

# UC Riverside

## UC Riverside Electronic Theses and Dissertations

### Title

The Washing of the Water

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/99j336n1>

### Author

Renner, Marcus

### Publication Date

2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
RIVERSIDE

The Washing of the Water

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts

by

Marcus V. Renner

June 2013

Thesis Committee:

Professor Charles Evered, Chairperson  
Professor Robin Russin  
Dr. Erith Jaffe-Berg

Copyright by  
Marcus V. Renner  
2013

The Thesis of Marcus V. Renner is approved:

---

---

---

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution to "The Washing of the Water": Tracey Alsobrook, Hector Aritizebal, Pascal Baudar, Mary Barrie, Brian Biery, Liz Blackwelder, Brad Boman, D'Shaun Booker, Betsy Bour, Don Bremner, Tim Brick, Pastor Jean Burch, Ryan Butler, Johanna Campos, Dr. Daniel Castro, Janine Christiano, Carlos Cruz, Dan Daughtery, Dave Doody, Candy Dougherty, Peter Dreier, Randy Jurardo Ertll, Daniel Estrada, Karen Evans, Merrilee Fellows, Porfirio Frausto, Mark Goodman, Tim Gregory, Whitney Harrison, Steve Hofevdahl, Sarah Horner, Karen Hovanitz, Nina Jazmaderian, Doss Jones, Tricia Keane, Roger Klemm, Marietta Kruells, Marylou Langdyke, Rosa Laveaga, Tom Lockhart, Mickey Long, Roberta Martinez, Tim Martinez, John Mayer, Mary McGivray, Meredith McKenzie, Jane Melton, Robert Moses, Gail Murphy, Ann Neilson, Eddie Newman, Lily Night, Laura Ohlasso, Yuny Parada, Dianne Patrizzi, Melissa Patton, Lori Paul, Ricky Pickens, Elizabeth Pomeroy, Darryl Qualls, Mikala Rahn, Andrew Salas, Christy Schober, Joseph Shuldiner, Tim Sippel, Steve Slaten, Nancy Steele, Rody Stephenson, Randy Strapazon, Howard Tan, Charles Thomas, Dr. Sandra Thomas, Tom Traeger, Daniel Vasquez, Jalila Walker, Dr. Eric Walsh, Scott Ward, Tim Wendler, LaWayne Williams, Paul Williams, Martin Yuson, Michele Zack.

Special thanks to Mary Barrie, Brian Biery, David Biggs, D'Shaun Booker, Tim Brick, Candace Dougherty, Michael John Garcés, Roger Klemm, Roberta Martinez, Melissa Patton, Mikala Rahn, Tom Traeger, Michelle Zack, and students in the Muir High School's Drama and Diversity Program.

Thank you to Caltech Theater Arts, Brian Brophy, Arden Thomas, Ashley Stroup, and the actors for their assistance in a reading of this work.

Thank you to the students, staff, and faculty of the MFA program in Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts at the University of California-Riverside, especially my faculty committee: Charles Evered, Robin Russin, Eric Barr, and Erith Jaffe-Berg.

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

JEFF REINHART - white, 7, student, Tom Sawyer camper

PHINEAS BRODY - white, early 60s, forager, naturalist

BRANDON - 17, La Cañada HS student, Tom Sawyer counselor

LISSA NAVARRO - white, early 30s, artist, 3 months pregnant

MONICA KEMP - late 40s, lawyer, advocate

JAMES BRODY - white, mid 60s, contractor, homesteader

TALLULAH "TALLIE" BANKS - African-American, early 60s,  
advocate

LYNN REINHART - white, 17, La Cañada HS student

PERRIN REINHART - white, mid 40s, doctor

ADAM REINHART - white, mid 40s, engineer

PRINCIPAL WRIGHT - late 40s, Muir HS administrator

JIM PENDORF - late 30s, teacher, garden manager

APRIL FUENTES - Latino/African-American, 18, Muir HS  
student

JAMAAL JORDAN - African-American, 17, Muir HS student

RAPHAEL RIOS - Latino, 18, Muir HS student

JASMINE - African-American, 17, Muir HS student

DANAE - 18, Muir HS student body president

TREMAIN - early 40s, African-American, ex-gang member,  
mentor

COUNCILMEMBER DAVID LAYTON - white, mid 40s, politician

EMILIA FUENTES - Latino, early 50s, advocate

OMAR - early 20s, drug dealer

Non-speaking roles on stage include the part of the  
MOUNTAIN LION, DEER, FROGS, TADPOLES (best played by  
children), and if the production team so chooses,  
individual to play TREES and BUSHES.

SETTING: Scenes take place across the neighborhoods of  
Northwest Pasadena, Altadena, and La Canada-Flintridge with two  
primary locations being Hahamongna Watershed Park and Muir High  
School.

TIME: 2013



AUTHOR'S NOTE: I have written this play to support a community-based production, meaning a production that actively seeks involvement of community members in the cast and on the production team. As such, many particulars of the script can change to accommodate participation by community residents. Artful edits might include addition of characters, lines, and changes to names or genders hopefully without losing the structural integrity of story. I have specified an ethnicity for the characters only when necessary for the story.

The multiple locations suggest a flexible staging with only those set pieces that I list at the top of each scene. Many scenes take place in the park, a dynamic environment that encompasses several different habitats. My vision for the park has people holding painted panels for particular habitat types (e.g. willow trees) or people in costume to represent trees. This should allow for more community participation and provide opportunities for a certain choreography of habitat to accommodate the action and cover quick set changes. Movement of trees and shrubs also suggests the maze of ever-changing vegetation one encounters off-trail in the park. The "neutral" position

for the habitat is a pool circled by willow trees. This is where the frogs and tadpoles live and both opens and closes the play.

The intent with animals is that they be humans in costume, but creative use of puppetry and other visual devices are also possible. The conceit with the size of the frogs and tadpoles is that the audience watches them as if they were also small frogs. When people or the large animals pass through, the audience returns to human scale and the amphibians become small enough to fit in the palm of one's hand.

Within the park, the soundscape is important. At night, this consists of chirping frogs. During the day, birds and crickets might prove helpful. Flowing water is especially inside the Devil's Gate Tunnel.

ACT I

SCENE 1

(HAHAMONGNA WATERSHED PARK, WILLOWS, NIGHT - Dim light on frogs amid a chorus of CROAKS. TADPOLES wriggle through a pool. One TADPOLE has yellow legs. ALL scatter as a MOUNTAIN LION passes through and exits. Lights fade.)

(PARK, OAKS, DAY - Lights up on TOM SAWYER CAMPERS, seven and eight years old, sitting in a circle. One of them is JEFF, 7. BRANDON, 17, stands over them along with PHINEAS, early 60s, wearing a small, rumped hat, a buckskin vest, a coyote tooth necklace, and a buck knife.)

JEFF

But why does the Echo Princess stay in the tunnels?

BRANDON

We've told you Jeff. The Silly Wizard has her locked up.

PHINEAS

With powerful silly magic. There is, however, a golden key that unlocks her prison.

JEFF

Where?

PHINEAS

Somewhere in Hahamongna park, out in the willows and the sand.

JEFF

*(To Brandon)*

Can we look for it?

BRANDON

Jeff, your sister is picking you up in five minutes.

(JEFF stands.)

JEFF

I want to find the key!

BRANDON

Maybe tomorrow. Okay, Crumpet Eating-Zombies, give a big zombie cheer for Mr. Phineas Brody for giving us more info on the Echo Princess.

CAMPERS

Aaaaargh!

PHINEAS

Very nice. I'm looking forward joining the legion of the undead very soon.

JEFF

She needs our help!

BRANDON

Okay, line up. You too, Jeff.

(The CAMPERS stand and assemble themselves into pairs. JEFF is at the back.)

BRANDON

Make sure you have everything and there's no trash on the ground.

(*To Phineas*)

Thank you Mr. Brody for setting us straight.

PHINEAS

It's amazing how everything gets crooked, isn't it?

BRANDON

Um...yeah.

(PHINEAS moves to exit but stops at the edge of the trees and watches the group.)

BRANDON

Okay, Tom Sawyer campers...I mean zombies, move out.

(BRANDON leads the CAMPERS off stage. JEFF turns, takes a few steps toward the park. PHINEAS watches him. JEFF then turns and rushes to catch up with the rest of the group.)

SCENE 2

(PARK, STABLES, DAY - LISSA, early 30s, stands in front of an easel, painting. MONICA, late 40s, sits at a picnic table reading a stack of reports. Next to her is a brown lunch sack. Opposite are oak trees. Birds CHIRP.)

MONICA

At least help me with these reports.

LISSA

You're the lawyer.

MONICA

I study insurance claims not environmental policy. And don't give me that "I'm an artist. I don't do details" crap. You mastered the county regs for the Altadena Farmer's Market.

LISSA

I thought Adam was going to help you.

MONICA

He's at JPL locked in his lab. Just go through the appendix for me. I want to get the talking points for the park meeting out to the group by tomorrow.

LISSA

They're the same talking points we've had for the last three years.

MONICA

The last fifteen years.

LISSA

"Soccer fields plus nature park equals bad idea."

MONICA

Equals?

LISSA

The worst idea since the dawn of ideas.

MONICA

We have to keep things simple.

LISSA

We win on the soccer field, then what?

MONICA

Then we stop the county from bulldozing the willows in the name of flood control.

LISSA

And when are we able to just enjoy the park?

MONICA

We can enjoy it, but we can't *just* enjoy it. Nature deserves vigilance. Now, read this.

(MONICA offers a book to LISSA.  
She takes it but doesn't open it.)

MONICA

You know I can't wait much longer for this woman to show up.

LISSA

Be patient.

MONICA

You're telling me to be patient? You're the one always pushing for revolution. Since when-

LISSA

Since I realized that certain things are beyond my control.

MONICA

Like what?

LISSA

Like how much you eat when you're pregnant.

MONICA

I don't know why you want to talk with her. We already know what we're going to say.

LISSA

But if we can get her on our side, the community will have one voice.

MONICA

I don't care how many voices there are as long as we're the loudest.

LISSA

The only way we're going to protect the park is if everyone works together. That's the key.

MONICA

I'll bet she's never even been here. We'll have to explain everything.

LISSA

If we can get everyone moving in the same direction, the city will have to listen.

MONICA

The city is just going to keep holding meetings until we all die. That's what the city is going to do. Then once we're gone, they'll do what they want.

LISSA

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

MONICA

Look, I like John Muir as much as the next person, but-

LISSA

I'm tacking that above this tadpole's crib. It's not just about nature. It applies to communities...to politics.

MONICA

I'm just saying there's a history. If other people wanted to be involved, they'd be involved.

LISSA

Things are changing--the Altadena Farmer's Market, the food co-op, the time bank. I think I've learned enough about how the community works to bring people together.

MONICA

Just remember some things are beyond your control.

(JAMES, mid-60s, enters and sets up a ladder. LISSA puts down her brush and approaches him.)

JAMES

I'm not here.

LISSA

But see that sounded like your voice.

JAMES

How many times do I have to say "no"?

LISSA

And all the time "yes" has been sitting over there just waiting for you to ask her to dance.

MONICA

He doesn't want to do it.

LISSA

Come on, James. We need a contractor to join the time bank. One time credit for each hour you spend providing a service gets you an hour of service from someone else.

JAMES

Do I get any credit for listening to you?

LISSA

An interconnected community of people helping each other out without money getting in the way.

JAMES

Money can get in my way any time it wants.

LISSA

You can decide later if you want to participate. Just sign up.



JAMES

So if I earn time, can I give it to someone else? Can I add years to their life?

LISSA

I don't want you to be left out.

JAMES

I'm from Altadena. Being left out is what we live for.

LISSA

I've moved to Altadena now and that's going to change.

MONICA

*(To Lissa)*

If Chris wants you to give something up now that you're pregnant, find someone else to run the time bank.

LISSA

I keep asking, but no one has any-

MONICA

Time?

LISSA

I can't let it just die. We have over 900 members.

*(To James)*

But no contractors.

JAMES

Nine hundred people and everything depends on a pregnant lady?

MONICA

Not a real sustainable business model.

JAMES

I'm just here to check on the roof.

*(JAMES climbs the ladder.)*

MONICA

I'm with Chris. Your own family has to come first.

LISSA

The community feels like my family.

MONICA

Once that kiddo pops out, your idea of family will shrink pretty fast.

(JAMES descends, folds the ladder, moves to leave, then notices the painting.)

JAMES

What's that?

LISSA

That's my painting of the proposed environmental center.

JAMES

What are those?

LISSA

Solar panels.

JAMES

It looks like a space ship.

LISSA

(Annoyed)

Come on, it's visionary.

JAMES

I hope they never build that.

LISSA

But the more people who get to know the park, the more people will want to protect it.

JAMES

The more people who trash the park, the less it will be worth protecting.

MONICA

The more buildings, the more people, the less wildlife.

LISSA

Who's going to take our place at these meetings if we don't train the next generation?

MONICA

The city doesn't have money to staff it, much less build it.

JAMES

I've got another job in Flintridge I've got to get to.

LISSA

Wait.

(LISSA gives JAMES the brown paper bag.)

JAMES

What's this?

LISSA

Cherry tomatoes from my garden.

JAMES

For what?

LISSA

Just something extra, to show you the wonders of the "sharing" economy. Say "hi" for me to your goats.

(JAMES takes the bag, grimaces, and exits. TALLIE, early 60s enters.)

LISSA

Mrs. Banks? Tallulah?

TALLIE

Call me Tallie. Everybody does.

LISSA

I'm Lissa. I spoke with you on the phone. This is my friend Monica.

TALLIE

(To Monica)

Looks like someone gave you some homework.

(TALLIE sits across from MONICA and LISSA at the picnic table.)

MONICA

The city's environmental impact report.

TALLIE

Pasadena sure knows how to write a report.

LISSA

The park commission's meeting is a week from Thursday.

MONICA

The city has a million dollars to build another soccer field-

LISSA

To add to that old one over in the trees.

MONICA

But this one is where the river comes through.

LISSA

Which means moving a lot of the sediment-

MONICA

Mud and gravel-

LISSA

And that's going to destroy a lot of wildlife habitat.

MONICA

And completely change the park.

TALLIE

Shoot, I remember when this was all gravel.

MONICA

You...you know the park?

TALLIE

Played "King of the Mountain" on the sand piles those cement companies left. My brothers would built rafts, float out on that lake behind the dam, bring home some fish to fry. I've been trying to get more parks for Northwest Pasadena, but the commission says, "You've got that big park right next door." And then I come down here, and it's the same as it was when I was a kid, except without the piles of gravel and the lake. I mean, there's nothing here.

MONICA

*(Upset)*

Actually there's quite a bit of wildlife.

TALLIE

That's what I'm talking about. The parks they're giving us are full of snakes. That's not right. But this has been going on for a long time. They think they have enough meetings, I'll give up or pass on and they can just do what they want.

LISSA

So, what do you think about the soccer field?

TALLIE

No, that doesn't make any sense. I can't support that.

LISSA

*(Relieved)*

We don't think it's a good idea either.

TALLIE

Just building one lonely little field. Now, if they were going to make it a real park like Brookside--with basketball courts, a running track, barbecue pits, maybe an amphitheater for concerts--that's something I could get behind.

MONICA

That wasn't what we had in mind.

LISSA

I'm sure if we just keep talking we can figure something out.

(The sound of a YUCCA FLUTE comes from the brush. PHINEAS appears. He takes the flute from his mouth and looks askance at his instrument)

PHINEAS

Getting some fibers stuck in my teeth.

LISSA

Phineas! Perfect timing. How are you?

PHINEAS

Warm. The flame of my love for you would stay lit despite deluge, downpour, or flood. You are my mugwort.

LISSA

Mugwort?

PHINEAS

Mugwort, the plant the Gabrieleño used to carry their smoldering embers from one camp to the next. It also makes a fine beer. So, you are twice honored. But if you so desire, I can call you Smoldering Ember.

MONICA

Oh god.

PHINEAS

What is your morning endeavor?

LISSA

We're talking about the park meeting a week from Thursday.

PHINEAS

Defending nature for my namesake?

LISSA

*(To Monica)*

He wants me to name the baby Phineas.

MONICA

If it's a girl?

PHINEAS

Willow. Sage. Laurel--all quite acceptable, as is Alisa, which follows *aliso*, which is Spanish for "sycamore." Linnea, after Linnaeus, the father of biological taxonomy, would also suffice.

TALLIE

Oh...my...god.

LISSA

He seems a bit odd, but he's harmless.

TALLIE

(*To Phineas*)

Brody? Phin Brody?

PHINEAS

(*Sighs*)

Tallie Banks.

TALLIE

How long's it been?

MONICA

What is going on?

PHINEAS

Twenty years?

TALLIE

Twenty-five. How's your brother?

PHINEAS

Where is my brother is a better question.

LISSA

He said he had a job up in Flintridge.

TALLIE

I can't believe it.

MONICA

How do you two know each other?

PHINEAS

Muir Class of '68.

TALLIE  
That's right. Mustangs for life.  
(To Phineas)  
You with these folks?

PHINEAS  
I'm a satellite member of their conservation cabal.

TALLIE  
(Laughing)  
Honey, you were flying with the satellites back in high school.

PHINEAS  
My interest in plants now is less...recreational.

TALLIE  
Where you living these days?

PHINEAS  
I avail myself of these trees most days. But on occasion I take lodging with my brother in Altadena.

TALLIE  
(To Monica)  
Now I see what you mean about wildlife. If you've got Phin Brody living down here, life is going to get pretty wild.  
(To Phineas)  
Homecoming's around the corner. You should come.

LISSA  
Homecoming for what?

TALLIE  
Football.

PHINEAS  
Football.

(LISSA and MONICA stare at them.)

TALLIE  
The Turkey Tussle. Against PHS.  
(To Lissa)  
How long you lived here?



LISSA

Almost three years. But...I'm involved in a lot of community groups.

TALLIE

Your not involved in the right groups if you don't know about the Tussle.

(TALLIE shakes her head.)

TALLIE

New folks moving in...Have you even been to the high school?

LISSA

I know the Muir Ranch garden has a table at the Farmer's Market.

TALLIE

You said on the phone you wanted to get more of the community involved. How you going to do that if you haven't even been to Muir? Ain't that right, Phin?

PHINEAS

Muir is the great oak, and we are all its acorns.

MONICA

I heard the new school board is sharpening its axe.

TALLIE

What do you mean?

MONICA

They might close the school.

TALLIE

Close Muir? Not on my watch.

*(Noticing the painting)*

And what is that?

LISSA

It's a painting of the proposed environmental education center in the Hahamongna Master Plan.

TALLIE

Environmental? If the city builds anything, they should build a jobs center. That's what we need.

LISSA

But wouldn't you like a place to learn about the wildlife.

TALLIE

Honey, my life's been wild enough already.

SCENE 3

(FLINTRIDGE, PERRIN'S LIVING ROOM, DAY - Lights up on a plush, modern space. There is a table or counter with a bottle vodka, a pitcher of lemonade, and glasses. Loose papers sit in the center of the floor with a pencil and eraser. PERRIN'S framed medical school diploma is on a wall.)

(LYNN, 18, enters with a hammer, crosses in stealth, and exits. PERRIN enters in stylish fitness gear. ADAM follows in jeans and a rumpled shirt. Both are in their mid-40s. He carries a leather-bound notebook. PERRIN stoops, stacks the papers from the floor, and puts them on the counter between her and ADAM.)

ADAM

I figured as long as I was up here-

PERRIN

Do you want a drink?

(*beat*)

Of course you don't want a drink. I'll just drink alone.

ADAM

Don't drink.

PERRIN

Why not? This is an occasion. A divorce. A fresh start for both of us.

(PERRIN pours herself a glass of lemonade, then adds vodka. She holds up the glass.)

PERRIN

Sure? It's a Bullfrog. Ribbit. You could just have the lemonade. I made it this morning.

(beat)

Do you want me to sign the papers now?

ADAM

There's no rush.

PERRIN

We're doing fine by the way. Thank you...Even though the backyard smells like a sty because of the septic; gangbangers broke the gate again; I'm behind organizing the fundraiser for the Education Foundation; and Lynn hates us, or at least hates me.

ADAM

How's Jeff?

(PERRIN yawns.)

PERRIN

I'm sorry. I've been having trouble sleeping.

ADAM

Talking with anyone about that?

PERRIN

Still looking for the key to my psyche?

ADAM

I gave up the search that algorithm a while ago.

PERRIN

Why did I marry an engineer?

ADAM

Jeff?

PERRIN

He's fine. His regular dreamy self.

ADAM

I wanted to take him and Lynn on a foraging walk down in the park next Saturday. That all right?

PERRIN

Is Monica going?

ADAM

It's her kind of thing.

PERRIN

You know they found a dead body down there, next to the bathroom.

ADAM

So...Is that a yes?

PERRIN

You can ask Lynn, but I made an appointment for Jeff at the salon to get his hair cut.

ADAM

I'm sure he's thrilled.

*(Pause)*

He seemed interested in the Rover. Curiosity found an oxidation gradient in its Martian rock sample.

*(PERRIN yawns again. She moves to tidy the living room.)*

PERRIN

I don't care.

ADAM

It could just revolutionize our understanding on the origins of life.

PERRIN

I don't care.

ADAM

You used to care.

PERRIN

Fresh start.

ADAM

Anyway, there's a lot of press stuff NASA wants me to deal with. I'm apologizing in advance if I screw up.

PERRIN

You'll pay half if I have to repair the septic?

ADAM

Wouldn't it would be better to wait for the neighborhood vote on the sewer before pouring money into a septic?

PERRIN

I'm the one who's been going to the meetings. They're voting no.

ADAM

Tell the sewer will lower their water bill.

PERRIN

How?

ADAM

The water district wants to treat the sewage, pump what's left to tanks under the athletic fields at Muir High School. The more water they put into the ground, the more free water they can take out.

PERRIN

Muir--that school's been a mess forever. I suppose one mess deserves another.

ADAM

Your mom seemed to like it.

PERRIN

*(Sarcastic)*

Because she and I agree about everything.

ADAM

Talking about high school...she seemed happy.

PERRIN

If it was so great when she went there, why did La Cañada break away from Pasadena and build its own high school?

(Lights down on PERRIN'S LIVING ROOM. Lights up on LISSA and PRINCIPAL WRIGHT, mid-40s, at MUIR HIGH SCHOOL.)

WRIGHT

We could use a positive article on the school, after you finish the one for the garden.

LISSA

It's just a blog. But this is my school now, so I'll do what I can.

WRIGHT

The board says it can't afford four high schools.

LISSA

Why are there fewer students?

WRIGHT

La Cañada built their own high school fifty years ago and that made Muir more black and parents sued to keep it diverse and there was a huge fight and the court ordered busing and one thing led to another...

LISSA

And the white parents pulled their kids.

WRIGHT

Sent them to private schools. When I went here we had 3,000 students. Now I'm principal and there's 1,300. Pasadena used to have one of the best school districts in the country.

LISSA

You mean except for the segregation.

WRIGHT

Well, yeah. People think Muir is struggling, but you compare us academically to other schools in the district, we're right there.

LISSA

Once people get an idea in their head-

WRIGHT

We're fighting the past. I wish you could meet Danae, our student body president. Got into Stanford early decision. She's running around trying to organize our homecoming assembly. I told her with all this talk about closing the school, it needs to be special this year.

LISSA

Why can't they close one of the other high schools?

WRIGHT

Muir's valuable real estate, right next to the freeway. And the developers pay for all the campaigns.

LISSA

That's not supposed to happen. This is Pasadena.

WRIGHT

Growing all those roses takes a lot of fertilizer. On that note, let me take you over to the garden, introduce you to Jim Pendorf, the teacher in charge.

(Lights down on MUIR. Lights up on PERRIN'S LIVING ROOM with ADAM and PERRIN.)

PERRIN

This guy outside you called to fix the gate...

ADAM

James. He's a friend of Monica's.

PERRIN

If he's her friend, then you should be the one to pay him.

(ADAM writes a check, tears it out of his book, and gives it to PERRIN.)

ADAM

There. Fill in the amount. You really think it was gangs?

PERRIN

Of course not. Your lovely daughter is vandalizing our house because you won't spend time with her.

ADAM

I doubt that. Here are the divorce papers.

(ADAM gives PERRIN the papers.)

PERRIN

Fabulous.

ADAM

Happy to be of service. Give the kids my best.

(ADAM exits. PERRIN inspects the papers and pours herself another drink. JEFF enters, stops, and looks at the floor where he left the papers. PERRIN notices him.)

PERRIN

(*Sensitive*)

Oh no, honey. It's okay. It's all right. Here are your drawings. We have to keep things neat.

(PERRIN hands him his sheets of paper, pencil, and eraser. JEFF spreads them on the floor, sits down, and starts drawing. PERRIN shakes her head and exits. JAMES enters with his tools. He sees JEFF'S drawing and stops.)

JAMES

Who's that?

JEFF

The Echo Princess. The Silly Wizard has her locked up. My group at camp says "Hi" when we go past the tunnel, and she says "Hi" back.

JAMES

Didn't know that. Who's that in the silver suit?



JEFF

That's the alien. He's going to marry the princess. My dad looks for aliens.

(JAMES rises and inspects PERRIN's diploma. PERRIN enters.)

PERRIN

How's the gate?

JAMES

You're a doctor?

PERRIN

Ophthalmologist. How's the gate?

JAMES

You need a new track. Someone bashed it.

PERRIN

I know.

JAMES

Like last time.

PERRIN

What will it cost?

JAMES

Same as last time.

PERRIN

Right.

JAMES

I'll write out an estimate.

(JAMES exits. LYNN crosses trying to ignore PERRIN.)

PERRIN

What did you get on your calculus test?

*(Calling after her.)*

You know I'll just call your teacher.

(LYNN turns.)

I got a "C."

LYNN

A "C."

PERRIN

Lots of people got C's.

LYNN

Your father was just here. He wants to do a park thing with you on Saturday.

PERRIN

He was just here?

LYNN

But if you're getting C's, you won't have time.

PERRIN

Yes I will.

LYNN

Then do better. You're applying to colleges. This isn't a game. What about the draft of your essay?

PERRIN

The application isn't due until December.

LYNN

You know you have to do at least three drafts.

PERRIN

Fine.

(Lights down on living room.  
Lights up on MUIR HIGH SCHOOL  
GARDEN. LISSA follows MR.  
PENDORF, late 30s. He sets down a  
flat of seedlings next to a  
wheelbarrow and a raised bed of  
soil with two standing shovels.)

PENDORF

With our new curriculum, students can take vocational classes and do college prep. But I'm always trying to get them internships. Shovel?

(PENDORF holds a shovel out to LISSA. She accepts and they shovel dirt into the wheelbarrow.)

LISSA

Job experience sets the table for success.

PENDORF

Everyone's willing to take an unpaid volunteer. As soon as I bring up money, people stop taking my calls.

LISSA

Money sucks.

PENDORF

Funny, most people don't feel that way. Most people are glad places like Wal-Mart are moving in, you know, a job's a job.

LISSA

That's like saying the pink tomato you buy in the grocery store is the same as the one you grow here in the garden.

PENDORF

You're saying Wal-Mart is a pink tomato?

LISSA

Kids need jobs that will let them grow, as people, explore their interests, give them new experiences.

PENDORF

So, you'd be willing to hire one of our students, perhaps, teach them about art?

(LISSA sways and touches her head.)

PENDORF

You all right?

LISSA

Nobody told me that being pregnant affects you, you know, physically...It's great you can give them jobs here at the garden.

PENDORF

Your article will help. The more boxes of vegetables we sell, the more kids I can hire.

(APRIL, 18, enters with JAMAAL, 17, who wears a new football jersey. They set down a bag of compost.)

PENDORF

April and Jamaal, this is Lissa. She's writing a story on the garden for her website.

*(To April)*

You have that list of colleges to apply to?

APRIL

My aunt says we can't afford college.

(RAPHAEL, 18, enters disheveled with plastic bags on his feet.)

PENDORF

You're late Raphael.

RAPHAEL

Not my fault.

PENDORF

Why are there bags on your feet?

RAPHAEL

I ain't getting my Jordans dirty.

PENDORF

We talked about this. You have to come prepared to work.

RAPHAEL

I'm prepared. Bags on my feet don't affect my preparation. My work shoes are at the house.

JAMAAL

What happened?

RAPHAEL

Mom's boyfriend up and kicked me out.

PENDORF

Why?

RAPHAEL

No reason. But it's cool. I did some camping last night.

PENDORF

Raphael, this is Lissa. She's writing a story on the garden. This is Raphael, he's...working off detention.

RAPHAEL

Last day, too.

LISSA

How do you like the garden?

RAPHAEL

My dad was a gardener. I was through with this shit by the time I was twelve.

PENDORF

You need to watch your mouth.

RAPHAEL

How am I supposed to watch my mouth? I can't see my mouth. I can see your mouth, and you need to brush your teeth.

PENDORF

*(To Lissa)*

I'd like to give him a job. He works hard and is good problem-solver. Does all right in my science class.

RAPHAEL

Glad you appreciate my talents, but I already got me some jobs, one of them is being the finest dude in this school.

*(RAPHAEL gives JAMAAL a high five.)*

PENDORF

You don't look so fine today. You need me make some calls, find you a place until you work things out with your mom?

RAPHAEL

Naw, it's cool. My people will take care of me.

APRIL

Mr. Pendorf, after I graduate can I get a job with the garden?

PENDORF

That money has to go to students.

APRIL

I wish I could stay in school. People are nice here.

PENDORF

You can stay in school. It's called college.

RAPHAEL

She could get a job at Wal-Mart. Don't need no college for that.

(PENDORF and LISSA exchange looks.)

MR. PENDORF

April, they have art classes in college.

LISSA

You're an artist?

PENDORF

She draws. Takes photos too. Shows up on time, without bags on her feet or under her eyes.

LISSA

(Pause)

Have you ever worked on a website?

APRIL

I've looked at websites.

PENDORF  
(*To Raphael and Jamaal*)

Stop laughing.

LISSA  
(*Pause*)

April, if you want, I will pay you to be my assistant.

APRIL

Assistant?

LISSA  
I'm going to have a baby, and I need someone to go to events, take photos. I can train you on my website, and maybe you can help with the time bank. How does that sound?

APRIL

Good.

(LISSA looks at PENDORF.)

LISSA  
Here's the deal. With the money I give you, I want you to buy something every week at the Altadena Farmer's Market. Have you been to Hahamongna Watershed Park?

APRIL

Where?

LISSA  
That's going to be your first assignment.

(JASMINE, 17, enters wearing tight clothes. She has a small purse and red and pink highlights in her hair.)

JASMINE  
(*Flirting*)

Heeeeeey! Jamaaaaaal!

JAMAAL

Oh man.

RAPHAEL

*(Laughing)*

On the baseball team and you hidin' from Jasmine. That's weak.

JAMAAL

I don't want people to think we hang out.

JASMINE

Mr. Pendorf, Principal Wright needs to see you.

PENDORF

*(To Lissa)*

Let me walk you out to the main building.

*(LISSA and PENDORF exit.)*

JASMINE

*(To Jamaal)*

What you doing?

APRIL

We're working.

JASMINE

*(Angry)*

I'm not talking to you girl. What you answering for when I'm not talking to you?

*(To Jamaal)*

You coming to the function at Shawnie's house on Saturday?

JAMAAL

There's a...church...thing...on Saturday.

JASMINE

They be having church on Saturday? That's out of control.

*(beat)*

Raphael, I need more of what you got.

RAPHAEL

Text me after school.

JASMINE

*(To Jamaal)*

The Dance Team posted a new video online. I'm in front. Promise me you'll look.



I...uh.

JAMAAL

Promise.

JASMINE

Well...

JAMAAL

Promise.

JASMINE  
(Desperate)

I promise.

JAMAAL

I'm going to cross your heart on it.

JASMINE

(JASMINE writes her name with her finger on Jamaal's chest.)

JASMINE

J-A-S-M-I-N-E.

JASMINE

(JASMINE puts her face next to Jamaal's and snaps a photo with her phone. She exits singing to herself "Pour it Up" by Rihanna.)

JASMINE

*Money on my mind, Money, money on my mind...Throw it, throw it up, Watch it fall off from the sky, Throw it up, throw it up...*

APRIL

She's ratchet.

RAPHAEL

She's just likes him. He should take it as a compliment.

(Lights down on GARDEN. Lights up on PERRIN'S LIVING ROOM.)

PERRIN

I've decided to move Paca from the stables in the park.

LYNN

Why?

PERRIN

The park isn't safe. They found a dead body next to the bathroom.

LYNN

Was it somebody we know?

PERRIN

Don't be a smart ass. Most kids don't have a horse. You shouldn't care where he stays.

LYNN

Monica has a horse at the stable. I'll just have to ride hers.

*(beat)*

PERRIN

And...

*(To Jeff)*

Jeff, go draw in your room so your sister and I can talk.

*(JEFF continues drawing. LYNN gets down on the floor with him.)*

LYNN

You can use my pens for coloring. They're under the bed.

*(JEFF gets up and exits. PERRIN takes a drink.)*

PERRIN

I'm going to stop Jeff's afterschool camp with Tom Sawyer, so you don't have to pick him up.

LYNN

You can't take camp away from him.

PERRIN

He's going to have to find other ways to spend time.

LYNN

Like what? Playing video games.

(PERRIN yawns.)

PERRIN

And doing his homework.

LYNN

He's seven. He wants me to help him act out his comic book.

PERRIN

So get your friends together and act it out.

LYNN

Ask people at school to dress up as aliens and run around the woods. That will make me so popular.

PERRIN

What about that boy Brandon? You're not...

LYNN

No. Geez. We run cross-country together. I'd have more friends if you had let me go on the service trip to Mexico. That's where people bond.

PERRIN

It was Mexico. There are drug killings every day.

LYNN

Hello. La Cañada High...Drugs.

PERRIN

Kids aren't killing each other.

LYNN

What about the guys who beat the crap out of that kid and left him on the school lawn?

PERRIN

That was...unfortunate.

(JAMES enters, stops, and listens.)

LYNN

Nothing was going to happen in Mexico.

PERRIN  
(*Forcefully*)

Things happen.

(*beat*)

I don't want you going down to the park.

LYNN  
Whatever. I'm eighteen. I can do what I want.

PERRIN  
And you live here.

LYNN  
Maybe I should go live with Dad and Monica.

(LYNN rushes out.)

PERRIN  
I'm sorry that you had to hear that.

JAMES  
The park's safe.

PERRIN  
What?

JAMES  
I spend a lot of time down there. The park's safe.

PERRIN  
People just dump bodies there.

JAMES  
Got to dump them somewhere. Here's your estimate.

PERRIN  
Thank you.

(*beat*)

JAMES  
I've been wanting to ask you about these tiles here.

(JAMES points to the decorated  
tiles around the fireplace.)

PERRIN

What about them?

JAMES

They look like Batchelder.

PERRIN

What?

JAMES

Ernest Batchelder, the tile guy.

PERRIN

Is that important?

JAMES

It's craftsman. People don't know this stuff and then they go and wreck something beautiful because they're ignorant. Like whoever put that gate across the driveway.

PERRIN

The gate was my idea.

JAMES

Oh. Be better off without it.

PERRIN

It's for protection.

JAMES

*(Sarcastic)*

Dangerous neighborhood. What year they build this house?

PERRIN

I don't know. My father bought when he started his research at JPL.

JAMES

What kind of research?

PERRIN

Rockets.

JAMES

Anyway, call me when you want me to fix it.

(JAMES moves to leave.)

PERRIN

You spend a lot of time in the park?

JAMES

Play disc golf.

PERRIN

The plastic things? I almost got hit by one of those last time I picked up my son.

JAMES

You probably got in the way.

PERRIN

Expecting grungy...golfers to look before decapitating someone is probably too much to ask.

(JAMES turns to leave.)

PERRIN

Wait. Would you mind...um, maybe showing me around the park some time...Give me a short tour. Get me oriented.

JAMES

I thought it wasn't safe.

PERRIN

That's why it's important to, you know, know what's what.

JAMES

*(Pause)*

All right. But you have to play disc golf with me.

*(Pause)*

And wear something grungy.

(Lights down on living room.  
Lights up on GARDEN. RAPHAEL sits  
with JAMAAL and APRIL.)

APRIL

*(To Raphael)*

What about your mom?

RAPHAEL

Man, she just stood there and watched him throw my stuff into street.

APRIL

Where you going to stay?

RAPHAEL

Omar will put me up.

JAMAAL

I'd go to the shelter before I'd stay with him. You'd be selling his weed 'til you're thirty to pay him back. You should stay with Tallie.

RAPHAEL

What kind of a name is Tallie?

JAMAAL

I stayed with her when my bro got out of prison, and my mom went to take care of him. She's good people.

*(Pause)*

The only thing is...

RAPHAEL

What?

JAMAAL

You can't be doping around her. She has a clean house. It's a deal with her.

RAPHAEL

Forget that.

*(DANA, 18, enters talking with FRIENDS.)*

RAPHAEL

*(To Jamaal)*

Bro, give me your shirt.

JAMAAL

What?

RAPHAEL

Give me your shirt!

(JAMAAL and RAPHAEL exchange shirts. RAPHAEL straightens himself up. He approaches DANAЕ, realizes the bags on his feet, stops, and struggles to take them off. Finally, he gets to her just as she's about to exit.)

RAPHAEL

Danae.

DANAЕ

You talking to me?

RAPHAEL

That's right. I've been working hard in the garden all morning, and the only thing that's kept me from going crazy is thinking about you.

DANAЕ

*(Pause)*

Is that your shirt?

RAPHAEL

Yeah.

DANAЕ

Cause it doesn't fit.

RAPHAEL

I could take it off.

DANAЕ

Dang, don't be scaring me like that. I've got the homecoming assembly to get together and I don't have time-

RAPHAEL

But-

DANAЕ

What? Unless you have a real Mustang for the assembly, we have nothing to say to each other.

(DANAЕ exits. JAMAAL and APRIL laugh.)



JAMAAL

Man, she got you. Here, give me my shirt.

(They exchange shirts.)

RAPHAEL

That's all right. She was checking me out, saw that your raggedy ass jersey didn't fit.

JAMAAL

(To April)

I say our boy agrees to meet with Tallie or we give what we saw to Jasmine. She'd put it on blast to the whole school.

APRIL

Sounds good to me.

#### SCENE 4

(PARK, WILLOWS, NIGHT - A MOUNTAIN LION stalks a DEER through the trees to a chorus of FROGS. Both exit and the chorus fades. Lights brighten as PHINEAS enters. He directs a group consisting of LISSA, APRIL, MONICA, ADAM, and LYNN. They fill plastic bags with leaves and berries from surrounding bushes. APRIL has a camera around her neck.)

LISSA

Phineas, what are you going to make for the commissioners?

PHINEAS

White sage tea, nettle soup, and nightshade salsa are on the menu.

MONICA

Nightshade? We don't want to kill the commissioners.

PHINEAS

Western black nightshade. As long as the berries are black, they are quite safe.

ADAM

Is it native?

PHINEAS

Its origins are...complex. Most of the plants we're harvesting today are exotic...much like myself.

ADAM

Then it helps the park to remove them? They're aliens?

PHINEAS

Planetary citizens. What did your superiors say to my suggestion?

ADAM

To have JPL engineers find a way to take out the dam and restore the river?

PHINEAS

I take suggested donations for these walks. Speaking to them was the donation I suggested for you.

ADAM

It's outside JPL's mission.

PHINEAS

Tell me, what is the truest sign that Mars once had life?

ADAM

Flowing water.

PHINEAS

And yet here we stand in Hahamongna, which is Gabrieleño for...

LISSA

Flowing Waters, Fruitful Valley.

PHINEAS

The waters flowed until they built the dam. You see it is quite within your mission. The Gabrieleño figured out the connection between water and life thousands of years ago.

ADAM

You don't believe in space exploration.

PHINEAS

Park exploration might prove more fruitful. Spending untold sums reaching for a single scoop of Martian soil when magic sediment abounds around us? Yes, there is a black hole in that logic.

ADAM

NASA is paying to clean up the groundwater.

PHINEAS

Good point...good, of course, only in comparison to the very bad circumstances of the original pollution.

ADAM

That was before my time.

PHINEAS

Mine too. And still it haunts us.

(MONICA approaches LISSA.)

MONICA

I told you that meeting with that Tallie woman was going to be a waste of time.

LISSA

I thought it went fine. I told her I'd do a feature on open space in Northwest Pasadena.

(MONICA stares at LISSA.)

LISSA

That's how it works. You want support, you lend support. People like Tallie just need to spend more time down here.

MONICA

And you're going to tell them that?

LISSA

If I have to. I need my kids to be able to listen to the frogs with their kids. And for that to happen it has to be more than just white folks with time on their hands speaking for the trees.

MONICA

I don't think the trees care who speaks for them.

*(Looking at April)*

Is that why you brought her with you?

LISSA

I brought her because she needed a job, and I needed some help.

*(LYNN approaches APRIL.)*

LYNN

Can you pretend to talk to me?

APRIL

Sure.

LYNN

My dad wants me to bond with Monica, that's his new girlfriend, and I am so not into it right now.

APRIL

Okay.

LYNN

Or you could actually talk to me. My name's Lynn. What school do you go to?

APRIL

Muir.

LYNN

I go to La Cañada.

*(Pause)*

I don't know anyone from Muir.

*(Pause)*

You go to Jim's.

APRIL

Yeah.

LYNN

Regular or zucchini fries?

LISSA

*(To Monica)*

I think we should meet with some of the soccer groups.

MONICA

No.

LISSA

The problem isn't going away. The city says it needs six or eight more fields to satisfy demand.

MONICA

The city is wrong. And even if they did need that many fields, you don't kill wildlife or cut down a hundred year old trees to make it happen.

LISSA

This isn't theoretical anymore. My countdown has started. I need to see some progress.

ADAM

Lynn, don't you want to come over here with us?

LYNN

April's telling me where she's from.

*(To April quietly)*

Tell me where you're from.

APRIL

My dad's from Mexico.

LYNN

I almost went to Mexico for a service trip.

LISSA

April, you live with your aunt?

APRIL

And her family and my younger brother and my grandmother.

LYNN

You have a house in Pasadena?

APRIL

We rent. But my aunt wants to move to El Monte.

MONICA

(to Lissa)

So much for getting her to bond with Hahamongna.

LISSA

(To April)

What does your aunt do?

APRIL

She volunteers, helps people get their citizenship.

LISSA

She knows a lot of people who play soccer then.

(LISSA and MONICA exchange looks.)

APRIL

My cousins played in the league at Villa Parke.

LISSA

The meeting on Thursday, bring your aunt. I want to get her opinion on something.

SCENE 5

(COMMUNITY ARMS HOUSING PROJECT, TALLIE'S LIVING ROOM, NIGHT - A cramped but homey space with a dining table and chairs, mirror, a closet door, and wall of photos and awards. JAMAAL watches RAPHAEL who looks at the photos. RAPHAEL has a full laundry bag.)

RAPHAEL

There's a photo of her and Magic Johnson.

JAMAAL

That was when they opened the 24 Hour Fitness on Woodbury. Tallie helped get that going.

(Pause)

She should be here soon. She's with my mentor Tremain, so you can't be embarrassing me.

(RAPHAEL checks himself in the mirror.)

RAPHAEL

Relax, *hombre*. The ladies are no match for the full Rafiki charm. First, on your woman Tallie and then on Danae.

(TALLIE enters talking with  
TREMAIN.)

TALLIE

Turn those schools they closed into parks. That's what I'm saying.

TREMAIN

That means the school district working with the city.

TALLIE

And what should be so hard about that? And then that woman Lissa in my ear about her time bank. Told her about my cherry pie, and she said I could trade the hour to make the pie for a guitar lesson. Jamaal, honey, sorry it took so long. And this must be your friend. Are you hungry, you need something to eat? What's your name?

RAPHAEL

Rafiki...I mean Raphael.

TALLIE

This is Tremain. He's my godson. Jamaal, why don't you get him some something.

(JAMAAL exits.)

TALLIE

Young man why do you need a place to stay?

RAPHAEL

My mom's boyfriend decided he didn't want me around.

TALLIE

Was there a reason or was he just in a bad mood?

RAPHAEL

It's a territory thing.

TREMAIN

Territory? You in a gang?

RAPHAEL

No, man. I mean, he's like a dog or a lion or something. He doesn't want the kids from some other guy around.

TALLIE

Where's your father?

RAPHAEL

In jail.

TALLIE

How did that happen?

RAPHAEL

He got drunk, drove the wrong way down a freeway ramp, killed a lady.

TALLIE

Lord. You have brothers and sisters?

RAPHAEL

Two brothers.

TALLIE

Where are they?

RAPHAEL

One's in jail, another's on probation...stupid gangbangin' stuff.

TALLIE

You go to Muir?

(JAMAAL enters and puts milk and cookies on the table.)

RAPHAEL

On and off. I just need a few credits to graduate.

TREMAIN

What about you Jamaal? You keeping your grades up?



JAMAAL

Four B's and an A.

TALLIE

*(To Tremain)*

You hear that? That's what Muir needs. More students like Jamaal, and they wouldn't think of closing the school.

RAPHAEL

I have a job...at the movie theater. I'm saving for my own place.

TALLIE

*(To Tremain)*

What do you think?

TREMAIN

I'd leave it to Jamaal. You willing to put yourself on the line for Rafiki here?

JAMAAL

*(Pause)*

He's cool.

*(TALLIE notices the laundry bag.)*

TALLIE

All right, you can stay. But you'll be doing your own laundry.

*(RAPHAEL pulls out a pair of new Air Jordans.)*

TALLIE

Will you look at that? Those all shoes?

RAPHAEL

Yes.

TALLIE

How you paying for those shoes working at a movie theater?

RAPHAEL

*(Pause)*

I do sales on the side.

TALLIE

And what do you sell?

(RAPHAEL looks at JAMAAL.)

RAPHAEL

Seeds. I work at the garden, at Muir, and we get these extra seed packets.

TALLIE

(*Skeptical*)

Seeds.

RAPHAEL

Yeah. I collect them too, like those pumpkins, you slice them open and pull out those seeds.

TREMAIN

(*Amused*)

Really? That must take a while.

TALLIE

Maybe he should join that time bank. What's your shoe size?

RAPHAEL

Ten.

(TALLIE looks at TREMAIN.)

TALLIE

All right. There are a load of sneakers in the back closet that belonged to my son. We can box those up and put yours there. Did Jamaal tell you about my rules?

RAPHAEL

Rules?

TALLIE

I get headaches and need my sleep, which means you need to be home before midnight. And this is a clean house, no drink and no drugs. Understood?

RAPHAEL

Yes, ma'am.

TALLIE

Is something I said funny?

RAPHAEL

No, ma'am.

TALLIE

Then you shouldn't be smiling. Don't stand there thinking you're all that and a bag of chips. You're not pulling anything on me. No drugs. Do you understand?

RAPHAEL

Yes, ma'am.

TALLIE

And you will be going to church on Sunday. You can come with me, or I can drop you at the Catholic Church. Honey, we're going to get you on track.

RAPHAEL

On track?

TALLIE

To graduate. We're trying to save a school and we can't be having any more dropouts. You a part of something now.

SCENE 6

(CONFERENCE ROOM, NIGHT - The PARKS COMMISSION sits in a horseshoe in front of a large CROWD. LISSA is at the microphone with her painting. COUNCILMAN LAYTON, mid-40s, runs the meeting. MONICA sits with ADAM, APRIL is next to EMILIA, her aunt, early 50s. RAPHAEL sits in the back with TALLIE, who knits.)

LISSA

The environmental education center would provide a place for everyone to come together. Do you want my painting?

LAYTON

Thank you. We'll take a photo of it for the record.

LISSA

Oh, and I don't support the addition of the soccer field.

LAYTON

Thank you. Monica Kemp is the next speaker. In the interests of time, I'll ask everyone to keep comments brief.

(LISSA sits and MONICA steps up to the microphone.)

MONICA

Our native habitats--the oaks, chaparral, willows--they come together and meet in this park. And that brings wildlife from all over. You put in a field and that means gophers and that means poison to kill them and that puts poison in the food chain.

(Pause)

And I hate to say it, but the people that play soccer down there now, they're ignorant. I've watched them leave trash all around after games. These people don't know how to take care of a place like this.

(Some in the CROWD CLAP, others GROAN. TALLIE looks up from her knitting.)

LAYTON

Do we have any other public comments?

(EMILIA pulls APRIL up to the microphone. EMILIA speaks in Spanish. APRIL translates.)

EMILIA

*Me llamo Emilia Fuentes. Mi sobrina me pidió que viniera. Toda nuestra familia juega fútbol y no somos ignorantes.*

APRIL

My name is Emilia Fuentes. My niece asked me to come here. Our family plays soccer, and we're not ignorant.

EMILIA

*El consejo municipal prometio que recibiríamos campos de fútbol. Ellos arreglaron Jackie Robinson Park para los morenos. ¿Por qué no podemos tener nuestro propio lugar?*

APRIL

The city council promised that we would get soccer fields. The city repaired Jackie Robinson Park for the blacks. Why can't we have our own place?

EMILIA

*He visto un parque detrás de la presa, y es solamente para personas con caballos.*

APRIL

I've seen this park behind the dam, and it's only for people with horses.

(The CROWD MURMURS. Some HISS.  
EMILIA and APRIL sit.)

LAYTON

Thank you Ms. Fuentes. Is there anyone else?

(TALLIE signals to LAYTON and  
approaches the microphone.)

LAYTON

Mrs. Banks, would you like to say something?

TALLIE

Now, I don't know if this is the best place for a field with all them coyotes running around. But I need to say that Jackie Robinson Park is for everybody, because what Jackie and Mack did was for everybody. People should come on over; there's nothing to be scared of. And for the commission, how we going to find the next Jackie Robinson if we don't provide our youth places to play. Because, you know, right now the largest green space in Northwest Pasadena is the cemetery. And that's not right.

LAYTON

Thank you, Mrs. Banks. Technically, Hahamongna is in Northwest Pasadena, but we understand what you mean. With the end of the comment session, we are going to adjourn so the commissioners can give this issue further study. Thank you.

(People stand. ADAM shakes his  
head at MONICA.)

ADAM

Ignorant?

MONICA

That's what you said when we were picking up all that trash.

ADAM

I meant everyone, humans...generally. You don't point fingers.

MONICA

I do.

(As people file out, LISSA looks hard at her painting.)

SCENE 7

(PARK - WILLOWS, NIGHT. The TADPOLES and FROGS scatter as the MOUNTAIN LION enters and drinks from the pool. PHINEAS watches unseen. The MOUNTAIN LION exits and PHINEAS follows.)

(PARK - WILLOWS, DAY - JAMES watches PERRIN pour sand from her shoe.)

PERRIN

You didn't say anything about quicksand.

(JAMES hands her the disc.)

PERRIN

Where was it?

JAMES

Stuck in that willow tree. The hole is over there.

PERRIN

I know. My mother won the Miss Guided Missile Pageant at JPL. You don't have to give me pointers on navigation. If they would cut all this back, manicure it like so it looks more like-

JAMES

Your lawn?

PERRIN

Is there something wrong with my lawn?

JAMES

No. My goats love thick green grass.

PERRIN

And you live in-

JAMES

Altadena.

PERRIN

Of course you do. Just..keep your goats to yourself.

JAMES

Vegetables would be a better choice.

PERRIN

Do I look like a farmer?

JAMES

No.

PERRIN

La Cañada-Flintridge isn't some barnyard hamlet. We're a modern, educated, forward-looking community.

(PERRIN hurls her disc, which immediately disappears in the willows.)

PERRIN

Shit.

(JAMES gets up.)

PERRIN

No. I'll find it. I'll find it.

(PERRIN starts thrashing around in willows.)

JAMES  
You need *dandien* [DAWN-dee-en].

PERRIN  
What?

JAMES  
Tai chi. It means "power from the center." You find your inner power and send it into your throw.

(PERRIN emerges from the willows.)

PERRIN  
*Dandien.*

(JAMES demonstrates in slow-motion with his disc.)

JAMES  
*Dandien.*

(PERRIN imitates, then throws her disc, which again goes into the brush.)

PERRIN  
Ahhhhh. I hate this game!

JAMES  
(*Offended*)  
It's a sport.

PERRIN  
(*Sarcastic*)  
Sorry.

(PERRIN disappears in the willows to look for her disc.)

JAMES  
This happens to be the very first disc golf course.

PERRIN  
In the country?



JAMES

In the world.

PERRIN

Double sorry.

(PERRIN appears with her disc.)

JAMES

Why did you want me to show you the park?

PERRIN

My daughter likes to sneak out at night. She's the one bashing the gate. Half the time she comes down here to visit her horse.

JAMES

Why don't you talk with her?

PERRIN

Because I'm fighting with my daughter about several things right now, and don't want to fight with her about sneaking.

JAMES

How do you know where she goes?

PERRIN

I follow her.

JAMES

You get that from a parenting class?

PERRIN

I know what you're thinking, that I'm one of those helicopter moms. Well, I'm not.

JAMES

Okay.

PERRIN

I'm not. If I was, I'd bust her. I keep my distance. I did my share of sneaking from that house when I was a teenager. The most important thing is that she gets into a good college. I save my fighting time for that.

JAMES

You studied cancer in med school, right?

PERRIN

Sure.

JAMES

You know any special treatments for liver cancer?

PERRIN

You have liver cancer?

JAMES

No. Someone else.

PERRIN

This "other person" got a diagnosis. What did they recommend?

JAMES

Radiation.

PERRIN

And...

JAMES

He wants something herbal.

(PHINEAS enters.)

PHINEAS

That's right.

PERRIN

Who are you?

PHINEAS

Phineas Brody--wild food gourmet, consort of cougars, and brother of Shamus.

PERRIN

Shamus?

PHINEAS

Gaelic for James. He doesn't use Shamus because he doesn't like to stand out. But perhaps today is different.

PERRIN

Let me guess: you live in Altadena.

PHINEAS

On occasion, currently I reside under yonder cottonwood.

JAMES

This is Mrs. Reinhart.

PHINEAS

Ah. Companion of Adam. The original woman.

*(To James)*

While I've been tracking my mountain lion, you've been tracking something else, brother. I'm impressed.

PERRIN

You know my husband?

PHINEAS

Is he your husband still? He attends my plant walks with what I can only presume is your daughter, during which I do my best to infect him with an awe of nature.

PERRIN

The plant guy. You're...not what I expected.

PHINEAS

And your expectation consisted of...

PERRIN

Someone with more...clothes.

PHINEAS

*(To James)*

Brother, I told Lissa you would take her into the tunnel.

JAMES

The water department doesn't want people down there.

PHINEAS

And yet you have keys.

JAMES

Because I used to work for them. They trust I won't do anything stupid.

PHINEAS

As do I and as does she. If you take her into the tunnel, I will acquiesce and visit your modern-day medicine man.

JAMES

*(Pause)*

All right. But only to the first bulkhead.

PHINEAS

You should bring Mrs. Reinhart, as she seems very much in drought.

PERRIN

What tunnel?

PHINEAS

Devil's Gate Tunnel.

JAMES

The first settlers dug tunnels under the park to collect groundwater.

PHINEAS

Devil's Gate, named after the rock formation that was there before the dam.

PERRIN

I'll pass on the tunnel.

PHINEAS

I'm sure your daughter will enjoy it. Lovely girl, a bit saddled by this nonsense between her parents. I say "saddled" because she rides horses-

PERRIN

What about my daughter?

PHINEAS

Let me see if I can recall the conversation from our foraging expedition...At my suggestion, Lissa expressed enthusiasm about the tunnel. Your daughter inquired as to its meaning. Learning said meaning, she said it would be perfect for her brother to look for the Echo Princess. Her father begged off, whereupon Monica, his "friend," volunteered to take your children on said adventure. Of course, I'm sure they'd rather go with you.

PERRIN

(*Angry*)

I'll have to have a talk with my husband.

PHINEAS

Then you are still married.

PERRIN

Yes.

(PERRIN winds up and throws the disc with great force. They follow the throw with their eyes.)

PERRIN

Am I close to the hole?

JAMES

You sure you're an eye doctor?

SCENE 8

(TALLIE'S LIVING ROOM, DAY - RAPHAEL, just out of bed, sits at the table next to a small stack of papers. TALLIE stands over him.)

RAPHAEL

A hundred and twenty! No one told me I need a hundred and twenty units.

TALLIE

If you want to graduate in June.

RAPHAEL

I can't do all this.

TALLIE

Not if you sleep in on a Saturday morning. Now, is there a reason you got home at 2 a.m.? I thought I was clear.

RAPHAEL

You know you're a cool lady and all, but I've got to take care of my business.

TALLIE

And what business is that?

RAPHAEL

My business is my business.

TALLIE

If you're sleeping in my son's bed, your business is my business. And the only business you're open for right now is math. I'm going to the grocery store and the cemetery-

RAPHAEL

What's at the cemetery?

TALLIE

My son. Now I want those problem sets done so I can check them when I get back. We're going to get you thinking about your future.

RAPHAEL

I know my future.

TALLIE

Really? And what does that future hold?

RAPHAEL

Let's just say I plan on being my own boss.

TALLIE

You running the movie theater now.

RAPHAEL

Naw, but I could. Got my car, fresh threads, shoes. I could quit that job anytime I want.

TALLIE

I see. You don't need to know math.

RAPHAEL

The only math I need is for counting money.

TALLIE

The shooting last week off Woodbury. The police dispatcher earns fifty thousand dollars; detective gets eighty; fire department ninety; judge, stenographer, bailiff, just the salaries, we're spending three hundred thousand on that

shooting. By the time, they lock someone up, it's maybe a million. Do the math, child. We have a whole economy that depends on kids shooting each other, and you think you smart enough to keep free of that?

RAPHAEL

You look all that up?

TALLIE

Don't need to.

RAPHAEL

I'm not Jamaal. I'm not going to college.

TALLIE

Honey, this isn't about college. It's about getting you so you can love someone besides yourself.

SCENE 9

(TUNNEL - JAMES holds a lantern that creates a pool of light, showing PHINEAS, LISSA, and APRIL in front. PERRIN, JEFF, and LYNN, who holds a second lantern, follow. All wear slickers. APRIL has a flash camera, PHINEAS has a canteen. The tunnel is wide enough for two abreast but not comfortable. DRIPPING and TRICKLES echo, the walls seems alive.)

PHINEAS

Water spirits calling to the wild water within us.

APRIL

I didn't think I believed in ghosts until now.

JAMES

Slap the name Devil's Gate on something and people get the wrong idea.

PHINEAS

*(To Lissa)*

There are lessons for you here.

LISSA

You mean the cleanup. This is the water NASA's cleaning?

PERRIN

Lynn, hold my hand.

LYNN

I've got Jeff. Jeff, how are you doing?

JEFF

*(Calling down tunnel)*

Princess, helloooo!

*(They hear an echo on "hello.")*

JEFF

She's here. She's really here.

*(JEFF moves forward. LYNN follows. PERRIN grabs for them, misses.)*

PHINEAS

The percolation, vaginal waters, the menstrual flow of Mother Earth, all around us as we crawl back to the womb.

LISSA

They dug this to catch the groundwater, right? Pipe it out to the reservoir?

JAMES

That was the original reason for the dam, to increase the flow in the tunnel.

PHINEAS

Our spirits, our imagination, our dreams, everything flows together, flows without end, underneath the sand.

JAMES

The granite wall that makes the Devil's Gate runs east-west from Washington Middle School across to Flintridge. It makes a bowl that holds all the water from La Cañada, Altadena, Northwest Pasadena.



PHINEAS

No boundaries, no obstacles, everything connected under the surface, flowing toward Hahamongna, feeding the springs that gave life to the river and are no more.

(LYNN holds JEFF and approaches APRIL.)

LYNN

How is your college essay coming?

APRIL

I don't have anything to say.

LYNN

My mom worked for USC admissions before med school. She can read your essay. She knows what they want to hear.

APRIL

But I can't get into USC.

LYNN

Mom, you'd read April's college essay for her, wouldn't you?

PERRIN

What are you talking about? Just hold onto Jeff.

JEFF

*(Calling out)*

Princesssss, you okayyyy?

*(They hear an ECHO on "okay.")*

PHINEAS

*(To Jeff)*

See, she's doing fine.

LYNN

April's applying to college. You can read her essay for her.

PERRIN

Fine. Whatever. Yes.

LISSA

(To April)

April, if Mrs. Reinhart reads your essay, you should do something for her.

PERRIN

It's fine. She doesn't have to-

LISSA

Maybe April could help James out fixing your gate.

JAMES

Oh geez.

LISSA

Then he could see how the time bank works.

JAMES

I'm taking all of you down here. How about that pays for her reading the essay?

PHINEAS

No, I'm paying for that by agreeing to see the doctor.

PERRIN

What are you talking about?

LISSA

We'd love to expand the time bank into La Cañada.

PERRIN

I'll do it for free! What part of free is confusing?

LISSA

It's only fair that you get something back.

PERRIN

I don't need anything back.

LISSA

But reciprocity-

PERRIN

I don't need reciprocity! I need to finish whatever the hell we're doing down here.

JEFF

*(Calling)*

Sorry. We don't have the key.

*(They hear the ECHO of "key.")*

LISSA

April, why don't you get some photos for us.

*(APRIL starts taking flash photos.  
PERRIN covers her eyes.)*

JEFF

*(To Lynn)*

Now we know where she is, we can find the key and rescue her.

LISSA

It's still polluted down here, right?

JAMES

Less so since La Cañada went on sewer. But, yes, we're in the plume.

PERRIN

Plume of what?

JAMES

Water contaminated with rocket fuel, from the first tests.

PHINEAS

And the reason our father killed himself.

JAMES

*(Angry)*

That's not why.

PHINEAS

Defiling sacred waters gave him nightmares.

JAMES

It was working on the missile tests that gave him the nightmares!

PHINEAS

And the chemicals they dumped into holes in the ground.

PERRIN

*(On edge)*

Lynn, Jeff, don't touch the walls.

PHINEAS

*(To James)*

Does she know the history?

JAMES

Her dad was a rocket guy.

PHINEAS

Perhaps that's why she can't sleep.

PERRIN

My father didn't have anything to do with the pollution!

PHINEAS

Are you sure?

*(PHINEAS opens his canteen and catches trickling water from the walls and drinks.)*

LISSA

What are you doing? If that's polluted...

PHINEAS

Cancer, the price my family pays for its absolution, awful truths absorbed into my cells, my body full of reckoning.

JAMES

The water doesn't give you cancer. It was the booze that gave you cancer! The pollution is measured in parts per billion, you idiot. "Billion," with a "B."

LISSA

Phineas! You have cancer?

PHINEAS

Unlike most, I don't pretend my cells are clean. We're all part of the stream, the pollution of past flowing into present, one generation flowing into the next. Until we clean these waters, the Echo Princess will live here and everything will...

*(Calling into the tunnel)*

Repeat.

*(They hear the ECHO of "repeat.")*

PHINEAS

Isn't that right, Mrs. Reinhart?

PERRIN

Lynn, bring Jeff. We're going.

LYNN

But mom-

PERRIN

Bring the lantern!

PHINEAS

*(To Lissa)*

We clean the water with the stories we tell, which is why the education center is important. We clean the water with truth. Isn't that right, Mrs. Reinhart?

PERRIN

Lynn, let's go!

JEFF

*(Calling)*

Goodbye!

*(They hear an ECHO of "goodbye.")*

LYNN

But-

PERRIN

I'm not listening to this.

(PERRIN hustles her children out, leaving the others listening to the water TRICKLE down the walls.)

SCENE 10

(MUIR HIGH SCHOOL, GARDEN, DAY - RAPHAEL stands in front of a twenty-pound bag of compost leaning against the bed of soil. A wheelbarrow, garden knife, and shovels are next to him. JASMINE watches from a distance unseen. RAPHAEL takes the knife, drops to his knees, and thrusts it into the bag, several times. He gets up, kicks the bag, and flips over the wheelbarrow. The shovels clatter. He sees JASMINE frozen and approaches her.)

RAPHAEL  
(*Angry*)

What are you looking at?

JASMINE  
(*Angry*)

Don't you be giving me attitude 'cuz the school got rid of your teacher! They fired Mrs. Johnson last week, and you don't see me go tearing up shit.

(*beat*)

RAPHAEL  
Why you so loud all the time, girl?

JASMINE  
I am loud because no one listens to me! I want people to listen to me. People listen to me I be quiet.

(*beat*)

No one sees me either.

RAPHAEL  
What are you talking about? People see you coming a mile away.

JASMINE

Naw, I mean for real.

RAPHAEL

What you want people to see you as?

JASMINE

A dancer. A good dancer.

(beat)

I got some money.

RAPHAEL

Tomorrow. I don't want to sell to you today.

SCENE 11

(CONFERENCE ROOM, NIGHT - LISSA faces a semi-circle of chairs. Against one leans her painting. RAPHAEL slouches next to TALLIE who knits. EMILIA waits next to APRIL, who stares at the floor. JAMES stands with his back to the group next to a large trash can and table on which there is a tray of snacks. PHINEAS glances from JAMES to LISSA. The many empty chairs have presence.)

LISSA

(To Emilia)

*Perdŭn. Yo soy Lissa.*

EMILIA

I speak English.

LISSA

Oh. I assumed because April translated for you at the meeting.

EMILIA

I like reminding those commissioners other people might come if they had translators.

LISSA

April's been doing a great job...She said you might be moving soon?

EMILIA

Rents are getting too high in Pasadena.

LISSA

Would April be able to stay at Muir?

EMILIA

Depends on the bus schedule.

LISSA

*(Pause)*

I coordinate the Arroyo Seco Time Bank. We've been talking to a few landlords about trading labor for lower rent.

JAMES

*(Sarcastic)*

I'd like to hear those conversations.

PHINEAS

*(To Lissa)*

I dragged him here. He's bent sideways about what happened in the tunnel.

LISSA

Lynn's mom seemed upset.

JAMES

*(To Phineas)*

It wasn't the time or place.

PHINEAS

Brother, it's sweet you're looking for someone to play disc golf with after I'm gone.

JAMES

Why didn't you keep it to groundwater?

PHINEAS

The cleanup is about more than groundwater.

TALLIE

Are they done with that?



JAMES

Eighteen more years.

TALLIE

Eighteen years?

PHINEAS

Drop by drop is the only way, up to the surface, pull out the poison, then send the water back down to join the flow.

(RAPHAEL yawns.)

RAPHAEL

Man, this is worse than school.

TALLIE

(*To Lissa*)

Muir just let go his favorite teacher.

LISSA

Mr. Pendorf? April, what's happening with the garden?

APRIL

They closed it. The garden doesn't work without him.

(Uncomfortable silence.)

LISSA

I guess we should get started. I invited some other people from our conservation group, but...something must have come up.

EMILIA

(*Sarcastic*)

Of course...something came up.

LISSA

I thought it would be good to think long term...about shared goals...find a solution that would leave everyone satisfied.

EMILIA

I'm not interested in everyone.

TALLIE

That's obvious.

LISSA

I thought perhaps we could identify other spaces.

EMILIA

There are no other spaces.

TALLIE

There were before they put in the 210 freeway. If they can bulldoze our neighborhood, they can knock down a few houses for some more parks.

JAMES

Keep that out of Altadena. We have too many historic homes.

TALLIE

James, is it really about historic homes or wanting to keep kids out of your neighborhood.

JAMES

Can't it be both?

TALLIE

Phin, please don't tell me he's turned into that person.

PHINEAS

I told him the Altadena hermit thing has gone out of style.

JAMES

It's about appreciating craftsmanship; it's about beauty.

TALLIE

Black is still beautiful, James.

LISSA

If we could just focus. I know there's something we haven't thought of.

EMILIA

We'll leave it to you then to tell us what to do. You seem good at that. April, let's go.

(EMILIA and APRIL stand up to go.)

LISSA

No, wait. Please.

EMILIA

You just want to keep us "ignorant" people out, so you can watch your birds and ride your horses without having look at people like me.

LISSA

No, I want to bring you in.

EMILIA

We don't need your permission.

LISSA

I didn't say you did.

EMILIA

You said you wanted to "bring us in."

LISSA

That's not what I meant.

EMILIA

It's just what you said.

LISSA

I'm sorry. I used the wrong words.

TALLIE

Telling folks where they can and can't go in this town has a history. It would be nice if new people, new groups, moving in remembered that.

EMILIA

This was happening to Mexicans here way before there were any blacks.

TALLIE

We would have come out to California sooner, but we were... delayed.

EMILIA

It wasn't my people who had slaves.

TALLIE

And I suppose all those Indians who were out here just dropped dead on their own.

RAPHAEL

(To April)

Do you know what they're talking about?

APRIL

I want to do my homework.

EMILIA

(To April)

This is homework, *hija*. They don't teach you this in school. The labor camps below Raymond Hill with all the Mexicans locked behind a chain-link fence.

TALLIE

The city chasing out black homeowners with redevelopment.

EMILIA

(To Lissa)

White women like you giving us white bread and telling us to eat hot dogs to be more American.

LISSA

But that's not me.

EMILIA

(To April)

Latinos founded Pasadena, *hija* Arturo Bandini married Helen Elliot...

APRIL

I know. You've told me.

JAMES

The Bandini-Elliot mansion. They built a beautiful craftsman home, and Caltech, in all its far-sighted wisdom, decided to tear down.

EMILIA

Why?

JAMES

Parking.

EMILIA

*Claro.*

RAPHAEL

Now I want to do homework. That's how boring this is.

TALLIE

You have enough time pick seeds from the center of a pumpkin, you have time to learn a little history.

RAPHAEL

You want me to care about dead people, you have to pay me.

EMILIA

No, *hijo*, the past is important because if you want the city to do something, you have to know what's happened before.

TALLIE

Otherwise you get the nicest blow off you can imagine. All polite, on letterhead.

EMILIA

Council defers to staff and staff defers to council...You can never tell what's going on.

TALLIE

You say anything, word gets back that you're a troublemaker, and no one answers your calls.

EMILIA

*Eso.* The Pasadena Way.

TALLIE

And you always ask for more than you need, just so you can walk out with something.

LISSA

That hasn't been my experience with the city.

EMILIA

Of course that hasn't been your experience with the city!

PHINEAS

I'm so glad you're all talking.

(LISSA picks up her painting.)

LISSA

Tallie, I was thinking about what you said about jobs. One of Muir's academies is environmental science, and I thought what if we set up a junior ranger program, pay youth from the neighborhood to work at the education center we want to build and take care of the park. Everybody wins.

EMILIA

You are doing it again.

LISSA

What?

EMILIA

You want us to be gardeners.

LISSA

No, biologists.

EMILIA

That's not realistic. We want them to be lawyers, doctors...

LISSA

What makes a biologist less real than a lawyer?

EMILIA

That's not what their families want them to do.

JAMES

I work outside every day. I don't see what's wrong with it.

TALLIE

But that's your choice. It's different when you're forced.

LISSA

No one's forcing anything.

EMILIA

You are forcing our children to go on walks where you tell them what to care about. Why not get them into the park for something they already want to do, like soccer, and let them discover it on their own?

LISSA

That's why April should be able to go to college, so she can discover what she wants to do on her own.

EMILIA

She needs a job, a real job.

LISSA

But she can't become a lawyer or doctor without college.

EMILIA

And I can't keep a roof over her head her without another paycheck coming in! How is she going to pay for college? And then she hears from people like you that she should go to art school? And why are you telling her she has to spend her money at the Farmer's Market? Who are you to tell us? You're not her mother.

(beat)

TALLIE

You're not her mother either.

EMILIA

Pardon me.

TALLIE

(To April)

Your mother was Keisha, wasn't she?

(APRIL nods.)

TALLIE

Twenty years ago my friend Vonnie comes over, tells me her niece is getting married. Says that Keisha is so happy, that her guy is Mexican, but so long as Keisha has that big smile on her face, Vonnie's happy. When Keisha got sick and passed, we heard there was a relative who was going to take the children, because I guess your brother-

EMILIA

It's complicated.

TALLIE

Yes, everything is complicated.

EMILIA

Family first.

TALLIE

That's right. But family can be more than blood. You get what I'm saying?

(APRIL starts to cry.)

RAPHAEL

Dang, man, you're making her cry. See what happens when you talk about all that past bullshit.

EMILIA

De que estado en México viene su familia?

RAPHAEL

They're not from Mexico. Mom is from Honduras, dad from El Salvador.

LISSA

Jalisco.

EMILIA

What?

LISSA

Jalisco. That's the state that my husband's family is from. His last name is Navarro. And he earns a living as a cameraman for the studios. That's why I suggested art school...Because there are jobs, real jobs, for people who like to take pictures.

PHINEAS

The truth is always more complex and lovely than we can imagine. And so we bury it, under layers and layers and layers of sand, and the only way to find it again is to dig a tunnel. Isn't that right brother?

(JAMES gets up and leaves.  
PHINEAS follows.)

LISSA

I'm sorry. I...I don't know...I was trying to help.



EMILIA

If you could help, those chairs wouldn't be empty.

(EMILIA gets up and moves to leave. APRIL stays seated.)

EMILIA

April, *ven ac*.

(APRIL gets up and leaves with EMILIA.)

TALLIE

(*To Raphael*)

Now it's time for you to do your homework.

(TALLIE and RAPHAEL leave. LISSA still holds her painting. She rises, lifts the tray of snacks in her arms, and as she leaves, drops her painting in the trash.)

## ACT II

### SCENE 1

(PARK, WILLOWS, NIGHT - FROGS and TADPOLES scatter as a deer comes to the pool to drink. A loud HIP-HOP RING TONE chases the deer away. The voices of JASMINE and RAPHAEL come from off stage.)

RAPHAEL

Man, turn that off! You're going to get us caught.

JASMINE

(*Loud*)

Don't be telling me to be quiet! You invited me, remember.

RAPHAEL

For your eyes, not your mouth.

(RAPHAEL, JAMAAL, JASMINE, and APRIL enter with flashlights. The sound of a HELICOPTER passes above them.)

JASMINE

I got mud on my shoes...and that is not okay. Do you hear me?

RAPHAEL

Dang girl, the cops in the helicopter can hear you.

JAMAAL

Danae's dad flies the ones that land over behind Jack in the Box.

RAPHAEL

So.

JAMAAL

He could zap you with that infrared camera, you try to date his daughter.

RAPHAEL

Let him. I don't need his permission.

*(To April)*

You sure you know where you're taking us?

APRIL

No.

RAPHAEL

You said you knew where they keep the horses.

APRIL

I do, but I don't know how to get there from over here.

JAMAAL

We get caught, we're all getting expelled.

APRIL

Why don't we just ask someone?

RAPHAEL

To give us a horse for homecoming? Girl, you crazy.

They might say "yes."

APRIL

(HELICOPTER sounds. A roving spotlight misses them. Sound and light disappears. RAPHAEL feels his waist.)

Oh man. Those branches must have snagged my jacket.

RAPHAEL

Where you going?

JAMAAL

I gotta get my jacket, bro. Just keep going. I'll find you.

RAPHAEL

(JAMAAL, JASMINE and APRIL exit. RAPHAEL moves back through the willows. The MOUNTAIN LION appears and stares at RAPHAEL. RAPHAEL freezes.)

You want a piece of me?

RAPHAEL  
(*Tough*)

(*Realizing*)

Damn. You want a piece of me. I am not Mexican food, okay. I'm Central American.

(The MOUNTAIN LION lies down and watches him. RAPHAEL waves his arms and makes NOISE. The LION is unimpressed. PHINEAS enters.)

Irusan, leave him be. Away with you.

PHINEAS

(*to Mountain Lion*)

(The MOUNTAIN LION exits.)

You're the dude from that meeting?

RAPHAEL  
(*beat*)

I scared him off for you. What did you call it?

PHINEAS

Irusan, an Irish name for King of the Cats, I have been tracking him for some time. He is my guide.

RAPHAEL

To what?

PHINEAS

Death. The eyes of cats look into both worlds. Curious he should bring us together here. Are you lost?

RAPHAEL

No, man. I'm not lost. I just don't know where I am. I left my...

(PHINEAS hands him his jacket.)

RAPHAEL

...jacket. You homeless?

PHINEAS

Far from homeless. That crooked cottonwood is my current abode.

RAPHAEL

How is this place to sleep? Seems peaceful.

PHINEAS

The space is quite commodious if you are in need.

RAPHAEL

It's all right. But my family moves around a lot, so you never know.

(beat)

Man, what is this place?

PHINEAS

A nature reserve, rocket launch site, disc golf course, water conservation area, summer camp, and flood control basin--a floor wax and dessert topping rolled into one. As befits our encounter, it is a place of discovery.

RAPHAEL

Looks like a giant sandbox.

PHINEAS

That is from the floods. This is a place where the rain gods rule. The river carries sediment and leaves it like Santa Claus behind the dam.

RAPHAEL

What do you do when it floods?

PHINEAS

Go swimming. There is a nice piece of re-bar in the canyon that I hang from to let the flood waters shake me.

RAPHAEL

So, you're crazy.

PHINEAS

To embrace the flood is to absorb its powers. From chaos, comes creativity; behind death is young life nipping at its heels. Irusan knows that, as do I. Perhaps you do as well. And what is your story?

RAPHAEL

I don't have a story.

PHINEAS

A man without a story. That's a problem.

RAPHAEL

I'm a businessman.

PHINEAS

And what business would that be?

RAPHAEL

I'm looking for a horse.

PHINEAS

Ah, you are from Muir.

RAPHAEL

Yeah.

PHINEAS

This is for homecoming.

Yeah.

RAPHAEL

You're trying to impress a girl.

PHINEAS

How did you-

RAPHAEL

Follow me.

PHINEAS

(PHINEAS and RAPHAEL exit. The HELICOPTER sounds return and fade. Spotlight on TALLIE in her home sorting laundry. She smells something and searches for its source. She finds it in Raphael's sheets. Her shoulders slump.)

(Lights out on TALLIE. Dim light up on PHINEAS, RAPHAEL, JASMINE, JAMAAL, and APRIL, now at the stables.)

An inspired idea, often tried, seldom successful. I think I still have the hoof prints on my chest.

PHINEAS

(A flashlight CLICKS on revealing LYNN and BRANDON.)

Who's there? We're on hold with the police.

LYNN

Lynn?

APRIL

April?

LYNN

How come she knows everybody?

JASMINE

APRIL  
(*To Lynn*)

What are you doing here?

LYNN  
My friend Brandon and I went on a run and decided to come down here to check on my horse.

BRANDON  
Hey everyone.

APRIL  
You have a horse?

LYNN  
He's sweet. You want to see?

APRIL  
These are my friends Jamaal and Raphael.

JASMINE  
Ahem.

APRIL  
And Jasmine. They're from Muir.

LYNN  
Phineas?

PHINEAS  
Irusan is out tonight, Miss Lynn, in case you wish to ride.

LYNN  
(*To April*)  
Why are you here?

(APRIL looks at RAPHAEL.)

JASMINE  
Come on, people. This is for the school!

RAPHAEL  
(*Sheepish*)  
We have this big homecoming assembly coming up, and we're the Mustangs and we wanted to see if someone would let us borrow a horse.

LYNN

At night?

RAPHAEL

We thought we'd figure out which one would work best before we, uh, asked permission.

LYNN

I can show you Paca and you can see if he would work.

*(thinking)*

But you'd have to do something for me.

APRIL

What?

*(LYNN looks at BRANDON.)*

LYNN

I need you to wear some costumes. It's for my little brother.

*(beat)*

Do you need me to teach you to ride? I volunteer for MACH-1. They take disabled kids out on horseback.

JAMAAL

Now that would impress Danae. Throw her on the horse and ride away into the sunset.

RAPHAEL

Her dad would never find us.

*(A spotlight fixes on RAPHAEL and a helicopter WHIFFS overhead. RAPHAEL, JAMAAL, JASMINE, and APRIL scatter. LYNN moves to spotlight and waves to the chopper.)*



SCENE 2

(TALLIE'S LIVING ROOM, DAY -  
TALLIE packs Raphael's sneakers  
into his laundry bag. She stops,  
opens the closet door, and pulls  
out an old shoe box. She takes out  
an old high top sneaker. She  
holds the sole of this sneaker  
against the sole of Raphael's  
sneaker. They are the same size.  
She sighs and puts the sneaker  
away as she hears RAPHAEL enter.)

(RAPHAEL smiles. He holds a cut  
rose and a sheet of paper.)

RAPHAEL

Get along little doggies. Get along! You, Miss Tallie,  
are looking at a *vaquero bravo*. Because I done rode me a  
horse today. My friend Lynn got me up on Big Red. Big  
Red's my horse. And we're just riding along, and it's all  
quiet down there in the park, peaceful. And then we see a  
fox. I don't mean a girl. I mean a real fox! Lynn gets  
all excited. Said she sees coyotes all the time but not  
foxes.

(RAPHAEL holds the rose out her.)

RAPHAEL

And this is for Miss Tallie. Because I got a "B" on my  
math test - a "B," not even a B minus, a B. Cut this from  
one of those rose bushes in the garden at school.

(RAPHAEL sees his things.)

TALLIE

(*quietly*)

I need for you to go...I told you. We don't have that in  
this house.

RAPHAEL

(*Pause*)

What?

TALLIE

I know what marijuana smells like. You lied to me.

RAPHAEL

It's medical. I hurt my back.

TALLIE

Another lie.

RAPHAEL

Come on, it's just some weed.

TALLIE

You're not the first person who's said that in this house.

RAPHAEL

You're kicking me out?

TALLIE

*(Sad)*

Is Jamaal using?...No, don't tell me because I can't believe you anyway.

RAPHAEL

You're sending me back to the street?

TALLIE

Lord knows, I don't want to.

RAPHAEL

Then don't. Don't. You want me to say I'm sorry. I'm sorry. *Lo siento*. I'll never do it again.

TALLIE

Stop it. Every time you lie, you're breaking my heart.

RAPHAEL

Fine. I don't need you. I don't need anybody. You're just like her! You want me to fail, so you can say I'll never be anything. That I'm just like him. That I'm not better than you. Don't you want me better?

*(Breaking down)*

Ain't mothers supposed to want me better?

TALLIE

I do not want you to fail. But you have broken faith with me. And I need my faith.

RAPHAEL

So this is a God thing?

TALLIE

Without faith you can't put two sticks together.

*(Pained)*

And...there is a history...here...in this place, on this ground, and I have to believe that all these years...some good has come from that. That we've made progress.

RAPHAEL

Your people's history. Not mine.

TALLIE

Do you even know the history of your people? Do you even know the history of your parents?

RAPHAEL

Not important.

TALLIE

You so busy running away from them, you running away from yourself. But history is in your bones. How you gonna run away from your bones when they're what's movin' your legs?

RAPHAEL

Isn't God supposed to be about forgiveness?

TALLIE

The last twenty years, my whole life has been about forgiveness. I've forgiven Tremain for what happened to my son, forgiven his friends...And I still can't forgive myself...for not loving my son more or loving him right. That's the pain I live with. But until you feel the wrong and move to make it right, I can't forgive. There's a wall that keeps God's love from flowing through me into you. And without forgiveness, there's no fresh start.

RAPHAEL

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, all right.

TALLIE

I don't need your apology. I need my faith...not that you'll always do right, but that when you do wrong, you will make it right.

*(Pause)*

Give me back my faith and you can stay.

SCENE 3

(PARK, STABLES, DAY - LISSA sits at a picnic table and draws plant cuttings on a sketch pad. MONICA enters. LISSA notices but keeps drawing.)

MONICA

*(Subdued)*

We won. The commission is recommending the council pull the soccer field.

LISSA

*(Uninterested)*

Congratulations.

MONICA

What are you doing?

LISSA

Phineas is helping me make a field guide for my daughter. It's going to be a girl.

MONICA

That's nice.

LISSA

Since pictures will be all that's left one day. You know all it takes is one generation not being able to come here. We lose that experience, that thread, people will forget how important it is.

MONICA

I know.

LISSA

Anyway, I figure when it's gone, pictures will help my daughter believe all my park stories.

(beat)

We missed you at the open space meeting.

MONICA

Look, if we try to solve every problem, we won't solve any.

(Pause)

You're having a daughter, but this park is the only child I'll ever have. It was the orphan that I took in, watching over it takes everything I have.

LISSA

Isn't there anything that gives you faith in other people?

MONICA

My faith isn't the issue. It's the faith of these trees. It's the faith of the mountain lion. See humans the way they see us. Theirs is the faith we've broken. When we do something that justifies their faith, that's when things change. Anyway, I wanted to post an announcement on the website and need your password.

LISSA

"Mosaic."

MONICA

It would be nice to have your help.

LISSA

I'm sure Adam can take care of it.

MONICA

Adam and I broke up.

LISSA

I'm sorry.

MONICA

Me too.

(beat)

LISSA

Come with me to the Muir homecoming. They're plowing under the garden. You should see it before it disappears.

(LISSA gets up and gives her a hug.)

LISSA  
Remember some things are beyond our control.

SCENE 4

(PARK, SUNSET OVERLOOK PARKING LOT, NIGHT - RAPHAEL talks with a well-dressed OMAR.)

RAPHAEL  
Naw, man, she don't do that?

OMAR  
She might if you asked her? She got you dressin' up like some dude from outer space.

RAPHAEL  
That was for her little brother.

OMAR  
Get her to smoke a bowl. Use some of that charm I taught you.

RAPHAEL  
It's not like that.

OMAR  
Forget her if she don't want you. Just get her to invite you to a party. Meet a few people. La Cañada is some serious money.

RAPHAEL  
Man, listen to me!

(Pause)  
You know you can watch the sun go down on the park from here. They call this the Sunset Overlook. It's peaceful.

OMAR  
Boy, what the hell are you talking about?

(RAPHAEL holds out a bag of marijuana.)

RAPHAEL

I don't need this anymore.

OMAR

What's that? You buying from someone else now.

RAPHAEL

No, man, I'm out. I'm done selling.

OMAR

You playing. You playing me.

(beat)

You think it's that simple? I just put cash down on extra because you and me were going to branch out into La Cañada, into high end. Now you're leaving me hanging.

RAPHAEL

I'm sorry, man.

OMAR

Sorry. Sure as shit you sorry. One sorry, dumb-ass Mexican punk-

RAPHAEL

I'm not Mexican-

OMAR

Drivin' your junkyard special, workin' your crappy job takin' tickets, cause that's all you good for, takin' tickets. I let you into the big show and you walkin' out on me?

RAPHAEL

Take it.

OMAR

It ain't all here. This coming back there better be some money with it.

RAPHAEL

I'll get it to you.

OMAR

No, you get it to me now.

RAPHAEL

I'm good for it.

OMAR

That's not the way this is going down. Give me your shoes.

RAPHAEL

No, man.

OMAR

Boy, you creating a problem for yourself. Give me your goddamn shoes!

RAPHAEL

No!

OMAR

I know where you staying. You want peace. You gonna get some war, you don't get those Jordans off your feet.

(A SPOTLIGHT hits them and HELICOPTER sounds fill the air, along with flashing lights and a SIREN.)

OMAR

SHOES!

(RAPHAEL takes his shoes off and shovels them to OMAR who bolts away. RAPHAEL jumps from the overlook and heads into the park.)

#### SCENE 5

(PERRIN'S LIVING ROOM, NIGHT - LYNN paces in front of ADAM and PERRIN. The bottle of vodka sits on the counter with glasses and an ice bucket, along with a scattered pile of invitations. There is anxious silence before anyone speaks.)

ADAM

Honey, you know whatever it is, you can tell us.



LYNN

You won't think it's important.

ADAM

Of course, we'll think it's important.

PERRIN

We just want you to tell us.

LYNN

*(Pause)*

Fine...You need to go with Jeff to see his fort.

ADAM

Huh?

PERRIN

What do you really want to tell us?

LYNN

That's it.

ADAM

What fort?

LYNN

The fort his Tom Sawyer group made in the park.

*(ADAM and PERRIN exhale.)*

ADAM

*(To Perrin)*

I thought she was coming

---

PERRIN

*(To Adam)*

I thought she was pregnant.

LYNN

You are both out of your minds.

*(beat)*

Don't you get that Jeff's comic book is about you? You're the Echo Princess and you're the Alien. Ever since we went down in that tunnel, he's been desperate to find the golden key. I thought once we acted out the comic book, he would chill out. But it just made it worse. Look, you don't have to worry about me. The end of this year, I'll head off to college or join the Army-

ADAM  
You're not joining-

PERRIN  
You're not joining-

LYNN  
Or whatever. But Jeff has to live here. You know the only other thing he does besides his comic book is play Angry Birds on the computer. The next comic book...it won't be a love story. Now get it together and go look at his fort!

PERRIN  
Jeff is fine.

LYNN  
He's not fine. And he'll get worse once you take him out of camp.

ADAM  
Why would you take him out of camp?

PERRIN  
The park is dangerous.

ADAM  
He's with a group.

PERRIN  
And what happens when he runs off to look for this stupid key, which, you know, isn't out of the realm of possibility. There are mountain lions for god's sake.

LYNN  
(*To Perrin*)  
It's not fair. You've got us on lockdown. Why do you think I sneak out of the house? By the way, I know that you know that I broke the gate.

ADAM  
You broke the gate?

PERRIN  
I told you. This is what I'm talking about.

LYNN

And she didn't even talk with me about it.

PERRIN

I was trying to give you space.

LYNN

By following me around with binoculars.

PERRIN

I'm sorry for trying to make sure you're okay.

ADAM

Binoculars?

PERRIN

Maybe if you'd spend more time with your kids.

ADAM

I'm...sorry. I'm trying to find life on another planet.

LYNN

Aren't Jeff and I life enough?

*(beat)*

PERRIN

*(To Adam)*

There are other things you don't know. She got a "D" on her calculus test.

ADAM

How could you get a "D"? You're good at math.

LYNN

Calculus isn't math. It's a foreign language.

PERRIN

And she wants to cut class on Friday to go to this homecoming assembly at Muir.

LYNN

*(Sarcastic)*

Can't have the daughter of the fundraising chair cutting class. What would people think?

PERRIN

Maybe someday you'll appreciate that people give money to make sure you get a decent education.

LYNN

Maybe someday parents will stop being all OCD about school, and kids can actually enjoy life instead of hanging at Panda Express complaining how there's nothing to do. Muir Homecoming is the real deal, and I want to see it.

PERRIN

You don't know what could happen down there.

LYNN

*(Sarcastic)*

Oh my god. Something...unpredictable...with people who are different.

PERRIN

You should worry about your own school.

LYNN

I am worrying about my school.

*(To Adam)*

You told me one of the conditions for life to exist is having enough variation so that evolution can do its thing.

ADAM

So?

LYNN

Our school, this neighborhood, this whole town doesn't have enough variation.

PERRIN

Come on. What about all the Korean students?

LYNN

That's not what I'm talking about. Everyone has the same amount of money.

PERRIN

They do not.

LYNN

You're right. They either have enough or more than enough.

ADAM

And that's a problem?

LYNN

Yes.

(beat)

That's why I wanted to go on the Mexico trip. If I can't cross the border, I'm at least crossing the Arroyo.

(beat)

I don't want to be scared of the world.

PERRIN

Muir isn't safe.

LYNN

You don't know anything about Muir. April's going to show me their garden.

PERRIN

Lynn-

LYNN

It took a week to get her to talk to me after you ripped her essay.

PERRIN

Not everyone is cut out for college.

LYNN

Is that you or the vodka?

ADAM

I thought we were talking about Jeff.

LYNN

We are. Go look at his fort and spend more time with him.

PERRIN

(To Lynn)

You want to know why I put up that gate and why I follow you around? I was just like you, good at math. And I was bored just like you, snuck out this house to find some excitement. But once I found it, this smart girl got stupid. And when my father found out I was pregnant...He

said it would damage his position at the lab, his standing in the community. And my mother went along, didn't even ask how I felt. Then she drove me to the clinic, sat there in the waiting room until I was through. Didn't say anything. Not one word.

*(Pause)*

That's why I fight with you. I would kill for you. And you're goddamn well going to know it!

*(Pause)*

You're going to be smart and tough, and you're going to get into a good college and no man is going to push you around.

LYNN

Dad's not pushing me. He's not here enough to push me. You're the one who's pushing me around.

*(beat)*

ADAM

*(To Perrin)*

Your mom didn't say anything, but she's the one who sat in that waiting room. Your dad...I can't say anything about him.

PERRIN

But you're doing the same thing he did. Living the same way.

ADAM

God, I hope not.

*(To Lynn)*

And I would be here enough to push you, but...your mother and I...we've always had a hard time loving each other.

LYNN

Be honest. I've had a hard time. You've always cared. It's me that's not sure.

ADAM

*(To Lynn)*

But sweetheart, you have to know that you and Jeff are what both of us love most in the world.

LYNN

Goddamn it! Then prove it. Go see his fort and come with me to homecoming.

SCENE 6

(PARK, OAKS, NIGHT - The DEER enters the clearing. The MOUNTAIN LION tackles it and kills it by the throat. PHINEAS watches unseen.)

(PARK, OAKS, MORNING - BRANDON holds hands with a group of Tom Sawyer CAMPERS including JEFF around a recently planted oak seedling. APRIL stands to the side and takes a photo.)

BRANDON

What should we name it?

JEFF

Pepperoni Pizza.

BRANDON

All right. All together.

GROUP

Trees need people. People need trees. Welcome to the world Pepperoni Pizza.

SCENE 7

(PARK, WILLOWS, MORNING - RAPHAEL sleeps under a canopy of willows. PHINEAS stands over him covering his body in willow stalks. A small satchel sits on the ground. RAPHAEL wakes in a panic and knocks the willow stalks away.)

RAPHAEL

What is...where am...I?

PHINEAS

You, my dear friend, are in the fort of the Crumpet-Eating Zombies, a most ferocious gang of eight year-old boys.

RAPHAEL

Man, can't you go find some berries for breakfast.

PHINEAS

Why don't you? I showed you what to look for.

RAPHAEL

My feet are all cut up.

PHINEAS

Yes, you are quite the tenderfoot.

RAPHAEL

What are all these branches and shit?

PHINEAS

*Salix lasiolepis*, the Arroyo willow.

RAPHAEL

Willow?

PHINEAS

The neighbor Indians called the people that lived here the Kiz'h [Kish]--the people of the willow branch--because they built their houses out of these willows, that spring back up after a flood, after all that sand and water rushes through. You know, it's the roots that hold them in place.

(As PHINEAS talks he ties a willow stalk into a hoop and begins weaving stalks together to fill its middle.)

PHINEAS

As willow people, it was Kiz'h's stories that gave them roots. Have you figured out your story yet?

RAPHAEL

I ain't got no roots. My mom is moving us around all the time.

PHINEAS

Perhaps starting over is your story. Seems you know a lot about how to make something out of nothing.



RAPHAEL

That's all I've got now: a whole bunch of nothing.

PHINEAS

Is that any different than before?

RAPHAEL

I had shoes before!

(PHINEAS pulls a pair of moccasins from the satchel. RAPHAEL puts them on.)

PHINEAS

You never begin from absolute zero.

(beat)

The key to starting over for this place has always been the floods. That sand and rock so kind to slice your feet was once part of those mountains and for millions of years the sediment has ridden the floods out across the flats. And sparkling on all those sand grains are the nutrients that feed new life, pure potential.

RAPHAEL

When's the next one? I'll get a ticket.

PHINEAS

Hard to say when or in who the flood will start. Most of us have done to our souls what they've done to the river, checked it behind a dam or between two walls so all the freshness that comes with a flood never touches our lives. But in this park, the flood still holds sway, waters and souls and imagination still run free, and the willows grab this sparkling sand and turn it into new life. Good stories are trees branching out toward sunlight.

RAPHAEL

I told you. I don't have a story.

PHINEAS

Are you sure? You're living with a most important person in the willow clan. You need to listen to her.

*(Pause)*

When that flood came through Tallie's life and Amir died, Tallie put everything she had into her roots, trying to hold all the little grains of this community together, trying to make new life for people.

RAPHAEL

Has she always been a God person?

PHINEAS

She sang in the choir in high school.

RAPHAEL

What about you?

PHINEAS

I attend the church of the well-placed shade tree.

RAPHAEL

You really went to high school with her?

PHINEAS

You want to learn about some real roots, go to the alumni museum at Muir. My brother helped set it up.

RAPHAEL

What should I do now?

PHINEAS

Start walking.

SCENE 8

(SOCCER FIELD - VILLA PARKE COMMUNITY CENTER, DAY. EMILIA and LISSA sit watching a soccer match. Underneath a folding table is a box of cheap snacks and a flat of bottled water. We hear SHOUTS in Spanish from players and the occasional WHISTLE.)

LISSA

What do you call what that guy is doing?

EMILIA

Dribbling. That's the first thing they teach. Always be in touch with ball. I tell my kids to imagine their spirit as the ball and life as the field. Never lose touch with the ball.

(LOUD WHISTLE.)

EMILIA

Okay.

(EMILIA gets up and starts arranging snacks and water on the table.)

EMILIA

You said you wanted to help. So help.

(LISSA helps EMILIA. She takes a bag of BBQ Doritos and looks at the ingredients.)

LISSA

You know I might be able to get fruit donated through the Farmer's Market.

EMILIA

Is there something wrong with these snacks?

LISSA

It's just...there are healthier options.

EMILIA

Are you saying I'm ignorant?

LISSA

(*Frustrated*)

No...I'm saying that there are many factors that play into the choice of snacks and that most of those factors are economic and that I might be able offset the costs so we can provide healthier options.

EMILIA

You want to tell them they get carrots instead of Doritos. Good luck with that. When I have more time, I make tamales.

LISSA

I'm sure they're delicious.

(beat)

So, if kids came to an education center at Hahamongna what would you tell them?

EMILIA

What do you mean?

LISSA

You said that I wanted to force kids to care about certain things. What would you tell them?

EMILIA

I'd tell them about the Mexican homesteaders who lived in the Arroyo and about Doña Eulalia Perez de Guillen, the first owner of Pasadena. You know even La Cañada, half the kids in their first little schoolhouse were from the Mexican families that picked oranges? What would you tell them?

LISSA

I would tell them about the Englemann Oak. How thousands of years ago, when things started to get warmer, all the other Mexican Blue Oaks left to go back to Mexico. But this oak, with its sweet acorns, decided to stay and all the other trees and plants here welcomed it and made room so this one oak could have a home. And that it's now endangered, and we need to plant more all around the city.

EMILIA

I like that. That's a good story.

LISSA

What if we called it the Environmental Science and Cultural History Center?

EMILIA

I'll think about that.

(beat)

LISSA

Your children played in this league?

EMILIA

They did. Now they play at Muir.

LISSA

That's good.

EMILIA

But the fields at Muir aren't as nice as this one.

(LISSA and EMILIA look at each other.)

LISSA

A million dollars would go a long way to fixing up the fields at Muir.

EMILIA

Lights would let the youth groups use it afterschool.

LISSA

I'm going to homecoming. Are you?

EMILIA

Yes.

LISSA

I'll talk to the city. You talk to the Principal Wright.

SCENE 9

(MUIR HIGH SCHOOL, ALUMNI MUSEUM - RAPHAEL sits at a table and chair with a book. Behind him are shelves with old yearbooks. There are several panels with photo collages on a wall. JAMES enters with PERRIN.)

PERRIN

I wouldn't have pegged you as a school spirit kind of guy.

JAMES

Muir is the only one of the public high schools with an alumni association.

(They notice RAPHAEL.)

JAMES

Oh. I wondered why the door was open.

(RAPHAEL closes the book and gets up to go.)

JAMES

You can stay.

RAPHAEL

I got to get my saddle for homecoming.

(RAPHAEL exits.)

JAMES

Sorry again about my brother.

PERRIN

No. It was actually quite helpful.

JAMES

What year did your mother graduate?

PERRIN

1958.

(JAMES pulls several yearbooks from the bookcase.)

JAMES

Here they are.

(JAMES opens one yearbook, and he and PERRIN look at it together.)

PERRIN

I didn't realize there were so many Japanese students at Muir.

JAMES

Japanese-American. The last part's important. When they got out of the internment camps, this part of the city had the cheapest real estate.

PERRIN

Here she is. She looks so young. What does this mean "Service Award"?

JAMES

Huh. The Key Club gave golden keys to the seniors whose service most benefited the school. She probably raised money selling oranges from the old farm north of the school.

PERRIN

Is there a picture of these key awards somewhere.

(JAMES flips back through the book.)

JAMES

Here. They're holding the keys. And there's your mother.

PERRIN

Can I make a copy of this?

JAMES

I'll take it down to the office. Take as much time as you need. This is what homecoming is for.

(JAMES exits. A moment passes.  
LYNN, APRIL, and JASMINE enter.)

LYNN

Oh my god mom, the garden is amazing. We have to get something like this at La Cañada. April says the teacher who ran it was let go. I told her you would do something, I mean, since you do all that fundraising.

JASMINE

That would be fresh, right, if we got money to bring our teachers back. Make a lot of people happy. Let me show you my mom.

(JASMINE goes over to one of the photo boards.)

JASMINE

There she is.

LYNN

She was a cheerleader?

JASMINE

All turnt up too. You know I'm not trying to be rude or nothing, but I have to get practicing for my routine.

LYNN

And I have to help get Paca ready. April brought her essay.

*(To April)*

See you in bit.

(LYNN exits. APRIL holds her college essay and stands wary by the door.)

PERRIN

April, why do you want to go to college?

APRIL

*(Long pause)*

I don't know.

PERRIN

What will you do if you don't go?

APRIL

I don't know.

PERRIN

What do you want to do?

*(APRIL is silent)*

PERRIN

You know my mother went here.

*(PERRIN holds out the yearbook.)*



PERRIN

That's her. She never knew what she wanted to do, either. Ended up in the typing pool at JPL, where my dad found her... Made her the perfect unhappy housewife.

(beat)

You need a goal. That's what's missing from your essay.

APRIL

But all I like to do is take pictures and draw.

PERRIN

Then write about that.

APRIL

That's nothing.

PERRIN

Turn it into something. There's all kinds of arts groups in Pasadena.

(beat)

You said in your essay that Muir feels like family. What did you mean?

APRIL

It's just like nobody believes in us, nobody thinks we'll do well, and so it's like all we have is each other.

PERRIN

Is that why you're applying?

APRIL

Mr. Pendorf and my friends kept on me. And Lynn made me promise.

PERRIN

And...

APRIL

I think my mom would have liked if I got into college.

PERRIN

I know she would be proud of you. I'm a mother. I know.

(beat)

You really should apply.

APRIL

But you didn't like my essay.

PERRIN

No, I did. You spoke from the heart.

(beat)

But that's just your first draft. You have to write at least three. You should have seen what I did to Lynn's first draft.

SCENE 10

(MUIR HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - Lights up on the MUIR HIGH SCHOOL DRUM CORPS in yellow t-shirts playing a fight song. A CROWD with all the major characters sit in bleachers and hold signs that say "Beat the Dawgs" and "Ring that Bell." Most wear gold and navy football jerseys and wave pom-poms and balloons. The DANCE TEAM does an energetic dance with JASMINE taking the lead. The energy is raucous, beyond a polite pep rally.)

(DANAE steps out after the song. A large bell RINGS in the background.)

DANAE

Give it up y'all for the Drum Corps!

(CROWD ROARS. The next cheer gets louder each time.)

DANAE

Whose house?

CROWD

'Stangs house!

DANAE

Whose house?

CROWD

'Stangs house!

DANAE

WHOSE HOUSE!

CROWD

'STANGS HOUSE!

DANAE

All right y'all. We got one last thing. The best principal in the world has an announcement for us. Let's hear it for Mr. Wright!

(CROWD ROARS.)

WRIGHT

(*Emotional*)

Thank you everyone for coming.

(*Pause*)

I want all the students to know that you are all so important. I want you to know that all the staff and teachers love you.

(*Pause*)

Second...ahem...uh...I don't know how to say this. The new school board has decided, for next year, to change the focus of our school.

(CROWD MURMURS.)

WRIGHT

The plan next year is to lease the campus out as an industrial park. And use some of our rooms for training classes.

EMILIA

What about the students?

WRIGHT

Students who want the training sequence can stay. The others will be re-assigned to other schools.

TREMAIN

What about athletics?

WRIGHT

There won't be an athletics program.

TALLIE

What about college prep?

WRIGHT

Students wanting college prep will be re-assigned.

EMILIA

Why don't you just say it? They are closing our school.

WRIGHT

I'm afraid so.

(People CRY and YELL. WRIGHT  
struggles to hold attention.)

WRIGHT

People...People...PEOPLE! I know this is upsetting. The school board will be holding a meeting to explain their decision a week from Thursday. I will be available to answer questions after the assembly.

(Most exit, angry, dejected,  
leaving only the main characters.)

TALLIE

Principal Wright. Why an industrial park?

WRIGHT

They say the community wants jobs.

TALLIE

But kids shouldn't have to choose between jobs and college.

EMILIA

Why are you telling us today?

TALLIE

Because he wants the alumni to do something about it.

PHINEAS

The alumni who care are dying and don't have any money.

JAMES

And the parcel tax for the school district didn't get enough votes.

TALLIE

Did you vote for it?

JAMES

Yes, I voted for it.

LISSA

I thought test scores were going up.

WRIGHT

Not fast enough.

PENDORF

You can't raise test scores when the students don't come into ninth grade with basic skills.

TREMAIN

These kids are under attack. Broken families, drugs, how we gonna keep these kids out of gangs if we break up the only family they know?

TALLIE

Under threat, under attack, under siege. It's always been that way.

MONICA

That's the story of the park as well. The broken families out there are made of plants and animals.

PERRIN

La Cañada feels that way too.

EMILIA

That's ridiculous. La Cañada has everything.

PERRIN

But that's how people feel. Caltrans built the 210 freeway through the middle of the community and they created the city to defend against that happening again.

PHINEAS

That wasn't the only thing they wanted to defend against.

JAMES

La Cañada always wanted to be select.

PERRIN

True. I think, and I guess I should just speak for myself, people are scared...It's personal insecurity.

TALLIE

About what?

PHINEAS

About death. An old fear. Hard to shake. So many came to Pasadena, La Cañada, Altadena to escape death, for health and a fresh start. But the fear of death led them to confuse health with purity. Anything, and anybody, that didn't meet their particular puritanical standard got pushed out, away, to the margin. Monica knows: health in nature isn't about purity.

MONICA

It's about process.

PHINEAS

It's about connection. You are all the Hahamongna watershed, bound together by what flows underneath.

JAMES

He means groundwater.

PHINEAS

And other things.

WRIGHT

It's hard to change the perception of the school. How do we beat the past?

LISSA

With new stories. New ideas.

TREMAIN

Mentoring programs.

APRIL

And art classes

JASMINE

And dance. Don't be forgetting about dance.

JAMAAL

And the garden.

APRIL

We need to bring back Mr. Pendorf.

(The students in crowd start to chant.)

STUDENTS

Garden! Garden! Garden!

PENDORF

Thank you...I appreciate that.

TREMAIN

During my time it was Mr. Davis. I used to come to this school just for him.

ADAM

I'm not an alum, but I work at JPL. Caltech and JPL could help Muir. It could be the next Bronx Science, a top flight magnet school. I could help.

PERRIN

Where are you going to get the time?

ADAM

*(To Perrin)*

I'll make the time...for these kids and ours.

RAPHAEL

Not just new stories.

TALLIE

What are you saying, Raphael?

RAPHAEL

There are old stories you can use. I know the history. This school's always bouncing back. We got roots.

APRIL

Pride.

Spirit.

DANAE

Whose house?

RAPHAEL

'Stangs house.

APRIL

That's right.

JASMINE

And the integration.

RAPHAEL

Always have had diversity.

JAMES

LISSA

There's the story of the Altadena Community Garden.

PERRIN

And the trail network in La Cañada-Flintridge.

EMILIA

Older stories, like Toypurina, *la indigena* that led a rebellion against the mission.

MONICA

The story of the river and its floods-that's the oldest story of all.

RAPHAEL

This is where I live. They ain't closing my house.

DANAE

Whose house?

GROUP

'Stangs house?

RAPHAEL

Thank you. Forget the Rose Parade. This school is what we should be celebrating on New Years.



TALLIE

That's right people. That's right. We got all the pieces, we just got to figure out how they go together.

PHINEAS

You figure this out, anything is possible.

RAPHAEL

Forget the school board. We come up with our own plan.

JASMINE

*(Clapping with each word)*

That is so tight. You know what I'm saying.

PHINEAS

Dams will crumble and rivers will flow.

WRIGHT

It's a question of money.

EMILIA

Lissa and I think we can get a million dollars from the city for the athletic fields.

LISSA

I know that businesses don't want to give students paid internships. But what if students earned hours through the time bank that business would pay off with donations to the school. Lowers costs for Muir and it's a tax write-off for the business.

WRIGHT

That's good, but it won't be enough.

ADAM

Foothill MWD wanted to send its sewer water down here to drain into the aquifer.

*(Everyone looks at ADAM.)*

ADAM

They might give the school some money.

TREMAIN

They want to send their sewer down here?

ADAM

They need a big space. They thought the athletic fields would be the best place. It happens in tanks, underground.

TALLIE

That is not even in the vicinity of right.

PHINEAS

But that's what this school does. People's mess runs through this place and comes out cleaner than it went in.

TALLIE

The washing of the water. Hmmm.

EMILIA

Does anybody here know people with money?

(PERRIN hesitantly raises her hand.)

PERRIN

I volunteer for the La Cañada Education Foundation. La Cañada parents aren't going to give money to Muir. But they might give to something the two high schools could share.

MONICA

The park is in between the two schools.

LYNN

April and I were saying we should build a horse trail between Muir and La Cañada High.

LISSA

And it could connect to the education center.

MONICA

The park is at the center of watershed and that would make the center-

PHINEAS

The center of the center.

LISSA

It could support classes at both schools-science, history, social studies.

LYNN

Might even make calculus fun.

TALLIE

What was that idea you talked about a jobs program...junior rangers?

LISSA

Train youth to take care of the park.

MONICA

They could clean up all those plastic straw wrappers I hate.

WRIGHT

This all fine, but they're fast tracking the permits for the industrial park to council.

EMILIA

He's right. The school district, the city. We need to get them on our side.

TALLIE

What we need is some of you all to run for school board.

WRIGHT

We need more time.

(Pause)

TALLIE

I know someone who can help. Y'all work on your plan. I've got someone I need to see.

SCENE 11

(PASADENA CITY HALL, COUNCILMEMBER LAYTON'S OFFICE, DAY - COUNCILMEMBER LAYTON sits across his desk from TALLIE and RAPHAEL.)

TALLIE

Thank you for taking the time. I know we don't live in your district.

LAYTON

We live in the same city.

TALLIE  
Yes, we do.

LAYTON  
And this is?

(RAPHAEL and LAYTON shake hands.)

RAPHAEL  
Raphael Rios.

LAYTON  
Pleasure to meet you.

RAPHAEL  
Nice office.

LAYTON  
They take care of us.

RAPHAEL  
Maybe I should run for city council.

LAYTON  
You should.

RAPHAEL  
I'd win too. Because Tallie knows all the black people in town. And the Mexicans would vote for me, even though I'm Central American. Isn't that how it's supposed to work?

LAYTON  
(To Tallie)  
You've found a politician.

TALLIE  
He's always talking. I suppose that's important for a politician.

LAYTON  
Listening is more important. What can I do for you? If it's about the open space issue, I need to wait for the recommendation from the parks commission.

TALLIE

It's something different. But thank you for thinking of that. With the school board trying to close Muir, we thought it would help if-

RAPHAEL

We want to make a new holiday.

LAYTON

A holiday?

TALLIE

A remembrance...of the struggle to integrate our schools.

LAYTON

I don't understand.

TALLIE

We think it would be helpful to mark the desegregation decision...officially.

LAYTON

*(Pause)*

What date was that?

TALLIE

January 23, 1970. I had just found out I was pregnant with Amir. What year were you born?

LAYTON

Seventy-one.

TALLIE

See, you both came into a different world.

RAPHAEL

We made buttons.

*(RAPHAEL gives a button to LAYTON. He eyes it suspiciously.)*

LAYTON

That's a school bus.

TALLIE

That's right.

LAYTON

You said January 23rd. We could organize a ceremony for Martin Luther King Day, maybe a luncheon.

TALLIE

We thought about that but feel this should have its own holiday. We thought September 8th, which was the first day of the busing.

LAYTON

I would think a luncheon would be sufficient.

RAPHAEL

We want a parade.

LAYTON

A parade?

RAPHAEL

Yeah. Like the Rose Parade.

LAYTON

You'd have to talk to the Special Events Office-

RAPHAEL

Get a school bus, all pimped out with flowers, paint it different colors so it's all multicultural and drive around the neighborhoods-

LAYTON

A school bus?

RAPHAEL

Nice and slow, maybe get a marching band or some mariachis. The drum corps from Muir would be down. We thought the bus could start at Muir and end up at PHS.

TALLIE

He likes the parade idea. I told him it would be nice if it could ride through the different neighborhoods to show how busing unified the city.

LAYTON

But it didn't.

TALLIE

That was the hope.

LAYTON

But that's not what happened.

TALLIE

Not completely, but it got things moving in the right direction. And maybe if we remember that every year, we'd move on down that road a little faster.

RAPHAEL

Get on the bus.

LAYTON

I really don't think-

TALLIE

I was out there that first day, with the buses, volunteering with the PTA, telling people where to go. Amir had just been born. And I took him with me, riding against my chest the whole day, on the bus, off the bus, riding around to all the different schools. White, black, Mexican, everybody taking care of each other. Lord, there was a feeling that day, and I told him, "Boy, this, this is your world."

LAYTON

Mrs. Banks, no one wants to talk about busing.

TALLIE

Call me Tallie. You've known me long enough.

RAPHAEL

What's the big deal about busing?

LAYTON

Tallie-

RAPHAEL

I don't get it. What's the big deal?

LAYTON

Tallie, that feeling, it didn't last.

TALLIE

It was a step.

RAPHAEL

Why don't people want to talk about busing?

LAYTON

*(To Raphael)*

Because it had the opposite effect. White people ran away from busing.

TALLIE

They ran away, but it wasn't from the buses.

RAPHAEL

So, let's talk about it.

LAYTON

Tallie, you understand this isn't going to happen. I know things have been hard. But you understand.

RAPHAEL

Why can't we talk about it?

LAYTON

It's not something people want to talk about.

RAPHAEL

Why not?

LAYTON

*(To Raphael)*

It's not how things are done.

RAPHAEL

I don't get you.

LAYTON

People don't want to stir up trouble.

RAPHAEL

You calling me a trouble maker?



LAYTON

This is Pasadena. We don't...We don't publicize problems. Tallie, you know.

TALLIE

Oh, I know. But some problems don't go away. They just keep flowing underground, from one generation to the next, polluting everything. And the only way to clean them up is to do what they doing with that water under that park, bring it to the surface. Not all at once, not that. Just one day a year, bring it up, wash that water, and send it back down, until one day it'll all flow clean.

LAYTON

It would just open old wounds.

TALLIE

Tell me, David, did riding the bus with Amir wound you?

LAYTON

That's not what I meant to say.

TALLIE

Because I'd heard these stories when Amir got home. "David this..." and "David that..." and Amir was always laughing at something you did when he got off that bus.

LAYTON

I can't make this personal.

TALLIE

It was personal when Amir went to the sleep over at your place. I'll tell you it was personal for me driving him over there. I don't think I'd ever been around those big houses east of Lake. Scared me to death. It was personal when you stayed with us and ate my greens, went down to Devil's Gate looking for frogs.

LAYTON

That was just us.

TALLIE

That's why we need a holiday, so it's not just us. So, everybody knows it happened. I had him draw that yellow bus big on the button, so it would look like a sun.

*(Long pause)*

I'm sorry to take up your time. We have one other thing-

*(TALLIE gets up to leave.)*

LAYTON

We have to put all that behind us.

TALLIE

I understand.

LAYTON

We have to concentrate on the future.

RAPHAEL

The future?

TALLIE

Raphael-

RAPHAEL

You're not giving us a future.

TALLIE

Hush.

RAPHAEL

The past isn't behind us. It's around us, like the ocean. We're living it every day. Maybe it's behind you, maybe that's the idea, leave the rest of us behind and not look back.

TALLIE

He's upset that they're closing his school. Raphael, let's not-

RAPHAEL

No, I've done the math. I looked at those school websites. Spend thirty thousand for your own kids, but when it comes to kids that look like me, you buying our school at Wal-Mart.

LAYTON

Take it to the school district. It's not the city's problem.

TALLIE

David, if you could just-

RAPHAEL

Where do you send your kids to school?

LAYTON

That's not the issue.

RAPHAEL

Come on boss, where do they go?

LAYTON

I don't have to justify-

TALLIE

Raphael, I'm trying to ask-

RAPHAEL

Where do they go?

LAYTON

My family isn't the-

RAPHAEL

Private or public?

LAYTON

I don't like it any more than you do, but I have a responsibility to my daughter-

RAPHAEL

That's what I thought. I tell you, you're not leaving me behind. I'm going to run for city council. Get me one of these offices.

*(Pause)*

Nah, I wouldn't like it here. There's no soul.

*(beat)*

TALLIE

The building permits, David.

LAYTON

What building permits?

TALLIE

For the industrial park they want to put at Muir. Delay them. Have the staff put them under review.

LAYTON

What about the holiday?

TALLIE

That seed is planted. And you know me well enough that I'll keep watering it. But right now we need time. We've got to organize the parents. If they're going to close our school, can't be sneaking it through. Give us that, David.

(Pause)

LAYTON

I'll slow it down.

TALLIE

Thank you.

LAYTON

And Mr. Rios.

RAPHAEL

*Sí, señor.*

LAYTON

I think you should run for office.

RAPHAEL

Why?

LAYTON

So I can vote for you.

SCENE 12

(PARK, WILLOWS, NIGHT - Dim light on frogs and TADPOLES at the pool. One TADPOLE has yellow legs. They scatter as lights brighten.)

(PARK, WILLOWS, DAY - Lights up on PERRIN, ADAM, and JEFF in Jeff's fort.)

ADAM

So this is it. The hideout of the Crumpet-Eating Zombies.

JEFF

When people walk by on the road we all go back over here to hide.

PERRIN

Not as big as our house, but a lot of natural light.

ADAM

And no gate.

PERRIN

I'm done with gates.

ADAM

Lynn said that her friend April is going to stay with you.

PERRIN

Just so she can finish the year at Muir.

ADAM

Lynn's excited.

PERRIN

My dad pulled me from my school during my senior year. It was terrible.

ADAM

Jeff, tell mom how your comic book ends.

JEFF

The Echo Princess and the Alien, they go off to the park to live in a fort. And then they have kids, and all the kids live in forts.

PERRIN

Honey, let's not call them forts. Let's call them homes.

ADAM

All made of willow trees.

(Lights down on ADAM, PERRIN, and JEFF. Lights up on PHINEAS and LISSA at the stables sitting at the picnic table.)

PHINEAS

What about the name Airmid [AIR-uh-mid] for your daughter?

LISSA

Airmid?

PHINEAS

The Irish goddess of healing, the mistress of herbal magic.

LISSA

All right.

PHINEAS

She was the keeper of the Well of Health. This was back in the time of fairies.

LISSA

Of course.

PHINEAS

And when warriors died in battle, they put them in the well and brought them back to life.

LISSA

That's helpful.

PHINEAS

But during one battle, much like Hahamongna, her clan's enemies filled the well with stones.

LISSA

What did they do?

PHINEAS

They discovered new magic to win the battle.

LISSA

New magic to defeat death?

PHINEAS

You can't defeat death.

LISSA

Then what should I teach my daughter, so she doesn't become puritanical.

PHINEAS

That love provides a maddening instinct for survival. One of the earliest steps in the evolution of life, love, and very hard to escape from. It quite splashes over everything. We're scared of death because we love life so much.

LISSA

And what happens when there's nothing left to love, when the bulldozers scrape down to bare earth? What do I say?

PHINEAS

That all the cement in this city came from the sediment of these mountains, that in every cinder block are those sparkling grains of sand. Tell her that even on Mars water flows under the surface.

(Lights down on LISSA and PHINEAS.  
Lights up on ADAM, PERRIN, and JEFF  
next to the planted oak seedling.)

PERRIN

Jeff, you planted this?

JEFF

Our group did. It's called Pepperoni Pizza.

ADAM

Looks like an Englemann Oak to me.

PERRIN

New life.

ADAM

"A self-organized chemical system with enough variation for novelty to evolve and a way to transfer that novelty from one generation to the next."

PERRIN

Thank you NASA project manager. What did the director say about the magnet school idea?

ADAM

He was open to it. I told him after we build the next rover, I wouldn't mind working on setting it up.

(JEFF sees LYNN off-stage, in the distance, and yells)

JEFF

Lynn!

PERRIN

(To Jeff)

Go get your sister.

(JEFF exits.)

PERRIN

Do you think there could be any new life for us?

ADAM

The whole premise of the Mars mission is that life isn't some random accident, that understanding more of the mystery will help us treasure what we have. But I need someone who's in love with me.

PERRIN

And I don't want us to become my parents.

(beat)

ADAM

So, imagine if we were strangers and going on a date, the first thing I would tell you is that I have these two amazingly smart and imaginative kids.

PERRIN

And I'd say, "That's funny. So do I."

ADAM

And that would probably get us to a second date.

PERRIN

Probably.



ADAM

Why don't we start there?

PERRIN

At the second date? What's after that?

ADAM

Launch a few probes. Build a robot. Discovery.

PERRIN

Why am I so hot for engineers?

(Lights down on PERRIN and ADAM.  
Lights up on LISSA in the WILLOWS,  
looking into the pool. PHINEAS,  
and TALLIE enter.)

LISSA

The tadpoles loved that new rain we got last night.

TALLIE

Man, there are a lot of them.

(beat)

I need to ask you who to talk with at the city about  
getting Raphael a job here at the park. This place, it  
unlocks something good inside him.

LISSA

Maybe he's our first junior ranger. Let's go to the city  
together.

(PERRIN, ADAM, LYNN, and JEFF  
enter.)

TALLIE

How did your meeting go with the Foundation?

PERRIN

They were intrigued. They need to see other donors getting  
behind the center.

LYNN

Jeff, look at all the tadpoles.

(JAMES enters with his bag of  
discs and gives a paper to LISSA.)

JAMES

Here.

LISSA

What's this?

JAMES

My application to join the time bank.

LISSA

Why...?

PHINEAS

In the spirit of such an endeavor, I offered a trade: radiation treatment for me, the end of hermitude for him. I think he got the better of the deal, though he might argue.

LISSA

I thought you were making peace with death.

PHINEAS

I can make peace with death. What I can't make peace with is never beating my brother at disc golf.

LYNN

Why does that one tadpole have yellow legs?

(PHINEAS inspects the pool, then speaks to the invisible tadpole.)

PHINEAS

Welcome back.

(*To Lynn*)

This will become a yellow-legged frog, a species discovered to science in this very park in 1908. They disappeared and have been endangered, but they're making a comeback in the mountains. This is the first I've seen them down here.

LISSA

Why are they coming back?

PHINEAS

No one knows.

TALLIE

Maybe the water is getting cleaner.

JASMINE

Heeeey, we're here. Let's get this party started.

(JASMINE, APRIL, RAPHAEL, and  
JAMAAL enter.)

LYNN

You're in a good mood.

JASMINE

Jamaal said I was a good dancer.

JAMAAL

What are you all looking at? Just telling the truth.

RAPHAEL

What's in the water?

LYNN

Tadpoles.

RAPHAEL

*(To Jasmine)*

You should kiss one.

JASMINE

Kiss one?

RAPHAEL

You kiss him he turns into a prince.

JASMINE

A prince like Jamaal?

RAPHAEL

If you want him to.

JASMINE

I'll kiss him then.

(MONICA and EMILIA enter with a wagon loaded with pots of Arroyo Willow seedlings and trowels.)

MONICA

All right. Here they are. If we're going to get this "save the school" plan off the ground, we have to do this right.

EMILIA

Everyone take a shovel and a willow.

(EVERYONE grabs something from the wagon.)

MONICA

Look for wet sand to dig.

LISSA

What happens if the county ends up bulldozing these for flood control?

MONICA

We plant more. Show people how to take care of their watershed.

RAPHAEL

Man, what's that word, "watershed"?

MONICA

An area of land drained by a common stream or river.

PHINEAS

Also a turning point.

LISSA

So is this a watershed for the watershed?

PHINEAS

It could be...if others join in.

APRIL

Look! The one with the yellow-legs, he's swimming.

(EVERYONE leans over to look.)

Dang, look at him go.                   RAPHAEL

END OF PLAY