

Acting Edition

The Spitfire Grill

Music and Book by
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Based on the Film by
Lee David Zlotoff

The Spitfire Grill received its New York premiere at
Playwrights Horizons, New York City, 2001

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World Premiere production
by George Street Playhouse on November 5, 2000
David Saint, Artistic Director
Michael Stotts, Managing Director

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THE SPITFIRE GRILL was first produced by Playwrights Horizons (Tim Sanford, Artistic Director; Leslie Marcus, Managing Director; William Russo, General Manager) in New York City on September 7th, 2001. The performance was directed by David Saint, with musical direction by Andrew Wilder, musical staging by Luis Perez, sets by Michael Anania, costumes by Theoni V. Aldredge, lighting design by Howell Binkley, and sound design by Scott Stauffer. The Associate Producer was Ira Weitzman, the Music Coordinator was John Miller, and the Production Stage Manager was Thomas Clewell. The cast was as follows:

PERCY TALBOTT Garrett Long
HANNAH FERGUSON Phyllis Somerville
SHELBY THORPE Liz Callaway
CALEB THORPE Armand Schultz
SHERIFF JOE SUTTER Steven Pasquale
EFFY KRAYNECK Mary Gordon Murray
THE VISITOR Steven Sinclair

CHARACTERS

PERCY TALBOTT – Early twenties. Pretty, if a bit rough-edged, her face declares the strength of her youth and a sadness beyond her years. Her accent has a southern Appalachian cadence. Strong folk/country belt to “D,” some head voice required.

HANNAH FERGUSON – About seventy. A gray-haired, flinty woman with a toughness that belies her years and a short, no-nonsense manner bordering on the bitter. Mezzo/alto chest range.

SHELBY THORPE – Mid-thirties. A plain, soft-faced creature with a shy, almost ethereal manner. Shimmering folk soprano with strong high belt to “D.”

CALEB THORPE – Early forties. Out-of-work foreman of the stone quarry. Earnest but frustrated working man clinging to a past he’s unable to recreate. Fervid, solid folk/rock voice (Top “G”).

SHERIFF JOE SUTTER – Mid - late twenties. A young small-town policeman with restless intensity and a deep undercurrent of regret for unfulfilled dreams. Strong folk tenor to a “G” (touches an “A”).

EFFY KRAYNECK – Fifties. Postmistress and busybody, a woman whose prying eyes and sharp tongue serve as a protective shield for a lonely life. Solid singer in mezzo/alto chest range (carries close harmony).

THE VISITOR – Mid-forties. A mysterious figure who never speaks. An actor with powerful eyes and a very strong sense of his body.

SETTING

A small town.

TIME

Not long ago.

AUTHORS’ NOTES

All characters (besides **PERCY**) speak in “standard Mid-western” speech, with absolutely no suggestion of “countrified intonations.” They pronounce the word “yeah” in a particular Midwest/Great Lakes manner: rather staccato and often with a very slight rise in pitch, ending in a glottal stop instead of trailing off (almost like “yep” without an aspirated “p”). They always retain the “g” in words ending “-ing” unless specified otherwise. Throughout the script, an ellipsis indicates a trailing off and a dash or dashes indicate an interruption or cutoff.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

- 01. A Ring Around the Moon Percy
- 01A. Morning Prep Instrumental
- 01B. Hannah's Harangue Hannah
- 02. Something's Cooking at the Spitfire Grill. Company
- 03. Coffee Cups and Gossip. Percy
- 04. Hannah Fell Down. Effy
- 05. Out of the Frying Pan Percy
- 05A. Frying Pan Playoff Instrumental
- 06. Percy Leaves the Bread Instrumental
- 06A. Hannah Had a Son Shelby
- 07. When Hope Goes Shelby
- 08. Ice and Snow. Caleb, Joe, and Effy
- 08A. Shelby's Ad Shelby
- 09. The Colors of Paradise. Percy and Shelby
- 09A. Opening I-6. Instrumental
- 10. Digging Stone Caleb
- 10A. Opening I-7 Instrumental
- 11. This Wide Woods Joe and Percy
- 11A. Opening I-8 Instrumental
- 11B. The First Letter. Instrumental
- 12. Forgotten Lullaby Hannah
- 13. Percy Sees the Visitor Instrumental
- 14. Shoot the Moon Hannah and Company

ACT TWO

- 15. Entr'acte/Opening Act Two Shelby, Percy, and Hannah
- 16. Come Alive Again Hannah and Company
- 16A. Picture Postcard Instrumental
- 17. Forest for the Trees Joe
- 18. Wild Bird Shelby
- 18A. Opening II-3 Instrumental
- 19. Before Sunrise Instrumental
- 19A. Sunrise Instrumental
- 20. Shine Percy
- 20A. After Shine Instrumental
- 20B. End Effy-Joe Scene Instrumental
- 20C. Broken Plate Instrumental
- 21. Way Back Home Hannah
- 22. Dear Mrs. Ferguson Effy and Joe
- 22A. The Last Letters Shelby and Percy
- 23. Finale Company
- 24. Bows Instrumental
- 25. Exit Music Instrumental

SONG LIST FOR PROGRAMS

ACT ONE

A Ring Around the Moon..... Percy
Something's Cooking at the Spitfire GrillCompany
Out of the Frying Pan Percy
When Hope Goes..... Shelby
Ice and Snow Caleb, Joe, and Effy
The Colors of ParadisePercy and Shelby
Digging Stone..... Caleb
This Wide Woods.....Joe and Percy
Forgotten Lullaby.....Hannah
Shoot the MoonHannah and Company

ACT TWO

Come Alive AgainHannah and Company
Forest for the Trees Joe
Wild Bird..... Shelby
Shine Percy
Way Back Home.....Hannah
Finale.....Company

ACT ONE

Scene One

(SCENE: Montage: Taycheedah Prison, Trailways Bus, Town of Gilead, The Spitfire Grill. February.)

(AT RISE: Stage to black. Perhaps a prison bell harshly rings. In the darkness, a voice is heard singing a cappella. A soft beam of light slowly illuminates PERCY's face.)

[MUSIC NO. 01 – A RING AROUND THE MOON]

PERCY.

OUTSIDE IN THE NIGHT
THERE'S A RING AROUND THE MOON.
THE WIND SINGS IN BARBED WIRE,
I'VE LISTENED TO THE TUNE
WHAT SEEMS LIKE FIFTY YEARS,
OR MAYBE IT WAS FIVE...
IT'S HARD TO COUNT THE DAYS
WHEN YOU'RE BURIED ALIVE.

(The light expands revealing that PERCY is behind prison bars.)

OUTSIDE OF THESE WALLS
IS A BIGGER WORLD THAN ME.
I HAD NOWHERE TO HIDE

PERCY.

THE LAST TIME I WAS FREE.
I'VE CIRCLED ON THE MAP
A PLACE TO START AGAIN;
A TOWN CALLED GILEAD...
CLOSE MY EYES AND COUNT TO TEN.
AND IT'S ONE-ONE THOUSAND TWO
THREE-ONE THOUSAND FOUR
FIVE-ONE THOUSAND
SIX-ONE THOUSAND
SEVEN-ONE THOUSAND MORE.
EIGHT-ONE THOUSAND NINE
NINE-ONE THOUSAND TEN.
FIVE YEARS SEEMED LIKE FIFTY,
NOW IT'S TIME TO START AGAIN!

(The prison bars swing open and PERCY steps out.)

RING AROUND THE MOON,
BIGGER WORLD THAN ME.
READY OR NOT, HERE I GO,
OLLY, OLLY OXEN FREE...
OLLY, OLLY OXEN FREE!

(PERCY changes her prisoner's jacket for a plain coat and scarf. Clutching a small suitcase, she crosses downstage.)

TWO STEPS FOLLOW ONE,
ONE STEP FOLLOWS TWO.
A TICKET IN MY HAND,
A BUS TO SOMEWHERE NEW.
A CIRCLE ON A MAP,
COUNT THE MILES TO GO
ON THE ROAD TO GILEAD
DOWN A HIGHWAY I DON'T KNOW.

IT'S ONE MILE TURNIN' TWO,
THREE MILES TURNS TO FOUR,
FIVE MILES TURNS TO FIFTY
THEN A HUNDRED MILES MORE.
BUS ROLLS TO A STOP,
DRIVER TURNS TO ME,
"THIS IS GILEAD..
WHAT THERE IS IS WHAT YOU SEE."
A RING AROUND THE MOON,
BIGGER WORLD THAN ME.
READY OR NOT, HERE I COME,
OLLY, OLLY OXEN FREE...

(Lights reveal SHERIFF JOE SUTTER. He flips through documents in a file. PERCY crosses to him. Music continues under.)

JOE. So – Perchance Talbott. Perchance. What kinda name is that?

PERCY. Percy'll do. Warden Halverson said he was gonna call.

JOE. Yeah, sure, I got a call from the prison. But to be honest, Miss Talbott, if the bus hadn't left, I'da put you back on it.

PERCY. Somethin' wrong with this place?

JOE. Cripes, look around you. Gilead's a ghost town. There's nothing here.

PERCY. The warden said that –

JOE. I really don't care what the warden said, Miss Talbott. He's not the one freezing his ass off at this bus stop, now is he?

PERCY. No sir.

JOE. So why Gilead?

(PERCY is silent.)

THE SPITFIRE GRILL

JOE. Miss Talbott, it's my job to know why you're here.

(PERCY hesitantly reaches into an inside pocket and hands him a carefully folded piece of paper.)

PERCY. Well, sir, I...cut this picture from an old travel book someone donated at the prison.

JOE. *(Reads picture caption.)* "Autumn colors along Copper Creek near Gilead, Wisconsin."

(Hands picture back to her.)

You're a little late.

PERCY. Creek ain't dried up has it?

JOE. It's frozen. And the fall colors are long gone.

PERCY. *(Not very sure of herself.)* I hope to be here when they come back.

JOE. Yep, well, in the meantime I don't know what the hell I'm gonna do with you.

(Looks around as if for an answer. Tries to sip his coffee.)

Damn...my coffee's cold. Grab your suitcase.

(He leads PERCY along, describing the town to her although we don't hear his words. Instead, we hear PERCY's thoughts.)

PERCY.

BEHIND THE WINDOW GLASS
THERE ARE FACES I CAN'T SEE.
I FEEL THEM AS WE PASS,
PEEKIN' OUT TO STARE AT ME
ALONG THE SILENT STREETS
THROUGH A CURTAIN OF NEW SNOW,
IN THE TOWN OF GILEAD...

JOE. Good. There's a light on over at The Spitfire.

PERCY. The Spitfire?

JOE. It's your best chance for a job, and apart from the local jail it's the only guest room in town. Looks like Hannah's burning the midnight oil.

(Music swells as The Spitfire is revealed. We see HANNAH FERGUSON carrying a lantern and a wrapped-up loaf of bread out back of The Grill. She sets the bread beside a large stump. HANNAH drives an axe into the stump, leaving it there with its long handle poised in the air. For a moment, she gazes out toward the deep wood, then turns to gather a few sticks of firewood to carry back into The Grill. JOE and PERCY arrive at the front porch of The Spitfire.)

(JOE enters The Grill and heads for the back porch.)

Hannah? Hannah, I saw the light. You still up?

HANNAH. No.

JOE. I didn't think so. Here, let me help you with that wood.

(Lights isolate PERCY alone in The Grill trying to warm her frozen hands, looking at her bleak surroundings and realizing the bus driver may have been right.)

PERCY.

THIS IS GILEAD...

WHAT THERE IS IS WHAT YOU SEE.

A RING AROUND THE MOON,

BIGGER WORLD THAN ME -

(Crossfade back to HANNAH and JOE.)

JOE. You know, Hannah, with your bad hip and that, you could use a waitress this winter.

HANNAH. Another body in here won't cure my hip, Joe.

JOE. You need some help, Hannah. I mean, this firewood's not gonna walk in by itself. And anyway, you'd be doing me a favor.

HANNAH. *(Going into The Grill.)* I don't owe you a favor.

JOE. *(Following HANNAH.)* Come on, Hannah. If you wind up in the hospital, who's gonna make my breakfast?

HANNAH. *(Looking over toward PERCY and shaking her head.)* I took in a stray dog once and I had to replace all my carpets.

JOE. I betcha Miss Talbott here is housebroken.

HANNAH. Just so you know, I'm not making any promises.

JOE. *(Turning to PERCY.)* Miss Talbott...

(PERCY crosses in.)

Miss Talbott, this is Hannah Ferguson.

(PERCY and HANNAH take each other in but don't speak. JOE breaks the silence.)

Well, looks like you're all set. Thanks Hannah, now I owe *you* a favor.

HANNAH. It's always nice to have the law on your side.

JOE. Miss Talbott.

(JOE exits. HANNAH leads PERCY through The Grill.)

HANNAH. Bathroom's at the end of the hall and there's plenty of hot water but not if you dawdle when you're washing. There's extra blankets in the cedar chest. I give you breakfast at six. Work starts at six-thirty sharp. Anything else you need to know will keep till then.

(Without so much as a "goodnight," HANNAH disappears, leaving PERCY alone, taking in her spartan surroundings.)

PERCY.

A DARK AND NARROW HALL,
AND THROUGH THE DOOR I FIND
THE SAME COLD EMPTY WALLS
I THOUGHT I LEFT BEHIND.

(The music shimmers as PERCY "sees" the window.)

A WINDOW WITHOUT BARS,
LOOKIN' OUT ON SOMETHIN' FREE...
IN THE TOWN OF GILEAD,
CLOSE MY EYES AND COUNT TO THREE.

(PERCY reaches her hand out the window into the cold night air)

AND THERE'S A RING AROUND THE MOON,
BIGGER WORLD THAN ME,
READY OR NOT, HERE I AM,
OLLY OLLY OXEN
FREE...

(Fade out.)

Scene Two

[MUSIC NO. 01A – MORNING PREP]

(SCENE: The Grill, next morning.)

(AT RISE: Lights up on HANNAH barking orders to PERCY.)

HANNAH. Percy, there's onions in the cellar that need to come up! And boil some water for oatmeal!

(A small bell may ring on The Spitfire's front door as JOE enters.)

PERCY. Yes, ma'am.

HANNAH. And get the Sheriff some coffee. Morning, Joe.

JOE. Hannah.

HANNAH. Percy, these potatoes won't peel themselves.

(The bell rings as CALEB enters.)

Well, look what the cat dragged in.

CALEB. Morning, Aunt Hannah.

HANNAH. It is.

(Goes back in the kitchen to PERCY who has plugged a cigarette in her mouth. HANNAH grabs PERCY's arm.)

And I don't want you smoking in my kitchen.

PERCY. *(With hair-trigger intensity.)* Don't grab at me, old woman!

(She pulls free.)

HANNAH. *(Sharply.)* You watch yourself or I'll put you out on the street like *that!*

(Snaps her fingers.)

PERCY. *(More riled.)* You tell me what to do and I'll do it,
but don't you *never* grab at me!!

**[MUSIC NO. 01B – HANNAH'S
HARANGUE]**

HANNAH. *(Realizing she may have a wild animal on her
hands.)*

SMART-MOUTHED GIRL,
FRESH OUTTA JAIL.
CAN'T TELL A SKILLET
FROM A GARBAGE PAIL.
KEEP IN YOUR PLACE.
THIS PLACE IS MINE.
MIND YOUR OWN BUS'NESS
AND WE'LL GET ALONG FINE.
TWENTY-ODD YEARS
THE HELP COMES 'N' GOES.
WHO THE HELL CARES?
WHO THE HELL KNOWS
WHO WIPED OFF THE TABLES
AND STRAIGHTENED THE CHAIRS?
WHO THE HELL KNOWS
AND WHO THE HELL CARES?

**[MUSIC NO. 02 – SOMETHING'S
COOKING AT THE SPITFIRE GRILL]**

*(The bell rings and EFFY enters, takes in
PERCY and crosses to HANNAH.)*

EFFY. Morning, Hannah.

HANNAH. Aren't you the early bird today, Effy?

EFFY. Thought you might need something from the store.

HANNAH. Well, I don't. And her name is Percy. Happy now?

EFFY. (*Conspiratorially; to HANNAH.*)

I HEAR SHE APPEARED ON THE STREET LAST NIGHT
RIGHT AT THE MIDNIGHT BELL.

HANNAH.

I THINK YOU READ TOO MANY
OF THE TABLOIDS THAT YOU SELL.

EFFY.

I HEAR PEOPLE TALK ALL OVER TOWN;
I THOUGHT THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW.

HANNAH.

NICE TO SEE YOU'RE SO CONCERNED,
NOW TAKE A SEAT OR GO!

Imagine, gossip in Gilead.

EFFY. I'm not one to repeat gossip.

HANNAH. No, Effy, you're always the one who starts it.

EFFY.

SAY WHAT YA WANT, SAY WHAT YA WILL,
SOMETHING'S COOKIN' AT THE SPITFIRE GRILL.

(EFFY takes a seat. PERCY crosses to her.)

PERCY. What can I bring you?

EFFY. Hannah knows what I'm having.

PERCY. You gonna want coffee with that?

*(EFFY slides her coffee cup to edge of the table.
PERCY fills it and turns away.)*

EFFY. (*As much to herself as to HANNAH.*)

TRASH FROM A TRAILER HAS NO RIGHT
TO SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT.
BESIDES THIS STINKIN' COFFEE,
I THINK I SMELL A RAT.
AND I'LL SPREAD THE WORD ALL OVER TOWN,
SHE WON'T GET TIPPED ONE DIME.

HANNAH.

TO HEAR IT YOUR WAY, EFFY,
YOU'D THINK TIPPING WAS A CRIME.

EFFY, HANNAH, JOE & CALEB.

SAY WHAT YA WANT, SAY WHAT YA WILL,
SOMETHING'S COOKIN' AT THE SPITFIRE GRILL!

EFFY. *(Turns for the first time to CALEB and JOE at the next table and hisses.)*

I HEAR SHE APPEARED ON THE STREET LAST NIGHT
WITH A MOTORCYCLE GANG!

JOE. Percy? Percy, this is Hannah's nephew Caleb Thorpe.
He's got that little real estate office just across the street
there.

CALEB. Only till the quarry's open again, Joe.

(To PERCY.) I was foreman out there at the quarry.

PERCY. Is that right.

CALEB. And where do you come from, Percy?

PERCY. *Dee-troit...*

CALEB. Oh yeah? Well, I had some clients from Detroit
once, but they didn't sound like you.

PERCY. I won't mind comin' from someplace else if that
don't suit you.

CALEB. *(Manages a smile although he's not amused by her evasion.)* I sorta look after Hannah now, so you'll
prob'ly be seeing quite a bit of me.

PERCY. *(With order pad poised.)* Well then, if you'll just
tell me what you want, Mr. Thorpe...

CALEB. Hannah knows what I'm having.

PERCY. That one's been real popular this mornin'.

(She exits.)

CALEB.

I WISH YOU'D CALLED ME UP
 BEFORE YOU BROUGHT HER 'ROUN'.
 SHE'S NOT THE KIND OF NEW BLOOD
 WE NEED IN THIS TOWN.
 WE NEED STRONG-BACKED WORKERS,
 WE HAD 'EM WAY BACK WHEN.
 WE NEED GOOD-HEARTED WOMEN
 WHO STAND BESIDE THEIR MEN
 IF GILEAD IS GONNA BE
 THE TOWN IT ONCE WAS
 AGAIN.

EFFY & JOE. (*Overlapping with CALEB's last note.*)

SAY WHAT YA WANT, SAY WHAT YA WILL.

JOE.

DON'T ASK ME WHY SHE'S HERE,
 I ONLY WISH I KNEW.
 GILEAD'S A PLACE FOR LEAVING,
 NOT FOR COMING TO.
 GILEAD'S A PLACE FOR LEAVING,
 NOT FOR COMING TO.

EFFY. (*Overlapping.*)

SAY WHAT YA WANT, SAY WHAT YA WILL.

EFFY, HANNAH & CALEB.

SOMETHING'S COOKIN' AT THE SPITFIRE GRILL.

*(Music continues as the bell rings and
 SHELBY enters. She carries a workman's
 lunch box. She is painfully shy; crossing the
 room to CALEB is an endless journey for her.
 As she passes, everyone acknowledges her
 but she hardly looks up.)*

HANNAH. Shelby.

SHELBY. Hannah.

EFFY. Shelby.

SHELBY. Miz Krayneck.

JOE. Morning, Shelby.

SHELBY. Sheriff.

*(She hands the lunch box to **CALEB**, but remains standing.)*

Caleb, you forgot your lunch.

JOE. Gonna join us for a cup of coffee, Shelby?

SHELBY. Well, I...

CALEB. *(Answering for her as she hesitates.)* Shelby's not much of a coffee drinker, are you Shel?

*(**SHELBY** shakes her head and turns to go, nearly running into **PERCY** who enters from the kitchen.)*

PERCY. Whoa!

SHELBY. Excuse me.

PERCY. No, excuse *me*. I'm not sure if I'm comin', goin' or standin' still.

*(**SHELBY** moves past **PERCY** toward the door.)*

Ma'am, you can sit wherever you like.

*(**SHELBY** begins to say more, stops herself, and moves to the exit.)*

EFFY.

YOU'D THINK THE STRANGER OWNED THE PLACE,
AND IT HASN'T BEEN ONE DAY.

CALEB.

I DON'T THINK HANNAH NEEDS THE HELP;
SHE'LL JUST GET IN THE WAY.

THE SPITFIRE GRILL

EFFY.

I HEAR PEOPLE TALK ALL OVER TOWN.
THEY SAY SHE HAS TATTOOS.

HANNAH.

IT DON'T TAKE MUCH IN GILEAD
TO QUALIFY AS NEWS.

ALL.

SAY WHAT YA WANT, SAY WHAT YA WILL,
SOMETHING'S COOKIN' AT - THE GRILL!

*(The refrain chugs in the background as the
action in The Spitfire fades to a low buzz.
SHELBY stands outside The Grill, looking in,
singing lyrical counterpoint.)*

HANNAH & EFFY.

SAY WHAT YA WANT,
SAY WHAT YA WILL.
*(Six times under
SHELBY.)*

SAY WHAT YA WANT,
SAY WHAT YA WILL.

JOE & CALEB.

SOMETHING'S COOKIN'
AT THE SPITFIRE GRILL.
*(Six times under
SHELBY.)*

SOMETHING'S COOKIN'
AT THE SPITFIRE GRILL.

SHELBY.

WELCOME TO GILEAD,
I SHOULD HAVE SAID
WELCOME TO GILEAD,
SILENT INSTEAD.

HANNAH & EFFY.

(Five times.)

SHELBY.

WELCOME TO
GILEAD.
WHERE ARE YOU
FROM?
WHY HAVE YOU
COME?

SOMETHING'S
COOKIN'
AT THE SPITFIRE
GRILL

JOE & CALEB.

(Five times.)

SAY WHAT YA
WANT,
SAY WHAT YA
WILL,

(SHELBY's thoughts are cut short by HANNAH calling out as action in The Spitfire suddenly resumes.)

HANNAH.

ORDER UP! ORDER UP!
PERCY, SHAKE A LEG!

(As PERCY serves the tables, the conversation swirls around her. SHELBY's voice joins in as she looks on from the outside. There is a musical build-up in counterpoint.)

EFFY.

I HEAR SHE APPEARED ON THE STREET LAST NIGHT
RIGHT AT THE MIDNIGHT BELL.
YOU'D THINK THE STRANGER OWNED THE PLACE,
AND IT HASN'T BEEN ONE DAY.

CALEB. *(Overlapping.)*

IT'S HARD TO KNOW FOR CERTAIN WHERE
A GIRL LIKE THIS HAS BEEN.
I DON'T THINK HANNAH NEEDS THE HELP.

HANNAH. *(Overlapping.)*

IT DON'T TAKE MUCH IN GILEAD
TO QUALIFY AS NEWS.

JOE. *(Overlapping.)*

DON'T ASK ME WHY SHE CAME TO TOWN.

HANNAH, EFFY,

CALEB & JOE.

SHELBY.

I WONDER WHERE SHE'S
FROM?

I HEAR PEOPLE TALK ALL
OVER TOWN

HANNAH.

THEY SAY
SHE HAS
TATTOOS.

EFFY.

I THOUGHT
THAT YOU
SHOULD
KNOW.

JOE.

THEY
WONDER
WHERE
SHE'S BEEN.

CALEB.

WHERE
IS THE
STRANGER
FROM?

SHELBY.

I WONDER WHY SHE'S COME ...

HANNAH.

THERE'S NOT MUCH NEWS IN GILEAD,
THERE'S NOT MUCH NEWS IN GILEAD,
THERE'S NOT MUCH NEWS IN GILEAD -

CALEB. *(Overlapping.)*

I WISH YOU'D CALLED ME FIRST LAST NIGHT,
I WISH YOU'D CALLED ME FIRST LAST NIGHT,
I WISH YOU'D CALLED -

EFFY. *(Overlapping.)*

I HEAR SHE APPEARED ON THE STREET LAST NIGHT,
ON THE STREET LAST NIGHT,
ON THE STREET LAST NIGHT -

JOE. *(Overlapping.)*

DON'T ASK ME WHY SHE CAME TO TOWN,
DON'T ASK ME WHY -

SHELBY. *(Overlapping.)*

I WONDER WHY SHE'S COME?
I WONDER WHY -

(The above is done in overlapping counterpoint which rises to a cacophony that PERCY can no longer stand. While refilling Effy's coffee cup, PERCY cuts off the noise by calling out across the diner.)

PERCY. Say Hannah, did I mention that I spent the last five years in prison?

(No one moves.)

And I only got locked up solitary three times. Imagine that.

(EFFY drops the fork she's holding.)

ALL.

SAY WHAT YA WANT, SAY WHAT YA WILL,
SOMETHING'S COOKIN' AT THE SPITFIRE GRILL!

(Blackout.)

Scene Three

[MUSIC NO. 03 – COFFEE CUPS AND GOSSIP]

(SCENE: The Grill.)

(AT RISE: PERCY is bussing tables.)

PERCY. *(Sings.)*

BEEN ELEVEN DAYS
SINCE I FIRST WALKED THROUGH THE DOOR.
EV'RY DAY THE SAME
AS THE DAY THAT CAME BEFORE.
COFFEE CUPS AND GOSSIP
EV'RY MORNIN' WHEN I RISE.
COFFEE CUPS AND GOSSIP,
DIRTY PLATES, SUSPICIOUS EYES.
IF THEY COULD SEE WHAT'S IN MY MIND,
I WONDER WHAT THEY'D SAY.
I WISH THAT COPPER CREEK WOULD SWELL
AND WASH THIS TOWN AWAY!

(PERCY roughly slams a plate into the bus tray. Simultaneously from the kitchen we hear a thud and crash followed by a moan from HANNAH. PERCY runs into the kitchen; the rising lights reveal that HANNAH has taken a nasty fall, dropping an armful of supplies.)

Hannah? Hannah!

HANNAH. Don't touch me!

PERCY. What happened?

HANNAH. Don't touch me!

PERCY. I heard you, Hannah. But your leg might be broke bad.

HANNAH. What would you know about broken bones?

PERCY. More than enough. Now you want to fight me old woman, then have at it. But hell or high water we're gonna have to get a doctor to fix that.

HANNAH. I don't want you -

PERCY. Where's the closest doctor?

[MUSIC NO. 04 - HANNAH FELL DOWN]

HANNAH. *(Weakening.)*... Prairie du Chien... *(Pronounced "sheen.")* Thirty-five miles.

(Light shift as PERCY rushes off to call the doctor. Crossfade to EFFY on the phone, dialing a number "in time and in tune" with the music.)

EFFY. Listen up, Sarah...

(Sings.)

SHE PUSHED HANNAH DOWN A FLIGHT OF STAIRS,
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY.
I'LL GET THE DETAILS FROM NEXT DOOR,
AND CALL YOU EITHER WAY.

(She hangs up, then dials another number "in time and in tune" with the music.)

Ruthie, are you sitting down?

OH, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD,
IT'S THE TALK OF ALL THE TOWN.
THE BIGGEST NEWS IN GILEAD
SINCE THEY CLOSED THE QUARRY DOWN.

(She hangs up and dials another number "in time and in tune" with the music. She speaks.)

Hello, Dorothy?

*(Lights crossfade to **JOE** and **CALEB** tending to **HANNAH**, who sits wrapped in a blanket with her leg propped up.)*

CALEB. Now do you care to tell me what happened here, Aunt Hannah?

HANNAH. I was on my way up the stairs and my hip gave out, that's all.

CALEB. Looks like you better close The Grill for awhile and send that girl on her way.

HANNAH. The Spitfire hasn't been closed one day 'cept Christmas in forty years. And "that girl" is the one who got me to the doctor.

CALEB. I don't want to be responsible for –

HANNAH. Who asked you to be responsible? Until I forget my name or start drooling at the mouth, I'll make my own decisions. Now, I'm not gonna be layed up forever. And till then, well, Percy will have to manage things.

CALEB. She just can't take over this place alone. Hell, she's fresh out of prison.

JOE. Maybe Shelby could help out –

CALEB. I don't want Shelby working.

JOE. Just for a little while, maybe.

HANNAH. Oh, Shelby'll solve everything, I'm sure.

JOE. What do you think, Caleb?

CALEB. Well, I suppose Shelby could handle the cash, have Percy stay in the kitchen.

HANNAH. The blind leading the blind. Now if you boys don't mind, I'm gonna pee, and I think I can manage that without help from either of you.

[MUSIC NO. 05 – INTO THE FRYING PAN]

(Music as lights shift to PERCY in kitchen reading a recipe.)

PERCY. *(In rhythm.)*

SEVEN CUPS WHITE FLOUR,
THREE CUPS OATMEAL,
FOUR CUPS BROWN SUGAR; PACKED.
TWO CUPS SHORTENING,
FOUR CUPS BUTTERMILK,
FIVE CUPS APPLES; CHOPPED.
TABLESPOON OF CINNAMON,
TEASPOON OF SALT,
FOUR LARGE FRESH EGGS; BEAT.

(Freely, over music.) Heat oven – three-fifty, grease up square pans, coffee cake for thirty-six... Damn!

(As PERCY tackles cooking, the pots and pans always seem to be one step ahead of her. She vainly attempts to catch up but is clearly overwhelmed.)

GOT A RECIPE FOR DISASTER:
TURN THE STOVE A LITTLE HIGHER,
THEN JUMP OUT OF THE FRYIN' PAN
RIGHT INTO THE FIRE.
NEVER EVER COOKED A MEAL
THAT DIDN'T START ITS LIFE OUT IN A CAN.
YES, I'M THE QUEEN O' TV DINNERS.
PULL ME OUTA THE FIRE, BACK IN THE FRYIN' PAN..
GOT MY APRON TIED ON BACKWARDS
AND THE OATMEAL'S BOILED TOO LONG.
BATCH O' BREAKFAST BISCUITS BURNIN'
AND THE COFFEE IS TOO STRONG.
THERE'S SO MUCH BUTTER IN THE BATTER
IT WOULD PROB'LY STOP THE HEART OF SUPERMAN.

PERCY.

SERVE UP A SIDE OF INDIGESTION.
SLIDE ME OUTA THE FIRE, BACK IN THE FRYIN' PAN...

(PERCY rings the service bell.)

ORDER UP! ORDER UP! ORDER UP!

SHELBY. *(Entering in a waitress apron to pick up the plate.)* What's this?

PERCY. Eggs over easy, hash browns, and bacon.

SHELBY. Oh.

PERCY. Why? What's the matter?

SHELBY. Which is the bacon?

(SHELBY exits. PERCY is discouraged.)

PERCY.

GOT THIS LUMPY PANCAKE BATTER,
AND THE EGGS ARE ALL HARD FRIED.
WHAT THE HELL COULD BE THE MATTER?
SMELLS LIKE SOMETHIN' EVIL DIED.
I SWEAR THE CORN BEEF HASH
COULD MAKE ME TURN INTO A VEGETARIAN.
ADD A TOUCH TOO MUCH TABASCO,
AND I'M OUTA THE FIRE, BACK IN THE FRYIN' PAN...

SHELBY. *(Entering, carrying a bowl with a spoon standing straight up in it.)* Percy, Effy sent her oatmeal back.

PERCY. *(Almost afraid to hear the answer.)* Why?

SHELBY. It's a little thick. She could get the spoon in but she can't get it back out.

(SHELBY exits.)

PERCY.

I FORGOT TO FLIP THE BACON,
AND THE SAUSAGE IS STILL RAW,

AND THE COFFEE CAKE I'M MAKIN'
MIGHT JUST BE AGAINST THE LAW.
I HEAR THE SIRENS WAIL.
IT PROB'LY WOULD BE BETTER IF I RAN.
BUT THERE'S ANOTHER DOZEN ORDERS,
GET ME OUTA THE FIRE, BACK IN THE FRYIN' PAN.

(To SHELBY, who enters.) So... You think I'm losing
Hannah's customers?

SHELBY. Oh, they'll come back.

PERCY. Pretty loyal, huh?

SHELBY. There's nowhere else to eat.

(She goes.)

PERCY.

YES, I CAN HEAR THE SIRENS WAIL.
I REALLY SHOULDA QUIT BEFORE I BEGAN.
BUT THERE'S A SINK O' DIRTY DISHES,
GET ME OUTA THE FIRE,
BACK IN THE FRYIN' PAN!
...MAN!

**[MUSIC NO. 05A – FRYING PAN
PLAYOFF]**

*(On applause PERCY takes off her apron
and hangs it on a chair. In a crossfade she
goes to HANNAH, who is sitting up, her foot
elevated.)*

I was gonna turn in, Hannah.

HANNAH. Percy, who exactly was it that taught you how
to cook?

PERCY. The devil, judgin' by the *looks*.

HANNAH. Shelby knows her way around a kitchen. Get some help.

PERCY. I will. 'Night then.

(PERCY begins to exit. HANNAH calls to her, very cautiously.)

HANNAH. Percy...? There might be one last thing that – still needs doing.

PERCY. What's that?

HANNAH. I'd do it myself, but I can't with this leg.

PERCY. Yes ma'am...

HANNAH. Get a loaf of bread from the kitchen. Wrap it up in a towel, and set it out back by the stump.

PERCY. Loaf of bread...?

HANNAH. And make sure you leave the axe in the stump there...so no one steps on it – and gets hurt.

(HANNAH can see the question in PERCY's face, but PERCY senses it's a question HANNAH does not want to answer.)

PERCY. *(Silently agreeing to leave the matter alone.)* I'll see to it. Not to worry. You want me to turn out your light?

HANNAH. No. Just go do what I told you.

(PERCY goes.)

[MUSIC NO. 06 – PERCY LEAVES THE BREAD/OPENING I-4]

(Light fades on HANNAH. PERCY follows the instructions and places the loaf of bread near the stump. In the shadows behind PERCY we can just barely make out the silhouette of a male figure watching her. It is THE VISITOR, but we can't see who it is. PERCY picks up the

axe and drives it into the stump, then gives a start as she senses some kind of sudden movement in the shadows.)

PERCY. Somebody there? ...Somebody there??

(JOE appears out of the darkness as THE VISITOR vanishes, unseen.)

JOE. It's me.

PERCY. *(Startled.)* What are you doin'?

JOE. I didn't mean to -

PERCY. What're you *doin'* here? Watchin' me? Lookin' at me in the dark?

JOE. I was only -

PERCY. If you're thinkin' I'm one of them sex-starved prison gals or somethin', you're damn wrong.

JOE. What??

PERCY. You just come around for our parole meetin's! Otherwise you got no business around me, you hear?!

(She goes into The Grill.)

JOE. *(Calling after her.)* I came by to see if Hannah needed more firewood!

(Shakes his head.)

Damn!

(Fade out.)

Scene Four

(SCENE: The Grill, morning. About a week later.)

(AT RISE: PERCY is doing AM prep. SHELBY and CALEB argue as they enter The Spitfire.)

CALEB. But Shel, you knew I was showing the quarry today, and that I needed my blue shirt.

SHELBY. *(Embarrassed to be arguing in front of PERCY.)*
I didn't have time for a colored load, Caleb. I told you, I'm sorry.

CALEB. I'm sorry doesn't get the damn shirt washed, does it?

SHELBY. *(Dispirited.)* I'll go home on my break. It'll be in the dryer.

(PERCY and SHELBY nod a wary "hello.")

CALEB. *(To PERCY.)* My aunt said she was gonna write out a list of supplies.

PERCY. On the table.

CALEB. *(Picks up the list.)* I'll drop these off when I come back for the bank deposit tonight.

(Kisses SHELBY's cheek.)

You girls try not to burn the place down. Who knows, one of these days this old greasy spoon might actually sell.

(Exits.)

SHELBY. ...Sorry I'm late.

PERCY. It's not *my* business.

SHELBY. *(Finding empty container.)* Scalloped potatoes finished?

PERCY. Nobody said I couldn't eat leftovers.

SHELBY. That's not what I -

PERCY. I was hungry.

SHELBY. You probably haven't had a decent meal since you went to pr- I'm sorry.

PERCY. I haven't exactly made a secret of where I've been, have I?

SHELBY. No, not exactly...

PERCY. *(Very carefully, lowering her defenses a little for the first time with a woman who is still virtually a stranger.)* I shouldn't oughta snap at you. I know you been savin' my bacon in here.

SHELBY. I have?

(PERCY nods cautiously.)

Now that things have gotten...sorted out, it's going pretty good, hunh?

PERCY. You could say that twice and mean it.

SHELBY. Just don't tell Caleb I've been helping out in the kitchen, okay?

PERCY. ...Okay. So, is Hannah really tryin' to sell this place?

SHELBY. Oh, I don't know, she might just give it away.

PERCY. Not really.

SHELBY. *(Hesitates.)* I think The Spitfire reminds her of better times.

PERCY. I don't mean to pry...

SHELBY. Oh, no... It's not that. It's just... She never talks about it.

PERCY. What?

SHELBY. Hannah had a son.

[MUSIC NO. 06A – HANNAH HAD A SON]

ELI WAS HIS NAME,
TALL AND SWEET AND STRONG,
LOVED BY EV'RYONE.

He was like a brother to Caleb. We all looked up to him.

AS LONG AS HE WAS HERE
NOTHING COULD GO WRONG.
GILEAD'S FAV'RITE SON..

And then – then the war came. His dad Jack had been kind of a war hero in his day...so as soon as Eli came of age, he enlisted.

[MUSIC NO. 07– WHEN HOPE GOES]

The morning of his send-off we all put on our Sunday best.

(Sings.)

EIGHT YEARS OLD
WITH A FLAG IN MY HAND,
STEP FOR STEP
WITH THE BIG MARCHING BAND.
THROUGH THE STREETS,
PICKET FENCE, WHITEWASH WHITE,
EV'RY HOUSE
PERFECT TRIM, PAINTED BRIGHT.
LIKE ELI, WE WERE BRAVE.
THERE WAS A WORLD TO SAVE.
THE BAND STRUCK UP A SONG,
GILEAD MARCHED ALONG.
I CAN SEE IT STILL,
EV'RYONE IN TOWN
WALKING UP THAT HILL,
WAITING FOR THE BUS,

WAVING HIM GOODBYE,
PART OF ALL OF US...
BOWED MY HEAD,
SAID MY PRAYERS EVERY NIGHT.
"ELI, PLEASE
SAVE THE WORLD, SET IT RIGHT"
FOLDED HANDS
HOLDING HOPE LIKE A PRAYER,
FOUR YEARS PASS,
FINGERS PART, NOTHING THERE ...

(Speaks.)

Missing in action. Hannah's never told anyone what the official story was, but after a few years, it was clear Eli wasn't coming back...

WHEN HOPE GOES, SIDEWALKS CRACK,
WHITEWASH FADES.
MUSIC STOPS, EMPTY STREETS,
NO PARADES.
WHEN HOPE GOES, FENCES SAG,
FLAGPOLES RUST.
PAINT PEELS, BROKEN WHEELS
GATHER DUST.
WHEN HOPE GOES,
HEARTS CLOSE.
EIGHT YEARS OLD,
WITH A FLAG IN MY HAND.
STEP FOR STEP
WITH THE BIG MARCHING BAND.
EV'RYONE IN TOWN
WALKING UP THAT HILL,
WAITING FOR THE BUS,
WE ARE WAITING STILL.

(The song ends.)

SHELBY. That was years ago... Eli's dad took it real hard. I guess his heart just gave out from it. The day after he died, Hannah put The Grill up for sale.

PERCY. My...she must have wanted to get rid of this place real bad.

SHELBY. She still does. She's always pestering Caleb to find a buyer. She says she "couldn't unload this Grill if it was the booby prize in the Lion's Club raffle!"

PERCY. *(With a dry laugh.)* Raffle?! ...Well, why doesn't she?

SHELBY. Why doesn't she what?

PERCY. Raffle it off... People do it all the time - ten dollars for a chance at a TV set or somethin'. To win a whole Grill I s'pose you could ask even more.

HANNAH. *(Offstage.)* Percy! Shelby! I don't smell coffee brewing!!

PERCY. Well, the fall didn't hurt her nose.

HANNAH. I heard that.

(PERCY and SHELBY look at each other and share their first smile.)

(Crossfade.)

Scene Five

[MUSIC NO. 08 – ICE AND SNOW]

(SCENE: Town of Gilead/The Grill: montage – passage of time.)

*(AT RISE: Crossfade reveals **CALEB, JOE** and **EFFY** in various limbo areas. They are engaged in mid-winter activities. Early March.)*

CALEB. *(Using axe blade-sharpening tools.)*
WAY-HO!

JOE. *(With ice-testing rod.)*
WAY-HO!

EFFY. *(Shaking sidewalk salt out of a dispenser.)*
WAY-HO!
GROUNDHOG SAID COLD DAYS AHEAD.
KEEP THE BLANKETS ON THE BED.

JOE.
IF I COULD, I'D GROW MY HAIR,
SLEEP ALL WINTER LIKE A BEAR.

CALEB.
MY SHADOW FROZE RIGHT WHERE I STOOD.
STOVE IS HUNGRY, CHOP MORE WOOD.
STOVE IS HUNGRY, CHOP – MORE WOOD.

CALEB, JOE & EFFY.
WAY-HO! ICE AND SNOW
WILL THE WINTER EVER GO?
WILL THE WINTER EVER GO?

*(Lights crossfade to **SHELBY** leading **HANNAH** – on crutches – into The Grill.)*

SHELBY. Feel good to get out of your room?

HANNAH. I could do without those stairs. In fact, I could do without this entire Grill.

SHELBY. (*Very tentative.*) Well, Hannah, with the real estate market how it is, you might...

HANNAH. I might *what*?

SHELBY. You might want to run a contest to raffle the place off.

HANNAH. A contest?!?

SHELBY. Oh sure. "Send in a hundred dollars for a chance to win The Spitfire Grill."

HANNAH. "Win?!?" What kinda nonsense is that?

SHELBY. (*Realizing that the idea sounded quite awful as verbalized.*) Nothing...

HANNAH. Shelby, that stove's not gonna light itself.

(Lights crossfade to CALEB, JOE, and EFFY engaged in late-winter activities. Mid-March.)

JOE. (*Untangling tire chains.*)

WAY-HO!

EFFY. (*Shoveling snow.*)

WAY-HO!

CALEB. (*Tightening a pipe wrench.*)

WAY-HO!

ICE STORM KNOCKS THE PHONE LINES DOWN.

PIPES ARE BURSTING ALL THROUGH TOWN.

JOE.

IF WINTER LASTS ANOTHER DAY,

I'LL PACK A BAG AND MOVE AWAY.

EFFY.

WOKE UP TODAY, THE SKY IS GRAY.

THE SNOW IS GRAY, MY SKIN IS GRAY,

GRAY, GRAY, GRAY, GRAY, GRAY, GRAY, GRAY...

(Lights back to the Grill. PERCY sits decanting catsup bottles. HANNAH hovers over her.)

HANNAH. Percy.

PERCY. Yes, ma'am.

HANNAH. I understand you and Shelby've been talking about some kinda raffle contest thing.

PERCY. We were only talkin'.

HANNAH. Talk now.

PERCY. We just thought you could ask people to send in an essay sayin' why they wanted The Spitfire.

HANNAH. An *essay*?

PERCY. You might maybe get a thousand or more. Then you'd pick the one you like best and give The Grill to whoever wrote it.

(Shrugs.)

That's all.

HANNAH. *(Walking away.)* Can't imagine there'd be fifty people who'd want this place, let alone a thousand.

(Over her shoulder to SHELBY who is entering the kitchen.) Better watch that pot, Shelby! She's pertneer ready to boil over!

(Lights crossfade back to CALEB, JOE, and EFFY.)

CALEB, JOE & EFFY.

WAY-HO! ICE AND SNOW
WILL THE WINTER EVER GO?
WILL THE WINTER EVER GO?

(Lights crossfade back to The Grill. Late March. HANNAH is snapping pea pods. SHELBY stirs a kettle in the kitchen.)

HANNAH. Where's Percy?

SHELBY. She went to Dodgeville for supplies.

HANNAH. Good. Come here once.

(SHELBY goes to HANNAH.)

Shelby... What do you really think about this contest notion?

SHELBY. Maybe you better ask Caleb about it.

HANNAH. When I want Caleb's opinion, I'll ask him. Right now, I'm asking *you*.

SHELBY. Well, then... If you're asking me, I'd say why not?

HANNAH. That's what I've been thinking, too. Suppose you could see to all the details for me?

SHELBY. ...I don't know.

HANNAH. *(Impatient.)* Yes or no, Shelby?

SHELBY. Yes.

HANNAH. Okay then. Now put that stew on slower or the meat'll be tough as leather. Folks'll wonder what you did with the other boot.

(HANNAH exits. Lights crossfade to reveal CALEB, JOE, and EFFY engaged in early-spring activities. Early April.)

CALEB. *(With a fishing rod.)*

WAY-HO!

JOE. *(Using a hoe.)*

WAY-HO!

EFFY. *(With push broom.)*

WAY-HO!

JOE.

HAD A DREAM THE OTHER NIGHT,
HEARD THE GEESE IN HOMEWARD FLIGHT.

CALEB.

WAY-HO!

JOE.

WAY-HO!

CALEB.

CREEK IS MELTING, SUN BREAKS THROUGH.
FISH FOR TROUT IN A WEEK OR TWO.

JOE.

WAY-HO!

EFFY.

WAY-HO!
SWEEP THE PORCH AND SHAKE A RUG.

*(Delighted to see the first real sign of a
Wisconsin Spring.)*

LOOK AT THAT, A LADYBUG!

CALEB.

CREEK IS
MELTING,
WATERS FLOW.
FISH FOR
TROUT
IN A WEEK OR
SO.
FISH FOR
TROUT
IN A WEEK OR
SO!

JOE.

HAD A DREAM
THE OTHER
NIGHT,
HEARD THE
GEESE
IN HOMEWARD
FLIGHT,
IN HOMEWARD
FLIGHT!

EFFY.

OH MY GOD,
A LADYBUG!

CALEB, JOE & EFFY.

WAY-HO, RISE TO SING!
DAYS ARE LONGER, FEELS LIKE SPRING!
DAYS ARE LONGER,
FEELS LIKE SPRING!

CALEB.

WAY-HO!

JOE.

WAY-HO!

EFFY.

WAY-HO!

[MUSIC NO. 08A – SHELBY’S AD]

(Lights crossfade to PERCY and SHELBY sitting at a table with a notepad.)

SHELBY.

“SMALL DINER,
REAL FIXER-UPPER,
TWO STORY HOUSE ATTACHED.
MAIN STREET LOCATION,
GOOD POTENTIAL...”

(Speaks.)

How’s that sound? Awful, hunh?

PERCY. It’s okay, I guess. But if I was gonna gamble a hundred dollars, I’d want it to be someplace, you know...special.

[MUSIC NO. 09 – THE COLORS OF PARADISE]

Besides, it’s not just The Spitfire they’d be gettin’, it’s Gilead too.

SHELBY. There’s nothing very special about Gilead.

PERCY. We just gotta help folks picture it right.
HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED OF A TOWN SO SMALL
THEY ROLL THE SIDEWALK UP?
WHERE THE WAITRESS SPILLS THE GOSSIP
AS SHE FILLS YOUR COFFEE CUP?

WHERE THE POST OFFICE AND BARBERSHOP
ARE IN THE GENERAL STORE,
AND THE ONLY STREET IS MAIN STREET
AND IT RUNS BY YOUR FRONT DOOR?

I don't know...

SHELBY. No, I like that. Keep going, what else?

(As PERCY continues to sing, SHELBY takes notes on her pad.)

PERCY.

DID YOU EVER WANT TO LOSE YOURSELF
AND WANDER WHERE YOU PLEASE?
WELL, YOU CAN WALK A HUNDRED MILES
AND NEVER LEAVE THE TREES.
JUST STEP OUTSIDE YOUR BACK DOOR
WHEN YOU WANT TO RUN AWAY.
THERE'S A CREEK THAT YOU CAN FOLLOW
ON A LAZY SUMMER DAY,
AND WHEN SUMMER TURNS TO AUTUMN
IN THE TOWN WHERE YOU ARE FROM,
THEN THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME...

(Standing apart from SHELBY, she pulls the travel book clipping from her pocket and gets a bit lost in her reverie.)

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME,
THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME TO YOU.
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME,
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME.

SHELBY. *(Excited about the ad, she offers.)*
HERE'S A CHANCE TO WIN A LITTLE GRILL
WITH ROOM ENOUGH TO GROW.

PERCY. *(Encouraging SHELBY.)*
ROOM TO GROW..

SHELBY.

THE CUSTOMERS WHO EAT HERE
ARE PEOPLE THAT YOU KNOW.

PERCY.

AND IF YOUR COOKIN'S TERRIBLE
THEY WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN...

SHELBY & PERCY.

DID WE MENTION THAT THE SPITFIRE
IS THE ONLY GRILL IN TOWN?
YOU CAN OWN A PIECE OF HEAVEN
WHERE THE HUMMINGBIRDS STILL HUM
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME...

PERCY. (*Offering SHELBY a look at the travel book clipping.*)

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME

SHELBY. (*Intrigued by the photo.*)

COLORS OF PARADISE COME...

PERCY.

THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME TO YOU

SHELBY.

COME TO YOU...

PERCY.

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE...

SHELBY & PERCY.

...COME!
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME.

SHELBY. (*Becoming more inspired.*)

THE MORNIN' WHEN THE HICKORIES TURN GOLDEN

PERCY. (*Sparked by the sudden turn of her friend's phrase,
taking notes.*)

WHEN THE HICKORIES TURN GOLD...

SHELBY.

AND SUNLIGHT BURNS THE MAPLES RED AS FIRE

PERCY.

RED AS FIRE...

BOTH.

THE MEADOW GLOWS, THE RIVER BANK IS BLAZIN'
LIKE PARADISE COME DOWN TO LIFT YOU HIGHER!

PERCY.

THEN YOU LOOK OUT FROM YOUR FRONT PORCH
TO SEE THE SUN GO DOWN,
ANOTHER NIGHT HAS FALLEN
ON THE STREET OF YOUR HOMETOWN.
AND ALL AT ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND
THAT YOU ARE HERE TO STAY,
WITH ROOTS SO DEEP INTO THE EARTH
THEY'LL NEVER PULL AWAY.

SHELBY.

NEVER PULL AWAY!

*(Their voices blend in harmony. The two
WOMEN feed off one another's energy, each
seeming to find for the first time a way to
express a deep longing for a better life.)*

SHELBY & PERCY.

AND WHEN SUMMER TURNS TO AUTUMN
IN THE TOWN WHERE YOU ARE FROM,
THEN THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME...
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME TO YOU
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME

PERCY.

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME...

SHELBY.

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME

PERCY.

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME...

SHELBY.

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE...

PERCY.

AND THE...

SHELBY & PERCY.

COLORS OF PARADISE COME!

(Fade out.)

Scene Six

[MUSIC NO. 09A – OPENING 1-6]

(SCENE: The Grill, three weeks later.)

(AT RISE: HANNAH sweeps the floor. From offstage we hear CALEB call.)

CALEB. Aunt Hannah? Aunt Hannah!

(He enters with several out-of-town newspapers in hand.)

HANNAH. No need to shout.

CALEB. *(Waving papers.)* What the hell is this about?

HANNAH. I don't have my glasses. What does it say?

CALEB. *(Reading papers.)* "Win a hometown Grill." "Enter the Spitfire raffle." Tell me this is just some kind of joke.

HANNAH. Sounds kinda funny, doesn't it?

CALEB. Yeah, it's funny alright. I can hear the whole county laugh right now. What the hell were you thinking?

HANNAH. To tell you the truth, Shelby and Percy did the thinking.

CALEB. Shelby and Percy...? Well...that's just great.

HANNAH. Spitfire's been on the market ten years, Caleb. I thought it was time to try something new. Or maybe you were hoping I'd leave it to you, when I kick over.

CALEB. Why would I want this old Grill?

HANNAH. Oh, it might just be worth a little something. Lord knows, it would have been worth a hell of a lot more if you'd sold it ten years ago, before they ran the highway through Mineral Point instead of here.

CALEB. And I suppose that was my fault? Cripes, it must be my fault the quarry closed, too. Of course, none of that would have happened if Eli was alive.

HANNAH. You leave him out of this.

CALEB. Why? It's what you're always thinking, you and Shelby, and everybody, if only Eli –

HANNAH. Caleb. Maybe that's what *you're* always thinking. Don't even *pretend* to know what I'm thinking.

(She goes past him dismissively. CALEB follows her.)

CALEB. Aw, the hell with it.

[MUSIC NO. 10 – DIGGING STONE]

Go ahead, raffle it off. I don't even know why I try.

(Sings.)

YOU GROW UP FAST, PAY YOUR DUES,
LEARN TO WALK IN YOUR FATHER'S SHOES.
BUILD A HOME, TAKE A WIFE,
SETTLE IN WITH THE WORKING LIFE.
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER
DIGGIN' STONE.
PAY HARD CASH FOR ALL YOU OWN.
A MAN IS MORE THAN BLOOD AND BONE
WHEN HE'S SHOULDER TO SHOULDER...
DIGGIN' STONE.

HANNAH. The quarry's closed, Caleb. The past is dead.

(She exits.)

CALEB.

THEN HARD TIMES COME TO TOWN,
SHAKE YOUR HAND AND-A SHUT YOU DOWN.

SET YOU UP JUST TO WATCH YOU FALL,
KICK YOU HARD AND MAKE YOU CRAWL.
WHERE ARE THE DAYS
WHEN A MAN COULD LIFT HIS HEAD
PROUD OF THE WAY
HE EARNED HIS DAILY BREAD?
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER
DIGGIN' STONE.
PAY HARD CASH FOR ALL YOU OWN.
A MAN IS MORE THAN BLOOD AND BONE
WHEN HE'S SHOULDER TO SHOULDER...
DIGGIN' STONE.

*(Half-light rises on kitchen area where
SHELBY guides **PERCY's** hand with a rolling
pin. **CALEB** watches from a distance as they
share an informal cooking lesson.)*

YOU STAND BACK UP, GET KNOCKED DOWN,
WATCH AS A STRANGER TAKES YOUR TOWN.
SUCK IT IN AND YOU SWALLOW LIES.
SOMETHING DEEP IN YOUR BELLY DIES.

*(Half-light on kitchen area fades as **PERCY**
and **SHELBY** exit.)*

WHAT DOES IT TAKE
FOR A MAN TO FEEL SOME PRIDE?
NOT LIE AWAKE,
WISHIN' FOR A HOLE TO HIDE...
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER
DIGGIN' STONE.
PAY HARD CASH FOR ALL YOU OWN.
A MAN IS MORE THAN BLOOD AND BONE
WHEN HE'S SHOULDER TO SHOULDER...
I GREW UP STRONG, PAID MY DUES.

CALEB.

TRIED TO WALK IN ELI'S SHOES.
SHOES DON'T FIT, FOOT'S TOO SMALL.
MAYBE I AIN'T A MAN AT ALL.
MAYBE I AIN'T A MAN
AT ALL.

(Blackout.)

Scene Seven

[MUSIC NO. 10A – OPENING I-7]

(SCENE: The Grill. Morning. Early May.)

(AT RISE: SHELBY is busy in the kitchen as PERCY comes down the stairs and discovers her there. PERCY is surprised.)

PERCY. Shelby, what are you doin' here?

SHELBY. Just getting a start on the baking.

PERCY. But it's so early.

SHELBY. I think it's better if I'm not home right now.

PERCY. Yeah?

SHELBY. Caleb found out about the raffle. He's not happy.

PERCY. *(With as much hair-trigger anger as sympathy.)*
Why should it matter to him?

SHELBY. You don't understand. He tries to take care of everything. Hannah, The Grill –

PERCY. Don't go defendin' him, Shelby.

SHELBY. I'm not, I only –

(JOE enters, Percy's parole file under his arm.)

JOE. Miss Talbott? I need to see – Oh, hi Shelby.

SHELBY. *(Assuming there might be trouble since JOE is at The Grill so early.)* Morning, Joe. I s'pose you got business...

JOE. We can take it outside. Miss Talbott?

(PERCY and JOE go out to the back porch.)

You didn't show up for our parole session last night.

PERCY. (*Pointing at file.*) Look, why don't you just leave me a list of all your damn questions and I'll answer 'em when I got the time.

JOE. Hey. It's my job and I gotta do it.

PERCY. Yes, I show up for work every day. Yes, I tell my employer where I go at night. No, I don't have contact with anyone I knew in prison. Yes, I'm gettin' on fine in my job. You can just ask anybody in town and they'll be more'n happy to tell you all about what they think of me.

JOE. Okay, okay.

(Closing the file and setting it down.)

Forget about the list. Let's just talk.

PERCY. Without that list, there ain't much for us to talk about, is there?

JOE. You're right...

(A beat of silence, then.)

We can sit here as long as you want...just staring at my woods.

PERCY. ...Your woods?

JOE. It will be when the old man passes on. Every worthless acre, from Hannah's property all the way to the river.

PERCY. Never seen so many trees before.

[MUSIC NO. 11 – THE WIDE WOODS]

JOE. (*Referring to file.*) Country girl like you?

PERCY. Do your papers there say I was "born in the West Virginia mountains"?

JOE. Uh-hunh.

PERCY. Yeah, well, I don't remember no trees, just coal mines...and how my daddy's fingers was always black from tar, even after he washed 'em, and how he coughed till it killed him. "Father deceased." That's when Momma moved us north to the city. Only woods I ever saw was in magazines and picture books. But this is better than any picture. It's beautiful.

JOE. It's a damn shame that's *all* it is.

(Sings.)

BACK BEFORE I WAS BORN,
A FOREST OF OLD TREES
KEPT WATCH OVER THE TOWN.
BUT THE LUMBER MEN CAME,
SWUNG A BIG AXE,
AND CUT THE FOREST DOWN.
AND WHAT GREW BACK
IS NO DAMN GOOD;
JUST SCRUB TREES
AND BRUSH WOOD...

It's all pretty worthless. Soon as it's mine, I'll sell the whole lot and get the heck outta here.

PERCY. You really want to leave?

JOE.

WHEN YOU LIVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE
IN THE TOWN OF GILEAD,
EV'RY MORNING YOU WAKE UP
TO ANOTHER WASTED DAY.
WHEN I HAVE ENOUGH CASH,
I'M TAKING A TRAIN
A MILLION MILES AWAY.
I'LL LEAVE BEHIND
THIS ONE DOG TOWN.
THERE'S NOTHING HERE
TO TIE ME DOWN.

JOE.

OH, A LIFE LIVED IN GILEAD
IS AS WORTHLESS AS THESE TREES...

PERCY. I've seen a lotta worthless things. But these trees...?

IF THIS WIDE WOODS WAS MINE,
IF THINGS WAS MAKE BELIEVE,
I'D WALK BENEATH THE BRANCHES,
I'D NEVER WANT TO LEAVE.

IF THIS WIDE WOODS WAS MINE
I'D FIND A STURDY TREE,
I'D SIT MYSELF BESIDE IT,
AND DREAMS WOULD COME TO ME.

I'D DREAM MYSELF DEEP ROOTS
TO REACH THE WATER.
I'D DREAM MYSELF LONG LIMBS
TO TOUCH THE BLUE.

IF THIS WIDE WOODS WAS MINE,
IF THIS WIDE WOODS WAS MINE,
IF THIS WIDE, WIDE WOODS WAS MINE

(Catching herself, she turns to JOE with quiet defiance.)

THAT'S WHAT I'D DO...

(An awkward silence; then.)

Well, I better get inside before Hannah sets the dogs out after me. Parole session over?

JOE. I think that'll do for now.

PERCY. Alright then...

(PERCY goes into The Grill. JOE looks out toward the woods, remembering something long since forgotten.)

JOE.

WHEN I WAS JUST A BOY,
I'D CLIMB THAT MAPLE TREE.
I'D LOOK OUT ON THE WORLD
AS FAR AS I COULD SEE...

(PERCY, now in the kitchen, begins to sing again. Though she and JOE are each unaware of the other, their voices blend in harmony.)

JOE & PERCY.

I'D DREAM MYSELF DEEP ROOTS
TO REACH THE WATER.
I'D DREAM MYSELF LONG LIMBS
TO TOUCH THE BLUE. OHH...

PERCY.

IF THIS WIDE WOODS WAS MINE...

JOE.

WHEN THIS WIDE WOODS IS MINE...

PERCY.

IF THIS WIDE WOODS WAS MINE...

JOE & PERCY.

IF (WHEN) THIS WIDE, WIDE WOODS WAS (IS) MINE...

(On first musical phrase, PERCY looks toward the porch. On second musical phrase, JOE looks back toward The Grill, then exits in the opposite direction.)

(Fade out.)

Scene Eight

[MUSIC NO. 11A – OPENING 1-8]

(SCENE: The Grill, after closing. Mid-May.)

(AT RISE: SHELBY and PERCY are closing down for the day.)

PERCY. Shelby, you know what? I think Hannah spilled that pitcher of ice water in Effy's lap on purpose.

SHELBY. Oh, she did not.

PERCY. And she was just about to order seconds on my apple brown Betty.

SHELBY. Good thing you're learning how to cook, Percy. Way to a man's heart is still through his stomach...or at least somewhere in that vicinity.

(A danger bell goes off in PERCY's head. This is not a topic for discussion. She tries to shut it down with a gentle evasion.)

PERCY. And who said I *wanted* a man?

SHELBY. You don't think Joe Sutter's been taking particular interest in you lately?

PERCY. *(Dismissively.)* He's my parole officer.

SHELBY. The Sheriff might be concerned with more than just your parole, Miss Talbott.

PERCY. *(SHELBY isn't getting it.)* Yeah, right. That boy's just plain lonely.

SHELBY. Whatever you say... But it doesn't take a fortune teller to picture you and Joe with a truckload of kids someday.

PERCY. *(Turning on SHELBY with a sudden defiance that frightens her friend.)* I ain't no kind of damn mother!

SHELBY. Percy, I –

PERCY. Do you know what I am?!?

(Then, quieter but no less intense.)

I'm a wild bird, Shelby. Wild bird don't have no nest.

(There is a short, awkward silence. HANNAH enters.)

HANNAH. Aren't you girls finished yet?

(Mutters.) Too slow to catch a cold.

(Sound of bell ringing.)

Here comes the town crier.

(EFFY enters, with a letter in hand.)

Grill's not open, Effy.

EFFY. I know what time you close. A letter came for you this morning.

HANNAH. Did it take longer than usual to steam it open?

EFFY. "Hannah Ferguson, care of The Spitfire Grill" ...Who do you know from Philadelphia?

HANNAH. I'm sure I have no idea.

(She snatches the letter from EFFY and puts it in her pocket. EFFY stares at HANNAH. After a beat.)

I don't think I'll open it just yet.

(Stymied, EFFY huffs out.)

Here Shelby, *you* open it!

(Excited, SHELBY opens the envelope and presents HANNAH with the enclosed cash.)

SHELBY. One hundred dollars!...

[MUSIC NO. 11B – THE FIRST LETTER]

SHELBY. “Dear Mrs. Ferguson, I saw the article about your contest last night when I couldn’t sleep. The reason I couldn’t sleep is because my family is falling apart. My husband walked out last year and left me with our high school boy. If I don’t do something soon, I’m afraid I may lose my son, too. Maybe if I could take us off to someplace like yours in Gilead, that won’t happen...”

HANNAH. *(Dismissively, as she walks away.)* If they’re all gonna sound like that, to hell with it. Shelby, you can go home now. We’re done here.

SHELBY. *(To PERCY.)* Caleb’ll be waiting anyway. ’Night then.

PERCY. ’Night, Shel.

(SHELBY exits.)

HANNAH. *(Handing PERCY a towel.)* Make sure you wrap that loaf up good. I gotta get off this leg.

PERCY. Still pretty tender?

HANNAH. Sore enough considering the doctor keeps telling me how good it’s healing.

PERCY. You think if a wound goes real deep, that the healing can feel just as bad as what caused it?

HANNAH. ...Might be. *(Starts toward her room.)*

[MUSIC NO. 12 – FORGOTTEN LULLABY]

Might be.

PERCY. *(Reaches out to touch HANNAH’s shoulder.)*
Hannah...

HANNAH. *(Pulls away sharply; then says, not unkindly.)*
Goodnight.

(PERCY takes the bread out to the porch. Light fades on her. HANNAH makes her way up to the bedroom as she sings.)

OLD FAMILIAR ACHES AND PAINS,
CUTS AND SCRAPES AND SOUVENIERS.
EV'RYBODY HAS A FEW
COLLECTED OVER DAYS AND YEARS.
ALL AT ONCE, A PAIN WILL COME
LIKE SOME FORGOTTEN LULLABY,
THE WHISPER FROM A CHILDHOOD WOUND
WHEN I FIRST LEARNED HOW NOT TO CRY.
TEARS WON'T MAKE IT GO AWAY.
YEARS WILL PASS AND I'LL REMEMBER.
MY LIFE HAS BEEN WHAT IT HAS BEEN.
NO ONE NEEDS TO PITY ME.
AND IF I FALL AND FALL AGAIN
I DON'T WANT ANY SYMPATHY.
FOR GOOD, FOR BAD, FOREVERMORE,
SOMEDAY I'LL LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP,
AND I WILL HAVE JUST ONE REGRET,
A SECRET I WILL ALWAYS KEEP.
AND ON THAT NIGHT, THE PAIN WILL COME
LIKE SOME FORGOTTEN LULLABY
THAT MOTHERS SING TO MISSING SONS
WHEN THEY'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO CRY.

(HANNAH lies down and light fades on her.)

[MUSIC NO. 13 – PERCY SEES THE VISITOR]

(Lights rise on porch area. PERCY sets the bread down and drives the axe into the stump. Once again in the shadows behind

PERCY *we can just make out the silhouette of a MALE FIGURE watching her. As PERCY makes her way back toward the door, she catches sight of the figure and stops short with a gasp. In the lantern light, his shadow looms above PERCY. It is THE VISITOR. Although frightened, PERCY quickly composes herself and stands her ground.)*

PERCY. You gonna do something to me, why don't you just come ahead and do it?! I'm right here, ain't I?

(THE VISITOR stands still for a moment, then holds up a small feather and sets it down on the stump. He steps back.)

Okay then.

(She picks up the feather.)

A feather? That's real nice. Thank you.

(THE VISITOR stands motionless.)

You scared me, that's all. I didn't see you there. Didja get them loaves of bread I left? I could bring you somethin' different if you want. I know how it is eating the same thing till you can't stand the sight of it no more. Would you like that?

(THE VISITOR doesn't answer.)

My name's Percy. You got a name?

(THE VISITOR doesn't answer.)

I think I'll call you "Johnny B," okay? Johnny B. How would that do?

HANNAH. *(Offstage.)* Percy...

(THE VISITOR tenses, then grabs the bread and leaves. PERCY follows a few steps and calls after him.)

PERCY. Maybe next time we won't be so rushed and we'll have more chance to chat.

(PERCY looks again at the Visitor's tiny gift.)

A feather.

(Fade out.)

Scene Nine

[MUSIC NO. 14 – SHOOT THE MOON]

(SCENE: The Grill. Late May through late June.)

(AT RISE: EFFY, clutching a handful of envelopes, marches toward The Grill like a woman on a mission. In The Grill, HANNAH is pouring JOE a cup of coffee. EFFY approaches HANNAH and slaps the envelopes down one at a time.)

EFFY.

HARTFORD, HOUSTON, HARRISBURG,
MINNEAP'LIS, MINNESOTA.
PORTLAND, PITTSBURGH, PROVIDENCE,
RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA.
SAY WHAT YA WANT, SAY WHAT YA WILL
ALL OF 'EM "CARE OF THE SPITFIRE GRILL."

(Speaks as music continues under.)

Now as postmistress, I've got a legal right to know if the mail service is being used for some irregular purpose. So are you going to tell me what goes on here, Hannah Ferguson? Or do I have to open these letters myself?

HANNAH. Not that it's any of your business, Effy. But if you must know, I'm running a contest to give away The Grill.

EFFY. What kinda contest?!

HANNAH.

FOLKS OUT THERE WILL PAY A PRICE
TO WIN A CHANCE AT PARADISE,
THEY PRAY FOR LUCK AND GIVE THE DICE A GO.

I'D NEED A COLD DAY DEEP IN HELL
BEFORE THIS GRILL WOULD EVER SELL,
SO WHY NOT TRY A HUNDRED BUCKS A THROW?

JOE.

IT'S LEGAL, ON THE UP AND UP.
FOLKS DROP THEIR MONEY IN THE CUP
AND WRITE A LITTLE ESSAY ON THE GRILL.

EFFY. *(To JOE, for HANNAH's benefit.)*

I BETCHA WHEN THE DEAL GOES DOWN
SHE'LL BE THE LAUGHINGSTOCK OF TOWN,
AND GREED IS SUCH A BITTER LITTLE PILL.

HANNAH.

COMES A TIME TO SHOOT THE MOON,
TAKE A CHANCE, SAY "WHAT THE HELL."
PAY TO POP THE PRIZE BALLOON,
SPIT INTO THE WISHING WELL.
SHOOT THE MOON, SHOOT THE MOON,
LIFE IS HARD AND GONE TOO SOON.
SHOOT THE MOON, SHOOT THE MOON,

(Taps her cane on the floor three times.)

SHOOT THE MOON!

(Lights shift to CALEB on the phone in limbo light. A week later.)

CALEB. Yeah, hello, is this the Genesee Depot Gazette? I'm trying to track down some news articles about a trial. About five years ago. Yeah, I'll hold.

(Lights shift to the kitchen, the following week. EFFY is now doling out envelopes to HANNAH. PERCY and JOE share a table, busily sorting envelopes into small piles as HANNAH passes them along.)

EFFY.

CINCINNATTI.

PERCY & JOE.

SHOOT THE MOON.

EFFY.

BIRMINGHAM AND BUFFALO.

AMARILLO.

PERCY & JOE.

SHOOT THE MOON.

EFFY.

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO.

DENVER, DALLAS.

PERCY & JOE.

SHOOT THE MOON.

EFFY.

PISTOL RIVER, OREGON.

TAMPA, TULSA.

PERCY & JOE.

SHOOT THE MOON.

EFFY.

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN.

(Suspiciously eyes envelope and barks.) Insufficient
postage!

(EFFY exits.)

HANNAH.

COMES A TIME TO SHOOT THE MOON,
PLACE YOUR DOLLAR ON A DARE.
DROWN IT IN A CHEAP SALOON,
SOON YOU'LL BE TOO DRUNK TOO CARE.

PERCY, HANNAH & JOE.

SHOOT THE MOON, SHOOT THE MOON.
LIFE IS HARD AND GONE TOO SOON.

SHOOT THE MOON, SHOOT THE MOON,

(Three claps; HANNAH taps cane.)

SHOOT THE MOON!

(Crossfade to SHELBY heading for The Grill with envelopes. A week later.)

SHELBY. *(With proud, joyous amazement.)*

CLEVELAND, CONCORD, CORPUS CHRISTI,
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA.
CHATTANOOGA, CHATTAHOOCHEE
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA.

(SHELBY joins HANNAH and PERCY sorting envelopes.)

PERCY, SHELBY & HANNAH.

NASHVILLE, KNOXVILLE, NEW YORK,
ALBANY AND AUSTIN.
MADISON, MEMPHIS, MOBILE,
BALTIMORE AND BOSTON.

(EFFY clomps into The Grill and toots a shrill whistle.)

EFFY. Gangway!!!

HANNAH. Oh, what now, Effy?

EFFY. *(Shooing HANNAH, PERCY, and SHELBY aside and pushing a chair out of the way.)* One side, ladies! Back up! Back up!

HANNAH. Don't rearrange my furniture.

(JOE enters pushing a wheelbarrow filled with overstuffed mailbags on the sides of which may be scrawled "C/O THE SPITFIRE GRILL.")

EFFY. I hope you're happy now, Hannah Ferguson!

(JOE hurls one of the mailbags onto the floor in the middle of the room.)

SHELBY. Holy Moses!

(JOE tosses another mailbag onto the floor.)

PERCY. Holy mack'rel!

(JOE lifts two mailbags out of the wheelbarrow and throws them on the floor.)

HANNAH. Holy shit!

SHELBY, PERCY, HANNAH, JOE & CALEB.

HUH! HUH! HUH!

HUH! HUH! HUH!

UHHHH...

WOOP! WOOP! WOOP!

WOOP! WOOP! WOOP!

(With whoops and hollers, they half-playfully drive EFFY out of The Grill. A spontaneous dance of joy around the mailbags then erupts.)

ALL. *(Including EFFY and CALEB, both offstage.)*

COMES A TIME TO SHOOT THE MOON,

STRIKE IT WHILE THE IRON'S HOT!

IT MAY LAST AN AFTERNOON,

YOU CAN SAY YOU TOOK A SHOT!

(Caught up in the moment, JOE takes PERCY's arm for an informal do-si-do. Surprised, PERCY gently but firmly pushes JOE away, after which they both continue in the celebration at some distance from each other.)

SHOOT THE MOON, SHOOT THE MOON!

LIFE IS HARD AND GONE TOO SOON!

SHOOT THE MOON, SHOOT THE MOON!

(Three claps/stomps/pounds of sheer delight.)

SHOOT THE MOON!

SHOOT THE MOON, SHOOT THE MOON!

LIFE IS HARD AND GONE TOO SOON!

SHOOT THE MOON, SHOOT THE MOON!

SHOOT!

SHOOT!

SHOOT!

SHOOT!

*(The letters are tossed into the air. They
rain back down, whirling around **HANNAH,**
PERCY, SHELBY, and JOE.)*

SHOOT THE MOON!!

(Curtain.)

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ACT TWO

Scene One

[MUSIC NO. 15 – ENTR'ACTE/OPENING ACT TWO

(SCENE: The Grill/Town of Gilead, July through September.)

(AT RISE: PERCY, SHELBY, and HANNAH sit after hours passing around a jug of Hannah's infamous applejack, getting tipsier by the swig as they read through the essays. Music throughout scene.)

HANNAH.

HERE'S TO US AND TO THE GRILL,
AN EMPTY GLASS WILL NEVER SPILL.

SHELBY & PERCY.

HERE'S TO US AND TO THE GRILL,
AN EMPTY GLASS WILL NEVER SPILL.

SHELBY. *(Reading.)* "Dear Mrs. Ferguson, if your Grill goes to me I will do my best to preserve its quaint, rustic charm. In time, it could become the cornerstone of a new theme park, Six Flags over Gilead."

(All three laugh over it.)

HANNAH. I don't know if I'm ready to be a theme park. Pass the jug, Shelby. This applejack's not doing us any good in the bottle.

HANNAH.

HERE'S TO YOU AND HERE'S TO ME,
THERE'S DRINK ENOUGH TO DROWN ALL THREE.

SHELBY & PERCY.

HERE'S TO YOU AND HERE'S TO ME,
THERE'S DRINK ENOUGH TO DROWN ALL THREE.

PERCY. Wait, wait, listen to this one:

(Reads.) "Dear Mrs. Ferguson, the reason I need your diner is because that's where the aliens told me they will land."

HANNAH. Maybe they'll take Effy with 'em!

(Laughter as HANNAH takes the letter from PERCY.)

We're sending that one back tomorrow. In the meantime...

HERE'S TO US AND TO THE GRILL,
AND HERE'S TO MONEY IN THE TILL!

HANNAH, SHELBY & PERCY.

HERE'S TO US AND TO THE GRILL,
AND HERE'S TO MONEY IN THE TILL.

SHELBY. You read one, Hannah.

HANNAH. Let's see...

(Reads.)

"Dear Mrs. Ferguson, I've worked as a cook all my life, but hard as my husband and I have worked, we've never had more than two nickels to rub together. My husband hasn't long to live.

(Sings.)

I'M SURE THERE'S LOTS OF FOLKS OUT THERE
DESERVING OF THE SPITFIRE'S CARE,
BUT WHAT A BLESSING IT WOULD BE

IF THIS MAN I LOVE WAS FREE
TO LEAVE THE CITY HAZE,
AND SPEND HIS FINAL DAYS
IN A TOWN LIKE GILEAD..."

PERCY. Maybe you should hang on to that one.

HANNAH. I guess. But I don't think I wanna pick someone out of pity.

SHELBY. Well, what sort of person would you want in here?

HANNAH. I don't know...someone younger than me. Of course, everyone is younger than me.

[MUSIC NO. 16 – COME ALIVE AGAIN]

Well, whoever gets it is gonna have their work cut out for 'em, running this place without the two of you.

(Sings.)

OH, I'VE SAT AT THIS TABLE
FOR SO MANY YEARS,
ALL ALONE AT THE END OF THE DAY.
I'D FORGOT WHAT IT WAS
TO HAVE FAM'LY AND FRIENDS
WHO CAN HELP PASS THE HOURS AWAY.
TONIGHT AT THIS TABLE,
I'VE CLOSED FOR THE DAY,
AND I'M FAR AS CAN BE FROM ALONE.
AND BE DAMNED IF THE GRILL
AIN'T THE BEST THAT IT'S BEEN.
YOU'RE THE DEAREST OF FRIENDS THAT I'VE KNOWN.
AND THE LIGHT FROM THESE WINDOWS
AIN'T SPARKLED THIS BRIGHT
NOT SINCE I CAN REMEMBER BACK WHEN,
AND MY FRIENDS AND MY FAM'LY ARE WITH ME TONIGHT
AND THIS OLD GRILL HAS COME ALIVE AGAIN!

HANNAH.

PEOPLE SAT AT THESE TABLES
 FOR TWENTY ODD YEARS
 JUST TO PICK AT THEIR FOOD AND COMPLAIN.
 NOW THEY WALK IN HERE SMILING
 AND CLEAN OFF THEIR PLATES,
 AND THE REASON AIN'T HARD TO EXPLAIN:
 THE GIRLS AT THE TABLE
 BESIDE ME TONIGHT
 GIVE THEIR HEARTS TO WHATEVER THEY DO.
 AND THE FOLKS 'ROUND THE GRILL
 HAVE A NEW APPETITE
 FOR THE GOODNESS THAT'S COMING FROM YOU.
 AND THE LIGHT FROM THESE WINDOWS
 AIN'T SPARKLED THIS BRIGHT
 NOT SINCE I CAN REMEMBER BACK WHEN,
 AND MY FRIENDS AND MY FAM'LY ARE WITH ME TONIGHT,
 AND THIS OLD GRILL HAS COME ALIVE -

SHELBY & PERCY.

AND THE LIGHT FROM THESE WINDOWS
 AIN'T SPARKLED THIS BRIGHT

HANNAH, SHELBY & PERCY.

NOT SINCE I CAN REMEMBER BACK WHEN,
 AND MY FRIENDS AND MY FAM'LY ARE WITH ME
 TONIGHT,
 AND THIS OLD GRILL HAS COME ALIVE AGAIN!

*(Lights crossfade to tight special on EFFY
 with menu, placing her order to an unseen
 HANNAH.)*

EFFY.

I'D LIKE THE MORNING SPECIAL, PLEASE.
 DOES THAT INCLUDE A PRIZE?
 I BROUGHT ALONG A HUNDRED BUCKS
 AND A PAGE OF PRETTY LIES.

(HANNAH now appears with a huge stack of essays. She stuffs a handful at EFFY.)

HANNAH.

IF YOU'RE SO WORKED UP
ABOUT THIS CONTEST,
BE MY GUEST,
JUMP RIGHT IN.
GOT READIN' ENOUGH
FOR A MONTH O' SUNDAYS,
AND DON'T PRETEND YOU NEVER LOOK
AT EVERYBODY'S MAIL.
COME BACK TO ME
WITH THE BEST O' THE BATCH,
AND THEN MAYBE,
JUST MAYBE,
I'LL PUT UP WITH YOUR SMARTASS REMARKS!

(HANNAH disappears; EFFY reads a letter.)

EFFY.

"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON,
I HAVE LIVED IN THIS BUILDING
FIFTEEN YEARS COME THIS FALL,
AND I STILL DON'T KNOW THE NAMES
OF THE PEOPLE 'CROSS THE HALL."

(Lights shift to kitchen area where PERCY is stirring a kettle. JOE reads a letter to her as she listens intently.)

JOE.

"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON,
IF I DROPPED DEAD TOMORROW,
WOULD MY BOSS EVEN KNOW?
TWENTY YEARS IN THIS CUBICLE,
I'M READY TO GO."

*(CALEB and SHELBY appear in another area.
SHELBY is folding laundry.)*

CALEB. That raffle contest stuff is keeping you kinda busy, don't you think?

SHELBY. I can manage.

CALEB. Well, with Hannah back on her feet now, she doesn't need both you and Percy anymore. I think it's time you stopped working at The Grill.

SHELBY. But I like working there.

CALEB. And I like having you at home. I'll let Hannah know you're quitting.

SHELBY. Caleb, you're not my foreman. This isn't the quarry.

CALEB. What's that supposed to mean?

SHELBY. *(Very tentatively.)* There's a clean shirt for you on top of the dryer. I'll be late for work...

(SHELBY exits.)

CALEB. *(Sings quietly.)*

WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR A MAN TO FEEL SOME PRIDE?
NOT LIE AWAKE, WISHIN' FOR A HOLE TO HIDE...

(Crossfade to street area. JOE and EFFY enter from opposite sides, leafing through a few letters while walking. As they pass one another during the "vocal overlap" section, they share a brief smile before continuing on their separate ways. They read their respective letters in two limbo areas.)

JOE & EFFY. *(Vocal overlap.)*

"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON,"

"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON,"

"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON,"
"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON..."

JOE.

"FROM THE SOUND OF YOUR PLACE,
WHY WOULD YOU EVER WANT TO LEAVE?
I GUESS YOU GOT YOUR REASONS,
BUT IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE."

EFFY. *(Reading a letter which really moves her.)*

"I KNOW YOU CAN'T TURN THE CLOCK BACK,
I KNOW THAT LIFE ISN'T FAIR.
BUT THERE'S GOT TO BE SOME HOPE LEFT,
SOMEWHERE."

*(Lights up on PERCY on back porch, SHELBY
at counter, and HANNAH in kitchen, each
reading a letter.)*

HANNAH, SHELBY & PERCY.

"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON..."

PERCY.

"I WANT TO SEE MORE THAN CONCRETE AND GLASS."

SHELBY.

"I WANT MY HUSBAND AND ME TO HAVE TIME FOR OUR
LIVES."

HANNAH.

"I WANT MY CHILDREN TO LEARN HOW TO SMILE."

HANNAH, SHELBY & PERCY.

"I WANT PART OF ME TO COME ALIVE AGAIN."

*(EFFY and JOE enter The Grill. The Spitfire
not only looks different, it feels different. A
magical shift has occurred and the sense of
budding joy and camaraderie is palpable.
EFFY even leaves a tip for PERCY.)*

JOE, EFFY, PERCY, HANNAH & SHELBY.

ALL SUMMER, MORE ESSAYS ARRIVE EV'RY DAY,
FIND THEIR WAY TO EACH CORNER OF TOWN.
PEOPLE SIT ON THEIR PORCH SWINGS
'N' READ THEM OUT LOUD
TILL LONG AFTER THE SUN HAS GONE DOWN.
OLD STORE FRONTS ARE PAINTED,
EACH FLOWER BOX FILLS,
THE SIDEWALKS ARE PATCHED AND REPAIRED.
THERE ARE CARS ALONG MAIN STREET
WITH OUT-OF-STATE PL-ATES.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE ANYONE CARED.
AND THE LIGHT FROM THESE WINDOWS
AIN'T SPARKLED THIS BRIGHT
NOT SINCE WE CAN REMEMBER BACK WHEN.
THERE'S A SPIRIT OF HOPE ALONG MAIN STREET
TONIGHT.

HANNAH, SHELBY & PERCY.

AND THIS OLD GRILL HAS COME ALIVE

EFFY & JOE.

AND THIS OLD TOWN HAS COME ALIVE

ALL FIVE.

AND GILEAD HAS COME ALIVE

EFFY & JOE.

ALIVE...

ALL FIVE.

AGAIN!

(Blackout.)

Scene Two

[MUSIC NO. 16A – PICTURE POSTCARD]

(SCENE: Behind The Grill, night. October.)

(AT RISE: The sky is star-filled. HANNAH emerges from the back of The Grill. She looks behind to make sure she is alone. Lantern in hand, she brings a loaf of bread out to the stump. She drives the axe into the stump and gazes out at the woods. She turns back to The Grill. PERCY emerges from inside.)

PERCY. There you are, Hannah.

(PERCY looks disappointed when she sees HANNAH has already completed the bread ritual.)

Oh...you already took care of things.

HANNAH. *(Nods and crosses back to The Grill.)* Yeah.

PERCY. Hannah...them loaves of bread we set out...are we leavin' 'em for –

HANNAH. These October nights get nippy. Keep yourself warm.

(PERCY watches HANNAH enter The Grill. Then PERCY crosses out to the stump. She stops, reaches in her pocket, and removes a well-worn clipping. She reads.)

PERCY. “Autumn colors along Copper Creek, near Gilead, Wisconsin.”

(PERCY tucks the photo alongside the bread. As she turns back to The Grill, JOE emerges from inside, startling her.)

JOE. Percy –

PERCY. Joe Sutter, you need to wear a bell around your neck.

JOE. Then you'd know I was coming and you might run away.

PERCY. I might.

JOE. And that'd be a shame, cuz you'd never find out about this.

(He holds out a piece of rolled-up paper tied with a piece of ribbon.)

PERCY. What is it?

JOE. Ten acres.

[MUSIC NO. 17 – FOREST FOR THE TREES]

PERCY. Looks like a piece o' paper to me.

JOE. My old man sat me down last night. He's so afraid I'll hop that train outa town that he cut me in on a little of the family land.

PERCY. Just what you always wanted.

JOE. He let me choose whatever parcel I liked. So I picked ten acres right along Copper Creek, close enough from here you could throw a stone and hit it.

PERCY. Your worthless woods...

JOE. A corner of it, anyway.

PERCY. So you gonna sell it and move on like you said?

JOE. *(Sings.)*

I'D LIKE TO THINK THE OLD MAN DIDN'T RAISE A FOOL,
BUT SITTING IN THE WOODS OUT THERE TODAY,
I COULDN'T THINK WHY ANYONE WITH HALF A BRAIN
WOULD EVER PACK HIS BAGS AND MOVE AWAY.

I'M JUST A FOOL WHO COULDN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR
THE TREES,
THAT IS, UNTIL THE DAY YOU CAME ALONG.
AND NOW THAT OUTBOUND TRAIN HAS ONE LESS
PASSENGER.
IT'S HERE IN THIS WIDE WOODS THAT I BELONG.

(Speaks.)

You know, there's a clearing where a fella could put up
a little house, with trees all around it. Maybe tomorrow
I could give you the nickel tour.

PERCY. Maybe.

JOE. I was hoping you could help me decide where to put
the front porch.

PERCY. Front of the house might be good.

JOE. That's why I need your help.

THERE'S THINGS THEY NEVER TEACH YOU IN A COUNTRY
SCHOOL.

THERE'S THINGS YOU GOTTA FIND OUT FOR YOUR OWN.
I MAY BE SLOW, BUT EVEN SO I FIN'LLY KNOW
THAT I DON'T WANT TO LIVE MY LIFE ALONE.

I'M JUST A FOOL WHO COULDN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR
THE TREES,

THAT IS, UNTIL THE DAY YOU CAME ALONG.

AND NOW THAT OUTBOUND TRAIN HAS ONE LESS
PASSENGER.

IT'S HERE IN THIS WIDE WOODS THAT WE BELONG.

OH...I'M JUST A FOOL WHO COULDN'T SEE THE FOREST
FOR THE TREES,

THAT IS, UNTIL THE DAY YOU CAME ALONG.

AND NOW THAT OUTBOUND TRAIN HAS ONE LESS
PASSENGER.

IT'S HERE IN THIS WIDE WOODS THAT WE BELONG.

IT'S HERE IN THIS WIDE WOODS

THAT WE -

PERCY. (*Cutting him off.*) Joe! Joe, you don't wanna be marryin' me.

JOE. Why not? I'm already used to your cooking.

PERCY. You gonna want children?

JOE. Hell, yeah. As many as you're up for.

PERCY. I can't have children no more...

JOE. Well, then we won't, or...

(His words trail off.)

PERCY. Joe, don't. Please...

JOE. Will you at least think about it?

SHELBY. (*As she comes out onto the porch.*) Percy, do you know where Hannah put the – Oh, I'm sorry...

JOE. That's okay. I guess we were just about finished here anyway. Ain't that right?

(No response from PERCY.)

'Night, then.

(He exits through The Grill.)

SHELBY. Percy, are you okay out here?

PERCY. He wants me to marry him.

SHELBY. Percy...

PERCY. I said no. That man deserves better than me.

SHELBY. I'm not so sure there is better than you.

PERCY. Shelby. You don't know me.

SHELBY. I know that you're my friend.

PERCY. Yeah, well do you know why I got locked up for five years?

(Looks right at SHELBY.)

I killed somebody.

SHELBY. Who?

PERCY. My stepfather. Mason Talbott. I was sixteen when he got me pregnant.

SHELBY. Percy...

PERCY. My momma just slapped me and told me to shut up about it. But you know what? I found myself lovin' that little life inside me. Feelin' it grow. I got to callin' it Johnny B. After that song, Johnny B. Goode. And I swore to God that I was gonna protect that baby no matter what. But Mason, he got drunk and took to me with his fists so bad that...my baby – And all I could think was how I hadn't kept my promise. Mason musta been afraid of the police or somethin' – cuz he pulled me outa the hospital and dumped me in the back of his car. We ended up in this motel somewhere. Mason had a bottle and he was into it real good. He was sayin' how it was right that my baby died. I didn't say nothin'. But later on, when he was layin' there on the bed all passed out, I took out his straight razor.

(Spent, she sits in the porch rocking chair, motionless and almost numb.)

SHELBY. Percy...

[MUSIC NO. 18 – WILD BIRD]

Oh, Percy-girl...

(She kneels. Gently and peacefully, SHELBY comforts her silent friend with calm, quiet confidence.)

SING A LONELY CHILD SONG,
POCKET FULL OF RYE,

PERCY. (*Cutting him off.*) Joe! Joe, you don't wanna be marryin' me.

JOE. Why not? I'm already used to your cooking.

PERCY. You gonna want children?

JOE. Hell, yeah. As many as you're up for.

PERCY. I can't have children no more...

JOE. Well, then we won't, or...

(His words trail off.)

PERCY. Joe, don't. Please...

JOE. Will you at least think about it?

SHELBY. (*As she comes out onto the porch.*) Percy, do you know where Hannah put the – Oh, I'm sorry...

JOE. That's okay. I guess we were just about finished here anyway. Ain't that right?

(No response from PERCY.)

Night, then.

(He exits through The Grill.)

SHELBY. Percy, are you okay out here?

PERCY. He wants me to marry him.

SHELBY. Percy...

PERCY. I said no. That man deserves better than me.

SHELBY. I'm not so sure there is better than you.

PERCY. Shelby. You don't know me.

SHELBY. I know that you're my friend.

PERCY. Yeah, well do you know why I got locked up for five years?

(Looks right at SHELBY.)

I killed somebody.

SHELBY. Who?

PERCY. My stepfather. Mason Talbott. I was sixteen when he got me pregnant.

SHELBY. Percy...

PERCY. My momma just slapped me and told me to shut up about it. But you know what? I found myself lovin' that little life inside me. Feelin' it grow. I got to callin' it Johnny B. After that song, Johnny B. Goode. And I swore to God that I was gonna protect that baby no matter what. But Mason, he got drunk and took to me with his fists so bad that...my baby – And all I could think was how I hadn't kept my promise. Mason musta been afraid of the police or somethin' – cuz he pulled me outa the hospital and dumped me in the back of his car. We ended up in this motel somewhere. Mason had a bottle and he was into it real good. He was sayin' how it was right that my baby died. I didn't say nothin'. But later on, when he was layin' there on the bed all passed out, I took out his straight razor.

(Spent, she sits in the porch rocking chair, motionless and almost numb.)

SHELBY. Percy...

[MUSIC NO. 18 – WILD BIRD]

Oh, Percy-girl...

(She kneels. Gently and peacefully, SHELBY comforts her silent friend with calm, quiet confidence.)

SING A LONELY CHILD SONG,
POCKET FULL OF RYE,

SHELBY.

TO THE ONLY WILD BIRD
'NEATH THE NORTHERN SKY.
FOLD YOUR TIRED WINGS AWHILE,
YOU WILL WAKE TO FLY...
WILD BIRD.

DREAM A DREAM OF LIFTING UP
FROM THIS HOLLOW TREE.
FLY A CIRCLE 'ROUND THE SUN,
HIGH ABOVE THE SEA.
WHEN YOU REACH THE FARTHER SHORE,
THEN YOU WILL BE FREE...
WILD BIRD.

LOOKING BELOW YOU,
WHAT DO YOU SEE?
LONE WILD BIRD,
IS IT ME?

*(SHELBY puts her arm around PERCY's
shoulder.)*

WILD BIRD, OH WILD BIRD,
TELL ME WHAT TO DO.
IF I WERE A WILD BIRD
COULD I FLY WITH YOU?
AND TURN A RING AROUND THE MOON,
REST HERE WHEN WE'RE THROUGH...
WILD BIRD...

*(PERCY has fallen asleep. SHELBY kisses the
top of her head as the lights...)*

(Crossfade.)

Scene Three

[MUSIC NO. 18A – OPENING II-3]

(SCENE: *The Grill, a while later that night.*)

(AT RISE: **CALEB** sits in darkness at a table, clutching a handful of papers. He drinks from a bottle. **SHELBY** comes in from the back porch, unaware that **CALEB** is in *The Grill*. **CALEB** sets his bottle down on the table.)

SHELBY. Caleb. You should be in bed.

CALEB. You're right. It's two thirty in the morning. I *should* be in bed. But somehow I just couldn't sleep. Must've been something I read.

SHELBY. What are you talking about?

CALEB. I had the paper over in Genesee Depot send me some clippings about Percy Talbott's trial. You might want to read them.

SHELBY. I don't care what they say.

CALEB. You should. Did you know that sweet little friend of yours slashed her stepfather? Take a guess how many times.

SHELBY. Don't do this.

CALEB. Two or three maybe?

SHELBY. I'm going home.

CALEB. How about twenty or thirty? Read 'em.

(**CALEB** thrusts the papers at **SHELBY**.)

That girl's a cold-blooded killer.

SHELBY. That girl is the first *hope* we've had since Eli was here.

CALEB. You watch your words, Shelby!

SHELBY. I'm tired of watching my words! You're jealous, Caleb, because Percy is doing something for me and for this town that you could never do!

(CALEB stands suddenly, knocking his chair over in the process. Something in SHELBY's face stops him from aggressively approaching her. After a moment of stunned silence for both of them, he speaks.)

CALEB. Shel...

SHELBY. I think you should find someplace else to stay for awhile.

(SHELBY exits.)

[MUSIC NO. 19 – BEFORE SUNRISE]

(Crossfade.)

Scene Four

(SCENE: The Grill/The Woods, just before dawn, next morning.)

(AT RISE: As the last few stars lose their light, PERCY remains sleeping on the porch rocker. THE VISITOR steals in. Carefully, he leaves on PERCY's lap a primitive-looking model of a bird made from twigs and leaves. Reaching down for the loaf of bread at the stump, THE VISITOR finds the magazine picture PERCY has left for him. At the same moment, PERCY stirs and awakens to find The Visitor's bird.)

PERCY. "Johnny B," that you?...Eli?

(THE VISITOR slowly stands straight up, facing away from PERCY.)

Eli... You made this, didn't you?

[MUSIC NO. 19A – SUNRISE]

(As he starts to go, she decides to follow, leaving the bird on the stump.)

Eli, where you goin'? Eli??

(PERCY follows. HANNAH enters to shake out a rug. She notices the little bird and picks it up as the lights crossfade. Special lighting effects – PERCY is dimly seen following ELI down a dark wooded path. As the path ends, PERCY stands facing a horizon on the brink of daylight. The first ray of sunrise lights her face.)

Oh, Eli... Eli, it's beautiful.

(ELI remains in the shadows near PERCY. Intensely aware of his presence, but knowing she dare not turn to look at him, her eyes remain transfixed before her. She sings.)

PERCY.

MORNIN' LIGHT, MORNIN' LIGHT...
 PARADISE CAME DOWN LAST NIGHT...
 ALL ITS COLORS BURNIN' BRIGHT...
 BURNIN' BRIGHT...

[MUSIC NO. 20 – SHINE]

(As PERCY sings, a spectacular sunrise illuminates a new day. As moved by Eli's revelation of this sight to her as she is by the glorious sight itself, PERCY at last begins to release the pain trapped inside her.)

THERE'S DARKNESS IN ME
 AS DEEP AS THIS VALLEY,
 AND THINGS THAT I DONE
 I CAN NEVER REPAY.
 THE DAYS I REGRET
 ARE TOO MANY FOR COUNTIN'.
 THERE'S SINS RIVER WATER
 WILL NOT WASH AWAY.
 BUT IF YOU CAN TURN THIS WHOLE VALLEY TO GOLDEN,
 AND BURN TILL THE COLORS OF PARADISE SHINE,
 THEN MAYBE YOUR BRIGHT MORNIN' LIGHT CAN
 DISCOVER
 A DIAMOND OF HOPE IN THIS DARK HEART OF MINE.
 MORNIN' LIGHT...
 SHINE ON ME...
 SHINE.
 FIND A DIAMOND OF HOPE
 IN THIS DARK HEART OF MINE.

I AIN'T ASKED FOR MUCH
IN THIS LIFE I'VE BEEN LIVIN'.
I LEARNED EARLY ON
THAT I'M HERE ALL ALONE.
NO MATTER HOW CLOSE
I STAND TO THE FIRE,
IT STILL MAKES ME SHIVER
AND CHILL TO THE BONE.
BUT IF YOU CAN TURN THIS WHOLE VALLEY TO GOLDEN,
AND BURN TILL THE COLORS OF PARADISE SHINE,
THEN MAYBE YOUR BRIGHT MORNIN' LIGHT CAN
UNCOVER
AN EMBER OF HEAT IN THIS COLD HEART OF MINE.
MORNIN' LIGHT...
SHINE ON ME...
SHINE.
FIND AN EMBER OF HEAT
IN THIS COLD HEART OF MINE.
MORNIN' LIGHT...
SHINE ON ME...
SHINE.
MORNIN' LIGHT...
SHINE ON ME...
SHINE.

*(As the light grows brighter, PERCY's cry
becomes exultant. No longer a plea, it has
transformed into an ecstatic affirmation.)*

SHINE ON ME.
SHINE ON ME.
SHINE!
SHINE ON ME!
SHINE ON ME!
SHINE!

(PERCY raises her arms to take in the light and warmth. In the shadows behind her, THE VISITOR lifts his arms in the same gesture. They are joined in the moment.)

PERCY.

SHINE!

SHINE!!

SHINE!!!

(Radiant and triumphant, PERCY glows. Overflowing with a deeply satisfying joy she's never allowed herself to feel before, she realizes she is good! She is worthy! PERCY basks in the glory of her discovery as the sunrise peaks and subsides. The music grows softer but conveys an edge of tension. ELI slowly comes out of the shadows and stands close behind PERCY. PERCY smiles, takes a deep breath, and sings with quiet self-assurance and deep contentment.)

THERE'S A FLICKER OF LIGHT,
THERE'S AN EMBER OF HEAT,
THERE'S A DIAMOND OF HOPE
IN THIS GOOD HEART OF MINE.

(From behind, ELI gently places his hand on PERCY's shoulder. PERCY places her hand atop ELI's. They both gaze forward, sharing a moment of blissful communion.)

(Fade out.)

[MUSIC NO. 20A- AFTER "SHINE"]

Scene Five

(SCENE: Outside The Grill, later that morning.)

(AT RISE: EFFY hails JOE and hands him mail.)

EFFY. You were forty-five minutes late picking up your mail. I was going to have the Sheriff send out a search party. But since you're the Sheriff, I didn't know who to call.

JOE. Thanks Effy, I appreciate your worry.

EFFY. You look like you've been spit at and hit.

JOE. Long night.

EFFY. She turned you down?

JOE. Effy, it's not really your damn business.

EFFY. Well, you bought a piece of ribbon yesterday, I figured it was for a package. Fifteen cents of ribbon won't wrap around much. Small package. Figured it was a ring.

JOE. It wasn't.

EFFY. Really, hmm. Now you got me curious.

JOE. Effy, you were born curious.

EFFY. Better than being born with six toes and a cowlick.

JOE. I suppose.

EFFY. Well, just remember what my mother always said.

JOE. What's that?

EFFY. "If you've got the thread, you'll find the needle."

JOE. What's that supposed to mean?

EFFY. ...Think about it.

JOE. Thanks, Effy, you've been a real help.

EFFY. Anytime, Joe. Anytime.

**[MUSIC NO. 20B – END EFFY-JOE
SCENE]**

(Crossfade.)

Scene Six

(SCENE: The Grill, later that day.)

(AT RISE: HANNAH and SHELBY are setting tables. CALEB enters. He and SHELBY meet eyes for a moment but SHELBY continues to work. HANNAH breaks the silence.)

HANNAH. Afternoon, Caleb.

CALEB. Aunt Hannah.

HANNAH. Missed you this morning.

CALEB. I wasn't hungry. Where's the rest of your staff?

HANNAH. Good question. Haven't seen Percy all day.
Want some coffee?

CALEB. Yeah. Maybe a sandwich, too.

HANNAH. Comin' up.

(Still glowing, PERCY appears outside the front of The Grill, leading ELI.)

PERCY. Come along, now.

(She enters The Grill.)

Not to worry, come on in.

(SHELBY looks up to see ELI just outside the doorway. She drops the plate she is holding. It shatters.)

HANNAH. That's one less to wash, Shelby.

(Turning from CALEB, she sees ELI.)

Oh, my Lord.

(ELI hesitates.)

SHELBY. *(After a brief silence, in a whisper of shocked recognition.)* ...Eli?

CALEB. *(In disbelief.)* Eli?! What the hell -?

(CALEB steps forward for a closer look. ELI mistakes it for a sign of aggression and flees.)

HANNAH. *(Rushing out to the porch.)* Wait! Wait, don't go! Don't go!!

(But he's gone. HANNAH lashes out at PERCY.)

What do you think you're doing?!

PERCY. Hannah, it wasn't like I -

HANNAH. You wrecked the only hope I had, damn you!

PERCY. I was only tryin' to -

HANNAH. Shut your mouth, you lying piece of trash!!

SHELBY. Hannah, no!!

(PERCY, standing her ground, looks right at HANNAH.)

CALEB. Eli's alive?

HANNAH. ...He went off to be a hero, like his father. But Eli was no hero. He was a deserter.

CALEB. What?!?

HANNAH. Not missing in action, just missing. He showed up here at The Grill one night when Jack and I were closing up. Jack threw him out. I didn't do a thing to stop him.

SHELBY. Hannah...!

HANNAH. *(Continuing; defensively.)* A deserter. The shame of it killed my Jack. The shame! Then one night, years after Jack died, I went out to stack the wood delivery, and it was already done, same way Jack taught

Eli to do it. It was winter. Cold. So I left a blanket and he took it.

SHELBY. Hannah...what have you done?

CALEB. My whole life I've been trying to live up to something that never was in the first place. I stayed here, and tried to bring something back to this town. I just wish to God you would have told us the truth. There's so much I think might've happened different.

HANNAH. Caleb, I...

(She has no words.)

CALEB. Here's to The Spitfire.

(He sets his coffee cup down sharply on the table. SHELBY begins to pick up the pieces of broken plate.)

[MUSIC NO. 20C – BROKEN PLATE]

(CALEB crosses toward SHELBY. He kneels and helps her. SHELBY and CALEB look at one another. CALEB hands SHELBY the pieces he's collected and goes out the front door. SHELBY discards the broken pieces and leaves The Grill, going the opposite direction as CALEB. HANNAH, unyielding as ever, sits stone-faced. She tersely calls to PERCY.)

HANNAH. Percy.

PERCY. Yes, Hannah.

HANNAH. I never should have called you that.

PERCY. No matter.

HANNAH. It does matter.

PERCY. I had a lot worse.

HANNAH. I know. And for that, I'm sorry.

PERCY. I'm sorry too, Hannah.

(Draws a bit closer to HANNAH, testing the waters.)

Don't you be worryin' about Caleb and Shelby. They'll come around.

HANNAH. *(Responding with a bitterness that PERCY doesn't expect.)* What about Eli? Eli may never come back now, after what you just put him through.

PERCY. *(Realizing that HANNAH's anger at her has not abated.)* After what I -?

(Provoked by her own frustration, PERCY lets HANNAH have it.)

You know - loaves of bread are all well and good, Hannah, but he don't need bread. He needs you.

HANNAH. It's too late.

PERCY. *(Challengingly.)* He needs to know that you forgave him. *If you have.*

HANNAH. You don't know what you're talking about, girl.

PERCY. *(Pushed to the limit, she says without thinking.)* I know what it is to lose a child, Hannah!

(HANNAH, still stone-faced, turns and looks at PERCY for the first time.)

I do. And mine can never come back. But your boy is out there.

(PERCY exits. HANNAH sits in silence as a slow shift of lights takes us from day to night. HANNAH rises and gets out a loaf of bread and a towel. Just as she is about to wrap up the bread, she resolutely changes her mind and puts the items back under the counter. She crosses to the front door, looks out for a moment, and switches on the porch lights.)

[MUSIC NO. 21 – WAY BACK HOME]

(HANNAH procures a lantern and makes her way toward the back porch. She looks outside.)

HANNAH.

IT IS LATE IN THE DAY,
IT IS LATE IN THE DAY.
WOULD YOU PLEASE FIND YOUR WAY BACK HOME?

(HANNAH goes outside.)

THERE'S A LAMP IN THE NIGHT,
THERE'S A LAMP IN THE NIGHT.
YOU CAN FOLLOW ITS LIGHT BACK HOME.
I WILL WAIT FOR YOU HERE UNTIL MORNING,
AND ON TO THE END OF THE DAY.
I WILL WAIT FOR YOU HERE UNTIL MORNING.
I PROMISE I WON'T TURN AWAY.

HEAR AN OLD WOMAN PRAY,
HEAR AN OLD WOMAN PRAY.
WOULD YOU PLEASE FIND YOUR WAY BACK HOME?
IT IS LATE IN THE DAY,
IT IS LATE IN THE DAY.
WOULD YOU PLEASE FIND YOUR WAY BACK HOME...?

(Finding no response, HANNAH makes her way back inside and sits at a table. A few stars have appeared in the sky. It is indeed late in the day. ELI appears in the shadows outside the front of The Grill and watches as HANNAH sings again, softly.)

IT IS LATE IN THE DAY,
IT IS LATE IN THE DAY...
WOULD YOU PLEASE FIND YOUR WAY BACK HOME...

(ELI comes out of the shadows and enters The Grill. He sits at the table with HANNAH. They do not embrace; they don't even touch. They look at one another and feel each other's presence as the lights...)

(Fade out.)

Scene Seven

[MUSIC NO. 22 – DEAR MRS. FERGUSON]

(SCENE: The Street/The Grill, several days later.)

(AT RISE: JOE and EFFY are outside The Grill looking at essays.)

EFFY. *(Holding up two essays.)* I'm not sure if either of these will win the blue ribbon but they're the best of what I read. I made a few spelling corrections.

JOE. I'm sure you did, Effy.

EFFY. This is the one I like the most.

(Reads.)

"Dear Mrs. Ferguson,
I'VE GROWN TIRED OF THE CITY,
IT'S NO LIFE FOR ME THERE.
I LONG FOR A BETTER PLACE
WITH NEIGHBORS WHO CARE."

JOE. *(Reading his favorite.)*

"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON,
I THOUGHT I WAS DESTINED
JUST TO WANDER AND ROAM,
BUT IN SOMEPLACE LIKE GILEAD,
I'D KNOW I WAS HOME."

EFFY. *(Genuinely moved.)* Oh, that's nice, too...

(PERCY and SHELBY enter, heading for the porch. All exchange a brief greeting.)

JOE. Morning.

EFFY. You're back working at The Grill again, Shelby?

SHELBY. Since yesterday. I just needed a little time.

EFFY. (*Kindly.*) How's Caleb?

SHELBY. He found work at a quarry near Galena.

EFFY. (*Surprised and interested.*) Illinois.

SHELBY. Not the foreman, but – he'll do alright. I think both of us will.

EFFY. (*Sincerely.*) I hope so.

SHELBY. (*Returning the sincerity in kind.*) Thanks, Effy.

JOE. Well, looks like today's the big day.

EFFY. (*Waving the essays.*) Here's our picks.

PERCY. I'll give 'em to Hannah.

EFFY. (*Reluctant to part with the letters.*) But she told us to bring in our favorites today.

PERCY. That's right. But now she wants to talk to just us girls.

EFFY. (*Excited.*) Just us girls?

SHELBY. (*Indicating herself and PERCY.*) Just us girls.

EFFY. Oh.

PERCY. We'll tell you all about it just as soon as we know.

EFFY. (*Laughing good-naturedly.*) I know you will... "girls." Maybe this little old lady can make it across the street all by herself.

SHELBY. (*Going into The Grill.*) Bye now.

EFFY. (*Exiting.*) Okay then.

(**SHELBY** makes an encouraging gesture to **PERCY** before leaving.)

PERCY. (*Pausing on the porch.*) Say Joe... I keep thinkin' 'bout the other night. I just wanna tell ya that...

(She hesitates.)

JOE. You don't have to tell me.

[MUSIC NO. 22A – THE LAST LETTERS]

I uh...I know a little something about wild birds.

PERCY. Yeah?

JOE. Yeah. *(He looks into her eyes kindly) ...It's okay, Miss Talbott.*

PERCY. Percy'll do.

*(She shares a smile with JOE. JOE exits.
PERCY enters The Grill and calls out.)*

Hannah! Hannah?

SHELBY. She's not here yet.

PERCY. I can't wait. Shelby...read me your favorite.

SHELBY. Okay. "Dear Mrs. Ferguson,
THERE'S JUST ME AND MY WIFE,
I'M A HARD-WORKING MAN.
WE'D LIKE TO RAISE A FAMILY,
IT SOUNDS LIKE IN GILEAD, WE CAN."

PERCY. *(Reading.)*
"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON,
THERE'S SOMETHIN' THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN:
A GIANT STRETCH OF EVERGREEN,
A GOLDEN VALLEY SHININ' DOWN BELOW,
AND ME JUST STANDIN' ON THE HILL.
I DREAM I'LL FIND IT AT THE GRILL,
BUT IF I'M DREAMIN' I DON'T WANT TO KNOW..."

SHELBY.
"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON..."

PERCY.
"DEAR MRS. FERGUSON..."

(HANNAH enters.)

PERCY. Hannah! We got all our finalists here! 'Cept for yours.

SHELBY. Should we read them out loud to you, Hannah?

PERCY. Or maybe we could just put 'em all in a big cookin' pot and pick one out.

HANNAH. None of that will be necessary.

PERCY. Why?

HANNAH. I'm sending all the money back.

PERCY. What?

SHELBY. (*Overlapping.*) Sending it back?

PERCY. Why? You gonna keep The Spitfire?

HANNAH. Heck no. I'll be too *busy* to run a Grill. I'll be taking care of my son.

SHELBY. Then why are you calling off the raffle?

PERCY. You couldn't pick an essay?

HANNAH. Oh, I picked a winner.

[MUSIC NO. 23 – FINALE]

The problem is, I picked an essay that doesn't qualify for the contest.

PERCY. What're you goin' on about?

HANNAH. (*Opens up a folded newspaper and reads/sings.*)

“WHEN YOU LOOK OUT FROM YOUR FRONT PORCH
TO SEE THE SUN GO DOWN,
ANOTHER NIGHT HAS FALLEN
ON THE STREET OF YOUR HOMETOWN.”

SHELBY. That's our ad!

HANNAH. Those were the best words written about The Grill. And I'll be dipped if I'm gonna give The Spitfire to the second best.

(Setting an old set of keys on the table.)

Here's the keys. I've never used 'em, not even sure if they work. But they're yours.

PERCY. Ours?!

HANNAH. Yours. This old Grill may not be much, but it's home. That's the least I can give back to my girls.

PERCY.

AND ALL AT ONCE, YOU UNDERSTAND
THAT YOU ARE HERE TO STAY.

SHELBY.

YOU ARE HERE TO STAY.

SHELBY & PERCY.

WITH ROOTS SO DEEP INTO THE EARTH,
THEY'LL NEVER PULL AWAY!

SHELBY & HANNAH.

NEVER PULL AWAY!

SHELBY, PERCY & HANNAH.

AND WHEN SUMMER TURNS TO AUTUMN
IN THE TOWN WHERE YOU ARE FROM,
THEN THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME.
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME!
THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME TO YOU!
AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME!

PERCY.

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE COME!

SHELBY.

AND THE COLORS OF PARADISE -

PERCY & HANNAH.

AND THE -

SHELBY, PERCY & HANNAH.

COLORS OF PARADISE

COME!

(Curtain.)

[MUSIC NO. 24 - BOWS]

[MUSIC NO. 25 - EXIT MUSIC]

PROPS

In the original production, nearly all of the utensils and other such props were made of wood or metal. Plastic items were avoided. The impression should be that the characters have owned these things for many years. No prop food or liquid was ever used in the Grill scenes. The contents of the plates were left to the audience's imagination. Some subsequent productions have employed only the bare minimum of props necessary to tell the story clearly.

ACT ONE

Preset

Small suitcase
Percy's coat
Bus ticket in coat pocket
Travel brochure clipping of "Autumn Colors" in coat pocket
Percy's scarf

ON PORCH:

Rocking chair
Wood box with logs
Axe (next to stump)

ON GRILL COUNTER:

Cash register
Spindle for used receipts
Order pad and pen
Percy's recipe card (for "Frying Pan" number)

UNDER GRILL COUNTER:

3 Loaves of bread
2 Towels
Bus tray
Spray bottle and wipe rag
Ledger book with pencil attached on string
2 Catsup bottles

IN GRILL:

Small "daily special" chalkboard and chalk
Broom
Coffee cups and saucers on tables
Silverware on tables
Paper napkin holders on tables

IN KITCHEN:

Crate for discarding used props

Apron for Percy

Various pots and pans

Various cooking utensils

Various mixing bowls

Various food containers

Tabasco

Salt and pepper shakers

Box of oatmeal

Coffee pot

Rolling pin

Sheet of wax paper

Towel

Desk bell (pitched on "B")

Trick bowl with stand-up spoon (for "Frying Pan" number number -
Effy's oatmeal)

PERSONAL PROPS

ACT ONE

Scene One

JOE

Cardboard coffee cup

File folder

HANNAH

Lantern

Scene Two

JOE

Tabloid-sized local newspaper

EFFY

Purse

SHELBY

Workman's lunch box

PERCY

Pack of cigarettes

Sack of onions

Scene Three

EFFY

Princess phone receiver (no cord)

JOE

Blanket for Hannah

Scene Four

PERCY

List of supplies (Percy leaves it on table before lights come up)

Scene Five

CALEB

(1st entrance) Blade sharpening tools

(2nd entrance) Pipe wrench (makes ratchet sound)

(Last entrance) Fishing rod

JOE

(1st entrance) Ice testing rod

(2nd entrance) Tire chains

(Last entrance) Hoe

EFFY

(1st entrance) Road salt dispenser

(2nd entrance) Snow shovel

(Last entrance) Push broom

HANNAH

Crutches

PERCY

Cane for Hannah

Scene Six

CALEB

3 full-size out-of-town newspapers

(Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin State Journal, Dubuque Telegraph Herald)

Scene Seven

JOE

File folder (Same as I-1)

Scene Eight

EFFY

Envelope with letter and \$100 bill

THE VISITOR

Feather

Scene Nine

EFFY

(1st entrance) Eight envelopes (Hartford, etc.)

(2nd entrance) Eleven envelopes (Cincinnati, etc.)

Toot-whistle hung around neck

CALEB

Telephone receiver (no cord)

SHELBY

Seventeen envelopes (Cleveland, etc.)

JOE

Wheelbarrow with four mailbags (each stuffed with envelopes)

ACT TWO

Preset

Clear all envelopes

Strike Chalkboard

Add center table and 3 chairs

IN GRILL:

30-40 letters on center table (in 3 piles)

3 tin mugs on center table

Booze jug on floor near Shelby's chair

ON GRILL COUNTER:

Cash register

UNDER GRILL COUNTER:

Two monogrammed aprons wrapped in plain brown paper
Huge stack of opened letters (stuck together - top letter removable)
2 Loaves of bread
2 Towels
Menus
Candy dish
Silverware wrapped in cloth napkins (3 sets)
3 matching tablecloths
3 flowers in small vases
Lantern

IN KITCHEN:

Discard crate
Pots and pans
Cooking utensils
Spice rack with spice jars
Coffee pot

ACT TWO

Personal Props

Scene One

EFFY

(1st entrance) Purse
(2nd entrance) A few letters
(3rd entrance) Purse
A few letters

JOE

(1st entrance) Letter
(2nd entrance) A few letters
(3rd entrance) A few letters

Scene Two

JOE

Rolled-up deed of land (tied with a ribbon)

SHELBY

Blanket

Scene Three

CALEB

Small whiskey bottle
5 photocopied pages of newspaper clippings

Scene Four

VISITOR

Small model of a bird made from twigs and leaves

HANNAH

Small throw rug

Scene Five

EFFY

Several pieces of mail for Joe

Scene Six

SHELBY

Breakable plate

Scene Seven

EFFY

Two letters

JOE

Letter

SHELBY

Letter

PERCY

Letter

HANNAH

Full-sized out-of-town newspaper
Set of keys on an old ring (in pocket)

COSTUMES

Simple, everyday clothing that looks completely natural to each character (and actor) is the goal. The clothes in the show should never seem “designed.” Avoid any “Sunday-go-to-meeting” flavor, especially in the women’s hair and make-up. We see these people in casual work-day situations and they should be clothed and (non-)styled accordingly. Aim for a timeless rurality. It’s great if each character has at least one piece of clothing that seems to have been in the family for many years.

The original production used one or two basic outfits per character, with various pieces and accessories that helped to tell time in the play. Until the last chorus of “Ice and Snow,” it’s a cold Wisconsin winter. Percy, Shelby, Effy, Joe, and Caleb will need winter coats, scarves, gloves, etc. Sweaters and long sleeves are appropriate indoor wear. “Colors of Paradise” to “Come Alive Again” move through spring and summer. Sweaters are gone; shirt sleeves are short or rolled-up; overshirts may be removed. Act Two, Scene Two to the end of the play takes place in October. Jackets and sweaters should be worn.

PERCY has a tomboy look. For Act One, a long-sleeved t-shirt and pale coveralls, with a plaid flannel overshirt. She’ll need a prisoner’s overshirt that removes easily for the opening scene. For Act Two, perhaps a bit nicer shirt or blouse and casual slacks.

SHELBY is a more “traditional” woman dressed in a simple jumper-type casual dress with various blouses and sweaters. High laced boots help give her a timeless look.

HANNAH wears casual slack or jeans and perhaps a shirt that might have belonged to her late husband. She can have some warm, lived-in sweaters for the winter and autumn scenes.

EFFY wears comfortable slacks and very sensible shoes. She’ll need winter boots for the scenes in “Ice and Snow” when she’s salting the road and shoveling snow.

JOE wears a standard sheriff’s uniform for most of the play. He should have both long and short sleeved uniform shirts. For Act Two, Scene Two, he wears a plain oxford shirt, windbreaker, and chinos.

CALEB clings to the past and dresses more like the quarry foreman he once was than the real estate salesman he now is. Work boots, jeans, t-shirt, and a plain overshirt.

ELI wears tattered, distressed dark khakis. He may have a bandana tied around his head. Avoid a fanciful interpretation of this character and go for a literal and natural homeless look.

SET

The Spitfire Grill was conceived to play on a single unit set with various levels and platforms suggesting different locations. Successful sets have ranged from highly literal to rather abstract to virtually no set at all. Some have placed the musicians onstage, rather than in a pit or loft. As long as the focus remains always on the characters, as long as the story can be told clearly, simply, and with honesty, then the scenery is "correct."

Michael Anania's set for the New York production was constructed entirely of rough-hewn wood planks with a monochromatic natural color. Employing a "less-is-more" sensibility, the details were stylized to include only the most basic elements essential for establishing a sense of place. The main playing areas were:

THE GRILL (Center)	Two tables for Act One, three tables for Act Two Check-out counter
THE BACK PORCH (Left)	Stump Rocking Chair
THE KITCHEN (Right)	Suggested only by an all-purpose wooden counter which represented a stove and food-preparation surface.

There were also three "LIMBO" areas; a smaller one up left center which was completely non-specific, and a larger one up right which was used as Hannah's room for most of Act One and for the "street" scenes in Act Two. A high elevated platform up center was used for the opening of the show and for the sunrise leading into "Shine."