

Outer Banks

Stephen Foglia

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in the Theatre
Department of the School of the Arts

Columbia University

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CHARACTERS

Junie - F, 20s
Brook - F, 60s
Sandy - a dog, any age
Lloyd - M, 60s
Wye - M, 20s
Ben - M, 20s
Fisherman - M, 40s
Caroline - F, 30s
Coleman - M, 20s
Nate - M, 20s
Three Souls

The same actor may play Ben, Nate, Fisherman, and Coleman.
Three Souls may be played (/doubled) by any arrangement of available actors.

SETTING

Location: New Bern, North Carolina and surroundings.
Time: 2016

NOTE

The transitions are arranged such that new scenes begin instantly around Junie; hours and days bleed into each other. Often, just when she is about to fall asleep, she is instead thrust into a new scene.

What works nicely is to have an incoming scene-partner overlap, however slightly, the end of the previous scene, or, in some cases, for Junie to move *into* the next scene before her current scene-partner has finished.

ACT ONE

WAKE UP, JUNE

Junie lies on the sand, asleep.

Waves. Cry of gulls.

As she stirs, music from her teenage years floats in softly on the breeze.

She sits up and looks out over the water. Checks the beach to her left and right.

Finch? Finch?

JUNIE

Something is very wrong.

She stands.

Finch! FINCH? FINCH?!

JUNIE

Junie stumbles down towards the water.

A military jet passes overhead, ear-splitting.

AND SAY GOODBYE

Junie's Mom's house. Brook appears, carrying a large cardboard box and a bottle of milk.

Mornin' sugar.

BROOK

Morning?

JUNIE

Brook speaks to whatever is in the box.

BROOK

You ready for your breakfast?

JUNIE

Where the hell'd you find that one?

BROOK

I found *her* right smack side of the road. Her mama turned over a trashcan and went rolling away, right into traffic, didn't it? Ooh, you were almost smushed up, you precious baby.

JUNIE

Picking raccoons outta trashcans. It's like you wanna get rabies. Again.

BROOK

I never *had* rabies, and neither does she.

Brook tilts the bottle of milk into the box.

BROOK

You don't listen to a word that girl says, Ms. Clementine. That's just jealousy.

JUNIE

I'm just saying. The hospital's bound to run out of vaccine one a these times.

BROOK

Ms. Clementine hasn't got a bit of rabies. She's just a little tee-ninecy thing. You'd think my daughter here would appreciate all the love I've got for strays. Took her in, didn't I? Took this whole family in. And I don't know a single one of us came from someplace much cleaner than a garbage can.

JUNIE

You're officially back at it then?

BROOK

Back at what?

JUNIE

I'm hardly done moving out, and you're adopting animals like when we were kids.

BROOK

Well, I found the old box. Sitting there empty like that. I was thinking, you tell me if you think this is a bad idea -- I haven't even talked to your older sister yet -- but I was thinking when she gets bigger we might give her Caroline's room.

JUNIE

I'm not sure a raccoon needs a bedroom.

BROOK

It's just an idea I was having. You know you leave her out she can get into all kinds of trouble, can't you? She found an old photo of your daddy lying around, and she shredded it right to pieces. Bless his heart, I try not to say anything nasty about him, though Lord knows I could. He had on that *duplicitous* smile of his, in the picture, that little duplicitous smile, and Clementine saw right through it. You're a smart little girl, aren't you? All the women in my family are; we got brains for days. You wanna feed her?

JUNIE

No.

Brook looks at Junie.

JUNIE

Can I?

BROOK

She'd love it.

Junie goes to the box and takes the milk bottle.

JUNIE

She's pretty damn sweet.

BROOK

I told you. This is what you'll be missing.

JUNIE

Mama.

BROOK

No, no it's healthy. I'm so glad you're feeling good again, or good enough. And anyway it's about time I stopped having to wear clothes around the house. But what was I saying?

JUNIE

You're giving Caroline's room to a raccoon.

BROOK

I thought about putting her in you and Finch's room, especially now you're moving back out -- and you *know* you can come home any time --

JUNIE

I know.

BROOK

Any time you need to, I want you to come right on back. And then I guess I wasn't ready, with Finch.

Brief silence. The sound of the river. Junie puts the bottle down.

JUNIE

Do you have the stuff I asked for?

BROOK

I got your box fan and your adaptor thingy by the door.

JUNIE

No the other stuff.

BROOK

Uh-huh. I put it all in a bag somewhere.

Junie goes and checks through the bag.

BROOK

You'll take care of it, won't you? No...I keep thinking, same as you are, I know it, any second now she's gonna walk in that door, and...-- that's it! That's what I was sayin' earlier. Two years, yes. And I wouldn't even thought about it, honestly I wouldn't, except there's the folks own Finch's student debt, which your daddy and I have talked about, and

JUNIE

What does money have to do with it?

BROOK

That's what I was getting to. We don't care about the money. That's what we said, your Dad and me, when we met. We can pay it -- or he can, mostly -- or we can go let em hang, it makes no difference to us either way. But there's the whole issue around it.

JUNIE

What issue?

BROOK

It's been two years. And hadn't we better...say goodbye?

Hard pause. The river sound reaches its peak volume for this scene (which is not very loud).

BROOK

What do you think?

Junie tries to hold it together, against the sound.

JUNIE

Like you said. She could still be out there.

BROOK

I'll tell you something, working over at the home, these sweet old ladies and darling old men, bless their hearts, they leave this world confused and hungry and in all kinds of stomach pain. With no one to look at but your old ugly mama. And it goes on, and on, and on. I watch that and I think about how gentle Lord Jesus took your sister up in his arms. And now it's our job to say goodbye. Otherwise we're letting it go on.

JUNIE

How do you know she went gentle?

BROOK

(warning)

Junie, leave it. Don't you think there's something good in saying goodbye? All of us together?

JUNIE

Like a funeral?

BROOK

A goodbye. That's all. Not a big to-do. Us and the folks who really cared about her. Wyatt if he's feeling up to it.

JUNIE

You do what you wanna do.

BROOK

I want us all to be there together. Junie?

Junie pulls out a flask and drinks. Radio from next scene hisses to life.

BROOK

Junie, don't go. I just wanted you to think about it, that's all. Why don't we talk about something else.

DON'T TRY TO OUTFIGHT

Junie is at home, drinking steadily to talk radio.

She picks through the contents of the bag.
Finch's things: clothes, journals, photographs, a
child's plush bird toy.

RADIO

Captain Daniel Dusek, the highest ranking US Official convicted so far of selling state secrets has been sentenced to 46 months in prison and ordered to pay up to \$100,000 in restitution and fines. Dusek plead guilty to conspiracy of bribery on January 15th of last year. The case involves a Singapore-based businessman known as Fat Leonard who allegedly provided Dusek and other conspirators with access to prostitutes in exchange for military secrets.

Junie summons Sandy, a very old pitbull mix, to
come curl up with her on the floor.

Her speech begins during the next radio beat.

RADIO

Bad day for ExxonMobil. On the heels of an SEC ruling that may force the company to disclose to investors how their profits will be impacted by December's climate agreement, the oil giant has now been dealt another public blow. The Rockefeller Family Fund has announced plans to fully divest from fossil fuels, and ExxonMobil is first on the list. "There is no sane rationale for companies to continue to explore for new sources of hydrocarbons," reads the letter posted to the Rockefeller Family Fund's website. The letter further accuses Exxonmobil of willfully deceiving the public on the subject of climate change, calling the oil giant's conduct, "morally reprehensible."

In sports the Golden State Warriors take on the Dallas Mavericks for the chance to improve their record to 65 and 7, that's two games ahead of the Chicago Bulls' pace for the all-time regular season wins record. Coach Steve Kerr has said the players have earned the right to chase history, and he will leave the choice to rest up to them.

Junie tosses the bag away.

JUNIE

You ever think...when you're with me...like I smell the same as your mama? People can't tell our faces apart. Unless they get close enough to see the vein running on her forehead. You look through pictures when we were kids, half the time I don't even know which is me. You gotta look for the expression, I can't even describe it, it's so tiny, but you click in on it, and hey there, it's Finch....Hi, it's me, Junie.

(re Sandy)

You can't smell a picture, though. One day she's gonna come walk in that door, and take us both home.

Sandy goes to the bag and picks up the stuffed bird. He brings it to Junie.

Sandy looks at the radio. Static. The voice changes.

RADIO

You left me a gift
of tongues, so the shadows tell
me things, and the silences toss
me their drift.

Static. Sandy and Junie check in with each other.

RADIO

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YOUR SHADOW'S STEPS

Lloyd appears, peeling a pear.

LLOYD

Hey, sugar. Just let myself in.

JUNIE

Get him, Sandy.

Sandy waddles over and licks pear juice off
Lloyd's palm.

JUNIE

Can't get that dog to assassinate anybody.

LLOYD

Place looks great. I watered your plants for you, they looked a little dry.

JUNIE

They like it dry. That's the whole damn purpose people sent em for.

LLOYD

I'm sure a little bit never hurt nothing. Can you believe a man makes it to my age not knowing a thing about plants? Boggles the mind.

JUNIE

I been losing sleep over it.

Junie retrieves dog food.

LLOYD

You're still not sleeping?

JUNIE

It was a joke.

Junie pours the dog food in Sandy's bowl.

LLOYD

These pears are something wonderful.

JUNIE

What do you want, Daddy?

LLOYD

I never heard back from you about my famous summer barbecue -

JUNIE

Sandy! Sandy!

LLOYD

-- Caroline's coming, and I believe I've even convinced your mother, knock on wood. Gosh it'd be good to have the whole...

Water sound low.

Sandy has run upstairs and is whining.

LLOYD

First dog in the family won't come to food.

JUNIE

He's troubled.

LLOYD

Is that right?

JUNIE

Y'all shoulda sent *him* to therapy. What'd you stop here for? You know I'm not coming to your barbecue.

LLOYD

Oh. Doreen and I were hoping --

JUNIE

I'm sorry, Daddy, I --

LLOYD

No, no. You oughtta do what you need. If you change your mind, we'll have plenty to eat.

JUNIE

Ok.

LLOYD

Wanted to talk to you about something else, anyway. Sure you won't have a pear?

Junie pulls out a bag of shredded cheese and starts rustling the plastic. She opens the bag and wafts the smell towards Sandy.

JUNIE

Mom already told me.

LLOYD

She did?

JUNIE

About the funeral. Yes, sir.

LLOYD

Good. I'm glad y'all had that talk. That's actually not the discussion I had in mind.

JUNIE

-- you're not really doing it are you? Whose idea was it? Did the new minister cook this up? It's got his droopy, asparagus-eating hands all over it.

Sound of gulls.

Junie's pace may pick up during the following discussion, but she does not explode.

LLOYD

You know, it doesn't have to be anything big. We're not talking about the whole church and all the bells and whistles, and "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go" -- but a sense of closure is also like opening up, and --

JUNIE

Closing what, Dad? How does fucking Fernando get to decide when to close --

LLOYD

Frank has nothing to do with this. It was your mother's suggestion

JUNIE

and where do you get the -- who cares whose idea it was, we can't do it. We can't. Tell Mom we can't do it.

LLOYD

It's not any time soon. Not next week, not next month. End of summer, we discussed. We're not doing anything without you. We just want you to think it over, so --

JUNIE

Sandy!

Junie drops the bowl on the floor, loudly.
Sounds cuts out.

JUNIE

Let's have that discussion you came here for.

Beat.

LLOYD

It's nothing for you to worry about, but I wanted you to hear it from me. So you're not surprised.

JUNIE

That's new.

LLOYD

Now you know Wyatt's been having a real hard time. You know that, don't you?

JUNIE

Don't tell me about Wye. I'm the one's had to put up with --

LLOYD

He's been struggling. He's been suffering. Just like you.

JUNIE

Not like me.

LLOYD

Each in your own way. You lost a twin sister, he lost a wife, now that's two kinds of partnerships there, two beautiful expressions of

JUNIE

Sandy! Goddamnit, dinner!

LLOYD

C'mon, sugar.

JUNIE

Gosh-darnit, Sandy.

LLOYD

Wye's gonna be joining us at camp.

JUNIE

Wye's a little old for summer camp.

LLOYD

Well that's why we got him working in the mess hall.

JUNIE

You're outta your goddamn mind.

LLOYD

Hey, now.

JUNIE

He's a convicted addict.

LLOYD

He's in recovery, and he's a fine young man, with real expertise in the kitchen. What Wye really needs, I figured, is a place, especially after what happened at the restaurant --

JUNIE

How is that even -- did HR sign off on this? Do you have enough insurance to hire a drug offender?

LLOYD

Now he hasn't been selling anything --

JUNIE

You're gonna let him around the kids?

LLOYD

He'll be working in the kitchen, and while I don't approve of drug use, I don't especially think he's a risk to children. The campers are too young for that nonsense anyway.

JUNIE

I swear I've seen you pull a lot of dumbass stunts --

LLOYD

That boy deserves another chance just like the rest of us --

JUNIE

He's not a boy, he's Finch's husband!

LLOYD

We are a Christian organization, and it's my duty as a Christian to extend a hand to those --

JUNIE

Bullshit! Why don't you extend a hand to all the other addicts and ex-cons who've applied over the years, if your sense of Christian duty is so all--

LLOYD

He's my son.

Now that the volume has dropped, Sandy's whine might be more audible.

LLOYD

That's the young man I took sailing. And taught how to navigate. And sat with in my house drinking Arnold Palmers and watching the Open. Just because your sister's gone, doesn't mean I stopped caring about him.

JUNIE

I wish you'd cared about me.

LLOYD

Your sister loved Wye. With all her heart. Can't you see we oughtta look after him?

JUNIE
Let him go. Just let him go.

LLOYD
It's really nothing to do with you.

JUNIE
No, it never is, is it?

Lloyd notices the whining upstairs.

LLOYD
Let me get him down for you.

JUNIE
Leave him alone!

Lloyd stops.

LLOYD
You want me to go?
(pause)
Doreen says hello. Says you can come by the salon any time.

JUNIE
Doreen can kiss my ass if she can bend low enough.

LLOYD
(gently)
She has a spinal condition.

He gathers his jacket and keys.

LLOYD
She cares about you an awful lot. So many people do. I wish we could make you feel it.

JUNIE
I know, Daddy.

LLOYD
Think some on your mother's idea. And remember if you change your mind about the barbecue.

JUNIE
Plenty of food.

He walks over and kisses her on the forehead.

LLOYD

Junebug.

Lloyd goes to the door, Junie into the next scene.

LLOYD

Have some of those pears.

Sandy can be heard digging.

THERE'S NOTHING LEFT

A chain restaurant like Bennigan's or Chilis.
Wye enters and sits opposite Junie.

JUNIE

It makes you uncomfortable?

WYE

Kinda yeah.

JUNIE

This makes you uncomfortable.

WYE

Yeah.

Wye checks his phone.

JUNIE

That's interesting.

WYE

Don't you think it's a little hostile?

JUNIE

Who taught you that, your therapist?

WYE

You taught me that. From your therapist.

JUNIE

I hate to break it to you, buster, but just because you can't have something doesn't mean you get to deny it to the whole stinking world.

WYE

I wouldn't deny anybody. Everybody's gotta make a choice. That's why God put the fruit out there in arm's reach --

Junie meets his surprisingly mature, serene energy with that of a petulant child.

JUNIE

Oh guess you wouldn't deny Hitler the Holocaust, huh?

WYE

What?

JUNIE

Or how about a pill-head his perc 30s?

Pause.

WYE

For some people, working through anger is the hardest part. For me --

JUNIE

Fuck you, Wye.

WYE

See the soul gets barnacles on it. I'm not saying you gotta change your life or anything. I'm saying for me, I had barnacles. A whole lotta barnacles. Some of them may have caused me to behave inappropriately towards you and others I love.

JUNIE

I remember.

WYE

...some maybe led me to alienate the Chef de Cuisine over at MJs. And his mother-in-law.

JUNIE

Yeah, I heard about that.

WYE

Pastor Wilson says, "Wye, you don't scrape those barnacles off, you'll start to fight the water, instead of letting it carry you."

JUNIE

Pastor Wilson?

WYE

Pastor Will Wilson. He runs Recovery. See it's affiliated with but separate from Church Of New Fellowship.

JUNIE

You mean the one above the bowling alley?

WYE

(seriously)

We are temporarily under the patronage of Have Yourself A Bowl.

JUNIE

I don't think that's a real church.

WYE

That's exactly how I found em! As you know, I wouldn't a set foot in a church before your sister left. Mom and I we had enough God nonsense from the old man -- we like to say we quit both of em the same day.

JUNIE

I know the story.

WYE

What I'm getting to is last September, I'm high as Isaiah, down there at the alley rolling ten frames -- this is after all the shit I...I have to apologize to you for the way I behaved...

JUNIE

Bowling alley.

WYE

Well it's just gutter ball gutter ball gutter ball. I'm about to have a word with the owners cause I've figured out their lanes are all crooked, when next thing I know I wake up, and I'm in the gutter.

(very profound)

I'm in the gutter.

Junie stares at him.

WYE

I see a man reaching down his righty glove, he's got a little cigarette ash clinging on his belly, and he says, "son. You got to move somewhere else." That's Pastor Wilson.

JUNIE

I don't believe this.

WYE

I didn't either! But what they got's a whole system, and it doesn't depend on your belief. It's about choice and action.

She has another beer. Raises it to him:

JUNIE

Choice and action.

WYE

See this is an illustration how sometimes your choices and actions get out a line with --

JUNIE

-- so you're working for Daddy now.

WYE

Oh. Long as everything stays on course.

JUNIE

That's pretty cool.

WYE

It's pretty dang generous of him. You know how hard it is to find employment given my history and circumstances. I ain't gonna lie, it's been

JUNIE

He's a sucker for Christian charity.

WYE

He's a good man.

JUNIE

You're both assholes.

WYE

You don't want me to have a job?

JUNIE

I don't want you working *there*.

Oh I see.

WYE

“Oh I see.”

JUNIE

Junie drinks her beer. Wye checks his phone.

River sound slowly rises.

JUNIE

You oughtta’ve left town.

WYE

Yeah, well. The time that thought occurred to me, I wasn’t in any condition to go. Are you still, uh, working at that tackle shop?

JUNIE

Fish Your Wish. Can’t you smell the mackerel.

Wye checks his phone.

WYE

A gentlemen never, uh...They give syrup with the fries here?

JUNIE

You didn’t have to take it.

WYE

I guess I can starve, huh?

JUNIE

You didn’t have to.

Junie is finished with that beer. She has another.

WYE

What do you want from me?

JUNIE

I wanna know how you can work at that camp. How you can go back to where the worst day of our lives happened. Stirring Sloppy Joe’s for other people’s kids not a thousand feet from the beach where Finch disappeared.

WYE

I kind of like the idea.

River sound reaches peak for this scene.

For an instant, something breaks in Junie, and her chest heaves, soundlessly. Almost as quickly, she recovers.

WYE

It makes me peaceful, thinking I can be near her. Recovery says you gotta cuddle up to your ghosts. You bring em with you and make new memories, so you'll accept life as it is rather than life as it was or life as it might be. See cause sad ghosts are heavy ghosts, and

JUNIE

Heavy ghosts become barnacles?

WYE

It makes a lot of sense.

JUNIE

So you're in favor of this funeral, too.

WYE

What funeral?

JUNIE

Never mind. I thought you might -- never mind.

Pause.

WYE

You don't feel it sometimes? Like you'd like to be, or no like, well like there's places you're closer to Finch? And then maybe...? A year ago I couldn't stand it to look at the water practically. It made me sick feeling I was even facing the same direction. But now whatever it is it's got hard enough I guess I can lean on it. And that's ok.

JUNIE

I'd kill myself. If I could just walk down the beach, that little point with the pirate wreck.

WYE

Do you mean that?

Wye's phone lights up again.

JUNIE

Who the hell is texting you?

WYE
It's E-Lo.

JUNIE
It's E-Lo.

WYE
And your dad wants to know if I'm coming to his barbecue. You're going, right?

JUNIE
Unbelievable.

Junie drinks and slams her beer down.

WYE
You should stop drinking.

JUNIE
Oh my lord, to hear that from you, after all you --

WYE
I just mean tonight. You've probably had enough.

JUNIE
It helps me sleep.

WYE
You're not sleeping?

JUNIE
I'm trying.

WYE
You know if you're serious about wanting Recovery...

JUNIE
Lord Jesus, Wye, you're not in a program. You're in a cult.

WYE
Christianity's not a cult.

JUNIE
My parents are Christians. You're in a cult.

WYE

Pastor Wilson said people'd say things like that.

JUNIE

How much money you give him?

WYE

That's just so we can move into a new facilities. They're calling it the Drydock.

Junie puts her head on the table.

WYE

See cause of boats and barnacles, which is a metaphor, and then also cause we're substance free living. I wish you would come with me. I worry about you.

JUNIE

I'm never coming with you. You're as full of shit as anybody.

WYE

(repeating a line)

All it is is a way people get better. Don't you wanna get better?

JUNIE

I forgot what an ignorant hillbilly you are.

Pause. That hurt a lot.

JUNIE

I probably had too many.

WYE

That wasn't nice.

JUNIE

I'm sorry.

WYE

You don't know what it's like because you don't have to look at yourself. I gotta sit across the table and see my wife. Angry and insulting me. I'm trying to do better.

He looks up at her.

WYE

I'm trying to do better.

NOT THE WEIGHT IN YOUR POCKET

Ben appears. Junie is at a bar in Morehead City.

BEN

Excuse me, miss?

Junie turns and salutes, drunkenly.

JUNIE

Yes, sir.

BEN

How'd you know I'm military...

JUNIE

Lucky guess. Or the high-and-tight.

BEN

I'm Ben.

JUNIE

Junie.

BEN

Junie. I like that. Do you, um, do you wanna play darts with me and my buddies?

JUNIE

Depends what you're playing for.

That baffles Ben a little.

JUNIE

I like your blush.

BEN

We're just killing time to be honest with you. We're on liberty. That's Janky, Pothole, and Evan over there.

JUNIE

Y'all are so cute together.

BEN

I guess you could say that.

JUNIE

You're at Cherry Point?

BEN

You know it?

JUNIE

I've lived here all my life. Listening to you boys flying overhead, so high you can't even see the plane on a bluebird day.

BEN

Y'ever see the sign out front of the base?

JUNIE

Pardon our noise. It's the sound of freedom.

BEN

Pardon our noise. It's the sound of freedom.

BEN

Retarded. Military never gets tired of shit like that.

JUNIE

You are awful loud. My sister and I used to hold our ears when we were little. Specially when you'd crack through the sound barrier.

BEN

Nah we don't break the sound barrier.

JUNIE

Excuse me, I've heard it.

BEN

That's strictly against regulations. Definitely wouldn't do it over land where someone could catch us. You try anything like that you'll warm your ass on the pavement.

JUNIE

I swear I heard it so many times, growing up. Those big whooshes and cracks overhead, like someone was punching through the sky.

BEN

Just some dumbass doing high speed passes. Cutting the atmosphere real hard.

JUNIE

Cutting, punching. I always wish it'd rip through, and just for a second I'd see what's on the other side.

BEN

...so, uh...do you want to...?

JUNIE

Yes. Let's go.

Junie puts a bill on the counter and grabs her purse. She starts to walk for the exit.

BEN

Junie? They're over here.

JUNIE

Darts is for children.

Ben looks back a moment, then trots after her.
("All right.")

BEN

Sorry my car's a real mess. It's an embarrassment, actually.

JUNIE

That's ok.

BEN

You don't have a car.

JUNIE

I don't want to drive.

BEN

Just warning you, you'll have to excuse the, uh...sorry I gotta open it from this side, too. Here you go. Hold on a second.

JUNIE

There's a hole in your floor.

BEN

Yeah, so I got this car, um, pretty used, and it had kinda rusted through. So we just cover it, mostly. But it's completely safe, you just keep your feet on either side.

JUNIE

Or if we run out of gas, I can Flintstone it.

BEN

Yeah, exactly.

Junie pulls her flask out of her purse.

BEN

Whoa. Do you mind, um, there are cops around here.

JUNIE

Oh my god I would love to get arrested. Take me out of this whole godforsaken saga.

BEN

-- Ok, but I wouldn't.

JUNIE

-- lock me up and forget about me. Can you imagine?

Junie puts flask away.

BEN

What do you do?

JUNIE

I used to teach third grade. Now I eat hushpuppies at the Sanitary and wait around for guys like you. Turn right.

BEN

Guys like me?

JUNIE

Men my sister would not approve of.

BEN

Want me to take you back?

JUNIE

No, take a left here and get on 70.

BEN

Then what?

JUNIE

Stay on it till you get to New Bern.

Junie rests her head.

BEN

Boys aren't gonna be happy with me. What are you taking a nap?

JUNIE

Not in a long time.

NOT THE SHINE IN YOUR HAIR

Sandy enters and licks Junie's face.

JUNIE

Holy moly, Sandy. It's 3am. Ok, ok. You know what you want.

Junie takes Sandy out.

Sound of the river rises. Junie is distracted by it and looks out towards the water.

JUNIE

River's high. I know, you wanna swim. We'll get grandma to take you. She'll throw you tennis balls till her arm falls off. Let's keep walking.

Junie doesn't move or take her gaze away from the river. Sandy sits.

JUNIE

Should we go to this funeral? You tell me, amigo. I don't like the idea of being around all those people either. They keep looking at me or not looking at me. I feel like I'm high, I keep forgetting what they're talking about before they're finished saying it. They can remember without us. They can say goodbye without us. They can give up without us.

(beat)

Even Wye's doing better than us.

(beat)

Do you see her? Do you feel her leaving like it's happening right over here?

Junie waves, indicating her peripheral vision.

JUNIE

I never stop seeing her. She's walking into the water. Her back's shiny, covered in drops. Her fat thighs shoving like a snowplow, making her butt wiggle when the surface cuts her shorter and shorter, until she's only half there. Maybe we do say goodbye.

Then maybe we get outta here, you and me Go somewhere we can't hear the waves. Or smell salt. Maybe then it'll stop happening.

Sandy growls. There's a man standing on the end of the pier.

JUNIE

Kinda early for fishing. See that light out there?

A light flashes out in the water.

Junie walks towards the water. The message takes a while. A long, almost abstracted moment of the light flashing on her face in the dark.

Sandy growls at her. Begins to bark.

JUNIE

(translating)

“Perchance she is not drown'd: what think you, sailors?”

The light winks out.

JUNIE

What the hell's going on?

THE CLOUDS CAME CLOSE

Caroline, Junie's older sister, enters. She has changed since work, but her hair and make-up suggest a more professional sibling.

CAROLINE

OK, jammies on, bra off, ready to party.

JUNIE

God, I love a screen porch. If I had one a these, I wouldn't ever leave it.

CAROLINE

Oh I insisted. Our realtor got us the house below market, so I put the rest of our budget into fixing this up. You're welcome to sleep out here tonight. I wish you would. I don't want you driving home to begin with.

JUNIE

Speak for yourself. I could do surgery right now.

CAROLINE

All right then finish off the bourbon. Serves Silva right, leaving it out for us.

JUNIE

Mighta thought he could trust you at least. He didn't count on this maniac.

CAROLINE

God it's gonna be a long six months.

Junie squints at Caroline's body.

JUNIE

Your boobs are gonna be terrifying.

CAROLINE

I'ma have to punch new holes in my mandolin strap.

Junie snorts.

JUNIE

So you're still, uh...

CAROLINE

Yes I'm still uh. I'm sticking with it. Despite the doubters and the haters.

Junie raises her hand.

JUNIE

Born hater.

CAROLINE

I'm having fun! Our group's having a concert at the end of the summer.

Junie drains her glass. She looks out at the gathering dark, then checks her watch.

CAROLINE

If I can trick you into coming.

Caroline fills Junie's glass.

CAROLINE

Or lure you with booze.

Junie snaps out of it. Toasts Caroline's belly.

JUNIE

Bottoms up, baby.

CAROLINE

I am so glad I can finally tell you. That was a hard one to hold onto!

JUNIE

I'm surprised you managed it.

CAROLINE

I'm proud of myself. Never was sneaky like you and Finch.

JUNIE

I'm really happy for you.

They touch. Caroline suddenly cries.

She pulls back and looks at Junie, crying and nodding, as if they understand each other.

Sounds of the waves and the wind rising.

Junie breaks eye contact.

CAROLINE

It's never quite how you expect it.

(re: her own tears)

God, look at me. Any given second, huh?

JUNIE

You heard about mom's idea? For the funeral?

CAROLINE

I don't think it's a funeral.

JUNIE

Then what the fuck is it?

CAROLINE

I don't know. Something for the family. For what Mom needs.

JUNIE

It's too soon. Carolina state law says seven years before you can declare someone.

CAROLINE

OK. Uh-huh.

JUNIE

It's true!

CAROLINE

I know.

JUNIE

They never found her. They never found anything.

Silence.

CAROLINE

So do you feel like she's...I dunno, sometimes I wonder. If you felt something, or sensed something.

JUNIE

It's not like that. It doesn't feel like she's gone.

CAROLINE

But do you really think she's...

JUNIE

I don't want to do it. It's not right. It's. Giving up and tamping the dirt down. It's not right.

CAROLINE

Is this one a those things maybe we have to do it first, and *then* we'll be ready.

JUNIE

Tell em to stop. You can't want it either. If you tell em they'll stop.

CAROLINE

I can try. I think they listen to you a lot more than they listen to me.

JUNIE

But if it's both of us. C'mon, Care. It's not time. You know it isn't. Please.

CAROLINE

I'll tell em.

Junie lets out a victory noise. Water fades.

JUNIE

Thank god! Oh, I'm gonna kiss you.

CAROLINE

Please don't.

JUNIE

I'm gonna kiss your stupid belly.

Junie chases Caroline, both laughing.

JUNIE

Baby! Baby, come here! Your mom's a boss bitch.

CAROLINE

Don't say that. Get away from us, you're drunk.

JUNIE

Can't help it, kid's gonna be seeing a lot of this.

Junie traps Caroline and stares at her belly. She kisses it. She drifts back to the couch.

CAROLINE

How's things at the tackle shop?

Junie shrugs.

CAROLINE

I kinda figured you'd get back to teaching eventually. Do you think about it?

JUNIE

Maybe I'll go back to bartending. Those were the effing days. Teaching all week then pouring at Prohibition. Young and beautiful. Didn't give a damn about anything.

CAROLINE

It wasn't that long ago.

JUNIE

I was flush.

And drunk.
CAROLINE

Flush and drunk.
JUNIE

And swimming in guys.
CAROLINE

Swimming.
JUNIE

Junie executes a slow-motion breast-stroke. She tumbles into Caroline, who strokes her hair.

CAROLINE
Maybe you do wanna go back. Maybe you need the attention.

Junie reaches for her glass.

JUNIE
Coming on real gray over the water. It shouldn't be this dark yet.

CAROLINE
They say rain overnight.

Silence. Junie is agitated.

CAROLINE
Speaking of attention. The universe is sending me all kinds. I don't know, maybe it's the hormone shift. Silva and I got our first invitation to couples swap.

JUNIE
(unengaged, did she even fully hear?)
Hmm?

CAROLINE
It was this couple we go disc-golfing with. Brad and Hee Young? They're a little bit older, not that much, and Brad is sort of on the way to crunchy, know what I mean?

JUNIE
He's got a little crunch on him

CAROLINE

He's pseudo-crunch. So the last few times we played, he started making these comments. First it was things about Hee Young, how she is in bed and all that kinda stuff, where it's inside jokes, kind of to her, but you can tell what he's talking about. Then he starts commenting about me.

JUNIE

Hell no.

CAROLINE

Just out of nowhere to Silva, "I bet you like to follow her up the stairs." "Must be hard to get out of bed every morning and leave that ass behind."

JUNIE

Unacceptable. Even if you do have a great butt.

CAROLINE

It was almost worth it to see how uncomfortable Silva got.

JUNIE

That poor, sweet man.

CAROLINE

He's insulted and scandalized on my behalf, and he hates locker room talk anyway -- this is a guy who still can't talk dirty after five years with me

JUNIE

And you're filthy

CAROLINE

At the same time he's so awkward he can't imagine contradicting his disc-golf buddy. So he just wiggles his knees and nods like an idiot. Heh. I guess they realized they had the wrong approach because after Sunday's game, Hee Young comes up and asks me to get a drink with her. And she doesn't beat around the bush: "Brad and I are in an open relationship. We like to fuck other people. I want to fuck Silva. Brad wants to fuck you. We could all fuck together, or not. We use protection. Brad's butt is off-limits." This is in an Applebees by the way.

The wind has picked up.

CAROLINE

Junie?

Hm? JUNIE

This was in an Applebees. CAROLINE

Ew. JUNIE

“So what did you say, Caroline?” CAROLINE

What did you say? JUNIE

Lord I didn’t know what to say. She caught me off my guard. I ate my Sriracha Shrimp and told her I’d talk to Silva. CAROLINE

It is starting to rain.

“How do you feel, Caroline? Would you ever want to? Is Hee Young hot? Would you want to bone Brad right out of his pseudo-crunch?” CAROLINE

I don’t know. JUNIE

I’m not asking you. CAROLINE

Junie realizes Caroline is upset.

What? JUNIE

You’re not listening. CAROLINE

I’m sorry. It’s the weather. JUNIE

The weather has nothing to do it. CAROLINE

I'm drunk.

JUNIE

Be here with me. Be my sister.

CAROLINE

I am.

JUNIE

No. You're not. You should be all over this.

CAROLINE

Are you gonna sleep with those people?

JUNIE

Who cares? Are you gonna stop looking at the water?

CAROLINE

When it gets all gray and the wind whips the waves up I think how bad it would be to be out there.

JUNIE

Yeah.

CAROLINE

I want to run up the red flag, and bring her in.

JUNIE

She's not in the storm.

CAROLINE

Obviously.

JUNIE

She's gone somewhere else.

CAROLINE

So am I. I'm not that person anymore.

JUNIE

Caroline hands Junie her glass.

CAROLINE

It'll be over by morning.

JUST TO HOLD YOU THERE

Junie watches the storm. Lies down to sleep.
The rain picks up.

A knock on the outer door. A FIGURE in a
raincoat.

JUNIE

It's late.

The Figure removes his hood.

JUNIE

Coleman?!

COLEMAN

Hey, Mister! Can I come in?

Junie opens the door. He marches in, sloshing.

COLEMAN

Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Awooo! What's the tune, baby June?

Junie yips and embraces him.

JUNIE

I can't believe it's you! What are you doing here?

COLEMAN

Aw heck, I'm dripping all over. You got a towel?
(laughing)

Want me to water the plants?

JUNIE

I thought you were in the Coast Guard.

COLEMAN

Was. Am. Was. Who knows.

He removes his rain jacket and tosses it over a
chair. Points at the bottle.

COLEMAN

Il reste encore d'alcools?

Huh?

JUNIE

Coleman hits himself upside the head.

Désolé.

COLEMAN

Hits himself again.

Sorry. Any left?

COLEMAN

Just finished. But I can get more! We'll have a night.

JUNIE

No, no. Don't you do a thing. Stand there let me look at you. If that ain't a sailor's dream. Hoo boy, I gotta get warm.

COLEMAN

Come over here. Take those boots off.

JUNIE

Thank you.

COLEMAN

Tell me what's going on.

JUNIE

Coleman hops in place taking off his boots,
which spill more water.

I been looking for Finch is what's going on.

COLEMAN

Finch is...gone.

JUNIE

Ai ya, gou pi! Yi jing you de dong xi jiu bu yong zai zhao le!

COLEMAN

He knocks himself on the head.

Yeah, well. Your parents, your big sister--

COLEMAN

Coleman shivers.

COLEMAN

Hooh! Good god, y'all! You don't have a fireplace out here?

JUNIE

I'll get you a drink.

Coleman peels his socks off while Junie retrieves another bottle.

COLEMAN

They asked me if I could keep an eye out. On my travels. I say "for Finch?" I go AWOL. Nine months. Been trawling in my daddy's boat. Down every stack of rock or sand, up every creek. You remember that boat? The *Pollywog*?

JUNIE

Course I remember that boat. You used to make me steer while you and Finch ran up the bow. You don't know the trouble we'd got in.

COLEMAN

I hope I made it worth it.

JUNIE

Couldn't say no. We'd been crushin' on you since Younglife.

COLEMAN

Finch and Junie. Every boy past nipple rocks turned the two of you over in his mind's eye.

JUNIE

Did you find something?

COLEMAN

If I did it'd be between me and my clients.

JUNIE

That's not funny. Don't fuck with me.

COLEMAN

I'm not, but there's privileged information. And I gotta think about what your folks'd want you seeing.

He shivers again.

COLEMAN

Lordy. You don't mind do you?

Coleman starts to take his pants off.

COLEMAN

Rain soaked right down to my soul.

Junie rushes him.

JUNIE

If you know anything, I need to know!

COLEMAN

Christoúgenna! Ti nychta, eh?

JUNIE

Tell me! Please!

He throws her off, but in the process he slips in a puddle and falls on his butt.

COLEMAN

Maybe this'll put you on a road the people who love you don't want you walking down.

JUNIE

For old times.

Her appeal reaches him.

COLEMAN

Heck, girl. It's not much. You'll see.

Coleman pats his shirt pocket, which squirts water in his face. He rummages through his pants pockets. Finds a small fish and tosses it out. Then he takes off his hat and finds a letter.

COLEMAN

Surprise! You can, uh, with a blow-dryer...

The letter is soaked through.

JUNIE

What's it say?

COLEMAN

Dear Junie,

JUNIE

A letter?

COLEMAN

Dear Junie,

Summer's bright and the days are long on the dirt roads of home. That's right: I finally found our family. Granddaddy built us a whirlything in the back yard with a post and a spinning cross piece. He's sorry we never came to use it before we went and sprouted. Saisie's got me out on the sleeping porch like she used to do when she was little. I listen to the crickets and the bullfrogs hollering at each other in the ditch all night. Turns out Saisie's family's got a long history. They figure they're descended from Queen Elizabeth. Half of em went off to Texas and made a fortune in baked beans. The other half's right here in the red dirt suburbs marrying electricians and bus drivers. All our uncles are still called Roy to remind em of their lineage. Folks are coming over soon for Mama's hot dog and maple syrup casserole. I'll see if I can entice Mr. Thatch outta his cabin. I sure miss you. Wish you were here.

Love Finch

JUNIE

She's alive. She's alive.

COLEMAN

I wouldn't leap to conclusions.

JUNIE

She wrote a letter!

COLEMAN

You're assuming you've gotta be alive to write one.

JUNIE

She's talking about our grandparents. Our birth family.

COLEMAN

You're assuming they're alive, too. You ever met em?

(No.)

JUNIE

Then where is she? Where did this come from? Where's Finch?

COLEMAN

Let me tell ya something I learned in my voyage. There are times, there are places, death's door opens. We feel how close the worlds are. Rubbed right up against each other. Did you feel it? When it opened?

JUNIE

I feel it all the time. Like a wind blowing through the middle of my heart.

Coleman grunts and shakes out of his shirt.

COLEMAN

Can't seem to get warm.

JUNIE

Wanna go inside?

COLEMAN

Nej, tack. Jag behöver sömn.

He knocks himself upside the head.

COLEMAN

I need to sleep.

JUNIE

Me, too.

COLEMAN

First I gotta return the old man's boat.

JUNIE

That's a long way.

COLEMAN

Don't I know it.

He gets up to leave.

COLEMAN

For my money, the real lead here is Thatch. In a cabin next door. If I ever wake up again, that's where I'd look. Met any Thatches?

She is silent. Coleman tips his hat.

COLEMAN

Good to see you, Junie. I missed you.

WITH THE OLD HOUSE IN YOUR LONG MIND'S HOURS

Junie combs through boxes of files. Finds a file she wants. Dials the number on it.

JUNIE

Hello, this is Junie from Fish Your Wish Tackle & Guide. May I speak to...Piedmont Thatch? Hi, Mr. Thatch, I'm calling from Fish Your Wish. I see you booked a trip with us in 2009, is that correct? See I'm calling because we've got a new mail offer we're sending out to past clients, and I'd like to verify your mailing address, if possible. Well the offer is coming by mail, so it'd be better if I could -- yes, I hear you, and ordinarily we're paper-free -- yes, no one knows the value of the environment better than us, but this is a one-time deal we're offering, and I'd just like to make sure you get it. Uh-huh. I promise. Whenever you're ready.

Junie writes down an address.

JUNIE

Thank you, Mr. Thatch. You'll be hearing from us soon.

LLOYD

One-time deal, huh?

JUNIE

(surprised)

Holy crap! Daddy!

(Seeing something in his bearing)

What's wrong?

LLOYD

What kind of offer is it?

JUNIE

Top secret.

LLOYD

Even for beloved fathers?

JUNIE

I'll let you know if I see one.

LLOYD

You seem in better spirits.

JUNIE

You look like a smushed possum.

Junie has found another file. She holds up a hand to pause her father.

JUNIE

(into phone)

Hi there, this is Junie from Fish Your Wish Tackle & Guide. May I please speak to Amos Thatch? Oh, is that right? You don't know where I could reach them, do you? Thanks just the same. Sorry to bother you. Uh-huh. No, you, too. Yes, ma'am. I'll see ya. Take care now. I couldn't help you with that. No, that sounds like a -- ...ok, bye.

JUNIE

You don't know any more Thatches do you?

LLOYD

Thatch. Like the roof? There's Will Thatcher and his sister Susie.

JUNIE

Just Thatch.

LLOYD

Live around here?

JUNIE

Not necessarily.

LLOYD

I'll have to think on it some. It does seem to ring a bell, but all my bells are covered in cobwebs.

JUNIE

I know what that's like.

LLOYD

Trust me, you don't.

JUNIE

So what's up? You wanna fish?

LLOYD

Don't I wish.

Junie gives a little sarcastic rimshot.

LLOYD

(self-consciously rhyming)

Came by for one more try at getting you to my barbecue.

JUNIE

I'm a little busy.

LLOYD

With the Thatches.

Junie dials a number and waits.

LLOYD

You know I can't remember the last time your mother came. It's sort of exciting.

JUNIE

Yeah, it's weird. I wonder why she hasn't accepted your invitation before.

LLOYD

Oh, we're past all that. Time heals all wounds. They say. Maybe I do want to fish. With you.

JUNIE

I don't fish anymore.

LLOYD

Since when?

Junie holds up a hand. She's on the phone again. Lloyd starts out the door.

JUNIE

There's something you can help me with. About my birth family. I been thinking about them lately.

LLOYD

Sure.

JUNIE

Thinking I'd maybe try and go check on em.

LLOYD

I'll tell you what: why don't you come to the barbecue? We can sort through all that. Which reminds me...

He digs into his pocket. Offers her a pig-shaped invitation card. Which she finally accepts.

LLOYD

Made it myself.

JUNIE

C'mon, Daddy. You should be going paperless.

LLOYD

I thought this was pretty cute. Willis has been teaching me how to use these design programs.

JUNIE

Don't you know the world is dying?

AND NOSED EVERY WINDOW

Junie, out for a run, stops by the Fisherman.

JUNIE

Mornin'

Fisherman nods.

JUNIE

Catching anything?

FISHERMAN

I don't catch anymore. I come out here to be with em.

JUNIE

I've been fishing here since I was three. So I know what you mean.

FISHERMAN

Lotta souls in the salt water. Nosing around the dark. Flipping their silver wings. You lose someone down there?

JUNIE

(shocked)

I don't know.

FISHERMAN

See how they gather? Spinning around, schools of em. Trying to stay warm. Some spinal memory a what they come from. Go on have a look. You see em?

She looks. She nods.

JUNIE

What are they?

FISHERMAN

You see em.

JUNIE

What happens if you catch one?

FISHERMAN

I don't pull em up anymore. They're none of em mine. But if you wanted.

Junie shakes her head, frightened.

FISHERMAN

Bait's over there.

Fisherman gestures to cooler.

FISHERMAN

But it costs a little.

JUNIE

I don't think she's down there.

FISHERMAN

Maybe you're right. They don't see through the surface too good. Maybe she's wondering if you're up here. You been listening to the radio? Checking your mail?

JUNIE

Do you know someone named Thatch?

FISHERMAN

I wouldn't say his name so close to the water. Specially if I was fishing for what's his.

JUNIE

Who is he? Where is he?

FISHERMAN

Word is he's gathering quite a crew. Don't come back till you're ready to pay.

Radio cues into next scene.

TILL YOU FORGOT WHICH WAY IN AND WHICH WAY OUT

Junie rolls her legs out on a foam roller. Agony.

RADIO

In Salinas, a mix of what looked to be Trump and Sanders supporters gathered outside of a Clinton event. They chanted and waved signs about her Goldman-Sachs speech transcripts and her use of a private e-mail server. Clinton supporter John Silva was puzzled by the protesters.

Sandy comes to lick her. Turns to radio.

RADIO

Until the loss becomes immortal, and the hole is more familiar than the tooth.

Junie changes the station.

RADIO

Why didn't you look for me? Why didn't you look for me? Why didn't you look for me?

Junie shuts off the radio. Returns to stretching.

Sounds of footsteps entering. Junie freezes.

FINCH (CUE)

Uneju? atwha iddi doyou odo ithwi imy irdbi?

Footsteps farther into the room. Sound of bag being unzipped.

JUNIE

Finch?

Junie is frozen. As if holding still will convince her sister to stay.

She finally turns. No one is there. She turns back. Continues rolling.

Sound of footsteps and a door closing. Sandy lets out a mournful howl. Finch sings the song that floated through Junie's mind at the top.

FINCH (CUE)
(singing, faintly)

My heart is crying, crying
Lonely teardrops.
My pillow's never dry of
Lonely teardrops.
Come home, come home.
Just say you will, say you will.
Say you will.

Junie goes to look where the song is coming from. Seems like it's through the door...She puts her ear to it.

FINCH (CUE)
(singing)

My heart is crying, crying...

JUNIE

Finch?

Junie opens the door, and a massive wave of water-sound strikes her.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOTHAT OLD HOUSE KEPT

Junie lies on the sand, asleep.

Waves.

LLOYD

I insist you try some of Doreen's coleslaw.

BROOK

Believe it or not, I still don't like coleslaw, and since we're not married you can stop trying to trick me into eating it.

Cry of gulls.

CAROLINE

OK, soon as you get back from the bathroom we're gonna tell them. Please don't stop by the TV. My heart can't take it.

As Junie stirs, music from her teenage years floats in softly on the breeze.

WYE

No, ma'am, I've been working part-time at the library. And weekends with the crew clearing out debris from the old Yacht Club.

LLOYD

I don't think she heard me.

BROOK

Junie?

LLOYD

What you don't want is too much mustard on your burger. It doesn't play nice with the pickles.

Junie looks out over the water. Checks the beach to her left and right.

WYE

Those're real nice sandals, sir. I been thinking about getting a pair, you know, since I'll be out there on the water all summer. When I'm not in the kitchen.

CAROLINE

You're blocking the cooler. Junie.

JUNIE

Finch? Finch?

WYE

You're lookin good, girl. You been sleeping any better?

Junie stands. Something is wrong.

JUNIE

Finch?

LLOYD

Cheese, Junie?

JUNIE

FINCH?!

She stumbles down towards the water.

BROOK

Junie.

JUNIE

FINCH!

CAROLINE

Junie.

JUNIE

FINCH!

A jet passes over-head, ear-splitting.

As the volume recedes, we are at Lloyd's BBQ.
And everyone is celebrating.

(Brook wears a papoose with Clementine, the
young raccoon, in it)

BROOK

I'm so happy for you. For both of you. Ooh, look: Clementine says "I'm excited too, Care. Put me in the ceremony."

LLOYD

This calls for a celebration. Whaddaya say we have a barbecue, huh? Starting right about an hour ago?

BROOK

This is just the good news we been lookin for. Isn't that right, Junie? Oh, say something to your sister!

Junie blinks at them. Seagull cries.

JUNIE

(guessing)

Congratulations?

BROOK

That was convincing.

LLOYD

You're gonna have to do better than that at the wedding.

JUNIE

So where are our birth parents?

CAROLINE

What?

BROOK

What on earth made you think of that?

CAROLINE

And who's *our*?

WYE

Congratulations, Care.

CAROLINE

Thanks, Wye.

WYE

May love fill your sails and may you never find yourselves becalmed.

CAROLINE

...thank you.

LLOYD

That's beautiful, son.

JUNIE

(to Lloyd)

You said you'd help me get to them.

WYE

I learned it from my minister, Pastor Will Wilson --

BROOK

So have you talked about a date yet?

CAROLINE

As a matter of fact we were thinking kinda soon.

LLOYD

Well why not? I gave Silva my blessing years ago.

BROOK

How soon? Before Christmas?

JUNIE

Mom.

CAROLINE

(speaking over/past Junie)

Maybe October?

BROOK

Oh my lord you're trying to kill me. Don't you remember your sister's wedding? Wyatt, you remember. I know you do, too, Junie.

Wye is texting.

LLOYD

Beautiful wedding. Doreen said to me --

JUNIE

Mom, it's important.

CAROLINE

(to Junie, increasingly annoyed)

Aren't you gonna ask how he did it?

JUNIE

What? Oh. How'd he do it?

BROOK

I want him to tell me. Where'd my future-son-in-law go? Silva!

LLOYD

He's helping Doreen move the credenza.

A crash from inside.

SILVA (O.S.)

We're ok!

BROOK

Oh, I'm so excited for this family to grow. It's about time. Have you told his parents yet? Gosh, we haven't even met them. What part of Mexico did you say they were from again?

CAROLINE

They're from Cleveland. They're coming in next week to visit. We'll have y'all over for dinner.

WYE

Can I bring anything?

LLOYD

(trying to defuse awkwardness)

Wye there's plenty more lemonade in the pitcher.

Brook tries again to pull Junie into the conversation.

BROOK

(to Caroline, re Junie)

Now, I know it's early, but you be sure and pick out a bridesmaid's dress that covers some of these tattoos. Grandma Mimi's gonna have a fit.

CAROLINE

She survived the last one. June's gonna look great.

BROOK

Oh, she just wanted so bad to be different. It's the twin thing. Had to separate yourself any way you could. Well you coulda made it easier, I'll say that much. I used to put bright red nail polish on your big toe when you were a baby.

That way I could tell you apart and you didn't go stealing any more of Finch's meals. It was less painful and a lot less permanent.

Mom. CAROLINE

I'm just teasing her. BROOK

You *are* gonna be Maid-Of-Honor, though. CAROLINE

What about Finch? JUNIE

Silence.

Junie is not naive in the following exchange.

What about her? CAROLINE

Shouldn't we wait? Isn't it too fast? JUNIE

Junie, I've been waiting. CAROLINE

But what if she could be there? What if I find her? JUNIE

That's not gonna happen. CAROLINE

Caroline. BROOK

I have leads. She's out there. JUNIE

She is not! CAROLINE

JUNIE

You don't know.

CAROLINE

I'm getting married. Stop making this about you.

JUNIE

But what's the rush? Is it because you're pregnant?

CAROLINE

Jesus Christ.

LLOYD

Hey, now.

BROOK

You are?

JUNIE

Oops.

CAROLINE

What the hell?

WYE

Congrats, Care, wow! I mean, like, double congrats.

BROOK

I take it this wasn't planned?

CAROLINE

We've talked about it. This wasn't quite the time-table, but I don't know what is anymore. I thought I was gonna be married a year ago. But no, I've been holding that off.

LLOYD

For Finch?

CAROLINE

(about June)

No, for her.

(to June)

Two years ago it was for Finch. Ever since then I've been waiting for you to get your shit together. Because I wanted you in my wedding, and I didn't want you drunk or acting like a crazy person. Everything's been, 'wait a little longer, your sister's coming along.' 'Not now, Caroline, we gotta look out for your sister.' Life went and took its course, I guess.

LLOYD

I'm thrilled I'm gonna be a granddad, sugar. And I'm proud you're getting married first.

CAROLINE

I wanted to, Daddy. I know it matters to you.

LLOYD

A lotta people these days don't think it makes a difference, but there's a promise you make when you're with your family and your community before God --

JUNIE

I never asked you to wait for me.

CAROLINE

You don't ask for anything, you just sit there and suck up everybody's time and energy, all our worry, all Mom and Dad's money.

BROOK

Caroline, stop it! You, too, Clementine!

CAROLINE

Somebody's gotta say something to her. Mama you oughtta be retired by now if you hadn't spent all that money on her psych clinic. But who knows maybe it was worth it since she apparently still thinks Finch is gonna come walking into my wedding.

LLOYD

Let's not talk about money, all right?

JUNIE

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

CAROLINE

Dad hasn't done one mission trip in two years. They're watching and waiting and losing their hair. Do you care about that?

LLOYD

Who's losing hair?

CAROLINE

I didn't even want to tell them about the wedding because I knew it'd just be "that's great, how does your sister look?" "Congratulations. Junie could use some good news." I need some good news, too!

JUNIE

Leave me alone.

CAROLINE

This is why I said we oughtta have a funeral.

JUNIE

You said what?

CAROLINE

Yeah. It was my idea.

Wye finishes a text and pockets his phone.

JUNIE

You lied to me.

CAROLINE

I was trying to help you, like everybody else.

JUNIE

You're an asshole.

BROOK

Girls!

JUNIE

You don't give a shit, you just want everyone to pay attention to you.

CAROLINE

For five minutes! And then one day in October. And how dare you say I don't care --

JUNIE

You don't. You want everything back to perfect Caroline life, doesn't matter if half our family's gone, doesn't matter if you have to drag the rest of us with you.

CAROLINE

Who am I dragging?

BROOK

Both of you hush up, this is ridiculous.

CAROLINE

You hush up.

LLOYD

Don't talk to your mother that way.

BROOK

No she can say whatever she wants. Ms. Clementine and I are going inside.

JUNIE

You're a traitor.

CAROLINE

You're crazy. You need to go back to therapy as soon as you get a real job to pay for it.

BROOK

She's not crazy.

WYE

That's a very damaging word.

CAROLINE

Stay out of it. She's drunk all the time. She acts like a total space-cadet. And she's been picking up random marines at Jack's every weekend.

JUNIE

I am not.

CAROLINE

Guess what, sugar? Your dumb, drunk ass keeps giving out my number to your nasty hookups.

(holds out her phone)

I got enough dick here to feed the whole Zeta house for months.

LLOYD

I think this is a conversation we can revisit another time.

JUNIE

Why would you tell them that?

CAROLINE

Why would you tell them I'm pregnant?

JUNIE

They were gonna find out anyway.

CAROLINE

I wanted to tell them!

JUNIE

I'm not crazy!

CAROLINE

Then stop acting like it.

Wye walks directly between the two of them and holds his palms out.

CAROLINE

What the hell, Wye?

JUNIE

Just move.

They try to side-step, but he moves with them.

WYE

Caroline. You see your sister's vessel taking on water, and you want to bail her out.

CAROLINE

Huh?

WYE

June. You feel your sister's bucket scraping your hull, despite you have a perfectly good bilge pump.

JUNIE

Nope.

WYE

And moreover she's trying to tow you to shore when you feel there's a crew member still in the water.

BROOK

Let em whoop each other. I can't listen to this.

WYE

Neither of you is crazy.

(to Junie)

I know how hard it is to leave a man behind. But you have to come back to shore. Or it's you and the rest of your crew next.

LLOYD

Gosh, he knows how to put a thing into words.

JUNIE

She wrote me a letter. She's still alive.

BROOK

She what?

WYE

Did she?

JUNIE

She's with Saisie and Uncle Brother and Granddaddy. And some guy named Thatch. That's why I need to know about my birth parents. Or their parents.

LLOYD

That's what your Thatch thing was about?

BROOK

Don't you think we talked to them? They're not the answer you're looking for.

CAROLINE

Don't listen to her. She never got a letter.

JUNIE

I did.

CAROLINE

Show me.

JUNIE

And she's sending me messages on the radio. On NPR. I can feel her sometimes I swear I can feel her right behind me.

CAROLINE

See what I'm talking about?

WYE

That's kinda out there, June.

JUNIE

You're the one who's in a cult!

WYE

Church Of New Fellowship is not a cult. I asked Pastor Wilson straight-up on Tuesday.

CAROLINE

Is that the place over the bowling alley?

WYE

We're moving soon. You know that new strip mall beside the Lowes?

LLOYD

What's all this about?

WYE

These are the folks I've been telling you about, who helped me get my head straight.

JUNIE

They're a cult. They've pumped Wye for half his savings. Which is Finch's money.

CAROLINE

He spent Finch's money on drugs.

WYE

They didn't pump me for anything. They gave me my life back.

LLOYD

I respect that, son. And you know I support your journey into the spirit. But I think you have to be careful about the congregation you choose; there's many a flock led astray by its shepherd. And I hope you're not planning on discussing any of this with the campers.

JUNIE

Mom.

BROOK

Hold on.

WYE

It's crazy you brought that up, cause what I've noticed is, reading the handbook, there's this incredible overlap between the Church's teachings and the lessons the kids are supposed to learn, about sailing and whatnot. I couldn't believe it.

JUNIE

(to Brook)

Just tell me what you can.

LLOYD

Uh-huh. I'd be more comfortable if --

WYE

-- It felt like one of those, you know, in the Matrix, a sign or a meaning pattern -- a loom, Pastor Wilson calls it, you know like a loom over an island?

BROOK

(to Junie)

We're not doing this right now.

LLOYD

That's a lovely image. But I think you and I oughtta talk maybe about how it's gonna be this summer. What'll make a good fit.

WYE

It's not bullshit, Lloyd! Your daughter's jealous cause she can't find her way to land.

LLOYD

Ease up.

CAROLINE

He's right about that.

JUNIE

I'm not jealous.

WYE

You got barnacles all over you, and you're taking it out in unhealthy ways.

BROOK

Ms. Clementine says you all sound pretty stupid right about now.

WYE

First you go and put your sister's shit in the streets. Now you're gonna come after me, try to embarrass and belittle me in front of your dad when I'm only trying to help. Everybody here's trying to help you.

CAROLINE

Did I say it? I think I said it.

JUNIE

You're not trying to help; you're trying to cover me up and hope I get normal fast enough you can put the whole thing behind you.

CAROLINE

There she is, with her grief so much purer than the rest of us.

WYE

There's nothing going behind us; we're carrying it just like you.

CAROLINE

You ungrateful, self-obsessed --

BROOK

-- All right let's calm down. This isn't the first spectacle to take place at your daddy's barbecue. Lord, I remember one year it was so hot you had to fart to keep your rump cool. I was already mad at him about some little infraction and swaying by the punch bowl every five minutes so I wouldn't have to talk to him. Well, your old buddy Doctor Moses thought it'd be just the funniest thing if he poured all his fishing gin into my lemonade. Soon enough, I'm leading a one-man charge down to the river in nothing but my garments.

LLOYD

There were some young boys found it awfully interesting.

BROOK

And some old men, too.

JUNIE

I gotta feed Sandy.

LLOYD

You aren't driving anywhere.

BROOK

I will block you in myself.

LLOYD

Now, I don't know what your mother thinks of this, but I believe you oughtta be seeing the therapist again.

BROOK

Oh, I think the she oughtta see the therapist.

LLOYD

Good.

BROOK

Good.

JUNIE

No.

LLOYD

Just until you get your hand back on the tiller.

JUNIE

No.

BROOK

You're gonna have to give me more than no.

JUNIE

No, ma'am.

(pause)

She was pointless.

BROOK

That's your professional psychiatric assessment?

LLOYD

Have you ever heard the term "confirmation bias"?

BROOK

Oh, hush up, Lloyd.

CAROLINE

That's not that what means.

JUNIE

It's too expensive.

LLOYD

Don't you know we'll pay anything to have you healthy?

JUNIE

You already spent too much last time. Care's right, Mama, you're supposed to be retired.

BROOK

Retirement's for old folks with a a death wish.

JUNIE

And people who wanna travel and enjoy themselves after all their work. Instead of worrying away everything on their grown up fucked up daughter.

BROOK

Where would I travel to? And leave Clementine?

JUNIE

Mom.

BROOK

You don't get to decide that. Far as I'm concerned you can pack up the whole guilt routine. If you really care so much how I spend my time, you can focus on getting better.

LLOYD

I understand you feel guilty about your financials. That's normal, every-family stuff. Boy, I tell you how I used to hate asking folks for money or taking it from em when they were giving. Now, what I learned is it's helpful to think of it as an investment, and to keep in mind what *we're* getting out of it.

JUNIE

You don't want to invest in me.

BROOK

Yeah, that's weird.

JUNIE

You hate me.

LLOYD

What?

JUNIE

You hate me for losing her. I was right there, and I didn't even see what happened to her. If she drowned, I was sleeping when she needed saving. If she ran off, I never tried to stop her. I lost your daughter, and you're so angry when you look at me, you gotta smother it in kisses. I swear to God it'd be better if y'all told me. It'd be better for both of us. We'd all feel better.

LLOYD

You want me to tell you that I hate you.

Junie nods.

Silence.

Lloyd cries.

LLOYD

You hate me.

BROOK
(dismissive)

Oh, Lloyd.

LLOYD

You both do. I told y'all to swim there. I took you there since you were peanuts. I even let the campers swim there some days. It's a friendly beach. It's always been a friendly beach. Gosh, I know with th-the climate and the time of year, the way the sound's been changing since the hurricane, and all those bull sharks moving in...

BROOK

Do we have to do this?

LLOYD

And then you cut me out! Like I'm not even a part of it.

JUNIE

You're not.

LLOYD

Like I don't even get to *mourn* with you.

CAROLINE

You chose to drift off.

LLOYD

We're still family! Damn it! I'm trying my best here. I need your forgiveness. And love.
(to Junie)

And you're shutting me out.

BROOK

The both of you knock it off. I swear you're worse than the old folks, and they've got real problems. Half of em can't make BMs. And the other half can't hold em.

JUNIE

Stop nursing us! Everything's a checklist with you. Just body parts and fixes. It's suffocating! You're so busy setting to work on me, you won't give any room to feel.

LLOYD

Amen.

BROOK

That was my daughter. I raised that girl, who wasn't even my own. I poured all my love into her, until we were blood. Oh, I've got feelings --

JUNIE

Then tell me.

BROOK

You were there. You're right. Sometimes I look at you, and I just think...

JUNIE

What?

BROOK

How could you let her get away?

Silence.

BROOK

And now you come and make me say it. Tell me I don't have any feelings. I have to swallow all that. Because my other daughter's in danger.

JUNIE

I was asleep.

BROOK

You think I ever slept when y'all were at the water?

JUNIE

She's 26! I didn't know I was asleep. It was a minute. Or two seconds. It could've been.

BROOK

Never once. Not even a second.

CAROLINE

Mom, Finch swam like a fish.

JUNIE

I don't know how she got away so fast. It doesn't make sense. It's not my fault.

LLOYD

Nobody says it's your fault.

JUNIE

She just did!

CAROLINE

That's not what she said.

BROOK

I don't wanna talk about this anymore.

JUNIE

How was I supposed to know? The sun was hot, and the sand was soft. She didn't say anything. She just got in.

BROOK

Right now we're gonna talk --

JUNIE

And every day I wonder what's worse. She wanted to go and didn't tell me. Or she didn't want to, and I couldn't hear.

BROOK

-- Right now we're gonna talk about therapy and getting you the help you need.

JUNIE

I don't need therapy; I'm gonna find Finch.

BROOK

You are not. We've been up and down that water a hundred times.

CAROLINE

A thousand times.

JUNIE

She's with our grandma. And Thatch.

LLOYD

Who is Thatch?

BROOK

I saw her on the news last night, in one of those crowds in Turkey. I thought I'd found her, too. But it just wasn't so.

JUNIE

That's not what this is.

Water sound begins to rise.

LLOYD

This doesn't help us with the task at hand.

WYE

You gotta point your bow towards your destination.

JUNIE

Why are you trying to keep me from her? You act like you aren't still looking, too. You paid someone to search the whole coast and didn't even tell me.

BROOK

June.

JUNIE

Coleman said you didn't want me looking. He said you didn't want me to have the letter.

CAROLINE

What are you talking about?

JUNIE

Coleman came to see me. Well, he came to Caroline's. I had to get it out of him because for some reason all of you are trying to hide the fact that Finch might still be here.

CAROLINE

When did that happen?

BROOK

Coleman Hill? That doesn't sound right.

CAROLINE

This was at my house?

JUNIE

Yes, Caroline. Like I said. The other night.

BROOK

Coleman drowned last year.

Beat. Caroline steps to Junie.

JUNIE

He had a letter. The old sleeping porch and the frogs.

BROOK

That doesn't make any sense. Honey. You tell her, Clementine.

LLOYD

Junebug...

JUNIE

You're lying to me.

Water reaches its peak, drowning them out.

BROOK

June...

JUNIE

I'm going to find her.

THAT OLD SONG RAN FROM ROOM TO ROOM

The Fisherman is on the pier, in the misty pre-dawn. He wears a heavy cotton hoodie and long denim shorts. His face dark beneath the hood.

FISHERMAN

Y'ain't brung yer rod.

JUNIE

I don't have one. Anymore.

FISHERMAN

S'all right by me, you just go ahead and use one a mine.

Junie steps forward.

FISHERMAN

Gotta have the goods, though.

Junie digs into Finch's bag and pulls out the bird plush. Holds it, hesitating.

The Fisherman takes the bird and draws it under his hood. Inhales deeply.

Satisfied, the Fisherman dumps the bird in a nearby cooler and gestures towards the rods.

Junie chooses a rod and checks the line.

FISHERMAN

Need bait? Souls is dumb, all right, but God ain't made one yet so dumb you catch it without bait.

The Fisherman kicks at another cooler.

FISHERMAN

Music works real good. Yeah, they'll come up and bite for that stuff. Even the ones like to swim down in the dark. I'll get you some.

JUNIE

I don't have any more to give you.

FISHERMAN

Call it on credit. Hold on it's gonna get real loud in a second.

The Fisherman pops open the cooler lid, and a hundred songs play at once. The Fisherman quickly yanks one out and slams the cooler shut.

The Fisherman examines the song with hands clasped tightly around it, muffling the sound of "O Lovely Silver Moon" from *Rusalka*.

FISHERMAN

What age you say?

JUNIE

[26]

FISHERMAN

Yeah, this'll do fine. Nice and sweet.

The Fisherman tosses Junie the song. She fixes it to the hook and drops the line into the water.

Luminous souls appear, swimming in a rotating column, like a school of fish.

One soul bites. Junie looks to the Fisherman.

FISHERMAN

Reel 'er in.

Junie reels. The Soul plops onto the deck. It is not Finch. The Fisherman shrugs. The Soul flops in place.

SOUL 1

Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God Oh God

Junie takes the hook and song out of the Soul's mouth and casts again.

She reels a Second Soul in. Also not her sister.

SOUL 2

(a cow lowing)
Moooooooooooooooo....

SOUL 1

Oh God Oh God
Oh God Oh God
Oh God Oh God
Oh God Oh God
(*etc.*)

FISHERMAN

Whole lotta souls under the pier. Sometimes it just ain't --

Junie angrily sets the line once more and casts.

She pulls up a Third Soul.

This soul does not even wait for her to remove the line, it continues racing about in circles, just as it swam underwater. It wraps the line around Junie and the other souls, who continue to moo and mutter "Oh God Oh God".

Junie is wound up. The Third Soul drags her towards the edge of the pier. As the Third Soul leaps back into the water, Junie is pulled after.

The Fisherman cuts the line just before Junie falls off the pier. She rushes to another rod.

The Fisherman shouts at her while tossing the remaining Souls back into the water.

FISHERMAN

Huh-uh. Y'only get the one rod now.

JUNIE

I need new bait. That one's useless. Are you listening? I want another song.

The Fisherman dumps another Soul off the pier.

JUNIE

Hey.

FISHERMAN

Caughtcha three souls in a minute.

JUNIE

How long does it take to find the right one?

FISHERMAN

How long? You could get back to her in no time at all. If that's whatchyer after.

JUNIE

That's what I'm after.

FISHERMAN

Yer eyes told a different story when that fish nearly dragged you in.

JUNIE

That's what I'm after!

FISHERMAN

Then jump! Who's stopping you?

They look at each other.

JUNIE

I need to go home.

FISHERMAN

I'm putting that cut line on yer tab.

PEELING BACK THE PAPERS AND RUGS

Junie rushes to Sandy.

JUNIE

I'm sorry, buddy. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Wordless moment.

Then the following speech is translated on delay through the radio.

JUNIE

Did she teach you twin-tongue? Sandy? Ouyou etget eme? Oyou yunderstand? Yi onto antwa ebe ethe astla oto easkspe spour ongetou. Erewhe illwi ordsw ogo gif obodyno eakspe emthe. Erewhe illwi whall ymy oughtstho ogo gif Inchyfi ancta earhe emthe? Andysa? Andysa? Alkta oto eme. Alkta oto eme. Alkta oto eme.

Sandy is silent. Junie hears herself echoed on the radio. She gets up and smashes the radio.

Sandy goes to Finch's bag and sniffs it. Whines.

Junie goes into Finch's bag and pulls out her clothes. She puts them on. Fixes her hair.

Time passes.

WITH YOUR TONGUE YOU WATCHED IT LIE ALONG THE BONES

Wye enters. Sandy rushes up and gets a hug.

WYE

Aw, hey Sandy. I've missed you, old man.

JUNIE

In here.

Wye sees her. Stops.

JUNIE

You want something to drink?

WYE

Water's good.

Right. JUNIE

What are you having? WYE

This? Nothing. This is. Hangover juice. Spiked with. More hangover, probably. I used to be a hell-hound. I don't know what happened. JUNIE

Have you tried sleeping? WYE

I have. I have. I have. Have a seat. How's...work? JUNIE

Work's good. Good to have a break. WYE

Good. JUNIE

Yeah. WYE

That's good. JUNIE

Right. WYE

I'm sorry about the barbecue. JUNIE

Appreciate it. WYE

I guess that wasn't how you wanted that to -- JUNIE

Already forgot it. WYE

So my dad...with your job this summer? JUNIE

WYE

I got my own thing going on.

JUNIE

You were right. I am jealous of you.

WYE

You shouldn't be. How's your family?

Junie shrugs.

WYE

You haven't talked to them? It's been almost a month.

JUNIE

Feels like we talked it to death. I pick up the phone sometimes. I open the curtains so they don't bust in. They all hate me and think I'm crazy. But you were trying to help. Whatever it is I've been listening to, I'm done with it. I wanna listen to you.

WYE

I'm glad you're feeling better.

JUNIE

I like the beard.

WYE

Thanks. There's a little scar I wanted to cover.

JUNIE

Can I touch it?

WYE

Ok.

She touches his beard. Silence.

JUNIE

Wanna talk about birds?

WYE

Sure.

JUNIE

I haven't had any bird talk in a long while. I don't know about you.

Pause.

WYE

You seen any?

JUNIE

Buncha brown pelicans headed out this morning.

WYE

I like a pelican. ...they're, um, a symbol of Christ.

JUNIE

Is that right?

WYE

Yeah I think cause of, uh, he's a fisherman. Anyway.

JUNIE

I saw a kildeer hopping around with his stripey head.

WYE

Her, right?

JUNIE

Her?

WYE

With the stripe -- that's a female. Finch said.

JUNIE

Her. You got a favorite?

WYE

I like herons a lot. A lot. Heron's a badass bird. You?

JUNIE

Yellow-rumped warbler. Fun to say. And relatable. Who doesn't have a little yellow-rumped warbler in em?

WYE

Uh huh.

JUNIE

Something wrong?

WYE

This is strange for me.

JUNIE

What's strange about it?

He thinks about it.

WYE

It just is. It's uncomfortable.

JUNIE

The life you've lived, and this is strange?

WYE

You know what you're doing. You're putting her on.

JUNIE

Putting her on.

WYE

Those are her clothes. That's her smell. Those're her birds. I don't know why you're doing it, but it makes me feel bad.

JUNIE

I just want to talk to you.

WYE

Can we talk about something else. And can you...fix your hair?

JUNIE

It is fixed.

WYE

I mean screw it up. More like you.

JUNIE

This is me.

WYE

It's not.

JUNIE

It is.

WYE

Maybe you oughtta talk to someone else about this.

JUNIE

I wanna talk to you.

Junie kisses Wye. They make out.

He pulls back.

WYE

See this is why I think the funeral's a good idea.

JUNIE

Don't start on that.

WYE

Closure's important. Saying goodbye's important. Knowing what's dead and what's alive

JUNIE

You wanted to fuck me four months after she went missing.

WYE

and I'm sorry. I was...There's not even a name for how low I was. I guess you know what I was going through.

Junie touches him.

WYE

I'm with someone.

Beat.

JUNIE

The mother-fucking texts.

WYE

I met her in Recovery. She's, um. She's helped me out with a lotta my stuff.

JUNIE

And she likes beards.

WYE

She has sensitive skin. It's this or shave twice a day.

JUNIE

Good for you.

WYE

No one's trying to hurt you or take her away.

JUNIE

It's fine for you. Y'all don't understand.

WYE

We have to move on. Whether we want to or not.

JUNIE

I don't. I can't. It's different for me.

WYE

I know it, Junie. I'm one you don't gotta explain it to. God, I slept with her every night knowing there was someone closer. Tried to argue with her and couldn't win cause there was always someone on her side. Asked her to explain things she didn't know how cause she never had to. Finch could shut me outta so much and be fine cause she stowed it all with you. Most people they come in the world, they figure out they're alone, they freak and spend all their time hunting for anyone to see like they do. If you find someone it's like, you exist. You're real, the world's solid.

Wye gets up. Sandy goes for a pet.

WYE

You can always call me.

AND YOU SAID TIME TO GO, IMAGINING YOU HADN'T GONE

Nate, a Marine, joins Junie at the bar.

NATE

Excuse me, I don't mean to bother you...

Junie spins and looks at him. He freezes.

NATE

I, uh, forgot where I was going with that.

JUNIE

Have a seat. Maybe it'll come back to you.

NATE

You live around here?

JUNIE
All my life.

NATE
I'm up at Cherry Point. With the Corps.

JUNIE
Oh I know.

NATE
Is it the haircut?

JUNIE
I've seen enough of y'all. Over the years.

NATE
Can't have seen enough if you hadn't met me.

JUNIE
Is that what you came over to say?

NATE
That was just something stupid. I'm Nate.

JUNIE
Finch.

NATE
Cool name.

JUNIE
Short for Finch-wina.

NATE
Now you're just playing.

JUNIE
You wanted to know.

NATE
What do you do, Finch?

JUNIE
I study conservation in the Neuse River Basin and Pamlico Sound.

NATE

Fancy.

JUNIE

Birds are my specialty. I gave a keynote for the Waterbird Society in twenty-thirteen. Were you around for that?

NATE

No I, must have been on base.

JUNIE

Would you like to hear it?

NATE

Your keynote?

JUNIE

That's right.

NATE

About birds?

JUNIE

Water birds. And conservation.

NATE

Y-Yeah. Do you wanna give it?

Over the speech, they end up back in Junie's place, having sex.

JUNIE

Good evening friends and fowls.

*When light cracks and thunder groans as if cursed
and you are safe in a dark house deep in Santa
Cruz, with the lights out, the current suddenly gone,
you think: "Who'll house the shivering hawk, and the
impeccable egret and the cloud-coloured heron,
and the parrots who panic at the false fire of dawn?"*

That's Derek Walcott in his poem "White Egrets", which I found by googling "white egrets" during a stormy 1AM two weeks ago when I was panicked over what to say to you. Why did a Nobel Prize-winning poet write about the egret? And what does his question have to do with us?

The second question we can all answer: *we* will house the shivering hawk, and the impeccable egret, and the cloud-coloured heron, and I'm sure we would house the parrots, too, if they lived in North Carolina. By *we* I don't mean just those of us here today, the Waterbird Society, I mean *we* the residents of coastal North Carolina and the inheritors of a home we may govern but we must share. In the poem, nature provides the monsoon that threatens the birds. Nature threatens; we must house. In reality it is we who threaten, and we who must provide protection from that threat. To stick with our friend the egret, it was his decimation in the 19th century that led to the conservation movement we are all a part of today. While here in North Carolina we have been blessedly free of the oil spills that have devastated the Brown Pelican and the chemical assaults on the Double-crested Cormorant, we are nonetheless witnessing the long-term degradation of our coastal habitats -- a word that comes from dwelling, or house. We face the depletion of food sources and the passive destruction of marine bird life caused by the fishing industry, which is itself facing an existential threat of scarcity, and is liable to respond to the massacre of nuisance birds with a weary shrug and a "so what?" Which brings me back to the first question. Why write about the egret? If birds inspire us by the liberation of their flight, by their familiarity with the heavens, waterbirds do so doubly: they may come to nest on land, but their lives are lived in water and air. They are close to the mystery. They have passed into other worlds and returned, only momentarily, to our view.

In bed:

NATE

So you're looking for Thatch.

Low water sound. Junie sits up, looking at him.

NATE

Never mind how I know. I know. You're looking for Thatch.

JUNIE

Who are you?

NATE

"I my sister know yet living in my glass." This is not the house of an ornithologist. Even an amateur one.

JUNIE

You need to leave.

NATE

Edward Thatch is the greatest pirate to ever roam this coast. He held parliament with shoals and had the mercy of seals on fog-lost rocks, who hushed at his passing and tossed fish to his scurvy-shrunk crew. All bars, all deeps, all whale roads and brackish sounds opened themselves to his ship.

Junie makes an inarticulate bewildered noise.

NATE

He sent me to deliver this.

Nate shows Junie a letter. She snatches at it.

JUNIE

Finch is kidnapped by pirates?

NATE

He died in 1718, but some say his soul had already abandoned his body. He left it behind to tend his sunken treasure ship, a home to sharks on the sandy bottoms of this very water. And there grew about him a dead man's quarter, a parish of memories, where the souls swim in the drowned and shattered sun.

She snatches again. Nate opens the letter.

NATE

Dear Junie,
The dogwoods are blooming and traffic is picking up on the dirt road in front of Saisie's house. Bands of blackbirds catch on the telephone wires like dewdrops in a spider's web. Sweet Roy and I like to sip tea and watch em fly off through the sunset, which is almost as good here - it just comes down a little crooked and soggy like a kid's watercolor. Sweet Roy got his name cause he got himself into a bottle of blueberry syrup when Saisie was working on her cryptogram, and by the time she looked up he'd drunk half of it and spilled the rest all around him on the sofa. She had to melt him off with vinegar and soda water and throw out the whole couch. Remember when Mom found us chasing that skunk naked through the Barudis' back yard. We mighta ended up Stink Finch and Nudie Junie. Awaiting your reply. Sis.

He folds the letter and tucks it away.

NATE

Shows he likes her. He opened the door to a pretty country.

JUNIE

How do I get there? Tell me where I have to go.

NATE

Under.

Nate smiles at her.

JUNIE

No. No way. Get out.

She tries to shove him away. He grabs hold of her and wrestles her down.

NATE

You know damn well where the wreck washed up.

JUNIE

Get off me. Get off me.

BUT CURLED STILL IN A BREAKFAST BOWL

Brook takes Nate's place, tending a tossing June.

BROOK

June. June.

Junie moans ("get off me").

BROOK

Let me take you to bed.

JUNIE

What? No.

BROOK

I'd carry you like I used to but one of us got bigger since then. OK, smartass, one of us got a lot bigger. C'mon. Upsy-daisy.

JUNIE

(recognizing her mother)

What are you doing here?

BROOK

I had a moment, and I wanted to see my little girl. Clementine's at the vet.

JUNIE

Is she ok?

BROOK

Oh, she's fine. She's getting her teeth cleaned. You just bet what that's gonna cost me. I'd brush those chompers myself if she'd let me at em, but she's a feisty one. I swear it's like having you all over again.

Brook helps Junie up.

JUNIE

I can stand. You smell like piss.

BROOK

Nobody likes the dentist. But thank you for noticing.

Junie winces loudly in pain.

BROOK

What's that about?

JUNIE

My neck.

BROOK

Why do you think I'm taking your bony butt to bed? Sweetheart, you're [26] years old, you are not gonna be able to just lie all ragamuffin on the floor.

Sound of gulls.

JUNIE

Wait. Wait.

BROOK

What is it?

JUNIE

Nothing.

BROOK

God bless it. You've been secret with me, too. I thought we were passed all that. But it's like when you were little again. You and Finch passing looks back and forth.

JUNIE

You don't hear it, do you? Waves shushing and gulls up high...and this music.

BROOK

You're too old for sleeping on the floor, but you're too young to be having a stroke.

Junie hums along with the song.

BROOK

What is that?

JUNIE

Something we used to listen to when we were younger. Driving around in the summer. On the road out to Emerald Isle. Waiting for life to start.

BROOK

Stuffy in here. I'll get these windows open for you. C'mon get you outta those clothes. You'll sweat through the sheets.

Junie takes her shirt and jeans off. Still humming.

Brook peels down the blanket, and Junie crawls in. Water sound at its high point.

JUNIE

You don't hear it.

Brook picks up Junie's shirt.

BROOK

This is your sister's, isn't it?

JUNIE

But it sounds so close.

Brook tucks Junie in and sits on the bed.

BROOK

June. Sweet and long. I was doing some thinking. And if you think it's too soon to say goodbye to Finch. Then it's too soon. It just is. We can put it off a while. Wait till you're ready. Everyone understands, and no one wants to see you hurt more.

(pause)

You're my number one priority. I don't care about the loans, or God-Forgive-Me your cousins, Mary Kelly, any of those folks. I don't care one iota about them compared to you.

JUNIE

I know, mama.

BROOK

I'm not even worried about Finch anymore. She's gone. She's gone. One way or another, she is. I know it. It's taken this long, but I know it. You hear me?

JUNIE

You should go ahead.

BROOK

Do you think so? Do you think it's right?

JUNIE

I do. It's ok. It's time to say goodbye.

BROOK

It is. It's gonna be so hard. I don't know if I could do it without you. Baby baby baby

AWAITING MELON CUBES, BANANA SLICES

Caroline and Sandy enter (Sandy at Junie's side).
Long silence at the door.

CAROLINE

Hi.

Junie looks to squeeze past Caroline.

JUNIE

(re: Caroline's pregnant belly)

You're gonna have to make some room.

CAROLINE

Ha.

JUNIE

How's the band? Have you achieved that high lonesome sound?

CAROLINE

Shut up.

JUNIE

Just high?

Shut up.

CAROLINE

I'm serious. I'm asking.

JUNIE

It's good. I'm learning a lot. I think it's the kind of thing you have to start when you're young if you want to really be good at it.

CAROLINE

Play me something.

JUNIE

Just come to the concert. I don't want to embarrass myself.

CAROLINE

Junie grabs the mandolin and plunks idly.

So what's up?

CAROLINE

Remember when you offered to take care of Sandy, if it was ever too much work?

JUNIE

That was before I was pregnant.

CAROLINE

So you take it back?

JUNIE

I'm having a child! Now you want me to take your dog, too?

CAROLINE

He's Finch's dog.

JUNIE

Don't do that!

CAROLINE

He is!

JUNIE

Why can't you keep him?

CAROLINE

JUNIE

It's...too much. Having him around.

CAROLINE

Ok.

JUNIE

Ok?

CAROLINE

Ok.

JUNIE

Thank you.

CAROLINE

He's gonna miss you. Won't you, Sandy? It's confusing for a dog. You think someone's feeding you, then she disappears. You gotta pee on a whole new set of shrubs.

JUNIE

I'll miss him, too.

CAROLINE

Want something to eat?

Junie shakes her head. Caroline walks away.

Sandy goes to Junie. Caroline returns with pretzels and hummus.

CAROLINE

Have some. Maybe my perspective is totally warped
(gestures to belly)

But you look starved.

(re: mandolin)

I'll take that.

Caroline takes the mandolin and plays a little.

JUNIE

I should go. Thanks, Care.

Junie stands up. Sandy gets up with her.

CAROLINE

I was thinking the other day about that Jesus-freak phase you went through. Right after Dad split. Not Jesus-freak. Zealot? God-crazy? Our own little penitent saint.

JUNIE

You had a phase, too.

CAROLINE

Blowjobs in the back of cars. You were fasting and whispering prayers while you brushed your hair. I was developing a skill with application outside of high school.

(beat)

Then one day it was over. No explanation. You're swearing again and eating pork ribs. What happened? Did you stop believing in God? Did y'all have a falling out?

JUNIE

No.

CAROLINE

Something that was so much who you were. And it just changed up.

JUNIE

You stopped blowing everyone who'd sit still long enough.

CAROLINE

All I wanted was attention. Did you get what you wanted?

JUNIE

I wanted to be above it all.

CAROLINE

And then you stopped.

JUNIE

It's like when you take your clothes off to get in the shower. Sometimes when you get out, you don't wanna put the same things back on.

CAROLINE

Huh. You think this is one of those things? Like you hopped in the shower and don't wanna put your life back on. Or maybe this is what you're wearing now, but pretty soon you wash off and realize you oughtta burn those clothes.

JUNIE

I just know he'll be happier.

CAROLINE

All of a sudden you know that.

JUNIE

Nothing's sudden.

CAROLINE

No, you've been using Finch as an excuse to shovel shit on everyone else for two years.

JUNIE

I'm not using her. Fuck you for saying that

CAROLINE

Listen to me: you've devolved; you've become a child and made everybody baby you. You want me to take Sandy. I will. He's a sweetheart. But when do you plan on walking on your own two feet again?

JUNIE

Half of me is gone!

CAROLINE

Try.

JUNIE

I've been trying.

CAROLINE

Try harder.

JUNIE

Screw you.

CAROLINE

Stand up.

JUNIE

I am!

CAROLINE

Stand up.

JUNIE

You mean literally?

CAROLINE

You're still here.

JUNIE

I'm not. You don't know what you're talking about.

CAROLINE

Oh I know that. I know none of us understands you.

JUNIE

I heard you the last time. You're being an asshole.

CAROLINE

You're abandoning your dog. I'm telling you how I feel.

JUNIE

You should feel like an asshole.

Junie starts to leave.

CAROLINE

Sit down!

Sandy sits.

CAROLINE

Not you, Sandy.

JUNIE

You told me to stand!

CAROLINE

I want to name the baby after her. I was gonna ask your blessing.

JUNIE

Why?

CAROLINE

Because.

(beat)

I see her sometimes, when I think about where she might've gone. I picture her with your family in [Russia] or [Egypt] or some shit. Kentucky, who knows? I never knew where y'all's people came from...but I know you both came together. That's what I was most jealous of. You both belonged somewhere together, even if you don't know where it was.

JUNIE

I think about that, too.

Would you go?
CAROLINE

I'd go wherever she went.
JUNIE

I guess the trick is knowing.
CAROLINE

Thanks. For helping me so much. With Sandy.
JUNIE

Oh, no problem. Dog germs are good for kids.
CAROLINE

You got my blessing.
JUNIE

Ok.
CAROLINE

Junie hugs Caroline. Touches her belly tenderly.

Lemme go bring his food in.
JUNIE

AND THE SCREEN-DOOR'S SECRETS

Junie at the shore where Finch disappeared.

It is totally silent. She takes her shoes off and places them side-by-side.

Then she puts one foot in the surf, and water shushes. She puts another foot in, and waves crash. She shivers. A third step, music rises.

In another space, Caroline plays her mandolin. Brook, Lloyd, Wye, and Sandy are gathered for a funeral.

CAROLINE

(singing)

*In my mind I'm gone to Carolina
can't you see the sunshine?
Can't you just feel the moonshine?
Ain't it just like a friend of mine
To hit me from behind?
Yes, I'm gone to Carolina in my mind.*

As Junie walks forward, luminous bodies appear
swimming before her.

CAROLINE

*With a holy host of others standin' around me
still I'm on the dark side of the moon
and it looks like it goes on like this forever
you must forgive me, if I'm up and gone to
Carolina in my mind*

Junie pauses for a moment, water up to her chest.

She smiles and goes under, disappearing in a
cloud of water and souls.

END OF PLAY