

C H O I C E S

A Musical for Two Males

Book & Lyrics by Derek P. Hassler

Music by Landon Braverman

CAST OF CHARACTERS

TWO (2) TO THREE (3) MALES:

MARK. (19) Musical Theatre Bari-Tenor [use of falsetto]. Average high school American male in 1970. Very logical thinker who keeps calm under the pressures exerted on him by himself, his family and friends, and society. He takes entire situations into consideration when making decisions. Although he is a wise nineteen year old, his actions are a direct result of feeling a sense of responsibility without consideration towards his own moral opinions. His biggest flaw lies within a direct result of his surrounding societal standards.

TY. (19) Musical Theatre Rock Tenor. Average high school American male in 1970. Mark's best friend. Reacts out of emotion rather than clear analytical instincts. Although his intensions are always good, he has a hard time expressing his emotions to others, especially when outside forces put what is dearest to him at risk. He has very clear beliefs that cannot be broken or shaped. His deepest flaw resides within the fact he tries to understand and empathize with a society turned against him, but cannot follow through with truly understanding it.

US MILITARY OFFICER (Prerecorded Voice Over)

SETTING

Naperville, Illinois: On the top of a hill overlooking the city.

SYNOPSIS

Choices, a musical by Derek P. Hassler and Landon Braverman, is about the loss of innocence between two best friends during the Vietnam Draft of the 1970's. Mark begins the piece by claiming everyone has events in their lives they choose and some they do not (Welcome to the World). Mark has invited his best friend, Ty, to their usual hang out spot to inform him that Mark has been drafted into the Vietnam War. Ty does not know how to immediately react and tells Mark to flee to Canada where he is safe from the draft (Just Go). It quickly becomes apparent that Mark has decided to enlist for his own reasons. Feeling cornered, Ty tries to convince Mark that going off to war is not worth losing everything he has, including his best friend (Can't You See?). Mark realizes that Ty has his own selfish reasons for wanting Mark to stay, and quickly confronts him on the matter. As Ty finally breaks, Mark stops him from leaving. Mark tells Ty all he really wants is Ty's support in leaving (All I Need). Unwilling to lend his support, Ty abandons Mark. Although he cannot bring himself to support Mark face to face, Ty makes the ultimate choice to volunteer for the army himself (Welcome to the World Reprise/Finale).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PROLOGUE

MARK stands facing the audience. Behind him, a vast darkness of stars fading into the lights of a distant town in the Midwest.

CUE: NO. 1 WELCOME TO THE WORLD

MARK
THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN LIFE
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE,
BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS
THAT ARE CHOSEN FOR YOU.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD.
WELCOME TO THE WORLD.

SCENE

Lights up. Night. June 4, 1970. MARK's car is parked facing the audience with its headlights illuminated. From the top of a hill, we can still see the lights of the town.

TY enters and immediately has a seat on the hood of MARK's car. He is holding a six pack of beer with one bottle already missing.

TY
Two for you, three for me. I accidently drank one of your beers on the way over.

MARK
(smiling)
Ty, Happy Birthday, buddy.

MARK impulsively heads towards his car and wraps his arms around TY.

TY
Stop it.

MARK
(opening a beer)
Nineteen.

TY
I know, I feel so old.

They laugh. MARK pulls out a wrapped gift from his breast pocket.

MARK
Oh, I got you something.

TY

("you better have")

No, you shouldn't have.

MARK

That's bullshit. If I didn't get you anything, you would hold it over my head for the rest of the year.

TY

(unwraps the gift)

An arrowhead? Really?

MARK

It's a necklace.

TY

I have a hundred necklaces.

MARK

I know, that's why I thought you would like it. If you don't, I can take it back.

TY

No, it's cool.

Awkward silence.

MARK

Ty, for the life of me, I can't figure out why you insist we come up here every year.

TY

I don't know... The view?

MARK

Ty, I have something else.

TY

It's not another necklace is it?

MARK

(laughing)

Shut up.

TY

What is it?

MARK takes an envelope out from his breast pocket and hands it to TY. TY looks it over closely.

CUE: NO. 2 JUST GO

TY

Woah, Shit.

(a beat)

Is this..?

MARK

Yeah. I'm sorry, but I would have to tell you sooner or later.

TY

So what's your plan?

MARK

Plan? What plan?

TY

MARK, TAKE A BREATH
AND JUST GO.

MARK

Go where?

TY

TWELVE HOURS TO THE BORDER,
WHERE A NEW LIFE IS IN ORDER,
YOU CAN GO.

MARK

What are you talking about?

TY

Ditching the draft isn't that difficult. You can be in Canada by
tomorrow.

(singing)

PACK UP THE CAR
AND JUST DRIVE.
YOU CAN HIGH TAIL IT PRONTO.
I HEAR NICE THINGS 'BOUT TORONTO.
YOU CAN DRIVE.

MARK

No, Ty, I'm not talking about...

TY

THAT'S WHY I'M HERE,
WE CAN TALK IT OUT;
FIGURE OUT WHAT YOUR OPTIONS ARE.THAT'S WHAT I'D DO.
I WOULD JUST GET OUT.
I WOULD TAKE THAT ROUTE.
I WOULD LEAVE THE THOUGHT
OF WARS THAT MUST BE FOUGHT,

(MORE)

TY (CONT'D)

'CAUSE I'D
GET IN THE CAR
AND JUST GO.
HERE'S YOUR FUTURE, DON'T FORSAKE IT.
WHEN YOU SEE A CHANCE YOU TAKE IT.
KEEP ON DRIVING 'TIL YOU MAKE IT,
AND IT'S MAKE IT NOW OR BREAK IT.
YOU CAN GO.

MARK

Ty.

TY

YOU CAN GO

MARK
("stop")

Ty, I'm not...

TY

MARK, JUST GO.

MARK

I'm not ditching the draft.
(a beat)
I'm going...to Vietnam.

TY

You know, you can fight the draft.

MARK

No, Ty...

TY

You don't have to go. You can just tell them it's a moral issue. I'll even be your sponsor thing.

MARK

No, Ty, I'm trying to tell you... I'm going.
(awkward silence)
I think it's a good thing.

TY

Mark, you and I both know that war is not a *good thing*.

MARK

I know, and I understand that that's the way you feel about it...

TY

(interrupting)

I am not the only one who feels that way.

MARK

Can you please listen to me for a second? I'm not trying to justify anything. I have a responsibility...

TY
 (interrupting)
 Really, Mark? A responsibility?

CUE: NO. 3 CAN'T YOU SEE

TY
 They're forcing you to fight for your country.
 (singing)
 GOTTA BEAT THE REDS,
 THAT'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN TOLD.
 ADD IT TO THE PILE
 OF THE LIES WE'VE BEEN SOLD.

REALLY, MARK? COME ON!
 REALLY, MARK? COME ON!

FIGHTING FOR YOUR LIFE
 IN A POINTLESS WAR.
 WHERE'S THE NOBLE CAUSE?
 TELL ME, WHAT IT'S FOR.

REALLY, MARK? COME ON!
 REALLY, MARK? COME ON!

CAN'T YOU SEE
 THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE HEADED?
 DOWN A SLIPPERY SLOPE.
 I'M AFRAID
 THIS WAR MAY CHANGE YOU.
 WHAT IF YOU CAN'T COPE?

MARK
 Maybe we have a different view of the war.

TY
 You know what, it's my birthday. Can we talk about this later?

MARK
 I've made up my mind. I got the letter two weeks ago.

TY
 Meaning?

MARK
 My bags are packed.

TY
 Jesus, Mark! Fine...
 (singing)
 GO TO VIETNAM,
 HIDE THERE IN THE GRASS.
 KILL A COUPLE MEN
 JUST TO SAVE YOUR ASS.

(MORE)

TY (CONT'D)

REALLY, MARK? COME ON!
REALLY, MARK? COME ON!

CAN'T YOU SEE,
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE HEADED?
DOWN A SLIPPERY SLOPE.
I'M AFRAID
THIS WAR WILL CHANGE YOU.
WHAT IF YOU CAN'T COPE?

MARK grabs TY's shoulders to calm him
down.

MARK

Hey!

(suddenly calm)

I WON'T CHANGE,
I'LL BE THE MARK YOU KNOW.
IT'S NOT ABOUT CHOICES,
TO STAY OR TO GO.

THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN LIFE
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE,
BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS
THAT ARE CHOSEN FOR YOU.

Mark holds up the draft letter.

TY

HAS THIS BEEN CHOSEN FOR YOU, MARK?
ARE YOU CHOOSING WHAT'S EASY FOR YOU, MARK?

OH--
UNDERSTAND,
THIS WAR COULD KILL YOU,
BUT YOU REFUSE TO SEE
THAT IF YOU DIE,
IT'S ALL FOR NOTHING,
AND WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE ME?

Silence.

MARK

Is *that* what this is about?

TY

I think we're done. Can we talk about something else?

MARK

No, we can't, because somewhere in that little brain of yours, you
seem to think that this all about you.

TY

Please, Mark, I don't want to talk about it.

MARK

Have you even thought about how this may effect me?

TY

Not now.

MARK

(laughing)

What else is new? You've taken this entire situation, *my situation*, and all you can think about is how fucked *you* are.

TY

It's really not about me. Please, can we..?

MARK

Oh, shut up. This is all happening to *me*, and all you can do is muster up one pathetic thought of how this situation will really make the rest of your life a miserable...

TY

(snapping/interrupting)

It's not about me, Mark. Hell, it's not about you. It's about *everything!* What about your family? What about your life? What about your friends? You want to fight in a war you know nothing about. And, yes, Mark. Yes. It is about me. Because while you are the one that this is happening to, I am the one who has to stay here and wonder if you're even alive. So yes, Mark, it is about me. How am I supposed to deal with losing my best friend?

There is a pause. After TY realizes there is nothing more to say he grabs his coat from the hood of the car.

TY (CONT'D)

I've gotta go.

TY folds his jacket over his arm and goes to leave.

MARK

Wait...

TY

(without turning)

No. Fuck you.

MARK

Stop.

TY

(without turning)

Good night.

MARK

Ty, please, stop.

TY is just about to exit the stage.

MARK (CONT'D)

You're right.

(beat)
(verbally stopping TY)

I'm an asshole.

TY pauses, then turns.

TY

What, Mark?

(beat)

What do you want from me?

CUE: NO. 4 ALL I NEED

MARK

I DON'T EXPECT
FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND
WHY I NEED TO GO.

AND I DON'T EXPECT
FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND
WHY I'M NOT AFRAID.

ALL I WANT FOR NOW
IS YOUR SUPPORT.
THAT'S ALL I WANT, FOR NOW.

TY

You know I can't do that.

MARK

I DON'T NEED
FOR YOU TO CHANGE YOUR MIND
ON HOW THIS MAKES YOU FEEL.

AND I DON'T NEED
FOR YOU TO CHANGE THE WAY
YOU WANT TO LIVE YOUR LIFE.

ALL I NEED FOR NOW
IS YOUR SUPPORT.
THAT'S ALL I NEED, FOR NOW.

IF YOU CAN DO THAT
IT'S NOT DEFEAT,
FOR THIS COULD BE
THE LAST TIME WE MEET.

(speaking)

Can you please just do that for me?

(beat)

Ty?

Long silence.

TY
Good night, Mark.

TY exits.

MARK
I DO SUSPECT
YOU'LL COME AROUND SOMEDAY,
BUT IT'S GOOD TO KNOW
IT'S YOU THAT GETS TO STAY.

EPILOGUE

SEGUE: NO. 5 FINALE

The background slowly fades to TY within the
Military Recruitment Office. June 5, 1970.

MARK
THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN LIFE
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE

MILITARY OFFICER (V.O.)
Name:

TY
Ty Kador.

MARK
BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS
THAT ARE CHOSEN FOR YOU

MILITARY OFFICER (V.O.)
Age:

TY
Nineteen.

MARK
THERE ARE SOME THINGS IN LIFE
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO FACE

MILITARY OFFICER (V.O.)
Home Town:

TY
Naperville, Illinois.

MARK
AND THERE ARE SOME THINGS
TOO CHALLENGING TO DO

MILITARY OFFICER (V.O.)
Date of Birth:

TY
June 4, 1951.

MARK
WELCOME TO THE WORLD

TY
Sir, I have a friend...

MILITARY OFFICER (V.O.)
Mr. Kador, when volunteering for the armed forces we generally
place an individual where we see fit.

MARK
WELCOME TO THE WORLD

MILITARY OFFICER (V.O.)
This decision must have been very difficult. You're a brave kid.

MARK
WELCOME TO THE WORLD

TY
Am I?

BLACKOUT.