

My Life as a Bald Soprano

by
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Music by
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Midtown International Theatre Festival
Version

(Premiered at Abbingdon Theatre, NYC 2008)

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ACT I

SCENE 1

A YOUNG GIRL'S BEDROOM IN SUBURBAN AMERICA.

GRETCHEN

That's her! My Grandmother Lola! She was my biggest support growing up. The portrait was painted when she was 16 years old, just as she was making her debut as a concert pianist. The picture hung in our living room directly across from her Steinway grand piano. I'd stare at it for hours and it felt as if she was right there with me!

The truth? - I Never met Lola. I only knew her through her portrait-that two dimensional plane. But even though I never met the woman who put music in my blood, she was always with me in the music.

"TO KNOW YOU"

I LONG TO KNOW THAT FACE BEHIND THE PLANE
THE TWO DIMENSIONAL PLANE
THAT ALWAYS STAYS THE SAME

I CALL YOUR NAME, YOUR NAME
HOPING YOU WILL SPEAK
TO FIND YOUR PRESENCE
AND FILL THE EMPTINESS WITHIN

I LIKE TO WEAR YOUR DRESSES
AND YOUR JEWELRY LEFT BEHIND
PRETENDING I AM ALSO ELEGANT
AND AS BEAUTIFULLY REFINED

YOU LOOK LIKE LOLA
LIKE LOLA THEY'D OFTEN SAY
AND I'D DREAM OF MEETING YOU
IN HEAVEN ONE DAY

YOUR LIFE WAS SHORT
I KNEW YOU NOT AT ALL
EXCEPT FOR YOUR RECORDINGS
AND PORTRAITS ON THE WALL

BUT OVER TIME I CAME TO KNOW THE VOICE
THE VOICE THAT WILL TRANSCEND
YOUR PRESENCE HERE ON EARTH

AS I THINK OF YOU

**AND GENTLY CALL YOUR NAME
YOUR STEINWAY ANSWERS SOFTLY...**

GRETCHEN (to audience) (cont'd)
I was eight when *it* all started...entering a world where *beauty* seemed to matter more than integrity. I felt like a foreigner amongst my own family and wondered whether we even shared the same genes. But the subject of adoption was never brought up. I was one of them only, isolated.

(Beat.)

GRETCHEN faces the MIRROR, who mimics her actions.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)
Who are you?

MIRROR
Your new face Sweetheart.
So, what do you think?

GRETCHEN
What?

MIRROR
Not bad eh?

GRETCHEN
Wait a minute!
Where's my old one?

MIRROR
I'm not exactly sure.
Guess she had things to do.

GRETCHEN
Things to do, this is my face we're talking about?

MIRROR
Uh-huh, yup. You know how it is, places to go, people to see...I don't know kid. The girl was busy. She needed a favor.
I'm just the replacement.

GRETCHEN
The replacement, but you're not even a girl?

MIRROR
Sorry. Guess you're going to have to suck it up, Little Lady. I'm not the boss, I don't make the rules.

GRETCHEN

Well you must have me mixed up with someone else because I never asked for this!

MIRROR

Life works in mysterious ways, doesn't it?

(Reading from a list)

I suppose we should verify a few of the facts first...just to be on the safe side. Wouldn't want to let the Boss down by getting the wrong girl, heh?

(chuckle)

Okay, doll face. Now I have your name as---

(Reading from pad)

Margaret Huyler Baker --

GRETCHEN

I go by Gretchen.

MIRROR

Okay. Got it. My bad. Sorry. Moving on...
Astrological Sign? The Archer. Check.
Chinese birth year? The Bicentennial also known as the year of the Dragon...

(He make a fire breathing noise)

---Oh and I almost forgot your address...

Yup. We've got our girl. It all checks out.

GRETCHEN

You know I'm only eight right?

MIRROR

Hum.

With all due respect kid, we try not to discriminate with regards to age, race, or sexual orientation.

GRETCHEN

But you don't get it! Just last week I had a full head of hair.

MIRROR

Look Sweetheart, I'm givin' ya all the information I've got. Embrace me baby. I'm cutting edge. Get it?

GRETCHEN

That's not funny!

MIRROR

Whoa, take it easy. Open your eyes and look at the whole package. I'm not half bad once you give me a chance.

GRETCHEN

Look. All I ask is that you give me my hair back.

MIRROR

Sorry. No can do. You've got to take this up with your follicles, kid. It's not my department.

GRETCHEN

Folli-Who?

MIRROR

Your hair follicles, young lady. Encyclopedia Britannica defines a hair follicle as "A part of the skin that grows hair by packing old cells together...This process results in goose bumps (or goose flesh)..."

GRETCHEN

Okay FOLLICLES, I am only going to say this once so you'd better listen up...

(Crescendo)

HELP!

FOLLICLES (ALL)

Hurry Gretchen! Please, we need your help!

GRETCHEN

I can't hear you. What did you say?

FOLLICLES (ALL)

Hurry, we're sinking---

GRETCHEN

You're what?

FOLLICLES (ALL)

We're S-I-N-K-I-N-G; you have to get us out of here!

GRETCHEN

Where are you?

FOLLICLE 1

D-E-E-P inside your scalp---

ALOPECIA AREATA

(disguised as a follicle)

---and F-A-L-L-I-N-G---d-e-e-e-per!

FOLLICLE 2

---It's pretty stuffy in here

FOLLICLES (ALL)

---Heave ho, heave-ho

FOLLICLE 2

Oh no I'm losing my grip, help!

GRETCHEN

What are you doing?

FOLLICLE 1

Trying to stay afloat long enough--
---to open your hair shaft---

FOLLICLE 2

But it's---locked!
And there isn't enough oxygen in here to keep
all of us alive!

FOLLICLE 3

Gretchen, your scalp is like quicksand.
And the hair shaft is our door to the outside
world; without the keys we're locked in here
for good.

GRETCHEN

But my reflection said you could help me.

ALOPECIA AREATA

(disguised as a follicle)

He was mistaken.

FOLLICLE 2

Yeah. We don't have a whole lot of say around
here.

GRETCHEN

So who's in charge?

FOLLICLE 1

I am, but even I don't have the power to wake
up your scalp, Gretchen. The spell is too
strong.

GRETCHEN

What spell?

ALOPECIA AREATA

The average scalp loses approximately 500 hairs
a day and our job as follicles is to regenerate
what has been lost.

FOLLICLE 1

But your scalp was bewitched one day by
ALOPECIA AREATA who stole your hair for her
crazy fashion designs---

GRETCHEN

Am I going to go BALD?

ALOPECIA AREATA

(still in disguise)

It's highly probable.

GRETCHEN

Can't you do something?

FOLLICLE 2

We've tried.

GRETCHEN

So you're giving up on me?

FOLLICLE 1

Gretchen, your scalp is bigger than all of us put together.

FOLLICLE 2

It would take millions of us for her to even feel a scratch.

FOLLICLE 1

And with every day that passes---

ALOPECIA AREATA

(disguised as a follicle)

Hundreds more of us die---

(chuckling softly, in amusement)

GRETCHEN

What should I do?

FOLLICLE 1

You have to convince ALOPECIA AREATA to lift her spell but don't wait too long. Time is... running out...

FOLLICLES (ALL)

We're D-R-O-W-N-I-N-G!

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Act 1

SCENE 2

INT. GRETCHEN'S BEDROOM SAME AS BEFORE

MIRROR

Well, hell-low there, cute stuff. Lookin' good...

GRETCHEN

Leave me alone.

MIRROR

Get up on the wrong side of the bed this morning, Doll Face?

GRETCHEN

If you're calling *this* cute, you need to have your eyes checked.

MIRROR

Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.
(Beat)

GRETCHEN

Is this some kind of punishment?
(Beat)

MIRROR

Hey. Who are you calling a punishment Little Lady? I just might be the best thing that's ever happened to you.

GRETCHEN

You?
I don't think so.

MIRROR

ATTENTION! This gal's in need of a major attitude transplant. Any willing participants should contact me immediately.

GRETCHEN

Leave me alone.

MIRROR

Can't do that, Sweetheart. I promised the boss I'd look after you and ALOPECIA AREATA really hates it when we break our promises.

GRETCHEN

Wait a minute. I thought you said you had nothing to do with her.

MIRROR

I try to stay out of her hair, if ya know what I mean. Ms. Areata has quite the temper... Besides one day, maybe you'll learn to like me.

GRETCHEN

Who is this ALOPECIA AREATA woman? *I have to meet her.*

GRETCHEN

Alopecia.

(sung)

ALOPECIA

ALOPECIA

ALO-PEE-SHI-AH!

ALOPECIA AREATA

AREAH-TA!

GRETCHEN

I need to talk to you.

ALOPECIA AREATA

Yes, Baldy?

GRETCHEN

Have you seen my hair by any chance?

ALOPECIA AREATA

Ah, yes. The locks arrived yesterday via Fed Ex. Thank you for the lovely specimen.

GRETCHEN

Who said you could steal my hair?

ALOPECIA AREATA

---There, there Baldy. No need to get all upset.

GRETCHEN

I want it back!

ALOPECIA AREATA

Awe. Poor, thing.

GRETCHEN

I'm not kidding! It doesn't belong to you, *You thief!*

ALOPECIA AREATA

Come on Child. Name calling won't get you anywhere. Get off your vanity horse. It's just hair.

GRETCHEN

But it's my hair and you're ruining my life. Besides you should pick on someone your own size.

ALOPECIA AREATA

Ah, my dear. I don't discriminate.

GRETCHEN

You mean, I'm not the only one?

ALOPECIA AREATA

Oh, don't be ridiculous. Do you actually think that I would limit my collection to the dwindling tresses of pathetic little girls? Don't be silly, dear. *Serious fashion calls for serious sacrifice.*

GRETCHEN (Cont.) (cont'd)

Well, where are they?

ALOPECIA AREATA

All around the world and spreading! It's time for Alopecia's *Coiffure Couture* to take the runway by storm.

"THE ALOPECIA SONG"

(ALOPECIA AREATA)

THE NAME IS

(AL-OH-PEE-SHAH AR-EE-AH-TAH)

DESIGNER EXTRAORDINAIRE

AT YOUR SERVICE

REQUESTING A SPECIMEN OF HAIR

**A TINY TUFT
THAT'S ALL IT TAKES
AND YOU GET STOCK
IN MY COMPANY
FOR MAKING IT GREAT!**

ALOPECIA AREATA

GRETCHEN

A LITTLE	(spoken)
INVESTMENT	I WILL NOT BE
WITH A VERY BIG	A LAB RAT
RETURN	FOR YOUR
ITS MONEY	EXPERIMENTAL
YOU CAN COUNT	FASHIONS
ON IT	MY LOCKS ARE
YOU WON'T GET	STAYING
BURNED	EVEN IF ITS IN
	RATIONS

**(ALOPECIA AREATA)
AT COIFFURE COUTURE
I TAKE FASHION
TO A CUTTING EDGE
ILL USE YOUR PRETTY TRESSES
AND MAKE EXPENSIVE DRESSES**

GRETCHEN

ALOPECIA AREATA

**ITS ALL A LIE
I'M LOSING HAIR
FASTER THAN I
CAN BEAR**

**PRETTY
PRETTY
DRESSES**

ALOPECIA AREATA (cont'd)

Hmm. That's a good one. Hold still. This will only take a second.

YOU GOTTA HAVE HAIR

**SHORT HAIR IS THE RAGE
EASY TO CARE FOR WHEN YOU AGE**

**BUT LONGER HAIR'S
A LOT MORE FUN
EVEN WHEN IT WEIGHS A TON**

**HAIR IS A STATEMENT
SO WEAR IT WITH PRIDE
WHO SAID IT DOESN'T MATTER PROBABLY LIED!**

(DUET)
WHO WANTS TO KNOW
THE BALD GIRL
LIVING IN HELL

AN ALIEN
AN OUTCAST
A LEPER
A FREAK
TO FIT IN THIS WORLD
YOU CAN NOT BE WEAK

(ALTERNATING DUET)
SHORT

(SHORT)
HAIR
(HAIR)
SHORT HAIR
(SHORT HAIR)

IS THE RAGE
(DUET)

LONG HAIR
(LONG)
LONG HAIR
(HAIR LONG)
LONG HAIR
(HAIR LONG HAIR)
IS A LOT MORE FUN
(DUET)

HAIR AD 1

You haven't tried anything until you've tried this...My one of a kind, specially formulated, specifically tested, GROWPECIA. One hundred percent EFFECTIVE. One hundred percent GREEN. No more nasty smelling chemicals and stinging Corti-zone shots---
---And with GROWPECIA'S all natural plant formulas, you'll be smelling like---Roses!
My product has been tested on the toughest of scalps with a 99.9999999 overall success rate. The follic-ley challenged say, "But can I afford it?" And my response is always, "Can you afford to be without it?"
Because who really wants to know the bald girl living in hell...AN ALIEN, AN OUTCAST, A LEPER, A FREAK! To live in this world, you can not be weak! Try GROWPECIA. Your answer to happiness-

MIRROR

What a load a garbage!

HAIR AD 2

Do you ever wish your hair was soft and silky without the need for tons of product-? How about a treatment that adds volume and texture to flat and damaged hair.....Now, you can have the best of both worlds, because with At Ease, we bring the salon to you. Look like you spent hours at the salon without the time or the expense. For simple, hair care at home...Remember, At Ease... Where fabulous hair, equals fabulous beauty---"

HAIR AD 3

---"Don't let failing follicles ruin your life! Cover embarrassing bald spots with Vain Mane. Vain Mane is a patented solution that works to restore thinning locks from deep within the shaft. One spray a day keeps the dermatologist away. Try Vain Mane risk free for thirty days. And if after that time, you are still not completely satisfied, we will gladly give you a full refund --"

MIRROR

Full Refund?...No problem! Just sell your soul to us first...

HAIR AD 4

"Tasteful Tint can give you Color to die for. With just a hint. One hundred percent pure. One hundred percent intense --"

MIRROR

TASTEFUL, TINT? Now there's a double standard...Hair dye. Not a problem if you don't mind looking like an older woman trying to prolong her sell by date...Ahhh! *The Golden Girls*. Gottah love 'em!

HAIR AD 5

"---Für die beste Haar Frisur in ganz Deutschland probieren sie unsere Haar Produkte. Nicht jeder ist mit einem Haar gesegnet das nach dem waschen nur Luft getrocknet werden muss und dann perfekt sitzt. Für glänzende goldene blonde Deutsche Locken weil wenn sie wunderbare Haare haben, haben sie wunderbare Gesundheit. Schwarz, Rot, Braun, hell oder dunkel aber nie nie Grau. Für natürliche Haar Faarbe probieren Sie GRAU IST EINE SAU---"

HAIR AD 6
"Deny frizz the
power to ruin
your day--"

HAIR AD 7
"---Descubre el
secreto a una
hermosa
cabellera---"

HAIR AD 8
"---And if
after that
time, you are
still not
completely
satisfied, we
will gladly
give you a full
refund---"

HAIR AD 9
"---Für Haar,
das Luxusversuch
ist---"

MIRROR

Don't buy into this, Kid. It's just good 'ole
Capitalism---

HAIR AD 10
"---You are the
hair that you
wear. Define
the real you
with---

HAIR AD 12
"---Großes Haar
gleich großer
Gesundheit.
Bereiten Sie
sich vor, die
Schönheit der
Gesundheit zu
entdecken---

HAIR AD 11
"---Cinco
nuevas formas
fabulosas en la
que puedes
obtener una
cabellera
fabulosa &
inolvidable---

HAIR AD 13

"---Shake things up with hair that shows your
wild side!

GRETCHEN

(to audience)

---I tried every hair tonic in the book, but
none of them were strong enough to stand up to
this stubborn scalp. At school, I was
bombarded by fabulous hairstyles, tempting and
taunting, my weakening locks. But we were no
match for their competition. I needed a place--
- A place where my head would feel at home.

MOP TOPS & MULLETS

(GRETCHEN)

MOP TOPS AND MUHL-LETS
AND DREADLOCKS LIKE BUHL-LETS
TIGHT HAIR AND LIGHT HAIR
AND LO-CKS WITHOUT LIM-MITS

WHERE'S MY SAL-ON
WHERE'S MY SAL-ON
A PLACE FOR MY HEAD TO CALL HO-OH-ME

(ENSEMBLE)

WHERE'S HER SAL-ON
WHERE'S HER SAL-ON
A PLACE FOR HER HEAD TO CALL HO-OH-ME

CREW CUTS AND PHAUX-HAWKS
HAIR DYES IN ALL COLORS
SO MUCH TO CHOOSE FROM
HOW WILL WE DECI-IDE?

WHERE'S MY SAL-ON
WHERE'S MY SAL-ON
A PLACE FOR MY HEAD TO CALL HO-OH-ME

(ENSEMBLE)

WHERE'S HER SAL-ON
WHERE'S HER SALON
A PLACE FOR HER HEAD TO CALL HO-OH-ME

PERMANENTS, STRAIGHTENERS
AND CRIMPING GALORE
OH, HOW I'D LOVE TO HAVE HAIR TO ADO-OH-RE

BUT WHEN THE
THE LOCKS FALL
THE LOCKS FALL LEAVING YOU BALD
YOUR SALON DAYS ARE NUMBERED
AND THE HAIR IS RECALLED

PRIMPING AND PAMPERING
ARE THINGS OF THE PAST
SO YOU BUY PROPECIA
TO MAKE IT LAST

AND JUST WHEN
WHEN YOU THINK
YOU HAVE IT UNDER CONTROL

ALOPECIA STRIKES AGAIN
TAKING HER
HER GREATEST TO-OH-LE

MOP TOPS AND MUL-LETS
AND DREADLOCKS LIKE BUL-LETS
TIGHT HAIR AND LIGHT HAIR
AND LOCKS WITHOUT LI-MITS

WHERE'S MY SAL-ON
WHERE'S MY SAL-ON
A PLACE FOR MY HEAD
A PLACE FOR MY HEAD
A PLACE FOR THIS HEAD
TO CALL
HO-OH-ME

(ENSEMBLE)
AH!

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1

SCENE 3

THE WIG SALON

GRETCHEN

(to audience)

My head finally found a home at Amy's of Denmark. An *upscale* wig salon in Wheaton, Maryland. The wigs came from all around the world vying for attention from middle-class American clientele.

GRETCHEN (cont'd)

I have a new friend.

MIRROR

That didn't take long.

GRETCHEN

I think you'll like her.

MIRROR

When did my opinion ever count?

GRETCHEN

You are soo annoying...

MIRROR

Go easy on me kid.

You know what they say about broken mirrors...

ENTER FANNY.

FANNY

Thanks for waking me up, Love. I've been so nackered from the jet lag-could've slept the whole bloody day away!

GRETCHEN

Hope you don't mind. There's someone I want to introduce you to.

FANNY

Mind? Not a bit. I'm excited. This jet-lag thing just takes a little getting used to.

MIRROR

Ah-Hum.

FANNY

Oh hello, there.

(boldly with confidence)

FANNY FANNY

Is the name

And naturally synthetic is my game!

I'm qualified with a capitol "Q"

To make sure you are a most beautiful you!

FANNY FANNY

I'm your gal.

Count on me to be your very best pal!

GRETCHEN

(whispering to MIRROR)

Isn't she great?

MIRROR

Smashing!

GRETCHEN

Don't worry about him. He's just jealous.

MIRROR

Gesundheit.

FANNY

Thank you.

GRETCHEN

So?

MIRROR

Bring out the Claratin and the Kleenex. This gal's got a leaky faucet.

GRETCHEN

Hey. Nobody's perfect.

MIRROR

HMM. Is That the smell of irony?

Thanks for the shower.

Fine. Suit yourself, Peladophobe!

GRETCHEN

Pella-duh, what?

MIRROR

Peladophobia is defined as "the irrational fear of becoming bald or of being around bald people."

FANNY

Pardon me, but I do believe there's been a misunderstanding---

MIRROR

---Stay out of this, Cousin It. This is between me 'n the kid.

FANNY

I'm really happy to be here, Gretch. That dingy old shelf in the UK was becoming unbearable!

GRETCHEN

Good. I could use a new friend.

MIRROR

Hey, what am I, Chopped liver?

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT I)

ACT II

SCENE 1

GRETCHEN'S BEDROOM. SAME AS BEFORE.

FANNY

Whew-who! Today's the day I get to shine
At Gretchen's school life will be fine!
Can't wait to meet all your friends

GRETCHEN

Yeah...

FANNY

Friends are fun
Friends are cool
And very important
In life and at school.

(GRETCHEN approaches FANNY helping her
off the floor.)

Arithmetic, Science, and History
To boot; So much to learn
Oh, what a hoot!

GRETCHEN

Unless you're the BALD girl!

FANNY

Awe, Not to worry, Gretch. I am about to
change all of that. Just remember the name;
And play the hiding game

GRETCHEN

Shh.

(Excitedly to MIRROR)

How does she look?

MIRROR

Fabulous, for a rug!

FANNY

Not to worry Gretch! This year is going to be
great!

GRETCHEN

(to Audience)

Sixth grade, a brand new school, boys teasing
me on the bus?
No thanks!

KID 1

Hey guys, have you seen Gretchen?
She's got a new wig-style.

GRETCHEN

(in a loud whisper)

Hey. Do 'ya think you could stop that?
It'll blow our cover.

FANNY

No need to feel jittery. I'll protect you.
We're best mates, remember?

---Now go on in there and make some friends.

GRETCHEN

That looks like fun. Can I play?

KID 1

Look! It's RETCHIE GRETCHIE, THE Wiggie Girl!

KID 2

Like the new do, Wretch!

KID 3

Where did you get it...?

KID 2

WIG-MART?

KIDS (ALL)

**THE BULLY SONG
RETCHIE GRETCHIE
WEARS A RUG!
HER HAIR WILL ALWAYS BE FAKE
AND FULL OF SLUGS!**

GRETCHEN

Fanny, what should I do?
They're all staring at me!

KID 1

Hey Wretchie, why doesn't your hair move?

KID 2

Yeah. Everybody knows that real hair doesn't
stay in one place!

GRETCHEN

Fanny. Wake up!

KID 3

Hey Stupid,
We're talking to you!

GRETCHEN

Fanny!

KID 2

What did you say?

GRETCHEN

Uh...Nothing.

KID 1

Well, are you going to answer us or not?

KID 2

Hey. We'll give you a dollar if you take your wig off?

GRETCHEN

I don't want your dollar.
Leave me alone!

FANNY

That a girl. Stand up to 'em!

GRETCHEN

Fanny, where have you been?

FANNY

(yawning)

Just went down for a little kip.

GRETCHEN

Stand still. You're a mess.

FANNY

Hey, Not so rough!

GRETCHEN

Sorry.

FANNY

Eek, slow down!
I'm not that flexible.

GRETCHEN

Come on, Fanny.
This is important!

FANNY

Please don't do this.

GRETCHEN

You'll thank me later.

FANNY

There won't be any later, Gretch.
You're singeing me!

GRETCHEN

Don't be such a DRAMA QUEEN!
Know what they say,
No pain, no gain---

FANNY

I mean it, all of your pushing and pulling
Is causing me to rot! Please, you don't have to
do this Luv. I'm only a synthetic---

FANNY (cont'd)

---Ouch, ouch, ouch! Your obsession with
perfection is ruining my complexion!

GRETCHEN

Come on, Fanny.

FANNY

(Fading in volume)

I mean it. There's no more time to waste
...I'm meting!

(Sung by KIDS)

THE BULLY SONG

RETCHE GRETCHIE
WEARS A RUG
HER HAIR IS FAKE
AND FULL OF SLUGS!

ALL I NEED

(Duet)

ALL I WANT IS TO LIVE MY LIFE
(LIVE HER LIFE)

WITHOUT THIS HASSLE AND THIS STRIFE

IS IT TOO MUCH TO DEMAND TO BE FREE?
(IS IT TOO MUCH TO DEMAND TO BE FREE)

TO BE FREE
(TO BE FREE)

ALL I'M ASKING FOR IS NORMALITY
(NORMALITY IS ALL SHE ASKS)

A BIT OF FREEDOM WITHOUT A PRICE
IF I COULD HAVE THAT IT WOULD BE NICE
(IF SHE COULD HAVE THAT IT WOULD BE NICE)

IT WOULD BE NICE
(...WOULD BE NICE)

I DON'T NEED A LOT

JUST A FRIEND WHO WILL LOVE ME FOR WHO I AM..
(JUST A FRIEND WHO WILL LOVE HER FOR WHO SHE IS...)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT II

SCENE 2

GRETCHEN'S BEDROOM. SAME AS BEFORE.

GRETCHEN

Oh great. What am I going to do now?

MIRROR

When did my opinion ever count?

GRETCHEN

I know. You're mad at me.

MIRROR

Well, do you think it would kill you to listen to your elders once in awhile?

GRETCHEN

What do you know about being a girl?

MIRROR

Not much. But I do know beautiful baldness when I see it.

GRETCHEN

Don't flatter yourself. You know I can't do that! What would my friends say?

MIRROR

Who cares what they think?

(Beat)

Besides, do you really want hair that amounts to nothing but hassle?

GRETCHEN

I'll take the hassle over being BALD any day!

MIRROR

Okay. But don't say I didn't warn you...

TYRA

Hi. My name is Tyra.

That's "T" for terrific!

Seriously, I'm nothing short of amazing.

My locks are 100 percent human while my custom made scalp is totally secure and fully breathable.

"You won't ever want to try anything else." ---

(Striking a pose)

GRETCHEN

Wow! Human hair? Total security? I must be dreaming...

TYRA

(continuing)

My designer tresses are custom made to fit your lifestyle.

MIRROR

(muttering under his breath)

I wouldn't believe everything you read.

GRETCHEN

Top of the line? We'll have to see about that.

Crossing downstage to Audience

And now...

Reporting to you LIVE-
From The Crowns of Glory Salon

The place where custom prosthetics are born
And plain old wigs are put to shame...

(Crowns of Glory plays while the
WIG CONTESTANTS enter)

CROWNS OF GLORY

ENSEMBLE

CROWNS OF GLORY
BLESSES YOU ROYALLY
WITH THE HAIR YOUR HEAD DESERVES
WERE THE LOCKS THAT AIM TO SERVE

GRETCHEN

TODAY I WILL MEET
THE BEST OF TRESSES
COMPETING TO BE THE NEW MISS CROWN
REINING MY HEAD
BEING THE TALK OF THE TOWN

ENSEMBLE

BEING THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

CROWNS OF GLORY
BLESSES YOU ROYALLY
WITH THE HAIR YOUR HEAD DESERVES
WERE THE LOCKS THAT AIM TO SERVE...
MI-MI-MI-MI-MI...

WIG CONTESTANT #1

(overlapping)

MI...MY NAME IS HELENA
I COME FROM SWEDEN, YA!
IF YOU WANT TO HAVE FUN
THEN YOU SHOULD PICK ME
CAUSE BLONDE IS THE BEST
BLONDE IS THE BEST
BLONDE IS THE BEST COLOR TO BE!

ENSEMBLE

MI-MI-MI-MI-MI...

WIG CONTESTANT #2

...MI!
MOVE OVER SWEETIE
THIS AIN'T THE PLACE
FOR SOFTIES LIKE YOU
YA HAVE TO BE A STAGE VETERAN
LIKE ME
SO MOVE OVER SWEETIE
MOVE SWEETIE
YOU BETTER MOVE OVER SWEETIE FOR ME

WIG CONTESTANT #3

WHAT YOU NEED DOLL,
IS HAIR WITH MANNERS

I WAS RAISED TO KNOW MY PLACE
PRAY ON SUNDAYS WITH UTMOST GRACE
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO BE A LADY
CHOOSE ME 'CAUSE I'M THE QUEEN
THESE OTHER GIRLS ARE PLAIN SHADY

ENSEMBLE

CROWNS OF GLORY
BLESSES YOU ROYALLY
WITH THE HAIR YOUR HEAD DESERVES
WERE THE LOCKS THAT AIM TO SERVE

WIG CONTESTANT #4 (TYRA)

IF BEAUTY AND FASHION
ARE ON YOUR MIND
THEN LOOK NO FURTHER
'CAUSE I'M THE LITTLE FIND
LAST MONTH, I GRACED PAGES OF VANITY FAIR
AND NEXT WEEK, I'M DOING A SPREAD
FOR MARIE CLAIRE

ENSEMBLE

CROWNS OF GLORY
BLESSES YOU ROYALLY
CROWNS OF GLORY

BLESSES YOU ROYALLY!

GRETCHEN

After deliberating for three and a half hours
I decided on Tyra. Hey. Who can argue with
the girl who has fashion on her side?

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT II

Scene 3

TYRA

The most important thing in fashion is to be Fierce and Fabulous. So you gotta know how to accentuate your features. Start off with a little foundation for an even skin tone. Blend and pat. Rule #1 *Always Designer*. Don't ever skimp on coverage. Then I like to add a little blush...Moving to the eyes...you want to invite them in. So I like to do a smoky eye shadow with black liner. And to top it off, you want a nice long lash... There. Fierce and---

MIRROR

Phony.

TYRA

Who asked you?

MIRROR

Well, you are kind of in my space here...

GRETCHEN

Don't worry about him. He's just a little possessive.

TYRA

Anyway. Once you've got the beauty basics, you've got to learn how to move. It's all in the walk. A good model carries herself with confidence and a little attitude. You try it. Nice 'n tall. Pelvis forward. Stomach in. Nice long strides. Head up. No slouch. Practice your walk until you have it down... That's it. Fierce and Fabulous.

MIRROR

Fierce and phony...

TYRA

Sell that personality girl!

MIRROR

Plasticity at her best.

TYRA

The most important lesson in looking fierce is to accentuate that beautiful personality. Because a beautiful outside is the key to a beautiful inside.

MIRROR

It's the other way around. You phony dyslexic piece of plastic.

TYRA

At least I take care of myself...

MIRROR

Yeah. And I'm sure your monthly maintenance costs a pretty little penny...

TYRA

To get ahead in this world you have to look good. No one ever got anywhere by being ugly. I mean your sitting behind a sheet of glass for God's sake...

MIRROR

Watch out. This glass is sharp.

TYRA

(with sarcasm)

Oooh, good one. FYI-Someone would have to break it first. And that won't be this face.

MIRROR

You're a piece of work

TYRA

At least I'm not stuck behind the same old pane of glass every day...

MIRROR

I am much happier than you will ever be.

TYRA

I don't think so.

(clears throat)

As I was saying Gretchen, you need to look good to feel good. Because happening hair is happening life. I didn't build my Global empire by just sitting around and looking plain. You've got to work it!

(TYRA strikes a pose)

Ya get me?

In this wide world of fashion, fierceness is always welcome---

TYRA (Cont'd) (cont'd)

---That's why I invented the first ever FIERCE AWARDS---Celebrating "Glam"-unicators around the world. After all, they don't call me 'TOP MODEL' for nothing.

MIRROR

What a load of garbage.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT II)

ACT III

Scene 1

TYRA

So, what's on the agenda for today, Gretchen?

GRETCHEN

Freshman swimming. Yuck!

TYRA

Great! Did you know I won first place in the Wig Olympics of '89?

GRETCHEN

Really?

TYRA

Uh-huh...

(Boasting)

Once the girls see my aquatic abilities, you'll be the hottest thing in popularity.

GRETCHEN

I think I hear them coming...

KID 1

Oh, my god! Did you see what she was wearing?

KID 2

Uh-huh. That Gucci suit costs a fortune!

KID 1

I know...--And she has the CHANEL shades to match.

KID 3

Well, if she can afford a pair of those, She's a friend of mine.

KID 1

Yeah, mine too. I heard she's really rich!

KID 2

Did you know that her dad owns an oil company?

TYRA

(laughing)

Get a load of these girls!

GRETCHEN

See, what I have to put up with?

TYRA

They need a crash course in Tyra etiquette.

GRETCHEN

Tell me about it.

TYRA

Come on. Let's show 'em how it's done.

KID 1

Whoa! Look it's Retchin' Gretchen!
Where did you get the new doo?

KID 3

Yeah, It's like so natural!

GRETCHEN

You like it?

KID 2

Like it? Girl, that hair could just about make
you the hottest thing in school?

GRETCHEN

Really?

KID 1

Yeah.

KIDS (ALL)

Not!

GRETCHEN

High School, Egos, Gossip...
I'm never going to fit in!

(Beat)

TYRA

Look on the bright side, Gretchen.
At least, I'm making you beautiful!
Besides, there's nothing like a day in the sun
and sea to pamper a youthful complexion.
Come on. Let me show you what I can do in the
water. Are you ready?

GRETCHEN

Yeah. I think so.

TYRA

Okay. Keep your eye on the waves. It's all
about timing.

GRETCHEN

Just tell me when to go.

TYRA

This is a good one.

GRETCHEN

(nervously)

Tyra, where are you?

TYRA

(Gasping for air)

Over here...Help!

GRETCHEN

Keep treading, Tyra...
We'll get through this!

ALOPECIA AREATA

(sung)

**LITTLE GRETCHEN
HAS NO HAIR
I HAVE IT ALL
AND I DON'T CARE---**

(LAUGHTER FOLLOWS)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT III

SCENE 2

MIRROR

Where's Miss TYRA?

GRETCHEN

Lost at sea.

MIRROR

Trust me. You're better off without her.

GRETCHEN

I guess you're right.

(Beat)

MIRROR

Way to go girl! I knew you had it in you---

(pause)

---So, when are you going to let the old
noggin' out for good?

GRETCHEN

I don't know. I really want to but this BALD
Thing just feels so final.

MIRROR

It's a big step.

GRETCHEN

Maybe I need something that will help me with
the transition...like a part-time job...

MIRROR

Working with wigs?

GRETCHEN

No thanks. *I'm retired.* I think I've had
enough HAIR for one lifetime.

MIRROR

Just checking...

GRETCHEN

(Reading)

Very funny. *National Lingerie retailer seeking
part-time sales associates --*

MIRROR

You'd be giving the corporate world a run for their money!

GRETCHEN

NO WAY. I can not do corporate.
I need something CREATIVE!

(Reading further)

Cute and cuddly man (100+) seeks nice girl for dinner, outings and more!

(beat change)

Perhaps a little too creative...

(Still reading)

Wait! I've got it...

World renowned art institution is seeking reliable individuals to pose for art classes. No experience necessary.

Now there's something I could do...

MIRROR

Absolutely. I think you are finally ready to uncover that inner diva!

(Lights out. GRETCHEN exits.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT III

SCENE 3

GRETCHEN

(Confidently, to Audience)

I picked up the art modeling pretty quickly.
Not much to it, really.

(with sarcasm)

A lot like meditation.

(GRETCHEN assumes an exaggerated
pose while FOCAL POINT plays in
the background.)

GRETCHEN (Cont'd) (cont'd)

FOCAL POINT

I'M STARING AT THE WALL
LOOKING AT NOTHING AT ALL
UNTIL I NOTICE HIS HEAD
COVERED WITH A COMB-OVER
GRADUALLY BEING SHED

(changing her pose.)

I PLAY A GUESSING GAME
LIKE THE ONES AT THE FAIR
ONLY THIS TIME INSTEAD OF WITH PENNIES
I AM COUNTING THE HAIR

(changing her pose.)

AS I STARE
WONDERING HOW MANY ARE THERE
I QUESTION WHETHER HE WORRIES
ABOUT GOING BARE

(changing her pose.)

WHAT A WONDERFUL FEELING
WHAT A WONDERFUL FEELING
TO LIVE WITHOUT THE FEAR OF
WHETHER OR NOT YOUR BALD HEAD
HAS BEEN OFFENSIVE OR ADORED!

ARTIST

I have to thank you Gretchen. There is
something really inspiring about drawing you-
something unique.

(beat)

How have you been feeling'?

GRETCHEN

Fine. Why?

ARTIST

Well, I was just wondering when the Chemo's over?

GRETCHEN

Oh. It's not Cancer.
Have you heard of ALOPECIA AREATA?
It's an auto-immune condition that makes your hair fall out. I wear the scarves in place of wigs.

ARTIST

(gesticulating to GRETCHEN'S head)

You mean, that's natural?

GRETCHEN

Uh-huh.

ARTIST

Wow. Well, at least you have a pretty face-
I'm sorry. Curiosity can make a person lose themselves-

GRETCHEN

It's okay.

ARTIST

I didn't mean to...Oh god. I'm so embarrassed.

GRETCHEN

(intervening)

---Don't be. You're helping me talk about it.
Besides I can't let ALOPECIA AREATA humiliate me forever...

ARTIST

That must have been difficult...

GRETCHEN

Well, being a bald woman in public can feel as exposed as being naked in front of a crowd.

(ALOPECIA AREATA continues amusing herself with hair specimens.)

But modeling for artists has shown me that true beauty comes from self acceptance.

The MIRROR gives an adoring look.

ARTIST

(Looking at the drawing)

Cool. You know, I'll be you are a lot closer
to removing that turban than you think.

GRETCHEN

I hope so.

(The ARTIST and GRETCHEN exit as
Alopecia awkwardly follows talking
to her self.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT III

SCENE 4

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, 1998. WE HEAR CITY AND PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC AS RED, YELLOW, AND GREEN LIGHTS FLASH AT A SLOW STEADY PACE. THE VOICES OF VARIOUS PEDESTRIANS ARE HEARD FROM OFFSTAGE OR RECORDED, AND OVERLAP.

At Rise: GRETCHEN stands to audience (in a nude body costume) bearing her bald head.

PEDESTRIAN 1

Look!
It's a Cone head!

(Laughter)

PEDESTRIAN 2

---What the heck?

PEDESTRIAN 3

Girl, what in God's name happened to you?

GRETCHEN stands tall while an intense bright light shines in her direction.

PEDESTRIAN 4
(in a gossipy tone)

Oh my God!
Look!
It's a Trecky wannabe---

PEDESTRIAN 5

---either that or a Sinead clone!

PEDESTRIAN 6
(laughing)

Yeah, what a Freak!

(ALOPECIA AREATA enters in a
bizarre Leigh Bowery esque
creation.)

PEDESTRIAN 7

I'll bet she does it for attention.

(The piano theme symbolizing
GRETCHEN's grandmother "Lola" overlaps
while her image appears.)

GRETCHEN bald and "naked"/in body
costume, crosses to the audience.

GRETCHEN stands center stage.

PEDESTRIAN 8

Whoa! Check out the skin head...
wouldn't want to use their stylist.

PEDESTRIAN 9

Yeah. What is it, Mars Cuts?

PEDESTRIAN 8 & 9
(in unison)

Freak-a-zoid!

GRETCHEN faces forward calmly
addressing the audience.

GRETCHEN

It doesn't matter what you think. This is who I
am.

(Beat)

It's just like Antonio Caldara states in his
aria, Seben Crudele...

"Your cruel punishment will not keep me
from loving myself."

(MORE)

GRETCHEN (cont'd)

This is who I am and it's time to start embracing that.

(GRETCHEN grabs the turban from the floor and ties it around her body. Facing the audience, she applies a bold red lipstick, puckering her lips with an approving look. The mirror behind illuminates.)

MIRROR

Way to go, Sweetheart!
I knew you'd come around, eventually.

GRETCHEN

Sorry I was so mean to you.

MIRROR

I'll get over it.
Change can be a very, scary thing.

GRETCHEN

Yeah but I guess ALOPECIA AREATA *really* did me a favor in the end.

(Beat)

MIRROR

The best gifts often come in threatening packages.

GRETCHEN

You're not really that scary, you know.
I actually think you're kind of sexy.

(Beat)

GRETCHEN and the MIRROR face each other while the music from ME overlaps.

ME

NOW THAT I WEAR IT WITH INTENTION
MY BALD HEAD HAS BECOME A NOVEL INVENTION
WHAT BEGAN AS AN INCONVENIENT BLIGHT
GAVE ME STRENGTH
AND GAVE ME SIGHT

WHILE I WOULDN'T MIND
BEING THE FACE OF GILLETTE
I TELL THEM ITS ALOPECIA
HOPING THEY WILL NOT FORGET
AN UNUSUAL CONDITION
THAT SUBTRACTS THE HAIR
WHILE GIVING THE SOUL
A CHANCE TO BE BARE

HOW ODD THAT LIFE'S GREATEST LESSON
LIFE'S GREATEST LESSON
COULD COME FROM LOSING ONE'S HAIR
I GUESS WE ALL HAVE OUR CROSSES
TO BEAR
AND LEARN FROM

NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE TRY TO DENY IT
THERE'S JUST NO POINT IN TRYING TO HIDE IT
CAUSE THAT'S THE WAY ITS MEANT TO BE
CAUSE YOU ARE YOU AND I AM ME

(As the song ends, the "mirror's"
image shifts; projecting the
portrait of Lola as in the opening
scene. A PEDESTRIAN somewhere in
the audience calls out to
GRETCHEN.)

PEDESTRIAN 10

Girl, that bald head of yours is so sexy,
Can I kiss it?

GRETCHEN

Thanks. She's good luck too, you know.
(Beat)

GRETCHEN exits.

THE STAGE GOES DARK. THE SPOT ON LOLA'S PORTRAIT BRIGHTENS
WHILE THE MUSICAL THEME PLAYS SOFTLY IN THE BACKGROUND

(Overlapping Offstage)

Thank you Lola. Your music helped me reclaim
my identity and now I have a "voice"!

(BLACKOUT)

(THE END)