

THE UNWRITTEN LIFE

"Sometimes the story you need to live isn't the
one you write"

A New Broadway Style Musical

Book, Music, and Lyrics by
Aaron A. Kaplan

(Composer, Songwriter,
Orchestrator, Playwright, Music Producer)

info@AaronAKaplan.com
(214) 770-2346

Synopsis

Celebrated writer Elliot Vale has everything that can be photographed and almost nothing that can be lived. After a rooftop event honoring his success leaves him spiritually empty, he slips into a community soup kitchen and meets Lena Hart, a fiercely private organizer whose authority comes from survival rather than status. Their connection is immediate, unstable, and charged by class difference, attraction, and genuine recognition.

As Elliot is drawn into Lena's world, the kitchen becomes the center of a widening conflict involving donors, board members, publicists, developers, and Elliot's own publisher. Elliot believes his language, access, and visibility can help save the room. Lena knows visibility is never neutral and that every institution offering help is also trying to own the story.

Their relationship deepens as the danger grows. Elliot repeatedly confuses revelation with rescue. Lena resists becoming anyone's usable narrative. Their bond ruptures under betrayal, public pressure, and artistic exposure, only to be tested again by crisis, fire, survival, and the choice of whether love can exist without appropriation. The musical ends with the community, the relationship, and the story itself rebuilt not as something tidy, but as something truly lived.

Principal Characters

ELLIOT VALE – A celebrated writer at the peak of his public value and the edge of private collapse.

LENA HART – A volunteer and organizer whose strength, humor, and privacy are rooted in lived survival.

MARCUS DANE – Elliot's quick-witted agent and crisis manager.

REGINA SHARP – Elliot's publisher, polished and ruthlessly strategic.

MRS. DORAN – The practical force at the center of the kitchen.

BOARD / FOUNDATION / DONOR FIGURES – Representatives of the systems trying to reframe need as ownership.

ENSEMBLE – Guests, travelers, volunteers, reporters, paparazzi, townspeople, and the larger machinery of the world around them.

SONGS

- THE SILVER SCREEN -
<https://on.soundcloud.com/2b6kJOP1ayZedWD6jf>
- ALL MY STORIES LOOK ALIKE
- SOUP FOR THOUGHT
- I WON'T COME BACK TILL I KNOW
- HIT THE ROAD, HIT THE HEART
- IN TROUBLE FOREVER -
<https://on.soundcloud.com/UzjZsXuqfXNVWLwP6>
- LOST AND FOUND
- TOGETHER BUT ALONE
- STORIES BETWEEN US
- LAUGHING IN THE RAIN
- THE PROFESSIONAL BUM
- THROUGH THE SMOKE
- (ELLIOT & PRESS)
- AUTHOR ELLIOT VALE FOUND ALIVE – HAILED AS HERO.
- HYPE
- MARGE'S COFFEE & PIE – OPEN SOMETIMES.
- THE LONG ROAD HOME
- OUR STORY, OUR WAY
- MAYBE REAL LIFE IS THE BEST STORY
- YOU LOVE WITH ALL YOUR LIFE
- REPRISE: ALL MY STORIES LOOK ALIKE
- THE BEST STORY WE'VE GOT
- THE LIVES THEY TOUCHED

ACT I

Scene 1 - "THE SILVER SCREEN / ROOFTOP PARTY"

SONG: THE SILVER SCREEN

<https://on.soundcloud.com/2b6kJOP1ayZedWD6jf>

MUSICAL SEQUENCE- "THE SILVER SCREEN"

ELLIOT: "THE SILVER SCREEN"

The Silver Screen, Silver
Screen, The Silver
Screen is Everywhere, Perched On
a Moral Folding
Chair, Long as WE Don't Stare!
The Silver Screen Goes, "Turn
Aside", Forget What
You're Facing On Film It's All
Fine, No Matter
The Headlines, No Matter Your
Night,
We Wipe It Away With A Rolling
White Light.
The Silver Screen Glows "Don't
Look Now"
That Stuff''s Not Important, Its
Not Your Vow.
American Movies Are Easy and Fun
When
They're Steered By James
Cameron. (Continues)

EXT. PUBLISHER'S ROOFTOP PARTY - NIGHT

A breathtaking Manhattan skyline glittering like a promise no one intends to keep. The terrace of a penthouse rooftop glows beneath string lights and glass chandeliers. FIRE PITS flicker in sleek bowls. A live jazz trio hums out something expensive and melancholy.

WAITERS drift through the crowd in black, balancing champagne flutes like they're carrying stock options. The guests are curated: editors, critics, producers, influencers, aspirational strangers in designer black. Everyone smiling too hard. Everyone speaking too loudly. Success, in its most performative form.

ELLIOT VALE, late 30s – novelist, playwright, screenwriter – stands in the center of it all like the guest of honor at his own execution. He

wears a charcoal SMOKING JACKET with satin lapels, tailored with effortless wealth. On his feet: pristine GUCCI LOAFERS, the kind of shoes that look insulted by the sidewalk. He's immaculate. And perfectly miserable. A champagne flute hangs lazily from his hand, untouched. He's cornered by an eager FAN mid-monologue.

FAN

I just loved your last play, Mr. Vale. The way it... captured the human condition.

Elliot offers a half-smile that doesn't reach his eyes.

ELLIOT

(pleasantly detached)

Ah yes. The human condition. My favorite tax deduction.

The fan LAUGHS – then hesitates, unsure if that was a joke or a warning. Elliot doesn't clarify. He just gives the room a bored scan, like he's looking for a fire exit or an excuse. Before the moment collapses into silence—

MARCUS DANE appears, late 30s/early 40s, Elliot's agent, slicing through the party with practiced charm. Marcus is sharply dressed, perfectly groomed, and always moving. His smile is bright and predatory – the grin of a man who can charm a room while quietly calculating what everyone is worth. He slides between Elliot and the fan like a human shield.

MARCUS

There you are! My star client. My genius wordsmith. My... flight risk.

Marcus offers the fan a smooth, disarming smile.

MARCUS

He means that as a compliment. He's allergic to sincerity.

The fan laughs again – grateful to be released – and retreats into the crowd. Marcus leans in, lowering his voice.

MARCUS

I was about to send a search party.

Or a therapist. Or both.

ELLIOT

You'd send whichever one had a better PR package.
 Marcus clocks Elliot's untouched drink.

MARCUS

You haven't even sipped. That's rude.
 Regina paid for the good champagne. Elliot lifts the glass slightly, examining it like it's evidence.

ELLIOT

That's because it is.
 Success in a bottle. Marcus takes the champagne flute and swaps it for a fresh one from a passing waiter, because Marcus believes in optics the way some people believe in religion.

MARCUS

Success pays for your neurosis.
 Drink up. Elliot exhales through his nose – not quite a laugh. More like a refusal to participate. Then—
 REGINA SHARP arrives, mid-40s, Elliot's publisher, cutting through the party like the CEO of the evening. Regina is confident, glamorous, and subtly intimidating – the kind of woman who makes people straighten their posture without knowing why. She doesn't "enter" a room. She claims it. Her smile is warm, practiced, and selective.

REGINA

Elliot. Darling.
 She kisses the air near his cheek. A gesture that's affectionate in theory, contractual in practice.

REGINA

The critics are raving.
 The Glass Kingdom is the talk of the town.

REGINA

And as the woman who paid for the first printing... I'd love to keep you marketable until the second.
 Elliot's smile is polite, empty.

REGINA

(pauses,

studying him)
You should look happier.

ELLIOT

I'm saving that emotion for my
next tragedy.

Regina's laugh is smooth and amused, but there's
steel underneath it.

REGINA

Your next tragedy better come
with a sequel clause.

Marcus jumps in – gentle, diplomatic,
strategically enthusiastic.

MARCUS

He's just overwhelmed.

You know artists. They feel too much. Elliot
turns to Marcus, deadpan.

ELLIOT

Name one thing I feel.

Marcus doesn't miss a beat.

MARCUS

Disgust.

Regina smiles wider, entertained by the banter,
but already scanning the party beyond Elliot –
eyes on power, influence, outcomes.

REGINA

They're going to want a speech
from you soon.

Something charming. Something grateful. Something
you'll hate. Elliot glances out at the skyline
again, detached, as if the city itself is judging
him.

ELLIOT

Perfect. I was hoping to
disappoint them personally.

Regina tilts her head, almost affectionate now –
like she's indulging a difficult genius.

REGINA

Just remember:

Tonight isn't about your mood. It's about your
mythology.

That lands. Elliot's expression barely changes...
but his eyes sharpen, just a fraction. Marcus
steps closer, lowering his voice like he's
delivering classified information.

MARCUS

Think of it this way –
every person here wants a piece of you. And you
don't even have to bleed for it.

ELLIOT

That's the problem.
I already did
A beat. Regina's smile doesn't drop – but she's
listening now.

REGINA

Elliot..
Be wonderful for ten
minutes.
Elliot finally takes a small sip of champagne. It
tastes like obligation. He looks at his glass
with mild contempt.

ELLIOT

Ten minutes.
A lifetime achievement. Marcus claps once, bright
and approving, as if Elliot just agreed to donate
an organ.

MARCUS

That's my boy.
Regina glides away into the crowd, immediately
intercepted by two PEOPLE WITH IMPORTANT
HAIRCUTS. Marcus stays with Elliot. Elliot
watches them all like he's observing a species he
used to belong to. His Gucci shoe taps once –
impatient, precise. Then he gives Marcus a
sideways look.

ELLIOT

If I jump off the building, does
it count as an exit or a
statement?
Marcus smiles like he's heard it before. Like
he's prepared for this.

MARCUS

It counts as bad press.
And Regina would sue your estate. Elliot's half-
smile returns – faintly amused, faintly
exhausted.

ELLIOT

Then I guess I'll live.
Marcus gestures toward the crowd like a
ringmaster unveiling a circus.

MARCUS

Attaboy.

Now go let them worship you. Elliot stares at the party the noise, the glitter, the hunger in people's eyes.

He takes another sip.

And steps forward like a man walking onto a stage he didn't ask for.

The jazz band crescendos. A spotlight catches Elliot mid-eye roll.

CAMERA PUSHES IN as he drifts toward the balcony, away from the noise. The crowd fades to a blur. He looks down at the city below – neon, motion, anonymity.

ELLIOT (V.O.)

They adore me pretending to care. (A lone waiter bumps into him.

The champagne splashes. Elliot doesn't flinch.

WAITER

Sorry, sir!

ELLIOT

No need. I'm already drowning. (The waiter hesitates – half-concerned, half-confused – then disappears. Elliot stares at his reflection in the glass wall).

ELLIOT (QUIETLY)

Maybe it's time to write something I don't have to fake.

MUSICAL SEQUENCE - "ALL MY STORIES LOOK ALIKE"

Elliot weaving through party guests, their words melting into rhythmic chatter as the song takes over. Turns into a big ensemble dance number as well.

SONG :

ELLIOT: "ALL MY STORIES LOOK ALIKE"

They love my words, not what
they mean,
A play of mirrors, never seen.
Every cheer is hollow, every
toast the same,

And I'm stuck here playing
someone else's game.

*(He steps into the
balcony lights – the
city
shining below.) I
want a story with
blood and*

skin, not just ink,
Something alive before I sink.
You cheer, you sigh, you nod
along,
But do you hear me, or the song?
The truth I seek isn't here
tonight,
It's waiting somewhere out of
sight.
Elliot leaves the glass and
glitter behind,
stepping into darkness.
The music fades to street noise
below.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE PARTY – NIGHT

He walks alone, the city's hum replacing the
applause.
Rain threatens overhead. His expression – freedom
or madness, impossible to tell.

FADE OUT TO BLACK.

INT. SOUP KITCHEN – NIGHT

The warmth here is different. Not curated. Not
purchased. Real. A cramped community kitchen
buzzing with activity – steam from industrial
pots, trays sliding across steel counters, paper
cups stacked in towers. Volunteers move with
purpose. The air smells like onions, broth,
coffee, bread. No jazz. No skyline. Just people
trying to get through the night.
LENA HART, late 20s/early 30s, works the serving
line with quiet focus. Hair pulled back, sleeves
rolled up, apron tied tight. She moves like
someone who's done this before – not for
Instagram. Not for optics. She fills bowls. Hands
off trays. Offers small smiles that aren't
rehearsed.