

## Scene Five

January first. About 2:00 am.

~~The storm has calmed down, but there is still the sound of some winter wind. EARL appears, wearing his winter coat. He goes into GAIL's room and starts to strip the bed. A beat later, GAIL appears, completely drained. She stands in the hall. He joins her.~~

EARL: Looks like the mattress is all right. Don't know if you want to soak these, or...

GAIL: Just leave them. You should go home. It's late.

~~EARL throws them in the bathroom. Beat.~~

EARL: She's gonna be fine.

GAIL: I just hope we can say the same thing about the baby.

EARL: They're doing everything they can to get him to pull through. So. I'll see ya.

GAIL: Do you want a drink? I could use a drink.

EARL: Aww, what the hell. It's New Year's.

~~GAIL goes into SARAH's room, gets a bottle of mead out of a box, her coffee cup and the water glass from earlier, and returns to her own room while EARL puts the cover on GAIL's bed during:~~

~~Wonder if they've had a New Year's baby yet. Less than a day apart, but that kid and Sarah's boy will be in different grades, eh? Different hockey teams, soccer. All pretty random when you think about it. Poor boy of Sarah's is gonna be the youngest all the time.~~

## ADDITION SCENE #6

GAIL &amp; EARL

Mark Crawford 105

GAIL: God willing. (She realizes she doesn't have anything to open the mead.) Oh...

EARL: Here.

~~EARL takes it and opens it with his utility knife's corkscrew.~~

GAIL: (Beat.) I should have stayed!

ADDITION #6 START

EARL: No, Sarah's right: you've got to get some rest.

GAIL: That's not what she said — she told me to get out, that I wasn't helping.

EARL: I think maybe what she meant was... Either way this thing goes, she's gonna need you. You're too sick to go in the ICU with the baby. So try and get some sleep and go back in the morning. She's not alone, she's got young Benjamin there.

GAIL: For whatever that's worth.

EARL: He came, didn't he? Lot of guys wouldn't'a even been there. (He's poured the mead into the coffee cup and water glass.) Well... cheers.

GAIL: Cheers.

~~They drink. It's not good.~~

EARL: Now what's that there?

GAIL: Mead. Made from honey.

EARL: Oh yeah...

GAIL: It's better when it's chilled. (Beat.) Oh, I've been meaning to ask you. I found a guy who might be interested in renting this land, but he wants to know how you made out last year. I know your crops were no good the year before, but — I don't need numbers, just... How'd you make out?

EARL: Fine. Good. Great.

GAIL: Even without the bee-killers?

EARL: Even without the bee-killers.

GAIL: (*Beat.*) I'm sorry this took up your whole New Year's. You really didn't have to stay that long.

EARL: I didn't have anything going on.

GAIL: There's no need to lie, Earl. I heard you on your cell phone at the hospital, saying sorry you had to cancel. So whoever she is, it's fine, and I'm sorry you didn't get to spend New Year's with her.

EARL: You know who that was? On the phone? Sheila. The boys are still home for the holidays and they roped me into coming over to Frank and Sheila's for New Year's. Figured it was my last chance to see the grandkids before they all take off so I said I'd go. I was gonna drop by, have one drink, make some dumb excuse about the weather, and head home. And probably fall asleep in front of the TV around eleven and wake up around... (*Checks the time.*) ...now, and realize I missed the whole damn thing. So there's no need to be sorry, cuz there is no gal. And to tell you the truth, I'm glad I had a reason to get out of going over there. Would'a been nice if the reason wasn't quite so dramatic, but... God knows Frank and Sheila weren't about to change their plans to go to the hospital. Even though it is his daughter in there. Emergency C-section, all drugged up, all the rest. His grandson hooked up to every machine under the sun. Like you said: selfish.

GAIL: Well. Thank you. For everything.

EARL: Yep. **#6** END

GAIL: So what? You on some kind of a break? Again? (*Nods.*) And not just from relationships. From... everything.

EARL: Oh? And how's that going for you?

GAIL: Ya wanna know something? I don't miss the sex. No, scratch that, I miss the sex, of course I miss sex. But I think what I really miss is... the other stuff.

EARL: What other stuff?

GAIL: I don't know. Never mind. (*Beat.*) You know, I was thinking about you a couple nights ago. In the middle of the night, I heard the sounds of a bird in the house — flapping its wings, squawking something awful. I still had my eyes closed, trying to figure out if it's in my room or down the hall, thinking, "How the hell did it get in here, and did one of the boys open the window in their old room, and Gail's got my screen, and what the hell kind of a bird is that anyway?" And I open my eyes. And I realize... I'm on the couch... in the living room... and the sound is coming from the TV. It's three in the morning and they're playing some nature show all about birds and how they mate. And this one: he's puffing out his chest and he's got this big red stripe and his tail feathers are all poking up and he's dancing back and forth eh, making a real show of it like: "Look at me! Look at this! All you ladies, check this out!" And this lady bird is just standing there with this look on her face like, "All right. That's enough, Jerry. Let's just do this thing so I can get back to work." And so the show says yeah, some birds do that type of thing, but other birds choose one mate for life: swans, eagles, parrots, Canada geese. And among those, some birds divorce,