

Scene Four

The pier. Mid-evening. KAREN walks to the end of the pier; AMOS follows.

KAREN

(like he's a two-year-old)
I know it's been a long time, Dad, so, just to remind you what we're doing. You put the lure on the end of the pole, you cast it out where you think the fish are, and you wait until they bite, then you reel them i--....Dad?

AMOS

Yeah, you go ahead. You start without me. I'll be there in a second.

KAREN

I knew it. "A second. Tomorrow." Dad, it doesn't matter until it's now!

AMOS

But it'll be now in just a second.

KAREN

Look. You nurtured me when I was lost without Mom, now it's my turn. What worked best for me was when you kept saying she'll always be in our hearts, but she would want us to move on. Remember all that?

AMOS

Remember? All I do is remember. I think that's actually my problem. I should've been there with her.

KAREN

Oh, no, don't do this to yourself....

AMOS

She radioed me that she had a weird rattle in her lungs, and couldn't row in, and by the time I rowed the dinghy out to rescue her....

KAREN

I know all this, Dad.

AMOS

I should've made it in time. I wasn't there for her.

KAREN

(coming to him)

She was doing what she loved to do. Catch and release. It made her so happy. Both of you.

AMOS

I know. That's why....I miss it. I want her back.

(HANNAH climbs up onto the pier, from below in the water.)

HANNAH

This is getting a little too goopy for me.

KAREN

Cheese! You scared me.

HANNAH

Yeah, I've learned how to be quiet in the Nature, cuz, y'know, I'm a *whisperer*. Well, I'll be going so you can get back to your goop.

AMOS

Not so fast. What were you doing in the water there?

HANNAH

Ooh, that look on your face, Mr. Mayor! Don't worry, not polluting your waters; just doing a pH test.

AMOS

You're putting fish food down there, so they'll miraculously appear right on cue at sunset!

HANNAH

Oh. Hadn't thought of that. Maybe I'll try that in the next town. That'd be a lot easier than getting them to lose faith in you and gain faith in me. See you, boss.

AMOS

Hannah Waters. I don't like you.

HANNAH

Doesn't matter if you like me. Only matters if you do the dance along with everyone else.

AMOS

Yeah, that's not going to happen.

HANNAH

I'm not so sure. I'm pretty wily.

AMOS

You're not wily. You're a cheat.

KAREN

Dad.

AMOS

I got this, Karen.

HANNAH

It's all right. I know what you think of me. I've seen it before.

AMOS

Oh, yeah?

HANNAH

Yeah.

(HANNAH confronts Amos. **11. A Con on Every Corner.**)

HANNAH

Here's you. See if I'm not wrong.

"THERE'S A CON ON EVERY CORNER,
THERE'S A CROOK IN EVERY NOOK."
YOU SEE SWINDLERS IN YOUR WINDOWS,
DANGER IN A STRANGER'S LOOK.

SOMEONE DIFFERENT, SOMEONE FOREIGN
YOU REJECT 'EM IN A FLASH.
EVERY PERSON THAT IS NEW TO YOU
GETS TOSSED OUT WITH THE TRASH.

"WATCH OUT - THERE'S A HOOLIGAN AMONG US!
TAKE HEED - THERE'S A DESPERADO NEAR!
BEWARE - OF THOSE DANGEROUS IDEAS!"
SO YOUR PEOPLE FRET AND WORRY
AND LIVE MORE AND MORE IN FEAR!

AMOS

Now wait a minute!

IT'S MY JOB TO BE PROTECTIVE,
BE ON LOOKOUT FOR THE WORST.
I IGNORE MY OWN SELF-INTERESTS:
PUT SHEWAUGA'S WELFARE FIRST.

I AM FAIR AND OPEN-MINDED.

HANNAH

THEN CHOOSE: IDEAS THAT YOU'VE GROWN UP WITH.

AMOS

I GIVE EVERYONE THEIR SAY.

HANNAH

OR B: THE IDEAS I'VE SHOWN UP WITH.

AMOS

I WEIGH EVERY FAULT AND MERIT.

HANNAH

Hooray.

THEN MY MONEY'S ALL SEWN UP WITH--

AMOS

I GIVE EVERY DOG ITS DAY.

HANNAH

OLD OUTDATED WAYS OF THINKING
LOOKING BACKWARD, NOT AHEAD.

HANNAH & AMOS

THERE'S A CON ON EVERY CORNER,
THERE'S A CROOK IN EVERY NOOK.
AND THESE FOOLISH CRAZY NOTIONS
DON'T DESERVE A SECOND LOOK.

AMOS

THERE'S A CON ON EVERY CORNER

HANNAH

THERE'S A DESPERADO NEAR

AMOS

THERE'S A CON ON EVERY CORNER

HANNAH
SO THE PEOPLE FRET AND WORRY

AMOS
THERE'S A CON ON EVERY CORNER

HANNAH
AND LIVE MORE AND MORE IN FEAR.

AMOS and HANNAH
THERE'S A CON AND THAT IS TRUE.
THERE'S A CON AND IT IS YOU.
AND I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO.
THERE'S A CON AND THAT IS TRUE.
IT IS YOU.
IT IS YOU!

HANNAH
Okay, now you feel better you've yelled at me, you go on back to your business of trying to fish again and vanquishing your grief over your wife Christine.

AMOS
How do you know about that!?

HANNAH
I heard you both talking, remember? Not everything is a conspiracy, Amos Stillman. Good luck getting through, Karen.

(HANNAH leaves, humming the con song.)

AMOS
(shouting after her)
I'm not going to let you get fish out of this river before I do!
You hear me!!!
(to Karen)
She hears me.

KAREN
Okay, town's money where your mouth is, Dad. Get some fish out of that river!

AMOS
Yup. I can do this! Give me a pole.

(SHE hands him a pole. A tense moment.)

KAREN

Is that...is that Mom's pole? Why'd you bring Mom's pole?

AMOS

Stupid.

KAREN

No, it's sweet. It's like having a part of her here. C'mon. Ready to try?

AMOS

Yup.

(AMOS puts a lure on his pole, leans back as if to cast...but....)

AMOS

I can't. I know everyone's going to lose their retirement funds and their dreams, and you're not going to college, all because of me. But I'm sorry. I can't.

KAREN

Dad, would it help if I stayed here another year?

AMOS

(breaking a little)
Yeah, it would.

(SHE puts her arm around Amos. **12. Time - Reprise.**)

KAREN and AMOS

THERE IS TIME TO DREAM,
AND TIME TO ROAM.
BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST:
TIME TO HELP,
TIME TO MEND,
TIME TO LOVE,
HERE AT HOME.
HERE AT HOME.

(Lights change to:)

Scene Five

(Lights shift to isolate Bobby and Benjamin, who are watching the grill, unsure what's happening between the two of them. Note: despite their banter, throughout this scene is a scary level of sudden uncertainty.)

BENJAMIN

So. Um. Bobby, what if I asked you to put down that phone?

BOBBY

I could do it. But would you ask?

BENJAMIN

Let me try.

(adopts a casual, off-the-cuff tone)

Hey, Bobby, while our Blue Goddess marinade is doing its magic on the Flank Steak, why don't you put down your phone a sec, and let's just chat.

BOBBY

Sure, Benjamin. Love to!

(BOBBY sets the phone down; but still looks at it askance.)

BENJAMIN

So let's have a conversation. You start.

BOBBY

I can do that. I'm not even looking.

(BENJAMIN picks up Bobby's phone -- *which is a big deal; this has never happened before* -- and slides it out of Bobby's eyesight.)

BENJAMIN

And one. Two. Thr --

(BOBBY leaps; grabs the phone; scrolling madly.)

BOBBY

What's happened in the last eleven seconds on the internet? Oh look, a baby goat dressed up like Pete Buttigieg!³

BENJAMIN

I think that's Buttigieg actually dressed up like a baby goat.

(no response)

Hello!?

(still nothing)

Aaaand he's gone again.

(to Bobby)

I'll just be inside if you need me.

(no response)

Or even if you don't.

(BENJAMIN starts to walk away. BOBBY puts the phone down.)

BOBBY

Wait! Benjamin. Look, look, it's down. I'm turning my back on it. How're you? Mmmm, that grillin' smells good, doesn't it? Lemon Pepper Grilled Chicken?

BENJAMIN

Grilled Steak, but yeah.

BOBBY

Grilled steak. I remember, that was the first recipe of yours I ever smelled. Second place.

(pause)

Are we okay, Benjamin? Are we, are we really gonna sell Erika?

BENJAMIN

To help save the town, and all our friends. That'd be worth it, wouldn't it?

BOBBY

I dunno. Erika. Kinda brought us together, didn't she? She's doing it again right now. She's kinda the...oh no, I can't believe I'm about to say this...grill of our dreams.

³ Throughout the script, please substitute current or local internet memes for whatever Bobby is reading on his phone. For instance here, would "dressed up like Governor Evers" be a better reference?

(THEY swoon around the grill. **13. Grill of My Dreams.**)

BENJAMIN and BOBBY
 PORTOBELLOS FOR THE FELLOWS
 BARBECUES FOR RENDEZVOUS.
 THOUGH HER SMOKE GETS IN OUR EYES, IT SEEMS
 SHE'S THE GRILL OF OUR DREAMS.

BENJAMIN
 WE'RE DIFFERENT, THE TWO OF US. OIL AND WATER.
 YOU'RE TEXTING, I'M TALKING. I'M COLDER; YOU'RE
 HOTTER.
 SO HOW DOES IT WORK IF YOU'RE PATIENT, I'M HASTY;
 I'M SLOW, MARINADE-Y; YOU'RE QUICKER AND BASTE-Y.
 YOU NEVER ADMIT THAT I SAVOR, YOU GOBBLE.

BOBBY
 AND YET, WHEN WE'RE GRILLING, WE NEVER DO SQUABBLE.

BENJAMIN and BOBBY
 OUR TROUBLES ALL MELTING LIKE BUTTER, IT SEEMS
 WITH THE LOVE OF THE GRILL OF OUR DREAMS.

BOBBY
 YOU'RE NEW YORK TIMES; I'M TIK-TOK AND REDDIT.

BENJAMIN
 I'M VISA AND AMEX, YOU'RE GOOGLE PLAY CREDIT.

BOBBY
 WHEN YOU WENT TO COLLEGE, I WENT SOCIAL MEDIA.
 YOU READ THE TECH MANUAL AND I WIKIPEDIA.

BENJAMIN
 BETWEEN US WE COVER EXPENSIVE AND THRIFTY.

BOBBY
 YOU HAVE TWO DEGREES.

BENJAMIN and BOBBY
 BUT WE HAVE FIVE-FIFTY.

BENJAMIN
 SO I WRITE IN A JOURNAL.

BOBBY

I POST DAILY MEMES

BENJAMIN and BOBBY

OF OUR LOVE OF THE GRILL OF OUR DREAMS.

WE'RE A RECIPE FOR DISASTER.
 ONE PART QUICKER, ONE PART FASTER.
 ONE PART SWEETER, ONE PART SOUR.
 ONE PART NIBBLE; ONE DEVOUR.
 OUR RECIPE, IT SHOULDN'T WORK

BENJAMIN

BECAUSE I'M SELFISH,

BOBBY

AND I'M A JERK.

BENJAMIN and BOBBY

CALL US CRAZY. WE'RE INSANE.

TO US THE GRILL'S BOTH SACRED AND PROPANE.

(Maybe a dance break as they yuck it up?
 Then, it grows suddenly painful and then
 almost hostile; feelings come out.)

BOBBY

So it's sounding like we don't want to sell her; we don't give
 the Fish Whisperer her money.

BENJAMIN

Let's not make a hasty decision. Because, as you know...
 I'M CAREFUL AND THOROUGH.

BOBBY

Ha!

YOU'RE OVERLY CAUTIOUS.

BENJAMIN

YOU SNARF UP SO FAST THAT YOU MAKE YOURSELF NAUSEOUS.

BOBBY

IT TAKES YOU AN HOUR TO SWALLOW A BITEFUL.

BENJAMIN

BECAUSE I ENJOY IT, YOU'RE JEALOUS AND SPITEFUL.

BOBBY

I HATE WHEN YOU LICK OFF THE SAUCE FROM THE SPATULA!

BENJAMIN

DON'T MAKE ME REGRET I'M NO LONGER A BATCHULA!

(THEY rein in their emotions.)

BENJAMIN and BOBBY

YET OUTLASTING IT ALL, FROM OUR LAUGHTER TO SCREAMS
IS OUR LOVE OF THE GRILL OF OUR DREAMS.

BENJAMIN

'Kay, that's four minutes. Thank you. You can look at your
phone again.

BOBBY

Meh. I'm good.

(THEY're good; forever.)

BENJAMIN and BOBBY

GRILL OF OUR DREAMS,
GRILL OF OUR DREAMS,
YOU'LL ALWAYS REMAIN THE GRILL OF OUR
DREAMS.

(Lights shift to:)