

**- DIRECTOR'S SCRIPT -**  
**(Single-Sided)**



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**Music and Lyrics by ANDREW LIPPA**

**Based on the novel by Daniel Wallace**  
**and the Columbia Motion Picture**  
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BIG FISH

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# Big Fish

Author notes from John August  
February 2014

## ON STORY

Big Fish centers on two men — Edward and Will Bloom — and two thematic questions:

1. Mortality, or How Does a Hero Live On?
2. Fatherhood, or What Makes a Good Dad?

Every scene involves one or both characters, and one or both questions. The arc of the play is these two men and these two questions coming together. Whether you're reading the play or performing it, I'd recommend you walk through the play scene-by-scene and song-by-song to discuss how each moment addresses one or both themes.

Why is Edward telling stories about his past? On the surface, it's to escape the present. On a deeper level, it's to connect to the heroic vision he has of his life as he confronts his death. (*Mortality*)

Why is Will trying to get details about Edward? On the surface, it's so he can understand his father. On a deeper level, it's to answer the question of what makes a good dad as he takes that role himself. (*Fatherhood*)

Edward Bloom is a man who claims to be unafraid of death because of what the Witch showed him. The truth is, he is afraid, as any rational person would be. Edward is afraid he's going to disappear. As a storyteller, he's cast himself at the center of an epic tale that exists only as spoken words. If he dies, who is going to keep his stories – his life's work, his essence – alive? The natural choice would be his son, but his relationship with Will becomes more and more fractured as the play unfolds.

Will Bloom is not just a witness to Edward's tales; he is ultimately the point of them. But having heard these stories a thousand times, Will sees them as an act — a disguise behind which his “real” father is hiding. With a baby of his own on the way, Will is desperately trying to figure out who his father is. Will is never trying to prove his father wrong. He is never looking for the truth; he is looking for a man.

Edward can come off like a blow-hard. Remember his fear.

Will can seem too critical. Remember his hope.

You won't really understand *Big Fish* until you look at the story from the female point of view. What do Sandra and Josephine want? Why does the Witch insist on showing Edward his future? How does Jenny Hill change the story for Edward and Will? Never forget that each of these characters has her own life and objectives.

Finally, don't think of Edward's tales as flashbacks. These are stories being told in the here-and-now for the benefit of Will or Young Will. If you get too caught up in the back-and-forth of time, you'll confuse yourself and the audience. Always let it be simple.

#### ON LANGUAGE

*Big Fish* is set in Alabama. More importantly, it's not set in New Orleans, or Mississippi, or the backwoods of Kentucky. Accents in *Big Fish* need to be simple and specific and musical. Clarity is always the key. Words don't count if the audience can't understand them.

We pronounce final Rs. Edward fights a war, not a *wah*. Edward's wife is Sandra, not Saundra. His high-school girlfriend is Jenny, not Ginny. (An exception to the usual shift of short e to short i.) Edward pronounces route as *rowt*, not *rute*.

Living in New York, Will Bloom has deliberately minimized his accent. As the play progresses, it's fine if it sneaks back in as Will spends more time at home.

#### ON STAGING

*Big Fish* can be performed with elaborate sets and magical staging to emphasize Edward's larger-than-life stories, or on a dark stage with several chairs to focus on Will's journey. Regardless of scale, every production needs to strive for emotional honesty, insight and beauty.

The role of Edward Bloom is played by one actor, spanning ages from 15 to 65. The role of Will is played by two actors, a boy (Young Will) and a grown man (Will). Because so much of the story is from Will's perspective, it's crucial that the audience always connect that the two Wills are the same character. Look for ways to physicalize the narrative hand-off between them.

*Big Fish* is not a time capsule. The past in Edward's stories is deliberately impossible ("When did that all happen?"), so the present day can always be the present day. Technically, that means the final scene with Will's young son is several years in the future, but one strongly suspects the future will have riverbanks and fishing poles just like we have now.

Edward Bloom's best friends are a giant, a witch and a werewolf. He has a big, accepting heart. It seems natural that the people in his life might come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Although our story is set in the American South, casting should never feel constrained by cultural expectation.

Finally, Andrew Lippa has prepared videos offering guidance on the music for *Big Fish*. Find them and use them, because they're a remarkable resource.

# Big Fish

Scenes, Characters, Musical Numbers, and Pages

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**BIG FISH**  
Prop List

**Act 1:**

- 2 Skipping Stones
- "The Iliad" (Book)
- Jumping Fish
- Fisherman's Bucket
- 3 Flashlights
- A Bug
- 2 One Dollar Bills
- Crystal Ball
- Skipping Stone
- 2 Skipping Stones
- Violin Case
- Tray of Champagne Glasses
- Dr. Bennett's Stethoscope
- BucketTowels
- Edward's Baseball Bat
- An "A+" Ribbon or Sticker
- Football
- Crown and Sash
- Don's Baseball Bat
- Pitchforks
- Rifles
- Giant Key
- Cat
- Juggler's Balls
- Clipboard
- Sandra's Blue Scarf
- Sandra's Barbecue Food
- Sandra's Text Book
- Edward's Box
- Ball in Box
- Helmet
- File
- Box
- Red File
- Bouquet of Yellow Daffodils
- Diamond Engagement Ring

**Act 2:**

- Young Will's Book
- Folded Slip
- Stool
- Blowgun
- Blow dart
- Campfire
- BaseballMitt
- Bouquet of Flowers
- Laundry Basket
- Red Folder
- Glass of Water
- Edward's Medicine (Pills)
- Red Folder
- Watering Can
- Red Folder
- Chains
- Banners and Signs
- Don's Deed
- Blindfold
- Red Folder
- Jenny's Deed
- Will's Cell Phone
- Edward's Chart
- Will's Notebook
- Pitcher of Water
- Glass of Water
- Key To The City
- Water Bottle
- Crystal Ball
- Multiple Daffodils
- Picnic Basket
- Fishing Pole

**ACT I**  
**SCENE 1**

RIVER BANK

*(Lights rise on a river)*

<b>#1 PROLOGUE</b>
--------------------

*(Reveal EDWARD at the river's edge. He's dressed in a suit, tie loosened. He skips a stone across the water. WILL enters stage right. He's dressed in a jacket and tie.)*

**WILL**

Dad? Mom's looking for you.

**EDWARD**

I don't know why we need rehearsal dinners. These people have been eating dinner their whole lives. They don't need practice.

**WILL**

*(a smile)*

Is this where you taught me to fish?

**EDWARD**

You caught a catfish this big.

*(He measures three feet with his hands)*

**WILL**

It was about half that size, but thank you. And thank you for cleaning it.

*(beat)*

Dad, about tomorrow...

**EDWARD**

You're nervous.

**WILL**

I'm not.

**EDWARD**

You are. You got that twitch. I recognize it.

**WILL**

Dad...

**EDWARD**

When you were a kid, you'd never jump in the pool. I'd have to sneak up and push ya.

**WILL**

Yeah, that was fun for me. Actually, I wanted to talk about you...

**EDWARD**

My favorite subject!

**WILL**

So, Josephine and I would appreciate it if you didn't tell any of your stories at the wedding.

**EDWARD**

My stories.

**WILL**

And jokes. No stories, no jokes. No anecdotes.

**EDWARD**

Oh. Okay, Will. Gotcha. Understood.

**WILL**

Thanks.

**EDWARD**

You used to like my stories, though -- especially the one about the witch.

**WILL**

I was six.

**EDWARD**

You were never six. You were born a tiny middle-aged man.  
*(EDWARD has a pain in his side)*

**WILL**

You okay?

**EDWARD**

I'm fine. You're the one in trouble here. You ready to get married?

**WILL**

I am.

**EDWARD**

*(tossing WILL a stone)*

Then here's to what's next.

**WILL**

To what's next.

*(EDWARD exits. WILL holds a moment, thinking back.)*

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

**SCENE 2**

A BOY'S BEDROOM

**#2 BE THE HERO**

*(WILL trades places with YOUNG WILL, who sits on his bed. WILL exits. EDWARD enters with a traveling case.)*

**EDWARD**

Evening, son.

**YOUNG WILL**

Where were you? You missed my game.

**EDWARD**

How do you know I wasn't hiding in the stands? Maybe I didn't want to spook you, keep you from hittin' that home run.

**YOUNG WILL**

We were playing soccer.

**EDWARD**

That's barely a sport. Now, what story's it gonna be tonight?

**YOUNG WILL**

I already marked it. Here.

*(He hands EDWARD a book--it's "The Iliad")*

**EDWARD**

You don't want this. These are prefabricated. Predigested. Let me tell you a real story -

**YOUNG WILL**

*(wary)*

You mean another story about you.

**EDWARD**

A story about life!

**YOUNG WILL**

Dad -- can you even read?

**EDWARD**

I can read just fine! Look...

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

*(Clearing throat; making a real effort)*

Chapter nine: "Thus kept the Trojans watch, but the ay-KEE-uns were holden of wondrous Panic..."

*(checking book cover)*

The hell is this book?

**YOUNG WILL**

It's about the Trojan War.

**EDWARD**

Okay. Ancient Rome and all that.

**YOUNG WILL**

They're actually Greek.

**EDWARD**

That's my point! We live in Alabama, Will. We got stories under every leaf and every stone.

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU  
YOU COULD CHANGE THE WORLD WITH JUST ONE THOUGHT  
WHAT IF I TOLD YOU  
YOU COULD BE A KING  
ANYTHING YOU DESIRED, BOY  
ANYTHING ON A PLATE  
ALL WITHIN YOUR POWER TO CREATE

I KNOW SOMEWHERE IN THE DARKNESS  
THERE'S A STORY MEANT FOR ME  
WHERE I ALWAYS KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY  
I KNOW SOMEWHERE SOME SURPRISING ENDING  
WAITS FOR ME TO TELL IT MY OWN WAY

BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY IF YOU CAN  
BE THE CHAMPION IN THE FIGHT  
NOT JUST THE MAN  
DON'T DEPEND ON OTHER PEOPLE  
TO PUT PAPER NEXT TO PEN  
BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY, BOY, AND THEN  
YOU CAN RISE TO BE THE HERO ONCE AGAIN

Now, best part of an adventure is the people you meet.

~~EDWARD~~



**EDWARD (CON'T)**

WHAT IF I SAID  
I MET A WITCH WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG  
WHAT IF I SAID  
SHE SHOWED ME HOW I DIE

**YOUNG WILL**

How you die?

**EDWARD**

POWERLESS IN THE FACE OF IT  
TERRIFIED IN THE WOOD  
THAT WAS WHERE MY LIFE WAS CHANGED FOR GOOD

~~YOU WITS: real THE G... EDWARD  
his hand.)~~

**EDWARD**

HEY!  
WHAT IF I SAID  
I MET A GIANT WASTING IN A CAVE  
WHAT IF I CLAIMED I ROSE TO BE FAR BRAVER THAN THE BRAVE  
ALL MY LIFE OF STORIES, SON, AND EVERY ONE IS TRUE  
SO BELIEVE ME AS I'M TELLING YOU

TO BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY WHILE YOU MAY  
BE THE GUY WHO GETS THE GIRL AND SAVES THE DAY  
YOU DON'T NEED A BOOK OF GREEKS  
TO TEACH YOU HOW TO STAY ALIVE  
BE THE HERO OF EACH STORY YOU DERIVE  
THEN FOREVER YOU'RE THE STORY WHO'LL SURVIVE

EVERY TALE THAT YOU INVENT  
CAN BE A LIFE THAT YOU MAKE REAL  
WHERE EACH CHARACTER YOU MEET  
BECOMES YOUR FRIEND

*(ENSEMBLE enters, each one dressed as we  
will see them later in the show.)*

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A NOVELIST  
TO MAKE BELIEVE WHAT'S WAITING 'ROUND THE BEND

**EDWARD AND ENSEMBLE**

BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY 'TIL IT'S DONE  
WHY GO PROMENADE WHEN YOU WERE BORN TO RUN

**EDWARD**

IF YOU UNDERSTAND THIS PREMISE  
YOU WILL NEVER BE ALONE

**EDWARD AND SOME ENSEMBLE**

YOU CAN CONQUER EVERY CHALLENGE  
YOU CAN FACE EACH STEPPING STONE

**EDWARD AND FULL ENSEMBLE**

BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY

*(EDWARD spots THE MERMAID in the river)*

**EDWARD**

WHAT IF I SWORE  
I SAW A MERMAID SWIMMING IN THE MIST  
WHAT IF I TOLD YOU  
SHE WOULD BE THE FIRST GIRL THAT I KISSED  
OUT THERE NEAR THE WATER  
FILLED WITH EAGERNESS AND FEAR  
HERE IS WHAT SHE WHISPERED IN MY EAR:

**EDWARD AND FULL ENSEMBLE**

BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY  
BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY  
BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY

*(Quick kiss--As music builds, EDWARD helps  
THE MERMAID out of the river.)*

**EDWARD**

Something about that kiss transformed her.

*(She now has legs! She dances.)*

Pretty as she was in the water, she was even more beautiful out  
of it.

*(she blows a kiss and spins out)*

One day, I met this fisherman...

*(A FRUSTRATED FISHERMAN enters)*

**FRUSTRATED FISHERMAN**

**Bryson Cole**

You gotta help me! If I don't catch a fish, my family's gonna  
starve!

**EDWARD**

The fish are sleepin'! You gotta get 'em movin'.

*(an idea)*

Try the Alabama Stomp!

*(EDWARD launches into a stomping dance step. One fish jumps out of the river, landing on stage --it's incredible!)*

**EDWARD**

Works every time!

*(then)*

C'mon, Will!

*(EDWARD dances again. YOUNG WILL tries to follow, but gives up halfway through. Another fish jumps out! THE FISHERMAN catches it in his bucket.)*

**EDWARD**

*(to THE FISHERMAN)*

C'mon, pilgrim. Let's see what you got.

*(THE FISHERMAN joins EDWARD in the Alabama Stomp)*

**EDWARD**

Something about this rhythm really gets their fins movin'.

*(They finish the step -- but this time, no fish jump out.)*

**YOUNG WILL**

Dad -- Couldn't you just give him some money?

**EDWARD**

*(to YOUNG WILL)*

See Will, give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime. Teach a man the Alabama Stomp, you feed his soul!

*(to the others)*

C'mon! Everybody! We gotta help this guy.

*[MUSIC BUILDS]*

*(More and more people join in)*

*[SFX: WATERY SOUNDS]*

*(The river begins to churn)*

*[MUSIC BUILDS]*

*[SFX: RUMBLE]*

*(Then suddenly, fish shoot out of the river-  
-As they celebrate, the ENSEMBLE gathers up  
the fish.)*

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

I KNOW SOMEWHERE IN THE FUTURE  
THERE'S ADVENTURE MADE FOR ME  
FILLED WITH MYSTERY AND PEOPLE I CAN LOVE  
I KNOW OUT THERE ON THE ROAD OF LIFE  
I'LL LIVE THE STORY I'VE BEEN DREAMING OF

**EDWARD AND ENSEMBLE**

LIVE THE STORY I'VE BEEN DREAMING OF  
BE THE HERO EVERY TIME YOU GET THE CHANCE  
IF THE MUSIC STOPS CONTINUE WITH THE DANCE

**EDWARD**

ON A WING OR ON A PRAYER  
YOU GET THERE ONLY WITH YOUR VOICE

**EDWARD AND ENSEMBLE**

BE ATTENTIVE  
BE INVENTIVE  
BE THE FIRST ONE TO REJOICE  
WITH A STORY IN YOUR HEART  
YOU WON'T NEED ANY OTHER CHOICE  
YOU'RE A HERO, FIGHTING DRAGONS, WINNING WARS  
BE THE HERO AND THE WORLD WILL SOON BE YOURS!!

**#2A BE THE HERO (PLAYOFF)**

*(ENSEMBLE exits)*

**YOUNG WILL**

What the hell was that?

**EDWARD**

It was a miracle, Will! C'mon.

**YOUNG WILL**

It doesn't seem plausible.

**EDWARD**

Will...

**YOUNG WILL**

Dad, why do you tell so many crazy stories?

**EDWARD**

*(momentarily stumped)*

It's who I am. Why does the sun shine?

**YOUNG WILL**

Because of fusion.

**EDWARD**

Lord, Will. It was a rhetorical question.

**SANDRA**

*(offstage)*

Edward!

**EDWARD**

*(to YOUNG WILL)*

Quick! Where's that book?

**SANDRA**

*(offstage)*

Why is the light still on?

**YOUNG WILL**

Now you're in trouble.

*(SANDRA enters)*

**SANDRA**

Edward Bloom! It's nine o'clock on a school night. Let this boy sleep.

**EDWARD**

I was just finishing this chapter on...

*(random page from book)*

Ag-UR-men-non. Why can't anyone have a normal name like Chuck?

**YOUNG WILL**

Mom, can you really get fish to jump out of a river by doing the Alabama Stomp?

**SANDRA**

I suppose anything's possible.

*(a look to EDWARD)*

For example, I've heard legend of a brave and handsome man who happily fixed the leaky sink in the bathroom the very first time his wife asked without excuses or delay.

**EDWARD**

*(to YOUNG WILL)*

That there's a myth. Except for the brave and handsome part.

**SANDRA**

*(smile)*

Lights out, both of you.

**EDWARD**

You heard your Mom.

*(YOUNG WILL gets into bed. SANDRA exits.  
EDWARD gives WILL a kiss on the top of his  
head and turns off the bedside lamp. Just as  
EDWARD is about to exit --)*

**YOUNG WILL**

Dad?

**EDWARD**

Son.

**YOUNG WILL**

Did you really meet a Witch?

**EDWARD**

*(knows he's hooked him)*

I did. But now, see...your Mom says I can't tell you that story. You'll get nightmares.

**YOUNG WILL**

I'm not scared!

**EDWARD**

Neither was I -- at first.

*(EDWARD sneaks back, getting in bed with  
YOUNG WILL)*

**EDWARD**

Now, it's a well-established fact that most southern towns of a certain size have a witch.

**YOUNG WILL**

Do we have a witch?

**EDWARD**

No, but we got two Dairy Queens, so we're still comin' out ahead.

**#2B BEFORE THE SWAMP**

Now, small-town witches mostly keep to the minor incantations, love spells, whatnot. But of all the witches in Alabama, there was one who was the most renowned, for she could see the future.

**YOUNG WILL**

And she told you the future?

**EDWARD**

She showed me! That night in the swamp, three of us went looking for her -- just three teenage boys on a dare.

*[MUSIC STOPS]*

I didn't know she would change my life forever.

**SCENE 3**

*THE SWAMP*

**#2C THE SWAMP**

*(A title card: "THE WITCH.")*

*(EDWARD changes into a teenage version of himself. The set changes, placing EDWARD in the swamp.)*

*"Teenage" DON PRICE and his little brother ZACKY PRICE enter downstage right with flashlights.)*

*[SFX: SWAMP NOISES and CROWS]*

*(EDWARD joins them. YOUNG WILL watches)*

**DON PRICE**

Shhh! Quiet, Zacky!

**ZACKY PRICE**

I gotta bug in my drawers!  
*(tries to shake it out)*  
Help me, Don!

**DON PRICE**

I ain't gettin' near your drawers.

**ZACKY PRICE**

Oh oh oh it's on the move!

*(He grabs at his seat, like a dog chasing its tail)*

**EDWARD**

Use your flashlight! It'll go towards the light.  
*(ZACKY shoves his flashlight down his crotch)*

**DON PRICE**

Not that way!

**EDWARD**

You want it to move down to your feet!



*(ZACKY sits on the ground, sticking the flashlight up his pant leg.)*

**ZACKY PRICE**

It's working!

*(wriggling)*

It's out!

*(DON stomps the bug)*

**DON PRICE**

C'mon, let's find that Witch.

*(DON and EDWARD head off. ZACKY picks up the carcass of the insect, then throws it in the river.)*

**ZACKY PRICE**

*(realizing he's alone)*

Wait for me!

*(He chases after them. As THE BOYS exit, the trees begin to come to life. The roots undulate, then magically transform into WITCHES, who fill the stage with a rhythmic dance.*

*When THE THREE BOYS re-enter, THE DANCING WITCHES instantly wrap themselves in their capes and become trees in the forest.)*

**EDWARD**

We're walkin' in circles, Don.

**DON PRICE**

*(getting in his face)*

You wanna lead, go ahead Bloom. I don't think there even is a Witch.

*(Suddenly, the WITCHES swirl apart and reveal THE WITCH, a backwoods sorceress)*

Teish, Alura, Faith,  
Karnie

**WITCH**

Boys, you have broken a sacred circle. You better have a good reason.

**ZACKY PRICE**

*(tight squeal)*

**DON PRICE**

We wanted our fortunes read.

**WITCH**

I can tell you the future with uncanny accuracy. Your loves, your lives, your deaths. Dollar apiece.

*(DON hands over his dollar)*

**ZACKY PRICE**

*(checking his pockets)*

Can I borrow a dollar? I'll pay you back.

**WITCH**

No he won't.

**ZACKY PRICE**

*(awed)*

She knows!

**DON PRICE**

*(to WITCH)*

C'mon. Tell me my future.

**WITCH**

You asked for it.

*(re: crystal ball)*

Oh. Yes. The future is quite clear.

**DON PRICE**

What do you see? Do I get quarterback?

**WITCH**

You lead an unexceptional life, filled with minor triumphs and major disappointments.

*(beat)*

And then you die.

**DON PRICE**

What? That's it?!

**WITCH**

That's all the spirits see for you.

**DON PRICE**

I want to know how rich I'm going to be.

**WITCH**

A dollar poorer than when you started.

*(to EDWARD)*

Now, as for you...

*(EDWARD is surprised to be singled out)*

**DON PRICE**

I want my money back!

*(he grabs the crystal ball)*

**ZACKY PRICE**

Don, don't! She'll hex you.

**EDWARD**

Give it back.

**DON PRICE**

How 'bout I smash it?

*(to the WITCH)*

How you gonna do fortunes without your crystal ball?

*[MUSIC OUT]*

**EDWARD**

I said give it back.

**DON PRICE**

Or what? You think you can take me, Bloom?

*(EDWARD reaches into his pocket and digs out  
a bill)*

**EDWARD**

Here's your money back. Now hand it over.

**DON PRICE**

*(handing it over)*

Witch-lover.

**ZACKY PRICE**

*(weakly imitating)*

Witch-lover.

*(ZACKY and DON exit)*

**EDWARD**

*(handing crystal ball)*

Here you go.

*("goodnight")*

Ma'am.

**WITCH**

Don't you want your fortune?

**EDWARD**

Let me guess:

**#3 I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT**

I lead a "disappointing life and then I die."

**WITCH**

Everyone dies, Edward Bloom.

*(he turns)*

But your death is glorious.

*(re: crystal ball)*

Let me show you.

**EDWARD**

Why would I want to see how I die?

**WITCH**

WHAT'S YOUR CONCERN?

ARE YOU SCARED OF HEARING ONE THING NEW

WHEN YOU COULD LEARN

SOMETHING SECRET THAT COULD HELP YOU THROUGH

IN ONE GOOD TURN

I CAN SHOW YOU COUNTERFEIT FROM TRUE

LIFE BEGINS WHEN YOU KNOW HOW IT ENDS

And yours is no ordinary life.

YOU BECOME IMPORTANT

YOU'RE THE BRAVEST MAN AROUND

YOU'RE THE KIND WITH VIRTUE

**WITCH (CON'T)**

ALWAYS FINDING COMMON GROUND  
YOU CLIMB EACH HILL IN FRONT OF YOU  
WITHOUT A SUFFERING SOUND  
COMPASSIONATE AND WARM  
THE CALM IN ANY STORM

**OTHER WITCHES**

SO, TAKE A CHANCE

**WITCH**

LET ME SHOW YOU HOW YOUR DAYS UNFOLD

**OTHER WITCHES**

AND IN ADVANCE

**WITCH**

YOU AND ME CAN PLAY THE HAND YOU HOLD

**OTHER WITCHES**

NOW JOIN THE DANCE

**WITCH**

WHEN YOU GAMBLE THEN YOU GET THE GOLD

**OTHER WITCHES**

LIFE BEGINS WHEN YOU KNOW HOW IT ENDS

**WITCH**

DON'T BELIEVE THE FAIRY TALES  
THAT SAY LIFE IS A BREEZE  
EVERY MAN MUST FACE A TRIAL  
THAT BRINGS HIM TO HIS KNEES  
BUT LET ME SHARE A MAGIC TRUTH

A PROOF OF ALL THAT THRIVES  
THE ONES WHO FACE THEIR FEARS  
LEAD THE MOST INTERESTING LIVES

**OTHER WITCHES**

INTERESTING LIVES  
INTERESTING LIVES!!

*(Dance sequence)*

**WITCH**

SO TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT

**EDWARD**

I WANT A BIG LIFE

**WITCH**

AND TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE

**EDWARD**

I SEE A ROAD

**WITCH**

TELL ME WHERE IT GOES

**EDWARD**

IN ONE DIRECTION

**WITCH**

SO, DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT'S NEXT  
WHAT'S WAITING IN THE VOID  
YOU MAY BE DISAPPOINTED  
BUT YOU MAY BE OVERJOYED!

**OTHER WITCHES**

OOH, OOH  
OOH, OOH  
OOH

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

<b>#3A EDWARD'S VISION</b>
----------------------------

*(THE WITCH holds out the crystal ball.  
EDWARD peers in.*

*Lights shift--Spooky, but also glorious.  
It's what EDWARD will see at the end of the  
play. As the moment ends, YOUNG WILL  
appears.)*

**YOUNG WILL**

What did she show you?

**EDWARD**

The last moments of my life.

**YOUNG WILL**

What were they? What did you see?

**EDWARD**

Surprise ending. Wouldn't want to ruin it for you.

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

**#3B I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT (REPRISE)**

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

*(leading YOUNG WILL)*

Though you were there. Your mother too -- but I didn't know her yet. She was just a girl with red hair.

*(YOUNG WILL disappears)*

**WITCH**

You're gonna find that girl. But it won't be easy.

*(THE WITCH meets EDWARD center stage)*

**WITCH (CON'T)**

SO...

**ALL WITCHES**

DON'T BE SAD  
DON'T BE SCARED  
BE ALERT  
BE PREPARED  
TAKE A BREATH  
TAKE IT SLOW  
LET UNCERTAINTY GO

*(THE WITCHES cover EDWARD, who disappears)*

WHEN YOU KNOW

*(Reveal EDWARD, now transformed into his older self. He readies a skipping stone.)*

**ALL WITCHES**

HOW IT ENDS YOU BEGIN

**OTHER WITCHES**

WHEN YOU TRY

**WITCH**

YOU CAN FLY

**ALL WITCHES**

FLY!

**#3C WITCH (PLAYOFF)**

*(As THE WITCHES exit, reveal GROWN-UP WILL in a tuxedo. He trades places with YOUNG WILL.)*



**SCENE 4**

*NEAR THE BANKS OF A RIVER*

*(Sunlight and trees. EDWARD is skipping more stones.)*

**WILL**

Dad, seriously, you need to get dressed. The wedding's in forty-five minutes.

**EDWARD**

*(re: skipping stones)*

See that? I almost got seven. Seven's good luck.

*(looks over)*

You'll need luck, what with that baby coming.

**WILL**

*(trying to play it cool)*

What are you talking about?

**EDWARD**

*(watching WILL, a smile)*

Josephine's pregnant.

**WILL**

How do you..?

**EDWARD**

*(re: WILL's face)*

'Cuz you just told me, just now. See, back when I worked at the circus, I developed a knack for reading expressions -- useful with lions. Plus she didn't drink at the rehearsal dinner.

**WILL**

Okay, Dad, nobody knows she's pregnant. You can't tell Mom.

**EDWARD**

Why not?

**WILL**

Because it's super-early. Statistically, there's a good chance it could not happen so...

**EDWARD**

Statistically.

**WILL**

Yes.

**EDWARD**

You -- an Alabama boy -- meet an American girl all the way over in Baghdad. What are the odds of that, statistically?

**WILL**

We're both reporters so it's not that remarkable.

**EDWARD**

Lord, Will. I would hate to see the rainbows in your world. Bet they're all-shades of gray.

**WILL**

It's just, the baby, I don't want to jinx it.

*(EDWARD tosses another stone. We hear it skip across the water.)*

**EDWARD**

*(re: stone)*

Relax, Will. That's seven. Everything's gonna be fine.

**WILL**

Promise me you won't say anything. And what we talked about earlier: no stories. No toasts.

**EDWARD**

C'mon. When have I ever embarrassed you?

*(off WILL's reaction)*

Fine. I'm not good around orchestras. But I really thought I could play that violin. It doesn't look that hard.

*(SANDRA enters wearing a beautiful dress)*

**SANDRA**

Honey, get dressed.

**EDWARD**

Will was holding me up! Look at you. Give me a kiss.

**SANDRA**

I just did my face. Go put on clothes.

*(As EDWARD exits, he spots a man carrying a violin case)*

**EDWARD**

Oh, hey! Is that a violin? Let me see that.

**SANDRA**

*(to WILL)*

Are you nervous?

**WILL**

No. Yes. Mom, about Dad...I know you can't control him...

**SANDRA**

I could just as easily control the weather.

**WILL**

Dad is like the weather. I can predict him, sort of, but I fundamentally don't understand him. I don't get him. He's this baffling hurricane.

**SANDRA**

If you're going to worry about anyone, worry about your poor mother. Abandoning me for a woman on television.

**WILL**

You love Josephine.

**SANDRA**

I do. We turn on the cable news sometimes just to watch her. She's smart and pretty and kind. But you're my little Alabama lamb, all the way up there in New York.

*(then)*

You want to practice one more time?

**WILL**

Absolutely.

<b>#4 ALABAMA WEDDING</b>
---------------------------

*(takes her hand, a box step)*

Forward, together, side, together. Back, together...

**SANDRA**

Not out loud, Will.

**WILL**

Right.

**SANDRA**

Better! That's it.

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

**SCENE 5**

*WEDDING RECEPTION AT THE WATER'S EDGE*

*(Lights shift as WEDDING DANCERS sweep in-- WILL begins dancing with his new bride, JOSEPHINE. Her wedding gown is stunning.)*

Wedding Guests:  
Bella, Hannah,  
Bryson, Shane,  
Adian, AnnaLeesa

**EDWARD**

Son, let me help you out there.

*(EDWARD cuts in, sweeping JOSEPHINE off her feet. He's quite the dancer. As they finish...)*

**EDWARD**

See, Will! That's how you do it.

*(WILL checks that JOSEPHINE is alright -- she is. They greet the crowd.)*

**WILL**

Thank you all so much for coming. Josephine and I are unbelievably grateful to have so many friends here to help us celebrate.

**JOSEPHINE**

For people who don't know, this is actually where Will proposed to me. One year ago, right here on the banks of this river. I had just met Edward and Sandra, and I knew -- I knew -- that I wanted to be part of this family.

*(Some coos as JOSEPHINE and WILL kiss)*

**WILL**

So before we get to dinner, we have a couple of things to...

*(EDWARD interrupts)*

**EDWARD**

Yes, good evenin'! My name is Edward Bloom. On behalf of me and my wife Sandra -- she's the gorgeous one right there -- it is a pleasure to welcome y'all to Alabama!

*(noticing WILL's objection)*

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

Will told me I was not allowed to give a toast. You'll notice there is no glass in my hand.

**WILL**

Technicality.

**EDWARD**

Technicality, he says!

*(WILL and JOSEPHINE yield the floor to him)*

**EDWARD**

Will thinks I talk too much -- but I would have loved to have a talkative father. My own Daddy, he was a farmer. Lucky to get four words outta him. But one day -- one day I heard him out in the field, just blathering at length. Said he couldn't get a word in between me and my mother, but the corn -- the corn was all ears.

*(THE CROWD laughs. Some groans.)*

**EDWARD**

*(to WAITER)*

Oh, hey, back up here.

*(He snags a glass of champagne from the WAITER)*

**EDWARD**

On the topic of fatherhood, I have an announcement. After careful consideration, I have decided to become a grandfather.

**WILL**

Dad!

**EDWARD**

Now, I'm sworn to secrecy, but I'm told my ambition may be fulfilled sooner than I dared hope.

*(a silent beat)*

*(All eyes on WILL and JOSEPHINE. A look between them. Finally, JOSEPHINE makes the save--)*

**JOSEPHINE**

Okay. Okay. It's time to catch the bouquet. Ladies, follow me.  
*(JOSEPHINE leads the women to the exit. WILL joins his mother, explaining and apologizing, sotto. EDWARD approaches--)*

**EDWARD**

C'mon, Will. It's good news!

**WILL**

*(moving downstage)*  
It's too early. A thousand things could go wrong.

**EDWARD**

They won't! Why are you such a pessimist?

**WILL**

I'm a realist, Dad. And yes, it's good news. But it's our news. Why do you have to make everything about you?

**EDWARD**

I'm excited! I got carried away.

**WILL**

You always get carried away. I'm sick of it.

**EDWARD**

I'm sick of you treating me like a child! What kind of son doesn't let his father give a toast at his wedding?

**WILL**

*(overlapping)*  
The son whose father does this.

**EDWARD**

Grow up, Will.

**WILL**

I did! You weren't there. You were never there.

*(SANDRA tries to intervene)*

**SANDRA**

Calm down.

**EDWARD**

I was building a business!

**WILL**

You were running away.

**EDWARD**

From what, from you?

**WILL**

From reality. All I got from you is a bunch of crazy stories about how awesome you are and I'm sorry Dad, that's not the man I see.

**EDWARD**

Maybe you never bothered lookin'.

**SANDRA**

Stop it! Both of you. Before you say something you can't take back.

**WILL**

I'm done.

**EDWARD**

So am I.

*(WILL exits. SANDRA follows him.)*

*After a beat, EDWARD adjusts himself-- another pain in his side. DOCTOR BENNETT approaches.)*

**DR. BENNETT**

Adian

You alright?

**EDWARD**

That boy is bull-headed. I don't know where he gets it.

**DR. BENNETT**

Askin' about you.

*(re: his side)*

What's going on there?

**EDWARD**

Put your stethoscope away, Doc. I'm fine.

**DR. BENNETT**

How long's this been going on?



**EDWARD**

I dunno. A while. It's nothing.

**DR. BENNETT**

You lost weight.

**EDWARD**

Exercise! What, you didn't see me dancing? I'm fine.

**DR. BENNETT**

I'm sure you are. But come in Monday, and we'll be doubly-sure.

**#4A JUST TAKE ANOTHER LOOK**

**SCENE 6**

*TWO DIFFERENT DOCTORS' OFFICES*

*(JOSEPHINE reclines on an examination table for an ultrasound conducted by a NEW YORK DOCTOR. Holding JOSEPHINE's hand, WILL stares in frustration at a screen. Somewhere in there is a fetus.)*

**JOSEPHINE**

JUST TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

**WILL**

I'm trying!

**JOSEPHINE**

IT'S JUST OFF TO THE RIGHT

**WILL**

My right or its right?

**JOSEPHINE**

A LITTLE BIT OF PATIENCE, WILL  
*(to THE DOCTOR)*  
NOW HOLD IT STILL  
AND THERE, VOILÀ!  
WITH LIGHT!

**WILL**

A penis! It's a boy!

**JOSEPHINE**

Yes!

**WILL**

We're having a son.

*(Lights rise on another part of the stage, where DR. BENNETT enters, followed by EDWARD and SANDRA. DR. BENNETT reviews lab results.)*

**EDWARD**

If it's bad news, just tell me.

**DR. BENNETT**

It's not what we want to see.

**SANDRA**

The tumor didn't shrink?

**DR. BENNETT**

No. It's spread beyond where we thought.

**SANDRA**

But that doesn't mean...

**EDWARD**

'Course it doesn't honey. I just have ambitious cancer is all. Right, Doc?

**DR. BENNETT**

Exactly.

**SANDRA**

We'll keep going though, right? Or try something new.

**DR. BENNETT**

There's a conversation to have about what's next.

*(SANDRA starts to tear up. Seeing this, EDWARD takes her hand.)*

**EDWARD**

Now, Sandra...

**SANDRA**

I need to call Will. We never should have kept this from him.

**EDWARD**

Fine. But you needn't worry him.

*(SANDRA exits)*

**DR. BENNETT**

Will doesn't know about any of this?

**EDWARD**

He's got his own life up in New York. No sense bothering him.

*(Lights shift back to WILL and JOSEPHINE)*

**WILL**

*(re: her belly)*  
This is really happening.

**JOSEPHINE**

*(playful)*  
You thought I was making it up?

**WILL**

No.

**JOSEPHINE**

I'll get dressed.

**WILL**

Meet you outside.

*(JOSEPHINE gets up. One last thought--)*

**JOSEPHINE**

Will -- we're going to have a son.

**WILL**

I know!  
*(alone for a moment)*

**WILL**

A son.

**#5 STRANGER**

STRANGER  
I'M FEELING STRANGER THAN I'VE EVER FELT BEFORE  
AND SO MUCH MORE

DIFFERENT  
LIKE SOMETHING OLD HAS JOINED WITH SOMETHING NEW  
BUT STILL FEELS TRUE

I'M PASSING THROUGH A RITE THAT EVERY PARENT DOES  
I'M WALKING ON SOME SHARED FAMILIAR GROUND  
YET EVERY STEP I TAKE IS NOT A STEP THAT WAS  
AND I'VE FOUND, I LIKE THE SOUND

*[MUSIC CONTINUES]*

*(WILL shifts as we arrive at--)*

**SCENE 7**

*NEW YORK CITY / CENTRAL PARK*

*(Skyscrapers in the distance. New Yorkers go about their day. A boy walks past with his father.)*

**WILL (CON'T)**

OF STRANGER

A CHILD I'VE YET TO MEET BECOMES MY EVERYTHING  
MY SONG TO SING

FATHER

AND SUDDENLY THE WEIGHT OF IT IS REAL  
WHAT DO I FEEL?

I FEEL CONNECTED IN A WAY I'VE NEVER KNOWN  
A LINE FROM DAD TO ME TO NEW-BORN SON  
SO FROM TODAY I'LL NEVER MAKE A CHOICE ALONE  
ONE FOR ALL  
ALL FOR ONE

AND WHEN HE'S BORN

I'LL TEACH HIM HOW TO USE HIS COMMON SENSE  
HE'LL LISTEN AND HE'LL LEARN AND HE'LL EXCEL  
I'LL TELL MY SON  
THAT LIFE IS LIVED IN CLEAR AND PRESENT TENSE  
NOT ONLY IN THE STORIES WE CAN TELL

MY FATHER TOLD ME STORIES

I COULD NEVER COMPREHEND  
IN EVERY TALE HE'D CLAIM TO BE THE HERO  
I'VE TRIED TO UNDERSTAND HIM  
BUT I WONDER IF I CAN  
BECAUSE AFTER ALMOST THIRTY YEARS

I STILL DON'T KNOW THE MAN

I WISH I KNEW THE MAN

BUT HE'S A STRANGER

MY FATHER IS A STRANGER I KNOW VERY WELL  
A PUZZLING SHELL

HOPEFUL

WHAT'S ON ITS WAY MAY HELP US BOTH TO GROW  
BUT I DON'T KNOW

**WILL (CON'T)**

I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL UNDERSTAND WHAT MADE HIM WILD  
I DON'T KNOW WHY HE HAS THE URGE TO FLY  
I WANT TO FACE HIM LIKE A MAN AND NOT A CHILD

SO I'LL TRY  
I'LL REALLY TRY  
AND IN TIME, MY BOY IS SURE TO SEE  
BRIGHTER DAYS FOR DAD AND ME  
WE CAN DO THINGS BETTER THAN BEFORE  
SO THAT STRANGERS WE WILL BE NO MORE

*(WILL's phone rings. He checks the  
number and answers)*

**#5A PHONE CALL**

**WILL**

Mom! I was just about to call you. What's...what's wrong? Mom?  
*(hearing the news)*  
I'm coming home. We'll be on the next flight.

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

*(WILL exits)*

SCENE 8

GARAGE-NIGHT

#5B AFTER STRANGER

*(EDWARD's desk and file cabinet are buried under mounds of file boxes. SANDRA enters, speaking to offstage WILL.)*

**SANDRA**

I wanted to tell you right away, but your father didn't want anyone to know he was sick. How dare anyone think Edward Bloom is mortal.

*(WILL enters with a bucket. SANDRA folds towels.)*

**SANDRA (CON'T)**

The treatment was a longshot. But your father was convinced it would work.

**WILL**

What does Dr. Bennett say?

**SANDRA**

He says comforting things. But we all know where this is headed.

**WILL**

I'm so sorry, Mom. I want to do something. How can I help?

**SANDRA**

I'm just glad you know. Family shouldn't have secrets.

**WILL**

Mom, have you and Dad talked about money?

**SANDRA**

We have plenty of money.

**WILL**

Is the house paid off?

**SANDRA**

Years ago. The day we sent in the last check, we had champagne. Your father opened it with a sword.

*(demonstrates)*

**SANDRA (CON'T)**

There was glass in the carpet for weeks.

**WILL**

*(re: files and boxes)*

Mom, you won't mind if I look for the mortgage? The insurance...

*(off her reaction)*

I'm worried about you, about what's going to happen. We have to keep a roof over your head.

**SANDRA**

I am not worried about the house. I'm not worried about me -- I'm worried about you.

**WILL**

I'm fine, Mom. I'll be fine, you don't...

**SANDRA**

Oh, "I'm fine." You sound like your father.

<b>#6 TWO MEN IN MY LIFE</b>
------------------------------

You are the two most stubborn men on Earth, and it is my curse that I love you both.

THERE ARE TWO MEN IN MY LIFE  
HIM AND YOU  
THERE ARE TWO MEN WHO'LL BE SPEAKING WHEN I'M THROUGH  
THERE ARE FEW MEN LIKE YOUR DAD  
NOT EASY TO DEFINE  
I KNOW HE ISN'T PERFECT  
BUT HE'S MINE

*(They exit the garage, which moves offstage.  
WILL sets up chairs.)*

THERE ARE TWO MEN IN MY LIFE  
HIM AND YOU  
AND I NEVER WANT TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO  
HE DISTORTS AND HE INVENTS  
SOME STORIES DON'T MAKE SENSE  
BUT WHY SHOULD THAT CONFUSE YOU  
WHY NOT LET THE MAN AMUSE YOU—

*(EDWARD and JOSEPHINE enter. She's laughing.  
A title card: "THE GIRL IN THE WATER")*



**EDWARD**

I was always a good swimmer -- people said I was born for the water. Plus I had a helluva teacher.

*(A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN sits in the river. A tail lifts up. EDWARD continues his story, sotto, as THE MERMAID swims.)*

**SANDRA**

HE TELLS A HARMLESS TALE  
THAT ALWAYS DRIVES YOU MAD  
BUT AREN'T YOU TELLING STORIES TOO  
YOUR POINT OF VIEW  
JUST DIFFERENT FROM YOUR DAD

**EDWARD**

This girl, she couldn't speak a word. But it was clear she was under some kind of curse.

**SANDRA**

THERE ARE TWO MEN IN MY LIFE  
HIM AND YOU  
AND THE STORIES I BELIEVE IN ALL COME TRUE  
HE CAN GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED  
BUT YOU SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD  
THERE IS MAGIC IN THE MAN  
PLEASE FIND IT WHILE YOU CAN

**EDWARD**

*(to JOSEPHINE)*

Only way to lift the spell...was with a kiss.

*(EDWARD kneels to kiss THE MERMAID, but before he can-)*

**WILL**

*(worried)*

Dad?!

*(THE MERMAID gets spooked and disappears beneath the water)*

**EDWARD**

Will.

*(EDWARD has a hard time getting back up. WILL tries to help him, but EDWARD won't have it.)*

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

I'm fine! You don't need to baby me.

**WILL**

Sorry.

**EDWARD**

People needn't worry so much. It's not my time yet. This isn't how I go.

**WILL**

Right. The Witch.

**JOSEPHINE**

The Witch?

**WILL**

There was a woman in the swamp who told him how he died.

**EDWARD**

She showed me how I go, and this is not it.

**JOSEPHINE**

So how does it happen?

**EDWARD**

Surprise ending -- wouldn't want to ruin it for ya.

*(to WILL)*

And you! Well, forget the life you know, because having a kid changes everything. I mean, there's the diapers and the burping and the midnight feedings...

**WILL**

*(to SANDRA)*

Did he do any of that?

**EDWARD**

No, but I hear it's terrible. Just awful.

**SANDRA**

*(checking her watch)*

Well, I should probably get dinner started.

**EDWARD AND WILL**

I can help.

**SANDRA**

No, no. You stay out here and talk.

*(SANDRA and EDWARD fuss, but he relents.  
SANDRA exits.)*

**EDWARD**

Oh hey, you come sit with me.

*(EDWARD and JOSEPHINE sit in the lawn  
chairs)*

**WILL**

So Dad, I can probably get the pump working if you wanted to swim.

**EDWARD**

Don't put yourself out.

**WILL**

It's fine.

**EDWARD**

You know where the chemicals are?

**WILL**

I used to do it when you were gone, remember?

**EDWARD**

*(prickly)*

I was a traveling salesman, Will. I couldn't exactly stay at home.

**WILL**

I wasn't trying to pick a fight.

**JOSEPHINE**

Oh! Here. You can feel him kick.

*(JOSEPHINE puts EDWARD's hand on her belly.  
He smiles.)*

**EDWARD**

He's strong! When is he coming?

**JOSEPHINE**

Twenty-two weeks. So--

**WILL**

Five months.

**EDWARD**

Five months. Well. You'll tell him about me. Only the good stuff.

**JOSEPHINE**

Of course.

*(A crack in his facade - his mortality suddenly feels very real. WILL and JOSEPHINE both clock this.)*

**WILL**

Yeah, Dad, I'd really love to know more about the real versions of events, stories, you. Maybe we can go over some things while I'm here.

**EDWARD**

You mean while I'm here.

*(an awkward moment)*

**JOSEPHINE**

So, I want to know the full history. Now, I know you grew up in Alabama, but was it here in Montgomery?

**EDWARD**

Not too far away. A tiny little place called Ashton. Our town was so small our phone book was the Yellow Page.

*(topping it)*

Our town was so small the zip code was a fraction.

*(topping it)*

Our town was so small we only had three jokes.

*(he stands)*

But I'll tell you: the best thing about growing up in a small town like Ashton -- a boy with ambition can be a pretty big deal.

**#7 ASHTON'S FAVORITE SON**

*(Montage begins showing EDWARD in high school--WILL and JOSEPHINE remain on stage.)*

**TOWNSFOLK**

EDWARD BLOOM  
YOU'RE ASHTON'S FAVORITE SON  
YES YOU ARE!

*(He swings the bat -- CRACK - and hits a home run. He is awarded a giant trophy.)*

EDWARD BLOOM  
JUST LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE DONE  
SUPERSTAR!  
HERO OF THE BASEBALL DIAMOND  
HITS A HOME RUN

CHAMPION OF THE SCIENCE FAIR

*(At a science fair lab table, EDWARD demonstrates his experiment. He receives an A+.)*

HE'S "A-NUMBER ONE!"

*(EDWARD stands on his school desk, surrounded by supporters holding signs for his campaign for STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT.)*

CAPTAIN OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL  
WINS THE DEBATE  
ALWAYS KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY

*(Signs flip--"WINNER!")*

*(EDWARD becomes a football player)*

FOOTBALL HERO, TOO  
LOOK WHAT HE CAN DO  
ASHTON'S FAVORITE SON IN EVERY WAY

*(EDWARD kicks a football. REFEREES lift their hands -- he's kicked the winning field goal.)*

*(Final transformation as EDWARD links arms with JENNY HILL, his date for prom. Each wears a sash and a crown: PROM KING AND QUEEN. They start to dance.)*

**JENNY HILL**

HE'S THE MAN I TREASURE  
HE'S THE MAN I'LL WED  
THOUGH HE DOESN'T KNOW IT YET  
HE'LL BE WITH ME UNTIL WE'RE DEAD  
JENNY HILL NO MORE WILL BE MY NAME  
AND I'VE HANDSOME EDWARD BLOOM TO BLAME!

*[MUSIC CONTINUES]*

*(The set changes as a group of CHEERLEADERS bring us to--)*

**SCENE 9**

ASHTON TOWN SQUARE

**CHEERLEADERS**

Karnie, Alura, Faith

EDWARD! EDWARD!  
GO EDWARD!  
EDWARD BLOOM  
OUR FAVORITE SON!!!!

*(As TOWNSFOLK exit, JENNY approaches.)*

**JENNY HILL**

Edward Bloom, do you love me like I love you?

**EDWARD**

Of course not.

**JENNY HILL**

You don't?

*(EDWARD hops down, following JENNY  
downstage)*

**EDWARD**

Jenny Hill, you are the prettiest--  
*(she coos)*

Smartest--

*(she coos more)*

And blondest girl in Ashton.

*(she coos the most)*

How I could love you like you love me when you are an angel and  
I am just a simple boy in love.

**JENNY HILL**

*(melting)*

Nothing will ever come between us.

*(a chaste kiss)*

*(Suddenly, a CROWD OF TOWNSFOLK pushes  
through. The town's MAYOR tries to control  
the growing mob.)*

**MAYOR**

AnnaLeesa

Now, calm down. Calm down!

SCHOOL TEACHER

Don

Mayor, there is a giant living in them hills.

SCHOOL TEACHER

Zacky

I seen him! He's ten feet tall, with crazy eyes of fire!

SCHOOL TEACHER

Bella

He might eat my cat!

SCHOOL TEACHER

Don

If you ain't gonna stop him Mayor, we will!

**MAYOR**

I won't have mob violence in this town. Not without a permit.

**DON PRICE**

*(holding up baseball bat)*

I got your permit right here! We gotta smash that giant before he smashes us.

**CROWD**

*(various)*

Yeah!/Absolutely!/He's right!/Uh-huh!

**DON PRICE**

Alright: we need torches and pitchforks.

**EDWARD**

Wait, wait! Has someone tried talking to this giant?

SCHOOL TEACHER

Don

You can't reason with 'im!

SCHOOL TEACHER

Zacky

He's a monster!

**EDWARD**

I'll do it! I'll talk to him. See if I can get him to move on.

**DON PRICE**

Edward Bloom.

**EDWARD**

Don Price.



**DON PRICE**

You wanna sweet-talk a giant, go ahead, Bloom. It's your funeral.

**EDWARD**

That's just it, Don. The witch showed me how my life ends. It don't happen like this.

**#7A EDWARD WALKS**

Bye, Jenny!

*(As EDWARD walks, the town and TOWNSFOLK recede; bringing us to--)*

**SCENE 10**

*FANTASTICAL FOREST*

*(A title card: -"THE GIANT.")*

*(Reaching the entrance to a cave --)*

**EDWARD**

Hello? Hello!

*(bats fly out!)*

My name is Edward Bloom, and I want to talk to you!

*(A deep rumbling voice, seeming to  
come from all around)*

**THE GIANT**

Go away!

**EDWARD**

I will not! Not until you show yourself. Come on out here, and face me like a man!

**THE GIANT**

I said GO AWAY!

**EDWARD**

Fine! I'm coming in.

*(EDWARD enters)*

## SCENE 11

### THE CAVE

*(Wet and dripping. Empty but for a pile of rubble center stage. EDWARD looks for shapes in the darkness.)*

#### EDWARD

Just like I thought. Only kinda giant you are is a giant coward.

*(The cave shudders. EDWARD thinks it's an earthquake. KARL THE GIANT enters from behind the rubble. EDWARD looks up to see KARL towering over him.)*

#### KARL

I will smash your bones and eat you for dinner!

#### EDWARD

You'll still be hungry. I'm more of an appetizer size.  
*(offering hand)*  
Edward Bloom...

#### KARL

*(knocks hand away)*  
Get out of my cave!

#### EDWARD

No. I came up here to talk to you.

#### KARL

I don't want to talk! I just want to be alone.

*(KARL moves downstage)*

#### EDWARD

Bullcrap. You are alone, so you're only pretendin' it's what you want. Under those dead animals and death threats, I see a guy who might need a friend.

#### KARL

You don't know me.

**EDWARD**

Sure I do! See, up 'til now I've been the biggest thing in Ashton. But you showin' up is a reminder: there's something bigger out there.

**KARL**

So go.

**EDWARD**

Come with me.

*(off KARL's reaction)*

Look, this town is too small for you, and it's too small for a man of my ambition.

*(smelling KARL)*

When was the last time you left this cave?

**KARL**

I'm agoraphobic.

**EDWARD**

I don't know what that means, but you gotta get outside.

**KARL**

*(a laugh)*

You're not very bright.

**EDWARD**

Well, how smart are you?

**KARL**

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.

**EDWARD**

Whoa! That's deep. Wow.

**KARL**

There's nothing for me out there. I don't fit in! I've never even been in a car.

**EDWARD**

You got those big legs! So walk.

**KARL**

I can't fit in a house.

**EDWARD**

We'll sleep under the sky!

**KARL**

*(sheepish)*  
I'll never find a girl.

**EDWARD**

Giant -- this is the South! We like our women big and beautiful.

**KARL**

But I--

<b>#8 OUT THERE ON THE ROAD</b>
---------------------------------

**EDWARD**

YOU CAN PINE YOUR LIFE AWAY  
WISHIN' THINGS WERE BETTER  
WAITIN' HERE FOR JUDGEMENT DAY  
WHILE KNITTIN' YOU A SWEATER  
BUT I BELIEVE THAT KIND OF LIFE  
WON'T SET YOUR SPIRIT FREE  
SO MY FRIEND, ONE SMALL SUGGESTION  
WHERE YOU OUGHTTA BE...

WE CAN TAKE A JOURNEY  
THROUGH THIS COUNTRY'S FLESH AND BLOOD  
ON A RIDE PAST COUNTRYSIDE  
AND MISSISSIPPI MUD  
HIT THE STREET WITH TWO BIG FEET  
TO BEAR YOUR HEAVY LOAD  
AND LIVE LIFE OUT THERE ON THE ROAD

ANYONE WE WANNA BE  
AND ANYTHING WE SAY  
COME TOMORROW WE'LL BE FREE  
OF WHO WE ARE TODAY  
ACTION AND ADVENTURE  
WHEN WE CHANGE OUR FIXED ABODE  
GO LIVE LIFE OUT THERE ON THE ROAD

*(EDWARD gets THE GIANT to dance a few steps  
back, closer to the entrance of the cave.)*

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

WOULDN'T YOU RATHER BE  
LIKE ROYALTY  
RESPECTED LIKE A KING  
WHERE IT'S ALL CIVILIZED  
YOU'LL BE SURPRISED

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

THE SONG YOU'LL HEAR 'EM SING  
PEOPLE'LL GREET YOU THERE  
SOME WANNA SHARE  
ENTHUSIASTIC NEWS  
AND ALL YOU NEED IS GUARANTEED  
WITH ONE BIG PAIR OF SHOES  
ONE BIG PAIR OF SHOES!

What's your name, giant?

**KARL**

Karl.

**EDWARD**

Listen, Karl. The world is huge!

**KARL**

One hundred and ninety-seven million square miles.  
Approximately.

**EDWARD**

Say, you're good with numbers.

**KARL**

Only big ones.

**EDWARD**

Well, naturally! Now c'mon! Let's get out of this cave!

DON'T YOU WANNA  
STEP OUTSIDE  
LOOK AROUND  
SEE WHAT'S WAITING THERE!

*(EDWARD leads the way out of the cave.  
As KARL EXITS -- squinting in the sunlight -  
- the set changes to exterior.)*

WE WERE BORN TO WAKE EACH MORN  
SOME PLACE WE'VE NEVER BEEN  
CHECKIN' OUT THE LOCALS  
AS THEY WATCH US CHECKIN' IN  
EVERY NEW ENCOUNTER  
IN ANOTHER NEW ZIP CODE  
WE'LL FIND IT OUT THERE -

*(The TOWNSFOLK arrive with pitchforks and rifles)*

**TOWNSFOLK**

THAT'S HIM, RIGHT THERE!

**EDWARD**

WAIT! HE'S NOT A MONSTER  
HE'S A THINKER  
HE'S A WHIZ  
THIS BOY ISN'T HALF AS BAD  
AS YOU ALL THINK HE IS

Karl, tell 'em a joke.

**KARL**

What do you get when you cross a hippo, an elephant, and a rhino?

*(beat)*

Helephino!

*(TOWNSFOLK laugh)*

**EDWARD**

I'VE BEEN SO INSPIRED  
I'VE DECIDED WE'RE A PAIR  
EDWARD AND KARL  
WE'RE HEADING OUT THERE ON THE ROAD

**DON PRICE**

Yes!

**JENNY HILL**

You're leaving? Now?!

**EDWARD**

Jenny, I can't imagine any place better than Ashton. But if I don't see the world, I'll never know.

**JENNY HILL**

EDWARD BLOOM  
DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU'RE LEAVING US FOR GOOD

**EDWARD**

JENNY, YES I'M LEAVING  
BUT "FOR GOOD" I NEVER COULD  
I'LL BE BACK SOME DAY

**JENNY**

AND I'LL BE WAITING WHILE YOU'RE GONE

*(A chaste kiss between JENNY and EDWARD)*

**TOWNSFOLK**

'TIL THEN, BE HAPPY ON THE ROAD

**EDWARD**

C'mon, Karl! Let's show 'em our traveling step!

*(demonstrates, to the crowd)*

Every road trip needs a traveling step.

*(EDWARD and KARL teach the town their  
traveling step. Soon everyone joins in the  
dancing celebration.)*

**MAYOR**

Edward Bloom, first son of Ashton, take with you this Key to the  
City, and know our doors will always be open to you.

*(THE MAYOR gives EDWARD a giant key)*

**EDWARD**

I swear on my name I'll never forget Ashton. I'll come back, I  
promise.

SUDDENLY, I'M THE KING  
WHO HOLDS THE KEY  
BUT EVERYBODY SECRETLY  
IS DYING TO BE MORE AND MORE LIKE WHO?

**KARL**

Like you?

**ALL BUT KARL**

LIKE YOU!



**EDWARD, KARL AND ALL**

I CAN SEE AMERICA  
DEPENDABLE AND TRUE  
OPEN SKY AND PASSERSBY  
CONGRATULATING YOU  
FIND THE OPEN HIGHWAY  
AND YOU'VE HIT THE MOTHER LODE  
GO CRAZY

**EDWARD, KARL AND MEN**

OUT THERE ON THE

**EDWARD, KARL AND ALL**

HAPPY!  
OUT THERE ON THE  
FINALLY OUT THERE

**JENNY**

PROMISE YOU'LL RETURN TO US!

**EDWARD, KARL AND ALL**

ON THE ROAD!!

*(The TOWNSFOLK march EDWARD and KARL out of town)*

**TOWNSFOLK**

ON THE ROAD!!

**#8A WILL AND JOSEPHINE**

*(Crossover--WILL rolls in a stack of file boxes. JOSEPHINE catches up with him, carrying a giant key.)*

**JOSEPHINE**

Will! Look what I found.

**WILL**

What is that?

**JOSEPHINE**

It's the Key to the City! From when he was a teenager. He left Ashton in search of adventure.

**WILL**

Oh, God. He got to you, didn't he? He seduced you.

**JOSEPHINE**

Do you know how your mother and father met?

**WILL**

They met in college. Wait -- which story did he tell you? There are at least seven versions of how he met my mother.

**JOSEPHINE**

This was romantic.

**WILL**

They're all romantic. My father is romantic. Was the giant in it?

**JOSEPHINE**

Yes! Karl.

**#8B THE TORNADO**

*(Reveal KARL and EDWARD. After a beat, they go dark.)*

**WILL**

So, Karl the Giant. Supposedly my Dad's best friend, but I never met him. There's no photo, no evidence he actually existed. I'm worried my father is going to--

*(not saying "die")*

--be gone and I'll never know what was true.

**JOSEPHINE**

But does it really matter what was true? Your father is telling these stories for a reason. If you understand the stories, you'll understand the man.

*(beat)*

How many stories are there?

**WILL**

I don't know. I've never counted.

**JOSEPHINE**

You should! You should make a list.

**WILL**

*(considers, then...)*

Okay. Let's do it. Chronologically, it starts with the Witch. She teaches him, what, not to fear death? Then he meets the mermaid.

**JOSEPHINE**

She teaches him about love. How love transforms a person.

**WILL**

I thought she taught him how to swim.

**JOSEPHINE**

You never listen.

**WILL**

So my father leaves Ashton with Karl the Giant. They have a series of wacky misadventures that roughly approximate the twelve labors of Hercules --

**JOSEPHINE**

What about the tornado --

**WILL**

Fine, the tornado.

*(He swirls his hand. As he does,  
TOWNSFOLK blow across stage. A title  
card: "THE TORNADO." EDWARD and KARL exit  
as a cat flies across stage with howl.)*

**WILL**

It's not important.

**JOSEPHINE**

It's incredibly important! Your father was headed for the Big City.

*(suddenly teary)*

But then fate -- fate pushes him towards love.

**WILL**

You have a lot of hormones in your body right now.

*(she nods, a bit overcome)*

Fine--the Winds of Destiny bring him to the Calloway Circus.

**#8C CALLOWAY CIRCUS**

**SCENE 12**

*THE CALLOWAY CIRCUS*

*(On a platform outside the bigtop, a juggling act finishes its set. AMOS CALLOWAY arrives center-ring.)*

**AMOS**

Yes, ladies and gentlemen. Any one of these acts could join the Calloway Circus!

*(a juggler's ball falls at his feet)*

**AMOS (CON'T)**

Except you! C'mere.

*(JUGGLER approaches)*

If I was lookin' for a Miscellaneous Object Dropper, you'd be at the top of my list. But I'm not. Next up #73--

*(checking clipboard)*

--the Alabama Lambs.

*(TEENAGE SANDRA rushes forward with her two FRIENDS. They're dressed in the traditional garb of some undiscovered European country.)*

**SANDRA**

That's us! We're the Alabama Lambs!

*(WILL and JOSEPHINE take a seat to watch)*

**AMOS**

*(recognizes her, disapproving)*

Miss Templeton! Does your daddy know you're here?

**SANDRA**

He knows I'm with my two best friends.

**AMOS**

Tell me, your father -- is he still a small town sheriff with unmedicated rage issues?

**SANDRA**

That's Dad!

**AMOS**

Best you get along home and breathe not a word of this folly.

**SANDRA**

Wait, Mr. Calloway, I am supposed to be here, I know it.

**AMOS**

And I know I don't want to be hangin' on your Daddy's wall like this.

*(terrified expression; checking clipboard)*

Next up, #74--Zaximus the Zensational.

**SANDRA**

Haven't you ever had a dream, a hope, a wish! Please, Mr. Calloway! Just let us try!

**AMOS**

Fine. Let's hear it.

*(SANDRA cues the music. Their song and dance is exuberant, goofy, and occasionally dirtier than they meant it to be.)*

**#9 LITTLE LAMB FROM ALABAMA**

**SANDRA AND TWO GIRLS**

**Alura and Faith**

SHIM-SHAM

I'M A LITTLE LAMB FROM ALABAMA

FLIM-FLAM

I'M A LITTLE LAMB FROM ALABAMA

WAITIN' TO BE FED

HOPIN' TO BE LED

BY A LITTLE SHEPHERD BOY FROM

**GIRL ONE**

M-I-S-S

**GIRL TWO**

I-S-S-I

**SANDRA**

P-P-

*(THE TWO GIRLS gasp!)*

**SANDRA AND TWO GIRLS**

I WHAM! BAM!  
LIKE A LITTLE LAMB FROM ALABAMA  
HOT DAMN  
WHO'S A LITTLE LAMB FROM ALABAMA?  
I'M A LITTLE MISS  
PRAYIN' FOR A KISS  
JUST A LITTLE LAMB FROM ALABAMA

*(They dance. As they do, EDWARD arrives at the edge of the crowd.)*

**SANDRA AND TWO GIRLS**

I'M A LITTLE MISS  
PRAYIN' FOR A KISS  
JUST A LITTLE LAMB FROM ALABAMA

*(As EDWARD spots SANDRA, everything slows to a fraction of normal speed. He is completely entranced.)*

**#10 TIME STOPS**

**EDWARD**

TIME STOPS  
WHEN SUDDENLY YOU SEE HER  
TIME STOPS  
AND WHAT YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW  
CHANGES  
AND LIFE BEYOND THIS MOMENT  
IS BETTER  
BIGGER

TIME STOPS  
BUT STILL YOUR HEART IS BEATING  
TIME STOPS  
THOUGH YOU DON'T TAKE A BREATH  
SHE'S THERE  
AND ALL YOU'VE EVER WANTED  
IS NEARER  
CLEARER

I USED TO THINK THE WORLD WAS SMALL  
NOW I DON'T THINK THAT WAY AT ALL

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

TIME STOPS  
WHEN DREAMS COME TRUE BEFORE YOU  
TIME STOPS  
WHEN FANTASY IS REAL  
I KNEW  
THIS MOMENT WAS EXPECTED  
BUT THIS GOOD  
WHO COULD?

*(SANDRA spots EDWARD. She loses her place in the routine.)*

**SANDRA**

THAT BOY IS STARING  
AND I FEEL A CHILL  
I DON'T KNOW WHY  
THAT BOY IS STARING  
AND THE WORLD IS STILL  
NOT TUMBLING BY  
THERE'S NO ONE TALKING  
BUT I CAN HEAR A THOUSAND VOICES  
WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE ME?

THAT BOY IS STARING  
IS IT ME HE SEES?  
I CAN'T BE SURE  
IF HE IS STARING  
SHOULD I TRY TO PLEASE  
OR BE DEMURE?  
MY HAND IS TREMBLING  
BUT IN THIS MOMENT NOTHING SCARES ME  
WHAT'S GOING ON?

*(Everything freezes as SANDRA and EDWARD slowly approach each other.)*

**EDWARD**

I USED TO SEE WHAT LIES AHEAD

**SANDRA**

I THOUGHT MY LIFE MIGHT BE A BORE

**EDWARD**

NOW I JUST SEE THIS GIRL INSTEAD

**SANDRA**

COULD BE I BOUND FOR SOMETHING  
MORE

**EDWARD**

TIME STOPS

**EDWARD AND SANDRA**

AND TROUBLES ARE ABANDONED  
TIME STOPS  
THE MINUTE HE/SHE ARRIVES  
I'VE SEEN THE FUTURE IN THIS INSTANT  
SUBVERSIVE  
SUBLIME!  
I'D LIVE FOREVER IN THIS MOMENT  
IF I COULD STOP

*(face to face)*

**EDWARD**

STOP TIME

*(their hands nearly touch)*

**SANDRA**

THAT BOY IS STARING AND I FEEL A CHILL  
I DON'T KNOW WHY

*(SANDRA rejoins THE DANCERS. As the moment concludes, SANDRA snaps back to reality. Time resumes normally.)*

**#10A ALABAMA TAG**

**AMOS**

Ladies, I'll tell you: That was terrific. But no one wants to see that in a circus. Teach those steps to an elephant, and then you'd have something. People want to see things beyond their imagination! Bigger than life! People want--

*(stops, pointing)*

You!

*(KARL THE GIANT enters behind EDWARD)*

**EDWARD**

Hey, buddy.

*(Panic as everyone flees from THE GIANT. SANDRA's friends pull her away.)*



**EDWARD**

*(chasing her offstage)*

Wait! Wait!

*(WILL and JOSEPHINE exit past KARL)*

**WILL**

*(re: KARL)*

It's not plausible.

**JOSEPHINE**

It's romantic!

**AMOS**

*(introducing himself)*

Amos Calloway. What's your name, Giant? You got a name? Doesn't matter. More exotic if you don't.

**KARL**

It's Karl.

**AMOS**

That works. Say, Karl, have you ever considered a career in the world of entertainment? More importantly, have you ever heard of this term -- wait, what is it? -- um -- "unconscionable contract?"

**KARL**

It's an agreement in which one party grossly misrepresents facts in order to take advantage of the other party's perceived ignorance.

**AMOS**

Well. That's a thorough definition.

**KARL**

I want thirty percent off the top and all the food I can eat.

**AMOS**

Ten percent.

**KARL**

Twenty -- and I won't do nudity.

**AMOS**

No one's asking!

**KARL**

Done.

*(EDWARD returns, defeated)*

**KARL**

Edward. What's wrong?

**EDWARD**

Karl, I just saw the woman I'm going to marry, I know it. But then I lost her.

**AMOS**

Heartbreaking! Most men gotta get married before they lose their wives. But good news! I'm gonna make your friend here a star.

**EDWARD**

That's great. 'Least one of us should be happy.

**AMOS**

Jesus, kid. This girl -- real pretty? Blue dress? Red hair?

**EDWARD**

*(grabs AMOS)*

Who is she? Where does she live?

*(AMOS snarls, then catches himself)*

**AMOS**

Kid -- don't waste your time. I know her daddy. She's out of your league.

**EDWARD**

What do you mean? You don't even know me.

**AMOS**

Lemme guess: you were the Hero of Hickville, a big fish in a small pond. This here is the ocean, and you're drowning. Take my advice and go back to Puddleville. You'll be happy there.

**EDWARD**

Look, I may not have much, but I have more determination than any man you're ever going to meet. I'm gonna find that woman and marry her and spend the rest of my life with her.

**AMOS**

Go write your Harlequin Romance somewhere else. I got a circus to run.

**#11 CLOSER TO HER**

**EDWARD**

IF YOU TELL ME WHO SHE IS  
I'LL WORK NIGHT AND DAY  
AND YOU WON'T EVEN HAVE TO PAY ME

*(Tri: "ding")*

**AMOS**

Okay.

ONCE A MONTH  
IF YOU WORK  
IF YOU SLAVE  
IF YOU CRY FOR ME  
THEN I'LL GIVE YOU A CLUE

ONCE A MONTH  
IF YOU CLEAN  
IF YOU HAUL  
IF YOU DIE FOR ME  
THEN THE CLUE WILL BE TRUE

ONCE A MONTH  
IT COULD BE WHAT SHE THINKS  
WHAT SHE LOVES  
WHERE SHE LIVES  
WHAT SHE DRINKS  
WHAT SHE HOPES  
AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PULL THE ROPES

*(CIRCUS WORKERS rehearse. AMOS gives EDWARD his first chore.)*

**AMOS**

CLOSER TO HER  
I'LL GET YOU CLOSER TO HER  
YOU ONLY NEED TO BE  
MY DEVOTEE BECAUSE  
I'LL TELL YOU WHERE SHE WAS BORN  
OR IF SHE PLAYS THE FRENCH HORN  
THEN YOU'LL BE CLOSER THAN YOU EVER WAS

**AMOS (CON'T)**

First clue--She likes dancing.

**EDWARD**

Dancing!

*(EDWARD dances with a dream vision  
of SANDRA.)*

**AMOS**

BACK TO WORK!

**CIRCUS FOLK**

CLOSER TO HER  
YOU'RE ONE STEP CLOSER TO HER

Bella, Hannah, Karnie,  
Bryson, AnnaLeesa

**EDWARD**

I'M NOT AFRAID TO STOOP  
TO SCOOPING POOP BECAUSE

**CIRCUS FOLK**

HE'LL STOOP FOR POOP!

**AMOS**

YOU'LL LEARN WHAT PERFUME SHE WEARS  
OR WHAT SHE SAYS IN HER PRAYERS

**EDWARD**

AND BE MUCH CLOSER THAN I EVER WAS

*(A line of dancing elephant butts do a  
little dance. AMOS watches from stage left,  
proud of his elephants.)*

**EDWARD**

Mr. Calloway, it's time.

**AMOS**

For what?

**EDWARD**

My clue! About the girl I'm gonna marry.

**AMOS**

If you got a clue, you wouldn't get married at all.  
*(to the CIRCUS FOLK)*

BACK TO WORK!

**CIRCUS FOLK**

DAYS INTO WEEKS INTO MONTHS INTO YEARS  
INTO CLUE AFTER CLUE AFTER CLUE

**AMOS**

SHE LIKES BLUE!

*(DREAM SANDRA passes with a blue scarf)*

**CIRCUS FOLK**

SEASONS GO BY IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE  
BUT THE DREAM DOESN'T SEEM TO COME TRUE

**AMOS**

BARBECUE!

*(DREAM SANDRA eats barbecue as she passes)*

**EDWARD**

YEAR AFTER YEAR  
WITH THE HOPE I WOULD HEAR  
SOMETHING KIND  
SOMETHING FRESH  
SOMETHING NEW -

*(finding AMOS)*

Mr. Calloway, it's been three years!

**AMOS**

Kid! There's other fish in the sea!

**EDWARD**

But I'm already hooked. Why do you insist keeping her name secret?

**AMOS**

SECRETS ARE THE BACKBONE OF SOCIETY  
EVERYBODY OUGHT TO HAVE A FEW  
I BELIEVE IN SECRETS  
AND I'LL KEEP MINE FOR A WHILE  
THEY KEEP ME A SUCCESS  
THEY MAKE YOU WORK FOR LESS

But I'm a man of my word. Your girl -- she's going to college.

**EDWARD**

College!

**EDWARD**  
CLOSER TO HER  
ONE TEXTBOOK

**CIRCUS FOLK**  
CLOSER TO HER

*(DREAM SANDRA passes with a book)*

CLOSER TO HER  
BUT I'VE  
BEEN WORKING HARD  
AND TIME IS FLYING  
BY

BUT YOU'VE  
BEEN WORKING HARD  
AND TIME IS FLYING  
CLOSER TO HER

**EDWARD**  
I'VE PAID HIS PRICE, I SHOULD GO  
STILL, THERE'S ONE THING I DON'T KNOW—

*(A "howl!" EDWARD reveals--)*

**EDWARD (CON'T)**  
Mr. Calloway?

*(--a furry, clawed AMOS)*

**AMOS**  
This is...difficult to explain.

**EDWARD**  
You're a werewolf.

**AMOS**  
Or maybe not so difficult.

**EDWARD**  
Mr. Calloway, this is your secret? You don't have to be ashamed  
of being a werewolf.

**AMOS**  
Really?

**EDWARD**  
Heck no! Just be yourself and be happy.

*(EDWARD scratches AMOS's head)*

**AMOS**  
I like you, kid. How about a bonus clue? Daffodils!

**EDWARD**

Daffodils?

**AMOS**

Her favorite flower -- those yellow ones. Real pretty.

**EDWARD**

Mr. Calloway, let me give her those daffodils! Tell me who she is!

*(a chord of conscience)*

**AMOS**

Hell. Her name is Sandra Templeton. She goes to Auburn University.

**EDWARD**

Thank you, Mr. Calloway. Thank you!

*(EDWARD drops a ball from his box;  
AMOS chases it offstage)*

**AMOS**

My ball! My ball! My ball!

*(EDWARD finding KARL --)*

**EDWARD**

Karl, how far away is Auburn University?

**KARL**

Seven hundred and sixty-three miles.

**EDWARD**

Then I'm gonna need your help.

**KARL**

Fellas, bring it out!

*(WORKERS wheel out a massive circus  
cannon. EDWARD takes the helmet.)*

**CIRCUS FOLK**

LIKE A CANNON BALL  
SOON TO BE A HUMAN COMET ABOVE  
LIKE A CANNON BALL  
CIRCLING A CONSTELLATION OF LOVE  
FILLING UP THE HEAVENS

**CIRCUS FOLK (CON'T)**

MAKING WATERS PART

AIMING STRAIGHT FOR HIS BELOVED'S WELCOMING HEART

*(EDWARD climbs into the cannon)*

*(Downstage, WILL looks through a file box.  
JOSEPHINE enters with a red file.)*

**JOSEPHINE**

Will. Who is Jenny Hill? I know that name.

**WILL**

She was my Dad's high school girlfriend. "The prettiest,  
blondest girl in Ashton."

*(re: folder)*

What is that?

**JOSEPHINE**

*(wary)*

It's a mortgage for a house in Ashton. Your father co-signed a  
loan with "Jenny Hill."

**WILL**

She's real? This doesn't make sense. Why would my father buy a  
house with another woman?

*(He looks up. A new thought--)*

**CIRCUS FOLK**

BOOM!

*(EDWARD is shot out of the cannon.  
WILL and JOSEPHINE exit. CIRCUS  
FOLK track EDWARD's progress  
across the heavens.)*

**CIRCUS FOLK**

CLOSER IT'S TRUE  
THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE HE CAN DO  
THE YEARS GONE BY WILL SEEM A KIND OF DREAMY BLUR  
AND WHEN AT AUBURN HE LANDS  
HE'LL DO WHAT FORTUNE DEMANDS  
WHEN FINALLY CLOSER THAN CLOSER TO

*(A body falls from the sky, landing at--  
AUBURN UNIVERSITY)*



**SCENE 13**

AUBURN UNIVERSITY

**EDWARD**

*(offstage)*

Ooof!

*(EDWARD stands up, dusting himself off. He carries a bouquet of yellow daffodils. He tries to find SANDRA amid many red-haired women.)*

Alura, Faith  
are "  
red-headed  
sorority sisters"  
with Jacquelyn

**#12 DAFFODILS**

**EDWARD**

*(various)*

Sandra! Sandra Temple--sorry, I thought you were...Wait, Sandra, hi...oh. Apologies. There are a lot of red-heads at this school. Oh -- "Auburn" -- yeah, makes sense.

*(finally)*

Sandra! Sandra Templeton!

*(SANDRA stands with a group of her SORORITY SISTERS.)*

**SANDRA**

*(not recognizing)*

Yes?

**EDWARD**

You don't know me, but my name is Edward Bloom and I am in love with you. I've spent the last three years working to find out who you are but it's all worth it to see you here, now, and to finally get to talk to you.

**SANDRA**

I'm sorry...

**EDWARD**

Don't need to apologize to me. I mean, I'm the luckiest person you're going to find today.

I WAS INDENTURED TO A TRAVELING CIRCUS  
ELEPHANTS AND ALL  
I WAS SHOT OUT OF A CANNON  
WHEN THEY UP AND LOST THE BALL

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

I MET WEREWOLVES, GIANTS, DANCING BEARS  
IF YOU DON'T THINK IT'S TRUE  
THEN HOW ON EARTH  
CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE ROAD  
THAT LED ME HERE TO YOU?

**SANDRA**

*(recognizing)*

Wait, are you...

**EDWARD**

LOOK, I SAW YOU  
AND ALL OF TIME IN ALL THE WORLD STOOD STILL  
AND I PROMISE  
I'LL PROVE MY WORTH  
I'LL ROAM THE EARTH UNTIL  
YOU BELIEVE ME  
AND WE CAN BE, AT LAST FOREVER ONE  
DON'T BE AFRAID  
BE MY CRUSADE

**SANDRA**

You're too late. I'm engaged to be married. She shows him the ring.

**EDWARD**

TELL ME WHAT I HAVE TO GO AND DO  
TO MAKE YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND  
ANYTHING I HAVE TO PROMISE TO  
I'LL GLADLY GET BEHIND  
I'M THE MAN WHO YOU SHOULD MARRY  
YOUR INTENDED THROUGH AND THROUGH  
OTHERWISE I'D NEVER WALK THE ROAD  
THAT LED ME HERE TO YOU

**SANDRA**

You're the boy from the circus!

**EDWARD**

I am!

**SANDRA**

I wasn't sure you were real. I imagine things a lot.

**EDWARD**

Then imagine us together: Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bloom.

**SANDRA**

Wait, Edward Bloom?

**EDWARD**

Yes.

**SANDRA**

From Ashton?

**EDWARD**

How did you know?

**SANDRA**

The boy I'm engaged to, he's from Ashton. Don Price.

**EDWARD**

Don Price?! They let him into college?

**SANDRA**

He's studying political science.

**EDWARD**

He'd fail gravity if it were a subject!

**SANDRA**

*(smiles)*

I help him where I can.

**EDWARD**

Bandage his knuckles where he drags them on the ground?

**SANDRA**

That's a terrible thing to say.

**EDWARD**

A terrible Price to pay. Don't marry that cretin.

**SANDRA**

Don.

**EDWARD**

Moron.

**SANDRA**

*(looking past him)*

No, Don.

*(EDWARD turns to see DON PRICE approaching with a bunch of his FRATERNITY BUDDIES. DON PRICE is pissed.)*

**EDWARD**

Oh, hey Don.

**DON PRICE**

Bloom?! What the hell are you doing?

**SANDRA**

*(to Don)*

Promise me you won't hurt him.

**EDWARD**

I promise.

**DON PRICE**

This is my girl. Mine. Look!

*(DON roughly grabs SANDRA's hand to show EDWARD the diamond ring.)*

**SANDRA**

Don!

**EDWARD**

Take your hands off her.

**DON PRICE**

Or what? You're not so big without a giant to back you up.

**EDWARD**

But I'll always be the bigger man.

*(DON PRICE suddenly clobbers EDWARD. His buddies join in, roundly kicking the crap out of EDWARD, who, true to his word, doesn't fight back.)*

**SANDRA**

Don, stop! Stop! Don, I will never marry you. This was a mistake.

**DON PRICE**

What? You actually love this guy?

**SANDRA**

*(hands him the ring)*

He's almost a stranger, yet I prefer him to you.

*(Disbelieving, DON AND HIS BUDDIES exit)*

**DON PRICE**

Witch lover.

**ZACKY PRICE**

*(weakly imitating)*

Witch-lover.

*(SANDRA helps EDWARD up)*

**SANDRA**

Are you alright?

**EDWARD**

ONCE A MONTH  
A SCRAP OF NEWS  
IT FELT LIKE YOU WERE THERE  
ONCE A MONTH  
I HEARD YOUR VOICE  
I HELD YOU, SOLITAIRE

AMOS SAID THAT YOU LOVED MUSIC  
SAID THAT YOU WERE COLLEGE BOUND  
BUT ONE THING  
MORE THAN ALL THE REST  
FILLED THE HEART INSIDE MY CHEST  
HE TOLD ME YOU LOVED--

DAFFODILS  
AND COUNTLESS AS THE STARS THAT SHINE  
THEY STRETCHED IN NEVER ENDING LINE  
'TIL ALL I SAW WAS--

DAFFODILS  
BESIDE THE LAKE BENEATH THE TREES  
ALL FLUTTERING AND DANCING IN THE BREEZE

AND LIKE THAT MOMENT RIGHT BETWEEN ASLEEP AND WAKING  
I THOUGHT I SAW TEN THOUSAND STRONG IN ONE QUICK GLANCE  
BUT WHEN I SAW YOUR FACE, I KNEW BEYOND MISTAKING  
A MILLION FLOWERS COULDN'T STAND A CHANCE  
SO, I'LL PRETEND THE--

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

DAFFODILS  
ARE JUST AN INTRODUCTION TO  
THE BLOSSOMING OF ME AND YOU  
BESIDE THE LAKE  
BENEATH A TREE  
BEYOND MISTAKE  
PLEASE MARRY ME  
PLEASE MARRY ME

**SANDRA**

But you hardly know me...

**EDWARD**

I have the rest of my life to find out.

*(Center stage, EDWARD and SANDRA. He points to a small bunch of daffodils--and then others as they appear.)*

**EDWARD**

These, these, and these...

*[MUSIC BUILDS]*

*(Ultimately, the whole stage is completely covered with daffodils.)*

**EDWARD**

THESE ARE FOR YOU  
ONLY FOR YOU

**EDWARD AND SANDRA**

LET'S BUILD A WORLD OF DAFFODILS  
THAT NEVER FADES AND NEVER DIES  
I SEE THE ANSWER IN YOUR EYES

YOU'LL/I'LL BE THE BRIDE  
I'LL/YOU'LL BE THE GROOM  
A DAFFODIL IN EVERY ROOM

**EDWARD**

AND I WILL SHOWER YOU WITH FLOWERS  
OR MY NAME ISN'T  
EDWARD--

**EDWARD AND SANDRA**

BLOOM

*(EDWARD and SANDRA lean in. And they kiss.)*

*BLACKOUT—END OF ACT I*

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 1**

**#13 ENTR'ACTE**

*(The entr'acte resolves to reveal  
WILL and JOSEPHINE downstage in  
their same positions from ACT I.)*

*(WILL is reeling)*

**WILL**

Why would my father have a mortgage to a house I've never heard about? And what's the deal with Jenny Hill?

**JOSEPHINE**

Maybe she's a friend.

**WILL**

Maybe she's more than that. My father was a traveling salesman. He could have easily had a second life. A second family!

**JOSEPHINE**

Stop! That's not real.

**WILL**

What is real with my father? What if all these crazy stories are just a smokescreen so we don't bother looking for the truth?

*(re: folder)*

My father bought a secret house in Ashton. I can't pretend we didn't find this.

**JOSEPHINE**

Okay, okay. I know you want to find answers, but think about the time you have left. You're here to make peace, Will, not start a war.

**WILL**

War? Did he tell you the war story? Because that's when I first realized he was making it all up.

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

**#14 RED, WHITE AND TRUE**



Scouts: Bella,  
Shane, Adian

*(A title card—"THE WAR." As WILL and JOSEPHINE exit, EDWARD BLOOM enters downstage left. He's dressed in a uniform, followed by SCOUTS, including YOUNG WILL.)*

**OVER-EXCITED SCOUT**

Bella

I'll get the fire started.

**EDWARD**

Now, I don't like to talk too much about the war.

*(With a groan, YOUNG WILL turns away, reading his book.)*

**EDWARD**

Truth is, I was just a common soldier like all the other Alabama boys. But then one night, I intercepted an enemy message--

*(He "magics" a folded slip from behind YOUNG WILL's ear.)*

**OVER-EXCITED SCOUT**

What did it say?

**EDWARD**

That very night at the big USO show, the enemy was planning to kill General Patterson.

*(He points stage right, where GENERAL PATTERSON enters.)*

**OVER-EXCITED SCOUT**

*(hand up)*

How?

**EDWARD**

With a poison blow-dart shot by a deadly assassin. Only I could save him.

**OVER-EXCITED SCOUT**

Weren't you scared?

**EDWARD**

A man does what he must. A Hero does what no other man can.

*(EDWARD brings a stool to GENERAL PATTERSON.  
A beautiful USO SINGER is revealed. It's  
SANDRA in a gorgeous dress.)*

General  
Patterson:  
AnnaLeesa

**OVER-EXCITED SCOUT**

*(to YOUNG WILL)*

Isn't that your Mom?

**YOUNG WILL**

In my Dad's stories, the most beautiful woman is always my Mom.

*(SANDRA begins to sing)*

**SANDRA**

THERE'S A BOY WHO KNOWS THE WAY I FEEL  
SOMEONE WHO IS CONFIDENT AND REAL  
ALWAYS AT THE READY  
ALWAYS BY MY SIDE  
HOW I HOPE SOME DAY I'LL BE HIS BRIDE

*(Beautiful PATRIOTIC DANCERS enter)*

USO Dancers:  
Bryson, Karnie,  
Faith, Alura,

**COMPANY**

WHAT ARE THE COLORS OF  
THE ONLY MAN I LOVE?  
RED, WHITE AND TRUE!  
WHO IS THE GUY FOR ME  
ANNOUNCING VICTORY?  
RED, WHITE AND TRUE!  
WHEREVER TENSIONS SEEM TO FLARE  
HE IS THE ONE WHO'S STANDING THERE  
AND WHEN HE LEADS THE WAY  
WE CAN STAND AND SAY  
RED, WHITE AND TRUE!

*(Spotlight ON RED FANG, who readies  
a blowgun.)*

Noah (Don as Red  
Fang)

**RED FANG**

Die, General Patterson!

*(EDWARD BLOOM leaps in, grabbing  
the blowgun. THE TWO MEN grapple--THE  
DANCERS don't acknowledge any of this.)*

**EDWARD**

It was at that moment I realized who my opponent was --  
*(rips off black mask to reveal red mask)*

-- Red Fang, the Poison Assassin.

*(the two men battle)*

**WOMEN**

WHAT ARE THE COLORS OF  
THE ONLY MAN I LOVE?  
RED, WHITE AND TRUE!  
WHO IS THE GUY FOR US  
FOREVER GLORIOUS  
RED, WHITE AND TRUE!  
WHENEVER EVIL COMES TO TOWN  
HE IS THE ONE WHO BRINGS IT --  
(HE'S THE ONE WHO BRINGS IT DOWN)  
SO LET HIM LEAD THE WAY

*(RED FANG knocks out EDWARD)*

**WOMEN**

AS WE SHOUT "HOORAY!"

**RED FANG**

Hooray!

**WOMEN**

RED!  
HE'S RED, WHITE AND--

*(THE WOMEN begin a stunning tap routine. THE GENERAL weaves between the girls. RED FANG can't get a clear shot at him.)*

**GENERAL**

AnnaLeesa

Hey! Hey! Not part of the show. Not part of the show!

*(Face-to-face with RED FANG, THE GENERAL grabs hold of the blowgun. A tug-of-war, with the girls helping THE GENERAL. Finally, THE GENERAL loses hold of the blowgun and stumbles onto the steps. THE WOMEN cover him up as they dance. RED FANG, determined to get to THE GENERAL, pulls each of the girls out of his way, finally exposing THE GENERAL.)*

**RED FANG**

No one to save you now!

*[SFX: thwwk!]*

*(RED FANG shoots a blow dart - but EDWARD jumps in the way, "taking the bullet" for THE GENERAL. With a blowdart stuck in his neck, EDWARD stumbles downstage, reeling. EDWARD falls, dead.)*

**YOUNG WILL**

Logically, that doesn't make sense-

**EDWARD**

*(popping up)*

Luckily, years earlier I had been bitten by the choocalabra snake of Tanzania. I was immune to Red Fang's poison.

*(EDWARD pulls the dart from his neck and throws it back at RED FANG. THE ASSASSIN falls--)*

**RED FANG**

*(dying gasp)*

Choouo-cuh-labra!

**GENERAL**

*(stepping forward)*

Private, what's your name?

**EDWARD**

Don't matter, sir. I'm just a soldier like all these men. And I think they deserve a show. Ladies? What do you say?

*(EDWARD joins them for a showstopping finale)*

**SANDRA AND WOMEN**

WHEREVER TENSIONS  
SEEM TO FLARE  
HE IS THE ONE  
WHO'S STANDING THERE

**EDWARD AND MEN**

I'M/HE'S JUST A  
PROUD AMERICAN  
I/HE WON'T PRESUME  
I'M/HE'S BETTER THAN

**ALL**

AND WHEN HE LEADS THE WAY  
WE CAN STAND AND SAY  
RED! RED! RED!  
RED! RED! RED!  
RED! RED! RED!  
HE'S/I'M RED, WHITE AND TRUE!

**#14A RED, WHITE AND TRUE PLAYOFF**

*(As THE DANCERS file out, downstage  
a campfire appears. EDWARD BLOOM  
finishes telling this story to the  
group of SCOUTS.)*

**EDWARD**

Lots of people say that was the turning point of the war. I like  
to think it was just one man doing his part.

*(THE SCOUTS cheer)*

**SCOUTS (VARIOUS)**

Yeah! Cool./Go Mr. Bloom!/Your dad is awesome.

**EDWARD**

G`night, scouts.

**SCOUTS (VARIOUS)**

*(exiting)*

`Night! / Goodnight Mr. Bloom!

*(YOUNG WILL stays behind with HIS FATHER)*

**YOUNG WILL**

Dad -- when did that all happen?

**EDWARD**

During the war!

**YOUNG WILL**

But...which war?

**EDWARD**

*(incredulous)*

Which war? Don't they teach you anything in school?

**YOUNG WILL**

That's just it. They do teach us.

**#14B CAMPFIRE DANCE/DAFFODILS TRANSITION**

*(YOUNG WILL exits. EDWARD doubles back to  
blow out the fire, then exits. We transition  
to--)*

**SCENE 2**

*BEDROOM. PAST.*

*(SANDRA makes the bed. YOUNG WILL enters with a baseball and mitt --)*

**YOUNG WILL**

I can help!

**SANDRA**

What would I do without you?

*(As they make the bed --)*

**YOUNG WILL**

Mom, are there really witches?

**SANDRA**

Why -- did your father have another run-in with Miss Johnson at the library? That woman is terrifying -- and honestly, your Dad doesn't really know how to whisper.

*(EDWARD enters, surprising SANDRA with a bouquet of flowers.)*

**SANDRA**

*(playful)*

Daffodils. Well, now I know you did something.

**EDWARD**

Bob Ray quit, so they're giving me his route. All the way to Dallas!

**SANDRA**

That's a lot of driving.

**EDWARD**

Helluva chance to expand my region.

**SANDRA**

I don't care how far you go, Edward Bloom. Just as long as you make it back.

*(With a kiss, she heads off with a laundry basket. EDWARD chases after her, frisky--)*

**SANDRA**

*(on exit)*

There is a young child right there!

*(EDWARD stays back with YOUNG WILL--)*

**EDWARD**

So, you got another soccer game this week?

**YOUNG WILL**

It's not soccer season anymore.

**EDWARD**

'Course not. Will, I'm gonna need you to look after your mother. You're the man of the house while I'm on the road.

**YOUNG WILL**

On the road to where?

**EDWARD**

Everywhere. How do I explain it?

<b>#15 FIGHT THE DRAGONS</b>
------------------------------

It's not about a destination, Will. The road is something that's in you. A need. You don't drive it - it drives you. Understand?

**YOUNG WILL**

No.

**EDWARD**

I'VE NEVER BEEN A MAN WHO LIVED AN OFFICE LIFE  
I'VE NEVER BEEN A MAN BEHIND A DESK  
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A MAN WHO SAID  
THAT STAYIN' STILL IS PLAYIN' DEAD  
THE KIND WHO'S LOOKIN' FORWARD TO THE CHALLENGES AHEAD  
PEOPLE SAY THAT'S IRRESPONSIBLE  
PEOPLE TELL ME STAY AT HOME  
BUT I'M NOT MADE FOR THINGS  
LIKE MOWIN' LAWNS OR APRON STRINGS  
I'M MY BEST  
WHEN NOT AT REST

SO I FIGHT THE DRAGONS  
AND I STORM THE CASTLES  
AND I WIN A BATTLE OR TWO



**EDWARD (CON'T)**

THEN COMES THE DAY IT'S TIME  
I'M PACKIN' UP AND I AM  
BRINGING ALL MY STORIES HOME TO YOU

ALL I CAN SEE IS MILES AHEAD WITH MILES TO GO  
ALL I CAN FEEL IS WIND AND SUN AND SKY  
STOP FOR A COFFEE, MAKE A FRIEND  
AND PRAY THE DAY WILL NEVER END  
'CUZ THERE'S ONE MORE ADVENTURE WAITIN' ROUND ANOTHER BEND

WHERE I FIGHT THE DRAGONS  
AND I STORM THE CASTLES  
AND I WIN A BATTLE OR TWO  
BUT THEN A FEELING COMES  
LIKE FIFTY THOUSAND DRUMS  
ALL BANGING "BRING MY STORIES HOME TO YOU"

AND I WONDER AS I WANDER  
ON THE ROAD FROM DOOR TO DOOR  
EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK OF WHERE I'VE BEEN  
DO YOU KNOW I JOINED THE CIRCUS  
MET A MERMAID  
FOUGHT A WAR  
DO YOU KNOW I THINK OF YOU THROUGH THICK AND THIN

BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH I'M MAKING DEALS  
AND BRINGING PEOPLE JOY  
I'M USUALLY ONLY THINKING OF MY BOY

OUT THERE ON THE ROAD I PRAY  
YOU'LL COME TO ME ONE DAY  
AND SAY--

**EDWARD AND YOUNG WILL**

LET'S FIGHT THE DRAGONS  
AND THEN STORM THE CASTLES

**EDWARD**

'TIL WE WIN WHAT NEEDS TO BE WON  
SO WHEN I'M OLD AND TIRED  
YOU'LL DO THE JOB REQUIRED  
YOU'LL BE THERE TELLING STORIES TO YOUR SON

*(EDWARD and YOUNG WILL move downstage)*

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

THEN WE FIGHT THE DRAGONS  
AND WE STORM THE CASTLES  
AND I DO THE BEST THAT I CAN  
BUT EVERYBODY KNOWS  
THAT'S HOW THE STORY GOES  
TO TURN EACH BOY INTO A BIGGER MAN

SO I'LL FIGHT THE DRAGONS  
'TIL YOU CAN

**#15A STRANGER REPRISE**

*(EDWARD exits. YOUNG WILL realizes he still has his mitt. He throws his ball off stage left. No one throws it back. WILL enters, carrying the red folder. He trades places with YOUNG WILL, who exits.)*

**WILL**

STRANGER  
I'M FEELING STRANGER THAN I'VE EVER FELT BEFORE  
AND SO MUCH MORE

DIFFERENT  
LIKE SOMETHING OLD HAS JOINED WITH SOMETHING NEW  
WHAT SHOULD I DO?

*(As WILL exits, reveal --)*

**SCENE 3**

*BEDROOM. PRESENT.*

*(EDWARD lies in bed. SANDRA turns on the TV.  
Western theme music plays.)*

**#15B EDEN RIVER**

**SANDRA**

A Western! You love Westerns.

**TV NARRATOR**

Eden River. The story of the great frontier and one man determined to make his mark on it - a hero, a champion, a brave pioneer.

*(WILL enters. A sotto conversation with  
SANDRA before she exits.)*

**WILL**

Dad?

*(Ignored, WILL switches off the TV.)*

**EDWARD**

Son?

**WILL**

Can we talk?

**EDWARD**

I believe we have permission.

*(A wince of pain)*

*(WILL helps him with a glass of water as  
EDWARD takes some medicine.)*

**WILL**

Do the pills help?

**EDWARD**

Mostly. But they got me floatin' a bit. Not entirely sure what's real.

**WILL**

I know that feeling.

*(EDWARD smiles. He walked into that one.)*

**WILL (CON'T)**

Do you know much about icebergs, Dad?

**EDWARD**

I saw an iceberg once. They were hauling it down to Texas for drinking water, only they didn't count on an elephant being frozen inside. The woolly kind. A mammoth.

**WILL**

*(interrupting)*

Dad!

*[MUSIC OUT]*

**EDWARD**

What?

**WILL**

I'm trying to make a metaphor here.

**EDWARD**

Then you shouldn't have started with a question. Because people want to answer questions. You should have started with, "The thing about icebergs is..."

**WILL**

*(frustrated)*

The thing about icebergs is you only see 10 percent of them. The other 90 percent is below the water where you can't see it. And that's what it is with you, Dad. I'm only seeing this little bit that sticks above the water.

**EDWARD**

*(joking)*

What, you're seeing down to my nose? My chin?

**WILL**

I have no idea who you are...because you have never told me a single fact.

**EDWARD**

I talk about myself all the time! I tell stories.

**WILL**

Yes, you tell stories, Dad. You make stuff up. And I'm wondering if it's all to conceal something you don't want people to know.

**EDWARD**

You got me. My secret identity.

*(dramatically)*

Superman.

*(Unamused, WILL cuts to the chase--)*

**WILL**

Can we talk about Ashton, Dad?

<b>#15C PRE-SHOWDOWN</b>
--------------------------

**EDWARD**

Ashton? I grew up there. You know that.

*(a shift)*

**WILL**

So why did we never visit? It's not that far a drive.

**EDWARD**

Nothing to see there.

**WILL**

Dad, I'm about to have a kid of my own here. It would kill me if he went through his whole life with...doubts.

**EDWARD**

It would kill you, huh?

*(sitting up)*

Let's hear it, then. What exactly are you accusing me of, Will?

**WILL**

I'm not. I'm just trying to get a handle on some things.

**EDWARD**

Handle 'em as you will. I think we're done talking.

**WILL**

Dad...

**EDWARD**

GET OUT!

*(WILL takes the folder. He crosses with SANDRA and she enters.)*

**SANDRA**

Will -- What did you do?

**WILL**

I didn't do anything.

**JOSEPHINE**

*(intercepting)*

Calm down. Calm down, Will.

**WILL**

I know you're trying to protect me. But you can't.

*(WILL and JOSEPHINE exit)*

**SANDRA**

*(to EDWARD)*

What happened?

**EDWARD**

He attacked me. Come after me like I'm a villain.

**SANDRA**

I'm sure he didn't mean to. Let's get you back to bed.

**EDWARD**

He's got it wrong. I'm not the bad guy.

*(SANDRA sits in the chair beside the bed, shuts her eyes. As EDWARD tries to sleep, the television comes to life.)*

*[SFX: STATIC. BUZZING. (Sounds from a Western)]*

*(The beginning of a dementia dream. COWBOYS and WESTERN TOWNSFOLK emerge from the TV. The bedroom transforms into an Old West saloon.)*

**EDWARD**

Who are you people?! Get out of my room!

*(WILL appears downstage dressed as a Wild West sheriff.)*

**EDWARD**

Oh, you want to do this, Will? We can do this, right here.

**#16 SHOWDOWN**

**WILL**

YOU SEE THIS MAN?  
THIS TIRED MAN?  
HE'S A LIAR AND SCOUNDREL TO THE CORE

**EDWARD**

YOU SEE THIS BOY?  
UNGRATEFUL BOY  
KNOCKIN' ON A LONG FORGOTTEN DOOR

**WILL**

NOW I KNOW  
I KNOW  
SOMETHING HE'S BEEN HIDING  
SOMETHING THAT HIS PRIDE WILL NOT REVEAL

**EDWARD**

HE WASTES HIS TIME ACCUSING ME  
WHAT EXACTLY DOES THIS FELLOW FEEL?

**WILL**

I FEEL LIKE THERE'S GONNA BE A HANGIN' TONIGHT

**COWBOY**

**Bryson**

Damn right!

**WILL**

THERE'S GONNA BE A HANGIN' TONIGHT

**VARIOUS**

**Bryson, Oz, Shane**

'Bout time!/String him up!

**WILL**

THERE'S GOTTA BE  
I GUARANTEE  
A WRONG AND A RIGHT

**WILL (CON'T)**

AND THERE'S GONNA BE A HANGIN' TONIGHT

*(THE TOWNSFOLK cheer and dance)*

THERE'S GONNA BE A HANGIN' TONIGHT

**ALL**

THAT'S RIGHT!

YES, THERE'S GONNA BE A HANGIN' TONIGHT!

**WILL**

YOU SEE THIS FOLDER IN MY HAND?

YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT IS

**EDWARD**

Do I?

**WILL**

WHO'LL BE THE FIRST TO TELL US

**EDWARD**

TELL ALL YOU WANT

BUT YOU WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND

**WILL**

SO WHAT COMES NEXT?

**MEN AND WOMEN**

WHAT COMES NEXT

ABIDE THE LAW

BEGIN A TRIAL

A TRIAL

A TRIAL

*(MEN and WOMEN gather together to form A JURY)*

**EDWARD**

Friends, life is a trial.

*(THE JURY laughs and nods)*

**WILL**

Now, you claim...



**EDWARD**

SON--  
YOU CAN'T GO BACK TO WHAT YOU WERE  
YOUR LIFE WON'T RERUN  
AND YOU CAN'T UNDO THE THINGS  
THAT YOU'D PREFER BE UNDONE  
YOU CAN NEVER CHANGE THE PAST  
THOUGH IT MAY HAUNT EVERY BREATH  
YOU CAN DROWN BUT BE REBORN  
IF YOU'RE NOT FRIGHTENED OF DEATH

**JURY**

Ooh.

**EDWARD**

YOU'RE SO SURE THAT I'M A ROTTEN FATHER  
ABSENT AND LAME  
NEVER INTERESTED IN STAYING HOME  
OR HOMECOMING GAME  
MAYBE YOU'RE THE ONE  
IMPERFECT SON  
WHO OVERREACTS  
BETTER CHECK WITH ALL YOUR SOURCES  
BEFORE TWISTING THE FACTS

**WILL**

SO, BY NO MEANS DID YOU VISIT ASHTON?

**EDWARD**

BACK IN MY YOUTH

**WILL AND ALL BUT JUDGE**

CAN YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN PRECISELY  
WHY YOU'RE HIDING THE TRUTH?

**EDWARD**

I'M NOT HIDING THE TRUTH

**WILL**

*(overlap)*

YOUR HONOR, I WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT  
ONE MORE MAJOR PIECE OF EVIDENCE

**EDWARD, GROCER AND WIFE**

AND THEN YOU'LL ACQUIT!

**WILL**

WOULD YOU KINDLY TELL THE JURY  
WHAT YOU HOLD IN THE AIR

**EDWARD**

SAYS RIGHT HERE THAT IT'S A DEED

**WILL AND ALL BUT JUDGE**

TO WHAT?

**EDWARD**

A HOUSE

**WILL**

TELL ME WHERE

**EDWARD**

REALLY, SON, I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT YOU THINK YOU'RE TRYING TO PROVE

**WILL AND ALL BUT JUDGE**

WHERE'S THE HOUSE?

**EDWARD**

IT SAYS IN ASHTON

**WILL**

AND THAT'S SOMEWHERE THAT YOU'VE  
NEVER BEEN TO SINCE YOUR BOYHOOD  
BUT THIS DEED SPELLS IT OUT  
THERE IS SOMEONE LIVING IN THAT HOUSE

**EDWARD**

NOW, WHAT'S THIS ABOUT

**WILL**

YOU INSIST YOU'VE NEVER BEEN THERE

**EDWARD**

WELL, THAT MIGHT BE THE CASE

**WILL**

NOW, YOU'RE LYING

**EDWARD**

THAT'S ENOUGH

**WILL**

YOU'RE LYING RIGHT TO MY FACE  
(re: folder)

Who is Jenny Hill?

(EDWARD won't answer)

**WILL**

(to the JUDGE)

Your honor?

**EDWARD**

Doc, how long we been friends?

**JUDGE**

Take him away.

(THE COWBOYS lift EDWARD onto the  
bed. He feels an imaginary noose  
around his neck.)

**ALL**

NOW THERE'S GONNA BE A HANGIN' TONIGHT  
THERE'S GONNA BE A HANGIN' TONIGHT  
THERE'S GOTTA BE  
A STURDY TREE  
AND IN THE MOONLIGHT

**MEN**

THERE'S GONNA BE A  
HANGIN'  
THERE'S GONNA BE A  
HANGIN'  
THERE'S GONNA BE

**WOMEN**

THERE'S GONNA BE A  
HANGIN'  
THERE'S GONNA BE A  
HANGIN'

**TOWNSFOLK AND WILL**

A HANGIN'  
A HANGIN'  
A HANGIN'  
A HANGIN'  
A HANGIN'  
A HANGIN' !!

(WILL and all the WESTERN CHARACTERS exit.  
The bedroom returns to normal.)

[SFX: THUNDER]

*(EDWARD screams, clutching his neck. Moving downstage, he takes his hands away, surprised to find there's no noose. SANDRA wakes, panicked to see EDWARD in this state.)*

**SANDRA**

Edward? Honey?

**EDWARD**

He attacked me. Come after me like I'm a villain.

**SANDRA**

You're okay! Let's calm down. Tell me what happened.

**EDWARD**

I just did!

*(beat)*

I did, didn't I? It's all got kinda blurry.

*(He crumples to the floor. SANDRA joins him.)*

**SANDRA**

It's okay honey. It was just a nightmare. You're right here with me.

*(They both listen to the rain)*

*[SFX: THUNDER]*

<b>#17 I DON'T NEED A ROOF</b>
--------------------------------

**EDWARD**

The roof should hold up. The shingles still got at least ten years in 'em. You'll be fine.

*(off her reaction)*

Ah, honey. What'd I say?

**SANDRA**

IN YOUR FACE  
I SEE A LIFETIME  
IN THIS PLACE

**SANDRA (CON'T)**

I FEEL AT EASE  
WALLPAPER PEELING  
PAINT WEARING THIN  
HERE'S WHERE I END AND BEGIN

I DON'T NEED A ROOF TO SAY I'M COVERED  
I DON'T NEED A ROOF TO KNOW I'M HOME  
THERE COULD BE A SINGLE SHINGLE DANGLING OVERHEAD  
I DON'T NEED A ROOF TO MAKE MY BED

*(EDWARD lays his head in SANDRA's lap)*

CLOSE YOUR EYES  
I'M STILL BESIDE YOU  
NO GOODBYES  
NEEDED TODAY  
HEAR WHAT THE RAIN SAYS  
KNOW WHAT IT KNOWS  
AFTER THE RAIN SOMETHING GROWS

I DON'T NEED A ROOF TO SAY I LOVE YOU  
I DON'T NEED A ROOF TO CALL YOU MINE  
I DON'T NEED ADVENTURE IN SOME FAR AWAY FRONTIER  
I DON'T NEED A ROOF TO FEEL YOU NEAR  
ALL I NEED IS YOU AND YOU FOREVER  
ALL I FEEL IS TRUE AND ABSOLUTE  
I DON'T NEED A LEGAL DEED TO HELP ME PLAY MY PART  
I DON'T NEED A ROOF TO HOLD MY HEART  
STAY WITH ME  
STAY WITH ME

*[MUSIC SEGUES TO #17A]*

*(As EDWARD and SANDRA exit, segue to--)*

**SCENE 4**

*OUTSIDE A TIDY, LITTLE HOUSE*

**#17A JENNY HILL**

*(JENNY HILL ENTERS, kneeling at the river's edge to fill up her watering can. Her back is to WILL as he enters, carrying the red folder.)*

**WILL**

Excuse me. Hi.

**JENNY HILL**

Oh.

*(recognizing him)*

Oh!

**WILL**

Hello.

**JENNY HILL**

I wasn't expecting you.

**WILL**

Are you Jenny Hill?

**JENNY HILL**

I am. And you're Will, Eddie's son. You look so much like him.

**WILL**

How did you know my father?

**JENNY HILL**

From high school. Before that, even.

*(A beat--not flinching)*

**WILL**

Were you and my father having an affair?

**JENNY HILL**

*(taken back)*

Wow. You just said it.

**WILL**

I've seen him with women. He flirts. He always has. On some level, I presumed he was cheating on my mother. I just never had proof.

*(shows her the folder)*

That's your signature, right? The deed to this house. He co-signed the loan.

**JENNY HILL**

Can I ask you a question? Why did you come here today? If you found this, why didn't you just ask Eddie?

**WILL**

Because he's dying.

*(JENNY is taken back by the suddenness of it. She's a tangle of conflicting emotions.)*

**JENNY HILL**

Look, I don't know how much you want to know about any of this. You have one image of your father and it would be wrong of me to go and change it.

**WILL**

My father talked about a lot of things he never did, and I'm sure he did a lot of things he never talked about. I'm just trying to reconcile the two.

*(beat)*

You said you went to high school with him. Was that here, in Ashton?

**JENNY HILL**

It was in Ashton, but Ashton wasn't here. You do know what happened to the town, right?

**WILL**

No.

**JENNY HILL**

Oh honey. That's the only reason your father came back. The state was building a new reservoir -- the whole valley was gonna be flooded. In just a few hours, the town of Ashton would be thirty feet under water.

*(making space on the porch)*

Edward Bloom came back to take one last look at the town he left so long ago.

**SCENE 5**

ASHTON TOWN SQUARE

*(Lights up--THE CITIZENS OF ASHTON have chained themselves to the buildings in protest. Banners and signs read "Save Ashton" and "Don't Drown Our Town." DON PRICE leads a chant from the base of a statue--)*

**DON PRICE**

What do we want?

**TOWNSFOLK**

Nothing to change!

**DON PRICE**

When do we want it?

**TOWNSFOLK**

Forever!

**DON PRICE**

What do we want?

**TOWNSFOLK**

Nothing to change!

**DON PRICE**

When do we want it?

**TOWNSFOLK**

Forever!

**DON PRICE**

As long as we're chained here, the state won't dare drown this town.

*(EDWARD enters. ZACKY is the first to spot him.)*

**ZACKY PRICE**

Edward Bloom?

Zacky continues

It can't be.



**EDWARD**

It is!

Zacky continues

**ZACKY PRICE**

We knew you'd come. When you left, you said quote, "I'll never forget Ashton. I'll come back, I promise."

**SHARECROPPER**

We just thought it'd be sooner!

**DON PRICE**

Edward Bloom.

**EDWARD**

Don Price.

**DON PRICE**

That's Mayor Don Price.

**EDWARD**

Congratulations. Look, I came because I read in the paper that they were floodin' the valley.

**ZACKY PRICE**

So what's your plan, Edward?

**EDWARD**

*(confused)*

What, me? You think I'm here to save you?

**#18 START OVER**

**ZACKY PRICE**

You're persuasive! You can talk to them, get them to stop building the dam.

**EDWARD**

The dam's already built. The river's already rising.

**DON PRICE**

The state's not gonna let us all drown.

**EDWARD**

Does anyone even know you're here?

**DON PRICE**

Yeah!

**DON PRICE (CON'T)**

*(actually...)*

Maybe.

**ZACKY PRICE**

Wait, nobody knows we're here?! Edward, you gotta help us. You're the only one who can save the town.

**DON PRICE**

Uh-uh! Not this time!

EDWARD'S NOT A SAVIOR  
EDWARD'S NOT A SAINT  
HOW CAN HE BE GOOD FOR US?  
HE'S NOT THE THING HE SAYS HE AIN'T  
WE CAN CHANGE OUR FATE  
YOU BET WE CAN  
WE DON'T NEED THIS INTERLOPING MAN

**EDWARD**

He's right!

**DON PRICE**

I am not! I mean...what?

**EDWARD**

You gotta let go of the past.

I SUGGEST THAT YOU  
START OVER

**DON PRICE**

Now?

**EDWARD**

START OVER

**DON PRICE**

How?

**EDWARD**

INSTEAD OF DROWN  
WE MOVE THE TOWN  
AND START OVER

**TOWNSFOLK**

Wow.

*(DON grumbles)*

**EDWARD**

YOU CAN SWEAT  
YOU CAN FRET  
'TIL WE'RE ALL SOAKING WET  
'CUZ GOOD GOD THERE'S A FLOOD ON THE WAY  
IF YOU START OVER  
TOMORROW BEGINS TODAY

What's so great about these buildings? Nothin'. These roads are full of potholes. But that's not what makes a town -- a town is made of people and memories and dreams. You got those! You don't have to stay here to stay together!

**FARM GIRL**

Karnie

But where we movin' to?!

**CHEERLEADER**

Alura

We gotta get some new land first.

**DON PRICE**

We couldn't afford to build a new town anyway.

**EDWARD**

*(undeterred)*

What if I got you the land and the money?

**ZACKY PRICE**

*(re: chains)*

Well, you'd know where to find us.

*(EDWARD leaves THE TOWSFOLK to meet up with AMOS CALLOWAY, seated at his desk, along with a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.)*

**AMOS**

I'll tell ya, Edward --

WHEN WE MET I LIVED A KIND OF SECRETIVE LIFE  
I WAS A MYSTERIOUS MAN  
AFTER MEETING YOU I MET MYSELF AND MY WIFE  
ALL BECAUSE YOU TOLD ME I CAN  
YOU'RE UPSET  
YOU'RE IN NEED  
I'VE GOT LAND  
AND A DEED

**AMOS (CON'T)**

YOU CAN HAVE EVERY WEED  
EVERY STONE  
YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN WHO I WOULD EVER GIVE A THING TO  
THE TRUEST FRIEND THAT I'VE EVER KNOWWWWN!

You'll love this land. Lotsa tasty rabbits!

**EDWARD**

Thank you Amos, thank you!

*(EDWARD leaves AMOS to find KARL THE GIANT,  
who has become a Wall Street tycoon. He has  
a GIANT GIRLFRIEND.)*

**KARL**

Edward! When I met you, I was living in a cave.

YOU CONVINCED ME TO  
START OVER  
START OVER

We'd offset the construction costs by floating a thirty-year  
fixed-rate bond tied to the to the Nikkei index.

*(beat)*

I know a guy.

IN A RUSH  
YOU'LL BE FLUSH  
I'LL GET CASH  
BUT HUSH-HUSH  
I WON'T DO THIS FOR JUST ANY JOE  
YOU CAN START OVER  
AND EDWARD I'LL GIVE YOU THE DOUGH

**EDWARD**

Thank you Karl, thank you!

*(EDWARD returns to THE TOWNSFOLK)*

I GOT YOU THE LAND JUST OVER THE HILL  
AND MONEY TO BUILD A NEW TOWN

**ZACKY PRICE**

MONEY TO BUILD A NEW TOWN

**DON PRICE**

MONEY TO BUILD A NEW TOWN

**TOWNSFOLK**

MONEY TO BUILD A NEW TOWN

**EDWARD, MEN AND WOMEN**

START OVER  
START OVER  
INSTEAD OF DROWN  
WE MOVE THE TOWN  
AND START OVER

**MEN AND WOMEN**

WE CAN SWEAT  
WE CAN FRET  
'TIL WE'RE ALL SOAKING WET

**EDWARD, DON AND ZACKY**

SO YOU BETTER BELIEVE WHAT WE SAY  
IF WE START OVER TOMORROW BEGINS TODAY

**ALL**

TOMORROW BEGINS TODAY

**EDWARD, DON AND ZACKY**

TOMORROW BEGINS TODAY

*(DON raises the deed and check triumphantly)*

**ALL**

TOMORROW BEGINS  
TOMORROW BEGINS!

*(As the song starts to build toward  
its conclusion, everything suddenly freezes  
and we're back to JENNY HILL'S PORCH)*

**WILL**

Wait -- if what you're saying is true, then that's the biggest thing my father's ever done. He saved a town. Why wouldn't he tell me that story?

**JENNY HILL**

Because the story doesn't end there.

*(JENNY HILL crosses into the town square, where she chains herself. Everything unfreezes --)*

**ZACKY PRICE**

Edward, you saved us again!

**EDWARD**

It was all Don's idea.

*(TOWNSFOLK cheer for DON instead)*

**DON PRICE**

Water's risin'! Let's go!

*(As CITIZENS exit, DON offers EDWARD a handshake. EDWARD notices a woman with her back to him. Doesn't realize it's JENNY.)*

**EDWARD**

Ma'am? Ma'am, we gotta go. They already started flooding the valley.

**JENNY HILL**

You're too late.

**EDWARD**

No -- we still got an hour, at least.

**JENNY HILL**

*(turning to him)*

You're years too late.

**#18A START OVER (REPRISE)**

**EDWARD**

Jenny Hill. What are you -- I heard you married, moved away.

**JENNY HILL**

My husband left me, too. He could never compete with the fantasy. A girl only gets one true love, and that was you.

**EDWARD**

Jenny, I'm sorry.

**JENNY HILL**

Just forget me like you did before. Let me drown here, Edward Bloom.

**EDWARD**

I won't.

**JENNY HILL**

You did! I have been drowning since the moment you left.

**EDWARD**

I'M NOT HERE TO ARGUE OR CONFESS  
ONLY HERE FOR DAMSELS IN DISTRESS  
LEAVE THIS MESS AND THEN  
START OVER  
START OVER  
SAY 'BYE TO THE OLD FANTASY  
AND START OVER

WHEN THERE'S PAIN  
DON'T COMPLAIN  
JUST HOLD ON THROUGH THE RAIN  
AND YOU'LL WONDER WHAT CAUSED ALL THE FUSS  
WHEN WE START OVER  
TOMORROW BEGINS FOR US

*(JENNY relents. EDWARD unlocks her chains and carries her off-stage. Water rises, eventually overtaking the town. WILL watches from the porch. A title card: "THE FLOOD." As the waters retreat, EDWARD leads JENNY in, her eyes blindfolded.)*

**EDWARD**

Little further. Little further. Now watch out for that poisonous snake!

*(she squeals)*

Just kiddin'. Alright, three...two...one..

*(He pulls down the blindfold)*

**JENNY HILL**

Oh my god. Is this really my house?

**EDWARD**

All you have to do is sign.

*(He holds the red folder with the deed.  
JENNY signs. So does EDWARD.)*

**EDWARD**

*(signing)*

Edward Bloom. I promised I'd come back, Jenny. I'm a man of my word.

*(WILL takes the folder from EDWARD's hand)*

**JENNY HILL**

Thank you.

*(A smile. A hug. The hug turns into a kiss.  
EDWARD lets it go on longer than he should.  
He finally pushes away.)*

**EDWARD**

I am in love with my wife. From the moment I saw her until the moment I die, she's the only one.

**JENNY HILL**

Lucky girl.

**EDWARD**

I'm sorry, Jenny. I am.

*(With that, EDWARD exits. As we transition  
back to present day, JENNY sits on the porch  
with WILL.)*

**JENNY HILL**

He never came back. And I guess he never said a word about saving Ashton. The greatest thing he ever did, and not a story to go with it.

**WILL**

He could have left you out of the story.

**JENNY HILL**

No, he could never risk you coming here, finding out. It had to go untold.

**WILL**

It was just a kiss.



**JENNY HILL**

*(surprised)*

You don't understand him, do you?

**WILL**

I want to.

**JENNY HILL**

Honey, you're the key to all of this. The way Eddie smiled when he talked about you -- well, you were just a boy, but you were smart. He was so proud of you. You knew that, didn't you?

*(WILL didn't)*

He wanted you to be proud of him, too.

*(WILL's phone rings. He checks the number and answers.)*

**WILL**

Hi...What's wrong, are you...When? Where is he? Is Mom...Okay. I'm coming, I'm coming.

*(to Jenny)*

I'm sorry. I have to...

**JENNY HILL**

Is it Eddie? Is he..?

**WILL**

I don't know.

**#18B TRANSITION TO HOSPITAL**

*(WILL exits as we reveal--)*

**SCENE 6**

*HOSPITAL ROOM*

*(EDWARD sleeps in a hospital bed. JOSEPHINE and SANDRA pace. WILL enters)*

**WILL**

What happened?

**JOSEPHINE**

Your father stopped breathing. We called the ambulance --

**WILL**

Is he going to be okay? I mean, will he get back to the way he was when--

*(She shakes her head)*

**WILL (CON'T)**

Mom. I'm so sorry. I should have been there.

**SANDRA**

There's nothing you could have done.

**WILL**

What does Dr. Bennett say?

**SANDRA**

They'll know better in the morning. Some test. I'm supposed to go downstairs--fill out paperwork.

**WILL**

I'll go with you.

**SANDRA**

No, one of us should stay with him.

**JOSEPHINE**

I'll go with you.

**#18C TIME STOPS REPRISE**

*(SANDRA hesitates, reluctant to leave, but then departs with JOSEPHINE. WILL sits beside the bed, writing in a note pad. DR. BENNETT enters.)*

**WILL**

Dr. Bennett.

**DR. BENNETT**

Will.

**WILL**

Dr. Bennett, how long have you known my father?

**DR. BENNETT**

*(checking EDWARD's chart)*

How old are you? Add a couple years to that.

**WILL**

How would you describe him?

**DR. BENNETT**

*(re: chart)*

Five-nine. One-sixty. Regulated hypertension.

**WILL**

Can he hear us?

**DR. BENNETT**

Hard to say what anyone hears. Harder still to know if they're listenin'.

*(DR. BENNETT exits. WILL pulls a chair over next to his father's bed. It's the mirror image of the opening, with a son beside his father.)*

**WILL**

I know about Ashton, Dad. I know what you did. You saved a town and broke a girl's heart. I get why you didn't want Mom to know. I do. But what you did was...heroic.

*(re: notebook)*

I made a list of your stories. There are thirty-six basic tales, with a lot of variations of course. Some are just jokes. Awful jokes, mostly. But you take the rest and it's like a myth. An epic tale about a farmer's son from Alabama who wanted to see the world. You never did, though. I did. And I think that's because of you.

*(takes EDWARD's hand)*

All this time, I thought you were trying to impress me. You were trying to inspire me.

[SFX: A LOW SOUND]

**WILL (CON'T)**

Dad?

*(EDWARD coughs, gasps, panicked.)*

Dad. Do you want me to get a nurse?

*(EDWARD shakes his head unambiguously)*

What can I do? Can I help? Can I get you something? Water?

*(WILL pours a glass from the pitcher on the nightstand. EDWARD pushes it away. He wanted something else.)*

**EDWARD**

The river.

**WILL**

The river?

**EDWARD**

Tell me how it happens.

**WILL**

How what happens?

**EDWARD**

How I go.

**WILL**

I don't...You mean what the Witch showed you? I don't know that part of the story, Dad. You never told me what you saw.

**EDWARD**

*(panicked)*

Will...

**WILL**

I can't. Dad, I don't know how to do this.

*(Every instinct tells WILL to get the doctor. EDWARD gives a louder noise. Desperate.)*

**WILL (CON'T)**

I can try, Dad. If you help. Just tell me how it starts.

**EDWARD**

Like this.

**#19 WHAT'S NEXT**

**WILL**

Okay. Okay.

*(WILL wings it, desperately trying to make up an Edward Bloom story on the spot. Looking around--)*

FIRST THINGS FIRST  
WE'RE IN THIS PRISON CELL  
HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO BREAK OUT  
FIND ANOTHER PLACE TO STAKE OUT  
LOOK AROUND  
BE SURE WE AREN'T SEEN  
SLOWLY CHECK THE DOOR  
BEFORE WE'RE SPOTTED  
WERE WE SPOTTED?  
I KNOW  
YOU'VE BEEN  
*(really pouring it on)*  
A SECRET DOUBLE AGENT  
BUT WE CAN TURN THE PAGE INTO ANOTHER KIND OF TALE

*(Lights rise--EDWARD sits up in bed)*

**WILL**

LET'S GO  
THE DOOR  
IS JUST OUR FIRST OPPONENT  
SO STEP OUT OF YOUR STATE OF SHOCK  
WE ONLY NEED TO PICK THIS LOCK-

**EDWARD**

No need!

*(From his bed, EDWARD pulls out the Key to the City. Hands it to WILL. WILL finds a wheelchair. Helps his father climb in.)*

**WILL**

"WHAT'S NEXT" IS ALL ANYONE NEEDS TO BEGIN  
"WHAT'S NEXT" HAS BEEN A FRIEND TO YOU  
WHAT'S NEXT TO DO?  
ONE WORD AND THEN SUDDENLY ONE MORE AGAIN  
JUST LIKE A PEN  
WRITING A PERFECT TALE

*(The key "unlocks" the door. WILL starts to  
wheel EDWARD through the "hallway.")*

**WILL**

OUT THE DOOR  
AND PRAY THE COAST IS CLEAR

**DR. BENNETT**

Edward?

**WILL**

NOSES TO THE GROUND  
BEFORE WE'RE SPOTTED

**EDWARD**

We were spotted!

**WILL**

SO, NOW WE FACE  
THE ULTIMATE DECISION  
RELINQUISH OUR CONTROL  
AS WE SURRENDER UP THE FIGHT  
OR ELSE WE SAY  
HELLO TO THE COLLISION  
JUST DO OUR JOB AND DO IT WELL

**EDWARD**

OR BETTER YET  
LET'S RUN LIKE HELL!

*(WILL pushes the chair fast, nearly  
slamming into DR. BENNETT.)*

**DR. BENNETT**

Will! What are you doing?

**EDWARD**

Figured out what's wrong with me, Doc. Been out of the water too long!

**DR. BENNETT**

Of course.

*(Reaching an "elevator.")*

**WILL**

"WHAT'S NEXT" IS ALL ANYONE NEEDS TO BEGIN  
"WHAT'S NEXT" HAS BEEN A FRIEND TO YOU  
WHAT'S NEXT TO DO?

*(Crotale plays a "ding" indicating the  
elevator doors opening. They enter with a  
NURSE in scrubs.)*

**WILL (CON'T)**

ONE WORD AND THEN SUDDENLY ONE MORE AGAIN  
JUST LIKE THAT PEN  
WRITING A PERFECT TALE

**EDWARD**

*(to NURSE)*

Edward Bloom. Green's a good color on you. Brings out your eyes.

*(Another "ding." WILL wheels EDWARD out of  
the "elevator.")*

**WILL**

*("that's enough")*

Alright, Dad.

**EDWARD**

You know who else had green eyes?

**WILL**

The mermaid?

**EDWARD**

The mermaid. Sea-green. Absolutely beautiful.

*(Passing through the front doors of the  
hospital--)*

**EDWARD**

*(points)*

There! My old Chevy!

*(EDWARD gulps from a water bottle)*

**WILL**

EDWARD BLOOM  
HOW DID YOU SWIM THROUGH DANGER IN THE WORLD  
WHAT WAS IN THE HEART THAT BEATS INSIDE YOU?  
WERE YOU SIMPLY WETTER THAN  
THE ORDINARY AVERAGE MAN  
OR WAS IT JUST YOUR FINS AND SCALES TO GUIDE YOU TO:  
WHAT'S NEXT

**EDWARD**

WE START THE CAR

*[SFX: ENGINE ROAR]*

**WILL**

WHAT'S NEXT?

*[SFX: Tire SQUEAL]*

**EDWARD**

WE HIT THE ROAD!

**WILL**

WHAT'S NEXT?

**EDWARD**

WE FIND THE RIVER

**WILL**

WHAT'S NEXT?

WHAT'S NEXT?

**EDWARD**

I don't, I...

*(EDWARD is confused -- he knows and doesn't know.)*

*(Reveal The River Valley--CHARACTERS from all parts of the story are waiting for EDWARD, including AMOS, KARL, DON PRICE and DR. BENNETT.)*

**WILL**

AND WHO DO WE SEE AT THE RIVER TO GREET YOU  
EVERYONE THERE AT THE RIVER TO MEET YOU  
EVERYONE YOU EVER KNEW



**WILL (CON'T)**

EVER SPOKE OF  
WAITING FOR YOU TO ARRIVE

NOW, CAN YOU SEE KARL BY THE TREE IN THE DISTANCE  
AMOS ARRIVES WITH HIS USUAL FLAIR

**ZACKY AND DON**

GATHERED 'ROUND, CHEERING ON  
YES, EVEN THE WITCH IS THERE  
SHE IS THERE!

*(THE WITCH enters with her crystal ball.  
EDWARD climbs out of the wheelchair,  
revealing better clothes under his hospital  
gown. He starts shaking hands. It's almost a  
receiving line.)*

**WILL**

"WHAT'S NEXT" IS ALL ANYONE  
NEEDS TO BEGIN  
"WHAT'S NEXT" HAS BEEN  
A FRIEND TO YOU  
WHAT'S NEXT TO DO?

ONLY ONE DAD  
ONLY INSPIRING ONE SON  
EDWARD, YOU'RE DONE  
WRITING YOUR PERFECT TALE  
TELLING THE PERFECT TALE

**EDWARD'S FRIENDS**

EDWARD BLOOM  
WE'VE COME TO SAY GOODBYE  
COME TO TELL YOU WHY  
WE'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU  
YES, WE LOVE YOU

YOU

**EVERYONE**

IT WAS A PERFECT TALE

*(THE MERMAID appears in the river)*

**EDWARD**

Well I can't say this was a surprise, exactly.

*(gestures to THE WITCH)*

But I thank you all for coming. A man is as rich as his friends.  
I am a tycoon.

*(EDWARD looks around--)*

But someone's missin' here...

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

**#20 HOW IT ENDS**

*(Sandra enters. She's wearing a spectacular dress. Edward greets her center-stage.)*

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

I'VE SEEN THIS ALL BEFORE  
WHEN I WAS JUST A CHILD  
I MET A WITCH WHO TOOK A BOW  
AND SHOWED ME HOW IT ENDED  
WE STOOD HERE ON THE SHORE  
THE AIR WAS SWEET AND MILD  
WITH DISBELIEF IMPLAUSIBLY SUSPENDED  
AND IN MY CHILD'S IMAGINATION  
I REMEMBER YOU

*(To KARL)*

THOUGH I DIDN'T KNOW IF WE WERE FOES OR FRIENDS  
BUT NOW YOU'RE STANDING HERE  
I SEE THE VISION COMING CLEAR  
I KNOW EXACTLY HOW THIS ENDS

*(Turns to SANDRA)*

IT ENDS WITH YOU  
IT ENDS WITH ME  
IT ENDS THE WAY A STORY'S  
ENDING IS SUPPOSED TO BE  
A BIT INSANE  
A TOUCH OF PAIN  
ADEPTLY TOLD  
YET UNCONTROLLED

IT ENDS WITH FAITH  
IT ENDS WITH LOVE  
IT ENDS WITH WATER IN THE  
RIVER AND THE SUN ABOVE  
PART EPIC TALE  
PART FIRE SALE

BUT ALL SINCERE  
AND STANDING HERE

*(To WILL)*

I KNOW I WASN'T PERFECT

**EDWARD (CON'T)**

I KNOW MY LIFE WAS SMALL  
I KNOW THAT I PRETENDED  
THAT I KNEW IT ALL  
BUT WHEN YOU TELL MY STORY  
AND I HOPE SOMEBODY DOES  
REMEMBER ME AS SOMETHING  
BIGGER THAN I WAS  
IT ENDS WITH SONS  
IT ENDS WITH WIVES  
IT ENDS WITH KNOWING WHEN THE PAVEMENT BENDS  
WE FIND OUR LIVES

SO LET IT COME  
AND LET ME GO  
SHOW ME THE WAVES  
AND LET THEM FLOW  
IT ALL ENDS WELL  
THIS MUCH I KNOW

*(EDWARD BLOOM's departure is a big moment, a celebration, appropriately triumphant and unhurried. THE CHARACTERS of EDWARD's stories slowly exit as we return to the hospital room.)*

*(WILL sits beside the bed, holding HIS FATHER's hand.)*

**WILL**

And that's how it happens. That's how you go.

*(The flatline of EDWARD's monitor)*

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

*(We stay in the moment, leaving WILL alone. He kisses his father's forehead. He then moves downstage to--*

**SCENE 7**

*THE RIVER'S EDGE*

*(WILL finishes telling a story at the funeral. A laugh from the guests. He and JOSEPHINE then greet a receiving line of MOURNERS, each of whom takes a daffodil to toss in the water.)*

*(Among the guests, we see the "real" versions of many of EDWARD's characters. WILL recognizes them from his father's stories. While the details were exaggerated, EDWARD's friends were real, including AMOS and KARL THE GIANT -- a very tall man.)*

**#21 THE PROCESSION**

**MEN AND WOMEN**

OOH, OOH, OOH, OOH  
OOH, OOH  
OOH, OOH  
OOH, OOH  
OOH (DOO DOO DOO DOO)  
OOH (DOO DOO)  
  
OOH  
DOO, DOO

**WILL**

I don't think we've met. I'm Will.

**KARL**

I'm Karl.

*(KARL exits. Sharing a look, WILL and JOSEPHINE exit)*

*[MUSIC SEGUES]*

**#22 BE THE HERO (REPRISE)**

*(Lights shift as SANDRA enters, carrying a picnic basket. It's not immediately clear if this is just after the funeral, or some time later.)*

*(WILL's six-year-old SON runs in, carrying a fishing pole.)*

**WILL'S SON**

Grandma! Grandma!

**SANDRA**

What is it?

**WILL'S SON**

We just saw the biggest fish in the whole world! It was as big as a car!

*(WILL and JOSEPHINE enter)*

**WILL**

Now, son. Let's stick to the facts.

*(look to SANDRA and JOSEPHINE)*

It was at least as big as a truck.

**WILL'S SON**

Yeah, a truck! And we're gonna catch it.

**SANDRA**

I can't wait!

**JOSEPHINE**

*("get to it")*

I want to see this fish.

**SANDRA**

*(to WILL and SON, re: basket)*

You get hungry, there's barbecue.

*(JOSEPHINE takes SANDRA's arm. They continue walking, and exit.)*

**WILL**

You know, it was right here on this spot that your granddad helped me catch my first fish.

*(gesturing wide)*

It was this big.

**WILL'S SON**

How'd you do it?

**WILL**

That is a Bloom family secret -- passed only from father to son.

BE THE HERO OF YOUR STORY  
IF YOU CAN  
BE THE CHAMPION IN THE FIGHT  
NOT JUST A MAN  
ON A WING OR ON A PRAYER  
YOU GET THERE ONLY WITH YOUR VOICE  
WITH A STORY IN YOUR HEART  
YOU WON'T NEED ANY OTHER CHOICE  
YOU'RE THE HERO  
FIGHTING DRAGONS  
WINNING WARS

BE THE HERO AND THE WORLD WILL SOON BE YOURS!!

*BLACKOUT*

*END OF MUSICAL*

**#23 BOWS**

**#24 EXIT MUSIC**