

A T O M I C

Book and Lyrics
Danny Ginges

Music and Lyrics
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DO contract ORiGiN™ Theatrical if you have any questions about anything. At all. And we mean anything. One of us that works here (not me) has a peculiar interest in recording the unusual bird calls of the adult hoatzin (a species of tropical bird found in the wet forests and mangroves of the Amazon and the Orinoco delta in South America) so we should be able to answer any questions you have about the Hoatzin. Plus we know some things about some other things too.

C H A R A C T E R S

LEO SZILARD (30) - A brilliant Hungarian physicist with an annoying habit of always being right. He sees the future, and science as the way he's going to save it.

TRUDE WEISS (20) - A gifted doctor. She's smart enough to know how tough a life with Leo will be. And strong enough to deal with that.

ENRICO FERMI (30) - Italian Nobel-winning physicist. If it's not science, he's not interested.

ARTHUR COMPTON (30) - Nobel-winning quantum physicist and head of the Chicago Metlab. torn between science and religion, morality and duty.

EDWARD TELLER (30) - A Hungarian genius like Leo with a more aggressive world view. He wants a bigger bomb.

LEONA WOODS (20) - The only woman on the Metlab team, but she's not going to let that stop her.

ROBERT OPPENHEIMER (30) - The bomb is his ticket to the recognition his brilliance deserves. It's an expensive ticket.

GENERAL GROVES (30) - Highly intelligent and quite reasonable. Till you get in his way. He will use the bomb to end the war. Yes he will.

PAUL TIBBETS (30) - A fearless young pilot with a keen sense of duty. If he can't win the war single-handed, he'll show how it's done.

LAVERNE/MAE/LENA (20) - Rosie the Riveter meets the Andrews sisters.

BARTENDER (20)

FEMALE SCIENTIST (20)

SCIENTIST (20)

U.S. MILITARY MEN X 2 (20)

NY COMMUTERS X 6-7 (see Suggested Doubling)

VOICES: News announcers, scientist, Roosevelt, Truman

S O N G S

ACT I

THE ATOM BOMB IS HERE (1960)	<i>Ensemble</i>
LITTLE FIRE	<i>Leo, Trude, Ensemble</i>
THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS	<i>Leo, Trude</i>
A RISK YOU TAKE	<i>Leo, Trude, Ensemble</i>
THERE ARE LINES	<i>Fermi, Leo</i>
DARK DAYS	<i>Leo, Fermi, Teller, Trude</i>
HEADLIGHTS	<i>Trude</i>
ATOM SMASHER	<i>Leona, Ensemble</i>
STARS AND STRIPES	<i>Tibbets, Leo</i>
WHERE IS HOME?	<i>Leo, Trude</i>
ONE DAY	<i>Leo</i>

ACT II

HOLES IN THE DONUTS	<i>Laverne, Mae, Lena</i>
GREATER BATTLE	<i>Leo, Ensemble</i>
WORLD OF GRAY	<i>Compton, Leo</i>
GREATER BATTLE REPRISE	<i>Leo, Fermi</i>
THE ATOM BOMB IS HERE (1945)	<i>Leo</i>
THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS REPRISE	<i>Leo, Trude</i>
ONLY NUMBERS	<i>Leo, Trude, Tibbets</i>
WHAT I TELL MYSELF	<i>Leona, Oppenheimer Ensemble</i>
FINALE	<i>Trude, Leo, Ensemble</i>

S C E N E S / S O N G S

SCENE	LOCATION	SONG
ACT I		
1	Prelude (1960)	1. The Atom Bomb Is Here (1960)
2	Formal Gathering Ny (1954)	1a. After The Bomb
3	Berlin (1933)	2. A Little Fire
4	AAC Office London	2a. Walk In The Rain
5	Southampton Row	3. The Force That Lights The Stars
6	Atlantic Crossing (1938)	4. A Risk You Take
7	Kings Crown Lobby (1939)	5. There Are Lines
8	Columbia Lab	6. Dark Days
9	Columbia Campus	
10	Columbia Montage	6a. Montage
11	Compton's Office (1941)	6b. Arthur Compton
12	Columbia Lab	6c. Hello Chicago
13	Trude's Place	7. Headlights
14	Metlab	
15	The Bar Montage	8. Atom Smasher
		8a. Atom Smasher Reprise
		8b. The Phone Call
		Transition
16	The Bar	8c. Into The Bar
		9. Stars And Stripes
17	Trude 's Place (1943)	9a. Stars And Stripes
		Transition
		10. Where Is Home?
		10a. The Letter
18	The Road Back	11. One Day
19	Metlab	
20	Alamogordo (1945)	
ACT II		
21	Formal Gathering Ny (1954)	11a. Entr'acte
22	Oak Ridge (1945)	12. Holes In The Donuts
23	Transition	12a. Queen Elizabeth
24	Leo's Place	13. Greater Battle
		13a. Leona Signs
25	Metlab	14. World of Gray
26	Above America	15. Greater Battle Reprise
27	White House	16. The Atom Bomb Is Here (1945)
28	Washington Bar	17. The Force That Lights The Stars Reprise
29	Above Hiroshima	18. Only Numbers
30	Aftermath	18a. Aftermath

31 Formal Gathering NY (1954)
32 Going Home (1960)

19. What I Tell Myself
20. Finale

Sample only. Do Not Copy.

S C E N E S / C H A R A C T E R S

SCENE CHARACTERS

ACT I

1	Prelude	COMMUTERS #1-7
2	Formal Gathering	LEONA, OPPENHEIMER, TELLER, COMPTON
3	Berlin (1933)	MAN, WOMAN, MAN 2, Leo, Trude, Ensemble
4	AAC Office London	Leo, Trude
5	Southampton Row	Leo, Trude, Ensemble
6	Atlantic Crossing	Leo, Trude, Ensemble
7	Crown Lobby	Leo, Fermi, Teller
8	Columbia Lab	Leo, Fermi, Teller, Trude, FRENCH, US, ENGLISH & GERMAN ANNOUNCERS (VO)
9	Columbia Campus	Leo, Fermi, Teller, Trude
10	Columbia Montage	Leo, Fermi, Teller, Trude, ROOSEVELT (VO)
11	Compton's Office	Compton, GROVES
12	Columbia Lab	Compton, Leo, Fermi, FEMALE SCIENTIST
13	Trude's Place	Leo, Trude
14	Metlab	LEONA, Fermi, Teller, Leo
15	The Bar Montage	Leo, Leona, Fermi, Teller, BARTENDER, SCIENTIST, Compton, OPPENHEIMER
16	The Bar	Leo, PAUL, Bartender
17	Trude's Place	Leo, Trude
18	The Road Back	Leo, Radio (Audio File)
19	Metlab	Compton, Teller, Fermi, Leona, Leo, Truman (Audio File)
20	Alamogordo (1945)	Leo, Oppenheimer, Groves, Fermi, Compton, Teller (Optional)

ACT II

21	Formal Gathering	Leona, Oppenheimer, Teller, Compton
22	Oak Ridge (1945)	MAE, LENA, LAVERNE, MILITARY MEN
23	Transition	Announcer
24	Leo's Place	Leo, Trude
25	Metlab	Leo, Fermi Female SCIENTIST, Scientist, Compton, Leo, Leona, Ensemble
26	Above America	Leo, Fermi
27	The White House	Compton, Leo, Oppenheimer, Fermi, Groves
28	Washington Bar	Leo, Trude, Paul, Bartender
29	Above Hiroshima	Leo, Trude, Paul, Announcement (VO)
30	Aftermath	Truman (Audio File)
31	Formal Gathering	Leona, Oppenheimer, Teller, Compton, Leo, Trude
32	Going Home	Leo, Trude, Fermi, Ensemble

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S U G G E S T E D D O U B L I N G

1. LEO (M1)
2. TRUDE / LAVERNE / COMMUTER #1 (F1)
3. FERMI / COMMUTER #2* (M2)
4. COMPTON / COMMUTER #3 (M3)
5. TELLER / TIBBETS / GROVES / COMMUTER #4 (M4)
6. OPPENHEIMER / SCIENTIST / COMMUTER #5 (M5)
7. LEONA / LENA / COMMUTER #6 (F2)
8. (OPTIONAL) MALE UNDERSTUDY / BARTENDER
9. (OPTIONAL) FEMALE UNDERSTUDY / MAE / COMMUTER #7

* ALSO #7 IF NO UNDERSTUDIES USED

A U D I O F I L E S O U R C E S

Scene 10

President Franklin D. Roosevelt declares war on Japan (full speech)

0.41 - 1.08, 2.30 - 2.49

Yesterday, December 7th, 1941. a date which will live in infamy. The United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of japan. no matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion. the american people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk8gygg0dke>

Scene 18

FDR dies 450412 News Clip 01, Old Time Radio

0.08 - 0.16

We interrupt this program to bring you a special news bulletin from cbs world news, a press association, has just announced that president Roosevelt is dead.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bstbg06e_8

Scene 19

this day in history, may 8, 1945: the war ends in Europe

0.48 - 1.13

I wish that Franklin D Roosevelt had lived to see this day. General Eisenhower informs me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the united nations. the flags of freedom fly all over Europe.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=7z1-sbxvk_i

Scene 23

National Emblem March

2.05 - 2.19

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u40oiesdwlu>

Scene 30

Radio announcement of bombing of Hiroshima and Truman's press release -

0.00 - 1.21

A short time ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima and destroyed its usefulness to the enemy. that bomb has more power than twenty-thousand tons of tnt. the Japanese began the war from the air at pearl harbor. they have been repaid many fold. and the end is not yet. With this bomb, we have added a new and revolutionary increase in destruction. to supplement the growing power of our armed forces. In their present form, these bombs are now in production. And even more powerful bombs are in development.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn_ujj9obds



Sample only. Do Not Copy.

ACT I
SCENE 1

AT RISE:

PRELUDE

New York 1960. The height of the
Cold War. Commuters in a state of
panic.

SONG 1: THE ATOM BOMB IS HERE (1960)

COMMUTER #2

U2 PLANE SHOT DOWN IN FLAMES

#3

EISENHOWER HELD TO BLAME

#4

RUSSIA DEMANDS AN APOLOGY

#2, 3, 4

WILL THIS END IN WORLD WAR THREE?

#6

WHAT DO THEY NEED THESE WEAPONS FOR?

#7

WILL MANKIND SURVIVE THE NEXT WAR?

#1

ARE THEY TARGETING NEW YORK?

ENSEMBLE

WHY DON'T THEY JUST SIT DOWN AND TALK?

ALL THAT WE HOLD DEAR

SOON COULD DISAPPEAR

THE ATOM BOMB IS HERE

#1

DUCK AND COVER KNOW THE DRILL

#4

SHELTER STOCKED BATHTUB FILLED

#7

RADIO AND FLASHLIGHT NEAR

ENSEMBLE

WELCOME TO OUR WORLD OF FEAR

HOW LONG DO THEIR BOMBERS TAKE?

SHOULD WE LEAVE OR IS IT TOO LATE?

HOW MANY WARHEADS DO WE NEED

FOR THE FREE WORLD TO SUCCEED?

IS THIS OUR FINAL SONG?

HOW DO WE GO ON?

UNDER THE ATOM BOMB

WE'RE ON THE BRINK OF MASS ANNIHILATION

WON'T SOMEBODY PLEASE EXPLAIN

HOW WE GOT INTO THIS SITUATION?

HAS THE WHOLE WORLD GONE INSANE?

#1

CAN'T WE GO BACK?
CAN'T WE UNDO?

#3

CAN'T WE GO BACK
AND START ANEW?

#4

CAN'T WE GO BACK?

#5

CAN'T WE UNDO?

ENSEMBLE

BACK TO THE WORLD WE KNEW

TOO LATE TO SHED A TEAR
HOLD YOUR CHILDREN NEAR
THE ATOM BOMB IS
ATOM BOMB IS
ATOM BOMB IS HERE

LIGHTS FADE.

FORMAL GATHERING - NY (1954)

SONG 1A: AFTER THE BOMB

Four old friends over wine at a table. LEONA WOODS, ARTHUR COMPTON, EDWARD TELLER and J ROBERT OPPENHEIMER. Teller stands, smoking. The mood is sombre. Leona breaks the ice.

LEONA

I know it's a horrible thing to say, but I actually prefer funerals to weddings. At least I know what to wear.

TELLER

It's good to be among friends Leona. Whatever the occasion.

OPPENHEIMER

Friends Teller? Since when do friends stab each other in the back?

TELLER

Good God Oppenheimer. I never told that inquiry anything I haven't said to your face. I'm a scientist. I call it as I see it. You would have lost your security clearance regardless of my testimony.

COMPTON

Now is not the time. I for one am glad it's just us.

TELLER

Absolutely. I am so tired of the inevitable question.

LEONA

'Would you do it again. If you knew the consequences?' Don't people ever get tired of asking?

COMPTON

Of course we knew the consequences. The consequences of failing. Losing the free world to Hitler.

OPPENHEIMER

We didn't know Jack Shit.

LEONA

Now we're racing the Soviets to see who can destroy the world faster. Just like Leo said we would.

COMPTON

Learning God's secrets doesn't mean we inherit his wisdom.

OPPENHEIMER

Are you still holding on to God, Compton? After all he put us through.

COMPTON

God is the only reason I got through.

LEONA

Did any of us really get through?

TELLER

We had a job to do and we did it.

LEONA

That doesn't keep you awake at night?

TELLER

I sleep like a baby. But then, I'm not Leo Szilard. Trying to save the world.

LEONA

Poor Leo.

TELLER

He never knew when to quit. That was his downfall. He was exactly the same when I knew him, back in Berlin.

Teller lights a match for a new cigarette. He watches the flame as we are transported back to Berlin in 1933.

TELLER (CONT'D)

Before the inmates took over the asylum.

SONG 2: LITTLE FIRE

LIGHTS FADE.

In the distance we hear a fire siren. People screaming as everyone races off stage.

BERLIN (1933)

MAN

Fire! Call the police!

WOMAN

Mein God, it's the Reichstag!

MAN 2

The Reichstag? Who would do such a thing?

TRUDE WEISS (20) answers a frantic
pounding on her door.

LEO (OFF)

Trude. Hurry. Open up. It's Leo.

A breathless LEO SZILARD (30) races
in with a suitcase.

TRUDE

Leo? What's wrong?

LEO

Pack your things. We have to leave. Now!

TRUDE

Leave? What are you saying?

LEO

A LITTLE FIRE STARTED
IN BERLIN TONIGHT
THAT DISTANT GLOW'S THE REICHSTAG
UP IN FLAMES

THEY'RE ROUNDING UP THE COMMUNISTS
THEY SAY SET IT ALIGHT
OR IS IT OUR NEW CHANCELLOR'S
TO BLAME?

THAT FURNACE IN THEIR EYES
THE RAGE THE FEAR
THE REASON I LEFT HUNGARY
FOR HERE

TRUDE

For God's sake Leo.

THAT LITTLE FIRE BURNING
IN BERLIN TONIGHT
WILL BE A FADED MEMORY
BY DAWN

WE'RE IN THE HOME OF CULTURE
THE CITY OF LIGHT
WHY DON'T YOU COME ON IN
AND GET WARM

A PAPER FOR MY
MEDICAL DEGREE
COULD BENEFIT FROM
YOUR ANATOMY

LEO

FOR MONTHS I'VE SEEN THIS COMING
THE TINDER IS DRY
ONE TINY SPARK WILL SET IT

ALL ABLAZE

MY BAGS WERE PACKED AND READY
AND NOW IS THE TIME
WE MIGHT NOT GET THE CHANCE
IF WE DELAY

TRUDE

MY STUDIES MY FRIENDS
MY WHOLE FAMILY
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS
YOU'RE ASKING OF ME

Trude exits. Leo, distraught, calls
after her.

LEO

Please Trude. You've got to believe me!
She returns after a long beat with a
suitcase, dressed for travel.

TRUDE

I do believe you Leo. Only because you have an
annoying habit of being right.
They walk past an angry rabble of
Nazi supporters.

ENSEMBLE

A LITTLE FIRE'S BURNING
IN BERLIN TONIGHT
IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF EVERY
GERMAN SON

A BETTER WORLD AWAITS THOSE
THAT CAN SEE THE LIGHT
ALL THE OTHERS BETTER
PACK THEIR BAGS AND RUN

LEO

A LESSON FOR HUMANITY TO LEARN
YOU START A LITTLE FIRE
EVERYTHING CAN BURN

Leo and Trude exit.

ENSEMBLE

A LITTLE FIRE'S BURNING
IN BERLIN TONIGHT
A LITTLE FIRE'S BURNING
IN BERLIN TONIGHT

LEO

EVERYTHING CAN BURN

ENSEMBLE

A LITTLE FIRE'S BURNING
A LITTLE FIRE'S BURNING
A LITTLE FIRE'S BURNING
IN BERLIN
TONIGHT

LEO (CONT'D)

EVERYTHING CAN
BURN

Music out.

LIGHTS FADE.

AAC OFFICE - LONDON

Leo on the phone.

LEO

Professor Chadwick? Leo Szilard from the Academic Assistance Council. (pause) Yes. (pause) Really? Well it turns out Hitler's stupidity is your good fortune. I have a list of very recently unemployed industrial chemists. Pioneers in their field. (pause) Of course I will. Thank you.

TRUDE enters holding a paper lunch bag.

TRUDE

I brought us lunch.

LEO

Trude. What a nice surprise.

He takes the paper bag and weighs it in his hand.

LEO (CONT'D)

Seeded rye. Chopped liver. And a sliced pickle from Blooms.

TRUDE

One day you'll get it wrong. Then I'll be surprised. My shift starts at two.

She takes a bite of her own sandwich.

LEO

I knew you'd land on your feet.

TRUDE

My supervisor said I'll be a great doctor.

LEO

I could have told you that.

TRUDE

You did. Right after you told me I was lousy at physics. On our first date.

LEO

Before that. I never date my students. But you were lousy at physics.

TRUDE

I'm so relieved.

LEO

I need to mail some resumes.

I'll walk you to the hospital.

SONG 2A: WALK IN THE RAIN

They grab some umbrellas and head to a rainy London street.

SOUTHAMPTON ROW - LONDON

They pass commuters holding umbrellas.

TRUDE

Mailing resumes? You should get an assistant.

LEO

There's no money for that.

TRUDE

They're paying you to solve the world's problems by yourself?

LEO

They're not paying me at all.

TRUDE

So how do you eat?

LEO

(holds up sandwich)

I have my sources.

TRUDE

No really.

LEO

You remember that family who died in their sleep.

TRUDE

Of course. Their refrigerator leaked toxic gas. You wanted to do something.

LEO

I did something. With my professor.

TRUDE

Einstein?

LEO

We developed a new refrigerator pump. Electrolux paid good money for that patent. Enough to last another year.

TRUDE

And then what? You're also an unemployed Jewish refugee. Why not use your position to find yourself a job.

LEO

(holding up resumes)

These people will starve. I won't. One advantage of leaving early.

TRUDE

One day early. The very last train out. I almost didn't join you.

LEO

I wouldn't have left without you.

(Music out)

In any case, I'm done with pure physics. I'd like to do something that can help people. Like biology.

SONG 3: THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS

LEO (CONT'D)

Imagine finding a cure for cancer. Or there's an exciting new field. Atomic physics. Only last month they discovered neutrons.

TRUDE

Neutrons. Sounds like an alien life form.

LEO

The energy contained in atoms is the most powerful force in the universe. What if we could harness it?

IMAGINE UNLIMITED POWER
IMAGINE THE WORLD WE COULD BUILD
BATTERIES THAT LAST A HUNDRED YEARS
GAS TANKS THAT ALWAYS STAY FILLED

SHIPS THAT DON'T NEED REFUELLING
WITH FUNNELS THAT NEVER BLOW SMOKE
BREATHE COUNTRY AIR IN THE CITY
RIDING BUSES THAT DON'T MAKE YOU CHOKE

THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS
IMAGINE IF IT WERE OURS
THE POWER THAT IGNITES THE SUN
COULD LIGHT THE WAY FOR EVERYONE

A WORLD JULES VERNE NEVER IMAGINED
H G WELLS ONLY DREAMED
WE'LL BE RIDING A SHIP TO THE FUTURE
POWERED BY ATOMS NOT STEAM
AND WHEN THIS PLANET'S TOO SMALL TO SUPPORT US
WE'LL FIND OTHERS TO HARBOUR OUR RACE
WITH ROCKETS THAT FLY ON FOREVER
THROUGH ENDLESS FRONTIERS OF SPACE

THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS
IMAGINE IF IT WERE OURS
THE POWER THAT IGNITES THE SUN
COULD LIGHT THE WAY FOR EVERYONE

TRUDE

Sounds impossible.

LEO

The experts all agree with you.

TRUDE

So prove them wrong.

IF THERE'S AN ANSWER OUT THERE
I KNOW YOU'LL FIND IT
AS SURELY AS THE DAY FOLLOWS THE NIGHT
YOU HAVE THE MIND
I'VE SEEN YOUR WORK TIME AFTER TIME
YOU GET THINGS RIGHT
YOU'LL GET THIS RIGHT

LEO

THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS

TRUDE

YOU'LL FIND IT

LEO

IMAGINE IF IT WERE OURS

TRUDE

FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS

LEO

THE POWER THAT IGNITES THE SUN

COULD LIGHT THE WAY

BOTH

THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS

IMAGINE IF IT WERE OURS

THE POWER THAT IGNITES THE SUN

COULD LIGHT THE WAY

FOR EVERYONE

TRUDE

Seems you've chosen your path.

LEO

I wish I knew where to start.

TRUDE

(laughs)

Don't look at me. I wouldn't know a neutron if it
hit me in the face.

LEO

(amused)

Of course you wouldn't. A neutron has no charge.

It would pass right through your --

(lost in thought. Music out.)

My God.

TRUDE

Leo?

LEO

A neutron. A neutron has no charge. No resistance!

Split the atom with a neutron! That has to be the

solution. But if I can think of it, the Germans

can too. We need to go.

TRUDE

Go?

LEO

America.

TRUDE

Leo. I left my home. My family. You said England
would be safe. And you were right. You probably

saved my life. But America? I have friends here now. My work is here. I'm not like you. I can't live out of a suitcase that's always packed.

LEO

(excited)

Trude, America is the new Berlin. Everyone including Einstein is either there or on their way. Besides I don't have a choice.

(on a serious note)

War is coming and this idea could decide it. I'm an enemy alien here. I can't work in England if there's a war. Not on any war effort.

TRUDE

I won't know anyone in America. Besides you.

Leo holds out his hand to Trude. She takes it.

ATLANTIC CROSSING

SONG 4: A RISK YOU TAKE

Travellers enter wearing coats and holding suitcases. Leo and Trude join them.

ENSEMBLE

AAAAH

LEO

A RISK YOU TAKE
A HEART CAN BREAK
WHEN YOU TIE YOUR DREAMS
TO THE LIFE OF ANOTHER

ENSEMBLE

A RISK YOU TAKE
THE EARTH CAN SHAKE
WHEN THERE'S SOMETHING NEW
THAT YOU DISCOVER

TRUDE

MY HEART IS YOURS FOREVER
I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT FOLLOW
I PUT MY FAITH IN YOU
THE PROMISE OF TOMORROW

LEO

AND NOW WE SAIL TOGETHER
UNCHARTED OCEAN
NO LIFEBOAT ON THIS VENTURE
WE'LL SINK OR SWIM AS ONE

TRUDE (CONT'D)

SAIL TOGETHER
UNCHARTED OCEAN

OH

SINK OR SWIM AS ONE

LEO

WITH EVERY STEP YOU TAKE YOU RISK A FALL
SO MANY DREAMS HAVE FAILED TO SCALE THAT WALL

BOTH

BUT THERE'S NO GREATER RISK YOU TAKE
THAN NO RISK AT ALL

ENSEMBLE

DREAMS CAN MAKE YOU
LOVE CAN BREAK YOU
DREAMS CAN BREAK YOU
LOVE CAN MAKE YOU

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

DREAMS CAN MAKE YOU
LOVE CAN BREAK YOU
DREAMS CAN BREAK YOU
LOVE CAN MAKE YOU

TRUDE

TAKE CARE NOT TO FALL

WE MIGHT LOSE IT ALL

Interlude as Trude and Leo arrive in
America.

ENSEMBLE

DREAMS CAN MAKE YOU
LOVE CAN BREAK YOU
DREAMS CAN BREAK YOU
LOVE CAN MAKE YOU

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

DREAMS CAN MAKE YOU
LOVE CAN BREAK YOU
DREAMS CAN BREAK YOU
LOVE CAN MAKE YOU

LEO & TRUDE

TAKE CARE NOT TO FALL

WE MIGHT LOSE IT ALL

LIGHTS FADE.

KING'S CROWN HOTEL LOBBY - NY (1939)

Leo is at reception on a public
phone.

LEO

Of course I know how cyclotrons work. I designed
one myself. (pause) So there was no knock-on
effect with indium. Can you run the test again?
Oh. I see. That's disappointing.

ENRICO FERMI walks past. Leo notices
and ends the call.

LEO (CONT'D)

I have to go.

(chasing Fermi)

Enrico Fermi! Welcome to New York.

FERMI

You know me?

LEO

The man who just won the Nobel Prize in physics?

Of course. I'm a physicist myself.

(extending a hand)

Leo Szilard.

FERMI

(ignoring the hand)

Szilard. You wrote me from England. You were trying to get Nobel laureates to boycott Japanese academia.

LEO

You got my letter then.

FERMI

You crossed a line.

LEO

We're scientists. It's our job to cross lines.

Break new ground. Push boundaries.

FERMI

Not all boundaries.

LEO

I heard you're starting at Columbia. Professor of Physics. There's a concept

SONG 5: THERE ARE LINES

LEO (CONT'D)

I've been working on that will surely interest you

--

FERMI

Some lines must not be crossed. Not ever.

The banter plays out like a tango,
with the speaker approaching the
listener, who retreats till it's his
turn to speak.

FERMI (CONT'D)

MEN HAVE IDEAS BUT THERE'S NO PROOF
ONLY WITH SCIENCE CAN WE FIND THE TRUTH
UNDER THE OCEAN OR IN SPACE
THERE IS NO CHALLENGE THAT WE CAN'T FACE

BUT DANGER STALKS THE UNAWARE
AND KILLS YOU IF YOU'RE NOT PREPARED
SO LISTEN CLOSE BEFORE YOU'RE LOST
THERE ARE SOME LINES THAT CAN'T BE CROSSED

LEO

YES LINES WERE CROSSED
WHEN HIROHITO WENT TOO FAR
SENDING HIS ARMY

TO CHINESE MANCHURIA
IF THERE ARE LINES FOR WHAT
WE CAN OR CANNOT DO
DON'T YOU THINK THAT THERE
SHOULD BE LINES FOR OTHERS TOO?

FERMI

No!

STAND THERE AND ARGUE IF YOU MUST
THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS AREN'T UP TO US
YOU WANT TO TALK MORALITY
GO TO YOUR SYNAGOGUE DON'T PREACH TO ME

AS SCIENTISTS WE NEED TO LEARN
THAT POLITICS WILL GET YOU BURNED
IGNORE MY WARNING AT YOUR COST
THERE ARE SOME LINES THAT CAN'T BE CROSSED

LEO

IT'S UP TO ALL OF US TO STAND AGAINST INJUSTICE

FERMI

IF WE CHOOSE SIDES
WHAT GOVERNMENT WOULD EVER TRUST US?

LEO

ISN'T OUR ROLE TO TRY AND BUILD A BETTER WORLD?

FERMI

OUR JOB IS SCIENCE
NOT CRYING LIKE A LITTLE GIRL

LEO

I TOOK A PATENT OUT IN THIRTY-THREE
LODGED IN SECRET WITH THE ADMIRALTY
A SIMPLE CONCEPT THAT COULD SAVE MANKIND
I'D LIKE YOUR HELP WITH THAT IF YOU DON'T MIND

FERMI

AAAAAAAYAA!

LEO

WHAT?

FERMI

LOOK WHAT YOU DID, YOU MADE ME SCREAM
A SECRET PATENT IS OBSCENE
IF WE DON'T PUBLISH OUR IDEAS ARE LOST
THAT IS A LINE THAT CAN'T BE CROSSED

WE'RE BUILDING KNOWLEDGE
TO PROMOTE THE HUMAN RACE
HELPING US GROW
NOT HELPING YOU TO STUFF YOUR FACE

LEO

FERMI YOU'RE WRONG THIS PATENT
ISN'T JUST FOR ME
IT'S TIME YOU STEPPED OUT
FROM THE DARK OF YOUR LABORA-TRY

LOOK AT THE WORLD
THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO
WE'RE STANDING ON THE BRINK
OF WORLD WAR TWO

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE
FOR WHAT WE FIND
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO
CROSS A LINE

EDWARD TELLER enters.

FERMI
NO WE CAN'T

LEO
BUT WE MUST

FERMI
NO WE CAN'T!

LEO
WHERE'S SOME TRUST?

FERMI
GO TO HELL!

LEO
IF I MUST!!

FERMI
THERE ARE SOME LINES THAT
CAN'T BE CROSSED!

LEO (CONT'D)
THERE ARE SOME LINES THAT
MUST BE CROSSED!

TELLER
Gentlemen. We left Europe to avoid war. Not start
one.

LEO
Teller. You're a neutral party. Help us settle
this.

FERMI
He's not neutral. He's Hungarian like you.

TELLER
I'm not like Leo at all. I'm employed. At
Princeton. Professor Neils Bohr just gave a talk
there this morning. I thought you might want to
know. Your colleagues in Berlin split a Uranium
atom.

LEO
(alert and excited)
Hahn and Strassman?

TELLER
Yes.

LEO
Using neutrons.

TELLER
You heard?

LEO

Split it? You mean it transmuted to lighter elements?

TELLER

That's right.

LEO

So neutrons may have been released.

TELLER

Perhaps.

LEO

How many?

TELLER

(guessing)

I don't know. Maybe one or two.

LEO

(firmly)

One? Or two?

TELLER

Who cares?

LEO

(insistent)

One? Or two?

FERMI

(suddenly getting it, excited)

One neutron that can split another atom, releasing one or two more. And if it's two. If it's two...

LEO

Exactly.

TELLER

The energy release would be exponential!

FERMI

(to Leo)

That was your idea! An atomic chain reaction!

LEO

I started at the wrong end of the periodic table.

We need to learn the number of neutrons. Fermi?

FERMI

(excited)

I have the setup.

LEO

I'll warn others in the field not to publish anything that might alert the Germans --

FERMI

A line!

LEO

Forget your lines!!

TELLER

Szilard is right. With an atom bomb Hitler will be unstoppable.

FERMI

A remote possibility. Perhaps ten percent.

LEO

A one-in-ten chance that Hitler could level a city. Perhaps this city. I vote for secrecy.

FERMI

We do not keep secrets!

TELLER

I also vote for secrecy.

LEO

That's settled. Two to one.

FERMI

What? That's not scientific.

LEO

No it's democratic. America is a democracy.

FERMI

A democracy! How the hell is it a democracy with only three people in the whole world voting?!

COLUMBIA LAB

SONG 6: DARK DAYS

The men put on lab coats. Leo and Teller set up a wooden box on the table.

LEO

The cadmium/radium source will fire slow neutrons into the uranium target.

TELLER

If a chain reaction is possible, it will light up like a Christmas tree.

FERMI

Gentlemen. The moment of truth.

They put on goggles.

FERMI (CONT'D)

IF NEUTRONS ARE PRESENT THEN WE SHOULD SEE

TELLER

FLASHES APPEAR ON THE CATHODE RAY SCREEN

LEO

FIVE YEARS I'VE CHASED THIS ELUSIVE DREAM

NOW I'M HOLDING ON TIGHT

TO THE HOPE I WASN'T RIGHT

ALL

TERRIFIED OF WHAT WE'LL FIND

DARK DAYS FOR MANKIND

Trude out carrying some medical books.

TRUDE

I FOLLOWED YOU HERE TO

THIS GREAT UNKNOWN

ALL I HEAR IS TALK

OF A WAR BACK HOME

IN A CITY OF FACES

I'M ON MY OWN

Fermi opens an aperture on the box.
Nothing happens.

TELLER

WELL I GUESS WE WERE WRONG

FERMI

IT MIGHT HELP TO SWITCH IT ON

Fermi flicks a switch. The screen starts flashing and clicking to a fever pitch.

TRUDE

AM I BEING LEFT BEHIND?

ALL EXCEPT TRUDE

DARK DAYS FOR MANKIND

Yanke beat. The men stare intently.

FERMI

NOW THAT WE'VE DONE IT
CAN'T KEEP IT TO OURSELVES

LEO

IF WE PUBLISH THE WORLD
IS GOING TO HELL

Teller walks in, waving a copy of Science magazine.

TELLER

SEEMS LIKE THE FRENCH
NEVER HEDED YOUR WARNING BELL

Fermi and Teller read from the magazine in shock.

LEO

(Reads from journal aloud)

FERMI

WHAT DID I SAY?
THEY PUBLISHED ANYWAY

LEO

HOW CAN THEY BE SO BLIND?

ALL

DARK DAYS FOR MANKIND

LEO

THE WORD IS SPREADING RIGHT ACROSS THE GLOBE

SFX

Radio tuning static.

US ANNOUNCER

News from the Currie Institute of France has the world of science buzzing with the promise of a new source of energy.

LEO

IN NO TIME THE WHOLE WORLD IS GOING TO KNOW

ENGLISH ANNOUNCER

Extremely powerful bombs capable of leveling any building in a ten mile radius could soon be possible.

LEO

IT'S GOTTEN TOO BIG FOR US ALONE

ENSEMBLE

NOW THE RACE HAS BEEN CALLED
IF WE LOSE WE LOSE IT ALL
SECOND PLACE WON'T CROSS THE LINE
DARK DAYS FOR MANKIND

LIGHTS OUT.

COLUMBIA CAMPUS

Leo working at his desk. Trude enters out of breath with two paper lunch bags. She hands Leo one.

TRUDE

Columbia is so far from Bellevue. We only have a few minutes before I have to get back.

Leo takes the sandwich and kisses her. Fermi walks past. Leo sees him.

LEO

Thank you Trude. I'll eat it later. I have to go.
Trude chases after Fermi.

TRUDE

When will I see you?

She exits in frustration. Leo catches Fermi. Teller joins them.

LEO

Fermi. You had your meeting?

FERMI

(a smile containing a sea of anger)

Washington is a wonderful city. The architecture is amazing, especially the new Pentagon. You know it's actually shaped like a pentagon.

TELLER

Will the Government help?

FERMI

In a word, NO.

LEO

You told them Germany leads the world in this field.

FERMI

(firmly)

They. Weren't. Interested.

LEO

There must be someone else we can talk to.

FERMI

(the anger breaks through)

Someone else?! How about the president of the United States?! We only got that meeting with the Pentagon because the dean knows some high level brass. But even with that. Even with my Nobel prize. All anybody saw was a fascist enemy alien. With some crazy science fiction idea. Crazy all right. Crazy for listening to you. From now on I'm sticking to science. To hell with politics. And to hell with both of you!!

LEO

Fermi. You're a genius.

FERMI

You fooled me once. Never again. I am a man of principle. One principle. Never to listen to you!

LEO

The military won't listen to us. So we need to find someone they can't ignore. My old professor!

FERMI

I don't care if your old professor is Albert Einstein. The military won't listen!

LEO

The president might.

FERMI

The president?

LEO

It was your idea. And my old professor is Albert Einstein.

TELLER

So Generaldirektor. You want Einstein to write a letter to president Roosevelt. Warning the possibility of a German atomic bomb!

LEO

Exactly.

FERMI

It's so crazy it will probably work.

LIGHTS FADE.

SONG 6A: MONTAGE
COLUMBIA MONTAGE

In a montage, Leo travels between Trude's place and the Columbia University lab.

Leo, Teller and Fermi in Lab coats. Leo pores over formulae and diagrams while Teller and Fermi look on.

LEO

Ten months. Not a word.

FERMI

Your plan worked. The president agreed. We'll get our funding. Be patient.

LEO

The German project has full military backing. We can't be patient.

TELLER

We can't do anything without funding. More than the \$6000 they promised. A lot more.

LEO

So we do all we can with the resources we have. And pray.

The men all pore over the blueprints. Leo looks at his watch, runs home.
Music sting and out.

LEO (CONT'D)
(out of breath)

Sorry I'm late.

TRUDE

Late? I never see you.

LEO

I've been so busy.

TRUDE

Busy on what?

LEO

This and that. How's work?

TRUDE

Since I moved to obstetrics, I've not stopped.

LEO

You see I told you. The threat of war will lead to stockpiling, and--

TRUDE

(impatient)

--and the shortage of rubber to more babies. What sort of 'this and that'?

LEO

It's a new project with some Government funding.

TRUDE

You're worried I won't understand it?

LEO

Trude. You don't have clearance.

TRUDE

I see.

Trude clears the plates. Leo tries to comfort her. She exits as Leo puts on his lab coat.

TELLER

H₂O is hopeless. It absorbed the neutrons.

FERMI

Heavy water then.

TELLER

Out of the question on our budget.

FERMI

What budget?

Leo moves to the others.

LEO

Carbon will work. Graphite. If it's pure enough.

Let's talk to the National Carbon Company.

Music sting and out. Trude puts candles and plates. Leo moves to her.

LEO (CONT'D)

What's this?

Shabbos. TRUDE

We never -- LEO

We took a lot for granted in Europe. Things that are no longer possible over there. I'm holding on to what I can. Good Shabbos Leo. TRUDE

A kiss. TRUDE (CONT'D)

(muddling her way through)

Baruch Atah-- LEO

(harried)

Darling. TRUDE

(shut up)

Leo. (then, forgetting her place)

--melekh ha'olam. Asher kidishanu b'mitz'vosav v'tzivanu--

LEO

I have to go back. Now. TRUDE

(pushing through)

L'had'lik neir shel shabbas--

She opens her eyes. He's gone. TRUDE (CONT'D)

Amein. Trude exits. Leo moves to Fermi and Teller.

LEO

You got the results? TELLER

Your note to the supplier to remove the boron did the trick. Graphite will work. FERMI

Once we get the money. Maybe they've forgotten about us. TELLER

It's a pity we're not at war. They clean up the papers. Leo returns home. Music sting. Underscore reflects 'A Risk You Take'.

LEO

Trude? It's four in the morning. TRUDE

Apparently the only time I can see you. LEO

I'm so tired. TRUDE

Too tired?

She breathes Leo in.

TRUDE (CONT'D)

Your little girlfriend smells like a chemical lab.

LEO

Eau de Laboratoire. The scent of the intelligent woman. I'll get you some.

TRUDE

Save it for an intelligent woman.

LEO

Trude.

TRUDE

I spend my days bringing babies into a broken world. A world I don't know how to fix. People we grew up with are being rounded up like cattle in Nazi work camps. And I don't know how to help them.

LEO

We help them by being alive. By being here.

TRUDE

It's not enough! Leo, you are the smartest man I know. I thought that if anyone could fix this world it would be you. I followed you here. I trusted you. And now? Now I never even see you. Where the hell are you?

LEO

I'm here. Right here.

She breaks away.

TRUDE

Till you go.

Leo catches her. Embraces her.

LEO

Especially then. You are the force that is driving me. To do what I need to do. To save us.

TRUDE

(pushing him away)

No! I fooled myself into believing you. You're not always right. That idea you so believed would change the world? Unlimited power for mankind. That dream you spent all those years chasing. You were wrong about that, weren't you.

Leo looks at Trude, wanting to tell her. Her eyes plead for an answer. In the silence Trude senses the truth. She looks at Leo. He looks back at her with the weight of the world. Music ends.

LEO

I wish I were.

Trude understands and silently walks away.

LIGHTS DIM.

SONG 6B - ARTHUR COMPTON

ROOSEVELT (ON RADIO)

Yesterday, December 7th, 1941. A date which will live in infamy. The United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion. The American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

COMPTON'S OFFICE

Two men in silhouette, ARTHUR COMPTON and GENERAL GROVES having a heated discussion.

COMPTON

General. I'm not sure I'm the right person for this.

GROVES

The dean of Chicago University? A Nobel laureate? Compton, there is nobody in this country more qualified.

COMPTON

A bomb that can level a city. You know I'm a deacon of the church.

GROVES

And I spent ten years learning warfare. You think I want another office job when there's a war to be fought? Wasn't building their damned Pentagon enough? You and I will do our duty Compton. This country is depending on us.

Groves departs.

Music ends

COLUMBIA LAB

Arthur Compton turns to address Leo, Fermi, Teller and others.

COMPTON

My fellow scientists. The United States is at war. We know Germany has its best people at work on an atom bomb. That it has secured uranium supplies from Czechoslovakia and Belgium. Heavy water from Norway. That it may be ahead of us by as much as one year. My task as your new Director of Research is to close that gap fast.

FERMI

You see Leo? I told you to be patient.

COMPTON

Gentlemen. The project is moving to Chicago.

LEO

You're joking. All the Uranium is at Columbia. All of the technicians are at Columbia.

FEMALE SCIENTIST

Leo's right.

The scientists murmur in agreement.
Compton glares at Leo.

COMPTON
(to Leo)

I don't believe we've met.

FERMI

I'm sorry Professor Compton. This is Leo Szilard.

COMPTON

Szilard. I've heard about you.

LEO

Likewise Arthur. Good things I hope.

COMPTON

Compton. Last name. This is a military operation.
Not co-eds on the quad.

LEO

Compton. I've put together a list of facilities
suited to our purposes right here in New York.

COMPTON

Keep up Szilard. Chicago's already approved.

FERMI

Leo. This is the opportunity we've been waiting
for. Arrivaderci Manhattan. Hello Chicago!

The scientists pack their things.

LIGHTS FADE.

SONG 6C: HELLO CHICAGO

TRUDE'S PLACE

Leo closes a suitcase as Trude
enters.

TRUDE

Where are you going?

LEO

The project is moving to Chicago.

TRUDE

You need to go, don't you.

Music fades

LEO

I'm sorry.

TRUDE

Couldn't they choose some place warmer? San Diego
would be nice.

LEO

That would be a wonderful place to work.

TRUDE

If it were San Diego I might have joined you.

LEO

(surprised)

You're not coming?

TRUDE

I hardly see you here as it is. Chicago will be
worse. I have a life here. Not the life I planned.
But a life. Can I help you pack?

(beat. Leo is lost)
Of course. Your suitcase is always packed.
He kisses her and leaves. She
watches him go.

SONG 7: HEADLIGHTS

TRUDE (CONT'D)

SOME CONSPIRACY
HOLDS ME FROM MY DREAMS
IS THIS THE LIFE THAT I'VE CHOSEN?
IN LOVE WITH A MAN
WHOSE LOVE IS HIS WORK
AM I SPENDING MY LIFE ALONE?

I'VE KNOWN MEN
WHO WERE CARING AND KIND
DOTING ON MY EVERY WORD
WHO DON'T TRY TO SOLVE
EVERY PROBLEM THEY FIND
WHO CARE FOR MY NEEDS
MORE THAN THE WORLD

BUT TRY AS I MIGHT I CAN'T SEE
ANY FUTURE WITHOUT HIM FOR ME
I'M FROZEN WHERE I AM
CAN'T MOVE FROM WHERE I STAND
IN THE BLINDING BRILLIANT HEADLIGHTS
OF THIS LOVE
IN THE BLINDING BRILLIANT HEADLIGHTS
OF THIS LOVE

IF HE USED THAT INTELLECT FOR HIS OWN GAIN
HE'D RULE THE WORLD AND LIVE A LIFE SO FREE
WHAT RICHES COULD DENY THAT DAZZLING BRAIN?
HE MIGHT FIND TIME TO SPEND WITH ME

BUT HE ALWAYS LEAVES HIS OWN NEEDS IN THE RAIN
A BETTER WORLD IS ALL HE WANTS AS PAY
I'M LONELY BUT HOW CAN I COMPLAIN?
I WOULDN'T WANT HIM ANY OTHER WAY

IN MY HEART I KNOW THERE'LL NEVER BE
ANY FUTURE WITHOUT HIM FOR ME
SO DESTINY BE DAMNED
I'LL STAY RIGHT WHERE I AM
IN THE BLINDING BRILLIANT HEADLIGHTS
OF THIS LOVE
IN THE BLINDING BRILLIANT HEADLIGHTS
OF THIS LOVE

LIGHTS FADE.

METLAB - CHICAGO

Fermi, Teller and Leo walk in on
Leona, who is working at her desk.

LEO

Excuse me miss. We're looking for Professor
Compton.

LEONA

He's at mass. You must be the newbies from
Columbia. Lets see. (pointing) Teller, Szilard and
Enrico Fermi.

FERMI

Perfecto!

LEONA

Leona Woods. Welcome to Chicago.

TELLER

You work for Professor Compton?

LEONA

We all work for Compton. And Compton works for
General Groves. And the general works for the
president. But if you're asking if I'm a
secretary? I'm a physicist. Post-grad under
Mulliken and Mrozowski. I'm developing the
detectors for monitoring the flux of neutrons in
the pile. And when you're ready, I can show you
our Employee Lounge. Signori?

FERMI

Per favore.

Leo and Fermi begin to exit.

TELLER

(flirting)

Are you single?

LEONA

Do you have a Nobel prize?

LIGHTS FADE.

THE BAR MONTAGE

In a montage we move between the bar
and the lab.

A bartender pours drinks as Leo,
Leona & Fermi sidle up to the bar.

SONG 8: ATOM SMASHER

LEONA

Here's where all the lab rats go after we close up
shop. This kind of work goes down better with a
little bourbon chaser.

Another shot.

LEO

Should you really drink so much?

ENSEMBLE

YOU BETTER

LEONA

Our business deals in 'can we's not 'should we's.

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

DROWN YOUR SORROWS
WE MIGHT ALL

LEO

But considering what we're doing.

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

DISAPPEAR

LEONA

You've got it the wrong way 'round. We drink so we
can deal with what we're doing.

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

YOU BETTER DROWN YOUR SORROWS
WASH AWAY THOSE FEARS
UNLESS WE GET THROUGH THIS
WE MIGHT ALL DISAPPEAR

LEONA

WHEN YOU BLAZE A TRAIL FROM A DUSTY ROAD
THERE'S NO RULES TO FOLLOW BUT YOUR OWN CODE
AND THE SKY'S SO CLOUDY
NO SUN CAN SNEAK BELOW

YAY-YEAH-YEAH...

LEONA (CONT'D)

WELL YOU'RE TIRED AND THIRSTY AND COME SO FAR
ENSEMBLE

COME SO FAR

LEONA

THEN YOU SEE THE BODY COUNT FROM THE WAR
ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

FROM THE WAR

LEONA

AND IT JUST AIN'T SO THEORETICAL ANYMORE

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

THEORETICAL

LEONA

YAY-YEAH-YEAH...

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

YOU BETTER DROWN YOUR SORROWS
WASH AWAY THOSE FEARS
UNLESS WE GET THROUGH THIS
WE MIGHT ALL DISAPPEAR

KEEP YOUR SLIDE-RULE SLIDING
WITH ANOTHER ROUND
IF WE'RE NOT THERE FIRST
WE'LL BE SIX FEET UNDERGROUND

LEO

Water please.

BARTENDER

First day?

ENSEMBLE

BETTER DROWN YOUR SORROWS
WASH AWAY THOSE FEARS
UNLESS WE GET THROUGH THIS
WE MIGHT ALL JUST DISAPPEAR

A lab meeting. Leona, Fermi, Teller
and Leo complain to Compton.

LEO

We can't have the world expert on atomic
disintegration on our team. Because he's an enemy
alien!

LEONA

Like who in this room isn't?

FERMI

I'm not allowed to discuss anything with Hans
Bethe. Because he's not in our "group"!

TELLER

The engineers can't utilize my designs. Because
I'm not an authorised engineer.

LEONA

But they can't initiate designs themselves.
Because they're not atomic physicists!

COMPTON

Military bureaucracy can be frustrating. I'll
speak to General Groves about your concerns.

LEO

General Groves is the one throwing up these
roadblocks. Who will you speak to about him?

COMPTON

General Groves is the man who will get this done.
He just got us the highest priority rating of any
US war project. Ever. Following protocol is a
small price to pay. Now get back to work.

Compton exits

LEO

Compton won't help us.

FERMI

What can you do? We can't go above his head.

LEO

What is more important? Protocol? Or winning this
war? I'm calling the Defence Research Committee.

Leo exits. Fermi and Teller follow.

TELLER

(to Fermi)

Perhaps we should promote Generaldirektor to
Feldmarschall Szilard.

SONG 8A: ATOM SMASHER REPRIS

Leona is left alone. Lighting
change. Teller returns. He looks
over her notes in quiet awe.

LEONA

What do you need, Gefilte Fish?

TELLER

Boron. We removed it from the graphite because it stops neutrons. You're using it to detect them. You figured this out yourself?

LEONA

Yeah. I did. Now back off!

TELLER

Hey! What gives?

LEONA

What gives is I'm tired.

TELLER

Why don't you go home?

LEONA

Because I have two brothers over there. Used to be three. And every day we don't figure this out is another day with a fucking knot in my stomach. Wondering how many are coming back.

LEONA (CONT'D)

AND WE ALL LEFT COLLEGE
WITHOUT A GOD
WITH NO ROAD MAP SAYING
WHAT'S RIGHT OR NOT
SO WE PRAY TO NO ONE
WE'RE DOING WHAT WE OUGHT

BETTER DROWN YOUR SORROWS
WASH AWAY THOSE FEARS
UNLESS WE GET THROUGH THIS
WE MIGHT ALL DISAPPEAR

Music ends. Another staff meeting.

LEO

We know how much Uranium 235 is needed to make a bomb. Because the British worked it out. We could have worked it out ourselves. Eighteen months ago. If Fermi and I had been allowed to talk to Professor Urey at the US Office of Naval Research.

COMPTON

I understand. But secrecy is of the utmost importance to General Groves.

LEO

Secrecy among ourselves is killing us. We're racing the Germans to the bomb. They don't have this red tape to deal with.

(then)

I'm writing to the president.

COMPTON

Perhaps I've been unclear about the chain of command. There's the president. Then the general. Then me. Then fifty feet of shit. Then you. If you question my authority again --

LEO

(cutting in)
Science is questioning!
COMPTON
The military is not! It's about following orders.
LEO
Do you have a stamp?
COMPTON
Excuse me?
LEO
I'm writing that letter.

SONG 8b: THE PHONE CALL TRANSITION

Leo storms out. The phone rings.
Compton answers. Groves appears on
the other line.

GROVES
Compton. You still have a problem.
COMPTON
Not Szilard again.
GROVES
Are you going to fix it? Or am I?
COMPTON
I don't think that's necessary General.
Unfortunately nobody can quite do what he can. Who
did he speak to this time?
GROVES
The Defence Research Committee.
COMPTON
That is unacceptable to be sure.
GROVES
No one is irreplaceable Compton.
COMPTON
I take full responsibility. This will not happen
again.

Compton hangs up.

LIGHTS FADE.

The scientists are working. Leo
storms in with a letter.

FERMI
What are you so excited about Leo?
TELLER
His citizenship.
FERMI
That was yesterday.
TELLER
It's a big deal.
LEO
The president!
FERMI
Roosevelt?

LEO

Lady Roosevelt. She agreed to pass my letter on to the president.

FERMI

(to Teller)

Now that's a big deal.

LEONA

This calls for a drink!

COMPTON (OFF)

Leo Szilard.

LEO

He used my first name. I'm in trouble.

Compton enters.

COMPTON

There is a letter. A letter I specifically directed you not to write.

LEO

Arthur, the president can (help us) --

COMPTON

(cutting in)

Compton.

LEO

Compton. You're either a scientist or a soldier. You can't be both.

COMPTON

I'm here to bridge the divide, Szilard. And if you can't follow orders, I can't protect you.

LEO

I don't need your protection.

COMPTON

You wrote a letter to the president. With the involvement of Albert Einstein.

LEO

Yes.

COMPTON

Who does *not* have clearance.

LEO

For God's sake! It was a letter of introduction --

COMPTON

(cutting him off)

Szilard! The general is looking for an excuse. Any excuse. To incarcerate you for the duration of the war. What good will you be to anyone locked away in a military prison?

A door opens. a very self-assured and slickly dressed J ROBERT OPPENHEIMER enters.

COMPTON (CONT'D)

I'd like you all to meet Robert Oppenheimer. He will now be heading the cooling systems division.

LEONA

That's Leo's role.

OPPENHEIMER

Let's do that again. It's J Robert Oppenheimer. The capital letter J. On its own. Always. But enough about me. What an honour it is to meet all of you.

(smiles as he approaches Leo)

Especially the man who made all of this possible.

LEO

Oppenheimer. I remember you from Berlin. You tried to poison your supervisor. An apple coated in some nasty chemicals.

OPPENHEIMER

Oh my poisoning days are over. Like Moses in the desert, you have shown us the path to salvation. A promised land where scientists like us get the recognition and funding we so rightly deserve.

LEO

Compton, you cannot be serious.

COMPTON

Miss Woods, can you show Mister Oppenheimer to his office.

LEONA

Right this way.

Oppenheimer takes her arm.

OPPENHEIMER

(to Leo)

Moses never made it into the promised land either.

The scientists exit, leaving Leo and Compton.

LEO

(angry)

You're firing me?

COMPTON

I'm having you transferred back to Columbia. You can work with us from there.

LEO

It's hard enough working with you from here. From Columbia it will be impossible.

COMPTON

I know how important you've been to the project. But but we don't need two generals. Right now I need team players. I'm sorry Leo. You're out.

LIGHTS FADE.

THE BAR

SONG 8C: INTO THE BAR

The bartender cleans up as Leo drinks a beer alone. A brash young army airman PAUL comes in and takes a seat nearby.

PAUL

Johnny Walker. Neat.

(It's served. He pounds it.)

Another please.

(It's served. He pounds it. Jesus.)

Another!

(Leo snatches the shot)

LEO

Are you old enough to be drinking?

PAUL

I'm old enough to fight and die for my country, so yeah, I think I can have a fucking drink if I want.

LEO

(to waitress)

Actually, make it Schlitz. Two please.

(passing one beer to Paul)

Easier on brain cells. You might need them one day.

PAUL

(decides, then)

Thanks. Paul.

LEO

Leo. Shipping out?

PAUL

Got my wings. Army Air Corps. First lieutenant.

LEO

A pilot. You'll most certainly need those brain cells.

PAUL

I'll drink to that.

They drink.

LEO

Your parents must be proud of you.

PAUL

Mom's proud. Dad still wants me to be a doctor. I told him where he can stick his thermometer.

LEO

You told him that?

PAUL

Sure. Isn't free speech what we're fighting for?

LEO

I'm an American citizen now. Do you think I could tell my boss where he can stick his slide-rule?

PAUL

That's not just your right. It's your patriotic duty. Just like it's my duty to tell the emperor of Japan where to shove his chopsticks.

LEO

You speak Japanese?

PAUL

He'll get the message. I'm hoping to deliver it in person.

LEO

You're not worried about the walls of flack he
might greet you with?

PAUL

What's the worst that can happen?

LEO

You can get yourself killed.

SONG 9: STARS AND STRIPES

PAUL

So I die defending my country in its time of need.
Protecting the boys who are up there with me.
Risking their necks to protect mine. Worry about
what might happen, you've already lost.

PAUL (CONT'D)

WE DIDN'T RAISE OUR HAND FOR WAR
WE NEVER SAID 'INVADE OUR SHORE'
THEY HAD A CHOICE TO STAY AWAY
THEY DREW FIRST BLOOD AND NOW THEY'LL PAY

I LOVE THIS LAND WHERE I WAS BORN
OUR FREEDOM IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR
I GOT MY WINGS AND NOW IT'S TIME
TO RAIN SOME PAYBACK FROM THE SKY

GONNA STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT
DEFEND OUR WAY OF LIFE
HIT 'EM RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES
THE STARS AND STRIPES WILL RISE

THOSE JAPANAZI JERKS WILL PAY
FOR MESSING WITH THE USA
WHEN OUR COUNTRY CALLS WE STAND PROUD AND TALL
AND NOTHING'S GONNA GET IN MY WAY

GONNA STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT
DEFEND OUR WAY OF LIFE
HIT 'EM RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES
THE STARS AND STRIPES WILL RISE

I CAN'T KNOW IF I'M THE ONE WHO MAKES IT
BUT BY GOD I'LL LIGHT THE WAY
RAISE THE FLAG UNTIL ANOTHER TAKES IT
DON'T GIVE IN WE'LL WIN THE DAY

GONNA STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT
DEFEND OUR WAY OF LIFE
HIT 'EM RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES
THE STARS AND STRIPES WILL RISE

LEO

You're right. I can't give up. Not without a
fight.

I CAN'T KNOW IF I'M THE ONE WHO MAKES IT
BUT BY GOD I'LL LIGHT THE WAY

PAUL

RAISE THE FLAG UNTIL ANOTHER TAKES IT

BOTH

DON'T GIVE IN WE'LL WIN THE DAY

LEO

GONNA STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

PAUL

DEFEND OUR WAY OF LIFE

LEO

HIT 'EM RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES

BOTH

THE STARS AND STRIPES WILL RISE

LEO

I started this. I have to finish it.

PAUL

You tell 'em Pops.

BOTH

GONNA STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

DEFEND OUR WAY OF LIFE

HIT 'EM RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES

PAUL

THE STARS AND STRIPES WILL

LEO

STARS AND STRIPES WILL

BOTH

STARS AND STRIPES WILL RISE

LIGHTS FADE.

TRUDE'S PLACE - NY

SONG 9A: STARS AND STRIPES TRANSITION

LIGHTS UP ON:

Leo is asleep at the table by an
empty bottle of scotch. Trude
arrives home with mail. Angry.

TRUDE

Leo. You've been here for months now. I know your
job meant a lot to you. But you might prepare
dinner once in a while.

(picking up bottle)

What's this?

LEO

You don't know.

TRUDE

Know? Know what?

LEO

Today's paper.

TRUDE

Leo, I've just finished a double shift.

He hands her the paper, pointing to
an article.

LEO

Here.

TRUDE

The State Department confirmed the existence of
Nazi extermination camps and the murder of -- up
to two million Jews. (Beat) Million? Million!? My
God Leo. How is that even possible?

LEO

Livestock is an industry. Why not murder?

TRUDE

You saw this coming.

LEO

Not this. Not in my wildest dreams.

TRUDE

I always thought it would pass. That one day, we'd
go back. We can't go back, can we?

SONG 10: WHERE IS HOME?

LEO

There's nothing to go back to.

She breaks down. Leo holds her.

LEO (CONT'D)

I ONCE HAD A HOME IN HUNGARY
THEN BERLIN WAS HOME TO ME
VIENNA WAS A PLACE WE LOVED TO ROAM

TRUDE

THE CAFES WHERE WE USED TO MEET
THE TEMPLE ON DONHANY STREET
THOSE PEOPLE WEREN'T JUST OUR FRIENDS
THEY WERE OUR HOME

LEO

HOW CAN SOMEWHERE THAT'S HOME
WHEN YOU'RE IN IT

BOTH

FEEL SO EMPTY AND COLD
THE NEXT MINUTE?

I KNEW THINGS WERE HARD
BUT NOT COLD AND HARD AS A STONE
ARE THEY GONE?
ARE THEY GONE?
HOW COULD THEY LEAVE US
SO ALONE?

GONE

ARE THEY GONE?
I'M A CITIZEN
WHERE IS HOME?

TRUDE

FRIDAY NIGHT BY CANDLE LIGHT
TELLING JOKES ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT
OLD MEN PRAYING CHILDREN LAUGHING

BOTH
HOW COULD WE KNOW?
TRUDE
HOME IS NOT GEOGRAPHY
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO WERE DEAR TO ME
THE MINDS THE IDEAS
WHERE DID THEY GO?

HOW CAN SOMEWHERE THAT'S HOME
WHEN YOU'RE IN IT
FEEL SO EMPTY AND COLD
THE NEXT MINUTE?

BOTH
I KNEW THINGS WERE HARD
BUT NOT COLD AND HARD AS A STONE

ARE THEY GONE?
ARE THEY GONE?
HOW COULD THEY LEAVE US
SO ALONE?

TRUDE
WE CAN'T JUST SIT HERE
AND MOURN OUR FATE
WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING
IT CAN'T BE TOO LATE

LEO
I AM ONLY ONE MAN
TRUDE
BUT YOU'RE NOT ALONE

LEO
GONE
TRUDE
HOLD ON THERE'S SO MUCH TO BE DONE
LEO
ARE THEY GONE?

TRUDE
FIGHT ON TILL THE BATTLE IS WON
LEO

GONE
TRUDE
NOBODY CAN DO WHAT YOU DO
LEO
ARE THEY GONE?

TRUDE
HOLD ON WE'RE DEPENDING ON YOU
LEO

I'M A CITIZEN
BOTH
WHERE IS HOME?

TRUDE
Leo. You have to stop them.
LEO

I was fired.

TRUDE

What happened to you? Once nothing could stop you.

LEO

I tried my best Trude. What more could one man do?

TRUDE

On his own.

Music out.

This strikes home. Leo sees himself
for the first time.

LEO

You're right. No man is an island. Except for Leo
Szilard.

TRUDE

I fell in love with a fighter. And the war isn't
over.

LEO

They took away my clearance Trude. I can't talk
with my colleagues about work. I can't even walk
down the street without Government agents
following me. Monitoring my calls. Reading my
mail.

TRUDE

(in her hands)

This mail?

SONG 10A: THE LETTER

Leo takes an envelope, opens and
reads it.

LEO

They don't even bother resealing it. Germany made
a big mistake invading Russia. They've lost. It's
only a matter of time before -- No.

(he stops cold)

It's not possible.

TRUDE

What is it?

LEO

Teller. He got a message from a friend in Berlin.
Fritz Houterman. Working on the German bomb.

TRUDE

What does he say?!

LEO

They're getting close.

(beat)

I have to go back.

SONG 11: ONE DAY

TRUDE

A moment ago you were fired.

LEO

We have to beat them Trude. Whatever it takes.
She kisses him and exits.

THE ROAD BACK - CHICAGO

LEO

TEN YEARS AGO A PASSING THOUGHT
LED ME TO WHO I AM
THESE PATENTS I HOLD
COULD SEE ME A WEALTHY MAN

I MANAGED TO ESCAPE THE RAGING STORM
THERE'S FOOD ON MY PLATE MY BED IS WARM
I TRIED MY BEST THEY SENT ME AWAY
THAT WAS OKAY UNTIL TODAY

TODAY IT'S RAINING MURDER
AND THERE'S NO END IN SIGHT
TEN THOUSAND SOULS ALIVE NOW
COULD BE ASHES BY TONIGHT

AS ONE MAN ON MY OWN
I HAVE NO VOICE
THESE CIRCUMSTANCES LEAVE ME
NO CHOICE

I CAN'T JUST HOPE THIS
CLOUD WILL BLOW AWAY

RADIO (OFF)

A press association report from Warm Springs,
Georgia has confirmed the passing of president
Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

LEO

ONE DAY WHAT AM I SAVING FOR
IF THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO SAVE ANY MORE
ONE DAY AS I FADE AWAY
DON'T LET ME RUE THE CHOICE I MADE ONE DAY

METLAB - CHICAGO

COMPTON

Szilard. What are you doing here?

LEO

Collecting the fee the government owes me for my
chain reaction patent. As well as my half of the
nuclear reactor design patent. Together they're
worth millions. Without them you have no bomb.

COMPTON

At a time like this. You're asking the U.S.
Government for money?

LEO

I don't care about the money. I care about beating
Germany to the bomb. Tell Groves he can have my
patents. If you'll have me back.

COMPTON

It means that much to you.

LEO

What could mean more.

COMPTON

(beat)

A team player?

LEO

A team player.

Compton extends a hand. Leo shakes it.

COMPTON

Welcome back to The Manhattan Project.

Leo puts on a lab coat and is met by Leona, Teller and Fermi. They begin working around the table.

LEO

THE RICHES I'D HOPED FOR
HAD TOO GREAT A COST
I CAN'T SAVE FOR TOMORROW
WHEN THE FUTURE MIGHT BE LOST

DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH
OF A DIFFERENCE I CAN MAKE
I JUST PRAY THAT I'M NOT
ONE DAY TOO LATE

Fermi and Teller take their coats off.

FERMI

Leo. We're going to Los Alamos. Working with Oppenheimer on the bomb design.

TELLER

Come with us. We've built the reactor. The foreplay is done. Now for the sex.

LEO

I'm working on a fast-neutron reactor design. To speed-up plutonium production. I need to be here.

They hug. Fermi and Teller leave.

LEO (CONT'D)

ONE DAY WHAT AM I SAVING FOR
IF THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO SAVE ANY MORE
ONE DAY AS I FADE AWAY,
DON'T LET ME RUE THE CHOICE I MADE

Leona rushes in.

LEONA

It's president Truman.

TRUMAN ANNOUNCEMENT

I wish that Franklin D Roosevelt had lived to see this day. General Eisenhower informs me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the United Nations. The flags of freedom fly all over Europe.

The two are overjoyed.

LEONA

(hugging Leo)

We beat them Leo. We won!

LEO

The war is over.

Compton enters.

COMPTON

Our war is far from over. The Los Alamos team need to test the implosion lens on a working plutonium device.

LEO

We don't need the bomb now.

COMPTON

The plane leaves in an hour.

Compton and Leo exit. The music shifts.

LIGHTS FADE.

ALAMOGORDO

Pre-dawn. Fermi, Compton, Leo and General Groves watch the horizon. Oppenheimer addresses the crowd.

OPPENHEIMER

Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to the Grand Premiere of the greatest achievement of man. The most colossal, most monumental, most astronomical power ever wielded by any mortal or god. You are about to witness the dawn of a new age for mankind.

LEO

This is madness!

Oppenheimer strides up to Leo, moving him away from the group.

OPPENHEIMER

Leo. So glad you're here to witness the fruits of all our labours.

LEO

The explosion will be seen and felt from Albuquerque to El Paso. How will you explain it to the public?

OPPENHEIMER

Leo. Haven't you learned the hard way where all this negativity leads? We are Gods here. Science is the shining beacon, leading this country to a blazing future.

An impatient General Groves joins them.

GROVES

What's the hold-up now?

He sees Leo and smiles, like someone who knows they hold all the cards.

Of course. Szee-lard.

LEO

General. You can't keep this a secret. The Russians will learn of it and --

COMPTON
(to Leo)

Szilard. You're breaking our agreement.

GROVES

Earplugs people. This is gonna shake the world.

SFX

Warning Siren

LEO

Are you blind? It's going to lead to an arms race
with the Soviets that could end civilization!

COMPTON

As scientists that's not our concern.

FERMI

Compton is right.

LEO

Germany surrendered. We don't need the bomb!

GROVES

Oh it never was about one bomb.

All put on their goggles and exit,
leaving Leo alone.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Initiating sequence. 5. 4. 3. 2. 1.

LEO

TODAY ALL THAT I FEARED HAS COME
RISING LIKE A THOUSAND SUNS
AND I PRAY THAT I'M NOT TOO LATE
TO STEM THIS TIDE I HELPED CREATE
GOD SAVE US FROM THE CHOICE I MADE
ONE DAY

SFX

The bomb explodes.

BLACKOUT.

Leo disappears in a flash of light
and smoke.

HOUSE LIGHTS UP ON:

An empty stage.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

AT RISE:

FORMAL GATHERING - NY (1954)

SONG 11A - ENTR'ACTE

Leona, Compton, Oppenheimer and
Teller.

LEONA

Did Leo really think he could have stopped it?

COMPTON

Not alone. But once Germany was defeated it should
have been clear to all of us.

OPPENHEIMER

I'll tell you what was clear. That the Government had spent two billion dollars racing the Germans to a bomb they never had.

TELLER

Neils Bohr was right when he said producing bombs would turn the country into a factory. Chicago, Los Alamos, Hanford, Oak Ridge. 130,000 people working around the clock. There's no way we could have stopped that.

COMPTON

We were the only ones who had any hope of stopping it. Apart from us and maybe a handful of others, nobody had any idea what they were even working on.

LIGHTS FADE.

OAK RIDGE

SONG 12: HOLES IN THE DONUTS

LAVERNE, LENA & MAE, factory girls at an assembly line. They march in with their assembly trays.

GIRLS

WE GET UP EVERY MORNING
WHEN THE WHISTLE BLOWS
WHAT IT IS WE MAKE ALL DAY
WE STILL DON'T KNOW
US GIRLS ARE LEARNING FAST
IT'S BETTER NOT TO ASK
THEY TELL US WHAT TO SAY
NOT SURE THAT IT'S OK
BUT WE SAY IT ANYWAY
WE'RE MAKING HOLES IN THE DONUTS
LIGHTS FOR THE LIGHTNING BUGS

MABEL WAS A PRETTY GIRL
FROM BALTIMORE
THEY TOLD HER TO KEEP QUIET
BUT SHE SAID WHAT FOR?
NEXT DAY SHE DISAPPEARED
BUT HER THINGS ARE ALL STILL HERE

THEY TELL US WHAT TO SAY
NOT SURE THAT IT'S OK
BUT WE SAY IT ANYWAY
WE'RE MAKING HOLES IN THE DONUTS
LIGHTS FOR THE LIGHTNING BUGS

LENA

LAST YEAR THIS WAS A FARM
IF YOU BELIEVE THE TALK

NOW THE POWER BILL IS BIGGER
THAN NEW YORK

LAVERNE AND MAE

BELIEVE THE TALK
BELIEVE THE TALK

THAN NEW YORK
THAN NEW YORK

GIRLS
THE BRIGHTEST THING YOU'LL SEE
IN ALL OF TENNESSEE
WE'RE MAKING HOLES IN THE DONUTS
LIGHTS FOR THE LIGHTNING BUGS

DON'T KNOW WHAT THE SECURITY IS ALL ABOUT
TRUCKS ARE COMING IN BUT NOTHING'S GOING OUT
NO CLUE WHAT IT'S FOR
BUT IT'S SUPPOSED TO WIN THE WAR

THEY TELL US WHAT TO SAY
NOT SURE THAT ITS OK
BUT WE SAY IT ANYWAY
WE'RE MAKING HOLES IN THE DONUTS
LIGHTS FOR THE LIGHTNING BUGS

Laverne is escorted out by one of
two military men.

WE'RE MAKING HOLES IN THE DONUTS
LIGHTS FOR THE LIGHTNING BUGS

Lena is escorted out by the second
man.

MAE

WE'RE MAKING HOLES IN THE DONUTS

Mae is escorted out by both men.

LIGHTS DIM.

TRANSITION

PRE-RECORDED MARCHING SONG

ANNOUNCER

The world's largest ocean liner, Queen Elizabeth,
pulls into New York harbour to a hero's welcome.
Aboard, almost 15,000 happy G.I.s. These are the
guys that helped win it for us against the Nazis.
And the entire nation welcomes them home.

LIGHTS UP ON:

LEO'S PLACE - CHICAGO

An enthusiastic Trude enters and is
greeted by Leo. They embrace.

TRUDE

I tried calling you. Germany surrendered. Leo, we
finally get our lives back.

LEO

Yes.

TRUDE

Now we can go to San Diego like we always talked about.

(Noticing his unease)

What's wrong?

LEO

It's not over Trude.

TRUDE

They still want to use the bomb? Berlin surrendered.

LEO

On Japan.

TRUDE

Japan has the bomb?

LEO

Japan has nothing, apart from the will to keep fighting. The way things are going, we'll be lucky to find a city left to bomb.

TRUDE

They want to use your bomb on a city? Of people?

LEO

There's no point using it on anything else.

TRUDE

When?

LEO

This week. Next week. As soon as a device is ready. They're making a terrible mistake.

TRUDE

You can't blame yourself Leo. It's war. So many have died. So many cities destroyed. What's one more?

LEO

I'm not worried about one city Trude.

SONG 13: GREATER BATTLE

I'm worried about the human race. If it's okay for us to use nuclear weapons to solve our problems, then it's okay for others. How will the war after this one be fought?

TRUDE

You can't stop it, can you?

LEO

No, I can't. Not alone.

LEO (CONT'D)

THE WAR WE FEARED AND FOUGHT AGAINST IS OVER
THE DAY WE LONGED AND PRAYED FOR HAS NOW COME
OUR GREATEST FEAR PROVED WRONG
THERE WAS NO GERMAN BOMB

THE DEAD NOW NUMBER IN THE TENS OF MILLIONS
AND THOUGH SO MUCH WAS LOST THE WAR IS WON

IT TOOK TWELVE TRAGIC YEARS
BUT THERE'S NO TIME FOR TEARS

Leo takes a folder from a drawer. He
looks to Trude. She nods, kisses
him, and leaves.

LEO (CONT'D)

A NEW AND GREATER BATTLE'S ON THE WAY
AND IF WE LOSE WE'LL HAVE THE WORLD TO PAY
CAN YOU HEAR THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE FOR OUR SOUL?

METLAB - CHICAGO

Leo presents the petition to a
female scientist.

FEMALE SCIENTIST

What is it?

LEO

A petition to President Truman. Stating we built
the bomb as a defensive measure against a German
bomb. We do not condone its use against Japan.

FEMALE SCIENTIST

Okay. Okay.

LEO

WE CAN'T GO BACK AND UNDO
WHAT WE STARTED
UNPLANT THE SEED AND
TAKE BACK ALL WE'VE DONE
THE ATOM WE HELPED FREE
IS NOW THE ENEMY

Fermi enters.

FERMI

You realize this bomb could save thousands of
American lives.

LEO

Fermi. I'm thinking about our grandchildren's
lives.

TO USE THE BOMB WILL COST US
ALL WE FOUGHT FOR
IT'S NOT WINNING WHEN YOU'VE LOST
ALL THAT YOU'VE WON

LEO (CONT'D)

THE GREATEST CASUALTY
OUR OWN HUMANITY
WHERE'S OUR MORALITY?

CHORUS

AHHHH

LEO

THIS IS INSANITY

FERMI

THIS IS INSANITY!

LEO

A NEW AND GREATER BATTLE'S ON THE WAY
AND IF WE LOSE WE'LL HAVE THE WORLD TO PAY
CHORUS

AHHHH

AHHH

LEO & CHORUS
CAN YOU HEAR THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE FOR OUR SOUL
SCIENTIST

Leo? What are you doing here?

LEO

I need you to sign a petition.

LEO & CHORUS

CAN YOU HEAR THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE FOR OUR SOUL

A NEW AND GREATER BATTLE'S
ON THE WAY

CHORUS

AND IF WE LOSE WE'LL HAVE
THE WORLD TO PAY

LEO

WE'LL HAVE THE WORLD TO PAY

LEO & MEN

CAN YOU HEAR THE
WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE
CAN YOU HEAR THE
WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE

WOMEN

CAN YOU HEAR THE
WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE
CAN YOU HEAR THE BATTLE

ALL

CAN YOU HEAR THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE FOR OUR SOUL

LIGHTS FADE.

Leo rushes in.

SONG 13A: LEONA SIGNS

LEONA

Where are you going?

LEO

Los Alamos. I need all the signatures I can get.

LEONA

About all that. I'm worried. That list of yours.

LEO

The petition?

LEONA

I know Oppenheimer. Anyone who signs that petition. I mean. There's only one place that employs Atomic Physicists.

LEO

I know.

LEONA

Okay. It's a big risk.

LEO

Yes. It is.

Beat.

LEONA

May I borrow your pen? I'd like to sign.

(She takes his pen, signs, and hands it back)

Good luck Leo.

She leaves. Leo packs up. Compton appears.

Music ends.

COMPTON

How's the petition coming?

LEO

(a little surprised)

Ninety-nine signatures. Yours would round it up nicely.

He offers it. Compton considers before waving it off.

COMPTON

It won't make any difference. I shouldn't be telling you this. A few weeks ago, the general informed President Truman about the bomb.

LEO

(Jumping in)

He didn't know?

COMPTON

He didn't need to know.

LEO

He was the vice-president!

COMPTON

Listen. Groves told Truman that the entire operation was created and the bomb built, solely to drop on the Japanese.

LEO

We have to tell him the truth.

COMPTON

The truth? They've spent billions on this project. Without congressional approval. And the president who authorised it is dead. That's the truth.

SONG 14: WORLD OF GRAY

COMPTON (CONT'D)

They have to use the bomb.

LEO

(looking at petition)

This won't stop it.

COMPTON

Nothing will stop it.

LEO

And you can live with that?

COMPTON

I'VE BEEN TORN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS
SINCE I FIRST LEARNED TO SPEAK
ONE FOOT PLANTED FIRM IN SCIENCE
ONE IN MY BELIEF

QUANTUM PHYSICS BOUGHT ME FAME
AND SOME PROSPERITY
ALL THE WHILE MY FAITH IN GOD
WAS SORELY TESTING ME

I WAS STRUGGLING WITHOUT A CLUE
DUAL REALITIES TORE MY SOUL IN TWO
TILL MY TO-THE-DEATH FIGHT
BETWEEN DARKNESS AND LIGHT
RIPPED AWAY
A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF GRAY

LEO

You're looking to science for morals Compton?
Science has no morals!

COMPTON

WE SIGNED UP TO THIS PROGRAM
WITH OUR CONSCIENCE CLEAR
THE ALTERNATIVE TO WINNING
WAS A WORLD OF FEAR

BRIDGING SCIENCE AND THE ARMY
TOOK A POINT OF VIEW
THAT AN ANSWER MIGHT BE FALSE
YET IT COULD STILL BE TRUE

LEO

This is madness.

COMPTON

IF YOU STAND THERE AND JUST DISAGREE
THEN IT'S ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE COIN YOU SEE
BUT WHEN BLACK SPINS TO WHITE
IT MIGHT SHED SOME NEW LIGHT
ON YOUR DAY
A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF GRAY

IN THE WORLD OF QUANTUM REALITY
CHOOSE BOTH RIGHT AND WRONG
'CAUSE THEY BOTH CAN BE
WITH NO CONFLICT IN
YOUR VOCAB'LARY
HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT
SIMULTANEOUSLY

LEO

YOU CAN HIDE BEHIND YOUR SCIENCE
AND YOUR NOBEL PRIZE
WE HAD THE MINDS TO GET HERE
THAT DOESN'T MAKE US WISE

CAN'T YOU SEE THE ENDLESS SUFFERING
THIS BOMB WILL CAUSE
IF OUR ACTIONS MAKE ITS USE
ACCEPTABLE IN WAR?

COMPTON

OR THE BOMB COULD MEAN THIS WAR WILL END
AND NO ONE WILL USE ITS LIKE AGAIN
BOTH THE THING YOU MOST FEAR
AND SALVATION APPEAR
ON ONE TRAY
A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF GRAY

LEO

You may be right Compton. But I need to live with
myself after this. I'm stopping it.

COMPTON

You can't stop it.

LEO

Then by God I'll light the way!

Leo storms out, leaving Compton
shaken to the core.

COMPTON

(reflective)

I'VE BEEN TORN BETWEEN TWO WORLDS
SINCE I FIRST LEARNED TO SPEAK
ONE FOOT PLANTED FIRM IN SCIENCE
ONE IN MY BELIEF

I CAN SEE TRUTH IN ALL THAT YOU SAY
BUT THERE'S TEN BILLION TRUTHS
IN THIS QUANTUM GAME

SO YOU BEND YOUR WORLD VIEW
TO THE TRUTH THAT GETS YOU
THROUGH YOUR DAY
A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF GRAY

LIGHTS FADE.

The sound of a propeller airplane
starting.

ABOVE AMERICA

Leo and Fermi flying to Los Alamos,
speaking loudly above the engines.

FERMI

You okay Leo?

LEO

How long 'til we're in New Mexico?

FERMI

You need to go to the bathroom again?

FERMI (CONT'D)

Did you go to the doctor? It might be serious.

LEO

It's nothing.

FERMI

So what are you worried about? The war will be over soon.

LEO

After they use the bomb. And I can't stop it.

FERMI

Your petition.

LEO

It's not enough.

FERMI

Look. Either A, we drop the bomb and a lot of people die. Or B, we don't drop it. The war goes on. And a lot of people die. We shouldn't get involved.

LEO

(suddenly excited)

Maybe there's an option C.

(beat)

What if we warn the Japanese. Tell them we'll destroy a certain city. On a certain date. Let them evacuate first. They still get to use their bomb.

FERMI

On an empty city.

LEO

Exactly.

FERMI

So nobody dies.

LEO

Nobody dies.

FERMI

That's so crazy, it will probably work!

LEO

Let's keep it between us for now.

SONG 15: GREATER BATTLE REPRISE

FERMI

You should tell everyone!

LEO

No. Not everyone. Not yet

LEO (CONT'D)

WE'LL NEED TO LAY THE GROUND FOR THIS IDEA
PROTECT IT FROM THE HAWKS WHO'LL TEAR IT DOWN
WE HAVE TO PLAY IT RIGHT
SO WE CAN WIN THIS FIGHT

LEO (CONT'D)

A NEW AND GREATER
BATTLE'S ON THE WAY
TO DEMONSTRATE COMPASSION
AS A PLAY

FERMI

TO SAVE A CITY FAR AWAY

AND SOAR TO VIC'TRY DAY!

BOTH

WE'LL END THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
AND NOT LOSE A SINGLE SOUL

LIGHTS FADE.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Leo, Fermi, Oppenheimer, Compton and
General Groves.

GROVES

Thank you for your report gentlemen. And for your
conclusion. I'm sure President Truman will concur.
Nobody will ever say we have not given this matter
the most careful consideration.

LEO

They'll say you gave it less than a moments
thought.

COMPTON

My apologies General. Szilard, I warned you.

GROVES

(as to a child)

And what is it you think we've missed?

LEO

We built the bomb to deter the Germans. From using
their own atomic bombs against us. Japan has no
bomb. No allies. No effective navy or air force.
They're finished.

COMPTON

And how many have to die, on both sides,
before they surrender?

OPPENHEIMER

The American people have given us two billion
dollars for this. They will demand results.

LEO

Results? By using the bomb, we are endorsing its
use as a weapon of war. A weapon only we possess.
Russia will take it as a threat and build their
own bombs to use against us. That will be your
results!

GROVES

All right Sea-lard.

LEO

It's Szilard.

GROVES

I could listen to you. Or I could listen to your Nobel prize-winning colleagues. Who have told me in writing that there is no acceptable alternative to dropping the bomb on Japan.

LEO

I have a petition here. With over a hundred signatures on it. Some of the sharpest minds in the country. Who are against dropping the bomb on Japan. Especially at this late stage of the war. If you must use the bomb, why not warn the --

GROVES

(cutting in)

Warn the Japanese first? And then drop it on an empty city? Perhaps because your own colleagues have considered that proposal and advised against it. Right here. In their report.

Throws the report on the table.

OPPENHEIMER

Leo. The bomb has never been tested in battle. If it doesn't work, America will be humiliated.

LEO

You would actually condemn a city of people for the sake of your reputation?

OPPENHEIMER

Our reputations. All our names. Our country's name. Do you want to be the man who made the bomb that didn't go off? America would look weak. Worse, vulnerable.

GROVES

Here's the thing Zee-lard. The signatories of this report are people President Truman trusts. You? You he's never heard of. And believe me, he never will.

LEO

So it's Oppenheimer's word against mine.

GROVES

It's also signed by Compton.

LEO

Of course.

GROVES

And Fermi.

Beat.

LEO

Fermi?

Leo looks to Fermi who looks away.

GROVES

Compton. Oppenheimer. Join me outside for a word.

OPPENHEIMER

Thanks again Leo. We couldn't have done it without you.

Oppenheimer and Compton exit leaving Fermi and Leo.

LEO

You told them?

FERMI

Leo listen.

(beat)

I had a moment alone with Oppenheimer. I thought if I could explain your plan to him, he'd surely get it and love it.

LEO

And prepare a plan to counter it.

FERMI

Oppenheimer said it. As scientists, we have no claim to special competence in solving political, social and military problems. That was also stated in the report. That is what I signed.

LEO

No acceptable alternative? That's not science. That's Oppenheimer playing God. With your endorsement.

FERMI

(close to tears)

I once told you. There are lines that cannot be crossed. If you had listened to me then, there would be no letter to Roosevelt. There would be no race against an imagined threat. There would be NO BOMB!!

Leo is shaken to the core. The two men look at each other for a long beat. Fermi turns to leave.

LEO

You're right Fermi. I wanted to save the world through science. I failed.

FERMI

You know they won't let you work in atomic physics after this.

LEO

I know.

FERMI

I will never understand you.

LEO

You and I live in different worlds. In mine, science is a means. In yours, it's the whole point. But somehow we managed to work together for a common cause. It's been a great honor Fermi.

Leo extends his hand. Fermi takes it.

FERMI

For me too.

SONG 16: THE ATOM BOMB IS HERE (1945)

The men hug. General Groves returns.

GROVES

That will be all Fermi, Sea-lard.

FERMI

(angry)

His name is Leo Szilard!

Fermi and Groves leave. Leo is
alone.

LEO

OF COURSE YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM
OF COURSE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'VE DONE
I'VE BEEN DOWN THE MINES WHILE OTHERS
BASK IN THIS ATOMIC SUN

I WASN'T WORKING FOR A PRIZE
I WASN'T CHASING FAME OR WEALTH
I GAVE EVERYTHING AWAY
TO HELP THE WORLD NOT HELP MYSELF

WHAT WILL THEY SAY ABOUT THE MEN WHO DID THIS?
FRONT PAGE HEROES WASHED IN FAME
AND THIS MAN ALONE WHO TRIED TO STOP IT
WILL THEY EVEN KNOW MY NAME?
IN A LAND THAT'S FAR FROM HERE
ACROSS SIX THOUSAND MILES OF SEA
A CITY TUCKED INTO ITS SLUMBER
UNAWARE OF WHAT WILL BE

A SILVER PLANE ON A RED DAWN SKY
TARGET SIGHTED AND CONFIRMED
WILL OPEN ITS HEART TO QUESTIONING EYES
SOON THE SECRET WILL BE LEARNED

SO MANY WAYS TO TEACH THE ATOM'S STORY
THE CLOSEST ONES ARE SPARED THE PAIN
TOUCHED BY A SUN IN ALL IT'S BURNING GLORY
WHERE PEOPLE STOOD SHADOWS REMAIN

SURVIVORS BURNED AND NAKED
BODIES CARPETING THE STREETS
SHOES MELTED INTO PAVEMENT
SKIN PEELING OFF IN SHEETS

AND NOW THE SHOCK WAVE BLASTS A WORLD OF ASH
ERASING TRACES OF THE PAST
SHARDS AND NAILS CROSS RIVERS TO IMPALE
RADIATION COMPLETES THE TASK

THE PERIL I ONCE SAW
IS HERE FOREVER MORE

IT STOPPED THE WAR SAVED COUNTLESS LIVES
THE NEWSMEN WILL BE TOLD TO SAY

WHEN ALL BELIEVE THEN IT'S NO LIE
WHAT DOES IT MATTER ANYWAY?

AND HERE I AM THE MAN WHO DREAMED IT
PLANTED THE SEED AND WATCHED IT GROW
THIS STUPID MAN WHO THOUGHT HE'D SAVE US ALL
HOW LITTLE DID I KNOW?

THE SWORD IS BEING DRAWN
THE AGE OF FEAR IS BORN
I MAY DISAPPEAR
BUT THE ATOM BOMB IS HERE
WASHINGTON BAR

Leo arrives at a bar. He sits near a soldier. A waitress pours Leo a scotch. He indicates her to keep pouring. Trude enters, distraught.

TRUDE

This is where you come to escape?

LEO

Trude? How did you find me?

TRUDE

When were you going to tell me?

LEO

You know?

TRUDE

The oncologist called my place looking for you.

LEO

He told you I have cancer?

TRUDE

He didn't have to.

LEO

Trude. I wanted to tell you.

TRUDE

(sarcasm)

Yes. You've had a lot on your plate.

LEO

I failed. What good is being right? Of knowing with certainty what will happen. And not having any power to change it?

TRUDE

Stop trying to fix the world. Fix yourself. There are ways to treat this.

LEO

They don't work. Most people die.

TRUDE

If you don't get help you'll certainly die.

LEO

Get help and die. Don't get help and die.

(He pauses in thought, and is suddenly excited)

Maybe there's an Option C!

TRUDE

Leo please!

LEO

(excited)

What if we used beta radiation?

TRUDE

Radiation? You're not serious.

LEO

Beta radiation has a short range. Millimeters. We could insert a tiny seed. A surgical implant. Kill the cancer from within.

TRUDE

We. You want me to help you. I know you're not used to doing anything where you're not the world authority. But I'm a doctor. Trust me. There are experts in this field.

LEO

Experts! People who are very good at telling you what can't be done.

TRUDE

They know what they're doing! I didn't tell you how to make a bomb.

LEO

It's not a bomb Trude. It's *the* Bomb. Like *the* Earth. Or *the* Sun. Because there is nothing else like it. And the Bomb, which I am largely responsible for, is about to destroy a city. Is that what God gave me this mind for? I had wanted to help people.

TRUDE

You can't help anyone if you won't get help yourself.

SONG 17 - THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS (REPRISE)

LEO

Then help me. Work with me.

(he takes her hand)

LEO (CONT'D)

You know medicine. I know radiation. And if any two people can beat this cancer, we can.

THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS

TRUDE

(taking back her hand)

YOUR BLINDED

LEO

IMAGINE IT WERE OURS

TRUDE

WHY CAN'T YOU SEE?

LEO

THE POWER THAT IGNITES THE SUN
COULD LIGHT THE WAY

TRUDE

YOU'VE FOLLOWED THAT DREAM
YOU'VE SEEN WHERE IT LEADS

LEO

THE FORCE THAT LIGHTS THE STARS

TRUDE

I TRUSTED YOU

LEO

IMAGINE IT WERE OURS

TRUDE

NOW TRUST ME TOO

LEO

THE POWER THAT IGNITES THE SUN
COULD LIGHT THE WAY FOR EVERYONE

TRUDE

I WON'T HOLD YOUR HAND
WHILE YOU KILL YOURSELF
YOU CAN'T ASK ME TO

Trude storms out in tears. Leo returns to the bar and downs his scotch. He pours another. The soldier seated next to him notices. It's Paul.

PAUL

You might need those brain cells one day.

LEO

I doubt it.

(turning in surprise)

Paul?

PAUL

Yeah, right.

LEO

(extending a hand)

Leo. I see you're a colonel now.

PAUL

(indicating insignia)

Got this silver bird in January. And a bigger silver bird this morning (spreads his arms like a plane). Put my mom's name on her.

LEO

You shouldn't celebrate something like that alone.

PAUL

(raising his glass)

I'm not.

Leo raises his own glass. Both men drink.

LEO

So what are you doing in Washington?

PAUL

Playing taxi driver. To General Eisenhower.

LEO

You must be pretty good.

PAUL

I'm the best. What brings you here?

LEO

I also happen to be one of the better people at what I do.

PAUL

Which is?

LEO

We -- make the holes in the doughnuts.

PAUL

And the -- light in the lightning bugs?

LEO

You know?

PAUL

Yeah. I didn't know you did too!

LEO

Yeah!

They realize they're being loud.

PAUL

I have nooo one I can talk to about this!

LEO

I know! And it seems like it will happen any day now.

PAUL

Tell me about it. How terrible are those fucking Japs?

(beat)

I mean, we're dropping napalm left and right. Sixty-seven cities burned to a crisp. And still nothing.

LEO

We're talking more than napalm.

PAUL

Oh yeah? We firebombed Tokyo in March. Burned sixteen square miles of city to the ground. More than a hundred thousand people fried. There is no way you'll do more with one of those. And it's really more humane if you ask me.

LEO

Humane?

PAUL

Ever see a person burn to death? With this, (snaps his fingers) they're gone. And the war will be over. At least that's what I tell myself to get through another day at work.

SONG 18: ONLY NUMBERS

LEO

The bomb may end the war. I'm not sure the world
can afford the price. Take care Paul.

PAUL

You too Leo.

Paul puts on his jacket and walks
off to work. The back of his jacket
reads 'Enola Gay'.

LIGHTS FADE.

ABOVE HIROSHIMA

We see Paul in his plane.

PAUL

THOSE PEOPLE DOWN BELOW, JUST NUMBERS
NOBODY THAT I KNOW, JUST NUMBERS
IT WASN'T ME THAT MADE THE CALL
BUT IF IT ENDS THE WAR
THEN I'M GIVING IT MY ALL

TRUDE

COUNT THE DEAD IN THE ROAD TOLL JUST NUMBERS
SAME AS LAST YEAR MAYBE MORE JUST NUMBERS
IT'S ONE THING WHEN A NUMBER'S IN THE NEWS
ANOTHER WHEN HE'S EVERYTHING TO YOU

LEO

THE SECONDS OF A LIFE JUST NUMBERS
PEOPLE ALWAYS DIE JUST NUMBERS
WE LOSE SO MANY WHEN WE FIGHT
WILL ONE MORE NUMBER SET THINGS RIGHT?

ANNOUNCEMENT

Target in site. Drop when ready.

ALL

WHEN YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS
YOU HAVE TO DO
TAKE A BREATH CLOSE YOUR EYES
TRY AND SEE IT THROUGH

TALK ALL YOU WANT
HERE AT THE END
WHEN IT'S LIFE OR DEATH
YOU OR THEM
SOMEONE'S GOT TO LOSE
ONLY NUMBERS

LEO

IT'S TIME TO CHOOSE

ALL

THEY'RE ONLY NUMBERS

PAUL

PLAY OR LOSE

ALL

ONLY NUMBERS

TRUDE

WE'VE GOT TO TRY

ALL

THE DAY WE DON'T FIGHT IS THE DAY THAT WE DIE

TRUDE
WHEN THE NUMBER HAS A NAME
AND THE NUMBER HAS A FACE
WHEN THE NUMBER IS YOUR LIFE
AND IT CANNOT BE REPLACED

ALL
NUMBERS

LEO
WHEN YOU'VE DONE ALL
YOU CAN DO

ALL
ONLY NUMBERS

TRUDE
AND SAID ALL YOU CAN SAY
ALL

TAKE A BREATH
CLOSE YOUR EYES
BLOW A MILLION DREAMS AWAY

Tibbets releases the bomb.

SFX
Bomb release and falling. Explosion.

BOOM! A flash of light. A cloud of
smoke. Tibbets exits. Leo flinches
in pain. Trude goes to him.

LEO
Trude. You're here.

TRUDE
Only because you have an annoying habit of being
right.

She holds him and leads him
offstage.

BLACKOUT.

AFTERMATH

SONG 18A: THE AFTERMATH

Darkness. News reports on the
dropping of the bomb from around the
globe.

ANNOUNCEMENT

One of the decisive factors which brought us to
the threshold of peace was the use of the atomic
bomb.

ANNOUNCEMENT 2

In the words of President Truman it was used to
shorten the agony of war. To save the lives of
thousands and thousands of young Americans.

TRUMAN ANNOUNCEMENT

Everybody was most happy and most relieved that
the first bomb of its type had been released. And
there was quite a lot of hilarity on the part of
everyone concerned.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Tokyo admits extensive damage caused by the atomic bomb at Hiroshima.

JAPANESE ANNOUNCEMENT

Naku yekechima. Hashiyista. Naku Kechunawa. Enola Gay.

TRUMAN ANNOUNCEMENT

We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan's power to make war.

LIGHTS UP ON:

FORMAL GATHERING - NY (1954)

Leona fills Oppenheimer's glass. He encourages her to keep pouring.

OPPENHEIMER

Keep going. It's not like I have to work tomorrow.

TELLER

You never did have the stomach for weaponry. None of you did.

LEONA

After we saw what those two bombs did? Two!

COMPTON

The order was drop when ready. When the second bomb was ready, it was dropped. Nobody's decision. No moral dilemma. Automated warfare.

OPPENHEIMER

Welcome to the future.

LEONA

I feel sick.

TELLER

I told you. No stomach.

Leo and Trude enter. Dressed for a wedding. Their own.

LEO

It's called being human, Teller. You should try it some time.

TRUDE

Maybe you should try talking about something else for a change. Especially today.

LEONA

You look absolutely radiant Trude.

TRUDE

Thank you Leona.

TELLER

Marriage suits you. It only took thirty years. But better late than never.

TRUDE

Perhaps we needed that year in hospital for Leo's treatment, to show us we can work together. Maybe even live together.

LEO

Facing your own mortality does change one's perspective. Anyway, it's wonderful that you all could come.

LEONA

Not all.

A sad moment for all.

LEO

No. It's funny, but I still here his voice sometimes. Hard to believe he's gone.

OPPENHEIMER

Fermi was in a class of his own. A true scientist till the end.

COMPTON

He put science ahead of everything. Even his own health.

LEONA

(raising her glass)

To Fermi.

They raise their glasses for a toast.

ALL

To Fermi.

OPPENHEIMER

Cancer's a horrible way to die. And we did that to people. To kids.

COMPTON

To each other. In the name of what? Progress?

LEONA

At least Leo tried to stop it.

TELLER

A pointless exercise. He had no hope of stopping it.

TRUDE

You think he didn't know that?

LEONA

We all knew it was hopeless. Even those of us who signed his petition.

LEO

It was war. We didn't know anything for certain. Just like the Japanese didn't know we even had atomic bombs till we dropped them.

OPPENHEIMER

Or that we'd allow them keep their Emperor.

COMPTON

Or that Russia would declare war on them. Overwhelm their army in Manchuria with over a million Soviet troops.

LEONA

Yeah. The very day we bombed Nagasaki.

TELLER

And ended the war!

LEO

(to Teller)

Suppose Germany had developed two bombs before we had any. Dropped one on Rochester and the other on

Buffalo. Then ran out of bombs and lost the war. Can anyone doubt we would have sentenced those responsible to death at Nuremberg. And hanged them?

TELLER

Who cares? We won. And winners get to write the history books. I didn't sign your petition because I love what I do. I'm proud to live in a country that takes shit from no one.

LEONA

Spoken like the true father of the Hydrogen Bomb.

TELLER

Do you know why I was for it when all of you were against it? Not because a bigger bomb was needed. But because it was possible. Isn't that our role as scientists? To push the boundaries of the possible? To follow that insatiable curiosity without fear or favor? Fermi would have certainly agreed.

OPPENHEIMER

He never agreed. Neither did I.

TELLER

No, you didn't. That's what cost you your precious security clearance.

COMPTON

The petition wasn't a pointless exercise.

TELLER

(cutting in angrily)

Truman never even saw that stupid petition! You know it's still a classified military secret. No one cares any more!

TRUDE

Let the man speak, Ed. Go on Arthur. Please.

COMPTON

As scientists we know that the universe is governed by uncertainty. We can't know where our actions will lead. But God always gives us a choice. Even if it seems like a hopeless choice at the time. Leo showed us that.

SONG 19: WHAT I TELL MYSELF

COMPTON (CONT'D)

We didn't need to see what that awful weapon could do.

TELLER

Of course we needed to see it. There will never be a direct conflict between the United States and Russia. Because now we know exactly what the result will be.

LEO

That knowledge came at a terrible price Teller. I
pay it every single day.

LEONA

We all do.

LEONA (CONT'D)

WHEN MY BOY WAS YOUNG I TOLD HIM SON
I'LL KEEP YOUR MONSTERS ON THE RUN
HE'D FEEL SO SAFE AND FALL ASLEEP IN MY ARMS

AND AS I TUCKED HIS SHEETS IN TIGHT
I'D KISS HIS HEAD AND PRAY I MIGHT
FIND WAYS TO KEEP MY BABY SAFE FROM HARM

NOW I TURN AROUND SURPRISED TO SEE
THAT THE MONSTER HE HAD FEARED IS ME

LEONA/COMPTON

WHAT I TELL MYSELF
TO GET TO SLEEP AT NIGHT
WHAT'S DONE IS DONE
WE SAVED A MILLION LIVES
SO WHY CAN'T I SLEEP AT NIGHT

OPPENHEIMER

I met President Truman. Not long after Japan
surrendered. Told him I had blood on my hands. He
gave me his handkerchief. Called me a cry-baby to
his staff. Is remorse such a terrible, terrible
thing?

ON MY BABY GIRL'S FIRST PRE-SCHOOL DAY
SHE SQUEEZED MY HAND AND SAID "DADDY, STAY"
FOR FEAR SOME BULLY KID WOULD TREAT HER MEAN

SO I SAT IN THAT LAST ROW OF CHAIRS
TILL SHE DIDN'T NEED ME THERE
NOW TEN YEARS OLD SHE THINKS OUR NAME'S UNCLEAR

WHAT I NEVER DREAMED WOULD FEEL SO BAD
THE BULLY SHE NOW FEARS IS DAD

ALL EXCEPT LEO

WHAT I TELL MYSELF
TO GET TO SLEEP AT NIGHT
IF THE WAR DRAGGED ON
MILLIONS WOULD HAVE DIED

ALL

SO WHY CAN'T I SLEEP AT NIGHT?

LEONA

We're the first generation of humans capable of
wiping ourselves from the planet. Is that our
legacy?

LEO

We can't turn back the clock. But perhaps we can
spin it forward. Evolve into the species we need

to be in order to survive. And Teller is right.
Building the bomb was a hell of an achievement.
Because it showed us that when we work together,
anything is possible.

TRUDE

Even a new cure for cancer.

COMPTON

Maybe science gets to save the world after all.

COMPTON/LEONA

I DID WHAT I DID CAUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS RIGHT

LEO

THOUGHT I UNDERSTOOD

COMPTON/LEONA/OPPENHEIMER

I DID WHAT I DID CAUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS RIGHT

LEO (CONT'D)

DID ALL THAT I COULD

ALL BUT LEO

I DID WHAT I DID

CAUSE I THOUGHT IT

THE RIGHT THING TO DO

IT'S WHAT I TELL MYSELF
TO GET TO SLEEP AT NIGHT
WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT

LEO (CONT'D)

AND WHAT WAS THE GOOD?

WHAT I TELL MYSELF
SLEEP AT NIGHT
LIGHTS GO OUT

ALL

WE SAVED A MILLION LIVES
THE CHOICE WE MADE WAS RIGHT

They leave, shaking hands and
hugging.

LIGHTS FADE.

GOING HOME - NY (1960)

Trude comes in with the mail. She
kisses Leo and hands him a letter.

TRUDE

Another letter from Jonas Salk?

LEO

My work in biology is attracting attention. Salk
offered me a chair at a new research facility he
was planning to open in Baltimore. I declined.

Leo opens the letter.

TRUDE

Leo, please. You could do great things in a place like that. It's the chance of a lifetime.

LEO

We are not going to Baltimore. I know where you want to go.

TRUDE

I don't care where we go. As long as I'm with you. Call him back. Say you've reconsidered.

Reading the letter. He smiles.

LEO

Do you think our old suitcases will survive one last journey Trude?

TRUDE

What did he say?

LEO

(reading)

The board agreed with my suggestion.

SONG 20: FINALE

The new Salk Institute for Biological Studies will be opening in San Diego.

Trude is hit by a train of emotion.

TRUDE

Oh Leo!

They embrace.

ENSEMBLE

DREAMS CAN MAKE YOU
LOVE CAN BREAK YOU
DREAMS CAN BREAK YOU
LOVE CAN MAKE YOU

DREAMS CAN MAKE YOU
LOVE CAN BREAK YOU
DREAMS CAN BREAK YOU
LOVE CAN MAKE YOU

Hand in hand, Trude and Leo head to exit before Leo stops in thought.
Music ends.

TRUDE

Leo? What is it?

LEO

What if a dedicated phone line was set up between the White House and the Kremlin? A hotline.

TRUDE

(excited)

Any misunderstandings could be cleared up before they got out of hand. It's brilliant Leo.

LEO

You really think so?

Fermi enters.

FERMI

It's a so crazy it will probably work. You should
tell everyone!

The ensemble enter and face the
audience.

CHORUS

A NEW AND GREATER BATTLE'S ON THE WAY
AND IF WE LOSE WE'LL HAVE THE WORLD TO PAY

LEO

A NEW AND GREATER BATTLE'S ON THE WAY
WE'LL HAVE THE WORLD TO PAY

LEO & MEN

CAN YOU HEAR THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE
CAN YOU HEAR THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE

WOMEN

CAN YOU HEAR THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE
CAN YOU HEAR THE BATTLE

ALL

CAN YOU HEAR THE WAR DRUMS ROLL
IN THIS NEW BATTLE FOR OUR SOUL?

CURTAIN