

Cold Rain

by Craig Houk

SAMPLE

COLD RAIN

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COLD RAIN

For Scott.

Who enjoys my writing almost as much as I do.

He holds my heart.

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CHARACTERS

LOLLY WEEKES A Witch (Ages 27, 34, 50, 57)

SHIRLEY WEEKES A Witch (Ages 31, 38, 54, 61)

CARLY WEEKES-REKOWSKI A Witch (Ages 22, 29, 38, 45, 52)

BRYSON REKOWSKI A Dandy (Age 16)

FISHER HICKMAN A Bully (Age 17)

JOHNNY REKOWSKI A Magician (Ages 16, 23)

DONNA PAGNOTTO A Fruit Fly (Age 16)

JOE REKOWSKI A Crooner (Ages 24, 47)

LYDIA PACHECO A Cop (Age 37, 44)

PRUDENCE PEELE A Counselor (Ageless)

Note: The roles of Lydia and Prudence should be played by the same actor.

SETTING

A Small Town in Western Pennsylvania just north of Pittsburgh

TIME

1959, 1966, 1975, 1982, 1989

Note: All scenes taking place in 1982 are chronological and transpire within a few days.

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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 Living Room	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 Living Room	Western PA
Act 2-7	1982	Bryson's Bedroom	Western PA
Act 2-8	1982	Rekowski Living Room	Western PA
Act 2-9	1982	Police Station	Western PA
Act 2-10	1989	Weekes Dining/Living Room	Western PA

COLD RAIN

COLD RAIN received its world premiere production on Saturday, July 14, 2018, as part of the DC Capital Fringe Festival in Washington, DC and was awarded Best Drama and named one of Best of Festival. The play was directed by Craig Houk and featured the following cast:

Desirée Chappelle as Carly Weekes-Rekowski

Elle Emerson as Lolly Weekes

Maura Claire Harford as Shirley Weekes

Grant Collins as Bryson Rekowski

Thomas Shuman as Fisher Hickman

Will Low as Johnny Rekowski

Stephanie Jo Clark as Donna Pagnotto

Blake Gouhari as Joe Rekowski

Lydia Kraniotis as Lydia Pacheco

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ACT 1
SCENE 1

1959. Nighttime. An Herb Shed at the Weekes home. LOLLY WEEKES, at present age 27, female; CARLY WEEKES, at present age 22, female; and SHIRLEY WEEKES, at present age 31, female, stand around a table. They are 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 sits nearby. A large pot boils on a burner.

LOLLY. *(As 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 mixes the ingredients into the pot and recites an incantation.)*

CARLY. 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 'em into the pot here. *(To both.)* And then I want the two 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

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pain endured, the pain resolve rest assured. Blotches leave him, go away, bound by thirty and a day. *(The pot glows as vapors rise out of it. Shirley takes a man's comb, plucks 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. During the previous, Lolly has stepped aside, out of earshot, and quietly speaks the following incantation.)*

LOLLY. 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 commanded. Shirley gently 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.)* Are you ready?

CARLY. *(Lightheaded as she holds out her hand, palm up.)* No... I just... I need a... *(Shirley strikes Carly's palm with the pin.)* Damn it, Shirley! *(Shirley guides Carly's hand over the pot. As the blood drips into it, there comes a chemical reaction and a burst of vapors.)*

SHIRLEY. 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 single black orb.)* This circle is now open, but my spell is unbroken. *(To Carly, regarding the orb.)* 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?

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SHIRLEY. Thirty years and one day. And then the spell'll be broken. (*Sound of a car door followed by the sound of a car starting, shifting, and pulling 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 alone.

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. Stay. Put.

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

SHIRLEY. We go roller-skatin'! (*With a flourish, Shirley pulls two pairs of roller skates from their hooks and exits. Lolly grudgingly follows. End of scene.*)

SCENE 2

1975. Evening. A Police Station. LYDIA PACHECO, at present age 37, female, sits in a chair behind a table. She is speaking with an unseen detective. She's been drinking.

LYDIA. Okay, look. It's a little hard to keep track of two teenage girls when you're workin' all hours and don't have a man around to pick up the slack, you know what I'm sayin'? 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 gotta talk to a detective or a cop or some other idiot, I gotta relive the night my girls drowned. (*Beat.*) So, what? So, you keep tellin' me it wasn't an accident. And you keep tellin' me that someone did this to 'em. 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 old 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

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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

1982. Mid-afternoon. Johnny Rekowski's Bedroom. The room is filled with various Hanna Barbera and other cartoon collectibles. There is also a television. BRYSON REKOWSKI, at present age 16, male; and FISHER HICKMAN, at present age 17, male, can be heard off.

BRYSON. (*Off, calling out.*) Anyone home?

FISHER. (*Off, in an elevated whisper.*) Keep it down, man. (*They appear.*)

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 a half mile away. We trekked through the woods and along the tracks to the back yard. It would've been quicker to take the main road.

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. Well, he isn't. Okay? So, please stop sayin' that. (*Beat.*)

FISHER. I'm gonna go. (*He starts off.*)

BRYSON. Hey... (*Fisher stops.*) 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.*) Right.

FISHER. You'll get 'em back.

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BRYSON. Yeah, okay. Well, Johnny's got 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. His van's out there? *(He joins Fisher at the window.)*

FISHER. Yeah. Volkswagen. Looks like a '73, '74 maybe.

BRYSON. I guess.

FISHER. You said nobody was home.

BRYSON. I don't see his motorcycle. Maybe he went for a ride.

FISHER. And you're 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. I don't think so. I mean, 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. Doesn't matter anyway. Unless you're two dimensional and in Technicolor, you're basically invisible to him. *(Fisher picks up a cap and places it playfully on Bryson's head.)*

FISHER. Why are you so scrawny? *(He squeezes Bryson's biceps.)*

BRYSON. *(Pulling away.)* Hey! Fisher, please. 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. 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. You two goin' out?

BRYSON. No. No. She's just a friend.

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FISHER. She ain't always with you, but you're always up there. Every match. Starin' 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. And anyway, 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? *(Beat.)*

BRYSON. Look, I'm just gonna grab a bunch of games for you, okay? *(He starts for the trunk.)* Bring 'em back as soon as you're done, though. *(He undoes another latch and pops the lock.)* My brother'll be totally pissed off if he finds out about this- *(Before Bryson can open the trunk, Fisher grabs him and forces him to the ground.)* No! What're you doin'?' Fisher, stop!

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'! *(Beat.)* Okay, now 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 fuckin' 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 and put your palms flat on the floor. *(Bryson does this.)* Good. Now push your butt back in to your calves, okay?

BRYSON. Okay. *(The two are now in what is referred to in wrestling as the referee's position. 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*

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floor. Their faces are close. They kiss. Fisher then hurriedly 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. *(He stands.)* I'm not queer! You got that?

BRYSON. *(He stands.)* Yeah.

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! *(He shoves Bryson.)*

BRYSON. Hey! *(He shoves Fisher back.)*

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 gets in Bryson's face.)*

FISHER. Do you hear me?

BRYSON. Screw you!

FISHER. Screw you!

BRYSON. Get out! *(He grabs a baseball bat that's lying nearby.)* Go! *(Fisher exits. Bryson breathes deeply and then follows him out. The trunk lid opens revealing JOHNNY REKOWSKI, at present age 23, male, who has been hiding inside.)*

JOHNNY. Heavens to Murgatroyd. *(Johnny returns to the trunk, closing the lid. End of Scene.)*

SCENE 4

1982. Late afternoon. A short time following the previous scene. A Kitchen in the Rekowski home. CARLY WEEKES-REKOWSKI, at present age 45, 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 as well.)

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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, grimaces, and spits the food into her napkin. She closes the napkin and drops it onto the plate. She takes the plate and scrapes everything into 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 REKOWSKI, at present age 16, enters.*) Sorry. (*He 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. Supper's gettin' cold.

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

CARLY. Less attitude to start. (*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 kids 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. (*Beat.*) Have you seen him 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?

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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 visited 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. (*Beat.*)

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

CARLY. What? No. Absolutely not. I've told you to never go there. It's not safe.

BRYSON. (*Under his breath and with a sigh.*) 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 not 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' anyway.

CARLY. What's the matter with you? You are not goin'.

BRYSON. Donna's pickin' me up soon. (*Carly rises from her chair.*)

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

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BRYSON. Screw you. (*A dish flies out of the sink and crashes to the floor, breaking into pieces. A gust of wind.*) You'll have to do better than that. (*Carly returns to her chair and continues to drink her wine.*)

CARLY. (*Resigned.*) Just... go, Bryson. Go to Flat Rock.

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 PAGNOTTO, at present age 16, female, peers in through the pane.*) Come in, Donna, it's open. (*Donna enters.*)

DONNA. 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 just clearin' the dishes and I dropped one.

DONNA. Oh, geez. Well, here, let me help. (*She starts towards Carly.*)

CARLY. (*A smidge aggressive.*) No, I've got it. (*Donna backs off.*)

DONNA. I'm a little early.

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

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

CARLY. Don't be silly. Have a seat.

DONNA. You sure?

CARLY. Sit down. (*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 retrieves a dustpan.*)

CARLY. No, it's true. Doesn't matter, anyway. Bryson and Johnny'll eat anything I put in front of 'em. (*Beat.*) How's your mom?

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

CARLY. Really? Well, that's great.

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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 has just finished cleaning up the broken dish.*)

CARLY. Sounds like it. (*She sits and pours another glass of wine. She's tipsy. A 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. (*Donna rises and crosses to the cupboard.*)

CARLY. Donna...

DONNA. Mm hm?

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 gets water from the faucet.*)

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

CARLY. Well, you don't strike me as someone who'd do somethin' stupid. 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. 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? (*An awkward silence. Donna sits.*)

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DONNA. So, how did you two meet? You and Mr. Rekowski.

CARLY. Oh, come on, Donna, you don't want to hear about that. No one wants to hear about that.

DONNA. Of course, I do.

CARLY. Really?

DONNA. Yeah. I really wanna know.

CARLY. (*Skeptical.*) All right. Okay. (*Beat.*) 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. (*Beat.*) 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.*) Anyway, 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'. (*Beat.*)

CARLY. Yeah, that's right. It was a while back, just before Bryson was born.

DONNA. What happened?

CARLY. Oh. Well, I think it's best not to conjure up unhappy events. (*Beat.*) So, 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 damn 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. (*Beat.*) Oh, and it turns out Marty was a good friend of Joe's. He told Lolly where

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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. Seriously? 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. 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 is so cool. (*Beat.*) Except, I guess what I don't get is... I mean, if your sister was so fixated on Mr. Rekowski, how'd you two end up together (*Beat.*)

CARLY. Well, 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. Wow. So, what happened when they got to the Tulagi?

CARLY. Well, Joe was the openin' act for a band called the Astronauts. (*Beat.*) Oh, and Lolly made a new dress for the occasion: a lavender satin cocktail number with cream-colored polka dots. Oh, and 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 Lolly up, so it took her 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. (*Beat.*)

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. 'Course. (*To Bryson.*) I'll see you outside. (*She exits.*)

BRYSON. I'm sorry, mom.

CARLY. Go. (*Bryson hesitates.*) Go. She's waitin'. And be careful.

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BRYSON. I will.

CARLY. I mean it. I worry. (*Bryson starts off. She calls after him.*) And don't be late. (*He's gone. She continues to drink her wine. End of Scene.*)

SCENE 5

1982. Just before sundown. A short time following the previous scene. The Rekowski Backyard. **JOHNNY REKOWSKI**, at present age 23, sits on a tree stump playing a handheld game, perhaps a Tomy Pac Man. Moments later, **FISHER HICKMAN**, at present age 17, arrives.

FISHER. Hey, Johnny. How's it goin'?

JOHNNY. (*Scarcely looking 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. What about?

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

JOHNNY. (*Gesturing toward the house.*) Check the house. He might be there.

FISHER. Your mom's home.

JOHNNY. (*Continuing with his game.*) So?

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

JOHNNY. You afraid?

FISHER. No. What? 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.*) Goddamit. (*To Johnny.*) When's he comin' back?

JOHNNY. Don't know.

FISHER. (*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.*)

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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. (*Chuckling.*) Are you fuckin' with me right now? So, you're... Okay, let me get this straight. 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, dude, I'll bite. Who was she after?

JOHNNY. My dad.

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

JOHNNY. (*Continuing 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. (*Calling after him.*) I'll return the favor by not tellin' anyone about you. (*Fisher stops.*)

FISHER. What did you say?

JOHNNY. I'll keep your secret if you keep mine.

FISHER. I ain't got no secret.

JOHNNY. I saw you. You and Bryson.

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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. *(Beat.)*

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 looks to the house and then back to Johnny. Beat. He lets Johnny go.)*

FISHER. I'm not fuckin' around. *(Fisher tries to pull a cigarette from the pack but struggles to get it out. He throws the pack to the ground.)* Goddam it! You're comin' with me.

JOHNNY. 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. I don't wanna hear another fuckin' word 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 don'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. *(Beat.)* 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. *(He thinks on it.)* How far's your car? *(Fisher punches Johnny. End of Scene.)*

SCENE 6

1966. Midday. A Living Room in the Rekowski home. SHIRLEY WEEKES, at present age 38, is seated in a recliner, smoking a cigar, and drinking a beer.

CARLY WEEKES, at present age 29, enters, very pregnant with Bryson, carrying

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deviled eggs and other snacks. LOLLY WEEKES, at present age 34, 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 sits on the couch and begins to pour iced tea.)*

LOLLY. 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 settles awkwardly into her chair.)*

CARLY. Well, this hippo doesn't wanna 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. *(Lolly settles in. Shirley takes a swig of her beer.)*

SHIRLEY. Care to share 'em with us?

LOLLY. Oh, before you 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. Ohhh. Bryson then because it'll undoubtedly be a boy. Though I do love the name Ellison. Ahhh, 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. Oh, well, 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? *(Beat.)*

LOLLY. How is Johnny? He still havin' trouble in school?

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CARLY. 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.

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, now hold on a damn minute. 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. (*Beat.*) Okay, granted, things haven't turned out the way I'd hoped they would. But all in all, my life is all right. (*Beat.*) 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. (*Beat.*) He's sensitive. Maybe too sensitive. He's so aware and he feels so much that, at times, I think he either acts out or shuts

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down as a way to survive. (*Beat.*) He loves me, I know that. Or at least he trusts me. And that's enough for me. (*Beat.*)

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 think I fucked it all up.

SHIRLEY. Language, Lolly.

CARLY. What do you mean, Lolly? What did you do?

LOLLY. I... I attempted a reverse spell. I... 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 you had any control over what happened that night? You don't have that kind of power.

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

SHIRLEY. Ha!

CARLY. I'm not gonna argue with you, okay? 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.

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SHIRLEY. There's nothin' to be done! Magic isn't meant to fix things. It's meant to coax things into bein', 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 turns back and retrieves the plate of deviled eggs.)*

SHIRLEY. 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. Beat. She re-enters.)* I'm outta beer at home.

CARLY. Help yourself to what's left in the fridge. *(Shirley starts for the kitchen.)*

SHIRLEY. I'll let myself out the back. *(She exits. We hear a refrigerator open and close, followed by a rattle of bottles. Off.)* Go with Bryson! Ellison's a stupid name! *(We hear a door closing off.)*

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 has 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. *(Beat.)* 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. *(Beat.)* 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. I feel it in my bones. *(Beat.)* 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's 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.)*

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SCENE 7

1982. Dusk. Nearly concurrent with Scene 5. Flat Rock. Old bits of police tape and a rotted police barricade sit nearby. BRYSON REKOWSKI, at present age 16, and DONNA PAGNOTTO, at present age 16, 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. I guess so.

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. *(Beat.)* 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 punches Bryson playfully.)*

DONNA. 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.

COLD RAIN

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. *(Beat.)*

BRYSON. He caught me starin' at his pubes 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 pubes. 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 Bryson playfully.)*

BRYSON. Quit hittin' me. *(He punches her back playfully. They laugh. Beat.)*

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

BRYSON. What?

DONNA. I sometimes have this 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. You comin'?

COLD RAIN

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 awful.

DONNA. There's been all kinds of weird stuff that's happened out here. People disappearin'. (*Beat.*) 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. (*Silence. Bryson is mesmerized.*) Bwahahahaha!

BRYSON. (*A little startled.*) Dammit, Donna. God. You're so stupid. (*Johnny calls from off.*)

JOHNNY. Bryson! (*He appears. He is out of breath. His eyes are blackened, and his nose is bloodied and swollen.*) Oh, hey. There you are.

BRYSON. Johnny, what're you doin' here? 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 our house lookin' for you.

BRYSON. And you told him you saw us?

JOHNNY. Yeah.

BRYSON. Why?

JOHNNY. I was bored.

COLD RAIN

DONNA. *(To Bryson.)* What happened with / you and Fisher?

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

DONNA. / What does he mean you two / were messin' around?

BRYSON. / How did you get here?

JOHNNY. Fisher drove me.

BRYSON. He drove you!? Where's he now? *(Johnny indicates the woods behind them.)*

JOHNNY. 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 ripped his eyes out or anything like that, so he can't be far.

FISHER. *(Shouting from off.)* Johnny! I'm gonna find you, man! And when I do, I'm gonna fuck you up! You hear me!? *(He cries out in pain.)*

JOHNNY. That's him now. *(End of Scene.)*

SCENE 8

1982. Dusk. Nearly concurrent with the previous scene. Gene's Place/Lounge. Downtown Pittsburgh. JOE REKOWSKI, at present age 47, male, sits on a stool playing a guitar. He sings RAIN ON (music and lyrics available on the pages 66 - 72). Sound of applause. He addresses the audience at Gene's.

JOE. Thank you. Much appreciated. I'm gonna take about a fifteen-minute break, get myself another beer or two, maybe have a smoke. I suggest you do the same. But don't you leave because we got a lotta great music comin' up for you. *(Joe steps away from his spot onstage and crosses into a dressing room. He takes a swig from a bottle of beer on his dressing table. He sits and looks at himself in the mirror, maybe runs his hands through his grizzled hair. He plucks 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 to clear the smoke. He then crosses to and opens the door, revealing CARLY WEEKES-REKOWSKI, at present age 45.)* Hey, baby.

CARLY. *(Tipsy, maybe a little drunk from the wine.)* Hi, Joe.

JOE. What're you doin' here?

CARLY. I came to hear you sing. It's been a while.

JOE. *(Skeptical.)* It's been a long while. You all right?

COLD RAIN

CARLY. ‘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 snickers.*) 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 moves away from Joe.*)

CARLY. You’re disappointed I’m here.

JOE. I’m just surprised is all. (*He motions her back to him.*) Come here. (*Carly hesitates.*) Come on. (*Carly goes to him, and he embraces her. They kiss. This should not be awkward for them but rather a welcome, 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, again 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 damn 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. (*Beat.*) I still have the record, the one Lolly bought me all those years ago. (*Beat.*)

JOE. What’re you talkin’ about? Why would Lolly have to buy you-

COLD RAIN

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 her in that lavender satin cocktail dress with the cream-colored polka dots.

JOE. Shit, I don't remember any dress with polka dots.

CARLY. 'Course, you do. She was wearin' it the night you two met.

JOE. I met you and your sisters over in the east end, at the roller rink. And none of you was wearin' anything like that. *(An awkward beat.)*

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. Joe's head falls gently and then slowly rises back up to meet Carly's gaze.)* 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? *(Beat.)*

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

CARLY. When?

JOE. About nine years ago, I guess.

CARLY. I never agreed 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? *(Beat.)*

JOE. Me and Shirley.

CARLY. You and Shirley?

COLD RAIN

JOE. We knew we wouldn't be able to convince you to get rid of Lolly's things, so I had the boys help 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. And that's not all. Look, why don't you sit down?

CARLY. I'll stand, thank you. (*Beat.*)

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 her 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. Oh, come on. We did not kill off Lolly. And it wasn't a little bit of money; it was enough for us to get caught up on our mortgage.

CARLY. I made that payment on the first of every month.

JOE. You made partial payments on the first of 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.

COLD RAIN

JOE. I don't know what to think.

CARLY. You have to trust that I was doin' the right thing. I was doin' what was best for us, for our family. *(Joe decides to let this go.)*

JOE. Somethin's wrong.

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...? Slow down. What're you talkin' about...? Who's here...? She said what...? Jesus Christ... Okay... Yeah, we're leavin' now. *(Joe hangs up the phone.)*

CARLY. What's wrong?

JOE. Angie Benedetti is out front.

CARLY. Angie?

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's 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 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 the hell's the matter with you? Why would you let him go down there?

CARLY. He's sixteen, Joe.

COLD RAIN

JOE. Jesus Christ. (*Beat.*) Now, listen to me. I want you to get in your car and get over to Flat Rock. Find Bryson and Donna and take ‘em 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, huh? That your sixteen-year-old is at a swimmin’ hole with some girl and your twenty-three-year-old is out for a joyride? It’s a waste of fuckin’ time. Let’s go. (*End of scene.*)

SCENE 9

1982. Nighttime. Nearly concurrent with the previous scene. Flat Rock. 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 PAGNOTTO, at present age 16, steps out of the darkness. She crosses to the water and calls out.

DONNA. Bryson! Bryson! (*JOHNNY REKOWSKI, at present age 23, enters from the darkness.*)

JOHNNY. I think he’s dead. I think they’re both dead.

DONNA. Shut up. (*Calling out again.*) Bryson!

JOHNNY. What was that?

DONNA. What?

JOHNNY. That flash of light.

DONNA. (*Annoyed.*) I don’t know. (*Calling out again.*) Bryson!

JOHNNY. I saw a woman-

DONNA. Shut up! (*BRYSON REKOWSKI, at present age 16, appears from the water.*) I don’t believe it.

JOHNNY. Holy crap.

DONNA. Bryson! Bryson, are you okay? (*Donna helps Bryson on to the rock.*)
Bryson, look at me. Are you okay?

BRYSON. I, uh... I’m fine. I’m fine. Where’s Fisher?

JOHNNY. Fisher 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.

COLD RAIN

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

BRYSON. Maybe he ran off.

DONNA. I don't think so. You fell in the water together and you're the only who came out.

JOHNNY. Ha! 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. It appears we're not alone.

DONNA. Crap. Okay, well, there's no need to panic. We haven't done anything wrong. *(Beat.)* 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 off.)* 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 go. *(Donna 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 WEEKES-REKOWSKI, at present age 45, enters.)*

CARLY. Bryson! Johnny! *(She embraces both.)* 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. *(To Johnny.)* What did you say?

DONNA. I'm outta here. *(She starts off.)*

COLD RAIN

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? (*Beat.*) Where's Fisher? (*Beat.*) Johnny, where's Fisher?

JOHNNY. He's dead.

CARLY. What do you mean he's dead? Dead how? Bryson, what happened?

BRYSON. I don't know, mom. Fisher... He came at me, we fought a little, and then we fell into the water.

DONNA. They were down there a long time.

CARLY. (*Composing 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? (*To Donna.*) 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. (*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, actually 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'.

COLD RAIN

CARLY. Normally not one of your better traits. (*Looking to the sky.*) Let's go. Rain's comin' through. (*More thunder. The winds pick up as they head off. A flash of lightning. Lolly appears in silhouette or in shadow. Rain pours down.*)

END OF ACT 1

SAMPLE