

# PUSHING DAISIES

"The Legend of Merle McQuoddy"


Episode #3T7059

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**FINAL DRAFT**   
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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A DESERT bakes beneath a boiling SUN. Nothing survives here, save two PLAY-DOH CAMEL RIDERS -- A MAN and a YOUNG GIRL -- cresting the dunes.

**NARRATOR**

*At this moment, a father and daughter were on a camel trip across the Rub' al Khali, the 600-mile-long body of sand in the vast, harsh wilderness known as the Arabian Desert.*

PULL BACK TO REVEAL we're actually--

INT. YOUNG CHUCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

YOUNG CHUCK and her father, CHARLES CHARLES (sporting improvised Lawrence of Arabia turbans), sit on her bed and manipulate the Play-Doh figures along the hills and vales of her blankets. An ALARM CLOCK on the nightstand reads 3:09 a.m.

**NARRATOR**

*In truth, Young Chuck should have been floating on a sea of dreams, but at 8 years, 8 months, 21 days old, she was kept awake by the insidious varicella zoster virus, also known as chicken pox.*

Young Chuck scratches her Calamine-covered self with sock-covered hands.

**NARRATOR (CONT'D)**

*Her father, Charles Charles, hoped this magical journey was the antidote to his daughter's discomfort. Indeed, it eased the girl's itch and replaced it with a burning desire for adventure -- adventures her father promised to take her on someday. Sadly, someday's adventures would never come, for in a month, Charles Charles would die...*

CLOSE ON the camel riders. Young Chuck picks them up, as if to play, but places them back down on...

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY - FLASHBACK

Charles Charles's headstone, where Young Chuck grieves. The Play-Doh figures lie lifeless.

**NARRATOR**

*...and Young Chuck would learn the sad lesson  
that, try as one might, one can never  
recapture what once was.*

As a devastated Chuck places the figures on her father's grave  
and leaves, CAMERA CRANES UP, past the headstone, through the  
trees, TO REVEAL--

EXT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY - THE PRESENT

Establishing.

**NARRATOR**

*Until 21 years, 6 months, 25 days later, in  
the Pie-Maker's vacant childhood home, when  
Charlotte Charles would again have her father.  
An understandable impulse to some.*

CAMERA FLIES THROUGH AN UPSTAIRS WINDOW AND INTO--

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

CHUCK stands with CHARLES CHARLES (face bandaged, hands gloved,  
as in Ep. 208). A whirlwind of emotion plays across her face.

**NARRATOR**

*To others, an unspeakable treachery.*

NED (O.S.)

You kept your father alive?

CAMERA WHIPS TO FIND NED, frozen in horror at the betrayal.

CHUCK

This looks bad -- is bad. Horribly bad.

CHARLES CHARLES

Can't be that awful. It's not like I'm the  
first ghost he's seen. Right, Deadly Nedly?

CHUCK

Dad, don't call him that.

(back to Ned)

Please, say something.

Dazed, Ned opens his mouth, but before he can speak, there's the  
sound of FOOTSTEPS coming up the stairs.

LILY (O.S.)

They're up here.

CLOSE ON THE AUNTS' FEET

Running up the stairs.

RESUME - NED'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM

CHARLES CHARLES

Lily?

Panicked, Ned looks to Chuck. She PULLS her father into the closet and shuts the door. Ned turns to find the MUZZLE of Lily's SHOTGUN pushing through the bedroom door.

NED

(kicking the door shut)

Get out!

Frantic, Ned pushes against the bedroom door and STRUGGLES to keep it closed.

NED (CONT'D)

Lily and Vivian, Charlotte's aunts from across the street--

(for Charles's benefit)

--who are terribly sad because Charlotte and her father are dead, is that you?

Ned loses the door battle. LILY and VIVIAN spill in.

LILY

Yes, and we're spittin' pissed at being served up a steaming plate of door.

VIVIAN

I don't get pissed. A gypsy once told me it brings on hemorrhoids.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - CLOSET - SAME TIME

The closet is packed with old clothes and toys. Chuck fights to maintain her composure. Charles Charles peeks out the keyhole. They speak in hushed tones.

CHUCK

After you were gone, Lily and Vivian moved into our old house to take care of me. They can't know we're alive--again. The shock would kill them, and there's too much death in this family as is.

CHARLES CHARLES

But they're your aunts, button-button.

CHUCK

Yes. Except the one who's my mother.

CHARLES CHARLES  
So, you know. And you're okay?  
(off her nod)  
Good.

RESUME - NED AND THE AUNTS

NED  
Sorry, thought you were home invaders.

LILY  
Then, why'd you say my name?

NED  
I didn't.

LILY  
I heard it.

NED  
Must be your bad eye -- ears.

VIVIAN  
When you came over here to check for squatters  
and didn't immediately resurface, Lily assumed  
the worst.

LILY  
And brought two barrels of backup.

NED  
No squatters. No anyone. Let's all go home.

There's a SNEEZE from the closet.

NED (CONT'D)  
*Gesundheit.*

LILY  
I didn't sneeze.

VIVIAN  
Nor did I.

NED  
Right. That was me.

Not buying it, Lily yanks open the closet. Ned closes his eyes,  
fearing the worst and getting it as Lily SCREAMS and FIRES.

NED (CONT'D)  
No!

Ned opens his eyes. A SMOKING clown doll torso lies on the  
floor of the closet. Its head has been blown off.

LILY

Get it away! Get it away!

Vivian kicks the clown corpse into the closet, shuts the door.

VIVIAN

It's all right. You killed it good.

(to Ned, off the clown doll)

Lily has been petrified of clowns ever since our grandpapa chased her around the house with one of those. It's her only Achilles' heel.

IN THE CLOSET, Chuck and Charles press themselves safely against side walls.

**NARRATOR**

*An Achilles' heel preyed upon by Charlotte Charles, whose strategic placement of the toy prevented her strong-willed mother from strong-arming her way further into the closet.*

RESUME, as Vivian puts an arm around a rattled Lily and guides her out. There's the sound of the FRONT DOOR CLOSING. Chuck and Charles peek out of the closet to face a fuming Ned.

CHUCK

We have to talk.

NED

You don't want to hear what I have to say.

Ned goes. OFF Chuck's agony...

EXT. LIBERTY APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A solemn Ned watches the APPROACHING THUNDERCLOUDS. Chuck arrives, cautiously approaches him.

**NARRATOR**

*A low-pressure system moving in from the coast threatened Papen County with its first winter storm. But for the Pie-Maker and Chuck, it was as if the tempest had already hit.*

CHUCK

If I were thinking clearer, I'd give you space to process everything, but I haven't slept since it happened -- since I started this happening.

NED

If your father's alive, someone else had to die. Who was it?

CHUCK

Dwight Dixon. We found him and his sniper rifle at the cemetery.

NED

What?

CHUCK

Emerson thinks he was planning to kill you and me the night we re-alived my father.

NED

Emerson knows?

CHUCK

I went to him for help. We buried Dwight in Dad's empty grave. He wanted me to tell you right away. I begged him to wait, just until I knew what to say, only you found me first.

NED

What would've happened if I hadn't?

CHUCK

I would've brought you up here and told you what I did was reckless and selfish.

NED

Yes, it was.

CHUCK

I can say, I'm sorry I deceived you. I'll be saying that forever. But what I can't say is that I'm sorry my father's alive-again. I'm so overwhelmed, so grateful to have him back. There's no way to explain it.

This lands with Ned.

NED

You acted on an impulse so poignant and deep, it's like the world's smallest needle piercing your heart. I know how it feels, because I felt it, too. With you. And I'll never be sorry I did it, either.

Overcome, Chuck scoops up a tarp covering some rooftop furniture, throws it over Ned and hugs him tight.

CHUCK

I'll give you air in a second.  
(then, letting go)  
So, what's next?

CONTINUED: (2)

NED

The reality of the situation is, your father is back, in swaddling bandages, but he's back. If we're going to be one, big happy -- albeit unconventional -- family, there's a lot to discuss--

CHUCK

There's a lot I've already covered. First touch life, second touch death. And that Digby and I are the only other alive-agains kept alive longer than a minute.

NED

Good. Then, that leaves figuring out what to do with your dad. And the only way to do that is together. Are we together?

CHUCK

We're so "gethered," electrons couldn't get between us. You've made me very happy.

NED

I can tell. You're beaming.

CHUCK

I'm not the only one.

Chuck points to the sweeping LIGHTHOUSE BEAM, casting a strange SHADOW FIGURE across the clouds (like the BAT SIGNAL).

NED

What is that?

**NARRATOR**

*The body of Nora McQuoddy was what that was.*

EXT. PAPEN HARBOR LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The lighthouse perches high above the wind-swept beach.

INT. PAPEN HARBOR LIGHTHOUSE - LAMP ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

NORA McQUODDY (40s) whistles as she polishes the LAMP.

**NARRATOR**

*For the meticulous Papen Harbor Lighthouse keeper, obsessing over a stubborn smudge would be a fatal mistake. Because what Nora didn't notice was her killer...*

THWACK! A HARPOON goes through Nora's back, slamming her against the lamp. A FLASH of lightning illuminates THE KILLER, clad in a YELLOW FISHERMAN'S JACKET and holding a harpoon gun.



**NARRATOR (CONT'D)**  
*...who wanted everyone to notice her.*

The killer FLIPS ON the LAMP and exits.

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A TV broadcasts a NEWS REPORT of Nora McQuoddy's murder and her SHADOW FIGURE beamed across the clouds. It's being watched by EMERSON, Ned, Chuck and OLIVE. The rest of the Pie Hole is empty as the STORM RAGES outside.

EMERSON  
That's some shady shadow puppet.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (ON TV)  
...the prime suspect, seen fleeing the scene in a yellow fisherman's jacket, has been identified as the lighthouse keeper's husband, Merle McQuoddy--

OLIVE  
Merle McQuoddy!

A flash of LIGHTNING and ZZZT! The POWER goes out. Everyone startles as Olive turns to them, a FLASHLIGHT beneath her chin.

OLIVE (CONT'D)  
Of all the enigmatic, esoteric, local ghost stories, his is my absolute fave.  
(with spine-chilling flair)  
Merle McQuoddy was a salty sailor who left his lighthouse keeper wife and young child on a fishing voyage ten years ago, only to vanish without a trace. Mariners swear his ghost haunts the sea caves by the harbor. And when the lighthouse shines, you can hear Merle's ghoulish moans as he cries out for someone to guide him home and -- BOO!

Ned, Emerson and Chuck SCREAM.

OLIVE (CONT'D)  
Ha! Boomed ya!

**NARRATOR**  
*In actual fact, the facts were these:*

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

MERLE McQUODDY, a handsome, clean-shaven sailor, kisses his wife, Nora, and YOUNG SON before grabbing his duffel and heading off.

**NARRATOR**

*Merle McQuoddy did indeed leave his wife and child on a voyage 10 years ago.*

EXT. SHIP'S WHEEL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

BATTERED BY RAIN, Merle struggles at the ship's wheel.

**NARRATOR**

*His boat, The Knockout Nora, was loaded down with Dungeness when it was knocked out by the Category 5 Typhoon Tyrone.*

EXT. DESERTED ISLAND - DAY - FLASHBACK

A beaten and bruised Merle sits beneath a lone palm tree.

**NARRATOR**

*For 9 years, 11 months and 5 days, the presumed ghost Merle McQuoddy was very much alive and alone on a deserted island.*

TIME LAPSE:

Merle SPROUTS a BEARD, which grows longer than his body.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - LAMP ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Nora stands on the widow's walk, looking out on the sea, hopeful. She puts a SPYGLASS to her eye and scans the waves.

**NARRATOR**

*All the while, Nora kept watch, praying that one day her husband would come home, and life would return to the way it once was. After a near-decade of waiting, her prayers were answered when Merle was rescued by a gay family cruise ship.*

THERE'S A WHISTLE FROM BELOW. Nora reacts, puts her eye back to the spyglass.

NORA'S POV: Merle signals her from the cruise ship, wearing an "I LOVE MY TWO MOMS" T-shirt and waving a PRIDE FLAG at her.

INT. PIE HOLE - RESUME

**OLIVE**

But Merle wasn't the man he used to be. He'd roam the beach at midnight. Shunned indoor plumbing. Flew into rages. Now, he's a murderer at-large and--

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CONTINUED:

Olive SCREAMS as a GUST OF WIND blows open the front door.  
Silhouetted in the rain is a MAN IN A YELLOW FISHERMAN'S JACKET.  
And OFF a FLASH of LIGHTNING...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

Ned, Chuck, Emerson and Olive stare in horror at the man in the yellow fisherman's jacket. He throws back his hood revealing a sweet-faced ELLIOT McQUODDY (17).

ELLIOT

Mr. Cod? I was told I could find you here.  
My name is Elliot McQuoddy.

OLIVE

Elliot McQuoddy! Son of urban legend, Merle  
McQuoddy! I'm your ghost dad's biggest fan!  
(re: Emerson)  
What can he do for you?

ELLIOT

Please, you have to clear my father of my  
mother's murder.

Elliot sits at the counter and dumps loose change out of a jar.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

My entire life savings. Everything I ever found  
combing the shore with my metal detector.

EMERSON

Bring me up to tempo as to what happened  
tonight.

ELLIOT

Mom dropped me off at the movies with a batch  
of homemade peanut brittle. Afterwards, when  
I didn't see the minivan, I walked home. Cops  
were everywhere. They told me she was dead,  
and Dad was nowhere to be found.

Chuck and Olive bring CANDLES from the kitchen, lighting them as they sit on either side of Elliot. Ned sets a slice of pie before the boy, offers up a dripping carton of ice cream.

NED

Want à la mode? Power's out, and the ice  
cream won't be so-much-ice as cream soon.

ELLIOT

(eagerly nods his head)  
Lots and lots, please? Who knows when I'll  
get another meal without Mom to make it.

OLIVE

You poor boy.  
(pulling him in for a hug)  
There-~~there~~.

Elliot's face inadvertently ends up in her bosom. Olive gingerly pushes his head away, sending Elliot to Chuck's chest.

CHUCK

Awww.  
(righting his head)  
Not here-~~here~~.

EMERSON

Sorry, kid, but I heard eyewitnesses saw Merle McQuoddy running from the scene.

ELLIOT

All they saw was a yellow raincoat. Look, I understand why people think Dad might've done this. In the month he was back, he was... different.

OLIVE

Is it true he used your beach as his litter box?

ELLIOT

Yes, but the real point is, there's no way he'd hurt my mother. After ten years of waiting, our family was finally reunited.

CHUCK

That's a long time to hold out hope.

OLIVE

Elliot here's a beacon of hope. When he was a little boy, he'd camp out in the haunted sea caves. Anytime anyone went in there looking for Merle's ghost, he'd run them out with a stick screaming, "My father's alive!"

ELLIOT

I thought you looked familiar.  
(then)  
Now, I'm that boy all over again. I don't know where my dad is, and even if I find him, they'll take him away. Excuse me.

Fighting tears, Elliot heads for the bathroom.

EMERSON

Hate to be a bitch, but there's no way I'm taking this case.

OLIVE

You think Merle McQuoddy murdered Nora?

EMERSON

His ship returned minus a few oars, making it an easy leap from captain to killer. Nothing the kid had to say makes me think otherwise. Plus, I don't work in the rain.

NED

Clearly, you don't hate being a bitch that much.

EMERSON

You don't get a 100% Saturniidae silk shirt from Thailand's Khorat Plateau wet.

CHUCK

But what if Merle's innocent? He already missed his son's formative years. Without us, he'll miss the next 10 to 20, and that's if he makes parole. Don't deny the kid a chance to make up for lost time with his father.

EMERSON

We still talking about Elliot and Merle? 'Cause this story sounds awfully familiar.

CHUCK

I'll kick you back my third of the cut--

EMERSON

Now, that's something I'm familiar with.

CHUCK

--since you'll be doing my third of the work. I'm taking a personal day to deal with personal... persons.

Another LIGHTNING FLASH. Emerson miserably takes in the rain.

EMERSON

Looks like Papa's gonna need a new raincoat...

INT. MORGUE - LAB - DAY

TIGHT ON - A PAIR OF SOAKED SHOES. TILT TO FIND an unhappy Emerson, obsessing over them as Ned stands by.

EMERSON

...and leather conditioner. See those water spots? These wing tips were custom cobbled.

Emerson pulls a chamois from his pocket and buffs them.

NED

Can we hurry? I'm supposed to see Chuck's father and I want to get him a "welcome back to life" gift first.

EMERSON

I got the perfect gift. You tappin' Dad back to the grave.

NED

That's terrible. Why would you say that?

EMERSON

'Cause you're in over your head. You can keep your dog on a leash 'cause he's a dog, but you can't keep a former war vet cut down in his prime on one. Before long, he's gonna break free and go runnin' through the streets tellin' the world what you can do. Tap that.

NED

This is Chuck's chance at having family again. I can't... "tap that."

EMERSON

So, make it look like an accident. Trip over an ottoman and Dick Van Dyke his ass. I've said my piece. Let's get face-to-face with Lighthouse Lady.

He pulls off the sheet to REVEAL Nora McQuoddy, harpoon still protruding from her back. Her melted corpse has more in common with an over-easy egg than a body.

NED

Where's her face? She's been effaced!

Ned STARTS his watch, touches Nora, who comes alive with a FLASH.

EMERSON

Ma'am, present conditions are cold and rainy with a 100% chance of "you're dead." But we're hoping you can tell us who killed you.

NORA

Enngh. Rrrrrr.

EMERSON

Aww, hell. We got a melty mouth. "Yes" or "no" questions, then.

NED

She can't nod. How can she nod?

Emerson reacts to a FAINT TAPPING SOUND.

EMERSON

What's that tapping?

Ned points to Nora's THUMB, tapping against the exam table.

NED

I don't think she's tapping. I think she's talking. In Morse code.

NORA

Aggggh. Mmmmmmm.

EMERSON

How do you know Morse code?

NED

Charles Charles taught it to me and Chuck as kids so we could communicate from our bedroom windows with flashlights.

EMERSON

Ms. McQuoddy, who committed your murder?

NED

(off her TAPPING)

P... C... H... S... Is that it?

NORA

Aggggh. Mmmmmmm.

Ned eyes his watch -- outta time. ZAP! Ned re-deads her.

NED

P-C-H-S. "Pikhiss." "*Pik-hiss.*" "*Pik-hiss.*"

EMERSON

It's an acronym, fool. Papen County Historical Society. Old lighthouse like Nora's? They'd be bound to have an interest.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ned and Emerson enter the hall and find Olive holding a bag.

NED

What are you doing here?

OLIVE

Lookin' and findin' you two, which was a cinch natch 'cause I'm such an ace junior P.I. in-training. And look what Mama got Papa.

From the bag, Olive pulls a clear plastic raincoat dotted with COD FISH emblems and offers it to Emerson.



EMERSON

(to Ned)

Tell her that thing won't fit.

NED

Sure it will. Like a glove.

OLIVE

Bought one for you, too, Ned. And for me, of course. 'Cause together, we're a crime-fighting team! Whaddya say, Papa?

NED

I think you and "Papa" will have a grand ol' time while I take care of a thing...

(for Emerson's benefit)

...that's not going to be a problem.

OLIVE

But...

Olive can't hide her dismay as Ned walks away.

EMERSON

Hey! Mood Swing Sally! Anchors aweigh!

**NARRATOR**

*While Olive tried to bury her disappointment beneath a smile, the Pie-Maker tried to bury his nervousness beneath a layer of butter, flour and sugar.*

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ned places an apple pie on the coffee table as Chuck pours tea. Nearby, Charles Charles builds a house of cards.

CHUCK

Dad, would you like to join us for pie?

CHARLES CHARLES

Thanks, button, but I'll have cake.

Ned shoots a freaked-out look at Chuck: "What?"

CHUCK

It's a delicious caramel apple crumble that Ned made special.

CHARLES CHARLES

Since when do you eat pie? You hate pie.

Ned shoots another look at Chuck: "What?!"

CHUCK

This is the one that won me over.

CHARLES CHARLES

So, no cake? At all? Oh, well.

NED

Let's not worry about pie. This family has bigger things to discuss. To that end, I brought a docket.

Ned rips a page out of his clue book and hands it to Charles.

CHARLES CHARLES

"Move Mr. Charles from Ned's childhood home to Ned's apartment." You killed a tree for this? Anyway, I'm happy as a clam right here.

NED

The problem is, Lily and Vivian are right here, too, and for a couple of agoraphobes, they get around. We can't risk them coming back and discovering you, thereby discovering the truth about all of us. From there, it's a hop, skip and a jump to angry mobs with pitchforks and torches.

CHARLES CHARLES

Why don't I move in with Charlotte?

CHUCK

Because I have a roommate, Olive, who also can't know about you.

CHARLES CHARLES

'Spose I'm fine bunking with a boy who could kill me again just by passing the pepper.

CHUCK

Actually, that's not a problem with our retractable salt-and-pepper passer.

NED

There are many safeguards already in place.

CHARLES CHARLES

Truth be told, you touching me dead doesn't scare me near as much as the thought of you doing it to my daughter.

NED

Sir, I could never hurt Chuck.

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES CHARLES

Sure, you could, Deadly Nedly. You could forget she's walking behind you and stop to tie your shoe. Or trip over a forgotten newspaper. Or run for the same doorway during an earthquake. No number of redundant precautions can assure you won't inadvertently kill her for good and forever unless you aren't in her vicinity, which is why we're gonna make a deal. I go quietly and play by your rules...

Quick as a flash, Charles grabs Ned's arm. Chuck and Ned freeze, but it's glove on sleeve, so there's no death spark.

CHARLES CHARLES (CONT'D)

...and you never see Charlotte again.

And OFF Ned, stunned by this turn of events...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. PIE HOLE - BOOTH - DAY

Emerson and Olive sit at a booth and examine a P.C.H.S. (Papen County Historical Society) brochure. The cover is dominated by a photo of the Papen family -- two handsome PARENTS and FOUR ARYAN SONS.

EMERSON

The First Family of Papen County. Buncha' blonde over blue *Children of the Corn*.

OLIVE

Which one are we gonna grill?

EMERSON

Gus.

ANGLE ON the brochure. Emerson's hand moves Olive's thumb out of the way TO REVEAL GUS, ultra-diminutive in stature.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

The Rosemary Kennedy of the Papen clan. While brothers one through four run the family's commercial real estate empire and South Asian call centers, all he got was the Historical Society.

GUS (O.S.)

Olive Snook?

EMERSON AND OLIVE'S POV: They lower the brochure TO REVEAL the miniature and morose GUS PAPEN standing beside them.

OLIVE

Mr. Papen. Welcome to the Pie Hole. Did you get my application to declare our wonderful establishment a historic landmark?

GUS

That application was denied the moment you people destroyed an exemplary specimen of turn-of-the-century *beaux arts* architecture with the addition of a stucco crust overhang.

EMERSON

(to Olive)

Told ya.

(to Gus)

But as long as you're here, mind answering some questions about Nora McQuoddy?

Gus takes a seat across from Emerson and Olive.

GUS

Have they found the blood-thirsty husband?

EMERSON

Merle? No.

GUS

Bet she didn't perish immediately. Couldn't have bled out from a harpoon hole. No, she probably cooked from the outside in, until her brain was just sweetbreads.

(off their stares)

What? I haven't earned the right to be glum?

OLIVE

(nods)

We've seen the family portrait.

EMERSON

Anyway, what was Nora's connection to the P.C.H.S.?

GUS

With her husband lost at sea, Nora couldn't afford the lighthouse upkeep. Since the structure is of utmost importance to our county's history, I used my family influence to declare it a Protected Historic Monument under the auspices of the P.C.H.S.

OLIVE

You nicked Nora's lighthouse?

GUS

I didn't steal it, I saved it. Once protected, county funds were allocated for maintenance. I appointed Nora the lighthouse steward and the McQuoddys its guardians until the family line dies out, or the sun swallows the Earth in a solar flare, killing us all.

EMERSON

That leaves Elliot in charge.

(to Olive, sotto)

Best alert the Coast Guard.

GUS

Other than that, I didn't really know Nora. If you want to learn more, talk to Annabelle Vandersloop. They volunteered together in our diorama exhibit. Such a depressing word, "diorama." It has "die" in it.

(beat)

I like "rama."

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Ned ushers Charles Charles inside.

NED

Home sweet--  
                  (sotto, to himself)  
--used to be--  
                  (louder)  
--home!

DIGBY bounds in, jumps up on Charles Charles.

NED (CONT'D)

Digby, no!

CHARLES CHARLES

It's all right. What a beautiful specimen.  
                  (SNEEZING uncontrollably)  
Damn, I was hoping my deathly dander allergy  
would've died with me the first time.

Chuck enters with a bag. For her father's benefit, she ignores Ned, going so far as to shield her eyes from him.

CHUCK

Dad, are you sick? Oh, no -- dogs. I forgot.  
Digby will stay at my place.

Ned signals to Chuck and mouths, "No!" Charles catches it.

CHARLES CHARLES

Son, were the orders to keep away from my  
daughter given in Tillamook?

NED

The cheese?

CHUCK

The extinct Native American language. See  
where I get my love of lingo?

NED

Or, if you want to talk, we could use a  
language we're all familiar with.

CHARLES CHARLES

                  (to Ned, in Tillamook)  
"Retreat!"

CHUCK

That means, "Go."

CONTINUED:

Ned shoots her an "Are you kidding me?" look. Chuck just giggles, so Ned disappears into the kitchen as Chuck guides her father to--

THE LIVING ROOM

She settles him on the couch. From the bag, she removes an Army walkie-talkie and her cigar box of mementoes from Episode 207.

CHUCK

I brought gifts. This, so we can stay in constant contact in the present. And this, so you can regain contact with your past.

Charles Charles opens the cigar box and removes some photos. He shakes his head, overwhelmed by the memories.

CHARLES CHARLES

Well, I'll be... Thank you, button.

CHUCK

Get settled. Say 'bye to your grandpa, Digby.

Digby BARKS and exits with Chuck. Ned enters with homemade chocolate cake.

NED

There's milk to go with this.

CHARLES CHARLES

You didn't have to go to that kinda trouble.

NED

I wanted to. This is a huge adjustment. Why not make it as smooth as possible?

CHARLES CHARLES

Big of you, kid. We won't get anywhere without teamwork.

NED

A perfect segue to our playbook -- actually, the rest of the docket -- but since we switched metaphors...

Ned hands Charles Charles a NOTEBOOK with the handwritten title: "THE RULES."

NED (CONT'D)

...all this pertains to the alive-again lifestyle, with your particular alive-again situation--

CHARLES CHARLES

You mean my corpse face--

CONTINUED:

NED

"Corpse face" taken into consideration. In short, stay inside with the door locked and curtains drawn. Food deliveries are verboten; however, telephone use is unrestricted as long as you choose from the list of cleared aliases on page 13 when communicating with the outside world. For the first month, I'd also recommend wearing latex gloves.

CHARLES CHARLES

Already got gloves on.

NED

No harm in double-bagging it, eh?

Ned laughs nervously. Charles Charles doesn't see the humor.

NED (CONT'D)

Sir, I'm really trying here.

CHARLES CHARLES

Well, you can stop. Instead of buttering me up, let's deal with the elephant in the room. You killed me.

Ned was not expecting this.

NED

I -- I don't know what to say.

CHARLES CHARLES

I knew your parents, Ned. You were raised right. How 'bout an apology?

NED

I'm sorry. I was just a boy, who accidentally discovered this...

(holds up his finger)

...thing he didn't understand.

CHARLES CHARLES

Understanding is something I'm having trouble with, too. Which is why "All's forgiven" is gonna be some time comin'. You need to respect that.

(off the notebook)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a bunch of reading to do.

And OFF this...



INT. EMERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Emerson and Olive sit across from ANNABELLE VANDERSLOOP (40s). She's austere in attitude, but a wreck in appearance. Craft supplies stick to her clothing.

ANNABELLE

Nora and I were best friends. We met through the Notable Widows of Papen County. Our goal is to pay tribute to our notable husbands' notable deaths, through the miniature medium of diorama.

OLIVE

I'm Olive Snook, and I love dioramas. How can I help?

ANNABELLE

Are you a widow?

OLIVE

No.

ANNABELLE

I can put you on the waiting list, in the hopes your husband perishes in a big, important way.

OLIVE

Unfortunately, I'm single. But I had a beloved horse that bought the farm. I could dioram-that.

ANNABELLE

Sorry. Expired spouses only. For example...

Annabelle turns to her rolling caddy of crafting supplies. Bungee'd to the top is a diorama labeled *The Great Filling Factory Explosion (1995)*. She places it on Emerson's desk.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)

...my late husband, munitions manufacturer Adolph Vandersloop, went out with a bang when an errant 4th of July rocket flew into an open window while he was taking inventory.

She presses a button and the diorama ANIMATES, complete with glittery EXPLOSIONS out the factory's windows. Annabelle grabs a jar of glitter from her crafting box and sprinkles more on.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)

One can never add enough glitter to a husband's memory. Miss Snook, do you see how your pony death would make a mockery of our legitimate efforts?

CONTINUED:

OLIVE

Do you see how you've got cotton balls stuck to your ass?

ANNABELLE

Thank you. I was looking for those.

EMERSON

I'm looking for something: Information on Nora McQuoddy and whether or not her husband made himself a notable widower.

ANNABELLE

I was with sweet Nora when she got the news that the homosexual boat had rescued Merle. Can you imagine the joy of starting over with a husband you thought lost? Alas, the husband found refused baths and conversed with sea lions.

EMERSON

You sayin' there was a lack of heat in their lamp room?

ANNABELLE

Oh, things were heated, but not with whoopee; with words. Especially about Elliot. Nora was the first to admit she was an overprotective mother, but with Merle home, and Elliot so desperate to bond with him, it quickly became two against one. Finally, she had to put her foot down.

EMERSON

On what?

ANNABELLE

Crazy ideas, like a father-son sailing trip around the world. Nora already lost a McQuoddy to the sea once, so she forbade it. It must've been the final straw for Merle before he snapped, killed her and went AWOL. Now, Elliot's free to go wherever he wants.

(tearing up)

Sometimes I think to myself: "Life. You can't make this crap up."

EMERSON

Thanks for your time.

Annabelle gathers her things and goes.

CONTINUED: (2)

OLIVE

Speaking of "crap," Elliot seems to be full of it. We met a heartbroken Mama's boy who never mentioned feuds with Mama. What gives?

EMERSON

That's just what we're gonna ask him.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

Emerson and Olive, wearing their matching raincoats, enter to find WILLIE, a guy in a realtor's jacket, pissily packing up his listing sheets and cookie tray.

WILLIE

Don't bother signing in. The open house is off.

EMERSON

Who are you?

WILLIE

Willie Gerkin, Smiley Realty.

OLIVE

You lost your smile, pickle.

WILLIE

I thought it was too good to be true. No sooner had I tacked the words "Five million dollar beachfront fixer" up in my cubicle when, bam! This 1 bedroom, 1 bath, with bonus lamp room -- perfect for home office or yoga studio -- lands in my lap. And now, I find out I can't sell it because it's a protected historical monument! This is so not the way *The Secret* is supposed to work.

EMERSON

Where's the owner?

WILLIE

Elliot? That little bowl-cut split. But not before I advanced him ten grand against the sale. Said he and his father were going out of town and needed cash quick. I was supposed to wire the rest of the proceeds to whatever foreign port they were docked in.

OLIVE

Is that legal?

WILLIE

How should I know? I just got my license. Screw it. I'm going back to personal training, where there's respect.

CONTINUED:

Willie flees.

EMERSON

Try this on for size. Merle kills Nora. Then, Elliot hires me to take suspicion off himself while he gathered funds for their father-son trip.

OLIVE

But if they did score a sloop, there's no way they could take it out in this weather. Must be hiding. Let's smoke 'em out.

Emerson sees that it has started to rain again.

EMERSON

Can't believe you've got me working in this downpour.

OLIVE

What's up with that anyway, rain hater? I'd get it if you were a cat, or had hair--

EMERSON

Or got dumped.

(a beat)

Back in the rainy day, my ex and I would hole up with a bottle of brandy and some tomato soup, and not come out till the sun did. Now, when the drops fall, they remind me of what I lost and ain't getting back. Sound crazy?

OLIVE

Not at all. Let's wait it out here a bit. I've always wanted to see this place, and you can't get much of a feel dressing up like a cookie-pushing Campfire Princess and trying to peek inside.

Olive pokes around. On a workbench she finds several SHIPS IN BOTTLES in various stages of construction. Olive picks up one of the empty bottles. She absentmindedly BLOWS across the top, emitting a ghostly WHOOO. Emerson startles.

EMERSON

You tryin' to give me the heebie-jeebies?

OLIVE

(something dawning)

Or a theory as to where the murderous McQuoddys might be holed up. Remember the sea caves Merle's ghost supposedly haunted with his howls? There's nothing haunted about them. The sound is created when the wind rushes in off the water. Kinda like...

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLIVE (CONT'D)

(blowing again, "WHOO")

Elliot knows those caves like the back of his hand.

EMERSON

If he's there, he's gettin' the back of mine.

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - DAY

A glum Ned rolls dough. Chuck enters from the dining area.

CHUCK

Sugars have been re-sugared, creamers have been re-creamed. Anything else before I head out to the store? Dad gave me a list.

(reading it)

"Slippers. Mouthwash. The last twenty years of my life back." He's so funny.

NED

Hilarious.

(off her look)

It's bad enough we can't touch. Now I'm not allowed to see you. How is that possible? Me-wise, you're pretty much ubiquitous.

CHUCK

We're not going to stop seeing each other. It's only when Dad's around, which is limited to your apartment. He can't go anywhere else.

CHARLES CHARLES (OVER WALKIE)(V.O)

Lewis? Got your ears on?

Ned jumps out of his skin. Chuck unholsters her walkie-talkie.

CHUCK

Affirmative, Clark.

CHARLES CHARLES (OVER WALKIE)(V.O)

Almost home?

CHUCK

Negatory. At the store, by the diaper aisle.

(shoves the walkie at Ned)

Cry like a baby.

Ned shakes his head, but Chuck is insistent. Finally, he squeaks out a weak BABY NOISE. It seems to do the trick.

CHARLES CHARLES (OVER WALKIE)(V.O)

Can you pick up some john paper? The quilted kind. Nedly must be on a budget.

CHUCK

Roger. Love you!

Chuck puts the walkie-talkie back in her purse.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

How fun was that?

NED

Not at all. Look, I'm not embarrassed to say that I'm scared of your father -- petrified, actually -- which means I'm not happy to be lying to him like this, and stop smiling.

CHUCK

I can't help it. Something's happening that I never thought would happen. My dad's torturing my first boyfriend.

NED

Yay.

CHUCK

Exactly. You and I get to be the teenagers we never got to be. You, because you were locked up in a boarding school, and me, because I was shut up with my shut-in aunts. But now, you're the studly varsity quarterback, and I'm the flirty head cheerleader.

Chuck grabs some plastic wrap as she seductively draws closer.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Which means we get to break curfew, mislead our parents and sneak around.

She Saran-kisses him in a very adult manner.

NED

I may need a little more convincing.

She kisses him again. He's clearly won over.

CHUCK

Meet up behind the bleachers later?

NED

Bring your pom-poms.

She exits. Ned happily watches her through the pass-through when he sees something that makes his blood run cold.

CONTINUED: (2)

AT THE COUNTER, a CUSTOMER, face shielded by a fedora, looks up and REVEALS his identity: It's Charles Charles, with his walkie-talkie. As CAMERA ROCKETS in on this disturbing image...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. PIE HOLE - COUNTER - DAY

Ned tries to comprehend the sight before him -- Charles Charles sitting at the counter. The Pie Hole PATRONS are oblivious.

CHARLES CHARLES

Looked to me like you were necking with my daughter. The daughter you promised to keep your distance from.

NED

You can't be here. Please, go back upstairs.

CHARLES CHARLES

I'm not going anywhere.

Ned takes a beat, turns to the Pie Hole patrons.

NED

Everybody out! We have a gas leak which caused a radon emission chock-full of asbestos. Safety first! Cover your eyes!

They rush out. Ned locks the door, turns back to find Charles Charles gone. There's a NOISE from the kitchen.

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ned races in. Charles Charles pokes through the fridge.

CHARLES CHARLES

Seriously. No cake anywhere?

NED

I made you a cake.

CHARLES CHARLES

I'm not one for chocolate.

NED

Who's not for chocolate? Everyone at least tolerates it! Mr. Charles, you can't be out in public like this. If someone sees you--

CHARLES CHARLES

I'll say I'm a burn victim. If I need to say anything at all. I've been walking around for an hour, and no one's looked at me twice. Wonder if I could get one of those handicapped parking placards.

NED

There's no driving! That's Rule Number 17!



CHARLES CHARLES

Why am I supposed to play by the rules when you don't, Romeo?

NED

I-- I'm just trying to keep you safe.

CHARLES CHARLES

Look, kiddo. You may be able to scare Charlotte with stories of mobs and pitchforks and torches, but I know the truth. If the villagers show, they aren't coming for me. They're coming for the guy with the magic finger.

NED

Hate to break it to you, Charles, but no one cared about Dr. Frankenstein. They were after his monster. And regardless of what you think, my priority is your daughter's well-being. If you walk out that door, you put her life in jeopardy.

CHARLES CHARLES

As her father, I'll be the judge of that.

Charles makes a move for the back door, but Ned blocks him.

NED

You're not leaving.

Charles snatches up a broom and swings. Ned ducks, grabs a nearby mop and BLOCKS his next blow. The men push back at each other. Ned swings, and the mop SMASHES the walkie-talkie on the prep counter. Charles gets dangerously close to Ned's face.

CHARLES CHARLES

Not bad for a dead guy, huh?

NED

Don't. Touch. Me.

Ned pushes Charles away from him. Charles stumbles back into the fruit storage room. Ned SLAMS the door and LOCKS it -- stunned by the sudden escalation of events.

**NARRATOR**

*As the tide turned for the Pie-Maker...*

INT. SEA CAVE - DAY

Emerson and Olive (in their matching raincoats) creep along with flashlights.

**NARRATOR**

*...a turn of the tide allowed Emerson Cod and Olive Snook to turn their investigation toward a sea cave.*

**EMERSON**

Stay close. If the McQuoddys are barnacled up in here, we have 'em cornered.

**OLIVE**

Okay. But if the smell of armpit, kelp and Bay rum blowing in behind us means anything...

Olive spins, SCREAMS. Behind them is Merle McQuoddy. He wears a yellow fisherman's jacket and has a bushy beard.

**MERLE**

Easy there. Friend, not foe here.

**EMERSON**

(drawing his gun)  
Well, we're foe fo-sho'. Emerson Cod, P.I., here to trawl you downtown. Where's Elliot?

**MERLE**

Gathering supplies.

Olive notices a boat, beached next to a makeshift camp.

**OLIVE**

Uh-huh. We know all about your McQuoddy Family Killers cruise. You two murdered Nora!

**MERLE**

You're mistaken, matey. When she died, I was here.

**EMERSON**

Why were you bunking al-grotto?

**MERLE**

For the past month, Nora and I had been trying to set our marriage back on its old course, but ten years apart leaves you different people. Last night, while Elliot was at the movies, she confessed she'd found her bearings with another man. Bewildered, I sought shelter here. The next morning, I returned to the lighthouse for provisions. Elliot told me my wife had been murdered, and that I was the prime suspect.

**EMERSON**

Why not clear things up with the authorities?

CONTINUED: (2)

MERLE

'Cause I'm a ghost with an alibi as thin as fishing line. It was Elliot's idea to set sail from here. He said he'd garner the funds while I prepped the vessel. What he doesn't know is I'm going back to the island alone.

OLIVE

You can't leave your child again.

MERLE

He's a man, now. Ish. A man-ish I don't know. And the father he loved has changed as well. I wish we could go back to those simpler times, but if wishes were fishes, we'd all have a fry.

EMERSON

Just one hole in your story -- Elliot never mentioned Nora's new squeeze.

MERLE

Nora never told him.

EMERSON

Well, you'd best cough up a name, or we're hauling your buoy in.

MERLE

She didn't tell me who he was, but I found this among her personal effects.

He hands over a SMALL SILVER SPOON on the end of a chain.

OLIVE

A Dutch love spoon. Men give them to their women as a symbol of the sweetness they will feed each other forever.

(off their looks)

I've read the entire Harlequin library.

MERLE

I didn't give my wife that spoon.

EMERSON

No, her lover did. A lover who murdered Nora out of jealousy before she had the chance to tell him she was leaving her husband. Engraving reads, "A.P. hearts N.M." N.M. is Nora McQuoddy. Who's A.P.?

OLIVE

Papen is a Dutch name. Scurvy! There are 50 Papens in this county alone.

EMERSON

But only one Augustus. Gus Papen.

And OFF this...

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - DAY

Still reeling, Ned sits in front of the fruit storage room. Chuck enters with bags of goods. She takes in the wrecked kitchen.

CHUCK

What happened?

NED

Your father came down here and we had a little... tussle.

CHUCK

A "tussle"?

NED

Well, maybe a scuffle.

Chuck's eyes land on her father's SMASHED walkie-talkie.

CHUCK

(gasps)

Dad! Did you touch him? Is he--

CHARLES CHARLES (O.S.)

Charlotte?

NED

Wait, wait, wait! Let me explain--

Chuck unlocks the storage room door to discover a pathetic Charles Charles. His belt has been re-purposed as a sling.

CHUCK

Oh my god.

CHARLES CHARLES

The light's... so bright.

Chuck helps her father up.

CHARLES CHARLES (CONT'D)

My wrist. I need to ice it.

CHUCK

Go on up. I'll be right there.

Behind Chuck's back, Charles shoots Ned a smirk and limps out. Chuck turns her disbelieving gaze back to Ned.

NED

That was an act.

CHUCK

Of complete foolishness. Why did you bring him to the Pie Hole?

NED

I didn't! Your father left my apartment of his own accord, then wandered around for an hour before grabbing a seat at the counter.

CHUCK

He wouldn't do that. He knows the rules.

NED

Didn't you hear? Your dad's not one for dogs, chocolate or rules. So, from this point on, he's going to be doing his own thing.

CHUCK

Let me go talk to him.

NED

We said we'd handle this together. I'm coming with you.

CHUCK

No. You're too upset. What if you start fighting again?

NED

He's a big boy. He can handle it.

CHUCK

Well, maybe I can't.

Chuck holds back tears. Ned softens.

NED

Chuck...

CHUCK

I get it. My father is stubborn and strong-willed and he doesn't appreciate everything you're doing for him. But this is a normal father-daughter-daughter's boyfriend dynamic.

NED

No, it's not.

CHUCK

Why not? Because he was dead for 20 years? Pretend he was in a coma.

CONTINUED: (2)

NED

I don't have the luxury of pretending he was in a coma, or that you're the head cheerleader, or that any of this is normal, because Charles Charles has no problem exposing our secret to the world. We have to put a stop to this right now.

CHUCK

How? Re-dead him? Because that's not an option.

NED

I never said that. Look, I've tried everything to make this work. You don't want to work together anymore? Fine. You figure it out.

Without a word, Chuck exits. And OFF Ned, realizing that Charles Charles might have just gotten the upper hand...

FADE OUT.

OMIT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. EMERSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Olive sits opposite a shocked Annabelle Vandersloop.

ANNABELLE

Gus and Nora were an item? I had no idea. Could he have had something to do with her murder?

OLIVE

Well, you didn't hear it from me.

ANNABELLE

What?

OLIVE

You know.

ANNABELLE

I don't.

OLIVE

You do. Gus? Give it a tad more thought.

ANNABELLE

I'm sorry, I've been working with spray adhesive all day. Makes me a little fuzzy... Oh my god! Miss Snook, I almost forgot! I told the Notable Widows your story, and it made us realize how very blessed we are. 'Tis better to have loved and lost than to be you. Therefore, we've appointed you the inaugural member of the Notable Pet Widows of Papen County. Just think -- you and your dead horse diorama will be an inspiration to all ladies incapable of finding a man.

OLIVE

Gee. Thanks.

Annabelle gathers up her craft caddy and heads for the door.

ANNABELLE

If you'll excuse me, I have an appointment to get to. It's gonna be a blast. Ta, Sad Miss Snook! See you at Tuesday's potluck!

She turns, COLLIDING with an entering Emerson. He notices the WHITE HANDPRINTS she's left on his jacket.

EMERSON

Not on the hand-finished wool with jacquard stitching!

ANNABELLE

Don't worry -- it's papier-mâché paste. Just flour and water. Comes right out. I seem to have misplaced my craft caddy.

EMERSON

You're holding it.

ANNABELLE

So, I am! Ta, Sad Miss Snook! See you at Tuesday's potluck!

Annabelle goes. Emerson turns his attention to Olive.

EMERSON

Vandersloop give you anything?

OLIVE

Just a good riling. Who does she think she is, pitying me? I should be pitying her! She's the one with a dead husband, whose death wasn't so much "notable" as *dim-witted*! Hey, Adolph, you're taking inventory in a munitions factory on the 4th of July during a fireworks display. Shut the window!

EMERSON

Shut your mouth, 'cause I got something from snooping around Gus Papen's office.

Emerson tosses Olive a STACK OF DOCUMENTS. Olive reads aloud:

OLIVE

"Papen County Office of Historic Preservation: Proposal To Redevelop Papen Harbor Lighthouse."

EMERSON

Check the next page. He got the green light.

Olive turns the page. On it, a new building design is laid over the current lighthouse. The design is stamped: "APPROVED."

EMERSON (CONT'D)

The runt of the Papen litter found a way to prove he can go toe-to-capitalistic-toe with his brothers. That lying Dutchman must have been preying on Nora since she introduced her valuable beachfront monument to him.

OLIVE

But why knock boats with Nora just to knock her off?



CONTINUED: (2)

EMERSON

Maybe she wasn't so keen to partner up, or maybe Gus wasn't so keen to split the profits. Merle's sudden return gave him a McQuoddy two-fer -- kill Nora and frame the crazy captain for the crime. With both of them gone, he could redevelop to his bank account's content. As long as he could get rid of--

OLIVE

Elliot McQuoddy!

She holds up a PHONE MESSAGE SLIP found among the documents.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Confirming a meeting with Gus at the lighthouse tonight.

As they bolt for the door...

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chuck enters. Her father sits in the living room with a book.

CHARLES CHARLES

C'mere, button. This is a "*Cookbook of Culinary Treasures from Around the World.*"

He opens it up TO REVEAL a MAP on the inside cover, then holds up a wooden spoon.

CHARLES CHARLES (CONT'D)

Close your eyes and tap the page. Where the spoon lands is where you and I will go. Tonight.

CHUCK

Dad, a misunderstanding got out of control, shoving ensued, fruit pantries were locked. Not the way things should've been handled, I agree, but leaving isn't the solution.

CHARLES CHARLES

(off Ned's notebook)

Does this sound better? "Rule 21: When crossing rooms simultaneously, Party A shall announce 'coming' at which point Party B shall pause, then commence movement with the response 'going.'"

CHUCK

That ritual can be rather endearing.

Charles holds up a pair of slippers, adorned with bells.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

So can that.

CHARLES CHARLES

This is how you live? With your every move monitored by a paranoid Pie-Maker?

CHUCK

Please tread lightly. You're talking about the Pie-Maker I love.

CHARLES CHARLES

How can you love him? It's not physically possible.

CHUCK

Ned and I see our inability to touch as a hurdle, and our love as the trampoline that bounces us safely over it. It bounced us over death, and there's no hurdle higher than that.

CHARLES CHARLES

Your analogy is a delusion that's gonna get you killed. Charlotte, you may have grown up without me, but I'm back and I'll never stop trying to keep you safe. In some subconscious corner of your mind, that's why you kept me here, isn't it?

**NARRATOR**

*It was a question not even Charlotte Charles had the answer to.*

CHARLES CHARLES

The little girl I left behind wouldn't have settled for a lock-and-key existence. She was destined for adventure. Let me use this second chance to give that back to you.

CHUCK

My life is here.

CHARLES CHARLES

This isn't a life. It's a freak show. But we're only freaks in Ned's world. Away from him, we can do anything, be anything.

CHUCK

Look at yourself. That's impossible.

CHARLES CHARLES

Look at yourself. You're brainwashed.

Mind reeling, Chuck struggles to comprehend this.

CHUCK

I just want it to be how it used to be.

CHARLES CHARLES

Then come with me. Pie is simple. Limited.  
Just a bit of pastry and filling. Cake is  
complex. Layered with treasures waiting to be  
discovered. Which one do you choose?

He offers the spoon. An agonizing beat, then Chuck takes it.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

It's begun to SNOW. Emerson and Olive jump out of EMERSON'S CAR  
and see the horrifying sight of Elliot, dangling from the widow's  
walk by a string of signal flags. A SHADOWY MAN hovers over him.

EMERSON / OLIVE

Oh, hell no!

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - WIDOW'S WALK - NIGHT

Olive and Emerson, gun drawn, burst onto the snowy widow's walk.  
Grappling with the flailing Elliot is Gus Papen.

EMERSON

Back away from the boy, Papen!

GUS

If I do, he'll die!

OLIVE

Reverse psychology won't work on us. That's  
exactly what you want!

GUS

What I want is to save him.

OLIVE

Is that reverse-reverse psychology?

ELLIOT

He didn't do this!

EMERSON

Then, who the hell did?

**NARRATOR**

***"Who the hell did" was Elliot McQuoddy himself.***

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - WIDOW'S WALK - FLASHBACK

The snow is thick. Elliot tries to hoist the SIGNAL FLAGS.

**NARRATOR**

*Realizing the severity of the impending  
nor'easter, Nora's son struggled to do his dead  
mother proud by raising the signal flags...*

Elliot slips on a patch of ice. He grabs for the halyard, but  
it slips from its cleat, sending Elliot over the rail.

ELLIOT

Mommy!

**NARRATOR**

*...and failed.*

RESUME

Emerson, Olive and Gus hoist Elliot to safety. They rush into--

INT. LAMP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Elliot struggles to catch his breath.

ELLIOT

Th-th-thank you.

EMERSON

(to Gus)

So, you weren't here to wipe out the McQuoddy  
line and take over the lighthouse?

GUS

Of course not. Not when I want to--

Suddenly, the LAMP TURNS ON. An EERIE HOWL fills the room.  
Emerson, Olive, Elliot and Gus tighten as a group.

EMERSON

I don't like the looks of this.

The lamp ILLUMINATES A MAN in A YELLOW FISHERMAN'S JACKET. His  
razor-sharp HARPOON GUN glistens.

OLIVE

I don't like the looks of him!

THUNK! As the HARPOON FLIES AT CAMERA, taking us...

TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - LAMP ROOM - NIGHT

Emerson, Olive and Elliot SCREAM at the yellow-jacketed figure as -- THUNK! The HARPOON comes FLYING out... all of two feet before it stops and a BANNER unfurls from the harpoon rod.

OLIVE

"Welcome to the Papen Harbor Memorial Haunted Lighthouse Resort & Day Spa"?

They turn to a beaming Gus. He blows a PITCH PIPE, and Yellow-Jacket begins to SING Helen Reddy's "*Candle on the Water*."

YELLOW-JACKETED FIGURE

I'LL BE YOUR CANDLE ON THE WATER / MY LOVE FOR YOU WILL ALWAYS BURN...

THREE more YELLOW-JACKETED FIGURES appear and take the harmony. In heaven, Olive jumps in, too.

YELLOW-JACKETED FIGURES / OLIVE

I KNOW YOU'RE LOST AND DRIFTING / BUT THE CLOUDS ARE LIFTING / DON'T GIVE UP YOU'LL HAVE SOMEWHERE TO--

CLICK. Emerson cocks his gun, aims at the quintet.

EMERSON

Shut the a *capp*-hell up.

They throw off their hoods TO REVEAL four confused SINGERS.

GUS

And that's how our cocktail hour begins -- with a bang and song! Followed by a gourmet meal and dancing here in the lamp room. That's why I called Elliot. To pitch him!

ELLIOT

This feels really, really wrong.

GUS

How can a symbol of love be wrong? A haunted hotel in the lighthouse she loved would be a symbol of how Nora's love will haunt me forever.

ELLIOT

So, you... and my mom?

GUS

She wanted to tell you, but then your father returned. We tried to put our feelings aside, to give them a shot at recapturing the past--

ELLIOT

But they couldn't. That, I know.

GUS

Let's have something good come out of this tragedy.

OLIVE

If that's the plan, please nix the glitter.

With the lights off and the lamp on, the room indeed SPARKLES with craft glitter. It covers the floor and walls.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

I mean, who'd ya get to decorate the place? Annabelle Vandersloop?

Everybody SNICKERS at this, until Emerson suddenly sobers.

EMERSON

Wait a minute. What if Crazy Craft Lady was up here, and instead of a hot glue gun, she brought a stone-cold harpoon?

ELLIOT

Mrs. Vandersloop was my mother's best friend. Why would she kill her?

EMERSON

(noticing something)

Because Nora wasn't the only squeeze Papen here was squeezin'. Turn around, shortstop.

Gus does. There's a WHITE HANDPRINT on the back of his head. Olive scrapes some of the crusty material off.

OLIVE

Papier-mâché! You were getting down with the diorama dame.

GUS

(rubs at the handprint)

On the contrary, I damned that dame every time she made an advance. Like tonight, in my office, and a dozen nights before.

EMERSON

C'mon, Papen. You two musta' swapped somethin' more than historical factoids.

CONTINUED: (2)

GUS

Once! Years ago at the Historical Society Christmas party. I got drunk trying to take my mind off the 17% chance that prostate cancer would render me impotent, and she took advantage of my weakened resolve. Not long after that, I met Nora.

OLIVE

Who became the lighthouse of your life; the light Annabelle never was, but yearned to be.

EMERSON

Spurned lover speared her best friend and framed ghost husband to take the fall. Let's rubber cement her ass to a prison bed.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Emerson leads Olive, Elliot, Gus and the Yellow-Jackets down the stairs. He halts, turns to the singers.

EMERSON

Tell me you boys are missing a baritone.

Everyone follows his gaze to A FIGURE, dressed in a P.C.H.S.-emblazoned yellow rain jacket. A LIGHTNING FLASH REVEALS it to be Annabelle Vandersloop.

ANNABELLE

A full house! So much for keeping the innocent-victim-count down.

Olive indicates the floor covered with sparkly, black dust.

OLIVE

Seriously, does she toot glitter?

EMERSON

That ain't glitter.

He nods to a barrel marked: "GUN POWDER."

ANNABELLE

You remember my late husband, Adolph, the munitions manufacturer? I inherited the remaining inventory. Said I'd save it for a rainy day, and look, here it is.

She pulls out a MATCH.

GUS

Annabelle, why?

ANNABELLE

You tossed our love aside like it never happened.

GUS

It was one night!

ANNABELLE

I was happier in that one night than I ever was in twenty-two years with Adolph. What we had was more special than anything you had with Nora. But love is patient, so I sat quietly, watching you spoon-feed that love spoon crap to her. When Merle returned, it was the answer to my prayers, but even then you couldn't let go. So I had to eliminate her.

GUS

I still love Nora.

Annabelle STRIKES the match.

ANNABELLE

That's why you've left me no choice.

GUS

I don't understand how killing us -- though it should be fast and relatively painless -- is gonna solve anything!

OLIVE

I do.

(to Annabelle)

When you called me "Sad Miss Snook," it honked me off, but now I realize you recognized sadness in me because you have it in you.

Olive moves toward Annabelle, as if going over to her side.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

The rest of you don't know what it's like. To know in your heart that you belong with somebody. That if only you could eliminate everyone else, he would finally, finally grasp what you've been trying to show him. The feeling you've been dying to recapture.

ANNABELLE

It would only take a moment.

OLIVE

But that moment never comes. So, what can you do? Decide to not love Ned?

ANNABELLE

Gus.



OLIVE  
Trust me, I've tried that.

ANNABELLE  
Me, too.

OLIVE  
Did it work?

ANNABELLE  
Heck, no.

OLIVE  
So I say, blow Gus sky-high, Annabelle. Maybe,  
just maybe, it's the way to finally move on.

Olive is right next to Annabelle now.

ANNABELLE  
We are alike, Sad Miss Snook.

OLIVE  
Except for one little thing.  
(then)  
I'm no killer.

PUH! Olive blows out the match.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

A cell door SLAMS on Annabelle's happy face.

**NARRATOR**  
*Annabelle Vandersloop did move on. She was no longer sad about losing Gus's love since a 30-year prison sentence gave her something to be truly sad about.*

Her grin falls.

EXT. SHIP'S WHEEL - DAY

Elliot captains the ship. A proud Merle coaches him.

**NARRATOR**  
*Merle and Elliot McQuoddy moved on as well, becoming partners in Gus Papen's lighthouse hotel. They used the profits for a trip around the world, and found on the high seas the route back to their father-son bond.*

INT. EMERSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Emerson pays Olive out.

**NARRATOR**

*Meanwhile, Private Detective Emerson Cod was afloat in a sea of reward money -- given by the Papen County Historical Society -- which he shared with a junior P.I. in-training.*

EMERSON

Nice work, Snook.

OLIVE

Thanks, Cod.  
(heading for the door)  
I learned from the best.

EMERSON

We ain't done. Remember when you said you were still in love with Ned? That wasn't just for the wicked widow's benefit, was it?

OLIVE

No. Oh, Emerson, I thought I'd stomped out that flame, or at least taken it down to a smolder, but no. I burn and yearn for him now more than ever.

EMERSON

Uh-huh. Do I need to be concerned about any of my Pie Hole peeps getting eliminated?

OLIVE

Meaning, am I gonna harpoon Chuck in a lighthouse so Ned will finally love me? No. Annabelle Vandersloop is the perfect example of what happens when unrequited love is left unchecked. My love is checked and re-checked, so it's safe to say I can keep suffering in silence with no risk of bloodshed.

EMERSON

Well, if there comes a day when being around the Pie Boy and his Pie Girl makes your sufferin' insufferable, just know you have a place here at this professional establishment. All's ya gotta do is ask.

Emerson offers her a cigar, which Olive happily accepts.

OLIVE

Emerson Cod, I think I may be winning you over.

EMERSON

Itty Bitty, you made me love a rainy day  
again.

As Emerson STRIKES a match and holds it up to Olive's cigar...

EXT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

It's SNOWING. Ned sits on the bench and takes in the wintry  
weather as Chuck arrives.

CHUCK

When I was little, I used to compare my dad to  
all the other dads on our street. I probably  
wasn't very objective, because I was convinced  
he was the bravest, strongest, most fun father  
in the neighborhood.

NED

I can say, objectively, he was all those things.

CHUCK

After he was gone, it's how I remembered him.  
Up on a paternal pedestal. And now... now, he  
wants me to leave.

NED

Leave, where?

CHUCK

Anywhere the spoon lands. He promised me an  
adventure like the ones he told me about when  
I was a kid. I just have to choose "cake"  
over "pie" and leave this life behind.

NED

Oh.

CHUCK

He's trying to be the father I always dreamed  
of. Someone who can keep his little girl safe  
and happy. Except... I'm not a little girl.  
And while he's still my father, and I can  
relate to what he's going through, I don't  
know him. Not after all this time.

NED

Time doesn't matter much. It took a split  
second for me to fall in love with you again.

CHUCK

But I'm not the person he thinks he knows,  
either. I'm the person you know. That's why  
I told my him, the spoon lands here.

(handing the spoon to Ned)

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I already feel safe and happy. Besides, you and I have adventures every day.

NED

What'd he think of your decision?

CHUCK

He's waiting for you.

NED

With a gun?

CHUCK

With an apology. He wants a fresh start. For all of us.

NED

Which means, he's a good dad.

CHUCK

And you're a good man. C'mon.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ned and Chuck enter.

CHUCK

Dad, grab your hat. We're taking hot toddies up to the roof to watch the snow.

They see it at the same time -- the cookbook's map and the note taped to it: "I CHOSE, TOO."

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Chuck and Ned burst onto the sidewalk as NED'S CAR pulls away.

CHUCK

Dad!

INT. NED'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Charles glances in his side-view mirror and resolutely hits the gas. As his daughter's reflection fades into the blizzard...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW