



Newport, Maine

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CLOSER TO HOME

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Cast of Characters (16m 13f – some doubling possible)

JUNIOR – M – Our Narrator, 40s/50s+
BURT Bunker – M – Local snow plower / Handy man, Cheap, 40s/50s
WALLY Wentworth M – Ida’s Husband, Plaintive, 40s/50s+
IDA Wentworth – F – Competitive, 40s/50s+
VIDA Coombs – F – Haughty, 50s/60s+
HERB Foster – M – Owner of the General Store, Smart, 50s
ADA Foster – F – Herb’s wife, 50s, Smarter than Herb
CRYSTAL Walls – F – New employee, “Steep learning curve”, 16/21...
DUBBA Bolger – M – Free lance clammer, FAST talker, 40s/50s
THELMA Norwood – F – Scatter brained, 60s+
TOMMY Parsons – M – Excitable, 30s/40s
JASPER Dunbar – M – Gruff, 40s/50s
ROGER Beal – M – Neighbor of Minnie Higgins, 40s/50s+
SONNY “SMITH” (Sabin) Hutchins – M – Sage, Savvy, 70s+
THERESA Polakowski – F – New lawyer “From Away”, 30s/40s+
PUD Hodgkins – M – Owner of the Lobster Pound, Long suffering, 50s
GERT Hodgkins – M – Pud’s wife, High maintenance, 50s+
NELLIE Hitchcock – F – Nervous, 50s+
FARNHAM Butler M – Local politician, mediator, Level headed, 40s/50s
BYRON Brown – M “From Away” Natty, Naive, 30s/40s
CAROL Sachsman – F – New resident, “From Away”, Stylish, Arrogant, 30s++
BERNARD Beauregard – M – a ‘Newcomer’ Boorish, Condescending, 40s+
CAPPY Carter – M – Clammer, Sardonic, 40s/50s+
BERTHA MacAlphine – F – Deaf, Bawdy and LOUD, 60s+
BRAD Kane – M – Police Officer, Friend of ADA Foster, 40s +
LENA Johnson – F – Plaintive, 50s+
MIDDY Tuttle – F – Eccentric, Coarse, 50s+
ALMA Hadley – F – Dog Person, Befuddled, 40s/50s+
MINNIE Higgins – F – Cat person, Defensive, Confused Neighbor of Roger Beal, 60s+

Many parts can be combined for smaller casts.

All Gender roles can be reversed where deemed appropriate.

Local costumes in general are 1950s to 1980s Downeast Maine.

“Away” costumes in general are in contrast to Downeast Maine.

SEVERAL SIMPLE LOCATIONS:

Narration DownCenter
Herb's General Store
2 locations to serve the smaller sketches
 IDA's House / ADA's House
 SONNY'S OFFICE for Ayuh Lessons
Pud's Pound – a lobster restaurant
Hall at the Grange
Clam Flats (DC)
Town Hall

CLOSER TO HOME by Brent Hutchins. 30 characters which can be readily doubled and 'regenderfied' as needed. About 110 minutes CTH is a series of vignettes that take place in a fictional Maine town called Broad Harbor. It pokes pointed fun at locals and of course, roasts folks from away. Centering around talk at the General Store and competitive Grandmothers cooking for the holidays, with a myriad of other antics from the locals and their favorite CFAs, this is more than a laugh-a-minute humor-fest as the target hits both close to home and far away. **ORDER #3036**

Brent Hutchins is a fourth generation Mount Desert Island carpenter, and in the words of one of his characters, "Junior", a Downeast entrepreneur! He has been active in all phases of community theater in central Maine for many years; including, acting, directing, set design and construction. Every earnest thespian knows the magic and melancholy of producing a play. Here today, gone tomorrow! In the midst of post production blues, after a particularly special run of "You Can't Take It With You," Brent realized that the magic and melancholy was in that script. So he took up his "pen" and began to write about what he knows: Downeast Maine.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

There are as many perspectives on "Down East" culture, as there are "Down Easters". Every one has their opinion of where "Down East" Maine starts, and ends. Everyone has their opinion of what the most authentic pronunciation of "Ayuh" should be. And folks from away, talk about the slow pace of life here. What folks from away call a fast paced life, is businesses that don't open until 10 AM, and supper that isn't served until 9 at night. And most of em have never ever tried to plow 50 driveways in one day, or dig 2 bushels of clams with the tide chasing them.

Trying to capture the skeptical, close knit , hard working, hard playing, culture of "Downeast" Maine, while avoiding caricature, is a challenging task. Stereotypes abound. As with any earnest attempt to understand a community, the best place to start is with it's elders. Most of my stories have their roots in the 1950s. A time in American history, that seems to me, to represent something of a portal from the 19th to the 21st century.

—**Brent Hutchins**

Order of Scenes – Characters

HERB'S STORE

Junior (JUNIOR describes Herb's General Store, and extolls it as the perfect place to gather town gossip...)

SNOW PLOWING

Burt Bunker, Wally Wentworth (Burt and Wally sit at Herb's counter and discuss cheapskates...)

UP TO THE STORE, Pahtl

Herb Foster, Crystal, Dubba, Thelma Norwood, TommyParsons, Jr. (Crystal, the new part time cashier is overwhelmed by eccentric customers)

TURKEY TOUCHÉ

Ida Wentworth, Vida Coombs (Ida and Vida talk on the phone the day after Thanksgiving)

TOWN LAWYER

Teresa Powlakowski, Herb Foster, Sonny Hutchins, Roger Beal, Jr. (We are introduced to the new town lawyer at Herb's Store, she is from NYC, and is not having a good day.)

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Ida Wentworth, Tommy Parsons (Over to Pud's Pound and Pub, late night philosophers)

WHAT'S FOR SUPPAH?

RELIGION & POLITICS

Nellie Hitchcock, Vida Bunker, Junior (Later, still at the pub, Nellie and Vida debate, with Junior as a witness.)

GRANGE SUPPAH

Ida Wentworth, Ada Foster, Vida Coombs, Gert Hodgkins, Farnham Butler, Junior, Byron, Burt Bunker, Jasper Dunbar, Tommy Parsons, Nellie Hitchcock, Roger Beal, Thelma Norwood, Dubba, Bertha MacAlpine. (Over to the Grange Hall. We are introduced to some new characters, and Byron, a "New Comer", tries to sell raffle tickets to "Downeasters")

SONNY'S WILD RIDE

Sonny (Sabin) Hutchins (Still at the Grange Hall, Junior introduces Sonny, the special after dinner speaker. Sonny tells of harrowing adventures fighting the great fire of 1947 on Mount Desert Island.)

INTERMISSION

CLAM COMMITTEE

Farnham Butler, Herb Foster, Carol Sachsman (Back to Herb's store) Farnham and Herb are accosted by a "New Comer" with concerns about the clammers on her shore front)

AYUH LESSONS

Sonny Hutchins, Bernard Beauregard (The scene an empty warehouse. A slight departure into a farcical man off the street piece, where a "Newcomer" learns more than he bargains for.)

HONEY POT

Carol Sachsman, "Clammer" (Cappy Carter). The scene is the mud flats. Carol has come down to interview the clam harvesters on her shorefront, and she gets stuck in the mud. Works best with a slightly lower fore stage for Carol to get stuck on, so the clammer is above her. A little mud helps a lot too!)

IDES OF MARCH

Pud Hodgkins, Wally Wentworth, Roger Beal (Back to the pub, Pud delivers beers and exits, the men debate.)

IN THE WOODS

Junior (Junior comes down stage center, and does woodmen's monologue.)

UP TO THE STORE, Paht 2

Herb Foster, Ada Foster, Crystal, Bertha MacAlphine (Back to Herb's Store, A bit of foreshadowing for the upcoming Town Meeting, and Crystal gets another lesson in Socioeconomics.)

PILLOW TALK

Wally Wentworth, Junior (Back to the pub, Wally tells the world his troubles and Junior listens, and then comes down right, and bridges us into Town Meeting. The stage is transformed to Town Hall as he speaks.)

TOWN MEETIN'

Junior, Ada Foster, Bernard Beauregard, Farnham Butler, Teresa Powlakowski

From audience: Lena Johnson, Tommy Parsons, Middy Tuttle, Officer Brad Kane, Alma Hadley, Burt Bunker, Nellie Hitchcock, Roger Beal, Minnie Higgins, Jasper Dunbar, (Actors have been infiltrating the audience, and there begins a lively back and forth between the select committee and the town members)

CONCLUSION

Junior (Junior enters from the audience and freezes the Town Meeting, Lena Johnson shouts one last line, black out, lights up for Juniors coda.

CURTAIN

ACT ONE

JUNIOR'S INTRODUCTION

JUNIOR: I come here tonight 'cause I like to tell stories, and my wife thought this might be a good outlet. 'Course I only tell true stories, and if you're gonna tell true stories, you can't be just a good talker, you've also got to be a good eaves dropper. And there's no better place to eaves drop than up to Herb's store.

I don't know if you've ever been up to Herb's Store, but it's one of them old fashioned General Stores, sadly enough, a disappearing breed. One half kinda devoted to hardware and home wares, one half kinda devoted to groceries, and the middle kind of a mix of both – a pound of butter here, a pound of nails there. Herb's got a lot of some stuff and little bit of most everything. You walk in the door, and it's got one of them brass chimes in front of it that sounds just like the 19th century. On your right is a big cork bulletin board covered with notices, business cards, Grange suppers, Town Meetings, up-coming yard sales – all the most important information you could possibly need to get by in the town of Broad Harbor. On your left is Herb's lunch counter. The counter's where most of us working stiffs generally set, so we can get in, get fed, and get back to the grind. But it's also the perfect vantage point from which to gather in all the local gossip, specially the stool nearest the register. Surprising what folks will confess to their cashier!

Eaves dropping is my favorite occupation, but it don't pay much. I do have to work occasionally to make ends meet. My skill set is on the blue collar side if you will, and it's kinda like Herb's Store. I know a lot about some stuff, and I know a little bit about most everything. I'm what you call a Downeast Entrepreneur, which means I work for myself 'cause I ain't fit to be employed. Of course there's really no such thing as working for yourself, now is there? Not really. You're always working for somebody. If you ain't working for your boss, you're working for your customer, and if you ain't working for your customer, you're working for your wife.

Take snow plowing for an instance. You ain't self employed when you're snow plowing, and it ain't snow that complicates snow plowing either; it's people. Everyone wants to be plowed first, and nobody wants to be plowed last. And they all want to come out and rearrange their entire fleet of vehicles in the door yard, so you can plow every inch of their property, and they don't have to lift a snow shovel. Meanwhile you got 50 other driveways down the road waiting to be plowed! And some folks can be so cheap.

(JUNIOR exits as BURT enters from restroom.)

SNOW PLOWIN'

(HERB'S STORE. BURT, dressed for outdoors, sits at lunch counter, drinking coffee. WALLY enters store, brushing snow off his shoulders.)

BURT: Still comin' down out there, Wally?

WALLY: Ayuh. I've already plowed almost everything once. Looks like I might have to plow it all again before this is over.

BURT: Oh, I've already waited too long on a couple, and ain't they gonna plow hard now!

WALLY: Plow with the storm, Burt, you know that, 'specially this one. It's wicked!

BURT: I know, I know, but I got a few driveways so cheap, they cry and moan when Mumma bills out two plowin's in one storm. So I try to wait'll the end on a couple of 'em, and don't I have to pound my way in!

WALLY: Awful when folks are so cheap. Why don't you tell her to drop 'em?

BURT: I can't even get her to raise their rates, let alone drop 'em.

(Imitating wife.)

Oh forget it, Burt. 20 bucks is plenty for his driveway, and that Mrs. Farnham's on a fixed income. She can't afford 35 dollars a storm. Yes, I says, twenty bucks was plenty twenty years ago, but the price of fuel, and trucks and everything has more than doubled.

WALLY: Well, for twenty bucks, you ought to plow him twice and charge him twice. How could he be that cheap??!

BURT: The thing is, I'm pretty sure she quit chargin' him another twenty dollars even when I do plow him twice, 'cause he don't come out on his porch no more and glare at me the whole second round!

WALLY: What an old skinflint! You can't make any money that way. Why don't you put your foot down?

BURT: Oh, I'd just get the same old lecture.

(Imitating wife again.)

You've got seventy other driveways that pay us plenty enough to make up for a couple old people, and besides, Burt, he is your father!

(BLACKOUT. BURT and WALLY exit.)

UP TO THE STORE, Paht 1

(Lights up on HERB'S store again. HERB and ADA stand at Deli counter with coffees.)

ADA: I know why you hired her, Dear. I noticed the hitch in her cute little gittalong. But do you think she's...like...trainable...Dude?

(ADA kisses HERB'S head and exits. CRYSTAL enters from restroom.)

CRYSTAL: *(Looking around.)* Dude...like...what kind of store do I...like...tell people this is?

HERB: Well...it's just a store.

CRYSTAL: But like...when people come in and like ask...like...Is this like a grocery store?

Or like they'll ask, like, "Is this like a general store?" Do we like sell hardware? Like...is it like...like a diner? Like is it like a convenience store? Like...?

HERB: *(Mocking her lightly.)* Like wow daddy oh.

CRYSTAL: Huh?

HERB: Let's just call it a general store. I like that.

CRYSTAL: Dude, I'm like chill with that, if you're like chill with that, dude.

HERB: That's the scoop, Betty Boop.

CRYSTAL: Huh?

HERB: Okay. We got that settled. Can you run a cash register?

CRYSTAL: I can, Dude. I like ran one at the college cafeteria in Orono.

HERB: Good, let's just practice a little so get you used to this one. I'll be the customer. Now, let's see. I'll have a candy bar and some gum, and one of these brownies. Here, ring me up.

CRYSTAL: *(Taking the first item and looking around the counter.)* Like, Dude...where's the scanner?

HERB: Oh, there is no scanner. You have to look at the price and ring it in.

CRYSTAL: *(Picks up gum and dangles it like a bell.)* Ring it?

HERB: Punch it in on the register.

CRYSTAL: *(Looks at him.)* Punch it?

HERB: *(Pointing to cash register.)* Press the buttons.

CRYSTAL: Oh.

(Looks at register.)

Which buttons?

HERB: *(Steps in and demonstrates.)* 25 cents for the gum, 50 cents for the candy bar, and a dollar and 25 for the brownie. That's a 2 dollar sub total. Add 7% for Governor Lepage¹.

¹ or whomever is currently Governor

That's a grand total of 2 dollars and 14 cents.

(The drawer opens. HERB takes a 10 dollar bill out of his pocket.)

Now you place the bill on the register ledge and give me my change.

(HERB steps back. CRYSTAL steps up and looks puzzled.)

CRYSTAL: *(Looking at the register.)* Where's the display?

HERB: Huh?

CRYSTAL: You know, like where it like shows me the change to give back, Dude.

HERB: Don't have one. Here, let me show you. You put the ten on the ledge, and you make the change. 1 penny, one dime, 3 quarters makes 3...

(Hands her the change. CRYSTAL looks at it quizzically. Hands her bills saying:)

...2 makes 5, and 5 makes ten.

CRYSTAL: Dude, like that is sick.

HERB: Huh?

CRYSTAL: You'd be like so sick at Sudoku, Dude!

HERB: Well... I usually do crossword puzzles when I'm sick. Okay, okay.

(Looks at his watch.)

We gotta open in a couple minutes, and I gotta get to the kitchen and start the breakfast sandwiches. Just clear the register, and do the best you can. Holler if you run aground.

CRYSTAL: Huh?

HERB: If you have a problem, just shout.

(HERB exits. DUBBA enters Store and walks to the counter.)

DUBBA: Herb,IgotcramsouttinmycahmosryshuckersImakecgood fritters
makegoodchowdatoo! [Herb, I got "crams" out in my car, "mostry" shuckers, make good
fritters, make good chowder, too!]

CRYSTAL: *(Unnerved.)* Huh?

DUBBA: *(Leans over the counter.)* ItolyaIgutcramsouttinmycahufrigginnumbawhat?! [I told
you, I've got "crams" out in my car. you friggin' numb or what?]

CRYSTAL: *(Backing away in terror)* DUDE! HELP!!

(HERB runs in.)

DUBBA: HerbIgut3peckacramsouttinacahIrorredemreargoodbutIcoudtakeemhome
purgemincormealyouwant [Herb, I've got 3 pecks of "crams" out in my car. mostly shuckers. I
rolled them real good, but I can take them home and purge them with cornmeal if you want
me to.]

HERB: No, Dubba, you always roll your clams good. Never get any gritty ones from you.

(Phone rings.)

Just a minute. I'll write you a check.

(HERB steps away to speak on phone while writing check for Dubba.)

DUBBA: *(To Crystal, pointing to shelves behind her.)* Itake3packparrmarrnofirterpint Arrensbrandyonenemsigretrighertheahdeah! [I'll take 3 packs Pall Mall, no filter. A pint of Allen's brandy and one cigarette lighter, there, Deah.]

CRYSTAL: *(Looking back and forth from HERB to DUBBA.)* ...I...I...

DUBBA: *(Pointing again, speaking as fast but louder.)* 3packparrmarrnofirterpintArrensbrandy onenembicrighers! [no translation in red?]

(Looks disgustedly at her. HERB hangs up and gathers the items for DUBBA.)

HERB: Here ya go, Dubba, 3 packs of Pall Mall, no filter. A pint of Allen's Brandy, and a cigarette lighter.

(HERB rings up the purchase.)

That's 12 dollars and 15 cents.

(DUBBA hands him a twenty.)

Out of twenty. There's 85 makes 13, 2 makes 15, and 5 makes 20. Thanks, Dubba, and here's your check for the clams. Bring me more as soon as you can won't ya?

DUBBA: NotcramminmorrowMummawansgoupmahdensIgut drivershegutnolisnce! [Not "crammin" tomorrow; Mumma wants to go up to Mardens, and I've got to drive her because she's got no license.]

HERB: Probably just as well, Dubba. If Sadie had a license, she'da jumped in the car and left ya years ago!

DUBBA: *(Looks right at CRYSTAL.)* Ha,ha,ha.
(cough,cough)

Shereftafootbeforebutshealwayscomesbackcuzshe'stoogoldarnuglytgetaridehahaha.

(cough,cough,cough.) [Ha,ha,ha, *(cough, cough)* She's left afoot before, but she always comes back because she's too goldarn ugly to get a ride!! ha,ha,ha *(cough,cough,cough)*]

CRYSTAL: I...I...

DUBBA: *(Talks to CRYSTAL over the counter moving to door.)* GRUNT!! Idontalktoofasdeah ulisntooslowGRUNT [I don't talk too fast deah. you listen too slow!]

(DUBBA exits laughing and coughing.)

CRYSTAL: Like...what did he say to me, Dude?

HERB: Well, first he told you that his wife had left him on foot before, but always came back because she's too darn ugly to get a ride. Then he told you that isn't so much that he talks too fast, as that you just listen too slow. Oh god, I'm probably burnin' the bacon.

(HERB exits quickly. JUNIOR enters and goes off stage to the rest room. THELMA enters wearing a hat with a band around it, holding a discount coupon. Notices new employee, Crystal, goes to the shelf, gets a box of Jiffy Jolly cake mix, brings it to the counter and begins to rummage in her purse. TOMMY enters and gets coffee.)

THELMA: Well don't that beat all, Deah. I had that coupon right in my purse.

(Rummages some more. JUNIOR reenters from rest room, gets a coffee and waits behind TOMMY.)

My stars and garters, I honestly don't know if I'm comin' or goin' anymore, Deah. I had that coupon for 50 cents off, and now don't you know I've left it home, Deah.

(More rummaging. begins to unload her purse onto the counter – books, lotion, car keys, change purse, scarf, etc.)

Now, I know I put that foolish thing in here somewhere. I've got to sort out this handbag.

(More things come out as CRYSTAL tries to keep them from falling off the counter.)

My lann, will you look at that! My best Bingo markin' pen. Now, I thought Lena Johnson stole that off the table at the Beano Hall 3 months ago, and I ain't set with her since. I just don't know how that coupon could be lost. Well, I'll go out to the car and look, Deah. It's awful bein' so old and foolish, Deah.

TOMMY: Thelma, what are you missin'?

THELMA: *(Turns to TOMMY who sees the coupon in her hat band.)* Oh, I don't know, Deah. I had a coupon in my hand bag. I know I did, and I'll be darned if I can find the cussid thing.

TOMMY: What's that stickin' out of your hat band, Thelma?

THELMA: *(Reaching up to her hat.)* What? Oh...oh my.
(She takes off hat and pulls out the coupon.)

Well there! Ain't that foolish. I put that coupon in there so it wouldn't get lost in my hand bag, and then forgot all about it! My head is just full of wool anyway, Deah.

(JASPER enters, pours himself coffee and stands in line behind TOMMY and JUNIOR. THELMA puts her hat back on and gives the coupon to CRYSTAL)

There, 50 cents off for this Jiffy Jolly Cake mix, and I need a pint of Allen's Coffee brandy.

CRYSTAL: *(Examining the coupon.)* Um...like um...this coupon is like for like Jolly John Popping corn.

(Crystal picks up the cake mix and looks at it.)

...not...um like uh, Jiffy Jolly Cake mix, Dude.

THELMA: Oh no, Deah. I can't eat popcorn, Deah. I get them kernels stuck in my partial somethin' wicked, Deah. Oh, no, Deah, that coupon's for the cake, Deah. Ayuh.

(HERB enters from the kitchen, noting the line up.)

HERB: Oh my, Thelma, you've got your whole closet piled up on my counter. Can't find your change purse again?

THELMA: Oh no, Deah. I thought I lost that coupon for that Jiffy Jolly Cake mix there, Deah, but it was in my hat band there all along. Ayuh, ain't I foolish?

HERB: That's all right, Thelma.

(Looks at line.)

Anybody need anything besides coffee?

TOMMY: No, Herb, just this coffee.

HERB: Give me a buck, Tommy. And Junior. Thanks, sorry for the delay.

(JUNIOR and TOMMY pay and exit.)

You all set there, Jasper?

JASPER: Yes, just coffee.

(Hands HERB a dollar and heads for door.)

HERB: Thanks. Now, you say you have a coupon, Thelma?

CRYSTAL: *(Stage whisper.)* Um...Dude, it's for like Jolly John Popcorn, Dude, not Jiffy Jolly cake mix, but like, she doesn't get it, Dude.

(Gives the coupon to HERB, who examines it.)

HERB: *(Stage whisper to CRYSTAL.)* Good that you showed me.

(To THELMA.)

Well, there, 50 cents off the cake mix, makes it 75 cents. Let's get your life back in your satchel, Thelma, and we'll ring you up so you can get home and make that cake for Harvard.

THELMA: Oh no, Deah. I only bake from scratch. I just couldn't bare to see that 50 cent coupon go to waste!

(BLACKOUT. HERB, CRYSTAL, THELMA exit. Scene changes to 2 small set pieces.)

TURKEY TOUCHÉ

(Lights up on two separate units R & L, each with table, chair & phone. IDA and VIDA are talking to each other.)

IDA: Mornin, Vida.

VIDA: Mornin, Ida, you got through Turkey Day alright?

IDA: Ayuh. we...

VIDA: Sorry we didn't make it by in the afternoon, Deah, but we had such a hustle bustle, and by the time we got it cleared away, Burt was asleep in his Lazy Boy, and I don't think the trumpets at Jericho could've roused him. It's that tricky thane they put in the turkey, I guess.

IDA: Well that's alright, Deah. We had 18 set down by noon.

VIDA: We had 19, and it wasn't ready until 1. I had a 22 pound bird...

IDA: Mine was 23...just to be sure of seconds for everyone and some leftovers for Wally. I was up at 4 and had it in the oven by 5, ayuh. And I say I had 18 set down by noon. 'Course Thelma and Harvard came with their granddaughter at half past, so...

VIDA: I cooked a twelve pound pork roast as well. Tommy and his wife and the kids came by for dessert. Tommy had to have some of my pork. He just loves it, and she ruins everything she cooks anyway. Then we had five kinds of pie...

IDA: We had 6. Blueberry, lemon meringue, banana cream, apple, pumpkin, and strawberry rhubarb. Oh and Thelma brought a pecan, so I guess that makes 7.

VIDA: I made a layer cake as well... Everybody loves my layer cake...

IDA: I had a sheet cake. 'Course I made it from scratch...you use that Jiffy Jolly Mix from up to Herb's Store, don't ya, Deah?

VIDA: Then we finished with hand-churned Neapolitan ice cream and brandied peaches.

IDA: Well, after turkey, stuffing, home made cranberry sauce, pickled beets, whipped potatoes, sweet potato pie, turnip, squash, three bean salad, peas, carrots, two lemon lime jello molds, seven pies and homemade cake, all we had room for was coffee... and of course my thin mints, I make by hand. Oh, and did I mention my crabmeat appetizer...did I?

VIDA: We had lobster stew. Burt won't abide three bean salad. I always make a green one. Of course I added broccoli in cheese sauce to the basics *you* mentioned, just for a little more variety.

IDA: Well...oh there's my call waitin'. I bet it's Thelma. She wanted the recipe for my HOME MADE cake. I better answer it.

VIDA: Oh I'll let you go then, Deah. Bye now.

(IDA and VIDA hang up.)

IDA: *(To herself, holding down button on phone.)* She adds broccoli and cheese sauce to the basics, for more variety...humph!

VIDA: *(To herself, holding down button on phone.)* I cook a 22 pound bird, so she says hers was 23 pounds. I've never even heard of a 23 pound bird.

IDA: And if she really had lobster stew for an appetizer. I'm a...

VIDA: And if she had crabmeat appetizers, I'm a...

IDA: Oh, hi, Thelma.

VIDA: Hi, Gert.

IDA & VIDA: You got through Turkey Day alright?

IDA: *(Simultaneously with VIDA)* Well, we had 23 all together...

VIDA: *(Simultaneously with IDA)* Well, we had 23 all together...

(BLACKOUT. IDA and VIDA exit. Their units are struck.)

TOWN LAWYER

(Scene opens at HERB'S Store. HERB is at the register. ROGER and SONNY are seated at SL lunch counter. TERESA POLAKOWSKI, enters. She is well dressed, but mussed up. One of her high heels is broken, so she walks with a wobble. Her hands are grimy and she's visibly shaken.)

TERESA: I...I...is there a restroom where I can clean up? I...I just had to change my own tire in the sleet coming down out there! My phone wouldn't work. Is there no reception in this town?

HERB: Well, if you drive up Ditchem Hill, oh about halfway, you can sometimes get reception off the tower in High Falls. If folks want to get a hold of each other around here though, most of em generally call each other on their real phones, or just stop over.

TERESA: Oh, I see.

HERB: No one stopped to help you?

TERESA: The only person that came by was a little old lady driving a beat up pick-up truck with a rifle mounted over the seat. She rolled down her window, spit some hideous brown liquid in my direction, and said that if I took one step off the roadway, I'd be on her land, and she'd set her dogs on me. Then she drove off. I tell you, she was quite frightening.

HERB: Oh, that was Middy Tuttle, she takes a chaw now and then. You must a been out on Hard Knocks Road.

(TERESA nods. HERB waves dismissively.)

You had nothing to fear from Middy Tuttle...long as you didn't step off the roadway.

(In renewed fear, TERESA puts her grimy hand to her lips, spits, then wipes her mouth with her sleeve disgustedly, and looks around, with her hands held up. HERB points to restroom.)

That way, Deah. Holler if ya need any more towels or anything.

(to ROGER and SONNY.)

You folks need anything before I go out in the kitchen?

SONNY & ROGER: All set Herb!

(BOTH stare hard at TERESA.)

TERESA: *(Flustered, moves toward restroom, catches SONNY and ROGER's stare. Looks behind her to see what it might be. Realizes it is she.)* Hi, Teresa Polakowski...um, excuse me. Ah, nice to meet you. I mean I...um, heh heh.

(ROGER and SONNY nod at her without speaking. TERESA hurries into restroom.)

ROGER: *(Looks after TERESA, then back to SONNY.)* Kind of an odd time of year for tourists, don't ya think?

SONNY: Oh, she's not a tourist. That's the new town lawyer.

ROGER: You don't say!

SONNY: Ayuh, there's an article in this week's Broad Harbor Times. It's got a picture of her shakin' Govenor Lepage's² hand at some big Lawyer conference up to the State House down to Augusta, and everything.

ROGER: Gorry, where's she from?

SONNY: Oh, New York...or some place like that. Article said that they hired a lawyer from away this time to avoid any *APPARENT* conflict of interest like the one that forced Dink Dilbert's boy to resign.

ROGER: Didn't Dink Jr. get caught tamperin' with vehicle titles for his father's dealership, up ta High Falls there?

SONNY: *APPARENTLY!*

ROGER: *(Shaking his head.)* The Broad Harbor town government is startin' to look more like the United Nations than the United States, Sonny.

SONNY: Ayuh, ayuh,

ROGER: *(Looks to see that HERB is still in the kitchen and lowers voice.)* Ada Foster is the only one left on town council that was born and raised in Maine, and she acts more like a summer person every day.

SONNY: They'll turn it all into one big megalopolis 'fore they're done.

ROGER: Megawhopolis?

SONNY: Oh, it's when you cram a whole bunch of Big cities right in a row.

(Gesturing in the general direction)

Kinda like Bangor/Brewer there.

ROGER: God forbid!

SONNY: *(Jerking his thumb towards the restroom.)* With a sharp cookie out of state lawyer they'll do it all behind the scenes, Roger.

(TERESA re-enters from the restroom, with soiled jacket or raincoat over one arm and a broken toilet paper holder in hand. Wobbles past ROGER and SONNY, who glare at her.)

TERESA: *(Apologetically.)* I broke the toilet paper holder. I'm not having a very good morning...heh, heh.

(Wobbles up to the counter, as HERB re-enters.)

I'm dreadfully sorry; I've broken the tissue holder, and made a mess of your restroom. I'll pay you for the damage.

HERB: That's alright, Deah. I'll clean it up.

² current Governor's name can be substituted

(HERB takes the broken paper holder from her.)

Don't you worry about it. Are you all set now?

TERESA: *(Looking at her watch.)* Oh, jeeze, at this rate I'm not going to have time to shop later.

(Looks around at the goods and points.)

A can of cat food,

(Puts the broken shoe heel on counter.)

some super glue, a bottle of aspirin, and...

(HERB retrieves these items and places them on the counter. Teresa glances at ROGER and SONNY, then leans across the counter to whispers something to HERB. JUNIOR enters, picks up a box of Jiffy Jolly Cake mix, approaches the counter and stands behind TERESA.)

HERB: *(Loudly, putting the bottle in the bag.)* AND A PINT OF ALLEN'S COFFEE BRANDY IN A BROWN PAPER BAG.

(This gets the attention of ROGER and SONNY.)

TERESA: *(Catches SONNY and ROGER's stare.)* Heh, heh. It's for when I get home, you see.

I... I've got this recipe. I'm going to get baked...

(Sees cake mix in JUNIOR's arms and snatches it to show everyone.)

I... I mean I'm going to bake a cake!!

(Double take between HERB, SONNY, and ROGER, who then look knowingly at the audience. BLACKOUT.)

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

(PUD'S POUND. Off Stage noises of celebration. Off Stage voices: "3...2...1... Happy New Year!" IDA and TOMMY enter with cocktails in one hand, confetti streamers in the other. They are tipsy, toss streamers & toast each other.)

IDA: So Tommy, ya got any New Year's resolutions?

TOMMY: Oh, god no, Ida. My wife's got enough for both of us.

IDA: Ayuh?

TOMMY: Ayuh.

IDA: What's she resolved?

TOMMY: Well, let's see...Less eatin', less drinkin', less smokin', less TV, less swearin' about her relatives...

IDA: Holy Mackerel! She got anything she wants more of?

TOMMY: *(Gives IDA a look.)* Ayuh...more work, more exercise, more flowers, more patience with her relatives...

IDA: That's the trouble with New Year's resolutions. Folks just try to do too much.

TOMMY: I wish you'd tell my wife that.

IDA: Folks oughta pick one thing they've wanted to accomplish, something within reason, and strive to do it before the year's out. Gives ya a much better chance of success...ayuh.

TOMMY: Is that what you do?

IDA: Ayuh. And I'll say that I've most always been able to accomplish my yearly resolution, and it gives me a sense of fulfillment, and a certain personal pride.

TOMMY: Well, I must say I'm impressed, Ida. I never put much stock in the whole New Year's resolution thing myself, but you seem to have the right angle on it.

IDA: Ayuh. It's really helped me reach...and remember...the milestones of life.

TOMMY: So...what's your resolution this year, Ida?

IDA: Thought I'd take a ride up to Milbridge.

(BLACKOUT. IDA and TOMMY strike props and exit.)

WHAT'S? FOR SUPPAH

(PUD'S POUND. PUD enters with printed menu, sits at table to study menu.)

PUD: *(Calls loudly.)* Gert!

(GERT enters.)

I been a bug picker my whole life. And I've run a pound and restaurant for more than 30 years. I've cooked about every livin' thing that swims in the ocean or crawls along the bottom, from whore's eggs to hen clams. And I've done my best to cater to every culinary trend that's come down the pike.

GERT: Well, it's good to keep up with the times, Pud.

PUD: When them nuts stahted cummin' in askin' for vegetarian dishes, back in the seventies, I shook my head, but I put them nut burgers on the menu, didn't I?

GERT: Yes, Pud, you did, and I was proud of ya.

PUD: 'Course next it was heart healthy, everything had to be fat free. "You got any fat free butter I can dip my clams in," they'd ask?

GERT: I know, Pud, I know.

PUD: Then, it was that Atkins diet there. The nuts were comin' in, askin' for nut burgers with no buns...and no chips. My inventory was gettin lopsided.

GERT: Well, that fad seems to have passed, somewhat any way.

PUD: Then it was sugar free, wheat free, gluten free, free range. I had so much free food on the menu, I had to raise my prices.

GERT: You've weathered it all well, Pud.

PUD: (*Picking up a menu and showing to her.*) Look here, Gert, at the latest breakfast special: Free range egg white omelette, antioxidant smoothie, Greek yogurt, and a cup of chai tea.

GERT: There is no doubt in the world, Pud, that you have the most progressive menu in down east Maine.

PUD: And gourmet too, Gert.

(Picks up the dinner menu.)

Look at this dinner menu: Pan shired Chipotle squid in a balsamic reduction, with sun dried tomato and cilantro garnish, served with a lentil and sprout salad.

GERT: And gourmet too, Pud.

PUD: And I done it all for you, Gert.

GERT: Now, Pud.

PUD: It's true, Gert. I knew you wasn't gonna be one a them traditional Maine wives, satisfied with just a regular quiet life of clam rolls and cole slaw, cheese burger baskets and root beer floats. I knew you wanted more than that from life, Gert, and I done my best to provide it.

GERT: Yes, you have, Pud.

PUD: But this is much too much, Gertrude.

GERT: But, Pud...

PUD: Some things are wrong, Gert, just wrong, and this is one of em.

GERT: But it's all the trend, Pud.

PUD: So's bath salts, but I aint puttin' em on the menu!

GERT: Well, it took twenty-five years, but I guess the honeymoon's over.

PUD: I'm sorry, Gert, I love ya, but there ain't no way on God's green earth I'm gonna defile the sacred Maine tradition of macaroni and cheese, by puttin' lobsters in it!

(BLACKOUT.)

RELIGION AND POLITCS

(PUD'S POUND. VIDA and NELLIE are seated. GERT brings them beers & leaves.)

VIDA: Well, that's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard...

NELLIE: I know, I know. It's not my notion, Vida. I'm just repeatin' what I was told. Don't crucify the messenger.

VIDA: But how could he, of all people, be so ignorant?

NELLIE: To tell you the truth, Vida, he made quite a lot of sense.

VIDA: How can you say he made sense, Nellie? He is goin' against hard, cold facts.

NELLIE: Accordin' to him, it ain't that simple, Vida.

VIDA: I can see he's not gonna last very long.

NELLIE: Oh, he's young, Vida. Couldn't be more than 45...and, Vida, he's a bachelor.

VIDA: Well, that helps explain it. Probably got long hair, too, don't he?

NELLIE: He's bald.

VIDA: Same thing, Nellie. It's not natural. I coulda' guessed as much – all new age mumbo jumbo, goin against the grain. Tryin' to reinterpret the fundamental underpinnin's of history itself. Probably wears one a them peace symbols on a necklace. They're a sign of Satan you know, Nellie.

NELLIE: You don't think it's quite all that bad, Vida, do you?

(JUNIOR enters.)

VIDA: Look, Nellie. I don't even go to church, and if I know the Scripture better than the new minister...

(Notices JUNIOR standing there.)

... it's pathetic. Junior, have you heard what that new hippie minister said in church last Sunday?

JUNIOR: No, Vida, what'd he say?

VIDA: He claims Jesus ain't a Republican!

(BLACKOUT.)

JUNIOR'S INTRO TO GRANGE SUPPAH

(JUNIOR moves from PUB'S POUND to center stage.)

JUNIOR: Oh my soul and body, religion and politics. Now how did we get on that subject?

That's how it works though sometimes, ain't it? You start on one track...then you fork off... then you fork off again. You fork off here, and you fork off there – here a fork, there a fork. Fore very much further, you've forgot where you first forked off! Oh, now I remember. I was just about to tell you a story that I overheard, settin' at the lunch counter up to Herb's Store, wasn't I? I guess I got side tracked.

(Looks at pocket watch.)

Oh gorry, I guess that tale will have to wait for another time, There is a Grange Suppah goin' on over to Broad Harbor, and I've got raffle tickets for my grand- daughter's 4-H club in my truck, and if I don't drop em off before it starts, my wife will be some ugly when she finds out! Say, you want to come along? It's only six dollars a plate, and that includes pie and coffee after!

(JUNIOR checks his wallet and exits beckoning the audience to follow. Stage Crew sets up backdrop and chairs Center Stage for Grange. ADA enters and sits.)

GRANGE SUPPAH

(GRANGE HALL. ADA sitting at a Grange table, organizing papers. IDA enters.)

ADA: Ida.

IDA: Ada.

(IDA sits with a chair between herself and ADA. VIDA enters.)

ADA: Vida

VIDA : Ada.

IDA: Vida.

(Gert enters with pies.)

GERT: *(Nodding to each.)* Ada, Ida, Vida.

ADA,IDA,VIDA: Gert!

(Gert walks past the table, turns to speak, but stops as FARNHAM enters.)

FARNHAM: *(Nodding to each.)* Ada, Ida, Vida...Gert!

ADA,IDA,VIDA,GERT: Farnham.

GERT: *(Showing her pies.)* I've brought Pud's organic pecan pies for the last Grange supper till Spring.

ADA: Oh, haven't you heard? High Falls just installed a new furnace, so they'll be having suppers year round. My daughter's a member, and she said....

VIDA: Well, It's all different up ta High Falls anyway now, ain't it?

(Exchanges knowing glances with IDA.)

IDA: Mostly folks from away up there now...I hear.

ADA: *(Getting a bit annoyed.)* My daughter is a member and....

VIDA: ‘Course your daughter married a fella from away, didn’t she. Ada?

GERT: Her daughter married my nephew, and his parents’ were both born and raised in Broad Harbor. You know that, Vida.

VIDA: Ayuh.

(Again exchanges glances with IDA.)

IDA: They don’t even call it the High Falls Grange no More, do they, Vida?

VIDA: Oh no, no...they renamed it some kinda hippie type name...um...

ADA: They renamed it the New Age Community Center, if you must know.

IDA: *(Nodding emphatically.)* Ayuh, ayuh, that’s it. Ha,ha,ha!

VIDA: Nothin’ but tofu potlucks and *organic* gardenin’ up there now!

(Points to Gert’s organic pies for emphasis.)

GERT: WELL!

VIDA: None of the old traditions

IDA: New Age *Communist* center more like it!

ADA: Now you listen here!

VIDA: All that organic gardenin’ foolishness...it’s not natural!

(FARNHAM showing growing concern as this conflict escalates, now steps into the breach.)

FARNHAM: I got my chickens to eat rhubarb.

(WOMEN stop abruptly.)

VIDA: DOW!

GERT & ADA: You don’t say!

IDA: They always said chickens won’t eat rhubarb.

FARNHAM: I know it, I know it.

ADA: How’d you do it?

FARNHAM: I cooked it!

GERT,ADA,IDA,VIDA: GORRY!

FARNHAM: I never could get em to eat it, and I got so much of the cussid stuff, that I can’t get it mowed fast enough to keep my wife from makin’ strawberry rhubarb pies out of it.

GERT: You don’t like strawberry rhubarb pie?

FARNHAM: Oh, I’ll eat a piece...and sure as you’re born, I’ll get a strawberry seed stuck in my partial... practically have to make a dentist appointment.

(Everyone puts a finger to his/her teeth, nodding.)

GERT: Well, I better get these pies down stairs.

ADA: And I've got more gravy to make.

(ADA and GERT start off to kitchen.)

VIDA: *(Whispering loudly.)* I better go supervise the gravy. She'll have it full of lumps again.

(ADA turns, makes a face, exits. VIDA follows her out, FARNHAM looks at audience, shakes his head, shrugs his shoulders, and turns back to the bulletin board. JUNIOR enters.)

FARNHAM: There you are, Junior. Your wife was just in here askin' if you dropped off them 4-H tickets yet.

JUNIOR: Oh deah, I was afraid of that.

(Sets down the box of tickets on Farnham's desk.)

I got talkin' to some awful nice folks up to High Falls and kinda lost track of time. Did she say she was comin' back?

FARNHAM: I don't know. Ida, what did Junior's wife say before she left?

IDA: Oh my stars and garters, I can't repeat all off it, Deah, but she did say you better high tail it home with two suppahs... and extra pie, 'cause you won't be gettin' dessert from her until further notice.

(IDA picks up a big grocery bag, hands it to JUNIOR.)

Here you go, Junior. We knew you'd be right along, so Ada put it all up for ya. There's a strawberry rhubarb pie on top so be careful.

(Smiles sympathetically at JUNIOR.)

We know it's your favorite!

JUNIOR: *(Sets down the bag; gets out his wallet.)* How much do I owe ya, Ida?

IDA: 12 dollars for the suppahs, and 8 for the pie.

JUNIOR: *(Hands IDA the money and grabs the bag.)* Thanks, Ida. I better shake a leg.
(Exits.)

FARNHAM: Now who are we going to get to sell these 4-H tickets?

IDA: How 'bout that Bernie there? That new fella, from away.

FARNHAM: He talks like a man with a paper asshole.

IDA: Could be just right for the job. Here he comes.

(BYRON enters.)

BYRON: Say...my first Grange supper! I always wanted to do this: the provincial bucolic community meal, sumptuous aromas wafting on the afternoon breeze!

IDA: You talk like a man with a...

BYRON: *(Interrupting.)* Plan!? That's me, a man with a plan!

FARNHAM: Ayuh. Do you think you could sell some of these raffle tickets for the 4-H club?

BYRON: Oh, sure, I could sell ice to Eskimos!

FARNHAM: Well, you pull that desk right over here, Brian, and see if you can't sell raffle tickets to Downeasters.

BYRON: It's Byron.

(Pulls available desk over and sits.)

IDA: Here comes some Downeastahs now.

(BURT enters.)

Burt, how many?

BURT: How many people you see standin' here, Ida?

IDA: I see you, but I know Eunice is here somewhere, Burt. I know better than that!

BURT: She's still fahhtin' around out in the car. She can buy her own dinner.

IDA: Now, Burt, just give me 12 dollars and go eat. There's people waitin' in line!

BURT: Here's 15.

IDA: Here's 3 back, now git.

BYRON: *(Trying to stop BURT.)* Say, want to buy a raffle ticket?

BURT: *(Putting the 3 dollars in his wallet.)* Ain't got a dollar.

(BURT exits down to kitchen. JASPER enters.)

IDA: Hello, Jaspah. How many?

JASPER: Only one, Ida. Erleane's run off with John Finny, that fella that plows my driveway there. Guess I won't be buyin' her supper no more.

IDA: *And* you gotta find a new fella to plow your driveway.

JASPER: God no, Deah. John's the only one I ever had that don't get gravel all over the lawn.

(Starts to exit to kitchen.)

BYRON: Would you like to buy a raffle ticket, Sir? It's for the 4-H club!

JASPER: What can I win?

BYRON: *(Looking closely at a ticket.)* A....a half a cow!

JASPER: Half a cow?

(Morosely.)

No... my wife left me, and she did all the cookin'...

(Brightening.)

Ain't you got a cord of wood or somethin'?

BYRON: *(Looks again at the ticket.)* No, Sir. Just a half a cow.

JASPER: I'm too broken hearted to cook. Besides, my freezer's so full of TV dinners now it wouldn't hold half a cow.

(Exits to kitchen.)

BYRON: Poor fellow. Poor fellow. Gosh this ticket selling gives me an appetite. I can't wait for lunch!

IDA: How many raffle tickets you sold so far, Brian?

BYRON: It's Byron...uh let's see...um, none!

IDA: I thought you sold Ice to Eskimos.

BYRON: Downeasters are different than Eskimos.

FARNHAM: Ayuh.

BYRON: *(Sniffing the air.)* But it'll be well worth the effort by the smell of that turkey dinner though...mmm!

(TOMMY enters.)

TOMMY: I see the parkin' lot's fillin' up, Ida. Any turkey left for me?

IDA: If you give me 6 dollars, Tommy, you can go down and find out!

TOMMY: Well I only got 5 dollars, Ida, but I got some returnables in the truck, probably make up the difference!

FARNHAM: Can't accept returnables.

IDA: Will you quit foolin' and give me 6 dollars, Tommy? God knows you got enough money to burn a wet elephant.

TOMMY: *(Pulls out his money.)* There ya go, Ida.

(Takes ticket and moves on.)

BYRON: *(Jumping out in front of TOMMY.)* Sir, I would accept returnables for a raffle ticket!

TOMMY: What can I win?

BYRON: Half a cow.

TOMMY: Half a cow? Which half?

BYRON: Excuse me?

TOMMY: Is it the left half or the right half?

BYRON: *(Looking closely at ticket.)* Uh...it doesn't say. Why would it matter?

TOMMY: *(Glancing at FARNHAM.)* Well you see, most cows are right hoofed, and will lay on their right side, and that makes the meat tough on that side, but left hoofed cows will lay on their left side, makin' the meat tough on that side. So, if it's a right hoofed cow, I'd want the left side, whereas if it's a left hoofed cow, I'd want the right side.

BYRON: Ohh...kay.

TOMMY: You find out, and I'll get my returnables after dinner!

(Exits to kitchen.)

BYRON: *(Studying the ticket again.)* Has he really got returnables in his truck?

IDA: Hard to tell with Tommy Parsons, Deah. He sprinkles the truth in just often enough to keep ya guessin'.

BYRON: Gosh, I'm hungry.

(NELLIE enters.)

IDA: Hello, Nellie. How many?

NELLIE: Only one, Ida. Ralph's up to camp.

IDA: 6 dollars.

(NELLIE pays, takes ticket and moves on.)

BYRON: Would you like to buy a raffle ticket, ma'am? It's for the 4-H club.

NELLIE: What can I win?

BYRON: Half a cow!

NELLIE: Half a cow! Oh, my soul and body. I don't know what I'd do with half a cow. It's just my husband and me, Deah, and he can't digest beef. Ain't there an afghan or somethin'?

BYRON: No, ma'm, just half a cow.

NELLIE: Oh, no, Deah. It would take me 5 years to eat half a cow.

(NELLIE exits through to kitchen as ROGER enters and hands IDA \$6.)

ROGER: Thanks, Ida.

(Takes ticket and starts through.)

BYRON: Sir, may I interest you in the chance to win a 1/2 a cow? I'm not sure which half, but it's only 1 dollar!

ROGER: Last time I bought 1/2 a cow, it kept fallin' over. I guess I'm all set with that!

(Exits through. THELMA enters, walks to IDA's desk, plops giant pocketbook on the desk and begins to scrounge in it. Reading glasses are propped on her head.)

THELMA: I just can't find my readin' glasses, Ida. I know I put em in my bag, but I can't find the cussid things in here.

(Continues scrounging through her bag.)

My soul and body, I've got to sort out this hooraw's nest. Oh my, would you look at that, Ida?

(Holds up a ticket and squints at it.)

I think this is my ticket stub from the 4-H Raffle last Grange supper, but I can't tell without my readers. I know I had the winnin' number, and they had the nicest afghan.

(Looks in her bag again.)

Now where are my glasses!

FARNHAM: Thelma, what's that on your head, Deah?

THELMA: *(Reaching up.)* Oh, my gawd...well there! Ain't that foolish! I put em up there, so I wouldn't lose em, hee hee hee!

(She puts them on and looks at the old 4-H ticket.)

Yesuh, that ticket has been in my purse all this time, and I was sure Ada Foster threw it out when she was cleanin' off the table. Guess it's too late now.

(IDA nods.)

Now where is my billfold?

(Looks back in her bag.)

I'll have to go out and check the car.

(THELMA exits as DUBBA enters.)

DUBBA: Ida! bindowncramminupJordnrivahdug5peckn'umsumungry! [I've been down "cramming", up Jordan River. Dug 5 peck and I'm some hungry.]

IDA: That's good, Dubba, pick out the shuckers, and I'll make fritters. Where's Sadie?

DUBBA: mummacound'tcumcuzshe'satthebeutipahla,she'llbethereallday; justliketryin'tsalvagethewreckoftheHessprissanywayhahahacoughcoughcough [Mumma couldn't come, because she is at the beauty parlor, she'll be there all day. It's just like trying to salvage the wreck of the Hesperus anyway. Ha, ha, ha, cough, cough, cough.]

(Continues to walk through.)

BYRON: Sir, could I interest you...

DUBBA: *(Without breaking stride.)* Grunt!
(Exits through to kitchen.)

BYRON: *(Bemused and amused.)* What all was it you all just said just now?

IDA: Dubba just said that he dug 5 pecks of clams down to Jordan River and he's some hungry. I told him to bring me the big ones and I would make clam cakes with them. He told me his wife was at the hairdressers. Then he told *you*, he didn't have a dollar for a raffle ticket 'cause he don't believe in gambling.

BYRON: Oh.

(BERTHA enters.)

BERTHA: *(Shouting.)* IDA, DEAH, I'D LIKE A TICKET FOR LUNCH, DEAH, AND I NEED ONE TO GO, DEAH. MOSES COULDN'T PRY PERCY AWAY FROM HIS RED SOX GAME ! GOD I HOPE THEY WIN, HE'LL BE JUST LIKE A BEAR ALL WEEKEND IF THEY DON'T!!

IDA: My stars and garters, Bertha, I'm not deaf, Deah, you are. Is your hearin' aid workin'?

BERTHA: *(Nodding.)* THAT'S GOOD, DEAH, THAT'S GOOD, AYUH!

IDA: *(Continuing, loudly.)* That's twelve dollars, Bertha. Now this yellow ticket's for your supper, and when they bring your pie, you give em this red ticket, and they'll make up Percy's so's it'll still be hot when you get it home!

BERTHA: AYUH, THANK YOU, DEAH!

(To FARNHAM as she starts through.)

FARNHAM, DEAR, CAN YOU PUT PERCY'S DINNER UP BEFORE I GO DEAH, SO IT'LL BE HOT WHEN I GET IT HOME?

FARNHAM: (*IDA tries again to explain, but FARNHAM holds up his hand.*) Yes, Bertha, I will. Give me that red ticket. I'll take care of it.

BERTHA: GOOD DEAH. WHAT'S THIS RED TICKET FOR?

FARNHAM: (*Shouting.*) That's okay, Bertha. I'll take care of PERCY!
(*Waves ticket to show her.*)

It's Percy's!

BERTHA: THAT'S ALRIGHT DEAH. IF THERE'S NOT ENOUGH FOR PERCY, I'LL FEED HIM BEANS...AYUH!

BYRON: (*Loudly.*) Ma'am would you like a raffle ticket? One dollar!
(*Holds up ticket in one hand and shows one finger with the other, to indicate one dollar.*)

BERTHA: YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEAK UP, DEAH. THE BACK GROUND NOISE AT THE SUPPER MAKES IT HARD TO UNDERSTAND FOLKS WITH MY HEARIN' AIDS IN, SO I LEAVE EM TO HOME.

BYRON: (*Not giving up.*) ONE TICKET, ONE DOLLAR! YOU CAN WIN 1/2 OF ONE COW!!

BERTHA: OH, A RAFFLE, IS IT? WHAT CAN I WIN DEAH?

BYRON: (*Cupping his hands around his mouth.*) HALF OF ONE COW!!

BERTHA: A HALF TON PLOW? OH, OH NO DEAH, WE'D HAVE LITTLE USE FOR A PLOW, DEAH. WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A TRUCK, DEAH.
(*Starts through to kitchen.*)

IDA: (*Stopping Byron from trying again.*) Bernie Deah. Bertha lives in senior housin'. She ain't got room for a plow...or a cow!

FARNHAM: (*To BYRON, with a chuckle.*) You go on and get your lunch, Brownie. I'll help Ida finish up here.

BYRON: It's...No, no, I have to sell at least one ticket before I give up.
(*ADA enters from kitchen.*)

ADA: Just one left!

FARNHAM: (*Holding up red ticket.*) Dinnah-To-Go for Percy MacAlpine.

ADA: Well, that's it then. Percy gets the last dinner. We cooked six turkeys, all the trimmings and 22 pies, and they *ATE EVERY BIT!*

BYRON: But it's only ten of noon and the sign outside says noon until two!

ADA: Well, yes, Deah. But everyone knows you had better get here by 11:30 or there won't be anything left.

(*BLACKOUT. BYRON exits. ADA and IDA move tables and chairs off. FARNHAM brings out podium, places it Center and exits. JUNIOR enters.*)

JUNIOR: Well, I hope you folks got enough turkey! The pies are all gone, but I think there's some coffee left, if anyone needs some more. Now everyone settle in, 'cause we've got an after dinner speaker for you...with a personal account of the great fire over to The Island. Let's have a hand for Broad Harbor's very own, Sabin Hodgkins.

(Claps and exits as SONNY enters and takes Center Stage behind podium.)

SABIN'S WILD RIDE

SONNY: Good evening, folks. My name is Sabin Hutchins, but my friends mostly just call me Sonny. I was asked if I might speak this afternoon on the great fire of 19 and 47. I wrote it down as best as I can recall. With your leave, I'll read it to you now.

I was born and raised in Southwest Harbor over on Mount Desert Island. 'Course we all know that Bar Harbor's the most famous town on The Island, but I never had much use for it. Too doggone much traffic if you ask me. I did though spend a fair amount of time over there during the time of the great fire. The fire started on a bone dry day in October up ta Dolliver's dump on the Crooked Road, about half way between Tibbet's Corner and Wicked Ville. They put it out once, but I guess the peat in the bog next to the dump was still burnin' under ground, and she started poppin' up all over the place again, and the wind picked up and away she roared. Burned almost 20 thousand acres on the island, and countless homes and businesses. I have to tell ya, folks, it broke my heart.

'Course as far as my wife was concerned the whole business was a conspiracy concocted so's I could go over to Bar Harbor and rescue damsels in distress. It didn't help none that about the third day I was over there, me and Putt Burn's was luggin' a chest of drawers down about half mile of staircase in some rich lady's ocean front mansion down on lower Main Street. I was on the bottom end, and there must a' been a bottle of ohdee cologne left in the top drawer, and it spilled and droodled right down the sleeve of my shirt. I smelled like a French Hen House for a week. And didn't I have to do some fancy tap dancin' on my kitchen floor tryin' to explain it to my wife when I got home. She even called Eva Burns on the phone so's they could grill Putt to find out if I was tellin' the truth. I'm not sure they ever believed us anyway. And didn't I have to put up with some ribbin' from Putt.

Be that as it may, I'd have to say that my most memorable related adventure didn't even happen in Bar Harbor. It happened in Somesville. I was headed home to Southwest after

lugging' an Indian tank all day in Bar Harbor putting out spot fires on Strawberry Hill. An Indian tank is a big heavy metal back pack full of flame retardant, and it's got a hose coming off it with kinda like a bicycle pump on the end that squirts out liquid when you slide it back and forth. We'd go around through the burn over searching out spot fires and smoldering stumps and soak em down and dig em out to prevent blown' cinders, and reduce underground burning, which was a constant danger. It was unglorious, sweaty, grimy, gritty work. After a long day of that detail I headed home the 20 or so miles to Southwest Harbor. I got to Somesville, which is about half way, and you could still see a thick haze of smoke in the air even that far from the fire. 'Course the wind had shifted and was blowin' it that way. I passed through the village proper and out on to the main drag towards Southwest, and then, through the haze up ahead, I see a hoss and hay rake going hell bent for election right down the middle of the road. The only thing missing was the pilot.

No doubt that hoss had got a whiff of the smoke when it shifted, panicked, and bolted, leavin' her owner on his back in a field somewhere with a knot on his head no doubt. Animals know that smoke smell instinctively, and the first thing a hoss wants to do is head for the barn...even if that's on fire. I was in the Model T pick up, and I managed to get around beside her enough to herd her off the main drag, onto Oak Hill Road, 'cause Oak Hill ain't so busy traffic wise as the main drag, and I thought there'd be less chance of it endin' badly for the poor thing.

Well, the next thing I know that hoss started pickin' off mail boxes with the rake. A mail box would fly to the right, and the rake would jounce to the left. But by and by, we come to a stretch that was a little less populated with mail boxes and she settled down into her own lane, so I swung out to pass. Just when I got abreast of her, she decided to make a race of it and sped up. I didn't dare take my eyes off the situation for an instant to check, but I swear we was both doin' 40 miles an hour. Then I realized we was gettin' awful close to Putt Burns' place, and about half the time his brood were out playin' stick ball in the middle of the road. So I dropped her down into second gear, poured on the gas and got out in front. Then I started tappin' the brakes, tryin' to slow her down without rammin' the stupid thing into me. Little by little, I finally brought her to a halt.

I set there a minute lookin' in the rear view at her, to see if she was really all done, and thinkin' to myself, what do I do with her now? She was head down, puffin' and blowin', steam come off her in clouds. Putt Burns' place was close at hand, so I decided to walk her there to cool her off so she might not get the colic. I eased the truck onto the shoulder and got out real slow. I walked up to her and just reached out for her halter when that hoss rolled her big brown eyes at me like I was Satan himself, and struck out again. I leaped on the rake

just in time to keep from gettin' run over and grabbed the traces. I stood right up straight on the foot board, yarned on them reins with my considerable strength and pulled that hoss's chin right up under her neck. That didn't phase her a bit. She went chargin' by Putt Burns' house like one o' them Lipperzaner Stallions. Head choked up in at a high hoppin gallop, and me on my feet, haulin' back for all I was worth. I looked, and there was Putt standin' in his door yard, laughin' and waving at me He told me later that all he could think of when we went by was Ben Hur.

In about another 1/4 mile, she run out o' steam, slowed to a trot, then down to a walk. And then, all at once, she turned hard left, crossed the road and leaped the gully into an apple orchard, the rake and me flappin along behind. Well, that rake had air filled tires, and it bounced about 8 feet into the sky when we crossed the gully, and I come down with a ka-thump on the seat. Before I could recover, that hoss picked out two apple trees that were just far enough apart for her purposes and shot between em. Everything fit but the wheels. The traces parted with a resounding snap. I flew over the shackle bar, tukus over teapot, landed in a heap and watched that hoss tear across the orchard and out of sight. I picked myself up, limped back to my truck and headed home. When I got there, sure enough my wife was standin' in the doorway, and she weren't happy." Eva Burns just called," she growled. "Said Putt saw you down by their place, joy ridin' with some filly, while your supper's gettin' cold!"

(BLACKOUT.)

INTERMISSION

25 pages in ACT TWO