

THE HARVEST

By Jason Pyette

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ANNA CARTHEGE, the mother, age 66

JAMES CARTHEGE, JR, a school administrator, age 44

ALAN CARTHEGE, the mayor of a small town, 25 miles north of the farm, age 42

MICHEAL CARTHEGE, prefers Micky, makes his living in Los Angeles as a bartender that tells everyone he's an actor, age 40

SARAH PINNELLY, the only girl in a family of boys. Married her high school boyfriend, David, right after graduation. They have two young boys, age 39

JOHN CARTHEGE: stayed on the farm since graduating high school and nearly runs the place, age 37

SAMUEL CARTHEGE: currently on leave from the military, age 35

JUNE JACOBS: local girl, age 36

Place

The Carthege family farm

Time

The present

ACT I

SCENE 1

Setting: As the lights come up, we see the interior of a farmhouse, one typical of the thousands that dot the plains across America. A living room is center. Older furniture, worn carpet, wood paneling. An interior that hasn't been updated for many years. Not out of a lack of awareness, but just a lack of need. It is as it always was.

Framed pictures cover the walls. Sports pictures. School pictures. 4-H pictures. Photos of children long grown into adulthood. Here and there, a C.M. Russell print or other western art pops up between the children of decades ago. Center of all the pictures hangs a family portrait. A farm family. Six kids arranged around their parents. The Carthege family when they were young.

Adjacent to the living room is a dining room with a table and chairs. Like everything else, it reflects the American west. The table is solid but scarred. Years of use. Hundreds of family meals. Thousands of hours of homework, farm work, and family work are worn into its surface. Now, covered with papers. Bills, deeds, invoices, legalities. Seemingly endless files and binders and piles.

At Rise: In the living room, on the couch, someone sleeps. He breathes heavily and the afghan that usually drapes over the back of the worn sofa, covers him. Two empty beer cans lie on the floor by his shoes. The room is filled with the hazy, soft light of early morning. The door opens and ALAN enters. He has an air of authority, and arrogance. He closes the door softly and then starts to head for the kitchen. He stops when notices the sleeping figure. He lets out a disgusted sigh and, after a moment, approaches the sleeping man. With no gentleness, Alan nudges him, probably harder than necessary.

ALAN

Wake up.

(No reaction. Pushes him again,
much harder.)

Mick! Wake up.

MICKY

(MICKY groans, rolls over a
bit.)

Shit.

ALAN

(Alan walks away, surveying
the rest of the room,
making his way to the table.
He switches on a light and
then flicks through a few
papers. Turns back to
Micky.)

When'd you get here?

MICKY

(Micky tries to wake up.)

Last night. Late.

ALAN

Did you see Mom? Or John?

MICKY

No. Asleep when I got here. I just crashed. It was really
late.

ALAN

How'd you get here? From the airport?

MICKY

Kenny Thompson picked me up. 'Member him?

ALAN

(With derision.)

How could I forget Kenny?

(Micky starts to say something but
then lets it go. Alan is
judgmental.)

He toes the beer cans as he comes
back over to the couch.)

ALAN (CONT'D)

Bring these with you or did you two stop in town?

MICKY

Had 'em with.

ALAN

For the drive?

MICKY

It's a long drive.

ALAN

You probably

MICKY

Jesus, Alan. Not yet, alright.

(Pause.)

What time is it?

ALAN

Almost seven.

MICKY

What the fuck are you doing here so early? Jesus

ALAN

I don't have a great deal of time to

MICKY

I know. I know.

(Rolls his eyes to himself.

Pause.)

ALAN

Mom should be up soon.

MICKY

Yeah. I s'pose.

(Silence.)

ALAN

Did you peek in and see him?

MICKY

No.

ALAN

Huh

(Again, judgmental.)

MICKY

Didn't see the sense. This morning.

ALAN

Yeah.

MICKY

When were you here last?

ALAN

Uh, week and half ago. Just for a couple hours though.

MICKY

What did you think then?

ALAN

I don't know, Mick. It's . . . I don't know . . . looks tough.

MICKY

I s'pose. That's the impression I got from Sarah.

ALAN

What exactly did Sarah say?

(His voice is hard.)

MICKY

Jesus, Alan. What the fuck is your problem?

(Micky digs through his coat,
finds a pack of cigarettes.)

ALAN

Don't smoke in here.

MICKY

Dude. I wasn't going to. Jesus.

ALAN

So, what did she say?

MICKY

Just said we need to come home. Like now.

ALAN

You and James?

MICKY

She mighta tried Sam. I don't know.

ALAN

There's no way he's getting here. The Army doesn't let guys go just because sisters call. Not sure why she thought everyone had to rush home.

MICKY

Uhhhh . . . ya know . . . Dad's in rough shape. Harvest has to start. Shit like that.

ALAN

Dad'll be fine. John can handle harvest.

MICKY

You coming down to help cut?

ALAN

If need be.

MICKY

Sure.

ALAN

(A finality in his voice.)

I would.

MICKY

How's Mom?

ALAN

Doesn't really show much.

JOHN

(JOHN enters from the back hallway
in his work clothes. He's
surprised to see Micky.)

Micky! Hey. When'd you get here?

MICKY

Johnny-boy! Last night. Late.

(They hug with true affection. John
glances toward Alan.)

JOHN

Hey, Alan.

ALAN

Morning, John.

(John continues to the door and
grabs his hat which is hanging
there.)

MICKY

Where you goin'?

JOHN

Gotta haul water. Cisterns almost out.
(He looks to Micky.)
Wanna come with?

MICKY

Uh . . . sure, but . . .

JOHN

What?

MICKY

I should stay and see Mom. Dad.

JOHN

Mom will still be here when we get back. Obviously, Dad will
too.

MICKY

Yeah. Okay. Let's go.

(He starts to grab his
jacket.)

JOHN

You ain't gonna need that.

(Micky grabs his smokes instead,
and his cell phone.)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Or that.

MICKY

Still no service out here?

JOHN

Not much.

MICKY

(To Alan)

Tell Mom I'll be back in a bit.

ALAN

Okay.

JOHN

(John waits by the door.
Micky catches up to him.)

You stink.

MICKY

It's my cologne. I call it essence of PBR.

JOHN

You should call it essence of shit.

(They exit. Alan is left alone in
the room. He crosses back over to
the table and looks through the
papers. He does not see his mother,
ANNA, enter. She is in her bathrobe
and slippers. She looks tired, even
beyond her years.)

ANNA

Those will drive you crazy.

ALAN

(Alan spins around,
startled.)

Jesus, you scared me.

ANNA

They aren't in any sort of order. That's what I was trying to do. Get them sorted out.

ALAN

I can help.

ANNA

Maybe later.

(She crosses to him, gives him a quick squeeze on the arm - affectionate, but that is as far as Anna's emotions go.)

When did you get here?

ALAN

Few minutes ago.

ANNA

Coffee?

ALAN

Please. Yes.

(Anna starts to the kitchen to make the coffee when she glances at the blanket on the couch, and the beer cans.)

ANNA

Where did he go?

ALAN

With John to get water. He said he didn't see you last night.

ANNA

I heard him come in.

ALAN

Course you did.

(She continues into the kitchen, Alan following. A few moments later, JAMES, the eldest son, enters through the front door. He is a large man, but not a large presence. He sets down a small suitcase. He looks around for a moment and seeing no-one, turns and goes down the hallway that leads to the back bedrooms of the house, leaving the suitcase. Alan and Anna re-enter from the kitchen.)

ALAN (CONT'D)

Someone come in?

ANNA

Well, I don't think that suitcase came in on its own.

(She exits down the hallway. Alan watches her go but does not follow. He returns to the table and starts to glance through the papers. James and Anna enter.)

JAMES

Alan.

ALAN

James. Thought it might be you.

JAMES

How are you?

ALAN

Okay. You?

JAMES

Good. I guess. As good as can be.

ALAN

Yeah. You went back and saw Dad?

JAMES

Just peeked in.

ALAN

Is he asleep?

JAMES

Yeah.

ANNA

He's usually asleep.

(There's a hint of annoyance
in her voice. After a
moment.)

JAMES

Is there coffee?

ANNA

I'll get you some.

(She exits into the kitchen.)

ALAN

When did you fly in?

JAMES

Last night. But I was too tired to drive a couple hours,
so I rented a car early this morning.

ALAN

Someone would've come and got you.

JAMES

I know. But it doesn't matter. No sense in it really.
(He glances toward the
kitchen to make sure his
mother isn't returning yet.)

What's with her?

ALAN

I think it's just wearing on her. She's worried.

JAMES

So, what's going on? Did something happen that I don't know about? Why the panic from Sarah?

ALAN

I'm not sure. What did she say to you?

JAMES

Nothing specific. Just "You better come home." When I pushed her, she wouldn't give me any details. Just said things are bad and we need you. So, I came. Has John said anything?

ALAN

Does he ever?

JAMES

(James looks at the piles of papers on the table.)

What's all this?

ALAN

From what I can tell every piece of paper they've received in the past fifty years. Bills. Receipts. I think this one is part of a casserole recipe.

JAMES

Were you wading through it?

ALAN

God, no. But I suppose somebody's going to have to.

JAMES

Leave it for Sarah.

ALAN

Good idea. She won't be able to stand the mess on the table.

(They both laugh quietly as they sit down at the table.)

JAMES

Has John said anything about harvest?

ALAN

Not to me. It's gotta be soon though. Quite a few people have already started cutting. Didn't you see him when you pulled in? They went outside just before you got here.

JAMES

They?

ALAN

Him and Micky.

JAMES

Micky's here?

ALAN

Last night.

JAMES

I didn't know she'd called him. Or that he actually came.

ALAN

Neither did I. 'Til I found him on the couch this morning. In his typical condition.

JAMES

When were you last here?

ALAN

I drove down week or so ago. It's hard to get away. There's always a lot to do.

JAMES

Still glad you ran for mayor?

ALAN

Oh yeah. Absolutely. I didn't mean that. I was talking about Margie and the kids. Seems like there's always something on the agenda.

JAMES

Do they ever come down with you? Here?

ALAN

You know. It's hard. The kids are so involved and Margie . .
. .

JAMES

Doesn't feel welcome.

ALAN

Yeah. That's what she says.

JAMES

Maybe if she

ALAN

Don't start on her, James.

JAMES

I'm not. Just saying that if she and Mom could just

ALAN

(A warning in his voice.)

Not this morning.

ANNA

(Anna enters carrying two cups of coffee. She gives one to James and keeps the other herself.)

We should get all of this off the table. I've started breakfast and your sister should be getting here anytime.

(She grabs a large cardboard box from the floor and starts to pile in the papers.)

ALAN

Nice filing system you got going there.

JAMES

Here. Let me help.

ANNA

No. It's fine. I've got it. There's really no rhyme or reason to this anyway. Not sure what to do with all of these.

ALAN

We're going to have to go through them, Mom. Get them organized and figure out what needs to be dealt with.

ANNA

All of them, Alan. All of them need to be dealt with.
(She aggressively grabs the papers and shoves them in the box. The men are a bit taken aback.)

Will one of you take this to the office.

JAMES

Yeah. Of course. I've got it.
(He grabs the box and carries it out of the room.)

ANNA

I'm going to work on breakfast.

(She also exits. A moment later, James returns.)

JAMES

What was that?

ALAN

Stress, I guess.

JAMES

Where are they? Financially?

ALAN

Jesus, James. What do you think? They've been in trouble for twenty years.

JAMES

Just asking.

ALAN

I would just think you'd be aware of things like that.

JAMES

I am. I mean, sort of. I know it's been tough, but

ALAN

But what?

JAMES

I just hoped that with John helping them out all the time . .
. . .

ALAN

John can't fix ten years of shitty crops.

JAMES

I guess.

ALAN

I think they're in pretty deep.

JAMES

Will this harvest help? How's the crop look?

ALAN

I don't know. You'll have to ask John.

JAMES

You haven't looked at all?

ALAN

Have you?

JAMES

C'mon, Alan. You live twenty-five miles away. I live several
states away. So, it isn't really that outrageous of a
question.

ALAN

I'm well-aware of how far away you live.

JAMES

What does that mean?

(Suddenly, SARAH enters. She is
enthusiastic and full of energy.)

SARAH

Well, look who finally made it here!

(She moves quickly to James
and gives him a big hug.)

JAMES

Hey there, Sarah.

SARAH

So good to see you, Jimmy. Hey, Alan.

ALAN

Sarah.

SARAH

I brought someone with me.

(She turns toward the door as
SAMUEL, the youngest of the
brothers, enters. He is fit and
clean-cut. He wears his uniform.)

JAMES

Samuel! I didn't know you were coming home.

SAMUEL

I didn't know myself. But I had some leave built up, so . . .
.

JAMES

Does Mom know?

SARAH

No! She's gonna be so surprised. Where is she?

ALAN

In the kitchen. I'll get her.

SAMUEL

No. Let me.

(He exits into the kitchen.)

ALAN

When did he get here?

SARAH

Yesterday, late afternoon. David picked him up at the airport
and brought him to our place.

JAMES

David did? Isn't he cutting already?

SARAH

No. Not yet. Maybe today. Probably tomorrow, though.

ALAN

Where are the boys?

SARAH

Are you kidding? Home with their dad. Can't pry them away from their Grandpa Dave and the machinery.

JAMES

They're a bit young, aren't they, for harvest?

SARAH

Davey's nine. He's big enough to help. Caleb isn't but won't be left behind.

ALAN

Okay, Sarah. Seems like there's a lot going on we don't know about. What's

(At that moment, Anna and Samuel
enter from the kitchen.)

ANNA

Did you all see who's here?

JAMES

Of course we saw, Mom. We're all standing right here!

ANNA

Go back and see your dad, Samuel. See if he's awake.

(Samuel nods and moves through the
others and out of the room.)

Sarah, come get everything to set the table for breakfast.

(She exits back into the
kitchen.)

JAMES

Yeah, Sarah. You're the girl. Set the table.

SARAH

Oh man . . . you are gonna get it. You can help too. This is not a gender-biased household!

JAMES

Since when?

(He exits into the kitchen. Sarah follows, but Alan stops her.)

ALAN

Sarah

SARAH

We'll talk later. I promise. Let's just help Mom now.

(She exits into the kitchen and Alan follows. A moment later, Samuel re-enters, looking a bit ashen. He looks at the kitchen door for a moment, contemplating going in, but then changes his mind and sits at the table. He seems a hundred miles away. A slight knock on the door startles him. The door opens and JUNE enters with the air of someone who has been in that house, in that room, many, many times.)

SAMUEL

June? Hey.

(He's confused.)

What are you doing here?

JUNE

Sam? Sam! Well, I just . . . I heard that Jim Jr. was gonna be home. Wanted to say hi.

SAMUEL

Oh.

(The awkwardness between them is palpable.)

JUNE

I didn't know you were coming home.

SAMUEL

Yeah, uh, I had some leave, so I thought I better.

JUNE

To help harvest, or see your dad?

SAMUEL

He looks pretty rough.

JUNE

Yeah, he does.

SAMUEL

You've been here to see him?

JUNE

Yeah.

(Another awkward moment.)

It's not that weird, Sam. It's not like I didn't get to know your parents pretty well when . . . when we were together. I've known them my whole life.

SAMUEL

I know.

JUNE

So, yeah, I'm here on and off. I stop to see if your mom needs any help.

SAMUEL

But she never does.

JUNE

No. No, she doesn't.

(Pause.)

SAMUEL

I thought he was doing better. Thought he came through the heart attack better than this.

JUNE

I thought so too. This has been . . . gradual. Until the last month or so. Now, he just sleeps all the time.

SAMUEL

Sounds like you're here more than "on and off."

JUNE

I suppose

SAMUEL

I'm sure John appreciates the help.

JUNE

Yeah

SAMUEL

Not sure how much Sarah is able to get here.

JUNE

She has her own family. Those boys are a handful.

SAMUEL

I'm sure.

JUNE

How long do you get to stay?

SAMUEL

A week or so. That's about it.

JUNE

Listen, Sam, if we get a little time, we should talk

(The door to the house opens and
John and Micky return.)

JOHN

That piece of shit breaks down every time I drive it, I
swear.

MICKY

Dude, it's been doing that since I was in high school.

(They both stop as they see June
and Samuel.)

MICKY (CONT'D)

Holy shit! Sammy! Damn! I didn't think you were coming.
(He grabs his brother in a
huge hug.)

SAMUEL

Yeah . . . I

MICKY

And June! Shit. I haven't seen you in years.

JUNE

Hi, Micky.

(Her grin and her affection
for Micky are both genuine.)

MICKY

God. How are you?

JUNE

I'm good.

(She glances toward John who
is just staring at her,
confusion on his face.)

JOHN

When'd you get here, June?

JUNE

Couple of minutes ago. Didn't know that Sam was here. Or
Micky either.

(The others all enter from the
kitchen, carrying breakfast.)

SARAH

Oh my god! Micky!

(She practically flings
herself into his arms. He
returns the hug.)

MICKY

Hey, kid sister!

SARAH

I've been waiting for you to get your ass here!

MICKY

It's here. It's here.

SARAH

'Bout time.

ANNA

Hello, Micky.

MICKY

Hey, Mom.

ANNA

So. You're all here.

(They all stand a bit awkwardly
looking at their mother. The
statement had an edge to it.
Finally, Micky breaks the moment.)

MICKY

Yeah. We are.

ANNA

It's about time.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 2

Setting: A short time later. The family sits around the table, which is now littered with dishes from breakfast.

ANNA

Did you all get enough?

JAMES

More than enough, mom.

(The others agree.)

ANNA

Good. Let's get this cleared up.

(She starts to reach for dishes.)

MICKY

No, mom. We got it.

(The others all agree.)

JAMES

Yeah. We do. Or Sarah does. She can handle it!

SARAH

Oh man. You are all about to get a real lesson in a whole new world.

MICKY

Ooooh. Scary!

JAMES

No worries, mom. We'll help. Just giving her shit.

ANNA

Ok. You take care of it.

(A small warning in that.)

I'm going to check on your father.

(She exits.)

MICKY

My guess is he's asleep.

ALAN

Don't be an asshole, Micky.

JAMES

When was the last time Mom got him into the doctor?

SARAH

What, three weeks ago, John? Four?

JOHN

Yeah, probably. Somewhere in there.

JAMES

Anything?

SARAH

Not really. Just lingering fatigue from the heart attack and what seems to be an inability to recover.

ALAN

Christ, that was almost a year ago.

MICKY

So, what? He's just lying around waiting to die?

JAMES

Micky!

ALAN

What the hell, Micky?

SAMUEL

Don't say shit like that.

JOHN

Maybe he's right.

SAMUEL

What do you mean?

JOHN

It's what it seems like. He just sleeps. He won't try and do anything.

SARAH

He had a heart attack!

JOHN

A year ago. He needs to get up and do something. But he doesn't.

SARAH

Or can't. Maybe he can't.

JOHN

Maybe.

MICKY

And in the meantime . . . you've been doing it all.

JOHN

Sarah helps out some.

SARAH

You know that's not true, John. I stop over but you run the damn farm.

JOHN

You have your own farm, and your own family.

SARAH

Yeah, well, it's not much of an excuse. June does more around here than I do.

SAMUEL

(Samuel quickly looks at
her.)

What? June does? Why?

(Silence for a moment. Sarah
glances at John, waiting for him to
say something, but he doesn't, so
she goes on.)

SARAH

Because she loves them.

SAMUEL

Okay. Just weird to me.

JAMES

She could've stayed for breakfast. You wouldn't have cared, would you've, Sam?

(John gets up and moves to the window, trying to get it open, but it's stuck.)

SAMUEL

No, I guess not.

JOHN

Fuck!

(Everyone looks at him in surprise.)

What? Window is stuck again. It's already fucking hot in here.

MICKY

It's always fucking hot this time of year. That's why harvest sucks.

ALAN

Like you'd know.

MICKY

Fuck off, Alan. You have no room to talk.

SARAH

Jesus. Stop it. Both of you.

ALAN

That attitude just pisses me off.

MICKY

What attitude?

ALAN

Like you've been here helping. You haven't! You ran off to LA, screwed up your entire life, and then you come back here bitching about how things are, but you've done jack-all to help.

MICKY

Screwed up my entire life?

ALAN

Two ex-wives. Two kids you never see. This party-boy façade you put on. Which, incidentally, you are too damn old for. And, what, a career as an actor? When's the last time you even had an acting job? A commercial five years ago doesn't exactly make you a professional. You're a fucking bartender.

MICKY

My life is my life and I'll live it however the hell I want. And leave my kids out of it or I'll smack you in the fucking face.

SARAH

Jesus, Alan. Stop it.

JAMES

This isn't helping anything.

SAMUEL

You're kind of an asshole.

ALAN

Don't even get me started on you, Samuel.

SAMUEL

What the hell does that mean?

ALAN

You ran away too. You stuck around, for what, a couple of years, popping in every now and again.

SAMUEL

I was going to college.

ALAN

Community college! But shit went south with you and June and so you just took off.

SAMUEL

I enlisted, you asshole.

ALAN

You still ran away.

JAMES

Alan! Stop.

ALAN

Really, James? You think that you can walk in here and tell me, tell all of us, what to do? Because you're the oldest? Not a chance. It's about time we had some actual truth in this room.

JAMES

I don't know where this is coming from, Alan, but you need to stop.

(Anna walks back into the room.)

ANNA

I think you all need to stop.

(A moment of embarrassed silence.)

MICKY

Sorry, Mom.

ANNA

Alan. Quit judging your siblings. You have no room to do so.

ALAN

Wait a minute, Mom

ANNA

No. I don't want to hear it.

SARAH

We have more important things to talk about, Alan.

ALAN

Well, that's true enough, Sarah. You need to explain some shit to us.

SARAH

I know.

MICKY

Why the urgency, Sarah?

JAMES

You called us all to get home now. It's not that easy to just fly home on a whim.

SARAH

Not exactly a "whim" James.

(They all start to react.)

SAMUEL

Back off you guys. Let her talk!

SARAH

First, this was my idea. Mom didn't know I was calling everyone.

MICKY

Okay?

SARAH

And I knew if I called and just asked you to come, to get home, you wouldn't.

JAMES

What do you mean?

SARAH

Would you, James? I call, ask you to fly home, even though nothing's really changed. Would you jump on that plane and get here?

JAMES

Of course, I

SARAH

No. No, you wouldn't. And you know you wouldn't. You'd have all sorts of reasons why you couldn't. Responsibilities at school. Activities for the kids.

ANNA

Sarah

SARAH

No, Mom. Alan is right. It's time some truth was spoken in this room.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

(She turns back to James.)

You would find some excuse not to come.

JAMES

Maybe

SARAH

No maybe about it. All of you.

ALAN

Hey, I've been here.

SARAH

Really, Alan? Really? You want to go down that road?

ALAN

Hold on

SARAH

Popping in for thirty minutes every other week does not count as "being here."

ALAN

Sometimes that's all I have. I do have a job and a family, you know.

SARAH

No. I'm not sure I would know! When's the last time Margie set foot in this house?

ALAN

We all know she has good reason not to.

SARAH

Bullshit.

ANNA

Sarah! Language.

SARAH

Good God, Mom. I'm sitting in a house with a dying father, a dysfunctional group of brothers, and a mother who really wants to just ignore it all, and you're going to disapprove of my saying "shit?" Well fuck that.

ANNA

Sarah, I don't know where this is coming from, but I don't like it.

(She gets up and starts to
leave the room.)

I'm going to go take a shower.

(She exits.)

MICKY

Jesus, Sarah.

SARAH

It's probably better she's not in the room.

MICKY

Okay. Fine. Maybe so. Go on.

ALAN

(Stands.)

We don't have to

JAMES

Sit down, Alan.

ALAN

What?

JAMES

Micky's right. She needs to go on. So sit down and listen.

MICKY

Yeah.

SAMUEL

Alan. They're right.

(Everyone looks at Alan for a
minute. Even John nods his head in
agreement. Alan realizes he really
has no choice. He sits.)

SARAH

Okay.

(Pause as she gathers her thoughts and calms down a bit.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm not trying to throw blame around, but there are certain realities we need to face. And the most important is Dad. Is he really just lying around waiting to die?

JOHN

Seems like it.

SARAH

Maybe he just needs something more to live for.

MICKY

(Confused)

What?

SARAH

Think about it. When's the last time that he had all of his kids together? When was the last time that we all were here, working together, being a family?

ALAN

Is this really why you called everyone?

JAMES

What are you getting at, Sarah?

SARAH

Ever since his heart attack he's just been wasting away. John can attest to that.

JOHN

Yeah . . . he just . . . lays there

SARAH

Like he has nothing to live for.

ALAN

Why? What's different? He farmed his whole life. Then he had a heart attack, which incidentally, two packs of Marlboros a day didn't exactly help, and now, what, he can't farm anymore so he's decided to die?

SARAH

You're over-simplifying, Alan. It's not like he made a choice. Something changed when he got sick. Something slipped away from him. He was one of the hardest working men I'd ever known. He basically ran this farm by himself

JAMES

Wait a second. All through high school we were all cleaning bins, driving truck . . .

SARAH

We did our chores? Yes. Agreed. We all did our chores.

MICKY

We had to.

SARAH

Exactly. That's my point. We did our chores because if we didn't, there'd be consequences.

ALAN

That's not so unique, Sarah. Most kids, especially teenagers, are like that.

MICKY

And it's not like we were dicks about it. We did our chores, and then we did other stuff. You included.

JAMES

Where are you going with this?

SARAH

Dad put his whole life into this farm. Everything he was. And even though we helped, it never got in our blood like it did his.

JAMES

Okay. I agree. None of us stuck around to run the farm, except John.

ALAN

This farm couldn't support all of us. Hell, it can't even support them. Much less all of us and our families. And all of Micky's ex-wives.

MICKY

God, you're an asshole!

JAMES

Damnit, Alan. Knock it off.

(Alan raises his hand, palm out,
indicating he didn't really mean
it.)

SAMUEL

What could we have done differently, Sarah?

SARAH

I don't know. But we all left. As soon as we could.

JAMES

I think we all had our reasons, Sarah.

ALAN

You left, too, Sarah. You didn't go far, but you still left
too, so this judgement of yours is a bit hypocritical.

SARAH

Jesus, Alan. Why do you have to make everything an attack? I
know I left.

ALAN

For a whole other family.

SARAH

Really, Alan? That's the way you see it? I married David
and became a part of his family, and started my own, so I'm
what . . . a traitor to ours?

ALAN

You're not a traitor, Sarah. It's just

SARAH

What?

ALAN

Nothing.

SARAH

No. Say it. We're throwing the truth out there, remember.
It's just what?

JAMES

Let it go, Sarah.

SARAH

No, James. I will not let it go. We've been "letting things
go" for far too long. So, Alan, it's just what?

ALAN

You could've done better.

(There is a moment of stunned
silence. After a few moments, Sarah
speaks, and she is calm.)

SARAH

You think I never knew this is how you all felt about David?
You think I don't realize you look down on his entire family?

JAMES

Sarah . . .

SARAH

No, James. You do, too. You all do. Because Dad does. And
Mom.

ALAN

Okay. Since we are where we are. There's truth to that.

SARAH

And it doesn't seem to matter that they are more successful
than most of the damn farms around here? Or that they are
simply good people?

JAMES

Of course, it does. I don't know where the judgement comes
from. But you're right, it's there.

SARAH

And I'm one of them! If you haven't noticed, I have the same
last name as they do! And let me tell you this, they are more
of a family than we ever were.

MICKY

And you're hoping to make us into that family?

ALAN

I think the time for that is long gone.

SARAH

No. That's not what I'm saying. But we can do better. We can try to be something we never were, and it might just help our dad find a reason to live.

(Again, a moment of silence as they
all realize the truth of her
statement.)

JAMES

How do you see this happening?

SARAH

Harvest.

MICKY

If he's asleep, he isn't exactly going to notice that we're out cutting wheat.

SARAH

No, he's not. But if we don't harvest and they lose the place, moving him somewhere else will kill him.

JAMES

That much is true.

SARAH

Here are the facts: Harvest needs to happen. Dad can't do it. John can't do it all alone. And this family needs something to pull it together.

ALAN

Even if that's true, how do we all just hang around and wait for harvest? And then stay and cut? Most of us don't have that time. We can't exactly just walk away from our lives.

SARAH

All that's more important than our parents?

ALAN

I'm not saying that.

MICKY

Sarah's right. We can do it. With all of us, we could be done in a week or so.

SARAH

John? Can we do it in a week?

JOHN

Sixteen hundred acres. Two shitty combines. By the time the dew burns off and we get started, we can maybe get ten, twelve hours in a day. So, yeah, if everything goes okay, we can cut in seven or eight days. But that's a pretty big "if."

MICKY

Why?

JOHN

Jesus, Micky. Open your eyes. Aren't those the same combines that were out there when you were a kid? Trucks too? All of our equipment has at least fifty years on it. That shit is held together with baling twine. Getting through without breaking down isn't gonna happen. Weather could shut us down too.

JAMES

Okay. All true. We'll just have to deal with things as they happen. Do you think we can start tomorrow?

JOHN

Maybe. We'll know in the morning. Moisture content's been dropping pretty steady in this heat. We should be below fifteen by tomorrow. If it stays hot.

JAMES

Is it supposed to?

JOHN

For the next few days. Then they say maybe some thunderstorms.

SARAH

Wouldn't be unheard of in this heat.

JAMES

Well, then I guess we gotta get it done before it storms. If we can start in the next few days, I can make arrangements. I'll stay.

SAMUEL

I've got a week.

MICKY

Well, as Alan has so lovingly pointed out, I don't have a life. So fuck it. I'm here.

SARAH

Alan?

(They all look at him.)

ALAN

Margie isn't going to like it, but okay.

JAMES

Alright. We all stay.

MICKY

Like one big happy family.

SAMUEL

One big happy dysfunctional and slightly alcoholic family.

(They all laugh. For a moment, and just a moment, they are a family.)

MICKY

Speaking of that. John? Still beer in the fridge in the shop?

JOHN

Yeah.

MICKY

Let's go. You know . . . "check the equipment."

(He starts for the door. Samuel shrugs and follows. A moment later, James as well.)

JAMES

Come on, Alan.

ALAN

You go ahead, I'm gonna . . .

MICKY

Fuck that. Come on. Just let it go.

ALAN

(There is a moment when Alan
is going to bite back but
doesn't.)

You're right. Fuck it. Let's go.

(Everyone is a bit shocked. Alan
follows behind as they all head out
the door until only Sarah and John
remain.)

SARAH

You going?

JOHN

I 'spose.

SARAH

You better, or they'll drink all your beer.

JOHN

It's shitty beer anyway.

SARAH

You okay with this? Everyone staying to help?

JOHN

Yeah, I guess. Don't know what else I'd do.

(John starts for the door.)

SARAH

John.

JOHN

What?

SARAH

You have to tell him.

JOHN

No. I don't.

SARAH

Sam and June were together for quite a while. He should know.

JOHN

It's none of his business.

SARAH

It's okay that you and June are together. It's more than okay. It's good. But if Sam finds out without you being the one to tell him, he's gonna be pissed.

JOHN

He doesn't need to know. We harvest. He leaves. All's good.

SARAH

Why? Why are you hiding it?

JOHN

I just don't want to deal with it, okay? Just leave it alone.
(He turns and walks out the door.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 3

Setting: Three days later. Early morning. No light comes from the windows. Alan enters from the front door. Obviously tired but wearing clean clothing. He exits into the kitchen. A moment later, Micky and Samuel enter from the hallway. Everyone wears typical work clothes of a farm, worn denim jeans, boots, and a light plaid shirt - except Micky, who wears a t-shirt with the sleeves cut off.

MICKY

I need coffee.

SAMUEL

Yeah.

MICKY

Or a Caesar. Actually, that would be so much better.

SAMUEL

You have a problem.

MICKY

I definitely have a problem.

(They start to the kitchen when Alan reenters. He holds a coffee pot in his hand.)

ALAN

You guys want some?

MICKY

Is there whiskey to go in it?

ALAN

Do you ever stop?

MICKY

Ummm . . . no.

SAMUEL

I'm with Micky. It would help my attitude immensely.

ALAN

Well, you're out of luck.

MICKY

Bet there's some stashed in the shop.

SAMUEL

Probably.

ALAN

You don't need any whiskey. Jesus you two. We have work to do.

MICKY

(Taps Samuel in the chest.)

Let's go.

ALAN

Samuel.

SAMUEL

What?

ALAN

Don't let Micky push you into being like him.

SAMUEL

I'm a big boy, Alan. I make my own choices.

(He turns back to Micky.)

Let's go.

MICKY

If there's none in the shop, we're headin' to town.

(They leave. The house is quiet again for a moment when Anna comes out of the back. She wears her robe, but she's clearly not been sleeping.)

ANNA

Sounds like you made some progress yesterday.

ALAN

Some.

ANNA

Any problems?

ALAN

Nothing major. One of the trucks broke down, but John got it going again. I swear he could fix anything with baling twine and WD-40.

ANNA

He is good at it.

(James enters from the back
bedrooms.)

JAMES

Hey, Mom.

ALAN

John up?

JAMES

Yeah. He'll be right out.

ALAN

Good. Need to get started.

JAMES

Hey, I noticed that the Thompsons haven't started cutting yet. Looks ripe. What's going on there?

ANNA

They sold.

JAMES

What? When? To who?

ANNA

Last year. AFS.

JAMES

What? AFS? Who the hell is that?

ALAN

AgriNorth Farming Systems. Big corporate farm. They're buying up all they can.

JAMES

No shit. Damn.

ANNA

Seems to be the way of things these days. It's a shame. I'll get breakfast going.

(She starts to exit to the
kitchen.)

JAMES

Mom. No. We can just grab some toast.

ANNA

James, Jr. I have been making food for harvest for fifty years. That is my part in all of this. I'm not going to quit now.

ALAN

Mom

ANNA

I should've had it done already. I always have it ready, but
. . . .

ALAN

But?

ANNA

Nothing.

JAMES

Dad?

ANNA

He started making noises in the middle of the night. I thought he was waking up. Just so restless.

JAMES

But he didn't?

ANNA

No. I laid there on the other side of the bed. Listening to him.

JAMES

It's okay, Mom. We can at least help.

ANNA

Okay.

(This is a concession for her. They start to move into the kitchen when John enters.)

JOHN

Hey.

JAMES

Ready to hit it again?

JOHN

Sure. But we're going to run out of bin space pretty fast. Then we have to haul to town. Gonna slow us down.

ANNA

First, you eat. Then you start.

(She again starts to go towards the kitchen.)

JAMES

Mom. You're exhausted. We can all see you're exhausted. Go get some sleep. We can take care of ourselves.

ANNA

That's not the way it's supposed to be.

ALAN

If you haven't noticed, nothing is really the way it's supposed to be.

(Sarah enters. She carries a large tote bag.)

SARAH

Hey.

JAMES

Sarah. What are you doing?

(She sets down the bag.)

SARAH

You all have to eat, right? Breakfast. It's probably not the best you've ever had, but it will fill you up. There's another in the truck with sandwiches and salads for lunch.

ANNA

Sarah

SARAH

I was already making food for David and our crew, so what's a little more?

ANNA

You should be home with your kids.

SARAH

Mom

ANNA

I was just making breakfast. It would've been fine.

JAMES

But it was great of you, Sarah.

ANNA

I had it handled.

SARAH

I know, Mom. I just

JOHN

Christ. Let's just eat. I'm starving.

JAMES

Yeah. Let's eat.

ALAN

Let's grab more coffee, Mom. John, will you go get Micky and Sam?

JOHN

Yeah.

(He exits.)

ALAN

Come on, Mom.

(He guides her into the kitchen.
This is a rare moment for Alan.)

JAMES

This was really good of you, Sarah.

SARAH

You wouldn't know it.

JAMES

It was. Really. Especially when you have your own family to take care of.

SARAH

She acts like I came in after curfew or something. Jesus.

JAMES

It's not you. It's just . . . all of this.

SARAH

All of what?

JAMES

All of us being here.

SARAH

That's a good thing.

JAMES

Sure. But it makes her feel dependent. Things are out of her control. And you know Mom likes control.

SARAH

Yeah.

JAMES

So, while you making food was incredibly nice, and you know we're all going to appreciate it very much, she feels inadequate. You know, that whole farm wife thing.

SARAH

I am that farm wife.

JAMES

Yes. Yes, you are. Holy cow, you are.

SARAH

Let's get this on the table.

(John re-enters, irritated.)

JOHN

I don't know how they can be so immature all of the time.

SARAH

(Laughing.)

You're kidding, right? You've met Micky? Are they coming up to the house?

JOHN

God only knows.

SARAH

I'll go get them. Can you two finish setting this up?
(She heads for the door.)

JAMES

Sure.

JOHN

What did you bring?

SARAH

Nothing too special. Just a breakfast casserole.

JOHN

That hash brown one you sometimes make?

SARAH

No. The sausage and egg.

JOHN

Oh.

(Pause.)

Good.

SARAH

What?

JOHN

Nothing.

SARAH

What?

JOHN

Nothing. I like this casserole better.

(She eyes him critically.)

SARAH

John? John!

JOHN

(Pause.)

Your hash brown casserole sucks.

SARAH

What?

JOHN

Sorry. You made me tell. But, yeah, sucks bad.

SARAH

James?

JAMES

Sorry. Can't hear you over here. Way too far away. Way too far!

SARAH

James!

JAMES

Oh, is that Mom calling me from the kitchen? Coming Mom!
(He quickly exits.)

SARAH

You guys are assholes.

JOHN

Yeah. Sorry. Thought you figured that out long ago.

SARAH

(Muttering as she goes.)

David likes my hash brown casserole. The boys love it.

JOHN

Sure they do.

(She exits out the door. Alan enters from the kitchen carrying a coffee pot and mugs.)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Doubt those guys are gonna want coffee without whiskey in it.

ALAN

Probably not, but I don't care. Lots to do today. Don't need drunk assholes on my crew.

(There is a beat. John contemplates whether he should say anything or not but then decides to speak.)

JOHN

That's part of the problem, Alan.

ALAN

Drunks?

JOHN

No. Your crew.

ALAN

(Alan doesn't understand.)

What are you talking about?

JOHN

We're . . . not your crew.

ALAN

I didn't mean it like that.

JOHN

No. But you said it. And that's your attitude.

ALAN

So, what, we should be your crew?

JOHN

Jesus you're fucking stupid sometimes.

ALAN

What?

JOHN

You walk in here with your goddam attitude.

ALAN

Hey, at least I'm here, aren't I? Helping.

JOHN

Sure. Now. Where were you when the combines and the trucks had to be serviced and repaired? Or when Mom needed water? Or the propane tank was running low? Or the tin on the fucking shop roof was loose and someone had to get up there and drive some screws or it was gonna end up in the next county?

(Pause.)

Or when Dad falls into his bed and doesn't get up for a month and Mom is basically a ghost in the house? Where were all of you then?

ALAN

Jesus, John, I

(At that moment Sarah bursts back in.)

SARAH

There's a fire!

JOHN

What? Where?

SARAH

North. Somewhere by AFS.

JOHN

Who called?

SARAH

David. Terry Westerman called him.

JOHN

Is he loading up?

SARAH

I think he and his dad already headed there.

(James and Anna enter. They've
heard the commotion.)

JAMES

What's going on?

JOHN

Fire. Up by AFS.

JAMES

How big?

SARAH

David didn't know but he heard it was pretty good size
already.

ANNA

It's supposed to be windy today. That won't help.

SARAH

I need to get home. David left the boys with his mom, but she
can't really handle them on her own.

JAMES

Of course, Sarah. Get home.

ANNA

I'll come with you, Sarah.

SARAH

What? No. Why?

ANNA

We need to make some food to take up north. If it's big fire,
they could be up there all day and even through the night.
They'll need to eat.

SARAH

Shouldn't you be here, with Dad?

ANNA

He'll be fine. He's been sleeping for days. I don't think
he's going to wake up and want to go fight the fire.

SARAH

Okay. True.

ANNA

I'll change and meet you outside.

(Anna exits to the bedrooms while
Sarah exits out the front door.)

JOHN

James, you should take the water truck to town and fill it
and meet us there. The rural trucks run out of water pretty
fast.

JAMES

Got it.

(Micky and Samuel run in.)

MICKY

John, I grabbed the swatters.

JOHN

Shovels?

MICKY

Got 'em.

JOHN

Let's go.

(They start for the door when Alan
jumps in.)

ALAN

Wait a minute.

(They turn back.)

JOHN

What?

ALAN

Is the fire on that corporate place, or just near it?

JOHN

I don't know.

MICKY

Why?

ALAN

If it's on AFS, they'll get it out. They have better equipment than any of us. More of it.

JOHN

What the hell are you saying?

JAMES

I'm not sure where you're going with this.

ALAN

We have to cut. We have crops standing in the field and we can't lose a day fighting a fire that they can handle.

JOHN

Are you insane? If it gets out of control, it could be burning our crop in hours.

ALAN

Look, I'm not trying to sound like an asshole here, but that fucking corporate farm can handle it. They have the best equipment in the country. They don't need us.

JOHN

That's not the way it works. If there's a fire, everyone goes.

MICKY

John's right. This is stupid. Let's go.

ALAN

Really? You all know we have a very limited window to get this crop in. The weather forecast doesn't look all that promising, and as John and Sarah have pointed out, if it isn't successful, it could be the end of the farm. You willing to risk that to go fight a fire that you don't need to fight?

JOHN

That's bullshit.

ALAN

Is it? Just because you feel like you have to run up there and help, doesn't mean your help is needed. But cutting here is. Get your priorities straight.

JOHN

My priorities?

(He is angry. He starts to go for Alan. James steps in.)

JAMES

Hold on, John.

JOHN

You have the balls to talk to me about priorities?

JAMES

John. Stop. You too, Alan.

MICKY

Jesus, Alan.

JAMES

Let's just stop a minute, okay. Everyone.

JOHN

James. We have to go.

JAMES

I don't know

JOHN

What?

JAMES

Alan might be right.

MICKY

What the fuck are you saying?

JAMES

Do they really need us?

JOHN

That doesn't matter.

JAMES

You said yourself that we're going to get slowed down. We can't lose the time.

MICKY

It might only be a couple of hours.

ALAN

If that's the case, then it isn't a very big fire and they don't need us.

MICKY

James. I can't believe you'd agree with him.

JAMES

It's practicality, Micky.

JOHN

Fuck you guys. I'm going. Micky, you comin'?

MICKY

Yeah. I am. Let's go.

JOHN

Samuel?

SAMUEL

Look, John. Why don't you two head up there? If it's bad, call and we'll head up.

MICKY

Jesus, Sam

SAMUEL

These guys are right. We need to at least get started. But if you need us, call.

JOHN

This is bullshit. Whatever.

(John leaves.)

MICKY

I'm surprised at you guys. You always say I'm the irresponsible one.

ALAN

This is the responsible thing to do, Micky. But hey, you go off and be a hero at the fire. Bet they'll have some beers for you afterwards.

MICKY

You just never quit being an ass, do you?

JAMES

Enough. Go, Micky.

(Micky looks at them for a second and then leaves.)

JAMES (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's get to it. Samuel, you and Alan cut. I'll drive truck.

(Alan exits.)

SAMUEL

This doesn't feel very right.

JAMES

It will. In an hour when they get back. Alan's an ass in the way he says it, but he's right.

SAMUEL

I hope so.

(They exit. A moment later Anna enters having changed out of her robe. She heads for the door but then stops. She hesitates and looks back at the bedrooms. A moment of indecision, but then she turns resolutely and exits out the front door.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 4

Setting: Late in the afternoon of the same day. As the lights come up, Samuel sits in the armchair in the living room. After a few moments, the door opens and Micky and John enter. They are dirty and tired. Smoke and grime cling to them. Micky carries an open can of beer and has another in his pocket. John also has one in his hand. They notice Samuel right away.

MICKY

What the hell are you doing in here? Where is everyone?

JOHN

Why are the combines sitting? It's still light out.

MICKY

Sam? What the fuck?

SAMUEL

We tried calling you. About a hundred times.
(Samuel's words and tone fill
the air.)

MICKY

Why?

SAMUEL

Dad

MICKY

What happened?

JOHN

What?

SAMUEL

He's okay, but Mom found him. He was . . . on the floor.

MICKY

Oh shit.

JOHN

Where is he?

SAMUEL

Hospital. We kept trying to call you guys. They made me stay here and wait for you. I wanted to go look, but we had no idea where you were. I called the corporate office, but they didn't know anything.

MICKY

God damn it!

SAMUEL

They got him to the hospital. He's not awake, but at least he seems stable.

MICKY

Okay. Let's get changed and get in there.

(He starts to go, but John hangs back.)

JOHN

(To Samuel)

He's stable? That's what they said?

SAMUEL

Yeah. That's what Sarah said. She called about an hour ago.

MICKY

John . . . ?

JOHN

I should stay here.

SAMUEL

What?

MICKY

What the hell, John?

JOHN

Me standing there looking at him laying in that bed isn't going to get the grain to town. He doesn't need me staring at him asleep. I've been doing that for a year. He needs me cutting.

SAMUEL

Jesus, John.

JOHN

Standing around a hospital room doesn't do anybody any good.

SAMUEL

John, I don't

JOHN

It doesn't! I can stand around there and do nothing, or I can cut.

MICKY

(Sighs.)

Shit. Okay. Yeah.

SAMUEL

You can't cut alone.

JOHN

Done it before.

SAMUEL

Whatever. But you're right. I'll stay and help.

MICKY

Fuck that. I'll stay.

SAMUEL

Micky, I really think you should go in. Mom asked where you were. Specifically you.

MICKY

Really?

SAMUEL

John and I can handle this until you guys get back.

MICKY

Okay. Shit. Okay. I'm just gonna go. They'll have to deal with the stench of smoke.

SAMUEL

That and booze.

MICKY

Right. Shit. Uh . . . here.

(Hands Samuel his open beer
can and then the second one
out of his pocket.)

Get rid of these, will ya?

SAMUEL

Call when you know anything.

MICKY

John? You sure? You could go. Sammy and I can cut.

JOHN

Let you guys fuck up my crop? Not a chance. Go.

SAMUEL

Will you just go?

MICKY

I'm going! Oh, shit. Here.

(He fishes one more crumpled-up
beer can from his pocket and tosses
it towards Samuel who misses the
catch. The can lands on the floor
in front of the wall of pictures.)

Sorry. Shitty throw.

(He exits quickly.)

JOHN

Give me a few minutes. I gotta shower off this smoke.

SAMUEL

And booze.

JOHN

Right. Well, here.

(Hands him his beer can.)

Guess if you're picking up after Micky, you can take my shit,
too!

SAMUEL

Gee, thanks. Asshole.

JOHN

I'll be quick.

SAMUEL

(Samuel crosses over to the
beer can on the floor,
retrieving it.)

No worries. I'll go fuel.

(As Samuel stands up, his gaze
falls on the picture of his family.
John starts to leave when Samuel
stops him.)

John?

JOHN

What?

SAMUEL

He's going to be alright, isn't he?

JOHN

Of course, man. He's tough.

SAMUEL

You sure?

JOHN

If I weren't, I wouldn't be here. I'd be heading to town.

(John leaves the room to wash up.
Samuel stares at the photo for a
moment, overcome with worry. He
sets the beer cans down and reaches
for the picture, taking it from the
wall. A moment later, June enters.
He sets the picture down.)

SAMUEL

Jesus, June.

JUNE

Sam.

SAMUEL

What are you doing here?

JUNE

I came to grab some things for your mom.

SAMUEL

You talked to her?

JUNE

Yeah. She forgot her purse in the commotion. She's waiting for you guys.

SAMUEL

Did she say how Dad's doin'?

JUNE

He's unconscious. I don't really know much else.

SAMUEL

But he's stable?

JUNE

Sounded like it.

(She exits into the kitchen. Sam is confused. June reenters with the purse, heading quickly for the front door. Sam stops her.)

SAMUEL

Why are you here, June?

JUNE

I told you, I came to get your mom's purse

SAMUEL

No. I get that. But why you? You still seem to be very much a part of this family. I've been gone for several years. But you're still here. Why?

JUNE

You haven't changed at all, have you? You still can't see things that everyone else can.

SAMUEL

What the hell does that mean?

JUNE

See, there it is right there.

SAMUEL

What is?

JUNE

God, Sam. You are so blind when you want to be.

SAMUEL

Blind about what?

JUNE

I really need to go. I just needed your mom's purse.
(June starts to exit.)

SAMUEL

June

(She keeps going.)

June. C'mon, June. June! JunieBerry!

JUNE

(This stops her. She turns.
Not angry, but sad.)

Please don't call me that.

SAMUEL

It's what I always called you.

JUNE

In a different life, Sam. When we were kids. When we didn't have anything more important to do than to go out in the mountains and pick June berries. That's when I was JunieBerry. Your little JunieBerry. It was cute then, but that time is long gone.

SAMUEL

I'm sorry I left the way I did.

JUNE

Sure.

SAMUEL

I didn't even tell you I was leaving.

JUNE

I knew you were.

SAMUEL

I didn't leave because of you.

JUNE

I know. I know why you left.

SAMUEL

(There is disbelief in his
voice. Doubt. Fear.)

Really?

JUNE

Jesus, Sam. How could I not know?

(Sam says nothing.)

JUNE (CONT'D)

You left because you couldn't love me.
Right?

(Pause.)

Because you couldn't love any woman.

(Pause.)

Can't love any woman.

(There is no judgement in her
voice. There is a long silence as
they both contemplate the truth
that is now in the room. Finally,
Samuel speaks softly. Truthfully.)

SAMUEL

No. I can't.

JUNE

But you can love.

SAMUEL

Yeah. But it doesn't work that way here.

JUNE

But you're not here, Sam. You're out there. In the world.
Where it's okay.

SAMUEL

You'd be surprised, how not okay it sometimes is.

(A moment. Now, it's her turn.)

JUNE

I'm with John.

SAMUEL

What?

JUNE

We've been together for over a year.

SAMUEL

You and John?

JUNE

Yeah.

SAMUEL

Wow. Okay. That's

JUNE

I thought you knew.

SAMUEL

No

JUNE

Earlier. I thought you knew. Then when John told me you didn't, well, I told him we needed to tell you.

SAMUEL

But you didn't.

JUNE

John didn't want to.

SAMUEL

Why? How does he think I'd react?

JUNE

You know John. He doesn't open up about things like that. But I think, in some sort of weird way, he feels like he's stealing his brother's girlfriend.

SAMUEL

(Small laugh.)

Well, I guess that's kinda accurate. You were my girlfriend.

JUNE

Okay, true. But I don't think that should matter now.

SAMUEL

It shouldn't. It doesn't.

JUNE

Somehow it does to John.

SAMUEL

Does he know . . . you know . . . what you and I were just .
. . . ?

JUNE

I don't think so. He usually doesn't see what he doesn't want
to see.

SAMUEL

Maybe he should.

JUNE

That's up to you.

SAMUEL

You said I was blind to things, and maybe I was pretty blind
to this, but now, I think I knew all along you were supposed
to be with John.

JUNE

Really?

SAMUEL

Really. Just makes sense in my head.

JUNE

In some ways Sam, you're the smartest one in this whole
family.

SAMUEL

Don't tell Alan that.

JUNE

(Laughing)

Believe me, I won't.

(Pause.)

Thank you.

SAMUEL

I care about you June. A lot. And John. And this. . . this is good.

(Spontaneously, she hugs him, overwhelmed by this admission. At that moment, John walks back in. He just stares for a moment. Disbelief. And a moment later - anger.)

JOHN

(He storms out the front door.)

Fuck!

JUNE

John!

(Samuel follows John out the door, yelling.)

SAMUEL

John! John!

(But he is gone. Samuel comes back in.)

It's okay, June. Just catch up to him and talk.

(The phone on the wall starts to ring.)

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

Tell him . . . about me.

(The phone continues to ring.)

JUNE

Are you sure?

(The phone rings.)

SAMUEL

Yes! Hang on.

(He crosses to the phone.)

JUNE

That should come from you.

SAMUEL

He needs to hear it. Then he'll know.

(He picks up the phone.)

JUNE

If you're sure

SAMUEL

Hello?

(June starts to go.)

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

June. Wait.

(Back to the phone. There is a long
pause as he listens. His face
drops.)

When?

(Pause.)

Okay.

(He hangs up and turns to June. His
face is stricken.)

Dad died about ten minutes ago.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

END OF ACT

ACT TWOSCENE 1

Setting: As the lights come up, James sits at the dining room table. All the papers are back, strewn about the room in piles. He has been sorting but is overwhelmed. He simply stares at all the piles for a moment, and then, after a few deep breaths, dives back in. A moment later, the deep rumble of far-off thunder. He looks up, worried. Micky enters, dirty and tired.

JAMES

Hey.

MICKY

Hey.

JAMES

Done for tonight?

MICKY

Yeah. Sprinkled a little bit. Gumming shit up.

JAMES

I was hoping you could go late tonight.

MICKY

Me too. It was so damn hot today I thought we'd be able to go all night. Fucking rain.

JAMES

Things run okay?

MICKY

Damn Dodge kept overheating, but we dealt with it.

JAMES

Others coming in, too?

MICKY

Yeah.

JAMES

Any sign of John?

MICKY

No.

JAMES

Where the hell is he?

MICKY

Man, I don't know. Sam wants to go look for him again.

JAMES

Guess that would be up to him. But I don't think he's going to find him. Not if John doesn't want to be found.

MICKY

I don't know if he even knows about Dad.

JAMES

It's been a day. By now, everybody in town knows.

(The door opens and June
hesitatingly steps in.)

JUNE

Can I come in?

JAMES

June. Of course.

(She enters the room and comes over
to the table. She is clearly
worried.)

JUNE

Have you heard from him?

MICKY

No. Not yet.

JUNE

I've called everybody.

MICKY

He'll turn up. He just needs a bit of time to think his way through all of this.

JUNE

I know. But he bottles stuff up. Lets it fester until it just blows.

JAMES

Don't worry, June. He'll show.

(Alan enters on the last statement.)

ALAN

I hope so. We could use the help.

MICKY

There he is. Always the voice of compassion and concern.

ALAN

Just telling the truth.

MICKY

Yeah. I guess.

ALAN

Hello, June.

JUNE

Hi, Alan.

ALAN

You haven't heard from him?

JUNE

No, but I . . .

(She falters a bit, not sure how far to go with her concern.)

ALAN

June. It's alright. We all know about you and John.

JUNE

You do?

JAMES

Sarah isn't exactly the best at keeping secrets.

JUNE

It wasn't a secret. It was . . . just

ALAN

Sam.

(A moment.)

JUNE

Yeah.

(Alan turns his attention to
James.)

ALAN

Getting anywhere?

JAMES

Sort of. But none of it's good.

MICKY

Nothing on life insurance?

JAMES

Much worse than that.

ALAN

What?

(James holds up a stack of papers.)

JAMES

Collection notices, overdue notices, statements on unpaid
accounts. The bank has been sending foreclosure warnings for
a year.

MICKY

Did you ask Mom about any of that?

JAMES

Tried.

ALAN

And?

JAMES

Nothing. Walking around like she's in a coma.

MICKY

Give her time. It's only been a day.

JAMES

Yeah. A day.

JUNE

Hard to believe he's gone.

MICKY

It's unreal. Hard to imagine this place without him.

JAMES

That's for sure.

JUNE

He was this place, your dad.

ALAN

Okay. But let's be careful not to make him something he wasn't.

MICKY

Alan. Jesus.

ALAN

Yeah. Dad was a hard worker. And he loved this farm. But let's not elevate him to superhero status quite yet.

MICKY

You have to respect how much he put into this place.

ALAN

Maybe a bit less into the place and more into the family would've been okay.

MICKY

God, Alan. He's been dead a day.

ALAN

Doesn't change the past.

JAMES

Not sure where this is coming from, Alan.

JUNE

I think I do.

MICKY

You do?

JUNE

I think John feels the same way, though he'd never come right out and say it.

MICKY

John loves this farm as much as Dad did.

JUNE

Why do you assume he's so different than the rest of you? Maybe he felt the same way you guys did, but someone had to stay and so he did.

JAMES

He told you this?

JUNE

Not in so many words.

MICKY

I guess I always thought he stayed because he felt the same as Dad.

JUNE

You saw what you wanted to.

JAMES

Were we completely wrong?

JUNE

No. He does love this place. I know that. But he also needs an identity. Something besides just James Carthege's son who works on the farm.

JAMES

John made his choices. We made ours. What should we have done differently?

JUNE

None of you ever gave him permission, one way or the other. Stay and take over the farm. Or leave. Instead, he was just here and you were contented with that. Took the pressure off of you.

(There is a moment as they all take this in.)

MICKY

Wow. Nothing like a death in the family to bring out all the ugly little truths.

JUNE

True. But you can fix it. Talk to him.

JAMES

You're right. We can. And we will.

ALAN

Of course, he has to come back here for us to do that.

MICKY

There is that.

JAMES

I'm sure there must be some sort of notice about insurance in this mess somewhere. I just haven't found it yet.

(He holds up a worn piece of paper.)

Found Grandma's cake recipe though.

MICKY

Glad they saved the important stuff.

JAMES

It's just a waste of time. I should be out with you guys.

ALAN

If we don't find anything tonight, then let it go and come help.

(The sound of thunder.)

JAMES

Don't like that.

MICKY

No. Not at all.

(Samuel comes storming in.)

SAMUEL

Fucking piece of shit.

JAMES

What?

SAMUEL

The fucking truck.

ALAN

What? Which one?

SAMUEL

Fucking Dodge. Just died pulling into the yard.

ALAN

What do you mean just died? Smoke? What?

SAMUEL

Yeah. Some smoke. Shit, I don't know.

ALAN

You didn't blow it up, did you?

SAMUEL

Fuck off, Alan. I didn't blow it up.

JAMES

Stop. Both of you. Let's just go take a look.

MICKY

I'll go look.

(He starts to go.)

JAMES

Do you even know what you're looking for?

MICKY

I did grow up here, ya know. I'll be right back.

(Micky leaves right as Samuel
notices June.)

SAMUEL

Hey, June.

JUNE

Hi, Sam.

SAMUEL

Any luck with John?

JUNE

I can't find him.

SAMUEL

Shit.

JUNE

But I will. And we'll talk. It'll be alright.

SAMUEL

Despite what happened, I'm glad you were here last night.

JUNE

Thanks. That means a lot.

ALAN

What gear were you in?

JAMES

Alan. Stop. It doesn't matter.

ALAN

It matters if he blew up the truck. Gonna be damn hard to haul grain with just one truck. Especially if we want to get done before the weekend. Damn hard.

JAMES

We'll get it done.

ALAN

Or we could just say to everybody, "Hey! The funeral is at ten but we gotta go by eleven 'cause we have to cut. Just so ya know. Pay your respects as fast as you can!"

JAMES

Alan. This isn't necessary.

SAMUEL

Why does it always have to be that way with you? The truck couldn't have just died on its own? Something couldn't have just gone wrong? Always has to be someone's fault.

ALAN

Just saying that Dodge has been running on this farm for fifty years. The fact that it dies now, when you're the one driving it, speaks volumes.

(Anna enters. Her voice is unemotional.)

ANNA

Maybe it just finally ran out of time. Like most everything else on this farm.

ALAN

Mom. Hey.

SAMUEL

How ya doin,' Mom?

ANNA

I just wanted some water.

(She starts for the kitchen.)

JAMES

We would've grabbed it for you.

ANNA

It's okay.

JAMES

Just tell us.

ANNA

I'm not the one who's dead, James. I can get my own water.

(She again starts for the kitchen
when she sees June.)

ANNA (CONT'D)

June.

(June approaches Anna. She
hesitates and then gives her a hug.
Anna accepts it but doesn't hug
back.)

JUNE

I'm so sorry, Anna.

ANNA

Yes.

(She disengages herself and
exits.)

ALAN

We don't have time to be fixing trucks. Besides, John is the
only one of us that's really much of a mechanic.

JAMES

John will be back.

ALAN

And what are you basing that on?

(James explodes,
uncharacteristically.)

JAMES

Goddam it, Alan! Stop! Why does everything have to be
negative with you?

ALAN

Jesus. Sorry. Okay. You're right. We can probably fix it.

(Anna reenters.)

ANNA

Wonderful having you all home again.

JAMES

Sorry, Mom.

ANNA

It's okay. You've always yelled at each other. Your father yelled. Always a lot of yelling. I always chalked it up to passion.

JAMES

Maybe.

ANNA

No. You just didn't like each other that much.

ALAN

Mom

ANNA

I wish it was different. But it isn't. Sometimes it just takes time to realize these things.

(Again, we hear thunder, but closer. Anna looks up as if it speaks to her.)

That thunder. Blistering hot day. Not a good pair.

(She starts to exit but stops by June.)

You're a good girl, June. But you shouldn't be here. This isn't the place for you.

JAMES

Mom

ANNA

I'm going back to bed.

(She heads for the bedroom.)

SAMUEL

But

ANNA

I'm tired.

ALAN

Mom, we didn't mean

ANNA

I'm tired, Alan. I'm going to bury my husband in a few days. Right now, I would like to sleep. So let me.

(She again turns to exit back to the bedroom but stops as she sees the portrait of the family sitting on the table beside the couch where Samuel left it. She picks it up and looks for a moment. Then, with little emotion, she sets it on the table.)

Somebody put that back on the wall.
(She exits.)

SAMUEL

June

JUNE

Sam. No. Don't.

(Sarah enters.)

SARAH

Hey.

JAMES

I didn't know you were coming over.

SARAH

Just wanted to see how things are going. Check in with Mom. Update you all on the arrangements for Dad. See Alan's smiling face. That sort of thing.

ALAN

How are things going? David still cutting tonight?

SARAH

No. We shut down about two hours ago. Pretty good rain swept through.

JAMES

How are things for Dad?

SARAH

Fine. Good. We'll be all set for Saturday. The ladies at the church have the luncheon handled. Kurt from the funeral home says he will take care of the other details.

SAMUEL

Sorry you've had to take it all on, Sarah.

SARAH

Arranging things is what I do best. Besides, if I keep busy, I don't have to think about the reality too much.

JAMES

Did Kurt say anything about what this will cost?

SARAH

Kind of. But it doesn't matter.

JAMES

Uh. Yeah. It really does.

SARAH

Not really.

ALAN

What?

SARAH

David and I are paying for it.

(They all start to protest.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Stop. We want to. David wants to. It's his way of showing respect. So just let him.

(There is silence, but they agree,
mostly because they have no
choice.)

ALAN

We should just sell the damn place.

SARAH

What?

JUNE

Sell the farm?

SAMUEL

Are you kidding?

ALAN

Oh, knock it off. Jesus. It's not like I'm suggesting we kill off Mom for insurance money or something. It's property. It has value. You know AFS would jump on it.

SAMUEL

There is no way we're selling to the fucking corporate farm.

JAMES

He might be right.

SARAH

James! No.

ALAN

All I'm saying is, this place is so far underwater that there might not be any other way out. That or bankruptcy. Either way the farm is gone.

SAMUEL

Well then you might as well just go ahead and kill Mom, 'cause selling the farm would do that.

SARAH

We can't sell the farm. Especially to AFS.

ALAN

Well, if you can come up with a better idea, I'm all ears.

JAMES

Look, I see what Alan's saying. The situation is pretty bad. But I also agree that taking the farm, and more importantly this house, from Mom is a really bad idea.

ALAN

There may not be a choice if Mom's going to lose it either way.

(At that moment, Micky comes in,
clearly not happy.)

MICKY

Well . . . it's fucked.

JAMES

What happened?

MICKY

Threw a rod. Oil pan looks like someone took a shotgun to it.

(Alan turns to Samuel.)

ALAN

A little smoke? You said there was a little smoke.

SAMUEL

Uh . . . well . . . maybe more than a little.

MICKY

And a fairly sudden lurch and stop?

SAMUEL

Maybe.

(Everyone expects Alan to explode.
When he speaks, he is calm and
matter of fact.)

ALAN

Well . . . guess it was in the wrong gear after all.

(He gives out a small laugh. A
moment of stunned silence and then
they all start to laugh.)

MICKY

Yeah, I'm guessing it was.

SAMUEL

It's not funny.

ALAN

I'm starting to think that maybe it just doesn't matter!
Jesus.

MICKY

No shit.

SARAH

I talked to John.

(This shocks them all back into
reality.)

JAMES
When?

SARAH
This afternoon.

MICKY
Why didn't you call us?

SARAH
I'm telling you now.

JUNE
Where is he?

SARAH
I don't know.

JAMES
Sarah!

SARAH
No. I really don't. He called. He was in town with some of his buddies. Obviously been drinking.

ALAN
And?

SARAH
I don't know. He doesn't sound so good.

JUNE
Does he know about your dad?

SARAH
Yeah. He knows. I tried to talk to him about it, but that didn't go very far.

JUNE
I'm not surprised.

ALAN
That asshole!

SARAH
You need to cut him some slack, Alan. He's dealing with this the only way he knows how.

SAMUEL

And his reaction to June and me? We were just talking. We can talk.

SARAH

I know. He knows.

SAMUEL

Well, he needs to get his head out of his ass.

SARAH

Don't you start as well. There's more to it than that and you know it.

ALAN

Okay. I get what you're saying. But right now, we need him here.

(A pause as they realize the truth
of this. Micky changes the
subject.)

MICKY

I thought we'd see more from the neighbors today. Some offers for help maybe.

JAMES

They all have their own cutting to do.

MICKY

That's not usually the way it works.

ALAN

Who knows? Everybody's got to get their own done. And they know that we're all home.

MICKY

I get that. But they also know the family needs some time to process the situation. Make arrangements. All that shit. For fuck's sake. They at least usually drop off a goddam casserole.

JAMES

Damn, Micky. Give people time.

SARAH

I don't know.

JAMES

What?

SARAH

Well, yes, I'm surprised too, but

JAMES

But what?

JUNE

The fire.

SARAH

Yeah.

JAMES

What about it?

JUNE

You didn't go. You stayed here. People notice things like that.

JAMES

We had to cut. And they had it under control.

JUNE

But you didn't know that at the time. No-one did. If it had gotten out of hand, it could've burned up the entire north country.

MICKY

Is she right? Are people pissed that we cut instead of fighting fire.

SARAH

I don't know if "pissed" is the right word, but . . . yeah. They're aware.

ALAN

Did David say something to that effect?

SARAH

(Angry)

No, Alan, David didn't. And he never would.

(Pause.)

But he went.

SAMUEL

(to Micky)

You went. And John.

MICKY

Sure. But, like Alan said, they know we're all here. So they know we all didn't go.

JAMES

It's too late now. Maybe we screwed up. I don't know. But we just need to figure out how to get it done now on our own. Especially with one truck.

SARAH

I can help. Or we can. David and me.

(She glances at Alan.)

Even though some of you can't help but be an asshole to him.

ALAN

Sorry. You're right. That was out of line.

JAMES

I didn't think you guys were done cutting?

SARAH

We're not. But the custom cutters across our road at the Hallingsford place are. They finished earlier today and were loading up when I left.

MICKY

I'm not seeing how that helps us.

SARAH

They could come here. It's eighteen miles. They could be here in the morning. This place would take them a day. Maybe two. They have four machines. Grain carts. Semis.

JAMES

Sarah, we can't pay them.

SARAH

I can.

(They again start to protest.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Shut up! David and I talked about it right before I headed here. He's already talked to them. They can be here in the morning.

JAMES

Sarah. It's really good of you. And of David. But

(Anna enters the room quietly
behind them all. She is listening,
but they don't notice her.)

SARAH

What? Why? We've done well. David has done well. And I know that pisses you all off for some reason. But we have the money. And this crop is looking okay. So why not? He's just trying to help. Even though none of you have ever shown him the least bit of respect, or even friendship, he's still trying to help. Because he's a good man. And he loves me. And because he loves me, he will do whatever he can to help this family. So why the hell not?

ANNA

Because he shouldn't have to.

SARAH

Mom!

ANNA

What is the matter with all of you? Four able-bodied men. A fifth off in a bottle somewhere. And you can't cut these fields? Your dad could. Did. By himself when necessary.

(Thunder.)

JAMES

Mom

ANNA

It's generous of you, Sarah. But it doesn't need to happen. Or shouldn't.

(Thunder.)

ANNA (CONT'D)

Going to storm. So, it might not even matter.

MICKY

Mom. These are different times. Things are different.

ANNA

No, Micky. There's always good times, bad times. It's how you deal with them.

(Thunder.)

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'm going back to bed before that storm hits.

(She exits. They are all quiet.
After a few moments, the sound of
rain.)

MICKY

Great.

ALAN

Well, I think Mom made the decision for us.

JAMES

I don't think anyone's going to be cutting tomorrow anyway with that rain.

(It is left in the air.)

MICKY

Listen. I'm going to town. I want to find John.

SAMUEL

I'll go with you.

MICKY

You think that's a good idea?

SAMUEL

It'll be fine.

MICKY

What about you guys?

ALAN

Yeah. Let's go find him. And . . . I could use a beer.

MICKY

Wow! James?

JAMES

I don't know

(He glances at the pile of
papers on the table.)

MICKY

There's nothing in there that's worth spending all night on.
That I can promise you.

JAMES

Okay. Let's go.

SARAH

I'm gonna head home. Get the boys to bed.

SAMUEL

Let's beat the rain.

(Alan, James, and Samuel run out
the door. The sound of rain
intensifies.)

MICKY

It really is generous of you and David, Sarah.

SARAH

Thanks, Micky.

MICKY

I'll talk to them. They'll come around. Mom will too.

SARAH

I'm not sure I have the same confidence as you.

MICKY

You'll see. Now, get home to those boys.

SARAH

Alright. Goodnight, Micky.

(She runs out the door. Micky turns
to June.)

MICKY

You coming with us to town?

JUNE

No. I don't think so. I don't think that's a good idea.

MICKY

Probably not. But don't worry. We'll find John and talk some
sense into him.

JUNE

Maybe it's not John I'm worried about.

MICKY

No? Then who?

JUNE

I'm not sure. Maybe you.

MICKY

Me? Why?

JUNE

God, Micky. You always want to save everyone. Even when we
were kids. Always wanting to fix things.

MICKY

(laughs)

Is that bad?

JUNE

No. Not at all. Maybe just not always possible.

MICKY

Maybe not. But, hey, someone's gotta try.

JUNE

Micky, you've been like a big brother to me my whole life. I
know how much you care about everyone.

(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

How much you want to help everyone. Including me. I just don't want to see you get hurt because of it.

MICKY

I won't! And I won't let them hurt John either.

JUNE

I think John can take care of himself.

(Car horn honk.)

MICKY

Yeah. I think he can. And, hell, he's got you to take care of him. He doesn't need me doing it too.

JUNE

Maybe it's the opposite of that, Micky. Maybe I need John to take care of me?

MICKY

(laughs)

I doubt that. I think you can take care of yourself pretty well.

JUNE

Yeah . . . maybe.

(He looks at her, puzzled. Another honk.)

JUNE (CONT'D)

You better go. Those assholes will leave you.

MICKY

Yes, yes they will!

(With a mischievous grin he takes off, yelling behind as he goes.)

Turn off the lights as you go, will ya?

(He is gone.)

(June stands for moment, looking around. She walks over to the picture of the family that still sits on the table. She picks it up and stares at it, lets out a sigh. Then, she walks over and hangs it back on the wall in its place and takes a step back. She looks at it for another moment, then the room she knows so well. Then she turns and leaves, clicking off the lights as she goes.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 2

Setting: Hours later. Micky sits at the dining room table, eating something in half light. He cracks open beer. Anna enters.

ANNA

You should drink milk instead. You'll feel better in the morning.

MICKY

Thanks. But if you haven't noticed, it's already morning.

ANNA

What time is it?

MICKY

Fourish.

ANNA

That meatloaf was better a week ago.

MICKY

Seems okay now.

ANNA

You probably shouldn't be eating it. It's probably bad.

MICKY

Smells fine. Tastes fine. I think I'll be okay.

ANNA

You never liked meatloaf as a kid.

MICKY

Hell, I don't like it now. But I'm hungry.

ANNA

And drunk.

(No judgement.)

MICKY

Yup.

ANNA

You're pretty tough on your body, Micky. It's going to catch up to you sometime.

MICKY

Don't start, Mom. Been a shit night anyway.

ANNA

I won't.

(Micky finishes the meatloaf.
Drinks a good portion of the
remaining beer.)

MICKY

When did you start calling me Micky?

ANNA

What do you mean? It's your name.

MICKY

It is now. But it wasn't. Not as a kid. Or in high school. I was Mick. Always Mick.

ANNA

I guess . . .

MICKY

I hated Mick. Mick. Mick. Mick the Hick. Jesus. How did that happen? How did you guys get Mick from Micheal? Why not Mike? Or Mikey?

ANNA

I'm actually not sure how Mick was it. I don't remember.

MICKY

Great. Not only does it suck, but you don't even know where it came from. Great parenting moment, Mom.

ANNA

(Small laugh.)

You were certainly never a hick.

MICKY

No.

ANNA

No matter how much the others tried to make you one.

MICKY

Wasn't gonna happen.

ANNA

I think maybe your brother is still angry that you never became one.

MICKY

Shit, Alan's angry about everything.

(A pivotal moment.)

ANNA

Yes. Yes, he is.

MICKY

Why?

ANNA

I don't know. I wish I did, but I don't. Sometimes I feel like I don't really know any of you at all. I raised you. Fed you. Thought you had decent childhoods. And it wasn't easy. No money. Six kids. So many acres to farm with broken down equipment. But I always felt we did okay. Now I wonder. I don't think I really know any of you and I wonder if I ever did.

MICKY

Not even Sarah?

ANNA

Her least of all, sometimes.

(Silence as Micky takes this in.)

MICKY

So, when was it? When did I become Micky to you?

ANNA

I don't know. It just seemed to happen over time. You were off living your life and that life belonged to Micky, not some farm kid named Mick. Over time it just seemed that I called you Micky when I mentioned you.

MICKY

Dad never did. I was always Mick.

ANNA

No. You're wrong. At the end, he was also calling you Micky. Fought it at first. Would always correct himself. But then he just let it go.

MICKY

I didn't know that.

ANNA

You weren't around. How could you?

(He looks down.)

ANNA (CONT'D)

That wasn't a criticism.

MICKY

I know. Just a truth. Those are sometimes worse.

ANNA

Sometimes.

(Pause.)

So why was it a shit night?

MICKY

Jesus, Mom. Watch your language.
(Laughs.)

ANNA

I think your mom would surprise you sometimes.

MICKY

Probably.

ANNA

What happened?

MICKY

John's a fucking idiot, and Sam isn't much better.

ANNA

What did they do?

MICKY

Got in a fight down at Red's. Stupid.

ANNA

A physical fight?

MICKY

Yeah. John was all drunk and pissed off. He started it. Sam tried to calm him down, but John just wouldn't let it go, and then Sam got pissed and the fists started flying. Dipshits. Both of 'em.

ANNA

Over June?

MICKY

Maybe on the surface. But . . . no.

ANNA

Well, I suppose I should be concerned, but it's certainly not the first time some of you boys got into a fist fight with each other.

MICKY

True.

ANNA

I swear, when you were boys, every day I'd find two of you fighting out behind the shop.

MICKY

But we're not boys now. Fucking morons.

ANNA

Don't be too hard on John, Micky. Things have been hard on him since you all left. He's done a lot to keep this place together.

MICKY

I know he has.

ANNA

I don't think he thinks anyone else realizes it. He feels pretty alone.

MICKY

What about Sam? Can I be hard on him?

ANNA

No, I don't really think you should be hard on any of them actually.

MICKY

Why?

ANNA

Because you really don't have room to judge anyone.

MICKY

Ouch.

ANNA

Again. Not a criticism.

MICKY

Felt like it.

ANNA

Not at all. You just don't have the right to criticize them. And they don't have the right to do the same to you, even though they do.

MICKY

Much of the time.

ANNA

I know. But they shouldn't. None of you should. None of you have been in each other's place. Shoes. You all went different ways and want different things. That's what I don't think any of you understand. Not one of you is the same as the rest.

MICKY

It doesn't feel that way, Mom. I feel like I'm so different from all of them. All of their lives seem . . . similar. Not the same, but kind of the same. And it feels like they all judge me because I chose something so different.

ANNA

They just don't understand you, or your life.

MICKY

How about you?

ANNA

I don't understand it, either.

MICKY

And Dad?

ANNA

Never could.

MICKY

Is that why I'm the least favorite child?

(He says this with a grin,
but one that masks the
truth. He needs to know if
it is the truth.)

ANNA

It doesn't work that way, Micky. I don't have most favorites
and least favorites. I have children that are more like me,
but favorites never comes into it.

MICKY

I don't think you can say that about Dad.

ANNA

I'm not going to speak for him. Men are different. Different
expectations. Different ideas of how things should be.
Simpler. When others don't fit into what they think is the
correct mold, they don't know what to do. Your dad was like
that. His world was pretty much black and white.

MICKY

Doesn't mean he was right.

ANNA

No. It doesn't. But he loved you Micky. He loved all of you.
So damn much.

MICKY

He had a pretty fucked up way of showing it.

ANNA

He just wasn't very good at it. That's his generation. They didn't say how they felt. They demonstrated it. By working so hard for so long, he tried to show you how much he loved you.

MICKY

I know. I just wanted the other kind sometimes.

(Pause.)

From both of you.

(This hits Anna.)

MICKY (CONT'D)

Not a criticism.

(She smiles back with some bitterness, some regret.)

ANNA

I suppose not.

(They sit in silence for a few moments. Micky has something he wants to say, and Anna knows so, but he can't bring himself to do it. Finally, he starts to get up and take his plate.)

MICKY

Well, I guess . . . I'm gonna . . . I should

ANNA

You're leaving.

(She already knows. He turns to look at her.)

MICKY

I think so.

ANNA

Today?

MICKY

Yes.

(She says nothing.)

Mom, please don't hate me.

ANNA

Oh, Micky. I never could.

MICKY

If I leave now, the others will.

ANNA

I guess that will be up to them.

MICKY

That's comforting.

ANNA

Is that what you want? Comfort?

MICKY

No. You're right.

ANNA

Micky, you've been fighting this place your entire life. I've never really understood it, but I've seen it. There's always been something in you that needed to tear away from here. But you've never been able to. Something has tied you to this so hard that you've burned through life fighting against it. But you could never get free. Now. Now I think you can. Even though it's going to have a pretty big price.

MICKY

Mom

ANNA

(Stands up.)

I'm going to go back to bed. I'm sure your brothers aren't too far behind you and then there'll be that mess to clean up.

MICKY

Yeah.

ANNA

A woman gets tired of cleaning up messes. So
clean up yours before you go.

(She exits.)

MICKY

Goodbye, Mom.

(Micky goes to the table to get his
dishes when his gaze falls on the
family portrait. He looks at it for
a moment with sadness, but then
turns and exits to the kitchen.
Moments later June enters from the
front door. She is angry. Micky re-
enters.)

JUNE

Where are they?

MICKY

Not back yet. I don't even know where they went.

JUNE

What the hell were they thinking?

MICKY

They're idiots, June.

JUNE

I don't get you guys. My life has been so tied up with all of
you and then I realize I don't understand any of you.

MICKY

How could you? I don't understand us. Or them. Or this shit
that just tears us apart. Always. It never changes. And I
just can't

(He stops.)

JUNE

Can't what?

MICKY

I don't know.

JUNE

No, Micky. Can't what?

MICKY

Every day I'm here I feel it more and more. I need to . . .
nothin'.

(He starts to leave.)

JUNE

Need to what? Micky. Micky! Need to what?

(Micky stops and turns back to
her.)

MICKY

Need to get away from it. Have to get away from it.

JUNE

What do you mean by that? Exactly?

MICKY

I'm leaving.

JUNE

Leaving?

MICKY

Yeah. This morning. Now.

JUNE

What the hell are you saying?

MICKY

I can't do this anymore. This family. This farm. I just
didn't realize it until I saw John and Sam trying to beat the
shit out of each other. And Alan and James just letting them.

JUNE

So you'll run away.

MICKY

Yeah. Just like they say I always do.

JUNE

Right before your dad's funeral? Are you kidding? What will
that do to your mom?

MICKY

She knows.

JUNE

Really?

MICKY

Yeah.

JUNE

And she's okay with it?

MICKY

She is. You might not know it, but Mom gets it. Gets me.

(Then, as if seeing June for
the first time.)

I think she gets you, too.

JUNE

She doesn't. She said this wasn't the place for me.

MICKY

And what do you think she really meant by that?

JUNE

That she doesn't want me around.

MICKY

I don't think so. I think she sees who you are. Knows that
this, this isn't the place for you.

(He looks at her a moment.
Makes a decision.)

Knows you need to get the hell out of here. You should come
with me.

JUNE

What?

MICKY

Come with me just to get the hell out of here. This place has
nothing for you. Mom sees it. I see it. You know it.

JUNE

I can't leave. Not like this.

MICKY

Why?

JUNE

John.

MICKY

C'mon June. You said it yourself. John can take care of himself.

JUNE

He needs me. To help him realize that staying here is okay. That

MICKY

Sure. Maybe he does. But what's best for John might not be best for you. Whatever he decides to do, doesn't change the fact that you, June, can't stay here. This place will never be what you want it to be, despite you trying so fucking hard for so many years.

(She looks at him, pain in her eyes. Tears starting.)

MICKY (CONT'D)

You loved Samuel, and when you realized that he could never love you back you went for the next best thing.

JUNE

Shut up.

MICKY

And somehow it ties you here. To this family. To this farm.

JUNE

Shut up!

MICKY

Tell me it isn't true.

JUNE

That's a horrible thing to say.

MICKY

Tell me it isn't true.

(He waits for her response. She has none except the tears that run down her cheeks. Finally, she looks up at Micky.)

JUNE

I wanted Samuel to love me.

MICKY

But we both know why he couldn't.

JUNE

You know?

MICKY

Hell, I've known since he was in sixth grade.

JUNE

Of course, you did.

MICKY

The part I don't get, June, is why? Why do you try so hard to be here? With us? I finally realize I have to get away from this, but you fight to stay. I don't get that.

JUNE

John is good to me.

MICKY

Of course, he is. He's a good person. But is that enough?

JUNE

I don't know. Maybe.

MICKY

Well, I guess nobody can decide that but you, but I think we both know the truth. John needs, what did you call it, permission, to stay, and you need permission to go. And nobody can give that to either of you but yourselves.

JUNE

You know you'll never get to come back here. You do this.

MICKY

Might be what I need.

JUNE

Maybe.

MICKY

Maybe you do too.

(She has no answer for that. He starts to exit, then turns, grins.)

MICKY (CONT'D)

Could you give me lift to town?

JUNE

Of course, Micky. You know I will.

MICKY

Cool. Let me grab my stuff.

(Micky exits. June drifts into the living room, looking at the pictures on the wall once again, stopping in front of the family portrait. Then she picks a smaller one from the wall. It is of her and James, Sr. John enters. She is surprised.)

JUNE

God, John.

JOHN

June.

JUNE

I looked everywhere for you. I was worried.

JOHN

Sorry.

(The air between them is awkward.)

Sorry I was an asshole.

JUNE

It's okay.

JOHN

You and Sam. You can talk. I mean, obviously. I was just being stupid. I

JUNE

John. Stop. It doesn't matter.

JOHN

Yeah. Probably. Still stupid though.

JUNE

Well, yeah. Kinda.

(Pause.)

I'm really sorry about your dad.

JOHN

(Notices the picture she holds.)

He loved you. You know that?

JUNE

Yeah.

(He takes the picture from her.)

JOHN

Do you realize that out of all of these, this is the only one where Dad is goofing around with a kid? Playing with a kid. The only one. And it's you. Not me or any of the others. You.

JUNE

I'm not sure what to say to that.

JOHN

You don't need to say anything.

(He drifts away to the table and slumps into one of the chairs. June moves in, sits by him.)

JUNE

What now, John?

JOHN

I don't know. It all just seems so pointless. Look at this.

(He waves his arm at the
piles of papers.)

All of this. This is what a lifetime of work has amounted to. Bills and foreclosure notices. My whole life we sat at this table. My mom feeding so many meals to six kids and their friends. Dad always there, at the end of the table, unless he was out working. Seeding or cutting or fixing things so that we could sit here. Homework. 4H projects. Whatever. All at this table. And now

(He grabs a random paper)

an overdue hospital bill. And a family that can't even sit down at the table together. So, what's the point?

JUNE

There's more than that. You know there is.

JOHN

Like what?

JUNE

You, John. There's you. As much as you never want to admit it, this farm is a part of you. You fight against it, always have. When your dad was alive, this farm was all him. But now he's gone. I'm sorry, but he is. And honestly, he has been for a while. So quit fighting it. Quit running from it.

JOHN

I don't know if I can do this. Fix this.

JUNE

I think you can. And while they'll never say so, so do your brothers.

JOHN

Is this what you want?

(She hesitates, and then answers
truthfully.)

JUNE

I don't think that matters.

(Micky enters the room. He stops
short when he sees John.)

MICKY

John. Hey.

JOHN

Micky.

(He glances at the bag in
Micky's hand.)

MICKY

You okay?

JOHN

You're leaving?

MICKY

Uh . . . yeah.

JOHN

I get that.

MICKY

You're not pissed?

JOHN

Micky, I don't think I could ever really be pissed at you.

MICKY

Thanks, man.

JOHN

The others are gonna be, though.

MICKY

Yeah, well, some things never change.

JOHN

(Extends his hand.)

Good luck.

(Micky takes his hand, but then
pulls him in and hugs him. Tight.
John does not resist.)

MICKY

Love you, little brother.

(There is nothing else to say.
Micky heads for the door.)

MICKY (CONT'D)

I'll wait in the car, June.
(He exits.)

JUNE

I told him I'd give him a ride to town.

(John is silent a moment.)

JOHN

Do you love me, June?

JUNE

Yes, John. I do. I always have. I've always loved all of you.

JOHN

But?

JUNE

But I don't know if it's enough.

(June looks at him for a moment,
and then with determination, she
makes a choice. She goes over to
the wall and takes down the family
picture, bringing it back over to
John, handing it to him.)

JUNE (CONT'D)

Look at this picture John. I'm in so many of these pictures,
but not this one. Because this one is you guys. Your family.
Not me. I tried for so long. But I wasn't a part of the
family in that picture, and I'm not a part of this one now,
whatever it is. And that's okay.

(She looks at him a moment
and then hugs him. After
several moments, she lets
go. Steps back.)

You're a good man, John.

JOHN

That's what everyone keeps saying. Not sure what that gets a
guy though.

JUNE

Everything. Gets him everything. I better go.

(She looks at him, unsure of what to do. Finally, she turns and leaves. John stares after her. He too, is at a loss. He looks back at all the papers and then at the picture in his hands. After a moment, he falls down onto the couch, clutching the picture to his chest and after a few moments, he is asleep. Anna enters. She crosses to the couch and looks at her son for a moment. She then gently takes the picture from him. She crosses to a living room chair and sits. She stares at the picture as the lights fade to black.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 3

Setting: Sunrise. The light seeps into the living room. John still sleeps on the couch. Anna sits in the chair. We don't know if she slept or not, but she is awake now. The picture remains in her lap. The door opens. Alan comes in first, followed by James and Samuel. Alan looks stern. James is concerned. Samuel is quiet, and downtrodden.

ANNA

Where have you been?

ALAN

We took him to my place to cool off.

ANNA

You could've called.

ALAN

It was late. We

ANNA

It doesn't matter.

JAMES

Listen, Mom, we

ANNA

No, James. Now is the time for you to be quiet. All of you. Sit down.

(She is quiet, but stern. They hesitate for just a moment, and then all do. Anna moves over to where the family portrait always hung. She quietly puts the picture back in its place.)

ANNA (CONT'D)

Your father has been dead for two days. I'm going to bury him this weekend and then that will be that. I've watched this family slowly fall apart over the years. All of you drifting off to your own worlds and your own lives, and your dad went his own way too, until nothing was left but pictures on the walls of who we used to be.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

But it wasn't always like that, you know. When we were young and you were kids, James wasn't like that. He worked hard. All the time. He was proud of this farm, and all of you, and his life. He did everything he could to provide for you and give you the things you all thought you needed. But it slowly beat him down. The whole life. Until he didn't have any more to give. And no- one to give it to. You'd all chosen different lives. He was okay with that. He understood that, but . . .

JAMES

But what?

ANNA

But he couldn't understand that the farm was the thing you needed to escape from. And that, I think, broke his heart. And so, over the past few years, he faded away, just like you did, until there was little left of him. The sickness, the heart attack, all just came from the same place and finally, he just let go.

JAMES

Mom

ANNA

No. Just listen. These walls are covered with our past. All of you as kids, doing all those things kids do in these little towns. 4H. Sports. School. All those things we wanted you to do. But we were all here. On this land and in this house. You became who you are here. I don't know where all of that went wrong, or if it really even did. Maybe it's the same in every farmhouse. I don't know. But this house, and this farm is where you came from. We weren't perfect by any means, but we were a solid farming family.

(Her tone becomes harder.)

What none of you understand is that all this talk about you boys and your dad and this godforsaken farm is only part of the story. The other part is me. And Sarah. The dirt gets under our fingernails as well. The farm gets in our blood. Even though that's not supposed to be our place. We're here to support you. To bring the meals to the field as you cut the crop. To give everything of ourselves to the family and the land. It's been my life and I see it becoming Sarah's. I'm not complaining. We knew what we were signing up for. We chose it.

(Pause.)

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

Now, your father is gone. In your minds, that means the farm is gone too. But I'm here, just like I've always been. And I'm not going to just fade away with the farm. This is my home. I've known little else in my life. I can't just leave it now. And you, as my boys, need to make sure that doesn't happen. I gave everything I was and everything I had to you. To this.

(She indicates the pictures
hanging all over the walls.)

Now, it's time you gave it back.

SAMUEL

God, Mom. I'm sorry.

JAMES

We're all sorry.

ANNA

Don't be sorry. Just fix it.

SAMUEL

How?

ANNA

Start by getting the damn crop cut.

JAMES

And then we figure out the rest.

SAMUEL

I guess that's a place to start.

ALAN

There's just one thing.

(Everyone stops, fearful of Alan
destroying what was just
accomplished.)

ALAN (CONT'D)

If we can get back to what we once were, become the family that once lived on this farm . . . you're not dressing us like that again.

(He sweeps his arm up indicating
all the photos. Everyone laughs.)

JAMES

God, no.

SAMUEL

I don't know, Alan. You looked pretty good in plaid. Might want to go back to that.

JAMES

Let's get to work.

(A low rumble of thunder breaks
them from the moment.)

ALAN

Shit. Is it supposed . . . ?

JAMES

I didn't think so, but it was getting hot early.

ALAN

John. What do you think? Can we cut?

JOHN

You're asking me?

ALAN

Yeah. I am.

JOHN

Why? You never ask.

ALAN

Because whether I like it or not, you know more about this damn farm than any of us.

JAMES

He's right.

(Samuel steps up to John, trying to
make his peace with his brother.)

SAMUEL

You sure as hell know more about it than me. About most things, really.

(John stares at him for a moment
and then nods. That's all it
takes.)

ALAN

And if you say we can cut, then we cut.

(Another low roll of thunder.)

JOHN

Well, I don't like the sound of that, but hopefully it'll
pass over fast. So, yeah, we should cut until we can't.

JAMES

How far are we, John?

JOHN

Really, just over half. But if we can beat the weather, we
can knock out quite a bit in a hurry.

(Thunder. Wind starts to pick up.)

ALAN

Shit.

SAMUEL

Let's get done what we can.

JAMES

Wait! Where's Micky? Did he come back from town?

(A moment. John stares at Anna,
waiting to hear her decision.)

ANNA

He's gone.

JAMES

Gone where?

ANNA

Back to L.A.

ALAN

What? Why the hell . . .?

ANNA

I sent him. He had to go.

(They stare at her in disbelief.)

ANNA (CONT'D)

He got a call. He has an opportunity to do a job but only if he went back right away. He wasn't going to say anything to anyone and he was going to stay, but I overheard the call and I made him go.

(John studies her intently.)

ALAN

He had an offer?

ANNA

Yes.

(Thunder. Closer. Wind.)

JAMES

We better get started.

ALAN

For what? A commercial?

ANNA

I'm not sure. Yes. Something like that.

(Thunder.)

JAMES

Alan?

ALAN

Okay. Good. Then I'm glad he went. He should.

ANNA

Yes.

SAMUEL

He wasn't worth a shit cutting anyway.

JOHN

Jesus, that's the truth.

(They all laugh as they head for the door. The wind increases.)

ANNA

I'll see if Sarah can come give me a hand. We'll bring lunch out to the field.

(Thunder.)

JOHN

Alan, check the weather report. See how long this is gonna hang on or if it's going to blow over.

ALAN

Sure.

(Thunder. Then rain starts.)

JAMES

Shit. Too late.

(John looks distressed.)

SAMUEL

John?

JOHN

That doesn't sound right.

ANNA

It sounds

ALAN

It'll probably pass over fast. Hot as it's been, it

JAMES

What is it, John?

(The sound has changed. More intense. Harder.)

ALAN

John?

ANNA

(A whisper.)

Oh my god

JOHN

That's hail.

(They all head to the windows. The sound increases in fury. The hail is hard and fast. We hear it bombarding the house and shop. Ice slams into the metal of cars and equipment in a deafening roar. It strips leaves and branches from the trees and destroys the roofs of the buildings. It beats down everything, including the crop, even though they can't see it happening. All the family can do is stand in horror and watch as the hail hammers down. The sound reaches a deafening crescendo, and then, as quickly as it started, it fades away to a stray thud here and there followed by an eerie silence. Nothing. As if sound itself had been beaten out of the air.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 4

Setting: The lights come up on a room full of early afternoon light. It is warm and bright, but the underlying mood is not. Anna is on the phone, talking quietly, emotionless. All are dressed in dark, somber clothes. Funeral clothes.

ANNA

. . . It was fine. No. We just got back a little bit ago. Yes, the luncheon was fine. Okay. Yes. No. It's okay. Everyone understood. Really. Yes. Okay. I love you, too.

(She hangs up the phone. Looks at her family. The spark from earlier is gone. All that remains is a woman who knows she is lost.)

SARAH

Micky?

ANNA

Yes.

SARAH

Is he okay?

ANNA

Yes.

JAMES

I'm sure he feels bad, not being here.

ALAN

I'm sure.

JAMES

But I'm still glad he went.

SARAH

Oh, for sure. He needed to.

JAMES

Did he say anything about his commercial?

ANNA

No.

(There is no need for the lie anymore. She moves over and sits at the table. They watch her. Sarah gets up and goes over to her mother. Sits by her, but there's little she can do. Anna is closed off.)

ALAN

I thought there'd be more people there.

SAMUEL

Yeah.

JAMES

Seems like more should've been. Dad lived here for seventy years.

ANNA

It doesn't matter.

ALAN

No, it doesn't.

SARAH

I thought June would've been there. She was close to Dad.

(Everyone looks over to John.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Did you try calling her?

JOHN

No.

SARAH

Why not?

JOHN

Sarah. It doesn't matter.

SARAH

What? Where is she?

JOHN

I don't know.

SARAH

And it doesn't matter?

(John gets up, heads for the door.)

JOHN

No.

SARAH

Where are you going?

JOHN

The shop. If that's okay with you? And David?

SARAH

John, that's not fair.

JOHN

Yeah. Well, none of this is fair.

(He leaves.)

JAMES

He's just angry, Sarah. He needs to lash out at something.

SARAH

So it's me. And my husband.

JAMES

Yeah. I guess so.

SARAH

David is helping. That's all he ever wanted to do.

ALAN

Well, now he's going to own it all.

SARAH

It's him or the bank. And then probably AFS. So, which do you prefer? At least this way it's still in the family.

ALAN

Is it?

SARAH

Yes, Alan. It is.

ALAN

I guess.

(He starts to head to the
back.)

JAMES

What are you doing?

ALAN

Getting my stuff. I need to get back. I've been gone long
enough.

JAMES

You can't stick around a little longer?

ALAN

For what? David's got the farm taken care of. Sarah can help
Mom. I need to get back to my responsibilities. Some of us
have those.

(He exits.)

SAMUEL

Don't be surprised, James. Some people never change.

JAMES

Sarah, we all know you're doing the right thing. For David to
take over this place. Pay everything that's owed. All that.
It's . . . a good thing.

(Sarah turns to her mother.)

SARAH

It's a good thing. Right, Mom?

ANNA

I'm tired. I'd like to lay down.

SARAH

Mom?

ANNA

Not now, Sarah. Not now.

(Anna gets up and starts
towards the bedrooms.)

JAMES

Do you need some help?

ANNA

Just get me some water, please.

JAMES

Of course.

(Anna exits while James heads into
the kitchen. Sarah and Samuel sit
silently for a moment.)

SAMUEL

They all know you and David are doing a good thing.

SARAH

They are so unfair to him. James re-enters with a glass of
water. He stops briefly.

JAMES

Give Mom time, Sarah. I think that it would be tough for a
woman, a farm woman, to realize she is dependent on her
children. I think that would be hard.

(He exits.)

SAMUEL

David is everything they weren't. Successful farm. Boys.

(He looks up at her with a
small smile.)

A great wife.

SARAH

Thanks.

(She smiles back a bit.)

SAMUEL

And he has a strong father who supports him. Helps him.

SARAH

And we didn't have that?

SAMUEL

I'm not sure.

SARAH

Why would you say that?

SAMUEL

I'm just saying that David has everything that our brothers wanted

SARAH

I'm not talking about them. I'm asking you, Samuel. Is that really what you think? About Dad?

SAMUEL

Yeah.

SARAH

Why?

SAMUEL

Do you realize I haven't been back to this farm since I joined the military?

SARAH

Sure.

SAMUEL

Did you ever wonder why?

SARAH

I just figured

SAMUEL

I told him.

SARAH

Who?

SAMUEL

Dad. The night before I left. I told him.

SARAH

Told him what?

SAMUEL

You know what.

SARAH

Sam

SAMUEL

I'd known for awhile. I figured it was something we needed to talk about before I left. Get the air cleared and all that. So it wouldn't be an issue when I came back.

SARAH

What did he say?

SAMUEL

Nothing.

SARAH

Nothing?

SAMUEL

It was like he didn't even hear me. Just wished me luck.

SARAH

Jesus

SAMUEL

So, that was it. Left the next morning.

SARAH

Sam, I'm so sorry. I didn't know.

SAMUEL

No-one did.

SARAH

So now what?

SAMUEL

I head back.

SARAH

Are you coming back here sometime?

SAMUEL

Mom's here. You. Your boys.

SARAH

Not sure that's an answer.

SAMUEL

I need to talk to John before I go. I don't want to leave my brother the same way I left my dad. Angry.

SARAH

Is he going to be okay?

SAMUEL

John? Yeah, I think so. Of all my brothers, he's the one I figured could handle anything.

SARAH

Have you told him that?

SAMUEL

No. Maybe I should.

SARAH

See you before you go?

SAMUEL

Of course.

(He exits. Sarah is left alone in the room. She stands for a moment, looking at the pictures on the walls. Wondering what to do next. The phone rings. She crosses over and answers.)

SARAH

Hello? Oh. Hi. Yeah. No, no need to come over. No, just take the boys to the house. No, it's okay. I'll be there soon. Okay. See you there.

(She hangs up. She starts to exit when she stops in the living room one more time. She goes over to the wall and takes down the picture of her family. Alan enters with his bag in hand.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

Heading out?

ALAN

Yeah. Need to get home.

SARAH

Okay.

ALAN

Look, I'm sorry about what I said. About David.

SARAH

It's okay. I'm pretty used to it by now. But it doesn't matter.

ALAN

Because you guys won?

SARAH

What?

ALAN

Joking

SARAH

No. You weren't. And you know you weren't. You just don't get it. We didn't win. We just did what was necessary. What we could. So, yeah, the farm is ours now. We'll work it. Our family will work it. But this house is not ours. Because we don't want it.

(She puts the family picture
into his hands.)

And this picture is not mine. That wall of pictures is not mine. And you want to know why? Because I don't need it. I have my own wall. In my own home. With my own pictures. My husband and my boys. My family. My family. And maybe in twenty or thirty or fifty years it'll look like this. A wall with dust-covered pictures of a past that no-one wants to be a part of. Maybe. But not if I can help it. It won't be this. My family won't be this.

ALAN

Do you think Mom ever thought that way too? Said the same thing?

SARAH

Maybe. I don't know. Now, she thinks she's lost it all. All of you. All of everything. And as much as I'll try to make her a part of my family, it won't happen. And I guess that'll have to be okay. I'll try and she'll resist and then at some point, she'll pass away too, in this house, and that will be the end of that.

ALAN

The end of us.

SARAH

Us? There is no us, Alan. There hasn't been an "us" for years. You should know that. You most of all.

ALAN

What do you mean by that?

SARAH

You don't remember, do you?

ALAN

What?

SARAH

Right before that picture? Right before we headed to town to get our family portrait taken? You don't remember?

ALAN

I don't know what you're talking about.

SARAH

Everyone got dressed up. Everyone was going to look nice for this oh-so-important picture. Five boys and their sister. Parents wanting to have a portrait of their family to show off. And it was important. It seemed like for the first time Dad was proud of us all. Everyone felt it. So, we all got dressed up and ready to head to town.

ALAN

Okay. Yeah. Sure. I remember the day. So what?

SARAH

When Samuel came in from his room, he was happy. He bought a new shirt just for the picture. Somehow, he'd gotten to town to buy a shirt with his own money.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

He was just a kid, but he thought this picture was so important that he went out and bought his own shirt. But it wasn't a farm shirt. It was different. A little flashy, maybe, but mostly just different. You made fun of him. You ridiculed him.

(Pause.)

You said he looked like a "homo."

ALAN

I didn't mean . . . I didn't

SARAH

Micky jumped all over you. Angry. Defending Sam like he always did. James trying to get involved. Me. John basically avoiding it. Lots of shouting and yelling. And then Dad roared in. Made everybody shut up.

(Alan is silent. He remembers.)

SARAH (CONT'D)

And he told everyone to get in the car. Shut up and get in the car. Except Sam. He told Sam to go change his shirt and then get in the car. Made him go change his shirt.

(She points at the picture.)

Look at it, Alan. What's Sam wearing? A goddamn button-up western shirt. You did that. You.

ALAN

I didn't know then . . . that

SARAH

So, when you look at that picture, recognize it for what it is. And realize when "us" started to end.

(Pause.)

I need to go. My boys are waiting for me. Goodbye, Alan.

(She exits. Alan stares at the picture for a moment and then, slowly, sinks down onto the couch. He sets the picture aside, puts his face into his hands and weeps.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF PLAY)