

TRAVELS OF ANGELICA

A Play by

Joseph McDonough

Production Script

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

ALEXANDER CRUMPLER

LUCIA CRUMPLER

EMMA

MATTHEW

VINCENT PENNY

GABRIELLE PENNY

PODGE

SETTING

LONDON, THEN COASTAL VIRGINIA

TIME

Today and 1657

TRAVELS OF ANGELICA

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ACT ONE

**SCENE ONE: CRUMPLER'S LODGINGS. LONDON.
1657. EVENING.**

LUCIA CRUMPLER, 15, is sitting on the floor. She gently clutches a doll and and hums softly to it for several beats.

ALEXANDER CRUMPLER rushes into the room, quickly stuffing clothes and other items into a sack.

LUCIA

Story, tonight?

CRUMPLER

No time, no time!

(Pause)

LUCIA

Story, Father?

CRUMPLER

Not now, Lucia! Would you like to sail away on a ship . . . ?

LUCIA

A ship? To where?

CRUMPLER

Anywhere you want . . . an enchanted kingdom . . . ?

LUCIA

Oh, yes! Yes!

CRUMPLER

So it shall be!

(LUCIA watches him run about.

Pause.)

LUCIA

Will you sail with me, Father?

(CRUMPLER stops and smiles
at her.)

CRUMPLER

How could I not?

LUCIA

Good—

CRUMPLER

You'll let me go with you?

LUCIA

(Laughing)

Yes! Yes!

CRUMPLER

Hurry now! Quickly! Help me gather a few things to take with us.

(She helps him pack. He doesn't stop
working.)

LUCIA

What shall we take?

CRUMPLER

Only what's essential . . . the rest will be sent to us later on the strong back
of a laughing sea porpoise . . .

LUCIA

(Excited)

A porpoise?

(LOUD VOICES are heard from outside.)

LOUD VOICES

Alexander Crumpler! Over there! That's the place! He's inside!
Crumpler! Traitor! Traitor!

(CRUMPLER quickly grabs LUCIA by the arm.)

CRUMPLER

(Whispers)

That's enough! Out the back way now!

LOUD VOICES

It's locked! Break it down!

(There is a pounding at the door.)

He pulls her away and toward a rear door.

She stops and points to a book
across the room on a small table.)

LUCIA

Father! Your book! Your book!

CRUMPLER

Leave it. There's a world where books spring up from the ground like
flowers . . .

(He pulls her out and they are gone.)

END OF SCENE

**SCENE TWO: THE BACKYARD OF AN OLD HOUSE
IN COASTAL VIRGINIA. TODAY.
SUMMER. LATE AFTERNOON.**

VINCENT PENNY, an old man, sits alone
near a wooden table.

He holds an old broken weather vane.

He stares straight ahead, softly mouthing
undecipherable words to himself.

There is the sound of car doors slamming
shut, not far off.

EMMA and MATTHEW walk on quietly
from around the house. EMMA carries a
notebook.

MATTHEW sees VINCENT and stops.

MATTHEW

Hey, here's somebody.

(They go over to VINCENT.)

Excuse me.

(VINCENT doesn't answer.)

Excuse me. Sir? Hello?

EMMA

(Louder)

Hello?

(VINCENT turns to them. He says nothing.)

Hi! Hope we're not bothering you.

(She smiles. No response.)

MATTHEW

I'm doing some scholarly research. It'll only take a minute, sir. Thanks!

(No response as VINCENT stares at them.)

Is that, by any chance, Old Crumpler Road? That gravel path leading up through the woods . . . to your house over there?

EMMA

There's no sign down by the main road.

MATTHEW

But if that's Chesapeake Bay way out there— and of course it is— and if we're one and a quarter miles north and two and a half miles east of where Killmarrock and Northumberland roads used to intersect—

EMMA

What a view of the bay! Mmmm, I love the . . . the smell of the water in the air. . .

(She closes her eyes and breathes in again.)

Do we ever have to go home?

MATTHEW

Then approximately three hundred yards from the old water line— somewhere right around here, should be the eastern end of Old Crumpler Road!

VINCENT

You here to fix my dolphin?

EMMA

Your what?

VINCENT

My dolphin.

MATTHEW

What's the matter with it?

VINCENT

It broke.

MATTHEW

Oh. Sorry to hear that.

(VINCENT holds the weather vane out to them.)

VINCENT

I've been trying and trying to get the stupid thing fixed. The missus will want to see it in its proper spot when she gets home.

(EMMA holds it for a minute.)

EMMA

It's a dolphin! It's cute!

MATTHEW

Cool. An old weathervane, isn't it?

(She examines it carefully.)

EMMA

And there's a little man riding on its back. Holding on tight. Ohhh, he looks so scared. You can look right into his eyes . . . he's quivering . . .

VINCENT

You like it?

EMMA

Yes. I do.

(She gives it back to VINCENT.)

Thank you for sharing it. It probably goes way, way up—

MATTHEW

On the very tip top of your house there, sir. Doesn't it?

VINCENT

Where the hell else would it go?

MATTHEW

Oh, sorry—

EMMA

We didn't mean to offend—

VINCENT

It broke away in a storm. Big purple gust of wind swooped in and snapped it right off like a dead branch on a tree. Landed smack down here in the

yard with a terrible thump. Right where you're standing, boy. That's become a dangerous spot.

(MATTHEW moves over a few steps.)

EMMA

I hear you've had lots of thunderstorms this summer.

VINCENT

Eighteen years ago last April. I would've been knocked down dead if I was standing there. But fortunate for me, I was sitting over here. I don't go over there any more.

EMMA

Good thinking. I like that.

VINCENT

This is no cheap aluminum weather vane like you see today. It's part wrought iron. Solid. See for yourself.

(He shoves it to MATTHEW.)

MATTHEW

Right . . . that's heavy, yeah . . . sir—?

VINCENT

(Quickly to EMMA)

You want to be my daughter?

EMMA

Your daughter?

VINCENT

I could use a new one. You're not a waitress are you?

EMMA

No, a writer—

VINCENT

She's a waitress. But not much of one.

EMMA

I'm probably not much of a writer—

MATTHEW

No, you're a great writer—

VINCENT

You be my daughter and we'll let him fix the dolphin.

EMMA

That's nice of you. But he'd like to ask you some questions—

MATTHEW

Do you happen to know if a man named Alexander Crumpler—

VINCENT

My other girl's a tramp. Every town's got one. Sneaking off with those loudmouthed boys who'll drink and drink until the local girls look pretty. Even Gabrielle. I'd be ashamed to be her father if I had any shame left in me. And her mother would be too to see how her only baby's turning out. Gabby thinks she's all grown up. She's got a ton of smarts, but not an ounce of charm. Turned mean and nasty on me, Gabby did. Don't you ever turn mean and nasty.

EMMA

(Laughs)

Me? How could I?

VINCENT

What's your name?

EMMA

Emma.

MATTHEW

Sir, could we ask you—?

VINCENT

Good simple name, Emma. Her mother wanted fancy old family names. It's a mother's job to pick the names for a girl. I gave in on that one. Gabrielle Angelica . . .

(GABRIELLE comes on from the house.

She is heavy-set and tough. She carries a drink for herself and a beer for VINCENT.)

GABRIELLE

Dad?

(She looks at EMMA and MATTHEW.

They are intimidated by her.)

GABRIELLE
Who . . . the hell are you?

VINCENT
She's your new sister.

EMMA
Oh, no—

VINCENT
And he's fixing my dolphin.

MATTHEW
Not actually—

GABRIELLE
Are you selling something?

EMMA & MATTHEW
No, no—

GABRIELLE
We're not buying. We're too poor.

MATTHEW
I'm not selling anything. I'd just like to ask you a couple research questions.

GABRIELLE
No. I'm not in any kind of mood . . .

EMMA
He doesn't mean any harm, ma'am. We're from Yale. University? And we're trying to determine—

MATTHEW
Thanks, I can take it from here, Emma. I'm doing historical research, ma'am. Nothing at all personal. And very, very quickly . . .

GABRIELLE
What the hell about?

MATTHEW
Thank you. You're both extremely kind to help me out here—

GABRIELLE

I didn't say I'd answer your stupid questions.

VINCENT

Mean and nasty . . .

MATTHEW

Well . . . I'll be exceedingly brief . . . have you ever heard of Old Crumpler Road?

GABRIELLE

No.

MATTHEW

This map of late colonial Virginia plats says that your gravel path up through the woods over there was once called Old Crumpler Road.

VINCENT

We never called it that.

GABRIELLE

We've never called it anything. Why bother?

MATTHEW

Have you ever heard of Alexander Crumpler?

GABRIELLE

No.

VINCENT

Never.

EMMA

He's a wonderful writer— a budding poet and a playwright— I've been gaining an appreciation myself—

MATTHEW

What about an Edward Blythebury?

GABRIELLE

Don't know him neither.

MATTHEW

Many years ago an Edward Blythebury bought some property somewhere up here where the road ends. I stumbled across the land record when I Googled "Edward Blythebury." On the Internet? Later I saw "Old

Crumpler Road” at the same place on the map and I became pretty curious—

EMMA

We freaked out—

MATTHEW

I’m speculating that Alexander Crumpler and Edward Blythebury might have been the same guy.

GABRIELLE

Go home.

VINCENT

Wait a minute! I knew him!

GABRIELLE

Jesus . . .

MATTHEW

(Laughs)

Edward Blythebury? I really don’t—

VINCENT

Borrowed two dollars and thirty-five cents from me. So we could take the Saturday morning train to Baltimore and see the circus. Never paid me back.

EMMA

Edward Blythebury lived in the seventeenth century—

VINCENT

He teased me with all the amazing sights and sounds I had ahead of me!

GABRIELLE

Dad—

VINCENT

But when we got there the circus was rained out. Too much wind for the tents. I cried and cried on the train all the way home. He was too brave to cry. So I cried for the both of us. Eddie got shot and killed in France by the Germans. I bet he didn’t cry.

MATTHEW

Well . . .

EMMA

Are there other Blythebury's who still live around here?

GABRIELLE

No.

VINCENT

Marcie is a Blythebury!

MATTHEW

Marcie?

VINCENT

My wife. Haven't seen her out there have you?

EMMA

She's a Blythebury?

VINCENT

Maybe gliding up the road? She's got the most perfect laughter in those eyes of hers.

GABRIELLE

Dad—

VINCENT

Don't give me that frown, you cow! She said she'd come back as soon as she was done. She looked at me straight and she told me!

GABRIELLE

We need to get you your supper. I'm going out . . . got a big night out tonight . . . I need to get ready.

(VINCENT turns to EMMA.)

VINCENT

Marcie was born in the water. Even when we were kids, she loved to swim. Let out the secret joy in her. Set free her adventurous spirit.

GABRIELLE

Look, there aren't any more Blytheburys. The name died out a while ago. That's all I know. I never kept up on those old folks. Who's got the time for that crap?

VINCENT

. . . and it wasn't the saltwater like you'd think . . .

GABRIELLE

Back to your car—

VINCENT

. . . she said it was the breath of the moon, and the kiss of the tides . . . kept her forever young. Like a sea goddess . . . I'd stand out on that cliff at night and watch her . . .

VINCENT

. . . Marcella the Mermaid! Half woman. Half fish. All angel!

EMMA

Is your wife—

GABRIELLE

Look, we can't help you with your research! We don't know a thing about it!

(MATTHEW and EMMA step back.)

Go back to Yale! University. Please . . . I'm going out . . .

(GABRIELLE pulls VINCENT up.

He pulls out of her grasp.)

VINCENT

I can walk for myself!

(He stares at GABRIELLE.)

Marcie went swimming!

(GABRIELLE walks off in disgust.

VINCENT turns to EMMA.)

Her eyes were laughing and she clasped my hand . . . as warm and as tight as anyone's ever held me . . . she promised me she'd be back . . . just as soon as she swam through all those thoughts in her head, just as soon as she could grow her healing wings . . .

EMMA

Healing wings? Really?

VINCENT

. . . her soothing arms and her healing angel wings . . . she wanted to fly beyond the water to where the ocean meets the stars. She promised to come back. Then she swam away . . . straight out into that bay and toward the sea. That was forty-five years ago . . .

END OF SCENE

SCENE THREE: THE HULL OF A SHIP. 1657.

CRUMPLER and LUCIA sit wrapped in blankets. LUCIA is shivering as she leans against her father.

CRUMPLER

Wrap yourself up tight, Lucia. Stay warm.

LUCIA

Tell me another story?

CRUMPLER

I think you ought to go to sleep. Sleep now . . .

LUCIA

No. Not yet.

CRUMPLER

The sea feels quite calm this evening, doesn't it? A splendid night for sleeping. Then in the morning, we'll see about going above deck and getting fresh air.

LUCIA

One more story about Mother. Please! Just one.

CRUMPLER

Where shall she be this time?

LUCIA

One where she swims with mermaids.

CRUMPLER

Good . . .

LUCIA

Do you think . . . do you think there are mermaids— swimming right outside our ship now?

CRUMPLER

How could there not be?

LUCIA

Do you think these mermaids saw Mother?

CRUMPLER

How could they not? On her journey Angelica searched everywhere for her beloved—to all four corners of the earth, then beyond the corners. Each sad place she traveled she brought food for the poor, for the unjustly imprisoned . . . and she spoke for those sad, trembling spirits who had even lost the strength of . . . words. Well, one day it seemed that some of the lovely mermaids who swam in the Sea of Preposterous Hopes—these English mermaids heard of your mother’s renown and became quite jealous. They invited your mother to come swim with them. But the invitation was a trick, you see, for they intended to drown her . . .

LUCIA

That wasn’t nice . . .

CRUMPLER

Angelica set sail with her old friend wide-eyed Captain Gregorio and his weathered ship *Tenacity*. And when they arrived at the Sea of Preposterous Hopes, the English mermaids shouted “We must carry you to the hungry of heart so that you may give them hope.” And upon hearing this urgent plea, your mother, being no coward, why she dove right in!

LUCIA

She was brave.

CRUMPLER

The powerful mermaids quickly clasped their official arms ‘round your mother, but instead of bringing her to the surface, they held her under the water. Angelica could not wiggle out of their hold! She held her breath as long as she could, but she was quite nearly done for!

LUCIA

No . . .

CRUMPLER

But then, Lucia — the mermaids— they looked into your mother’s frightened eyes— and they had pity in their mermaid hearts. Tears poured down their mermaid cheeks. “Why are we doing such a horrible thing?” “Why? Why?” And they let her go. Your mother drifted up and up to the surface. And the guilty English mermaids wept and wept at the shame of their deed. They filled the ocean with the taste of their tears . . . and they haven’t stopped weeping to this very day.

(LUCIA wraps up tightly in her blanket. She is getting sleepy.)

LUCIA

And . . . Mother . . . ?

CRUMPLER

She sprouted her angel wings, and flew off through the night, landing at last on a glistening shore. She rested there on the sand because she was sleepy, very very sleepy . . .

LUCIA

I'm not sleepy . . . not sleepy . . .

CRUMPLER

And one day she awoke, her generous eyes found her true love, Edward Blythebury. Then they rested there together, warm and at peace in each other's soothing arms. And they waited for the *Tenacity* to sail back to her. For their journey and her travails had just begun . . .

(He looks down at LUCIA as she sleeps.)

END OF SCENE

**SCENE FOUR: OUTSIDE NEAR THE CHESAPEAKE
 BAY. DUSK.**

EMMA runs on looking up at the sky.

MATTHEW follows her on. He carries
a backpack.

MATTHEW

Why did you have to stop already?

EMMA

And waste this view from the car? It's so clear tonight. Wow!

MATTHEW

(Smiles at her.)

If you don't let me drive it'll take us a year to get home . . . seriously . . .

EMMA

Just look at that sunset hitting the bay . . . it's so peaceful and pretty at
dusk . . .

(MATTHEW sits on a bench. He takes a water bottle
out of his backpack.)

I love it here . . .

MATTHEW

I was listening to my music . . . trying to think of the perfect theme . . . I
thought I had a good idea . . . now it doesn't seem like anything
interesting. I'm not the writer you are . . . we should probably get back on
the road . . .

EMMA

How could we? Not yet. You can just now see the little stars up there . . .
distant but close . . . starting to reappear . . . glimmer down . . . like they're
whispering to us . . . I wonder if Crumpler saw sunsets around here just
like this . . .

MATTHEW

You know . . . maybe . . . maybe Crumpler's a dead end.

EMMA

What . . . no, you need to stay with it! You've got a great start.

MATTHEW

I don't know. I've looked at everything.

EMMA

No, wait— I think it was in Crumpler's diary . . . that's where I heard it . . .

(She pulls a book out of Matthew's backpack.)

MATTHEW

Still don't have an angle . . . a hook . . .

EMMA

It's been stuck in my brain since we saw those people this afternoon . . . somewhere near the end . . . Crumpler was sketching out characters . . . just like I do . . .

MATTHEW

Do you really think I can build my whole dissertation around what we've got? My advisor just grunted and grumbled at it. He wasn't particularly encouraging.

EMMA

No, fight for your ideas! You're absolutely on to something good, Matthew. Crumpler's subversive writings are getting him in trouble with the Puritan authorities. And this diary confirms that Crumpler's new play was going to be an allegory with a Blythebury in it. So then Crumpler switches to his character's name: Edward Blythebury—

MATTHEW

I can't even prove he changed names and traveled here to begin with. I can't prove he ever left London.

EMMA

It's got to be connected. Those people were Blytheburys.

MATTHEW

The old guy married a Blythebury. But they could also be different Blytheburys. Unrelated to Crumpler.

(She finds the place in the book.)

EMMA

Here it is! He's sketching out a the name and a character for a political play he was going to write: *Angela or Angelica . . . bravely*

swims with the mermaids of Puritan oppression and torture . . . warns against an evil government and its fraudulent Christian god that must be defeated . . . a generous goddess of the common good . . . travels the oceans and the skies . . . finds the destitute of will, the hungry of hope . . . speaks for the poor, trembling spirits who have lost the strength of words . . . she becomes a benevolent sea nymph . . . and has the healing arms and the soothing wings of an angel . . .

MATTHEW

Yeah. O.K . . . ?

EMMA

That is similar to what that old man was saying about his wife.

MATTHEW

Just because it's similar—

EMMA

Has the healing arms and the soothing wings of an angel? That's awful close to what he said: soothing arms and healing wings of an angel. And his daughter's name is Gabrielle Angelica? Angelica!

MATTHEW

There are similarities, but—

EMMA

This diary, it just stops cold in London on February 15th 1657, right? And doesn't Crumpler then completely drop out of the historical record—

MATTHEW

Maybe because they caught him and hanged him.

EMMA

There's no record in England that his execution order was carried out.

MATTHEW

Not every record survives—

EMMA

Then Edward Blythebury suddenly pops up on over here on June 10th when his deed is recorded?

MATTHEW

Emma—

EMMA

Blythbury buys property at the end of what becomes Old Crumpler Road!

MATTHEW

I know, Emma, I know . . . I've thought through all that. But is any of this much of a contribution to literary history? If I add a few unknown details to his biography, should that influence anybody's response to his body of work? Which is fairly slim anyway. Scraps of poetry from a young man. Plus, I can't actually prove he lived here or was executed here. There are no more records to research.

EMMA

But Matthew—

MATTHEW

Even if it's all true, I don't think it's not enough for me to use.

(He goes to EMMA, and hugs her.)

But thank you for helping me . . . you've been great . . . I'm glad you're excited . . .

EMMA

We've got to go back.

MATTHEW

What?

EMMA

We do . . .

MATTHEW

He's too much of an obscure, minor figure anyway . . .

EMMA

No—

MATTHEW

I just want to finish my degree. I can find somebody else to write my dissertation on. It's O.K.

EMMA

No, it's me . . . I think I want to write about him . . .

MATTHEW

You do?

EMMA

I've been thinking . . . maybe he's a character for one of my stories or something . . . he's this restless, whimsical radical . . . I really like that. I want to see . . . whatever it is that's maybe still unseen . . . something barely living about him that's hiding out there. It's his sad, but beautiful fantasies . . . his unreasonable, unexpected . . . hope. When I try to write my poetry, try to write my stories . . . I think it feels like me . . .

MATTHEW

(Smiles at her)

I love you, Emma.

EMMA

I have a glimpse of him . . . just a glimpse . . . I need to go back.

END OF SCENE

**SCENE FIVE: THE YARD. SUMMER. 1657.
AFTERNOON.**

CRUMPLER sits at a wooden table writing
with a quill on sheets of paper.

LUCIA stands, staring straight out.

LUCIA

It's beautiful today!

CRUMPLER

(Not looking up as he writes)

Uh-hmm . . .

LUCIA

I can see the ocean. Can you see it?

CRUMPLER

Of course . . .

LUCIA

(Takes a deep breath)

The ocean smells like apple cider. With molasses! Never smelled like
apple cider with molasses at home.

CRUMPLER

No . . .

LUCIA

Home smelled like fish cakes. Do you smell the apple cider with
molasses?

CRUMPLER

Uh-huh . . .

(She breathes deeply again.)

LUCIA

I like this smell. Can we live here forever?

CRUMPLER

Forever? We'll do our best.

(He looks back down and continues writing.)

LUCIA

What are you writing?

CRUMPLER

Just words . . . nothing but words at this point . . .

LUCIA

Oh.

(She looks over his shoulder.)

Are those the words?

CRUMPLER

Uh-huh . . .

LUCIA

I don't understand . . . how words on paper talk. What do those words say?

CRUMPLER

Not much of anything yet . . .

(Pause)

LUCIA

Are they happy?

CRUMPLER

In spots. Perhaps.

LUCIA

Are they sad?

CRUMPLER

Well, yes, in parts. I'm struggling . . . these words aren't doing their assigned tasks right now. I can't seem to find the precise words, the perfect words . . .

LUCIA

Oh.

CRUMPLER

I'm still in the thicket of it. Searching for what needs to be said. And the best order of things— what comes next, and then next after that.

LUCIA

Is Mother in your words?

CRUMPLER

Yes. It's my play about your mother.

LUCIA

I get sad when I think of her. Sometimes.

(CRUMPLER looks up.)

CRUMPLER

I get sad too. Many times.

LUCIA

She liked to sing to me. I remember. She let me twist my fingers in her hair . . . and she'd sing . . .

CRUMPLER

She sang to me too . . .

LUCIA

I sing to my dolls. They're my babies.

CRUMPLER

Yes.

LUCIA

I'll sing to my new babies when I get older.

CRUMPLER

Lovely, Lucia. Now let your father get back to work for a little while. Please . . .

LUCIA

All right . . .

(LUCIA watches him write for a few beats.)

Do you think . . . could there be a story about me? Can I be in your play too?

CRUMPLER

Hmmm . . .

LUCIA

Please?

CRUMPLER

You know, Lucia . . . it's quite amusing you should say that. This just might work out . . . yes . . . I need a beautiful, magical name for a new character. Because I have just reached the scene where Angelica has been captured and whisked away from her true love, Edward Blythebury—

(Whispers)

— that's me.

LUCIA

(Whispers back)

That's your name now. I remembered!

CRUMPLER

Yes, exactly. So here we are . . . resolute Angelica and too whimsical for his own good Edward Blythebury, have been tricked and separated.

LUCIA

I don't understand—

CRUMPLER

Your loving mother is being held prisoner on the magnificent ship of Lord Reginald Farthington!

LUCIA

Who's that?

CRUMPLER

Why only the most feared and powerful man on the seas. Even powerful enough to capture your mother.

LUCIA

I don't like him . . .

CRUMPLER

Lord Farthington has two sharp-clawed crows perched on each of his shoulders, waiting to fly off and attack the goodhearted! You see, Angelica has been helping the poor and the powerless. Greedy Lord Farthington doesn't like her at all. He'd like to see her dead.

LUCIA

I don't like him at all!

CRUMPLER

Of course you don't! But this is the wonderful part— there will be a scene at night on the deck of Lord Farthington's ship . . . where Angelica looks up to the stars for some small bit of guidance, of help. And out of the wavering mist appears—who do you think?

LUCIA

I don't know.

CRUMPLER

Her sister sea goddess: Lucia the Sea Nymph!

LUCIA

Me! That's me!

CRUMPLER

Sweet of heart and wise beyond her years!

LUCIA

Am I beautiful?

CRUMPLER

How could you not be?

LUCIA

I'm a sea nymph! I'm a sea nymph! What's that?

CRUMPLER

(Jotting down notes)

Let's see now, first you'll have a little stage business picking some odd bits of seaweed from your wings. Then you'll have a thing or two to say about perseverance and man's tilted battle against all religion. Against all government. Hmm, when governments of men conspire with men of god and the gods of men . . . it's always for evil, never for good.

LUCIA

All right . . .

CRUMPLER

Then Angelica says you must hurry, so you take her hand and off you go!

LUCIA

Go where?

CRUMPLER

(Still jotting)

To find Edward Blythebury . . . through the sky, with much sound and commotion, all the while speaking this and that about perpetual love and time's cruel clock . . . until you despair that you can't fly any farther, and you rest on a sad and lonely spot: the Island of Bitter Dreams . . .

LUCIA

Is that where Mother is now?

CRUMPLER

Well . . . yes . . . in the play.

LUCIA

She didn't really die. Not like other people die. Not forever.

CRUMPLER

(Smiles)

How could she? I'm keeping her alive, Lucia. As best I can, in words. Some day I may find people willing to listen on this shore

(CRUMPLER begins to write again.)

LUCIA

Will I get to see her again?

CRUMPLER

After a good, grown life. Filled with your own fantastical tales.

LUCIA

But I want to see her now.

(PODGE, 50's, enters.)

PODGE

Mr. Blythebury!

CRUMPLER

(Turns)

Oh, hello. Mr. . . .

PODGE

Podge.

CRUMPLER

Of course. Mr. Podge. Good day to you, sir. You're well, I trust?

PODGE

A trusting man, are you, Mr. Blythebury?

CRUMPLER

I hope that I am, sir.

(PODGE looks around some more.)

PODGE

You're not out in your fields today?

CRUMPLER

Earlier. Before the sun was full out. I'm learning. I'll be back at it later.

PODGE

Yes, you should.

CRUMPLER

I was just writing some letters. Friends back home . . .

(CRUMPLER quickly gathers up his papers
into a single pile on the table.)

PODGE

Scorchingly warm afternoon, it is.

(Mopping his brow)

Miserable . . . and insufferable . . .

CRUMPLER

Oh, Lucia, fetch Mr. Podge a drink of water. I'm sorry, sir.

LUCIA

Yes, father.

(LUCIA runs off. PODGE carefully watches her go.)

CRUMPLER

Our well is drafting wonderfully now.

(Pause)

I can't thank you enough. For your assistance in digging last month. It's a blessing to have a neighbor . . .

PODGE

That daughter of yours . . .

CRUMPLER

Lucia?

PODGE

Unusual name. Lucia. It's not English?

CRUMPLER

No.

PODGE

Or German?

CRUMPLER

Italian.

PODGE

Ahhh.

CRUMPLER

It's a beautiful language.

PODGE

Hmmm. Lucia. Is it a Christian name?

CRUMPLER

It is. Saint Lucy.

PODGE

Ahhh. Saint Lucy. Virgin and martyr.

CRUMPLER

For saints, I suppose it helps to be one or the other. Though I hear both are highly preferable.

(CRUMPLER chuckles. PODGE does not laugh.)

PODGE

Lucia. Lucia. She's slow, is she?

CRUMPLER

Oh— Lucia, hurry, please! Mr. Podge is waiting!

PODGE

Slow-witted, I mean.

CRUMPLER

Slow-witted. Well, I suppose . . .

PODGE

A simpleton, is she?

CRUMPLER

It depends on to whom she's compared.

(LUCIA comes back with a cup of water.)

LUCIA

(Very quietly)

Water, sir.

PODGE

Yes.

(PODGE takes it and drinks.)

Thank you . . . ahhhh . . .

(CRUMPLER motions LUCIA to go inside. She exits.)

CRUMPLER

Well . . . what can I do for you today, Mr. Podge?

PODGE

Mr. Blythebury, we should be men of discriminate words. Not fellows who seek the earthly pleasure of their own voices . . .

CRUMPLER

Well, it's mostly our own voices we hear out here.

PODGE

Our vast isolation in this colony can be a virtue. When I can better afford it, I'll send for my little wife from London. A man needs his wife. That's all . . . do you have a wife?

(Pause)

CRUMPLER

She died.

PODGE

A pity. On the journey?

CRUMPLER

In England. Do you have some business with me today, Mr. Podge?

PODGE

I've been conducting an observance of you, Mr. Blythebury.

CRUMPLER

An observance?

PODGE

As I pass by from time to time through the trees, riding on to town . . . I watch and I listen. You appear to be . . . unusual . . . Mr. Blythebury.

CRUMPLER

Unusual?

PODGE

Do you worship God, sir?

CRUMPLER

In my own manner.

PODGE

You don't intend to hire or purchase any laborers?

CRUMPLER

No.

PODGE

I don't see how you can farm your acres by yourself. I needed a couple men for three days just to assist building my cabin.

CRUMPLER

I have managed on my own.

PODGE

Yes, of course. You're a younger man than I. But when you can better afford it, I would think you'll be buying some more permanent help. You must have plans for your existence here.

CRUMPLER

I am what I can afford. And all I need.

PODGE

I'm not of the sort of men who makes judgments of another man.

CRUMPLER

Nor am I.

PODGE

But a man such as I, who has just one neighbor . . . he needs to make an assessment of that other fellow. If you were a criminal perhaps . . . there are many reasons to leave England, as you know. Some of them unsavory.

CRUMPLER

I am not a criminal.

PODGE

It's a matter of safety. Of trust.

CRUMPLER

You can trust me.

PODGE

We must be careful. I can say with a smile that you're a likeable man. And I intend you no particular harm, Mr. Blythebury.

CRUMPLER

And I intend only courtesies to you, Mr. Podge.

PODGE

You and I must have the most unfruitful plots in Virginia. Sandy. Rocky. No one else has the poor judgment—or poor fortune—to be so far out this way.

CRUMPLER

We'll get by.

(PODGE steps away from CRUMPLER.

As he does so, PODGE grabs the top sheet off of the stack of papers on the table.

He reads it.)

Mr. Podge!

PODGE

Travels of Angelica? What does that mean?

(Pause)

CRUMPLER

It's *Travails*, actually.

PODGE

Ahhh, yes, I see. *Travails*. This is a letter you're writing?

CRUMPLER

No. It's a different sort of writing.

PODGE

Oh. How unusual.

CRUMPLER

It's religious writing.

PODGE

Hmmm.

CRUMPLER

It has angels in it.

(PODGE hands the paper back to CRUMPLER.)

PODGE

Aside from the Bible, I'm not of the sort of men who profess much inclination for writings.

CRUMPLER

I wouldn't think so.

PODGE

It's not considered a saintly pursuit, I wouldn't think.

CRUMPLER

I have no aspirations for sainthood.

PODGE

None?

CRUMPLER

Sainthood would be wasted on me. Humility suits me best.

PODGE

Good day to you, Mr. Blythebury.

CRUMPLER

Good day to you, Mr. Podge

(As PODGE goes away he speaks from the shadows.)

PODGE

We are nearly exactly the same . . .

(CRUMPLER watches him go.)

END OF SCENE

SCENE SIX: THE YARD. EVENING.

VINCENT sits looking out toward the bay. He is drinking a beer.

MATTHEW and EMMA sit near him. EMMA has a notebook.

VINCENT

No hangings that I ever saw. Nope.

EMMA

No, you wouldn't have seen it. But maybe heard of it? Somebody named Bythebury? Or Crumpler? He was condemned in England but maybe hanged over here.

VINCENT

Though there's a couple of people who I wouldn't have minded getting hung.

EMMA

It would've been an old, old story. Like from your grandfather. Or from your wife's family.

VINCENT

My grandpa never hung anybody.

MATTHEW

(Laughs)

No, he would have only been telling a tale he'd been told—

VINCENT

He shot a few.

MATTHEW

Shot?

VINCENT

When I was nine years old, Grandpa Penny shot his own brother. Shot my Great Uncle Leonard in the kneecap for looking at my grandma funny. When I was twelve, he shot his best friend Charlie's pinky finger off for laughing at him when he lost at poker. When I was fourteen, he shot the postman in the heel of his foot for delivering the mail with a smirk. Grandpa Penny liked to drink. But he wasn't much of a shot.

EMMA

Well—

MATTHEW

We're sorry to have bothered you again, Mr. Penny. Thanks for your help.

EMMA

Well, Mr. Penny—

VINCENT

My name's Vincent, Emma.

EMMA

Well, Vincent, maybe there's another story you might remember. From way back?

(VINCENT looks at his empty bottle,
then looks at MATTHEW.)

VINCENT

I've got another job for you, Beer Boy!

MATTHEW

Great.

VINCENT

Fetch me another!

MATTHEW

I'd really rather not go in your house again. We don't know these people, Emma—

VINCENT

There's another nickel in it for you when you get back. There should be plenty in the basement if the kitchen is out.

MATTHEW

I feel funny snooping around in their house if she walks in.

VINCENT

Gabby? She'll stay out all night. Like a tomcat.

MATTHEW

(Whispers to EMMA)

I don't think he knows anything—

EMMA

(Laughing)

Come on, Beer Boy. One more. Please?

MATTHEW

All right, all right.

EMMA

And another one for me. I've got a nickel for you too when you get back.

MATTHEW

Your Beer Boy will return.

(MATTHEW heads toward the house.

VINCENT watches him.)

EMMA

You know, Vincent, I'm a writer myself. A save the world wannabe, I guess. And I'm becoming fascinated by Alexander Crumpler—

VINCENT

Your fellow doesn't like it here. Look at that sky. How could he not?

EMMA

Well . . . Matthew's a little stressed out right now. Pressures at school. It's very competitive in his department.

VINCENT

Betcha he's no fun at parties. Nope.

EMMA

He's a little awkward with strangers at first . . . but I kind of like that. We have fun together.

VINCENT

Hmmm . . .

EMMA

He's sweet to me . . . puts up with me . . . I get crazy about . . . I'm a little strange, I guess . . .

VINCENT

Are you going to marry him?

(EMMA laughs.)

Huh?

EMMA

You know, that's kind of a personal question, Vincent.

VINCENT

Are you? Fess up.

EMMA

Well, I don't really know . . . maybe . . .

VINCENT

Don't do it! Hell of a mistake.

EMMA

Vincent!

VINCENT

He's not the worst I've seen, but he's lacking a proper sense of adventure, that one. Wouldn't be a decent marriage.

EMMA

A decent marriage requires a proper sense of adventure?

VINCENT

A half decent husband does. Marcie wanted to teach me that.

EMMA

How?

VINCENT

Forget everything you know and start learning everything new. We married late, you know. We were odd people. Different in the same way. I was a chatty fellow with a crippled leg but a lot of dreams. And she loved to listen to me talk. Imagine that. I'd go on and on about the crazy places I was going to take her, the grand travels we had ahead of us. Just talk. Marcella Blythebury was so lively, so imaginative . . . I could see all the world laughing in her eyes. She was my adventure . . . but I didn't . . .

(Loud noises are heard from the house,
followed by MATTHEW screaming.)

MATTHEW'S VOICE

Owwwwwww!

EMMA

Matthew?

MATTHEW'S VOICE

Oh, crap! Crap!

(EMMA gets up.)

EMMA

What's wrong?

(MATTHEW appears from the house.

He has beer dripping all over him.)

MATTHEW

Uh, can we go now?

EMMA

What happened?

MATTHEW

Beer Boy screwed up.

(He hands VINCENT a beer.)

This might be the last one.

EMMA

Wait—

MATTHEW

We ought to leave.

EMMA

What happened?

MATTHEW

I dropped something! C'mon!

EMMA

Dropped what?

MATTHEW

Twenty-four bottles of beer, O.K.?

VINCENT

What the hell?

MATTHEW

There weren't any more cold ones in the fridge! And there's a case right there on the floor. So I thought I'd be nice and put 'em in the fridge—then I slip and I drop the whole case, and they go crashing all over the kitchen floor.

VINCENT

I'm not paying for those!

MATTHEW

(To VINCENT)

Sorry.

EMMA

We can't just leave that mess in there.

MATTHEW

Yes we can! Let's go. I don't have any more questions for him.

EMMA

No. No! We're not going to leave beer and glass on the floor! Go clean it up. I'll help you. You go find a broom or a mop . . .

MATTHEW

Emma, please . . .

EMMA

I'll be right in. Humor your compulsive note taker?

(MATTHEW heads back to the house.)

MATTHEW

All right, all right . . .

VINCENT

Gabby's gonna be so pissed when she gets home!

MATTHEW

Let's hurry!

(MATTHEW rushes into the house.)

VINCENT

No adventure . . .

EMMA

Vincent, please, listen! This Alexander Crumpler, he's my new adventure, and I really need you to help me if you can.

VINCENT

I want to help . . . yes . . .

(She grabs his hand.)

EMMA

Vincent, I need you to concentrate.

VINCENT

O.K.

EMMA

Think back for me on any tale or story you might have been told . . . when you were young . . . will you do that for me?

VINCENT

I am . . . I am . . .

EMMA

Good. There were always people named Blythebury who lived around here?

VINCENT

Marcie was the last one named Blythebury. And then she married me.

EMMA

When did Marcie's Blytheburys come to this part of Virginia?

VINCENT

They were an old, old family . . .

EMMA

From back in colonial times?

VINCENT

Yes, I think so . . .

EMMA

But were Marcie's Blytheburys related to an Edward Blythebury who lived right around here in 1657?

VINCENT

I'll ask her when she comes back . . .

EMMA

Do you have any kind of memory of him at all . . . anything Marcie might have said . . . ?

VINCENT

I'm trying . . .

EMMA

Focus really hard. Close your eyes if you need to . . .

VINCENT

All right, my eyes are closed. . . .

EMMA

I know you can think of it, Vincent. Something you might of heard from Marcie about Edward Blythebury . . . an old tale, old folklore, maybe phrases she used, odd expressions of hers or even a song . . . what did she tell you about a sea woman . . . a sea nymph . . . a benevolent sea nymph . . .

VINCENT

Sea nymph . . . sea nymph . . .

EMMA

Healing angel wings . . . a sea nymph with wings . . .

(VINCENT begins to recite a poem,
struggling to remember the words.)

VINCENT

The sea nymph . . . the sea nymph sings . . .

(He pauses and thinks)

The sea nymph sings . . . of promised treasure

Buried be at Crumpler's pleasure

The hangman thinks he's won the game

But Crumpler lives without his name

EMMA

Vincent . . .

(VINCENT begins to sing, finding the melody
deep in his memory.)

The melody is roughly the same as the song Lucia

hummed to her doll in the first scene.)

VINCENT

*The hangman often spies the tree
A crooked oak snakes toward the sea
The sea nymph keeps the cur away
For Crumpler shall return some day!*

EMMA

Vincent! Oh my god! On my god!

(She hugs him.)

VINCENT

Can I open my eyes now?

EMMA

Yes!

VINCENT

That was an old song!

EMMA

That was wonderful!

VINCENT

I'd forgotten I'd forgotten it!

EMMA

You did great, Vincent! Fantastic!

VINCENT

(Laughs)

I did! I did it! Wow, that was fun!

EMMA

Where did you hear that?

VINCENT

When I was a boy . . .

EMMA

And you're sure the name in the song is "Crumpler?"

VINCENT

Of course!

EMMA

Wait! I have to write this down!

VINCENT

I think fishermen sang it. No, farmers. At night when they were drinking. Men are more likely to sing when they're drinking.

EMMA

People sang it around here?

VINCENT

No. Wait, I think maybe the women sang it. Yes! Women sang it to the babies on their laps. They'd take us kids down to the feed and bait shop on Saturday nights. The men would drink and sing and tell lies in the back room. The women would relax with their babies in rocking chairs on the long front porch. They'd sing songs, and laugh and gossip all night . . . and in the dark in the store, us big kids would play with the minnows and the bugs and the worms . . . giggling at what we overheard . . . listening and dreaming . . . we'd make up stories . . . those were perfect nights . . .

EMMA

Tell me the song again!

VINCENT

. . . I think Marcie sang it to Gabby to rock her to sleep . . . she liked to sing like that . . .

(He slowly sings again)

The sea nymph sings of promised treasure

Buried be at Crumpler's pleasure . . .

(There is a loud scream from the house.)

MATTHEW'S VOICE

HELLLP! EMMAAAA!

EMMA

Matthew?

(MATTHEW runs on, chased by GABRIELLE.

She is wielding a butcher knife. She is drunk.
She chases him around the yard.)

GABRIELLE

Lousy thief! I'll kill you!

MATTHEW
 No!

GABRIELLE
 I'll slice you open!

MATTHEW
 I was just cleaning up—

GABRIELLE
 Slice you in two! Rip out your spleen!

MATTHEW
 I wasn't stealing anything!

GABRIELLE
 Cut out your heart!

EMMA
 Stop it!

MATTHEW
 I swear!

GABRIELLE
 Liar!

EMMA
 You don't need to hurt anybody!

GABRIELLE
 This is my house!!!

(VINCENT stands.)

VINCENT
 Gabrielle Angelica Penny!!!

(GABRIELLE stops. She stands still for
 several seconds.)

You're not going to kill him . . . no . . . no!

(GABRIELLE slowly puts the knife down.)

MATTHEW
 Thank god . . .

VINCENT

Not till he cleans up that mess in the kitchen.

EMMA

Let me help with the kitchen! It won't take us long . . .!

(EMMA and MATTHEW run off.)

GABRIELLE

I'm so tired, Dad . . . exhausted . . .

(GABRIELLE sits on the ground and cries.)

VINCENT

Gabby, you're a bright girl when you want to be. You knew your multiplication tables when you were four. When I taught mathematics down at the school, you were the only child who always knew the answer. Every time I called on you. Always had the answer . . .

GABRIELLE

Don't hardly know what to do with myself anymore . . .

VINCENT

Which lying bastard was it this time?

(VINCENT sits on the ground with her.

He slowly cradles her.)

GABRIELLE

They're all bastards!

VINCENT

I know.

GABRIELLE

But he was the worst. He didn't even lie.

VINCENT

You shouldn't stay out so late, young lady. It's no good for you.

GABRIELLE

He was stingy . . . with his words. Not even some made-up story . . . so I could pretend the son of a bitch wasn't seeing somebody else . . . so I could hear him say pretty things about me that I could believe for a day or two . . . I wasn't worth the bother . . .

VINCENT

No good for you . . .

GABRIELLE

I hate the whole tired, rotten stink of this place . . . a lifetime of bad health
and you're still here . . .

VINCENT

I'll be dead soon enough, girl . . . I'm dying a little bit every day . . .

GABRIELLE

. . . tired of fighting . . . every day I'm fighting . . . I'm getting too damn
ugly . . . too damn old . . . my head's killing me . . . there's nothing worth
holding on to here . . . there's nothing worth dreaming . . .

END OF SCENE

SCENE SEVEN: THE YARD. EVENING.

CRUMPLER sits at the table, writing by lantern light.

LUCIA runs on holding a sheet of paper.

LUCIA

Father! I finished!

CRUMPLER

(Still writing)

Hmm?

LUCIA

My picture! I'm finished!

CRUMPLER

You can never say you're truly finished . . .

LUCIA

Look!

(She holds it out to him.

He looks up from his writing.

He is slowly overwhelmed.)

I drew it! All by myself. This afternoon. And tonight too.

CRUMPLER

It's lovely . . .

LUCIA

I worked and worked. Just like you told me.

CRUMPLER

Beautiful . . .

LUCIA

It's mother.

CRUMPLER

I know.

LUCIA

It's how I remember. Does it look like her? Just like her?

CRUMPLER

It's precisely how she should look . . . exactly as I'd want you to think of her . . . look at those eyes, Lucia . . . how could you not believe those eyes . . . ?

LUCIA

Did I do good?

CRUMPLER

How could you not?

LUCIA

I had trouble remembering what I remembered . . .

CRUMPLER

It's perfect, Lucia. I wouldn't change a thing!

LUCIA

I did good!

CRUMPLER

Quite the artist! You make me proud, Lucia.

(She hugs him.)

LUCIA

I'm an artist!

(PODGE walks on, a bit unsteady, carrying a lantern.)

PODGE

Mr. Blythebury . . . ?

CRUMPLER

Who's there?

PODGE

Mr. Blythebury?

CRUMPLER

Mr. Podge? Good evening . . .

PODGE

Most excellent to see you

CRUMPLER

And the same to you, Mr. Podge . . .

PODGE

I was wandering up the path . . . enjoying the cool night air that is . . . is here under this clear sky tonight . . . we've had so many, many thunderstorms since I've last been out this way . . . I haven't been neighborly . . .

CRUMPLER

Are you well, sir? Mr. Podge?

PODGE

No voices for me to converse with as it were . . .

CRUMPLER

By chance, have you been drinking any spirits, Mr. Podge?

PODGE

Spirits? Oh, yes. They are my occasional weakness, my friend . . .

CRUMPLER

(Smiles)

You have been drinking . . .

PODGE

And each evening is an exceptional occasion . . .

CRUMPLER

Would you like to sit down?

PODGE

Oh, no!

CRUMPLER

Can I help you?

PODGE

Mr. Blythebury! It is I who must help you!

CRUMPLER

Help me?

(They look at each other.)

PODGE

Perhaps your daughter . . . Saint Lucia . . . she might wish to go inside for a bit . . .

CRUMPLER

Lucia . . .

(He motions LUCIA inside. She goes.)

PODGE

Just between us . . . two unremarkable men . . . my friend . . .

(PODGE tries to peer at Crumpler's manuscript pages.)

Still writing, is it?

CRUMPLER

Yes—

PODGE

Still writing religiously?

(CRUMPLER quickly gathers up the pages to keep them away from PODGE.)

Angel's travels, is it?

CRUMPLER

It's late, Mr. Podge.

PODGE

No . . . travails. Travails of an angel it is! Yes!

CRUMPLER

Mr. Podge—

PODGE

So grand to hear your voice . . . I don't hear many these days . . . not like in England. Too many, many voices there . . . so many of them discourteous . . .

CRUMPLER

You were going to help me, Mr. Podge?

PODGE

Yes, Mr. Blythebury. Yes. I rode down to Lancaster today. They've posted notices of looked-for miscreants. They've got officers and soldiers and the like to search into such matters down there. But I don't mingle. I'm not one to judge myself the faults of another man.

CRUMPLER

What does this have to do with me?

PODGE

There was one such notice. Describing one such man. A Mr. Alexander Crumpler? Of London town. Seen this February past in Portsmouth. Witness says he boarded a tall ship for Virginia . . . he and his conspicuous, simpleton daughter.

CRUMPLER

Well, we did sail from Portsmouth. That's where we lived— I have papers that state who I am. I can show them to you—

PODGE

Ahhh, good! I am pleased this was not you! Why this Crumpler fellow seems like most despicable and unnecessary man. An evil poet . . . a . . . what else did it say? An atheist! An actor! An insurrectionist!

CRUMPLER

That is not me.

PODGE

Advocator of treason . . . slanderer of God . . .

CRUMPLER

But I am Edward Blythebury.

PODGE

Yes! Why this misguided Crumpler, a nobleman's son-- he bedded and married a dirty Irish tavern maid. A bawdy instigator. You may have heard of her. A notorious Nessa Gallagher? She was reputed a brazen and obstinate malcontent. Known for inciting troubles in the most ignoble quarters of London, it said. Making baseless promises to the sick and the weak. Found guilty of insurrection, she was. Some eight or ten years past.

CRUMPLER

That was not my wife . . .

PODGE

(Quietly and softly)

Met a merciless, monstrous fate. Hung by her neck at Tyburn.
Disembowled and dragged through the streets of London, her head held
high on a pike. For the awful entertainment and applause of the public . . .

CRUMPLER

That was not my wife . . .

PODGE

No Christian could take pleasure in that . . . whatever the crime . . . no
Christian—

CRUMPLER

That was not my wife!

PODGE

Of course not, Mr. Blythebury. I'm relieved to know it.

(CRUMPLER tries to help him.)

CRUMPLER

I'll walk you back home.

PODGE

No, no, I can manage myself . . . !

(Pause)

If I thought you were Crumpler, I could have turned you in. They offer
rewards for such actions. Be careful. Please. I wouldn't wander about
outside your farm any more than necessary. I'm not of the sort of men
who likes to judge, but many men are lacking decency . . . it is unfortunate
but it is true. 'Tis a blessing to disappear. To be forgotten. As if no one
but God . . . and perhaps not even he . . . knew that you lived. I shall be
watching out for you, and listening for you . . .

CRUMPLER

Good night to you, Mr. Podge.

PODGE

Good luck to you, my friend.

(PODGE slowly walks away.)

LUCIA runs back on to CRUMPLER.)

LUCIA

(Whispers)

What did he say?

(CRUMPLER puts his arm around her.)

CRUMPLER

Lucia, don't worry . . . don't worry about him . . .

LUCIA

I don't like him. Don't like the looks of him.

CRUMPLER

He seems a very sad man. He's a bit of a talker, Lucia. But you needn't trouble yourself.

LUCIA

He won't take you away? Like they did mother?

CRUMPLER

(Smiles)

How could he? No, no. And if he dared try, Lucia the Sea Nymph would flap and flutter her fanciful faerie wings . . . and swoop in on that ocean wind and rescue me!

LUCIA

I would! I would!

(CRUMPLER walks her off to their house.

EMMA and MATTHEW enter, followed by
VINCENT and GABRIELLE.)

EMMA

Not one drop left on the floor. Didn't take so long.

MATTHEW

No. Thanks for helping.

VINCENT

Kitchen's never been cleaner. That's the shame of it. And I've been in that house forty-eight years and two months next Saturday. Marcie's father built that house. I've mopped that floor three times. First time forty-eight years ago when Marcie and I were newlyweds. Then forty-five years ago after Marcie swam off and I wanted the place spic and span for her return. And then tonight. It was due for a damn mopping.

MATTHEW

O.K. We should really go, Emma. We're done.

EMMA

Wait—I need to get the whole song written down.

MATTHEW

But we—

VINCENT

We never offered our guests any refreshments—

MATTHEW

Thanks, but I've destroyed enough tonight. And we're really tired—

VINCENT

Where are my manners? Gabby, get them something to drink.

GABRIELLE

I'm off duty, Dad! And I have to work early shift tomorrow. Unless you want us to starve around here. So leave me alone, will you?

(GABRIELLE steps aside and stands alone.)

EMMA

Vincent . . . that song . . .

MATTHEW

Sorry to intrude. You folks have a very good night. We've got a long drive home.

EMMA

. . . it mentioned some kind of treasure. Didn't it?

VINCENT

I think so.

(EMMA pulls out the notes she was jotting down.)

EMMA

The sea nymph sings of promised treasure . . . right?

VINCENT

Buried be at Crumpler's pleasure . . .

EMMA

What do you think that means?

VINCENT

I don't know.

EMMA

Sings of promised treasure . . . Buried be . . . ?

VINCENT

Buried treasure . . . ?

EMMA

Wait . . . at Crumpler's pleasure!

VINCENT

Yes . . .

EMMA

Oh my god! What if he was able to leave behind his unknown writings?

MATTHEW

What?

EMMA

What if he was able to bury what he wrote here? Bury it for safe keeping, before they got to him?

(CRUMPLER and LUCIA walk out and gaze toward the water.

The modern characters and the 17th century characters do not see or hear each other.)

CRUMPLER

Look at the water out there, Lucia, lit up by that mysterious moon.

LUCIA

It's bright . . .

EMMA

It must have been vital to him . . .

(She stands near CRUMPLER though she does not see him.)

CRUMPLER

Wave after wave after wave . . . gliding over the shore . . . never stopping, or completing . . .

EMMA

Saving what's important . . .

CRUMPLER

Has it been a hundred of them? Today and yesterday and tomorrow . . . ?

EMMA

Waiting and waiting for somebody else to find it . . .

LUCIA

More than a hundred, I think . . .

EMMA

Communicate with him after 350 . . .

CRUMPLER

A thousand? A million? Or more?

MATTHEW

Emma . . . ?

CRUMPLER

We're so tiny out here— two nameless grains of sand breathing under that endless sea of stars . . .

EMMA

Breathe in his words . . .

CRUMPLER

The tides of time are heartless, Lucia. They wash over us and over us and then we're gone . . . as if we were never here . . .

GABRIELLE

(Whispers to herself)

I'm losing time . . .

VINCENT

(Softly sings)

The sea nymph sings of buried treasure . . .

GABRIELLE

. . . got old too quick . . .

CRUMPLER

But the moonlight, the sea and the stars, Lucia . . . they go on and on and on . . . I believe your mother might be found somewhere in those very stars . . .

(LUCIA reaches to the sky.)

EMMA

I understand it . . .

LUCIA

I want to touch them . . . they're beautiful . . . beautiful . . .

EMMA

He's been waiting for us! I can see him now . . .

(CRUMPLER looks up at the stars.)

CRUMPLER

Are you there, my love?

EMMA

Yes . . .

MATTHEW

Emma? What are you doing?

CRUMPLER

I'm trying to do right by you. Do you hear me still?

EMMA

I need to help him speak again . . .

CRUMPLER

Our days are lonesome and brief . . . our sad nights eclipsed by our dreams. Why couldn't we live on and on together? Was it not possible?

EMMA

It is possible . . .

LUCIA

Look! I'm touching them! The stars are in my hands! The stars are in my hands!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE EIGHT: THE YARD. LATER. THE SAME NIGHT.

EMMA is pacing about the yard.

GABRIELLE sits lost in thought at the table.

EMMA

I can feel it . . . it's full of clues!

(No response.)

I think the first verse could possibly mean that somehow Crumpler escaped execution. *The hangman thinks he's won the game. But Crumpler lives without his name.* What else could it mean? Or, I suppose, it could mean that he didn't escape the hangman, but he tricked him. By living on anyway. Maybe through the promised treasure that was buried. But how does he live without his name? As an anonymous writer? As Edward Blythebury?

GABRIELLE

My mama was the last Blythebury . . . Marcella Blythbury . . .

EMMA

Right. Did she have brothers or sisters?

GABRIELLE

Just herself . . .

EMMA

Do you have any family stories of some kind of treasure?

GABRIELLE

Can't find her stories . . . just pieces of her . . .

EMMA

Gabby, did your mother ever tell you—?

GABRIELLE

My mama must have been brave . . . I've been a coward. If I was like her, I would've been brave enough to stop waiting cheap tables and be gone from here before I became what I swore I wouldn't . . . my mama found herself a way to go. I don't blame her. She hadn't been happy. She needed out in a terrible way. Maybe she drowned out there in a storm. But I want to imagine she really did find herself something. A big piece of driftwood. A ship. A mermaid. Some angel. Any way to keep floating on and on. And not let the tide float you back. God, she must have been strong. Leave the old man. Let him fend for himself.

EMMA

Well . . . he is your father.

GABRIELLE

Yeah . . . I know . . .

EMMA

I'm sure you love him . . .

(GABRIELLE does not respond.)

. . . you do . . .

GABRIELLE

It would be worth a lot of money . . . if we found something here?

EMMA

Well—

GABRIELLE

Right?

EMMA

Depending. On what we found.

GABRIELLE

This guy . . . this English guy lots of people have heard of— he buried his secret writings . . . so they wouldn't get found by the wrong people . . . till the right people found them . . .

EMMA

I think so. If that's what "promised treasure" means.

GABRIELLE

Handwritten pages. 350 years old?

EMMA

About that.

GABRIELLE

Sealed real tight I hope. And they'd be the only existing copies. Anywhere.

EMMA

They'd have to be.

GABRIELLE

And we could sell them?

EMMA

Oh . . . yeah, you could . . . I guess it would be worth something. Probably not a fortune—

GABRIELLE

Dad and me. If it's on our property. Sell to the highest bidder . . . some university . . . some rich collector or somebody . . .

EMMA

I guess so. The money would be yours. My interest is more . . . unusual.

GABRIELLE

Let me see that! I can figure this out!

(GABRIELLE takes EMMA'S notebook from her.

MATTHEW comes on from the house, slowly followed by VINCENT.

MATTHEW is carrying a tray of drinks.)

VINCENT

Don't drop it, stumblebum—

MATTHEW

I've got it—

VINCENT

Or trip and fall on your ass like you did before.

MATTHEW

Relax, I'm fine.

VINCENT

A refreshment for our lovely guest? Emma? We found more beer in the basement.

EMMA

Thanks.

(EMMA takes a beer from the tray.

VINCENT takes one for himself.)

VINCENT

(To MATTHEW)

Put it down. On the table.

(Smiling to EMMA)

We've got plenty. Stay a while. A week. It's been too quiet 'round here.

MATTHEW

(Takes a drink)

Just a soda for the road for me. We need to find a hotel. You ready, Emma?

EMMA

No—

MATTHEW

We leave now, we get a few hours of sleep, then we split the driving tomorrow—

EMMA

We can't leave now—

MATTHEW

(Whispers to EMMA)

Emma, it's ten till one.

EMMA

We're almost there!

MATTHEW

You're not.

EMMA

I am!

MATTHEW

You're starting to embarrass yourself.

EMMA

You have to trust me. Believe in me . . .

(He walks away from her.)

GABRIELLE

(Softly but firmly)

Half for you and half for me, old man. Then you're on your own. And so am I . . .

(Beginning to smile to herself)

Italy or Greece . . . France and England. See all the castles and the fancy gardens and all . . . where beautiful times really were . . . feel like a princess or somebody . . . and never drift back . . .

(GABRIELLE looks at EMMA)

Let's find that damn treasure . . . I think I might know where to look . . .

END OF SCENE

**SCENE NINE: INSIDE CRUMPLER’S CABIN.
EARLY AUTUMN. LATE
AFTERNOON.**

A fire burns in a small stove. A candle
burns on the table.

Lucia’s picture of her mother is tacked to
the wall.

CRUMPLER is writing at a table.

LUCIA is singing softly to herself
while drawing.

LUCIA

Lucia the sea nymph . . . Lucia the sea nymph . . .

CRUMPLER

Lucia! Maybe I’ve got the next scene. Listen . . .

LUCIA

I am.

CRUMPLER

Remember, Lucia, your mother is lost on the Island of Bitter Dreams.

LUCIA

With a Queen . . .

CRUMPLER

Yes, lonely Queen Marcella. Queen Marcella, you see, carries two
impossibly heavy buckets. One a pail of sorrow from all the days behind
her. And the other a pail of fear, for all the days that lie ahead. Angelica
comforts the unhappy queen, but Angelica is sad herself. For she has lost
Edward Blythebury and she may never see him again.

LUCIA

But she will!

CRUMPLER

How could she not?

LUCIA

But how?

CRUMPLER

Well, suddenly drifting up to the shore is— Poor Blind John . . . a trembling young man, afraid of all the earthly powers he cannot see. Poor Blind John floats the roaring seas, Lucia, crouched on the back of a porpoise!

LUCIA

On a porpoise!

CRUMPLER

(To himself)

Yes— a bit of a costume conundrum, I suppose, but not a concern of mine.

LUCIA

What does he do?

CRUMPLER

Why, with Angelica's help, Poor Blind John begins to see anew without his eyes.

LUCIA

How?

CRUMPLER

She gives him hope. Then Angelica asks him if he can point her the way toward Edward Blythebury. And he says he thinks he can!

LUCIA

Good!

CRUMPLER

But as she is about to fly away, Lord Reginald Farthington descends upon her! He quickly grabs her in his gnarled hands!

LUCIA

Oh, no . . .

CRUMPLER

Farthington and his misguided ruffians—his evil men—whisk Angelica off again!

LUCIA

Why?

CRUMPLER

Because . . . I've been thinking a lot about this . . . they're to be pitied, finally. I don't know if this makes any sense to you, Lucia, but they fear they will lose what they have, and consequently, they will lose who they are. Angelica reminds them of this. She's not afraid to tell them to their strong frightened faces.

LUCIA

She's brave . . .

CRUMPLER

But now taken away to be executed.

LUCIA

How could she? No!

CRUMPLER

Many weak men find strength in evil deeds. They've carried her to Lord Farthington's Puritan enclave.

LUCIA

Where's that?

CRUMPLER

It might be anywhere, Lucia.

(CRUMPLER makes quick notations on the sheet with his quill.)

Where a loving god . . . who created a world filled with suffering . . . is worshiped by men who blindly profess their love for him . . . by perpetuating suffering in his very name . . .

LUCIA

What does per-pe-tu-ating suf-fering mean?

CRUMPLER

In a way, it means some frightened men feel they've been chosen to do harm . . . and we must keep both eyes open so we can change their ways, Lucia.

LUCIA

I look with both eyes. Every time!

CRUMPLER

Yes. Of course you do!

LUCIA

Then what? What about Mother?

CRUMPLER

Well, Angelica must find a way to escape so that she can reunite with
woeful Blythebury!

LUCIA

But how?

CRUMPLER

Well, I haven't actually written that part yet . . .

LUCIA

Oh . . .

CRUMPLER

Maybe I'll write some today.

LUCIA

Yes.

CRUMPLER

There are things, parts of the story, I need to work out, Lucia.

(LUCIA screams.

She sees PODGE standing behind CRUMPLER.

PODGE has crept into the room unseen.)

PODGE

Hello!

CRUMPLER

Podge! How dare you!

PODGE

Am I interrupting?

CRUMPLER

You don't enter a man's home—

PODGE

My apologies.

CRUMPLER

— without his beckoning!

(CRUMPLER quickly gathers up
all the pages of his manuscript.

He puts them in a small wooden chest .)

CRUMPLER

What business have you here?

PODGE

Your business.

CRUMPLER

My business?

PODGE

Yes, Mr. Crumpler.

CRUMPLER

I've told you, I'm Edward—

PODGE

Blythebury. Yes, I know. I've heard that tale. But I would think there's not another man in this vast Virginia colony who can recall having heard of this dull Blythebury fellow. Now, Alexander Crumpler, that might be an altogether different inquiry.

CRUMPLER

What do you want with me?

PODGE

To help you.

CRUMPLER

Help me?

PODGE

Alexander . . . we've kept remarkably quiet . . . and quietly unremarkable. Haven't we? Don't you think so, Lucia?

CRUMPLER

Podge . . .

LUCIA

I . . . I don't know . . .

(She turns away from him.)

PODGE

(To LUCIA)

You look lovely today.

CRUMPLER

Podge—

(LUCIA runs behind CRUMPLER.)

PODGE

We've been forgotten. To our farming. Tending to our tiny, private affairs, up here on our little sandy plots of earth. Though each time I pass by, I can't help but notice that your fields over here, across the creek—they appear considerably less rocky and sandy than mine . . .

CRUMPLER

How do you propose to help me?

PODGE

A partnership. We bind together our fields.

CRUMPLER

Why would I want to do that?

PODGE

Because I hear the hangman approaching. Swiftly.

LUCIA

Father?

CRUMPLER

Lucia, go outside. I must speak to Mr. Podge alone.

LUCIA

Father—

CRUMPLER

Outside, Lucia! Outside!

(LUCIA runs outside crying.)

PODGE

I am not your hangman, Alexander, no . . . I rode down to the harbor two days ago to bring back some tea, some ale and whatnot. But instead, I

found your life being sold in the marketplace. You fetch a more than modest price, I discovered. Fifty pounds. Your writ of execution arrived on a ship from England this week. Now you're not just a wanted man, you're a fully condemned man. Fifty pounds . . . there's hardly a man amongst us who doesn't have some wicked blot on his past . . . a stain of disrepute . . . that's why all men travel here. All men.

CRUMPLER

What do you suggest?

PODGE

Have I told you about Mrs. Podge?

CRUMPLER

Have you sent for her?

PODGE

No. I'm afraid Mrs. Podge won't be making the journey. She's dead.

CRUMPLER

Oh.

PODGE

Eleven years, four months and twenty-three days ago.

CRUMPLER

I'm sorry.

PODGE

So am I. I mean that sincerely, Alexander. Deeply.

CRUMPLER

I trust that you do.

PODGE

I'm a man who is in the disposition, as it were . . . I'm going to market . . . I'm looking for a new Mrs. Podge . . .

CRUMPLER

No . . . no . . .

PODGE

Too many nights endured alone have their own private terrors, Alexander. No more feverish trips . . . down to the perfumed lanes of dark harbors . . .

CRUMPLER

Podge—

PODGE

I am of the sort of men who requires a new Mrs. Podge to take proper care of—

CRUMPLER

Not Lucia . . .

PODGE

Which has brought me to a problem of . . . procurement. Having little property and less money—

CRUMPLER

She's too young.

PODGE

Yes.

CRUMPLER

She's barely fifteen . . . and she's . . .

PODGE

I can protect her, Alexander. I shall be quite good to her.

CRUMPLER

She's simple . . . she has the mind of a child . . .

PODGE

You have my word.

CRUMPLER

Just a child! She doesn't understand things . . .

PODGE

It's an excellent match.

CRUMPLER

Mr. Podge—

PODGE

Fifty pounds would procure me another woman.

(Pause)

CRUMPLER

You . . . you are a sad, heartless man.

PODGE

But are you a practical man? Or a sad, heartless dreamer?

CRUMPLER

Not Lucia.

PODGE

I respect a practical man! What's bottled up in our heads is worthless. But what we grasp with our hands . . . hold carefully in our own hands, Alexander . . . shall we have a partnership? I leave the choice to you. I will be waiting for your answer.

(PODGE goes out.)

CRUMPLER stands still for a moment then calls out.)

CRUMPLER

Lucia! Lucia!

(LUCIA runs in.)

LUCIA

He's gone, father!

CRUMPLER

Good.

LUCIA

I hate him, father! I hate him!

CRUMPLER

Hush now, hush . . .

LUCIA

What . . . was he— ?

CRUMPLER

Nothing . . . business . . . he likes to talk . . . you shouldn't be worried about him.

LUCIA

Are you going to die?

CRUMPLER

No, no—

LUCIA

Are you?

CRUMPLER

Of course not. How could I?

LUCIA

I don't want you to die . . . like mother . . .

(He hugs her.)

CRUMPLER

And I shall try not to, Lucia. For as long as I can. I promise you that.

LUCIA

Good . . .

(CRUMPLER goes to the wooden chest where he put his manuscript. He brings it to LUCIA.)

CRUMPLER

Now Lucia, I need you to listen to me. I'm thinking we may have to go away.

LUCIA

Where?

CRUMPLER

I don't know. We may not have to go at all. Men may come searching for me. And if we have to go away quickly for a short while, we ought to hide this chest. It contains my play about your mother. I shouldn't carry it with me. We should carry as little as possible. Where shall we hide it? I don't know . . . I think we should bury it. For safekeeping till we come back. Could you help me dig a hole? Please?

LUCIA

Yes—

CRUMPLER

Just a few feet down— not nearly as deep as when we dug the well—

LUCIA

I can dig! I'll help you!

CRUMPLER

Good . . . good . . .

(He hugs her again.)

I need to finish writing it first. It's important to me to keep your mother alive.

LUCIA

Yes.

CRUMPLER

Not her name. Or her face . . . but the essence, the spirit of her . . . she gave hope, Lucia . . . to each dead and tortured soul she smiled upon . . . especially me . . .

LUCIA

And me . . .

CRUMPLER

I am a better man. I was shameful . . . she inspired me toward worthier dreams . . . to compose my dreams to paper for others to see. As she would want me to do.

LUCIA

I remember that smile . . .

CRUMPLER

There's so much that's relentlessly dark and cruel, Lucia . . . your mother . . . Nessa, my Angelica . . . she was radiant . . . a tiny, constant star . . .

LUCIA

Angels don't die . . .

CRUMPLER

I didn't have the deeds or the words to save her as she deserved . . . I had no courage . . . what I couldn't do then . . . I think I might know now what she would want me to say . . .

LUCIA

I want to save her too . . .

CRUMPLER

I see her in your face . . . your eyes . . .

LUCIA

She said I was her favorite angel.

CRUMPLER

I know. And she's quite proud of you. I'm certain of that.

(LUCIA hugs him.)

LUCIA

I love you, father . . .

CRUMPLER

And I do love you so, Lucia . . .

LUCIA

Finish her story . . .

CRUMPLER

Yes, yes . . . how do you suppose we should conclude her travails?

LUCIA

I don't know . . . I don't know . . . we'll think of something . . .

END OF SCENE

SCENE TEN:

INSIDE VINCENT'S HOUSE.

GABRIELLE and EMMA are rummaging through old boxes of photographs.

VINCENT holds an old photo and is looking it over.

MATTHEW slouches uncomfortably in a chair off to the side by himself. He drinks a beer.

EMMA

The hangman often spies the tree . . . a crooked oak snakes toward the sea . . . the sea nymph keeps the cur away . . . for Crumpler shall return some day . . .

GABRIELLE

Crooked oak . . .

VINCENT

(Looks at the photo)

This one's a fake. And a poor fake at that.

EMMA

You're definitely on to something . . .

GABRIELLE

I've looked through these old pictures lots and lots of times since I was a girl . . . it's fun to see other people, other times . . . to really imagine what it was like once . . . I know it's in here somewhere . . .

VINCENT

That's Marcie's father, I suppose. But he never looked like that. Never wore a thick wool suit like that. Never.

EMMA

A crooked oak tree . . .

VINCENT

And her old man never wore a phony bowler like that. He never wore a hat at all. That head of his was perfectly square. With corners. A big

fat cube of a head. It would've been a waste of time to try to fit a round hat on square head like his. This ain't a real photo. I'd swear to it.

GABRIELLE

These are from Grandma Blythebury's things up in the attic . . .

(VINCENT tries to look through a box,
getting in GABRIELLE'S way.)

VINCENT

I don't remember any of these . . .

GABRIELLE

Move! Let me find it!

(VINCENT steps away.)

VINCENT

Your Grandma Blythebury went insane. She put ketchup on ice cream.

GABRIELLE

Dad . . .

VINCENT

Not just vanilla. Chocolate too.

GABRIELLE

Why don't you go on to bed? You're tired.

VINCENT

I'm not tired.

GABRIELLE

It's awful late.

MATTHEW

(Loudly)

No kidding!

(They all stop and look at MATTHEW for a moment,
then ignore him.)

EMMA

Probably a very big tree . . .

VINCENT

These pictures are fakes . . .

(VINCENT gets in the way again.)

GABRIELLE

Go to bed, Dad.

EMMA

A crooked oak snakes toward the sea . . . !

VINCENT

I caught a snake once.

GABRIELLE

Oh, Jesus . . .

EMMA

You're sure it was a crooked oak?

GABRIELLE

It had to be!

EMMA

Good!

MATTHEW

(Almost to himself)

Oh, that proves everything . . .

VINCENT

Caught that snake barehanded. Big ol' copperhead.

GABRIELLE

Grandpa Blythebury may have cut it down. It would've been an awful old tree. Maybe dying.

(VINCENT grabs a picture from a pile GABRIELLE has set aside.)

VINCENT

Hey, look at this! I think this one's supposed to be Marcie just out of high school. I remember the flowers all over that dress. Pink rose petals, I'm sure of it. They're only gray petals here. There's nothing of Marcie in that smile . . . it's not her at all . . .

(GABRIELLE holds up an old photo.)

GABRIELLE

I found it! This is it! Look!

EMMA

Let me see!

(GABRIELLE holds out the photo
so the others can see it.)

I think that's an oak . . . isn't it?

VINCENT

Looks like an oak.

GABRIELLE

It's an oak! No doubt!

EMMA

Yes!

VINCENT

An ugly one. Those branches are twisting around every which way.

EMMA

That's it!

GABRIELLE

There on the side . . . must be the old house that was here before this one.

EMMA

So where was this oak?

GABRIELLE

Look . . . on the other side, that's pretty much the same view out toward
the bay, like we got in our yard now!

EMMA

Looks like two bushes . . . or young trees in the background . . .

GABRIELLE

Pine trees, aren't they? They're still there! Except a hell of a lot taller!

EMMA

So . . . we figure out from the picture where the crooked oak was in relation to those pine trees . . .

GABRIELLE

Yeah!

EMMA

And then we can—

MATTHEW

And then what? And then what, Emma?

EMMA

Then, we'll dig—

MATTHEW

Dig up this hidden stash of literary treasure? Some old plays from your newly discovered undiscovered Shakespeare?

(EMMA stares at him.)

EMMA

Yes.

MATTHEW

What for?

EMMA

Because it's important! To discover his ideas. Hear what he has to say-- his inspiration-- let it take us wherever it takes us . . .

MATTHEW

(Softly)

No. It's not important . . .

EMMA

It is.

MATTHEW

You write fiction. You've got your imagination. That's all you need. As for the rest of the world, they don't want any more Alexander Crumpler. Nobody's looking for a new old play. Who wants to read it? Who wants to sit through it? Who wants to even know about it? Nobody's interested. Think about it.

(Pause.)

EMMA continues to stare at MATTHEW.)

EMMA

I . . . I think . . . we should dig first on the east side . . . on the east side of the spot where the trunk of the tree stood! Toward the bay. *The crooked oak snakes toward the sea. Toward the sea!* It's a clue!

VINCENT

Let's go.

GABRIELLE

Absolutely!

(GABRIELLE and VINCENT go off.)

MATTHEW

I don't get it, Emma. I'm trying. I have been all night. I want to believe with you . . . but there's nothing . . . I don't want to see you hurt . . .

(She looks at him for a beat then turns.)

EMMA

I'm ready. Let's dig!

(EMMA runs off.)

END OF SCENE

**SCENE ELEVEN: INSIDE CRUMPLER’S CABIN.
NOT QUITE YET DAWN.**

A fire burns in the small stove. A candle
burns on the table.

Lucia’s picture of her mother is tacked
to the wall.

CRUMPLER is carefully putting his
manuscript pages into the wooden chest.

He is exhausted.

LUCIA is playing with her doll.

CRUMPLER

You needn’t have gotten up so early . . .

LUCIA

Couldn’t sleep any more.

CRUMPLER

Just because I was still up . . . it’s not yet dawn . . .

LUCIA

Not sleepy.

CRUMPLER

Well . . . this is all of it. I got started last night and I kept writing and
writing . . . I think I understand . . . there are still a few tricky places— but
whatever its flaws. . . I think I finally have something . . . it might be
music . . .

LUCIA

Maybe I’ll draw again . . .

CRUMPLER

I’m going to lock it, Lucia.

LUCIA

Something happy . . .

CRUMPLER
 There's a key— Lucia?

LUCIA
 Huh?

CRUMPLER
 I'm locking it with this key.

LUCIA
 A key. I see it.

CRUMPLER
 I'll just put the key beside it for the time being . . . don't ever mention a word about this to anyone—

LUCIA
 No one.

He whispers to her.)

CRUMPLER
 We'll bury it.

(She whispers back.)

LUCIA
 Today?

CRUMPLER
 Why not? Beside your little tree.

LUCIA
 My crooked tree.

CRUMPLER
 Yes . . .

LUCIA
 Which side?

CRUMPLER
 Wherever you want . . .

LUCIA
 Under the branch . . . that looks like a snake . . .

CRUMPLER

A perfect place . . .

(He sits beside her.)

I'm so tired . . . I wrote and wrote, then wrote it again all night. Didn't stop. I hope it has all the words it needs. It might be beautiful . . . after all these years . . . I think she would approve . . .

LUCIA

It must be beautiful! How could it not be?

CRUMPLER

Thank you, Lucia.

LUCIA

How does it end?

CRUMPLER

What?

LUCIA

Your play? How does it end? Tell me.

(CRUMPLER smiles.)

CRUMPLER

Well . . .

LUCIA

Tell me!

CRUMPLER

All those Angelica has aided throughout her travails—wide-eyed Captain Gregorio, Queen Marcella and all the rest— they now return the favor, and help Angelica and Edward at last find each other. There will be a perfect moment, just before they sail away together, when Edward sets eyes once again on his long lost beloved . . . and she sets eyes on him . . .

(The room is suddenly filled with lantern light.)

PODGE'S VOICE

Alexander! Alexander! Are you awake?

CRUMPLER

Podge?

(PODGE appears in the room,
holding a lantern in CRUMPLER'S
face.

PODGE is out of breath and in a hurry.)

PODGE

Get up! Get up, Alexander!

CRUMPLER

What—

PODGE

We haven't any time!

CRUMPLER

Time for what?

PODGE

Listen to me, Alexander!

CRUMPLER

My answer is no!

PODGE

Yes, of course, of course! I knew you'd remain steadfast—

CRUMPLER

I will never allow—

PODGE

I'm not here for Lucia! This is much more urgent! Three soldiers came to my cabin late last night! Inquiring about you.

CRUMPLER

You sent for them!

PODGE

No! They're searching each farm! But I told them nothing!

CRUMPLER

Liar!

PODGE

Nothing! I held my silence! These men, Alexander . . .

(He stops and catches his breath.)

These men were most unpleasant but tired. So I gave them quarter. And some ale to pickle their troubles. That's all! They were asleep just now when I rode over here. But they may have heard me. I don't know . . .

CRUMPLER

Bastard—

PODGE

No! I knew nothing about them! Listen to me, please . . . take my horse. It's outside.

CRUMPLER

Your horse?

PODGE

It's my mare with the bad front foot. Not as strong as my other. But she's healthy enough. She'll still get you well away if you don't ride her hard and you leave soon, Alexander. Ride west and wait for me. I'm traveling with you.

CRUMPLER

Why?

PODGE

There were several official papers to be read in these soldiers' satchels whilst they slept. I have a ghost of a past as well that lurks two steps behind me. I commiserate . . .

(PODGE tosses a small parcel to him.)

PODGE

Just in the event . . . that's nearly two pounds. I haven't any more to spare you.

CRUMPLER

I don't understand . . .

PODGE

You may need that. Go to the Rappahannock, Alexander. But don't follow the creek there. You might be seen fleeing out in the open. Take the path down from here through the woods. Head west and make your way to the Rappahannock. Tonight, after dark, I'll bring Lucia in my wagon.

CRUMPLER

Why—

PODGE

You can't be seen with her! We'll meet you at Morgan's Cross tomorrow morning. If we don't perchance find you there, we'll cross the river and ride further out to Bray's Fork. Morgan's Cross or Bray's Fork!

CRUMPLER

Podge, I can't—!

PODGE

Crumpler! They may have followed me! You'll be arrested!

(LUCIA runs to CRUMPLER.)

LUCIA

Father!

CRUMPLER

Don't worry, I won't leave you—

LUCIA

No! Take the horse!

CRUMPLER

Lucia—

LUCIA

They'll kill you! Like they killed Mother!

(CRUMPLER hugs LUCIA as she cries.)

CRUMPLER

Lucia—

LUCIA

Go now! You must! Don't let them kill you . . . please . . . don't let them kill you . . . !

CRUMPLER

Lucia . . .

LUCIA

Please . . . please . . . don't let them kill you . . . don't let them kill you!

CRUMPLER

I won't . . . I won't . . . I won't . . . I'll see you tomorrow.

LUCIA

Yes! Yes!

CRUMPLER

You take care of things inside here . . . and out in the yard . . .

LUCIA

Yes, Father. I will.

CRUMPLER

I'll wait for you. I won't go on. I promise, I promise . . .

PODGE

We'll see you tomorrow morn.

CRUMPLER

Tomorrow, Lucia.

LUCIA

Tomorrow . . .

CRUMPLER

And I'll have a fantastical tale. A new tale just for you.

LUCIA

Hurry!!!

(CRUMPLER runs out.)

Good-bye . . .

(PODGE stands looking after him for several beats.

LUCIA sits still.

Silence.)

PODGE

As they progress in years . . . many men think back on the terrible things they've done, and they begin to fear there may indeed be a hell looming before them. Not I. I'm more and more terrified there may be no heaven . . . and the angels who've flown past, here among us . . . are all there are . . . all there were . . .

(He turns to her.

She refuses to look at him.)

Some day you may understand this. Or perhaps not, but I hope that you might . . . I had to lead your father away . . . I needed to play a bit of a trick on him . . . there are laws and such things which not all of us can successfully escape . . . there's nothing more dangerous, you see, than a saint, or a martyr. Your mother was a martyr. And your father a saint. They couldn't abide by the world as it is . . . they trouble the quiet that the rest of us cling to . . . you might yet understand . . . we won't be joining him, Lucia . . . I am sorry . . . Lucia?

(Pause)

Where does your father keep his papers?

(LUCIA will not answer him.

PODGE begins to look about the room.

He finds the wooden chest and sees the key beside it.

He opens the chest and pulls out the manuscript pages.

LUCIA remains still, silent and afraid.

PODGE looks through the manuscript pages.)

Not these.

(He puts the pages down on the table.)

Does your father have other papers? His property deed? Legal papers?

(LUCIA doesn't answer.

PODGE looks around some more.

He finds a small tin, opens it and pulls out a few small rolls of paper.

He unrolls them and reads them.)

PODGE

Yes, Mr. Blythebury . . .

(He rolls the sheets again and puts them in his pockets.

He looks at LUCIA.)

Lucia?

(Pause)

Look at me!

(LUCIA looks at him with fear.

PODGE calms himself and smiles at her.)

I have proceedings to attend to. There's one thing that's very, very important for you to remember. If anyone should come by here and ask about me . . . my name is Edward Blythebury. That's my name now. Mine. Edward Blythebury. Can you remember that?

(LUCIA slowly nods.)

What is my name, Lucia? What is my name?

LUCIA

(Softly)

Edward Blythebury . . .

PODGE

Good.

(PODGE gets up and goes toward the door.

He stops.

He comes back into the room and picks up all the manuscript pages.

He carries them to the stove and tosses them into the fire.

LUCIA runs to him and tries to stop him.)

LUCIA

No!

(PODGE pushes her away.)

PODGE
Sit down!

LUCIA
No!

PODGE
Lucia. Sit. Please . . .

(LUCIA sits in a chair.)

We don't need these writings here. These writings are too noisy, I suspect. We can't have that. Who knows what troubles they might bring about . . . we'll be happier without them.

(PODGE stands at the stove for several moments and watches the manuscript burn.

He struggles with great difficulty for the words with which to speak to her.)

I'm not the sort of man . . . who will cause you any harm, Lucia. No. It may not seem as such . . . but I am not a cur . . . not a rogue, nor a hateful man, I . . . I aspire to decency. I can be a good man . . . a proper man . . . in all ways respectful of you . . .

(He stops and looks at her for a moment and gently gives LUCIA her doll.

She does not look at him.

He goes to the door.)

Don't go near the path down through the woods today. When I return, we'll have fifty pounds in our pockets, Mrs. Blythebury.

(PODGE goes out and is gone.

LUCIA sits alone and clutches her doll in fear.

She stares straight ahead and cries.

Finally she begins to softly hum and sing to her doll, so quiet she is almost imperceptible at first.)

LUCIA

Lu . . . cia . . . Lu . . . cia . . . the sea . . . nymph . . . Lucia . . . the sea
nymph . . . Lucia the sea nymph . . . Lucia the sea nymph . . .

END OF SCENE

SCENE TWELVE: THE YARD. JUST AFTER DAWN.

VINCENT and MATTHEW sit looking out toward the water, drinking beers.

Several empty beer bottles lie around.

There are some tools on the table.

MATTHEW

They can dig and dig, Vince . . . she gets so restless . . . and really excited, you know? They're not going to find anything. Disappointment, maybe . . .

VINCENT

Disappointment . . .

MATTHEW

Yeah. I've got five hundred miles to drive . . . and I've got two, long seventeenth century Brit lit torture sessions to inflict tomorrow on summer term kids that don't want to be there any more than I do . . .

VINCENT

Shouldn't have taken that job teaching. I'd promised Marcie we'd go. Wake up under a different sky. She believed me. But when you get offered steady wages, you don't throw them away. She tried to smile when I told her but she just couldn't do it . . . tried to turn up the corners of her mouth, but her eyes wouldn't lie for her . . . Marcie's eyes would never lie . . .

MATTHEW

I don't have what . . . what she's got . . . some kind of . . .

VINCENT

She came out later that night to swim. She told me . . . I do love you, Vincent . . . I'll be home soon . . . and her eyes told me she was happy . . .

MATTHEW

She's finding this strange, perfect . . . love. She's tried her best to share it back with me . . . But I'm not the sort of guy who can see what she sees . . .

VINCENT

I sat here and I watched her go . . .

MATTHEW

I can't go where she wants . . . where she needs to go . . .

VINCENT

If you can't believe eyes like that . . .

(Loud screams from EMMA and GABRIELLE are heard.)

MATTHEW jumps up.)

MATTHEW

Emma? What's the matter?

(The screams continue.)

Emma?

GABRIELLE'S VOICE

Dad!

(EMMA and GABRIELLE run on.)

EMMA is carrying a wooden chest covered in dirt.)

EMMA

How about pliers?

GABRIELLE

Maybe a screwdriver!

EMMA

Yeah! Can't get the lock open—

(She calls to GABRIELLE.)

Just break it! It's all rusted!

(EMMA puts the chest on the ground and tries to break off the lock.)

MATTHEW and VINCENT stare at her.

GABRIELLE runs over with a tool from the table.)

GABRIELLE

Let me at it!

EMMA

Carefully!

(GABRIELLE works at the lock and finally breaks it off.)

GABRIELLE

There!

EMMA

Oh . . . !

(EMMA gently holds the chest with anticipation.)

GABRIELLE

Open it!

(EMMA opens the lid and looks in.

She carefully pulls out a brittle and damaged piece of paper. It is Lucia's drawing of her mother.

They all stare at it in silence.)

EMMA

It's . . . some kind of picture . . . a sketch . . . a drawing of someone . . .

GABRIELLE

Let me see it!

(GABRIELLE takes the drawing.)

I think it's a woman . . . look at her eyes . . . she's staring right back at you . . .

EMMA

There's more . . .

(EMMA reaches into the chest.

She pulls out a dozen or so other drawings.

She looks them over.)

EMMA

. . . more pictures . . . more drawings . . . old drawings . . .

GABRIELLE

What else?

(EMMA looks in the chest.)

EMMA

Nothing . . .

(GABRIELLE and VINCENT look
through the drawings.)

GABRIELLE

This one . . . looks like some guy . . . riding a fish . . . !

VINCENT

My dolphin!

GABRIELLE

Here's somebody carrying buckets or something . . . !

VINCENT

Here's an old ship . . . see the sails? And there's the captain . . .

GABRIELLE

And fish underneath . . .

VINCENT

No, people. Mermaids . . .

GABRIELLE

Look at this one! There's a woman and a little girl holding hands. A girl
and her mother! And they've got wings. See?

VINCENT

They're flying over the water . . .

GABRIELLE

And here . . . there's people on a ship . . . the girl is there and the mother . .
. smiling . . . holding hands with a man . . .

VINCENT

The ship's surrounded by stars . . .

EMMA

There's no writing . . . no writing anywhere . . . nothing . . .

GABRIELLE

Are these pictures valuable? They look really old. Don't they?

EMMA

There should be manuscripts . . . lost works . . .

GABRIELLE

How much can we get for this stuff? What do you think it's worth?

(There is a long pause as she looks at VINCENT.)

These have gotta be valuable! Gotta be . . . I know it . . . I . . . I . . .

VINCENT

Look like some kid drew them . . . playing around . . . Gabrielle, they're not worth anything.

EMMA

Maybe there's more. We should keep digging! Let's go back and dig . . . Gabby . . . Gabby?

(GABRIELLE slowly puts her pictures down.

Silence.)

GABRIELLE

(Softly)

I . . . gotta get ready for work . . . bastards put me on a double shift . . . I can't be late . . . can't be late . . .

(GABRIELLE slowly walks away into the house.

For the first time, VINCENT sees and holds the picture of Lucia's mother.)

VINCENT

Marcie . . .?

MATTHEW

I'm sorry, Emma . . . I am sorry . . . let's go.

EMMA

Maybe we miscalculated the spot . . .

MATTHEW

No.

EMMA

Matthew . . .

(There stare at each other for a moment.)

MATTHEW

I'm going home now.

(EMMA slowly nods, tries to smile,
and turns away.)

Good-bye, Emma . . .

(MATTHEW walks off to his car.)

EMMA

There should have been . . . this can't be it . . . there's more . . . he must
have had words . . . stories . . . something to share . . . there has to be . . .

(VINCENT is still holding the picture of
Lucia's mother.

He looks it over carefully and begins to cry.)

VINCENT

(Softly)

Marcie . . .

(He drops the picture to the ground
and walks away into the house.

EMMA is surrounded by the pictures all around
her on the ground.

She begins to cry.)

EMMA

There has to be . . .

(She looks over the drawings on the ground,
trying to make sense of them.)

Is this it? Why . . . why would . . . maybe . . . maybe . . .

(There is an abrupt change of lighting.)

CRUMPLER appears. He looks at EMMA and smiles.

EMMA looks in amazement.

LUCIA appears. She too smiles at EMMA.)

LUCIA

Sail with us . . .

EMMA

Me?

LUCIA

Yes, Emma . . .

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