

FOOD TRUCK PLANET

Ninth Draft — June 2026

A Post-Apocalyptic Rock Musical in Two Acts

Book, Music & Lyrics by

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*"When the world ended, humanity did not preserve its monuments...
...it preserved its recipes."*

LOGLINE

When civilization collapses and rival food truck clans rule the highways of a broken America, a weary chef and his daughter journey toward the legendary Fountains of Youth, unaware they have become the central players in an ancient contest between Michael and Lucifer where the fate of humanity will ultimately be decided through redemption.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In a world where food trucks have become kingdoms and recipes are treasured more than gold, Sonny El Santo and his daughter Maria leave the ruins of Chicago in search of the mythical Fountains of Youth. Along the way they encounter powerful warlords, unlikely allies, and an ancient struggle between good and evil that will determine far more than their own survival.

ABOUT THE MUSICAL

Food Truck Planet is an original post-apocalyptic rock musical blending action, comedy, romance, and spiritual allegory into an epic theatrical adventure. Inspired by the wit of Shakespearean comedy and the scale of modern rock musicals, it tells a story of family, sacrifice, redemption, and the enduring power of hope.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Sonny El Santo

A seasoned Mexican-American food truck owner in his fifties and proprietor of La Cocina Nuestra. Once a formidable man, he now believes the greatest act of strength is feeding another human being.

Maria

Sonny's daughter. A courageous young Mexican-American woman in her early twenties. Intelligent, determined, and unwilling to surrender hope to a broken world.

Cain

A mysterious wanderer. Unknown to mankind, he is the Archangel Michael walking among humanity in human form, quietly guiding souls toward redemption.

Mr. Lucky

Lucifer, the Son of the Morning. Charming, elegant, and endlessly persuasive. He never commands evil; he merely makes it seem reasonable.

Mad Maxine Jones

Leader of the Butchies. Once a woman of deep faith, unimaginable loss transformed her into the most feared warlord of the interstate.

Rocco

Maxine's silent lieutenant. Deadly, disciplined, and absolutely loyal.

Patty Cake

A baker whose optimism somehow survived the collapse of civilization. Warm, funny, flirtatious, and fearless beneath her flour-covered apron.

Big Tone

Leader of the Jerk Posse. Larger than life, endlessly entertaining, and fiercely protective of those he calls family.

Blaze

Leader of the Inferno Pitmasters. A flamboyant barbecue warlord who worships smoke, fire, and perfectly cooked brisket.

Ahmed

Commander of the Sultans of Shish. A brilliant strategist who believes peace can only exist through absolute control – and who will learn to question that belief.

The Butchies

Mad Maxine's elite motorcycle army.

The Inferno Pitmasters

Masters of smoke, flame, and open-fire cooking.

The Jerk Posse

Caribbean food truck warriors led by Big Tone.

The Sultans of Shish

Nomadic skewer masters and guardians of the northern road, commanded by Ahmed.

The Dustfolk

Travelers, traders, scavengers, pilgrims, and refugees struggling to survive along the forgotten highways.

SONG LIST

ACT I

SCENE 1 - THE PRICE OF MERCY

All For One

— *Mad Maxine & The Butchies*

Bad Boy Shuffle

— *Mr. Lucky*

Salvation Road

— *Cain*

Leaving Chicago

— *Sonny & Maria*

SCENE 2 - DREAMS AND BLOOD

Bathed in Blood

— *Mr. Lucky & Mad Maxine*

No News Is Good News

— *Sonny & Maria*

Talk About It

— *Cain & Ensemble*

SCENE 3 - INTO THE FIRE

Blown Away

— *Sonny*

Final Destination

— *Patty Cake, Cain & Sonny*

ACT II

SCENE 1 - THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Boulevard

— *Maria*

You Got What I Need

— *Mad Maxine & The Butchies*

Pleasure and Pain

— *Patty Cake & Sonny*

Salvation Road (Reprise) (A Cappella)

— *Patty Cake, Cain & Sonny*

SCENE 2 - HELL OR HIGHWATER

Moshi Moshi

— *Mr. Lucky*

Don't Wait 'Til Tomorrow

— *Cain, Sonny, Mad Maxine & Maria*

The Real Thing

— *Patty Cake & Full Cast*

FINALE

Curtain Call / Exit Music

Instrumental Medley featuring themes from Salvation Road and The Real Thing.

PROLOGUE

The world did not end in a single day.

Governments collapsed.

Cities emptied.

The highways endured.

*As civilization faded, food trucks became more than kitchens. They
became homes,
caravans, and kingdoms, carrying the recipes and traditions of a
forgotten world.*

*Across the wasteland, rival food truck clans now battle for fuel,
territory, and
survival while whispers persist of the legendary Fountains of Youth,
hidden
somewhere beyond the ruins of Chicago.*

*Unknown to mankind, two ancient beings continue a contest older than
civilization itself.*

*One walks the earth disguised as a weary traveler named Cain.
The other smiles from the shadows and calls himself Mr. Lucky.*

Their battlefield is neither heaven nor hell.

It is the human heart.

ACT I

ACT I, SCENE 1 – THE PRICE OF MERCY

Setting: *The shattered outskirts of Chicago. The skeletal remains of Interstate 90 loom above an abandoned truck stop. Burned-out cars, rusted gas pumps, broken concrete, and twisted steel fill the stage. Ash drifts through the air. Upstage sits a battered brick-red food truck beneath a collapsed highway sign.*

Across its side:

LA COCINA NUESTRA

The truck is scarred, patched, and still standing.

Lighting: *Cold gray dawn. Smoke and haze. Distant orange flickers from fires beyond the skyline.*

Sound: *Wind through broken girders. Loose metal signs creaking. Far-off engines. Then motorcycle engines. One. Then many.*

Music: *The overture builds from low percussion and electric guitar into a hard industrial rhythm.*

AT RISE:

Bodies lie scattered across the truck stop.

The Butchies roar in on motorcycles, moving with terrifying discipline. They are not a mob. They are an army.

Rocco enters first, silent and sharp. He surveys the field, then signals. The Butchies part.

Mad Maxine Jones enters, carrying her iron mace, Mercy.

A wounded scavenger crawls toward a dented canteen. Maxine watches him reach for it. Mercy crashes into the pavement inches from his hand. The scavenger freezes.

MAD MAXINE

Live.

Remember why.

She turns to the Butchies.

MAD MAXINE

Raise the chains.

Raise the engines.

Let the road remember our name.

The Butchies slam weapons against metal. The rhythm locks in.

MAD MAXINE

This world did not give us mercy.
So we made our own.

The music explodes.

ALL FOR ONE

Mad Maxine & The Butchies

During the number, violence becomes ritual. Motorcycles circle. Chains whirl. Oil drums become percussion. Maxine conducts the chaos with small, precise gestures. Rocco moves at her side like a blade.

At the final beat, the Butchies freeze in formation. Maxine stands over the battlefield, Mercy raised toward the ruined Chicago skyline.

The song ends. Silence.

Maxine dismisses the Butchies with one hand. They step back. She looks upward.

MAD MAXINE

Art thou listening?

(Beat.)

No.

Of course not.

When I was a girl, they taught me to kneel.

Hands folded.

Voice soft.

They said Heaven heard the meek.

I was meek.

I was good.

I buried my dead with prayers in my mouth.

And Heaven answered with smoke.

She lifts Mercy.

MAD MAXINE

If thou art there, strike me.
Here.
Now.
Clean.

No thunder. No light. Nothing.

Maxine smiles coldly.

MAD MAXINE

That is what I thought.

The stage freezes. A silver coin spins in darkness.
TING.

Lighting shifts.

Mr. Lucky appears, immaculate and amused. Cain appears opposite him, weathered, still, leaning on his staff.

LUCKY

Look how she bloometh in the dirt.
A flower fed on blood.

CAIN

Thou hast ever admired broken things when they
may yet be sharpened.

LUCKY

I admire usefulness.
She begged Heaven for an answer.
Heaven, as ever, gave her silence.

CAIN

Heaven gave her breath.
Choice.
Time.

LUCKY

And men gave her wounds.

He circles the frozen Maxine.

LUCKY

She does not kneel.

She claims.

There is music in that.

CAIN

There is injury in that.

LUCKY

Injury makes better rhythm.

Cain studies him.

CAIN

Say plain what thou art.

Lucky smiles.

LUCKY

A correction.

When the scales sit unattended too long, someone
must touch them.

He flips the coin.

LUCKY

And I do have such elegant hands.

The music turns sly, swaggering, dangerous.

BAD BOY SHUFFLE

Mr. Lucky

During the number, Lucky dances through the frozen battlefield. He never touches Maxine, Rocco, the Butchies, or the fallen scavengers. He does not need to. The frozen bodies pulse faintly to his rhythm, as if temptation has entered the air.

Cain remains still. Watching. Waiting.

The song ends with Lucky catching his coin.

TING.

LUCKY

There.

A sermon with better shoes.

CAIN

A dance upon graves is still a dance upon graves.

LUCKY

Must thou drain the sparkle from everything?

CAIN

Must thou season despair and call it supper?

Lucky grins.

LUCKY

Careful, old friend.

Thou art nearly funny.

CAIN

And thou art nearly honest.

Beat.

CAIN

Thou dost not free them.

Thou raisest the ceiling that they may fall from
a greater height,

and smilest as they thank thee for the fall.

LUCKY

And thou pointest toward some invisible road and
callest thirst a virtue.

Cain turns toward the shadowed Dustfolk at the edge of the stage.

CAIN

There is a road.
Not invisible.
Only long.

*A warm golden light begins pushing against Lucky's red glow. A
lonely wind instrument enters.*

CAIN

For those who have wandered.
For those who have fallen.
For those who still think themselves beyond
return.
Listen.

The music opens.

SALVATION ROAD

Cain

*During the number, Dustfolk emerge from shadow: travelers,
children, widows, old men, scavengers too tired to fight. At
first they mistrust Cain. Then, one by one, they move toward his
light.*

*The projections shift from burning Chicago to an endless northern
road. For one instant, blue water shimmers in the distance.*

The Fountains. Then gone.

Lucky notices. His smile tightens.

The song ends. Cain and Lucky stand alone again.

LUCKY

How many centuries hast thou walked that road?

CAIN

Enough to know it leads somewhere.

LUCKY

And yet they keep choosing me.

CAIN

Not all.

LUCKY

Enough.

A distant truck engine grows. Lucky hears it first.

LUCKY

Ah.

The cook arrives.

The higher plane dissolves. Time resumes.

The Butchies scatter into smoke. Rocco follows Maxine. Their engines fade. The battlefield remains.

Later. Ash drifts.

Maria enters. She is early twenties, Mexican-American, slender and fierce. Black leather jacket. Long braid over one shoulder. An assault weapon slung across her back. She walks among the dead. She kneels beside one fallen man. Gently, she closes his eyes. No panic. No tears. Only respect.

A diesel engine approaches. La Cocina Nuestra rolls slowly into view — only the grille, headlights, and front tires at first. The driver's door opens. Boots step down. A stained white apron.

Sonny El Santo enters. He sees Maria. He sees the dead. He sees the road.

MARIA

We can't stay here.

SONNY

Whoever they were, they're gone.

The old storm passes.
The old world finds its way back.

Maria rises and looks directly at him.

MARIA

What world?
Look upon Chicago.
Her towers lie like broken teeth.
Her streets run rust instead of blood.
This is not a pause.
It is a burial.

SONNY

Out there, the air cuts thee open and leaves thee
for vultures.
I am not thy jail, Maria.
The world wants thee dead.

MARIA

The world wants everyone dead.
That is no reason to help it.

Sonny looks away.

SONNY

This truck fed thy mother.
Fed thee.
Fed strangers who could not pay.
It is all I kept alive.

MARIA

Then drive it.

SONNY

Beyond these ruins lies only death.

MARIA

Then here lies a slower one.

(Beat.)

Ashes do not become fire again.
Stay, and we perish by inches.

Sonny studies her.

SONNY

Thy mother had that same fire.

MARIA

Good.

Then I come by it honest.

SONNY

Fire warms.

Fire also ruins supper.

MARIA

Only if the cook lacks courage.

He almost smiles.

SONNY

Thou hast sharpened thy tongue upon my last
nerve.

MARIA

And still it cuts no deeper than truth.

A distant metallic howl. Both look north.

SONNY

If we go...
we do not come back.

MARIA

We already haven't.

Long silence.

Sonny looks at La Cocina Nuestra. Then at Maria.

SONNY

Then let us tempt tomorrow.

Maria allows the smallest smile.

MARIA

At last.

A sermon with wheels.

A low guitar begins. Sonny opens the truck. Maria begins loading supplies.

SONNY

Water.

Fuel.

Beans.

Flour.

Medicine.

MARIA

Ammunition?

SONNY

Unfortunately.

She grabs it. He reaches into the cab and takes down an old framed photograph of Maria's mother. He looks at it a long moment, then tucks it carefully behind the dashboard.

SONNY

Forgive me.

MARIA

For leaving?

SONNY

For waiting this long.

The engine sputters. Almost dies. Then catches. The headlights flare. The music swells.

LEAVING CHICAGO

Sonny & Maria

During the number, they prepare La Cocina Nuestra for the road. Maria loads water, canned goods, ammunition, and medicine. Sonny checks the grill, the engine, and the small cross hanging near the dashboard.

The projections show Chicago receding. The road north slowly appears.

By the final refrain, Sonny climbs into the driver's seat. Maria sits beside him. The truck begins to roll.

Cain appears in shadow on one side of the stage. Lucky appears opposite him. Neither interferes. The truck disappears into the dawn. The music fades.

LUCKY

North, then.

How sweetly hope walks when it hath not yet met
the bill.

CAIN

And how bitterly thou speakest when fear hath
failed to stop it.

Lucky flips his coin.

LUCKY

Fear never fails.
It merely changes costume.

The coin lands.

TING.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT I - SCENE 1

ACT I, SCENE 2A - DREAMS AND BLOOD

Setting: *Three days later. A lonely crossroads market beneath the crumbling remains of an interstate overpass somewhere in northern Illinois. For a few precious hours each week, rival travelers gather here under an uneasy truce. No weapons drawn. No blood spilled. Food. Fuel. Medicine. News. For a little while, the old world pretends it is not dead.*

Lighting: *Late afternoon. Warm amber sunlight cuts through drifting dust. This is the first genuinely beautiful light of the musical.*

Sound: *Diesel engines idle. Pots clang. Coffee percolates. Children laugh. Someone strums an old guitar. The smell of bread, onions, roasting meat, coffee, and wood smoke fills the air.*

Music: *A gentle marketplace underscoring: acoustic guitar, hand percussion, accordion, and distant steel drums.*

AT RISE:

Food trucks line both sides of the market. A pizza oven burns. Someone grills fish. An elderly woman trades tomatoes for batteries. Children weave between trucks playing tag.

For a brief moment...

...the apocalypse disappears.

La Cocina Nuestra slowly rolls into the market.

MARIA

Father... look. People. Not soldiers. Not scavengers. People.

SONNY

Never mistake peace for safety. The road hath many disguises.

They step down.

A little girl watches La Cocina Nuestra with hungry eyes. Maria notices immediately. Without asking Sonny, she reaches into the truck and hands the child a warm tortilla.

The child's mother rushes forward.

MOTHER

Forgive us. We have nothing left to trade.

SONNY

Then trade nothing. A child should never bargain
with hunger.

*The woman quietly embraces Maria. Maria is embarrassed and moved.
Sonny pretends not to notice.*

A cheerful voice rings out from offstage.

PATTY CAKE (O.S.)

Fresh bread! Fresh pies! Fresh cinnamon rolls!
And if they be not fresh— lie kindly and spare my
feelings!

Laughter ripples through the market.

A brightly painted bakery truck rolls into the square.

Across its side:

PATTY CAKE'S BAKERY

"Life Is Short. Eat Dessert First."

*The rear doors burst open. Patty Cake appears with baskets of
bread and pastries. She curtsies like a queen greeting peasants
she secretly likes.*

PATTY CAKE

Good people! Questionable people! And thou, sir,
whose stew last Thursday violated three
commandments and possibly a plumbing code—
welcome back!

The crowd laughs.

PATTY CAKE

Today's special is bread. Yesterday's special was
bread. Tomorrow's special, should civilization
endure... shall be bread with confidence.

She notices Sonny. Looks him over.

PATTY CAKE

Now there's a face that hath argued with a frying
pan.

SONNY

The frying pan apologized.

PATTY CAKE

Excellent. I prefer a man who wins in the
kitchen. Second loaf half price. Third one's free
if thou smileth.

SONNY

Madam, I smile only upon holidays.

PATTY CAKE

Then rejoice. Today is Bread Day.

Maria laughs. Sonny nearly does.

MARIA

We should buy bread.

SONNY

We have tortillas.

PATTY CAKE

And yet here thou standest, poorer for the
absence of butter.

Beat.

*Sonny gives Maria a look. Maria gives him one back. Sonny buys
bread. Patty triumphs.*

PATTY CAKE

A wise investment. Bread remembers who loved it.

*Steel drums begin in the distance. Then reggae. Then laughter. A
colorful convoy enters the market in a burst of music, smoke, and
confidence.*

The Jerk Posse.

Their trucks are painted in bright colors, patched with steel, and crowned with smoking jerk barrels. Atop the lead truck stands Big Tone, holding an enormous cast-iron skillet like a royal scepter.

BIG TONE

Make way! Royal business! His Majesty hath arrived— and somebody still owes me diesel!

The crowd cheers. Big Tone jumps down. He smells the air dramatically.

BIG TONE

Bread. Coffee. Weak soup. Fear.

He turns toward Sonny.

BIG TONE

And tacos.

He walks directly to La Cocina Nuestra, circling Sonny like a judge at a championship fight.

BIG TONE

Brother... that truck tells me two things. One— thou canst cook. Two— thou desperately needest seasoning.

SONNY

I have survived fifty years without thy advice.

BIG TONE

A miracle! One meal with me and angels themselves shall dance reggae.

SONNY

I know one or two.

Big Tone stops. Studies Sonny. Then bursts into enormous laughter.

BIG TONE

Ha! This one stays.

PATTY CAKE

Careful, Tone. He's almost charming.

BIG TONE

Almost charming? That face was carved from church furniture.

SONNY

And yet it hath survived.

PATTY CAKE

Barely.

Maria laughs. Sonny looks at her, betrayed.

SONNY

Thou too?

MARIA

I follow the evidence.

A quiet figure enters through the crowd.

Cain.

He carries his staff and watches the market with sorrowful affection. Patty notices him first.

PATTY CAKE

Well now... If it isn't our mysterious traveler.
Tell me— dost thou ever sleep?

CAIN

Only when mankind remembers how.

BIG TONE

Then thou hast been awake a mighty long time.

CAIN

Aye.

PATTY CAKE

Prophet?

CAIN

Traveler.

PATTY CAKE

That is what prophets say when they don't want to
buy anything.

BIG TONE

Hungry?

CAIN

Always.

BIG TONE

Good. Any man who refuseth free food cannot be
trusted.

*Cain sits. Big Tone serves him jerk chicken. Patty breaks bread.
Sonny passes tortillas. Maria hands cups of water to children.
For several minutes, nothing dangerous happens. People eat.
Trade. Laugh. Live.*

Maria watches the children running through the market.

MARIA

Father... When was the last time thou heard
children laugh like this?

Sonny watches. His face softens.

SONNY

Too long.

Patty catches that softness. She says nothing. Only smiles.

The marketplace underscoring grows warmer. Then slowly... a chill enters. The light cools. A wind crosses the market. Conversation fades.

At the far edge of the square, Mad Maxine appears with Rocco and half a dozen Butchies. They do not attack. They watch.

Maxine sees food being shared. Children laughing. Families reunited. For the briefest instant, something like grief passes through her face.

Behind her, unseen by all except Cain, Mr. Lucky appears.

LUCKY

Look at them. Bread. Music. Laughter. Hope. How expensive it all looks.

Maxine does not answer.

LUCKY

Thy people hunger. Theirs celebrate. Tell me, Maxine... art thou queen? Or audience?

Maxine's grip tightens around Mercy.

CAIN

Softly. Do not hear him.

Lucky smiles.

LUCKY

They build a kingdom that should have been thine.
They feast while thy dead lie hungry beneath the earth.

Maxine steps forward. The marketplace falls silent. Big Tone stands. Patty quietly moves children behind her bakery truck. Sonny instinctively steps in front of Maria.

MAD MAXINE

Who owneth this market?

No one speaks. Big Tone answers.

BIG TONE

Depends. Who asketh?

MAD MAXINE

Judgment.

One drumbeat. Then another. Then another. Lucky steps beside her like a shadow wearing a smile.

LUCKY

Sing it, my storm. Let them learn thy hunger.

Maxine slowly raises Mercy. The first electric guitar chord explodes.

BATHED IN BLOOD

Mad Maxine & Mr. Lucky

During the number, the Butchies descend with terrifying precision. Tables overturn. Fuel barrels roll. Merchants flee. The fragile truce shatters.

Lucky moves through the chaos singing to Maxine, feeding her rage without touching a single person. Maxine answers in fury. Rocco leads the Butchies through the market with brutal efficiency.

Sonny shields Maria behind La Cocina Nuestra. Big Tone rallies the Jerk Posse with skillets, machetes, and steel drums. Patty Cake pulls frightened children into her bakery truck, slamming the doors shut just before a Butchie reaches them.

By the final chorus, the market lies broken. Bread in the dirt. Coffee spilled. Toys abandoned. The music crashes to an end.

Silence. Smoke. BLACKOUT for one beat.

Lights rise slowly into the aftermath.

ACT I, SCENE 2B - DREAMS AND BLOOD (CONTINUED)

Setting: *Continuous. The crossroads market after the attack. Broken tables. Scattered food. Small fires. Damaged trucks. The truce has been shattered, but the people are still alive.*

Lighting: *Dusk. Smoke softens the last of the amber light. The warmth of the scene now comes from cook fires, headlights, and human stubbornness.*

Sound: *Coughing. Children crying softly. Tools scraping. A few engines sputtering. Then silence as everyone takes in what has been lost.*

AT RISE:

Patty Cake opens the rear doors of her bakery truck. Children climb out, shaken but safe. Patty counts them quickly. All alive. She exhales.

She sees a loaf of bread lying in the dirt. She picks it up. Brushes it off. Hands it to the same little boy who had hidden in her truck.

PATTY CAKE

Bread still feeds. Even dirty bread.

The boy takes it. Sonny watches her.

SONNY

Why stay?

PATTY CAKE

Where?

SONNY

Here. This market. This road. Why come back when men like that come with teeth?

Patty looks around at the broken market.

PATTY CAKE

Because someone always comes back hungry. If I stop showing up... who feeds them?

Sonny has no answer. Big Tone examines his damaged truck. One headlight dangles by a wire.

BIG TONE

Poor girl. Thou hast survived another bad relationship.

MARIA

She still runs.

BIG TONE

Aye. Like her owner. Loud. Crooked. And difficult to kill.

Maria smiles. Then looks toward where Maxine disappeared.

MARIA

She could have killed us.

CAIN

Aye.

MARIA

Why didn't she?

Cain looks into the distance.

CAIN

Because somewhere beneath rage, memory yet breathes.

BIG TONE

That, or she was distracted.

PATTY CAKE

By thy singing?

BIG TONE

My singing hath ended smaller wars.

SONNY

And started several?

BIG TONE

Naturally.

Patty notices Sonny trying to repair La Cocina Nuestra.

PATTY CAKE

Need a hand?

SONNY

I manage.

PATTY CAKE

That was not my question.

Beat.

Sonny hands her a wrench.

SONNY

Left bolt. Not that one.

PATTY CAKE

I know a left bolt when it insults me.

They work together. Their hands brush while tightening the same piece of metal. Both pretend it didn't happen. Maria notices. Big Tone notices. Cain notices. Lucky, watching from the shadows, notices most of all.

LUCKY

Well now... that complicates supper.

A soft acoustic guitar enters. The marketplace begins to stir. Someone lifts a table. Someone relights a cook fire. A child laughs once, then stops, unsure if laughter is allowed.

Sonny looks at Maria.

SONNY

When the world breaks, people expect silence.

MARIA

Then give them music.

Sonny nods. The guitar grows.

NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

Sonny & Maria

During the number, the market slowly rebuilds itself around the song. Tables are lifted. Coffee is poured. Bread is cut. Big Tone cooks jerk chicken for anyone still standing. Patty bakes fresh loaves from salvaged dough. Maria carries food to children and wounded travelers. Sonny repairs the grill on La Cocina Nuestra, then begins cooking again.

As the number continues, projections briefly show fragments of the old world: dinner tables, crowded streets, birthday cakes, corner food carts, summer nights. Each image fades back into the wasteland.

By the end of the song, the market is no longer whole. But it is alive.

After the Song.

Night falls. A large campfire burns center stage. The survivors gather around it with food from every truck. Jerk chicken. Bread. Tacos. Soup. Coffee. For the first time, Sonny, Maria, Cain, Patty Cake, and Big Tone sit together as one company.

BIG TONE

Never trust a man before supper. Never abandon
him after dessert.

PATTY CAKE

There. Wisdom at last. With gravy.

SONNY

I did not know wisdom came with gravy.

BIG TONE

Then thou hast been listening to the wrong
prophets.

Cain smiles.

CAIN

He is not entirely wrong.

PATTY CAKE

Mark the date. The prophet approves the gravy.

Laughter. Maria watches them, quietly moved.

MARIA

This is what I meant.

SONNY

What?

MARIA

There is still a world. Not the old one. But
something.

*Sonny looks around. He cannot deny it. From the darkness beyond
the firelight, Lucky watches.*

LUCKY

Families. How quickly they assemble. How quickly
they break.

Cain steps beside him.

CAIN

Yet thou hast spent eternity fearing them.

LUCKY
Fearing?

CAIN
A family is a small rebellion against despair.

Lucky looks toward Patty and Sonny.

LUCKY
Then let rebellion fall in love.

Cain's expression hardens.

CAIN
Do not.

LUCKY
My dear Cain... I never do anything. I merely
wait for people to want.

Lucky vanishes into darkness. Cain looks toward Sonny and Patty.

CAIN
Softly. The heart is now a road also.

Around the fire, Big Tone begins tapping a spoon against a tin cup. Patty joins with a bread knife against a pan. Maria claps. Others join. A rhythm grows. Cain stands. The firelight catches his face.

CAIN
Ye have broken bread. Ye have counted wounds. Now
speak. Not as strangers guarding crumbs, but as
souls yet breathing. If fear hath ruled thy
tongue, dismiss it. If grief hath built a wall,
open a door.

The music swells into communal rhythm.

TALK ABOUT IT

Cain & Ensemble

During the number, the campfire becomes the heart of the world. Dustfolk, traders, Jerk Posse, children, Patty Cake, Sonny, Maria, and Cain sing together. The number is not polished. It is communal. Utensils become percussion. Trucks become drums. Voices begin uncertainly and grow stronger. By the final chorus, the market has become a family for one night.

*As the song ends, the campfire burns bright.
Then—*

A distant horn. Long. Low. Not a train. Not thunder. Another horn answers. The ground vibrates.

Big Tone slowly stands. His smile disappears.

MARIA

What is it?

Big Tone lifts his face to the wind. Sniffs.

BIG TONE

Hickory.

PATTY CAKE

We are surrounded by smoke.

BIG TONE

Not this kind.

Another horn. Closer now. A faint orange glow rises beyond the highway.

SONNY

Friend of yours?

BIG TONE

Acquaintance.

PATTY CAKE

That means enemy.

BIG TONE

Not always.

Beat.

BIG TONE

Mostly.

Cain turns toward the glow.

CAIN

The road hath sent another trial.

Lights fade slowly. The horn sounds once more in the dark.

END OF ACT I - SCENE 2

ACT I, SCENE 3 - INTO THE FIRE

Setting: *Night. Several miles north of the crossroads market. The old interstate stretches into darkness. Behind the company, the faint glow of the ruined marketplace flickers against the sky. Ahead... only smoke.*

Lighting: *Moonlight. Orange firelight. Occasional bursts of flame from somewhere beyond the next rise.*

Sound: *A distant diesel engine. Another. Then a deep air horn. Long. Proud. Almost musical.*

AT RISE:

The company walks cautiously. Sonny. Maria. Patty Cake. Big Tone. Cain. Several Dustfolk. Everyone is tired. No one speaks.

Big Tone suddenly stops. He sniffs the air.

BIG TONE

Hickory. Mesquite. Applewood. ... Only one fool
burneth all three.

Another horn. Headlights slowly appear through the smoke. Enormous armored barbecue trucks emerge. Smoke pours from towering stacks. Chains drag behind steel bumpers. Rotisserie spits turn slowly. A platform rises.

Standing upon it—

BLAZE.

He spreads his arms.

BLAZE

WHO COOKETH... WITHOUT INVITATION?

Silence. Then—

BIG TONE

Still compensating for something, Blaze?

The Pitmasters erupt with laughter. Blaze points at Big Tone.

BLAZE

Still seasoning everything until it surrendereth?

BIG TONE

Still confusing smoke with personality?

The rivalry is old. Friendly. Dangerous. Blaze notices Sonny.

BLAZE

And thou? Flat-top?

SONNY

Aye.

BLAZE

No pit?

SONNY

No.

BLAZE

No smoker?

SONNY

No.

Blaze looks horrified.

BLAZE

Savages.

Patty can't help herself.

PATTY CAKE

He said the taco man was a savage.

SONNY

I've been called worse.

BLAZE
Impossible.

A Pitmaster whispers.

PITMASTER
Challenge him.

Blaze smiles.

BLAZE
Very well. One dish. Thy best. If I win... thy
diesel. If thou win... safe passage.

SONNY
Done.

The Cook-Off.

*Grills ignite. Smoke fills the stage. Big Tone serves as referee.
Patty insists on judging.*

PATTY CAKE
I possess impeccable taste.

BIG TONE
Thou also possesseth no self-control.

PATTY CAKE
A judge must make sacrifices.

*The audience gets a long comedic cooking sequence. Blaze's team
performs with spectacle. Flames. Smoke. Flying spices. Sonny
cooks quietly. No tricks. Just beautiful food.*

Maria sneaks brisket. Sonny catches her.

SONNY
Traitor.

MARIA
Research.

Huge laugh.

Blaze tastes Sonny's taco. Silence. Another bite. Another.

BLAZE
... I dislike thee.

SONNY
So I've gathered.

BLAZE
Because this... is magnificent.

He laughs. Extends his hand.

BLAZE
Brother?

Sonny shakes it.

SONNY
Brother.

The orchestra swells warmly.

Then—

Motorcycle engines. Lucky's voice echoes.

LUCKY (V.O.)
How touching.

*The Butchies explode onto the highway. Maxine leads the charge.
Mercy raised.*

MAD MAXINE
TAKE EVERYTHING!

Battle.

The Pitmasters answer with fire. The Jerk Posse joins. The Dustfolk flee. Cain protects civilians instead of fighting. Maria is separated in the confusion.

SONNY

Maria!

Smoke engulfs the highway. The orchestra drives into—

BLOWN AWAY

Sonny

The song begins as Sonny fights desperately through smoke, fire, and chaos searching for Maria. Rather than stopping the action, the number propels it. Big Tone and Patty fight alongside him while Cain shepherds survivors to safety.

At the climax of the number, Sonny finally reaches Maria—

Maxine charges. Mercy comes down.

Blaze sees it. Without hesitation — he throws himself between them. Mercy strikes Blaze instead.

The orchestra stops. Silence.

Blaze falls into Sonny's arms.

SONNY

Why?

BLAZE

Because... thou would've done the same.

He laughs weakly.

BLAZE

Besides... someone hath to admit... thy tacos are better.

He removes a glowing ember-red medallion from beneath his apron.

BLAZE

Won this years ago. Never knew what it opened.
Guess... it was opening me.

He presses it into Sonny's hand.

CAIN

The Ember Token. The first key.

Blaze looks toward his Pitmasters.

BLAZE

Keep... the fires... burning...

He dies.

No music. Only wind.

Even Maxine is shaken. For the first time, she lowers Mercy. She stares at Blaze. At Sonny. Something changes behind her eyes. She turns away.

MAD MAXINE

Fall back.

The Butchies withdraw. Lucky appears in the shadows. He is furious.

LUCKY

One sacrifice... can ruin years of excellent
work.

Cain kneels beside Blaze.

CAIN

No. One sacrifice... can begin the work anew.

The Pitmasters lift Blaze's body onto his great smoker. They salute. Then depart south in solemn procession.

The company gathers. Maria is gone. Not captured. Gone. Only her scarf lies on the road. Sonny picks it up.

SONNY

Maria...

CAIN

She lives.

SONNY

How knowest thou?

CAIN

Because hope yet moveth north.

Patty steps beside Sonny.

PATTY CAKE

Then we fetch her.

Big Tone shoulders his skillet.

BIG TONE

Nobody walketh into the north alone.

Cain grips his staff.

CAIN

Then let us become companions. Not by chance. By
choice.

*Sonny looks at each of them. Then closes his hand around the
Ember Token.*

SONNY

Very well. North. Together.

The orchestra begins the opening of—

FINAL DESTINATION

Patty Cake, Cain & Sonny

The song begins quietly as the four unlikely companions gather their supplies. During the number, the Dustfolk choose to follow them. The road stretches into darkness. Far in the distance, a faint blue shimmer suggests the legendary Fountains of Youth.

As the final chorus rises: Sonny leads. Patty walks beside him. Big Tone twirls his skillet onto his shoulder. Cain follows with quiet purpose.

Four travelers. One road.

High above them, Lucky watches. For the first time... he is uncertain.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

ACT II, SCENE 1 - THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Setting: Before dawn. Several days after Blaze's sacrifice. A forgotten stretch of highway north of Chicago – broken pavement giving way to towering pines and dense morning fog. Ancient stone markers stand beside the road, worn smooth by centuries. Somewhere beyond these tree lines lie the legendary Fountains of Youth.

Lighting: Cold blue moonlight slowly yielding to the first pale light of dawn.

Sound: Wind. Distant motorcycles. Then birdsong – rare, fragile, and beautiful.

AT RISE:

MARIA bursts onto the stage. She is exhausted. Covered in dirt. Her clothes are torn from days of running. She looks over her shoulder.

Nothing. She keeps moving.

A distant motorcycle engine. Then another. Then many.

Maria stops only long enough to catch her breath. She removes a small locket from beneath her shirt – a keepsake from her mother, the twin to the photograph Sonny carries. She holds it tightly.

MARIA

Come on, Dad... Please...

She kisses the locket. Puts it away. Runs again.

The motorcycle engines grow louder.

ROCCO (O.S.)

Spread out! She can't be far!

Maria ducks behind a fallen tree. She waits. Silence. She starts crawling.

A motorcycle bursts through the brush. Maria bolts.

The Butchies explode onto the stage from every direction. Maxine rides at their center.

ROCCO

There!

MAD MAXINE

Alive! Do you hear me? Alive! Lucky wants the
girl – not the corpse!

*A chain whistles past Maria's head. She dives. Rolls. Keeps
running.*

*The road suddenly ends. Ahead – a circle of ancient standing
stones. Beyond them – nothing but cliffs.*

Maria stops. She is trapped. The motorcycles surround her.

Maxine slowly removes her helmet. She smiles.

MAD MAXINE

Well... Look what the storm carried in.

MARIA

If you're looking for surrender... keep riding.

Maxine laughs.

MAD MAXINE

Still defiant. Good. He was right about thee.

MARIA

Lucky.

MAD MAXINE

Aye. He hath plans for thee.

MARIA

Tell him... he can go to Hell.

(smiling)

MAD MAXINE

That... is exactly where this road leadeth.

*She slowly removes Mercy. The Butchies close in. Maria raises a
broken tree branch. Pathetic. But determined.*

Suddenly—

A hunting horn echoes across the valley. Long. Deep. Ancient. Everyone freezes. Another horn answers. Then another. The forest itself seems alive.

ROCCO

Max...

MAD MAXINE

Hold.

Figures begin appearing between the trees. Disciplined. Silent. Long steel skewers glint in the morning light. Within seconds — the Butchies find themselves surrounded.

One warrior steps forward.

FIRST SULTAN

Lay down your weapons. You stand upon protected land.

MAD MAXINE

Do I?

FIRST SULTAN

You do.

MAD MAXINE

Then summon thy master.

A calm voice answers from deeper in the trees.

AHMED (O.S.)

I have already come.

The warriors part. AHMED enters. No armor. Simple robes. Hands folded behind his back. He surveys the clearing — first Maxine, then Maria, then the Butchies.

AHMED

Good morning. I regret we are closed for war
today.

No one laughs. Ahmed continues calmly.

AHMED

You have crossed the northern boundary. Leave
peacefully... and no blood need be spilled.

MAD MAXINE

One girl. That is all I require.

Ahmed turns toward Maria.

AHMED

Is this true?

MARIA

No.

AHMED

Very well.

He turns back.

AHMED

Then thou shalt leave without her.

MAD MAXINE

I wasn't asking.

AHMED

Neither was I.

A long silence.

MAD MAXINE

Kill them.

Instantly – the Butchies attack. Ahmed raises one hand. The Sultans move as one. Steel meets steel. Chains clash against skewers. The battle is disciplined chaos. The Butchies fight with rage. The Sultans fight with precision.

Maria slips away unnoticed. Almost.

ROCCO
THE GIRL!

Three Butchies break away. Ahmed sees them.

AHMED
Protect her.

Four Sultans pursue. The battle intensifies. More horns. More Sultans emerge from the forest. Maxine realizes she is losing ground. Rocco rides beside her.

ROCCO
There are too many!

Maxine looks toward the trees where Maria disappeared. Then toward Ahmed.

MAD MAXINE
This is not over.

AHMED
No. It hath scarcely begun.

MAD MAXINE
BUTCHIES! RIDE!

The motorcycles disappear into the forest. Silence slowly returns. Birdsong. For the first time.

Ahmed watches until the engines can no longer be heard. A whistle. Two Sultans emerge with Maria. She is unharmed. Still defiant.

AHMED

Art thou injured?

MARIA

Only tired.

AHMED

That is fortunate. Tired people generally
recover. Dead people seldom do.

Maria almost smiles. Ahmed notices.

AHMED

Progress.

He studies her.

AHMED

Who art thou?

MARIA

No one important.

AHMED

In my experience... those are the most dangerous
people.

A beat.

AHMED

Come.

MARIA

Where?

AHMED

Breakfast.

MARIA

I'm leaving.

AHMED

Not before breakfast.

MARIA

You don't understand. My father—

AHMED

If thy father liveth... he prayeth thou findest
kindness. Permit me to answer his prayer.

*Ahmed starts walking. He never looks back. After a long
hesitation... Maria follows. The Sultans fall in around them.
As they descend through the trees... the morning fog slowly
parts.*

Maria stops.

*Below her... stretching across the valley... is the Boulevard.
Smoke rises from dozens of food trucks. Fresh bread bakes in
outdoor ovens. Children run laughing through market stalls.
Merchants raise awnings. Travelers unload wagons. Music drifts
across the square.*

*For the first time since leaving Chicago... Maria sees something
she thought the world had lost.*

Life.

BOULEVARD

Maria

*Maria descends into the valley alone, moving through the
Boulevard for the first time. The number is a song of recognition
— not hope restored, but hope remembered. She moves through the
market touching things: a loaf of bread, a child's drawing pinned
to a truck, a pot of coffee. The world she thought she had lost
is still here. Broken, yes. Patched and diminished. But alive.*

*By the final verse, she has found a place to sit. She is still.
The Boulevard moves around her.*

The song ends in quiet wonder.

Later.

The Boulevard is in full market swing. Maria has been given food, clean clothes, and a place to rest. She is watching from the steps of a converted church-truck when Maxine appears at the edge of the valley.

Alone. No Butchies. No Rocco. No Mercy. Only Maxine.

Ahmed sees her. He walks to her directly.

AHMED

Alone?

MAD MAXINE

Aye.

AHMED

Why?

A long silence.

MAD MAXINE

Because I am tired of being the reason people
run.

Ahmed regards her for a long moment.

AHMED

Come.

MAD MAXINE

I don't deserve—

AHMED

No one does. That is not the question.

He gestures toward the market. Maxine hesitates. Then slowly descends.

YOU GOT WHAT I NEED

Mad Maxine & The Butchies

During the number, something unexpected happens: the Butchies arrive one by one, following their leader not into war but into the valley. The song is initially Maxine's declaration of what her people lack – fuel, food, medicine, rest. But as the number builds, the Boulevard answers. Market vendors emerge. Sultans offer food. A Sultan medic tends a wounded Butchie. By the final chorus, a tentative, suspicious, grudging peace has been struck. The Butchies park their motorcycles. They sit. They eat.

It is the most dangerous thing Maxine has ever done.

After the Song.

Maxine sits alone at the edge of the market. Maria approaches. Sits beside her.

A long silence. Neither looks at the other.

MARIA

You could've killed me. Twice.

MAD MAXINE

Aye.

MARIA

Why didn't you?

Maxine is quiet for a long time. When she speaks, it is not to Maria. It is to no one.

MAD MAXINE

Thou hast thy father's eyes. He hath the same
look when he feeds a child. Like it matters. Like
one meal changeth the world.

MARIA

Doesn't it?

Long silence.

MAD MAXINE

I had a daughter.

Maria does not respond. She only waits.

MAD MAXINE

She hath her father's eyes.

Beat.

MAD MAXINE

Had.

Maria reaches out. Gently places her hand on Maxine's.

Maxine does not pull away.

Across the market, Sonny's convoy arrives. La Cocina Nuestra rolls into the Boulevard, followed by Patty Cake's bakery truck, Big Tone's rig, and a long trail of Dustfolk. The Jerk Posse — who reunited with Big Tone two days north of the crossroads — ride alongside.

Sonny steps down from the truck.

He sees Maria.

He goes very still.

Maria stands.

He crosses the market. She meets him halfway. They embrace without a word. Sonny holds on.

SONNY

I thought—

MARIA

I know.

SONNY

Thy scarf—

MARIA

I left it so thou wouldst follow.

Beat.

SONNY

That is remarkably cruel.

MARIA

I learned it from the best.

He holds her tighter.

Patty Cake finds Sonny. Their reunion is quieter – eyes that say what neither has words for yet. Big Tone, watching, is uncharacteristically silent.

BIG TONE

(quietly) Somebody should cook.

PATTY CAKE

Aye. Somebody should.

She glances at Sonny. Something has shifted. The road has done something to them both.

PLEASURE AND PAIN

Patty Cake & Sonny

The song takes place during the preparation of an enormous shared meal in the Boulevard. On its surface it is a comic cooking duet – their approaches to food are entirely incompatible, and they fight about everything from seasoning to presentation. Beneath the comedy, something honest is being said: about loss, about the war of caring for another person, about the terrifying possibility that there might be time enough for something more.

By the end of the number, the meal is magnificent. They are standing close. Neither has said anything directly. But the market knows.

Night. The Boulevard glows with firelight. The shared meal has ended.

Cain sits alone at the edge of the square. Patty approaches. Sits beside him. Big Tone joins. Then Sonny. No one speaks for a while.

PATTY CAKE

The road ends tomorrow.

CAIN

Aye.

PATTY CAKE

Art thou afraid?

A long pause.

CAIN

I am afraid that what waits at the Fountains is simpler than anyone expects. And that simple things are the hardest for mankind to accept.

SONNY

What dost thou mean?

CAIN

They seek immortality. They shall find a choice.

Silence.

Patty looks at the stars for a long time.

SALVATION ROAD (REPRISE, A CAPPELLA)

Patty Cake, Cain & Sonny

The reprise begins with Patty Cake singing the first verse alone, quietly, by heart – she has heard Cain sing it since the crossroads market and has never forgotten it. Sonny joins her on the second verse. Cain adds the third. No instruments. Only voices in the dark of the Boulevard. Around them, unseen, the Dustfolk who have followed since Chicago listen in silence.

As the song fades, Cain looks north. For just a moment, his expression is not that of a weary traveler. It is something older.

The Fountains shimmer briefly in the projection – closer now. Real.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT II - SCENE 1

ACT II, SCENE 2 - HELL OR HIGHWATER

Setting: *The Fountains of Youth. Ancient stone terraces surrounding crystal pools fed by cascading waterfalls. No palace. No throne. No monument. Only creation, untouched and waiting.*

Lighting: *Blue-white dawn. The water catches and scatters the light. The stage is more beautiful than anything seen before in the musical.*

Sound: *Falling water. Wind. Nothing else.*

AT RISE:

The company enters in two groups from opposite sides of the stage.

From the left trail: Sonny, Patty Cake, Big Tone, Cain.

From the right trail: Ahmed, Maria, and a small company of Sultans.

A moment later, from the forest edge: Mad Maxine, Rocco, and the Butchies – on foot. Mercy is strapped across Maxine's back, not in her hand.

Silence.

Everyone sees the Fountains for the first time. No one speaks. The water falls. The light catches it. For a long moment the entire company stands still.

*Then – Lucky steps from the shadows.
Applauding.*

LUCKY

Well... What a remarkable family reunion.

MOSHI MOSHI

MOSHI MOSHI

Mr. Lucky

The song is Lucky's grandest performance – part seduction, part sales pitch, part eulogy for human ambition. He moves through the

company addressing each person directly: Maxine, who wanted justice. Maria, who wanted her father safe. Sonny, who wanted his daughter back. Ahmed, who wanted order. Patty, who wanted time enough to love someone. Big Tone, who wanted his people to thrive.

He offers each of them the Fountains. A different version of it for each person. The same water. Different promises.

Cain does not move during the number. He watches. He waits.

By the final chorus, Lucky has worked himself into the center of the group. His arms are wide. His smile is the most beautiful thing in the room.

The song ends. A beat of silence.

MARIA

It's over, Lucky.

LUCKY

No... It's finally beginning.

He walks slowly among them. No one stops him.

LUCKY

You all came looking for the same thing. Life.
Hope. Another chance.

(chuckles)

Humans are wonderfully predictable.

Sonny steps toward Maria.

SONNY

Maria...

MARIA

Dad...

They embrace. The company quietly steps back. Ahmed watches. He understands.

LUCKY

Touching. Truly. Now... which one of you deserves
forever?

Nobody answers.

LUCKY

Exactly.

Cain steps forward.

CAIN

No one.

Lucky turns. Smiles.

LUCKY

Still preaching.

CAIN

Still listening.

Lucky laughs.

LUCKY

Tell them. Tell them the truth. Tell them why
Heaven hid this place.

Cain looks at the water. Then at Maria.

CAIN

Because Paradise cannot be possessed. Only
received.

Ahmed lowers his head. He has known this all along.

AHMED

Every generation believed they could protect it.
Every generation failed.

MARIA

Then stop protecting it. Start sharing it.

Ahmed looks at her. Long silence.

Maxine slowly steps toward the water. Mercy still strapped across her back. Lucky watches. For the first time – satisfied.

LUCKY

Yes. Take it. Claim it. The world belongs to the strong.

Maxine looks into the water. She sees her reflection. Not the warrior. The woman she once was.

She slowly looks toward Sonny. Then Maria. Then Cain.

And this is the moment she has been building toward since Blaze fell – the man who stepped between a weapon and a stranger. Who died choosing something other than himself. She has been carrying that image like a coal in her chest, and now, standing here, it burns through the last wall.

Slowly, Maxine reaches back and unstraps Mercy from her back.

She holds it out over the water.

Lets go.

It disappears beneath the surface without a ripple.

MAD MAXINE

No more.

Lucky's smile disappears.

LUCKY

Pick it up.

MAD MAXINE

No.

LUCKY

I made thee.

MAD MAXINE

No. Pain made me. Grief made me. You merely
applauded.

Silence.

Lucky's charm vanishes. His voice changes. Ancient. Cold.

LUCKY

Very well. If I cannot have the Fountain... no
one shall.

He rushes toward the water.

Maria instinctively steps between Lucky and the spring.

*Cain steps forward. Their eyes meet. For the first time – the
masks fall away.*

CAIN

Enough.

LUCKY

Brother...

Cain smiles. Sadly.

CAIN

Not anymore.

*A brilliant white light floods the stage. Lucky recoils. He
cannot approach. The light is not violent. It is simply – true.
And he cannot bear it.*

Lucky screams. Not in pain. In defeat.

Slowly... the light fades. Lucky is gone. Only silence remains.

Nobody moves.

*Maria kneels. She reaches toward the water. Looks back at Sonny.
He nods.*

She gently touches the spring.

Nothing dramatic. The water simply begins flowing – clearer, brighter, alive. The sound spreads through every stream, every waterfall, every river beyond the stage.

Patty smiles.

BIG TONE

... So... Who's hungry?

Everyone laughs. Even Maxine.

Ahmed walks to Sonny. Extends his hand.

AHMED

Take care of her.

SONNY

Together.

Ahmed nods. They shake hands.

Maria looks around at everyone assembled.

MARIA

The world's still broken.

PATTY CAKE

Aye.

MARIA

Then we'd better start cooking.

Big Tone claps loudly.

BIG TONE

NOW THAT... ...is a mission I understand.

The opening riff begins.

DON'T WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW

Cain, Sonny, Mad Maxine & Maria

The song begins with Cain, then Maria, then Sonny, then – most unexpectedly – Maxine, who sings quietly at first and then with the full power of a woman who has been silent too long. During the number:

Maxine removes her Butchie colors. Rocco quietly follows. Ahmed opens the northern gate. The Ember Token – which Sonny has kept through every battle, never losing it – glows warmly in his hand as he holds it up to the Fountain's light. The company chooses the road home instead of remaining at the Fountain.

End of song.

Without pause...

THE REAL THING

Patty Cake & Full Cast

Throughout the finale, rival food trucks roll onto the stage together for the first time:

The Boulevard. The Jerk Posse. The Inferno Pitmasters – who have followed Blaze's last command and kept the fires burning all the way north. The Butchies. The Sultans. Former enemies prepare one enormous shared meal.

The Fountains remain untouched in the background. The miracle was never the water. The miracle was the people.

The final chorus ends. The last chord rings. A beat.

Lucky appears briefly at the very back of the stage.

He flips his silver coin.

Catches it.

Smiles – not with malice, but with a curious respect, as though the outcome surprised even him.

Tips his hat toward the audience.

And disappears into the darkness. He is not destroyed. He is not defeated. He is simply – elsewhere. Waiting, as he always has, for the next generation to make its choice.

BLACKOUT.

CURTAIN CALL / EXIT MUSIC

The company takes bows as the band launches into the exit music – an instrumental medley weaving themes from Salvation Road and The Real Thing.

Cain takes his bow last. He is smiling. He looks exactly like a man who has seen this story before and is glad to see it play out well again.

Lucky's silver coin catches the light briefly on the edge of the stage. No one picks it up.

END