOTHER HUGE

Nervous - not wanting to upset the MAYOR..

I was. Yes, I was but --

MAYOR

Glad I was here to stop her then.

KAT

But why?

MAYOR

This was his idea? The stranger? To make this poisonous concoction.

KAT

No. It's a delicious soup.

MAYOR

So sweet. So innocent.

YOU BELIEVE HIM WHEN HE TELLS YOU
HE CAN MAKE A SOUP FROM STONE
THAT YOU'RE BETTER OFF TOGETHER
THAN YOU EVER WERE ALONE

HE SAYS IF YOU ALL GIVE A LITTLE
YOU'LL GET MORE IN RETURN
WE SHOULD ALL JUST HELP EACH OTHER
THAT'S THE LESSON WE SHOULD LEARN

IF WE SING AND DANCE TOGETHER
THEN LIFE WILL BE COMPLETE
HE'S CHARMING YOU
DISARMING YOU
IT ALL IS JUST SO SWEET

BUT TELL ME WHAT IF YOU ARE WRONG
AND THIS EVIL SMILING STRANGER'S
STRINGING ALL OF YOU ALONG
YES TELL ME WHAT IF YOU ARE WRONG
IT SOUNDS SO RIGHT
BUT WHAT IF YOU ARE WRONG

(Dipping a finger in the soup and touching it to her tongue.

I tell you without a doubt this soup is poison. It was the stranger's devious plan all along. Poison all the citizens simultaneously, rob them blind and then off into the night like some twisted backward Santa Claus. Tadd, take the prisoner into custody.

TADD ties ALEX's hands behind his back.

KAT

No. You can't do that?

MAYOR

What can't I do?

KAT

He's not mean. He's nice. And the soup isn't poison.

MAYOR

(mocking her voice)

He's not mean. He's nice. And da soup isn't poison.

KAT

He's my friend. Not a thief.

MAYOR

He's your friend. He's nice. He wouldn't steal anything. Tadd, check the nice stranger's bag.

TADD pulls out the keys to the city.

TADD

He's taken the keys to the city.

MAYOR

As I suspected. Once again Mayor Imperia, ME, was right and protected everyone else, YOU, from the dangerous stranger. So let's get back to doing things my way. The right way. I mean, Nod, really, you were going to share? (NOD falls to the ground)

YOU'VE NEVER TRUSTED HER
SHE'S NEVER TRUSTED YOU
GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS
SUSPICION MAKES THEM TOO
SO NEVER TRUST A STRANGER
NEVER TRUST A FRIEND
EVERY FRIENDLY DOG IS SURE TO BITE YOU IN THE END

The KAT pulls the focus of MAYOR and TADD allowing NADIA to escape. One by one - The other villagers march behind MAYOR IMPERIA - frightened and disheartened.

ALL (EXCEPT KAT)

IMPERIA! IMPERIA!

MAYOR AND TADD
 AND I TOLD YOU YOU WERE WRONG
 YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT ALL ALONG
 YES I TOLD YOU YOU WERE WRONG
 YOU SILLY CHILD
 I'M RIGHT AND YOU WERE WRONG
 HA!

ALL exit except for ALEX, MAYOR and TADD who is restraining ALEX.

MAYOR IMPERIA

And now for the thief.

ALEX

I'm not a thief. I didn't steal that key. Someone put it in my bag.

MAYOR IMPERIA

I know. Tadd did. Well done, Tadd.

ALEX

Why?

MAYOR IMPERIA

It's the quickest way to get them back on my side. Give them someone else to hate. Oh . . .And the soup is delicious by the way.

ALEX

I think you underestimate them.

MAYOR IMPERIA

Suddenly and fiercely in ALEX'S face.

No, I think you do. The simple minded idiots will always come back around to my way of thinking. All they need to see is you being thrown off the top of our 1000 foot wall. Tadd, attach the stranger to the "Wall-evator" You're about to take a little ride.

Blackout.

SCENE THIRTEEN

Door number three, with the key panel, rolls in. NADIA is back at her childhood home. She enters with a bag and a coat - preparing to quickly pack and leave.

NADIA

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER
 MY FATHER WOULD COME HERE
 AND TELL ME A FABLE EACH NIGHT
 OF BATTLES AND LAURELS
 THAT END WITH A MORAL
 TO TEACH ME WHAT'S WRONG FROM WHAT'S RIGHT
 NOW IT'S BEEN YEARS
 AND HE'S LONG DISAPPEARED
 BUT THE STORIES HAVE NOT GONE AWAY
 AND THE FASTER I RUN
 THE STRONGER THEY COME TO ME
 TELLING ME I NEED TO STAY

IN A MINUTE I'M PACKED
 IN AN HOUR I'M GONE
 IN A DAY THE WIDE ROAD'S OUT IN FRONT OF ME
 IN A WEEK I'LL BE SAFE
 IN A MONTH I'LL FORGET
 IN A YEAR IT'S ERASED FROM MY MEMORY

NO MORE STONES
 NO MORE WELLS
 NO MORE SOUP
 NO MORE WALLS
 NO MORE MAYORS, NO STRANGERS
 NO ANYTHING
 I CAN BLOCK OUT THE PAIN
 I CAN BLOCK OUT THE JOY
 I KNOW I'VE DONE IT BEFORE

JUST TELL MYSELF
 THERE'S NOTHING HERE ANYMORE
 THERE'S NOTHING FOR ME HERE ANYMORE
 JUST TAKE THE FIRST STEPS ACROSS THE FLOOR
 IT'S NOT MY FAULT
 NOT MY CONCERN
 IT'S NOT MY WAR
 WHY IS THERE ONE FOOT IN
 WHEN THERE'S ONE FOOT OUT OF THE DOOR

SHOULD I DO WHAT'S SAFE?
 SHOULD I DO WHAT'S SMART?
 DO I FOLLOW MY HEAD
 OR DO I FOLLOW MY HEART?

SHOULD I DO WHAT'S BRAVE?
SHOULD I DO WHAT'S BRIGHT?
I THINK I WANT TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT

BUT WHAT'S RIGHT
DO I EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT IS?
WHAT'S RIGHT?
WHAT'S RIGHT FOR ME OR FOR THEM?
WHAT'S RIGHT?
SHOULD WAIT FOR A SIGN?
WHAT'S RIGHT?
DO SOMETHING BUT SOME OTHER TIME?
WHAT'S RIGHT?
AM I JUST TAKING A SIDE?
WHAT'S RIGHT
IT'S NOT UP TO ME TO DECIDE
WHAT'S RIGHT
OR LIKE THE STORIES MY FATHER ONCE TOLD

BUT THIS TIME IT'S ME IN THE FABLE
HE ALWAYS KNEW I WAS ABLE
LIKE THE TALES THAT HE TOLD
I'LL JUST HAVE TO BE BOLD
SO YOU GIVE UP YOUR SAFETY AND HOLD
TO WHAT YOU KNOW IS RIGHT

IT ISN'T ALWAYS WHAT'S SAFE
WHAT'S RIGHT - IS SOMETIMES TAKEN ON FAITH
WHAT'S RIGHT - DOESN'T MEAN I'M NOT SCARED
WHAT'S RIGHT - IS SHOWING ATLEAST THAT I CARED
WHAT'S RIGHT - IT ISN'T A QUESTION OF WHEN
WHAT'S RIGHT
IS STANDING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH THEM
WHAT'S RIGHT - DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN THAT YOU'LL WIN
BUT LET THE BATTLE BEGIN
I'M GOING TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT

She exits.

SCENE FOURTEEN

ALEX is being lifted to top of the wall on the "Wall-levator". MAYOR is on a rampage - she speaks into a microphone broadcasting to the town. TADD by her side.

MAYOR IMPERIA

This insubordination will not be tolerated. New laws will take effect immediately. #1. The town square will be closed #2 Work hours at the mine will be doubled #3 Any voice of opposition will meet with immediate and fatal consequences.

NADIA enters.

Oh, Nadia. I thought they'd drowned you in that soup of theirs. What do I owe the pleasure?

NADIA

You are going to release Alex and give me the keys to the city. The one you put in Alex's bag.

MAYOR IMPERIA

Let's assume I say no.

NADIA

Trust me, in a matter of moments I will have that key - and you will no longer be Mayor.

MAYOR IMPERIA

This should be an interesting matter of moments then .

NADIA

Yes.

MAYOR

Oh, Nadia. You are so like your father. In too many ways.

I SEE, YOU THINK
 THAT I AM JUST SOME EVIL MAYOR
 THESE POOR PEOPLE
 JUST DON'T KNOW THEY NEED A SAVIOR
 TRUST ME THEY WON'T CARE ABOUT YOU WHEN YOUR GONE
 THEY'D RATHER HIDE
 THEY WON'T COME RUNNING TO YOUR SIDE

NADIA

MAYBE, WE'LL SEE
 I THOUGHT THE SAME THING YESTERDAY
 BUT SOMEHOW I'M HERE
 WHEN I SHOULD PROBABLY RUN AWAY

SEE I THOUGHT GIVE UP
 THE WORLD IS JUST A MESS
 AND IT WILL STAY THAT WAY
 BUT THEN I HEARD SOMEBODY SAY

NADIA AND OFF-STAGE VOICES
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD
 WE COULD LET IT DIE
 OR YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

MAYOR IMPERIA

The problem is - it isn't true. Because even you couldn't believe that I deserve a second chance.

NADIA

Of course I do.

MAYOR suddenly takes TADD's sword and strikes at NADIA who flies backward.

MAYOR

See what happens when you trust people. Your father trusted me. Made me mayor himself. You'll be seeing him shortly I imagine.

SCARED GIRL

Nadia!

KAT, who has been hiding in the shadows, tosses NADIA the stirring stick.

NADIA

Now run! Tell Them!

KAT exits. The MAYOR and NADIA engage in sword play.

MAYOR

Nice - put the children in danger.

WHO'S WRONG?
 WHO'S RIGHT?
 THAT IS NOTHING MORE THAN CHATTER
 I WIN THIS FIGHT
 SO WHAT I SAY IS ALL THAT MATTERS

YOU DREAM ALL DAY
 BUT LIFE JUST DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY
 YOU FOOLISH GIRL
 YOU CAN NEVER SAVE THE WORLD

KAT sings from the town square. One by one the people of the town emerge and join with her.

KAT
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

ADD OTHER KIDS
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

NADIA knocks the sword out of the MAYOR's hands. The MAYOR slowly steps toward it.

MAYOR IMPERIA
 You have some fight in you. This is indeed an interesting few moments.

ADD MAMA HUGE, WBN
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

ADD ALL OTHERS
 YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

A quick sudden move from the MAYOR and Nadia is disarmed and on her knees. MAYOR takes out an antique pistol.

MAYOR IMPERIA
 Nadia, Nadia. You should have seen that coming. I made a city out of stone. A wall of stone. To keep people like you away. But funny, I really only needed the smallest stone to rid myself of you and your father. One small enough to serve as a bullet. Tadd.

YOU'RE ABANDONED NOW
 NO ONE HEARS YOUR CALL
 YOU TRIED YOUR BEST
 YOUR STILL ALONE

She turns to Tadd for the bullet - He freezes.

NADIA

NO MORE WALLS
WE'LL ALL BE FREE
LEAVE THE FEAR BEHIND
COME BE WITH ME

Tadd reaches down to help NADIA up - the ensemble starts to enter and stand behind NADIA, closing in on the Mayor.

TADD AND ENSEMBLE

YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

MAYOR

Tadd??

ENSEMBLE

YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

MAYOR

What are you doing?

ENSEMBLE

YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

NADIA AND TADD

NEVER LET IT DIE
WHEN YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

The full ensemble begins backing the MAYOR toward the wall.

ENSEMBLE

YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

MAYOR

Have you all gone mad?

ENSEMBLE

YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

MAYOR

What's next? Tear down my wall? No wall. No safety.

ENSEMBLE
YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD
NEVER LET IT DIE
WHEN YOU AND I COULD SAVE THE WORLD

The sound of an enormous rock slide - the Mayor has disappeared.

SCENE FIFTEEN

ALEX

Funny how things work out sometimes. That Mayor backed herself right into the weak part of the wall causing the whole thing to fall around her. Making a prison of her own design.

And with Nadia leading the way, that stone city returned to the wonderful city it had been designed to be. A Lost Toy City - Lost no more. Check.

And as for the rest of us - we have a party to attend to.

Everyone starts bringing in supplies to build the party. NADIA emerges holding the "Key to the City"

BLINKIN/WINKIN

We brought the tables.

MOTHER

I brought the bowls.

KAT

I brought the Hula Hoops!

ALEX

WE MAY STRUGGLE AT THE START
WE'RE BEHIND WHEN THE RACE BEGINS

NOD

I'm bringing chairs. . . . to sh . .

ALEX

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE
WE MAY WONDER IF WE'LL REACH THE END

NOD

Chairs. . . . to . . share.

ALEX

BUT WHEN ALL THE FEAR IS GONE

NADIA

Good job, Nod.

ALEX
 TOGETHER WE WILL CARRY ON
 FOR WE KNOW WHEN THE DAY IS DONE
 SOUP'S ON

NADIA inserts the "Key to the City" into the panel. Suddenly there are colored, chasing lights - The city comes alive.

ALEX AND NADIA
 WE MAY STRUGGLE AT THE START
 WE'RE BEHIND WHEN THE RACE BEGINS
 BUT DARKNESS DOESN'T EVER WIN

ALL
 LIGHT WINS

ALEX AND NADIA
 WHEN ALL THE FEAR IS GONE
 TOGETHER WE WILL CARRY ON
 FOR WE KNOW WHEN THE DAY IS DONE
 SOUP'S ON

TADD timidly enters - MOTHER gives him a warm hug and a baby to hold.

ALL
 OH, OH, OH
 WHEN ALL THE FEAR IS GONE
 TOGETHER WE WILL CARRY ON
 FOR WE KNOW WHEN THE DAY IS DONE
 SOUP'S ON

ALEX AND NADIA
 WE'RE NOT AFRAID OF THE DARK
 WE'RE NOT AFRAID OF THE LIGHT
 WE'RE NOT AFRAID OF WHAT EVER COMES OUR WAY

ALL
 WHEN ALL THE FEAR IS GONE
 TOGETHER WE WILL CARRY ON
 FOR WE KNOW WHEN THE DAY IS DONE
 SOUP'S ON, SOUP'S ON, SOUP'S ON

They all pile in together around the table, soup bowls in hand, to take the happiest "selfie" you could possibly imagine.

THE END