

# A-WOP BOP A-LOO BOP

## Full Synopsis

### Act One

In the mid-1960s, Ruby Lester, a famous singer, appears on TV ("Sleepwalk"). Talking to the audience, she tells them that before she became a singer, she grew up listening to her father Chester DJ at a local radio station KWK in St. Louis, Missouri. The scene begins to change and take us back to 1959. Ruby introduces us to Gary, the lead of a local band called Gary and the Twisters, and others at Ruby's high school who had dreams of their own. Judy wants to create the next hit dance move. Raymond wants to be a DJ just like Chester.

Gary and the Twisters are performing at the high school dance ("Rock Around the Clock"). When Ruby, then known as Roberta, tells Judy that she wants to be in Rock & Roll band, Judy and other students are shocked she wants to be a "loser" like Gary. Raymond rushes in and tells everyone to listen to an announcement on KWK. A DJ at KWK announces the station will no longer play Rock & Roll records and declares this week is "record breaking" week. The following week, Elvis gets kicked out ("Rip It Up"), as do The Coasters ("Yakety Yak"), and Little Richard ("Tutti Frutti (Short)").

Back at school, students are mad at Ruby because her dad works at KWK ("I'm Sorry"). Ruby is determined to make a change and transforms her look, going from Roberta to Ruby ("Rock Around the Clock (Reprise)").

KWK is receiving dozens of angry calls about the ban on Rock & Roll. The Boss, who's been in charge for a week, talks to Chester and praises him for playing along with the new station policy so well. Chester is upset and tells Boss that he can't stand not playing Rock & Roll. Raymond arrives to start his summer job at KWK. Boss explains their plan to keep listeners excited: a contest. And it's up to Chester and Raymond to make it happen or they lose their jobs. After Boss leaves, they confess to each other how much they miss Rock & Roll ("Who Put the Bomp?").

During home economics, Judy shares with Ruby and the rest of the class about her dream of coming up with a new dance ("The Loco-Motion"). After class, they overhear students talk about Gary and the Twisters playing at the Rockabilly Barn. Ruby and Judy decide to go.

At the Rockabilly Barn, Gary and the Twisters are performing ("Jailhouse Rock"). Judy introduces Ruby to Gary. When Gary asks her to join as a backup singer for the Twisters, Ruby doubts that singing backup will help her chase her dream. But when television talent scout Rick Parks introduces himself to Gary and tells him that he's looking for female singers, Ruby changes her mind and performs with her new "Rubettes" ("Jim Dandy"). Rick asks Ruby to come to the station for a screen test the following week. Judy gets Ruby to admit she has feelings for Gary.

At the KWK station, Ruby tells Chester the news about Rick Parks and the screen test. Boss is enraged when they hear about Rick Parks hosting a song and dancing contest at the TV station. Raymond suggests that KWK hold a "Name That Song" competition and drop a clue from a song every week. The winner will get to DJ the station for a week.

Kids are listening to KWK for the first clue at a diner. Judy comes in to show her new dance move ("Land of a Thousand Dances") - only to learn that it has already been done and has a name - The Pony.

Ruby catches Gary singing on the roof of Rockabilly Barn and tells him that Rick Parks wants her to sing on the show Dance Sensation. As the two confide in each other about their worries and frustrations, Gary shows her his favorite spot "Up On the Roof". They almost kiss. Back inside the Barn, Rick Parks finds them and tells Ruby he wants her performing on "Let's Rock!", a new Rock & Roll show. He's claimed the Rockabilly Barn for the whole year to produce and broadcast the show. Gary chimes in, hoping that this means the Twisters will get to perform on TV, but Rick tells him that they won't be on the show. Gary's history with reform school will not sit well with sponsors. Gary storms off, while Ruby is conflicted about who to side with.

## **Act Two**

Backstage in her dressing room, Ruby is getting read for "Let's Rock!". Although she's excited to have her big break, she worries that she has turned back on her dad, Gary, and her friends. The show begins ("Let's Rock!"), and Ruby makes her television debut ("Rip It Up (Reprise)").

At KWK, Boss is furious that "Let's Rock!" has stolen their listeners and blames Chester. Raymond suggests they offer money for their contest prize. Boss sets the prize to a staggering ten thousand dollars. The station doesn't actually have the money, but Boss is going to rig the contest to avoid paying out.

Meanwhile, "Let's Rock!" continues ("Stupid Cupid"). Judy is about to dance on TV for the dance contest but is too scared to do it. Raymond encourages her to go for it and gets her spirits up. Judy performs her new dance ("The Judy") and wins.

At a diner, Gary and the Twisters perform ("Runaway"). Everyone there listens to the next KWK contest clue. As Ruby enters the diner, Gary mocks her for her newfound stardom. Raymond pulls Gary aside, promising he has something that could be worth his while.

Chester finds the final Rock & Roll record remaining at KWK - a Chuck Berry record signed by Mr. Berry himself. Chester doesn't have the heart to destroy it and decides to play it on air ("Johnny B. Goode"). Boss comes in and destroys the record after the song finishes. Raymond informs Boss that he's set it up that Gary will shout out the right answer for their contest.

Chester announces the final clue in the high school gymnasium ("The Contest Results") and Gary shouts out the answer. Just as Gary is declared the winner, the police barge in to arrest Boss and Chester for holding a gambling event without a license. Raymond confesses that he gave Gary the answer in advance. Ruby and Judy are furious, but Gary and Raymond tell them they love them. Gary asks the police to let Boss and Chester go if he doesn't take the prize money and if Boss spends some of the money on Rock & Roll records for the station. Boss agrees, and everyone celebrates the return of Rock & Roll ("Blue Suede Shoes (Finale Part 1)", "Tutti Frutti (Finale Part 2)").