

# **ALMOST, MAINE**

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**Fourth Revised Edition**

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## NOTES FOR READERS, ACTORS, DIRECTORS, AND PRODUCERS

### **On punctuation and stage directions:**

*Almost, Maine* employs a lot of very specific overlapping dialogue.

You'll often see this symbol: //. It will appear in the middle of lines or words, and it simply means that the next character to speak should begin their line where the // appears (and thereby interrupt the character who is currently speaking).

You'll also see this symbol: >. It simply means that the character who is speaking should keep talking and drive through to the end of their thought or point or sentence and not wait for the other character to speak.

Sometimes you'll see dialogue in brackets like these: [ ]. These words are not spoken. They're simply a guide to what a character leaves unsaid.

Sometimes you'll see commas after end punctuation. This is simply to encourage pace and keep things moving.

Please don't completely dismiss the stage directions. Many are actions—actions that are of equal importance to what is spoken.

### **On place:**

*Almost, Maine*, doesn't exist. It is a mythical composite of several Northern Maine towns. Were it to exist, *Almost* would be located in the remote heart of Aroostook (pronounced, "uh-ROO-stick") County, the sparsely populated, northernmost county in Maine. It would occupy unorganized territory that is officially designated as Township Thirteen, Range Seven, or T13 R7. T13 R7 is some 450 miles north of Boston, MA, and about 50 miles from the border of Canada, where Quebec and New Brunswick meet. (See the map at the back of this volume.)

*Almost, Maine*, is not a coastal town. It is nowhere near the ocean. Potato farms dominate the landscape, and the expansive North Maine Woods are to the west. *National Geographic* once printed something to this effect: "They call Montana 'Big Sky Country.' Well... 'they' haven't seen Northern Maine."

Winters in Almost, Maine, are long, cold, and snowy. It usually feels like winter there from October to May.

**On the northern lights:**

The northern lights are brilliant, ribbon-like, otherworldly displays of light. Northern Mainers are fortunate: They live just inside the southernmost tip of an area in which the northern lights regularly appear. Growing up, I remember being treated to a northern lights show at least once a year.

The northern lights occur when atoms become “excited.” During solar storms, plasma (ionized, or charged, particles) from the sun is sent streaming toward the earth. As it enters the earth’s atmosphere, it collides with atoms, and excites them—that is, it moves their electrons into higher-energy orbits. Those electrons want to return to their normal lower-energy orbits, and when they do so, they release energy in the form of tiny packets of light called photons. When enough photons are produced, the brilliant light display that is the aurora borealis hovers in the sky. When the aurora fades, it’s because the affected atoms have returned to their grounded state. *Almost, Maine* is a play about people who are normally very grounded but who have become very excited by love...and other extraordinary occurrences.

**On time:**

*Almost, Maine* takes place over a period of about seventeen minutes on a Friday night in the middle of winter. The “Prologue” begins at 8:43 P.M. All subsequent scenes (except for the “Epilogue,” which begins at 8:57 P.M.) start around 8:50 P.M. and end a little after 9 P.M. There is a “Magical Moment” in each scene, and all of these Magical Moments are happening at exactly the same time—at 9 P.M. When these Magical Moments occur, the northern lights appear. In my mind, the northern lights and these Magical Moments give rise to one another.

**On the people:**

The people of Almost, Maine, are almost Canadian.

The people of Almost, Maine, are rural Americans. They’re not hicks.

They're not quaint, quirky eccentrics. They don't wear funny clothes and funny hats. They don't have funny Maine accents. They are not "Downeasters." They are not fishermen or lobstermen. They don't wear galoshes and rain hats. They don't say, "Ayuh."

The people of Almost, Maine, are not cuddly and cute. They're hard-working, ordinary people. They're dignified. They're honest and true. They're not cynical. They're not sarcastic. They're not glib. But this does not mean that they're dumb. They're very smart. They just take time to wonder about things. They speak simply, honestly, truly, and from the heart. They are not precious about what they say or do.

The people of Almost, Maine, are dealing with a lot of the things that people who live in rural America deal with: poverty, unemployment, limited opportunity, addiction. So, there's a distinct sadness underlying the hope and joy in this play.

**On casting:**

*Almost, Maine* is a play for four actors.

*Almost, Maine* is also a play for as many as twenty actors.

If using four actors, I recommend casting people in their late twenties/into their thirties. However, I have seen the play done beautifully by four actors in their forties.

If using nineteen actors, know that some scenes work really well with people in their teens; some work well with people into their fifties.

Any kind of human being—actors of all shapes, sizes, colors, backgrounds, abilities, and genders—can act in this play.

Anyone who is comfortable playing the gender of the characters can play the roles.

**On music:**

Original music composed for *Almost, Maine* by Julian Fleisher is available for licensing through Dramatists Play Service. Please visit the *Almost, Maine* page on [www.dramatists.com](http://www.dramatists.com) for more information regarding the ordering and use of the original music.

# SCENE BREAKDOWN

## PROLOGUE

### ACT ONE

- Scene 1: Her Heart
- Scene 2: Sad and Glad
- Scene 3: This Hurts
- Scene 4: Getting It Back

## INTERLOGUE

### ACT TWO

- Scene 5: They Fell
- Scene 6: Where It Went
- Scene 7: Story of Hope
- Scene 8: Seeing the Thing

## EPILOGUE

## PLACE

Various locales in Almost, Maine,  
a small town in far Northern Maine that isn't actually a town and  
that doesn't quite exist.

## TIME

Not too long ago—or maybe a long time ago—  
on a cold, clear, moonless, slightly surreal Friday night  
in the middle of the deepest part of a Northern Maine winter.

*“...the sentimental person thinks things will last—  
the romantic person has a desperate confidence that  
they won’t.”*

—F. Scott Fitzgerald

*Almost, Maine* is for romantics—not sentimentalists.

If you decide to cut the kissing in *Almost, Maine*, I would ask that you make an announcement at the beginning of each performance of the play that explains the kissing situation—something like this:

“*Almost, Maine* is a collection of love stories—many of which involve life-changing kisses. Some of our actors were uncomfortable with all this kissing and we have found our own creative and theatrical way to represent these kisses—so that you know when there is kissing in tonight's performance, so that the stories we're telling make sense. We want you to know that this isn't how *Almost, Maine* is normally performed. Normally, the actors would just kiss when kissing is called for. But we're excited to reimagine how to portray all the kissing in this play as we tell its stories of love—with a young cast.”

If there's another COVID flare-up, something like this would work:

“*Almost, Maine* is a collection of love stories—many of which involve life-changing kisses. But—portraying love in the age of COVID-19 is quite different from portraying love in the pre-COVID-19 era. So our actors will not be kissing in tonight's performance—for safety's sake. Which means that we had to figure out how to portray kissing on stage—when our actors can't kiss. And I think we have figured it out! We have found our own creative and theatrical way to represent these kisses—so that our actors are safe—and so that you know when there is kissing in tonight's performance, so that the stories we're telling make sense. And—we want you to know that this isn't how *Almost, Maine* is normally performed. Normally, the actors would just kiss when kissing is called for. But we're excited to reimagine how to portray all the kissing in this play as we tell its stories of love—in the time of COVID-19.”

**ON ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN *ALMOST, MAINE***

Some have expressed concern that the alcohol consumption in *Almost, Maine* is inappropriate for high school actors.

I respect this concern, so please feel free to replace the beer in scene Scene 2, “Sad and Glad” and Scene 5, “They Fell,” with root beer.

The reference to beer in Scene 8, “Seeing the Thing,” has been replaced with cocoa in the alternate version of the scene, which is on page 16 in this document.

# ALMOST, MAINE

## PROLOGUE

*Music.*

*It's about 8:43 P.M.*

*Lights up on Pete and Ginette sitting on a bench in the middle of a snowfield, looking at the stars.*

*They are not sitting close to each other at all: Pete is sitting on the stage right end of the bench; Ginette, on the stage left end of the bench.*

*Music fades.*

*Long, long, long beat of Pete and Ginette looking at the stars.*

*Occasionally, they look at each other.*

*Often, Ginette looks at Pete as he looks at the stars.*

*Ginette clearly has something she wants to say to Pete.*

GINETTE. Pete, I—...

*Pete turns to Ginette, eager to hear whatever it is she has to say.*

*But Ginette doesn't say anything more.*

PETE. What?

*Ginette wants to tell Pete she loves him, but can't quite do it.*

GINETTE. I just—am having a nice time, Pete.

PETE. I'm glad, Ginette.

GINETTE. I always do with you.

PETE. I'm glad.

*Pete and Ginette enjoy this moment together.*

*And then there's nothing else to say, so...they look back up at the sky.*

*And then maybe Pete looks at Ginette while she looks at the sky.  
And then he looks back up at the sky.*

*Beat.*

PETE. Boy, the stars are just [awesome]—...! I didn't know you knew all that stuff! // After all this time, I didn't know you knew all that!

GINETTE. Well, it's not [like I know that much about 'em]—... It's just some stuff my dad taught me...

*Pete smiles and nods at Ginette and all that she knows.*

*And Ginette smiles and nods back at Pete.*

*And then there's nothing else to do or say, so... they look back up at the sky.*

*Beat.*

*And then Ginette turns to Pete and watches him as he watches the sky.*

*She thinks.*

*And then finally says:*

Pete?

PETE. *(Turning to Ginette, waiting for her to say what she has to say.)*  
Yeah?

*Little beat.*

GINETTE. I love you.

*Beat.*

*Pete just stares at Ginette.*

*Beat.*

*And then he looks away from Ginette.*

*Beat.*

*And does not respond to Ginette.*

*Beat.*

*Ginette takes in Pete's non-response, deflates, and then looks away from him, trying to figure out what has happened.*

*We now have two very uncomfortable people.*

*Pete is dealing with what Ginette has just said to him; and Ginette is dealing with Pete's response—or lack thereof—to what she has just said to him.*

*Big...long...awful...silence.*

*Finally, Pete breaks the silence with the truth.*

PETE. Um...well, I...love you, too.

GINETTE. *(Hugely relieved.)* Oh!!

*Ginette feels JOY.*

*And Pete does, too.*

*And Ginette shivers a happy shiver.*

PETE. Oh, are you cold? // Do you wanna go?

GINETTE. No, no! I just wanna sit. Like this. Close.

*Pete and Ginette aren't close to each other at all—but maybe for them, it's close.*

I feel so close to you tonight.

*Ginette slides a little closer to Pete.*

It's nice to be close to you, Pete.

*Ginette slides a little closer to Pete.*

It's safe.

*Ginette slides a little closer to Pete.*

I like being close. Like this.

*Ginette slides a little closer to Pete.*

I mean, I can think of other...ways...of being close to you *(They enjoy this innuendo—sweetly, truly.)* ...but that's not—that's not [the kind of close I'm talking about right now]—... I like this right now. This kind of close. Right next to you.

*Ginette gets even closer to Pete and leans right up against him, resting her head on his shoulder.*

*Beat.*

You know, right now, I think I'm about as close to you as I can possibly be.

*Ginette is truly content.*

*Beat.*

PETE. (*Honestly discovering.*) Well...not really.

GINETTE. What?

PETE. (*Simply and truly figuring this out.*) Not really. I mean, if you think about it in a different way, you're not really *close* to me at all. You're really actually about as far away from me as you can possibly be. I mean, if you think about it, technically—if you're assuming the world is round, like a ball, like...

*Pete gathers some snow and makes a snowball, which he will be using as a visual.*



...like a snowball—the farthest away you can be from somebody is if you're sitting right next to them. See, if I'm here...

*Pete points out a place on the snowball facing them that represents him.*

...and you're here...

*And then Pete points out a place on the snowball facing them that represents Ginette—and it's right next to him—practically the same place he just pointed to.*

...and you started walking away from me—that way—

*Pete points off stage left.*

...then...

*Pete traces a path around his makeshift globe—along the equator and not pole to pole—that describes the longest distance between Pete and Ginette.*

*If the earth had rings around its equator, Pete would be tracing the path of the earth's rings.*

*His point is that, while Ginette and Pete are sitting as close to one another as they possibly can, they are actually as far away from one other as they can possibly be.*

*Little beat.*

...that's far.

GINETTE. (*Taking this in and trying to figure out what Pete is saying.*) Yeah.

*Beat.*

*Disheartened, Ginette moves away from Pete.*

*She doesn't feel like being "close" to Pete anymore.*

*Pete realizes his musings on what it means to be close have not had the intended effect.*

*In fact, they've had a potentially disastrous effect.*

*So he tries to save the evening.*

PETE. But...now, you're closer!

*This is true.*

*Ginette actually is closer, according to Pete's theory on what it means to be close.*

GINETTE. (Puzzled.) Yeah.

*Ginette moves away from Pete again, sliding all the way to the other side of the bench.*

PETE. And closer!

*Little beat.*

*Ginette gets up.*

*And starts to go, taking a step or two away from Pete.*

And closer!

*Ginette stops.*

*And turns and looks at Pete.*

*And then turns away from him and takes a couple more steps.*

And closer and closer!

*Ginette stops again.*

*And turns and looks at Pete—and then turns back, and starts to leave again, taking a couple more steps.*

And closer and closer and closer...

*Ginette stops again.*

*And turns and looks at Pete again.*

*She is trying to figure out what's going on—and what Pete is saying.*

*She looks off left.*

*She looks at Pete again.*

*She looks off left again.*

*And then...Ginette leaves, taking step after step after step.  
With every single step she takes, Pete calls to her, with great  
hope:*

*...and closer and closer and closer...and closer and closer and  
closer and closer!*

*Eventually, Ginette is gone, exiting stage left, with Pete still  
calling, "...and closer" to her.*

*Unfortunately, Ginette is getting farther and farther away  
from Pete.*

*This is not quite what Pete intended, and he calls to Ginette  
one last time.*

*And closer!*

*Beat.*

*Pete looks at his snowball.*

*And then looks back to where Ginette has exited.*

*What has he done?*

*Pete rises and takes a few uncertain steps toward where  
Ginette is headed, looking to see where she went.*

*He stops.*

*And looks at his snowball.*

*Music.*

*And we begin.*

*Pete fades from view and we TRANSITION into...*

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1: Her Heart

*Music fades.*

*It's 8:50 P.M. or so.*

*A woman appears.*

*She is standing in an open field looking up at the sky.*

*She is clutching a small brown paper bag to her chest.*



*Beat.*

*We hear a distant door open and close.*

*After a long beat, a man enters.*

*He is wearing a big warm coat over plaid pajamas, and untied boots.*

*He watches the woman watch the sky for a good long while as he tries to figure out what she's doing and what she's looking at and how he might engage with her.*

*Finally:*

MAN. Hello.

WOMAN. (*Turning to the man, pleasantly.*) Hello.

*The woman resumes looking up at the sky.*

*The man looks up at the sky to see what she's looking at—to make sure he's not missing anything.*

*And then he looks at the woman.*

MAN. I thought I saw someone.

*The woman continues to look up at the sky.*

I was about to go to bed. I saw you from my window...

*The woman is still looking up at the sky.*

Can I [help you]—? ...Is there somethin' I can do for you?

WOMAN. (*Turning to the man.*) Oh, no. I'm just here to see the northern lights.

*The woman resumes looking at the sky.*

MAN. Okay. Okay. It's just—it's awful late and you're in my yard.

WOMAN. Oh, I hope you don't mind. I'll only be here tonight. I'll see them tonight—the northern lights—and then I'll be gone. I hope you don't mind!

MAN. (*Looking out.*) Is that your tent?

*The tent is unseen—and is somewhere out in front of the man and the woman and not onstage.*

WOMAN. Yes.

MAN. You've pitched a tent... >

WOMAN. So I have a place to sleep >

MAN. in my yard...

WOMAN. after I see them—I didn't know I was in somebody's yard—I hope you don't mind.

MAN. Well, it's not that I [mind]—

WOMAN. Do you mind?

MAN. Well, I don't know if [I mind, exactly]—

WOMAN. Oh, no, I think you mind!

MAN. No, it's not that I mind—

WOMAN. No, you do! Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't think you would! I didn't think—. You see, it says in your brochure >

MAN. My brochure?

WOMAN. that people from Maine wouldn't mind. It says (*Producing a brochure about Maine tourism.*) that people from Maine are different, that they live life “the way life *should* be.”<sup>1</sup> And that, “in the tradition of their brethren in rural northern climes, like Scandinavia,” they'll let people who are complete strangers—like cross-country skiers and bikers and hikers—camp out in their yards, if they need to, for nothing., They'll just let you., I'm a hiker. Is it true? >

1 If you ever travel to Maine by car on Interstate 95, you will be greeted by a sign erected by the Maine Office of Tourism that reads, “Maine: The Way Life Should Be.”

MAN. Well, [I guess, but]—

WOMAN. That they'll just let you stay in their yards if you need to? 'Cause I need to. Camp out. 'Cause I'm where I need to be. This is the farthest I've ever traveled: I'm from a part of the country that's a little closer to things—I've never been this far north before—or *east*, and did you know that Maine is the only state in the country that's attached to only one other state?!?

MAN. Um—

WOMAN. It is!! (*Taking in the big sky and all the wide open space.*) Feels like the end of the world, and here I am at the end of the world, and I have nowhere to go, so I was counting on staying here—unless it's *not* true, I mean, *is it true?* >

MAN. Well [I don't know]—

WOMAN. Would you let a hiker who was where she needed to be just camp out in your yard for free? >

MAN. Well [I don't know]—

WOMAN. I mean, if a person really needed to? >

MAN. Well [I don't know]—

WOMAN. Reallyreally needed to?

MAN. Well, if a person really needed to, sure, // but—

WOMAN. Oh!

*The woman suddenly rushes to the man and hugs him.*

I'm so glad, then!! Thank you!!

*As the woman hugs the man, the brown paper bag she has been holding gets squished between their bodies.*

*The man doesn't quite participate in the hug—but is surprised by all the feelings he is suddenly feeling for the woman.*

*The woman realizes that she doesn't know the man well enough to be hugging him—but is surprised by all of the feelings she is suddenly feeling for him.*

*The woman eventually releases the man from the hug.*

*And we see that the man is now holding the woman's bag in the crook of his arm.*

*He doesn't quite know he has it.*

*And the woman doesn't know he has it.*

*The exchange of the bag was imperceptible to both the woman and the man—and should have been almost imperceptible to the audience.*

Sorry about that.

MAN. It's okay.

WOMAN. Sorry—I just—really need to be here and do this, so—thanks.

*The woman resumes looking intently for the northern lights.*

MAN. Sure.

*Little beat.*

So [you're just here to see the northern lights, huh?]

WOMAN. Oh, no!

*The woman realizes that she doesn't have the small brown paper bag she was holding and starts searching for it.*

MAN. What?

WOMAN. Oh, God!

*The woman finally sees that the man has her bag and points to it.*

I need that!

MAN. Huh? (*Realizing he has the bag.*) Oh. Here.

*The man offers the bag to the woman.*

*The woman grabs the bag.*

WOMAN. Thank you.

*The woman resumes looking up at the sky.*

MAN. Sure.

*Beat.*

*The man is puzzled.*

Okay. Okay...

*Little beat.*

So you're just lookin' for a place to see the northern lights from?

WOMAN. Yeah. Just tonight.

MAN. Well, you know, you might not see 'em *tonight*, 'cause // you never really know if [you're gonna see 'em]—

WOMAN. Oh, no! I'll see them! Because this is the right time: Solar activity is at an eleven-year peak. And I'm in a good place: Your latitude is good. Well, as good as it can be, under the circumstances. I was gonna go to a higher latitude—like, up to Canada somewhere—but I forgot to renew my passport, so I couldn't, and Alaska is just too far away, so this was the closest place I could get to in the lower forty-eight states that sees the northern lights regularly, so I flew, and I took a bus, and then I hiked to get here, so, anyway, everything's in order. And, wow, you have good sky for seeing them. It's so big!

*The woman takes in the sky.*

And dark!

*The woman takes in the horizon.*

And it's *flat*. And there are no trees in the way.

MAN. Yeah, [it] used to be a potato farm.

WOMAN. Oh. (*Taking in the sky.*) Makes for a big sky.

MAN. Yeah.

*The woman and the man take in Northern Maine's magnificent night sky.*

*And then the woman turns to the man and watches him watch the sky.*

WOMAN. So—you're a farmer?

MAN. No. *Used* to be a farm. I'm a repairman.

WOMAN. Oh.

MAN. Fix things.

WOMAN. Oh.

*The woman laughs.*

MAN. What?

WOMAN. You're not a lobster man.

*The woman just said the word "lobsterman" like it was two words—which is odd.*

*And amusing.*

MAN. No.

WOMAN. I guess I thought that everyone from Maine was a lobster man and talked in that funny...way like they do in Maine, and you don't talk that way.

MAN. Nope. You're not Downeast. You're up north. And this is how we talk up north, pretty much.

WOMAN. Oh.

MAN. No real accent up here.

WOMAN. Oh.

MAN. Plus, the ocean's a couple hundred miles away. (*Wryly.*) Be an awful long ride to work if I was a "lobster man."

WOMAN. (*Enjoying him.*) Yeah. Well, anyway, thank you. Thank you for letting me stay and do what I need to do. It's important that I do it, and—...

*She's sad.*

I've just had a pretty rough go of things lately, and I just really appreciate your kindness and understanding—

*Suddenly, the man, who is feeling lots of feelings for the woman, is hugging her.*

*The woman doesn't quite participate in the hug, but feels lots of feelings for the man.*

*After a beat, the man pulls away from the woman, and he has her small brown paper bag again—but the man and the woman don't know he has it.*

MAN. Oh, gosh—I'm sorry.

WOMAN. Um...

MAN. I'm sorry—are you okay?

WOMAN. Yeah.

MAN. I'm real sorry I did that. It's just—you just seemed sad. >

WOMAN. Um—

MAN. And also: I think I love you.

WOMAN. (*Gobsmacked.*) Huh?

MAN. Yeah—I saw you from my window, and...I love you.

WOMAN. Um—okay—well...that's really nice of you to say, but that's not [what I'm here for]—... I'm so sorry, but I'm not here for that [to have someone fall in love with me].

MAN. Oh, no, I didn't think // you were—

WOMAN. I'm here to pay my respects. To my husband.

MAN. Oh, no.

WOMAN. Yeah: My *husband*. Wes. I'm here to say goodbye to him. Because—he died recently.

MAN. Oh, jeez.

WOMAN. Yeah. On Tuesday, actually. And, see, the northern lights—did you know this?—the northern lights are really the torches that the recently departed carry with them so they can find their way home, to heaven, and, see, it takes a soul three days to make its way home, to heaven, and this is Friday, this is the third day, so, you see, I *will* see them—the northern lights—because they're *him*: He'll be carrying one of the torches. And, see, I didn't leave things well with him, so I was just hoping I could come here and say goodbye to him and not be bothered, but what you just did—*said*—there just a second ago—that bothered me a little, I think—or—no—it didn't bother me, but it's going to get in the way of me saying goodbye to him, I think—or something—and, so, I think maybe I should go find another yard—

*The woman packs up her map and her backpack and prepares to go.*

MAN. No! // No!

WOMAN. Yeah—

MAN. I'm sorry I did that—I don't really know what happened.

WOMAN. Well, *I* do, I know what // happened.

MAN. I'm not the kind of person that usually does things like that! Please! Don't go! Just—do what you need to do and I won't bother you. Maybe just...consider what I did a-a-a-a...a warm Maine welcome. Or something.

*Little beat.*

*If any other guy said something like that, it'd be creepy.*

Um—you know what? I'm just gonna get outta your way and let you do what you need to do.

*The man starts backing away, true to his word.*

All right?

*The woman trusts this guy for some reason.*

*And decides to stay in his yard and do what she needs to do.*

WOMAN. All right.

MAN. All right.

WOMAN. Thanks.

MAN. Sure. Sorry about...all that.

WOMAN. It's...okay.

*The man starts to go back to his house, and the woman resumes looking up at the sky.*

MAN. (Stopping.) And if you need anything—bathroom...heat—just give a holler, okay?

WOMAN. Okay.

*The woman watches the man turn and go back to his house. And realizes she doesn't want him to go.*

Hey!

*The man stops and turns to the woman.*

Thanks for letting me stay. I really appreciate it.

MAN. Sure.

*The man starts to turn and go back to his house again.*

*The woman calls to him, stopping him.*

WOMAN. And, um—I'm [Glory]—my name's Glory. Just so you know.

MAN. Okay. Hi, Glory. >

GLORY. Hi.

MAN. I'm East.

GLORY. Huh?

EAST. My name's East. (He's used to explaining his name.) For Easton. It's the name of the town— (Pointing toward the east.) a little ways

that way—where I was born. [There was a] Mess-up on the birth certificate...“a son, *Easton*, born on this sixth day of January, (*Insert appropriate year.*), in the town of Matthew, Maine”...instead of the other way around...

GLORY. (*Amused—and sad for the guy.*) Oh. >

EAST. Yeah.

GLORY. Well, happy birthday a few weeks late.

EAST. Thanks.

*Little beat.*

GLORY. So... (*Referring to the place.*) ...Easton. >

EAST. Yeah—

GLORY. Yeah!

*Glory pulls a map out of her pocket or backpack.*

I passed by near there on my way here, and, by the way, where is “here”? I couldn’t find it on my map.

EAST. Um...Almost.

GLORY. What?

EAST. You’re in unorganized territory. Township Thirteen, Range Seven.

*Glory checks her map.*

It’s not gonna be on your map, ’cause it’s not an actual town, technically.

GLORY. What // do you mean—

EAST. See, to be a town, you gotta get organized. And we never got around to gettin’ organized, so...we’re just Almost.

GLORY. Oh...

*Beat.*

EAST. Okay, well, like I said, holler if you need anything.

*East heads back to his house.*

GLORY. Okay. Thanks.

*Glory watches East go—and is somehow charmed by this guy. And then she resumes looking at the sky—and then suddenly realizes that she’s missing the bag she had been clutching to her chest.*

*This should upset her so much that it affects her breathing.*

Oh! Oh, God!

EAST. (*Stopping.*) What? What's wrong?

GLORY. (*Having trouble breathing.*) My heart!

EAST. What? Are you // okay?

GLORY. (*Seeing that East has her bag, pointing to it and almost hyperventilating.*) My heart!

EAST. What?

GLORY. You have my heart!

EAST. I wh//at?

GLORY. In that bag!, It's in that bag! >

EAST. Oh.

GLORY. Please give it back!, // Please! It's my heart!, I need it!, Please!

EAST. Okay, okay, okay.

*East hurries to Glory and gives her back the bag he didn't even know he had.*

GLORY. Thank you.

*Glory's breathing normalizes.*

EAST. You're welcome.

*Long beat.*

*East considers what he has just heard.*

I'm sorry, did you just say that...your heart is in that bag?, Is that what you just said, that // your heart—...?

GLORY. Yes.

*Little beat.*

EAST. It's heavy.

GLORY. I guess.

*Little beat.*

EAST. Why is it in that bag?

GLORY. It's how I carry it around.

EAST. Why?

GLORY. It's broken.

EAST. What happened?

GLORY. Wes broke it.

EAST. Your husband?

GLORY. Yeah. He went away.

EAST. Oh.

GLORY. With someone else.

EAST. Oh, no. I'm sorry.

GLORY. Yeah. And when he did that, I felt like my heart would break. And that's exactly what happened. It broke: hardened up and cracked in two. Hurt so bad, I had to go to the hospital, and when I got there, they told me they were gonna have to take it out. And when they took it out, they dropped it on the floor, and it broke into nineteen pieces. Slate.

*Glory gently shakes the bag, which should be filled with small pieces of slate. (Slate shards make a great sound when shaken.)*

*[Note: These shards shouldn't be too big—a heart is the size of its owner's fist.]*

It turned to slate.

*Glory looks back up at the sky.*

*East ponders what Glory has just said.*

*And, after a beat, he responds to what she has just said the only way he knows how.*

EAST. Great for roofing.

*Glory looks at East—and does not know how to respond to what he just said, so she doesn't, and looks back up at the sky.*

*East doesn't know what to do, so he starts to head back to his house, but stops after a few steps.*

Wait—how do you breathe? >

GLORY. Huh?—Oh—

EAST. If your heart is in that bag, how are you alive?

GLORY. (Indicating the heart that's now in her chest.) Artificial.

EAST. Really.

GLORY. Yeah. 'Cause my real one's broken. And there's always a shortage of real hearts for transplants, so I got an artificial one...

EAST. Oh.

*Little beat.*

So...

*East points to the brown paper bag Glory is holding.*

Why do you still have this one?

GLORY. Well, it's my heart. [What else am I gonna do with it?]

EAST. But it's broken.

GLORY. Yeah, // I don't really [wanna talk about it]—

EAST. 'Cause of your husband. >

GLORY. Yeah, [I really don't wanna get into it]—

EAST. Wes. >

GLORY. Yeah, [I really don't wanna get into it]—

EAST. Who left you.

GLORY. Yeah, // I really [don't wanna get into it]—

EAST. Why are you payin' your respects to him if he left you?

GLORY. Because that's what you do when a person dies, you pay them respects.

EAST. But he *left* you, >

GLORY. Yeah, but—

EAST. and it seems to me that a man who leaves somebody doesn't deserve any respects.

GLORY. (*Deflecting.*) Well, I just didn't leave things well with him, >

EAST. What do you mean?—

GLORY. and...and I need to apologize to him.

EAST. But he *left* you! >

GLORY. I know, but—

EAST. Why should you apologize?

GLORY. Because!

EAST. Because why?!?

GLORY. Because I killed him!!

*Everything stops.*

*And gets really quiet.*

*East backs away from Glory, because she may well be dangerous.*

EAST. Oh...

GLORY. And I'd like to apologize! See, I was over a year into my recovery from when they put my artificial heart in—I was all better, doing almost all the things I used to be able to do—and then Wes just shows up at my place one day and says he wants me back. And I said, “Wes, I have a new heart now. I'm sorry. It doesn't want *you* back.” And that just killed him.

EAST. (*Greatly relieved.*) Oh. But it didn't kill him—you didn't kill him—

GLORY. Well, yeah, I did, kinda, because he got so sad that my new heart didn't want him back that he just tore outta there and ran out into the street, and a bus was coming, and it didn't see him, and he didn't see *it*, and it just...took him right out, and if I'd have been able to take him back, >

EAST. Glory—

GLORY. (*Getting upset.*) he wouldn't have torn outta there like that >

EAST. Hey—

GLORY. and been just taken out like that, and so, I just wanted to say goodbye in my own way—not as his sad ex-wife at some big public service—but just privately, you know?, And—and—and—

*Suddenly, East comforts Glory with another hug.*

*Glory melts into the hug for a moment before suddenly pulling/ pushing away.*

*And when she does, East has her heart again.*

*The strangers stand face to face.*

*And then Glory suddenly kisses East.*

*And—just as suddenly—she pulls away from him.*

Oh, God—I'm sorry. >

EAST. Don't be.

GLORY. I'm so sorry I did that.

EAST. Don't be! I love you!

GLORY. What? No! [That's impossible!]

EAST. Yeah!

GLORY. Well...

*Glory realizes that East has her heart again and grabs it back.*

...DON'T!

EAST. Why?

GLORY. Because I won't be able to love you back: I have a heart that can pump my blood and that's all! The one that does the other stuff is broken! It doesn't work anymore—

*East suddenly kisses Glory.*

*Glory fully participates in the kiss—and then pulls away.*

*And East has her heart again.*

*Glory realizes this and grabs it from him.*

*And East grabs it right back.*

EAST. Let me have this!

GLORY. No! It's mine!

*Glory tries to get her heart back from East—and East prevents her from doing so—and thwarts every subsequent attempt she makes to do so.*

*[Note: This part of the scene should devolve into a game of keep-away. Make it convincing.]*

EAST. I can fix it!

GLORY. What? No! >

EAST. Glory—!

GLORY. Give it back to me now!

EAST. But it's broken. >

GLORY. Please!

EAST. It's no good like this.

GLORY. But it's my heart!

EAST. Yes, it is! And I believe I have it!

*This stops Glory.*

*Little beat.*

And I can fix it.

*Little beat.*

I'm a repairman. I repair things. It's what I do.

*Little beat.*

*Then, East crouches and takes off his coat and spreads it out on the snowy ground, flannel lining up, and gently places Glory's bag on his coat.*

*And then he opens the bag so he can examine its contents.*

*As he does so, music fades in, and the northern lights appear.*

*Glory sees the northern lights—in front of her, above her, on the field of stars behind her.*

*And they are a thing of wonder.*

*This is Magical Moment #1.*

GLORY. Oh! Oh, wow! Oh, wow! Oh, they're so beautiful...

*Glory remembers who they are and calls up to the sky.*

Oh! Oh! Wes!! Wes!! Goodbye!! I'm so sorry!!

*Glory marvels at the northern lights.*

Goodbye, Wes!!

*And then the northern lights become still...and fade a bit.*

*Music fades out.*

*Glory then turns to East—who is examining a little piece of her heart.*

*And she says—not in a we're-gonna-live-happily-ever-after way, but in more of a this-is-all-quite-miraculous-and-wonderful-and-promising-but-also-really-weird way:*

Hello...East.

*Music resumes.*

*East looks at Glory...and gets back to work repairing her heart.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

## Scene 2: Sad and Glad

*The music and the northern lights fade.*

*It's about ten minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*A man, Jimmy, appears.*

*He sits alone at a table in a back corner of Almost, Maine's local hangout, the Moose Paddy.*

*He is nursing a couple of Budweiser beers.*



*Sandrine St. Pierre enters.*

*She is coming from the ladies' room, cheerily heading back to her friends, who are up front.*

*Sandrine passes Jimmy's table.*

*Jimmy sees her—and is thrilled to be seeing her—and calls to her.*

JIMMY. Sandrine!

SANDRINE. Hm?

*Sandrine stops and turns and sees...Jimmy.*

*She is not happy to see him.*

*But she suddenly smiles so he doesn't know that she's not happy to see him.*

Jimmy!

JIMMY. (A little too excited.) Hey!

SANDRINE. Hey!

JIMMY. Hey!!

SANDRINE. Hey!!

JIMMY and SANDRINE. Heyyyy!!!

*Jimmy bear hugs Sandrine.*

*Sandrine doesn't hug Jimmy back.*

JIMMY. How you doin'?!?

SANDRINE. Doin' pretty good! How are you doin'?!?

JIMMY. I'm doin' good, doin' good! How are you doin'?!?

SANDRINE. I'm good, doin' good, great! How are you?

JIMMY. Great, great! How *are* ya?

SANDRINE. Great, // great!

JIMMY. Oh, that's great!

SANDRINE. Y//eah!

JIMMY. That's great!

SANDRINE. Y//eah!

JIMMY. That's great!

SANDRINE. Y//eah.

JIMMY. That's great!

SANDRINE. Y//eah.

JIMMY. You look great!

SANDRINE. Oh, no—

JIMMY. You look great.

SANDRINE. Than//ks.

JIMMY. You do. You look so great.

SANDRINE. Thanks, // Jimmy.

JIMMY. So pretty. So pretty.

SANDRINE. Thanks.

*Awful, uncomfortable beat.*

*Then, a little too cheerily:*

JIMMY. Here, have a seat!

SANDRINE. Oh, Jimmy, I can't—

JIMMY. Aw, come on, I haven't seen you in...well, *months*.

SANDRINE. Yeah—

JIMMY. And months and months and months and months and months and months and *months*, how does that happen? Live in the same town as someone and never see 'em?

SANDRINE. I don't know.

JIMMY. I mean, I haven't seen you since that night before that morning when I woke up and you were just gone.

SANDRINE. Yeah, I, uh...—

*Sandrine takes a seat and is about to explain—when a waitress comes blasting in.*

*The waitress is in constant motion, always appearing and disappearing equally quickly.*

WAITRESS. Look at you two, tucked away in the corner over here! Lucky I found ya! (*Referring to Jimmy's couple of Buds.*) Is the man and his lovely lady ready for another round?

JIMMY. Sure, we'll [have a coupla beers]—

SANDRINE. No! We're not together.

JIMMY. Well [we used to be]—

SANDRINE. We're all set, thanks.

JIMMY. Well [don't you want a drink?]

SANDRINE. All set!

JIMMY. Okay—yeah, we're good.

WAITRESS. Okay. (*Taking in the weird dynamic; and then starting to go.*) Well, holler if you need anything.

SANDRINE. Thanks.

WAITRESS. (*Stopping.*) No really—you gotta holler. It's busy up front!

SANDRINE. (*To the waitress.*) Okay.

JIMMY. (*To the waitress.*) Okay.

WAITRESS. (*On her way out.*) Okay!

*And the waitress is gone.*

*Another awkward beat.*

JIMMY. (*Fishing.*) So, um...ya here with anybody, or...?

SANDRINE. Yeah—um...the girls.

JIMMY. Oh.

SANDRINE. We're, uh—... (*Covering.*) Girls' night! We're in the front. (*Getting up and starting to go—she wants out of this situation.*) Actually, I just had to use the ladies' room, so I should get back to // them.

JIMMY. (*Stopping her.*) Aw, but I haven't seen ya! They'll survive without ya for a minute or two! So, what's been—here—have a seat—so what's been goin' on, whatcha been up to?

SANDRINE. (*Giving in, sitting.*) Well—

JIMMY. Did you know that I took over my dad's business?

SANDRINE. Yeah, that's great!

JIMMY. I run it now! >

SANDRINE. I heard that.

JIMMY. I'm runnin' it! >

SANDRINE. Heard that.

JIMMY. Runnin' the business! >

SANDRINE. Congratula >

JIMMY. Runnin' the whole show, >

SANDRINE. tions!, Good for you!, Good for you.

JIMMY. the whole shebang—thanks—yeah. We still do heating and cooling, >

SANDRINE. Yeah?

JIMMY. and we've expanded, too. Just got into pellet stoves: sales and service.

SANDRINE. Oh.

JIMMY. Yeah, it's a lotta work. A lotta work. I'm on call a lot: weekends, holidays, you name it, 'cause, you know, your heat goes, people die, it's serious.

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. Yeah. Like, I do Thanksgivin', Christmas, 'cause I let the guys who work for me, like, East helps with repairs sometimes, I let 'em have the day off so they can be with their families since I'm all alone this year.

SANDRINE. Oh.

JIMMY. Yeah. (*Driving the point home.*) I really don't have anybody anymore, really. My brother and sister got canned, so they left town. >

SANDRINE. Right...

JIMMY. And Mom and Dad retired, headed south.

SANDRINE. Yeah, I heard that.

JIMMY. Vermont.

SANDRINE. Oh.

JIMMY. Yeah, winters there are a lot easier. And then—I don't know if you heard, but...then Spot went and died on me.

SANDRINE. Oh, Jimmy, I didn't know that!

JIMMY. Yeah. He was old, it was his time. He was a good fish, though. (*Seriously sad about Spot.*) But, so, like I said, I really don't have anybody anymore, really...but, (*Trying to put his sadness behind him.*) so, um, I was wonderin'—would you like to come over? It'd be fun! Catch up, hang out...?

SANDRINE. Oh, Jimmy [I really can't]—

*The waitress blasts in again.*

WAITRESS. And I forgot to tell ya—don't forget: Friday night special at the Moose Paddy: Drink free if you're sad. So, if you're sad, or if you two little lovebirds are ready for another coupla Buds or somethin', you just let me know, all right?

SANDRINE. No, we're [not together]—

JIMMY. Okay!

WAITRESS. (*Exiting.*) Okay!

*And the waitress is gone.*

SANDRINE. (*Helplessly.*) Okay...

JIMMY. So whatta you say? Wanna come on over, for fun?

SANDRINE. No, Jimmy. I can't. I can't. (*Getting up to leave.*) I really gotta get back with the girls.

JIMMY. Naw—

SANDRINE. (*Forceful, but kind.*) Yeah, Jimmy, yeah. I gotta. 'Cause, see...oh, gosh, I've been meanin' to tell you this for a while: There's a guy, Jimmy. I've got a guy.

JIMMY. (*Huge blow. But he's tough.*) Oh.

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. Well...good for you. Gettin' yourself out there again.

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. Movin' on.

SANDRINE. Yeah, well, actually, Jimmy, it's more than me just gettin'

myself out there and movin' on. Um...this is my...bachelorette party. I'm gettin' married.

JIMMY. (*Huger blow.*) Oh.

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. Wow.

SANDRINE. Y//eah.

JIMMY. Wow.

SANDRINE. Y//eah.

JIMMY. Wow.

SANDRINE. Y//eah.

JIMMY. Wow, that's—...

*Jimmy is devastated.*

*But he's tough.*

I thought you said you weren't gonna do that. Get married. Thought it wasn't for you, you told me.

*Little beat.*

Guess it just wasn't for you with me.

*Beat.*

So, who's...who's the lucky guy?

SANDRINE. Martin Laferriere.<sup>2</sup> You know him? The // [game warden]—

JIMMY. Yeah, the game warden guy, over in Ashland!

SANDRINE. Yeah!

JIMMY. Wow!

SANDRINE. Yeah!

JIMMY. He's a legend! Legendary! I mean, if you're lost on a mountain in Maine, he's the guy you want lookin' for ya!

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. I mean, if you're lost out there in this big bad northern world, Martin Laferriere's the guy you want to have go out there and find ya!

<sup>2</sup> Pronounced, "la-FAIR-ee-AIR."

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. And he found...you.

SANDRINE. Yeah. I'm sorry I never told you—I actually thought you woulda known, I thought you woulda heard.

JIMMY. How would I have heard?

SANDRINE. Well, you know...people talk.

JIMMY. Not about things they know you don't wanna hear, they don't. And I gotta be honest with you: That's not somethin' I woulda wanted to hear.

*A painful beat.*

*Then Jimmy bucks up.*

So...when's the big event?

SANDRINE. Um...tomorrow!

JIMMY. [Oof.] Really.

SANDRINE. Yup!

JIMMY. Well then...

*Jimmy downs his Bud and then raises his arm to wave down the waitress.*

*As he does so, his unbuttoned sleeve slides up his arm a little.*

*(Hollering to the waitress.)* HEY!

SANDRINE. *(Not wanting the girls—or anyone—to see her with Jimmy.)* What are you doin'?

JIMMY. *(Going toward the front—where the waitress has exited and where the bachelorette party is.)* Gettin' our waitress—she said holler. *(Calling to the waitress.)* HEY! *(To Sandrine.)* What's her name?

SANDRINE. I don't know, she's new // here.

JIMMY. *(To the waitress.)* HEY!

SANDRINE. *(Not wanting to draw attention.)* What are you doin'?

JIMMY. We gotta celebrate! You got found! And you deserve it! He's quite a guy.

SANDRINE. Aw, Jimmy.

JIMMY. *(To Sandrine, and completely sincerely.)* And so are you. I mean—you're quite a girl—woman—person.

SANDRINE. (*Moved by his kindness.*) Thanks, Jimmy.

JIMMY. (*Raising his arm again and hollering to the waitress.*) HEY!

SANDRINE. (*Trying to stop Jimmy from drawing attention to them.*)  
Jimmy! Whoa!

*Sandrine notices a black marking on the inside of Jimmy's forearm.*

Jimmy—hey! What's that?

JIMMY. (*To Sandrine.*) What?

SANDRINE. (*Referring to the black marking on his arm.*) That!

JIMMY. Oh, nothin'—tattoo—

*Jimmy hides his tattooed arm behind his back and uses his other arm to wave down the waitress.*

HEY!

SANDRINE. What?!?

JIMMY. (*To Sandrine.*) Tattoo., (*To the waitress.*) HEY!

SANDRINE. (*Intrigued.*) What—when did you get that?

JIMMY. (*To Sandrine.*) Um...after you left., (*To the waitress.*) HEY!

SANDRINE. (*Going for Jimmy's arm.*) Jimmy! Well—what's it of, what's it say?

JIMMY. (*To Sandrine.*) Nothin', nothin', (*To the waitress.*) HEY!

*Sandrine grabs Jimmy's tattooed arm and pushes up his shirt sleeve.*

(*To Sandrine.*) N-n-no!

*Sandrine reads the bold, black letters on the inside of Jimmy's forearm:*

SANDRINE. "Villian."<sup>3</sup>

JIMMY. Villain.

SANDRINE. Who's Villian?

JIMMY. Villain. It's supposed to say, "villain."

SANDRINE. What?

JIMMY. It's supposed to say, "villain."

3 Rhymes with "jillian."

SANDRINE. Well, it doesn't say, "villain." It says, "Villian."

JIMMY. I know, (*Pulling his arm away from Sandrine, and pulling his sleeve down so he can cover the unfortunate tattoo.*) I spelled it wrong— >

SANDRINE. What?!?

JIMMY. —*they* spelled it wrong. It says, "Villian," but it's supposed to say, "villain."

SANDRINE. Well, why is it supposed to say, "villain"? Why would you want a tattoo that says, "villain"?

JIMMY. 'Cause...

SANDRINE. 'Cause why?

JIMMY. Just 'cause.

SANDRINE. Just 'cause *why*?

JIMMY. Just 'cause...when a guy's got a girl like you...well, I just think that losin' a girl like you, drivin' a girl like you away... >

SANDRINE. Jimmy, you didn't drive me away—

JIMMY. is just plain criminal. It's *criminal*. It's *villainy*! And it should be *punished*! So I punished myself, I marked myself a villain so girls would stay away so I'd never have to go through what I went through with you again—can I kiss you?

SANDRINE. (*Not mean.*) No.

JIMMY. Sorry.

*Beat.*

SANDRINE. (*Kindly, referring to Jimmy's tattoo.*) You can get that undone, you know.

JIMMY. Yeah.

*Beat.*

SANDRINE. I gotta head.

*Sandrine starts to go.*

JIMMY. Yeah.

*Little beat.*

*Then, calling to Sandrine:*

Hey, I'm—...

*Sandrine stops and turns to Jimmy.*

*Little beat.*

I'm glad you got found.

SANDRINE. Thanks, Jimmy.

*Sandrine goes back to her bachelorette party—and she is welcomed heartily by the girls.*

*We hear this.*

*And Jimmy hears this—and it's all too much for him to bear.*

*Beat.*

*And then the waitress blasts back in.*

WAITRESS. Hey! Sorry! You were wavin' me down. I saw you, but it's so busy in the front! There's this bachelorette party: those girls! Good thing it's not, "Drink free if you're *glad*," 'cause those girls are wicked *glad*. Gosh—I had to fight my way through to find you, but I did it! I found ya! So: What'd ya need, what can I do ya for? Another Bud?

JIMMY. Um, I'm okay, I'm good, thanks...

*We hear more joy from the bachelorette party.*

*The waitress takes in all the happiness at the bachelorette party.*

*And then takes in all of Jimmy's sadness.*

*And she sees the empty chair where Sandrine was sitting; and then looks off to where Sandrine went; and then looks at the empty chair; and then looks back off to where Sandrine went...and sees Sandrine with all her girls...and puts the pieces together.*

WAITRESS. Oh, pal... Um... Um... Well, remember, like I said, Moose Paddy special: Drinks are free if you're sad. Okay? Just tell me you're sad, and you'll drink free.

*The waitress waits for a response from Jimmy.*

*But doesn't get one.*

Just say the word. Let me know. 'Cause I know from sad, and you're lookin' pretty sad.

*The waitress again waits for a response from Jimmy.*

*But doesn't get one.*

*Jimmy is just sad.*

Okay. Well, my name's Villian, if you need anything.

*This is Magical Moment #2 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound cue could help define this magical moment.*

*The northern lights gently appear.*

*[Note to the actor playing Villian: The next line may be used if you feel you need it for clarity. It's just a backup, in case you feel the first mention of your name isn't heard (audience members cough at the most inopportune times), or if the audience is slow to catch on. Use it if you need it; don't if you don't—up to you.]*

Just ask for Villian.

*The waitress goes.*

*Beat.*

*Jimmy wonders if he heard the waitress right—that her name is Villian.*

*And he has to find out, so he calls to her.*

JIMMY. *Villian?!?*

VILLIAN. *(Stopping/returning.) Yeah?*

JIMMY. *Hi.*

VILLIAN. *Hi!*

JIMMY. *I'm not sad. I just would like another Bud.*

VILLIAN. *All right!*

*Villian goes.*

JIMMY. *(Making sure her name is actually Villian.) Villian!!!*

VILLIAN. *(Stopping/returning.) Yeah?!?*

JIMMY. *I'm glad you found me.*

VILLIAN. Aw... (*Leaving, and to herself.*) "I'm glad you found me,"  
that's adorable...

*Music.*

*Jimmy is dumbfounded.*

*Maybe he deals with his tattooed forearm in some way.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

### Scene 3: This Hurts

*The music and the northern lights fade.*

*It's about ten minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*A woman is ironing a man's work shirt in the laundry room of Ma Dudley's Boarding House.*

*A man is sitting on a backless bench reading from a notebook labeled THINGS THAT CAN HURT YOU.*

*The woman looks at the shirt she has been ironing and suddenly crumples it and throws it into her laundry basket.*

*Then she picks up the iron and wraps the cord around it, preparing to put it away.*

*As she does so, she burns herself on it.*

WOMAN. Ow! Dammit!

*The man sees this happen, takes note of it, produces a pencil, and writes "iron" in his notebook labeled THINGS THAT CAN HURT YOU.*

*Meanwhile, the woman has put the iron back where it belongs—maybe on a shelf onstage or maybe somewhere offstage.*

*She then goes to the ironing board, folds it up, and turns to put it back where it belongs—which is near where the iron lives.*

*As she turns, she accidentally wallops the man in the head with the flat face of the ironing board, knocking him off the bench.<sup>4</sup>*

Oh, no! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!, Oh...I didn't see you!, Are you okay!?!?

MAN. (*Unfazed.*) Yeah.

WOMAN. No you're not!! I smashed you with the ironing board!, I wasn't even looking!, Are you hurt?

MAN. (*Calmly resituating himself on the bench.*) No.

WOMAN. Oh, you must be!! I just *smashed* you!, Where did I get you?

<sup>4</sup> Please see the NOTES FOR DIRECTORS section on page 144 of this volume for guidance on how to execute the ironing board hits.

MAN. In the head.

WOMAN. In the head!?! Oh, (*Going to him.*) come here!, Are you okay?

MAN. Is there any blood?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. Any discoloration?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. Then I'm okay.

WOMAN. Well, I'm gonna go get you some ice.

MAN. No. I can't feel things like that.

WOMAN. Like what?

MAN. Like when I get smashed in the head with an ironing board. I don't get hurt.

WOMAN. What?

MAN. I can't feel pain.

WOMAN. Oh, Jeezum Crow,<sup>5</sup> what the hell have I done to you? >

MAN. Nothin'.

WOMAN. You're talkin' loopy!, Listen to you, goin' on about not being able to feel pain!, That's delusional!, I've knocked the sense right outta ya!

MAN. No, I'm okay.

WOMAN. Shh! Listen: I was gonna be a nurse, so I know: You're hurt. You just took a good shot right to the head, and that's serious.

MAN. No, it's not serious. I don't think an ironing board could really hurt your head, 'cause, see, ironing boards aren't on my list of things that can hurt you.

*The man forces his book labeled THINGS THAT CAN HURT YOU on the woman.*

WOMAN. (*Dealing with his book.*) What?, // What's [this]—?

MAN. Plus, there's no blood or discoloration from where I got hit, // so [I'm okay]...

<sup>5</sup> Pronounced, "JEE-zum CROW." Jeezum Crow is a euphemistic curse word.

WOMAN. Well, you can be hurt and not be // bleeding or bruised.

MAN. And, plus, my list is pretty reliable, 'cause my brother Rob is helping me make it, and I can prove it to you: See, I bet if I took this ironing board,

*The man gets the ironing board.*

like this, and hit you with it, that it wouldn't hurt you.

*The man smashes the woman in the head with the flat face of the ironing board.*

See?, // That didn't hurt.

WOMAN. (*Scrambling to get away from him.*) OW!!

MAN. Oh!

WOMAN. Ow! What the hell was that?! // Why did you do that?

MAN. Oh! I'm sorry! // Did that hurt?

WOMAN. God!

MAN. Oh, it did, didn't it?

WOMAN. Ow!

MAN. Oh, I didn't think it would, 'cause, see, ironing boards are not on my list of things that can hurt you, but, gosh, maybe they should be on my list, becau//se—

WOMAN. What are you talkin' about?

MAN. I have a list of things that can hurt you—my brother Rob is helping me make it—and ironing boards aren't on it.

WOMAN. Well, that ironing board hurt me.

MAN. Yeah.

WOMAN. So you should add it to your list.

MAN. Yeah.

*Beat.*

*The man adds "ironing boards" to his THINGS THAT CAN HURT YOU book, and then he thinks.*

*And then picks up a book labeled THINGS TO BE AFRAID OF.*

Should I be *afraid* of ironing boards?

WOMAN. Well, if someone swings it at your head and wallops you with it, yes.

MAN. Well, it's not [on this list]—... I have a list of things to be afraid of, too, and ironing boards are not on this list either.

WOMAN. Well they shouldn't be, really.

MAN. No?

WOMAN. No, you shouldn't be *afraid* of ironing boards.

MAN. No?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. But they can *hurt* you.

WOMAN. Yeah.

MAN. So I should be *afraid* of them.

WOMAN. No.

MAN. So I *shouldn't* be afraid of them?

WOMAN. Right.

MAN. But they can *hurt* me.

WOMAN. Well, if they're used the way you used it, yeah.

MAN. Oh-oh-oh! So, they're kind of like the opposite of God!

WOMAN. What?

MAN. Well, ironing boards can *hurt* me, but I shouldn't be *afraid* of them, but God, my brother Rob says, God *won't* hurt me, but I should *fear* him.

WOMAN. Um...I guess.

MAN. Boy, this is getting very complicated.

WOMAN. What is?

MAN. This business of learning what hurts, what doesn't hurt, what to be afraid of, what not to be afraid of.

WOMAN. Listen, you're goin' on and on about some nutty stuff: Are you sure you're okay?

MAN. Yeah. I don't feel pain, I told you.

WOMAN. Yeah, you did. But—what do mean?—what do you have?

MAN. (*Not comprehending the question.*) What do I have?

WOMAN. Do you have some sort of a neurological condition or something?

MAN. I don't know.

WOMAN. What do you mean you don't know? Haven't you been diagnosed? >

MAN. Um—

WOMAN. I mean, what does your doctor say?

MAN. Oh, we can't afford doctors.

WOMAN. What? // Wait—

MAN. And my brother Rob says I just can't feel pain, and that's all we need to know, and we can manage just fine. >

WOMAN. But—

MAN. Oh! And if you don't believe me, you can hit me if you want to, to see [that I really don't feel pain]!

WOMAN. Oh, n//o—

MAN. Go ahead., It won't hurt., See?

*The man smacks his forehead head with the book labelled  
THINGS THAT CAN HURT YOU.*

WOMAN. OW!

MAN. See?

*The man smacks his head again.*

WOMAN. Don't!

MAN. See?

*The man smacks his head again.*

WOMAN. Stop!

MAN. Go ahead.

*The man offers the woman his book labeled THINGS THAT  
CAN HURT YOU so she can hit him with it.*

WOMAN. No!

MAN. Come on!

WOMAN. No!!

MAN. Come on!!

WOMAN. NO!!!

MAN. Okay. You don't have to. Most people don't. Hit me. Most

people just go away. You can go away, too, if you want to. That's what most people do when I tell them about myself. My brother Rob says I just shouldn't tell people about myself, because I scare them, so I've actually recently put "myself" on my list of things to be afraid of, see? (*Locating the entry for "myself" in his book labeled THINGS TO BE AFRAID OF.*) But [I'm not sure he knows I did that]—

*Her curiosity getting the better of her, the woman has come up from behind the man and suddenly wallops him on the back of the head with the book labeled THINGS THAT CAN HURT YOU.*

WOMAN. Oh, my gosh! I'm sorry! // Oh, my gosh! I just clocked you! >

MAN. You hit me! Most people go away, but you hit me!

WOMAN. I had to *see* [if it really would hurt you]! But—are you okay?

MAN. Yeah, I don't feel // pain!

WOMAN. ...Don't feel pain, right! But—are you sure?

MAN. Well, is there any blood?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. Any discoloration?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. Then I'm okay.

WOMAN. Well, buddy, you can be hurt and not even look like it.

MAN. But—

WOMAN. Trust me. There are things that hurt you that make you bruised and bloody, and there are things that hurt you that don't make you bruised and bloody and...they all hurt.

*Beat.*

*The woman gives the man back the THINGS THAT CAN HURT YOU book.*

MAN. Thank you.

WOMAN. Sure.

*The woman starts to head back to gather her laundry—but stops and takes in the man and his books.*

*She is fascinated by him.*

So—I don't wanna—I'm the kinda person who minds my own business—but...well, I'm Marvalyn, I'm new here—

MAN. Yeah, we saw you and your husband move in.

MARVALYN. Huh? Oh—no, no, he's not my husband. He's just my boyfriend. Eric.

MAN. Oh.

MARVALYN. Yeah. We're just here [temporarily]—... Our roof collapsed from all the snow in November, and we're just here till we can get our feet back on the ground.

MAN. Oh. Well, that's good, 'cause that's what Ma Dudley says her boarding house is. A place where people can live until they get their feet back on the ground. My brother Rob says we've been trying to get our feet back on the ground our whole lives.

MARVALYN. Oh.

MAN. Yeah, he says it takes some people longer to do that than others.

MARVALYN. Yeah, I guess it does.

*Little beat.*

Anyway—like I said—wait—I'm sorry, what's your name?

MAN. Steve.

MARVALYN. Hi, Steve. // So, [like I said]—

STEVE. Hi.

MARVALYN. Hi—so, like I said—Steve—I mind my own business, but I was gonna be a nurse, and I think you might need to see a do//ctor—

STEVE. You guys are loud.

MARVALYN. Huh?

STEVE. You and Eric. You yell and bang.

MARVALYN. O//h—

STEVE. We're right below you.

MARVALYN. O//h—

STEVE. You're in room six on the third floor.

MARVALYN. Ye//ah—

STEVE. We're in room three on the second floor, right below you, and we can hear all the yelling and banging.

MARVALYN. Um...well, I'm sorry about that. We're goin' through a rough patch. Happens. Sorry.

*Marvalyn starts to gather her stuff so she can go.*

*But she can't quite leave this guy.*

What's it like?

STEVE. What's what like?

MARVALYN. To not feel pain.

STEVE. I don't know. I don't know what it's like to hurt, so...I don't know.

MARVALYN. So—how did—...? Were you born this way?

STEVE. No, it's something I developed, my brother Rob says.

MARVALYN. When did you develop it?

STEVE. When I was little when my mom died.

MARVALYN. Oh.

STEVE. Yeah. And when she died, I stopped feeling pain and my development as a human being got stunted, my brother Rob says.

MARVALYN. Okay—your brother Rob needs to stop [being an armchair physician]—wait, what does he do? For a living?

STEVE. He plows snow and does odd jobs when there's no snow to plow.

MARVALYN. Okay, well, I really think your brother needs to take you to a doctor, you know? // I was gonna be a nurse [and]—

STEVE. No, we manage fine, my brother Rob says, and I'm lucky, because he's done a really good job with me—I don't know what I'd do without him, because he's been teaching me what hurts ever since I stopped being able to *tell* if I was hurt, so—

MARVALYN. Why?!?

STEVE. Well, so I won't ruin myself! See, I have to know what hurts, so I know when to be afraid. See, my mind can't tell me when to be afraid, 'cause my body stopped knowing what being hurt is a long time ago, so I've had to memorize what might hurt.

MARVALYN. Ok//ay...

STEVE. And I have to memorize what to be afraid of.

MARVALYN. Okay...

*Steve shows Marvalyn items in his book labeled THINGS TO BE AFRAID OF.*



STEVE. Things like bears.

*Steve flips to another page in the book.*

And...guns and knives.

*Steve flips to another page in the book.*

And fire.

*Steve flips to another page in the book.*

And fear—I should fear fear itself.

*Steve flips to another page in the book.*

And pretty girls.

MARVALYN. Pretty girls?

*Steve realizes that he thinks that Marvalyn is pretty.*

STEVE. Yeah.

MARVALYN. Why should you be afraid of pretty girls?

STEVE. Well, 'cause my brother Rob says they can hurt you, 'cause they make you love them. >

MARVALYN. What?!?

STEVE. And that's something I'm supposed to be afraid of, too: love.

MARVALYN. Why?

STEVE. 'Cause it hurts you, my brother Rob says, >

MARVALYN. But—

STEVE. but Rob says that I'm really lucky, 'cause I'll probably never have to deal with love.

MARVALYN. Wait-wait-wait, what does he mean, you're never gonna have to deal with love?

STEVE. Well, first off, 'cause I won't be able to feel it.

MARVALYN. Why?

STEVE. Because it hurts you, and I can't feel pain.

MARVALYN. Well, love shouldn't hurt y//ou.

STEVE. And, second, because Rob says I'm really lucky, because no one's probably ever going to love me anyway, because I have a lot of deficiencies and not very many capacities.

MARVALYN. You know what, a lot of people do.

*And suddenly Marvalyn is kissing Steve.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound cue could help define this as the beginning of Magical Moment #3.*

*At first, it's just Marvalyn kissing Steve, but, eventually, Steve participates, and when he does, Marvalyn breaks away, because she realizes it was wrong of her to kiss him.*

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry I did that. Are you all right? Are you okay?

*Steve doesn't quite know how to reply at first.*

*But then, maybe feeling his lips, he resorts to his usual way of answering this question.*

STEVE. Well...is there any blood?

MARVALYN. No.

STEVE. Any discoloration?

MARVALYN. No.

STEVE. Then I'm all right. [I think.]

MARVALYN. Yeah. You are.

*Little beat.*

I'm so sorry I did that. It's just—... You're just...very sweet, and I think you have to not let your brother de//cide all the [things he's decided about you]—

STEVE. *(Trying to make sense of what just happened.)* But—wait: You have a boyfriend.

*Marvalyn begins gathering her stuff again—she needs to get out of there.*

MARVALYN. Yes, I // do.

STEVE. Eric.

MARVALYN. Yes—

STEVE. And you're his girlfriend, right?

MARVALYN. Yup.

STEVE. And if you're his girlfriend and he's your boyfriend, you must love each other, right?

MARVALYN. Yeah, we do, very much.

STEVE. But—you just kissed *me*.

MARVALYN. Yup, I did.

STEVE. And it's Friday night, and you're doing your laundry.

MARVALYN. Yup, I am.

STEVE. And people who love each other, they don't kiss other people and do their laundry on Friday nights, I've learned that. People who love each other, they go to the Moose Paddy on Friday nights, or they go dancing together, or they go skating. And they kiss each other. They don't kiss other people—you know what? I think maybe you and your boyfriend don't actually love each other.

MARVALYN. You know what? (*Preparing to leave.*) I've been down here longer than I said I would be, and he doesn't like that.

STEVE. Who?

MARVALYN. My boyfriend.

STEVE. Who you love.

MARVALYN. Y//es.

STEVE. Very much.

MARVALYN. Y//es.

STEVE. Even though you just kissed me.

MARVALYN. Yes.

STEVE. Wow, I'm going to have to talk to my brother Rob about this!

MARVALYN. No! Don't talk to your brother Rob about this! Tell him to stop teaching you.

STEVE. [Tell him to stop teaching me]...What?

MARVALYN. Whatever he's teaching you. Tell him to stop. What he's teaching you...isn't something you wanna know.

STEVE. But I have to learn from him!

MARVALYN. Look: I was gonna be a nurse, so I know: You need

to go to a doctor and find out what's really wrong with you and not have your brother read whatever it is he reads and decide all the things he's decided about you.

STEVE. But [I have to learn from him]—

MARVALYN. You know what?, I gotta go.

STEVE. Right. You gotta go. You're—you're leaving. I knew you would. That's what people do.

*Steve sits down on the bench, dejected, and waits for his laundry to finish.*

MARVALYN. No, I just have to [go]—. I told you, Eric // doesn't like it if—

STEVE. Your boyfriend?

MARVALYN. Yeah, he doesn't like it if I'm down here longer than I said I'd be, and I've been down here longer than I said I'd be.

*On this line, Marvalyn picks up the ironing board so she can put it away.*

*And, as she does, she accidentally swings it around and hits Steve in the head, just as she did at the beginning of the scene.*

*Steve gets knocked off the bench again.*

STEVE. OW!

*This is the continuation of Magical Moment #3 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*Music gently fades in to help define this magical moment.*

*The northern lights gently appear.*

MARVALYN. Oh! I'm sorry!

STEVE. OW!

MARVALYN. I'm so sorry!, Are you all right? I can't believe I just did that to you again!

STEVE. OW!!

*Marvalyn makes her way over to Steve to make sure he's okay—  
but suddenly stops, because she realizes what he's just said.*

MARVALYN. Wait—: What did you just say?

*As Steve rubs his head, he realizes what he just said.*

*And then he looks at Marvalyn and tells her plainly:*

STEVE. Ow.

*This is the completion of Magical Moment #3.*

*Marvalyn and Steve just look at each other, utterly unsure of  
what has happened—and of what will happen.*

*Music swells.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

## Scene 4: Getting It Back

*The music and the northern lights fade.  
It's about ten minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.  
We are now in the front yard of a small home.  
We hear a truck pull into the driveway.  
We hear the truck's horn blare.  
We hear the truck's doors open and close.*

GAYLE. *(From off.)* Lendall!

*A woman—Gayle—barges into the yard and yells:*

Lendall!!

*Gayle waits to see if Lendall has heard her.*

*It doesn't seem he has.*

*Gayle crosses offstage and goes to Lendall's door—and we hear her pound on it.*

*(From off.)* Lendall!!!

*Beat.*

*No response from Lendall.*

*We hear Gayle pound on the door again.*

*(From off.)* Len//dall—!

*We hear a door open and close.*

*Gayle quickly makes her way back out onto the stage and paces and seethes.*

LENDALL. *(From off.)* Gayle! What?!? What's the matter? What's wrong?

*Lendall enters.*

*He does not move as quickly as Gayle.*

What are you doin'? I thought you weren't comin' over tonight 'cause of Sandrine's bachelorette // party thing.

GAYLE. Lendall:

*Gayle is seething.*

*She is full of something to say.*

*But she can't quite say it yet.*

LENDALL. (*Approaching Gayle.*) Gayle—what's wrong? You okay?

GAYLE. (*Shutting Lendall up and stopping him from approaching.*)  
Shhh!

*Gayle stills herself.*

Lendall:

LENDALL. What?!?

*Gayle steels herself.*

GAYLE. I want it back.

LENDALL. [What are you talking about?] Huh?

GAYLE. I want it back.

LENDALL. (*Not comprehending.*) What [do you want back]?

GAYLE. All the love I gave to you?, I want it back.

LENDALL. (*Trying to understand what Gayle is talking about.*) What???

GAYLE. Now.

LENDALL. I [don't understand]—...I don't under//stand—

GAYLE. I've got yours in the truck.

LENDALL. (*Completely confused.*) What???

GAYLE. All the love you gave to me?, I've got it in the truck.

LENDALL. What are you talkin' about?

GAYLE. I don't want it anymore.

LENDALL. What? [What do you mean you don't want it anymore?]

GAYLE. I've made a decision: We're done.

LENDALL. What?!?

GAYLE. We're done. I've decided. And, so, I've brought all the love you gave to me back to you. It's the right thing to do.

LENDALL. (*Completely bewildered.*) Um, I [really don't understand what you're talkin' about]—

GAYLE. It's in the truck.

LENDALL. You said.

*Beat.*

*Lendall is completely baffled.*

GAYLE. (*Frustrated that Lendall is not doing what she's asked him to do.*) I can get it for you, or...you can get it.

LENDALL. Well, I don't want it back.

GAYLE. Well, I don't want it! What am I supposed to do with all of it, now that I don't want it?

LENDALL. Well, I don't know!

GAYLE. Well, under the circumstances, // it doesn't seem right for me to keep it, so I'm gonna give it back.

*Gayle heads to her truck.*

LENDALL. Under what circumstances? (*Calling to her.*) Gayle, what are [you talking about]—? I don't understand what [you're talking about]—... What are you doing?

GAYLE. (*From off.*) I told you. I'm getting all the love you gave to me, and I'm giving it back to you.

LENDALL. (*Calling to her.*) Well, I'm not sure I want it— (*Seeing her—and what she has.*) —whoa! Need help?

GAYLE. (*Returning.*) Nope. I got it. It's not heavy.

*When Gayle returns, she has a bunch of HUGE bags full of love.*

*[Note: These bags can be whatever you want them to be. I have seen this scene done with garbage bags, red cloth bags, and laundry bags full of pillow stuffing. I have also seen huge clear recycling bags filled with air and some glitter—probably my favorite. Whatever you choose—I would tend toward otherworldly and magical.]*

*Here you go.*

*Gayle leaves the huge bunch of bags with Lendall and then exits so she can get more of the love Lendall gave her.*

LENDALL. (*Truly puzzled, referring to the bags of love.*) And this is...?

GAYLE. (*From off.*) All the love you gave me, yeah.

LENDALL. Wow.

*Beat.*

That's a lot.

*Gayle returns with more bags of love and leaves them with Lendall.*

GAYLE. Yeah.

*Gayle goes back to her truck to get more bags of love.*

LENDALL. Whole lot!

GAYLE. *(From off.)* Yeah.

*Gayle returns with even more bags of love.*

*There is now an ENORMOUS pile of love in Lendall's yard.*

LENDALL. Wow. What the heck am I gonna do with all this? I mean...I don't know if I have room.

GAYLE. *(Upset.)* Well, I guess you'll have to find a place for it, won't you?

*Lendall and Gayle look at the huge pile of love.*

*Gayle collects herself.*

And now, I think it's only fair for you to give me mine back, because... I want it back.

*Little beat.*

All the love I gave to you?

LENDALL. Yeah?

GAYLE. I want it back.

*Little beat.*

So go get it.

*Lendall is at a loss—and doesn't do what Gayle is demanding that he do—because he has no idea how to go about doing it.*

Lendall, go get it.

*Lendall, again, doesn't do what Gayle is demanding that he do—because he has no idea how to go about doing it.*

Please.

*Lendall still doesn't do what Gayle is demanding that he do.*

NOW!!!

LENDALL. *(Shaken and completely at a loss as to what to do.)* Okay.

*Lendall slowly exits into his house—even though he has no idea how to do what Gayle has asked him to do.*

*Long beat.*

*Gayle waits among all the love she has returned to Lendall.*

*She's fighting being upset.*

*Eventually, Lendall returns—empty-handed, it seems.*

*He approaches Gayle and faces her.*

*And then he presents her with a tiny little canvas or paper bag.*

*[Note: If possible, the audience shouldn't see the little bag until Lendall holds it out to Gayle.]*



*Gayle stares at the bag for a beat.*

*And finally says:*

GAYLE. What is that?

LENDALL. It's all the love you gave me.

*This is both not quite true...and quite true.*

GAYLE. That's [all the love I gave you]—...? That is *not* [all the love I gave you]—. There is no way [that is all the love I gave you]—... That is *not* [the love I gave you]—. (*Mortified.*) Is that all I gave you?

LENDALL. Yeah.

GAYLE. Oh.

*Gayle looks at the little bag Lendall is offering...and then looks at all the big bags.*

Okay.

LENDALL. Why don't you open it, and [see what's inside]—?

*And Gayle is crying.*

(*Going to comfort her.*) Hey, hey—what's goin' on?

GAYLE. (*Resisting and rejecting Lendall's comfort.*) I told you: We're done.

LENDALL. Why do you keep sayin' that?

GAYLE. Because—... (*This is hard to say, but it has to be said.*) Because when I asked you if you ever thought we were gonna get married—remember when I asked you that?

*Lendall remembers.*

*But is quiet—as quiet as he was when Gayle asked him if he ever thought they were going to get married.*

A couple weeks ago? I made pizza?

LENDALL. Yeah—

GAYLE. Yeah, well, when I asked you...*that*, you got so...*quiet*. And everybody said that *that* right there shoulda told me everything.

LENDALL. Everybody who?

GAYLE. Everybody!

LENDALL. *Who?*

GAYLE. ...Marvalyn // said—

LENDALL. *Marvalyn?!? >*

GAYLE. Yes, Marvalyn—

LENDALL. Marvalyn said that, // like she's an expert?

GAYLE. Yes, Marvalyn said that how quiet you got was all I needed to know!, And she's right: You don't love me.

LENDALL. What—? Gayle, no! [That's not true!!]

GAYLE. Shh! And I've been trying to fix that, I've tried to *make* you love me by giving you every bit of love I had, and now...I don't have any love for *me* left, and that's...that's not good for a person... and...that's why I want all the love I gave you back, because I wanna bring it with me.

LENDALL. Wait—where are you going?!?

GAYLE. I need to get away from things.

LENDALL. What—? What things?! There aren't any things in this town to get away from!

GAYLE. Yes there are: You!

LENDALL. Me?

GAYLE. Yes. *You* are the things in this town I need to get away from, because I have to think and start over, and so: All the love I gave to you? I want it back. In case I need it. Because I can't very well go around giving *your* love—'cause that's all I have right now, is the love *you* gave *me*—I can't very well go around giving *your* love to other guys, 'cause // that just doesn't seem right—

LENDALL. Other guys? There are other guys?!?

GAYLE. No, not yet, but I'm assuming there will be.

LENDALL. Gayle—

GAYLE. Shh!!! So I think—. I think that, since I know now that you're not ready to do what comes next for people who have been together for quite a long time [like, get married], I think we're gonna be done, >

LENDALL. Why? Gayle—!

GAYLE. and, so, I think the best thing we can do now is just return the love we gave to each other, and call it...

*Gayle looks at the pathetic little bag that contains all the love she gave Lendall and then looks at the awesome several that contain all the love Lendall gave her.*

...even.

*It's not "even" at all.*

Oh, Jeezum Crow, is that really all the love I gave you, Lendall? I mean, I thought [I gave you so much more than that]—. I mean, what kind of person am I if this is all the love I gave y—... No...n-n-no! (*Fiercely.*) I know I gave you more than that, Lendall, I know it!

*Gayle has a revelation.*

Did you lose it?

LENDALL. What?!? // No, Gayle! No!

GAYLE. Did you lose it, Lendall?!? 'Cause I know I gave you more than that, and I think you're pulling something on me, AND THIS IS NOT A GOOD TIME TO BE PULLING SOMETHING ON ME!!!

LENDALL. (*Raising his voice—and this guy doesn't raise his voice.*) I'M NOT! Pullin' somethin' on you! I wouldn't do that to you!

*Lendall collects himself.*

Jeez! I think—gosh, I hate the way you're talkin' to me!

*He steams and stews a bit.*

*And finally says, with finality:*

And I think—I think maybe you should just take what you came for. And I guess I'll see you later.

*Lendall chucks the little bag at Gayle's feet and exits into his house, slamming the door behind him.*

GAYLE. (*Weakly.*) Lendall—[wait]. Lendall...

*Gayle is at a loss.*

*She came over to break up with Lendall.*

*And it seems that he just broke up with her.*

*But, ultimately, this is what she wants.*

*Gayle looks at the little bag at her feet, picks it up, and is about to leave.*

*But curiosity stops her.*

*And she opens the little bag and examines what's inside.*

*And then yells offstage.*

Lendall—what is this?!? I don't [understand]—... This isn't [all the love I gave you]—... Lendall: What is this?!?

*Little beat.*

LENDALL. (*From off.*) It's a ring, Gayle.

GAYLE. What?

LENDALL. (*Returning.*) It's a ring.

GAYLE. What? Well—

*Gayle takes what is in the bag out of the bag.*

*It's a small box.*

This isn't [all the love I gave you]—. This is *not* [all the love I gave you]—...

*Gayle realizes she's holding a box that an engagement ring might come in.*

Oh, Lendall, this is a ring. Is this a...*ring*? A ring that you give to someone you've been with for quite a long time when you want to let them know that you're ready for what comes next for people who have been together for quite a long time?

LENDALL. Yup.

GAYLE. Oh.

*Little beat.*

But...all the love I gave to you? Where is it?

LENDALL. (*Referring to the small box.*) It's right there, Gayle.

GAYLE. But [that can't be all of it]—

LENDALL. It's right there.

GAYLE. But [there's no way that's all of it]—

LENDALL. It *is*! That's it! Right there! There was so much of it—you've given me so much over the years—

GAYLE. (*Making sure he understands just how many years it's been.*) Eleven.

LENDALL. —over the eleven // years—

GAYLE. *Eleven, yeah! // Eleven.*

LENDALL. —yeah, eleven, yeah—shh! You've just given me so much that I don't know what I've even done with it all. I had to put some in the garage, some in the shed. And after you asked me if I ever thought we were gonna get married, there was more of it than ever comin' in, and I asked my dad if he had any suggestions what to do with it all, and he said, "You got a ring yet?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Get her one. It's time. When there's that much of that stuff comin' in, that's about the only place you can put it."

*Little beat.*

He said it'd all fit [in the ring].

*Little beat.*

And he was right.

*They look at the small box.*

That thing is a lot bigger than it looks.

*Little beat.*

So...there it is. All the love you gave me. Just not in the same... form as when you gave it.

GAYLE. Yeah.

*Beat.*

LENDALL. You still want it back?

GAYLE. Yes. I do.

LENDALL. Well, then...take it.

*Gayle is about to open the box—but, before she does, she looks at all the bags of love that are all around them and asks:*

GAYLE. Can I keep all this?

LENDALL. It's yours.

GAYLE. Thank you.

*Gayle looks at the ring box and is about to open it again—but stops.*

Lendall, you didn't have to get me a ring. That's not what I was asking.

LENDALL. Yes, I did. It's way past time. And it's honorable.

*Lendall takes the box, opens it, and shows Gayle what's inside: It's a ring—a perfect, simple engagement ring.*

*This is Magical Moment #4 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he's feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound cue could help define this magical moment.*

*The northern lights gently appear.*

GAYLE. Well...it's very beautiful.

*Lendall is very happy that Gayle thinks the ring is beautiful.*

*And then he takes the ring out of the box, and, with a bit of fanfare, gets down on one knee, and puts the ring on Gayle's finger.*

*Little beat.*

Oh, Lendall—... I'm so sorry. It's just—I was at Sandrine's bachelorette party, >

LENDALL. I know...

GAYLE. and she and Martin are already gettin' married *already*, and that got me thinkin' about us, >

LENDALL. Shh.

GAYLE. and then I talked to Marvalyn, and she // said that how quiet you got was [a big red flag]—

LENDALL. Shh.

*Lendall quiets Gayle with a kiss.*

*And then he hugs her.*

*Music.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*Lendall and Gayle might now be wondering how they will ever recount the story of how they got engaged.*

*That'll be tricky.*

*But it's a problem for another time.*

*For now, things are okay as the lights fade on these two small people—in love and in a little pain—hugging it out underneath a big, spectacular, starlit northern night sky.*

*Maybe Gayle can't help but take a good look at that ring...*

*As the lights fade to black.*

## **End of Act One**

*Intermission*

*Eventually we move to what I'm calling the...*

## INTERLOGUE

*It's about ten minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*We are exactly where we left off in the "Prologue."*

*Pete appears stage left—exactly where we last saw him: looking off left to where Ginette exited, occasionally looking at his snowball, and always pondering the consequences of having shared his theory of what it means to be "close" with the girl he loves.*

*Eventually, Pete makes his way back to his seat on the bench, all the while focused on where Ginette went.*

*Pete sits in silence, still pondering.*

*He stares at his snowball.*

*And then he looks off to where Ginette went.*

*And then he looks at his snowball.*

*And then off to where Ginette went.*

*And then at his snowball.*

*And he wonders what he's done.*

*And then he rises and takes a few uncertain steps toward where Ginette exited, looking to see where she went, and wondering where she's gone.*

*Music.*

*Pete fades from view, and we TRANSITION into...*

## ACT TWO

### Scene 5: They Fell (Male Version)<sup>6</sup>

*Music fades.*

*It's a few minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*Randy and Chad—two “County Boys”<sup>7</sup>—appear.*

*They are in a potato field.*

*Each carries his own cooler (the coolers will eventually serve as stools), and each is drinking a bottle (or can) of Natural Light beer.*

*Randy and Chad are mid-conversation.*

RANDY. All I'm sayin'—

CHAD. No—

RANDY. All I'm *sayin'* is that it was bad, Chad!

CHAD. No: No way it was as bad as mine.

RANDY. Chad! It was *bad!* >

CHAD. But—

RANDY. *Real bad!*

CHAD. But—

RANDY. *Badder-than-it's-ever-been bad!*

CHAD. I believe you, but—

RANDY. *Baddest-date-ever bad!*

6 In the original published version of *Almost, Maine*, “They Fell” is a scene for two men. Transport Group’s 2014 revival of *Almost, Maine* was the first to present the male and female versions of “They Fell” in rotating rep. The female version of “They Fell” immediately follows the male version, and should, ideally, be presented in rotating rep with the male version of the scene.

7 A “County Boy” is a man who was born and raised in Aroostook (uh-ROO-stick) County, the northernmost county in Maine and the largest county east of the Rocky Mountains. To be a “County Boy” is a source of pride.

CHAD. Yeah, well, I'm just sayin'—

RANDY. Chad! It was *historical* bad!!

CHAD. I hear ya, b//ut—

RANDY. But you're not *listenin'*! // It was *epical bad*!

CHAD. No, *you're* not listenin', (*Exploding—topping Randy.*)  
'CAUSE I'M TRYIN' TO TELL YOU THAT I HAD A PRETTY  
BAD TIME MYSELF!!!

*Little beat.*

RANDY. No. There's no way it was // worse than mine!

CHAD. (*Topping Randy again.*) It was pretty bad, Randy.

RANDY. Really.

CHAD. Yeah.

RANDY. Okay: Go. [Let's hear it.]

*Randy opens his cooler, drops his empty beer bottle (or can) in it, gets himself another beer, pops it open, closes the cooler, takes a seat on it, and offers Chad the proverbial floor.*

CHAD. (*This is a little painful.*) She—... She said she didn't like the way I smelled.

RANDY. What?

CHAD. Sally told me she didn't like the way I smelled. Never has.

RANDY. (*Taking this in.*) Sally Dunleavy<sup>8</sup> told you that she didn't // like the way [you smelled]—...?

CHAD. Yeah.

RANDY. When?

CHAD. When I picked her up. She got in the truck, we're backin' outta her driveway, and all of a sudden, she starts breathin' hard and asks me to stop, and she got outta the truck and said she was sorry, but she couldn't go out with me, because she didn't like the way I smelled, never has.

RANDY. What?!?

CHAD. Said she thought she was gonna be able to *overlook* it—the way that I smelled—but that that wasn't gonna be possible after all,

<sup>8</sup> Pronounced, "DUN-luv-ee."

and she slammed the door on me and left me sittin' right there in her driveway.

RANDY. (*Taking this in.*) 'Cause she didn't like the way you smelled?

CHAD. Yeah.

RANDY. Well what kinda—...?

*Little beat.*

I don't mind the way you smell.

CHAD. Thanks.

RANDY. Jeez.

CHAD. Yeah...

*Little beat.*

Told you it was bad.

RANDY. More than bad, Chad. That's sad.

CHAD. Yeah.

*Little beat.*

So, I'm guessin' I'm the big winner tonight, huh? So...I get to pick tomorrow, and I pick bowlin'. We'll go bowlin', supper at the Snowmobile Club, coupla beers at the Moose Paddy, and just hang out.

*Little beat.*

RANDY. I didn't say you're the big winner.

CHAD. What?

RANDY. Did I say you're the big winner?

CHAD. No, but [there's no way you can beat bein' told you smell bad]—

RANDY. No. All that's pretty sad, Chad, and bad, but you didn't win.

CHAD. What do you mean?

RANDY. You didn't win.

CHAD. You can beat bein' told you smelled bad?

RANDY. Yeah.

CHAD. Well, then... [Let's hear it.]

*Chad opens his cooler, drops his empty beer bottle (or can) in it, gets himself another beer, pops it open, closes the cooler, takes a seat on it, and offers Randy the proverbial floor.*

RANDY. (*This is tough to share.*) Mine's face broke.

CHAD. What?

RANDY. Her face broke.

CHAD. (*Trying to comprehend.*) Her f//ace [broke]—...?

RANDY. Her face broke, dude, yeah, how many times I gotta say it? Only get one chance with a girl like Yvonne LaFrance<sup>9</sup> ...and her face broke.

*Little beat.*

Told you it was bad.

*Little beat.*

CHAD. How did her face break?

RANDY. When we were dancin'.

CHAD. *DANCIN'?*

*Randy and Chad don't dance.*

RANDY. Yup.

CHAD. (*Mocking Randy.*) Why were you *dancin'?!?*

RANDY. (*Quashing the mockery.*) 'Cause that's what she wanted to do! On our date! So I took her! Took her dancin' down to the Rec Center. You pay, then you get a lesson, then you dance all night. They teach "together dancin'"—how to dance together—and we learned that thing where you throw the girl up and over, and Yvonne—well, she's pretty small...and I'm pretty strong. And, well, I threw her up and over, and, well...I threw her *over...over.*

*Little beat.*

And she landed on her face.

*Little beat.*

And it broke.

*Beat.*

Had to take her to the emergency room.

<sup>9</sup> Pronounced, "ee-VON la-FRANTZ." LaFrance rhymes with "ants."

*Long beat.*

*Then, finally:*

CHAD. That's a drive.

RANDY. Thirty-eight miles.

CHAD. Yup.

RANDY. (*Disgusted.*) And she *cried!*

CHAD. (*Also disgusted.*) [I] Hate that.

RANDY. The whole way!

*Little beat.*

*Then* asked me to call her old boyfriend to come get her!

CHAD. Oh, no.

RANDY. He did! Asked me to "please leave."

*Little beat.*

He's [as] small as she is.

*They laugh.*

*And then maybe the guys fall into a sadness.*

*Then, Chad laughs—at the ridiculousness of it all.*

What?

CHAD. That's just—pretty bad.

RANDY. Yup.

CHAD. And sad.

RANDY. Yup.

CHAD. So...I guess you win.

RANDY. Yup!

CHAD. That right there might make you the big winner of all time!

RANDY. Yup!

CHAD. "Baddest-date-guy" of all time!

RANDY. Yup!

CHAD. Congratulations!

RANDY. Thank you!

CHAD. So what do you pick tomorrow?

RANDY. Bowlin', supper at the Snowmobile Club, coupla beers at the Moose Paddy, hang out.

CHAD. Good.

*Randy and Chad air-toast and then chug their beers simultaneously.*

*And then probably belch.*

*Little beat.*

*Maybe they fall into some sadness.*

*And then Chad laughs again.*

RANDY. What?

CHAD. I don't know. Just sometimes...I don't know why I bother goin' "out." I don't like it, Randy. I hate it. I hate goin' out on these dates. I mean, why do I wanna spend my Friday night with some girl I might *maybe* like, when I could be spendin' it hangin' out with someone I *know* I like, like you, you know?

RANDY. Yeah.

CHAD. I mean...that was rough tonight. In the middle of Sally tellin' me how she didn't like the way I smelled... I got real sad, >

RANDY. Aw, buddy...

CHAD. and all I could think about was how not much in this world makes me feel good or makes much sense anymore, and I got really scared, 'cause there's gotta be somethin' that makes you feel good or at least makes sense in this world, or what's the point, right? >

RANDY. Yeah.

CHAD. But then I kinda came out of bein' sad and actually felt okay, 'cause I realized that there *is* one thing in this world that makes me feel really good and that *does* make sense, and it's you.

*Long beat.*

*Chad is surprised—and mortified—by the string of words that just came tumbling out of his mouth.*

*And everything stops.*

*Chad isn't quite sure what he has just said.*

*Randy isn't quite sure what he has just heard.*

*Long, long beat of these guys sorting out what Chad just said and what Randy just heard.*

*Finally, Randy extricates himself from the extremely awkward and strange and uncomfortable situation he finds himself in, and he starts to leave.*

RANDY. Well, I'm gonna head. >

CHAD. Yeah...

RANDY. *(Disengaging from Chad.)* I gotta work in the mornin'...

CHAD. Well, I'm just supervisin' first shift at the mill, so I can pick you up any time after three—

RANDY. Oh, I don't know, Chad: Me and Lendall, we got a long day tomorrow—we're still catchin' up, fixin' roofs from all the snow in December., Gotta do Marvalyn and Eric's, and—

CHAD. Well, four // or five? Six or seven?

RANDY. Prolly busy all day, I don't know when we'll be // done.

CHAD. Well, you just // say when—

RANDY. I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, // so—

CHAD. Well, I'll be ready whenever // you want me to come pick ya up—

RANDY. Hey-hey-HEY!!

*Randy makes it clear that there will be no more discussion on the matter.*

*After a little beat, he says:*

I'll see ya later!

CHAD. Yeah.

RANDY. Yeah.

*Randy starts to go again.*

CHAD. Yeah-yeah-yeah...

*Chad watches Randy go, and then calls to him.*

Hey, Randy!—

*Randy stops and turns to Chad, and, when their eyes meet, Chad suddenly and completely—and almost in slow motion—falls down.*

*His fall should be more of a crumple than a fall.*

*Love is often described, after all, as making people weak in the knees.*

*And the knees should hit the ground first, then the body, and, finally, the face.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as Magical Moment #5, Part One.*

*[Note: Eye contact is what initiates Chad's fall—and all falls that follow.]*

RANDY. Whoa!

*Randy rushes over to Chad, trying to figure out what just happened.*

Chad! What the [heck happened]—? You okay?

CHAD. Yeah [no]—

RANDY. What the [heck happened]—? Here.

*Randy helps Chad up.*

CHAD. Thanks. Um—

RANDY. What was that? You okay? What just happened there?

CHAD. *(Trying to figure out what just happened.)* Um...I just fell.

RANDY. Well, I figured that out.

CHAD. No [it's more than me just falling]—... I just [fell in love with you]—...

*Little beat.*

I think—... I think I just fell in love with you there, Randy.

*Chad's eyes meet Randy's as he says this, and he crumples to the ground again.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as Magical Moment #5, Part Two.*

RANDY. Chad!

CHAD. Whoa...

CHAD. *(On the ground, face-planted.)* Yup.

*Chad slowly gets himself up.*

That's what that was. Me fallin' in love with you...

*As soon as Chad gets himself upright, his eyes meet Randy's*

*again, and he crumples to the ground again.*

RANDY. (*Trying to figure out what the heck is happening.*) Chad: What are you doin'? Come on, get up!

*Randy gets Chad up, roughly.*

CHAD. No-no-no, Randy! [I'm just gonna fall down again—]

*Chad's eyes meet Randy's again, and the moment that they do, he crumples to the ground again.*

RANDY. (*Fiercely.*) Would you cut that out?!?

CHAD. (*Fiercely right back, and from the ground.*) Well, I can't help it!! It just kinda came over me!! I've fallen in love with ya, here!!

*Randy takes this in.*

*And is confused.*

*And scared.*

*After a long beat, he says:*

RANDY. Chad: I'm your best buddy in the whole world...and I don't quite know what you're doin' or what you're goin' on about... but (*Furious—explore the possibility that Randy might beat Chad up.*) what the heck is your problem?!? What the heck are you doin'?!? Jeezum Crow, you're my best friend!

CHAD. Yeah—

RANDY. *YEAH!* And that's a thing you don't mess with! And you messed with it! And you don't *do* that!

*Randy starts to go but stops and charges right back over to Chad, because he's not done yet.*

'Cause, you know somethin'? You're about the only thing that feels really good and makes sense in this world to me, too, and then you go and foul it up, by doin' *this* [falling down] and tellin' me *that* [that you've fallen in love with me], and now it just doesn't make any sense at all! And it doesn't feel *good*!

*Randy starts to go again, but stops again, because he's still not done yet.*

You've done a real number on a good thing, here, buddy, 'cause we're friends, and there's a *line* when you're friends that you can't cross! And you *crossed* it!

*And then Randy's eyes meet Chad's...and Randy—suddenly and completely and almost in slow motion—falls down, crumpling to the ground, just like Chad did.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as the culmination of Magical Moment #5 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #4, when Gayle sees her engagement ring and Lendall proposes to her...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he's feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian... which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*The northern lights appear.*

*Randy and Chad try to figure out what the heck is happening to them.*

*Whatever it is, it's about as scary—and wonderful—as it gets. Problem: Randy and Chad are far away from each other, and all they want to do is get close to each other, so they stand up so they can make their way toward one another.*

*When they are upright, they look to one another, but as soon as their eyes meet, they crumple to the ground again.*

*Beat.*

*Bewilderment.*

*Then they scramble to get up again and look to each other again, but as soon as their eyes meet, they crumple to the ground again.*

*Beat.*

*Randy and Chad desperately want to get close to each other, so—in a bit of a frenzy (in order to “beat” the falls)—they get up again, but as soon as their eyes meet, they fall down again.*

*After a little beat, they get up again, and their eyes meet again—and they fall down again.*

*Frustrated and bewildered, they get up again, and their eyes meet again—and they fall down again.*

*Again, they get up, and their eyes meet, and they fall down.*

*They get up/their eyes meet/they fall down.*

*They get up/their eyes meet/they fall down/they get up/their eyes meet/they fall down.*

*Finally, the falling frenzy settles...and Randy and Chad are no closer to one another than they were when they started.*

*They just look at each other.*

*It's all scary and thrilling and unknown.*

*Music.*

*Maybe they start crawling on their bellies toward one another and reach for one another.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

## Scene 5: They Fell (Female Version)

*Music fades.*

*It's a few minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*Deena and Shelly—two “County Girls”<sup>10</sup>—appear.*

*They are in a potato field.*

*Each carries her own cooler (the coolers will eventually serve as stools) and each is drinking a bottle (or can) of Natural Light beer.*

*Deena and Shelly are mid-conversation.*

DEENA. All I'm sayin'—

SHELLY. No—

DEENA. All I'm *sayin'* is that it was bad, Shell!

SHELLY. No: No way it was as bad as mine.

DEENA. Shell! It was bad! >

SHELLY. But—

DEENA. *Real bad!*

SHELLY. But—

DEENA. *Badder-than-it's-ever-been bad!*

SHELLY. I believe you—

DEENA. *Baddest-date-ever bad!*

SHELLY. I hear ya, b//ut—

DEENA. But you're not *listenin'*, // Shell: It was *bad!*

SHELLY. Deen—no! *You're* not *listenin'*, // 'cause—

DEENA. Like *epical-monumental-historical bad!*

SHELLY. (*Exploding—and topping Deena.*) WELL, I'M TRYIN' TO TELL YOU THAT I HAD A PRETTY BAD TIME MYSELF!!!

*Little beat.*

10 A “County Girl” is a woman who was born and raised in Aroostook (uh-ROO-stick) County, the northernmost county in Maine and the largest county east of the Rocky Mountains. To be a “County Girl” is a source of pride.

DEENA. No. There's no way it was // worse than mine!

SHELLY. It was pretty bad, Deen.

DEENA. Really.

SHELLY. Yeah.

DEENA. Okay: Go. [Let's hear it.]

*Deena opens her cooler, drops her empty beer bottle (or can) in it, gets herself another beer, pops it open, closes the cooler, takes a seat on it, and offers Shelly the proverbial floor.*



SHELLY. (*This is a little painful.*) He—... He said he didn't like the way I smelled.

DEENA. What?!?

SHELLY. Todd told me he didn't like the way I smelled. Never has.

DEENA. (*Taking this in.*) Todd *Dunleavy*<sup>11</sup> told you that he didn't // like the way [you smelled]—...?

SHELLY. Yeah.

DEENA. When?

SHELLY. When he picked me up. I got in his truck—we were backin' outta my driveway—and all of a sudden, he starts breathin' hard—hyper-hyper— (*Searches for but can't find "ventilating."*) // breathin'—

DEENA. (*Finds the word Shelly can't find.*) —ventilating.

SHELLY. —ventilating, yeah, and he stops and he gets outta the truck and says he's sorry, but he can't go out with me 'cause he doesn't like the way I smell, never has!

DEENA. What, never has? When has he smelled you before?

SHELLY. I don't know, around town or whatever.

DEENA. Well, jeez!

SHELLY. Anyway, he said he thought he was gonna be able to overlook it—the way that I smelled—but that that wasn't gonna be possible after all, because he couldn't breathe, somethin' about allergic, >

DEENA. Allergic?

11 Pronounced, "DUN-luv-ee."

SHELLY. and he said it wasn't *me*—it wasn't *me!*—it was somethin' about “the women” and “the // lengths” we go to—

DEENA. What?, “The women”?!?

SHELLY. Yeah, and “the lengths” we go to to // smell nice, >

DEENA. “The *lengths*” we [go to to smell nice]—?!?

SHELLY. and he said that whatever it is I use to smell nice just was too sweet-smellin' for him, he said—

DEENA. Oh!, Like, *perfume!* // Oh!

SHELLY. Yeah—and just doesn't smell very nice to him, “no offense,” and he slammed the door on me and left me sittin' right there in my driveway. In his truck.

DEENA. (*Taking this in.*) 'Cause he didn't like the way you smelled?!?

SHELLY. Yeah.

DEENA. Wait, you don't even use any kind of perfume, do you?

SHELLY. No! // No!

DEENA. That's just how you smell, right?

SHELLY. I don't know, I don't smell myself.

DEENA. Well...what the [heck is his problem]—...I think you smell great.

SHELLY. Thanks.

*Little beat.*

Anyway, he said he'd come back and pick his truck up tomorrow and would I mind please rollin' down the windows for him to air it out overnight.

DEENA. What? There's nothin' to air *out!* >

SHELLY. I know!

DEENA. Todd has issues!

SHELLY. Yeah.

*Little beat.*

*Suddenly Deena starts to leave, with purpose.*

What are you doin'?

DEENA. Doin' somethin' to his truck.

SHELLY. Deen!

DEENA. (*Grabbing Shelly.*) Come on! We're doin' somethin' to his truck. >

SHELLY. Deen—no!

DEENA. You're too nice! Time to get mean! We're doin' somethin' to his truck!

SHELLY. Deen! >

DEENA. *We are!*

SHELLY. We're not doin' nothin' to his truck!! Relax!!

*Deena calms down and sits back down on her cooler.*

DEENA. Jerk. He should be so lucky, gettin' to go out with you.

SHELLY. Nah.

DEENA. Yeah!

SHELLY. Anyway: Pretty bad, huh?

DEENA. Yeah. And a little sad, too.

SHELLY. Yeah.

*Little beat.*

So, I'm guessin' that I'm the big winner tonight, huh?, And so I get to pick tomorrow, and I pick bowlin'. We'll go bowlin', supper at the Snowmobile Club, couple of beers at the Moose Paddy, hang out.

*Little beat.*

DEENA. I didn't say you're the big winner.

SHELLY. What?

DEENA. Did I say you're the big winner?

SHELLY. No, but [there's no way you can beat bein' told you smell bad]—

DEENA. No. All that's pretty sad, Shell, and bad, but you didn't win.

SHELLY. What do you mean?

DEENA. You didn't win.

SHELLY. You can beat being told that you smell bad?

DEENA. Yeah.

SHELLY. Really.

DEENA. Yeah.

SHELLY. Well, then: [Let's hear it.]

*Shelly opens her cooler, drops her empty beer bottle (or can) in it, gets herself another beer, pops it open, closes the cooler, takes a seat on it, and offers Deena the proverbial floor.*

DEENA. Mine's face broke.

SHELLY. *(Taking this in.)* What?

DEENA. His face broke.

SHELLY. *(Trying to comprehend.)* His [face broke]—...?

DEENA. Face broke, Shell, his face broke, how many times are ya gonna make me say it?

SHELLY. Sorry.

*Little beat.*

DEENA. Told you it was bad.

*Beat.*

SHELLY. How did his...face break?

DEENA. When we were dancin'.

SHELLY. *Dancin'?* Darren LeMans<sup>12</sup> took you *dancin'?!?!?*

DEENA. Yeah.

SHELLY. Down to the Rec Center?!?

DEENA. Yeah.

SHELLY. Oh, that's nice! // That's nice! >

DEENA. Yeah.

SHELLY. What a good guy! >

DEENA. Yeah.

SHELLY. I wouldn't have expected that from him!, Wish someone'd take me dancin'!, Musta been so *fun!*

DEENA. Yeah, [it] was. Till his face broke.

SHELLY. Yeah. Well, what happened?

DEENA. Well, we did that thing they have where you pay, you get

<sup>12</sup> Pronounced, "luh-MANZ." LaMans rhymes with the word "fans."

a lesson, and then you dance all night. They teach “together dancin,” how to dance together.

SHELLY. Aww, that’s nice!, That’s fun!

DEENA. Yeah, and we learned that thing where you throw the girl up and over and...well, Darren was havin’ a hard time figuring out the move—how to do it—and it’s so *easy*—and so I thought maybe it’d help him get his part if—once through—we switched, and I did his part, and he did mine...and, well, Darren’s not a very big guy. I mean, he’s little. Little, little man.

SHELLY. He is, isn’t he?

DEENA. Yeah. Never realized it before. He sounds taller on the phone.

SHELLY. He does!

DEENA. Yeah, so—anyway—we *switched* so I could show him how to do his part...and, well, I’m pretty strong, and...he’s just *small*.

SHELLY. He really *is*, isn’t he?

DEENA. Yeah—and I threw him up and over...and, well, I threw him *over...over*. And...he landed on his face.

*Little beat.*

And it broke.

*Little beat.*

Ocular—orbital—bone fracture.

SHELLY. Oh.

*Beat.*

DEENA. Had to take him to the emergency room.

*Long beat.*

*Then, finally:*

SHELLY. That’s a drive.

DEENA. Thirty-eight miles.

SHELLY. Yup.

DEENA. (*Disgusted.*) And he *cried*.

SHELLY. Oh, no...

DEENA. The whole way.

*Little beat.*

Asked me to call his *mom* to come get him.

SHELLY. Seriously?!?

DEENA. Yeah. And she *did*. Asked me to “please leave.”

SHELLY. Aw, Deen, I’m sorry!

DEENA. It’s all right. He was a lousy dancer.

SHELLY. Most of ’em are.

DEENA. Yeah.

*Deena and Shelly laugh at the ridiculousness of Deena’s evening.*

*And then maybe they fall into some sadness.*

*And then Shelly laughs again.*

What?

SHELLY. That’s just—pretty bad.

DEENA. Yup.

SHELLY. And sad.

DEENA. Yup. So...I’m guessin’ I win!

SHELLY. Oh—yeah—no question, no question! That right there might make you the big winner of all time!

DEENA. Yup!

SHELLY. “Baddest-date-girl” of all time!

DEENA. Yup!

SHELLY. Congratulations!

DEENA. Thank you!

SHELLY. So what do you pick tomorrow?

DEENA. Bowlin’, supper at the Snowmobile Club, coupla beers at the Moose Paddy, hang out.

SHELLY. Sounds good.

*Deena and Shelly air-toast and then chug their beers simultaneously.*

*Beat.*

*Maybe they fall into some more sadness.*

*Then Shelly laughs again.*

DEENA. What?

SHELLY. Oh, Deen, I don't know. Just sometimes...I don't know why I bother goin' "out." I mean—I know *why*—it's 'cause you gotta go out, but I'm scared 'cause I've been *goin'* out and nothin's *comin'* of it, you know?, And I feel like I'm runnin' outta chances, >

DEENA. Don't say that, don't say that—

SHELLY. and lately I've been wonderin' why I even have to bother... *goin'* out. I mean—I don't like it, Deena. I hate it. I hate goin' out on these *dates*. I mean, why do I wanna spend my Friday night hangin' out with some guy I might *maybe* like, when I could be spendin' it hangin' out with someone I *know* I like, like you, you know? >

DEENA. Yeah.

SHELLY. I mean...that was rough tonight. In the middle of Todd tellin' me how he didn't like the way I smelled—I mean, he doesn't smell all that great!

DEENA. Not many of 'em do!

SHELLY. Yeah!, And, well—anyway—I got so sad.

DEENA. Aw, but it wasn't you, // it wasn't you!

SHELLY. I know, I know, but after he said *that* [that I smelled bad], all I could think about was how not much in this world makes me feel good lately or makes much sense anymore, and I got really scared, Deen, 'cause there's gotta be somethin'—at this stage of the game—there's gotta be somethin' that makes you feel good or at least makes sense in this world, or what's the point, right?

DEENA. Yeah...

SHELLY. But then I kinda came out of feeling sad, and I actually felt okay, 'cause I realized that there *is* somethin'—at this stage of the game—there *is* one thing in this world that makes me feel really good and that *does* make sense, and it's you, it's always been you.

*Beat.*

*Shelly is a bit surprised—and mortified—by the string of words that just came tumbling out of her mouth.*

DEENA. (*Trying to figure out if she heard what she thought she just heard.*) Huh?

SHELLY. (*Trying to cover.*) Nothin’

*But it’s too late.*

*It’s quiet and still.*

*Shelly isn’t quite sure what she has just said.*

*Deena isn’t quite sure what she has just heard.*

*Long, long beat of these two sorting out what Shelly just said  
and what Deena just heard.*

*And then Deena extricates herself from the extremely awkward  
and strange and uncomfortable situation she finds  
herself in and starts to leave.*

DEENA. Okay, well, I should get goin’ home, Shell. The cats get lonely lately.

SHELLY. Yeah... Well, I’m only goin’ in to the mill early tomorrow., Just got some maintenance issues to resolve. [I] Bet I’ll be done before noon, so I can pick you up...lunchtime?

DEENA. Yeah—no—I // don’t think [I wanna do much of anything tomorrow]—

SHELLY. Oh! They got the craft fair goin’ at church, maybe we could hit that before // bowlin’—

DEENA. Oh, I don’t know, ’cause, you know what?, I kinda forgot, Shell: I’ve got a big day tomorrow. >

SHELLY. Well—

DEENA. I gotta be up at the crack o’crack to open the salon: We’re doin’ Sandrine St. Pierre’s wedding tomorrow., [I’m] Doin’ the bride’s hair and the bridesmaids’ hair and the moms’ hair and all the makeup and the nails, and I might // not be up for anything afterwards—

SHELLY. Well, I’ll come get ya whenever you’re done, like we planned—

DEENA. Mmm...prolly gonna be busy all day., We might have to do touch-ups for the wedding pictures, I don’t know when we’ll be // done, you know?

SHELLY. Well, we could skip bowlin’ and just do supper at the Snowmobile // Club.

DEENA. And I'm gonna be really exhausted, so, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know // so—

SHELLY. Well, I'll be ready whenever // you want me to come pick ya up—

DEENA. Hey-hey, Shell: Maybe we oughtta just give it a couple days and see when we both have the time, and we'll make a plan, okay?

SHELLY. Well, the craft fair's only // this weekend, so—

DEENA. Yeah, you know what?, You know what?, You know what, Shell?: I'm gonna head.

*Deena makes clear that the discussion is over.*

*And then checks to make sure everything is okay with her and her best friend.*

*(Brightly.)* Okay?

SHELLY. Okay.

DEENA. *(Making sure/insisting that everything is okay.)* Okay?

SHELLY. Okay.

DEENA. *(Making like everything's okay.)* Okay!

SHELLY. Okay!

DEENA. Okay! Bye!

*Deena starts to go again.*

SHELLY. Bye!

*Shelly watches Deena go, and then calls to her.*

Hey, Deena!

*Deena stops, turns to Shelly, and when her eyes meet Shelly's, Shelly suddenly and completely—and almost in slow motion—falls down.*

*This should be more of a crumple than a fall.*

*Love is often described, after all, as making people weak in the knees.*

*And the knees should hit the ground first, then the body, and, finally, the face.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as Magical Moment #5, Part One.*

*[Note: Eye contact is what initiates Shelly's fall—and all falls that follow.]*

DEENA. Whoa!

*Deena rushes to Shelly, trying to figure out what just happened.*

Shell, hey! What [happened]—? You okay?

SHELLY. Yeah [no]...

DEENA. What the [heck happened]—? Here.

*Deena helps Shelly up.*

SHELLY. Thanks. Um—

DEENA. What was that? You okay? What just happened there?

SHELLY. *(Trying to figure out what's going on.)* Umm...I just fell.

DEENA. Well, I know, I saw.

SHELLY. No [it's more than I just fell]—... I just [fell in love with you]—...

*Little beat.*

I think I just fell in love with you, there, Deena.

*As Shelly says this, her eyes meet Deena's, and she crumples to the ground again.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as Magical Moment #5, Part Two.*

DEENA. Shelly!

SHELLY. Oh, boy...

SHELLY. *(On the ground, face-planted.)* Yup.

*Shelly slowly gets herself up.*

That's what that was. Me falling in love with you...

*As soon as Shelly is upright, her eyes meet Deena's again, and she crumples to the ground again.*

DEENA. Shelly: What are you doing? Come on, get up!

*Deena helps Shelly up.*

SHELLY. No-no-no, Deena [I'm just gonna fall down again]—

*Shelly's eyes meet Deena's again, and the moment they do, she crumples to the ground again.*

DEENA. Would you cut that out?!?

SHELLY. Well, I can't help it!! It just kinda came over me!! I've fallen in love with you, Deen!

*Deena takes this in.*

*And is confused.*

*And scared.*

*After a long beat, she says:*

DEENA. Shelly: I'm your best friend in the whole world...and I don't quite know what you're doin' or what you're goin' on about... but (*Angry.*) —what are you talking about?!? What are you *saying*?  
Shell: You're my best friend, >

SHELLY. Yeah—

DEENA. and that's—... I love that! But—I don't [understand why you just said what you just said]—. I mean—yeah, it's true: You're about the only thing that feels really good and makes sense in this world to me, too. You keep me from feelin' like I'm gonna become that crazy cat lady—but now, what you've *done* [fallen down] and what you've *said* [that you've fallen in love with me], well, it makes me feel for sure like I'm gonna become that crazy cat lady 'cause me-and-my-best-friend-in-the-whole-wide-world doesn't make sense at all right now. And that doesn't feel good. And I think I'm really mad at you! 'Cause you can't go back! Once it's out there, you can't take it back—something like that—and now it's just hanging there, and what do you *mean*?!? We're *friends*! >

SHELLY. Yeah...

DEENA. *Best friends*! >

SHELLY. Yeah!

DEENA. And there's a line when you're friends that you can't cross! And you crossed it!

*And then Deena's eyes meet Shelly's...and Deena—suddenly, completely, and almost in slow motion—falls down, crumpling to the ground, just like Shelly did.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as the culmination of Magical Moment #5 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #4, when Gayle sees her engagement ring and Lendall proposes to her...*

*which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he's feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it —and Glory sees the northern lights). The northern lights appear.*

*Deena and Shelly try to figure out what the heck is happening to them.*

*Whatever it is, it's about as scary—and wonderful—as it gets. Problem: Deena and Shelly are far away from each other, and all they want to do is get close to each other, so they stand up so they can make their way to one another.*

*When they are upright, they look to each other, but as soon as their eyes meet, they crumple to the ground again.*

*Beat.*

*Bewilderment.*

*Then they scramble to get up again and look to one another again, but as soon as their eyes meet, they crumple to the ground again.*

*Beat.*

*Deena and Shelly desperately want to get close to each other, so—in a bit of a frenzy (in order to “beat” the falls)—they get up again, but as soon as their eyes meet, they fall down again.*

*After a little beat, they get up again, and their eyes meet again—and they fall down again.*

*Frustrated and bewildered, they get up again, and their eyes meet again, and they fall down again.*

*Again, they get up, and their eyes meet, and they fall down.*

*They get up/their eyes meet/they fall down.*

*They get up/their eyes meet/they fall down/they get up/their eyes meet/they fall down.*

*Finally, the falling frenzy settles...and Deena and Shelly are no closer to one another than they were when they started.*

*They just look at each other.*

*It's all scary and thrilling and unknown.*

*Music.*

*Maybe they started crawling on their bellies toward one another, hands outstretched.*

*And the northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

**ALTERNATE VERSION OF SCENE 5, “THEY FELL”**

Some have expressed concern that Scene 5, “They Fell” is inappropriate for high school actors and audiences.

I respect this concern and offer this alternate version of “Seeing the Thing,” which makes it a scene between a boy and a girl.

**Scene 5: They Fell**

**(Alternate Version)<sup>7</sup>**

*Music fades.*

*It’s a few minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*Randi and Chad—two “County Kids”<sup>8</sup>—appear.*

*They are in a potato field.*

*Each carries their own cooler (the coolers will eventually serve as stools), and each is drinking a bottle (or can) of Barq’s root beer.*

*Randi and Chad are mid-conversation.*

RANDI: All I’m sayin’—

CHAD: No—

RANDI: All I’m sayin’ is that it was bad, Chad!

CHAD: No: No way it was as bad as mine.

RANDI: Chad! It was bad! >

CHAD: But—

RANDI: *Real bad!*

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<sup>7</sup> In the original published version of *Almost, Maine*, “They Fell” is a scene for two men. The Tennessee Women’s Theatre Project was the first company to present the female version of “They Fell.” Transport Group’s 2014 Off Broadway revival of *Almost, Maine* was the first to present the male and female versions of “They Fell” in rotating rep. Both of the male and female versions of this scene are available in the Fourth Revised Edition of the play.

<sup>8</sup> A “County Kid” is someone who was born and raised in Aroostook (uh-ROO-stick) County, the northernmost county in Maine and the largest county east of the Rocky Mountains. To be a “County Kid” is a source of pride.

CHAD: But—

RANDI: Badder-than-it's-ever-*been* bad!

CHAD: I believe you, but—

RANDI: Baddest-date-*ever* bad!

CHAD: I hear ya, b//ut—

RANDI: But you're not *listenin'*, // Chad: It was *bad!*

CHAD: Randi—no! *You're* not listenin', // 'cause—

RANDI: Like epic-monumental-*historical* bad!

CHAD: (*Exploding—and topping Randi.*) WELL, I'M TRYIN' TO TELL YOU THAT I HAD A PRETTY BAD TIME MYSELF!!!

*Little beat.*

RANDI: No. There's no way it was // worse than mine!

CHAD: (*Topping Randi again.*) It was pretty bad, Randi.

RANDI: Really.

CHAD: Yeah.

RANDI: Okay: Go. [Let's hear it.]

*Randi opens her cooler, drops her empty root beer bottle (or can) in it, gets herself another root beer, pops it open, closes the cooler, takes a seat on it, and offers Chad the proverbial floor.*

CHAD: (*This is a little painful.*) She—... She said she didn't like the way I smelled.

RANDI: What?

CHAD: Sally told me she didn't like the way I smelled. Never has.

RANDI: (*Taking this in.*) Sally Dunleavy<sup>9</sup> told you that she didn't // like the way [you smelled]— ...?

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<sup>9</sup> Pronounced, "DUN-luv-ee."

CHAD: Yeah.

RANDI: When?

CHAD: When I picked her up. She got in the truck, we're backin' outta her driveway, and all of a sudden, she starts breathin' hard and asks me to stop, and she got outta the truck and said she was sorry, but she couldn't go out with me because she didn't like the way I smelled, never has! >

RANDI: What?!?

CHAD: Said she thought she was gonna be able to *overlook* it—the way that I smelled—but that that wasn't gonna be possible after all, and she slammed the door on me and left me sittin' right there in her driveway.

RANDI: (*Taking this in.*) 'Cause she didn't like the way you smelled?

CHAD: Yeah.

RANDI: Well what kinda—...?

*Little beat.*

I don't mind the way you smell.

CHAD: Thanks.

RANDI: Jeez.

CHAD: Yeah...

*Little beat.*

Told you it was bad.

RANDI: More than bad, Chad. That's sad.

CHAD: Yeah.

*Little beat.*

So, I'm guessin' I'm the big winner tonight, huh? So...I get to pick tomorrow, and I pick bowlin'. We'll go bowlin', supper at the Snowmobile Club, coupla root beers at the Moose Paddy, and just hang out.

*Little beat.*

RANDI: I didn't say you're the big winner.

CHAD: What?

RANDI: Did I say you're the big winner?

CHAD: No, but [there's no way you can beat bein' told you smell bad]—

RANDI: No. All that's pretty sad, Chad, and bad, but you didn't win.

CHAD: What do you mean?

RANDI: You didn't win.

CHAD: You can beat bein' told you smell bad?

RANDI: Yeah.

CHAD: Well, then... [Let's hear it.]

*Chad opens his cooler, drops his empty root beer bottle (or can) in it, gets himself another root beer, pops it open, closes the cooler, takes a seat on it, and offers Randi the proverbial floor.*

RANDI: *(This is tough to share.)* Mine's face broke.

CHAD: What?

RANDI: His face broke.

CHAD: *(Trying to comprehend.)* His [face broke]—...?

RANDI: His face broke, Chad, how many times I gotta say it? Finally get to go out with Darren LaFrance,<sup>10</sup> and his face breaks.

*Little beat.*

Told you it was bad.

*Little beat.*

CHAD: How did his face break?

RANDI: When we were dancin'.

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<sup>10</sup> Pronounced, "la-FRANTZ." LaFrance rhymes with "pants."

CHAD: Oh.

*Beat.*

RANDI: Had to take him to the emergency room.

*Long beat.*

*Then, finally:*

CHAD: That's a drive.

RANDI: Thirty-eight miles.

CHAD: Yup.

RANDI: *(Disgusted.)* And he *cried!*

CHAD: *(Also disgusted.)* [I] Hate that.

RANDI: The whole way!

*Little beat.*

*Then* asked me to call his old girlfriend to come get him!

CHAD: Oh, no.

RANDI: She did! Asked me to "please leave."

*Little beat.*

She's even smaller than he is.

*They laugh.*

*And then maybe they fall into a sadness.*

*Then, Chad laughs—at the ridiculousness of it all.*

What?

CHAD: That's just—pretty bad.

RANDI: Yup.

CHAD: And sad.

RANDI: Yup.

CHAD: So...I guess you win.

RANDI: Yup!

CHAD: That right there might make you the big winner of all time!

RANDI: Yup!

CHAD: Baddest date of all time!

RANDI: Yup!

CHAD: Congratulations!

RANDI: Thank you!

CHAD: So what do you pick tomorrow?

RANDI: Bowlin', supper at the Snowmobile Club, coupla root beers at the Moose Paddy, hang out.

CHAD: Good.

*Randi and Chad air-toast and then chug their root beers simultaneously.*

*Little beat.*

*Maybe they fall into some sadness.*

*And then Chad laughs again.*

RANDI: What?

CHAD: I don't know. Just sometimes...I don't know why I bother goin' "out." I don't like it, Randi. I hate it. I hate goin' out on these dates. I mean, why do I wanna spend my Friday night with some girl I might *maybe* like, when I could be spendin' it hangin' out with someone I *know* I like, like you, you know?

RANDI: Yeah.

CHAD: I mean...that was rough tonight. In the middle of Sally tellin' me how she didn't like the way I smelled...I got real sad, >

RANDI: Aw, buddy...

CHAD: and all I could think about was how not much in this world makes me feel good or makes much sense anymore, and I got really scared, 'cause there's gotta be something that makes you feel good or at least makes sense in this world, or what's the point, right? >

RANDI: Yeah.

CHAD: But then I kinda came out of bein' sad and actually felt okay, 'cause I realized that there *is* one thing in this world that makes me feel really good and that *does* make sense, and it's you.

*Long beat.*

*Chad is surprised—and mortified—by the string of words that just came tumbling out of his mouth.*

*And everything stops.*

*Chad isn't quite sure what he has just said.*

*Randi isn't quite sure what she has just heard.*

*Long, long beat of these kids sorting out what Chad just said and what Randi just heard.*

*Finally, Randi extricates herself from the extremely awkward and strange and uncomfortable situation she finds herself in, and she starts to leave.*

RANDI: Well, I'm gonna head. >

CHAD: Yeah...

RANDI: (*Disengaging from Chad.*) I gotta work in the mornin'...

CHAD: Well, I'm just supervisin' first shift at the mill, so I can pick you up anytime after three—

RANDI: Oh, I don't know, Chad: Me and Lendall, we got a long day tomorrow—we're still catchin' up, fixin' roofs from all the snow in November., [We] Gotta do Marvalyn and Eric's, and—

CHAD: Well, four // or five? Six or seven?

RANDI: Prolly busy all day, I don't know when we'll be // done.

CHAD: Well, you just // say when—

RANDI: I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, // so—

CHAD: Well, I'll be ready whenever // you want me to come pick ya up—

RANDI: Hey-hey-HEY!!

*Randi makes it clear that there will be no more discussion on the matter.*

*After a little beat, she says:*

I'll see ya later!

CHAD: Yeah.

RANDI: Yeah.

*Randi starts to go again.*

CHAD: Yeah-yeah-yeah...

*Chad watches Randi go, and then calls to her.*

Hey, Randi!—

*Randi stops and turns to Chad, and, when their eyes meet, Chad suddenly and completely—and almost in slow motion—falls down.*

*His fall should be more of a crumple than a fall. Love is often described, after all, as making people weak in the knees. And the knees should hit the ground first, then the body, and, finally, the face.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as Magical Moment #5, Part One.*

*{Note: Eye contact is what initiates Chad's fall—and all falls that follow.}*

RANDI: Whoa!

*Randi rushes over to Chad, trying to figure out what just happened.*

Chad! What the [heck happened]—? You okay?

CHAD: Yeah—[no]—

RANDI: What the [heck happened]—? Here.

*Randi helps Chad up.*

CHAD: Thanks. Um—

RANDI: What was that? You okay? What just happened there?

CHAD: *(Trying to figure out what just happened.)* Um...I just fell.

RANDI: Well, I figured that out.

CHAD: No [it's more than me just falling]—... I just [fell in love with you]—...

*Little beat.*

I think—... I think I just fell in love with you there, Randi.

*Chad's eyes meet Randi's as he says this, and he crumples to the ground again.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as Magical Moment #5, Part Two.*

RANDI: Chad!

CHAD: *(On the ground, face-planted.)* Yup.

*Chad slowly gets himself up.*

That's what that was. Me fallin' in love with you...

*As soon as Chad gets himself upright, his eyes meet Randi's again, and he crumples to the ground again.*

RANDI: *(Trying to figure out what the heck is happening.)* Chad: What are you doin'?'? Come on, get up!

*Randi gets Chad up, roughly.*

CHAD: No-no-no, Randi! [I'm just gonna fall down again]—

*Chad's eyes meet Randi's again, and the moment that they do, he crumples to the ground again.*

RANDI: *(Fiercely.)* Would you cut that out?!?

CHAD: (*Fiercely, right back, and from the ground.*) Well, I can't help it!! It just kinda came over me!! I've fallen in love with ya, here!!

*Randi takes this in.*

*And is confused.*

*And scared.*

*After a long beat, she says:*

RANDI: Chad: I'm your best buddy in the whole world...and I don't quite know what you're doin' or what you're goin' on about...but... (*Furious and dangerous.*) ...what the heck is your problem?!? What the heck are you *doin'*?!? Jeezum Crow, you're my best friend!

CHAD: Yeah—

RANDI: *YEAH!* And that's a thing you don't mess with! And you messed with it! And you don't *do* that!

*Randi starts to go but stops and charges right back to Chad, because she's not done yet.*

'Cause, you know somethin'? You're about the only thing that feels really good and makes sense in this world to me, too, and then you go and foul it up, by doin' *this* [falling down] and tellin' me *that* [that you've fallen in love with me], and now it just doesn't make any sense at all! And it doesn't feel *good*!

*Randi starts to go again, but stops again, because she's still not done yet.*

You've done a real number on a good thing, here, buddy, 'cause we're friends, and there's a *line* when you're friends that you can't cross! And you *crossed* it!

*And then Randi's eyes meet Chad's...and Randi—suddenly and completely and almost in slow motion—falls down, crumpling to the ground, just like Chad did.*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound effect could help define this as the culmination of Magical Moment #5 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #4, when Gayle sees her engagement ring and Lendall proposes to her...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he's feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*The northern lights appear.*

*Randi and Chad try to figure out what the heck is happening to them.*

*Whatever it is, it's about as scary—and wonderful—as it gets.*

*Problem: Randi and Chad are far away from each other, and all they want to do is get close to each other, so they stand up so they can make their way toward one another.*

*When they are upright, they look to one another, but as soon as their eyes meet, they crumple to the ground again.*

*Beat.*

*Bewilderment.*

*Then they scramble to get up again and look to each other again, but as soon as their eyes meet, they crumple to the ground again.*

*Beat.*

*Randi and Chad desperately want to get close to each other, so—in a bit of a frenzy (in order to “beat” the falls)—they get up again, but as soon as their eyes meet, they fall down again.*

*After a little beat, they get up again, and their eyes meet again—and they fall down again.*

*Frustrated and bewildered, they get up again, and their eyes meet again—and they fall down again.*

*Again, they get up, and their eyes meet, and they fall down.*

*They get up/their eyes meet/they fall down.*

*They get up/their eyes meet/they fall down/they get up/their eyes meet/they fall down.*

*Finally, the falling frenzy settles...and Randi and Chad are no closer to one another than they were when they started.*

*They just look at each other.*

*It's all scary and thrilling and unknown.*

*Music.*

*Maybe they start crawling on their bellies toward one another, and reach for one another.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

## Scene 6: Where It Went

*The music and the northern lights fade.*

*It's about ten minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*Phil and Marci appear.*

*They have just been ice skating on Echo Pond and are in the process of taking their skates off and putting their boots/shoes back on.*

*Phil has hockey skates; Marci has hockey skates or figure skates.*

*When the scene begins, Marci has one shoe on and one skate on.*

*Marci's shoe should be a winter shoe, not a boot.*

*Beat.*

PHIL. It still feels like you're mad.

MARCI. *(Undoing her skates; and she's convincing, here.)* I'm not mad, // I just said I wish—

PHIL. But you were., You *are*.

MARCI. I'm not! I just said I wish you'd pay more attention lately.

PHIL. You're mad.

MARCI. I'm not mad! I was having fun, I thought. I had fun tonight. Did you?

PHIL. Yeah.

MARCI. Good.

*Marci smiles at Phil as he undoes his skates and puts his boots on.*

*And then Marci resumes undoing her skates—but is distracted and seems to have lost something.*

*Beat.*

PHIL. *(Continuing his defense.)* I mean, I was late because Chad/Shelly<sup>13</sup> called me in to the mill. I had to work. I need the hours.

<sup>13</sup> Insert the appropriate name depending on which version of Scene 5, "They Fell," was performed.

MARCI. (*Looking for something.*) I'm not mad at you, Phil, you had to work, // I get it.

PHIL. I did [have to work]!

MARCI. (*More actively looking for something.*) Phil, where's my shoe?

PHIL. What?

MARCI. Where's my other shoe?, I can't find it.

PHIL. Well [where'd you put it when you took it off?]...

*Phil starts looking for Marci's other shoe.*

It's gotta be here.

MARCI. Where is it?!?

*Marci and Phil search for Marci's other shoe.*

*And then Marci stops searching and turns to Phil.*

Is this you being funny?

PHIL. N//o.

MARCI. 'Cause it's not funny. >

PHIL. I [never said it was]—

MARCI. It's cold out here!

PHIL. Well, you're the one that wanted to go skating!

MARCI. Phil!

PHIL. (*Frustrated and getting angry.*) We'll find it! It's gotta be here!

*Little beat.*

MARCI. I'm not mad. I was never mad.

*Little beat.*

I was disappointed. But now I'm // done.

PHIL. Marce. [Let it go.]

MARCI. I had fun tonight! Skating! I thought it would be fun! >

PHIL. (*Lying.*) It was.

MARCI. Forget all the...stuff. Get us away from the kids, get us back to where we used to be. We went skating, first time you kissed me, you know, on a Friday night just like this one. 'Member? Right here...

*Marci touches Phil in some way—maybe on the back.*

Echo Pond.

PHIL. (*Shrugging off Marci's touch.*) I know where we are., Where the heck is your shoe? Maybe it's [in the car]—. Maybe it's in the car.

*Phil heads toward the car to look for Marci's other shoe.*

Did you [put your skates on out here or in the car]—? Where'd you put your skates on, out here or in the car?

*Phil exits and we hear him open and close the doors of a minivan.*

MARCI. (*Sad that her husband just shrugged her off.*) I put them on with you. Right here.

*Beat.*

*Marci looks to the sky for answers while Phil searches for her other shoe.*

*Phil returns.*

PHIL. Well, it's // not in the car—

*Marci suddenly sees a shooting star.*

MARCI. Oh-oh-oh!!!, Shush-shush-shush!, Shooting star!, Shooting star!

*Marci closes her eyes and makes a wish.*

*Phil searches the sky for the shooting star.*

PHIL. What?, Where?!, // Where?!

MARCI. (*Eyes closed.*) Shh!!, I'm wishing, I'm wishing!

*Phil keeps searching the sky but sees nothing.*

PHIL. Aw, I missed it.

*Phil continues to search the sky.*

*Marci watches Phil as he searches the sky.*

MARCI. Yeah, you did.

PHIL. What's that supposed to mean?

*Marci resumes looking for her shoe.*

MARCI. Nothin'. It's just...not really all that surprising.

PHIL. What?

MARCI. That you didn't see it.

PHIL. What?

MARCI. The shooting star.

PHIL. Why?

MARCI. You don't pay attention, Phil.

*Little beat.*

PHIL. See, when you say things like that, I feel like you're still mad.

MARCI. I'm not.

PHIL. Marce [what's goin' on?]-

MARCI. I wasn't mad., (*Frustrated about a lot more than her missing shoe.*) *WHERE* is my shoe?!?! Gosh, maybe it *is* in the car.

*Marci heads to the car to look for her other shoe.*

I mean, >

PHIL. It's not in the car.

MARCI. I have one shoe on already. (*From off.*) I *know* I didn't put my skates on in the car, 'cause the shoe I have on was out there. I changed out there, didn't I? With you? Phil?

*Phil doesn't answer.*

*And stares out over Echo Pond.*

*He's sad, trying to sort out what's going on with him and his wife.*

(*From off.*) Phil? I put my shoes right next to yours after we put our skates on, but it's not...there... This is the weirdest thing.

*Marci rejoins her husband.*

It's not in the car, I mean, I'm not gonna put one skate on in the car, the other one on out here.

*Marci sees Phil staring out over Echo Pond and senses his sadness.*

What's wrong?

PHIL. Huh? Oh. (*Covering his sadness and lying a good lie.*) I'm just...makin' a wish of my own. On a regular one.

MARCI. Oh.

PHIL. (*A peace offering.*) Wanna wish on it with me?

MARCI. Yeah. Yeah, that'd be nice. Which one?

PHIL. Umm... (*Pointing.*) ...see Shepalojo<sup>14</sup> Mountain?

MARCI. Uh-huh.

PHIL. (*Pointing out a star.*) Straight up. Right above it.

MARCI. The bright one?

PHIL. Yeah.

MARCI. (*Pointing, using Phil's arm as a sight.*) That one?

PHIL. Yeah.

MARCI. (*Making sure she's looking at the star Phil is looking at.*)  
Right there?

PHIL. Yeah.

MARCI. Phil:

PHIL. Yeah?

MARCI. That's a planet.

PHIL. What?

MARCI. That's a planet. You're wishing on a planet.

PHIL. That's a [planet]—?

MARCI. Yeah, >

PHIL. Well, how do you know?

MARCI. and it's (*Singing.*) "...when you wish upon a *star*," not "...  
when you wish upon a *planet*" // or "*Jupiter*—"

PHIL. I know, I know! How do you know?

MARCI. Said on the weather, Phil. Jupiter's the brightest object in  
the sky this month. It'll be sitting right above Shepalojo Mountain  
over the next bunch of weeks. They've been sayin' it on the weather  
all week. And your wish is never gonna come true if you're wishing  
on a planet.

PHIL. Well—

MARCI. You gotta pay attention.

PHIL. Why do you keep sayin' that?

MARCI. What?

PHIL. That I gotta pay attention?

14 Pronounced, "shee-pa-LO-jo"

MARCI. 'Cause you don't.

PHIL. What are you talkin' about?

MARCI. Phil: Happy Anniversary.

*Beat.*

*A long, loud silence.*

PHIL. Huh?

MARCI. Happy Anniversary. That's what I'm talkin' about.

*Beat.*

PHIL. I'm [sorry]—.

*Phil can't bring himself to say he's sorry.*

*Little beat.*

*Then, instead of apologizing, he says:*

I knew you were mad.

MARCI. I'm not mad, // Phil!

PHIL. You're mad at me, and pretty soon, outta nowhere, it's gonna get ugly. >

MARCI. Phil, I'm not mad, // I'm [frustrated]—!

PHIL. I mean, Marce: I'm *sorry*!! I know I missed some things, but I gotta work! I gotta take a double when Chad/Shelly<sup>15</sup> needs me at the mill! He's/she's helpin' me—*us*—out, you know, // offering me the overtime!

MARCI. I know, // I know—

PHIL. No, you *don't* know: Me workin' is for *us*, and the kids, and it's a lot sometimes, and it messes me up!

MARCI. Phil! I'm not mad about you workin'. You gotta work. I understand that. What I don't understand is why I'm lonely, Phil. I got a husband and a coupla great kids. And I'm lonely.

*Little beat.*

You just—...You don't pay attention anymore. You go away. And I don't know where you go, but you go somewhere where you can't

<sup>15</sup> Insert the appropriate name and pronoun depending on which version of Scene 5, "They Fell," was performed.

pay attention, and you miss your son's first varsity hockey game, and // you forget Missy's birthday and >

PHIL. Hockey equipment costs money!

MARCI. (*Furious.*) you forget your *anniversary*! I mean, I brought you here hoping you'd remember about us. But you didn't. And that makes me so *MAD* I don't know what to do anymore!

*Beat.*

PHIL. You *lie*.

MARCI. What?

PHIL. You lie so bad.

MARCI. What?

PHIL. (*Seething.*) You're mad at me. But you don't *tell* me—even when I ask you over and o//ver.

MARCI. Because *you* wouldn't // pay attention if I *did* tell you—

PHIL. (*Exploding—this should be ugly.*) No! No! No! Because *you* don't know how to tell me what you feel like about me, so I never know where I am, where I stand! Maybe that's why I go away! So I can know where I am for a *SECOND*! And you know what?, It's lonely there too, where I go. And you sent me there. You went away a long time before I did. And now all's you do is lie.

MARCI. I don't lie!

PHIL. (*Explosive and ugly.*) Yes, you do! You say you're not mad, but you're mad! You say you have fun, but you didn't! You didn't have fun tonight, did you?

MARCI. No.

PHIL. But you kept sayin' you did.

MARCI. I didn't. I didn't have fun, Phil. I don't have fun with you anymore.

*Beat.*

Did you?

PHIL. No. I had a rotten, lousy time.

*Beat.*

MARCI. Well, then...

*Little beat.*

What are we doin'? What are we waiting for?

*Beat.*

*And then...a shoe that looks exactly like Marci's other shoe...drops from the sky, right between Marci and Phil.*

*This is Magical Moment #6 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #5, when Chad and Randy or Shelly and Deena fall in love with each other...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #4, when Gayle sees her engagement ring and Lendall proposes to her...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he's feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian... which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound cue could help define this magical moment.*

*The northern lights appear.*

*Marci and Phil stare at the shoe.*

*Beat.*

*And then they survey the sky, trying to figure out where it came from.*

*And they see the northern lights—and they're extraordinary—but the shoe dropping from the sky is far more extraordinary right now.*

*So Marci and Phil probably hardly notice the northern lights.*

*And they look at the shoe again.*

*Little beat.*

*And they look back up at the sky.*

*Little beat.*

*And they look at the shoe again.*

*And wonder what the heck just happened.*

*And then Phil checks the sky once more as he tentatively retrieves the shoe and gives it to Marci.*

*Music.*

*Marci puts the shoe on.*

*Beat.*

*Marci and Phil survey the sky one more time.*

*And then Marci gets up.*

*And takes the car keys out of her pocket.*

*She looks at Phil.*

*Phil doesn't look at Marci.*

*And it doesn't seem like he has any intention of going with her.*

*So Marci exits.*

*And we hear her start the car...and then drive away.*

*Phil is alone.*

*A shooting star cuts across the night sky on the field of stars.*

*Phil sees it.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

## Scene 7: Story of Hope

*The music and the northern lights fade.*

*It's about ten minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*A stylishly dressed woman appears.*

*The woman approaches the front porch of a small home, pulling a wheelie suitcase and carrying a fancy purse.*

*The woman is full of joyful anticipation.*



*She knocks on the door or rings the doorbell and waits.*

*Beat.*

*The woman is about to knock or ring the doorbell again—when the lights come on in the house.*

*The woman turns away from the door and prepares herself to meet the man she came to see, still full of joyful anticipation.*

*Then the porch light comes on.*

*And a short man (or a man who is in some way not the man he used to be) answers the door a bit cautiously—because people don't normally drop by at this hour in Almost, Maine.*

*[Note: The actor playing the man should be short. Or thin. Or balding. Or overweight. This is crucial to the magic of the story. If the actor playing the man is not short, line options are included in the scene. Please use the appropriate set of lines depending on what kind of person the actor playing the man is.]*

WOMAN. *(Fast and furious—so absorbed by what she has to say and by what she has come to do that she really doesn't take in/look at the man.)* I know this isn't going to be very easy, but I was just out there all alone in the world, and I got so scared, because all I could think about was how I had no place in this world, but then, I just—outta nowhere—realized that there was one place in this world that I did have, and that was with you, so I flew, and I took a taxi to get to you., I just had to come see you., Thank God you're [here]—...

*The woman finally really looks at the man.*

*The man is not who she thought he'd be.*

Oh [I'm sorry]—... Wait—[you're not who I thought you'd be]—...  
I'm sorry! You're not [who I thought you'd be]—... I'm [sorry]—...

*A little beat as the woman checks to make sure she's at the  
right place—and recovers from an unexpected turn of  
events.*

This is the house... I'm so sorry!... Does Daniel Harding live here?,  
I'm looking for Daniel Harding.

MAN. You're // looking for [Daniel Harding]—?

WOMAN. Looking for Daniel Harding, yeah. He *lives* here. I  
thought. But... (*Off the man's confused state, realizing that Daniel  
Harding doesn't live there anymore.*) ...Ooooh...he doesn't, does  
he? Oooh, I am so sorry!

*The woman gathers her bags, preparing to leave—and trying  
to make light.*

I am so embarrassed! “Who is this woman and what is she doing  
here?”

*The woman laughs.*

*The man doesn't.*

I just honestly thought he'd be here. I always thought he'd be here.  
Always.

*The woman is at a loss, but wonders if maybe this man can  
help her.*

Do you know him? Big guy, big tall guy. Played basketball. All-  
State, center? *Strong*. Do you know him?, Played hockey, too? >

*[Note: If the actor playing the man is not short, but thin or  
of average build, please use these lines: Do you know him?  
Big guy, big strong guy. Wrestled? Heavyweight? All-State?  
Strong? Do you know him?, Played hockey, too?*

*If the actor playing the man is not short or thin, but has lost  
his hair, try this: Do you know him? He played soccer—  
All-State—and he wrestled. Lotsa [crazy] hair. Fun guy!,  
Do you know him?*

*If the actor playing the man is not short or balding, but overweight, try these lines: Do you know him? He played soccer—All-State—and he ran cross country. Super fun guy., Do you know him?]*

MAN. Well [as a matter of fact, I do]...

WOMAN. Oh, don't even answer that. That was [a horrible thing to ask]—. I know that's a horrible question to ask a person who lives in a small town, as if everybody in small towns knows everybody else., Argh!, I can't believe I asked that. I don't live here anymore, but when I did, I hated it when people assumed I knew everybody in town just because it was small. It was worse than when they'd ask if we had plumbing "way up there," 'cause, you know, people in small towns really don't know each other any better than they do in big towns, you know that? I mean, you know who you know, and you don't know who you don't know, just like anywhere else.

*Little beat.*

I'm so sorry to have bothered you. I was just so sure [I'd find him here]—. When his parents passed away, he kept the house, I heard. He lived here. He stayed here, I thought. He was one of the ones who stayed.

*Little beat.*

I didn't stay. I went away.

MAN. Most people do.

WOMAN. Yeah. And I guess he did too. I never thought he would. I guess I lost track. You gotta hold on to people or you lose 'em. Wish there was something you could keep 'em in for when you need 'em...

*The woman tries to make light. She "looks for Daniel Harding," and "finds him" in her purse.*

Oh, there he is, perfect!

*The woman laughs.*

*The man does not.*

*Beat.*

*The woman starts to go—but stops after a few steps.*

*Because she can't go, for some reason.*

*Maybe because she feels like maybe this man can help her.*

Boy it's *cold*. I forgot.

MAN. Yeah.

*Beat.*

*The woman starts to go again—but feels like she wants to keep talking to this man, so she stops again.*

WOMAN. I can't *believe*—... I took a taxi here. From Bangor.<sup>16</sup> To see him.

*Beat.*

MAN. (*Processing the fact that this woman took a taxi one hundred and sixty-three miles. Then, wryly understated.*) That's far.

WOMAN. Yeah.

MAN. That's a hundred and sixty-three miles.

WOMAN. Yeah. This place is a little farther away from things than I remember.

MAN. Why did you do that?

WOMAN. Because I could only fly as close as Bangor, and I needed to get to him as fast as I could.

MAN. Why?

WOMAN. Because I want to answer a question he asked me.

MAN. Oh?

WOMAN. The last time I saw him, he asked me a very important question, and I didn't answer it, and that's just not a very nice thing to do to a person.

MAN. Well, that's bein' a little hard on yourself, don't you th//ink?

WOMAN. He asked me to marry him.

MAN. Oh.

*Little beat.*

And you...

WOMAN. Didn't answer him. No.

<sup>16</sup> Pronounced, "BANG-gore." Bangor is Maine's third-largest city, pop. 33,000. It is 163 miles south of Almost, Maine.

*The man whistles—or makes a sound—and this whistle or sound is full of judgment.*

Yeah. And that's why I'm here. To answer him.

*And then the woman feels the need to defend herself.*

I mean, I didn't answer him in the first place because I didn't *have* an answer at the time. I mean, I was going to *college*, and then...the *night* before I'm about to go off into the world to do what I hope and dream, he asks me, "Will you marry me?" I mean, come on! I was leaving in the morning! What was I supposed to do?

MAN. I don't know.

WOMAN. (*Continuing to defend herself.*) I mean, I told him I'd have to think about it, that I'd think it over overnight and that I'd be back before the sun came up with an answer. And then I...left. Left him standing right...there [where you're standing]...and then...I didn't make it back with an answer before the sun came up or...at all.

MAN. That sounds like an answer to me.

WOMAN. No! That wasn't my answer! I just...went off into the world, and that's not an answer, and I think—...

*Little beat.*

MAN. What?

WOMAN. I think he thought I'd say, "Yes."

MAN. Well, a guy's probably not gonna ask a girl that question unless he thinks she's gonna say, "Yes."

WOMAN. I know, and...I'm afraid he probably waited up all night, hoping for me to come by, and I just want to tell him that I know now that you just can't do a thing like not answer a question like the one he asked me, you can't do that to a person. Especially to someone you love.

MAN. (*Taking this confession in.*) You loved him?

WOMAN. (*Backpedaling.*) Well [I don't know if I loved him]—. I don't know if [I loved him]—. I mean, we were kids.

*The woman thinks.*

*And then concludes, honestly and truly:*

Yes. I did.

*A revelation.*

I do.

*Maybe another revelation.*

I feel like I dashed his hopes and dreams.

MAN. Oh, come on.

*The speech that follows is not a blatant attack.*

*It's more of a rumination—one that doesn't do much to make the woman feel better.*

You give yourself too much credit. He was young. That's all you need to get your hopes dashed: Be young. And everybody starts out young, so...everybody gets their hopes dashed.

*Little beat.*

And, besides, I don't think you really *dashed* his hopes. 'Cause if you *dash* somebody's hopes—well that's...kind of a *nice* way to let 'em down, 'cause it *hurts*...but it's quick. If you'd have said, "No," *that* woulda been "dashing his hopes."

*Little beat.*

*What follows is more pointed.*

But you didn't say, "No."

You said nothin'.

You just didn't answer him.

At all.

And that's...killin' hope the long, slow, painful way, 'cause it's still there, just hangin' on, never really goes away.

And that's...kinda like givin' somebody a little less air to breathe.

Every day.

Till they die.

*Beat.*

*The woman takes in this very unhelpful information.*

WOMAN. Yeah...

*Little beat.*

*Then, at a loss:*

Okay. Well...thank you.

MAN. For what?

*The woman ponders the question.*

*And then realizes she has no idea why she thanked the man.*

WOMAN. I don't know.

*The woman starts to leave.*

*The man watches the woman go for a beat.*

*Then:*

MAN. Goodbye, Hope.

HOPE. Goodbye. (*Stopping.*) Argh!, I'm so...sorry to have bothered you... It's just, I was all alone out there in the world with no place in it, and I realized what I'd done—... Wait—... You called me Hope. How did you know my name?

*Hope approaches the man.*

*And really looks at him.*

*Maybe the man reveals himself in some way.*

*And the woman finally recognizes him: He's Daniel Harding.*

*The woman is stunned.*

Danny?!?

*This is Magical Moment #7 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #6, when Marci's other shoe drops from the sky...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #5, when Chad and Randy or Shelly and Deena fall in love with each other...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #4, when Gayle sees her engagement ring and Lendall proposes to her...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he's feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound cue could help define this magical moment.*

*The northern lights appear.*

DANIEL. Hello, Hope.

HOPE. *(In a bit of a spin.)* Danny...I didn't // rec[ognize you]— >

DANIEL. I know.

HOPE. I didn't // rec[ognize you]— >

DANIEL. I know.

HOPE. I didn't even // recognize you!

DANIEL. I know.

HOPE. You're so...

DANIEL. I know.

HOPE. ...small.

*[Note: Only use the previous line if the actor playing Daniel is short or thin. If the actor playing Daniel is not short or thin, "...small" should be cut and replaced with silence—a silence in which Hope will search for a descriptive word but not be able to find one.]*

DANIEL. Yeah. I, uh, lost a lotta hope. That'll do a number on you.

*Long beat.*

*Daniel and Hope stand in a stunned, still, and awful silence.*

*Finally, Hope says something.*

HOPE. Danny: I'm so sorry I never came back [to answer you]—

DANIEL. *(Kindly.)* Shh. It's okay. 'Cause, you know somethin'? You're early.

HOPE. What?

DANIEL. You're early! You said you'd be back with an answer to my question before the sun came up, and Jeezum Crow, the sun's not even close to being up yet! It only went down a few hours ago. Look how early you are! That's good of you.

*Beat.*

*They enjoy Danny's goodness.*

So...a taxi all the way from Bangor?!?

HOPE. Yup.

DANIEL. To tell me...?

*Hope is about to say, "Yes," when she is interrupted.*

SUZETTE. (From off.) Honey? Dan? Hon?

*Little beat.*

*Hope is stunned.*

*And then devastated.*

*Daniel is also stunned.*

*And then remembers that he has a wife.*

Who's there?

DANIEL. (Calling inside to his wife.) Just somebody...needs directions.

SUZETTE. (Calling, from off.) It's awful late for directions.

DANIEL. (Calling inside.) Yeah—Suzette, listen...

*Beat.*

...I'll be right in.

SUZETTE. (Calling, from off.) Okay.

*Beat.*

*Daniel slowly turns to Hope.*

DANIEL. I—...

HOPE. What?

DANIEL. (Simply and matter-of-factly.) I hope you find it, Hope. Your place in this world.

*Beat.*

Bye.

HOPE. Goodbye, Danny.

*Daniel goes inside.*

*And Hope lingers—she is at a loss.*

*And then she grabs her wheeie suitcase and starts to go—but stops, and, after all these years, answers Daniel.*

*She knows he won't hear her.*

*She knows it wouldn't matter even if he did hear her.*

*But she answers him anyway.*

Yes.

*Beat.*

*Then, smaller and to herself:*

Yes.

*Hope starts to go.*

*Maybe she turns back—and, as she does, the porch light goes out.*

*Music.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

## Scene 8: Seeing the Thing

*The music and the northern lights fade.*

*It's about ten minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*Dave and Rhonda appear.*

*They have been snowmobiling and have just arrived at Rhonda's cabin in the woods.*

*They are wearing full snowmobile regalia, replete with helmets, gloves, and snowmobile suits.*

*Dave carries a present—a wrapped painting.*

*Rhonda and Dave kick the snow off their boots before entering the winterized porch of Rhonda's cabin.*

*This is the first time Dave has ever been inside Rhonda's house.*

*Rhonda is not particularly comfortable with this.*

RHONDA. Okay. This is it. You're in. You're inside.

DAVE. This is the porch.

*Dave would like to go further inside.*

RHONDA. It's winterized. [And this is as far inside as you're getting.]

*Beat.*

So, Dave: *What?!* What do you gotta do in here that you couldn't do outside?

DAVE. Well, I got somethin', here, for ya, here.

*Dave presents his wrapped gift.*

*This is Awkward Present Moment #1.*

RHONDA. What's this?

DAVE. It's—. It's—. It's—. (*Changing the subject explosively to dispel the awkwardness.*) Boy, that was fun tonight, Rhonda! >

RHONDA. Yeah!, [It] Was!

DAVE. I mean, twenty miles out there, >

RHONDA. Yeah!

DAVE. beans and franks at the Snowmobile Club, >

RHONDA. Yeah!

DAVE. twenty miles back, coupla beers at the Moose Paddy!

RHONDA. Awesome!

DAVE. Yeah!, And, boy, you flew on your new sled, // man!

RHONDA. It's a Polaris,<sup>17</sup> man!

DAVE. I know, and you whupped my butt!

RHONDA. Yeah! That's what you get for ridin' an Arctic Cat!<sup>18</sup> Ya get yer butt whupped! And I whupped it!

*Rhonda playfully smacks Dave around as she teases him.*

DAVE. I know!

RHONDA. Whupped your butt! >

DAVE. I know!

RHONDA. Whupped it! >

DAVE. I know!

RHONDA. Whupped your butt, Arctic-Cat-Man!!

DAVE. I know!, I know!, I'm not // sayin' ya didn't!

RHONDA. You're not ever beatin' the Snowmobile Association's Snowmobiler of the Year, you know!

DAVE. I know!

*Rhonda finishes up with smacking Dave around—it's all good fun.*

*And then everything settles.*

RHONDA. That was fun.

*Beat.*

*Rhonda and Dave look at the wrapped gift Dave is holding.*

*This is Awkward Present Moment #2.*

DAVE. So, this [present I have for you] is, um... Well, we been... together now [for a good long time now]—

RHONDA. (*Scoffing.*) Together?!?

17 Pronounced, "pull-AIR-iss." Polaris is a popular brand of snowmobile.

18 Arctic Cat is a popular brand of snowmobile, and competitor of Polaris.

DAVE. Well—

RHONDA. *Together?!?* What are you talkin' about, "together"???

DAVE. Well, we been *friends* for quite a few years now...

RHONDA. Yeah, so?

DAVE. And, well—...

*Dave searches for but can't find the words to convey what he wants to say.*

RHONDA. Well what?!?

DAVE. *Shh!*—and—*and*—*and*—... And here.

*Dave shoves his gift on Rhonda.*

*Rhonda doesn't know what to do with it, because these two don't give each other presents.*

RHONDA. What are you doin' here, bud?

DAVE. Open it.

RHONDA. "Together." Hm. I don't know about this...

DAVE. Just open it.

*Rhonda opens the present Dave gave her.*

*We soon learn that it's a piece of stretched canvas—a painting.*

*It's best if the audience can't see what it's a painting of.*



*Rhonda stares at the painting for a while.*

*And Dave hopes that, when Rhonda sees what he has painted for her, she will want to be "together" with Dave and they will live happily ever after.*

*But that's not what happens.*

RHONDA. What is it?

DAVE. (*Stunned by the question.*) What do you mean, what is it? Can't you...see what // it is?

RHONDA. It's a picture.

DAVE. Yeah.

RHONDA. A paintin'.

DAVE. Yeah.

RHONDA. Where'd you get this? It looks homemade.

DAVE. What do you mean it looks homemade?

RHONDA. It looks like someone really painted it.

DAVE. Well, someone really *did* paint it. [Like...someone like me!]

RHONDA. (*Realizing that Dave painted this painting for her.*) Did you paint this?

DAVE. Yeah!

RHONDA. For me?

DAVE. Yeah!

RHONDA. Oh...

*Rhonda doesn't quite know what to make of the fact that Dave painted a picture for her.*

Why?!?

DAVE. (*Crestfallen that Rhonda would ask such a question.*) Well—...

RHONDA. I mean...thank you! // Thank you., Thanks., Thanks.

DAVE. There you go!, That's what people say!, There you go! You're welcome...

*Rhonda props the painting up against a crate—it's best if the audience still can't see it.*

*And she sits in a chair and stares at Dave's artwork.*



RHONDA. So, Dave...I didn't know you *painted*.

DAVE. Yeah. This is—...

*Dave turns the painting right side up—because Rhonda propped it up against the crate upside down.*

I'm takin' adult ed art. Tuesday nights. Merle Haslem<sup>19</sup> over at the high school's teachin' it—it's real good—and this is my version of one of those stare-at-it-until-you-see-the-thing things. Ever seen one of these? Some of the old painters did it with dots. They called it—... (*Searches for—but can't quite come up with—“pointillism.”*) ... somethin'...but I did it with a buncha little blocks of colors, see, and if you just look at the little blocks of colors, it's just a buncha little blocks of colors, but if you step back and look at the whole thing, it's not just a buncha little blocks of colors: It's a picture of something.

19 Pronounced, “HAZ-lum.”

RHONDA. Picture of what?

DAVE. I'm not gonna tell you, you have to figure it out.

RHONDA. Oh, come on, Dave!

DAVE. No, it takes a little time., It can be a little frustrating.

RHONDA. Well, why would you give me somethin' that's gonna frustrate?!?

DAVE. No-no-no, I just mean you gotta not *try* to look for anything, that's what'll frustrate you. You gotta just *kinda* look at it, so it doesn't *know* you're lookin' at it.

RHONDA. What're you talkin' about?

DAVE. Well...you gotta trick it! >

RHONDA. Huh?

DAVE. You gotta trick it!

*Dave demonstrates "trickin' it."*

*He walks by the painting, stealing glances at it as he does.*

Just...trick it!

*Dave demonstrates how "trickin' it" works again.*

See? Walk on by, and...trick it!

*He demonstrates "trickin' it" again.*

See? Trick it!

*Dave demonstrates again.*

Just gotta walk on by and trick it!

*He demonstrates again.*

RHONDA. (*Amused and irritated.*) Dave—what are you doin'? What're you talkin' about?

DAVE. You gotta not let it know. And hopefully you'll eventually see what it is. It's a common thing—it's somethin' everybody knows. Go ahead—try it!

RHONDA. (*Skeptically.*) Okay.

*Rhonda reluctantly tries "trickin' it" a few times, like Dave did.*

*[Note to the actors playing Dave and Rhonda: Feel free to play with adding language in the above "trickin' it" section. Just make sure it's all about "trickin'" the painting. And—have fun!]*

*This “trickin’ it” business should be pretty darn funny.]*

DAVE. There ya go, there ya go!

RHONDA. (*Giving up on “trickin’ it.”*) This is stupid. I don’t see anything.

DAVE. No, you were doin’ good—!

RHONDA. (*Putting an end to this ridiculousness.*) Dave!!

DAVE. All right, all right, then, how about do this: Just do what you usually do around the house at night, and check it out real casual-like, like...

*Dave demonstrates how to check out the painting “real casual-like”: He finds a mundane task or activity like tying his boot or polishing the furniture as he casually checks out the painting.*

*[Note to the actor playing Dave: Feel free to give words to whatever it is you choose for your mundane task. A lame example: Oh, Jeez, I gotta polish the furniture...and then polish some furniture and check out the painting casually. This should be stupid and silly and hilarious.]*

*Rhonda watches Dave as he checks out the painting “real casual-like.”*

*And marvels at what a goofball he is.*

RHONDA. Well, I usually have a Bud and talk to you on the phone.

DAVE. Well, do that! I’ll get you a Bud, and you can talk to me! Where’s the kitchen—?

*Dave has started making his way into Rhonda’s house, but Rhonda stops him almost immediately: She does not want him going inside.*

RHONDA. N-n-n-n-no! >

DAVE. What?

RHONDA. I’m outta Bud. [I] Only got Natty Light.

*Dave starts back into the house.*

DAVE. All right, I’ll get you a Natty Light, and you can have your beer and talk to me—

*Rhonda stops Dave again.*

RHONDA. No-no-no!

DAVE. Why not? Come on, let's go inside and get us a coupla beers and hang out! >

RHONDA. No! (*Focusing on the painting.*) We gotta trick this thing, right?

*Rhonda resumes the "trickin' it" business.*

See? I'm trickin' it!, I'm trickin' it! Trickin' it!, I'm trickin' it!

*[Note to the actor playing Rhonda: Have a blast with this "trickin' it" business. Riff on what Dave has done to "trick it." And/or just trick it in your own way.]*

DAVE. It's what people who've known each other for a long time do: They have some beers and hang out! Hey! Come on!! Hey!! HEY!! QUIT IT!!

*Dave's raised voice puts a stop to Rhonda's "trickin' it" routine because this guy doesn't raise his voice very often.*

How many years I know ya?, I come all the way out here every Friday night, and I never been inside your house for beers!?! That's not natural. It's unnatural, // Rhonda! So let's do what's the *natural* thing to do and go inside and have some beers and hang out!

RHONDA. I don't care what it is, I gotta trick this thing. Hey! Hey-hey-hey, DAVE!! Quit runnin' your *suck*!! I gotta *look*! At this *thing*!

*Rhonda pulls up a chair and sits and stares straight at the painting, which frustrates Dave.*

DAVE. You're doin' it wrong! >

RHONDA. Shh!

DAVE. That's not [how you do it]—. You gotta trick it!, You gotta trick it!—

RHONDA. Hey-hey-hey!, Okay, okay!! I got somethin'!

DAVE. Yeah?

RHONDA. Yeah! Yeah-yeah-yeah: Roadkill.

DAVE. What?

RHONDA. Roadkill. Dead raccoon in the middle of the road.

DAVE. What?!? No! That's not what it is!

RHONDA. Okay, deer. Dead bloody deer // in the middle of the road.

DAVE. What?!? No!! Rhonda! It's not // a dead deer in the middle of the road!!

RHONDA. Okay, moose. >

DAVE. What?!?

RHONDA. Dead bloody moose in the middle of the road.

DAVE. RHONDA!!! No!!! No!!! That's not somethin' I'd wanna *paint*!!!  
// That's not even close to what it is! Dead *moose*?!? Come on!!!

RHONDA. Well, that's what I see!, I don't know what it is!, Don't get *mad*!, Jeezum Crow!

DAVE. You don't see what it is?!?

RHONDA. No!

DAVE. Well, can I give you a hint?

RHONDA. Yeah!

*Dave suddenly swoops in and kisses Rhonda smack on the lips.*

*That's the hint.*

*Rhonda immediately gets up and pulls away from or pushes Dave off her.*

*Then, angry/flustered:*

What are you doin'?!? What was that?!? Why did you do that?!?

DAVE. 'Cause I was givin' you a hint.

RHONDA. Well, you can't just do that to someone!

DAVE. Well—

RHONDA. And don't ever do that again! >

DAVE. Okay—

RHONDA. To me! >

DAVE. Okay—

RHONDA. Ever, okay?!?

DAVE. Okay—I'm sorry.

RHONDA. And GET OUTTA HERE!!!

*Rhonda storms off into the rest of the house.*

*Beat.*

*Dave is stunned.*

DAVE. *(To himself.)* Jeezum Crow.

*Dave sullenly gathers his things.*

*And his painting.*

*And leaves.*

*Little beat.*

*Dave suddenly returns.*

*(Yelling.)* HEY, RHONDA!!

RHONDA. *(From off.)* WHAT?!?

DAVE. YOU REALLY ARE WHAT THEY SAY!

RHONDA. WHAT? WHAT DO THEY SAY?!?

DAVE. THAT YOU'RE A LITTLE HUNG UP, THERE!

RHONDA. *(Entering forcefully.)* Who says that?

DAVE. *(Retreating—Rhonda's tough.)* Everybody.

RHONDA. Everybody who?

DAVE. Everybody, Rhonda. It's what people in town say!

RHONDA. When?

DAVE. When they're *talkin'*! They say that you're a little hung up, there, so I gotta be a little persistent, there, if we're ever gonna be together, // and, boy, they were right!

RHONDA. Aaah! What is with you and all this talkin' about us bein' "together" tonight?

DAVE. Rhonda! Come on! I like you! And everybody knows it! >

RHONDA. Everybody *who*?

DAVE. And I want us to be together or go out or somethin'! And everybody else does, too!

RHONDA. Everybody *who*?

DAVE. Everybody!

RHONDA. *Who, Dave?!? Who's sayin' all this stuff?!?*

*This is a tough question to answer, because the people who said this are Rhonda's friends.*

*Ultimately, Dave realizes that he has no way out and meekly admits:*

DAVE. Just...Suzette.

RHONDA. *Suzette?*

DAVE. Yeah, and Dan...

RHONDA. (*In disbelief.*) Suzette and Dan *Harding* said that I'm a little hung up there and that we oughtta be together or go out or somethin'?

DAVE. Yeah.

RHONDA. Well [why would they say that?]-.

*Rhonda is hurt that people have been talking about her love life behind her back.*

Who else said that?

DAVE. Marci.

RHONDA. *Marci?!?*

DAVE. Yeah, and Phil, // and— >

RHONDA. Marci and *Phil?!?*—

DAVE. Yeah—and Randy and Chad/Deena and Shelly,<sup>20</sup> and >

RHONDA. *Randy and Chad/Deena and Shelly?!?*—

DAVE. Lendall and Gayle, and >

RHONDA. *Gayle?!?*

DAVE. Marvalyn and Eric, and >

RHONDA. Marvalyn...?

DAVE. Jimmy, and Sandrine, and *East!*

RHONDA. *East?!?*

DAVE. Yeah. And that's just to name a few...

RHONDA. (*Deeply hurt.*) Well, why would they [say that we oughtta be together behind my back]-...? I love those guys. I'm good to those guys. Why would they say that? That's talkin' about me. Behind my back. That's mean.

DAVE. No, no—I don't think they're bein' mean, Rhonda. They were just tellin' me to go for it with you... 'cause they like you. And me. Us. They're rootin' for us, Rhonda.

20 Insert the appropriate names depending on which version of Scene 5, "They Fell," was performed.

RHONDA. Who's rootin' for us?

DAVE. Everybody! Gayle and Lendall and Randy and Chad/Deena and Shelly<sup>21</sup> and Marci and Phil—

RHONDA. Well, they never told me that, that they're "rootin' for us"—

DAVE. Well, that's 'cause I told 'em not to tell you they were. 'Cause I wanted you to find out from me that I liked you. Not [from] them.

*Beat.*

*Rhonda is still hurt.*

*But mostly confused.*

Just—... I'm sorry if I made you mad. When I kissed you.

RHONDA. You can't just do that [kiss someone like that], you know.

DAVE. Yeah—I know—sorry—I just thought you liked me the way I like you.

RHONDA. I do.

DAVE. (*Stunned.*) You do?

RHONDA. Yeah. I guess.

DAVE. (*Taking this in.*) Well...all right, then!

*Little beat.*

So...then, can I [kiss you]—wait—so, do you wanna be...together?

*Rhonda thinks.*

*And then answers.*

RHONDA. Yeah. I guess.

DAVE. (*Overjoyed—but holding it together.*) Well, all right, then!

*Little beat.*

So...then...can I [kiss you]—I would like to kiss you, if that's okay.

*Dave moves in for a kiss.*

RHONDA. It's not.

*Dave stops.*

21 Insert the appropriate names depending on which version of Scene 5, "They Fell," was performed.

*And deflates.*

DAVE. Oh.

RHONDA. It's not.

DAVE. Okay.

*Beat.*

*And then Dave starts to go, because—what else can he do?*

RHONDA. 'Cause—...

*Dave stops and turns to Rhonda.*

'Cause I don't know how.

DAVE. (*Confused.*) Huh?

RHONDA. I don't know how.

*Little beat.*

I've never done it before.

DAVE. What do you mean?

RHONDA. I won arm wrestling at every Winter Carnival from fifth grade on, and I work in plywood at Bushey's Lumber Mill, and that's not what most men wanna...want.

DAVE. Oh, now, where do you get that?

RHONDA. From *everybody*.

DAVE. Well then...you got it wrong, Rhonda, 'cause, I gotta tell ya, there's a lotta guys that think you're...somethin' special.

RHONDA. Nah.

DAVE. Yeah! I mean—I do.

*Beat.*

So, um, have you never [really ever been with anybody]—?

*A revelation.*

You never...have [been with anybody]...?

RHONDA. No.

DAVE. Oh.

*Little beat.*

Well...do you wanna [be with me]...?

*Little beat.*

You know what?, Let's, um...try [kissing each other]—... Um... why don't you try givin' me a kiss, and see what happens. And I'm not gonna make fun of you or nothin' bad like that—if you're worried about that—I promise...

*Rhonda steps toward Dave.*

*And it seems like she might kiss him...but then doesn't.*

RHONDA. No—no—let's do the...this.

*Rhonda goes back to the painting so she can work on figuring out what Dave has painted for her.*

Is it raspberries?

DAVE. Nope.

*Dave goes to Rhonda and gently takes her hand.*

*Rhonda doesn't acknowledge this, but doesn't resist.*

RHONDA. Apples?

DAVE. Nope.

*Dave has stepped in between Rhonda and the painting.*

RHONDA. Big open-faced strawberry rhubarb pie?

DAVE. Nope.

*Rhonda and Dave stand face to face.*

*And look into one another's eyes.*

*There are lots of feelings.*

*And then Dave slowly moves in for a kiss.*

*And then Rhonda suddenly finishes what Dave started, and kisses Dave hard.*

*For a while.*

*And then she breaks away, overwhelmed.*

*Rhonda and Dave stand face to face for a beat.*

*Everything has changed.*

RHONDA. You okay?

DAVE. Oh, yeah.

*Rhonda suddenly kisses Dave again and the kiss turns into Rhonda hugging Dave tightly, eyes closed.*

*And then...Rhonda opens her eyes.*

*And the painting is directly in her eye-line.*

*And she finally sees what Dave has painted for her.*

*This is Magical Moment #8 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #7, when Hope recognizes Daniel... which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #6, when Marci's other shoe drops from the sky...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #5, when Chad and Randy or Shelly and Deena fall in love with each other... which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #4, when Gayle sees her engagement ring and Lendall proposes to her...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he's feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound cue could help define this magical moment.*

*The northern lights gently appear.*

RHONDA. Oh, Dave!

DAVE. What?

RHONDA. I see it! It's a—. I see it. It's—...

*Rhonda goes to the painting.*

It's nice. This is really nice. It's good. You're good at this!

DAVE. Yeah?

RHONDA. Yeah.

*Dave suddenly kisses Rhonda and breaks away.*

DAVE. And you are very good at *this* [kissing]!

*Rhonda suddenly kisses Dave hard and breaks away.*

RHONDA. I thought it'd be hard!

*Rhonda suddenly kisses Dave hard again.*

And it's not!!!

*Rhonda kisses Dave again.*

At all...

*Rhonda kisses Dave again.*

And I feel like I wanna do it for a long time, but I also feel like I wanna do somethin' else...next...

*Huge revelation.*

And I think I might know exactly what that is!

DAVE. Yeah?

RHONDA. Yeah.

*Music.*

*Rhonda unzips her Polaris snowmobile jacket and takes it off.*

*And then nods to Dave, letting him know that she wants him to do the same.*

*And Dave does: He unzips his Arctic Cat snowmobile jacket...and takes it off.*

*And then Rhonda starts taking off her snowmobile pants—and Dave follows Rhonda's lead.*

*But then Rhonda realizes that she needs to get her snowmobile boots off before she can take her snowmobile pants off—and Dave realizes the same thing—and they hop and flail and fall to the ground as they try to get their boots off.*

*And they probably help each other get their boots off.*

*And then they help each other wriggle out of their snowmobile pants.*

*And then Rhonda and Dave start to take off layer after layer after layer [the more layers the better] of clothes (jeans, track pants, hoodies, flannels, long sleeve tees, short sleeve tees).*

*They do this with increasing speed and intensity until it's a bit of a frenzy, and we end up with two people from Northern Maine facing each other, wearing only their long johns—with a great big pile of winter clothes on the floor between them.*

*Beat.*

*Rhonda and Dave face each other—in their long Johns—and they are breathless—and dying for each other.*

So...are you ready for what comes next-next?

DAVE. Yeah.

RHONDA. Well, then, get yourself inside there, and let's do what's next-next!

DAVE. All right!!!

*Dave starts into the rest of the house, and Rhonda starts to follow—but stops.*

RHONDA. Whoa—wait, wait!

*Music cuts out.*

DAVE. *(Stopping.)* What?

RHONDA. We gotta be up at the crack o'clock tomorrow. We're workin' first shift. We can't do this.

*Dave and Rhonda sadly realize that they have to get up early for work.*

*After a beat, Dave has a revelation, and he looks at Rhonda.*

DAVE. Says who?

*Little beat.*

RHONDA. *(Catching Dave's drift.)* You mean...*call in?*

*Dave nods.*

Like we're sick?

*Dave makes like he has a cough.*

We're callin' in?!?

*Dave sneezes—very artificially.*

*And then—JOY.*

*Music resumes.*

We're callin' in!!! We're callin' Chad/Shelly<sup>22</sup>!! 'Cause you and me?  
We're not workin' first shift or *any* shift tomorrow!!

*Rhonda kisses Dave and sends him into the house.*

22 Insert the appropriate name depending on which version of Scene 5, "They Fell," was performed.

You get yourself *inside*, there, Mister Arctic-Cat-Man, and you get ready for what's next-next!

DAVE. Oh, I'm gonna! I'm gonna!

*Dave exits into the rest of the house.*

*And Rhonda is about to follow—but sees the painting before she does.*

*And picks it up and looks at it.*

*And loves it.*

*Then, from inside, we hear Dave call:*

HEY, RHONDA!

*Rhonda snaps out of her reverie.*

*And heads inside.*

*And brings the painting with her—in such a way that we finally get to see what it is.*

*It's a heart.*

*Music swells.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

## **End of Act Two**

*And we TRANSITION into the...*



**ALTERNATE VERSION OF SCENE 8, “SEEING THE THING”**

Some have expressed concern that Scene 8, “Seeing the Thing” is inappropriate for high school actors and audiences.

I respect this concern and offer this alternate version of “Seeing the Thing.”

**Scene 8: Seeing the Thing**

**(Alternate Version)**

*The music and the northern lights fade.*

*It’s about ten minutes earlier—8:50 P.M. or so.*

*Dave and Rhonda appear.*

*They have been snowmobiling and have just arrived at Rhonda’s cabin in the woods.*

*They are wearing full snowmobile regalia, replete with helmets, gloves, and snowmobile suits.*

*Dave carries a present—a wrapped painting.*

*Rhonda and Dave kick the snow off their boots before entering the winterized porch of Rhonda’s cabin.*

*This is the first time Dave has ever been inside Rhonda’s house.*

*Rhonda is not particularly comfortable with this.*

RHONDA: Okay. This is it. You’re in. You’re inside.

DAVE: This is the porch.

*Dave would like to go further inside.*

RHONDA: It’s winterized. [And this is as far inside as you’re getting.]

*Beat.*

So, Dave: *What?!* What do you gotta do in here that you couldn’t do outside?

DAVE: Well, I got somethin’, here, for ya, here.

*Dave presents his wrapped gift.*

*This is Awkward Present Moment #1.*

RHONDA: What's this?

DAVE: It's—. It's—. It's—. (*Changing the subject explosively to dispel the awkwardness.*) Boy, that was fun tonight, Rhonda! >

RHONDA: Yeah!, [It] *Was!*

DAVE: I mean, twenty miles out there, >

RHONDA: Yeah!

DAVE: beans and franks at the Snowmobile Club, >

RHONDA: Yeah!

DAVE: twenty miles back, coupla root beers at the Moose Paddy!

RHONDA: Awesome!

DAVE: Yeah!, And, boy, you flew on your new sled, // man!

RHONDA: It's a Polaris<sup>1</sup>, man!

DAVE: I know, and you whapped my butt!

RHONDA: Yeah! That's what you get for ridin' an Arctic Cat!<sup>2</sup> Ya get yer butt whapped! And I whapped it!

*Rhonda smacks Dave around as she teases him.*

DAVE: I know!

RHONDA: Whapped your butt! >

DAVE: I know!

RHONDA: Whapped it! >

DAVE: I know!

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced, "pull-AIR-iss." Polaris is a popular brand of snowmobile.

<sup>2</sup> Arctic Cat is a popular brand of snowmobile, and competitor of Polaris.

RHONDA: Whipped your butt, Arctic Cat-Man!!

DAVE: I know!, I know!, I'm not // sayin' ya didn't!

RHONDA: You're not ever beatin' the Snowmobile Association's Snowmobiler of the Year, you know!

DAVE: I know!

*Rhonda finishes up with smacking Dave around—it's all good fun.*

*And then everything settles.*

RHONDA: That was fun.

*Beat.*

*Rhonda and Dave look at the wrapped gift Dave is holding.*

*This is Awkward Present Moment #2.*

DAVE: So, this [the present I have for you] is, um... Well, we been...together now [for a good long time now]—

RHONDA: *(Scoffing.) Together?!?*

DAVE: Well—

RHONDA: *Together?!?* What are you talkin' about, “*together*”???

DAVE: Well, we been *friends* for quite a few years now...

RHONDA: Yeah, so?

DAVE: And, well—...

*Dave searches for—but can't find—the words to convey what he wants to say.*

RHONDA: Well what?!?

DAVE: *Shh!*—and—and—and—... And, here.

*Dave shoves the present on Rhonda.*

*Rhonda doesn't know what to do with it, because these two don't give each other presents.*

RHONDA: What are you doin' here, bud?

DAVE: Open it.

RHONDA: "Together." Hm. I don't know about this...

DAVE: Just open it.

*Rhonda opens the present Dave gave her.*

*We soon learn that it's a piece of stretched canvas—a painting.*

*It's best if the audience can't see what it's a painting of.*

*Rhonda stares at the painting for a while.*

*And Dave hopes that, when Rhonda sees what he has painted for her, she will want to be "together" with Dave and they will live happily ever after.*

*But that's not what happens.*

RHONDA: What is it?

DAVE: *(Stunned by the question.)* What do you mean, what is it? Can't you...see what // it is?

RHONDA: It's a picture.

DAVE: Yeah.

RHONDA: A paintin'.

DAVE: Yeah.

RHONDA: Where'd you get this? It looks homemade.

DAVE: What do you mean it looks homemade?

RHONDA: It looks like someone really painted it. — —

DAVE: Well, someone really *did* paint it. [Like...someone like me!]

RHONDA: *(Realizing that Dave painted this picture for her.)* Did you paint this?

DAVE: Yeah!

RHONDA: For me?

DAVE: Yeah!

RHONDA: Oh...

*Rhonda doesn't quite know what to make of the fact that Dave painted a picture for her.*

Why?!?

DAVE: *(Crestfallen that Rhonda would ask such a question.)* Well—...

RHONDA: I mean...thank you! // Thank you., Thanks., Thanks.

DAVE: There you go!, That's what people say!, There you go! You're welcome...

*Rhonda props the painting up against a crate—it's best if the audience still can't see it.*

*And she sits in a chair and stares at Dave's artwork.*

RHONDA: So, Dave...I didn't know you *painted*.

DAVE: Yeah. This is—...

*Dave turns the painting right side up—because Rhonda propped it up against the crate upside down.*

I'm takin' adult ed art. Tuesday nights. Merle Haslem<sup>3</sup> over at the high school's teachin' it—it's real good—and this is my version of one of those stare-at-it-until-you-see-the-thing things. Ever seen one of these? Some of the old painters did it with dots. They called it—... *(Searches for—but can't quite come up with—“pointillism.”)* ...somethin' ...but I did it with a buncha little blocks of colors, see, and if you just look at the little blocks of colors, it's just a buncha little blocks of colors, but if you step back and look at the whole thing, it's not just a buncha little blocks of colors: It's a picture of something.

RHONDA: Picture of what?

DAVE: I'm not gonna tell you, you have to figure it out.

RHONDA: Oh, come on, Dave!

DAVE: No, it takes a little time., It can be a little frustrating.

RHONDA: Well, why would you give me somethin' that's gonna *frustrate*?!?

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<sup>3</sup> Pronounced, “HAZ-lum.”

DAVE: No-no-no, I just mean you gotta not *try* to look for anything, that's what'll frustrate you. You gotta just *kinda* look at it, so it doesn't *know* you're lookin' at it.

RHONDA: What're you talkin' about?

DAVE: Well...you gotta trick it! >

RHONDA: Huh?

DAVE: You gotta trick it!

*Dave demonstrates "trickin' it": he walks by the painting, stealing glances at it as he does.*

Just...trick it!

*Dave demonstrates how "trickin' it" works again.*

See? Walk on by, and...trick it!

*He demonstrates "trickin' it" again.*

See? Trick it!

*Dave demonstrates again.*

Just gotta walk on by and trick it!

*He demonstrates again.*

RHONDA: (*Amused and irritated.*) Dave—what are you doin'? What're you talkin' about?

DAVE: You gotta not let it know. And hopefully you'll eventually see what it is. It's a common thing—it's somethin' everybody knows. Go ahead—try it!

RHONDA: (*Skeptically.*) Okay.

*Rhonda reluctantly tries "trickin' it" a few times, like Dave did.*

*{Note to the actors playing Dave and Rhonda: feel free to play with adding language in the above "trickin' it" section. Just make sure it's all about "trickin'" the painting. And—have fun! This "trickin' it" business should be pretty darn funny.}*

DAVE: There ya go, there ya go!

RHONDA: (*Giving up on "trickin' it."*) This is stupid. I don't see anything.

DAVE: No, you were doin' good—!

RHONDA: (*Putting an end to this ridiculousness.*) Dave!!

DAVE: All right, all right, then, how about do this: Just do what you usually do around the house at night, and check it out real casual-like, like...

*Dave demonstrates how to check out the painting “real casual-like”: He finds a mundane task or activity like tying his boot or polishing the furniture as he casually checks out the painting.*

*{Note to the actor playing Dave: Feel free to give words to whatever it is you choose for your mundane task. A lame example: Oh, Jeez, I gotta polish the furniture... and then polish some furniture and check out the painting casually. This should be stupid and silly and hilarious.}*

*Rhonda watches Dave as he checks out the painting “real casual-like.”*

*And marvels at what a goofball he is.*

RHONDA: I usually make myself some hot cocoa and talk to you on the phone.

DAVE: Well, do that! I'll make you some cocoa, and you can talk to me! Where's the kitchen—?

*Dave has started making his way into Rhonda's house, but Rhonda stops him almost immediately: She does not want him going inside.*

RHONDA: N-n-n-n-no! >

DAVE: What?

RHONDA: I'm outta cocoa.

*Dave starts back into the house.*

DAVE: Well, I don't really care about the cocoa, so let's just go on in and we can just hang out.

*Rhonda stops Dave again.*

RHONDA: No-no-no!

DAVE: Why not? Come on, let's go inside and hang out! >

RHONDA: No! (*Focusing on the painting.*) We gotta trick this thing, right?

*Rhonda resumes the business of “trickin’” the painting Dave gave her.*

See? I’m trickin’ it!, I’m trickin’ it! Trickin’ it!, I’m trickin’ it!

*{Note to the actor playing Rhonda: Have a blast with this “trickin’ it” business. Riff on what Dave has done to “trick it.” And/or just trick it in your own way.}*

DAVE: It’s what people who’ve known each other for a long time do: They have some cocoa—or, you know...don’t [have cocoa]—and hang out! Hey! Come on!! Hey!! **Hey!! Quit it!!**

*Dave’s raised voice puts a stop to Rhonda’s “trickin’ it” routine because this guy doesn’t raise his voice very often.*

How many years I known ya?, I come all the way out here every Friday night, and I never been inside your house!?! That’s not natural! It’s unnatural, // Rhonda! So let’s do what the *natural* thing to do is and go inside and hang out for a change!

RHONDA: I don’t care what it is, I gotta trick this thing. Hey! Hey-hey-hey, *DAVE!!* Quit runnin’ your mouth!! I gotta *look!* At this *thing!*

*Rhonda pulls up a chair and sits and stares straight at the painting, which frustrates Dave.*

DAVE: You’re doin’ it wrong! >

RHONDA: Shh!

DAVE: That’s not [how you do it]—. You gotta trick it!, You gotta trick it!—

RHONDA: Hey-hey-hey!, Okay, okay!! I got somethin’!

DAVE: Yeah?

RHONDA: Yeah! Yeah-yeah-yeah: Roadkill.

DAVE: What?

RHONDA: Roadkill. Dead raccoon in the middle of the road.

DAVE: What?!? No! That’s not what it is!

RHONDA: Okay, deer. Dead bloody deer // in the middle of the road.

DAVE: What?!? No!! Rhonda! It’s not // a dead deer in the middle of the road!!

RHONDA: Okay, moose. >

DAVE: What?!?

RHONDA: Dead bloody moose in the middle of the road.

DAVE: *RHONDA!!!* No!!! No!!! That's not somethin' I'd wanna *paint!!!* // that's not even close to what it is! Dead *moose?!?* Come on!!!

RHONDA: Well, that's what I see!, I don't know what it is!, Don't get *mad!*, Jeezum Crow!

DAVE: You don't see what it is?!?

RHONDA: No!

DAVE: Well, can I give you a hint?

RHONDA: Yeah!

*Dave suddenly swoops in and hugs Rhonda—and then tries to give her a kiss.*

*That's the hint.*

*Rhonda immediately pulls away from/pushes Dave off her when he tries to kiss her.*

*Then, angry/flustered:*

What are you doin'?!? What was that?!? Why did you do that?!?

DAVE. 'Cause I was givin' you a hint.

RHONDA: Well, you can't just do that to someone!

DAVE: Well—

RHONDA: And don't ever do that again! >

DAVE: Okay—

RHONDA: To me! >

DAVE: Okay—

RHONDA: Ever, okay?!?

DAVE: Okay—I'm sorry.

RHONDA: And GET OUTTA HERE!!!

*Rhonda storms off into the house.*

*Beat.*

DAVE: *(To himself.)* Jeezum Crow.

*Dave sullenly gathers his things.*

*And his painting.*

*And leaves.*

*Little beat.*

*Dave suddenly returns.*

*(Yelling.)* HEY, RHONDA!!

RHONDA: *(From off.)* WHAT?!?

DAVE: I LIKE YOU, YOU KNOW!

*Rhonda doesn't answer.*

A LOT!

*Rhonda doesn't answer.*

AND I THINK WE OUGHTA BE TOGETHER, OR GO OUT, OR SOMETHIN'!

*Rhonda still doesn't answer.*

AND A LOTTA PEOPLE THINK SO, TOO!

*Little beat.*

RHONDA: *(From off.)* WHAT?!?

DAVE: I SAID A LOTTA PEOPLE THINK WE OUGHTA BE TOGETHER! OR GO OUT!  
OR SOMETHIN'!

RHONDA: *(Returning.)* Who thinks that?

DAVE: Just—a lotta people.

RHONDA: (*Advancing on Dave.*) How do you know they think that?

DAVE: (*Retreating.*) 'Cause they said so.

RHONDA: When?

DAVE: When they're *talkin'*!

RHONDA: Well...who said so?

DAVE: Everybody.

RHONDA: Everybody *who*?

*This is a tough question to answer because the people who said this are Rhonda's friends.*

*Ultimately, Dave realizes that he has no way out and meekly admits:*

DAVE: Just...Suzette.

RHONDA: *Suzette?*

DAVE: Yeah, and Dan...

RHONDA: (*In disbelief.*) Suzette and Dan *Harding* said that we oughtta be together or go out or somethin'?

DAVE: Yeah.

RHONDA: (*Hurt.*) Well [why would they say that?]  
—

*Rhonda is hurt that people have been talking about her love life behind her back.*

Who else said that?

DAVE: Marci.

RHONDA: *Marci?!?*

DAVE: Yeah, and Phil, // and— >

RHONDA: Marci and *Phil?!?*  
—

DAVE: Yeah—and Randi and Chad/Randy and Chad/Deena and Shelly,<sup>4</sup> and >

RHONDA: *Randi and Chad/Randy and Chad/Deena and Shelly?!?!*<sup>5</sup>—

DAVE: Lendall and Gayle, and >

RHONDA: *Gayle?!?*

DAVE: Marvalyn and Eric, >

RHONDA: Marvalyn...?

DAVE: Jimmy, and Sandrine, and *East!*

RHONDA: *East?!?*

DAVE: Yeah. And that's just to name a few...

RHONDA: (*Deeply hurt.*) Well, why would they [say that we oughtta be together behind my back]—...? I love those guys. I'm good to those guys. Why would they say that? That's talkin' about me. Behind my back. That's mean.

DAVE: No, no—I don't think they're bein' mean, Rhonda. They were just tellin' me to go for it with you... 'cause they like you. And me. Us. They're rootin' for us, Rhonda.

RHONDA: Who's rootin' for us?

DAVE: Everybody! Gayle and Lendall and Randi and Chad/Randy and Chad/Deena and Shelly<sup>6</sup> and Marci and Phil—

RHONDA: Well, they never told me that, that they're "rootin' for us"—

DAVE: Well, that's 'cause I told 'em not to tell you they were. 'Cause I wanted you to find out from me that I liked you. Not [from] them.

*Beat.*

*Rhonda is still hurt.*

*But mostly confused.*

Just—... I'm sorry if I made you mad. When I hugged you...and tried to kiss you.

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<sup>4</sup> Insert the appropriate names depending on which version of Scene 5 ("They Fell") was performed.

<sup>5</sup> Insert the appropriate names depending on which version of Scene 5 ("They Fell") was performed.

<sup>6</sup> Insert the appropriate names depending on which version of Scene 5 ("They Fell") was performed.

RHONDA: You can't just do that [kiss someone like that], you know.

DAVE: Yeah—I know—sorry—I just thought you liked me the way I like you.

RHONDA: I do.

DAVE: *(Stunned.)* You do?

RHONDA: Yeah. I guess.

DAVE: *(Taking this in.)* Well...all right, then!

*Little beat.*

So...then—wait—so, then, do you wanna be...together?

*Rhonda thinks.*

*And then answers.*

RHONDA: Yeah.

DAVE: *(Overjoyed—but holding it together.)* Well, all right, then!

*Little beat.*

So...then...can I [kiss you]—I would like to kiss you, if that's okay.

*Dave moves in for a kiss.*

RHONDA: It's not.

*Dave stops.*

*And deflates.*

DAVE: Oh.

RHONDA: It's not.

DAVE: Okay.

*Beat.*

*And then Dave starts to go, because—what else can he do?*

RHONDA: 'Cause—...

*Dave stops and turns to Rhonda.*

'Cause I don't know how.

DAVE: *(Confused.)* Huh?

RHONDA: I don't know how.

*Little beat.*

I've never done it before.

DAVE: What do you mean?

RHONDA: I won arm wrestling at every Winter Carnival from fifth grade on, and I work in plywood at Bushey's Lumber Mill, and that's not what most guys wanna...want.

DAVE: Oh, now, where do you get that?

RHONDA: From *everybody*.

DAVE: Well then...you got it wrong, Rhonda, 'cause, I gotta tell ya, there's a lotta guys that think you're...somethin' special.

RHONDA: Nah.

DAVE: Yeah! I mean—I do.

*Little beat.*

You know what?, Can we—let's, um...try [kissing each other]—... Um...why don't you try givin' me a kiss, and see what happens. And I'm not gonna make fun of you or nothin' bad like that—if you're worried about that—I promise...

*Rhonda takes a step toward Dave.*

*And it seems like they may kiss—when Rhonda says:*

RHONDA: No—I don't think I'm ready for that, Dave. Can we just [look at the painting so I can figure out what it is]—let's do the...this.

*Rhonda goes back to the painting so she can work on figuring out what Dave has painted for her.*

Is it raspberries?

DAVE: Nope.

*Dave goes to Rhonda and has gently taken her hand.*

*Rhonda doesn't acknowledge this, but doesn't resist.*

RHONDA: Apples?

DAVE: Nope.

*Dave has stepped in between Rhonda and the painting.*

RHONDA: Big open-faced strawberry rhubarb pie?

DAVE: Nope.

*Rhonda and Dave stand face to face.*

*And look into one another's eyes.*

*There are lots of feelings.*

*And then Dave slowly moves in on Rhonda and hugs her.*

*After a beat, Rhonda breaks away, overwhelmed.*

*Rhonda and Dave stand face to face for a beat.*

*Everything has changed.*

DAVE: Was that okay?

RHONDA: Yeah!

*Rhonda suddenly hugs Dave, eyes closed, like her life depends on it.*

*And then...Rhonda opens her eyes.*

*And the painting is directly in her eye-line.*

*And she finally sees what Dave has painted for her.*

*This is Magical Moment #8 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #7, when Hope recognizes Daniel...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #6, when Marci's other shoe drops from the sky...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #5, when Chad and Randy or Shelly and Deena fall in love with each other...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #4, when Gayle sees her engagement ring and Lendall proposes to her...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he's feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory's heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*A wisp of music or a gentle sound cue could help define this magical moment.*

*The northern lights gently appear.*

RHONDA: Oh, Dave!

DAVE: What?

RHONDA: I see it! It's a—. I see it. It's—...

*Rhonda goes to the painting.*

It's nice. This is really nice. It's good. You're *good* at this!

DAVE: Yeah?

RHONDA: Yeah.

*Rhonda suddenly hugs Dave—and just as suddenly pulls away from him.*

RHONDA: Dave?

DAVE: Yeah?

RHONDA: I really like you.

DAVE: Good! I really like you, too!

RHONDA: But I don't know if I'm ready to kiss you yet.

DAVE: Oh. Okay. That's okay.

RHONDA: Yeah?

DAVE: Yeah.

RHONDA: All right. I just... I just... I'm not ready...

DAVE: It's okay.

RHONDA: Okay.

*Rhonda looks at Dave's painting.*

I just...I just wanna be with you...like this...for a while.

DAVE: Okay.

RHONDA: And maybe have some cocoa.

DAVE: I thought you said you didn't have any cocoa.

RHONDA: I do.

DAVE: *(Teasing.)* Liar.

RHONDA: *(Laughing.)* Anyway, maybe we can look at this [the painting]. For a while.

DAVE: Okay.

RHONDA: While we drink some cocoa. 'Cause it [the painting] is really good.

DAVE: Thanks.

RHONDA: You're good at this.

DAVE: Thanks.

*Rhonda hugs Dave, squeezing the painting between their bodies.*

*And then Rhonda breaks away.*

*And looks at the painting.*

*And then hangs it somewhere so we can all finally see what Dave painted for her: A heart.*

*And Rhonda and Dave look at the heart.*

*I think it would be awesome if their backs were to us while they do so.*

*And we see them hold hands while they look at the painting as the lights fade.*

*Music swells.*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*And we TRANSITION into...*

## EPILOGUE

*Music and the northern lights fade.*

*New music up.*

*It's a few minutes earlier—8:57 P.M. or so.*

*We are exactly where we left off in the "Interlogue."*

*Pete appears exactly where we last saw him: He is standing stage left, holding his snowball, looking off to where Ginette exited, and pondering the consequences of having shared his theory of what it means to be "close" with the girl he loves.*

*He looks at his snowball...and then looks off left...and then looks at his snowball again...*

*And then he makes his way back to the bench and sits down, maybe slightly defeated—but he almost immediately gets back up and heads stage left again to look off to where Ginette exited earlier. Is she gone for good? Is she coming back?*

*And then...*

*...Ginette slowly enters from the other side of the stage—stage right—and makes her way to the bench.*

*And the northern lights appear.*

*This is the beginning of Magical Moment #9.*

*And it should be miraculous.*

*Ginette stops and sees Pete looking off left to where she exited some ten minutes ago.*

*Pete sees the northern lights and marvels at them.*

*Ginette watches Pete marvel at them.*

*And then Pete sees Ginette.*

*And he stops cold.*

*And he looks off left to where Ginette exited in the "Prologue."*

*And then he looks at Ginette.*

*And then he looks off left to where Ginette exited in the "Prologue" one more time.*

*And then he looks back at Ginette.*

*And maybe he quickly looks off left to where Ginette exited in the “Prologue” one more time.*

*And then he looks back at Ginette.*

*And then he nonverbally asks, using the snowball, if she’s been all the way around the world.*

*And Ginette nods, “Yes.”*

*She’s been all the way around the world, and she’s back.*

*She’s “close” again.*

*Pete wonders how this can be true—and then doesn’t care if it’s true or not true.*

*And he tosses his snowball.*

*And Ginette and Pete make their way to one another.*

*And they embrace.*

*This is the culmination of Magical Moment #9 (which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #8, when Rhonda finally sees what Dave painted for her...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #7, when Hope recognizes Daniel...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #6, when Marci’s other shoe drops from the sky...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #5, when Chad and Randy or Shelly and Deena fall in love with each other...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #4, when Gayle sees her engagement ring and Lendall proposes to her...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #3, when Steve realizes he’s feeling pain for the first time in a long time...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #2, when the waitress tells Jimmy that her name is Villian...which happens at the same time as Magical Moment #1, when East opens the bag containing Glory’s heart so he can start repairing it—and Glory sees the northern lights).*

*The northern lights glow more brightly.*

*Ginette and Pete take them in—and they’re awesome.*

*And then Ginette and Pete sit on the bench.*

*And they marvel at the northern lights.*

*And then Pete looks at Ginette while she continues to marvel at the northern lights.*

*And the lights fade to black.*

*And it all begins again.*

**End of Play**

## PROPERTY LIST

### **Prologue, Interlogue, and Epilogue**

Snowball

### **Scene 1: Her Heart**

Small brown paper grocery bag, filled with nineteen small slate pieces

Maine travel brochure

### **Scene 2: Sad and Glad**

Two bottles of Budweiser

Tray for the waitress

### **Scene 3: This Hurts**

Man's shirt

Ironing board

Iron

Laundry basket filled with folded laundry

Two composition books

Pencil

### **Scene 4: Getting It Back**

Large bags or sacks filled with batting or pillow stuffing or air and glitter or what you will

Small, small pouch with ring box (and ring) inside

### **Scene 5: They Fell**

Four bottles (or cans) of Natural Light beer

Two coolers that can be sat on

### **Scene 6: Where It Went**

Men's hockey skates

Women's hockey or figure skates

Winter shoe

### **Scene 7: Story of Hope**

Purse

Wheelie suitcase

### **Scene 8: Seeing the Thing**

Wrapped painting

## SOUND EFFECTS

### **Scene 1: Her Heart**

Distant sound of doors opening, closing

### **Scene 2: Sad and Glad**

Bar activity

Bachelorette party noise

### **Scene 4: Getting It Back**

Truck pulling into driveway

Truck door opening, closing

Pounding on door

House door opening, closing

### **Scene 6: Where It Went**

Car door opening, closing

Car starting, leaving

### **Scene 7: Story of Hope**

Car approaching, idling, leaving

Doorbell

Fancy-shoed footsteps in snow

Door opening, closing

### **Scene 8: Seeing the Thing**

Snowmobiles approaching, parking

## NOTES FOR ACTORS

### **On punctuation:**

I've addressed the // and > symbols in the notes section at the beginning of this volume. I just wanted to remind you that the overlaps are very specific and difficult. Please figure them out—accurately! Please remember that // means that the next speaker should start speaking and that > just means keep talking and don't stop and wait for the other character to speak. Drive through to the end of the sentence or thought.

Some other punctuation notes:

- Sometimes you'll see commas after end punctuation:

RHONDA. Hey-hey-hey!, Okay, okay!!

This is simply to encourage pace and keep things moving. Push through to the landing place—which is, in this case, the double exclamation point.

Remember that lines in brackets like these [ ] shouldn't be spoken. They're just guides to what is unsaid.

A dash (—) at the end of a line means that the next speaker cuts off the current speaker.

A dash followed by a period (—.) or a dash followed by an ellipsis (—...) at the end of a line means that the person speaking cuts themselves off with thought. The next character to speak does not do the cutting off.

An ellipsis (...) at the end of a line means that the thought trails off.

A dash (—), a dash followed by a period (—.), or a dash followed by an ellipsis (—...) *inside* a line means that the person speaking cuts themselves off with thought before moving on.

Because pace is key to this play, keeping your lines of thought active is key, as is noting when the characters are actually listening to each other. Often you'll be playing people who aren't listening to each other. Explore that—the non-listening that happens when people are thinking, or are too busy talking. I think the big epiphanies come when people actually listen to and hear each other—and I think epiphanies—and true listening—are rather rare.

**On dialect:**

Northern Mainers don't really have a distinctive dialect, though Rs are pretty pronounced. Words like "sorry" or "forest" or "tomorrow" are pronounced "SORE-ee," "FORE-est," and "to-MORE-ow." The "or" sound is the key. That's about all I'd do with dialect—because the Maine dialect most people know of is a coastal thing, and Almost, Maine, is a couple hundred miles from the ocean. It's not "Downeast," so please don't do "Downeast" Maine. Please. It's not who these people are. Do not think "lobstah" or "A-yuh." Think Canadian. Most important: Just talk. And hit your Rs a little harder than you normally might.

And, while the people of Almost, Maine, are rural dwellers, they definitely don't have Southern accents. This play takes place in Northern Maine.

**On language:**

Please honor the beats—the quiet moments—in *Almost, Maine*. And make sure they are full and electric. This play must never feel slow. There's a buoyancy to the material. A lightness. And I think it's in the language. Find where the words come tumbling out of the characters' mouths. Find where the words don't come so easy—where the quiet moments are. Much is communicated in those quiet moments, and the play must continue to move forward inside of them.

Please note that the characters from out of town (Glory and Hope) talk more—and faster—than the people of Almost. They have most of the play's monologues. They use words in an attempt to stay in control of situations that get out of (their) control.

**On characterization:**

Your job as an actor in these plays is to tell the stories. You're a storyteller. Don't worry too much about being a chameleon. Don't create caricatures. Sure, you want to create distinct characters—but trust the stories to do a lot of that work for you. Tell the stories, and allow the characters to come to life. This doesn't mean be lazy. It doesn't mean don't be outrageous. It doesn't mean don't be creative. It doesn't mean do nothing or be boring. It just means... construct truthfully!

Remember: The people of Almost, Maine, are not cute and cuddly. They're not quaint eccentrics. They are not simpletons—although there is a guilelessness about them. They're not quirky. They are ordinary people. It's their *situations* that are odd, extraordinary, and (maybe) quirky.

My advice: Don't forget how much the people of Almost, Maine, are hurting. Honor the ache, play the pain (keep most of it covered), and don't forget that *Almost, Maine* is a comedy. Sadness and pain are the funniest things in the world.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

### **On Maine:**

Maine is the easternmost and northeastern-most state in the United States.

Maine has 611 miles of international border with Canada, more than any other state except Alaska and Michigan.

Maine is the only state in the country that's attached to only one other state—New Hampshire.

Maine's total area is about 35,400 square miles. The other New England states (Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island) have a total area of about 36,600 square miles. Although it comprises almost half of New England's total land area, Maine contains only 9% of the region's population.

With 1.3 million residents, Maine is the most sparsely populated state east of the Mississippi River. It has 40 people per square mile. (Consider this: Vermont—*Vermont*—has 65 people per square mile; Massachusetts has 810; New Jersey: 1,100.)

Maine's largest city is Portland, pop. 68,000. (Greenwich, CT, has 63,000 residents.) Only Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming have smaller largest cities.

Maine's unorganized territories make up more than half of the state's total land area.

Maine is more forested than any other state in the country. It is 90% woods.

Maine has more moose per square mile than any other state.

Maine contains the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail: Mount Katahdin in Central Maine.

### **On Aroostook County:**

Aroostook is the largest county east of the Mississippi River, with an area of 6,828 square miles. It is larger than Connecticut (5,567 sq. mi.) and Rhode Island (1,214 sq. mi.) combined.

Aroostook County's population is about 67,000, making it one of the most sparsely populated counties east of the Mississippi. (Connecticut and Rhode Island's combined population is 4.7 *million*.) Aroostook has about 10 people per square mile, making it less densely populated than North Dakota.

**On Almost, Maine:**

Were it to exist, Almost, Maine, would be located in T13 R7, in the heart of Aroostook County. T13 R7 is some 75 miles northwest of the northern terminus of Interstate 95; some 120 miles north of Mount Katahdin; some 200 miles northwest of the ocean (at its closest); some 300 miles north of Portland, Maine; and some 450 miles north of Boston, Massachusetts.

Population: about 300.

Median annual household income: about \$30,000.

Hours of daylight in mid-January: about 9.

Average January temperature: 9 degrees Fahrenheit.

Average annual snowfall: 110 inches.

Again, thank you for reading. If you're working on a production of the play, thank you for believing in a place like Almost, Maine.

—*John Cariani*

