

JUSTIFY MY PREFERENCES

Music, Lyrics and Book by Shafeeq Shajahan

ACT I

Scene 1: JUSTIFY MY PREFERECNES

Two boys sit on either side of a stage as they stare into the distance. They are unmistakably camp and have a longing in their eyes.

#CUE MUSIC

JAMES

Here I am again. Hung-over. Hungry. Horny. But more importantly, just disappointed. Disappointed with the devastating number of blonde-haired and blue-eyed guys that chose to ignore me last night.

I mean, how many more nights of unmet expectations do I have to endure to realise that there is a point to the love I have to offer, a reason for the way I have always felt, a significance to my daily porn routine?

GIVE ME A REASON
FULFILL MY SENSES
I'LL WAIT THIS SEASON
TO JUSTIFY MY PREFERENCES
OH... MHMMM...

SEB

Here I am again. Alone in my room, staring at the ceiling, listening to my favourite boy band's last single before they broke up. And I'm thinking about how empty my bed feels right now.

Pause.

I just told my mother. She seemed pretty okay with it. I'm not ready to tell my dad, though. I guess I want him to know that what I am - it's very real.

So I'll wait. I'll wait for someone special.
(with increasing confidence)

And, you know what? I think I'm finally ready for him.

MAKE IT ALRIGHT
BREAK DOWN MY DEFENSES
JUST HOLD ME TIGHT
AND JUSTIFY MY PREFERENCES

JAMES

I've got to stop looking. I'm going to place my feet on the ground and let the Lord take the reigns. Because, I know... deep down... if I stop actively trying to seek him out, he *will* come to me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JAMES (cont'd)

I KNOW I HAVEN'T MET YOU YET
BUT SOMETHING INSIDE ME KNOWS YOU'RE COMING
YOU'LL BE CUMMING... MHM...

SEB

I KNOW I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU YET
BUT LIKE A FOOL, MY HEART IS DRUMMING
YOU'LL BE STUNNING...

I have an audition tomorrow. I'm going to meet new people. This is my chance to start over.

Out with the old, cloistered shy boy that cried to sappy romantic movies and in with a new, *confident* Seb that is finally ready to take chances.

He takes a breath.

Finally ready to meet you.

JAMES and SEB slowly start to notice each other's presence on stage. Although they haven't met yet, the song morphs into more of a duet.

JAMES

COME BE MY BABY
DROP ALL PRETENSES
COME TOUCH MY BODY
AND

SEB

TODAY
OKAY
MMKAY

BOTH

JUSTIFY MY PREFERENCES

SEB

I KNOW I'LL MEET YOU
THE GAME COMMENCES
I WANNA HUG YOU
SO

JAMES

TONIGHT
ALRIGHT
SO TIGHT

BOTH

JUSTIFY MY PREFERENCES

SEB

ONE YEAR OF DREAMING OF YOUR SOUND

JAMES

ONE YEAR OF FUCKING ALL AROUND

SEB

THIS HAS TO BE

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

THE TIME FOR ME

BOTH

TO MEET SOMEONE WHO'LL SET ME FREE

JAMES

THESE LOVE SONGS DON'T MAKE ANY SENSE

SEB

COUPLES AROUND ME HOLDING HANDS

SEB

I'LL WAIT NO MORE

JAMES

I'LL OPEN DOORS

BOTH

FOR YOU'LL BE THE ONE I'M LOOKING FOR

Allow actors to riff and take control

JAMES

TAKE MY DEVOTION

SEB

TAKE MY EXPENSES

JAMES

TAKE ALL EMOTION

BOTH

AND JUSTIFY MY PREFERENCES

JAMES

COME JOIN ME, LET'S SIN

SEB

COMMIT OFFENSES

JAMES

LET'S START, LET'S BEGIN

BOTH

TO JUSTIFY MY PREFERENCES...

SEB

ALWAYS SO UNSURE

SUPPRESSINGMY HEART

UNCLEAR ABOUT THE FUTURE HOW MY LIFE WILL START

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

SO MANY NIGHTS
FEELING ALONE

BOTH

I NEED TO SEE THE LIGHT SO YOU CAN BRING ME HOME

The two characters stare directly at each other.

SEB

COME HELP ME FEEL SAFE

JAMES

COME TAKE YOUR CHANCES

BOTH

LET'S LEAVE IT TO FATE
TO JUSTIFY OUR PREFERENCES

The music ends. JAMES eyes SEB, they smile sheepishly and SEB is left alone on stage.

SCENE 2: Fall Asleep To A Movie

SEB

I met James yesterday. In fact, I saw James last Friday. I remember him staring at me. I was singing this great original song on stage for that amazing Brecht play I was in. He was in the audience... and he kept staring.

But I *met* him yesterday. After the callback. He was wearing a red top with a low neckline. Sitting down on a table, reading a monologue. He said hello.

(laughs)

He's confident like that. He looked me in the eyes and made some sort of joke about the long monologue that he had to deliver for the show. I was so nervous, I just laughed along, pretending to find it funny... It wasn't.

(pause)

I like him. He's cute. He's sweet. He's talented. And, most importantly, I think he likes me too.

JAMES walks on stage. The pair knowingly smile at each other again. This time, SEB walks off.

#MUSIC STARTS

JAMES

I SAW YOU LAST FRIDAY
WITH YOUR YELLOW COAT
WITH YOUR ATONAL VOICE
AT YOUR SHITTY PLAY

(CONTINUED)

BUT I MET YOU YESTERDAY
 WHEN WE COLLECTED OUR SCRIPTS
 AND I SAID A SARCASTIC COMMENT
 (spoken)

Ten minute monologue!
 (sung)

LET'S FALL ASLEEP TO A MOVIE
 COS I CAN'T HELP THINKING OF ALL THE
 NASTY THINGS YOU'LL DO TO ME
 LET'S FALL ASLEEP TO A MOVIE
 FORGET THE GAMES I'M INTO YOU
 WE PROBABLY WON'T SLEEP ANYWAY

SEB reenters. The couple start interacting.

SO COME TO MY BEDROOM
 YOU'LL SEE MY GOLDEN TACKY SHEETS
 AND MY POSTER OF THAT A&F MODEL
 AND MY BROADWAY COLLECTION
 WE CAN CUDDLE UP IN BED
 BUT NOTE, I AM THE BIG SPOON
 (spoken)

Who am I kidding?
 (sung)

YOU'LL BE THE BIG SPOON
 AND WE'LL GET TO IT RIGHT AWAY

LET'S FALL ASLEEP TO A MOVIE
 COS I CAN'T HELP THINKING OF ALL THE
 NASTY THINGS YOU'LL DO TO ME
 LET'S FALL ASLEEP TO A MOVIE
 FORGET THE GAMES I'M INTO YOU
 LET'S GET THE MOVIE STARTED

THIS DISNEY FILM IS BORING
 YOUR BLUE EYES ARE DISTRACTING
 I'LL PUT MY ARMS AROUND YOU
 AND HEY... WHAT A SURPRISE...
 YOUR LIPS ARE TOUCHING MINE

LET'S FALL ASLEEP TO A MOVIE
 COS I CAN'T HELP THINKING OF ALL THE
 NASTY THINGS YOU'LL DO TO ME
 LET'S FALL ASLEEP TO A MOVIE
 FORGET THE GAMES I'M INTO YOU
 MY MOVIE'S FINALLY STARTED

*JAMES pulls SEB into his arms, they gently kiss
 and sit on the floor.*

SCENE 3: MAKEUP CONSULTATION

JAMES

(patronisingly)
So you like pop music?

SEB

Well, not *only* pop. I listen to all kinds of music -

JAMES

- but you, really, only listen to pop music.

SEB

(laughing)
Do you have a problem with that?

Pause.

JAMES

Not at all. It's cute.

SEB reaches for a kiss but JAMES touches SEB's hand.

Thank you.

SEB

For what?

JAMES

For being my boyfriend.

Pause.

Three weeks and we're already a couple. Things aren't moving too quickly, are they?

SEB

No... I shouldn't think so. We should let our feelings take control, do what feels natural.

Pause.

And thank you. It's very nice to have someone by my side. Someone I'm proud of, you know?

JAMES

(playfully)
Are you proud of me?

SEB

Of course. I see you rehearse on that stage and, sometimes, I can't believe that my boyfriend is -

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

(cheekily, increased pace)
Stop it. You're making me blush.

Pause.

JAMES touches SEB's face, caresses his cheeks, but notices something.

JAMES

Shit.

SEB

What?

JAMES

That's a really big hickey.

SEB

James!

He rushes to a mirror.

I told you not to! How are we going to go to rehearsal tomorrow? Everyone will talk!

JAMES

Let everyone talk.

SEB

James, I'm not like that. I'm going to have to call my mum now. She'll have some sort of... makeup tip.

JAMES

Relax. It'll be fine.

JAMES slowly approaches SEB from behind and tries to give him another hickey on the other side of his neck.

SEB

James!

SEB initially resists, but ends up turning into JAMES. They embrace and start kissing. JAMES calms SEB down. They stare at each other for quite a long time.

JAMES

I love you.

Pause.

(with doubt)

It's not too early to say that, is it?

SEB

If it feels natural, say it.

JAMES

I love you.

SEB

I love you too.

JAMES gives SEB a knowing look, kisses his forehead and leaves. SEB smiles, then approaches the audience.

My mum told me to get the correct shade of foundation to cover up the bruise.

He reveals three different coloured tubes of foundation. He shrugs.

#MUSIC STARTS

CHESTNUT, PORCELAIN, IVORY
 NOTHING COVERS MY HICKEY
 SHOULD BE ASHAMED, SO IMMATURE
 BUT SOMETHING IN ME, WANTS TO TWIRL
 CHESTNUT, PORCELAIN, IVORY
 THESE ARE THE COLOURS OF MY DREAMS

THE WAY THAT HE MAKES MY HEART GO,
 THUD IN THE NIGHT, MY FEET
 START TO SHAKE, MY LUNGS
 JUST GO TIGHT, 'COS I
 CAN'T SEEM TO TAKE, HOW THIS
 INTENSITY FIGHTS MY SELF-CONTROL,
 THINK IT'S FAKE, BUT I
 FEEL THAT IT'S RIGHT, 'COS

WHEN I TOUCH HIM,
 I TAKE A BREATH,
 AND I'M FREE.
 WHEN HE HOLDS ME,
 I CLOSE MY EYES,
 AND I SEE.
 I'VE FINALLY FOUND,
 MY CHESTNUT BOY.

HE BOUGHT ME A ROSE, IT WAS
 VALENTINE'S DAY, AND HE
 KISSED MY BIG NOSE, I HAD
 NOTHING TO SAY, EXCEPT
 THE QUESTION I POSED, WAS HOW
 MUCH DID HE PAY, FOR THAT
 RED, THORNY ROSE, LOOKED
 QUITE CHEAP I MUST SAY

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SEB (cont'd)
BUT HE KEEPS ME WARM,
WHEN I'M COLD,
WHEN I'M BLUE.
NO NEED TO CONFORM,
HE LET'S ME BE,
DO WHAT I DO -

The song is interrupted by a loud piercing voice offstage.

JAMES

SEB! Can you do the dishes! The kitchen's a mess!

SEB

CHESTNUT, PORCELAIN, IVORY
THESE ARE THE COLOURS OF MY DREAMS.

SCENE 4: FISHING FOR A KISS

The scene transitions quickly. Immediately, there is a sense that five months have passed and the couple are more comfortable with each other. They are at an Italian restaurant, eating a meal together.

JAMES

(with his mouth full)
You never talk about your father.

SEB

Why?

JAMES

I mean, you always talk about your mother.

SEB

Well, what do you want to know about my father?

JAMES

What's he like?

SEB

He's been there for me.

Pause.

JAMES

He doesn't know, does he?

SEB

No.

(CONTINUED)