

North Wind



A One Act Play

How do you move forward when everything you see reminds you of what you've lost?

SYNOPSIS

A trio of characters search for freedom from their pasts in a snow-bound Midwestern bar.

CHARACTERS:

ROSE CASSIDAY: Female. 60's. East Coaster. Ghost.

(HENRY) DOC CASSIDAY: Male. 60's. Midwesterner. Big-hearted. Grumpy.

HANNAH MOORE: Female. 30's. Out-of-towner. Struggling.

RADIO VOICE: Male or Female Voice. Midwesterner.

Playwright's Notes:

(/): indicates overlapping dialogue.

Playwright encourages open casting.

**Songs are all in the Public Domain.

Setting: *Doc's Bar & Grill* in rural Illinois.

Time: As indicated.

SCENE 1

January 25, 1978

A long mahogany bar from the thirties is flanked by a half dozen bar stools. A beer tap is centered on the bar and shelves of liquor line the wall behind the bar. Christmas lights are strung across the back bar. A well-worn stuffed Rudolph the Reindeer leans on one side. Pabst Blue Ribbon and Hamm's Beer signs hang on one wall. Hanging above the bar, a neon sign that once read *Doc's Bar & Grill*, now reads *Doc's Bar & Grll*. There is a front door and a window that lead to the outside world on one side of the bar, and on the other side, another door that leads to a back room. A string of clear lights hang from the ceiling. Three tables with two-to three chairs each are staggered in front of the bar. A wood-burning stove struggles to keep the drafty room warm. The sound of a muffled transistor radio can be heard in the background. There's a payphone on the wall and an unlit juke box on another. The window, next to the front door, opens to the black of a moonless night. Two black and white photographs hang on the wall near the front door: one of a young woman and the other, a young man in a military uniform. A POW MIA flag hangs above the photograph of the young man.

ROSE sits at the end of the bar near the front door. DOC is sweeping the floor with a push broom.

ROSE

You plan on leaving the Christmas lights up until the Fourth of July like you did last year?

DOC

Wasn't the Fourth a' July.

ROSE

Damn close.

DOC

It was Memorial Day. I know 'cuz I took 'em down so you could hang the red, white, 'n' blue ones fer Danny.

ROSE

Looks like it's gonna be a slow night. Let's tak 'em down while we have the time. That way they'll be put away for next Christmas.

DOC

Next Christmas? Barely made it through this one and now you're talkin' about the next.

ROSE

It was a month ago!

DOC

Awww, come on...ease up a little, will ya'?

ROSE

Why don't you take a little of your own medicine?

DOC

I don't wanna do this now, Rose. It's late and I'm tired. Ok?

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)

I'm sorry fer snappin' at ya'. Christmas is hard, that's all...ya' know I don't mean it.

Doc takes something from behind the bar,
holding it behind his back.

DOC (CONT'D)

Why, hello! Have you been here long?

I'm sure I woulda noticed a woman as pretty as you sitting by yourself and all.

You love flowers?

You don't say...well, I just happen ta' have the most beautiful bouquet

Doc takes the floral arrangement from behind
his back and sets in front of Rose. This
arrangement has seen better days.

DOC (CONT'D)

of red roses.

ROSE
Red roses? Those are my favorite.

DOC
You don't say?

ROSE
Oh, Doc. What am I gonna do with you?

DOC
Nothin'. It's as good as can get.

A gust of wind slams the door open. It bangs against the wall. The wind howls and carries snow in with a gush.

DOC (CONT'D)
Goddamn door!

ROSE
How many times have I told you/

DOC
/I know, I know...shoulda had it fixed by now.

ROSE
That's an understatement.

Doc forcefully closes the door.

DOC
Always gotta be right, don't ya'? Some things never change.

ROSE
Or...some people.

DOC
If that ain't the pot callin' the kettle black.

Doc gives Rose a dirty look and turns up the volume on the radio.

RADIO VOICE
...bitter cold and heavy snowfall expected throughout the night. The I-80 corridor may see upwards of thirty inches.

DOC

Jesus Christ!

RADIO VOICE

National Weather Bureau says whiteout conditions may cause near zero visibility on the roads. That means you need to stay inside, folks. Keep it tuned to WNPO for the latest weather conditions.

Doc turns off the radio.

DOC

Thirty inches!

ROSE

You get gas for the snow blower?

DOC

Yeah, I got the gas for the blower. I can already feel the pain.

ROSE

I don't know why you don't listen to me.

DOC

What now?

ROSE

I made the appointment with the doctor, but you canceled it.

DOC

So I can pay alotta money for him ta' tell me my knee's goin' bad?

ROSE

No. For him to help you make it feel better.

DOC

Who you kiddin? Gettin' old and I got a bad knee. Don't need no doctor ta' tell me that.

ROSE

Mr. Know-it-all. Is that right, Dr. Cassidy?

DOC

That's me.

ROSE

Can I quote you on that?

DOC

Always gotta have the last word, don't ya'?

Doc picks up the broom and sweeps again. Rose looks out the window.

ROSE

Sure is coming down hard. Remember how we'd take Danny sledding down the big hill by Lincoln School? I can see him running full speed with the sled behind him. Looking back at us, his rosy cheeks peeking out from under the hood of his big coat, with a big smile on his face. What I wouldn't give to take him sledding one more time. Wouldn't that be something? The three of us together again.

DOC

Yeah.

A car is heard pulling into the lot adjacent to the bar. Headlights briefly flash through the window. A car door slams.

DOC (CONT'D)

Who the hell is out there tonight?

HANNAH swings open the front door. It bangs against the wall. She is dressed in jeans, boots, a black turtle neck and a denim jacket with a sun flower embroidered on the back, and carrying a leather fringe purse slung over her shoulder, stands shivering in the doorway.

DOC (CONT'D)

I'm closed!

Hannah doesn't move.

DOC (CONT'D)

I said, "I'm closed!"

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)

Don't just stand there! Close the goddamn door.

ROSE
Easy does it.

Hannah closes the door.

HANNAH
It's so...it's so...so...cold out there.

DOC
Called a blizzard.

Hannah stomps off snow onto Doc's floor. Doc grabs the mop behind the bar and moves to wipe up the snow.

HANNAH
Sorry.

DOC
Can't be havin' people slippin' and fallin' in here. They'll sue me.

HANNAH
It's just...the snow...it's coming down hard. Pulled off at the last exit thinking it would be better once I got off the highway, but I started sliding every which way. So...I drove real slow, just tryin' to stay on the road. I thought I was gonna hit a tree. But I saw your sign!

DOC
Just my luck! What kinda car you drivin'?

HANNAH
Brand new Fiat Spider.

DOC
No wonder!

Doc sees a bottle sticking out of Hannah's purse.

DOC (CONT'D)
You always bring your own bottle?

HANNAH
No.

ROSE
She shouldn't be driving.

DOC
I'll take that.

Doc takes the bottle from Hannah.

DOC (CONT'D)
Boone's Farm Strawberry Hill. See ya' like the good stuff.

He sets the bottle on the bar.

HANNAH
All they had.

DOC
I was just closin' down for the night.

HANNAH
You...gotta phone I can use?

DOC
(pointing to the payphone)
Over there. Make it quick. Wanna get outta here before it gets real bad.

HANNAH
Thanks.

Hannah goes to the payphone.

ROSE
You were awful hard on her.

DOC
Not now.

ROSE
It isn't safe for her. Not on those roads in her condition.

DOC
Don't go playin' Mother Theresa again.

Hannah struggles to find some change in her
purse.

She stumbles looking, dumping the contents of her purse on a nearby table. Her car keys fall and land under the table. She finds a five dollar bill and breathes a sigh of relief.

Can I get some change?

HANNAH

Sure.

DOC

Doc takes the five, raises it to the light, and eyes it to make sure it's real.

You're kidding, right?

HANNAH

Never can be too careful.

DOC

He opens the cash register and gives her change.

Thanks.

HANNAH

Welcome.

DOC

Never seen snow like this before.

HANNAH

Radio man said we could get up ta' thirty inches.

DOC

Thirty?

HANNAH

Yep.

DOC

I could barely see.

HANNAH

DOC

Called a whiteout. Happens 'round here. Nothin' to stop the snow from blowin' across the plain.

HANNAH

Shit.

Hannah returns to the payphone. She attempts to put a coin in the phone, but drops it on the floor. It falls into a heater vent.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Shit! Shit! Shit!

She gets down on her hands and knees to retrieve the coin, but is unable to. She gets up awkwardly, fishes another coin out of the pile she has, presses it in the payphone, and dials.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Hi. It's Hannah.
No! I don't need money.
Jesus Christ, Jack! I just-
Yeah, that's what I get for trying. Go to hell!

Hannah hangs up the phone.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Asshole!

Hannah gets some more change out and makes another call.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Come on...come on. Just answer the damn phone. Please. Please. Please.

Hannah hangs up the phone.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Now, what?

She gathers herself and her things and walks over to a table. She attempts to sit, misses the chair, and falls on the floor, face up.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch!

ROSE

Go and help her.

Doc goes to Hannah and extends his hand to help her up.

DOC

Here. Lemme help ya' up.

HANNAH

No thanks.

DOC

Come on...lemme help.

HANNAH

I said, "No thanks."

DOC

I'm gonna have to insist ya' get up off my floor, Ma'am.

HANNAH

Did you...just...call me, Ma'am?

DOC

I would call ya' by your name, but I don't know it!

HANNAH

Hannah! Name's Hannah!

Hannah moves to all fours and uses a chair to steady herself as she makes her way to a standing position. She brushes herself off.

DOC

Nice ta' meet ya' Hannah. I'm, Doc.

Doc....Ohhhh, you're Doc.

HANNAH

Hannah reads Doc's sign aloud. The "i" is not lit.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Doc's Grill. You need to get your sign fixed. Unless this is a Grill.

DOC

U-huh.

HANNAH

Wait. Where's my purse?

DOC

Over there.

Hannah fishes a few more dollars out of her purse.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Hey Doc!

DOC (CONT'D)

Yeah?

Hannah slaps her money on the bar.

HANNAH

Can I get a drink?

DOC

A drink?

HANNAH

Yeah. A vodka n' soda.

DOC

Huh?

HANNAH

A DRINK!

DOC

Ohhhh...a drink? Ya' mean, like the one I'm not gonna serve ya'?

HANNAH

Anyone ever tell you that you're a real mean bastard? Can't be good for business. Pleeeeeze, Doc. All I want is one. Lil. Drink.

DOC

Know what I want?

HANNAH

No.

DOC

What I want is for you ta' sit down before you fall down again. And get your damn paws off my bar.

Hannah grumbles in response, but relents and sits down.

DOC (CONT'D)

I think you had more'n enough ta' drink already. Besides...I don't think you're gonna find what you're lookin' for in a bottle. The only thing I'm offerin' you is a cupppa coffee. So what'll it be, Hannah: coffee? Or, coffee?

HANNAH

Fine. Coffee.

Doc pours two cups of coffee.

DOC

Cream or sugar?

HANNAH

No. Thanks.

DOC

Careful now. It's hot.

Doc raises his cup.

DOC (CONT'D)

Cheers.

HANNAH

Cheers.

You hungry? DOC

Kinda. HANNAH

Take your pick. Got M&M-plain and peanut. Cheese popcorn. Pork rinds. Or, pickled pig's feet. DOC

Pickled *pig's* feet? HANNAH
M&M Peanuts. Please.

Beat.

Nice jukebox. HANNAH (CONT'D)

Thanks. Rose loved it. DOC

Rose? HANNAH

My wife...was my wife. DOC

Doc points to the photograph of Rose.

That's Rose. Taken right after we got married.

She's...beautiful. HANNAH

My Rose a' Sharon. DOC

Hannah points to a photograph of a young man in uniform.

Who's that? HANNAH

Our son. Danny. DOC

He live nearby?
HANNAH

No.
DOC

Aww...that must be hard.
HANNAH

Yeah. It is.
DOC

Beat.

Went missin' ...in Korea.
DOC (CONT'D)

I'm so...sorry.
HANNAH

Yeah.
DOC

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)
Feels like a million years ago. Shot down...so they said. But, I know he's gonna walk through that door again someday.

Doc takes a handkerchief out of his back pocket.

How old is he...in the photograph?
HANNAH

DOC
17. That was taken the day before he left. He shipped off and never came back.

Musta been real hard.
HANNAH

Still is.
DOC

HANNAH

Yeah. I understand. Looks a lot like you in the picture.

DOC

Ya' think?

HANNAH

I do.

DOC

He was a real good kid. Loved cars and baseball. Notta book person like his Mother. She wanted Danny ta' go to college...or work in the business...anything but the military. It was his idea ta' enlist.

ROSE

He had big dreams...or maybe, I did.

DOC

He used ta' love it when I told him stories about my time in the service...about when I was a pilot and lived overseas. All the different places I got ta' see. He'd look at me with those brown eyes...all lit up.

ROSE

What I wouldn't give to see those eyes again.

DOC

He was stubborn like me, too. He had his mind up about enlisting before he talked ta' me'n'Rose...said he knew what he wanted ta' do with his life...said he wanted ta' fight for his country. Tried ta' talk him out of it but...he just wouldn't listen.

ROSE

We should've done more.

DOC

Never forget the day he told me and Rose he was goin'. Hadda get our signatures 'cuz he was seventeen. Rose wouldn't talk about it. Didn't even look at the form. Signed it and told Danny he was makin' a big mistake.

ROSE

I was the one who made a big mistake that day.

DOC

I was stuck between a rock and a hard place. I wanted to stand behind Danny's decision...but I thought he was too young. Goin' ta' war's not like the movies. That night Rose had a bad dream. She dreamt...Danny died.

ROSE

Godammit, Doc. For all your stubbornness, you couldn't say no.

DOC

If I could go back...I'd make him wait another year....finish school....but, that ain't how life works.

HANNAH

No.

ROSE

We failed him.

HANNAH

That ain't how life works. If only...if only. I'd never leave her. I'd stay with her every minute. If only, I could hold her...one more time...kiss her cheek again. I miss her so much.

Beat.

ROSE

Say somethin'.

DOC

You lose someone, too.

HANNAH

Yeah.

Beat.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

My daughter.

DOC

What was her name?

HANNAH

Ava.

DOC

I'm so sorry...for yer loss.

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)

You still hungry?

HANNAH

Yes. Can I have the cheese popcorn?

DOC

You bet. How 'bout two?

HANNAH

Thank you.

Hannah devours the cheese popcorn, licking every little bit off her fingers.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

That is a really pretty jukebox.

DOC

It's a Rock-Ola. They call this one "The Capri II." Made in '65. Story has it the guy who started the company, Mr. Rockola, added a dash to his name, so people'd know how to say it. R O C K dash O L A. ROCK-OLA! I been collectin' entertainment machines since before I shipped off. Got a pole barn full of 'em.

HANNAH

Pole barn?

DOC

It's a big garage. They made rifles, too.

HANNAH

Who?

DOC

Rock-Ola. Had an army contract. Made a couple hundred thousand carbines for the military.

HANNAH

Carbines?

DOC

It's a rifle with a short barrel. Used ta' use 'm all the way back on horseback, if you-kin believe that? Seein' as they were easier to handle than a standard rifle would be, considering...sorry...sometimes I forget who I'm talking to.

(MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)

Danny used to ask me questions like that all the time.

HANNAH

I'm sorry.

DOC

It's ok. As I was sayin' Rock-Ola used their furniture manufacturing equipment to build the rifles. Matter a fact, I got a genuine Rock-Ola manufactured M1 Carbine out back. Taught Danny to shoot with it. Always said he was gonna have one of his own some day.

ROSE

You still have that damn gun? You told me you got rid of it!

Hannah walks over to the juke box.

DOC

I did get rid of it. I put it in storage. Haven't taken it out but to clean it.

ROSE

Getting rid of it means it's gone. It's outta here. It's someplace else. It doesn't mean tucked in there with your goddamn penny arcade!

HANNAH

Does this work?

DOC

What?

HANNAH

Jukebox.

DOC

Nah. Needs service.

HANNAH

Bummer.

Hannah flips through the songs.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Got alotta great music here.

DOC

Yeah.

HANNAH

Awww. Elvis...I read he died in his bathroom.

DOC

What?

HANNAH

Elvis. Elvis Presley. Said he died on the toilet.

DOC

Who said that?

HANNAH

People Magazine.

DOC

People huh?

HANNAH

People Magazine. It's a magazine about people. Not everyday people like you and me. Famous people. Like Elvis.

DOC

More'n I need ta' know. Liked the guy's music. That's all.

HANNAH

Ma Rainey's *Booz and Blues*? Sounds like my life.

DOC

What a voice!

HANNAH

Awww... *By The Light of the Silvery Moon*.**

DOC

One'a Rose's favorites. Doris Day?

HANNAH

Yeah.

(singing)

*By the light of the silvery moon,
I want to spoon, to my honey I'll croon love's tune,*

DOC

(singing along with Hannah)

*Honeymoon keep a-shining in June,
Your silvery beams will bring love dreams, we'll be cuddling soon,
By the silvery moon.*

HANNAH

By the silvery moon. We used to sing that in the car when we'd go on vacation.

DOC

Rose loved that song.

HANNAH

You dance, Doc?

DOC

Nah. Not for me.

HANNAH

Aww, come on. Everybody dances.

A loud crash is heard outside the bar.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Jeezus!

DOC

Tree branch. Snow's gettin' heavy, that's all.

HANNAH

Shit.

DOC

Guess I'm gonna have ta' sweep the roof.

HANNAH

Tonight?

DOC

Nah, it can wait 'til tomorrow. Everything can wait 'til tomorrow.

HANNAH

Okay...

Hannah crosses over to a table and sits down.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna sit here for a minute before...I get back on the road. My eyes are...

Hannah yawns and lays her head on the table.
She falls asleep.

ROSE

Snow's beautiful.

DOC

Cuz you don't have ta' shovel it.

ROSE

True.

Beat.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Stuck between a rock and a hard place, huh?

DOC

You know I was, Rose.

ROSE

Shouldn't a let him go.

DOC

Didn't wanna take away his dreams.

ROSE

You think I did?

DOC

Don't go puttin' words in my mouth.

ROSE

I spent my whole life raisin' our son. Why would I wanna take away his dreams? I just didn't want to lose him!

DOC

Neither did I!

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)

He's still out there. Could be...a prisoner of war.

ROSE

They would've found him by now. It's been almost thirty years.

DOC

Damn it, Rose! You don't know that.

ROSE

(pointing to Hannah)

What are you gonna do about her?

DOC

I dunno.

ROSE

It isn't safe for her out there.

DOC

Not my problem.

ROSE

Yes, it is. She was drinkin'. You know, I'm right.

DOC

Gotta big day ahead'a me tomorrow. Snow's not gonna plow itself.

ROSE

Let her stay here tonight, Doc.

DOC

Ohhhh, no!

ROSE

Yes. Let her stay in the back room.

DOC

No.

ROSE

Okay...she's gonna end up dead in a ditch and it's gonna be all your fault.
You know, I'm right.

Hannah wakes up.

HANNAH

Huh? Did you say somethin'?

DOC

Yeah. You got anybody nearby you can call?

HANNAH

No.

ROSE

Told ya' so.

DOC

Well...I got to thinkin' while you were nappin'

ROSE

Thank god.

DOC

Maybe it isn't such a good idea for ya' ta' get back on the roads. Snowin' pretty hard out there. Ain't gonna get any better tonight...so...I was thinkin'

ROSE

Say it.

DOC

Maybe you...can stay here tonight.

HANNAH

Here?

DOC

Yeah.

HANNAH

In the bar?

DOC

No, not in the bar. In the back room.

HANNAH
Oh...I dunno about that.

DOC
Where else ya' gonna go?

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)
Exactly. If ya' go back on the road, you're gonna end up in a ditch and freeze ta' death.

HANNAH
Wouldn't be so bad.

DOC
Don't say that.

HANNAH
Better'n this.

DOC
I'm gonna pretend I didn't hear that. I had the back room fixed for Rose after she got sick. There's a bed and anything else ya' might need.

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)
I slept there after Rose died. Couldn't stand to be in the house alone. With no Rose.

HANNAH
You sure?

DOC
I'm sure.

HANNAH
I'll pay you back.

DOC
You don't owe me nothin'. Let's see what tomorrow brings. It's gettin' late and I'm gettin' tired.

HANNAH
*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;*

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

*And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.*

DOC

You write that?

HANNAH

Nah...Shakespeare. Had to memorize it in high school.

DOC

Pretty good. That Shakespeare.

HANNAH

Yeah.

DOC

Come on. I'll show ya' the room. It's right over here.

Hannah picks up her purse and follows Doc to the back room. He turns on the light and steps back into the bar.

DOC (CONT'D)

Go in and see what ya' think?

Hannah steps into the back room.

HANNAH

It's nice in here.

DOC

Look in the drawer for extra blankets.

The sound of drawers opening and closing is heard.

HANNAH

Yeah. I got'm.

DOC

(standing in the doorway)

You can put your stuff over there on the chair. Use the phone behind the bar, if ya' need to call me. Phone number is next ta' the phone. Gonna lock the door on my way out.

(MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)

You should be all set then. I'll be back in the bar at sunrise. I live next door. If you gotta problem, call me. Don't matter what time it is.

Doc walks to the bar.

DOC (CONT'D)

I'll leave lights on in here so ya' can see if ya' need to use the bathroom.

HANNAH

(from the back room)

Okay.

Doc approaches Rose.

DOC

You win again.

The sound of a dog barking is heard.

DOC (CONT'D)

Dammit!

ROSE

What?

DOC

Forgot ta' let Sebastian out.

ROSE

Go on. Let Sebastian out and get some sleep. Tomorrow'll be here before you know it.

Doc quickly turns off a few lights off, unplugs the coffee maker, puts on his coat, hat and gloves.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I'll watch over her.

DOC

'Til tomorrow.

Doc blows a kiss. Rose catches it and touches the kiss to her heart.

Tomorrow.

ROSE

Doc opens the door. The wind howls. Doc struggles to pull the door closed and locks it. Rose moves freely about the room. There is an ethereal quality to her. She walks over to the juke box and it lights up when she touches it.

We had big dreams, didn't we?

ROSE (CONT'D)

End of Scene.

SCENE 2

Middle of the Night. Dream Sequence.

The sound of a baby wailing is heard. The light comes on in the back room. HANNAH appears as a silhouette in the doorway. Wearing a night gown, Hannah enters holding a baby. As she rocks the baby back and forth, the baby becomes quiet. She kisses the baby.

HANNAH

Shh. Shh. Shh. Shh. It's ok. Don't cry. Once upon a time, the North Wind and the Sun had an argument about who was the stronger. While they were arguing, a Traveler passed along the road, wrapped in a cloak. "Let us agree," said the Sun, "that whoever is stronger can make the Traveler remove the cloak." "Very well," growled the North Wind, and at once sent a cold, howling blast against the Traveler.

The wind howls. Hannah shivers. ROSE gets a blanket from behind the bar, walks over to Hannah, and puts it around her shoulders. Hannah pulls the blanket around herself. Rose walks back to the bar.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

The cloak whipped about the Traveler's body from the wind, but the Traveler held onto it tightly, not letting go. The North Wind tore angrily at the cloak, but all his efforts were in vain. Then, the Sun began to shine gentle beams. In the pleasant warmth, the Traveler unfastened the cloak and let it hang loosely. The Sun's rays grew warmer and warmer, so much so that the Traveler became uncomfortable. Off came the cap, and eventually, the cloak dropped to the ground. Then, to escape the blazing sun, the Traveler laid in the welcome shade of a tree by the roadside. Don't ever forget, Ava, gentleness and kindness can win when might and force fail. Back to bed, little angel, it will be morning soon.

Hannah exits with the baby.

End of Scene.

SCENE 3

Next Morning.

Early morning light streams through the window. A rooster crows. Dogs bark. The low sound of the wind howling against the building is heard. An occasional car can be heard passing by. DOC unlocks the door and enters. He brushes the snow off his coat. He is carrying a small brown paper bag and a news paper. He sets them on the bar and turns on the lights. He walks back behind the bar, takes off his coat, and hangs it on a hook next to the bar. He makes a pot of coffee. He pours himself a cup and sits at the end of the bar at a stool next to ROSE. He kisses her. He opens the brown paper bag and takes out a donut. Rose bathes in the aroma of the coffee and the smell of fresh donuts.

Mornin'.

DOC

Sleep well?

ROSE

Real good.

DOC

What I wouldn't give to have just one bite!

ROSE

Doc gets up and turns on the radio.

RADIO VOICE

...and light snowfall and low winds expected through the end of the day. We're only looking at up to six more inches today, folks. So, if you want to clear your driveways, now's the time to do it. National Weather Bureau says we're in for another heavy snowfall again the day after next. That means if you have any shopping to do, you better get in done now. Keep it tuned to WNPO for the latest weather conditions.

Doc turns off the radio.

He sits, takes a bite, and sets the donut on top of the paper bag. He opens the news paper and separates it into two parts, placing one in front of Rose and the other one in front of himself. He takes a sip of coffee, picks up his part of the paper, snaps it open and begins to read.

DOC

Well, I'll be damned! Not Joe, too.

ROSE

No!

DOC

Yup. Time don't stop for nobody.

HANNAH enters from the back room, barefoot with a blanket around her shoulders. She is hung over.

DOC (CONT'D)

Mornin' Hannah. Come on in and sit down.

Hannah doesn't move. Doc walks over to her and guides her to a seat at a table.

DOC (CONT'D)

Right over here.

Hannah sits.

DOC (CONT'D)

Gotta a couple a feet a snow last night. Ran the blower. Parkin' lots all clear. Scraped the ice off your windows Got a can a Heat fer ya' . . . Knocked the snow off the roof. Got some donuts. Cinnamon sugar. Want one?

HANNAH

I don't feel so good.

DOC

Lemme get ya' some water.

HANNAH

Ok.

Doc pours Hannah a glass of water. She stares at it.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry about last night.

DOC

Not a problem. Can I get ya' anything else?

HANNAH

Not right now.

A gust of wind blows the door open. Hannah pulls the blanket tightly around herself.

DOC

Goddamn door!

Doc closes the door and sits near Rose, continuing to read the newspaper.

DOC (CONT'D)

Says here it's gonna get up ta' twenty-five degrees today. Boy, won't that feel good!

HANNAH

Twenty-five?

DOC

Yep.

HANNAH

Too bad I didn't bring my bathing suit.

DOC

Haven't heard that one before.

HANNAH

I don't know if I could live here.

DOC

You get used to it. Have ta' get a good winter coat, that's all.

HANNAH

And gloves. And a hat.

DOC

Don't forget the boots. Now, you're thinkin' like a local. How 'bout you help out around here this afternoon?

Doc grabs a broom and leans it on the bar near Hannah.

HANNAH

Ok.

DOC

We need ta' sweep up before I open up.

HANNAH

Ok.

DOC

Little hard work never killed anybody.

HANNAH

Can I ask you a question?

DOC

U-huh.

HANNAH

You ever feel like giving up?

DOC

Shoot! I'm human, ain't I?

HANNAH

Yeah.

DOC

A'course I felt like givin' up. Just gotta put one foot in fronta the other and keep movin'.

HANNAH

But...how do you move forward when...everything you see reminds you of what you lost?

DOC

A minute at a time.

HANNAH

I don't know how to do that.

DOC

Sure ya' do. Doin' it right now.

HANNAH

No, I'm not. It hurts.

DOC

The pain doesn't ever truly leave ya'. You get used to it, that's all. Then, one day, it's mostly in the rearview mirror.

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)

Always gonna be there. Somewhere.

HANNAH

Mine's always right in front of me.

DOC

That why you drink so much?

HANNAH

I guess.

DOC

I used ta' drink a lot. Got to the point where I was drinkin' in the mornin' ta' forget the night before. Stopped carin' about anything except my next drink. Got so bad Rose even took away the keys ta' my truck. Ended up sleepin' here at the bar. Couldn't face Rose. Hated myself more than she did.

ROSE

I never hated you. I couldn't watch the man I loved do that to himself.

DOC

Rose called a friend and asked him ta' come talk ta' me. He showed up one mornin' and asked me if I wanted to go to a meetin'. So, I put my tail between my legs and I went. Truth be told: I couldn't bare the thought a losin' Rose. Not after Danny was gone.

HANNAH

How'd you do it?

DOC
One day at a time.

HANNAH
That's it?

DOC
That. And support meetins'.

Beat

DOC (CONT'D)
You sure you don't have any family to call?

HANNAH
I was married. Well, technically, I'm still married, but not for long.

DOC
Ya' know, drinkin' isn't gonna make it better. Makes it worse. Do the next right thing, Hannah.

HANNAH
Next right thing?

DOC
Anything that doesn't include drinkin'.

HANNAH
I need to lie down.

Hannah stands. She runs to the bathroom. The sound of Hannah vomiting is heard.

ROSE
Go on...check on her.

Doc walks to the bathroom door.

DOC
You ok in there?

The sound of a toilet flushing. Hannah reenters wiping her face with a paper towel. She exits to the back room and closes the door.

I don't miss those days. DOC (CONT'D)

Me, neither. ROSE

I'm blessed ya' stuck with me, Rose. Wouldn't have blamed ya', if ya' hadn't. DOC

Goes both ways. You were there for me, too. ROSE

Wouldn't have it any other way. DOC

I need to ask you something. ROSE

Beat.

Will you help her? ROSE (CONT'D)

How? DOC

Just help her out is all I'm asking. Don't let her throw her life away. ROSE

I can try. DOC

You were there for me when we got the news that Danny was missing. I didn't want to go on living without Danny. I didn't think I could. ROSE

I still imagine him walkin' through that door. DOC

You need to know something. ROSE

Beat.

Danny. ROSE (CONT'D)

A blast of wind blows the door open and it slams against the wall. They both look at the door.

DOC

I know. I know.

Doc closes the door.

ROSE

How long you been gonna fix that door?

DOC

Too long.

ROSE

Go and get what you need to fix it. I'll watch over Hannah while you're gone.

Doc grabs his coat and keys and moves to the door. He exits. Rose walks to the photograph of Danny and removes it from the wall.

ROSE (CONT'D)

How do I tell him, Danny?

Rose kisses the photograph.

End of Scene.

SCENE 4

An Hour Later.

ROSE is seated at the end of the bar in her usual spot. HANNAH enters from the back room dressed as she was when she arrived. The door opens and DOC enters, walking backward carrying a box with bar supplies and tools to fix the door. He closes the door behind him.

Goin' somewhere? DOC

I can't do this. HANNAH

Can't do what? DOC

This. Me. My life. I'm not ready to deal with...what happened. I...can't. HANNAH

I think you can. DOC

No, I can't. HANNAH

I see you, Hannah. DOC

And, I see her. Every minute of every day. HANNAH

Doesn't have to be like that, Hannah. DOC

I can't let go. HANNAH

Yes. You can. DOC

Hannah exits the front door. Doc continues to put things away.

ROSE

I'm gonna miss that broken door.

DOC

I'm not. Neither will the heating bill. I'll get to it after I put this stuff away.

ROSE

Sooner the better.

Hannah throws the door back open.

HANNAH

Did you take my car keys?

DOC

No.

HANNAH

Then where are they?

DOC

I dunno.

Beat.

HANNAH

What in the hell did you do with my keys?

DOC

I told ya', I don't have your keys.

HANNAH

Liar!

DOC

Listen kid, I've had it about up to here with you.

HANNAH

I hate you. You're nothin' but a sorry old man in a rundown bar in the middle of fucking nowhere!

DOC

Who do you think you are? Comin' in here blusterin' like the wind. Knockin' things over. Kickin' up all kinda dust. What the hell does it get ya' in the end? A big, fat nothin'! For the last time: I don't have you're goddamn keys!

HANNAH

Then, where are the hell are they?

DOC

I don't know! Probly where you damn well left 'em!

Hannah walks into the back room.

ROSE

They're over there.

DOC

What?

ROSE

Over there. Under the table.

Doc picks up the keys and sets them on the bar.

DOC

You knew this whole time?

Beat

Hannah! I found your keys!

Hannah reenters.

HANNAH

I knew you had'm.

DOC

No! I didn't. They were under the table.
Musta fallen outta your purse last night.

Hannah picks the keys up off of the bar. She exits, closing the door behind her.

DOC (CONT'D)

Goddammit!

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)

Gave it my best, Rose.

Rose nods in agreement.

DOC (CONT'D)

Now, it's just you'n'me. We got the place to ourselves again. You remember how it was? Before the war? Before Danny?

ROSE

I do.

Beat

ROSE (CONT'D)

Remember, I told you there was something I needed to tell you about Danny?

DOC

Not now.

ROSE

I can't wait much longer.

The front door opens. Doc steps back from Rose. Hannah enters sheepishly and quietly closes the door behind her, standing near the door.

DOC

You again?

HANNAH

Battery's dead.

DOC

Well, ain't that somethin'.

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)

Don't just stand there, have a seat.

Hannah sits.

DOC (CONT'D)

Coffee?

HANNAH

Ok.

Doc hands Hannah the coffee and she holds it to warm her hands.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I thought my luck had changed when I met Jack. And, then we had Ava. But...everything went to shit again.

DOC

No family?

HANNAH

No. My Mom had breast cancer...died when I was fourteen.

DOC

That musta been hard. Losin' your ma so early.

HANNAH

Yeah.

Beat.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Never knew my Dad.

DOC

Who took care of ya'?

HANNAH

Foster care. Eight different homes.

DOC

You're gonna get through this. You gotta have patience, that's all.

HANNAH

I don't do patience.

DOC

You will. We all gotta do patience. Give it time.

End of Scene.

SCENE 5

Middle of the Night. Dream Sequence.

HANNAH and ROSE are seated at one of the tables. Hannah comforts an imaginary baby. Rose sits next to her.

ROSE

What's her name?

HANNAH

Ava.

ROSE

Like Ava Gardner.

HANNAH

Yes.

ROSE

Ava Gardner died a tragic death.

HANNAH

So sad.

ROSE

Yes.

HANNAH

Do you know what Ava means?

ROSE

No, tell me.

HANNAH

Bird. It means bird. I have to hold tightly, so she can't fly away.

ROSE

Can I have a peek?

HANNAH

No. You might wake her.

ROSE

I won't. Cross my heart.

Rose crosses her heart.

HANNAH

(holding the baby closer)

And, hope to die?

ROSE

*Truth may seem but cannot be;
Truth and beauty buried be.
That are either true or fair;
For these dead birds sigh a prayer.**

Beat.

ROSE (CONT'D)

It's time to go...back to bed.

HANNAH

I can't.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I'll never show her to you. Never.

ROSE

I just want to help her get some rest.

HANNAH

You're trying to take her away!

ROSE

(comforting Hannah)

You know this story, Hannah. "Very well," growled the North Wind, and at once sent a cold, howling blast against the Traveler.

HANNAH

Don't make me listen.

ROSE

The cloak whipped about the Traveler's body from the wind, but the Traveler held onto it tightly, not letting go. The North Wind tore angrily at the cloak, but all his efforts were in vain.

HANNAH

Please.

ROSE

Then, the Sun began to shine gentle beams. The Sun's rays grew warmer and warmer. Off came the cap. The cloak dropped to the ground. Then, to escape the blazing sun, the Traveler laid in the welcome shade of a tree by the roadside. Goodnight, little bird. Goodnight. Rest well and fly free.

Rose stands.

ROSE (CONT'D)

It's time now. Give her to me.

HANNAH

No. Stop!

ROSE

Give me your hand. The moon is saying good night. The sun will be rising soon. Time to go back to sleep. To sleep.

End of Scene.

* *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, William Shakespeare

SCENE 6

Next Morning.

Early morning light streams through the window into the bar. A rooster crows. A dog barks. The plaintive moan of the wind howling against the building. An occasional car can be heard passing by. Sound of a truck pulling up outside. Sound of the engine shutting off. Truck door opens and closes. DOC is at the door. He is singing to himself ***Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral.*

DOC
(from outside)

***Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral,
Too-ra-loo-ra-li,
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral,
That's an Irish lullaby.*

Doc unlocks the door and enters. He brushes the snow off of his coat and shakes off the cold. ROSE is seated at the bar.

DOC (CONT'D)

Mornin'!

Doc kisses Rose on the cheek.

ROSE

Morning.

Doc takes off his jacket and hangs it on a hook on the wall. He puts his hand over Rose's back in a loving way. He sets a small brown paper bag, a news paper, and another white bag on the bar and turns on the lights. He starts the coffee maker. While he waits for the coffee to brew, he walks back to Rose and sits next to her.

He opens the bag and takes out a music box.

Surprise!

DOC

Oh! My Danny Boy!

ROSE

He winds the music box and lets it play. It plays ***Danny Boy*. They listen to the tune. Doc walks behind the bar, pours himself a cup of coffee, and sits at the end of the bar next to Rose. He opens the paper separating it into two parts. He sets part of the paper in front of Rose.

My Rose a' Sharon.

DOC

HANNAH enters from the back room. She is wearing her coat and has her purse.

Morning.

HANNAH

You're up bright and early.

DOC

Yeah. I've got something I need to do.

HANNAH

Coffee?

DOC

Actually...I was hoping to run to the store, if it's ok with you?

DOC

Ok.

HANNAH

Would it be possible for me to borrow your truck?

DOC

I guess. Still kinda slippery out there.

HANNAH

I promise, I'll be real careful.

Beat.

I need to say something.

DOC

Ok.

HANNAH

I owe you an apology. I'm really sorry for what I said yesterday. I didn't mean it.

Doc extends his hand to shake.

DOC

Apology accepted.

Hannah shakes his hand.

HANNAH

Thank you.

Doc retrieves his car keys from his pocket.

DOC

How 'bout we go to a meetin' today?

HANNAH

Today?

DOC

Nothin' to be scared of.

HANNAH

Okay.

Doc gives Hannah the keys.

DOC

Truck's next door. In the driveway.

HANNAH

I won't be gone long.

DOC

No worries.

Hannah exits out the front door.

ROSE

You did a good thing, letting her use you're truck.

DOC

Yeah, well...she's startin' to grow on me. Not so bad when she's sober.

Doc sits next to Rose and picks up the newspaper.

DOC (CONT'D)

Says here we're gonna get an early spring.

ROSE

Garden will be full of blooms in no time.

DOC

'Member how small it was when we moved here?

ROSE

And, how you and Danny built the patio around it?

DOC

Glad I had him ta' help me dig it out.

ROSE

He hated that job.

DOC

All that diggin' and rock haulin'.

ROSE

I can see him now. Half-dead. Leaning on the shovel.

DOC

I kept sayin' "Keep diggin', son! Keep diggin'!" You're gonna make your mama so proud.

ROSE

And he did.

Doc takes Rose's hand in his.

DOC

Will ya' marry me, Rose O'Conner?

ROSE
I think I will, Henry Cassiday.

Doc moves closer to Rose. She pulls away.

DOC
Somethin' wrong?

ROSE
No. Well...yes.

Rose walks away from Doc.

ROSE (CONT'D)
I can't do this anymore.

DOC
What do ya' mean?

ROSE
I mean: Me. Here with you. I can't do THIS anymore.

DOC
Not now, Rose.

ROSE
Yes. Now! I miss Danny.

DOC
No.

ROSE
When you bring a child into the world, you're supposed to care for that child and to protect them from any harm.

DOC
And, we did.

ROSE
No! We didn't. I didn't. We let him go when we agreed to sign the form. I should've said no.

DOC
Don't go throwin' salt on old wounds, Rose!

ROSE

He had his entire future ahead of him!

DOC

Maybe, he still does.

ROSE

No! He's doesn't!

DOC

You don't know that.

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)

Don't ya' think it's hard for me, too? I think about him every day. I go back ta when he was here and we were still a family. I try ta imagine...what he'd be like today. If he'd have his own family? Ya' think it doesn't kill me every day knowin' I might never see him again?

I'd give anything to see him walk through that door. One more time.

ROSE

Danny's not coming back.

DOC

You don't know that!

Beat.

ROSE

Yes. I do.

DOC

God dammit. Let it go.

ROSE

I can't.

DOC

Just because you lost hope. It doesn't mean I have to.

ROSE

I saw Danny.

Beat.

DOC
What?

ROSE
I saw Danny. I saw him, Doc. He was waiting for me.

DOC
You're just sayin' that.

ROSE
No. I saw him. He was there.

Doc's chest deflates like a balloon losing all it's air.

ROSE (CONT'D)
He was there when I died. He looks just the same. The eyes. The smile. He was our Danny, Doc. Our beautiful Danny. It's time for me to go.

DOC
No.

Beat.

DOC (CONT'D)
I can't...lose you, too.

ROSE
You have to let go. He's waiting for me.

DOC
I'm beggin' ya' Rose. Please, don't go.

ROSE
It's time.

Beat.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Hannah will help...until you figure it out.

DOC
Hannah ain't gonna help!

ROSE
She needs help. And, so do you.

You said you'd marry me. DOC

And, I did. ROSE

Marriage is supposed to be forever. DOC

So is motherhood. ROSE

End of Scene.

SCENE 7

A Few Hours Later.

HANNAH is sweeping the floor. DOC is setting up behind the bar. ROSE is in her usual seat.

HANNAH

That meeting was not what I imagined.

DOC

People are people, Hannah. Just tryin' to get through life.

HANNAH

You're right.

DOC

You can say that again!

HANNAH

I'm SO hungry! Just wanna eat.

DOC

Whatever you're cookin' smells real good.

HANNAH

You like gravy, Doc?

DOC

Who doesn't like gravy?

HANNAH

Let's eat at the bar. Less to clean up before we open.

DOC

Before *we* open?

HANNAH

Oh, I...sorry. I thought...

DOC

Ah, I'm pullin' your leg. You can stay as long as you want, Hannah. Here. Let's make it official. I am officially offering you a job as an employee of Doc's Bar & Grill.

(MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)

The pay ain't so good; ain't got much money, but you'll get a roof over your head and food to eat. Whaddaya say?

HANNAH

I...accept! Yes!

DOC

Great! You can start today!

The juke box lights up and the song *My Wild Irish Rose*** begins to play.

***If you'll listen, I'll sing you a sweet little song,
Of a flower that's now drooped and dead,
Yet dearer to me, yes, than all of its mates,
Tho' each holds aloft its proud head. 'Twas
given to me by a girl that I know,
Since we've met, faith, I've known no repose,
She is dearer by far than the world's brightest
star,
And I call her my wild Irish Rose
My wild Irish Rose,
The sweetest flow'r that grows,
You may search ev'rywhere,
But none can compare
With my wild Irish Rose.*

HANNAH

Holy...shit!

Hannah drops the broom.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Scared the hell out of me.

Hannah picks up the broom and walks over to the juke box. The door blows open, hitting the wall.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Goddamn door!

Rose crosses the room. She turns to look at Doc.

Thank you, Henry.

ROSE

Rose exits through the open door. Doc stands frozen in place, staring at the open doorway.

Time stands still.

Hannah's voice breaks the silence.

Aren't you gonna close the door?

HANNAH

Beat.

You ok?

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Huh?

DOC

You ok?

HANNAH

Yeah...I'm fine.

DOC

You sure, boss?

HANNAH

Yeah. I'm sure.

DOC

Doc closes the door with the awareness that he is closing the door on the past.

And, call me, Doc, would ya'?

DOC (CONT'D)

Black Out.

END OF PLAY

