

ACT I SCENE 1

SETTING: The lights raise on the picnic table, downstage center, and DAN and SARAH's house, stage left. DAN is at the picnic table outside of his house. He is quietly working but seething with anger. He has been mending his trot lines. There are several bushel baskets and crab nets on the table as he works. He is sharpening a Bowie knife. As Sarah enters from her work at the grocery store in Easton, Dan stabs the knife into the picnic table top. It is late afternoon.

SARAH

Why aren't you out on the boat?

DAN

I think they are try'n to blame it on me. Henderson started asking me questions today down at the docks. He was asking what did I know about the two thousand dollars that is missing.

SARAH

One of the women who was picking crabs was saying that Middleman's boy was working on his father's boat the day the money went missing.

DAN

Yeah. His boy is back from prison. I saw him.

SARAH

Middleman's boy hasn't been around since that money has gone missing. They say his Daddy bought him a car and told him to go out West.

DAN

Doesn't matter Sarah, they are coming after me. Has Middleman been trying to talk to you again?

SARAH

He tried to but I turned my back on him.

DAN

Good, turn your back on him. He's scared of me.

SARAH

He said he had to talk to you.

DAN

He is nothing to us now.

SARAH

I think he wants to talk now because his boy came back.

DAN

...But our son is still gone!

SARAH

Why do you think they are going to blame it on you?

DAN

They are going one by one to make sure I got no alibi. I've been watching Henderson down on the docks.

SARAH

You just waiting Dan?

DAN

What else can I do?

SARAH

The packers need your catch.

DAN

(Beat)

So he tried to talk to you again?

SARAH

Yes. It is worse now that his boy is back from prison.

DAN

He comes to you saying he is feeling bad about our boy but he never says what happened to him. He knows.

SARAH

But you won't let me ask him, will you? He would tell us now.

DAN

He won't tell us.

SARAH

We never asked him. He is falling all over himself saying he's sorry. I could ask him. He's the only one who would tell us...

DAN

You think our boy is dead?

SARAH

I didn't say that.

(Beat.)

You don't want me to ask him because you don't want to know.

DAN

Our boy is not dead, Sarah. I know he did what I told him: "Pick a star out over this house." He will be coming home some day.

SARAH

It will be thirteen years come July 27th, Dan. Thirteen years in less than a week. He has been gone a long time.

DAN

We can't talk about it. We never could.

DAN gathers his trotline, baskets and nets, gets up from the picnic table and goes inside.

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

(RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR. enters and cautiously approaches SARAH who is still at the picnic table.)

Excuse me, Sarah, is Dan here?

SARAH

You can't be here! What are you doing here?

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

I have to talk to Dan!

DAN sees RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR. through the screen door and he lunges through the screen door and down the steps. DAN violently grabs RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR. from behind and turns him around to face him and then slugs him hard. RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR. falls and struggles to get up. DAN slugs him again.

DAN

(As he stands over RICHARD
MIDDLEMAN, SR.)

You are looking for me Middleman? I can't take no more!

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

I know you can't, Dan.

DAN

Get off my land! Stay out of my life!

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

I just want to take some pressure off of you.

DAN

You can't. I get it everyday! Everyday! And now your boy comes back and you send him away? Why have I got to live with that right now? Now they are waiting on me down at the docks!

DAN slugs RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.
again while he is still on the
ground.

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

(Still on his back.)

Henderson stops me down at the dock. He wants to know where you were last Tuesday at lunch time... I told him you were still out on your boat.

DAN

But I wasn't. Why'd you tell him that?

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

You didn't steal that money!

DAN

No, I didn't steal nothing!

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

I told Henderson that you weren't around when it went missing.

DAN

I came in early. I had my crabs.

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

Anybody see you come in?

DAN

I don't know who saw me. I don't care.

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

You better care. Henderson is looking for you all the time.

DAN

You didn't see me. Why'd you say you did?

RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR.

He was looking to blame you. You know he's got people saying you were there. You need an alibi.

DAN

You weren't there when I came in. If they find out you are lying, you telling a lie to protect me, won't do me no good.

DAN starts to throw another punch.

SARAH

(Breaks up the fight.)

Dan, you can't do this. You can't be hitting him! Ask him Dan! Ask him. Ask him what happened to our boy.

At the last second DAN pulls the punch and RICHARD MIDDLEMAN, SR. struggles to his feet and exits.

BLACKOUT.

END OF SCENE

ACT I SCENE 2

THE HEADLIGHTS OF THE CAR FLASH ON AND BEAM OVER THE AUDIENCE.

RICHARD, behind the wheel, is driving fast, with BELLE banging on him from the backseat and screaming at him at the top of her voice. The car radio is very loud.

BELLE

(Reaching again and again over the front seat as she keeps trying to turn the radio down.)