

2 pages

START:

LIGHTS UP on NEIL on the porch steps.
JODI enters.

JODI

Are you concerned, dad?

NEIL

Sure I am. The soil is all used up. With flooding and droughts and flooding and droughts nothing grows anymore. And the predators. There never used to be coyotes around here. Now they move in packs. And lynx and wolves and woodchucks, the sons of bitches. Fighting over scraps. That's all that's left and it's only going to get worse. This year I'm going to fight back.

JODI

I meant...are you concerned about me?

NEIL

Why would I be concerned about you?

JODI

Not going to college. I let you down.

NEIL

You didn't let me down.

JODI

But you guys are so invested in me going.

NEIL

You know, I took some time off myself.

JODI

What did you do?

NEIL

Hitched around the country--this was before hitch-hiking was a prelude to rape and murder. Lived in a van in San Pedro with a clog dancer named Diana. I was headed up to work on the pipeline when I ran out of money and picked apples in Washington state. One of the apple pickers got me involved in a commune doing Shakespeare for convicts to get grant money from the state which got converted into a shipment of psilocybin which enabled us to buy a boat and take tourists out in Elliott Bay for drunken sunset cruises with polka bands. The money rolled in, which caused tension in the group, as it always does. Nothing quite like dividing up cash with a greedy socialist. Anyway, late one night, everyone's asleep, I'm skinny-dipping off the boat, flying on mushrooms, and I thought I could just let it all go, slip to the bottom of the bay and die a happy man.

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NEIL

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"



At the time, it was a pretty intoxicating thought, sink into the deep and go right back to the beginning. So down I went, naked and alone to face the great beyond. But something pushed me up like a geyser and I blasted out of the water, gasping and choking and that's when I decided to go to college.

JODI
I didn't know you did Shakespeare. And mushrooms.

NEIL
Kitten, I did everything and I had nothing. No cash, no possessions, no plans. No fear. I had to invent every day from scratch. Now all I think about is protecting what we've got.

JODI
Why?

NEIL
Why what?

JODI
Why do we have all this stupid crap you have to protect? Why do you work this job that gives you hives?

NEIL
This is where the journey took me.

JODI
God, that is so lame. Like you had nothing to do with it.

NEIL
The problem is, when you're young, you think there's no way in. So you work your ass off and find your way in and you realize there's no way out.

JODI
Which is why I'm not going in.

NEIL
You know your mother has a different point of view.

JODI
I know all about her point of view. But it isn't her life, is it?

LIGHTS FADE on JODI and NEIL.

STOP

LIGHTS UP on THE CAMPUS LOUNGE. The dance ends. SPUD kisses ANNIE.

ANNIE
You have children, don't you, Spud?

2/2

NEIL

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"