

## ACT I - SHALE

### FRACKING LOVE STORY

*A new kitchen.*

*A tiled, spotless floor. No table, yet.*

*It's a summer evening and the room exudes a distinctly air-conditioned comfort.*

*Cabinets line the walls above and below gleaming counter tops. One door leads outside, another leads further into the house.*

*Think about all the things that happen in kitchens.*

*Think about all the things that lead to and from this kitchen, all the wires and guts behind the walls and below the floor. Think about the pipes that pump water to the faucet and then out from the drain. Think about the power, in from the line outside, buzzing up from the breaker-box to the fridge, to the lights. Think about the gas hissing up through copper pipes from the line outside to the oven and the stove. Think about the vents and ducts for the HVAC.*

*Five figures appear.*

*MARCELLUS lounges under everything, holding the mountains in place.*

*JORDAN rolls around the country in countless little pieces.*

*SAINT BARBARA and SAINT PETER look on from heaven.*

*FATHER PETE prays.*

FATHER PETE

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

SAINT PETER

Saint Barbara, virgin and martyr, patroness of miners and explosions, your earthly father took your head. So, your heavenly father took his life with bolts of lightning from on high. Pray for us.

SAINT BARBARA

Saint Peter the Apostle, you are the rock and the foundation of the Church. To you Christ gave the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. Pray for us.

SAINT PETER

Marcellus slept, long and slender like a chalk board, dreaming of a life outside the cool embrace of Appalachia. He could feel that inside he was shining, precious dark places.

SAINT BARBARA

Fracking, or hydraulic fracturing, is a process used to extract oil and natural gas from rock formations deep within the earth, rock formations such as the Marcellus shale formation in the Eastern United States.

SAINT PETER

Then there was the day that he met Jordan.

SAINT BARBARA

In traditional oil and natural gas drilling, wells are drilled straight down. But modern fracking wells use directional drilling. This means that they drill straight down and then turn, drilling horizontally through the deep rock. This deep rock is then fractured along the well shaft using a series of small explosions.

*Marcellus's singing begins to shift, experiencing these new sensations.*

SAINT PETER

It started as a thousand tiny tickles, acupuncture from heaven. Marcellus giggled. He knew it. His time had come. He was penetrated, deeply, sideways. And then. that. pressure. that. exquisite. pressure...and...Jordan.

SAINT BARBARA

A fracking fluid is injected into this L-shaped shaft at high pressure, filling the fractures, and releasing the oil or natural gas trapped in the pores of the rock. The fracking fluid is usually composed of about two million gallons of water, over fifty thousand gallons of chemicals, and several thousand tons of sand. The sand serves as a proppant, holding cracks in the rock open so oil or gas can flow out.

*Marcellus's singing reaches a strained climax.*

SAINT PETER

The pressure broke. Marcellus felt himself open in a million, billion tiny places. It burned. It ached. It sang. Ecstasy. He was filled with something, with someone new. Jordan, in a million, billion perfect orbs, filling every part of him. Jordan, whispering of millennia rolling across the continent before a massive wall of ice, of ancient oceans, of exotic lands with names like "Wisconsin" and "Minnesota," Jordan, turning his most intimate caverns to rivers.

SAINT BARBARA

Only perfectly round, perfectly strong sand can be used in fracking. The largest and best supply of such sand is found in the Driftless Area in the Upper Midwest of the United States. Drift is rock and gravel left behind by the movement of glaciers. In the last ice age, this unusual area was untouched by glaciers. So, it is called Driftless.

*Marcellus tries to sing though this last part, but it is painful, something is being removed.*

SAINT PETER

Jordan told Marcellus to hold his breath. "This might feel a little strange," whispered a million silica voices. And then the great suck. Marcellus gasped. He felt the power inside him dissolve and flow out and away. It filled him with such a perfect sadness. "Is this what it's like to give birth?" he thought. Jordan cradled him from within.

SAINT BARBARA

Any questions?

JORDAN

I don't think so.

MARCELLUS

You met me in a million pieces.

JORDAN

But I knew you.

MARCELLUS

You were made for me.

JORDAN

And you will be unmade.

#### PREPARATION OF THE WELL PAD

*SIERRA (29) enters. She carries an old chair and a bag of groceries. She sets the chair in the middle of the room and the groceries on the counter. This is her kitchen. She smiles and touches a countertop.*

*There is a bang and clatter from the door through which she has just entered.*

RANDALL

(O.S.)  
Goddamnit!

COLLIN

(O.S.)  
Sorry!

RANDALL

Yeah.

COLLIN

Is your hand okay?

RANDALL

Yes.

COLLIN

I'm really sorry about that.

*Sierra laughs a little.*

SIERRA

You guys need help?

RANDALL

(O.S.)

We got it, sweetie.

COLLIN

(O.S.)

We got it.

RANDALL

Now turn it. No. Grab it. Yes. There. Turn it. This way. Alright, now you get your side up, I have to get through the jam.

COLLIN

Through what?

RANDALL

The door jam. There like that. No.

*COLLIN (31) backs a little ways into the room then stops abruptly at the sound of a thud. He's holding one end of a long flat box, a prefabricated Ikea table.*

COLLIN

Sorry!

RANDALL

Just back it up.

*Collin gives Sierra a look. She stifles another laugh.*

RANDALL

(O.S.)

Back it up. Careful. You're going to scuff the-

*The package hits the wall again with a little thud.*

RANDALL

Let's switch spots.

COLLIN

I got this.

RANDALL

It's alright, Collin. Just set it down and step back a little.

*Collin and Randall set the package down.*

*RANDALL (55) worms his way into the room. He is breathing heavily.*

RANDALL

See, if we get up like that, then I can swing it around and in.

SIERRA

You want a glass of water?

RANDALL

I'm alright.

*Sierra pours one anyway, hands it to him. He drinks.*

RADALL

Praise the Lord for central air.

COLLIN

Amen.

*Randall's breathing slowly evens out.*

*Collin gets a drink straight from the faucet. Sierra swats him.*

SIERRA

Use a glass.

COLLIN

You use a glass.

*Sierra laughs. She begins unpacking the groceries.*

*MARY ANNE (55) pokes her head in over the box. She holds a chair.*

MARY ANNE

This just doesn't seem like the right spot, does it?

SIERRA

I don't know, could be interesting.<sup>7</sup>

RANDALL

Very funny. You two wanna do it?

SIERRA

Okay.

MARY ANNE

Just let me set this down.

*Mary Anne's head disappears.*

COLLIN

Mary Anne. You don't have to do that.

MARY ANNE

(O.S.)

You don't think we can?

COLLIN

Um, no.

SIERRA

Step back.

*Sierra and Mary Anne pick up the box. They try to move it forward. It bangs into the wall with a thud.*

RANDALL

Ha!

*Collin takes a step towards them.*

MARY ANNE

Maybe if you just lean it like this.

SIERRA

I see it. Yup.

*Brings her end up, around the outer door, and into the room. They set it down.*

SIERRA

Ingatorp.

MARY ANNE

Ingatorp!

RANDALL

That was the easy part.

MARY ANNE

Please.

RANDALL

Ikea is the devil's work.

COLLIN

Well done.

MARY ANNE

Thank you, Collin.

*Mary Anne exits and quickly returns with the chair. She sets it near the other.*

SIERRA

You two can go get the rest of chairs, if you think you can handle it.

RANDALL

Yes, Ma'am.

*Collin and Randall exit. Sierra and Mary Anne sit. Mary Anne notices something on the back of Sierra's chair.*

MARY ANNE

Remember this here. Was this you?

SIERRA

That was Tyler.

MARY ANNE

Really? I could have sworn it was you.

SIERRA

You're thinking of my door. I carved a skull in my door in high school. My thing was skulls. Cats was Tyler. You got him that pocket knife, remember?

MARY ANNE

Oh, you're right.

SIERRA

You grounded him for that one.

MARY ANNE

We grounded him?

SIERRA  
Grounded.

*Pause.*

MARY ANNE  
I'm glad these are here, Sie.

SIERRA  
Me too.

MARY ANNE  
Full of memories.

*They both fall into unpacking the groceries for a moment.*

MARY ANNE  
I was over at Meemaw's yesterday.

SIERRA  
Okay.

*Pause.*

MARY ANNE  
I told her you moved in together.

SIERRA  
Mom.

MARY ANNE  
She asked me when the wedding was happening, again.

SIERRA  
The wedding happened.

MARY ANNE  
You signed a paper. That's not a wedding.

SIERRA  
We're married.

MARY ANNE  
I wasn't sure what to tell her about the wedding.

SIERRA  
Tell her there was a wedding.

MARY ANNE  
That would break her heart to not have been invited.



SIERRA

No one was invited.

MARY ANNE

I know.

SIERRA

I really don't want to get into this now.

MARY ANNE

You should call her, or go see her. She misses you.

SIERRA

I was there last week. Wait, so she thinks I'm living in sin?

MARY ANNE

I guess so.

SIERRA

How is that better than not being invited to the wedding?

MARY ANNE

It's not really.

SIERRA

Ugh.

MARY ANNE

I'm sorry.

SIERRA

Yeah.

MARY ANNE

I am. I'm happy if you two are happy. I just wish you would keep thinking about a wedding, a real wedding, at some point. People ask about it.

*Sierra hands Mary Anne a bag of carrots.*

SIERRA

Will you peel these?

*Mary Anne takes the bag.*

MARY ANNE

Think about it.

SIERRA

I'm thinking about it.

*Collin enters followed by Randall. They each carry a chair. They set them around the room.*

COLLIN

There's one more.

*Collin exits. Randall sits.*

SIERRA

You know it wouldn't be a church wedding.

*Pause.*

MARY ANNE

I know.

RANDALL

Weddings?

SIERRA

Yes.

RANDALL

Mary Anne, they got married.

MARY ANNE

I know. But no one else does.

RANDALL

I could take out an ad, if you want.

MARY ANNE

Okay, we're done talking about it.

*Collin enters with the last chair.*

*Pause.*

COLLIN

What?

SIERRA

Nothing.

COLLIN

What?

SIERRA

Tell me about this priest.

RANDALL

Father Pete. He's young.

MARY ANNE

He's young. I like him.

RANDALL

Little too young.

MARY ANNE

He's kind of bookish. But he's a good priest, starts each homily with a joke. What was that one from today?

RANDALL

Something about the stone, throwing the first stone.

MARY ANNE

Oh that's right. So, Jesus. No. The people of a town are about to stone this woman who was guilty of adultery.

SIERRA

Always a good start to a joke.

MARY ANNE

Oh, you know the story. Jesus comes between the crowd and the woman and says, "Let the person among you who is without sin cast the first stone."

COLLIN

I think I know this one.

MARY ANNE

Just then, a stone comes sailing through the air and hits Jesus right in the face. The crowd parts to reveal a little old woman, already picking up another stone. Jesus looks at her and rolls his eyes. Then he says, "Mother!"

*Randall chuckles. Collin laughs.*

SIERRA

Good one. So, they kill the woman?

MARY ANNE

What?

SIERRA

The end of the joke is that the crowd goes ahead and stones the woman to death? Perfect for Mass.

MARY ANNE

No, that's not the end of the joke. They all forgive each other and then have a nice meal together.

RANDALL

I thought they all got a drink. Collin?

*Randall moves to the fridge to grab himself a beer.*

COLLIN

Sure.

*Randall takes one for himself and hands another to Collin.*

RANDALL

Now, let's see how our boys are doing.

MARY ANNE

You gotta put that thing together.

*She points at the box.*

RANDALL

We can do it in a minute.

MARY ANNE

TV goes off when Father Pete gets here.

RANDALL

What?!

MARY ANNE

It's just preseason.

COLLIN

What if he wants to watch?

MARY ANNE

He doesn't watch sports. I asked him.

COLLIN

I don't know if I like this guy.

MARY ANNE

Well, he's getting into heaven.

RANDALL

If I can't watch the Steelers in heaven, I'm going somewhere else.

*Collin and Randall go into the next room, the game turns on.*

*Sierra goes to the fridge and takes out a bottle of white wine for Mary Anne, pours her a glass.*

*They work in silence for a little while, preparing the meal.*

SIERRA

It's not that I don't think something, a celebration, would be fun. It's just that with Collin and some of the people who would come, old friends. It would be hard for him.

MARY ANNE

So, don't invite them.

SIERRA

That would be hard.

MARY ANNE

Alright. Try to understand that it's important for me, okay? I'm trying.

SIERRA

I know, Mom. There's a priest coming to dinner, at my house.

MARY ANNE

I think you'll like him. He's so smart, like you.

*Collin and Randal shout from the next room.*

*Sierra looks at Mary Anne.*

MARY ANNE

Go ahead, I'll take over.

SIERRA

Thanks!

*Sierra runs into the next room. She adds her shouting to Randall and Collin's.*

*Mary Anne smiles to herself.*

*Randall enters. He puts his empty into a bin. He gets another from the fridge.*

MARY ANNE

Slow down there, cowboy.

RANDALL

First one goes quick.

MARY ANNE

Randy.

RANDALL

Alright, alright. Hey, go easy on her.

MARY ANNE

I am.

RANDALL

No more wedding talk.

*Randall kisses her.*

*There is a knock at the door.*

*Mary Anne goes to open it. Father Pete (36) enters. He carries a bottle of red wine.*

MARY ANNE

Father! You're early.

RANDALL

Hey there, Padre.

*Father Pete hugs Mary Anne and shakes Randall's hand.*

MARY ANNE

The table! We didn't put the table together.

FATHER PETE

I'm sorry I thought about driving around for a while. I usually run into a whole line of trucks this time of day.

RANDALL

It's fine. Mary Anne, it's going to be alright.

MARY ANNE

I'm so sorry, Father. We're glad you're here.

*Collin enters.*

MARY ANNE

Collin, this is Father Pete. Collin is our son-in-law.

*They shake hands.*

FATHER PETE

Good to meet you.

COLLIN

You too. I mean, Father. Thanks for coming to our house. I guess we better get going on that thing.

*Points at the table.*

RANDALL

No, I'm not having another evening ruined by Ikea furniture. Let's eat in the living room. You and Sierra are on your own with that one.

FATHER PETE

Where is...

MARY ANNE

Sierra. Sierra!

RANDALL

Sierra!

SIERRA

(O.S.)  
Go! Go! Go!

*Collin and Randall run into the next room. All three of them cheer.*

MARY ANNE

I am so sorry.

FATHER PETE

It's alright. I brought this for the house.

*He hands her the bottle of wine.*

MARY ANNE

Thank you very much.

FATHER PETE

You can thank the Lee's. They brought a case of it to the rectory during Easter. We've been working our way through it. Father Doherty hardly touches the stuff any more, and I'm just not up to the task. All the same, it's pretty good.

MARY ANNE

Great.

*Mary Anne walks over to the door to the TV.*

MARY ANNE

TV off!

*The TV goes silent. Collin and Randall walk back into the kitchen. Sierra follows.*

SIERRA

Sorry. That was amazing. Sorry.

MARY ANNE

And this is my daughter Sierra. This is her house, believe it or not.

SIERRA

Father Pete. Welcome.

FATHER PETE

Thanks for having me. I've heard so much about you.

SIERRA

Oh my.

FATHER PETE

Most of it good.

*They all chuckle politely.*

FATHER PETE

Are you sure you don't want Collin here for this?

*The scene is penetrated, shot through with another moment further down the line.*

SIERRA

I'm sure.

*This new conversation flows through the room, taking everyone with it leaving only Sierra and Father Pete.*

#### SCENE [N] - VERTICAL DRILLING

*Sierra and Father Pete are in a hospital waiting room.*

FATHER PETE

I understand.

SIERRA

There's no reason to get him worried.

FATHER PETE

Of course.



SIERRA

Because this still might be nothing.

FATHER PETE

Absolutely.

SIERRA

It's just cause I'm in the last trimester. They need to check.

FATHER PETE

I'm sure you're both fine.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

What about your mom?

SIERRA

I called my dad.

FATHER PETE

Good.

SIERRA

They know. I told them I would call them after. They don't need to drive all the way to town just for this.

FATHER PETE

Okay.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

I was surprised you called me.

SIERRA

I was too.

FATHER PETE

I'm glad you did.

SIERRA

It's good to have someone here. It can't be Collin, and I honestly couldn't handle my mother right now.

FATHER PETE

I understand.

SIERRA

You don't have to stay if you need to be somewhere.

FATHER PETE

I need to be right here.

SIERRA

Thank you.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

Would you like to pray with me?

*Sierra looks at Father Pete.*

SIERRA

No.

FATHER PETE

Some people find it calming.

SIERRA

I am not one of those people.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

I wish I knew more about what is happening.

SIERRA

Me too.

FATHER PETE

The first one is always scary, my sister was in the hospital almost every week during the last few months, little scares.

SIERRA

I think it's always scary.

FATHER PETE

Of course.

SIERRA

You're an Uncle.

FATHER PETE

Three times over.

SIERRA

How old?

*Father Pete takes out his phone.*

FATHER PETE

The oldest one is eight, Joey. And then Charlie is four, and Barty just turned two.

*He hands Sierra the phone.*

SIERRA

Aw, they're precious. Barty?

FATHER PETE

Bartholomew

SIERRA

Alright.

FATHER PETE

I think he'll grow into it.

SIERRA

He'll have to. All boys.

FATHER PETE

All boys.

SIERRA

Huh.

*Long Pause.*

FATHER PETE

I'm sure it's nothing.

*Sierra starts to breathe heavily.*

*Mary Anne enters.*

SIERRA

Mom.

MARY ANNE

Did you set a timer?

*Everything flows back again, back to before, back into the Kitchen.*

### CASING AND PIPING

*Father Pete has a glass of wine, Collin has another beer.*

*Randall is not there.*

SIERRA

Shoot.

*Mary Anne rushes to the oven and opens the door. She waves her hand in front of her face.*

SIERRA

Shoot!

MARY ANNE

They're not too bad.

SIERRA

I thought you would set the timer.

MARY ANNE

I'm sorry, honey.

SIERRA

Can we just scrape the top off?

MARY ANNE

Sure.

SIERRA

What should we do?

MARY ANNE

It's going to taste a little burned.

FATHER PETE

I'm sure they'll be just fine.

*Randall enters. He sniffs the air.*

RANDALL

Something is done.

SIERRA

I'm just going to scrape it off.

FATHER PETE

Collin, what do you do?

COLLIN

I work for the natural gas industry.

FATHER PETE

Oh. What do you do?

COLLIN

Mostly general labor on the drill sites.

SIERRA

They just promoted him.

FATHER PETE

Congrats.

COLLIN

Thanks. Got a little raise.

SIERRA

It's really hard work.

FATHER PETE

Sounds like hard work.

COLLIN

It's worth it.

*Pause.*

RANDALL

Father, I had a chance to read that thing, that-

FATHER PETE

The encyclical?

RANDALL

Encyclical, yes. Loud-ati Say?

FATHER PETE

Laudato Si (Law-DA-toe See)

RANDALL

Right.

FATHER PETE

What did you think?

RANDALL

It was...interesting.

FATHER PETE

Not everyone is a fan of the Holy Father.

RANDALL

Does the Pope have fans?

SIERRA

I'm a fan.

RANDALL

I think you have to go to Church to be a fan.

FATHER PETE

He is a very charismatic man. I think he has people really inspired. He's not afraid to articulate the teachings of the Church.

RANDALL

Or the teachings of Karl Marx.

SIERRA

Dad.

*Pause.*

MARY ANNE

Should we eat?

SIERRA

We should eat.

MARY ANNE

He's been reading since he retired. I don't know that we should encourage it.

FATHER PETE

So, you think he's a marxist?

RANDALL

I don't know. He's calling for an end to fossil fuels. That would mean the end of us here. Goodbye coal, goodbye natural gas. There goes my pension and his job.

COLLIN

Don't bring me into this.

RANDALL

I mean, there goes our way of life. Good luck charging your phone without fossil fuels, good luck having any kind of modern society.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

I don't think the Pope wants anyone to loose their job.

RANDALL

I know, I know.

FATHER PETE

And, I don't know, you're right. It's a big thing, a big conversation.

RANDALL

Yup.

FATHER PETE

You were a coal miner. Is that right?

RANDALL

Thirty-one years.

FATHER PETE

Wow.

RANDALL

Times have changed. It's a dying thing. This here's the future.

*Randal indicates Collin.*

SIERRA

I believe the children are our future.

COLLIN

Teach them well and let them lead the way?

SIERRA

Show them all the beauty they possess inside.

COLLIN

Give them a sense of pride to make it easier.

MARY ANNE

(singing)

Let the children's laughter

MARY ANNE, COLLIN, AND SIERRA

(singing)

remind us how we used to be!

RANDALL

I get the feeling I'm being made fun of.

FATHER PETE

I think they're making fun of you.

*There is general laughter.*

MARY ANNE

Father, will you say grace?

FATHER PETE

Of course.

SIERRA

What are you doing here?

*The scene is penetrated again.*

MARY ANNE

Your father called me.

*Everyone flows back. This time Sierra, Father Pete, and Marry Anne remain.*

### TRIPPING OUT

*Mary Anne continues to approach Sierra and Father Pete.*

MARY ANNE

I was running errands. What's going on?

SIERRA

Everything is fine, Mom. I just wanted to come in for a checkup.

MARY ANNE

How are you feeling? Are you feeling okay?

SIERRA

I feel fine.

MARY ANNE

Then why did you come in? Did something happen? Where is Collin?

SIERRA

Mom.

MARY ANNE

I'm sorry.

SIERRA

Collin is at work. I didn't want him to worry. Everything is fine.

FATHER PETE

Hello, Mary Anne.

MARY ANNE

Father Pete! Oh my goodness. I didn't even see you there.



FATHER PETE  
That's fine.

*Pause.*

MARY ANNE  
I didn't know you did hospital ministry.

FATHER PETE  
Oh.

SIERRA  
I asked him to come.

*Pause.*

MARY ANNE  
Why didn't you call me?

SIERRA  
I didn't want anyone to worry.

MARY ANNE  
Well, I'm worried.

FATHER PETE  
Can I get you both something from the cafeteria?

SIERRA  
Please stay.  
(to Mary Anne)  
Where is Dad?

MARY ANNE  
I sent him to get Collin. He wasn't picking up his phone.

SIERRA  
Mom!

*Pause.*

MARY ANNE  
What happened, Sie?

SIERRA  
I had a little bleeding. I just wanted get it checked out.

MARY ANNE  
Okay.

*Pause.*

MARY ANNE

Does it feel- How do you feel?

SIERRA

Fine. I feel fine.

*Long pause.*

SIERRA

It feels different.

*Collin walks out into the yard as the scene flows back down the pipe. He lights up a cigarette.*

*Father Pete joins him.*

FATHER PETE

Hey.

*Collin holds up his hands.*

COLLIN

You caught me.

FATHER PETE

Can I bum one?

#### REPLACING THE BIT

*Collin hands Father Pete a cigarette.*

COLLIN

Absolutely.

FATHER PETE

Thanks.

*Collin hands him the lighter. Father Pete lights up.*

COLLIN

You don't seem like a smoker.

FATHER PETE

It's been a little while. You don't seem like someone who sings Whitney Houston.

*Collin laughs.*

FATHER PETE

This is a great home you have here.

COLLIN

Thanks.

FATHER PETE

When did you move in?

COLLIN

Two months ago.

FATHER PETE

Is this your first dinner party?

COLLIN

Is that what this is?

FATHER PETE

We just had dinner.

COLLIN

Dinner party.

FATHER PETE

It feels like a party.

COLLIN

A dinner party.

FATHER PETE

What?

COLLIN

Having the parish priest over for a dinner party.

FATHER PETE

Yeah.

COLLIN

You seem like a good guy. But you have to know this was all Mary Anne and Randall's idea. Sie and me aren't really church people.

FATHER PETE

I know. That's fine.

COLLIN

Is it?

FATHER PETE

I guess that depends who you ask.

COLLIN

It does.

*They smoke in silence for a while.*

FATHER PETE

Were you raised in a faith?

COLLIN

Yup. Christian.

FATHER PETE

What denomination?

COLLIN

Just a Christian church. I don't know.

*Long pause.*

FATHER PETE

I hope this isn't- Mary Anne shared with me, a little about your last couple years.

COLLIN

Oh.

FATHER PETE

I think it's admirable what you accomplished.

COLLIN

Is it?

FATHER PETE

And if you ever needed someone to talk to.

COLLIN

What?

FATHER PETE

That's my job.

COLLIN

I'm not Catholic.

FATHER PETE

That doesn't matter. Maybe talking to someone would help? Talking to someone outside of the family can sometimes help.

COLLIN

I have a sponsor.

FATHER PETE

Of course.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

Well you know that you and Sierra are always welcome. Any time you want to talk or drop by. That's why I'm here.

COLLIN

Thanks, Father. That's real nice of you.

*Pause.*

*Father Pete becomes aware of a low drone off in the distance.*

FATHER PETE

What's that sound?

COLLIN

They're putting in a new pad bout a mile over that way, over that hill.

FATHER PETE

So close.

COLLIN

So close to what?

FATHER PETE

To your house.

COLLIN

Father, that's a pad right there.

*Collin points a little ways up the hill.*

FATHER PETE

That there?

COLLIN

Yup. They put that one in a year or two before we bought the place.

FATHER PETE

Just up the hill there?

COLLIN

What did you think that was?

FATHER PETE

I don't know. I guess I didn't really look at it.

*Collin laughs.*

FATHER PETE

Do you ever get worried?

COLLIN

About what?

FATHER PETE

Your water.

COLLIN

Our water is fine. Sounds like somebody's been watching Josh Fox.

FATHER PETE

Well.

COLLIN

(in a raspy Josh Fox voice)

Little did Father Pete know. He. Had been drinking frac water. All night.

FATHER PETE

I've been sticking to wine.

COLLIN

Smart.

FATHER PETE

Did you see Gasland?

COLLIN

Just the first one, they have it on Netflix.

FATHER PETE

Doesn't it scare you a little bit?

*Sierra comes out.*

COLLIN

No.

FATHER PETE

Really?

SIERRA

What scares you?

COLLIN

Sure, a few people got fucked over. Stuff can go wrong if you do it wrong. But am I gonna stop driving just cause somebody got in a car accident? My crew, we do it right and we do it safe.

SIERRA

Oh.

COLLIN

I know some of the guys that drilled those wells. They don't cut corners. You think we would live here if I thought there was a risk?

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

Of course not.

SIERRA

Well, there is risk.

COLLIN

Sie.

SIERRA

There's always risk, right? We don't know Father Pete really at all. Huge risk. That wine could be poisoned.

COLLIN

Very good point.

FATHER PETE

True.

SIERRA

It's time for dessert.

FATHER PETE

Excellent.

*Father Peter enters the kitchen.*

*Sierra kisses Collin.*

COLLIN

What's that for?

SIERRA

I'm just happy.

*Pause. They breathe in the night air together.*

SIERRA

You still want to tell them tonight?

COLLIN

Your parents, your call.

SIERRA

It's weird with Father Pete here.

COLLIN

He seems alright.

SIERRA

He does.

*Collin crouches down to Sierra's belly.*

COLLIN

(a funny voice)  
What do you think little man?

*Sierra laughs and pulls Collin to his feet.*

SIERRA

Um. No.

COLLIN

Alright.

*The look at each other. The moment fades and flows back around them, taking Sierra and leaving Collin.*

COLLIN

Where's, Sie?

### REACHING THE "KICK-OFF POINT"

*Collin walks into the waiting room to Mary Anne and Father Pete.*

MARY ANNE

Collin.

FATHER PETE

She went in a little while ago.

COLLIN

Is anyone in there with her?

MARY ANNE

She wanted to go alone.



COLLIN

What is going on?

MARY ANNE

Probably nothing. It's just a check-up.

COLLIN

Why didn't she call me?

FATHER PETE

She said you were at work.

COLLIN

What is he doing here?

FATHER PETE

Sierra asked me to come. I was in the area.

*Randall enters.*

RANDALL

Don't worry, Collin, I'll park the car.

*Randall assesses the tension.*

RANDALL

Where is she?

MARY ANNE

Back with the doctor.

COLLIN

I'm going back.

*Sierra enters.*

*She and Collin share a long moment. He knows everything in that moment.*

*Sierra flows back the other way.*

SIERRA

I made pie!

### HORIZONTAL DRILLING

*Everyone settles back into the kitchen. Randall is at the sink doing dishes.*

RANDALL

What kind we talking' about here?

SIERRA  
Pecan.

RANDALL  
I approve.

*Collin takes two more beers out of the fridge, he hands one to Randall and keeps one for himself.*

COLLIN  
Peeee-can pie.

FATHER PETE  
Sounds delicious.

SIERRA  
(to Collin)  
Grab some plates.

*Collin takes some plates from a cupboard.*

FATHER PETE  
So, how did you and Collin meet?

SIERRA  
We met in high school. Who wants ice cream?

FATHER PETE  
Just pie for me.

RANDALL  
Yes, please.

*Collin and Sierra serve out the pie.*

MARY ANNE  
Collin took her to a dance.

COLLIN  
It was Tyler's idea.

FATHER PETE  
Who's Tyler?

*Brief pause.*

RANDALL  
Tyler was our oldest.

*Another brief pause.*

FATHER PETE

Of course, Mary Anne told me about him.

COLLIN

I was friends with Tyler.

SIERRA

It was a week before Homecoming and all of my friends had dates.

MARY ANNE

This was before your wearing gothic time.

SIERRA

I maybe had a goth phase shortly after this.

COLLIN

That might be my fault.

SIERRA

Maybe, a little.

FATHER PETE

So, Collin, you're older.

COLLIN

I was a senior when she was a freshman.

FATHER PETE

Scandal.

SIERRA

Totally. I had my dress and everything all ready, and Andy Halverson was supposed to ask me, but he ended up asking my friend Krista.

COLLIN

Andy was a tool.

SIERRA

I was devastated. I wouldn't come out of my room. So, my brother asked Collin to take me.

FATHER PETE

What a nice story.

COLLIN

He had to pay me.

MARY ANNE

No, he didn't.

COLLIN

Twenty bucks.

MARY ANNE

I didn't know that.

SIERRA

My gigolow.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

You two have been dating since high school?

COLLIN

No.

SIERRA

No, we really didn't even date then, just the dance. Then I went to school. We reconnected later on.

FATHER PETE

What about you and Randall?

MARY ANNE

What?

FATHER PETE

How did you meet?

MARY ANNE

We met in the service.

FATHER PETE

I didn't know you served too.

MARY ANNE

I was an army nurse.

RANDALL

She was the meanest nurse they had.

MARY ANNE

Randy, stop it.

RANDALL

She was. People were afraid of her.

MARY ANNE

I was good at dealing with some of the more difficult patients.

RANDALL

We were stationed at a base in Turkey. It must have been eighty-one, eighty?

MARY ANNE

Nineteen eighty-one. And that is a story for another time.

SIERRA

It's a good one.

MARY ANNE

Father, do you want any more wine?

FATHER PETE

I'm good, but thank you.

RANDALL

How about you Father? How did you and the Church meet?

FATHER PETE

We met at a bar.

*Laughter.*

FATHER PETE

No. I um—I think this what you mean—I began discerning when I was at Duquesne for undergrad. It took me a while. I spent a lot of years in denial, but here I am.

MARY ANNE

We're glad you're here.

*A lull in conversation.*

*Sierra gets up to take some plates to the sink. She turns around.*

SIERRA

So, I have an announcement.

(to Collin)

I'm doing this.

COLLIN

Alright.

SIERRA

Collin and I have an announcement.

*Sierra shifts. Everything is flowing back and down. They all go with her, flowing down and back.*

*She looks up at everyone.*

### HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

*Sierra is in the examination room, or the waiting room, it's a blur.  
Everyone is there.*

*She looks at Collin. He walks to her.*

*She shakes her head.*

*He falls into her arms.*

*Sierra holds him.*

*Mary Anne covers her mouth as Randall puts an arm around her.*

*Father Pete begins to pray.*

*The moment rests in stillness.*

*One by one they turn and leave, first Father Pete, then Mary Anne, then  
Randall, then Collin.*

*Sierra is left alone.*

### GAS PRODUCTION

*Sierra takes a forkful of the pie. The Steeler's game is on in the next room.*

*Father Pete enters. Sierra hands Father Pete a fork.*

SIERRA

This needs finished.

FATHER PETE

Alright then. You're missing a good game in there.

SIERRA

Really?

FATHER PETE

I have no idea.

SIERRA

My mom said you're not really a sports fan.

FATHER PETE

Not at all.

SIERRA

Thank you for pretending. You made the boys' night.

FATHER PETE

Not yours?

SIERRA

That game was over in the second quarter.

FATHER PETE

Of course.

SIERRA

Plus. There's pie.

FATHER PETE

Pie.

*They each take another bite.*

FATHER PETE

So, you're a nurse.

SIERRA

Like mother like daughter. I'm surprised I haven't run into you before. We see most of the clergy in town at some point or another.

FATHER PETE

I do have a shift at the hospital. But most people call Father Doherty, a familiar face.

SIERRA

I'm sure you'll be familiar soon enough.

FATHER PETE

I hope so.

SIERRA

Did you grow up around here?

FATHER PETE

No. Actually, I'm from Minnesota, near a town called Winona.

SIERRA

Pittsburgh was for school?

FATHER PETE

Yep.

SIERRA

You stayed.

FATHER PETE

It reminds me a lot of home here.

SIERRA

Do you get to go back much?

FATHER PETE

Yes. A lot, recently.

SIERRA

Oh yeah?

FATHER PETE

To visit my dad, the professor.

SIERRA

The professor?

FATHER PETE

He's a retired Philosophy professor.

SIERRA

Is he alright?

FATHER PETE

Oh, he's healthy, mostly. A mine opened down the road from our house. It's actually where our old church used to be. It's made things really hard for my Dad. There's fifty trucks a day running in front of the house, dust and sand everywhere. They mine sand there.

SIERRA

Sand?

FATHER PETE

That's what I heard. I don't know much about it, but it's been miserable. He can't leave the windows open.

SIERRA

That's awful.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

Sorry about before, with Collin. I didn't mean to criticize his work.

SIERRA

He's a little touchy. They've been getting more and more grief from people. A group of protesters shut down his work site a few weeks back.

FATHER PETE

Really?



SIERRA

It was mostly people from Pittsburgh, I think. You know how it goes.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

Congratulations, by the way.

*Sierra smiles.*

SIERRA

Thank you.

FATHER PETE

I am honored to be here for the announcement.

*Pause.*

FATHER PETE

Are you okay?

SIERRA

What?

FATHER PETE

You're. I'm sorry, you have a little nose bleed.

*Sierra touches her nose, then looks at her hand.*

SIERRA

Oh! I'm sorry.

*She gets a paper towel, holds it to her nose.*

SIERRA

That's embarrassing.

FATHER PETE

Are you okay?

SIERRA

Fine. Must be dry in here, my fancy new AC.

FATHER PETE

Yeah.

SIERRA

Sorry, I'm going to...

FATHER PETE

Of course.

*Father Pete exits.*

*The sound of the game fades.*