SCENE THREE

Hours and hours later.

Darkness.

Sounds of rain, thunder.

A stroke of lightning illuminates for a moment the insides of a cabin.

ZACH rushes into the cabin, soaking wet – screaming with almost primal energy. CARLA enters behind, soaked, beaten down.

ZACH
AH!!!!!!!!!! AH!!!!!!!!!! AH!!!!! MOTHER NATURE YOU’RE A MOTHER FUCKER!!!!
AH!!!!!!!!!!!!!! BUT WE SURVIVED YOU! WE ARE NOT AFRAID!!!!!
AH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CARLA
Mr. Clemenson. Stop. Please. Stop.

ZACH
AH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CARLA
Please STOP!

ZACH
Ah!

CARLA
You’ve been screaming like that for hours now.

ZACH
What a trip! What a friggin’ trip! We were out there man, we were in it! In the elements! We were – it was – EPIC! We’re epic! We rocked it! You ROCKED IT! You were such a bad ASS Out THERE! YOU JUST persevered! You are a friggin’ Captain! You’re a General! You could have been Robert E. Lee! Or better yet – Stonewall Jackson! You were that bad ASS!!!! You –

CARLA
I think you’re being a tad dramatic Mr. Clemenson.

ZACH
Naw. No way! No way am I being dramatic. I’m telling it like it is. You just – you’re fearless! You friggin’ just soldiered through. And when we hit that mudslide you were like – whatever, you just slid through it and got up and kept going and man, it was inspirational.

CARLA
It was survival. I just wanted to get us out of the cold rain and into some place dry.

ZACH
And you found one! You found us a nice place to wait out this storm. Safe and sound indoors.

CARLA
In the middle of god knows where.

ZACH
You’re shivering.

CARLA
I am not.

ZACH
Drink this.

CARLA
What is it?

ZACH
Whiskey.

CARLA
How many flasks do you have?

ZACH
Seven. Drink.

CARLA
Mr. Clemenson I don’t –

ZACH
Hush your mouth.

CARLA
Don’t tell me to hush my mouth.

ZACH
Take a swig.

CARLA
I will not swig.

ZACH
Ms. Keenan, I promise you’ll feel warmer.

CARLA
I don’t want to –
ZACH
Your bottom lip even in the dark is turning blue. Go on, just take a swig.

Beat.

CARLA
Fine. A swig. But that’s all. A swig.

ZACH
Fine.

CARLA
Fine.

CARLA swigs. From here on, she drinks fairly consistently.

CARLA
Oh.

ZACH
Good stuff huh?

CARLA
Yes. This is quite good.

ZACH
Yeah. Make it myself.

CARLA
You made this?

ZACH
Yup. Have a homemade distillery in my place. That’s my Daddy and my grand-daddy’s recipe. Clemenson Moonshine.

CARLA
It’s really quite sophisticated.

ZACH
Yeah and strong. Probably 70% pure alcohol.

CARLA
It – travels so fluidly – its in my chest now. It’s very –

ZACH
Yeah, it’s a kicker right?

CARLA
Yes. Yes it is.
ZACH
I didn’t take you for a whiskey aficionado Ms. Keenan.

CARLA
I’ll have you know that years ago I was given a 1958 bottle of Glen Garioch and I consider nothing finer on a rare occasion than sipping half a glass of that delicious whiskey. But this, Mr. Clemenson, this and perhaps it’s the circumstances is a very close second.

ZACH
Ms. Keenan, I do believe that’s the first compliment you’ve paid me.

CARLA
Well don’t let it go to your head. I’m still angry with you for throwing my phone which if we had at this moment we could use to call for help.

ZACH
We don’t need help Ms. Keenan, we got shelter, we’re fine.

CARLA
Perhaps you are fine. I am not fine. I am not fine in the least. This is a complete and utter disaster and you know it. Not only have we no way to communicate with the outside world, we lost what few supplies we had.

ZACH steps away from CARLA, starts looking around the space.

CARLA
— where are you going?

ZACH
I’m just walking over here. See what I can find.

CARLA
Over where?

ZACH
Not two feet from you.

CARLA
I can’t see you.

ZACH
Here, I’ll sing so you know where I am.

(singing)
SITTING BY THE ROADSIDE ON A SUMMER’S DAY
CHATTING WITH MY MESS-MATES, PASSING TIME AWAY
LYING IN THE SHADOWS UNDERNEATH THE TREES
GOODNESS, HOW DELICIOUS, EATING GOOBER PEAS.

PEAS, PEAS, PEAS, PEAS
CARLA
Your voice is like a screechy old car.

ZACH
In that case, I bet you’d love to hear another verse.

“WHEN A HORSE-MAN Passes, THE-

CARLA
Stop. Please. Spare me!

ZACH finds something.

ZACH
Aha!

CARLA
What? What is it?

ZACH
Found something.

CARLA
What’d you find?

ZACH
How does the Bible start?

CARLA
What?

ZACH
I’ll give you a hint “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth —” What’s the rest?

CARLA
I have no idea.

ZACH
Yes you do, Listen – you know this. Everyone knows this. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said” —

CARLA
You are creeping me out.

ZACH
ALIVE AND WELL GLOBE PRODUCTION SCRIPT

No. That’s not what God said. What did God say?

CARLA
I don’t know, what did God say?

ZACH
God said – “Let there be light! And there was light”.

ZACH has lit a candle. There is some light. We can see we’re in some kind of cabin. They both take a moment and look around. ZACH thrilled, CARLA horrified.

ZACH
Ms. Keenan I do believe we’ve stumbled right into the real deal.

CARLA
Real deal?

ZACH
Straight up authentic from the 1800’s. Pretty old. Pretty cool!

CARLA
Pretty creepy.

ZACH
Ms. Keenan, you are what I like to call a buzzkill.

CARLA
I am not a buzzkill, I’ll have you know we’re in a very dangerous situation Mr. Clemenson. This is just how these things go.

ZACH
How what things go?

CARLA
This is how people disappear. Journalist Carla Keenan, last seen wandering Virginia countryside with a Civil War re-enactor, Mr. Zachariah Clemenson—

ZACH
The fourth.

CARLA
The fourth?

ZACH
The fourth. Zachariah Clemenson the 4th.

CARLA
There are three others of you?
ZACH
There were. Just me now. I was hoping Regina would birth me a son to name Zachariah Clemenson the 5th. I’m not getting any younger and I need a spawn to carry on my name. A male spawn. I need a male spawn!

We hear a squeak of the floor.

CARLA
What was that?

ZACH
It’s us. We moved that’s all. Wood floor.

CARLA
But we don’t know for sure. We have to know.

ZACH
We’re fine. We’re alone.

CARLA
But we’re not sure. Someone could be hiding in the shadows, waiting to attack. Just waiting to jump out of hiding with a chainsaw or a butcher’s knife and gut us! What if it’s the Lonesome Soldier?

ZACH
It’s not the Lonesome Soldier.

CARLA
But it could be. He could be watching us right now, waiting to attack!

CARLA
Listen!

Beat.

ZACH
(whispering)
I don’t hear anything.

CARLA
Exactly. That’s the sound of someone getting ready to gut us. We have to show them we’re not afraid. We have to call them out. That’s how these things work. If we don’t call them out, they’ll have the advantage. We have to show them we’re strong.

Hello? Anyone here? If you are, reveal yourselves now! We are not afraid of our destiny! We will fight for OUR LIVES!!!!!!

ZACH
Here, hold on to this.
ZACH hands CARLA the candle and starts to exit.

CARLA
Where are you going?

ZACH
Find us some wood for that fireplace.

CARLA
You’re going to leave me in here all alone.

ZACH
Just for a minute or two.

CARLA
A minute or two? Anything can happen in a minute or two. One minute someone is just minding their business, the next minute they’re attacked and gutted.

ZACH
You’ve got a vivid imagination around this stuff Ms. Keenan.

CARLA
I’m somewhat of a horror buff. Well its complicated. I’m a horror buff who’s horrified of horror.

ZACH
Sounds unhealthy.

CARLA
Oh it is. It’s terribly unhealthy. But unstoppable.

ZACH
Well you are going to have to try to stop it, just for a minute, while I look for wood. I’m sure you’ll be fine... We didn’t check under the bed but I’m sure you’ll be fine.

CARLA
Very funny Mr. Clemenson.

ZACH
Be back in jiffy.

ZACH exits. Silence. CARLA listens and looks around the space.

CARLA
I’m not afraid of being alone Mr. Clemenson! In a cabin. In the woods. In the rain. I flourish in my aloneness! As long as its not pitch black, I’m fine. And its not dark, I have this candle, which illuminates this entire space so I feel safe here. I’m safe. I’m safe. I’m -
The candle goes out.

CARLA
I’m not safe. I’m in danger. Mr. Clemenson? … Mr. Clemenson? ….

Thunder outside.

CARLA
Oh god. Oh god. Oh god. Oh god. Oh god. Oh god.

CARLA takes a huge swig of whiskey.

CARLA
Wooo!

She takes another swig.

CARLA
Better.

She’s about to take another swig, ZACH re-enters with wood.

CARLA
Oh! Thank god you’re back!

CARLA almost rushes to him but stops herself part of the way.

ZACH
What happened to the candle?

CARLA
It went out and I didn’t know how you lit this before and –

ZACH puts down the wood and takes a lighter out of his pocket.

ZACH
I used this.

He lights the candle.

CARLA
You have a lighter?

ZACH
Yup.

CARLA
That’s not very authentic Civil War era is it?

ZACH
Naw, but it’s practical.
CARLA
Thank god for practical Mr. Clemenson.

ZACH
Yup. And look what else we can thank god for - wood! Under a tarp. Which is good. Cuz its dry. Which means we can start a fire. Which means we can get dry.

*ZACH pulls his journal out of his back pocket and is about to rip out pages.*

*ZACH starts ripping pages out of the journal.*

CARLA
What are you doing?

ZACH
Gotta start this fire somehow.

CARLA
Use something else Mr. Clemenson, those are your words. You must value them.

ZACH
Why? You didn’t.

*ZACH starts to rip pages out again.*

CARLA
Wait! Use this instead.

*CARLA pulls a People magazine out of the inside of her coat.*

ZACH
What is this?

CARLA
People magazine.

ZACH
I can see that. Why do you have this?

CARLA
I wanted something to read on the plane ride down...and... I have a weakness for celebrity culture.

ZACH
You’re just full of surprises aren’t you?

CARLA
Just use it, ok?

ZACH
You sure?

CARLA
I’m sure.

*ZACH has lit the pages of the magazine and thrown some logs in, the fire has started.*

ZACH
Sit here. So you can get warm.

CARLA sits. ZACH sits next to her. Beat.

CARLA
Thank you for getting wood.

ZACH
(starts to chuckle)

CARLA
What?

ZACH
Getting wood. Get it? You thanked me for getting wood.

CARLA
Yes I did. Oh! Honestly Mr. Clemenson, honestly.

Beat.

ZACH
Look Ms. Keenan, I’m sorry about all this and I promise to make it up to you tomorrow.

CARLA
It’s really too late for you to make it up to me. There is nothing left for you to make up for. Tomorrow I must insist you escort me back to civilization.

ZACH
But –

CARLA
This is not a negotiation or a discussion Mr. Clemenson, this is a fact. Are we clear?

ZACH
Yes ma’am.
CARLA
And don’t call me ma’am. I’m not a ma’am.

ZACH
Sure you are. Where I come from all women are ma’am’s. It’s a term of respect.

CARLA
Well where I come from ma’am means you’ve become an old maid. And I’m not an old maid Mr. Clemenson. I’m a woman.

ZACH
If you say so.

CARLA
I beg your pardon?

ZACH
Nothing.

CARLA
I heard what you said.

ZACH
Well that’s a first.

CARLA
What is that supposed to mean?

ZACH
That you don’t listen to me.

CARLA
All I’ve done is listen to you. For days and days.

ZACH
No you haven’t. You hear me speaking but you’re not really listening to me. You disregard me.

CARLA
You disregard me!

ZACH
Well if I do, it’s because you did first!

CARLA
I did not. You started this!

ZACH
Me?
CARLA
Yes! I explicitly explained that I would prefer for us to stay in hotels on this job and you ignored me completely and now look what’s happened!

ZACH
Look Ms. Keenan, I know that none of this is ideal but come on, this is pretty cool! We’re in the midst of some kind of adventure here! This is life at its best—unexpected, exciting, thrilling!

CARLA
Well I disagree, I think this is life at its worst.

ZACH
Well then we’re gonna have to just agree to disagree about this.

CARLA
I don’t want to agree to disagree about this. What I want is for you to agree that I’m right and you’re wrong.

ZACH
Well I think you’re wrong.

CARLA
I think you’re wronger!

ZACH
I know you do...but you’re wrong.

CARLA
I am never wrong.

ZACH
Look mistakes were made, yes, I’ve apologized for those. Maybe if you just tried to be a little nicer. It’s pretty lonely traveling with you. You keep up all this resistance all the time. Makes me feel like I’m on my own. I’d like to get to know you Ms. Keenan.

CARLA
Well you don’t act like it.

ZACH
Well I’ll try harder to.

CARLA
Good.

ZACH
And you could try harder too.

CARLA
Try harder to what?

ZACH
To meet me halfway, to try to get along. We’re lost, only have each other right now and we should try to find a way to hear and see each other or this night will —

CARLA
—be a nightmare.

ZACH
Yeah.

...

CARLA
Well how would one try harder if one were to try harder.

ZACH
One could start by letting one’s guard down a little.

CARLA
And how would one do that?

ZACH
One would have to just talk to someone a little I guess.

CARLA
About what?

ZACH
About whatever. I’ll just ask you a question and you’ll just answer it ok?

CARLA
Fine.

ZACH
Ok... So what kind of toothpaste do you use?

CARLA
I use baking soda.

ZACH
I brush with Aquafresh. Mmm mmm refreshing.

CARLA
Toothpastes such as Aquafresh are full of sugars which negate the point of brushing ones’ teeth.

ZACH
Is that true?
CARLA
I think it’s a little true.

ZACH
Learn something new every day. Good. Now that wasn’t too bad, was it?

CARLA
It was fine.

ZACH
Now you ask me a question.

CARLA
I’m not good at asking questions.

ZACH
You’re a reporter, Ms. Keenan. It’s your job to ask questions.

CARLA
I’m not good at asking personal questions.

ZACH
Then pretend I’m your story.

CARLA
I can’t.

ZACH
Why not?

CARLA
Because I don’t usually write stories where I have to ask people questions.

ZACH
What kind of stories do you usually write then?

CARLA
Well I write often about the arts. Visual arts mostly.

ZACH
Like paintings and such?

CARLA
Yes, about paintings and sculpture, experimental works and the modern classics, photography, retrospectives of course.

ZACH
So tell me something then, if you write about art most of the time, why’d you decide to cover the Lonesome Soldier?
CARLA
I didn’t – why writers take certain assignments is complicated. There are reasons.

ZACH
Like what?

CARLA
Like things that I’m not interested in sharing with you Mr. Clemenson.

ZACH
Suit yourself.

CARLA
I will.

Beat.

ZACH
How’s the fire feel?

CARLA
...

ZACH
Been a long while since I sat in front of a fireplace like this. When’s the last time you sat in front of one?

CARLA
Mr. Clemenson we just –

ZACH
Ms. Keenan, I’m trying here. When was the last time you sat in front of a fireplace?

CARLA
I don’t remember.

ZACH
Do too. Go on. Tell me.

CARLA
... Quechee.

ZACH
Quechee?

CARLA
Quechee Vermont. Have you ever heard of it Mr. Clemenson?
ZACH
Can’t say that I have.

CARLA
My grandmother had a house there. When I was little we’d go up there for the summer. And my grandmother had a fireplace. And on cool summer nights she’d light it.

The first time I sat in front of her fireplace I was afraid. I didn’t want to get too close so she took out some marshmallows and we made smores. That got me closer to the fire. The smores. S’mores. Smores. I want some smores right now. Wouldn’t it be great if we had smores?

ZACH
I don’t like marshmallows.

CARLA
You offend me, you know that? How can you not like marshmallows? Marshmallows are delicious. When I was eight I ate marshmallows for seven days straight once. I love marshmallows. Marshmallows, marshmallows, marshmallows, mershmallllssss... My grandmother loved marshmallows too.

She taught me about art. My grandmother did. She used to take me to museums every Saturday when I was growing up and we’d look at art together. And she was an artist too. She wouldn’t have called herself that though, she would have called herself a housewife. But she did make art Mr. Clemenson. Beautiful art. She had this one piece, I don’t know how to explain it, its just a piece of marble that she shaped in two concentric pieces but one of the sides comes to a point, and out of it there’s a break in the marble, a different color, a red, that makes a line down to the bottom of the piece, a little crack of red in the grey. And it makes me feel so much pain. And I don’t know why. I want to know why it makes me feel.

She just died.

She was the most important person in my life. I’d talk to her about everything and now I have no one to talk to about anything. I’m lost without her. I don’t know who I am or what I’m supposed to be doing anymore. I don’t know right from wrong. I’ve lost my moral compass. I’ve lost my way.

What am I saying?

Mr. Clemenson I believe this whiskey has gone straight to my head.

ZACH
Told you its strong. How much of it have you drank?

CARLA
I don’t know.
ZACH
Give me that flask.

CARLA
Is mine.

ZACH
I’m just gonna borrow it Ms. Keenan. Just for a second.

CARLA
You promise?

ZACH
Promise.

CARLA
Ok.

*She hands it to him. He weighs it in his hands, pretty light.*

ZACH
Ms. Keenan you’ve had a lot of this haven’t you?

CARLA
Define “a lot” Mr. Clementime.

ZACH
Clemenson. And I think I have my answer. Mind if I have a swig?

CARLA
Swig away.

*They pass the flask back and forth from now on.*

CARLA
Mr. Clemenson?

ZACH
Yeah Ms. Keenan?

CARLA
My clothes are wet.

ZACH
Mine too.

CARLA
I wanna get out of them. But before I do, I want you to know that I’m not a floozy.
ZACH
Floozy?

CARLA
Floozy.

ZACH
Who says floozy?

CARLA
I say floozy. Faloooooozieee.

ZACH
Falooziieeee... Ok. Well, I’m not a faloozy either.

CARLA
So its established that we’re both not floozies. I just want it clear that I just don’t feel good in these clothes and I want to feel good. Ok?

ZACH
Ok.

CARLA starts to take off her clothes.

CARLA
It’s getting hot. Remember that song (singing) “Its getting hot in here, so take off all your clothes, I am getting’ so hot, I’m gonna take my clothes off!”. See that was fun! I can be fun! You said I can’t be fun but look I’m fun. Look I’m fun and I’m gonna take off my clothes now.

ZACH
No no no no no.

CARLA
Yes yes yes yes yes.

ZACH
Ok, but wait, I’m gonna turn around now so you can get undressed, cuz I’m a gentleman.

CARLA
You don’t really look like a gentleman you know that? You look like a rogue. Are you a rogue?

ZACH
I don’t know what a rogue is.

CARLA
Yes you do. You’re one. You’re a rogue. A rogue is a deceitful and unreliable scoundrel.
ZACH
I don’t agree that I’m a rogue but I do like the word scoundrel.

CARLA
I like that word too. No one speaks of scoundrels anymore. Do you ever think that maybe you’re living in the wrong time?

ZACH
All the time.

CARLA
When would you live if you could choose any time? I know I know I know I know. The Civil War.

ZACH
Yeah, that’d have been cool. What about you?

CARLA
I think I was supposed to be English and live in England and be Margaret Schlegel.

ZACH
Who’s Margaret Schlegel?

CARLA
She’s the heroine in “Howards End”. I love Margaret Schlegel. She’s so—passionately cautious. I want to be considered passionately cautious.

ZACH
How can you be passionate and cautious?

CARLA
You can be both like Margaret Schlegel, that’s how! And Carla Keenan. Hi my name is Carla Keenan and I’m pautiously cassionate. I mean—this is hard to get off. How do you get these things off?

ZACH
Just—the coat should just come off like a coat and the shirt you can unbutton and—

CARLA
I can’t do this. This is too hard, my fingers aren’t working. I’m so much drunker than I thought I was. Please help me out of this stuff.

ZACH
I will but first I want your approval.

CARLA
I approve. I’m dying in these clothes. I approve. I approve.
ZACH
Alright. I’m not gonna look though.

CARLA
Ok.

ZACH
Ok. Here I come.

CARLA
Ok.

ZACH walks to CARLA.

CARLA
Hello.

ZACH
Hello.

CARLA
What’s up?

ZACH
Oh nothin’. Thought I’d help you undress.

CARLA
Ok.

ZACH
Ok.

CARLA
You know what?

ZACH
What?

CARLA
That’s what. (CARLA falls back laughing) Do you remember when you were little and that was the funniest joke in the entire world? Guess what? What? That’s what!

Oh, it’s not as funny now.

Beat. The two look at each other. A kiss is palpable, ZACH breaks the spell.

ZACH
Let’s get this jacket off.
CARLA
Right. The jacket. Let’s get the jacket off.

ZACH
Here goes the jacket!

ZACH pulls the jacket off.

CARLA
Whoooo!!!!!

ZACH
Good girl. And now here goes the pants ok? And when I pull these off, I want you to cover your legs with this blanket right here ok?

CARLA
Ok.

ZACH
Ok. Here goes!

ZACH pulls the pants off. CARLA doesn’t cover her legs. Her legs are sensational.

CARLA
I forgot to cover my legs.

ZACH
I can see that.

CARLA
I’m going to cover them now. (she starts to wrap herself in the blanket) This blanket is itchy. It reminds me of Lou. Lou is itchy. Itchy Lou.

ZACH
Who’s Lou?

CARLA
My fiance’. Ex fiancé. He just left me. Screw you Lou! I hate Lou. That’s not true. Lou says I have a compulsive need to tell the truth all the time. He says when I lie, even the littlest lie it seems to haunt me, like the tell tale heart and then I have to confess. And it’s true I do and Mr. Clemenson, I’ve been haunted for days now because I have a lot to confess to you. Mr. Clemenson I’m here under somewhat false pretenses... I don’t know who I’m working for... I got this job from an ad on Craigslist! I took the job for the money. Five thousand dollars! That’s how much I’m getting paid! The ad said they were a major magazine and they sent me half my fee and I’m supposed to get the rest when I turn in the story and 2500 dollars is a lot of money for me right now because I can’t pay my rent because Lou left me and my credit cards are maxed and I used to write for a newspaper but newspapers are dying and so I was fired and I can’t seem
to get another job and I’ve won awards! But no one cares. That’s not true, people care but not enough people so I was cut. And that made me angry. That’s not true, I was angry before that. That’s not true, I wasn’t angry, I was misunderstood and that makes me angry because no one understands me. Not even Lou. When we were at the Virginia Diner that was him that texted me. He was in the apartment getting his stuff and he wanted to know who should get the Joni Mitchell cds. “I get the Joni Mitchell cds dillweed I get them!!” Which is what I texted him. He should have known that! Why didn’t he know that? He should have known that I love Joni Mitchell! Joni Mitchell tells the truth! Joni Mitchell is my idol! I wish I were Joni Mitchell singing the truth at the top of my lungs - (singing, loud and bad and cautious and passionate)

I AM ON A LONELY ROAD AND I AM TRAVELING
TRAVELING, TRAVELING, TRAVELING
LOOKING FOR SOMETHING, WHAT CAN IT BE
OH I HATE YOU SOME, I HATE YOU SOME
I LOVE YOU SOME
OH I LOVE YOU WHEN I FORGET ABOUT ME
I WANT TO BE STRONG I WANT TO LAUGH ALONG
I WANT TO BELONG TO THE LIVING
ALIVE, ALIVE, I WANT TO GET UP AND JIVE
I WANT TO WRECK MY STOCKINGS
IN SOME JUKE BOX DIVE
DO YOU WANT – DO YOU WANT – DO YOU WANT
TO DANCE WITH ME BABY
DO YOU WANT TO TAKE A CHANCE
ON MAYBE FINDING SOME SWEET ROMANCE WITH ME BABY
WELL, COME ON!

Beat. She and ZACH catch each other’s eyes.

CARLA
I like you when you listen.

ZACH
I like when you let me. Ms. Keenan I –

CARLA
You have such sweet eyes. Your eyes are full of love. I can hardly look at you sometimes on account of your eyes.

CARLA pulls ZACH down to bed. She’s laid back. ZACH is hovering dangerously close, over CARLA.

Their faces almost connecting. They’re breathing in intertwine. They look deep into each other. Its sustained and deep and then – CARLA has passed out.

1 From Joni Mitchell’s song “All I Want” – lyrics/music – Joni Mitchell
ZACH
Ms. Keenan?

Beat. CARLA starts to snore.

Blackout. END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

SCENE FOUR

The next day. Sunny, dry. On the side of dirt road.

CARLA has sunglasses on, sitting on a fallen log. She’s so obviously hungover, it’s painful.

ZACH is stuffing his face with cornbread and talking.

ZACH
Shouldn’t be too long. Connie said sometimes Jesse, that’s the guy’s name, Jesse, sometimes dilly dally but she said he’s never more than a half hour or so. He’s not a cab driver she said. He’s just a guy who drives people places for money so he’s just sort of on his own clock I suppose. His own clock on Southern time, which could be a problem, that’s sort of a double whammy of slowness right there. But like I said, shouldn’t be too much longer.

CARLA
...

ZACH
You should have seen the look on her face when I told her where we stayed last night. According to her, that cabin is called the Old Humpback Cabin. She said in all the years she’s been working in that General Store slash Post Office she’s never heard of anyone staying out there and she’s been working at the General Store slash Post Office for more than 20 years. She believes that the cabin is haunted because of the triple murder suicide that occurred there. She also got a kick out of my uniform. When I walked in, she looked me dead in the eye and let out one loud, crazy rebel yell. (he does the rebel yell).

CARLA
...

ZACH
This cornbread is unbelievable, Connie makes it herself. Reminds me of my grandma’s. Buttery. You sure you don’t want any?

CARLA
No thank you.

ZACH
You sure?

CARLA
I don’t think I could stomach it right now.
ZACH
Could cut the alcohol.

CARLA
Cut the alcohol?

ZACH
You know the fat in the bread, could cut some of the alcohol.

CARLA
I’m fine thank you.

ZACH
Suit yourself.

CARLA
I will.

*Beat. ZACH eats like a pig — and makes noises too.*

CARLA

ZACH
What noises?

CARLA
The noises you are making while you are eating.

ZACH
I make noises?

CARLA
Yes.

ZACH
Huh. I’ll have to listen for them.

*ZACH goes back to eating. He makes a noise. He hears it.*

ZACH
I heard that! I do make noise. I never noticed it.

CARLA
...

ZACH
I feel real bad about your hangover.

CARLA
It’s fine.
ZACH
I just didn’t know how much you drank until you drank it and then, well then you were kind of –

CARLA
Whatever I said or did last night Mr. Clemenson I’m sure was ridiculous and embarrassing and meaningless in the clear light of day.

ZACH
No that’s not the case Ms. Keenan, and –

CARLA
I’d prefer to keep everything that happened last night off the record and –

ZACH
But you don’t have to, we don’t have to, we could, you could stay, we could finish this and –

CARLA
I’ve been clear already this morning Mr. Clemenson, I want to go home. I don’t know how much clearer I need to be. I –

ZACH
Alright alright alright, don’t get yourself into a tizzy –

CARLA
I’m not getting myself into a tizzy –

ZACH
Yes you are and all I was trying to say was last night wasn’t a big deal and that I only gave you the whiskey because I wanted you to get warm so you wouldn’t catch cold and I guess that’s one way to look at it.

CARLA
What’s one way to look at it?

ZACH
You didn’t catch cold.

CARLA sneezes.

ZACH
I’m sure it’s just a low grade cold.

CARLA takes a handkerchief out of her coat pocket to wipe her nose and at the same time finds a folded piece of paper – a cashier’s check…which she unfolds…

CARLA
What’s this?
ZACH
What’s what?

CARLA
This.

She shows it to ZACH. ZACH looks at it.

ZACH
It looks like a cashier’s check for $2500. Addressed to you.

CARLA
I can see that. How could this get in there?

ZACH
I have no idea.

CARLA
It wasn’t here yesterday.

ZACH
It must have been.

CARLA
It wasn’t.

ZACH
Are you sure?

CARLA
Yes I’m sure. I’m certain. Did you put this in here Mr. Clemenson?

ZACH
Why would I -

CARLA
I don’t know why, I just am wondering if you did.

ZACH
Well I didn’t.

CARLA
For some reason I don’t believe you.

ZACH
Well that’s my not my problem.

CARLA
Yes. Yes it is. You put this in here didn’t you?
Beat.

ZACH
Ok, yeah I did. I did put it there yeah.

CARLA
Why?

ZACH
Why?

CARLA
Why?

ZACH
For safe keeping.

CARLA
From what?

ZACH
From...the Lonesome Soldier.

CARLA
From the Lonesome Soldier.

ZACH
Yeah, sometimes he steals people’s money.

CARLA
Is that so?

ZACH
Yeah. It’s a known fact. And I’ve journaled about it. Do you want me to read you a little bit from my journal about the Lonesome Soldier and his stealing ways? Let’s see here.

CARLA
No! NO! NO! I’ll take your word for it.

ZACH
But I got a really good journal entry about it.

CARLA
I’m sure you do. But I’m not, I don’t think I can stomach anything else from your journal Mr. Clemenson, not with this hangover.

ZACH
You don’t like my writing?

CARLA
I — No I don’t. There I said it.

ZACH
But you encouraged me to keep my journal last night.

CARLA
I know I did. And I now have lived to regret it.

ZACH
That hurts Ms. Keenan.

CARLA
I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings. I just want to get to the bottom of this. Ok?

ZACH
Ok.

CARLA
Ok... Now let’s just back up a little bit...why did you have this check in the first place?

ZACH
The magazine people gave it to me.

CARLA
When?

ZACH
Before.

CARLA
Before what?

ZACH
Before the trip.

CARLA
Before the trip?

ZACH
Yeah, they sent a packet with a check for you and a check for me and I was supposed to give the check to you at Appomattox but we’re not getting to Appomattox so –

CARLA
I was not to receive the rest of my fee until I finished the job.

ZACH
Well then, there you go.
CARLA
But I haven’t finished the job.

ZACH
Sure you have.

CARLA
According to whom?

ZACH
According to –

CARLA
You?

ZACH
Well no. I mean, yeah but we’re done here so you should get paid.

CARLA
We may be done but this assignment was not completed. You can not just decide to pay me other people’s money for a job I have not finished thanks to your negligence.

ZACH
My negligence?

CARLA
It’s obviously all your fault I couldn’t finish the job.

ZACH
My fault?

CARLA
Yes. You got us lost.

ZACH
Well, yeah but that’s just circumstantial.

CARLA
It was not just circumstantial.

ZACH
Oh no, then what was it?

CARLA
It was disastrous.

ZACH
Now you’re being dramatic.

CARLA
I am not being dramatic. I am being correct.

ZACH
You see, I knew you’d respond like this. That’s why I put the check into your pocket. I meant for you to find it later, when you were halfway gone. I figured you’d find it, think about returning it but then remember all the bills you got lying around at home and keep it and no one would be the wiser.

CARLA
I would be the wiser. I would know.

ZACH
So?

CARLA
So ethically I’d feel compromised.

ZACH
What would you have done with it then?

CARLA
Returned it.

ZACH
You would not have.

CARLA
Oh yes I would have. It’s the only correct thing to do, don’t you agree?

ZACH
Well no I don’t.

CARLA
Of course you don’t.

ZACH
What’s that supposed to mean?

CARLA
Tell me something, were you planning on keeping your fee?

ZACH
Yeah.

CARLA
I rest my case.

ZACH
You rest your case?
CARLA
Yes I rest my case. You have no qualms about accepting money for a job not complete.

ZACH
None.

CARLA
But you should.

ZACH
But I don’t.

CARLA
Take out your check.

ZACH
My check?

CARLA
Yes. Your check. Take it out.

ZACH
Why?

CARLA
Because today I am going to teach you how to stand up for what’s right in the world.

ZACH
By doing what?

CARLA
We are going to destroy our checks.

ZACH
Destroy them?

CARLA
Yes. Take out your check.

ZACH
I don’t know where mine is.

CARLA
Then look for it.

ZACH
Ms. Keenan –

CARLA
Don’t Ms. Keenan me. Look for your check. And your lighter.

ZACH
My lighter?

CARLA
Yes your lighter.

ZACH
Why?

CARLA
We will ceremoniously burn both of our checks in one glorious act of correctness.

ZACH
Burn them!

CARLA
Yes.

ZACH
I refuse.

CARLA
Well I refuse your refusing.

ZACH
I refuse your refusing my refusing.

CARLA
And I refuse your refusing my refusing your refusing!

ZACH
I am rubber you are glue whatever you say bounces off of me and sticks to you.

CARLA
Well that’s just ridiculous.

ZACH
That was a legitimate comeback!

CARLA
It was not and you know it!

ZACH
It was too!

CARLA
No it was not.
ZACH
What do you know about comebacks anyway?

CARLA
I’ll have you know I happen to be the Queen of Comebacks.

ZACH
The Queen of Comebacks?

CARLA
Yes! That was my title. At Palmetto Junior High School. I was Carla Keenan, the Queen of Comebacks. I beat Missy Meyers, the toughest girl in school at a comeback contest in front of the entire school... practically. So don’t tell me what’s a legitimate comeback. I know everything there is to know about comebacks.

ZACH
Is that a challenge?

CARLA
No, it’s a fact.

ZACH
Is that so?

CARLA
Yes. It is.

ZACH
I’ll make you a deal.

CARLA
I don’t make deals.

ZACH
You haven’t even heard what I’m going to say.

CARLA
I’m not interested.

ZACH
Just listen to me!

CARLA
Fine.

ZACH
Let’s have a comeback contest.

CARLA
A comeback contest.

ZACH
Yeah and if I win, you keep the check, no more questions asked. And if you win—

CARLA
We both burn our checks.

Short beat.

ZACH
Fine. Deal?

CARLA
Deal.

ZACH
Shake on it.

ZACH spits on his hand and holds it out. CARLA is repulsed. She spits on her own hand and shakes ZACH’s.

ZACH
Ok. How do we start?

CARLA
Well if we are going to do this properly I believe we should begin with some ground rules.

ZACH
Ground rules?

CARLA
Yes.

ZACH
Like what?

CARLA
No “Your mama” comebacks.

ZACH
Your mama?

CARLA
You know like “Your mama is so fat that when she bends over we enter daylight savings”. Those sort of things... I personally find them offensive and hurtful.

ZACH
Fine. Anything else?

CARLA
Yes. No “You’re so ugly” comebacks either.

ZACH
Like “You’re so ugly that when you smile people cry”?

CARLA
Yes like that except better than that.

ZACH
I thought that was good.

CARLA
I know you did and that’s sweet.

ZACH
That was snarky...

CARLA
You’re going to lose this contest Mr. Clemenson. Do you want to forfeit now?

ZACH
Nope. You?

CARLA
Not on your life.

ZACH
How do we know who wins?

CARLA
One of us, namely you, will give up. Ready?

ZACH
Ready.

CARLA
I’ll start. You’re so stupid you think “harass” is two words.

ZACH
You’re so uptight you can’t even get a stick up your ass.

CARLA
You’re such a hick that on Thanksgiving you have to decide which pet to eat!

ZACH
Wait a minute.
CARLA
What is it?

CARLA
I’m trying to imagine you with a good personality.

CARLA
Don’t let your mind wander like that, it’s too small to be let out on its own.

ZACH
You think you’re a wit and you’re probably half right.

CARLA
It’s too bad stupidity isn’t painful.

ZACH/CARLA
Cuz you’d be in a lot of pain!

CARLA
That was my comeback!

ZACH
I intercepted it!

CARLA
You can’t intercept a comeback!

ZACH
Well I just did!

CARLA
You’re just threatened because I’m winning.

ZACH
You’re not winning, you just think you are.

CARLA
Oh Mr. Clemenson, your village just called they’re missing their idiot.

ZACH
Then you better call them back and tell them you’ll be home soon!

CARLA
It’s your village Mr. Clemenson! You’re the village idiot! Not me!

ZACH
I am rubber you are glue whatever you say bounces off of me and sticks to you!
CARLA
You already used that one!

ZACH
So I’m using it again!

CARLA
Well that can’t count!

ZACH
Sure it can.

CARLA
You’re just desperate because you’re on the ropes!

ZACH
You’re so desperate you got drunk so I could take advantage of you!

CARLA
Well you’re so desperate you took advantage of me when I was drunk!

ZACH
I did not!

CARLA
You didn’t?

ZACH
I didn’t.

CARLA
Why not?

ZACH
Why not?

CARLA
Why didn’t you take advantage of me?

ZACH
I’m confused. You wanted me to take advantage of you?

CARLA
Yes.

ZACH
Yes?

CARLA
No!
ZACH
No?

CARLA
I don’t know.

ZACH
I’m confused.

CARLA
I’m confused!

ZACH
We’re mutually confused!

CARLA
You’re more confused!

ZACH
You’re more confused!

CARLA
You’re so confused you don’t see how ridiculous you are!

ZACH
You’re so ridiculous you don’t see how confused you are!

CARLA
You’re so stupid you don’t see how stupid that comeback was.

ZACH
You’re so insensitive you don’t realize how much that hurts me!

CARLA
You’re so sensitive you let that hurt you!

ZACH
So what if I did?

CARLA
So you should be tougher!

ZACH
You should be softer!

CARLA
You should have been more prepared for this job!

ZACH
So should you have!
CARLA
You should have never gotten us lost.

ZACH
You should have never taken this job.

CARLA
You’re right I shouldn’t have!

ZACH
Did you just agree with me?

CARLA
No.

ZACH
You did. You agreed with me.

CARLA
So?

ZACH
So I consider that giving up.

CARLA
It was not giving up.

ZACH
Sure it was. You didn’t comeback. You just agreed. Ms. Keenan, I do believe I won.

CARLA
No. That does not mean you won, that just –

ZACH
No. I won. You said that the challenge would be over when one of us gave up. And you just gave up. So I won. I won! I won! WOOOHOOOO!!!!! I WON!!!!! I’m THE WINNER!!!! I BEAT THE QUEEN OF COMEBACKS!!!!!!! I WON!!!!!!! Tell me I’m the winner.

CARLA
No. I won’t. And besides you may have won the contest but it doesn’t matter.

CARLA tears her check up into pieces, throws it all over the place.

ZACH
But we had a deal.

CARLA
Well I just broke it.
ZACH
But that was a cashier’s check!

CARLA
So?

ZACH
So that was cash. That wasn’t a check you deposit, that was cash. That was $2500!

CARLA
I am aware of that Mr. Clemenson.

ZACH
That was a lot of money that can’t be gotten back!

CARLA
I’m aware of that too but as far as I am concerned that was blood money.

ZACH
It was not blood money, it was your fee! I was paying you your fee!

ZACH *scoops down to grab the pieces of the check.*

At the same time, CARLA has a lightbulb moment.

ZACH
We can still salvage it, we can put the check back together, we can -

CARLA
Oh my god.

CARLA
You posted the ad didn’t you?

ZACH
What? What ad?

CARLA
The Craigslist ad. You posted the Craigslist ad.

ZACH
No I didn’t.

CARLA
You did. There is no magazine is there?

ZACH
Of course there’s a magazine. They hired you. And me. They hired both of us.
CARLA
They did not. This money was yours wasn’t it?

ZACH
Ms. Keenan, do I look like I have $2500 to spare?

CARLA
No. Which would explain why you’re scrambling to put the check back together. This was your money.

ZACH
You’re wrong.

CARLA
I’m never wrong.

ZACH
Well you’re wrong about this. You have this all wrong. You’ve got an active imagination Ms. Keenan.

CARLA
Indeed I do. But this isn’t my imagination. I don’t know how I missed this before. You posted the ad, you sent me the cashier’s check, just like this one, you sent me my ticket, and information packet.. That was your writing wasn’t it?

ZACH
No I – I didn’t – you’re getting this all –

CARLA
It was. You hired me. I’m here working for you. Why have you done this? You lead me on, you –

ZACH
I didn’t lead you on. I didn’t even –

CARLA
You’re right you didn’t lead me on, you lied. Why did you lie to me?

ZACH
I didn’t mean to –

CARLA
So it is you –

ZACH
No I didn’t say –

CARLA
You just said, you didn’t mean to – you didn’t mean to what?
ZACH
I didn’t mean to - -

CARLA
Make a fool of me?

ZACH
No, that’s not -

CARLA
Because that’s how I feel. Like a fool!

ZACH
No Ms. Keenan -

CARLA
Don’t try to wiggle out of this!

ZACH
I’m not trying to -

CARLA
What was your plan?

ZACH
I didn’t have a plan, I wasn’t, I didn’t-

CARLA
Why won’t you just admit it?

ZACH
Because there’s nothing to admit!

CARLA
I don’t believe you.

ZACH
Believe what you want!

CARLA
No I want to know the truth.

ZACH
I’ve told you the truth.

CARLA
You have not.

ZACH
I have to.
CARLA
Have not!

ZACH
Have to!

*CARLA grabs her rifle and points it at ZACH.*

CARLA
Mr. Clemenson tell me the truth right now or I will blast you from here to Gettysburg!

ZACH
Ms. Keenan!

CARLA
Put your hands up.

ZACH
But —

CARLA
I said PUT YOUR HANDS UP.

ZACH
It’s just that —

CARLA

ZACH
Yes ma’am.

CARLA
And don’t move a muscle unless I tell you, you can.

ZACH
Yes ma’am.

CARLA
And stop calling me ma’am. You know how I feel about that.

ZACH
Ok Ms. Keenan.

CARLA
Now. You are going to tell me the truth. The whole truth.

ZACH
But —
CARLA
The whole truth.

ZACH
I just think-

CARLA
So help you God. Say it.

ZACH
Say what?

CARLA
Say, I Zachariah Clemenson the 4th do solemnly swear to tell the whole truth so help me God.

ZACH
That only works in a court Ms. Keenan, with a bible and-

CARLA
Say it or I shoot.

ZACH
You don’t have the guts.

CARLA *cocks the gun.*

ZACH
I Zachariah Clemenson the 4th do solemnly swear to tell the whole truth so help me God.

CARLA
Ok. Did you or didn’t you hire me?

*Beat.*

ZACH
I did.

CARLA
Why?

ZACH
I wanted someone to cover the Lonesome Soldier and no one would.

CARLA
What do you mean?

ZACH
I mean I kept pitching the story to papers and magazines and no one bit and so then I came up with the idea to pretend I was a magazine and get a
professional down here to write the story and I saved my money for almost a year to get that fee. I figured if what you wrote was as good as I hoped, I could get it published or at the very least I could put it up on the internet and people would read it and get excited about all this.

CARLA
About the Lonesome Soldier.

ZACH
Well yeah, but not just the Lonesome Soldier. That was just part of it. That was just like the gateway you know?

CARLA
Gateway.

ZACH
The Lonesome Soldier was just supposed to be this thing to get people down here, get them through the door.

CARLA
So there’s no Lonesome Soldier.

ZACH
I didn’t say that.

CARLA
You just said –

ZACH
But I didn’t say –

CARLA
The whole truth Mr. Clemenson.

ZACH
Fine. But before I get into the whole truth, can you stop pointing that gun at me?

CARLA
No I cannot.

ZACH
Look, it’s not like it’s loaded or anything.

*She puts the rifle down. Beat.*

ZACH
Alright. So the whole truth is – you’re looking at him.

CARLA
Looking at who?
ZACH
The Lonesome Soldier. I’m the Lonesome soldier, ok? You got me. I surrender. Actually there are three of us. I got a couple of buddies – we trade off playing the Lonesome Soldier, one of ‘em was supposed to show up for us sometime yesterday, another one on the first day but I suppose we missed them on account of the faulty compass and then the rain.

We had some pretty spooky stuff planned but none of it worked out. At least not in the way I planned it. At first the Lonesome Soldier was gonna antagonize you for being a Yankee, he was gonna try to make you feel what it was like to be in the war. And then he was gonna try to explain his side of things, tell you about everything that led up to the surrender, what it meant to surrender, how it felt, so that when you got to Appomattox you’d really understand it, you’d really feel it. And Ms. Keenan, Appomattox! Appomattox is just something to behold! And to think of what happened there! To stand there and know it happened right there, well that’s just – that’s just – I knew if nothing else that Appomattox would make you see! And you’d be able to write the story that was supposed to be told and people would want to come down here and see and hear it all for themselves. And if that worked, I’d have fulfilled something for myself. I would have achieved something great. I believe so much in this story Ms. Keenan. I believe that there’s something for all of us to learn from the story of the surrender, from what happened at Appomattox, something that we all need in our lives. I believe if people really could understand that story that our country could change, could get better. And if I could do that, my life could have meaning. And I want my life to mean something.

I shouldn’t have done any of this. I see that now. But I couldn’t help it. Regina, she kept telling me this was stupid. She thinks I’m a fool. Thinks that everything I believe in, is foolish, a waste of time. She thinks I should go work a regular job. That’s what she says. Go get a regular job and give up this dream. But I couldn’t help it, it’s my passion. You know what I mean, don’t you? You have a passion too. You know what it means to have a passion. Don’t you? I know you do. Last night when you were talking about your grandmother and her work, her art, I saw it in you. I saw your passion. And I don’t care if it was the whiskey that was talking, I liked that whiskey tinged Carla Keenan last night and when you were up and singing that song I looked at you and something opened up in me and I feel kind of ridiculous saying it right now but for the record I gotta tell you – Ms. Keenan I think you’re a 100% bonafide real deal not farb in the least authentic knockout.

Do you hate me? I don’t blame you if you do. Do you? You do. It’s ok. I hate myself.

Car honk.

ZACH
There you go. There’s Jesse. There’s your ride back to civilization. Go on. Leave me. I’ll be fine. Go on. I’m just gonna lie here and feel sorry for myself until I die or get eaten by wolves. Or both. Or maybe run over by a car. I deserve that. To be run over by a car. That’s all I am. Road kill. Road kill of history. That’s what I am. No I’m not even that. I’m not even worthy of road kill. Just go! Leave me Please! Leave me to my shame! OH THE SHAME! THE SHAME AND THE PAIN AND THE –

CARLA
Mr. Clemenson, stifle it.

ZACH
...

CARLA
The only correct thing for me to do is walk away from you in this very moment and not think twice.

ZACH
Ms. Keenan –

CARLA
Goodbye Mr. Clemenson.

CARLA turns and walks off.

ZACH
Ms. Keenan! Wait! Don’t –

We hear a car door open, close, and then the car pull away.

ZACH
DAMN IT ZACH!!! DAMN IT!!!! DAMN IT!

He kicks a rock. Hard.

ZACH
Ow! Damn Rock! Ow! OW!!! OH THE PAIN!!! THE PAIN OF IT ALL! THE PAIN OF MY LIFE!!!!

ZACH falls to the ground in pain.

ZACH
AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!! Do the bloat. Do the bloat and calm yourself Zachariah. Come on. Just bloat! Stomach out, arm splayed, back arched, ow! God damn it pulled my back out too! OW!!!! AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!

CARLA re-enters...

CARLA
Mr. Clemenson?
ZACH
Ms. Keenan?

CARLA
I –

ZACH
Is that really you or have I started seeing visions now?

CARLA
It’s really me.

ZACH
I thought you just left.

CARLA
Well obviously I didn’t. Though I don’t know why I didn’t. That’s not true. I know why I didn’t. I didn’t because I couldn’t. You have flustered me Mr. Clemenson. It seems to be what you’re good at. Flustering me. I’ll have you know I never get flustered. About anything. But you – you fluster me. I do have a passion. And I’ve been hiding it. But you saw it. You. How could you of all people see that? How dare you! How DARE YOU OF ALL PEOPLE!

…I have every right to be angry with you for this whole thing Mr. Clemenson.

ZACH
I know you do.

CARLA
You were deceitful,

ZACH
I know.

CARLA
Foolish,

ZACH
I know.

CARLA
Obnoxious

ZACH
I know.
CARLA
Disrespectful

ZACH
I know.

CARLA
Stop interjecting.

ZACH
Yes ma’am.

Beat.

CARLA
But... you were also brave. It takes great bravery to do something despite its foolishness. And passion. It takes great passion. And I respect that, more than respect it, I — desire it.

I want to live my life like you live your life. Well, not literally, because from all I’ve seen, your life is clearly a mess but your passion...Mr. Clemenson, your passion is something to be envied.

I feel terrible about the cashier’s check Mr. Clemenson. That was a lot of money to have raised and I should not have destroyed it so cavalierly. That was...wrong of me. And because I have no way of paying the money back, I believe the only correct thing to do is to continue with my professional duties. And because I insist on us remaining professional there will be no more personal outbursts where one of us says something like “you’re a 100% bonafide real deal not farb in the least authentic knockout” or whatever it was you said.

You hired me to do a job and this job is not complete. I will write your story for you and you will be able to do whatever you want with it — try to sell it to a magazine, put it on the internet, whatever you desire.

We will go to Appomattox.

You wanted me to see it and I want to see it now that you’ve explained to me why it is so important to you. We are going to go on foot because that’s how you wanted us to go.

And we’re way off course, which means we have a lot of walking to do but we’re going to do it and we’re going to make it there by April 9th, because that was your plan. And we’re going to follow your plan and do this.

Do you understand me?

Beat.

ZACH
(quietly)
Yes.

CARLA
I didn’t hear you.

ZACH
Yes.

CARLA
Good. And do you think you can lead us now without getting lost Mr. Clemenson?

ZACH
I do.

CARLA
Then… lead away.

ZACH
Well alright then. Now let’s see. (ZACH pulls out the map, he looks at it, then turns it around so its facing the right way, then-) Let’s go.

As the two start to move, the world of the play transforms dramatically and we find ourselves, quite magically on the grounds of Appomattox Courthouse.

ZACH and CARLA stand side by side looking at the grounds of the park together.

We should get a palpable sense of the beauty of the grounds. The clean lines of it, the clarity that is Appomattox.

A long beat.

ZACH
Appomattox.

CARLA
I’m... overwhelmed.

ZACH
It’s something isn’t it?

CARLA
It’s so — small.

ZACH
Yup.

CARLA
Like us.

ZACH
Yup.

CARLA looks at ZACH.

CARLA
Are you tearing up?

ZACH
I can’t help it that I’m sensitive.

Long beat.

CARLA
You know what I’d like right now?

ZACH
What’s that?

CARLA
For you to finish telling me the story of the surrender.

ZACH
You do not.

CARLA
Yes I do.

ZACH
Why?

CARLA
Well because we’re here. And this is what you wanted me to see and I want to understand it.

ZACH
...You’re not gonna curl up into a ball and cover your ears with your hands again are you?

CARLA
No.

ZACH
Do you swear?

CARLA
I swear.
Alright, so all through the night of April 8th and into the early morning of April 9th, the two Generals send letters back and forth and finally they agree to meet right here. Lee arrives first and waits. Grant comes soon thereafter and for a period of several minutes the two men are by themselves. After four long years of war, hundreds of thousands of men killed, land, property, towns, cities destroyed, it all comes down to these heroes, Generals of opposing Armies, these two men, just flesh and blood, deciding the fate of our country.

That’s a scene I’d love to re-enact. That’s delicate stuff right there. Because it’s not just about the surrender. It’s about what happens after the surrender. Most countries split apart for good after a Civil War. But we didn’t. We did something very different and it’s all because of these two men who found a way to really see and hear each other. I’d like to think I could do that, but I don’t know if I could. That’s something to strive for I think. Something to be better at. The seeing and the hearing of each other. The ability in the most difficult moment to look ahead with hope, accept the tensions between us and choose for a greater good to unite.

Beat...

ZACH
Ms. Keenan, I do believe the professional part of our journey is now over.

CARLA
No it’s not I haven’t even started to write the story and –

ZACH
Frankly Ms. Keenan, I don’t give a damn.

ZACH goes to pull CARLA to him. She stops him.

CARLA
Wait!

ZACH
What’s the matter?

CARLA
You can’t just man handle me like that!

ZACH
Yes I can.

CARLA
Mr. Clemenson, I’m not a floozy!

ZACH
I know you’re not a floozy.
CARLA
Good as long as that’s clear.

ZACH
It’s clear. And just so it’s clear to you I’m no floozy either.

CARLA

ZACH pulls her in again.

CARLA
Wait!

ZACH
What is it?

CARLA
I can’t do this! This is too impulsive! This –

ZACH
Hush.

CARLA
Don’t tell me to hush.

ZACH
I’ll tell you whatever I want to.

CARLA
You most certainly will not.

ZACH
Yes I will. And if you won’t listen I’ll just have to make you hush.

CARLA
I’d like to see you try.

ZACH
I bet you would.

CARLA
I would.

The two move in to kiss again. Then –

CARLA
Wait!

ZACH
What now?
CARLA
I can be a miserable person.

ZACH
You don’t say.

CARLA
Well you’re no walk in the park yourself.

ZACH
I know it.

CARLA
I can be demanding.

ZACH
I can be stubborn.

CARLA
I can be quick to judge.

ZACH
I can be slow to make a decision.

CARLA
I can be impatient.

ZACH
I can be emotional.

CARLA
I can be cold and rude and dismissive and –

ZACH
– impossible.

CARLA
I am not impossible!

ZACH
You’re impossible.

CARLA
Well if I’m impossible, so are you.

ZACH
Fine. I’ll agree to that. We’re both impossible.

CARLA
Fine. I agree to that. As long as its clear that you’re more impossible.
ZACH
Fine.

CARLA
Fine.

ZACH
...And everything else?

CARLA
We’ll just have to agree to disagree about.

ZACH
I thought you hated that phrase.

CARLA
You’re right I do. This will never work.

ZACH
But here we are.

CARLA
Maybe we could agree to disagree about agreeing to disagreeing.

ZACH
Just surrender to me Carla Keenan.

CARLA
I’m trying.

ZACH
Well try harder.

Beat.

It’s tentative. They are still somewhat, somehow unsure. They move closer and closer, nice and slow, an infinite distance in the smallest of gestures...

They get so close to each other, their lips are practically touching but they both seem to be waiting for the other to make the big move. They look at each other, waiting, hoping.

And this waiting, this “almost” is hot. So hot. And it just gets hotter and hotter. So hot that the stage seems to fill with light.

The stage gets brighter and brighter and brighter and brighter until we just have to –

BLACKOUT.
END OF PLAY.