

Heat Lightning

A full-length play

HEAT LIGHTNING

The play is set in multiple locations connected to a small bar located on a small lake surrounded by woods five miles outside a small college town.

Time is fluid.

Characters in order of appearance

CHRIS- A man celebrating his 50th birthday. Married to Raye.

RAYE- A woman in her late 40's married to Chris.

WAITRESS/ (Can double as EMILY) A young college student in her early 20's.

JOAN- A young female college student who likes to talk about sex.

STEVE- A young male college student who thinks he knows it all.

CHRISTOPHER- A young male college student celebrating his 20th birthday and wants adventure and excitement. The young version of Chris.

RACHAEL- A young female college student who is a little timid and likes simple pleasures. The young version of Raye.

PAUL- A young male college student who is shy and very organized.

EMILY- A young female college student who knows what she wants and is fearless.

Act One

Scene 1 a spotlight with a birthday banner behind (inside a bar)

Scene 2 outside back door of the bar

Scene 3 multiple locations in the woods

Act Two

Scene 1 multiple locations in the woods

Scene 2 outside back door of the bar

Scene 3 a spotlight with a birthday banner behind (inside a bar)

SCENE ONE: INSIDE THE BAR

Lights reveal CHRIS standing at the side of the stage. He is wearing jeans and a casual button down shirt with a well-worn, unbuttoned casual jacket. In the background is a banner that reads: "Happy 50th Birthday!" RAYE enters.

RAYE

Chris. Where is your phone?

CHRIS

(Pats his pockets) I must have left it at the house.

RAYE

People have been trying to call you for the past hour to wish you a happy birthday. Because they can't get through they are messaging me.

CHRIS

Who?

RAYE

Steve from New York, Paul from San Francisco and several others. Here. *(She hands him the phone to scroll through messages; looks at him critically.)* Why did you wear that coat? You look like some homeless guy who's been digging in the trash. You need to get rid of that old thing.

CHRIS

I'm not ready to get rid of it. *(Hands phone back.)* I'll call everyone when I get home tonight.

RAYE exits. The crowd starts to chant "Speech, Speech". CHRIS walk to the center of the stage in front of the banner.

CHRIS

All right everybody, settle down or they'll kick us out. *(Looks back at sign.)* Fifty years. Wow. I'm not sure I believe it.

A WAITRESS brings him a drink.

**NOTE: The waitress should have the same general features as EMILY later in the play (height, shape, etc.). However, if the same actress is used who plays EMILY, she should be disguised with different color hair and look similar. In no way should she be perceived as the real EMILY.*

WAITRESS

This is from the guys at the back.

CHRIS

Thank you. *(She turns to walk away, but he stops her.)* I'm sorry, but you look so much like someone... Are you from around here?

WAITRESS

Nope. Just moved here last week.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Quit hitting on the waitress and get on with your speech!

Laughter from the room. WAITRESS exits.

CHRIS

Sorry! Where was I? Oh, yeah.

CHRIS looks off in the direction of the WAITRESS again as he takes a quick drink. He chokes.

CHRIS

That's straight Tequila!

Crowd laughs.

CHRIS

Okay. *(Looks at crowd.)* When I was young I would imagine my life at thirty. At forty. At fifty. Boy, was I off. I thought when I turned fifty I would be living in New York, London, Paris, or Hong Kong. *(Shakes head.)* If you told me when I was twenty I would be standing in this bar tonight on my fiftieth birthday, I'd have bet you a million bucks you were wrong. Good thing I didn't make that bet. *(Laughter. Briefly looks back towards where the WAITRESS exited.)* I've done okay, I guess. Helped build a local business. Had a couple of great kids who are off the payroll, for the moment. I've got great friends *(Raises his glass towards his friends. Looks down at his coat.)* Maybe a few regrets. I know my wife regrets that I chose to wear this coat tonight.

I bought this coat on my twentieth birthday. It still fits... if I don't try to button it. I've put on a few pounds since I was twenty. *(Crowd laughter.) (Ironically.)* Fifty. I thought I would have made it, checked all the boxes. *(Downs his drink.)* It's easier when you're young because you only focus on the next adventure. The next thing. All you care about is having enough beer to drink, a great stereo system and sex. *(Crowd laughter.)* Oh, and a car! The right car is the measure of the man. Yeah, but all that doesn't pan out once you get a job, get married, have kids, you have to work your ass off to pay the bills. You start thinking about what's safe and secure. So, you cut back on beer and buy groceries, the stereo goes into a garage sale to raise money for the PTA, you sell the Corvette for an SUV...And the sex...

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

TMI!

Laughter from the crowd.

CHRIS

(With fake stoicism:) Some things must be sacrificed to preserve the peace. Oh no, I can see that look in my wife's eye. I better shut up before I get myself in deeper than I already am. *(Crowd laughter. Looks back at sign again.)* Fifty. Yeah... Time to work on some of those regrets. *(He drifts off in thought.)*

SCENE TWO: OUTSIDE OF BAR

Lights change as the banner flies out and the back door of the bar is revealed. The WAITRESS is standing, smoking a cigarette. CHRIS enters. He is no longer wearing his coat.

CHRIS

Sorry to put you on the spot like that.

WAITRESS

No problem.

CHRIS

She was young and attractive.

Oh, the girl I remind you of.

WAITRESS

She was fearless.

CHRIS

CHRIS'S wife RACHAEL, whom he calls RAYE, enters, obviously irritated at CHRIS. There is an awkward silence.

I better get back to work.

WAITRESS

WAITRESS exits.

People are looking for you.

RAYE

RAYE turns to go back inside.. CHRIS looks at moon.

CHRIS

Full moon tonight. Isn't that supposed to mean everybody acts a little crazy?

RAYE

Is that your excuse?

CHRIS

Just making an observation. *(Looks around.)* This place brings back so many memories.

RAYE

Memories about selling your precious 'Vette or "workin' your ass /off" to pay the bills?

CHRIS

/Look, you know I'm not good at speeches, Raye. Cut me a little slack. *(Takes a drink.)* That moon. *(Beat.)* It makes me think about the night we went on that picnic. The gang, Steve, Joan, you, me--

RAYE

Emily.

CHRIS

Who would have thought when we did that summer internship with the city parks department we'd end up the way we did. Everything was so much simpler then.

RAYE

I don't remember it that way.

CHRIS

The night of that picnic was when we got together.

A FLICKER OF LIGHTNING.

(Looks up.) Did you see that?

RAYE

You should go back in. People are looking for you.

RAYE turns to go back in.

CHRIS

Stay out here with me for a minute.

RAYE

Why?

CHRIS

Because I'd like that.

RAYE

I'd rather not.

CHRIS

What's eating you? My coat? I took it off.

RAYE

You can wear whatever you like.

CHRIS

What then? My speech? I don't know what got into me.

RAYE

You gonna blame it on the moon?

CHRIS

No. Maybe. I don't know. Look, I didn't mean I regretted my life.

RAYE

It sure sounded like you did. Sounded like a regular theme.

CHRIS

It was a joke.

RAYE

I didn't find it funny.

CHRIS

No, I guess you wouldn't. But that can't be the only thing bugging you. You've been upset ever since the college reunion.

RAYE

I'm tired.

CHRIS

I suppose that's *your* theme.

RAYE

(Turns back towards door.) You need to get back to your party.

CHRIS

What is it? Talk to me.

RAYE

Now you want to talk?

CHRIS

It's like everything I do seems/ to aggravate you. Tell me.

RAYE

/You really want to do this? Right now?

CHRIS

Yes.

A FLICKER OF LIGHTNING.

RAYE

(Takes a breath.) Okay. Why did you marry me?

CHRIS

Why?

RAYE

Yes.

CHRIS

Because I loved you. I mean, I love you. I loved you then, and I love you now.

RAYE

I don't think so. I don't think you ever did. I think you regret staying in this town and marrying me.

CHRIS

That's crazy! Why would you say that?

RAYE

Because when we went to the reunion--

CHRIS

I knew it--

RAYE

You saw all those people and you felt like you had missed out.

CHRIS

Maybe I did. So what?

RAYE

I heard you talking about Emily.

CHRIS

I was only asking if anyone knew what she was doing now.

RAYE

That's not what/ I'm talking about.

CHRIS

I can't talk about/ an old friend?

RAYE

/You didn't see me. You said you wished that things had turned out different.

CHRIS

Doesn't everyone wish that some things had turned out different?

RAYE

Not when you're talking about an old girlfriend.

CHRIS

Wondering about differences doesn't mean I didn't want to marry you.

RAYE

You didn't say wonder. You said wish.

CHRIS

I just... I meant... that I missed/ seeing her.

RAYE

/Well, that was obvious when the entire bar saw how you looked at that waitress. I knew who you were thinking about./ You were thinking about Emily.

CHRIS

/That was a just a weird moment. It caught me off guard.

RAYE

You talked about regrets more than anything else.

CHRIS

It was just what came into my mind. We all have obligations/ that we don't...

RAYE

/I'm an obligation?

CHRIS

No, not like that.

RAYE

It sure sounded like that! It sounded like you had specific issues in mind. What?

CHRIS

I just... I can't... explain it right now.

RAYE

You know that's your problem. You can never explain it. You say you want to talk but you don't talk.

CHRIS

Because you jump to conclusions. You want black and white answers. That's not how life is.

RAYE

I'm asking you simple questions. I'm not asking you to explain how the entire universe works.

CHRIS

These aren't simple questions. Look, all I know is that life isn't the way I thought it would be. Can I acknowledge that? I wanted...

RAYE

What! You wanted/ what?

CHRIS

More! *(Beat.)* When I add up the things in my life against where I thought I would be, I end up short.

RAYE turns away, hurt.

CHRIS

Look, I'm not saying I regret being married to you. Yes, we've had rough spots, but that doesn't mean I don't want to keep putting in the effort/ to keep our marriage going.

RAYE

/So you have to put in an effort to stay married to me?

CHRIS

No. That's not what I meant. You're twisting my words.

FLICKER OF LIGHTNING. CHRIS looks up as RAYE looks at him for a beat.

RAYE

You know what? I've got my own regrets. Maybe I made a mistake, too. You come home from work and you never want to talk about what's going on. When I want to talk, you just get frustrated and give up.

CHRIS

I don't know what you want me to do. You say you're unhappy, but you won't tell me what you want to change. I can't fix something if I don't know what to do!

RAYE

I'm tired of arguing. I'm done.

CHRIS

What are you saying?

FLICKER OF LIGHTNING.

RAYE

I'm done with you and your regrets.

FLICKER OF LIGHTNING.

CHRIS
Raye!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Where is the birthday boy?

RAYE
We'll go back in and just pretend that everything is fine--we're both/ pretty good at that

CHRIS
/Raye

RAYE
--and why don't you find some place else to sleep tonight. Then tomorrow you can go work on your regrets. Hook up with Emily or that waitress or whoever.

CHRIS reaches for her but she pulls away.

CHRIS
Raye, wait!

RAYE
Stop!

RAYE starts to exit back into the bar. There is a BLINDING FLASH and a THUNDER CLAP. Everything goes to black. The lights come back up. We see Chris getting up off the ground.

CHRIS
Jesus! *(He staggers around trying to look for Rachael.)* Raye? Raye! *(Looking around.)*
Rachael! Where are you?

RAYE is nowhere to be seen. CHRIS goes up to the door. The door to the bar is closed and locked. CHRIS tries the door.

What the hell? *(He yells.)* Oh, nice move, Raye, lock me out. *(Pounds on door.)* Raye, let me in! Raye!

CHRIS walks to the side of the building and looks off.

(Talking to himself.) The parking lot is empty. What the hell is happening? Raye!
(Beat.) This isn't over! *(Beat.)*

CHRIS searches his pockets for his car keys.

CHRIS (CON'T)

Damn it! Where's my car keys? Raye, c'mon, it's a five mile walk back to town.

After sighing in frustration, CHRIS starts off into the woods. There is silence, then the sound of a car pulling up and four doors closing. After a moment CHRISTOPHER, STEVE, PAUL, JOAN, RACHAEL and EMILY enter. They all have been drinking a little. The guys carry blankets and bottles of beer and wine coolers. RACHAEL carries a basket of food. CHRISTOPHER has a pint bottle of Scotch he sips from and is wearing his "new" coat.

JOAN

I can't believe we're doing this!

STEVE

It was Christopher's idea. He wanted to do something different.

CHRISTOPHER

It's my 20th birthday. I decided to wear my new coat Rachael helped me pick out and celebrate with a picnic under the stars.

RACHAEL

I've never been on a picnic at night before.

PAUL

Our summer internships are over. One more year, then graduation!

JOAN

Wow, look at that moon.

RACHAEL

(Pointing to the outside wall of the bar and the shadows on it.) You can see our shadows.

CHRISTOPHER

It's the kind of night when magic happens.

EMILY

I never pictured you guys as the romantic types.

JOAN

Steve is more the Neanderthal type.

STEVE

(Pretending to be a caveman.) Steve hurt.

CHRISTOPHER

(Joining the caveman scene.) Steve my friend!

CHRISTOPHER and STEVE hug. RACHAEL

Maybe you guys should go by yourselves!

*

The GUYS crack up. A COYOTE howl is heard off in the distance.

JOAN

What was that?

CHRISTOPHER

Probably a coyote.

RACHAEL

There are animals in the woods?

PAUL

Probably just coyotes ...maybe a bear or two. But they tend not to bother you unless--

STEVE

Unless they sense fear. Worse yet, you run and they're on you in a minute.

CHRISTOPHER

There is nothing to worry about.

A SMALL FLASH OF LIGHTNING.

JOAN

Was that lightning?

CHRISTOPHER

(Looks up.) Doesn't look like rain.

PAUL

Must be heat lightning.

EMILY

What's heat lightning?

PAUL

Some say it's just a reflection of light from something a long way away. Others say it's not real. Just a mirage.

STEVE

See, nothing to worry about.

RACHAEL

We've got coyotes, bears, and heat lightning. Are you sure we should be doing this?

CHRISTOPHER

Absolutely! It's an adventure!

EMILY

Sounds good to me. Where should we have this picnic?

STEVE

I know these woods like the back of my hand. I'll find a spot.

JOAN

Oh, no. If we're going to have a picnic... the girls get to pick the spot!

CHRISTOPHER

Fair enough.

RACHAEL

I've got the food. Come on, Joan grab the blankets, and let's go find a safe spot.

JOAN grabs the blankets. RACHAEL and JOAN start to run off into the woods.

EMILY

Wait up!

JOAN

Come on, Emily!

EMILY

(Grabbing the beer.) I just think we need to hang on to the beer, too!

RACHAEL

Good idea!

RACHAEL, JOAN and EMILY run off laughing.

STEVEN

What are they up to?

PAUL

Who knows? Come on!

PAUL runs off after the girls.

STEVE

Whenever girls laugh and run off, it's not a good sign.

*A shaft of moonlight illuminates
CHRISTOPHER.*

CHRISTOPHER

Ohh. I just felt a cold chill. Weird.

STEVE

Wait. Full moon. Oh, no! *(Starts to flail around. Then howls like a wolf.)* Ahhhooooo!
It's the full moon tonight and the Wolfman is prowling the woods with the coyotes and bears. Who knows what creatures of the night/ we might run into.

CHRISTOPHER

/Stop it.

STEVE

You are way too serious tonight.

STEVE gestures, "Let's go".

CHRISTOPHER

So are you and Joan going to get together?

STEVE

She's been sending me little signals all summer, but I could be wrong. Tonight I intend to find out. How about you? Rachael? Or are you more into the lovely Emily?

CHRISTOPHER

I like them both for very different reasons.

STEVE

So which one?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm waiting for a sign to tell me which girl is right for me.

STEVE

(Laughs.) A sign? *(Sarcastic.)* Right. Okay, Romeo, I'm gonna go find the girls before they drink all the beer!

STEVE runs off. LIGHTNING FLICKERS IN THE SKY AGAIN. CHRISTOPHER looks up and then shrugs and runs off as the lights fade out.

SCENE THREE: THE WOODS

Somewhere in the woods. After a moment CHRIS enters.

CHRIS

Great, I'm totally lost now.

CHRISTOPHER walks on but doesn't see CHRIS.

CHRISTOPHER

Steve? Rachael? Emily?

CHRISTOPHER exits.

CHRIS

Holy shit! Was that me?

Walks over to where CHRISTOPHER exited and follows him off. After a moment, JOAN, RACHAEL and EMILY enter.

RACHAEL

So, what kind of spot are we looking for?

JOAN

Something with private spaces nearby.

EMILY

If you want to do “private” things then maybe you should go find your own picnic spot.

JOAN

Says the voice of experience.

EMILY

I haven't heard anyone singing your saintly praises.

JOAN

Can't a girl just have a little fun?

EMILY

I'm all about that.

RACHAEL

Are you really planning to do something tonight?

JOAN

I sure hope so.

RACHAEL

Out here in the woods with everyone around?

EMILY

Why not? It's not like the guys aren't interested in us.

JOAN

I have my sights set on Steve. How about you two?

RACHAEL

I... kind of like...Christopher.

EMILY

Really? I know Paul likes you. I thought you guys were a good match.

RACHAEL

What makes you say that?

EMILY

The way he looks at you.

RACHAEL

Yeah, but to be a match, I have to look back at him. Christopher is more my style.

EMILY

That's a shame because I've got my eyes on Christopher, too.

JOAN

Uh oh! Looks like someone is going home unhappy.

EMILY

Well, it won't be me.

RACHAEL

Or me. I can spark his interest.

EMILY

(Laughs sarcastically.) "Spark his interest?" Yeah, right, Goodie Two Shoes

RACHAEL

I am not! Joan, tell her.

JOAN

I'm sorry Rachael, but Emily's right.

RACHAEL

I bet I could get a guy faster than either one of you.

JOAN

You're on! I bet a bottle of wine I can get Steve all worked up before either of you .

EMILY

I'll take that bet, too. Winner gets a bottle of the alcohol of their choice?

RACHAEL

Whoa! I'm not sleeping with anybody for a bottle of booze.

JOAN

Okay, Rachael's right. Let's say you have to get a guy naked. An extra bottle if you can do it without taking off any of your own clothes.

RACHAEL

How do you prove that?

JOAN

First one back here with a clothing trophy wins. And it can't be a sock or a shoe!

RACHAEL

I don't know. You're saying we talk them out of their pants? How do you do that?

EMILY

Doesn't take much.

JOAN

Just compliment what's underneath.

JOAN and EMILY knowingly laugh.

EMILY

Do we have a bet? Or are you gonna wuss out, Little Miss Priss?

RACHAEL

I'm not a prude!

JOAN

Bet?

RACHAEL

I am not a prude! Oh, all right! Bet.

JOAN

We need to split up. I'm looking forward to my bottle of Vodka! Or two!

RACHAEL

Or my bottles of very expensive wine!

EMILY

Don't count your grapes before they're smashed.

RACHAEL, JOAN, and Emily go off in different directions. After a moment STEVE enters. He is clearly lost.

STEVE

Where the hell did everyone go? *(Turns around and tries to get his bearings.)* Let's see *(Points.)* The lake is that way. *(Looks the other way.)* No maybe that way.

(Looks the other way.) Or is it that way? *(Looks up at the sky.)* Maybe if I can find the north star that will tell. *(Searches for a moment.)* Nope, they all look the same to me. Dammit.

STEVEN exits, and then CHRIS enters a different part of the woods. CHRIS, still confused, sits down. EMILY enters from a different direction blinking and rubbing her eye.

EMILY

Damn, I think I got a lash in my eye.

EMILY takes a small mirror out of her pocket to check her eye. CHRIS, still seated, is dumbfounded.

CHRIS

Emily?

EMILY

Christopher, I didn't see you there. I need your help.

CHRIS

What are you doing here? I haven't seen you in years.

EMILY

(She laughs.) I just saw you.

CHRIS

That's impossible.

EMILY

Stop acting strange and help me. I've got an something in my eye, and it's driving me crazy. Would you take a look?

CHRIS

Okay.

CHRIS steps up to EMILY and she puts her hands on his chest. EMILY hands him her mirror as he looks deep into her eyes.

CHRIS

I think I see it. *(He removes the lash and shows it to her on his fingertip.)* Just an eyelash. Got it.

She blows the lash off his finger.

EMILY

My wish.

EMILY kisses CHRIS. CHRIS reacts a little startled by the kiss and starts to hand the mirror back but stops when he sees his reflection.

CHRIS

(As he looks in the mirror.) Wait. How....

EMILY

What?

CHRIS

I'm... young!

EMILY

...and?

CHRIS

But, how? *(Puts the mirror in his pocket.)* Wait. *(Looking at her closely.)* How old are you?

EMILY

(Laughing.) How old am I?

CHRIS

(Very serious.) Yes. How old?

EMILY

The same age I was a few minutes ago. *(Seductively.)* What age did you want me to be? Because if twenty/ is too young, I--

CHIRS

/Twenty? You can't be.

EMILY

Can't be?

She looks at him, trying to figure out what game he is playing.

CHRIS

How old do you think I am?

EMILY

Did you hit your head on something?

CHRIS

No. I need to know how old you think I am.

EMILY

It's your birthday. You think you're over the hill because you turned the big 2-0?

CHRIS

2-0? *(Chris looks up.)* It's the same moon.

EMILY

What?

CHRIS

As the one outside the bar.

EMILY

Yeah. Remember our shadows on the wall?

CHRIS

But the bar was closed when I left it.

EMILY

Of course, it is. They closed it for renovation.

CHRIS

Renovations?

EMILY

Are you gonna act weird all night? What happened to your coat?

CHRIS

My coat?

EMILY

Yes. The one you bought that Rachael helped you pick out.

CHRIS

Oh, I left it back at the bar...

EMILY

Never mind. I've got a big surprise for you.

CHRIS

Surprise?

EMILY

(As she nestles close to him.) It's so warm. Aren't you hot? Why don't you unbutton your shirt? *(She starts to unbutton his shirt.)* Let's just get you out of these hot clothes.

CHRIS

Wait! It's *that* night! *(Looking around, panicked.)* Where are the others?

EMILY

(Smiles mischievously.) Somewhere else.

CHRIS

Has anything happened... yet?

EMILY

(Continues trying to unbutton his shirt.) Not yet, but we can change that.

STEVE (O.S.)

Hello?

CHRIS

Wait. Stop. *(Re-buttoning shirt.)* Don't go anywhere. It's really important I talk to you, but first I have to... go and... stop someone...

EMILY

Who?

STEVE

Hello???

CHRIS

Uhhh *(Doesn't want to say his younger self.)* Steve!

EMILY

Steve?

CHRIS

Yeah, he was about to make a big mistake, I mean it sounds like he's lost and I really need to stop him. .

CHRIS exits hurriedly leaving a bewildered EMILY.

EMILY

(Calling off.) Christopher! *Christopher!*

EMILY exits as RACHAEL enters a different part of the woods. She is carrying the food basket.

RACHAEL

Hello? Hello?

CHRISTOPHER enters and sees RACHAEL. He can't help himself. He walks up behind RACHAEL.

CHRISTOPHER

(Like the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood.) Hello, there. Where you going with those goodies little girl?

RACHAEL

Christopher! You surprised me.

CHRISTOPHER

(Still in character.) Are you off to see your granny?

RACHAEL

(Innocent, yet coy.) Why, yes, Mr. Wolf.

CHRISTOPHER

Little Red, what's that in your basket?

RACHAEL

Mama said don't share any of my goodies, but I think we can make an exception.

CHRISTOPHER

My, what beautiful eyes you have.

RACHAEL

All the better to see you.

CHRISTOPHER

Really?

RACHAEL

(Really pouring it on.) Let me set this basket down and see where this story takes us.

RACHAEL takes a step to set the basket down and stops suddenly and screams and drops the basket.

RACHAEL

Snake!

RACHAEL jumps up on him.

CHRISTOPHER

It's just a little green snake. *(Sets her down but keeps her in his arms .)* It's not dangerous. I think it was more scared of you than you of it. It's all right. *(He points as it moves away.)* See, there he goes.

He is still holding Rachael, who looks very vulnerable. She looks up at him and she kisses him.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, Little Red...

RACHAEL

Thanks for rescuing me.

CHRISTOPHER

You were about to share your goodies with me before our slippery little friend made an appearance.

She looks at the basket, now tipped over.

RACHAEL

Damn it. I knocked over all the cupcakes. The frosting's a mess.

RACHAEL reaches for the basket and takes out a messy cupcake.

CHRISTOPHER

That doesn't matter.

RACHAEL

But the frosting the best part.

CHRISTOPHER

Here, hand me one.

RACHAEL hands CHRISTOPHER a cupcake.

He takes off the cupcake paper, separates the cap from the bottom half, then inverts the cap so the frosting is in the middle.

RACHAEL

(Watching him.) What are you doing?

CHRISTOPHER

It's a trick I learned. Now the frosting is mixed in with the cake. Here, have a taste.

He takes a piece and offers it to her and she takes a bite.

RACHAEL

That's good!

CHRISTOPHER

(Sitting.) See, if you just eat the frosting off the top, you forget about the cake and then the cake, no matter how good it is, is going to let you down.

RACHAEL sits and settles back into his arms so she is seated in front of him with her back to him. He feeds her a piece of cupcake.

RACHAEL

Ummm.

CHRISTOPHER

You like that, huh?

RACHAEL

More.

CHRISTOPHER

(He teases her with a piece of cake and then pulls it back. She snaps her teeth at his fingers.) Ahhh! Ahhh, no biting!

RACHAEL

No teasing. *(Changes the subject.)* So, you're a cupcake expert.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm an expert on a lot of things. *(He feeds her another piece of cupcake.)* I just keep it under the surface.

RACHAEL

This is nice. Like when we had to clear out that abandoned lot a couple of weeks ago. Just the two of us.

CHRISTOPHER

You mean the day we got drenched.

RACHAEL

I didn't mind the rain. You made that little lean-to out of those boards and it was like our own little hideaway in the rain.

CHRISTOPHER

Until it started leaking like a sieve.

RACHAEL

I was shivering and you put your arms around me to keep me warm. That was the first time you kissed me.

CHRISTOPHER

How could I resist?

RACHAEL

I didn't want you to resist.

CHRISTOPHER

Then the sun came out.

RACHAEL

I didn't want it to stop raining. I wanted it to be just you and me all alone in the world.

CHRISTOPHER

(Looks around.) Like tonight.

RACHAEL

Tonight, I'd like to see more of what's under the surface.

She turns to him and begins to try to take off his coat.

RACHAEL

Do you really like your coat?

CHRISTOPHER

I do. Thank you so much for helping me find it.

RACHAEL

Aren't you warm in that? Maybe you should take it off ...along with your shirt?

CHRISTOPHER

And what would Granny think of Little Red trying to take off my clothes?

RACHAEL

I would tell her, "Mind your own business old lady".

CHRISTOPHER

(Laughs.) You're really full of surprises tonight.

RACHAEL

I think you should take off them both off and maybe slip out of those pants--

CHRISTOPHER

Who is the wolf now?

RACHAEL

We could see where this story really takes us.

CHRISTOPHER

Let's get you out of some of your clothes too.

RACHAEL

Oh, no. I asked you first.

STEVE (O.S.)

Christopher? Paul? Help?

CHRISTOPHER

Sounds like Steve has lost his way.

RACHAEL

I thought he knew this woods like the back of his hand.

CHRISTOPHER

(Reluctantly.) So much for just the two of us alone in the world.

STEVE

Anybody? Somebody...

CHRISTOPHER

I better go save him before he get's really lost. Hold my spot.

CHRISTOPHER gives her a kiss and exits.

RACHAEL

(Sarcastic.) Great. He leaves me alone in the woods to go rescue Steve. *(Suddenly realizes.)* And I didn't even get any trophy clothes. *(Takes a beat.)* Well, Christopher, I'm certainly not gonna give up that easily.

RACHAEL exits as STEVE enters in another part of the woods.

STEVE

(Looks around.) Hello? Anyone? Come on, guys! *(To himself.)* You better have left me some beer. *(Looks around, talking to himself.)* What do you do when you're lost? Make a fire. Okay, make a fire. *(He gathers a few sticks. He puts sticks together and then checks his pocket.)* No matches. *(He takes two sticks and starts rubbing them together.)* How do they do this? *(He rubs more vigorously.)* Ow! I think I got a splinter.

STEVE sits dejected. JOAN enters. Sees she is alone with STEVE. SHE smiles devilishly.

JOAN

Hello, there.

STEVE

Oh, thank God! I'm not lost! Where are the others?

JOAN

I came to find you.

STEVE

You did? Great! Maybe we can find the others now.

JOAN
What's your hurry?

STEVE
Hurry?

JOAN
Just you and me alone in the woods.

JOAN reaches out to STEVE and runs her fingers over his chest.

STEVE
What are you doing?

JOAN
(Starts to unbutton his shirt.) You are hot, you know that?

STEVE
Hot?

JOAN
You've got my motor running.

STEVE
I do?

JOAN starts to unbutton Steve's pants.

STEVE
(Scared and excited at the same time.) Oh, boy! *(Steve slows her down.)*

JOAN
Don't you like it?

STEVE
Well... sure I liked it.

JOAN
I want to get closer to you.

STEVE
Now? Here?

JOAN

I've heard what a great body you have, and I want to see if everyone is right.

STEVE

You heard that from someone? Who?

JOAN

Never mind who! I want to focus on us.

STEVE

I mean I just can't get over that someone said I had a great body.

JOAN

Stop talking. *(Putting on her best passionate voice.)* I want you naked, right now!

STEVE

(He suddenly turns on the charm, and takes off his shirt and drops it.) Well, who am I to turn down a beautiful woman?

*He starts to strip off his pants. He realizes
JOAN has not removed her clothes.*

STEVE

Hey, how come you're not getting undressed?

JOAN

I'm shy. Close your eyes.

*He becomes a little more modest, so he moves
behind a large bush that covers him from the
waist down and finishes taking off his clothes
and places them on the bush.*

STEVE

Okay, I'm naked. Your turn.

JOAN

Remember, close your eyes first.

*STEVE closes his eyes and JOAN steals his
clothes and steps behind the bush with Steve
and runs her finger across his chest. STEVE
giggles.*

RACHAEL
Good idea.

PAUL
Help me gather some sticks.

RACHAEL
Oh, no! I've already almost stepped on a snake. I am not picking up anything. I'm just going to step over here where its safe.

PAUL
No worries.

RACHAEL steps away to what she thinks is a safe spot and in the process steps on something that suddenly emits a loud buzzing sound. RACHAEL, while screaming, starts twisting and turning and waving her arms trying to get it off of her.

RACHAEL
Get it off me! Get it off me!

PAUL
What is it? What is it?

RACHAEL
I don't know but get it off me!

PAUL
Hold still. Hold still. *(He removes a cicada from her back.)* There it's gone. It was just a cicada.

RACHAEL
Snakes, giant bugs, ticks and mosquitos! Why do people think going into woods is fun?

PAUL puts his arms around RACHAEL.

PAUL
It's okay. Everything is fine.

RACHAEL
I'm just a little bit frustrated right now. *(She looks up at him, and he kisses her. She is surprised but regains her composure.)* I wasn't expecting that.

PAUL

I hope that was okay. I've wanted to do that since I first met you.

RACHAEL

(Trying to change the subject.) I'm sorry I lost my cool over a little bug.

PAUL

I'm not. It gave me the chance to be a hero.

RACHAEL

You probably think I'm one of those girls who faints at the sight of a spider. Well, I don't.

PAUL

Good. Because you've got a big one on your shoulder.

RACHAEL

(She whirls around.) What!

PAUL

(Brushes it off of her.) Just a Daddy Long Legs. It's gone.

RACHAEL

I hate this place!

PAUL looks at RACHAEL for a long moment.

RACHAEL

What? What is it?

PAUL

Sorry, it's just that you look so beautiful in the moonlight.

RACHAEL

Thanks. I think.

PAUL

Don't think I'm creepy, but I've watched you this past year. Your favorite color is blue. You like pizza, but don't like pasta. You always speak up when you see injustice. *(Rachael starts twirling her hair with her finger.)* And you always twirl your hair when you're nervous.

RACHAEL

(Stops twirling her hair.) That's a little intimidating. Why didn't you say something before this? I saw you every morning when we checked in at the rec office and you never said a word.

PAUL

There was never a time when it was just the two of us. You always had guys around you who were more athletic and better looking than me.

RACHAEL

Well, it isn't creepy, but it's a little odd. However, I noticed some things about you, too.

PAUL

Yeah?

RACHAEL

I will say you were very organized each morning.

PAUL

I know I'm weird. I like order and lists.

RACHAEL

Being organized is a really good skill.

PAUL

Thanks.

RACHAEL

So why did you wait until tonight?

PAUL

When I heard about tonight, it felt like destiny. I was hoping to get a chance to talk to you. I'm confident when I'm working with numbers. I'm not so good with people. *(Looks around at the woods.)* Do you feel it? There's something strange about the woods tonight. *(Takes a deep breath.)* It gives a shy guy like me the courage to say the things I always wanted to. I have a secret,

RACHAEL

(Unsure.) You do?

PAUL

I have an alter ego.

RACHAEL

An alter what?

PAUL

Ego.

PAUL unbuttons his shirt to reveal a Superman T-shirt underneath.

RACHAEL

Superman?

PAUL

Yeah. Superman. That's my alter ego.

RACHAEL

(Backs away a little.) Wow. I ahhh....don't know what to say.

PAUL

Too much information. My downfall.

RACHAEL

No. Not at all. *(Remembering the bet.)* Hey, why don't you take the rest of your clothes off... I mean so I can see your superman alter ego better.

PAUL

Well, I'm not wearing the tights or the cape. That'd be silly.

RACHAEL

But, I'll bet the shorts match, don't they?

PAUL shyly nods his head, yes.

RACHAEL

C'mon, you can show me.

PAUL

You won't laugh?

RACHAEL

No. In fact, I think its kind of sexy.

PAUL

You do? *(Starts to strip off his clothes.)* You know, I keep a journal of all of my thoughts so that I can categorize them into provable and non-provable theorems.

RACHAEL

That sounds...great. Here let me hold those for you.

RACHAEL collects Paul's clothing.

PAUL

(Getting excited about sharing his theory.) Yes. In fact if you put the events of tonight into an equation you and I are the x and y factors and the full moon can be a quotient that can be added into the sum when divided by the number of days we have known each other. *(Finishes taking off his outer clothes.)* I feel like Clark Kent during the day, but underneath *(He whips off his glasses.)* I'm Superman.

RACHAEL

It's not all that strange....

PAUL

You don't think it's weird?

RACHAEL

Here, *(reaches for his glasses)* I'll hold those for you.

RACHEL puts his glasses in his shirt pocket and begins to take the last of his clothes. He is wearing a pair of red swim shorts that are a little too short.

PAUL

So what do you think?

RACHAEL

(Doesn't know what to say.) You wear this under your clothes all the time?

PAUL

Oh, no. That would be weird. These are my swim trunks. I put them on in case we went swimming. I like to be prepared. I picked red because they go with the shirt. But don't get me wrong. I'm not weird. I only wear this when I really need a confidence boost, like tonight when I wanted to talk to you. *(Suddenly self conscious.)* Maybe I should get dressed.

RACHAEL

No! I mean I think you look great in your...outfit. I think you should just let your secret identity out for tonight.

PAUL

You do?

RACHAEL

Yes. I'll just hang onto your clothes so you don't lose them.

PAUL

Thanks!

RACHAEL

You know what? Why don't you wait right here and I'll just run these back to the bar so there's no chance of losing them.

PAUL

(Not sure.) I don't know. The others might not understand.

RACHAEL

Oh, sure they will. They'll be impressed.

PAUL

You think so?

RACHAEL

Stay there. I'll be right back.

PAUL

Right back?

RACHAEL

Yes. I'll be right back.

RACHAEL exits with PAUL'S clothing.

PAUL

(He calls after her.) Hey, Rachael, come back. I need to keep my glasses. I can't really see without them. *(No response.)* Rachael?

We hear STEVE doing his Tarzan yell.

PAUL

(Looks around.) Rachael?

We hear branches crashing as something nearby is breaking tree branches.

(Starts to walk.) Don't run, don't run, don't run. To hell with that.

PAUL takes off running. STEVE enters wearing a loin cloth tunic made out of ivy leaves and vines.

STEVE

Oww, oww, oww. (Groaning in pain.) Okay, no more trying to swing on vines.

STEVE limps off. CHRISTOPHER walks on in another part of the woods. He is there for a beat and then EMILY enters.

EMILY

There you are! Where's Steve?

CHRISTOPHER

Steve?

EMILY

Yes, you left me to keep him from making a mistake.

CHRISTOPHER

I did?

EMILY

Yes, right after you got the lash out of my eye. You are really odd tonight. First you don't know how old you are and then you run off. Well, this time I'm not letting you get away. You never gave me a chance to tell you my surprise.

CHRISTOPHER

Surprise?

EMILY

Yes. Remember when you and I were sent to clean up by the river bank? And you told me the day you turned 18 how you went and got a passport. You told me all the places you were going to see. Paris, London, Cairo, Hong Kong--

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. That's my plan.

EMILY

I have a surprise. I let go of the lease on my apartment today. I'm moving to Hong Kong in two days.

CHRISTOPHER

Wait? What?

EMILY

My father's company just got a big account and he asked me if I wanted to help him out. I thought it over and I decided to drop out of school and take him up on his offer.

CHRISTOPHER

Congratulations. I'm really jealous.

EMILY

You don't have to be jealous. Come with me. You said you wanted to go to Hong Kong. Here's your chance.

CHRISTOPHER

Really?

EMILY

Yes.

CHRISTOPHER

Wait. What about school?

EMILY

What about it?

CHRISTOPHER

I promised Dr. Wilson I would be his research assistant on his big project this year. I promised my brother I would be his best man at his wedding. I've made lots plans for the year.

EMILY

Think of what we'd see...the things we'd eat...the things we could do...

CHRISTOPHER

(He looks at her, unsure.) I don't think I can just up and go.

EMILY

You want adventure. Here it is staring you right in the face. The adventure could start tonight. Right here.

CHRISTOPHER

Here?

Right now.

EMILY

Now?

CHRISTOPHER

Take your clothes off.

EMILY

Wait, what?

CHRISTOPHER

Or don't you really want adventure. I guess you just want to talk about it, but when it comes down to it... you're afraid of it.

EMILY

I'm not afraid of it.

CHRISTOPHER

How much do you want it? Take your clothes off.

EMILY

(*Hesitating.*) Emily... I...

CHRISTOPHER

You don't find me attractive? (*Turning her back to pretend she is slowly walking away.*)

EMILY

No I didn't say that. It's just...

CHRISTOPHER

Just what? You want excitement you have to take chances.

EMILY

I want....

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe I asked the wrong person. Maybe I should give Paul a chance. I'll tell you what. I'm going to start walking in that direction. I'm sure I can find someone who wouldn't be afraid to get what they want...

EMILY

Emily wait...

CHRISTOPHER

RACHAEL

These are Paul's clothes. He has on a Superman get-up underneath.

JOAN

A what?

RACHAEL

Yeah. I tried to get Christopher's clothes, but he wouldn't cooperate.

JOAN

What?

RACHAEL

And then he ran off.

JOAN

Tell me everything.

RACHAEL

First, Christopher was the wolf and I was Red Riding Hood--

JOAN

Ohh, I like that!

RACHAEL

Then I almost stepped on a snake, and we kissed, and then he ran off to help Steve.

JOAN

I found Steve and he was more than eager surrender his clothes.

RACHAEL

Not everyone puts out a vibe like you.

JOAN

Can I help it if my libido is always running?

RACHAEL

Libido?

JOAN

Yeah, I heard it on a talk show on TV yesterday. They had a bunch of women on who were always "ready," you know. I think I might be one of those.

RACHAEL

I told you to stop watching those shows. Last week you thought you were psychic.

JOAN

I still am. I knew there would be a phone call for me just before the phone rang today.

RACHAEL

Your mother always calls you Sunday afternoons.

JOAN

True, but it wasn't her. When it was Steve on the phone, I knew it was destiny. It was meant to happen.

RACHAEL

Destiny. That's what Paul said about tonight. I'm so confused. First Christopher and I kiss, and then he takes off. Then Paul kisses me and tells me he has wanted to kiss me since he has known me. He knows my favorite food and stuff. Men are so unpredictable.

JOAN

Whoa! Both Paul and Christopher kissed you? Girl, I may have gotten the clothes, but sounds like you got the guy. You should be happy.

RACHAEL

I know but...

JOAN

You really wanted Christopher.

RACHAEL

It's not so much I want him.--in a physical way--which I wouldn't say no to. It's just I want more. I want a relationship too. I think there is something special there. But now I've got Paul coming on to me at the same time Christopher and I are getting close.

JOAN

Maybe you were lovers in a past life with both Christopher and Paul. There was this psychic on TV who could tell if people were connected in the past.

RACHAEL

Stop! You are not helping!

JOAN

Maybe you were Cleopatra in a past life with all these lovers who had to battle each other for you.

RACHAEL

Stop!

JOAN

I'm starving. Give me some those cupcakes.

RACHAEL

They're a little messed up.

JOAN

Right now I could eat the crumbs Hansel and Gretel dropped. *(Takes a cupcake.)* Okay. Take these beers and the rest of the cupcakes and go find Christopher and see if he's your destiny!

RACHAEL

But I don't...

JOAN

Less talk, more action! I've got to get back to Steve before he gets lost again. Now get out there!

RACHAEL

Joan!

JOAN

Nope. No time to waste!

JOAN marches RACHAEL off, then comes back for her beer and cupcake..

JOAN

Back to Steve!

JOAN exits. STEVE enters in a different part of the woods.

STEVE

Where the hell is everyone?

A GROAN OF PAIN from off in the woods.

STEVE

What was that?

Another GROAN.

STEVE

Is that a...? Bear! (*STEVE runs off yelling.*) Bear! Bear!

Instead of a bear CHRIS comes on. He has stubbed his toe and banged his knee. He is groaning in pain. He looks around and sits for a minute rubbing his knee. Then he looks up.

CHRIS

Damn, that hurt. What a night!

CHRISTOPHER enters. As he does, CHRIS hides himself in the bushes to watch him.

CHRISTOPHER

(In a soft whisper so others won't hear.) Emily? *(As he passes through:)* Emily? I know you're around here somewhere!

CHRISTOPHER exits. CHRIS goes carefully to look off in the direction CHRISTOPHER just exited.

CHRIS

How am I supposed figure this out without running into myself?

CHRIS contemplates this as PAUL walks up behind him.

PAUL

Rachael? Oh, thank God I found someone.

CHRIS

(Whirls around.) Paul! You scared the hell out of me!

PAUL

Oh, sorry. I thought you were Rachael. I can't see well without my glasses. I was running from a coyote.

CHRIS

Paul? I forgot you were here.

PAUL

You mean since the last time I saw you? Did you hear them?

CHRIS

Who?

PAUL

Coyotes!

CHRIS

No. *(Looks at him and starts to laugh.)* That was you! Superman! I had totally forgotten! *(Continues to laugh.)*

PAUL

You're making fun of me now.

CHRIS

(Regaining his composure.) No. No. Not at all. Have you seen Rachael?

PAUL

I was looking for her. Can I ask you something?

CHRIS

Sure.

PAUL

What do you think of Rachael?

CHRIS

Why do you ask?

PAUL

It's just you're always so confident. I've always admired that about you. Tonight when I found Rachael I just pretended I was Superman and she was Lois Lane. I kissed her and she didn't pull away. Do you think I really have a chance with her?

CHRIS

You kissed Raye.. I mean Rachael?

PAUL

Yeah. Do you think she's attracted to me?

CHRIS

Attracted?

PAUL

Yeah.

CHRIS

I, uh. No, I've never noticed any attraction on her part..

PAUL

Really?

CHRIS

Yeah. She never said a word about you.

PAUL

(Dejected.) Oh. *(Determined.)* You know what? I'm going to change that! Thanks, Chris! If you see anyone else shout out, okay?

CHRIS

Oh, I'll be sure to.

PAUL exits.

CHRIS

Not a chance. Raye and Paul kissed. I wonder what else Raye never told me about this night.

LIGHTNING FLAHSSES as CHRIS exits. A moment later RAYE enters.

RAYE

Hello??? Is anybody here? *(Looks around.)* Where the hell am I?

BLACKOUT. END OF ACT.

ACT TWO: THE WOODS

RACHAEL enters carrying the basket, the beers and the blanket.

RACHAEL

How did I end up lugging all this stuff around!

CHRIS enters.

RACHAEL

Oh, there you are. Everything okay? Not going to run off?

CHRIS
Raye?

RACHAEL
Raye? You've never called me that before.

CHRIS
I mean Rachael.

RACHAEL
What happened to your coat?

CHRIS
My coat? I ahh...put it someplace for safe keeping.

RACHAEL
Oh, okay then. Maybe we can pick up where we left off. You told me to hold your place.

CHRIS looks at RACHAEL seeing the young beautiful woman he married.

RACHAEL
What? Why are you staring at me like that?

CHRIS
My God you are so beautiful.

RACHAEL is flattered and embarrassed. She opens a beer.

RACHAEL
I got some beer. You want one or are you sticking with your Scotch?

CHRIS
Scotch? Oh I must've left it in my coat . . . I'll have a beer.

*RACHAEL hands him a beer. He pops it open.
CHRIS studies RACHAEL for a moment.*

RACHAEL
What is it? Do I have a spider on me?

CHRIS
What? No.

RACHAEL

I feel like everyone's studying me like some bug under a microscope.

CHRIS

I just wanted to sit and look at you for moment.

RACHAEL

Is something wrong?

CHRIS

I'm sorry. I was just thinking about life...thirty years from now.

RACHAEL

(Laughs.) Thirty years?

CHRIS

What do you hope your future will be like?

RACHAEL

Well... *(Thinking.)* I hope that by the time I turn fifty I'll have gotten most of what I wanted in life.

CHRIS

What is that?

RACHAEL

To teach, of course. Be surrounded by family and friends.

CHRIS

What about adventure?

RACHAEL

Sure. Who wouldn't. How about you ?

CHRIS

Me?

RACHAEL

Yeah. What do you hope you'll have done by fifty?

CHRIS

Go someplace else. Maybe go sky diving, climb Mt. Everest. You know, adventure.

CHRIS glances to see what her response to this is.

RACHAEL

Wow. That sounds pretty amazing. My kind of adventure would be sitting on the dock with a drink and watching the sunset in the Florida Keys.

CHRIS

(Wistfully.) I would have liked that, too.

RACHAEL

You want to jump out of a planes and watch sunsets? How does that work?

CHRIS

Yeah. *(Laughs.)* It isn't just about an adrenaline rush. It's about--

RACHAEL

--having someone to share it with.

CHRIS

(Smiles.) Yes. Yes it is.

RACHAEL

What about family?

CHRIS

If I had it to do over again, I'd wait a little longer to have kids.

RACHAEL

(Laughs.) If you had it to do over? Do you have some secret kids hidden away somewhere?

CHRIS

No.

RACHAEL

I wouldn't mind ending up like my grandparents. They didn't visit exotic places, but they had nearly sixty years together and they still held hands. I hope I'll find someone special like they did. That's the future I want.

CHRIS

When you're young the future seems so far away. You promise yourself you're going to do so many things. Then you wake up one day, and discover that somewhere along the way time passed you by, and you didn't notice.

RACHAEL

You're the expert?

CHRIS

What if I told you I... had a dream about the future.

RACHAEL

Now you're psychic, too? You and Joan.

CHRIS

What?

RACHAEL

Never mind.

CHRIS

(Hesitates.) You were in my dream.

RACHAEL

I was?

CHRIS

Yes.

RACHAEL

Really? Where did I live?

CHRIS

Right here. You never left.

RACHAEL

Was I married?

CHRIS

Yes.

RACHAEL

To who?

CHRIS

(Thinks whether to tell the truth and then decides not to.) I don't know. I couldn't tell.

RACHAEL

Was I happy?

CHRIS

Sometimes.

RACHAEL

Sometimes? You sure you didn't have a nightmare?

CHRIS

It wasn't all bad.

A pause as they both drink their beer in thought.

RACHAEL

What did I look like?

CHRIS

You were very attractive. You hadn't aged much at all, and people thought you were much younger than you really were.

RACHAEL

That's good.

A pause as they both drink their beer.

RACHAEL

I don't usually dream at night.

CHRIS

Everybody dreams. You just don't remember them.

RACHAEL

The only dreams I remember are usually where someone is being awful.

CHRIS

Yeah, and you punch in your sleep.

RACHAEL

I what?

CHRIS

I mean. I bet you punch in your sleep.

RACHAEL

(Looks up at moon.) You know that moon is very romantic.

CHRIS

It makes you believe in love and "happily-ever-afters".

RACHAEL

It does.

CHRIS

I just wish that's how love really worked.

RACHAEL

What do you mean?

CHRIS

I mean, sure... *(A beat to gather his thoughts.)*... at the beginning love is like that coat we picked out. You think the coat will last forever, but pretty soon little threads start coming loose, buttons come off, you get stains that won't come out. But you ignore it for so many years until it's finally just hanging in pieces. You don't even know how that happened. Maybe it wasn't a good coat to start with. Maybe you should have picked a different coat.

RACHAEL

I didn't force you to pick that coat.

A SMALL FLASH OF LIGHTNING,

CHRIS

(He is now fully in his head and doesn't think about where he is or the repercussions.) And all these shadows of people and dreams from the past start to call out to you. You start seeing their faces in people you meet even the waitresses who brings you a drink, and it gnaws at you, and makes you question the decisions you made. You remember that warm wonderful coat and you wonder if you'll ever be able to wear it again. *(And now he transitions to speaking to RACHAEL as though she is RAYE.)* And before I can figure out things you have the nerve to tell me to throw it away and that it isn't worth fixing!

RACHAEL

I have the nerve?

CHRIS

Yes. Just when I'm at my most vulnerable and trying to sort through what's real and what are just shadows, you tell me to find someplace else to sleep all because of something I said about Emily!

RACHAEL

Excuse me?! I don't know who you think I am, but I've never told you to throw away your coat! And why should I care what you said about Emily? Why don't you go find Emily tell her your dreams!

RACHAEL starts to storm off. Then just before she exits turns back to talk.

You can take your coat and go to hell!

RACHAEL storms off.

CHRIS

(He suddenly realizes what he has done.) Oh, my God! *(Calling after her.)* Raye! Rachael! Wait!

CHRIS runs off after Rachael. After a moment STEVE wanders on with a loin cloth and a Tarzan like tunic made out of vines he has wrapped around himself.

STEVE

Hello? Hello? Anyone?

Discovers the blanket and the basket and the beer.

STEVE

Well, look what I found!

EMILY enters, her blouse partially undone. She is barefoot. She is followed by CHRISTOPHER who is now without his coat and with his shirt unbuttoned is still chasing her. EMILY spots STEVE and begins to giggle.

EMILY

(Pulling her shirt closed.) Steve?

CHRISTOPHER

(Surprised to find someone else.) Oh! Hey, buddy. What's with the outfit?

STEVE

Joan ran off with my clothes and I had to improvise. Looks like you two have been having some fun yourselves.

EMILY

(Smiles at CHRISTOPHER.) Not yet.

STEVE

So? What do you think? Do you get who I am?

EMILY

Ummm, Mowgli?

STEVE

Mowgli?

EMILY

Yeah, from the Jungle Book.

STEVE

No. I'm Tarzan.

CHRISTOPHER

Tarzan?

STEVE

Yeah. You know. Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh.... Well, Tarzan, you have picked an interesting vine for your loin cloth there.

STEVE

Why?

CHRISTOPHER

Because that's--

EMILY

(Stops CHRISTOPHER from continuing.) --very unusual for a loin cloth.

CHRISTOPHER

(Gets that he's not supposed to say what it is.) Ah, yeah. Very unusual choice.

STEVE

You like it?

EMILY

Very much. *(Trying to keep from laughing but not hiding it well.)* I'll better go see if I can...uh find my clothes. *(To Christopher, quietly.)* Unless you find me first.

EMILY runs off laughing hysterically.

STEVE

What's she laughing about?

CHRISTOPHER

Nothing. Just a private joke.

STEVE

Remember what I said. When women run off laughing, it's not a good sign.

CHRISTOPHER

You may be right, buddy. I, uh, think you might want to find your clothes and get out of those vines.

STEVE

I don't know. I feel very free running around the woods like this. Joan told me lots of people think I have a nice body. Why shouldn't I show it off.

STEVE walks past CHRISTOPHER looking at where EMILY ran off. CHRISTOPHER stifles a laugh as he sees STEVE'S "full moon".

CHRISTOPHER

Boy, it truly is a full moon tonight! *(Trying not to laugh.)* Whatever works for you!

STEVE

Have you seen Joan? I want her to see me in this.

CHRISTOPHER

I tell you what. I'll go help Emily find her shoes, and if I find Joan I'll send her your way.

CHRISTOPHER can barely keep from exploding in laughter as he exits after EMILY.

STEVE

I don't get what's so funny. I think I look pretty good.

PAUL enters.

PAUL

Rachael? What are you wearing?

STEVE

(Laughing.) Do I look like Rachael?

PAUL

Sorry, I can't see without my glasses. (*Trying to see him close up.*) What are you wearing?

STEVE

It's my Tarzan get-up, but nobody seems to get it.

PAUL

Why are you dressed like Tarzan?

STEVE

I could ask you the same question, Superman.

PAUL

You first.

STEVE

Joan stole my clothes and left me naked so I had to put something on. I'm trying to find her. Have you seen her? I was looking for her when I heard a bear.

PAUL

You heard a bear? I've been searching for Rachael after I got run off by a coyote. Wait a minute. Joan took your clothes and Rachael took mine. Is something going on?

STEVE

Where did you find the Superman suit?

PAUL

I had it on under my clothes. Did you find Christopher? Does he still have his clothes?

STEVE

Some of them, but Emily was halfway out of hers.

PAUL

Have you seen Rachael?

STEVE

No. Just Emily and Christopher.

PAUL

I'm going to keep searching for Rachael. Let me know if you see her.

STEVE

If you see Joan, telling her I'm looking for her.

PAUL exits. STEVE stubs his toes as he starts to exit and begins hopping on one foot.

STEVE

Owww!

JOAN enters.

JOAN

(Trying not to laugh.) Well, look at you.

STEVE

Joan! I was just telling Paul that I wanted to find you.

JOAN

Well... *(Trying to suppress a smile.)* You look very...woody.

STEVE

What do you think?

JOAN

What do I think?

STEVE

Yeah, you think I look sexy?

JOAN

Who are you trying to be? Mowgli?

STEVE

No. Why does everyone keep saying that? *(Trying to be very masculine.)* I'm Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle. You want to swing on my vine?

JOAN

Ahhh, not really. Especially since that vine is poison ivy.

STEVE

What?

JOAN

Yeah, that's poison ivy you have wrapped around you.

STEVE

Oh, my God! I didn't know what poison ivy looked like. Are you sure?

JOAN

Yup. I'm pretty sure.

STEVE

(Panicking.) I gotta get this off! I gotta do something!

JOAN

(Taking pity on him.) Whoa, slow down there, Lord of the Jungle. Why don't you strip that off. *(Picks up the blanket that was left on the ground.)* Here, wrap this blanket around you.

STEVE

Oh, my God, what am I gonna do? What am I gonna do?

JOAN

One step at a time. Let's get you out of those vines first. *(She moves over and holds up the blanket while he strips off the vines. She then wraps him in the blanket.)* There, that's much better.

STEVE

Thanks. Where are my clothes?

JOAN

Sorry. I left them back by the bar.

STEVE

That's just great. Not only did I look stupid but now I'm covered with poison ivy.

JOAN

I thought you looked kind of sexy.

STEVE

You did?

JOAN

Yes.

STEVE

You don't think I look stupid?

JOAN

Nope. Sexy... and very cute.

JOAN kisses him. STEVE responds.

STEVE

I really did want to impress you.

JOAN

I've always been impressed by you.

STEVE

You have?

JOAN

Yes. I always thought you were smart and funny.

JOAN kisses him.

STEVE

You're not just saying that to take pity on me are you?

JOAN

Nope.

STEVE kisses her and starts to get passionate.

STEVE

Really. *(Kisses her again.)* You want to find a private spot?

JOAN

(In a very sexy voice.) Absooluutely.... NOT! Are you crazy? You've got poison ivy all over you!

STEVE

(Deflated.) Oh, yeah. I guess that would be a bad thing, huh?

JOAN

Yeah, and that is not worth a bottle of vodka.

STEVE

What?

JOAN

Never mind. Maybe we can find some other way to have fun.

STEVE

How?

JOAN

Men! You are all so simple-minded.

STEVE

What kind of fun can we have if I can't touch you?

JOAN

(Kisses him.) Well, you pretty much had the poison ivy all over you, right? *(He nods.)*
But, you didn't eat any, did you.

STEVE

(She rubs her finger over his lips.) Ohhh. I get it!

JOAN

(Leads him off.) Come on, Lord of the Jungle.

JOAN and STEVE exit. In another part of the woods CHRISTOPHER and the partially dressed EMILY enter from one direction and RACHAEL enters from a different direction.

CHRISTOPHER

Rachael...

RACHAEL

I see you found Emily. Now you both can just run off together.

CHRISTOPHER

What?!

EMILY

Jealous?

RACHAEL

(Sarcastically.) No.

CHRISTOPHER

(He starts to try and explain.) Rachael...

CHRIS starts to enter but pulls up short when he sees his younger self and the others. He stays hidden from their view.

RACHAEL
Get her to help you buy a coat!

CHRISTOPHER
My coat?

RACHAEL grabs the beer and cupcakes and storms off.

EMILY
Finders keepers...

CHRISTOPHER
What? *(Calls off towards Rachael.)* Rachael!

EMILY
What was the deal about the coat?

CHRISTOPHER
I'm not sure. *(Calling after her.)* Emily, I'm sorry. I... need to sort this out! I promise I'll be right back and then we can talk more about Hong Kong.

EMILY
Christopher!

CHRISTOPHER exits. EMILY turns to go off, but CHRIS comes on from close to where CHRISTOPHER just exited.

CHRIS
Emily. I need to talk to you for a minute?

EMILY
Christopher? I thought you were abandoning me for Rachael.

CHRIS
I did, I mean... I just wanted to talk to you first.

EMILY
To me? Why?

CHRIS
Because I have to know something. Why did you ask me to go with you? Was it because...

EMILY cuts him off with a kiss. A FLASH OF LIGHTNING. Then, from behind CHRIS, RAYE appears.

Chris? RAYE

CHRIS whirls around.

Raye? CHRIS

What the hell is going on? RAYE

It's not what it looks like. CHRIS

RAYE
It looks like you were kissing that woman and-- *(She takes a beat and realizes it really is EMILY.)* Emily? But how is that...

CHRIS
Emily, would you excuse us a moment?

EMILY
But I...

CHRIS quickly pushes EMILY away from RACHAEL.

CHRIS
Why don't you go join Steve and Joan? I'll be along. Thanks!

As EMILY, very put off by these events, exits, CHRIS crosses back and pulls RAYE away from where they were just standing.

RAYE
But she's/... How is that...

CHRIS
/How did you get here?

RAYE

Get here? I was standing there talking to you at the bar, then the lightening struck and the next thing I knew I was lost in the woods.

CHRIS

I can't explain it. Remember that night we were arguing about?

RAYE

What?

CHRIS

The night of the picnic....before our senior year. This is it.

RAYE

That's crazy.

CHRIS

With Steve, Joan, Emily and Paul.

RAYE

There is no way.

CHRIS

That was Emily in her twenties!

RAYE

How is that possible?

CHRIS

I don't know, but it's that night again.

RAYE

So why was she kissing you? You're obviously not in your twenties!

CHRIS

Because I'm young.

RAYE

You still look old to me.

CHRIS

I don't look that way to them.

RAYE

That's impossible.

CHRIS

I'm telling you they see me as my younger self.

RAYE

This makes no sense.

Pulls Emily's mirror out of his pocket.

CHRIS

Wait a minute. Here look at yourself in the mirror.

RAYE

What?

CHRIS

Just look at yourself! How old do you look?

RAYE looks at herself and sees that she is young again.

RAYE

Oh my God. I'm young again. *(Looks at Chris.)* How? I mean why?

CHRIS

They all see *(Pointing at the mirror.)* that same image--us, at twenty. There is one more complication...

RAYE

Complication?

CHRIS

Yes.

RAYE

What?

CHRIS

Our twenty-year-old selves are here, too.

RAYE

How can we all be here at the same time? Isn't that supposed to cause some kind of cosmic disaster?

CHRIS

I don't know. I haven't come face-to-face with my younger self yet.

RAYE

If you haven't come face-to-face, then how do you know you're here?

CHRIS

I saw me.

RAYE

(A beat as if trying to absorb all this for a moment.) Have you seen me? I mean my younger self?

CHRIS

I spoke to her when she tried to get my clothes off.

RAYE

She did what?

CHRIS

Don't you remember that night? You and Joan had a bet or something to see if you could get the guys to take their clothes off.

RAYE

I had forgotten all about that.

CHRIS

Well, your younger self is still acting out that bet. Except that I made her mad.

RAYE

I don't understand.

CHRIS

I'll explain it later. So far I've mostly tried to watch from a distance.

RAYE

It didn't look like you were watching from a distance with Emily just now.

CHRIS

No, I was just trying to get some/ information from her--

RAYE

/It looked like you were trying to get something! I was right. We never should have gotten together.

CHRIS

I'm not willing to throw away the past thirty years of our lives as a mistake. To say that our kids and everything we've done doesn't matter. I don't know exactly what I'm supposed to do here, on this night, at this time. But something brought us both back here, and I am determined to find out why.

RAYE

And what do you expect me to do while you're groping Emily?/ Just sit here in the middle of nowhere?

CHRIS

I wasn't groping her! I need to get something settled! We don't need to risk the future. Your wandering around doubles the odds of us bumping into our past selves.

RAYE

And your wandering around doesn't pose a risk?

CHRIS

Please. Just stay put.

CHRIS exits. RAYE sits dejectedly. A small flash of lightning. A moment later. PAUL enters.

PAUL

Rachael? Is that you?

RAYE

Paul?

PAUL

Finally!

RAYE

You have a Superman outfit on!

PAUL

Of course, because you took my clothes.

RAYE

Your clothes?

PAUL

Look, about that kiss back there.

RAYE
Kiss?

PAUL
Yeah. When we kissed.

RAYE
We did? (*Remembering.*) That's right we did.

PAUL
I just couldn't help myself. I probably told you too much about my feelings for you and scared you off, but you inspire me to be bold.

RAYE
I do? (*He puts his arms around her.*)

PAUL
Moonlight becomes you.

RAYE
Look, Paul., I am really flattered/ but I'm a

PAUL
/No, let me finish. From the first moment I met you I sensed that there was something special about you. I don't want to waste this opportunity. If you don't take a chance you never know, right?

RAYE
Paul, my life hasn't quite turned out like I thought it would.

PAUL
It's never too late. I believe in the here and now. The future is still an open book.
He begins kissing her neck.

RAYE
Paul...are you trying to seduce me?

PAUL
Is it working?

RAYE
I don't know.. Maybe. Paul. Look I can't do this right now. I'm mar.. um committed.

PAUL
 You are?

RAYE
 I shouldn't be doing this. Chris is...

PAUL
 Christopher? Are you and Christopher seeing each other? I don't want to create a problem between you two.

RAYE
(To herself.) Too late for that.

PAUL
 What?

RAYE
(Sits down.) Sorry. No. Don't worry about it. *(In self reflection.)* What the hell am I doing here?

PAUL
 I know why I'm here.

RAYE
 Lately all I feel is scared and angry. *(She leans back against a tree.)* I just want to feel alive and wanted again.

PAUL
(Leans in gently.) I want you.

RAYE
 It's kind of you to say that.

PAUL
 I'm not just saying that. I mean it.

He leans in to kiss her but she stops him.

RAYE
 Paul. We shouldn't be doing this.

PAUL
 You talked about wanting to feel alive. I'm right here. But if you want me to stop then just tell me.

RAYE

No it's ..You know what? To hell with him.

PAUL

With who?

RAYE

Never mind. If he can be stuck in the past, so can I.

PAUL

(Takes her hand.) Come on. *(Pulls her up.)*

RAYE

Where are we going?

PAUL

To throw caution to the wind.

*PAUL pulls RAYE offstage. Lightning flashes.
RACHAEL and EMILY enter from different
direction in another part of the woods.*

RACHAEL

Oh. It's you. Where's Christopher?

EMILY

He was with you when I saw him last.

RACHAEL

(She slumps against a tree.) I'm so sick of these damn woods.

EMILY

Did you and Christopher work things out?

RACHAEL

Work what out?

EMILY

The coat thing or whatever you were ticked about.

RACHAEL

What's going on between you and Christopher?

EMILY

I've asked him to come to Hong Kong with me.

RACHAEL

What?

EMILY

My father offered me a job and I've invited Christopher to go with me.

RACHAEL

Are you in love with him?

EMILY

No.

RACHAEL

He obviously is attracted to you.

CHRIS starts to enter, but stops when he sees them. He stays hidden at the side to overhear the conversation.

EMILY

Christopher is free to be with whoever he wants. I have no control over that.

RACHAEL

Do you have feelings for him?

EMILY

(Laughs.) You assume that attraction equals love. Attraction is just that. Attraction. "I want you" is not the same as "I want you forever" or even "I want you and only you." I asked Christopher to come with me because he's fun to be with and talented. Yes, I'm attracted to him. Would I like to have sex with him? Yes. You don't have to be in love to enjoy sex. In fact it's better if you don't. That way feelings don't get in the way.

RACHAEL

I've don't know that I've ever met a woman like you. Lots of guys, but never a woman.

EMILY

I'll loan you my copy of the *Joy of Sex*. It's still on *Cosmo Magazine's* best seller list. You should read it.

RACHAEL

You should at least be honest with Christopher about what you're doing. No matter how you define it, I think he views your attraction to him as a sign that you want a relationship.

EMILY

You were trying to get his clothes off tonight, too.

RACHAEL

I don't care about the stupid bet. I have feelings for him/ not just sexually.

EMILY

/Yeah right.

RACHAEL

I want a relationship with him. *(She takes a beat.)* Christopher used his coat to describe love. He talked about hanging on to it, and being sad when it frayed away until nothing was left. I think for him/ love is more--

EMILY

/that's why I don't fall in love. I don't want frayed anything! When the adventure's over, what's the point? Move on.

RACHAEL

I feel sorry for you.

EMILY

Before you shed any tears why don't we see who Christopher leaves with at the end of the night. Then we can talk about who should feel sorry.

RACHAEL

(Stands to leave.) Yes. Let's let see.

CHRIS exits before RACHAEL exits. Emily waits a moment then exits as STEVE and JOAN enter a different part of the woods. STEVE is now fully dressed and shivering under the blanket.

STEVE

Has the temperature dropped? I'm freezing.

JOAN

You weren't cold at all in the water.

STEVE

That's because your body kept me warm. I thought you weren't going to let me touch you with poison ivy on me.

JOAN
The water washed it off.

STEVE
(*Kisses her.*) That was really nice.

JOAN
Yes, it was.

STEVE
I wonder where everyone else is?

JOAN
Hopefully, they made a fire. I'm a little cold, too.

STEVE
They're all probably sitting around drinking beer and laughing. Tarzan Lord of the Poison Ivy.

JOAN
I didn't think it was laughable.

STEVE
Really?

JOAN
Yeah. I think there is a Lord of the Jungle inside you. You just need to learn not to slip on banana peels. I'll tell you a secret. I've always had a thing for Tarzan ever since I saw him swinging on a vine with Jane in those old black and white movies.

STEVE
Why?

JOAN
I loved the idea of being in the wild without people always judging you.

STEVE
I don't think people judge you.

JOAN
See, that's why I like you. You don't even notice. Yes, people judge me. Guys have judged me my whole life.

STEVE

I never-

JOAN

-You're different. I grew up in a neighborhood with a bunch of boys. They'd always give me hell about being a girl and kept me off of the ball field, out of the clubhouse, you know. The only way I could get back at them was to say things that made them a little uncomfortable and that evened the playing field.

STEVE

I just thought you liked to talk about sex.

JOAN

It's a defense mechanism. Some times I don't know when to turn it off.

JOAN shivers from the cold.

STEVE

You want to share my blanket?

JOAN

Thanks.

STEVE AND JOAN exit as PAUL and RAYE enter another part of the woods. Clearly, nothing has happened.

RAYE

I'm sorry, Paul.

PAUL

Did I do something wrong?

RAYE

No. No, not at all. (*Referring to the movie, "The Graduate".*) I just feel like Mrs. Robinson.

PAUL

The English Lit teacher, Mrs. Robinson?

RAYE

No, a different Mrs. Robinson, much different. It's not important. But, thank you.

PAUL

For what? We didn't do anything.

RAYE

For wanting to do something. For making me feel young.

PAUL

You are young.

RAYE

Paul, you were always incredibly nice to me. Thank you for that, but I'm just not in a place where something can happen between us. I just want to be friends. Okay?

PAUL

Are you sure I didn't do anything wrong?

RAYE

I'm sure.

She kisses his cheek.

PAUL

(Dejected.) Okay. I guess I better go find my clothes. Where did you put them?

RAYE

Why don't you try back by the bar.

PAUL

Okay. Will you walk with me there?

RAYE

I want to stay here alone for a little bit longer. You go on ahead and I'll be along shortly.

PAUL starts to leave.

RAYE

Oh, and Paul?

PAUL

Yes?

RAYE

Let's not mention any of this to the others.

PAUL

Why?

RAYE
They might not understand.

PAUL
(Reluctantly.) All right.

PAUL exits.

RAYE
(Looks off after Paul.) Sorry, Superman.

LIGHTNING FLASHES. CHRISTOPHER enters.

CHRISTOPHER
Rachael! There you are.

RAYE
(Shocked to see the young Christopher.) Chris?

CHRISTOPHER
I know you are probably upset about Emily.

RAYE
Yes...I mean, no. I don't really know what I mean. I'm just confused.

CHRISTOPHER
Me, too.

RAYE
About what?

CHRISTOPHER
About everything.

RAYE
What do you mean?

CHRISTOPHER
Do you think things happen for a reason?

RAYE
Why?

CHRISTOPHER

I mean tonight is my birthday. I should be celebrating. I should be...

RAYE

Happy?

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah, but I'm torn...

RAYE

Why?

CHRISTOPHER suddenly kisses RAYE.

RAYE

Why did you just kiss me?

CHRISTOPHER

Because I had to.

RAYE

I don't/ understand why

CHRISTOPHER

/Because my heart is telling me there's something special with you.

RAYE

There is?

CHRISTOPHER

I've been running around these woods tonight and trying to decide which direction to go with my life. To throw caution to the wind and take off or to stay here and keep the promises I made... and build a relationship.. with... you.

RAYE

Me?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. I want adventure and excitement. I'm not afraid of it. I love adrenaline rushes. But I want more...someone who grounds me and makes me a better person in the other times when life isn't about flying off to exotic places. When it just two people alone in the woods on a summer night or in a rain storm. That's the more... I want.

Something inside me says that person is you. *(Suddenly feels embarrassed.)* I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said all that.

RAYE

Why?

CHRISTOPHER

Because I don't know if you feel the same way.

RAYE

(Moved by his statement. Smiles.) I did. I mean I do.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm glad.

RAYE

Me, too.

PAUL (O.S.)

Rachael? Anybody?

CHRISTOPHER

(Starts to call out.) Over-

RAYE

(Cutting him off.) Why don't you go find him and I'll catch up with you back at the bar.

CHRISTOPHER

Are you sure?

RAYE

Yeah. Go on.

CHRISTOPHER looks at her unsure and then exits. RAYE looks after him and then exits in search of CHRIS as JOAN and STEVE enter a different part of the woods with the blanket draped over JOAN'S arm and carrying the beer. Emily comes on from a different direction.

EMILY

Well, look at the two of you.

STEVE

We were just out looking for everyone else.

PAUL enters.

PAUL

Steve? Joan? Is that you?

JOAN

Yes, it's us.

PAUL

Finally. I was beginning to think I would never find you guys. Has anyone seen my clothes?

STEVE

Nope, sorry.

STEVE puts down the beer as he moves over to a tree and tries to nonchalantly scratch his butt against it.

PAUL

I've got to find where Rachael put them.

EMILY enters.

EMILY

Where have you all been?

JOAN

(While scratching the inside of her thigh.) We just went for a little swim.

EMILY

(EMILY watches STEVE and JOAN.) Oh, really? You do any swinging on that vine?

STEVE

No. No. *(Crossing his legs to try to itch his crotch.)* Why do you ask?

EMILY

Looks like you're having a little poison ivy action there.

STEVE

No. The lake washed it all off, thanks.

PAUL

Poison ivy doesn't wash off completely, you know.

JOAN

What? What do you mean?

PAUL

Once it come in contact with the skin the oil has already penetrated the surface if it's on for more than five minutes.

STEVE

But Joan and I--

JOAN

Shut up, Steve! I just helped him wash some of it off in the lake.

CHRISTOPHER enters.

STEVE

Christopher, where have you been?

CHRISTOPHER

Searching the woods like everyone else.

PAUL

Have you seen Rachael?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. She said she would meet us back at the bar.

STEVE

Lets all stay together this time.

PAUL

(Turns to Emily.) Joan, do you know where Rachael put my clothes?

EMILY

I'm Emily. I think what you need more than clothes are your glasses.

STEVE

Come on, Paul. Christopher, you grab the beer.

They all start to head off towards the bar.

CHRISTOPHER

Sure. Hey Emily, can I talk with you a second?

The others exit. EMILY waits.

CHRISTOPHER

I really want to tell you how grateful I am for the invitation to go with you. You are the most exciting woman I've ever met.... but....

EMILY

But?

CHRISTOPHER

I've decided I'm staying here. At least for this year. There are some people I don't want to walk away from right now.

EMILY

(Disappointed.) Are you sure?

CHRISTOPHER

Pretty sure.

EMILY

You and I would have had a lot of fun.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm sure we would have. Why don't you go on ahead and I'll wait here for Rachael.

EMILY

I guess she wins after all.

CHRISTOPHER

What do you mean?

EMILY

Forget it. If you change your mind, I don't leave until Monday.

EMILY exits. CHRISTOPHER sits down. RAYE walks on, but stops when she sees CHRISTOPHER and stays out of sight.

A FLICKER OF LIGHTNING.

*CHRIS walks on but doesn't see RAYE.
CHRISTOPHER spots CHRIS. He doesn't
recognize the older version of himself. RAYE
stays back in the shadows to watch.*

*RACHAEL walks on but doesn't see RAYE.
RACHAEL sees them and is stunned to see two
CHRISTOPHERs and stays hidden in the brush.*

RACHAEL

(Softly.) There are two...

CHRISTOPHER

Oh. I didn't realize anyone else was in the woods tonight... *(Looks at him closer.)*
Do I know you?

CHRIS

(Looks around.) Well, the world is still here.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

CHRIS

Nothing, sorry.

CHRISTOPHER

You remind me of my dad.

CHRIS

Really? How strange.

CHRISTOPHER

So are you lost, too?

CHRIS

Yeah. In more ways than one.

CHRISTOPHER

Me, too. Want a beer?

CHRIS

Sure.

CHRIS sits and CHRISTOPHER hands him a beer.

CHRISTOPHER

My name's Christopher.

CHRIS

(Hesitates a moment.) Mine's Chris.

CHRISTOPHER

Wow. Really?

CHRIS

Yeah. You look like you've had a rough night.

CHRISTOPHER

It's my birthday, and it's been confusing.

CHRIS

I'll agree with you on that. *(Hesitates not wanting to give too much information.)* It's my birthday, too.

CHRISTOPHER

Really? That's wild.

CHRIS

Tonight was supposed to be a celebration of my life. Funny thing was as I looked around I was overwhelmed by doubt.

CHRISTOPHER

I know exactly what you mean. There's this girl, Emily. She's challenges all the rules about relationships. She's exciting. Every time I'm with her it's like a bolt of electricity ~~going~~ goes through me. She offered me the chance to go to Hong Kong. It's what I always said I wanted... yet....

CHRIS

...You turned her down.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah.

CHRIS

Why?

CHRISTOPHER

Because I can't really see what happens after the thrill is gone. This other girl...

CHRIS

Rachael?

CHRISTOPHER

You know her?

CHRIS

I, uhh, am an old friend of the family. You were saying...

CHRISTOPHER

(Thinking.) She's not exciting like Emily.

RACHAEL/ RAYE stiffen a bit.

But she's smart and funny and warm. She's happy without needing an adrenaline rush to feel alive. That's what I find attractive about her. I think I could be really happy with Rachael. I just wish Rachael was a little more... adventurous some times.

*RACHAEL/RAYE realize he is right. A
FLICKER OF LIGHTNING illuminates the
woods. CHRIS and CHRISTOPHER look up.*

CHRISTOPHER

Do you think everybody has an Emily and a Rachael?

CHRIS

(Laughs.) You mean the same way Rachael has a Christopher and a Paul. I guess we are all flies drawn to light. Hoping not to get burned.

*The moonlight suddenly shifts in the trees
revealing RAYE and RACHAEL. EVERYONE
sees each other.*

CHRIS

But if you're lucky the right light brings out the best in you.

*The moon light goes back down on RAYE and
RACHAEL but stays on CHRIS and
CHRISTOPHER..*

CHRISTOPHER

Did you just see.....

CHRIS

(Looking up at the moon.) When this night began, I wanted to feel that electricity again. I was drawn to that bolt of lighting. But as I wandered these woods, I discovered that I already had the moon, I was too distracted chasing after distant stars.

CHRISTOPHER

(Looks closely at CHRIS and suddenly has a feeling he is looking at himself.) Wait a minute.. Are you? *(Feeling overwhelmed.)* Me.....I mean....

CHRIS

(Needing to go before CHRISTOPHER asks too many questions.) You need to catch up with Rachael. I think I can find my way out now. Thanks for the beer.

CHRISTOPHER

Wait...

CHRIS

(Starts to exit and then turns back.) I'm not supposed to do this but what the hell. It's a strange night anyway. I want to tell you something while I have the chance.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah?

CHRIS

Listen more and don't try to fix every problem.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay. What else?

CHRIS

Don't sell the 'Vette.

CHRISTOPHER

Why?

CHRIS

Never mind. You'll understand later.

CHRIS exits.

CHRISTOPHER stops and thinks for a moment and then exits. RACHAEL stares at RAYE for a long moment.

RAYE

He's right about the vette.

RACHAEL

But, wait....

RAYE smiles then she exits in the direction CHRIS went. RACHAEL slowly turns confused and exits in the direction CHRISTOPHER went. The lights fade.

SCENE TWO: OUTSIDE THE BAR

STEVE, JOAN, EMILY, and PAUL are there. Paul is now dressed with his glasses on. RACHAEL enters.

JOAN

Rachael! We've been looking for you.

RACHAEL

It was crazy. At one point I was just wandering around in the woods and then suddenly I saw something...

PAUL

What?

RACHAEL

(Decides not to say it.) The path back to here.

PAUL

Where's Christopher?

CHRISTOPHER enters.

STEVE

Speak of the devil.

CHRISTOPHER

(Carrying his coat.) I found my coat.

JOAN

And we found Rachael.

STEVE

Let's not split up again. It's taken all night just to get us back together.

JOAN

How about we walk over to the beach and have our picnic there.

PAUL

Is there any food left?

JOAN

Yeah. We've still got some cupcakes and marshmallows.

EMILY

Let's build a fire and we can roast 'em. Anyone got matches or a lighter?

PAUL

I got a lighter. I always carry one.

JOAN

But you don't smoke.

EMILY

Always ready to save the day, right?

PAUL

(Smiles.) Yes.

EMILY

(Puts her hand on his chest.) You do have muscles under here. Man of Steel is right. I never noticed.

PAUL

(A little embarrassed.) Well I ...

EMILY

So which one was your favorite Superman, George Reeves or Christopher Reeve?

PAUL

(Thrilled.) Christopher Reeve of course!

EMILY

You look kinda like him in this light...

PAUL

I do?

EMILY

(As they exit.) How do you feel about Hong Kong...

JOAN and STEVE start to head off.

STEVE

(As they exit.) Hey, Christopher bring the beer.

CHRISTOPHER pulls RACHAEL aside and they stay for a moment as everyone else exits.

CHRISTOPHER

Rachael, can I talk to you a second?

RACHAEL

Okay.

CHRISTOPHER

Something strange happened in the woods tonight.

RACHAEL

...lots of strange things happened tonight.

CHRISTOPHER

This was something I can't explain. I met this guy and he was so familiar and then I saw you, well, two of you.

CHRIS and RAYE enter unseen.

RACHAEL

(Pretending she doesn't know.) Really?

CHRISTOPHER

It was so strange. I was talking to this guy about you and Emily and then you appeared.

RACHAEL

What about Emily?

CHRISTOPHER

I only saw you.

RACHAEL

How do you feel about her?

CHRISTOPHER

Remember that cupcake trick I showed you. I think Emily was always just the frosting on top.

RACHAEL

So what does that make me?

CHRISTOPHER

The best part.

RACHAEL

So are you saying I don't have any pizzazz?

CHRISTOPHER

No. I'm saying you're the cake... *(He kisses her.)* And the frosting. *(Kisses her again.)* And the sprinkles on top...

RACHAEL

(Although enjoying this, she stops him.) Let's just take this one step at a time. *(Puts her arm in his.)* All this talk of cupcakes have made me hungry.

A FLICKER OF LIGHTNING. They both look up.

RACHAEL

It's clouding up a little, but it doesn't look like rain.

CHRISTOPHER

It's just heat lightning.

RACHAEL

I don't mind getting wet if it does rain. How about a little skinny dipping in the lake. You game?

CHRISTOPHER

Sounds like an adventure.

They both smile and exit. CHRIS and RAYE walk out into the clearing looking off after CHRISTOPHER and RACHAEL.

RAYE

I don't remember asking you to go skinny dipping that night.

CHRIS

I don't either.

RAYE

(Looking off after Christopher and Rachael.) Do you think what happened tonight will change them, *(looks at Chris)* I mean us?

CHRIS

Maybe we aren't supposed to remember things forever? I didn't remember a lot of what happened tonight.

RAYE

Me either.

CHRIS

Maybe your grandparents had it right.

RAYE

My grandparents?

CHRIS

Your twenty-year old self told me tonight you wouldn't mind ending up like your grandparents who were married for 60 years and still held hands.

CHRIS offers RAYE his hand. SHE smiles at him and takes his hand. A FLASH OF LIGHTNING.

RAYE

Think it's gonna finally rain?

CHRIS

(Looks up and then puts his arms around RAYE.) I think we can survive a little storm.

They kiss.

A CRACK OF LIGHTNING blinds the stage with a LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE THREE: INSIDE THE BAR

In the darkness a rowdy crowd of people yell “Speech! Speech!” A spotlight reveals CHRIS with his back to the audience and RAYE standing next to him with her back to the audience. In the back is a banner that reads. “Happy 50th Birthday!” They both turn around together and look out at the crowd confused for a minute until they realize they are back at the start.

MALE VOICE

You both look kinda lost!

CHRIS

(Looks at RAYE.) Not anymore. Thanks, thanks everyone. I used to think of life as kind of a balance sheet and there was a lot more debit than credit, you know.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Man, is this gonna be corny or what?

CHRIS

Hey, it’s my birthday! Just stick with me, here. As I turn fifty today—half way through, I hope.--*(Laughs.)* I understand that life and love are about more than a spread sheet. *(Looks at RAYE and takes her hand.)* It’s not just about the adventures you’ve banked. A real life is about all of the parts, the warmth and the wounds. The struggles we face are meant to make us rediscover where we’ve been and where we are going. It’s about having people who are there for you *(Gives Raye a look.)* even when you’re lost in the woods. Fifty isn’t the end. It’s the beginning of a new adventure *(Warmly, to Raye)* if you’ll have me?

RAYE

(Laughing.) If you’re lucky.

Crowd laughs. CHRIS turns back to focus on the audience.

Then maybe, just maybe we'll have a fighting chance that the story will be...and they fell in love...again and again until the end of time.

CHRIS and RAYE kiss. EVERYONE laughs and cheers. WAITRESS enters.

WAITRESS

Excuse me but the manager needs you to move your Corvette because its blocking the delivery truck.

CHRIS

(Looks at RAYE and smiles.) I kept it?

RAYE

We kept it.

WAITRESS exits.

RAYE

Chris and I made a treat for all of you in honor of his birthday. Cupcakes for everyone!

Everyone cheers.

Lights fade out.