

Ariel & Ren

Scene 4
Under the Train Bridge

(REN follows ARIEL up a ladder to a girder under a bridge covered with graffiti. High above the river they brace themselves as a train rumbles on tracks overhead. This time, they both scream with abandon.)

REN & ARIEL. Aah-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-h--...!

(When the train sound fades, REN realizes how high they are and pulls back from the edge.)

Stent

REN. Whoa! *(peers down)* It's a free-fall into the river from up here! Are you out of your mind?

ARIEL. You noticed!

REN. What're we, like, forty feet above the water?

ARIEL. But look around: up here I can pretend I'm halfway to heaven... I listen to the river...

(indicates girders) ...and look what happens!

REN. *(inspects the girders)* Whoa! This place is covered with graffiti.

ARIEL. It's not graffiti! It's poetry. I call this place "My Diary."

REN. You climb all the way up here and write poems?

ARIEL. Uh-huh. They're all dedicated to Bobby.

REN. Bobby? Who's Bobby?

ARIEL. My brother.

REN. You never told me you have a brother.

ARIEL. *Had* a brother. Bobby was one of the four kids who went off the Potawney Bridge.

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REN. Oh, God. I'm sorry.

ARIEL. Yep. One of the...

(a la Rev. Moore) "...four young people who held the promise of Bomont's brightest future."

REN. Why didn't I know this?

ARIEL. We never talk about it. And once Daddy decided the town needed saving, he never mentioned Bobby again.

REN. You must miss him real bad.

ARIEL. I try not to think about it.

REN. That never works. I'll bet you think about it all the time.

ARIEL. How did you know that?

REN. I study you.

ARIEL. Oh, yeah? What do you see?

REN. Somebody who's smart.

ARIEL. Thank you.

REN. Maybe a little bit angry.

ARIEL. Maybe a lot.

REN. And somebody who's sad.

(Beat.)

I always wondered where that came from.

ARIEL. *(touched)* Now you know.

(They're both silent. She starts to speak, but stops herself.)

[MUSIC NO. 14: "ALMOST PARADISE"]

REN. What?

ARIEL. I've never felt like anyone's ever stopped to really look at me.

REN. Oh, no... You're on my mind twenty-four hours a day.

(Pause. They grow self-conscious, look away and sing their private thoughts.) end

I THOUGHT THAT DREAMS BELONGED TO OTHER MEN,
CUZ EACH TIME I GOT CLOSE, THEY'D FALL APART AGAIN

ARIEL.

I FEARED MY HEART WOULD BEAT IN SECRECY

REN & ARIEL.

I FACED THE NIGHTS ALONE
OH, HOW COULD I HAVE KNOWN
THAT ALL MY LIFE I ONLY NEEDED YOU?

WHOA, ALMOST PARADISE
WE'RE KNOCKING ON HEAVEN'S DOOR
ALMOST PARADISE
HOW COULD WE ASK FOR MORE?
I SWEAR THAT I CAN SEE FOREVER
IN YOUR EYES.
PARADISE!

ARIEL. *(turns to REN)* Y'know, you make me forget everything that's wrong with my life.

REN. There are some things I'd like to forget.

ARIEL. Like...?

REN. This battle I'm causing in Bomont! And I still don't know what I'm gonna say to the Town Council.

ARIEL. Oh, that reminds me. You'll need this.

(From her shoulder bag she pulls a book bristling with paper bookmarks and hands it to him.)

REN. *(reads the cover)* The Holy Bible?