# little switzerland

A Full-Length Play

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## ACT I Scene 1

AT RISE:

Lights come up on OLLIE, downstage. He has a warm face, wiry figure, early to midtwenties. He is crouching in front of a little red wagon full of unassembled parts of an engine and various tools. In the midst of working on the engine, OLLIE looks up awkwardly from his work. He takes a moment before he addresses the audience.

### **OLLIE**

Hi. I'm Ollie Harper. I have a twin sister, and then another younger one, and a brother. And a dog. Two dogs. Two dogs and two cats. And a dusty old farm that hasn't seen a soy bean in over ten years. Are you looking at my engine? It's not done yet. I just took it apart. You have to do that to clean it and make it new. Yeah. Lots of parts and things to remember.

(To audience member.)

Could you hand me that socket wrench over there? That one. No. That's a . . . It's okay.

(OLLIE gets the socket wrench himself and goes back to work. Again, he looks up at the crowd and takes a moment to adjust before he addresses everyone again.)

You can't get mad when someone doesn't know somethin' or do somethin' 'cause it's not civilized. Right? That's what our mom taught us, before she ran off with the plumber. But she's still right. I mean, people just don't know.

(To audience member.)

It's okay that you didn't get the socket wrench. You can't expect everyone to know everything. I don't know everything. Do you?

(Lights down on OLLIE and up on the kitchen table, where DAYLE, ZACK, and TOBI, are wearing party hats and gathered around a cake. OLLIE joins them. DAYLE is a natural beauty with a grounded soul. ZACK, the oldest brother by a few years, is a more flamboyant type. TOBI is the sharp and confident seventeen-year-old sister.)

#### **EVERYBODY**

Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday Dear Dayle and Ollie! Happy Birthday to you!

(They both take a deep breath and blow all the candles out.)

|   | ACK  |
|---|--|
| Tell me your wish!  | ND.  |
| You can't tell it or it won't come true!  | OBI  |
| ZA Remember the year you turned thirteen  | ACK  |
| DA (Cutting the cake.)  | YLE  |
| Oh, my God! That was the year we lit the tr   | ree house on fire!                                 |
| I don't remember  | OBI  |
| DA Well, Zack was in charge of the house 'cause Mom was   | YLE<br>e Dad was off on some month-long run and    |
| OI Who knows.   | LLIE   |
| ZA A bunch of us crammed into that tiny little t  | ACK ree house over the brook out back.             |
| OI Sturdy little tree house.  | LIE  |
| DA You built that thing!  | YLE  |
|   | ACK y of us knew what to do with it once it landed |
| Dayle knew.   | OBI  |
| OL Look at her blushin'   | LIE  |
| I don't remember the party, but I do remember the party, but I do remember the party of poison oak! | OBI er busting Dayle and Deaton out behind the     |

| ZACK And Dayle goes for her throat, knocks over a candle and the whole tree house goes up in flames! |
|--|
| TOBI<br>No way!  |
| OLLIE No way is right. The tree house burned down because Zack                                       |
| ZACK<br>Don't you dare!  |
| OLLIE Zack finally got hair.   |
| TOBI Ew. I don't know if I want to hear about this.  |
| DAYLE Oh! I almost forgot!   |
| ZACK<br>Drop it!   |
| TOBI So, how are Zack's pubes and anything flaming connected?  |
| DAYLE Well, still, we were playing spin the bottle   |
| OLLIE We were always playing that game.  |
| DAYLE Zack spun it   |

And it landed on Deaton.

Did you kiss?

(There's a pause.)

OLLIE

TOBI

| ZACK Of course not!   |
|---|
|   |
| DAYLE So, he jumps on Zack, tugging at his pants  |
| TOBI Does he get in them!   |
| DAYLE No, but he lights the whole god-damned tree house on fire! We're all lucky we're ever alive!  |
| OLLIE He was drunk.   |
| DAYLE Ollie   |
| ZACK Who wants more cake?   |
| TOBI I gotta go to work. Let's do presents.   |
| DAYLE You can't go to work on our birthday party!   |
| TOBI<br>Got to.   |
| ZACK Let's do presents anyway. Mine first!  (He hands DAYLE and OLLIE two identical packages.) I bet Deaton would have bought you all new tools Ollie. He'd buy Dayle something really beautiful. Remember when he had six dozen roses delivered for your sixteenth birthday! |
| TOBI I remember that!   |
| DAYLE That's all in the past.   |
| (They all chuckle: the presents are finally opened. They are  |

(They all chuckle; the presents are finally opened. They are revealed to be the same small book of poetry.)

| ZACK   |
|--|
| Handmade expressly for you both.                                       |
| DAYLE  |
| Look it's a book of poems.   |
| ZACK   |
| Best read at the early morning sunrise                                 |
| OLLIE  |
| (Reading the cover.)   |
| "The Complete Works of Zachary D.H. Lawrence."                         |
| (Slight pause.) That ain't you.  |
|  |
| ZACK   |
| It's called a pseudonym.   |
| OLLIE  |
| It's called someone else's name.                                       |
| TOBI   |
| (She throws the presents down.)  |
| Open them quick. I gotta go to work.                                   |
| OLLIE  |
| (Opens his first. It's a new socket wrench. He is genuinely thrilled.) |
| Thanks, Tobe.  |
| (He gives her a hug.)  |
|  |
| TOBI   |
| Now you can finish your engine.  |
| DAYLE  |
| (Opens a bottle of Southern Comfort.)                                  |
| Southern Comfort?  |
| TOBI   |
| Take the edge off.   |
| ZACK   |
| Let's light the cake again!  |
|  |
|  |

| I'm going to wo   | rk.                        | TOBI                               |            |
|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| One more time,    | Tobi!                      | ZACK                               |            |
| Please, Tobe. C   | One last time.             | OLLIE                              |            |
| Okay. But we c    | can't keep doing this fore | TOBI<br>ver.                       |            |
| It's tradition!   |                            | ZACK                               |            |
| It's juvenile.    |                            | TOBI                               |            |
| ,                 |                            | DAYLE the cake and lighting them.) |            |
| Let's just do it. |                            | TOBI                               |            |
| Okay. Ready. I    | Everybody make a wish.     | DAYLE                              |            |
| Ready everyboo    | ły?                        | OLLIE                              |            |
| (                 | They all take a deep brea  | ath and blow out the candles.      | Blackout.) |

END OF SCENE 1

# ACT I Scene 2

AT RISE:

Later that evening. A small section of the cake, complete with candles, is still on the kitchen table. ZACK stands with his back to the audience, center. OLLIE is sitting on the couch in front of him, reading a comic book, not paying any attention to ZACK. ZACK is dressed in an obviously old zoot suit, complete with accessories. The color of the suit, a bit too small, is teal. ZACK speaks with great enthusiasm.

**ZACK** 

So . . . What do you think?

(He stands eagerly. OLLIE has no response.)

Ollie! I'm talking to you!

(Pause. Still no response. He continues in a parental tone.)

Ollie.

**OLLIE** 

Yeah?

**ZACK** 

Will you pay attention, please?

**OLLIE** 

I was readin'.

**ZACK** 

How do you like my suit?

**OLLIE** 

(Wanting to get back to his book, but responding with honesty.)

Neat color.

**ZACK** 

I'm going to wear it to Yale's orientation.

**OLLIE** 

Yale?

**ZACK** 

Do you know what Yale is, Ollie?

| OLLIE Didn't we do this last year? Didn't you buy a suit or somethin'? Didn't you say you were gonna go somewhere?                             |
|--|
| ZACK (Uncomfortable.) Of course not.   |
| OLLIE  (Innocently.) You came downstairs and I was sittin' in the same spot, too And you said somethin' about goin' somewhere. Away somewhere. |
| ZACK<br>Stop.  |
| OLLIE<br>Huh?  |
| ZACK Stop talking.  (ZACK loosens his collar.) Somebody said once that I look like Errol Flynn. Do you think that's true?                      |
| OLLIE  (Takes a good look at ZACK.)  Who told you that?  |
| ZACK<br>Ollie, didn't I ask you to stop talking.   |
| OLLIE<br>Yeah, but   |
| ZACK<br>Did Dayle buy food?  |

ZACK

(Hesitating to ask.) Do you think I should?

Nope.

OLLIE

OLLIE

You don't know what to buy. Dayle buys all the good stuff.

|                  |   | ZACK                           |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Has that cake    | (ZACK eyes the cake.) been sitting there all day? |                                |
| Yup.             |   | OLLIE                          |
| You should the   | row it away.                                      | ZACK                           |
| Don't bother n   | ne none.  | OLLIE                          |
| It's bothering i | me!   | ZACK                           |
| Then you shou    | ald throw it away.                                | OLLIE                          |
| What did you     | (Beat. ZACK opts to lear have for lunch?          | ZACK ve the cake alone.)       |
| Sardines.        |   | OLLIE                          |
| Go back to yo    | (Sighs.)<br>ur comic book.                        | ZACK                           |
|                  | (Long pause. OLLIE rea                            | ds while ZACK sits nervously.) |
| I'm writing a b  | oook, you know.                                   | ZACK                           |
| Uh, huh.         | (Not looking up.)                                 | OLLIE                          |
|                  | (Long pause. OLLIE loo<br>1take off that suit.    | ks at ZACK.)                   |
| We may be ha     | (As though he has a big s ving a visitor.         | ZACK ecret.)                   |

| I say  |
|--|
| OLLIE Heard you the first time.  |
| ZACK<br>Well, you could respond.   |
| OLLIE Deaton.  |
| ZACK<br>How did you know?  |
| OLLIE You act all funny when he comes around. Like a girl.                               |
| ZACK<br>Why do I talk to you! Why!   |
| OLLIE Because I'm your brother   |
| ZACK But that doesn't solve anything. Does it?   |
| OLLIE And there's no one else around and you hate to be alone.                           |
| ZACK Words of wisdom from one of America's great intellectuals. Go back to your funnies! |
| OLLIE  (Pause.)  Take off your quit. He won't be in 'til leter.                          |
| Take off your suit. He won't be in 'til later.   |
| ZACK How do you know?  |
| OLLIE 'Cause I picked up the other line when you and Tobi called him.                    |
| ZACK But Dayle has no idea he's coming.  |

(ZACK smiles knowingly at OLLIE. OLLIE goes back to his comic.)

| OLLIE<br>No.   |
|--|
| ZACK It was supposed to be a birthday surprise. He was supposed to be here for the party.  |
| OLLIE Well, I ain't surprised he missed it, that's for sure.   |
| ZACK He just got out of one of those fancy-schmancy rehabs for rich people.  |
| OLLIE<br>Again?  |
| ZACK Did you know that Deaton lived in New York City for a little while?   |
| OLLIE That's where he started doin' the fancy drugs.   |
| ZACK Oh, you always have to be so morbid!  |
| OLLIE<br>It's true.  |
| ZACK<br>Stop talking.  |
| (Pause.) I think I'm going to leave with him.  |
| OLLIE<br>Who?  |
| ZACK Deaton! Isn't that who we're talking about here? He's moving into his rich stepmother's house in Switzerland and he told me I can come and stay for as long as I want.  (OLLIE chuckles.) What! |
| OLLIE You'd hate it there.   |

| ZACK Well, I certainly don't belong here. I'm out of my element.   |
|--|
| (Pause.) How could you not want Deaton to visit?   |
| OLLIE 'Cause. Grady doesn't want him here either.  |
| ZACK<br>Well, that's because she's jealous.  |
| OLLIE She knows what he's like. Grady always says she loves him to death, but he's got the mentality of Howdy Doody. |
| ZACK Grady said that?  |
| OLLIE  |
| Yup.   |
| (Beat.) He's a good guy, but (OLLIE shakes his head.)  |
| We'll see.   |
| ZACK<br>What do you think will happen?   |
| OLLIE  |
| He'll come and make everyone happy and then he'll take off and everyone will be miserable again. Same as always.     |
| ZACK<br>No! I mean, with Dayle!  |
| OLLIE He doesn't ever finish anything. I doubt if he ever finished rehab.  |
| ZACK Deaton is a most accomplished individual!   |
| OLLIE Only 'cause he's got money.  |
| ZACK<br>Well, I think you're wrong.  |

| OLLIE  |
|--|
| Okay.  |
| ZACK<br>Besides, Dayle loves Deaton. He'd be great for her.  |
| OLLIE She'd be great for him, maybe.   |
| ZACK Oh, whatever. They'd be great for each other. We could fly to Spain on weekends!  |
| OLLIE He's not that rich   |
| ZACK Did you see the letter Tobi got from England?   |
| OLLIE She showed me.   |
| ZACK She didn't show me. All I got to see was the envelope. What did it say?   |
| OLLIE I dunno. They were just talking about how smart she was.   |
| ZACK I did really well in high school too, you know. You don't believe me, but I did. I did so well, I got letters from schools who wanted to see me all the time.  (Beat.) I did, you know.  (Beat.) Deaton went to a boarding school in Connecticut. Can you imagine a life like that?  (Beat.) What time is it? |
| OLLIE (Looks at his watch.) Almost 6:30.   |
| ZACK Oh, God. Tobi will be home any minute.  |

| What are you so afrai        | OLLIE<br>d of her?  |
|------------------------------|---|
| I'm not afraid!              | ZACK  |
| You avoid her like she       | OLLIE<br>was poison oak.  |
| Fact is Ollie, Tobi is a     | ZACK nasty brute of a little girl.  |
| She's not a little girl a    | OLLIE nymore.   |
| She's a complete child ways. | ZACK  And I'm not in the mood to play Daddy to her selfish, bratty  |
| Somebody's got to tea        | OLLIE ch her.   |
| Well, Dad can do it.         | ZACK<br>He's the father.  |
| Dad's never here.            | OLLIE   |
| Well, when he is here        | ZACK he can teach her.  |
| I think you should tel       | OLLIE her what you don't like about her.  |
| is scre                      | nly, TOBI's voice is heard coming up the drive. She ming for DAYLE. Hearing this, ZACK dives up the b his room, just as TOBI enters.) |
| *                            | TOBI c, digging through the scattered garbage in the room.) e is that stupid bitch! I'll wring her neck!                              |
| (Not n banana Hey, Tobe.     | OLLIE oticing her panic, walks into the kitchen to retrieve a)  |

**TOBI** Ollie, have you seen Dayle? (Slight pause.) Ollie! Have you seen Dayle! **OLLIE** Uh . . . Why? **TOBI** Well, she was supposed to pick me up at two o'clock and drive me in town before I went away. **OLLIE** Where did you say you were goin'? **TOBI** Camping. **OLLIE** With who? **TOBI** Youth group. **OLLIE** Can I come? **TOBI** No! (Softening.)

Maybe next time, Oll.

(A car horn beeps outside.)

Tell Dayle when she comes in that she has screwed up absolutely everything for me. I had things to take care of in town that needed to be done this afternoon. Not tomorrow. Not next week. This afternoon. I had a special appointment that I obviously had to miss because of her. Ollie, are you going to remember this?

(No response.)

Nevermind. I'm going to write it down.

(She snatches an envelope off the table, and looks around for a pen.)

I can never find a pen in this house! I can never find anything in this place!

(As she searches, OLLIE eats his banana and reads his comic. She has found a pen and writes the note furiously. Off, the horn beeps again, loudly. She puts the note in OLLIE's hand, grabs her over-night bag off the couch, and exits. OLLIE finishes

his banana, drops it on the floor, and sits back down on the couch. He continues reading. Moments later, DAYLE enters through the door covered head to toe in mud.)

| DAYLE  |
|--|
| Hey.   |
| OLLIE  |
| Hey.   |
| (She sits next to OLLIE with a bottle of alcohol. She saturates a towel and tends to a cut on his hand.)                   |
| DAYLE You been working on your engine?   |
| OLLIE  |
| Yeah.  |
| DAYLE  |
| How's it coming?   |
| OLLIE Okay. You been out back?   |
| DAYLE  |
| 'Course.   |
| OLLIE How's it comin'?   |
| DAYLE Nothing's happening. Maybe I should accept that it's just like all the other dried up plots around here and give up. |
| OLLIE Lots of people'll tell you your crazy. Don't believe 'em.  |
| DAYLE<br>We'll see.  |
| (She's done with his hand.)  |
| OLLIE  |
| Tobi's lookin' for you.  |

| Why?  | DAYLE                           |
|---|---------------------------------|
| She said you were supposed to give her  | OLLIE a ride.                   |
| Give her a ride ? Oh! I completely  | DAYLE forgot!                   |
| She went camping. (He reflects.) I like camping.                                  | OLLIE                           |
| I can't believe I forgot. I never forget th                                       | DAYLE nings like that.          |
| (Still holding the note.) I was supposed to give you this.  (He hands it to her.) | OLLIE                           |
| (Reading it to herself.) What is her problem? You'd think I nev                   | DAYLE ver did anything for her. |
| (Not looking up from his  | s comic book, OLLIE shrugs.)    |
| She really needed a passport.   | OLLIE                           |
| (Excited.) Did she get the scholarship?   | DAYLE                           |
| I dunno.  | OLLIE                           |
| Well, why would she need a passport, C  | DAYLE<br>Ollie!                 |
| I think I'd like to go to England.  | OLLIE                           |

(ZACK appears at the bottom of the stairs, holding a thin book

of poetry. He has changed into an old smoking jacket.)

ZACK

Oh, Dayle . . . How many times have I told you that playing in the dirt not only makes you insane, but also most unsightly.

**DAYLE** 

Zack . . . you wouldn't understand.

**ZACK** 

I hate it when you call me that.

**DAYLE** 

What?

**ZACK** 

You know what. That name. Zack. You know I hate it. It sounds so . . . so not me.

(He sits down and opens his book. He doesn't really read it, he just sits there, posed.)

**DAYLE** 

Your name isn't Zachary. It's Zack.

ZACK

I refuse to partake in such inane conversation.

**DAYLE** 

Nobody knew how to spell Zachary.

ZACK

Well, at least I wasn't born here.

**DAYLE** 

Oh, please! Spare me the agony of your story telling!

**ZACK** 

On the contrary, my darling sister, I was born in the deep woods of . . . Massachusetts.

DAYLE

Oh, yeah. Where were you born this time. Walden Pond or somethin'? Zack--

**ZACK** 

The name! Please! I'm getting a migraine from all of this irrelevant speech.

| Okay, ZACK!                |   | DAYLE   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Why do you to              | orture me? Why?   | ZACK  |
|                            | DAYLE begins to wande<br>strategy for cleaning and<br>plate out of the sink whice | he mess, holding his head in agony.  er into the kitchen; she's creating a begins picking things up. She pulls a ch probably hasn't been washed in a a loud knock at the door.) |
|                            |   | DAYLE   |
| Ollie, will you Forget it. | get the door? (OLLIE is reading, he do  |   |
|                            | ` •   | nd DEATON standing there. He is c and very warm. He gives her a smooth  |
| Hey lady                   |   | DEATON  |
| Oh, my God .               |   | DAYLE   |
| Happy birthda              |   | DEATON  |
|                            | (They hug.)   |   |
| Where have yo              | ou been?  | DAYLE   |
| You look so di             |   | DEATON  |
|                            | (DEATON touches her ha  | air.)   |
| Yeah, well it's            | been a while. Come in.  | DAYLE   |

DEATON

Hey, Oll.

| (They hug.)  |
|--|
| DEATON<br>Happy birthday.  |
| OLLIE Want some cake?  |
| (OLLIE motions to the cake on the table.)  |
| DEATON<br>I'll pass, thanks.   |
| DAYLE (To DEATON.) Sit down.   |
| OLLIE Dayle, can I talk to you   |
| DAYLE Later, Oll.  |
| (OLLIE wanders out.)   |
| DAYLE I didn't think you were still alive.   |
| DEATON I just got back.  |
| DAYLE Where have you been?   |
| DEATON All over the world. First I went to England. Then Italy, Spain, back to Italy for a while, Germany, Portugal, flew to Ireland, walked around there for a while, got bored, and wen back to Italy. Then I flew here. |
| DAYLE Who paid for that?   |
| DEATON  My dad. He figured it was a good way to get me out of his life for a while.  |

| DAYLE Oh, that's right he re-married again.   |
|---|
| DEATON Yeah. Her name's Michelle. We can't stand each other so she's constantly sending me away. As far away as possible. But she's loaded, so you won't see my father complaining. |
| DAYLE Why didn't you write me? I was worried sick about you.  |
| DEATON I can't write to you, Dayle.   |
| DAYLE   |
| Thanks.   |
| DEATON No, don't take it as an insult. I just can't write you. That's all.  |
| DAYLE Well, are you back for good?  |
| DEATON I don't know. Only if you marry me.  |
| DAYLE (Laughs.)<br>Okay.  |
| DEATON Actually, I'm thinking about doing some more traveling. But I'll be back for Christmas. Only to see you. No one else.  |
| DAYLE Oh, of course. Not like you'd stop in to see your mother.   |

DEATON

Nope! Every second would be devoted to you. And like-wise, I'd hope.

(Beat.)

I thought about you a lot.

(They stare at each other. DAYLE breaks away.)

| DAYLE I heard about rehab. I'm sorry about all of the trouble  |
|--|
| DEATON You knew about that?  |
| DAYLE<br>Yeah.   |
| DEATON<br>How did you know?  |
| DAYLE Word of mouth. I figured that's why I didn't hear from you.  |
| DEATON Well, you heard right. I didn't exactly finish But the good thing is I'm clean now. No. Actually, I got really drunk in Germany. Only once.  (He laughs.) That's the minimum requirement of everyone who goes there.  |
| DAYLE (Goes to do the dishes.) Is it?  |
| DEATON (Noticing her change in temperament.) But uh I'm totally clean now. I swear.  |
| DAYLE Are you seeing anyone?   |
| DEATON Not really.   |
| (Slight pause.) You know, on my way over here, I stopped by Grady's house. Her boyfriend was there. What's his name Nicki? Anyway, I guess they were having a fight so she told me she'd meet me here. She hasn't changed (Beat.) Whenever I travel, I meet the most amazing people. I'm always reassured that not |
| everybody's like my dad. Not everybody's selfish. People who hardly knew me were offering me a place to sleep.   |

DAYLE

That sounds pretty dangerous--

### **DEATON**

Precisely my point! You still think that way! But it's not like that at all. And the things I saw! Colossal buildings that you can't even count the years on they're so old. And then there's little old me. And my stupid, little problems. And who cares? I wanted to scream to the Vatican, WHO CARES! DOES ANYBODY CARE? People do that all the time, I'm sure. It made me realize that my life is so irrelevant next to this ancient house of worship that it's not even worth the worry. I finally realized that things must be done now. The important stuff anyway.

**DAYLE** 

(Pause.)

Will you talk to Grady for me.

**DEATON** 

Let me guess . . . she's in trouble.

**DAYLE** 

This is serious. I'm worried about her.

**DEATON** 

You're always worried about her and she doesn't worry enough. You've always made such a great pair.

**DAYLE** 

She's getting worse.

## **DEATON**

She's probably just bored so she's creating some interesting drama for herself. I mean, who can blame her? This town is totally dead. It was dead when I left and it just keeps getting deader. All those overworked farms and deserted houses. Can you even get a job around here?

**DAYLE** 

I wouldn't know. I haven't been to work in a while.

**DEATON** 

What've you been doing?

**DAYLE** 

Working the farm.

**DEATON** 

What farm?

(He looks at her for a minute.)

I know you don't mean--

| DAYLE I know it sounds crazy, but  |
|--|
| DEATON That farm has been a big pile of dust for I don't know how long.  |
| DAYLE I know we can't get the whole thing back, but I've been working this small patch                                       |
| DEATON Dayle, what for?  |
| DAYLE Because I think it's still good. I know it is. It's really been working actually                                       |
| DEATON Dayle, that farm'll never be worth anything.  |
| DAYLE You don't know anything about it   |
| DEATON Can I have an opinion?  |
| DAYLE I'm not asking for much, just to be able to make something happen out there.   |
| DEATON   |
| (Smiles at her.) The whole town might be going to shit, but you'll have one good patch of farmland. You're amazing. (Pause.) |
| You know, I almost didn't recognize you when I first saw you.  |
| DAYLE Yeah, well I'm kind of dirty   |
| DEATON No, I mean you've changed. It's like you keep getting younger instead of older.                                       |
| DAYLE What's that supposed to mean?  |

## **DEATON**

It's a compliment. Look at you. You look great. I think you had the same hair cut when you were twelve years old. You were a tomboy then, too.

**DAYLE** 

You always did like dirty women.

(Suddenly, GRADY bursts through the door on roller skates. She is in her twenties, very attractive.)

**DAYLE** 

My god, Grady.

**GRADY** 

Hey, there's a fire out there!

**DAYLE** 

Where?

**GRADY** 

'Bout a mile over the tracks. I ran into Jimmy Brown on the way over and he said they already dragged out the bodies of four little kids.

DAYLE

What happened?

**GRADY** 

Don't know. But they haven't found any adults yet, that I know for sure. I'm gonna go check it out. Wanna come?

**DAYLE** 

No.

**GRADY** 

Dayle, you're no fun. Okay, me and Deat will tell you what happens.

**DAYLE** 

I went with you on that sick trailer park expedition. Never again.

**GRADY** 

And that was cool, right?

DAYLE

It was sick.

(To DEATON.)

A few weeks ago a woman was strangled by her boyfriend out in East Side Park. And who was the first to hear about it . . . ?

**GRADY** 

My cousin Marty lived right next door, so she was one of the first to find out--

DAYLE

Too bad she didn't find out sooner.

**GRADY** 

So she calls me and says, you won't believe what's going on, you gotta get over here. And so I call Dayle up and invite her over to Marty's and--

**DAYLE** 

If I'd known what I was going for I never would've gone.

**GRADY** 

Ingrate! The most exciting afternoon of your year and you know it! (To DEATON.)

Those of us who can't travel the world, take what we can get. I hear you're new dad's new trophy wife's got some bucks, Deat. Even more than the last one.

DAYLE

Does anyone want something to drink?

**GRADY** 

What d'ya say we christen that bottle of So Co over there.

**DAYLE** 

Tobi gave me that for my birthday.

**GRADY** 

Hey, happy birthday.

(She gives DAYLE a hug.)

Sorry I missed the party. No poison oak, I hope. Well, what d'ya know . . . Even a pristine little twat like Tobi knows the importance of good booze. Let's have a round in her name!

**DAYLE** 

Grady, we've got a recovering alcoholic in the house.

|  | GRADY  |
|--|--|
| So? You've got one recovering alcoholic difference does that make?  (Pause.) | e, and one non-recovering alcoholic. What          |
| Did that come out right?   |  |
| I'm not opening that bottle now.   | DAYLE  |
|  | GRADY  |
| (Standing.) All right. I'll take a rain check. Well, we You comin', Dayle?   | e'd better go before this fire's yesterday's news. |
| No.  | DAYLE  |
| Okay. Let's go, Deat.  | GRADY  |
| (DEATON stands to follo  | w GRADY.)  |
| Wait, where will you go after?   | DAYLE  |
| Out. Wanna meet us?  | GRADY  |
| Uh Come back here after.   | DAYLE  |
| Okay. Then we can all go out. And hav  | GRADY e a drink.                                   |
| Grady  | DAYLE  |
| It'll be just like old times!  | GRADY  |
| (DAYLE gives DEATON  | a look.)   |
|  | DEATON   |
| Don't worry, Dayle.  |  |

# (GRADY skates out with DEATON behind her.)

# DAYLE

Wait Grady, can I talk to you for just one minute?

# **GRADY**

No time, baby. They said it was gonna rain. I wanna get there before it starts.

(Blackout.)

END OF SCENE 2

| ACT I  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Scene 3  |                                 |
| AT RISE:  The sound of rain and the It's about three-thirty the DAYLE is asleep on the soaking wet, enters and for the soaking wet, enters are the soaking wet, enters and for the soaking wet, enters are the | following morning; couch. TOBI, |
| DAYLE  |                                 |
| (Covering her face with a blanket.) Shut the light out.  |                                 |
| TOBI   |                                 |
| Go to your room if you want to sleep.  |                                 |
| DAYLE  |                                 |
| Tobi? Oh, I thought you were Ollie. What are you doing here?   |                                 |
| TOBI   |                                 |
| We got rained out. What did you think? I was homesick?   |                                 |
| DAYLE  |                                 |
| It's raining?  |                                 |
| TOBI   |                                 |
| No, I just decided to turn the hose on myself before I came in the door  | <u>.</u>                        |
| DAYLE  |                                 |
| Well take off those wet clothes. And shut off the light. You woke me it?   | up. What time is                |
| TOBI   |                                 |
| 3:30.  |                                 |
| (TOBI sniffs around the room.)   |                                 |
| DAYLE  |                                 |
| 3:30?  |                                 |
| TOBI Deaton's been here.   |                                 |
| DAYLE  |                                 |
| How did you know?  |                                 |

| TOBI   |
|--|
| I smell cologne.   |
| DAYLE Yeah. He was here.   |
| TOBI What are you two scheming to do this time?  |
| DAYLE Scheming?  |
| TOBI You've been scheming together since you were kids. What is it this time?  |
| DAYLE Nothing. He's not going to be here long. He might be moving to Europe.   |
| TOBI Did you hear about the fire?  |
| DAYLE Yeah. Do you know what happened?   |
| TOBI We heard about it on the news coming back. Some woman left her kids alone to go to a bar. They think one of the older kids was playing with matches. There were nine of them. |
| DAYLE Nine?  |
| TOBI I hope that woman fries. (There is a long silence.) I was looking for you earlier when you blew me off. Where were you?   |
| DAYLE Playing in the dirt.   |
| TOBI I looked for you. You weren't there.  |
|  |

### DAYLE

I went over to Jack Greer's to borrow some tools and inside his shed there was a robin's nest, right over the door jam. And the eggs were hatching. So I stayed and watched. They were so tiny and skinny and hungry.

(TOBI's not all that interested. Pause. TOBI looks around the room.)

**TOBI** I wish someone'd take a match to this place. **DAYLE** Don't even joke like that. **TOBI** I'm not joking. It's disgusting. **DAYLE** What the hell do you want me to do about it? **TOBI** Clean it! **DAYLE** You clean it. **TOBI** Why don't you get a job! **DAYLE** I've been looking for one. **TOBI** When? I don't see you looking. **DAYLE** Economy's bad. **TOBI** Dayle, we live in the sticks. You can always get a job shoveling shit or something.

**DAYLE** 

You try and shovel shit.

| TOBI  Lors a full time student and Lyverk. You do nothing  |
|--|
| I am a full-time student and I work. You do nothing.   |
| DAYLE  |
| Mind your own business.  |
| (ZACK enters in his pajamas and is wearing a frozen eye mask.)   |
| ZACK   |
| What is all the hubbub!  (TOBI and DAYLE do not answer.) I was having the most glorious dream about Canada. Oh, how I miss it. |
| TOBI   |
| You've never been to Canada, stupid.   |
| ZACK   |
| (Ignoring her.)  |
| The glorious rolling hills, the ice tipped mountain tops, the hockey The sensation of skiing in negative sixty degree weather  |
| TOBI   |
| None of us even know how to ice skate.   |
| ZACK   |
| (Snapping out of it.) What were you two wallowing about?   |
| TOBI & DAYLE   |
| Nothing.   |
|  |
| ZACK Well, now that I'm up will somebody please make me my tea?  |
| TOBI   |
| Make it yourself.  |
| DAYLE  |
| I was just going to make some anyway.  |
|  |
| (She walks over to the stove and prepares a kettle. Disgusted, TOBI drops herself in a chair.)                                 |

TOBI

This sucks.

| ZACK What sucks?   |
|--|
| TODA   |
| TOBI This. This whole life I have. The lives we have.  |
| ZACK   |
| I know what you mean, Tobi. Who would have thought that someone like me could have come from a hovel like this.  (To himself, sniffing.) |
| What's that glorious scent?  |
| DAYLE<br>Shut up Zack or I'll kill you.  |
|  |
| ZACK Are you getting my tea?   |
| DAYLE  |
| Yes! So hush.  |
| TOBI   |
| (Pause.) I'm not like all of you, you know.  |
| 7.4.077  |
| ZACK Well, I know you're not like me. None of you are actually. Especially you Dayle. You're always so dirty.                            |
| D. W. F.   |
| DAYLE  |
| (Ignoring him.) So, tell us Tobi. Why are you so different.  |
| TOBI   |
| I'm going to England.  |
| DAYLE (Quietly, happy.) You got it.  |
| ZACK Did I hear someone talking about Europe? I love talking about Europe. It's so me.   |
| DAYLE  |
| You got the scholarship!   |

| (DAYLE rushes to TOBI and hugs her. | The two squeal with |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| excitement.)                        |                     |

ZACK

Hold it! No one's getting anything unless I know about it!

**TOBI** 

I got a scholarship to Trinity. I'm moving to London! And I can promise you all that once I leave, I'm never coming back.

(Harshly.)

I'm breaking the tradition of losers in this family.

**DAYLE** 

Why are you so spiteful?

TOBI

Why am I so spiteful? Mom took off, Dad's never here and I'm living with a bunch of meatheads who have never done anything with their lives. Ollie and I are the only ones who work. What's wrong with you two? Do you enjoy being slugs?

**DAYLE** 

(Calmly.)

Why don't you just--

**TOBI** 

You used to have ambition. And then you dropped out of college, pretended you didn't care about anything anymore and started letting Grady bring you down--

**DAYLE** 

That's it! Where the hell do you get off saying those things to me! Huh! I didn't drop out of college, I left because you--

(DAYLE stops herself. There is a long, awkward pause.)

**ZACK** 

Is tea ready yet?

DAYLE

Almost.

**TOBI** 

Let him do it!

| DAYLE  |
|--|
| (Through her teeth.) Tobi, if you're leaving for good, as you say you are, then wouldn't it be nice to do so on a happy note?  |
| (TOBI begins to talk back.)  |
| DAYLE  |
| Enough.  |
| (TOBI makes an abrupt move to the other end of the room, keeping her back to the others. OLLIE enters from the garage, his hands and clothes are covered in grease.) |
| ZACK   |
| What in the name of Walt Whitman have you been doing?  |
| OLLIE  |
| Fixin' the truck. Oh, hi Tobe  |
| DAYLE  |
| It's 3:30 in the morning.  |
| OLLIE  |
| (Looks at his watch.)  |
| 3:46.  |
| DAYLE  |
| Whatever. It's late. There's no light and it's raining.  |
| OLLIE  |
| Not in the garage it's not. And there's light in there, too. What do you think I am? Stupid?   |
| (Silence.)   |
| Besides, I need to fix it for tomorrow 'cause I gotta go into town in the mornin'.   |
| ZACK   |
| Why?   |
| TOBI   |
| I'd still like to go tomorrow if that's okay.  |

OLLIE

Sure. We'll take off at about ten o'clock.

| TOBI Okay. I'll be ready.  |
|--|
| OLLIE Super. (Beat.) Hey, does everyone know about the fire?   |
| ZACK Our new mailman Norm told me all about it. Said there were nine kids in that house.                   |
| DAYLE The woman was at a bar, is that what you said Tobi?  |
| TOBI Just your typical locale trash. I hope she dies a slow and painful death.                             |
| OLLIE I just hope she can live with herself. (Beat.) Well, goodnight everyone.                             |
| (OLLIE exits up the stairs.)   |
| ZACK Wait a minute! Where is he going tomorrow? (No response.) Tobi, where are you going tomorrow and why. |
| TOBI He told you weeks ago he got this job.  |
| ZACK Doing what?   |
| TOBI I'm not sure exactly. I know he'll be rebuilding transmissions and brakes and stuff.                  |
| (TOBI starts to exit up the stairs.)   |
| ZACK For whom?   |
| TOBI  (Annoyed that he won't leave her alone.)  Foreign cars. Mercedes, I think                            |

| ZACK   |
|--|
| (Impressed.)<br>Well, that's okay then.  |
| (Pause.) He can do those kinds of things?  |
| DAYLE He's been working on cars since he was nine. Where have you been?  (There is a knock at the door.) Who the hell is that? |
| (She opens the door. It's DEATON, drunk.)  |
| ZACK Deaton! I was just thinking about you!  |
| (DEATON tries to focus n ZACK.)  |
| DEATON<br>Tequila  |
| ZACK Tequila! I should have known. You hablo that Espanol, si?   |
| (DEATON passes out on the floor.)  |
| DAYLE<br>Could you excuse us Zack?   |
| ZACK<br>Oh, I can help   |
| (ZACK helps lift DEATON to the couch. He stands in front of him and lightly taps his face.)                                    |
| ZACK<br>Wake up Wake up  |
| DEATON<br>Zack?  |
| ZACK<br>Hi.  |

(TOBI bolts up the stairs.)

| Where's Dayle?                         | DEATON             |
|--|--------------------|
| She's here.                            | ZACK               |
| Can you go away?                       | DEATON             |
| Oh well, we need to talk.              | ZACK               |
| Later.                                 | DEATON             |
| (Smiles at DEATON.) Okay. Hasta amigo. | ZACK               |
| (ZACK exits.)                          |                    |
| Were you planning on staying here ton  | DAYLE ight?        |
| I always knew I could count on you, D  | DEATON<br>ayle.    |
| Yeah. Good old me.                     | DAYLE              |
| You're a good person, Dayle.           | DEATON             |
| I'm a sucker.                          | DAYLE              |
| You're disappointed. In me. You're dis | DEATON sappointed. |
|  | DAYLE              |
| Yes. (Pause.)<br>Very.                 |                    |

| DEATON  |
|---|
| Me too. (Pause.)  |
| I'm depressed now.  |
| DAYLE Me too.   |
| DEATON You're such a good person. Dayle. I love you so much. You really care about me. You'll always care about me. I need someone to care about me. Always. Will you always care about me? |
| DAYLE It's hard caring for someone that is always letting you down.   |
| DEATON  |
| Again!  |
| DAYLE<br>Again.   |
| DEATON I am sober, though. Not right now. But most times. I'm better. Just don't tell Tobi, okay?   |
| DAYLE Tobi? Tobi doesn't care about anyone besides herself.   |
| DEATON Tobi cares a lot.  |
| DAYLE You don't know what you're talking about  |
| DEATON She cares a lot 'bout you. She wants you to be happy   |
| DAYLE (Cutting him off.)  |
| You're drunk, Deaton. You don't know what you're saying.  |

| DEATON  |
|---|
| Okay.   |
| (Pause.) I'm so glad I'm here! Do you think we could stay up to watch the sunrise? It'd be just like old times!         |
| (TOBI appears at the bottom of the stairs.)   |
| TOBI  |
| (Infuriated.) I thought you were here.  |
| DAYLE   |
| Did we wake you   |
| TOBI  |
| (Cutting her off.) Deaton, I know you're drunk. So you might as well get right back on your plane and get the hell out  |
| DAYLE Tobi, he didn't kill anybody, he's just   |
| TOBI Yes. I realize that and I want you to get the fuck out, Deaton.  |
| DEATON<br>Sorry, Tobi.  |
| TOBI Don't apologize to me!   |
| DEATON<br>Sorry, Dayle.   |
| DAYLE What the hell is going on here!   |
| TOBI I'll tell you what's going on. This asshole is not coming back to this house ever again. Ever! Is that understood! |
| DEATON I know, I know   |

(He gets up to leave.)

| DAYLE Are you seriously leaving?  |
|---|
| TOBI<br>Yes!  |
| DEATON<br>You know, Tobi you aren't so holy   |
| DAYLE What?   |
| TOBI That's just like you, Deaton! You come in here and create conflict! That's all you've ever done! I don't know why I thought you'd be different this time! You're still just a loser! |
| DAYLE<br>Tobi!  |
| DEATON Yeah, well you can't run from the truth Tobi   |
| TOBI You're the one who's running! You're running all over the world!   |
| DEATON<br>Look in the mirror, Tobi!   |
| DAYLE<br>SHUT UP!   |
| TOBI Get out of here, Deaton.   |
| DAYLE Stop it!  (To DEATON.) Are you really going to go? I don't think you should leave like this.  |
| DEATON It's just down the hill.   |
| DAYLE You can stay, Deaton. It'd be better if you stayed.   |

| (TOBI scoffs loudly.)   |
|---|
| DEATON I'll see you later.  |
| (He kisses her on the cheek and exits.)   |
| DAYLE Tobi, would you mind explaining yourself!   |
| TOBI<br>Yes. I would. I'm going to bed.   |
| DAYLE No you're not! You had no right to do what you just did! Why do you do things to spite me! Why! |
| TOBI I don't think you'd ever understand  |
| DAYLE Well you'd better start explaining because To be quite honest, I'm really starting to hate you. |
| TOBI (Beat.)<br>Good.   |
| DAYLE Good? Good! Do you know what good is, Tobi?   |
| TOBI Good is when Deaton is very far away!  |
| DAYLE And what is your obsession with Deaton?   |
| TOBI I'm not obsessed with Deaton. You are.   |
| DAYLE What?   |

TOBI

You are. He's knows it too. That's why I want you to keep away from him.

**DAYLE** 

Who are you? My keeper?

**TOBI** 

Deaton has always been trouble. He's always giving you false hope. I was hoping he was stronger now, but he's not. And so he has no place in your life. I'm sorry, but it's true. My best advice to you is to get some new clothes, get a plane ticket and get out. You could get a good job in a big city or something. I mean, you're smart Dayle. You can always do something with yourself.

(Beat.)

**DAYLE** 

What's wrong with my clothes?

(Blackout.)

END OF SCENE 3

|   | ACT I<br>Scene 4  |
|---|---|
| AT RISE:  | It is the next morning, around 9:30. TOBI adamantly stands center stage holding an envelope up to her face. As TOBI is calling to ZACK, DAYLE enters from outside. She is dressed in blue jeans, boots and a flannel shirt. |
|   | TOBI  |
| Zack! Zack!   |   |
| What?   | DAYLE   |
| (Looking at the envelope.) A letter just arrived for a Zachary F.F. Th        |   |
| They must have the wrong house.   | DAYLE   |
| No. They don't. Our pompus-assed broth<br>Hemingway just didn't work for him. | TOBI her changed his name again. I guess  |
| Well, who's it from?  | DAYLE   |
| Yale.   | TOBI  |
| Did he get anything else?   | DAYLE   |
|   | TOBI  |
| Just about three dozen mail order catalog (Beat.)                             | ues.  |
| Zack! Your rejection letter has arrived!                                      |   |

DAYLE

Why do you always have to be so negative?

#### **TOBI**

Dayle, get real. Zack's been applying to the same ivy league college for ten years. I don't know when he's going to get it through his thick skull that they don't want him. Zack!

#### ZACK

(Prances down the stairs.)

I was meditating with a poem. You broke my concentration with your yelps, missy. You must speak softly, my sweet sister.

(TOBI stares at him with disgust, but he continues.)

# **ZACK**

A poem! A poem for our great land of Canada!

(He recites the poem with great pride and seriousness.)

Oh sweet Ontario, With the evergreens and falling snow. Sometimes it's even FORTY BELOW on the mountain tops of Ontario.

Oh! Oh! Oh! ON-TAR-IO! I am so, so, so, full of sorrow!

(He begins to weep. TOBI and DAYLE just stare at him. After a moment, TOBI applauds.)

**TOBI** 

Could you do that again?

ZACK

It was beautiful, I know. So in the moment . . .

**TOBI** 

(To DAYLE.)

Kids could hire him for birthday parties instead of getting a clown. He's much more farcical.

**DAYLE** 

Be gentle.

TOBI

Hey, Zack. There's a note from Yale here for you.

| Thank you.  (He opens it, quickly glances at the letter, and puts it back in the   |
|--|
| envelope.)   |
| They want me.  |
| TOBI Oh, yeah? Let me see.   |
| ZACK   |
| (Holds up his hand.) Hush, little sister. This is going to be hard for the whole family, I know. But I'm going to have to turn them down. Again. |
| TOBI Oh. You really got accepted, huh?   |
| ZACK<br>Of course.   |
| DAYLE<br>Tobi  |
| TOBI Let me see the letter.  |
| ZACK (Pause.) Why?   |
| why:   |
| TOBI Because I've never seen an acceptance package that was so thin before. Let me see.  |
| ZACK<br>Certainly not.   |
| TOBI  (Moving towards him.)  Let me see it!  |
| ZACK (Running away.) No!   |

|                               | TOBI  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Let me see it! 1              | Chasing him around the room.) NOW!  |
| Go away!                      | ZACK  |
| Gimme the lette               | TOBI<br>er!   |
| Leave me alone                | ZACK<br>!   |
| Dr. Mr. F.F Tho<br>Freakdome! | TOBI reau! We are please to offer you acceptance into the program of                                |
| Tobi!                         | DAYLE   |
| Stay away!                    | ZACK  |
| We want Zack!                 | TOBI We want Zack! We want Zack!  |
|                               | TOBI is chanting and running after ZACK when DEATON enters. They see him and stop in their tracks.) |
| Hi.                           | DEATON  |
| (                             | TOBI grabs ZACK's letter and runs out of the room.)   |
| No!                           | ZACK  |
| (                             | ZACK runs after her. DAYLE and DEATON are alone.)   |
| How're you doi:               | DAYLE ng?   |
| How are you do                | DEATON bing?  |

| DAYLE  |
|--|
| I don't know. This place is really starting to get to me.  |
| DEATON   |
| (Pause.)   |
| Come away with me.   |
| DAYLE  |
| (Laughs.) Remember when we were little and my dad would drink and you'd tell me that you were going to take me away and marry me to save me?  (Pause.) |
| I loved you for that. The thought was just enough to make me happy.  |
| DEATON   |
| So let's do it.  |
| DAYLE Yeah, okay. Where do you want to go this time? Jupiter?  |
| DEATON   |
| I'm serious.   |
| (Pause.) I love you Dayle.   |
| DAYLE  |
| You told me that when we were six  |
| DEATON  No. You don't get it. I want you to be my wife. I came back here to convince you to marry me and move to Switzerland.                          |
| DAYLE  |
| You sound so serious.  |
| DEATON   |
| I am. Look I have a plane leaving in four days. You have four days to make your decision.  |
| (Beat.) What are you thinking?   |
| DAYLE  |
| I think that this is the craziest thing I've ever heard.   |

DEATON

Take a chance with your life, Dayle. You only live once.

I couldn't leave--

**DEATON** 

You couldn't leave what? Your family doesn't want you to sift through some extinct soy bean field for the rest of your life.

DAYLE

I just need some time to--

**DEATON** 

There is no time. What are you going to do if you don't come with me? Get a job at the local mill or manage a supermarket? And where are your friends Dayle? All of them, besides Grady, hightailed it out of here as soon as they could. There's no one around. In ten years this town will bear absolutely no resemblance to the way it was when we were little. I'm offering you a ticket out. You would be insane not to take it. You'll have opportunities you've never had before. You can finish school. You can study anything you want. Learn different languages and meet lots of fascinating people. Your world will grow so incredibly big. You'll have more resources than you can ever imagine. Anything's better than a farm full of sand.

(Slight pause.)

**DAYLE** 

When do we leave?

(They hug and kiss.)

**DEATON** 

Are you sure this what you really want?

DAYLE

I'd be a fool not to.

**DEATON** 

I just want you to be happy.

**DAYLE** 

This is what's best. I know it. I can't stay in a place where there's nothing for me. I can't be farming dry land for the rest of my life. I got to get out while I can. And who else would I leave with but you, Deat. You're my oldest friend.

(Beat.)

| DEATON I've really got to go.  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| DAYLE  |  |  |
| We've got to make plans.   |  |  |
| DEATON We will. I'll be back later. I promise.   |  |  |
| (They kiss. DEATON exits. DAYLE reflects on the scene with a smile. TOBI and OLLIE enter, OLLIE with a suitcase.)  |  |  |
| DAYLE Where are you guys going?  |  |  |
| TOBI I'm dropping Ollie off.   |  |  |
| DAYLE Where?   |  |  |
| TOBI What? Oh, I mean we're going to fix cars. Stop asking me questions. What are you smiling about? No one's allowed to enjoy themselves in this house. Especially if Deaton's doing the entertaining |  |  |
| DAYLE<br>Don't start, Tobi.  |  |  |
| (TOBI picks up OLLIE's bag and exits.)   |  |  |
| OLLIE Well, I guess this is goodbye.   |  |  |
| DAYLE Ollie, I'll see you later.   |  |  |
| (He grabs DAYLE and hugs her, gives her a big kiss and exits. Fade to black.)  |  |  |
| END OF ACT I   |  |  |

# ACT II Scene 1

AT RISE:

OLLIE sits in a spot with a pencil and paper.

## **OLLIE**

Dear Family . . . I have joined the Navy. I am going to fix airplanes and fly in them too. Don't know when I'll see y'all 'cause I'm going over-seas.

(Beat.)

It's funny how people are. Remember when we had that giant mutt that used to chase leaves around? He wasn't the smartest of dogs. But it's what made him happy. Then we had the tom cat that used to run around the house in circles. And everyone thought he was so great 'cause he was always doing somethin', remember? Well, that cat was runnin' around so much he got hit by a truck. He never stopped. I think it was good that he got hit, though. 'Cause he never played with string or nothin'.

(Pause.)

But that dog. That dog lived for almost twenty years. And all he did was chase leaves around. And eat rocks.

(Pause.)

Tobi's a good kid, Dayle. We all are. But she's a little confusing sometimes. She's good. She means well, but she doesn't always know what she means. Ya know? And you're good, too. You're just older than her. Try not to blame her for being so young. There's so much she honestly does not understand.

(Pause.)

So look after everyone. Especially yourself. I'll write. Love, Ollie.

(Lights fade.)

END OF SCENE 1

ACT II Scene 2

AT RISE:

It is 1:00 the next morning. ZACK is wearing his teal zoot suit, pacing nervously and steadily sipping a glass of red wine. When DEATON finally arrives with a knock at the door, ZACK hesitates to answer it. When he finally does, he is instantly filled with happy energy, DEATON immediately recognizes it as forced.

**ZACK** 

Thanks for coming over so late, Deaton. We could always count on you.

(He moves busily around the room as to avoid eye contact.)

**DEATON** 

Zack, you sounded so bad on the phone . . . Are you okay?

**ZACK** 

Me? Oh, yeah! I just lost it for a minute. Can I offer you a glass of wine?

(DEATON wants the wine, but is trying to resist.)

**DEATON** 

Uh . . .

**ZACK** 

Oh! Sorry! Forgot you're on the wagon. Or is it off? Off, on . . . (Raises his glass.)

Well, cheers to good times ahead.

**DEATON** 

Are you drunk?

(Beat.)

Why don't you sit down. You're making me dizzy.

**ZACK** 

Dizzy? You should try being me!

**DEATON** 

C'mon. Sit down.

(ZACK sits. Pause.)

Okay . . . So, what's this about?

| ZACK  |
|---|
| (Clears his throat and pauses for a moment.) Deaton Who does your hair? I mean, you have great hair, but it's such a good cut too |
| DEATON  |
| Stop fuckin' with me.   |
| (Flatly.)<br>What's up.   |
| ZACK  |
| (Finishes off his wine.) Are you Are you going to marry Dayle? Just wondering   |
| DEATON  |
| Just wondering?   |
| ZACK  |
| I I think you should. I I think that you would make a good couple.  |
| (ZACK looks at the floor. DEATON notices there's something ZACK isn't telling him.)   |
| DEATON  |
| Nice suit.  |
| ZACK  |
| You like it?  |
| DEATON  |
| Why did you really call me over?  |
| (ZACK is a little uncomfortable, but he continues.)   |
| ZACK  |
| Do you ever think that you spend too much time thinking about yourself?   |
| (Beat.) I drive myself crazy. I really do, Deaton. I stay in this house all day long.   |
| DEATON Why don't you go out?  |
| ZACK  |
| I can't.  |

| DEATON  |
|---|
| DEATON Why not?   |
| ZACK  |
| (Pause.) Do you think I look like Errol Flynn?  |
| DEATON Mmmmm  |
| ZACK Wait. Before you answer honestly, just say that I do. No one says that I do, but you can say it, Deat.   |
| DEATON Say what? That you look like Errol Flynn?  |
| ZACK  |
| (Giggles.) Don't I, though. People tell me that all the time.   |
| DEATON Exactly why did you get me out of bed!   |
| ZACK  |
| (Drinks.) I think about all sorts of things. Everything. What I look like, what I'll wear tomorrow, what I'll wear a week from now. What I'll wear in a year. When I'll go to Yale. What I'll wear at Yale. What I'll wear at Yale's graduation. What I'll wear on my visits to Walden Pond What I'll wear outside. And I think and think about it until I'm afraid to go out of the house. I'm afraid that the thoughts that I have in my room won't be as good as the stuff that happens outside. |
| DEATON  |
| It's scary, huh?  |
| ZACK<br>Yeah. Really scary.   |
| DEATON  |
| (Goes to ZACK and puts his arm around him.) Things will work out.   |
| ZACK  |
| You're the only person I can talk to, Deaton.   |

|                  |  | DEATON  |
|------------------|--|---|
| Well, I'm here   | Zack.  | DEATON  |
| You're like the  | brother I never had.                           | ZACK  |
| What about O     | llie?  | DEATON  |
| You're like the  | brother with a brain I ne                      | ZACK<br>ever had.   |
|                  | (There is a pause.)                            |   |
| So               |  | DEATON  |
| So.              |  | ZACK  |
| What else do y   | you think about?                               | DEATON  |
| You.             | (Takes a deep breath.)                         | ZACK  |
|                  | ZACK breaks out in ner                         | for a moment and then looks away. vous laughter, spilling wine all over es a chuckle, and then backs away.) |
| Some people r    | (Laughing harder.) night consider it an obse   | ZACK ssion. Are you uncomfortable, Deaton?  |
| Did you just te  | ell me you were attracted                      | DEATON to me?   |
|                  | (DEATON looks at ZAC two burst into hysterical | CK, shocked. After a moment, the laughter.)   |
| I bet you really | y want a drink now, huh?                       | ZACK  |
| What a visit th  | nis has turned out to be.                      | DEATON  |

| ZACK Maybe I shouldn't have called   |
|--|
| DEATON  No. I mean, coming back to this house  (Slight page)   |
| (Slight pause.) I have been all over the world, but there is nothing more confusing, exciting and frightful than this house. |
| ZACK I know. Imagine if you were trapped in it like I am.  |
| DEATON   |
| It's enough to make a guy an alcoholic.  |
| (DEATON realizes what he has said and his laughter fades. ZACK shares this reaction.)  |
| DEATON (Looks shamefully at the ground.) Dayle   |
| (TOBI comes down the stairs. ZACK does not see her.)   |
| ZACK<br>Please take her, Deaton.   |
| TOBI   |
| (Startling ZACK.) What are you philosophizing about now?   |
| (ZACK looks at DEATON, horrified. He panics for a moment, and then runs up the stairs to his room.)                          |
| DEATON   |
| Was that necessary.  |
| TOBI Who invited you?  |
| DEATON What did I do now?  |
| TOBI You're intrusive.   |

## **DEATON**

You asked me to come here!

**TOBI** 

I wanted you to come earlier for her birthday! I thought that somehow you could kick her back into gear--

**DEATON** 

Oh, so now it's all my fault. You're the one who's so determined to make everybody angry.

**TOBI** 

No, I'm not. They just don't understand me. You don't understand me either, so why don't you just mind your own business.

**DEATON** 

Hey, you begged me to get involved in your business.

TOBI

No. I begged you to get involved in Dayle's business. I never invited you into mine.

**DEATON** 

This isn't about Dayle and you know it--

TOBI

It most certainly is! This change that Dayle's going through, it all started right after you left last year.

**DEATON** 

That's bullshit.

**TOBI** 

It's true! You came here and you started hanging out, all lovey dovey and all that. And then, poof! Deaton's gone. Didn't leave a note or anything.

**DEATON** 

I was in a bad way. I did her a favor.

**TOBI** 

You made her crazy! She stayed in bed for a month crying over you. And then she started this thing with the farm. One day she stopped crying and went out to the farm and started working this little patch, trying to make something happen. It was really scary, Deaton, to see my sister farming a patch of land with no life in it. She actually planted, can you believe it? And she believed something was going to grow. Just like she always find a way to believe that you will some day turn around. It's pathetic.

| DEATON  |
|---|
| (Suddenly.) Do you think she's really unhappy with her life?  |
| Do you tillik sile's really tilliappy with her life:  |
| TOBI What does it matter? She's digging in dry dirt!  |
| DEATON When I got here, Dayle didn't give me the impression that there was anything wrong with her life. Is there something wrong with yours?   |
| TOBI  |
| Stop it! You are not going to come here and fill my head with insecurities just because you feel shitty about yourself.   |
| DEATON  |
| Well aren't you just the strong and independent one. I'm impressed.   |
| TOBI  |
| Don't patronize me.   |
| DEATON  No, really. You are the only person I've ever met that can live her whole life all by herself. You have a great family. A little fucked up, but sincere.  (Pause.)  Especially Dayle. |
| TOBI  |
| (Pause.) She doesn't know what she is, you know? She can't be happy here.   |
| DEATON Well, she won't have to be. She's coming to Switzerland with me. We're getting married.  |
| TOBI  |
| (Pause.)<br>What?   |
| DEATON  |
| I asked her to marry me and she said yes.   |
| TOBI  |
| What is wrong with you? Do you ever grow up?  |

### **DEATON**

What's wrong with you! I did what I thought was right!

TOBI

Face it, Deaton. You're a loser. I only thought you'd be worthy if you had your shit together. But you don't. You can come back when you do, but for now you're useless.

**DEATON** 

Who are you to judge me--

**TOBI** 

I actually thought you might've cleaned up. But you're nothing more than a worthless drunk, and God only knows what else. I don't want that shit anywhere near my sister.

**DEATON** 

You didn't do such a good job of keeping away from it yourself, did you?

**TOBI** 

I don't know what you're talking about--

**DEATON** 

Do you really want me to tell you what I know--

TOBI

Shut up!

**DEATON** 

You're not as pure as your halo--

**TOBI** 

Shut up! I am not like you!

**DEATON** 

You're not so different!

**TOBI** 

I am not like you! I do not dump on other people!

DEATON

No. You just act so bitchy that no one likes you--

TOBI

But I don't dump on them. If you marry Dayle, you'll dump on her for the rest of her life. (Slight pause.)

You've already ruined everything. You've already broken Dayle's heart. You'd just better patch things up and get the hell out of here.

| DEATON   |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| What's your problem?   |  |  |
| TOBI   |  |  |
| Just leave me alone.   |  |  |
| DEATON   |  |  |
| Talk to me.  |  |  |
| TODI   |  |  |
| TOBI (Pause.)  |  |  |
| You don't know what it's like to live here, Deaton. The air is so thick. Nothing happens. Do you know that I can't remember the last time Zack left the house? He's stuck. He's really sick, Deaton. I think he believes the crazy things he says. |  |  |
| DEATON   |  |  |
| But that's no reason to be mean to him.  |  |  |
| mo D.Y.  |  |  |
| TOBI I don't know how else to act. I can't be like Dayle.  |  |  |
| I don't know now cise to act. I can't be like Dayle.   |  |  |
| DEATON I think it's great that you're getting out of here.   |  |  |
| TOBI   |  |  |
| (Surprised.)   |  |  |
| You do?  |  |  |
| DEATON   |  |  |
| Yeah. I don't think that anybody should be where they don't want to be.  |  |  |
| TOBI   |  |  |
| (Slight pause.)  |  |  |
| It's It's not that I don't want to be here. It's just  |  |  |
| DEATON   |  |  |
| Wanna tell me how do you make your money, Tobi?  |  |  |
| (TOBI turns to him.)   |  |  |
| Don't bother answering. I already know.  |  |  |
| TOBI   |  |  |
| Whatever you've heard, it's not true.  |  |  |
| (Pause.) How do you know?  |  |  |
| TION GO YOU KHOW:  |  |  |

| DEATON I was looking to buy. And they mentioned you were dealing.   |
|---|
| TOBI I can't believe you were looking to buy.   |
| DEATON I can't believe you were dealing.  |
| (TOBI doesn't know what to say. She just looks at DEATON in horror.)  |
| TOBI I'm not a dealer, I'm just working for a friend  |
| DEATON Cut the shit. It's all the same. (Slight pause.) We don't need to talk about it. You did what you had to do. |
| TOBI You remind me of my dad, Deaton. A real charmer. He charms people and then lets them down.                     |
| DEATON How do I let people down?  |
| TOBI You promise things to everybody.   |
| DEATON<br>So, now Dayle's everybody.  |
| TOBI It's not just Dayle  |
| DEATON (Innocently.) I didn't promise Zack anything.  |

TOBI
You didn't? He's been talking about you coming to take him away for weeks. Did you

tell him that?

| Oh! That's kid's stuff!   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| TOBI You're not a kid, Deaton. You can't play with people like that anymore.  |  |  |
| DEATON I don't play with people.  |  |  |
| TOBI You don't mean to, but you do. God, I wish I'd remembered all this before I'd asked you to come. I saw that Dayle was in a rut and I thought that you could get her out of it. |  |  |
| DEATON You think she's stuck.   |  |  |
| TOBI<br>Right.  |  |  |
| DEATON You think she's stuck here.  |  |  |
| TOBI<br>Yes.  |  |  |
| DEATON And unhappy.   |  |  |
| TOBI<br>Yeah.   |  |  |
| DEATON She didn't seem that way to me.  |  |  |
| TOBI She's making the best out of a situation she was forced into.  |  |  |
| DEATON By whom?   |  |  |
| TOBI Circumstances.   |  |  |
| DEATON Because of what? What?   |  |  |

TOBI

Because of me. Because she had to take care of me.

(TOBI is horrified by her own words.)

**DEATON** 

Tobi--

(TOBI runs out of the house.)

**DEATON** 

Dayle never felt that way about you.

(Blackout.)

END OF SCENE 2

|  | ACT II<br>Scene 3   |
|--|---|
| AT RISE:   | It is four-thirty the same morning. GRADY is at the kitchen table, DAYLE is trying to put a steak on her black eye. |
| Will you get that thing away from me!  | GRADY   |
| You're swollen really bad.   | DAYLE   |
| Who cares?   | GRADY   |
| You gotta get rid of this guy.   | DAYLE   |
| Don't give me shitty advice like that! I   | GRADY happen to be in love!   |
| He beats you. He always has. He prob   | DAYLE<br>pably always will.   |
| So what. He's worth it.  | GRADY   |
| I hate to see you like this.   | DAYLE   |
| You're the one getting so worked up. I don't you wanna hear an exciting story's (Excited.) Have you ever had a menage a trois? | GRADY just came over here to tell you an exciting story, ?  |
| (Pause.)<br>No.  | DAYLE   |
| I have.  | GRADY   |
| Oh, Grady!   | DAYLE   |

## **GRADY**

See this was my exciting story! Wanna hear it! I came home from bar hoppin' with a bunch of gals from work and I was real tired see so I went in to my bedroom to go to bed, so I'm in bed and I notice that Nicki's not there. I gave him a key, see 'cause my mom's gone to Nevada for a couple of weeks. And then, I'm half asleep and I hear Nicki comin' in the front door, I think he was drunk 'cause he was makin' a lot of noise. So he has this girl, see, and he brings her into our bedroom--

**DAYLE** 

Grady--

**GRADY** 

No wait! I'm getting to the good part. So he comes into the room, I'm half asleep, and he lifts up my head, opens my mouth and sticks something on my tongue. You know what it was?

**DAYLE** 

Arsenic.

**GRADY** 

No! It was acid. I mean, we've done acid before but this was just so unexpected, ya know? So by the time I'm really tripping we're all stark naked in bed together and this girl . . . this girl wasn't really looking like a girl, she looked like . . . some sort of weird space creature. Like E.T. or somethin', all neat colors and really bug eyed. Have you ever touched an alien's breasts?

**DAYLE** 

(Pause.)

No.

**GRADY** 

Well, neither had I until last night, but it was weird, really weird. Invigorating, though. Like I had done something really risky, chancy. I mean, I never would have thought of doing anything like that before I knew Nicki. He's great for me isn't he?

(Pause.)

What's wrong with you?

DAYLE

So when did he beat you up?

### **GRADY**

Oh. Well, after all was said and done and we had pretty much finished whatever it was that we were going to do with each other, the girl--you know, the alien--she bugged. I mean she totally weirded and ran out of the house. I was out of my mind at the time and didn't know what was going on. I just figured she was having a bad trip or somethin'. But Nicki told me it was because I had upset her. I'd done something wrong to make her leave. Do you think that's true Dayle? I mean, I did everything Nicki told me to. (Pause.)

Geez, I hope he's not mad at me anymore. I'd really like to go home.

**DAYLE** 

So, he kicked you out of your own house.

**GRADY** 

Well, he's staying there too. Anyway, it's good for us to have these nice little chats.

**DAYLE** 

At five o'clock in the morning?

**GRADY** 

Well, at least we won't be wasting the day!

**DAYLE** 

That's one way to look at it.

**GRADY** 

Boy, am I glad Nicki didn't find out about me and Deaton.

**DAYLE** 

What are you talking about?

**GRADY** 

Well, Deat came over and . . .

**DAYLE** 

And what?

(Slight pause. Then, horrified.)

You slept with him.

**GRADY** 

Um . . .

DAYLE

You did. I know you, Grady. Oh, God . . .

| Jesus, Dayle                               | GRADY                |                                |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tell me the truth!                         | DAYLE                |                                |
| Calm down.                                 | GRADY                |                                |
| You always were a talker, Grady.           | DAYLE                |                                |
| Never a liar, though.                      | GRADY                |                                |
| Did you sleep with him or not?             | DAYLE                |                                |
| Well                                       | GRADY                |                                |
| Tell me the truth!                         | DAYLE                |                                |
| I am.                                      | GRADY                |                                |
| (Long pause.)                              |                      |                                |
| I should've known                          | DAYLE                |                                |
| All I'm going to say is that I'm glad he's | GRADY leaving today. | Nicki will bite his balls off. |
| What do you mean he's leaving?             | DAYLE                |                                |
| He's leaving for Switzerland today.        | GRADY                |                                |
| No, he's not.                              | DAYLE                |                                |

**GRADY** 

He used my phone to make his flight arrangements. (Pause.)

What's wrong?

**DAYLE** 

Are you sure?

**GRADY** 

Dayle, I was there.

(Pause.)

**DAYLE** 

He didn't tell me he was leaving.

**GRADY** 

That's so Deaton isn't it! Just to take off and not tell anybody where he's going! Don't worry Dayle, he'll turn up in a year or two. Men come and go, darlin'. You'll have to learn to accept that sooner or later. I'm kind of glad to see him go, actually. I mean, look at what he's done! He's distracted me from my boyfriend. He's made me unfaithful. It's a good thing he's leaving when he is. Besides, he's always pumping your head full of those childish fantasies. I can tell that's what he's been doing. Always has, since we were little kids. Things'll go right back to normal once he's gone. You'll see.

(Beat; then, DAYLE paces furiously, desperately for a minute. GRADY-who rarely sees this side of her--stares skeptically. Finally, DAYLE retreats to the top of the refrigerator where she'd kept the bottle of Southern Comfort TOBI had given her for her birthday; the bottle still has a bow on it. DAYLE takes it down.)

**GRADY** 

Dayle . . . What're you doing?

**DAYLE** 

(Finding the shot glass.)

What does it look like.

**GRADY** 

Is that for me or you?

**DAYLE** 

Me.

(DAYLE throws back a shot. Then, another.)

| GRADY<br>Whoa. Slow down, girl.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| DAYLE I just should've known better.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| (DAYLE does her third shot and within seconds is feeling the effects, which are visible in her facial expression.)        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRADY It's the third one that hits you. Hand me down that bottle.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| (DAYLE passes the bottle. GRADY drinks. There is a long pause.)   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DAYLE This is what I get  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRADY For what?   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DAYLE For acting like a kid.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRADY All you're gonna get is a nasty hangover. If you're lucky, you'll get sick.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| (GRADY hands DAYLE the bottle. DAYLE drinks again. They continue to pass it back and forth as they quickly become drunk.) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DAYLE I don't know what's wrong with me.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRADY<br>Nothing's wrong with you.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DAYLE Deaton makes me crazy. I let him make me crazy.   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| GRADY You just want someone to love you. There's nothin' wrong with you. You're just like everyone else.                  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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That's just the thing. I'm not like everyone else. Everyone else is leaving. Everyone else gave up. Everyone else is going really far away.

**GRADY** 

Not me.

**DAYLE** 

No wonder I'm confused.

(The two women share a familiar laugh.)

**DAYLE** 

(Pause. Then, very serious.)

Grady . . . do you remember my mother?

**GRADY** 

(Also very serious.)

Yeah. Some.

**DAYLE** 

What do you remember about her?

**GRADY** 

Just kid's stuff.

**DAYLE** 

Tell me.

**GRADY** 

I remember . . . She was really pretty. I admired her.

DAYLE

Me, too.

**GRADY** 

I remember she smoked.

**DAYLE** 

Long cigarettes.

**GRADY** 

And had long, wavy hair. Like, way down her back.

DAYLE

Like mine used to be.

**DAYLE** 

probably ends up leaving her with the clap and nine kids at the top of the God damned tower. And he takes her hair with him. Same fuckin' thing. Deaton leaves before he can

Do you really believe--

make you hate him.

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|          |     |        |     |

Do I have to be any more plain about it? If you marry Deaton, you will have married your father. Is that what you want! Huh! Do you want the only man in your life to be a worthless drunk who doesn't really give a shit about you!

**DAYLE** 

Shut up!

**GRADY** 

Wake up and get over him!

**DAYLE** 

You should talk! At least Deaton doesn't beat me!

**GRADY** 

(Lowering her voice.)

Well, if he did at least you wouldn't be able to hide from the truth. 'Cause it'd be branded all over your fuckin' face.

**DAYLE** 

(Begins to cry.)

Oh, God, Grady . . .

**GRADY** 

At least I know the truth. I might pretend I don't know what's goin' on. But really . . . I do. You have no fuckin' clue.

**DAYLE** 

(Sobbing.)

I'm sorry.

(They embrace.)

**GRADY** 

You're not like your mother, Dayle. She never wanted to be anyone's mother. You always wanted to be everyone's mother.

**DAYLE** 

I don't know what to do, Grady.

(Pause. Suddenly, DAYLE gets an idea and runs out the back of the house.)

**GRADY** 

Dayle?

(TOBI enters through the front door. She and GRADY glare at one another.)

**GRADY** 

Hello, little girl. Want some candy?

(Pause.)

TOBI

I saw your coked-up boyfriend on the way over. He's looking for you. He's going to kill you, you know.

**GRADY** 

I'd better go find him then.

(GRADY gets up to exit.)

**TOBI** 

You're pathetic.

**GRADY** 

Just honest.

**TOBI** 

Your boyfriend says that he found out you've been messing around. You're dead.

**GRADY** 

Why don't you look after your sister!

**TOBI** 

Look, Grady. I really don't think you have any right--

**GRADY** 

(Cutting her off.)

I have every right! You forget things, Tobi. You wanted to be just like her. Don't you remember?

(TOBI starts to walk away, but GRADY grabs her by the arm.)

**GRADY** 

Do you have any idea where you come from? Do you even know what your mother was? Your mother was the town whore--

**TOBI** 

Stop it!

# **GRADY**

And your dad was a drunk and no one cared about you kids. So you know who did? Your sister. She did everything for everybody and never asked for anything back.

**TOBI** 

(Offended.)

So what are you trying to tell me? That I owe her? That I have to take care of her now?

**GRADY** 

That's exactly what I'm telling you. You owe her respect, if nothing else.

**TOBI** 

Grady, I have a lot going on right now--

**GRADY** 

I don't give a shit! You've made everyone not give a fuck about you!

**TOBI** 

Well, that means a lot coming from you. You epitomize this place. You're going nowhere but down.

**GRADY** 

At least I know what loyalty is.

(Pause, gives TOBI an infuriated glare.)

How the hell could you let Deaton into this house.

TOBI

What are you talking about?

**GRADY** 

That was your biggest mistake.

**TOBI** 

I didn't know he was coming.

**GRADY** 

Bullshit! Don't lie to me. You want to keep anyone away from her, it should be him.

TOBI

I don't know what you're talking about.

**GRADY** 

Well then, you're dumber than I thought you were.

|   |   | - T |  |
|---|---|-----|--|
| 1 | 1 | ٧I  |  |
|   |   |     |  |

Don't blame me if Dayle makes a stupid mistake.

**GRADY** 

She's a good, strong person. What she needs is a little support, not some dodo who's going to fill her head with unreachable fantasies.

TOBI

It doesn't matter. He's leaving.

**GRADY** 

I got him to leave. And he has no choice now.

(Pause. GRADY's method is inferred silently.)

**TOBI** 

How unselfish of you.

**GRADY** 

I'm probably going to get killed when I go home.

(Beat.)

**TOBI** 

Did you know that woman . . . the one who torched those little kids?

(GRADY shakes her head "no".)

**TOBI** 

Nobody knew them. In a town this size, nobody knew this woman or any one of her nine children. Just think about them, in that house, all alone and scared. And with no way out. They couldn't get out.

(Beat.)

How do you think that woman will live with herself?

(Beat.)

**GRADY** 

Everybody makes mistakes.

(GRADY exits. DAYLE excitedly runs into the house.)

DAYLE

Tobi . . . Where's Ollie?

| Ollia   | TOBI  |  |
|---|-------|--|
| Ollie  (She takes out OLLIE's letter and places it on the table. I talked to my host family and they said I could come early. |       |  |
| What's early?   | DAYLE |  |
| I'm leaving today.  | TOBI  |  |
| You tell me this now?   | DAYLE |  |
| What difference does it make?   | TOBI  |  |
| It makes a big difference.  | DAYLE |  |
| Well, too late now.   | TOBI  |  |
| Guess so.   | DAYLE |  |
| I'm never coming back, you know.  | TOBI  |  |
| I won't ask you to.   | DAYLE |  |
| (Pause.)  |       |  |
| I got him to come.  | TOBI  |  |
| What?   | DAYLE |  |
|   | TOBI  |  |
| Deaton. I got him to come and see you.  |       |  |

DAYLE

| Do you ever stop   |
|--|
| TOBI Listen to me! I knew you were unhappy. I called Deaton and told him and he came. I thought he could do some good, but   |
| DAYLE  |
| I don't believe you  |
| TOBI Look, I know you're down about what happened with Deat and Grady. But she only did it for your own good.  |
| DAYLE  |
| Excuse me?   |
| TOBI She saw it too. It was all a mistake, Dayle. We all wanted to make up for it in some way  |
| DAYLE Did it ever occur to you to mind your own business? Get out of here!   |
| TOBI I'm really sorry! I wanted Deaton to introduce you to new things help you get on your way. I never wanted him to marry you. That's the last thing I wanted. This place is no future |
| DAYLE  |
| Well, you're wrong.  |
| TOBI   |
| Why do you think nobody stays here?  |
| DAYLE  |
| (Pause.)   |
| I don't know. And you won't either. So go.   |
| (Pause.)   |
| TODI   |
| TOBI Why don't you tell me to stay?  |
| DAYLE  |
| You make your own choices.   |

(TOBI crosses paths with ZACK on her way out.)

**ZACK** 

"I was angry with my friend

I told my wrath, my wrath did end.

I was angry with my foe:

I told it not, my wrath did grow."

(He stares at her for a moment. TOBI takes a beat before she slowly exits.)

**DAYLE** 

Zack, you wouldn't believe--

(ZACK holds up an envelope in front of DAYLE.)

**DAYLE** 

What's that?

**ZACK** 

You tell me.

(He hands it to her. She opens it and reads.)

**DAYLE** 

 $Dear\ Zack\dots On\ behalf\ of\ the\ Creative\ Writing\ Department\ of\ Eastern\ State\ University,\\ we\ are\ pleased\ to\ offer\ you\ acceptance\ .\ .\ .\ Oh,\ Zack!$ 

ZACK

Are you responsible for this?

DAYLE

Well . . .

**ZACK** 

How could you do it without asking me?

**DAYLE** 

Because I knew you'd say no. But you got in!

ZACK

Well, I'm not going.

DAYLE

Listen, I know you're scared, but--

| ZACK I'm not scared, I just don't want to. And I won't.  |
|--|
| (ZACK tears the letter in half.)   |
| DAYLE<br>You're so wrapped up in your fantasy world that you've lost sight of your life.   |
| (ZACK attempts to exit.)   |
| DAYLE  Don't you dare walk out on this conversation! I am sick and tired of everyone sweeping their shit under the rug! That is why we're all so miserable. It's not the damn small town. It'll be us whether one of us goes to England, or Switzerland or runs up to their god damned bedroom!  (Beat.)  I thought college might be a way for you to meet people and to use your mind. For real, not pretend. It's time. You know it is.  (Beat.)  Are you listening to me? |
| ZACK (With his back to her.) Yes.  |
| DAYLE Look at me then.  (ZACK does not turn to her.) Zack? Are you okay?   |
| ZACK<br>I  |
| DAYLE What?  |
| ZACK I want you to know  |
| DAYLE Yeah?  |
| ZACK I want you to know that I have a few (Slight pause.)  |

I have a few problems.

**DAYLE** 

Well, that's . . . That's a real news flash, Zack.

(Beat.)

You have a few problems. So what! We all have problems. I'll tell you what my problem is. Wanna hear it? I don't stick to my guns about what I really believe in. I thought about going away. But I love it here. There's nothing wrong with where we are. I'm tired of feeling like I should want something else. I don't want anything besides what I have.

**ZACK** 

I tried to help you.

DAYLE

You tried to help me? When?

**ZACK** 

Well, it's ruined now. I tried to help you, but it obviously wasn't the help you wanted.

**DAYLE** 

Lots of people tried to help me. But nobody asked me what I needed.

(By this time ZACK is wiping tears from his face.)

DAYLE

Why are you crying?

ZACK

Because I hate this house.

DAYLE

For someone who hates it, you sure spend an awful lot of time in it.

**ZACK** 

I know.

DAYLE

You know, all those people flying off to Europe have it easy. It's trying to deal with the everyday stuff that's hard.

(Beat.)

I'll help you. We'll work on it this summer.

**ZACK** 

I can't believe I might be going to a state school.

(Beat.)

| It seems so far away.   |
|---|
| DAYLE It's two hours away. You can come back and visit.   |
| ZACK<br>Visit who?  |
| DAYLE<br>Me.  |
| ZACK Does that mean that  |
| DAYLE I'm not going.  |
| ZACK<br>It'll be just you and Ollie, then.  |
| DAYLE Oh, Ollie left us a letter  |
| (She retrieves and opens the letter.)   |
| ZACK (Reads over her shoulder.) Dear Family Ha! Look at the way he spelled family!  |
| DAYLE  (Continues.)  I have joined the Navy. I am going to fix airplanes and fly in them too. Don't know when I'll see y'all 'cause I'm going over-seas  (Pause.)                                     |
| ZACK  |
| You're going to be all alone. (Beat.) Think you can survive without us?   |
| (DAYLE holds out her hand to show ZACK her prize.<br>He takes her hand to inspect. The two are quiet as OLLIE wheels in his engine, now completed, on a little red wagon and addresses the audience.) |

# **OLLIE**

I don't know any bad people really. Do you? I mean what's bad? It's hard to say . . . isn't it? I think so.

(Pause, motions to engine.)

Well, it's done. Looks good, huh? It's easy. All you have to do is sort it out and figure out what goes where . . . and there you are.

(He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small part.)

Except for this. I couldn't quite figure out where it goes. It's funny though. Cause it runs. It runs without this thing. Funny, huh? You kinda wonder why it was there in the first place. But then, I guess it's different for everybody. I mean, I'm not gonna do it the same way the first guy did. But, like I said, it runs. Might fall apart, but that's the chance you take. I'll hold on to this though.

(OLLIE puts the part back in his pocket. He glances over his shoulder at DAYLE and ZACK. Blackout.)

END OF PLAY

## **CHARACTERS**

DAYLE A young woman, early to mid-twenties. A natural, warm smile;

Ivory Soap beautiful.

DEATON A good-looking guy in his mid-twenties, irresistibly charming and

likable.

TOBI A girl of seventeen. Stern and neatly dressed.

ZACK Twenty-eight. Has been rejected from Yale for ten years and is

still applying.

GRADY Early to mid-twenties. Hell bent on enjoying life.

OLLIE DAYLE's twin brother. Seemingly slow and simple.

### **SETTING**

The entire play takes place in the family's adjoining living room and kitchen; small town, America. The house is disheveled, messy, and makeshift, reflecting poverty and neglect. There are three doors, one to go outside and one with a staircase which leads to the unseen, upstairs bedrooms. The third door is used only by OLLIE; it goes out to the garage. The kitchen space has a round table with three mismatched chairs. The sink is always piled with dirty dishes; the refrigerator, near empty.

# TIME

The present.