

CANYONLANDS

A Drama in Two Acts

by

Courtney White

This place has become so diverse nobody gets along anymore.

- a resident of Boulder, Utah

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Canyonlands

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This play explores the American, especially western, phenomena of rootlessness and the effects it has on families and communities at the start of the 21st century.

The play is set inside a bicycle shop in a small town in southeastern Utah during one summer. The shop's establishment has caused conflict between its owner, Joshua Rose, who recently arrived with his family from Los Angeles, and the last remaining farmer within town limits, who doesn't like the changes he sees taking place to his home town.

Joshua Rose is an entrepreneur with a Midas touch – every business he has started, and there have been many, has succeeded financially, practically without effort. He expects the bicycle shop to do the same. The trouble is Josh is incapable of settling down, emotionally or physically. He has no roots, no place he calls home. Utah is just another stop in a never-ending search for...something. It's always about the next town, the next business opportunity, the next career, the next move. The consequence of his restlessness in combination with his financial security, however, is that Josh doesn't have any idea of who he is.

The play starts when Leslie, his wife, decides she is sick of living “on the run” and wants to settle down and open a bookstore in town. Alarmed at the prospect of putting down roots, Joshua insists that they leave. A power struggle ensues within the Rose family. Complicating matters, Josh has ‘adopted’ a young man as the shop repairman for the summer and becomes attached to him despite, or perhaps because of, the young man's obscure origins. The young man's restlessness opens Josh's eyes to his own predicament.

Other characters include the Roses' two combative daughters, one of whom develops an attachment to the good-looking son of the farmer, with consequences of its own; the zen Buddhist bicycle salesman, Tad, who is not as clueless as he first appears; and Howard, a pushy lawyer and fellow big-city refugee who followed Joshua to the ‘wilds’ of southern Utah when his marriage fell apart. Howard also senses opportunity in redrock country, much to Joshua's ultimate chagrin.

A plot twist halfway through the play turns everyone's expectations upside down. And much like the town he has invaded, Joshua will never be the same again.

Cast:

Joshua Rose, father
Leslie Rose, mother
Erin Rose, daughter, 17
Samantha Rose, daughter, 14
PJ, a bicycle repairman, 17
Vernon Moss, a farmer
Kyle Moss, his son, 17
Tad, a salesperson
Howard, a lawyer
A Sheriff, two Male Customers, two Female Customers

Set:

The interior of a bicycle shop.

There is a long window on the left, with a bench underneath and a street lamp outside. There is a front door next to the window. A rack of used bicycles sits underneath a “RENTAL” sign. In the back is a dutch door that leads to a bicycle repair room.

There is a counter in the right-middle portion of the set. There are stools, a cash register, and a phone/fax machine. A large gap in the right-hand wall leads to the Showroom. There is a door marked “W” in this wall. Above both are two small windows.

On a wall is a large map of the Canyonlands.

Setting:

The action takes place during summer at the turn of the (20th) century in Jericho, a small town in southeastern Utah.

Act I:

Scene One: Tuesday morning
Scene Two: Tuesday afternoon
Scene Three: Wednesday morning
Scene Four: Wednesday afternoon

Act II:

Scene One: the following Sunday night
Scene Two: Monday morning
Scene Three: Tuesday afternoon

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: We are in the main room of a sparse but quaint bicycle shop. There is a long window, a front door, and a rack of bikes to the left. A “RENTAL” sign hangs above the bikes. A counter, an exit to a Showroom, two restroom doors, and two windows above them are on the right. A big map of the Canyonlands rests on a wall.

AT RISE: Early morning light streams through the long window. On the floor, sandwiched between the counter and the rack of bicycles is a SHAPE in a sleeping bag. A cheap alarm clock sits nearby.

(After a few seconds the alarm clock goes off. A hand emerges from the sleeping bag and gropes for the clock. It finds the target and the sound stops)

(After a few seconds the clock goes off again. The hand gropes for the offending clock, finds it, and hurls it into the showroom, offstage. The sound stops)

(Four PEOPLE cross in front of the sunny window, outside the shop, casting long shadows across the floor. The muffled voices of an animated conversation can be heard. They pause outside the entrance door)

(Suddenly the figure in the sleeping bag sits bolt upright. PJ, a lanky, fresh-faced lad of approximately seventeen years of age, wearing a white T-shirt and briefs, scrambles out of the bag as a key turns in the front door's lock)

(PJ hurriedly gathers his belongings together into a teetering armload. He glances around the shop as if looking for a place to hide. A shoe falls. As he bends over to pick it up he accidentally knocks a bike in the rack. The bikes fall like a stack of dominoes)

(The front door opens. The bell tinkles merrily. Panicked, PJ rushes to the nearest closed door, the one marked 'W', opens it, revealing a restroom, steps inside quickly and shuts the door behind him)

(JOSHUA enters. He is dressed in casual but expensive slacks and a golf-style shirt. He carries a copy of the New York Times under his arm)

(LESLIE enters. She is dressed matter-of-factly in jeans, and a cotton shirt. She is followed by ERIN, who is well-dressed, and SAM, who is not)

JOSH

All I'm asking for is a vote, fair and square, nothing more.

LESLIE

But why here?

JOSH

I thought it would be better if we voted on neutral territory.

LESLIE

I don't consider your bicycle shop neutral territory.

JOSH

Well, it is to me.

LESLIE

You know, letting the kids vote in family decisions is becoming a bit too democratic for me. It's like letting everyone put a hand on the steering wheel of a car. Sooner or later there's bound to be an accident.

JOSH

What? We've had some good votes. Remember when you didn't want to go see that movie last week and we did? You wound up thinking it was a great flick.

(LESLIE holds her ground near the door as JOSH crosses the room and drops the newspaper on the counter)

LESLIE

What about the time the three of us wanted to go rafting down that river and you didn't? Remember how you panicked when you saw water in the bottom of the raft and jumped out because you thought we were sinking? Remember clinging to that rock for hours while a zillion search-and-rescue guys hollered at you to let go?

JOSH

Hey, I became good friends with that rock. I like democracy. I know it can be a pain sometimes, but I still think it's good a principle for them to grow up with. It's certainly better than what I had: Do this! Don't do that! Go to your room! Stop torturing the cat! I vowed to never be ruled by tyranny again, or to rule by it. It hasn't been so bad.

LESLIE

That's because we used to outnumber them. Remember Sam's first vote?

SAM

A red '65 Cadillac convertible!

JOSH

That was a cool car.

LESLIE

It was an indulgence we couldn't afford.

JOSH

What good is an indulgence if you can't afford it?

LESLIE

I threatened a coup d'etat.

JOSH

Over a Coup de Ville, I remember. What's your point?

LESLIE

There are very good reasons most teenagers aren't allowed to vote.

ERIN

(turns quickly)

Would you two just shut up and get on with the vote?

LESLIE

See what I mean? What's wrong with a little tyranny now and then?

JOSH

Plenty. Call me the last idealist on the planet. I still believe democracy's a good idea.

LESLIE

This isn't democracy, it's sour grapes. Don't get them confused.

JOSH

It's not sour grapes.

LESLIE

Josh, if the town council hadn't turned you down last week would we even be having this argument?

JOSH

We might. I've been thinking about leaving Jericho for a couple months actually.

LESLIE

Then why did you ask them for permission to open a microbrewery, of all things?

JOSH

Because I thought making beer would be fun.

LESLIE

This is southern Utah. You were there. You saw their faces. They were not amused.

JOSH

(waving a hand)

I was hoping to appeal to their sense of entrepreneurialness, or whatever. You know, the free market, and all that crap.

LESLIE

What did that one councilor call you - "immigrant scum"?

JOSH

I don't know what his problem was. He looked like he wanted to hit me. They're businesspeople. I was talking about economic opportunity.

LESLIE

You were talking about beer. I don't understand, if you've been thinking about leaving, why did you file a lawsuit against the city?

JOSH

That was Howard's idea. He thinks he can get the brewery decision overturned. He wants to shove it down their throats. Howard thinks he's the original tough guy.

LESLIE

A lawsuit's just going to make things worse.

JOSH

He doesn't care.

LESLIE

Neither, apparently, do you.

JOSH

That's not true. I care about how people feel, especially if they're potential customers. Trying to please all the people all the time is the first rule of business.

LESLIE

I thought your first rule of business was to be smarter than the customer.

JOSH

That too. Actually, I've decided the first rule of business is to have plenty of first rules. Just in case. Sam, Erin, come here please. It's time to vote.

ERIN

Finally! You two are such windbags.

SAM

Yeah, regular snow-blowers.

JOSH

Alright. Who wants to move back to Los Angeles?

(ERIN raises her hand dramatically. JOSH raises his more slowly. LESLIE folds her arms. SAM does nothing)

JOSH

Sam? What about our talk last night?

LESLIE

What talk last night?

SAM

I don't know. I don't like LA.

ERIN

Sam! You loved it. What about all your friends?

SAM

What friends? You mean all your friends. That and your mickey mall.

JOSH

We can go somewhere else Sam. What about San Francisco?

ERIN

Dad!

LESLIE

Josh!

SAM

I don't know. San Francisco doesn't sound very skanky.

JOSH

Skanky?

ERIN

You and your stupid thrills and chills.

JOSH

Is this about mountains? There are mountains near San Francisco, I think. Let's go there.

(LESLIE moves close to SAM)

LESLIE

Hold on here. You don't really want to leave Jericho, do you honey? What about your favorite places to skateboard? Could you give up The Iron Maiden? What about Mega-Death? Wouldn't you miss The Endless Void?

JOSH

(snaps fingers)

We can move to New York City. It's kind of like southern Utah, only with more people. It's got canyons.

(ERIN can't believe she's being ignored so she stomps off)

JOSH

How about Florida? We'll move right next to Disney World.

SAM

(looks up sharply, smiling)

Cool!

LESLIE

(counterattacks)

I'll buy you a new skateboard.

JOSH

I'll buy you a year's pass to the Magic Astrodome, or whatever it's called.

LESLIE

(rapidly)

I'll buy you two new skateboards.

JOSH

(faster)

I'll buy you a scooter.

LESLIE

(faster)

I'll buy you two scooters.

JOSH

I'll buy you a three-wheel ATV.

LESLIE

I'll buy you a four-wheel ATV.

JOSH

I'll buy you a dune buggy.

LESLIE

I'll buy you a motorcycle.

SAM

Cool! I vote with mom. A tie means we stay here, right? Fat!

JOSH

A motorcycle?

LESLIE

(slaps a hand to her forehead)

This is your fault.

SAM

A motorbike. How totally garbanzo! Minkin' shaker wipe out!

(SAM points a finger at ERIN. ERIN sticks her tongue out)

ERIN

Rock Head.

SAM

Store Slut.

(SAM parodies a fashion model on a runway as she walks)

ERIN

That's it! I can't stand any of you. I'm going to get a cappuccino. You know where I'll be if you need me, which you obviously don't.

(ERIN exits in a huff. SAM pulls a skateboard from behind the counter)

SAM

A motorbike. Totally Ozzie. This calls for a major shank. I think I'll do Total Annihilation.

(SAM crosses to the door and exits)

JOSH

Voting is still a good thing. In theory anyway.

LESLIE

Our daughter is on her way to Total Annihilation and you're still talking about democracy?

(SAM opens the door and leans in)

SAM

I forgot. Hey dad, it happened again.

(SAM nods at the collapsed row of bicycles and exits)

JOSH

(hollers toward the repair shop)

PJ! Come out here!

(to Leslie)

Are you really going to buy her a motorcycle?

LESLIE

Of course not.

JOSH

Good. Then, we can have another vote in a week.

(yells)

PJ!

(the door to the Women's restroom opens slowly. PJ stands inside his bag)

PJ

Good morning Mrs. Rose. How are you?

LESLIE

I'm fine PJ.

JOSH

What are you doing in the women's bathroom?

PJ

Nothing!

JOSH

Then come out of there. We need to have a little talk.

(after a pause PJ bunny-hops out into the room)

PJ

Sorry about the bikes Mr. Rose.

(leans over awkwardly, trying to right a bike)

Perhaps I should get dressed first.

JOSH

Perhaps you should.

(PJ hops quickly to the repair shop door and exits)

LESLIE

You're amazing. No one else in the world could move to a small town he never saw before, open a bicycle shop that no one said was needed, hire a Buddhist to sell bicycles that no one thought they needed, take in a young boy off the street as if he were a stray dog and make him the shop repairman, and still make money off the whole thing!

JOSH

You're just jealous.

LESLIE

Of course I'm jealous. I've been jealous since I've known you. You do the craziest thing you can think of - and you make it work! It's unnatural.

JOSH

It's perfectly natural. It's all part of my plan.

LESLIE

What plan? You hate plans.

JOSH

(speaks as he opens the store for business).

Exactly. Except for the plan to have no plans. I've been thinking about this - I've succeeded at everything I've tried when I should have failed, why? Because there was no plan. I trust my gut.

LESLIE

And now your gut is telling you to leave Jericho?

JOSH

Yes. Frankly, I'm finding it rather hard to pour my heart and soul into a bicycle.

LESLIE

That doesn't seem to be a problem for Tad. Or PJ.

JOSH

They're young, and the young take pride in odd things. Did I ever tell you about my grand scheme to make money when I was fifteen? Homeless people trading cards. Like baseball cards only with pictures of vagrants instead. I thought I could make a profit and help the poor bastards at the same time. Except I could never figure out why they kept trying to break my camera.

LESLIE

For a capitalist, you're one sick socialist. So what's the real reason for leaving this time?

JOSH

You make me so sound so shallow.

LESLIE

Josh, how many times have we moved since we've been married? Eight? Ten?

JOSH

Are you counting houses, or just cities?

LESLIE

Jobs. Careers. When we met you were selling computers on campus, remember? Then you bought a bar. Then you became a stockbroker, which was totally crazy. You've been a restaurant owner, a mobile home dealer, a frozen pizza entrepreneur, and even a dot-com guy, though it was never clear to me what you were actually selling on the Internet.

JOSH

(shrugs)

Me too.

LESLIE

And they all made money. One after another. Of course I'm jealous. You hardly broke a sweat. But what's next, Josh? What non-plan does your gut have in mind?

JOSH

I was thinking about gambling actually. It's hot. Maybe we could buy a riverboat. Wouldn't that be great, floating up and down the Mississippi like Mark Twain?

LESLIE

This is about my bookstore, isn't it?

JOSH

No, this is not about your bookstore.

LESLIE

It opens in less than a week and suddenly you're talking about moving? That's a coincidence?

JOSH

Yeah. I've been thinking about this for a while. Before the bookstore. I'm bored. I want to move on. Besides, I'm sick of all this damn red rock.

LESLIE

I'm sick of living on the run. I feel like a fugitive. Why can't we settle down?

JOSH

We can, and we will, but not in Jericho.

LESLIE

Why not Jericho? What happened Josh? You were crazy about this place when came here.

JOSH

I know, but I've decided there's too much sun here. It shines all day. It beats on my skin like a drum, it hurts my eyes. It's probably giving us cancer.

LESLIE

You worshipped the sun in Seattle! You said you were going to rust in all that rain.

JOSH

I know, but it never rains here, or when it does it washes half the mountain into the river. This country is too extreme. I want to go to someplace softer. What about New Orleans?

LESLIE

This is about my bookstore, isn't it?

JOSH

Of course not. I promise we'll stop moving next time. We'll settle down, I swear. You can start another bookstore.

LESLIE

Where, on a riverboat in a Louisiana swamp? What would I sell - *Fifty Ways to Beat the Dealer*? Postcards of crocodiles? I don't want to move to someplace softer. I want to stay here. I like it here. I like the red rock, and the sun. I like the people, even the tourists. I like the idea of selling books to them.

(pause)

You're afraid it will succeed. You don't want it to, because it's my idea, my dream, and not yours. Right?

JOSH

No! I like success. I don't care whose dream it is, if it makes us money.

LESLIE

What is it then? You don't think I can pull it off, do you?

JOSH

Hold on, there's a lot of my money invested in that bookstore....

LESLIE

(interrupts)

But nothing else. It opens in a week and you haven't even set foot inside the store. You haven't carried one box, or lifted one book. And now you're talking about leaving?

JOSH

(sighs)
I'm asking us to consider it.

LESLIE

And I'm asking us not to.

(the door opens and TAD saunters inside, leading a bike)

TAD

Good morning, howdy, top of the day to you all.

JOSH

You're late Tad.

TAD

Time is meaningless when you're in the middle of a ride. And this one was sweet. I hit Level Three early, near Teapot Rock, and then just kept climbing. By Sleepy Tom Canyon I was already in Level Four, after that I was flying through heaven. Miles are meaningless too. It's the ride that counts, not how far you go. You should try it Mr. Rose. You really should take a ride sometime.

LESLIE

(begins to leave)
That would be the day.

JOSH

Leslie wait!

LESLIE

Good-bye, I have work to do.

TAD

Everyone should ride a bike. What a wonderful world that would be.

(LESLIE exits. TAD walks down the ramp and exits)

JOSH

(yells)
Leslie! Tad! Don't forget to take a shower this time!
(looks at the fallen bikes)

PJ!

(PJ immediately appears at his door. He steps out and begins to set each bicycle upright. JOSH wanders over to a stool and sits down heavily)

PJ

I'm sorry Mr. Rose. It won't happen again.

JOSH

That's what you said the last time. And the time before that. Honestly PJ, you're a contradiction, a damn good mechanic in the body of a goofball. Just where did you learn to fix bikes anyway?

PJ

At home.

JOSH

Ah yes, your mythical home. Did your father teach you how to fix bikes?

PJ

No. I taught myself.

JOSH

Good for you. I'm mostly self-taught too. That way one doesn't have to deal with so many conflicting opinions about things. But you finished high school, didn't you PJ?

PJ

No, actually.

JOSH

Really? What does your family think about that?

(beat)

Do you even have a family?

PJ

No. And I don't want to talk about it.

JOSH

Why not? Are you an orphan? A runaway? A mass murderer? Did you have parents at some time in your life?

(PJ slowly shakes 'yes')

Ah, progress. What happened to them?

PJ

I said I don't want to discuss it.

JOSH

PJ, you seem like a nice kid. I took you in for the summer because you remind me of someone I know. Fortunately you can fix bikes too, but honestly, you've got to tell me more about yourself.

PJ

Who do I remind you of?

JOSH

To be truthful you remind me of me. I drifted for a time after finishing high school, taking odd jobs.

PJ

If I remind you of you then why do you need to know anything else about me? Sir.

JOSH

True, but at least I have a real name. What kind of name is PJ anyway? Do you have a last name? You know, instead of paying you in cash, which could get me in big trouble, I could demand your Social Security number. Do you even have a Social Security number?

PJ

Yes.

JOSH

More progress.

PJ

**(suddenly hot)
Leave me alone! Ok?**

JOSH

Ok.

(KYLE MOSS, dressed in western clothes and a cowboy hat, enters suddenly. He immediately looks out the window. PJ retreats to his shop and exits)

JOSH

Can I help you ?

KYLE

**(scowls at the rentals)
I want to see your mountain bikes. The new ones.**

JOSH

They're in there. What's your name son?

KYLE

Kyle.

JOSH

Well Kyle, is someone following you?

KYLE

Is Erin here?

(PJ appears at his door, listening)

JOSH

Erin? No, she's over at Café Le Pooch, or whatever it's called. You two in the same class?

(KYLE nods "yes")

JOSH

Are you a cappuccino drinker?

KYLE

(scowls)

I don't think so.

(KYLE exits quickly into the showroom)

JOSH

Neither did I.

(the front door opens abruptly and VERNON MOSS enters. He is dressed in jeans and a cowboy hat)

MOSS

Did I just see my son come in here?

JOSH

Maybe. What does he look like?

MOSS

Don't play games with me. He looks like me, only shorter.

(yells at showroom)

Kyle!

JOSH

What seems to be the problem?

MOSS

He did this deliberately. He knows he's forbidden to come here.

JOSH

Why would anyone forbid a child to enter a bicycle shop?

MOSS

That's none of your business.

JOSH

That's incredible. Giving your kid a bike is number eight in the basic book of parenting, right between buying them braces and yelling at them to turn the music down.

MOSS

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

(hollers into showroom)

Kyle!

(KYLE enters looking defiant)

JOSH

(to KYLE)

See anything you like?

KYLE

Yeah.

MOSS

It doesn't matter. Come on Kyle, we're going home.

KYLE

I'm not finished.

MOSS

I don't care.

JOSH

Let the boy look at bikes.

MOSS

Butt out. Let's go.

(MOSS opens the door. After a pause KYLE exits)

JOSH

You know Mr. Moss, I believe you owe me an apology.

MOSS

For what? For fighting your distillery? I don't think so.

JOSH

For calling me "immigrant scum." It was needlessly insulting.

MOSS

(lets door close)

So were you! Who are you? You waltz in here, open a store we don't want, plan a brewery we don't want either, and now your wife plans to open some sort of ecologically correct bookstore? I think you should be apologizing to me.

JOSH

I don't think so.

MOSS

Then why the lawsuit? You couldn't walk away, you had to sic your big city shyster on us.

JOSH

We're just following the letter of the law.

MOSS

God is in the fine print, is that it?

JOSH

Why are you so hostile? Why fight us? We're trying to be good neighbors.

MOSS

Good neighbors build bridges, not fences, or microbreweries. Let me make it as clear as I can. We don't like you, and it's nothing personal. We don't want your bikes, your books, or your beer. We don't like the changes that are happening here. We've got certain values and traditions. You might think they're quaint, but they're bedrock to us. A healthy community is a two-way street, not a cul-de-sac with a locked gate.

JOSH

You can't stop change. It's one of the universal laws of physics. Nothing rests. Change happens.

MOSS

And for every action there's an equal and opposite reaction, isn't that right? In the meantime my son stays away from your bikes. Do you understand that at least?

JOSH

Hey, if he walks in that door then I'm going to treat him like any other customer.

MOSS

If customers is all we are to you Mr. Rose, instead of neighbors, then you'll be getting no more apologies out of me.

(MOSS exits)

JOSH
(to PJ, who stands at his door)
You agree?

PJ
About what? About you being "immigrant scum?"

JOSH
About my insensitivity.

PJ
A brewery is a bad idea.

JOSH
It makes good economic sense.

PJ
Not if it makes people mad.

JOSH
I thought they were just putting on a show. The brewery is about business.

PJ
Not everything is about business.

JOSH
Sure it is. You're young, you'll learn.
(PJ scowls)
Don't give me that look. Hey, I was an anarchist once myself. Been there, done that.

PJ
Now you just want to make money.

JOSH
No, been there, done that too. I don't know what I want anymore. What about you? What's your generation's greatest ambition in life? What would kids have today if they could have anything, anything at all?

PJ
Peace and quiet.

JOSH
Me too. See, we're more alike than you realize.

PJ

That's a frightening thought. Sir.

(PJ exits into his shop. JOSH steps behind the counter, sits on a stool and opens the New York Times)

(After a moment JOSH lowers the paper, sighs, and picks the telephone. He dials slowly as the lights fade)

Scene 2

Afternoon light streams from the two windows above the restroom doors. Still sitting behind the counter, JOSH is engrossed in a newspaper article while eating a power bar.

(Wearing the latest biking regalia, a sour-faced MALE CUSTOMER and FEMALE CUSTOMER emerge from the showroom leading two new mountain bikes. They are followed by TAD)

TAD

The experience is the thing. It doesn't matter what you ride as long as it sets you free.

(the COUPLE exchange an unsmiling, skeptical glance)

MALE

Freedom carries a rather high price tag these days, don't you think?

TAD

These are the finest machines money can buy. You'll notice the quality right away. You'll earn this ride, it'll make you feel free, like...

JOSH

Tad.

TAD

Hey, they all cost this much. It's a conspiracy, what can I say?

WOMAN

What if I don't like it? Is there a money back guarantee on this thing?

TAD

I guarantee you this fine machine will you lead straight down the road to peace, harmony...

(suddenly the sound of a tool box crashing to the floor erupts from PJ's shop. JOSH lowers the paper sharply)

TAD

Of course it does have a two-year tire-to-tire warranty, parts and labor included, just in case.

WOMAN

I don't want to get all the way out there and fall off.

TAD

That would be a shame, wouldn't it?

(another crashing sound erupts from the repair shop. The COUPLE'S frown deepen. They look at Josh)

JOSH

Mice.

(the COUPLE smile wanly as they exit)

TAD

(mimics)

"Is there a money back guarantee?" I don't think they smiled once.

JOSH

Some people wouldn't know how to be happy if it hit them in the head.

TAD

That's so sad.

(the door opens and HOWARD enters. He wears a nice suit and carries a fancy briefcase)

JOSH

Here comes one now. Hello Howard.

HOWARD

Here comes what now?

JOSH

I was just complaining to Tad about how there seems to be a lawyer under every rock nowadays.

TAD

He said you guys grow like mushrooms, though he didn't say if you were poisonous or not.

JOSH

Isn't it obvious?

HOWARD

(fake smile)

Funny. I need to speak to you privately.

(TAD shrugs and exits into the showroom. JOSH rises from behind the counter, cleaning his hand of crumbs)

JOSH

What do you want, o venomous one?

HOWARD

Why do I put up with your crap?

JOSH

Because you like my money.

HOWARD

What money? Maybe around here it's money, but it's nothing like I was making in LA.

JOSH

You're still a rich man, even in Jericho. Did you get my message, you snake?

HOWARD

Obviously. What do you mean you want to drop out of our lawsuit? Why?

JOSH

I've changed my mind.

HOWARD

You can't do this to me. Have you forgotten, I'm a half-partner in this microbrewery thing?

JOSH

So do it alone. You seem so hell-bent on this project anyway.

HOWARD

What brought this on? Are you sick?

JOSH

I've decided the microbrewery was a bad idea. You heard what they said at that meeting.

HOWARD

(leans closer)

Are you kidding me? You've never cared what people thought. You said it was your first

rule of business. Were you lying?

JOSH

We struck out with the city council, just in case you didn't notice.

HOWARD

Hell, we're barely out of the first inning. It's a guaranteed money-maker. What's your problem? Has this climate dried out your senses?

JOSH

Just take me out of the lawsuit, alright? Besides, we're leaving.

HOWARD

What do you mean you're leaving?

JOSH

Does everything you say end with a question mark?

HOWARD

Where are you going?

JOSH

I don't know. Someplace green.

HOWARD

Has Leslie agreed to this?

JOSH

Not yet.

HOWARD

So you're not going. This is not one of your dumb voting things, is it? I thought so. Voting is a dumb idea. Fran and I ruled our kids with an iron glove.

JOSH

And according to Fran that's why they never call.

HOWARD

You really want to leave? What about me? I followed you out here.

JOSH

Who's fault was that?

HOWARD

Yours! After Fran and I divorced you said I needed fresh air. Practically dragged me here.

JOSH

You love it here!

HOWARD

I'm aware of that. I just can't figure these damn people out. They're so... rural.

(a loud banging sound comes from the repair shop)

JOSH

PJ!

(to Howard)

I've got to deal with something. Here's an idea, why don't you just drop the lawsuit altogether?

HOWARD

And give up? No way. Both sides smell blood. This is a big fight. If we can break them on this then we can open the floodgates. Whoosh! It'll wipe them all out. We have investors.

JOSH

I don't care. Drop me from the suit. Now.

HOWARD

Alright, but I want that microbrewery.

(he rises from the stool)

You're making a big mistake. There's opportunity written all over this one.

JOSH

I just want out.

HOWARD

The story of your life. Fine with me. Be a coward. Got to go. Got work to do, can't sit around all day reading the paper like some people I know. Opportunity is knocking. God I love this country!

(HOWARD exits)

JOSH

PJ! What the hell are you doing in there?

PJ

(appears at door)

Sorry Mr. Rose. Don't worry, nothing broke.

JOSH

That's not what I'm worried about. PJ, come out here. I forgot to tell you I got a call from Mr. Warren last week. Do you remember Mr. Warren?

PJ

(steps out wearing a grease-stained smock)

Sure, the old red Schwinn. It had a busted chain. I fixed it.

JOSH

You did fix it, and you fixed it very well. Mr. Warren complimented your work and said you cleaned his bike so well it looked like it was brand new. But, you put the seat on backwards.

PJ

I did?

JOSH

You can't go through life putting the seat on backwards, PJ. It's bad for business. You have to pay attention to the details. Take it from me.

PJ

But you don't pay attention to details. I don't mean to be disrespectful, but you don't know the first thing about bikes.

JOSH

That's simply not true.

PJ

Then show me where the cantilevers are on this bike.

(JOSH points vaguely to the bike's crankshaft)

PJ

(points to the brakes below the handlebar)

Nope. How about the preloaded adjustor for the suspension fork?

JOSH

This is silly. No one needs to know anything about the things they sell anymore. I don't know any more than the customers do anyway.

PJ

I wouldn't presume. Sir. Know what this is?

(he points, Josh shrugs)

A brake boss. How about a chain ring? Or a cog? Or the rear derailleur?

JOSH

You've made your point PJ.

PJ

Have I? You know, Mr. Rose, we have less in common than you think. Personally, I don't

see much of myself in you.

JOSH

Well that's fine, PJ. Of course you have the advantage of actually knowing who you are. I'm just over here taking guesses.

PJ

Why? Why guess, I mean?

(JOSH wanders to the middle of the floor)

JOSH

It's what people do. They'd rather guess at a puzzle than know a fact. Facts are boring. Disappointing too. I'll show you what I mean, tell me a fact about yourself.

PJ

Ok. I'm tired of being interrogated every day.

JOSH

Who's interrogating you? I'm just asking some questions. Unless you've been interrogated before. Have you? You're on the run from the law, aren't you PJ?

PJ

No!

JOSH

But you're on the run, aren't you?

PJ

Why can't you leave me alone?

JOSH

Because we are more alike than you realize. And because I want to understand what makes people run.

(beat)

Do you think I'm a coward?

PJ

I don't know. Sometimes.

JOSH

Really? I've never thought of myself that way. Heroically-challenged perhaps, but not a coward.

PJ

You seem to be afraid of putting down roots.

JOSH

That's different. I keep moving because I can't make up my mind. Indecision isn't the same as being afraid. Is it fear or desire that keeps us moving?

PJ

Beats me.

JOSH

It's both.

PJ

That's not much of an answer.

JOSH

But it's true. I've been thinking about this. We keep in motion because we're afraid of death. My generation has one foot in the grave so we have to keep the other foot moving all the time. On the other hand, it's desire that sustains us. To see new places, do new things, meet new people. Life is a circus, every ride is a thrill. So we're split down the middle, half of us is drunk with life, and the other half mortified of living.

PJ

I didn't understand any of that.

JOSH

You will in a few years.

PJ

Oh boy.

(beat)

Are you serious about quitting the lawsuit?

JOSH

I am.

PJ

That's kind of brave. But your friend seems sort of...truculent.

JOSH

Nice word. And you didn't finish high school? What are you, a reader?

PJ

You make it sound like a disease.

JOSH

Personally, I think literature is overrated. How many glimpses into the human soul can one endure anyway? I prefer newspapers. I can get all the tragedy with half the pretentiousness.

PJ

You're kind of strange, aren't you? Sort of reality-challenged.

(TAD enters, dressed for riding, and pushing his bike in front of him. PJ retreats slowly toward his shop)

TAD

Another slow day. Mind if I leave early? Got to answer the call of the wild mountain bike.

JOSH

(waves a hand)

Sure. Have fun.

TAD

(hesitates at door)

Thanks. Is it true you're thinking about leaving?

JOSH

It's true I'm thinking about it.

TAD

What would you do with the shop?

JOSH

Don't know. Maybe I'll burn it to the ground and collect the insurance.

TAD

That's not cool. Bad karma. You really should think about your next life.

JOSH

My next life? I've barely begun to think about this one.

(TAD exits as SAM enters. She is disheveled, her shirt is torn. Her right arm hangs limp at her side)

SAM

This place peels! Dad, I want to change my vote.

JOSH

What did you say?

SAM

I said this place peels.

JOSH

No, after that.

SAM

I want to change my vote. I want to leave. But I don't want to go back to LA. I hate LA.

JOSH

Why did you change your mind?

SAM

Butch. He's such a puker. He keeps pushing me around. Thinks he's some hotshot geeker with a board. Keeps diving me and shanking with the wedgie which really pisses me off. Then he blows and screams like a dingo on the way out. Makes me look like a gummer in front of the gallery. Besides, this place no longer turns my twinkie.

JOSH

No longer "turns your twinkie"?

SAM

You know, this place sucks.

JOSH

Oh. Have you told your mother yet?

SAM

No. I thought you could do that.

(SAM stiffly tosses her skateboard behind the counter)

JOSH

What's the matter with your arm? Did you break it?

SAM

Naw, just fell on it. I can feel my fingers now.

(SAM wiggles the tips of her fingers just a little bit)

JOSH

Where should we go? To survive your mother's counterattack we'll need a plan.

SAM

I thought you hated plans.

JOSH

Well, think of it as...a strategy, I don't know. What about Orlando?

SAM

Naw. I've been thinking, Disney blows. I'm sick of Mickey's face.

JOSH

What about Detroit?

SAM

Too reeky.

JOSH

Atlanta?

SAM

Too south.

JOSH

Vermont?

SAM

Too north.

(SAM struggles to move her right arm. Her face frowns with pain. JOSH checks his watch)

JOSH

Come on Sam, your mother will be here any second. Where do you want to go?

SAM

(grimacing as she struggles with her arm)

I don't know. I like it here. It's ramboic.

JOSH

Thrills, right. I forgot. Hey, what about the Rocky Mountains? There's lots of things for you to fall off in Colorado. What's the bungee thing? Or the parachute thing?

SAM

Fat! Where's this?

JOSH

(paces)

Colorado. The whole state is a daredevil's paradise. We could move up high someplace, actually see a horizon for once. I could buy you a mountain, and a rope, and a piston, or whatever they're called. Colorado has every danger a fifteen-year-old can dream of - tall mountains, sheer cliffs, avalanches, bears. It's exactly the place to, how did you put it? Turn

your twinkie?

SAM

No Butch either.

JOSH

No Butch. Nothing but starting over. What do you say?

SAM

Forty-six!

(JOSH frowns. SAM gives him an impatient 'thumbs-up' sign)

JOSH

Oh.

(JOSH grins and slaps SAM on the back. SAM gasps)

JOSH

Sorry. Maybe we should take a look at that.

SAM

I'm alright. Erin will blow a fuse if we don't move next to a mall.

JOSH

Maybe I'll build a mall for her. You know, that's a great idea. We'll move into some sleepy little town not far from a big city and open a mall of outlet stores. Italian suits or rain coats or loafers. Your mother could have her precious bookstore. I like it.

(THEY smile conspiratorially. LESLIE flashes past the window and enters)

LESLIE

Sorry I'm late. A big delivery of books arrived just as I was leaving. What are you two hyenas grinning like that for?

SAM

We're moving to Colorado.

LESLIE

We are?

JOSH

I've got it all worked out. We're going to build an outlet mall in some small but quaint town like Jericho and sell upscale clothing. Don't say anything yet. Listen, I just realized something - we're like pioneers, we're going into the country again, beating down the wilderness of rural ignorance, taming the land like Daniel Boone.

LESLIE

In high heels?

JOSH

I'm serious. I've just realized something about myself - I've been a pioneer all my life. That's why we keep moving.

LESLIE

Oh dear, you've been reading too many mail-order catalogs again.

JOSH

Listen to me, this country is like a new frontier. It's wide open again.

LESLIE

(to Sam)

Did you change your vote? Is that what this is about?

(SAM nods sheepishly and then tries to move her arm)

LESLIE

(starts)

What's wrong with your arm Sam?

SAM

It hurts.

LESLIE

(coming to Sam)

What did you do sweetie?

SAM

I fell on it. It was Butch's fault. My curls purpled him. Ouch!

LESLIE

(feeling Sam's shoulder)

Honestly Sam, do you have to break your neck before you learn something?

JOSH

I'm trying to communicate a major revelation here.

LESLIE

Our daughter needs to see a doctor.

JOSH

I know that, I'm just saying there is a frontier here, a frontier of opportunity. This country

is just begging for change.

LESLIE

Josh, the only frontier you've ever crossed is the one in your head. The Little Mind on the Prairie.

JOSH

You wouldn't be opening a bookstore here if you didn't agree. You're an opportunist, just like me.

LESLIE

I'm not an opportunist, just like you! Unlike some people I know, I believe in things. I don't act on whims, certainly not the whims of teenagers. You're wrong Josh, you're not a pioneer. Pioneers had faith, they had belief, in themselves and their dreams. What's your dream Josh? What are you trying to accomplish? After all these years I still have no idea. Let's go Sam.

(LESLIE and SAM begin to exit. ERIN enters the shop in a huff. PJ appears at his little door)

ERIN

Daaaaad! I've been sitting at Cafe La Vache for hooooours! You said you would come pay my bill. I had to practically beg them to let me leave. We've got to get back right now and pay up or I'll never be able to show my face there again.

JOSH

Jesus Erin, how many cappuccinos and croissants did you have?

SAM

Well just look at her.

ERIN

(to Sam)

What happened to you? Did you break your arm again? If you weren't such a kamikaze idiot with that board, Mom wouldn't have to haul you off to the clinic every other day.

SAM

Maybe I should sit around all day like you.

(mimics)

Ooo, I think I burned my tongue on the french roast.

JOSH

Erin, your sister changed her vote. We're leaving Jericho.

ERIN

What?!! No way!!

(she gives SAM a big hug, which hurts her arm)

ERIN

Sorry.

LESLIE

(glowering)

Let's go.

(LESLIE leads SAM out the front door. They exit)

JOSH

Hey PJ, do you mind closing up? Thanks.

(to Erin)

I forgot something. I'll be right back.

(JOSH exits into the showroom. PJ steps out)

ERIN

Yes! Will you miss me?

PJ

I don't know you.

ERIN

You got a girlfriend?

PJ

No.

ERIN

I saw you hanging around our school the other day. What was that?

PJ

Nothing.

ERIN

What about the bleachers at the game? I saw you there too. Looking for someone?

PJ

A friend.

ERIN

A girl-friend?

(PJ doesn't respond)

Were you following me?

PJ

Why would I be so foolish?

ERIN

I have that effect on people. Have you been watching me?

PJ

Maybe.

ERIN

My very own stalker. How romantic.

PJ

I don't think so.

ERIN

Are you gay?

PJ

No! And stop asking me questions. You're moving to Colorado, by the way.

ERIN

We are? Where's that?

PJ

(points)

Over there.

ERIN

(She gives him a sly smile)

Oh. You're kinda weird. How cute!

(JOSH enters. Carrying a bank pouch under one arm, he walks over to the cash register, opens it, and removes money. He makes a face at the paltry amount, and puts it in the pouch)

ERIN

Dad, what's in Colorado?

JOSH

Lots of cute boys. I'll tell you about it on the drive home. Did I tell you I'm thinking about building an outlet mall in Colorado? You could help me pick out the stores.

ERIN

Really? An outlet mall? I'm listening. Bye PJ.

(She gives him a flirtatious smile and a wave)

(JOSH heads for the door)

ERIN

Hey dad, does this mean I get free clothes too?

(JOSH and ERIN exit out the front door)

(PJ hustles to the main window and watches ERIN walk away. After a moment he turns the door's lock and changes the 'OPEN' sign to 'CLOSED'. he turns off the overhead light)

(PJ walks toward his shop. As he passes the bicycle rack he gives the first bike a violent kick. The bikes topple over noisily. He exits into his shop)

(Lights down)

Scene 3

Early morning SUNLIGHT streams through the big window. PJ is curled up in his sleeping bag. The cheap alarm clock sits nearby.

(After a moment, the clock begins to shriek. PJ raises a hammer and smashes the clock to smithereens)

(LESLIE crosses in front of the window, unlocks the front door, and opens it. She sticks her head inside)

LESLIE

Psst. PJ. Are you still sleeping? PJ?

(LESLIE enters and turns on the light. She spies the fallen bikes, the smashed clock, and the hammer)

LESLIE

Are you alright? PJ? Are you alive?

PJ

What do you want?

LESLIE

Josh wanted me to tell you he'd be late. He's going to the bank. He wants you to open up.

PJ

Why bother? Why doesn't he just close the shop now and get it over with?

(sits up)

Unless you're not leaving?

LESLIE

We might have to.

PJ

What do you mean?

LESLIE

Josh talked to a friend of ours from New York City last night. About selling the shop to him. You'd still have a job here.

PJ

I don't want a job here. I don't want you to leave.

(LESLIE walks slowly to the window)

LESLIE

And I don't want to go.

PJ

Then don't! Put your foot down.

LESLIE

On what? Every time I try I find nothing there.

PJ

You could say 'no'!

LESLIE

I'm not sure it would matter.

PJ

Why wouldn't it matter?

LESLIE

'In sickness and health.' It's hard to explain. You'll understand someday.

PJ

Everybody keeps telling me that. You're not happy, are you?

LESLIE

Happy enough.

PJ

You've been dreaming about the bookstore for a long time, haven't you?

(she doesn't respond)

Then you should pursue it. Why have dreams if you can't be happy?

LESLIE

You are young. Unlike the rest, I'm not sure the bookstore is about happiness.

PJ

You've had other dreams?

LESLIE

**A few. In college I studied to be a biologist. So I could save endangered species
Yeah, right. Then I took accounting classes so I could manage all the money Josh kept
making. But that was boring. I thought about becoming a paralegal, but took
correspondence courses in court reporting instead. Then there were the ethnography
classes, then it was night school to become a nurse. Which I thought was it, finally.**

PJ

What happened?

LESLIE

**We kept moving. And I kept changing my mind. For a long time I blamed myself. I felt
overwhelmed with opportunity. Now, I don't know.**

PJ

"I'd rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad."

LESLIE

Who said that?

PJ

My father. He was always quoting one of those old dead white guys. You shouldn't be sad.

LESLIE

I'm trying. It's hard when you feel like you're not in charge of your own destiny.

PJ

Do you blame Mr. Rose?

LESLIE

**No. Besides, we've had fun. We took the girls around the world when they were little. We
were only supposed to be gone two months, but we stayed away for nearly eight. Josh lost his
business, I can't remember which one. But it didn't matter. He thought of something new.
Do you believe in destiny, PJ?**

PJ

Yes. Put your foot down.

LESLIE

Maybe I will. Why is this so important to you?

PJ

(shrugs)

I dunno. I don't like to see people unhappy.

LESLIE

And whether we're unhappy or not is important to you?

(ERIN crosses in front of the window and enters. PJ watches as LESLIE smiles knowingly at PJ)

LESLIE

Or is there some other destiny you have in mind?

ERIN

What are you talking about? You sound like dad. Hello PJ. Is he here yet?

LESLIE

Who? Your father?

ERIN

Be serious. Kyle. He called me this morning to say that he was going to sneak over here and rent a bike. He asked me if I would go on a ride with him. Cute outfit, PJ.

LESLIE

But I thought you hated bikes.

ERIN

No, I don't. Look, Kyle's afraid of his dad and thought it would look better if I were with him, just in case he got caught.

LESLIE

Caught doing what?

ERIN

Get real. This is an important moment for Kyle. He's exploring his feelings. He's looking for ways to express himself. Don't give me that look. Are the real bikes in here?

(ERIN exits into the showroom. PJ stands up, still inside the sleeping bag)

PJ

Are you really going to let her go out with Kyle?

LESLIE

Do you seriously think I can stop her? Maybe it'll rain.

PJ

You can forbid her to go.

LESLIE

Can I? Do parents have that right anymore?

PJ

They do around here.

(PJ exits into the repair shop as JOSH enters eating an apple, the bank pouch under an arm)

JOSH

(spies mess)

What happened here? Wait, I don't want to know. It will spoil my mood.

LESLIE

(folds arms)

I'll spoil your mood. I need help in the bookstore. Now.

JOSH

Get PJ to help. I think he's a reader.

(ERIN appears at the door looking expectant)

LESLIE

I would rather have my family help. Erin?

(ERIN scowls and exits as SAM bursts through the front door. She carries a skateboard under her arm)

SAM

(looking around)

Jesus. You expecting any customers today?

JOSH

Not if I'm lucky.

(KYLE enters. He carries a backpack. PJ emerges from the repair shop carrying a tool)

LESLIE
Maybe you could help me.

KYLE
With what ma'am?

LESLIE
Never mind.

(KYLE eyes the tool in PJ's hand. ERIN appears)

ERIN
There you are! Quick, let's go before they tell us to do something. Like 'be careful.'

(KYLE exits with ERIN into the showroom)

SAM
I was just wondering, when do I get my motorbike?

JOSH
Ask your mother.

LESLIE
Over my dead body. Now, is someone going to help me in the bookstore or not?

JOSH
Don't forget, we voted to leave.

LESLIE
Two teenagers and a tumbleweed. Hardly a constitutional convention.

PJ
Are you really going to let them take those bikes out just like that?

JOSH
You're right, I should take his credit card number.

(TAD enters holding a manila folder. ERIN and KYLE emerge from the showroom pushing bikes)

TAD
Whoa, good news! Erin on a bike. There might be hope for this world yet.

SAM
Yeah, just our luck.

TAD

There's no such thing. Luck is just karma thrown into reverse.

PJ

I really don't think they should go out.

JOSH

Not without a helmet.

ERIN

Gawd!

(ERIN rolls her eyes and exits into the showroom)

LESLIE

Hello?!

JOSH

(to Tad)

Isn't it your day off? What's in the folder?

TAD

It's a business proposal. To buy the bicycle shop. You're still selling it, right?

JOSH

I'm still considering it.

(ERIN enters carrying two bicycle helmets)

ERIN

(to Josh)

Happy?

LESLIE

IS SOMEONE GOING TO HELP ME WITH MY BOOKSTORE?!!!

(everyone holds up an object – PJ, the tool; JOSH, the pouch; TAD, the folder; SAM, the skateboard; KYLE and ERIN, their helmets)

(the answer is 'no')

LESLIE

(to Josh)

For your information, I'm not leaving Jericho.

JOSH

We voted.

LESLIE

Then you can leave without me.

JOSH

Leslie...wait.

(LESLIE exits)

ERIN

That was fun.

SAM

Waxy. Time to blast. I'm going to dog a new course. I think I'll call it 'Reverse Karma.' Fat.

(SAM exits. KYLE whispers to ERIN who throws up her hands, turns, and exits into the Showroom)

JOSH

(to Tad)

Let's see your proposal. Is it good? I suspect you don't have much money.

(TAD hands the folder to JOSH who opens it)

TAD

I'm having trouble with this money thing. It's so negative. I have a friend of a friend who works at a bank over in Mount Vernon. I think she can help with a loan.

JOSH

Hmmm. I'll be straight-up with you. I have an offer from a stockbroker friend of mine back east. Money is no problem with him of course. He's sick of the rat race. He wants to go west, and bring the rat race with him. So, I have an interesting choice: an opera-loving, anxiety-ridden stock jock with a hypochondriac wife who thinks she's having a wilderness experience when she sees a robin land on the railing of their 17th-floor apartment or, Little Bhudda in lycra. The walls are definitely tumbling down. I'll think about it.

(ERIN enters carrying two water bottles, dripping water. She hands one to KYLE, but he wants both)

TAD

I still can't get over it. Erin on a bike.

ERIN

Funny. Of course, I'm not actually on the bike yet.

JOSH

Maybe you should go with them.

TAD

No thanks. I'm going to go help Mrs. Rose in her store. Anyone want to join me?

(no one responds. TAD shrugs and then exits out the front door. ERIN nods at the front door. ERIN and KYLE begin to push the bikes across the floor)

PJ

(to Kyle)

Your father know you're here? Maybe I'll give him a call.

KYLE

Maybe it's none of your business.

(PJ steps in their way, blocking their access to the door. They stop. JOSH stares into space)

ERIN

Move it PJ. Dad!

JOSH

What? It's alright PJ. Erin will be back by noon to help her mother. Right?

ERIN

Right.

(PJ doesn't budge)

ERIN

What is this about PJ? Don't you have better things to do, like pick up your bikes?

PJ

Your mother needs help.

ERIN

So do you.

KYLE

Get the door.

(KYLE suddenly grabs both bikes and lifts them off the ground. He swings them in a threatening manner at PJ, who is forced to duck out of the way. ERIN opens the door and holds it as KYLE exits)

ERIN

(to PJ)
What's your problem?

(ERIN exits)

(PJ tosses the tool across the floor, which startles JOSH)

PJ

You are so clueless!

JOSH

About what? About Erin? I don't think so.

PJ

No, not about Erin.

JOSH

Come on. I see the way boys look at her. Including yourself.

PJ

About Mrs. Rose. Your wife? The woman standing here a few seconds ago asking for help. Do you have any clue how unhappy she is?

JOSH

I do actually. I just don't know how to solve it.

PJ

'Solve it?' This isn't a mathematical equation. She wants to stay here. She wants help in her store, which is where I'm going right now. You should come too.

JOSH

I'm needed here.

PJ

For what? Hardly anyone ever comes in here, just in case you hadn't noticed.

JOSH

I have noticed actually.

(JOSH crosses the floor slowly, stopping to stare into the depths of the Showroom, lost in thought. PJ walks over near the bicycle rack and cranes his neck to look out the big window)

PJ

(impatiently)

Can I go?

JOSH

Fine with me.

(PJ surreptitiously removes a bike from the rental rack and pushes it toward the door. He glances back at JOSH who is still lost in thought)

(PJ opens the front door and quickly pushes the bike through and exits)

(The tinkle of the little bell shakes JOSH out of his trance. He turns, as if expecting a customer. Seeing no one, he sighs)

(Lights down)

Scene 4

In the darkness, JOSH sweeps up the broken clock bits in the semi-darkness. He picks up PJ's tool and returns it to the shop. Then he sets the bikes upright.

Lights up – strong afternoon light streams in from the side windows – as he finishes.

(the bell tinkles merrily as MOSS enters)

JOSH

Not today please. I'm not in the mood for another lecture.

MOSS

I just came over to ask you a question. How did you like that rain?

JOSH

Is that your question? I didn't notice. Was it a good rain?

MOSS

It was sort of a squall. What the Navajos around here call a 'male' rain. Where is everyone?

JOSH

I don't know. What do you want?

MOSS

I'm looking for my son.

JOSH

He left on a bike. With my daughter.

MOSS

(after a pause)

That's what I heard. Do you know where he went?

JOSH

Someplace red. Is that your question?

MOSS

No. Why didn't you call me?

JOSH

Because it's none of my business. They went for a bike ride, for crissakes! Let them be!

MOSS

Guess I have to now.

JOSH

What is your problem?

(silently MOSS crosses the floor slowly to the big map of the Canyonlands)

MOSS

Someplace red.

(pause)

Did you know that my uncle prospected all over this place in the fifties? He was lookin' for uranium to beat the Russians. Found a lot of rattlesnakes instead. He told me this land was good for nothing but dust and heartbreak. Now it's a national park. Amazing. He's buried right...there.

(he points).

He used to carry a vial of green dirt around in his pocket. Chinle formation, I think they called it. Radioactive. Sometimes he'd take it out and put a little bit on the tip of his tongue. For good luck, he said. Died of cancer at forty-nine. Did you know that my family has been here since 1872?

JOSH

I didn't. Is that your question?

MOSS

My great, great-grandfather settled on the strip of green by the river, south of Jericho, where our farm is today. He was a pioneer. Did you know that's become a dirty word to some people, pioneer?

JOSH

No.

MOSS

Did you know that I'm the last workin' farm within city limits? Once there used to be ten farms here, growin' everything from alfalfa to apricots. Did you know that all of them sold out and disappeared within the last ten years? All gone! Over a century of hard work, right down the toilet! Did you know that?

JOSH

I didn't.

MOSS

Did you know your big house sits on a hill above what used to be a dairy pasture owned by my friend Calvin Jenks? His family has lived and worked in this valley as long as my family has. He sold out in order to pay back taxes and put his kids through college. Sold to a developer that split his farm into five acre-lots, including the one you own now. When the first farms started going my neighbors and I purchased a hundred acres here, a hundred acres there. But after a while we couldn't keep up anymore. The cost of land rose faster than the price of alfalfa. Pretty soon there was only me.

JOSH

I'm sorry.

MOSS

I've got three offers for my farm sitting on the desk at home. They tell me I'll be a rich man. I tell them I'm already a rich man. They don't understand. You know what I got in the mail last year? A xerox of a nursery rhyme. It was mailed to me without a return address. Know what it was? Ten Little Indians. The one that ends with the line: Then There Were None.

JOSH

Developers are swine.

MOSS

That's easy to say, isn't it? But it didn't stop you from building your home over Cal's outhouse, did it?

JOSH

I'm quitting the lawsuit.

MOSS

I heard. But it doesn't really matter, does it?

JOSH

What do you mean?

MOSS

**Get your shyster to quit too?
(Josh shakes 'no')**

Then you haven't done anything.

JOSH

Is that your question?

MOSS

No.

JOSH

Then what is it?

(irritated)

Why are you here Mr. Moss?

MOSS

Why are you here?

JOSH

I'm not sure anymore. Satisfied?

MOSS

Are you are staying or leaving? I'm getting mixed signals.

JOSH

We voted to leave.

MOSS

Then how come your wife is still putting up books?

JOSH

Is that your question?

MOSS

No. Do you know about the airport?

JOSH

What airport? You mean that little strip of dirt outside of town? What about it?

MOSS

So you haven't heard.

JOSH

Apparently my ears are not as big as yours.

MOSS

I think you should talk to your lawyer.

JOSH

Howard? What are you talking about? What about the airport?

MOSS

Ask your lawyer. He's making more plans. You mean you really don't know?

JOSH

Yes, it's true. I really don't know what's going on.

MOSS

That's too bad.

JOSH

What *is* your question?

MOSS

Why?

JOSH

Why what? The airport?

MOSS

No.

(he looks away)

MOSS

Just, why?

(beat)

Why?

(beat)

That's my question. Do you have an answer?

(JOSH sits heavily on a stool)

JOSH

I don't. I'm sorry. Have you asked God?

MOSS

Not really. I feel like he's not paying much attention to me these days.

JOSH

Have you asked your banker then?

MOSS

He's paying less attention to me than God is.

JOSH

I know the feeling.

(pause)

It's a good question. I've begun to wonder about it myself.

MOSS

A little late, don't you think?

JOSH

Not for my next life.

(pause)

(the front door opens suddenly. A different MALE CUSTOMER sticks his head inside)

MALE

Excuse me, do you rent bikes?

JOSH

Not right now.

MOSS

(moves toward door)

Sure he does. Says so right there.

(points up)

Come on in.

(to Josh)

Tell my son to come home when you see him.

(the MALE CUSTOMER enters, followed by his companion, a different FEMALE CUSTOMER)

MALE

Do you know what the elevation is here?

JOSH

(blinks)

Excuse me?

MALE

The elevation of Jericho?

JOSH

Four thousand...something.

MALE

And it's the same all year 'round, right?

MOSS

Actually, it rises in the winter, that's why it's colder.

(the CUSTOMERS nod to each other. MOSS tips his hat, gives JOSH a quick look, and exits)

FEMALE

I can't get over how red everything is here.

JOSH

(after a sigh)

It's red all year too.

MALE

Are there any Indian ruins we can ride to nearby? We just love ruins. I admire the Indians so much for living here. It must have been so hard, don't you think?

FEMALE

Too bad they all died.

JOSH

Actually, quite a lot of them are still alive.

FEMALE

Really? Where? Oh, you mean *those* Indians.

MALE

(makes a face at the rentals)

Maybe we'll buy new bikes. Where would they be?

JOSH

(points to showroom)

In there.

FEMALE

We're thinking about staying. Maybe buy another home. It's so exciting.

MALE

Yeah, we read all about southern Utah in an airline magazine.

JOSH

(following them)

Really? So did I.

(as the CUSTOMERS exit into the showroom, the front door opens and HOWARD enters. He carries his customary briefcase)

JOSH

What do *you* want?

HOWARD

(crossing to counter)

Your blood of course.

JOSH

You can't have it right now. I've got customers.

HOWARD

That's news. This won't take long. Where's your zen master anyway?

JOSH

It's his day off.

HOWARD

Every day is his day off. Where did you find him anyway?

JOSH

He found me. Said it was destiny. You believe in karma, Howard?

HOWARD

Only when it's useful.

JOSH

Don't you believe in a previous life? I know, only when it's useful. But what if it were true, what would you have been?

HOWARD

Probably another lawyer.

JOSH

I think you were an Aztec chief, cutting the hearts out of living people.

HOWARD

Then you're the sacrificial victim for the day.

(HOWARD opens the briefcase and takes out papers)

JOSH

Here comes the dagger now. What does it say?

HOWARD

It says you're out of the lawsuit against the town. Like you wanted. It says you're a fool too, right there.

(points to a place in the document)

Sign here.

JOSH

(takes the document)

Why don't you drop the lawsuit altogether?

HOWARD

Why?

JOSH

I don't know, how about doing it in the spirit of civic harmony.

HOWARD

What the hell is that? The only people who believe in harmony anymore are those crystal idiots. I nearly hit one in the street. She almost made beautiful music with my front bumper.

JOSH

What about doing it because you're a nice guy?

HOWARD

Funny. Look, I don't have time for a philosophical discussion. I have to make tracks to Mount Vernon to catch a plane. It's a damn nuisance too. So sign.

JOSH

(looks up sharply)

What's a damn nuisance?

HOWARD

You're being a damn nuisance. The airport situation. You know that. It's a forty-five minute drive one-way to catch a plane. That's valuable time to me.

JOSH

What you have in mind? Howard, I know you too well. When you start talking about time, the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. What about the airport?

HOWARD

Nothing. Yet.

JOSH

What do you mean 'yet'? What are you going to do, force the Jericho town council to pave

the runway?

HOWARD

Yes, actually.

JOSH

You're kidding me. You're not kidding me. Are you serious?

HOWARD

Am I anything else?

JOSH

You'd sell your children into slavery if it would add thirty minutes to your day.

HOWARD

Hey, it's a useless dirt strip. The damn thing gets, what, three flights a month from that ancient crop-duster out of Canaan? It's ridiculous. But I don't want to discuss it now. Just sign the damn document.

(pause)

We have a plan.

JOSH

Who's "we"?

HOWARD

Myself, Stan, and a couple new guys from Chicago. You don't know them. We were going to ask you to join us, but I told the guys you had scared up a conscience recently. You want in?

JOSH

I don't think so. It'll ruin this town.

HOWARD

(checks watch)

It's exactly what this backwater needs. And why do you care anyway? You're leaving, right? Sign on the damn dotted line Josh, I've got to run.

JOSH

Don't you think there'll be opposition?

HOWARD

I don't care. We want it, and we're going to get it. This is rather hard to take from a man who plans to move to Colorado and open an outlet mall. I have news for you, Mr. Bicycle Shop, you can't close the barn door behind you. That's because there is no barn anymore. We knocked it down for the new golf course, remember?

JOSH

The town council will never vote to pave the runway.

HOWARD

Yes they will.

JOSH

What are you going to try?

HOWARD

Nothing. Some of us are going to run in the next election, that's all.

JOSH

That's a lot. You can't win.

HOWARD

Who says we can't? There's more of us here now than you realize. And more coming everyday. Eventually we will prevail. We're the irresistible force, nothing can stop us. You know your history, it's simply the way things were meant to be. Fate. Destiny. Karma. Whatever. Now sign!

(after a moment JOSH takes the pen and signs)

HOWARD

Another fool charges headlong into oblivion.

JOSH

Another angel falls from grace.

HOWARD

That's alright. Who believes in angels anymore? Who's got the time?

(HOWARD efficiently gathers up all his stuff and smartly turns to leave)

JOSH

I hope there's a traffic jam.

(as HOWARD approaches the door LESLIE enters)

HOWARD

Good afternoon, Leslie.

LESLIE

Hello, Howard.

(HOWARD exits with a backward look at Josh. As he exits, the CUSTOMERS enter from the showroom – their expressions have changed)

LESLIE

I hate it when he's polite. It makes me nervous.

JOSH

(to the CUSTOMERS)

See anything you like?

MALE

We've changed our minds. Thanks anyway.

JOSH

Is there something wrong?

FEMALE

No. We're going to drive around instead. Maybe try that Chinese restaurant out by the highway.

JOSH

(JOSH shoots a look at Leslie, who shrugs)

What Chinese restaurant?

(the CUSTOMERS exit, looking uncomfortable)

LESLIE

What did Howard want?

JOSH

I got out of the microbrewery lawsuit.

LESLIE

Good for you. What's going on?

(JOSH walks slowly across the floor)

JOSH

I've been thinking. The bookstore may be a waste of time. According to Mr. Moss, the people here don't want it. He thinks it's going to be some sort of radical environmental, feminist, socialist, double espresso place. He thinks it might agitate people.

LESLIE

That's ridiculous. If you'd come over, you'd know I'm selling Aesop's Fables, and fishing guides, and children's puzzle books. There's a section on local history. And Mr. Wexler, the church deacon, promised he would sell me some of his cook books. My shop is only radical if someone thinks books are radical.

JOSH

Some people still do, apparently.

(beat)

I've been thinking, perhaps we don't belong here.

LESLIE

Where do we belong Josh?

JOSH

I'm just having second thoughts, that's all.

LESLIE

You've never had a second thought in your life. Do you remember the reason why we moved here in the first place?

JOSH

Opportunity.

LESLIE

Open space.

JOSH

Same thing.

(pause)

LESLIE

Josh, I came over to apologize for yelling earlier. And to ask for your help. Please. The Grand Opening is on Sunday. Tad and I can't do it by ourselves.

JOSH

What about PJ? I sent him over.

LESLIE

No, you didn't.

JOSH

Well, not technically.

LESLIE

What are you talking about? PJ's not at the store.

JOSH

He said he was going to help you. He left here hours ago.

LESLIE

He never arrived.

JOSH

What do you mean? II don't understand.

(JOSH spies the gap in the rental rack)

JOSH

He lied.

LESLIE

Why would he do that? Where did he go?

JOSH

I don't know.

(suddenly, someone rushes past the window outside. ERIN bursts into the bicycle shop, looking wet and disheveled)

ERIN

Oh mom!

(ERIN falls into her mother's arms)

LESLIE

What's wrong sweetie?

ERIN

He's missing! Kyle!

JOSH

What do you mean 'missing?'

ERIN

Call the sheriff. Call his father. Do something!

LESLIE

Tell us what happened first.

ERIN

He disappeared! He went to pee behind some rock or something and he didn't come back. Then it started to rain, hard. When it slowed I tried to follow his footprints. They went up this canyon, like he was running. But then I lost them. Then I got scared.

JOSH

Scared from what?

ERIN

I almost got lost. The canyon get getting deeper. I was afraid to go any further. I thought I heard noises. Oh mom, we've got to do something!

(LESLIE nods at the phone. JOSH moves to pick it up)

LESLIE

What sort of noises?

ERIN

It sounded like yelling. But it could have been the wind.

(JOSH dials the phone, then turns his back)

ERIN

I yelled and yelled but it was raining too hard. I hid under a tree. It wouldn't stop.

LESLIE

You're soaked. You must be cold.

JOSH

(hanging up the phone)

The sheriff's just down the street. He said he'd be here in a second. Did you see anyone else out there?

ERIN

No. I hate it out there! I'm never going back!

LESLIE

It's alright, honey. Kyle probably took a wrong turn. He'll find his way back.

ERIN

I don't know. There was something creepy out there. The way the rain started just after Kyle left. Those walls. Didn't someone get lost out there once and never came back, that boy with the donkey? They never found his body, right?

LESLIE

That was a long time ago. Lots of people go out there today and come back just fine. Josh, is there a coat or something we can put around her?

JOSH

I'll find something. You said you heard noises?

ERIN

It sounded like laughter. Or singing. It echoed. Goddamn wilderness!

LESLIE

Josh, get the coat please. Now!

(JOSH exits into the Showroom)

ERIN

He can't be lost mom, he grew up here.

LESLIE

Anybody can get lost, honey, even close to home.

**(the blue-and-red lights of a police car start flashing outside the window.
LESLIE and ERIN hug tighter)**

**(JOSH enters from the Showroom carrying a new sweatshirt in his hand.
He stops)**

**(the blue-and-red lights suddenly flare up extremely brightly, bathing the
entire store)**

(all lights go out suddenly)

End of Act I

ACT II

Scene 1

LIGHT from the street lamp comes up, casting dark shadows across the bike shop.

(after a moment PJ walks past the big window. He unlocks and opens the door and enters)

(he crosses the floor quickly and exits into his repair shop. After a few seconds, a battered duffel bag comes flying out the door. It is followed by clothes, shoes and other personal items)

(PJ steps out of the shop holding a short stack of books. He quickly stuffs the duffel bag with the clothes and other items)

(carrying the bag, PJ steps behind the counter and drops the bag. He punches numbers on the cash register until the drawer pops open)

(PJ pulls a small wad of cash out of the drawer. He counts bills carefully and returns some of the bills to the drawer. He begins to close the drawer, but hesitates. He adds a few more bills to the register and stuffs the remainder in his pants pocket)

(he closes the drawer and then disappears into the showroom)

(a few seconds later LESLIE crosses silently in front of the window, casting a shadow)

(she opens the front door and enters. The bell tinkles. She shuts the door and crosses to the bench and sits without turning on a light. She appears to be upset)

(PJ emerges cautiously holding a new windbreaker in his hands. As he emerges, he hesitates. He peers around the room in the darkness)

(another figure crosses in front of the big window – it is JOSH. He peers into the shop through the window, hands cupped on either side of his face)

(as the front door opens, PJ exits quickly into the showroom)

(JOSH enters and turns on the overhead light)

JOSH

There you are. Are you alright?

LESLIE

I couldn't stand it anymore.

JOSH

It wasn't that bad.

LESLIE

What Grand Opening did you attend? It was awful. Only eight people showed up, four of whom only spoke German. And nobody bought a book, except Tad, who was being polite.

JOSH

Another couple came in after you ran out. And the Germans bought a picture book on the Old West.

LESLIE

Don't try to cheer me up.

JOSH

I won't. Remember, I was the one that suggested a delay.

LESLIE

I know you did. But other people said to go ahead. Local people. They said it would be a nice distraction from the search.

JOSH

Well, then, don't take it personally.

LESLIE

Of course I'm taking it personally! Mrs. Bonner, the woman who runs the county library, she promised, absolutely promised, she would be there. But she wasn't. The Taylors. They ordered books from me before the store was even open. Where were they? Or the Bowens? Or Charlie Davenport, the principal of the high school?

JOSH

Did you advertise?

LESLIE

Of course I advertised. I did everything right. I even did research and picked a night when there wasn't anything else going on.

JOSH

You did research to figure that out? Nothing ever goes on here.

(JOSH crosses the shop floor slowly)

LESLIE

Do you think someone called a boycott at the last minute?

JOSH

I doubt it. Apathy is more likely. It's the opiate of the new millenium.

(as he speaks, JOSH spies the duffel bag lying on the floor. He walks over to it, and then scans the room. He carefully pushes the bag out of view, behind the counter, with his foot)

JOSH

I've decided that most of life is all about expectations. Think about how many times someone says during the course of a lifetime "Boy, that was disappointing." Or, "Hey, that was better than I thought." What are you saying? The movie or the meal didn't change. What was different was your expectations. That's why I keep mine low. Then I'm always pleasantly surprised.

(while talking, JOSH has been scanning the room. LESLIE sighs)

JOSH

You had a bad night. Be patient. Lower your expectations. Wait until the search is over. Have another Grand Opening.

LESLIE

No. No more openings, no more books, no more people, no more Jericho, no more anything!

JOSH

What do you mean no more Jericho? You think we should leave?

LESLIE

Why not? It looks like the only roots I'll ever put down will be in a nursing home.

JOSH

Where do you want to go? Colorado?

LESLIE

(shrugs)

Sure. Shove me into the back seat and drive me all the way to Crippled Creek or Rotting Aspen, or wherever. Any place but here.

JOSH

Don't be angry at Jericho.

LESLIE

Of course I'm angry! People made promises. What sort of town breaks its promises?

JOSH

A town that's afraid.

(JOSH peeks into the Women's bathroom)

JOSH

Are you serious about moving to Colorado?

LESLIE

Oh, I don't know anymore.

(LESLIE buries her face in her hands. JOSH opens the Men's door sharply, as if expecting someone there)

JOSH

You could start another book store.

LESLIE

I don't want another book store. I want a real home. In a real place.

JOSH

It's too late. There are no more real places. They went to the highest bidder. Hey! What if we bought a ranch. There's tons for sale. I could try my hand as a vaquisto or vanquero, or whatever they're called. You know, be a cowboy.

(JOSH peers into the darkness of the Showroom)

LESLIE

Josh, I think there are laws against animal abuse, even in Colorado.

(JOSH makes a face as, suddenly, ERIN and SAM cross in front of the window. ERIN waves at LESLIE. They enter)

ERIN

There you are! Someone wanted to buy a map and when I looked around both of you were gone. Is everyone alright?

JOSH

We're thinking about Colorado again.

ERIN

We are? Mom?

LESLIE

I don't care anymore.

ERIN

What about Kyle?

JOSH

I don't think he wants to move to Colorado.

ERIN

Don't joke about this! I'm not going anywhere until they find him.

(Josh shrugs)

Mom?

LESLIE

I don't want to discuss it right now.

ERIN

I'm worried about him.

(SAM stands off pensively. JOSH crosses the floor and peers surreptitiously into PJ's repair shop)

JOSH

Kyle's probably hiding out just to annoy his father. Boys, you know. Besides, it's not like you two are boyfriend and girlfriend, right?

ERIN

Right.

SAM

I saw them kissing.

(ERIN gasps)

LESLIE

(startled)

Say that again.

SAM

I saw them kissing.

LESLIE

Saw who kissing?

SAM

Erin and Kyle.

Liar! ERIN

Where? JOSH

In the rocks, over by Mega-Death. SAM

Spy! ERIN

You were waxing through our territory. Besides we could hear your giggling a mile away. SAM

You kissed Kyle? LESLIE

It wasn't exactly a kiss. ERIN

Did your lips touch? LESLIE

(ERIN shrugs and nods)

I see. Anything else we should know? Sam?

(SAM shifts her weight uneasily)

Sam? LESLIE

He was touching her leg too. Up Here. SAM

(She indicates her upper thigh. ERIN gasps again and smacks SAM hard on her bad shoulder. SAM yelps)

Is this true Erin? JOSH

I made him stop. I swear. ERIN

LESLIE

(to Sam)
Did he stop?

(SAM nods 'yes' while grimacing in pain)

JOSH
It doesn't matter. When they find Kyle, we're leaving for Colorado.

LESLIE
That's right.

ERIN
Mom! You can't do this to me!

LESLIE
Yes I can.

JOSH
Your mother has changed her mind. Let's make it official. All in favor of leaving Jericho and moving to Colorado raise your hand.

(JOSH raises his hand quickly. LESLIE does too, though more slowly)

(pause)

(ERIN folds her arms. Heads turn toward SAM, who is still gripping her shoulder)

JOSH
Sam?

SAM
I can't.

JOSH
Use your other arm.

SAM
No. I mean, I can't go. I want to stay here. Butch is leaving. His old man is dragging him off to Phoenix, or some dump like that, so everything's wavy now. Besides, Butch gave me his board, which was really fat of him. It's a woofer, so I got to check it out.

ERIN
Yes! Way to go little sister!

(she hugs SAM exultantly. SAM grimaces)

ERIN

Sorry.

JOSH

Maybe it's time for a little tyranny afterall.

ERIN

(puts arms carefully around SAM)

Don't try it. We're united. Besides, we're at an impressionable age.

JOSH

So am I.

LESLIE

Enough! Let's go back to the store and then go home.

(LESLIE rises from the bench)

JOSH

What about Colorado?

LESLIE

Enough about Colorado already! No more voting! I just want to go to home and to bed. That's all. That's my entire expectation right now. Sleep.

(LESLIE opens the front door and holds it open. ERIN and SAM move toward the door)

LESLIE

Sam, you should have said something about this before now. Did you tell the sheriff?

SAM

No. Do I have to now?

LESLIE

Yes. In the morning. Not that he'll understand half of what you say.

(ERIN and SAM exit)

(JOSH wanders over to the counter. He sits heavily on a stool)

LESLIE

Aren't you coming?

JOSH

No. I've got some thinking to do. I'll be along later.

LESLIE

Josh. Come home, now.

(JOSH doesn't respond)

(after a moment, LESLIE exits. JOSH sits quietly at the counter)

JOSH

Do you think our family is too liberal?

(PJ steps out of the Showroom)

PJ

I think your whole family is crazy.

JOSH

Why do you say that?

PJ

I don't know. Your family doesn't seem to have much order.

JOSH

Order? I hate order. I hate it almost as much as I hate plans. I know we haven't followed the rules, not that there are many rules left to follow anymore, but we've hung together as a family, and that's the important thing, right?

PJ

Right.

(pause)

What's this about a search for Kyle?

JOSH

What do you mean? He's missing, didn't you know that?

PJ

No. I mean, I saw the helicopter and all, but I thought...

JOSH

Thought what?

PJ

I thought they were looking for me.

JOSH

Why?

PJ

(moves away)

I don't want to talk about it.

JOSH

Didn't you follow them in a jealous rage? On my bike?

PJ

It wasn't jealousy. I, uh, wanted to protect Erin.

JOSH

From who? Did you see them kissing?

PJ

I did. That's when I left. And got lost. Damn canyons. What do you mean Kyle's missing?

JOSH

He went to pee behind a tree and vanished in the rain. They followed his tracks but lost him on the rocks.

PJ

What do you think happened?

JOSH

What I think doesn't matter. I think he ran away. But maybe he didn't. In any case, they know someone else was out there.

PJ

What you mean?

JOSH

Some Navajo guy found another set of bike tracks, fresh, even after the rain.

PJ

Mine?

JOSH

Don't know. They haven't asked me any questions. Yet.

PJ

What are you going to tell them?

JOSH

What do you want me to say? Leslie knows you're missing. So does Tad. I told them you

were looking for Kyle on your own. Tad's out there searching too.

PJ

Has Erin said anything?

JOSH

All she can think about is Kyle.

(pause)

Did you do something, PJ?

PJ

No. I told you, I got lost. I saw them kissing, alright? Why don't you believe me?

JOSH

Because I suddenly don't know who you are.

PJ

Funny words coming from you.

(he moves farther away)

I didn't do anything.

JOSH

Then why do you think the helicopter was looking for you? Why were you hiding?

(PJ doesn't respond)

JOSH

(moving toward PJ)

Did you kill Kyle?

PJ

No!

JOSH

Then why are you running?

PJ

Someone's looking for me.

JOSH

Who?

(PJ doesn't respond)

What happened to your parents, PJ? Did you kill them too?

PJ

No!

(pause)
I didn't. Somebody else did.

JOSH
Who?

PJ
A drunk driver. From California.

(PJ moves farther away from Josh)

PJ
It was two years ago. I was working down at the school. In the library. They went to see a movie...and didn't come home. I had four younger sisters. They were all in the car with my parents.

JOSH
Any survivors?
(PJ shakes his head 'no')
What about the drunk driver?

PJ
He lived. Of course. Why does that always happen? It made me so mad!

JOSH
You're still pretty angry about it, aren't you?

PJ
Well, they didn't do anything wrong! Aren't we taught that bad things happen for a reason? They were just driving down the road minding their own business. They weren't going fast. They didn't drink. They were obeying all the rules. They shouldn't have died!

PJ
None of my sisters older than twelve. Why did they have to die so young? People told me it was part of God's plan.

JOSH
Are you mad at God?

PJ
No. I was mad at everyone else, especially the drunk. I couldn't believe no one called me. I found out about the accident when I went home and saw the sheriff outside. I thought someone was sick or something. The officer asked me if I wanted to go to the crash scene. He recommended that I didn't, so I didn't.

(PJ walks to the center of the shop floor)

JOSH

Are you mad at the drunk?

PJ

Of course I am! He fought the charges in court. He said it wasn't his fault. Said he had a migraine. He got off with a year in jail and some probation time. A year! That was it for killing six people. Six people!! It was his first offense so there was nothing the judge could do. There were rules to follow. The judge said it wasn't his fault.

(pause)

PJ

I got so mad I yelled at people. I yelled in court. I yelled at the judge, the lawyers, the sheriff. But everybody said it wasn't their fault, which made me yell even louder. The sheriff blamed the law, the judge blamed society, and everyone else blamed the drunk. The asshole never apologized, not once. He smirked through the trial. He even laughed once. It made me crazy. I was there when he got out of jail. I broke both his knees with a baseball bat. I smashed his hands too. I hit him over and over. I never wanted him to drive again.

(pause)

PJ

They let me out of reform school after eight months. They said I was temporarily insane. The drunk tried to go after me in court but I didn't own anything. Then he tried to confront me face-to-face, but I was afraid about what I might do, so I ran away. I was afraid of hurting him again. All I ever wanted was an apology.

(pause)

PJ

They talked my uncle into taking me into his family. But he was mean. Said I was a sinner. That I was being judged by God. He didn't even try to understand. His wife was nice, but the kids picked on me. I got into a fight with his son. I ran away. I blamed myself. Maybe he was right, maybe the whole thing is my fault. I should have made them stay at home. I should have gone with them. I should have done something. Things happen for a reason, right? I lived and they died. I must have done something wrong.

(pause)

PJ

My uncle's looking for me. I think he wants me to go to jail. I can't do that.

(pause)

PJ

The last thing I remember was dad telling me to have a good time at work. He waved and

smiled as I drove away. He had his favorite John Deere cap on, like he was going to work in the garden. Mom wore a white dress. She told me to be careful. I borrowed ten bucks from dad. I still have it.

(PJ pulls a dirty ten-dollar bill from his pocket)

I just want to give it back.

(PJ crumples the bill in his hand)

JOSH

I'm sorry.

PJ

I don't want your pity.

JOSH

What do you want?

PJ

To be left alone.

(PJ suddenly charges for the front door)

JOSH

PJ!

(PJ opens the door and hesitates for a second)

JOSH

Don't run away. I'll explain it to them. Don't go.

(PJ exits)

JOSH

PJ!

(JOSH opens the front door)

JOSH

(yells)

PJ! PJ!

(JOSH exits. The door closes behind him)

(Lights down)

Scene 2

Strong morning light falls from the left side windows. JOSH is sitting on a stool and is resting his head on his folded arms on the counter.

(the door opens and HOWARD enters, carrying his briefcase. The bell tinkles merrily. JOSH raises his head wearily)

JOSH

That was fast.

HOWARD

The world's become a virtual courthouse. Did you know your 'open' sign says 'closed'?

JOSH

It doesn't matter. What did you find out?

(JOSH holds out his hand and HOWARD hands him a piece of paper)

HOWARD

Your kid has a history. Didn't you check before you hired him?

JOSH

Check what? He looked like a stray dog when I found him. What has he done?

HOWARD

Well, besides crippling a drunk for life, he broke the arm of a kid in his uncle's family. He's also been picked up three times for smashing the front windows of those state-run liquor stores. You know about his family?

JOSH

I do.

HOWARD

Tough luck. There was a note that said his uncle thinks your stray dog might be suicidal.

JOSH

Really?

HOWARD

**I think they're looking for him. There's his name
(he points to a place on the paper).
Want me to call his uncle?**

JOSH

No, I'll do it.

HOWARD

Suit yourself. Where is he anyway?

JOSH

He's on the search, I think. Any word about that?

(HOWARD moves to the center of the floor)

HOWARD

Nope. Can I use your bathroom? Know what I think? I think that Kyle kid fell in some quicksand. I never could see the appeal of canyons. I went on a hike up one once and tried to have a vision. All I could think of was lasagna. By the way, did you hear about the airport?

(HOWARD crosses to the Men's Room, places his briefcase on the floor, and opens the door)

JOSH

What about the airport?

HOWARD

The word is with all this search-and-rescue chaos, the state is willing to pay for a bigger airport. Federales might help too.

JOSH

They'll still need the permission of the town council.

HOWARD

True. But I haven't met a politician yet who could say 'no' to free money, have you?

(HOWARD points his finger at Josh as if it were a pistol. He 'fake' shoots him, winks, smiles, and disappears into the bathroom)

(The front door opens and a grim-faced MOSS enters)

JOSH

Hello councilman. Did they find your son?

MOSS

No.

JOSH

I'm sorry. I thought you'd be out there directing the search.

MOSS

They didn't want me. Said I was interfering.

(MOSS crosses the shop slowly and unsteadily)

JOSH

What do you want?

MOSS

My lawyer wants me to sue you. He thinks we can get your shop because you let Kyle take a bike out, and because of your daughter. “Unsupervised” I think was his term. He told me if we could get your shop he’d turn it back into a feed store. He thinks we can sue you back to Los Angeles.

(MOSS comes close to Josh in a menacing manner)

JOSH

Thank god for lawyers. Have you been drinking?

MOSS

What if I were? It’s not everyday that a father loses his only son.

JOSH

I think you should leave now.

MOSS

Not till we talk about something. I want to talk to you, father to father. About something personal.

(MOSS suddenly grabs JOSH by his shirt)

MOSS

This is all your fault, you son-of-a-bitch! I have half a mind to belt you across this room.

(the Men's Room door opens suddenly and HOWARD steps out. Spying MOSS’S clenched fist he suddenly rushes across the set and grabs MOSS from behind)

(MOSS breaks HOWARD’S grip easily, turns and gives the lawyer a mighty shove. HOWARD staggers backward clumsily and exits into the Showroom)

(MOSS turns to confront JOSH again when HOWARD suddenly flies out of the Showroom and knocks MOSS over. They grapple on the floor and roll around for a bit)

(both MEN rise to their feet. MOSS swings clumsily at HOWARD, who ducks the punch. They square off)

JOSH
Stop this!

MOSS
(to Howard)
Come on you greedy son-of-a-bitch. Take a shot.

HOWARD
Don't tempt me.

JOSH
Howard, are you crazy?

(JOSH steps between them)

MOSS
Get out of the way! I've been dreaming about this all summer.

(but JOSH won't get out of the way. So MOSS gives JOSH a big shove)

MOSS
(to Howard)
I know all about your airport plans, you leech. Take a shot. Go ahead.

HOWARD
Don't you wish.

MOSS
Then I will.

(MOSS swings wildly and then staggers)

HOWARD
Yes sir, I think we're having a Wild West flashback.

MOSS
Don't make a mockery out of me!

HOWARD
I don't have to, you're doing a fine job all by yourself.

MOSS
You're a leech, not a man!

(MOSS tries a roundhouse swing again, but HOWARD backs away deftly)

HOWARD

You're certainly no Muhammed Ali.

JOSH

Howard! What's this all about anyway?

HOWARD

Power.

MOSS

Not power. It's about who I hit first.

(MOSS suddenly charges HOWARD. He swings rather wildly and HOWARD deftly dodges his blow)

(turning awkwardly, MOSS stumbles and falls. He hits his head against the counter. He holds his head in pain)

(MOSS suddenly lunges for HOWARD'S feet, grasping with his hands. HOWARD backs away)

MOSS

Come here you leech! Quit running away.

(MOSS quits crawling and just lies on the floor)

HOWARD

That was fun. Is anyone going to call the sheriff?

JOSH

No!

(HOWARD straightens his clothes. He checks his watch)

HOWARD

Works for me. Oops, gotta run.

JOSH

Don't go Howard. I need your help. To work this out.

HOWARD

To work what out?

JOSH

I'm not sure. This.

HOWARD

Hire another lawyer.

JOSH

That's not what I meant.

HOWARD

Well, I don't know what you mean then, and I haven't got the time to figure it out.

JOSH

Howard!

(HOWARD opens the door quickly and exits)

(pause)

MOSS

Let the leech go.

(MOSS rolls painfully over onto his back)

MOSS

He's won anyway. It's all over.

JOSH

What is?

(MOSS sits up and leans against the counter)

MOSS

Everything. My farm. This town. The future.

JOSH

You have been drinking.

MOSS

We're a conquered people.

JOSH

Don't be ridiculous. Howard's not invincible. Beat him at his own game.

MOSS

That's your answer? Be like Howard?

JOSH

No one's conquering anyone. This isn't a football game.

MOSS

You're absolutely right, it's no game. But you're wrong about the fight. I lost.

JOSH

Don't be stupid. Get up on your feet. And stop talking about 'conquered people.' Who the hell is 'we' anyway? I feel just as oppressed as you do.

MOSS

Believe it or not, Mr. Rose, this isn't about you. Or me. This is about Kyle.

JOSH

I'm sure he's alright.

MOSS

He is alright. I know cause he called me this morning. From North Carolina.

JOSH

What do you mean?

MOSS

He ran away. Hitchhiked to North Carolina. To join the army. Signed up secretly. Over the Internet. Had the whole thing planned out. He never wanted to farm.

JOSH

Maybe that's not true.

MOSS

No, it's true enough. He hates what I do. He said so.

JOSH

He's a teenager. He's supposed to hate what his parents do. It's part of the job description. He'll change his mind.

MOSS

I don't think so. You could see it in his eyes. He hates me.

JOSH

Are you sure that's not the alcohol talking?

MOSS

Positive. He's not coming home.

(pause)

JOSH

Don't you have other kids?

MOSS

I should, shouldn't I? Well, I don't.

(pause)

Ironic, huh? I fight the developers tooth-and-nail for the place and when I turn around I have no one to give it to.

JOSH

Surely somebody else must want your farm. You must have a nephew or niece.

MOSS

No, nobody wants it. Nobody wants to farm anymore. It's too much work. Too dirty. Too boring. It doesn't make enough money. You want it? To farm.

JOSH

Not really.

MOSS

What am I going to do without my son?

JOSH

I don't know.

MOSS

You don't know. How typical.

(after a pause, MOSS rises to his feet stiffly)

JOSH

Maybe there is something I can do to help. With the farm, I mean.

MOSS

Like what?

JOSH

I don't know. I have friends.

MOSS

I've seen your friends. Why don't you just place an ad in the New York Times: Wanted! Psycho-Therapists, Divorce-Lawyers, Internet Freaks, Plastic Surgeons, Enviro Nuts, Performance Artists, and other unhappy souls to invade small town in southern Utah for fun and profit. The boom is on!!

JOSH

That's not fair.

MOSS

What's not fair? The victor writes the history books. Is that fair?

JOSH

There's no victor here.

MOSS

Wake up Mr. Rose! It's over. You won. We lost.

(MOSS moves toward the front door slowly)

JOSH

What if we stayed here, and tried to help Jericho?

MOSS

By doing what? Starting a film festival?

JOSH

Help with the farm.

MOSS

What do you know about dirt?

JOSH

What did I know about mobile homes? I know something about money.

MOSS

Farming isn't about money. That's the problem. Forget it.

(MOSS stops near the front door)

JOSH

I want to help.

MOSS

It's too late. What's the quote about that Roman emperor? "He made a devastation and called it 'peace'." Now you want to help? Now?

(pause)

(the door suddenly opens and HOWARD enters. HOWARD points at his briefcase near the Men's Room, and begins to cross the floor)

MOSS

(to Josh)

I'll tell you how you can help. Sell your shop to my lawyer. We could use a feed store in

Jericho again.

(MOSS exits)

(HOWARD picks up the briefcase)

HOWARD

What did he mean by that? What's a feed store?

JOSH

Do you know what a horse is?

HOWARD

Sure, they're the things cowboys use to sit on in those cigarette ads. Are you selling your shop?

JOSH

I'm thinking about it.

HOWARD

To who? To me?

JOSH

Not to you.

HOWARD

That's alright. Besides, it's not exactly a cash cow, is it? So to speak.

JOSH

That wasn't the idea.

HOWARD

What was the idea?

JOSH

I can't remember.

HOWARD

I forget, are you guys staying or leaving?

JOSH

I don't know. I want you to drop the airport thing.

HOWARD

Oops. Gotta run. Can't stop for philosophical discussions.

(HOWARD moves toward the front door)

JOSH

(yells)

Howard!

(HOWARD stops)

JOSH

Do you remember the time Fran threw you out of the house and you came to live with us for a couple weeks?

HOWARD

Which time?

JOSH

The first time. The time when you hit the side of our house with your car because you were too drunk to see straight.

HOWARD

That time. What about it? And can you make this quick?

JOSH

Do you remember the good time we had together, with my family? Remember getting sober? Remember Leslie getting you and Fran to reconcile? Remember telling us that we saved your life?

HOWARD

So I owe you one, is that what you're driving at?

JOSH

No. Remember why Fran threw you out in the first place? Because you didn't care about the real things in life. Like your family.

(pause)

HOWARD

What's your point?

JOSH

Howard, leave the airport alone. And don't give me any crap about investors.

(HOWARD seems lost in thought for a moment)

HOWARD

No.

JOSH

Why not?

HOWARD

Because I don't have a choice. Because if I don't take this opportunity, someone else will. You should understand that. Fate. Destiny. Karma. Whatever.

(checks watch)

I've got to go.

(HOWARD moves toward the front door)

JOSH

Howard!

HOWARD

What are you doing, cashing in my IOUs?

JOSH

If I have to.

HOWARD

I'm sorry.

(HOWARD opens the door)

JOSH

Howard!

HOWARD

I can't.

JOSH

Not even for an old friend?

HOWARD

We haven't known each other that long, have we?

(HOWARD shoots Josh a defiant look. He exits)

(Lights down)

Scene 3

Early morning light falls from the left side windows.

(TAD peers through the front window. He opens the unlocked door carefully and enters the shop. He turns on the overhead light. The bikes have been set upright and all looks clean and tidy)

TAD

Hello?

(TAD scans the shop)

TAD

Anyone home?

(TAD looks at his wrist, but there is no watch. He shrugs and walks toward the counter. He spies a short stack of papers at the end of the counter)

TAD

Ahh...

(TAD reads the top page of the stack gingerly)

(after a moment, JOSH enters through the front door)

TAD

Sorry about being late, boss. I couldn't get my dogma out of bed this morning.

JOSH

That's alright. I was just taking a walk.

TAD

You were? Cool. Personally, I've had enough fresh air for a while. This it?

(TAD points at the stack of papers)

JOSH

It is. You'll find that I agreed to all your terms, including the price.

TAD

Really? Totally awesome. Is there a catch?

(JOSH walks across the floor as he talks)

JOSH

Just one. I want you to hire a CPA. Zen and the art of accounting sounds like a contradiction. Buddha never filled out a tax return.

TAD

Neither have I. Just kidding.

JOSH

I'm curious, Tad. What's the first thing you're going to do when you take over?

TAD

Here? A friend of mine thinks I should do a purification ceremony. She's a shaman. She's been in here and thinks this place really needs a realignment. You know, smoke and stuff. Personally, I'd start with a paint job and new carpeting.

JOSH

Good idea. Then what?

TAD

I'd sponsor a bike race. I'd advertise in 'Radical Biker,' and 'Outdoor Extremist' and on the Internet. You know, get real. I didn't mean that as an insult.

JOSH

No insult taken. You know the shop never turned a profit. Not even close.

TAD

I know. I looked at the numbers. Ugly. I'm no MBA, but shouldn't a business have customers?

JOSH

In theory. At least there's no debt. I've been floating the place with cash from my previous lives.

TAD

Bummer.

JOSH

Why did King Midas lose his touch?

TAD

I think he got hungry. Didn't all his food turn to gold? Why are you selling the shop, if you don't mind me asking? Cause it's losing money?

JOSH

No. It's hard to explain. I need to start over. Again.

TAD

You're leaving?

JOSH

I don't think so. Business has picked up at the bookstore, so Leslie's happy. Erin has been brooding since the Kyle thing. And Sam, well, I haven't a clue there. Everyone's coming over soon. We're going to have another vote.

TAD

That reminds me, the whole concept of voting in elections baffles me. I can't understand the idea of voting for things I don't know anything about. I mean, shouldn't we be experts or something?

JOSH

Theoretically. Actually, it's our last vote. I've decided to be fashionable and try an oligarchy instead.

TAD

What's that? Sounds like a vegetable.

JOSH

It's not. Go ahead and sign the contract. Both copies. Everything's fine.

(as TAD scans the contract JOSH wanders over to the big map of the Canyonlands on the wall)

TAD

What does "indemnity" mean? And "tort"? That sounds like a cookie.

JOSH

It's not. Trust me. It's all standard stuff. I've done this a million times.

TAD

Alright, but I gotta tell you that all this business stuff makes my karma ache.

JOSH

Mine too.

(TAD signs the contracts)

TAD

What are you going to do?

JOSH

That's a good question. What does Jericho need, Tad? If it could acquire one thing, anything at all, what would that be?

TAD

A sense of humor.

JOSH

I agree. What else?

TAD

(thinks for a moment)

More air conditioning. I'm serious! Why do you ask?

JOSH

I was thinking of running for city council.

TAD

Totally civic! Why?

(JOSH turns away from the map)

JOSH

Why does anybody run for political office? To get what I want, of course.

TAD

What do you want? An oligarchy?

JOSH

I wish. How about peace and prosperity? Make the trains run on time. Bridge to tomorrow. Yesterday. Whatever.

TAD

(shrugs)

You got my vote.

JOSH

(grins after a pause)

Beat the snot out of the other guy.

TAD

(grins)

That's what I thought. Cool. Bad karma though.

JOSH

Well, maybe I'll come back as something useful in my next life. Like a frog or a tree.

TAD

Who you going to beat in the election, Mr. Moss?

JOSH

No. He says he's giving up his seat. Somebody else. Done?

(JOSH picks up one copy of the contract, straightens it, and sticks out his hand. They shake)

JOSH

Congratulations, you're now the proud owner of a piece of the New Frontier, or whatever they're calling it these days. Meet the New West, same as the Old West, only with more latte.

TAD

And For Sale signs.

JOSH

Hey, don't bite the hand that feeds you.

TAD

I don't intend to.

(suddenly the front door opens and MOSS enters)

MOSS

I got your message that you wanted to see me.

JOSH

I didn't think you would be over so soon. I have a question for you.

TAD

I'm leaving boss. Can't wait to tell my dad I joined the System. He'll flip. Cool. Bye.

JOSH

Good luck.

TAD

No such thing, remember?

(TAD exits)

JOSH

I just sold the shop to Tad.

MOSS

So I heard.

JOSH

(blinks in amazement)

You did? What else have you heard?

MOSS

Is that your question?

JOSH

What about the airport?

MOSS

What about it? As far as I know your shyster friend still plans to expand it. You talk him out it yet?

JOSH

I don't think I can. That's why I wanted to talk with you. I've decided to stay in Jericho.

MOSS

And do what?

JOSH

I don't know, open feed store?

MOSS

I'm not in a humorous mood. Is that your question?

JOSH

I was thinking about running for your seat on the city council.

MOSS

I said I wasn't in a humorous mood. You're serious. That's dumber than the feed store. You can't win.

JOSH

I could with your help.

(pause)

JOSH

I have some money. I have time. I have certain skills, not all of them terribly useful, but maybe useful enough for politics. We could be a team. The mayor's job is going to be open, as you know. You could be mayor.

MOSS

I was mayor once. Didn't do much good, did it?

JOSH

Things have changed. We could unite.

MOSS

And be what, the Laurel and Hardy Party? What would be our platform?

JOSH

Stop Howard.

MOSS

That's not much of a platform. What if we did? What about the next Howard that comes along. And the one after that? I'm a little too worn out for perpetual vigilance.

JOSH

Look, I don't know what to do, Mr. Moss, except stop Howard somehow. I know how he thinks. I know some of his friends. I know a little dirt too. With your help we can win.

MOSS

Then what?

JOSH

I don't know. Yes, it's true. I don't know. Do you want to stop the airport or not? That's my question.

(JOSH notices someone walk by the window)

MOSS

Hmmm.

(suddenly, the front door opens and PJ enters. He carries his sleeping bag under one arm and a beat-up duffel bag under the other)

PJ

I just came to get my stuff.

(PJ crosses to the repair shop and exits)

JOSH

What's your answer?

MOSS

How do I know you won't change your mind and take off?

JOSH

I won't. You have my word.

MOSS

Can a leopard change his spots?

JOSH

I'm going to try. Look, if you don't think we could win...

MOSS

(interrupts)

I think we could, actually. As absurd as it sounds, I think you have a good plan. But I still don't understand why you want to do it. Is it something personal?

JOSH

Yes. But not with Howard. Something personal with me. But don't want to discuss it right now. I've got to talk with PJ. What's your answer?

MOSS

My answer is "maybe." Maybe yes. Come by the farm when you're done and we can talk about it some more.

(JOSH moves toward the repair shop)

JOSH

I will. I've got other plans too, for Jericho.

MOSS

Like what, a jazz festival?

JOSH

Opera house. Just kidding. What about more air conditioning?

MOSS

That's a good idea.

JOSH

I've got others. You'll see.

(PJ enters carrying an armload of clothes and gear, including a large backpack)

MOSS

Thanks for the warning.

(MOSS exits)

PJ

You're staying?

JOSH

I am. But you're not?

PJ
What does it look like?

JOSH
I sold the shop to Tad.

PJ
Goody for Tad, I guess.

(PJ kneels and begins to stuff clothing and other personal effects into the backpack)

JOSH
You'd still have a job here, I'm sure.

PJ
I don't want a job here. What is this plan you two were talking about?

JOSH
I'm thinking about running for city council.

PJ
Why? Don't you think you've done enough damage to southern Utah?

JOSH
Apparently not. Where are you going, back into the wilderness?

PJ
No. The desert sucks. There isn't much food. Wilderness is a good idea only if you've got a full belly. I'm going someplace else.

JOSH
Where? Home?

PJ
Not home. Colorado maybe.

JOSH
Did you hear about Kyle?

PJ
I heard he gave his old man the slip. Pretty clever.

JOSH
Is that what you're doing, giving Jericho the slip?

PJ

Something like that.

JOSH

You don't need to run anymore, PJ. I called your uncle.

(PJ stops stuffing)

PJ

You did? What did he say?

JOSH

He's not angry anymore. He doesn't want to put you in jail or anything. Actually, he's worried about your health. He just wants you to come home.

PJ

I don't believe that.

JOSH

(points to the phone)

Well, it's true. Want to talk to him?

PJ

No. I don't want to go back there. It's not my home.

JOSH

Then stay here.

PJ

And do what?

JOSH

Finish high school.

PJ

That's exciting.

(he starts packing again)

JOSH

Get a job. In Leslie's bookstore. I have connections. You might get free books.

(PJ keeps packing)

JOSH

To go to college.

(PJ stops packing)

PJ

For someone who doesn't like plans, you sure have a lot of them.

JOSH

What can I say? I'm evolving. What about college?

PJ

You never went.

JOSH

Precisely. And my poor example should be a lesson to you. Want to be like me?

PJ

No.

(PJ begins packing again)

JOSH

You know, Mr. Moss could use help on his farm, with the mulching or harvesting or what ever they call it.

PJ

He's not a nice man. Why don't you help him instead?

JOSH

I intend to, but just not with the dirt part. I'd probably ruin his crop. He misses his son.

PJ

Then he shouldn't have driven him away.

JOSH

Is that what I'm doing?

PJ

(hot suddenly)

What am I, the lost son you never had? Can't you leave me alone?

JOSH

It's like we're trading places.

(PJ stands up)

PJ

What's wrong with that?

JOSH

I'm not ready for it.

PJ

Get ready.

(PJ shoulders the backpack)

JOSH

You're one of the reasons I decided to stay. To help.

PJ

I don't want your help.

JOSH

What about a home, PJ?

PJ

What about it?

(PJ walks toward the front door)

JOSH

This doesn't make any sense. You have roots here.

PJ

Not anymore.

JOSH

What about Erin?

(PJ pauses as he reaches the front door)

PJ

What about her?

JOSH

You know perfectly well what about her. She's staying here, at least for a while.

PJ

So? I'm not her type, apparently.

JOSH

You don't know that.

PJ

No, but I can take a good guess.

JOSH

There's nothing I can say to make you stay?

PJ

No.

(PJ opens the front door, then hesitates)

PJ

You said once you wanted to know what makes people run.

JOSH

That's right.

PJ

Did you find an answer?

JOSH

No. But I think I figured out why we stick.

(PJ lets the door close. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the dirty ten-dollar bill. He holds it out to Josh)

PJ

I want you to have this.

(JOSH doesn't respond)

PJ

Please.

(JOSH reaches out slowly and takes the bill)

PJ

Use it to start a film festival.

JOSH

Opera house.

PJ

Whatever. Tell Erin I said good-bye. Tell her I'll be in Colorado.

(PJ exits)

(JOSH looks at the bill in his hand, and then slowly closes his hand)

(JOSH walks over the window and turns the ‘Open’ sign around to read ‘Closed’ to the street. He surveys the shop for a moment)

(LESLIE appears outside the main window. She peers inside)

(LESLIE opens the door and enters)

LESLIE

Sorry I’m late. I stopped by the store. Erin is still there waiting for Sam. They’ll be here in a minute. Are you alright?

JOSH

I’m fine. Just trying to figure out how to get my karma out of reverse gear.

LESLIE

Do I want to know what that means? Did everything go alright with Tad?

JOSH

It went great, though a friend of his thinks the shop might need a realignment. It has something to do with smoke.

LESLIE

Oh dear. Are we still planning to have a vote?

(he nods ‘yes’)

Which way are you going?

JOSH

(sighs)

I don’t know all of a sudden.

LESLIE

You’re not still thinking about the outlet mall?

JOSH

No, no more outlet malls. What if a became a farmer?

LESLIE

I think we’d starve.

JOSH

Me too.

(JOSH suddenly reaches out his arms to Leslie, who comes forward. They embrace)

JOSH

Actually, I have an idea.

LESLIE

Uh-oh.

(ERIN and SAM suddenly enter through the door)

ERIN

We're here! Stop the hugging, and no speeches, ok? Let's just vote and then go eat something. I'm starving.

SAM

Me too. But not at her stupid café. I'm not really in the mood for a goat cheese crescent, or whatever they call it.

ERIN

Croissant. Please! You do that on purpose, don't you? Can we vote now?

SAM

What's wrong, dad? You look sad.

LESLIE

He sold his shop.

JOSH

No, I was just thinking about democracy. I'm going to miss voting.

ERIN

I won't.

SAM

Yeah, way too weird.

JOSH

Ok, last time. Everyone who wants to stay in Jericho, raise their hand.

(LESLIE and SAM raise their hands quickly. After a beat, ERIN raises her hand too)

ERIN

(to Sam)

Don't give me that look.

SAM
He's not coming back.

ERIN
You don't know that.

(everyone looks at JOSH. After a beat, He raises his hand)

SAM
Fat! Let's eat.

ERIN
You sold the shop? To who?

JOSH
To Tad. Why don't we talk about this over breakfast.

ERIN
What are you going to do now?

JOSH
I'm thinking about running for town council.

LESLIE
You are?

ERIN
Why?

JOSH
What's wrong with your generation? Don't you believe in public service anymore?

(JOSH opens the front door and holds it open)

ERIN
Public service sounds like a contradiction in terms. Kinda like military intelligence.

SAM
I think it's dingo. Wiffle-rad cracker box. You know, cool.

(SAM exits)

JOSH
Thank god.

ERIN

Actually, it's ok with me too. Do I get any extra votes? Just kidding.

(ERIN exits. LESLIE hesitates at the door)

LESLIE

Are you serious?

JOSH

Am I anything else?

LESLIE

This have something to do with Howard? I thought so. It'll be a fight. You'll need money.

JOSH

I've got my first contribution right here.

(he holds up PJ's ten-dollar bill)

LESLIE

From who?

JOSH

From a friend. A family friend.

(LESLIE raises an eyebrow as she exits)

(JOSH turns and scans the store with a look of unmistakable fondness)

(he turns off the overhead light)

(he steps outside and closes the door. He locks the door with a key)

(he walks past the window and exits)

(Lights out)

END OF PLAY