

Once on Rumspringa



by ex Lancaster Amish farm-kid

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(they/she)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (6)

On Rumspringa

WILLA STOLTZFUS (f or nb): 19; masc; sarcastic, driven, unyielding; currently navigating gender identity and drug addiction, as someone 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.

DESIGN

The only fixed set is Willa and Sadie's trailer. Beyond that, we visit the iconic Shady Maple Smorgasbord, a county police station, barn party, local dive bar, cornfield, and church (as is custom, erected inside the Bishop's house and eerily unadorned).

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

Electric candles might line the audience. Projections and soundscapes can also help bring the world to life.

A familiar song should be appointed as Sadie and Willa's "theme song," some outdated pop hit like Madonna's "Like A Prayer." It'll accompany their first high at a party and drift onstage in diegetic ways—over the radio at Shady Maple, as Sadie's ringtone, in the windchimes and rain, as a choral hymn.

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

Once on Rumspringa is inspired by true events, documentaries, and interviews with ex-Amish individuals, who provided script consultation.



A PA Dutch barn hex symbol for good luck

Prologue

Flickering **candles**, lining the audience and placed around the set as practical lights, glow in the otherwise dark space. An awkward, nervous voice commands with forced confidence.

JEDIDIAH (o.s.)

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 flat Earth around the sunball,
Our youngsters are free to play outside upon Lucifer’s Playground,
With no one to catch them when they trip and fall.

Like a hazy fever dream, our additional 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 modern man.
Such as, um, cords. Crosswalks. Clocks without hands!
And—Temptation! To engage in, um, the destructive Acts our sacred *Ordnung* [bible] dubs...

(Melodramatic, 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, um, era of independence ends with their choice.

To survive “on the outs,” shunned for eternity...
 Or be baptized and married with us—h-hallelujah, rejoice!
 Let us pray our little hens are herded towards the loudest /voice/...

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

Morning light illuminates JEDIDIAH at his altar or podium, as a perpetually uncomfortable silhouette. He sighs, stretches, and calls out:

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

That was me doing the Rumspringa Ceremony. Did you hear it, Ruth?
 It was alright *ja* [yes]?
 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

This rural Pennsylvania 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, acres of cornfield ripple.

After a moment, 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, lovingly watches her friend drool, then sticks her pie in Willa's face.

WILLA wakes, gagging.

SADIE

Guder mariye, Schlof-kopp [good morning, sleepyhead]!
 Happy last day of Rumspringa!

WILLA

I'm gonna retch...

SADIE

(Disappointed, and oblivious to innuendos)

I thought I'd wake you with the smell of my pie, for the occasion.

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...

A needle in her blanket haystack, WILLA finds her
meth pipe and breathes in. 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 you were too busy *rutzing* [futzing] around and spiraling, then, to pack for Florida?
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 freeway, or whatever/

WILLA

/The *high* way. We'll do it the high way.
So, it'll be a piece of angel food cake.

SADIE

Uh...

WILLA

This, my Sadie Smucker, is what all our suffering has been for.

WILLA & SADIE

(Dreamy-eyed, on the same team)

Sarasota, Florida.

SADIE

Hideaway Promised Land for ex-Amish kids, all shunned together!

WILLA

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 our feet in the sand?

WILLA

Do you feel the breeze in your bonnetless hair?

SADIE

Do you see the ocean?!

WILLA

Real ocean waves. They've just, been there forever.

SADIE

Forever.

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

WILLA

(Lowkey jealous)

The heck is Jeeves?

Note: monologues and dialogue in general can be fast-paced, due to restlessness and drugz.

SADIE

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

And—but what he told me about, is, is this thing named a “going down payment?”

Which means, in exchange for the trailer keys, we have to give money “up front.” And, *ich wees net* [I dunno], we're already behind on rent here, and according to Brother Jeeves, our savings fund of 20 Florida 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 exploding one of the motor-mobile machines.

WILLA

Cars. You know they're called cars.

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

WILLA (cont'd.)

It's fine. I understand 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/

WILLA

Uh, yeah. *Ja*, it is. Instead of laying in the Sarasota sun, you'd rather sit on a backless splintered 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 props to represent the offering dish and Bible. Maybe a **baseball cap** and *The Internet for Dummies*.

WILLA (cont'd.)

Offering dish! Overflowing with wooden nickels he doesn't deserve. And—let us not forget the *Ordnung* [bible], which he'll hover his hand over, never touching it, because 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

Good, *gut maedel*. "Can you commit yourself to Him?"

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 leans in, for what'd be their first kiss.

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

Suddenly, SADIE's eyes flash open and dart to...the **"offering dish."**

SADIE (cont'd.)

That's it, Wills! You're a genius! You're even smarter than Jeeves!

WILLA

I want a word with Jeeves.

SADIE delivers this line like she's expecting Willa to join in. Ya know, the trope when characters hatch a plan in unison?

Except Will just grimaces back, bewildered, or mumbles some words, trying to follow along.

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. We're committed. Then, we're like, "look over there!" and then we snatch the offering dish and drive off into the midday sun! /That's the plan!/

WILLA

/That was...I was doing a joke/

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

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 pulls out a traditional **Amish dress**.

SADIE

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*!

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

SADIE slips behind a **room divider** to change.

WILLA might try shamelessly sneaking
peeks—like, on potentially their last day together,
Sadie's still being a prude?! Come on.

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

WILLA

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

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

SADIE

You're gonna back out.

WILLA

You're gonna—go back in! For real! You're already enjoying slipping into your old role.
You'll be corralled back in, and in a fortnight be hitched, to some nice *plain* [Amish]
husband who slaps you when the crops dry out. Or—Levi Zook! Like your families
arranged. That *dum dum ignoramus* [idiot]...

SADIE

(Half joking)

Whooooa, language.

WILLA

Yeah, sorry, too far.

SADIE emerges, in head-to-toe Amish attire.

SADIE

Anyways, we both know that won't happen.

Obviously, Levi's gonna take the ban, and stay out here with his...

(Nodding at meth pipe)

...business enterprising empire.

(Showing off dress)

Ta da!!!

WILLA

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

SADIE

Takes one to know one.

WILLA

(Hard-pivoting, triggered by the accusation)

Alright. New plan.

I'll sell our stash.

If Levi can do it, so can I.

And *I* won't get high off my own supply. Starting... [mumbling, trailing off] soon...

SADIE

No time like the present!

That's *wunderbaar* [wonderful], Wills.

But, much like our dollar bills, I fear we're almost out...

WILLA

What? No. No way.

We're far from out...

Frantic, WILLA begins hunting the house.

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 under an armchair)

FUCK.

(After a sigh)

Fine. Fuck, I'll buy from Levi and sell for him. 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

/Amen./ Okay. Okay! Let's try this. I'll help pitch in, too! I'll head over to Shady Maple to try and hawk my pie to Ruth. For us.

WILLA

For us. Go team.

SADIE

Go team.

But, just, um... Will? Could you do me a *once* [favor], pretty please, and /don't use/

WILLA

/I won't use./

SADIE

Oath it.

WILLA

I will! 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...

But SADIE doesn't catch this, while packaging her sticky Shoofly in **Saran wrap**.

SADIE

What was that?

WILLA

Nothing.

SADIE

I can...hit the road.

WILLA

I believe you.

SADIE

I believe in you.

WILLA

Sick.

SADIE

Slay.

The besties linger, awkward, unsure how to part.

WILLA

Sei gut [be good/goodbye].

SADIE

Lebe wohl [live well].

With a dorky salute, WILLA leaves. With her messy pie and tense emotions, SADIE stays.

Scene 2: Shady Maple Smorgasbord

We're now at Shady Maple, a ginormous Amish buffet and 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, a 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, to lowkey serve cunt.

RUTH

(Fast, deadpan, rehearsed spiel)

"Welcome to Shady Maple Smorgasbord, the most glorious Amish restaurant on Earth! Run by us, the Amish, for you, the *English* [non-Amish]! Boasting over 100,000 square feet of comfort food, 'Eating is the Journey and Salvation is the Destination.'"

JACOB

I'm not a tourist, I'm a regular/

RUTH

I know, sir. But I have to/

JACOB

This place is like the bastard child of a megachurch and a mall!

RUTH

It's a buffet, sir.

At some point during this, we see LEVI arrive
“**outside**,” to meet WILLA, and give her drugs.

Around now, it should also start drizzling, so
characters show up wet or with umbrellas.

Eventually, SADIE also enters the kitchen and
devours scraps, licking plates clean.

RUTH (cont'd.)

(Continuing her mandated speech)

A bottomless buffet, where you can take endless trips with endless plates! Our current
special is half-off, if you've had gastric bypass surgery this year.

JACOB

What a steal!

RUTH

Of course, sir, I'm happy to fill your plate for your pleasure, instead.
But we've got a line round the block 4 hours long, and you've been sittin' here on your
telephones for half that. So how can I help you?

JACOB

Um, I'm actually waiting on...
But ya know what? Guess I'll just order awhile.
I'll have you handle my plate. Years of indulgence leads to years of self-restraint.

(Pats his tummy, then)

Let's go with the...Famished Farmer's Combo?
Sausage. And bacon. Pancakes. And waffles. Scrapple over grits. And your world-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

(Recoiling at the devil's number, then)

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

The definition of dippy is: "Lacking good judgement. Foolish. Absurd. Mad—"

JACOB

Siri, baby, that's enough.

JACOB slaps his phone, attempting to shut her up.

SIRI (cont'd.)

Now playing "Dippy Egg" by Snuff.

The song plays—bona fide angry dad rock—as JACOB smacks his screen.

RUTH glares in contempt, then turns, swipes a plate from a nearby table, and beelines into the kitchen. There, she's surprised to encounter:

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 begins assembling Jacob's breakfast, cracking and frying **eggs**.

RUTH

How selfless of you to grace me with your presence, before you're formally shunned tomorrow. I suppose you could 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 banned man Jacob Beiler, who's been hanging round town for twenty years now.

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

RUTH (cont'd.)

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

SADIE

(Annoyed blatant lie)

Ruth. I'm wearin' this because I'm comin' home tomorrow.

RUTH

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

Note: in this scene, SADIE might exaggerate her **accent**, code-switching around Ruth.

SADIE

That's exactly how I feel about the baptism ceremony! It's powerful as heck. Bishop Stoltzfus is like an e-mail fax message shot straight from *Gotte*.

RUTH

Stoltzfus won't be runnin' sermons this year.

SADIE

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

RUTH

He was growing so old, Sadie. In his late *thirties*. The poor elder was as burnt out, as *English* sinners in Hell and their English muffins in toasters.

Thankfully, we elected a new Bishop, and good *schicksaal* [fate], it was a landslide. Everyone cast their prayers in agreement.

SADIE

Everyone? Well, not everyone. Not...women.

RUTH

(Not seeing the issue)

Why would women...?

SADIE

Nae, ja./

RUTH

Why would you even want to, when you can/

SADIE

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

RUTH

Jedidiah! My darling *liebbling*, Jedidiah!

SADIE

Oh, gee willikers.

RUTH

The man has been locked in—our attic, praying and practicing, from 4AM wakeup call into the dead of night. This evening's his last rehearsal, and it's open to the council, so that's got him as stressed as a chicken acclimating to the chicken hierarchy during first breeding season.

SADIE

(Genuinely enthused)

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'll* be the one administering the Holy Kiss at ceremonies! 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.

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! 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 tired.

LEVI removes his shades, unveiling bloodshot eyes.

JACOB

Yeah, your eyes are all red.

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

LEVI

No. I got allergies, yo.

Plus, I've been working. Hard.

JACOB

Well done. You got a job?

LEVI

Bitch, I've *had* a job. I'm a...business entrepreneur. Who just had a business meeting. And now has a new business colleague...Will. Will's a bag man, working for yours truly like a little bitch, selling my business product to my business customers.

JACOB

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

Uh. Maybe. I got time to figure it out.

JACOB

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

LEVI

(Snarky, but genuinely open to suggestions)

What do *you* think I should do?

JACOB

Well, I've sure liked getting to know you...

LEVI

No shit. I'm the realest.

JACOB

(Suddenly kinda frank)

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 waffles. Your favorite.
Even though they just hiked the price.

LEVI

Recession indicator, bruh.

JACOB

(Ignoring that)

Thank the Lord, right, kid?

LEVI

(Grossed out re: "kid")

Thank the motherfuckin' whatever.

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

JACOB

Speaking of...mothers/

LEVI

/Motherfuckers?/

JACOB

Um. How is your mother these days?

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

Family's important.

LEVI

Where are my fuckin' waffles? Waffles are important.

JACOB

Patience, Levi. Hedonism doesn't excuse pride, lust, or...any of the sins, really. Um. 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 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.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen:

SADIE

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

RUTH

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

Getting to the point, SADIE proposes her pie.

SADIE

Could you display this in the pastry wagon?

RUTH

(Choking at the stench)

Sadie. Your baking's *baremlieh* [horrible].

SADIE

Hey, 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.

RUTH tosses a sopping rag at SADIE, to begrudgingly but obediently wipe surfaces.

RUTH (cont'd.)

Ain't Levi Zook still courtin ya, on the outs?

Given you a buggy ride lately?

SADIE

Oh. No, *nae*, that's...

RUTH

Too bad.

The Zook *bruders* used to adore ya.

Especially Jedidiah. My Jedidiah.

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

SADIE

Uh, please don't.

RUTH

Grow up.

SADIE

I'm trying.

RUTH

You're not! You've been fighting the current for three years, for no one but yourself, while I surrendered my Rumspringa after mere months.

(Proud, with a hand on her stomach)

For higher obligations.

SADIE

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

RUTH

A real woman lives her life expecting absolutely nothing.

Beat. RUTH casually brandishes a **butcher knife**, wholly unnecessary for buttering biscuits.

SADIE

Yeah. That makes sense. And I wish I believed it, but I just can't spend every meal standing in silence behind my respective man, as we do in the Community, literally eating 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 feel compelled to confess.

I can tell you're eating...

(Voice lower)

The Drugs.

Jedidiah ate...some of the same thing you're having...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

...

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.

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 the baptism tomorrow.

Nor the Pearly Gates when we pass.

SADIE

Ruth, wait...

RUTH

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

SADIE

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

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

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

JACOB

(Exaggerated noir detective mode)

Gimme the 411, fellas.

A crash? On Old Country Road, off the...covered bridge? Copy.

No shit. Not the strand I've been tracking, by any chance? Damn.

10-411. I'll be there as fast as I can drive. Uh, legally.

Returning to the table, JACOB begins rummaging for **cash**. He's the type of guy whose pockets are always bursting 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 blushes, but has to speak up, before JACOB leaves.

LEVI

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

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

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. The counter might
be cleared and topped with candles, or JEDIDIAH
carries on a **podium**, transitioning into:

Scene 3: Bishop Interlude I

Now that he's actually in the church, on the day of,
JEDIDIAH is nervous as heck. He addresses the
audience, shakily.

JEDIDIAH

Guder mariye, congregation. Sons, and sons of sons.
And daughters and mothers...
Welcome to Baptism Ceremony!

(Cringe 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, jerks, around his crotch.

I pray that's enough for you.

I mean, I pray I'll do you proud. As I perform our annual four sermons about what we believe—what I believe—concerning the temptations our new congregants have returned to release. We will scrub their souls, muddled with manure, like Jesus cleaning his dirty, dirty, dirty disciples. Um. For *Forestalling*, the Introduction, I shall read from 1 Corinthians! A crowd pleaser, here it comes...

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

Drat, shucks, shoot, just building suspense...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."

(Paraphrasing)

But do you not feel selfish, when you place yourself above your community? Above us?

With his emotional support Bible, JED grows slightly more comfortable, confident.

And, and worse, "when you sin sexually—you are not your own body. You are made from Christ, and you were bought at a price." By Jesus. For you, he paid that price. For you, we've all sacrificed. And so, "Do not seek your own good. Seek the greater good." And if you do not, "You might escape, but only through fire."

Lightning cracks. JEDIDIAH jumps and squeals.

WILLA, SADIE, and LEVI scatter.

Disappointed in himself, JED sighs, takes an **apple** out of his pocket, and crunches a bite. This can happen anytime he discusses temptation. Biblical sight gag! Get it?

And now, Jedidiah, you must merely do that before an audience.
The entire Community. Easy. Easy...easy...

JED lowers to his knees, moaning:

Oh, *Gotte*...

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

SADIE paces around their home (the only fixed set), until her flip phone rings. Her ringtone is some outdated pop, maybe Madonna's "Like A Prayer."

SADIE

Is that you, Will?!

Across the stage, the Shady Maple table is now an interrogation room, holding...

WILLA

It's me, Sadie.

Note: in this scene, WILLA's accent, which was probably faint in Scene 1, is undetectable. More code-switching, in public.

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

SADIE

I've been worried sick, Will!

WILLA

It's been two hours, Sadie.

SADIE

I wouldn't know, Will! Our clock flicked out with the electricity for a second. And you need to fix it. Where the heck are you?!

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.

SADIE

Should I be?

WILLA

Definitely not, no.

SADIE

Well, carry on, then?

WILLA

Alright. Here goes.
...I was busted.

SADIE

Oh, sis yucht...

WILLA

For...speeding.

SADIE picks up a **mason jar**, smashes it.

WILLA (cont'd.)

What was that?

SADIE

I broke a glass.

WILLA

It's like, we can never win.

SADIE

Is your body and spirit okay?

WILLA

Uh, yes, 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. 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 mystery books, the bad guys—or the innocent ones, whoever's roped into trouble by wrathful 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 us, in our little glass jar.

All those years of running around, I can't believe we finally got caught.

WILLA

Not we, Sadie. Me.

SADIE

I'll bring bail dollars for the Speeding Pass.

WILLA

Don't. Don't go back for the offering dish.

Don't lift a finger.

SADIE

How 'bout ten, for prayer?

WILLA

Really, Sadie. I know what I did was selfish, but...I'll figure this out. 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.

WILLA

I've got to go/

SADIE

/Willa, were you high?

WILLA

(Carefully choosing words around Jacob)

Um...Not on my own...I bought a separate...little sweet treat. As an energy boost!
Because I was so frickin' nervous and just trying to help us! Are you still there, Sadie?
Say something, please say something!

SADIE

Something.

Something I would do...is follow you, to the end of the world.

To Florida.

But God, you can be so stupid and stubborn 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, um, such specific crime language to a
minimum, during this call/

JACOB

Miss Stoltzfus, hang up the phone.

SADIE

Will, please come home...

JACOB

Miss Stoltzfus, the phone.

SADIE

Will, 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.

Kinda drunk 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. You also left out you were carrying drugs.

WILLA

Because she's carrying none.

JACOB

How protective 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. Smartass.

It means you have the right to remain silent, instead of taking shots at my upbringing. There, they shame me. Out here, y'all judge me. You still talk and talk about crazy old ex-Amish Jacob Beiler, don't go to his house for Halloween, maybe he'll give you a cross to bear, and that wouldn't look good with your colored hair...

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

WILLA

Ohh, no, 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 sometimes...they're calling this...

(Gesturing to Willa's appearance)

"A phase," right? And when you're in a phase, you're allowed to make everyone's life hell.

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

WILLA

What do I have to do? I'm not the one cooking this shit/

JACOB

I know. You're not a threat.

Too quickly dismissed, kinda offended, WILLA furrows her brows. She could if she wanted to!

JACOB (cont'd.)

But you're in touch with it.

You've met the temptress that's ravaged town after town...

(These are actual towns)

Lititz. New Holland. Bird-in-Hand...

Intercourse! It fucking ruined Intercourse!

It's torn families apart, and forced them to stick together, and stolen young lives in the night. And you know the source to all that suffering.

WILLA

Um...Sin?

JACOB

("Bad cop," smacking the table)

The Supplier of the meth!

(Finally softening into "good cop")

Dear. Between you and me, your right to remain silent won't free you like talking will.

You want out? All you've gotta do is pay a visit to this supplier. Chat a bit, get him to confess, while you're wearing a wire.

I'll explain how it works. I know technology can be hard for girls.

WILLA

I'm not a—/

JACOB

(Self-correcting, apologetic)

"Woman." You're not a girl. You're a woman.

I did the training. I know the PC shit.

WILLA

Me, too. PC's a computer.

JACOB

Well, then. You'll operate the wire just fine.

WILLA is wavering, feeling guilty, compelled to balance her selfish acts with a selfless one.

WILLA

I won't send anyone to the chopping block.

JACOB

As if this guy's not lining 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

I have guns. Everyone has guns.

WILLA

Is that a loaded gun?

JACOB

Is that a loaded question?
Pray you don't have to find out.

WILLA

(Eye roll)

Dear God.

JACOB

We'll protect you for life, and lock all these bastards up. But until then, you'll be the one behind bars.

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

JACOB (cont'd.)

(Standing to go)

I did hear, on your call...that your "best friend" is on Rumspringa. What if you miss your window to convince her to stay? Now that'd wreck some hearts.

JACOB exits, swigging from his flask and leaving
WILLA in her "holding cell," where she remains
for the next few scenes, deliberating, in withdrawal.

Meanwhile, SADIE flips open her cellular.

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."

JEDIDIAH joins, prefacing his next Interlude:

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."

SADIE speaks upwards, into the darkening skies
and darker void.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Dear *Gotte*. Or...phone. Or...FBI...? I'm sorry.

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

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

Scene 5: Bishop Interlude II

Still onstage, in his house/church, JED is attempting
to go off-book, with handwritten notes. But as his
big event approaches, his anxiety grows.

JEDIDIAH

Sermon II. *Anfang*. The Beginning.

Which is different from the Introduction...I didn't write the rules.

But that doesn't mean I don't love the rules!

As Stoltzfus would say, "*So war's immer*." Rules are tradition.

The world out there that you just saw—our baptism candidates—it's moving faster than
ever. Right? No one cares about you. But in here, *Gotte* does. So, um, we submit to his
order, to preserve what's true.

For the *maedels* out there—*Hallo, maedels*—your purpose is to submit. And to, um, not
be demons...and, um, lure us into the aforementioned temptations, pulling us from our
roles as dominant, unshakable, protective, providers...ahh, cow dung!

On a candle, Jed's paper notes catch **afame**.

Ruth! Ruth!!! Achh, *kedrick, kedrick*, cow dung!

Squealing, he fans the pages, blows on them.

I need *wassere, wassere, wassere*...

JED swipes a jug of **holy water** and splashes it upon the fire. Oy. Over the puddle, he kneels.

Gotte! You trusted me, and I cannot rise to your service.
I love...I hate...

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

Give me a sign. If you call on me to do this, give me a...

Riiiiiiiiing! In another room, a **phone** shrills. JED jumps. Wind howls. Introducing the next scene, a single corn cob may roll across the stage. Ominous.

Scene 6: Cornfield

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

JEDIDIAH

Levi! My *bruder!* *Wie bischt!*
It's nice to see you again, after three sunball spins.

LEVI

Yeah. 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 shall let it drip into my beard.

LEVI

Congrats, 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! 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, she tracks.

LEVI

I'm sorry, man, but I'm actually hella hurting for green right now. I'm in a kinda scary business situation. Like, I might've just been robbed.

JEDIDIAH

You were robbed?!

LEVI

Yeah, bruh, of my business product! And get this—BY my business colleague! I can't get in touch with Mr. Will and the low-down is, we owe some very loyal disciple customers my expensive business product. Gotta carry out my side of the deals, you know?

JEDIDIAH

Sure. Like trading goods. Cattle.

LEVI

Yeah, except my herder bitch ran away with the bessies.

JEDIDIAH

What a pickle.

(Beat, then)

My issue is, though, *bruder*...

I'm...ill. Alright? Inside the skull.

My brain buzzes with bees of dubiousness and disbelief. Bishop Stoltzfus told me it was merely head congestion...Just a lifetime of everlasting year-round allergies. But I'm beginning to think it's the 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. Whole County'll be present. And I'll bring *you* the offering dish after. Brimming with wooden nickels.

LEVI

For real?

(Doing the math)

Four hundred dollars worth?! That's...holy shit...

JEDIDIAH

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

LEVI

Okay. Bet. Ya know what, what the fuck.

You're lucky I just came into this money.

JEDIDIAH

A sign.

LEVI

Nah, I just don't really 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

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 I ever do is show up places, just to be turned away. Guess I should lower my bar into hell.

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

We're all one, and equal.

LEVI

For sure...

JEDIDIAH

But gee, the power 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 volume 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, get that dish, and bring me my fucking money.

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

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

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

Sorry, yeah, sorry I'm a smidgen delayed.

JEDIDIAH

That you are is a miracle. 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 understand how that works.

SADIE

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

Anxious, JED peers around, but fortunately, LEVI
is leaving, having not seen them.

JEDIDIAH

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

SADIE

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

JEDIDIAH

Ha, ha...oh dear.
Um. Let's cut to the steeplechase?
On the wire, you said you could cure my sermon stress...?

SADIE

(Nervous, new at this)

Uh. Yes. I can. I...I think you need this.

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

JEDIDIAH

A whoopie pie?

(Lying, but being kind)

Sadie, you know I love your whoopie pies.
But I'm fulfilled by my wife's, your sister's, whoopie pies.

Gradually, trying something new, SADIE leans into
her femininity, flirting, seeing it work on Jed.

SADIE

That's okay.
You don't even gotta taste it.
Alls you've gotta do is peek.

The magic's *inside*.

JEDIDIAH

Oh...my. May I...touch it?

SADIE

You may.

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

SADIE (cont'd.)

(Offended)

Jedidiah! That's homemade!

JEDIDIAH

(Also aghast)

I know that ingredient!

SADIE

I know you do.

I know it made you feel big and strong, *ja*?

It gave you faith, and a real manly halo and wings?

JEDIDIAH

That it did...

JED picks it up, dusts it off, wavering.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

You're sweet. Thank you, dear. But...

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

SADIE

I used the last of it on a Shoofly.

JEDIDIAH

Shoofly funeral pie? Who died?

SADIE

No one, yet.

Enjoy baking your baked good, brother. Pleasure doing business with ya.

But if anyone asks, I was never here.

JEDIDIAH nods curtly, 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 7: Police Station / Cornfield

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

JACOB

How we doin' in here?

WILLA

How's it look like we're doing?

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

JACOB

Ah, I scored an invite to the Willa Stoltzfus pity party! Lucky me.

Miss Stoltzfus. 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

(Nothing to lose, confession)

I might. A little.
I've been on my Rumspringa. Today's my last day.
So, stop looking at me 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 see why you won't squawk. If you're stuck here, you don't have to make a choice. You don't have to trust yourself. You can blame me.

(Jokey, condescending)

You can blame me, sweetheart.
Come on. I wanna go hunting for dealers...

WILLA

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

JACOB

Uh. You're not.
Would you treat me any different if I was the Bishop?

(Joking, with voice)

Kumm mit [come on], *Willa*. Follow the light, Willa/

WILLA

I don't want to/

JACOB

/Come along, lets go/

WILLA

/Dett, leave me alone.

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

JACOB

I'll check in again 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

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

LEVI

...Hilarious.

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

JACOB

What about what I gave you this morning?!

LEVI

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

JACOB

(Taken aback)

You saw your Amish family?

LEVI

Yahhh.

JACOB

To say goodbye for good, or...?

LEVI

Neither.

JACOB

Okay. Well, just another brilliant move of yours.

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

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

The Tri-Town Area Drug Task Force. DTF.

LEVI

(Backing away)

Noiiiiice. There's a title. Um. Wow. Why didn't you tell me?

JACOB

You've never asked me a single question.

LEVI

Right on, man. Right on...

JACOB

Levi? Breathe, kid...

LEVI

(Slipping to the floor)

I think 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 airplane to motherfucking Florida!

Because they're in public, JACOB attempts to quiet
LEVI, who worms 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, yeah, unless I go straight-up Amish! Screw our weekly Farmers Combos! I'll pull a U-turn and go get baptized and tell everyone in the village all about your horseshit. 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 on what to say)

Material goods can't solve your problems.

LEVI

They KIND OF CAN, THOUGH.

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

JACOB

Fine. Go. Hitch hike to Florida, or anywhere that isn't here.

Leave this purgatory of a town, and the Community that would actually keep you safe,
but where you'd resent me forever.

Get yourself shelter, not some last-ditch stab at pleasure.

(Serious, after a beat)

You know if you die here, on the outs, not committed to the church...you're barred from
Heaven. From eternal life, and eternal waffles. Son—/

LEVI

Don't you dare call me that.

I can take care of myself, Jacob.

I am no one's Son.

Enraged, LEVI 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 **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, on the other side of your device. I'm using it more now, since Will was busted with your drugs, you know.

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

SADIE
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've got Professional Experience now. Might even have a knack for it—/

LEVI
Nah, fuck no, I'm closing shop.

SADIE
What?

LEVI
(Probably a Jacob phrase)
It's a dangerous road.

SADIE
Roads never spooked ya before. Remember how dark it'd get, on the ride home in your buggy after church *singeons* [singalongs]?
You had the loveliest voice. Mine was awful.

LEVI
You were young.

SADIE

(Tuneless, terribly, song by The Killers)

“When we were young...”

LEVI

Yeah. And we’d play pretend we were *Dett* and *Maam*, ‘member that?

SADIE

Heads of a family.

LEVI

Straight chillin. Now that’s a throwback.

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

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. 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, 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 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

(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, and my baking's *baremllich*, just ask Willa or my sister or your brother/

LEVI

Trust me. *This* kind of handy you can be.
(truly innocent, but can sound uncomfy)
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 flavor? 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 supptime, would you say?

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.

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.

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.

If you want an intermission, maybe put it here. If not, carry on, godspeed.

Scene 8: 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

Blech! Good Heavens, Ruth.

RUTH

I thought you'd appreciate the gesture.

JEDIDAH

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, eventually slipping a palm down his trousers, if both actors are comfortable choreographing this.

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

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—I'm sorry, /I'm sorry, I'm sorry—/

RUTH

/Jed, where'd you get this?!

JED snatches it back, playing keepaway.

JEDIDIAH

It's—um, it's one of yours! From the batch you baked last week, generous angel, for the 16-year-olds 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—/

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

Oh. Uh. Your whoopie pies are...

RUTH

In detail, *once*.

JEDIDIAH

(Stammering)

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

Correct.

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

(With a playful, menacing lil slap)

Come on, husband, say it!

What do we whisper behind the outhouse, after faking bites, 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 again, So, riddle me this, *liebbling*.

Why are you holding, in your palm there, one of my Sister's "flat, lumpy, sort of slimy, 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, hmm?

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 messy, terrifying shimmy.

RUTH (cont'd.)

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

JEDIDIAH

Shut your whoopie-piehole!

RUTH

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 my sister Sadie is "running late," I can only assume *you* are running around.

JEDIDIAH

Narrish maedel...

RUTH

Of course, that's it. After all I do for you...

I'm a crazy woman. And she's a quieter girl.

She'd be an easier wife, wouldn't she? A tamer mother?

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

JEDIDIAH

No.

RUTH

Prove it. Let me watch you throw it away.

JEDIDIAH

No.

RUTH

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

JEDIDIAH

No.

RUTH

You're right. We shouldn't just dump it. We'll *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 *creeeeaak*.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

(Composing)

Oh. Um. *Willkumme*, Council...

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 immediately into...

Scene 9: Bishop Interlude III / Police Station / Barn Party

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

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

For you this evening, I present *Altvater*, the Third Sermon.
Of course, we know *Altvater* means Patriarch. But how often do we ask ourselves, "What *is* Patriarch?" Patriarch is Male Head of Church. Male Head of Family.
And Male Head of all Churches and Families is...?

JED might pause and point to the Heavens, waiting
for audience members to answer.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

Gotte. That's right, men.

At this point in our parable, we have relinquished temptation and married ourselves to tradition. Finally, our King will award immortality to his disciples, *if* they confess their sins and pay their dues. On the matter, Luke Chapter 12, declares: "When a crowd of thousands had gathered, Jesus began to speak:"

WILLA prays at her cell 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.

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 along LEVI. All 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

Did...did ya see the band they brought 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 jugs and banjos powered by electricity!

WILLA

The Yoder Boys, *ja*. They rock onwards.
Did ya see that giant tarp kids are calling "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, peeping around)

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

WILLA

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

SADIE

Ewww!

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?

LEVI displays a plastic baggy. SADIE gasps.

SADIE (cont'd.)

Why, that's...that's...

(To Willa)

You enjoy the meth minerals?

WILLA

I ain't never tried before.

SADIE

Me neither. You have, Levi? It's only our first week of Rumspringa, and you've already got so much in that tiny plastic sack...

LEVI

I'm gonna sell it more than I use it, of course. I just wanna 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...

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? Damn, it feels like...Hope.
You believe in yourself, and time is infinite.
You believe Love is real, and life is 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

I can handle hardcore.

I always eat the apple core.

LEVI

Alright, don't twist your knickers in a knot.

Lemme just pull out my pipe and/

SADIE

I've got matches. 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 schtarrkeppich [a common phrase]?

Why are you so stubborn?

SADIE

Everyone's always askin' us that.

But we're not stubborn. We're strong.

LEVI

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.

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

WILLA

(Gesturing offstage)

They’re “wasted.” See? The lambs. The older kids are feeding them poison, through that tube someone called “a beer bong.”

SADIE

Oh. What a clever contraption.

(Now sitting and settled)

So, 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 don’t know. But I know I know what you are.

You’re a silly goose with a soft heart.

You’re a soul worthy of forever.

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

WILLA

(After an endeared beat)

Are you ready?

SADIE

I'm frightened.

WILLA

We can do it with our eyes closed?

SADIE

Can we not go back?

WILLA

Do you want to?

SADIE

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

WILLA

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

Home never felt like home. To me, you feel like home.

Emboldened, WILLA graces Sadie's 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?!

Nobody's even paying attention. We can be ourselves out here. We can wear the pants!

We can touch. We can start over.

(Re: the drugz)

With this?! We can be free...

With that, slowly, curious, still on their knees,
WILLA and SADIE face each other and touch
hands, palm to palm, as if 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 beer cans and rakes, and...are those
beer cans stabbed onto rakes? Put the tridents downwwwn!

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

SADIE

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

WILLA

Well, we'll get a house, Sades. And careers, if you want, and a barrel more of this power.

SADIE

I've heard it destroys people...

WILLA

But it built this, didn't it? 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 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 leave you with that, wanting more.

I shall see you tomorrow, 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 10: Local Dive Bar

JEDIDIAH sits at the bar, 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.

JACOB

You Mennonite?

JEDIDIAH

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.

Throat tight. Chest heavy. Brain on fire. From all the, uh, harvestin', you know.

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'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 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. 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. 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 the outhouse, and by the light of 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). Putting two-and-two together, JED is advancing.

JACOB (cont'd.)

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

JEDIDIAH

You don't mean...Levi?

I would hardly describe Levi as serious and lasting, but...

JACOB

Uh, hold your horses, man. 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

It was love!

(Unaware this is a phrase)

Love is love!

JEDIDIAH

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

JACOB

Uh...looks like a power outage.

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 morning 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:

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 11: 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

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

LEVI

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

SADIE

Come again?

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! 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. 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.

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

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 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 hoooooome! 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

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 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 caught 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.

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 with her.

RUTH

(Wandering inside, nose upturned)

Grisleh, are you proud of this unkempt pigsty you call Home?!

Flour coating every surface—it's a tinderbox. Crawling with 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 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 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.

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 crank 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, 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

Aw 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
Oh, Ruth...

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 *are* well-acquainted, don't you know?

I see them meeting for secret scrapple on the sly.

My guess is they're forbiddenly courting.

LEVI

Ha! Nah, he wishes. This bastard's my *Dett*.

A 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 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 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 getting innocent children addicted to an artificial euphoria!
But, that's life out here, huh?
Free happiness isn't real. It's poison.
And you're a murderer for distributing it.

LEVI

And you're a mas-o-chist 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-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

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 any goddamn 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 too late.

LEVI

When I do well for myself out here, everyone makes me feel bad about it. When I don't,
I'm fucking cooked. I didn't ask for any of this! I'll drag *you* down with me...!

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...

Avoiding eye contact with the others, LEVI directs
the **pistol** at his **own temple**. Oh. Shit...

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 the three girls run into the yard.

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

LEVI

I wasn't going to...

JACOB

It's okay, son. I know.

(Re: the fire)

I've always wanted to say this.

(Into wire/phone)

Boys? I'm gonna need backup.

JACOB moves aside with LEVI, to his 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! 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

We'll walk, then! I'm serious, it's only how far to paradise?!

SIRI (voice)

(From Jacob's pocket)

1,086 miles to Paradise Beach, Florida.

SADIE

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

WILLA

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

SADIE

But what if we do? What if, together, we already did?!

WILLA

I'm an addict.

SADIE

I know, Will.

WILLA

Yeah, yeah, and I know...no will.

No free will. No will power.

...I need to go back.

SADIE

(Nodding, like "yes yes")

For our plan.

WILLA

No, no. Not only for tomorrow.

For real.

Maybe, once I've fixed myself up, someday I'll escape and come find you—/

SADIE

/Whoa, whoa, whoa, *liebling*. Pump the brakes.

There are doctors out here! "Rehab centers." I heard about them, from Jeeves.

You could be like—Dorothy, from the Wizard of Oz! She went to "Rehab." Or Marilyn Monroe! Or Prince!

JACOB

Those are terrible examples.

WILLA

(To Sadie)

As you said this morning, “with what money?” I can’t *afford* to be like...Marilyn Monroe, cross-dressing like a man in *Some Like It Hot*. I can’t hold a job when I’d rather be holding a pipe, which, out here, I can always be doing.

SADIE

Okay. I will come back with you then.

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 with practicality.

WILLA (cont’d.)

(Like “wtf”)

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

Firetruck sirens sound off, in the distance.

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 send my earnings back to you, Ruthie. And the family.

If you’ll watch over Will.

Releasing ego, RUTH breathes deep, near tears, accepting this. 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.

As a parting gift, RUTH hands SADIE the **dollars** she'd snatched from the trailer. SADIE takes them. Then, SADIE returns her attention to WILL, outstretching her **hand-sewn clothes**.

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 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 looks to RUTH, who turns her back, allowing it.

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

The rain starts up again, along with an orchestral version of "Like A Prayer" (or whatever theme song). Cinematic? Ridiculous? Both? Your call.

WILL

I...I....

As they part, SADIE shakes her head, no. She can't. Both know, right now, there's nothing else to say.

RUTH corrals WILL out, EXITING.

SADIE stands alone, nearly naked.

Scene 12: 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: 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 that what pains us today pay off in our futures—or others' futures—for the Community and vaster cosmic design.

My first cohort of baptism candidates!

Tis my humblest honor to summon up and 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 a flame to a wick!

I'm overwrought with how deeply I love our Father's...big...heart.

Choked up, our leader snorts, a side effect of a lingering high. RUTH claps him on the back.

JEDIDIAH (cont'd.)

First up is none other than our old Bishop's Daughter.

At 19, this girl sure enjoyed her "run-around." That's no short run!

(After light-hearted laughter from his fans)

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 and His Church, 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.

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 as his character witness. Both are cleaned up nicely, wearing button-downs, addressing a judge.

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 society that *is* astray. But he's smart, and forcing himself onto the right path. 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 sick and twisted world? Uh, yah. 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 granted his requested sentence, with a sigh of relief, shared with JACOB. The two collapse together in an exhausted hug.

From behind WILLA, JEDIDIAH clasps a hand over her eyes. Then, RUTH comes forward, to seal WILLA with the **Holy Kiss**. On the lips. No homo. Then, JED pours Holy Water over Willa.

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

SADIE, who enters wide-eyed, wearing a swimsuit and carrying a suitcase, fresh off a bus.

She wanders in front of an unburned trailer. Outside the trailer window, instead of farmland... ocean waves crash upon the shore.

Sarasota, Florida. She made it.

Across the stage, WILLA and SADIE lock eyes and reflect. On what could've been. What could someday be. But right now, what is.

SADIE

I can't.

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

SADIE (cont'd.)

Whoopie pies for sale! Holy, *transcendent* whoopie pies!
Funeral pie, hot and wet!

WILLA eyes the offering dish. Someday?

The theme song rises. Waves wash over.

End of play.