PREACHER. *(Overlapping singing.)* Welcome to Calvary Baptist Church. Welcome. Glad y'all could make it. Good to see you. *(Points to someone in audience.)* We've been missing you! Welcome!

(He walks on stage and takes his position behind the pulpit, as the boys continue singing.)

MARK, BENNY, ANDREW, T.J. "...And the glory of His resurrection share, When His chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies, And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there!"

MARK. *(To audience.)* Unless you're a sodomite.

PREACHER. Everybody sing!

(BROTHER CHAFFEY, MOTHER and PREACHER join the boys for a rousing chorus.)

ALL. "When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, When the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there!"

MARK. Unless you're a big ol' sissy queen homa-sex-u-al.

(The boys sit, MARK on the back pew.)

PREACHER. Yes, brethren...

MARK. *(Turns around, to audience.)* Or a dyke.

PREACHER. ...when the roll is called up yonder, I will be there!

MOTHER. Praise God.

PREACHER. Will you? Well, I sure hope so, because there is only one way to the promised land, only one way to heaven — and that is through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

(On the first "one way" T.J. raises his hand, index finger pointing up. On second "one way" MARK raises his hand, middle finger pointing up.)

MOTHER. Amen.

PREACHER. Open your Bibles to Romans 3:23. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

MARK. *(From pew, to PREACHER.)* Have they?

(MARK rises, takes his tie off, throws it in his pew, walks towards the pulpit, ultimately standing next to the PREACHER, commenting and reacting to the sermon for audience's benefit.)

PREACHER. Flip over to Romans 6:23. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." Eternal life. Death. Eternal damnation in the Burning Lake of Fire where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

MARK. Oooh.

PREACHER. Forever. For eternity.

MARK. That's so long.

PREACHER. God gives us choices.

MARK. Does he now?

PREACHER. Free will. It's your choice.

MARK. What a crock of shit.

PREACHER. It's your choice. I'll say it again.

MARK. Oh, please do — because I don't think we got it the first one hundred times.

PREACHER. God gave us the freedom of choice!

MARK. *(To PREACHER.)* Really? Well, I choose to go to hell. I choose to burn in the lake of fire. I choose to gnash my teeth. *(To audience, sarcastic.)* Wouldn't you? I mean, it's so logical.

(MARK starts walking the church, circling the pews.)

PREACHER. Are you lost and without Christ?

MARK. I guess.

PREACHER. Are you on that broad and winding road that leads to destruction?

(MARK skips like a girl.)

MARK. Yep. Just skippin' along.

PREACHER. Do you want to BURN IN HELL?

MARK. Could I just simmer, please?

PREACHER. Do you wanna go down...?

MARK. *(Claps his hands.)* Okay, that's enough of you for now.

(The PREACHER stops, looks down at his Bible, more trance-like than frozen.)

MARK. *(To audience.)* I was born in Dallas, Texas. The buckle of the Bible Belt. Here at Calvary Baptist Church, my Daddy was a deacon, Mama was the primary Sunday School teacher. Me? I'm a queer. A fag. A pansy. A mo. A fairy. A sissy. And I have continued to disappoint them my entire life.

(The PREACHER bangs the pulpit and roars back to life.)

PREACHER. If you haven't accepted Jesus as your personal Savior —

MARK. *(Whips around, points.)* Hey! I'm not done!

(The PREACHER stops, back in his trance, as MARK walks over to MOTHER.)

MARK. This is our Mother... she plays all of our Mothers... except one dead Mama... that would be creepy. And that is our Preacher. Back then... I believed every word he said. We all did. I have some doubts now. *(Indicates.)* Brother Chaffey. Latent. Okay, I'm gonna do you all a favor. I'm gonna have him skip the next boring forty-five minutes of his sermon. Wrap it up, preacher man.

(MARK claps, then sits in his pew again.)

PREACHER. We're gonna sing an invitational hymn. If you are lost and without Christ, I want you to open up your heart and accept him. It's easy. Just bow your head and say, "Jesus, come into my heart. I accept thee, Lord." Then make it public. Walk down this aisle and tell the world.

MARK. *(Turns around; to audience.)* It's really only a few hundred people. But Baptists are very dramatic.

(The PREACHER indicates for the congregation to stand. They do as BROTHER CHAFFEY plays "Pass Me Not Oh Gentle Savior" and they all sing.)

ALL. "Pass me not oh gentle Savior. Hear my humble cry. While on others thou art calling. Do not pass me by. Savior. Savior. Hear my humble cry. While on others thou art calling. Do not pass me by."

(PREACHER walks down aisle to edge of stage, addresses audience.)

PREACHER. *(Overlapping singing.)* I feel like there's someone out there that needs to be saved. Let him into your heart. Come, come to Jesus.

(PREACHER backs up to the altar. ANDREW grips the pew, then suddenly bolts down the aisle, shakes PREACHER's hand.)

ANDREW. I want to accept Jesus as my personal Savior.
PREACHER. Amen! Praise Jesus.

(The "congregation" stops singing; BROTHER CHAFFEY continues to play softly underneath the dialogue.)

MARK. That's Andrew. He was my best friend when I was little. Look how beautiful he was. And nobody had a soul that deep. Nobody. *(Pause as he reflects for a moment.)* There were four of us. Four "sissies" in Calvary Baptist Church. There were about forty kids in the church, so ironically, it worked out statistically. Sissy. Interesting word. Negative word. Not something I ever wanted to be. But it was the first word I ever heard that described that part of me. That part I despised. Even now, I do not want to be called sissy. Gay, fine. Handsome masculine straight-acting gay guy. Better. *(Looks around, points.)* That's Benny. *(Smiles as he watches BENNY fan himself dramatically with a church fan.)* The biggest sissy of all. *(BENNY drops his church fan, then picks it up and continues fanning as MARK walks over to T.J.)* And this is T.J. *(Holds his heart.)* Be still my foolish heart. T.J.'s Mama died when he was little and he worked very hard to please his tight-ass military Dad. He excelled in everything. Except loving me. Was the prize pupil in Sunday School. He could memorize scriptures better than any of us and when it came to Bible drill — look out! *(Calling out.)* Ready...Draw swords! John 3:16.