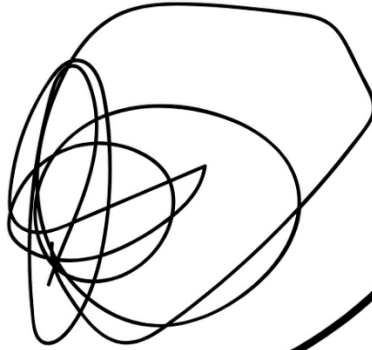


Orbiting Jupiter



Orbiting Jupiter

Production Notes.

Orbiting Jupiter was adapted by myself with editing from Gary D. Schmidt to be produced in “story-telling” style. A large portion of the script is direct narration and/or directly telling the story to the audience rather than acting it out. This style of theatre helps bridge the gap between the audience and the actors and allows for the characters to include details that wouldn’t be included in a more standard theatre setting. This type of theatre also allows for the story to move in a very fluid motion. There are not rigid scenes or scene breaks/blackouts but rather a continuous story being told and shown. Story-telling theatre also allows the audience to focus almost completely on the characters and the story instead of set and property.

Orbiting Jupiter also makes prominent use of ensemble casting. Every character takes part in the ensemble at some point and to do so does not need any costume change or any real change or indication that the actor is not playing their central role. The ensemble often speaks out together, acts as background characters or is used to emphasize certain lines. Each time an actor is speaking as an ensemble member their line is marked with an asterisk(*).

Throughout *Orbiting Jupiter*, there are lamps along the back wall. These lamps are slowly turned on one by one to demonstrate change in both Joseph and Jack. The fourteen lamps serve to emphasize certain scenes or moments which are important to these characters.

There is also an ensemble of chairs used to create everything in the set throughout the whole piece. Anything mentioned in the stage directions is formed by one or more of the chairs.

The musical themes mentioned in the piece can all be found through this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10mX5J1wX133023pzK5qsuYYVpybMCbsn?usp=sharing>

Orbiting Jupiter is ultimately a story about redemption. When everything was taken from Joseph, including his life, he focuses on one thing. his daughter. It is about finding good in the worst. To demonstrate this theme the music and lyrics from “It is Well” by Horation Spafford are used throughout the performance. These words serve to remind the audience the truth behind this story.

“When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul”

Cast List (in order of appearance).

Joseph Brook – *A young teenager who wants to be with his daughter more than anything else*

Madeliene Joyce – *The mother of Joseph's daughter*

Jack Hurd – *Joseph's new foster brother, innocent and eager to have a cool older brother*

Mrs. Hurd – *Joseph's new foster mother, a fierce protector of her children*

Mr. Hurd – *Joseph's new foster father, calm and loving but in control*

Mrs. Stroud – *Joseph's social worker, passionate about her work*

Mrs. Haskell – *Jack and Joseph's ill-mannered bus driver*

Mrs. Canton – *Jack and Joseph's principal, rather judgmental but secretly soft*

Mrs. D'Ulney – *Joseph's quirky math teacher*

Mr. Brook – *Joseph's father, passionate, harsh, and intense*

Ernie – *Jack's friend, an idiot*

Rev. Ballou/Greenleaf – *The Hurd's pastor/A janitor at a local church*

The Librarian – *The foster mother of Joseph's daughter*

Jupiter Joyce – *Joseph and Madeleine's daughter*

Property List.

13 chairs

A worn down table

14 lamps

A folder

A telephone

2 stools

2 metal pails

4 photographs

4 books

A spoon

4 pairs of ice skates

Assorted piles of paper

A pen

Assorted Christmas ornaments

A gold angel Christmas ornament

A knife

Act 1

Scene 1

[The stage is empty and dark. JOSEPH walks to the set and turns on one lamp, illuminating the space. MADDIE enters and grabs JOSEPH's hand. The two begin to dance together as MADDIE hums THEME #1. The ENSEMBLE begin to enter the stage, singing THEME #1.]

*It is well, it is well
With my soul, with my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul]*

*MR. HURD. Jupiter.

*CANTON. Jupiter.

*STROUD. Jupiter.

*ERNIE. Jupiter.

*MRS. HURD. Jupiter.

*LIBRARIAN. I promise I'll always know where you are.

JACK. I promise you I'll always know where you are. Joseph did. Every night before he turned out the light, he looked out his window and he could find you. Among all the other stars- you can see a lot of stars in Maine, he could see you. When we would walk through the woods behind the house, he would look up at the sky and find you. It didn't matter if it was snowing or raining or anything- he would look for you every night. I'm sure Joseph was looking for you the night Mrs. Stroud came to bring him out of Stone Mountain Detention Facility. The night he got into her car and left.

*MADDIE. Chapter One. Eastham, Maine.

[JOSEPH AND MADDIE EXIT]

JACK *[As JACK talks MRS. HURD and MR. HURD enter, setting a small dining room]*. It was a Wednesday afternoon, almost two years ago, when Mrs. Stroud drove up to Eastham, Maine. Down the long dirt road that ran its way through our town. Past all the shops, stores, and houses. Although there aren't too many of any of those in Eastham. Past Eastham Middle. my school.

The only middle school in Eastham. Past Old First Congregational. One of a few churches we had. Almost everyone I knew went there or some church. You couldn't guess what people would say to ya in small town Maine if you didn't. She drove past our small grocery store, past the post office, past our one McDonalds. Up our long dirt driveway. Up the big hill and in front of our garage. Past the barn and the cows and the fields. Past the pond which had finally thawed. Past the apple trees which were just beginning to bloom and past the bees doing their dances. Up to our small white door where she knocked. Where she would bring Joseph just two days later.

[STROUD enters.]

MRS. HURD. Mrs. Stroud! Come on in! We are so excited to finally meet you!

STROUD. Thank you!

MRS. HURD. This is my husband, you've talked before I'm sure, and this is Jack!

STROUD. Hello Jack! I've heard a lot about you! And I'm sure you are going to make an excellent foster brother to Joseph someday, hopefully soon!

MRS. HURD. Yes, Jack has been very excited! We've been talking about his new brother.

MR. HURD. Please, sit down Mrs. Stroud.

STROUD. Thank you Mr. Hurd. I've just come by to make sure you fully understand this decision. Taking care of someone like Joseph Brook is not really an easy task. I wanted to make sure you all knew what you were undertaking here. *[Somewhat hesitantly.]* Jack, I've already talked to your parents about most of this, but- Joseph has been through quite a lot.

JACK. Then she looked me right in the eyes.

STROUD. Before you agree to have Joseph come live with you, there are one or two things you ought to understand.

JACK. She took out a folder that read-

STROUD. State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

JACK. Mrs. Stroud opened the folder. This is what she told me.

STROUD [*In monologue to the audience.*]. Two months ago, when Joseph was at Lake Adams Juvenile, he was given something in the boys' bathroom. He swallowed it. After a long time, his teacher came looking for him and when she found him, he screamed. She said he'd better come out of this bathroom right now. He screamed again. Then he tried to kill her. They sent Joseph to Stone Mountain Detention Facility. He won't talk about what happened to him there, and he won't wear anything orange.

JACK. She said-

STROUD. He won't let anyone stand behind him.

JACK. She said-

STROUD. He won't let anyone touch him. You really can't touch him or stand behind him.

JACK. She said-

STROUD. He won't go into rooms that are too small

JACK. She said he won't eat canned peaches

STROUD [*To the Hurds.*]. He's not too big on meatloaf either.

JACK. He hasn't tried my mother's canned peaches. He'll try those!

STROUD [*Smiling.*]. Hopefully. [*A pause. STROUD looks deeply at JACK.*] Jack, your parents know this and you should too. There's something else about Joseph. He has a daughter. [*Silence settles.*] She's only three months old, but he's never seen her. That's one of the biggest heartbreaks in this case. Mrs. Hurd, I'll leave this with you. Read it, and then you can decide. Call me in a few days if-

MRS. HURD. We've already talked this over. We know.

STROUD. Are you sure?

MR. HURD [*Looking around at his family.*]. We're sure.

STROUD *[Leans down.]*. How about you, Jack?

Scene 2

[STROUD exits, JOSEPH enters.]

MRS. HURD. Two days later, on Friday, Mrs. Stroud brought Joseph home. He looked like any regular kid at Eastham school. Dark hair and dark eyes. A little taller than normal. He really coulda been any other kid at Eastham. Except he had a daughter. And he wouldn't look at you when he talked, if he talked.

MR. HURD. He didn't say a thing when he got out of the car. He wouldn't let my wife hug him. And he wouldn't shake my hand. I brought him to his room and he threw his stuff on the top bunk and climbed up. He didn't say anything. He laid there the rest of the night. The next morning I called Jack and him in to milk the cows.

JACK. In the big barn Joseph and I tore up three bales and then we went back to the cows in the tie-up to milk.

[JACK and JOSEPH enter the barn, MR. and MRS. HURD exit.]

JACK. So these are our two cows, Rosie and Dahlia. They're even older than I am. Have you ever milked a cow before?

[JOSEPH doesn't respond. JACK is trying to fill the silence.]

JACK. It's ok, I had to learn how to milk them too. They're really nice though! If they moo around you it means they like you!

[JACK still waits for a response from JOSEPH but gets nothing.]

JACK. We use their milk for everything and sometimes we sell it too. And it's really important that we milk them everyday otherwise it's bad for them. So, um, yah, we have to do this every afternoon this week after we get home from school.

[JACK is still waiting for a response from JOSEPH who is staring at his feet.]

JACK. If you come over here I can show you how to do it. *[JOSEPH doesn't move.]* School is pretty fun most of the time, but some of the teachers are kind of annoying. But I think you'll get along ok with everyone. As long as you don't talk to Mrs. Haskell. She's our bus driver and she's super annoying.

[JOSEPH carefully approaches the cow. He points at it.]

JOSEPH Which one is this?

JACK. That one's Rosie. She's the calmest. If you rub her rump, she'll moo.

D'ULNEY. Moo!

[JOSEPH continues staring at his feet.]

JACK. So what do you like to do for fun? My friends and I like to play basketball in the summer and in the winter we skate. *[There is a silence.]* So, um, what's your daughter's name? Don't you have a daughter?

JOSEPH *[Cutting.]* What?

[MRS. HURD enters.]

MRS. HURD. Joseph, you can watch for now but later you'll be helping! *[JOSEPH doesn't react. He continues staring at his feet.]* Joseph just stood with his back against the wall.

JACK. When my mother got to Rosie she asked

MRS. HURD. Would you like to try milking her?

[JOSEPH shakes his head. He continues staring down.]

MRS. HURD. She's gentle. She'd let anyone milk her. I'll be back in a minute with the pails.

JACK. Joseph didn't say anything. But as soon as my mom left I saw him try to rub Rosie's rump. Just to see if she would be happy. Rosie let out a big-

D'ULNEY. Moo!

[JOSEPH begins to exit.]

JACK. She's just telling you she's happy--

JOSEPH. I don't care.

[THEME #2 (Ver 1)]

Scene 3

JACK *[As JACK speaks, the ENSEMBLE sets the bus.]* The next Monday, Joseph and I went to ride the bus to school, which I'd done a million times. You wait in the cold and dark and the bus pulls up. Mrs. Haskell doesn't talk to you or even look at you cus

[In unison.]

HASKELL. it's cold and it's dark and I didn't spend all my life wanting to be a bus driver ya know so ya better go sit down.

JACK. it's cold and it's dark and she didn't spend all her life wanting to be a bus driver you know so you better go sit down.

JACK. So you sit down and the bus bumps over to Eastham Middle. Not a big deal. But that morning, Mrs. Haskell looked right past me.

HASKELL. How do I know you?

[JACK and JOSEPH continue to walk down the bus aisle.]

HASKELL. You're that kid that has a daughter.

[JOSEPH stops dead in his tracks.]

HASKELL. Mrs. Canton told the staff all about it. Just so we could be sensitive, ya know?

[JOSEPH begins to walk out of the bus.]

HASKELL. Hey if you wanna walk, it's no skin off my nose. *[Getting annoyed.]* Two miles that way! And what do you think you're doing?!

JACK. That last part was to me, because I got off the bus too.

HASKELL *[Under her breath.]* You're nuts.

[JOSEPH doesn't turn around. Continues "staring down" HASKELL.]

HASKELL. You know I didn't mean anything. Just getting to know you, kid.

[JOSEPH continues staring. HASKELL is annoyed.]

HASKELL. Suit yourself. It's twenty one degrees out there.

[The ENSEMBLE removes the bus. There is a beat of silence. JACK blows out his breath.]

JOSEPH. Why'd you do that?

JACK *[Regretting his decision.]* I don't know.

JOSEPH. You should've stayed on the bus.

JACK. Yah. You're probably right. It isn't any twenty-one degrees out. And right as I walked in front of Joseph to start towards school I heard him say-

JOSEPH. Hey.

JACK. He'd dropped his backpack and picked up a stone from the side of the road. He looked carefully towards the steeple of Old First Congregational. The steeple's old bell looked like it could be centuries old.

[JOSEPH throws the rock at the bell and it rings.]

JACK. I'd never heard that bell ring before.

[JACK drops his backpack and picks up a stone. He throws it at the bell but misses. He picks up another and misses again. Joseph scoffs.]

JACK. It's hard to throw with your gloves on!

[JACK tries once more and misses again.]

JOSEPH. You're throwing off your front foot. Push off with your back.

[JACK listens to him this time and hits the bell, letting out a ring.]

JOSEPH. See?

JACK. I think I saw Joseph smile.

[The second lamp is turned on.]

[JACK nods. Both kids smile for a moment. Both are freezing cold.]

JOSEPH. Gimme some of your stuff.

JACK *[After a beat.]*. Thanks.

JOSEPH. We'll get there faster.

JACK. I gave him some of my textbooks then I pulled out my PE stuff but he told me

[In unison.]

JACK. I could carry my own stinking jock.

JOSEPH. You can carry your own stinking jock.

JACK. Two miles. I can't even tell you what my fingers felt like.

[THEME #3]

Scene 4

[The scene shifts to a school hallway. A bell rings and students hurry to their classes, leaving JACK and JOSEPH alone in the hallway.]

JACK. When we finally got to school the halls were empty except for Mrs. Canton. The vice principal who would've probably been better off as a drill sergeant.

[CANTON clears her throat and "enters" the scene]

CANTON *[In an impossibly sweet voice.]* Did you miss the bus.

JACK. Sort of

CANTON. Sort of?

JACK. We got off.

CANTON. It's not even twenty degrees out there.

JACK *[Warming up his hands with his breath.]* I know.

CANTON. Why did you get off the bus?

[JACK is silent.]

JOSEPH. The bus driver is a huge jerk.

CANTON. Excuse me?

JOSEPH. Your shoes look like someone shined 'em ten minutes ago. How the hell do you wear shoes like that?

CANTON. You're Mr. Brook, right? Maybe one of your problems is a lack of respect. *[Polite with an edge]* This means a tardy for both of you. Get to class Jackson .

Jack *[Scared.]* Yes Ma'am.

[JACK exits, leaving CANTON alone with JOSEPH. There is a beat. JOSEPH relents and stands up.]

CANTON. Follow me. I'll go over your schedule. You do have a schedule you know, Joseph.... he didn't say anything.

[THEME #4]

Scene 5

*HASKELL. Chapter Two. Our Favorite Planet.

JACK. After that, we started walking to school together every day.

MRS. HURD. You boys will need some gloves and hats. Oh, and probably some sweaters. And take your father's old winter coat.

JACK. At least kind of together. He was always a little bit behind me. We followed the Alliance river- running dark and fast this time of year. And we'd stop at Old First Congregational and clang the bell. Every. Day. No matter how cold it was. Monday.

*BALLOU. 23 degrees.

JACK. Tuesday.

*LIBRARIAN. 19 degrees.

JACK. Wednesday.

*CANTON. 21 degrees.

JACK. Thursday.

*ERNIE. 16 degrees.

JACK. Friday.

*STROUD. 8 degrees.

JACK. I don't think he would say anything, but I'm pretty sure Joseph was glad I was there.

Scene 6

[A school bell rings. D'ULNEY is onstage.]

D'ULNEY. I'm not sure everyone was glad Joseph was at Eastham, though. At lunch, he sat alone. In the classroom, he sat alone. And after school waiting for the bus home, he sat alone. Mr. Collum wouldn't let him in his eighth grade science class, even though he was in eighth grade. But he was in the eighth grade math class that I taught. We teachers were still careful around him, though. I guess it was enough that he tried to kill a teacher once. I'm sure that's what Mrs. Halloway thought whenever she looked at him. In her language arts class, when no one was looking, Joseph would pull a picture out of his wallet. He held it so no one else could look at it. Halloway didn't like that.

[HALLOWAY walks towards JOSEPH'S desk and holds out her hand to collect the picture. JOSEPH doesn't hand it over. Instead, he ignores her and puts the picture back in his wallet.]

D'ULNEY. And then there was Canton.

[A bell rings. CANTON stops JACK in the hall with a clearing of the throat.]

CANTON. Mrs. Haskell said you weren't on the bus again today.

JACK. I walked.

CANTON. With Joseph Brook?

JACK. Well, I-

CANTON *[Hesitantly.]*. Listen Jackson. I respect your parents. I really do. *[She is genuine. This causes her to stumble over her words. She struggles to share her thoughts through the cheesy anecdotes she has in mind]*. They're trying to make the world a better place. They're bringing kids like Joseph into a normal family. But kids like Joseph aren't necessarily going to

be normal. He's just going to be different, think different. And that's ok. Kids like that just think differently. But they are going to do some things that you and I...

JACK. He's not really like that.

CANTON. Are you sure? When's the last time you've had to talk to the vice principal? When's the last time you've gotten a tardy?

[JACK is silent. Genuinely considers what she is saying.]

CANTON. Monday. And who were you with?

[Pause. JACK is still thinking.]

CANTON. I'm just warning you to be careful around Mr. Brook. You don't really know all that much about him.

[CANTON looks him over with genuine love and concern and walks off.]

Scene 7

[THEME #2 (Ver 2)]

[MRS. HURD and JOSEPH enter.]

MRS. HURD. Joseph started helpin' us chop up firewood, things like that. And in Maine you don't even need a porch light to do the chores. Outside, that night, it was cold and bright.

[MRS. HURD and JOSEPH spread hay in the barn. JOSEPH stops and looks out at the stars. He is transfixed on one star. MADDIE. He is doing everything in his power not to show emotion. A few moments later MRS. HURD notices JOSEPH. They pause a beat.]

MRS. HURD. Are you ok?

JOSEPH. What?

MRS. HURD. Are you ok?

[JOSEPH toughens himself up but never looks back. He is afraid to show JACK that he is almost crying.]

JOSEPH. Why wouldn't I be?

[Long beat.]

MRS. HURD. Joseph, I know this might be hard to talk about. And you don't have to answer me. But I would love to hear a little bit about your daughter. Like maybe her name? I know you probably think about her a lot-

[JOSEPH looks over his shoulder.]

JOSEPH. It's none of your-

MRS. HURD. I'm just asking.

[There is a moment of silence. MRS. HURD begins to walk away.]

JOSEPH. Her name is Jupiter.

*STROUD. Jupiter.

*BALLOU. Jupiter.

*HASKELL. Jupiter.

*MADDIE. Jupiter.

JOSEPH. It was our favorite planet.

[THEME #5]

MRS. HURD *[Thoughtfully.]* Jupiter.

JOSEPH. I always know where Jupiter is.

[MRS. HURD, now trying to distract JOSEPH, grabs two metal pails. She hands one of them to JOSEPH.]

MRS. HURD. C'mon, you'll get the hang of it soon.

JOSEPH. You need milk this bad, there's probably some place you could buy it like normal people.

MRS. HURD. I don't need the milk, Joseph. But the cows need you to milk them.

JOSEPH. She doesn't need me to-

MRS. HURD. She needs you. Sit down on the stool.

[JOSEPH stares from the stool to MRS. HURD, unimpressed and annoyed. MRS. HURD doesn't budge, so he sits.]

MRS. HURD. I'll show you again. With your thumb and your forefinger, you pinch the top - like this, then you let your fingers strip the milk down, like this.

It took a few tries before there was any progress. And it wasn't slow and steady, but Joseph was milking. And I guess I was happy. I forgot not to walk behind-

*MADDIE/*STROUD/*HASKELL/*BALLOU. *Bang!*

[JOSEPH jumps up against the wall. He is breathing heavily. He is in fight or flight mode.]

MRS. HURD. I - I'm sorry Joseph. I'll try to remember. The way he was breathing- I-

*LIBRARIAN. Joseph always knew where Jupiter was.

Scene 8

[A bell rings. D'ULNEY and JOSEPH are onstage]

D'ULNEY. Not every teacher wanted Joseph out of Eastham. Coach Swieteck didn't mind him. Especially during the apparatus unit, when he found out he could do stuff better than any of the

other eighth graders. When they climbed the rope, Joseph could do it in thirty-eight seconds--three seconds faster than Swieteck.

I teach sixth, seventh, and eighth grade math. I don't understand why students complain about it. I mean, what's really more exciting than solving an equation? Anyways, the one day I was on bus monitor duty, I noticed Joseph sitting alone, again, by the end of the bus line. And, I don't know, I had a feeling about this kid.

Joseph?

[JOSEPH looks at her but does not move.]

D'ULNEY. Can you come with me please?

JOSEPH. Am I in trouble again?

D'ULNEY. I don't think so. Should you be?

[JOSEPH continues looking down.]

D'ULNEY. Follow me.

JOSEPH. I have to wait for my-

D'ULNEY. It'll just be a minute.

I took him back to my classroom and showed him some geometry proofs. He knew all of them. After that, I started bringing a new theorem to fifth period office duty everyday. Mrs. Canton didn't like that.

[CANTON enters.]

CANTON. Joseph Brook is on office duty.

D'ULNEY. Of course. It's *so* much more important for him to run around the school dropping off messages than to be challenged to learn what great mathematicians have wrestled with for a thousand years.

CANTON [*Grabbing the theorem from JOSEPH.*]. You'd think they'd have solved it by now.

D'ULNEY [*Half to JOSEPH, half to CANTON.*]. It's not the solution, Mrs. Canton. It's the path to the solution that's fascinating.

[*CANTON stares daggers at D'ULNEY who clears her throat.*]

CANTON [*Handing over a large stack of papers.*]. You need to deliver these. When you get back, I want you to clean up the attendance files. [*She exits.*]

D'ULNEY. After that, I guess he was pretty busy during fifth hour office duty. So Joseph started eating lunch in my room. I'd give him proofs and he'd work on 'em till the bell rang. I think he was just happy not to be eating alone. And I guess I was, too.

[*The third lamp is turned on.*]

D'ULNEY. I thought by the end of the year we might even start working on some trig questions! I didn't have any other students who could do trig.

Scene 9

JACK. Joseph never talked about his family. But one day I met his dad. As soon as I saw him, I knew it. Same dark eyes.

[*MR. BROOK enters.*]

MR. BROOK. Joe around?

JACK [*Looks up and stops milking the cows. Hesitant and scared.*]. No.

MR. BROOK. They got you doing chores, huh? What are you here for?

JACK. I live here.

MR. BROOK. I know you live here. I mean before.

[*MR. HURD enters, announcing his presence with a drop of a pail. MR. BROOK turns around.*]

MR. BROOK. You Mr. Hurd?

MR. HURD. That's right. Jack, come back here and spread more hay for Rosie, will you?

[JACK exits.]

[To MR. BROOK.] You're not supposed to be here.

MR. BROOK. I wanted to see what kind of hellhole they put my son into.

MR. HURD. Like I said, you're not supposed to be here.

MR. BROOK. You got 'em shoveling manure too? Is that what you get outta this? A buncha kids to do your work for ya?

MR. HURD. We're taking good care of Joseph. Now it's time for you to go.

[MR. BROOK gets closer to MR. HURD. He is beginning to shout.]

MR. BROOK. You know I can-

MR. HURD. *[Remaining calm but clearly tense.]* I'm sure you can. Now it's time for you to get out.

[There is a long, tense silence. JOSEPH enters quietly and starts to exit when he sees his father.]

MR. BROOK. Joe!

MR. HURD. Joseph, go back into the house and help Mrs. Hurd set the-

MR. BROOK. Joe, come here and look your father in the eyes.

MR. HURD. Joseph you don't have to-

MR. BROOK. I'm talking to my son. *[With ensemble]* Joseph!

*HASKELL/*D'ULNEY/*ERNIE/*BALLOU. Joseph!

[JOSEPH carefully walks closer to MR. BROOK. It is difficult for him to look at his father.]

MR. BROOK. Do you really like it here Joe? Talk to me.

[JOSEPH is silent. He is afraid to speak.]

MR. BROOK. Talk to your Dad. You honestly think it's better here? You belong back at home carrying the tools for your old man. *[As he is talking, MR. BROOK raises his hand and JOSEPH flinches and storms off. MR. BROOK attempts to follow him, now yelling. MR. HURD stops MR. BROOK before he can follow JOSEPH.]*

*HASKELL/*D'ULNEY/*ERNIE/*BALLOU. *Bang!*

MR. BROOK. You don't belong here Joe. You're not ever going-

MR. HURD. Mr. Brook! I will say this one more time. You are not supposed to be here. Leave now or I will have the police here in minutes.

MR. BROOK *[exiting, still angry but feeling isolated after his son's response]*. I- I'll be back to see my son.

[THEME #6]

Scene 10

*CANTON. Chapter Three. New Ice

[THEME #7]

JACK. By the end of November, it looked like my father was right. we were in for a wicked winter. And when we walked to school, everything around us was only white. The ground, the trees, the bell tower of Old First Congregational, the sky, and even the Alliance river. I guess that's why Joseph dropped his backpack that day and headed towards the river.

[The river is formed with the various chairs + ENSEMBLE members. JOSEPH carefully steps onto the river. JACK stands behind him, worried.]

JACK. What are you doing Joseph?

JOSEPH. What does it look like I'm doing Jackie?

JACK. *[narrating]* He stepped right onto the Alliance River. *[in character]* Joseph, I'm serious, I don't think-

JOSEPH *[angrily]*. Figure it out Jackie.

[JACK watches nervously as JOSEPH walks further onto the ice.]

JACK. You know, that is pretty new ice.

[JOSEPH doesn't look back]

JACK. Joseph, I'm serious, this isn't safe. I've seen people fall through before. Joseph I'm not kidding!

[JOSEPH unzips his jacket and spins around on the ice. Almost like he is skating. He continues getting further and further away from the shore.]

JACK *[urgently, almost crying]*. Joseph! Joseph please! Just come back! Joseph!

JOSEPH *[looking back at JACK]*. Shut up, Jackie.

JACK *[not knowing what to do]*. Maddie! Maddie!

[JOSEPH looks back at JACK like he is going to kill him.]

JOSEPH. Shut up! *Shut up!*

JACK. Maddie!

JOSEPH. Shut up!

[JOSEPH begins to jump up and down on the ice.]

JACK. Joseph! Joseph please stop! *[screaming, with ENSEMBLE]* Joseph!

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). Joseph!

MADDIE. Joseph, please.

[JOSEPH falls through the ice. The scene freezes.]

JACK. The winter I was six, I saw a yellow dog on thin ice on the Alliance river. I was with my mother, and we were walking back from old First Congregational. The dog was out pretty far and it had fallen through and its eyes were huge. It was grabbing on with its front paws, scratching, looking for something to hold on to. It wasn't making a sound. I told my mother we had to go get it, but she stood there, holding her hand over her mouth. It just kept looking for something to hold on to. Until suddenly it stopped, put its head down on the ice, slid into the dark water and was gone. Gone. I live on a farm. I see animals die all the time. Never like that.

I cried about that yellow dog every night for I don't know how long. I had dreams about it. About the cold water, the ice pulling my legs and dragging me down. And the moment when I put my head down and slide into the dark water.

That's why it felt like a nightmare when Joseph stepped out on the ice. That's why I screamed "Maddie." The name I had heard him say in the night again and again and again. That's why I screamed when Joseph fell through the ice of the Alliance river.

Scene 11

JACK. That's how people die, you know! They fall into the water and they get dragged under the ice or they make it back and freeze to death.

JOSEPH. Then we better get back to your house, Jackie.

JACK. It's Jack.

JOSEPH. Yeah.

JACK. Why did you-

JOSEPH. We're out now, aren't we? Let's go.

JACK. But his lips were already blue and so were mine, and I wasn't exactly sure we would make it. So maybe it wasn't such a bad thing when Mrs. Canton drove up to us at the bank, with her perfectly unscuffed shoes.

[CANTON enters]

CANTON. And is this why you are always late?

JACK. Mrs. Canton I-

CANTON. If someone hadn't called me about two crazy kids out on the ice, I wouldn't have come here. *[looking at JOSEPH]* It wasn't too hard to figure out who it would be, either.

JACK. But just then I didn't feel like arguing with her and her perfectly unscuffed shoes.

CANTON. Jackson, I expected more from you. I've talked to you before about being careful who you spend your time with!

JOSEPH. Aw, that's real sweet of ya Canton-

CANTON. Joseph Brook! I will be talking with you about this during fifth period office duty tomorrow morning. Something for you to look forward to.

JACK. What about-

CANTON. You know I want what's best for both you and your family. Take your sweaters and your coats off before you get in my car. I will be driving you both home to talk with your parents.

[CANTON exits]

JACK. So Mrs. Canton drove us home. You can imagine what my mother did when we got inside later that day.

MRS. HURD. *[Entering]* Stand in front of the wood stove! Everything that's wet, off! Underwear too. It's not like there's anything I haven't seen before.

JACK. And you can guess what my father said when he got back.

MR. HURD. *[Entering]* Jack, what do I tell you every single year? What have I told you over and over?

JACK. Don't go out onto the ice until you say it's safe.

MR. HURD. Did I say it was safe?

JACK. No, sir.

MR. HURD. No, I didn't.

JOSEPH. Mr. Hurd, I-

MR. HURD. Quiet, Joseph. I'll talk to you in a minute. Of all the brainless, foolish things for a boy who has lived near a river all his life, this was the most brainless, the most fool thing you could come up with. If for one minute you had thought through-

JOSEPH. He came onto the ice for me.

MR. HURD *[after a moment]*. I know, Joseph. That's what we'll be talking about.

Scene 12

JACK. That night it was cold in our room. And maybe it was because of that frozen water, but when Joseph leaned against his bed, I could see a scar running all the way down his back. The white line dragged down from under his right arm then all the way down to his sweatpants.

JOSEPH. Jackie.

JACK. It's Jack.

JOSEPH. Don't worry about Canton. Your father's gonna call her. You'll be alright.

JACK *[very worried]*. I wasn't worried.

JOSEPH. I know.

JACK. I wasn't.

JOSEPH. I know.

JACK. But my stomach unknotted because I guess I was a little worried.

JOSEPH. And Jackie. Don't ever say that name again. Her name is Madeleine. I'm the only one who calls her Maddie.

JACK. Okay.

[There is a silence. JOSEPH walks across the stage and slowly turns on one lamp. He looks out the window longingly.]

JACK. Joseph, why did you get on the ice?

JOSEPH *[He continues looking out the window]*. Maddie liked to skate.

[THEME #5]

JACK. I didn't say anything the rest of the night. It was the first thing I ever heard about her.

[THEME #2 (Ver 3)]

Scene 13

[Bus is onstage with HASKELL and ERNIE. MRS. HURD, JOSEPH, and JACK enter]

MRS. HURD. The next morning I told the boys that from now until spring they would be taking the bus to school. No arguments! So I waited by the end of the bus line with them just to be sure.

HASKELL *[with a stupid prideful grin]*. Looks like you two got your minds changed for you.

[JOSEPH gets on the bus and sits in the very back.]

HASKELL *[Impossibly sweet.]* I hear your boy had some trouble yesterday.

MRS. HURD *[Matching HASKELL's tone.]* Is that what you hear?

HASKELL. That's what I hear. I guess your husband really took him out to the woodshed, if you know what I mean.

MRS. HURD. Actually, I'm pretty proud of what he did.

HASKELL. Almost drowning?

MRS. HURD. I guess you didn't hear everything.

[MRS. HURD confidently exits, having defeated HASKELL.]

HASKELL *[to JOESPH]*. Are you getting on or not?

[JACK gets on and sits by some of his friends, one of whom is JAMMING to Dancing Queen by Abba.]

JACK. I sat down by Ernie, and I guess we were being loud because Mrs. Haskell yelled that

[In unison]

JACK. We could walk the rest of the way and it wouldn't be any skin off her nose. Almost two miles that way!

HASKELL. You can walk the rest of the way and it won't be any skin off my nose. Almost two miles that way!

JACK. And then she said some words you probably wouldn't hear in our old First Congregational church and we all sat down.

ERNIE. You really fall into the Alliance river?

JACK. Not exactly.

ERNIE. How can you not exactly fall into a river?

JACK. I went in partway.

ERNIE. That's how people die, you know! You're nuts. Freaking nuts. If you got any left! That's what freezes first.

[They wrestle each other the way twelve-year-old boys do.]

ERNIE. Why are you hanging around *him* anyways? Everyone knows he's psycho. He probably dragged you into the river, didn't he?

JACK. We live in the same house, Ernie.

ERNIE. That doesn't mean anything. You know he'll be gone as soon as they find a place for him in psycho school.

JACK. Shut up.

ERNIE. Maybe this is news to you, Jack, but he almost killed a teacher.

JACK. That's crazy.

ERNIE. No. What's crazy is what'll happen to him if some of the eight grade guys ever find your psycho brother by himself. Don't you know what he did to Jay Perkins?

JACK. What?

ERNIE. They were in D'Ulney's class and Jay said something to psycho about his girl and in like, two seconds he had his hands around Jay's throat.

JACK *[hesitantly]*. That's not true.

ERNIE. All I know is that Jay Perkins would be dead right now if it wasn't for D'Ulney. And since D'Ulney blamed Jay for saying what he did, nothing happened. Jay Perkins is telling everybody how he's gonna bust your foster brother up. Psycho school better start lookin real good.

Scene 14

JACK. When we got off the bus, Mrs. D'Ulney was waiting for Joseph.

[The bus is taken off. D'ULNEY motions for JOSEPH to come with her. JOSEPH is hesitant.]

D'ULNEY. It's ok. It's ok. Let's talk before the bell rings.

[They begin to walk away.]

JACK. I didn't hear what they said.

D'ULNEY. Joseph Brook! What were you thinking?

JOSEPH. Just because I-

D'ULNEY. I was worried about you.

[JOSEPH considers this. It is not something he has heard many times in his life. The fifth lamp is turned on.]

JOSEPH. Thank you. I'm sorry.

D'ULNEY. It's alright. *[She looks him over, still concerned.]* Now come with me, I'll write you a pass for your first hour. I have some trig questions I want you to try.

Scene 15

JACK. At fifth period office duty there wasn't really much to do. Canton was busy as all get out and there weren't any messages to deliver and we had already cleared out the attendance files, so Joseph pulled out *Octavian Nothing* and began to read. Then Canton walked by.

CANTON. *[Entering]* Joseph. Put the book away.

[JOSEPH looks at CANTON but continues reading.]

CANTON. You're not here to read books or play games. You are here to work. And you never know when there might be an important errand to run.

JOSEPH. I guess.

CANTON. You guess?

[JOSEPH sighs and puts the book away.]

CANTON. Being responsible, Mr. Brook, means being ready to do what you're supposed to be doing, even if no one is watching or making you do it. Do you understand that?

[JOSEPH is silent.]

CANTON *[frustrated, she is raising her voice]*. Do you understand that Mr. Brook?

JOSEPH. I have to get to class.

CANTON. Joseph!-

*MR. HURD/*HASKELL/*D'ULNEY/*ERNIE. Bang!

[CANTON reaches out for JOSEPH and grabs his shoulder. In a split second, JOSEPH has dropped his backpack and has backed up against the wall. He is breathing heavily. A heavy silence descends on the room.]

JACK. Don't touch him. Please don't touch him.

[CANTON is at a complete loss for words. She doesn't know what to do. She picks up JOSEPH'S backpack and hands it to him.]

CANTON. You better get to class.

[JOSEPH bolts off stage. JACK follows him. CANTON is alone on stage considering what just happened. She addresses the audience for the first time.]

CANTON. The way he was breathing... I-

[THEME #4]

Scene 16

MRS. HURD. That night it was so cold that even Joseph, who said he wasn't going to wear anything like that long underwear I gave him, put it on. Jack and I went down to our little pond and started to shovel off the snow. It was white and powdery and if there had been any more wind it would've blown off like dust. It didn't take us long and after all the snow was shoveled, the ice beneath was smooth and slippery and light green. Jack and I lay around the edge of the pond where it was still clear and we could see pebbles and drowned sticks and sand. It was about then when Mr. Hurd came back with Joseph.

MR. HURD. *[Entering with JOSEPH]* What fool thing are you guys up to?

MRS. HURD. Come and see. You too, Joseph. *[Hands JOSEPH a pair of skates. JOSEPH looks carefully at them.]* The stars began to come out as we all laced up our skates.

[Theme #8]

MRS. HURD. We could already see the moon.

MR. HURD. He skated around and around. Even after Mrs. Hurd and I got off the ice to start a fire.

JACK. Around and around. Even after I got off the ice.

MR. HURD. His hands were out and his eyes were closed and we watched him lean and skate and lean and skate. Around and around.

JACK. I wondered if he was skating with Maddie.

MRS. HURD. Around and around, and I didn't want him to stop, no matter how cold and late it got. And the stars watched. And so did the moon. And Jupiter over the mountains.

*HASKELL. Jupiter.

*ERNIE. Jupiter.

D'ULNEY. Jupiter.

*BALLOU. Jupiter.

JOSEPH. I have to see Jupiter. Will you help me?

MRS. HURD. Joseph, you know-

JOSEPH. I have to see her.

MR. HURD. You know we have-

MRS. HURD. And under the stars and the moon and Jupiter, Joseph told us everything.

*BALLOU. Everything.

Scene 17

[THEME #9. The following scene takes place in JOSEPH's memory. It is choreographed movement timed to fit the monologue].

*MADDIE. Chapter Four. Madeleine Joyce

JOSEPH *[as JOSEPH speaks the HURDS slowly exit]*. Maddie liked to skate. And she was good at it, too. You know, we used to walk to the little creek behind her house and she pretended she was skating on it. She didn't need skates like these. She slid in her boots and she was beautiful in them. Better than beautiful. She would skate around and around till the sun went down. And I watched her skate around under the stars and the moon and Jupiter. And she would squint her eyes really tight and smile, and her arms were out and the wind ran through her hair. And she would open her eyes to look right at me. She loved that.

She was only thirteen when I met her. Her mom and dad were lawyers, so she spent most of her time alone in her big house. But Maddie was there the hot summer morning my dad came to change the showerheads and faucets and he brought me to carry the tools. The second she smiled at me, I felt something different. Like I was in some crappy rom com.

So, I came back two days later. We spent the whole day together. We watched movies and she showed me how to play tennis and we walked the long path that cut back through the woods behind her house. Before I left that day she pushed me into her pool with all my clothes on. It would keep me cool on the seven mile walk home.

That summer I walked those

*MRS. HURD. One.

*CANTON. Two.

D'ULNEY. Three.

*BALLOU. Four.

*STROUD. Five.

*ERNIE. Six.

*MADDIE. Seven miles.

JOSEPH. To her house everyday. We watched movies and played tennis and we would take those long walks. I hated the seven miles back from her house everyday, but walking with her felt like nothing. She never asked me why my face looked so beat up. I never told her what my father was doing to me because I wasn't around to carry the tools. I didn't have to. When I was with her it felt like we were on our own planet in a dark sky.

[The sixth lamp is turned on.]

Scene 18

JACK. Joseph, it's freezing. *[There is silence.]* What are you looking at?

JOSEPH. I can't see Jupiter. The moon's too bright. I don't know where she is.

JACK. It's where it always is.

JOSEPH. No, it isn't.

[JOSEPH wraps his arms around himself and turns around.]

JOSEPH. I'm going to find her. I need to. I'm not going to stay alone.

JACK. You're not alone.

JOSEPH. I'm alone.

JACK. No, you're not!

JOSEPH. I'm alone.

JACK. You've got me.

JOSEPH *[Cutting.]*. Jackie, I'm a lifetime ahead of you.

JACK. It's Jack.

JOSEPH. Ok, Jackie.

Scene 19

[Bus is onstage, along with HASKELL and ERNIE.]

MRS. HURD. By the next morning it was snowing, which meant if we wanted to skate we would have to shovel off the ice pond again. The bus was late and Mrs. Haskell skidded the tires in the new snow when she stopped for them. *[Exits.]*

HASKELL. Hey, you think you could drive a bus better, go ahead. Go ahead!

[JOSEPH walks to the end of the bus. Past the same kid who is still JAMMING to Dancing Queen by Abba.]

HASKELL. That's what I thought.

JACK. Hey Ernie. Ernie.

ERNIE. Listen, Jack.

JACK. Relax, Ernie. She's not going into the river. You won't die.

ERNIE. Just listen. Don't hang around psycho kid anymore, ok?

JACK. What's that supposed to mean?

ERNIE. Just don't hang around him.

JACK. Why?

ERNIE. No reason.

JACK. Ernie-

ERNIE. I said no reason.

JACK. Ernie went back to looking out the window and we sat in silence the rest of the ride.

[Bus taken off.]

Scene 20

[THEME #10. Once again the scene takes place in JOSEPH's memory and it is choreographed movement timed to fit the monologue].

[MADDIE and JOSEPH enter.]

JOSEPH. That fall, Maddie went away to school in Andover. And I didn't know what to do. I went to the library every afternoon to write to her. Writing stunk, but it was better than nothing. A little. I didn't have a whole lot to do without her. Nothing felt exciting.

But she came back for Christmas. I walked the

*MRS. HURD. One.

*CANTON. Two.

D'ULNEY. Three.

*BALLOU. Four.

*STROUD. Five.

*ERNIE. Six.

*MADDIE. Seven miles

JOSEPH. to her house and knocked on her door and she was there. Looking just as happy as she did before. She brought me inside and we had hot chocolate and coffee in her kitchen. And she told me all about *[In unison with ENSMEBLE]* Andover. About her friends and her classes and how she would skate on the pond behind the schoolhouse. And she was really excited to show me something. Something she wrote.

*MRS. HURD. Andover.

*BALLOU. Friends and her classes.

*LIBRARIAN. She would skate on the pond behind the schoolhouse.

[MADDIE plays a simple song on the piano. JOSEPH watches her, entranced.]

I could listen to her forever. I didn't ever need to say anything. Even when we went on that long walk through the snowy acreage. And she told me more about her *[In unison with ENSEMBLE]* friends and her classes and how she would talk with her favorite teachers after school. And she threw snowballs at me and hit me. And I threw snowballs too but I couldn't hit her. I couldn't even imagine hitting Maddie with a snowball.

*CANTON. Friends and her classes.

*HASKELL. How she would talk with her favorite teachers after school.

And that night we stayed out behind her house skating on the pond until the stars came out. And we sat on the bank of the pond and just watched them.

[To MADDIE.] That's Jupiter. It's my favorite planet.

MADDIE. It's mine too- now.

JOSEPH. And when she got tired, she grabbed my hand and we danced. Under the stars and the moon and Jupiter. *our* favorite planet. Maddie closed her eyes, but I didn't want to. I didn't want to miss a second. Because I loved her. I hadn't known that before. How it could... fill me. I guess I hadn't known anything.

*CANTON. What kind of love is that?

[The seventh lamp is turned on. JOSEPH and MADDIE exit]

Scene 21

[JACK and ERNIE are onstage.]

JACK. I figured out what Ernie meant on the bus that day. About staying away from Joseph. I knew what he meant a few days later. In gym class. When Coach Swieteck was gone to some stupid PE conference and we had some stupid substitute who knew just as much about running a PE class as Mrs. D'Ulney would. I knew when Ernie told me to roll up the mats with him after class. When I looked at Ernie and around the gym and some of the eighth graders were still shooting baskets, but Joseph had already gone into the locker room. When Nick Porter and Brian Boss and Jay Perkins were gone too.

ERNIE. Jack.

JACK. I could hear slamming from the locker room. Again and again.

[The ENSEMBLE slams chairs on the ground rhythmically.]

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). Again and again.

ERNIE. Jack, please just don't go.

JACK. I could hear Joseph yelling from all the way outside the locker room.

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). Slamming and yelling.

ERNIE. Jack-

[JACK turns around and enters the locker room. ENSEMBLE forms a hallway, slamming chairs on the ground rhythmically creating an intense percussion.]

JACK. I ran down the center aisle towards the eighth grade locker room as fast as I could. Slamming and yelling. Slamming and yelling. *[The ENSEMBLE surrounds JACK, increasing the volume of the percussion.]*

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). Slamming and yelling!

JACK. And Joseph. And Jay Perkins, laying on the floor, blood pouring out of his nose. And Brian Boss and Nick Porter holding Joseph. And slamming him over and over again against the locker. Joseph didn't have much of his shirt on and you can imagine the welts from the lockers. And blood too, spattering it's way across his back. And he couldn't say anything because Nick Porter had his hand across Joseph's mouth and he was strangling him and shoving him against the lockers. Then Jay Perkins stood up.

*MR. HURD. Jay, enough.

JACK. Jay didn't hear.

D'ULNEY. Jay, c'mon, give it a break.

JACK. But the stupid eighth graders just stood and watched as they slammed him over and over again.

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). Slamming and yelling.

JACK. But Jay just kept walking.

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). Stop it Jay!

JACK. He pulled his arm back and Nick Porter pulled his hand away. Right as Jay Perkins reared his arm back and I couldn't see Joseph get hit one more time and I- STOP!

[The ENSEMBLE scatters from JACK, ending the percussion. A light reveals JOSEPH who slowly shakes his head. There is a quiet moment.]

JOSEPH *[Quietly but firmly.]*. Get out of here Jack.

JACK. He just shook his head. And he sat there, bleeding, and he shook his head and told me to leave.

He looked the same way he did when he was looking for Jupiter every night out our window. Through the rain or snow or clouds.

The same way he looked when someone, anyone, got too close. When he could feel someone behind him and he shot up like he had seconds left to live. Like someone had gotten too close before. Like he was ready to do anything to not get hurt.

He looked the same way he did when he was sleeping. Late at night he would shout-

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). "Let me go"

JACK. Or words I didn't even know. When he would start to cry in the middle of the night and just say a name, and he'd say it like it was someone he would do anything to find.

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE) *[yelling]*. Jupiter! Jupiter! Jupiter! Jupiter! Jupiter!

JACK. His eyes looked wide. Like he was ready to give up. Like he was ready to put his head down on the ice and slide into the dark water. Gone.

[With more intensity.] I couldn't see another yellow dog die.

STOP!

I pushed off from the lockers and slammed into Jay Perkin's back. His face plowed into the wire mesh of the lockers and he fell to his knees. And while he was on the ground screaming, Joseph

smashed his fist into Nick Porter's face. Again and again and again. Till Nick was on the ground.

JACK. And Joseph was crying. Like at night. And he didn't stop and he looked like he would never stop.

[The ENSEMBLE slam their chairs down once more.]

[THEME #6]

Scene 22

*MRS. HURD. Chapter Five. The Right Decision

D'ULNEY. *[Alone onstage.]* I know Joseph didn't start that fight. I know he didn't because when I subbed in for Coach Swietek the day before, I watched those three guys watch Joseph. And they weren't watching him because he was so good at doing the dismounts from the parallel bars. Joseph looked like he didn't even notice, except one time when Jay Perkins crossed in front of him when he was running. I didn't hear what Jay Perkins said to him. Joseph didn't say anything though, even though Nick Porter and Brian Boss laughed like it was funny. Sometimes, I just made sure they weren't on the same apparatus unit as him. And when the class was over I made sure they were the last ones to clean up the mats.

But I think Joseph had made a decision about who he wanted to be friends with. Especially when Jay Perkins glared him down that day in PE. Now, whenever Joseph ate lunch, he ate with Jack. And when Joseph sat in class, Jack sat with him. And when Joseph was waiting for the bus, Jack sat with him. I guess Jack had decided he really liked his new foster brother. I always knew Jack was a good kid.

Scene 23

JACK. I sat in Canton's office. Still in gym stuff and with some blood still on me- not mine. And Mrs. Canton sat behind her desk. Probably to keep her perfectly unscuffed shoes safe.

[MRS. CANTON paces back and forth, clearly displeased.]

CANTON. So you want to tell me what a sixth grader was doing in the eighth grade side of the locker room in an eighth grade fight?

JACK. Winning.

CANTON. Don't be smart with me, Jackson. We've talked before about what happens when you're with Joseph Brook.

JACK. It was three guys on one. What was I supposed to do?

CANTON *[Raising her voice.]* For starters, go get a teacher.

JACK. Would you have left a guy getting beat up to go find a teacher?

[CANTON is slightly defeated. She realizes that JACK is right.]

CANTON. This is what I meant, Jackson.

JACK. It's Jack.

CANTON. This wasn't your fight. This wasn't about you. But look what happened, all because you were hanging around Joseph Brook. I mean, you might get suspended. I'm telling you I know his type. Trouble follows him like a yellow dog.

JACK *[Fiercely.]* I've seen what happens to yellow dogs. *[A pause.]* It was three against one.

CANTON. I'm not saying you didn't think it was the right decision. All I'm saying is you're a different kid around Joseph, not a better kid. You need to be careful around him.

JACK. I did think it was the right thing. And you still didn't answer my question. Would you have left a guy being beat up?

CANTON *[Giving up.]* Go get cleaned up. The bell rings in ten minutes.

[THEME #2 (Ver 1)]

[JACK and JOSEPH are in their room]

JACK. Later that night, before he turned the light out, Joseph sat by the window. His back was covered in cuts from the wire lockers but I could still see that long scar that ran down his back.

JOSEPH. Jackie.

JACK. It's Jack.

JOSEPH. Yeah. Listen, you should've stayed out of it.

JACK. Maybe.

JOSEPH. You should have.

[JOSEPH is looking out the window for Jupiter.]

JOSEPH. No one's ever had my back before. Except Maddie. Thanks.

[JACK joins JOSEPH at the window JOSEPH points to Jupiter]

JOSEPH. Can you see her? Right there?

[THEME #5]

[The eighth lamp is turned on.]

Scene 25

[THEME #11. Once again in JOSEPH's memory and utilizing movement.]

JOSEPH. That year I met her, Maddie's Christmas break lasted for three more weeks, so I came every single day of it. Seven miles each way. And on the day before Maddie went away to Andover, I walked those

*MRS. HURD. One.

*CANTON. Two.

D'ULNEY. Three.

*BALLOU. Four.

*STROUD. Five.

*ERNIE. Six.

*MADDIE. Seven miles.

JOSEPH. in the rain. And Maddie answered the door and brought me to the fire and covered me in a red woolen blanket. And I took off my wet clothes and she made us hot chocolate and coffee. She asked me what I remembered about my mother. I told her

*MADDIE, ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). “Not much.”

JOSEPH. I remembered going outside with her after a snowstorm and pouring maple syrup onto the new snow and then eating it together.

So that's what Maddie and I did. We found new snow and ladled the syrup carefully onto the new powder. And when it froze I fed it to her and she picked it up and fed it to me. And she laughed and she leaned forward and- *[They kiss]* and she kissed me. For the first time.

*ERNIE. Under the stars and the moon and Jupiter.

Scene 26

MRS. HURD. A letter we received from Mrs. Canton told us that Jack and Joseph would be suspended for a few days and they were to be expelled if there were further incidents. They would have to make up all of their missed days when they got back to school. *[There is a knock at the door. D'ULNEY enters.]* But Joseph didn't have to make up his classes.

JACK. You know how strange it is to see a teacher at your house? You instantly feel like you must've done something you'd rather not tell your parents about. But she wasn't here for me. She was here for Joseph.

D'ULNEY. I went over some proofs with Joseph and assigned his homework. And when I was done, I graded some papers while he did his homework. So he could ask any questions he needed to. Jack, why don't you come here and learn this too?

JACK. Mrs. D'Ulney, won't I just have to learn it again next year?

D'ULNEY. It will be good preparation, so just quit fussing and get busy. Besides, this is exciting stuff!

MRS. HURD. She came all four days of Joseph's suspension. All four days so he wouldn't have to make up a single math class in January. And later, Mrs. Stroud came, too. *[STROUD enters.]* Just to see Joseph. He looked really happy to see her. And she was happy, too. So Joseph showed her around the farm. Introduced her to Rosie and Dahlia. He showed her the big barn and the apple trees and the pond where we had skated. I think I saw him smile.

[The ninth lamp is turned on.]

STROUD. I'm glad you like it here, Joseph.

Scene 27

[The final scene in JOSEPH's memory. Choreographed to the monologue still but without any music. Perhaps more mechanical].

JOSEPH. Maddie's parents took out an injunction against me. I wasn't allowed to see Maddie again. Ever. And any violation of this meant I would be prosecuted. That was when the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services delivered the news that my Dad and I would begin receiving monthly visits and evaluations. And that Maddie was away at some school in Andover again. They wouldn't tell me which one. I had to find her.

No one else knew it like I knew it; I just-- I had to see her. The police didn't understand when they found me at Maddie's house later that week. They didn't understand when I told them that I only wanted to talk to her parents. I wanted them to know who I was. To tell them that I loved her! And if they didn't want to let me see her, that was fine. We would make it on our own. I would work. I would do whatever it took. I loved her.

*CANTON. What kind of love is that?

Scene 28

[MRS. STROUD knocks on the door. MR. BROOK answers it.]

STROUD. Are you Mr. Brook?

MR. BROOK. Yah.

STROUD. Can I come in? My name is Mrs. Stroud and I'm from the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services. I'm here to talk to you about your son, Joseph.

[MR. BROOK welcomes MRS. STROUD into a small living room.]

STROUD. Are you familiar with the Joyce family?

MR. BROOK. Who?

STROUD. You did some plumbing work on their house a little while ago?

MR. BROOK. Oh yah, that pretentious-

STROUD. It appears your son struck up a relationship with their daughter, Madeleine Joyce.

MR. BROOK *[With a laugh.]*. Yah, the kid wasn't around to carry my tools anymore.

STROUD. Mr. Brook, Madeliene Joyce is pregnant. Now, she is only thirteen years old. Based on what we know now and my impression of the situation, this means that the DHHS has decided to remove Joseph from his home and place him in a juvenile detention facility. I'm sorry, Mr. Brook, but your son might be facing criminal charges.

MR. BROOK *[After a beat.]*. Wouldn't be the first time. And probably won't be the last.

STROUD. Mr. Brook, do you understand that Joseph is going to be removed from your home and--

[JOSEPH enters the room.]

MR. BROOK. Hey stud, you got some girl--

STROUD *[standing]*. Joseph? I want to talk to you about Madeliene Joyce. Mr. Brook, if you could give us some privacy?

MR. BROOK. You can tell me anything you're going to tell my son--

STROUD. Mr. Brook.

[MR. BROOK is annoyed, but he gets up and exits. JOSEPH is still standing in the doorway.]

STROUD. Would you like to sit down? My name is Mrs. Stroud and I'm from the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

[JOSEPH sits down carefully. He is on edge.]

STROUD. Joseph, some time within the last year or so, you struck up a relationship with Madeline Joyce. Is that correct?

JOSEPH. Yeah. What is this about?

STROUD. Madeline Joyce is pregnant. And since you are the only person who has been with her, it is evident that you are the father.

JOSEPH. What?

STROUD. However, since you are thirteen you have no parental rights over the child. At the moment, rights are contested. Madeleine's parents aren't quite sure what--

JOSEPH. I'm going to be a father?

STROUD. Yes that's right Joseph. But you have to remember that you're still--

JOSEPH. I have to see her. Maddie. I have to see her. *[panicking]* I- I- I have to be with her. We're going to have a baby. I have to be with her.

STROUD. Joseph, you can't see her. You know that you-

JOSEPH [*desperately*]. I have to keep the baby away from my Dad. We have to leave Maine. I can't stay here. I need to see her.

STROUD. Joseph!

JOSEPH. Maybe Maddie's parents will help us. Can they help us? I need to see her. Can they let me see her?

STROUD. Joseph, you have to remember that--

JOSEPH. My dad can't know about this. He really can't. Please. Maybe Maddie's parents will let us stay with them. When can I see her? I need to see--

*MRS. HURD/*MR. HURD/*HASKELL/*D'ULNEY. Joseph!

STROUD [*finally yelling to get him to stop*]. Joseph! You can't see Maddie. You know that! She is in school in Andover for two months and frankly it's not your business where she is going to stay after that. And I'm sorry, but Madeleine's parents- they're not going to help you. You're only thirteen! I'm afraid no one is going to be able to help you for a while.

[*THEME #12*]

Scene 29

*LIBRARIAN. Chapter Six. What Kind of Love is That?

JACK. On Christmas Eve that year, Joseph and Dad and I took some box saws and headed up the hills to find a tree. Me and Dad usually argue about which tree to cut down, but this year we just let Joseph choose. It was the first Christmas tree he had had. My mother brought the boxes of ornaments down and we set them out on the kitchen table. The handmade ones I made when I was young. The red glass bulbs my father bought my mother one year. The thirteen gold angels my parents got me each year. One for each year of my life. The glass bluebird, the tiny sled, and the teddy bear.

MRS. HURD. This one's for you.

[MRS. HURD hands a small box to JOSEPH. JOSEPH opens it and finds a small golden angel ornament, identical to the others. He contemplates it. MRS. HURD watches lovingly.]

JOSEPH. Jupiter would love this.

*MR. HURD. Joseph always knew where Jupiter was.

MRS. HURD. Alright, now I need you boys to get ready. Church starts in about an hour. And we are making it to church even if the gates of hell stand against us. Joseph, have you ever been to a church service before?

JOSEPH. No.

MRS. HURD. Never once?

[JOSEPH shakes his head.]

MRS. HURD. Didn't your mother ever-- *[She stops herself]*. I'm sorry Joseph, I'm being nosy and I hate nosy people. I'll finish the dishes. You and Jack run upstairs and get ready. There are two pressed shirts for you on the banister. And, Jack, this year you can't wear your work boots to church.

[JACK begins to protest.]

MRS. HURD. Nope! No arguments. Don't even try.

JACK. I wore my boots. She didn't even notice. That night was cold and dark when we got to First Congregational. *[ENSEMBLE enters, along with BALLOU.]* Inside, the air was filled with that sweet waxy smell of candles burning. We were a little late, so we had to sit all the way up to the front. We sang a few songs but Joseph didn't even open his mouth. And then Reverend Ballou got up to tell the story.

JOSEPH. About Joseph and Mary. *[In unison with BALLOU]* Two kids, not really married. They found out they were gonna have a baby. They were in trouble. And there was no one to help them. But angels came and told them not to be afraid, because God would be with them. And the baby would be special. And Joseph took care of Mary, and when they had to go to a far away city and couldn't find a place to stay, because, like I said, there sure wasn't anyone helping

them, Joseph found a place. And under the stars and the moon and Jupiter, that's where they had their baby. And the stars shined above them and they loved their baby.

BALLOU. Two kids, not really married... they were in trouble... God would be with them... Joseph took care of Mary

[The church service concludes and the ENSEMBLE slowly exits the stage until it is only JOSEPH and REVEREND BALLOU left on stage. BALLOU approaches JOSEPH.]

JOSEPH. How much of that story is true?

BALLOU. I think it all has to be true, or none of it.

JOSEPH. The angels? Really?

BALLOU. Why not?

JOSEPH. Because bad things happen. What kind of love is that? If there were angels then bad things wouldn't happen.

BALLOU. Maybe angels aren't always meant to stop bad things.

JOSEPH. So what good are they?

BALLOU. To be with us when bad things happen.

JOSEPH. Then where the hell were they?

[JOSEPH exits.]

Scene 30

JACK. On Christmas morning it was still snowing hard, so we stayed inside all day to open presents. The usual stuff. Socks and shirts. Thrilling.

JOSEPH. I got a copy of the book *Walden*.

JACK. The only thing more boring than socks. Anyway, when we finished opening gifts, Joseph started reading the first few pages of *Walden*, probably to be polite, when my Dad said.

MR. HURD. Joseph I think there's one more thing for you.

[MR. HURD hands JOSEPH an envelope. JOSEPH carefully opens it to find one piece of paper inside.]

JOSEPH *[Reading the paper.]*. "We'll help."

JACK. Help with what?

MRS. HURD. We're going to call Mrs. Stroud tomorrow and see if we can set up a time to meet her.

[JOSEPH looks back and forth from the letter to the HURDS. He looks like he could cry.]

JOSEPH. Meet her?

MRS. HURD. Nothing's certain yet... but we are hoping to plan a time for you to meet Jupiter.

[JOSEPH runs to MRS. HURD and hugs her tightly. She puts her arms around him. He leans into her as MR. HURD gently places his hand on JOSEPH'S shoulder.]

JACK. And you know what? When my father placed his hand on Joseph's shoulder, he didn't even flinch.

JOSEPH. I am going to see Jupiter.

[JOSEPH walks towards MADDIE]

JOSEPH. I am going to see Jupiter.

[THEME #13]

End of Act 1

Act 2
Scene 31

[THEME#14]

JACK. It stayed wicked cold through Christmas vacation. And whenever it was warm enough to go outside, Joseph and I had to shovel the driveway and by the house and the barns.

JOSEPH. And each time we had to throw the snow higher and higher to make it over the drifts we had made. And on one day, Jack was throwing his very high pile of snow when I took my pile of snow and threw it right at-

[JOSEPH throws a pile of snow directly in JACK'S face. JACK is taken by total surprise and JOSEPH begins to laugh while JACK angrily wipes the snow out of his face.]

JACK *[Over JOSEPH's laughing.]*. Joseph, you idiot, it's so cold!

MRS. HURD. Come back in, boys! Dinner's ready.

[The family gathers around the dining room table as MRS. HURD sets the table.]

JACK. Mom, Joseph threw snow in my face while I was trying to shovel!

JOSEPH. So what?

MR. HURD. I'm glad you got at least something done before you undid all your hard work.

MRS. HURD. Oh, give 'em a break, I'm sure--

JACK. I didn't really care. Joseph had played! And smiled. I didn't get to see that very often.

[The eleventh lamp is turned on. The phone rings. The table falls silent.]

MRS. HURD. We had been waiting for the call about Jupiter since Christmas.

[JOSEPH and MRS. HURD stand. JOSEPH watches as MRS. HURD walks to the phone and picks it up.]

MRS. HURD. Hello?

MR. HURD. It wasn't Mrs. Stroud. And it wasn't about Jupiter.

MRS. HURD. Yes, hello Mr. Brook.

[JOSEPH'S face falls. He listens intently.]

MRS. HURD *[On the phone.]* I- I don't think that's possible. *[MRS. HURD listens unhappily.]* Has Mrs. Stroud been informed? We won't allow this unless- ... Alright. Not before four o'clock. Yes, four o'clock... All right. If that's what's been decided. *[Looking at JOSEPH.]* Yes he's right here. I suppose you can talk to him. *[Speaking to JOSEPH.]* Your father's hired a lawyer.

JOSEPH. Okay.

MRS. HURD. He's somehow gotten visitation rights. I don't know how but he'll um- he'll be here on Monday to see you, Joseph.

[JOSEPH, thinking, grabs the phone from MRS. HURD. As JOSEPH speaks the lights fade until they only remain on him.]

JOSEPH. Hey dad... okay... yeah... no... I'm okay... I'm sorry...okay... on Monday?... okay, goodbye

Scene 32

STROUD. They had taken Joseph to Lake Adams Juvenile. With a high fence. And exits that were always locked. I couldn't think about him there. I came later in the month to deliver some papers.

JOSEPH. What are these for?

STROUD. You're a minor and your father is still your legal guardian. But we think it's important that you, as the father, sign these papers. They involve parental rights, Joseph, which you are signing over to the state so that we can find the best possible future for your baby.

JOSEPH. My baby.

STROUD. *[Still lost in her own thoughts.]* And frankly, since your father is... not cooperating, we need you to help us.

JOSEPH *[Frantically looking through the papers.]* She's a girl?

[STROUD is emotional. She nods. JOSEPH continues looking through the forms.]

JOSEPH. What's her name?

STROUD. Jupiter Joyce.

JOSEPH *[To himself.]* Jupiter.

*ERNIE. Jupiter.

*HASKELL. Jupiter.

*MR. HURD. Jupiter.

D'ULNEY. Jupiter.

STROUD. Um, I'm not really supposed to give you this but...

[THEME #13]

[STROUD hands a small photo to JOSEPH. JOSEPH gingerly takes the photo, as if it is the most important thing he has ever held. He stares at it and begins to weep.]

JOSEPH *[Even though he is talking to the audience, he is really talking to himself.]* She was beautiful. Better than beautiful. She was holding her perfect hands and her perfect fingers and her perfect fingernails up over her head, and her tiny mouth was spread in a yawn, and her dark eyes were open. And she was looking at me. She was looking right at me. And she looked warm in her light green blanket and hat and she was like- she was like a planet in a dark sky.

[There is a long silence.]

STROUD. Joseph. You need to sign these papers.

JOSEPH. No, I can't.

STROUD. Joseph. Jupiter has to be put up for adoption. I promise you she will go to a good family who will love her and take care of her.

JOSEPH. I love her. I'll take care of her.

STROUD. Joseph, you're barely fourteen. You can't take care of her. If you really want what's best for Jupiter, you should-

JOSEPH. We're what's best for Jupiter. Me and Maddie.

[STROUD gently puts her hand against JOSEPH'S face. JOSEPH doesn't flinch.]

STROUD. Joseph, I didn't want to tell you this. I thought it would be too much. Maybe it will be. But you have to sign these papers. If you don't, Madeleine's parents will prosecute you.

[JOSEPH looks at STROUD.]

STROUD. There were complications. Joseph, Madeleine-

Joseph *[Quiet at first but getting progressively louder.]*. Don't say anything. Don't say anything. Don't say anything. Don't say anything. Don't say anything.

STROUD. *[Overlapping with JOSEPH.]*. Joseph, please. Joseph she- *[With ENSEMBLE]* Joseph!

*MR. HURD/*HASKELL/*CORISSA/*ERNIE. Joseph!

[JOSEPH is quiet.]

STROUD. She's gone.

[He throws down his chair. STROUD watches him, pained. JOSEPH is breathing heavily.]

STROUD. She is gone, Joseph. But she would have wanted this.

That was how Joseph heard for the first time that he would never see Madeleine again. Never touch her, never talk to her, never walk through the woods with her. That was how Joseph heard that Madeleine was gone.

[THEME #6]

Scene 33

JACK. We didn't talk about his father coming. But it was like that feeling you have in dreams. When you know something is coming and all you can do is hope you wake up before it does. Joseph was waiting for me after school on Monday. He told me he was going to walk home and I told him I was going to walk with him. And he didn't say I was being a jerk. When we passed Old First Congregational, we stopped to throw snowballs. When we got back home, there was an old beat up van in the driveway. It said

MR. BROOK. Brook Plumbing

JACK. And next to it another car with

STROUD. State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services

JACK. We went into the house. Me in front of Joseph.

[JACK and JOSEPH enter the house.]

MR. BROOK. Hey, stud.

JOSEPH *[Looking at the ground.]*. Hey.

[The room is tense.]

MR. BROOK. It takes a goddamn lawyer to see my own son. But I finally got one. A good one.

JOSEPH. Okay.

MR. BROOK. Let's go talk.

STROUD. The living room's free. Right in there.

MR. BROOK. I'm taking my son for a drive.

STROUD. No. You'll stay here in the house.

MR. BROOK. Like hell we will!

STROUD. *[Punching numbers into her phone.]* I can end this visit right now, Mr. Brook. Your choice.

[MR. BROOK shoves JOSEPH towards the living room. JOSEPH flinches.]

STROUD. I'm sorry about this. I'm really sorry. I advised against it, but he's right - he's got a good lawyer. Well, a threatening lawyer. And unfortunately, those are the ones who get what they want.

MRS. HURD. What does he want?

STROUD. I think he wants money.

MR. HURD. He's here for money?

STROUD. He's complicating any adoption for Jupiter. His lawyer claims that since Joseph is a minor, he had no parental rights to begin with. His father, the legal guardian, has those rights. And it seems that Mr. Brook won't sign anything away until a large check arrives at his house with Madeleine's parents' signature on it. Of course, there's nothing in writing that says all that, but everyone knows that's what he's waiting for.

MRS. HURD. So Joseph...

STROUD. Mr. Brooks' lawyer is thinking ahead. He wants to be able to demonstrate Mr. Brooks' parental affection for his son and, by extension, his granddaughter.

D'ULNEY. Jupiter.

*CANTON. Jupiter.

*LIBRARIAN. Jupiter.

*ERNIE. Jupiter.

JACK. And Jupiter?

STROUD. Her adoption is in limbo. Madeleine's parents want to move on, and they want Jupiter adopted into a good home. But until Mr. Brook signs, that can't happen. No family is going to choose a child whose adoption might be contested.

MRS. HURD. So Joseph's voice doesn't count?

STROUD. He's a minor. I promise you I'm doing what I can.

[MR. BROOK and JOSEPH enter the kitchen. MR. BROOK is visibly angry.]

MR. HURD. Mr. Brook, can we talk about--

MR. BROOK *[Slowly building till he is yelling.]* I've got a right to my own son, you know. Who the hell do you think you are, keeping him from me? You think I'm gonna give in to someone just because they're rich? You know now I've got a lawyer too.

[MR. BROOK comes closer to the HURDS but MRS. STROUD stands between them.]

STROUD. If you don't leave now--

MR. BROOK. Who the fuck do you think you're kidding? You've got a sweet deal. You get that check from the state every month to keep my kid. You're in this for money.

[MR. BROOK turns to JOSEPH.]

MR. BROOK. Does he know that? Do you know you're just a job for them? You are nothing but income. What kind of love is that?

[JOSEPH contemplates this.]

MRS. HURD [*Trying to get JOSEPH'S attention, slightly frantic.*]. Joseph. Your father's right. every month a check comes from the state, but I need you to see where it goes.

[*MR. HURD pulls a small pile of papers from a file cabinet.*]

MRS. HURD. This is a printout from the bank. It shows checks being put into an account every month starting here, see? And here's the balance in the account. All of the checks being added together. You see that, too?

MR. HURD. Now look here. You see your name? The account is in your name. That money is for you. It's the beginning of your college fund, Joseph.

[*JOSEPH stares intently at the printout.*]

MR. BROOK. College fund? You think Joe is going to college? Like he's going to go to some pretentious school and act like he's smarter than his dad. You think that's gonna happen?

MRS. HURD [*Almost yelling.*]. Yes. That's exactly what's going to happen. And if you asked any of his teachers, they'd say so too.

MR. BROOK [*With a hollow laugh.*]. Then they don't know what for. And I'm telling you, the day's not far off when I come back here to take my son away. Like I said, a fathers' got rights.

STROUD. We'll see.

MR. BROOK. We'll see? [*To the HURDS.*] How'd you like it if someone came to take your boy away? How the hell would you like it? I bet you'd do whatever it took to get him back.

[*MR. BROOK walks over to where JACK is standing.*]

JOSEPH [*Intensely.*]. Don't touch him.

[*MR. BROOK is slightly taken aback.*]

MR. BROOK [*Almost regretfully.*]. I'll get you out of here as soon as I can, Joe. Things will be better. I promise. It will be a new life for both of us. And you won't have to go to college for it.

STROUD [*Opening the door for him.*]. Mr. Brook!

[MR. BROOK begins to exit but turns around.]

MR. BROOK. And Joe, next time you try to tell me not to do something...

[MR. BROOK exits the house, slamming the door behind him. There is a brief moment of silence as characters reflect on/recover from what just happened.]

JOSEPH. Am I really going to college?

MRS. HURD. I think Mrs. D'Ulney would have our heads if you didn't.

JOSEPH. I am going to college. And I am going to see Jupiter.

Scene 34

JACK. The next day the cold broke. It only lasted for a few days, but the sun was bright and the sky was too bright a blue to look at. The cows got restless thinking it was time to go out again and Quintus Sertorius, our horse, snorted and nickered and swished his tail and did everything he could to tell us how happy he was that spring is coming. Even though it was a long way off. Sometimes it's like that. Just knowing something is coming is enough to make you snort and nicker.

JOSEPH. I am going to college. I am going to see Jupiter.

[The twelfth lamp is turned on. JACK and JOSEPH exit, MRS. HURD enters.]

MRS. HURD. But the days dragged on and the snow got heavy again. When I called Mrs. Stroud, she said that Joseph had to wait to find out about Jupiter. And when I called again, she said that we would just have to be patient.

STROUD. In order for Joseph to receive visitation rights, we need permission from his foster parents, his counselor, and the head of the school he is attending. Now, obviously Mr. and Mrs. Hurd were ok with this, but Joseph's counselor wasn't so sure. And when I asked his principal, Mrs. Canton, she said

[In unison.]

STROUD. I'm not sure it will be good for Joseph.

CANTON. I'm not sure it will be good for Joseph. I imagine you were notified when Joseph got into a fight recently? Well I don't think Joseph should be rewarded for this type of behavior and I-

STROUD *[angrily cutting her off]*. I talked to the teachers instead. I got recommendations right away.

[D'ULNEY enters and reads off of a letter.]

D'ULNEY. To whom it may concern, I have used the word genius three times in my life. Once when I spent a weekend holed up in my basement and I finally found what x was equal to, once when I saw that my friend on Facebook found out how to fix her broken monitor with a bobby pin, a gum wrapper, and some pliers, and once when eighth grader Joseph Brook came into my room one afternoon, sat down, and finished an entire trigonometry test in 15 minutes *for fun*. He is one of my best, most responsible students, and I did not hesitate for a moment when Mrs. Hurd asked me to write this recommendation. Actually, he's made my life quite a bit better, now that I have someone to eat lunch with everyday. And he loves math almost as much as I do!

STROUD. The letters were great. But still not exactly what we needed. And when I tried to explain it to Joseph, well, he didn't quite get it.

Scene 35

JACK. Did she say when you can see Jupiter?

JOSEPH. Nope.

JACK. Did she say how long until they decide?

JOSEPH. No.

JACK. Did she say anything?

JOSEPH. Jupiter's in Brunswick.

JACK. Brunswick?

JOSEPH. Brunswick is south of here, right?

JACK. Joseph, you're not--

JOSEPH. South?

JACK. Yeah but you really can't--

JOSEPH [*Frustrated, yelling.*]. Jackie, let's just shut up for now, okay?

JACK. Okay.

JOSEPH. Okay.

JACK. It's Jack.

JOSEPH. Yeah.

Scene 36

STROUD. It was when they found out that Joseph tried to kill a teacher that they took him to Stone Mountain Detention Facility. He stayed one day and one night and then he tried to leave. They caught him when he was at the top of a fence, caught in a roll of barbed wire. When he pulled it free, the razor ripped over the top of his foot, and as he fell, the razor cut along his side. Starting from under his right arm and cutting all along to almost his knee. The doctor said he had never put so many stitches in one little boy's body before. When I visited him that day I asked him, "Where did you think you were going? Madeleine is gone."

JOSEPH. Where do you think I was going?

STROUD. You can't be a father. You're only fourteen.

JOSEPH. I am a father.

STROUD. No. You signed away--

JOSEPH. No. I am Jupiter's father. I will always be Jupiter's father.

STROUD. After that, he wouldn't talk to me. He wouldn't talk to anyone. Not even when he got beat up. Not the first time, not the second, not the third time. Not even when they held him down and wouldn't let up. He wouldn't talk to anyone. That's when I told him I was going to speak with the best foster parents I knew. They hadn't taken any boys in for almost twelve years. They lived on an organic farm. Would he like that? Living on a farm? They didn't have a lot of technology, and he would have to go to a school called Eastham, but they had acres of land and they had two cows named Rosie and Dahlia and a horse and woods and a pond to skate on. Would he like that?

JOSEPH. I am Jupiter's father. I will always be Jupiter's father.

*MRS. HURD. Joseph always knew where Jupiter was.

Scene 37

JACK. Joseph was gone. Gone. The next day he wouldn't talk to me. Not when we ate breakfast, not when we stood to wait for the bus, not in any of our classes. And I don't think Joseph talked to anyone else, either. At the end of the day, when I went out to meet him at the school bus, he wasn't there. When I watched out the window of the bus to see if he was walking, he wasn't there. And when I got home, he wasn't there. He wasn't there by milking time either, so I got started alone.

MRS. HURD. It was then that we checked his room and saw the missing clothes, and the missing second volume of *Octavian Nothing*, and the missing backpack.

JACK. My mother called Mrs. Stroud, and Mrs. Canton, and Mrs. D'Ulney, but none of them had seen or heard from him. That's when my dad and I decided to drive around and try to find him. And I knew just where he was headed.

*MRS. HURD. Joseph always knew where Jupiter was.

Scene 38

*HASKELL. Chapter Seven. Gone.

MR. HURD. We hadn't driven more than ten minutes out of Eastham before it began to snow. A lot. The snow came down with hard gusts, socking the sides of the pickup and blotting out the windshield.

JACK. The roads kept getting worse and worse, and the longer we drove the more I lost hope of finding him-- now or ever again.

MR. HURD. He's probably found a place to stay.

JACK. I'm not sure he believed it.

MR. HURD. About forty-five minutes out of Eastham, we turned back. We hadn't gotten very far, but we weren't getting much further in this.

Scene 39

MRS. HURD. I had already called Mrs. Stroud, who had called the police. And I called Mrs. Canton and a couple of the other teachers, just to see if Joseph might be hiding out in a janitor's closet or something, but they didn't seem to know what to do either. That was when Mrs. Canton showed up.

[There is a knock at the door and MRS. HURD goes to answer it, revealing MRS. CANTON on the other side.]

MRS. HURD. Mrs. Canton!

CANTON. Hello Mrs. Hurd. May I come in?

MRS. HURD. Yes, of course. Can I get you anything?

CANTON. No, I'm fine, thank you. I heard your boy's in a little trouble. I just came to see if there is anything I can do to help.

MRS. HURD. Thank you, but I'm not sure there is at the moment. We've called the police and some of Joseph's teachers. I'm just here holding down the fort while my husband and Jack are out looking for him. *[Begins to get choked up.]* Nothing we can do but wait right now I suppose.

CANTON *[Concerned.]* Now, Mrs. Hurd, you can't blame yourself! It's nothing you did wrong. It's natural for things like this to happen. Especially with kids like Joseph. I knew something like this would happen. Joseph comes from a group of people who are bound to run off eventually. It's nothing you did wrong.

MRS. HURD. I'm sorry?

CANTON. I just mean that sooner or later this was bound to happen. Joseph has a history of misbehaving and acting out like this. I just don't want you to think that--

MRS. HURD. Mrs. Canton!

JACK *[Narrating.]* My mother, I should tell you, is a pacifist.

MRS. HURD *[Slowly growing.]* I should tell you something. I have been arrested three times for protesting foreign policy in El Salvador and five times for protesting nuclear power. So I don't like pushy policemen very much and I don't like pushy vice-principals either. *[Picking up a pan on the table.]* So I suggest you leave Mrs. Canton, because I am afraid you are in more danger of a flattened face than you understand.

[MRS. CANTON exits QUICKLY as MRS. HURD dusts herself off and calms herself down. A few moments later MR. HURD and JACK re-enter. MRS. HURD looks at both of them hopefully, but MR. HURD shakes his head. The family gathers around the table in solemn silence.]

MRS. HURD. The rest of the night we waited for a phone call and listened to the storm blowing outside.

MR. HURD. Waited and listened.

JACK. No one said anything.

MRS. HURD. Waited and listened.

*LIBRARIAN. Under the stars and the moon.

[The sound of the storm gets louder and louder. JACK gets up to look out the window.]

JACK. In the storm, through all the snow, I couldn't see Jupiter. I hope Joseph could. He always knew where she was.

[There is a knock at the door. MRS. HURD answers it to see a slightly distressed MRS. STROUD.]

MRS. HURD. Mrs. Stroud!

STROUD. Hello Mrs. Hurd. I'm sorry to be coming by so late at night.

MRS. HURD. No! Please come in!

MR. HURD *[Pulling up a chair for her.]*. Can we get you anything?

STROUD. No, I'm fine. Thank you-

MRS. HURD *[Desperately.]*. Have you heard anything yet?

STROUD. That's what I was coming to talk to you about. There's no sign of him yet. The police have all been alerted between Brunswick and Eastham and there are State troopers watching on the highways. I didn't have a, uh, a recent picture of Joseph. This is from right before he went to Stone Mountain. *[Handing a picture to MRS. HURD]*. It doesn't look a whole lot like him anymore really, but it was all I had.

MRS. HURD *[With a small laugh.]*. Yeah, I would never let him grow his hair that long. *[After a moment.]* We'll find him.

STROUD *[Trying to remain professional.]*. Yes, we're very confident that he will be found soon. This is not the first time Joseph has run away and we've found him every time, so I'm certain this will be no different. You know I've been taking care of-- working with Joseph for almost three years now and every time he's run off he's found his way back. I'm so sorry I've put you all in this situation, I didn't--

MRS. HURD. We were the ones who signed up for it, weren't we?

STROUD. Yes, but I should've given you more warning and I- I had been really sure Joseph was ready for this adjustment and I had prepared him for his new life and I- I really thought I had done something right for him.

[MRS. HURD comforts MRS. STROUD.]

STROUD *[Clearing her throat.]*. Anyways, I really came to offer my help.

MR. HURD. Help?

STROUD. I know you had been looking for Joseph yesterday, and I know the police are searching for him now, but I think it might be a good idea to keep looking.

[JACK, who has remained silently looking for Jupiter out the window, turns around.]

STROUD. I know it might seem a little hopeless right now, but you know Joseph better than most people. I think if anyone could find him it's you.

MR. HURD. You think we should go to Brunswick right now?

MRS. HURD. It's still snowing heavily, there's no way he would be out right now, and really the chances of us finding him in this weather are--

JACK *[Frustrated at his parents.]*. It's Joseph. Joseph is gone. We need to go.

Scene 40

MRS. HURD. The next morning, we decided to split up. Mrs. Stroud drove on her own through the East side of Eastham and we took the West side.

STROUD. I stopped at every place that looked like Joseph might have tried to stay. gas stations, fast food restaurants, motels, churches, bars. The Hurds gave me a second picture of Joseph, but even in that one he was hard to make out. It was of Joseph standing next to one of their cows and it was hard to see Joseph's face in the barn light and it was really more a picture of the cow than anything else but it was all I had. I showed it everywhere I stopped and asked if anyone had seen him but every time the answer was always

*HASKELL/*D'ULNEY/*BALLOU/*LIBRARIAN. No.

STROUD. At every gas station.

*BALLOU. No.

STROUD. Every fast food restaurant.

*HASKELL. Haven't seen him.

STROUD. Every motel.

D'ULNEY. You're looking for a cow?

STROUD. And every bar.

*LIBRARIAN. I don't recognize him.

MRS. HURD. Jack and my husband and I drove through Lewiston and down towards Brunswick. We stopped again and again and again, but no one else had seen anything of Joseph. We found some place to eat dinner then we decided to park and look around on foot.

JACK. Let's split up.

MR. HURD *[Thinking.]*. Okay, but we're not staying out in this cold too long. We can't be back home too late. You take this side of the street, your mom and I will split up further ahead.

[MR. and MRS. HURD share a look and then split up to opposite sides of the stage and exit. JACK looks around. Now alone on stage.]

JACK. The wind, of course, was right in my face now. And the sky was spitting snow. Okay, so maybe I was a little mad at Joseph. I couldn't feel my toes. Or the ends of my fingers. I mean, what chance did he have walking around Brunswick and finding a house with a baby and that baby being Jupiter? I guess I was just as stupid. I mean, what chance did I have walking around the streets of Brunswick and suddenly running into him? As if I could turn a corner and there he'd be? Alone. Cold. Watching the house where Jupiter is sleeping? With her?

*BALLOU. Joseph always knew where Jupiter was.

JACK. An ambulance drove by and a few minutes later a police car. I hoped it wasn't anything to do with Joseph. Ahead of me, a car pulled into a driveway and kids got out. The mom looked at me and almost said something. I think she mighta been scared of me. Is that what Joseph had to feel like?

*LIBRARIAN. Something to be afraid of?

JACK. By the time I saw the Library I think my face had frosted.

Scene 41

STROUD. I drove all the way through Lewistown stopping everywhere with no luck. I tried to think about what he would have done. If I were Joseph, I wouldn't go into stores. I'd probably be walking around a neighborhood, hoping someone would walk out so I could ask about a new baby around - something like that. He'd make up a story about why he wanted to know and he would just hope that maybe someone would tell him. I rounded a block of houses. It was then that I found my first bit of hope. In an old Baptist church where I walked in and overheard a conversation.

CANTON. Have you seen this boy?

[REV. GREENLEAF takes the picture from MRS. CANTON.]

GREENLEAF. Yah actually. Yah, he was here.

CANTON. He was here?

GREENLEAF. I can't say exactly when he got here. But I found him yesterday morning on the couch in the Teen Sunday School room.

CANTON. Is he still here?

GREENLEAF. I'm afraid not. We had breakfast, we talked. He was pretty hungry since I'm pretty sure all he had to eat was the potato chips he found in the church kitchen. And they'd been there a lot longer than they should've.

CANTON. What did you say to him?

GREENLEAF. We didn't talk for long. I asked him where he was from. He told me he was from Portland. And he gave me a phone number that he told me was his parents'. When I went to call, I got a real estate agent in Yarmouth on the line. When I came back he was gone. How do you know him?

CANTON. I'm the principal of the school he attends. His poor family has been searching for him everywhere. He's one of their foster kids - a sad case really. Were you aware that this boy has been in multiple juvenile detention facilities?

STROUD *[narrating]*. In a church in Lewistown. Looking for the same boy I was. The lady who refused to write a letter. Mrs. Canton.

CANTON. Mr. Greenleaf, are you aware that you let someone with a criminal record in your church and then just let him go?

GREENLEAF. I didn't know anything about that, but he looked like he needed help. I--

CANTON. Did you think about helping yourself? This is a child who has physically assaulted others on multiple occasions. I don't think this was the right place for someone like him to be--

GREENLEAF. Actually, I imagine a church must be exactly the right place for someone like him to be. *[CANTON is quiet.]* Now what's the boy's real name?

CANTON. Joseph Brook.

GREENLEAF. I will be praying for Joseph Brook. If I were you I would check some of the other public spaces around here. The library perhaps?

STROUD *[narrating]*. It was then that I got another idea. I'd like to think I know Joseph pretty well and if that's true I know exactly who he is looking for. Jupiter's foster mother lives in Brunswick. She works at the library. I've visited Jupiter at her house before. If I know Joseph, I know where he's going.

[LIBRARIAN and JACK enter.]

JACK. Libraries are terrific in a whole lot of ways, but one way is that on a frozen day in Maine in the winter, you can go inside. Everything was so warm! I went around asking if anybody had seen Joseph but everyone said,

*HASKELL/*D'ULNEY/*ERNIE/*BALLOU. No.

JACK. I asked if anybody knows a little girl named Jupiter, but everyone said,

*HASKELL/*D'ULNEY/*ERNIE/*BALLOU. No.

JACK. In the back there was a children's section. Some of the mother's held babies. Yah, I thought he might be there, too.

LIBRARIAN *[From behind him.]* Who are you looking for?

[JACK turns around.]

LIBRARIAN. Um, I overheard you asking. *[JACK hands her the photograph of JOSEPH.]* What's his name?

JACK. Joseph.

LIBRARIAN. What's he doing in Brunswick?

JACK. I think he's looking for Jupiter. I mean, his daughter.

LIBRARIAN. His daughter?

JACK. Her name is-

LIBRARIAN. Jupiter?

*ERNIE. Jupiter.

D'ULNEY. Jupiter.

*BALLOU. Jupiter.

JACK. Yes.

LIBRARIAN. This is Jupiter's father?

JACK [*Stunned.*]. Joseph Brook.

LIBRARIAN. He's just a baby himself.

JACK. He's fourteen.

LIBRARIAN. Like I said. I think I need to make a phone call.

JACK. You know her. You know where she is?

LIBRARIAN. I think we'd better make a phone call.

JACK. All he wants to do is see her! That's all. He just wants to see his daughter. Please, if you--

LIBRARIAN. And who are you? How do you know him?

JACK. He lives with me. I'm his, well his brother, I guess. It doesn't matter, I have his back. Why can't he see her?

LIBRARIAN. You don't even know where he is. And how do you know it would be good for him? I'm sure it wouldn't be good for her.

JACK. She's six months old.

LIBRARIAN. They're not going to be together. He's in high school. He can't give her what she needs.

JACK. He loves her.

LIBRARIAN. Yes, he loves her. He can do that. But he can't just love her for himself. It's selfish. He has to love her for her, too.

JACK *[After a pause.]*. He just wants to see her.

LIBRARIAN *[With a sigh.]*. I know. I really do know.

JACK. You know her, don't you? Do you take care of her? Can you do something about it?

LIBRARIAN *[Thinking, after a moment.]*. You can tell Joseph that Jupiter is doing fine. Tell him she's growing and she's happy. And she's ready for a family. A permanent family. Tell him- tell him that he and his father need to let her go. I guess, that's quite a lot to put on you-telling him that.

JACK *[Hesitantly, almost angry.]*. Take care of her. Please.

LIBRARIAN *[Calling after Jack, who is leaving.]*. Tell him she's beautiful. Better than beautiful. Tell him- I will take care of her. And she will find a family who will love her.

JACK *[In response.]*. Tell Jupiter that Joseph tried to find her.

[The LIBRARIAN nods.]

JACK *[Earnestly.]*. He tried really hard, okay?

LIBRARIAN. Okay.

JACK *[About to cry.]*. And he loves her. He loves her a lot. Even if she doesn't know him.

*CANTON. What kind of love is that?

[The LIBRARIAN'S phone rings. She picks it up and signals JACK not to leave.]

LIBRARIAN. Okay, describe him to me. *[She signals JACK to hand her the picture of JOSEPH. She speaks while looking at the picture.]* No, I know who he is. It's Jupiter's father. No, no, it's Jupiter's father. Yes, you better call. *[To JACK.]* This is some sort of plan, isn't it?

JACK. What?

LIBRARIAN. You come here where I work and he goes to the house. Did you plan that?

JACK. He's at your house?

LIBRARIAN. My husband says a boy who looks just like this has been standing in our yard since noon. If you have anything to do with this--

JACK. It's not a plan. I promise!

LIBRARIAN *[thinking.]*. Okay. I'm going to ignore my instincts here and take you with me. Maybe you can talk him out of this. We'd better go. Do you mind if I drive?

JACK. I'm twelve.

LIBRARIAN. Never would have known.

Scene 43

JACK. She had a whole lot of rules.

[In unison.]

JACK. I had to stay in the car. My seat belt had to be buckled. The whole way there. I shouldn't interfere. I shouldn't expect to see Jupiter. *[After a pause.]* I really shouldn't interfere.

LIBRARIAN. You have to stay in the car. Your seat belt must be buckled. The whole way there. You shouldn't interfere. You shouldn't expect to see Jupiter. You really shouldn't interfere.

JACK. As we drove, I couldn't think of anything besides how glad I was that I wasn't outside. The wind still sounded horrible. Even more lonely than before. Whipping around our car as it started to get dark out. Crying, lonely, scared. All by itself in the cold. I just kept looking out our window for Joseph.

LIBRARIAN. And then there he was.

JACK. Standing alone. In front of a small brick house. In a yard that would've been nice in the summer, but looked pretty bare right now.

[CANTON and STROUD enter. They stop dead in their tracks as they see JOSEPH. The ENSEMBLE begins to hum "It is Well".]

LIBRARIAN. He stood with arms crossed to keep out any cold that he could.

CANTON. I think he had been stargazing. Looking for her in the sky.

STROUD. It wasn't any twenty-one degrees out.

LIBRARIAN. Under the stars and the moon and Jupiter.

[In unison]

LIBRARIAN. Joseph always knew where Jupiter was.

CANTON. Joseph always knew where Jupiter was.

JACK. He had actually found her. Here. Because he always knew where she was.

LIBRARIAN. He looked just like her. Determined, like she is.

CANTON. He didn't even have a winter coat. He had been standing for hours, and he didn't even have a winter coat.

STROUD. He stood like he could wait until the end of the world. Which he probably would.

CANTON. What kind of love is that?

[THEME #2 (Chorus)]

LIBRARIAN. Joseph?

[As the ENSEMBLE sings the LIBRARIAN walks to JOSEPH and reaches out to touch him, but he backs away. After a moment the LIBRARIAN offers him a small photograph of Jupiter. As the music swells, JOSEPH takes the picture.]

The ENSEMBLE hums the chorus to “It is Well”.]

CANTON. She handed him a picture of-

*HASKELL. Jupiter.

*MR. HURD. Jupiter.

*BALLOU. Jupiter.

*MRS. HURD. Jupiter.

[The thirteenth lamp is turned on.]

CANTON. And she told him all about her. How she was growing up. How she had the funniest personality. How she was beginning to look just like him. And Joseph just listened. He just stood there, still without his winter coat, and listened about how a girl, his girl, was growing up.

LIBRARIAN. Oh, Joseph, it’s the best we can do for now.

JOSEPH. Jupiter.

LIBRARIAN. I’m sorry you can’t see her, Joseph. I really am. We’re taking good care of her.

JOSEPH. I’m her father.

LIBRARIAN. I- I’ll tell her all about you. I’ll write to you. I promise.

JOSEPH. Tell her I-- *[JOSEPH trails off, unable to finish.]*

LIBRARIAN. I will.

[JOSEPH abruptly hugs the LIBRARIAN. The two share a short moment.]

JACK. Joseph...

JOSEPH. What are you doing here?

JACK. We came looking for you?

JOSEPH *[He thinks about this and smiles.]*. Look at this *[He shows JACK the picture of Jupiter.]*

CANTON. Joseph smiled. Really smiled. What kind of love is that?

JACK. She's beautiful.

JOSEPH. So Jackie, do you still have my back?

JACK. Yup. And it's Jack.

JOSEPH. Yeah. Thanks.

[A beat of silence.]

JOSEPH. Jackie, have I told you about the first time me and Maddie danced?

JACK. Yeah

Joseph. Yeah. It was great.

Scene 44

[This is a final movement scene. As JACK recalls the memories the ensemble echoes the previous choreography from JOSEPH's memories].

JACK. But on the way back, in the car, Joseph told me again. He told him how they would wait till the stars came out and then she would grab his hand and she would hum. How he couldn't even imagine closing his eyes. And while he told me, he didn't look away from that picture of Jupiter even once.

[STROUD enters.]

Over the next couple days, Mrs. Stroud had a lot to say about Joseph [*In unison with STROUD.*] violating rules and being mature and understanding boundaries, and what was he thinking anyways.

STROUD. violating rules... being mature... understanding boundaries... what were you thinking anyways? [*She exits.*]

[*THEME #17*]

JACK. And we started walking to school again. Joseph didn't want to hear a whole lot of what the bus driver had to say. And when we walked those long miles he would tell me about how he walked with her. How he knew he loved her because those long miles felt like nothing. [*In unison with JOSEPH.*] And sometimes he didn't even need to say anything. They just walked together.

JOSEPH. And I didn't even need to say anything. We just walked together.

JACK. Sometimes Joseph didn't need to say anything to me either. And once in a while we would stop to skate on the Alliance and he would tell me about her. [*In unison with JOSEPH.*] How she would put her arms out while she skated. How the wind blew her hair all around her.

JOSEPH. She would put her arms out while she skated. And the wind blew her hair all around her.

JACK. And when we skated on the Alliance we would put our arms out just like her. And when we stopped to have snowball fights on the way to the Alliance he told me about her. How they used to have snowball fights and she would hit him as hard as she could with a snowball, which wasn't very hard. [*In unison with JOSEPH.*] But he couldn't hit her. He knew he loved her because he couldn't even imagine hitting her with a snowball.

JOSEPH. But I couldn't hit her. I knew I loved her because I couldn't even imagine hitting her with a snowball.

JACK. But when we had our snowball fights he didn't hit me either. And I know he could've. But right before we went to bed every night, he would tell me about the time he danced with her. [*MADDIE enters.*] How they would wait till the stars came out. How she would take his hand and she would hum under her breath. And they would sway to the tune. Under the stars and the

moon and Jupiter. *their* favorite planet. And she would close her eyes but he couldn't. He didn't want to miss a second. Because he loved her.

[MADDIE and JOSEPH dance as the ENSEMBLE sings "It is Well."

*It is well, it is well
With my soul, with my soul
It is well, it is well with my soul*

The scene mirrors every time they have danced before. As they dance every last remaining lamp is turned on. They shine brightly.]

JACK. I guess you can't replace some moments.

Scene 45

*STROUD. Chapter Eight. Snorting and Nickering

MRS. HURD. The nights stayed cold, but the days began to warm. It was about the time of year when my husband and I would tap our maple trees for syrup. And this year, with Joseph's help, we tapped thirty six trees just on the first day!

MR. HURD. These pails are filling quick! What did we ever do without you Joseph? Think we can put in another two dozen tomorrow?

JOSEPH. No problem. *[Thoughtfully.]* Someday, Jupiter would love to do this.

[Long beat. Mr. and Mrs. Hurd understands what he is saying.]

MRS. HURD. Someday she will! *[MR. and MRS. HURD exit.]*

JACK. Joseph and I could hardly wait to get home from school everyday. We couldn't wait to see if Joseph had gotten any letters from the librarian. Every week he would hear just a little bit more about Jupiter. How she was growing up. Joseph said *[In unison with JOSEPH.]* it was almost worth riding the bus home.

JOSEPH. It's almost worth riding the bus home.

JACK. But we couldn't ride the bus because everyday after Joseph finished his last class Mrs. D'Ulney called him into her classroom and the two of them would work on trig questions for another thirty minutes. *[D'ULNEY enters.]* Yep, after school had already ended, Joseph deliberately chose to do more math.

D'ULNEY. Things were really changing for Joseph at school. In PE, Coach Swieteck had put Joseph in charge of his own squad of kids who wanted to go out for track and field in the spring. Joseph worked with them in the field stuff-- high jump and broad jump and even pole vault. He was so good at it that no one minded that a kid was coaching them.

And Mrs. Halloway, in Language Arts, was calling on him a lot- I think because she saw Joseph reading *Walden*. She asked him *[In unison with *HASKELL]* if he liked it and he said *[In unison with JOSEPH.]* he'd already read it once and he was reading it again.

*HASKELL. Do you like it?

JOSEPH. I already read it once and I'm reading it again.

D'ULNEY. And she asked him if he had read her favorite Thoreau book, *[In unison with *HASKELL.] A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*. And so she took him to the Library and they checked it out together. You know how English teachers are. If they get you to take out a book they love, they're yours for life.

*HASKELL. *A week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*.

And Joseph wasn't doing fifth period office duty anymore. Canton had said something about how *[In unison with CANTON]* Joseph had learned to be responsible. No kidding! Mrs. Canton said Joseph had learned to be responsible.

CANTON. Joseph had learned to be responsible.

Now that's all fun stuff, but most importantly, I had nominated Joseph for the Math Olympiad in April. The Math freaking Olympiad. The greatest math competition in the state! Where great mathematical minds battle it out. Many enter, only one wins. So, I spent thirty minutes with him after school every day teaching him more trigonometry. And even if Joseph didn't win the title of Maine's Math Olympiad champion, I made sure he was ready for high school and someday, college. And it began to feel normal. Like it would always be like this. *[She exits.]*

JACK. And so we spent our winter learning about Jupiter and having snowball fights on the way back from school and tapping our maple trees for all they were worth. And it began to feel normal. Like it would always be like this.

JOSEPH. Like it would always be like this.

JACK. Until the day we walked home and saw a new, clean, white pickup by the barn.

JOSEPH. Jackie, go into the barn.

JACK. Why?

JOSEPH. Just do it, okay? *[JOSEPH enters the house.]*

JACK. So I waited in the barn,

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). Waited and listened.

JACK. Waited and listened.

ENSEMBLE (EVERYONE). What kind of love is that?

JACK. and it wasn't until I heard my father yell that I ran back into the house.

MR. HURD. Mr. Brook!

MR. BROOK. Stop. *[MR. BROOK grabs JACK as he runs into the house. With a laugh.]* This changes things doesn't it. *[Looking around the room.]* Yah, it sure does. All I want's my boy. Same as you.

MR. HURD. We both want what's best for our boys. We both want what's best, but this isn't the way to do it.

MR. BROOK. It's my way.

JOSEPH *[From somewhere deep in his gut.]* You sold her! You sold her!

MR. BROOK *[Angered.]*. I made an arrangement. It's not like you were gonna get her. And we needed the money. I'm not a do-good fool -- like them. *[Gesturing to the HURDS.]*

[JOSEPH screams. Not words this time; from some broken part inside of him. He breaks free of the HURDS and attempts to run at MR. BROOK and JACK. The HURDS catch him and he breaks free again but this time falls on the floor, sobbing.]

MR. BROOK. Done now, Joe?

[JOSEPH looks up from the ground, glaring at MR. BROOK.]

MR. BROOK *[Quietly but intensely, gesturing behind him.]*. Get in the truck. *[Yelling this time.]* In the truck!

[JOSEPH begins to get up, but MR. HURD pulls him back.]

MR. HURD. You're going to get in your truck. You're going to let my boy go, you're going to get in your truck right now, and this is going to end.

MR. BROOK. STOP

[MR. BROOK grabs a knife from the kitchen table and holds up to JACK'S side. MRS. HURD lets out a small scream.]

MR. BROOK. You think you're in charge here? *[Yelling.]* Give me my boy and we'll be gone.

MRS. HURD. How far do you think you'll make it? They'll be watching for you. They can find trucks like yours, easy.

MR. BROOK *[Thinking at first.]*. So maybe I'll take 'em both. How'd you like that? *[Grabbing JACK even more intensely, yelling.]* I'll take my kid and yours for insurance.

JOSEPH *[A desperate, child-like yell.]*. No!

[The room is silent for a moment. JOSEPH slowly begins to walk towards MR. BROOK.]

JOSEPH. No dad. I'm coming. Let's go. Please, Dad, leave him here. Leave them here. *[Whispering.]* Let's just go.

[MR. BROOK eases the knife from JACK'S side and slowly lets go of JACK. JOSEPH grabs JACK'S arm and pulls him away from MR. BROOK. JOSEPH carefully nudges JACK back towards his family.]

JOSEPH. C'mon dad. Let's go.

[MR. BROOK shoves JOSEPH out the door and they both exit. The door slams shut behind them. MRS. HURD rushes to JACK and hugs him. She makes sure he is alright while MR. HURD dials the phone, calling the police. MRS. HURD is crying.]

JACK. I watched through the window as Joseph got into the bright pick up truck. And slowly, under the moon, and the stars, and Jupiter, I watched Joseph leave. But not before he looked back one more time to see me. And then he was gone.

Scene 46

JACK. The winter I was six, I saw a yellow dog on thin ice on the Alliance river. I was with my mother, and we were walking back from old First Congregational. The dog was out pretty far and it had fallen through and its eyes were huge. It was grabbing on with its front paws, scratching, looking for something to hold on to. It wasn't making a sound. I told my mother we had to go get it but she stood there, holding her hand over her mouth. It just kept looking for something to hold on to. The dog almost got out but the ice broke under it again and it was gone. Gone. I live on a farm. I see animals die all the time. Never like that.

They didn't get Mr. Brook's pickup out of the river for two days. My mother wouldn't let me go, but she went. She said Mrs. Canton opened the door on Joseph's side. Mrs. Canton. But it was my mother who carried Joseph's body out of the frozen truck.

MRS. HURD. Here's what we figured had happened.

Joseph's father was probably driving a lot faster than he could handle. Mrs. Canton was driving out of school and she was about to turn right when she saw the white pickup coming toward her. She braked, skidded on the ice into the middle of the road. Joseph's father hit her square. Mrs. Canton's car went over the embankment and into some trees. Then he turned in front of Old First Congregational. Through the bridge out sign. Onto the Alliance bridge. They didn't make it halfway. The rotted timbers collapsed and the pickup was...

JACK. Gone. Joseph is gone. But Joseph had something to hold on to. He had Jupiter. He had Maddie.

[THEME #15]

[JOSEPH walks on stage and slowly turns off each lamp individually. He then turns around to see MADDIE holding a star. They run across the stage and embrace as if they hadn't seen each other in years. They remain on stage embracing.]

Scene 47

[Characters entering and sitting down when mentioned.]

MRS. HURD. The funeral service for Joseph was three days later.

ERNIE. Mrs. D'Ulney was there.

D'ULNEY. Mrs. Canton.

JACK. My mother and father. Ernie was there. The librarian; she sat in the back.

MRS. HURD. Reverend Ballou and Mrs. Stroud.

STROUD. That was it. Nine people.

MR. HURD. We met in a prayer chapel because there were so few of us.

MRS. HURD. It was simple. We sang and Reverend Ballou read some verses. Joseph would've liked it. simple.

[THEME #16]

BALLOU. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

[In unison.]

BALLOU. Where the hell were they?

JACK. Where the hell were they? Bad things happen. If there were angels then bad things wouldn't happen. Where the hell were they?

BALLOU. You have searched me Lord and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts from afar. Before a word is on my tongue you, O Lord, know it completely.

JACK *[Now yelling.]* I knew Joseph. I knew Joseph. I knew- *[Quietly.]* I knew he hated wearing long underwear. I knew he loved hearing the bell of Old First Congregational ring. I knew he loved the way Rosie mooed when he milked her. I know he acted tough because he had to. I know he loved Maddie. A lot. So much that he walked seven miles there and back to see her. So much that he escaped juvi just because he had to see her. So much that he couldn't even imagine hitting her with a snowball. He loved her so much he could just watch her skate.

I knew that he could take a hit. When Jay Perkins reared his fist back and smashed it into his face. When Nick Porter covered his mouth and smashed him into the lockers again and again till he was bleeding.

I knew that he would scream in the middle of the night. When no one was up but the stars. I knew that he would cry and just yell her name like he would do anything to find his daughter.

BALLOU. He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them.

*LIBRARIAN. Jupiter.

*ERNIE. Jupiter.

D'ULNEY. Jupiter.

*MRS. HURD. Jupiter.

JACK. Jupiter! Jupiter! He would do anything for you.

BALLOU. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained. To Him who made the great lights, For His loving kindness is

everlasting. The sun to rule by day, For His loving kindness is everlasting, The moon and stars to rule by night, For His loving kindness is everlasting.

JACK. Under the stars and the moon and Jupiter, he left that night. Under the stars and the moon and Jupiter, I watched him get in the truck and drive away. And he just looked at me like he would have done it again in a heartbeat. Without a second thought, he walked across the room and went to die for me.

BALLOU. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay his life down for his friends.

[JACK looks around desperately as the music grows louder and louder.]

JACK. Stop! Stop it! It's not ok. What kind of love is that? Joseph wasn't just my friend! I had his back. And he had mine. That's what greater love is.

[MADDIE begins to sing in the silence.]

It is well

With my soul

It is well, It is well with my soul]

BALLOU. My grace is sufficient for you. For my power is made perfect in weakness.

Scene 48

D'ULNEY. Chapter Nine. Jupiter Joyce.

JACK. It was a Wednesday afternoon one year later, on what would have been Joseph's sixteenth birthday, when Mrs. Stroud drove up our long dirt driveway. Past the barn and the cows and the fields. Past the pond which had finally thawed. Past the apple trees which were just beginning to bloom and past the bees doing their dances. Up the big hill and in front of our garage. And in the backseat of her car was you! Jupiter Joyce.

STROUD. *[Entering with JUPITER.]* Here she is!

*HASKELL. Jupiter.

*BALLOU. Jupiter.

*LIBRARIAN. Jupiter.

JACK. Dark eyes, light hair. Slightly shorter for your age and just about middle for everything else. You were smiling the same way he did.

STROUD. Jupiter, this is your new brother. His name is Jack.

JUPITER. Jackie.

JACK. Jackie!

JUPITER. Jackie!

[STROUD exits.]

JACK. I took your hand and we waddled together around the car, then around the yard. We went into the barn and I introduced you to Rosie and Dahlia, and I showed you the pond where Joseph used to skate. And we sat outside together for hours until the stars came out.

*CANTON. That's what greater love is.

[THEME #1]

JUPITER. Jackie!

JACK. Look at that one! Do you know what that star is called? Jupiter! Like you! Joseph always knew where Jupiter was. Among all the other stars- you can see a lot of stars in Maine, you know. When we would walk through the woods behind the house, he would look up at the sky and find you. *[After a beat.]* Jupiter, I promise I'll always know where you are.