

Side 2: Crutch, Homer, & June

12

~~REBEKAH. So that night June put pen to paper and wrote
self a business-like letter.~~

~~JUNE. The best Almighty: I don't want to care about to
die again ever. I'm not ugly, and most of the boys
around here.~~

~~REBEKAH. She wrote a good letter to a doctor.
JUNE. And make a thought.~~

~~JUNE. Cause I'm almost sixteen, and I think I'm vain,
but I'm not ugly, and most of the boys
around here.~~

~~(SOUND OF DISTANT THUNDER as JUNE EXITS and CRUTCH
ENTERS.)~~

~~CRUTCH. The day that the healer arrived was precipitous,
friends, in a number of ways.~~

~~(MORE THUNDER, WIND SOUNDS sneak in. HOMER ENTERS
to watch the coming storm.)~~

~~HOMER. Would you look at those thunderheads.~~

~~CRUTCH. Rollin in blacker than sin on a Sunday.~~

~~HOMER. (Hopeful) Well. Maybe she'll blow right on by us.~~

~~CRUTCH. I doubt it, Homer.~~

~~HOMER. I don't mind rain, but I hate that dura thunder.~~

~~CRUTCH. Aw, it's just the Good Lord up there blowin His
nose.
(THUNDER closer now, louder. WIND SOUNDS are rising.)~~

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HOMER. I've seen some hellers in my day, but this takes the
cake.

~~(JUNE runs on, worried.)~~

JUNE. Mr. Collins, have you seen my dog?

CRUTCH. Nope.

HOMER. If that dog of yours has any smarts, it's hidin out,
June.

JUNE. Ma claims she spotted a funnel cloud yonder!

HOMER. A twister?!

CRUTCH. It's weather for twisters, no question there.

JUNE. I gotta find my dog!

~~(JUNE runs off calling for "Lady." We hear her continuing to call
from off-stage as the STORM sounds grow even more intense.)~~

CRUTCH. You best get yourself down to the storm cellar,
June!

HOMER. It's fixin to break any minute!

CRUTCH. (Exiting) I'm gonna head for shelter myself.

HOMER. (Exiting) I tell you, it's blowin in fast!

~~(The STORM BREAKS WIDE OPEN. THUNDER and the DOOR
pops open and REBEKAH pokes her head out. Note: if your
stage has no door, just enter her.)~~

~~REBEKAH. Just the weather, folks!~~

~~JUNE. (Upset.) I can't find my dog!~~

~~CRUTCH. Don't you have enough sense to get out of the
cellar!~~

Side 3: Rebekah, Phineas, Belva, Homer, Crutch, Balloonist

16

AGGIE. Oh, my God!
 HOMER. (Exiting) Juney!!
 REBEKAH. Swim, baby, swim!!
 TINY. Somebody save him!
 TOWNSPEOPLE. (Exiting, and off-stage voices) I'll get
 her!—Gang now!—Juney?—Keep hold of my boot!—Grab
 him!—He's gone!—Juney?!
 TINY. (Exiting) Don't lose him!

(The stage is empty.)

TOWNSPEOPLE. Hold on! —We lost him!—Jesus in
 Heaven! —Look out for —Make way!

(The BALLOONIST stumbles on as if tired onto stage. He assumes
 he's soaking wet, but no water or damp clothes are neces-
 sary. He falls to the floor, gasping for breath. The TOWNS-
 PEOPLE rush back on and gather around him. Note: the
 worst of the storm has passed, but there's still plenty of WIND
 and RAIN.)

TINY. Is he alright?

CRUTCH. Don't even touch him now —

PHINEAS. Give him air, people!

BALLOONIST. (Gasping) Where am I?

BELVA. You're in Gray, stranger!

BALLOONIST. Gray?

TINY. You want your boot back?

(Commotion on stage as REBEKAH and HOMER enter. HOMER
 carries a lifeless-looking JUNE in his arms. The attention
 shifts to JUNE.)

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HI!

(EVERYONE except the BALLOONIST is gathered around JUNE
 now.)

REBEKAH. Somebody help her!

PHINEAS. (Pairing JUNE'S hand, frantically.) Juney, come

to...!

HOMER. Breathe, Juney.

REBEKAH. (Crying) Oh, my God, baby.

BELVA. She's fixin to die!

BALLOONIST. (Alone) Is her heart beating?

REBEKAH. What?

BALLOONIST. Does she have a pulse?

REBEKAH. (Panicked) I don't know—I just—

CRUTCH. Give him room, people— let the man through.

REBEKAH. Juney?

BALLOONIST. Ma'am, stand back — I'll do what I can.

PHINEAS. Lord God, we ask you to heal and bless her.

(CRUTCH speaks to the audience, as the action continues.)

CRUTCH. This stranger among us — this man —

— knelt down and took that girl's hands —

and then, an amazing thing —

TINY. Sweet Jesus —

CRUTCH. I held to that child and blew her breath in

her — and I mean to tell you, the very same moment

opened her eyes, the wind ceased to howl in and the rain stopped to

fall in like that.

Side 4: Gray, Homer, + Crutch

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(*MAGGIE speaks to the theater.*)

MAGGIE. I don't cotton to whiskey and I don't abide smoke — but to like a lot of good Christians, I'm willing to tolerate both in the name of commerce. And so, Mr. Galen, Gray made his way down to the Corner Cafe.

(*As HOMER and CRUTCH join the next scene, they enter with a stool, a chair, and empty glasses, etc. There's no need for either liquids or a table.*)

CRUTCH. Why ain't you in a cafe, but more of a tavern.
HOMER. It ain't in the corner of the dum' corner.

(*GRAY enters during the scene, sits on his chair and turns his back towards the MEN, so he doesn't see them.*)

GRAY. Now the —

MAGGIE. He said —

GRAY. — holds the key to constitutional fortitude, friends. It just stands the reason that what you put into your system is what will eventually work its way forth.

MAGGIE. The privy's out back, what's what you're hintin' at.

GRAY. I think my gastrointestinal tract is holding up fine for the time being, Ma'am. What are your specials this evening?

MAGGIE. Meat and potatoes.

GRAY. I'll try the beef.

MAGGIE. How do you want your beef cooked?

MAGGIE. Well-done, please.

MAGGIE. I like it rare myself.

GRAY. Lot of folks do.

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MAGGIE. Meat doesn't taste right if there's no little bit of blood in it.

GRAY. I'll chicken it, please.

MAGGIE. I want that seared on the outside, pink in the middle then?

GRAY. Ma'am, would you please cook the steak through and through?

MAGGIE. If that's how you want it —

GRAY. Thank you now I prefer it, Ma'am. Thank you.

MAGGIE. (Exiting) Perfect waste of a good piece of meat...

CRUTCH. Thank God they don't have the venereal disease.
(*The MEN clink glasses.*)

HOMER. Doc, why do you take your steak black?

GRAY. It kills all the bacterial matter.

HOMER. Bacterial matter?

GRAY. Parasites, germs, and amoebas, that's right. Germs are like dust, see? They're everywhere. They carry diseases around like a puppy totes slippers.

CRUTCH. I don't see nary a one.

GRAY. They're microscopically small, Mr. Collins, but they are tenacious.

HOMER. There's germs in the Corner Cafe?

GRAY. From the looks of it, I'd say a few million have set up housekeeping in this very room.

CRUTCH. Good God Almighty!

GRAY. No call to panic. Whiskey's a fine way to keep them at bay. Serves to sterilize the system, you understand.

HOMER. What about soda pop?

GRAY. Carbonated beverages, consumed in moderation, have actually proven to benefit the metabolism, son.

GRAY. Miss Wingfield, I want you to take this jar out to the privy, and relieve yourself in it.

TINY. *(Doesn't move.)* You want to trot that thought by me again?

GRAY. I need to examine your urine, Ma'am.

TINY. What kind of animal are you?!

GRAY. I am merely trying to ascertain the root cause of your chronic insomnia.

TINY. Oh, my God! I have insomnia?!

(BELVA, CRUTCH, and MAGGIE instantly enter as GRAY exits.)

BELVA. Tell me about it.

TINY. I've suspected for years I had a demon, but I didn't know what it was.

MAGGIE. Guess what I have? I have migraines.

TINY. Oh, my poor thing, you poor thing, you poor thing!

CRUTCH. What do you do for it?

MAGGIE. Hot compresses.

BELVA. Migraines? Not nothin'. Mr. Collins has — what do you call it, dear?

CRUTCH. It's dyspepsia, ulcer — dear.

BELVA. I have arthritis. Right here in my hand.

TINY. My dear God!

BELVA. *(Dry)* It's incurable

(More TOWNSPEOPLE enter, forming a chorus-line of ailments.)

TINY. Insomnia.

MAGGIE. Migraines.

BELVA. Arthritis.

CRUTCH. Ulcers.

HOMER. Rheumatism.

JUNE. Menstruation.

REBEKAH. Indigestion.

TINY. Erythema.

JUNE. From all across the county they came —

HOMER. Same —

(REBEKAH, CRUTCH, TINY, and BELVA each exit after their lines.)

REBEKAH. The same —

CRUTCH. The same —

TINY. The peake in my mouth —

BELVA. The doctor is a healer like birds flock to crumbs!

JUNE. People flocked to you if you didn't have somethin' wrong with you.

PHINEAS. *(Entering)* I tell you, I wouldn't set foot near that man!

(LIGHTS change as JUNE, MAGGIE, and HOMER cross to BELVA'S NEAS. The scene might be the parlor's front porch.)

JUNE. Why not?

PHINEAS. Cause he's nothing but trouble, that's why. I may be able to read, but I have committed the whole bible chapter and verse to my heart. Now you've got your leprosy, you've got your demon possession — and you've got your plagues from the bible score, but there isn't one single germ in the bible.

Side 6: Homer, Maggie, Phineas

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HOMER. Folks felt a lot better before that man came to town, pastor. It's true.

PHINEAS. I wish he'd float to whence he came, Homer.

MAGGIE. Have you got somethin' personal against him, or is it just physical?

PHINEAS. Well, I hate to talk, Margaret.

MAGGIE. I know you do, Pastor --- I hate to talk, too.

PHINEAS. But Tiny told me --- my own sister told me he told her to disrobe --- what? And right there in front of him, too.

JUNE. Did he say to it?

PHINEAS. I don't want to say. But what kind of scoundrel'd ask a fine young man to do such a thing? I tell you, it's a sin in favor of nudity.

JUNE. Personally, I'm in favor of nudity.

MAGGIE. June.

JUNE. When I was to see him, I took all my clothes off --- every last stitch --- and he stripped me down to his birthday suit, too.

Then we danced around a fire and sacrificed small animals and house pets till the sun came up.

PHINEAS. June, don't josh.

HOMER. If I had a wife or a sister, I'd be a girlfriend or...something, I mean. I best be heading for home, Pastor.

JUNE. Mind yourself, June.

HOMER. Bye, June. I'll see you at church, one.

JUNE. (*Homer is boring.*) Bye, Homer.

(*HOMER calls after her.*)

HOMER. I'll buy you a soda pop sometime.

MAGGIE. Pastor, where's Tiny been keepin' herself? She wasn't to service on Sunday nor choir practice on Wednesday.

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PHINEAS. That dum doctor told her to sleep in the daytime and stay up all night.

MAGGIE. Well I never heard such a thing.

PHINEAS. Tiny told me she saw him late last night --- and just take a guess where he was. (*Dramatic beat.*) Graveyard.

MAGGIE. The graveyard?

HOMER. What in the world was Doc doin' out there?

MAGGIE. Did he have a shovel?

PHINEAS. Oh, he's some kind of secretive Free-Thinker, Maggie --- there's no tellin' what he could do! Dig up dead people just for curiosity's sake.

HOMER. He wasn't diggin' up dead people, is he?

PHINEAS. I don't think we've sunk to that yet. But I know a preacher who knows of a fella who talked to somebody who lives in the city ---

MAGGIE. And?

PHINEAS. Apparently, there was a doctor he knew, kept a whole jar of gizzards --- and I'm talkin' human-type gizzards --- pickled right there on his desk!

HOMER. Pickled 'em?

PHINEAS. Pickled 'em, that's what he did! Just like a Godblessit cucumber, Homer! I tell you, it gives a man pause.

MAGGIE. (*Exiting.*) I don't know what this world's comin' to.

(*HOMER enters with a length of rope as PHINEAS and MAGGIE exit.*)

TINY. (*To us.*) She's in reality sound asleep right now. But for purposes of telling me I am a tree.

HOMER. (*To us.*) I'm a tree what's in me.

TINY. (*To us.*) I'm a tree what's in me.

HOMER. And this is June's yard. And in case you

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Side 7: June & Rebekah

28

guessed it by now, I am one tree with a real bad crush on the prettiest girl in the county.

(They stretch the "clothesline" between them as REBEKAH and JUNE enter with a basket of laundry to hang on the line.

Note: we don't need too many articles of clothing to get the point across.)

JUNE. Mama?

REBEKAH. Yes, June?

JUNE. Do you think you'll ever get married again?

REBEKAH. I doubt it.

JUNE. Why not?

REBEKAH. Because I'm still in love with your father, that's why. I imagine I always will be.

JUNE. But, Ma, just suppossin you met somebody you liked a lot, and he liked you back, and he asked you to marry him? What do you think you'd do then?

REBEKAH. Honey, that's not gonna happen.

JUNE. But what if it did?

REBEKAH. It won't.

JUNE. I ain't sayin it will, but it's possible, ain't it?

REBEKAH. June. What's your point?

JUNE. I think we should ask Doctor Gray over for dinner.

REBEKAH. No.

JUNE. Why not?

REBEKAH. Because I have no interest in courtin that man. None whatsoever.

JUNE. Well what if I do?

REBEKAH. Oh, Lord, June.

JUNE. I like him. I really do, Ma. I mean I really, really like him.

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REBEKAH. June, he's too old for you.

JUNE. You were in love at my age.

REBEKAH. Yes, but your Pa was no older than me.

JUNE. I'm old enough to know how I feel.

REBEKAH. Honey, you don't even know Doctor Gray.

JUNE. Then why don't we ask him to dinner and rectify that?

REBEKAH. No, June.

JUNE. But, Ma—

REBEKAH. I said no, honey.

JUNE. (After a moment.) Maybe he could just make a house call or somethin.

REBEKAH. You're not sick.

JUNE. Well you are.

REBEKAH. I am not ill in the least.

JUNE. Then how come you keep throwin up in the mornin'?

(Off her mother's look.) Are you havin a baby?

REBEKAH. (After a moment.) I don't know.

JUNE. What do you mean you don't know?

REBEKAH. I mean I don't know if am or not yet.

JUNE. Maybe you should ask Doctor Gray.

REBEKAH. We've already spoken about it. At length.

JUNE. What did he say?

REBEKAH. I don't want to talk about this.

JUNE. You sure act like you're havin a baby.

REBEKAH. Honey, look at me. (JUNE does.) We don't need another mouth to feed. Right now, it's all I can do to look after you and take care of myself, honey. Do you understand what I'm tellin' you?

JUNE. No.

REBEKAH. (After a moment.) I'll explain it sometime when you're older.

Side 8: Belva, Crutch, Gray

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(REBECCA exits. JUNE turns to us.)

JUNE. The thing I'm going to do when I'm older is move to the city, and so I'm going to be a nurse. I'll teach me to nurse. I'll get a little bit of a dowstairs. I'll cook him real nice house wife meals. I'll have lots of nice meals. I'll have lots of nice clothes, and I'll have lots of lots of children.

(HOMER turns to us as JUNE exits.)

HOMER. If oak trees could talk, I'd be cryin'.

(Night. BELVA and CRUTCH rush on stage. BELVA carries a lantern. CRUTCH has a red rag wrapped around his hand, signifying that he's cut himself. BELVA knocks, or we hear the sound of her knocking, as:)

BELVA. Doctor Gray? Doctor, wake up!

CRUTCH. You know it's the funniest thing, Bel — it really don't hurt at all.

BELVA. *(Knocks again.)* Doc? Are you decent?

GRAY. *(O.S.)* Be right with you, people!

CRUTCH. Sorry to wake you.

(GRAY enters, barefooted and buttoning his shirt. He's just woken up.)

GRAY. What's wrong, Mrs. Collins? You taking ill?

BELVA. It ain't me, it's him, Doc. He's cut his hand bad.

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GRAY. Oh, no...

CRUTCH. I was tryin to sharpen a plow.

BELVA. I went to bed early; I went to sleep directly —

CRUTCH. I's intendin to plant by the light of the moon.

BELVA. Next thing I knew, Mr. Collins is standin there bleedin all over my clean sheets.

GRAY. *(Avoids looking at it.)* How bad is it?

CRUTCH. Well. It's a gash, Doc, there's no question there.

GRAY. How deep is it?

CRUTCH. Well look at it. Isn't that somethin? You see all

them — what do you call em? — them innard things?

BELVA. Tendons, I reckon.

(GRAY passes out. Beat.)

CRUTCH. Doc?

BELVA. Good Lord, he's fell back to sleep.

CRUTCH. Honey, I don't believe he's sleepin. I think the man fainted flat out.

BELVA. I'll fetch some water — we'll bring him around.

(BELVA exits.)

CRUTCH. *(Privately)* Hey, Galen — snap to now

GRAY. *(Groggily)* What...?

CRUTCH. *(Calls)* He's comin around, Belva!

(BELVA enters with a BUCKET.)

BELVA. Just hold on — I'll give him a dowsin.

GRAY. What?...ho—ho—whoa!—hold it a second! Just let

Side 9: Rebekah & Gray

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CRUTCH. I'd call it a beauty mark, Belva.

BELVA. A beauty mark?

CRUTCH. What do you say you and me talk about along way home, honey?

BELVA. Mr. Collins, you speak to me?

CRUTCH. This much. At this time of night, just puts a man of a mood.

BELVA. I think you should hurt yourself often.

(MUSIC rises on REBEKAH, who speaks to the theater. MUSIC supports her thoughts, her speech.)

REBEKAH. In the long days that followed the death of my husband, I dreamt about him near every night. In my dreams, my husband rose up from the earth; the dust fell from his eyes; and his voice was so familiar and lonesome, it scared me. Sometimes I could feel his breath through the window. I could feel his touch in my sleep. *(Then)* And so, when I found myself dreaming in tears, and I woke up alone, I went to the graveyard to see him.

(GRAY enters the graveyard, late at NIGHT. We barely see him... more shadow than presence. He takes a yarmulke out of his pocket, puts it on, and softly begins to say Kaddish.)

GRAY. *(Half-whispering.)* "Yis-gad-dal'yis-kad-dash sh'meh rab-bo, b'ol-mo di'v-ro kir'-u-seh v'yam-lich mal-chu-seh, b'cha-ye-chon u-'yo-me-chon u-v'cha-yech d'chol bes yis-ro-el —"

REBEKAH. What are you sayin'?

(She's startled him. He takes his yarmulke off.)

GRAY. Mrs. Muldoon...! Fancy meeting you here.

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REBEKAH. What are you doin'?

GRAY. I'm saying Kaddish, Ma'am.

REBEKAH. Say what?

GRAY. It's a kind of a prayer for the dead.

REBEKAH. It's a foreign language, ain't it?

GRAY. To some folks it is.

REBEKAH. It sounds beautiful. Who are you prayin' for?

(GRAY crouches near the old "grave," which lies flat to the earth.)

GRAY. You see this old stone here? The name's worn away, but I noticed a star on it.

REBEKAH. Oh, nobody knows who that is. We all figured he must of passed on at Christmas. On account of the star.

GRAY. No, Ma'am, that's the Star of David. I figure whoever this is, he must be one of my people.

REBEKA. You don't mean he's kin to you?

GRAY. Not by blood.

REBEKAH. *(Softly)* Would you pray that prayer for my husband? For me?

GRAY. I'd be honored to, Mrs. Muldoon.

(They cross to where her husband was buried.)

GRAY. It's a right pretty stone, Ma'am. You've done him proud.

REBEKAH. Thank you...

GRAY. This prayer for the dead is all about life. It speaks to the glory of God, but it's said for the living, you see? It's kind of a prayer for us. You understand?

Side 10: Phineas & Gray

GRAY. If I can do it, you can do it. Come on, ~~drop your~~
~~Phineas~~. PHINEAS. (Averts his eyes.) "Blessed is ~~the~~ that walketh not
in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of the scorn-
ful—"

(GRAY joins in ~~the~~ ~~hymn~~, too. PHINEAS looks up, amazed. After a moment, the preacher drops his own trousers as they recite the passage together. Both men end up with their pants around their ankles.)

GRAY. (Overlapping.) "But his delight is the law of the Lord. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season—"

GRAY. Now, let's see if we can get to the bottom of this, so to speak.

PHINEAS. Don't touch me.
GRAY. I know you're tender.
PHINEAS. Just keep your paws to yourself!

(GRAY and PHINEAS mirror each other, so that GRAY examines his own body.)

GRAY. (Touching his own belly.) Would you say the pain is localized about here?

PHINEAS. A tad lower.
GRAY. Here?
PHINEAS. South, and a tad to the East.
GRAY. So it's in the region of the groin, if you'll pardon my French?

PHINEAS. It feels like somebody stuck a knife in me.
GRAY. Sharp pain or dull?
PHINEAS. Shootin' clean through to my backside.
GRAY. And does your urine have a...darkish hue to it?
PHINEAS. It's bloody as all get out, yeah.

(GRAY sits down to think. Starts to cross his legs, discovers he can't — then continues his diagnosis in a business-like fashion.)

GRAY. Mr. Wingfield, I believe you've got a stone, sir.
PHINEAS. A stone?
GRAY. A kidney stone, likely. It blocks the urethra, causes some swelling, a great deal of discomfort.

PHINEAS. Are you gonna cut on me?
GRAY. Pastor, I'd hope to avoid that, I truly would. First thing to do is to try and relieve the pain.

PHINEAS. Doc, I'd be more than grateful.
GRAY. You know Benjamin Franklin, my personal favorite among the Founding Fathers, suffered from the very same ailment.

PHINEAS. Ben Franklin had stones?
GRAY. Oh, he had a stone the size of Gibraltar. He was plagued with such pain, it just about crippled him. But being a man of some scientific prowess, he relieved himself of it by reversing the gravitational flow, inverting the torso — thereby releasing his stone from the granular region.



Side 11: Gray & June

~~... bald hands~~
~~... they miss~~
 (GRAY enters, looking faint, gasping for air. He ends up next to JUNE.)
 GRAY. Oh, God, oh, God, oh, God!
 (He puts his hands on his knees. JUNE leaves her hand in his face. It's obvious they've been together before.)
~~...~~
~~...~~
~~...~~

GRAY. Thank you.
 JUNE. Why are you so scared of blood?
 GRAY. I don't know.
 JUNE. You think you'll ever get over it?
 GRAY. Do we have to talk about this?
 JUNE. Why do you wash your hands after every single patient?
 GRAY. Because it stops the spread of germs.
 JUNE. How?
 GRAY. I don't know, it just does.
 JUNE. Well if washin kills germs, then why don't you make everybody who's marked take a bath and just wash the marks off em?
 GRAY. Because it doesn't work that way, June.

JUNE. Why not?
 GRAY. Because the marks are an external symptom of an illness that's already inside them, that's why.
 JUNE. Then why don't you wash out their innards? Make em drink soap and hot water to kill the germs.
 GRAY. That wouldn't work.
 JUNE. Why not?
 GRAY. Because the sickness has already taken root in the bloodstream and spread through their systems.
 JUNE. Is that why you're scared of blood?
 GRAY. Can I ask you a question? Why do you ask so many questions?
 JUNE. Because you told me there's no such thing as a dumb question, only a dumb answer.
 GRAY. Well I love your questions.
 JUNE. You do?
 GRAY. In fact, I love them so much I want to parcel them out. From now on, I want you to limit yourself to one question a day.
 JUNE. One a day?
 GRAY. One a day.

~~... PEOPLE narrate the Q & A for us; they're fair~~
~~... (it.)~~
 REBEKAH. Monday:
 JUNE. Do you...
 GRAY. Yes.
 REBEKAH. JUNE. I...
 JUNE. Do you believe God...
 (After a beat.) Yes.
 REBEKAH, TINY, & HOMER. Wednesday:

Side 12: June + Gray

JUNE. Why?
 GRAY. Why what?
 JUNE. Why do you believe God is good?
 GRAY. Well, don't you?
 JUNE. I don't know. *(Off GRAY'S look.)* They say His eye is on the sparrow, but if that's true, then why do people get sick and die? I mean sparrows don't pray. They don't go to church. They don't tithe. They don't do anything but fly around and be sparrows, and if God cares more about them than we do about us, then what good is He?
 GRAY. How do you know sparrows don't pray?
 REBEKAH, TINY, HOMER & PHINEAS. Thursday:
 JUNE. How come you've never been married?
 FIVE TOWNSPEOPLE. Today:
 JUNE. Have you ever had a girlfriend?
 GRAY. Yes.
 JUNE. Is there anything else you want to say about that?
 GRAY. No.
 JUNE. *(To us.)* I wanted to ask him what happened to her — if she died tragically or flung herself from a bridge because he forsok her, or if she forsok him and left him heart-broken, and that's why he couldn't settle down and probably never would settle down til he met the right person, and I thought we both had a pretty good idea who that might be, but then, I was partly afraid the right person might be my own mother, and I couldn't bear to ask about that. Besides which, I'd already used up my question for Friday.
 REBEKAH. Which brings us to —
 SIX TOWNSPEOPLE. Saturday:
 JUNE. Doc? What happens after we die?
 GRAY. I don't know.
 JUNE. Can I take back that question and ask a new question?

JUNE. If you believe God is good, then do you believe in heaven? And if you do, do you think I'll see my father again? And if I do, how old do you reckon I'll be when I see him? Cause I'm plannin to live as long as I can, so I'll be a lot older than him when I die, and that'll be weird cause I'll look like his mother, but feel like his daughter, except by then, I'll probably have kids of my own, and they'd get confused if I ended up younger than them — so how do you think all that sorts itself out?

GRAY. I think you'll always be your Pa's daughter, no matter how old you are.

JUNE. You think I'll ever stop missin him?

GRAY. No. I think you'll miss him for the rest of your life.

JUNE. I don't need eternity. I'd give anything just to spend a day with him. Or an afternoon even. If I could spend one afternoon with my father, that would be heaven enough for me.

GRAY. And what would you say to him, June?

JUNE. *(Close to tears or in them.)* I don't know. I guess I'd just tell him I love him, and want him back.

(He puts his hand on her shoulder.)

REBEKAH. Jesus, hein June, saved her last time and most personal question for—

ALL TOWNSPEOPLE. Sunday

REBEKAH. And once again she wrote her thoughts down.

(JUNE gives GRAY a piece of paper or an envelope, which he opens and reads.)

GRAY. "Do you think I'm pretty? Check this box for 'yes' or

Side 13: Maggie, June, Gray

box for 'no'."

REBEKAH. Oh, June.

JUNE. It may be trite and immature to you, Mother, but some things you don't ask out loud.

GRAY. *Holds her the paper back.* June, I think you're fifteen.

JUNE. What is that supposed to mean?

GRAY. It means I'm not gonna answer that question. Now, if you don't mind, I have patients to treat.

(MAGGIE enters. JUNE looks at her, feels slapped in the face.)

MAGGIE. Doc, I know you're busy as a three-legged cat in a sandbox, so I won't take up much of your time, but I woke up this mornin', my head hurts so badly I can barely see.

GRAY. Do you have any fever?

MAGGIE. No.

GRAY. Are your glands swollen?

MAGGIE. No, I don't think so.

(MAGGIE takes a seat, GRAY checks the glands in her neck.)

~~_____~~

MAGGIE. Oh, I've practically soaked my dum head in hot water — it ain't helpin' any. It's probably just what you said, Doc, it's probably just worry is all. *(To JUNE.)* You comin' to choir tonight?

JUNE. Not if I can help it.

GRAY. Maggie: I found a mark on you.

MAGGIE. Where?

GRAY. On the back of your neck.

MAGGIE. *(A worried smile.)* I can't be marked — I haven't done anything wrong.

JUNE. Well neither has anyone else.

MAGGIE. Preacher's too prideful. Belva's a gossip. Crutch drinks like a fish. I read the bible — I pray everyday.

GRAY. If God sent down lightning to strike everybody who misbehaved, we'd have theologians predicting the weather.

MAGGIE. Well you tell me what's causin' it then!

GRAY. It's a disease — it's spread by germs, not by God!

MAGGIE. I never heard of these germs things before you came here.

GRAY. Maggie, germs have been here since the dawn of creation.

MAGGIE. You're the one causin' this, ain'tcha?

GRAY. Don't be ridiculous.

MAGGIE. I didn't have this before you touched me.

GRAY. Yes, you did, Maggie.

MAGGIE. *(Backing away from him.)* No, I didn't — I couldn't — I know it!

(MAGGIE exits.)

GRAY. Maggie?! Maggie, come back here! *(Turns to JUNE, frustrated.)* Would you go talk sense to that woman? Maybe she'll listen to you.

~~_____~~

(Lighting us to evening "choir practice". TINY, REBEKAH, HOMER, and PHINEAS. MAGGIE is the choir director.)

HOMER. *(Soda pop in hand.)* Hey, June, aren't you goin' to choir?

Side 15: June

PHINEAS. "Ashes to ashes."
REBEKAH/MAGGIE/GRAY. "Ashes to ashes."
PHINEAS. "And dust unto dust."
REBEKAH/MAGGIE/GRAY. "Dust unto dust."

(GRAY and REBEKAH look back toward the RIVER. JUNE continues to paddle with strength, slowly, faintly...)

GRAY. (Softly) Water...
PHINEAS. Water?

GRAY. May it be water.

MAGGIE. Well, Doc, it's a boat.

GRAY. He does drink water. I boil my water. June does what I do.

REBEKAH. She has to get you got here.

GRAY. It's the simple things in the world.

PHINEAS. Water.

(They look toward the RIVER again...and JUNE glances back at them, too.)

HOMER. June?

JUNE. What, Homer?

HOMER. You heard what your mother said: Don't look back. But I want to remember.

HOMER. I know. But it'll just make you miss it all the more. June. Don't tell me you're already homesick.

(The LIGHT IS SLOWLY GROWING FAINTER on the mother and GRAY and the TOWNSPEOPLE, as if they're moving and more distant. JUNE continues to paddle at the same steady rhythm.)

...tell you something: I miss my farm, June, I really do. I miss my farm.

JUNE. I have a baby and I'm a virgin. So don't complain, Homer.

HOMER. Didn't that happen to somebody else one time? After a while...

JUNE. What, Homer?

HOMER. Well, it can't be as pretty as Gray, Indiana.

JUNE. The rest of the world, I imagine.

(MAGGIE, of course, has stuck in by now. The LIGHT on the grave-diggers is faint.)

(LATER...)

JUNE. (To the theater.) June could not bear to look back on the pain or the beauty of her childhood again, but she never wanted to forget — so at that very moment, under these very stars, and on this very river, she began to compose a story in her mind to tell her little Sister someday. So she'd understand that we all come from loss, and from love. And her story ended and began like this: Once upon a time there was a girl who looked remarkably like me.

(LIGHTS TO BLACK.)

THE END

