

ACT 1SCENE 1

Lights up on the full ensemble of actors. ETHAN, a strong young man of wavering optimism, stands beside a table. He wears a backpack and carries a guitar. A BUS STATION ATTENDANT sits behind this table. The rest of the ensemble is gathered upstage. They sing **Prologue** together, as a chorus.

Prologue (#1 NEW)

ENSEMBLE

WHEN THIS STORY ENDS,
THERE WILL BE LIGHT
THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCE

ETHAN

What do you have scheduled to leave in the next half hour?

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

Nothing scheduled to leave from here. Buses don't usually make stops here between midnight and 5AM.

ENSEMBLE

THE WAY FROM HERE TO THERE
IT IS NOT LINEAR;
THERE'S NO CONTINUUM.

Ethan begins to turn away.

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

But you're in luck because the 11:00 bus to Stockton, with intermediate stops at..let's see.. Edgars, Monroe and Rutland Park, was delayed and will be arriving in the next few minutes.

She hands him a ticket.

ETHAN

I guess it was meant to be.

Ethan sits in a chair next to the table.

From the ensemble, a woman in a nurse's uniform emerges - GEORGE WILKINS, our narrator.

GEORGE

Good evening. Hello. I am here.

(She clears her throat and
stands up proudly.)

I am here to tell you a story. Which is kind of funny,
because I don't think of myself as much of a storyteller. But
I do meet a lot of interesting people. Many of them are going
through challenging, difficult, painful times. I would like
to tell you a story about one of these people I once knew.
His name is Ethan Michaels. His story is true. His story can
heal.

Shifting Sand

GEORGE (cont'd)

OUR STORY BEGINS IN A TOWN CALLED CASCADE
A TOWN NOT UNLIKE YOUR OWN HOMETOWN

CASCADE WAS MADE WITH IDEAS AND VISION
FAMILY AND COMFORT AND A CREEK TO DIP YOUR TOES IN

A group of the ensemble form a
silhouette of a creek and a couple
houses near it emerge behind them.

GEORGE (cont'd)

YELLOW PETALS, THEY KIND OF LOOK LIKE TRUMPETS
THE GREEN LEAVES OF SUMMER CHANGE TO SAFFRON IN THE FALL
HERE IN CASCADE, WE CALL THEM THE HORN TREES
THEY BLOSSOM ONCE A YEAR, AND YOU'LL ONLY SEE 'EM HERE

Everyone on stage holds up a large,
beautiful yellow flower so that they
engulf the stage.

GEORGE (cont'd)

PLANTED BY HIS FATHER, TAKEN CARE OF BY THE SON
MAGIC YELLOW PETALS ENJOYED BY EVERYONE

Ethan stands up and begins walking
through the sea of yellow flowers. He
puts his hands out, gently brushing the
flowers as he passes.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Ethan's father taught him about nature, community, and the
ways of the family business. On Ethan's sixteenth birthday,
his father gave him a present that meant a lot to him - the
seed box in which he had originally brought the horn tree
seeds to Cascade. He told Ethan that as long as he kept the
box full, there would always be room to grow.

Ethan reaches into his backpack and
pulls out the seedbox.

GEORGE (cont'd)
 THEN WHIPLASH COURSE CRASH
 MANGLED ETHAN'S MIND

Several people carrying red fabric cover the flowers with the red. Others run around in a choreographed panic as red lights flash. In fear, Ethan retreats back to his chair.

GEORGE (cont'd)
 A FIRE BROKE OUT IN HIS FAMILY HOME
 CLAIMING HIS PARENTS, LEAVING ETHAN ALONE
 HOMELESS, 18, WITH A BUSINESS TO RUN
 WITHOUT A SENSE OF THE SUN OR A

The panicked choreography halts and the lights turn raw and white. The ensemble faces the audience.

ENSEMBLE
 WAY TO NAVIGATE ON SHIFTING SAND
 FORTUNE PLAYS THE CARDS AND WE DON'T SEE ITS HAND
 THE GAMBLE FINDS A WAY TO SCREW US TO THE WALL
 THE PROMISE IS WE WILL FLY BUT ALL WE DO IS FALL

AHHHH
 AHHHH

George steps to the front of the stage with urgency and speaks alongside the Ensemble's "Ahhs". While singing, the ensemble lines up rows of chairs next to Ethan, to represent a bus.

GEORGE
 Caring for his father's horn trees became Ethan's top priority, but he needed guidance. Mr. Carter - a man who owned many of Cascade's businesses - stepped in to take Ethan under his wing, and became like a second father to Ethan.

They were soon confronted with a serious problem- an invasive species, commonly referred to as Devil Weevil, had found its way to Cascade's trees. The species ate through tree roots at a rapid pace and was powerful enough to potentially change the image of Cascade forever.

Ethan was able to partner with Mr. Carter's pesticide company to find a treatment plan for the trees and preserve Ethan's father's legacy. Ethan was incredibly grateful for Mr. Carter - until he learned that he had deceived him and been a threat to the trees and Cascade all along.

ENSEMBLE

TORN BETWEEN THE ROAD AND THE SKY
HOPEFUL AND COURAGEOUS WITHOUT KNOWING WHY
CAST OUT INTO WIDE OPEN SPACE
SEARCHING FOR MEANING AND THE ILLUSION OF PLACE
SO HE BEGINS TO VOICE OPPOSITION
BUT APATHY IS THE CASCADE CONDITION

The ensemble gradually backs up leaving only Ethan and a handful of others on stage, in chairs lined up to represent a bus. Ethan stands up from his chair next to the bus station attendant.

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

Are you sure you want to get on that bus?

ETHAN

I've never been more sure about anything.

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

From my experience, people that buy a ticket at this time of night usually come running back.

ETHAN

But the people here won't stand up for what's right.

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

How so?

ETHAN

There's this man - he owns everything in town - he needs to be stopped.

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

Mr. Carter?

ETHAN

Yes!

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

What did he do to you?

ETHAN

There's too much to say.

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

You can't stand up to him. He even finances the hospital.

ETHAN

If we were all in it together.

BUS STATION ATTENDANT

When you're older you'll understand. People just want to do their thing, work hard, take care of their families, live their lives. People don't want to put up a fight when they've got what they need.

ETHAN

I just can't agree. Not now.

Ethan walks down the aisle of the bus.

Insects and Mr. Carter (#3)

ETHAN (cont'd)

WHAT I THOUGHT I KNEW
 REPLACED BY DISARRAY
 MY COMPASS FAILED TO GUIDE ME - TRUE NORTH
 MAGNETIZED - AND THROWN OFF COURSE

DIGNITY AND TRUST
 CHOKED ON THEIR OWN APATHY
 MONETARY LUST
 WAS THE SPARK THAT MADE THE FLAME
 IT'S BURNING UP MY TOWN
 AND I CAN'T SLOW IT DOWN

My father gave me this seed box that has eight compartments.
 In each new town that I travel, if I am able to make a
 difference, I am going to ask for a memento and when this
 seed box is filled I will return and share these stories with
 Cascade! Then things can really change!

THE LINES ON THE ROAD COUNT THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH
 BEHIND ME IS TYRANNY AHEAD IS THE TRUTH
 THE DAYS THAT LIE AHEAD MAY BE WORSE THAN TODAY
 BUT AT LEAST IT WILL BE ON MY TERMS
 AT LEAST I'LL KNOW I TRIED

UNBOUND, UNTANGLED, UNBRIDLED AND FREE
 I'LL GO ANYWHERE THEY WILL TAKE ME
 I HAVE TEN THOUSAND IDEAS
 I WILL FIND A PLACE WHERE THEY LISTEN
 I WILL FIND A PLACE WHERE THEY HEAR
 I'VE GOT TO FIND A PLACE WHERE THEY LISTEN
 AND IT SURE AS HELL AIN'T HERE

Lights out.

SCENE 2

Lights up on a street in Rutland Park. There are two visible storefront signs- one reads "Rutland Park Unemployment Office" and one reads "Grocery Store". George leads in a large group of people who form a line outside the unemployment office. At the end of the line are ROSS and LORRAINE, a lower middle-class artistic couple in their early 30s.

Wednesday Afternoon (#4)

As the Rutland Parkers sing, a unique
bird begins chirping, which fits into
the music of the song.

ROSS AND LORRAINE

BROKEN AND EXHAUSTED FROM DECAY
DON'T DARE TO LOOK AROUND
THERE'S LOCKS ON ALL THE DOORS
THE WINDOWS ARE ALL ASH AND GREY
I'LL TELL YOU THAT I'M FINE
SMILING WHILE I STAND IN LINE

THE ECONOMIC SHRINE
EXPLODING INTO DUST
THE BLAZING FRAME OF GOLD
HAS GIVEN WAY TO MOLD AND RUST
IT'S ALWAYS OUT OF SIGHT
BURIED IN THIS URBAN BLIGHT

ROSS, LORRAINE AND ALL
RUTLAND PARKERS

THIS IS HOW IT FEELS
WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON
WHEN EVERYONE'S AFFECTED
NO ONE IS IMMUNE

THIS IS HOW IT FEELS
EVERY AFTERNOON
THE PLACE THAT GAVE US PROMISE
IS NOW AN EMPTY ROOM

BRICK AND MORTAR, PLASTIC, GLASS AND STEEL
WHY BOTHER TO RESIST
LUCK IS OVERDRAWN
AND PROVIDENCE HAS BEEN DISMISSED
I'LL TELL YOU THAT I'M FINE
SMILING WHILE WE STAND IN LINE

RESIGN

Ethan comes out of the grocery store, wearing his backpack and carrying a deli sandwich. The bird chirps again.

ETHAN

Listen. That bird sounds strangely like a moonjay.

LORRAINE

It is.

Ethan runs up to her.

ETHAN

So you've heard this before?

LORRAINE

Yes. There's tons of them around this time of year.

Ethan turns to Ross.

ETHAN

You have heard this, too?

ROSS

Of course!

Ethan turns to the rest of the people in the line.

ETHAN

All of you?

Everyone nods and says things like. "Yes!", "I've seen many of them", "I hear them all the time."

ETHAN (cont'd)

This is amazing. Do you know how lucky all of you in Rutland are?

A man in line, GARTH, speaks up.

GARTH

It's Rutland *Park*.

ETHAN

Sorry! Rutland *Park*. Did you all know that the moonjay is actually native to Canada and said to not ever migrate to the midwest, but clearly that's not true! It's truly an amazing bird - a single bird's call takes on overtones when joined with the voices of other moonjays. Some ornithologists even suggest these overtones vibrate moonjays' bones and stimulate them for mating!

GARTH

How about that!

ETHAN

And - I'm guessing you guys have noticed that when flying in direct moonlight, their feathers take on an iridescent glow - it looks like a piece of jewelry that my grandmother used to wear when I was very young.

LORRAINE

Mother of pearl - my mother always said the glow was akin to mother of pearl.

ETHAN

Yes! That's it!

George enters, carrying a stick that dangles a bird overhead. Ethan turns to another greyhound bus passenger, who is carrying a backpack and a sandwich.

ETHAN (cont'd)

(pointing to the sky)

Do you see that bird?

PASSENGER

Yeah! Neat!

ETHAN

Have you ever seen one like that before?

PASSENGER

No, never!

Ethan rushes inside and comes out with several other passengers from the bus.

ETHAN

Have any of you ever seen this bird?

The passengers all shake their heads and say things like "No", "What a pretty bird", "Look at it colors".

ETHAN (cont'd)

See!

ROSS

Wow! I can't believe it - it's like we've been living with a little four leaf clover and we never even knew!

Musical Underscoring.

ROSS (cont'd)

Thanks for pointing this out. Makes a grim day a little brighter.

(He holds out his hand to
Ethan.)

I'm Ross.

ETHAN

(shaking his hand)

Ethan.

George exits with the bird.

ROSS

I'm pleased to meet you.

ETHAN

You, too. So, tell me, what do you do?

ROSS

Well, not much of anything now! Used to run a music store, but it closed. That's what brings me to this line.

Ethan turns to a young woman, LILLY.

ETHAN

And you?

LILLY

I used to be an assistant for a local realtor.

Ethan turns to Garth.

ETHAN

And what do you do?

GARTH

Used to own a pizza place and ice cream shop.

ETHAN

Wow. Isn't there anything to do in Rutland now?

GARTH

It's Rutland *Park* and no! That's why we're in the unemployment line.

ETHAN

Right, Rutland *Park*. Sorry. But you still do things, right? I don't mean how do you make money. I mean what do you do!

LORRAINE

We stand in line.

ROSS

We look for jobs.

GARTH

We try to feed our family.

ETHAN

And when all of that is done, then what? Anything you enjoy?

LILLY

Sometimes I have picnics.

LORRAINE

I like music, I used to play, but lately there's too much else to worry about.

ETHAN

But wouldn't you all like to hear it?

A quiet young man speaks up.

TIM

Yeah!

ETHAN

(to Lilly)

And maybe after she plays, she could join your picnic.

GARTH

What are you getting at kid?

Rotisserie (#5)

ETHAN

BECAUSE YOUR JOB'S NOT YOU, TELL ME WHAT YOU DO
WHEN YOU'RE FILLING UP THAT FREE TIME ON A FRIDAY.
IS IT WORKING WITH YOUR HANDS OR PLAYING IN A BAND
WRITING POETRY OR KNITTING OR DECOUPAGE

ROSS

It's like collage.

TIM

MY FATHER TAUGHT ME THE WAYS OF WOODCRAFT
BUT I HAVEN'T DUSTED OFF THAT TABLESAW IN YEARS

LORRAINE

MY VIOLIN'S BEEN HANGING ON THE WALL

GARTH

MY ROTISSERIE CHICKEN TASTES LIKE HEAVEN
BUT I NEVER GET TO MAKE IT.

ETHAN

IF IT'S AS GOOD AS YOU SAY
TRAVELLERS WILL PAY
AND THEY PROBABLY WOULD STAY TO HEAR SOME MUSIC.
YOU COULD BUILD A STAGE
WITH SHOWS FOR EVERY AGE
A FESTIVAL COULD HAPPEN HERE IN RUTLAND

ALL

Rutland *Park!*

Ethan and the Rutland Parkers think for
a moment. The sound of a moonjay is
heard.

ETHAN

You can invite people to come to Rutland Park to see the
moonjay. People will come from all over the country, to see
this. There are tons of birdwatchers like me out there! And
once these people get here, they will need to eat, drink and
be entertained.

GARTH

WHERE WILL WE GET THE MONEY
AND WHO'S GONNA DO THE PLANNING
HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT LOGISTICS

ETHAN

DON'T YOU KNOW THE TRICK IS TO
WIPE AWAY YOUR DOUBT
AND LEARN TO DO WITHOUT

LORRAINE

TRUST ME, WE KNOW HOW TO DO WITHOUT

RUTLAND PARKERS

IF POVERTY IS RELIGION WE'RE DEVOUT!

LILLY

WHAT IF PEOPLE DON'T SHOW UP

LORRAINE

ONLY ONE WAY TO KNOW

TIM

WE EITHER STAND IN LINE OR RUN TO THE SKY

LORRAINE

WHERE THE MOONJAYS FLY!

ALL

WHERE THE MOONJAYS FLY!!!

ETHAN

This moonjay is more than a four leaf clover. It's a rainbow-

LORRAINE

With a pot of gold!

RUTLAND PARKERS

WHEN OUT-OF-TOWNERS COME TO SEE THE MOONJAY
MAYBE THEY WILL CONTEMPLATE RETURNING EVERY YEAR.
A FESTIVAL COULD GIVE US ALL CHANCE
TO CELEBRATE AS NEIGHBORS
AND RUTLAND PARK WILL BE THE PLACE TO BE!

BECAUSE WE ARE INSPIRED, WE'LL DO THE WORK REQUIRED;
BEMOANING UNEMPLOYMENT IS BEHIND US.
AND AFTER THIS EVENT, WE ALL GET A PERCENT
AND MAYBE WE WILL FINALLY BE OKAY.

One of the Greyhound passengers comes out of the grocery store and calls out to Ethan.

PASSENGER

Son, the bus is ready to leave.

ETHAN

Go on without me. I think I'm going to stay here a while.

ROSS

How do you know this will work?

Musical Underscoring.

ETHAN

Forty years ago my father planted hundreds upon hundreds of beautiful trees in my hometown and people came from miles around just to see them. I think I can do the same thing with the moonjay and it will remind my friends back home of the way things used to be.

The Moonjay (#6)

George enters as Ethan and everyone in the unemployment line scurry about to prepare for the festival. Via a dumbshow, Ethan leads the organization of the festival, handing out flyers, folding papers to represent brochures, and setting up performance and craftsman areas. Through all of this, George sings.

GEORGE

THE MOONJAY SHINES IRIDESCENT
WHEN LUNAR LIGHT DEVOID OF SHADOWS
FILLS HER FEATHERS CAUSING HER TO SHINE LIKE
MOTHER OF PEARL, SHIMMERING SPLENDOR,
AIRBORNE SPECTRE SENT FROM HEAVENLY LIGHT.

THE SONGBIRD CALLS SO SWEETLY
THE OVERTONES REVEAL THEMSELVES
WHEN THEY GATHER THEY BLEND AND RESONATE LIKE
VIOLINS IN ECHOING CHAMBERS
OR WHISTLING WIND
OR CRICKETS CALLING TO THE TIDE

The people of Rutland Park begin preparing their crafts. Ethan works most closely with Ross and Lorraine as he prepares all the festival materials.

GEORGE(cont'd)

IN SECRET LEGEND, THE MOONJAYS ARE SAID TO
FOLLOW ACHING HEARTS AND MINDS,
AND THEY NEST WHERE
THEY SENSE SWELLING PASSION
AND LEND THEIR SONG, TO FILL THE AIR...

Ross and Lorraine exit leaving Ethan briefly alone. George picks up a phone and hands it to Ethan. He puts it to his ear.

ETHAN

Are they still in bloom?

(Pause.)

Good.

(Pause.)

I found a place where they listen.

GEORGE

THE MUSIC OF THE MOONJAY
IS HEIGHTENED WHEN SURROUNDED BY
VISIONARY ATMOSPHERE.

Diverse groups of people begin filling
the stage, looking at the sky with
binoculars, buying food and crafts, and
purchasing and putting on handpainted
"Moonjay Festival" T-shirts.

THE RARITY OF THE BIRD
THAT GLOWS WITH THE MOON
BRINGS FORTUNE TO THE WANDERERS
WHO SEEK ITS MYSTIC TUNE

WHEN DAY GIVES WAY TO NIGHT
AND YOU HEAR THE MOONJAY CALL
THE OMEN OF ITS HARMONY
BRINGS LUCK TO ONE AND ALL.

SIGNS UP IN THE SKY
HELP US SEE THE WAY
THE MOONJAY BRINGS COMFORT
AND CLARITY OF PURPOSE
WHEN DAY LIGHT GIVES WAY.

A group of people sit down on blankets
in front of a group of musicians
including Ethan with a guitar, Ross
with a banjo, and Lorraine with a
fiddle.

ETHAN, ROSS, AND LORRAINE

THE RARITY OF THE BIRD
THAT GLOWS WITH THE MOON
BRINGS FORTUNE TO THE WANDERERS
WHO SEEK ITS MYSTIC TUNE

WHEN DAY GIVES WAY TO NIGHT
AND YOU HEAR THE MOONJAY CALL
THE OMEN OF ITS HARMONY
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