

(DRAFT: 21 Sep 2019)

COLD RAIN

A play in two acts
By Craig Houk



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COLD RAIN by Craig Houk

CHARACTERS

LOLLY WEEKES (Ages 27, 34, 50, 57) A Witch
SHIRLEY WEEKES (Ages 31, 38, 54, 61) A Witch
CARLY WEEKES-REKOWSKI (Ages 22, 29, 38, 45, 52) A Witch
BRYSON REKOWSKI (Age 16) A Dandy
FISHER HICKMAN (Age 17) A Bully
JOHNNY REKOWSKI (Ages 16, 23) A Magician
DONNA PAGNOTTO (Age 16) A Fruit Fly
JOE REKOWSKI (Ages 24, 47) A Crooner
LYDIA PACHECO (Age 37, 44) A Cop } Played by the same actor.
PRUDENCE (Ageless) A Counselor }

SETTING

A Small Town somewhere in Western Pennsylvania

TIME

1959, 1966, 1975, 1982, 1989

NOTE: All scenes taking place in 1982 are chronological and occur within a few days.

SCENE BREAKDOWN

Act 1-1	1959	Weekes Herb Shed	Western PA
Act 1-2	1975	Police Station	Western PA
Act 1-3	1982	Johnny's Bedroom	Western PA
Act 1-4	1982	Rekowski Kitchen	Western PA
Act 1-5	1982	Rekowski Backyard	Western PA
Act 1-6	1966	Rekowski Livingroom	Western PA
Act 1-7	1982	Flat Rock	Western PA
Act 1-8	1982	Gene's Place/Lounge	Western PA
Act 1-9	1982	Flat Rock	Western PA
Act 2-1	1959	Tulagi Night Club	Colorado
Act 2-2	1982	Police Station	Western PA
Act 2-3	1966	Flat Rock	Western PA
Act 2-4	1975	A Chasm	Elsewhere
Act 2-5	1975	Johnny's Bedroom	Western PA
Act 2-6	1982	Rekowski Livingroom	Western PA
Act 2-7	1982	Bryson's Bedroom	Western PA
Act 2-8	1982	Rekowski Livingroom	Western PA
Act 2-9	1982	Police Station	Western PA
Act 2-10	1989	Weekes Dining/Livingroom	Western PA

ACT 1**SCENE 1**

(An herb shed. 1959. Nighttime. Three women stand around a table, casting a circle. On the table are various sized bowls containing mandrake roots, flower petals, betel nuts and a bottle of red wine. Also on the table are three candles: white, black and green, surrounded by bay leaves. Incense is burning. A stack of 45 RPM records sit nearby. A large pot boils on a burner.)

LOLLY

(She lights the candles.)

Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit. I ask thee to free and heal our bodies from all negative forces.

LOLLY/CARLY/SHIRLEY

Blessed be!

CARLY

(She begins to create a mixture of the ingredients into the pot.)

Mystic moon, full and bright,
Give me what I wish tonight.
A little love, is all I need,
I can do the rest indeed.
Fetch no beast, make no trouble,
Send him to me, on the double.
The one I love, will need a nudge,
Into my arms, where he can't budge.
And there he will forever stay,
For all of our remaining days...

SHIRLEY

...For Aradia's sake, Carly. You tryin' to conjure a man or a garden snail?

LOLLY

Leave her be, Shirley.

SHIRLEY

Put a sock in it, Lolly.

(To Carly.)

You. Take those records and put them into the pot here.

(To both.)

And then I want the pair of you to stand aside.

LOLLY

Shirley...

SHIRLEY

Now!

(A gust of wind. Lolly is forced back. Carly does as commanded. Shirley takes over mixing the ingredients and casting the spell.)

As I cast this mystic spell,
Bring this man three nights of hell...

(She extinguishes the white and green candles. The black candle remains lit.)

...Candle black, black as night,
Bring him pangs of love tonight.
Boils on his skin will grow,
Vex him with a reddened glow.
Pine and yew afflict him now,
For three nights, he'll wonder how.
When three nights of ache have passed,
Bring him hence and make it fast.
When three nights of pain endured,
The pain resolve rest assured.
Blotches leave him, go away,
Bound by thirty and a day.

(The pot glows as vapor rises out of it. Shirley takes a man's comb, pulls hair from it and drops the hair into the pot. She then takes a photo, tears it in half, sets half of it aflame and tosses the other half into the pot. The

comb and photo both appear in ACT 2, SCENE 1.)

LOLLY

(During the above, Lolly has stepped aside, out of earshot, and quietly speaks the following incantation.)

Whilst this foul crone blathers on,
Moon above please hear my plea.
Reverse this vex that's coming on,
And send it from we witches three.

SHIRLEY

Come here, Carly.

(Carly does as instructed. Shirley strokes Carly's hair and then, without warning, pulls a strand out. Carly winces. Shirley places the strand into the pot. Nothing happens.)

Nuts! I think we need something a little more... personal. More... charged.

(Shirley pulls a pin from her hair. Carly timidly holds out her hand, palm up.)

Are you ready?

CARLY

(Already light headed.)

No... I just... I need a...

(Shirley strikes Carly's palm with the pin.)

Ow!

SHIRLEY

(She guides Carly's hand over the pot. The blood drips into it. As it does, there comes a chemical reaction and a burst of vapors.)

Give to Carly now the devotion of this man and by him may she conceive one - no two - offspring. And in this spell, seal the pact of my charge with Carly's health and longevity.

(The pot glows brighter and the vapors rise in abundance. Shirley removes the contents with a large wire strainer spoon. The records have melted and formed into a black orb.)

This circle is now open, but my spell is unbroken.

(To Carly.)

Take this to Flat Rock and release it into the water. You'll need to swim about nine yards out to where it's deepest.

CARLY

Shirley...

SHIRLEY

...Go.

CARLY

Two children? I didn't ask for two...

SHIRLEY

...In case one of 'em doesn't turn out so good. Now go! There isn't time.

(Carly takes the orb from Shirley and exits. Shirley and Lolly stand quietly for a moment.)

LOLLY

Have you lost your fuckin' mind?

SHIRLEY

Language, Lolly.

LOLLY

Thirty and a day?

SHIRLEY

Thirty years and one day. And then the spell is broken.

(Sound of a car door. The car starts and then pulls away.)

LOLLY

Carly will be fifty-two years old. What then?

SHIRLEY

The poor bastard will have spent three decades with her. If he's miserable, he'll leave. If he's still in love with her after the spell lifts, he'll stay.

LOLLY

She shouldn't be out there by herself.

SHIRLEY

She needs to be on her own. If not, the spell won't take. And I can't have you interferin' with my incantations. So, you'll stay put.

LOLLY

Shirley...

SHIRLEY

...You'll stay put.

LOLLY.

Well, I'm not gonna be able to relax until Carly's home and safe. So, what do we do in the meantime?

SHIRLEY.

We go roller-skatin'.

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 2

(Police station. 1975. Evening. Lydia Pacheco sits in a chair at a table. She is speaking with a detective. She's been drinking.)

LYDIA

Okay, look. It's a little hard to keep track of two teenage girls when you're working all hours and don't have a man around

to pick up the slack. You know what I mean? So, I don't appreciate your assertion that I'm somehow responsible for what happened at Flat Rock that night. Tina and Rose are dead. Okay? And there ain't nothin' I can do about it. But I damn sure ain't gonna take the blame. They had no business bein' there and I sure as hell didn't give 'em permission to go. So, you can just cut the shit with that line of questionin'.

(Beat.)

And why do you keep bringin' me back in here anyway? Huh? You know, because every time I sit in this chair and I have to talk to a detective or a cop or some other idiot, I gotta relive the night my girls drowned. So, what? So, you keep tellin' me it wasn't an accident. And you keep tellin' me that someone did this to them. And you want justice. For who? For me? For two dead girls? Well, you can just fuck right off with that nonsense.

(Beat.)

You're all useless. Every last one of you. Hell, I could do a better job. That's right. Drunk ol' Lydia Pacheco could do a better job than a bunch of dimwitted, degenerate dicks.

(Beat. She rises out of her chair.)

Hey, listen. I'm pretty sure I'm gonna be sick. So, I'm gonna go. And I guess I'll see you at Marie and Leroy's wedding next weekend?

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 3

(A bedroom. 1982. Midafternoon. The room is filled with various Hanna Barbera and other cartoon collectibles. There is also a TV. Voices can be heard off.)

BRYSON

(Off, calling out.)

Anyone home?

FISHER

(Off, in an elevated whisper.)

Keep it down, man.

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(They enter.)

BRYSON

Why?

FISHER

I don't want anyone to know I'm here. That's why.

BRYSON

You're embarrassed to be seen with me.

FISHER

Bullshit.

BRYSON

You parked like four blocks away. We trekked through the woods and along the tracks to my back yard. It would've been quicker to take the main roads.

FISHER

Give it a rest, okay?

BRYSON

I don't think anyone's here anyway. My mom usually gets home around four.

FISHER

What about the retard?

BRYSON

What?

FISHER

Your brother.

BRYSON

Johnny?

FISHER

Yeah. He's a retard, ain't he?

BRYSON

No, he's not.

FISHER

Come on. Dude is fucked in the head. How old is he and he still lives at home? I thought he was retarded.

BRYSON

No. So, stop sayin' that.

FISHER

I'm gonna go.

(He starts off.)

BRYSON

Hey...

(Fisher stops and turns to Bryson.)

I thought you wanted to play Atari.

FISHER

No. No, man. I got my own system. Just lookin' to borrow a couple of games.

BRYSON

(Disappointed.)

Oh.

FISHER

You'll get 'em back.

BRYSON

Yeah, okay. Well, Johnny has a trunk full here.

(He crosses to the trunk and undoes a latch.)

He, uh... What do you want? He's got Pac Man, Asteroids, Space Invaders, Pit Fall...

FISHER

(Peering out a window.)

...Isn't that your dad's van in the driveway?

BRYSON

(He stops and turns to Fisher.)

Um... yeah, maybe.

(Bryson moves to Fisher.)

FISHER

Volkswagen. Looks like a '73. '74 maybe.

BRYSON

(Disinterested.)

I guess.

FISHER

You said nobody was home.

BRYSON

(He joins Fisher at the window.)

Well, his motorcycle isn't there, so he must've gone out for a ride. Maybe he went downtown.

FISHER

And you sure your brother ain't here?

(Fisher looks around the room. He checks out various objects: pictures, action figures, an alarm clock, stuffed animals, etc.)

BRYSON

I don't know. He might be in the cellar watchin' cartoons. That's usually where he is if he's not in here. And if he's not here, he's usually in the den. There's a TV in there too. It really doesn't matter any way. Unless you're two dimensional and in Technicolor, you're basically invisible to him.

FISHER

(Fisher picks up a cap and places it playfully on Bryson's head.)

Why are you so scrawny?

(He squeezes Bryson's biceps.)

BRYSON

(He pulls away.)

Hey... Fisher. Don't... don't do that.

(He takes off the cap and tosses it aside.)

FISHER

That's why everyone picks on you, you know. Because you're all boney and shit.

(He grabs at Bryson's waist. Bryson pulls away again.)

BRYSON

Fisher, please...

FISHER

...You should learn to defend yourself.

BRYSON

I do all right.

FISHER

I don't mean with words. I mean with your body. Your arms. Your hands. Your legs...

(He reaches for Bryson's legs. Bryson clears further.)

BRYSON

...Do you want the games or not?

FISHER

Why do you come?

BRYSON

What're you talkin' about?

FISHER

To my matches. You think I don't see you sittin' up there? At the top of the bleachers? Sometimes you're there with that nerd chick. What's her name?

BRYSON

Donna.

FISHER

Yeah. You two goin' out?

BRYSON

No. She's just a friend.

FISHER

She ain't always with you, but you're always up there. Every match. Starin' down at me.

BRYSON

So, what? So, I've seen you wrestle. What's your point?

FISHER

Well, if you want, I could show you some moves.

BRYSON

No. I don't think so. It's not really my thing.

FISHER

Okay. I get it. You don't like to fight. Fine. You don't have to fight. But you need a way to defend yourself if someone comes at you.

BRYSON

If someone comes at me, I'll run. I'm fast.

FISHER.

What happens if they catch you?

BRYSON

They won't.

FISHER

What if they do?

BRYSON

Look, I'm just gonna grab a bunch of games for you.

(He starts for the trunk.)

Bring 'em back as soon as you're done, okay?

(He undoes another latch and pops the lock.)

My brother'll be totally pissed off if he finds out about this so...

(Before Bryson can open the trunk, Fisher grabs him and forces him to the ground. Bryson struggles.)

..What're you doin', Fisher? Stop it.

FISHER

Relax. I'm gonna show you a couple of moves.

BRYSON

I said "no".

(They continue to struggle until Fisher successfully restrains Bryson.)

Ow!

FISHER

Stop movin'. Okay, listen. I'm gonna let up a little. And you better not try to break free because, believe me, I will pin you hard to the floor again. You hear me?

BRYSON

Yes.

FISHER

I'm not kiddin' around. You better not move and you better do what I tell you to do.

BRYSON

Fine.

FISHER

Bryson...

BRYSON

..Fine. I said fine!

FISHER

Okay. Rise up with me... And go slow.

(Bryson rises as Fisher does.)

Now get on your hands and knees with your palms flat on the floor.

(Bryson does this.)

Good. Now push your butt back in to your calves, okay?

BRYSON

Okay.

(They are now in what is referred to in wrestling as the referee's position. A beat. They begin to wrestle, initiated by Fisher. This will be clumsy and will last a while as it grows in intensity. It ends when Fisher pins Bryson to the floor. They're faces are close. A beat. They kiss. Fisher pushes himself off Bryson. A moment.)

Fisher... it's okay.

FISHER

(Coldly. Distracted.)

I was tryin' to show you how to protect yourself.

BRYSON

I know but...

FISHER

I'm not gay.

BRYSON

I didn't say...

FISHER

..Look, I'm not queer. You got it?

(He stands.)

BRYSON

Yeah.

(He stands.)

FISHER

And anyway, you made me do it... Comin' on to me all the time.

BRYSON

That's not true...

FISHER

...We're not the same, you and me. You're a faggot...

(Fisher shoves Bryson.)

BRYSON

(Bryson shoves back.)

...Hey...!

FISHER

...I was tryin' to show you how to defend yourself. And you baited me, man. You fuckin' baited me. And listen, dude, I will kick your ass if you tell anyone. You hear me?

BRYSON

What's the matter with you...?

FISHER

(He moves closer to Bryson.)

...Do you hear me?

BRYSON

Screw you.

FISHER

No. Screw you.

BRYSON

Get out.

(Bryson grabs a baseball bat that's lying nearby.)

Go!

(Fisher exits. Bryson breathes and then follows him out. A beat. The trunk lid opens revealing Johnny.)

JOHNNY

Heavens to Murgatroyd.

(He returns to the trunk, closing the lid.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 4

(A kitchen. Late afternoon. Carly carries a pot from the stove to the kitchen table, which has been set for four. She sets it down. She then retrieves a salad and loaf of bread from the counter. She places these on the table.)

CARLY

Bryson! Johnny! Supper!

(She sits at the table and prepares a plate for herself.)

Bryson! Get down here! Where's your brother?

BRYSON

(Off.)

I'll be down in a minute!

CARLY

Where's your brother?

BRYSON

(Off. Annoyed.)

I don't know!

(Carly pokes at her pasta with a fork. She takes a bite, makes a face and spits the food into her napkin. She closes the napkin and drops it onto the plate. She takes the plate and scrapes everything in to the garbage. She returns the empty plate to the table and sits. She pours herself a glass of wine and is quiet for a moment. Bryson enters.)

BRYSON

Sorry.

(Bryson pulls a canned soda from the fridge and sits at the table. He grabs a plate and begins to serve himself.)

CARLY

I called for you twice.

BRYSON

I was finishin' up some homework.

CARLY

Your supper's gettin' cold.

BRYSON

I said I was sorry. What more do you want?

CARLY

Less attitude to start.

(A quiet moment. Bryson eats. Carly drinks her wine.)

Did you walk home from school today?

BRYSON

I got a ride.

CARLY

Oh yeah? From who?

BRYSON

I don't think you know him.

CARLY

Try me.

BRYSON

His name's Fisher.

CARLY

The Hickman boy? Wasn't he suspended for sellin' pot brownies at the school bake sale?

BRYSON

A bunch of students got suspended for that. And that was like three years ago.

CARLY

I don't want you hangin' out with him.

BRYSON

We're not hangin' out. He gave me a lift.

CARLY

Well, we're gettin' your bike fixed. I'll ask your dad to look at it. Have you seen your dad today?

BRYSON

No. I didn't even know he was home.

CARLY

He came in late last night.

BRYSON

How's he doin'? How was the tour?

CARLY

I don't know. He didn't say much. Just slipped in quietly and went straight to bed. He was dead asleep when I left for work this mornin'. I expect he'll be performing downtown tonight.

BRYSON

I'd like to go see him.

CARLY

I don't think so, Bryson. Anyway, you're too young.

(Disappointed, Bryson continues eating.)

You know what I would like you to do? I'd like you to go visit your aunt Shirley...

BRYSON

...Mom, no...

CARLY

...I'm sure she'd love to see you. Or at least give her a call. Just to let her know what you've been up to.

BRYSON

No way. She's like almost completely deaf and totally blind. And the last time I saw her she kept callin' me momma's suck-a-titty baby.

CARLY

Well, she's a little rough around the edges.

BRYSON

She's a mean old woman. And her house stinks like cigar smoke and cat piss.

CARLY

All right, Bryson. Forget I mentioned it.

BRYSON

(Another moment.)

Would it be okay if I went to Flat Rock later with Donna? She was askin'.

CARLY

Absolutely not. I've told you to never go there. It's not safe.

BRYSON

(Under his breath.)

That is such bullshit.

CARLY

What did you say?

BRYSON

I said it's not dangerous.

CARLY

A lot of kids have either been hurt or have died out there over the years. Little Gino Benedetti slipped on the rocks and busted his head wide open last month. He's still recoverin'. And Lydia Pacheco lost her twins, Tina and Rose, several years back. Both drowned. You wanna end up like that?

BRYSON

I'll be careful.

CARLY

Did you hear me? I said no.

(Bryson begins clearing the table. Carly pours herself another glass of wine. Bryson stacks the plates and flatware and places them in the sink. He turns to Carly.)

BRYSON

I'm goin' any way.

CARLY

What is wrong with you? You are not goin'.

BRYSON

Yes, I am. Donna's pickin' me up soon.

CARLY

(She rises from her chair.)

You are not allowed to go there. Do you hear me? I don't want to have to say it again.

BRYSON

Screw you.

(A dish flies out of the sink and crashes to the floor, breaking in pieces. A gust of wind.)

You'll have to do better than that.

CARLY

(She returns to her chair.)

Just go, Bryson. Go to Flat Rock.

(She drinks her wine.)

BRYSON

I gotta get a shower and put a bag together. Can you let me know when Donna gets here?

CARLY

Yeah.

(Bryson exits. She calls after him.)

And don't use up all the hot water!

(A moment. Carly gets up from her chair, grabs a broom, and begins sweeping up the pieces of the broken dish. A knock at the kitchen door. Donna peers in through the pane.)

CARLY

Come in, Donna. It's open.

DONNA

(She enters.)

Hi, Mrs. Rekowski.

CARLY

Call me Carly.

DONNA

You always say that, but it sounds weird to me when I call you by your first name.

CARLY

Mrs. Rekowski is fine then.

(She continues sweeping up the broken dish.)

DONNA

Oh, no. What happened?

CARLY

It's nothin'. I was clearin' the dishes and I dropped one.

DONNA

Well, here... let me help...

(She starts towards Carly.)

CARLY

...No. I've got it.

DONNA

I'm a little early.

CARLY

Bryson just went upstairs to shower and change. I expect he'll be a while.

DONNA

Oh. Okay. Well, I can wait in the car.

CARLY

Don't be silly. Have a seat.

(Donna sits.)

You hungry? We have leftovers.

DONNA

No thanks. I already ate.

CARLY

Probably for the best. My food tastes like shit.

DONNA

Oh, come on. That's not true.

CARLY

(She retrieves a dust pan.)

No, it's true. It doesn't matter. Bryson and Johnny'll eat anything I put in front of them. How's your mom?

DONNA

Oh, she's doin' really well. She got her cosmetology license awhile back and now she's workin' over at McClain's Beauty Salon on Lawrence.

CARLY

That's great.

DONNA

Yeah, and my dad just got promoted to partner.

CARLY

(Flatly.)

Wow. That's terrific.

DONNA

So, things are pretty good right now.

CARLY

(She has just finished cleaning up the broken dish.)

Sounds like it.

(She sits and pours another glass of wine. She's tipsy. They sit quietly for a long moment.)

There's pop in the fridge if you want somethin' to drink.

DONNA

I'll just have water if that's okay. Pop's not good for you anyway. I read somewhere that...

CARLY

...Glasses are in the cupboard there. And there's ice if you want.

DONNA

Oh. Okay. Thanks.

(She rises and crosses to the cupboard.)

CARLY

Donna...

DONNA

Yeah?

CARLY

I told Bryson earlier... I don't like the idea of you two heading off to Flat Rock today.

(Donna retrieves a glass and crosses to the freezer to get ice.)

DONNA

Oh... Well... You know, we can do somethin' else. Maybe go to a movie. Tron just came out. We've been wantin' to see that. Oh, or The Dark Crystal. That's supposed to be really good.

CARLY

...No. No, that's not why I brought it up. I just... I want you to be careful.

DONNA

(She gets water from the faucet.)

We're not gonna do anything stupid, Mrs. Rekowski.

CARLY

Well, you don't strike me as someone who'd do somethin' stupid, Donna. And you know... you and Bryson have been friends for a very long time...

DONNA

...Since we were little...

CARLY

...Right. And now you're both in high school. You're maturin'. Your bodies are changin'...

DONNA

(She sits at the table.)

Oh... okay... Well, Bryson and I are just friends, Mrs...

CARLY

..Relationships evolve, Donna. And I mean, the two of you are very close. Always have been...

DONNA

...I promise you that Bryson and I are just friends. And anyway, Bryson's... Well, he's...

CARLY

He's what?

DONNA

He's not... really my type.

CARLY

What? What're you talkin' about? He's a very good lookin' young man.

DONNA

Yeah, he is. But...

CARLY

But what?

DONNA

(After an awkward moment.)

How did you two meet? You and Mr. Rekowski?

CARLY

Oh, come on, Donna. You don't want to hear about that.

DONNA

Of course, I do.

CARLY

Really?

DONNA

Yeah. I really wanna know.

CARLY

(Skeptical.)

All right. Okay. Well... Mr. Rekowski and I met... What's it been...? Twenty-four years ago now, I guess. October 2nd, 1959. It was on a Friday night. At the Flamingo Roller Rink, over on Larimer Ave in the east end. B.B. King played there once, did you know that?

DONNA

I did not.

CARLY

Well, he did. And it was a very big deal. Anyway, Joe was on tour at the time. The night before we met, he played Cleveland. And the next night, he was supposed to be in New York. At the Five Spot Café...

DONNA

...In the Bowery.

CARLY

That's right. Except there was a hurricane headin' up the east coast and it was movin' faster than predicted. So, even though his flight got off the ground in Cleveland, it had to be rerouted to Pittsburgh. By that time, all flights in and out of New York were cancelled.

(Beat.)

So, I was livin' with both my sisters at the time. Not too far from here. Old maids, lesbians, witches, people used to call us. And it was my sister Lolly who introduced me to Joe's music. She heard one of his songs playin' on the radio when she was on vacation in Boulder a few months before...

DONNA

...Bryson told me she went missin'.

CARLY

It was a while back. Just before Bryson was born.

DONNA

What happened?

CARLY

It's best not to conjure up unhappy events. Anyway, Lolly loved it. Joe's song. She was hypnotized by his voice. So much so that she went to seven different record stores, includin' three in Denver, just to find the damned thing. And she finally found it at a place called Marty's Music Shack, if you can imagine. She bought every single copy they had on hand. Ten in total.

DONNA

Ten? What was she gonna do with ten records?

CARLY

One she saved for me. The other nine... Well, she had plans for those. Turns out Marty was a good friend of Joe's. He told Lolly where Joe was playin' that weekend and offered to take her there the followin' night, but on one condition. That she go as his date.

DONNA

So, she went on a date with a stranger to some dive? Just to hear Mr. Rekowski sing?

CARLY

Lolly knew how to take care of herself. And this was no dive, I'll have you know. Joe was on the verge of somethin' big, Donna. He had a hit single in rotation on the radio and he was playin' at the Tulagi, one of the best nightclubs in the region.

DONNA

That's really cool. Except, I guess what I don't get is... if your sister was so fixated on Mr. Rekowski, how'd you two end up together?

CARLY

Lolly's never had much interest in men. But when she heard Joe's voice on the radio, she knew that this was the man for her baby sister. She had to be sure, though. She had to meet him. Face to face. And that's why she went on that date with Marty. She did it for me.

DONNA

So... what happened when they got to the Tulagi?

CARLY

Well, Joe was the openin' act for a band called the Astronauts. Oh, and Lolly made a new dress for the occasion... a lavender satin cocktail number with cream colored polka dots. It was gorgeous and she looked beautiful in it. I have a picture somewhere. I'll have to look for that.

(Beat.)

Anyway, Marty was feelin' a little frisky when he picked her up, so it took Lolly some time to wrestle his hands away from her hemline and on to the steerin' wheel. So, when they finally got to the club, Joe was nearly finished with his set. But Lolly was able to hear him sing live...

(Bryson enters.)

BRYSON

...Mom...

DONNA

Hi, Bryson.

BRYSON

(To Donna.)

Hey. You ready to go?

DONNA

Your mom's in the middle of this really great story about how she and your dad met.

BRYSON

I've heard dad tell it a million times.

CARLY

Well, your dad's recollection of things isn't as exact as he thinks it is.

BRYSON

Have another glass, mom.

CARLY

You two go ahead. And Donna... Maybe we can keep what I've told you between you and me. What do you think?

DONNA

Sure. Of course.

(To Bryson.)

I'll see you outside.

(She exits. A moment.)

BRYSON

I'm sorry, mom.

CARLY

Go. Go. She's waitin'. And be careful.

BRYSON

I will.

CARLY

I mean it. I worry.

(Bryson exits. She calls after him.)

And don't be late.

(A moment. Carly continues to drink her wine.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 5

(Backyard. Before sunset. Johnny sits on a tree stump playing a handheld game, perhaps a Tomy Pac Man. After a few moments, Fisher arrives.)

FISHER

Hey, Johnny. How's it goin'?

JOHNNY

(He scarcely looks at Fisher.)

Oh, hey dirt bag.

FISHER

Why do you gotta be a dick, man? I'm tryin' to be nice here.

(Johnny continues playing his game.)

Your brother around?

JOHNNY

(Not looking up.)

Who wants to know?

FISHER

I wanna know. I gotta talk to him.

JOHNNY

About what?

FISHER

I don't know. I mean, we were hangin' out earlier and I... Look, I just need to see him. Okay?

JOHNNY

(He gestures toward the house.)

Check the house. He might be there.

FISHER

Your mom's home.

JOHNNY

(He continues with his game.)

So?

FISHER

So, I don't wanna talk to your mom.

JOHNNY

You afraid?

FISHER

No, I ain't afraid. I just don't wanna to talk to her. I need to talk to Bryson.

JOHNNY

He's gone.

FISHER

You just said he was home.

JOHNNY

No, I didn't.

FISHER

Where'd he go?

JOHNNY

Flat Rock. About an hour ago.

FISHER

(To himself.)

Damn it.

(To Johnny.)

When's he comin' back?

JOHNNY

Don't know.

FISHER

(Quietly, to himself again.)

Fuck.

(Fisher sits next to Johnny. He pulls a cigarette from its pack, lights it and smokes it. Johnny continues with his game.)

JOHNNY

She's a witch, you know?

FISHER

What're you talkin' about? Who's a witch?

JOHNNY

My mom. She puts curses on people. And she cooks up mad mixtures in the kitchen in the middle of the night. Diabolical concoctions. That's why I am the way I am.

FISHER

What do you mean?

JOHNNY

You think I'm retarded, but it's not true.

FISHER

I don't think you're re...

JOHNNY

...I don't give a shit, really. You can think whatever you want. I know the truth. I've been to all kinds of shrinks. And I've been on all kinds of drugs. But you can't fix what's been cursed. It's almost impossible to undo a witch's curse, especially when you're not the intended target.

FISHER

So, you're... okay, so you're the way you are because your mom cast a spell on somebody else and you got in the way?

JOHNNY

Somethin' like that.

FISHER

Okay, I'll bite. Who was she after?

JOHNNY

My dad.

FISHER

You're puttin' me on. You are so full of it.

JOHNNY

(He continues with his game.)

Like I said... I don't give a shit what you think. I don't give a shit what anyone thinks.

FISHER

You're serious? You're talkin' crazy, man. Witches don't exist.

JOHNNY

Yes, they do. They're as ancient as humankind. My mom's a witch.

FISHER

Whatever you say.

JOHNNY

You can't tell anyone.

FISHER

Tell anyone what? That your mom's some psycho sorceress? Don't worry. I wouldn't want anyone thinkin' I'm bat shit crazy like you anyway.

(He studies Johnny for a moment, takes one last drag off his cigarette and puts it out.)

I'm outta here. Catch you on the flip side, nut job.

(He starts off.)

JOHNNY

(He calls after Fisher.)

I'll return the favor by not tellin' anyone about you.

FISHER

(Fisher stops. He turns to Johnny.)

What did you say?

JOHNNY

I'll keep your secret if you keep mine.

FISHER

I ain't got a secret.

JOHNNY

I saw you... you and Bryson...

FISHER

Screw you. You saw nothin'.

JOHNNY

Did too. I saw you wrestle Bryson to the floor, get on top of him and stick your tongue in his mouth.

FISHER

You better keep your trap shut, retard. I'm warnin' you.

JOHNNY

You two were gettin' hot and heavy there.

FISHER

One more word, retard. One more word and you're a dead man. Do you hear me?

JOHNNY

Faggot.

(Fisher grabs Johnny by his shirt collar and pulls him up off the stump. Johnny's game falls to the ground.)

She's watchin'.

FISHER

(Fisher looks to the house and then back to Johnny. A moment. He lets Johnny go.)

I'm not fuckin' around.

(Fisher tries to pull a cigarette from the pack but struggles to get it out. A moment. He throws the pack wildly to the ground.)

Goddam it! You're comin' with me.

JOHNNY

To where?

FISHER

Flat Rock.

JOHNNY

I'll have to ask my mom.

FISHER

Screw your mom!

JOHNNY

I'm not supposed to go anywhere without her permission...

FISHER

...Enough about your mom! How old are you, man?

JOHNNY

Twenty-three and a half.

FISHER

Twenty-three and a...? Dude, do you hear yourself? Listen to me. Your mom doesn't care where you go. As long as you go. Don't you get it? She's half passed out in there, sittin' on her witch ass, drinkin' herself to death. The only person she cares about is herself. Now, you got a choice. Either I drag your sorry ass to my car with my bare hands or you get yourself there on your own two feet.

JOHNNY

How far's your car?

(Fisher punches Johnny and drags him off.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 6

(A living room. 1966. Midday. Shirley is seated in a recliner, smoking a cigar and drinking a beer. Carly enters, very pregnant with Bryson, carrying deviled eggs and other snacks. Lolly follows with a tray of glasses and a pitcher of iced tea.)

SHIRLEY

Oh, goody. My favorite. Deviled eggs.

(She piles a few on to a napkin.)

LOLLY

(She sits on the couch and begins to pour iced tea.)

You keep eatin' the way you do, Shirley, you'll grow to the size of a hippopotamus.

SHIRLEY

Hippos are largely herbivorous, Lolly.

LOLLY

Hippos are just plain large.

CARLY

(She settles awkwardly into her chair.)

Well, this hippo doesn't want to talk about how fat anyone's gettin'.

LOLLY.

Sorry, Carly.

(She hands Carly a glass of iced tea.)

SHIRLEY

You come up with any names for the baby yet?

CARLY

I have come up with a couple of names, yes.

SHIRLEY

(Takes a swig of her beer. Lolly settles in.)

Care to share them with us...?

LOLLY

...Oh, before you do decide on a name, keep in mind that Deanna Pagnotto is due right around the same time and she is definitely havin' a girl. I think she's namin' the baby, Donna.

CARLY

I'm aware. And don't worry, Donna is not one of the options. If it's a girl, I'll name her Ellison. And if it's a boy... Bryson.

LOLLY

Bryson then because it'll undoubtedly be a boy. Oh, though I do love the name Ellison. Ahhhh... I think you should go with Ellison either way.

CARLY

Joe doesn't like either name.

SHIRLEY

Who cares what Joe likes? He named your first boy and look what you ended up with... Johnny. When I think of Johnny, I think of that smug bastard who took over hostin' The Tonight Show. What a douchebag he is. He won't last.

CARLY

He's named after Johnny Cash.

SHIRLEY

Oooh, I like Johnny Cash. That "Everybody Loves a Nut" album cracks me up.

CARLY

Anyway, if it is a boy...

LOLLY

...It is...

CARLY

...I'm namin' him Bryson.

SHIRLEY

Well, that's settled then, isn't it?

LOLLY

How is Johnny? Is he still havin' trouble in school?

CARLY

He is. We're talkin' about pullin' him out. If he's not back talkin' his teachers and windin' up in detention, he's comin' home with a bloodied lip because he's pissed off one of the other kids.

LOLLY

He's seven years old, for Aradia's sake.

COLD RAIN by Craig Houk

CARLY

I don't know what else I can do. He's out of control.

SHIRLEY

There's nothin' wrong with that boy that can't be fixed by puttin' him over your knee and givin' him a few whacks on his back side...

CARLY

...I would never...

SHIRLEY

...A little tough love is all it takes.

LOLLY

Well...

SHIRLEY

Well what?

LOLLY

Well, I can't help but think that all of this may be your doin', Shirley.

SHIRLEY

My doin'?

LOLLY

Well...

SHIRLEY

Come on now. Spit it out, Lolly. I'm dyin' to hear how I'm responsible for the way Johnny turned out.

LOLLY

That night. In the herb shed...

SHIRLEY

...Oh, for Aradia's...

CARLY

...Leave it alone. There's no use bringin' that up again. What's done is done.

LOLLY

No. No. What's done can be undone. We were supposed to be castin' a simple love spell.

SHIRLEY

Please. A simple love spell wasn't gonna bring this one a husband.

LOLLY

Maybe not. But it would've been a hell of a lot safer than the spell you did cast. And Carly wouldn't be in the mess she's in.

SHIRLEY

I helped Carly get what she wanted. Anything beyond that is out of my control. She raised that child, not me. If Carly's life is a mess, it's her own doin'.

CARLY

Hey, hold on. I wouldn't call my life a mess. And don't go pattin' yourself on the back, Shirley. You didn't quite give me what I wanted. Okay, granted, things haven't turned out the way I'd hoped they would. But all in all, my life is all right. Yes, Johnny's been a handful, to say the least. He's awful to other kids and he's downright horrible to most adults, but he always treats me with kindness. He's sensitive. I don't know. Maybe too sensitive. I just think he feels like he doesn't belong in this world. He's so aware and he feels so much that, at times, I think he either acts out or shuts down as a way to survive. He loves me. I know that. Or at least he trusts me more than anyone else. And that's enough for me.

LOLLY

I'm sorry, Shirley.

SHIRLEY

You've upset Carly, not me.

CARLY

I'm not upset. It's fine.

LOLLY

No, I'm sorry... because... Well, I did somethin' I shouldn't have done. I was worried about Carly. I panicked. And I didn't really know what I was doin'. But I did it. And... I fucked up.

SHIRLEY

Language, Lolly.

CARLY

What do you mean? What did you do?

LOLLY

I... I attempted a reverse spell. I... cast one. Or at least I think I did.

CARLY

What? When?

LOLLY

That night. The night Shirley hijacked the...

SHIRLEY

...I did not hijack the...

CARLY

...Enough! Both of you! What do you mean you cast a reverse spell?

LOLLY

I performed an incantation to try and counter Shirley's spell.

CARLY

The spell we cast to bring Joe to me?

LOLLY

Yes. And Johnny. And Bryson... or Ellison. Oh, I really do prefer Ellison...

CARLY

...What did you do, Lolly?

LOLLY

I screwed everything up. I meant to put a stop to all of it. And all I did was screw things up. But I can fix it.

SHIRLEY

There's nothin' to fix. Do you honestly believe that you had any control over what happened that night? You don't have that kind of power.

CARLY

You seem pretty damned sure of yourself, Shirley. What if you're wrong?

SHIRLEY

Ha!

CARLY

Look, I'm not gonna argue with you. All I'm suggestin' is that maybe Lolly's on to somethin' here.

SHIRLEY

She's not.

CARLY

Maybe between your spell and Lolly's spell, somethin' went wrong. Maybe somethin' went terribly wrong.

SHIRLEY

Impossible.

CARLY

I'm pregnant, Shirley...

SHIRLEY

...I hadn't noticed...

CARLY

...I'm gonna have this kid any day now. And I'm sorry... I love Johnny with all my heart, but I can't risk havin' my second kid turnin' out like the first.

SHIRLEY

There's nothin' to be done. Magic isn't meant to fix things. It's meant to coax things into being, to nudge things in a desired direction. It's not an exact science. Now I'm tellin' you both. Leave it alone.

LOLLY

But there's...

SHIRLEY

...I'm through discussin' it. I'm leavin'.

(She starts off.)

CARLY

Shirley...

SHIRLEY

(She turns back and retrieves the plate of deviled eggs.)

...And I'm takin' these with me. If you want the dish back, you know where to find me. Don't expect me to clean it.

(She storms out. Carly and Lolly sit quietly for a moment. Shirley re-enters.)

I'm outta beer at home.

CARLY

Help yourself to what's left in the fridge.

SHIRLEY

(She starts for the kitchen.)

I'll let myself out the back.

(She exits. Off.)

Go with Bryson! Ellison's a stupid name.

(Door closes, off. A moment.)

LOLLY

I need to make things right. I mean, I should at least try.

CARLY

And risk makin' things worse for me?

(Regretful.)

I'm sorry.

LOLLY

Oh, there's no need to be. I mean, look at what we've done, Shirley and me. Neither of us have ever had anything genuine to look forward to, so we've pinned all our hopes on you.

CARLY

Lolly...

LOLLY

...You're all that's left, Carly. Before the three of us, Grandma Imogene was the last to have the gifts we possess. And before her, there was Great Great Grandma Millie. And Shirley and me...? Well, we won't be usherin' in the next assemblage, so it's fallen to you. Now as for Johnny... Well, he is who he is, so we'll have to accept him and support him as best we can. And I don't think any amount of magic is gonna help on that front. But this one...

(She touches Carly's stomach.)

This one we can do somethin' for. We need this child... to continue our lineage. And maybe it's no coincidence that the Pagnotto's are due to have a girl soon. Bryson and Donna. It's meant to be. So, I have a plan... to undo Shirley's curse...

(Carly starts to interject.)

...And you don't have to do anything... except have a healthy, beautiful baby boy who is gonna grow up and get married and bless you with a very special grand baby. I'll take care of the rest. Tonight.

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 7

(Flat Rock. 1982. Dusk. Old bits of police tape and/or a rotted police barricade sit nearby. Bryson and Donna enter carrying their backpacks.)

DONNA

Do you think you'll always be that way?

BRYSON

What way?

DONNA

You know what I mean.

BRYSON

I don't know. Probably.

DONNA

I read somewhere that they forced this guy to lay down in his own feces and urine for, like, three days. They showed him pictures of naked men and then injected him with drugs that would make him throw up. And then they abused him nonstop, callin' him a dirty queer and a pansy, that sort of thing. And when they couldn't be in the room to insult him in person, they recorded it and left it playin' in a loop on tape. They did all of that to "purge him of his homosexual urges". Isn't that crazy?

BRYSON

It's sad.

DONNA

I don't think it's somethin' that can be corrected. I think it's an ordinary part of human evolution.

BRYSON

What're you talkin' about?

DONNA

Population control. I mean, gay men can have sex with women if they want. They can still reproduce. They're just less likely to do it. And some won't do it at all. So... less sex, less babies. No sex, no babies. You've evolved. You're further along than the rest of us. Anyway, it's only a theory.

BRYSON

What about you?

DONNA

What about me, what?

BRYSON

You think you'll always be a total dweeb?

DONNA

(She punches him playfully.)

Bite me.

BRYSON

I'm kiddin'. I'm kiddin'.

DONNA

It's true, though.

BRYSON

No, it's not, Donna. I wasn't serious.

(Beat.)

Donna, I'm sorry. It was a joke.

DONNA

I'm not upset. I was just thinkin'... The closest thing I've ever had to a boyfriend was Ted Caskey. And I say that only because he accidentally put my retainer in his mouth durin' our band trip to Baltimore a couple of years ago.

BRYSON

Ack. I remember that. And it was gross.

DONNA

The fact that he didn't spit it out and immediately rinse his mouth with bleach - but instead just smiled, pulled it out and handed it to me covered in his spit - left me with a small glimmer of hope that maybe, just maybe, he wasn't repulsed by me. My first almost, sort of kiss.

BRYSON

He caught me starin' at his pubic hair once.

DONNA

He did not.

BRYSON

Yeah, except he thought I was starin' at his dick.

DONNA

Did he say anything?

BRYSON

Yeah. He said, "You starin' at my dick, Bryson?"

DONNA

What'd you say?

BRYSON

I panicked. I didn't know what to say. So, I blurted out, "No, I'm not starin' at your stupid dick. I'm lookin' at your freakish pubic hair. Maybe you should dry off somewhere else." So, he did.

DONNA

That was it?

BRYSON

Yep. He grabbed his gym bag and his clothes and he walked away. And he never mentioned it again.

DONNA

Wow.

(Accusingly.)

Did you look at his dick?

BRYSON

How could I not? It's huge.

DONNA

Bryson!

(Bryson demonstrates the size of Ted Caskey's penis with his hands.)

Stop it! You're such a pig!

(She punches him playfully.)

BRYSON

Quit hittin' me.

(He punches her back playfully. They laugh.)

DONNA

You know what's sad? Or maybe it's not so sad. I don't know...

BRYSON

What?

DONNA

I sometimes have this intense feeling that I'll never meet the right guy or fall in love. I'm not crushed by it. It's just a feeling I have. I guess it's somethin' that I'll have to get used to.

(This resonates with Bryson.)

We should go for a swim. Before it gets too late.

(Donna takes her top and shorts off. She wears a bathing suit underneath. Bryson begins to do the same, but before he can finish, Donna is already headed for the water.)

BRYSON

Hey...

DONNA

(She turns to Bryson.)

You comin'?

BRYSON

What do you know about the Pacheco twins?

DONNA

The Pacheco twins?

BRYSON

Tina and Rose. My mom said they drowned out here.

DONNA

Oh, yeah. I heard about that. It was a while back, though. They said it was an accident, but a lot of people think there's more to it.

BRYSON

Really?

DONNA

Well, there was a story goin' around that they weren't out here alone. That there might've been a boy with them. The police found some clothes lyin' near a tree, mostly girls stuff, but there was, like, one tube sock and a pair of boy's underwear mixed in.

BRYSON

That's terrible.

DONNA

There's been all kinds of weird stuff that's happened out here. People disappearin'... You know, way back, people used to come out here to practice these weird folk magic rituals. Warlocks... or hexenmeisters I think they called them... They'd put people in these special chairs and then perform chants as they danced around them. I think to heal them in some way or to expel negative forces. Somethin' like that. Anyway, a lot of people think that those forces are still out here somewhere, sort of bouncin' around out of control. Wreakin' havoc on the mortal world.

JOHNNY

(Calling from off.)

Bryson!

(He enters. His eyes are blackened and his nose is bloodied and swollen.)

Oh, hey, there you are.

BRYSON

What're you doin' here? Shit, Johnny, what happened to your face?

JOHNNY

Fisher punched me.

BRYSON

What? What do you mean he punched you? Why?

JOHNNY

He's a little peeved that I saw the two of you messin' around on my bedroom floor earlier.

DONNA

Bryson...

BRYSON

...You were there?

JOHNNY

He stopped by the house lookin' for you.

BRYSON

And you told him you saw us?

JOHNNY

Yeah.

BRYSON

Why?

JOHNNY

I was bored.

DONNA

(To Bryson.)

What happened with you and Fisher?

BRYSON

(Overlapping Donna, to Johnny.)

Bored? You were bored? Are you out of your fuckin' mind?

DONNA

What does he mean you two were messin' around?

BRYSON

(Overlapping Donna, to Johnny.)

How did you get here?

JOHNNY

Fisher drove me.

BRYSON

He drove you here? Where is he now?

JOHNNY

(He indicates the woods behind him.)

Back there somewhere. I kicked him square in the nads when he tried to pull me out of the car. He was winded, but it's not like I broke his legs or tore his eyes out or anything like that, so he can't be far.

FISHER

(Shouting, off.)

Johnny! I'm gonna find you! And when I do, I'm gonna fuck you up bad! Do you hear me?

(He cries out in pain.)

JOHNNY

That's him now.

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 8

(Gene's Place, downtown Pittsburgh. Dusk. Joe sits on a stool holding a guitar. He has just finished a song -- Cold Rain. Applause. He addresses the audience at Gene's.)

JOE

Thank you. Much appreciated. I'm gonna take about a fifteen-minute break here. Get myself another beer or two. Maybe have a smoke. I suggest you do the same. But don't you leave. We got a lot more great music comin' up for you.

(Joe steps away from his spot on stage and crosses into a dressing room. He sits and looks at himself in the mirror. A bottle of beer sits on his dressing table. He picks a partially smoked joint out of an ash tray and lights up. A knock at the door. He takes a quick drag and then stubs the joint out. After exhaling, he waves his hands in the air to clear the smoke. He then crosses to and opens the door, revealing Carly.)

Hey, baby.

CARLY

Hi, Joe.

JOE

What're you doin' here?

CARLY

(She's still tipsy, maybe a little drunk from the wine.)

I came to hear you sing. It's been awhile.

JOE

(Skeptical.)

It's been a long while. You all right?

CARLY

Of course, I'm all right. I don't know. I feel like we hardly see each other anymore, even when you are home. And, well... I just needed to get out of the house I guess.

JOE

Okay.

(Carly starts to snicker.)

What...? What's so funny?

CARLY

Nothin'. It's nothin'. It's just... Well, I saw that Eddy's still coverin' the front door. And he's wearin' that same ragged old Eagles t-shirt he always wore. Oh, and his hair... His hair is so thin now. Doesn't stop him from tyin' what's left of it back in a ponytail, though, does it? And fat old Stan Davies was so shocked to see me, he broke wind. He nearly blew himself right off the bar stool. And Georgio Gulotta spilled a pitcher of beer all over his poor wife. That woman's forever pregnant and she's gotta be my age if not older.

(She moves in on Joe, getting a little flirtatious with him, maybe a little physical.)

Anyway, they all went down like dominoes when I walked by the bar. They're probably afraid I'll cause the walls to give way and the roof to come crashin' down on their heads.

JOE

You're layin' it on a little thick, don't you think?

CARLY

(She moves away from Joe.)

You're disappointed I'm here.

JOE

I'm just... surprised is all.

(He motions her back to him.)

Come here.

(She hesitates.)

Come on.

(She goes to him and he embraces her. They kiss. This should not be awkward for them but rather a welcomed, albeit rare, moment.)

You been drinkin'?

CARLY

You askin' as a man whose shirt stinks of beer and weed?

JOE

I suppose I am.

(Another kiss. Carly leans into Joe, getting more physical with him.)

CARLY

I caught the end of your last set. I love that song, Joe.

JOE

Oh, God. What's it been? Twenty-five years? You'd think people'd be tired of hearin' it. I know I'm tired of playin' it.

CARLY

It's a damned good song. And your voice... it gets better with age.

(Maybe she unbuttons his shirt or undoes his belt buckle.)

JOE

Come on...

CARLY

...It does, Joe. I mean it...

JOE

...Come on now. That's enough.

(He gently pulls away from her.)

CARLY

Anyway, it's my favorite song. Always has been. I still have the record. The one Lolly bought me all those years ago.

JOE

What're you talkin' about? Why would Lolly have to buy you...?

CARLY

...Which reminds me... I have been all over the house lookin' for that really nice picture of her. You know the one I'm talkin' about. The one of Lolly in that lavender satin cocktail dress with cream colored polka dots.

JOE

I don't remember any dress with polka dots.

CARLY

Of course, you do. She was wearin' it the night you two met.

JOE

Carly, I met you and your sisters over in the east end, at the roller rink. And none of you were wearin' anything like that.

CARLY

Well, it doesn't matter anyway. My point is...

JOE

...Wait, wait. Hold on a second. My old buddy... Marty from Denver. He stopped in the Tulagi one night with some woman. Long time ago. Some woman he met in his record store. Said she was a fan of mine. Shit, I can't remember her name...

CARLY

...I was wrong about the dress...

JOE

...No, no. That's what I'm gettin' at here. The dress. I can't remember what she looked like, but I do remember a dress...

CARLY

...I'm sure it was just a coincidence...

JOE

...Kind of like the one you were just talkin' about...

CARLY

(Quietly with a wave of her hand.)

...Forget about it, Joe.

(A gust of wind.)

My point is... I had at least three boxes of Lolly's belongings tucked away in the back of the attic at home. And when I went up there this evenin', none of it was there. So, where is it?

JOE

We got rid of all that stuff a long time ago, Carly. Sold most of it and then donated what was left over.

CARLY

When?

JOE

About nine years ago I guess.

CARLY

I would never agree to that.

JOE

Well, it's done.

CARLY

You said "we", Joe? You and who else?

JOE

(Quietly exasperated.)

Oh, for Christ's sake, Carly... Why can't you just leave it alone?

CARLY

You and who else?

JOE

Me and Shirley.

CARLY

You and Shirley?

JOE

We knew we wouldn't be able to convince you to get rid of Lolly's things, so Johnny and Bryson helped me pack up the van and we brought everything over to Shirley's.

CARLY

There were things that I'd have liked to have kept, Joe. Remembrances of her.

JOE

I'm sorry.

CARLY

Sorry isn't gonna cut it, Joe.

JOE

And that's not all. Sit down.

CARLY

I'll stand, thank you.

JOE

We had to wait five years from the day Lolly disappeared before we could file a petition.

CARLY

A petition for what?

JOE

To have Lolly declared dead.

CARLY

No...

JOE

...We waited seven years, Carly.

CARLY

Why would you do that?

JOE

Lolly's will.

CARLY

Her will? What does any of this have to do with her will?

JOE

Once the state declares someone dead, their assets get divided among the - whatta you call 'em - the beneficiaries.

CARLY

You did all this? You and Shirley? You made all these decisions and you didn't bother to include me?

JOE

We decided it was best to leave you out of it.

CARLY

Fuck you.

JOE

Carly...

CARLY

...Fuck both of you!

JOE

Times were desperate. We needed the money.

CARLY

For what, Joe? What was so important that you had to kill my sister off for a little bit of money?

JOE

It wasn't a little bit of money. It was enough for us to get caught up on our mortgage.

CARLY

We were never behind on our mortgage. I made that payment on the first of every month.

JOE

You made partial payments every month.

(Beat.)

What was goin' on, Carly? I mean, either you were burnin' through cash doin' who knows what. Or we just didn't have enough comin' in to cover expenses. Either way, you kept it from me. And we almost lost our goddam house in the process.

CARLY

It's not what you think.

JOE

I don't know what to think.

CARLY

Joe, you have to trust that I was doin' the right thing. I was doin' what was best for us. For our family.

JOE

(He decides to let this go.)

Somethin's wrong, Carly.

CARLY

What do you mean?

JOE

You... showin' up here. You never come here. And then now this Lolly business. I thought we don't talk about Lolly.

CARLY

She's been on my mind lately.

JOE

Somethin' must've triggered it.

(A rotary phone rings. Joe answers it.)

I'll be out in a minute, Eddy... What...? What're you talkin' about...? Who's here...? She said what...? Jesus Christ... Okay... Yeah, we're leavin' now.

(He hangs up the phone.)

CARLY

What's wrong?

JOE

Angie Benedetti is out front.

CARLY

What?

JOE

Gino's mom. From down the street.

CARLY

I know who she is, Joe. Why is she here?

JOE

She said she saw that Fisher punk racin' off in his car with Johnny in the passenger seat. Said he took out her mailbox.

CARLY

When?

JOE

What the hell is Fisher doin' with Johnny?

CARLY

I have no idea.

JOE

I swear to Christ if he hurts my boy... I swear I will break his fuckin' neck.

CARLY

Joe...

JOE

...Call Bryson and tell him to stay in the house and to lock the doors.

(He starts off.)

CARLY

Joe. Joe!

JOE

What?

CARLY

Bryson's not home.

JOE

Where is he?

CARLY

I asked him not to go.

JOE

Where is he?

CARLY

With Donna. At Flat Rock.

JOE

What's the matter with you? Come on, Carly. Why would you let him go down there?

CARLY

He's sixteen years old, Joe.

JOE

Jesus Christ. Listen to me. I want you to get in your car and get over to Flat Rock right now. Find Bryson and Donna and take them back to the house. I'm gonna get on my bike and look for Johnny.

CARLY

I'm callin' the police.

JOE

And what're you gonna tell 'em? That your sixteen-year-old son is at a swimmin' hole with some girl and your twenty-three-year-old son is out for a joyride? It's a waste of time. Let's go.

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 9

(Flat Rock. Nighttime. The area is deserted except for Bryson and Donna's belongings. A blinding white light fills the stage, but then quickly goes out. After a moment, Donna steps out of the darkness. She crosses to the water and calls out.)

DONNA

Bryson. Bryson.

JOHNNY

(Johnny enters from the darkness.)

I think he's dead. I think they're both dead.

DONNA

Shut up.

(She calls out again.)

Bryson!

JOHNNY

What was that?

DONNA

What?

JOHNNY

That flash of light.

DONNA

(Annoyed.)

I don't know.

(She calls out again.)

Bryson!

JOHNNY

I saw a woman...

DONNA

...Shut up!

(Bryson appears from the water.)

I don't believe it.

JOHNNY

Holy crap.

DONNA

Bryson, are you all right?

(Donna helps Bryson on to the rock.)

Bryson, look at me. Are you okay?

BRYSON

I, uh... I'm fine. Where's Fisher?

JOHNNY

He sleeps with the fishes.

BRYSON

No. No. We have to find him.

JOHNNY

Do we?

BRYSON

Look, I know he's a total scumbag, but we gotta find him. We can't leave him out here.

DONNA

Okay, well I hate to agree with your brother, but I think Fisher's dead.

BRYSON

Maybe he ran off into the woods.

DONNA

You fell into the water together. And only you came out.

JOHNNY

Maybe if Fisher "came out" sooner, we wouldn't be in this mess.

DONNA

(To Johnny.)

Get away from me.

(Johnny clears. Car headlights flash across the scene.)

JOHNNY

We're not alone.

DONNA

Crap. Okay. Well, there's no need to panic. We haven't done anything wrong. Just in case, though, let's get our stuff and get the hell out of here.

(They begin to collect their things.)

CARLY

(Off.)

Bryson! Donna! Are you out here?

JOHNNY

That's mom.

(Shouts.)

Mom! We're over here!

DONNA

You idiot. What're you doin'?

CARLY

(Off.)

Johnny?

JOHNNY

Yes! We're over here!

CARLY

(Off.)

Don't move! I'll be right there!

DONNA

My car's this way. Let's get out of here.

(She starts off.)

BRYSON

It's fine, Donna. We have to tell someone what happened.

DONNA

Your mom's gonna be pissed.

BRYSON

Somebody's dead. Pissed is an understatement.

(Carly enters.)

CARLY

Bryson! Johnny!

(She embraces both of them.)

Are you both okay?

(To Johnny.)

What happened to you?

JOHNNY

I'm recoverin' from a nose job.

CARLY

Fisher did this to you?

(Johnny nods.)

Your face is a mess.

(To Donna.)

Are you all right?

DONNA

I'm fine.

CARLY

(To Bryson.)

And you?

BRYSON

I'm okay.

CARLY

Good. Because I'm gonna kill all three of you.

JOHNNY

Oh, I think one death today is enough...

DONNA

...Johnny...!

CARLY

...What did you say?

DONNA

I'm outta here.

(She starts off.)

CARLY

Donna Pagnotto! Not another inch.

(Donna stops. To all of them.)

What's goin' on? What happened here?

BRYSON

It was an accident.

CARLY

What was an accident?

(No one responds.)

Where's Fisher?

(Again, no one responds.)

Johnny, where's Fisher?

JOHNNY

He's dead.

CARLY

What do you mean he's dead? Dead how?

(To Bryson.)

Bryson, what happened?

BRYSON

I don't know, mom. Fisher... he attacked me, we struggled a little, and then we fell into the water.

DONNA

They were down there a long time.

CARLY

(Beat. She composes herself.)

Okay... Okay, well, this is what we're gonna do. The three of you are gettin' in the car with me...

DONNA

...But my car...

CARLY

...All three of you, do you hear me? We'll come back for your car later. And we're goin' to straight to the police station...

DONNA

...But Mrs....

CARLY

...Zip it, Donna. As soon as we get to the station, I'm callin' your parents.

BRYSON

Can't we leave Donna out of this?

CARLY

I told you not to come here, Bryson. I told you it was dangerous.

JOHNNY

Mom...

CARLY

(Turning sharply.)

What?

JOHNNY

Aunt Lolly was here.

(Wind comes in slowly. Thunder in the distance.)

CARLY

We don't have time for your jokes, Johnny. And I don't have the patience right now.

JOHNNY

It's not a joke. I saw her. By the trees. Well, technically above the trees.

DONNA

I saw somethin' too. A flash of light. I don't know where she came from. But she was over there, sort of hoverin'. And then she was gone.

CARLY

Bryson?

BRYSON

I didn't see anything.

CARLY

Okay, well... that stays between us. Does everyone understand?

(Donna and Bryson nod.)

Not a word about that to the police.

(Pointedly to Johnny.)

Do you understand?

JOHNNY

So, we're gonna pretend it didn't happen?

CARLY

That's exactly what we're gonna do.

JOHNNY

I excel at pretendin'.

CARLY

Normally not one of your better traits.

(She looks to the sky.)

Let's go. Rain's comin' through.

(More thunder. The winds pick up as they head off. A flash of lightening. Lolly appears in silhouette or in shadow. Rain pours down.)

(End of Act 1.)

ACT 2**SCENE 1**

(Backstage dressing room at the Tulagi. 1959. Evening. Lolly appears in the doorway. She is wearing a lavender satin cocktail dress with cream colored polka dots. She surveys the room, moving about and then over to Joe's dressing table. She retrieves a comb from the table, the same as is seen in ACT 1, SCENE 1. She folds the comb into a handkerchief and then places it in her purse. She then goes to a jacket that's draped over a chair, searches through it and finds a photo, the same as is seen in ACT 1, SCENE 1. She looks at the photo for a moment and then places it in her purse as well. She then re-drapes the jacket over the chair. She sees an unfinished drink, picks it up and sniffs it. The drink is strong. Joe enters.)

JOE

Anything I can do for you?

LOLLY

(Lolly turns to him.)

Oh for... goodness sake. You startled me.

JOE

We've got a bar out front. But you're more than welcome to my whiskey if you like. It's the cheap stuff. And it burns like hell goin' down.

LOLLY

Thank you for the offer, but I don't drink.

JOE

So, you just go around smellin' other peoples' liquor?

LOLLY

It certainly looks that way, doesn't it? I'm sorry. I shouldn't have been snoopin' about.

JOE

No harm done. I got nothin' to hide.

(An awkward beat.)

LOLLY

(She still has his drink in her hand.)

This must be yours.

JOE

(He takes the drink.)

And you must be...

LOLLY

...Oh! Of course. Sorry. I'm... Marty's friend. He said it'd be all right if I came back stage.

JOE

He mentioned he had a lady friend with him tonight. So, he left you to fend for yourself? You know, there's a lot of questionable characters runnin' around back here...

LOLLY

I do all right on my own.

JOE

...Marty included.

LOLLY

I can handle him.

JOE

I bet you can.

(He stares. Lolly matches his gaze.)

You know, it's not every day a woman as pretty as you goes out with a guy like Marty Gershowitz. I mean, the women he dates are

usually cradlin' a Schlitz and smellin' like a pack of Winston's. And they certainly don't dress like what you're wearin'.

LOLLY

I suppose there's a compliment in there somewhere.

JOE

There is indeed. So, what brings you to the great city of Boulder?

(He takes a drink.)

LOLLY

I came to hear you sing.

(Joe laughs.)

What? What's funny? Is that so hard to believe?

JOE

Uh, sorry. Yeah, it is. It's a little hard to believe. You're from Pittsburgh, right?

LOLLY

I am.

JOE

And you came all the way to Colorado? Just to hear me sing?

LOLLY

I did.

JOE

(He laughs again.)

I'm just the opening act is all. There isn't anyone who lives in Denver who's come here to listen to me sing tonight. Let alone Pittsburgh. They're all here to see the Astronauts.

LOLLY

You underestimate the power of your music, Mr. Rekowski.

JOE

(His laughter subsides.)

Call me Joe.

LOLLY

(Lolly smiles.)

Joe.

JOE

You're serious.

LOLLY

I am.

JOE

Listen, I don't know what to say. People seem to like my songs, I guess. I mean, I just keep writin' 'em and then hope for the best.

LOLLY

You're selling yourself short.

JOE

Look, I appreciate it. I really do. But if it's all right with you, I'll just say thank you kindly. And then maybe we can just leave it at that. What do you say?

LOLLY

I've embarrassed you.

JOE

No. No, not at all. It's just... well, I try not to look forward. You know? I don't want to make plans. I don't want to have expectations. I just want to sit back and enjoy life. And whatever comes, comes. Good or bad.

(A beat.)

LOLLY

I should get back to Marty.

JOE

Oh, he's probably three sheets to the wind by now.

LOLLY

Well, then I guess he won't miss me if I just slip away without him.

JOE

You're welcome to hunker down here with me if you like. I gotta stick around for the encore, so I got some time to kill.

(A beat.)

LOLLY

It was nice to meet you.

JOE

Likewise. Though I don't think I caught your name.

(Lolly extends her hand. Joe takes it with his right hand and places his left hand over hers. Lolly notices the wedding band. A beat.)

Vera.

LOLLY

Vera?

JOE

Yeah. Uh... that's... that's my wife's name. Vera.

(A Beat.)

LOLLY

Are you a good man, Mr. Rekowski?

JOE

Please call me Joe.

LOLLY

Are you?

JOE

I don't know. I try to be.

LOLLY

Well, most men don't even try, so there may be hope for you yet. Vera's a pretty name.

JOE

A pretty name for a pretty woman. I, uh... I actually got a picture of the two of us here if you're...

(He starts for his jacket.)

LOLLY

No. I think I've bothered you enough. I really should go.

JOE

I'll walk you out.

LOLLY

No. It's fine. I can find my way.

(She starts off, but then turns back.)

Oh, I almost forgot. One more thing.

JOE

What's that?

LOLLY

(Lolly moves towards Joe with a sweeping motion.)

Hear this spell, for when I'm done,
Your mind will clear, forget I've come.
The time we've spent, be put on pause,
And all will be just as it was.

(A gust of wind. Joe stumbles back, then turns and steadies himself at his dressing table. A beat. He raises his head and looks into the mirror. He senses that someone is in the room and turns to see who. Lolly is gone.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 2

(A police station. 1982. Late night, early morning. Carly is

seated. Lydia Pacheco, now a police officer, stands quietly nearby.)

CARLY

Looks like the rain might hold off for a bit. I mean, that was some downpour earlier, huh?

(Lydia is silent.)

Lydia, look... I appreciate you takin' the time to see me, but I'm not sure I have anything to tell you...

LYDIA

...I'm here because you can't control your damned kids.

CARLY

Fair enough.

LYDIA

I don't like you, Carly Rekowski.

CARLY

I know. Not many people do.

LYDIA

And for good reason.

CARLY

Well, I never quite understood the animosity. But I can admit I'm not the most pleasant person to be around.

LYDIA

You used to be.

CARLY

Look, Lydia... I really don't know what more I can add. You talked to the boys. They know more than I do...

LYDIA

...We're still piecin' things together. And we haven't found Fisher yet. So, anything you can offer in the way of details might be useful.

CARLY

Well, I'm sorry. I got nothin'.

LYDIA

Ok. Well, you're free to go then.

CARLY

Lydia...

LYDIA

...You can go.

*(Carly starts off, but then turns back.
A moment.)*

I gave you your chance to get outta here. And if you knew what was good for you, you'd keep walkin'.

CARLY

I think it's time we made peace with each other.

LYDIA

Is that right?

CARLY

I'd like to know how you've been.

LYDIA

And you think now's a good time for the two of us to catch up on things?

CARLY

No, I suppose not.

(Carly doesn't move.)

LYDIA

You drive by my place every day. So, everything you need to know about my life you can see from the street. The grass is overgrown, except for the parts where there's just dirt and mud. The siding is peelin' away from the house. My porch is fallin' apart. My car is a rusted tin can on balding tires. And now thanks to that Fisher punk, the Benedetti's mailbox has taken up residence in the putrefied maple at the end of my driveway. And

I'm still divorced by the way. That hasn't changed. Tina and Rose are still dead, their bodies rottin' away over at Oak Park Cemetery...

CARLY

...All right. I get it. You're life's a disaster.

LYDIA

Are we all caught up now?

(Carly is still for a moment. She then turns to go. But before she clears the door...)

I always worried that Tina and Rose might take after me. And I don't mean with their looks. They got lucky. Took after their dad in that department. Us homely girls, though... We had to rely on our personality if we wanted to snag a man. And since I had no personality and wasn't much to look at, I was desperate to make myself attractive in whatever way I could. So, bein' one of the few girls in high school whose legs were more accommodatin' than a No-Tell Motel, I hit the jackpot with a husband and a set of twins by the time I was eighteen. Ken married me because he had to. Obviously. You'll never understand what it's like to be in a man's arms and to know deep down that he'd rather be anywhere else than there with you... To feel his loathing in the way that he touches you and to hear it in the way that he breathes when he's lyin' next to you.

CARLY

I haven't been a very good neighbor. And I'm sorry.

LYDIA

You didn't show up to the funeral. I buried my girls and you never bothered to come by to offer condolences. No flowers. No card. Nothin'.

CARLY

I couldn't bear it.

LYDIA

I'm their mother. How do you think I felt?

CARLY

I lost Lolly out there too, you know.

LYDIA

Oh, I know. The whole town knows how your family got rich off your sister's so-called demise.

CARLY

We did not get rich. And I had nothin' to do with that. And at least you got closure.

LYDIA

(She moves to Carly.)

Instead of takin' you out at the knees right now, I'll just let you in on a little-known secret... When you lose your children, you never get closure.

CARLY

This was a mistake.

(She starts off again.)

LYDIA

I've been wonderin'...

(Carly stops and turns.)

Forget it. I don't know why I'm bringin' it up.

CARLY

What?

(Lydia hesitates.)

Tell me.

LYDIA

Somebody used to leave money for me. Every month. On the first. Someone would put an envelope full of cash into my screen door out back. I guess they'd come by in the middle of the night because it'd be there when I got up in the mornin'. And part of me wanted me to know who was doin' it.

CARLY

What difference would that've made?

LYDIA

Well... if I knew who it was, and if I didn't need the money so much, I might've just told that person to go fuck themselves. Because I'm no charity case. I thought about waitin' up by the back door to try and catch them in the act.

CARLY

So, why didn't you?

LYDIA

Partly because I was usually passed out drunk by ten, but mostly because I didn't think I wanted to know why they were doin' it.

CARLY

I expect the "why" wasn't important.

LYDIA

You don't think so? But what if the "why" meant that someone might be in a lot of trouble? What if the money was someone's way of askin' me to leave things alone?

CARLY

What's your point, Lydia?

LYDIA

Some people think my girls didn't drown on accident. And some think there was a boy out there with them. A teenage boy.

CARLY

I'm aware.

LYDIA

The coroner told me somethin' that I've never shared with anyone, Carly. Because I was ashamed of what my girls were doin'. And it's the reason I asked Detective Meir to stop the investigation.

CARLY

I'm sure what they were doin' was perfectly normal for girls their age, Lydia.

LYDIA

Normal? The two of them... experimentin' together with some delinquent? How was that normal?

CARLY

Look, I appreciate your sharin' all this with me, but none of it is any of my business.

LYDIA

Well, I think that maybe it is. You know, they've come a long way with forensic science.

CARLY

I don't have a clue what that is, Lydia.

LYDIA

What I mean is... scientists are now able to test someone's DNA. Someone's... genetic code... can be used to identify that person and to tell that person apart from everyone else.

CARLY

I damn sure failed those classes.

LYDIA

Yeah, me too. I also failed my girls. And even though I know there's nothing I can do to bring 'em back, I am gonna make it up to them. Anyway, they still have the evidence from the crime scene. So, you know... I guess we'll see.

(Lydia starts off.)

CARLY

You made the right decision to stop the investigation, Lydia. It has wrecked me that you lost your girls. But it was an accident. And nothin' more.

(Lydia exits. Carly moves into a hallway. Shirley appears.)

CARLY

Where the hell have you been?

SHIRLEY

Oh, I'm sorry. I would've been here sooner, but my broom is in the shop and I gave my flyin' monkey the night off. I took the bus. Missed the first one because I was waitin' in the parkin' lot at the Howard Johnson's across the street from the station. My eyes aren't so good anymore. What of it?

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 3

(Flat Rock. 1959. Evening. The wind is blowing. A storm is coming through.)

LOLLY (V.O.)

We need this child... this boy... to continue our lineage. So, I have a plan to undo Shirley's curse... Tonight.

(Lolly wades out of the water and on to the rocks. She carries the black orb. She is fatigued from the swim. The winds pick up quickly. Lolly looks up as a bright light fills the stage. She then starts to levitate. Without warning, she is yanked away as the lights go dark. She screams.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 4

(A chasm. 1975. Prudence, a counselor of sorts, sits in a wingback chair. She speaks with a sixteen-year-old Johnny who is sitting upright on a chaise lounge. He is soaking wet and agitated. The trunk from his bedroom is open and is visible nearby.)

PRUDENCE

Johnny? Johnny, how old are you?

JOHNNY

(Distracted.)

Sixteen and a half.

PRUDENCE

Thank you.

(Prudence jots this down.)

All right. Shall we get started?

JOHNNY

How much time do we have?

PRUDENCE

Time is immaterial.

JOHNNY

That's a lie.

PRUDENCE

What's important right now is your recovery, Johnny. Let's not concern ourselves with time.

JOHNNY

Time is critical. Without time, we can't set deadlines. Without deadlines, we can't set demands. And without demands, we can't set goals. To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan and not quite enough time.

PRUDENCE

Who said that?

JOHNNY

I did. Just now.

PRUDENCE

Look around you, Johnny. Do you see a clock? I'm not wearing a watch. Time is not advancing. It doesn't exist. Not here.

JOHNNY

But you and me... we're in motion. We're talkin', interactin', and movin' towards somethin'. Movin' away from somethin'.

PRUDENCE

There's no point in debating it. As I've said, time does not exist here. It's just you and me. In perpetuity. For now.

JOHNNY

That doesn't make sense.

PRUDENCE

What I mean to say is that it's permanent for me. But only temporary for you.

JOHNNY

So, there's a chance that this'll end?

(He indicates the two of them.)

PRUDENCE

For you, yes.

JOHNNY

Which means there's a chance that this'll stop?

(He gestures out.)

PRUDENCE

That what will stop?

JOHNNY

You don't see it? The ground. It's risin' up. All around us. I mean, look. We're surrounded by clay and silt and sand and pebble and cobble and boulder. And it's all rocketin' skyward. It's cold here. Are you cold?

PRUDENCE

The earth is not rising up, Johnny. We're falling. Does that make sense?

JOHNNY

We're fallin'?

PRUDENCE

In an unending chasm.

JOHNNY

Why?

PRUDENCE

All of this is your doing, Johnny. Only you can answer 'why'.

(Johnny thinks on this.)

Are you ready to move on?

JOHNNY

I guess so.

PRUDENCE

Good. Why do you think you're here?

JOHNNY

I've no fuckin' clue.

PRUDENCE

Do you remember how you got here?

JOHNNY

Nope.

PRUDENCE

Think on it. Just before you arrived here. Just moments ago. Try to remember it exactly as it happened.

JOHNNY

That's a lot of pressure, lady.

PRUDENCE

Take your time.

(A moment.)

JOHNNY

I was with this girl. Somewhere near the water, surrounded by trees. It was really late. We weren't supposed to be there. It was a full moon. I remember that. And she was...

PRUDENCE

Go on.

JOHNNY

That can't be right.

PRUDENCE

What can't be right?

JOHNNY

A mirror. She was lookin' into a mirror. Admirin' herself. Touchin' herself. She was showin' off for me. She pulled an elastic out of her hair. And her hair fell to her shoulders. Then she started playin' with the bottom of her dress. Tuggin' down on it at first, but then pullin' it up, showing off her legs. I saw her ass. Saw her underwear. Kind of a Pepto-Bismol pink trimmed in blue. She didn't look at me at first. She just kept lookin' into that mirror. And then she kissed her reflection on the mouth.

PRUDENCE

Where you aroused?

JOHNNY

Yeah. Pretty much.

PRUDENCE

And then what happened?

JOHNNY

The she turned and looked at me. I expected her reflection to turn the opposite direction, but it didn't. So, then there were two of them. Standin' there. Both of them starin' at me. Callin' for me. Callin' my name.

PRUDENCE

How did you respond?

JOHNNY

Well... I fucked her. Both of her. I was clumsy, but I got the job done.

PRUDENCE

And then?

JOHNNY

And then we went for a swim. The three of us. Splashed around for a long while. But then I got tired. And as I swam away from them to the rocks, I saw a flash of light. And then it started to rain. And when I turned around, I saw that she... that they were gone.

PRUDENCE

Gone where?

JOHNNY

No idea. I remember being really shaken up about it, though. And I was pissed off. I don't know why. Maybe because they left me there by myself. Or maybe because I just imagined I finally got laid and that it didn't actually happen. Except there was somethin'... violent... about the way they disappeared. I could feel it.

PRUDENCE

How do you mean you could feel it? In your bones? With every fiber of your being?

JOHNNY

Yeah. All of that.

PRUDENCE

Show me.

(Johnny turns to her, confused.)

Go on. Show me how it manifested itself. Your anger. The violence.

(Johnny stands up and moves downstage a bit. A moment. He stomps his right foot. Another moment. Stomps his right foot again. He repeats this over and over, harder and harder each time, his stomps maybe accentuated by a drum beat. He is suddenly interrupted by Carly's voice.)

CARLY

(Off. Her voice is hollow, echoing, somewhere in the distance.)

Get back here, Johnny. Do you hear me? I asked you a question.

JOHNNY

Oh, shit. I'm in trouble. I gotta go.

(Prudence disappears. Johnny climbs into the trunk. The trunk spins and then slides across the stage into his bedroom.)

SCENE 5

(A bedroom. 1975. Late night. Fresh laundry sits on the bed. Johnny steps out of the trunk and into the scene. Carly appears.)

CARLY

Answer me. Where have you been? It's way past your curfew.

JOHNNY

Oh, I know.

CARLY

You're soakin' wet. What happened?

JOHNNY

I don't remember.

CARLY

How can you not remember?

JOHNNY

It's a gift.

CARLY

Dry yourself off. And put on some clean clothes. I did laundry this mornin'.

JOHNNY

You got it.

(Johnny removes his shirt.)

CARLY

I mean it. And do not leave this house again tonight. There's been an accident. Somethin's happened to the Pacheco girls.

JOHNNY

Are they dead?

CARLY

I don't know. Lydia's on her way over. I'm givin' her a lift to Flat Rock. Where the hell's your other sock?

(He has kicked off his shoes. He is wearing one tube sock.)

JOHNNY

What about Bryson?

CARLY

He's asleep. I need you to keep an eye on him.

JOHNNY

Why me?

CARLY

Because your dad's not here and I need to go out.

(Johnny clumsily removes his sock.)

If he wakes up and asks for me, just tell him I'll be right back.

JOHNNY

I'm not feedin' him.

CARLY

You don't have to feed him. I just need you to watch him until I get back. Do you understand what I've just told you?

JOHNNY

I'm not retarded.

CARLY

I don't like that word.

JOHNNY

Yes, I understand.

CARLY

Good. I'll be back as soon as I can. Okay?

COLD RAIN by Craig Houk

JOHNNY

Okay.

(Carly exits. Johnny undoes his pants. They drop to the floor. He is naked. He collapses onto to the bed.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 6

(A living room. 1982. Late night, early morning. Rain pours down. Lolly appears outside a window. She tries the front door, but it's locked. She stands back from the door and casts a spell. The door unlocks and opens on its own. Lolly enters the room. The door closes behind her. Joe appears. He smokes a joint and holds a beer.)

JOE

(Quietly.)

Un-fuckin-believable.

LOLLY

(Startled.)

Oh, for Aradia's sake!

JOE

(Firm, but still quiet.)

No. No. None of this Aradia bullshit. You better be a ghost. Because if you're not, I'm gonna make you one.

LOLLY

Okay Joe...

JOE

(He takes a drag off the joint.)

You need to explain yourself, Lolly.

LOLLY

There isn't time.

JOE

Make time. Bend time. You can do that, right?

LOLLY

Where's Carly?

JOE

Where the hell have you been? Do you have any idea the shit storm of chaos that's been brewin' since you've been away? Everyone thinks you're dead. As far as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's concerned, you are dead.

LOLLY

Joe, I need to talk to Carly. Where is she?

JOE

I wanna know what the hell's goin' on? We got a kid missin', probably drowned, and Johnny and Bryson are bein' questioned by the police. And somethin' tells me you might have somethin' to do with it.

LOLLY

Fisher's fine.

JOE

What do you know about Fisher?

LOLLY

He's not dead.

JOE

Where is he?

LOLLY

Well, that won't be easy to explain.

JOE

Are you fuckin' kiddin' me? There's a search party all over flat rock right now lookin' for him.

LOLLY

They won't find him.

JOE

What have you done, Lolly?

LOLLY

He's safe. That's all you need to know.

JOE

(A long beat.)

I'm done.

LOLLY

Done with what, Joe?

JOE

With you. This. The last twenty-five years. All of it.

LOLLY

You're overreactin'.

JOE

You think I don't know what you've done? You and Shirley... and Carly?

LOLLY

Joe...

JOE

...Not another goddam word from you.

(Lolly goes silent.)

You know, as much as I'd like to blame the three of you, the truth is, if I hadn't been so weak to start, things would've turned out a lot different. But that's what I've always been. Weak. Selfish. A coward. And that's why I walked away from Vera all those years back. Not because of you, Lolly. Not because of you and your fuckin' voodoo. I was a coward long before you and I ever met. You just took advantage of it.

(Beat.)

All I ever really wanted was to be alone. No commitments. No obligations. My life on my terms. And I never wanted recognition. I was afraid of it. Afraid of what it might bring me. Or of what it might take from me. I just wanted to make music. I wanted to make music and then share it with whoever felt like listenin'. All I wanted was to be able to express myself in a way that was familiar and safe.

(Beat.)

So, what happens next? Huh? Well, I'll tell ya. I'm gonna get my two boys and get the hell outta here. And we're gonna get as far away from all of this as possible. So that the three of us might have a regular life somewhere together.

(A car horn sounds. Joe goes to the window.)

They're home.

(He grabs an umbrella or two and heads out the front door. Lolly settles into a chair.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 7

(A bedroom. 1982. Middle of the night. Bryson sits alone, headphones on. Donna climbs through a window.)

BRYSON

What're you doin' here? It's two in the mornin'.

DONNA

I was worried about you.

BRYSON

Your mom and dad are gonna kill you.

DONNA

My mom told me to come.

BRYSON

You know, besides you and me, nobody likes your parents.

DONNA

What? Why?

BRYSON

Because they're perfect.

DONNA

That's bogus. Everyone loves my parents.

BRYSON

Other kids call you "well-adjusted" behind your back.

DONNA

Well, that's harsh.

(She heads for the bedroom door.)

BRYSON

Where do you think you're goin'?

DONNA

I wanna know what's goin' on. How do you expect to hear anything with the door closed?

BRYSON

It's been quiet for a while now.

DONNA

And your aunt Lolly's down there?

BRYSON

Yep. She's back.

DONNA

And how are you dealin' with that?

BRYSON

I don't know. I mean, she's been gone a long time. And I've never met her.

DONNA

Well, she's family, Bryson. So, you have to feel somethin' about it.

BRYSON

I feel indifferent.

DONNA

That's impossible.

BRYSON

How is it impossible? I mean, at some point, in the history of mankind, someone must've decided that they were feelin' somewhere in the middle about somethin' and needed a way to communicate that feelin' to someone else in a single word. And that word turned out to be "indifferent". So, that's what I'm feelin' right now.

DONNA

Bryson...

BRYSON

I'm tired of bein' scared all the time. You know? And I'm tired of feelin' like I have to explain myself to everyone... of feelin' like I need to apologize to people for who I am. And fuck it, Donna. I really hate my mom sometimes. I mean, like really hate her. And yeah, maybe my dad's the good guy, maybe he's not. Doesn't matter anyway because we got nothin' in common. And the only reason I need him around is because he makes me feel safe sometimes. So, my Aunt Lolly's back. So what? She can't protect me. She couldn't even protect herself.

DONNA

Bryson...

BRYSON

You're my family, Donna. I'm not afraid when I'm with you. Of anything. And, you know, even when you're not around and I'm feelin' overwhelmed, I just take a deep breath and remind myself that you exist and that you're a part of my life.

DONNA

You're a dickweed. And I love you.

BRYSON

Well, I'm in to guys, so...

(They hug tightly.)

DONNA

You need to promise me somethin'.

BRYSON

Okay.

DONNA

My dad has an apartment in the East Village that he keeps for work. And that's where I'll be stayin' when I head to New York next year...

BRYSON

...And you want me to be your pimp.

DONNA

What? No! You're an idiot. No. I was just thinkin'... since I'll be startin' at NYU in the fall... I was thinkin' you could move there and live with me.

(Johnny enters.)

JOHNNY

Pack a bag. And make it a big one.

BRYSON

What? What're you talkin' about?

JOHNNY

Dad said we get one bag each, so find the biggest one you got.

BRYSON

Why?

JOHNNY

We're leavin'. Well, you, me and Dad are leavin'. Not Donna. Donna stays.

BRYSON

What do you mean? What about mom?

JOHNNY

Nope. No girls. Just the boys.

(Johnny starts off.)

BRYSON

Johnny...

JOHNNY

What? We have to go.

BRYSON

The other day... You said you saw me and Fisher messin' around...

JOHNNY

Yeah? So?

BRYSON

How?

JOHNNY

With my two eyes, that's how.

BRYSON

You must've been hidin' somewhere.

JOHNNY

So what if I was?

BRYSON

Where? Where were you hidin'?

JOHNNY

In the trunk.

BRYSON

In the trunk?

JOHNNY

Isn't that what I just said?

BRYSON

The trunk was latched.

JOHNNY

So?

BRYSON

The trunk was latched, Johnny. So how were you able to get in to it and then latch it? That's impossible.

JOHNNY

Nothing's impossible, Bryson. Some things are just less likely than others.

(Bryson and Donna exchange a look.)

Come on! Let's go!

(Johnny exits, followed by Bryson and Donna.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 8

(A living room. 1982. Middle of the night. Carly, Shirley and Lolly are present.)

CARLY

(Calling off after Joe who has headed off.)

Joe. Joe!

SHIRLEY

Leave him be. He needs time to cool off.

LOLLY

I'm not goin' back to Flat Rock.

CARLY

What other option do we have, Lolly? We have to get Fisher back. We can't leave him out there.

LOLLY

Why not?

CARLY

Because he's a kid. And the police are lookin' for him.

LOLLY

He attacked your boys, Carly. He nearly killed Bryson.

SHIRLEY

I told you to leave things alone, Lolly.

LOLLY

And you. You! You're the reason I've been gone for sixteen years. Sixteen years, Shirley!

SHIRLEY

I warned you not to interfere with my spell.

LOLLY

So, my punishment was expulsion?

SHIRLEY

Your punishment was and has always been your ineptitude.

CARLY

Shirley, please...

SHIRLEY

...Don't defend her, Carly. And grow a backbone for Aradia's sake.

CARLY

What have I done?

SHIRLEY

It's what you haven't done. You haven't stopped blamin' everyone for your problems and you most certainly haven't taken control of your own life.

CARLY

How was I supposed to take control of my own life with the two of you interferin'...? You know what? Never mind. I get it now. I should've told the two of you to fuck off a long time ago.

SHIRLEY

Language, Carly.

CARLY/LOLLY

Screw you, Shirley.

SHIRLEY

And now we're all on the same page.

LOLLY

No, we are not on the same page. I'm not goin' back there. The only way to get Fisher back is if someone takes his place. And it won't be me.

CARLY

If not you, then who?

SHIRLEY

Stop it, the pair of you. Now, listen... I may have a spell we can try that might bring Fisher back, though I can't be sure it'll work. But I need somethin' of his. Somethin' personal. Anything that he's had meaningful contact with.

LOLLY

And how are we gonna get our hands on somethin' like that?

(Bryson and Donna enter. Bryson carries a duffle bag.)

BRYSON

What about me?

CARLY

Bryson... What're you doin'? Why do you have a bag? And why is Donna here?

SHIRLEY

Are we gonna play Twenty Questions or are we gonna do some magic?

DONNA

Magic? We're gonna do magic? Awesome!

CARLY

Not you, Donna.

DONNA

Can I at least watch? I won't get in the way, I promise.

CARLY

Just... stand clear.

(Donna moves aside.)

SHIRLEY

Bryson, do you have somethin' of Fisher's that we can use?

BRYSON

Yes.

LOLLY

Well, where is it?

BRYSON

Right here. It's me. You can use me.

(A beat. They all react to this news in their own ways.)

CARLY

Okay... okay well... Let's just get this done. Shirley, what do we need to do?

SHIRLEY

(To Carly and Lolly).

I need you two on either side of me facin' in.

(Carly and Lolly do as instructed. To Bryson.)

And you... I need you in the middle here.

(Bryson drops his bag and does as instructed. To Carly and Lolly.)

Now, give me your hand. And place your free hand somewhere on Bryson.

(Again, Carly and Lolly do as instructed.)

SHIRLEY

(Winds howl as Shirley recites the following incantation.)

Keepers of what disappears,
 Hear me now, prick up your ears.
 Find for us who we now seek,
 By Moon, Sun, Wind, Fire, Earth, and Sea.
 Bound and binding, binding bound,
 Heed our plight, we've run aground.
 What was lost, please now be found,
 Bound and binding, binding bound.
 The spell's been cast between the worlds,
 Beyond the bounds of time and space.
 Keepers of what disappears,
 Let who we seek come to this... [place]

(Joe enters carrying a bag, followed by Johnny who drags his trunk.)

JOE

...This has to stop!

(There is an abrupt shift in the atmosphere.)

No more! Do you hear me?

CARLY

Why are the boys packed, Joe?

JOE

We're gettin' outta here?

CARLY

You can't just take the kids and leave.

JOE

Get your bag, Bryson.

(Bryson retrieves his bag.)

Johnny, let's go. Now!

(Johnny begins to drag his trunk.)

CARLY

(To Shirley.)

Thirty and a day, Shirley. What happened to thirty and a day?

SHIRLEY

I've told you time and again that magic isn't an exact science.

(Joe has reached the front door. He opens it. Lydia enters.)

JOE

Oh, for fuck's sake.

LYDIA

And a howdy-do to you.

JOE

Lydia, what're you doin' here?

LYDIA

Looks like I'm interruptin' a campin' trip.

CARLY

(To Lydia.)

What do you want?

(Lydia spots Lolly. A long, tense moment.)

LYDIA

I didn't want to believe it was true, but now here she is. Lolly Weekes. In the flesh.

SHIRLEY

You're drunk, Lydia. You're seein' things...

LYDIA

...I'm not drunk, Shirley. Though I damn sure wish I was.

CARLY

Lydia, go. Just... get out of here and mind your own damn business.

LYDIA

Detective Meir will be comin' for Johnny first thing tomorrow mornin'. So, I suggest you all stay put. Because runnin' isn't gonna do any of you any good. And Donna, if you knew what was good for you, you'd get as far away from these dickheads as possible.

(To Lolly.)

And you. You shoulda stayed dead.

(Lydia exits.)

JOE

(Calling after Lydia.)

They're comin' for Johnny? For what? What'd he do...?

(To Johnny.)

What'd you do, Johnny?

JOHNNY

They think I killed Tina and Rose.

JOE

(A long beat.)

Did you?

JOHNNY

I don't remember.

JOE

(Beat.)

Bryson, Johnny... get in the van. You too, Donna. I'm droppin' you off at home. Go!

(Bryson and Donna do as instructed.)

CARLY

Bryson...

(She reaches for Bryson. He scarcely reaches back. He and Donna exit.)

Joe, wait...

JOE

I've heard enough!

CARLY

Johnny stays here. With me.

JOE

Get in the van, Johnny.

JOHNNY

(He continues to struggle with his trunk.)

I may have over packed.

JOE

Oh, for...

(Joe grabs Johnny's trunk and manages to get it out the front door. Once he's cleared the entry, the front door slams shut and locks on its own. Johnny is still inside.)

CARLY

Shirley...?

SHIRLEY

I didn't do it. I thought you did it.

JOE

(He is outside the door, trying to open it, banging on it.)

Carly! Carly! Open the door!

(He continues banging.)

LOLLY

(She moves to the door and casts a spell.)

To a different place, I now refer,
At the look of my face, you now deter.
Whether day or night, dark or light,
I dismiss you swiftly from my sight.

(Joe goes silent and still. He is suddenly wrenched out of sight by an unseen force.)

CARLY

Lolly! What have you done!?

(She goes to the door.)

Joe! Joe!

LOLLY

Carly... They're on their way. And no one's been hurt.

(Sound of a car starting and speeding off.)

SHIRLEY

Well, I have to say, Lolly... I am impressed. Nicely done.

CARLY

(She goes to Johnny.)

Are you okay?

JOHNNY

Well I would be, except dad just made off with a lot of my good shit.

CARLY

(To Johnny.)

Listen to me. I have no idea what the police know. And none of that really matters now. Okay? So... what you and I are gonna do... We're gonna head back to the station tonight...

LOLLY

...Carly...

CARLY

...Tonight. We're not gonna wait until the mornin'...

LOLLY

...I have another idea...

CARLY

...And you're gonna turn yourself in. Do you understand?

LOLLY

Carly...

CARLY

...I'm not interested in what you have to say about it, Lolly.

LOLLY

He doesn't have to turn himself in.

CARLY

(She turns sharply to Lolly.)

It's like I'm talkin' into the abyss with you!

SHIRLEY

Carly... Let's hear what Lolly has to say.

LOLLY

Thank you, Shirley.

SHIRLEY

Of course. So, make it quick.

LOLLY

Ok... well... It's fairly simple. So... we have two problems here... One concernin' Fisher and the other concernin' Johnny. And I think... we can solve both problems by using both problems to solve both problems.

SHIRLEY

She's right. That is fairly simple.

CARLY

What're you sayin', Lolly?

JOHNNY

She wants me to take Fisher's place.

CARLY

What? No. Absolutely not.

JOHNNY

Why not? I mean, jail sounds pretty cool and all, but... I don't know... spendin' the rest of my life hangin' out in nirvana doin' whatever the hell I want when I want sounds pretty rad to me.

CARLY

I hardly think it's nirvana, Johnny.

JOHNNY

Not for Aunt Lolly, no. But maybe for me.

CARLY

It doesn't matter. You're not goin'. And that's final.

JOHNNY

Do you remember the time Mike Davies fell out of the back of his granddad's speed boat...?

CARLY

Not now, Johnny, please...

JOHNNY

...It wouldn't have been so bad, except it was parked in their driveway at the time. Knocked his head pretty good. Broke his arm too. I think he was out cold for like five minutes.

CARLY

Johnny...

JOHNNY

...Everyone thought it was an accident, but it wasn't.

CARLY

What do you mean?

JOHNNY

Mike Davies was a douchebag. Nobody liked him. Always braggin' about his family's money. And about how they'd go out to their lake house every summer. And how he'd ride around all day in that stupid fuckin' speedboat...

CARLY

...What does this have to do with anything...?

JOHNNY

...The day he fell, I was walkin' past their house. Saw him climb up into the boat. He was in a hurry too. Probably because there were three kids chasin' after him and threatenin' to kick his ass. But before they could get their hands on him, Mike's granddad came out of the house carryin' a huntin' rifle. He fired a warnin' shot into the air and told them to get the fuck outta there. So, they did. And then he turned to Mike and told him to get his faggoty ass out of the boat and into the house.

CARLY

What did you do, Johnny?

JOHNNY

I'd already picked up a rock and was rollin' it around in my fingers. And as soon as his granddad went back in, Mike started to climb out of the boat. Our eyes met. And that's when Mike lost his grip and fell backwards onto the gravel. There was a lot of blood.

(At some point during the following, Shirley and Lolly move to Johnny and hold hands. They prepare to cast a spell.)

CARLY

You didn't hurt Mike Davies.

JOHNNY

I willed him to fall.

CARLY

You didn't.

JOHNNY

I wanted him dead.

CARLY

Maybe so, but that doesn't mean you had anything to do with it.

JOHNNY

I think bad thoughts all the time, mom.

CARLY

We all do.

JOHNNY

I'm afraid I might hurt someone. Or that maybe I already did.

CARLY

That's not possible.

JOHNNY

You willin' to take that chance? Because I'm not.

(Shirley reaches for Carly's hand to finish the circle.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 9

(Police station. 1982. Two days later. Fisher is seated in a chair at a table. He is dirty and disheveled and is wearing the same clothing that we last saw him in. Lydia arrives with a soda. She sets it on the table.)

LYDIA

Here you go, Fisher.

(Fisher looks at the soda and then to Lydia.)

We'll have a doctor come in in a bit to look at you. All right? We want to make sure you're okay. That you haven't been hurt.

FISHER

Okay.

LYDIA

And we're trying to get in touch with your uncle.

(Beat.)

In the meantime, I'll make sure you have a place to stay tonight. I know someone who I'm pretty sure'd be willin' to take you in. At least until we can figure out next steps.

FISHER

Whatever.

(Fisher pops the tab on the soda and begins drinking it.)

LYDIA

Look, I gotta ask you some questions, Fisher.

FISHER

Am I under arrest?

LYDIA

No.

(Beat.)

You went missin' for almost two days. Can you tell me where you've been?

FISHER

Someplace where you can't hide from the truth.

LYDIA

New Jersey?

FISHER

Fuck off.

LYDIA

All right, okay... Listen, I need to know if someone took you. Or if you... decided that you needed to get away for a bit on your own.

(Fisher does not respond.)

Look, Fisher, we do know that you punched Johnny Rekowski, forced him into your car, and drove him out to Flat Rock. That's technically kidnappin'. And that you attacked Bryson Rekowski when you got there. We also know that you both fell into the water. And while Bryson made it out okay, you just... vanished.

FISHER

Am I goin' to jail?

LYDIA

No. Nobody's pressin' charges. Now, can you tell me what you were you doin' out at Flat Rock? What made you go after those boys?

FISHER

Oh, come on. Johnny Rekowski is a grown ass man. He's not a boy.

LYDIA

You're dodgin' the question. What got you so upset?

FISHER

What difference does it make? Looks like I'm off the hook.

LYDIA

It's no secret - to anyone in this town anyway - that Bryson is gay...

FISHER

...What the fuck does that have to do with anything?

LYDIA

Is that why you went after him?

FISHER

I'm outta here.

(Fisher rises out his chair and starts for the door.)

LYDIA

Where are you gonna go, Fisher?

(Fisher stops but does not turn back.)

You plannin' on runnin' away again?

FISHER

(He turns sharply.)

I didn't run away. You think you're so fuckin' smart, don't you?

LYDIA

(Not at all hostile.)

If I was so fuckin' smart, I wouldn't have to ask you all these questions, now would I?

FISHER

There's nothin' wrong with me.

LYDIA

I didn't say there was.

FISHER

And if there is somethin' wrong with me, it's not my fault.

LYDIA

I don't think there's anything wrong with you, Fisher.

FISHER

(After a long moment.)

My dad was just sittin' there on the back porch. On the glider when we found him, me and my mom. His eyes were open, and I could see he was tryin' to breathe, though he wasn't movin' much. And my mom didn't do anything. He was all purple, like a goddam eggplant. And then all of a sudden, he started makin' this weird noise, kinda like he was snorin'. And then he puked all over himself. I remember gettin' some of it on my shoes. And my mom just stood there. Lookin' at him. Doin' nothin'. Like she was just waitin' for him to die. And I could tell she just wanted it to be over. And the sooner the better. And then he was gone.

(A rotary phone rings. Lydia answers it.)

LYDIA

(On the phone.)

Yeah...? He is...? Okay... Yeah, just give me a couple of minutes.

(She hangs up the phone.)

The doctor's here. So, listen. You need a place to crash tonight, am I right?

FISHER

I guess so.

LYDIA

What do you think about stayin' with me?

FISHER

Your place is a dump.

LYDIA

That it is. Though I did do a little housework. Vacuumed the floors. Did some light dustin'. Sprayed a little Windex. Threw around some Pine-Sol. Mostly, I just got rid of all the liquor bottles.

FISHER

I bet you have a lot of empties.

LYDIA

Got rid of the full ones too. And I cleaned the twins' bedroom. Put all the girly stuff in to storage, so your manhood will remain intact if you decide you can bear spendin' the night at Lydia's House of Filth.

FISHER

Why're you doin' this?

LYDIA

Nobody else wants you. And I have a void to fill.

FISHER

No. I don't think that's gonna work for me.

LYDIA

Look, Fisher... I get it. Your dad died and your mom didn't wanna have anything to do with you. My girls died and my husband did the same with me. Left me alone to fend for myself. So, does

that make them a couple of self-centered shit bags? You bet your ass it does. And hey, listen, I'm not perfect. Never have been. I came out of my mother's uterus sideways, so I was pretty much a fuck-up from the beginnin'. But that doesn't mean I can't look after you for a day or two... or for as long as you need. So, what do you say?

(The phone rings. Lydia answers it.)

Yeah...? Yeah, okay. Send him in.

(She hangs up the phone.)

Okay. Well, I'll get out of the way.

(Lydia starts off.)

FISHER

How long's this gonna take?

LYDIA

Not long. Maybe fifteen, twenty minutes.

(She starts off again.)

FISHER

Mrs. Pacheco...

LYDIA

(She turns to Fisher.)

Call me Lydia.

FISHER

I like waffles for breakfast. Fresh not frozen. And the syrup heated up in a pan. With three strips of bacon and a glass of orange juice.

LYDIA

If you're good, you might get stale cheerios and a glass of Tang.

FISHER

That works too.

LYDIA

I thought it might.

(Lydia exits.)

(End of Scene.)

SCENE 10

(Dining room/living room. 1989. Carly, Lolly and Shirley are living together again. Shirley is asleep in a chair. An unfinished beer sits nearby, a cigar smoldering in an ash tray. Carly sits at a dining table drinking a glass of wine and reading a book or a magazine. Lolly enters carrying groceries.)

LOLLY

I'm back. And I've got everything I need to make my world-famous Chicken a 'la King. But first, we'll start with my equally famous stuffed celery and cherry tomatoes. And for dessert, the winner of the 1966 Pillsbury Bake-Off... the Tunnel of Fudge.

CARLY

Lolly, sit down.

LOLLY

There isn't time, Carly. I gotta get dinner started.

CARLY

It can wait.

LOLLY

Carly...

CARLY

...Leave it.

LOLLY

Okay. What's wrong?

CARLY

Sit down. Please.

LOLLY

All right.

(Lolly joins Carly at the table.)

CARLY

I'm leavin'.

LOLLY

Well, that's fine. It'll take me some time to get dinner ready anyway. When do you think you'll be back?

CARLY

I won't be back.

LOLLY

What do you mean you won't be back? Where are you goin'?

CARLY

To New York. Michael Pagnotto, Donna's father... he got me a secretarial job at one of his company's branch offices in Brooklyn.

LOLLY

And where are you gonna live?

CARLY

I got a small efficiency apartment lined up in Queens.

LOLLY

Why?

CARLY

I'm hopin' to maybe reconnect with Bryson. If he'll have me. Before I go, though, I need one thing from you.

LOLLY

And what's that?

CARLY

My son. I want Johnny back.

LOLLY

(She rises and moves away.)

No. I won't do that...

CARLY

(She follows Lolly.)

...Why not?

LOLLY

Nothin' has changed. If I bring Johnny back, he'll go to prison. And somebody has to take his place. I'm sorry, but it's not gonna be me. And with you gone, Shirley's gonna need me around. I mean, is that what you want? Your son behind bars?

CARLY

At least I'd be able to speak to him. To see him. Maybe to hold him.

LOLLY

I expect he's happy right where he is.

CARLY

Like you were happy there?

LOLLY

That was different. Johnny was never meant for this world. He didn't belong here. You know that better than anyone else.

(Beat.)

And if you're lookin' to point fingers... Shirley's the one. You wonder why she asked the spirits to give you two children? Because she knew that at some point they'd be takin' one of them away from you. As payment for bringin' Joe to you. But I got in the way. Like always...

CARLY

...Is that why you did it? Is that why you killed those girls...? And before you say anything, I know that Johnny had nothin' to do with it.

LOLLY

What difference does it make now?

CARLY

I wanna know why. Before I leave here, I wanna know what would make you do what you did to those girls.

LOLLY

Everything I've done in my life, I've either done for you and your children or by Shirley's mandate. And what have I gotten in return? Certainly not gratitude. Mostly just distrust and disapproval. And for nearly two decades, I was rewarded with exile. So, forgive me if I don't feel obligated to explain myself or to apologize to you or to anyone else for my actions.

CARLY

I think we all got what we deserved.

LOLLY

So, that's settled then?

(A beat. Carly exits. Lolly calls after her.)

I'll get dinner started! Appetizers in about twenty minutes! Okay?

(Lolly begins unpacking the groceries. To Shirley.)

Did you hear me, Shirley?

(Shirley does not respond.)

Deaf as a post.

(She returns to unpacking groceries.)

I only needed one of the twins. And since Rose was furthest out in the water, I went after her. I waited for Johnny to get back to the rocks before I cast the spell. I wanted to make sure he was out of harm's way. But somethin' didn't go quite right and Rose... well, she started to panic. It was supposed to happen in an instant, but... I don't know, I must've missed somethin', because she was able to struggle against it... And when Tina realized what was goin' on, she swam to Rose and reached out for her. But it was too late. So, I just hung there, helpless, as Rose wrapped herself around Tina, dragging her down.

(Beat.)

And there were others. Anthony Benedetti. Damn klutz fell and nearly bled out from the head. And then along came Fisher. Angry, vengeful... scared. A perfect brew... And with him, I was determined to succeed... And I did. Because I'm here. And life is good.

(Carly enters carrying a bag.)

I was hopin' you'd change your mind.

CARLY

Thirty and a day, Lolly. Today's the day. I'm free to go. I'll send for the rest of my things.

(Beat.)

You know... I think Joe and I always wanted the same things in life. But instead, we ended up with each other.

LOLLY

(She crosses to Shirley.)

Shirley... Shirley, wake up. Carly's leavin'.

CARLY

She's gone.

LOLLY

Shirley...

CARLY

She's dead, Lolly. She's been dead for hours.

LOLLY

What're you talkin' about?

(She tries to wake Shirley.)

Shirley... Shirley!

(Carly starts off.)

You can't leave now. What am I supposed to do?

CARLY

It's a corpse, Lolly. I hardly think even you'd be able to fuck that up.

LOLLY

(Quietly.)

Language, Carly.

CARLY

Anyway, you'll figure it out. You always do.

(Carly exits.)

(End of Play.)