

End of the Line
(A Mini Comic Opera)

Music by Nathan Wasner
Libretto by Alan Olejniczak
Dramaturgy by Jessica Murphy Moo

Nathan Wasner
<https://nathanwasner.com>
nwasner@hotmail.com
425-273-4999

Alan Olejniczak
www.alanolejniczak.com
alanlolen@gmail.com
415-728-1111

END OF THE LINE

CASTING: Both men are in their twenties. Any race.

WAITER *Baritone* (A2 to G4)

CUTE GUY *Tenor* (D3 to B4)

TIME: Late autumn evening

SETTING: Interior of a subway rail car in Seattle. It may also be reset in any major city with a subway line. You're invited to rename the station stops to suit the production.

STAGING: It can be as simple as an empty stage with folding chairs placed back-to-back. If recordings of the station announcements are not used in the production, the pianist can simply speak those lines.

1. [Opening Instrumental]

WAITER is sitting in a subway car looking forlorn and clearly intoxicated. He's dressed in black, with a bow tie and waiter's apron. He wears an overcoat with bulging pockets. The train comes to a slow screeching halt. Sound of doors opening. (prerecorded overlay with music underneath) CUTE GUY, dressed in a smart suit with his undone tie and shoulder bag, steps into the train car and stands away from the WAITER. He's exhausted from a long day at the office. "Stand clear of the closing doors please." and other inaudible directions from the train conductor. The doors close and the train lurches forward. The WAITER looks at the CUTE GUY longingly.

2. [Opening Arioso]

WAITER:

Hey, you're cute!

CUTE GUY: *(taken back)*

Excuse me?

WAITER:

I said, "You're cute!"

CUTE GUY: *(humorously going with it)*

Like a puppy-dog cute?

WAITER:

No! Like,
handsome-sexy-otter-cute!

CUTE GUY: *(laughs)*

Is that even a thing?

[WAITER gets up and approaches the CUTE GUY, who appears amused.]

3. [First Duet]

WAITER:

Will you have a drink with me?

CUTE GUY:

Seems you've already had a few.

WAITER:

I've had a lot to drink, actually.
Okay, how 'bout a REAL date then?
We're all just a little bit gay.
Over-styled straight guys
are always so confusing.
Not even in college?

But I'm celebrating!
I've reached the end of the line.

CUTE GUY:

No kidding.
But I'm not gay.
Not even a little bit gay.

Over-styled?!
No. Sorry.
I'm flattered though.
You're celebrating?
What are you celebrating?

[The WAITER sits down and the CUTE GUY sits down next to him.]

4. [First Aria]

WAITER:

I once had a dream,
a shooting-star-like dream.
Bright lights and Broadway,
all eyes adoring me.

[The WAITER starts to show off as if in performance.]

I'm an actor and a singer,
and a damn good ukulele-er,
model student, summa cum laude,
the star of each production,
who thought that he was good enough,
but wasn't really good enough.
I had big dreams.

[The WAITER reaches into his pockets and begins pulling out salad forks and letting them all fall onto the floor of the railcar - by the handfuls.]

No auditions at the theater.
No cabarets or nightclubs.
No weddings or bar mitzvahs.
A failure by all standards.
So, I'm a banquet waiter now.
A former banquet waiter now,
who once had dreams.

[The WAITER gets on the floor with the CUTE GUY who is collecting the scattered salad forks.]

CUTE GUY:

So I have to ask:
What's with all the forks?

WAITER:

I lost another audition today
and thought that wine would help.
Maybe just a glass - or eight.

Chef McDonald caught me drinking,
so she fired me on the spot!
Out of spite,
I stole her salad forks.
Now no one gets the caesar!

(He laughs)

It seemed like a great idea - at the time
but it was childish, I know.
(spoken) Stupid, really.

[2nd Arioso]

CUTE GUY:

Childish?!

I'll show you childish!

[CUTE GUY whips open his shoulder bag and pulls out an office stapler. He animates it like a talking puppet.]

CUTE GUY: *(spoken in mock imitation of his boss)*

"Hey Eli, can you work late again tonight?"

[WAITER laughs and the CUTE GUY tosses him the stapler.]

CUTE GUY:

Here, keep it.

I have dozens.

I swipe them off my boss's desk.

It drives him to madness.

Madness!

Which is why I do it.

WAITER:

What is your line of work?

5. [Second Aria]

CUTE GUY:

Investment banking:

selling securities,

preparing financial reports,
mergers and acquisitions.

But at this rate,
working ten-hour days,
I won't make it to fifty.
Something has to change.
At this job I hate
before it's too late.

WAITER:

You should try modeling.

[Announcement of approaching Angle Lake Station. CUTE GUY snaps out of it.]

6. [Third Arioso]

[The CUTE GUY hands the last of the forks back to the waiter who shoves them back in the pockets of his overcoat.]

WAITER: *(spoken)*

Wait! Angle Lake?!

CUTE GUY: *(spoken)*

But Othello is my stop!

WAITER / CUTE GUY:

Dang!

We'll have to double back.

CUTE GUY:

I don't want this career.

WAITER:

I don't want to be a failure.

7. [Second Duet]

Tomorrow you'll wake up sober,
but deciding you're a failure is up to you.
Don't give up your dream just yet.
You'll land a part.
You'll take the stage.

Allow yourself to imagine
a different life, a better life.
Allow yourself to dream.
A life that brings you joy.
One where you're the driver.

Trust yourself,
Trust in me,
You'll find your way.
I'll find my way.

Trust in yourself,
Trust it'll all work out.
I'll find my way.
You'll find your way.

CUTE GUY / WAITER:

We'll find our way.

[Announcement of approaching the station. "Last stop, Angle Lake. Please exit the car. Last Stop." The door opens and the CUTE GUY and WAITER step out onto the empty platform. The two men look at each other.]

8. [Final Arioso]

CUTE GUY:

Well, I guess this is it...
Thanks.

[They laugh and shake hands.]

WAITER:

Thank you!

CUTE GUY / WAITER:

Good luck.

[There is no more to be said and the CUTE GUY walks away. WAITER looks at the stapler. He animates it like a talking puppet.]

WAITER: (spoken as the stapler)

Dang, he was cute!

[The WAITER laughs to himself, shoves the stapler in his coat pocket, and eventually exits in the opposite direction.]

[End of Opera]