Rumors of Polar Bears (1st ed. - 06.18.10) - rumorsofpolar6jp
Copyright © 2010 Jonathan Dorf

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play (the "Play") is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. ("Playscripts"). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website (www.playscripts.com). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author's agent, as applicable.

Restriction of Alterations. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, the cutting of music, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying. Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

Statement of Non-affiliation. This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works. This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work *not included in the Play's score*, or performance of a sound recording of such a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov), ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and NMPA (www.nmpa.org) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

The Rules in Brief

1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.

2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.

3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, cut any music, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.

4) DO provide the required credit to the author(s) and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.

Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that authors are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the author, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—whether or not you charge an admission fee. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law. Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to $150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov) for more information.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

Playscripts, Inc.
450 Seventh Ave, Suite 809
New York, NY 10123

toll-free phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY
email: info@playscripts.com
website: www.playscripts.com

Cast of Characters

DEME, 18, female, survivalist meets teen next door

ROMULUS, 15 or 16, male, Deme's brother

ADAM, male, around Deme's age

EVE, same age, Adam's girlfriend and not the sharpest tack

SCRUBS, 13, hyperactive girl, something of a mascot like Anybodys from *West Side Story*—could possibly be male as well

IKE, 18, male

TINA, 18, female, Ike's girlfriend

INHABITANTS OF NEW SAN FRANCISCO

ANDI, 18, female, their leader, short for Andromeda

CASSIE, 15, female, her younger sister, short for Cassandra

DOC, 18, female, a self-styled "doctor"

ENSEMBLE (aka TEEN GIRLS), the inhabitants of New San Francisco, flexible in number but preferably 3-4 minimum, with no maximum. The actor playing Tina could also play an inhabitant of New San Francisco. As noted above, it is possible for Scrubs to be played as a male instead, simply making the necessary pronoun changes in the script.

Setting

Settings can be largely suggested, though the kiddie pool is necessary, and there should likely be at least a few selected set pieces that hint at the recycled nature of New San Francisco. The rest is up to your production's ambition. A good designer should feel free to go to town, as long as the set doesn't prevent the play from moving quickly. The kiddie pool itself is most likely round and plastic, the kind that parents put in the yard for their small children—making it all the more ridiculous when the teens frolic in it.

Production Notes

In Scene 1, "freeway" may be replaced with "highway," depending on what suits your production. It is possible for productions to substitute local examples for the geography used in the play, but great care should be taken to find examples that have the same sensibility.

Thus, beginning in Scene 3, you may use something other than "New San Francisco," but try to find a word that is not only similar in meaning, but also in its musicality. Similarly, in Scene 6, productions may substitute equivalent local examples for the Colorado River, California and Nevada, keeping in mind that in the original example, there really is considerable tension over this water. The line that refers to "mass evacuations of coastal regions" could be "shore regions" or "the flood plain" or something similarly appropriate if the location you're using is near a lake or river instead of an ocean. It is important to avoid blackouts as much as possible between scenes.

Acknowledgments

Rumors of Polar Bears premiered at Cambridge-Isanti High School in Cambridge, Minnesota in May 2010 under the direction of Kelly Fairchild-Fahrni with the following cast and crew:

DEME . . . . . Georgia Larson
ROMULUS . . . . . .Jonathan Wells
ADAM. . . . . .Christian Isaac
EVE . . . . . .Madelyn Gunderson
SCRUBS. . . . . .Tylinn Fahrni
IKE. . . . . Adam Heinen
TINA . . . . . .Julia Neary

Inhabitants of New San Francisco:

ANDI. . . . . Taylor Lehn
CASSIE . . . . . .Hannah Palmer
DOC. . . . . Jessica Peters
TEEN GIRLS. . . . . Sydney Johnson, Meghan Morin
Emily Ramstad, Norma Sanchez
Kara Sundvall
PERCUSSION. . . . . .James Hannan
Elizabeth Nault-Maurer,
Adam Peterson, Jordan Uhrich

Student Director / Choreographer. . . . . .Tylinn Fahrni
Stage Manager . . . . . Jennifer Hannan
Lights. . . . . Andrew Pflipsen
Crew . . . . . .Jessica Christensen
Jerome Hunt, Mikaela Kase
Mariah Mies

RUMORS OF POLAR BEARS
by Jonathan Dorf

Scene 1

(The near future. Somewhere in the western United States. DEME, *18, female, appears in a spotlight. Her clothes are survivalist meets teen next door, but it's better if the light can hit just her face. Her head is well-covered to shield it from the sun.)*

DEME. I always wanted a baby polar bear. Its fur would be so white, I could hold it in my arms and rock it to sleep at night, and it would be soft and pure next to me. And each day we'd play games, the kind of games that parents and their baby polar bears play, and as it gets older it would know how to be.

(Beat.)

That's how it is with a lot of things. If we only got them when they were babies, maybe a lot of these things wouldn't have happened. And now the polar bears have gone far, far away. Or maybe they're just gone.

(Lights up to reveal DEME *in a blighted landscape. Nearby, a squatter tent dwelling that has the feel of having been patched and mended repeatedly.* ROMULUS, *15 or 16, enters. His clothing has the same survivalist streak, with a hint of punk in his boy next door wear. He has a bag slung over his shoulder.)*

ROMULUS. Sun's down.

DEME. And?

ROMULUS. Friday night.

(Beat.)

Friday night!

DEME. Don't know how you even keep track.

ROMULUS. *(Singing it like a jingle:)* Friday night is party night.

(Points at his watch.)

It's magic. The magic watch that never stops.

DEME. It will.

ROMULUS. Sourpuss.

(Singing again:)

Friday night is party night. Make your work week come out right.

DEME. Speaking of work…

ROMULUS. Let's not speak of it.

(Once more singing:)

Friday night—

DEME. If you sing that one more time…

ROMULUS. You'll what.

DEME. Don't push me.

*(*ROMULUS *pushes her super gently, just to be annoyingly literal.)*

DEME. You know that's not what I meant.

ROMULUS. *(Singing:)* Friday night—

DEME. Don't—

ROMULUS. *(Continuing:)* Is—

DEME. Romulus, I mean it.

ROMULUS. *(Beat.)* Here.

(He pulls a bunch of cans out of his bag.)

Tuna. Garbanzo beans. Creamed spinach. Creamed corn. Cream of wheat. Score or what?

DEME. You always do this.

ROMULUS. I didn't know cream of wheat came in a can.

(Beat.)

I always do what?

DEME. You always hold a few back until I'm mad, and then they pop out, peace offering.

ROMULUS. I come in peace.

(Beat.)

Is it working?

(She hauls off as if to hit him. He flinches, but she runs her hand through his hair gently. Then she grabs his hair hard.)

ROMULUS. Ow!

(She kisses his hair and lets go.)

DEME. How many cans are left down there?

ROMULUS. Dunno. It's dark.

DEME. More or less.

ROMULUS. Probably less. Come on—it's Friday night. Can't we wait and be end of the world again on Monday?

(Beat.)

What?

DEME. That's such a Mom thing.

ROMULUS. Yeah?

(Beat.)

I think I remember less each day.

DEME. Don't be all end of the world, Deme.

ROMULUS. I write in my book, but it just feels less and less real.

DEME. Dad had no sense of humor.

ROMULUS. I don't remember him at all.

DEME. You were three.

ROMULUS. Three should be good for something.

DEME. That was a crowded year.

ROMULUS. I hope he doesn't hate me for not remembering.

DEME. *(Beat.)* Why are we talking like this? It's Friday night.

(Singing:)

Friday night is party night.

ROMULUS and DEME. Make your work week come out right.

ROMULUS. I'm goin' in head first this time.

DEME. Ha.

ROMULUS. One of these days I will. Dive bomber!

DEME. You ready?

ROMULUS. You got the stuff?

*(*DEME *pulls a shoulder bag of her own from inside the squat.)*

DEME. Do you have to ask?

*(*ROMULUS *howls, as if sending a signal to distant friends. He's answered by cawing and barking and howling from elsewhere in the area.)*

ROMULUS. To the party pool!

(Lights dim, except for the spotlight on DEME.*)*

DEME. The year Romulus turned three, I remember a man in a designer pin-striped suit and perfectly polished shoes swinging a sledgehammer at every inch of his Hummer, screaming that he would no longer be part of the problem. And when he's done, he sits on the curb and points at me to come closer and he says he wants to set it on fire, but he can't, because he just can't hurt the planet any more. He grabs my hand and starts to cry, and he says he's sorry he's crying, but he can't help it and isn't there some way he could give back the Hummer and the half hour showers for just one more minute with his wife? And then he stands up, wipes his face, tells me the Oil and Water Wars are all his fault, and throws himself onto the freeway below.

(Beat.)

I made that up. Not the Hummer or the hammer or the crying or him taking my hand or the freeway. But the Oil and Water Wars didn't start for another week, and that's just what we call them now because there's nobody to tell us different.

(The lights may go to black if absolutely necessary, but it would be better for them to cross fade and come up on the new location.)

Scene 2

(Not far away, and not long afterward. A kiddie pool, empty of water, sits in an otherwise barren patch of ground. A nearby sign used to read "Danger: Keep Out," but danger has been crossed out, and the words "private club" scrawled in graffiti over top. Enter DEME *and* ROMULUS.*)*

ROMULUS. We're never first.

*(*ADAM, *Deme's age and dressed in a sort of punk meets beach meets Mad Max chic, steps out of the shadows.)*

ADAM. And you never will be.

*(*EVE, *same age, his girlfriend and probably not the sharpest tack in the box, jumps out right after.)*

EVE. Ambush!

DEME. You're just a regular Bonnie and Clyde.

ADAM. Adam and Eve, thank you very much, and we coulda' water whacked you no thing.

ROMULUS. But you gave the signal.

EVE. *(Mimicking him:)* But you gave the signal.

ADAM. Maybe we been waiting, watching for weeks, studying your ways.

ROMULUS. Yeah, and maybe our parents are waiting for us at the spa.

EVE. What's a spa?

ADAM. Baby, it's not important.

EVE. I hate it when he uses words I don't know.

DEME. *(To* ADAM*:)* You're right.

EVE. I'm a poet.

DEME. We shoulda been more careful.

ROMULUS. But—

DEME. Shut it.

EVE. *(Continuing her thought:)* Show some respect.

ADAM. Hey, we're here. It's all good.

DEME. Yeah, Eve. Give us one.

EVE. *(Beat.)* OK.

(Her poem:)

Day hot sun dry hot
My favorite time is night
Pool of water wet!

DEME, ADAM, and ROMULUS. Amen.

EVE. Let's get this party started!

DEME. Where's Dare? And Tina and Ike?

*(*SCRUBS, *the youngest at 13 or 14, bounds out of the bushes. She's the Anybodys of their world.)*

SCRUBS. What about where's me? I call first into the party pool!

*(*SCRUBS *races out of her punk-Mad Max-tomgirl wear and into a bathing suit lickety split, jumping into the empty pool.)*

ROMULUS. Hey—it's my turn.

SCRUBS. Party water!

*(*ROMULUS *races to strip to a bathing suit or shorts or whatever is most suitable.)*

SCRUBS. *(Chanting:)* Pour! Pour!

ROMULUS. Wait!

SCRUBS. Pour! Pour!

*(*DEME *pulls a gallon jug out of her bag and pours its contents into the kiddie pool.)*

SCRUBS. Woohoo!

(Enter TINA *and* IKE, *about the same age as* DEME, ADAM, *and* EVE. *They dress about the same, but with maybe just a bit more of a designer edge. They look gaunt.)*

ROMULUS. That's enough, Scrubs. My turn now.

SCRUBS. Says who?

ROMULUS. Says me.

EVE. I says too.

DEME. *(To* IKE *and* TINA*:)* Where's Dare?

SCRUBS. I just started partyin.

(Her party call:)

Rock on! Rock on hard!

*(*SCRUBS *jumps around and frolics as if this is the best thing ever.)*

IKE. He's tired.

DEME. *(To* ROMULUS*:)* You gonna dive in?

ROMULUS. Maybe I will.

DEME. Romey says he's going to dive in.

*(*ADAM *tries to push his way past* ROMULUS, *but* ROMULUS *blocks him.)*

ROMULUS. It's my turn.

ADAM. Not if I get there first.

DEME. Tina, you OK?

EVE. Ad, let him go.

*(*ADAM *and* ROMULUS *struggle playfully. Of course, just as* ADAM *starts to get past* ROMULUS, *he has to stop to strip down to his swim gear, which gives* ROMULUS *time to block him again.)*

ROMULUS. Not this week.

ADAM. I am the king of the party pool!

SCRUBS. Party, party!

EVE. Adam!

ADAM. I'm just havin' fun with him.

(Beat.)

Fine.

*(*ADAM *lets go of* ROMULUS, *then feints at him.* ROMULUS *flinches, but stands his ground.)*

ROMULUS. Blow, Scrubs.

(Beat. SCRUBS *gets out.* ROMULUS *jumps in.)*

ROMULUS. Party, party!

ADAM, EVE, SCRUBS, and ROMULUS. Party, party! *(etc.)*

*(*ADAM, EVE, *and* SCRUBS *dance around the party pool, while* ROMULUS *frolics in it.* DEME *studies* IKE *and* TINA, *who looks longingly at the pool. Beat.* TINA *can't take it anymore and runs for the party pool, pushing the others out of the way and drinking from the pool.)*

ROMULUS. Don't drink the party water.

ADAM. Yeah—if you drink it, what are we gonna party in?

*(*TINA *stops drinking.)*

TINA. Sorry. I was just really…thirsty.

DEME. Where's Dare?

EVE. Yeah. How we gonna party in the pool if you drink the water? Then we'd have to be sad all the time.

IKE. Dare's tired. He's lying down.

DEME. *(Beat.)* Is he lying down, Tina?

IKE. I just told you—

DEME. Tina?

(Beat. TINA *shakes her head.)*

DEME. Romey, get out of the water.

ROMULUS. But we're partyin—

DEME. Get out of the water now!

(This time ROMULUS *doesn't hesitate. He gets out and grabs his clothes. During this exchange, the others retreat ever so slightly from* IKE *and* TINA.*)*

DEME. *(To* TINA*:)* Where's Dare?

TINA. We thought he just got too much sun—his skin had this splotch—

DEME. Like all over or in one place?

TINA. One place. Like a dot.

DEME. Like a bite?

TINA. I dunno. And then he got a fever and the sweats and more splotches and we kept givin' him water but it didn't help and then he…

DEME. We have to leave.

ROMULUS. Leave? Why?

EVE. Adam, what's going on?

DEME. Leave for good.

IKE. There's nothing wrong with us.

DEME. And Dare's just tired. Right, Ikey?

*(*TINA *can't help herself. She drinks voraciously from the kiddie pool.)*

SCRUBS. Tina, you're drinking the party water.

DEME. Show us your splotches.

IKE. We gave our part to Dare, that's all.

DEME. I bet you got 'em too.

(Until the end of the scene, DEME *keeps her distance from* IKE *and* TINA*.)*

IKE. Tina, stop it!

*(*TINA *stops drinking again.)*

DEME. We've gotta go.

ROMULUS. Where?

DEME. I don't know yet. North.

ROMULUS. Why do we have to go anywhere?

EVE. Yeah. We live here.

DEME. *(To* EVE*:)* Nobody says you have to go anywhere.

ROMULUS. So why do I?

ADAM. You can stay with us.

DEME. How long do you think you got?

EVE. Yeah. Stay with us.

DEME. How long til you get whatever they got?

ADAM. We go out there, we get water whacked for sure.

SCRUBS. I ain't gettin' water whacked.

DEME. For what? For our nothing?

ADAM. They don't know that.

DEME. There's no they. When's the last time we even heard a voice?

ROMULUS. *(Beat—indicating* IKE *and* TINA*:)* We can't just leave 'em here.

> *(*DEME *starts to pack. Beat.* ROMULUS *seethes, but he joins* DEME *in packing, getting road clothes, etc.* ADAM, EVE, *and* SCRUBS *follow suit.)*

DEME. And we didn't.

> *(Beat.)*

I had a string from the place where the cans had almost run out.

> *(She lets the string go, and* IKE *grabs it.* DEME *begins to walk, and it unravels until it extends across the stage.* ADAM, EVE, ROMULUS, *and* SCRUBS *walk near* DEME, *while* IKE *and* TINA *walk at the end of the string, with* IKE *holding it.)*

DEME. That was how far they had to be. Romey wouldn't look at me for three days. But none of us caught what they had. And on the fourth day—

> *(*IKE *lets go of the string, and the lights fade on him and* TINA.*)*

DEME. It could have been any of us. It could have been all of us.

> *(To* ROMULUS*:)*

It could have been you.

ROMULUS. Don't expect me to say thanks.

> *(Beat.)*

And now what?

DEME. We keep going.

ROMULUS. What's wrong with here?

DEME. Too hot.

ADAM. It's perfect.

EVE. Yeah. I love it.

DEME. It'll get worse.

ADAM. We're almost out of cans. We gotta restock.

DEME. From where? Got a better chance up north.

ADAM. Of runnin' out.

DEME. I heard buzzing last night.

ROMULUS. Every time you hear a bug now we move?

EVE. I don't think so.

SCRUBS. You don't even know that's what happened.

ROMULUS. Not for sure.

ADAM. *(Running at* EVE*:)* Bugggzzz… Bzzz…

EVE. *(Playing:)* Don't let it get me!

*(*ADAM *chases* EVE *around.* SCRUBS *joins in. Even* ROMULUS *gets into it, as they run all over the stage, with* ROMULUS *ultimately pantomiming a horrible death just as he looks up to realize that he's surrounded by* TEENAGE GIRLS *armed with makeshift weapons. Your production can use as many women as it likes, but there should be enough that the five characters already on stage appear to be in jeopardy.)*

Scene 3

(Very theatrically, perhaps almost as a dance sequence—but more hip-hop/street/modern than ballet—the armed TEENAGE GIRLS *break apart the group, prodding them in separate directions. One by one, they are whirled toward* DOC, *a girl with a mask, then returned to the middle—all except for* ROMULUS, *who disappears completely.* DEME, ADAM, EVE, *and* SCRUBS *are left alone on stage.)*

DEME. How long has it been?

(Beat.)

It's been too long.

(Beat—to the now vanished TEENAGE GIRLS*:)*

Hey! Why you takin' so long on him?

(Pause.)

Hey!

(A liquid-filled metal cannister rolls onto the stage. They eye it suspiciously.)

SCRUBS. What is it?

DEME. Don't touch it.

SCRUBS. But what is it?

ADAM. Maybe it's a bomb.

EVE. Don't play.

ADAM. I'll protect you, baby.

SCRUBS. *(Poking at it very gently:)* It's squishy.

DEME. It's metal.

(Beat.)

I said hey!

SCRUBS. Maybe they killed him, and that's his blood.

*(*DEME *leaps at* SCRUBS, *who zips out of the way.* ADAM *and* EVE *restrain* DEME.*)*

ADAM. *(To* SCRUBS*:)* You shut up.

(To DEME*:)*

Come on—you know she's just trouble with legs.

(Beat.)

You good?

DEME. As long as she stays over there.

*(*ADAM *and* EVE *let* DEME *go, though both stay close.* DEME *feints at* SCRUBS, *who flinches and keeps her distance.)*

ADAM. If everybody's too creepers to look, I'll do it.

EVE. Careful, baby!

(He gets in front of it. Studies it. Beat. He opens it, then gets down and sniffs.)

ADAM. Water.

DEME. Sure?

(Beat. He tips it toward his mouth.)

EVE. Adam!

(He sips.)

ADAM. Wet. Water.

EVE. They gave us water?

*(*EVE *and* DEME *gather around for their drink, but* SCRUBS *hangs back.)*

DEME. Save some for Romey.

SCRUBS. *(Beat.)* What about me?

*(*DEME *gives her a long look, then turns away.)*

SCRUBS. I miss the party pool.

*(*DEME *steps out of the scene.)*

DEME. Scrubs is—

*(*SCRUBS *walks into* DEME's *"out of time" moment.)*

SCRUBS. I can talk about myself.

DEME. Scrubs has no sense of boundaries.

(Beat.)

It's *my* monologue.

SCRUBS. So?

(Beat.)

Fine.

*(*SCRUBS *goes back into the scene.)*

DEME. That's how she's been since we found her. Yeah, if she does the tellin', she'll leave out the part where she's a stick thin carcass on the side of the road a few hours short of a prophet to send her home. But as cold as the body's headed, the eyes are fire. She shoulda been dead a week before we found her, but those eyes didn't believe they should close.

(Beat.)

Those eyes believe in the polar bears too. Even if sometimes I want to stick my fist so far up that big mouth it's gonna come out the back of her head and wave.

(The lights shift.)

DEME. Give her a sip. *(To* SCRUBS*:)* But count to 100 in your head before you swallow it. Slow.

SCRUBS. But—

DEME. 100.

EVE. *(Sidling up to* DEME*:)* Do you get more out of it that way?

DEME. I just want her to shut up for a couple minutes.

(The lights fade on them and up on where ROMULUS *stands alone.* CASSIE, *same age as* ROMULUS *and dressed in a green meets punk motif, as are most of the others of her settlement, watches him, cautious but compelled. A pair of* GUARDS *from the raiding party stand at a distance but watchful.)*

ANDI. *(Off:)* Don't go near him.

CASSIE. I'm not.

ROMULUS. Where's Deme?

ANDI. *(Off:)* You are.

ROMULUS. Where's my sister?

CASSIE. Oh my God—you're right. He's a zombie. Help! He's eating my brains!

(Beat.)

The other ones aren't broken. Why should he be?

*(*DOC, *18 or 19, a girl in a makeshift mask and gloves, approaches. She has a backpack slung over her shoulders.)*

DOC. Only takes one.

(To ROMULUS*:)*

Turn out your pockets.

*(*ROMULUS *obeys.)*

ROMULUS. What are you doing?

DOC. I'm a doctor.

(She shoves a thermometer in his mouth.)

ROMULUS. There's nothing—

DOC. Don't talk.

CASSIE. He's fine.

DOC. *(To* CASSIE*:)* Move back.

(She pulls the thermometer out of his mouth and checks it.)

ROMULUS. You can't be a doctor. You're my sister's age.

DOC. OK.

*(*DOC *takes off her mask.)*

DOC. Welcome to New San Francisco.

(Lights up on the rest of the stage—and the entirely recycled set of New San Francisco, which can be as elaborate or as suggested as

your production needs. DEME, ADAM, EVE, *and* SCRUBS *are there, reunited with* ROMULUS. DEME *hugs him tight.)*

SCRUBS. Rock on!

ROMULUS. I'm fine.

DEME. I didn't know what—

ROMULUS. I'm fine.

(Beat—not so harsh:)

I'm fine. Really.

*(*DEME *nods.)*

SCRUBS. Rock on hard…

DEME. New San Francisco.

ANDI. We started with nothing.

(Each NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS *line is meant to be said by a different individual, though it is possible for your production to experiment with having the same line said by multiple actors at once.)*

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
We love it here.
We like it.

ANDI. Everything is made out of something that was before.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
We have a stream.
We think it's clean.

ADAM. I smelled the water, and it doesn't smell.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
We boil it in case, but we think it's clean.

ANDI. We heat our water with the sun.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
Can't be too careful.
Not after what happened before.

CASSIE. Warm showers.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
A sauna.
We got a spa.

SCRUBS. Rock on.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
We have light here.
Cooking.
And a garden.
Steamed veggies.

ROMULUS. No more fishing in dark holes for cans.

EVE. New San Francisco.

ANDI. And it was good.

CASSIE. As good as it gets.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
Don't forget the windmill.
Two next week.
Then three.
Our carbon footprint…

CASSIE. Invisible.

ANDI. Give more than we take.

EVE. New San Francisco.
Sun, wind, water—starting over.
Makes it feel like home.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
Some of the plants aren't as green as they were.
Some of the plants are turning brown.
There's not as much water as there was.
There's water on the other side of the mountains.
Salt water.
The other side of the mountains is underwater.
With water we can't drink.

ANDI. Water for the plants.

CASSIE. I see green again.

NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS.
Breathe again.
We can all breathe again.
Cassie sees it.
The visions.
They're never wrong.
It'll all heal.

ADAM. I could get used to this, baby. Livin' the spa life.

EVE. Spa. Why is everybody so nutty about spa?

ADAM. Compared to before, this is heaven.

ANDI. You help, you can stay.

EVE. Tell me what spa is right now, or I'm gonna scream.

SCRUBS. I want to see me some plants.

FIRST TEEN GIRL. I'll show you.

SECOND TEEN GIRL. We garden.

ADAM. Spa is the most beautiful word in the world.

SCRUBS. Can I garden?

EVE. More beautiful than party pool?

FIRST TEEN GIRL. Rock on, girl.

SCRUBS. *(Recognizing a kindred spirit:)* Rock on!

*(*SCRUBS *exits with the* FIRST *and* SECOND TEEN GIRLS.*)*

ADAM. Somebody take us to the spa.

EVE. To the spa!

(The THIRD *and* FOURTH TEEN GIRL *[or any others from the* NEW SAN FRANCISCO CHORUS*] escort* ADAM *and* EVE *offstage.)*

ROMULUS. I'll do something. We help we can stay, right?

ANDI. That's right.

ROMULUS. What you want me to do?

DEME. *(Sotto to* ROMULUS*:)* We're not staying.

ROMULUS. Why not?

ANDI. I don't know. What can you do?

DEME. Not the right place.

ROMULUS. Why not?

(To ANDI*:)*

What you need doin'?

ANDI. I'll give it a think and hit you back.

DEME. This valley's dying.

ROMULUS. You got it flipped. They're bringing it back.

(To ANDI*:)*

But you got something, right?

ANDI. We got work for everybody that wants it.

ROMULUS. I want it.

DEME. There are no polar bears here.

ROMULUS. Maybe there aren't any anywhere. How do you know they aren't all gone?

ANDI. The water in the valley is headed this way. We're gonna dam it up, use it for the gardens. You can help with that.

DEME. *(To* ANDI*:)* Thanks, but we won't be staying.

ROMULUS. I'll help.

DEME. We'll do what we need for a couple weeks of road food.

ROMULUS. I don't care about stupid polar bears.

ANDI. Polar bears?

DEME. We're going north. That's where they are.

ANDI. Polar bears are killers.

DEME. We'll be safe there.

ANDI. You're safe here.

DEME. Are we?

ANDI. Things are good here.

ROMULUS. I want to stay.

ANDI. *(Beat.)* You don't look for a killer—unless you want to die.

Scene 4

(Later that day. CASSIE *approaches* ROMULUS*, who writes in a small, ratty notebook.)*

CASSIE. Dinner's almost ready.

ROMULUS. Not from a can?

CASSIE. Not from a can. What's that?

ROMULUS. Helps me remember things.

CASSIE. What kind of things?

ROMULUS. Things I don't want to forget.

(There's an awkward silence.)

CASSIE. So…your sister and my sister…meow!

(She makes clawing gestures in the air.)

ROMULUS. Sorry about that.

CASSIE. Not your fault.

(Another awkward silence. And there's a hint of attraction in the air.)

CASSIE. What's it like?

ROMULUS. What?

CASSIE. Out there.

*(*ROMULUS *shrugs.)*

CASSIE. What's that mean?

ROMULUS. Sometimes stuff just *is*, you know?

CASSIE. *Is* good or *is* bad?

ROMULUS. How come there's no other guys?

CASSIE. Sometimes stuff just *is.*

(Beat.)

There were, where we used to be. The twins, Matthew and Luke. Then there was John…and Peter. Peter was the funny one. He'd find these dead flowers on the ground, and he'd try to water them with spit and give them to me. One time, his mouth is so dry, there's hardly any spit—you know, like he gets no distance—and so it's dribbling all over his chin. And so he smiles and gives me these dead dandelions and then he realizes he's got this glob all over his chin, and he's trying to get it with his tongue while he's still smiling and bowing and holding out the flowers. I'm like, "Peter, I think the dandelions could use a few more drops." And he says, "I think you're right." And he wipes them on his chin and put them in my hand.

(Beat.)

He was the first to go. Andi says that's so he could be at the gates for us. I don't know what that means. I just know he's gone.

ROMULUS. He sounds pretty cool.

*(*CASSIE *nods.)*

CASSIE. And then we left and found this place.

ROMULUS. Why do they say you see things?

CASSIE. Because I do.

ROMULUS. How?

*(*CASSIE *shrugs.)*

CASSIE. *(Beat.)* I've got some pictures before the—Andi calls it Tipping Day.

ROMULUS. You've got pictures?

CASSIE. *(Continuing her thought:)* Like it was happening a little all the time. Just a little. So little you don't even notice. Until one day it just…tipped.

(She pantomimes a tipping motion with her hands.)

ROMULUS. I want to see the pictures.

CASSIE. It's almost like that here. Like it was before.

ROMULUS. Please.

CASSIE. I can show you.

ROMULUS. I'd like that.

(He reaches out and takes her hand. Enter ADAM *and* EVE.*)*

EVE. The spa!

ADAM and EVE. *(Rocking out:)* Spa spa spa, etc.

EVE. They've got this glass that makes the rocks hot.

ADAM. From the sun.

EVE. And they steam.

ADAM. Best ever…

SCRUBS. What about the party pool?

ROMULUS. That was good times.

ADAM. That was nothing.

CASSIE. What's the party pool?

EVE. Zero.

ADAM. The spa is the new party pool.

ROMULUS. Just this place we used to go.

ADAM. The party pool is dead. Long live the party spa.

SCRUBS. The party spa.

ADAM, EVE, and SCRUBS. Party spa! Party spa! *(etc.)*

(It looks like they're about to parade off.)

ANDI. Dinner's ready.

ADAM, EVE, and SCRUBS. Party spa…

ADAM. After dinner! Party spa—

EVE, SCRUBS, and ROMULUS. After dinner!

ROMULUS. You should come.

CASSIE. I've been to the spa before.

ROMULUS. But not the party spa!

(All start to dance offstage as the lights dim, except for DEME, *who remains, almost reclusive, in one corner, watching the proceedings, and* ANDI, *similarly reclusive, in the other.)*

Scene 5

(After dinner. From offstage, we hear sounds of "party spa, party spa" and other improvised sounds of fun. On stage, CASSIE *and* ANDI *are in one area, and* ROMULUS *and* DEME *are in another. The conversations are separate, though intertwined.)*

ROMULUS. Come on—everybody's there.

DEME. The party spa?

ANDI. This is a bad idea.

CASSIE. Come on—it's just one night.

ROMULUS. *(Singing the jingle from before:)* Friday night is party night.

ANDI. Pretty soon it'll be just one more night and one more night after that—

DEME. How do you even know it's Friday?

ROMULUS. The magic watch that never stops.

CASSIE. You say you want it to be normal, but you don't want us to do normal things.

ANDI. The party spa is normal?

DEME. Things don't stay forever, Romey.

CASSIE. Romey says it'll be the most fun I ever had.

ANDI. Romey?

ROMULUS. You always see the worst in everything.

ANDI. *(Realizing* CASSIE *likes him—teasing:)* Romey…well, if Romey says…

DEME. I see what's real.

ANDI. Romey Romey Romey…

CASSIE. *(Embarrassed:)* Stop.

ANDI. Romey—

CASSIE. Stop.

ANDI. *(Finishes "Romeo":)* —O.

ROMULUS. Your polar bears aren't real.

CASSIE. Did you just smile?

ANDI. No.

DEME. They are.

ROMULUS. They're ghosts. It's like some guy a long time ago said, "I think there's some polar bears up north." Or maybe he didn't even say up north. Maybe your head made that up. Maybe all he said was "I saw polar bears once. At the zoo. Before everything fell apart. Before it all tipped."

ANDI. You still see it green, right?

CASSIE. Green as grass grows.

ANDI. *(Beat.)* Go—with Romey.

CASSIE. Thanks!

*(*CASSIE *gives* ANDI *a hug and starts to go, lingering at the edge of the stage as if waiting for* ROMULUS.*)*

ROMULUS. You should come.

DEME. We need to go.

ROMULUS. Come on—it'll be like it used to be. Only better.

DEME. *(Beat.)* I'll look. For a minute.

(He meets up with CASSIE.*)*

ROMULUS. To the party spa!

(They exit, leaving ANDI *and* DEME *alone in their areas, perhaps staring across at each other for a beat before* ANDI *exits.* DEME *stays on stage, unlit, a shadow.)*

Scene 6

(Enter SCRUBS, *fresh from the party spa. She should have her own light, and* DEME *should stay unlit and almost invisible.)*

SCRUBS. Deme ain't watchin', so I finally get to speak my mind. Whole time we're partyin' it up at the spa, she's watchin' us. I can't barely enjoy the wet hot 'cause I can feel her staring a hole through me, through everybody.

(Beat.)

And while we're on the subject, that part about me being half-dead, that's what we call an exaggeration. For real I'm just sleepin on the side of the road, catchin my breath. Don't let her tell you different. My Mom is sleepin too.

(Beat.)

Only reason I even stick with her is that sometimes she teaches me stuff, only I hate all the stuff she teaches me. It's boring and useless. Like the word euphemism. Sleeping is a euphemism for dead.

(The lights come up across more of the stage, and SCRUBS *joins* ROMULUS, ADAM, EVE, CASSIE, *and some of the* NEW SAN FRANCISCANS, *all dressed as if they've just come from the party spa—perhaps similarly to the party pool attire of earlier. DEME observes from a distance, and* ANDI *enters sometime during this choral moment. Each of these lines could be said by any of the* NEW SAN FRANCISCANS, *or by anyone but* DEME, CASSIE, ROMULUS, *or* ANDI.*)*

CHORUS OF NEW SAN FRANCISCANS.
She needs to stop staring.
She needs to stop talking.
Maybe she's right.
The ground is turning browner.
The plants are dying.
You're imagining it.
She says it, and now you're seeing it.
Listen to Cassie, not to her.

(To ROMULUS*:)*

Why did you bring her to the party spa?
She ruined everything.
The garden is fine.
Not if we waste the water.
You sound like her.
You sound like my mother.

I miss my mom.
I miss mine too.
Breaking news: units of the California National Guard have opened fire on Nevadans guarding the Colorado River aquifer.
The governor of California has denied all responsibility and said—
These units are acting alone.
Anonymous sources confirm California acted while it still had sufficient supplies of oil to carry out an attack.
Mass evacuations of flooded coastal regions are underway.
People are being left for dead.
On the side of the road.
Or worse.
There is panic.
Things are falling apart.
Breaking down.
It's chaos.

ANDI. Stop!

(All comes to a grinding halt. Silence. It's as if that choral moment never was—almost.)

ANDI. There was a man. A week ago.

CASSIE. What man?

ANDI. A man in the valley. I didn't tell you. He was just passing through. No reason to tell you about a man just passing through.

(Beat.)

I gave him half my water. He says, "You give me the other half, I'll tell you a story you won't never believe, but that don't mean it's a lie." I pour him all but one mouthful, and he moves real close and whispers, "The polar bears. They're real, and I know where they are." No matter what I say, he won't say another word. "I've said too much," he says, and he takes a swallow, and then he's gone.

DEME. Where did he go?

(ANDI *points north.)*

DEME. A week?

ANDI. Give or take.

CASSIE. Why didn't you say something?

ANDI. Maybe ten.

CASSIE. You should have said something.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com