*Acting Edition*

# Corsicana

by Will Arbery

This sample is an excerpt of a Concord Theatricals title.

Samples of Concord Theatricals titles are for perusal and cannot be used for performance ordownloaded, printed, and distributed in any way.

SAMUEL FRENCH

Copyright © 2023 by Will Arbery

"Come Clean"
Words and Music by Kara DioGuardi and John Shanks
Copyright © 2003 BMG Bumblebee and Sony Music Publishing (US) LLC
All Rights for BMG Bumblebee Administered by
BMG Rights Management (US) LLC
All Rights for Sony Music Publishing (US) LLC Administered by
Sony Music Publishing (US) LLC,
424 Church Street, Suite 1200, Nashville, TN 37219
All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.
Reprinted by Permission of Hal Leonard LLC

*CORSICANA* is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all member countries of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the Universal Copyright Convention, and/or the World Trade Organization conforming to the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television, online/digital production, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-71065-0

www.concordtheatricals.com
www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

**FOR PRODUCTION INQUIRIES**

United States and Canada
info@concordtheatricals.com
1-866-979-0447

United Kingdom and Europe
licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk
020-7054-7298

Each title is subject to availability from Concord Theatricals Corp., depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *CORSICANA* may not be licensed by Concord Theatricals Corp. in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Concord Theatricals Corp. office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *CORSICANA* is subject to a licensing fee. The purchase, renting, lending or use of this book does not constitute a license to perform this title(s), which license must be obtained from Concord Theatricals Corp. prior

to any performance. Performance of this title(s) without a license is a violation of federal law and may subject the producer and/or presenter of such performances to civil penalties. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Concord Theatricals Corp.

This work is published by Samuel French, an imprint of Concord Theatricals Corp.

No one shall make any changes in this title(s) for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, scanned, uploaded, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, digital, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall share this title(s), or any part of this title(s), through any social media or file hosting websites.

For all inquiries regarding motion picture, television, online/digital and other media rights, please contact Concord Theatricals Corp.

## MUSIC AND THIRD-PARTY MATERIALS USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music and/or other copyrighted third-party materials (e.g. artworks, logos) in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music and materials that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for clearances of all third-party copyrighted materials, including without limitation music, and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Concord Theatricals Corp., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of such copyrighted third-party materials by licensees. For music, please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

*CORSICANA* had its world premiere at Playwrights Horizons in New York City on June 22, 2022. It was directed by Sam Gold. The scenic design was by Lael Jellinek and Cate McCrea, the lighting design was by Isabella Byrd, the sound design was by Justin Ellington, and the costume design was by Qween Jean. The composer was Joanna Sternberg. The music director was Ilene Reid, and the vocal and text coach was Gigi Buffington. The production stage manager was Amanda Spooner. The cast was as follows:

**GINNY** . . . . . Jamie Brewer
**CHRISTOPHER** . . . . . Will Dagger
**JUSTICE** . . . . . Deirdre O'Connell
**LOT** . . . . . Harold Surratt

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you first and foremost to Sam Gold. This impossible thing happened because of you. Thank you to Amy and Jo. A bottomless thank you to Frances Gold. And thank you to the incredible cast, Will Dagger, Harold Surratt, Didi O'Connell, and Jamie Brewer. This play was you. Thank you Isabella Byrd, Justin Ellington, Lael Jellinek, Cate McCrea, Amanda Spooner, Zach Brecheen, Andie Burns, Joshua Yocom, Ilene Reid, Gigi Buffington, and Qween Jean. Huge thank you to Joanna Sternberg for the gift of your beautiful songs. Thank you Adam Greenfield and Natasha Sinha and Lizzie Stern and Billy McEntee and Blake Zidell and Playwrights Horizons. Thank you Tom Park and David Skinner for your initial support in writing this play. Thank you to Greg Nobile for getting it over the finish line. Thank you to Brian D. Coats, Elizabeth Kenny, Ansa Akyea, K. Todd Freeman, and especially Lauren Potter. Thank you to John MacGregor, Olivier Sultan, Eva Dickerman, Lewis Hyde, Kyle Hobratschk, David Searcy, Nancy Rebal, Wayne Hall, 100W Corsicana, Sam Barickman, Di Glazer, Jacob Robinson, Abigail Friedman, Loddie Allison, Chloé Cooper Jones, Jia Tolentino, Emily Davis, and Ryan Haddad. Thank you to Robert Egan, Mark Seldis, Jose Delgado, Ramon Valdez, Stephen Tyler Howell, and Adam O'Byrne. Thank you to the Ojai Playwrights Conference and Interstate 73. Thank you to Gavin Morrison and Lucia Simek. Special thank you to Joan Arbery and Glenn Arbery and Virginia Arbery. Hi Yi. Love you. Thanks Hilary Duff! Thank you, most especially, to the unstoppable Julia "Joofbox" Arbery, to whom this play is totally & completely dedicated. Pop goes my heart.

## CHARACTERS

**GINNY** – 34, f, white, a woman with Down syndrome, a volunteer, a singer

**CHRISTOPHER** – 33, m, white, Ginny's half-brother, a film teacher at the community college

**JUSTICE** – late 60s, f, white, Lot's best friend, Ginny & Christopher's honorary aunt, a writer

**LOT** – 60s, m, black, an artist, a musician

## SETTING

Two spaces in Corsicana, TX:

Lot's house – a barebones space in the middle of nowhere – full of art that we never see.

Ginny's house – one-story, ranch style, doesn't get great light.

## TIME

Early summer, 2022.

*When you give a gift there is momentum, and the weight shifts from body to body...*
*The gift moves in a circle...*
*The gift leaves all boundary and circles into mystery...*
– Lewis Hyde, *The Gift*

*You just have to say it out loud.*
– Julia Arbery

## Part One

*(Christopher and Ginny's house, which used to be their mom's house: a dusty little Texas ranch-style.* **CHRISTOPHER** *is in the den on his phone and* **GINNY** *comes over and looks at him.)*

*(He eventually looks up from his phone and touches her nose.)*

**CHRISTOPHER**. Boop.

**GINNY**. Haha. So.

*(He notices that she's upset.)*

**CHRISTOPHER**. Are you okay?

**GINNY**. I'm not sure.

**CHRISTOPHER**. What's wrong?

**GINNY**. I'm not sure. Big hug?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah.

*(He gives her a big hug. She cries into his arms. Or maybe she wants to cry but can't.)*

Oh no. Okay. It's okay.

*(This happens for a while. And then she pulls away.)*

**GINNY**. I need to do something.

**CHRISTOPHER**. You need to do something?

**GINNY**. I need you to help me do something.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Like what?

**GINNY**. Something to do.

*(She looks at the ground.)*

I don't have anything to do.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Are you bored?

**GINNY**. No. I'm worried. I can't find my heart.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh. You can't find your heart. Okay –

**GINNY**. I can't feel anything there.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh no. Okay, so let's get active again. Let's get your job back at the nursing home.

**GINNY**. No.

**CHRISTOPHER**. No? What about the choir?

**GINNY**. No.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Why not?

**GINNY**. I don't belong.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yes you do. Everyone loves you.

**GINNY**. Not if I'm not happy.

**CHRISTOPHER**. They always love you.

**GINNY**. Not if I'm not like me.

**CHRISTOPHER**. You don't feel like you?

**GINNY**. No.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh, man.

**GINNY**. But that's okay.

**CHRISTOPHER**. No, it's not. Okay, let's…

*(He gets out his phone and starts filming her.)*

**GINNY**. What are you doing?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Say something to your friends. We'll send it to Tim and Angelo and Justice.

**GINNY**. What do you want me to say?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Whatever you want. Something funny.

*(Pause.)*

**GINNY**. *(To the camera.)* Hi, everyone. This is Ginny. I miss you but I need space. I'm not feeling good.

*(She covers her face.)*

I hate this.

**CHRISTOPHER**. *(Still filming.)* Okay just shake it loose. Ginny. HONK! GINNY! What do you wanna say to your BOYS!

*(She doesn't show her face. He keeps trying. He tries to get the camera in her face to make her laugh, and she pushes it away. He stops filming.)*

Sorry.

**GINNY**. It's okay.

**CHRISTOPHER**. I'm sorry, Ginny.

**GINNY**. It's not a big deal.

**CHRISTOPHER**. No, it is. Have I been –

**GINNY**. Have you been what?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Just kind of. Asleep.

**GINNY**. No you're awake.

**CHRISTOPHER**. No I'm so…

**GINNY**. I'm just not in the mood.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah.

**GINNY**. Because I'm lazy.

**CHRISTOPHER**. No you're not. I am.

**GINNY**. Yeah you are.

**CHRISTOPHER**. You think I'm lazy?

**GINNY**. Just a little bit.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah we're just… Okay. We need to – we're just, like, little kids. We don't know what to do. Like we're waiting for her to come in and just be like, *let's eat*, *let's go to church*, *let's*… but we're just little kids.

**GINNY**. No, we're adults.

**CHRISTOPHER**. You're right.

**GINNY**. I'm thirty-four years old and you're thirty-three years old.

**CHRISTOPHER**. You're right.

**GINNY**. So we have to be adults.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Okay.

**GINNY**. So you have to figure that out.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Okay I get it.

**GINNY**. And shave your face.

**CHRISTOPHER**. What? No.

**GINNY**. Are you sure?

**CHRISTOPHER**. You don't like the mustache?

**GINNY**. No. But I'm open-minded, actually. So be yourself.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Okay…

**GINNY**. I can help you to be yourself. I need you to help me to be myself. And that's hard for me to say, because I don't like asking for help.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Okay. I understand. And I'm sorry for being lazy and scared.

**GINNY**. That's fine.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Okay. I'm gonna – okay.

*(Now:)*

*(***JUSTICE** *is unloading groceries in their kitchen.* **CHRISTOPHER** *enters in his sleep clothes.)*

**JUSTICE**. Oh, sorry!

**CHRISTOPHER**. What are you –

**JUSTICE**. Nothing to see here.

**CHRISTOPHER**. You didn't have to do that.

**JUSTICE**. Just a few things. I was already there.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh man thanks, Justice. Thanks. Yeah sorry – I think I took on too many classes.

*(He holds up some Sprite.*)*

Oh thanks. Oh is this for Ginny?

**JUSTICE**. She asked for it directly.

**CHRISTOPHER**. I'm trying to get her off soda. Is that dumb?

**JUSTICE**. No that's probably very not dumb. Should I take it back?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah maybe. Is that okay?

**JUSTICE**. Sure, I'll give it to the church. Or I like Sprite.

**CHRISTOPHER**. I just think it's not good for her. I don't know. Whatever I don't know.

---

* A license to produce *CORSICANA* does not include a license to publicly display any branded logos or trademarked images. Licensees must acquire rights for any logos and/or images or create their own.

**JUSTICE**. Did you talk to her about it?

**CHRISTOPHER**. I tried. No, I don't know. I just thought I'd wean her off it slowly. Like be a better influence. It's dumb it's manipulative. I just want her to feel better.

**JUSTICE**. And you?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Me? No, I eat terribly, I'm a huge hypocrite.

**JUSTICE**. No, how are *you* feeling?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh. I mean who can say.

**JUSTICE**. Uh-huh.

**CHRISTOPHER**. What about you?

**JUSTICE**. Heavy. Slow to joy. Missing your mom. More than I know what to do with.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah. It's.

**JUSTICE**. Yeah. Don't know where to put it all.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah, exactly. It's.

*(Pause.)*

Sorry. It's hard for me to, uh –

**JUSTICE**. Don't be sorry.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Ginny said I'm lazy.

**JUSTICE**. You're not lazy.

**CHRISTOPHER**. I think I am. I know I am. HEB is literally on the way home from work, it's right there, I could just go in and get groceries and I don't. I don't make things better. And what am I, the king of dust?

**JUSTICE**. Ha! Well there's a writer I love who calls dust "matter in the wrong place." And laziness "temperament not aligning with environment." Shut up, Justice. I thought we had a plan, Christopher. I thought you liked that idea of going to see Lot.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah I did like that idea. I'm just nervous. But let's do it.

**JUSTICE**. No I'm not coming with you.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Really?

**JUSTICE**. No he won't talk to you if I'm there. He's too used to me. He'll answer all your questions right to my face.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Is he mean?

**JUSTICE**. Nahhh.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Okay. Okay I'll go. I'm just nervous. I mean it feels weird to just show up and – but it's the best idea we've got and I'm gonna go I'm just nervous.

**JUSTICE**. No, don't be nervous. Look, you drive that long road and it feels like nothing at first. And then suddenly it's just something. And it's great. He's great. Something's shifted in him lately. He's letting himself be seen. And letting me spend whole days with him, and it's been... it's really been – well. Who knows. You're gonna love him, Christopher. I have a good feeling about it.

**CHRISTOPHER**. That's good.

**JUSTICE**. Just see how it feels.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Okay.

**JUSTICE**. I have a good feeling about it.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Do you?

**JUSTICE**. Sort of a dream.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah. What?

**JUSTICE**. Like a dream. Like I dreamt it. Like I dreamt it already happened and it went great. Don't know if I really did dream it, all I can remember for sure from my dreams lately is circles, circles of bodies, standing, bodies of the dead standing in circles. But not in a bad

way. And this feels part of that. So I feel good. Like I know what's gonna happen already, even though I don't know, and it's good, and I'm just impatient to get to that goodness. And it's *very* selfish. Like good things come out of it for me. I feel implicated. But first you gotta go do your thing. Then I'll know what my thing is. But no rush, I can wait. And I might be wrong about all this. I'm just meddlesome. I'm just guessing.

*(Now:)*

*(***CHRISTOPHER** *steps into Lot's small house, which is full of art and some trash that will soon be art. But we don't see any of it.)*

**CHRISTOPHER**. Hello…?

**LOT**. *(Offstage.)* What. Dangit. Who – uh – oh – I'm not wearing pants – who is that –

**CHRISTOPHER**. It's uh –

**LOT**. *(Offstage.)* I'm not wearing pants –

**CHRISTOPHER**. Sorry!

**LOT**. *(Offstage.)* Who uh – one moment.

*(***LOT** *emerges from his secret workspace. He's wearing pants.)*

Who's that?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Hi, sorry. I would have called but –

**LOT**. Yeah no telephone –

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah of course, so I'm sorry for – So – so –

**LOT**. You saw that article? Is that all happening now?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh, no I – do you remember – no, Justice introduced us, we met in the street fair, last month. We talked about uh, I was the one you played that song for –

**LOT**. Oh.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Do you remember? That beautiful song?

**LOT**. I played it?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah by the – by Justice's book sale… Justice is a friend of my family's.

**LOT**. Justice is a friend of everyone's family.

**CHRISTOPHER**. That's true. But she's like really sort of a part of mine.

**LOT**. Well me too. So?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh but anyway –

**LOT**. Which song?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh, it was, it was beautiful. I think it was called "Weird."

**LOT**. Yeah, oh yeah, yeah, "Weird." I remember you. I played you "Weird."

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah, I loved it. I'm sorry for just showing up, I just didn't know –

**LOT**. It's fine.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh good yeah Justice said to just show up, so –

**LOT**. Yeah that's fine – the gate's open at the front, that means you're welcome. I keep it open now. Visitors welcome.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Great, good –

**LOT**. Anyway I was ready. There's been a question in the air lately.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh yeah?

**LOT**. Yeah so I didn't know what to expect with a question in the air – so I've been working hard and just working hard and harder – getting weird and working hard – so I didn't know what to expect – when there's a question like that in the air.

**CHRISTOPHER**. What – uh – sorry what question?

**LOT**. About whether people'd be showing up. I was grieving but it was closing me up. Now I want the grieving to open me up. And I opened my heart up and then the article happened.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh I'm sorry to hear you've been grieving. I am too.

**LOT**. That's okay.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Yeah. Well – yeah Justice showed me that article in *Oxford American* and it was really so good. Like so cool. So so cool. It really made me proud to be from Corsicana. And the whole layout, the spread, the art looked so good, it was so cool and so fancy. And yeah just congratulations and yeah just like what's it like to be so fancy?

**LOT**. Is it so absurd that The Fancy and I could commingle?

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh not at all, sorry if I… oh wait I recognize some of these guys! This is the same art here that was in the – it's right here!

**LOT**. Some of it. The rest she took away in a box.

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh cool, to show it? That's awesome.

**LOT**. You're enthusiastic.

**CHRISTOPHER**. I am?

**LOT**. The word "enthusiasm" means "possessed by God."

**CHRISTOPHER**. Oh, cool. How'd this writer find you?

**LOT**. It's all Justice's fault. Some friend of Justice, some friend from Dallas who saw my things. She came down, poked around, saw what I'd – yeah. And I guess she – yeah. She had a lot of ideas about what it all meant. And she wrote down the ideas and came back down and we went through it together. With a pen. And some of it felt okay to me.

# WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

**www.concordtheatricals.com**

**www.concordtheatricals.co.uk**

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and anything theater-related, follow us on our social media channels.

**@ConcordShows** and **@ConcordUKShows** on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

concord
theatricals