

# ***The Sycamore Street Kite Flying Club***



***A New Musical***

***Book & Lyrics: Juliana Jones***

***Music: Roy M. Rogosin***

## CHARACTERS

(Roles may be doubled to accommodate a smaller cast)

CHUCKLES- patriarch of Sycamore Street

YOUNGER/MIDDLE CHUCKLES-to age from thirties to fifties

TED- Chuckles' adult son

SHIRLEY-Ted's wife

PETER - Ted and Shirley's teenage son; Chuckles' grandson

KATE- Chuckles' next door neighbor

YOUNGER/MIDDLE KATE-to age from thirties to fifties

WENDY- Kate's adult daughter

JEREMY- Wendy's young son, Kate's grandson

STAN- Chuckles' neighbor

ALICE-Stan's wife

MADISON- Stan and Alice's teenage daughter

WALTER- retiring UPS driver

LEO-Walter's younger partner

DOROTHY -resident at assisted living facility

## Musical Numbers

### ACT ONE

1. SYCAMORE STREET (Walter, Chuckles and Neighbors)
2. GOLDEN WAVE (Men of Dinosaur Meadows)
3. YOU ONLY DIE ONCE (Chuckles)
4. WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER (Wendy and Chuckles)
5. IT'S A KITE (Chuckles and Neighbors)
6. BUCKET LIST (Shirley, Leo, Dorothy, Chuckles)
7. HOW COULD YOU? (Chuckles, Kate, Ted)
8. AFTER GOODBYE (Jeremy)
9. NIGHT FLIGHT (Chuckles and Neighbors)

### ACT TWO

10. RETIRED (Walter, Leo, Chuckles)
11. ISN'T IT A SHAME? (Middle Kate, Middle Chuckles, Older Kate, Older Chuckles)
12. PLAN K (Chuckles and Madison)
13. SECOND BEST (Ted and Chuckles)
14. GIGGLESOPHY (Peter, Jeremy, Madison and Neighbors)
15. STARGIRL (Kate and Chuckles)
16. GIGGLESOPHY REPRISE (Neighbors)
17. THE CHOICE (Chuckles, Kate, Jeremy, Ted, Shirley)
18. FINALE-- IT'S A KITE (REPRISE) (All)

*(Sycamore Street resembles one which all of us have walked down at one time or another, or imagined in our mind's eye. It is familiar and comfortable. and lined with trees, one more prominent than the others - its ancient limbs spread, embracing the part of the street it shades. From one limb, we see the dangling feet of an unseen young boy, whom we will learn is JEREMY. The three houses on the street are undistinguished, except for the one center stage, which has a shed leaning against its fence. There are moving boxes and a trunk in front of the center house. The neighbors, in tableau, are in front of their houses. STAN and MADISON are poised to paint the house, SR. KATE is sitting on her front steps, SL. WALTER, an older UPS man, is leaning on a dolly which carries a big box SR )*

### **#1 SYCAMORE STREET OPENING**

WALTER

IF THE STREETS COULD TALK  
THE STORIES THEY WOULD TELL  
THEY WOULD LAUGH; THEY WOULD WEEP  
THEY WOULD WRAP YOU IN THEIR SPELL

IF THE STREETS COULD TALK  
HISTORY'D TAKE WING  
IF SYCAMORE STREET COULD TALK  
I KNOW THAT IT WOULD SING

SING THE SONG OF STAN DUBINSKY  
HE'S DUMB, BUT SORTA SWEET  
HIS FAMILY'S LIVED HERE A HUNDRED YEARS

SING THE SONG OF THE MACDONALDS  
FINEST FOLKS YOU'LL EVER MEET  
SOMETIMES KATE TRIES TO HIDE HER TEARS

THEN OF COURSE, THERE'S GOOD OL' CHUCKLES  
HE KEEPS ME ON MY FEET  
YOU'LL SEE WHAT I MEAN WHEN HE APP---

*(CHUCKLES enters from the shed)*

CHUCKLES

Hello, Dolly. Hiya, Walter. You're runnin' a little late today.

WALTER

*(mopping his sweaty head)*

I feel like a slug in this heat. You know it's the steamiest July on record? *(he hands Chuckles the clipboard, which CHUCKLES signs and hands back to WALTER)* Lemme give ya hand with this.

*(Together, the two men roll the box back to Chuckles' shed)*

CHUCKLES

You're not the only one who's slowing down. *(stretching out the spasm in his back)* These days, it takes me two hours to watch 60 minutes.

WALTER

So what's in the box?

CHUCKLES

*(opens the lid and lifts a metal triangular frame)*

*In the box?* Just a bunch of parts. Ahh, but *outside* the box? Sky. Nothing but sky. Walter, how long have you been making deliveries to Sycamore Street?

WALTER

10 years in August. In fact, I've got news. Next week is my last....

*(CHUCKLES ignores him and disappears into his shed. He comes out carrying a brown kite with the letters UPS stitched into it and trailing a gold tail)*

CHUCKLES

I made ya something. Consider it free marketing. Take note of the extraordinary brown and gold details.

WALTER

*This* is what you do in that shed? You make kites?

CHUCKLES

If you don't like it, I'll change the colors and give it to the FedEx guy.

WALTER

I like it. I'm just surprised. I thought you worked on real inventions.

CHUCKLES

I tried solar toasters once, but I always come back to kites.

WALTER

It's gotta be claustrophobic in there. I'm a fisherman. I need the great outdoors.

CHUCKLES

Great hobby--unless you're the fish.

WALTER

Yeah, but why kites?

CHUCKLES

How else can a boy be safe on the ground and soar into the sky at the same time?

WALTER

I have no idea.

CHUCKLES

That's your problem, Walter. I'll tell you what. Since it's been 10 years, I'm naming you an honorary neighbor of Sycamore Street. Now you can come to the party, and, if you're a good pilot, you can join the club.

WALTER

What club?

CHUCKLES

Be here tomorrow at half past eight for Night Flight.

*(WALTER exits as TED enters from CENTER HOUSE.)*

TED

Ready to go, Dad?

CHUCKLES

Where are we going?

TED

You're hilarious. Do you want me to drive you or not?

CHUCKLES

Will you wear a chauffeur's hat and let me call you Jeeves?

*(crossing to the moving boxes and trunk in front of Chuckles' porch)*

TED

I can't pack all this stuff in my trunk.

CHUCKLES

Then you're not a very good pachyderm. Get it? Trunk, pachyderm? Take your time.

TED

Tell me again why you're moving to the Meadows? It makes no sense.

CHUCKLES

*(ignoring him)*

It's about dollars, not sense, Son. Over there, they'll cook for me, they'll clean for me, plus, I'll get all the Jello my heart desires. Besides, the house costs too much to keep up. It was either the Meadows or a yurt.

TED

Be serious, Dad. You're not exactly the nursing home type.

CHUCKLES

Read the brochure, Teddy. It's a "dynamic assisted living community" where people like *your* lovely wife get paid to assist dynamic people like me. Now, I've got a very serious question for you.

TED

*(Frustrated)*

What is it?

CHUCKLES

Where does a elephant take his family on vacation?

*(TED ignores him)*

CHUCKLES

Tuskaloosa!

TED

Forget about the damn elephants. I'm just afraid you'll be sorry.

CHUCKLES

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AROUND  
IT'S THE SAME OLD STREET  
THE ONLY THING NEW  
IS WHERE I'M PLANTING MY FEET

SKIP THE SAPPY GOODBYES  
IT'S A TRUNK AND SOME GEAR

*(STAN crosses to CHUCKLES' porch, rummages through the boxes, and takes out a snorkel, mask, and ski pole)*

I WON'T BE A STRANGER; I WON'T DISAPPEAR  
CAUSE EVERYTHING I LOVE IS--

*(Interrupting, STAN challenges CHUCKLES to a duel)*

En Garde!

*(The NEIGHBORS come to life as CHUCKLES picks up the other ski pole and they sword fight. CHUCKLES vanquishes STAN)*

STAN

*(removing snorkel)*

Chuckles, why the hell are you moving to Dinosaur Meadows?

CHUCKLES

Not moving. Moving on. *(He turns to MADISON)* Explain it to your father, Maddie.



MADISON

I wish I could, but I'm way too sad.

CHUCKLES

IF SOMETHING MAKES YOU CRY  
JUST LOOK IT IN THE EYE  
THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHIN' BRIGHTER YOU CAN SEE

IT WON'T BREAK YOU IN HALF  
IF YOU LOOK AT IT AND LAUGH  
YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON ME

CHUCKLES

*(spoken)*

And a little ...

MADISON

Gigglesophy.

KATE

Giggle all you want. But giggle here.

CHUCKLES

I choose to be a dinosaur-ass before I become a pain in *your* ass.

TED

Let's go, Dad.

*(CHUCKLES crosses to the tree. As he sings, he sees JEREMY dangling his feet. He crosses, and ties JEREMY'S sneaker.)*

CHUCKLES

YA THINK YA KNOW A TREE  
BECAUSE IT'S OLD AND IT'S WISE  
JUST LOOK A LITTLE CLOSER  
YOU FIND A SWEET SURPRISE

*(JEREMY jumps down from the tree. CHUCKLES sizes him up as JEREMY does the same to CHUCKLES. JEREMY extends his hand. CHUCKLES shakes it]*

CHUCKLES

SO THE PARTY GOES ON  
IT'S WHAT TOMORROW EXPECTS  
NOT GOODBYE

NEIGHBORS

NOT GOODBYE

CHUCKLES  
(to JEREMY)

LET'S FLY...

JEREMY

LET'S FLY...

CHUCKLES & NEIGHBORS

INTO...

*(CHUCKLES exits with TED. Crossfade to the common room at Dinosaur Meadows. TED, CHUCKLES, enter and greet SHIRLEY, who is decorating for a beach themed party)*

CHUCKLES

Dinosaur Meadows, where extinction is just a heartbeat away.

TED

Let's get you settled in.

*(DOROTHY crosses and SHIRLEY intercepts her as TED and CHUCKLES exit )*

SHIRLEY

Hi, Dorothy, where are you headed?

DOROTHY

I'm going to Gimbels to buy a new dress for my date tonight.

SHIRLEY

Gimbels closed thirty years ago, Sweetheart. And you're already wearing a beautiful dress. Why don't I take you back to your room for a rest before the beach party.

DOROTHY

My boyfriend Jerry is coming.

SHIRLEY

There's no Jerry here, Dorothy.

DOROTHY

Of course he's not here yet, Silly. He's in college. Don't tell my parents.

SHIRLEY

Your secret's safe with me.

*(As SHIRLEY and DOROTHY exit, the MEADOWS MEN enter wearing Hawaiian shirts, bermuda shorts, and knee socks pulled all the way up. They are carrying boogie boards)*

**#2 GOLDEN WAVE**

MEADOWS MEN

SOMETHING STRANGE IS GOIN' ON WHEN WE LOOK AT OUR  
REFLECTION

SOME CRUEL TRICK OF NATURE HAS DONE A BAIT AND  
SWITCH

OUR EYES STILL SEE EPITOMES OF VIGOR AND PERFECTION  
OUR VISION'S 20/40, BUT THE CALENDAR'S A BITCH

WE WON'T BE THE GRANDPAS WHO SHUFFLE DOWN THE  
SHORELINE

WE'LL JUMP INTO THE OCEAN; WE'LL MAKE A LOT OF NOISE  
WE'LL RIDE A WHALE, WE'LL PARASAIL

A CONSTANT FORCE OF MOTION

CAUSE IN THE END THE WISEST MEN GO BACK TO BEING  
BOYS

SPLASHIN IN THE SURF

FIRST MAN

SURFIN ON A WAVE

ALL

SUN SHININ' LIKE GOLD

SECOND MAN

STREAKING IN OUR HAIR

ALL

IT'S A BEACH OF A DAY

LIKE BOYS ON THE BEACH  
WE LOVE TO CROON  
LIKE BOYS TO MEN  
WE MAKE HEARTS SWOON  
WE MEADOWS MEN  
WILL SHOOT THE MOON

*(The men turn their backs to the audience and drop their Bermuda shorts.)*

WE MIGHT FALL DOWN  
WE MIGHT FORGET  
BUT BABY IT'S NOT OVER YET  
WE'RE BOLD  
WE'RE BRASH  
BUT DAMN IT ALL WE'RE BRAVE

JUST IN CASE  
WE KNOCK ON WOOD  
MAN OH MAN LIFE IS GOOD  
COME WITH US  
LET'S RIDE THE GOLDEN WAVE

*(Lights dim. Crossfade to Sycamore Street. PETER enters and crosses to KATE on her porch)*

KATE

Peter, did your grandpa get settled in okay?

PETER

Mom said something about a beach party (*pointing to SOLD sign*) This sign is new...and depressing.

KATE

It sure will be strange to have new people living in his house.

PETER

I've spent every Sunday of my life in that house. Chuckles' chuck roast family dinner.

KATE

With hot fudge souffle as the first course. I think I'll go him visit later. I like to surprise him.

*(PETER enters CENTER house. KATE crosses back to her house SL and sits on her front porch staring at CHUCKLES' house.)*

*(FLASHBACK: YOUNGER KATE and YOUNGER CHUCKLES emerge from their respective houses and meet center stage.)*

YOUNGER CHUCKLES

Remind me again, Kate, why I agreed to let you drag me out of bed at two am in the middle of winter. I was promised some sort of surprise.

YOUNGER KATE

Let's go to the backyard for a better view. I want to show you the Taurus constellation and January's the best time to see it. Come to think of it, Charlie, you can relate to Taurus. You're both full of bull!

YOUNGER CHUCKLES

That sassy attitude makes you even cuter. Does Bob have any idea how lucky he is? Wait, does Bob even live here anymore?

YOUNGER KATE

Do you flirt like this with all the neighbors? The realtor should have warned me about you.

YOUNGER CHUCKLES

Stargirls get special treatment. Now, dazzle me with your brilliance before we freeze to death.

*(YOUNGER KATE and YOUNGER CHUCKLES exit. CROSSFADE back to the present at DINOSAUR MEADOWS as CHUCKLES sits on the edge of his bed. TED enters)*

TED

Are you ready, Dad?

CHUCKLES

Son, I need to tell you something.

TED

Let me guess. You've fallen in love with one of the nurses and you're eloping.

CHUCKLES

*(taking a deep breath)*

Ted, I'm sick. Remember my colon? It's on its way to becoming a semicolon.

TED

Not funny.

CHUCKLES

I need you to keep it between us until after the party.

TED

Keep what between us?

CHUCKLES

Teddy, I'm dying.

TED

*(shaken, he begins to pace)*

No you're not. This is one of your stupid pranks.

CHUCKLES

I wish it were. But it's not.

TED

We'll beat it then. You'll get treatment. I'm going to find a doctor. You stay here.

CHUCKLES

I'm going to the party.

TED

But we've got to do some--

**#3 ONLY DIE ONCE**

CHUCKLES

YA ONLY DIE ONCE  
BUT YA LIVE EVERY DAY  
YA ONLY DIE ONCE  
SO TAKE ME OUT TO PLAY

IF THE PLANETS ARE SPINNIN'  
THEN I'VE GOT A CHANCE  
YA ONLY DIE  
ONCE  
SO TODAY, LET'S DANCE

*(CHUCKLES begins to waltz with TED, who resists and breaks away)*

TED

I can't take you out of here just so you can fly a kite.

CHUCKLES

LIGHTEN UP, SON  
LIFE'S A PARTY  
LIGHTEN UP, SON  
GIVE IT A TRY  
MESS UP YOUR HAIR  
UNFURROW YOUR BROW  
AND FOR GOD'S SAKE  
LOOSEN YOUR TIE

TED

*(handing CHUCKLES some water)*

You've got to stay hydrated.

*(to the nurses in the room)*

Tell him he needs to stay hydrated.

CHUCKLES  
*(producing a flask)*

I FILLED UP A FLASK  
I SMUGGLED IT IN  
I FILLED UP A FLASK  
FILLED IT RIGHT TO THE BRIM

FORGET THE CHEAP STUFF  
IT'S THE PREMIUM GOLD

*(offering the flask to TED)*

TAKE A STIFF DRINK, SON  
BOY, DO AS YOUR TOLD

TED

I don't want a drink.

NURSES

LIGHTEN UP, SON  
LIFE'S A PARTY  
LIGHTEN UP, SON  
FATHER KNOWS BEST  
KICK UP YOUR HEELS  
SEE HOW IT FEELS  
THERE'S PLENTY OF TIME  
WHEN YOU'RE DEAD TO REST

TED

*(Exasperated, to CHUCKLES)*

You paid them to do that, didn't you?

CHUCKLES

LET'S GO FOR A DRIVE AND NEVER COME BACK  
LET'S PUT THE TOP DOWN ON THE CADILLAC  
YOU AND ME, KID, ON THE OPEN ROAD



LET'S--

TED

Not happening.

NURSES  
(more sober)

SO THE END BEGAN  
THE BOY BECAME A MAN  
STANDING UP TO THE ONE  
HE ONCE CALLED

TED

Sir.

CHUCKLES

I WON'T SIT AND WAIT  
OR LET THIS SEAL MY FATE  
A HEART THAT WANTS TO BEAT WON'T BE DETERRED

CHUCKLES & NURSES

THERE ARE PARTIES  
THERE ARE PRETTIES  
THERE ARE LIGHTS IN DISTANT CITIES

CHUCKLES

ALL OF THEM ARE CALLING OUT TO ME

LIGHTEN UP SON  
LIFE'S A PARTY  
YA ONLY DIE ONCE,  
IT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE  
I'M LIVIN MY LIFE  
I'M LOVIN' MY LIFE  
I'M LEAVIN MY LIFE  
I'M SETTING MYSELF FREE

*(Crossfade to Sycamore Street. It is afternoon. Guests are arriving at the party. Madison is sitting near the fence by Chuckles' shed, looking at her cell phone.)*

STAN

It feels weird to have a party without the host.

ALICE

I know, but he insisted. Third week in July, rain or shine. *(to STAN)* It hasn't stopped you from getting drunk and making an ass out of yourself.

STAN

Bottoms up, Dear! *(braying like a donkey, pointing to his ass and shaking his booty)* I'll bet Chuckles is holding court at the Meadows right now. He sure can work a room.

*(CHUCKLES enters unseen, approaches MADISON. Together, they sneak behind the group and lurk silently behind ALICE)*

ALICE

Even when it's empty.

STAN

*(doing Groucho Marx with the cigar)*

Open the refrigerator and he'd do ten minutes - to the light bulb.

ALICE

And that's why we come back, year after year just to--

*(CHUCKLES and MADISON jump at ALICE and scare her. CHUCKLES and MADISON high-five each other. MADISON crosses to the CHUCKLES' shed, looks around to see the coast is clear, climbs the fence and shimmies into the window)*

CHUCKLES

*(to ALICE)*

You were not going to finish that sentence with "Just to fly a kite?" were you? Did Neil Armstrong "just" fly to the moon? "To the moon, Alice!"

*(ALICE hugs CHUCKLES and STAN shakes his hand.)*

ALICE

We thought you weren't coming!

CHUCKLES

Where's your kite? I'll bet you sold it on Ebay.

*(ALICE proudly shows her kite to CHUCKLES)*

ALICE

It's holding up better than I am these days.

CHUCKLES

*(To STAN, who is about to make a joke)*

Stanley, resist the urge to make an ASS-inine joke--she's the mother of your child, for God's sake!

*(STANLEY looks dejected, but remains silent.)*

Where did Maddie go? She's like a ninja.

*(WENDY approaches with JEREMY. She runs to CHUCKLES who embraces her in a massive bear hug)*

WENDY

Chuckles! I've missed you so much! Mom said you sold your house? Is that true?

CHUCKLES

When you're gone, you miss things. Clearly, you were abducted by aliens who conducted top-secret experiments on your cranium.

*(JEREMY laughs)*

And let me guess, this is your highly intelligent alien offspring, Beepledorp.

WENDY

This is Jeremy. You met him last time we were here.

CHUCKLES

It was so long ago, it must have slipped my mind. Your mom really missed you.

WENDY

She came to Akron for two weeks last year.

CHUCKLES

*(He sizes up Jeremy)*

It's not the same as you coming home. Now, Beepledorp. You're a little short for a grown alien. I hear there are two future stewardesses sleeping in your grandmother's house.

*(ALICE shakes her head in disapproval)*

WENDY

They're not called "stewardesses" anymore.

CHUCKLES

"Kite Tenders?!" *(no reactions.)* Okay, I give up--

WENDY

They're twins. A year and a half.

CHUCKLES

How old's the other one?

JEREMY

They're twins, numb nuts!

WENDY

*(embarrassed)*

Jeremy, where'd you learn that?

JEREMY

Stan.

CHUCKLES

Who's minding the flight crew?

WENDY

My mom. Ya know she actually purrs when she holds the girls.

CHUCKLES

Of course she purrs. Kate's a cougar.

WENDY

That's gross.

CHUCKLES

Why is it gross? Your mom is an extremely attractive woman. She could have a line of men at her door with a flash of those legs.

WENDY

Excuse me, I have to go scrub my brain. Can we please keep it G rated in front of the child?

JEREMY

Are you talking about S-E-X?

CHUCKLES/WENDY

*(simultaneously)*

Yes!/No!

WENDY

How do you know about s-e-x?

JEREMY

One time, when I was little, I came in the house to get a popsicle. You and Dad were on the couch. Dad was all sweaty and you were praying.

WENDY

*(mortified)*

Oh my God.

JEREMY

Yeah, like that, but louder.

CHUCKLES

*(enjoying Wendy's discomfort)*

Oh do go on, Beepledorp.

JEREMY

So, yesterday, I asked Stan about it, and he said it was a kind of hug that only grown ups do, that I shouldn't do it for a long time, but if I do do it, I should always wear a condom!

CHUCKLES

*(laughing heartily)*

I'll set the boy straight about s-e-x later, but right now, tell me how's your mom really doing? Arthritis is sure kicking the--

ALICE

Chuckles!

CHUCKLES

Cranberries out of her. She promised to come no matter what. I assume she'll bring her decaying hip. Can't have a party without the girl next door, now can we?

WENDY

She said she'd stop by later to check on things.

CHUCKLES

I don't take checks. Only cash. Them's the rules. *(turning to JEREMY)* Now, Beepledorp, I've got a special mission for you. Walk down the street and see if you can find a pouting girl, about this high *(he holds out a hand)* probably staring at her phone. Her name is Madison. Tell her she's needed at Mission Control.

WENDY

Chuckles, he's a little boy. He can't walk around by himself.

CHUCKLES

You used to walk around by yourself. He'll be fine.

JEREMY

Yeah, I'll be fine.

CHUCKLES

*(digging in his pocket)*

There's a store at the corner. Take this money and buy us some M&Ms Peanut M&Ms. Can't have a party without lots of M&Ms. And, when you get back, there will be a special surprise waiting for you. Let Mission Madison begin. Godspeed, Commander. *(He salutes)*

*(JEREMY returns the salutes and runs off.)*

CHUCKLES

*(fatigued, he sits on the picnic table bench. He gestures for WENDY to sit with him)*

So I take it your other half didn't make the trip?

WENDY

Bart and I split up. I haven't found a way to tell Jeremy. It's been so much harder than I thought.

CHUCKLES

Is that why you haven't come home for so long?

WENDY

You can't run home whenever life gets tough.

CHUCKLES

That's exactly when you *should* run home.

WENDY

(pointing to the SOLD sign)

Then why are *you* running away?

CHUCKLES

Touche, fourche, and six-che, my sweet girl.

WENDY

I feel so alone.

#### **#4 WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER**

CHUCKLES

WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER  
THIS BLUSTER OF BAD WEATHER  
WE'RE STRONG AND WE'RE FOREVER  
LIKE THAT TREE YOU USED TO CLIMB

WENDY

THE WORLD BEYOND THIS STREET  
FEELS SAD AND INCOMPLETE  
CAN'T WE JUST STAY HERE AND TURN BACK TIME?

CHUCKLES

WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER  
ONE TACTICAL ENDEAVOR  
SOMETIMES IT'S NOW OR NEVER

TO FACE THE BIG WHAT NEXT

WENDY

MAYBE NO ONE REALLY KNOWS  
THE REASON THE WIND BLOWS  
WHY THE WAY THE STORY GOES  
IS NOWHERE NEAR WHAT WE EXPECT

CHUCKLES

LET'S BEND THE WAY WE SEE

WENDY

EMBRACE THE MYSTERY

CHUCKLES

TAKE A GIANT BREATH AND JUST LET GO

CHUCKLES AND WENDY

WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER  
THIS BLUSTER OF BAD WEATHER  
WE'RE STRONG AND WE'RE FOREVER  
THAT'S ALL WE NEED TO KNOW!

CHUCKLES

Go see your mom. It always puts a smile on her face.

WENDY

But Jeremy will be back soon.

CHUCKLES

I'll take care of Jeremy. I'm almost old enough to be his father.

*(PETER enters)*

PETER

Ya mean great, great grandfather don't ya, Old Man?



CHUCKLES

Well, I *am* twice as great as most. Thank you for the compliment, Grandsquirt.

WENDY

Are you really going to be a senior in high school? God, I feel old. I used to babysit you.

CHUCKLES

Imagine how old I feel. I used to babysit his father.

WENDY

Any plans for after you graduate?.

PETER

Maybe I'll join the circus.

CHUCKLES

Over my dead body.

PETER

There's an idea.

CHUCKLES

Stop being a Bozo. You're going to college. Wendy, your mom is waiting.

*(WENDY hugs him and exits. PETER waves at her. CHUCKLES looks around for a chair and slowly sits.*

PETER

Gramps, I thought you were at the Meadows. You didn't hitchhike here did ya?

CHUCKLES

Of course not. I took a Goober.

PETER

You mean Uber?

CHUCKLES

You didn't see the driver. He was dangerously low on brain cells. He said, "where to old man?"

PETER

What's wrong with that?

CHUCKLES

Do you see any old men here? Think carefully, Peter, your inheritance hangs in the balance.

*(JEREMY runs in with two big bags of M&Ms in his hand.)*

CHUCKLES

Ahh, Commander Beepledorp. Where is Madison?

JEREMY

Couldn't find her. But look at these M & Ms! Peanut! Super King-Size!

CHUCKLES

I guess that means we are super-kings. *(offering Kate his bag of M&Ms as she enters the scene)*  
A sweet for my sweet. Chivalry is not dead yet, but it *is* on a respirator, so take it while you can.  
*(Turning toward JEREMY)*

I've got a surprise for you, young man. I'll be right back.

*(CHUCKLES crosses to his shed and MADISON scrambles out the window, circles behind her house and enters the scene)*

JEREMY

What's chivalry?

KATE

It means being a gentleman. *(noticing MADISON)* Maddie, have you met Jeremy yet?

MADISON

Haven't had the pleasure. What's up, Shortstack?

JEREMY

I've been looking everywhere for you!

MADISON

I didn't realize we were playing hide and seek.

*(CHUCKLES returns holding a kite behind his back)*

CHUCKLES

*(To MADISON)* Ahh, I see you've returned. Please don't leave me alone with the adults ever again. Now, Beeepleddorp, your grandmother told me you were coming, so I've got something very special for you.

*(CHUCKLES ceremoniously hands JEREMY a yellow kite with a purple tail. JEREMY takes it, examines it, tries to "play" with it. He motions to CHUCKLES to come down to his level. CHUCKLES struggles, but bends on one knee. MUSIC begins)*

JEREMY

What does it do?

CHUCKLES

It flies.

JEREMY

So it's like a bird?

CHUCKLES

It's a wish maker! *(to MADISON)* Let's teach him the Kite Flyer's Prayer.

MADISON

I've got to go walk my dog.

CHUCKLES

You don't have a dog.

MADISON

Right, well, I've gotta...I got nothin'. I'm too old to play with kites.

CHUCKLES

You break my heart Maddie. *(to KATE)* Are you going to break my heart too?

*(Ceremoniously)* I hereby dedicate this kite to Beeepleddorp and initiate him as the newest member of the Sycamore Street Kite Flying Club. Raise your kite, young man.

JEREMY

Where's your kite?

CHUCKLES

I make ‘em. I don’t fly ‘em.

JEREMY

Why not?

CHUCKLES

You ask too many questions. Now, raise your kite.

*(JEREMY sighs and raises his kite)*

CHUCKLES

May this kite find fair breezes  
May nothing cut its strings  
Let this kite remind us  
To fly, we don’t need wings.

*(JEREMY throws it in the air and it falls to the ground)*

JEREMY

*(dejected)*

It’s broken.

*(CHUCKLES picks up the kite and unspools the thread. He hands it to JEREMY)*

### **#5 IT’S A KITE**

CHUCKLES

IT’S A KITE  
IT’S A FLIGHT  
IT’S A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT

WATCH IT WHIRLING ON THE WIND  
SOARING THROUGH THE SKY BEGINS

IT’S A STRING  
IT’S A WING  
IT’S A MARVELOUS THING

IT’S A BOY AND HIS BEST FRIEND  
TOGETHER AS THE JOURNEY BENDS

*(The NEIGHBORS enter sporadically with kites and items for the party)*

NEIGHBORS

IT'S A GIFT  
IT'S A LIFT  
IN A WORLD SO ADRIFT

WATCH IT TUMBLING THROUGH THE AIR  
DRIFTING BY WITHOUT A CARE

EACH NEIGHBORHOOD  
NEEDS SOMETHING GOOD  
A MOMENT MEANT TO SHARE

*(CHUCKLES instructs JEREMY as he begins to fly the kite)*

CHUCKLES

NOW TIGHTEN THE SPOOL  
THEN TEST THE BREEZE  
NOW START TO RUN  
BUT WATCH THE TREES!

NEIGHBORS

LOOP THE LOOP  
DIP AND DIVE  
TUMBLE, TWIST  
AND FEEL ALIVE

CHUCKLES

EACH KITE'S A LITTLE DIFFERENT  
EACH PILOT HAS HER STYLE  
EACH KID SHOULD HAVE A CHANCE TO FLY  
SUCH A SIMPLE WAY TO SMILE

*(JEREMY tries to hand the kite to CHUCKLES to fly, but CHUCKLES shakes his head. As the Neighbors sings, CHUCKLES loses his balance and stumbles, and struggles to sit down on the porch stairs, a little disoriented. He puts his head in his hands)*

NEIGHBORS

IT'S A KITE  
IT'S A FLIGHT  
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT

WITH DAYLIGHT ON THE RUN  
WE RACE TO TOUCH THE SUN--

*(TED and SHIRLEY enter, see CHUCKLES and cross quickly to him)*

TED

Oh my God! Dad!

CHUCKLES

It's nothing. It's just hot. Why don't you get me a cocktail.

SHIRLEY

Let me at least take you inside to check your vitals.

CHUCKLES

Don't worry, I'm still vital.

TED

Go inside, Dad,. Let Shirley check you over. I'm losing patience with you.

CHUCKLES

Then it's a good thing *you're* not the nurse. Get it? Patience? Nurse? Lead on fair, Shirley.

*(SHIRLEY and CHUCKLES enter CHUCKLES house. TED follows.)*

*(JEREMY crosses to MADISON who has been sitting on her front stoop, pouting)*

JEREMY

Wasn't that awesome, Maddie? Did you see how high it flew?

MADISON

Right til ya got it stuck in the tree.

JEREMY

Thanks for gettin' it down for me. Hey, where's your kite?

MADISON

I don't have one.

JEREMY

Why not?

MADISON

Last summer I got mad and broke it.

JEREMY

Maybe Chuckles will make you a new one.

MADISON

Nope. It's one of his stupid rules. *(in a mocking, "old man" voice)* "Barring natural disasters, every soul on Sycamore Street gets one kite."

JEREMY

That's sorta mean.

MADISON

Old people are mean. And by old I mean anyone over the age of 20. I'm going to disappear for a while. See ya later, Shortstack.

JEREMY

Can I come with you?

MADISON

You're just a little kid.

JEREMY

I know. I hate it. It's so boring.

MADISON

Enjoy it while you can. Getting older sucks. Especially when you live on the most boring street on Earth.

JEREMY

We could share *my* kite if you want.

MADISON

How bout I climb on that kite, you run really fast, then you let go. I could escape this place once and for all.

JEREMY

I don't think that would work.

*(CHUCKLES has been listening)*

CHUCKLES

Thank goodness! I've finally found people my own age. Maddie, promise you won't leave until my announcement and double promise you'll stay for Night Flight.

JEREMY

Night flight? Cool! *(after a beat)* What's night flight?

MADISON

They put these dumb little lights on their kites and run down the street like maniacs.

CHUCKLES

You used to like it when you were little.

MADISON

I used to have a kite when I was little.

CHUCKLES

Won't you humor an old man by staying to hear my announcement? I'll play the "I could go any minute" card if I have to.

MADISON

*(grinning playfully)*

They say that people get nice before they croak, so, trust me, you'll never die.

CHUCKLES

*(mimicking a frog)*

Croak. Croak. Night Flight. Be here. You may be the only one with enough grit to pull the others through.

MADISON

Through what?

CHUCKLES

Come and find out. If you do, maybe I'll consider making you a new kite.

MADISON

But what about your rule about one kite per soul?

CHUCKLES

I'm willing to accept "being a teenager" as a natural disaster. Whaddaya say?

MADISON

Fine. 'Til then, I'll be in my room. *(to JEREMY)* You're a great kid. Can I have a hug?



JEREMY

*(looking terrified as he remembers his talk with STAN)*

Um, I don't think I'm ready for s-e-x.

MADISON

*(to CHUCKLES)*

What the hell is he talking about?

CHUCKLES

*(laughing)*

Maddie, why don't we teach Jeremy the Sycamore Street handshake instead. You remember it don't you?

MADISON

*(laughing)*

Anything to distract the little pervert.

*(She holds her hand out and she and CHUCKLES do a sequence of handshakes)*

CHUCKLES/ MADISON

Neighbors forever  
Like the sun and the moon  
So it's never "goodbye"  
It's just see ya soon.

JEREMY

Teach me! Teach me!

MADISON

He's all yours.

*(MADISON exits)*

JEREMY

The handshake! The handshake!

CHUCKLES

Later. Right now, we've got more important matters before us. We've gotta get your kite ready for night flight so we can send you back to ASTROLUPHAGUS. (*Noticing TED who is approaching*) Danger's afoot, Beepledorp, or in this case, Danger's a Ted.

TED

You're on very thin ice with me, Dad, and we have a lot to talk about. But right now, I'm just making sure you're not drinking too much.

CHUCKLES

(*saluting his son*) I've limited myself to one "tail of the cock! Sir!

TED

You've been in the sun a long time. Let Shirley take you back for a rest before night flight.

CHUCKLES

Why can't I just rest in my house? It's still *my* house for another few weeks.

TED

You told us to get rid of all your stuff, so we got rid of your stuff. It's just a few boxes now and a bunch of junk in the basement. So, it's back to the Meadows. You're the one wanted to move.

CHUCKLES

Fine, I'll go with Shirley, but I'm coming back for Night Flight. I've got an announcement to make. An important announcement.

TED

If you promise to rest, I'll ask Shirley to bring you home later.

CHUCKLES

I gave you power-of-attorney, not decider-of-destiny. The deal was you bring me home to work on my kites twice a week if I give up the Cadillac. In spite of the fact that I'm still an exceptional driver and that mishap with the mailbox was the mailbox's fault, I fulfilled my promise without a fight.

TED

Without a fight? You threw a drink at me when I suggested it.

CHUCKLES

I regret that now, Son. It was expensive whiskey.

TED

I'll keep up my end of the bargain until we close on the house. But you need to give me the keys to the car if you expect me to sell it.

CHUCKLES

I've hidden the keys somewhere in my shed.

TED

But, no one is allowed in your shed.

CHUCKLES

Then, you've got yourself quite a die-lemma. You're a smart boy, you'll figure it out.

*(STAN approaches.)*

STAN

Back already, Old Man? I guess we're funner than your new dinosaur friends.

CHUCKLES

And better at grammar too.

STAN

Grammar Schmmaer, let's have drink.

TED

He can't. He needs to take a rest.

*(SHIRLEY enters)*

Shirley, will you take Dad back to the Meadows?

SHIRLEY

Sure. It's not my shift, but I've got a surprise for all the residents. And, I'd like to check in on Dorothy. She's the lady you met the other day, Chuckles. She's forgetting more and more every day. It's kind of sad.

TED

Well, she won't forget Dad. Who could?

CHUCKLES

Thank you, Ted. Now, dear Shirley, it seems it's time for my nap *(to the party-goers)* Enjoy the free food, folks, I'll be back.

*(CHUCKLES and SHIRLEY exit. HOUSES REVOLVE and become The Meadows Active Retirement Community. Several residents are in the community room doing yoga. CHUCKLES and SHIRLEY enter)*

CHUCKLES

Well, Dear, you've done your due diligence--returned the relic to the museum. Don't you have some pills to push?

SHIRLEY

You know it's not like that here. Why don't you join the yoga class?

CHUCKLES

I am a man, not a pretzel.

SHIRLEY

Dad, Ted told me you're sick..

CHUCKLES

Theodore Arnold strikes again.

SHIRLEY

I know you're unpredictable, but why would you move away from everyone you love at the exact time you need their support the most?

CHUCKLES

I'm Chuckles, Dear. I like to see them laugh, not cry. You'll keep my secret until Night Flight, right?

SHIRLEY

I will, but, today's your lucky day. Or rather, tomorrow is. Turns out the best oncologist in town does her rounds here once a week. You're her first appointment.

CHUCKLES

I'd rather do yoga.

SHIRLEY

Class is over now, but why don't you go meet Leo. He followed the love of his life here.

CHUCKLES

Shirley, you're one of the kindest people I know. Clearly, since you put up with Ted, you've got an endless capacity for compassion. So, give it to me straight. Is this place going suck my soul with its predictability?

SHIRLEY

Not today. I have a surprise. Follow me. And pay attention.

*(As the music begins, the yoga class ends and the residents roll up their mats.)*

**#6 BUCKET LIST**

SHIRLEY

THERE'S NO SIN IN SETTING STANDARDS OR ESTABLISHING  
ROUTINE  
BREAKFAST THEN MED MANAGEMENT AND LUNCH AT 12:15

NEXT THEY WATCH JUDGE JUDY; THEN CHARDONNAY AT FIVE  
WHEN WE ASSIST THEIR LIVING  
COULDN'T WE? SHOULDN'T WE?  
MAKE 'EM FEEL THEY'RE STILL ALIVE.

CHUCKLES

What exactly are you proposing ?

SHIRLEY

I started a new program called "Do NOT Go Gently". It's about sharing the things on our bucket lists. Will you come play with us?

CHUCKLES

It seems a little morose, doesn't it? Pointing out all the things we can't do anymore?

*(SHIRLEY crosses the community room. . She walks confidently to the front of the room.  
CHUCKLES follows, shaking his head)*

SHIRLEY

Aww come on, give it a chance. Or are you afraid?

CHUCKLES

I flew three combat missions before you existed. I'm not afraid of anything

SHIRLEY

Well good, then, we're all in. Shout out what you want to do!.

*(RESIDENTS sing)*

DOROTHY

TO LEARN TO YODEL

LEO

TO SEE THE TEMPLES OF TIBET

SHIRLEY

TO WALK THE TIGHTROPE AT THE CIRCUS

LEO

TO COOK AT THE CORDON BLEU

*(They all look at CHUCKLES)*

CHUCKLES

TO SING PICASSO AT THE MET

SHIRLEY

You mean Pagliacci, right Chuckles?

CHUCKLES

*(ignoring SHIRLEY)*

AHHHH AYYYYY PICASSO!

DOROTHY

TO SEE THE AURORA BORE-ORE-ORE-ALIS

ALL  
IT'S NICE TO HAVE THIS DREAMING  
CLOSE OUR EYES AND JUST BELIEVE  
TO THINK ABOUT TOMORROW 'STEAD OF YESTERDAY

EVEN IF IT NEVER HAPPENS  
THERE'S NO TIME FOR US TO GRIEVE  
WE'RE ROWDY AND WE'RE RAGING  
ELECTRIC AND ENGAGING  
OUR TIME FOR CENTER STAGING  
MEANS WE WILL NOT GO GENTLY TODAY!

*(HOUSES REVOLVE to Sycamore Street. The party continues. KATE and JEREMY are sitting on the front steps. JEREMY is holding his kite)*

JEREMY  
Gram, can I ask you something?

KATE  
Anything.

JEREMY  
Chuckles makes all these awesome kites, but he doesn't fly one himself. How come?

KATE  
Maybe I'll tell you when you're older.

*(JEREMY takes KATE'S wrist and stares at her watch for 10 seconds)*

JEREMY  
Ok. I'm 10 seconds older. Tell me.

KATE  
When did you get to be so clever? Chuckles hasn't flown his own kite in a long, long time. You see, he was a medic in the Air Force. He was a hero. When he moved to Sycamore Street, he and your Grandpa Bob would talk for hours about their war stories. He wanted to help men talk about their feelings. So, he became a psychiatrist .

JEREMY  
Stan told me feelings are for girls.

KATE

The whole neighborhood knows that Stan cries every time he watches Finding Nemo.

JEREMY

I'm so gonna bust on him for that. But what about Chuckles?

KATE

Chuckles had a son.

JEREMY

Ted, right? He's kind of crabby.

KATE

Ted had an older brother. His name was Paul, but we all called him Peanut. Even when he outgrew it. Charlie and Peanut did everything together. They flew kites every Saturday and had amazing kite battles in the sky. Peanut worshiped his dad. He wanted to be just like him. So, when he was old enough, he enlisted in the Air Force.

JEREMY

*(excited)*

Was Paul a pilot? Did he fly jets?

KATE

He did. Have you heard of a country called Iraq? You have a cousin who's there now, in the Marine Corps. Anyway, Peanut was flying over Baghdad when...

*(CROSSFADE TO FLASHBACK: The lights dim and isolate an AIR FORCE OFFICER standing in front of CHUCKLE'S house. A younger CHUCKLES comes out to the yard.)*

AIR FORCE OFFICER

I have been asked to inform you that your son has been reported killed in the line of duty in Baghdad, Iraq at 0700 hours on July 21st, 1991. On behalf of the Secretary of Defense and the United States Air Force, I extend to you and your family my deepest sympathy for your great loss.

*(The officer salutes, YOUNG CHUCKLES salutes. The officer hands CHUCKLES a folded American flag. YOUNG CHUCKLES crosses to the center, clutching the flag. He sings a cappella)*

### US AIR FORCE SONG

YOUNGER CHUCKLES

OFF WE GO INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER  
CLIMBING HIGH INTO THE SUN



HERE THEY COME ZOOMING TO MEET OUR THUNDER  
AT 'EM BOYS, GIVE 'ER THE GUN!  
DOWN WE DIVE, SPOUTING OUR FLAME FROM UNDER  
OFF WITH ONE HELLUVA ROAR!  
WE LIVE IN FAME OR DOWN IN FLAME.

*(He falls to his knees. The younger KATE emerges from KATE's home, unseen by, either JEREMY or OLDER KATE. She crosses to YOUNGER CHUCKLES and he cries in her arms. YOUNGER KATE helps him up and leads him into his house )*

***(CROSSFADE to the PRESENT)***

JEREMY

That's really sad. You know what? July 21st is today! Isn't that weird?

KATE

Not so weird. Charlie decided he could either be sad forever or find a way to celebrate Peanut's life. So, he started making kites for everyone in the neighborhood. We became the "Sycamore Street Kite Flying Club". We meet once a year, third week in July. But, he's never been able to fly a kite of his own again.

*(CHUCKLES enters with SHIRLEY. He heads for the shed. JEREMY runs to him)*

JEREMY

Hey Chuckles, teach me how to make kites. I wanna make two for my little sisters.

CHUCKLES

The "stewardesses"? *(sobering a little)* That's a hell of a generous idea. But nobody's allowed in my shed. In a few weeks, when the Communists take over my house, that includes me. So I've got a lot to do. Plus, I've got a pretty important announcement to make.

JEREMY

I'm sorry about your son.

CHUCKLES

About Teddy? Oh, he's not so bad...for a Republican.

JEREMY

I mean Peanut.

*(CHUCKLES looks across to KATE, who waves)*

CHUCKLES

You remind me a lot of him.

JEREMY

No way. *He* was hero.

CHUCKLES

But first, he was a little boy. Now, go tell your grandma her lips should be used for kissing, not telling ancient tales.

JEREMY

I'm not saying anything to my grandma about kissing, Weirdo.

CHUCKLES

Coward. Will you at least do an old man a favor and go tell everyone to gather in front of my shed?

JEREMY  
(yelling)

Everyone to the shed!

CHUCKLES

I could have done that,

JEREMY

Then why didn't you?

*(The neighbors begin to gather around CHUCKLES and he clinks his glass)*

CHUCKLES

*(ceremoniously clinking his glass)*

It's precisely 8:02 *(to Stan)* You're late!

STAN

Better late than old!

*(The guests stand with their families-- WENDY and JEREMY stand together. KATE enters. She waves to CHUCKLES. STAN and ALICE stand together. They make room for MADDIE, who runs in. TED and SHIRLEY, and PETER stand together.)*

CHUCKLES

This was a great day. Perfect last time.

STAN

Are you drunk again? You mean perfect pastime.

CHUCKLES

Right, pastime. Talk about your Freudian slip. Hey, did I ever tell you what a Freudian slip is?

ALL

*(irritated to hear this same joke again)*

“It’s when you say one thing but mean your mother”!

TED

Get on with it Dad, we’re not getting any younger.

CHUCKLES

Settle down, Son. I won’t turn into a pumpkin at midnight. Zucchini, perhaps, but not pumpkin.

ALL

The announcement!

CHUCKLES

*(Slowly and thoughtfully)*

I need some volunteers.

*(JEREMY raises his hand excitedly)*

JEREMY

Pick me! Pick me!

PETER

NEVER, and I mean NEVER, volunteer for my grandpa unless you know exactly what you’re getting into. Once he said he was on a “soul searching mission” and I ended up sloughing dead skin off his feet for over an hour. I still haven’t recovered.

CHUCKLES

First, I need someone to take over the kite flying party. *(lots of reaction)* The new owners of my house are humorless, and most likely, Communists, as they would not negotiate my preservation of the party or kite shed into the terms of the sale. So, I’ll need someone to host the party in perpetuity. *(No one steps forward.)* Stan and Alice? You volunteer? Splendid!

ALICE

We didn't volunteer.

STAN

C'mon Alice, it'll be fun. A whole day for you to order me around and tell me all the things I'm doing wrong.

ALICE

*(dramatic pause)* We'll do it!

CHUCKLES

Perfect. Now my second request is a bit more...delicate. You all know that I'm more child than grown-up. That's why Jeremy and Madison are my best friends. But, as it turns out, my body isn't as youthful as my spirit.

KATE

What do you mean?

CHUCKLES

*(takes a deep breath)*

I mean my colon has pooped out on me. *(laughs)* Someday that will be really funny.

STAN

Dude, what the hell are you talking about?

CHUCKLES

I'm talking about cancer.

*(Everyone is thunderstruck. CHUCKLES tries to break the tension).*

*(holding up his glass of whiskey)*

My doctor, Jack Daniels, has been very helpful in numbing the pain.

ALICE

Oh my God, what can we do to help?

CHUCKLES

I've decided to take matters into my own hands and do...absolutely nothing. Nature will take its course and in a few months, fingers crossed, I'll be standing at the pearly gates - with a fistful of excuses.

TED

You can't be serious.

CHUCKLES

Deadly serious. And, in lieu of a Viking funeral, I want all of you by my side when I say goodnight.

TED

Did you ever stop to think that maybe this wasn't the most appropriate way to tell us? There are kids here, for Chrissakes!. What's the matter with you?

CHUCKLES

First of all, Beepledorp is a King on his planet and Madison is stronger than most grownups I know.

SHIRLEY

Maybe we should all just take a deep breath.

CHUCKLES

I'm an old man, Shirley. It can't be earth shattering news that I don't have a lot of breaths left. I'm just giving destiny a dignified kick in the colon

WENDY

I think we should let you all have some time. This is a family issue.

CHUCKLES

Everyone on this street is my family.

ALICE

Still, Wendy's right. This isn't really our decision. I'm sorry Chuckles. I'm so so sorry.

*(WENDY runs off.)*

CHUCKLES

Was it something I said? *(calling after them)*

STAN

Chuckles, Dude, this is nuts. No one here is ever gonna let you give up, no matter how big a shit you are.

ALICE

Stan's right, for once. This is insane. Teddy, talk some sense into your dad. C'mon Maddie.

*(MADDIE doesn't move)*

Maddie, I said now.

CHUCKLES

Jeremy, show Maddie what I taught you before she goes.

*(JEREMY and MADISON do the Sycamore Street handshake.)*

MADISON AND JEREMY

Neighbors forever  
Like the sun and the moon  
So it's never "goodbye"  
It's just see ya soon.

*(At the end of it, MADISON approaches CHUCKLES and gives him a hug.)*

MADISON

Don't do anything stupid. Like, you know, stupid.

CHUCKLES

I expect to see you here for Night Flight.

MADISON

I'll be here if you will.

*(MADISON, STAN AND ALICE exit. KATE leads JEREMY to her house. JEREMY enters the house and WENDY comes out to the porch to sit with KATE. Music starts)*

SHIRLEY

Dad, come inside and let's talk about this. We'll see the doctor in the morning and make a plan.

CHUCKLES

*(to TED)*

Ted, you've done two things right in your life-- marrying this woman *(pointing to Shirley)* and producing that son *(pointing to PETER)*. But nobody is going to change my mind on this. I'm not a fan of long goodbyes. Peter, stick around for Night Flight okay?

PETER

Don't be a bozo, Gramps. You've gotta fight this.

*(PETER hugs CHUCKLES and exits. KATE has moved over to her porch and sits with her head in her hands. Wendy comforts her. TED is pacing as if ready to explode)*

**#7 HOW COULD YOU?**

TED  
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?  
HAVE YOU FINALLY LOST YOUR MIND?  
SURE, YOU'RE ECCENTRIC  
BUT YOU'VE NEVER BEEN UNKIND

YOU MAKE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT  
LIKE ALL IS SAID AND DONE  
WHY SHOULD I MATTER AT ALL?  
I'M ONLY YOUR SON!  
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?  
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?  
THIS AWFUL PLAN YOU SHARED

CHUCKLES  
I'M SORRY, TED

TED  
YOU'RE SELFISH, DAD

SHIRLEY  
MAYBE YOU'RE BOTH JUST SCARED

CHUCKLES AND TED  
*(spoken)*

I'm not scared.

SHIRLEY  
Well I'm scared enough for all of us. Why don't we go inside and talk it over?

TED  
I'm too upset to talk, I need to take a drive, clear my head.

SHIRLEY  
Can I at least come with you?

*(TED nods. SHIRLEY crosses to CHUCKLES and tenderly puts her hands on his cheeks and kisses his forehead. TED sighs, exasperated, and exits)*

CHUCKLES

Ted, come back here! Ted! Dammit.

*(CHUCKLES looks around helplessly, then notices KATE and WENDY. He crosses to her. WENDY goes inside.)*

CHUCKLES

Kate, you know me. I'm a tear-off-the-bandaid kind of guy. I can't do it any other way.

*(KATE remains silent)*

Say something, Kate. Say anything

KATE

HOW COULD YOU DO THIS  
SAY THAT AWFUL THING OUT LOUD  
YOU MADE ME STAND THERE  
LIKE I WAS ONE OF THE CROWD

WITH ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH  
I DESERVE SOMETHING MORE  
DON'T I MATTER AT ALL  
YOUR GIRL NEXT DOOR?

CHUCKLES

I'm sorry. I didn't know how to tell you.

KATE

And you scared Jeremy. He's just a little boy. How do I explain this to him?

CHUCKLES

Let *me* explain it to him.

KATE

HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?  
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?

CHUCKLES

I'VE GOT NOWHERE TO HIDE



KATE  
YOU'RE LOSING FAITH!

CHUCKLES  
I'M FACING FACTS!

KATE  
I'M GOING INSIDE!

*(KATE enters her house. CHUCKLES looks around, desperately, at an empty street)*

CHUCKLES  
THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY HAVEN  
THE PLACE I CALL HOME  
HOW COULD THEY DO THIS? *(looking to where TED exited)*  
HOW COULD THEY DO THIS *(looking at KATE'S door)*  
LEAVE ME STANDING IN THE STREET  
ALONE?

*(JEREMY tentatively opens the door and crosses to CHUCKLES)*

JEREMY  
I'm on *your* side.

CHUCKLES  
What are you talking about, Beepledorp?

JEREMY  
Everyone's really mad at you, but not me. I've got your back.

CHUCKLES  
You can't even reach my back..

JEREMY  
Then I'll stand on my tiptoes. You make everyone so happy with your kites, and your party, and your stories. I just wanna make you happy too.

CHUCKLES  
You're exactly like your grandma--good to the core. It's a little irritating.

JEREMY  
I just wanna help.

CHUCKLES

The only way you can help is by not giving this one more minute of thought. Your job is to be the best alien Earth has ever seen.

*(KATE opens the screen door)*

KATE

Jeremy, why don't you go wash up, put on your PJs and I'll tell you about the stars, ok?

JEREMY

Grandma is an expert on stars.

CHUCKLES

I know. I call her Stargirl.

JEREMY

Stargirl. Like Star Wars? That's awesome. See ya later Chuckles. Thanks for the kite. And I promise, I'm your man.

CHUCKLES

You're the tallest man I know, Beepledorp.

*(JEREMY exits)*

CHUCKLES

Are you ready to talk?

KATE

Why didn't you tell me, Charlie, the minute they told you?

CHUCKLES

I was hoping to be hit by a meteor before you found out. Colon cancer isn't very s-e-xy.

KATE

Be serious, please. You've never surrendered to anything without a fight in your entire life. I should know.

CHUCKLES

All that fighting didn't get me very far with you. Unless you want to fool around now? *(he makes a move on her)*

KATE  
*(remonstrating)*

You can't stop living. Your family needs you. I need you.

CHUCKLES  
You never needed me, Kate. You had Bob, the kids, all the stars aligned at your command.

KATE  
Not all of them. But none of that matters now. I'm talking about the future and you're throwing the past in my face.

CHUCKLES  
Not throwing it, offering it.

KATE  
What's the difference?

CHUCKLES  
One's a weapon, the other's a gift. I'm sick. And I hate being sick. It makes me feel weak and old. You're too young to understand.

KATE  
I'm only five years younger than you, you big dope.

CHUCKLES  
It's been so long since you sweet-talked me! Will you support me, Kate?

KATE  
Absolutely not. And I'll never forgive you if you give up on us. Never.

CHUCKLES  
That's a shame, isn't it?

*(KATE moves closer to him and looks him in the eyes)*

KATE  
Help me understand, Charlie.

CHUCKLES

You just need time to process this.

KATE

A psychiatrist to the bittersweet end.

CHUCKLES

It's not the end yet. But it *is* getting dark. Almost time for Night Flight, your favorite part.

KATE

We are not finished with this conversation.

CHUCKLES

Our conversation will *never* end. Don't you know that by now? We're like a Mobius Strip.

KATE

What on earth is a Mobius Strip?

CHUCKLES

Ooooooh, I love it when I get to teach you things for a change! A mobius strip is a continuous band with only a curved boundary. Beginningless, endless. Like us.

KATE

What a long, strange, Mobius Trip it's been.

CHUCKLES

Given my news, isn't a pun on a Grateful Dead song a little insensitive?

KATE

Isn't asking your friends and family to watch you die a little more insensitive?

CHUCKLES

*(shaking his head and laughing)*

You win. You *always* win.

*(JEREMY comes to the porch of KATE'S house. He is in his pajamas.)*

JEREMY

Gram, I'm ready!

*(KATE gives CHUCKLES a long look)*

KATE  
*(to CHUCKLES)*

To be continued.

*(Before CHUCKLES can respond, KATE turns and crosses to JEREMY. CHUCKLES crosses to his shed and enters it.)*

KATE  
Sweetheart, it's been a long day and you must be very confused about Chuckles. Do you want to ask me anything?

JEREMY  
I'm okay. Just tired.

KATE  
Alright then. Say your prayers.

JEREMY  
I've never said my prayers outside before.

KATE  
It's a much better connection.

JEREMY  
How come?

KATE  
No roof gets in the way.

*(She stands to watch.)*  
JEREMY  
I need a little privacy.

KATE  
Of course.  
*(KATE goes inside the house. JEREMY sits on the picnic table)*

## **#8 AFTER GOODBYE**

JEREMY

HEY YOU UP THERE  
LONG TIME NO SEE  
I'VE GOT A QUESTION FOR YOU

I THINK THE EARTHLINGS  
ARE LYIN' TO ME  
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S TRUE

CAUSE THERE MIGHT BE  
SOMETHIN' BIG I HAVE TO DO

I HAD THIS GOLDFISH  
THEN HE GOT SICK  
FLOATIN' IN THE BOWL  
DAD CALLED IT A NEW TRICK

THEY SAID IT'S BEST TO FLUSH HIM  
I TRIED NOT TO CRY

BUT I WONDERED THEN  
AND I WONDER NOW

WHERE DO WE GO  
AFTER GOODBYE?

*(JEREMY stands., looking puzzled.)*

I HAD A HAMSTER  
NAMED BERNARD  
HE'S IN A SHOEBOX  
IN MY BACKYARD

MOM SAID HE'S PLAYIN' WITH THE GROUNDHOGS

*(JEREMY pauses and shakes his head, speaks the next line)*

BUT BERNARD WAS WAY TOO SHY

SO I WONDERED THEN  
AND I WONDER NOW

WHERE DO WE GO  
AFTER GOODBYE?

*(As JEREMY asks the following questions, his excitement builds with each possibility. He begins to climb the giant Sycamore tree)*

JEREMY

DO WE GO TO HEAVEN?  
DO WE FLOAT IN SPACE?  
DO YOU TAKE YOUR PENCIL AND ERASE?  
DO WE COME BACK WITH A DIFFERENT FACE?

WHAT'S THE TRUTH?  
WHAT'S THE LIE?

WHERE DO WE GO  
AFTER GOODBYE?

*(JEREMY sits on a branch)*

WE'LL WAIT RIGHT HERE  
ME AND THE MOON  
I HOPE YOU ANSWER  
PLEASE TELL ME SOON

I KNOW YOU'RE UP THERE  
IN THAT STARRY SKY

SO WHERE DO WE GO  
WHERE DO WE GO  
WHERE DO WE GO  
AFTER GOODBYE?

WHERE DO WE GO  
AFTER GOODBYE?

*(CHUCKLES emerges from his shed holding a kite with lights on it and crosses to JEREMY)*

CHUCKLES

Whatcha doin' up there?

JEREMY

Thinkin'.

CHUCKLES

Not enough of that these days.

JEREMY

Are you scared?

CHUCKLES

Of what?

JEREMY

You know.

CHUCKLES

Of dying?

*(JEREMY nods)*

CHUCKLES

A little.

JEREMY

Are you sad?

CHUCKLES

A lot. I'll miss my friends, like you.

JEREMY

Then why do it on purpose?



CHUCKLES

Climb on down and I'll try to explain it.

*(JEREMY scrambles down the tree and they cross to the picnic table and sit)*

What's your best subject in school?

JEREMY

Science.

CHUCKLES

That must come in handy for an alien. So, imagine you have a big science test. You know you did your very best. You think you answered most of the questions. You'd feel good about turning it into the teacher, right?

JEREMY

Right.

CHUCKLES

That's how I feel about all of this. Does that make any sense?

JEREMY

Sorta.

CHUCKLES

Sorta is a great place to start. But, there *is* one more thing I have to do before I turn in my test.

JEREMY

Put your name on it?

CHUCKLES

I have to show King Beepledorp the magic of Night Flight.

JEREMY

*(excited)*

Is it time?

CHUCKLES

Look around. All the neighbors are coming back. *(Neighbors all enter and shake hands.)*

Go get your kite (*after a beat*) and your grandma.

*(JEREMY runs into KATE'S house as the neighbors come and embrace or shake hands with CHUCKLES. They all have kites, except MADISON. CHUCKLES crosses to her with the new kite and hands it to her. She hugs him)*

*(WALTER enters holding his brown UPS kite. CHUCKLES crosses to him and shakes his hand)*

Walter, ya made it! This street never lets me down!

*(The kites have small lights on them and as CHUCKLES and KATE pass each neighbor, he sets them in a pose and the kites' lights are illuminated. He poses KATE last, but she will not pose. She crosses to her porch and clutches her kite)*

## **#9 NIGHT FLIGHT**

CHUCKLES

IF YOU LIVE BENEATH A SKY THAT HAS NO STARS  
CAUSE THE ATMOSPHERE GOT ALL CLOGGED UP WITH CARS

YOU CAN'T JUST GIVE THE DIRTY SKY A SCRUB  
BUT YOU CAN JOIN US HERE  
JOIN US HERE  
JOIN US HERE  
AT THE SYCAMORE STREET KITE FLYING CLUB

Neighbors

THIRD WEEK IN JULY, COME RAIN OR COME SHINE  
IF THE WIND'S NOT BLOWIN', IT'LL TAKE MORE TIME

WE SOAR WITH THE SUN AND THEN WE WAIT  
TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK TOCK  
TIL DUSK SETS IN, 'ROUND HALF PAST EIGHT

WE'RE THE CITY'S PRETTIEST SIGHT  
TAKE MAIN TO OAK, WE'RE THE SECOND RIGHT

JOIN US HERE TONIGHT  
JOIN US HERE TONIGHT  
JOIN US HERE TONIGHT  
FOR THE SYCAMORE STREET NIGHT FLIGHT

*(CHUCKLES crosses to Kate. Music continues as they speak)*

CHUCKLES

All of this is for you, Stargirl. It's always been you. Please come fly for me.

KATE

Promise me you'll find another way through this.

CHUCKLES

I'll think about it. It's the best I can do.

*(KATE remains on her porch clutching her kite. CHUCKLES surveys the scene he has set.)*

CHUCKLES

LIFE GETS BUSY  
TIME MOVES SO FAST  
THE FUTURE SOON BECOMES THE PAST  
YOU WANDER THROUGH THE WORLD  
YOU STUMBLE THROUGH THE DARK  
THEN YOU SEE A BEACON BURNING BRIGHT

Neighbors

JOIN US HERE  
JOIN US HERE  
JOIN US HERE  
WE'RE THE SYCAMORE STREET KITE FLYING CLUB

CHUCKLES

WSSSSHHHHHHH!

*(By the end of the song, all the kites are illuminated and the stage lights go down so it looks like stars. TED stands alone on his porch)*

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

*(After the party. As the lights come up on The Meadows, WALTER sits in an Adirondack chair. LEO is shaving him. CHUCKLES and TED enter.)*

CHUCKLES

If you were going to give me the silent treatment all the way here, why didn't you have Shirley bring me back?

TED

You did drop a bomb on us tonight. A big, selfish bitch of a bomb.

CHUCKLES

What's wrong with me choosing to choose?

TED

Euthanasia is not a rational choice, so clearly you've lost your mind.

CHUCKLES

Euthanasia? Who's talking about kids in China? I'm not asking you to do anything, Son.

TED

Doing nothing is just as bad.

CHUCKLES

I need to do it my way.

TED

I can't support your way.

CHUCKLES

Then I suppose we have nothing more to say. I'm going in search of a late night card game. If dogs can play poker, maybe dinosaurs can too.

TED

Dad...

CHUCKLES

We'll talk tomorrow.

*(TED takes a beat, sighs heavily and exits. CHUCKLES crosses to WALTER and LEO)*

Hiya. Didn't see you two there. Walter, is that you? What the hell are you doing here?

WALTER

I live here now. I tried to tell you at your party, but things were a little...tense. *(to LEO)* Leo, this is the guy I was telling you about from Sycamore Street. With the kites. *(in a loud whisper)* And the Big C.

CHUCKLES

*(to LEO)*

Why are you shaving my UPS guy?

LEO

Because it's a beautiful night. The moon is twice as bright as those awful fluorescent lights inside.

CHUCKLES

*(to Leo)*

Well, you're a good son to treat your dad so well. Sometimes I think my kid would drop me off at the curb if he could get away with it.

LEO

*(offended)*

I am NOT his son.

WALTER

*(standing, wiping shaving cream off his face)*

I was just telling him that the age gap is starting to feel more like a canyon.

LEO

And I told him I don't care. Especially now that I'll have him all to myself.

CHUCKLES

So Mr. Robinson gets his Benjamin and they live happily ever after. As long as my packages arrive on time, then koo-koo-ka-choo to you.

WALTER

That's what I've been trying to tell you. I'm retiring.

CHUCKLES

Retiring or *(drops his voice an octave)* RETIRING?

WALTER

30 years at the post office, 10 years at UPS. Now I'll just be passing time 'til Leo catches up.

CHUCKLES

When he does catch up...then what?

WALTER

We're moving to Boca Raton. He promised. I'm going to buy a 25 footer and spend my days catching grouper.

CHUCKLES

Christ, now I know how the last dinosaur felt. He probably looked around and said, "Where's Stegy?", "He's dead". "What about Rex?", "retired". "And Bronto?", "Bronto moved to Boca".

### **#10 RETIRED**

WALTER

WHEN A CAR GETS A FLAT, IT SHOULD GET RETIRED  
WHEN A SOCKET BLOWS A FUSE, IT SHOULD GET REWIRED  
WHEN A MAN CAN'T FIND HIS PURPOSE  
HE NEEDS TO GET INSPIRED  
THEY'LL RAISE A GLASS  
THEY'LL WISH ME WELL  
THE GOLDEN YEARS CAN GO TO HELL

A MAN WITHOUT A MAILBAG  
HAS NO STORIES LEFT TO TELL

LEO

*(seductively putting his arms around WALTER)*

I could be your mailbag.

CHUCKLES

I'm too young to hear such gutter talk.

WALTER

*(to LEO)*

YOU'RE THE LOVE OF MY LIFE DEAR; YOU MAKE ME FEEL 19  
BEYOND A LOVER'S PASSION IS THE SPACE THAT'S IN BETWEEN  
A PERSON'S NOT A PURPOSE,  
CHUCKLES, TELL HIM WHAT I MEAN

CHUCKLES

WE MAKE OUR DEALS

WALTER

WE MAKE OUR PACTS

WALTER & CHUCKLES

THESE GOLDEN YEARS MAKE US FACE FACTS  
A MAN WITHOUT MOMENTUM  
GETS STUCK IN HIS OWN TRACKS

CHUCKLES

YOU COULD PLANT PETUNIAS OUT IN THE YARD

LEO

OR WRITE ME SONNETS

CHUCKLES

THE SECOND COMING OF THE BARD

LEO

YOU COULD JUST STOP RUNNING; THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO  
CHASE

WALTER

THEN LIFE WOULD JUST DRAG ON AT ITS PETTY, PETTY PACE

*(DOROTHY'S enters dressed in her nightgown, but carrying her pocketbook.)*

CHUCKLES

Dorothy, why are you still awake?

DOROTHY

*(not recognizing CHUCKLES)*

Excuse me Sir, I'm waiting for my boyfriend. His name is Jerry. He's tall and dreamy. He's taking me to see Beach Blanket Bingo at the drive-in tonight, but he's running terribly late. Have you seen him?

CHUCKLES

*(tenderly)*

I'm sure he'll be here real soon. He'd be a fool to miss a date with such a pretty girl. Until he gets here, may I sit with you for a bit?

*(She nods and they sit on a bench. She puts her head on his shoulder and falls asleep.)*

WALTER

JUST MAKE ME A PROMISE  
GRANT ME A SINGLE WISH  
I CAN BE RETIRED  
I CAN BE REWIRED  
I CAN EVEN BE INSPIRED  
IF YOU TAKE ME TO THE SEA  
AND LET ME FISH

LEO

LET'S RAISE A GLASS

CHUCKLES

*(quietly)*

LET'S SAY THREE CHEERS

WALTER

WHATEVER WE DO

WALTER, LEO, and CHUCKLES  
LET'S SCREW THE GOLDEN YEARS



*(CROSSFADE TO SYCAMORE STREET. It is the day after Chuckles announcement. KATE and WENDY are drinking tea and talking on the front porch. SHIRLEY approaches with a cell phone in her hand as if she just finished a call)*

SHIRLEY

They just met with the doctor. It didn't go well. Dad is hell bent on doing nothing. Ted is beside himself. He has to call his mom and tell her. And I suppose we should tell Susan.

*(JEREMY exits the house with his kite)*

JEREMY

Who's Susan?

WENDY

The creature from the Black Lagoon! And also, Chuckles' second wife.

KATE

*(clearly upset)*

We are not calling Susan. She took his money, she's not getting his last breath.

WENDY

Mom, calm down.

KATE

He deserves better, that's all.

SHIRLEY

They're on their way home. Chuckles wants to work in the shed. Ted and I talked all night and we've come up with a plan that just might work.

KATE

Anything's better than what he has in mind.

SHIRLEY

Jeremy, would you like to help me go through Chuckles' books? He's got some really neat ones with planes on the cover. I'll bet he'll let you keep the ones you like.

JEREMY

*(excited)*

Can I, Mom?

WENDY

If it's okay with Chuckles, it's okay with me.

SHIRLEY  
(to JEREMY)

Last one in the house is a rotten egg!

*(SHIRLEY and JEREMY exit)*

WENDY

Are you okay, Mom?

KATE

I'm fine, honey.

WENDY

It's like you're a million miles away. Can I ask you something, woman to woman?

KATE

Go ahead.

WENDY

Was there ever anything between you and Chuckles?

KATE  
(shaken)

I was loyal to your dad until the day he died.

WENDY

That's not what I'm asking. Did you and Chuckles ever have feelings for each other?

KATE

We've been neighbors for thirty years. We've been through a lot. Of course, I care about him.

*(CROSSFADE TO FLASHBACK : MIDDLE AGED KATE and MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES. He has a kite behind his back.)*

MIDDLE AGED KATE

5th Annual Sycamore Street Kite Flying party. How are you holding up?

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

I'm talking to the girl next door. So I'm walking on the moon.

MIDDLE AGED KATE

You can't say that anymore, Charlie. You're a married man again. Where is Susan anyway? Studying for her finals?

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

Be nice. She's not that young. But, she says that kites aren't exactly her "thing", so she's not coming to the party. Where's Bob? That is his name, isn't it? Traveling for business again? Is he ever home for pleasure?

MIDDLE AGED KATE

He in Singapore.

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

*(improvising)*

Sing a song to the girl next door  
The one with stars in her eyes  
Her husband's off to Singapore  
While alone her new kite flies

MIDDLE AGED KATE

New kite? But I already have this one. One kite per soul, right?

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

Soulmates get two.

*(MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES hands her a star-shaped kite.)*

MIDDLE AGED KATE

It's beautiful, Charlie. But the first kite will be sad if I abandon it.

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

That's not my problem.

MIDDLE AGED KATE

No, but, you're *my* problem.

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

I'm being charming. Unfortunately, you're being sensible

MIDDLE AGED KATE

You're about to ruin a perfectly mediocre party.

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

I despise the word “mediocre”.

MIDDLE AGED KATE

*(grinning slyly)*

I know you do.

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

*(mimicking her)*

I know you do.

*(KATE sighs,exasperated. As MIDDLE AGED KATE and MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES sing, the scene crossfades back and forth from the past to the present, as if Kate is having the memory, but still trying to have a conversation with WENDY)*

**#11 ISN'T IT A SHAME?**

MIDDLE AGED KATE

I FIND NIGHTS LIKE THIS QUITE TEDIOUS AND BORING  
I'D RATHER BE TUCKED IN MY BED AND SNORING  
I DO MY BEST TO LISTEN, POLITELY NOD MY HEAD  
WHILE YOU BLATHER ON AND ON AND ON AND ON  
I MAKE MENTAL GROCERY LISTS INSTEAD

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES

*(playfully)*

IF WE'RE BEING HONEST, MIDDLE AGE IS MAKING YOU RATHER  
RUDE  
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN THANKED ME FOR THE PARTY, FOR THE DRINK,  
FOR THE FOOD

*(KATE starts to interrupt. CHUCKLES puts a finger up to her mouth)*

I WASN'T DONE YET; WE'RE NOT HAVING FUN YET  
I BLATHER ON AND ON TO FILL YOUR EMPTY SPACE  
AND BY THE WAY, YOU'VE STILL GOT FOOD ON YOUR CHUBBY,  
CHUBBY FACE

*(MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES tenderly removes the food from her chin. Spoken)*

It's corn. Very lady-like.

***(CROSSFADE to the PRESENT)***

KATE  
*(to WENDY)*

We need to find a way to help Charlie.

WENDY

You *could* give him your blessing.

KATE

Never. He's stubborn, and complicated, and exasperating, but he's also my.....

***(Crossfade to past.)***

MIDDLE AGED KATE  
I OBJECT TO EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU  
I CAN OFFER CIRCUMSTANTIAL PROOF  
YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD REUNION LEAVES MY NIGHT IN RUIN  
IT'S BEEN A COMICALLY CALAMITOUS GOOF

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES  
WE HAVE NOTHING AT ALL IN COMMON  
EXCEPT OUR MUSIC, OUR POLITICS, OUR FAVORITE BOOKS

MIDDLE AGED KATE  
AND IT SEEMS ONLY ONE OF US HAS OVERCOME HER ADOLESCENT  
LOOKS

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES  
I'M SORRY YOU TURNED OUT SHALLOW

MIDDLE AGED KATE  
TOO BAD YOU TURNED OUT LAME

MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES  
ISN'T IT A SHAME?

MIDDLE AGED KATE  
ISN'T IT A SHAME?

*(Crossfade to present.)*

KATE  
Plus, I'd wallow in "what if" for the rest of my life.

WENDY  
I think you've been wallowing in "what if" for a really long time.

KATE  
Go to your room, young lady.

WENDY  
Mom, I'm an adult. You can't send me to my room.

KATE  
Then go get those babies for me to hold.

WENDY  
Only if you promise not to inhale them.

KATE  
I'm a grandchild junkie, what can I say? Sweetheart, please don't stay away so long next time. No matter what you're going through, we can always go through it together.

WENDY  
Funny, that's exactly what Chuckles said. Thank you, Mom.

KATE  
For what?

WENDY  
For choosing your family.

*(WENDY exits.) (Crossfade to the past)*

MIDDLE KATE  
*(As OLDER CHUCKLES enters)*

WE SURELY DODGED A BULLET WHEN WE WERE YOUNG AND SO  
NAÏVE  
WE WOULD HAVE BEEN A TRAIN WRECK THE LIKES OF WHICH MY  
MIND CANNOT CONCEIVE

MIDDLE CHUCKLES  
*(As OLDER KATE enters)*

I CAN BE A BIT ELITIST, SARCASTIC AND A BIT SARDONIC, TOO  
SO COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS THAT I KEPT THINGS PLATONIC WITH  
YOU

MIDDLE KATE  
BUT WHEN YOU SPEAK OF SANTORINI THERE'S NO WAY YOU  
COULD KNOW  
WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES AND FANTASIZE THAT'S WHERE I GO

OLDER CHUCKLES  
IN MY JOB I ONLY LISTEN, I NEVER SAY WHAT'S ON MY MIND  
WITH YOU I SHARE MY STORIES; GET A CHANCE TO JUST UNWIND

OLDER KATE  
IS IT STRANGE HOW MUCH I LIKED IT WHEN YOU LAUGHED AT MY  
JOKE ABOUT VOLTAIRE?

MIDDLE CHUCKLES  
SPEAKING 'CANDIDELY,' THERE JUST MIGHT BE, A BRAIN  
SOMEWHERE IN THERE

*(as MIDDLE AGED CHUCKLES sings this last line, he puts his hand on MIDDLE AGED KATE'S  
head tenderly and lets it linger. There is a silence)*

MIDDLE CHUCKLES  
I'M GLAD YOU HAVE A HAPPY LIFE

MIDDLE AGED KATE  
I'M GLAD YOU HAVE A LOVELY WIFE

OLDER CHUCKLES/OLDER KATE  
YET HERE WITH YOU, THINGS FEEL DIFFERENT...

OLDER KATE  
BUT THE SAME

OLDER CHUCKLES  
LIKE BEING LESS ALONE

OLDER KATE  
LIKE FINALLY FEELING HOME

MIDDLE CHUCKLES/MIDDLE KATE  
ISN'T IT A SHAME?

OLDER KATE  
IS IT?

OLDER CHUCKLES  
IS IT?

ALL  
ISN'T IT A SHAME?

*(MIDDLE KATE AND MIDDLE CHUCKLES enter their houses. **CROSSFADE to present.**)*

*(TED enters and CHUCKLES begins to cross to his shed. )*

TED  
Dad, before you disappear, I need you to take your meds like you promised. A deal's a deal.

CHUCKLES  
You and the fart of the deal.

TED  
If you start talking politics, I may reconsider my objections to your plan.

CHUCKLES  
I knew you'd come around.

TED  
Try to behave yourself. I'll bring out your meds and some lemonade.

*(TED crosses and enters CHUCKLES' house. CHUCKLES begins to enter his shed and hears a loud crash from within.)*



CHUCKLES

Who's there? *(he picks up a rake which is leaning on the shed)* C'mon show yourself!

*(MADISON exits the shed holding the frame of the hang-glider)*

Care to explain?

MADISON

I'm really sorry. Don't be mad. I've been sneaking in through the window since I was a little kid. Sometimes it gets a little rough out here with all the "grown ups".

CHUCKLES

Why do you think I built this sanctuary? Just me and my kites. And, as it turns out, you. To think, all these years I assumed I had a really big rodent problem.

MADISON

You won't tell my parents will you? They'd be thrilled to add "breaking and entering" to my list of failures.

CHUCKLES

Au contraire, I'd say you're quite a success at breaking and entering. I won't tell if you won't.

MADISON

Thanks Chuckles, you're the man. So, things got pretty out of hand last night. Your announcement scared me.

CHUCKLES

Then we're even cause you just scared me half to death.

MADISON

What makes you think any of us would ever support your demented plan of doom anyway?

CHUCKLES

Wishful thinking, I guess.

MADISON

You know, there's a zillion ways to off yourself quickly if that's what you really want. Why make everyone watch you get sicker and sicker? Maybe you just need to consider a new plan.

*(He hands her his notebook, which she begins to flip through)*

CHUCKLES

Trust me, I'm no slacker. I've done my homework.

**#12 PLAN K**

CHUCKLES

(SINGS)

I'VE CONTEMPLATED PLANS FROM A TO Z  
PLANS OF ELEGANCE AND EXPEDIENCY

I DON'T WANT TO BE A BOTHER  
I DON'T MEAN TO MAKE A MESS  
I JUST WANT TO FADE AWAY  
FADE AWAY, MORE OR LESS

MADISON

*(Spoken)*

More or less?

CHUCKLES

*(sings)*

SINCE WE'RE SHARING SECRETS  
THE WORLD OUT THERE HAS NEVER KNOWN  
SINCE YOU SNUCK INTO MY SHED  
AND MADE YOURSELF AT HOME

LIFE HAS NO GUARANTEE  
IT'S MORE LIKE RENT TO OWN

I'M THE LIFE OF EVERY PARTY  
CAUSE I'M SCARED TO BE ALONE

MADISON

*(spoken)*

I get that. Being alone sucks.

CHUCKLES

*(sings)*

THESE TERMS AND NEW CONDITIONS  
PROBLEMATIC PREDILECTIONS  
THERE IS NO RENEWAL OF MY LEASE

A MAN NEEDS A PLAN OR HE GETS RESTLESS  
HE GETS RESTLESS TO REST IN PEACE!

MADISON

*(spoken)*

So let's make a new plan. Dad's got a pistol "hidden" in his sock drawer.

CHUCKLES

Well that got dark and dramatic awfully quick.

MADISON

I'm 17—I live for dark and dramatic.

CHUCKLES

*(SINGS)*

PLAN G,  
IT WAS WORTH A SHOT  
BUT IF I MISS, IT WOULD HURT A LOT  
I'M A LIFELONG CRITIC OF THE NRA  
I CAN'T LET A GUN HAVE THE FINAL SAY  
PLAN G,  
IT ISN'T WORTH A SHIT  
CAUSE THE SOUL WON'T REST  
IF THE MAN'S A HYPOCRITE

MADISON

*(spoken)*

Fair enough. I saw this epic movie once where this guy jumped right in front of a train.  
Kablam!

CHUCKLES

*(spoken)*

Plan T? Colorful, but it would throw off the entire transportation grid and I, for one, don't want to be responsible for a bunch of pissed off commuters.

CHUCKLES

THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS  
MORTAL COIL VIOLATIONS  
SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE BELOW THE CREASE

A MAN NEEDS A PLAN OR HE GETS RESTLESS  
A MAN NEEDS A PLAN OR HE GETS RESTLESS  
HE GETS RESTLESS TO REST IN PEACE

MADISON

Dad said you've always needed an audience. Is that what this is all about?

CHUCKLES

He's wrong. As usual. I don't need an audience. What I need is a friend.

MADISON

Ok, so what's next?

CHUCKLES

THE PLAN I THINK I'VE PICKED IT  
BE MY JIMINY CRICKET

MADDIE, I NEED HELP,  
WHADDYA SAY?

MADISON

*(holding up the hang-glider part)*

I peeked in that box earlier. Are you gonna build what I think you're gonna build?

CHUCKLES

LET'S CALL IT  
LET'S CALL IT  
LET'S CALL IT  
PLAN K!

*(STAN exits his house holding a brown paper bag. He crosses to MADISON and CHUCKLES)*

STAN

You two are definitely up to no good. Chuckles, can I have a minute in private?

MADISON

Jeez, I love you too, Dad.

STAN

Maddie, that's not what I meant. You can stay if you want.

MADISON

Too late. I'm outta here.

*(MADISON exits.)*

STAN

Guess neither one of us is gonna win father of the year any time soon.

*( STAN hands CHUCKLES a brown paper bag)*

Don't tell Alice about this, cause she'd murder me, but last night I called a doctor friend and told him about your situation and he hooked me what you'll need just in case you don't want to suffer. Man's gotta do what a man's gotta do, am I right?

CHUCKLES

This was either really thoughtful or really mean. Maybe I should just dress up like a golden retriever and walk myself down to the vet. They've got the right idea.

STAN

You're more rottweiler than retriever, but you do have a point. What are you gonna do if Ted doesn't come around?

CHUCKLES

I'm considering my alternatives. Top secret. So if I told you, I'd get to kill you. I mean I'd have to kill you. Decisions, decisions. *(holding up the bag)* Seriously, Stanley, thank you for this. I'm going to go hide this bag, and myself, in my shed.

STAN

I'll miss you, Chuckles.

CHUCKLES

I'll only be 50 feet away, Nemo. Don't cry yet.

STAN

I just meant...oh nevermind. You're an asshole.

*(CHUCKLES kisses STAN dramatically on the forehead. STAN crosses to his house. CHUCKLES starts to enter his shed.)*

*(TED enters with a tall glass of lemonade and a pill bottle)*

TED

Dad...your meds.

*(CHUCKLES stands in the door of his shed. TED hands him the lemonade)*

CHUCKLES

I'm going to take my medicine like a good boy, but it doesn't change anything. *(CHUCKLES takes a flask from his pocket and pours it into the lemonade)*

TED

Dad, Shirley and I have a plan.

CHUCKLES

*I'm* not interested in any more deals or plans.

TED

Can't you just listen to me for once? If I was Paul, you'd listen.

CHUCKLES

That's a low blow, Ted. Even for you.

TED

I've been invisible since the day he died. Maybe even before he died.

CHUCKLES

What makes you think you're invisible?

Because I'm second.

TED

Second what?

CHUCKLES

**#13 SECOND BEST**

TED

SECOND BORN  
SECOND FACE  
SECOND BEST  
SECOND PLACE

HOW CAN I COMPETE WITH WHAT YOU LOST?  
HOW CAN I GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED?  
I TRY AND TRY AND TRY  
TO BE A DECENT GUY  
BUT I'M STUCK HERE FOREVER  
IN MY BROTHER'S WEEDS

SECOND CHOICE  
SECOND HAND  
SECOND VOICE  
SECOND MAN

YOU BEG ME TO HAVE A LITTLE FAITH  
THE SHADOWS OF THE PAST WON'T CEASE TO HAUNT  
I PRAY AND PRAY AND PRAY  
TO GIVE US ONE MORE DAY  
SO I CAN FIND A WAY  
TO BE THE SON YOU WANT

*(CHUCKLES grabs TED by the shoulders and looks him square in the eye)*

Teddy, is that what you really think?

CHUCKLES

How could I think anything else?

TED

CHUCKLES

You've got it all wrong. I owe you everything. You stayed. Nobody else did. Paul. Then your mom. Then Susan. They all left. But you stayed and took care of me. And even though I can be a complete bastard, you *still* take care of me. You saved my life. Don't you get that? I'd be a disaster, well, a bigger disaster, without you.

TED

I didn't go down in a blaze of glory like Paul.

CHUCKLES

He didn't *choose* to go down in a blaze of glory. But you *choose* to stay with me. Big difference.

CHUCKLES

SECOND THOUGHTS  
SECOND GLANCE  
SECOND SON  
SECOND CHANCE

WHETHER YOU BLESS MY CHOICE OR NOT  
I'M SO PROUD TO HAVE YOU AS MY SON  
I KNOW I KNOW I KNOW  
IT'S HARD TO LET ME GO  
BUT BELIEVE ME KID  
YOU'RE THE BEST THING I'VE EVER DONE

*(TED offers his hand, but CHUCKLES pulls him into a huge bear hug)*

TED

I'm not agreeing to anything. But I'll read the Death with Dignity pamphlet you so lovingly superglued to my steering wheel.

CHUCKLES

Well, it's a sticky issue, Son.

TED

I'll read the pamphlet if *you* reconsider your treatment options, OK?

CHUCKLES

You didn't say "deal". It's a miracle. I'm going to start packing up the shed.



TED

And I'll get started sorting out things in the basement. I can see why you left it for last. It's a mess.

CHUCKLES

Watch out for the skeletons.

TED

I thought skeletons were in the closet.

CHUCKLES

My closet had no vacancy.

TED

Can Shirley and I talk to you later about our plan?

CHUCKLES

As long as she does all the talking. Wouldn't want us to ruin our peace accord, now would we?

TED

Fair enough, Dad. Fair enough.

*(TED exits to the house. CHUCKLES enters his shed.)*

*(JEREMY enters and begins to set up a table at CENTER. He has gallons of chocolate milk and cups. He tapes two signs to the front of the table. Sign #1 reads: CHOCOLATE MILK FOR CHUCKLES. Sign #2 reads: HELP CHUCKLES BUY A NEW COLIN (spelling error on purpose)*

*(MADISON and PETER enter.)*

MADISON

What's goin on here, Short Stack?

JEREMY

Chocolate Milk Stand.

PETER

We can see that, but why?

JEREMY

I heard Stan say the lady down the street couldn't afford to paint her house, but *could* find three thousand bucks for a new pair of boobs, so I figured I could find the money to buy Chuckles a new colon Plus, everyone around here is so sad.

*(the Neighbors begins to enter and buy milk from JEREMY)*

MADISON

When life hands you lemons, make chocolate milk.

PETER

Gramps would *hate* it if we were all mopin' around because of him. I can hear him now, "Nobody likes a crybaby."

MADISON

He loves to laugh more than anyone else I know. Remember that Halloween when he dressed up like a spider and jumped off the roof and nearly scared my dad to death?

PETER

Stan literally peed his pants!

MADISON

Maybe we should teach Jeremy what Chuckles taught us. It would help take our minds off things.

*(Music begins)*

### **#14 GIGGLEOSOPHY**

PETER

IF SOMETHIN' MAKES YOU CRY  
JUST STARE IT IN THE EYE  
THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHIN' BRIGHTER  
YOU CAN SEE

MADISON

IT WON'T BREAK YOU IN HALF

IF YOU LOOK AT IT AND LAUGH  
CHUCKLES ALWAYS SAYS THAT IS THE KEY

PETER  
SO STEP RIGHT UP

JEREMY  
STEP RIGHT UP

MADISON  
AND FILL YOUR CUP

PETER  
AND FILL YOUR CUP

Neighbors  
WITH A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!

GIGGLOSOPHY  
GIGGLOSOPHY  
SET YOUR SADNESS FREE  
SET YOUR SADNESS FREE  
SEE HOW FUNNY LIFE CAN BE  
WITH A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!

JEREMY  
*(spoken)*

How does it work?

MADISON

The street knows what to do!

*(Music underscores as pairs from Neighbors tell jokes)*

NEIGHBOR #1

Why won't all the other bodily organs play with Colin the Colon?

NEIGHBOR #2

Cause he's such a little shit!

Neighbors

GIGGLE GIGGLE GIGGLE  
YOUR BELLY STARTS TO JIGGLE  
YOU LAUGH UNTIL YOU PEE  
WITH A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!

GIGGLE GIGGLE GIGGLE  
YOUR FUNNY BONE WILL WIGGLE  
TIL YOUR MOOD LIFTS LIKE THAT TREE  
WITH A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!

*(KATE and WENDY exit KATE'S house and cross to JEREMY. CHUCKLES exits his shed and crosses to them)*

CHUCKLES  
*(to JEREMY)*

Just the man I was looking for. I need my trusty co-pilot to complete a very important maneuver.

JEREMY  
*(excitedly salutes)*

Reporting for duty, Captain.

CHUCKLES  
I only made Lieutenant, but thanks for the promotion. You see here that I have made the stewardesses their very own tails. You, Airman Beepledorp, must complete the final, and most essential, step-- tying them on. They're different colors so you can tell those two sisters of yours apart. C'mon, kites can't fly without 'em!

JEREMY  
Why not?

CHUCKLES  
Cause the tail tells the tale. See what I did there Kate? I'm witty and deboner. *(KATE shakes her head and turns away)*

Tough crowd. *(he turns to Jeremy)* Ok, Little Man, let's take off.

KATE  
*(to CHUCKLES)*

Actually, I'd like to talk to you.

CHUCKLES

You know talking would be my *second* favorite thing to do with you.

WENDY

I am standing right here, Chuckles. And she is my mother. Please stop coming on to her.

CHUCKLES

Is that what I was doing? Guess I've still got it.

*(turns to JEREMY)*

Jeremy, a long time ago, I taught your mom to fly kites. Why don't the two of you pack up those babies, take your kites to the park and you can help her remember how it's done.

WENDY

That actually sounds lovely. Let's go pack a picnic!

*(They hurry inside)*

CHUCKLES

*(to Kate)*

Now that I have maneuvered to get you alone, what do you plan to do with me? Spare no details.

KATE

I didn't sleep at all last night. I was so mad at you. Then mad at God. Then mad at you again.

CHUCKLES

I can deal with the big "C". I can deal with Ted. I suppose I can even deal with Communists moving into my house. But, I could never deal with you being mad at me. Talk to me, Stargirl.

*(Music starts. KATE looks at CHUCKLES for a moment. She picks up her star kite and gazes at it.)*

### **#15 STARGIRL**

KATE

I'VE NEVER TRULY BEEN YOUR STARGIRL  
I'M MORE LIKE YOUR SATELLITE  
I WANDER THROUGH YOUR GALAXY  
A LONELY, LOVE STRUCK FLIGHT

I STARED SO OFTEN IN THAT WINDOW  
YOUR BEDROOM LIGHT WOULD ALWAYS SHINE  
I WISHED ON EVERY SPECK OF STARDUST  
SOMEDAY, PLEASE LET THAT LIGHT BE MINE

YOUR EYES FIND MINE  
IN THE DARKNESS  
A MAGNET MOVES ME WITH ITS FORCE  
MY EYES CAN'T HIDE  
I SURRENDER  
MY HEART FLOAT HELPLESSLY OFF COURSE

CHUCKLES  
*(more seriously)*

Why didn't you ever tell me this before?

KATE  
OUR LIVES SPUN ROUND AND ROUND LIKE PLANETS  
I STUDIED STARS AND PLAYED THE FOOL  
WITH CHILDREN TO RAISE; GARDENS TO TEND  
EVERY LAW OF NATURE HAD ITS RULE

AND NOW, YOU TELL ME YOU ARE DYING  
THIS AWFUL THING YOU WANT TO DO  
WITHOUT YOUR SMILING FACE  
THERE'S ONLY EMPTY SPACE  
HOW CAN I LIVE IN A WORLD WITHOUT YOU?

*(KATE begins to cry and buries herself in Chuckles shoulder. He continues the song)*

CHUCKLES  
YOUR EYES FIND MINE  
IN THE DARKNESS  
A MAGNET MOVES US WITH ITS FORCE

YOUR EYES FIND MINE  
I SURRENDER  
TWO HEARTS FLOAT HELPLESSLY OFF COURSE

KATE

*(KATE holds him forcefully)*

IT'S TIME TO GIVE THE SKY A CHANCE  
THE SUN, THE MOON WERE MEANT TO DANCE!

THE UNIVERSE IS OURS TO SEE  
BUT WIN OR LOSE  
YOU MUST CHOOSE  
YOU MUST CHOOSE  
TO STAY WITH ME

*(They embrace, but CHUCKLES separates from her and his tone changes)*

CHUCKLES

You play dirty, Stargirl. I've chased you for 30 years, but now that I'm finally ready to let go, you stop running?

KATE

I could take care of you.

CHUCKLES

Would there be spongebaths?

KATE

I'm trying to have a serious conversation with you and you are behaving like a fourteen year old boy.

CHUCKLES

You make me feel like a fourteen year old boy. But, this is too much to take on. Even for the strongest person I know. I won't put you through it.

KATE

Shouldn't that be *my* choice?

*(TED and SHIRLEY enter.)*

TED

Sorry to interrupt, but Shirley and I really need to talk to you. We have a *-(rethinks his word choice)*, an offer for you. It's win/win, for sure.

CHUCKLES

Sounds like a deal in wolf's clothing. I'm listening. Sort of.

SHIRLEY

We kill the sale of the house. Ted and I would move back here and we'd take care of you.

CHUCKLES

Nothing about my one way ticket to la la land.

TED

I can't do it your way, Dad.

CHUCKLES

You are not moving back here to watch me croak, kids. Lotta people would love that. You're not on the list.

KATE

Charlie, listen to what they are offering. It's what you wanted.

CHUCKLES

You honestly think it's a good plan, Kate?

KATE

It's better than yours! Your plan changes everything and it puts everyone in a very difficult position.

CHUCKLES

*(putting his arm around Kate)*

Speaking of positions. I was reading the Kama Sutra...

*(WENDY, JEREMY exit the house with their kites, a stroller and a picnic basket. )*

JEREMY

What's the camera suitor?

ALL

Never mind!

CHUCKLES

Listen, folks, I'll make a deal with all of you. Jeez, Ted, now you've got me doin' it.

TED

What are you saying?

CHUCKLES



I'm saying that I'm willing to give the treatments a shot. One shot. IF I get to move back here and IF Kate puts her mouth where her money is.

JEREMY

What does that mean?

CHUCKLES

It means I want her by my side.

TED

Don't you want me by your side?

CHUCKLES

I've got two sides, Son, just like everyone else. Now let's take a vote. All in favor of me movin' back to Sycamore Street, say "aye".

*(CHUCKLES moves from neighbor to neighbor. Each enthusiastically says, "Aye". He finally stops in front of Kate, who smiles and touches his face)*

KATE

Aye.

CHUCKLES

*(holding Kate's stare)*

The "eyes" have it. *(enthusiastic cheers)* But, before any of you get too excited, I've agreed to just one treatment. Only one. Is that clear?

SHIRLEY

You know that's not how chemo works.

CHUCKLES

*(excited)*

Well, that's how it works for me. Teddy, call the Communists. Tell them to take their closing costs and shove 'em. Dr. Chuckles is coming home!

JEREMY

I'm confused. Are you leaving or coming back?

CHUCKLES

No one *really* leaves Sycamore Street. Well, the leaves leave. But the trees stay. That's called a meta-five.

JEREMY

What's a meta-five?

CHUCKLES

One more than a metaphor! Now, I've got a lunch date with Walter. *(to KATE)* Promise you'll come by and see me later?

KATE

You bet your mobius strip I will.

*(CHUCKLES, TED and SHIRLEY exit.)*

**#16 GIGGLOSOPHY (reprise)**

PETER, MADISON AND JEREMY  
STEP RIGHT UP

Neighbors  
STEP RIGHT UP

PETER, MADISON, AND JEREMY  
AND FILL YOUR CUP

Neighbors  
AND FILL YOUR CUP  
SEE HOW FUNNY LIFE CAN BE  
WITH A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!

*(JEREMY climbs on PETER'S back. KATE claps her hands and exits.)*

BRING IT HOME NOW!  
A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY  
RIDE EM COWBOY!  
A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!

*(to the tune of RAWHIDE)*

COLON COLON COLON  
GET YOURSELF A FLOWIN'  
COLON COLON COLON  
PEPTIDE!

A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!  
A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!  
A LITTLE GIGGLOSOPHY!

*(SHIRLEY guides CHUCKLES to a chair as the scene crossfades to Dinosaur Meadows)*

SHIRLEY

I changed shifts so I could get things started. First some fluids to keep you hydrated.

*(She inserts the IV.)*

CHUCKLES

I feel like a potted plant.

*(TED enters.)*

TED

You look good for a ficus. Guess who's right behind me?

*(JEREMY bursts through the door, followed by KATE)*

CHUCKLES

And the gang's all here.

JEREMY

*(playing with the IV tube)*

What's the tube for?

CHUCKLES

It's to get me ready for chemotherapy.

JEREMY

What's that?

CHUCKLES

It's like... Star Wars. Chemotherapy is like the Jedi. And Cancer is like the Dark Side. They have this epic battle and, if the force is with us, I'm home before you go back to Akron.

SHIRLEY

But, fighting the dark side takes a lot out of a Jedi fighter, so he may be pretty sick.

JEREMY

Will he be able to fly kites with me? Cause I've been given a new mission.

CHUCKLES

And what's that, Commander Beepledorp?

JEREMY

To get you to fly your kite again. It's what you want, right?

CHUCKLES

Kate, what exactly have you been telling him?

JEREMY

Answer me, Earthling.

CHUCKLES

It's classified.

JEREMY

Then whisper in my ear and I'll put it in data lockdown.

*(CHUCKLES whispers in JEREMY'S ear. JEREMY presses a "code" on his chest)*

JEREMY

Beep. Bop. Boop. Data locked down.

KATE

We just wanted to come say goodnight. We should let you rest.

JEREMY

What happens if the dark side wins?

KATE

We won't talk about that now.

CHUCKLES

It's okay to talk about it, Kate. Nothing's set in stone. Not even me. If that happens, Beepledorp, if the dark side gets too powerful, I want you to find me a really big shoe box.

KATE

A shoebox?

CHUCKLES

So I can keep Bernard company. Now, in the words of Obi Wan Kenobi, get outta here so I can get some sleep.

*(KATE kisses CHUCKLES. JEREMY makes the barfing signal by placing his finger down his throat. TED does the same. They exit his room and take spots in isolated light)*

## **#17 THE CHOICE**

KATE

CHOOSE TO LOVE ME

JEREMY

CHOOSE TO FLY YOUR KITE

TED

CHOOSE TO START OVER

KATE, JEREMY, TED, SHIRLEY

CHOOSE TO FIGHT THIS FIGHT

CHUCKLES

THEIR VOICES, THEIR CHOICES  
ECHO IN MY HEAD

BUT IT'S ME ALL ALONE  
LYING IN THIS BED

KATE/JEREMY/TED/SHIRLEY  
*(echoing CHUCKLES)*

WAITING	WAITING
NEEDING	NEEDING
PRAYING	PRAYING
PLEADING	PLEADING

CHUCKLES

CHOOSE TO HELP ME  
CHOOSE TO HOLD MY HAND  
CHOOSE TO SET ME FREE  
CHOOSE TO UNDERSTAND

I LOVE YOU  
MORE THAN I CAN SPEAK  
BUT I AM OLD  
I AM SCARED  
I AM WEAK

*(CHUCKLES gets out of bed. The lights on the others go down)*

I COULD HUG MY PARENTS  
FLY KITES WITH PAUL  
THE FRIENDS I'VE LOST  
I'D SEE THEM ALL  
I KNOW THEY'RE UP THERE  
IN THE STARRY SKY---

*(CHUCKLES takes a deep breath, exhales and pulls the IV from his arm)*

CHUCKLES  
*(dialing his phone)*

Madison. It's Chuckles. I need you to come get me. Yes, I know it's the middle night. I'll tell you when you get here. Please. Don't tell your parents *(pause)* Thank you Maddie. See ya soon.

THE PLANETS KEEP SPINNING  
LONG AFTER GOODBYE  
YOU ONLY DIE ONCE  
SO TODAY LET'S FLY!

*(CHUCKLES exits. **Crossfade** to Sycamore Street. MADISON and CHUCKLES enter, mid-conversation)*

CHUCKLES

Or you could just sit with me while I take the pills and we could both get some sleep. I have the stuff in the shed.

MADISON

Mom and Dad would never forgive me. What about chemo? Didn't you just promise everyone you'd try it?

CHUCKLES

Sometimes, Maddie, you gotta go with your gut.

MADISON

Well, I'm not gonna watch you kill yourself. But, I *will* help you finish Plan K if you want. My very own community service project. If we pull an all-nighter, it will be ready by morning. How 'bout you tell me embarrassing stories about my dad so I can use it as ammunition?

CHUCKLES

I refuse to make one more mean remark about Stan...tonight, anyway.

MADISON

But you live for ripping on my dad.

CHUCKLES

True, but he's one half of what made you you, so, tonight, he gets a pass. Let's get to work!

*(They enter shed)*

*(STAN and ALICE enter from their house. The neighbors gather.)*

STAN

When I find that kid safe and sound, I'm gonna kill her.

KATE

Have you heard from her?

ALICE

Yes, a text that said, "with old friend. No need to worry." Clearly she's never been a mom.

*(TED enters holding a cell phone)*

TED

Leave it to my father to renege on a deal. Shirley just called. Dad ran away too. *(They all look toward the shed)*

ALICE

*(finally understanding the situation)*

Maddie did say she was with an old friend. Stan go in there and get her.

STAN

No one's allowed in his shed. You go get her.

TED

I shoulda known my dad had something to do with this. He's officially corrupted everyone on Sycamore Street.

*(MADISON emerges from the shed. STAN runs to her and hugs her long and hard. ALICE does the same)*

STAN

Madison Grace, where the hell have you been all night?

MADISON

With Chuckles. Doing community service. I thought you'd be proud, Dad.

*(JEREMY who was playing in the yard, crosses to neighbors)*

JEREMY

Chuckles let a girl in the shed? He's such a numb nuts!

MADISON



He did. And together, we came up with a better way to end to this story. Ladies and Gentlemen, may I present to you Plan K.

CHUCKLES

*(yelling)*

Everyone! Gather round! See, Beepledorp, I can yell like a maniac too!

*(WENDY, hearing the commotion, enter. SHIRLEY, still in scrubs enters. MADISON helps CHUCKLES come out of the shed. They have built a kite, like a hang-glider, with tails flying and a pole in the center. CHUCKLES is wearing a flight cap and goggles and holding Paul's folded flag.)*

CHUCKLES

The Kiteman cometh. Or, in my case, the Kiteman goeth.

KATE

You can't be serious, Charlie. What about giving treatment a try? You made me a promise.

CHUCKLES

Try to understand, Stargirl.

KATE

How are you going to get it to fly?

*(As CHUCKLES speaks, he is unfolding Paul's flag and placing it reverently on the pole)*

MADISON

We thought we'd go up to Sycamore Mountain and try it out. Isn't it awesome?

CHUCKLES

If she catches the wind right, I could end up in *(looking at KATE)*....Santorini.

TED

And if it doesn't fly?

CHUCKLES

Then nobody has to play the role of grim reaper except the grim reaper.

KATE

Charlie, this is crazy. Even for you.

TED

You can't even lift that thing.

CHUCKLES

Can too. I've been working out at the Gulag. *(he makes muscles with his arms.*  
*(To Kate)* Bet you're sorry you missed out on this stud muffin now.

TED

Prove you can lift it. Right here, right now.

CHUCKLES

*(To JEREMY)* I need my co-pilot to make a flight check.

*(JEREMY takes the job very seriously, inspecting each part of the kite)*

JEREMY

Don't hurt yourself, Lieutenant.

*(CHUCKLES struggles as he lifts the contraption. He walks and gets more and more wobbly with every step. Eventually, he falls to the ground and it breaks into pieces. He emits a frustrated cry. KATE runs to one side, TED to the other)*

CHUCKLES

Get away from me! All of you! I don't need your help!

TED

I'm sorry, Dad. I don't know what you want from me.

CHUCKLES

*(sobered, but not angry)*

Everybody here knows what I want from you. Except you.

*(turning to KATE)*

Stargirl.

KATE

Tell me what you want to do.

CHUCKLES

I want to go home.

*(JEREMY steps forward)*

JEREMY

We're not going home.

KATE  
(to JEREMY)

Sweetheart, it's what he wants.

JEREMY

Chuckles wants to fly. *(He begins gathering the pieces of the hang glider)* We can fix this thing. Maddie knows how it works. WE'RE NOT GIVING UP.

CHUCKLES

Jeremy, I'm not giving up. I'm letting go. Do you understand the difference?

JEREMY

It's Beepledorp. And on my planet, a promise is a promise.

*Music begins*

### **#18 FINALE -IT'S A KITE (REPRISE)**

JEREMY

LET THIS KITE FIND FAIR BREEZES  
LET NOTHING CUT ITS STRINGS  
LET THIS KITE REMIND US  
TO FLY WE DON'T NEED WINGS

*(The Neighbors enters and forms a semicircle upstage)*

NEIGHBORS

IT'S A KITE  
IT'S A FLIGHT  
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT

WATCH IT WHIRLING ON THE WIND  
SOARING THROUGH THE SKY BEGINS

IT'S A STRING  
IT'S A WING  
IT'S A MARVELOUS THING

IT'S A BOY AND HIS BEST FRIEND  
TOGETHER AS THE JOURNEY ENDS

*(JEREMY bends down to CHUCKLES. He is holding his kite. Music continues underneath)*

JEREMY  
*(spoken)*

I can't fly it without you.

CHUCKLES

Look around. You've got everything you need right here.

NEIGHBORS

IT'S A GIFT  
IT'S A LIFT  
IN A WORLD SO ADRIFT  
A CHANCE TO TOUCH THE MOON

*(Underscoring continues)*

SHIRLEY

Ted, go help your father.

*(After a beat, TED crosses behind CHUCKLES and kneels behind him. He tenderly holds him in his arms and then helps him to his feet.)*

TED

If it's what you really want, Dad, we'll do it your way.

*(TED and CHUCKLES cross to CHUCKLE'S front porch and begin to enter the house)*

NEIGHBORS

AFTER ALL THESE MILES  
THIS STREET OF OURS STILL SMILES

NOT GOODBYE, BUT SEE YOU SOON!

*(JEREMY tosses the kite. The Neighbors watch it float upward.)*

JEREMY  
WWWWSSSSSHHHHHHHH!

*(CHUCKLES turns back to the noise, looks upward, and smiles as lights go down)*

