

Fireflies

By

Tony Winters & McKayla Hoffman

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Cast of Characters

<u>AMELIE:</u>	Shadowy and emotionless. 24
<u>ATLAS:</u>	Her brother. Optimistic and friendly. 25
<u>FINNIE:</u>	The narrator. A loving realist. 40+
<u>HUGO:</u>	Atlas' best friend. Fun and Compassionate. 40+
<u>PATRICE:</u>	A friend of Atlas. Moralistic and uncertain. 30+
<u>OLLIE:</u>	A friend of Atlas. Gentle. An every-man. 40+
<u>MADELEINE:</u>	Atlas and Amelie's mother. Romantic. 40+
<u>Y. AMELIE:</u>	A young version of Amelie. 13
<u>Y. ATLAS:</u>	A young version of Atlas. 14
<u>ENSEMBLE:</u>	Other friends, etc.

Scene

In the outskirts of any city.

Time

Present.

ACT I

Scene 1

1. "PRELUDE: O MIO BABBINO CARO"

All is dark. On the screen, fireflies move around, acting as the only light in the world. Suddenly, a voice begins to sing through the silence.

AMELIE

*O, Mio Babbino Caro,
Mi Piacere e Bello, Bello,
Vo'andare in Porta Rossa
A comparar l'anello
Si, si, ci voglio andare
e se l'amassi indarno
andre sul Ponte Vecchio
ma per buttarmi in Arno!
Mi struggo e mi tormento,
O Dio, vorrei morir!*

*When final note is finished, the lights come up
the screen shows a perfect blue sky over the
outskirts of a city.*

SEGUE.

2. "MR. BLUE SKY"

*From all directions of the room, ensemble cast
members start entering. Among these people are
FINNIE, HUGO, PATRICE and OLLIE.*

FINNIE

*Sun is shining in the sky!
There ain't a cloud in sight;
It's stopped raining,
Everybody's in a play.*

FINNIE & PATRICE

*And don't you know,
It's a beautiful new day, hey, hey!*

HUGO

*Running down the avenue,
See how the sun shines brightly?
In the city,
On the streets where once was pity,*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE

Mr. Blue Sky is living here today! Hey, hey!

ENSEMBLE

*Mr. Blue Sky, Please tell us why,
 You had to hide away for so long.
 Where did we go wrong?
 Mr. Blue Sky, please tell us why,
 You had to hide away for so long.
 Where did we go wrong?*

OLLIE

*Hey you, with the pretty face!
 Welcome to the human race!*

PATRICE & OLLIE

*A Celebration;
 Mr. Blue Sky's up there waiting,*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE

And today is the day we've waited for! Ah!

*At this point, everyone has reached the stage.
 ATLAS enters.*

ENSEMBLE

*Mr. Blue sky, please tell us why,
 You had to hide away for so long.
 Where did we go wrong?
 Hey there, Mr. Blue!
 We're so pleased to be with you.
 Look around, see what you do.
 Everybody smiles at you!
 Hey there, Mr. Blue!
 We're so pleased to be with you.
 Look around, see what you do.
 Everybody smiles at you!
 Mr. Blue Sky!*

ATLAS

*Mr. Blue, you did it right;
 But soon comes Mr. Night,
 Creeping over,
 now his hand is on my shoulder,
 Never mind - I'll remember you this -
 I'll remember you this way!*

ENSEMBLE

*Mr. Blue sky, please tell us why,
 You had to hide away for so long.
 Where did we go wrong?
 Hey there, Mr. Blue!
 We're so pleased to be with you.
 Look around, see what you do.
 Everybody smiles at you!
 Ba ba ...*

As the outro is happening, the cast files off in all directions, save for FINNIE, who stands center stage. The lights dim and the music changes.

FINNIE

(To the Audience)

Welcome, one and all. My name is Dr. Finnie Robinson. I am here to share the recent events in the life of a young patient - or rather, friend of mine - a young man who faces his worst enemy: his own memories.

END SONG.

Lights come up. As FINNIE speaks the following, the scene unfolds as spoken.

FINNIE

Allow me to set the scene. We begin in the city - a soulless, often hollow place, but for some, filled with a sort of life and magic which can break a person's soul or set it on fire. And here, somewhere on the outskirts of this city, lives a young man. Atlas!

ATLAS enters, as if called, and stands staring at the audience.

Now, I first met Atlas when he was very young - his mother worked as my secretary. But that is not where our story begins - you see, as Atlas grew, he became everything his mother loved. He was successful and optimistic. But there is another side to our story - a counter-balance, if you will. Amelie!

AMELIE enters exactly the way Atlas did, and stands to the other side of FINNIE.

Amelie - Atlas' younger sister by a year. More of her father's daughter. But you see, their father died when they were both very young, and this left Amelie cold, in a darkness only she could understand. So this is where our story begins - both brother and sister, living together in a tiny apartment, barely making enough money to survive, and trying with all of their might to live with each other's all-too-different personalities.

FINNIE exits, and ATLAS and AMELIE unfreeze. AMELIE goes offstage. ATLAS is preparing for work, tidying his hair and clothes. AMELIE re-enters, her hair a mess, wearing pajamas.

ATLAS

Well, good morning sleepyhead!

AMELIE

Mm.

ATLAS

How'd'ya sleep?

AMELIE sits at the kitchen table and does not answer.

Hello! Anyone in there?

AMELIE

(Hiding her face)

Mm!

ATLAS

Oh, what's the matter?

AMELIE

It's too early.

ATLAS

Too early! It's 7:15! What, did you have a bad dream or something?

AMELIE

No.

ATLAS

"No?" Jeez. No witty remark? No quick comeback? You must be sick or something.

AMELIE

Mm.

ATLAS

(After a pause)

Hey, I meant to tell you - I found our old yearbook, from high school! It's hard for me to remember those days, but I'll always remember how you became homecoming queen. Oh, that was mom's proudest week. Meanwhile, I was there, hanging out with the dungeons and dragons kids, haha. I was never as cool as you. Everyone in the whole school loved you then! I don't know why you couldn't be that way again... I think you could... Maybe you're just tired, that's all. You just need to find a good job, and get back on your feet. Then everything will be fine. Come on! Let me see that smile!

Silence.

Come on, cheer up! It's a beautiful day!

AMELIE continues to ignore him.

3. "DAYDREAM BELIEVER"

ATLAS

*Oh, I could hide 'neath the wings
of the bluebird, as she sings.
The six-o'clock alarm would never ring.
But it rings, and I rise,
Wipe the sleep out of my eyes,
The shaving razor's cold, and it stings.*

*Cheer up, sleepy jean!
Oh, what can it mean,
to a daydream believer
And a homecoming queen?*

*AMELIE scoffs, and ATLAS sits across from her at
the table.*

*You once thought of me,
As a white knight on his steed
Now you know how happy I can be.
Oh, and our good times start and end
Without dollar one to spend
But how much, sister, do we really need?*

*Cheer up, sleepy jean!
Oh, what can it mean,
to a daydream believer
And a homecoming queen?*

*Cheer up, sleepy jean!
Oh, what can it mean,
to a daydream believer
And a homecoming queen?*

*AMELIE continues to sit in silence. ATLAS goes to
the audience and breaks the fourth wall.
Man, this isn't working. Okay, I'm gonna need
everyone's help! A-one, two, three, four!*

*Cheer up, sleepy jean!
Oh, what can it mean,
to a daydream believer
And a homecoming queen?*

*Everybody now!
Cheer up, sleepy jean!
Oh, what can it mean,
to a daydream believer
And a homecoming queen?*

END SONG.

ATLAS goes back to sit with AMELIE.

ATLAS

Man, that still didn't wake you up? I give up. Why don't you just go back to sleep for a while? Then, when you wake up, you can try again - look for a job or something - I mean, if you want to - and just... for God's sake, cheer up!

AMELIE

(Offhandedly)

Sorry.

ATLAS

No, no - I just think you could be a little bit less of a... Debbie downer. I'm sure you understand.

He looks at his watch then gets up quickly.
Jesus! I've gotta go. See you around 4:30! I want to hear all about your day!

He smiles and exits.

AMELIE

A downer? Me?

4. "ALL APOLOGIES"

AMELIE

*What else should I be?
All apologies.
What else should I say?
I'll rise and greet the day?
What else could I write?
I don't have the right.
What else should I be?
All apologies.*

*In the sun,
In the sun, I feel as one.
In the sun, in the sun,
I'm buried, buried,
Buried...*

*I wish I was like you;
Easily amused.
Find my nest of salt
Everything's my fault.
I'll take all the blame;
for why I'm not the same.
I just refuse to learn.
I'm choking on the darkness
that's inside of me.*

*In the sun,
In the sun, I feel as one.*

*In the sun, in the sun,
I'm buried, buried,
Buried...*

*All in all is all we all are.
All in all is all we all are...*

END OF SONG.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 2

Screen shows the remainders of a sunset, with some fireflies buzzing around. Lights are very low.
MADELEINE enters, followed by YOUNG ATLAS and YOUNG AMELIE.

MADELEINE

We got here at the perfect time. The sun's about to go down. Come on, sit over here.

They all sit center stage. Y. ATLAS and Y. AMELIE lay in the grass.

This is the spot where your father and I used to go, back when we felt like we had to hide our love from our parents. We would just lay here and look at the sky, for hours and hours, and we would just talk and talk about life, and the things we wanted to do. This was where we first decided we were going to get married. Right here, under the stars, with all the fireflies... But that was a different time. People do things so differently now - I was only sixteen when that happened. Now, people who are sixteen - they're too absorbed in their cell phones to do anything romantic. You two will be that age soon - I hope that you don't let technology rip you away from what really matters.

Y. ATLAS

What's that, mom? What really matters?

MADELEINE

Love, Atlas. What matters, more than anything else in the world, is love. Not always the romantic kind, though. You're too young to understand that. I mean the kind of love that a person can have for their family, or their friends. One ounce of love and compassion can brighten up an age worth of darkness. You love your sister, don't you Atlas?

Y. AMELIE

Mom!

Y. ATLAS
Of course I do.

MADELEINE
Now, think of all the things you would do for Amelie - what you would do if she was ever hurt, or needed help. The mark of a true hero is if he is able to show that kind of love to anybody - even if he has to sacrifice some of his own comfort in the process.

Y. ATLAS
For anybody?

MADELEINE
Anybody and everybody.

Y. AMELIE
(Embarrassed)
Didn't you say we came up here to watch the fireflies?

MADELEINE
Yes, yes! Now don't be impatient. We're getting there. But what was I talking about - yes. Amelie, I want you to do the same. Understand? You love your brother, don't you?

Y. AMELIE
Mom, I'm not--

MADELEINE
Don't you?

Y. AMELIE
(Quietly)
Yes, mom.

MADELEINE
So just think about all of the things that Atlas--

She suddenly stops and looks up. The screen illuminates with fireflies.
Oh! Look at that, would you just look!

Y. AMELIE
We're looking!

They all stand in awe, taking in the majesty.

MADELEINE
Oh, isn't that just - you know, your grandmother used to say that fireflies were the spirits of those who have passed to the other side, and if you are able to catch one, it means that someone up there has a message for you. Maybe today's your day, why don't you try?

Y. ATLAS immediately follows the instructions, but Y. AMELIE is more hesitant. Y. ATLAS swats around, trying to catch one, and Y. AMELIE slowly follows with great embarrassment.

MADELEINE

Look at them all! What a beautiful sight, isn't it?

Suddenly, Y. ATLAS cups his hands together and pulls them back, having caught a firefly.
Oh, would you look at that! Lucky you!

Y. ATLAS

How do I know what the message is?

MADELEINE

(Thinking for a moment)
You'll know it in your heart.

Y. ATLAS stops still for a moment, then smiles.
Do you have it?

Y. ATLAS

I think so.

MADELEINE

If you think, you know.

Y. ATLAS

It's dad.

MADELEINE

(Smiling)
Oh, isn't that - and what does he say?

Y. ATLAS

(Confidently)
That's a secret.

He lets the firefly go.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 3

Lights up. Stage is empty. FINNIE enters.

FINNIE

So we know who Atlas and Amelie grew up to be - but why, you may ask, are they so different? for that, we turn to - Mr. Hugo Wright!

HUGO comes in from behind the audience, and walks up to the stage.

HUGO

Hey, Fin.

FINNIE

Hugo here is a key player in our story - You see, without him, none of what you are about to witness would have happened. It's all a miracle, really. I should call you a genius.

HUGO

Oh, no, no. I'm just doing my job.

FINNIE

That job, of course, is to be Atlas' best friend.

HUGO

A bit older than him, but none of us seem to mind.

FINNIE

And when he says "us," of course, he includes...

HUGO

Patrice!

FINNIE

And Ollie!

PATRICE and OLLIE enter from opposite sides of the audience and walk up to stage.

PATRICE

That's me!

OLLIE

You called?

FINNIE

You see, these three have known Atlas for quite some time - they've all come to understand each other and share their lives with each other, through the good times and the bad.

HUGO

We're there for him...

PATRICE

And he's there for us.

FINNIE

About ten years ago, Hugo started this... group - a weekly friends' support group - where, on each Wednesday night, they would meet and talk about their lives, hoping that they could give each other guidance and love.

HUGO

It had to be done. I didn't want him to grow up without any fatherly influence in his life at all - but I ended up becoming more like a brother. Took him out to shows, gave him someone to share stories with. And now, we're still best friends.

PATRICE

Yeah, I've known Atlas a while - since Hugo brought me to the group. I always knew he was something special.

OLLIE

Yeah, you got that right.

PATRICE

He's such an Angel.

OLLIE

An angel? That's one way to put it. He's a good kid, but he's an enigma. Never talks about himself - always about his sister, or one of us. Always trying to solve other people's problems instead of his own.

FINNIE

And that, my friends, is where I come into the story. Like I said before, I worked with his mother, Madeleine, and we became close. She saw that Atlas was having trouble coping with his father's death, so I decided I would work pro bono to try to help him out. Now I didn't know about this support group right away... but when I met Hugo, he brought me here. And lo and behold... there he was.

HUGO

Atlas, the thankful.

PATRICE

Atlas, the angel.

OLLIE

Atlas, the enigma.

FINNIE

And from that moment on, we all stood as one, lifting each other up and holding each others' loves and losses in our own hearts.

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE

Isn't that what friends are for?

5. "WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS"

They all congregate in the middle, then HUGO splits off.

HUGO

*What would you think if I sang out of tune?
Would you stand up and walk out on me?
Lend me your ears, and I'll sing you a song;
And I'll try not to sing out of key.*

FINNIE & HUGO

*Oh, I get by with a little help
from my friends.
Mm, I get high with a little help
from my friends.
I'm gonna try with a little help
from my friends.*

OLLIE

What do I do when my love is away?

FINNIE, PATRICE & HUGO

Does it worry you to be alone?

OLLIE

How do I feel by the end of the day?

FINNIE, PATRICE & HUGO

Are you sad because you're on your own?

OLLIE

*No! I get by with a little help
From my friends.*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE

*I get high with a little help from my friends.
I'm gonna try with a little help
from my friends.*

FINNIE & PATRICE

Do you need anybody?

OLLIE

I need somebody to love.

FINNIE & PATRICE

Could it be anybody?

HUGO & OLLIE

I want somebody to love.

FINNIE & PATRICE

*Would you believe
in a love at first sight?*

HUGO

*Yes, I'm certain
that it happens all the time.*

FINNIE & PATRICE

*What do you see
when you turn out the light?*

OLLIE

*I can't tell you;
but I know it's mine!*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE

*Oh, I get by with a little help
from my friends.
I get high with a little help
from my friends.
I'm gonna try with a little help
from my friends.*

FINNIE & PATRICE

Do you need anybody?

HUGO & OLLIE

I just need someone to love.

FINNIE & PATRICE

Could it be anybody?

HUGO & OLLIE

I want somebody to love.

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE

*Oh, I get by with a little help
from my friends.
I'm gonna try with a little help
from my friends. I get high with a little help
from my friends.*

HUGO

*Yes, I get by with a little help
from my friends,
with a little help from my friends!*

FINNIE, PATRICE & OLLIE

Ah!

END SONG.

FINNIE

*So, I hope you will pardon my unprofessional tone as I
continue mapping out this miraculous story - as you can
see, I have a vested interest in it myself. But let me*

take you now to Wednesday - when our role will come into place. Hold onto your seats, because now, things are going to get interesting.

HUGO, PATRICE and OLLIE understand and go off to set the stage. As FINNIE is speaking, they set a partition up, splitting the stage in half. They put a lone chair near the front on the stage right side, facing out the window. AMELIE enters and sits in the chair.

Two days have passed since we last saw our friends, Atlas and Amelie. Atlas doesn't know it, but Amelie has stopped searching for work - in fact, she was never looking at all. For too long, Atlas has been paying the rent himself, with no help from his sister. But he doesn't mind. All he wants is for her to feel safe and loved. So when he comes home one day to find her door locked, it only stands to reason that he would be worried.

FINNIE exits and ATLAS enters, coming home from work.

ATLAS

Hey Amy?

Silence. AMELIE hears but barely reacts.
Amelie?

He goes to her door and knocks. Still silence.
Amy, I wanted to take you out for ice cream. What do you think?

Another silence, now longer. AMELIE moves around.
I saw you from outside the window, I know you're in there!

Another silence.
(with worry)
Amy? Amelie?

6. "LITTLE SISTER"

He moves closer to the door.
Little sister, why are you all alone,
staring out your window?
Hey, little sister,
Can I come inside there?
I want to show you how to love,
I've always been the only one
who's known you like nobody ever,
Yeah, yeah.

*Little sister, can't you
find another way?
No more living life
behind a shadow!
Little sister, can't you
find another way?
No more living life
behind a shadow!*

Amy, what's been wrong with you lately? I can't seem to get anything through to you... why can't things just be how they used to be? Back when we were young?

*You'd whisper secrets in my ear,
Our mother singing, "cheek to cheek,"
Such a sweet thing when you'd open up to me.
But now, you think I've got you wrong,
But come on - don't you know,
I understand just who you really are now,
Amy.*

*Little sister, can't you
find another way?
No more living life
behind a shadow!
Little sister, can't you
find another way?
No more living life
behind a shadow!*

ATLAS listens in on the door. AMELIE slowly moves toward it with uncertainty, then with anger. She opens the door, to ATLAS' smile, exits, then slams it shut.

END SONG.

AMELIE

What? What do you want?

ATLAS

I thought we could go out for ice cream, then maybe you could meet my friends.

AMELIE

(Suspiciously)
Your... friends?

ATLAS

Just this once, Amy... please.

AMELIE

Don't tell me, this is that support group you're in.

ATLAS

Well, I wouldn't call it that, but--

AMELIE

That's exactly what it is.

ATLAS

They're wonderful people! I think you'll really like them. Trust me, they're not gonna analyze you, or anything like that. And come on, we can go out for dinner, then ice cream. It'll be a night out. Just like the old days.

AMELIE

(Seeming to transform suddenly)

Well... why not. But only - only if we have our ice cream before dinner.

ATLAS

Ah! You see, that's the Amy I know! Come on, let's get out of here.

As they exit, AMELIE looks up to the sky, toward the audience, and shakes her head in defeat.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 4

Lights up. Stage is set with a few chairs scattered. FINNIE and HUGO enter, not as narrators.

FINNIE

I just got a message from Atlas - he says he's bringing his sister tonight.

HUGO

(Worried)

Oh - oh no. Not this again.

FINNIE

You know this is something we have to deal with. You know she's been on his mind a lot lately, and... that's what we're here for. Maybe we can help.

HUGO

With just this one session? I don't think so.

FINNIE

We'll do the best we can.

HUGO

I don't know. Patrice and I are starting to feel like we should just tell Atlas--

FINNIE

Don't you dare! His sister means everything to him. Do you want to break his heart?

HUGO

He has to learn about this problem eventually.

FINNIE

Eventually. But not from us. Not now.

PATRICE and OLLIE enter, laughing.

PATRICE

Hey guys! How's it going?

FINNIE

Fine - just thought I'd give you guys a heads up though, that Amelie is coming tonight...

OLLIE

Amelie?

PATRICE

(With sudden shock)
Atlas' sister. You know...

OLLIE

Oh. That. Well, we'll just have to--

Suddenly, ATLAS and AMELIE enter.

ATLAS

Hey! We were just behind you guys the whole way here, isn't that funny!

PATRICE

Hey, Atlas! How are you?

FINNIE

(Awkwardly, but with warmth)
And this - this must be your sister. Please, Amelie, why don't you take a seat. Why don't we all take a seat!

ATLAS

Sounds good. Amelie, this is Dr. Finnie, an old friend of mom's -

FINNIE

Oh, stop, I'm not a doctor here.

ATLAS

And I think you've met Hugo and Ollie before--

HUGO

Oh, yeah!

ATLAS

And then this is Patrice. Everyone, this is my sister.

PATRICE

So pleased to... finally meet you!

AMELIE waves at them, and they wave back.

ATLAS

(whispering to AMELIE)

Amy... why don't you shake their hands?

FINNIE

Oh, we understand - everyone's sick these days. We get it if you don't want to.

AMELIE

Yes, that's right.

FINNIE

So, if we'll all take our seats, then we can get started!

They all move the chairs into a circle, and OLLIE moves in a chair for AMELIE.

OLLIE

Here's one for you, miss.

ATLAS sits, and stares at AMELIE.

ATLAS

Well, aren't you going to say thank you?

AMELIE

(quietly)

Thanks.

OLLIE

Oh, really, Atlas, it's okay. I take no offense.

Silence. They all smile at each other.

FINNIE

So! Atlas, why don't you introduce us to your sister a bit?

ATLAS

Well, I think she can introduce herself--

AMELIE

(sharply, but quietly)
Atlas, please!

ATLAS

Well, okay. I guess she doesn't want to talk much tonight! Ha! Well - so... she um - I don't know, what can I say about you Amelie?

AMELIE is silent, as is everyone else.
Um - well, she specializes in world languages - she's fluent in Spanish, French, German, and Russian, and is pretty great at Italian and Portuguese, plus quite a few native American languages too! Hmm... She's 24, so a year younger than me - I always gave her crap for that, you know... when we were kids... and, um, let's see... What else?

AMELIE

I think that's enough.

ATLAS

Oh, no - there's so much I could say about you! Come on, help me out here...

AMELIE remains silent.
Please, Amy, give me something to work with here... I'm sorry, everyone, she's not usually this... why are you so quiet tonight, Amy? Is something wrong?

7. "HIDE IN YOUR SHELL"

ATLAS stares at AMELIE for a moment, then goes behind her.

ATLAS

I get it... really, I do... I know you've been feeling dried up and all that... but you can let that out here, with these people... you don't have to hide it...

*You hide in your shell,
'Cause the world is out to*

*bleed you for a ride.
You think, "What will you gain,
Making your life a little longer?"
Heaven, or hell,
Was the journey cold
that gave you eyes of steel?
Sheltered behind -
Painting your mind and playing joker?*

*By this point, everyone else has gathered around
AMELIE.*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
Too frightening!

ATLAS
To listen to a stranger.

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
Too beautiful!

ATLAS
To put your pride in danger.

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
You're waiting for,

ATLAS
*Someone to understand you!
But you've got demons in your closet!*

HUGO & OLLIE
You've got demons in your closet!

ATLAS
And you're screaming out to stop it!

HUGO & OLLIE
And you're screaming out to stop it!

ATLAS
Saying life's begun to cheat you.

ATLAS, FINNIE & PATRICE
*Friends are out to beat you,
Grab on to what you've scrambled for!*

ATLAS
*Don't let the tears linger on inside you now
'Cause it's sure time you gained control
If I could help you, If I could help you,
If I could help you, just let me know!
Oh, let me show you the nearest signpost*

To get your heart back and on the road.
If I could help you, if I could help you,
If I could help you, just let me know!

Everyone but ATLAS moves to the sides and whispers
to each other, staring at them. ATLAS comforts
AMELIE as she stares at them.

It's okay. They're not talking about you, they're
just... don't think about that.

All through the night,
As you lie awake and hold yourself so tight,
What do you need?
A brother who knows your heart to tell you?
I, as a boy,
I believed the single cure for pain is love!
How would it be,
If you could see the world through my eyes?

The rest have now returned to surround AMELIE.

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
Too frightening!

ATLAS
The fire's becoming colder!

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
Too beautiful!

ATLAS
To think you're getting older!

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
You're looking for,

ATLAS
Someone to give an answer!
But what you see is just illusion!

HUGO & OLLIE
What you see is just illusion!

ATLAS
You're surrounded by confusion!

HUGO & OLLIE
You're surrounded by confusion!

ATLAS
Saying life's begun to cheat you.

ATLAS, FINNIE & PATRICE
*Friends are out to beat you,
 Grab on to what you've scrambled for!*

ATLAS

*Don't let the tears linger on inside you now
 'Cause it's sure time you gained control
 If I could help you, If I could help you,
 If I could help you, just let me know!
 Oh, let me show you the nearest signpost
 To get your heart back and on the road.
 If I could help you, if I could help you,
 If I could help you, just let me know!*

END SONG.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 5

*FINNIE steps forward. Everyone else has left.
 Stage is blank.*

FINNIE

Sometimes, the best intentions are left unspoken. But
 Atlas could never resist the chance to help his sister.
 So what should he have expected her reaction to be?
 Gratefulness? Relief? Well, whatever his expectation
 was... he was sorely mistaken.

*FINNIE exits, and ATLAS enters, followed by
 AMELIE.*

ATLAS

Well, wasn't that a nice time?

AMELIE

Not really.

ATLAS

(Turning around with disbelief)

What?!

AMELIE

Well, you know, you don't have to act all surprised.
 You told me no one was going to analyze me, and look at
 what happened. Couldn't have been two minutes before
 everyone there pretended they knew my whole life story!

ATLAS

(Unapologetically)

Well, I have told them a lot about you.

AMELIE

Why? Seriously, Atlas, Why? Why do you feel the need to talk about *me* all the time?

ATLAS

Well... I don't know, I just...

AMELIE

Why?!

ATLAS

Because I care about you, and I worry for you! I don't want you to be alone and helpless your whole life!

AMELIE

Seriously. That's it? Why don't you tell me something new for a change. Like - tell me why you really joined this support group. There has to be something that you talk about, other than me. I am not the only thing in your life, and I swear to God - if you just talk about me all the time, then there's something seriously wrong in your head.

ATLAS

No, I - I don't.

AMELIE

Then what? What else do you talk about, besides me?

ATLAS

I don't - I don't know, it's not really that important.

AMELIE

Goddammit, Atlas, you always act as though you have your whole life figured out! Listen to me - what is wrong with you? Why can't you just face your own self for once? Just this once? Why can't you just sit for a minute and think about some of your own damn problems? Like the horrible weight you put on your shoulders every time someone asks for help? Or, what about the fact that little parts of your memory just seem to vanish into the past? Huh? Yeah, you think I don't know, don't you?

ATLAS

Amy, what are you talking about?

AMELIE

Don't pretend you don't know! Don't...

(She goes aside)

Don't make me do this, Atlas...

ATLAS

Amy, what... what's going on? Let me help--

AMELIE

(springing back, suddenly)

No! It's my turn now. You had your chance to tell me what all my insecurities were. Now it's my turn!

ATLAS is now nearly in tears. She has figured him out. He slowly goes off.

AMELIE

Atlas, don't--

8. "APRES MOI"

AMELIE

(to the sky)

God, what am I thinking? How long can I keep up the facade? How long before I'm no longer what he expects me to be? I can't let him know the truth... about who I really am... what I really am... I have to finish what I started...

*I must go on standing;
You can't break that which isn't yours
I must go on standing;
I'm not my own; it's not my choice.*

*Be afraid of the lame;
They'll inherit your legs.
Be afraid of the old;
They'll inherit your soul.
Be afraid of the cold;
They'll inherit your blood.
Apres moi, le deluge
After me comes the flood.*

*I must go on standing;
You can't break that which isn't yours
I must go on standing;
I'm not my own; it's not my choice.
La da da...*

*Be afraid of the lame;
They'll inherit your legs.
Be afraid of the old;
They'll inherit your soul.
Be afraid of the cold;
They'll inherit your blood.
Apres moi, le deluge
After me comes the flood.*

*Be afraid of the lame;
 They'll inherit your legs.
 Be afraid of the old;
 They'll inherit your soul.
 Be afraid of the cold;
 They'll inherit your blood.
 Apres moi, le deluge
 After me, the flood.*

*I must go on standing;
 You can't break that which isn't yours
 I must go on standing;
 I'm not my own; it's not my choice.*

*I I must go on stand standing dong;
 You can't can't break that
 that which isn't isn't yours yours
 I I must go on stand standing dong;
 I'm not, not my own;
 no, it's not, not my choice!
 La da da...*

END SONG.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 6

Screen shows fireflies. Lights come up. ATLAS is standing on the hill. A faint sound of a river can be heard.

ATLAS

God, what am I doing? What was I thinking? Who am I to tell her that she has to change, when I... God... my memories, little pieces of forgotten memories, they keep coming in and out... don't go too close to the water, Amy...

The river becomes louder. He comes back to reality.

I've never heard that river so loud before - back when we were kids, it was always so... gentle... peaceful... I remember - ha - I taught Amy how to swim in that river. There was that time, ten years ago, when she tried to swim out to - oh, there I go again. Reminiscing about things that happened years ago, things that will never happen again... Who knows if these memories are even real?

He is silent for a moment.

Why is this building up so quickly? How did she get into my brain like that? With just one little... She has no idea how much she affects me. No idea at all.

9. "AND/OR"

ATLAS

But isn't it just so fitting... that instead of bringing her into the light, I've let her drag me into the dark... isn't it just... perfect...

*There was a time when I could
Be sure of my choices,
Back when my conscience
was a lesson and a dream;
For the best, or for the worst,
Or the for the learning,
But I am falling back down.*

*Back to the place where my
Voice is caught in silence;
Where my heart is in a puddle on the floor.
For every inch of doubt,
There is a mile of repentance.
And I am falling back down.*

*Sometimes I like to think it's best,
To reach for one heart and forget the rest.
And that is the way it should be,
So why's it so terrifying in life? When we have life...*

*We can't wait one more day!
We have come so far, and
We need to work in the dark
To return to the light!
To the light, to the light, to the light!*

I feel like I'm talking to a part of myself I've never known before... these memories... this is my... my shadow...

*Your heart is stitched tight
With the threads of adolescence,
And yet your mind is filled
With fury and devotion.
I'd like to meet you in the middle
For the first time,
But we are falling back down.*

*Back to the place where
We can blend ourselves together,
Troilus and Cresiyde
in some forbidden world,
And our eyes will never meet
with any condemnation;
For we are falling back down.*

*Sometimes, my life slips through my hands
 Like footsteps that fade in desert sands,
 And that's not the way it should be,
 But why's it so terrifying life?
 When we find life...*

*We can't wait one more day!
 We have come so far, and
 We need to work in the dark
 To return to the light!
 To the light, to the light, to the light!*

Where do I go from here? How can I keep doing things
 the way I've been, now that I know the truth? How can
 I... How can I do this to myself?

*Sometimes, I like to stand my ground
 When one heart is lost, the other's found.
 But that's not a question I'll dare to ask.*

*We can't wait one more day!
 We have come so far, and
 We need to work in the dark
 To return to the light!*

*We can't wait one more day!
 We have come so far, and
 We need to work in the dark
 To return to the light!*

*To the light, to the light, to the light!
 To the light, to the light, to the light!
 To the light, to the light, to the light!*

END SONG.

BLACKOUT.

INTERMISSION.

ACT 2Scene 110. "DARKNESS, DARKNESS"

Lights dim. The sound of night is heard, and the screen shows a sunset. MADELEINE, Y. ATLAS and Y. AMELIE are sitting on the hill. MADELEINE is reading while the other two are doing as they wish. They have a small radio with them. AMELIE enters in front of them.

AMELIE

*Darkness, Darkness, be my pillow,
Take my hand and let me sleep.
In the coolness of your shadow,
In the silence of your deep.*

*Darkness, Darkness, long and lonesome
is the day that brings me here.
I have felt the edge of silence;
I have known the depths of fear.*

*Darkness, Darkness, be my blanket,
Cover me with the endless night
Take away the pain of knowing
Fill the emptiness of light.*

END SONG.

AMELIE turns to go off, then she goes over to Y. ATLAS, who is now sitting. She looks him directly in the eyes, but he does not see her.

AMELIE

Wake up, will you? Please, just wake up!

She goes off.

Y. ATLAS

(Pointing to where AMELIE was)
Look mom! A Firefly!

MADELEINE

Oh, can you catch it?

Y. ATLAS tries, but fails. "O Mio Babbino Caro" comes on the radio.

Y. ATLAS

Aw man, it got away.

MADELEINE

Oh! Come here, you two - this is the song I was telling you about. That one that your grandmother used to sing to me. It's called O Mio Babbino Caro."

Y. ATLAS

What's that mean?

MADELEINE

Well, um - I don't know - I'm sure it's something quite romantic though.

She sings along with it for a bit.

Y. ATLAS

It's very pretty, mom.

Y. AMELIE

Hold on - I think I might be able to understand some of this.

MADELEINE

Oh, dear, you've been taking Italian for two months now. This is complicated stuff. It's from an opera, after all.

Y. AMELIE

No, no, really - Babbino - that means papa. Caro means dear. So that must be, "Oh my dear papa!"

MADELEINE

Very good, Amelie. Very good. But listen to the music, isn't it pretty?

Y. ATLAS

It's beautiful!

Y. AMELIE

(Listening closely)

Oh - I'm pretty sure she just said she wants to die.

MADELEINE

Amelie! Not now, please. Can't you just listen to the music?

Y. AMELIE

Really though, I think that's what she--

MADELEINE

AMELIE! Not now!

There is a long silence. The song continues.

Y. AMELIE

It's... It's a very pretty song.

They keep listening in silence until the song ends.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 2

Stage is set to the apartment, with Amelie's room set up on the side. ATLAS sits alone in a living room chair. After a few beats, AMELIE enters swiftly, as if searching for him.

AMELIE

Hey... are you alright? I didn't see you last night.

ATLAS

Yeah, I went to bed early.

AMELIE

I got home at 7:30...

ATLAS

Right.

AMELIE

(Worried)

Well, okay.

AMELIE starts to walk toward her room, then turns around with resolve.

Atlas, I - I have news.

ATLAS

(Suddenly interested)

Yeah? What's that?

AMELIE

I - I've been afraid to tell you.

ATLAS

(After a pause)

What is it?

AMELIE

Well, you're not going to like it. But... I'm going away.

ATLAS

(Not believing her)

Going away? No you're not.

AMELIE

(firmly)

Yes, I am.

ATLAS

What do you mean, going away? On vacation?

AMELIE

Enough jokes, come on. We've been living together since we were 18. Don't you think it's time to move on from... this?

ATLAS

Why should we? We're happy, aren't we?

AMELIE

We've been living paycheck to paycheck for years. You can't really call that happiness, can you?

ATLAS

Why not? At least we have each other.

AMELIE

That's the thing, Atlas - you're not getting it. This isn't just about me. You need to find someone else to spend your time with, other than me. I can't be here forever.

ATLAS

But I've been very happy with the way things are...

AMELIE

Don't start. All you have is me, and your support group. I don't even make any money, so you've had to take care of me for years - And they're all old enough to be your parents. You need to find other people to connect with, people like you - people with the same interests and ideas. And unfortunately, that's really not me.

ATLAS

(Getting up, going to her)

But that doesn't matter, really! I never minded paying the extra rent for you. You're the only person who has ever really... known me, completely. I don't want you to go, please don't go!

AMELIE

My mind is made up! It's what's best for both of us.

ATLAS

But - how will you live? Did you find a job? Is that what this is about?

AMELIE

(looking away)
It's not important.

ATLAS

Not important?! Amy, what's gotten into you?

AMELIE

(going into her room)
Don't try to hold me, Atlas. I'm going.

11. "GOD ONLY KNOWS"

ATLAS

Is this about my attitude lately? I'm sorry, really - I promise, I'll be back to my old self in no time. Is there anything I can do to make you stay?

AMELIE

No.

ATLAS

But... don't you understand?

*I may not always love you,
But long as there are stars above you,
You never need to doubt it.
I'll make you so sure about it.
God only knows what I'd be without you.*

If you should ever leave me...

AMELIE

Oh, life would still go on, believe me.

ATLAS

*But the world would show nothing to me.
So what good would living do me?
God only knows what I'd be without you.*

AMELIE

You're really overthinking all of this.

ATLAS

But I'm serious! I've never really had a person who has known me as well as you do, and I don't think I ever will.

AMELIE

Well, that's no reason not to try.

ATLAS

But...

AMELIE

Listen, I don't want to spend the rest of my life
wondering if I've been in the wrong place this whole
time. It's time for me to live for myself for once.

ATLAS

Can't you do that here?

AMELIE

Atlas, I can't.

ATLAS

But Amy, really...

*God only knows what I'd be without you.
If you should ever leave me,
Though life would still go on, believe me,
The world could show nothing to me.
So what good would living do me?*

*God only knows what I'd be without you.
God only knows what I'd be without you.*

*AMELIE stares at him for a moment, then goes in
her room and slams the door.*

END SONG.

ATLAS

(yelling in to her)

Think about it, Amy! Things have been really good these
past few years!

ATLAS goes back and sits in the chair.

12. "APRES MOI (REPRISE)"

*AMELIE goes into her room and picks up her packed
duffel bag to go, then puts it down in angst and
goes over to her chair and looks out the window.
After a few beats, she slams the window closed and
slowly gets up.*

AMELIE

*I must go on standing.
You can't break that which isn't yours.
I must go on standing.
I'm not my own...
It's not my choice...*

END SONG.

*AMELIE gets the bag and storms out of the room.
ATLAS looks up at her, saddened by her decision.*

ATLAS

(getting up)

P - please...

AMELIE goes to leave, and ATLAS blocks her way.

AMELIE

Atlas, please get out of my way.

ATLAS

(quietly)

I won't let you go... I can't...

AMELIE

What are you gonna do, huh? Are you gonna force me to stay?

ATLAS

No, but... this was all so sudden... Just for a while?
I promise it will be worth it. I'll be better, I promise!

AMELIE

It's not about that! Would you get out of my way!

ATLAS

I won't. Amy, can't you see, this is what mom warned us of. She wanted us to stay together, because we would never find anyone else who understood us like family does...

AMELIE

Well that's just stupid.

ATLAS

(taken aback)

Amy, what's come over you? Come on, you don't mean that.

AMELIE

You know damn well that I'm not kidding around. Please, Atlas, don't make force you out of the way. I just need to go.

ATLAS

(Making one last attempt)

I'll do anything - why don't we go over to firefly hill, and do some star gazing, and catch some fireflies? Walk down by the river, like the old days?

AMELIE

God, Atlas, don't you know what you sound like? You have our mother's naivete written all over you! All you have left are these long-forgotten childhood memories, and all you do is wish things could be the way they were in our fake little childhood world! It's meaningless!

ATLAS

(Trying to take her bag)
You don't mean that.

AMELIE

(pulling away)
Atlas, STOP!

13. "HEMORRHAGE (IN MY HANDS)"

AMELIE backs away and drops her bag in anger.

AMELIE

*Memories are just where you laid them.
You drag the waters,
'til the depths give up their dead.
What did you expect to find?
Was it something you left behind?
Don't you remember anything I said?*

ATLAS

*Well I said, Don't fall away, and leave me to myself.
Don't fall away, and leave love bleeding
In my hands, in my hands again,
Leave love bleeding in my hands,
In my hands, love lies bleeding!*

AMELIE

This is all you ever do now. You just want the whole world to resemble your childhood days, as if everything else doesn't matter. When are you going to let it sink in that we're not kids anymore!

*Don't hold me back; I feel life's changes
And there are so many things
That you'll never know.
You think that life is like
Some movie, black and white.
We're dead actors faking our lines,
Over and over and over again,
I've tried to fall away,
and live life for myself.*

ATLAS

*Don't fall away, and leave love bleeding
 In my hands, in my hands again,
 Leave love bleeding in my hands,
 In my hands, love lies bleeding!
 And I need you, but you turn away.
 You don't remember, but I do...*

AMELIE

You've never even tried.

This whole time, I've had to live life by your rules; play the game your way! Don't you understand, I can't be held like this anymore! Not once have you asked me if I wanted things to be different. You just expected that I wouldn't. Well I'm not taking it anymore! I am done.

She goes to get her duffel bag, but ATLAS grabs her arm.

ATLAS

Amy, please -

*Don't fall away, and leave me to myself.
 Don't fall away and leave love bleeding,*

ATLAS & AMELIE

*In my hands, in my hands again!
 Leave love bleeding in my hands,
 In my hands again, leave love bleeding
 In my hands, in my hands again...*

ATLAS

No...

AMELIE violently passes by ATLAS and gives him one final look of parting, almost with remorse, then exits.

END SONG.

ATLAS stares after Amelie with an emptiness in his eyes, as if his whole world is now black. He slowly goes to the chair and sits, in silence. Over the course of a minute, the lights go up and down, signifying the passage of days. ATLAS remains seated, not moving a muscle. Suddenly, after the passing of days is finished, there is a knock on the door, from offstage.

HUGO

(from offstage)
Hey, Atlas? You in there?

Silence.

We've been worried about you, man. You didn't tell us
you weren't going to be at the meeting last night.

FINNIE

(also offstage)
I don't think he's home.

HUGO

Oh, he's definitely home. I just know it...

FINNIE

Hey Atlas?

HUGO

Atlas, we just want to know you're okay!

There is another knock. ATLAS gets up begrudgingly then goes to the side of the stage and opens the door to let them in. HUGO, FINNIE, OLLIE and PATRICE enter.

HUGO

Hey, buddy, what's up? We hadn't heard from you, so we assumed something must have happened. Is everything alright?

ATLAS is silent, but makes a hurt face.

PATRICE

Atlas, you've been acting so strange lately... I feel like you've changed suddenly since last week.

HUGO

You sure you're alright?

ATLAS

Yes...

He hesitates.

Oh, who do I think I am, lying to you? Of course I'm not okay.

OLLIE

(worried)
Oh no, what's wrong?

ATLAS

(sitting again)

Well... my... my sister is gone.

They all gasp and stare for a moment, unsure of what to say.

PATRICE

You mean, you've... you know now, about...

ATLAS looks up at her with a confused look.

FINNIE

(interrupting)

What Patrice means to ask is, do you know where she is?

ATLAS

No. She didn't tell me where she was going.

FINNIE

Have you tried calling her?

ATLAS

She doesn't use a cell phone.

HUGO

Jesus.

FINNIE

Oh, no. Well... have you tried calling your mother?

ATLAS

No. I haven't tried anything. Amy just wants to be left alone.

There is a pause. FINNIE, HUGO and OLLIE stare at PATRICE as if to keep her silent.

PATRICE

Well, I think maybe we should talk about... um...
Atlas, why don't we talk about you? We know your sister
is... missing... but, what about you? Why didn't you
come to the meeting last night?

HUGO

(whispering)

Patty, please...

ATLAS

It's okay, guys, it's not a very sensitive topic. At least not with you. I'm starting to wonder if... No, I can't say that.

OLLIE

What? You can tell us anything.

FINNIE

It's okay.

ATLAS

I've just been wondering if maybe she was right... in saying that all I do is cling to fabricated memories. She said our mom was stupid to romanticize everything, but... I just... I do the same thing. And I've just realized, that this whole time, I've been trying to force her to do the same. I've been living in my mother's footsteps too much. And I can't do that. I... I just have to wonder if I've been romanticizing on a fake past...

HUGO

Looking to the past for answers is never such a bad thing.

PATRICE

(hiding something)

No, in fact, the past may have all the answers...

ATLAS

I just wonder if... no, it can't be. I don't make things up, do I? I don't create stories to fill in the blanks, do I? I feel like there are little puzzle pieces of my memory that have fallen under the table, and I've just carved out new ones to replace them...

FINNIE

Well, we all do that sometimes.

ATLAS

But what if I...

OLLIE

(after a pause)

What?

ATLAS

God. I can't do this to myself. I miss the old days. When I could be sure about who I was, and who I used to be... Why can't things be that way again?

14. "YESTERDAY"

FINNIE, OLLIE and HUGO come in close and kneel near ATLAS. PATRICE looks on.

ATLAS

*Yesterday,
all my troubles seemed so far away.
Now it looks as though they're here to stay
Oh, I believe in yesterday.*

*Suddenly,
I'm not half the man I used to be.
There's a shadow hanging over me.
Oh, yesterday came suddenly.*

*Why she had to go, I don't know.
She wouldn't say.
I said something wrong,
Now I long for yesterday.*

*Yesterday,
love was such an easy game to play.
Now I need a place to hide away.
Oh, I believe in yesterday.*

*Why she had to go, I don't know.
She wouldn't say.
I said something wrong,
Now I long for yesterday.*

*Yesterday,
love was such an easy game to play.
Now I need a place to hide away.
Oh, I believe in yesterday.
Mm...*

SEGUE.

15. "YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND"

HUGO rises, and the rest follow.

HUGO

Hey now - don't worry. We're always here with you, whenever you need us.

*When you're down, and troubled,
And you need a helping hand,
And nothing, oh nothing is going right,
Close your eyes and think of me,
And soon I will be there,
To brighten up even your darkest night.*

OLLIE

*You just call out my name,
And you know, wherever I am,
I'll come running to see you again.*

HUGO & OLLIE

*Winter, spring, summer or fall,
All you've got to do is call,
And I'll be there, yeah, yeah, yeah.
You've got a friend.*

FINNIE

*If the sky above you
Should turn dark and full of clouds,
And that old north wind
Should begin to blow,*

FINNIE & HUGO

Keep your head together,

HUGO

Just call my name out loud, now.

FINNIE

Soon, I'll be knocking upon your door.

FINNIE, HUGO & OLLIE

*You just call out my name,
And you know, wherever I am,
I'll come running to see you again.
Winter, spring, summer or fall,*

HUGO

*All you've got to do is call,
And I'll be there, yes I will.*

PATRICE

(Finally jumping in)
*Hey, ain't it good to know,
That you've got a friend,
When people can be so cold...*

ATLAS looks up at her with uncertainty again.

FINNIE

They'll hurt you,

PATRICE

And desert you.

FINNIE & PATRICE

*Well they'll take your soul
If you let them.*

PATRICE

Oh, but don't you let them.

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
*You just call out my name,
 And you know, wherever I am,
 I'll come running.*

HUGO

*To see you again.
 Don't you know about,*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
Winter, spring, summer or fall.

PATRICE

Hey, now, all you've got to do is call.

OLLIE

And I'll be there, yes I will.

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
You've got a friend.

FINNIE

*You've got a friend.
 Ain't it good to know,
 You've got a friend.*

FINNIE & HUGO

*Ain't it good to know,
 you've got a friend.*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
You've got a friend.

END OF SONG.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 3

Stage is empty. AMELIE enters.

AMELIE

(looking out)

Dad... papa... O mio babbino caro... I need you now. I need your help. You know why I did it... you know why I left... but was it right? Do I really have to get him to find the truth like this? I know I have hurt him so badly... I wish I could just... free him. Free him from the burden on his shoulders. But... it's been too long...

16. "MADNESS"

AMELIE

He needs to know the truth. Doesn't he, papa? Doesn't he?

*I... I can't get these memories
Out of my mind...
And some kind of madness
Has started to evolve.
I... I tried so hard
To let this go,
But some kind of madness
is swallowing me whole, yeah.*

*But I have finally seen the light
And I have finally realized
What he needs.
Ooh...*

*And now, I need to know,
Is this really love
Or is it just madness
Keeping him afloat?
'Cause when I look back
At all the crazy fights we had
It's like some kind of madness
was taking control, yeah.*

*And now, I have finally seen the light
And I have finally realized
What he needs.*

Dad, I'm not asking for much. Just a sign, or something. What can I do for him? Is now the right time? O, mio babbino caro... mi struggo e mi tormento... O dio, vorrei morrir.

*And now, I have finally seen the end
And I'm not expecting you to hear...
But I have finally seen the light
And I have finally realized,
I need to love!
I need to love!*

*Comfort me,
Talk to me, please,
Come on and rescue me.
Yes, I know,
I could be wrong,
Maybe I'm too headstrong...
But all love is... all love is...
Madness.*

END SONG.

BLACKOUT.

Scene 4

Fireflies are shown on the screen. Light is very low. ATLAS sits in a camp chair on the hill, looking out. Behind him, MADELEINE, Y. ATLAS and Y. AMELIE are playing on the hill.

MADELEINE

Hey, Atlas, honey, why don't you go show your sister that great spot you found down by the river? I'm sure it will make her feel better.

Y. AMELIE

Mom, I'm fine.

MADELEINE

Oh, no you're not. You've been a grump all day. Atlas, show her, will you?

Y. ATLAS

Yes, mom, of course! Come on, Amy.

They go off, and MADELEINE follows to the edge of the stage and looks after them.

ATLAS

(still looking out)

Don't go too close to the water, Amy...

MADELEINE

Hey, Amelie! Atlas! Stay off the rocks, please.

ATLAS

Amy, come on. You heard mom.

MADELEINE

Hey! Amelie! Did you hear me?

She goes off.

ATLAS

Yes, mother. We heard you.

MADELEINE

(from offstage)

Amelie? Amelie! Don't - Atlas, grab her! No! Amelie!

Y. ATLAS

(from offstage)

Amy! Take my hand!

MADELEINE
AMELIE! NO!

There is a long pause. water sounds are heard in the background.

17. "DARKNESS, DARKNESS (REPRISE)"

ATLAS

*Darkness, Darkness, be my pillow,
Take my hand and let me sleep.
In the coolness of your shadow,
In the silence of your deep.*

*Darkness, Darkness, hide my yearning
For the things that cannot be
Keep my mind from constant turning
Toward the things I cannot see.*

*Darkness, Darkness, be my blanket,
Cover me with the endless night
Take away the pain of knowing
Fill the emptiness of light.*

END SONG.

AMELIE enters, dressed all in white. ATLAS does not see her or look at her.

AMELIE
Atlas?

ATLAS
Don't get too close to the water, Amy. You heard mom.

AMELIE
Atlas, you know. I know that you know.

ATLAS
What do I know, Amy?

AMELIE
The truth.

ATLAS
Darkness has clouded my judgment. Or maybe it's cleared the clouds away.

AMELIE
You understand now.

ATLAS

I - I'm not sure.

AMELIE

Atlas... your love... it was never in vain.

ATLAS

I never believed it was.

AMELIE

And mother never blamed you. I know you think she did, but she didn't.

ATLAS

(Suddenly, knowing)

Where are you, sister? Where are you, Amelie?

AMELIE

I am not here.

ATLAS

You're not, are you? You never were.

AMELIE

That's right, Atlas. I'm sorry you had to learn this way.

ATLAS

The water took you.

AMELIE

Apres moi, le deluge.

ATLAS

After me, the flood.

AMELIE

You know the rest, don't you?

ATLAS

I believe so.

AMELIE

Tell me the story, Atlas. How did it happen?

ATLAS

Our mother... she thought you were turning into dad. She was afraid you were going to start yelling at people, and that you would lose all of the love she wanted to give us. She was so worried for you.

AMELIE

What did she do, Atlas?

ATLAS

She asked me to take you down to the river. I'd been there... so many times, but... never at sundown. I should have known, with it being high tide and all.

AMELIE

What happened?

ATLAS

I - I told you to stay off the rocks. But you wouldn't listen. Mom tried to stop you. Maybe it was fate, after all. Maybe you wanted it this way.

AMELIE

Now that's the first time you've been wrong.

ATLAS

What?

AMELIE

I never wanted to leave you.

ATLAS

But the river... you couldn't swim well enough yet... you knew it was a bad time to swim...

AMELIE

I was my father's daughter. I never did as I was told.

ATLAS

And because of that, you...

AMELIE

Because of that, I am dead.

ATLAS

Don't use that word.

AMELIE

I want you to tell me what happened after. I want to hear it from you.

ATLAS

I... I don't know if I can...

AMELIE

Ten years have passed, Atlas. Ten years. And you didn't know until now. Why?

ATLAS

I - I don't know, Amy. Help me.

AMELIE

My poor brother. You've spent so many years making up stories... living a life that you created, and giving life to a restless spirit of a sister. You made me homecoming queen in high school... gave me a degree in languages... you know, Mom tried to fix you. That's why she hired her best friend to help you. That's why she got Finnie involved, but you wouldn't budge. It was going to take a lot more than a simple psychiatrist to help you find the truth. So, when your mother's friends - and yours, I'll admit - they do love you, Atlas. When they heard about your inability to accept the truth, they jumped in to help too. Some others wanted you to be sent to a hospital, so you could be treated for delusions... but they wouldn't let that happen. They kept it quiet, so no one would take you away. Because of them, you are living a comfortable life.

ATLAS

But... what about... you?

AMELIE

Me? Well, I was never there. I thought you must have understood by now. I didn't get a job, because no one else could see me. See, you've been paying for a two bedroom apartment by yourself... because, well... I was never there. But I was with you... every second, trying to find a way to get you to find the truth... and it took me so long to figure it out. So when you invited me to your group, it gave me an idea... I didn't want it to have to work this way, but after ten years, it was the only solution. I had to bring you into the darkness.

ATLAS

Because too much light can be blinding.

AMELIE

Exactly. And... I'm so sorry I had to leave you alone like that. I just... I had to make one final push for you to bring yourself to where you are now.

ATLAS

Darkness helps me see clearer.

AMELIE

And you've been in the light your whole life.

ATLAS

But... Amy... Where do I go from here?

AMELIE

Atlas, you're free.

ATLAS

Free of you? I don't want to be free of you!

AMELIE

No - not me. I am always with you. You have carried the world on your shoulders for far too long. And now, your burden is released. And my task is complete.

ATLAS

And - what does that mean for you?

AMELIE

That means I'm free... I can pass on. I know, you're asking yourself now... why did I stay at all? Atlas, I couldn't let you be taken to an institution and locked away. I could never see you in such a dismal situation. I knew I had to do this myself.

ATLAS

You... you hovered there, in the darkness between living and dying... for me?

AMELIE

For you.

ATLAS

Mother used to say that the mark of a true hero--

AMELIE

Is their ability to show love, even if it means they have to sacrifice their own comfort in the process.

ATLAS

And... Amy, no greater love has ever been known.

AMELIE

Rest, now. Rest.

18. "WHAT THE WATER GAVE ME"

ATLAS

This is all so unfair...

AMELIE

No, Atlas. It is only life. But don't forget me; I will always be with you.

*Time, it took us to where the water was.
 That's what the water gave me.
 And time goes quicker
 between the two of us.
 But oh, brother, don't forsake me;
 Take what the water gave me.*

*Lay me down.
 Let the only sound be the overflow.
 Pockets full of stones.
 Lay me down.
 Let the only sound be the overflow.*

*And oh, poor Atlas;
 The world's a beast of a burden.
 You've been holding on a long time.
 And all this longing,
 and the ships are left to rust.
 That's what the water gave us.*

*So lay me down.
 Let the only sound be the overflow.
 Pockets full of stones.
 Lay me down.
 Let the only sound be the overflow.*

*'Cause they took your loved ones,
 But returned them in exchange for you.
 But would you have it any other way?
 Would you have it any other way?
 You couldn't have it any other way.*

*'Cause she's a cruel mistress,
 And a bargain must be made.
 But oh, brother, don't forget me,
 When I let the water take me.*

*Lay me down.
 Let the only sound be the overflow.
 Pockets full of stones.
 Lay me down.
 Let the only sound be the overflow.*

*Lay me down.
 Let the only sound be the overflow.
 Pockets full of stones.
 Lay me down.
 Let the only sound be the overflow.*

END SONG.

AMELIE softly puts her hand on ATLAS' shoulder, and he touches her hand lovingly, then she lets go and exits. ATLAS sits silently, staring out. After a while, FINNIE, HUGO, PATRICE and OLLIE enter and face the audience.

FINNIE

And so, my friends, this is where our story concludes. I do hope that we can keep this confidential - Atlas is my patient, after all. My colleagues told me that if Hugo's support group worked, then it would be a breakthrough in curing dissociative amnesia. Atlas had one of the longest-running cases in recent history, and Hugo's idea of curing him without direct treatment - it was a leap of faith, but it was genius. And now, it seems as though Atlas is getting closer to the light. It'll just be a matter of time before he's back on his feet again.

HUGO

Atlas is not just Finnie's patient, though; he is our friend. Our brother. We had to protect him, because we couldn't let people treat him like he was crazy - we couldn't let him feel alone.

OLLIE

He's always had us, and he always will.

PATRICE

Atlas has spent his whole life showing love to everyone - but now, it is his turn to receive it. He will never be a burden.

19. "HE AIN'T HEAVY, HE'S MY BROTHER"

OLLIE

And as long as we have a say - he will never feel the weight on his shoulders ever again.

FINNIE

Do not be discouraged, friends.

*The road is long,
with many a winding turn
That leads us to who knows where,
Who knows where?*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
But I'm strong!

FINNIE

*Strong enough to carry him.
He ain't heavy, he's my brother.
So on we go.*

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
*His welfare is my concern,
 No burden is he to bear;
 We'll get there.
 For I know!*

HUGO

*He would not encumber me.
 He ain't heavy, he's my brother.*

FINNIE

*If I'm laden at all,
 I'm laden with sadness
 That everyone's heart
 Isn't filled with the gladness
 Of love for one another.*

OLLIE

It's a long, long road,

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE
From which there is no return.

OLLIE

While we're on the way to there, why not share?

FINNIE, PATRICE, HUGO & OLLIE

*And the load,
 Doesn't weigh me down at all!*

OLLIE

He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

*All four of them go to lay hands on ATLAS to
 comfort him. Other ENSEMBLE members enter and do
 the same.*

ENSEMBLE

*He's my brother!
 He ain't heavy, he's my brother!
 He ain't heavy, he's my brother!*

*As each of the supporters goes up to ATLAS in
 support then goes off, FINNIE, HUGO, OLLIE and
 PATRICE return to the front.*

END SONG.

HUGO

Are you okay, Atlas?

FINNIE

Why don't we let him be for a while, Hugo? I think he needs some time alone.

HUGO

Right.

HUGO and FINNIE place their hands on ATLAS' shoulders.

Call me anytime. I'm always here for you.

FINNIE

And you know where my office is, if you ever need to - stop in. We'll see you soon.

ATLAS

(as they are going off)
Th - thank you! For everything.

PATRICE

I'm sorry about your sister. I'm sure she was a wonderful person. I - well, you know. Never hesitate to call if you need anything. Even if you just need company.

PATRICE goes off, and OLLIE steps forward.

OLLIE

Look at that sky, huh? Isn't it a good night. look at all those fireflies. Beautiful. I can understand why this is your spot. Well - if you want me to stay, I will.

ATLAS

That's okay. Thank you.

OLLIE

Alright - just - I'll see you soon. Anytime, brother.

As OLLIE exits, ATLAS looks forward again in silence.

20. "BOTH SIDES NOW"

ATLAS

*Bows and flows of angel hair,
And ice cream castles in the air
And feathered canyons everywhere
I've looked at clouds that way.
But now, they only block the sun.
They rain and they snow on everyone.
So many things I could have done,
But clouds got in my way.*

*I've looked at clouds from both sides now.
From up and down; and still somehow,
It's cloud illusions that I recall.
I really don't know clouds at all.*

*Moons, and Junes, and Ferris Wheels
The dizzy, dancing way that you feel
When every fairy tale comes real
I've looked at love that way.
But now, it's just another show.
And you leave 'em laughing when you go.
And if you can, don't let them know.
Don't give yourself away.*

*He stands and sings with more passion.
I've looked at love from both sides now.
From give and take, but still somehow,
It's love's illusion that I recall.
I really don't know love -
I really don't know love at all.*

*Tears, and fears, and feeling proud
To say, "I love you" right out loud,
Dreams and schemes and circus crowds,
I've looked at life that way.
Oh, but now, old friends are acting strange.
They shake their heads,
And they tell me that I've changed.
Well something's lost!
But something's gained,
In living every day!*

*I've looked at life from both sides now!
From win and lose, and still somehow,
It's life's illusions that I recall.
I really don't know life at all!*

*I've looked at life from both sides now!
From dark and light, and still somehow,
It's life's illusions I recall.
I really don't know life,
I really don't know life at all.*

SEGUE.

21. "O MIO BABBINO CARO (REPRISE)"

AMELIE starts singing out of nowhere from the wings. ATLAS is awestruck.

AMELIE

*O, Mio Babbino Caro,
Mi Piace e Bello, Bello,*

*Vo' andare in Porta Rossa
A comparar l'anello*

ATLAS & AMELIE

*Si, si, ci voglio andare
e se l'amassi indarno
andre sul Ponte Vecchio
ma per buttarmi in Arno!
Mi struggo e mi tormento,
O Dio, vorrei morir!
Babbo, pietà, pietà
Babbo, pietà, pietà.*

As they sing the final note, ATLAS reaches out and catches a firefly. He brings it close and smiles, then on the last beat, he releases it.

END SONG.

BLACKOUT.

BOWS.