

Sun-Dried Tomatoes

by

TheatriQ Performance Ensemble
Dreams of Hope

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CHARACTERS

As always character names, pronouns, and identities are at the discretion of the performer. All may be changed.

Barb - Just out of high school, Brandon's best friend and roommate

Brandon - Just out of high school, Barb's best friend and roommate

Steve - Just out of high school, Brandon and Barb's new roommate

Arthur - queer elder, recently retired musician

Mildred - queer elder, lives with Debby

Debby - queer elder, friends with Arthur, lives with Mildred

Bonnie - Martha's partner, Cedar's mom, Fauna's step-mom

Martha - Bonnie's partner, Fauna's mom, Cedar's step-mom

Cedar - high schooler, Bonnie's child, Fauna's step-sibling, Martha's step-child

Fauna - middle schooler, Martha's child, Cedar's step-sibling, Bonnie's step-child

Russell Sprout - a brussels sprout

Potato Jo - a potato

Perry the Pomegranate - new to the garden

Ashton the Slug - ugh

Sunny the Sunflower - flower power!

Pea Number One - just wants some space

Watermelon - figuring it out

Dwight Oak - has been around for a long while

Tomato - growing apart

SPRING IN THE GARDEN

*A golden sun rises over a Pittsburgh garden in the
backyard of a three unit apartment building.*

*Young leaves flash tender green to the morning sky as birds
sing. Bumble bees bustle from one new bud to the next.
(Think Edvard Grieg's Peer Gynt.)*

*The garden sings with new life in a way that is so pretty it's
annoying.*

*And just as the symphony of this spring morning reaches
it's sugar-coated climax-*

POTATO JO

KEEP IT DOWN UP THERE! What's a potato gotta do to get some sleep around here?!

POTATO JO appears. Yes, they are a potato.

*They see the audience (They could appear as a video
projection, reality TV show confessional-style.).*

POTATO JO

A lot of people look at the garden and they see leaves and flowers and fruits and vegetables and all that. And they're like, "Le sigh, let's have a barbecue. Why don't we barbecue anymore? We got that grill. We better use it. It's such a beautiful day."

BUT Don't be fooled!

It's all made out of dirt.

Dirt. Dirt. Dirt.

*RUSSELL SPROUT appears. Yes, they are a brussels
sprout.*

RUSSELL SPROUT

My name is Russell, short for Russell Sprout. I live in the most incredible garden! It's full of all of my favorite plants, the best...and only plants that I know! Spring is my favorite time of year. There are so many new sprouts and leaves popping up everywhere.

It's like—boop! Hello, how are you?

Boop! Oh, hello, how are you?

Boop! Boop! Boop! Hello. Hello! HELLO! So many new friends!

POTATO JO

Spring is the worst. And I'll tell you why. Yeah, there's new plants. And they're

fine. Some of them are obnoxious, like that Russell, but they're never harmful and never malicious. But the worst part are all the new bugs. They come in here like they own the place, moving stuff around. Like, "Oh, I'm a powerful bug that can move around and chomp on your face." It doesn't matter that this is my home, my space. They don't care who they hurt.

RUSSELL SPROUT

Bugs are... Nice. I mean some of them are nice. They try. I think all of them try, well most of them try... to be nice. Ladybug is super nice, such a good friend. Stinkbug though... I just- I think they probably didn't get very much love as a larva.

ROOMIES - TOMATO - 1

BARB and Brandon enter the garden. Brandon holds a small tomato plant.

BARB

This little thing is supposed to be a tomato plant?

BRANDON

Yep! Isn't she cute?

Barb flicks a leaf on the plant.

BARB

Promise me you aren't going to treat this plant like your aloe vera plant and call it your child...

BRANDON

Too late! Do you think I should hire a babysitter to watch her while we're out?

BARB

Brandon, I don't think that's a real thing.

BRANDON

And what about school, doctors appointments, PLAYDATES?!

Barb sighs deeply.

BARB

Deep breaths, honey. Now say it with me:
it is just a plant. It does not need playdates.

BRANDON

Everyone needs friends, Barb.

Fauna and Cedar enter the garden

BARB

It's the new neighbor!

BRANDON

Oh my God, Barb you can't just call someone "new neighbor." Say hi!

BARB

Hi, new neighbor!!!

CEDAR

(to Fauna)

Do you know them?

FAUNA

They live on the top floor. Sometimes we can hear them screaming about Monopoly and dogs at three AM.

BARB

You can hear that?

FAUNA

Loud and clear. You really need to up your Monopoly game.

BARB

Hey! Punk!

BRANDON

Barb, stop fighting the middle schooler. Have some class.

(to Cedar)

Hi, I'm Brandon. And this is Barb. What's your name?

CEDAR

Cedar...

BRANDON

Nice to meet you, Cedar. I know moving can be a pain, but I'm glad you're here.

BARB

Yeah, moving sucks!

CEDAR

Yeah.

BARB

My parents use to move around a lot. It was awful. New schools and new friends and new everything. Sometimes it just felt like what I wanted didn't even matter.

CEDAR

Whatever.

Cedar exits into the apartment.

BARB

I'm sorry?

FAUNA

They're just a little shy around new people.

BARB

Are they a new roommate?

FAUNA

Um, kind of. My mom got remarried. That's my new sibling.

BRANDON

Congratulations!

FAUNA

Thank you.

BARB

Still on for video games later?

FAUNA

You mean still on for getting your butt kicked?

BARB

HARDLY.

Fauna laughs.

FAUNA

Good to see you both. I should go help them unpack. Nice new tomato plant.

BRANDON

ISN'T IT THE BEST?!

FAMILY - MOVING IN

Cedar enters to find BONNIE unpacking some boxes.

BONNIE

Wow, I can't believe we're finally here.

CEDAR

Neither can I.

BONNIE

Oh, isn't this just super exciting, Cedar? Just look at the windows and the floors and wow! Can you believe we're finally here?

CEDAR

Mom I-

MILDRED enters.

MILDRED

(knocking on door)

Hello? Is anyone home?

BONNIE

Yes yes yes! You must be one of the neighbors.

MILDRED

I'm Mildred. I live downstairs with Debby. You must be Martha's wife.

Cedar makes an annoyed noise.

BONNIE

Yes, I'm Bonnie. This is my child, Cedar. Say hi Cedar.

CEDAR

Hi Cedar.

Brief pause.

MILDRED

Well, we're all so happy to welcome you to your new home. You'll just love it here!

BONNIE

We already do.

CEDAR

Yeah, right.

BONNIE

Thank you, Mildred. We appreciate it.

CEDAR

Can I leave now?

BONNIE

And where do you plan on going?

CEDAR

Somewhere else.

MILDRED

We have a beautiful garden. You are welcome to go check it out.

Cedar exits.

BONNIE

Sorry about that.

MILDRED

It's really okay, Bonnie.

BONNIE

It's been hard on Cedar, moving.

MILDRED

Change is rough on all of us. They'll come around.

BONNIE

I hope you're right.

PERRY THE POMEGRANATE

PERRY THE POMEGRANATE

I got replanted into another garden today. I'm not sure I totally understand why, but I think I heard my former people talking about me taking up too much space or something? That kind of didn't make me feel great... It's not like I can really control my size, you know? Anyway, I don't know how to feel about this new place. It's kind of... lonely? I had some plant friends back at my first garden, and I never even got the chance to say goodbye before I was uprooted. I've been at this new place for a couple days now and not a single plant has welcomed me here. We're all planted far from each other and I'd have to raise my voice to an uncomfortable volume to even say hello. I just feel so... isolated. I just wanna go home... my real home.

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EDLERS - ARTHUR ARRIVES

Debby works in the garden. They see something on the ground, slowly they crouch down to look at it.

Arthur enters. They carry luggage. They see Debby, set their luggage on the ground, and sneak over to them.

ARTHUR
Boo!

DEBBY
Ahhh!

Debby jumps up and immediately holds their back in pain.

DEBBY
Oh! Arthur? Arthur!

ARTHUR
Hey there, Debby!

DEBBY
You can't scare me like that any more.

ARTHUR
Sorry.

Arthur smiles at Debby. They embrace.

DEBBY
What are you doing here?

Debby looks down at Arthur's luggage.

DEBBY
With your luggage...

ARTHUR

So, Deb. Here's the thing.

DEBBY

Arthur?

ARTHUR

I might need a place to stay for a little while.

DEBBY

How long is a little while?

ARTHUR

Just a few...months.

DEBBY

A few months?!

ARTHUR

I wouldn't ask unless I needed to.

Pause.

DEBBY

Are you okay?

ARTHUR

I lost my place. I um...I haven't been able to work for a little while.

DEBBY

Oh. Is it- Are you having troubles again?

ARTHUR

It's fine. It's just- I don't know. As I get older, I thought I would just get better at... but... I don't know.

DEBBY

Oh, Arthur, It's fine. I'm sorry. Of course you can stay until you find something. We have a spare room. I just wish you would have called.

Mildred enters from behind Arthur. Arthur does not see them.

ARTHUR

Thank you, thank you! Oh this is going to be so much fun, just like the old days! You know, I was a little worried that you still lived with... What was their name...

DEBBY

Arthur.

ARTHUR

Oh, what was their name? They were the worst, so possessive and controlling. You know, they didn't like me at all. I think I was just too free for them.

DEBBY

Arthur.

ARTHUR

Shoot, what was their name?

DEBBY

Mildred.

ARTHUR

Oh that's right!

Debby points behind Arthur. Arthur turns.

ARTHUR

Mildred.

MILDRED

Hello, Arthur.

ARTHUR

Um. Hello.

MILDRED

How is work? Still with that same band?

ARTHUR

I'm on a break.

DEBBY

Mildred, my wonderful friend and roommate, can we have a little chat?

MILDRED

Why is Arthur here?

DEBBY

So, you know our spare room?

MILDRED

You mean my embroidery studio?

DEBBY

Why don't we all go inside and have a nice chat over some tea.

ARTHUR

Like a family meeting?!

MILDRED

Oh no.

They all exit into the apartment, bringing Arthur's luggage.

FAMILY - ASK YOUR MOTHER

Fauna runs around the apartment. They have a lot of energy right now. Bonnie and Martha are unpacking in different parts of the apartment.

FAUNA

Mom. Mom! Mooooooooommm!!!

BONNIE

Yes, Fauna. What is it?

FAUNA

I'm bored. I wanna do something. What should I do?

BONNIE

Well, what do you want to do?

FAUNA

I don't know. That's why I'm asking you.

BONNIE

I'm busy with unpacking. You should go ask your mother.

FAUNA

But I am asking my mother.

BONNIE

Your other mother.

Fauna runs over to Martha.

FAUNA

Mom. Mom! Mooooooooooooommm!!!

MARTHA

What is it?

FAUNA

I can't decide what to do. What do you think I should do?

MARTHA

I don't know. Why don't you go ask your mother?

FAUNA

I am asking my mother. I just asked my mother.

MARTHA

Your other mother, silly goose.

FAUNA

But I already-

MARTHA

Bonnie is your mom too and I'm sure happy to answer your questions.

FAUNA

Alright.

Mom. Mom! Mooooooooooooommm!!!

Fauna runs to Bonnie.

BONNIE

What is it now? I told you I'm busy.

FAUNA

But what should I do?

BONNIE

I think we've already had this conversation.

FAUNA

But I still don't know what to do. I'm BORED!!

BONNIE

When do you go back to school?

FAUNA

MONDAY!

BONNIE

That's right.

FAUNA

It's Saturday! Saturday!

BONNIE

You could help me unpack?

FAUNA

No.

BONNIE

Help do the dishes?

FAUNA

No.

BONNIE

Do your homework?

FAUNA

No.

BONNIE

Read a book?

FAUNA

No.

BONNIE

Practice your French horn?

FAUNA

I already did that.

BONNIE

Oh, I know. Why don't you get Cedar and show them your patch in the garden?

FAUNA

Do you think they'd like that?

BONNIE

I think it could make them feel welcomed. They're already down there.

FAUNA

Yes! Let's goooooo!

Fauna runs off to find Cedar.

ROOMIES - ROOMMATE SEARCH

Barb and Brandon walk through the garden. Barb is scrolling on their phone.

BARB

I miss Vine. Can we set up a Gofundme for Vine?

BRANDON

...or our rent?

BARB

We get paid next week, right? What's the big deal?

BRANDON

Actually... I kind of... Got laid off yesterday.

BARB

WHAT.

BRANDON

Sorry I didn't tell you earlier... The store is closing and I don't know how fast I can secure another job. What are we gonna dooo?

BARB

Take a nap? Go back Home?

BRANDON

I can't go back home. My parents painted my room for my sister to move in. I'm dead to them as far as I know.

BARB

Gone in their hearts. Uuuuuugh, should we get a roommate?

BRANDON

The roommate discourse rears it's ugly head again, eh?

BARB

But we're not good at people!
Maybe we should just go back to high school?

Brandon and Barb look at each other and shudder in disgust.

BRANDON

Wash your mouth.

BARB

A roommate wouldn't be that bad.

BRANDON

Someone would have to share a room.

BARB

We're besties. I'm sure we could stand to room together for a few months.

BRANDON

True... and if we split rent three ways then we'd each be paying...

Brandon types on phone's calculator, shows it to Barb.

BARB

Holy smokes! Roommate it is!

BRANDON

Roommate!

BARB

We gotta get real this time!! To social media!

Brandon cracks their knuckles.

BRANDON

CRAIGSLIST, FACEBOOK, SCREAMING ON THE STREETS!

Pause.

BARB

Maybe not the last one, but we're desperate so I'm not ruling it out.

BRANDON

Do we even have any friends?

BARB

Pshh, no. Should we make some?

BRANDON

I don't know. Who would we ask? We hate everyone.

BARB

And everyone hates us.

BRANDON

What kind of person would we even want in here?

BARB

Well, first things first, they have to be queer. We should interview people.

BRANDON

Like auditions? A SCREENING PROCESS!!

Brandon and Barb enter their apartment.

(Maybe a montage of potential roommates... played by the plants. I don't know. It would be nice to have a way to introduce Steve at this point. Maybe we do a video montage like it's a video game/anime sequence where each potential roommate does funny poses while a narrator says their "stats."

e.g. NARRATOR: Steve! Fresh out of high school, Steve is a level seven needle worker and a level twelve Naruto fan. With 120 HP and 150 MP, watch out! Steve will win over your heart with their charm and social awkwardness. Special abilities include stating the obvious, deep solitude, and... LOWERING YOUR RENT!)

FAMILY - TRADITION

Cedar enters. They listen to music with headphones.

Fauna runs out and approaches Cedar.

FAUNA

Hey, Cedar. Cedar? Cedar!

Cedar's takes an earbud out of their ear.

CEDAR

What?

FAUNA

You wanna see my garden?

CEDAR

I'm busy right now.

FAUNA

Oh. Okay.

Pause. Fauna looks sad.

CEDAR

All right, fine. Lets go.

FAUNA

Really?

CEDAR

Sure.

FAUNA

Awesome! Okay it's a little small. But I can't wait for you to see all the plants that I managed to squeeze in. I have tomatoes and beans and cabbage and a rose bush. The rose bush is the best!

CEDAR

"Although she be but little, she is fierce."

FAUNA

What's that from?

CEDAR

Its a quote from Shakespeare.

FAUNA

Oh. Did you know historians think he may not have been straight?

CEDAR

No.

FAUNA

They never teach you stuff like that in class. I wish they did. They teach history like gay people have never existed.

CEDAR

Yeah. Are all gay people really good at writing?

FAUNA

(laughs)

Maybe.

They arrive at the garden patch.

FAUNA

Here it is! This one is my mom's favorite plant, the rose bush. They call it Sylvia Rosevera.

CEDAR

Huh?

FAUNA

Like Sylvia Rivera, important activist, historical personage.

Cedar shrugs.

FAUNA

You'll learn. And this patch here is for you.

CEDAR

What do you mean?

FAUNA

It's for you to grow something. It's right next to the one for your mom. We all grow at least one thing in the garden. It's kind of our thing, a family tradition.

CEDAR

A tradition?

FAUNA

Yup! Surprise! What do you think you want to grow? There are so many things to choose from, flowers and veggies-

CEDAR

Actually, I'm good.

FAUNA

What?

CEDAR

I'm good. I don't need a patch.

FAUNA

Really?

CEDAR

It would be a waste.

FAUNA

Why?

CEDAR

Well, we're not going to be here long.

FAUNA

What do you mean? This is your home now.

CEDAR

It's really nice of you trying to include me here, but you know our moms are not

going to last, right?

FAUNA

What?

CEDAR

My mom isn't serious about this. We'll be gone soon enough.

Cedar walks away.

ASHTON THE SLUG

ASHTON THE SLUG

Flowers are the worst sometimes.

I don't see why Rose and Sunflower are so upset. I was just telling them that I know how it feels. I don't see roots. I think we are more similar than we are different from each other. I don't know why they always have to focus on the differences. Sure, I've never actually been through the same experiences as them. But like, I'm really good at sympathizing, unlike some bugs in the garden. Have you heard Stinkbug talk? I'm one of the good bugs. Other bugs wouldn't take time out of their busy days to even talk to the plants, let alone try to connect with them. We totally connect with each other. For example, they can't move. And sometimes, when I'm lazy, I don't move either. We are so alike!

SUNNY THE SUNFLOWER

SUNNY THE SUNFLOWER

Ashton the slug is... hard to be around sometimes. They were hanging out with Rose and me the other day, we were having a good time. But then Ashton started saying things about Rose and me that made me really uncomfortable.

"Must be nice for you flowers, all you have to do is stand there and look pretty. I know how you must feel."

Rose tried very politely to call them out, then they got into this fight.

It's like Ashton thinks they know something about what it's like to be a plant.

They don't. They're a slug.

Their perspective is so different, moving all around in the garden, eating food that someone else made. We can't do that.

They don't have a clue what it's like to root yourself in a place, feeling the cool dirt below, little worms tickling your roots and the warm sun above. They don't know what it's like to take breath, water, and sunlight and make a meal for yourself. That's a freaking miracle, and Rose and I do it every day.

Rose really chewed Ashton out, shut them down. At first I felt a little sorry for them, but I don't feel that bad. I just hope they listened.

ELDERS - OLD CABBAGE

Arthur, Mildred, and Debby work in the garden.

ARTHUR

This plant looks rough.

MILDRED

That's because you've been watering it too much.

ARTHUR

It looked thirsty.

MILDRED

How did the plant LOOK thirsty?

DEBBY

What are you two arguing about this time?

MILDRED

Arthur is upset because they drowned this plant.

ARTHUR

I did not! It was thirsty!

MILDRED

You killed it. Congrats. You're a plant killer.

DEBBY

You didn't kill the plant. Just don't give it water for a couple days and it'll be fine.

ARTHUR

Okay. Cool... You know I missed this, gardening.

MILDRED

You used to garden?

ARTHUR

I used to watch Debby garden.

MILDRED

Useless.

DEBBY

You said you would try to get along.

MILDRED AND ARTHUR

We are!

Pause.

Arthur picks something up.

ARTHUR

Hey do you know what this is?

MILDRED

Uh... I um... think that's a peach?

ARTHUR

It kinda smells odd.

MILDRED

Does it?

Mildred and Arthur both take a deep smell.

Debby comes over.

DEBBY

That's a cabbage, a rotten cabbage.

MILDRED AND ARTHUR

Ugh!

Arthur drops it.

MILDRED

You were supposed to harvest the cabbage last week!

ARTHUR

Well, I...forgot.

MILDRED

What?

ARTHUR

I forgot. I had this amazing idea for a new song and I got sidetracked.

MILDRED

What?!

DEBBY

Arthur.

ARTHUR

What? I can't have ideas for songs?

MILDRED

That could have been dinner.

ARTHUR

Just cabbage? That would be a gassy choice.

DEBBY

Arthur.

ARTHUR

What!?

Pause.

DEBBY

So, you're writing songs again?

ARTHUR

Maybe.

DEBBY

What happened to a break?

ARTHUR

I can't stay on a break forever.

ROOMIES - MEETING

Brandon, Barb, and STEVE are in the living room of their apartment.

BRANDON

I'd like to welcome you all to our first house meeting as a whole group.

BARB

(to Steve)

Previously, Brandon was the only one who attended these.

STEVE

Well thank you for having me. I'm Steve.

BRANDON

Yes, you live with us. We know your name.

STEVE

And I don't really know what to say at these types of things.

BARB

You'll be just fine. We're here for you.

BRANDON

We're just opening the space up for us, as roommates, to talk about our cohabitation and the challenges that this brings us.

BARB

(to Steve)

They practiced this in our room earlier. They made notecards.

BRANDON

If anyone would like to bring forth any issues pertaining to the group please step forward. Steve?

STEVE

Oh, well, our toilet has been acting up recently. So, I'm wondering if we should contact—uh—I don't know who you contact.

BRANDON

That's great, Steve. Anyways, I think we should talk about cleanliness.

BARB

Glad to hear that the voices of the people are being represented, Brandon!

BRANDON

I know some of us aren't use to keeping a space of our own. So, that can cause some issues in terms of...well...smell.

BARB

(laughs)

Get 'em, Brandon!

BRANDON

I made a helpful chart that shows the proper times to wash your clothes.

BARB

I'm sure Steve will find that very useful.

BRANDON

It's for you, Barb.

BARB

What.

STEVE

Oh, shoot.

BRANDON

Barb, our room smells.

BARB

Excuse me?

BRANDON

You need to do something about it.

BARB

I'm sorry but I thought this was a community meeting, not a call-out-your-best-friend-in-front-of-the-new-roomie meeting.

STEVE

Well, the second one just isn't as catchy.

BRANDON

I don't mean to be inflammatory, but it's my space too.

BARB

You said I stink!

BRANDON

No, you keep your body very clean, which is why I don't understand why your side of the room looks like... well. Sometimes I look at it and I have flashbacks to your post apocalyptic phase in high school.

BARB

Oh, you wanna talk about high school phases, huh? I still have the pictures from your My Chemical Romance obsession, eyeliner and all!

BRANDON

(gay gasp)

You wouldn't.

BARB

Oh, I would.

Long pause.

STEVE

Well, I just wanna say that I really liked Naruto in high school, and I think the

ending should've-

BRANDON

Steve, your name isn't on the lease.

BARB

You don't get to talk.

BRANDON AND BARB

(They argue loudly about cleaning, talking over each other.)

STEVE

(singing louder and louder)

HERE I AM WITH MY NINJA CLAN NINJA CLAN HERE WE STAND,
NATUTO IM ON MY WAY NARUTO ILL BE OK GETTING READY TO
FIGHT ON SET WITH MY FRIENDS BY MY SIDE...

FAMILY - DAD JOKES

Fauna is in the garden. Martha comes outside.

MARTHA

Ooo, look at all the lightning bugs.

FAUNA

Hey.

MARTHA

Am I intruding on another hashtag "Teen Angst" moment?

FAUNA

Am I about to get some more terrible hashtag "Dad Jokes?"

MARTHA

Which ones didn't you like? I'll take them to the shop tomorrow and demand a full refund.

Fauna groans and laughs.

MARTHA

So, kiddo, how you feeling?

FAUNA

Since when did you start calling me "kiddo?"

MARTHA

I'm just trying to evoke a familial vibe, getting my Full House daddy routine down.

FAUNA

(laughs)

Oh, I just don't know what to do! Being an angsty teen is just sooo hard.

MARTHA

Well, as your legal guardian, my advice is to, uhhhh... stay in school? Stand up to your bully; ask out your high school crush; be yourself; you're beautiful; and, most importantly, don't do drugs.

FAUNA

That's a lot of information to take in. Let me see if I got this right: drop out of school is what you said right?

MARTHA

Close enough.

FAUNA

(ticking list off on their fingers)

Join my bully's gang; seduce my high school crush; always conform to the crowd; and, most importantly, do drugs.

MARTHA

Perfect.

They both laugh.

MARTHA

So. What's going on?

FAUNA

I don't know I'm not feeling it today.

MARTHA

Is there anything I can do to help?

FAUNA

I don't know.

MARTHA

Okay.

Pause.

FAUNA

You and Bonnie. You're staying together, right?

MARTHA

I hope so. Why do you ask that?

FAUNA

Cedar said Bonnie...Cedar said you wouldn't last.

MARTHA

Oh.

FAUNA

But I think Bonnie loves you.

MARTHA

And Bonnie loves you.

FAUNA

We're sure?

MARTHA

Yes, we're sure. And I love you.

FAUNA

I know.

MARTHA

Why do you think Cedar said those things? How do you think Cedar is feeling?

FAUNA

I don't know.

MARTHA

When people say mean things, what is usually true? We've talked about this.

FAUNA

Oh, right. They are usually sleepy, hungry, lonely, or...um

MARTHA

Sleepy, hungry, lonely, or afraid.

PEA NUMBER ONE

PEA NUMBER ONE

I don't know why I have to share everything, the nutrients, the sun, the water. I need more to grow! I need silence and time to think and all I hear is "Hey, Pea

Number One, how do you feel about our awesome pod? Hey, Pea Number One, you're not looking so green, is everything alright?" Or the worst. "Do you mind scooting over." I WOULD IF I COULD, PEA NUMBER THREE!"

When I ignore all of your questions, the memo clearly states "Leave me alone." They hog up all the warm sun and then tell me I should've gotten some before them. They use up all the water and tell me it's my fault for drinking the dirt dry. They even try to tell me that fall is coming too quickly, so I better hurry up and grow. I know we're all related, we're peas in a pod...but I need out. I need freedom. I'm told that things will change with the harvest comes. I'm not sure how, but it must be better than this.

ELDERS AND ROOMIES - SHOELACES

Brandon, Barb, and Steve are in the garden, giggling as they tie their shoelaces together.

Mildred and Debby enter.

MILDRED

Arthur's patch is actually doing pretty well.

DEBBY

They're figuring it out.

MILDRED

Yeah. So, Debby, how long are we expecting Arthur to stay with us?

DEBBY

I don't know. Thank you for being so patient. I know they're not your favorite person.

MILDRED

They're fine. They just can be a little, overbearing some times.

DEBBY

They have thick armor. I think sometimes they put a lot out there to keep themselves safe.

MILDRED

What do you mean?

DEBBY

Sorry, not my story to tell. I hope you both get a chance to know each other. I think you actually could really enjoy each other's company.

MILDRED

Whatever you say, Debby. The eternal optimist.

DEBBY

Everything incredible all the time!

*Mildred and Arthur notice the roommates staring at them.
Mildred stares back, smiling.*

MILDRED

Hello?

BRANDON

Sorry! We'll be out of your way quickly!!

Brandon and Barb stand up and try to walk away but realize they can't since all the roommates' shoelaces are tied together.

Mildred laughs as Brandon and Barb fumble to untie their shoes while Steve looks at them confused.

DEBBY

Spring sprouts, hold your horses! We're not here to intrude, just to discuss garden business.

Brandon, Barb, and Steve pause.

MILDRED

I see y'all have a new roommate.

DEBBY

Oh, hello and welcome! What's your name? Hobbies? How are you feeling?

STEVE

Oh umm, I'm Steve. They/them pronouns. I like, uhh, I like to bake, sew, and watch musicals. I'm feeling alright, a bit confused to be honest.

DEBBY

That's sensational! Have you tried embroidery? If not, Mildred can show you some tips and tricks! What's your favorite thing to bake? Thoughts on gardening? No judgement of course. I prefer to grow produce plants, if your apartment ever needs a bit of extra food you can always come to me. I've offered to Nance and Barb, but they haven't taken up the offer.

MILDRED

Debby, dial it back. You're scaring the children.
(to Steve)

We should talk sewing though.

By now Brandon and Barb have untied themselves and

moved away.

BARB

Thank you for the warm introduction, but Nance and I need to go. Steve, we'll be upstairs.

DEBBY

Oh! That reminds me I have cookies in the oven!

Debby, Brandon, and Barb exit.

STEVE

I haven't tried embroidery yet. Why is Debby so interested in me?

MILDRED

They really like to make friends. I hope that's alright.

STEVE

I think that's great.

MILDRED

Brandon's tomato plant and Arthur's patch of garden have been doing well recently. That doesn't have anything to do with you moving in, does it?

STEVE

I can't bear to see dying plants. Also, that tomato seems pretty important to Brandon.

MILDRED

Say, I have a favor to ask of you.

STEVE

What's this favor?

MILDRED

I need your help because Brandon and Barb seem...reluctant to engage with new people. Debby and I want to plan an autumn harvest feast with the whole building for the end of the summer. It'll be something to show how we've all grown and get to know each other better. I'm trying to get Bonnie, Martha, Fauna, and Cedar to help too. What'd'ya think?

STEVE

I think that sounds like the best thing that has ever happened.

SPOKEN WORD - FAMILY

BONNIE

Plant within me
 A seed of potential
 And watch it grow
 And watch it flourish
 And watch it bloom
 From within my chest
 And as it does
 Watch me weep
 Because I am so proud
 Of what we have harvested

CEDAR

Plant within me
 A seed of potential
 And let it blossom
 Into an unknown
 But do not be surprised
 When it's something you didn't ask for
 There are more flowers than
 Pretty peonies and lovely lilies
 Some flowers are ugly
 Some flowers decay
 Some flowers bite

FAMILY - MOTHER

Cedar sits in the garden, listening to music. They have a backpack.

Martha enters, sees Cedar, and sits next to them. Cedar rolls their eyes and takes off their headphones.

CEDAR

What do you want?

MARTHA

How was school today?

CEDAR

Fine.

MARTHA

What are you listening to?

CEDAR

You wouldn't know them.

MARTHA

Try me.

CEDAR

(a band that the actor listens to)

MARTHA

Alright, you got me. I haven't heard of them. You ever listen to Patti Smith?

CEDAR

Who?

MARTHA

She's the best. I'll make you a tape some time.

CEDAR

A what?

MARTHA

A mixtape.

CEDAR

Right.

Cedar starts to put their headphones back on, but Martha stops them.

MARTHA

Hey, can we talk for a minute?

CEDAR

Isn't that what just happened?

Pause.

MARTHA

Cedar, I know that this is a big change and it's hard. I just want you to know that I love your mom... and I love you. I hope you can let me know how I can be a good mom for you too.

CEDAR

My mom?

MARTHA

Yeah.

Cedar throws their head phones to the ground. They break.

CEDAR

You are not my mom! You are never going to be my mom. I have a mom. And we were doing just fine.

MARTHA

Cedar.

CEDAR

My mother doesn't love you. They're just confused. Pretty soon they're going to realize that and it's going to go back to how it was before.

Cedar storms away. Martha picks up the broken head phones and goes back inside.

THUNDERSTORM

Clouds roll over the garden.

Thunder peels in the distance as it starts to rain, light at first, then a little harder. It's a spring shower.

Cedar walks in the rain, angry at everything.

Arthur is in their room. They go to their musical instrument, pull it out of the case and look at it.

Steve secretly tends to the garden.

As the storm gathers force, time slips by.

One hour becomes the next. One day becomes the next. Before our eyes a few weeks pass.

The garden visibly grows.

And what started as a spring shower is now a full-blown Summer thunderstorm. Lighting flashes across the sky and cracks like a bull whip.

(Maybe this is the moment for "Electric.")

SUMMER IN THE GARDEN

The thunderstorm calms and vanishes. The sun comes out.

It's summer in the garden, hot an humid.

Green life explodes from every available inch of soil. The garden is like a city, buzzing with the busy work of a thousand bugs. They toil away under smiling flowers and ripening vegetables.

RUSSLE SPROUT

Ohmygosh, ohmygosh, ohmygosh, can't you feel it? Just drink it up. Oooooooooo! I love the way the dirt feels after a thunderstorm. It's like a huge squishy pillow. And all that delicious delicious rain. Yes! Summer is the best. Long days and warm nights. And there are so many new plants.

POTATO JO

(just stares for a while)

What? Sorry. I haven't slept in two weeks. If it's not the birds, then it's the bees, and if not the bees, then it's the crickets, and if not the crickets then it's the tree frogs. And the CICADAS, don't get me STARTED on the CICADAS. Remember when it was winter and everyone was asleep? Can we please just go back to that?

RUSSLE SPROUT

There's celery, and asparagus, and basil, and oregano, and mint—mint is the BEST—and carrots, and potato—I don't think potato likes me very much—and-

POTATO JO

It's like none of the plants have any idea that they are all just going to get eaten. Seriously.

RUSSLE SPROUT

Everything is awesome!

ROOMIES - TOMATO - 2

Brandon and Barb are in the garden.

BRANDON

Hey, Barb, come look! This one tomato is alllll green, baby.

BARB

That's very special. Have you been watering it?

BRANDON

Not really at all, no. It's just an overachiever, an honors tomato plant.

BARB

Oh, Brandon.

BRANDON

I'm raising her right. My tomato star child.

Brandon wipes a fake tear away.

BARB

Alright...so...what are you gonna do with your first tomato?

BRANDON

Ah, the future! How scary! I have no idea.

ROOMIES - STEVE PHONE CALL

Steve is alone in their room, watching tv.

Their phone rings.

STEVE

(into phone)

Hello. Oh, hi Dad. Steve's. I'm okay, actually. Yeah, the apartment is still really nice. It's close to school, close to work, I love it.

Brandon and Barb laugh loudly as they enter the apartment.

STEVE

Oh that—that's just Brandon and Barb, my roommates. They're great people, Dad. I actually feel like I'm a part of something for a change, y'know? I don't think I've ever felt this feeling of, what's the word... Inclusivity. They're both so cool and I love their dynamic, it makes me feel... Really good? No no, it's not like that, they're just my friends, why would you even say that—NO DAD. I already told you this, come on!
We were doing so well—

Brandon proceeds to barge into Steve's room without knocking

BRANDON

HEY STEVE, WHERE DID YOU PUT THE—Hey S-Steve? You okay?

Steve turns away. They are visibly tearing up. They quickly hang up the phone and face Brandon again.

STEVE

Nance, I really don't want to talk about it.

BRANDON

Okay. Sorry.

Brandon leaves. Steve buries their face in a pillow.

FAMILY - BONNIE AND MARTHA - 1

Bonnie sits in the garden reading a book. Martha enters, coming home from work.

BONNIE

You're home late.

MARTHA

Summer vacation should apply to adults too.

Bonnie puts down the book. The two embrace.

BONNIE

You okay?

MARTHA

Just tired. My eyes feel sore. Isn't it weird how sitting at a desk can make you tired like that.

BONNIE

You got email burn.

MARTHA

Email burn. Heh. How was your day?

BONNIE

Fine. Normal. Home at six. We ended up eating without you. Leftovers are in the fridge.

MARTHA

Thanks.

BONNIE

Sorry, Cedar and Fauna were really hungry.

MARTHA

It's alright.

(pause)

We need to talk about Cedar.

BONNIE

Did they say something else?

MARTHA

No. I'm just worried. They've been so quiet lately. Is this normal?

BONNIE

Honey, I have no idea what normal is.

Martha chuckles.

MARTHA

I don't know what to do. I can't make them like me.

BONNIE

I think they're just processing.

MARTHA

Yeah.

BONNIE

Come on, let's get you some dinner.

Bonnie and Martha enter the apartment.

WATERMELON

WATERMELON

I was planted a few months ago. Everything seemed really nice, until I actually sprouted, because it turned out, I had been planted under gravel. Or maybe the gravel had been put over where I'd been planted. I don't know, because I hadn't germinated yet and I couldn't see.

Anyways, I thought I could keep growing despite the gravel, so I ignored it. That worked out for maybe a week, but by then I was pretty far behind everyone else and I was just miserable all the time. I wanted to ask someone for help, but it wasn't that bad of a problem, and what would they even do? What would they think of me?

Luckily, I didn't have to struggle much longer, because Rose noticed the gravel and helped me move it out of my way. Once I actually did something about it, it seemed like there was a lot less than I had originally thought there was.

I guess sometimes you just gotta get the gravel out of your life. You can't always

do that on your own.

ROOMIES AND FAMILY - BARB AND CEDAR

Barb is coming home from work.

Cedar is sitting in the garden.

BARB

Hey there, new neighbor.

CEDAR

Please don't call me that.

BARB

Fine.

CEDAR

I've been here for like a month.

BARB

We can't rush these things.

CEDAR

Whatever.

BARB

Are you settling in, making a cozy little spot in your new family?

CEDAR

No. I'm not going to be here for that long.

BARB

I see, Cedar Tree. Are you off to bigger and greener forests?

CEDAR

No, I'm just here until my mom comes to their senses.

BARB

Oh. Okay... Sorry, but don't you have two moms?

CEDAR

No. That's just Martha. I mean, sure my mom might technically be married to them, but they're straight. They're not queer.

Long pause.

BARB

Well, I am. Queer, that is. And I don't think I like you using that word like that. This apartment building is a safe place for people like me. People who know who they are and just want to be accepted that way.

CEDAR

Whoa. Settle down. I didn't mean to offend you. Why are you so emotional all of the sudden?

BARB

Um no. You don't get to police my emotions. Just promise me that you're being nice to Fauna. They're a really nice kid.

CEDAR

What?

BARB

Promise me, alright?

CEDAR

I promise.

BARB

Thank you.
And maybe you should take a minute to stop thinking about yourself and just be glad that your mom is happy.

Barb exits and leaves Cedar in the garden among the plants.

ELDERS AND ROOMIES - STEVE AND MILDRED

Steve and Mildred are inside the Elders' apartment.

MILDRED

I really appreciate you coming down to help me out, Steve. My eyes just don't work as well as they used to. Feel free to start something of your own if you want, I have plenty of hoops and needles.

STEVE

Ah, thanks Milly—do you mind if I call you that, by the way?

MILDRED

Sure, Milly's fine. Haven't heard that one in a while.

STEVE

And actually, I kind of, um, brought my own project I've been working on for a while now...

Steve rifles through their backpack for their own embroidery tools and pulls out their half-finished embroidery project. They begin to set up for the start of a stitch.

MILDRED

Oh that's an interesting design there, what's it mean?

STEVE

(very animatedly)

OH WELL YOU SEE, IN JAPANESE, THIS SYMBOL MEANS 'LOVE' AND IN NARUTO THIS ONE CHARACTER GAARA USES IT AS--

MILDRED

THAT'S VERY INTERESTING Steve. Well, how do you like the neighborhood so far? Are Brandon and Barb treating you right? Those two can be a little... intense...

STEVE

It's great. I love them so much, I've never been around people like that before, and I honestly think that it's improving me as a person too... It's just so surreal, y'know?

MILDRED

Believe me, I know...

Arthur enters.

ARTHUR

Where's Debby?

MILDRED

Hello, Arthur. This is Steve, our neighbor.

STEVE

Hi there. I'm Steve, which Mildred just said. But that's still who I am.

ARTHUR

Do you know where Debby is?

MILDRED

I think Debby stepped out to run some errands.

ARTHUR

(getting more and more agitated)

Do you know when they'll be back? Where did they go?
It seems like they've been gone a while.

MILDRED

They just left a little while ago.

ARTHUR

Do they have a phone with them?

MILDRED

They don't have a phone.

ARTHUR

Oh my.

MILDRED

Is everything alright?

Anything we can help with? You seem... What's wrong?

Arthur takes some deep breaths, manages to calm down.

ARTHUR

No. I'm fine.

Can you please tell Debby I was looking for them, when they get back. I'll be in my room.

MILDRED

Sure.

Arthur exits.

STEVE

Good to meet you!

(Pause.)

Are they okay?

MILDRED

I'm not sure.

DWIGHT OAK

DWIGHT OAK

Have you ever thought about settling down for a while and soaking everything in? I do it all the time. Until the sun is covered or it isn't raining, and that sucks, cause I get thirsty.

But I mean, I also soak in everything around me too. There's this garden below,

with all these other smaller plants and bugs.
 And there's bugs living in me, come to think of it.
 I let them live there. Bugs need homes too.
 But the other plants and the bugs are usually fighting, or running around, or growing so fast.
 And then there are these humans. I see them coming in and out of this giant block. Sometimes they're taking care of my friends in the garden, or talking to each other, or just being busy. But sometimes they fight too.
 You know no one usually takes time to just soak in the sun, or hold the butterflies when they land on their branches, or feel the moisture of the dirt up against your roots or the wind in your leaves. The other plants don't really do it either. But I do. I have for a few decades... It's nice.

ROOMIES - STEVE AND LONELINESS

Brandon and Barb are having causal conversation at the apartment. Steve returns from grocery shopping.

BRANDON

Oh cool, Steve's back. Did you get my coconut water?

STEVE

Yes.

BRANDON

And my lavender shampoo? And the paper towels? And the—

STEVE

(chuckling)

Yes, yes, and yes, Brandon.

BARB

Nance, stop mooching off of Steve and get a damn job already! They shouldn't have to pick up your bill for everything. This is going way beyond "nice gestures." Steve you don't have to do this every time Brandon asks.

STEVE

NO!

Brandon and Barb share a confused glance.

STEVE

I- I mean... I want to do this. Please let me do this for you. This is the first time someone's ever, ya know, needed me.

BARB

Steve honey, what do you mean? We need you all the time. Remember that spider in the bathroom last week—

STEVE

That's not what I meant... I didn't have a lot of friends back in high school. And honestly, I still don't. I've been alone for a lot of my life, so having someone need me, even for something as simple as coconut water, I'll be there for them. Whenever I see you two interacting in such a wholesome way it gets to me a little.
(dramatically sniffs)
What's it like to have someone like that? Sorry I'm rambling guys.

BRANDON

Steve! You are loved here! There's no such thing as rambling in this house! Speak your truths. LET IT OUT—

BARB

Woah there Nance, give them some space.

STEVE

I'm okay.

(pause)

Y'know what, actually, let me put these groceries away and make us some tea and let's sit down and have another of those "community meetings" you seem to love so much. I think we all need it.

BRANDON

Can't have tea without cookies! You picked those up too, right Steve?

BARB

Brandon please—

STEVE

Whoops, I guess I did forget something...

BARB

STEVE, NO. WE TRUSTED YOU!

FAMILY - CEDAR AND FAUNA

Fauna is in the Garden, chasing a butterfly around. Cedar enters. They hold a paper bag.

CEDAR

Hey.

FAUNA

Oh hi, Cedar.

CEDAR

What are you doing?

FAUNA

Writing a novel.

CEDAR

What?

FAUNA

Joke Attack! I'm chasing bugs!

CEDAR

Oh my gosh.

Fauna sees the brown paper bag in Cedar's hands.

FAUNA

What's that?

CEDAR

Um. It's a seed pack. I got it at the Giant Eagle.

FAUNA

A seed pack.

CEDAR

It it- Um, is it too late to, um, plant something, in that patch.

FAUNA

What?

CEDAR

That's fine if it's too late.

FAUNA

OMG. OF COURSE IT'S NOT TOO LATE. OMG! OMG!

CEDAR

Alright, calm down.

FAUNA

Whaddyagit? Whaddyagit?

CEDAR

Oh, I think they're flowers.

Cedar takes a seed pack out of the bag and shows Fauna.

FAUNA

Oooh, Marigolds, excellent choice.

CEDAR

Yeah?

FAUNA

Absolutely. They symbolize despair, grief, and cruel treatment towards a loved one.

CEDAR

Joke attack?

FAUNA

Sadly, not. Victorians had no sense of humor.

CEDAR

Oh.

FAUNA

But they also keep bad bugs away. Let's plant them!

CEDAR

Okay.

They go to the garden patch and start to dig.

FAUNA

This is going to be the best garden. Mom and Mom and you and me! Do you ever just stop and think about how awesome our family is?

CEDAR

Fauna.

(Beat)

I want you to know that I think you're really cool, and nice. And I want to thank you for being nice to me.

FAUNA

Of course!

CEDAR

But we're not family. I am never going to feel like family here. I already have a mom, and Martha is not them.

FAUNA

I thought this meant-

CEDAR

This means I am going to be nice to you, while I'm here. That's all.

FAUNA

Oh.

Long pause. They finish planting the seeds.

CEDAR

What do we do now?

FAUNA

We water them.

Cedar gets a watering can. Fauna thinks for a moment.

FAUNA

No thank you.

CEDAR

What?

FAUNA

No thank you. I don't want you to be nice to me, if you can't be nice to my mom too.

CEDAR

Fauna.

FAUNA

Our moms are in love. It's a happy thing. I'm sorry it hurts you so much. I wish I could make it better somehow. But I don't like it when you're mean to my mom.

Fauna exits.

ROOMIES - AFTER PHONE CALL

Brandon sits in their room, watching something on their computer. Steve knocks on the door.

BRANDON

Who is it and what do you want?

STEVE

It's um, me... Steve. Do you mind if I come in?

BRANDON

What's the password?

Pause.

STEVE

I didn't know there was a password.

BRANDON

There isn't, Steve, it was a joke.

Brandon takes Steve by the arm and drags them in before shutting the door.

STEVE

Oh...

BRANDON

So, what's up?

STEVE

I just... Um... Was wondering if we could talk, maybe?

BRANDON

Mhm, about?

STEVE

Nothing, never mind, I shouldn't have even-

BRANDON

C'mon, dude, what do you wanna talk about?

Steve takes a deep breath.

STEVE

The phone call.

Pause.

BRANDON

The what?

STEVE

When I was... Last week I was on the phone. You walked in when my dad hung up on me, and... I was... um, crying.

BRANDON

Oh... Yeah. Yeah, I remember that.

Steve avoids eye-contact.

STEVE

Well, you asked if I was okay and I said I didn't wanna talk... I was hoping that it isn't too late to change my mind?

BRANDON

No, of course not. What, uh... Happened with your dad?

STEVE

Just... Ever since, I, um.. Came out... He brings it up in every conversation, as if he can, like, talk it out of me, or something? Like if he acts like I'm straight every single time I try to tell him about my life, I'll just... Stop being gay?

BRANDON

Damn... I did' know any of that. I'm really sorry, Steve.

STEVE

I just wish he could drop it. If he doesn't accept me, that's fine, I just wish I could go back to being his kid who had a life he actually cared about. Now, whatever I say comes back to the fact that I'm "confused" about my sexuality and him wondering when my "phase" is going to end, and-

Steve starts to cry.

BRANDON

Oh, um...

(Awkwardly putting a hand on Steve's shoulder)

I don't know how to comfort, really, but it'll be okay?

STEVE

(still crying)

I'm sorry... This is embarrassing. I probably shouldn't have even-

BRANDON

No, it's okay! I'm glad you feel comfortable opening up to me. I'm just not used to talking about feelings, I guess.

STEVE

Really? But you and Barb are so close. I thought you told each other everything?

BRANDON

Well, we're around one another constantly and we're totally best friends.

But...we're never really serious? I dunno, we communicate in jokes and sarcasm, I guess.

STEVE
Oh.

The door opens suddenly and Barb comes in.

BARB
What's going on in here?

STEVE
(wiping tears away quickly)
Oh, um, nothing.

BRANDON
Yeah, don't worry about it, Barb.

BARB
(eyeing the two suspiciously)
Things look pretty... emotional in here. You gonna tell me what I missed?

Brandon and Steve exchange a look.

BRANDON
It's just kinda personal, I don't know if Steve is comfortable sharing everything.

BARB
(scoffs)
Oh, so am I not trust worthy or something?

STEVE
No, it's not that. It's just-

BARB
Or are you afraid I'm just going to make jokes and be sarcastic?

BRANDON
You were eavesdropping?

BARB
You have a loud voice.

BRANDON
Not cool, Barb. That was a private conversation.

BARB
This is our room! And that was about me.

BRANDON
It was about Steve.

STEVE

I should go.

BARB

No. Steve, I'll go.

Barb exits.

FAMILY - BONNIE AND CEDAR

BONNIE

So kid, what's the haps?

CEDAR

Mom... No.

BONNIE

Okay, but don't say I didn't try to be a "cool mom."

CEDAR

Moms aren't cool, Mom. They're just, ya know, Moms.

Bonnie sighs.

BONNIE

Doomed to a life of nerdy mom-hood forever. Thanks, child.

CEDAR

Hey!

(Cedar laughs.)

And people wonder where I get my sense of humor from.

BONNIE

Well it certainly wasn't from your dad, God rest his soul.

CEDAR

You divorced him, Mom. He didn't die.

BONNIE

Oh right right, that's step seven of my evil lesbian plan.

CEDAR

I thought you were bisexual.

BONNIE

Well yes, but it doesn't roll of the tongue as easily.

CEDAR

I mean, you are bisexual, right?

An uncomfortable air enters the room as unfamiliar territory of conversation not yet explored between the two of them shows up.

BONNIE

Yes. I am.

CEDAR

And you're sure?

BONNIE

Are you asking if I'm sure that I like women?

Pause.

CEDAR

Yes.

BONNIE

I hope so. I just married one.

CEDAR

How do you know?

BONNIE

We had a party. You were there.

CEDAR

No. How do you know you like men and women and not just one or the other?

BONNIE

Ah- hard questions, Cedar. Hard questions.

CEDAR

You never really talked about it...

BONNIE

You never really asked.

CEDAR

No, I didn't I guess, but I'm your kid, mom.

BONNIE

Try and put yourself in my shoes, Cedar.

Pause.

CEDAR

That's not my job!
You're my mom. I'm not yours.

BONNIE

Whoa.

CEDAR

The responsibility to ask questions shouldn't be on me.
I want to talk about this stuff and work through our problems. But if I can't, that shouldn't be my fault.
You're my mom! I was here first. I need you, and you're not helping.

Pause.

BONNIE

How can I help?

CEDAR

I don't know.

BONNIE

I know this is hard for you.

CEDAR

You don't know. You're too busy with your new family to know anything.

BONNIE

It's our family. Martha and Fauna are our family now.

Cedar says nothing.

BONNIE

Cedar, I'm giving all that I can here. This is new for both of us.

Pause.

CEDAR

It all used to be fine when it was you and me.
Now everything feels wrong.
I see how I am. I don't like it. But I don't know how else to be.
And even if I'm a bratty teenage waste, you can't just stop being my mom.

BONNIE

When did I stop being your mom?

CEDAR

When you became all these other things.

Pause.

BONNIE

You are not a waste.

A bit bratty maybe, but never a waste.

(Beat)

I'm scared that we're becoming strangers.

CEDAR

Yeah.

BONNIE

So. Let's talk. I can tell you everything you want to know.

CEDAR

No.

BONNIE

Cedar.

CEDAR

Not now. I need some time to think.

Cedar exits.

ELDERS - ANXIETY

Arthur sits in their room with their instrument. They just look at it. Debby enters.

DEBBY

You're serious about this?

ARTHUR

Yes.

Debby and Arthur look at the instrument for a long while.

DEBBY

Is this one a John Cage piece?

ARTHUR

You're very funny.

DEBBY

Sorry.

ARTHUR

I keep trying. I keep trying, but every time I pick it up. I just- I don't know. I can't. I feel...

DEBBY

Arthur, it's okay.

ARTHUR

What is wrong with me?

DEBBY

You are perfect. And you live with anxiety. That's something that you have lived with for years.

Pause.

Arthur takes Debby's hand.

ARTHUR

Do you remember when we first talked about this?

DEBBY

I do.

ARTHUR

You know that I would have never found help without you.

DEBBY

You would have found help.

ARTHUR

I don't know.

DEBBY

How are you right now?

ARTHUR

I am feeling it. That same old thing, but it's stronger. You know, I thought I was fine, managing it fine, but something shifted this year. A few months ago, before coming here, I was about to go on, some restaurant a few hours away. It was the last stop on our little tour. We had played the place before. The room was full of fans. And I couldn't do it. I couldn't move.

DEBBY

These things aren't a straight line.

ARTHUR

Don't I know it.

DEBBY

This year has been different. There is a lot of fear in the world right now, a lot to be afraid of.

ARTHUR

But this is in me.

DEBBY

I know. What can I do?

ARTHUR

I don't know. Just keep being here, listening.

DEBBY

Of course.

Pause.

DEBBY

You should talk to Mildred.

ARTHUR

About this?

DEBBY

About anything. They are my close friend for a reason, really good listener.

ARTHUR

Do they have Anxiety? Are they like me?

DEBBY

No. I think you two are very much not alike. But you might have certain things in common. Not my stories to share.

ARTHUR

Alright.

SPOKEN WORD - ROOMIES

BARB

I am grateful for the Earth and her perfect body
 Pulls me inwards as if she were holding me hostage
 The certainty of gravity
 And I'm sure that the knowledge of "what comes up must come down" has kept

others sane as it has me
 Did you know that the Earth spins at one thousand forty miles per hour?
 Did you know that the laws of inertia demand for us to be propelled into space
 like disregarded bubblegum flicked away?
 Did you know that the weight of gravity keeps us secured to Earth's body?
 Some people think of this as
 The earth's body is not a perfect circle.
 Her body bulges in the center, distorted by inertia, forced into a fight against
 gravity she cannot win but wages in defiance anyways
 I call this the love of a mother.

STEVE

I have fantasies of living as a cloud
 Free and drifting in an endless horizon of a thousand blues.
 The cloud is a kite
 The cloud is a leaf
 The cloud is bound only by the limitation of the observer's imagination.
 I watch the cloud and I attempt to learn
 I spend hours contorting my body into the shapes of my observers
 But I am mass-solid and sturdy-and the cloud is only a fleeting memory of what
 water once was
 I can never wander aimless like the cloud, unrestricted, free and yet
 simultaneously loved

BARNDON

Do you know what space tastes like?
 Can you imagine the scent of emptiness?
 I want to be the blackness before a supernova.
 My mind lives in planets up there
 spinning and spinning and spinning
 I rise and set with the floating moon
 The falling sun
 The distant stars shine
 glow
 wash over me
 My eyes fill with light
 With alien air
 Of other worlds
 spinning and spinning and spinning

ROOMIES - FEELINGS

Barb is in the garden. Brandon enters from the apartment.

BRANDON

Barb?

BARB

What do you want?

BRANDON

We need to talk.

BARB

Says who?

BRANDON

Me?

Barb rolls their eyes.

BRANDON

Look, the only reason Steve talked to me instead of you was because I walked in on them crying after a phone call with their dad.

BARB

Or Maybe, I'm just impossible to talk to.

BRANDON

Um... No, it's really not that.

Pause.

BARB

Do you think we really can't be serious with each other?

BRANDON

Can we?

More silence

BARB

I don't know.

BRANDON

Neither do I.

BARB

I guess maybe we both just kinda suck at feelings.

The two share a weak laugh.

BRANDON

Damn straight.

BARB

I guess I just never thought about how weird it is until this new kid comes along and just pours their heart out to you, you know? Like, how can we be so close and spend so much time together and manage to keep all our feelings bottled up in silence all this time?

They ponder the question quietly to themselves.

BRANDON

I guess maybe we're both just scared of emotional vulnerability or something.

BARB

True.

BRANDON

So... I guess we should both try and face our fears by trying to open up a little?

BARB

I guess so.

They two exchange a smile before embracing.

SUMMER BREEZE

A warm summer night, crickets lull the garden to sleep. A summer breeze moves through the leaves.

Slowly, time slips again. The breeze keeps moving and takes on a hint of a chill.

Days pass, then weeks. The summer breeze turns into a fall wind. Leaves blaze from green to gold, fiery red, and rich brown. The plants of the garden grow heavy with produce and tired from a summer of work.

FALL IN THE GARDEN

The breeze calms, leaving a crisp fall day. The garden is ready for harvest.

POTATO JO

Shhhh. Do you here that? Listen. Just listen. Almost nothing. It's the most beautiful sound in the world. Fall is like that time right before bed. It's amazing. Winter is going to be here so soon. And that silence is all I'm going to hear for months. Mmmmmmm.

RUSSLE SPROUT

I just am so thankful to everyone who made this summer possible. BEST SUMMER EVER. And when I look back on all the good times that we had...
(starting to tear up)

I am just so grateful to be part of this garden. There was that time that it rained, and then it stopped raining. Or that time when four bees landed on me at the same time. AT THE SAME TIME.

POTATO JO

Shhhh.
(smiles contentedly for a long while)
Just like that.

RUSSLE SPROUT

(fully crying now)
It's like, why does it have to end? I am never going to forget any of you. You are all such a big part of my life. You changed me. I feel that I am a better plant for having known you.
(starts to sing a song from Qamp)

FAMILY - BONNIE AND MARTHA - 2

Bonnie sits in the garden. Martha enters, carrying two cups of coffee. They hand one to Bonnie.

BONNIE

Thanks.

MARTHA

How's it going out here?

BONNIE

Just thinking.

MARTHA

(breathing deeply)
Mmmm, that fall air, crisp like an apple.

Pause.

BONNIE

I'm a bad mom.

MARTHA

No.

BONNIE

What are we doing? I keep thinking about it. It's all so fast. Was it too fast?

MARTHA

No.

BONNIE

I keep feeling like Cedar got left behind.
We used to be a team, just the two of us. And of course I'm happy now, I'm so happy. I just-
These past few weeks we hardly talked to each other.

Pause.

MARTHA

Bonnie, this is real. We're real.
I love you. And we both love Cedar.
And none of us are going anywhere.
There's gonna be hard parts. Love can be hard. That's what makes it strong.

BONNIE

My wife, the wise sage.

MARTHA

I prefer lavender.

Bonnie chuckles.

BONNIE

I still don't know.
What can I do?

MARTHA

Whatever you do, you don't have to do it alone. We're a team now. I feel like sometimes you forget that. What can *we* do?

BONNIE

What can we do.

MARTHA

I think I have an idea.

ROOMIES - TOMATO 3 + WALKING HOME

Steve and Brandon hang out in the garden. Barb is walking home from work. Barb calls Brandon.

BRANDON

Helloooo?

BARB

Well howdy, partner.

Barb walks down the street towards the apartment.

BRANDON

Are you getting out of work now?

BARB

Yup! Already off the bus just two minutes away.

STEVE

Who are you talking to?

BRANDON

Just Barb, they're on their way home.

BARB

Do I hear the sound of adoring fans in the background, Brandon?

BRANDON

No our fan broke last week, remember?

BARB

Oh yeah. Well, that sucks.

STEVE

Tell Barb I said hi!

Barb enters the garden.

BARB

Say it to my face, Steven! I have arrived!

Brandon and Steve uproariously applaud.

STEVE

Do you just get lonely on the way home?

BRANDON

My brother from another mother.

BARB

Soul mates fated to be together forever.

BRANDON

Two peas in a pod.

BARB

The Edward to my Bella.

BRANDON

Gross.

BARB

I'm sorry. The um apple of my-

STEVE

We get the point.

BRANDON

But no, we usually text each other when we get off the bus but ha now recently...

BARB

with the whole hell freezing over and resurgence of white power as if it's the latest fashion choice...

BRANDON

We usually call each other when walking home.

STEVE

Ohh...

BARB

I mean. I'd just buy mace or whatever, but, ya know, the whole broke thing put a damper on that plan.

BRANDON

Not to mention the whole "just as likely to pepper spray myself as my possible gay bashing assailant" thing.

STEVE

That's nice. It's good to look out for each other.

BRANDON

You know. You can call me when you're walking home too, Steve. I'm always here.

BARB

The perks of unemployment.

BRANDON

I'm sorry. I'll check my poor privilege.

BARB

Thank you. But really, Steve, I know you got mad ninja skills.

BRANDON

But hit us up.

BARB

If you want to.

STEVE

Yeah. Haha. I'll do that.

BARB

Be a little more awkward, Steve.

BRANDON

Be nice, Barb. They're small.

STEVE

I am not-

BARB

Sweet baby.

BRANDON

The child I raised.

BARB

Darling honor student.

BRANDON

Love of my life.

Brandon looks at the garden.

BRANDON
Ahhhhh!!!

Steve and Barb duck.

BARB
What?

STEVE
Who?

BARB
Where?

Brandon runs to their tomato plant.

BRANDON
It's ripe!!!

Brandon picks a single tomato and brings it over to Barb and Steve.

STEVE
That was terrifying.

BARB
Yes. Yes it was.

BRANDON
Just look at it!

BARB
Well, what are we gonna do with it?

BRANDON
Can we just do nothing. Nothing sounds about right. Nothing.

STEVE
You just want to stare at it?

BRANDON
Its nice. I think I'm allowed to just stare at it. Where's the closet preschool?

BARB
Preschool?! No. This is a fruit, what does it need to learn?

BRANDON
The alphabet. Numbers one through one hundred. Love and affection. There are

many things a fruit can learn.

STEVE

That is true.

BARB

Brandon, we humans grow food to shove it in our gobs. Let's shove this tomato in our gobs.

BRANDON

What? No! She deserves better than that.

(Pause. They all look at each other, and then back at the tomato.)

Fine. If she must have a short life, I want it to be a classy one. One of refined taste and fancy chandeliers. I will store her until I have decided. To the refrigerator!

Brandon exits followed by Barb and Steve.

ELDERS - ARTHUR AND MILDRED

Arthur stands in the living room of the apartment, staring at their instrument in its open case.

They consider it for a long while.

Without Arthur noticing Mildred enters and watches them.

Arthur finally goes to the case, picks up the instrument. They are about to play and then they stop. Arthur puts the instrument back in the case, closing the lid

Arthur turns to see Mildred watching.

ARTHUR

How long have you been there?

MILDRED

A while.

ARTHUR

It's very rude to spy on people.

MILDRED

I wanted to see if you would like to weed the garden with me, I know Debby would appreciate it.

ARTHUR

I think I'm going to stay in, actually.

MILDRED

Are you alright?

ARTHUR

I'm fine.

MILDRED

Are you sure? You seem-

ARTHUR

I'm fine.

Please stop asking.

Arthur leaves the room.

FAMILY - CEDAR AND MARTHA - 1

Cedar enters and sits in the garden. They look at the rose bush. Martha enters from the apartment carrying the headphones and a walkman.

CEDAR

What are these?

MARTHA

They're your head phones. I fixed them for you, perks of knowing someone handy.

CEDAR

Why?

MARTHA

I thought you would appreciate it.

CEDAR

Do they really work?

MARTHA

Yep.

CEDAR

Okay.

MARTHA

Aren't you gonna try them? I worked hard on those.

CEDAR

Fine.

Cedar plugs the headphones into their music player. Cedar looks surprised.

CEDAR

Wow, thanks.

MARTHA

No problem.

Martha pulls out an old cassette and a walkman and hands it to Cedar.

MARTHA

And I made that mixtape for you.

CEDAR

A mixtape, really?

MARTHA

I know, it's a little dated. But come on, just try it, please.

CEDAR

I will.

MARTHA

Okay.

Martha gets up and goes.

TOMATO

TOMATO

I don't dislike Rose. I want to make that really clear, because I'm about to complain about them. I like them, actually, they're very nice. But we're way too close and I just really need to get away from them. Like, I don't have any space to grow anymore. I'm getting poked left and right by Rose's thorns. Rose is trying to grow away from me and I'm trying to grow away from Rose, because we can't really interact comfortably anymore. Maybe once we have enough space we'll be

able to be friends again. But we're both kind of suffocating right now.

ELDERS AND ROOMIES - NIGHT GARDEN

Nighttime. Steve works in the garden. Mildred enters as quietly as possible.

MILDRED

(Whispering.)

Steve... Steve.

STEVE

What?!

MILDRED

Steve, it's me Mildred. I want to talk about the feast.

Steve, wide eyed, turns slowly around.

STEVE

Don't say "the feast" like that. You sound like a vampire.

MILDRED

This isn't an anime! I'm talking about the harvest feast.

STEVE

Why are we having a secret meeting?

MILDRED

I don't know. But it is very dramatic, isn't it?

STEVE

Yes?

MILDRED

The feast! It's time to start planning.

STEVE

Okay. Uhh, okay. I can bake cookies and maybe we can embroider a table decoration. Have you gotten Cedar and Fauna in on it?

MILDRED

Great, great ideas! Fauna is very excited. And Martha and Bonnie are totally on board.

STEVE

Thank you for letting me help with this, I'm really grateful for all of this. Brandon

and Barb, feeling welcomed, being in an openly trans and queer space that's also my home!

MILDRED

You're gonna make me cry. Please stop. When I came here, this place was so full of growth and queerness and transness, I was overwhelmed with relief that I could let some of my guard down. I am trying to open that same welcome to Arthur. We both have reasons to thank our roommates.

STEVE

I guess I didn't realize that old, uhh, yeah old people need safe spaces too. I just kind of assumed since you and your roommates seem so grounded and confident.

MILDRED

Old people feel self conscious too! We're not robots who give out hard candy and tell weird proverbs. Debbie, Arthur, and I all have our own obstacles.

Pause.

STEVE

May I hug you?

MILDRED

No. But a firm handshake would be dandy!

Steve and Mildred vigorously shake hands.

STEVE AND MILDRED

The Feast!

POTATO JO AND RUSSELL SPROUT

In the garden. All the plants stand shoulder to shoulder like crops ready to be picked. Like soldiers waiting for the command of "Fire". One by one each plant looks up, their face washed with a mixture of fear and excitement, and their leaves tense with the weight of the unknown. One by one each plant steps backwards off stage. Whisked away by the hands of a creature much larger than themselves until only Russel and Potato stand alone.

RUSSEL SPROUT

The harvest is here.

POTATO JO

The harvest is here.

RUSSEL SPROUT

We haven't been picked yet. Why haven't we been picked yet?

POTATO JO

Does it matter? Are you eager to be eaten?

RUSSEL SPROUT

I mean kinda? A little. Life and death is a cycle, Jo. We're just pawns in the greater Food Pyramid of Life.

POTATO JO

That's deep, kid. And a lil creepy to be frank. I'm pretty sure there's a word for people that are into that type of stuff.

RUSSEL SPROUT

Can we be real for a second, Jo.

POTATO JO

There's only seconds left so I suppose so.

RUSSEL SPROUT

Being in this garden has been some of the best times of my life

POTATO JO

They've been the only times of your life.

RUSSEL SPROUT

And even though you are a bitter and mean vegetable.

POTATO JO

Getting kinda personal there.

RUSSEL SPROUT

Even though you are a vicious and deeply unhappy spud.

POTATO JO

Hey! I have feelings.

RUSSEL SPROUT

Even though you spend all your time trying to ruin the fun of others in some sort of convoluted messed up way where you substitute the emotion of anger for something akin to love.

POTATO JO

Are you done?

RUSSEL SPROUT

It has been an honor growing alongside you this spring.

POTATO JO
Russel...

RUSSEL SPROUT
Potato Jo...

POTATO JO
It has been an honor.

ROOMIES - MEETING 2

Brandon, Barb, and Steve are in their apartment.

BRANDON
I would like to call this meeting to order. It has come to my attention that a member of this humble abode has an issue that needs to be.. attended to?

BARB
Huh? What? Is this about me?

STEVE
Don't talk around it, Brandon. Barb, we're worried about you.

BRANDON
Yeah but, ahem. You've been reading like, the really sad stuff online. The really, really sad stuff. The really really reall-

STEVE
I think what Brandon's getting at is we're worried, we love you, and we just want to know if you're all right.

BARB
Thanks for asking so nicely, Steve... Honestly I've been feeling pretty sad lately. The thrift shop is giving me less hours, I'm worried I'll lose my job, again. Everything I used to like seems... boring. I'm going through some rainy weather, rainy boring grey weather.

BRANDON
(starting to sing)
Welll, theeee sun will come out! Tomorrowwww-

STEVE
Thanks for telling us, Barb. We both really appreciate your honesty. Even if some of us can't express it... in a way that makes sense.

BRANDON
That's all I had! Would you rather me belt out some Rent? Song and dance can be

healing!

STEVE

I'd looove to hear that some other time, but right now is about Barb. What can we do to help?

BARB

... Maybe stop saying my side of the room smells?

BRANDON

Not an option. That requires you to clean your side of the room.

STEVE

Completely an option! Barb! How about.. We help you clean? Brighten up the space.

Brandon groans.

BARB

Um. Okay.

STEVE

Alright. Also, I have an announcement. Mildred and I are going to be hosting a harvest feast in the garden, before it gets cold. We were hoping you both would attend.

Long pause.

BRANDON

Oh. I'm busy that day.

BARB

Me too.

STEVE

I didn't even say when it was going to be.

BRANDON

Ugh. Being social is hard!

STEVE

Come on roomies! It would really mean so much if you could come!

BARB

You know. That sounds... Really nice actually, let's do that.

BRANDON

(softly sings and getting louder)

The sun will come out-

STEVE
NO!

FAMILY - CEDAR AND MARTHA - 2

Martha is working in the garden. Cedar enters, holding the walkman.

CEDAR
This isn't as awful as I expected.

MARTHA
Is that the best I'm gonna get out of you?

CEDAR
Yes.

MARTHA
Okay then.

CEDAR
You put (band from before) on here.

MARTHA
Yeah. They're pretty good. Thanks for introducing me to them.

CEDAR
Yeah. I like Patti Smith too.

MARTHA
I'm glad.

Pause.

CEDAR
Why would you do this for me?

Pause.

MARTHA
Because, I care about you.

CEDAR
Why.

MARTHA

Do I need a why?

CEDAR

I have been mean to you.

MARTHA

Love is when you can forgive someone for anything they do.

CEDAR

What tea packet did you read that off of?

MARTHA

The earl grey in the kitchen.

Cedar laughs. Martha joins them.

CEDAR

I'm sorry... for how I've been acting.

MARTHA

Thank you for saying that, Cedar.

Pause.

CEDAR

I think- I think I've been scared that I'm going to lose my mom, like they won't need me any more.

MARTHA

Your mother loves you. They're not going anywhere.

Pause.

CEDAR

How could my mom go so long without telling me about... you know.

MARTHA

About me?

CEDAR

About being bisexual.

MARTHA

Maybe they were scared you wouldn't accept them.

CEDAR

That's silly, they're my mom, of course I would accept them. I just wish they told

me sooner so I could get used to it.

MARTHA

Its hard to come out to someone you love.

CEDAR

Was it hard for you to come out to Fauna?

MARTHA

There's was nothing for me to come out of. Fauna always knew. But my parents, that was hard, will always be hard.

Pause.

CEDAR

I'm sorry.

MARTHA

Thank you, Cedar.

Elders - Memories

*Arthur digs through a dusty box of old stuff. They sneeze.
Mildred enters.*

ARTHUR

Gosh darn dang fangled dust bunnies hopping no business being here!

MILDRED

What are you mumbling about?

ARTHUR

Who's there?

MILDRED

I'm just trying to mind my dust bunnies hopping no business being their gosh darn fangled self.

ARTHUR

You heard that?

MILDRED

Colorful language you got there.

ARTHUR

I was living with my sister for a while. My nieces aren't much higher up than here
(raises hand about chest height)

I can't be breaking out in curse words every other sentence so I got, well-

MILDRED
creative?

ARTHUR
It's the lyricist in me.

Arthur pulls out a notebook.

ARTHUR
Aha! Speaking of, this is my old song book.

MILDRED
Oh wow, the famed Book of Arthur.

ARTHUR
Nearly every darn song I've written is in this thing.
(to the notebook)
How you doing, Bessy? It's been too long, hasn't it?

MILDRED
So, you're serious about getting back into music.

ARTHUR
As serious as it is hot in Texas.

MILDRED
Debby always talked about your work. I've been trying to remember it. I think I only heard you play a few times.

ARTHUR
That would have been a while ago. Debby hasn't been able to travel to any of my shows for a while. Did you ever make music?

MILDRED
I sing in the shower.

ARTHUR
That I have heard. It's enchanting.

MILDRED
Thank you.

Pause.

ARTHUR
I've been meaning to thank you.

MILDRED

You getting soft on me?

ARTHUR

Seriously. Thank you. I know I'm not the easiest person to live with, but this has meant a lot. I don't know what Debby told you, but it's been a rough year for me.

MILDRED

Debby doesn't share anything that's not theirs to share.

ARTHUR

They're good like that.

MILDRED

But, it's not hard to guess. Is it something you want to talk about?

ARTHUR

I don't know. Do you know what it feels like to be unable to move some days, just frozen there.

Pause.

MILDRED

I do.

Pause.

ARTHUR

What do you do?

MILDRED

I get help, professional help. And I surround myself with people I love and safe spaces. Also, I stay put. That has helped me.

ARTHUR

I haven't really tried that last one before.

MILDRED

Maybe you should.

ARTHUR

Yeah, right.

Mildred looks at Arthur.

ARTHUR

You're serious. You want me to stay?

MILDRED

I've been thinking, and it would be a pain to move everything all around again.

ARTHUR

Yes. It would.

MILDRED

You at least need to stay for the harvest feast.

ARTHUR

That sounds really nice.

MILDRED

No pressure. But if you're up to it, I'm sure we'd all like to hear the song you've been working on.

ARTHUR

We'll see.

SPOKEN WORD - ELDERS

DEBBIE, MILDRED, AND ARTHUR

(Each line spoken by a different person)

Think of the ocean
 And its never ending expanse
 Think of its depths
 And think of its blackness
 Of its unexplored territory
 Of its mysterious creatures
 Of the overarching unknown
 Think of the ocean and do not be afraid
 Think of the ocean and welcome its comfort
 Welcome the excitement of something new
 Think of the ocean
 And know that all things must come to an end
 Sooner or later
 The ocean will end
 But that's not now
 And until then
 And until we meet that conclusion
 And until we meet that climax

DEBBIE, MILDRED, AND ARTHUR

(spoken all together)

Just let it be

FAMILY - BONNIE AND CEDAR - 2

Debby and Martha setup the table for the feast.

Fauna enters with a vase of flowers.

FAUNA

How are these?

DEBBY

Oh, those are perfect, Fauna.

MARTHA

Where's the tablecloth?

Bonnie enters, carrying a bed sheet.

BONNIE

Right here!

MARTHA

The bed sheets?

BONNIE

We can wash them after.

DEBBY

I think they're perfect.

They go well with the decoration that Steve and Mildred made.

They put the sheet on the table. Debby places the decoration. Fauna puts the flowers in the middle. They all admire it for a moment.

Cedar enters.

CEDAR

Mom.

DEBBY

Cedar, you're just in time to help.

CEDAR

Great, just a minute though.

Mom, can I talk to you?

BONNIE

Of course.

Bonnie and Cedar go off to the side.

CEDAR
I love you.

Pause.

BONNIE
I love you too.

CEDAR
I know things are different now. But I don't want to be strangers.

BONNIE
I don't want that either.

They embrace.

CEDAR
So, we cool now?

BONNIE
I think it's a bit more complicated than that.

CEDAR
What's up with moms and always wanting to complicate things...

BONNIE
Let's just say we're, ah, beginning to work through some of our familial issues.

CEDAR
Cool cool.

BONNIE
I really love you, like a lot.

CEDAR
I know.

Pause.

FAUNA
Everyone loves everyone!!

CEDAR
Oh my.

FAUNA
FAMILY HUG!

CEDAR
This is interesting.

Cedar is in the middle of a family group hug with Martha, Bonnie, and Fauna.

(NOTE: If any of the actors would rather not be in a group hug, this could easily be replaced with a family cheer or huddle.)

MARTHA
Get in here, Debby.

DEBBY
Alright.

Debby joins in.

CEDAR
(from the center of the hug)
Don't we need to set the table now?

ROOMIES - TOMATO - 4

Barb, Brandon, and Steve are in their apartment. They all look at the tomato. It sits next to a bowl of homemade pasta.

BARB
I'm so ecstatic, I finally got to use my linguini machine!

BRANDON
She's so beautiful I don't know if I can cut her up.

STEVE
We need to hurry. The feast is going to be starting soon.

BARB
She'll be even more beautiful coupled with the freshest pasta in the land.

BRANDON
That's so true... Tomato, I'm so proud of you.

Brandon begins to cut up their tomato. They weep while they do so.

Steve grabs a pan of cookies and exits.

THE FEAST

Debby, Bonnie, Cedar, Fauna, and Martha prepare the last-minute arrangements for the feast.

Steve enters with the cookies.

STEVE

Sorry, I'm a little late!

DEBBY

You're right on time. Go ahead and set those over there.

FAUNA

Steve Steve Steve!

CEDAR

Deep breaths, Fauna. Deep breaths.

STEVE

Hi, Fauna.

FAUNA

This is awesome!!

Steve laughs.

Mildred enters with Arthur.

MILDRED

You're sure about this?

ARTHUR

Yes. I think so. Yes.

MILDRED

You can bail at any time.

ARTHUR

No. I'm sure. I feel... safe here.

Debby clinks a glass.

DEBBY

Alright, everyone. I think we're ready to get started. Where are Brandon and Barb?

Barb enters.

BARB

It is my pleasure to announce the debut of... TOMATO PASTA.

Brandon enters holding the bowl high. They process toward the table with dignity and grace.

Steve begins to clap loudly. Everyone else follows suit.

However, Brandon's shoelace is untied.

They step on it and fall forward, spilling the tomato pasta all over the ground.

BRANDON

My baby!! Noooooo!!

MILDRED

Oh, I'm so sorry, hon.

Barb goes to Brandon.

BRANDON

So young, too soon.

BARB

I know. I know.

Brandon and Barb share a hyper-dramatic movie cry.

BARB

Look Nance, it has gone back to the Earth from whence it came. Look at the little seeds.

BRANDON

You're right. You're right! NOBODY STEP HERE.

DEBBY

Alright. Shall we get started?

Everyone takes their seats.

DEBBY

Thank you very much to Mildred and Steve for making all of this possible.

There is general applause.

DEBBY

I thought it would be nice to start with some toasts. I asked Bonnie to go first.

BONNIE

Thank you, Debby. I want to make my toast to family. I've been thinking a lot this summer about the family that you get born into and the families that you make. Neither of those are easy. But I feel so lucky to have the families I have in my life. Martha, Fauna, and Cedar. Thank you. I know this year has meant a lot of changes, but we all got through it together. I love you.

ALL

Cheers!

BARB

I'd like to share a toast, to my new clean room.

Brandon raises their glass up.

BRANDON

To Barb's new, clean, totally not smelly room.

ALL

Cheers!

DEBBY

Steve?

STEVE

Oh. Is it my turn? I'd like to make my toast to friends. I don't have a lot of experience with friends. But I was thinking that friends are like a garden.

BRANDON

That's a real metaphor.

BARB

Friends metaphor-ever!

STEVE

Yeah. You can plant all the seeds—of friendship—that you want, but the seeds you tend are the ones that will grow. I'm so glad to be growing with all of you.

BARB

Steve, what did we tell you about all this feelings talk!

ALL

Cheers!

DEBBY

We have one last thing before it's time to eat.

FAUNA

It's not time yet!?

CEDAR

For real, come on!

MARTHA

Shhhhh.

MILDRED

(to Arthur)

You're still sure?

ARTHUR

Yes. I got this.

Arthur stands up. They open their music case and stare at their instrument for a long time. They take a deep breath, pick it up and face everyone.

ARTHUR

Hi. My toast is a little different. It's been so good to get to know you all this summer to varying degrees.

BRANDON

(whispering to Barb)

Who is that?

ARTHUR

But I guess the only thing left to toast is... Life.
To life.

Arthur plays a song.