

PRAISE FOR "CARLISE"

· I thought "Carlisle" was a stimulating adaptation of [Chekhov's] "Three Sisters" to the Native American experience. The personal story lines were seen through the lens of the very particular cultural situation ... I would like to see a full production with the additional dances, music, and other materials ... I wonder if those "realities" could be more forcefully brought in; not as introduction or at the tail end but as some kind of disruption, an explosion of "Indian" into "Chekhovian" – something that the characters might simply stop and watch, as if from another dimension.

Onwards,
Richard Schechner, Ph.D.
Editor, "The Drama Review"
Founder, The Performance Group at the Garage Theatre
NYU-Tisch Professor of Performance Studies

· My NYU colleague, his wife, and I saw 'Carlisle' last evening and we recommend it highly. It wasn't initially obvious to me how [Anton] Chekhov's 'Three Sisters' could tell the complex story of the Indian Schools, but Myrton Running Wolf's script ingeniously creates a compellingly and disturbingly plausible account of how that period might have played against the universal vulnerabilities of family and the psyche in general. It is a work-in-progress, some lines still read, but the actors reflect New York's always astonishing talent pool, and the staging, with a touch of 'Our Town', deftly defies the spare facilities. It is a story told with wit and intelligence by a Native author whose voice, as he points out, is one we should be listening to.

Enthusiastically,
T. James Matthews, Ph.D.
NYU Assoc. Dean, Grad. School of Arts & Science
Coordinator of the Native People's Forum at NYU
Professor of Psychology and Neural Science

· Dear Myrton,
It was a pleasure to meet you and to see your wonderful production ... We would be honored to have you as our guest speaker at our upcoming Salon as part of our production of Adam Hunault's The Ghost Dancers, which is part of our current season about occupation at the Sanford Meisner Theater.

Maria Schirmer
Education Director
Stone Soup Theatre Arts, NYC

· Congratulations on Carlisle! I saw it Saturday at La MaMa and was impressed with all the work ... Please convey my congratulations to all involved for their great work.

Karen Oughtred
Artistic Director
Australian Aboriginal Theatre Initiative

· Congratulations! Terrific job on adapting the play; I loved the visuals and music. The director had a real understanding of the script and staged it well ... let me not forget the actors. Excellent job on their part. I am very impressed with it all. You are in a position to be heard and quit frankly, its very time appropriate ... Venetia Reese, [one-time] casting director at the Public [Theatre, NYC] attended with me and really liked the show.

Kim Snyder
New York based Lakota playwright
Documentary filmmaker

· Congratulations, Myrton. It's a hit!

Steve Elm
NYC's AMERINDA - resident director
Editor, "Talking Stick: Native Arts Quarterly"
The American Indian Community House, NYC
Performing Arts Department

· I was honored to attend Myrton Running Wolf's play "Carlisle" at La MaMa ETC. Myrton's multi-media performance shared how the First Nations students at Carlisle struggled to see their indigenous past and how they were tortured by the assimilationist ways dreamt up by Army Lt. [Richard Henry] Pratt who said: "Kill the Indian and save the MAN."

Matthew Bessell, LCSW
Extended Care Social Worker
EEO LGBT Group Chairperson

CARLISLE

CHARACTERS

MATTHEW FORTUNE-BOY

KATHRYN JOHN
His fiancé/wife

NATALIE FORTUNE-BOY
His spinster sister

MAURA FORTUNE-BOY
His fierce sister

IRENE FORTUNE-BOY
His baby sister

PAUL STRONG-HORSE
Maura's gay husband, a teacher

ALEXANDER HE-IS-LAZY
Lieutenant Colonel, commander of the school regiment

NICHOLAS GOVERNOR
A half-breed lieutenant

KING ITAMISTSIKSIPOKO
A warrior captain

JOHN IVAN
Regimental medic

FLOWER
60-year-old nanny to the Fortune-Boy family

KOXTOKIS
School council watchman

PETER DEFENDS-THE-ROCK
Student soldier

CARL FLIES-AHEAD
Student soldier

Setting: Just outside Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1914.

OPENING

*Music up: Tribal drums -
ceremonial, beautiful, haunting.*

RANDOLPH (V.O.)

How do we forgive our fathers? Maybe in a dream -

*Lights up: Green and shapeless,
an infant forest. A young Indian
Chief stands waiting.*

RANDOLPH (CONT'D.)

Do we forgive our fathers for leaving us too often, or forever,
when we were little? For scaring us with unexpected rage, or
making us nervous because there was never any rage at all.

*Indians flood the stage, dancing
and celebrating. A wedding.*

*The Bride enters and goes to the
young Indian Chief, her father.
They smile and hold each other.*

RANDOLPH (CONT'D.)

Shall we forgive them for their excesses of warmth or coldness?
For pushing or leaning? For shutting doors. For speaking
through walls. Or never speaking. Or never being silent.

*The Groom enters. The Chief
smiles his approval and gives his
daughter's hand to the Groom.*

RANDOLPH (CONT'D.)

Do we forgive our fathers in our age or in theirs? In their
deaths or our own? If we forgive our fathers ... what is left?

*The drums build in rhythm and
volume. The Indians sing full of
passion and pride. They move like
acrobats. BOOM! Lights out.*

Silence.

ACT ONE

Special up: on tall and beautiful Maura Fortune-Boy wearing a black dress staring out a window.

Above her is a painting of a distinguished man, the young Indian Chief, dressed in a United States military uniform.

MAURA

"The long spell of her enchantment came to an end. The Princess awakened and gazed upon him softly ... is it you my Prince?"

Lights up full. The elegant house is made of wood. People prepare a party in the dining room.

NATALIE (O.S.)

I hate this school! Why do we have to leave? They can drag our students off to war if they want to, I don't care! But why do we have to go!?! Six months, pfft, may as well be six days!

IRENE (O.S.)

Calm yourself, Natalie. They're not kicking us out on the streets. Our father died building this school.

Maura hums a melody.

NATALIE (O.S.)

Maura, stop SINGING! Daddy didn't allow it inside!

MAURA

Don't yell at me because your precious shitty school is closing!

John Ivan enters.

JOHN IVAN

That's right, Maura! Right to the "shitty" point! Every single one of us is lost.

MAURA

Shut up, John Ivan. What the hell are you talking about?

Natalie, Irene, Nicholas, and King enter the living room.

JOHN IVAN

This school's sacrificing our students! Those boys are cannon balls - ammunition for America's good reputation! And the girls? Fat "shitty" Buffalo Women and Indian Princess whores.

MAURA

You are a bastard.

KING

No, Maura, you are. Your father, "The Great Commander Fortune-Boy", drunk ass, taught you to act more like a man than a woman.

MAURA

What?

KING

... what?

Maura slaps King across the face.

MAURA

I am not afraid of you, King!

King backhands her.

KING

Doesn't matter. You don't have to be.

Maura punches King in the face, knocking him to the floor.

MAURA

You are the asshole, King!

KING

... yeah, I know.

He laughs. Nicholas steps in.

NICHOLAS

Captain Itamistsiksipoko! You are a disgrace! You're not a man or a soldier! You haven't an ounce of the pride our ancestors -

KING

OUR ancestors!?! Really, Nicholas? For Christ sake, look in the mirror! You are a **WHITE MAN!** Desperately pretending to be, wanting to be, an Indian because it is the best you could ever hope for! You can't even tie your own fucking shoes -

NATALIE

STOP!!! Enough, gentlemen, please! Now I have milk and cookies in the kitchen if anyone -

JOHN IVAN

This school taught us to hate each other.

IRENE

No, it didn't. We taught ourselves. Nicholas, you're fine.

NICHOLAS

(apologetic)

I'm part Cherokee. My grandmother was a Cherokee princess. My great grandfather was the chief of our tribe. Okay, my father owns a railroad company in Chicago. So what? So we have a maid, and I make her pull my boots off when I go home on holiday from Carlisle - I'm spoiled. I admit it. I'm not ashamed.

IRENE

Nicholas, be quiet now please.

Flower and Koxtokis enter with a birthday cake.

FLOWER

Birthday cake time! Happy birthday, Irene! Did everyone hear? Our soldiers are going to the war in France! So proud of them! They're all excited - hopping around in their little uniforms!

KOXTOKIS

They look dead. Every soldier I've ever seen looks dead - matchsticks in the mud.

NATALIE

Matchsticks, Koxtokis?

KOXTOKIS

They get knocked over easy, Miz Fortune-Boy - ruined forever; useless before doing what they were put here to do.

A knock on the front door.

JOHN IVAN

That's for me! I'M COMING!!! It's for me!
(another knock, louder)
 Fuck you! I said hold your damn horses!!!

NICHOLAS

All the cursing ... which reminds me, Natalie, our new commander is coming over. I invited him to Irene's birthday party.

NATALIE

Ugh, Nicholas! Okay, fine. Flower, take Koxtokis and King into the kitchen - they could use some milk and cookies.

FLOWER

Of course.

Natalie, Flower, Koxtokis, and King exit into the kitchen.

IRENE

I hear the new commander is gorgeous! Did you hear, Natalie? He's supposed to be amazing!

NATALIE (O.S.)

I'm not looking for a man, Irene!

MAURA

Yes, Natalie's not looking for a man and America's not looking for a new tribe of darkies to stick out in its cotton fields.

(Matthew Fortune-Boy enters quietly)

If you could, Irene, you'd piss all over the new commander. You and Natalie would gnaw off each other's feet to be first on your knees in front of a man.

MATTHEW

The military pissed over all of us, Maura. We bathe in their stink just like our mother and father did. Our students, our soldiers ... "**SOLDIERS**", HA! We're sending those babies to war!

Flower dashes out the front door.

FLOWER

Someone's here! There's a visitor at our front door! Now you be nice, Maura. Don't be ... well, you know -

MAURA

"Well-I-know" what?

MATTHEW

Our traditions - our enemy ripped away everything, and we gave up ... but we never really possessed anything in the first place.

*John Ivan and Alexander enter.
Flower swoons after Alexander.*

FLOWER

Ladies and gentlemen. This is ... umm ... Lieutenant Colonel -
(*Alexander whispers in her ear; she blushes*)
This is Alexander He-Is-Lazy ... it's just his last name ...

*Flower exits, bumps into the door,
and giggles. John Ivan angrily
throws his gift after her.*

ALEXANDER

Ladies -

*Natalie runs in, trips, falls, and
takes down Irene. Irene jumps up
smiling. Natalie elbows her into
Alexander's arms. Irene faints.*

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)

I'm terribly sorry. Natalie, is it?

Natalie groans a painful whistle.

KING

... nicely said, Natalie.

*Natalie turns, slams into the
door, giggles, and exits.*

ALEXANDER

I am Alexander He-Is-Lazy. The new commander of Carlisle's -

KING

He-Is-Lazy?

NICHOLAS

King, don't start - it's just his last name.

KING

What? Just because I don't have an impressive Indian name - if Alexander "He-Is-Lazy" - he-just-might-be-lay-zee.

MAURA

Shut your face, King Itam-ist-sik-si-poko. It's his last name! No one can pronounce your damn name. Pratt's soldiers nearly beat you to death because they couldn't say it.

IRENE

(buried in Alexander's chest)

Why didn't they make King change his name like everyone else?

MAURA

'Cause they were afraid of him. 'Cause he used to be a warrior; not some dandy in a woman's coat hiding a bottle of perfume in one hand and a knife in the other.

King mists himself with perfume.

ALEXANDER

(looking down at Irene)

You have your mother's eyes. I knew her.

(to Maura)

And I knew your father. I served in his regiment in Boston. He was the greatest military man I've ever known.

KING

I'm sorry, are you from the Kiss-Ass tribe or the Wanna-bees?

ALEXANDER

Staff Captain King Itamistsiksipoko: a very impressive reputation, legendary at an early age. Twenty-five is it? An amazing fighter, a quick witted hot-head, a brave and stubborn child abandoned by your family. A frightened little boy who will one day be a great leader without friends or followers.

(to Maura)

Maura Fortune-Boy. Third child and middle sister. Thank you for standing up for me. I don't need you to defend me.

MAURA

Oh, excuse me, Commander!

MAURA (CONT'D.)

I didn't realize your ego was inflamed by your pedigree. I bet you believe every lie they told you ... tell you.

(a curtsey)

Commander He-Is-Lazy, your nobility is a fucking joke!

IRENE

MAURA?! Language! Sound like a bunch of hoodlums! Natalie!!!

ALEXANDER

Maura Fortune-Boy - put a female teammate in the hospital, earned six months in the guardhouse; broke the athletics instructor's nose with a a baseball; beat a male classmate nearly to death - your father saved you from prison. His favorite child but his most violent; a smart-ass; funny and hurtful; married and unhappy; the shining star of the family.

(moves closer)

Judgmental, intelligent, gloomy, and alone ... I miss anything?

(Maura fumes)

I won't defend myself. I'll leave now if you like.

NATALIE (O.S.)

NO! MAURA! She's harmless, Commander! Don't listen to her!

JOHN IVAN

Our little guard dog if you will, ha! ... hmpf ... 'scuse me.

MAURA

Puppet commander blinded by a white man's education. A prison guard like my father, just a lower rank. I am all that you say. My father, your hero, made me this way.

ALEXANDER

(lifting Irene to her feet)

I was commissioned at Harvard University. The Military saved my life. Now my duty is to save others. Discipline will be our people's salvation. It was your father's gift to us all.

IRENE

Oh, my God, you're beautiful. Do you know I can hold my legs over my shoulders while I -

MAURA

You are here to take our children to war - to their slaughter!

ALEXANDER

There is greatness in all of you! You come from a great people who held onto their souls in spite of all they went through.

(to Maura)

I hope my daughters find the strength I see in you; I hope they find what you've found. I am here to save our children.

MATTHEW

Saviors, Alexander, are rare at Carlisle. What about these children's hopes for the future? We can't teach them anything - not Christianity, not English - without the proper motivation.

(silence)

And our father?! He died a year ago today; Irene's birthday.

IRENE

Oh, geez, thanks, Matty. I almost forgot.

(to Alexander)

Commander, my brother Matthew. He's very serious.

MAURA

He's in love.

IRENE

With some rag-a-muffin off the reservation ... hip-hip-hooray.

MAURA

Filthy Navajo Apache whatever. Girl can't even dress herself. Bet she still scrubs her face with dirt.

Irene and Maura laugh.

MATTHEW

Forgive my sisters, Commander. Carlisle's full of orphans; our family included. No one to guide or protect us. Truth and reality are our teachers, "The greater the pain, the greater the lesson!" That was our father's gift.

MAURA

Our father beat the Cherokee and Lakota languages into our heads, but we're forbidden to speak them here. So he beat French and German into us as well. A lot of good that did.

IRENE

(points at painting)

That's my father in that picture! Matthew painted it himself!

Natalie enters with cookies.

NATALIE

Daddy was a great man! He gave us this house, these clothes ... our students never had things so good. Maura was Daddy's favorite, not that any of us mind, and that's the truth!

IRENE

Our father wasn't an Indian.

NATALIE

Ah-ha! OH! ... ha-ha ... 'scuse me?

IRENE

He was a military officer. He was trained, and he served, in Boston. We're Bostonians.

NATALIE

Oh, yes. Here, here! We're Bostonians.

IRENE

He moved our family from Boston to Carlisle fourteen years ago to run this school. But we are STILL Bostonians.

NATALIE

HERE, HERE!!! This is fun! Cookies anyone? Milk?

ALEXANDER

Thank you, Natalie. Maura, your father, your mother, all of us are "Bostonians"! That was your father's real gift.

NATALIE

Here, h- ... Irene, what did I miss?

Maura stares at Alexander, grabs a cookie, and grins coyly.

MAURA

"The long spell of her enchantment came to an end. The Princess awakened and gazed upon him softly ... is it you my Prince?" Pfft, children's rhyme stuck in my head since this morning.

NATALIE

Irene? ... I missed something.

IRENE

Yeah, brazen strumpet hooker ...

(Maura smacks her)

Ow!

(Natalie offers her a cookie)

Thank you, Natalie.

Paul Strong-Horse bounces in, in uniform, carrying a book.

PAUL

I *LOVE* this school! Our students are heading off to fight the war in France, glory hallelujah! I told you! The Carlisle Indian School's re-education campaign is working! Happy Birthday, Irene! "SIS-TAH"! Morning everyone!

(hugs Irene; extends hand to Alexander)

Paul Strong-Horse, math teacher and official servant of the United States Government assigned to Carlisle Indian School's ninth grade! Irene, I made this book for you - a history of our school since it was opened in 1879 by Superintendent Richard Henry Pratt. It contains a list of every student who ever graduated. *Feci, quod poturi, faciant meliora potentes!* [*I have done what I could, may others more capable do better*]

(tosses the book to Irene)

The Romans - now they knew how to work and play! Their health depended on it! "Mens sana in corpore sano", a healthy mind in a healthy body they'd say! Structure! Superintendent Pratt said, "The most important thing in life is structure. Whomever loses his routine, loses his footing." Our school motto: "Kill the Indian and save the man!" ... okay, maybe not that one.

(wraps his arms around Maura)

Maura loves me! My wife loves me! I am in the best mood!

MAURA

Paul, you should go home. This meeting's only for family.

PAUL

Maura, I'm your husband ... Nicholas isn't family ... King's not -
(pointing at Alexander)

This guy ... who the hell is he?

(laughs)

Oh, you, Maura! You're so funny! We have a four o'clock dinner at Michael Preacher's house. All the families will be there.

MAURA

I won't.

MAURA (CONT'D.)

(pause, silence)

Oh, all right, I'll go! Just leave me alone. Please!

Maura storms off.

PAUL

Oh, well, yes, that's fine. Get some rest, Maura. I know how it is! We'll chat later at Michael Preacher's house!!!

(awkward pause)

Michael is such a nice man. He shared something strange with me yesterday. He said, "They're heading for disaster, Paul."

(checks his watch)

Your clock is seven minutes fast. "They're heading for disaster and there's nothing we can do about it," he said.

NICHOLAS

You are a great teacher, Paul Strong-Horse. A model of assimilation. Alexander wouldn't be able to lead our soldier boys to a war victory without men like you!

ALEXANDER

I'm not sure if I can guarantee you a victory, sir.

KING

How about just survival, Lazy?

JOHN IVAN

Victory over what, Nicholas? The Germans? The French? How about our oldest enemy - the United States of America? Over this shit!

KING

You are lost, Nicholas.

NATALIE (O.S.)

Lunch is served in the dining room everyone! We have deserts!

JOHN IVAN

(jumps up)

Ooo, apple pie? I can't get enough of your pie, Natalie!

MAURA

John Ivan, STOP! You will not get drunk today. Do you hear me? DO NOT GET DRUNK TODAY!

All move to the dining room.

JOHN IVAN

Drunk?! Who said anything about getting drunk? I want some apple pie. 'Sides I haven't had a drink in, what, two years?
(*everyone groans*)

Shut your mouth, Maura. Mind your own damn business.

MAURA

John Ivan, I'll punch you in the face if you look at a drink.
(*angry whisper*)

Damn it, I have to go spend another boring evening at Michael Preacher's house. I hate that man.

NICHOLAS

Don't go - simple as that.

JOHN IVAN

Yeah, Maura, don't go.

MAURA

"Yeah, Maura, don't go."
(*sulks into the dining room*)
I have such a shitty life.

JOHN IVAN

And we're off! To a Brave New World!

NICHOLAS

Just like Columbus and Copernicus!

KING

Just like a *WHITE MAN*, Nicholas Governor!!!

IRENE

King! Nicholas doesn't have to apologize for being educated and well-spoken. For being optimistic.

ALEXANDER

I should be going. It was nice to meet all of you ... again.

MAURA

No, you can't leave!

NATALIE
(*re-enters*)

Yes, please stay for lunch!

IRENE
You have to stay! I insist -

ALEXANDER
I shouldn't ... you're celebrating your sister's birthday.

NATALIE
Don't be silly.

Irene bounces in place.

ALEXANDER
Oh, bouncing ... well, okay, I'll stay. Happy Birthday, Irene.

Natalie and Alexander enter dining room. Nicholas and Irene linger.

IRENE
Maura's an ass. She only married Paul because Daddy told her to - 'cause Paul was "the best student Carlisle ever graduated".

NICHOLAS
You look very serious.

IRENE
I beat all his scores ... I hate King; he says scary angry things.

NICHOLAS
He's a scary angry man. Alexander's right, King was abandoned as a child. He doesn't know how to behave around people.

(hugs Irene)
Irene, my love, I know you're not ready, but when we're married-

IRENE
(rips away)
I am not marrying you, Nicholas! You don't know anything about love! You don't know anything about me!

NICHOLAS
I know my life at Carlisle is wonderful because of you. I know you make the struggle worthwhile, the fight ... your father said -

IRENE

(fighting tears)

My father, my *FATHER*, blah, blah, blah ...! Life at Carlisle is not wonderful. Not for Maura, not for Natalie, and certainly not for me! It's suffocating. I am more than what you think I am! I am more than this!

NICHOLAS

(laughs)

Of course you are!

Kathryn John bursts in wearing traditional Apache clothes.

KATHRYN

Aw, shit, I'm late. They've already started. Irene! Happy birthday, little sister! Oh, look at you! You're so pretty.
(to Nicholas)

Hello, Lieutenant Governor.

IRENE

Ha! "Lieutenant Governor"?! I never ... now that's just funny -
(Nicholas socks her)

Ow, fucker ... Kathryn, we are not sisters. We must keep proper courtesies. Thank you, you look nice too ... pfft, ha!

(laughs; Nicholas socks her)

In your royal Apache-ness getup. Hit me again, I dare you -

KATHRYN

Well, thank you, I -

Natalie enters.

NATALIE

Matthew! Kathryn John is here!

(a harsh whisper)

Kathryn, what are you wearing? That shabby dress and that green belt again? Dear, we've talked about your appearance.

KATHRYN

I know, but it's ... I just thought ... it's the closest thing I have to your gowns. You are all so beautiful.

NATALIE

Yes, I know. You need to try harder, Kathryn. You can't come over if you don't dress properly.

NATALIE (CONT'D.)

This is the Fortune-Boy house and we must keep up standards, be shining examples - **MATTHEW! KATHRYN JOHN IS HEEEEERE!!!** In the dining room, dear. Everyone is waiting.

*Kathryn hugs Natalie tightly.
Natalie freezes with disgust.*

KATHRYN

Thank you for inviting me, Natalie! Thank you for the opportunity to -

NATALIE

(shoves Kathryn into dining room)

Yes, that's enough of that. Off you go!

The crowd hushes. John Ivan pours wine. In the living room, Irene swaggers over to Natalie.

IRENE

"Thank you for inviting me?"

NATALIE

Be polite. Shut your face.

All enter the dining room.

IRENE

Commander He-Is-Lazy, this is our Navajo Apache, Kathryn John, my brother Matthew's lady-friend.

ALEXANDER

(shakes Kathryn's hand)

It is a pleasure.

MAURA

Aw, shit, give me a drink.

(rips John Ivan's away)

A toast, friends! Life is short, life is sweet - it's a hell of a lot better than long and bitter.

PAUL

Here, here! Wait, what? That was horrible language, Maura.

KATHRYN

Apologies, Commander. The Fortune-Boys have forgotten proper military courtesy. Their father's dead.

*Maura lunges to clobber Kathryn.
Natalie and Irene yank her down.*

ALEXANDER

Oh, no, no. I'm far too formal. This is nice ... quaint.

(drinks)

And the wine is wonderful. Where's it from?

KING

(a grand proclamation)

THE ASS OF A COCKROACH!

IRENE

You see!?! It's disgusting! Asses and swearing ...

(to Nicholas)

Oh, God, I'm going to throw up.

NICHOLAS

No, you're not. Sit down.

NATALIE

I'm roasting a nice turkey with apple-tart sauce for dinner if any of you gentlemen care to stop by tonight.

ALEXANDER

Turkey with apple-tart sauce sounds wonderful!

IRENE

Then by all means, please come. I'd love to show you what the girls over in the dormitory taught me. You ever see a ...?

JOHN IVAN

Someone help me find my eye-glasses; I set them down. Am I wrong or is our lovely Kathryn John wearing a costume?

KATHRYN

No, sir, I'm wearing an Apache dress my grandmother -

NICHOLAS

It's not a costume, John Ivan. It's traditional "regalia" made by the girl's Apache grandmother.

MAURA

A costume.

JOHN IVAN

Like I said.

IRENE

No, this one is authentic. I can smell it.

KING

That's my shoes. I stepped in horse-shit on my way over.

(checks shoe bottoms)

Nope, I was wrong. It's her Apache dress.

The room explodes with laughter.

MATTHEW

Kathryn's our guest! She's not wearing a uniform like Commander Lazy, but she tries. She doesn't own decent women's clothing!

A GASP. Irene guffaws. Maura smacks her. King mists himself. Kathryn dashes out in tears.

NATALIE

It doesn't smell that bad.

MATTHEW

(to John Ivan)

Look at you! You're one to talk! You slept in your clothes, didn't you, John Ivan!?! Look at your hair!

Matthew dashes after Kathryn.

JOHN IVAN

... what?

NATALIE

You do look a little like Kathryn, John Ivan.

JOHN IVAN

... I know ... I was drunk.

(King giggles; smiles)

... alone, in the dark, without my eye-glasses.

Matthew catches Kathryn.

MATTHEW

Kathryn, wait!

KATHRYN

I'm sorry.

MATTHEW

Kathryn.

KATHRYN

No, Matthew, I'm so sorry.

(heaves with tears)

I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know how to behave. I try to fit in, but ... what was I thinking? This is too hard!

MATTHEW

No, Kathryn, it's not. They're teasing. Don't listen to -

KATHRYN

Matthew! This world is so different from the reservation. I'm embarrassing you! I need to go apologize.

(moves toward the dining room)

I can't! I'll embarrass you more! Matthew!?! I don't know what to do! I'm afraid!!!

MATTHEW

It's this place, Kathryn. They are good people, believe me. They have good hearts. It's just this place.

KATHRYN

Matthew, I'm trying so hard.

MATTHEW

I know, Kathryn, I know. Please don't be upset. Give them a chance. They know ... they do. Please be patient.

(holds Kathryn, she cries)

You remember what we talked about? Spending more time with them, together maybe ... as my wife, Kathryn? Maybe?

KATHRYN

(throws her arms around him)

Oh, yes, Matthew! Yes, yes! I will be your wife!

They kiss. Lights out.

DANCE INTERLUDE 1

The Bride sings a love song in the old language. The Indian Children join her.

Lights up: We are back in the infant forest. The Children explode into a dance, laughing and playing like sprite fairies.

The Parents watch happily. The Groom joins his Bride.

The Parents drift off stage as the music builds and the dance reaches its zenith.

Suddenly, THREE GHOSTLY FIGURES storm on stage wearing decayed flowing robes and hoods - a combination of United States Cavalry and Grim Reaper.

The Ghosts maul the Children and sling them over their shoulders.

The Groom fights back, knocking a Ghost to the ground. From behind, the Lead Ghost brutally snaps the Groom's neck.

The Bride stands motionless. The other Children are stolen away.

The Lead Ghost moves to the Bride and grabs her. She cries out for her father.

She screams, calling for help. There is no answer ... the Lead Ghost steals her away.

Lights out.

ACT TWO

*Special up: on the painting of
Randolph Fortune-Boy. Maura and
Alexander enter the living room.*

MAURA (O.S.)

I hate this school! I hate my father! I mean ... what he did,
had to do. We're sending our children to war, Alexander!

ALEXANDER

I didn't know they're beaten and starved. I saw a girl tied to
a table with her hair winched down to keep her from moving.

MAURA

We need to do something.

ALEXANDER

You are so amazing, so beautiful -

MAURA

My husband is a queer!

(Alexander nods, speechless)

I never loved him. I can't deny ... you are so strong!

ALEXANDER

I hate fighting. I hate being their leader.

MAURA

I'm falling in ... behind. I'm losing control of -

ALEXANDER

Your clothes ... they're ravishing.

He tries to kiss her; she dodges.

MAURA

You all right?

ALEXANDER

Fine, I feel drunk. My wife is disgusted by Indians ... bitch.

MAURA

My father didn't teach me how to love. He only taught me how to
fight.

ALEXANDER

I guessed that.

In the dark dining room, Matthew sits reading a book. Kathryn enters wearing an elegant gown.

KATHRYN

Matthew? ... Matthew!?! ... MATTH ...!

MATTHEW

Kathryn.

KATHRYN

Do not sneak up on me, little man! Where's Flower? There's a candle burning in our bedroom! Who lit it? I should whip her. Matthew, say something! You are Randolph Fortune-Boy's son!

MATTHEW

I think I'm failing -

KATHRYN

What?

MATTHEW

... nothing.

KATHRYN

Koxtokis is here, Matthew. The school council sent him over with some papers for you to sign ... Matthew? ... FLOWER!!!

MATTHEW

... send him in, Kathryn. I'll be happy to take him.

Kathryn exits. Alexander and Maura stalk each other.

MAURA

Our people, they can't see. They're asleep ... WAKE UP! Fight for something! ... fight for anything.

ALEXANDER

You're incredible.

Maura spins away dramatically; she trips and falls over the ottoman.

Kathryn storms back into the dark dining room with Koxtokis.

KATHRYN

I don't want any of those damn trick-and-treaters in my house!

MATTHEW

We've already invited everyone over, dear.

KOXTOKIS

I have papers for you to sign, sir.

KATHRYN

Those "INDIANS" are filthy and violent ... Matthew?! ... FLOWER!!!

Kathryn exits. Alexander lifts Maura and pulls her close.

MAURA

We have to save our students. We have to be good ... better.

ALEXANDER

You have amazing eyes.

MAURA

(drags him over to the candles)

The light's better over here.

ALEXANDER

... you're right.

He kisses her. She laughs/snorts.

MAURA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to ... I'm sorry.

Maura kisses Alexander. Koxtokis touches Matthew's arm.

KOXTOKIS

Sir, the school council sent papers over for you to sign.

MATTHEW

I was fooled, Koxtokis! My father, my mother, my wife hates me. I'm Secretary of the Carlisle Indian School Council! *Secretary!* That's a woman's job! But it's the best I could ever hope for!

KOXTOKIS

I know. Just ignore it. It'll go away in a day or two.

MATTHEW

What?

KOXTOKIS

What?

MATTHEW

... what?

KOXTOKIS

I'm sorry. I'm a little hard of hearing. You have to speak up.

MATTHEW

I wanted to be a professor at Boston University. I put my faith in my family, marriage, a school full of lost little Indians ...

KOXTOKIS

Some council members went to Boston once - ordered pancakes at a fancy restaurant. One councilman ate forty! ... then he died.

MATTHEW

What?

KOXTOKIS

What?

MATTHEW

I thought love was supposed to erase hate, Koxtokis.

KOXTOKIS

You're right. Can I go now?

MATTHEW

This house is so cold.

(Koxtokis puts papers on table and exits)

... you can go, Koxtokis ... bring me those papers and you can ... he went. Figures. Nobody listens.

Matthew exits.

ALEXANDER

I don't want to be married. I want to be with y-

MAURA

Shhh, don't talk like that. Aw, go ahead and talk like that!

(yells)

I don't care! I DON'T CARE!!!

(a noise)

Shut up, someone's coming! Don't talk like that!

Maura dives on the couch.

Nicholas and Irene enter.

NICHOLAS

Okay, I look like a white man. I was born in Chicago, I have a rich father, BUT I am Cherokee! So I have a some German in me - that's no different than any of you. Hi, Maura! Hi, Alexander!

MAURA

Shut it.

NICHOLAS

(apologizing)

I know. You're right.

IRENE

What time are the trick-and-treaters coming over?

MAURA

I don't care.

NICHOLAS

Everyone says, "Nicholas is a white man - claims he's Cherokee, but all white men claim they're Cherokee. He's full of shit!"

IRENE

A lady came by the Post Office today; her son died of diarrhea. Shit himself to death, ha! Oh, my language. She wanted to send a letter to her brother in Chicago "General Delivery"! I told her don't be stupid. She started crying. I'm horrible.

NICHOLAS

I'm half-Cherokee. I swear on my mother's life. Great Grandpa was the chief of our tribe. I don't even like white people!

IRENE

What's the matter with you, Maura?

MAURA

You look like a twelve-year-old boy.

NICHOLAS

It's her haircut.

ALEXANDER

Yeah, that's what I thought!

IRENE

What?! No! Ugh, I hate this school! Makes me look like a twelve-year-old boy ... wearing this ugly dress ... in these heels -

NICHOLAS

I think you look lovely. You're beautiful, delicate -

IRENE

Shut up!

NICHOLAS

(apologizing)

I know. You're right.

MAURA

It's Daddy's fault.

IRENE

Everything's "Daddy's fault"! My hair, Nicholas' Cherokee mom, your marriage - oops! Guess not everything's daddy's fault.

NICHOLAS

We have toilets.

(dead silence, Maura laughs)

Books, clean uniforms - we've suffered, yes, nobody is denying that, but no one lives life without difficulty. On the bright side - no more massacres. Why are you laughing, Maura?

MAURA

Nothing. Sorry. You're doing great. Please continue.

NICHOLAS

You people! I came here to find my proud heritage but ... okay, birds fly south in the winter! They don't know where they're going or why they're going there, but the dumbest bird flies!

MAURA

Wait what?

NICHOLAS

In a hundred years you'll all be in exactly the same place!
Afraid of the world! Afraid of white people! Afraid of life!

ALEXANDER

In a hundred years, Nicholas, we'll have better lives. It's why
we're fighting and sacrificing -

Maura laughs.

NICHOLAS

Yes! Laugh!

MAURA

No, Nicholas, we need to believe in something. We are the ones
sacrificing for this war! We have nothing! Why is that!?!
Shakespeare once wrote, "There's nothing in this world can make
me joy; Life is as tedious as a twice told tale."

ALEXANDER

I wish I'd met you twenty years ago.

NICHOLAS

It's useless arguing with you two. Maura, I quit the military.

MAURA

I know, I heard. Now you'll be nothing.

*(John Ivan, hair a mess, enters the dining
room, sits and reads his newspaper)*

His highness, John Ivan ... with a fork shoved up his butt.

ALEXANDER

Anyone ever notice how much he talks?

IRENE

About himself. Bunch of useless nonsense.

NICHOLAS

Each night he locks himself up in his cabin and studies medicine
for our sake. He's a remarkable doctor really.

JOHN IVAN

IRENE FORTUNE-BOY! Come in here please!

MAURA

He can hear us?

JOHN IVAN

Nicholas! I'm not a doctor. I'm a medic. Irene! Venez ici!

*Irene stomps into the dining room.
She sits and plays solitaire.*

MAURA

Ever wonder why Irene looks so much like John Ivan?

NICHOLAS

Maura, don't be stupid. The Commander doesn't need to hear -

MAURA

My brother and sisters hate me 'cause I speak up for myself. My father made me lead them around like lost little puppies 'cause I have a loud mouth. Because I speak up for myself! I speak up for them! I had the shit knocked out of me, they didn't! Life will be better back in Boston.

ALEXANDER

A boy whispered Cherokee to his friend - something about all the birds outside his window - a guard heard it and threw him across the room; broke his collar bone. Boy hasn't spoke Indian, or of birds, since. You won't be happy in Boston; they won't let you.

NICHOLAS

There are always casualties ... even in training.

MAURA

King said, "Dying in the belief of something is not really death. But this school doesn't believe in anything."

KING

(passing through)

What I said was, "Carlisle believes in preparing us for war. But being prepared for war means we're already dead."

KATHRYN

(enters dining room)

Oh, everyone! My baby just kicked! Someone! Come here! Feel!

JOHN IVAN

You missed one ovulation, Kathryn! You and Matthew are only married a month. Baby couldn't be more than the size of a jellybean. Kick as much as it likes, you won't feel a thing.

KATHRYN

(glowing; to her belly)

I feel you, don't I, "Michael"? We're joined.

JOHN IVAN

Crazy. Couldn't know if it's a boy or girl ... or gas.

KING

Kathryn, why are you naming your kid after our school's superintendent? Why not after its father, Matthew?

KATHRYN

It's obvious, isn't it? Michael's a great man ... I mean, well -

KING

If that were my child, day it's born, I'd kill it and eat it.

KATHRYN

Oh, God!

*King mists himself and walks away.
Matthew enters the dining room.
Kathryn storms out.*

MATTHEW

Good evening, everyone! How are we?

CARL (O.S.)

Cold, sir!

*Student soldiers Carl Flies-Ahead
and Peter Defends-the-Rock enter
to CHEERS.*

MATTHEW

Hey, hey! There they are!

JOHN IVAN

Our war heroes!

IRENE

'bout time.

CARL

Sir, does it usually snow this much so soon, on All Hallows Eve?

KING

Every year!

PETER

Ms. Irene? Students are coming by soon but, if it's all right, I bought you a gift from Sears-Roebuck - a colored pencil set.

IRENE

Ugh, Peter, I'm a grown woman not a little girl ...

(opens gift)

Oh, look how pretty!

CARL

Doctor, are you dressing in costume for All Hallows Eve?

JOHN IVAN

Carl, my dear young man, I am not a doctor - I am a medic. And yes, I'm already wearing a costume. I'm a wild savage Indian.

MAURA

Flower! Bring us some tea, please!

FLOWER

(crosses to dining room)

I'm right behind you ... don't have to yell.

MATTHEW

Flower! In here too, please!

FLOWER

(enters dining room; snatches teapot)

It's right in front of you! Be right back.

(enters living room; smiles at Alexander)

Sir, I almost forgot, I have a note for you.

KATHRYN (O.S.)

Flower!!!

FLOWER

I'M COMING! Shit. Everyone stay right the hell where you are!

FLOWER (CONT'D.)

(hands Alexander note; pours Maura's tea)

No one worry about this old poor woman, thanks!

ALEXANDER

Damn it, that woman! I'm sorry, Maura, I need to leave.

MAURA

Why? What's wrong?

ALEXANDER

My wife poisoned herself again. I'm sorry, this is very rude. You are incredibly beautiful.

*Alexander kisses Maura and exits.
Nicholas gawks. Maura SLAPS him.*

FLOWER

Here's your tea, Maura. And Commander ... now where'd he go!?! I just poured him his tea, the ignoramus.

MAURA

SHUT YOUR MOUTH! You're the ignoramus! Say bad things about everybody. Irritating old bitch. Give me that damn teapot!

*(grabs teapot, storms into dining room,
throws the cards off table, and pours tea)*

Who wants tea!? Your cards are all over the fucking place! Move! Give me a place to sit! I'm a woman! MOVE!!! Shut your mouths! DRINK! ... your stupid tea!

IRENE

God, Maura. You're in a bad mood.

FLOWER

(enters and hugs Maura)

The Commander will be back -

MAURA

Don't touch me! Don't even talk to me, "I'm in a bad mood".

JOHN IVAN

I wouldn't touch her.

MAURA

You know what?

MAURA (CONT'D.)

*(leaps table, chokes John Ivan; they crash
to the floor)*

No one ever knows what the hell you're talking about!

*Matthew and Irene pull Maura off.
King and Nicholas carry John Ivan
to living room; set him on sofa.
Kathryn storms in.*

KATHRYN

Maura! Mais vous avez des manieres grossiers! Deja ne dort pas! *[You're being uncouth! I can't sleep!]* Foul mouth! My baby should not be around this!!!

She storms out.

MAURA

ALL RIGHT!!! ... who the hell taught Kathryn to speak French?

NICHOLAS

Doctor, are you okay?

JOHN IVAN

I'm not a doctor.

KING

You know he never went to medical school, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

King, I don't want to fight with you.

KING

I'm not fighting with you, Nikki, I'm being myself. You people talk about love; love is just an excuse to give up; not fight.

NICHOLAS

King, there are so many of us here at Carlisle. We have strength for greatness. If we work together we can -

JOHN IVAN

Nicholas. You're a finely educated man, finely assimilated. That meal was impeccable - onion soup and a lovely roast Portobello beef casserole.

KING

You're delirious, John Ivan. Must've hit your head. Portobello isn't a beef casserole. It's a plant, genius ... a mushroom.

JOHN IVAN

Silly boy. A Portobello is not a mushroom. It's a casserole made from beef.

KING

A Portobello is a mushroom, shit head.

JOHN IVAN

You have never eaten portobello, King-Shit, 'cause you've never been away from Carlisle. You're barely off the Reservation.

KING

I've never eaten Portobello because it smells like rotten feet!

Everyone enters the living room.

MATTHEW

Enough, *GENTLEMEN!* Please.

NICHOLAS

(grabs Matthew and dances)

"And there we see a swamping gun; large as a log of maple -

JOHN IVAN

"Upon a duced little cart; a load for father's cattle -

NICHOLAS and MATTHEW

"Yankee Doodle keep it up; Yankee Doodle dandy! Mind the music and the step, and let the girls be handy!"

Laughter; Nicholas kisses Matthew.

NICHOLAS

Let's get drunk, Matthew! Then I'll take you to that Boston University and make 'em let you in!

KING

Which one? There are several universities in Boston.

MATTHEW

There is only one Boston University.

KING

No, there are several.

MATTHEW

You're right! They're everywhere! Is that better?

KING

There are several universities in Boston -

*Everyone boos. King storms off
into the dining room.*

KING (CONT'D.)

... the hell with all of you.

IRENE

What time are the trick and treaters coming over?

MAURA

I don't care. You people need to stand up for our students!

CARL

No one needs to stand up for me.

MAURA

Sit down.

(Carl obediently sits on floor)

Matthew's a failure! Natalie's in denial! Irene's a child!

IRENE

What!? You don't know what the hell you're talking about, Maura. I'd walk to Boston right now by myself if I had to!

*Kathryn enters and whispers in
Matthew's ear. She exits.*

MATTHEW

Everyone! Please leave. Kathryn's not feeling well.

IRENE

She's fine. She's lying.

MAURA

This isn't her house - she just acts like it is.

MATTHEW

This house is part mine, Maura. Can we all just share, please?
And right now, Kathryn needs her rest.

Everyone slowly exits.

CARL

... but I bathed.

PETER

Let the lady sleep, Carl. I hear she's pregnant.

John Ivan and Matthew are last.

MATTHEW

Marriage is a complete waste of time, John Ivan - it's horrible.

JOHN IVAN

It's far better than loneliness, Matthew. Matthew, I was in
love with your mother.

MATTHEW

I know, John Ivan. I know.

*They exit. Irene blows out
candles. King re-enters.*

KING

Where'd everybody go?

IRENE

Home. They all went home.

KING

Irene? I love you. I was rude earlier and I'm sorry for that.
You're elegant and kind. You're so beautiful. You're the only
one who understands me. I know I can't make you love me ...

IRENE

Good night, King. Please go home now.

KING

... but I'll kill any man who ever tries to love you.

KATHRYN

(enters in nightgown)

Oh, God! King, you're still here! I'm not even dressed!

KING

Pfft, who cares?

King stares at Irene. He exits.

KATHRYN

Irene? Are you all right? You look like you've seen a ghost.

IRENE

I was ... King ... it's nothing. You ever been to Boston, Kathryn?

KATHRYN

Nope, never. Don't really want to.

FLOWER

(enters)

Kathryn? Michael Preacher is here, outside, waiting on his sleigh. He asked to see you ... he's waiting on a sleigh.

KATHRYN

Michael Preacher's here on his sleigh!? He's so silly! He said he'd like to take me for a ride, but ...! Irene, you hear that!?!

IRENE

Yes. I hear he's outside. Waiting. On his sleigh.

KATHRYN

Tell Michael I'll be right there, Flower.

(Flower exits)

Isn't this exciting, Irene?! Irene, I'll be right back.

Kathryn exits. Flower re-enters.

FLOWER

I didn't tell Michael Preacher. I hate her.

Doorbell rings. Irene and Flower dive behind the sofa.

IRENE

Is that Michael Preacher, Flower?

FLOWER

I think it's those damn trick-and-treaters!!!

IRENE

Tell them to go away! Tell them no one's home!

FLOWER

If no one's home, how could I answer the door?

(doorbell RINGS; Irene shoves Flower out)

OH, ALL RIGHT!!!

*Flower storms off. Paul, Natalie,
and Alexander enter.*

PAUL

That school meeting was awful! Irene, congratulate your sister. Natalie was just named the new head mistress of Carlisle.

ALEXANDER

Hey!? Where'd everybody go?

NATALIE

Irene? Weren't the students coming over?

IRENE

Aaaagh! I don't feel like being interrogated!

PAUL

Somebody's being a pissy little girl. Where's Maura? And why is Michael Preacher waiting outside? On a sleigh?

IRENE

Ugh, Paul!

ALEXANDER

I can't go home. Let's go get drunk. Paul, we need to talk.

PAUL

No. I just wanted a little wine, some pleasant company ... O fallacem hominum spem! *[Oh, the deceit of human hope]*

NATALIE

I'll go get drunk with you, Alexander! Ow, my head hurts.

*All exit except for Irene.
Kathryn crosses in her fur coat.*

KATHRYN

I'll be back in half an hour, Irene! Make that an hour!

Kathryn giggles and exits.

IRENE

... I hate this school.

Lights out.

DANCE INTERLUDE 2

*Sound cue: Cold bitter wind.
Music: A haunting melody. Lights
up: on a blue-grey prison cell
world.*

*Scared Indian STUDENTS dressed in
wool uniforms stand waiting. The
boys have short hair. The girls
wear long dresses.*

*The Military Ghosts drag in the
new Indian Children they stole
from the forest - the Bride among
them.*

The Scared Students shrink back.

*The Ghosts throw the new Indian
Children to the ground and leave.*

*The Students emerge. Some strut
on stage, mocking the Ghosts.*

*The new Indian Children stand
frightened and confused. The
Students smile and offer comfort.*

*The Bride moves off alone. She
sings a beautiful song of longing
and hope - evil cannot win.*

*The Ghosts burst back on stage.
The Students and the Indian
Children retreat, but the Ghosts
toss them around like rag dolls.
The children CRY and SCREAM.*

*The Ghosts stop. They back away
and remove their hoods.*

They are American Indians.

Lights out.

INTERMISSION

DANCE INTERLUDE 3

Music up: Stereotypical "War Path" drums. Lights up: We are back in the prison cell. The stage is bare.

The Students hop on stage in stereotypical "Injun" fashion: face paint, construction-paper feathers, rubber tomahawks, whooping and pounding their mouths in the common cliché. The Bride is in the middle.

The Bride SCREAMS out in disgust. She rips off her feathers and throws her tomahawk to the ground. Other students beg her to put the costume back on.

A BABY-FACED BOY rips off his feathers. He SCREAMS/SINGS in the old language.

More students rip off their feathers and SING. They overpower the "War Path" music.

All of the Students rip off their feathers. They are free of their stereotypes. Victory!

Suddenly, the Ghosts dash in. The Students stop celebrating; several fall to the ground and obediently gather up their feathers.

The Bride, the Baby-Faced Boy, and two other students stand defiantly against the Ghosts.

Lights out.

ACT THREE

Sound cue: fire siren, people screaming. Lights up: A bedroom, 4:30 AM, windows glow with fire. Maura lies asleep on one of two beds. Natalie and Flower rush in.

NATALIE

Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Oh, my God!

FLOWER

The girls are hiding under our front porch screaming for help!
The main dormitory is completely on fire!

NATALIE

(piles dresses on Flower)

Here, take these and these! Those girls are half-naked!

FLOWER

Natalie! I can't carry all of these!

KATHRYN

(strolls in)

That's because you're useless, Flower. Natalie, why do you keep that old woman around? Flower should be back on her reservation living out the rest of her life in the sticks. She makes us look soft.

MAURA

(grabs pillow and storms out)

It's Christmas Eve! Shit! Be nice to each other, fuckers!

NATALIE

Kathryn, why do you always pick on Flower? Ow, my head hurts.

KATHRYN

I'm sorry, Natalie. I didn't mean to upset you.

NATALIE

We're supposed to protect these children, to teach them, love them! But you hate them! The things you say, you make me SICK!

KATHRYN

(slaps Natalie; then hugs her)

I'm sorry, Natalie. Forgive me. You were talking crazy.

NATALIE

Ow ... no, I'm sorry. You're right. I am going crazy. I need help. Someone please help us! We're in the bedroom!

KOXTOKIS

(lumbers in excited)

This reminds me of the Great Chicago fire of 1871! Oh, you should have seen those white people shit their pants!

NATALIE

(piles dresses on him)

Koxtokis please hurry! Give these to the girls under our porch.

KOXTOKIS

Yes, ma'am.

Flower and Koxtokis hurry out.

Alexander enters breathing heavy.

ALEXANDER

My daughters are fine! Someone said they were caught in the fire, but they're okay! They were standing in our doorway; people screaming all around. I'm no savior. Christmas is no time for orphans burning up in a school! "Oliver Twisting"!

(Maura and Irene enter quietly)

The fire is everywhere and nobody knows what to do! ... just run and hide. This is what it must've been like when Columbus first arrived; colonists burned our villages; stole everything we had. LOOK AT US!!! Look how we treat each other! Our students hate us! They hate themselves! We won't even speak our language!

(sings)

Jingle bells, jingle bells ... excuse me, I feel nauseous.

MAURA

Jingle all the way.

ALEXANDER

... jingle all the way.

Nicholas, Paul, and King enter.

Paul lies down next to Maura.

Nicholas instantly falls asleep.

KING

The fire is almost out. You are all cowards.

ALEXANDER

Aw, King. Let's go help the students clean up.

KING

(both exit)

Yes, sir.

IRENE

I hate King. Nicholas is asleep. That's nice. **NICHOLAAAASS!!!**

NICHOLAS

I'm up! I'm not asleep! I'm not a white man! I'll kick your teeth in! I'm going to work on my railroad in Chicago ... my father's railroad ... I am sorry ... what'd you say?

(tenderly to Irene)

Why are you sad? It's a time for happiness, not worry. I'd give my life for these children; for you. That makes me Indian.

MAURA

Enough, Nicholas. Go home now, please.

NICHOLAS

Maura? I can't see yooouu! There's no light. The morning will be here soon, Irene, this darkness will pass. Don't be afraid. You are so beautiful. You are my light through the shadows.

MAURA

Nicholas Governor! Please go away.

NICHOLAS

(giggles, exits)

I'm going -

MAURA

(lying down gently)

Are you asleep, Nitoxkotaki?

PAUL

What did you call me?

MAURA

Paul Strong-Horse Nitoxkotaki ... you look exhausted.

PAUL

Maura, I love you, but don't ever call me by that name. Only my father calls me that name, and only on our reservation.

MAURA

No, he doesn't! That's not true!

IRENE

She's tired, Paulie. Let her rest. You should go home.

John Ivan enters drunk. He picks up a china clock and examines it.

PAUL

Maura is the most wonderful,
beautiful WIFE IN THE WORLD!

MAURA

(angry)
Amo, amas, amat, SHIIIT!

PAUL

See! A breath of fresh air! I married Maura five years ago - I swear it only feels like ten! HA! I make myself laugh. Oh, we can't be more together than this - huddled together, alive - our ancestors died for this, you know? No one sees that in Boston or New York. Two months left and Carlisle is burned to the -

JOHN IVAN

(SLAMS clock on floor)

SMASH!!! Into a million pieces!

KATHRYN

Drunk - Ass - Indian.

PAUL

That was an expensive clock, John Ivan!

IRENE

That was my mother's clock, John Ivan!

JOHN IVAN

Maybe. Maybe we're all already dead. Why are you staring at me? Kathryn is fucking Michael Preacher and you won't see that! Christmas is time to get drunk and cuss each other! They toast us on the reservations - those PRISON CELLS. We're their last bastion of hope! Honestly, that's just fucking great!

(sings)

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!

JOHN IVAN (CONT'D.)

(Peter enters covered in soot; John Ivan dances with him)

London bridges burning down, burning down ...!

*John Ivan falls out the door.
Maura giggles. Flower enters.*

PETER

(sings and dances; laughing with Maura)

London bridges burning down, burning down!

IRENE

It's not funny! IT'S NOT FUNNY!!! Everything is gone!

PETER

Everything! My letters, my photographs - all gone! All burned!

PAUL

Maura, stop -

MAURA

"Maura, stop! Be quiet! Be a HYPOCRITE like me!" I'm not stopping, Paul! NO! No, I won't be quiet! I won't be like you! Natalie is a coward! Matthew sold our house to Carlisle and gave the money to Kathryn! Kathryn, you give us our money back!

PAUL

Maura, Matthew owes money to everyone! Yelling at Kathryn won't change that -

MAURA

Why are you defending her? I am your wife! This isn't her house, Paul. This isn't fair!

PAUL

I make a fine wage, Maura. We have money. I give you everything you could ever -

MAURA

This isn't about money, Paul!

PAUL

Kan-nitsi-nanat nitxo-pataki ixp-nistoa, Maura. *[All I own is yours, Maura.]*

MAURA

I know, Paul, I know that ... Can I just be angry please?

(flops on bed)

But whatever you say, dear. Go home, Nitoxkotaki.

PAUL

Yes. Get some sleep, Maura. I'll wait for you downstairs.

(kisses her and exits)

Jingle bells, jingle bells ... lots of singing tonight.

FLOWER

Natalie? Please don't throw me out.

NATALIE

Oh, Flower, you are our nanny. Nobody's throwing you out.

KATHRYN

Wanna bet? She'd be more at home on her reservation.

NATALIE

Flower has lived with us all my life, Kathryn! She's family.

KATHRYN

No, she's not! She's a servant who can't take care of herself! Christmas is a time for new beginnings - I used to wear animal skins; I don't any more. Our students were heathens, but now they're going to war to be something else or die trying to be. And all Flower does is eat, sleep, and sit on her ass!

NATALIE

Then let her eat, sleep, and sit on her ass!

KATHRYN

She is our servant, Natalie! Why can't you see that?! We have cooks and nurses! Why do we need this one old woman?

A siren blares outside.

NATALIE

Aw, fuck ... I've aged ten years tonight.

KATHRYN

Natalie, you hide in that classroom all day long while I work in this house all day long! If anyone's gonna say anything about anybody then I will be the one saying something about somebody!

NATALIE

You're not saying nothing about nobody, Kathryn!

KATHRYN

I want that old bitch out of my house by tomorrow! I swear to God if you don't get her out of my sight right now -

Maura jumps up and shoves the side of Kathryn's head. Kathryn falls, stumbles up, grabs Flower, exits.

KATHRYN (CONT'D.)

Flower, honey, come on, let's go clean something. I'll help.

PETER

It's Christmas, we should stay positive. We can't win, can we? Nothing to win. If we honor Jesus, we dishonor our own people.

Peter exits. There's a NOISE. Natalie looks out the window.

IRENE

What is that?

NATALIE

John Ivan. Drunk. He's coming back inside. I'm hiding.

Natalie grabs Maura and Irene and hides. John Ivan staggers in.

JOHN IVAN

"Tradition" ... "God" ... Whose? Christ's or the Indians?

(laughs)

Defeated by the United States of America?! Pathetic, lonely, drunk - I am not a doctor! I am a medic! I forgot my home. Boston is my reservation. Our parents were lost. We are lost!

(sobs)

I can't help you. Once, maybe, maybe once ... That town woman, that white woman - she died. I treated her, I killed her! It was the Indian's fault. Study, practice, do right, don't turn it to shit. This isn't freedom. We do what they want!

(laughs)

Talk about Voltaire and Shakespeare; we never read those books! Liars! Cowards! You're not mystical or noble. Trinkets are not your identity! YOU'RE NOT WHAT THEY PACK IN THEIR MUSEUMS!

JOHN IVAN (CONT'D.)

We let them win and now we admire them? Education, assimilation ... murderization? She died last Wednesday. I remember everything. Swallow it. Don't say it. Get drunk on it.

The men rush in. The sisters emerge from their hiding place.

ALEXANDER

We heard yelling.

JOHN IVAN

... what time is it?

NICHOLAS

It's nearly five A.M., doctor.

IRENE

Doctor, you look tired. You should get some sleep.

JOHN IVAN

Madam, I am not tired. I am not a doctor, Madam.

PAUL

You just need some firewater inside you right, John Ivan? Match the fire outside? "In vino veritas"! There's truth in wine!

IRENE

King Itamistsiksipoko, please go away.

KING

What? Why? Nicholas is allowed in.

ALEXANDER

We should all leave. Let's give the sisters back their bedroom.

All exit except for the sisters.

IRENE

I can't take this! It's CHRISTMAS! We should be happy! Matthew should not be married to Kathryn! He should not be on Michael Preacher's school council! Everyone knows about Michael and Kathryn; they all laugh behind Matthew's back. Our clothes, our house - they're not ours! We only pretend they are!

NATALIE

Irene -

IRENE

NO! Life used to be easy! I used to be beautiful! I can't remember the Italian word for *SEX*! I can't remember what Mama looked like! I'm forgetting everything! I can't see; I can't -
(hyperventilates)
 ... breathe ... Oh, God, I can't breathe ... I can't see or breathe!

NATALIE

(laughs)

Irene, sweetie, it's okay.

IRENE

Nuh-uh! It's not okay! I'm twenty-five years old! I should be humping in our barn not watching it burn! I work for this, this school! I'm old and ugly and I should just kill myself.

NATALIE

Don't cry, Irene, I have it so much worse than you.

IRENE

I'm not crying! Don't touch me. I'm not crying. Get away.

NATALIE

Irene, I think you should marry Michael Preacher.

IRENE

WHAT!?!

NATALIE

I mean Nicholas Governor ... sorry.

(laughs; Irene cries)

You know what Christmas really is, Irene? A time for peace and goodwill. Our parents brought us here for a good reason; they knew it was for the best. That's real love. So Nicholas is a white man and not so good-looking - everyone gets married, sweetheart.

IRENE

I wanted a handsome and strong man.

NATALIE

You'll end up an old maid.

*Kathryn enters carrying a candle.
The sisters dive for cover.
Kathryn exits; the sisters emerge.*

MAURA

That bitch. I bet she set fire to the school.

NATALIE

Maura, don't be stupid. You're the stupidest person here.

MAURA

You bitch. All you do is make cookies. Irene! Natalie! I have a confession I want to make! Ow, my head hurts.

IRENE

Your head hurts? That's your confession?

MAURA

SHUT UP please! I was going to be a doctor and, as you know, I was the best student Carlisle ever graduated.

(Irene scoffs, Maura socks her)

But Daddy told me to marry Paul, so I did. Natalie, listening? I'm only going to say this once ... okay ... I'm so nervous, but I have to say it ... I'm in love with that man you just saw leave.

NATALIE

You're in love with Nicholas?

MAURA

... um, no.

IRENE

Oh, my God! You're in love with John Ivan!

MAURA

What? No!

NATALIE

Michael Preacher?

MAURA

He wasn't even here! Ugh, I should slap you!

IRENE

Maura, I'm getting irritated.

MAURA

Why do I talk to you? I'm in love with Alexander He-Is-Lazy!

*Kathryn re-enters. The sisters
dive for cover. Kathryn exits.
The sisters crawl back out.*

IRENE

... this is ridiculous.

NATALIE

I'm not listening! So shut your stupid mouth, stupid face!

MAURA

I - CAN'T - HELP - IT!

NATALIE

I - CAN'T - HEAR - YOU!

MAURA

I fell in love with Alexander's awkwardness, with his funny voice, with his hopefulness ... with his two beautiful daughters!

NATALIE

You're talking to yourself, Maura! And I'm not listening!

MAURA

Natalie, I'm in love with Alexander. And you know what? He loves me! He's not afraid of me! Irene -
(yanks Irene close, sits)

Irene, how long can we live like this? Carlisle's winning. We're dying. We have to take risks. That's my confession. I'll be quiet now like the sleeping princess in that story.

Matthew and Koxtokis enter.

MATTHEW

I don't understand you! What do you want?

KOXTOKIS

I told you ten times, Matthew Fortune-Boy -

MATTHEW

Do not call me "Matthew Fortune-Boy"! You may call me "Professor Fortune-Boy".

KOXTOKIS

Professor Fortune-Boy, the soldiers are asking to go through your garden to reach Letort creek for water to fight the fire.

MATTHEW

Thank you, Koxtokis. The soldiers may go through our garden.
(Koxtokis exits)

Where's Natalie?

(Natalie steps forward)

Oh, good. I lost my key to the cupboard. May I use yours?

(Natalie hands him the key)

Damn that Koxtokis! "Matthew Fortune-Boy". His arrogance, right!?! That fire was big! They say it's almost out.

(Irene walks away)

Why so quiet? We don't talk any more. Maura? Are we fighting? Good, let's have it out once and for all!

Matthew hops around his sisters.

NATALIE

Matthew, stop. This is a horrible night.

MATTHEW

Why are you angry? Christmas is always a disappointment. All of the students' gifts? They were in the barn - the whole lot burned, gone, nothing left. I hate this place too! I never pretended to be anybody's leader.

ALEXANDER (O.S.)

(sings outside window)

Jingle bells, jingle bells!

MAURA

Jingle all the way!

(jumps up, grabs her coat, hugs sisters)

Good luck, Natalie. Sweet dreams, Irene. Good night, Matthew - you ass - go to bed; leave the girls alone; we'll talk about it tomorrow. Try to get a good night's sleep next to your woman.

Maura exits.

NATALIE

She's right, Matthew. It's bedtime. We'll talk tomorrow.

MATTHEW

Kathryn is not a bad person. She tries to fit in -

MATTHEW (CONT'D.)

She wears white women's clothes, speaks their language. I love her. You should. Are you angry I gave up teaching? I dishonored our parents? They never sent children off to war! Off to die! But I am! I'm on the school council! And, yes, I'm proud of that! Are you mad because I sold our house? I owe four thousand dollars of debt to keep us living the way we were raised! I hold us together!

(Natalie and Irene walk away)

And your glorious father gave me nothing except a punch in the fucking mouth for not being the man he was! He left us nothing!

PAUL

(calls; then enters)

MAURA!?! ... Has anyone seen Maura? Where is she? ... Maura!

Paul exits. Natalie lies down.

MATTHEW

Kathryn is honorable and decent. I want us to be happy, but it's all a lie. Natalie? Irene? Please. I'm not -

He stops and exits. Paul enters.

PAUL

Maura's not here? ... This is incredible.

Paul exits. There's a knock.

IRENE

Natalie? Is someone knocking?

NATALIE

It's John Ivan. He's still drunk.

IRENE

Natalie? I'm sorry this is such a horrible night. I'm sorry I cried. Natalie?

NATALIE

Yes.

IRENE

What's going to happen?

NATALIE

I don't know, Irene. We'll be fine. Try to get some sleep.

IRENE

Natalie? I'll marry Nicholas. He's a good man if you think so.

(lies down next to Natalie)

Merry Christmas, Natalie.

NATALIE

Merry Christmas, Irene.

Lights out.

DANCE INTERLUDE 4

Sound cue: A SERGEANT barks out orders. Soldiers march en mass. Lights up: Gold morning light.

YOUNG SOLDIERS hurry across the stage to join their regiments.

Music up: Brass, heroic, majestic.

The BABY-FACE BOY enters wearing a World War I infantry uniform. He carries a rifle, lugs a heavy backpack, and dons a metal helmet.

He stumbles. His helmet falls to the ground. He bends down to retrieve it and the weight of his backpack pushes him to his knees.

Alone, the Baby-Face Boy breaks and silently cries. A STUDENT REGIMENT marches on stage. He joins them.

The Soldiers move full of duty and courage, fearless, exhilarated to be heading off to war.

The Sergeant barks out a military cadence. The Students march off.

The Baby-Face Boy's helmet lies center stage. He dashes in, bends down, and his rifle falls to the ground. His backpack forces him to his knees. Baby-Face wrestles himself up and walks off to join his regiment.

The Sergeant barks out his military cadence. The Students join him -

ACT FOUR

Military cadence fades. Lights up: Front lawn. Nicholas, Irene, Paul, and Matthew stand with Peter and Carl who wear WWI uniforms. John Ivan sits in a chair.

NICHOLAS

Don't be afraid, boys. Five battalions are leaving with you.

PETER

Carlisle lied to us; we're not supposed to be fighting in a war.

CARL

We'll be fine, Pete.

PETER

No, we won't, Carl. Miss Irene, here's my name tag. If, um, something happens to me, can you make sure my parents get it?

IRENE

Of course, Peter. There's nothing to be afraid of.

CARL

Thank you all for everything. You know, dying's not so bad.

PAUL

Who said anything about dying!? Come on now, you'll be fine.
(emotional, hugs boys)

Go on, get on with you.

CARL

Let's go, Pete. Goodbye Carlisle! A-ik-si-ma-tsi!

They exit. Maura enters. She hugs the boys as they leave.

JOHN IVAN

They didn't say goodbye to me.

IRENE

You didn't say goodbye to them.

JOHN IVAN

I'll meet up with them tomorrow morning in New York City.

MAURA

(walks over)

Crazy old man ... you just going to sit there on your fat ass?

JOHN IVAN

Yes.

MAURA

... move over.

PAUL

Did everyone hear? Nicholas kicked King's ass in the middle of the street last night! In a fistfight!

NICHOLAS

(embarrassed, goes inside)

It wasn't a fistfight.

JOHN IVAN

No, not a fistfight. Nicholas just called King an "apple" - told him he's red on the outside, WHITE in the middle! Ha! King wanted to kill Nicholas! Supposed to settle it today.

MAURA

You're letting them fight? King will kill Nicholas.

JOHN IVAN

Nicholas needs to learn to stand up for himself. There's a chance he could kick King's ass. Lord knows King needs it.

MATTHEW

Doctors shouldn't want people to fight.

JOHN IVAN

Then it's a good thing I'm not a doctor, isn't it, Matthew?

IRENE

Momma wanted us to take care of each other.

MAURA

Momma wanted a lot of things, Irene. Silly dreams now -

PAUL

My father told us stories. We pretended to be characters from his fairytales - change our voices, walk like them!

JOHN IVAN

My sister wouldn't let go of my hand when they dragged the others away. Off to boarding school. She made them take her too - so I wouldn't be alone. So stubborn. Their sacrifices - was any of it worthwhile?

PAUL

You are answering your own question. Today is worthwhile! Today, this day, we finally get to stand up and fight!!!

IRENE

For this country, Paul ... and they hate us.

PAUL

You talk like they're forcing us to go! We're fighting for our own freedom -

JOHN IVAN

Paul Strong-Horse, why'd you shave your mustache off? Your face looks too smooth - it looks like my ass.

PAUL

When my grandpa was a boy, a soldier gave him a blanket. It was infected with smallpox. My grandpa watched his mother and sister die from the smallpox it carried. But he told me, he told me that the soldier, that boy, looked lost.

Sound cue: "Waltzing Matilda"

IRENE

Fuck ... "Waltzing Matilda"! Kathryn's teaching Michael Preacher to dance to it. They go at it for hours! She's not pregnant, you know.

PAUL

Michael Preacher's here?! Oh, let's all go in and say hello!

Paul drags everyone inside except Maura and John Ivan. Silence.

MAURA

My father loved these students. He loved them more than his own children. He was always with them.

JOHN IVAN

He loved you, Maura. You were his daughter. Why are you angry?

MAURA

Because! I don't know ... I feel ... broken ... on the inside. I don't have a home any more, John Ivan. And I didn't think my parents would ever leave.

JOHN IVAN

We all eventually leave, Maura.

MAURA

(fighting tears)

No! They abandoned me, John Ivan! Years ago. And so ... I turned my back on them! Everything they believed.

JOHN IVAN

None of us are who we thought we'd be.

MAURA

None of this is what my parents wanted.

JOHN IVAN

No, it's not.

MAURA

John Ivan, call me when Alexander arrives ... please.

*She exits. Carl yells off-stage:
A-IK-SI-MA-TSI! Matthew enters.*

MATTHEW

Quit all that hollering! Shut the hell up already!

JOHN IVAN

They'll be gone soon enough, Matthew.

MATTHEW

Kathryn and Michael are going at it in the middle of our floor in front of everybody. Think you'll ever come back, John Ivan?

JOHN IVAN

(laughs)

Only in a pine box I hope! Maybe if I survive, Matthew, maybe.

MATTHEW

Why did my father bring us to this place?

JOHN IVAN

So you could meet your lovely wife.

MATTHEW

She's a lunatic - the worst person I know.

JOHN IVAN

Matthew, if you ever do leave this place, don't look back.
You'll fall in love with it all over again just like your wife.

MATTHEW

I'm afraid of being alone, John Ivan. Am I the lunatic?

KING

(enters with Koxtokis)

No, Matthew, you're not. John Ivan, it's time. When I broke my leg, my parents carried me to the army's hospital ... I saw them beaten for it ... and then I never saw them again. I was nine, Matthew. The pain went away, but the scar didn't. The people we love the most make us who we are, so we all matter.

JOHN IVAN

(stands gingerly)

King, "the mystic sage". Ow, shit on a stick! I'll be back.
Take Shakespeare here to go get his ass kicked by Nicholas.

KING

"In peace there's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility; but when the blast of war blows in our ears, then imitate the actions of the tiger!" ... that's Shakespeare.

(mists himself with perfume)

I used a whole bottle of this today; still smell like a corpse.

JOHN IVAN

(exits with King)

Tigers, Shakespeare, and corpses ... oh, my.

KOXTOKIS

I have papers for you to sign, professor.

MATTHEW

(stands and exits)

Koxtokis, leave me alone. Please. I beg you.

KOXTOKIS

All these scared people; I've seen worse. Never be good enough.

Nicholas and Irene enter.

IRENE

Happy stupid Valentine's Day! Shipping our students off to war!

NICHOLAS

Valentine's Day was originally for martyrs ... originally.

IRENE

Nicholas, when we're married, do not always correct me - please. I can't stand these stupid Indians ... sight of their ridiculous new uniforms!

NICHOLAS

I have to leave. I'm seeing some friends off this morning.

IRENE

You're lying, Nicholas. What happened between you and King?

NICHOLAS

I don't ... what? I've always had trouble looking in your eyes. You are beautiful. You make all my dreams come true. I can give you anything you want. But that isn't enough, is it, Irene?

IRENE

I can be a good wife, Nicholas; I'll learn to be happy with you.

NICHOLAS

But you don't love me.

IRENE

What do you want me to say, Nicholas?

NICHOLAS

Anything.

IRENE

Then stop talking, Nicholas!

NICHOLAS

... little things mean so much; we tell ourselves they don't ...

NICHOLAS (CONT'D.)

I wasn't supposed to be here. At this school. You see that dead brown tree, Irene? It's like me. When I die, I'll always be a part of Carlisle.

IRENE

I'm going with you.

NICHOLAS

No ... I would've been grateful for your touch, or even just a smile ... but this place never took care of me. It was never my home as hard as I tried. I didn't have my coffee this morning.

IRENE

I'll make you some. It'll be ready when you get back.

*Nicholas exits. Irene sits.
Matthew sneaks across the stage.*

KOXTOKIS

Professor? I didn't draft these papers; and they won't sign themselves.

MATTHEW

I thought you were hard of hearing, Koxtokis?

KOXTOKIS

I'm sorry, what did you say? I'm a little -

MATTHEW

"Hard of hearing," I know. I'm sorry, Koxtokis. I haven't been here for anybody ... my mother let me drive us to town once - she went into a store and I, as a joke, pretended to drive away. She ran out crying, jumping up and down - it destroyed her. She thought I was abandoning her. I can still see her face. We destroy each other so easily without thinking.

KOXTOKIS

Someone said it got down to sixty degrees below zero in Chicago this past winter!

MATTHEW

These boys don't want to die for their beliefs. Jesus, they don't have any beliefs of their own yet!

MATTHEW (CONT'D.)

We were supposed to teach them, not confuse them. Oh God, I told them to sleep their pain away!

KOXTOKIS

Thousands of people died! Froze to death, stiff as boards! Was it Chicago or Boston? I don't remember which.

MATTHEW

People with more to lose than we could ever imagine are fighting this war. But our children volunteered! Oh, God, I am my father!

KOXTOKIS

Thousands died, Matthew ... we can't always be afraid.

KATHRYN (O.S.)

Matthew! Quit all that hollering! We're listening to music! Ai-siko-ist-sik-iniu, ix-kyai-oa-siu [*stop making noise, you bear*]. Koxtokis, give those papers to your master.

KOXTOKIS

Yes, ma'am.

MATTHEW

I am not his master, Kathryn! He is not our servant!

KATHRYN (O.S.)

Then what is he, Matthew?

*Lost, Matthew looks to Koxtokis.
Gentle Koxtokis nods reassuringly.
Matthew walks the papers inside.
Flower, Natalie, and Alexander
enter.*

NATALIE

Stay off our lawn! Flower, tell them this is not a walkway.

FLOWER

This is not a walkway! Stay the fuck off grass! Come here!

(whispers to students)

... now here ... here's two dollars ... just in case. Now, go on!

(smiles; shushes them away)

Off the fucking grass! Irene, look at my new dress! You should see how me and Natalie are living over in the dormitories!

FLOWER (CONT'D.)

I have a council member's old room and my own bed! God is finally smiling down on us!

ALEXANDER

I need to leave. Thank you for everything ... Natalie, am I doing the right thing? No other Americans are sending their children off to fight this war. I'm sorry. Is Maura around?

IRENE

I'll go find her. Come on, Flower. Let's go find Maura.

Flower and Irene hurry off stage.

ALEXANDER

... oh, God. I'm so scared ... The school council held a luncheon for us today. They gave speeches, made toasts ... but my heart was here with all of you. I liked being here.

NATALIE

My mother would be pleased. Will we ever see you again?

ALEXANDER

I don't think so. Our parents, they saved our lives by coming to this school. Natalie, my daughters and wife will be staying a few more weeks. If anything happens to me, could you ...?

NATALIE

Of course, Alexander. I never wanted to be head mistress of Carlisle - my family's "greatest achievement". I told my mother once, "George Washington is the father of our country!". So silly. It'll all be lost - they're closing the school for good.

ALEXANDER

I'm sorry if I ever treated you without the proper respect. I talk too much. Please forgive me for that.

NATALIE

(wipes her eyes; calls)

Maura! Where is she?

ALEXANDER

I'm supposed to be a great leader! I should give a farewell speech! ... LIFE IS NOT EASY! We feel alone. But there is happiness, we just can't see it always.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D.)

Things will get better, clearer. Everything will be fine. I should be going, Natalie.

(Maura enters)

I came to say goodbye.

MAURA

Goodbye. Please -

She cries. He gently kisses her.

ALEXANDER

Write to me. Please don't forget. I have to go.

(Maura holds him)

Natalie, take her please. I have to go.

Natalie touches Maura's arm.

Alexander leaves. Maura sobs.

NATALIE

Maura, stop. Please, sweetie, you have to stop crying.

PAUL

(entering)

No, she doesn't. Let her cry, Natalie. She doesn't have to do anything. Maura is a good woman. I love her. I'm lucky to have her. She doesn't need to do anything.

MAURA

"The long spell of her enchantment came to an end. The Princess awakened and ..." I'm losing my mind. "... is it you, my Prince?"

NATALIE

Maura, sweetie? Quick, someone get me some milk and cookies!

MAURA

No! Don't! Leave me alone! Don't touch me! Look, I'm not crying anymore! "The long spell of her enchantment came to an end. The Princess awakened and ..." I can't remember the rest of it! I'm fine! Leave me alone! What does that mean, "The long spell of her enchantment came to an end?" My life is all wrong!

Irene enters. A GUNSHOT booms.

IRENE

Oh, my God!

MATTHEW

(dashes in)

That was too damn close! Those stupid soldiers!

PAUL

Look, Maura! I took this beard and mustache from a student!
When I put them on I have as much hair as a white man!

MAURA

PAUL!!! YOU ARE NOT A WHITE MAN!

PAUL

... but it's funny though.

NATALIE

Oh, Maura, sweetheart ... shut up.

Kathryn enters with Flower.

IRENE

The soldiers are leaving now.

MAURA

Good, I don't want to see any of them ever again.

The Sergeant barks his cadence.

KATHRYN

Me neither, right, Maura!? Now we can celebrate Columbus Day,
Thanksgiving, the Fourth of July without feeling shitty! Cut
down that old dead tree. The land is ours now, enit, Maura!?
No more eating squirrels, rabbit, and prairie dog ... shit!

(laughs uneasily)

My mother had a game, "Who Could Catch the Largest?" Horrible!
She'd say, "Laughing, smiling will make everything better!"
Crazy savage. Full of shit she was! Irene, your belt doesn't
match your dress. We must keep up appearances, dear.

(violently to Flower)

Why is there a fork on this bench!? I'm talking to you! Why is
there a fork on this ...? Oh, shut up!

Kathryn storms inside.

MATTHEW

Yes. She's lost her mind.

John Ivan enters, badly shaken.

JOHN IVAN

Natalie? ... umm ... Natalie?

MAURA

Paul, would you fetch me my coat, please? I left it inside.

PAUL

(hurries off)

Right away, dear.

JOHN IVAN

NATALIIIIIEEE!!!

NATALIE

What is it, John Ivan?

JOHN IVAN

King ... he had a gun. I didn't know. He shot Nicholas.

A GASP. All eyes turn to Irene.

IRENE

What? I'm sorry, I wasn't listening. What is it, John Ivan?

NATALIE

I could have stopped it. I should have stopped them.

IRENE

What? What happened, Natalie?

JOHN IVAN

King escaped. He'll be in New York City by the time they find him, which means they won't. He'll find his way to the war and die the way he's dreamed ... Irene, Nicholas is dead; King killed-

IRENE

Natalie? Tell me what happened!

Natalie holds Irene. Irene crumbles. Maura hurries over.

MAURA

(fighting tears)

Listen to the soldiers, Irene. Papa and Nicholas are with them. They're leaving to go protect us. You're alright. We're all alright. We can make things better; they would want us to -

IRENE

(heaving with tears)

We have nothing, we sacrificed all of it! I don't want to be here! We did what we were told! Natalie? We did what we were told, they promised - I don't want to be here! I want to be a teacher, but our children are all gone ... and why?

NATALIE

Because this is our home, Irene. We can't leave. We can't forget. Our ancestors are here; their ghosts everywhere. We're their ghosts! We have to remember. That's why our lives are not over ... not yet. We are still alive. We're still here.

The Sergeant's cadence builds.

The Soldiers join him. Lights and cadence fade out.

FINALE

Lights up: In Living Room; the Lead Ghost stands staring at the painting of Randolph Fortune-Boy.

RANDOLPH (V.O.)

How do we forgive our fathers? Maybe in a dream -

The Ghost pulls off his hood. He is Randolph Fortune-Boy!

RANDOLPH (CONT'D.)

Do we forgive our fathers for leaving us too often, or forever, when we were little? For scaring us with unexpected rage, or making us nervous because there was never any rage at all.

Randolph trembles with self-hate and falls to his knees.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D.)

Shall we forgive them for their excesses of warmth or coldness? For pushing or leaning? For shutting doors. For speaking through walls. Or never speaking. Or never being silent.

Lights up full: Silhouettes of the young Indians surround Randolph - a jury of ghosts.

RANDOLPH (CONT'D.)

Do we forgive our fathers in our age or in theirs? In their deaths or our own? If we forgive our fathers ... what is left?

The Bride enters. She goes to Randolph and gently touches his bowed head. Music up: BOOM! A loud single drumbeat.

Maura enters and slowly approaches her father.

The Bride smiles and takes Maura's hand. She places it gently on top of Randolph's head. Maura cries.

*Randolph looks up at his daughter.
He wraps his arms around her legs.
The Bride smiles and backs away.*

*Two other Ghosts lead Natalie and
Irene in. Natalie freezes.
Irene, tears streaming down her
face, dashes over and hugs her
father.*

*The Ghosts drop their robes and
are reborn into the warriors they
once were.*

*An Indian dancer leads Matthew in.
Matthew storms over to his father
and stands angrily over him.*

*Randolph waivers. He cries and
apologetically reaches out to his
son. After a moment, Matthew
softens and touches his father's
face.*

*Matthew and Natalie help their
father stand.*

*Each character of the play is led
in by an Indian dancer.*

They are home.

*The drums build in rhythm and
volume. The Indians sing full of
passion and pride and move like
acrobats. BOOM!*

Lights out.

THE END