

# Heat Lightning

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## HEAT LIGHTNING

### SYNOPSIS:

Chris on the night of his 50th birthday party has a argument with his wife about the decisions he made on a pivotal night on his 20th birthday in the same location. A strange lightning strike sends him and his wife Raye back to that fateful night in a comic and romantic romp in the woods with mistaken identities passionate choices that makes him come face to face with his younger self who teaches him about why he made the choices he did.

TIME: Fluid

### CHARACTERS: 8

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

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

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.

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

### SETTING:

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.

#### 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. *(Chris stares at the waitress like he's seen a ghost.)*

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...Some things must be sacrificed to preserve the peace. *(Crowd laughter. Looks at sign again.)* Fifty. Yeah... Thanks everyone for coming! *(He looks off towards where the waitress exited lost in thought.)*

*Laughter from the crowd.*

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 for staring at you like that. It's just. You remind me so much of someone.

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

WAITRESS

I better get back to work.

*WAITRESS exits.*

RAYE

People are looking for you.

*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, this place... *(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. Tonight is the second time you've said that.

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 different 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 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?

*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.

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.

EMILY

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

*JOAN grabs the blankets. EMILY and JOAN run off into the woods.*

RACHAEL

Wait up!

JOAN (O.S.)

Come on Rachael! Grab the beer!

RACHAEL

*(Grabbing the beer.)* Ok coming. *(She runs off reluctantly.)*

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.

*STEVE gestures, "Let's go".*

CHRISTOPHER

Wait. Are you and Joan going to get together?

STEVE

She's been flirting with me all summer. But we were always in a big work group with a supervisor. Tonight I intend to find out what her intentions are. How about you? Rachael? Or is Emily more your type?

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 out of his clothes 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

You both are all talk. You've been flirting all summer and this is the first opportunity to get them alone outside of work.

JOAN

You've haven't been alone with them either. I've seen the way you look at Christopher.

EMILY

I wouldn't mind spending more time with him, but I've got bigger plans.

JOAN

You're just afraid to take my bet!

EMILY

(Laughs) Ok, what the hell. What's one night. I'll take that bet. Winner gets a bottle of the alcohol of their choice?

RACHAEL

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

JOAN

Alright. 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

You're saying we talk them out of their pants? How do you do that?

EMILY

That's exactly it. First one back here with someone's pants wins.

RACHAEL

I don't/ know

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

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

Damnit, I got something 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 so long.

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?

I'm... young!

CHRIS

...and?

EMILY

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

CHRIS

*(Laughing.)* How old am I?

EMILY

*(Very serious.)* Yes. How old?

CHRIS

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--

EMILY

/Twenty? You can't be.

CHIRS

Can't be?

EMILY

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

How old do you think I am?

CHRIS

Did you hit your head on something?

EMILY

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

CHRIS

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

EMILY

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

CHRIS

EMILY

What?

CHRIS

As the one outside the bar. But the bar was closed when I left it.

EMILY

Of course, it's closed. It closed 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 now 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 this 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 the rest of the group went off with a load of trash and 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.

I do?  
STEVE

*JOAN starts to unbutton Steve's pants.*

STEVE  
*(Scared and excited at the same time.)* Oh, boy! Wait! Maybe we should take this a little slower. I mean I'm.. I've never...*(Steve slows her down.)*

JOAN  
You've never...

STEVE  
*(Bluffing)* Oh no! No! I've done it lots of times. I just mean I've ...never had a girl start taking my clothes off before she took off her clothes.

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  
*(Caught in a lie.)* Who? 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?





*RACHAEL walks on backing up from a different direction as Paul walks on backing up from a different direction looking off in the other direction. They bump into each other.*

RACHAEL & PAUL

Ahhhh.

RACHAEL

You scared me!

PAUL

Sorry, you scared me, too. Did you hear that?

RACHAEL

Yes! *(Pointing in the opposite direction.)* I thought it came from that direction.

PAUL

Is that a coyote or a bear?

RACHAEL

It sounded more like a baboon howling.

PAUL

These woods are crazy. It's like you can't pin down where a sound comes from. I haven't seen anyone since we left the bar. Maybe we should build a fire to signal the others. It would also keep away whatever animal made that awful noise.

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 Superman underwear.*

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. 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! I think you should just let your secret identity out for tonight.

PAUL

You do?

RACHAEL

Yes. I'll just hang your clothes right over there. *(Indicates a spot offstage.)*

PAUL

Thanks!

RACHAEL

You know what? Why don't you wait right here and I'll just run back and get a couple bottles of beer for us.

PAUL

*(Not sure.)* I don't know. Being alone in the woods in my underwear? What if the others come along. They 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?

EMLY

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?

EMILY

Right now.

CHRISTOPHER

Now?

EMILY

Take your clothes off.

CHRISTOPHER

Wait, what?

EMILY

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.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not afraid of it.

EMILY

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

CHRISTOPHER

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



CONTACT MICHAEL COCHRAN TO READ THE REST OF THE PLAY AT  
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