

Once on Rumspringa



by ex Lancaster Amish farm-kid
Ellis Stump
(*they/she*)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (6)

On Rumspringa

WILLA STOLTZFUS (f or nb): 19; masc; sarcastic, driven, unyielding; currently navigating drug addiction and gender identity, as an individual who's never been through the DARE program or heard of pronouns

SADIE SMUCKER (f): 19; femme; bright and optimistic bordering on delulu; arranged to marry Levi but obviously in love with her bestie Willa; grappling with feminine privilege and the Amish cult of domesticity

LEVI ZOOK (m): 19; local drug dealer; Amish Jesse Pinkman aesthetic; trying to catch up to the world in tech, style, and language, but kinda stuck in the 90s; deeply lonely and desperate for a guiding light

Within the Community

RUTH ZOOK (f): 24; responsible, curt, condescending; would "wear the pants" if Amish women were allowed to wear pants; Sadie's older sister; married and committed to the church; waitress at Shady Maple Smorgasbord

JEDIDIAH ZOOK (m): 24; meek, awkward; Ruth's submissive husband and Levi's "goody two boots" brother; struggling with anxiety, which his village dismisses as allergies; presently undertaking new role as Community Bishop

On the Outs

JACOB BEILER (m): 30s-40s; divorced dad energy, but intense behind closed doors; ex-Amish; DEA agent who crafted his identity from noir cop movies; feels powerless; also an alcoholic and secretly Levi's dad

SETTING

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

Our home base is Willa and Sadie's trailer. Beyond that, we visit the iconic Shady Maple Smorgasbord and a county police station, barn party, local dive bar, cornfield, and church.

DESIGN NOTES

Because the Amish shun decor—like, even tablecloths and mirrors—sets can be minimalist, moveable, multi-purpose, and conceptual over literal. At its simplest, each requires a table and two chairs.

A familiar song should be appointed as Sadie and Willa's "theme song." Probably some outdated pop hit like Madonna's "Like A Prayer." It can drift onstage diegetically: over the radio at Shady Maple, as Sadie's ringtone, in the windchimes and rain, get creative.

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 minutes, no intermission

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Sophia Caressa, Charlie B. Foster, Morgan Gould, & Yasmin Pascall
for creative contributions

Once on Rumspringa is inspired by true circumstances, personal experience, and interviews with ex-Amish individuals.



A PA Dutch barn hex symbol for good luck

Prologue

Flickering candles, lining the audience or placed around the set, glow in the otherwise dark space.

JEDIDIAH (o.s.)

(Awkward forced confidence)

Rumspringa. It means, of course, “to run around.”
 And—run around they do! These lambs together we raised,
 From their bloody births, to this rite-of-passage, at 16 years of age.
 Starting today, for up to three orbits of *Gotte*’s [God] flat Earth around the sunball,
 Our youngsters are free to run around Lucifer’s Playground,
 With no arms to catch them when they fall.

Like a hazy fever dream, the other actors run onstage, 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 dangers known to man.
 Such as...cords. And...crosswalks. Clocks without hands!
 And—temptation! *Ja*. To do wrong.
 And commit the evil acts our sacred *Ordnung* [bible] dubs...
 (Melodramatic, this is a real term)

Frowned-Upon.

Perhaps even our 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 ends with their choice.
 To survive “on the outs”...shunned for eternity...
 Or be baptized and married among us—h-hallelujah, rejoice!
 Let us pray our little hens, um, hop towards the loudest voice...

A rooster cock-a-doodle-doos, introducing dawn.

Morning light illuminates JEDIDIAH, as a perpetually uncomfortable silhouette, clutching notes for dear life. He sighs, then calls out:

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

Ruth? Did you hear that?

That was me doing the Rumspringa baptism ceremony.

It was alright, *ja*? Ruth? *Liebling* [darling]?

I'm ready for my breakfast sausage.

JEDIDIAH wanders off in search of meat links.

Scene 1: Willa & Sadie's Trailer

This meth den is a pigsty. Pizza boxes, oatmeal canisters, and energy drinks encircle a stained mattress on the floor. There, knotted in sheets, WILLA snores.

Outside their poorly boarded-up window, beyond the trailer park, cornfields ripple for miles.

SADIE bustles in, bright and delirious. She wears an apron over her nightgown and carries a noticeably sloppy, floppy Shoofly pie.

SADIE kneels by the bed with heart eyes, watching her bestie drool, then sticks her pie in Willa's face.

SADIE

Guder mariye, Schlof-kopp [good morning, sunshine]!

Happy last day of Rumspringa!

WILLA

What the fuck...

SADIE

It's a special occasion. I wanted to wake you with the smell of my pie.

WILLA

I'm gonna retch...

SADIE

(Disappointed, and oblivious to sexual innuendos)

It's wet-bottom Shoofly funeral pie!

I made the bottom extra wet, just the way you like.

WILLA

Where's my shit...

SADIE

Will...

WILLA

Not to smoke, I oath. I just need...one comforting sniff...

WILLA finds her meth pipe, a needle in her blanket haystack, and breathes sweet relief. SADIE bites her lip, concerned.

WILLA (cont'd.)

How long have you been up? Or, you didn't sleep/

SADIE

/I whipped up four dozen whoopie pies and cross-stitched eight pillows.

WILLA

You *ferhoodled* [confusing] freak.

SADIE

You spiteful *schnickelfritz* [troublemaker].

WILLA

So I guess you were too busy *rutz*ing around and spiraling, then, to pack? My luggage sack is by the door. I'm ready to go.

SADIE

Are you?

SADIE gives Willa a once-over. With her bedhead pixie cut, Willa looks like buggy roadkill.

SADIE (cont'd.)

You're confident you can drive like this? Down the freeroad, or the free way, or whatever it's called/

WILLA

/The *high* way. We'll do it the high way.
So it'll be a piece of angel food cake.
Because this, my Sadie Smucker, is what all our suffering has been for.
/Sarasota, Florida./

SADIE

(Dreamy-eyed, on the same team)

/Sarasota, Florida./

Secret Promised Land for ex-Amish kids.

WILLA

Where we can shoot high as Heaven to our heart's content.

SADIE

In that gorgeous mansion of a trailer.

WILLA

It's a frickin' /double-wide!/
/

SADIE

Double the fun.
Do you feel the sand in your bare toesies?

WILLA

I do. Do you feel the breeze in your bonnetless hair?

SADIE

I do. Do you see the sea?!

WILLA

I do. I can't believe it's real. It's just, like, been there forever.

SADIE

And it will be. Forever.

However. Um. During my awakeness last night, I...I looked at the computer about this. I asked Jeeves...

WILLA

Who the fuck is Jeeves?

SADIE

He's no one, Wills. He's just, like, a robot I think.

But, but what he told me about is this thing named a "going down payment?" Which means we have to give money "up front" to even get the keys to the trailer. And, *ich wees net* [I dunno], Wills, we're already behind on rent here, and according to Brother Jeeves, our savings fund of 20 dollars isn't enough...

WILLA

I'll get a new job, the second we get there.

SADIE

How? With our 6th grade education and your resume? You were fired from the vehicle shop, for all but exploding one of the motor-mobile machines.

WILLA

Cars. They're called cars, you *dum dum ignoramus* [dummy].

Sensitive beat. Then Willa funnels her fear into a tense joke:

WILLA (cont'd.)

Sorry. It's fine. I mean, I get why you don't wanna leave Pennsylvania today. You wanna go home and commit to the church tomorrow.

SADIE

Nae, no, that's not it, I/

WILLA

Yeah, *ja*. Instead of laying under the tropical sun, you'd rather be sitting on a splintery backless pew, for 8 hours straight, just to be baptized by my stupid *Dett* [dad], standing like an egomaniac over the...

Committed to the bit, WILLA grabs a trucker hat or baseball cap to portray the:

WILLA (cont'd.)

Offering dish! Overflowing with wooden nickels he doesn't deserve. And, and...

A book to represent the Amish Bible. *The Internet for Dummies* or *Twilight*?

WILLA (cont'd.)

The *Ordnung*, of course, which he'll hover his hand over, not touching, never touching, as if he knows the hypocrisy would burn his paper-thin skin, as he asks, "Sadie Smucker. Can you renounce your devils, your world, and your own flesh and blood?"

SADIE

Oooh, I love this question! Yes! Yes, I can!

Playful, verging on erotic, SADIE drops to knees.

WILLA

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

SADIE

I can.

Executing the ritual, WILLA covers Sadie's eyes with her hand.

WILLA

And finally, "Can you be obedient and submit, always?"

SADIE

I...I...

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

Sensing this, SADIE leans in, too, until...

Suddenly, SADIE gasps, her eyes flash open and dart to the “offering dish.”

SADIE (cont'd.)

Oh my gosh. Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

WILLA

/What your eyes and boobs look like in the morning sun...?/

SADIE

/We put on our old garb and show up tomorrow/ before we hit the 3 year cut-off and can't never again. We go through the ceremony, pretend we're all-in, and then we're like “hey, look over there!” and we take the dish and drive off into the midday sun!

Wait, what did you say?

WILLA

What you said.

SADIE

Wills, you're a genius. You're even smarter than Jeeves!

WILLA

I want a word with this Jeeves.

Chaotically, SADIE starts packing—for a visit to their Amish Community, not Florida.

WILLA (cont'd.)

Whoa, Sades, you can't be serious. You wanna go back, and snatch and dash from the community we're trying to cut ties from?

SADIE

It'll be a chance to see your folks one last time! And ruffle the feathers of your pet rooster I know you secretly miss...

WILLA

I hate cock. I've never liked cock.

SADIE

Cocks are the dickens...

SADIE pulls out a wrinkled traditional Amish dress.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Wowzers. I haven't worn this in 3 years.

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

WILLA

Probably buried in, too.

SADIE

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

I made it myself, from a manure sack.

Already looks a smidgen...looser than before...

SADIE slips behind a room divider, and WILLA tries shamelessly sneaking peeks. Like, on potentially their last day together, Sadie's still being a prude?! Come on.

WILLA

It's not even going clean that makes me want to die. It's going home.

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

WILLA lights up a cigarette, using a pickled beet jar as her ashtray.

SADIE

You're gonna back out.

WILLA

Me?! What? *You're* gonna go...back in! And stay for real yet! You'll be corralled back into it all, and in a fortnight you'll be hitched, to some nice *plain* [Amish] husband who slaps you when the crops dry out, or worse! Levi Zook! Just like your families arranged.

SADIE

Willa, please. We both know that won't happen. Obviously, Levi Zook's gonna take the ban and stay out here with his...business enterprising...empire.

SADIE emerges, in head-to-toe Amish attire, also smoking a cigarette and with sunglasses.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Ta da!!!

WILLA

Levi Zook's no hot shot. He's just an addict.

SADIE

Takes one to know one.

WILLA

(Suddenly newly excited)

Hold up. Shit.

Sadie Smucker, are you thinking what I'm thinking?!!

SADIE

(Lowkey concerned)

Uh, *leibling*, we just did that...

WILLA

Oh, right, yeah...

Well! You know what we *haven't* done yet?!

Sell...ourselves. Like, I'll sell our stash! If Levi Zook can do it, so can I. And unlike that doof, *I* won't get high off my own supply. Starting...shortly.

SADIE

No time like the present! That's *wunderbaar* [wonderful], Wills.

But unfortunately, about our stash...

Much like the dollar bills, I fear we're almost out...

WILLA

What? No way. We're far from out...

Frantic, WILLA begins hunting the house, knocking over milk crates and leaning towers of phonebooks.

WILLA (cont'd.)

Aren't we keeping anything in the closet?

SADIE

Not that I'm aware of...

Beat. WILLA clocks this, and SADIE doesn't or pretends she doesn't.

SADIE (cont'd.)
You're a fiend, my friend.

WILLA
Hell...

SADIE
You know how I feel about that word.

WILLA
Fine. Fuck?

SADIE
Fine.

WILLA
(*From fully under an armchair*)
FUCK.
(*After a sigh*)
Fine. New...different plan!
I'll buy from Levi and sell for him. Little freak's always thirsting for dealers. It's a gamble of 20 bucks, but you've gotta risk /it for the biscuit./

SADIE
/Risk it for the biscuit./

WILLA
Amen.

SADIE
A-women.
Okay. Let's do this! I believe in you. And I'll pitch in, too. I'll head over to Shady Maple right now, try and hawk my pie to Ruth.

WILLA
You do that, girl, you go Ruth that pie to a hawk!
(*Supportive lie*)

Ruth famously loves your pie. Who wouldn't? It's so moist and definitely not slimy/

SADIE looks up from packaging her sticky Shoofly
in saran wrap.

SADIE

....Will? Um. Thank you. But, um, unrelated...could you do me a big old *once* [favor],
pretty please, and.../don't use.../

WILLA

/I won't use./

SADIE

/Oath it./

WILLA

/I will!/ I will, okay? If *you* can oath *me*, that after tomorrow, you can actually detach
from all this and hit the road with me for good.

(Under breath)

And maybe, in Florida, finally feel comfortable changing in front of me...and getting
close to me...and letting me touch your teats/

SADIE

What was that?

WILLA

Nothing. I'm off to find Levi.

SADIE

Okay, bestie. *Sei gut* [be good/goodbye].

WILLA

Okay. Bestie. *Lebe wohl* [live well].

The besties linger with unbridled energy, wanting to
embrace but settling on:

WILLA (cont'd.)

High five!

SADIE

It's like a prayer!

WILLA

A very sticky one...

With an awkward salute, WILLA departs, leaving SADIE with her messy pie and messy emotions.

Scene 2: Shady Maple Smorgasbord

Welcome to Shady Maple. It's a real place. Google it. It can be portrayed by a table with a checkered tablecloth, and a separate counter for the kitchen.

At the table, JACOB, cop with divorced dad energy, sips coffee and checks *two* phones, otherwise clipped to his belt. He's Important.

RUTH darts to JACOB with her waitress pad—and plates she's bussed from prior tables—ready to serve cunt.

RUTH

(Deadpan rehearsed spiel)

Welcome to Shady Maple Smorgasbord, the largest buffet in America. Run by us, the Amish, for you, the *English* [non-Amish]. With 100,000 square feet of comfort food, here, "Eating is the Journey and Salvation is the Destination."

JACOB

I'm a regular, not a tourist.

RUTH

I know, sir.

JACOB

(A compliment)

It's like the bastard child of a mall and a megachurch!

RUTH

It's a buffet, sir.

(Continuing her mandated spiel)

Where, for this month only, we're offering 50% off the annual pass with proof of gastric bypass surgery. We'll slash your money, if you slash your tummy.

JACOB

What a steal. Do you take Ozempic?

RUTH

Cash only, sir.

Of course, if you don't wanna walk the buffet, I'm happy to fill your plate for you instead, sir.

(More serious)

But, we've got a line round the block 4 hours long, and you've been sitting here on your tele...phones for half that. So. How can I help you, sir?

JACOB

Um, I'm actually waiting on...but I guess I'll just order awhiles.

Around now, out in the "parking lot," LEVI meets WILLA to sell her the drugz.

It's started drizzling, so characters can show up damp or with umbrellas.

Meanwhile, inside, at the Shady Maple kitchen counter, SADIE has arrived and begun devouring scraps, licking plates clean.

JACOB (cont'd.)

And I'll have you handle my plate. Years of indulgence leads to years of self-restraint. Let's go with the...Famished Farmer's Combo?

RUTH

Sausage or bacon, scrapple or grits, pancakes or waffles?

JACOB

Yes. With extra waffles. And your famous apple butter with a side of biscuits, and why don't we toss a couple doughnuts on the platter, too? Maybe just...six? Six. Six.

RUTH shudders at the devil's number and does the sign of the cross, before:

RUTH
Eggs?

JACOB
Dippy. That's over-easy.

RUTH
I know what dippy means.
You think *I'm* gonna ask: "Sorry, what does dippy mean?"

Prompted, confusing "sorry" for "Siri," JACOB's phone chimes in:

SIRI
According to the dictionary, "dippy" is an informal word, meaning foolish, absurd, lacking good judgement/

JACOB
Siri, baby, that's enough...

JACOB slaps his phone, attempting to shut her up.

SIRI (cont'd.)
Playing "Dippy Egg" by Snuff.

The song plays, bona fide angry dad rock, as JACOB smacks his screen. RUTH glares in contempt, then turns and beelines back to the kitchen, where she encounters:

RUTH
Schwester [Sister] Sadie! You almost made me drop this untouched dish of mashed potatoes, atop scalloped potatoes, atop home-fried potatoes, I hardly recognized you! You look so...*plain* [Amish], I could cry.

SADIE
Me, too.

RUTH

Well, let's put those able hands to use, shall we?

With SADIE's pathetic help, RUTH begins assembling the brekkie, cracking and frying eggs. Note: in this scene, SADIE might exaggerate her accent, code-switching around family.

RUTH (cont'd.)

How selfless of you to grace me with your presence, before you're formally shunned tomorrow. I suppose you can still visit me here, although you won't, and all we'd be allowed to talk about is how dippy you want your eggs.

You can sit out there, with the banned man Jacob Beiler.

RUTH points out the "window," an imagined round window on a swinging kitchen door.

RUTH (cont'd.)

See that, *schwester*? That's you, *schwester*. My, your future looks bright/

SADIE

(Irritated blatant lie)

I'm wearing this because I'm comin' home, Ruth.

RUTH

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

SADIE

Yeah, that's how I always feel about the baptism ceremony, you gotta see it to believe it, it's powerful as heck! Bishop Stoltzfus is the best, like an e-mail fax message shot straight from *Gotte*.

RUTH

Stoltzfus won't be runnin' the show this year.

SADIE

What happened to Willa's *dett* [dad]?

RUTH

Oh, he was growing so old, Sadie. He was *thirty-six*.

Poor elder was as burnt out as...as *English* sinners in our Hell and English muffins in their toasters. Thankfully, we elected a new Bishop, and it was a landslide. Everyone cast their prayers in agreement.

SADIE

Everyone? Not everyone. I mean, not...women.

RUTH

(Not seeing the issue)

Why would women...?

SADIE

Nae, ja [no, yeah]/

RUTH

Why would you even want to, when you can trust/

SADIE

Totally. That'd be silly. Um. So who got it then?

RUTH

Jedidiah Zook. My darling Jedidiah Zook.

SADIE

Gee willikers!

RUTH

The man has been locked in...our attic, praying, from 4AM wakeup call into the dead of night. This evening, he has to perform a rehearsal for the Council, so that's got him stressed as a chicken acclimating to the social hierarchy during first breeding season.

SADIE

I can imagine. 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

Oh my gosh, and as Bishop's Wife, you'll be the one giving the Holy Kiss at ceremonies! Better start practicin' your smoochie-woochies, Mrs. Zook.

RUTH

(Defensive, as Sadie makes smooch sounds)

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

SADIE

Um. Okay! That sounds...nice.

Meanwhile, JACOB tips a flask into his orange juice. Drinks from the flask. Chases with the screwdriver. Hastily pockets his flask as...LEVI slinks in, wearing a hoodie and unironically retro shades. Hard rap, or "We Want Some Pussy" by 2 Live Crew, streams from his Walkman, until he slides into the seat across Jacob.

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

JACOB

Look at you, up and at 'em! Great to see you here/

LEVI

/I fucking hate it here. It's an Amish orgy, yo! Those loose-lipped bonnetted bitches might see us together, and gossip like they do...

JACOB

(Pointed; he relates)

Well, you can say that again...

LEVI

Say it yourself. I'm too sleepy.

LEVI removes his shades, unveiling bloodshot eyes.

JACOB

Yeah, my gosh, your eyes are all red.

Have you been...sad? Crying about your last day of Rumspringa?

LEVI

I've got allergies, bitch.

Plus I've been working. Hard.

JACOB

Oh, well done. You finally got a job?

LEVI

I've had one! Surprise, old man. I'm actually somewhat of a business entrepreneur, who just had a business meeting and now has a new business colleague. Named Willauhhh... Will. Will's kind of a big man, working for yours truly, like a little bitch. Selling my business product to my business customers.

JACOB

Sounds like a lot of business. You're in high demand.

LEVI

You bet your *fancy English* John Deere tractor I am.

JACOB

So, is this your five-year plan?

LEVI

Maybe. I got time to figure it out.

JACOB

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

LEVI

"Look at me, I'm Jacob, and I can read clocks, and I can afford to buy stocks that aren't soup!" Who am I?

JACOB

...Me?

LEVI

You're good.

(Snarky, but genuinely open to suggestions)

What do you think I should do, stock man?

JACOB

Uh, well, I've sure liked getting to know you...

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

Bitch. Nobody looks out for Levi Zook.

JACOB

Nobody? I'll have you know I just ordered your favorite, before they run out. Thank the Lord, right, kid?

LEVI

(Grossed out re: "kid")

Thank the motherfuckin' whatever.

JACOB

It's waffles. I ordered you extra waffles.

LEVI

(Like "shit, ya got me there")

I motherfuckin' love waffles.

LEVI reaches for a drink of his partner's boozy orange juice, but JACOB swats his hand away.

JACOB

Speaking of.../mothers/

LEVI

/Mother fucking?/

JACOB

How is your mother these days?

LEVI

Ew. 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

Family's important.

LEVI

Where are my waffles? Waffles are important.

JACOB

Patience, Levi.

LEVI

You literally just told me /time is ticking/

JACOB

/Yeah, what I mean is...hedonism doesn't excuse greed, lust, pride, or...any of the sins, really. Um. 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 menu, sounding 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.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen:

SADIE

Ruth, can I ask you a *once* [favor] once?

RUTH

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

SADIE

Could you display this in the pastry wagon?

SADIE proposes her pie. RUTH gags at its stench.

RUTH

Sadie! Your baking's *baremlich* [horrible]!

SADIE

Oh, come on, 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 quite smooth on the bovine udders. Could pump a butter-churning dasher stick with a natural wrist. In-and-out, in-and-out...

SADIE

So? I should be...?

RUTH

A farmer's wife. Clean.

RUTH tosses a soaking rag at SADIE, who begrudgingly but obediently wipes surfaces.

RUTH (cont'd.)

Ain't Levi Zook still courtin ya, on the outs? Given you a buggy ride lately?

SADIE

Oh, no, he's been...busy...

RUTH

That's too bad. The Zook *bruders* used to adore ya, all of 'em.

Especially Jedidiah. My Jedidiah.

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

SADIE

Uh, please don't/

RUTH

Grow up/

SADIE

I'm trying/

RUTH

How hard?! You've taken your whole youth, your full three years, for no one but yourself, while I surrendered my Rumspringa after mere months, for higher obligations.

RUTH places a hand—or spatula or biscuit held by her hand—on her stomach.

SADIE

Oh my gosh, Ruthie, are you finally expecting?!

RUTH

A real woman lives her life expecting absolutely nothing.

Beat. In her other hand, RUTH casually brandishes a butcher knife, unnecessary for buttering biscuits.

SADIE

Yeah, I mean, I guess that makes sense. And I wish I believed it. But I just can't spend every meal standing in silence behind my respective man, eating literally only his scraps/

RUTH

(Furiously defensive)

Jedidiah often leaves me a whole half a biscuit!

SADIE

Okay. Yum. But don't you ever wonder if you deserve more? Like three-quarters...?

RUTH stabs the knife into the cutting board,
cooling herself. Then, after a deep breath:

RUTH

Little *Schwester*. I can tell you're eating...

(Lowering voice)

The Drugs.

Jedidiah ate some of the...same sugar...on our Rumspringa once.

SADIE

Jedidiah did?! Really?

(Skeptical, familiar with addiction)

You're certain only once...?

RUTH

Man flew into a fit of ego, thought he was *Gotte*, then all but killed himself and everyone in his wake. Is *that* what you feel *you* deserve?

SADIE

Do you think it is?

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.

Balancing a coffee pot, overloaded breakfast plate,
and basket of carbs, RUTH maneuvers to leave.

RUTH (cont'd.)

I don't expect to see you at baptism tomorrow.

Nor the Pearly Gates when we pass.

SADIE

Ruth, wait...

RUTH

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

SADIE

I...I'm not...a table...? I'm not...

RUTH exits the kitchen. Dismayed, SADIE eventually also exits, out the back door.

In the dining room, JACOB has stepped aside to answer a phone call.

JACOB

(Exaggerated noir detective mode)

Hey fellas, gimme the 411.

A crash on Old Country Road, off the covered bridge...? Copy, copy that.

Not the strand I've been tracking by any chance?

Shit. Okay. 10-4...11. I'll be there as fast as I can drive. Legally.

Returning to the table, JACOB rummages for cash. He's the type of guy whose pockets are, like, always overflowing with crumpled receipts.

LEVI

You're peacing?

JACOB

Duty calls.

LEVI

Dude, I just got here!

JACOB

Perfect timing.

RUTH drops the Famished Farmer's Special on the table, eyeing the two suspiciously.

LEVI

Ya know what, sheriff? Get outta here after all. See if I care.

But, hey, you promised, yo. Don't forget my...can I have my...allowance *once* [please]?

JACOB passes over, across the table...

LEVI (cont'd.)

A Bible? Seriously?

JACOB

In the end, what else matters?

LEVI

Money?

JACOB

Look inside. It's inside.

LEVI

Inside...me?

JACOB

Inside the Book, kid.

Sure enough, LEVI cracks open the Bible to find: two crisp \$100 bills. To Levi, that's a ton of money.

JACOB (cont'd.)

Be grateful you get to make a choice.

With that, JACOB exits. LEVI stuffs the money into his Levi jeans pockets, then scarfs the meal.

Meanwhile, back in the kitchen, RUTH dumps SADIE's foul pie in the trash.

Table and chairs remain onstage. Counter might be cleared and topped with candles, or JEDIDIAH carries on a podium, transitioning into:

Scene 3: Bishop Interlude

Now that he's in the church, on the day of, without his notes, JEDIDIAH is nervous as heck. He addresses the audience, shakily.

JEDIDIAH

Guder mariye, congregation! Welcome to everyone's favorite function, the Rumspringa baptism ceremony! Woo...

Feebly, he tries riling the audience in a cheer.

I can't hear you...

Um. Alright. Now, I know I'm no Bishop Stoltzfus. Never will I reach his length 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 or jerks around his crotch.

I pray mine's long enough for you.

And, and that I do you all proud. As I perform our four sermons concerning what we all believe. What, what I believe. Um. Regarding the temptations our congregants have returned to release. Together we shall scrub clean their souls, muddied with manure, like Jesus with his dirty, dirty, dirty disciples. Um. For *Forestalling*, the Introduction, I shall read from 1 Corinthians! A crowd pleaser...

JEDIDIAH fumbles and drops his Bible. He bends over, unsnapping a suspender in the process.

Drat, shucks, shoot, shuckity shackity shooteroo...

(Collecting himself)

I'm so sorry you had to hear that. Ahem.

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

"Temptation is common to mankind, but *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—but do you not feel guilty, when you place yourself above others? Above your community? Above us? “Do not seek your own good, but the greater good, or you will escape only through...FIRE!”

On a candle, Jed’s Bible catches aflame.

Suddenly dancing in a barn on fire, WILLA, SADIE, and LEVI scatter.

Squealing, JED fans the pages, blows on them.

Achh, *kedrick, kedrick*, cow dung!
I need *wassere, wassere, wassere*...

JED swipes a jug of holy water and upturns it. Over the soaked Bible, in the puddle, he kneels. Oy.

That could mean nothing. It’s fine. I’m fine.
Oh, Gotte...

Head in hands, he questions everything.

Scene 4: Willa & Sadie’s Trailer / Police Station

SADIE paces their home, until her flip phone rings. Her ringtone is some outdated pop song, I suggest Madonna’s “Like A Prayer” (which we’ve already cleared with the estate, thanks Madonna).

Across the stage, the Shady Maple table has become an interrogation room. Note: WILLA’s accent, perhaps faint in Scene 1, is now undetectable.

SADIE
Will, is that you?!

WILLA
It’s me, Sadie.

SADIE

I've been worried sick, Will!

WILLA

It's been two hours, Sadie.

SADIE

Well, I wouldn't know, Will, on account of our clock flickered out with the electricity there, and I need you to come fix it, Will.

WILLA

(Attempt at a joke)

Why don't you just ask Jeeves, Sadie.

SADIE

WHERE ARE YOU.

As WILLA and SADIE converse, they stomp or pace in unison, emotionally connected.

WILLA

Are you holding anything breakable?

SADIE is gripping her chest, her heart, but says:

SADIE

I'm shaking my head no.

WILLA

I can picture it. Alright.

I was busted.

SADIE picks up a mason jar and chuck it into the ground, shattering it.

WILLA (cont'd.)

What was that?

SADIE

Nothing. I'm doing the laundry. Why were you busted?

WILLA

Um. For speeding.

SADIE grabs another mason jar and smashes it in the same way.

WILLA (cont'd.)

What was that?

SADIE

Nothing. I'm doing the dishes. Is your body and spirit okay?

WILLA

Uh, I think. Both remain intact.

SADIE

That's a relief. I love your body and spirit.

WILLA

I love...yours, too.

SADIE

I love...you loving my body and spirit.

WILLA

I love...you...loving that, too.

Beat. Romantic tension!

SADIE

/But so you're in actual jail?/

WILLA

/But so I'm in jail./

Sighing in their respective locations, both sit.

SADIE

In my paperback mystery books, the bad guys—or the innocent ones, whoever's roped into trouble by bitter men and hauled away for it—they 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, to be fair, I don't have too many to know yet.

SADIE

Sometimes I miss the days we had none to know at all.

When it was just you and me, in our little glass jar.

I'll bring you the bail dollars, for the speeding pass.

WILLA

Don't! Don't you dare go back for the offering.

Don't leave the house. Don't lift a finger.

SADIE

How 'bout ten for prayer?

WILLA

Really, Sadie. I'll be home soon.

SADIE

In time for supper?

WILLA

To set the table.

SADIE

I shall prepare a pork chop.

WILLA

With my favorite jars for sauce?

SADIE

(Looking at the broken glass)

Maybe...

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.

WILLA

I've got to go/

SADIE

/Were you high?

WILLA

(Carefully choosing words around Jacob)

Uh, no. Not on, um...

I bought a separate little sweet treat. Okay? Because I was so frickin' nervous, and I was just trying to help us! Sadie, are you still there? Say something!

SADIE

Something...

WILLA

(Relieved exhale)

Okay/

SADIE

I would do. Is follow you to the end of the world. To Florida. But God, Wills, you can be so stupid sometimes I want to skin you alive and sell your dried flesh at the market as boot leather.

WILLA

Message received. But, let's try and keep the criminal language to a minimum right now/

JACOB

Miss Stoltzfus, hang up the phone.

SADIE

Will, please come home...

JACOB

Miss Stoltzfus, the phone.

SADIE

Will, I...we shouldn't be alone...

JACOB

Willa!

WILLA slams the receiver, leaving SADIE shaken. For the remainder of the scene, SADIE tornadoes around the room, nearly yanking out her hair.

Lowkey tipsy JACOB ushers for WILLA to sit, and a clock begins to tick, tick, tick...

JACOB (cont'd.)

You didn't mention you wrecked the car.

WILLA

That would've wrecked her heart.

JACOB

How poetic of you.

WILLA

She's my best friend. Don't you have anyone you care about that much?

JACOB

I plead the Fifth.

WILLA

"Obey your father and mother?" Or "thou shalt not kill?" if you were so icked out by Anabaptism, you went Catholic out here.

JACOB

The Fifth *Amendment*, not commandment.

It means you have the right to remain silent, instead of taking shots at my upbringing.

(Almost to self)

The Amish shame me. You *English* judge me...

Ohh. WILLA realizes JACOB assumes she's not Amish, due to her outfit and code-switching.

WILLA

Ohh. Oh, actually I'm not/

JACOB

Like the others, right? No, *you're* a special little snowflake. *Your* life is hard. Your parents, with their cushy jobs at the community college or Three Mile Island power plant that only almost explodes occasionally, they're calling this...

(Gesturing to Willa's appearance)

"A phase," right? And when you're going through a phase, you're allowed to make everyone's lives hell.

Beat. WILLA just wants to leave, so she swallows her pride and plays along.

WILLA

I'm not the one cooking this shit.

JACOB

I know. You're not a threat.

WILLA

(Offended, mumbled)

I mean, I could be, but/

JACOB (cont'd.)

But you are in touch with it.

The temptress that's ravaged town after town.

(These are actual towns)

Lititz. Shamokin. Bird-in-Hand.

Intercourse! It fucking ruined Intercourse!

It sucked Blue Ball, PA dry.

It's torn families apart, and forced them to stick together, and stolen young lives in the night, and stolen young lives in the day.

And *you* know the source of all this suffering.

WILLA

Um...sin?

JACOB

(Smacking the table, playing bad cop)

The meth, Miss Stoltzfus! The supplier of the meth!

(Softening into good cop)

Dear. We're gonna make this nice and easy for you. Alls you've gotta do is go pay this guy a visit. Shoot the breeze, get him to confess, while you're wearing what we call "a wire." I'll explain the technology. I know that can be confusing for girls.

WILLA

Oh, I'm not really a/

JACOB

(Self-correcting)

Woman. You're not a girl, you're a woman. Or...female.

I did the training. I know all that PC shit.

WILLA

Me too. PC's a computer.

JACOB

Well, then, sounds like you'll operate the wire just fine.

WILLA

I won't send anyone to the chopping block.

JACOB

As if this guy's not lining up lambs for slaughter? No need to play martyr.

WILLA

It's self-serving, too. I snitch, and I'm dead meat. These guys have guns.

JACOB

Everyone has guns.

WILLA

Is that a loaded gun?

JACOB

Pray you don't have to find out.

WILLA

(Eye roll)

Dear God.

JACOB

You do this, and we'll protect you for life and lock all these guys up. But, until then, you'll be the one behind bars.

JACOB waits for her to fold, but WILLA holds fast.

JACOB (cont'd.)

I did hear, on your little call, that your "best friend" might go back to the church. She's on Rumspringa, yeah? What if you miss your window to convince her to stay? Now that'd wreck some hearts.

Lights on their set, or WILLA is left in a "holding cell" for the next few scenes, deliberating.

Meanwhile, SADIE flips open her cellular.

SADIE

(Talking aloud, while typing)

Internet. Open Internet. Search: how much is bail from jail? Oh, 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."

JEDIDIAH joins in his own space, drenched in sweat, losing his fucking marbles.

He squints at his Bible pages destroyed by fire and water, so he mumbles or follows a beat behind:

SADIE & JEDIDIAH

“Where can I go from your spirit? From your presence, where can I flee?
Test my heart, test my anxious thoughts.
And lead me in a better way. Everlasting.”

Both look to the heavens, fearful.

SADIE

Gotte? Or...phone? Or...FBI?
I hope you’re not watching or listening to me right now.

From the Bible, SADIE slips...a previously stashed baggy of meth. She kisses it. Amen. SADIE’s lights dim, as she carefully dials a phone number...

Meanwhile, moaning on the ground, fists to temples or slapping his own face:

JEDIDIAH

Oh, Gotte. You trusted me with this power, and I cannot rise to your service.
I can’t do it. Give me a sign, Lord! If this be my calling, give me a/

Riiiiiiing! From another room, a phone shrills.
JED jumps. Wind howls.

Introducing the next scene, a single corn cob might roll across the stage. Ominous.

Scene 5: Cornfield

A short time later, among the Community outskirts, under increasingly stormy skies, JED twiddles his thumbs, until LEVI stalks through the stalks.

JEDIDIAH

Levi! My *bruder!* *Wie bist du!*
After three spins of the sunball...it’s nice to see you again.

LEVI

Yeah. Hearing your voice on the other end of my cell was pretty fuckin' trippy.

JEDIDIAH

It is quite peculiar using one.

LEVI

Only phone in the whole Community.

JEDIDIAH

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

LEVI

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

JEDIDIAH

I shall let it drip into my beard.

LEVI

(After a forced chuckle)

Congrats, 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

What?

JEDIDIAH

Approximately two hundred dollar bills precisely.

LEVI

Hold up, dude! I thought we was gonna catch up and all!

JEDIDIAH

That we will! We'll 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 penny she makes, she tracks.

LEVI

Okay. I mean, I'm sorry, man. But I'm hella hurting for green right now. I'm actually in a kinda scary business situation. Like, I was basically just robbed!

JEDIDIAH

Robbed?!

LEVI

Yeah, of my business product! And, get this—*by* my own business colleague. The low down is, I can't get in touch with...Mr. Will, and we owe some very loyal business disciples my very expensive business product.

JEDIDIAH

That's quite a lot of business.

LEVI

Gotta uphold my side of the deals, you know.

JEDIDIAH

Sure. Like trading goods. Cattle.

LEVI

Except my herder bitch ran away with the bessies.

JEDIDIAH

What a pickle.

LEVI

Yeah.

JEDIDIAH

My issue, though, *bruder*...is...I'm ill, alright?

LEVI

What?

JEDIDIAH

Yes. Inside the skull. My brain buzzes with bees of disbelief. My chest is weighted by an anvil. Bishop Stoltzfus told me it was merely a lifetime of year-round seasonal allergies, but I'm beginning to think it's that sickness they only believe on the outs.

LEVI

Anxiety. I've seen the commercials.

JEDIDIAH

(With longing)

Commercials...

LEVI

You ain't missing much.

JEDIDIAH

(Like a commercial)

Well. 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 referring to my service tomorrow. The whole county'll be present. And I'll bring you the offering dish after, brimming with wooden nickels.

LEVI

Jedidiah, you dog! That's...

(Doing the math)

Carry the one...four hundred dollars, bro! For real?!

JEDIDIAH

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

LEVI

That's a lotta oatmeal.

Ya know what, what the fuck.

You're lucky I just came into this money.

JEDIDIAH

A sign.

LEVI

Yeah, a sign that I just don't fucking care anymore.

LEVI thrusts his allowance upon a grateful JED.

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

I just got here?!

JEDIDIAH

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

LEVI

Oh, screw this. It's like, alls I ever do is show up places, just to be turned away again.

LEVI takes out his Panasonic headphones and Walkman. Maybe "Money Maker" by Ludacris?

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...

LEVI

You don't fuck with an "echo chamber of tone-deaf morons all chanting the same hymn" type beat?

JEDIDIAH

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

LEVI

For sure.

JEDIDIAH

But gee, this sways you in a different way, doesn't it?

LEVI cranks up the volume as he grooves away.

LEVI

Mhmmm. Feels so niiiiiiice.

(With an "L" to his forehead)

Loser.

JEDIDIAH

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

You're the loser, loser! /Loser! /

LEVI

/Loser! Loser, loser! / Go to Hell. And while you're there, you get that dish, and then bring it back with my fucking money.

LEVI trudges over to a dirt patch, kneels, and gets high, as the song continues quietly.

From the other direction, SADIE enters and approaches JED, who's flustered but expecting her. By her gaunt appearance, he's a bit taken aback.

SADIE

Jedidiah Zook? Bishop-to-Be?

JEDIDIAH

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

You look like a doll in your old bonnet.

(With pity)

But with...dead eyes.

SADIE

Oh. Yeah. Sorry I'm a smidgen delayed.

I called the church line again to tell you, but it told me to leave a vocal message.

JEDIDIAH

I don't understand how that works.

SADIE

Me neither. I hope it didn't explode or nothing.

JEDIDIAH

Let's cut to the steeplechase.

On the telephone, you said you could cure my sermon stress?

SADIE

Um. Yes! That I can. I...You...need...

From under her bonnet, SADIE whips out a raw, mushy, unwrapped...

JEDIDIAH

A whoopie pie?! I don't need a whoopie pie. You know I love your whoopie pies. But I'm satisfied by my wife's, your sister's, whoopie pies.

Trying something new, SADIE plays up her femininity, kinda flirting, seeing it work.

SADIE

Jedidiah. The magic's inside.

JEDIDIAH

Oh...oh my.

May I?

SADIE

Go ahead. Have a peek.

JEDIDIAH gingerly parts the chocolate halves and discovers...the baggy of meth.

JED drops it, shocked.

SADIE (cont'd.)

(Offended)

Jedidiah! That's homemade!

JEDIDIAH

I know that ingredient!

SADIE

I know you do.

I know how it made you feel, all strong and powerful, like an angel.

A...manly angel. With a manly halo and man wings.

JEDIDIAH

(Picking it up, wavering)

Indeed. Hello, my crystally old friend.

(To Sadie)

You're sweet. But you couldn't have packaged it in clingwrap, as a *once*?

SADIE

I used the last of it on a Shoofly.

JEDIDIAH

Funeral pie? Who died?

SADIE

No one, yet.

Enjoy baking this baked good, brother. Pleasure doing business with ya. But if anyone asks, I was never here...

JEDIDIAH nods, trading Levi's cash for the naked pastry. He jams it in his pocket, then exits.

Thunder rolls, but SADIE lingers on her old stomping grounds, nostalgic, perhaps a little guilty.

SADIE (cont'd.)

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

Lights and focus shift to...

Scene 6: Police Station / Cornfield

In her cell, WILLA is a knotted soft pretzel of pain, in withdrawal, when JACOB pops in.

JACOB

How we doin' in here, Miss Stoltzfus?

WILLA

How's it look like we're doing, Officer Beiler?
I'm having the time of my life. This is my youth.

JACOB

Well. Didn't know I scored an invite to the Willa Stoltzfus pity party. Lucky me.
Willa, dear. Life's a bitch. She fucks you in a barn, you fall in love with her, and then her husband chases you out of the Community with a rake.

WILLA

Uh, what?

JACOB

You wouldn't understand.

WILLA

I might.

Don't bust a fucking nut, but...I'm actually on my Rumspringa. Today's my last day. So, stop acting like I live on handouts.

JACOB

Stoltzfus...you're the bishop's daughter!

WILLA

You're a bad detective.

JACOB

It's a common last name.

Well, now I understand why you'd rather hang out here than let me help you.

WILLA

Why, because it feels like home?

Just even darker and smaller and more boring?

It's not that simple.

JACOB

No, I think it's even simpler. I think you're killing your time here, riding it out till after tomorrow, so you don't have to make your big choice at all. Because you don't trust yourself enough to make the right one. If you stick around here, for tomorrow and forever, you can blame me. Is that it, dear?

WILLA

Would you treat me any different if I were a boy?

JACOB

You're not.

Would you treat me any different if I was the Bishop?

Kumm mitt, Willa, liebling, blieb gehorsam um demittich

Come along, Willa, darling, 'be obedient and humble' /

WILLA

Oh my god, *Dett*, leave me alone!

Freudian slip! Mortified moment of silence. Then, WILLA curls onto her side to retch or heave.

JACOB

Dett? I'll check back soon.

Proud for coming off as Fatherly, JACOB saunters back to his desk, swigging from his flask.

There, he isn't expecting to find...LEVI, fiddling with the counter, tapping his feet, tweaking.

JACOB (cont'd.)

Levi? I didn't know today was "take your punk to work" day.

LEVI

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

JACOB

I don't get it.

LEVI

Me neither.

JACOB

What happened to your allowance?

LEVI

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

JACOB

You saw your Amish family today?

LEVI

Yeeeeeee.

JACOB

To say goodbye for good, or...?

LEVI

Dunno.

JACOB

Right.

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

Fucked-up kid almost kamikazed herself off a bridge.

(Half-joking)

Now, she's my prisoner.

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

LEVI

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

JACOB

For the entire Tri-Town Area. DTF.

Tri-Town Area Drug Task Force. So actually, TTA...TD/

LEVI

Niceeeee! Right on, man, right on. Why didn't you tell me?!

JACOB

I do. You just don't listen.

LEVI

What?

JACOB

Exactly.

But LEVI is busy backing away and dropping to the floor, shallow breathing.

JACOB (cont'd.)

Whoa, buddy, breathe/

LEVI

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

JACOB

Do what? Our brunches? Your Rumspringa?

LEVI

Everything! Man, I've gotta GTFO. I've gotta pack up some floaties and fly an aeroplane to motherfucking Florida!

Because they're in a public police station, JACOB tries quieting LEVI, who's worming upon the floor. An absurd, somehow endearing sight.

JACOB

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

LEVI

(Manic as all fuck)

Yeah? Are we? Well, I'll go straight-up Amish then! Screw our weekly Farmers Combos! I'll pull a U-turn and go get baptized and tell everyone in the village all about you. And my old man and brothers will fuckin' kill each other, if they don't kill themselves first, and take Mom and pummel her into a 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 beat, lost)

Material goods can't solve your problems.

LEVI

They KIND OF CAN, THOUGH.

JACOB

Fine.

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

JACOB (cont'd.)

Go. Go hitch hike to Florida, or anywhere that isn't here. Leave this purgatory of a dot on a map and the community that would actually keep you safe but where you'd resent me forever. Use this for shelter, not some last-ditch stab at pleasure.

Levi. You know what happens if you die on the outs, not committed to the church.

You're barred from Heaven.

From eternal life and eternal waffles. Think about that, son. Eternal waffles/

LEVI

Don't you dare call me that.

JACOB

Eternal waffles?

LEVI

Son! I can take care of myself. I can figure shit out for myself.

Levi Zook ain't no one's fucking son!

LEVI Zook exits the building, leaving JACOB scraped clean, to pick up his fallen receipts alone.

Outside, LEVI squats on the curb or a parking block, when his phone rings. If you haven't used it yet, def "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, inside your phone. I'm using phones more now, since, you know, Will was busted with your drugs?

LEVI

Uh, yeah, I know that now. Would've been helpful info, like, five minutes ago, but/

SADIE

I'm reaching out to apply to the position of filling her role. I've got professional experience now. Might even have a knack for it.

LEVI

Fuck no. I'm closing shop.

SADIE

What? Why?

LEVI

(Probably a Jacob phrase)

It's a dangerous road.

SADIE

But roads never spooked ya before! Remember how dark it would get, on the rides home in your buggy after choir *singeons* [singalongs]?

You had the loveliest voice. Mine was awful.

LEVI

You were young. We were young.

SADIE

(Tuneless, terribly, song by The Killers)

“When we were young...”

LEVI

Remember how we'd play pretend we were *Maam* and *Dett*?

SADIE

Heads of a family.

LEVI

Straight chillin. Now that's a throwback.

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

SADIE

Yeah. 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. No eyes. No mouth. But we'd kiss where its lips 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, 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 over-easy 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

"I'm desperado..."

LEVI

Well, maybe there's somethin' else you can do for me, instead. Another kinda favor.

SADIE

Oh, well, I'm not too handy with housework, and my baking's *baremlich*, just ask Willa or my sister or your brother or/

LEVI

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

SADIE

Uh...are you speaking a favor of the sexual variety? Because, I actually have some corn cobs to go slather with cream, demanding my attention/

LEVI

No! No, heck no!
This is innocent, Sades. Just one last chance to play pretend.
You down to do me this *once*?

SADIE

(Thinking about timing)

Do we still have some idle hours before suppertime?

LEVI

Uh...yeah?

SADIE

Okay.

LEVI

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

SADIE

Meet at mine, then.

LEVI

Dope.

SADIE

(Tasting the word)

Dope.

I don't know how best to bid farewell and end a call, so...smell ya later/

LEVI

One final question, Sadie.

Do you still own any of your pretty plain 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.

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

From her cell, WILLA glares at them, or into the distance, in anguish.

As the impending storm brews, lights.

Scene 7: The Church

Into the black, a matchstick lights a candle, then another. This is the work of RUTH, humming a lullaby like *Gottes Liebe* [God Is My Darling].

Outside, JEDIDIAH cradles his new possession, the whoopie pie. He removes the meth baggy and snorts a little. Heavens to Betsy! That'll do. JED enters the Church, startled to see Ruth.

JEDIDIAH

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

RUTH

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

JEDIDIAH

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'd have a moment to relax.

RUTH

Oh, honeycomb! Your wife can help you relax....

RUTH moves towards JED, who winces away.

RUTH (cont'd.)

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

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...

RUTH

Excellent! We'll make 'em watch! Make 'em stand in their pews and rejoice for this *once*. Gotte knows they need it.

RUTH backs Jed against his podium, eventually slipping a palm down his trousers.

RUTH (cont'd.)

I can feel the power exciting *you*. In your heartbeat, and in your pocket...

JEDIDIAH

N-no, not there...

RUTH

Ja? What's this mound in your trousers, baby?

JEDIDIAH

That's—nothing! It's nothing!

RUTH

Don't feel like nothin' to me.

JEDIDIAH

Ruth! S-Stop it...

RUTH

Ja, it really feels like something to me!

Something awfully...rounded...and velvety...and...

(Suddenly confused and turned off like, did he 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, it's merely, um...

/I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry—/

RUTH

/Jed, where'd you get this?!

JED eventually snatches it back, playing keepaway.

JEDIDIAH

Whatever do you mean? My wife, it's from the batch you baked just last week, generous angel, for the kids who stay here, forgoing their Rumspringas, to be baptized straight away. Good kids, who don't desert, deserve good desserts! But! I saved one for myself, snuck it aside, you know me, Ruth, such a /wutz/

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

Your...your whoopie pies are...

P-p-perfectly plump. And moistly. Creamy, and...

RUTH

Heavenly? Would you say Heavenly?

JEDIDIAH falls to his knees.

JEDIDIAH

Yes, ma'am. Your whoopies are heavenly.

RUTH

Next question.

Jedidiah Zook. Tell me what my sister's whoopie pies are like.

How do we describe hers, hm?

(*With a playful menacing lil slap*)

Come on, husband, spit it out! What do 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

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

RUTH

Correct again. So, riddle me this, *liebling*. Why are you holding, in your palm there, one of my sister's "flat, lumpy, sort of slimy and runny" whoopie pies?

JEDIDIAH

I...can't....

RUTH

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?

And that's when, clear as day, I heard my little sister Sadie apologizing for "Running late." Running late. As if she's some businessman from the shining city of Lancaster, running from the business capital selling business goods!

JEDIDIAH

That's a lot of /business.../

RUTH

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

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

RUTH (cont'd.)

You and your brothers always thought she was so pretty.
But do you still believe that, after 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. If Sadie is "running late," I can only assume *you* are running around.

JEDIDIAH

Shut your whoopie-piehole.

RUTH

That's it, isn't it?
I talk back too much?

JEDIDIAH

Narrish maedel...

RUTH

Oh, *narrish maedel*, indeed!
Of course, after everything I do.
I'm the crazy woman. And she's a quieter girl.
You think she'd be an easier wife?

JEDIDIAH

No...

RUTH

A tamer mother?

JEDIDIAH

No....

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

RUTH

Prove it, then. Let me watch you throw this away.

JEDIDIAH

No...

RUTH

This blob that would make no man say "whoopie!" for this pie.

JEDIDIAH

No.

RUTH

Fine. You're right, as usual.

We shouldn't merely dump it. We should *burn* it, 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, as the door swings open with a *creeeeak*.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

Oh. Um. Hallo, Council, *willkumme...*

RUTH

(*Meta joke, re: candles*)

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

Just allow me to relight these. Then I'll get out of your hair.

(*To Jed*)

Knock 'em dead.

Emotionless, RUTH relights the candles for Jed and exits, taking us into...

Scene 8: Bishop Interlude / Police Station / Barn Party

This time, new fortitude overtakes JED. Ego. Detachment by violence. And, uh, meth.

JEDIDIAH

We have now reached *Altvater*. Hark!
We know that translates to Patriarch.
But how often do we remark:
What is Patriarch? Where is Patriarch? How is Patriarch?
And what is it not?
Patriarch is male head of church, male head of family.
But who is male head of the whole lot?

JED waits for an audience member to answer, pointing to the Heavens if they need a hint.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

That's right, men. Gotte.
At this point in our parable, we've released temptation.
But to formally join our congregation,
The last step, children, if you choose,
Is to confess your sins and pay those dues.

WILLA prays at the bench in her cell, like a pew.

Neither WILLA nor JED needs a readable Bible for this classic banger.

JEDIDIAH

Luke Chapter 12, bring us home.

JEDIDIAH & WILLA

"Nothing hidden will not be made known.
What you have whispered into ears in the night,
Will be heard in daylight."

WILLA flashes back to a Rumspringa barn party, her first, at the ripe age of 16.

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 are innocent, unweathered iterations of themselves.

SADIE

Willa! Wills! I've been achin' to say alls night.

(Dizzy with excitement)

Hi.

WILLA

(Equally giddy, but playing it cool)

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 surnames sat us side-by-side for 16 years.

SADIE

That's why this hoedown had me feeling so down, at first, what with nobody forcing us to sit together. But now...

WILLA

Here we stand. By choice.

SADIE

(After a beat, making conversation)

Dids, uh, didya see the band they broughts in, all the ways from Iowa?!

Or Illinois. One of those “I” states. Idaho?

LEVI

(To Sadie, a zinger)

You da hoe.

SADIE

(Still to Willa, mind-blown)

They’ve got banjos powered by electricity!

WILLA

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

And—and there’s that giant tarp out back the kids are callin’ a “slip-n-slide?” They’re just sudsin’ up their skin with dish soap and going to town! Their *bare skin*.

It makes me feel, um...

SADIE

(Similarly flustered, bashful)

Me too. Couples are *schmunzlin’* in every corner...

WILLA

On every haystack, there’s a needle pokin.

SADIE

(Giggling)

Ewwww!

LEVI

I place my bets on a record number of baptisms for our year, on accounts of all this babymakin.

SADIE

Grisleh [gross], Levi. Behave in front of my bestest friend.

LEVI

Don't scold me, *liebling*.

Reckless Willa came to see me.

She wants to buy my seeds.

SADIE

Come again, you better?

WILLA

You said I could try before I buy.

LEVI

Righteroo!

LEVI displays a plastic baggy. SADIE gasps.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Oh! Why, that's...that's the...

You enjoy these minerals, Willa?

WILLA

I ain't never tried before.

SADIE

Levi, you have?

LEVI

I'm mostly gonna sell it, of course! I just wanna make enough Benjamin bills to afford a trailer of my own! The communal one sucks, crashing with everyone and their brother and their sister and their sixteen cousins.

SADIE

But, I live there. What about me?

WILLA

It's okay, Sades/

SADIE

(Still to Levi)

I just figured all our firsts we'd experience together, hand-in-hand.

What's it even feel like?

LEVI

Crank? Well, gosh, it feels like hope. It makes you believe in yourself and love and life.

SADIE & WILLA

I'll take it.

LEVI

Okay. I mean, this shit ain't for good girls like you, Sadie. It's hardcore.

SADIE

I can handle hardcore. I always eat the apple core.

LEVI

Damn. Alright. Lemme just pull out my pipe and all/

SADIE

Willa brought a pipe, I presume?

(A strap-on joke, for the queers!)

She can pipe me. In fact, I'd rather have Willa pipe me.

WILLA

/Oh, well, *denki...*/

LEVI

/Ferwas bischt alfatt so schtarrkeppich?

Why are you so stubborn?

SADIE

We're not stubborn.

WILLA

We're strong.

LEVI

Fine. You take care of her, ya hear me, Bishop's Daughter?

Godspeed, ladies. You girls have fun.

LEVI hands over a baggy and meanders off to party on. The friends 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 really feel like a...

SADIE

A what, 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 don’t know, Will.

But I know *I* know what you are, Will.

You’re a silly goose with a soft heart, Will.

You’re a soul worthy of forever, Will.

And you’re my best friend. Will.

WILLA

(After an endeared beat)

Are you ready?

SADIE

I’m frightened.

WILLA

We can do it with our eyes shut?

SADIE

I can't...close mine. You know the way they twitch/

WILLA

Might I help?

SADIE

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

It's like a wave's washed over us.

SADIE

And we're alone in the Universe.

WILLA

Reborn today.

SADIE

Home never felt like home to me.

You feel like home to me.

Emboldened, the two grace fingers.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Oh, but Will! That's f-f-f...

WILLA

Frowned-Upon? Smiling with you is worth being Frowned-Upon.

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 like, if we couldn't be together like this, you could kill?!

Out here, nobody's paying attention.

We can touch. We can wear the pants! We can start over.

(Re: the drugz)

With this?! We can be free...

Slowly, curiously, still on their knees, WILLA and SADIE face each other and touch hands, palm to palm, in shared prayer. But before they can traverse any further...

The barn door slams open and JACOB enters, to a chorus of screams and scrambles.

JACOB

Hands where I can see 'em, hooligans! Drop your beer cans and your rakes, and...are those beer cans stabbed onto rakes? Put the beer tridents dowwwwn!

WILL & SADIE duck behind haybales, popping their heads up and down like whack-a-moles.

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.

SADIE

If we run away, Will, what will we do, Will?

WILLA

We'll get a house, Sades! And careers, if you want—in business! And a barrel more of this power!

SADIE

I've heard it destroys people...

WILLA

It built this, didn't it? Come on, follow me.

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

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

JEDIDIAH

And Luke said:

JEDIDIAH & WILLA

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

JEDIDIAH

My friends. I must leave you with that, wanting more. I shall see you tomorrow for the real event. 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 9: Local Dive Bar

JEDIDIAH sits at the bar, some Pennsyltucky 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

Thank you. Grew it myself.
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.

JACOB

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 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. Tight throat. Heavy chest. Brain on fire. From all the, uh, harvesting.

JACOB

Hay fever. It's the worst.

JEDIDIAH

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 are 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 out.

JACOB

Well, it *is* pouring.

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.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

I have seen you before.

JACOB

Yeah, we already covered that/

JEDIDIAH

No. No. Years before. When I was merely a spring chicken.
Inside my parent's house.

JACOB

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

JEDIDIAH

The hayloft! Outside it! Late one night, I was creeping out to use the outhouse, and by the light of my lantern and the moon, I saw you and my *maam*/

JACOB

Fuck...

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

JACOB (cont'd.)

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

JEDIDIAH

You don't mean...my brother Levi?
I'd hardly describe Levi as serious and lasting...

JEDIDIAH is advancing.

JACOB

Hold your horses, man. Take it easy now...

JEDIDIAH

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

JACOB

Come on, man. It was love!
(*Unaware this is a phrase*)
Love is love!

JEDIDIAH

This *once* is for my Father!

JEDEDIAH 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

New message from work.

JEDIDIAH

Who goes there?! Reveal yourself!

JACOB

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

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

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, I surrender! *Gotte*, what wrath of evil overtakes?!!

JACOB

Uh...looks like a power outage. Shouldn't phase you too bad.

(Shouted to bartender)

This kind man will be covering our drinks.

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

Readyng his umbrella, JACOB EXITS. JED shakes off his stunned state to bellow:

JEDIDIAH

You are dead and doomed, Shunned Man, mark my words.

You will die on Earth and burn in Hell.
YOU WILL DIE ON EARTH AND BURN IN HELL....

Lights flutter and zap to black.

Scene 10: Willa & Sadie's Trailer

SADIE and LEVI stand across from each other, quiet and awkward, both in full Amish garb. Due to the power outage, they're surrounded by candles.

SADIE

You want me to...baptize you?

LEVI

You know, like, like we're getting baptized together! In the church!
I thought it might...feel nice.

SADIE

In a sexual way?

LEVI

No! Oh my god, no! In a more, like...if one of us is struck by lightning or murdered by a gang of pissed-off meth heads, or overdoses or decides to fucking end it all tonight, they'll be saved and get to chill in the clouds for eternity....sorta way.

SADIE

Oh. 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.

SADIE

You got it, buster.

Tentative, but with her mind on the money, SADIE carries out the ritual. With each question, she absorbs power, getting into it.

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, therein to live and to die?

LEVI

I can.

SADIE

And in all order of the *Ordnung*—which was probably written a million years ago by an angry man to keep everybody else in their places but is all probably 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 close to her pelvis.

There is no intention of sexual activity occurring, but it certainly looks like it, as...

WILLA enters the trailer.

WILLA

Honey, I'm hoooooome! What the goddamn, fucking *hell*?!

SADIE

This is not what it looks like...

LEVI

It's a trade!

SADIE
For your bail!

LEVI
She straight-up consented, yo!

SADIE
Everything I do, I do for you!

WILLA
Save it. I knew this is how it ends. You, back with a boy, like you believe you belong.
Shame on me, guess I'm the *dumm dum ignoramus*, after all.
(Speaking into her chest, the wire)
Come in, Detective! Come inside!
I've got the supplier and an abuser caught 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)
COME IN, I SAID COME IN.

The front door crashes open. In the frame, a drenched silhouette, sways RUTH.

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, Sadie! Are you proud of this pigsty you call home?!

Flour coating every surface. It's a tinderbox!

And crawling with pests...

Naturally, because you leave your pies out uncovered and exposed 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...

The Smuckers rev up to charge like bulls, RUTH
outstretching her palms to flatten her sister's tits.

But before they can collide, WILLA slips between.

WILLA

Hey. Sadie! Look at me. Look at me/

SADIE

I LOVE YOU.

WILLA

What?

SADIE

You heard me.

WILLA

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

I love you, too.

SADIE

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 crank I supply 'em.

WILLA

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

During all this, sloshy JACOB has appeared in the lawn outside, lurking. Via the wire, he's just heard Levi's irrefutable confession. Not a news flash, but hard to digest. 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 something pointless.

The girls are drawn to the window, watching JACOB role-play as a cop, hand on pistol.

SADIE

Don't shoot!!

WILLA

(Eye roll)

He won't shoot.

JACOB

I could shoot!

WILLA

Yeah? Then shoot me.

SADIE

/No!/

RUTH

/No!/ Shoot my Sister!

SADIE
/Ruthie.../

WILLA
/I'll kill you./

RUTH
Because my husband wants to fuck her!

WILLA
Oh, get over yourself. Everyone wants to fuck her.

SADIE
Well, that's awful flattering, but...

JACOB
Levi! I know you're in there!

RUTH
(*To the girls, gossipy*)
These two! They're well-acquainted, don't you know? I've seen them meeting up for scrapple on the sly. My guess is they're forbiddenly courting.

LEVI
Ha! He wishes. This bastard's my *Dett*.

The girls "ewwww."

WILLA
You're fucking your dett?!

LEVI
No! He's, like, just my *Dett*.

The girls "awww?" A martyr off to duel, LEVI walks out into the yard, just as the rain lets up.

JACOB
Throwing my dimes towards drugs and prostitution?!
You're no child of mine.

LEVI

Man, we weren't even gonna touch each other, I swear! On the Ordnung you gave me!
I just wanted to...feel something, alright?! To remind me of home.
Because I can't go back.
I can't go anywhere.
So I just wanna make my stupid fucking choices feel worth a stupid fucking life.
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! You're addicting innocent children to this artificial euphoria!
You're a murderer for distributing it.

LEVI

And you're a mas-o-chhist for sticking around chasing it!
That's right. Everybody's gettin' smart these days. I Google big words, too.
You were kicked out, mas-o-chhhist, so peace already!

JACOB

I can't! 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

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 now, because you lack any goddamn discipline, eventually you'll kill yourself, and drag this hopeless horde down with you/

LEVI

Oh, fuck that, man! It's too late!

LEVI tackles JACOB, wrestling 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!

LEVI wins the weapon, prying it from his father.

Rising to his feet, LEVI backs up, gun trembling in his shaky hands, to a chorus of shrieks.

LEVI

I...I...

Shutting his eyes tight, LEVI directs the pistol at his own temple. Oh, shit. But then...

RUTH drops a flaming match onto the flour-coated tabletop or carpet, setting the trailer on fire.

More screams. RUTH grabs the cash from the table, as she, WILLA, and SADIE run into the yard.

Outside, LEVI drops the gun and drops to his knees.

LEVI (cont'd.)
I wasn't going to...

JACOB

I know, buddy. It's okay.
The gun isn't even loaded.

LEVI

Of course it isn't.

JACOB

Watch this.

(Re: the fire, into wire/phone)

Boys? I'm gonna need backup.

(To Levi)

I've always wanted to say that.

LEVI

Very cool, *dett.*

JACOB

Come on, son...

LEVI and JACOB move aside, to Jacob's car. The girls watch the trailer's insides burn.

WILLA

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

SADIE

(Still unyieldingly optimistic)

No! It doesn't have to be! We can always 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

Okay, well, we'll walk, then! It's only how far to paradise?!

WILLA

Seriously?

SIRI

(Prompted by “seriously,” from Jacob’s pocket)

You are 1,086 miles from Paradise Beach, Florida.

SADIE

Thank you, voice of *Gotte!* See?! Easy!

WILLA

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

SADIE

Yeah, but, but what if we do? Or what if, together, we already did?!

WILLA

I’m an addict.

SADIE

I know, Will.

WILLA

Well, I don’t. Know no will. I know no free will. No will power.

SADIE

I get it/

WILLA

I need to go back.

SADIE

Yes. We do. For the plan.

WILLA

No, no. Not only for tomorrow. For real.

Maybe someday, once I’ve fixed myself, I’ll escape and come find you/

SADIE

Whoa, *liebling*. Pump the brakes.

There are doctors out here! And “rehab.” I heard about that from...well, I found someone even better than Jeeves. Chat GT something. And she told me you can go to the rehab and come out like Dorothy, from the Wizard of Oz! She went there. And so did Marilyn Monroe, and Prince!

JACOB

Those are terrible examples.

WILLA

(To Sadie)

I appreciate the thought. But, with what money? Rehab isn’t free. And I can’t hold a job when I’d rather be holding a pipe, which out here, I can always be doing.

SADIE

I’ll come back with you.

WILLA

This isn’t about you.

SADIE

You don’t need to get better alone.

WILLA

Any other way, and I never will.

I can’t be loved by you, while I hate myself.

And I only feel like I *can* love, when I’m high, which is why I hate myself.

You and crystal meth can’t be the only faiths I believe in.

Heavy beat. Then, emotionless, SADIE begins to strip. Heartbroken but brisk, with practicality.

WILLA (cont’d.)

(Like “wtf”)

Uh...*this* is your kink I’ve been missing all these years?

SADIE

You need garb for the baptism ceremony.

I’ll go giddy-up our business enterprise awhiles, with my impressive new resume and all.

And I’ll mail my earnings back to you, Ruthie! And the family.

If you’ll watch over Will?

RUTH exhales, accepting, but not without one last comment, eyeing Sadie's bare chest:

RUTH

My tits are bigger than yours.

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

As a parting gift, RUTH hands SADIE the money she rescued from the trailer. SADIE takes it.

Then, SADIE turns to WILL, holding out her hand-sewn clothes.

In the distance, firetrucks and police sirens wail.

WILL

Fuck. Um...take a bus? Don't try and walk the whole ways there.

SADIE

You have my word.

WILL

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

SADIE

And I for you.

But, right now, as if we're concluding the baptism ceremony...

Grant me the Holy Kiss?

As if requesting permission, WILL looks to RUTH, who turns her back. But SADIE dives right in. And at long last, the best friends embrace, and kiss.

The rain starts again, along with an orchestral version of "Like A Prayer" or the song you've chosen. Cinematic? Ridiculous? Both? Your call.

RUTH corrals WILL out, EXITING. Nearly naked, SADIE stands alone.

Scene 11: Church / Courthouse / Sarasota, Florida

That weekend, JEDIDIAH conducts the baptism ceremony with frenzy. Eyes on fire. Face coated with chocolate crumbs and frosting residue. RUTH stands behind him, subordinate.

On his altar table sit the untouched *Ordnung* and overflowing offering dish.

JEDIDIAH

By golly, we made it! Part Four. *Leide*.
 Acceptance of submission and inevitable suffering.
 Hallelujah, what a time!
 May we trust today's pain pays off in the future,
 For others, the Community, and vaster cosmic design.
 My first cohort of baptism candidates!
 'Tis my honor to summon onwards and above.
 For wisely deciding to grow and die here,
 Within our chosen family of one true Love.
(Tearing up)
 I...Heavens to Betsy. *Gotte*'s presence today is like a flame to a wick!
 I'm overwrought by how deeply I love our Father's big...heart.

Choked up, he snorts. RUTH claps him on the back.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

First up is our ole Bishop's Daughter!
 She sure enjoyed her runaround, that was no short run!
 Thank Heavens our little *schnickelfritz* found her way home to Kingdom Come.

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

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

Miss Willa Stoltzfus. Through *Gotte* Himself, I ask.
 Can you commit yourself to Him, to live and to die?

A choral version of the theme song plays. A cappella. No instruments, as is tradition.

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

WILLA

I will.

Meanwhile, in a courthouse, handcuffed LEVI shuffles to the stand, with JACOB as his character witness. Both wear button-downs, cleaned up nice.

JACOB

I solemnly testify on behalf of Levi Zook. He's just a kid. And he didn't go astray, he was born into a world that *is* astray. But he's smart, and he's softer than he looks, and he wants to do good. He actually inspired me to start going to AA, mainly for the free donuts. Um, just a short run 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?

LEVI

In exchange for my own bed, three square meals a day, and no connections to this sick and twisted world? Uh, yeah. Yeah, I can.

JEDIDIAH

And at long 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?

WILLA & LEVI

I... I...

LEVI is granted his requested sentence, with a sigh of relief, shared with JACOB.

From behind WILLA, JEDIDIAH clasps a hand over her eyes, and RUTH comes forward to give WILLA the Holy Kiss. Like, on the lips. No homo. JED pours Holy Water over Willa.

At least, now, both teens are finally clean.

As is...SADIE, who enters with a suitcase, in a swimsuit, fresh off a bus. She wanders in front of an

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

Sarasota, Florida. She made it.

Across the stage, SADIE peers into her old world.

SADIE

I can't.

SADIE cracks open her luggage, full of pastries, and begins awkwardly selling to passersby.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Whoopie pies for sale! Holy magic whoopie pies! Shoofly funeral pie, hot and wet!

WILLA and SADIE lock eyes and reflect. They eye the offering dish, then each other again. Someday?

The theme song rises. Waves wash over.

End of play.