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Flames

A Musical Thriller

Book, Music, and Lyrics by
Stephen Dolginoff

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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FLAMES was originally produced at LAMB Arts Regional Theatre in Sioux City, Iowa (Russell Wooley, Managing/Artistic Director/Producer; Diana Wooley, Producer), opening on October 17, 2013. The director was Russell Wooley; the musical direction was by Donald E. Short III; the fight direction was by Eric Hagen; the set & sound design was by Russell Wooley; the lighting design was by Michael Rohlena; the costume design was by Karen Sowienski; the stage manager was Bronwyn Eastlick. The piano arrangements were by Stephen Dolginoff and Zachary Orts. The cast was as follows:

MEREDITH . . . . . Jessica Wheeler
ERIC . . . . . Matt Rixner
EDMOND . . . . . Josh Case

CHARACTERS

MEREDITH – a beautiful woman in her late 20s-early 30s.

ERIC – a handsome man in his 30s.

EDMOND – a non-descript man in his 30s.

SETTING

A cemetery (and various flashback locales)

TIME

The present (and flashbacks to the recent past)

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Amy Rose Marsh, Amy Wagner, and Ron Gwiazda

MUSICAL NUMBERS

PRELUDE

"HE CAN STILL HEAR YOU" – Eric

"YOU'RE DIFFERENT" – Meredith

"IDENTIFIED THE BODY" – Meredith and Edmond

"JEALOUSY" – Eric

"NIGHT OF THE FIRE (ERIC'S VERSION)" – Eric and Edmond

"NIGHT OF THE FIRE (EDMOND'S VERSION)" – Edmond and Eric

"THE RIGHT CHOICE" – Meredith

"NEVER LET HIM HURT YOU" – Edmond

REPRISE: "NIGHT OF THE FIRE" – Eric

"EDMOND'S EYES" – Eric

FINALE – Eric and Meredith*

(*A printed program shouldn't reveal who sings the finale.)

AUTHOR'S NOTES

FLAMES is a musical suspense thriller that takes place in a dark, moody setting, and should be performed in a cautious and careful pace to keep the tension high. The show features three very modern characters in a very gothic setting. The more their costumes are in stark contrast to the cemetery atmosphere, the better. And though the story is in no way supernatural, it should be presented to almost have the tone of a ghost story combined with a mystery. Like "Alfred Hitchcock meets Edgar Allan Poe."

Several moments are marked in the script as "flashbacks" because they take place in the past as told by one of the characters. "Flashback" is not an accurate word for most of these scenes. In most cases, a character is telling a story of what they *claim* happened in the past. Whether or not it is true isn't revealed until the end. But the audience in the theatre should perceive these scenes as "flashbacks" as they unfold.

In the script there is a character named "Edmond" – by the end it will be revealed whether or not this man is only *pretending* to be "Edmond" or really is him. But for purposes of clarity, his character shall always have that name in the script. The character of Meredith is often referred to by the nickname "Mere" – it is pronounced like "Mare."

Great care should be taken when casting the role of Edmond in order to keep the mystery continuity strong. It is best if he is handsome, yet in an average, non-descript kind of way. It is only his eyes that Meredith recognizes at first and Eric comments on later. If the actor has very distinguishing physical characteristics such as red hair and freckles, or if he is extraordinarily tall, short, etc., then Meredith will have much more information to use to prove or disprove his story. The possibility that he is telling the truth is very important. So nothing in his appearance should run counter to that. Remember, it is very dark and rainy. The trees cast shadows. Meredith appears to be in a fragile state-of-mind. So the illusion that this man may be telling the truth is a little easier to believe than if it were broad daylight.

It is crucial to always keep the audience guessing. All three characters are pretending to be something they're not to some extent. And they all end up vastly different than how they start. Like in a typical suspense thriller, the audience should never quite get a handle on exactly what is going on until the end. One minute Eric seems like the romantic hero, and then in Edmond's flashbacks, Eric is more of an unstable psychopath. And vice versa! Meredith appears to be a standard ingénue/woman-in-jeopardy, so her ultimate reveal should be quite a surprise.

In the original production, the fights, strangulations, bodies rising back up, bloody umbrella stab, etc. were staged with great precision. And they were choreographed extremely carefully to appear very realistic, and quite frightening. With all the lightning and thunder going on around them, it was extremely effective.

Most importantly, have fun! These three characters end up doing horrible things to each other live onstage, so please revel in the outrageousness.

– Stephen Dolginoff

[MUSIC NO. 1 – "PRELUDE"]

(While the houselights are still up, an enormous clap of thunder plunges the audience into total darkness.

Prelude music immediately begins and sets an eerie, atmospheric mood.

Within the music, there is another clap of thunder and a flash of lightning. This illumination causes us to briefly glimpse an empty cemetery.

The music continues in the darkness.

Another clap of thunder and lightning, this time fleetingly revealing the figures of a **MAN** *and a* **WOMAN***, under an umbrella, entering the cemetery, while being slowed by the storm.*

The music continues in the darkness and then ends as the storm softly abates.)

The Cemetery, Night – The Present.

(Lights finally fade up on a small, dark, traditionally spooky cemetery.

It is a murky, stormy night under an ominous full moon.

There are gravestones of varying sizes, a few small monuments, trees, tree stumps, perhaps a marble bench or two.

[Alternatively, it could be set with nothing but a single gravestone on a bare stage or black box.]

MEREDITH*, a woman in her late 20's-early 30s; and* **ERIC***, a man in his 30s, both wearing stylish raincoats,*

stand huddled under a large, old-fashioned, black, metal-tipped, umbrella. In front of them is a gravestone, which simply reads: "Edmond."

There is another flash of lightning and a clap of thunder, but it sounds more distant. They both look up at the sky.

After a few moments, **ERIC** *speaks.)*

ERIC. It looks like that's the last of the storm.

MEREDITH. Thank God. Finally. I'm so terrified of lightning. Ever since I was little. I was always afraid I was gonna get shocked.

ERIC. There's nothing to be scared of, Mere. *(pronounced "Mare")*

(They put down the umbrella.)

At least it was a good excuse to carry Edmond's old umbrella.

MEREDITH. *(as she's closing it)* I never need an excuse. It reminds me of him. Classic.

(He smiles at her warmly.)

ERIC. Here, take one.

*(***ERIC** *takes out two small memorial candles and hands one to her. They kneel down at Edmond's grave and place them in front of it.*

Then **ERIC** *takes out a book of matches and they each light their candle. The flames cast long shadows onto the gravestone.)*

MEREDITH. It's hard to believe he's been gone for a whole year.

*(***MEREDITH** *starts to cry.* **ERIC** *tries to console her.)*

ERIC. I know.

MEREDITH. We'll be together again someday, Edmond.

ERIC. I hope you're resting in peace, buddy.

*(***MEREDITH** *composes herself.)*

MEREDITH. Thanks for bringing me here tonight, Eric.

ERIC. Sometimes I have good ideas.

MEREDITH. This is just like the funeral. Only you and me. No one else came.

ERIC. That's the past. It doesn't matter anymore. We were there for him then. And we're here for him now.

MEREDITH. It wasn't much of a surprise that no one wanted to be here after what he did. How he died…what a horrible way to go.

(She gets up, **ERIC** *follows and tries to comfort her.)*

ERIC. Meredith…don't talk about that now. It's over. We have to just…remember the good.

MEREDITH. One day he was a successful guy without a care in the world. The next day a criminal, and then… dead.

ERIC. I know. It was so fast.

MEREDITH. I still don't understand, Eric. Why did he do it? Those people – he may as well have murdered them.

ERIC. Don't say that. You know it was a far cry from murder. There's no other explanation – he just needed the money. And then he got carried away.

MEREDITH. He spent too much on me. Why didn't he just tell me he was having problems? Why didn't he confide in you?

ERIC. He probably thought I wouldn't understand.

MEREDITH. *I* would have understood. I loved him.

ERIC. I loved him too. He was like a brother.

MEREDITH. All that money…just gone without a trace.

ERIC. It isn't right.

MEREDITH. I keep looking at that horrible wedding dress in my closet. Haunting me. Tormenting me. He'll never see how I looked in it.

ERIC. You will get over this. I promise.

MEREDITH. *(being irrational)* How? Why?

ERIC. Because that's what Edmond wants.

(Music begins.)

MEREDITH. He's gone. He can't want anything anymore.

ERIC. Not as long as we remember him. In a way, he's still with us…

MEREDITH. *(near tears)* Did we even know him?

ERIC. Shhh….

(He sings.)

[MUSIC NO. 2 – "HE CAN STILL HEAR YOU"]

YOU CAN'T LET BAD KARMA
ENTER YOUR MIND
AND TRY TO STEER YOU.
AS LONG AS HE'S IN YOUR HEART,
YOU WILL FIND
HE CAN STILL HEAR YOU.

HIS PRESENCE IS STRONG
SO YOU CAN LET GO.
YOU MAY FIND THE CONCEPT STRANGE,
BUT I KNOW
HE CAN STILL HEAR YOU.

HIS PICTURES ARE LOOKING DOWN
FROM YOUR WALL,
HE'LL ALWAYS BE NEAR YOU.
BUT WHY SHOULD YOUR WORLD
SLOW DOWN TO A CRAWL?
HE CAN STILL HEAR YOU.

YOU DON'T EVER
HAVE TO BLOW OUT THE FLAME
BUT DON'T SHUT ME OUT,
I'M FEELING THE SAME.
HE CAN STILL HEAR YOU.

(He moves in closer to her.)

SO LET'S GET SOME PERSPECTIVE,
YOU HAVE TO LIVE YOUR LIFE.

IT'S HARD TO BE OBJECTIVE
BUT I'M STANDING HERE AND WAITING,
IF YOU'LL LET ME TAKE YOUR HAND
AND CONSIDER MAYBE DATING–
HE'D UNDERSTAND.

(Music continues.)

MEREDITH. I can't say you're surprising me. And it's crossed my mind too. But, it just doesn't feel right.

ERIC. Why not? We're all we have left, Mere. He'd want us to be happy.

MEREDITH. He'd want us to forgive him. And mourn him.

ERIC. And we have. For a *year.*

(He continues to sing.)

YOU KNOW THAT HE'S STILL
ALIVE IN MY HEAD,
AS LONG AS YOU'RE NEAR ME.
YOU KNOW THAT I HOLD
RESPECT FOR THE DEAD.
HE CAN STILL HEAR ME.

I KNOW THAT HE WANTS
MY HAPPINESS TOO,
I KNOW HE SUPPORTS
WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO,
SO LET ME EXPLORE
MY FEELINGS FOR YOU …

I CAN GIVE YOU THE MOON
AND IT ISN'T TOO SOON
IF YOU THINK IT THROUGH!

(Music continues.)

MEREDITH. Eric…

ERIC. We've grown so close this year.

MEREDITH. I know. And I've depended on you. More than I should have.

ERIC. No. Exactly like you should have.

(He takes a tentative step toward her. Then takes her in his arms gently to give her a kiss.

Before their lips meet **MEREDITH** *pulls back.)*

MEREDITH. You're vibrating.

ERIC. What? Oh damn.

(He fishes into his coat pocket, pulls out a large tablet-style smartphone, and checks the screen.)

ERIC. *(cont.)* There's no way to escape e-mail. Sorry.

(He turns off the smartphone and puts it back into his pocket.

Then he reaches for her again and kisses her softly and briefly.)

ERIC. That's what I've been waiting for.

MEREDITH. I wasn't expecting that tonight.

(She motions to **EDMOND***'s grave.)*

In front of Edmond.

ERIC. But, doesn't it feel good?

MEREDITH. I'm not sure yet.

ERIC. I can give you time.

MEREDITH. That's what I need.

(She goes to the gravestone.)

MEREDITH. Do you think you could let me be alone here for awhile?

ERIC. Actually, that's a great idea. Stay here and talk to Edmond about it. And see how *he* feels.

MEREDITH. *(confused)* What?

(She catches on.)

Oh…because he can still…

*(***ERIC** *smiles.)*

ERIC. *(sings)*

YOU KNOW THAT HIS AURA
STILL FILLS THE AIR.

SO TALK TO HIM NOW;
HE'LL LISTEN, I SWEAR.
HE CAN STILL HEAR YOU,
HE CAN STILL HEAR YOU,
HE'S RIGHT THERE.

(Music ends.)

MEREDITH. *(looking at the grave)* He is.

ERIC. And there's no better place for you to be.

(He squeezes her hand and notices her ring.)

You still wear your engagement ring. I was with him the day he bought it. The day before he…

(He starts to get choked up.)

Don't you think it's time to take it off?

MEREDITH. Only a man would say that. I haven't taken this ring off since he put it on my finger. He made me promise him I never would.

ERIC. I remember him telling me he was gonna say that. So romantic.

MEREDITH. I didn't realize that was the very last time I would ever see him alive.

ERIC. *(agreeing, sadly)* He was … gone by the end of that night.

MEREDITH. So I'll never take it off, no matter where I am, no matter what I'm doing. It's all I have left.

ERIC. Well, maybe someday you'll have a new ring. From someone important.

(He holds her hand and touches the ring. She pulls it away.)

MEREDITH. Then it will sit right next to this one.

ERIC. Of course.

(Realizing he has offended her, he moves to exit.)

I'll … get some herbal tea at that diner down the road.

MEREDITH. That creepy place?

*(***ERIC** *looks around at their surroundings as thunder is heard.)*

ERIC. It's no creepier than here.

MEREDITH. I still don't think I'd drink their tea.

(He chuckles and hugs her.)

ERIC. Meet me there when you're finished.

MEREDITH. Alright. I won't be long.

ERIC. *(heading off)* I'll see you in a bit.

(He exits.

She takes off her coat, then clutches at her ring and twists it around her finger as she speaks to the grave.)

MEREDITH. Edmond. Eric's right. I have to go on with my life. I miss you so much. But every day it does get a little easier. And right now I need to be very sure that I'm doing what you'd want.

[MUSIC NO.3 – EDMOND'S ENTRANCE UNDERSCORE]

(A **MAN** *in his 30s, dressed in dark clothing, slowly enters from the shadows behind her, accompanied by a few strains of mysterious music.*

He watches her for a moment and walks toward the grave.

Thunder clap. A flash of lightning finally illuminates him fully.

MEREDITH *jumps.)*

MAN (EDMOND). Hello.

MEREDITH. Damn. You frightened me.

MAN (EDMOND). I'm so sorry.

MEREDITH. Not your fault. It's a public place.

(She tries to be polite.)

Hello.

MAN (EDMOND). I didn't mean to interrupt you.

MEREDITH. It's fine. It was a one sided conversation anyway.

(As **MEREDITH** *watches him, he goes to the gravestone and blows out both candles.)*

MEREDITH. Why did you do that?

MAN (EDMOND). Open flames are dangerous.

MEREDITH. They're just candles. And they were *mine.*

MAN (EDMOND). I'm sorry.

(She moves to re-light them, but realizes she doesn't have the matches.)

MEREDITH. Have you got a match?

MAN (EDMOND). No.

MEREDITH. *(referring to the grave)* Maybe it's better. It's how he died. Fire.

MAN (EDMOND). I know.

MEREDITH. You do? You came to visit Edmond?

MAN (EDMOND). Yes.

MEREDITH. You knew him?

MAN (EDMOND). Yes.

MEREDITH. I was his fiancée. I have no idea who you are. Did you work together?

MAN (EDMOND). I wanted to see his grave.

MEREDITH. I'm sorry, but who are you?

MAN (EDMOND). Is your boyfriend coming back?

MEREDITH. Eric? He's not my …who are you?

MAN (EDMOND). That's not an easy question to answer.

MEREDITH. You're freaking me out.

MAN (EDMOND). Don't be afraid.

MEREDITH. Just tell me who the hell you are. If you knew Edmond, you'd know that he didn't end up with any friends. So it's difficult for me to believe that you…

MAN (EDMOND). Mere, it's me.

*(***MEREDITH** *just stares at him.)*

MEREDITH. You know my name?

MAN (EDMOND). It's *me.*

MEREDITH. It's who?

MAN (EDMOND). Look at my eyes. You always said you loved my eyes.

MEREDITH. What the hell are you talking about?

(The **MAN** *looks to the gravestone pointedly.)*

MAN (EDMOND). It's *me.* Look.

MEREDITH. I don't know who you are, but I think you should leave now.

(He carefully moves closer to her.)

EDMOND. You know who I am. Just look.

*(***MEREDITH** *looks into his eyes.)*

MAN (EDMOND). Remember the first night you looked into them?

(He removes his overcoat.

The lights begin to change.)

[MUSIC NO.4 – FIRST FLASHBACK INTRO]

Flashback. A Bar. Two Years Earlier.

(Music begins and underscores the scene, as **MEREDITH** *and* **EDMOND** *share a flashback to the night the couple first met.*

[And though she isn't sure this **MAN** *really is him, he acts as* **EDMOND** *in the flashback.]*

The scenery doesn't change. We are still in the cemetery, only disguised by lighting.

If desired, furniture can rise up in a swirl of mist, as if from a grave, and do the same for all flashback scenes. But it is not necessary to have any additional set pieces.

MEREDITH *and* **EDMOND** *are in a dark bar/dance club, with club-style lighting moving all around them. He approaches her.)*

MAN (EDMOND). Meredith, right?

MEREDITH. That's right.

MAN (EDMOND). *(very charming)* We met last week. But, you were on your way out.

MEREDITH. I remember.

(She is clearly smitten by him.)

MAN (EDMOND). I was hoping we'd run into each other again.

MEREDITH. Me too.

MAN (EDMOND). I'd like to learn more about you.

MEREDITH. *(coyly)* What do you want to know?

(He contemplates for a moment and smiles.)

MAN (EDMOND). Everything.

*(***MEREDITH** *takes in his dreamy, romantic quality. Music intensifies, she sings.)*

[MUSIC NO.5 – "YOU'RE DIFFERENT"]

MEREDITH.

I'M A GIRL WHO DOESN'T LIKE
BLUE JEANS OR LEATHER
OR AN EVENING WATCHING FOOTBALL
WITH A BEER.
ALL THE GUYS I MEET
CAN'T STRING FOUR WORDS TOGETHER.
SO ON WEEKENDS, WITH MY FRIENDS
I WIND UP HERE!

I'M A GIRL WHO LIKES TO CUDDLE
WITH MY KITTEN
BUT WITH MEN,
I FIND THAT NEVER REALLY FLIES.
AND ALTHOUGH MY
DATING POLICY'S UNWRITTEN,
I DO NOTHING ELSE

BUT ALWAYS COMPROMISE.

BUT YOU'VE STILL GOT ALL YOUR HAIR
AND YOU SEEM TO REALLY CARE
YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER GUYS
AND FOR ME THAT'S RARE!

(He smiles at her, somewhat embarrassed by her compliments.)

I'M A GIRL WHO BUYS A BOOK
THEN BUYS ANOTHER.
AND I LISTEN TO THE CLASSICS,
LOVE GOOD FLICKS.
TRY TO FIND A GUY WHO
DOESN'T WANT A MOTHER
OR A GUY WHO ISN'T ONLY OUT FOR KICKS.

BUT YOUR MANNERS ALL ARE THERE
AND YOU'VE SURE GOT LOOKS TO SPARE.
YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER GUYS
AND FOR ME THAT'S RARE!

(He takes her into his arms and they start dancing. She looks deeply into his eyes.)

HOW DID YOUR ARMS GET SO STRONG?
HOW DID YOUR GRIP GET SO TIGHT?
HOW, SINCE WE'VE ONLY JUST MET,
CAN THIS FEEL SO RIGHT?

I'M A GIRL WHO LIKES THINGS SIMPLE,
KEEPS THINGS HOMEY
AND IT'S BEST THAT I ADMIT THAT
FROM THE START.
SINCE I HAVEN'T MET A GUY WHO'LL
GET TO KNOW ME
OR CAN SEE THAT I'M OLD FASHIONED
IN MY HEART.

AFTER YEARS OF "IT'S NOT FAIR,"
NOW YOU'VE COME FROM GOD-KNOWS-WHERE!
YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER GUYS
UNLESS YOU'RE SIMPLY FULL OF LIES,

YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER GUYS,
AND FOR ME THAT'S RARE!

(The flashback begins to fade as the lights start to change.

MEREDITH *continues singing.)*

The Cemetery, Immediately Following.

(The lights gradually return to the present, as **MEREDITH** *finishes her memory.)*

MEREDITH.

YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER GUYS
THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL
IN YOUR EYES
YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER GUYS
AND FOR ME THAT'S RARE!

(Music ends. The lights have restored.)

*["***MAN** *(***EDMOND***)" will now be indicated simply as "***EDMOND.***"]*

EDMOND. You couldn't have forgotten my eyes. Look close.

MEREDITH. I'm trying to.

EDMOND. Can't you see me in them?

(She looks deep into his eyes and almost seems swayed.)

MEREDITH. But nothing else is the same.

EDMOND. You looked so beautiful that night at the bar. You were wearing pink.

(This causes her to "snap out of it" and pull away.)

MEREDITH. A lot of people saw me that night. And I always wear pink. That doesn't prove anything.

(A clap of thunder causes her to reach for the umbrella. She pauses for a moment and thinks. Then she very deliberately makes sure the umbrella passes right in front of **EDMOND***'s face, as if to test him.)*

EDMOND. You brought my vintage umbrella.

*(***MEREDITH** *doesn't say a word.*

EDMOND *notices her hand.)*

EDMOND. You're still wearing your engagement ring.

(She doesn't respond.)

I gave it to you the day of the fire.

(Her expression seems to say "and?")

I asked you to never take it off.

(He tries to reach for her hand. She pulls it abruptly from him and drops the umbrella.)

MEREDITH. Tell me who you are.

EDMOND. You know.

MEREDITH. I wanna hear you say it.

EDMOND. I'm Edmond.

*(***MEREDITH** *points to the grave.)*

MEREDITH. *(exasperated) That's* Edmond. Edmond is dead. He burned to death. You don't look like him, you don't sound like him. And you don't even have any burns.

*(***EDMOND** *rolls up a sleeve to show his arm is severely burned and scarred.*

MEREDITH *reaches, instinctively, to touch it, but stops herself. She just stares at the horrifying sight and remains silent.*

Satisfied, he rolls his sleeve back down.)

MEREDITH. That doesn't look so good.

EDMOND. I know. Still hurts.

MEREDITH. *(suspicious)* And yet, your face …

EDMOND. I have a *new* face.

MEREDITH. That is ridiculous.

EDMOND. It's true.

MEREDITH. You look perfect. It would have to be something out of a science fiction movie.

EDMOND. Well, it sort of was like that.

MEREDITH. Fiction.

(Music begins.)

EDMOND. No.

MEREDITH. Face or no face, I was there when Edmond died.

(Unsettled by the memory, she vehemently sings.)

[MUSIC NO. 6 – "IDENTIFIED THE BODY"]

MEREDITH.

I IDENTIFIED THE BODY
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALLED IT.
I IDENTIFIED THE BODY
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

IT WAS THE HARDEST THING
I EVER HAD TO DO.
AND, BELIEVE ME,
HOW I WISH IT WASN'T TRUE.
BUT I IDENTIFIED THE BODY
AND IT WASN'T YOU.

BOTH.

IT'S BEEN AN AWFUL YEAR
BUT I'M TRYING TO MOVE ON.

MEREDITH.

I'VE ACCEPTED
THAT THE MAN I LOVED
IS GONE.

EDMOND.

HE'S RIGHT HERE…

MEREDITH.

THIS HAS TO BE
SOME KIND OF CON.

(Music continues.)

EDMOND. Meredith, you aren't remembering it right. You "identified me" *before* I died…that is, I *didn't* die. You came to the hospital and they let you say goodbye to me while I seemed unconscious. But they told you I died *after* you saw me. Isn't that right?

*(***MEREDITH** *thinks hard and twists at her ring.*

EDMOND *sings.)*

THERE WERE BURNS ACROSS MY BODY
THAT'S WHAT THEY TOLD ME.
AND NOT ONLY ON MY BODY
BUT I BARELY HAD A FACE
AND I BARELY HAD A VOICE.

AND AFTER THEY MADE YOU
LEAVE MY SIDE,
I ASKED THEM
TO TELL YOU THAT I DIED.
THEY LIED.
THEY LIED.

MEREDITH.

THAT ISN'T HOW IT HAPPENED–
THAT'S NOT WHAT I REMEMBER.

EDMOND.

IT'S EXACTLY HOW IT HAPPENED
BUT YOUR MIND IS PLAYING TRICKS.

I WAS IN A LOT OF TROUBLE, AFTER ALL
BUT I WAS FRAMED
AND ABOUT TO TAKE THE FALL.
SO I PAID THE DOCTOR OFF.

MEREDITH.

YOU PAID THE DOCTOR OFF?

EDMOND.

IT WAS MY ONLY CHANCE,
MY BACK WAS TO THE WALL.

BOTH.

IT'S BEEN AN AWFUL YEAR
BUT I'M TRYING TO MOVE ON.

MEREDITH.

I'VE ACCEPTED
THAT THE MAN I LOVED
IS GONE.

EDMOND.

HE'S RIGHT HERE.

MEREDITH.

OR IS THIS SOME KIND OF CON?

(Music continues.)

MEREDITH. You faked your own death? I mean you're saying Edmond faked his own death?

EDMOND. If I didn't, after I recovered I would have been locked up. Even you believed I was guilty. Didn't you?

MEREDITH. The evidence against Edmond was… overwhelming.

(She sings.)

HE DID SOMETHING HORRIBLE.
SOMETHING ON A WHIM.
HE DID SOMETHING TERRIBLE…

EDMOND.

SOMETHING UNLIKE HIM?

(Music continues.)

MEREDITH. Even if you paid the doctor, what about the rest of the hospital?

EDMOND. He took care of everything. Faked some papers, created new records and a new identity for me.

MEREDITH. *(incredulous)* And your face?

EDMOND. *(sings)*

THEN I HAD EXTENSIVE SKIN GRAFTS
GOD, HOW THEY WERE PAINFUL!
EXPERIMENTAL SKIN GRAFTS
I WAS A GUINEA PIG EACH TIME!

AND THEY TOOK A YEAR TO HEAL,
A YEAR OF PAIN.

IT TOOK A YEAR TO FIGURE OUT
HOW TO EXPLAIN.

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