

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an *excerpt* from a Samuel French title.

This sample is for perusal only and may not be used for performance purposes.

You may not download, print, or distribute this excerpt.

We highly recommend purchasing a copy of the title before considering for performance.

For more information about licensing or about purchasing a play or musical, please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

Gnit

*a fairly rough translation of
Henrik Ibsen's Peer Gynt*

Will Eno

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

SAMUELFRENCH.COM
SAMUELFRENCH-LONDON.CO.UK

Copyright © 2014 by Will Eno

All Rights Reserved

Cover Image © “Blandt Blomar” (Among flowers) Two men and a boy, Anton Stang, in an orchard in Stongfjorden. Circa 1910 by Photographer Paul Stang, released by County Archives of Sogn og Fjordane, Sweden.

GNIT is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-70307-2

www.SamuelFrench.com

www.SamuelFrench-London.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Info@SamuelFrench.com

1-866-598-8449

UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

Plays@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk

020-7255-4302

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French, depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *GNIT* may not be licensed by Samuel French in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Samuel French office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *GNIT* is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play(s) does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to Samuel French before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Samuel French.

No one shall make any changes in this title(s) for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall upload this title(s), or part of this title(s), to any social media websites.

For all enquiries regarding motion picture, television, and other media rights, please contact Samuel French.

MUSIC USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for all music clearances and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Samuel French, against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of music by licensees. Please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

GNIT was first produced in the 2013 Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville in Louisville, KY on March 15, 2013. The performance was directed by Les Waters, with sets by Antje Ellermann, costumes by Connie Furr-Soloman, lighting by Matt Frey, sound by Bray Poor. The Production Stage Manager was Paul Mills Holmes. The cast was as follows:

MOTHER Linda Kimbrough
PETER Dan Waller
STRANGER 1 Kris Kling
STRANGER 2 Kate Eastwood Norris
TOWN Danny Wolohan
SOLVAY Hannah Bos

CHARACTERS

MOTHER – (UNCLE JOE, BEGGAR), 60s or so

PETER – 30s-40s

STRANGER 1 – (STRANGER 3, MOYNIHAN, VOICE, HUNTER, ROBBER,
Voice of SPHINX, SHACKLETON, PALE MAN, REPORTER), male, late
20s-40s

STRANGER 2 – (BRIDESMAID, BRIDE, GROUPIE, WOMAN IN GREEN,
HELEN, CASE WORKER, ANITRA, PASTOR, BREMER, ANNA),
female, late 20s-40s

TOWN – (THE GREEN FAMILY, INTERNATIONAL MAN, BEGRIFFIN),
male, 30s-50s

SOLVAY – (BARTENDER, DARK LADY, GRAVEDIGGER, AUCTIONEER),
female, 30s-40s

Double-cast roles are in parentheses. This suggested configuration will require a number of quick-changes, but these are certainly in the spirit of the play.

All of the characters share a simple and dry way of delivering their lines, and, as well, a kind of matter-of-fact and Scandinavian worldview, even though the play is not set there.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Though the play is mainly set in unnamed semi-mythical setting, I think it works well with a somewhat Scandinavian scenic design. This is not to say a modern or IKEA-product sort of design, but rather one that uses raw and rough-hewn wood and rough natural fabrics. Various locations should be created simply, but also very specifically. Transitions should be able to be accomplished quickly and without a lot of fuss. A sense of woods and mountains and trees is important, especially for the end of the play.

Music and a rich sound design, for transitions and elsewhere, are encouraged. For example, perhaps there is some strange and beautiful Appalachian music that would work well, in a spot or two, for transition music. For another example, director Les Waters and sound designer Bray Poor used a pop song in a recording by the children of the Langley School Music project for the transition into the wedding scene, which then continued at a lower volume into the scene.

It is important that the role of Peter is played seriously. He is an intelligent-enough and resourceful man who is on a serious and deeply felt mission to find himself. He also has a very dry sense of humor, though he is mainly unaware of, and certainly unconcerned with being funny. Similarly, all other characters in the play share a dry and simple way of speaking. I think a production that is rich in its detail, in terms of both acting and scenic design, but is also simple and unpretentious, is best in order to bring out both the humor and the pathos of the play.

ACT FIRST

Scene First

(The Gnit home – pronounced “Guh-nit”. Lights up on MOTHER, alone, in bed, recovering from a hysterectomy. Any movements she makes, throughout the scene, are made with a little difficulty.)

MOTHER. Never have children. Or, I don’t know, have children. You end up talking to yourself, either way.

(Pause. PETER enters, with a small box.)

PETER. Hi, Mom.

MOTHER. You’re a liar.

PETER. That’s a nice “welcome home.”

MOTHER. No, it isn’t.

PETER. God, Mom. I was trying to –

MOTHER. *(interrupting)* Yes, I’m sure you were.

(noticing the small box that PETER holds)

Is that for me?

PETER. What, this? Uh, yeah. You might not like it.

MOTHER. *(She opens it. It’s a men’s tie, yellow-green.)* You know, just because I can’t have children anymore, because I don’t have the organs for it anymore, doesn’t mean I suddenly started goddamn wearing goddamn ties. Oh, but we’re in luck. It’s your color.

PETER. If you don’t want it, I’ll give it a try. *(begins putting it on)*

MOTHER. How kind.

PETER. Hey, it fits.

MOTHER. Aren't you even going to ask how I am?

PETER. How are you?

MOTHER. You promised you'd be here. What a darling boy.
You lied.

PETER. I said I was sorry.

MOTHER. No, in fact, you didn't.

PETER. Well, I am.

MOTHER. No, in fact, you aren't.

PETER. Why don't you ever believe me?

MOTHER. Probably because you're always lying.

PETER. I was trying to tell you, if you'd just let me –

MOTHER. (*interrupting*;) And because, when you begin sentences with "I," I'm not even sure you know who you're talking about. Because maybe I didn't hold you enough when you were little.

PETER. You held me a lot.

MOTHER. I held you all the time. I never let you go. You were very holdable. I held you and told you little stories to cover up the sound of your father piddling our futures away. (*pause*) I needed you, Peter. I was scared.

PETER. I'm sorry, mom.

MOTHER. I know you are, sweetheart. You always were.

PETER. I was trying to get home and then the –

MOTHER. (*interrupting*) Maybe if I'd let you babble more when you were a baby, you wouldn't still be babbling now.

PETER. I'm not babbling, this is the story of –

MOTHER. (*interrupting*) "Mrs. Gnit, will someone be coming to help you home?" "My son should be here any minute. I think he's going to surprise me. I'll just wait here." And we all stared down a long empty hallway. Surprise!

PETER. I was trying to –

MOTHER. (*interrupting*) Just be quiet.

PETER. So now I can't even open my mouth?

MOTHER. That's all you can do. Like a little fuzzy baby bird.
Making little peeps for its dirty worm.

PETER. *(pause)* Peep peep. *(brief pause)* Is there any chance I could get that dirty worm now? *(brief pause)* I like your dress.

MOTHER. I'm glad you're home, you big old disappointment.

PETER. *(wanting to tell a story)* I almost didn't make it.

MOTHER. *(not wanting to hear it)* But you did. Where's the cat?

PETER. Probably outside.

MOTHER. Can you get me the blanket? I think it's under the bed.

(PETER starts looking for the blanket, which isn't under the bed.)

PETER. So, yeah, no, I almost didn't make it.

MOTHER. There's supposed to be a frost tonight.

PETER. Huh. Anyway, so a few days ago, I'm looking around, and what do I see, but a –

MOTHER. *(interrupting)* It isn't under the bed?

PETER. No. What do I see, but this crazy dog. Wild, but familiar; brown fur, but with Dad's eyes. So I took off after it.

MOTHER. Okay.

PETER. What?

MOTHER. No, go ahead.

PETER. I will. So, I could so easily see the thing, shivering on a rusty tangled chain, while a family dined inside, in silence. There it sits, banished – hungry and getting smarter. Scrawniness is power, it seemed to say. I wanted to know its secret.

MOTHER. I don't think dogs have secrets. *(admiring her dress)* Do you really like this dress?

PETER. It's fine. Yeah, so this dog. I started screaming my own name, chasing after it. God. Wow. *(He stares off, dreamily.)*

MOTHER. *(brief pause)* And? I'm not interested – but, don't leave us hanging. Did you catch it?

PETER. Yes and no. We ran through backyards, boy and dog, together. My legs got all scratched up. Somebody shot at us, I think.

MOTHER. *(concerned)* No.

PETER. Yeah. I think. People screamed. I didn't recognize anything. The dog, now limping, now half-wearing a pretty dress from a clothesline we'd run though, and me. Man and Nature, Mom. On a journey without maps, through a new theology, bible-less. And I suddenly could see that the –

MOTHER. *(interrupting)* God, what is that smell? Do you smell that? Oh, God, it's terrible.

PETER. I don't smell anything. But, so there we were. I saw the world as if I'd just turned a corner onto it. This was my moment. I wanted to –

MOTHER. *(still trying to find the source of the smell)* Is it your shoes? Did you step in something?

PETER. *(He sniffs his shoes and is repulsed.)* Oh, God. Yeah, I did. Sorry. Fuck.

MOTHER. Take them off, Peter. Get them outside. And don't swear.

(He exits.)

Love is in the air.

(PETER returns with his shoes off.)

Light a candle or some matches. *(brief pause)* We don't have any candles. Maybe I hung that blanket up outside.

PETER. So, the dog and I. It had been a few days now and the hunger and blood loss were getting us somewhere special. I was seeing stars. I don't know what the dog was seeing. Sticks? Bones? Stars, just like me? I don't

know, I'm not a veterinarian. We stopped to breathe and I was rubbing my leg and then the dog just bolted. Then I looked up, and, there was the house, and, here I was, Home.

MOTHER. Really?

PETER. Really, Mom. Mom, I never felt so alive.

MOTHER. No? Not even last year? When the exact same thing happened? And you couldn't get home in time to take me in for my blood tests? You told me the exact same story, last year.

PETER. What do you mean, last – . No, come on – I felt alive then, too. This was different. This time, at first, I was thinking –

MOTHER. (*interrupting*) Enough, Peter. I can't, okay. No more. (*brief pause*) God, I can't get warm.

PETER. Here. (*He puts his jacket over her.*)

MOTHER. Can you tell me what you were born for? Honestly? Because I can't.

PETER. Well, you always told me –

MOTHER. (*interrupting*) I'm sure I told you something.

(*finds a little bag of candies in PETER's jacket pocket*)

What are these?

PETER. Oh, yeah, I forgot. I thought you used to like those.

MOTHER. Yes, I did, Pee-Wee. I did used to like these. (*She tries one.*) You're a good boy, Peter. You're like your father.

PETER. You hated dad.

MOTHER. I *disliked* your father, and was deeply offended by him. I never hated him. You be careful or you'll end up just like him.

PETER. Oh, no. I've got bigger plans.

MOTHER. So did he.

PETER. I'm on a journey to discover, to uncover, the authentic self.

MOTHER. Yeah? Get some milk, while you're out. (*brief pause*) I'm sorry about what I said, Peter. You were born because I needed you. Let me see your legs.

PETER. (*PETER rolls up his torn pants.*) Dueling scars, from my run-in with the world.

MOTHER. Cuts on your legs from running in the woods like an idiot.

PETER. Well, potayto, potahto.

MOTHER. There's rubbing alcohol in there.

(*Pointing to a cabinet. PETER gets the rubbing alcohol.*

MOTHER *prepares to put it on PETER's cuts.*)

That girl should be doing this. That girl you used to skate with.

PETER. Sarah.

MOTHER. I think she still loves you. With her brains and looks and her money, and your – all your wonderful things, your posture – what children you'd have. You could do worse than marrying her. Just think. We could get new windows.

PETER. Maybe I should. She's pretty. (*He winces and swears, due to the sting of the alcohol being applied.*) Jesus. I should give that a go. I liked her. I should. Christ. She'd make me happy and calm. I could find myself. God, Fuck, that stings. She loved me. I should marry her. Auugh! Fucking Jesus Shit! I will. I'll marry her.

MOTHER. She's getting married this afternoon. I'm sorry, Peter. I don't know why I even brought it up. Probably some unconscious thing.

PETER. (*very calmly, softly*) Fucking Jesus Shit.

MOTHER. Don't swear, Peter.

PETER. Sarah's getting married.

MOTHER. Maybe if you'd worked harder at school or been born a different person... who knows?

PETER. Yeah, that's true, actually. *(brief pause)* You know what, I'm going to the wedding. I'll just show up. I'll have her, and with her idiot father's idiot consent. I always respected him. This just somehow feels right.

MOTHER. No it doesn't. This feels stupid and wrong. Just forget it, please. I just got out of the hospital. I need you here.

PETER. *(He wasn't listening.)* I'll need to leave, right away. And I'll need you to come with me. Talk me up, a little, with the in-laws. The Gnits will rise again!

MOTHER. No, we won't.

PETER. Yes, they will.

MOTHER. Peter, please – I just need to eat some protein.

PETER. Ah, I love you, ma. I should put you up on the roof or something.

MOTHER. That doesn't make any sense.

PETER. Doesn't it?

MOTHER. No. Did you even hear one word I just said?

PETER. Yeah. Definitely. "Children." And, I think, "posture," a while ago. So there's two – you only asked for one. Listen, I know this seems hectic. I know I seem a little hectic, right now. But I know it's right. This is the moment. I thought it was that dog, but, no. This'll be the moment. When my whole life, everything, changed. I promise. I'm the man of the house, now. I'll take care of you. I will. I'll comfort you, mother. *(motioning toward jacket)* Could I grab my, yeah, there we go – *(PETER takes his jacket back, gently.)* Wait, so who's she marrying?

MOTHER. That Moynihan. Come here, dear. Your collar is wrong.

PETER. Moynihan? I think I'd make a much better person than Moyniha –

(PETER has moved towards her bedside. MOTHER violently grabs PETER by the collar or tie.)

MOTHER. (*interrupting*) You're killing me, Peter. I'm so tired of the cold. I'm tired of the free church food. So go ahead, you go and try to get yourself married to that girl. Because, you know what? We need help. We're poor. Did you know that? We're poor people. I have a condition. We have broken windows and medical bills. We're in trouble. And you are killing your dying mother. (*She lets PETER go.*)

PETER. I understand.

MOTHER. No, you don't. (*very brief pause*) Be careful, Peter. Don't go die some ridiculous death.

PETER. I will, Mom. Thanks. I won't be long. Bye.

MOTHER. I really need you here. I need you. So come back home, soon, okay.

PETER. Definitely. (*He's halfway out the door.*)

MOTHER. What did I just say?

PETER. (*He was not paying attention. Pokes his head back in the door.*) Oh. Just, that when, or, I shouldn't, you said I shouldn't feel that I need –

MOTHER. Get out of here, Peter.

(*PETER exits. MOTHER eats another piece of candy.*)

That little man of mine. Sometimes, it's like I'm still pregnant with him. I mean, sometimes, I still get a little kick out of him.

Scene Second

(PETER enters, on his way to the wedding. Other side of the stage, two strangers approach. PETER hides.)

STRANGER 1. Oh, my god, yeah – half drunk half the time, just sort of stupid the rest. He’s just, “Me, me, me.” I mean, that’s him, saying that. I heard that one time he actually –

PETER. *(He steps out of his hiding spot. Pointedly:)* Sorry to interrupt. I suppose you’re talking about me?

STRANGER 1. Ah, no – sorry, buddy. *(He turns to continue talking to STRANGER 2.)* He’s terrible with old people, unkind to animals. *(He turns back to PETER.)* Hey, wait a minute – you’re Peter Gnit, aren’t you. You’re actually just like the guy I was just talking about. *(to STRANGER 2)* In fact, he’s probably worse.

STRANGER 2. What smells like urine?

PETER. Is this a quiz?

STRANGER 2. No. I smell urine.

PETER. Well, don’t look at me.

STRANGER 1. We’re both staring directly at you.

(STRANGER 1 and 2 begin to walk away.)

Anyway, as I was saying, this other guy was such a jerk, such a liar. But at least he didn’t have any pride about it. That’s what makes Gnit so much worse. He actually has the temerity to think he’s got something to offer us all.

STRANGER 2. Is temerity like recklessness?

STRANGER 1. Sort of, yeah.

STRANGER 2. That’s what I thought.

STRANGER 1. Vocabulary.

STRANGER 2. Yeah. *(very brief pause)* I guess in our relationship, you’re the one who talks more.

STRANGER 1. *(modestly:)* Oh, I don’t know about that, but, thank you.

(They both exit.)

PETER. *(He tries to smell his underarm.)* I'm not a – whatever he said. I'm not. Let's see. I need a plan, here. *(brief pause)* That cloud looks like a cloud. That cloud looks like me, kind of. I am, in my eyes, the King of the Clouds.

STRANGER 3. *(enters)* Hi, I'm a person. Now, I doubt you're with the wedding, dressed like you are, smelling like you do. Are you? If so, the path to the wedding is that-a-way. If not, the path off my property is this-a-way. So, now, I've offered you a couple of different courses of action, a couple different a-ways off my land. Don't make me do something I don't want to do. Which I would very happily do.

PETER. Do you know who I am?

STRANGER 3. Yes, I do. Actually, let me be more honest, here – no, I don't. I'm sure you're someone. Get off my property.

(Brief pause. He opens his arms, in a gesture that seems to say, "I told you to leave, what are you still doing here?" PETER mimics the gesture. STRANGER 3. points offstage. PETER mimics this, too.)

Stop imitating me.

PETER. I'm not imitating you. You're just doing it sooner.

(PETER exits. STRANGER 3 exits.)

Scene Third

(At the wedding.)

TOWN. *(enters, a single person)* Some nights I get so drunk I think I'm a whole fucking town. I get liquored up into such a state, into so many states, that I feel as angry and judgmental and beautiful as a whole town. Whole town. I shouldn't have smoked that cigar.

(PETER enters, other side of the stage.)

Hey, look – it's that Peter Gnit. What's he doing here? No, don't look, don't look. Great, he's coming over here. Hey, watch it, you almost spilled on my jacket. Yeah, I'll fucking smash this glass right into your eye. Guys, guys, guys. *(brief pause)* The bride seems really moody. She really loves Moynihan, though. You can tell. *(PETER approaches.)* Hey, the entertainment is here. Gnit, tell us a story. Here's some booze, monkey-man.

(TOWN hands PETER a bottle.)

PETER. I thank you, sir. Not a monkey, though. *(PETER clears his throat.)* Let's see. *(PETER drinks.)* A child was born one Monday or the year before, on a Tuesday. All sorts of forces assembled against him – even the shape of his head was determined by outside pressure. Nonetheless, if that's a word, feeling himself an emperor, somehow, he left to somehow found his empire. *(a quick sip)* This is good. What is this? *(He takes a quick look at the label.)* Lingonberry – that's interesting. Anyway, he went through rain and sun and snow, unto himself, as life's many doors and trapdoors opened before him. End of story, basically. Many years later, in a private ceremony, he was crowned the Subject of Subjects and lowered into the final earth. *(glances at the label again.)* You know, I bet this would go really well with another bottle of this. *(He drifts off.)*

TOWN. Huh. Not a bad tale. Really? That was the only bottle. So, the main guy died – did not see that coming. Sorry, where did they have cigars? You look stupid because you're poor and I'm going to punch you in the face. Hey, whoa – those are fightin' words. People, again, please, this is a wedding feast. This town is driving me crazy.

(**PETER** is approaching **BRIDESMAID**.)

Hey, look, Gnit is up to something over there. Where? Right there. Oh yeah.

(*Music is playing at a low level.*)

PETER. Let me introduce the real me. Hi.

BRIDESMAID. Who invited you?

PETER. I did.

BRIDESMAID. Well then I think you should ask yourself to leave.

PETER. Do you want to fuck around? You know, weather permitting?

BRIDESMAID. That is so rude.

PETER. But is it really, though?

BRIDESMAID. Yes. (*calling offstage:*) Richard, this guy was just really rude to me. (*exits*)

PETER. (**SOLVAY** enters.) I think she misconstrued what I said.

SOLVAY. Hello.

PETER. Hi.

SOLVAY. My name is Solvay.

PETER. What a coincidence.

SOLVAY. How is it a coincidence?

PETER. No, just, great name. "Solvay." It makes me want to ask for forgiveness. You know, "Atone, atone."

SOLVAY. I never had that reaction to it. I'm, um...

PETER. What?

SOLVAY. Nothing.

PETER. Did you want to, would you care to join me in a –
SOLVAY. (*interrupting:*) I'm fine. I love this song.

(*Looks at TOWN, who sips a drink, maybe dances a few small dance steps.*)

Look at everybody. It's quite a crowd.

(*TOWN waves a small awkward wave.*)

PETER. It's a good crowd.

SOLVAY. Are you here with the –

PETER. (*interrupting*) My name's Peter Gnit.

SOLVAY. "Gnit?" I've heard about you. (*brief pause*) I've always wondered about that name – where's it from?

PETER. It's a typo.

SOLVAY. Oh.

PETER. Yeah, some mix-up from a birth certificate but we just decided to go with it. Will you have this dance with me?

SOLVAY. I've heard about you, I said.

PETER. Come on. Dance with me. What are you afraid of?

SOLVAY. Nothing. I don't know. My father. The town. My body, and disease. Heights, small spaces, drowning, you, poverty. (*a little laugh*) I'm not afraid of anything. Except loneliness, choking, stroke, drowning, anything socially-transmitted, the dark, weakness, guilt, this, you, I don't know, loneliness, going blind, history, this, things like this, my father, fathers.

PETER. Right, but I mean – actually, yeah, wow, that's a pretty good list. Drowning – ouch.

SOLVAY. I have to go.

PETER. No you don't. Stay.

SOLVAY. Why?

PETER. There's something here. Between us. A moment, maybe. A long moment.

SOLVAY. Did you hear all the things I'm afraid of?

PETER. Yeah.

SOLVAY. And you're not scared?

PETER. No, I'm scared.

SOLVAY. That makes me feel good.

PETER. Did you ever just want to feel – I don't even know how to say it – welcomed, in life? Just, give me a smile, world. Like I'm not in the wrong place. Just soup and a blanket, and everything's all right. Did you ever want that?

SOLVAY. Yes. *(brief pause)* Soup and a blanket. You're very... I don't know. I'll just say that: You're very.

PETER. Thank you.

SOLVAY. You're welcome. *(brief pause)* I have to go. *(She exits.)*

PETER. I like your worldview.

MOYNIHAN. *(enters)* Jesus, Jesus, Jesus – fuck.

PETER. *(to himself)* Solvay.

(TOWN comes downstage, stands nearby.)

MOYNIHAN. My wife-to-be won't come out of the bathroom.

PETER. Your wife-to-be or not-to-be? Do you remember your Shakespeare? Not me. Mainly, I'm a people person, in the executive mold, with good problem-causing skills.

MOYNIHAN. I didn't know that. But, so, she won't come out of the bathroom. I don't know what I said. Maybe you could talk to her?

PETER. Sure.

(PETER turns, moves a little downstage, toward TOWN, strikes a soliloquist's pose. Speaks to TOWN, and seemingly somewhat toward the audience:)

And here the villain seeks your complicity. I do this for the benefit of my mother, for Family with a large F, and for the benefit of those who like to cry at weddings.

TOWN. *(very brief pause)* Sorry, is that, are you saying that to me? Yeah, what was that? It's like he said this whole weird thing. Are we supposed to say anything back?

PETER. No, you don't have to say anything.

TOWN. Okay. Do you know... did you guys happen to know, that this whole function hall was once an old candle factory? Interesting. That wasn't interesting. Well, it wasn't uninteresting. Yes, it was. No, it wasn't.

PETER. Are you done?

TOWN. Hi.

PETER. Hi. (*to MOYNIHAN:*) Let me see what I can do, okay? That is the question.

MOYNIHAN. Thanks.

(**PETER** moves upstage.)

They used to skate together.

TOWN. (*Awkward pause. To MOYNIHAN:*) Big day, huh? Yeah, it's like: I sentence you to a sentence with life in, like, here's your ball and chain, hello?, life sentence, watch out. (*very brief pause*) That didn't come out right. No, it didn't. He's been drinking. We've all been drinking. But, so, yeah, congratulations. Yeah, congrats.

MOYNIHAN. Thanks. God, I'm a nervous wreck.

(**MOYNIHAN** is downstage, facing audience, while **PETER** quietly jimmies open the bathroom door, disappears inside, returns with **BRIDE** over his shoulder and sneaks off. **TOWN** exits, to have a look.)

UNCLE JOE. (*enters*) You should probably hear about this. Gnit just ran off with your wife over his shoulder. Or, I guess, fiancé. It happened about, I would say, ten to fifteen feet behind you.

MOYNIHAN. What? Are you serious? Where were they go –

UNCLE JOE. (*interrupting*) When do we eat, Paul? Hunger is all I remember from any wedding I've ever been to. Hunger and waiting. And then, finally, a cold plate of bad food. At least at funerals they get you in and out.

TOWN. (*enters*) Gnit made off with the unhappy bride! Wasn't her dress amazing? The unhappy bride was laughing and waving! The whole town just stood there. The pig! I'm so drunk, right now. What was that fabric? Let's kill him! Revenge! Tablecloths always make me sad – isn't that weird? I said fucking Revenge.

MOYNIHAN. I think I'm going to be sick.

UNCLE JOE. Is there any crackers or anything around here, Paul? I'm going to see if I can find some crackers.
(*exits*)

MOYNIHAN. What am I going to do?

TOWN. He humiliated all of us. Me, most of all. I'm the girl's father. He is. And I swear to you all, I am going to kill him, and you will swear along with me that it was an accident. Now, let's go! Wait a minute – if she's so unhappy, why would she laugh? Shut up, Richard. Yeah, this is no time to think. Hey, your tie's all crooked, here, let me get that. (**TOWN** *straightens his tie or collar.*) Much better. So, Marek was just telling everyone about how this place used to be some kind of an old candle fac – . I said, let's fucking go. Factory. An old candle factory. Oh, yeah?

MOTHER. (*enters, moving with difficulty*) What's going on? What happened? Don't tell me. No, tell me. Is the wedding over?

TOWN. Sort of.

MOYNIHAN. That's all you have to say?

(**TOWN** *shrugs.*)

The little liar ran off with her. Gnit, I'm talking about. He kidnapped her. We were going to be happy. That was the plan. I did the seating.

MOTHER. What does the girl's father think?

MOYNIHAN. He's going to shoot Gnit in the back and get one of these upstanding townspeople here to lie and say it was an accident.

MOTHER. You're not serious.

TOWN. We are. We just suddenly changed, from a little group standing around, to a bloodthirsty mob on a mission. Don't worry, ma'am, just let me assure you he'll be dead or in serious pain by morning.

MOTHER. He's my son.

TOWN. Oh. We didn't know that. (*very brief pause*) I did – Hi, Mrs. Gnit. Sorry. I thought you were a caterer or something. Let's go. Time is wasting. My anger is wasting. The mob has spoken.

MOYNIHAN. Someone has to die, for all the dead things inside me.

TOWN. (*finding the above philosophically distasteful:*) Ewww.

MOYNIHAN. What?

TOWN. No, nothing, that was great. Let's go. He's getting away. (*begins to exit*)

MOTHER. Please wait. Good townspeople...

TOWN. You have one minute. Yeah, because, we really should... Yeah.

MOTHER. Please listen. People get struck by lightning, playing golf. They drown, skinny-dipping, drunk. We get skin cancer, lying in the sun at the beach. All very silly, in the end, the way of all flesh. The best of all is to die in the night, at home, quietly, just from having not died for so long. Let my son die a silly natural death. Just let him suffer the normal humiliations. Don't hurt him. I'm the boy's mother. Please. I'm asking you.

TOWN. Well, we're the boy's lynch mob and we're telling you. No, hang on, those were good points. I think I speak for all of us when I say we're a little torn. Let's go. But, wait, if we actually picture the moment of the hammer hitting the head, or the screwdriver entering the ear – I said, Let's go. You know, Richard, I don't think you should come. No, he should come. It should be everyone. We speak with one voice. Bye. Don't run. Yeah, let's pace ourselves. (**TOWN exits.**)

MOTHER. Cartoons. You're all just thoughtless cruel cartoons. And so am I. And how do you draw a drawing of me to show what I'm feeling? How do you spell the sound of an old lady being hit in the stomach with the facts of her life? Not "pow." Or "wham." It's quieter than that. It's smaller and almost all vowels. The sound of an old woman, being hurt. Or the sound of a son, not turning out like anyone wanted. It's just a little sound. God. Ohhh.

ACT SECOND

Scene First

(**BRIDE** and **PETER**. *In the mountains.*)

BRIDE. You should've seen their faces how I saw their faces, upside-down, and so angry. Yelling, "Kill him. Kill the lucky vermin." With my former husband-to-be at the front, his new tuxedo all torn up, and tears in his eyes. Then the screams turned to wheezing and all I could hear was you breathing.

PETER. It was really something, wasn't it.

BRIDE. I was hoping you'd save me. Maybe I was just scared, but, I think I was making a big mistake.

PETER. Yeah. Listen, maybe you following me here wasn't the best idea.

BRIDE. You carried me here.

PETER. Yeah, I know. Hey, so who was Solvay? Was she with you or the groom or what?

BRIDE. Who? Should we make a fire?

PETER. I think we'll be all right. (*brief pause*) I'm in love.

BRIDE. I'm in love, too.

PETER. It's an amazing feeling, isn't it. (*brief pause*) So, yeah, are we clear?

BRIDE. What?

PETER. You should go back down, okay? You can probably still catch the end of the, you know, your wedding. I thought that other moment was the moment, the one with the dog, or running off with you, but now I have a better grasp on things. This is it. Solvay is.

BRIDE. Don't even joke, Peter.

PETER. Okay.

BRIDE. I have nowhere to go back down to. I gave up everything for you. My father's love, security, money, Moynihan. I ruined my life for you.

PETER. Thanks, I guess. But, as I said, you know – well, I already said it.

BRIDE. Are you – . Peter? I can't believe you're doing this. What about all the things you said? And all the times we –

PETER. (*interrupting*) I was probably drunk, okay? I can see how this could look ugly. But, what can I do – I gotta be me.

BRIDE. Do you? (*brief pause*) You ruined my life.

PETER. Yeah, you said. And I said I was sorry. On second thought, you were with me every step of the way.

BRIDE. You had me in a headlock, you fucking – . Do you even –

PETER. (*He interrupts.*) Sshhh. That's enough. Go away. I'm all sobered up, now. Isn't this awful. For whatever reason, I don't even want to bother coming up with something final to say. Death to your memory. Actually, that's pretty final.

BRIDE. Someday, if you're lucky, you'll look back and it will hurt you to think about this. You hurt someone who, admittedly, had a lot of problems, but who was still just a person who loved you.

PETER. Okay, very good.

BRIDE. (*simply, plainly:*) Oh my God. I'm having a panic attack. Thank you so much. I'm in the woods in a wedding dress, on my wedding day, having a panic attack. (*She exits.*)

PETER. Panic attack. That can't feel good. It's probably just cold feet. (*He exits.*)

Scene Second

(*In the mountains. MOTHER and SOLVAY.*)

MOTHER. I just need to sit for a bit.

SOLVAY. We'll find him. He has to be somewhere.

MOTHER. I keep seeing him, dead and broken, lying backwards in a ditch, animals gnawing on his muddy crotch. Mothers just have a sense.

SOLVAY. I have a feeling too.

MOTHER. That's nice.

SOLVAY. It really is. (*very brief pause*) I think he's wonderful. So full of life, and himself. He scared me. Then I liked him. He'll be okay.

MOTHER. It was good of you to come with me. People don't really help much. That's not true – people can be sweet.

SOLVAY. No, of course. I saw the whole town heading off, practically with rakes and torches. He doesn't deserve to get hurt. People don't understand him. I probably don't either, but, hurting him probably isn't going to help. Maybe I feel guilty about something, and, somehow, that explains something about me? I don't know.

MOTHER. Maybe. (*brief pause*) He used to come up here when he was little. I followed him once. He made a little clearing. He gathered all these little things together, some cloth and stones, an oak leaf. And he was talking to it all. He told the cloth, "You're a bad piece of cloth, because you're not a stone." And he told the stone it was disappointing it wasn't a leaf. And he had an animal bone he held up and said, "I don't even know where to start, with you." And then he said, "We're all the wrong thing. But here we are, together." And he sat there. Peter could be so quiet. I watched him till sunset. Then he put everything in a pile and said, "Bye, cloth. Goodbye, leafy. Bye, bone. I love you."

SOLVAY. Aww, that's a long story. "Goodbye, leafy." The poor thing. I used to make dolls, too.

MOTHER. We're not terrible people. I'm not a terrible mother.

SOLVAY. I know.

MOTHER. I think you'd make a wonderful person for Pee-Wee.

SOLVAY. *(She laughs.)* Ohh. "Pee-Wee." I think we'd be very happy. I don't know how I'm supposed to know this. But how do you know anything? Did you ever hear anyone say, "This is the moment. This is what I believe, now." And that was it and they made that their life, right then and there, forever and ever, and never looked back.

MOTHER. I have heard people say that. But they never followed through, or they got syphilis or something and then just disappeared. *(very brief pause)* But I'm sure it happens.

SOLVAY. That's what it was like for me. And it never was like that, before. I don't know what this feeling is, or where it came from, but I feel really sure about it.

MOTHER. And why is that, dear?

SOLVAY. No, I just said, it's not something I can really articulate.

MOTHER. No, of course. Men can be very attractive.

SOLVAY. Yeah, I know that, but, this is different.

MOTHER. I understand. Peter's father was a complete idiot.

SOLVAY. Is that, that's how you're showing you understand?

MOTHER. You're very sweet, dear.

SOLVAY. Let's just keep looking.

(MOTHER stops.)

Are you okay?

MOTHER. I just got out of the hospital. *(brief pause)* I'm amazed the world's children don't all die of guilt for the things they put the world's mothers through. *(brief pause)* You're very kind to care about us.

SOLVAY. Of course. I do care about you, Mrs. Gnit.

MOTHER. Oh, you don't have to call me that, dear. Wait!

(She freezes, turns her head slightly sideways, listening.)

(Pause. They both listen.)

SOLVAY. Did you hear something?

MOTHER. I thought I did. I'm a mother, you know – we have a sense. Although, sometimes, it's wrong.

(They exit.)

Scene Third

(The mountains.)

PETER. *(enters)* “Tall peaks in the distance. Late day, the shadows lengthen. Amid wild mountain flowers and babbling brooks, a solitary figure approaches.” That’s a stage direction from some play I read in school. Probably should have paid more attention. Or not, or not. *(brief pause)* Maybe I should go back and face the whole music and just get it over with. Start my life with Solvay. It’d be good. Good food, the indoors, love, company, the true self. I’ll go back.

GROUPIE. *(enters)* Hi.

PETER. Hello. Beautiful evening.

GROUPIE. Isn’t it. God, it’s gorgeous. It’s great being outside.

PETER. It can be, yup. What brings you up here?

GROUPIE. We’re from the city, my two girlfriends and I. We’re groupies.

PETER. I see. Groupies following some bearded guru or a promising local act?

GROUPIE. No. Just groupies.

PETER. With no... yeah, I get it. Just groupies. *(with interest)* Really? Maybe I could join you. Or you could join me.

GROUPIE. Yeah, I don’t know. We’re here mainly for the air. But, do you want to have a glass of wine with us? We’re kind of in the mood to be crazy and also we’re a little high.

PETER. Crazy is a watchword of mine. A little high is my philosophy. Your gracious offer I gladly accept. You picked the right mountaintop of the right range on the night of the right sunset.

GROUPIE. You’re funny. Come on. We’re over here.

(She motions offstage. They exit.)

TOWN. (*enters, out of breath*) Fucking. The fucking. Hey, slow down. You're not even winded. I want to see that bastard writhe, blood in his ears and eyes. Yeah, I play tennis three times a week, just try to stay active. Why don't we just go home. Moynihan did. No! I think I got poison ivy. I want to sit down. No, we're not stopping till we're dripping red. (*indecipherable grumbling*) What? I didn't say anything. Make sure you don't touch your eye. Yeah, you should wash your hands. Hey, look at this, this is Bergfrue – also known as pyramidal saxifrage. It's a nice little flower. Are we stopping or what? Death! It's almost like a little daisy. (**TOWN exits.**)

(**PETER enters, with GROUPIE, speaking to another person offstage.**)

PETER. Please, why not, more champagne. The lamb was delicious.

GROUPIE. You're so authentic.

PETER. Yeah. I was really hungry. (*begins to exit*)

GROUPIE. Where are you going?

PETER. Now? Just going to find some more kindling.

GROUPIE. Oh. Okay.

PETER. Don't sigh. Your good man shall return. (*aside:*)
Like hell he will. Thanks for the so-so experience.

GROUPIE. "Like hell he will"? "Thanks for the so-so experience"?

PETER. Oh. (*very brief pause*) Sorry about that.

GROUPIE. You know, I teach art in prison and I have several advanced degrees in molecular – why am I even wasting my breath.

PETER. I don't know.

GROUPIE. You're just like everyone else. (**GROUPIE exits.**)

PETER. Me? No. That's probably the problem. I'm not enough like everyone else. (*He seems a little dazed.*)
I'm wiped out. Let's see. I've got a big heart and I'm having palpitations. I could soliloquize, I could faint – lot of possibilities. (*He faints.*)

Scene Fourth

(Someone walks by, looks at the unconscious PETER for a while, gives him a little kick, looks around, then walks away. WOMAN IN GREEN enters. She puts cold water on PETER's forehead.)

PETER. Are you a dream? Are you an angel?

WOMAN IN GREEN. If I were a dream or an angel, wouldn't I know all about that dog you chased and how it got all caught up in a woman's dress from a clothesline?

PETER. I guess. You still look like an angel.

WOMAN IN GREEN. You look like a person.

PETER. I try to be myself. Because, really, that's just a large part of who I am.

WOMAN IN GREEN. We don't get a lot of people around here. This is really mysterious. I've dreamed about someone like you. I sit in my room and I have dreams and I'm starting to think they're about you. Do you believe in fate? Or other explanations?

(She takes his hand and they exit.)

TOWN. *(enters)* Are we – I think we're going in circles. It was good to get out of the house, but I think this is it for me. Let's stay out here, I like it out here. No, no, me too, I'm going back, too. We'll fuck up Gnit when he comes back home. The air really is n-n-nice out h-h-here. Who are you? You haven't said one word this whole time. I s-s-s-stutter. I th-th-th-thought you'd-d-d-d laugh. *(Short laugh.)* Hey, maybe we could fuck this guy up, instead? I mean, here he is, right here. True, we wouldn't have to go chasing him all over. Wh-wh-why would you duh-duh-do that? Let's bully this guy later – I'm famished. Y-y-you p-p-people are m-m-mean. Come on, guys. Make sure you bring your trash. Wh-wh-wh-wait for muh-muh-muh me. Okay, come on, slowpoke. S-s-slow-poke. I f-f-fucking like that. *(exits)*

(**PETER** enters, with **WOMAN IN GREEN**. His rumpled clothing is even more rumpled.)

PETER. Well, that was, you know, that was very good. (*very brief pause*) God, is it morning, or is daytime just starting to look sadder? You know? Jesus.

WOMAN IN GREEN. Time is funny.

PETER. Yes, it is.

WOMAN IN GREEN. Here comes my family.

PETER. Where?

WOMAN IN GREEN. It'll just be another second.

(*Very long pause.* **TOWN/THE GREEN FAMILY** costume change.)

Here they are.

THE GREEN FAMILY. (*enters, a single person*) Hello.

PETER. Are there more of you?

THE GREEN FAMILY. I think this is everyone.

PETER. Well then hello. Good evening. Good day.

WOMAN IN GREEN. Daddy, everyone – this is Peter.

THE GREEN FAMILY. Hello. Hi. How's it going? We'll make this quick. We're in real estate. We need a son-in-law. And a brother-in-law. For reasons you don't need to know. You and our daughter seem to be sexually simpatico. You are he. Our new son. Hey, brother. Welcome aboard. You're very rich, now. Be nice or we'll operate on you, and we aren't really doctors. Now, a toast.

PETER. This is all very flattering.

THE GREEN FAMILY. Isn't it? I know, it's so flattering.

PETER. It really is. But I'm afraid I'll need a little time.

THE GREEN FAMILY. Take all the time you want. (*very brief pause*) Have you decided?

PETER. Good people, good woman, I must decline. Or, at least, defer.

WOMAN IN GREEN. What about over there, before, in the willow tree? You started yelling, and I said, “Don’t finish inside me,” but you did, anyway. And now I might be pregnant. What about all the things you yelled? I gave myself to you. So now please just do what any fox or marmoset or the other monogamous animal would do, and stay with me.

PETER. I’m afraid I can’t.

THE GREEN FAMILY. We’re afraid you must. Put on this suit. Here’s a briefcase. (*puts the suit jacket on him*)

PETER. You’re very insistent. You know what? Why not? Give me that. (*He grabs the briefcase. He’s pleased with his new look.*) I could see this, maybe. Yeah. How’s this sound? “Cancel my morning massage. Reschedule my afternoon massage. Listen, I’ve got a little place I’d buy myself but company policy forbids it. You really just got to see the place, owned by an old lady, never hurt a fly, used to cry herself to sleep, and she wants it to go to a decent sort, a sort like you, and like I say, I’d buy it myself, because I’m like you, but you’re even more like you, so why don’t we fill out some papers and put you in your new home, how do you like the sound of that, ‘Your new home,’ see, it’s already, linguistically speaking, yours, so now all you got to do is buy it. Get me a pen, darling. Do you want a cup of coffee?” How was that?

THE GREEN FAMILY. Not bad. What did I tell you? You were born for this. If he was born for anything. That’s enough, Steven. I was kidding – I’m sure he’ll be fine. (*whispering*) Empty-headed fucking parrot.

PETER. Pardon?

THE GREEN FAMILY. Nothing. Yeah, I didn’t hear anything. So, are we all right, here?

PETER. I have to say, it feels pretty good.

THE GREEN FAMILY. Does it. Our one rule around here, is, “By yourself, for yourself.” Do it our way, and, things fall into place.

PETER. It's all I've ever done. This could really work out.

THE GREEN FAMILY. Here, dress it up with this pocket square.

(puts a folded pocket square in PETER's breast pocket)

Very nice. It brings out his eyes.

PETER. *(brief pause)* You know what? I can't. I'm sorry. Though I think that I – as a cloud-watching alcoholic – could probably do very well in a commission-driven industry, I really must say no. Good people, I am on a search, a search for the truest me. And I don't think I'll likely find him, here with you. Maybe I might, though.

THE GREEN FAMILY. Our daughter asked you nicely. So did we. So just say yes. And, just so you know, we'll gladly hear it, "Yes," as the last word you ever say, practically just a whisper, a last breath, trickling out of your bloody mouth, dirty newspaper stuck in the incisions made in your body by our unclean tools, following our failed operation. Steven, when did you get like this? Don't mind him. Hey, we're just crazy people. Or we're business people. Or just he is. Or, we're not.

PETER. I'm crazy too. I'd have to be to turn down your wonderful offer.

THE GREEN FAMILY. We asked you to be one of us. And you said no. It hurt. Now, we're going to hurt you back. Can we start, Dad? Yeah, kids – you go ahead.

(He nods, draws three knives out of his coat.)

PETER. *(pleading)* Please, Sirs. I'm begging you –

THE GREEN FAMILY. We've seen begging before. And it hasn't made any difference. No, not true – remember the time we cut out a guy's mouth, instead of his eyes, because he wanted to see his kids grow up? Oh, yeah. Boy, we've done some awful things. But, we did them *together*. I always felt that, with the kids, it was important to always –

(They're interrupted by sirens, offstage. THE GREEN FAMILY and WOMAN IN GREEN are frightened.)

THE GREEN FAMILY. *(cont.)* Run! No, let's take him hostage! Him!? Are you kidding!? Let's go, just run! No. Just walk normally.

(They exit.)

WOMAN IN GREEN. I love you.

(She makes quote marks with her fingers around the following word, although she says it genuinely.)

"Honestly."

(exits)

Scene Fifth

(Stage goes dark, but for PETER, in a cone of light or hard side lighting. Sirens abruptly stop. Amplified breathing.)

PETER. Who is that? Who are you?

VOICE. Me.

PETER. Who's "me?"

VOICE. I am.

PETER. That's like something I'd say.

VOICE. Interesting.

PETER. I guess. So, who are you? Or, what are you?

VOICE. I'm the middle.

PETER. This is only the middle!?

VOICE. I'm the thing in between things. The space between spaces, the little lack of sound between words. Where the air isn't going in or out. Call me peace, or, death. I'm what you can't handle.

PETER. Maybe you want some of this! *(He throws a punch.)*

VOICE. I don't have a body. There's nothing to hit.

PETER. Then maybe you want some of this. *(He does nothing.)*

VOICE. Now you're talking.

PETER. How can I get past you?

VOICE. I'm not really anything, so it's impossible to get past me. And I'm not actually real, so you'll never get over me. Just try to live with me.

PETER. Is this philosophy?

VOICE. I don't know. Is *this* philosophy? *(a couple of breaths)*

PETER. I don't know.

VOICE. Well, then I don't know either. See, I only exist in correlation to your resistance to me. *(VOICE does not laugh.)* Forgive me – I always have to laugh when I tell people that.

PETER. How come you didn't laugh?

VOICE. It didn't seem funny, that time.

PETER. Wait a minute. I think I get it. Are you telling me I should just bide my time, just go with the flow? And then whatever's going to come to me will come to me? My reward in life?

VOICE. Yes.

PETER. But, is this true? And can you be trusted?

VOICE. No.

(PETER tries to get past again. He can't.)

PETER. I give up.

VOICE. Me too.

PETER. *(brief pause)* So now what happens?

VOICE. We wait.

PETER. Okay. Not my favorite thing. *(brief pause)* I wonder if Solvay is waiting for me. That must be awful. Turning and listening, at every snapped twig. She probably feels completely alone. As if nobody cares and nobody loves her. As if I don't. *(He is a little choked up.)* Sort of surprised, by that feeling. Feeling bad for someone else. *(brief pause)* Hello? Thing? Middle?

(He looks around, something's changed and he's able to pass.)

Hey. How 'bout that.

Scene Sixth

(Outside MOTHER's cabin. PETER is asleep, behind a bush.)

(A HUNTER with a gun enters and walks slowly across the stage.)

HUNTER. Bleezie! *(toward heaven:)* Hey, Grandpa – you up there? My poor dog has rabies. So I'm in the middle of a kind of sad adventure. I can't even imagine what I'm about to do. *(very brief pause)* My wife brought it home a bunch of years ago, the dog. The kids gave it this weird name that just sort of stuck. And, all of a sudden, Bleezie was with us all the time. Morning noon and night. My best friend of my life.

(Hears a sound from PETER's hiding place. Very brief pause, listens.)

Anyway, so now here I am with a gun, trying to track her down, going to all her favorite spots, looking for a trail of foamy saliva, and wondering, if I can get a clear shot at my sick dog Bleezie-girl, will I be able to pull the trigger. *(very brief pause)* Plus, there's a bounty out on that Gnit guy. I could use the reward – maybe shoot him in the spine and get the kids a new sled. I think that would really be a great – I just thought of place she loved to go. *(exits)*

PETER. *(appearing, with pieces of grass or straw on his back)* Jesus. I hope I never see that character again. I wonder how big the reward is. *(brief pause)* What a night. I made some strides, though, I think. I better go try and grab some money out of my mom's purse. Yes, sir, I've got work to do.

HELEN. *(enters with basket of food)* Solvay thought I might find you here.

PETER. Solvay? Where is she?

HELEN. She's waiting for me. She wanted me to drop this off. She thought your mother might need some food.

PETER. Why didn't she come with you?

HELEN. This is a strange century and she's very sensitive. She didn't know where you both stood on things. But she wanted me to make you sure you didn't need anything.

PETER. Of course, right, strange century, sensitivity. Tell her thank you. I don't need anything.

HELEN. Is that the truth?

PETER. (*looking at her intently, trying to make a philosophical point*) Is *this* the truth?

HELEN. Do you have the flu or something? You look terrible.

PETER. I haven't really been sleeping.

HELEN. Weren't you just asleep a few minutes ago?

PETER. Everyone's a comedian. (*brief pause*) Well, okay, so maybe not everyone.

HELEN. Is there anything else?

PETER. No. (*brief pause*) I think about her, a lot. I have to say. All the time, kind of. I just thought about her, last night. I felt bad. It was helpful.

HELEN. She loves you.

PETER. She does?

HELEN. That's what I said. I'm a really straightforward person.

PETER. Well then I love her. I really do. Wait! Give her this souvenir pen with the little sleigh in the snow in it. See? When you go like this he goes back and forth. Give it to her, okay?

HELEN. It's not a great gift, but, okay, I'll give it to her.

PETER. Tell her not to forget me. I have to leave again but I'll come back.

HELEN. She does love you. And she's a really good person. I don't really see what she sees in you.

PETER. How could you?

HELEN. I wish you treated people better.

FINISH READING THIS SCRIPT

Visit our website to purchase the full script or to explore other titles.

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

To stay up to date on all that we are doing, follow us on social media:



*Titles for licensing are subject to availability depending on your territory.