CATHERINE AND THEO

We've got a surprise!

You can look now! (PIPPIN opens his eyes and turns, CATHERINE announces the dish very theatrically)

Quince Pudding Flambé! Oh, I haven't made it for years, but I thought, you know, for this special occasion...

PIPPIN

Oh, uh... what special occasion? I usually don't like surprises.

CATHERINE

Well, you'll like this one. (PIPPIN stands, eyes closed)

Well... one year ago today... you arrived here! So Theo and I thought that we would celebrate with a little party. So I made this... and Theo made you a new flute...

(THEO crosses to PIPPIN and hands the flute to him)

PIPPIN

Oh, Theo, thank you. It’s beautiful... I don't know what to say.

CATHERINE

Well, let me say something then. (Pause)

In the year months that you've been with us, a lot of water has flowed under the dam-

LEADING PLAYER

(Appearing suddenly) Over the dam. Water flows over the dam.

CATHERINE

(Bashful and embarrassed) I know, I’m sorry! I seem to be a little bit confused...
LEADING PLAYER

Oh, I can see that. Try sticking to the part, huh?

(There is a tense moment between CATHERINE and the LEADING PLAYER, then)

CATHERINE

I will. (She turns to PIPPIN) In the year that you’ve been with us, a lot of water has flowed over the dam. You've come to mean a great deal to me... to us...

(SHE looks menacingly at the LEADING PLAYER, then coldly) ...to our very ordinary lives.

(Back to PIPPIN, the LEADING PLAYER skulks offstage)

So, I just want to say for me... and for Theo... we're glad you're here. And now we have so many good years ahead of us.

(SHE and THEO move PIPPIN to the head of the table. PIPPIN sits very reluctantly) Sit here. Sit right here... right at the head of the table.

(THEO and CATHERINE sit, there is an uncomfortable pause) Well, isn't anybody going to eat my pudding?

THEO

(Grabbing the pudding) I am.

PIPPIN

I can’t stay here. I’m sorry, I have to go.

CATHERINE

Why?

PIPPIN

(Rising suddenly) Because this isn't enough! Life has got to be more than ducks that die, and leaking roofs, and flaming quince pudding! I can’t stay here.
CATHERINE

Are you sure?

PIPPIN

I am not going to be stuck doing the same damn thing every day.

CATHERINE

And night?

PIPPIN

Don't you see, there has to be something more than this! There has to be.

CATHERINE

Maybe there isn't any more.

PIPPIN

I know there is...

CATHERINE

(To audience, as if a litany, learned by rote)

I loved my husband very much. The years we spent together were the happiest of my life. And then one day he was struck by fever. When his hand went cold in mine, I felt my life, too, was over. I was overcome by the deepest despair. I took to my bed for five days. On the sixth day I got up. There were things to be done. An estate to run. A boy to raise.

(As soon as PIPPIN is gone, the lights begin to go out on CATHERINE)

CATHERINE

(As soon as the lights dim, cutting off monologue) Shit! Could you hold the light for a minute!?

(Meekly) Come on... could you hold the light for a minute, please?
(The light comes back on) Thanks...

(The LEADING PLAYER appears in the darkness)

LEADING PLAYER

What are you doing? You don’t have a song here.

CATHERINE

I do now.