

## SCENE 1

It is a hot, dry late-summer day. On stage is the front of two average houses in Midwestern suburbia and their small front yards. Both front yards have gardens. One garden is full of wild flowers that encompass the yard in its entirety. An intriguing and disorderly mix of orange, red and purple flowers - some tall, some short. The other yard has three distinct garden beds, each with a different type of flower. The flowers are planted in perfectly lined rows - for the mostpart. Each bed has at least one flower that does not belong, or one flower that is out of alignment with the others. In the center of the yard is a horn tree, covered in beautiful yellow flowers.

The set is fully lit as the audience enters the theater.

The house with the wild flowers has a For Sale sign out front.

As the house lights go down, the For Sale sign begins to rattle, and with a slight magical chime, a Sold sign drops down across it.

**Hollie Steals a Lawn Ornament** begins to play.

The stage is silent for a moment, and then HOLLIE quietly exits the house with the orderly garden beds. She is in her early 50s, dressed conservatively, with her hair pulled back. One loose piece dangles near her face. She twirls it around her index finger. She has a fidgety curiosity about her. She looks down at her feet and sees that she's wearing two different shoes.

HOLLIE

What the -- come on Hollie!

She re-enters the house, and comes back with two of the same flip flops on. She steps off her porch, and out of her yard, ready to go on a walk.

She starts on her way, passing the house next-door - she notices the "Sold" sign. She gasps.

HOLLIE

When did that...

She begins twirling her loose hair, then sighs and re-pulls back all of her hair. She takes a deep breath, then non discretely peers to her right, then her left. She tip toes in an almost cartoon-like way all the way to the right of the set, looking both ways, then all the way to the left of the set, looking both ways, then back to the neighbor's house. She suddenly drops to her hands and knees and begins crawling through the wild flowers. She is barely visible, but gasps.

HOLLIE

It is still here!

Hollie's hand sticks up from behind the wild flowers, holding an unusual lawn ornament - it has a very intricate, almost ancient design, with a gemstone in the center.

The sound of someone whistling is heard.

HOLLIE

Oh crap!

Like a ninja, Hollie rolls out of the wild flowers, bursting to her feet, right as the mail carrier, CHRIS, enters, walking down the side walk.

CHRIS

Hollie!

HOLLIE

Chris!

They stare at each other silently for a moment.

CHRIS

You've...got a little--

She gestures to Hollie's shoulder which has a flower or weed hanging from it. Hollie quickly brushes it off.

CHRIS

And a little--

She gestures to Hollie's knee, which is covered in dirt. Hollie quickly brushes it off.

CHRIS

So...

HOLLIE

Happy Tuesday!

CHRIS

What have you got there?  
(pointing to the lawn ornament)

HOLLIE

Oh! It's a lawn ornament!  
(She points to the gem stone.)  
This is my birth stone! Isn't that unusual? I mean, if you see a lawn ornament with your birth stone, you've got to grab it, that's what I've always said!

CHRIS

Always?

HOLLIE

No matter the price...or...circumstances. Have you ever seen a lawn ornament like this?

CHRIS

No, but I haven't seen many lawn ornaments. Or...I have seen some that look like bumble bees. Or maybe sunflowers?

HOLLIE

Yeah, that's popular.

CHRIS

Or maybe a...what's the...  
(She makes a swirly motion with her hand, reminiscent of a bug)

HOLLIE AND CHRIS

Dragonfly!

HOLLIE

Ha! We both said dragonfly!

CHRIS  
Yeah, that's a popular one, too, I think.

HOLLIE  
Definitely.

In the background, the sound of cicadas is heard.

CHRIS  
Cicadas.

HOLLIE  
Hmmm?

CHRIS  
That sound.

HOLLIE  
Oh - yes - it seems more intense this year.

CHRIS  
It's the 17 year ones!

HOLLIE  
Oh, yes, of course!

The sound grows more intense.

CHRIS  
(Walking up to Hollie's tree)  
You must have some in your tree here. They're really making a racket!

Chris puts her hand on the tree looking up into it. A couple shriveled petals fall from the tree. Chris picks one up.

CHRIS  
The drought's getting to it, huh? Garden still looks OK, though.

HOLLIE  
It takes a lot of watering. Like, really a pretty dedicated amount.

CHRIS  
Well, no rain in the 10 day yet. Hoping for some by the end of the month at least!

HOLLIE  
You and me both.

Chris pulls some mail out of her bag  
and hands it to Hollie.

CHRIS

Well, here's your mail for today.

(pointing at an envelope  
laughing)

Hammersmith and Zelretch. Do you think that two lawyers ever  
meet each other and decide they just aren't meant to start a  
firm together?

Pause.

CHRIS

Well, see you tomorrow Hollie! Stay cool.

HOLLIE

You, too, Chris.

Chris walks away, whistling.

Hollie opens the Hammersmith and  
Zelretch envelope and exhales, as if  
she's been holding that breath a long  
time.

HOLLIE

Out of the grey....

Hollie sings **Hollie Receives a Letter.**

HOLLIE

"HAMMERSMITH AND ZELRETCH FAMILY LAW (windchimes)  
THIS IS THE FINAL CONFIRMATION  
YOU WILL NOT GET ANOTHER NOTIFICATION (windchimes)  
ABOUT YOUR MARITAL SEPARATION"

DECIDED. IT'S ABSOLUTE.

FINALLY IT'S FINAL.

THERE GOES THE NOTHING THAT WE NEVER HAD  
AND THERE IS NOTHING MORE NOT TO SAY  
BECAUSE ON MY OWN, THE CYCLONE PHASES  
SPIN AROUND MY LIFE

WHEN YOU'RE FIFTY-ONE YOU DON'T GET A DO OVER  
I TOLD MYSELF I WASN'T GONNA TO STEW OVER  
WHEN YOU PARK YOUR PONTIAC TOO FAR TO THE RIGHT  
SO I'D CLIMB INTO MY KIA FROM THE PASSENGER SIDE  
I WOULD WIGGLE IN SIDWAYS, KNEES OVER HEAD  
I'D BANG MY HIP INTO THE GEARSHIFT  
ACCIDENTLY HONK THE HORN WITH MY ARMPIT  
AND THE NEIGHBORS WAKE UP AND WRITE ME EMAILS  
WITH CAPITAL LETTERS AND BULLET POINTS  
THAT SAY THINGS LIKE "COURTESY" AND "PLEASE REFRAIN"

BUT NOW HE'S GONE...  
AND I REMAIN

DIVORCE AGREEMENTS MUST BE SIGNED  
SUBMIT IT BY FAX OR DELIVER BY COURIER  
WE DON'T LIKE FAX 'CAUSE IT IS OFTEN BLURRIER  
WE'RE LUCKY THAT YOUR HUSBAND IS SUCH A WORRIER (what?!?)

I'M GONNA SIGN THIS LETTER...

She searches her pockets.

HOLLIE

Crap. No pen.

She goes inside. The music continues  
and there is an unnatural gust of wind  
that rattles the windchimes and the  
petals on her horn tree. She steps back  
outside, pen in hand.

HOLLIE

THIS SUMMER I'M ALONE IN THIS NERVE-WRACKING HOME  
AND ALL OF HIS CRAP IS PACKED UP AND GONE  
EXCEPT FOR ONE THING  
I GOT A WHOLE CLOSET OF NOVELTY SOCKS  
LIKE IRONIC SPACE KITTENS AND WEIRD MELTING CLOCKS  
MONKEYS AND CUPCAKES AND BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
PIRATES AND PIZZA AND FUCKING BETTY BOOP

WHEN WE DISAGREED, HE'D CALL ME AUTOMATON,  
DIMINISHED MY LOGIC AND ARGUED AND ARGUED,  
THE COUNSELING AND CANCELLING AND BALANCING THE WORK  
I SPOKE TO A PROFESSIONAL  
AND THERE'S JUST NO CURE FOR CHRONICALLY BEING A JERK

I'M GONNA MAIL THIS LETTER  
Crap, no stamp. Staaaaaammp!

She goes back inside, then comes back  
out, stamp in hand.

HOLLIE

HE HAD STACKS; I HAD PILES  
HE HAD GRINS; I HAD SMILES  
HE HAD METHODS; I HAD STYLES  
HE HAD INCHES; I HAD MILES

TAKE TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS, MAIL IT OFF IN A BOX  
AND I NEVER REALLY CARED ABOUT THE CAR OR THE SOCKS

She seals the divorce papers in the envelope, stamps it and clips them to the mailbox. She picks up the lawn ornament. She exhales again and slowly sits on the curb, next to the sewer grate. She takes down her hair.

HOLLIE

Now I wonder.

She leans over the grate. She pulls her hair back up. She sings **Hollie Sings to the Sewer.**

HOLLIE

LOW; EVEN LOWER THAN THE GROUND  
I SPEAK INTO THE SEWER GRATE AND  
LISTEN FOR THE SOUND ADVICE  
COMING FROM BELOW, FROM THE DRAIN  
LET THE SEWER KNOW MY PAIN

(Another voice begins to  
harmonize with her.)

HOLLIE AND THE VOICE

LOW

HOLLIE

WHY ARE THE DAYS A CREEPING GLACIER AND THE YEARS ARE RAPIDS  
HOW DO I NAVIGATE THE TIME, WHEN TO EBB, WHEN TO FLOW  
WHO WILL I SEE WHEN I'M LOOKING AT ME  
WHEN WILL I KNOW IF THE IMAGE MIGHT CHANGE  
AND WHAT IS THE BEST REACTION WHEN THAT VISION SEEMS SO  
STRANGE  
OLD FRIEND

HOLLIE

WHY

VOICE

BECAUSE THE DECADES ARE MADE OF DAYS; THAT'S WHY THEY LINGER  
LONGER

HOLLIE

HOW

VOICE

FIRST YOU THROW AWAY YOUR MAP, THEN YOU LISTEN TO THE MOON

HOLLIE

WHO

VOICE

YOU WILL ALWAYS SEE YOUR FACE, RESIST THE CHANGE AND SET THE  
PACE

WHEN

HOLLIE

VOICE

SHORE UP YOUR CURIOUS NEED TO KNOW AND THE COURAGE TO WONDER  
WHERE  
OLD FRIEND

Hollie sets down the lawn ornament. She stands up, and goes inside the house. After she goes inside, there is a slight rattle in the sewer. **Music continues.** Slowly from the sewer, a tentacle emerges. It picks up the lawn ornament and pulls it into the sewer, as the lights dim, indicating night.

The sound of cicadas is heard.

The tentacle re-emerges, still holding the lawn ornament. This time it extends high into the air, and over the neighbor's garden. It begins to lower the ornament back where it came from until the sound of a truck is heard. The light of headlights begin to fill the stage as the tentacle quickly darts back into the sewer, narrowly missing the light.

The sound of a truck door shutting is heard.

LEONARD, a buttoned-up man with a peculiar gait, who appears to be in his 50s, enters holding a box. He approaches the neighbor's house.

Hollie exits, stirred by the noise. She is wearing a robe.

She and Leonard's eyes meet, as they are standing directly parallel to one another at their front doors.

HOLLIE

Oh!

LEONARD

Oh?

HOLLIE

Hi!



LEONARD  
Hello there.

HOLLIE  
You're - the new neighbor?

LEONARD  
I am the new neighbor.

Pause.

HOLLIE  
So - you're a night mover, huh?

LEONARD  
A - what? Is that slang? For...?

HOLLIE  
No! No slang. Just a random thing I said. Because you're moving in at night.

LEONARD  
Oh.

HOLLIE  
Like a conversation starter.

LEONARD  
Hmmm.

HOLLIE  
An awkward one.

Pause. Hollie walks over to him and sticks out her hand.

HOLLIE  
I'm Hollie.

Leonard awkwardly sets down the box and shakes her hand.

LEONARD  
I am Leonard.

HOLLIE  
Welcome to Cascade.

LEONARD  
Thank you for your hospitality.

HOLLIE  
Well, we're neighbors!

LEONARD

Yes!

Pause.

HOLLIE

So why are you moving in at night?

LEONARD

Oh...trucks were delayed...and night fell. What can I say?

HOLLIE

Sorry - that was really nosy! I'm not normally this nosy.  
Or am I?

LEONARD

Are you?

HOLLIE

No - I'm sorry. I'm just wondering things today.

LEONARD

No need to apologize for asking questions. I find the more  
questions that I ask, the less grey the world becomes!

HOLLIE

Wow. Yes! I agree! So what questions do you have? About  
Cascade. Or the neighborhood.

LEONARD

Well...are there many people - like us? Meeting new people,  
and asking questions?

HOLLIE

(Laughing)

No. There are not a lot of new people here. And definitely  
not a lot of questions being asked.

LEONARD

An easy going place then. That's what I've heard.

HOLLIE

Yes - easy going.

**Hollie Meets Her Neighbor** begins to  
play.

LEONARD

Have you lived here long?

HOLLIE

Yep - all my life.

LEONARD  
How long is that?

HOLLIE  
Excuse me?

LEONARD  
I'm sorry. Is that nosy?

HOLLIE  
No, it's just - straightforward. That's fine I think.  
(Pause.)  
51. I'm 51. And you?

LEONARD  
Oh - 51 also!

HOLLIE  
Really??

LEONARD  
Well...let's just say 50s.

HOLLIE  
(Laughing.)  
Not being very straightforward now, are you?

LEONARD  
I don't mean to be--

HOLLIE  
It's fine - really!

LEONARD  
So what do you like here?

HOLLIE  
In Cascade? Boy, I don't know...

LEONARD  
Must be something!

HOLLIE  
Must be...

(Pause. She gestures to his garden)  
Your garden! I've always really liked this garden. At your new house. Do you think you will keep it?

LEONARD  
Yes. I think I will. You have a lovely garden, too.

HOLLIE

Thanks. I try really hard to make it lovely. Like really pretty hard. So thanks.

LEONARD

You're welcome.

HOLLIE

(Gesturing to the horn tree.)

I think my tree goes better with your garden, though. I always try to get my garden to match the tree but it never does quite right.

LEONARD

It is a unique yellow.

HOLLIE

Yes.

LEONARD

I like your garden better.

HOLLIE

You do?

LEONARD

I do. It looks like it took a lot of planning. You've done a great job.

HOLLIE

Well thanks! I really do appreciate it!

Pause.

HOLLIE

Well here we are. Liking each other's gardens.

Hollie laughs awkwardly. Leonard laughs even more awkwardly. They stop laughing, look at each other and sing.

HOLLIE

IT'S NOT THAT OFTEN THAT I FIND SOMEONE THAT WANTS TO TALK ABOUT GARDENING

LEONARD

DO CASCAD...IANS NOT ENJOY GARDENING?

HOLLIE

NO, IT'S NOT THAT OFTEN THAT I FIND SOMEONE THAT WANTS TO TALK.

LEONARD

NO ONE WANTS TO TALK?

HOLLIE  
NO, IT'S NOT THAT OFTEN THAT I FIND SOMEONE  
THAT I WANT TO TALK TO.

LEONARD  
SO I'M LIKEABLE ENOUGH TO YOU?

HOLLIE  
YES, YOU SEEM LIKABLE ENOUGH TO TALK TO

LEONARD  
Gardens!

HOLLIE  
Gardens...

Pause.

LEONARD  
So...  
WHY DO YOU LIKE A GARDEN?

HOLLIE  
WHY DO YOU LIKE ANYTHING.  
I FIND IT HARD TO SAY

LEONARD  
IT SHOULD NOT BE HARD TO SAY

HOLLIE  
Oh really?

LEONARD  
YOU SELECT WHAT GOES  
AND THEN YOU WATCH AS IT GROWS,  
THE PLANTS THRIVE ON THEIR OWN  
WHEN YOU LAY THE GROUNDWORK WELL...

HOLLIE  
I PLANT THIS STUFF CUZ I JUST LIKE HOW IT SMELLS

LEONARD  
THE FLOWERS?

HOLLIE  
THE DIRT!

LEONARD  
YOU LIKE THE SMELL OF DIRT?

HOLLIE  
AND THE FLOWERS. AND THE GRASS  
I LIKE HOW IT SOUNDS

LEONARD  
THE GRASS?

HOLLIE  
THE WIND

LEONARD  
THE WIND

HOLLIE  
THE GRASS

LEONARD  
YOU SHOULD LAY DOWN IN THE DIRT  
JUST LISTEN TO THE WIND AND YOU'D BE HAPPIER

HOLLIE  
BUT THEN THE PEOPLE WOULD TALK

LEONARD  
YOU SAID THEY DON'T TALK

HOLLIE  
I SAID THAT I DON'T TALK TO THEM AND IT'S  
NOT THAT OFTEN THAT I FIND SOMEONE  
WHO LIKES TO TALK ABOUT GARDENING

HOLLIE AND LEONARD  
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

LEONARD  
Well, I should be getting inside- I have unpacking to do.

HOLLIE  
And I should be getting back to bed. Unless you need help  
with your boxes.

LEONARD  
I have the truck until the morning. I'll be fine to unload  
it then.

HOLLIE  
OK - well, goodnight.

LEONARD  
Goodnight.

Leonard goes inside his house. Hollie  
walks back towards her own front door.  
She notices that the lawn ornament is  
not where she left it.

HOLLIE

Where...

She walks towards the horn tree and the sound of the cicadas grows very loud. She begins walking towards her door and it fades. She notices this and pauses. She turns back around and as soon as she looks at the tree the sound begins again. She pauses, and then slowly approaches the tree. As she does so, **music begins to build** in conjunction with the cicadas' sound. She gets directly next to the tree and stares at it, mystified.

HOLLIE

What...

As she speaks, three voices are heard from the tree. They sing **Hollie Meets Her Other Neighbors.**

CICADAS

THE DAUGHTER OF THE GALE  
MUST DEFEND AGAINST THE ANCIENT!  
DEFEND AGAINST THE ANCIENT!

Hollie struggles to piece together what they're saying.

CICADAS

THE GIANT HAS A HUNGER TO  
RETAKE WHAT WAS TAKEN  
SO THE STASIS WILL MISSHAPEN

OBLIVIOUS TO WHAT BENEATH POSSESSES,  
HE'S MISTAKEN!  
GALE DAUGHTER, HE'S MISTAKEN!

IF YOU ARE DEFEATED,  
AGITATION WILL BE SHAKEN,  
SO YOU MUST NOT BE COMPLACENT!

AND THE CURSE WILL AWAKEN;  
CICADAS WILL BE VACANT;  
CASCADE WILL BE FORSAKEN

HOLLIE

I don't...understand....