

Once on Rumspringa



by once Lancaster Amish farm-kid

Ellis Abigail Stump
(they/them/theirs/she/her/hers)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (6)

(Note: Diverse casting is strongly encouraged.)

On Rumspringa

WILLA STOLTZFUS (f or nb, masc-of-center): 19; broody and sarcastic with a heart as soft as melted butter; addicted to automobiles and crystal meth and Sadie, but still becoming comfortable with that

SADIE SMUCKER (f): 19; bright, optimistic, femme; fascinated by knowledge and human psychology; arranged and expected to marry Levi, but obviously in love with longtime bestie Willa

LEVI ZOOK (m): 19; stereotypical small-town drug dealer, at least from the surface; attempting to catch up to the world, but stuck in the 90s (picture a redneck listening to hip hop on a Walkman clipped to sagging jeans); desperately seeking a trustworthy guiding light

Within the Community

RUTH ZOOK (f): 21; Sadie's sister; already married and committed to the Church; hard-working waitress at Shady Maple Smorgasbord; responsible, curt, occasionally condescending; would "wear the pants" if Amish women were allowed to wear pants

JEDIDIAH ZOOK (m): 25; Ruth's submissive husband and Levi's goody two boots brother; bumbling and anxious; preparing to take on his new role as next Community Bishop (the church preacher and town leader)

On the Outs

JACOB BEILER (m): late 30s-40s; ex-Amish; undercover DEA agent who devised his cop persona from classic noir; goofy enough in public (like failed dad jokes), but intense behind closed doors; deep down feels powerless and disrespected; also an alcoholic and secretly Levi's father

SETTING / DESIGN

Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Autumn harvest season. One day, from sunrise to sundown, and the following dawn.

Along with Willa and Sadie's meth-den trailer home, locations span a notoriously touristy Amish restaurant called Shady Maple Smorgasbord, county police station, Rumspringa barn party, local redneck dive bar, shadowy cornfield, and church of the Amish faith (erected inside the Bishop's house and eerily unadorned, as is custom).

Because Amish shun decor—even tablecloths and mirrors—sets can embrace minimalism. All can be moveable, multi-purpose, and more conceptual than literal. At its simplest, every scene requires only a table and few chairs. Projections and soundscapes are options, not necessities. Electric candles might line the audience. This piece thrives both in-the-round and proscenium style.

A familiar song should be appointed as Sadie and Willa's "theme song." I recommend an outdated pop hit like Madonna's "Like A Prayer." During a flashback in Scene 6, it accompanies their first high, at the party where they fell in love. Building up to that, it should drift onstage in various ways—over the radio at Shady Maple, as Sadie's ringtone, in the windchimes and rain, as a choral hymn. In this way, diegetic sound can be warped by the characters' states heightened by drugs, faith, and emotion.

TO NOTE

[]	Translation of Pennsylvania Dutch, for example:
<i>once</i>	[please / a favor]
yet, awhile, all	Common Amish filler words
//	Indicates overlap
– or ...	Suggests pause

RUN TIME

90-100 min, excluding optional intermission
(between Scenes 5 & 6)

*Once on Rumspringa is inspired by true events, documentaries,
and self-conducted interviews with ex-Amish individuals,
who also generously provided script consultation for authenticity.*



A PA Dutch barn hex symbol for good luck

Prologue to Communion

Into the darkness lit only by flickering candles,
placed onstage as practical lights or lining the
audience, a voice commands with awkward,
stammered, forced confidence.

JEDIDIAH (o.s.)

Rumspringa. It means, of course, “to run around.”

And run around they do! These babes we raised together, from their bloody births up to
this rite-of-passage, initiating at age 16.

For up to three orbits of the sunball around *Gotte*’s flat Earth, our young sinners are free
to scrape their knees and learn their lessons upon Lucifer’s Playground outside.

Like a hazy fever dream, our additional five actors
ENTER the space, sloshed and square-dancing.

Their red Solo cups and adolescent chaos scream
frat energy, but their bonnets reveal: this is a barn
party, baby. The liberated virgins do-si-do and dab,
suck face and thrust rakes into the smoky air.

JEDIDIAH (cont’d.)

Beyond our Community walls, they’ll meet all Modernity’s dangers.

Such as—cords. Um, crosswalks. Clocks without hands.

And—Temptation! To engage in the destructive Acts our sacred *Ordnung* dubs...

(Melodramatically; this is a real term)

Frowned-Upon.

Perhaps even our two most Forbidden: Murder. *And Homosexuality*.

On that note, across the “crowded field,” WILLA
and SADIE lock eyes. Sparks fly. Aw, fuck.

JEDIDIAH (cont’d.)

This era of independence concludes with their choice: to either marry and be baptized
into the Church, or survive on the Outs, shunned, for eternity.

Let us pray our lambs are herded in the right direction.

Somewhere over yonder, a rooster cock-a-doodle-
doos, introducing dawn. Morning light illuminates

JEDIDIAH—as merely a silhouette, perpetually uncomfortable—at his altar or podium. He sighs, stands, stretches, and calls out:

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

That was good, *ja* [yes], Ruth?

Ruth? *Liebling* [darling]? I'm ready for my breakfast sausage.

JEDIDIAH wanders off in search of meat links, EXITING, as the sunlight breaks upon:

Scene 1: Willa & Sadie's Trailer Home

This rural Pennsylvania meth den is a pigsty, as you'd expect. A stained mattress occupies the linoleum floor, encircled by pizza boxes, oatmeal canisters, energy drinks. The girls' library (a stack of yard sale books) includes a dictionary, Farmer's Almanac, and *The Internet for Dummies*.

Outside their poorly boarded-up window, beyond the trailer park, acres of cornfield ripple.

Knotted in sheets and an oversized t-shirt, WILLA snores. With her *strubbly* [unruly] bedhead, she looks like horse-and-buggy roadkill.

After a moment, SADIE bustles in, in a state of bright, joyful delirium. She wears an apron over her nightgown and carries a steaming Shoofly pie (a molasses-based dessert often served at funerals).

She lingers, lovingly, watching her friend snort and drool, before kneeling beside the mattress, extremely close, and sticking her pie in Willa's face.

SADIE

Guder mariye, Schlof-kopp [Good morning, Sleepyhead]!

WILLA

(Waking with a start, gagging)

The fuck?

SADIE

Happy last day of Rumspringa!

WILLA

I'm gonna retch.

(Immediately digging around her nest)

Where's my shit?!

SADIE

/Now, Will.../

WILLA

/Not to/ smoke, I swear. I just need—one comforting sniff...

A needle in her blanket haystack, WILLA finds her meth pipe. Sweet relief. SADIE pouts, disappointed.

SADIE

(Oblivious to any innuendos)

I wanted to wake you with the smell of my pie.

Wet-bottom Shoofly funeral pie!

I made the bottom extra wet. Just the way you like.

WILLA

Right. Well. It smells rotten.

And there's—hair in it.

How long have you been up?

(When Sadie brushes this off)

You didn't sleep.

SADIE

I whipped up four casserole dishes, baked three dozen whoopies, cross-stitched six pillows, and packed up our luggage bags.

WILLA

You tweaked-out manic spaz.

SADIE

You sad stubborn *schnickelfritz* [troublemaker].

WILLA

Your tolerance is so low it's pathetic. It's been—two days?
You should be crashing, not *rutzing* [rushing] around.

SADIE

(Dismissing this dilly-dallying)

There's no time. I'm about to try on my old garb I just laundered.

WILLA

How exciting.

SADIE

Honestly? It kinda is.

Last time I wore it was—three whole years ago. Right before we left for Rumspringa.

As she speaks, SADIE slips behind a room divider to change—irritating WILLA, who might even try shamelessly sneaking peeks. Like, on their *last* day, Sadie's still insisting on being a prude?! Come on.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Made it myself, way back then, from a lovely manure sack we had on-hand.

Only had to shake out a few leftover clumps first.

It's the frock I was gonna be baptized in, and then married in. Or so I thought.

WILLA

Probably buried in, too.

SADIE

(Like "wow, genius idea!")

If I'm lucky, and it still fits by then, *ja!*

It's already a smidgen—looser than before.

Won't you try on one of yours?

WILLA

I will not.

SADIE

You'll have to, early tomorrow dawn.

WILLA

You'll have to force me.

SADIE

(Poking fun)

Aww. Like dressing up a lifeless little miserable doll.

WILLA

If you're lifeless, you can't be miserable.

And it's not even Going Clean that makes me want to die. It's the Going Home.

Like, withdrawal is unbearable, but withdrawal in a *dress*...

SADIE pops out her now-bonnetted head.

SADIE

Are you backing out on me?!

WILLA

No, Sadie, I'm not! And—/you look ridiculous—/

SADIE

/Because/ you promised me, Wills! You're strong /enough./

WILLA

/I know/ I'm strong enough.

But this plan of yours is frickin' *ferhoodled* [confused]—/

SADIE

It's foolproof. This plan of *ours*.

This year's our last chance. *Tomorrow's* our last chance, to return home, before we hit the cut-off and can't never again. We pretend we're there to stay, snatch the cash we need from the offering dish, and slip out for good, good riddance.

It's our only option, to afford our escape to the /shore—/

WILLA

/Sure.../sure...

SADIE emerges, now donning full traditional Amish attire—dress, apron, stockings, boots.

SADIE

I'm sorry?

WILLA

With your sunken, crazed eyes, you look more like a widow than a milkmaid.

(Sadie only glares in response)

And yeah, you know what *I* believe? I say you enjoy putting on and playing up this lame old role. And the moment you're reunited with your folks and farmland, you'll be corralled back into it, and stay forever yet. You'll commit to the Church, for real. *Schicksaal, schicksaal* [fate], what coincidence, what fate!

SADIE

/Stop it now.../

WILLA

/Uh-huh, and/ in a month's time, you'll be hitched, to some nice *plain* [Amish] Amish husband who slaps you when the crops dry out. Or Levi Zook, that dump dope, just as your families arranged.

SADIE

Willa, be fair. We both know Levi isn't surrendering his Rumspringa. Not with the way his...

(Clears throat, nodding at pipe)

Business Enterprise Empire...is thriving out here.

WILLA

That's your only objection to everything I just said? Also, you're wrong. Levi's not a hot shot. He's just an addict.

SADIE

Takes one to know one.

Silenced by that, WILLA lights up a cig, using a pickled beet jar as her ashtray.

SADIE (cont'd.)

We're going home tomorrow for Autumn Communion, and that's final.

(As if it's a selling point)

You'll get to hear your *Dett* [Dad] perform the Baptism ceremony.

WILLA

Joy, Hallelujah. How I've missed that.

SADIE

(Emulating a Bishop, with reverence)

Willa Stoltzfus. "Can you renounce your devils, world, and own flesh and blood?"

WILLA

No. Look at me. Obviously, I cannot.

(Doing the same, sarcastically)

Sadie Smucker. "Can you be obedient and submit, always?"

SADIE

Ja [yes], that I can. Watch me.

Playfully, verging on erotically, SADIE drops to her knees before Willa. Executing the ritual, WILLA covers Sadie's eyes with her hand.

Going rogue, feeling emboldened or desperate in their dwindling window of opportunity, WILLA leans in for a kiss—what would be their first.

But sensing this, SADIE flashes open her eyes and compulsively starts to ramble.

SADIE (cont'd.)

And the leaves, Will! The leaves! Gee, they'll be so pretty falling from the orchard trees! And we can sail around on our scooters, and you can ruffle the feathers of your pet rooster I know you secretly miss.

WILLA

I don't like cock. I've never liked cock.

SADIE

Cocks *are* the dickens.

But hey, we'll score some free bread and wine from the ceremony.

WILLA

And numb bums, from sitting on those backless pews for eight hours straight.

SADIE

So we can cruise in your automobile for eighteen. That's the give-and-take.

WILLA

(Cocky scoff)

I can get us there in less.

Perched side-by-side on the edge of the mattress, or
the front step of their trailer, the pals envision
they're coasting, Willa's pedal to the metal.

SADIE

Well, you won't, however. I looked up the directions, in the atlas at the public library, and
I won't allow you to speed us down the freeway—or the High Road, or /whatever—/

WILLA

The Highway. We do things the High Way.

SADIE

(Ignoring Will's jokes)

On our journey down to Florida.

(Dreamy-eyed)

Sarasota, Florida, Wills. That's what all this is for.

Hideaway paradise for ex-Amish kids, all shunned together.

We can shoot high as the sky to our heart's content, in that gorgeous mansion of a trailer
calling our names. We've gotta be able to put down rent, the second we get there.

WILLA

And we shouldn't depend on our old Community for that help. The whole point of this is
to snip ties and start our adult lives. I'll get us the money elsewhere.

SADIE

With what job?

WILLA

I'll find a new one.

SADIE

With what resume? Our 6th grade education and your track record? You were fired from the vehicle body shop, 'cause you all but exploded one of the motor-mobile machines.

WILLA

Cars. They're called cars, you *dumm dumm ignoramus* [idiot].

Deeply offended, SADIE heads back inside to package her molasses-based pie in Saran wrap.

WILLA (cont'd.)

Hey, shit—I'm sorry. You know I love you—yoouuuur plan. And I can see the Happy Ending, too. The two of us—just the two of us—feet in the sand, breeze in your hair. Real ocean waves, like we've never even seen, living without a care.

SADIE

We can build castles out of seashells and wear hats made of straw.

WILLA

If that's what you want.

SADIE

It is.

WILLA

Okay, well, that's what I'm trying to say. There's not a man in the Amish Community who can make us happy as we make each other.

SADIE

Not a man in the Tri-Town area, or maybe the Universe.
We're best friends.

WILLA

(Tight-lipped, deflated by that label)

Right. Just best friends. Um.

What if I just sell the rest of our stash? We're not using again till after the weekend anyhow, so you say, so it'll be outta sight, outta mind, and we won't have to go back—/

SADIE

You can't.

WILLA

Don't tell me what to do.

SADIE

No, I said you can't because it's *all* [gone].

WILLA

All? All of it's *all*? It can't be. I know we had a pinch left...

(Hunting the house, fervorous)

Just enough for a quick rush or a quick buck, I swear to you, I swear to *Gotte* [God]—/

SADIE

You're a fiend, my friend.

WILLA

I wouldn't have used so much. I couldn't have! Hell...

SADIE

You know how I feel about that word.

WILLA

Fine. Fuck?

SADIE

Fine.

WILLA

(From under an armchair or a table)

Fuck!

SADIE

I'm heading over to Shady Maple to meet Ruth. Gonna try and sell these whoopie pies, make some last-minute side cash for our adventure.

WILLA

Good luck. Ruth hates your whoopies. Says they're *baremlisch* [godawful].

SADIE

I think she envies their plumpness.

WILLA

Either way. She takes 'em, chucks 'em, and you don't make a wooden nickel.

SADIE

Fine. I'll take solely the Shoofly, if you're so smart.

WILLA

Don't take the car.

(Off Sadie's look)

You're not in the right headspace, cuckoo. And you're horseshit at driving, especially in the rain. See the horizon, heavy with dark clouds?

Both turn to the window, framing clear blue sky.

SADIE

You're just being pessimistic.

WILLA

And you're just being lazy. The walk's only twelve miles.

SADIE

Ja, I know, and usually that's a piece of upside-down angel food cake. But right now, I—I need the wheels, Wills. My joints are all...my spine...

WILLA

Your joints are *all*? They're gone, too?
Is that a side effect of withdrawal? Losing your backbone?

SADIE

No! I meant...

(Chaotically tangled in cling wrap)

Achhhh!

WILLA

Easy, right? Going clean?

SADIE

Y-Yes. Easy. *Over*-easy as dippy eggs.
I'll see you soon. Just do me a *once* [a favor], and hold down the fort, and don't do anything foul or foolish awhile. Oath me, Will.

WILLA

Fine. If you promise me, that after tomorrow, you can actually detach from all this, and hit the road with me, no looking back.

(Muttered, as Sadie gathers her things)

And maybe, in Florida, finally feel comfortable changing in front of me.
And getting close to me...

SADIE

What was that?

WILLA

Nothing.

SADIE

I can—hit the road.

WILLA

Cool.

SADIE

Don't move.

WILLA

I won't.

SADIE

Okay. Bye.

WILLA

Okay. Bye.

The two stare each other down with a churning mixture of passion, frustration, and shame, until WILLA salutes, and SADIE departs.

WILLA sits in turmoil for a beat, before stubbing out her cig and snatching the keys. Lights.

Scene 2: Shady Maple Smorgasbord

Welcome to the grandest Amish Restaurant in existence, a 110,000-square foot monstrosity, where Amish waitresses serve English tourists, briefly overlapping our two worlds. From its rooftop steeple to the multi-floor gift shop of kitschy knick-knacks, it's giving...mall meets megachurch.

Except it's a buffet! Boasting rooms of comfort food, where Eating is advertised "as a Destination." You can fill your own plate or use a server, like RUTH, as JACOB has chosen. Although currently, at his table, he's asleep.

Back in the kitchen, SADIE eventually pops by to devour scraps and lick plates clean.

RUTH

Sir? Can I get you anything? Anything at all? We've got a four-hour line around the building, and you've been sittin' here for half that. Drooling.

JACOB

Oh, uh—gee, yes. Sorry about that. I'm waiting on, um...But guess I'll just order awhile. Let's go with the...Famished Farmer's Special?

RUTH

Eggs?

JACOB

Dippy. That's over-easy.

RUTH

I know what dippy means.

JACOB

Why, of course you do, little lady. I didn't mean to offend a /pretty young thing like—/

RUTH

/Sausage?/ Bacon?

JACOB

Both! Always. Plus the big ole biscuits, with your world-famous apple butter, scrapple, of course, and another coffee refill, *once* [please], if that's not too much trouble.

RUTH

It's my job, Sir.

JACOB

Funny one, too, ain't it? Waitress at a smorgasbord.
What makes some folk wanna serve themselves, keep on going back for more and more, like broken records, or washing machines stuck on—vicious cycles.
While others wanna have a stranger do their bidding?

RUTH

Uh. I dunno, Sir.

JACOB

Right, of course you don't.
Because you don't understand those technological references.

RUTH

No. No, I do, Sir.
Why'd *you* decide to sit here in the Restaurant, 'stead of the Buffet?

JACOB

(Patting his belly)

Years of indulgence, my girl. Leading to years of self-restraint.

(Totally obliviously)

Oh, and could you add a couple doughnuts to the platter, too? Just four or five. Six, to make it even. Thanks, Miss. Love your bonnet.

With that, JACOB takes out two phones—not one, two—and checks both. They're likely clipped to his belt, suave and important.

RUTH glares in thinly-veiled contempt, before tearing herself away, swiping a nearby plate, and heading into the kitchen, where she encounters...

RUTH

Schwester [Sister] Sadie! You almost made me drop this untouched dish of mashed

potatoes atop boiled potatoes atop home-fried potatoes, I hardly recognized you!
 Holy Moses, I haven't seen you in anything but your *fancy English* [non-Amish] trash
 clothes in forever. You look so...*plain* [Amish], I could cry.

SADIE

Me, too.

RUTH

While you're here, may as well put those able hands to good use. Clean.

RUTH tosses a sopping rag at SADIE, who
 proceeds to begrudgingly wipe down countertops.

Meanwhile, at his table, JACOB tips a flask into his
 orange juice. Drinks from the flask. Chases with the
 screwdriver. Browses a police file. Repeats.

RUTH compiles the meal, cracking and frying eggs,
 as she immediately, instinctively initiates gossip:

RUTH (cont'd.)

Guess who's sittin' out there in the Restaurant this morning.

SADIE

The Lord Himself?

RUTH

Sister! Hangin' 'round those Rumspringa fools turned your mouth foul. Keep aware of
 that, when you wander back to grace us with your presence. /It's been months—/

SADIE

/I am, I can, sorry./

(Noticing coffee's low)

I'll start a new pot awhile. So?

RUTH

Well, now I don't wanna /tell you./

SADIE

/Oh come on,/ Ruthie, I apologized! That's what you do, right? Is forgive?

RUTH

(After a beat, this is high-key gossip)

Jacob. Jacob Beiler. Fella who left the Community awhiles back, before we was even born. Strolls in now and again, using cellular telephones. Not just one, Sadie. *Two*. Like he's trying to rub it in.

SADIE

Why'd he leave?

RUTH

Some shameful family secret, so I've heard.
Treated his wife like an old cow put out to pasture.
But mind your own business. We shouldn't go stickin' our noses in other ladies' pies.

SADIE peers up from sniffing one of Ruth's pies,
with whipped cream on her nose, which RUTH
wipes off.

RUTH (cont'd.)

So, what's the occasion? For your dressing like a sensible woman this once?

SADIE

I'm 'comin home, Ruthie. For Communion.

RUTH

Ha. I'll believe it when I see it.

SADIE

That's how I always feel about the Baptism Ceremony, it's powerful as heck. And Father Stoltzfus is the best, like an e-mail fax message shot straight from God.

RUTH

(After a condescending glare)

Stoltzfus isn't runnin' Communion this year.

SADIE

What happened to Willa's *Dett* [Dad]?

RUTH

Oh, he was growing so old, Sadie! Nearly *forty*. The poor Elder was all burnt out.

But the Council vote for our new Bishop was unanimous.
Every member of the Community.

SADIE

Every man, you mean.

RUTH

(Not seeing the issue)

Same as always.

SADIE

So, who is it then? I see you're /dying to tell me—/

RUTH

Jedidiah. My darling *liebling*, Jedidiah!

SADIE

Gee willikers...

RUTH

It's a great responsibility, it is. He's buckled down, praying, from before 4 AM wakeup call, to long past sundown. We've burned through so many candles, I may start dripping my own earwax into jam jars.

(Ignoring Sadie's repulsed expression)

Tonight's his last rehearsal before tomorrow, and it's open to the Council, so that's got him wound-up as a clock.

SADIE

As Bishop, that means he'll handle the only phone in the whole Village!

RUTH

To be used solely for critical trade operations, and other corn-related matters.

SADIE

And! As Bishop's Wife! *You're* the one administering the Holy Kiss at ceremonies! Gosh. Better start practicin' your pucker, Mrs. Zook.

RUTH

(As Sadie makes smoochy sounds, cold & defensive)

I don't need practice. I receive plenty of mouth affection from my husband.

SADIE

Um. Okay! That sounds...nice.

RUTH jabs a finger at a giant tub, like a bucket, labeled Butter, next to a literal ice cream scooper.

RUTH

Scoop me some apple butter balls *once*.
Jacob the *wutz* [pig] likes his big slabby blobs of butter.

SADIE

Wutz, ja. Oink, oink.

Out in the Restaurant, JACOB hastily caps and hides away his flask, just as...

LEVI slinks in, wearing unironically retro shades and a hoodie pulled over his head. 2Pac or Biggie streams from his Walkman, until he slides into the seat across Jacob.

The dynamic between these fellas should feel intentionally weird and ambiguous. Have fun!

LEVI

Man, you know I hate it here. Why do you make me come here?

JACOB

("What kinda question is that?")

The range of whoopie pie flavors. Red velvet. Pumpkin. Peanut butter.

LEVI

Only join that doubts diabetes.

JACOB

Remember last year's promotion? Half-off annual buffet pass, for anyone who got gastric bypass surgery? What a steal! It's Heaven on Earth.

LEVI

It's an Amish orgy. They fuggin' run it, yo! Those loose-lipped bonnetted bitches might

see us together, and gossip like they do...

JACOB

Who cares? Be proud you're on the Outs.

LEVI darts for a drink of his partner's coffee, but
JACOB swats his hand away.

JACOB (cont'd.)

Now, don't sit there *grexxin*' at me. You're the one showing up late, and all red-eyed.

LEVI

I got allergies. Plus, I've been working. Hard.

JACOB

You finally got a job? Where?

LEVI

Can't say.

JACOB

Can't or won't?

LEVI

I just had some, like, hella important business clients to meet before this.
Like my...colleague. Will. Will's a big man.

For what it's worth, LEVI has no comprehension of
gender identity, but is referring to Willa.

JACOB, meanwhile, knows Levi's up to no good,
but cannot quite put his finger on it, due to
self-deluding and drunkenness.

JACOB (cont'd.)

You're in high demand.

LEVI

You bet your *fancy English* [non-Amish] John Deere tractor I am.

JACOB

Is that, uh, gonna keep you from hopping back on the Amish bandwagon?

LEVI

Dunno yet. I got time to figure it out.

JACOB

You've got...less than twenty-four hours.

LEVI

(Snarky, but also genuinely open to suggestions)

What do you want me to say? What do *you* think I should do?

JACOB

Well, I sure like having you around. You know that.

LEVI

No shit. I'm the realest.

JACOB

You're a wreck. And out here, I can only protect you from yourself for so long.

LEVI

Protect me? Bitch. Nobody looks out for Levi Zook.

JACOB

You don't think so? I'll have you know I just ordered you scrapple. Your favorite.

LEVI

Fat chance. The sign out front by the whoopie pie wagon, said they're *all* [gone].

JACOB

Well, must've just ran out, then.

Looks like I ordered ours right in the nick of time.

Thank the Lord, eh, Kid?

LEVI

Kid? Gross. Thank the motherfuckin' whatever.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, SADIE proposes her pie.

SADIE

Ruthie, can I ask you a *once* [favor] real fast?

RUTH

It's never just one *once* with you.

SADIE

(Again, this is a real true thing that exists)

Could you display this in the pastry wagon, by the statue of Wilbur the Whistlepig?

RUTH

(Choking at the stench)

Sadie! Your baking's *baremlisch*!

SADIE

It's not that bad. *I'm* not that bad. Like—what am I good at, then, do ya think?

RUTH

(Accompanied with erotic gestures)

Well, you were always halfway smooth on the bovine udders, and could pump the butter-churnin' stick with a natural wrist—in-and-out, in-and-out—and you're wide-eyed as a rooster every crack of dawn.

SADIE

So? I should be...?

RUTH

A farmer's wife.

SADIE

Griesleh [gross]! Boys are gross.

RUTH

Grow up.

SADIE

I'm trying to.

RUTH

Nae, you're not. You're right up against your three-year edge.

While I renounced *my* Rumspringa after mere months.
(Proud, pointedly, with a hand on her stomach)
For higher, more selfless obligations.

SADIE

Ruthie! Are you finally expecting?!

RUTH

A real woman lives her life expecting absolutely nothing.

SADIE

(After processing that, like, okay crazy lady)
Ha. Don't do your thing where you think you're better than me.

RUTH

I don't think. Don't have the time for it. You, on the other hand, stuff yourself with Time like it's last call at the Time Buffet.

SADIE rolls her eyes, while pouring a mug of coffee. For herself.

Meanwhile, RUTH brandishes an alarmingly sharp steak knife, wholly unnecessary for buttering toast.

RUTH (cont'd.)

What about Levi, hm? How's lovable little Levi Zook faring these days?

SADIE

Not at all how you'd expect.

RUTH

He was always so sweet. Polite and disciplined as his brothers. The whole Zook clan would kill for you. And Jedidiah still asks about you. *My* Jedidiah.

SADIE

Aw. Tell him hi from me.

Swallowing lifelong envy she'll never admit,
RUTH stabs the knife into the cutting board.

RUTH

Ain't he still courtin' ya on the Outs? Levi? Given you a buggy ride lately?

SADIE

Oh. No. *Nae*, that's—/

RUTH

Too bad. I'll have Jedidiah give his little brother a firm talking-to. A tasteful spanking.

SADIE

Please don't...

RUTH

(Equally “comforting” and menacing)

No *maedel* [woman] can grow and harvest a whole field by herself.

Out in the Restaurant, JACOB continues slurping his cocktail and attempting to converse.

JACOB

So, how's your family these days? Your Mother?

LEVI

Beats me.

JACOB

She beats you?!

LEVI

No, man, I mean I have no idea.

JACOB

Maybe you should—write more?

LEVI

Maybe you should—care less?

JACOB

She'd appreciate it. Family's important.

LEVI

Where my fuggin' waffles? Waffles are important.

JACOB

Patience, Levi. Hedonism doesn't excuse gluttony, pride, lust—or, any of the sins, really, now that I wrack my brain. You...fuck, what I mean is... You hanker for happiness served on a silver platter, but doesn't that always come at someone else's expense?

LEVI

Smorgasbords are bottomless, fool.

(Pointing to the menu, sounding it out)

All You Can Eat.

JACOB

You're such a nihilist.

LEVI

And you're such a hypocrite.

And what's nihilist mean again? Whatever. Doesn't matter.

Nothing matters.

Before JACOB can begin to respond to that, one of his phones rings. He steps aside to answer, slipping into overcompensatory noir detective mode.

In the kitchen, RUTH abruptly corners SADIE.

RUTH

Little *Schwester*, I feel called to confess. I can tell you're eating...

(Whispered)

The Drugs.

SADIE

Wait, what?! I'm not! For truth, Ruth, cross my heart!

RUTH

Whatever your lying heart's whispering to your doomed soul—I *see* it, Sadie, in your eyes! Jedidiah ate some of...the same thing you're having...on our Rumspringa once.

SADIE

Jedidiah did? Really?

(Head cocked in disbelief)

You're certain only once?

RUTH

He flew into a fit of passion, thought he was *Gotte*, then all but killed himself and everyone around us comin' down. Oh. You're falling down?

SADIE

I'm rising up! I'm getting better, getting clean. For you and the family and my future. Because, what I'd love to do—hypothetically, of course, if I didn't stay here—is study Psychology. Why *Humans* do things, not *Gotte*. Just—all we're taught in the schoolhouse is how to be a pure Wife and Mother, but I can't spend every meal, standing in silence, behind my respective man, eating only his scraps—/

RUTH

(Furiously defensive)

Jedidiah often leaves me a whole half a biscuit!
And it sounds like you've settled up your noggin.

SADIE

No, I haven't, /Ruth, wait—/

RUTH

/I've got/ tables to wait on first. Tables that can't waste forever waiting on themselves.

SADIE drops the rag, preparing to go.

SADIE

I'll see you at Communion, *Schwessy*. I love you, *Schwessy*. I love—/

RUTH

Finish your job.

SADIE

Pedal my pie.

RUTH

Are there... The Drugs inside?

SADIE

(Genuinely surprised)

What? No. Why?!

RUTH

Fine. I'll try. *Sei gut* [Be good]. Goodbye.

SADIE EXITS. RUTH maneuvers the other way, platter in one hand, coffee pot in the other.

JACOB

(Into phone)

Crash on Old Country Road? Off the covered bridge? Copy.

You—what do you mean “the girl’s one of my kind?” Come on, now, fellas, you guys know I’m not that anymore...

No shit. How much did she have on her? Not the strand I’ve been tracking, by any chance? Damn. 10-4. I’ll be there as fast as I can drive.

JACOB begins rummaging for cash. He’s the kind of guy who always has, like, an obscene amount of crumpled receipts in his pockets, fluttering out.

LEVI

You’re peacing?

JACOB

Duty calls.

LEVI

Dude, I just got here!

JACOB

Waitress, dear? Perfect timing. Oh—you only assembled one breakfast plate?

RUTH

I thought you were dining alone yet.

JACOB

That’s alright; we all make mistakes of judgment. He’ll take it. But could we have a to-go container too, once?

RUTH

Uh, sure, Sir. Here, Levi.

LEVI

Thanks, Ruth. *Wie bischt* [Good day].

RUTH

Hello.

JACOB

Splendid. You finish this off, Lev, then when this nice girl with the big bonnet returns with your styrofoam, just fill 'er up at the Buffet, too.

RUTH

You can only take out what's on your plate, Sir. Smorgasbord Policy.

JACOB

To Hell with Policy.

LEVI

Jesus Christ...

RUTH

(After wincing at the curse words)

I'll be back. Enjoy awhile.

(Backing into the kitchen)

Sadie! Guess who I just saw sittin' in that booth with the Shunned Man? Sister...?

Alas, RUTH finds nothing besides the rag and cleaning task, abandoned below her standards.

RUTH (cont'd.)

Shoddy workmanship, that *dumm dumm ignoramus*.

Curious, RUTH dips a finger into Sadie's pie, tastes, gags, maybe discovers a hair. *Blech...*

LEVI

(To Jacob, possibly overlapping Ruth)

You know what, Sheriff? Get outta here after all. See if I care.

But, yo, first. Don't forget my...can I have my...allowance *once*?

JACOB passes over, across the table...

LEVI (cont'd.)

A Bible? Seriously?

JACOB

Figured you don't got one, wherever you live.

Work hard and pray harder, Kid. 'Cause in the End, what else matters?

LEVI

Money?

JACOB

Look inside. It's inside.

LEVI

Inside...me?

JACOB

Inside the Book, kid.

LEVI peeks inside the Bible to find, sure enough, a couple bills between the pages. He stuffs them into his Levi jeans pockets.

JACOB (cont'd.)

(On his way out)

Be grateful you even get to make a choice.

RUTH returns with a to-go box, eyeing the two suspiciously. SHE EXITS. JACOB EXITS. LEVI shoves aside the Bible and begins shoveling up Jacob's meal. Eventually, he EXITS too.

The table and chairs remain onstage. The kitchen counter may be cleared and topped with candles, becoming an altar, or JEDIDIAH brings on a podium, to transition into:

Communion Interlude I: *Forstellung* [The Introduction]

At this unsettlingly simple church setup, erected inside the Bishop's own home, JEDEDIAH addresses the audience as his Congregation, shakily.

JEDIDIAH

Guder mariye [Good morning], Congregation.

Bruders [Brothers]. *Schwesters* [Sisters]. Welcome to Fall Communion!

He performs a cringey trumpet sound.

Now, I know I'm no Bishop Stoltzfus. Never will I reach his—level of beard. Man's got the best beard in the County, don't he? Nearly all the ways down to here!

Jed's hand hovers around his crotch area, before he realizes and readjusts.

Oh, erm—but, I pray I'll do you all proud, as I speak Our Truth. What we all believe. What *I* believe. Um. Our Four Sermons, as outlined in *The Ordnung* [Amish rulebook], explain why we practice Fall Communion. For Part I, *Forestalling*, our Introduction, I shall read from 1 Corinthians. A crowd pleaser...

Jedidiah fumbles and drops his Bible. The sound echoes in the empty space. He bends over to retrieve it, unsnapping a suspender in the process.

Drat. Shucks. Shuckity shoot, um...Got it! Just—building suspense. Ahem.

(Reading, slightly more confidently, supported by a script)

“Recall our ancestors, who danced under the Clouds, and passed through the Sea, and did Forbidden Things.”

Around Jed, the barn party imagery recommences. SADIE is there with LEVI, but looking past him, sharing glances with WILLA. Clandestine pining!

“Now, *Gotte* will not let you be Tempted beyond what you can bear.”

This line SADIE mouths along with Jed, but speaking to Levi, playfully:

“*I have the right to do anything,*’ you say.

But not everything is beneficial, or constructive. Do not seek your *own* good, but the *Greater Good*. For the sake of others, and the conscience.

Alas, of our shameful ancestors, *Gotte* was not proud.

So, as a warning for us:

(This can land bluntly)

Their bodies He scattered, and killed with snakes and storms.”

On cue, thunder rumbles above. JEDIDIAH jumps, and WILLA, SADIE, and LEVI do indeed scatter.

Sermon complete, the Bishop-to-be steadies himself with a sigh, pulls an apple from his back pocket, and crunches a bite.

And now, Jedidiah, you must merely do that before an audience.

The entire Community. Easy. Easy...Easy...

This was a rehearsal. No bodies in pews. No listening ears. Jed lowers to his knees, moaning:

Oh, *Gotte*...

Scene 3: Willa & Sadie’s Home / Police Station

SADIE tornadoes around the duo’s home (the only fixed set onstage) in ratcheting anxiety and withdrawal, until her flip phone rings. Her ringtone is outdated pop, maybe Madonna, “Like A Prayer.”

SADIE

Hello? Who’s this? I don’t know your number on the telephone.

Across the stage, the Shady Maple table is now a police station interrogation room, holding...

WILLA

Sadie, it’s me.

Throughout their conversation, the two pace or

stomp in unison, emotionally connected.

SADIE

Will, dear?! Oh, *Gotte*, I've been worried sick! I've cross-stitched so many pillows!

SADIE clutches one that says "Bless this Trailer."

WILLA

It's been two hours, Sadie.

SADIE

NO, THE CLOCK ISN'T WORKING RIGHT.

WILLA

We're looking at different clocks, Sadie.

SADIE

I meant ours! Here! Our analog time-teller that plugs into the wall!? The power zapped out for a flash, and now all our electronics are going haywire and glaring at me, and you need to come fix them with your technology knowledge, where are you?!

WILLA

Okay. Remember what you told me, last time we saw each other?

SADIE

Earlier today, you mean?

Was that earlier today? I'm having difficulty keeping track...

WILLA

Yes. Yeah. You said to hold down our homestead and not do anything stupid awhile.

SADIE

I wouldn't have. Stupid's a stupid word.

WILLA

Ja, well [whatever], promise me you'll stay put. You swear it?

SADIE

This better be good, Wills.

WILLA

It's not, Sades. I...was pulled over for...speeding.

SADIE

Oh, sis yuscht [oh, damn it], *ach, nae nae nae* [oh, no no no]!
To where were you speeding, Will?! Were you going to BUY?!!

WILLA

No! No. I wasn't...*only* going to *buy*. I was trying to help *us*, you've gotta believe me!

SADIE

You know I do. Always. I'd follow you to the end of the Earth—to Florida.
Even if you're so stubborn and stupid sometimes I want to skin you alive for boot leather.

WILLA

Okay, maybe keep the specific crimes to a minimum, during this phone call—/

SADIE

So, what? Are you alright, then? In the body and spirit?

WILLA

Um. *Ja*. Yes. Both remain intact.

SADIE

I'm quite relieved to hear that.

WILLA

I'm happy to hear you're relieved.

SADIE

I'm happy to hear you're happy.

WILLA

I'm happy to hear your...voice.

SADIE

I love...your voice.

WILLA

I love...yours, too.

Beat, to dislodge the romantic tension, thick as a county fair milkshake, then:

SADIE (cont'd.)
But so you're in Actual Jail?

WILLA
But so I'm in Jail.

Sighing in their respective locations, both sit.

SADIE (cont'd.)
In my paperback mystery books with Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, the bad guys—or the innocent ones, whoever's roped into trouble by wrathful men and hauled away for it—they, you...you only get one call.

WILLA
That's true in real life, too.

SADIE
Ja? I was your one call?

WILLA
Only number I know by heart.
Although, I don't have too many to know yet.

SADIE
Sometimes I miss the days we had none to know at all. When we relied on just us, 'cause that's all we had. All those years of running around, I can't believe we finally got caught.

WILLA
Not we. Just me. As it should be.

SADIE
I'll bring the bail dollars, for the Speeding Pass or whatever.
What about our Florida money? We'll use our Florida money!
Where's our Florida money?

WILLA
I...Okay. Don't /throw anything breakable—/

SADIE
/Don't you dare tell me it's.../

WILLA

All [gone].

SADIE

Addict!

SADIE (cont'd.)

I know what you were doing!

WILLA

I know what I was doing!

SADIE (cont'd.)

But, I'll make our bail anyhow.

WILLA

Don't lift a finger.

SADIE

How 'bout ten, for prayer?

WILLA

(This promise is a blatant lie)

I'll be home soon.

SADIE

In time for supper?

WILLA

To set the table.

SADIE

I shall prepare a pork chop.

WILLA

You know I love your rub-downs. But where the Hell...

(Changing word choice, for Sadie's sake)

*Heck...*are you getting all these ingredients?!

SADIE

From the dumpster behind Shady Maple.

JACOB ENTERS, gesturing for Willa to hang up.

JACOB

Miss Stoltzfus, hang up the phone.

SADIE

Will, please come home...

JACOB

Miss Stoltzfus, give me the phone.

SADIE

Will, I can't be alone...

JACOB

Miss Willa Stoltzfus! You lived without communication to the outside world for sixteen years. You can handle a few hours.

WILLA

(Into phone)

I've got to go. *Sei gut*, be good.

WILLA slams the receiver, leaving SADIE shaken. For the remainder of the scene, SADIE paces around the room, all but yanking out her hair.

JACOB

Addict.

JACOB ushers for WILLA to sit. A clock begins to tick, tick, tick.

JACOB (cont'd.)

Funny, how in your conversation you didn't mention you wrecked the car.

WILLA

That would've wrecked her heart.

JACOB

How poetic of you.

You also neglected to admit what we found in your pockets, and your bloodstream.

WILLA

Because there's none to be found in hers.

JACOB

How protective of you.

WILLA

She's my best friend. Don't you have anyone you love that much?
Like, say, your wife you left, when you left the Church? Or...no? So someone else, then?
That's right. I know stuff. Bishop's Daughter perks.

JACOB

I plead the Fifth.

WILLA

Honor and Obey Your Father and Mother? Or Thou Shalt Not Kill?
If you've given up Anabaptism altogether and become Catholic awhile.

JACOB

The Fifth *Amendment*, not Commandment.
And you too have the right to remain silent, as you were informed by the cops.
But, between me and you, lamb, sacrificial silence won't release you like talking will.
You're in touch with the Source to all this. The temptress that's plagued our County for
years. Like a crop disease, distributed by pests, ravaging town after town.

(These are real towns)

Lititz. New Holland. Bird-in-Hand...Intercourse! It fucking ruined Intercourse!
This demon has torn families apart and stolen young lives in the night.
And you know the Source.

WILLA

To such Suffering? Um... Sin?

JACOB

(Smacking the tabletop, revealing new anger)

The meth, Miss Stoltzfus. The Supplier of the meth.

WILLA

I won't send anyone to the chopping block.

Upping the intensity, in the manner he's likely

worshipped in cop films, JACOB rises and circles.

JACOB

Like the Supplier does, you mean? This Executioner, baiting good girls into deep trouble. Your “best friend”—the one who makes you feel all kindsa protective and poetic—is doomed without you. That matters more than your loyalty to this circle of screw-ups.

WILLA

You don't know me.

JACOB

I know your type. I know you're not cut-out for this path you're condemning yourself to walk. You have no reason to play Martyr.

WILLA

It's self-serving, too. I snitch on this guy, and I'm dead meat.

JACOB

Actually, you snitch, and you're safer than ever. You won't be giving me a name, Miss Stoltzfus. You just lead me to the big man, chat a bit, shoot the breeze, get him to confess. Then I take it from there, and you're on your way. Free.

WILLA

Forever?

JACOB

As long as that means to you.

WILLA

How would that work?

JACOB

We've got a device you wear. It records sounds and sends 'em straight to me, in real time. I'll explain all the details, if you're interested. Are you interested?

WILLA

I... am. But...I...can't.

JACOB

Well, alrighty, then.

Swigging from his flask, Jacob strides towards the door.

WILLA

Hey! Where are you going?

JACOB

While you're here, contemplating our little offer—wire now, or bars for longer—I'll be researching this tip, that the local Amish might be involved. Wild Amish mafia shit.

WILLA

(Knowing, wry)

Haven't you ever been to a Rumspringa party?

JACOB

Is that a loaded question?

WILLA

(Eyeing his holster)

Is that a loaded gun?

JACOB

Pray you don't have to find out.

WILLA

Dear God.

JACOB

Yeah, Kid. I've seen those barnraiser shindigs. Hundreds of teens in backwards caps and suspenders, who've never tasted the Blood of Christ, sloshed as hell. Bandwagoned in from across the country, spread entirely by word of mouth, like fuckin' herpes. I've shut that shit down, to keep you from killing yourselves. And *you* shun *me* for my actions.

As JACOB turns, WILLA stands, determined.

WILLA

Hey, wait, um...do you have one of those wires I could just—see?
I think technology's cool. I want you to show me.

The two either EXIT, striking the chairs and table,

or travel to the countertop (used so far as the kitchen counter and Jed's altar), which next becomes the police station front desk.

WILLA can remain onstage onwards, in a chair in the corner, her "holding cell."

Meanwhile, SADIE flips open her cellular again.

SADIE

(Talking aloud while typing)

Internet. Open Internet. Search: How much is bail from jail? *Ach*. Hell....

(Catching herself)

Hell...*p*. Helllllp...me, *Gotte*. What do I do?!

Lit with an idea, SADIE selects a Bible from their shelves of Bibles, opens to a passage and reads:

SADIE (cont'd.)

Psalms 139. "O Lord, You have searched me and You know me. Familiar with all my ways."

JEDIDIAH joins, prefacing his next Interlude:

SADIE & JEDIDIAH

"Where can I go from your Spirit? From your Presence, where can I flee?
Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me, and know my anxious thoughts.
See what is offensive in me, and lead me in a better way. Everlasting."

SADIE speaks to the thunderous skies and dark void, wracked with nerves and crackling synapses.

SADIE

Dear God. Or...Phone? Or FBI or All?
I hope you're not watching or listening to me right now.

From the Bible, SADIE slips a hefty bag of meth, previously stashed. She kisses it. Amen.

As lights dim, she carefully dials a phone number...

Communion Interlude II: *Anfang* [The Beginning]

Still onstage, in his house/church, JEDEDIAH
continues practicing, referring to handwritten notes.

JEDIDIAH

Part II. *Anfang*: The Beginning.
Which is different from the Introduction...I didn't write the rules.
First we discussed Temptation, remember?

Another bite of apple. This can occur whenever he
brings up Temptation. Biblical sight gag!

How we shouldn't tempt ourselves, or each other.
Because that's, um, Evil. And God knows and sees *All* [nothing].
Not—not *All* as in Nothing. God doesn't see *Nothing*. God sees *Everything*.
Ha...Comedy.
But, *ja*. It happens. Thus, the only way to survive is continually cleaning our hearts,
muddied with manure, towards wrongdoers, and ourselves.
Like—Jesus, and his dirty, dirty disciples.
Despite all, forgiving them, and promising them Eternal Life.
(With waxing confidence and conviction)
Submit, demands the *Ordnung*! To the Will of your Church, Community, and Traditions.
Their sins, forgive and forget. Our sins. Forgive, and for—/

On a candle, Jed's paper notes catch aflame. Oy.

Kedrick! Kedrick, kedrick [cow dung], *ach*, cow dung...

He fans the pages, blows on them, stomps on them.

Wassere, wassere, wassere [water]!

JED swipes a jug of Holy water and splashes upon
the smoking ashes. Over the puddle, he kneels.

O, *Gotte*, give me a sign!
You trusted me with this role, but I cannot rise to your service.
I can't do it. And I can't forgive myself for disappointing you.

Head in hands, JEDIDIAH slaps his own face or presses fists to his temples, self-loathing.

I hate, I hate, I hate...

Give me a sign. If this be my calling, give me a...

Riiiiiiiiing! In an adjacent room, a phone shrills. JED jumps. Wind howls. Lights down.

Introducing the next scene, a single corncob may roll across the stage. Ominous.

Scene 4: Amish Cornfield

A short time later into the afternoon, among the Community outskirts, JEDIDIAH twiddles his thumbs, until LEVI stalks in through the stalks.

JEDIDIAH

Levi! My *Bruder!* *Wie bischt!* It's nice to see you again.

LEVI

I gotta say, hearing your voice on the other end of my cell was pretty fuckin' trippy.

JEDIDIAH

It is quite peculiar using one. I haven't since my Rumspringa.

LEVI

Only phone in the whole Community.

JEDIDIAH

To be used solely for critical trade operations, and other corn-related matters.

LEVI

Still, having access to the outside world and all...

Don't let that power go to your head, or it won't fit under your stupid straw hat.

JEDIDIAH

I'll let it go to my beard.

LEVI

(After a forced chuckle, “ha...ha...”)

Congrats, though, new Preacher Man. I’m proud but not surprised.

JEDIDIAH

Denki [thank you], brother.

LEVI

How are you, brother?

JEDIDIAH

I’m—well, brother. But...I need some money.

LEVI

Hold up, what?

JEDIDIAH

Approximately two hundred dollar bills precisely.

LEVI

Dude! I thought we was gonna catch up and all!

JEDIDIAH

That we will yet! Do the catching up and down, East and West. All the cardinal directions. I just wanted to bring this up awhile. I can’t borrow from Ruth’s savings she hides under the floorboards. Every cent she makes at Shady Maple, she tracks. You know the Smucker *schwesters*.

LEVI

Sadie ain’t so shady.

(After Jed delivers a look like “Just you wait”)

I’m sorry, man, but I’m actually, like, hella hurting for green right now. I lost a fuck-ton amount recently. Like, just an hour ago recently. Like I was pretty much robbed.

JEDIDIAH

You were robbed?!

LEVI

Yeah, bruh, my business product! And the low-down is, I can’t get in touch with my... Enterprise Colleague...but I owe some...dedicated customers my expensive product.

They expect me to carry out my side of the deals, you know?

JEDIDIAH

Sure. Like trading goods. Cattle.

LEVI

Strictly business.

JEDIDIAH

Mmm. Brother, I'm...ill, alright? Inside the skull, with a sickness they only believe in on the Outs. My brain buzzes like a hornet's nest of doubts. I presumed it was head congestion, merely a lifetime of everlasting year-round allergies. Till it got worse. But then Saaaa--somebody prescribed me a *fancy English* diagnosis and possible solution, yet.

LEVI

Anxiety. I've seen the commercials.

JEDIDIAH

(With longing)

Commercials...

LEVI

You ain't missing much.

JEDIDIAH

(Like a commercial)

What if I promised to pay you back *double* the \$200 buckaroos?

A "Rebate," if you will. In 24 hours. Guaranteed.

LEVI

That's impossible.

JEDIDIAH

That's Religion. I'm talking about the Service tomorrow. Whole County'll be present.

And I'll bring *you* the Offering Dish after. Brimming with wooden nickels.

LEVI

Four hundred dollars worth? Seriously?

JEDIDIAH

I'd sign an oath on my life's supply of oats.

LEVI

Fine. Whatever. I don't even care anymore.

LEVI rips out his allowance from Jacob and thrusts it upon a grateful JEDIDIAH.

JEDIDIAH

I often find the moment a man stops caring is when he begins to care the most.
And perform the best.

LEVI

That doesn't even make sense.

JEDIDIAH

Thank you, Levi. Bless you. Now, you should probably skedaddle.

LEVI

What?! I just got here!

JEDIDIAH

I have a reputation to uphold these days. And you look like horseshit.

LEVI

Screw this. It's like, all's I ever do is show up places, just to be turned away again.
Guess I should lower my expectations even lower.

LEVI takes out his Panasonic headphones and Walkman, cuing more muffled 90s gangsta rap.

From JEDIDIAH, this stirs a yearning gaze and subtle, contained, yet bouncing hip movements.

LEVI (cont'd.)

The fuck are you buggin' about?

JEDIDIAH

I just miss music. Real music, with instruments and accompaniment.
Not merely proud a cappella upon the singing bench.

LEVI

Ha. Yeah, I remember feeling like, every hour I spent nailed to that bench, chanting the same dumb hymns along all the morons, I lost my own voice, like, a note more.

JEDIDIAH

It's to demonstrate we're all one, and equal.

LEVI

For suuuuure.

JEDIDIAH

But gee, the influence of real sound sways you in a different way, doesn't it?

LEVI

Sure does. Maybe you should've considered that, before you went and made your permanent life choices.

LEVI cranks up the music as he grooves away.

LEVI (cont'd.)

Mmmm. Feels so niiiiiiiice.

(With an "L" to his forehead)

Loser.

JEDIDIAH

(With a hand to his forehead, but more like a rooster)

You're the loser, Loser!

LEVI

Go to Hell. And, while you're there, learn to think for yourself.
And keep your word and get me my fucking money.

LEVI drags his feet and soul to a spot in the dirt, where he can be Alone. There, he kneels, produces a baggy, and gets high, as the song continues, faint. "Money Maker" by Ludacris?

Meanwhile, from the other direction, SADIE ENTERS on a mission. She beelines to JED, who's flustered but expecting her.

SADIE

Jedidiah Zook? Bishop-to-Be?

JEDIDIAH

Why, I'll be! Sadie Smucker, my Sister-in-Matrimony!

SADIE

Sorry I'm a smidgen delayed.

JEDIDIAH

Nae, it's a miracle you didn't arrive any earlier. I was—running behind, too.

SADIE

I called the Church telephone line again, and it sent me to answering machine. So I left a vocal message.

JEDIDIAH

I don't know how that works.

SADIE

Me, neither. Hopefully it didn't explode or nothing.
Say, is this a private location yet? Don't you hear—music?

Anxious, JED peers around, but fortunately, Levi's already dipped.

JEDIDIAH

No. But I suppose my years of chopping and hammering wood, surrounded by bleating goats, can mess with your ears. Make you miss things.

SADIE

And I suppose years of living carelessly, like I have, can mess with your brain.
Make you hear things that aren't actually there.

JEDIDIAH

Ha, ha...Oh, dear.

SADIE

Let's cut to the steeplechase.

JEDIDIAH

Lickety split. On the wire, you said you could cure my...sermon stress.

SADIE

Cure it? I can kill it, and all your fears, clearing your path from Safe to Great.
I can make you believe in yourself, like you're on top of the world.
And I'll let you see it to believe it. Praise Hallelujah, Glory Be!

From her apron or even under her bonnet, SADIE
whips out a raw, mushy, unwrapped:

JEDIDIAH

A whoopie pie? I don't need a whoopie pie!
Your sister, my wife, makes the best whoopie pies!

SADIE

The magic's *inside*.

JEDIDIAH

Oh—my. May I...touch it?

SADIE

Try before you buy. Smart man.

JED gingerly parts the chocolate halves, discovers
the meth baggy tucked inside, and drops it, shocked.

SADIE (cont'd.)

(Offended)

Jedidiah! That's homemade!

JEDIDIAH

I thought you meant Medication! For Mental Healthiness. Ruth disclosed you're studying
Psychology—I thought you were gonna sell me Psychology!

SADIE

Technically, you mean Psychiatry. But this here is Spirituality, too. Transcendent yet.
I got word you liked it, when you did it in the past. It gave you angel's wings...

JED picks it up, dusts it off, wavering.

JEDIDIAH

You couldn't have at least packaged it in clingwrap, as a *once*?

SADIE

It was *all* [gone]. I used the last of it on a Shoofly.

JEDIDIAH

Shoofly funeral pie? Who died?

SADIE

No one, yet.

Enjoy baking this baked good, Brother. Pleasure doing business with you.

But if anyone asks, I was never here.

JEDIDIAH nods curtly, trading Levi's cash for the naked pastry. He jams the mess down his pocket, then EXITS.

Overcast clouds darken the sky, indicating rain. But SADIE lingers in the field, nostalgic, admiring the natural beauty of her old stomping grounds.

SADIE (cont'd.)

I was never here. It's like I was never here...

JACOB (o.s.)

Hello, dear. How we doin' in here?

Lights down as SADIE EXITS, shifting focus to:

Scene 5: Police Station / Amish Cornfield

In her cell, and the throes of withdrawal, WILLA is a knotted pretzel of pain, as JACOB pops in.

WILLA

(Daggers, no patience)

How's it look like we're doing, Officer Beiler?

I'm having the time of my life. This is my youth.

JACOB

This is a woe-is-me pity party. “I’m a victim. I’m a scapegoat.”
Miss Stoltzfus, life’s a bitch. She fucks you. Then you die.
Or, if she refuses to fuck you, you fuck her first.

(Not realizing how purely evil that sounds, gesturing
vaguely at Willa’s malaise)

This is a . . . girl thing, I suppose.

WILLA

I’m not—/don’t say that./

JACOB

/Right, right./ Apologies. You’re not a girl. You’re a *woman*.
I took the mandatory training course. Run by that pretty African American—*female*.
How to be, what the kids call it these days? PC?

WILLA

That’s a computer.

JACOB

I know computers. And you know everything, don’t you?

WILLA

Please, leave me alone. With my dark thoughts. I’m begging you.

JACOB

(Talking to Willa, but thinking about Levi)

You’re sabotaging yourself.
This morning, you woke up with so much Freedom, you didn’t know what to do with it.
It scares you, doesn’t it? Trusting your fucked-up self to make the right choice?
You don’t think you deserve it.

WILLA

You can’t get in my head. There’s a chorus of voices in there already.

JACOB

A *chorus*, yeah. Not a Bishop.
Deep down, you crave an all-knowing voice telling you what to do.
So, listen to me, kid. Wear the wire. Protect yourself, legally.
Then, go anywhere you don’t have to exercise such fucking willpower.

Shit's inescapable here. It's a death sentence. You hear me?
 Alright, now. Let's go, get up, chop chop—/

WILLA

(Hands over ears)

Stop, stop, my fucking *Gotte*—/

JACOB

(Firmer, patronly tone of voice)

Willa, dear. Taking the Lord's name in vain is not very *lady-like*—/

WILLA

I said leave me alone, *Dett!*

Mortified moment of silence for that Freudian slip.

JACOB

(Almost...smug?)

Dett?

WILLA curls onto her side to retch or dry heave.

Proud, patting himself on the back for coming off as
 Fatherly, JACOB saunters back to his desk, sipping
 from his flask. There, he isn't expecting to find...

LEVI, fiddling with the countertop, tapping his feet,
 not subtly tweaking out.

JACOB

Levi? Last time I checked, today isn't "take your punk to work" day. Ha!

LEVI

Hilarious. Now, here's another joke. I'm broke.

JACOB

I just gave you enough to scrape by this morning!

LEVI

I loaned it, bitch. Had to help a brotha out. My brother Jedediah.

JACOB

(Taken aback)

You saw your Amish family today?

LEVI

Yahhh.

JACOB

To say hello again? Or goodbye for good?

LEVI

Neither.

JACOB

Just another brilliant move of yours.

You should know I've got an Amish girl locked up as we speak.

Fucked-up kid went and almost kamikazed herself off a bridge.

(Half-joking)

Now, she's my prisoner.

Connecting the dots, splintering, LEVI cracks into laughter. JACOB beams, awkwardly, thinking Levi enjoyed his joke.

LEVI

Dude, no shit. You're not, like—the druggie department?

JACOB

For the entire Tri-Town area. Head of the Lancaster Drug Task Force. DTF.

LEVI

(Backing away)

Um, wow. Okay. That's a pretty wack title. But right on, man. Right on...

JACOB

Levi? What's going on? Are you okay? Breathe, Kid—/

LEVI

(Slipping to the floor)

I'm drowning, man! I can't do this anymore.

JACOB

What? Our arrangement? Your Rumspringa?

LEVI

Everything! I've gotta GTFO.

I'm gonna pack up some floaties and fly an aeroplane to motherfuggin' Florida.

Lost on what to do, swiveling his head to make sure the coast is clear (which it likely isn't), JACOB feebly, quietly, attempts to console, as:

LEVI squirms and worms upon the floor, a both absurd and kind of endearing sight.

JACOB

Levi, we're all each other's got out here.

LEVI

(Manic as all fuck)

Yo, I'll go straight-up Amish, then! Screw our weekly Farmers Specials—don't mean shit to me, anyhow. I'll pull a U-turn and get baptized into the Church and tell everyone all about you. And my old man and brothers will rip themselves into animals and kill each other in cold blood, if they don't kill themselves first, and they'll take Mom and pummel her with shame till she's a blood puddle on the kitchen floor. And with her outta commission, there won't even be nobody to mop up the mess! That's the chaos you'll cause! That's the damage you've done!

JACOB

(After a resigned beat, completely lost on what to say)

Material goods can't solve your problems.

LEVI

They KIND OF CAN, THOUGH.

JACOB fishes a few crumpled bills from his pockets, alongside his usual receipts. All he has left.

JACOB

You know what? Go. Hitch-hike to Florida, or anywhere that isn't here.

Escape this Purgatory of a town, and the Community that would actually keep you safe,
 but where, if you stayed, you'd resent me forever.
 Buy yourself Shelter and Safety, not some last-ditch stab at Pleasure.
 Real health, not your disturbed definition of Happiness.
 Only then and there, will you find true love.

LEVI

I can find Love, jackass. /Leave me alone./

JACOB

/Let me drive you home./

LEVI

In what? Your goddamn cop car?! Sirens screamin, lights flashin, you fuckin kidding me?

JACOB

It's about to rain! It's already spritzing, and I'm just trying to...
 Weren't you scared straight by what they tell you before Rumspringa, right before setting
 you loose? If you die here on the Outs, prematurely, and you're to blame...
Gotte steers you away, at the Pearly Gates.
 From Eternal Life, and Eternal Waffles. Come, now, /Son—/

LEVI

/Don't you dare/ call me that.
 I can take care of myself.
 I can figure shit out for myself.
 Levi Zook ain't no one's /Son./

JACOB

*/ACHOO!/
 ...It's my seasonal allergies. You've still got hay on your hoodie.*

LEVI

(Turning to leave)

I'm startin' to think it'll cling to me no matter where I go.

JACOB

Hey! Didn't your mother teach you any manners?
 What to say when someone sneezes and their heart stops beating?

LEVI

For sure. Bless You, Jacob. And Fuck You.

Enraged, LEVI ZOOK exits the building, leaving JACOB, emotionally and financially scraped clean, to pick up his fallen receipts alone.

Outside, LEVI squats on the curb or a parking block, when his flip phone rings. Probably “We Want Some Pussy” by 2 Live Crew.

LEVI (cont’d.)

(Picking up flatly)

What do you want.

SADIE

Levi? It’s me, Sadie Smucker, on the other side of your device.

I’m using them more now, since, you know, Will was busted with your drugs?

LEVI

Uh, yeah, I know that now.

Would’ve been helpful information, like, five minutes ago but—/

SADIE

Right. So I’m aware she was working for you, and I made some of our bail, but not quite enough, so I wish to continue her service. I’ll sell your stuff to everyone on her list. I’ve got Professional Experience now, actually. I might even have a knack for it—/

LEVI

Nah, fuck no, I’m over all this. Wheeling and dealing. I’m closing shop.

SADIE

Because of Willa?

LEVI

Because a lotta reasons.

SADIE

Well, that’s too bad.

LEVI

Life's too bad.

SADIE

Oh, lighten up, Silly.

LEVI

(With a little laugh)

Silly. Sure. We always got along well, didn't we? Back in the old days?

While they chat, both fidget and twirl their hair,
invested and nervous for different reasons.

SADIE

Rides home in your buggy after hymmin' *singeons* [singalongs].
You had the loveliest voice. Mine was awful.

LEVI

You were young.

SADIE

(Singing, tuneless, terribly)

But it never got better yet!

LEVI

And, snap—we'd make-believe we were *Dett* and *Maam*, remember that?

SADIE

Heads of a family.

LEVI

Straight chillin'. Now that's a throwback.

SADIE

I played that game with Wills, too. First, actually.
We'd rock a dolly—and if you've never seen an Amish doll, with only brothers, they're
faceless—and we'd kiss where it's mouth would be and whisper:

A light is cast upon WILLA, in her cell.

SADIE & WILLA

“You can be whatever you want to be. I love you.”

LEVI

The *plain* life.

SADIE

The *plain* life.

WILLA grabs her knees, in the fetal position,
rocking like a baby.

LEVI

Maybe it’s like, if you want the *plain* life, you can just choose the *plain* life.

SADIE

I don’t think it’s as easy as dippy eggs. Not when you want the best for other people *and* yourself. When you’re selfless *and* selfish, it feels more...hard...boiled.

LEVI

You really need this money, Sadie?

SADIE

(Singing again, horribly)

I’m desperado...

LEVI

Maybe there’s somethin’ else you can do for me, then, instead. Another kinda favor.

SADIE

Oh, well—I’m not too handy with housework, you should know, and my baking’s *baremllich*, just ask Willa or my sister or your brother or really anyone—/

LEVI

Trust me. *This* kind of handy you can be.
All’s you’ve gotta bring is your hands.
Your body. Your mouth...Um. Do you understand?

SADIE

Are you speaking a favor of the sexual variety? Because I have some corn cobs to

slather with cream, demanding my attention—/

LEVI

No! Heck no. For real, Sades, what I'm imaginin' is innocent.
Just one last chance to play pretend.
What do you think? You down to do me this *once*?

SADIE

(Considering timing)

Do we still have some idle hours before suppertime, would you say?

LEVI

Uh... Yeah?

SADIE

Okay.

LEVI

Okay. It just can't be at my trailer, 'cuz I might have, like, the fuzz or the FBI on my tail.

SADIE

Meet me at mine, then.

LEVI

Dope.

SADIE

(Tasting the word)

Dope. Now, I don't know how best to bid farewell and hang up a phone call, so.../bye./

LEVI

/One/ final question, Sadie.

Do you still own any of your pretty *plain* [Amish] garb?

SADIE

...Yes...

LEVI

A nice frock, hand-made? Bonnet and apron? You still have it all?

SADIE
Ja...

LEVI
Will you wear it?

SADIE
It's already on.

At this point, SADIE and LEVI are staring at each other, albeit in different locations, gripping their communication devices. Hard.

From her cell, WILLA glares at them, or into the distance in anguish. The impending storm brews, as the lights go down.

If you're including an intermission, it goes here. If not, plow onwards, godspeed.

Scene 6: The Church (In Jedidiah's Home)

Into the black, a matchstick flickers to life. It lights a candle, then another. This is the work of RUTH, humming a lullaby like "Gottes Liebe."

Outside, JEDIDIAH cradles his new possession: the whoopie pie. He removes the meth baggy, rations a fingerful, and snorts. Heavens to Betsy! That'll do.

JED re-pockets the pastry and enters the Church, startled to see Ruth and the flames.

JEDIDIAH
You've arrived early. Doors don't open till dusk yet.

RUTH
But it's getting dark already awhile, on account of the storm and all. So I brought extra matches, and candles. Hand-made from my own ear wax.

JEDIDIAH

Blech! Good Heavens, Ruth.

RUTH

I thought you'd appreciate the gesture.

JEDIDIAH

You know as far as ears go, I care only for ears of corn.

RUTH

Well, I wanted to see you prior, too. Ask how you're feeling. How are you feeling?

JEDIDIAH

Fine. I reckoned I would be alone. Have a moment to relax.

RUTH

Honeycomb. Your Wife can help you relax.

(Moving towards JED, who winces away)

Hey, now. Don't take your tension out on me. Allow *me* to take it out of *you*.

And then put it *into me*...

JEDIDIAH

(Justifiably aghast)

Ruth! We're in the Church!

RUTH

So hush, baby. Don't speak yet.

JEDIDIAH

The Council will be here any moment! To judge my performance...

Unhinged, RUTH backs Jed up against his podium.

RUTH

Excellent. We'll make 'em watch. Make 'em stand in their pews and rejoice for this *once*. God knows they could use the Stimulation. And I can feel the Power exciting *you*. In your heartbeat. And the movement in your pocket...

JEDIDIAH

O-oh...

RUTH

Ja, baby, what's this mound in your trousers, hm?

JEDIDIAH

That's—it's—it's nothing! Stop it. It's n-n-nothing!

RUTH

(Forcing her palm down his pants)

Don't feel like nothin' to me.

JEDIDIAH

Ruth! I—I said stop...

RUTH

Ja, ja, feels like somethin' to me. Something awfully...rounded...and velvety...and...

(Suddenly confused, turned-off, like—did this loser just go soft?? Or come already??? Or...)

Squishy? And soggy? Wait, what?

RUTH pulls out a finger, coated in thick, white, creamy...frosting. She digs inside and yanks out:

RUTH (cont'd.)

Jedidiah, is this a whoopie pie?

JEDIDIAH

No! No, ma'am, it's merely—um, /I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry—/

RUTH

/Jed,/ where'd you get this?!

JED snatches it back, playing keepaway, skirting the space with Ruth on his tail.

JEDIDIAH

It's—um, it's one of yours, this is! From the batch you baked, last week, you generous angel. For the youth group fall harvest picnic. Good kids, those are. The ones who stay here, forgoing their Rumspringas, to be baptized in a jiffy. Good kids, who don't desert...deserve...good desserts. But! I saved one for myself, snuck this aside. You know me, Ruth, such a *wutz*. You know me, Ruth, such a—/

RUTH

Liar. You are such a liar. *This* is shoddy craftsmanship. It's no whoopie pie of mine. Jedidiah, tell me what my whoopie pies are like.

JEDIDIAH

Uh, they—they are...

RUTH

Whose?! Whose are, Mr. Zook?

JEDIDIAH

Yours—yours are, Mrs. Zook.

RUTH

Proceed.

JEDIDIAH

Your whoopie pies are...perfectly plump. And moistly. Creamy, and...

RUTH

Heavenly? Would you say Heavenly?

HE falls to his knees.

JEDIDIAH

Yes, ma'am. Your whoopies are Heavenly.

RUTH

Denki. And what about my sister's whoopie pies, hm? How do we describe hers?

(Playful, with a little smack)

Husband! Say it! What we whisper behind the outhouse, after faking bites and pretending they're *gut*? Even when we lie to Sadie's face, in our hearts and guts, we know they're—?

JEDIDIAH

Baremlieh! Flat and lumpy. And on the inside, sort of slimy and runny.

RUTH

Correct. So, answer me this, *lieblich*. Why are you holding, in your palm, one of my Sister's flat, lumpy, sort of slimy, runny whoopie pies?

JEDIDIAH

I...can't.

RUTH

Give it to me. We're throwing it away.

JEDIDIAH

What's gotten into you?

RUTH

What's gotten into *me*? *Who's* gotten into *you*?

JEDIDIAH

Explain?!

With Jed disoriented, RUTH snags the whoopie.

RUTH

I was here by the altar, lighting the jars-of-wax I cobbled together for *your* benefit, when I heard your *fancy English* wire start to ring. And ring and ring and ring and then...stop, and make a sound that went: "beeeeeeeep."

And I wondered, what trade-or-corn-related-matter might this be, hm?

But that's when, clear as day, I heard my little sister Sadie apologizing for "Running Late." Running Late. As if she's some big-deal businessman, from the shining city of Lancaster. Or, a call girl perhaps.

RUTH rips apart the whoopie, smashes a half upon each tit, and performs a terrifying, messy shimmy.

RUTH (cont'd.)

Is she your little milkmaid?! Delivering the JUGS?!

JEDIDIAH

Shut your whoopie-piehole!

RUTH

Yes, you Zook *bruders* always thought she was so pretty.

How can you still believe that, seeing her now?!

Bulging eyes. Skeleton body. No longer dainty—destructible. A dead girl walking.

Or—trying to walk, and run. But always stumbling. Always too late.

Jedidiah Zook. If my sister Sadie is “Running Late,” I can only assume *you* are Running Around.

JEDIDIAH

My Wife! I...

RUTH

You want to have a child with someone else.

JEDIDIAH

What?! *Nae!*

RUTH

With my sister. Because—why? She’d make a better mother?
A quieter, tamer one?

JEDIDIAH

Narrish maedel [deranged lady], you’re crazy. That’s not Truth!

RUTH

Prove it. Let me watch you throw away this evidence.
This blob, that would make no man say “whoopie!” for this pie.

Sealing the pastry back together, RUTH returns it like a threat. But JED’s growing cold, dangerous.

JEDIDIAH

...No....

RUTH

No? Fine. You’re right. We shouldn’t merely dump it, we’ll burn it, with fire—/

JEDIDIAH

NO.

As lightning pierces the sky, JEDIDIAH strikes RUTH across the cheek.

The candle flames extinguish.

The couple recoils, blinking at each other, frozen, until RUTH rushes out the back, EXITING, just as:

The front door swings open with a creeeaaaaak, suggesting the Council's entrance.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

(Stammering, composing)

Oh. Um. Hello, everyone. *Willkumme* [Welcome].

(A meta joke, re: the candles going it)

Everything just got...pretty dark there, suddenly. Didn't it?

I'll just—re-light these. And then we'll...um, I'll...Begin.

Communion Interlude III: *Altwater* [The Third Sermon] / Police Station / Rumspringa Barn Party

This time, new fortitude overtakes him. Patriarchal ego. Detachment by way of violence.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

For you this evening, I will perform *Altwater*, the Third Sermon, which of course translates to: "The Patriarch." Male Head of Church. Male Head of Family.

And the Male Head to *all* Churches and Families is...? *Gotte*. *Gotte* is Patriarch to All.

At this point in our parable, our King is awarding Immortality to his Disciples, *if* they confess their sins and pay their dues.

Luke Chapter 12 heralds: "When a crowd of thousands had gathered, trampling one another, Jesus began to speak:"

In her cell, WILLA kneels and prays at the bench like it's a pew.

JEDIDIAH & WILLA

"Nothing hidden will not be made known.

What you have whispered into ears in the Dark,

Will be Heard in Daylight."

With that sentiment, WILLA flashes back to a Rumspringa barn party—her and the gang's first, at the ripe age of 16. Note: if she rocks a cropped haircut in the present, here, it's long.

This is the scene we've been watching unfold during Jed's sermons! Surprise!

Finally succumbing to their pent-up tension, SADIE goes to WILLA, dragging LEVI along. All three are innocent, unweathered iterations of themselves.

SADIE

Willa! Will! I've been achin' to say alls night, um...
(Dizzy with excitement)

Hi.

WILLA

(Equally giddy, but being chill)

Hey.

SADIE

Whoa. That was...

WILLA

/So cool.../

SADIE

/SO COOL./ How we didn't do: "*Wie bischt, Miss Stoltzfus.*"

WILLA

"*Wie bischt, Miss Smucker.*"

SADIE

Every day in the schoolhouse was the same.

WILLA

Thank *Gotte* our last names sat us side-by-side for 16 years.

SADIE

I suppose that's why I was bummed at this hoedown, at first, with nobody forcing us to sit together. But now...

WILLA

Here we stand. By choice.

SADIE

How's it feel so different?!?

WILLA

Well, prob'ly because—many reasons.

SADIE

True, like—this band they brought in, all the ways from Iowa!
Or, Illinois. One of those “I” states. Idaho?

LEVI

(To Sadie, poppin' in with a zinger)

You da hoe.

SADIE

(Still to Willa; mind-blown)

Their jugs and banjos are man-powered by electricity!

WILLA

The Yoder Boys, *ja*. They rock onwards.

SADIE

And didya see the slip-n-slide out back?!

WILLA

That's what they call that gigantic tarp? Makes sense. Folks are just sudsin' their skin with dish soap, and goin' to town! Their *bare skin*. It makes me feel, um...

SADIE

(Similarly flustered, bashful, peeping around)

I know. Me too. Couples are *schmunzlin'* [kissing] in every corner...

WILLA

On every haystack, there's a needle pokin'.

SADIE

Ewwwww!

LEVI

I place my bets on a record number of fall Communion baptisms for our cohort, on

accounts of all this babymakin.’

SADIE

Levi! Behave in front of my bestest friend.

LEVI

Don’t scold me, *lieblich*. Reckless Willa came to see me.
She wants to buy my seeds.

SADIE

Come again, you better?

LEVI displays a plastic baggy. SADIE gasps.

SADIE (cont’d.)

Why, that’s metha...whatever that is.
You enjoy the meth minerals, Wills?!

WILLA

I ain’t never tried before.

SADIE

Me neither. Levi, you have? It’s our first week of Rumspringa, and you’re already carrying some around, in a tiny plastic sack...

LEVI

I’m gonna sell it more than I use it, of course. I’m—I’m just trying to make enough Benjamin bills to afford a trailer home of my own. So I don’t have to crash in the crappy communal one, with everyone and their brother, and their sister, and their sixteen cousins.

SADIE

But...I live there. What about me?

WILLA

/Sades, it’s okay.../

SADIE

(Still to Levi)

/I just/ figured all our first highs we’d experience together, hand-in-hand.
What’s it even feel like?

LEVI

Crank? Damn, it feels like...Hope.
 Like you believe in yourself, and time is infinite.
 You believe Love is real, and life's worth it, and anything's possible.

SADIE & WILLA
 (Sudden, surprising themselves)

I'll take it.

LEVI

Whoa, uh...this stuff ain't for good girls like you, Sadie Smucker. It's hardcore—/

SADIE

Give it to us. I can handle it.

LEVI

Alright, alright, don't twist your knickers in a knot.
 Lemme just pull out my pipe and all—/

SADIE

I've got matches on me. And Willa brought a pipe, I presume?
 (A strap-on joke, for the queers!)
 She can pipe me. In fact, I'd rather Willa pipe me.

WILLA

/Oh, well, *denki*, but—/

LEVI

/*Ferwas bischt alfatt so/ shtarrkeppich* [a common phrase]? Why are you so stubborn?

SADIE

Everyone's always askin' us that. But we're not stubborn. We're strong.

LEVI

If you say so. Just don't wander too far, and don't say I didn't warn ya.
 Take care of her, ya hear me, Bishop's Daughter?
 And find me later, after y'all hit it, and it hits you.
 Maybe we can kick it together yet.
 Godspeed, ladies. You girls have fun.

Annoyed, third wheel LEVI hands the baggy to WILLA, then meanders off to party on. WILLA and SADIE kneel to prepare their supplies.

WILLA

(Muttered)

“Godspeed, ladies. You girls have fun.” Ugh.

SADIE

Well, now, what bothers you about that?

WILLA

I don’t know. I just don’t feel like a...

SADIE

A what? I couldn’t hear you, between the cheering mob and crying lambs.

WILLA

They’re “wasted.” See? The older kids are feeding them beer through that tube.

SADIE

Oh. What a clever contraption.

What aren’t you, Will?

WILLA

I’m not certain, Sades.

But I like when you call me Will, if you could keep doing that.

SADIE

I will, Will.

WILLA

Denki. Just. Why’s it easier to know what you aren’t, than what you are?

SADIE

I’m not sure. But I know *I* know what you are.

You’re a silly goose with a soft heart.

You’re a soul worthy of eternity.

And, to me, you’re the best person alive.

WILLA

Close your eyes.

SADIE

I'm frightened.

WILLA

(Likely for another reason, because Intimacy)

I am, too. But we've done the deed. We're committed.

SADIE

Can we not go back?

WILLA

Do you want to?

SADIE

I can't—shut my eyes. You know how they twitch when I try.

WILLA

Here. Might I help?

SADIE

Please. Thank you for asking.

WILLA gently covers SADIE's eyes with her hand.
With the other, she assists to light the pipe.

WILLA (cont'd.)

Now, breathe in...

Lighting and music morph. If Sadie's ringtone (the couple's theme song) is "Like A Prayer," this is a slowed, echoey, reverb version.

SADIE

Holy *Hell*.

WILLA

Yeah?

SADIE

Ja. O, *ja*... Your turn.

WILLA

Oh... God. It's like...

SADIE

We're rising, ain't it? Floating up up and away...

WILLA

Like a wave's washed over us.

SADIE

And we're alone in the Universe.

WILLA

Reborn today.

SADIE

(New thought)

Home never felt like home to me.

You're home to me.

Emboldened, WILLA graces Sadie's fingers.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Ohh, but Will, *that's*—so F-F-F...

WILLA

Frowned Upon? Smiling with you is worth society's frowns.

SADIE

It's above Frowned Upon! It's Forbidden!

Among the two highest offenses: Sexuality Queerness and Murder!

WILLA

Yeah, and don't you sorta feel, if we couldn't be together like this, you could kill?!

No one's paying attention. I can be myself. I can touch you. *We* can. Start over.

(Re: the drugz)

With this magic?! We're free...

With that, slowly, curious, still on their knees,
WILLA and SADIE face each other, and they touch
hands, palm to palm, one soul in shared prayer.

But before they can traverse any further—the barn
door slams open and JACOB ENTERS, to a chorus
of scrambles and screams.

JACOB

Hands where I can see ‘em, hooligans! Drop your beers and your rakes, and...
Are those beer cans stabbed onto a rake, like a trident? Put it down!

The girls duck behind haybales, popping their heads
up and down like whack-a-moles.

SADIE

Oh, sis yuscht, Wills, what do we do?! Levi, wherever the heck he’s at, is far too
ferhoodled to control a pony right now...

WILLA

Let’s run away. We’ll get jobs, and our own trailer.
And a barrel more of this power.

SADIE

I’ve heard it ruins people...

WILLA

Brought us together, didn’t it? What could possibly tear us apart?
Come on. Follow me.

Exalted, the two link hands and sprint off. But
imaginary SADIE keeps running, breaking their
handhold, EXITING.

Meanwhile, LEVI tries crawling away, on all fours,
but JACOB grabs him by the shirt. Busted. On their
way out, JACOB swipes and downs a beer.

All this results in WILLA solo, back in her cell,
while JEDIDIAH concludes:

JEDIDIAH

Our Good Book compares Hell to Prison on Earth.
The Prisons of Society and—Psychology—we build for ourselves.
We easily seduced mortal fools.
And Luke said:

JEDIDIAH & WILLA

“You will not get out, until you have paid everything you owe.”

JEDIDIAH

(Closing the book, swallowing hard)

My friends, I must now go. I shall see you tomorrow, early morning, for the real event.
(Emphasis on this)

Do not forget cash for Offering.

JEDIDIAH flees the Church, EXITING, while
WILLA rattles the bars of her cell.

WILLA

Hello? Anyone out there?! Can you tell Detective Beiler I’ve made my choice?
I’ve gotta be home in time for supper. Sadie’s probably already got buns in the oven.
And I wanna bring her flours. All-Purpose Flour, Self-Rising Flour...
I’ve made my choice! I’ve made my choice!

Outside, the rain falls, along with her tears.

Scene 7: Local Bar

Following his rehearsal, JEDIDIAH sits at the bar of a local dive, some Pennsylvucky redneck joint, before a mass of empty glasses. George Jones croons in the background.

JACOB ENTERS, damp from the downpour, and takes a seat next to Jed.

JEDIDIAH

Your choice, bartender. Expert’s call.
Just keep hittin’ me with the strongest force you’ve got.

JACOB

And instead of my usual, I'll have whatever he's having.
This man with the impressively long beard.

JEDIDIAH

You. I've seen you before.

JACOB

Small town, small world.

JEDIDIAH

I shouldn't be here. In this small world.

JACOB

That makes two of us.

JEDIDIAH

I shouldn't be at this bar, either. I never do this.

JACOB

Hey, it's—4:59. Cut yourself some slack. You Mennonite?

JEDIDIAH

Amish. Full-blown Amish.

JACOB

Alrighty. So. no. You shouldn't be here. But your secret's safe with me. And if you'd see anyone from the Community, just means they're breaking the rules, too.

JEDIDIAH

You don't think I'm a bad man?

JACOB

By non-Amish standards, you seem pretty on-par.

JEDIDIAH

It's just been a long, rough day. To a long, rough life.

JACOB

Tell me about it.

JEDIDIAH

Well, it started when I woke up.
Itchy eyes. Sore throat, damned with phlegm.
Heavy chest, like weighted with an anvil. From all the harvestin', you know.

JACOB

Hay fever. I hear ya.

JEDIDIAH

It's the worst.
Next to genetic fatal Maple Syrup Urine Disorder.

JACOB

Jesus, that's dark.

JEDIDIAH

Like the urine of those affected.

Drinks are slid down the counter to the men.

JACOB

So, uh, what're we drinking?

JEDIDIAH

I believe it's what the bartender called a...Dirty Slutty Bitch.
I requested mine with a tiny umbrella, but she said they're *all* [gone].

JACOB

Well, it *is* pouring out.

JEDIDIAH

Supposed to keep at it, too. Raining cats and dogs, roosters and hens.
According to the Farmer's Almanac.

JACOB

Trusty source.

JEDIDIAH

Hasn't failed me yet.

JACOB

What should we toast to?

JEDIDIAH

To saying Hell with it. And doing what feels Right.

JACOB

Cheers.

JEDIDIAH

Cheers.

They drink. They chug. Moments pass. The bar lights flicker from the storm. JACOB sneezes, and:

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

You. I've seen you before.

JACOB

Uh, yeah, we already covered that.

JEDIDIAH

No, no—*years* earlier, when I was merely a spring chicken. But you've been in my dreams since. My night terrors. Since I saw you inside my family's house.

JACOB

Sir, I can assure you. I've never been *inside* your parent's house—/

JEDIDIAH

Outside it! The hayloft! I was creeping out to use the outhouse, and by the light of my lantern and the moon, I saw...

JACOB

Lower your voice. You don't know what you're talking about.

JEDIDIAH

That's what you said that night, too!

“Shhh, Son. You don't know what you're seeing.

Don't holler. Don't tell a soul.”

JACOB is attempting to pay and bolt, but his pockets are empty (aside from the receipts).

JACOB

Fuck...

JEDIDIAH

I lost confidence in my Father. Faith in my own flesh and blood.

JACOB

And I lost the love of my life, so...

JEDIDIAH

So you *did* do it with my *Maam*!

JACOB

I never meant for anything to come of it! Nothing so serious and lasting...

Putting two-and-two together, JEDIDIAH advances.
JACOB backs up, hands in the air.

JEDIDIAH

Serious and lasting? Shunned Man, what all have you done?!

JACOB

Well, uh—a lot, okay? But hold your horses. Take it easy now...

JEDIDIAH

I'd rather do this the Hard Way.

I've got my buggy parked out front. Let's settle this like men.

JACOB

Mr. Zook...

JEDIDIAH

Mr. Zook indeed. This *once* is for my Father!

JEDIDIAH lunges for JACOB. They scuffle.

JED spansks JACOB's ass with a thick pocket Bible.

JACOB

Ouch! That's dense!

JEDIDIAH

Old Testament.

As they tussle, Jacob's work iPhone chimes in:

SIRI (voice)

New Message from WORK.

JEDIDIAH

Who goes there?! Reveal yourself!

JACOB

No, no, shut up, Siri, you bitch! That's classified information—/

As if on cue, the trembling bar lights go black, confounding JEDIDIAH.

JACOB forces Jed's arms behind his back and a bend at his knees, tucking Jed's hands under his own suspenders. Pseudo handcuffs.

JEDIDIAH

I surrender! Lord, I surrender! What wrath of evil overtakes?!?

JACOB

Um. A power outage, by the looks of it. Shouldn't phase you too bad. Good luck with everything, Mr. Zook. And since you're forbidden from visiting the pharmacist...Here. Tylenol, Benadryl, Prozac. For tomorrow and your future.

JACOB tosses the pill bottles in front of speechless Jedidiah, before finishing off both their cocktails.

JACOB (cont'd.)

(Shouted, to the unseen bartender)

This kind man will be covering our drinks.

And then he should be cut off, and given a ride home. In a car.

Readying his umbrella, JACOB EXITS. JED shakes off his stunned state to bellow after him:

JEDIDIAH

You are dead and doomed, Shunned Man, mark my words.
YOU WILL DIE ON EARTH AND BURN IN HELL.

Lights flutter and zap to black.

Scene 8: Sadie & Willa's Trailer Home

Back on the home front, SADIE stands across from LEVI, both in full Amish garb. With the power out, they're surrounded by candles.

SADIE

So, how do we start? What do you want me to do?

LEVI

I want you to act like you're baptizing me.

SADIE

Uh, come again?

LEVI

Like—like we're getting baptized together. In the church.
I thought it might—feel nice.

SADIE

In a sexual way?

LEVI

No! No.

In a more, like—if one of us is struck by lightning or murdered by a gang of pissed-off meth-heads tonight, they'll be saved and able to chill in Heaven for eternity—sorta way.

SADIE

Oh. Um. That's quite specific.

LEVI

I'm gonna kneel now.

SADIE

Okie doke.

LEVI

And you can cover my eyes and ask me the questions.

Tentative, but with her mind on the money, SADIE carries out the ritual. With each question, she gets more into it, absorbing more space and power.

After a lifetime of submission, turns out this girlie's got some dom vibes. Go off, Sades!

SADIE (cont'd.)

Levi Zook. "Can you renounce your devils, world, and own flesh and blood?"

LEVI

I can.

SADIE

"Can you commit yourself to Him and His Church, therein to live and to die?"

LEVI

Yes, I can.

SADIE

"And in all order of the *Ordnung*—which was probably written by a man a million years ago to keep everybody in their places but is just made-up anyways—can you be an obedient little disciple bitch and fucking submit, always?!"

LEVI

Um, what.

By now, LEVI is on his knees at Sadie's feet, eyes covered by her hands, face suspiciously close to her pelvis. There is no intention of sexual activity

occurring, just unbridled adolescent energy, but it certainly looks like it, as...

WILLA ENTERS the trailer.

WILLA

Honey, I'm hoooooooooome!
What the goddamn, fucking *Hell?!?*

SADIE

This is not what it looks like...

LEVI

It's a trade!

SADIE

For the bail!

LEVI

She straight-up consented!

SADIE

Everything I do, I do for you!

WILLA

Oh, save it. This is my fault. I knew this is how it'd end.

With you and a boy, like you believe you belong.

Shame on me. Guess I'm the *dumm dumm ignoramus*, after all.

(Speaking into her chest, the wire)

Come in, Detective! Come inside! I've got the Source and an Abuser cornered red-handed. And in a—prostitutionary trade!!

SADIE

Who are you talking to?

LEVI

Are you talking to *Gotte?* Can you tell him I say hi?

SADIE

Looks like Will's speaking to the heart.

LEVI

Or her teat.

At that, SADIE blushes deeply.

WILLA

(Still into the wire)

I SAID COME IN.

On cue, the front door crashes open, letting in the rain. In the frame, a silhouette against the storm, sways RUTH, drenched.

RUTH

Hello, *Schwester*.

WILLA

You're not who I was expecting.

RUTH

Sadie Smucker, you Dirty Slutty Bitch. /Willa, step aside./

SADIE

/Willa, help!/

WILLA

I would, Sades, but, I don't disagree.

RUTH

(Wandering inside, nose upturned)

Grisleh, [gross], are you proud of this unkempt pigsty you call Home?!
Flour coating every surface—it's a tinderbox. Crawling with bugs and pests...
Naturally, because you leave your pies out uncovered.
Like you expose your *other* pie for the world...

WILLA

Again, you're not wrong.

RUTH

Did you even *try* to resist Temptation? Did you taste a crumb of guilt?

Or did you *delight* in indulging?

LEVI

You're all mistaken...

SADIE

(To Ruth)

You're just jealous.

RUTH

I'm sorry?!

SADIE

I'm not. I've grown my guts large enough to live a full existence, against all the odds. And you could, too, but you won't. And for that, I'm not sorry.

RUTH

You're the reason I can't be a mother.

SADIE

You're the reason I can't be myself!
Wait, what?

RUTH

You flat, lumpy, slimy, runny whore...

SADIE

You—settled, cult-following old baby cow!

The Smuckers rev up to charge at each other like bulls, RUTH outstretching her palms to flatten her sister's tits. But before they can make contact, WILLA slips between, flagging Sadie's focus.

WILLA

Hey. Sadie. Look at me. You /look at me./

SADIE

(Adrenalized)

/I LOVE YOU./

WILLA
What?

SADIE
You heard me.

WILLA
Yeah. I just wanted to hear you say it again.

SADIE
I've always loved you.

WILLA
I've always known.

RUTH
(In awe, heartbroken)
I've never known...such...heated passion.

LEVI
(Equally resentful)
It's the crystal meth, Ruth. The fuggin' crank that I supply 'em.

WILLA
Oh, screw off, Levi. Unless you have any left? I'm dying here...

During all this, sloshy JACOB has appeared in the lawn outside the trailer, lurking. Having just heard Levi's irrefutable confession via the wire—not a news flash, but hard to digest—he's been deciding a course of action. Now, he pounds at the door.

JACOB
Alright, kids, I've heard all I can bear. Come out with your hands up.

LEVI
Fuck...

Inside, LEVI attempts to hide—behind a coat rack or in an otherwise pointless hiding spot.

on the sly. My guess is they're forbiddenly courting.

LEVI

Courting?! Ha! That's not it at all! This bastard's my *Dett*.

Somber, brave, a bona fide martyr off to duel, LEVI
walks out into the yard.

JACOB

Throwing my dimes towards Drugs and Prostitution?! You're no child of mine.

LEVI

Dett, no! We wasn't even gonna touch each other, I swear! On the Bible you gave me!
I—I just wanted to *feel something*, alright?! To remind me of home.
Because I can't go back. I can't. So I'm fucking desperate.
To make my stupid choices feel worth it.
And your religious bull ain't it! That truth don't make you happy.

JACOB

And what makes you happy isn't truth! It's chemicals!
Addicting innocent children to an artificial, impossible euphoria.
But that's life out here, yeah? Free happiness isn't real. It's poison.
And you're a murderer for distributing it.

LEVI

And you're a masochist for staying in this town chasing it!
That's right. Everybody's gettin' smart these days. I Google big words, too.
You were kicked out, mas-o-chist, so peace already!

JACOB

I can't. Like you, son, I can't quit.
But at least *I'm* trying to make the world a better place.

LEVI

Only after you fucked it from behind!

JACOB

Well—technically, never from behind.
Face-to-face. Eye to eye.

RUTH

(Endeared)

Missionary!

LEVI

Jesus Christ.

JACOB turns serious, narrowing in on Levi. It's just the two of them. Father and Son.

JACOB

I may have tempted your *maam*, Levi, but I didn't buy her.

I didn't beg, lie, steal, or cheat her. I loved her. And she loved me.

And with that love, we made you.

We made You.

And I'm sorry we did.

I'm sorry I couldn't raise you.

And I'm sorry that, if I don't arrest you, because you lack the goddamn self-discipline, eventually you'll kill yourself, and drag this hopeless horde down with you.

Oh, fuck that. To LEVI, these apologies are empty, meaningless, and coming way too late. He tackles JACOB, straddles, pins him, straining for the gun.

The girls scream. On instinct, WILLA and SADIE huddle together, holding each other.

RUTH wields her matches like a threat.

RUTH

I will burn this motherfucker down!

Up close and personal with Levi's hoodie, Jacob's sinuses are not happy. He begins inhaling rapidly.

LEVI

Yeah, Dad, get a load of this! How do you like me and my hoodie now?!

JACOB

You...you little punk...You little...*ACHOO!*

As JACOB sneezes, LEVI wins the weapon, prying it from his father. Rising to his feet, LEVI backs up, gun trembling in his shaky hands.

But then—to a chorus of shrieks—LEVI raises the pistol to his own temple, making himself the target.

Oh. Shit. He wraps a finger around the trigger, as...

RUTH drops a flaming match onto the flour-coated tabletop or carpet, setting fire to *everything*, including the cash that's been passed hand to hand.

Cursing, hollering, the girls clamor out of the trailer, joining the men in the yard, under open sky.

And there, in a line, under the rain, all watch the tin dollhouse smolder, from the inside out.

WILLA

Well...I guess this is the end of the road.

SADIE

No! No, we—can drive further! Past that end of the road! Now, we have no excuse *not* to go to Florida, and bury ourselves and our secrets under the palm trees and sand!

WILLA

We can't. I...

(Final confession)

I totaled the automobile machine.

SADIE

We'll walk, then! It's only how far to Paradise?!

SIRI (voice)

(From Jacob's pocket)

1,086 miles to Sarasota, Florida.

SADIE

Thank you, voice of *Gotte*. Easy!

WILLA

Sadie, what if we never find this Heaven inside your head?

SADIE

But what if we do? Or what if we already did?
Or what if, as human beings, we were simply born to run?

WILLA

Not we, *lieblich*. We were ripped into the world as livestock, born to die.

This one-track pessimism, versus Sadie's unrelenting optimism, strikes both as resolute.

WILLA (cont'd.)

I'm an addict.

SADIE

I know, Will.

WILLA

And I know no will.
No free will. No will power.
I need to be someplace void of any religion I'd care to worship.
No idol for me to obsess over, or practice to distract myself with.
I need to go to Church.

SADIE

Come again?

WILLA

(Clearly the plan she came up with behind bars)

I need to go home.
Not only for the weekend.
Maybe someday, once I've fixed myself up, I'll escape and come find you—/

SADIE

(Shocked, pumping the brakes)

Leiblich, breathe. There are—doctors out here! And “Rehab Centers.”
I asked Jeeves about it.
You could be like—Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz, went to “Rehab.”

And Marilyn Monroe! And Prince!

JACOB

Those are terrible examples.

WILLA

(To Sadie, continuing the conversation)

As *you* said this morning, “with what money?”
I can’t hold a job when I’d rather be holding a pipe.
Which I can always be doing out here.

SADIE

Okay. Okay. Well.

(Like, if this is really what you want...)

I’ll stay with you. In the Community. As long as you need—/

WILLA

/No—/

SADIE

You don’t have to get better alone.

WILLA

(Big Point, nail in coffin)

Any other way, and I never will.
I can’t be loved by you while I hate myself.
You and Crystal Meth can’t be the only faiths I believe in.

A beat, before SADIE begins to strip, emotionless,
heartbroken, with only brisk practicality.

WILLA (cont’d.)

Uh, the fuck? This is your kink I’ve been missing?

SADIE

You need garb for the baptism ceremony.
I’ll giddy-up our business enterprisin’ awhile, with my impressive new resume and all.
And—I’ll send my earnings back to you, Ruthie. And the family.
If you’ll watch over Will.

Releasing her ego and long-held beliefs, RUTH breathes deep, near tears, accepting. But not without one last snide comment, eyeing Sadie's bare chest:

RUTH

My tits are bigger than yours.

SADIE blinks in surprise, but nods. It's not false.

Then, she returns her attention to WILL, outstretching her hand-sewn clothes.

WILL

Fuck. Um...Take a bus, or an aeroplane. Don't try and walk, okay?

SADIE

You have my word.

WILL

Every sunrise, until we're together again, I'll pray for you.

SADIE

And I for you.

But right now, as if we're concluding a Baptism Ceremony...
Grant me the Holy Kiss?

As if requesting permission, WILL peers to RUTH, who turns her back, allowing it. But SADIE doesn't bother waiting, diving into Will.

And at long last, the best friends embrace, and kiss.

Water falls from the Heavens, along with an orchestral or choral version of "Like A Prayer" (or whatever theme song). Eternal care and passion hold the two close, until finally, they part.

WILL

I...I....

SADIE shakes her head, no. She can't. Both know, in this moment, there's nothing else to say.

After giving her *schwester* a final once-over, RUTH gently corrals WILL out, EXITING.

SADIE stands alone, naked. Blackout.

Communion Conclusion VI: *Leide* [The Suffering]
Church / County Courthouse / Sarasota, Florida

That weekend, JEDIDIAH conducts the Communion Conclusion with frenzy. Eyes on fire. Face coated with chocolate crumbs and frosting residue. The man believes He is *Gotte*.

JEDIDIAH

By golly, we made it! Part Four. *Leide*.

Acceptance of Submission and Suffering. *Inevitable Suffering*.

May we trust that what hurts today helps our futures, or vaster cosmic design.

Our *Gotte* requests of us: "*Do this in remembrance of me.*"

(Tearing up)

Thus, it is my humblest honor to summon up and onwards my first cohort of Baptism Candidates, wisely deciding to grow old here, within our chosen family of true Love. I...Heavens to Betsy. *Gotte's* presence today is just...so...powerful...

Choked up, our Leader snorts, the after-effect of a lingering high. Standing behind Jed, subordinate, RUTH forcefully claps him on the back.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

First up is none other than our old Bishop's Daughter. At 19 years of age, this girl sure enjoyed her Rumspringa—that's no short run!

Light-hearted laughter rises from his endeared congregation.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

Thank Heavens our little *schnickelfritz* found her way home at last. Willa Stoltzfus?

WILLA pads up front, in Sadie's handmade ensemble. There, she kneels.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

Miss Stoltzfus. Through *Gotte* Himself, I ask:

Can you commit yourself to Him and His Church, to live and to die?

The theme song becomes solely vocal. A cappella. No instruments, as is tradition.

WILLA bows her head. RUTH looks down upon her *schwester* with pity yet protectiveness.

WILLA

I will.

JEDIDIAH

And in all order, can you be obedient and submit, always?

Meanwhile, in a County Courthouse, handcuffed LEVI shuffles to the stand with JACOB.

Both are cleaned up nice, wearing button-downs, addressing an unseen Judge.

JACOB

I solemnly testify on account of Levi Zook. He's just a kid. And he didn't *go* astray; he was *born* into a society that *is* astray. But he's smart, and forcing himself onto the right path. He's the reason I gave up my badge and skewed pillars of justice and faith, and sent myself to Rehab. Just a few months in the Big House is fair enough punishment, because he'll be good. Won't you, Levi, as a *once*? Can you be obedient and submit, always?

LEVI

In exchange for my own bed, three square meals a day, and no connections to this fucked-up world? Yeah. Yeah, I can.

JEDIDIAH

And at last, before Mrs. Zook performs her ceremonial duty as Bishop's Wife... Can you renounce your devils, your world, and your own flesh and blood? For the Greater Good?

WILLA & LEVI

I... I...

LEVI is awarded his requested sentence, with a sigh of relief, shared with JACOB. The two collapse together in an exhausted hug.

From behind, JED clasps a hand over WILLA's eyes. RUTH comes forward to seal her with the Holy Kiss—on the lips—as the Bishop upturns a jug of blessed water over her head.

At least, now, both teens are finally Clean. As is...

SADIE, who ENTERS in front of the trailer set, which has also been tidied-up, clean. She wears a swimsuit and totes a basket of pastries.

Outside the window, instead of rippling farmland, ocean waves crash upon shore.

Sarasota, Florida. She made it.

SADIE gazes across the stage into her old world, locking eyes with WILLA. Both reflect, in Remembrance of what was. What might have been and someday could be. But right now, what is.

SADIE

I can't.

Breathing in the salty air, feeling the sand between her toes, SADIE calls out to passersby:

SADIE (cont'd.)

Whoopie pies for sale! Transcendent whoopie pies! Funeral pie, hot and wet!

The theme song rises. Sun sets. Waves wash over.

End of play.