

Go To Ground

a play about a fox hunt

By Stuart Spencer

CHARACTERS

Oliver, late 20s

In Bailey:

Ford, his father
Joy, his wife
Caitlin, his sister
Tony, his brother
Evelyn, his ex-girlfriend

In the City:

Gordon, his boss
Mrs. G., an old friend
Celia, his ex-girlfriend
Cron, his best friend
Darly, his girlfriend

The play is double cast accordingly.

NOTES TO THE READER

The Look and Sound of the Play:

Aside from the double-casting of all the roles except Oliver, there are significant design distinctions between the world of 'the city' and that of 'Bailey'.

Bailey is in full, vivid color, as seen mainly in the bright reds, golds, whites of the hunt livery, but also in the autumn colors and other natural features. The city is black, white, and grey.

In Bailey it is always bright daylight. In the city, it is always night and sometimes raining.

Bailey is always outdoors. The city is always indoors.

Finally, in the city, people speak in a modern, fractured syntax that often struggles to express its meaning. But in Bailey, everyone generally (not always) seems to know what they're going to say and how to say it, and they do so in iambic pentameter blank verse. Actors should be able to speak verse but, as always, it's important not to emphasize scansion over the meaning of the words.

Riding Horses Onstage:

In regard to the riding of horses, no special props or mechanical devices should be used. The actors' legs "become" the horses legs (and therefore have a life of their own) while their upper bodies remain human.

Typography:

// indicates that the next line begins at this moment

[] indicates a word that is unspoken

GLOSSARY

LIVERY: The clothing worn by a person in the hunt. Ford and Tony being 'staff' wear red coats (which are never referred to as being 'red' - only 'scarlet' or 'pink'). Joy, Caitlin, Evelyn, and Oliver wear black 'Melton' coats. The rest of the livery consists of black knee-high boots, white jodhpurs, a stock tie fastened with a stick pin, and a hunting cap.

WHIPPING-IN: The process of controlling and guiding the hounds - which are never called 'dogs' - in the discovery and pursuit of the scent. The person doing this is the 'whip'.

HILLTOP: A verb meaning to follow the hunt on horseback and watch it from a relatively safe distance. Persons who don't ride well, or whose horses are not suited to the rigors of the actual hunt, will be a 'hilltopper'.

STIRRUP CUP: A potent mixture of various liquors designed to give comfort and courage to members of the hunt.

ACT ONE

Scene 1

(Oliver appears, nattily dressed,
speaking to us.)

OLIVER

Go To Ground. A play about a fox hunt.

How many of you ride a horse?

(He waits for a show of hands.)

Not many.

Not to worry. Fortunately we're
Prepared to give a demonstration for
The uninitiated. Horses go
At different speeds - we call them "gaits". My fam'ly
Has agreed to show you what they look
Like so that you can tell a gallop from
A trot.

(Joy appears "walking" her horse)

My mother, Joy. As you can see,
A simple walk. Her back is straight but not
Inflexible. Her shoulders are relaxed,
The elbows in, and loosely, in her hands,
The reins. You never want to grip the reins.
I don't know why.

(Joy comes to a full stop, and cocks her
ankle at an angle.)

When standing still, the horse
Will often cock his foot. It's normal;
The horse is fine. So: moving on.

(Tony appears)

My brother

Tony. This is called a trot. Which means
That Tony has to post. He's posting now.
Okay, that's it.

(Tony goes and stands next to Joy. Oliver
looks down at his ankle, which cocks like
Joys.)

It never fails.

(Ford has already entered already at a
canter.)

And this

Is called a canter. That's my father, by
The way. You notice how he's rolling with
The horse's gait. You never want to fight
The horse's gait. That's very bad. The horse
And rider should be one. Like so. He's very

Good. Okay, that's fine.

(Ford continues)

Hey Dad. Hey Dad!

(Ford stops)

That's fine. Appreciate it.

(Ford stands next to Tony; Caitlin appears.)

Now. The final

Gait will be the gallop. Are you set?

(Caitlin glares at him.)

Oh sorry. Caitlin. Sister. Sorry. Set?

Then go.

(Caitlin breaks into a full gallop that takes her directly off stage opposite.)

The gallop's not for novices.

(Caitlin bursts back on stage from the wings, still galloping.)

It's very fast as you can ...

(And she hurtles off stage again)

... don't try this

At home.

(And she's back again - !)

I think we got the point. Hello!

(She hears him and stops, goes to join the others.)

And so, that's it. The basics. All you really

Need to know. Although there is one thing -

It's me, you see, just so you understand ...

(The others all interrupt him.)

THE OTHERS

Oliver!/Hey!/Let's just do it!/They'll see for themselves!

OLIVER

In that case, may I offer you:

ALL

Go To Ground.

OLIVER

A play about a fox hunt.

(All but Oliver and Caitlin exit.)

Caitlin, still on horseback, makes a wide circle around the stage at a walking pace. Oliver stands outside the circle.

We are in Bailey.)

CAITLIN

You're kidding or you're crazy or you're both.
You can't be thinking - no - that I would take
Your side?

OLIVER

Why not?

CAITLIN

Why not, he says. Because,
For one, you don't know how to ride
A horse.

OLIVER

I do!

CAITLIN

You don't.

OLIVER

Of course I do!

CAITLIN

You haven't seen a saddle or a stirrup
Or a halter - not in seven years.

OLIVER

Come on. It's like a bike.

CAITLIN

A bike? A bike?

(She dismounts.)

OLIVER

You learn it once and then you know. It's not
As if it's difficult. In fact, I've heard
The horse is doing all the work.

CAITLIN

(Hands him the reins.)

Hold.

(He takes them.)

You know what I think you should do? Go home.

OLIVER

Well that's just it. That's where I am.

CAITLIN

The city.

OLIVER

The city's not my home.

CAITLIN

Oh no? Since when?

OLIVER

Since ... look, the point is, here I am, and all I want to do is join the hunt.

CAITLIN

Okay,
Suppose you go. Suppose you spend the morning
Hunting. Then what happens?

OLIVER

Then I stay.

CAITLIN

In Bailey.

OLIVER

Yes.

CAITLIN

You're coming back to Bailey.

OLIVER

Yes.

CAITLIN

For good.

OLIVER

That's right.

CAITLIN

Okay.

OLIVER

Well, look -
Let's take it one thing at a time. They go
In what - a couple hours?

CAITLIN

Eleven sharp.

OLIVER

So let me go, just let me do it. Then
We'll talk about the rest. You'll understand
When I explain.

CAITLIN

Well, look, you want to ride,
Then ride. It's not for me to say. You've got
To get the go-ahead from Dad, that's all.

OLIVER

I was thinking -

CAITLIN

No.

OLIVER

That you could -

CAITLIN

No.

OLIVER

Just talk to -

CAITLIN

- no -

OLIVER

- him -

CAITLIN

- no -

OLIVER

- for me.

CAITLIN

It's not
My problem, kid. You want to ride to hounds,
Okay by me. But I'm not asking Dad.
(Noticing his disheveled state)
And some advice? I'd tidy up a little
First.

OLIVER

(Tucking in his shirt)
I never got a chance to change.

CAITLIN

Your lip. There's blood.

(He wipes it with his hand.)

OLIVER

How's that?

CAITLIN

You really want
To know?

OLIVER

Of course.

CAITLIN

(Making a leap to the bigger subject ...)
Whatever happened or
Whatever changed - I'm telling you: to come
Back here and join the hunt like this - it's not
The answer.

OLIVER

This is typical. You people
Tell me all the time: "You don't come home.
You never call. You never even email."
So. Okay. Thanksgiving, yes? And here
I am. I'm home! And what's the only thing
I hear?

CAITLIN

Okay, you're right. So tell me. Help
Me understand. What happened to you?

OLIVER

Me?

CAITLIN

Last night.

OLIVER

What makes you think that something -

CAITLIN

If

You want me on your side, I have to know.

OLIVER

All I want to do is climb on board...

(The horse)

This thing and chase a fox. Is that so big
A deal?

CAITLIN

You see? Right there. You seem to think
There's nothing to this. Always did. You're wrong.
There's what you wear, the way you ride and work
The hounds. The signals - horns and shouts. It's not
So simple, Ollie. Rules. The way we do
Things matters. You don't have to like that but
That doesn't change the way it is. This isn't like
The city - making up the rules, or better
Yet, not having any.

(Pause)

OLIVER

It's not that easy to explain.

CAITLIN

I'm listening.

OLIVER

It wasn't like it was a single thing.
It was a chain. The domino effect.
A house of cards, and just the slightest breeze ...

CAITLIN

Specifics please.

OLIVER

Okay, well, Darly then.

CAITLIN

Who's Darly?

OLIVER

Darly is my girlfriend. Was.

CAITLIN

She must be new.

OLIVER

Six months.

CAITLIN

Oh pardon me -
Longtime companion. Sorry. Go ahead.

OLIVER

We had a date.

(Darly appears in her own light opposite.)

CAITLIN

She stood you up?

OLIVER

I wish.
That would have made it simple. No, it wasn't
Quite that neat.

CAITLIN

So go ahead. I'm list'ning.

(Lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 2

(The city. Wednesday night.

Darly's apartment. She is on a cordless phone. Oliver is just entering.)

DARLY

No, I doubt it.

I just do.

Of course I'll ask.

Okay.

Okay, I have to go.

He just walked in. I'll call you back.

I'll call you back.

Ten minutes.

All right, good bye.

OLIVER

Who was that?

DARLY

Oh nothing. Just my mother.

(Going to him: bright, warm)

Hi.

OLIVER

Sorry I'm late.

(They kiss.)

DARLY

You need some boundaries with that guy. He so takes advantage of you.

OLIVER

Gordon? No he doesn't -

DARLY

He fucking does.

OLIVER

You just - you don't understand, okay?

DARLY

You're right. I don't.

OLIVER

Gordon is a great boss, okay? You don't find many guys like that in this business.

DARLY

And what is 'that'?

OLIVER

What is what?

DARLY

The 'that' in 'guys like that'?

OLIVER

Gordon is one of those guys, they sort of teach you stuff but they don't really teach. They just sort of do it - and you just learn, because you want to be like that. And besides, there's no bullshit with him, no skanky scumbag real estate developer skankheads hanging around. And there's plenty of those at other companies, believe me. Lot of guys go that way.

(Beat.)

DARLY

Anyway, you're here, so who cares?

OLIVER

I do have to go back though.

DARLY

What?

OLIVER

Just for a second.

DARLY

To the office?

OLIVER
The money wasn't ready.

DARLY
What money?

OLIVER
The petty cash.

DARLY
What petty cash?

OLIVER
I have to drop it at the contractor.

DARLY
Tonight?

OLIVER
Tomorrow?

DARLY
On Thanksgiving?

OLIVER
I don't know, it's important.

(With some effort, she puts this too behind her.)

DARLY
Okay. So. Let's start over.
(A fresh start)
Hello.

OLIVER
Hi.

(They kiss.)

DARLY
It's all right. You know what? I don't want to go out tonight anyway.

OLIVER
We can go out. I'll meet you.

DARLY

No, I don't want to.

OLIVER

(A bald seduction)

You want to ... stay in?

DARLY

(Smiles)

And do what?

OLIVER

Backgammon. Parcheesi. Hide 'n seek.

(He's nuzzling her.)

DARLY

You're naughty.

OLIVER

You like naughty.

DARLY

How do you know?

OLIVER

I did a study.

(They neck. He moves to her earlobe.)

DARLY

Ollie -

OLIVER

Yeah -

DARLY

Hold on a sec -

OLIVER

What - ?

DARLY

I'm sorry.

OLIVER

What's the matter?

DARLY

(She pushes gently; he backs off.)

I want to ask you something.

OLIVER

About what?

DARLY

Tonight ...

OLIVER

Okay.

DARLY

I actually had this idea about what to do.

OLIVER

Nice. I like it when you get creative.

DARLY

No, well, I was thinking, I mean, it is Thanksgiving. And there's really nothing to do in the city tomorrow. And I just thought, you know, I really ought to go home.

(Pause)

OLIVER

Home?

DARLY

Home.

OLIVER

You mean - home home?

DARLY

Yeah.

OLIVER

As in, that place you can never go again?

DARLY

More as in, for the holidays.

OLIVER

Oh that home.

DARLY
Exactly.

OLIVER
As in, home sweet.

DARLY
Right.

OLIVER
As in, there's no place like.

DARLY
That's the one.

OLIVER
And uh - what prompted this? If you don't mind my asking.

DARLY
Because I was going to ask you to come with me.

(Beat.)

OLIVER
With you.

DARLY
Yeah.

OLIVER
Why?

DARLY
I don't know. It's pretty this time of year. You could meet the folks. They've been asking about that.

OLIVER
You told them about me?

DARLY
Well yeah - just - you know - the way you do. Your name comes up.

OLIVER
Right. Of course.

DARLY

So, how 'bout it?

OLIVER

You want me to go up to ... whatever it is ...

DARLY

Katonah.

OLIVER

Tomorrow morning and just // hang out with ...

DARLY

Tonight actually.

OLIVER

Tonight.

DARLY

There's an 8:20 train.

OLIVER

Tonight.

DARLY

You go home, grab a change of clothes, go by the office, do your thing, meet me at Grand Central.

OLIVER

You're really serious.

DARLY

Yes.

OLIVER

Wow. Okay.

DARLY

What's the matter?

OLIVER

I don't know what to say.

DARLY

How 'bout yes?

OLIVER

You know, I'm sorry, but I didn't realize you did this kind of thing. Go home. Take people with you. Meet the folks. Et cetera. In fact, you told me once - I remember - you said you didn't go home for holidays.

DARLY

I never said that.

OLIVER

No, I remember.

DARLY

I think that might have been someone else.

OLIVER

No ...

DARLY

I think maybe you're losing track.

OLIVER

// You said -

DARLY

Because I'm not exactly your first ...

OLIVER

It was our first date, and you said "I go home once a year ..."

DARLY

No ...

OLIVER

"... and I never spend the night."

DARLY

No I did not.

OLIVER

"... and never on holidays."

DARLY

I never said that // and if I -

OLIVER

Yes // you did.

DARLY

- and if I did - and I didn't because I don't - I mean I do go home - then ... I forgot what I was going to say.

(Beat)

OLIVER

Don't do this.

DARLY

Do what?

OLIVER

You're pushing this. This is not what we are.

DARLY

I take it you're not coming.

OLIVER

I can't even deal with my own family. No.

DARLY

So even if I - ?

(Beat; she lowers her tone)

... even if this was important?

OLIVER

(Studying her)

But it's not ...

DARLY

But what if it was?

OLIVER

But it's not.

(Quickly)

Look - just go home, just do it. Really. It's fine. I've got shit to do anyway.

DARLY

You really want to play errand boy, don't you.

OLIVER

I volunteered.

DARLY

So un-volunteer.

OLIVER

I can't. I just ... I can't.

I'm sorry.

(Beat)

DARLY

You know, the thing is - and you know this, we both know it. There's a fork in the road.

OLIVER

There is?

DARLY

I mean, we had a great summer. The weekends, the beach, the house, the people in the house, Cron. It was all great. But, you know, since then, the last couple months, we just ... I mean, ever since Labor Day we're just, I don't know ...

OLIVER

We're just what?

DARLY

You know ...

OLIVER

No.

DARLY

Like - not moving.

OLIVER

Not moving.

(Beat.)

DARLY

Stagnating. We're stagnating.

OLIVER

We are?

DARLY

It's sink or swim. You either keep going. Or, you know. You don't.

OLIVER

What do you mean, sink? We're not sinking.

DARLY

It's classic, Ollie. I want to keep it going, you don't.

OLIVER

Wait a second. I want to keep it going. I want to keep going just the way it is.

DARLY

(Sad, but brave)

Yeah. I know. Exactly.

OLIVER

Darly ... !

DARLY

(Completely sincere.)

No, it's okay. Really. I knew it might be like this.

OLIVER

Why can't we just - you know - you go - wherever ...

DARLY

Katonah.

OLIVER

- and I'll stay here. And I'll see you Friday.

DARLY

I wish I had time to talk yo into this but I really want to make that train. Please come.

OLIVER

I can't. I just - I don't do that. I don't go home to my home, or anybody's home. I just don't. I'm sorry.

DARLY

Yeah, I know ...

(She wells up)

Yeah ... excuse me ...

(She gets a tissue.)

OLIVER

I'm sorry ...

DARLY

No, please. I'll get over it. I just need a little time.

(Beat)

Do I get a kiss goodbye?

(He's not sure what to do, but kisses her.)

I'm going to miss you.

(Beat.)

You better go. I don't want to start crying.

(She waits while he turns and goes.)

She picks up the cordless and dials.)

DARLY

I can't talk, I've got to pack. I'm on the 8:20.

No. He's not coming.

I don't know, he didn't feel like it.

Mom, I said I'd ask. I asked. It's not like I didn't tell you what he was going to say.

Okay. Okay. Is somebody going to pick me up?

9:35.

Okay. See you.

I've got to pack.

Bye.

(She hangs up as the lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 3

(Bailey. The yard between the house and stable.)

In the cross fade, a phone rings.

Ford enters on horseback, in full livery. Joy enters on foot, opposite.

JOY

Oh Ford, dear, glad I caught you. Mr. Crowley's On the phone. He wants to bring his nephew Roger on the hunt today.

(Ford turns the horse around and comes back to her.)

FORD

How old

Is he?

JOY

Not on the lawn, dear.

(Ford turns the horse again, moving away.)

I'm not sure.

He's eight or nine, at least. I think. He rides A Shetland Pony, that I know.

FORD

Oh Mother

Macree, a Shetland Pony? Look, the kid's Too young, that's it.

JOY

But would you take the call?

I have to make the stirrup cup and I'm Not even -

(Tony has entered on foot, but in his livery.)

FORD

Tony, what the hell is going On? I thought I left you with the hounds.

TONY
Oh yeah, you did, but something's up.

FORD
What kind
Of something?

TONY
I don't know exactly how
To say this but it's kind of like ...

FORD
Like what?

TONY
Like Oliver. He's here.

JOY
Where is he?

TONY
In the barn.

FORD
Well what the - ? What's he doing there? Forget
It, I don't care. It doesn't matter why.

JOY
Excuse me, dear, but Mr. Crowley's waiting
On the -
(Oliver appears.)
- oh.

OLIVER
Surprise! Good morning all.

JOY
Good morning, dear.

OLIVER
I know I should have called,
But then -

FORD
But then that's not your style.

(An awkward pause)

JOY

(Time to escape ...)

Nice to see you dear. I have to get
The phone.

(She kisses him on the cheek and goes.)

TONY

(Ditto)

So, Ollie, look, I'm whipping-in.
The hounds, you know? I got to see a man
About a dog. Good stuff! We'll see you later
On, okay?

OLIVER

Sure thing.

TONY

Nice tie. You rock.

(He flips Oliver's tie as he passes.)

OLIVER

I'm sorry that I didn't call.

FORD

It doesn't
Matter, Oliver. It's just, we're busy. It's
Thanksgiving. Turnout's always high today.
I'll see you later, at the buffet. You'll
Be there?

OLIVER

I'd like to be if that's all right.

FORD

Of course. Delighted. Anyone is welcome,
You know that.

(He nudges his horse and starts to go.)

OLIVER

There's something else I'd like
To ask. If it's all right, I'd like to ride
To hounds today.

FORD

You would.

OLIVER

I would.

FORD

Your horse?

And where's

OLIVER

I thought I'd borrow one.

FORD

From whom?

OLIVER

Well Caitlin said the Baldwins have a horse
Called Montezuma. Old but sound, I guess.
She's calling them right now.

FORD

And livery?

OLIVER

And livery.

FORD

Exactly. You don't own
One.

OLIVER

Yes I do.

FORD

You never rode to hounds
In your entire life.

OLIVER

You bought one for
Me anyway. Remember? Cap to boots.
I never wore it. But it's in the attic,
In a trunk. Unless somebody moved
It.

FORD

No, I'm sure it's where you left
It.

OLIVER

So, it's all okay? Permission granted?

FORD

No.

OLIVER

Why not?

FORD

You don't know how to ride

A horse.

OLIVER

I went through this with Caitlin.

Yes I do.

FORD

Not well enough. You only
Ever rode a horse inside a fence.

OLIVER

It can't be all that different.

FORD

No? It can't?

You haven't got a clue. This horse is half
A ton of muscle, bone, and hoof. And when
It hears the hounds give tongue, that half
A ton starts moving twice as fast as you
Could ever think of running. And it doesn't
Want to stop. It loves to run. That's all
It really loves. And you're a puny little
Flea with only one thing in your favor.
That's persuasion. Nothing else. There's not
A chance in hell that you, or anyone,
Is strong enough to stop a thousand
Pounds of horse from running where it wants
And jumping what it likes. The only thing
You've got is what you know. And you know nothing.

(Caitlin enters on foot.)

You can hilltop if you like.

OLIVER

I don't

Want to hilltop, I -

FORD

It's that or nothing. Take
Your pick.

(He goes.)

CAITLIN

It's really not that bad. I hilltop
Sometimes. And besides, I heard that Evvie
Martin's riding with them.

(This gets his attention.)

OLIVER

Yeah?

CAITLIN

I bet

She'd like to see you.

(He contemplates the potential of this...)

OLIVER

Right ...

CAITLIN

You see? It all
Works out. And by the way, your horse is ready.
Montezuma's waiting in the paddock.

OLIVER

Well, hell, let's go - !

CAITLIN

Where to?

OLIVER

The attic!

(They exit as lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 4

(The city. Wednesday night. A
midtown office.

Rain outside.

Cron discovered at his desk. He
wears suit and tie. He is on the
phone as Oliver enters.)

CRON

Nine o'clock is good.

Yeah, Rosetti's - sure. Seventh Avenue, north of Tenth.
I'll be there.

Of course.

Of course. Looking forward.

All right.

Bye now.

(He hangs up and pumps his right arm.)

Oh ... yes!

OLIVER

Yeah?

CRON

Bing-o!

OLIVER

Yeah?

CRON

She wants to wants to meet me "someplace in her
neighborhood."

OLIVER

Ah yes.

CRON

I mean, that is the code, right? I'm not making this up. That is hot chick-ese for "You're going to get laid tonight".

OLIVER

I think you're gonna get some.

CRON

I'm gonna God damn fuckin' TRY!

(Cron takes some casual clothes out of the desk drawer to put them on.)

OLIVER

How'd you meet her?

CRON

Barnes and Noble.

OLIVER

No way.

CRON

Swear to God.

OLIVER

You were in a bookstore?

CRON

I was looking for a book.

OLIVER

The fuck you were. What book?

CRON

Any book. What the fuck do I care?

OLIVER

(With a smile)

What's her name?

CRON

Her name is ...

(Like he can taste it ...)

... Celia.

OLIVER

(This rings a bell)

Celia.

CRON

(Again, relishing it ...)

Celia.

OLIVER

(His mood has shifted)

I knew a Celia once.

CRON

How was she?

OLIVER

Long time ago. I liked her.

(Then a memory ...)

I liked her a lot.

CRON

(Picking up on his tone)

What happened? She break your heart?

OLIVER

(Searching for the memory...)

I don't know ... did she? It's been a long time.

It's funny. You like somebody but you don't hang on.
You turn around, they're gone. You forget all about
'em.

I broke up with Darly.

CRON

What?

OLIVER

Yeah.

CRON

What the fuck?

OLIVER

I know ...

CRON

What the fuck happened?

OLIVER

I don't know. She was all - you know -

CRON

All what?

OLIVER

She wanted me to go home with her.

CRON

What?

OLIVER

To her family.

CRON

What?!

OLIVER

In Katonah.

CRON

What the fuck is wrong with her?

CRON

Jesus Fuckin' Christ. These fuckin' bitches think they can just ...

(He stops short, making a connection.)

OLIVER

Can what?

CRON

(Slowly)

Nothing, no, I -

OLIVER

What?

CRON

(A memory of his own)

Shit ...

OLIVER

What?

CRON

(Decisively)

Nothing, no, forget it ...

(Gordon enters, suit and tie.)

GORDON

Gentlemen. Good evening. Hope I didn't keep you waiting.

OLIVER

I just got here.

GORDON

(To Cron)

You did the banking?

CRON

It's right there.

(Gordon opens a briefcase on the desk, checks something inside, is satisfied.)

GORDON

(To Oliver)

You sure you don't mind, Ollie? It's a holiday. I'd understand.

OLIVER

I'm going to be here anyway.

GORDON

Very good. Now, here's the thing. There's a number here -

(He produces a piece of paper)

- I'm going to put it inside -

(He does)

- You're going to call this number first. Okay? Don't go out to meet him and you don't call first. Very important. I don't want you out in Canarsie, suitcase full of money and there's nobody to meet you.

OLIVER

Got it.

GORDON

It's right here. Side pocket.

OLIVER

Eight ball in the side pocket.

GORDON

You're all set.

(Hands Oliver the case. Checks his watch.)

Gentlemen, I'm a husband and a father and I want to make my train. Enjoy your holiday. See you Monday morning.

CRON

See ya.

OLIVER

Later.

GORDON

Last one out, turn off the lights.

(He goes.)

OLIVER

So. Anyway.

CRON

Yeah.

OLIVER

You were going to say ...

CRON

What?

OLIVER

I don't know. You were all - something.

CRON

Oh right, no, it's not important. It's over.

OLIVER

What's over?

CRON

You and Darly. It's done. Doesn't matter.

OLIVER

So if it doesn't matter, you can tell me.

(Beat)

CRON

Well, I was just - I remember back this summer - and you had to do something - petty cash - I don't know - on a Saturday, so you didn't get out to beach house 'til Sunday.

OLIVER

Yeah ...

CRON

So Darly's there, and we get to talking. You know. Like you do. You know, she really likes you and everything.

OLIVER

Yeah ...

CRON

But I don't know: she just comes out with this thing that if she ever wants to break it off with you, you know, she'll make it seem like it was really you.

(Beat)

OLIVER

Okay ...

CRON

And - uh - well, she said - you know - she got specific. Like "I could ask him to go home with me for, I don't know, some holiday." And you'd say no, and she'd insist, and then you'd - you know - break up with her.

I didn't want to say this.

OLIVER

This summer. At the beach.

CRON

Yeah.

OLIVER

The weekend I wasn't there.

CRON

I think you got out on Sunday, for the day.

(Beat)

OLIVER
So how did this come up?

CRON
I don't know - we just - you know -

OLIVER
You just what.

CRON
I don't know.

OLIVER
'Cause why would that come up?

CRON
How do I know? I don't remember.

OLIVER
Well, you were there.

CRON
What do you want? I don't remember. We were talking.

(Beat)

OLIVER
You fucked her.

(Beat)

CRON
No.

No.

OLIVER
You fucking God damn fucked her.

CRON
Ollie ...

OLIVER
Didn't you.

CRON

No.

Yes.

OLIVER

I fucking don't believe this.

CRON

Hey - you dumped her! It's over. Who cares?

OLIVER

I don't believe it.

CRON

Ollie, Christ, I'm sorry. I didn't want to tell you.

OLIVER

Just shut up -

CRON

It doesn't fucking matter.

OLIVER

Just shut up!

CRON

It's history.

OLIVER

Just shut the fuck up!

(Beat. Oliver turns away. A long beat.)

CRON

(Carefully)

See, this is what they do. They fuck with us. They fuck with our heads. We're so God damn sincere, we don't have a chance. These fucking cunts, they know that. And this is what they do. The manipulate the fuck out of us.

(Oliver checks his watch.)

OLIVER

I'm going to find her.

CRON

What?

OLIVER

She's on a train. I want to get this from her.

CRON

Ollie, Christ, come on ...

OLIVER

You - I'll find later -

(He starts to go. Cron physically stops him.)

CRON

Don't go fuckin' looking for her. That's what she wants.

OLIVER

Let go of me.

CRON

She isn't worth it, man.

OLIVER

Let the fuck go of me.

CRON

She'd fuckin' love that, you know? If you go chasing her ...

(Oliver punches Cron in the face and he goes down. Oliver stands over him, confused, angry.)

OLIVER

You - you were -

(Cron holds his bleeding nose.)

CRON

Oh fuck ...

OLIVER

I thought you were - my friend.

CRON

You God damn fuck. You fucking cunt. You fucking God damn hit me!

Get the fuck out of here. Get the fuck out. You fucking bitch. You cunt.

(Oliver starts to go, remembers the briefcase, gets it, then exits. Cron staggers to his feet as the lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 5

(Bailey. The yard.)

Joy, now in full livery, enters carrying a gallon plastic jug. Ford calls from offstage, then enters following her.)

FORD

Wait a minute. Joy! Hey! Hold your horses,
Pun intended. Let me have a look.

(He sizes her up.)

JOY

At what? Is something wrong?

FORD

You're rather fetching
In those jodhpurs. I'd say better than
The day I met you.

(He takes her by the waist.)

JOY

Stop. I have to take
The stirrup cup to Tony.

FORD

I don't get
A taste?

JOY

It's awfully hot. You'll burn yourself.

FORD

Who says I mean the stirrup cup?

(He gets in a kiss.)

JOY

Oh you!
You always get this way the morning of
A hunt. Now really darling, this has got
To wait. Just take a sip so I can finish
Up.

(She hands him a cup.)

Be careful now, it's very hot.

(He takes a sip.)

FORD
More rum, I think.

JOY
More rum?

FORD
No kick. It's got
To have a kick.

JOY
I thought it did ...
(She takes a sip)
I really
Think it's plenty strong myself.

FORD
I'm telling
You, my dear, today of all days, add
The rum. We'll all be needing it.

JOY
I guess.

FORD
And on that note: keep you-know-who away
From it. That's all we need.

JOY
He wouldn't, I
Don't think. Not this time. Have you noticed?

FORD
Noticed what?

JOY
He just seems different. Not
So angry. Sad almost. So vuln'erable.

FORD
He's just hung over, Joy. You're reading in.

JOY
But I think he deserves a chance, don't you?

FORD

He's had his chance! And then some! Easter Sunday,
You remember? Just this year? Appearing
Naked at the dinner table - then
Complaining he was cold? Or what about
Our wedding anniversary? He brought
That woman dressed in leather pants and nothing
But a lace brassiere on top. And then
A certain Christmas ...

JOY

... Yes ...

FORD

... he lit a marijuana
Cigarette and blew the smoke
In mother's face?

JOY

She did say that she rather
Liked the smell.

(Caitlin enters.)

CAITLIN

Okay, we're ready now.
I think.

(She looks off stage, waving them on.)
Hello?

(Oliver and Tony enter. Oliver is now in his
livery.)

Not perfect, maybe, no,
But good enough for now.

(Ford goes closer to assess Oliver. He leans
over and runs his finger over one boot.)

FORD

Mildew.

TONY

A little polish - comes right off.

(Ford sticks a finger into the should of the
jacket. It pokes through, popping out the
other side.)

FORD

Moth holes.

TONY

Yeah but no one's going to see
Them.

CAITLIN

Even if they did, who cares?
(Ford levels his gaze at her.)
Don't answer that.

FORD

It's not the way to do
Things. Sorry, folks. But that's the way it is.

JOY

Well, not exactly.

FORD

Sorry?

JOY

Your old coat.

CAITLIN

That's right!

FORD

So what about it?

TONY

Why can't he
Wear it?

FORD

Impossible.

CAITLIN

But why?

JOY

Why not?

FORD

It's got my colors on it.

CAITLIN

So? Don't answer

That.

FORD

He's not a member of the hunt.

CAITLIN

I said don't answer that.

JOY

But dear, he won't
Be in the hunt. Remember? Ollie's going
To hilltop.

CAITLIN

Right. Besides I'll take them off.

(Beat. Ford sees he's outnumbered.)

FORD

Okay. If that's what everybody wants.

(And he exits.)

JOY

So there. It's settled then. Oh good! We'll have
Such fun!

TONY

Come on, I'll show you where it is.

(Tony and Oliver go the other way.)

JOY

I think that this time, maybe, things might turn
Out fine.

(Confidentially)

So tell me ... something happened, yes?

CAITLIN

(Keeping his confidence)

You think so? Really? Why?

JOY

I do. I don't
Know what it was, but it was big. I think
It might have really changed him.

CAITLIN

I don't know,
I really wouldn't get my hopes up, Mom.

JOY

You must admit he seems sincere.

CAITLIN

Hey look,
I'm game. I'm into this. I'm going to help.
I just think, maybe, Ollie hasn't quite
Hit bottom yet. But given time, he might.

(They go as the lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 6

A commuter train. Wednesday night.
We hear the clickety-clack of the
rails.

Rain continues.

Sitting next to each other, Gordon
and Oliver. Oliver is at the
window, staring out into the night,
the briefcase at his feet. Gordon
has a newspaper folded in his lap.
He was reading it, but has put it
aside.

Beat.

GORDON

Well, you tried, kid. That's all you can do.

(Beat)

Did you call her? She have a cell phone?

OLIVER

(Looking out the window.)

I got the voice mail.

(Beat)

GORDON

And you checked the whole train? It's eight cars, you
know.

OLIVER

Nine.

(Beat.)

GORDON

Well listen. It's not meant to be. Not tonight. She'll
call you back in the morning. You'll talk. Things'll
work out.

OLIVER

No. No they won't.

(He finally stops looking out the window,
though he doesn't really look at Gordon.)
It's okay. I don't really want to find her. What am I
going to say? "I love you? Don't leave?" I don't love
Darly. I don't care if she leaves.

Shit. I'm sorry. This is really - this is so
inappropriate. I'll just - I'll go somewhere else...

(He starts to get up. Gordon gently restrains
him.)

GORDON

Ollie, hey, relax. You're off duty, pal. Personal time.
You're family, you know that. You got to spill, spill.

(Oliver sinks back into his seat.)

OLIVER

It's just - Jesus - what a crazy night. I don't get it.
It just all starts to slip away - evaporate - like a
dream or something - you can't stop it, you can't
change it. Nothing. It just [happens] ...

(He makes a gestures of helpless
resignation.)

GORDON

When sorrows come, they come not as spies, but in
battalions.

OLIVER

Yeah.

(Beat)

Who said that?

GORDON

Beats me.

Think of it this way: You've got a clean slate. Nothing
to hold you down. No strings.

OLIVER

Sometimes - you know? - it's like, that's the problem. Not enough strings. More strings. Or maybe better ones.

GORDON

What are you, twenty - ...?

OLIVER

Twenty nine. Knockin' on 30.

GORDON

You're a kid. You got time.

OLIVER

You think so? Really?

GORDON

Plenty.

OLIVER

I just - you know, I look at you, and - it's amazing, that's all. You make it look so easy.

GORDON

(Laughs)

It's all an act. Mirrors and pulleys.

(Oliver looks at him directly for the first time.)

OLIVER

You got married - how old?

GORDON

Twenty five. Met her in college. Only girl I ever dated, seriously anyway.

OLIVER

You see? I mean, for me that's, I can't even imagine that.

GORDON

Well, things were different. Different times.

OLIVER

I don't know, I don't think so. I've got friends - back in PA - they're all, you know, married or getting married. They've been dating since high school. Their best man is some guy they met in kindergarten.

GORDON

Well, all I can say is, I've got my own shit. Trust me. There's always something slipping away, Ollie. It's always the thing you don't see. If you saw it, you could stop it. Hold on to it. But you can't see it 'til it's already gone. That's life.

(We hear a conductor's announcement on the P.A. "Next stop Valhalla. Valhalla is next.")

OLIVER

I got to get off.

GORDON

Going home?

OLIVER

Yeah.

GORDON

You're welcome to stay. It's only two more stops. Plenty of room. Peg's got a big dinner planned. All the trimmings.

OLIVER

No, I - thank you - I really can't. I just want to get home and, I don't know, get some sleep. Anyway, I got this.

(He picks up the briefcase.)

GORDON

Right. Of course.

Remember to call. It's a tough neighborhood out there.

OLIVER

I will.

GORDON

I appreciate your doing this Ollie.

OLIVER

Oh, please, no big deal.

GORDON

No, it is. There's something in it for you, too.

OLIVER

Oh come on, please -

GORDON

No really. You showed your stuff the last six months, making the drops. Not everybody sticks their neck out like you have.

OLIVER

Well - I mean, thanks, but ... I didn't stick my neck out. I mean, I'm not really doing anything.

GORDON

It doesn't go unrecognized. I want you to know that.

GORDON

(Checking around, then lowering his voice...)
Guys who make the drop, they go places.

OLIVER

Make the what?

GORDON

The drop. The money.

OLIVER

You mean, the petty cash.

GORDON

Yeah, sure ... the "petty cash".

(Beat. Oliver looks at the briefcase, then back at Gordon.)

OLIVER

What are we talking about? This is petty cash.

GORDON

("Come on now ...")
Ollie ...

OLIVER

It's not petty cash?

GORDON

Are you serious?

OLIVER

Gordon, you're making me nervous.

GORDON

It's what you call lubrication. Oil in the machinery, so everything goes nice and smooth.

OLIVER

You mean ... but ... but I drop this with the contractor.

GORDON

Exactly. And he makes sure it all goes to the right places. That's the beauty - we're protected. We've got a middleman. Insulation. You didn't think I was sending you out there without something. Everybody keeps quiet, they can't touch us.

Come on. You knew this.

OLIVER

No. I didn't know.

GORDON

Five thousand dollars, every couple weeks? It never occurred to you?

OLIVER

You told me it was petty cash!

GORDON

What am I going to say? That's an office. There are people there. The walls have ears.

OLIVER

I don't believe this.

GORDON

So you walk out with five thousand dollars in your hand. You meet a man you don't know, in a different place every time, you hand over the money, and this seems to you like normal business.

OLIVER

This is a joke, right? You're joking.

Oh my God. I can't do this.

GORDON

Ollie, you want out, just say the word. I'm not going to make you do something you don't want.

OLIVER

No - I don't want.

GORDON

Fair enough. So be it.

(Oliver gives the briefcase to Gordon.)

You do understand, though. You can't say anything. There's a lot of people involved here. Including you.

OLIVER

Me? I'm not involved with this.

GORDON

I'm afraid you are.

OLIVER

I had nothing to do with this.

GORDON

You were the drop, kid. And not just once. For six months you did this.

OLIVER

I didn't know what I was doing.

GORDON

I don't think the D.A.'d see it that way. You can't just see what you want to see, Ollie. That's not a defense.

(Beat)

Look, I'm just saying, don't talk. That's all you got to do. You don't talk, there's no problem.

(Oliver is reeling)

OLIVER

It's not real. This is not real.

You're not this person. You're not a - you don't pay bribes. You don't make payoffs.

GORDON

Ollie, please, the volume.

OLIVER

(Not specifically to Gordon.)

What is going on?

P.A.

"Valhalla. This is Valhalla."

GORDON

You go ahead. Get yourself home. I'll see you Monday morning.

OLIVER

No - I don't think so.

GORDON

Ollie, come on now.

OLIVER

No - I can't - I - I just ... don't you realize?

(Now very much to Gordon.)

Who are you? I don't know you. I don't know anyone!

What is going on tonight?

(They lock eyes for a long moment as we hear the Conductor...)

P.A.

This is Valhalla. Please check to make sure you have all your belongings and have a pleasant holiday. Watch the closing doors.

(And Oliver scrambles over Gordon and runs for the door as the lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 7

Bailey. Lights rise on a bedroom.

Tony and Caitlin discovered,
waiting. Caitlin paces. Tony
reclines lazily on the bed, toying
with a hunt cap. Caitlin calls off
stage.

A long beat. She stops, anxious.

CAITLIN

It's like waiting for the paint to dry.

(Beat)

Oliver!

OLIVER (O.S.)

I'm coming!

TONY

Hey - relax.

I'm whipping in. They can't go anywhere
Without me.

CAITLIN

How 'about it Ollie? Does

It fit?

OLIVER (O.S.)

I think it's going to work!

(Joy enters.)

JOY

Where is he?

Is he ready?

TONY

Getting there.

CAITLIN

Another couple

Minutes, Mom.

JOY
(Conspiratorially)
So listen ev'rybody.
This is so important. Evvie
Martin's in the hilltop field
Today -

CAITLIN
We know.

JOY
You do?

CAITLIN
I told him that
Already.

JOY
Yes but it's just so important
That we leave the two of them alone
Together.

TONY
Why?

JOY
Because you never know
But things might start to happen ...

CAITLIN
Mom.

JOY
Why not?
She's wonderful for him and always was.
And just because he didn't realize
That at the time - well, now he's got a second
Chance. And we should all support him by -

CAITLIN
We get it, fine, who's arguing? We'll leave
Them both alone.

JOY
It's just that Ollie's very
Fragile now but if we show him our
Support, he might just do it -

(Ford enters.)

FORD
What the hell
Is going on in here? I've got a hunt
To run!

TONY
He's just about -

OLIVER (O.S.)
I'm almost there!
Hold on! Just give me half a minute, please!

FORD
I don't have a half a minute! I've got forty seven
Hunters out there, not to mention horses,
Not to mention eighteen hounds, and then
Another twenty riders if you want
To count the hilltoppers ...

(Oliver enters in a new livery, boots in
hand. Tony gives the wolf whistle.)

CAITLIN
Nice.

OLIVER
You think?

TONY
You're lookin' good.
(To Ford)

What say?

FORD
I wore that coat for seven seasons. I
Was young. It fits you better than I thought.
And how about the boots?

OLIVER
I haven't tried
Them on.

FORD
They're size eleven.

OLIVER

Damn, I wear

A ten.

FORD

They'll fit. If they're too big just stuff
Some cotton in the toes. I hope you don't
Mind blisters. What about a hat?

TONY

I've got

It.

FORD

Give it to him.

TONY

Catch.

(Oliver puts it on.)

OLIVER

Hey look, it fits.

CAITLIN

I think he looks okay. I cut the colors
Off already -

FORD

Caitlin. Tony. Joy.

We'll be right out.

(They go.)

You realize that everything you're wearing -
There's a reason for it. Everything
Has got a hist'ry. Ev'ry thread means something.
Jodhpurs narrow, snug, to go inside
The boots. The boots are high: no chafing on
The horse's flanks. The Melton coat is heavy,
Tightly woven, keeps you warm this time
Of year. And black because you're not a member
Of the staff. The hat is reinforced
In case you fall - a helmet basically.
That tie does double duty as a bandage.
Long enough to wrap around a wound.

OLIVER

Okay. Well thank you. Good to know, I'm sure.

FORD

There's more.

(He has think how to say this...)

The fox is smart, of course. In this case, legends
Don't mislead. He's cunning and he's fast.
He'll run, he'll hide, he'll double-back, or sometimes
Run us all in circles. True. As if
It's really his idea, and we just play
Along. And if he gets in trouble - if
He sees us closing in - he'll go to ground.
He's never far from home, a den, a hidden
Place where trouble never finds him.
In other words it's not about the fox. It's you.
It's who you are and what you are. It's in
The gut, deep down, where you don't understand
It. That's the point. You have to feel it, have
To want it. I'm not saying want to want
It. Really want it, in the bones and blood.

(Pause)

Now. You left all this. You walked away.

OLIVER

I know, but now it's time.

FORD

To what?

OLIVER

Come back.

FORD

Come back? You can't come back to where you never
Were.

OLIVER

I know -

FORD

You don't know. That's the point.
You think you just throw on some clothes and climb
On top a horse, and there you go. Well, no -
I'm sorry but it's more than that. You have
To know your horse, know how he moves, his personality,
To know what he's afraid of,
Of what he likes, what he'll respond to, what
He won't. You have to live in it. And make
It part of you. It all takes time and taking
Time is one thing you don't understand ...

(Evelyn enters)

EVELYN

Excuse me. Sorry.

(An awkward silence ...)

Caitlin sent me up
To see if you were ready.

OLIVER

Yes, we are.

(To Ford)

I'll be right there. I have to get my boots
On.

EVELYN

I can help.

OLIVER

(To Ford)

I understand.

FORD

Don't keep

Us waiting.

OLIVER

No, I won't.

FORD

That's good. Because
I'll start without you if I have to.

(He goes. Oliver sits down and pulls on a
boot. Evelyn is friendly, but there's
something held in reserve.)

OLIVER

Well hi.

EVELYN

Hello.

OLIVER

It's good to see you.

EVELYN

Yes.

I heard that you were back.

(Oliver goes to the trunk with one boot on.)

OLIVER
There's s'posed to be
Some cotton stuffing ...

EVELYN
Boots too big?

OLIVER
A little.

EVELYN
You sit down, and take it off. I'll look
For it.

(He sits, she looks.)

OLIVER
Did Caitlin say that I'm with you?
I mean, the hilltop thing?

EVELYN
She didn't, no.

OLIVER
At first I didn't want to - but they said
That you were in it, so I thought, well, hell,
In that case ...

EVELYN
(Warily)
What? In that case what?

OLIVER
In that
Case, yes. I wouldn't want to be in any
Other place.

(She produces a large wad of cotton from the
trunk.)

EVELYN
Here - stuff it.

OLIVER
Hey, I know,
You're angry and I -

EVELYN

Who said I was angry?

OLIVER

I don't blame you. I'd be too.

EVELYN

Hello,

Guess what. I'm over it. It's history.

OLIVER

I miss you -

EVELYN

God ...

OLIVER

- I missed you for a long -

EVELYN

Oh please.

OLIVER

I missed you even when I didn't
Know I missed you.

EVELYN

How convenient.

OLIVER

No,

It's true.

EVELYN

Well that explains you never coming
Back. Why bother, since you weren't aware
Your heart was breaking?

OLIVER

Look, I made mistakes.

I know that.

EVELYN

Boot.

OLIVER

I'm sorry?

EVELYN

Try the boot.

(He does.)

What happened?

OLIVER

What?

EVELYN

What happened?

OLIVER

When?

EVELYN

Don't play

This game. What happened in the city?

OLIVER

Nothing.

EVELYN

Something happened. Tell me.

(Beat)

OLIVER

Well, I guess

It's just - you think you know a person but
You don't. Your friends are really strangers, then
You find out you're a stranger too, to someone
Else. And then you're really lost.

EVELYN

I don't

Think I quite follow ...

OLIVER

No, it doesn't matter.

All that matters is: I just got very
Clear about a couple basic things.
And that's why I came back. 'Cause now I'm clear.

EVELYN

So now I'm something that you're clear about.

OLIVER

Well, yeah, I guess you are.

EVELYN

I'm not sure I
Believe you, but why not? It doesn't
Really matter anyway.

OLIVER

It does.

(His boot is on.)

EVELYN

It fits?

OLIVER

It fits okay.

EVELYN

Then do the other.

OLIVER

Hey - I'm trying to talk to you!

EVELYN

Just put

The other boot on, Oliver.

(He does.)

You think that you

Can just show up like this and everything
Is easy. Well, it's not. It's complicated.

(He goes to her, boots on, and kisses her.)

OLIVER

Is it? Really?

EVELYN

Yes. You shouldn't do

That.

OLIVER

No? Why not?

EVELYN

Because I'm -

(He kisses her again. She responds, despite
herself.)

OLIVER

You see? Whatever else? The complications
Or whatever? Doesn't matter. You
And me. That matters. No. Don't say
It. I don't want to hear.

(The hunt horn sounds.)

Come on, let's go.

Or no, I think the phrase is 'Tally-ho!'

(He goes, she follows as the lights go to ...)

Blackout.

End Act One)

ACT TWO
Scene 1

(Mrs. Gilhooley's apartment. A parlor floor apartment of a townhouse. High ceilings, nice detail. Books everywhere - shelves, tables, the floor.)

Rain continues.

Oliver sprawled in a chair - tired, wet, wasted. Mrs. Gilhooley is in the doorway to the kitchen.)

MRS. GILHOOLEY
You like peppermint, yes?

OLIVER
Sure.

MRS. GILHOOLEY
Because I got Red Zinger too.

OLIVER
Peppermint's good.

(The tea kettle whistles, off. As she goes ...)

MRS. GILHOOLEY
So go ahead, you were saying. You got off the train ...

OLIVER
That's it. That's the whole story. I got off at Valhalla, turned around, took the next train back to the city. I saw your light on and I thought I'd say hello.

(She returns with a steaming mug of tea.)

MRS. GILHOOLEY
Ohhhh - that's nice. It's been ages.

OLIVER

I mean three people, right in a row like that. Darly, then Cron, the Gordon. Gordon. Probably the three most important people in my life - except you - and they're all fakes. I thought I knew all of them. I didn't know anything.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Well, I'm glad you stopped. I miss our talks.

OLIVER

I know. Me too. I don't know where the time goes.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Well, big changes. Everybody going every which way.

OLIVER

You know, but some things you got to hang on to. Like this. I always loved to come home, knock on your door before I went upstairs to my place. Such a great way to end the day - chewing it all over. We're going to have to start this again, regular. I'll make sure I ...

Did you need something?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Some pepcid for my stomach. I can never find anything around here.

OLIVER

Maybe the bathroom?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

No, she keeps 'em out here somewhere. I thought in the vase here. I don't know. Everything's all mixed up. Tea in the breadbox, toothpaste in the shower, cleanser in the desk drawer. How the hell does she [find anything] ... ah! Found 'em.

(In bowl on the desk.)

OLIVER

She?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

(As though it's obvious.)

My niece. She's terrific, don't get me wrong. But our minds don't work the same. I'm a very organized person, you know that.

(She's struggling with the packaging.)

OLIVER

Here - let me ...

(She hands it over.)

MRS. GILHOOLEY

She's got the brains. But a little scattered. The absent-minded professor if ever there was one.

(He hands her the pill. He's still trying to put this "niece" information together.)

OLIVER

And she's living here? With you?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

(Why doesn't he know this?)

Well, not with me. By herself.

OLIVER

(Even more confused.)

But - what do you mean? What about you?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

What about me?

OLIVER

This is your apartment.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

(Friendly but astonished)

Ollie, what's the matter with you? I don't live here. Not anymore. I moved out. Two years ago. I gave her the apartment.

OLIVER

What?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

You know, you might get along, you two. Couple of scatter brains. You ought to come down and say hello to her sometime.

OLIVER

So you just, you picked up and ... just left?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

(With a shrug)

It was time to go. Let somebody else enjoy. She always loved the place, and she teaches, you know. Professor. NYU. Walk to work. So I tell the landlord. He's agreeable. I go to Schenectady. Which is very nice mind you. I bought a car. Took driving lessons and everything. And I got a yard too. With bushes.

OLIVER

But you never told me ...

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Told you what?

OLIVER

That you were going. That you were gone.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

I did. I wrote you a letter. For your birthday.

OLIVER

You did?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Every year. It's in my book. I'm very organized.

OLIVER

I never got anything.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Well, they didn't come back. And I certainly got the address right. Maybe you forgot. You got it but you don't remember.

OLIVER

This is so crazy.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Well, you're // busy -

OLIVER

Please - just hold on. Let me get this ...

You don't live here anymore.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

No.

OLIVER

Your niece lives here.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Correct.

OLIVER

For two years.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

At least.

OLIVER

So I just missed all this? I blink and two years go by?

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Ollie, it happens.

I've seen it how many times? A tenant moves in upstairs - they come from little towns, farms, whatever: they get eaten up. It's too much. They get lost in it. They think it's going to be like home only bigger. But it's not. It's a whole other thing. You've got to know how to find your own little spot. Otherwise you're lost. It's easy not to find it. Some don't.

OLIVER

But two years ... that can't be right ...

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Two and a half.

OLIVER

Oh my God ...

MRS. GILHOOLEY

No, please, don't make those noises. You're taking it all too serious.

OLIVER

But -

MRS. GILHOOLEY

No buts about it.

OLIVER

I should have known.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Ollie, Ollie, please. Now look, I got to turn in. I got a big day tomorrow. First thing in the morning she drives me out to Long Island. It's all the in-laws on her father's side but that's all I got. It's Thanksgiving. Can't be too choosy.

OLIVER

You're mad at me.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Mad? Why should I be mad? What did you do?

OLIVER

That's just it: I didn't do anything. I didn't even know you were gone. I thought - six months, maybe - but two and a half years?!

MRS. GILHOOLEY

You're taking this all the wrong way. Forget I said anything.

Besides, look what happens. I come to visit for one night, and who knocks on my door? It's old times again: a cup of tea, chew the fat, unload some troubles. It's family. Better. We like each other.

But now, as they say - all good things. I've got to say good night.

(Oliver stands, goes to the door. He turns back to look at her, stunned, confused.)

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Ollie? What's wrong?

OLIVER

(Quietly)

I'm one of them, aren't I.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

What's that?

OLIVER

I'm just like them.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

I don't follow. Just like who?

OLIVER

It's not just other people - Darly, Gordon. It's me.

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Ollie, where are you going?

OLIVER

Out ...

MRS. GILHOOLEY

Come on now, it's late ...

OLIVER

Just around the corner. Rosetti's. I think I need a drink.

(She looks at him, concerned, as he goes, and the lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 2

(Bailey. The field of the hunt.
Sounds of the hunt: hooves, shouts,
hounds, horns, etc.)

Tony enters on horseback, with a
hunter's horn. He gives several
blasts, then exits as ...

Tony, Ford, Caitlin, Evelyn all
make crosses establishing the hunt.

Evelyn enters on horseback. Caitlin
appears opposite, intercepts her.)

CAITLIN

Oh Evvie - hey - I'm glad I caught you.

EVELYN

Caitlin ...

(The horses are in an agitated state now and
tend to move on their own so that people find
themselves drifting away from each mid-
sentence and must constantly be nudging their
horse back toward the other person.)

CAITLIN

I'm sorry you got stuck with Oliver.
It isn't fair. But Dad decided he
Should hilltop. And I should have realized -
- Well, you know - you and Ollie ... well, I wasn't
Thinking.

EVELYN

Cait, it's fine. You're very sweet
To say so. Really, thank you. But the fact
Is, I don't mind. You see, I'm -

(Tony enters.)

TONY

Hey, the field
Is gath'ring. Evvie, hi. Hey listen, sorry
You got stuck with Oliver. That sucks.

EVELYN

No, it's fine. It's really fine. I was saying -

CAITLIN

(To Tony)

She's been very nice -

(To Evelyn)

- but really Evvie,
You should know that -

EVELYN

No I'm telling you
I'm past it. I was saying here to Caitlin
That I'm -

TONY

- hey, you know? Guess what: the good
News is: I bet he can't stay on his horse,
I bet he breaks his leg before we -

EVELYN

- No,
Now really, please, just listen to me. This
Is fine. The thing that you don't know is that -

(The hounds bay furiously, drowning her out.)

Oliver enters on horseback.)

OLIVER

They found a scent!

TONY

Oh shit!

CAITLIN

Come on, let's go!

TONY

We have to go!

CAITLIN

Come on!

(Caitlin and Tony exit. Evelyn brings her
horse around and moves out, though both she
and Oliver both 'trot' while staying in one
place.)

EVELYN

Well, bring your knees
In. And your toes. Your elbows too. And sit
Up straight.

(He does all this.)

OLIVER

Like that?

EVELYN

It's fine.

OLIVER

Don't patronize
Me. I can take it.

EVELYN

Ollie, knock it off.
I'm busy.

OLIVER

All I'm asking is a little
Conversation.

(A horn sounds off stage. Evelyn stops.)

EVELYN

Damn it.

OLIVER

What?

(A beat as she listens for the horns.)

EVELYN

They lost the scent.

(Oliver stops also, coming back to her.)

OLIVER

Now what?

EVELYN

We wait.

(They do, for a long moment.)

OLIVER
How long does that take?

EVELYN
Anybody's guess,
You never know.
(He dismounts.)
Hello?! You don't dismount!
Hello!

OLIVER
Why not?

EVELYN
Because you don't!

OLIVER
Well, if
There's nothing going ...

EVELYN
Mount!

OLIVER
Excuse me?

EVELYN
Mount
Your horse.

OLIVER
Oh shit.

(He cringes and grabs his thigh.)

EVELYN
What's wrong?

OLIVER
My leg. Oh shit.
A cramp. Oh fuck.

(He holds his thigh.)

EVELYN
Oh, Ollie, not like that.
Sit down.

OLIVER

What for?

EVELYN

Just do it.

(He doesn't.)

You are unbelievable.

(She dismounts and practically knocks him over.)

I said sit down.

OLIVER

I'm sitting!

EVELYN

Let me feel.

OLIVER

(Backpedaling now)

It's not that bad, I -

(He pulls away.)

EVELYN

Oh

Shut up! It's possible it's serious.

OLIVER

It's feeling better now. I think it's fine.
Oh yeah, it's better now.

(He stands, flexing his leg)

EVELYN

You dick. You didn't

Have a cramp.

OLIVER

Well not exactly, no.

EVELYN

You are such a freak. You know that, right?

OLIVER

I'm sorry but you wouldn't listen.

EVELYN

I'm
Not listening now! I'm getting married, Ollie!

(Pause)

I tried to tell you earlier, the attic,
But you wouldn't let me finish.

OLIVER

Married.

EVELYN

Yeah.

OLIVER

Married. Right. I didn't really
Think of that. I never even really thought
About the possibility of that.

EVELYN

So now you know. I hope it doesn't mean
We can't be friends.

OLIVER

Oh sure, of course. You bet.
So who's the lucky guy?

EVELYN

Uh ... Daryl Dunn.

OLIVER

You're kidding me. From high school Daryl Dunn?

EVELYN

Oh please don't start. Just don't. Just do me one
Small favor: don't.

OLIVER

A solid kinda guy,
No doubt. A real provider, mark my words.

EVELYN

He has some vivid recollections of
Your sense of humor circa seventeen
Years old.

OLIVER

We used to call him "Over". That
Or "Finish". Get it? Dunn?

EVELYN

Deep inside
I'm laughing uncontrollably at that.

OLIVER

Okay, you're right. I like him, hey, he's great.

(Beat)

EVELYN

We set a date. January Tenth.
And you're invited.

OLIVER

You expect me to - ... ?

EVELYN

I didn't say 'expect'. I said invited.

OLIVER

Evvie, this is crazy and you know
It.

EVELYN

No, that's it. It's really not. It's normal,
Though I don't expect that word to be
In your vocabulary.

OLIVER

See? The anger.
What's up with the anger if you don't
Have any feelings?

EVELYN

I have feelings Oliver.
Who's says I don't have feelings? But
It's over, Ollie. Jesus. Seven years!
It's over! Sure I had a few good cries
I wrote some letters but thank God I never
Sent them. Then I - well, I guess I just
Moved on. I fin'ly stopped and said enough.
You obviously had forgotten me -
Is it so shocking I should do the same?

OLIVER

Okay. Okay. Okay. In other words
The nightmare isn't over. I'm still in it.

(He goes to her and kisses her. She whacks him with her crop but he is already moving to the horse and mounts it.

EVELYN

Hey Oliver, that's not your horse. That's not Your - ! Oliver, that's Panron! That's not Montezuma! Oliver!

OLIVER

Oh what's the fucking Diff'rence anyway?

EVELYN

But Oliver ...!

(He rides off in a canter, leaving her behind as the lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 3

(The City. A downtown bar. Dark, chic.)

Cron and Celia are discovered. They each have a drink. Cron has a bandage on his nose.)

CELIA

I had dream about this place.

CRON

Really.

CELIA

Just this week.

CRON

About this place.

CELIA

Yeah.

CRON

Wow.

CELIA

And you too.

CRON

No way.

CELIA

Well, not you. But you know - somebody like you. Same ... template.

CRON

Ah.

CELIA

There was somebody else too.

CRON

A third party.

CELIA

A third party. But that part's sort of vague.

CRON

Amazing.

CELIA

Well, not really ...

CRON

You don't think?

CELIA

Well, I read this book and actually - no.

CRON

(Flippant)

The book of dreams ...

(Beat)

CELIA

Is that a joke?

CRON

No, I'm just // saying ...

CELIA

Because I'm totally serious.

CRON

I'm sorry, no.

CELIA

It's call Probability And You.

CRON

Ahhh.

CELIA

Probability is not a joke.

CRON

No, I know.

CELIA

And prescient dreams are probability. Dreams that tell the future. When you do the numbers, they're really kind of ...

I'm sorry. This is boring.

CRON

No, please ...

CELIA

I do this. It's boring. I'm sorry.

CRON

No really. Numbers. Dreams. Please go on.

CELIA

Okay. Well. Give me a number.

CRON

Okay.

CELIA

The odds I mean.

CRON

The odds.

CELIA

That a dream, any dream - dream X - comes true.

CRON

The odds.

CELIA

That what happens in the dream happens in life. The odds of that.

CRON

I don't know.

CELIA

Give me a number.

(Beat)

CRON

Million to one.

CELIA

That's too easy.

CRON

Well ...

CELIA
Make it a billion.

CRON
Okay.

CELIA
Billion to one?

CRON
Billion to one.

CELIA
Billion to one it does not come true.

CRON
Correct.

CELIA
Okay. Now. How many people on earth?

CRON
On earth?

CELIA
Yes.

(Beat)

CRON
On the earth?

CELIA
Yes.

(Beat)

CRON
I don't know.

CELIA
Six billion. With a "B".

CRON
Is that right.

CELIA
Give or take.

CRON

Okay.

CELIA

So let's say, five dreams a night. Major dreams. Dreams they remember. That's thirty billion dreams. Every night. And we said, what, a billion to one, right?

CRON

Right.

CELIA

So that's thirty dreams a night that come true. Per night.

(Beat)

CRON

Wow.

CELIA

(Smiles)

Good book.

CRON

Amazing.

CELIA

It's all numbers.

(Oliver enters: tired, wet, not happy. At the bottom. Or so he thinks.)

Celia cannot see him, but Cron does.)

CRON

Oh shit.

CELIA

What is it?

CRON

Fucking hell.

(She starts to turn around.)

No, please, don't. I'll take care of this.

(Oliver approaches, his eyes fixed on Celia, almost as though he doesn't even see Cron.)

CRON

Ollie, what? What the fuck? I mean, come on, man,
privacy.

OLIVER

(In a trance)

Celia ...

CELIA

Do I know you?

OLIVER

It's me. Oliver. Ollie.

CELIA

I'm sorry, I ...

CRON

Hey, please. Gimme a fuckin' break.

(To Celia)

Come on, let's go.

(He takes Celia by the hand but Oliver pulls
her other arm.)

OLIVER

Wait a second. No. I'm Oliver. You know me.

CELIA

I do?

OLIVER

It's a long time ago, but yes.

CELIA

I'm sorry, I ...

CRON

Ollie, Jesus fuckin' Christ.

OLIVER

Your name is Celia, right?

CELIA

Yes.

OLIVER

You were a grad student. Seven years ago. You lived on East 12th Street. Third floor in the back.

CELIA

Yeah ... ?

OLIVER

I know you. We know each other.

CRON

Okay, jocko. Now listen. You're outta line.

CELIA

(to Cron)

Wait a minute. Whoa. Please. This is interesting. It's a mystery

CELIA/OLIVER

I like mysteries. She likes mysteries.

CELIA

(To Oliver)

... yeah.

OLIVER

Mystery movies. Mystery novels. Mysteries in your own life. You go to the book store every Friday and you buy a new mystery and you read it over the weekend. And if you figure out the mystery by Sunday morning you treat yourself to waffles and bacon. Yes?

CELIA

Well, I used to ...

OLIVER

Seven years ago.

CELIA

Yeah.

OLIVER

Bingo.

CELIA

Oh my God ...

OLIVER

You know me.

CELIA

This is crazy. Who are you?

OLIVER

My name is Oliver.

CELIA

Oliver.

CRON

Hey excuse me. Can we do this another time?

CELIA

Hold on a second.

CRON

(To Oliver)

You are one petty fuck, you know that?

CELIA

Don't say that to him ...

OLIVER

Why don't you take a hike?

CELIA

(To Cron)

... that's not nice.

CRON

(To Oliver)

I should take a hike? Me?

(To Celia)

Is that what you want?

CELIA

Well, you don't have to talk to him like that.

CRON

Because hey. No problem. I can go.

CELIA

Well, I just think this is sort of interesting // and

...

CRON

No, please, hey. I'm gone. I'm outta here.

CELIA

I didn't say that, I just ...

CRON

In fact, I sort of want to say good bye. You know?

(To Oliver)

Good bye, Oliver. And fuck you.

(Cron punches Oliver in the face. Oliver goes down. To Celia.)

And have a nice fuckin' night.

(He exits.)

Celia kneels down to Oliver, who is just trying to sit up.)

OLIVER

Oh man ...

CELIA

Are you all right?

OLIVER

I don't know. Jesus.

(She helps him stand up, pulls over her stool.)

CELIA

Here, sit. You want - I don't know - you want a drink?

OLIVER

I'm okay. Really.

CELIA

There's blood.

OLIVER

Oh shit.

CELIA

Here - take this.

(She hands him a napkin.)

It's right here.

(She dabs at it.)

Just hold it. Press.

(He does.)

OLIVER

Thank you.

(They are seated on the stools.)

CELIA

So.

OLIVER

Yeah.

CELIA

I'm sort of embarrassed.

OLIVER

That's all right.

CELIA

I know I'm spacey but Jesus.

OLIVER

Well, you know, it was sort of ... not very long.

CELIA

Ohhhh

OLIVER

It was basically a long weekend.

CELIA

And this was ... ? when was this?

OLIVER

Seven years ago.

CELIA

So - what happened? Long weekend and then what?

OLIVER

Well - I sort of - panicked, I guess. I can't explain it. I really liked you. I think maybe too much.

CELIA

Oh right. That.

OLIVER

So you're not angry.

CELIA

Of course not.

OLIVER

Because I'd understand.

CELIA

I'm not angry. I don't remember, that's all.

OLIVER

I met you at this little place called Zim's.

CELIA

Oh Zim's - right -

OLIVER

A little bakery kind of place -

CELIA

Right, right. With little tables.

OLIVER

Exactly. Right.

CELIA

Those little cheesy biscuits. I used to go there all the time.

OLIVER

So we met and there was this long weekend coming up, July Fourth, I think, and we went to your place and we didn't come out 'til Tuesday.

CELIA

Wow.

OLIVER

It was pretty great.

CELIA

Very Last Tango In Paris.

OLIVER

But I'm just, I'm really sorry I didn't follow through. But you know, here we are. Fate brings us together. Again. You can't fight fate.

CELIA

No, you can actually.

OLIVER

Okay, but I mean - we were so good together. It was so right // and -

CELIA

No, I believe you // but ...

OLIVER

- and I really blew it. I was stupid. I ran away from things. Anybody who was good for me, I ran away. I didn't know. I was an asshole. And all the assholes in the world, they were my best friends. But I get that now. I see the problem. Believe me, it's been a big night, it all got clear.

And I just want another chance. With you. To show you I'm for real. Now I'm for real. I learned my lesson.

(He leans in to kiss her, she pushes him back.)

CELIA

Whoa. Hold on.

OLIVER

I'm sorry.

CELIA

I mean, I don't even know you.

OLIVER

No but you do.

CELIA

But I don't.

OLIVER

I know but ...

CELIA

I'm somebody new. I'm a different person. So are you.

OLIVER

No I realize that // but ...

CELIA

Do you realize there's not a single cell in your body that was there seven years ago? They all get replaced. One by one. Everyday. Seven years, you're a new person. What can you do?

I'll tell you what.

OLIVER

What.

CELIA

Next time? It's a date.

OLIVER

Next time?

CELIA

Yeah.

OLIVER

Next time what?

CELIA

Next time I, you know, bump into you.

OLIVER

Bump into me?

CELIA

Yeah.

OLIVER

This is New York City.

CELIA

Hey, it just happened, didn't it?

OLIVER
Once.

CELIA
Twice.

OLIVER
Twice in seven years!

CELIA
Look, I'm tired. I have to get up in the morning.
Big day, family stuff ...

OLIVER
No! No! I can't lose you. Not again. You're all I've
got. I don't have anything else. It's all gone.
Please.
Please!

CELIA
You're scaring me.

OLIVER
I'm sorry.

CELIA
I'm going to go.

OLIVER
Give me your number.

CELIA
Are you kidding?

OLIVER
I'll give you mine. I've got a card.

CELIA
No.

OLIVER
Please.

CELIA
I don't want it.

OLIVER

Please!

CELIA

You're scaring me again.

OLIVER

I'm sorry.

CELIA

What's your name again?

OLIVER

Oliver.

CELIA

Oliver.

OLIVER

Ollie.

CELIA

Ollie. Okay. Here's the deal.

I really believe if it's meant to be - you know, if something is really meant to happen, it happens. You don't have to make it happen. Okay?

(She makes ready.)

So I'm going to go and you're going to - no, just stay there. You're going to stay here. Because if you don't, I'm calling 911.

(She reaches into her purse shows her cell phone.)

Okay?

(She exits.)

OLIVER

Celia? Celia! No! Noooooooooo!

(He falls to his knees in agony as the lights cross fade to ...)

Scene 4

(Bailey. The hunt.

Sounds of the hunt: horn, the hounds, shouts, horses, etc.

Ford and Tony enter on horseback. Again, their horses are excited, and the two men find themselves circling each other as they speak.)

FORD

The ground is damp from last night's rain. I don't know why they lose the scent like this. So look, I'll tell you what. We'll circle back. That line of pines right over there looks good.

(Tony sounds the horn and they move off.

Joy is discovered in a separate light as Evelyn enters.)

JOY

Oh, Evvie, aren't you riding with the hilltop - ? Wait a minute. Where's your horse? That's not your horse. That's Ollie's horse. That's Montezuma.

EVELYN

Yes, I know, that's why I'm here.

JOY

Where's Ollie?

EVELYN

On my horse.

JOY

On *your* horse?!

EVELYN

Yes exactly.

JOY

Ollie's riding Panron?

EVELYN

Yes.

JOY

That's not

A good idea.

EVELYN

No.

JOY

But why'd you let

Him do that?

EVELYN

Joy, I didn't let him, he
Just took the horse and disappeared.

JOY

Oh dear.

EVELYN

I thought you'd want to know. I don't know where
He is. I didn't follow him. I think
That's what he wanted, maybe, and I -

JOY

No,

You're right. You're absolutely right. I'm sure
He's fine. He probably went home. He could
Be halfway to the city now for all
We know.

EVELYN

You think?

JOY

Not really, no.

EVELYN

And Panron's

Very skittish, Joy. He's hard to handle.

(Lights cross fade to Tony and Ford
opposite.)

TONY

No luck there. I'll bet he went to ground.

FORD

Not likely, no. Too soon. He's good, this one.
He knows his way around. He's here
Though, I can feel it.

TONY

So - what now?

FORD

Ravine.
He'll want to cross the brook and throw us off.
We'll set the hounds on either side, so either
Way they find a scent.

(Tony blows the horn as Ford exits.)

Oliver enters, cantering. He pulls up short
when he sees Tony.)

OLIVER

What happened? Is it over?

TONY

Ollie - hey!
You're not supposed to be here.

OLIVER

Oh come on,
Not you. I thought at least that you'd be cool.

TONY

Don't shout. The hounds are working. Any noise
Distracts them.

OLIVER

Working how?

TONY

They're trying to find
The scent.

OLIVER

They haven't done that yet?

TONY

Be quiet!

Shhh!

OLIVER

(Whispering)

I thought they did that at the start.

TONY

They lose it sometimes.

OLIVER

How long does it take?

TONY

Hey Ollie, look, I'm sorry, but I'm working
Too.

OLIVER

You are?

TONY

I'm whipping in.

OLIVER

You're what?

TONY

I'm whipping in. I have to keep them focused
So they don't go running after rabbits
Or whatever.

OLIVER

"Whipping in." I used
To know a girl who did that // kind of ...

(Ford enters.)

FORD

Oliver,

What the hell is going on?! He's working -
Can't you see that?

OLIVER

Keep your voice down. It
Distracts the hounds.

FORD

(Lowering his voice.)

You're not allowed to ride
With us. I told you you could hilltop. Riding
In the field is strictly by permission
Only.

(He notices Oliver's horse.)

Where the hell's your horse? What
The hell'd you do with Montezuma?

OLIVER

Oh,
Well, that's a little complicated. Evvie -

FORD

Never mind, I take it back, don't tell
Me. Look. You turn yourself around, and get
That horse back where you both belong.

OLIVER

It's really
Such a problem?

FORD

It's a problem, yes.

OLIVER

For you.

FORD

For me and everybody else.

OLIVER

I don't see anybody else complaining.

FORD

That's because they know they can rely
On me to do my job: dismissing you.

OLIVER

"Dismissing"? As in - ?

FORD

Out. That's right.

OLIVER

But you
Can't -

FORD

Yes I can. I'm Master of this Hunt
And you are not a member.

OLIVER

How the hell
Do I become a member if you won't
Give me a chance?

FORD

That's all I've ever given
You was chances. I've got what to show
For that? Nothing. You're interfering with
Our pleasure, you're a hazard to the hunt,
You are dismissed!

(Hounds heard. Tony enters.)

TONY

They've got the scent!

FORD

(To Oliver)
And that's an order.

TONY

Dad!

FORD

Let's go!

(Tony blows on his horn. He and Ford exit.)

Joy and Caitlin are discovered opposite in a
separate light, U.S. of Oliver. All three are
at a steady trot, again 'moving' in place.
They have to shout to be heard.

Also, the lights narrow on all the riders
now, lighting them only from the waist up.)

CAITLIN

Hey Ollie! Hey! What gives? You're not
Supposed to be here!

JOY

Didn't Ford just speak
To you?

OLIVER

You people really are obsessed,
You know? He talked to me, I listened, but
I don't see why it's such a problem. So
I ride, so what?

CAITLIN

You're just supposed to hilltop.
Go back there and ride with them.

JOY

(Aside to Caitlin)

Oh - maybe

Not on second thought.

OLIVER

You couldn't keep
Me out of this forever, anyway.

CAITLIN

No, not forever, just until it's over.
Go find Evvie, please? Before you hurt
Somebody - or yourself.

OLIVER

She's getting married,
Did you know that?

JOY

No! Oh dear.

CAITLIN

Oh shit.

OLIVER

To Daryl Dunn no less.

JOY

Oh Ollie, I'm

So sorry.

CAITLIN

Fine, it sucks. That's doesn't change
The fact that you don't have the slightest grasp
Of what you're doing.

OLIVER

No? Like what?

CAITLIN

Much too fast, for one. You crowd the hounds. Like going

OLIVER

Okay, you see? That's all you had to say.

CAITLIN

So do it.

OLIVER

Whoa!

(The horse doesn't respond and in fact breaks into a canter.)

I said - hey whoa!

CAITLIN

Exactly what I'm saying! See? And that's

JOY

On the reins! You're pulling

OLIVER

Of course I am!

JOY

On them. Don't pull

OLIVER

Well, what do you suggest?!

CAITLIN

Sit back!

JOY

Relax!

OLIVER

Relax?!

CAITLIN

You're tensing up!

OLIVER

Of course I am!

CAITLIN

The horse thinks that's a sign to put
On speed.

OLIVER

Well, tell him that it's not!

JOY

Relax

The reins!

OLIVER

I can't do that! You want to see
Me fall or something? Whoa! He doesn't listen!
(Hounds baying - and Oliver's horse breaks
into a full gallop.)

Whoa!

JOY

Oh dear!

OLIVER

He hears those dogs and just
Goes faster!

CAITLIN

Those aren't dogs, they're hounds!

OLIVER

Oh thank
You - very helpful! Tell the God damned things
To please shut up!

(To the hounds)

Shut up! Be quiet! Shush!

(The hounds continue baying.)

Ford and Tony appear in a third separate
light.)

TONY

Hey Dad, I think we have a problem.

FORD

Jesus

God Almighty! Oliver!

TONY

He's out
In front - he left the hounds behind him - look!

FORD

Hold hard! Hold hard I said!

JOY

He doesn't understand You!

OLIVER

(Over his shoulder.)
What the hell is that? "Relax"?!
"Hold hard"!? I don't know what I'm s'posed to -

CAITLIN

The fence! Watch

OLIVER

(He goes over a fence.)
A-Ahhhh!

CAITLIN

He made it!

JOY

Hold on tight!

OLIVER

I am!

TONY

Oh fuck.

CAITLIN

What now?

FORD

(To Tony)

Your language please.

TONY

But look - out there -

FORD

I'm looking - what?

CAITLIN

Oh shit.

FORD

What is it?

JOY

Caitlin, please, your language.

CAITLIN

Look!

JOY

What is it?

OLIVER/CAITLIN/TONY

It's the fox!!

CAITLIN

He's going to run

Right over it.

TONY

His horse is going to trample

It!

FORD

Hold hard, God damn it! Hold!

OLIVER

I can't!

JOY

That poor, dear fox ...

CAITLIN

Well, Mom, it is a fox

Hunt after all.

FORD

You're not allowed to do

This!

TONY

And he's just about on top of it!

OLIVER

Slow down!

JOY
He's going to run it over!

CAITLIN

Hey!

TONY

Hey look - !

CAITLIN

The horse - !

TONY

He sees the fox!

JOY

Hang on!

CAITLIN

He's pulling up!

TONY

Watch out!

JOY

Hang on!

OLIVER

A-AAAAHHHHHHH!

(Oliver dives forward, thrown over the horses's neck and his light goes out. Tony and Ford's light goes out also. An eerie silence.)

CAITLIN

He isn't moving.

JOY

I can't look.

(Tony and Ford appear on foot as another special discovers Oliver flat on his back.)

TONY

(Gently)

Hey Ollie -

FORD
Oliver?

OLIVER
Where am I? What?

FORD
Don't try to move.

TONY
Your horse -

FORD
He pulled up short.

TONY
He threw you.

OLIVER
Where's the fox?

FORD
It got away.

OLIVER
Oh shit. I almost got it though.

FORD
That's not
The point. The idea's not to run it down.

TONY
That's what hounds are for.

OLIVER
(Twists uncomfortably)
God, my back -

FORD
Oh no -

TONY
What's wrong?

FORD
Don't move!

TONY

It hurts?

OLIVER

Not really,

No -

FORD

Your neck?

OLIVER

It isn't that - it's like
There's something underneath me - I don't [know] -

(Tony sees something.)

TONY

Holy ... shit. You landed on it! Whoa!

(Oliver sits up. Beneath him is the dead fox.
Ford picks it up matter-of-factly.)

FORD

You see there? On the mask? Grey hair. An old
Boy, this one. Had the smarts but not the speed.
You never would have caught him otherwise.

(He brings out a large hunting knife.)
It's just as well - he wouldn't last the season,
Not at his age.

OLIVER

Hey excuse me, um ...
What's that?

TONY

He's cutting off the pads.

OLIVER

The pads?

TONY

The paws.

OLIVER

You're cutting off a paw?

TONY
They're prizes,
Ollie.

FORD
Pads. All four. And brush and mask.

TONY
The tail and head.

OLIVER
But I don't get it: why?

FORD
Tradition.

OLIVER
Right. Of course.

TONY
And then the bleeding.

OLIVER
Don't tell me ...

TONY
... but ...

FORD
It's what we do.

TONY
He marks
You with the fox's blood.

FORD
Not him I don't.

TONY
Yeah but Dad - first kill.
(To Oliver)
You always get
The bleeding on first kill.

FORD
But not the way
He did it.

OLIVER

No it's fine, I really don't
Like blood that much.

TONY

No wait, but really. This
Is what we do. He smears it on your forehead.
(To Ford)
That is tradition, isn't it?

(Ford, seeing Oliver's discomfort, recognizes
an opportunity.)

FORD

It is.

TONY

So then we'd better do it, right?

(Evelyn enters. Tony and Ford turn away to
deal with the dead fox.)

EVELYN

Ollie, God you scared me. You okay?

OLIVER

I'm fine. I just got thrown, that's all.

EVELYN

You really had me worried.

OLIVER

No, I'm fine.

EVELYN

Well, good. So. Great. I'll go and tell the others.

OLIVER

Wait. I - want to say ... congratulations.

EVELYN

Oh. Well ... thank you.

OLIVER

He's good people.

EVELYN

Thank

You, Ollie. So. I should go back and -

OLIVER

Wait.

Just wait one second. Please. There's something called
A blooding and I guess I'm going to do
It - get it - have it done - whatever.

(Ford has picked up on this, turns back to
them.)

FORD

So you're ready then.

OLIVER

(A brave face ...)

Sure. Why not?

(Ford dabs his thumb into the blood of the
fox paw, smears a line of it across Oliver's
forehead. Oliver's eyes never leave Ford's
thumb. As Ford steps back Oliver's eyes seem
not to re-focus. He looks wobbly.)

FORD

Well, how was that?

TONY

You look official Ollie.

EVELYN

Ollie? You okay?

OLIVER

I -

FORD

(Very pleased ...)

Looking like

The real McCoy!

TONY
A hunter!

OLIVER
Right ... a hunter

(And he faints into a heap as the lights go quickly to black.)

Scene 5

(Mrs. Gilhooley's apartment. Friday morning. Bright sunshine.)

Noises from the kitchen - rattling plates and utensils, water running, tea kettle whistles.

The phone rings.

Celia appears in the kitchen doorway, answers the phone.

CELIA

Hello?

Oh hi Aunt Maggie. You made it. How was the trip?

Oh, that's good. I wish you could'a stayed.

No, I know, I understand.

Right.

No, just getting some breakfast.

What?

No, I don't think so, why?

Okay. Well - if I see him, I'll say hello.

No, I'm not going to go knocking on his door. What are you trying to do, set me up or something?

(The doorbell.)

Listen, that's the door.

Right.

Okay.

Talk to you later.

(She hangs up, answers door.)

CELIA

Oh Jesus.

OLIVER (O.S.)

Hi.

CELIA

You found me.

OLIVER (O.S.)

Can I come in?

CELIA

How did you find me?

OLIVER (O.S.)

I'm your neighbor. I live upstairs on three.

(Beat. Celia looks at the telephone that she was just on.)

Can I come in?

CELIA

Sure ...

(She waves him in. He has flowers.)

OLIVER

Oh, I, uh .. you know ... for you.

(She takes them silently and arranges them in a vase over the following.)

Your aunt, we - uh - I used to come down. We used to talk a lot. Sort of like a surrogate mom, you know?

She never mentioned me?

CELIA

Well ... not exactly ...

OLIVER

Well, she had a lot of friends. I was, just some guy upstairs.

Look, I'm sorry I was so crazy the other night. It was just - I was having one of those really bad nights. And when I saw you - I just really remembered - something. It all sort of came back to me, and it was good. You were good. A good person. For me, I mean. And I just really didn't want to - you know - mess it up. Again.

OLIVER (con't)

Although of course I did. I know that. But that was good too, sort of, in a way, because I went home. And I - um - well, I went on a fox hunt. And I don't know. It sort of helped. When I got back last night, I went to bed and I was lying there thinking, sort of half asleep about all these little pieces of - you know - everything that happened - and they all kind of started to go together. And then I woke up. And I just sort of knew that you were very ... very close by.

And I don't think I'm forcing anything. I'd say this was definitely meant to happen.

Seeing you again. For the third time.

(Beat. The flowers are done.)

CELIA

You hungry?

OLIVER

Ummm...

CELIA

I was going to make waffles.

OLIVER

Oh - well - yeah - sure -

(Beat)

CELIA

So - what do you do?

OLIVER

Well I'm - actually - unemployed. I quit my job.

CELIA

Oh.

(Pause.)

What now?

OLIVER

I didn't get that far. Been sort of busy.

CELIA

You went home.

OLIVER

Yeah.

CELIA

Fox hunting.

OLIVER

Yeah - well, that's - I don't normally do that - never, actually. First time.

CELIA

Do they really - I mean - is there a fox and everything?

OLIVER

Oh yeah. There's a fox. You never catch it. Well, sometimes. Not very often.

CELIA

Did you catch it?

OLIVER

Yeah. I did, actually.

CELIA

What do you do with it? Once you catch it?

OLIVER

Well, you, um - well, listen, you want to see one?

CELIA

A fox hunt?

OLIVER

Yeah. We can go. If you want. I mean, there's a hunt every weekend.

CELIA

You're kidding.

OLIVER

No.

You ride a horse?

CELIA

I took lessons a long time ago.

OLIVER

So you can hilltop. That's - you follow along. You don't really hunt - you just sort of see it, you know?

CELIA

From the hilltop.

OLIVER

Yeah, I guess - that's right.

You want to go?

CELIA

Yeah.

OLIVER

Okay. We'll um - next weekend - we'll go out, and we'll uh - we'll do that. It's fun.

CELIA

So tell me about it. I'll make waffles.

(She goes into the kitchen.)

OLIVER

Well, you're out in the woods, and the hounds - you have to call them hounds by the way. Never "dogs".

(The lights begin a slow fade ...)

Oh and you always want to stay behind the master - that's the person up in front - they wear a scarlet coat. Never "red" - it's always "scarlet" - but you want to stay behind because you don't want to crowd the hounds ...

(The lights are out.)

End of play.)