

# ALMOST, MAINE

## ACT ONE

*with Scene One, which is entitled ...*

### HER HEART

*Music fades. The lights fade up on a woman standing in the front yard of an old farmhouse in Almost, Maine. She is clutching a small brown paper grocery bag to her chest. She is looking up at the sky. A porch light comes on. We hear a screen door open and slam as a man enters. He watches the woman for a while. He is wearing a big warm coat over plaid pajamas, and slippers or untied boots.*

MAN. Hello.

WOMAN. *(To him.)* Hello. *(Resumes looking to the sky.)*

MAN. I thought I saw someone. *(Little beat.)* I was about to go to bed. I saw you from my window ... *(Beat.)* Can I — ? ... Is there something I can do for you?

WOMAN. *(To him.)* Oh, no. I'm just here to see the northern lights. *(Back to the sky.)*

MAN. Okay. Okay. It's just — it's awful late and you're in my yard ...

WOMAN. Oh, I hope you don't mind! I'll only be here tonight. I'll see them tonight. The northern lights. And then I'll be gone. I hope you don't mind —

MAN. *(Looking out.)* Is that your tent? *(The tent should be seen by East and Glory — not by the audience.)*

WOMAN. Yes.

MAN. You've pitched a tent ... >

WOMAN. So I have a place to sleep, >

MAN. in my yard ...

WOMAN. after I see them, I hope you don't mind.

MAN. Well, it's not that I —

WOMAN. Do you mind?

MAN. Well, I don't know if —

WOMAN. Oh, no, I think you mind!

MAN. No, it's not that I mind —

WOMAN. No, you do! You *do!* Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't think you would! I didn't think — . You see, it says in your brochure >

MAN. My brochure?

WOMAN. that people from Maine wouldn't mind. It says *(Pulling out a brochure about Maine tourism.)* that people from Maine are different, that they live life "the way life *should* be,"\* and that, "in the tradition of their brethren in rural northern climes, like Scandinavia," that they'll let people who are complete strangers, like cross-country skiers and bikers and hikers, camp out in their yard, if they need to, for nothing, they'll just let you. I'm a hiker. Is it true? >

MAN. Well —

WOMAN. that they'll just let you stay in their yards if you need to? 'Cause I need to. Camp out. 'Cause I'm where I need to be. This is the farthest I've ever traveled — I'm from a part of the country that's a little closer to things — never been this far north before, or east, and did you know that Maine is the only state in the country that's attached to only one other state!?

MAN. Um —

WOMAN. It is!! *(Taking in all the open space.)* Feels like the end of the world, and here I am at the end of the world, and I have nowhere to go, so I was counting on staying here, unless it's not true, I mean, *is* it true? >

MAN. Well —

WOMAN. Would you let a hiker who was where she needed to be just camp out in your yard for free? >

MAN. Well —

WOMAN. I mean, if a person really needed to, >

MAN. Well —

WOMAN. reallyreally needed to?

MAN. Well, if a person really needed to, sure, but —

WOMAN. *(Huge relief!)* Oh, I'm so glad, then!! Thank you!! *(The woman goes to the man, throws her arms open, and hugs him. In the hug, the bag gets squished between their bodies. When they part, the man is holding the woman's bag. The exchange of the bag is almost imperceptible to both the man and the woman, and to the audience.)*

\* If you ever go to Maine by car, via Interstate 95, you will be greeted by a sign, erected by the Maine Office of Tourism, that reads: "Maine: The Way Life Should Be."

*Immediately after hugging the man, the woman resumes looking intently for the northern lights. Beat. Then, realizing she doesn't have her bag:*

Oh, my gosh! *(Realizing that the man has her bag.)* I need that!

MAN. Oh. Here. *(He gives it back.)*

WOMAN. Thank you. *(The woman resumes looking to the sky.)*

MAN. Sure. *(Beat.)* Okay — . Okay ... *(Beat.)* So you're just lookin' for a place to see the northern lights from?

WOMAN. Yeah. Just tonight.

MAN. Well, you know, you might not see 'em tonight, 'cause // you never really know if —

WOMAN. Oh, no. I'll see them. Because I'm in a good place: Your latitude is *good*. And this is the right time: Solar activity is at an eleven-year peak. Everything's in order. And, boy, you have good sky for it. *(Taking in the sky.)* There's lots of sky here.

MAN. Used to be a potato farm.

WOMAN. I was gonna say — no trees in the way. And it's *flat!* Makes for a big sky! *(Beat.)* So — you're a farmer?

MAN. No. Used to be a farm. I'm a repairman.

WOMAN. Oh.

MAN. Fix things.

WOMAN. Oh. *(Laughs.)*

MAN. What?

WOMAN. You're not a lobster man.

MAN. No ...

WOMAN. I guess I thought that everyone from Maine was a lobster man and talked in that funny ... way like they do in Maine, and you don't talk that way ...

MAN. Nope. You're not Down East. You're up north. And this is how we talk up north, pretty much.

WOMAN. Oh.

MAN. Plus, ocean's a couple hundred miles away. Be an awful long ride to work if I was a lobsterman.

WOMAN. *(Enjoying him.)* Yeah. Well, anyway, thank you. Thank you for letting me stay. I've had a bad enough time of things lately not to be given a bad time here — *(The man, inexplicably drawn to her, kisses the woman. When they break, the bag has exchanged clutches imperceptibly — the man has it. And now we have two stunned people.)*

MAN. Oh ...

WOMAN. *(Trying to figure out what just happened.)* Um ...

MAN. Oh.

WOMAN. Um ...

MAN. Oh, boy.

WOMAN. Um ...

MAN. I'm sorry. I just — ... I think I love you.

WOMAN. Really.

MAN. *(Perplexed.)* Yeah. I saw you from my window and ... I love you.

WOMAN. Well ... — that's very nice — ... but there's something I think you should know: I'm not here for that.

MAN. Oh, no! I didn't think you were!

WOMAN. I'm here to pay my respects. To my *husband*.

MAN. Oh —

WOMAN. Yeah: My *husband*. Wes. I just wanted to say goodbye to him, 'cause he died recently. On Tuesday, actually. And, see, the northern lights — did you know this? — the northern lights are really the torches that the recently departed carry with them so they can find their way to heaven, and, see, it takes three days for a soul to make its way home, to heaven, and this is Friday! This is the third day, so, you see, I *will* see them, the northern lights, because they're *him*: He'll be carrying one of the torches. And, see, I didn't leave things well with him, so I was just hoping I could come here and say goodbye to him and not be bothered, but what you did there just a second ago, that bothered me, I think, and I'm not here for that, so maybe I should go // and find another yard —

MAN. No! No! I'm sorry if I — ... if I've behaved in a way that I shouldn't have —

WOMAN. *(Leaving.)* No //, I think —

MAN. No! I really don't know what happened.

WOMAN. Well, I do, I know what happened!

MAN. I'm not the kind of person who does things like that. Please.

Don't go. Just — do what you need to do. I won't bother you.

Maybe just ... consider what I did a very warm Maine welcome.

WOMAN. *(Stopping; charmed.)* All right. All right. *(Beat.)* I'm — My name's Glory.

MAN. I'm East. For Easton.