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THE HARMONIC HEART

CECE, DRESSED ENTIRELY IN BLACK AND WEARING A SLOUCH HAT AND DARK GLASSES, SITS IN THE BACK ROW OF THE AUDIENCE. MIKE, A LARGE BLACK MAN, ENTERS THROUGH THE STAGE DOOR. HE GOES TO THE EDGE OF THE STAGE AND SINGS "AMAZING GRACE" IN A FULL, RESONANT BASS. CECE INTERRUPTS MIKE AFTER A VERSE.

CECE: (SOFT) Can you sing?

MIKE: I'm sorry?

CECE: I asked you if you tap danced.

MIKE: I dance through my music, ma'am.

CECE: Could you show me a little soft shoe, then?

MIKE CONTINUES TO SING "AMAZING GRACE" FROM THE POINT AT WHICH HE WAS CUT OFF. HE ROCKS BACK AND FORTH FROM TOE TO HEEL AS HE STRUGGLES TO HIT THE NOTES. CECE INTERRUPTS AGAIN.

CECE: (SOFT) Give it a little more... soul.

MIKE: I'm sorry?

CECE: I said, "Give me your spirit."

MIKE: I already gave it to you.

CECE: (LOUDER) Do you know where you are?

MIKE: I'm sorry. I don't.

CECE: Will you present your heart?

MIKE CUPS HIS HANDS AND REACHES INSIDE TO PULL OUT HIS HEART [ASK THE WRITER... EASIER TO SHOW THAN TO DETAIL HERE] AND PRESENTS IT TO CECE. THE STRUGGLE TO RIP OUT HIS HEART WITHOUT DRAWING A DROP OF BLOOD... HAS DRAINED THE LIFE FROM HIM. TEARS RUN DOWN HIS FACE AS HE CRADLES THE PULSATING HEART IN HIS HANDS.

CECE: (SOFT) Now...will you please leave?

MIKE: I'm...I can't hear you.

CECE: I asked if your heart would sing.

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MIKE OPENS HIS MOUTH TO SING "AMAZING GRACE" BUT ONLY QUIET SOBS COME OUT. CECE INTERRUPTS HIM.

CECE: Not you.

MIKE BOWS HIS HEAD AND EXTENDS HIS HEART. HE STAYS IN THIS POSITION FOR THE REST OF THE SCENE. HIS HANDS BEAT WITH LIFE.

CECE: Music for the eyes.

MIKE: May I put it back now?

CECE: Hush, I'm still listening.

THE HEARTBEAT FADES LIKE THE DYING SECOND HAND ON A WIND-UP WRISTWATCH.

CECE: I'm finished.

MIKE: How do I put it back?

CECE: You can't have what isn't yours.

MIKE: I understand.

CECE: Time to go, then.

MIKE: I'll leave it on the table.

CECE: On your way out.

MIKE: I'll wipe up the floor, too.

CECE: No! I'll lick it clean.

MIKE: Thank you.

CECE: Good-bye.

MIKE: I tried?

CECE: You tried your heart out.

MIKE: It hurts.

CECE: (SOFT) Next.

MIKE: Thank you again.

CECE: I said... "Next." (BLACKOUT.)