

# **NOMAD**

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SCENE I.

A street corner. PETE and STEVIE are in the middle of a fight. ROSE, a bag lady, sits on a bench.

PETE

What? (Beat) Look, Stevie, let's go get something to eat, and we can figure out what to do.

STEVIE

(Looking at stain on shirt) Looks like you already ate.

PETE

What, I --

STEVIE

I know what to do.

PETE

(Confused) Then what are we doing here?

STEVIE

You tell me.

PETE

You asked me to meet you. What do you want from me?

STEVIE

Support. Help me have this baby.

PETE

(A long beat) I can't do that. It's going to just ruin your life.

(STEVIE angrily leaves. PETE stares at her and then sits down in disgust next to ROSE on bench. There is a long pause. She reaches into one of her bags and pulls out an old box of chocolates)

PETE

(Still fuming about his daughter) Unbelievable.

ROSE

You know, life is like a box of --

PETE

(Snapping at her) No it isn't.

ROSE

(Beat) No, I guess it isn't. (Mumbling somewhat as she opens the box) Well, shouldn't let it go to waste -- (Sees something inside, a bug that she flicks out with her finger) Wot's that? Freeloader. Nope, you can never tell what you might find. Could be a praline; could be a cockroach. That's the difference between movies and life. (Beat) Boy, that bus ain't never gonna come.

PETE

(Looks at her for the first time) This isn't a bus stop.

ROSE

That would explain it.

PETE

Unbelievable.

ROSE

Yes, that would be an excellent explanation. (Reaches into another bag and pulls out a newspaper) Now would you just look at that. The daily double was the four horse and the seven horse, paid three hundred and twenty-six dollars. I could be in Miami now.

PETE

The buses are just as unreliable in Miami. You're better off here.

ROSE

Another excellent point. (Beat) Three hundred and twenty-six samolians. Boy, wouldn't itta been nice to have this paper yesterday.

PETE

You probably did have it yesterday. That paper's about three months old.

ROSE

(Looking at date) Oh. So it is; so it is. I get a little behind in my reading time to time. But still, imagine

knowing who was going to win. Man, I'd march straight into OTB -- and probably still talk myself into betting the losers. (Laughs)

PETE

(Still fuming about fight with daughter) Unbelievable.

ROSE

Heavens, if something unbelievable can get you so upset, wait 'til you run upside reality.

PETE

It's one thing that she moved in with the bum --

ROSE

I never liked him.

PETE

-- but now she's going to have his kid.

ROSE

Right. (Beat) Unbelievable. (Beat) She should have her own kid, that's what I did.

PETE

You know OTB is still open. You don't need a bus. You can walk there.

ROSE

Well, now, I didn't realize this was the only bench in the city.

PETE

(Beat) Sorry.

ROSE

You're hoping she'll come back?

PETE

(Looks at her, surprised) Yeah. (Beat) Who are you?

ROSE

Rose is my name. I overheard you fightin' with her.

PETE

Yeah. So did half the neighborhood, I'll bet.

ROSE

I think the bus is going to come before she does.

PETE

(Looks off in the direction she left) Yeah, I think you're right.

ROSE

Now my little one, she was forever coming back. Every time she couldn't work it out, which was every time there was something to be worked out, she was at the door, tears in her eyes. Got so I had to start moving around just so's she wouldn't know where to find me. Can't be coming back all the time.

PETE

No, you can't.

ROSE

And me, I had to learn not to let it get to me, you understand what I'm saying. She's her; you're you.

PETE

Man, how do I get myself into these things.

ROSE

Well, I'm glad you asked me that, because --

PETE

I wasn't asking you.

ROSE

Oh. Sorry. Thought I caught an interrog.

PETE

I was asking myself, and I know the answer.

ROSE

Good for you. Knowing the answer is key. The daily double should be a snap for anyone "knows the answer."

PETE

Why am I talking to you.

ROSE

You just said you weren't.

PETE

Then why am I listening to you.

ROSE

Are you? Well, that's refreshing. Before you tune out again, just allow me to say that when you're having a bad day, always remember --

PETE

How about when you're having a bad life?

ROSE

Well, you can --

PETE

How about every time you come to a truly seminal moment, you fuck up? God, what a mistake.

ROSE

(Back to paper) The four/seven. I coulda bought my own bus.

PETE

What is this obsession with buses? Where do you want to go?

ROSE

Don't know. Just know what it feels like when I wanna leave.

PETE

It should be so easy.

ROSE

Don't think I got that.

PETE

When you're unhappy with your life, it should just be so easy to hop on a bus and leave.

ROSE

You're unhappy with you life?

PETE

Look, lady, I don't mean to be rude, but --

ROSE

Right. (Back to the paper) Well, let's check out the horoscope. Aries, Aries. Here we are. "You will start on a long journey." Whoa, right on the button. Where's that bus.

PETE

That paper is three months old. Did you take a long journey three months ago?

ROSE

Must be; else how could I have gotten here. (Back to paper) Now, let's see what Calvin and Hobbes are up to.

PETE

I just have to put this behind me. There's nothing I can do about it. I can't go back and change it; it's done.

ROSE

Now you're talking. So much life to savor, can't get bogged down in regrets. Take me, for example. I could tell you stories about the mistakes I made, but what's the point. Nope, just take a deep whiff of that rich city air, bask in the haze and think: It's great to be alive.

PETE

Yeah? What's so great about it?

ROSE

What's the alternative?

PETE

That doesn't make it great.

ROSE

Oh. What would make it great?

PETE

I -- I'm not sure. I had my chances, god knows. I just made some bad calls at key times.

ROSE

And that's why life sucks.

PETE

Yeah, that's why. That's why for everybody. We'd all like a chance to do a few things over, get it right.

ROSE

And that would make it great.

PETE

I think so. Don't you? This the life you wanted for yourself?

ROSE

Must be or I wouldn't be living it.

PETE

Great, New Age bag ladies. It sure as hell isn't the life I want.

ROSE

And you're saying if you hadn't made a few bad calls -- how many, by the way?

PETE

What?

ROSE

How many really key mistakes have you made, you figure?

PETE

I don't know. (Beat) I can think of three doozies I'd like to take back -- four, if you count this (indicating the fight he just had with his daughter).

ROSE

There you go, four mistakes. And if you could go back, you'd make the right call.

PETE

If I knew what I know now? If I knew what was going to happen? Of course.

ROSE

This I'd like to see.

PETE

You and me both.

ROSE

Suppose I could do that for you.

PETE

What?

ROSE

Suppose I could "send you back" is the way I would phrase it. You tell me the other three mistakes, I send you back and we see what happens.

PETE

(Takes a long look at her) You know, you don't seem like the, how can I say it, the --

ROSE

Type?

PETE

Yeah, the type that would be, you know, a --

ROSE

Bag lady?

PETE

Yeah, I guess.

ROSE

Well, you take what you can get.

PETE

What does that mean?

ROSE

Anyhow, what do you think? Want to go back, take another shot at your mistakes?

PETE

I don't know if you're just kidding me or you really are --

ROSE

Capable of doing this?

PETE

No -- really are nuts.

ROSE

Oh, I'm definitely nuts. But I can do this. It's like a rare form of idiot savant..ness -- itude -- ancy, whatever.

PETE

You can send me back in time?

ROSE

Piece of cake. Forward is the tough one.

PETE

Why don't you send yourself back and fix *your* mistakes?

ROSE

How do you think I ended up like this. So, wanna give it a shot?

PETE

Sure. But why limit ourselves. Don't want to be selfish. Send me back to Dealy Plaza, November 22nd, 1963.

ROSE

Now you're humoring me. You don't believe I can do it.

PETE

You're right, I don't. I don't believe that you believe you can do it.

ROSE

Well, how about if I prove it to you. Pick one incident in your life you remember, not a biggie, just anything.

PETE

(Looking off) She's not going to come back. I better go.

ROSE

Come on, give it a shot. What have you got to lose?

PETE

(Glares at her)

ROSE

Where did you get that stain on your shirt? Looks like mustard. You probably had one of those dirty water hot dogs.

PETE

Yeah, so?

ROSE

So, watch. I'm really good at this.

(Either by a change in lights or sound effects, we signal a regression. On stage is PETE IN THE PAST, eating a hot dog.

At this point, he is dressed identically to PETE, which establishes they are the same person, although this actor will later be playing Pete 30, 20 and 10 years ago)

PETE

What's happening?

ROSE

That's you a half hour ago. You remembered it and I took you there.

PETE

That's not me.

ROSE

We all have such distorted ideas of what we look like.

PETE

Wait, I can't -- what's happening?

ROSE

That is you, ain't it?

PETE

Yes.

ROSE

Of course, we tend to remember ourselves a little different from what we were, but that's definitely you.

PETE

Yes, yes. How are you doing this?

ROSE

Beats me. I try not to overanalyze stuff.

PETE

That's me, eating -- I've gone back, you sent me back.

ROSE

Sure thing. Now you can prevent that stain.

PETE

But I'm me, I'm not him.

ROSE

Yeah, everyone makes that mistake.

PETE

(To PETE IN THE PAST) Be careful with the --

PETE IN THE PAST

Huh? (Slightly turning his head as if he hears something but doesn't directly see or acknowledge Pete. As he turns his head, some sauerkraut falls off the hot dog onto his shirt) Shit.

PETE

(Simultaneously with above) Shit.

ROSE

Okay, that's enough.

(The scene reverts back to PETE and ROSE alone on the bench)

PETE

Wait, I --

ROSE

That was just a sample. We don't waste these things on sauerkraut stains, just seminal moments.

PETE

(Shaking his head) I don't know what just happened.

ROSE

No? You knew when it happened though, didn't you? That's how you got that stain.

PETE

You know what I mean. How did you do that?

ROSE

Can't tell you, but I can do it again, if you're game.

PETE

I need a second to catch my breath.

ROSE

Just tell me the last time you had your breath and I'll send you back there. Just kidding.

PETE

I must be -- what's happening here?

ROSE

Not a hell of a lot yet. But I think we're close.

PETE

What are you, some kind of con artist or gypsy --

ROSE

We don't use the term gypsy any more, I'm a WANCD.

PETE

A what?

ROSE

Wandering American of non-Caucasian Descent.

PETE

I don't believe this. You can't really do this.

ROSE

Oh yes I can. Of course, this is nothing compared to what my husband could do.

PETE

What could he do?

ROSE

Disappear. He done that trick to me several times.

PETE

It was like I'm me watching me.

ROSE

How is that any different than normal?

PETE

I -- I -- oh, god, what is happening to me?

ROSE

Only what you make happen. I can do this, Pete --

PETE

How do you --

ROSE

And you know I can. This is your chance, go back, fix your mistakes, make a new life for yourself.

PETE

(Long pause) If I went back, how would I change anything? If I said something, would he hear me?

ROSE

You never talk to yourself?

PETE

Sure. (Beat) But will he listen?

ROSE

(Finger on nose) Bingo. Are you ready?

PETE

This is ridiculous. I have to get out of here.  
(Pete rises and as he starts to exit, the lights come up on Susie, playing her guitar, right in his path. He stops)

PETE

Susie.

End of scene

SCENE II

(It is thirty years ago. SUSIE is playing and humming *In The Moment* on the guitar. PETE IN THE PAST is about to enter. Note: PETE IN THE PAST's lines spoken to PETE cannot be heard by SUSIE or MARIANNE)

PETE  
Wait, before you go in.

PETE IN THE PAST  
*I thought I left you in the bathroom.*

PETE  
Listen, I'm not just the guy you talk to when you talk to yourself. I know what's going to happen to you today.

PETE IN THE PAST  
*So do I.*

PETE  
No. You know what you want to happen. It's not going to work out the way you think, unless you let me help you.

SUSIE  
Pete, you get locked in?

PETE IN THE PAST  
Coming. *I don't think I need help.*

(Entering Susie's room)

PETE IN THE PAST  
So, like I was saying, I got my pop's car.

PETE  
She's so beautiful.

SUSIE  
(In between hums) Great. And?

PETE IN THE PAST  
(To Susie) Where do you want to go?

SUSIE

Sing with me.

IN HARMONY

*Happy to be in the moment.*

PETE

(With above) Oh, Susie, I can get you out of here, I can, I will.

PETE IN THE PAST

*Right, I will.* Where do you want to go?

SUSIE

Can we sing this for my mom?

PETE IN THE PAST

Now?

SUSIE

No, she's at the doctor's. When she gets back.

PETE IN THE PAST

Well, I was hoping we could get going. You said you wanted to see the trees.

SUSIE

I do. They won't be going anywhere.

PETE

Now, don't wait for her mom. That's going to mess things up.

PETE IN THE PAST

*Tell me about it, she always does.* Sure, but --

SUSIE

But what? She won't be long. Please, I really want her to hear it.

PETE IN THE PAST

Well, when you ask like that...

PETE

No, see, you're just afraid, it has nothing to do with how she asks you.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I am afraid, sure, but -- okay. So where do you want to go?*

SUSIE

Where do I want to go? (Delighted it's her choice) Let's see. (She mulls it over like a kid in a candy shop)

PETE

God, look at that. Everything is such a gift to her.

SUSIE

Remember that park, the first day we spent together when we met -- re-met.

PETE IN THE PAST

Untermeyer's. Perfect, that's perfect.

PETE

It is.

SUSIE

It is?

PETE IN THE PAST

It is.

SUSIE

Good. (Beat; she plays a little) Why?

PETE

You know, you could show her why right now.

PETE IN THE PAST

*Now? In her room? I -- Because I have something I want to talk about and I think that going to the place where we started our relationship -- this time around -- is the right place.*

SUSIE

(Big smile) Oh.

PETE

Does she know?

SUSIE

Good, I'm glad I thought of it.

PETE IN THE PAST

*She couldn't; she just doesn't think that way.*

PETE

No, I think you're wrong. I think she wants to as much as you do.

SUSIE

(At her window) And it's such a beautiful day for it. I love the fall with the leaves.

PETE

Talk to her now. Don't make it such a big deal.

PETE IN THE PAST

*But it is a big deal.*

SUSIE

And there's something sad about it, too.

PETE IN THE PAST

Sad?

PETE

You're afraid. If you start, it will be easier.

PETE IN THE PAST

*This is her parents' house, they could come home, her brother could.*

SUSIE

I guess it's from all these years in school. This is like saying goodbye to summer.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yeah, I guess.

PETE

The longer you wait, the more anxious you'll become.

PETE IN THE PAST

Susie --

SUSIE

That park, with those marble steps leading nowhere in the middle of the woods. It's a wonderful place to talk about anything.

PETE IN THE PAST

I know what you mean. *I can't do it here.*

PETE

Look, it's not about doing it. It's overrated, believe me. It's about reaching her -- no, it's about letting her reach you.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I don't know what that means.* Susie, you know how it is at the doctor's. She could be there --  
(Offstage noise, a door)

SUSIE

There she is. It'll only take a second.

PETE

Damn.

MARIANNE

(Entering) Hi, kids.

SUSIE

Hi, mom.

PETE

Man, drunk again, that poor lady.

PETE IN THE PAST

Mrs. Sherman.

SUSIE

What did the doctor say?

MARIANNE

He needs to do some more tests.

PETE

You need to stop drinking.

SUSIE

Oh. (Getting guitar) Pete and I have a surprise for you.

MARIANNE

Great. I could use a pick-me-up.

SUSIE

(Starts to play and then sing:)

In the moment-- (stops)

PETE

(Over Susie's singing) Look at her. What a troubled lady she was.

SUSIE

Pete?

PETE IN THE PAST

(Who has been staring at Marianne) Oh, god, I'm sorry. Start again.

MARIANNE

Susie, before you do that, the doctor gave me a prescription and I dropped it off at the drug store but I didn't want to wait. It should be ready now; would you run down there and pick it up?

SUSIE

Oh, well --

PETE

Don't let her go.

SUSIE

Pete and I were about to go out. We were just waiting for you so we could play you the song.

MARIANNE

Oh. (Beat) It's okay. I'll pick it up later.

PETE IN THE PAST

We can pick it up and bring it back this evening.

MARIANNE

I'm supposed to start taking it this afternoon, but really, I can go back.

SUSIE

Ma, you look tired.

PETE

Don't let her go.

SUSIE

I'll go. That's okay, isn't it Pete?

PETE IN THE PAST

Well -- she doesn't look well.

PETE

She's not. You go get it.

PETE IN THE PAST

I can go.

MARIANNE

Why don't we let Susie go, Pete. You can help me here. The doctor said I should move my bed closer to the window.

SUSIE

Sure. I'll be five minutes. (Susie exits)

MARIANNE

How are your folks, Pete?

PETE IN THE PAST

Fine.

PETE

Be careful.

MARIANNE

Say hello for me, will you?

PETE IN THE PAST

Sure.

PETE

And be prepared.

MARIANNE

We really should get together; I'll give them a call.

PETE IN THE PAST

They'd like that, I know.

PETE

Don't stay in here with her.

PETE IN THE PAST

Did you want help inside?

MARIANNE

Later. I'd like to talk with you.

PETE IN THE PAST

*Why am I feeling so scared?*

PETE

Grown-ups are terrifying.

MARIANNE

I've been meaning to tell you how delighted I am that you and Susie got together after all these years. I couldn't think of a better boy for Susie to be with.

PETE IN THE PAST

Thanks.

MARIANNE

I sent Susie out so we could be alone. I have something I need to tell you. (Beat) I'm going to die, Pete.

PETE IN THE PAST

What? How --

MARIANNE

My liver.

PETE IN THE PAST

*What do I say?*

PETE

Say you're sorry.

PETE IN THE PAST

I'm sorry.

MARIANNE

I'm going to have to tell Susie, but I wanted to speak with you about it first. The doctor says I may have six months, I may have two years. Sid is good at doing things, but he's grown so dependent on me I can't rely on him to take care of Susie during all of this. He'll provide for her, of course, but she'll need help in other ways, ways of the soul, you know what I mean. So it's a great comfort for me to know that you're around. And I hope, Pete, that you'll be around to see Susie through this. I hope you'll be in her life forever, but those things -- who knows. But if you can hold her hand through this, it will mean so much to her and to me. Tell me you'll do this.

PETE

Say yes.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I'm not ready for that. Do what? I don't know exactly --*

MARIANNE

Susie was born sad, Pete. Or maybe I made her that way. I don't know, but I know she is. I recognize the signs. And if she makes the same mistakes I made, that sadness will overwhelm her.

PETE IN THE PAST

Susie is sad? We're all sad sometimes. I don't --

MARIANNE

She hides it.

PETE

No she doesn't.

MARIANNE

Another trick she learned from me. And more importantly, when she's with you it goes away. My mother didn't die when I was young, but I lost her all the same, and I know what it did to me, how hopeless and despondent I became. I don't want Susie to -- (she is overcome) But you can help, Pete. You're wiser than your years.

PETE

No, I'm not.

MARIANNE

You can get her through this, you can show her she's free to make choices for herself, she can choose love instead of fear, joy instead of sadness. (Grabbing and embracing PETE)  
Tell me you'll do this for me, Peter, please, please, please.

PETE

Comfort her. Say yes.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I can't; this is too spooky. (A mantra) Please let me go, please let me go --*

THE TWO PETES

Please let me go.

PETE

Oh, God. So much need.  
(MARIANNE slowly composes herself and disengages from him)

MARIANNE

I'm sorry, Peter. Sometimes I just feel overwhelmed. I had no right to ask --

PETE IN THE PAST

It's all right. You're upset, I know.

MARIANNE

Yes, I am. I know you'll do the right thing.

PETE IN THE PAST

*What is the right thing?*

PETE

Right now? Getting laid.  
(A silence)

MARIANNE

How are your folks?

PETE IN THE PAST

They're fine, they --

MARIANNE

I asked you that already, didn't I?

PETE IN THE PAST

Uh, yes.

MARIANNE

How is your grandfather?

PETE IN THE PAST

He died last year.

MARIANNE

Oh, I had no idea. I'm so sorry, such a wonderful man.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yes, he was.

MARIANNE

I'll call your mother.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yes, she'd enjoy hearing from you.

MARIANNE

I've lost touch with so many of my old friends.

(SUSIE enters)

SUSIE

Got it.

MARIANNE

Thank you, dear. I'll take some and then I think I should go lie down for awhile.

SUSIE

What about the song?

MARIANNE

Later. You kids go play together. (MARIANNE leaves)

(SUSIE stares after her; a look of concern is gradually replaced by a somewhat enigmatic smile)

SUSIE

So, ready to go?

PETE IN THE PAST

Your mom looked kind of tired.

SUSIE

Well, you know how she gets.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yeah.

SUSIE

She's been better lately. But things like this, like going to the doctor even, can upset her.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yeah.

SUSIE

You've been very kind not to mention her problem, Pete. But we probably should talk about it.

PETE IN THE PAST

Sure, sometime.

PETE

Now.

PETE IN THE PAST

*This isn't the place.*

PETE

You worry about the right place, too much.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I don't want to share this with her. If I do, I don't --*

SUSIE

Okay. Sometime. Are we ready to go?

PETE IN THE PAST

*I am so scared.*

PETE

Tell her.

PETE IN THE PAST

*That I'm scared?*

PETE

Yes.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I can't do that.*

PETE

Why?

SUSIE

Are you all right?

PETE IN THE PAST

Sure.

PETE

Tell her.

SUSIE

Did my mother say something to upset you?

PETE IN THE PAST

No, of course not.

PETE

Let her in.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I don't know if I want to anymore.*

SUSIE

You know she can exaggerate.

PETE IN THE PAST

Oh. She didn't say anything.

SUSIE

Nothing? You just sat here and looked at each other?

PETE IN THE PAST

We talked about my folks, you know.

SUSIE

Uh-huh. So let's go. I know exactly where I want to go.

PETE IN THE PAST

You told me already, Untermeyer's.

SUSIE

I mean exactly where at Untermeyer's.

PETE IN THE PAST

Where?

SUSIE

Guess.

PETE IN THE PAST

The bench by the garden, where we kissed.

PETE

The tower by the river.

SUSIE

The tower by the river.

PETE IN THE PAST

Oh. Why?

SUSIE

Because that day, when we were there, a breeze came in off the river and for just a second I felt like we were on the flying bed again. Like when we were five.

PETE

(In wonder at a lost memory) The flying bed.

PETE IN THE PAST

What flying bed?

SUSIE

You don't remember that?

PETE

Yes.

PETE IN THE PAST

No.

SUSIE

We would open the window and lie down on my bed, flat on our backs, holding hands, with our eyes closed. And then --

PETE

Starting with the backs of our legs --

PETE IN THE PAST

(remembering) -- we could feel the bed start to rise.

SUSIE

And we would slowly circle the room

PETE IN THE PAST

Until it glided out of the window.

PETE

Over the streets.

SUSIE

Past the school.

PETE IN THE PAST

Over the reservoir.

PETE

Down to the river.

PETE IN THE PAST

And beyond.

SUSIE

We could feel the breeze as we flew.

PETE

We could.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yes, we could.

SUSIE

We probably flew over that same tower in Untermeyer's. That's why when we were there that day and the same breeze wafted by us, I remembered, I remembered the moment.

PETE

There, how beautiful is she now. Take her now.

PETE IN THE PAST

*It's too hard. Coming over here it seemed easy; now it's so complicated.*

PETE

That's what makes it worthwhile. That's what makes it last forever, the complications.

SUSIE

(Song: In The Moment)

SUSIE

I haven't told you -- maybe I should wait.

PETE IN THE PAST

No, say it.

SUSIE

How much of a difference you've made in my life.

PETE

See?

PETE IN THE PAST

*I don't know.*

PETE

Don't even talk, just take her.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I couldn't do that.*

PETE

She wants it. She wants you.

SUSIE

Sometimes around here, I feel kind of trapped.

PETE IN THE PAST

Uh-huh.

SUSIE

I love my mom so much, I do, but no matter what I do for her

it's never enough to make a difference; she still gets so sad.

PETE IN THE PAST

That must be tough.

SUSIE

And then she, you know.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yeah.

SUSIE

Since you've come back into my life, I feel like I can get back on that bed and fly out of this room.

PETE IN THE PAST

That's great.

PETE

It is great.

PETE IN THE PAST

*It doesn't feel great.*

SUSIE

Come on; let's go now.

PETE IN THE PAST

Susie --

SUSIE

I really need to get out of here.

PETE

Go.

PETE IN THE PAST

Where? Where are we going?

SUSIE

Take me out of here, Pete.

PETE IN THE PAST

Susie, wait, I --

PETE

No, don't wait.

SUSIE

If you don't want to go to Untermeyer's, we can go anywhere.  
Anywhere would be special with you.

PETE

That's where.

SUSIE

Help me Pete.

PETE IN THE PAST

*Oh, god.*

PETE

She is asking a lot, but --

SUSIE

Help me get out of here.

PETE IN THE PAST

*What am I going to do?*

PETE

Exactly what you came here to do. Kiss her.

PETE IN THE PAST

*What's she going to think of me after, when she learns what  
her mother just told me.*

PETE

I don't know. It is hard, but --

SUSIE

Help me with mom.

PETE IN THE PAST

*Help watch her die?*

PETE

Watching grandpa was hard enough.

SUSIE

Pete, I love you.

PETE IN THE PAST

Susie, I -- I'm so scared. I'm not ready for this. I love you, Susie, I do. (They embrace)

PETE

That's the feeling; that's what you want to focus on, what you want to hold on to.

PETE IN THE PAST

But I want more than this.

PETE

Ask her for it.

PETE IN THE PAST

*Her mother's dying, this isn't the time.*

PETE

Let her decide that.

SUSIE

I need you.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I don't want to be needed, I don't like feeling so necessary.*

PETE

Think of how you felt looking at her when you came in.

PETE IN THE PAST

*Right. Now I know why she always looks so beautiful playing all those sad songs. It's because I think I can fix it; I think I can fix her sadness, she's asking me to.*

PETE

You can.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I don't believe that. Not this sadness, it's bottomless.*

PETE

It is bottomless.

SUSIE

For so long I've felt grounded in perpetual autumn. Now I can fly again. To our spot.

PETE

If you love her, maybe her sadness will disappear.

PETE IN THE PAST

*It won't disappear.*

SUSIE

With you.

PETE

For as long as you love her, it will.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I'll be consumed. I'll be swallowed up.*

SUSIE

Forever, Peter, in our own world.

PETE IN THE PAST

*And then who will take care of me? (Beat) Who will take care of me?*

PETE

(Beat) You'll have to take care of yourself.

PETE IN THE PAST

*I have my own needs. I can't deny myself, I can't.*

PETE

(Beat; defeated) No, you can't. She's so passionate, so desperate.

SUSIE

(Noticing his look) I'm sorry, Pete. Sometimes I just feel overwhelmed.

PETE IN THE PAST

That's all right. Maybe going out isn't such a good idea today.

SUSIE

Oh?

PETE IN THE PAST

Your mom really didn't look good.

SUSIE

Oh.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yeah. Look, Susie, what I wanted to tell you, what I need to tell you is that I'm feeling very confused.

SUSIE

You are? About what?

PETE IN THE PAST

About us. I love you very much, but I need some time alone to think this through.

SUSIE

(Susie is smiling and the smile stays on her face through the rest of the scene) Oh. Okay.

PETE IN THE PAST

I'm sorry --

SUSIE

It's all right. I understand.

PETE IN THE PAST

You do?

SUSIE

Yes. I mean I understand what happens when you get confused.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yeah.

SUSIE

And I understand wanting to be alone.

PETE IN THE PAST

But this isn't forever, I just --

SUSIE

No, I know. Nothing is forever. That's what makes things

so confusing, I think.

PETE IN THE PAST

So, I'll call you.

SUSIE

Great.

PETE IN THE PAST

(Starts to leave; turns back) I haven't made you sad, have I?

(SUSIE keeps smiling and barely perceptibly shrugs her shoulders. PETE IN THE PAST turns and goes)

SUSIE

Hello, old friend.

(Sings) *And just as long*

*As I can see*

*The look in your eyes*

*When you looked at me*

*I will spend*

*The rest of my life*

*In the moment.*

end of scene

SCENE II

(PETE IN THE PAST and SALLY in bed together making love, mostly under the covers. PETE IN THE PAST reaches out to the end table drawer for a condom. There is none)

PETE IN THE PAST

Shit.

SALLY

(About some way she was touching him) I thought you said you liked that.

PETE

I said that because I thought you liked doing it.

PETE IN THE PAST

No, it's not that. There's no rubber here.

SALLY

Oh.

PETE IN THE PAST

I know there was one left.

SALLY

Are you sure?

PETE IN THE PAST

Yeah I'm sure. I bought six last week. I used one Tuesday, one Thursday --

PETE

God, are you keeping a list?

SALLY

God, are you keeping a list?

PETE IN THE PAST

Three Saturday.

SALLY

Three?

PETE

I don't think so.

PETE IN THE PAST

Don't you remember, one broke?

PETE

Oh, right. After forty-five minutes they tend to become a little fragile.

PETE IN THE PAST

That leaves one left.

SALLY

Uh-huh.

PETE IN THE PAST

So?

SALLY

So what?

PETE IN THE PAST

So where is it?

SALLY

I don't know.

PETE

Yes you do.

(PETE IN THE PAST just stares at her)

SALLY

What?

PETE IN THE PAST

We had an agreement.

SALLY

We did?

PETE

We did?

PETE IN THE PAST

All right, an understanding. This was exclusive --

SALLY

Exclusive?

PETE IN THE PAST

It was just us. I wouldn't see anybody else and you wouldn't see anybody else.

SALLY

I'm not "seeing" anybody else.

PETE IN THE PAST

No?

SALLY

I don't like you when you're like this.

PETE IN THE PAST

Then what happened to the scumbag?

SALLY

Right now he's taking up room in my bed.

PETE

Her nephew used it for a water balloon, as she well knows.

PETE IN THE PAST

Look, I'm sorry.

SALLY

I don't know where it is.

PETE IN THE PAST

I just get...

SALLY

You just get what?

PETE

Jealous.

PETE IN THE PAST

Frustrated.

SALLY

How could you get frustrated? We're fucking doing it whenever you're over here.

PETE IN THE PAST

That's not what I mean. I get frustrated because I don't know where I am with you. I don't know what's happening here.

SALLY

Why do you need to know?

PETE

Yeah, why?

PETE IN THE PAST

Why don't you? That's what I don't understand.

SALLY

See, there it is again, you need to know, you don't understand. I mean, like fucking. Why can't we just do it? Why does it have to be such a trip?

PETE IN THE PAST

You want to do it without protection?

SALLY

I've done it plenty of times without protection. God, what a stupid word, protection. Like having a baby is like some kind of punishment.

PETE IN THE PAST

You want to have a baby?

SALLY

I didn't say that. Jesus, why is it no matter what I say you ask me questions?

PETE IN THE PAST

Do I do that?

SALLY

(Diving under covers) Aughhh.

PETE

(With Sally) Aughhh.

PETE IN THE PAST

So, I guess we just won't do it tonight.

SALLY

(From under covers) There's that place on the corner, they're still open.

PETE IN THE PAST

I'm not going out there. It's like ten below out there.

PETE

Which is ten degrees warmer than this room.

SALLY

(Emerging) You want me to go? No way. I hate those things anyway.

PETE IN THE PAST

Right.

SALLY

(Beat) Now you're going to sulk.

PETE IN THE PAST

Just being me. Don't you find my spontaneity attractive.

SALLY

I hate this.

PETE

So do I.

SALLY

What do you want from me?

PETE

Love.

PETE IN THE PAST

Honesty.

PETE

Unconditional love.

PETE IN THE PAST

To know you're committed.

PETE

Total "I'm yours even if you become a football watching actuary" love.

SALLY

Well, just keep it up and eventually I'll be committed. You're driving me crazy. I don't know about anything but right now. I'm committed to you right now.

PETE IN THE PAST

Good, then get out of bed, get dressed and go down –

SALLY

I just became uncommitted. Sorry, you missed the moment. Got to jump on your opportunities, Petey. (Looks under covers at his groin) Explain something to me.

PETE

That, we know, is impossible.

PETE IN THE PAST

What?

SALLY

(Still looking at his groin under blanket) This turns you on?

PETE IN THE PAST

No.

PETE

Yes.

PETE IN THE PAST

No, I just still want to do it.

SALLY

See, there's something about this that scares me. I get the sense that you don't just want to fuck me now for now; you want to fuck me now for the next forty years.

PETE

And we have a winner in the first row.

PETE IN THE PAST

Don't be ridiculous.

PETE

No, man, don't you be ridiculous.

SALLY

And I just can't do that, can't you hear me.

PETE IN THE PAST

I hear you.

PETE

I don't think you do. This is your basic fixer-upper.

PETE IN THE PAST

But --

PETE

No buts, Pete.

PETE IN THE PAST

-- there's something right about us, don't you think?

PETE

Like what? What does that even mean?

SALLY

I don't know.

PETE IN THE PAST

When I met you --

PETE

This is where you screw it up, Pete. There is nothing right about you two unless you make it right.

PETE IN THE PAST

-- and I was feeling, I don't know --

PETE

Try desperate.

PETE IN THE PAST

-- desperate, I guess. Maybe I come on too strong. I'm

just looking for something I can build on.

SALLY

Okay, well, about now I'm beginning to feel like poured concrete. I don't know what I want, Pete; I don't know if I'll ever know --

PETE

You won't, trust me.

SALLY

There's a painting I never showed you, Pete. Before you get bent all out of shape, I never showed it to anybody, for a long time not even myself. No, it's true. I started it when I was sixteen, as a joke or experiment, I can't remember. I put on a blindfold and just painted without looking. When I was through, I made sure I couldn't see it when I took the blindfold off, and then covered it up. Every so often, when I feel like I'm sinking, I go back to it, again without looking. Finally, after so many years, on my thirtieth birthday I decided to look at it, to see what I had done. It was weird, really freaky. The canvas was full of incredible shapes and colors, images of my life clearer to me than if I was reading a diary. I stared at it without moving for what seemed like forever, and I started to feel chilled. Pete, it was my life, but I wasn't there. I couldn't find myself anywhere on that canvas. Where am I, Pete? There isn't much room left. I need to find a way to get on that canvas, Pete, do you know what I'm saying? (During this speech, Sally's focus has drifted totally away from Pete, even when she seems to be talking to him)

(The Song: Far and Away/Lost in the Distance)

PETE

Now what?

SALLY

Now what?

PETE IN THE PAST

You tell me. We've been here before, that's for sure.

PETE

No, you've never been here. It looks the same, but you've

never been here.

PETE IN THE PAST

We talk different languages, we have different lives.

SALLY

Danny made a water balloon out of it.

PETE IN THE PAST

What?

SALLY

The other bag, Danny made –

PETE IN THE PAST

Who's Danny? You mean your sister's kid?

SALLY

Right.

PETE IN THE PAST

Why didn't you say in the first place?

SALLY

I don't know. Why didn't I?

PETE IN THE PAST

You tell me. We get into a fight about the stupid thing which you could have ended –

PETE

Maybe it's because whenever you say "you tell me" to her, you immediately start to tell her.

PETE IN THE PAST

-- by simply telling me –

SALLY

Pete, I didn't want to tell you. It wasn't what we were fighting about; it wouldn't have made any difference.

PETE

What does that tell you, pal?

PETE IN THE PAST

(Long beat) I'm in over my head, Sally.

PETE

Good.

PETE IN THE PAST

You're too...(he tries to find a word) ...complicated for me.

SALLY

Complicated?

PETE

Time to go.

PETE IN THE PAST

(Beginning to get out of bed) I'm going home.

SALLY

Forever?

PETE IN THE PAST

No, I plan to go to work tomorrow.

SALLY

Pete.

PETE IN THE PAST

Since when is Miss one day at a time so interested in forever?

PETE

Just go.

PETE IN THE PAST

I'm going.

SALLY

(Peering at his groin under the covers) You don't look like you're ready to go to me.

PETE IN THE PAST

A few blasts of the arctic air –

SALLY

The weirdest things turn you on.

PETE

The saddest things actually.

SALLY

I don't want you to go. (Strokes his face and looks back at his groin) That turned you off?

PETE

Look who's talking.

PETE IN THE PAST

My telling you I wanted to leave turned you on?

SALLY

No.

PETE

Yes.

PETE IN THE PAST

I think it did.

(SALLY starts to get out of bed)

PETE IN THE PAST

Where are you going?

SALLY

I'll go to the corner and get some bags.

PETE IN THE PAST

Really?

PETE

Here it comes. Let her go.

SALLY

It's my fault, I'll go.

PETE IN THE PAST

It's freezing out there.

PETE

Not for the ice queen.

SALLY

I was planning on getting dressed.

PETE

Let her go.

PETE IN THE PAST

It's not about that.

PETE

No, it isn't, but it will be if you don't let her go.

PETE IN THE PAST

That's not what I need from you.

SALLY

What do you need from me? (She looks again at his groin)

Ah, back in business.

(She mounts him)

PETE

No, get her off.

PETE IN THE PAST

Not without –

PETE

Get her off.

SALLY

(Starts having her orgasm)

PETE

Don't come inside her, get her off.

(SALLY comes)

PETE

Well, you got her off.

(And PETE IN THE PAST comes)

PETE

Fucked again.

End of scene

SCENE IV: TEN YEARS LATER

(SALLY'S loft. In this scene, PETE is not visible until the mirror scene. It is unclear whether PETE IN THE PAST is hearing him)

PETE IN THE PAST

Is it mine?

SALLY

Of course not.

PETE IN THE PAST

Well, I don't know, that night at your sister's.

PETE

That was five months ago.

SALLY

That was a year ago. God, Pete. And you call me a cadet.

PETE IN THE PAST

Well, whose is it?

SALLY

I'm not sure I want to tell you.

PETE

And what difference does it make.

PETE IN THE PAST

What do you mean you don't want to tell me? I mean we're - granted we're not married, but we're living together - I mean what about Stevie?

SALLY

Tanji.

PETE IN THE PAST

Who?

SALLY

Tanji Nakadai. The sculptor.

(PETE IN THE PAST is clueless)

SALLY

Typical. You met him at the Christmas party. You had a long talk about Kurosawa.

PETE

It was only long because I couldn't understand what he was saying.

PETE IN THE PAST

(Still unclear) And he's a painter?

PETE

What the fuck's the difference? Why aren't you angry?

SALLY

Sculptor.

PETE IN THE PAST

And how long has this been going on?

SALLY

"This?" What "this" are you talking about?

PETE

Oh please.

PETE IN THE PAST

Your relationship with -

SALLY

There's no relationship. "This" went on for maybe twenty minutes, that's how long "this" has been going on.

PETE IN THE PAST

Are you in love with him?

PETE

Oh, this answer is going to be useful.

SALLY

We understand each other. I have a better sense of him right now -

PETE

While he's off probably screwing somebody else's girlfriend.

SALLY

- than I do of you.

PETE IN THE PAST

(Beat) So, what do we do now?

PETE

You're afraid.

SALLY

You. Here. Now. Can you do that, is that even remotely possible?

PETE IN THE PAST

What?

SALLY

Stay in this moment. (SALLY stares at him)

PETE

Tell her how you feel, schmuck.

PETE IN THE PAST

I don't know what you want from me.

SALLY

And?

PETE

You don't want to know, pal. The answer is nothing.

PETE IN THE PAST

And - I give up.

SALLY

You did that a long time ago; you're not allowed to do it twice.

PETE IN THE PAST

What about Stevie?

SALLY

What about her?

PETE IN THE PAST

How is she going to feel about this?

SALLY

Ask her.

PETE IN THE PAST

Did you already tell her, does she know?

SALLY

What do you mean, "tell her --"

PETE

Oh please.

PETE IN THE PAST

Oh please, you know perfectly well --

SALLY

No, she doesn't know I'm pregnant.

PETE IN THE PAST

Hmm.

SALLY

And no, she's doesn't know why it happened. And no, she doesn't know what's going to happen. She's a kid, she wants to know about now. What can you tell her about now, Pete? What do you know about now?

PETE

I don't know what I know about now, but I know it when I see it.

PETE IN THE PAST

Stevie is going to -

SALLY

Forget about Stevie.

PETE

Like you did when you slept with Tanji.

SALLY

This is what's happening now. You have a choice. You can focus on what we are and making that work; or you can keep on trying to unravel who we were and worrying about what we're going to be. If you pick the former, you'll have a partner -

two partners. If you pick the latter, you can pack up and go back to apartment 19J with its view of the harbor and be warm again.

PETE IN THE PAST

(Beat. Then a bit of an outburst) Why is it you go sleep with somebody and I'm the bad guy?

SALLY

That's better.

PETE IN THE PAST

What - what's better?

SALLY

There are no bad guys. There's just how people feel. I'm going to go in and make dinner. You go figure out how you feel now. Not how you felt last week; not how you're going to feel tomorrow. I know you can do this.

(SALLY leaves)

PETE IN THE PAST

(Unconsciously picking up stuffed animal) Always the last to know.

PETE

Face it, bud. There are still half a dozen other things you're the last to know that haven't gotten around to you yet. Linear living can be a bitch.

STEVIE

(Entering) Mom, do we have - oh, it's you.

PETE IN THE PAST

Hi. What are you looking for?

PETE

Not you, apparently.

STEVIE

Never mind. You wouldn't know.

(Silence. PETE IN THE PAST  
doesn't know what to say)

PETE

You're even afraid of her?

(STEVIE starts to exit)

PETE IN THE PAST

Try me.

STEVIE

I need clay.

PETE IN THE PAST

You need clay?

STEVIE

Where's mom?

PETE IN THE PAST

In the kitchen, cooking place, whatever it is. Why do you need clay?

STEVIE

What are you doing with Trotter (the stuffed animal)?

PETE IN THE PAST

Who?

PETE

The stuffed horse you got her for her fifth birthday.

PETE IN THE PAST

(Looking down at what he's holding) Oh. Nothing.

STEVIE

Going for a ride?

PETE IN THE PAST

(Beat) Hmm, maybe.

PETE

No. Not this time.

STEVIE

He won't take you where you want to go, you know.

PETE IN THE PAST

No?

PETE

No.

STEVIE

No. Only me.

PETE IN THE PAST

Only you will take me where I want to go?

PETE

Yes.

STEVIE

No. He'll only take me. If you ride him, he'll just ride around in circles.

PETE IN THE PAST

How do you know that's not where I want to go?

PETE

You think that's a joke? Ha.

STEVIE

Oh, daddy.

PETE IN THE PAST

And where do you want to go?

STEVIE

I don't know. (Silence) What are we having for dinner?

PETE IN THE PAST

I have no idea.

STEVIE

Why aren't you cooking? Mommy makes weird things.

(Silence)

PETE

The dead spots.

(STEVIE starts to leave)

PETE IN THE PAST

Wait. (Beat) So what did my little girl do today?

STEVIE

I don't know.

PETE IN THE PAST

You don't know?

PETE

What did you do today? What are you doing now?

STEVIE

I forget.

(Silence)

STEVIE

Can I go now?

PETE

Funny, I was just about to ask you the same question.

PETE IN THE PAST

Stevie, uh - how would you feel if I - um, well, if I left here, you know, for awhile.

STEVIE

(Grabbing the stuffed horse) You can't take Trotter.

PETE IN THE PAST

No, of course not. See...

STEVIE

What.

PETE

There is no what. This is the moment. There's a door opened here into a confused and tangled snarl. It's scary, sure. It means letting go of who you are and becoming part of something else. But it's worth it, Pete. Stay with it, Pete.

PETE IN THE PAST

Um...nothing. I don't think we have any clay.

STEVIE

Yes we do. Mommy knows.

(STEVIE exits)

*(I Never Saw starts to play.*  
PETE IN THE PAST gets up and  
goes over to a mirror. PETE  
appears in mirror)

PETE

*(Singing) I never saw you looking this way before*

PETE IN THE PAST

It will be better this way.

PETE

*I never realized the feelings you had*

PETE IN THE PAST

Some people are just not cut out for marriage.

PETE

*It don't seem so long ago that you were telling me  
How it was gonna be  
But I don't recall this part at all  
'Cause I never saw you looking this way before*

PETE IN THE PAST

Stevie will get it when she's older. I can be a better  
father with just a little distance.

PETE

*Maybe that's 'cause you didn't want me to see  
You say you know just what's in store  
You say you've even known worse times before  
But I never saw you looking this way  
At me.*

(Music continues and SALLY  
enters)

SALLY

You didn't tell her.

PETE IN THE PAST

No.

PETE

But she knows.

SALLY

Does that mean you're going to try to work this out?

PETE IN THE PAST

What's to work out? I'm not an abortionist.

PETE

No matter; she's going to lose it.

SALLY

It's not about that.

PETE IN THE PAST

(Really angry for the first time in the scene) It sure the fuck is now, thanks to you.

PETE

That's better.

SALLY

That's better.

PETE IN THE PAST

What's better? You're driving me off the wall, Sally.

SALLY

You're showing me your anger. That's a start.

PETE IN THE PAST

I'm sorry. I can't get pregnant. Otherwise I could show you my anger just like you show me yours.

SALLY

(Beat) That's fair. I'm sorry.

PETE IN THE PAST

Yeah, well, we're all sorry now.

PETE

The last thing this family will ever share.

SALLY

I don't want you to leave. I want to work this out.

PETE IN THE PAST

You have my blessings. Go to the potter and work it out with him.

SALLY

Sculptor.

PETE

As you well know.

PETE IN THE PAST

And what's she (indicating STEVIE) looking for clay for? Have you been taking her over there with you?

(SALLY doesn't answer)

PETE IN THE PAST

I never hear her looking for law books.

SALLY

That can change. Nothing is beyond repair. All the pieces are here. They just need unraveling, sorting and mending.

PETE

And recognizing whose piece is whose.

PETE IN THE PAST

(Beat) And after the mending, where do we end up? Back at the site of the last train wreck. It's endless.

PETE

Like you have something better to do with the rest of your life.

PETE IN THE PAST

Forget it, Sally. I'm done.

(Music swells up. SALLY remains for awhile, and then exits)

PETE

It's still not too late.

PETE IN THE PAST

It's better this way. At least I know how to take care of myself. Until I do that, I can't take care of anyone else.

PETE

*(Singing) I never saw*

PETE IN THE PAST

*(Singing) I never saw*

TOGETHER

*You looking this way before*

PETE

*Though you would have me think that nothing has changed  
But every time you smile and tell me that*

TOGETHER

*Things will be fine*

PETE

*That's when your eyes meet mine*

TOGETHER

*And there in your eyes is where I find that*

PETE IN THE PAST

*I never saw*

PETE

*I never saw*

TOGETHER

*You looking this way before  
Where can you go after you're done being free  
You say you're sure it won't happen no more  
How many times have I heard that before  
Hey I never saw you looking this way  
At me.*

- END OF SCENE -

SCENE V:

A street corner; shortly before the top of the play.

PETE

Is it his?

STEVIE

Of course it's - fuck you. I can't believe I -

PETE

You said yourself there was that guy -

STEVIE

Who?

PETE

The one in your lit class that -

STEVIE

Oh, please. Him? I was pissed at Yadi when I found the crack pipe. So I acted out a little.

PETE

Well, that's why I asked. I don't know why you tell me all this anyway.

STEVIE

I was under the impression you liked to hear what your "little girl" did today.

PETE

You need money, I'll give you money.

STEVIE

What does that mean?

PETE

You know, for (pointing to STEVIE's stomach) - if you want -

STEVIE

As if.

PETE

So what do you want?

STEVIE

I wanted to see my father(?)

PETE

(Beat) You're going to have this baby?

STEVIE

Yes.

PETE

What about school?

STEVIE

I'll drop out for awhile.

PETE

Are you going to marry him?

STEVIE

No. I don't know. We'll see what happens.

PETE

God, you're just like your mother.

STEVIE

What's that supposed to mean?

PETE

You make no attempt to reason. You don't consider the options. You let your passion, or whatever it is, run away with you and now all of a sudden, what? Motherhood. We talked about law school, we talked --

STEVIE

Back up. What are you saying? When mommy got pregnant with me, it was what, an accident?

(During PETE's next lines,  
there is a slightly delayed  
echo of his voice)

PETE

I didn't say that.

STEVIE

Sure sounded like it.

PETE

It wasn't planned, no, but...(PETE stops, distracted)

STEVIE

What?

PETE

Um, nothing. Like a deja vu or something.

STEVIE

(Beat) Okay. Well, now at least I know where I stand.

PETE

What.

STEVIE

I've just been this unwanted burden on you all these years  
and -

PETE

I didn't say that.

STEVIE

Oh please, daddy. Our whole relationship is things you  
didn't say. Mostly 'cause you weren't there.

PETE

You were with me as much as mommy, you know, almost.

STEVIE

Yeah? What difference does that make? You still weren't  
there even when you were there.

PETE

What? (Beat) Look, Stevie, let's go get something to eat,  
and we can figure out what to do.

STEVIE

(Looking at stain on shirt) Looks like you already ate.

PETE

What, I --

STEVIE

I know what to do.

PETE  
(Confused) Then what are we doing here?

STEVIE  
You tell me.

PETE  
You asked me to meet you. What do you want from me?

STEVIE  
Support. Help me have this baby.

PETE  
(A long beat; when PETE speaks we again hear the slightly delayed echo of his line, but when he says "can't" the echo says "can") I can't do that. It's going to just ruin your life.

(STEVIE angrily leaves. PETE stares at her and then sits down in disgust next to bag lady on bench. There is a long pause. She reaches into one of her bags and pulls out an old box of chocolates)

PETE  
(Still fuming about his daughter)  
Unbelievable.

ROSE  
You know, life is like a box of –

PETE  
(Snapping at her) No it isn't.

ROSE  
(Beat) No, I guess it isn't. (Mumbling somewhat as she opens the box) Well, shouldn't let it go to waste -- (Sees something inside, a bug that she flicks out with her finger) Wot's that? Freeloader. Nope, you can never tell what you might find. Could be a praline; could be a cockroach. That's the difference between movies and life. (Beat) Boy, that bus ain't never gonna come.

PETE

(Looks at her for the first time) This isn't a bus stop.

ROSE

That would explain it.

PETE

Unbelievable.

ROSE

Yes, that would be an excellent explanation. (Reaches into another bag and pulls out a newspaper) Now would you just look at that. The daily double was the four horse and the seven horse, paid three hundred and twenty-six dollars. I could be in Miami now.

PETE

The buses are just as unreliable in Miami. You're better off here.

ROSE

Another excellent point. (Beat) Three hundred and twenty-six samolians. Boy, wouldn't itta been nice to have this paper yesterday.

PETE

You probably did have it yesterday. That paper's about (slowly, a bit distracted) three months old.

ROSE

(Looking at date) Oh. So it is; so it is. I gets a little behind in my reading time to time. But still, imagine knowing who was going to win. Man, I'd march straight into OTB -- and probably still talk myself into betting the losers. (Laughs)

PETE

(Still fuming about fight with daughter) Unbelievable.

ROSE

Heavens, if something unbelievable can get you so upset, wait 'til you run upside reality.

PETE

It's one thing that she moved in with the bum –

ROSE

I never liked him.

PETE

-- but now she's (distracted again, slowly) going to have his...(stops; looks at ROSE, looks around and then down at the stain on his shirt) I - I...

ROSE

What?

PETE

You - never mind. (More to himself) Just a weird deja vu.

ROSE

All over again.

PETE

(Long beat as he looks at ROSE) Have I - have I been here before?

ROSE

(A sigh of great relief) Child, you don't want to know how many times.

PETE

Oh, god.

ROSE

Don't worry, son. This is the last time, now that you know.

PETE

What do you mean "now that I know?" What do I know?

ROSE

It's the "now" part of what I said that'll make the difference.

PETE

Who are you? What are you?

ROSE

(Beat) This is just going to make it worse, I promise you. I'm sort of a manifestation of what it would be like if you could really listen to yourself, really hear yourself.

PETE

You're a mani...you're right, that did make it worse.

ROSE

Listen, you were finally able to break one cycle; don't start another worrying about how it happened. Point is now you can move on.

PETE

Oh yeah? How?

ROSE

By staying put. You can spend your whole life regretting the past and fearing the future, and you won't have lived one moment of it. That means working on what you have now. The tougher it gets, the more you feel the urge to run, the more you need to stay put. Otherwise...

(Song NOMAD)

ROSE

*Clueless in the moonlight  
Restless at the dawn  
Doubtless in the noon light  
That it's time for moving on  
You rise up from the tangles  
You pull out from the snarl  
You look at all the angles  
And you know  
You're too invested in this life you've borrowed  
There's no today that won't improve tomorrow  
The time has come to leave the pain and sorrow  
Nomad  
For the desert of your heart*

PETE

I'm sorry; I'm trying, really. I understand the words, I just have no idea what's going on.

ROSE

Good. That's that much less that you have to let go of.

PETE

Why is this any different? Sure, you can tell me stuff just like I told myself stuff when I went back. But it's not a question of what you know. There was nothing I told myself

that I didn't already know.

ROSE

So what is it a "question" of? You wanted to change the past because you're unhappy now. Change the now, see how that works.

PETE

But how? I can't change the now, even if I knew what that meant. I can only change...(PETE doesn't say "myself" but thinks it)

(Lights up on SUSIE, SALLY and STEVIE in different parts of the stage. They sing:)

SUSIE

*Somewhere my spirit's soaring  
Though I'm stuck here in your past*

SALLY

*Brush strokes that I'm ignoring  
Is this still life finished at last*

STEVIE

*Wanting to believe you  
Want to believe in me*

STEVIE, SUSIE AND SALLY

*Where is the happy ending*

SUSIE

*You've returned*

SALLY

*You fled your fears and still you're broken hearted*

STEVIE

*Lost in the echoes of a love departed*

STEVIE, SUSIE AND SALLY

*And now you're back again right where you started  
Nomad  
In the desert of your heart*

ROSE

*Nomad*

*In the desert of your heart.*

(Lights down on SUSIE, SALLY  
and ROSE, leaving STEVIE  
upstage, still quite angry.  
PETE looks at her and  
eventually smiles and rises to go to her)

End of play