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Characters

JANICE (GRACE) WIRTH, 36, sister taken for adoption, now living in Toronto.

BARB WABUNG, 24, sister living on the Reserve.

RODNEY, 25, Barb's boyfriend.

TONTO, 32, Rodney's brother.

Time

Late spring, early summer in 1992, approximately five months after the events described in *Someday*.

Location

The first act takes place in Janice Wirth's downtown condominium in Toronto. The second act moves to Barb Wabung's house in Otter Lake, a Reserve somewhere in central Ontario.

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Act 1

Act 1, Scene 1

Act I

Scene One

Lights up on an upscale condo. Movie and theatrical posters adorn the walls, with the odd sprinkling of Native art. The place is empty. The quiet is broken by four loud and sharp knocks on the door. There is silence, then more knocks are heard. Again, no response. A door bell rings repeatedly. Silence. Agitated whispering is heard on the other side of the door, a low decibel argument. Then the clicking of metal on metal, and jiggling of the door knob. The door opens to reveal TONTO on his knees in front of the lock. He has picked it.

TONTO When in Toronto, do as the Torontonians do. Told you it wouldn't be hard.

He enters, followed by BARB and RODNEY.

BARB WABUNG This is a bad idea, Tonto, this is breaking and entering.

TONTO She's your sister, right?

(BARB nods) It's not technically a B & E if it's your sister's place. It's a law, I think. Here's your jackknife back.

RODNEY Cool, look at this city. I told you it was a killer view. You can almost see the Reserve from here.

TONTO That's Lake Ontario. We're that direction.

-- 3 --

RODNEY I didn't say our Reserve. I meant any Reserve. Six Nations must be....

TONTO That direction. Syracuse over there. You can almost see where Tyendinaga would be.

RODNEY Wow, Mohawks as far as the eye can see.

BARB WABUNG Where do you think she is?

RODNEY Not at the Goodwill, that's for sure. Look at this apartment! Barb, when I grow up can I be an entertainment lawyer too?

BARB WABUNG No wonder she didn't want to stay at our place. After seeing this apartment, I don't wanna stay at our place.

RODNEY Some of these movie posters are signed. Look, an autographed picture of Al Waxman. Is he still alive?

BARB WABUNG Don't touch anything.

Without thinking, she picks up a piece of abstract sculpture.

BARB WABUNG What is this?

RODNEY I think they call it art.

-- 4 --

BARB WABUNG How can you tell?

RODNEY It's in the middle of the table and it's not a bowl.

TONTO The woman's not as white as you thought. There's some damn good art up here. A Maxine Noel, an Odjig, a Roy Thomas.

RODNEY

(à la Star Trek) Dammit Jim, I'm an Indian, not an art critic.

RODNEY disappears into the washroom.

BARB WABUNG Think they're originals?

TONTO Well, they're definitely not prints. So either they're originals or great forgeries. And as much as I like Maxine's work, I don't think there's that great a market for fake Noel's. Someday, maybe.

RODNEY comes out of the bathroom.

RODNEY Barb, go look at her bathroom.

BARB WABUNG I don't want to look at her bathroom.

RODNEY Trust me, go look at her bathroom.

Puzzled, BARB peaks into the bathroom.

BARB WABUNG Wow!

-- 5 --

RODNEY Didn't I tell you?

BARB WABUNG I've never seen a bathroom like this. Tonto?

TONTO investigates.

TONTO What the hell is that?

BARB WABUNG I don't want to know. It's like an amusement park in there.

RODNEY Hey, Barb. Take a look at this.

BARB WABUNG What now?

RODNEY is standing in front of a photograph on a desk.

RODNEY See. She didn't forget.

BARB WABUNG She still has it.

TONTO Still has what?

BARB WABUNG The picture Mom gave her last Christmas. Of Dad holding her.

TONTO I'd forgotten how big your father was. How old was Grace there?

-- 6 --

BARB WABUNG About three months. The C.A.S. took her a couple months later.

RODNEY See Barb. It may not be a wasted trip.

BARB WABUNG I miss that picture. Why didn't she return our calls? Couldn't she tell it was important?

TONTO I don't think she's been here for a while. This plant soil is very dry.

RODNEY You know, sometimes you're just too Indian.

TONTO Chi-meegwetch. And check her answering machine. Eleven calls. How many times did we call?

RODNEY Including the two this morning, ten all together.

BARB WABUNG So she's not here. A three hour drive for nothing.

RODNEY So, what do you want to do? Hang out here and wait for her to get back, or do you want to head home?

BARB WABUNG I'm tired, Rodney. I want to go home.

RODNEY You got it. Let's go.

They start moving toward the door.

-- 7 --

TONTO Provided this godforsaken city hasn't towed my truck.

Suddenly, the rattle and click of keys in a lock is heard. The trio freeze, panic stricken like deer in headlights.

BARB WABUNG Shit!

RODNEY Everybody hide!

They all scramble to find places to hide in the apartment. The door opens and JANICE/GRACE enters with her luggage. She looks tired and worn. Barely glancing at her apartment, she drops her bags and takes her coat off. She opens the closet to find TONTO.

TONTO Uh, hi....

JANICE screams.

TONTO It's okay! It's okay!

She goes into a martial arts position (Wendo) and punches him solidly. TONTO goes down in the closet, a flood of coats covering him in an avalanche.

JANICE WIRTH

(screaming) 911! 911!

TONTO crawls out of the closet in pain and half-conscious, only to have janice start kicking him.

TONTO

(in pain) Barb...!

BARB and RODNEY emerge from their hiding position.

BARB WABUNG Grace! Take it easy. It's us!

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JANICE WIRTH Barb? Rodney?

BARB WABUNG Hi Grace.

JANICE WIRTH What are you doing here? In my apartment?

BARB WABUNG We had to see you.

JANICE WIRTH How'd you get in here?

RODNEY We, uh, snuck past the security guard and, well, Tonto picked your lock.

JANICE WIRTH Who picked my lock?

RODNEY My brother, Tonto.

RODNEY gestures to TONTO who only now is getting up off the ground.

TONTO

(still in pain) Hi. I spent a year working for a locksmith in Peterborough. It's quite easy once you know how they work.

JANICE WIRTH What are you all doing here? In my apartment?

BARB WABUNG Well, when you didn't return our messages....

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JANICE WIRTH What messages? Will someone tell me what's going on here?

BARB WABUNG Grace, Mom passed away four days ago.

JANICE WIRTH Anne..., oh Barb, I'm sorry. What happened?

BARB WABUNG She went in her sleep.

JANICE WIRTH Four days ago?

BARB WABUNG The funeral was yesterday. I wanted you to be there.

JANICE WIRTH Oh Barb, I'm so sorry. I've been away and....

BARB WABUNG I think you should come back, and say good-bye, you know, to her.

JANICE WIRTH Go back.

(realizing) Go back?! Barb I can't.

BARB WABUNG What do you mean you can't? You owe it to her.

JANICE WIRTH I'm sorry about Anne, I really am. And I'll do what I can if you need any help. But going back... I can't.

BARB WABUNG You have to go back. She's your Mother. Our Mother. I don't care if you just drive up, put some flowers down, say good-bye, hop back in and drive away afterwards.

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RODNEY You really should, Grace.

TONTO It's the proper thing to do.

JANICE WIRTH Sorry, but I'll determine what's proper for me to do. Anne was a lovely lady....

BARB WABUNG Your biological mother.

JANICE WIRTH I knew her for one hour, that was all.

Beat.

BARB WABUNG I don't believe you.

TONTO What have you got against Otter Lake? That's where you come from, that's your people.

JANICE WIRTH My people live in London.

TONTO No, your caretakers live in London, your family lives in Otter Lake.

JANICE WIRTH I love my parents.

TONTO I'm sure you do. Look, I worked for a year as a counsellor at the Youth Centre. I met kids all the time, and adults, too, who were trapped between one culture and another. It can do weird things to some people. But I

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found it can help if you have a sound understanding of where you come from, then you'll have a better understanding of where you're going. Got me?

JANICE WIRTH That's really wonderful.

(to BARB) I realize you're going through a rough time right now, Barb, but I really don't think it would be in anyone's best interest for me to go back to Otter Lake. The last time I left there, I was a mess. I'm still trying to get a hold of myself. I do not want to go through that again.

BARB WABUNG Okay, you don't want to come home and say good-bye to the woman who gave birth to you. I'm not surprised, but I am disappointed. I hoped you'd been born with some of Mom's compassion.

JANICE WIRTH Don't take this personally. It's me, not you. Now, if there's anything else I can do to help....

RODNEY Um yeah, as a matter of fact there is, Grace.

JANICE WIRTH Please, my name is Janice.

RODNEY Okay, Janice. Um, we need a place to crash. Got any room?

BARB WABUNG What? I don't want to stay here.

RODNEY Sweetheart, essence of my existence, we need some place to stay for the night. It'll be dark in an hour and Tonto can't drive because of his night-blindness....

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BARB WABUNG You have night-blindness?

TONTO It's a personal thing.

RODNEY I don't have my license since that little altercation with the O.P.P., for which I still think that breathalyzer was rigged. You don't like to drive on the highways. Kind of limits our alternatives.

BARB WABUNG I don't want to stay here!

JANICE WIRTH All of you? Here?

RODNEY We're house-broken.

BARB WABUNG Listen to me, I don't want to stay here.

JANICE WIRTH But Barb doesn't want to stay here.

RODNEY Listen, honey, do you want to walk home? Sleep in the truck or better yet, sleep on the streets? It's early spring so the chance of getting frost bite is practically non-existent.

BARB WABUNG

(to TONTO) How bad is your night-blindness?

RODNEY Trust me, it's very bad. We don't have a choice.

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BARB WABUNG Well....

RODNEY It's decided. Can we?

JANICE WIRTH Well, I guess. You're all welcome to stay if you want. It's the least I can do.

BARB WABUNG Can't get much more least than that.

RODNEY I think that's a 'yes.'

(to TONTO) Shall we go get our stuff?

JANICE WIRTH I'm supposed to be on vacation.

TONTO Why bother, you've got a natural tan.

RODNEY and TONTO walk to the door.

TONTO

(to RODNEY) How long have I had night-blindness? Is it fatal?

RODNEY Shh!

They exit as the lights go down.

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Act 1, Scene 2

Scene Two

It is several hours later. JANICE is in the kitchen making coffee. BARB comes out of the bathroom drying her hands. They spot each other and there is an instant note of tension. BARB backtracks into the bathroom. There is silence for a moment.

JANICE WIRTH You might as well come out of the bathroom. There's only so much you can do in there. I've made some coffee. Would you like some?

There is a pause before BARB comes out.

BARB WABUNG Thank you.

JANICE WIRTH How long do you think Rodney and Tonto--I can't believe I'm calling him that--will be?

BARB shrugs, unwilling to talk.

JANICE WIRTH Is the bedroom fine?

BARB nods.

JANICE WIRTH You're a little old to be giving me the silent treatment.

BARB WABUNG Milk please.

JANICE WIRTH That's a beginning.

BARB WABUNG You wanna talk, okay then, I have a question for you. Why are you being so nice all of a sudden?

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JANICE WIRTH Fair enough. I suppose from your perspective I do deserve a bit of a cold shoulder. I wasn't exactly the warmest of hosts earlier. But you have to admit, it's a little unusual for the three of you to be waiting in my apartment. I just about had a heart attack.

BARB WABUNG Back in Otter Lake, if somebody's not home, we wait inside.

JANICE WIRTH This isn't Otter Lake. But I guess you had a valid reason for coming here. I understand that.

BARB WABUNG How nice of you.

JANICE WIRTH And I don't see any point for animosity between us. We are, as you keep pointing out, sisters of one nature or another. I'm not a bad person, Barb.

Again there is an awkward silence between them.

JANICE WIRTH Do you come to Toronto often?

BARB WABUNG Last time was Christmas.

JANICE WIRTH It's quite the difference, isn't it?

BARB WABUNG As Rodney says, "It's a nice place to visit but I wouldn't want to put a land claim on it"

JANICE WIRTH He's got a very interesting sense of humour.

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BARB WABUNG He's a goof. But he's my goof. This is good coffee.

JANICE WIRTH It's a Kenyan blend. Would you like some more?

BARB WABUNG Yeah, that company makes good coffee I hear. I need a good jolt. Long car trips put me away.

JANICE WIRTH It's decaffeinated.

BARB WABUNG Decaffeinated?! Then what's the point? Got any real stuff.

JANICE WIRTH You'd drink caffeinated coffee at this hour of the night?

BARB WABUNG Yeah?

JANICE WIRTH I'd be up all night. Not that it matters. I don't have any, what you might call "real stuff" in the apartment. Better warn you, no salt or butter either.

BARB WABUNG Boy, we'll be outta here real early tomorrow. The more I talk to you, the more I realize there's nothing to talk about.

JANICE WIRTH The subject of coffee is hardly the thing to base a relationship on.

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BARB WABUNG Sometimes it's all you got. Mom always wondered what kind of place you lived in. I always thought it would look something like this. Certainly better than our old house.

JANICE WIRTH But that old house had character. This is just a condo.

BARB WABUNG I know a lot of people who would trade some character for a condo like this. Nice art. Even some Native ones, I see. Tonto was impressed.

JANICE WIRTH They were gifts.

BARB WABUNG

(to herself) Figures.

There is an awkward silence between the two.

JANICE WIRTH So when do you think the boys will be back?

BARB WABUNG In a little while I guess. Tonto wanted to see if there was a social tonight at the Native Centre. He's into things like that.

JANICE WIRTH That's on Spadina right? Driven by it many times.

BARB WABUNG Did you ever go in?

JANICE WIRTH Never had the time. I notice I've picked up your habit of calling them boys. They must be on both sides of thirty.

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BARB WABUNG Yeah, but a boy is always a boy, even in the nursing home. I suspect Rodney will still be climbing trees in his wheel chair. Tonto won't be far behind him.

JANICE WIRTH What a bizarre name. Tonto.

BARB WABUNG Goes with his character.

JANICE WIRTH What does he do?

BARB WABUNG Anything and everything. Basically he survives off of various employment programs, apprenticeships, training incentives, stuff like that. He also drums a bit.

JANICE WIRTH Oh, he's a musician. I used to date this jazz guitarist for a while. He....

BARB WABUNG He's not exactly a musician. He sings traditional Ojibway songs.

JANICE WIRTH Really? That must be interesting. He can make a living off of that?

BARB WABUNG I think you're missing the point, dear sister.

JANICE WIRTH

(occupied) Sorry, didn't catch that.

BARB WABUNG I was just thanking you again for taking us out to dinner. That was very nice of you....

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JANICE WIRTH ...For a change. Is that what you were thinking?

BARB WABUNG Maybe.

JANICE WIRTH That always seems to be it, doesn't it? Always this, what would you call it, tension between us. All through dinner you barely said a word. It doesn't have to be this way, Barb. We could be friends.

BARB WABUNG You're the one who doesn't want to say good-bye to our Mother. I'm sorry if that makes me a little sensitive. We shouldn't have come here. With all due respect, Miss Wirth, maybe we shouldn't stay here.

JANICE WIRTH Little late for that, you're here now. Contrary to what you may believe, I have nothing against you or Otter Lake.

BARB WABUNG You'd never know. You haven't even asked how the funeral went.

JANICE WIRTH Fine, Barb, how did the funeral go?

BARB WABUNG Fine as far as funerals go. Everyone was there, even the people she didn't get along with. Flowers everywhere, people. It was the first time I'd seen some of my uncles in suits since Dad died. Nothing quite like seeing a group of overweight middle aged men in mismatching, twenty year old suits all standing in a row.

JANICE WIRTH Was it a traditional funeral?

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BARB WABUNG Yeah, Catholic.

JANICE WIRTH I was raised Anglican.

There is another silence between them.

JANICE WIRTH There's that awkwardness again.

BARB WABUNG So much for the saying "Blood is thicker than water."

(pause) Nice view. Bet it cost a fortune.

JANICE WIRTH What doesn't these days?

BARB WABUNG True.

JANICE WIRTH Your house has a nice view. I remember that beautiful willow tree hanging over the lake. The view from your kitchen window was quite special.

BARB WABUNG You saw it in December. Now there are leaves on the willow and the lake has thawed. Looks even better. Except for the cottages.

JANICE WIRTH What cottages?

BARB WABUNG The band office has leased out land all along the southern shore of the village to cottagers from the city. They're everywhere, like a bad cold.

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JANICE WIRTH That's a little harsh.

BARB WABUNG Sorry if I offended you. I didn't think you'd take it personally.

JANICE WIRTH I didn't and we were talking about the house. Anne's house. Are you going to keep it, now that Anne has....

JANICE doesn't know how to finish the sentence.

BARB WABUNG I don't know. It all hasn't sunk in yet. The house is a mess right now. Mom hired the boys to renovate the place with the money she won in that lottery. Add an extension, a sewing room, just off her bedroom. I don't know what I'll do with it when it's finished. I don't sew much. I don't even know what I'll do with Mom's room.

JANICE WIRTH How are you holding up?

BARB WABUNG I don't have a choice.

JANICE WIRTH Everybody has a choice.

BARB WABUNG Not me. When Dad died, I held the family together. When Paul died, I held the family together. I'm used to this now. I never had the luxury of being able to run away.

JANICE WIRTH Most people would consider seeing their family for the first time in thirty-five years an emotional experience.

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BARB WABUNG Most people would have stayed for dinner. Most people would have called in six months. She loved you, you know. She did, even after you walked out on her on goddamned Christmas Eve. She still loved you. Thirtyfive years of waiting and she was willing to wait some more.

JANICE WIRTH I explained....

BARB WABUNG Even when she cried, she still loved you. I knew you wouldn't be back but I couldn't tell her that. Her whole life had been built on hope, even after you left she still hoped. And as her daughter, I had to help keep that hope alive.

JANICE WIRTH Barb please....

BARB WABUNG Last March when she sent you a birthday card, your polite little thank you card said it all to her.

JANICE WIRTH I was leaving on a business trip. I didn't have time....

BARB WABUNG Neither did Mom. It was on her night table the morning I found her. You were always beside her. Always.

JANICE WIRTH I had no control over that.

BARB WABUNG Neither did I. I guess it's all Mom's fault then.

JANICE WIRTH That's not fair.

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BARB WABUNG Surprise, surprise. I'm the one who failed classes in high school, who got drunk, rolled the car, who made her cry. But you were never there to disappoint her. You were the ideal, I was the reality.

JANICE WIRTH I don't need this.

BARB WABUNG Gonna run away again? Where this time? We're in your place. Or maybe your other family, your white family in London.

JANICE WIRTH Leave them out of this. They have nothing to do with this.

BARB WABUNG Nothing? Are we having the same conversation?! The government took you away from Mom and gave you to them. Did they ever once try to find your home, take you somewhere where there were Indians? Have you ever been to a Pow wow?

No answer.

BARB WABUNG Just once I'd like to know what's going on in that beautified head of yours. You've always got those walls around you. Me and Mom spilled our guts to you but not the immaculate Grace.

JANICE WIRTH I told you about my life, how I found you.

BARB WABUNG You told us the facts. I don't know one damn thing about you, the person.

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JANICE WIRTH Oh, you're being ridiculous. Barb this is my home. You're welcome to stay here, spend the night, whatever, but I hope you'll do me the courtesy of respecting me in my own home.

BARB WABUNG Like you said, it's your home. I wonder where those boys are?

JANICE WIRTH Look behind you, in the corner.

JANICE points to a picture hanging by itself. BARB walks over to it and examines it.

JANICE WIRTH I kept it. That picture means everything to me, even though I never knew him.

BARB WABUNG Paul's picture. God, I can't get over how much you look like him.

JANICE WIRTH Yes, I've been told that. I have two other brothers but it's not the same. They were born to the Wirth's. I know we don't see eye to eye, but I do acknowledge who you are and where you came from. I really wish you would do the same for me.

Suddenly the buzzer for the front door goes off. JANICE goes to answer.

JANICE WIRTH That must be them. Hello.

RODNEY

(voice over the buzzer intercom) Aye, Captain, two to beam up. Energize.

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Janice buzzes them in.

JANICE WIRTH Does he ever give up?

BARB WABUNG Don't worry, tomorrow we'll be out of your life.

JANICE WIRTH I wish we could be friends.

BARB WABUNG I wish we could be sisters.

JANICE WIRTH Friends are easier.

BARB WABUNG Sisters are blood.

There is a knock and JANICE opens the door. The boys come in.

RODNEY

(à la Ricky Ricardo) Lucy, we're home. Boy, was it rough at the club tonight! Where're my bongos?

TONTO Is that coffee I smell? I knew there was something about this woman I liked.

BARB WABUNG So did you make it to the Native Centre?

RODNEY Yeah, but judging by some of the people we met, they're more off-center.

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TONTO

(fake laugh) Nobody was there so we took a look around downtown.

BARB WABUNG You weren't hanging around in lingerie shops, again, were you?

RODNEY He wouldn't let me. But, Barb, look what we found.

RODNEY holds up a hardcover book.

BARB WABUNG Not another one of your books. We got enough as it is.

RODNEY No, you'll like this one. It's the latest biography of Amelia Earhart.

BARB WABUNG Really, let's see.

RODNEY hands it to BARB who looks it over excitedly.

TONTO We haven't had time to read it yet but they're always good for a hoot.

BARB WABUNG Oh, cool, I love that picture. She looks so young.

TONTO I can't wait to show her.

JANICE WIRTH Show who what?

BARB WABUNG This one has her dying in Saipan, a prisoner of the Japanese, in 1937.

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TONTO Give me a break, white people will find a conspiracy anywhere. Wait a minute, turn back. There's the plane. Ugly thing, eh?

RODNEY She never liked flying the Lockheed 10-E Electra, too clumsy.

JANICE WIRTH Who are you talking about?

TONTO Amelia Earhart. Who'd you think? This coffee tastes funny.

BARB WABUNG It's decaffeinated.

TONTO Yuck. The savages. How could they do that to an innocent little bean?

RODNEY Geez, when you think about it, another half an hour and she'd have made Howland Island.

JANICE WIRTH Amelia Earhart, the pilot?

RODNEY You know another? My favorite theory of theirs is she was captured by aliens and forced to breed with Elvis and Jim Morrison to create television evangelists. That would explain a lot, wouldn't it?

JANICE WIRTH But how come you know so much about her?

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RODNEY It's common knowledge back home.

JANICE WIRTH What, her fan club is located in Otter Lake?

BARB WABUNG Not quite. Remember the brown brick house about two hundred feet from our place?

JANICE WIRTH Yeah, I remember. I almost turned into that driveway by mistake.

BARB WABUNG That's where she lives. Just saw her yesterday at the funeral.

(to *TONTO*) Maybe we should buy some regular coffee.

TONTO Definitely.

BARB WABUNG There's no salt or real butter either. If she tells me she's a vegetarian too....

JANICE WIRTH What is this? Some kind of joke?

BARB WABUNG What Joke?

JANICE WIRTH Amelia Earhart! In Otter Lake.

BARB WABUNG Oh that. Yeah, she and Mom used to be good friends. Used to baby sit me and Paul when we were young.

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RODNEY Me too. Christ, she could swear better than any of us.

JANICE WIRTH Amelia Earhart is dead.

BARB WABUNG She's in her nineties but I wouldn't call her dead.

JANICE WIRTH You're all not serious are you? Amelia Earhart? THE Amelia Earhart?!

RODNEY Except now she goes by the name Amy Hart. The cutest little, wrinkly, white woman you ever saw. Looks like one of those dried up apple dolls.

BARB WABUNG It is Amelia Earhart, Grace.

JANICE WIRTH Janice!

BARB WABUNG Okay, Janice.

JANICE WIRTH Amelia Earhart's been missing for over fifty years.

TONTO Fifty-five isn't it?

RODNEY Did the big belly flop July 3rd, 1937. Had her first bowl of corn soup in Otter Lake November 21st, 1937.

BARB WABUNG It's true.

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JANICE WIRTH If this is all true, then this is fantastic! Incredible. How'd she get there?

TONTO That's another long story. You see....

JANICE WIRTH And everybody in the village knows this? I mean about Amelia Earhart?

RODNEY Yeah, it's not as if it's a secret. Almost every kid from the Reserve has done some essay or project on her in school. After a while the teachers were getting suspicious so we had to make up a story about Indians having a special affinity for her, respecting her because she personifies the feminine presence of the eagle as it flies across Grandmother Moon. One guy even equated her with a legend of "the woman who circled Turtle Island" which he made up during lunch hour.

TONTO That was me. White people buy all this kind of stuff.

JANICE WIRTH This is incredible! Amazing. The media will go crazy. This is the biggest story since....

BARB WABUNG Now wait a minute. Don't get carried away.

JANICE WIRTH But why? This could be....

BARB WABUNG ...Wrong. She doesn't want publicity. Her first husband was a publisher and she got sick of all the publicity. She came to Otter Lake to get away from it all.

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JANICE WIRTH But you said everybody in the village knows.

RODNEY Yeah, in the village. Because we're her family now. It's her secret but it's also ours.

TONTO Telling other people would be like turning in a friend. No can do.

JANICE WIRTH Then why are you telling me.

BARB WABUNG Contrary to what you think, you are still family, whether you care or not.

JANICE WIRTH Then you're taking one hell of a risk.

RODNEY Not really. So what if you tell somebody else, you'd look cute on the cover of the *National Enquirer*, but then it would just fade away.

JANICE WIRTH But I'm a respected lawyer. With connections. If I wanted....

BARB WABUNG Yeah, if you wanted. But I'm hoping you don't want to. No matter how long you've lived out here, I think you still have some Otter Lake in you.

JANICE WIRTH This is all so crazy.

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RODNEY Yeah, but it kinda makes life interesting, don't you think?

BARB WABUNG You're not going to tell anyone, are you?

JANICE WIRTH I don't understand you. Not more than fifteen minutes ago you were criticizing me about Anne, now you entrust me with this "precious" secret of yours. What's the game?

BARB WABUNG No game. This is who we are. Family, friends, we stick together.

RODNEY Except during band elections.

BARB WABUNG Shut up, Rodney. At our place we always have people dropping in, visiting, calling, whatever. You, yourself, said our place felt like a home. Sorry, but this place doesn't feel like a home to me.

TONTO Yeah, bit cold to me too.

BARB WABUNG The walls look so white my eyes hurt. Nobody has called, doesn't look like you get many visitors. You seem kinda alone here.

JANICE WIRTH I have friends. I've been away for a while, remember?

BARB WABUNG Alone?

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JANICE WIRTH What's that got to do with anything?

BARB WABUNG Where we come from, you have to try, I mean really work at it, to be alone.

RODNEY Yeah, and I've tried.

JANICE WIRTH I feel like I'm being cornered by the three of you. I have my life and you have yours. Why don't we just leave it at that.

BARB WABUNG There's always this barrier you put up. Rodney used to be that way, after Paul died.

RODNEY But I'm much better now.

JANICE WIRTH The bottom line is I'm happy with my life. That's all that's important. It's getting late and I've had a long day. I would like to go to bed, if it's okay with you?

BARB WABUNG Your apartment.

TONTO But it's not even eleven yet. I'm just waking up.

JANICE WIRTH

(to *BARB*) You and Rodney have the guest room. It's already made up.

RODNEY Great.

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JANICE WIRTH And I guess Tonto can have the couch.

TONTO

(less enthusiastically) Great.

JANICE exits to bedroom.

RODNEY Come on, it will be just like when you lived with Marie. You spent half your nights on the couch anyway.

TONTO That couch was a lot warmer place, let me tell you, than Marie ever was. The things I do for you two.

RODNEY Yeah, like you care.

JANICE comes back into the room carrying blankets and a pillow. She puts them on the couch.

JANICE WIRTH This should be okay. Anything else I can get you?

BARB WABUNG A cure for night-blindness?

JANICE WIRTH Help yourselves to the towels on the shelf in the bathroom if you want to shower in the morning.

RODNEY Oh look, her towels match. Come my little crab into the seafood salad of love.

BARB WABUNG I hate it when you talk like that. See you in the morning. We're leaving bright and early.

RODNEY and BARB disappear into their bedroom.

-- 35 --

RODNEY So, did you bring the trapeze?

The door closes leaving TONTO and JANICE alone for an awkward moment.

JANICE WIRTH Well, if there's nothing else, I'll be off to bed.

TONTO What kind of bed do you have?

JANICE WIRTH Pardon?

TONTO Your bed. What kind is it?

JANICE WIRTH A Queen-size King Koil, why?

TONTO Awfully big bed. Awfully small couch.

JANICE WIRTH Nice try, Tonto. You'll fit on the couch. Bigger and better men than you have slept there.

TONTO It was worth a try.

JANICE sees her luggage sitting by the front door and carries it to her bedroom.

TONTO Need any help carrying those big, heavy suitcases all the way to your room?

JANICE WIRTH I got them here from B.C., another few feet won't kill me. Good night,...Tonto.

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With her luggage, JANICE awkwardly walks to her room as TONTO watches.

TONTO Good night,...Kemosaaabe.

Her door closes leaving TONTO on stage alone. He starts to make his bed on the couch.

TONTO The big beautiful city, a big beautiful Indian, a big beautiful bed. Now you'd think all those things would go together, wouldn't you?

He flops down on the couch.

TONTO We ain't through yet.

He pulls the blankets up over his head ending the scene.

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Act 1, Scene 3

Scene Three

TONTO, a sock draped over his eyes, wakes up the next morning to the sound of JANICE, in a house coat, making coffee and a snack for herself. He watches her for a moment.

JANICE WIRTH I know you're watching me.

TONTO doesn't say anything.

JANICE WIRTH Still want to play games, huh?

TONTO Since when is watching you a game. It's a free country, almost.

JANICE WIRTH Do you want some coffee?

TONTO That would be good.

TONTO gets up off the couch and is dressed only in a T-shirt and underwear.

TONTO Here, try this.

TONTO tosses her a small package.

JANICE WIRTH Hey, what's this? Coffee! Where'd you get this?

TONTO About 6:30 this morning the sun came streaming in through that big window of yours. Hard to sleep when there's a spot light on you.

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JANICE WIRTH I had to pay extra for a southern exposure.

TONTO When I worked construction for a year, I had to get up at that god forsaken hour. I swore never again. Except for sunrise ceremonies, of course. But even those are getting harder and harder to get up for. Anyway, I went to make coffee, found that decaf stuff of yours and thought "the hell with this." So, I went out and got some real, good stuff an hour ago.

JANICE examines the package closely, surprised.

JANICE WIRTH I have travelled the world, shopped most of my life in every type of store possible, and I have never, ever, come across any coffee anywhere labelled "Extra-caffeinated." Where did you find this?

TONTO I worked in a coffee shop for half a year, so I know a little about coffee. Always remember, where there's a will, there's a way.

JANICE WIRTH Is this the Otter Lake way?

TONTO If I wasn't afraid of needles, I'd take it with a syringe. We'll make an Indian of you yet.

JANICE WIRTH Is that all it takes? Strong coffee?

TONTO That and a fine appreciation of good lookin' aboriginal men.

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JANICE WIRTH Well, I will say, you do have nice legs.

TONTO You should see the rest of me.

JANICE WIRTH Thank you, but no. Your coffee will be ready in a few minutes.

TONTO I suppose I should get dressed.

JANICE WIRTH Please.

TONTO An almost naked Indian scares you?

JANICE WIRTH Just my reputation.

She points to the window. TONTO reacts with embarrassment and quickly tries to dress.

TONTO Holy mackerel, three million White people lookin' at me in my undies. Might start a riot.

JANICE WIRTH The city of Toronto scare you, Tonto? Tonto. How'd did you ever get a name like Tonto?

TONTO It's a nickname, my real name is Eli Albert. Now given a choice between Eli Albert and Tonto, which do you think has more character?

JANICE WIRTH I think Eli Albert is a nice name. But why Tonto?

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TONTO My Dad used to work steel in the city a lot when I was a kid. He'd always be going off to work for days at a time. When I asked where he was, I was told "your Dad is in Toronto," only I couldn't say Toronto, I kept pronouncing it Tonto. The name kinda stuck.

JANICE WIRTH I think that's sweet. Do you have a horse named Scout?

TONTO No, but I have a Bronco called The Anti-Christ.

JANICE WIRTH You're a funny man.

TONTO How often do you work out?

JANICE WIRTH Who? Me?

TONTO Yes, you. That shot you gave me yesterday was a professional one, if I ever felt one. And I'm ashamed to say I've felt a few in my younger days. That punch went right through me.

JANICE WIRTH I took a Wendo course at my club. It's a type of self-defense for women. I thought it might come in handy some day.

TONTO You're lucky you didn't break your hand on my kidney stones.

JANICE WIRTH It wasn't that hard. Was it?

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TONTO You could kiss it and make it better.

JANICE WIRTH I could make it worse.

TONTO I'll settle for breakfast.

JANICE WIRTH I'd better warn you, you eat at your own risk. I'm not much of a cook.

TONTO Well, what have you got?

JANICE WIRTH Yogurt, I think....

TONTO Boy, this is really a fun house. I'll stick with the coffee. Is it ready yet?

JANICE WIRTH Another few minutes.

TONTO picks up the bag of decaffeinated coffee.

TONTO I tried this decaf stuff once. Sort of like kissing a relative. Tastes the same but no spark.

He drops it in the garbage.

JANICE WIRTH Hey, that's good coffee.

TONTO That's like buying beer with no alcohol.

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JANICE WIRTH Ah, one of those real men who doesn't drink non-alcohol beer.

TONTO One of those real men who doesn't drink beer, period.

JANICE WIRTH I thought all Indian men drank.

TONTO I thought all women could cook.

JANICE WIRTH Touché. Stereotypes everywhere. Sure you don't want the yogurt?

TONTO Pass.

JANICE WIRTH If you don't mind me asking, why don't you drink?

TONTO My mother died of the stuff. That can sort of turn you off it.

JANICE WIRTH Oh, I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have asked. Rodney never mentioned anything about that.

TONTO Why should he?

JANICE WIRTH You're brothers, aren't you?

TONTO I was raised by his family after my Mother died. We sort of became brothers, I've lived with his family longer

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than he has. I was there the day he was born. Looked like a worm with legs.

JANICE WIRTH You were adopted? Like me?

TONTO Yeah, except I stayed on the Reserve. Saw my real Dad a lot when he was home. He worked in the city all the time and couldn't look after me so the Stones took me in.

JANICE WIRTH That's Rodney's parents?

TONTO Rufus and Lillian Stone. Good people. Been with them as long as I can remember. Actually, you're one of the reasons I ended up with the Stones. God knows where I'd be if it weren't for you and Anne.

JANICE WIRTH Anne! What does Anne have to do with this?

TONTO It's too bad you never knew your Mother better. From what I heard, she really kicked up a fuss after you were taken, once she stopped being afraid of the authorities. I guess taking your child away can really change that fear to anger. Well, whatever, it worked. She rattled some cages.

JANICE WIRTH Yes, she told me.

TONTO But did she tell you that because of her fuss, the Province decided to try a new program to foster Native kids on the Reserve? I was an experiment. I was placed with the Stones at the age of five and bang, here I am

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twenty-seven years later, a fine human being. I hear they do that kind of thing in a lot of places now.

JANICE WIRTH You got to stay on the Reserve and I was sent away.

TONTO Yeah, but my case came eight years after you. A lot changed in that time. And things are still changing. Just think, Miss Wabung, you changed Native history. Not a lot of people can say that. Your Mother saved my butt. If it weren't for her, God knows where I'd be now.

JANICE WIRTH Only eight years.... And my name is Wirth.

TONTO Wirth, Wabung, whatever. The truth is, we're kinda related. Both being raised by other people. Sort of brother and sister. And whatever Barb may say, you look like you've got a good head on your shoulders. I've seen some doozies out there. Next time you're driving around this city, take a good look at those people sleeping on the sidewalks. Our people. A lot of them are you and me, sister. We were lucky.

JANICE WIRTH And you got to see your Father.

TONTO Oh yeah, every month or so. It was all cool.

JANICE WIRTH That must have been wonderful.

TONTO Ever been hugged by somebody who chews tobacco? I heard your new parents were rich.

JANICE WIRTH Yes.

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TONTO There you go. Everybody got something.

JANICE WIRTH

(lost in thought) ...Something.

TONTO Rodney's cool for a brother. A little too book smart though. Sometimes you can't make head nor tail of what he's saying. He once spent an hour making a comparison of, get this, the colonization of North America based on the two sci-fi books: *The Martian Chronicles* and *Cats Cradle*. That guy needs to spend a little more time on this planet. He needs to know tradition.

JANICE WIRTH And you can teach him this tradition?

TONTO I listen to the Elders. It's all really obvious. The trouble with Rodney is he thinks like a white person. His heart's Native but that brain of his needs a good tan.

JANICE WIRTH Why do you say that?

TONTO There! Boom! You just said the magic word. The whole difference between Native people and White people can be summed up in that one, single three letter word. "Why?" White people are so preoccupied with why everything works. Why was the universe created? Why is the sky blue? Why do dogs drool when you ring a bell? "Why" is their altar of worship. Their whole civilization is based on finding out why everything does everything.

JANICE WIRTH And Native people are different? What is your answer to why?

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TONTO "Why not?" That's it. That's the answer. Why was the Universe created? Why not? Why do leopards have spots? Why not? Why do Indians and religious people play bingo? Why not? You keep asking why you should go home to Otter Lake. Instead of asking yourself 'why', you should try 'why not.'

JANICE WIRTH Why should I listen to you?

TONTO Why not? Makes sense, huh?

JANICE WIRTH I've been in therapy. It's not that easy.

TONTO People always want to make things difficult. The world was made a certain way. Accept it. It's like this whole concept White people have with, oh, what's that term..."finding your Inner Child." Now why would they want that? I mean children are great and all that, but seriously, would you want to start wetting the bed again?

JANICE WIRTH I never wet the bed.

TONTO

(uncomfortably) A lot of kids did. Anyway, moving on. That's the "White, Caucasian, let's go back to the beginning and try to get it right again" approach. Instead, they should do what Native people do, try to find their Inner Elder. It's a hell of a better pay off. A kid can only appreciate being young. An Elder can appreciate the young and the old, and everything in between. A Child would be afraid to go to Otter Lake. An Elder would interpret it as a necessary learning experience.

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JANICE WIRTH You make it all sound so easy. Flip a switch and your life is explained.

TONTO I didn't have to come here, you know. You're Barb's luggage and Rodney's too, I guess, by association.

JANICE WIRTH Then why are you here?

TONTO Simple. On occasion, life can be a simple math problem. There are more reasons for me to be here, in this apartment than somewhere else. I had more to learn from coming to meet you, than staying at home. I hate Toronto but sometimes the pain can be worth it. Basically, the positive out-weighed the negative.

This sinks into JANICE for a moment.

JANICE WIRTH You have some interesting theories.

TONTO It's more than that. It's practice. I never preach anything I don't practice.

JANICE WIRTH I'll remember that. You're an interesting fellow. Certainly not what you seem to be. A bit of a closet philosopher, perhaps?

TONTO Nah, as Rodney would say, I came out of the closet years ago. The philosophy closet that is. So are we gonna get breakfast?

JANICE WIRTH Oh yes, I suppose we should. There's a charming place just down the street.

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TONTO Sounds great to me. Let's go.

JANICE WIRTH I think we should wait for the others. They might want to eat too.

TONTO Good point. Then let's get them up. Leave it to me.

TONTO marches over to the door and bangs heavily on it.

TONTO Okay you two. Up and at 'em. I'm hungry.

There is some mumbling and giggling in the other room and RODNEY shouts out.

RODNEY Okay, we'll be out in...five minutes.

BARB WABUNG No, ten minutes.

RODNEY Yeah, yeah, ten minutes.

TONTO I'll handle this.

TONTO opens the door and barges in. There is a scream, then TONTO comes out dragging the blankets.

TONTO If I'm not getting it, nobody is. And I said I'm hungry. Move it.

(to JANICE) What are big brothers for?

RODNEY stumbles out as he does up his jeans. He's angry.

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RODNEY Do you mind? We were...busy.

TONTO You've got the rest of your life for that. We only have this morning to eat. It's a long drive back, remember.

JANICE WIRTH Um, Rodney, we're going to breakfast down the street. You better dress for it.

TONTO You heard the lady.

RODNEY And to think I could have been an only child.

BARB comes out of the bedroom, also angry, and buttoning up her shirt.

BARB WABUNG There you are.

TONTO You still may become an only child.

He hides behind JANICE.

TONTO Now Barb...

BARB WABUNG Come here Tonto....

TONTO Barb, I was just a little hungry, that's all. Rodney?

RODNEY You're on your own, pal.

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TONTO Janice?

JANICE WIRTH I don't believe you three. Barb, take it easy. He was just joking around.

BARB WABUNG You're defending him! What did you do to her?

TONTO Nothing!

JANICE WIRTH Everybody just calm down and take it easy, okay?

BARB WABUNG

(to TONTO) You're living on borrowed time, buddy.

TONTO Respect your elders, I'm older than you remember.

BARB WABUNG Then act it.

TONTO I got real coffee.

Pause.

BARB WABUNG You're forgiven.

RODNEY Ah, coffee has charms to soothe the savage breast.

TONTO Help yourself.

RODNEY pours himself a cup of coffee.

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RODNEY I love the smell of Nabob in the morning. Somebody mention something about breakfast?

TONTO Yeah, down the street.

JANICE WIRTH When you're all ready we'll grab breakfast before we leave.

BARB WABUNG What do you mean "we leave"?

JANICE WIRTH I mean we. I changed my mind. I'm going with you.

BARB WABUNG

(to TONTO) What *did* you do to her?

JANICE WIRTH Now if you'll excuse me, I'll get my things.

JANICE exits the room to get her things.

BARB WABUNG

(repeating the words) She's coming back with us? She's coming back with us?!

RODNEY and TONTO give each other the thumbs up signal.

Lights go down.

End of Act 1

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Act 2

Act 2, Scene 1

Act II

Scene One

The scene opens on the Otter Lake Reserve in an old, lived-in house. There is a missing wall at one end due to ongoing renovations. The house is empty until JANICE appears in the doorway. Alone and silent. The implications and memories of this house flood her. Finally she enters and slowly glides through the room, taking in the texture and atmosphere of the house she was born in. She stops at a large photograph of Anne and Barb. Her solitude is interrupted when RODNEY, in full song, enters carrying a duffel bag, odds and ends, and the book about Amelia Earhart.

RODNEY "Country roads, take me home, to the place I was born, Otter Lake, mountain Mama, take me home, country roads...." Thank you. Thank you. Please, hold your applause.

JANICE WIRTH Was that song for my benefit?

RODNEY I don't do benefits.

JANICE WIRTH Do you have an off button? Travelling in a car with you for three hours is like a cheap trip to Vegas. How does Barb put up with all your high energy all the time?

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RODNEY Best recipe for a solid relationship: good food, good sex, good times. Not necessarily in that order. I do what I can to keep my little Indian princess happy. I give her the surreal, she gives me the real. Not conventional, I'm sure, but it works for us.

BARB enters.

BARB WABUNG Boy, you really made Tonto's day by letting him park your Saab.

JANICE WIRTH He seemed so taken with it.

RODNEY He spent a year as a mechanic, so he has a fondness for good quality cars.

JANICE WIRTH He will be careful with it, won't he?

RODNEY He'll treat it like his own. I think he's in love. You're the first woman he's ever met with a car better than his.

JANICE WIRTH I don't go anywhere without my car.

RODNEY Neither does he. Which makes sense considering there's no place to go in, or around, Otter Lake without a car.

BARB WABUNG The place hasn't changed much, has it?

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JANICE WIRTH The refrigerator was over there, wasn't it?

BARB WABUNG Good memory. Mom moved it until the renovations are finished. Do you want to go to the graveyard now?

JANICE WIRTH Not right now.

BARB WABUNG You're not backing out, are you?

JANICE WIRTH Barb, I just got here. I need to rest and adjust first. Not everybody runs on your timetable.

BARB WABUNG

(to RODNEY) Did we bring everything in?

RODNEY Yep.

BARB WABUNG Anybody want anything to drink?

JANICE WIRTH Ah yes, the quintessential pot of tea. I remember that from my last trip. Do you have any herbal tea?

BARB WABUNG What do you think?

JANICE WIRTH Of course not. I'll pass for now.

BARB WABUNG Think meat and potatoes. That's us. I was nineteen years old before I had Lasagna. Twenty-two before I had a stir fry.

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RODNEY This is sort of like *Dynasty* meets *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

TONTO enters, holding a car part.

TONTO Hey Grace....

JANICE WIRTH Please, my name is....

JANICE AND BARB AND RODNEY AND TONTO Janice.

TONTO Okay, Janice. Do you know what this is?

JANICE WIRTH It looks like a car part!

TONTO It is but I've never seen anything like it. I got it out of your car. I don't know what it does. I was hoping you would know.

JANICE WIRTH You took it out of my car?! Why did you do that?

TONTO Why not?

BARB WABUNG Tonto, put it back.

TONTO I intend to. Just curious, that's all.

BARB WABUNG Rodney, go help him.

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TONTO It's not that difficult.

BARB WABUNG Then go work on the house. There's a hell of a draft coming through the wall over there. Do something. Just get out.

RODNEY Barb, what are you trying to say?

TONTO Hey, little brother, let's go. I think there's something happening here.

RODNEY Oh, women stuff. Okay then, let's go out and do something manly. Bet I can spit farther than you can.

TONTO Gra...Janice, if you want, I can take you up to the graveyard when you want.

JANICE WIRTH Thank you. Maybe later. After you put the part back.

TONTO Okay.

He and RODNEY exit.

JANICE WIRTH Tonto is so different from Rodney. Hard to believe they consider themselves brothers.

BARB WABUNG I know but Rodney has his serious side. He doesn't like to show it but it's there. Last Christmas when you left, Mom was in a terrible state. I'm not telling you this to make you feel guilty or anything, just Mom sort of went

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to pieces. Goddamn, if Rodney wasn't in here trying twice as hard to make us laugh. At first we weren't in the mood, but I'll say this for the guy, he's quite infectious. Normally Rodney doesn't like that sort of family thing. After Paul died, they were really close, he couldn't handle the heavy emotional stuff, and tended to run away from it. But not that time. He stayed the weekend, did most of the cooking, chopped the wood. Everything. While I looked after Mom.

JANICE WIRTH I'm glad somebody was there for you.

BARB WABUNG So am I. Enough of this depressing stuff. Like I said earlier, wanna drink? And I'm not talking about tea?

BARB pulls out a case of beer and drops it with a thump on the table in front of JANICE.

BARB WABUNG Have a drink.

JANICE WIRTH I'm really not a beer drinker.

BARB opens a cupboard door revealing rows of liquor bottles.

BARB WABUNG Fair enough. How about some Vodka, Rye, Rum, Gin or Tequila?

JANICE WIRTH No, thank you. If I was in the mood for a drink, I would prefer a white wine.

BARB WABUNG Figures you'd prefer white.

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BARB grabs a bottle of white wine out of another cupboard and puts it on the table.

JANICE WIRTH Barb, I don't mean this to sound critical but do you have, by any chance, a drinking problem?

BARB WABUNG With a mother like Anne, I don't think so. The only liquor she would allow in this house was in Rum cakes.

JANICE WIRTH Then why...?

BARB WABUNG Later. This bottle fine?

JANICE WIRTH I'm partial to Chardonnay.

BARB pulls another bottle out and puts it on the table in front of JANICE.

BARB WABUNG French?

JANICE WIRTH Wonderful.

BARB WABUNG Any particular year you're fond of?

JANICE WIRTH Barb, it's barely four o'clock and I don't feel like a drink.

BARB WABUNG Oh, yes, you do.

BARB finds a corkscrew and attacks the wine bottle.

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JANICE WIRTH What are you up to?

BARB WABUNG I bought all this stuff the other day, hoping we could talk you into coming up here.

JANICE WIRTH Why?

BARB WABUNG Because, big sister, I want to get to know you.

JANICE WIRTH You can do that by getting me drunk? Isn't that a little cliché?

BARB WABUNG Mom had a saying, and I think it's true: only drunks and children tell the truth. I want the truth, and you're a little tall to be a child. So, drink up.

BARB hands JANICE her mug of wine. JANICE reads the mug.

JANICE WIRTH "Today is the first day of the rest of your life."

JANICE reads the opposite side of the mug.

JANICE WIRTH "Provided you're not dead already." That's uplifting.

BARB WABUNG A birthday present from Rodney. Sorry, no fancy wine glasses, but I do have some Tupperware, if you....

JANICE WIRTH This will be fine. You actually brought me up here to get drunk?

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BARB WABUNG And say good-bye to Mom.

BARB, with a physical gesture, urges her to drink.

JANICE WIRTH I'm having a problem understanding this. If Anne was against drinking in this house, then....

BARB WABUNG ...Why all this? Mom used to say, "God works in mysterious ways, and so does Barb." Why should the mystery stop with Mom's being gone? You know, you've really got to quit asking why. Especially when it comes to hospitality.

JANICE WIRTH Please, I've had this lecture.

BARB WABUNG Tonto?

JANICE WIRTH The same. Quite an interesting man. Has he ever been to university?

BARB WABUNG He painted the residences at Trent University one summer but that's about it. That's our Tonto.

JANICE WIRTH I bet if he really applied himself...Rodney too.

BARB WABUNG Don't underestimate Rodney. He's taken more university and college courses than there are pearls in your necklace. They're both kind of the same. They just learn what they want to know, then move on.

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JANICE WIRTH Some would consider that a waste of time and money.

BARB WABUNG Not everybody wants to be a lawyer. Some people are happy being who they are.

JANICE WIRTH What if who they are is a lawyer.

BARB WABUNG Then God help them. Cheers.

BARB forcibly toasts with JANICE, and they drink, though JANICE is still unsure. BARB refills the slightly drained cup and she continues to do this at every opportunity.

BARB WABUNG Lighten up there, Janice-Grace. Sit down, put your feet up, suck it back. Make yourself at home.

JANICE WIRTH You do this often?

BARB WABUNG Nah, can't drink like I used to, not like when I was a kid. Takes days to recover now. And besides, Rodney acts the fool enough for both of us, the entire Reserve, maybe the country.

JANICE WIRTH I see.

BARB WABUNG This is an example of what I mean about me spilling everything but not you. You just sit there so prim and proper, keeping quiet while the world around you blabs on.

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JANICE WIRTH If you remember correctly, the last time I was here, I left in tears. I'd hardly call that prim and proper.

BARB WABUNG Yeah, but you didn't tell us why you were crying.

JANICE WIRTH Wasn't it obvious?

BARB WABUNG Maybe, maybe not. The point is you ran away when you started crying, like it was a weakness. Families were created for weaknesses.

JANICE WIRTH Barb the philosopher.

BARB WABUNG Barb the realist.

JANICE WIRTH Reality is what you make it.

BARB WABUNG No, reality is what it makes of you. Oh my God, I sound like Tonto.

JANICE WIRTH Can we do something about all this liquor? I feel like a drunken businessman will try to pick me up any moment.

BARB WABUNG You got it.

They both get up and move the liquor to the counter.

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JANICE WIRTH So what is the case with you and Rodney? Is he going to move in with you now?

BARB WABUNG He's been here almost constantly since Mom...you know. He's been very good. Even been sleeping on the couch at nights. When Mom was alive, we had too much respect to do anything in the house. Then, well...last night at your place was the first time we'd slept together since it happened.

JANICE WIRTH Remind me to wash those sheets. You haven't answered my question. Is Rodney going to be moving in with you?

BARB WABUNG Why do you want to know?

JANICE WIRTH Discovery is a two way street.

Beat.

BARB WABUNG I don't know what we're gonna do. Maybe we'll build a new house and shut this one down. It's that room.

JANICE WIRTH What room?

BARB WABUNG Mom's room. I can't go in there. Even after four days it makes me feel too weird. I just hope it doesn't turn into one of those dust covered shrines weird old people have.

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JANICE WIRTH Tell me about her. About Anne. I knew her for less than an hour. I want to know more.

BARB goes to the doorway of Anne's room.

BARB WABUNG Let me show you something.

BARB hovers in the doorway

BARB WABUNG I can't go in. Grace, you'll have to.

JANICE WIRTH For the thousandth time, my name is....

BARB WABUNG

(pointing) Right there. That package. Get it.

BARB returns to the table and JANICE enters the room and returns carrying a wrapped box.

JANICE WIRTH What's this?

BARB WABUNG Your birthday present from March. Mom was hoping some day you'd show up and she could give it to you in person. That's the kind of mother she was. And, like everything else, that responsibility now falls to me.

JANICE WIRTH I don't like that attitude. Quit making me out to be a villain. I'm not.

BARB WABUNG Are you going to open the present or not?

JANICE WIRTH In a minute.

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BARB WABUNG "In a minute!?" Your first present from your birth mother and you say "in a minute?!"

JANICE WIRTH These are unfamiliar waters for me. I want to take it slow and calm. That's why I left last time. It was too much too soon. I crumbled. Thirty-five years stuffed into an hour.

BARB WABUNG We did a little crumbling ourselves.

JANICE WIRTH Was she buried beside Paul?

BARB WABUNG Of course. And Dad. The funeral even made the local papers. Wanna see?

JANICE WIRTH Please.

BARB WABUNG Most of the Reserve came, and quite a few from town. The only time she ever made the papers: when she won that lottery money, and when she died.

JANICE WIRTH I recognize the Church from the drive in. I take it she was well respected.

BARB WABUNG Respect isn't the word. Mom was...Mom. Everybody knew her.

JANICE WIRTH Who's that old woman in the wheelchair?

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BARB WABUNG Oh, that's Amy, Amelia Earhart.

JANICE WIRTH Not that again. I'm sorry I don't buy it.

BARB WABUNG You don't have to buy it. Look out the window. Go ahead.

Hesitant but defiant, JANICE goes to the window.

BARB WABUNG See the brown brick house way down there?

JANICE WIRTH Yeah?

BARB WABUNG That's where she lives.

Beat.

JANICE WIRTH Amelia Earhart, who has been missing for over fifty-five years, the focus of one of the greatest, continuous searches in history, lives in a small brown brick building on the Otter Lake Reserve in Ontario, Canada?

BARB WABUNG Why not? Elvis could be a making Lacrosse sticks in Six Nations for all we know.

JANICE WIRTH If that is her, how the hell did she get here?

BARB WABUNG Easy. Her plane went down in the ocean. The plane sank in eight minutes with her navigator. She was picked up the next day by a Filipino fishing boat. Nobody spoke English and they didn't know who she

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was. Two weeks later she arrives at some small fishing port in the Philippines, travelling, what's that word, incognito. All that time in the sun had made her very dark. She dyed her hair black. Bought passage on a boat to the States. A month later she's here. Simple.

JANICE WIRTH But why? It makes no sense. What's the motivation. Why here? This little out-of-the-way jerk water Indian Reserve in the middle of nowhere.

BARB WABUNG She was in love. We had a lot of iron workers come from around here. A lot worked in New York for months at a time. She met Adam Williams, the man who owned that house.

JANICE WIRTH But wasn't she married?

BARB WABUNG To some publisher-type guy, but it wasn't much of a marriage.

JANICE WIRTH So you're telling me Amelia Earhart ran off with an Indian iron worker. Just like that?

BARB WABUNG You haven't seen our iron workers. It was a perfect opportunity. She was supposed to be dead. She was tired of all the publicity and headaches. Hello Otter Lake. She liked what this place had to offer. It became home.

JANICE WIRTH This is too weird.

BARB WABUNG This is Otter Lake.

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JANICE WIRTH I still don't believe you.

BARB WABUNG Wanna meet her?

JANICE WIRTH What?

BARB WABUNG Wanna meet her? I know she's home right now. We could go visit. I know she wants to meet you. Mom told her all about you.

JANICE WIRTH I don't know....

BARB WABUNG Afraid of the truth? It is Amelia Earhart. And I'm going to prove it to you.

BARB goes to the window and yells.

BARB WABUNG Hey you two, come here,

(to JANICE) Get your shoes on.

JANICE WIRTH Do you think we should?

BARB WABUNG Definitely.

The boys enter.

RODNEY You yelled, sweetness?

BARB WABUNG I want you or him to drive us down to Amy's, okay sweetie?

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TONTO Sweetie? Have you been drinking?

The boys see all the liquor.

TONTO Holy mackerel! Where'd all that come from?

RODNEY Must be a Chief's Convention in town.

BARB WABUNG You leave that stuff alone. That's for Grace and me.

TONTO You got a stomach pump to go with it?

BARB WABUNG Just drive us, okay? We'll take care of the rest. Let's go.

BARB and JANICE get up to leave.

JANICE WIRTH Oh, Barb, I'm out of wine.

BARB WABUNG No problem, got more, lots more. It ain't a Chardonnay, but around here we have a saying: beggars can't be choosers. You'll just have to force down this Beaujolais.

JANICE WIRTH Philistines. No more Chardonnay. I'm going to complain to the manager.

BARB WABUNG Rodney, grab me a couple beers. I'm running low.

The women walk out giggling.

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TONTO What the hell was all that?

RODNEY Be afraid, be very afraid.

BARB WABUNG

(off stage) Rodney!

RODNEY Coming dear.

RODNEY grabs some beers.

TONTO You know what's going on, don't you?

RODNEY Relax, things are going smoothly. Just as I planned.

TONTO Any smoother they'll be unconscious.

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Act 2, Scene 2

Scene Two

It is approximately an hour later and a bit darker. The door opens and TONTO enters, supporting JANICE who is extremely drunk.

TONTO Easy going. Right in here.

JANICE WIRTH Hey, I've been here before. Thirty-six years ago.

She bursts out laughing drunkenly.

TONTO Yeah, yeah, you're hilarious.

RODNEY and BARB enter in the same state.

BARB WABUNG I love you, Rodney.

RODNEY So do I.

The two men dump them at the seats.

TONTO What now?

JANICE WIRTH Barb, wine.

BARB WABUNG

(whining) Okay.

They both burst out laughing.

TONTO You realize this was one of the reasons I gave up drinking.

BARB looks up at the boys.

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BARB WABUNG Are you two still here?

RODNEY Yeah.

BARB WABUNG Why?

JANICE WIRTH Why not?

JANICE laughs at her own joke.

BARB WABUNG Girls night out. Out!

(to Tonto) You too.

TONTO Maybe, like, you two should cut down a bit.

JANICE WIRTH It's Barb's idea. We're celebrating Anne.

TONTO Yeah, well, I don't think it's right.

BARB WABUNG Just like a man. Just when you're having a good time, they go and pull out.

Confused, TONTO looks at RODNEY.

RODNEY Hey, she's not talking about me. You think maybe they're bonding a little too much?

TONTO Was that your idea?

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RODNEY My idea was to get them together alone, by themselves somewhere.

TONTO Maybe they can share a room at the detox centre.

BARB WABUNG OUT!

They exit quickly.

BARB WABUNG Okay, straighten up. It's time to get serious.

JANICE WIRTH Well, for two people who don't drink much, we're sure doing okay.

BARB WABUNG Rodney is so cute, isn't he?

JANICE WIRTH Yep, cute, that's the word I was thinking. Cute. Cute Rodney. Rodney the cute. Sir Rodney the Cute. Barb, what's he like in bed? Is he any good?

BARB WABUNG Let's find out.

(yelling) Hey Rodney, come here.

RODNEY sticks his head in the doorway.

BARB WABUNG Grace wants to know if you're any good in bed?

Beat.

RODNEY Um ... Um ...

For once RODNEY has no snappy retort. He quietly disappears back outside. They burst out laughing again.

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JANICE WIRTH He is cute. Want another one?

BARB WABUNG You betcha. I thought you didn't drink beer.

JANICE WIRTH Like you said, "beggars can't be choosers."

BARB WABUNG I haven't done this in years.

JANICE WIRTH Barb, do you think it was proper for us to go over to Amy's like this? In this condition I mean?

BARB WABUNG Oh, Amy could throw them back with the best of them. If anything I think she found us funny. I wonder why? So what did you think of our little Amy Hart?

JANICE WIRTH My Lord Christ, you were right. That is her. I can't believe it!

BARB WABUNG Believe it. And I can't believe you offered to represent her as her lawyer! That is so tacky.

JANICE WIRTH I know, I know. It just sort of popped out. The lawyer runs deep, I guess. What was that she said to me in that language.

BARB WABUNG It's called Annishnawbe, Ojibway for Christ's sake. Will you get these things straight? This isn't kindergarten.

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JANICE WIRTH Amelia Earhart speaks fluent Annishnawbe Ojibway. It gets stranger and stranger.

BARB WABUNG Why wouldn't she? She's been here over fifty years. Her and Mom used to rattle on for hours.

JANICE WIRTH So what did she call me again?

BARB WABUNG Wawasquaneh sim.

JANICE WIRTH What does it mean?

BARB WABUNG My little flower.

JANICE WIRTH Amelia Earhart called me her little flower?

BARB WABUNG No. That's what Mom used to call you when you were a little baby. My little flower. Times were poor, so your first bed was made from old pillowcases patterned with

flowers. So Mom started calling you her little flower. Wawasquaneh sim.

JANICE WIRTH That's sweet.

BARB WABUNG Isn't it.

JANICE WIRTH I like Amy.

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BARB WABUNG I'm so happy.

JANICE WIRTH This has got to be the greatest story of the decade.

BARB WABUNG What is? That Mom called you her little flower? Talk about a slow news day.

JANICE WIRTH No. Amelia. Here, in Otter Lake.

BARB WABUNG Oh, but that's our story, the village's.

JANICE WIRTH I can't believe you won't let me tell anybody this. It's not fair.

BARB WABUNG She's a part of this community. This whole Reserve is like a family. You don't go telling secrets on family.

JANICE WIRTH And you consider her family?

BARB WABUNG She was one of Mom's best friends. And, remember, she's your Godmother.

JANICE WIRTH I know! My Godmother! Amelia Earhart is my Godmother. I gotta tell somebody. That is so cool.

JANICE knocks over her bottle of beer, spilling it.

BARB WABUNG That wasn't.

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JANICE WIRTH Barb, this is unbelievable.

BARB WABUNG What's so hard to believe?

JANICE WIRTH Barb, think about it. I was born here but I don't feel at home here and Amelia Earhart does. She's family and I'm not because the Children's Aid Society took me away. Doesn't all this seem a little weird to you?

BARB WABUNG After this many beers everything seems weird.

(testing JANICE) Are you gonna tell on Amy?

JANICE WIRTH I don't think anyone would believe me.

BARB WABUNG Then Grace, you gotta problem.

JANICE WIRTH I really wish you wouldn't call me Grace.

BARB WABUNG Why not? It's your name.

JANICE WIRTH No, it's not. My name is Janice. I didn't know about "Grace" until six months ago. I don't feel comfortable being addressed that way. It's like somebody calling you Susan or Victoria all of a sudden. It doesn't feel right.

BARB WABUNG Fine, *Janice*.

JANICE WIRTH I've made you mad again, haven't I?

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BARB WABUNG You're just so white.

JANICE WIRTH You make that sound so bad.

BARB WABUNG It is. You're not white. You're Indian, Ojibway. Go look in a mirror.

JANICE WIRTH I know what I am. I've spent most of my life trying to figure that out. I don't need you telling me what I am and am not.

BARB WABUNG I don't have to tell you anything. Like I said, looking in the mirror will tell you everything.

JANICE WIRTH I've been looking in the mirror for thirty-five years. Tell me what makes an Indian then, Barb? Come on tell me. What is an Indian? Is an Indian someone who drinks?

Look, Barb, I'm drinking.

JANICE takes a swig of her beer.

BARB WABUNG That's bullshit and you know it.

JANICE WIRTH Do you speak this Ojibway language?

BARB WABUNG Yeah, kinda.

JANICE WIRTH Then if it's so important to you, teach it to me.

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BARB WABUNG When?

JANICE WIRTH Right now. I'm pretty good with languages. What do you call this?

JANICE holds up a bottle of beer.

BARB WABUNG You're crazy.

JANICE WIRTH No, I want to know. What do you call a bottle of beer?

BARB WABUNG It isn't that easy

JANICE WIRTH If you try hard enough, anything can be easy. Beer!

BARB WABUNG Beer. Let's see.

(thinking) Shinkopiiwaabo. That sounds like it.

JANICE WIRTH Shinki ...Shinki

BARB WABUNG Shinkopiiwaabo.

JANICE WIRTH Shinkopiiwaabo. Wine.

BARB WABUNG Um, wine is Zhoominaabo.

JANICE WIRTH Zhoominaabo. Shinkopiiwaabo and Zhoominaabo. Window.

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BARB WABUNG Waasechikan.

JANICE WIRTH Waasechikan. How about that lake out there?

BARB WABUNG Saakaikan. Is any of this sinking in?

JANICE WIRTH Don't rush me. Saakaikan. So far so good. What's next?

BARB WABUNG Ahneen, hello. Co-waabmen, I'll be seeing you.

JANICE WIRTH Ahneen, co-waabmen. Next.

BARB WABUNG Numbers. Want your numbers?

JANICE WIRTH Shoot.

BARB WABUNG Okay, repeat after me.

JANICE tries very hard to mimic each word.

BARB WABUNG One

JANICE WIRTH Pashig

BARB WABUNG Two

JANICE WIRTH Niish

BARB WABUNG Three

JANICE WIRTH Nswi

BARB WABUNG Four

JANICE WIRTH Niiwin

BARB WABUNG Five

JANICE WIRTH Naanan

BARB WABUNG Six

JANICE WIRTH Koodswaswi

BARB WABUNG Seven

JANICE WIRTH Niizhwaaswi

BARB WABUNG Eight

JANICE WIRTH Niizhwaaswa

JANICE stumbles over the Ojibway number eight.

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JANICE WIRTH Nishwash.

BARB bursts out laughing.

JANICE WIRTH What? What did I say?

BARB WABUNG

(through the laughter) Nishwash!

JANICE WIRTH What?

BARB WABUNG You said Nishwash. That means a guy's crotch.

JANICE WIRTH Nishwash?!

JANICE bursts out laughing too.

JANICE WIRTH Maybe I should wait till I'm sober.

BARB WABUNG Oh, I wish the boys were here for that one. That was funny.

JANICE WIRTH Hey, maybe I can teach you something. I can speak French fluently, some Italian, and I'm still pretty good with Latin. A hold over from my school days.

BARB WABUNG An Indian who speaks Italian and Latin. How do you say, "Want another beer?" in Italian?

JANICE WIRTH That would be, "Vuole un'altra birra?"

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BARB WABUNG Forget it. I won't even try that.

JANICE WIRTH And the correct answer would be "Si, Certamente," certainly. Wanna learn some French?

BARB WABUNG No thanks. Four years of high school French taught me all I'd need to know. Ou est la salle de bain? I figure with that under my belt, I can survive just about anything.

JANICE WIRTH Then I guess I have nothing to teach you.

BARB is silent for a moment.

BARB WABUNG You could do me a favour.

JANICE WIRTH Me? What?

BARB WABUNG You know about money, right? I mean you obviously aren't hurting....

JANICE WIRTH Barb, are you hitting me up for a loan?

BARB WABUNG Don't flatter yourself. It's all that money we got from the lottery Mom won.

JANICE WIRTH If you want, I can set you up with some good investment consultants.

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BARB WABUNG You. Why don't you look after it for us?

JANICE WIRTH It would be better if you had a professional...

BARB WABUNG It would be better if we had family looking after family.

JANICE WIRTH It would make me feel uncomfortable.

BARB WABUNG And giving all our money to some white stranger will make me feel comfortable?

JANICE WIRTH You asked for my opinion, I gave it.

BARB WABUNG Never mind. I'm sorry I asked. This is not the kind of conversation you would hear on your typical Indian Reserve. Maybe we could start a whole new Reserve for people like you, where you could talk about investment counsellors, and jazz guitarists and Saabs and stuff.

JANICE WIRTH Are you trying to hurt me?

BARB WABUNG I can get a car out of a snow covered ditch. I can chop wood, clean a fish. Not much call for those talents in the big city, huh?

JANICE WIRTH I guess Tonto would have to join me on that Reserve.

BARB WABUNG No, Tonto's as Indian as they come. It has nothing to do with being adopted. It has to do with being taken

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away. Some are taken away but never leave. You had a whole family waiting to accept you and you ran. You took yourself away. That's the difference. And unfortunately, that's the truth of the matter.

JANICE WIRTH For you. I have my own truth.

BARB WABUNG Truth is truth. You're just playing lawyer again.

JANICE WIRTH You wanna play lawyer? You wanna play fucking lawyer? Your honour, my client, one Janice Wirth was taken into custody by the Children's Aid Society in 1955 in the false belief that her mother, Anne Wabung was not maintaining a proper and adequate home environment for the infant. It appeared the father had abandoned the family when, in fact, the father had secretly enlisted in the army as a means of providing financial assistance for his family. Flash forward thirty-five years. After many years of soul searching and trepidation, my client seeks out her birth family, to put the final piece in the puzzle of her life together. Satisfied with what she's learned, she returns to the world in which she was raised. However, finding herself under severe emotional stress due to her visit, my client is unable to resume work. She decides to take two months off, to deal with the bouncing around in her head. She finally gets herself back together when she finds herself right back where she began. In the same kitchen, with the same people, with the same problems. That, your honour is our case.

Silence.

BARB WABUNG Wow, you're good at that.

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JANICE WIRTH It's the truth.

BARB WABUNG I guess this is what Mom meant when she said only drunks and children tell the truth.

JANICE WIRTH Maybe.

BARB WABUNG Mom had a lot of sayings like that.

JANICE WIRTH My Mother didn't.

BARB WABUNG No?

JANICE WIRTH She was quite practical, serious. She didn't have much use for cute little sayings. I wonder what I would be like if I had grown up here.

BARB WABUNG Probably fatter.

JANICE WIRTH Wonderful. When I was a little girl, I always dreamt my Mother was somebody like Pocahontas or Sacajewea. I used to read all about them. Did you know Sacajewea was a Shoshoni word meaning Bird Woman?

BARB WABUNG Binshii-kweh. That means Bird Woman in Annishnawbe, Ojibway.

JANICE WIRTH Binshii-kweh. I must remember that. I also used to dream I had a sister.

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BARB WABUNG But probably not like me.

JANICE WIRTH I seem to remember canoes and buckskin. I don't remember why though.

BARB WABUNG Couldn't have been me then. Never had a buckskin dress in my life. And I hate canoeing, my legs cramp.

JANICE WIRTH I wonder if that's why I bought that white fur coat of mine, my heritage coming through.

BARB WABUNG Doubt it. You're the only Indian I know who has one.

JANICE WIRTH I wanted to belong here so bad. When I drove up that driveway, it seemed like I had prepared my whole life for that meeting. But from the moment I arrived, I knew I didn't belong. You didn't even like me.

BARB WABUNG I didn't like you because I knew you were going to hurt Mom.

JANICE WIRTH How could you know that?

BARB WABUNG Easy. You weren't real to her. You couldn't possibly be everything she dreamed. Somewhere down the line, she would realize you weren't a dream, weren't perfect, and her world would come crashing down. And as usual, I would be there to cry with her. It wasn't you I didn't like, it was the bomb I knew was waiting to go off. I didn't personally start to dislike you until you walked out. The minute that door closed behind you, I

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knew it was over,

(beat) You killed her, you know? As sure as you put a gun against her head. She died because of you.

JANICE WIRTH That's not fair.

BARB WABUNG No, it's not, is it? I loved Mom, she loved you, and you killed her.

JANICE WIRTH Quit saying that.

BARB WABUNG When you left, you took her spirit, her will to live, with you. She was dead long before last Tuesday. It just took a while for her body to catch up. Drink up, Janice.

JANICE punches BARB. She goes flying across the room, creating a loud crash.

JANICE WIRTH Don't you dare hang all of that on my head. If you want to hate me then hate me. But you have no goddamn right to blame me for Anne's death. I'm part of this whole fucking picture too.

TONTO and RODNEY come running in, alerted by the noise.

JANICE WIRTH

(yelling) Get out!

Started, the boys do as they're told quickly. BARB picks herself up slowly.

JANICE WIRTH I am so sorry for Anne's death, but I am not responsible for what happened to her. I can't be. I can't handle more guilt. Why do you think I didn't want to come

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here? I've got scars of my own. I know I walked out of here, and I have to live with that fact. You don't think I realize that she's gone and that I'll never know what kind of woman she was or what could have happened between us? I grew up wanting to hate this woman, thinking my whole life was her fault. That's why I ran out of this house. I was all prepared to dislike and pity some old Indian woman that lost me because of alcohol. Instead I find this wonderful, sweet, caring woman that had her baby taken away by the system for no good reason. A baby she loved and fought to get back. I began to feel it all. I started to care, Barb, but I didn't want to care. If I care, I'll realize what I've lost.

BARB WABUNG Mom always said you couldn't miss something you never had.

JANICE WIRTH She was wrong.

BARB WABUNG I guess. Grace, you're all I've got left.

JANICE WIRTH I thought you didn't like me.

BARB WABUNG My brother's dead, my father, my mother. I'm an orphan. I don't wanna be alone.

JANICE WIRTH You've got Rodney.

BARB WABUNG It's not the same.

JANICE WIRTH No, I guess it isn't. I don't feel well.

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BARB WABUNG Neither do I.

JANICE WIRTH Oh, your poor face. What did I do?

BARB WABUNG Not my face. My stomach.

JANICE WIRTH I thought I hit you in the face?

BARB WABUNG You did. I think. But my stomach.... Can you help me sit down?

JANICE WIRTH Okay.

JANICE puts her arm around BARB and helps her over to a chair. Once BARB is sitting, JANICE takes her arm away but BARB grabs it.

BARB WABUNG Thank you.

BARB passes out, her arm knocking the birthday present onto the floor. JANICE goes to make her more comfortable.

JANICE WIRTH Poor Barb. I'm so sorry for your face, Anne, everything.

JANICE trips over the present on the floor. Drunkenly she picks it up. Fighting tears, she opens the present, revealing a large dreamcatcher.

JANICE WIRTH What the hell is this?

She notices a tag attached. She struggles to read it.

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JANICE WIRTH "...Good dreams pass through the webbing, bad dreams are caught and dissolved by the early morning light. Usually given to newlyweds to hang over the window in their bedrooms or to the mother of a new born baby, to ensure her baby will only have pleasant dreams." ...new born baby....

JANICE starts to cry, slowly she lays her head down on the table and passes out. The men enter tentatively, checking out the territory. TONTO lifts JANICE's head, but it falls with a thud.

TONTO Normally that should hurt.

TONTO examines the present.

TONTO What's all this stuff? Nice Dreamcatcher. Do you mind telling me what's going on here?

RODNEY It worked.

TONTO What worked?

RODNEY The plan. Barb's plan. With a little coaching from yours truly.

TONTO Oh God, what have you two done this time?

RODNEY They needed to bond. And nobody bonds like a couple of drunks.

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TONTO But it's a false bonding. Drunks will kill each other over the last mouthful of booze. You're playing with fire.

RODNEY Firewater?!

TONTO Damn it, Rodney, this is serious. Alcohol doesn't solve problems, it creates them.

RODNEY I know, I know, but the system fucked them up royally. Something equally screwy had to fuck them back down. Fight fire with fire.

TONTO I used to work in a Detox Centre, you didn't. Two wrongs don't make a right.

RODNEY approaches BARB.

RODNEY Look at her. Sleeping peacefully. She just got drunk with her adopted sister for the first time. I'm sure there's a country song in there somewhere.

TONTO Rodney, why did you do this?

RODNEY I told you....

TONTO Uh uh. You told me what you did, but not why. There's something going on in that book-clogged head of yours. Let me have a peak.

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RODNEY Anne.

TONTO Yes?

RODNEY The car accident, when Paul died. She never blamed me for that.

TONTO Why should she? Wasn't your fault.

RODNEY He was coming to pick me up at the bar. I phoned him, remember? He wouldn't have been on that road if it hadn't been for me. Half the village was giving me dirty looks but, God bless her, she never thought a single bad thing about me. What a woman.

TONTO And all this ...?

RODNEY I took part of her family away. I had to return another part. Barb planted the idea but I cultivated it. Remember the stuff with the night-blindness?

TONTO Oh, Rodney, man

RODNEY It's okay now. Really.

BARB moans and wakens.

BARB WABUNG Rodney?

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RODNEY Right here, Barb.

BARB WABUNG I love my Mother.

RODNEY I know you do, sweetie. And she loves you.

BARB WABUNG Put me in her bed. I want to sleep there.

RODNEY Sure thing.

RODNEY helps the almost unconscious BARB toward the bedroom.

TONTO Okay genius, what do I do with this one?

RODNEY Put her in Barb's room. And Tonto, better get some buckets out of the back room.

TONTO Good idea. Oooh, are you gonna be in pain tomorrow, Kemosabe.

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Act 2, Scene 3

Scene Three

The scene opens on a graveyard. All four enter the grounds. Again the women are leaning quite heavily on the men. BARB and JANICE are in pain.

BARB WABUNG

(squinting) Rodney, do something about that sun, please?

JANICE WIRTH

(to TONTO) Not so fast. Easy. Slow down. Never again.

BARB WABUNG Rodney, Rodney, if you love me, you'll kill me right now.

JANICE WIRTH I may never eat again.

RODNEY Boy, I wish we had a camera.

They arrive at Anne's grave.

TONTO Here we are.

JANICE WIRTH So this is it.

TONTO You sure you're up to this?

JANICE WIRTH No time like the present.

TONTO Still, it is kinda tacky visiting your Mother's grave hung over.

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RODNEY That's my Barb, tacky all the way.

BARB WABUNG Okay, you guys, get away. Go wait at the car. This is daughter stuff.

RODNEY You sure? You look a little unsteady.

BARB WABUNG It's okay. We'll be fine.

RODNEY We'll be over here, if you need help.

The men exit.

JANICE WIRTH God, I feel awful. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

BARB WABUNG Mom used to say "self-inflicted wounds don't count." Janice, hold me up.

JANICE WIRTH I can barely hold myself up.

BARB WABUNG Okay. I'm okay.

BARB walks to the tombstone.

BARB WABUNG Mom, look who I brought. It's Gra It's Janice, Mom. You were right. She did come home again.

JANICE WIRTH I don't know what to say, Barb.

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BARB WABUNG You'll think of something. I got to go. I'm not feeling well.

BARB hobbles away in obvious pain.

BARB WABUNG

(calling plaintively) Rodney!!

JANICE is left alone at Anne's grave.

JANICE WIRTH Hello Anne. Wherever you are, I hope you're feeling better than I am. The last time you saw me, I was a mess. Confused. In great emotional pain. Now it's physical pain. I don't know which one is better,

(pause) Yes I do. The physical pain will go away. The emotional pain will take longer. If at all. I'm sorry I left the way I did. It must have been a horrible Christmas for you. But you must understand I didn't walk out on you. I walked out on me. To everybody I was Grace, but to me I'm Janice. I don't know if I can ever be the Grace you wanted, or the Grace Barb wants. I don't know anything any more. I'm hungover. I've met Amelia Earhart. And I'm standing at your grave, a woman I barely got to know. What a town this Otter Lake of yours. I guess the reason I'm here is to seek forgiveness for the bad thoughts I had, about you. I couldn't help it. I needed a reason, some excuse for what happened to me, what I went through. You were all I had. Growing up in the home I did, looking the way I do, the schools I went to, the jokes I heard. I had to blame somebody. I feel so ashamed. You were so kind to me, so nice. And all I wanted was evidence, proof to justify my anger. And there you were, so sweet and accepting. My whole life fell away. Everything I had wanted to believe was gone because of you. That made me even more angry. I hate myself now. I'm tired of being angry. I'm tired of mistrusting you. I'm tired of everything. I just don't want to fight it any more. I'm sorry. You deserve better

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JANICE collapses. TONTO comes running up to her side.

TONTO Yo, Janice, are you okay?

JANICE WIRTH I don't know any more.

TONTO Know what?

JANICE WIRTH Anything.

TONTO That's an awful lot to forget after one night of drinking. Trust me, you know everything you need to know. People may learn a few facts or stories over the years, but all the real important things in life we know at birth.

JANICE WIRTH I don't need grave-side therapy right now. You had it easy, you grew up here. You knew everything.

TONTO That has nothing to do with it. Janice, have you ever heard of a bird called a cowbird?

(JANICE shakes her head) Interesting bird the cowbird. They lay their eggs in other birds' nests then fly off.

JANICE WIRTH

(sniffing) Cuckoos.

TONTO What?

JANICE WIRTH Cuckoos. The English have a similar bird called a cuckoo.

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TONTO Whatever. Anyway, the robins or starlings, whichever the nest belongs to, they raise the baby cowbird as a robin or a starling or whatever. But when it grows up, the cowbird is still a cowbird. It lays its eggs in another bird's nest just like any other cowbird. Somewhere, deep inside, it knew it was a cowbird. No matter how it was raised or what it was taught. What are you, robin or cowbird?

JANICE WIRTH I don't know.

TONTO Well, let's go find out.

JANICE WIRTH What do you think I've been trying to do all these years?

TONTO Yeah, but you've been doing it alone. 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, heads are better than one.

JANICE WIRTH But it's not your problem.

TONTO I'm a cowbird too, remember. Let me help, okay?

Beat.

JANICE WIRTH Why not?

TONTO Are you done here?

JANICE WIRTH Not yet. Go ahead, I'll be down in a moment.

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TONTO exits. Janice turns around and looks at the grave one last time. She sees a daisy growing off to the side. She picks it and gently places it against the headstone.

JANICE WIRTH Co-waabmen, Mom, from your daughter, Grace.

JANICE walks towards the car exiting.

The lights go down.

THE END

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