

ALMOST, MAINE
by John Cariani

PROLOGUE

Music.

It is a cold Friday night in the middle of winter in a small, mythical town in northern Maine called Almost, Maine. A field of stars – a clear, cold, moonless northern night sky – serves as the backdrop for the entire play. Light up on Pete and Ginette sitting on a bench in Pete’s yard, 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 beat of Pete and Ginette looking at the stars. Ginette keeps stealing glances at Pete.

GINETTE

Pete, I – ...

(Beat. She’s about to say, “I love you.”)

PETE

What?

GINETTE

(She can’t quite do it.)

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. There’s nothing else to say, so...back to the sky.)

GINETTE

(Still can't say what she really wants to say.)

And the stars are just - ! I didn't know you knew all that stuff! // After all this time, I didn't know you knew all that!

PETE

Well, it's not - ... It's just stuff my dad taught me...

(Beat. There's nothing else to say, so...back to the stars.

Beat. Ginette turns to Pete.)

GINETTE

Pete - ...

PETE

(Turning to Ginette.) Yeah?

GINETTE

I love you.

(Beat. Pete just stares at Ginette.

Beat. Pete looks away from Ginette.

Beat. And does not respond.

Beat. Ginette takes in Pete's reaction; deflates; 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; Ginette is dealing with Pete's response – or lack thereof – to what she has just said.

Big...long...pause.

Finally, there's nothing else for Pete to say but the truth, which is:)

PETE

I...love you, too.

GINETTE

Oh!!!

(Huge relief! Pete and Ginette feel JOY! Ginette shivers – a happy kind of shiver.)

PETE

Oh, are you cold? // Wanna go inside?

GINETTE

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

(Pete and Ginette shouldn't be close to each other at all – but for them, it's close.)

I feel so close to you tonight. It's nice to be close to you, Pete.

(She gets closer to him. Beat.)

It's safe.

(She gets closer to him again. Beat.)

I like being close. Like this. I mean, I can think of other...ways...of being close to you

(i.e., sex, and they enjoy this sweetly, truly – Pete probably can't believe she brought this up, but he's probably very happy that she did!) but that's not - ... I like this right now.

This kind of close. Right next to you.

(She gets even closer to him; leans right up against him. Beat.)

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

(She is very content.)

PETE

(Beat. Honestly discovering.) Well ... not really.

GINETTE

What?

PETE

(He is 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,

(Gathering snow to make a snowball for use as a visual. This works pretty well when little drifts of snow are attached to the bench, with the snowball resting among the drifts.)

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

(Points out a place on the snowball that represent him.)

and you're here

(Points out a place on the snowball that represents her, and it's right next to him – practically the same place he just pointed to.),

then ...

(Pete now demonstrates that if you go around the world the OTHER way – all the way around the world the OTHER way, equatorially [not pole to pole] – that he and Ginette are actually as far away from each other as they can possible be.

Little beat.)

... that's far.

GINETTE

(Takes this in. What on earth does he mean?)

Yeah.

(Beat. Disheartened, Ginette moves away from Pete – all the way the other end of the bench. She doesn't feel like being "close" anymore.)

PETE

(Takes this in: His "interesting thought" seems to have moved the evening's proceedings in a direction he didn't intend.

Then, trying to save the evening, helpful:)

But ... now you're closer.

(Because she actually is closer, the way he just described it.)

GINETTE

(Puzzled.) Yeah.

(Perhaps hurt, she gets up and starts to leave. What else is there to do?

After she takes barely a step or two, Pete stops her with:)

PETE

And closer ...

(Ginette stops. She turns and looks at Pete, then turns back and start to leave, but, as she takes another step away from him, Pete again interrupts her step with:)

And closer ...

(Ginette stops again. She turns and looks at Pete, then turns back and starts to leave again, but, as she does so, Pete stops her with:)

And closer ...

(Ginette stops again; looks at Pete again; turns ... and takes another step ...and another and another and another and another. With each step she takes, Pete says, " ... and closer and closer and closer and closer ..."

When she is just about to exit, Ginette stops. She is trying to figure out what's going on, what Pete is saying.

She looks at Pete; she looks off left; looks at Pete again; looks off left again; and then leaves, taking step after step.

With every single step she takes. Pete calls to her, telling her, with great hope, that she's " ... closer and closer and closer and closer ..."

until, eventually, Ginette is gone, exiting stage left, with Pete still calling, " ... and closer," with every single step she takes.

Unfortunately, with every step she takes, Ginette is getting farther and farther away from Pete. This is not necessarily what Pete intended, and his "closer's" trail off.

Music.

Lights fade on a sad, confused, helpless Pete. He looks at his snowball. What has he done? And we begin ...

Scene 1
HER HEART

Music fades.

The lights fade up on Glory standing in the front yard of an old farmhouse in Almost, Maine. She is clutching a small brown paper grocery bag to her chest. She is looking up at the sky.

A porch light comes on.

We hear a screen door open and slam as East enters. He watches Glory for a while. He is wearing a big warm coat over plaid pajamas, and slippers or untied boots.

EAST

Hello.

GLORY

(To him.) Hello. *(Resumes looking to the sky.)*

EAST

I thought I saw someone. *(Little beat.)* I was about to go to bed. I saw you from my window ... *(Beat.)*

Can I - ? ... Is there something I can do for you?

GLORY

(To him.) Oh, no. I'm just here to see the northern lights. *(Back to the sky.)*

EAST

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

GLORY

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 –

EAST

(Looking out.) Is that your tent? *(The tent should be seen by East and Glory – not by the audience.)*

Yes. GLORY

You've pitched a tent ... > EAST

So I have a place to sleep, > GLORY

In my yard ... EAST

After I see them, I hope you don't mind. GLORY

Well, it's not that I – EAST

Do you mind? GLORY

Well, I don't know if – EAST

Oh, no, I think you mind! GLORY

No, it's not that I mind – EAST

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

EAST

My brochure?

GLORY

That people from Maine wouldn't mind. It says (*Pulling out a brochure about Maine tourism.*) that people from Maine are different, that they live life "the way life *should* be," and that, "in the tradition of their brethren in rural northern climes, like Scandinavia," that they'll let people who are complete strangers like cross-country skiers and bikers and hikers, camp out in their yard, if they need to, for nothing, they'll just let you. I'm a hiker. It is true? >

EAST

Well –

GLORY

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 – 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?!?

EAST

Um –

GLORY

It is!! (*Taking in all the 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? >

EAST

Well –

GLORY

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

EAST

Well –

GLORY

I mean, if a person really needed to, >

EAST

Well –

GLORY

Reallyreally needed to?

EAST

Well, if a person really needed to, sure, but –

GLORY

(Huge relief!) Oh, I'm so glad, then! Thank you!

She goes to East, throw her arms open, and hugs him. In the hug, the bag gets squished between their bodies, When they part, East is holding Glory's bag. The exchange of the bag is almost imperceptible to both of them, and to the audience. Immediately after hugging East, Glory resumes looking intently for the northern lights.

Beat.

Then, realizing she doesn't have her bag:)

Oh, my gosh! *(Realizing that East has her bag.)* I need that!

EAST

Oh. Here. *(He gives it back.)*

GLORY

Thank you. *(She resumes looking to the sky.)*

EAST

Sure. *(Beat.)* Okay -- . Okay ... *(Beat.)* So you're just lookin' for a place to see the northern lights from?

GLORY

Yeah, Just tonight.

EAST

Well, you know, you might not see 'em tonight, 'cause // you never really know if –

GLORY

Oh, no. I'll see them. Because I'm in a good place: Your latitude is *good*. And this is the right time: Solar activity is at an eleven-year peak. Everything's in order. And boy, you have good sky for it. (*Taking in the sky.*) There's lots of sky here.

EAST

Used to be a potato farm.

GLORY

I was gonna say – no trees in the way. And it's *flat*! Makes for a big sky! (*Beat.*) So – you're a farmer?

EAST

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

GLORY

Oh.

EAST

Fix things.

GLORY

Oh. (*Laughs.*)

EAST

What?

GLORY

You're not a lobster man.

EAST

No ...

GLORY

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 ...

EAST

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

GLORY

Oh.

EAST

Plus, ocean's a couple hundred miles away. Be an awful long ride to work if I was a lobster man.

GLORY

(Enjoying him.) Yeah. Well, anyway, thank you. Thank you for letting me stay. I've had a bad enough time of things lately not to be given a bad time here – *(East, inexplicably drawn to her, kisses Glory. When they break, the bag has exchanged clutches imperceptibly – East has it. And now we have two stunned people.)*

EAST

Oh ...

GLORY

(Trying to figure out what just happened.) Um ...

EAST

Oh.

Um ... GLORY

Oh, boy. EAST

Um ... GLORY

I'm sorry. I just -- ... I think I love you. EAST

Really. GLORY

(*Perplexed.*) Yeah. I saw you from my window and ... I love you. EAST

Well ... -- that's very nice -- ... but there's something I think you should know: I'm not here for that. GLORY

Oh, no! I didn't think you were! EAST

I'm here to pay my respects. To my *husband*. GLORY

Oh -- EAST

Yeah: My *husband*. Wes. I just wanted to say goodbye to him, 'cause he died recently. On Tuesday, actually, and, see, the northern lights -- did you know this? -- the northern GLORY

lights are really the torches that the recently departed carry with them so they can find their way to heaven, and see, it takes three days for a soul 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 did there just a second ago, that bothered, me, I think, and I'm not here for that, so maybe I should go // and find another yard –

EAST

No! No! I'm sorry if I -- ... if I've behaved in a way that I shouldn't have -

GLORY

(Leaving.) No // , I think –

EAST

No! I really don't know what happened.

GLORY

Well, *I* do, I know what happened!

EAST

I'm not the kind of person who does things like that. Please. Don't go. Just – do what you need to do. I won't bother you. Maybe just ... consider what I did a very warm Maine welcome.

GLORY

(Stopping; charmed.) All right. All right.

(Beat.)

I'm -- . My name's Glory.

EAST

I'm East. For Easton. It's the name of the town – little ways that way – where I was born. Mess-up on the birth certificate ... “a son, Easton, born on this sixth day of January, [insert year] in the town of Matthew, Maine” ... instead of the other way around ...

(*Amused.*) Aw, I'm sorry ... > GLORY

Naw ... EAST

so, (*Referring to the place.*) Easton, > GLORY

Yeah – EAST

GLORY
yeah! I passed through near there on my way here, and, by the way, (*Scanning the horizon.*) where is “here,” where am I? I couldn't find it on my map.

Um ... Almost. EAST

What? GLORY

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.

What // do you mean – GLORY

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 ...

(They enjoy this.

Beat.

Glory now deals with the fact that she is missing her bag. She was clutching it to her chest, and now it's gone. This should upset her so much that it seems like it affects her breathing.)

Oh! Oh!

EAST

What? What's wrong?

GLORY

(Seeming to be having trouble breathing.) My heart!

EAST

What? Are you // okay?

GLORY

My heart! *(Seeing that he has her bag; pointing to the bag.)*

EAST

What?

GLORY

You have my *heart!*

EAST

I -- ?

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. (*He gives her the bag.*)

GLORY

Thank you. (*Her breathing normalizes.*)

EAST

You're welcome. (*A long beat while 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.

EAST

(*Considers.*) It's heavy.

GLORY

Yes.

EAST

(*Beat.*) Why is it in that bag?

GLORY

It's how I carry it around.

EAST

Why?

GLORY

It's broken.

What happened? EAST

Wes broke it. GLORY

Your husband? EAST

Yeah, He went away. GLORY

Oh. EAST

With someone else. GLORY

Oh, I'm sorry. EAST

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.

(Gently shakes the bag, which should be filled with small [a heart is the size of its owner's fist] pieces of slate – they make a great sound when shaken.)

It turned to slate.

(Beat. She look back up at the sky.)

EAST

(Takes this in.

Beat.

His only response to what she has just told him is:)

Great for roofing.

(Glory just looks at East.

Beat. Then:)

Wait a second, how do you breathe? 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.

EAST

Then – why do you carry it around with you?

GLORY

It's my *heart*.

EAST

But it's broken.

GLORY

Yeah.

EAST

'Cause your husband left you.

GLORY

Yeah.

EAST

Well, why are you paying 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 seem 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

(Pressing.) What do you mean? –

GLORY

and I need to apologize to him.

EAST

But he *left* you! >

GLORY

I know, but I –

EAST

Why should you apologize?

GLORY

Because!

EAST

Because why?!?

GLORY

Because I killed him!

EAST

Oh. *(This stops East; he backs off a bit.)*

GLORY

And I'd like to apologize.

(Beat. Then, admission:)

See, he had come to visit me when I was in recovery from when they put my artificial heart in – I was almost better; I was just about to go home, too – and he said he wanted 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

(Relief.) Oh. But, it didn’t kill him, you didn’t *kill* him –

GLORY

Yes, I did! Because he got so sad that my new heart didn’t want him back, that he just tore outta the hospital, and ... an ambulance that was comin’ in from an emergency didn’t see him and just ... took him right out, and if I’d have been able to take him back, >

EAST

Glory –

GLORY

he wouldn’t have torn outta there like that, >

EAST

Glory!

GLORY

and been just taken out like that, and so, I just feel that, for closure, the right thing to do is –

(Inexplicably drawn to her, East kisses Glory. When she pulls away, he has her heart again. She takes it back.)

Please don't do that anymore.

EAST

Why?, I love you!

GLORY

Well, 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.

(Again, inexplicably drawn to her, East deliberately kisses Glory. Glory pulls away. East has her heart again. Glory grabs it from him; East grabs it right back.)

EAST

Please let me have this.

GLORY

(Desperately trying to get her heart back.) No! It's mine!

EAST

(Keeping her heart.) I can fix it!

I don't know if I want you to!

GLORY

Glory -- ?

EAST

(Going after her heart.) East, please give that back to me!

GLORY

(Keeping her heart.) But, it's broken. >

EAST

Please -- !

GLORY

It's no good like this.

EAST

But, it's my heart, East!

GLORY

Yes, it is. And I believe *I* have it.

EAST

(This stops Glory. Beat.)

And I can fix it.

(Beat.)

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

(Beat. East crouches, gently places the bag on the ground and start to open it in order to examine its contents.)

Music.

As he opens the bag, music up, and the northern lights appear – in front of Glory, above Glory, on the field of stars behind Glory. Glory sees them ... and they're a thing of wonder.)

GLORY

Oh! Oh, wow! Oh, they're so beautiful ... *(Remembering who they are.)* Oh!
Oh! -- Wes!! Wes!! Goodbye! I'm so sorry! ... Goodbye, Wes! *(And the northern lights – and Wes – are gone. Glory turns to East, who has taken a little piece of her heart out of the bag is examining it.*

Music out. Then in the clear:)

Hello, East.

(Music continues.

East looks at Glory, and then begins repairing her heart ... as the lights fade.

Transitional aurora.

End of “Her Heart.” After the lights have faded and “Her Heart” is over, we begin

Scene Two, which is entitled ...)

Scene 2
SAD AND GLAD

Music fades.

Lights fade up on Jimmy sitting alone at a table in a back corner of Almost, Maine's local hang-out, the Moose Paddy. He is nursing a couple of Buds.

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

She passes Jimmy. Jimmy sees Sandrine, stops her.

JIMMY

Sandrine!

SANDRINE

Hmmm? (Beat. This is a bit awkward – awful, actually.

Then, overcompensating:)

Jimmy!

JIMMY

Hey!

SANDRINE

Hey!

JIMMY

Hey!!

SANDRINE

Hey!!

JIMMY/SANDRINE

(Jimmy hugs Sandrine. Sandrine doesn't really take the hug or hug him back.)

Heyyyy!!!

JIMMY

How you doin'!?

SANDRINE

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

JIMMY

I'm good, I'm good! How are ya?!?

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

Yeah!

JIMMY

That's great!

SANDRINE

Yeah!

JIMMY

That's great!

Yeah. SANDRINE

That's great! JIMMY

Yeah. SANDRINE

You look great! JIMMY

Oh . . . SANDRINE

You look great. JIMMY

Thanks. SANDRINE

You do. You look so great. JIMMY

Thanks, Jimmy. SANDRINE

So pretty. So pretty. JIMMY

Thanks.
(*Beat.*) SANDRINE

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 –

WAITRESS

(Entering.) 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/SANDRINE

Well -- / No! We're not together.

JIMMY/SANDRINE

We'll -- / We're all set, thanks.

JIMMY/SANDRINE

Yeah -- / All set!

JIMMY

Yeah.

WAITRESS

Okay. Well, holler if you need anything.

SANDRINE

Thanks.

WAITRESS

No really – you gotta holler. It's busy up front! (*She exits.*)

SANDRINE

Okay.

JIMMY

(*Fishing.*) So ... you here with anybody, or –

SANDRINE

Yeah, the girls.

JIMMY

Oh.

SANDRINE

We're, uh -- ... (*Covering.*) Girls' night! We're in the front. Actually, I just had to use the ladies' room, so I should get back to // them.

JIMMY

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

SANDRINE

(*Giving in, sitting.*) Well –

JIMMY

Did you know that I took over 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, we do rugs now, we shampoo 'em.

SANDRINE

Oh.

JIMMY

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

Right –
SANDRINE

Mom and Dad retired, headed south.
JIMMY

Yeah, I heard that.
SANDRINE

Vermont.
JIMMY

Oh.
SANDRINE

Yeah, winters there are a lot easier. And then Spot went and died on me ...
JIMMY

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

Yeah. He was old, it was his time, he was a good fish though, but, so, like I said, I really don't have anybody anymore, really ... but, so, um, I was wonderin' – would you like to come over? It'd be fun! Catch up, hang out?
JIMMY

Oh –
SANDRINE

(Entering.) 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?
WAITRESS

SANDRINE

No, we're –

JIMMY

Okay.

WAITRESS

Okay. *(She exits.)*

SANDRINE

(To waitress.) Okay.
(Beat.)

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. Getting' yourself out there again.

SANDRINE

Yeah.

JIMMY

Movin' on . . .

SANDRINE

Yeah, well, actually, Jimmy, it's more than me just getting' myself out there and movin' on. Um . . . this is my . . . bachelorette party.

(Beat. Then, off his blank look:)

I'm getting' married.

JIMMY

(Huge blow.) Oh.

SANDRINE

Yeah.

JIMMY

Wow.

SANDRINE

Yeah.

JIMMY

Wow.

SANDRINE

Yeah.

JIMMY

Wow.

SANDRINE

Yeah.

JIMMY

Wow. That's -- . . . Thought you said you weren't gonna do that. Get married. Thought it wasn't for you, you told me.

(Beat.)

Guess it just wasn't for you with me.

(Beat.)

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

SANDRINE

Martin Laferriere. (*“la-FAIRY-AIR”*) You know him? The uh –

JIMMY

The ranger guy, over in Ashland.

SANDRINE

Yeah, yeah, 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 you.

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 you.

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 would have 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 . . . that's not somethin' I woulda wanted to hear . . .

(Beat.)

So . . . when's the big event?

SANDRINE

Um . . . tomorrow!

JIMMY

Really.

SANDRINE

Yup!

JIMMY

Well then . . . *(Jimmy downs his Bud, and then raises his arm, to get the waitress' attention. As he does so, his unbuttoned sleeve slides up his arm a little. He hollers:)*
HEY!

SANDRINE

(Not wanting Jimmy to draw attention to them.) What are you doin'?

JIMMY

(Going towards the front.) Getting' our waitress, she said holler, *(Calling to waitress.)*
HEY! *(To Sandrine.)* What's her name?

SANDRINE

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

JIMMY

(To waitress.) HEY!

SANDRINE

What are you doin'?

JIMMY

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

SANDRINE

Aw, Jimmy.

JIMMY

And so are you.

SANDRINE

(That was the nicest thing a guy like Jimmy could say to a girl.) Jimmy . . .

JIMMY

(Arm raised, hollering to waitress.) HEY!

SANDRINE

(Protesting.) Jimmy! *(Then, noticing a black marking on Jimmy's arm.)* Jimmy!-whoa-hey! What's that?

JIMMY

(To Sandrine.) What?

SANDRINE

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

JIMMY

(Covering the mark, using his other arm to wave down the waitress; to Sandrine.) Oh, nothin', tattoo, *(To waitress.)* HEY!

SANDRINE

(Intrigued.) What – When did you get that?

JIMMY

(To Sandrine.) Um . . . After you left. *(To waitress.)* HEY!

SANDRINE

(Intrigued, going for his arm.) Jimmy! Well – what's it of, what's it say?

JIMMY

(To Sandrine.) Nothin', nothin', *(To waitress.)* hey-hey-HEY! *(Sandrine grabs his arm.)* N-no!

SANDRINE

(She rolls up his sleeve and takes a beat as she reads, on the inside of his forearm, in big, bold letters:)

“Villian.” *(Rhymes with “Jillian.”)*

JIMMY

Villain.

SANDRINE

Who's Villian?

JIMMY

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

SANDRINE

What?

JIMMY

It's supposed to say, "Villain."

SANDRINE

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

JIMMY

I know, 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.

(Beat.

She kisses Jimmy on the cheek.

Beat.

Then, referring to his tattoo:)

You can get that undone, you know.

JIMMY

Yeah.

(Beat.)

SANDRINE

I gotta head. *(She goes.)*

JIMMY

Yeah. *(Then, stopping Sandrine.)* I'm -- .

(Sandrine stops, turns to Jimmy.

Beat.)

I'm glad you got found.

SANDRINE

Thanks, Jimmy. *(Sandrine goes back to her bachelorette party – and she is welcomed back heartily. We hear this.*

Jimmy hears this. He is alone, sad, and stuck there. Maybe gets his coat off his chair.

Time to go home. Alone. As usual.

Beat.)

WAITRESS

(Entering.) 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 – 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 . . . *(He's sad, looking off to where Sandrine went.)*

WAITRESS

(Looks off to where Sandrine went . . . sees the empty chair . . . puts the pieces together.)

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.

(Beat.)

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

(No response from Jimmy. He's just sad.) Okay. Well, my name's Villian, if you need anything. *(She goes.)*

JIMMY

(Beat. Her name registers. He calls to her.) Villian!?!

VILLIAN

(She stops.) Yeah?

Hi. JIMMY

Hi . . . VILLIAN

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

All right! *(She goes.)* VILLIAN

Villian!! JIMMY

(Stopping.) Yeah?!? VILLIAN

I'm glad you found me. JIMMY

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

(Music.

Looks like Jimmy might stay. Maybe he's a little glad. He sits back down, maybe deals with his tattooed forearm in some way.

Lights fade.

Transitional aurora.

End of "Sad and Glad."

After the lights have faded and "Sad and Glad" is over, we begin Scene Three, which is entitled . . .

Scene 3
THIS HURTS

(Music fades.

Lights come up on Marvalyn finishing up ironing a man's clothes, in the laundry room of Ma Dudley's Boarding House in Almost, Maine.

Steve is sitting on a bench.

Marvalyn starts folding the man's shirt she was ironing, but thinks better of it, and instead, deliberately crumples it, and throws it into her laundry basket. She picks up the iron, wraps the cord around it, preparing to put it away. As she does so, she burns herself on it.)

MARVALYN

Ow! Dammit!

(Steve takes note of this and writes "iron" in a homemade book labeled "Things That Can Hurt You."

Meanwhile, Marvalyn return to deal with the ironing board, which also must be returned to its proper place – the same place she just brought the iron. After folding up the ironing board, she turns to exit and accidentally wallops Steve in the head with the ironing board, knocking him off the bench he was sitting on.)

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

STEVE

(Unfazed.) Yeah.

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

No.

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

In the head.

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

Is there any blood?

MARVALYN

No.

STEVE

Any discoloration?

MARVALYN

No.

STEVE

Then I'm okay.

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

No. I can't feel things like that.

MARVALYN

Like what?

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

What?

STEVE

I can't feel pain.

MARVALYN

Oh, Jeezum Crow, what the hell have I done to you? >

STEVE

Nothin' –

MARVALYN

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!

STEVE

No, I'm okay.

MARVALYN

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.

STEVE

No, it's not serious. I don't think an ironing board could really hurt your head, 'cause, see, (*Forcing his "Things That Can Hurt You" book on her.*) ironing boards aren't on my list of things that can hurt you, >

MARVALYN

(*Dealing with his book.*) What is -- ?

STEVE

plus, there's no blood or discoloration from where I got hit, so . . . >

MARVALYN

Well, you can be hurt and not be bleeding or bruised –

STEVE

And my list is pretty reliable, 'cause my brother Paul is helping me make it, and I can prove it to you: See, I bet if I took this ironing board, like this, and hit you with it, that it wouldn't hurt you (*He smashes her in the head with the ironing board.*), see?, // that didn't hurt.

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

Oh!

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

God!

STEVE

Oh, it did, didn't it!

MARVALYN

Ow!

STEVE

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, because –

MARVALYN

What are you talkin' about?

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

Well, that ironing board hurt me.

STEVE

Yeah.

MARVALYN

So you should add it to your list.

STEVE

(Beat.

He adds "ironing boards" to his list of "Things That Can Hurt You." He then picks up a book labeled "Things To Be Afraid Of.")

Should I be *afraid* of ironing boards?

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

Well they shouldn't be, really.

STEVE

No?

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

No?

MARVALYN

No.

STEVE

But they can *hurt* you.

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

What?

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

I guess.

STEVE

Boy, this is getting very complicated.

MARVALYN

What is?

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

Are you sure you're okay?, // you're just goin' on and on about crazy stuff –

STEVE

Oh, yeah, yeah, see, I have congenital analgesia, he thinks. Some // people –

MARVALYN

What?

STEVE

Congenital analgesia.

MARVALYN

Who thinks?

STEVE

My brother Paul. Some people call it hereditary sensory neuropathy type four, but . . . it just means I can't feel pain. You can hit me if you want to, to see!

MARVALYN

No.

STEVE

Go ahead. It won't hurt. See? *(He hits his head with the book.)*

MARVALYN

OW!

STEVE

See? *(He hits his head again.)*

MARVALYN

OW!

STEVE

See? *(Hits his head again.)*

MARVALYN

OW!

STEVE

Go ahead. *(He offers her the book labeled "Things That Can Hurt You" so she can hit him with it.)*

MARVALYN

No!

STEVE

Come on!

MARVALYN

No!!

STEVE

Come on!!

MARVALYN

NO!!

STEVE

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 Paul says I just shouldn't tell people about myself, because I scare them, *(Referring to his book labeled "Things To Be Afraid Of" so he can show her.)* so I've actually recently put "myself" on my list of things to be afraid of, but – *(Her curiosity getting the better of her, Marvalyn comes up from behind Steve and wallops him on the back of the head with the book labeled "Things That Can Hurt You.")*

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

I had to see [*what would happen*]! But – are you okay?

STEVE

Yeah, I don't feel // pain!

MARVALYN

. . . Don't feel pain, right, of course you're okay! – but – are you sure?

STEVE

Well, is there any blood?

MARVALYN

No.

STEVE

Any discoloration?

MARVALYN

No.

STEVE

Then I'm okay.

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

But –

MARVALYN

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.

Then, giving him back the book labeled "Things That Can Hurt You":)

I'm Marvalyn.

STEVE

I'm Steve. I live on the third floor. Room Eleven.

MARVALYN

(Deflecting.) I live with my boyfriend, Eric. I love him very much.

STEVE

Yeah. We saw you move in.

MARVALYN

Yeah. Our roof collapsed from all the snow in December. We're just here until we can get our feet back on the ground.

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

Oh.

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

Yeah.
(*Beat.*)

STEVE

You guys are loud.

MARVALYN

Huh?

STEVE

You and Eric. You yell and bang. We're right below you.

MARVALYN

Oh. Sorry about that. We're goin' through a rough patch. Happens. Sorry.
(*Beat.*
Then, changing the subject:)
What is it like?

STEVE

What?

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. I don't really feel.

MARVALYN

Is this . . . how you were born?

STEVE

Yeah. I don't have fully developed pain sensors. They're immature, my brother Paul says // , and because they're immature –

MARVALYN

How does he know that?

STEVE

Oh, he *reads*, >

MARVALYN

But –

STEVE

and because they're immature, my development as a human being has been retarded, he says, >

MARVALYN

But –

STEVE

but he *teaches* me what hurts, though.

MARVALYN

Why??

STEVE

So I won't ruin myself. 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 doesn't know what being hurt is, so I have to memorize what might hurt.

MARVALYN

Okay . . .

STEVE

And I have to memorize what to be afraid of. (*Showing her, in his book.*) Things like bears. And guns and knives. And fire. And fear – I should fear fear itself – and pretty girls . . .

MARVALYN

Pretty girls?

STEVE

(He thinks she's pretty.) Yeah.

MARVALYN

Why should you be afraid of pretty girls?

STEVE

Well, 'cause my brother Paul says they can hurt you 'cause they make you love them, and that's something I'm supposed to be afraid of, too – love – but Paul says that I'm really lucky, 'cause I'll probably never have to deal with love, because I have a lot of deficiencies and not very many capacities as a result of the congenital analgesia.

MARVALYN

Wait, what do you mean you're never gonna have to deal with love // , why –

STEVE

'Cause I'm never gonna know what it feels like, Paul says.

MARVALYN

Well, how does he know that?

STEVE

'Cause it hurts.

MARVALYN

It shouldn't.

STEVE

And, plus, I have a lot of deficiencies and not very many capacities.

MARVALYN

You know what, a lot of people do. *(She kisses him. At first it's just Marvalyn kissing Steve, but eventually, Steve participates. Then Marvalyn breaks away.)* I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Are you all right? Are you okay?

STEVE

(Doesn't quite know how to respond. He hasn't learned about this. Then, maybe feeling his lips, and resorting to his usual way of answering this question.) Well . . . is there any blood?

MARVALYN

No . . .

STEVE

Any discoloration?

MARVALYN

No.

STEVE

Then I'm all right. *(Is he?)*

MARVALYN

Yeah. You are.

(Beat.)

I'm so sorry I did that. It's just -- ... You're just very sweet.

STEVE

(Trying to make sense of what just happened.) But . . . you have a boyfriend and you love him very much.

MARVALYN

(She begins gathering her stuff.) Yes I do. And yes I do.

STEVE

And you just kissed me.

MARVALYN

Yes I did.

STEVE

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

MARVALYN

Yes I am.

STEVE

And people who are in love with each other, they don't kiss other people and do their laundry on Friday nights, I've learned that. People who are in love with 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 don't think that's love, // what you and your boyfriend have –

MARVALYN

(Deflecting, 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 very much.

MARVALYN

Yes.

STEVE

Even though you kissed me?

MARVALYN

Yes.

STEVE

Wow, I'm going to have to talk to my brother Paul about this –

MARVALYN

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

STEVE

What?

MARVALYN

Whatever he's teaching you. Tell him to stop. What he's teaching . . . 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 not have your brother read whatever it is he reads.

STEVE

But –

MARVALYN

You know what, I gotta go.

STEVE

(Sits down on the bench.) Right. You gotta go. You're – you're leaving. I knew you would. That's what people do.

MARVALYN

No, I just have to --. 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. Then, as she goes to put it away, 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.)*

STEVE

OW!

MARVALYN

Oh! I'm so 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

(She goes to help him; stops short.) Wait --- : What did you just say?

STEVE

(As he rubs his head, he realizes what he just said.

Beat.

He looks at Marvalyn, tells her plainly:)

Ow.

(Music.

Marvalyn and Steve just look at each other. Utter uncertainty. This is scary. And wonderful. But mostly a little scary – because who knows what’s next.

Lights fade.

Transitional aurora.

End of “This Hurts.”

After the lights have faded and “This Hurts” is over, we being Scene Four, which is entitled . . .

Scene 4
GETTING IT BACK

Music fades.

We hear someone – Gayle – pounding on a door.

GAYLE

Lendall! *(More pounding.)* Lendall! *(More pounding.)* Lendall!

(Lights up on the living room of a small home in Almost, Maine. It is furnished with a comfortable chair and an end table. Lendall has been woken up. Maybe he was asleep in bed; maybe he was asleep in the chair. Either way, he's up now. He turns on the light, and goes to answer the door.

Gayle continues to pound on the door.)

LENDALL

Okay! Gayle! Shhh! I'm comin', I'm comin'!

GAYLE

Lendall!

LENDALL

Hey, hey, hey! Shh, come on, I'm comin'! *(He exits stage left to answer the door.)*

GAYLE

(Entering; blowing by him.) Lendall –

LENDALL

(Returning.) What's the matter?, what's goin' on?

(Beat.

Gayle is stewing.)

What?

GAYLE

(she's been in a bit of a state, but she collects herself.) I want it back.

What? LENDALL

I want it back. GAYLE

What? LENDALL

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

What? LENDALL

Now. GAYLE

(Little beat.) I don't understand – LENDALL

I've got yours in the car. GAYLE

What? LENDALL

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

What are you talkin' about? LENDALL

I don't want it anymore.

GAYLE

Why?

LENDALL

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

GAYLE

What?! –

LENDALL

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.

GAYLE

(Bewildered.) Um, I –

LENDALL

It's in the car.

GAYLE

You said.
(Beat.
He's kind of paralyzed trying to figure this out.)

LENDALL

(Waiting for him to take some action and go get the love.) I can get it for you, or . . . you can get it.

GAYLE

Well, I don't want it back. I don't need it –

LENDALL

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. *(She leaves.)*

LENDALL

Under what circumstances? *(Calling to her.)* Gayle – what are -- ? I don't understand what -- . . . 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 – whoa! Need help?

GAYLE

Nope. I got it. It's not heavy.

(She returns with an ENORMOUS bunch of HUGE red bags full of love. The bags should be filled with clothes or towels [for a little bit of weight and stability] and foam or pillow stuffing [for shape, and to keep them soundless]. She dumps the bags on the floor.)

Here you go.

LENDALL

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

GAYLE

(Exiting.) All the love you gave me, yeah.

LENDALL

Wow.
(*Beat.*)
That's a *lot*.

GAYLE

(*Returning with more bags of love.*) Yeah. (*She exits.*)

LENDALL

Whole lot.

GAYLE

Yeah. (*She returns with even more bags of love. There is now a GIGANTIC pile of love in Lendall's living room.*)

LENDALL

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

GAYLE

(*Upset.*) I'm sure you'll find a place for it (*i.e., another woman.*) . . . And now, I think it's only fair for you to give me mine back because . . . I want it back.

(*Beat.*)

All the love I gave to you?

LENDALL

Yeah?

GAYLE

I want it back.

(*Beat.*)

So go get it.

(*Lendall doesn't move. He's probably trying to figure out what is happening and why it's happening.*)

Lendall, go get it.

(*Lendall still doesn't move.*)

Please.
(Lendall still doesn't move.)
Now!!!

LENDALL

(A little shaken; a little at a loss.) Okay. *(He exits. Gayle sits in the chair and waits. She's still in a state.)*

Long beat.

Lendall returns . . . with a teeny-tiny little bag – a little red pouch – and places it on a little table next to the chair. They look at the little bag. The little bag should be between Lendall and Gayle. And Gayle should be between the many bags of love and the little bag of love.)

GAYLE

What is that?

LENDALL

(It's obvious – it's exactly what she asked for.) It's all the love you gave me.

GAYLE

That's -- . . .? That is *not* --. There is no way -- . . . That is *not* --. *(Mortified.)* Is that all I gave you?

LENDALL

It's all I could find . . .

GAYLE

Oh. Okay. *(Taking in the little bag . . . and then all the big bags.)* Okay. *(And she's crying.)*

LENDALL

Gayle . . . what's goin' on here?

GAYLE

I told you: We're done.

LENDALL

Why do you keep saying that?

GAYLE

Because -- . (*This is hard to say, but 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 doesn't seem to want to remember.*)

In December? . . . It was snowing?

LENDALL

(*But he remembers.*) 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 >

LENDALL

Marvalyn?!? Marvalyn said that, like she's an expert?

GAYLE

said – yes, Marvalyn, yes, 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!

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

Where are you goin'?

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 (*i.e., 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 ... (*Taking in the bags – the pathetic one that contains the love she gave him, and the awesome several that contain the love he 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 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! (*She thinks. Collects herself. New attack.*)
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

I'm not. Pulling something on you. I wouldn't do that to you . . . Just – I think -- . . . Gosh -- . . . (*Not mean, just at a loss.*) I think maybe you should just take what you came for, and I guess I'll see you later. (*This is pretty final. He exits into the rest of the house.*)

GAYLE

(Realization of the finality; calls him, weakly.) Lendall . . . Lendall . . .

(Now Gayle is at a loss. But this is what she wants. She looks at the little bag, takes it, and is about to leave. But curiosity stops her. She sits in the chair, opens the bag, and examines what's inside.)

Lendall!?! What is this? What the heck is this, Lendall? This is *not* the love I gave you, Lendall, at least have the decency to give me back what --. Lendall, what is this?

LENDALL

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

GAYLE

What?

LENDALL

(Returning.) It's a ring.

GAYLE

What? Well, what the -- ? *(She takes what is in the bag out of the bag.)* This isn't -- . This is *not* -- . . . *(Realizes it's a ring box.)* 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 if 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 . . . *(She opens the box, sees the ring.)* Oh!

(Beat.)

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

LENDALL

It's right there, Gayle. *(Referring to the ring.)*

GAYLE

But –

LENDALL

It's right there.

GAYLE

But –

LENDALL

It *is*! That's it! Right there! There was so much of it – you gave me so much, over the years –

GAYLE

Eleven.

LENDALL

-- over the eleven // years –

GAYLE

Eleven, yeah .

LENDALL

-- yeah, you gave me so much . . . that I didn't know what to do with it all. I had to put some in the garage, some in the shed. I asked my dad if he had any suggestions what to do with it all, and he said, "You got a ring yet?" 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."

(Beat.)

He said it'd all fit. (*i.e., in the ring*)

(Beat.)

And he was right.

(Beat.)

(They look at the ring. Then, simply:) That thing is a lot bigger than it looks . . .

(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

(*She takes the ring out of the box. Then, referring to all the bags of love:.*) Can I keep all that?

LENDALL

It's yours.

GAYLE

Thank you.
(*Lendall takes the ring, puts it on Gayle's finger.*
Music.)

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

LENDALL

Yes I did. It was time. And it's honorable.

GAYLE

Well . . . it's very beautiful.

(*Beat.*)

Lendall -- . . . I'm so sorry. It's just -- it's a Friday night, and I was sittin' home all by myself -- we didn't even go out or anything, and I started thinkin' that that's just not right, and --

LENDALL

Shh. (Into a kiss. And a hug.

After a moment – still in the hug, and unbeknownst to Lendall – Gayle can't help herself but to take a good long look at that ring.

Lights fade on Gayle and Lendall hugging and swaying – two small people in love, underneath a big, spectacular, star-lit northern night sky.

Transitional aurora.

End of "Getting It Back."

End of Act One.

Fade to black.

Intermission.

After the intermission, we move to what I'm calling the . . .

ACT II

INTERLOGUE

Music.

Lights up on Pete, from the "Prologue."

He is simply waiting for Ginette. His snowball is on the bench next to him.

He looks offstage left, to where Ginette exited.

He looks at his snowball.

He looks out.

He bundles up against the cold.

Lights fade, and we begin . . .

With Scene Five, which is entitled . . .

Scene 5
THEY FELL

Music fades.

Lights up on Randy and Chad – these guys are one-hundred-percent “guy,” two “Aroostook County boys” – hanging out in a potato field in Almost, Maine. They’re probably drinkin’ some beers – Natural Lite, if you can get it. They’re in mid-conversation.

CHAD

I believe you, I’m just sayin’ –

RANDY

It was bad, Chad. *Bad.*

CHAD

I hear ya, b // ut –

RANDY

But you’re not *listenin’*, // Chad: It was bad! >

CHAD

No, *you’re* not listenin’, ‘cause >

RANDY

Real bad . . .

CHAD

(Topping Randy.) I’m tryin’ to tell you that I had a pretty bad time *myself!!!*

RANDY

(Taking this in; then:) No. There’s no way! --

It was pretty bad, Randy. CHAD

Really. RANDY

Yeah. CHAD

Okay . . . go. *(Let's hear it.)* RANDY

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

What? RANDY

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

(Taking this in.) Sally Dunleavy told you that she didn't // like the way -- . . . ? RANDY

Yeah. CHAD

When? RANDY

When I picked her up. She got in the truck – we were backin' outta her driveway – and all of a sudden, she starts breathin' hard and asked me to stop and she got outta the truck CHAD

and said she was sorry, but she couldn't go out with me because she didn't like the way I smelled, never had!

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, 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 -- . . . ?

(Beat.)

I don't mind the way you smell.

CHAD

Thanks.

RANDY

Jeez.

CHAD

Yeah . . .

(Beat.)

Told you it was bad.

RANDY

More than bad, Chad. That's sad.

CHAD

Yeah.

(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.

RANDY

(Looks at Chad.

Beat.)

I didn't say you're the big winner, >

CHAD

What?

RANDY

did I say you're the big winner?

CHAD

No –

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.

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

CHAD

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

RANDY

What?

CHAD

Her face broke.

RANDY

(*Taking this in.*) Her -- ?

CHAD

Only get one chance with a girl like Yvonne LaFrance and her face broke.
(*Beat.*)
Told you it was bad.
(*Beat.*)

RANDY

How did her face break?

CHAD

When we were dancin'.

RANDY

Dancin'?' (*These guys don't dance.*)

CHAD

Yup.

RANDY

CHAD

Why were you *dancin'*?

RANDY

'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 dancing," 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 I threw her up and over, and, well . . . I threw her . . . *over* . . . over.

(Beat.)

And she landed on her face.

(Beat.)

And it broke.

(Beat.)

Had to take her to the emergency room.

(Long beat.)

Then finally:)

CHAD

That's a drive.

RANDY

Thirty-eight miles.

CHAD

Yup.

(Beat.)

RANDY

(Disgusted.) And she cried.

CHAD

Hate that.

RANDY

Whole way.

(Beat.)

Then had me call her old boyfriend to come get her.

CHAD

Ooh.

RANDY

He did. Asked me to “please leave.”

(Beat.)

He’s small as she is. *(They laugh.*

Beat.

Chad laughs.)

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 makes 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.

(Beat.

They drink their beers, and crush the cans, and shoot them into crates or an offstage abandoned potato barrel, maybe. Everything settles.

Beat.

Chad laughs.)

RANDY

What?

CHAD

(Sitting.) 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 something that makes you feel good or at least makes sense in this world, or what's the point, right? 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.

(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 was just said and heard.)

RANDY

(Escaping the discomfort.) Well, I'm gonna head. *(He start to leave.)* >

CHAD

Yeah . . .

RANDY

(Deflecting throughout the following.) 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 –

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? Or six or seven?

RANDY

Prob'ly 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!, so >

CHAD

Well –

RANDY

(Putting a stop to this – he wants outta there.) hey – HEY!! I'll see ya later! *(He leaves.)*

CHAD

Yeah. Yeah-yeah-yeah . . . *(Chad watches Randy go. Then:)*
Hey, Randy! – *(Suddenly, Chad completely falls down on the ground. Maybe it's more of a crumple to the ground. Love is, after all, often described as making people weak in the knees.)*

RANDY

(Rushing back, seeing Chad on the ground.) Whoa! Chad! You okay?

CHAD

Yeah . . .

RANDY

What the -- . . . Here . . . *(Helps Chad up.)*

CHAD

Thanks. Umm . . .

RANDY

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

CHAD

(Trying to figure this out.) Umm . . . I just fell . . .

RANDY

Well, I figured that out . . .

CHAD

No -- . . . I just --.

(Beat.)

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

(Beat.)

Randy is silent. What has Chad just said? What has Randy just heard? Chad looks at Randy, then suddenly and completely falls down again.)

RANDY/CHAD

Chad!/Whoa . . .

CHAD

(On the ground.) Yup, that's what that was. *(Getting up.)* Me falling in love with you . . . *(He looks at Randy, and falls down again, suddenly and completely.)*

RANDY

Chad: What are you doin'? Come on, get up! *(Randy gets Chad up, roughly.)*

CHAD

No-no-no, Randy -- *(Chad looks at Randy and immediately falls down 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. Confused, scared.

Long beat. Then:)

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 *(Angry.)* -- what the heck is your problem?!? What the heck are you doin'?!? Jeezum Crow, you're my best friend, >

CHAD

Yeah –

RANDY

and that's -- . . . That's a thing you don't mess with. And you messed with it. And you don't *do* that. *(He starts to go, but stops – 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 (i.e., falling down.)* and tellin' me *that (i.e., that you're in love with me.)*, and now it just doesn't make any sense at all. And it doesn't feel good. *(Starts to go again, but stops – 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!

(Little beat.

And then, Randy, who is now on the opposite side of the stage from Chad, suddenly and completely falls down.

Beat.

Randy and Chad look at each other.

A moment of realization. This is about as scary – and wonderful – as it gets. Now – the guys are far away from each other, and all they want to do is get to each other, so they go to get up – in order to get to each other – but suddenly and completely fall down.

This is weird.

They scramble to get up again, to see if they can “beat” the fall, but they fall down again. They desperately want to get to each other, so – in a bit of a frenzy, to try to “beat” the falls – they try to get up, they fall down;

they get up, they fall down;

they get up, they fall down;

they get up, they fall down;

they get up, they fall down.

The falling frenzy settles . . . and Randy and Chad are no closer to each other than they were when they started.

Beat.

Music.

They just look at each other. It’s all scary and thrilling and unknown. It’s going to be wonderful. Just not quite yet.

Lights fade.

Transitional aurora.

End of “They Fell.” After the lights have faded and “They Fell” is over, we begin Scene Six, which is entitled . . .

Scene 6
WHERE IT WENT

Music fades.

Lights up on Phil and Marci, who have just been ice-skating on Echo Pond in Almost, Maine. They are undoing their skates, putting on their boots/shoes. Phil has hockey skates; Marci has figure skates. Marci has one shoe on, one skate on. (Marci should be wearing a winter shoe – like an L.L. Bean hunting shoe, or a suede-like winter shoe – not a boot.)

Beat.

PHIL

It still feels like you're mad.

MARCI

(Undoing her skate.) I'm not mad, // I just said I wish >

PHIL

But you were, you *are*, >

MARCI

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. *(Smiles, continues to undo her skates; is puzzled by something.)*
Beat.

PHIL

(Continuing his defense.) I mean, Chad called me in to the mill. I had to work.

MARCI

(Looking for something.) I'm not mad at you, Phil, you had to work, // I get it.

PHIL

I did!

MARCI

(Now actively looking for something.) Phil, where's my shoe?

PHIL

What?

MARCI

Where's my shoe, I can't find it.

PHIL

Well, it's gotta be here . . .

MARCI

Where is it?!? *(They look for her shoe.*

Beat.)

Is this you being funny?

PHIL

No.

MARCI

'Cause it's not funny. >

PHIL

I –

MARCI

It's cold out here!

PHIL

Well, you're the one that wanted to go skating!

MARCI

Phil!

PHIL

(Angry – a bit of an explosion.) We'll find it! It's gotta be here!
(Beat.)

MARCI

I'm not mad. I was never mad. *(Re-lacing her skate – too cold for stocking feet. Beat.)*
I was disappointed. But now I'm // done.

PHIL

Marce! –

MARCI

I had fun tonight! Skating! I thought it would be fun!, >

PHIL

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, on a Friday night just like this one.
'Member? Right here . . . *(She touches Phil in some way – maybe rubs his back.)* Echo
Pond –

PHIL

(Subtly/subconsciously shaking off Marci's touch.) I know where we are, where the heck is your shoe? *(Going to look for it.)* Maybe it's – maybe it's in the car. Did you -- . . . Where'd you put your skates on, out here or in the car? *(We hear him open the doors and trunk of the car.)*

MARCI

(Dealing with the fact that Phil shrugged her off.) I put them on with you. Right here. *(Beat. She looks to the sky for answers.)*

PHIL

(Returning.) Well, it's // not in the car –

MARCI

(She sees a shooting star.) Oh-oh-oh!!! Shooting star, shooting star! *(She closes her eyes, and makes a wish.)*

PHIL

Wha -- // Where, where?!? *(He looks for it.)*

MARCI

(Eyes closed.) Shh!! I'm wishing, I'm wishing!

PHIL

(Keeps looking, and then:) Oh, I missed it.

MARCI

(Just looks at him.) Yeah, you did.

PHIL

What's that supposed to mean?

MARCI

(Finishes re-lacing her skate, eventually gets up to look for her shoe.) Nothing – 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.
(Beat.)

PHIL

See, when you say things like that, I feel like you're still mad.

MARCI

I'm not.

PHIL

Marce –

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. (*Going offstage, 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. He is trying to sort out what's going on with him, his wife. He's sad. 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. (*Returning.*) 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 – (*Sees how sad Phil is.*) What's wrong?

PHIL

(*Covering.*) Huh? Oh. I'm . . . making a wish of my own. On a regular one.

MARCI

Oh.

PHIL

Wanna wish on it with me?

MARCI

Yeah. Yeah, that'd be nice. Which one?

PHIL

Umm . . . see Hedgehog Mountain?

MARCI

Uh-huh.

Straight up, right above it. PHIL

The bright one? MARCI

Yeah. PHIL

That one? MARCI

Yeah. PHIL

Right there? MARCI

Yeah. PHIL

Phil: MARCI

Yeah? PHIL

That's a planet. MARCI

What? PHIL

MARCI

That's a planet. You're wishing on a planet.

PHIL

That's a -- ?

MARCI

Yeah, >

PHIL

Well, how do you know?

MARCI

and it's (*She sings.*) “. . . when you wish upon a *star*,” not “. . . when you wish upon a *planet* // or *Saturn* – “

PHIL

I know, I know! How do you know?

MARCI

Said on the weather, Phil. Saturn's the brightest object in the sky this month. It'll be sitting right above Hedgehog 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?

What? MARCI

That I gotta pay attention? PHIL

'Cause you don't. MARCI

What are you talkin' about? – PHIL

Phil: Happy Anniversary.
(*Beat.*) MARCI

Huh? PHIL

Happy Anniversary. That's what I'm talkin' about.
(*Beat.*) MARCI

I'm -- . (*Can't quite say he's sorry.*
Beat.
Then, instead of apologizing:) I knew you were mad. PHIL

I'm not mad, // Phil! MARCI

You're mad at me, and pretty soon, outta nowhere, it's gonna get ugly. > PHIL

MARCI

Phil, I'm not mad, I'm –

PHIL

I mean, Marce: I'm *sorry*!! I know I missed some things, but I gotta work! I gotta take a double when Chad needs me at the mill! He'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.

(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 pay attention and you forget your son's first hockey game and // you forget Missy's birthday and >

PHIL

Hockey equipment costs money!

MARCI

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

You're mad at me. But you don't *tell* me – even when I ask you over and over –

MARCI

Because *you* wouldn't // pay attention if I *did* tell you –

PHIL

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

(*Furious.*) 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.

Beat.

Marci and Phil survey the sky, trying to figure out what just happened.

Music.

Phil retrieves the shoe and gives it to Marci, who puts it on. Marci gets up. She then takes the car keys out of her pocket, exits, and we hear her start the car and drive away. Phil is alone.

A shooting star cuts across the night sky on the field of stars. Phil sees it.

Lights fade.

Transitional aurora.

End of "Where It Went."

After the lights have faded and "Where It Went" is over, we begin Scene Seven, which is entitled . . .

Scene 7
STORY OF HOPE

Music fades.

Sound of a car approaching, idling. A car door opens, then closes. Sound of car leaving. Sound of fancy-shoes footsteps in the snow approaching.

Doorbell.

Lights up on a woman standing on the front porch of a small home in Almost, Maine. She carries a suitcase and a purse.

Note: The actor playing the man must be short or thin. This is crucial to the magic of the story. "Story of Hope" is a story of loss, and a physical manifestation of loss in the man is key – lost height, lost weight – because this man is literally half the man he used to be because he has lost so much hope. You'll be surprised by how magical and heartbreaking and funny this scene is when the physical manifestation of the man's loss is crystal clear.

DANIEL

(From off.) Just a minute . . .

(The light comes on in the house; then a porch light comes on. A man who is not the man he used to be answers the door a bit cautiously. Nine o'clock at night is, after all, the middle of the night. He's in pajamas and a bathrobe. He enters and stops cold. He knows this woman.)

HOPE

*(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 is how I had no place in this world, but then I just outta nowhere realized that there is 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, *(Finally really looking at him.)* thank God you're -- . . . *(The man is not who she thought he'd be.)* Oh -- . . . Wait -- . . . I'm sorry. You're not -- . . . I'm -- . . . *(Checking to make sure she's at the right place.)* This is the house -- . . . I'm so sorry -- . . . Does Daniel Harding live here?, I'm looking for Daniel Harding.*

DANIEL

You're // looking for –

HOPE

Looking for Daniel Harding, yeah. He *lives* here. I thought. But . . . (*Off the man's confused state, realizing.*) . . . ooooh . . . he doesn't, does he? Oooh. I am so sorry. (*She gathers her bags, preparing to leave.*) I'm so embarrassed. "Who is this woman and what is she doing here?"

(*Beat.*)

I just honestly thought he'd be here. I always thought he'd be here. Always.

(*Beat.*)

Option A

Do you know him? Big guy, big tall guy. Played basketball, all-Eastern Maine, center? *Strong*. Do you know him? // Played hockey, too? >

Option B

Do you know him? Big guy, big strong guy. Wrestled? Heavyweight? All-Eastern Maine? *Strong*. Do you know him? // Played hockey, too? >

DANIEL

Well . . . –

HOPE

Oh, don't even answer that. That was --. 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, agh!, can't believe I asked you 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 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.

(*Beat.*)

I'm so sorry to have bothered you. I was just so sure --. 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.

(*Beat.*)

I didn't stay. I went away.

DANIEL

Most people do.

HOPE

Yeah. And I guess he did too. I never thought he would. I guess I lost track . . . You gotta hold onto people or you lose ‘em. Wish there was something you could keep ‘em in for when you need ‘em . . . *(Trying to make light, she “looks for him,” and “finds him” in her purse.)* Oh, there he is, perfect! *(She laughs. Not much of a response from Daniel.)*

Beat.

She starts to go; stops.)

Boy it’s cold. I forgot.

DANIEL

Yeah.

(Beat.)

HOPE

(Starts to go. Stops.) I can’t *believe* - - . . . I took a taxi here. From Bangor. *(Bangor is 163 miles south of Almost, Maine.)* To see him.

DANIEL

(Beat.

She took a taxi 163 miles.)

That’s far.

HOPE

Yeah.

DANIEL

That’s a hundred and sixty-three miles.

HOPE

Yeah. This place is a little farther away from things than I remember.

DANIEL

Why did you do that?

HOPE

Because I could only fly as close as Bangor and I needed to get to him as fast as I could.

DANIEL

Why?

HOPE

Because I want to answer a question he asked me.

DANIEL

Oh?

HOPE

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.

DANIEL

Well, that's bein' a little hard on yourself, don't you th // ink?

HOPE

He asked me to marry him.

DANIEL

Oh.

(Beat.)

And you . . .

HOPE

Didn't answer him. No.

(Daniel whistles.)

Yeah. And that's why I'm here. To answer him.

(Beat.)

(Then, realizing she probably ought 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?

DANIEL

I don't know.

HOPE

(Defending 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 . . . *(Where the man is standing.)* . . . there . . . and then . . . I didn't make it back with an answer before the sun came up or . . . at all.

DANIEL

That sounds like an answer to me.

HOPE

No! That wasn't my answer! I just . . . went off into the world, and that's not an answer, and I think -- . . .

(Little beat.)

DANIEL

What?

HOPE

I think he thought I'd say, "Yes."

DANIEL

Well, a guy's probably not gonna ask a girl that question unless he thinks she's gonna say, "Yes."

HOPE

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.

DANIEL

(Taking this in.) You loved him?

HOPE

Well -- . I don't know if -- . I mean, we were kids. *(She considers. Then, honest and true:)* Yes. I did. I do.

(Beat.)

I feel like I dashed his hopes and dreams.

DANIEL

(This speech is not an attack. It's more of a rumination – one that doesn't do much to make the woman feel better.) Oh, come on. 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, 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."

(Beat.)

Maybe a little pointed here.) 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.

HOPE

(Taking in this very unhelpful information.) Yeah . . .

(Beat.)

Then, at a loss:) Well . . . thank you.

DANIEL

For what?

HOPE

(Considers; then, honestly:) I don't know. *(She start to leave.)*

DANIEL

(Beat.)

Goodbye, Hope.

HOPE

Goodbye. (*Stopping.*) Agh!, 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 to him, to Danny, and that with him was my place in the world -- . . . Wait . . . (*Realization.*) You called me Hope. How did you know my name?

(*The man gently presents himself – maybe removes his glasses – and the woman recognizes him.*) Danny?!?

DANIEL

Hello, Hope.

HOPE

(*In a bit of spin.*) Danny . . . I didn't // rec -- >

DANIEL

I know.

HOPE

I didn't // rec -- >

DANIEL

I know.

HOPE

I didn't even // recognize you!

DANIEL

I know.

HOPE

You're so . . .

DANIEL

I know.

HOPE

. . . small.

DANIEL

Yeah. I, uh, lost a lotta hope. That'll do a number on you.
(Long beat.
They don't hug. Or greet each other physically. It should be awful.)

HOPE

Danny: I'm so sorry I // never –

DANIEL

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 his 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 by:)

SUZETTE

(From off.) Honey? Dan? Hon? Who's there?

DANIEL

(Beat.)
Just somebody . . . needs directions.

SUZETTE

It's awful late for directions.

DANIEL

Yeah – Suzette, listen . . .
(Beat.)
. . . I'll be right in.

SUZETTE

Okay . . .

DANIEL

(Beat.)
I -- . . .

HOPE

What?

DANIEL

(Simple – not precious.) I hope you find it, Hope. Your place in the world.
(Beat.)
Bye.

HOPE

Goodbye, Danny.
(Danny goes inside. Hope lingers – she is at a loss. Finally – after all these years – she answers Danny. She knows he won't hear her. She knows it wouldn't matter if he did. But she answers him anyway.)
Yes.
(Beat.)
Then, smaller and to herself:)
Yes.

(Music.

Hope starts to go; she turns back.

The porch light goes out.

Lights fade.

Transitional aurora.

End of "Story of Hope."

As the lights fade, and "Story of Hope" is over, we begin Scene Eight, which is entitled . .

Scene Eight
SEEING THE THING

Music fades.

Sound of two snowmobiles approaching and parking. The lights from their offstage headlights can be seen as they approach.

Lights up on the winterized porch of a small shack in the middle of nowhere – but still within the “town” limits of Almost, Maine.

Rhonda and Dave – the snowmobilers – enter, kicking the snow off their boots. They are carrying their snowmobile helmets and are dressed in layer upon layer upon layer of snowmobile/winter clothing. Dave has a present – a wrapped painting – behind his back.
Beat.

RHONDA

(She is not comfortable with having Dave in her house. This is a first.) Okay. This is it. You're in. You're inside.

DAVE

This is the porch. *(He'd like to go further inside.)*

RHONDA

It's winterized. *(This is as far as he's 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. *(He presents his wrapped gift, creating “awkward present beat #1.”)*

RHONDA

What's this?

DAVE

It's -- . It's -- . It's -- . *(Changing the subject, explosively dispelling the tension.)* Boy, that was fun tonight, Rhonda! >

Yeah, was!

RHONDA

I mean, twenty miles out there, >

DAVE

Yeah!

RHONDA

beans and franks at the Snowmobile Club, >

DAVE

Yeah!

RHONDA

twenty miles back, coupla beers at The Moose Paddy!

DAVE

Awesome!

RHONDA

Yeah, and, boy, you flew on your new sled, // man!

DAVE

It's a Polaris, man!

RHONDA

I know, and you whapped my butt!

DAVE

Yeah! That's what you get for ridin' an Arctic Cat: Ya get yer butt whapped! And I whapped it!

RHONDA

I know! DAVE

Whipped your butt! RHONDA

I know! DAVE

Whipped it! RHONDA

I know! DAVE

Whipped your butt, Arctic Cat-Man!! RHONDA

I know, I know, I'm not sayin' ya didn't! DAVE

RHONDA
(Settling down.) That was fun.
(Beat.
Everything stops again. They look at the wrapped gift. Call this "awkward present beat #2.")

DAVE
So, this is, um . . . Well, we been . . . together 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, and, well –

RHONDA

You getting' all girl on me?

DAVE

-- *shh!* – and, and, and -- . . . And, here. (*He presents her with his gift.*)

RHONDA

(These two don't give each other presents.) What are you doin' here, bud?

DAVE

Open it.

RHONDA

"Together." Hmm. I don't know about this . . .

DAVE

Just open it.

RHONDA

(She opens the present downstage center. The present – a wrapped canvas painting – must be opened in such a way that the audience cannot see what it is. Once Rhonda opens it, she props the painting up against a crate – still so that the audience can't see it. She has no idea what it is a painting of.

Beat.)

What is it?

DAVE

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

Looks like someone really painted it.

DAVE

Well, someone really *did* paint it?

RHONDA

(*Realizing.*) Did you paint this?

DAVE

Yeah.

RHONDA

For me?

DAVE

Yeah.

RHONDA

Oh . . . (*She has no idea what it is, what to make of it.*) Why?!?

DAVE

Well -- . . . (*He painted it 'cause he thinks the whole world of her.*)

RHONDA

I mean . . . thank you! // Thank you, thanks, yeah.

DAVE

There you go!, that's what people say!, there you go! You're welcome.

RHONDA

(*Sitting in chair, center, staring at her painting.*) So, Dave . . . I didn't know you painted.

DAVE

Yeah. This is -- . . . (*Turns his painting right side up – Rhonda propped it up wrong. Then:*) I'm takin' adult ed art. At nights. Merle Haslem 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, 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 blocks of colors, it's just colors, but if you step back and look at the whole thing, it's not just 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*?!?

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

You gotta trick it! (*Demonstrates "tricking it" – steals glances at it as he walks by it.*) Trick it! (*More demonstration.*) See! Trick it, trick it! Gotta not let it know. And hopefully you'll eventually see what it is. It's a common thing, it's somethin' everybody knows.

(*Rhonda tries "trickin' it" a few times, like Dave did. This "trickin' it" business should be pretty darn funny.*)

There ya go, there ya go!

RHONDA

(*Gives up on "trickin' it."*) This is stupid. I don't see anything.

DAVE

No, you were doin' good!

RHONDA

Dave!

DAVE

All right, all right, then do this: Do what you usually do around the house at night, and check it out real casual-like, (*Demonstrating.*) and –

RHONDA

I usually have a Bud and talk to you on the phone.

DAVE

Well, do that. Where's the kitchen? (*Starting into the house.*) // I'll get you a Bud, and you can talk to me –

RHONDA

(*Stopping him – she doesn't want him going inside.*) N-n-n-n-no!

DAVE

What?

RHONDA

I'm outta Bud. Only got Natty Lite.

DAVE

(*Starting back into the house.*) All right, I'll get you a Natty Lite, // and you can have your beer and talk to me –

RHONDA

(*Stopping him.*) N-n-no!

DAVE

Why not? Come on, let's go inside and get us a coupla beers! >

RHONDA

No! (*Back to the painting.*) We gotta trick this thing, right? See? I'm trickin' it, I'm trickin' it! Trickin' it, I'm trickin' it!

DAVE

It's what people who've known each other for a long time do. *Come on!! HEY!!!*
(*Stopping her "trickin' it" routine.*) Quit it!! 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 unnatural. It's unnatural, // Rhonda! So let's do what's the *natural* thing to do and go inside and have some beers -- !

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. (*She sits; stares straight at the painting, which frustrates Dave.*)

DAVE

You're doin' it wrong!

RHONDA

Shh!

DAVE

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?!? 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 kisses her right on the mouth. That's the hint. She immediately gets up/pulls away. Then, angry/flustered:)

What are you doin'?!?

(Little beat.)

What was that?!? Why did you do that?!?

DAVE

'Cause I was giving you a hint -- . . .

RHONDA

Don't ever do that again. *Ever! And GET OUTTA HERE!!! (She storms off into the house.*

Beat.)

DAVE

(Gathering his things; to himself:) Jeezum Crow . . . *(He starts to go; stops; then, exploding:)* HEY, RHONDA!!

RHONDA

What?

DAVE

You really are what they say!!

RHONDA

What? What do they say?

DAVE

That you're a little hung up, there!!!

RHONDA

(Reentering forcefully.) Who says that?!?

DAVE

(Retreating – she's tough.) Everybody.

RHONDA

(Continuing to advance.) Everybody who?

DAVE

(Retreating.) 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, they say, and they were right!

RHONDA

Who says?

DAVE

(Tough question to answer, 'cause these are their best buds.) Suzette.

RHONDA

Suzette?

DAVE

Yeah, and Dan . . .

RHONDA

(Disbelief.) Suzette and Dan *Harding* say that I'm a little hung up, there, and that you gotta be a little persistent, there . . . ???

DAVE

Yeah.

RHONDA

Well, who else?

DAVE

Marci . . .

RHONDA

Marci?!?

DAVE

Yeah, and Phil, // and -- >

RHONDA

Marci and *Phil?!?* –

DAVE

-- yeah – and Randy and Chad, and >

RHONDA

Randy and Chad?!? –

DAVE

Lendall and Gayle, and >

RHONDA

Gayle? –

DAVE

Marvalyn and Eric, and >

RHONDA

Marvalyn . . . ?

DAVE

and Jimmy, and Sandrine, and East, and >

RHONDA

East??

DAVE

that's just to name a few . . .

RHONDA

(Deeply, deeply hurt.) Well, why would they -- . . . ? I love those guys. I'm good to those guys. Why would they say that about me? That's talkin' about me. That's mean.

DAVE

No -- . I don't think they're bein' mean, Rhonda. I think they said that to me about you to kinda warn me what I was getting' myself into with you. 'Cause they like you. And me. Us. They're rootin' for us, Rhonda.

RHONDA

Who's rootin' for us?

DAVE

Everybody! East and Gayle and Lendall and Randy and Chad –

RHONDA

Well, they never told me that, that they're "rootin'" for us –

DAVE

Well, that's 'cause you're a little hung up, there, Rhonda!

(Beat.)

He has scraped something deep inside Rhonda.)

Just -- . . . I'm sorry if I made you mad. I don't know what I did wrong. I just gave you a kiss. I mean, just . . . why not give me one back? It's the polite thing to do, you know, get a kiss/give a kiss, very fair. Just . . . give me a kiss, Rhonda.

(Beat.)

RHONDA

I don't know how.

DAVE

What do you mean?

RHONDA

I don't know how. I've never done it before.

DAVE

You never . . . kissed?

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 take good long looks at you!

(Beat.)

Holy Cow: So you never -- . You never . . . have [*had . . . relations*] . . .?

RHONDA

No.

DAVE

Well, gosh. I think that's kinda neat.

(Beat.)

You know what?, do me a favor: Try givin' me a kiss and see what happens. And I'm not gonna make fun of you or nothin' bad like that, I promise . . .

RHONDA

No . . . No . . . Let's do the *(Going back to her chair so she can work on the painting.)*

this: Is it apples? Cherries? Big open-faced strawberry rhubarb pie --

(Dave kisses Rhonda. For a while. Eventually, Dave gently breaks the kiss, checks on her. She's okay. Looks like she liked it this time. The painting should be in Rhonda's eye line during/after this kiss, because now . . . she's finally going to be able to see what Dave has painted for her.)

Oh, Dave . . . I see it! It's a --. I see it. It's -- . . . *(Getting up from her chair and getting the painting -- so the audience still can't see it.)* It's nice. That's really nice. It's good. You're good at this! *(She clutches the painting to her chest -- the audience still can't see it.)*

DAVE

Yeah?

RHONDA

Yeah.

DAVE

(Kisses Rhonda. The painting is squished between their bodies -- the audience still can't see what it is.) And you are very good at this . . .

RHONDA

(Kisses Dave hard -- and she really is very good at it, which catches Dave by surprise.) I thought it'd be hard! *(She kisses him again, fast and hard.)* And it's not!!! *(She kisses him again, fast and hard.)* At all . . . *(The painting -- now an afterthought -- ends up facing upstage in Rhonda's chair; the audience still hasn't seen it.)* And I feel like I wanna do it for a long time, but I also feel like I wanna do somethin' else . . . next . . . *(Rhonda is just about jumping out of her skin, dying to know what's next.)* But I don't know what that is.

DAVE

I do.

(Music.

The anticipation is killing them both. But finally, Dave musters his courage, and shows Rhonda what they might wanna do next . . . by gently unzipping her Polaris snowmobile jacket and taking it off. Then he unzips his Arctic Cat snowmobile jacket – with her help! – and takes it off. Then he takes off his boots; indicates that Rhonda should do the same. And Rhonda does. Dave then takes off his snowmobile pants. Rhonda takes off hers. And then Rhonda and Dave start to take off layer after layer after layer [the more layers the better – and funnier!] of snowmobile/winter clothes, which they do more and more rapidly and with more and more intention 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 . . . and a great big pile of winter clothes on the ground between them.

Beat.

They're dying for each other!

You wanna know what comes next-next?

RHONDA

Yeah.

DAVE

Why don't we go inside . . . and I'll show you . . .

RHONDA

Well, how long is it gonna take?

DAVE

Well . . . it could take all night. Maybe longer . . .

RHONDA

Well, wait!

(Music fades down.)

We're workin' tomorrow, first shift.

DAVE

Says who?

(Beat.

He shrugs – he has an idea.)

RHONDA

(Gets what he's saying.) You mean call in? We're callin' in?!?

(Music fades back up.

This is a very exciting idea – because these people never call in!)

We're callin' in!!! *(Very excited!)* We're callin' Chad!!! *(Very, very excited!)* 'Cause you and me, we're not working first shift or any shift tomorrow. *(Still very, very excited, Rhonda starts to exit into the house; stops – and this is Rhonda's own special brand of seduction:)* You get yourself inside, here, Mister Arctic Cat-Man and you show me what's next! *(She raucously exits into the house.*

Beat.

Dave is amazed – a bit stunned. The way this has panned out is far beyond his wildest dreams! And it's because of his painting, which he now picks up – still so the audience can't see it – and has a moment with it. He looks at it, clutches it to himself, and gives thanks! He is interrupted by Rhonda:)

DAVE!!

(Snapped out of his reverie, Dave exits, to live out this dream. As he does so, he quickly, casually, unstage-ily leaves the painting behind in such a way that it finds itself sitting on the chair's arms, propped up against the chair's back, so that the audience can finally see that it is a painting of . . . a HEART. Just a big red HEART.

Lights fade. The HEART remains lit.

Music up.

End of "Seeing the Thing."

After the lights have faded on "Seeing the Thing," the painting of the heart remains brilliantly lit. It seems to glow brighter for a while, and then, suddenly –

*Music end/blackout/transitional aurora,
and we move to the . . .*

EPILOGUE

Music.

*Lights up to reveal Pete, who is still exactly where we left him in the “Interlogue”:
sitting on his bench, looking off left to where Ginette exited. His snowball is still sitting
next to him.*

*Pete gets up, taking his snowball with him, and goes toward where Ginette exited to see if
he can see here.*

And then . . . there’s a wonderful little swell in the music as . . .

*Ginette slowly – maybe a little wearily – enters from the other side of the stage, stage
right!*

It starts to SNOW!

*Pete senses Ginette; turns to her; starts towards her – but stops and, first, nonverbally
asks, using the snowball, if she’s been all the way around the world . . .*

*and she nods, “Yes,” because she has! She’s been all the way around the world and
she’s back – and she’s “close” again.*

Pete tosses his snowball behind him, and Ginette and Pete run to each other and hug.

They go to the bench, sit and, on the last chord of the music, resume looking at the stars.

The northern lights appear.

Music ends.

Lights fade to black.

The End

Rock and Roll!

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