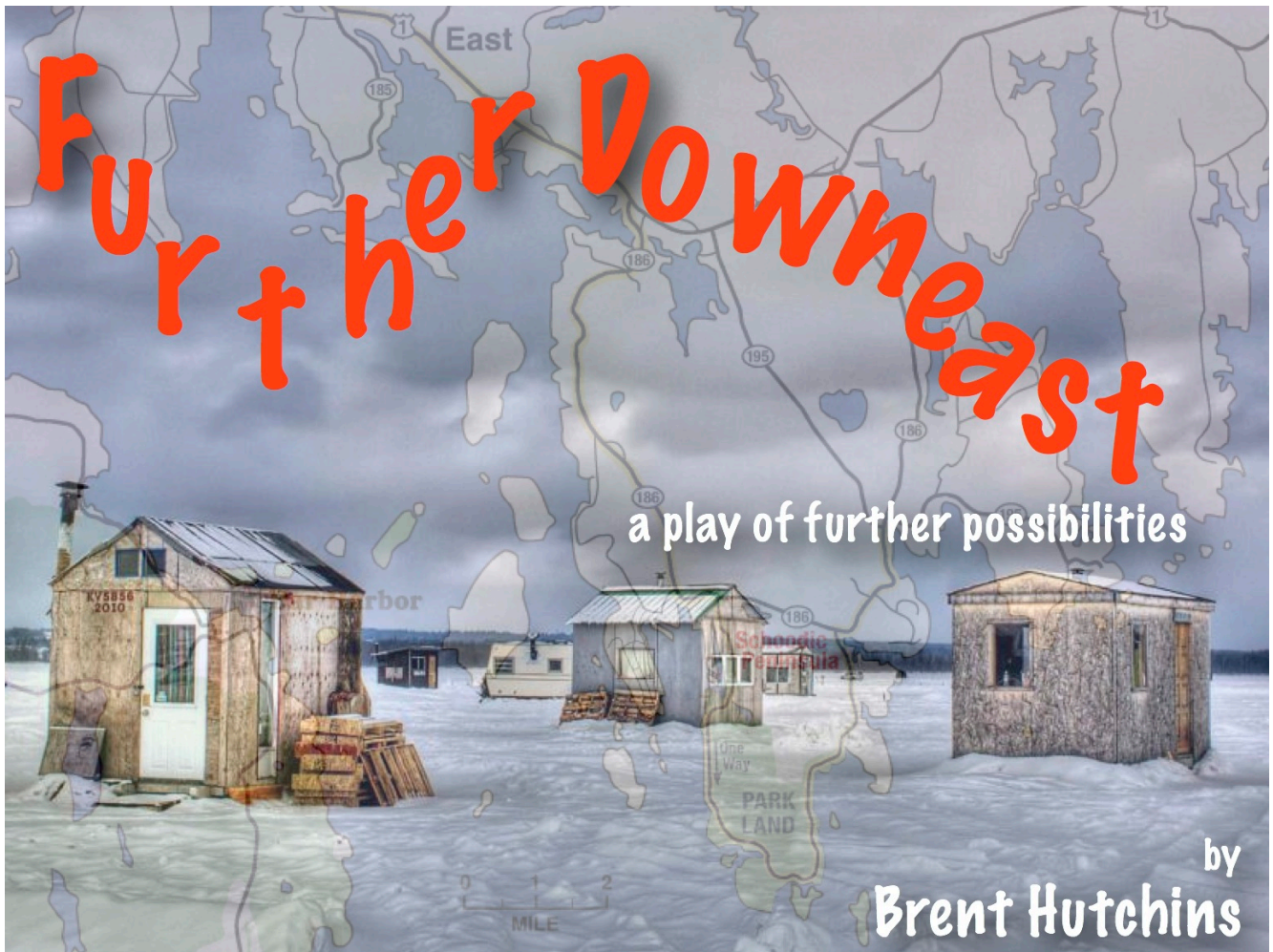


# PERUSAL SCRIPT



Newport, Maine

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## **FURTHER DOWNEAST**

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**Cast of Characters** (11m 9f 1eithr -- some doubling possible, gender switching is possible)

**Junior**–M–Likes to talk (that’s why he’s the narrator/host), 40s/50s+

**Rusty**–M–Likes to fish, 30s/40s

**Tommy**–M–30s, Likes big toys

**Eddie**–M–Out of his “Depth”, 30s/40s

**Babs**–F–Has too much money, 40s/50s+

**Fanny**–F–Has too much money, 40s/50s

**Alvine**–M–Honest and wry, 40s/50s+

**Prue**–F–Unsure, 40s/50s+

**Sabin**–M–Sage and Savvy, 60s+

**Ida**–F–Determined 40/50s+

**Vida**–F–Bemused, 40s/50s+

**Wally**–M–Confounded, 50s+

**Wife**–F–Controlling, 40s/50s+

**Jean**–F– daughter, late 20s early 30s

**Charlene**–F– mother-in-law, 50s-60s

**Bertha**–F–60s++, DEAF

**Proprietor**, M/F, Undone, 40s/50s+

**Minnie**–F–Beside herself, 60s++

**Herb**–M–Long suffering, 50s+

**Tommy**, M, Jaspers foil, 40s/50s

**Jasper**–M–Tommy’s foil, 40s/50s

## **SEVERAL SIMPLE LOCATIONS:**

Narration DownCenter  
On the Ice  
two unspecified locations  
Kitchen counter  
unspecified location  
2 locations for two people: 1 a car, the other a home.  
make-shift courtroom  
a Front Yard sale  
Herb's General Store

**FURTHER DOWNEAST** by Brent Hutchins 11m 9f 6e either -- some doubling possible. About 60 minutes. A sequel to his popular **CLOSER TO HOME**, **FURTHER DOWNEAST** has more from the pointed pen of a true Downeaster! This time Ice Fishing provides the -- well -- icy glue that holds the show together, with each new adventure getting more and more dangerously funny, interspersed with other tidbits about all things 'Downeast!' Written in the style of the old time serial movies, each vignette allows you to laugh through it until the next Ice Fishing mis-adventure perks up and ramps up the action! **ORDER #3037**

**Brent Hutchins** is a fourth generation Mount Desert Island carpenter, and in the words of one of his characters, "Junior", a Downeast entrepreneur! He has been active in all phases of community theater in central Maine for many years; including, acting, directing, set design and construction. Every earnest thespian knows the magic and melancholy of producing a play. Here today, gone tomorrow! In the midst of post production blues, after a particularly special run of "You Can't Take It With You," Brent realized that the magic and melancholy was in that script. So he took up his "pen" and began to write about what he knows: Downeast Maine.

## **AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

There are as many perspectives on "Down East" culture, as there are "Down Easters". Every one has their opinion of where "Down East" Maine starts, and ends. Everyone has their opinion of what the most authentic pronunciation of "Ayuh" should be. And folks from away, talk about the slow pace of life here. What folks from away call a fast paced life, is businesses that don't open until 10 AM, and supper that isn't served until 9 at night. And most of 'em have never ever tried to plow 50 driveways in one day, or dig 2 bushels of clams with the tide chasing them.

Trying to capture the skeptical, close knit, hard working, hard playing, culture of "Downeast" Maine, while avoiding caricature, is a challenging task. Stereotypes abound. As with any earnest attempt to understand a community, the best place to start is with it's elders. Most of my stories have their roots in the 1950s. A time in American history, that seems to me, to represent something of a portal from the 19th to the 21st century.

—**Brent Hutchins**

## FURTHER DOWNEAST

### TOUCHY SUBJECT

**JUNIOR:** I came here tonight because, I like to tell stories. It's the oldest and most venerable form of news and entertainment known to humanity. That is why, the always dyin' art of live theater, will never quite finish dyin'. People are drawn to it, like to a camp fire. It's in our DNA.

Theater is the place we can explore the most challenging of subjects, express our deepest desires, and face that which frightens, and yes even disgusts us, with an open mind.

With that said, I would like to broach a subject that I've very much wanted to discuss of late but have felt that until now, it was inappropriate, even for theater. And I also feel that should I wait any longer, the moment of appropriate opportunity shall pass.

Now I hope you're all all warm enough to talk about...Snow, especially last winter's. Wasn't it a cocker? You'd have to be as old as me, at least, to recall anything to top it! I built my first snowman in November, and I had to put my snow shoes on just to take out the trash a couple times in January! And what a plow' season! Every storm was an adventure. Nothin' else puts life in perspective, quite like snow. I just love snow. I can't help it Don't get me wrong, I like summer just fine, though I do get god awful hungry, waitin' for it to get dark enough to eat suppah!

### JUNIOR'S INTRO to ICE FISHING

**JUNIOR:** Another thing I miss about winter is Ice fishin'. 'Course, I never actually fish -- I haven't got the patience for it. -- but in moderate doses, ice fishin' can be a most entertainin' and rewardin' spectator sport. And even for your serious modern fisherman, it's still size that matters. Who's got the biggest 4 wheeler? Who's got the biggest ice tent? Oh, they trick them tents out with cook stoves, and electric lights, televisions, stereos -- all the comforts of home. Some of them fellas got more invested in their ice tents than I got tied up in my house and garage.

But all and all, once the tents are set up, it's the sport that really matters. And that most ancient, invigorating and venerable of outdoor activities, would still be recognized by our

ancestors, a few modern touches notwithstanding.

Years ago you'd put your tip ups and your ice chisel in your back pack, put your snow shoes on and hike across the ice to your tent, chisel your holes and set your traps. Time you were done, you'd be ready for a beer!

Now a days you load your 3 horse, gasoline powered carbide tipped ice auger on the back of your 1200 cc all-terrain, quadra track fourwheeler, and fly across the ice at 60 miles an hour, drill your holes in five minutes, set your traps... and you're ready for a beer.

Now, for any of you folks who may have led a sheltered life, I will describe a simple fish trap, also known as a tip up.

'Course there's as many different types of tip ups as there are mousetraps, but the most rudimentary fish trap is a stick about 2 feet long, with a reel of line attached to the bottom and a little flag on a slender flexible metal rod attached to the top of it, and 2 little sticks attached crossways in the midst of it, like so, to keep it from fallin' all the way through the hole. You put your bait on your hook and reel out enough line for the depth of water you have and the type of fish you're after. Then you set the stick over the hole, bend your flexible rod down, and trig the end of it on a little clasp that's sensitive to the motion of the reel, such that when a fish takes the bait and spins the reel, the clasp releases and the little flag pops up.

There, you've set your first trap. Each fisherman is allowed five traps that must be within sight, plus one jiggin' hole. But jiggin' is another subject.

So, we're all set to drink, uh fish, and it's kind of like the trenches in World War I -- long stretches of boredom, interrupted by moments of frenzied activity. One minute you got four men standin' around tryin' to keep warm, and occasionally peerin' through their binoculars. Then someone shouts FLAG! And they all leap on their four wheelers, start em up with a deafening roar and tear across the lake to get to that hole. No matter whose trap it is, they jump off and surround the tip up. The owner grabs it, pulls up the line, and generally finds the bait still dangling there. They reset the trap and roar back to the tent sight. Debate ensues. One of 'em will declare, "Probably a wind flag." Another will rebut, "I think I saw a nibble outta that bait fish, it was a strike." Then the cycle begins anew.

Generally, after a few rounds of this spasmodic activity, I will take my leave and hike around the pond, take in the glorious winter scenery and maybe visit a few other rabid fishermen. By and by, I'll circle back around to my buddies' tents, and they'll be fryin' up a batch of

deer steaks with bacon and onions or hamburgers and hotdogs. And sure enough, there will be one or two fish just about within keepin' size, maybe a little notched salmon, and with luck, a big enough Brookie, or a Togue if someone's fishin' deep -- all gutted and cleaned, layin' there on the ice. One of the fellas will say, "Salmon's too gamey." Another will pipe up, "I don't really like fish that much." Then they'll all look at me and say, "We ain't gonna eat these, you want to take 'em home?" And with all the trouble and expense they've been through, I figure it's the least I can do for 'em.

### **ICE FISHIN', Paht 1 -- (What'd you get for Christmas?)**

*(Scene opens with RUSTY, TOMMY, and EDDIE dressed for winter. RUSTY is standing. TOMMY and EDDIE are sitting on upside down 5 gal buckets in different places on the stage. Each has a jiggin' pole in one hand, a beer in the other, and is looking down at his "jiggin' hole as they talk. EDDIE has binoculars around his neck and occasionally puts his beer down and lifts the binoculars and looks off stage to imaginary tip ups.)*

**RUSTY:** *(Looking down and jigging his pole.)* I don't know if I'll ever figure out my wife. I bought her just what she's been buggin' me about for two years at Christmas, and it went over like a hair in your biscuit!

**TOMMY:** What'd you get 'er?"

**RUSTY:** A new washer/dryer, and she's been without a dryer, since the old one died two years ago. I thought she'd been tickled pink about it. I was clever too, I had it installed Christmas Eve, and I managed to keep her out of the cella' all evenin'. I think she mighta been suspicious that I had something big down there for her, but she went along with my little white lie, and even took me out to suppah she was in such a good mood.

**EDDIE:** And she didn't like it?

**RUSTY:** No suh. Things went south fahst when the biggest package under the tree was full of dirty clothes.

**TOMMY:** You can't tell what they'll do next, Rusty. I surprised my son with that brand new snow sled there.

*(Points off stage to snowmobile.)*

She's a 1200 cc, Snow Runner with independent suspension, rack and pinion steering, heated seats and handle bars, a kick ass stereo, and a trailer with a three man pop up tent, and my wife was pissed! On top a' that, she wouldn't let him come today.

**RUSTY:** Your boy must be some disappointed he didn't get to try out his new Christmas present.

**TOMMY:** Well, she'd already yanked the fun out of it when I took 'em outside and *showed 'em* the snowmobile. She growled about irresponsible, overgrown kids, and wastin' money, until she got Tommy Jr. cryin'. Wouldn't even let me tell him it came from Santa.

**RUSTY:** Godfrey, that's wicked despiseable – spoiling his present and dismissin' Santa, right in front of the poor kid...on Christmas!

**TOMMY:** I know it, and now his birthday comin' up, and I wanted to get him a huntin' rifle, but I'm not sure I dare at this point.

**EDDIE:** That's too bad. I loved my first rifle. How old is Tommy Jr. now anyway?

**TOMMY:** He'll be 2 next month

**RUSTY:** And she wouldn't let you bring him?

**TOMMY:** No, her father is a retired fish and game warden, and therefore god's gift to all outdoor recreational activity. He told her that there's nothin' but punk ice under this snow and we'll be lucky if we don't all drown!

**EDDIE:** Women, they treat us like we were children.

*(Gets up.)*

Well, think we should get the steak out of the tent sled?

*(ALL stand. Suddenly their knees bend and hands fly up.)*

**RUSTY:** Did you feel that?

*(ALL look at each other in alarm and then out to audience. BLACKOUT.)*

## **CUTTIN' PULP**

**JUNIOR:** In the winter of 1951, I was still living in Southwest Harbor where I'd been raised. I was trained by my father as a carpenter, and I did love the trade. Work was slow that winter however so I took a job cuttin' pulp wood for old Bob Carter over in Tremont. We chopped down the trees and limbed 'em with a double bitted ax. Then we'd take a buck saw and cut 'em up in 4 foot lengths and stack 'em. You had to pile and burn your own brush, and Bob paid 10 dollars for every cord you cut and stacked. Well, I want to tell you, it was some of the hardest work I ever done in my entire life.

We'd start at 6 in the mornin' and by nine o'clock, I'd be so hungry I'd eat my lunch then. Some of them older fellas could cut 2, 2 and a half cord in a day. It was really somethin' to watch their axes fly. Hard as I tried, the best I could ever manage was a cord. That worked out to a dollar twenty-five an hour, and I made a dollar fifty workin' for the old man. But as I say, carpenter work was scarce that year, and I had a baby on the one hand and a pregnant wife on the other. I worked so hard that winter that more than once I come home and fell



asleep face down in my supper.

## **ICE FISHIN', Paht 2**

*(Scene opens with three men in long under wear wrapped in blankets, sitting around a small stove.)*

**EDDIE:** Think your cell phone's dried out yet, Rusty? I got to call my wife soon, or she'll have the National Guard out lookin' for me."

**RUSTY:** *(Picking up cell phone from stove fender and looking dolefully at it.)* The phone's all done, Eddie. They don't like swimmin' very much.

**TOMMY:** *(Head in hands.)* Neither do snow mobiles, Rusty. Ohhhhhh crap.

**RUSTY:** She'll probably be alright, Tommy. At least she wasn't runnin' when she went through.

**TOMMY:** Ohhhhhh, crap,crap,crap!

**EDDIE:** Lucky this old camp was close by, or we'd a been in a hell of a pickle!

**TOMMY:** I'm gonna be pickled when my wife gets her hands on me, I tell ya what. Ohhhhhh...crap!

**RUSTY:** How deep you think it is where she went through?

**TOMMY:** Oh, prob'ly twenty feet anyway. She was passed the drop off. I had her out there on purpose, 'cause it's the shore edges that ain't safe.

**EDDIE:** Listen, you guys, if we don't get a phone to work, we'll be spendin' the night here.

**RUSTY:** We'll be spendin' the night, I guess. Those phones ain't gonna work, Eddie. And it's too late to strike out across the lake.

**EDDIE:** I ain't walkin' across the lake, late or early. I'm all set with that. I'll walk out the road.

**TOMMY:** There ain't no road to this camp, Eddie. In the summer, they come by boat. Don't worry, the ice is fine for walkin'.

**EDDIE:** Holy crap, we gotta walk back across this lake? I need a drink!

**RUSTY:** There's a bottle a Jim Beam in the tent sled... Too bad she was tied to the snow mobile, or she mighta floated.

**EDDIE:** Three rib eye steaks in there, too! And chips and the cake my wife made. Oh, my god, is she gonna be wrathful!

**TOMMY:** If you think your wife is gonna be wrathful, Eddie, my wife was already wrathful, and now what she was wrathful about is on the bottom of the lake...

**RUSTY:** ...and she told you the ice wasn't safe.

**TOMMY:** I can hear her father now. "Well son," he'll say, "when you've been around as long as I have... heh,heh,heh...." Ohhh, crap!

**EDDIE:** Well, I'm hungry. I wonder if there could be anything edible in this place.

*(Goes off to look.)*

**TOMMY:** Good luck with that.

*(Puts more wood in stove.)*

**RUSTY:** I'm gonna go scrounge up some fire wood.

*(Exits.)*

**EDDIE:** *(Coming back from other room.)* I found a can of beans!

**TOMMY:** Ayah. They've been out here since last year, Eddie. You know how many times they froze and thawed? They'll be just like mud.

**EDDIE:** I'm just about hungry enough to eat mud, so I'll find out, if i can get this darn can open.

**RUSTY:** *(Excited.)* There's somethin' floatin' out there, in the hole the snow mobile went through!

**EDDIE:** You think it's the tent sled?

**TOMMY:** Well I'm pretty sure it ain't the snow mobile, Eddie. They don't float. The lid on that sled was latched, so she musta held air. Let's go out and see if we can retrieve it.

*(THEY start to exit. EDDIE stops.)*

**EDDIE:** Better bring your cell phone, Rusty.

**RUSTY:** Forget it, Eddie. That phone's dead.

*(ALL exit. The cell phone on the stove fender rings. BLACKOUT.)*

### **Downeast Abby: SNOW GLOBE**

**BABS:** I just can't explain it. It's not something one can put one's finger on really, but you cross the bridge, and the weight of the world falls away. The countryside, so much like the local folk, apparently, rough, and rustic, but beneath that exterior, lies a simple childlike nature, quite malleable to the adroit summer resident. You chuckle at their bucolic primitive, colloquialisms, pretend wide eyed admiration for their simple country wisdom, and they will cater to your every need -- vastly more tractable than any help you can find on the Eastern Shore...and at a third the price!

**FANNY:** Oh Babs, I couldn't agree more! I would fire my entire staff at our estate in the Hamptons and bring my little Maine people back and forth with me, if I didn't think it might swell their heads!

**BABS:** Oh, maybe it's not the tax haven that it might be, but the depressed economy north of Portland keeps everything from shore front properties, to goods and services, extremely affordable. Besides, we have the bulk of our portfolio in the global economy now. Our tax

burden is minimal compared to previous decades. Personally, I'm glad the rich are not having to prop up the middling classes so much these days. It allows us more intelligent control of our philanthropy.

**FANNY:** I wish you could explain all that to my husband. He constantly complains about the property taxes in Hamilton County... and the potholes! If he had his way, he'd just summer on the Long Island shore and winter at our condo on the Rivera.

**BABS:** Of course, Alistair, only flies in on the odd week end, and our man, picks him up at the Hamilton air port, in the Land Rover. Once ensconced at Cliff House, Alistair avoids all local roads and bumpkins.

**FANNY:** My children dreaded the thought of spending summers here. Griff, my oldest, always said what passes for a country club in Maine is a burger shack next to a nine hole golf course in a potato field. Ha,ha,ha. But I felt that it was good for them to rough it a bit. As long as they aren't exposed to the backward education system and avoid being ensnared by social climbing local girls, I believe summering in Maine is a wonderful way to make men out of boys.

**BABS:** Yes, yes, but not for daughters.

**FANNY:** Of course...they might steal the pool boy's attention from us!

**BABS:** HA,ha,ha,ha,ha!

**FANNY:** Ha,ha,ha,ha,ha!

**BABS:** No, seriously, the whole state, and all the little people in it I wish I could take it back to the real world in the fall...in a tiny snow globe, that I could shake, whenever I need to escape!

### **Downeast Abby: THE LITTLE PEOPLE**

**ALVINE:** I've got to pick up Alistaire Archer at the Broad Harbor airport in half an hour, and god knows what would happen if I was late. He's probably got a look that can kill. Do you know, that man has not once spoken to me in 5 years of workin' out there? We communicate with head gestures only. He nods with a frown. I nod with a smile. I open his door. He gets in the back. I drive out to Cliff House, and we reverse the procedure.

**PRUE:** And that's all that's passed between you in 5 years of workin' for him?

**ALVINE:** There was one time, when I closed his coattail in the car door. His chin went up in the air, kinda like Franklin Roosevelt's used to, and he clenched his teeth, kinda like *Teddy* Roosevelt used to. I remember thinking it was ironic, 'cause I'd bet lunch, that old Alistaire has nothin' but contempt for progressive politicians.

**PRUE:** He hasn't *actually* spoken even one word to you, in all that time?

**ALVINE:** ‘Course once I get him up to Cliff House, we never set eyes on him again... until it’s time to take him back to the airport.

**PRUE:** And you want me to apply for the cook’s job? Sounds too creepy out there, Alvine.

**ALVINE:** Now Prue, these people aren’t like the rest of us. They’re bigger than life. If they made their fortune with their own two hands, they have to be smarter, stronger, and more ruthless, by a long stretch, than your average slob. And their appetites and eccentricities are bigger, too. Most of your self-made tycoons are a bit like caricatures of regular people. Now...if they inherited their money, things get even more bizarre. Anyway Prue, in 5 years of workin’ there, I’ve been paid, on time, every time...every penny.

**PRUE:** That would be a first. The last two rich folks I cooked for chiseled and cheap-skated me like I was draining the last of their fortune. Besides, I’d be working for Mrs. Archer anyway, wouldn’t I, not that weird old fellow. What’s she like?

**ALVINE:** “Babs?” She hates being called Mrs. Archer... Babs...she’s...interesting. She writes out big checks from Aliataire’s account, like they were party favors. Evidently she’s filthy rich in her own right as well,

**PRUE:** Ayuh?

**ALVINE:** Ayuh, but she inherited hers!

**PRUE:** Oh.

(BLACKOUT.)

### **ICE FISHIN’, Paht 3**

*(Scene opens with EDDIE sitting by stove putting wood in it. RUSTY enters with armload of wood.)*

**RUSTY:** *(Sniffs.)* P.U.! What’s that smell?

**EDDIE:** I caught my socks on fire tryin’ to dry ‘em out on the stove.

**RUSTY:** Jeez that’s nahsty!

*(Trying not to laugh.)*

And what’s that down the front your shirt?

**EDDIE:** Beans. A rock don’t make a very good can opener.

**RUSTY:** Were they tasty?

**EDDIE:** If you like mud.

**RUSTY:** *(Shaking his head.)* Well, I guess I better go spell Tommy.

**EDDIE:** How’s he making out with that tree?

**RUSTY:** The ax we found is awful dull, but Tommy’s makin’ progress.

**EDDIE:** You think it’ll work?

**RUSTY:** Hard to say. If we can drop ‘er right, and she’s tall enough to reach the hole when she falls, we ought ta be able to squirrel out on the trunk and branches and get a hold a’ that tent sled.

**EDDIE:** Ribeye and chips!

**RUSTY:** Bourbon and cake!

**EDDIE:** I got dry socks in there too!

**RUSTY:** It’ll be like Christmas and New Year’s Eve all in one!

*(Hand on the door knob.)*

Keep that fire goin’. Remember, there ain’t no more matches. And, Eddie, try not to burn up any more of your wardrobe!

*(A rending crashing sound, then a slight pause.)*

**TOMMY:** *(Off stage.)* Timberrr!

**EDDIE:** Ain’t you supposed to hear “Timberrr” first, and then the big crashing sound?

**TOMMY:** *(Off stage.)* Oh crap!

**RUSTY:** *(Rushes out and yells off stage.)* Ohhhh, nooo!

*(EDDIE puts on his wet sock and wet boots, untied, and runs out the door, closing it. Lights fade to a spot on the wood stove that flickers out to black. BLACKOUT.)*

## **THINGS I HEARD AT THE GRANGE**

*(Scene opens with IDA and ADA standing at a counter peeling vegetables.)*

**IDA:** I got my chickens to eat rhubarb.

**ADA:** Is that so?

**IDA:** Ayuh.

**ADA:** How?

**IDA:** I cooked It.

**ADA:** Well there.

**IDA:** I know it.

**ADA:** Ayuh.

**IDA:** They always said chickens won’t eat rhubarb.

**ADA:** I know it.

**IDA:** Well, I cooked it, and by gorry, they ate it.

**ADA:** I’ll be.

**IDA:** Ayuh, I mean they’ll eat anything, just about, but I never could get ‘em to eat rhubarb.

And I got so much o’ the cussid stuff! So finally I says to myself this spring, “Why not try cookin’ it?” And I did, and by gorry they ate it.

**ADA:** Well there.

**IDA:** I don't know how many strawberry rhubarb pies I've made tryin' to use the stuff up, and I don't even like strawberries, let alone rhubarb.

**ADA:** Will Albert eat it?

**IDA:** Oh, he'll eat a piece alright, and about like as not, he'll get a strawberry seed stuck in his partial, and then, don't you know, I practically gotta make a dentist appointment! Just like haven' a kid anyway.

**ADA:** A great big kid with dentures!

**IDA:** Ayuh...some glad I got the chickens to eat it, though, now I don't have to make all them pies that end up moldin' in the fridge 'til I throw 'em out.

**ADA:** Well , why don't you just mow it, or let it grow? That's what I do.

**IDA:** Oh no, I wouldn't want it to go to waste, Deah!

**(BLACKOUT.)**

## **ICE FISHIN', Paht 4**

*(Scene opens in dim light. RUSTY, TOMMY, and EDDIE are sitting around the stove. Rusty is rubbing two sticks together.)*

**RUSTY:** This worked every time in Scouts. This wood's just too damp.

**TOMMY:** *(Shivering.)* J-just great! I'm dyin' a hypothermia, and our Boy Scout here is failing to earn his fire patch.

**EDDIE:** I think it's Girl Scouts that get patches. Boy Scouts get badges, don't they, Rusty?

**RUSTY:** *(Stops rubbing the sticks and looks thoughtful.)* I'm not sure, but I think Girls have badges, too. Lemme remember...you earn badges, but patches...I'm not sure how you get patches...hmm? I sure had fun in the Scouts though.

**TOMMY:** M-my life is f-freezing in front of me, and you guys are skatin' down m..memory lane!"

**RUSTY:** *(Back to rubbing the sticks vigorously.)* Sorry, Tommy. We'll get you dried out one way or another. Come on, you little dickens... burn! It's so hard to see what I'm doin'. Eddie, find the cell phone and bring it over here. I wanna try somethin'.

**TOMMY:** Who ya gonna c-c-call, your Scout master?

**RUSTY:** Verrry funny, Tommy. I'm not gonna call anyone. I just wanna see if the batteries are dry enough to get some light out of it. You find it, Eddie?

**EDDIE:** *(Searching around.)* Not yet. I thought it was right here...hmm.

**RUSTY:** It sucks that branch speared the tent sled.

**EDDIE:** Right where the bourbon and cake were, too!

**RUSTY:** Two feet to the left, and she'd a been fine.

**TOMMY:** If it hadn't been so dark, I might of seen she was hollow hearted before she spun off the stump. Boy I've had a lot of luck lately... all bad!

**RUSTY:** I guess it was good luck that branch spun around and knocked you outta the way. That tree could a killed ya.

**TOMMY:** *(Rubbing his chin.)* M-my head's cracked open, I'm soaking wet, and I'm freezing. Where the tree failed, Rusty, the w,w,wife will s-s-succeed...that's if I don't die here first.

**EDDIE:** We got the steak, though. That was lucky!

**RUSTY:** You let the fire go out, Eddie. Some lucky!

**TOMMY:** Wet steak tartar, anyone?

**EDDIE:** Sorry, guys. With all the excitement when the tree came down, I...

**RUSTY:** It's not your fault, Eddie. I should have thought of it, too.

**EDDIE:** Hey, I found the phone!

*(Opens it.)*

It lit up! Maybe I can call my wife!

**TOMMY:** You hold it down there where our Eagle Scout can see what he's d-d-doin', first, before I f-freeze to d-d-death. Then try callin' your w-wife!

**EDDIE:** Sorry, Tommy!

*(Puts phone close to where Rusty's rubbing the sticks.)*

**RUSTY:** That's a little better. Let me see...let me see. Oh, she's smokin', she's smokin! Be ready with more tinder and that piece a birch bark, Eddie. Hold the light. I'm gettin' a glow!

*(Begins blowing the embers, talking between puffs.)*

Eddie...

*(Blows.)*

...more tinder...

*(Blows.)*

...birch bark.

*(Blows, blows, blows.)*

That's it, baby. Come on burn, baby, burn!!

*(Scoops up a little pile of birch bark, puts it in the stove, blows and gestures at the other kindling, which EDDIE starts handing to him.)*

**TOMMY:** Go, boys, go. I must admit, I n-never thought you'd d-do it, Rusty!

**RUSTY:** So you kept telling me.

*(Blows longer and softer to keep it going.)*

Give me more bark and those dry leaves we swept up. We'll get this baby roaring hot. Eddie, take the ax and go out and split up some of the big stuff.

*(EDDIE exits with ax.)*

**TOMMY:** *(Moving his stool up to the stove.)* Wow, don't that feel some good!

**RUSTY:** Keep shovelin' them leaves and bark in the stove, Tommy. Then put some of them dry branches in there. I'm gonna look for somethin' to cook the steak in.

*(Exits to the other room.)*

**TOMMY:** We'll get her jumpin' hot and cook it right on top of the stove if we have to.

*(Adds more bark and leaves. The lights brighten still more, and the sound of a roaring fire comes up. TOMMY rubs his hands in front of the stove.)*

Oh, boy, I might just survive this ice fishin' trip after all.

**RUSTY:** *(Re-entering with a pan.)* I found one, and that's probably good 'cause if we tried to cook it on top, the grease might catch, and we'd have a...

**EDDIE:** Fire, fire! The roof's on fire!

**(BLACKOUT.)**

## **SABIN HODGKINS**

**JUNIOR:** Now folks, I have got a special Guest Speaker here for you tonight who is going to give us a personal account of his harrowing adventures, as a young man durin' the great fire of 1947, over on Mount Desert Island. Let's have a big hand now for Mr. Sabin Hodgkins.

**SABIN:** 1947 was just about the driest summer in Maine since fire was invented, and there were conflagrations of historic proportions all over the state. But none more devastatin' than what we went through over to Bar Harbor. Some genius was burnin' trash up ta Dolliver's dump, on the Old Bar Harbor Road...about half way between Town Hill and Hulls Cove, gusty though it was. 'Course the damn fool lost control of it. Well, the Bar Harbor Fire department got there and put it all out...or rather thought they'd done. Evidently, it was so dry that the peat bogs in North East Creek next to the dump had started burnin' underground, and that night the wind picked up, and little fires started breakin' out all over the place.

Three departments and dozens of volunteers fought spot fires all the next day and night, but to little avail. It just got worse and worse 'til they had a full blown forest fire on their hands. Then the wind come 'round to the Northwest and *really* started to blow. Now that wind, fanned the forest fire into what they called a fire storm where it generates it's own super heated wind, and then it begun roarin' over the hills toward Bar harbor proper, changing life and landscape forever.

I was settin' in a Southwest Hahbah high school classroom starin' out that window. When the wind was right, you could smell the smoke from clear across the Island. There I was, a 16 year old, daydreaming about rescuing fair damsels in nightgowns from burning buildings. Suddenly the school room door burst open and I got my wish...sort of...It was old Tom



Seavey, the road commissioner of Southwest Harbor. Tom must a been somewhere between 70 and 110 years old, near as I could tell, and looked like a strong breeze might blow him away. He announced that the wind had shifted again in Bar Harbor and all the houses on the shore side of lower Main Street had to be evacuated, *and* able volunteers were needed to remove the furniture from these homes to the town ball field in hopes to save something from the encroaching flames.

Before you could blink, every boy in that class room was on his feet and headed for the door. “Whoa, whoa. Wait just a minute there now,” shouted Mrs. Higgins, the sophomore math teacher. “If you’re not sixteen years or older,” she says, “you just sit right back down in your seat!” We all knew that the only kids in that classroom over fifteen was me and Shorty Argyle, ‘cause we’d both stayed back! So the rest of ‘em went moanin’ and groanin’ back to their chairs, and Shorty and I, proud as men, strode out with Mr. Seavey, climbed into the Southwest Harbor town truck and headed for Bar Harbor.

The town truck was an old Ford one ton dually, with a dump body and just about enough room to squeeze the three of us in the cab. I’m pretty sure the only suspension she had, was the coils in the bench seat, such that you had to hold your hand atop your head to soften the blow from the cab ceiling when she went over bumps! Well, Tom Seavey might have been old, and scrawny, but he had a lead foot, and he put it right in the carburetor! I kept my tongue back, my teeth clenched, one hand on the dash board and the other on top o’ my head. We made it to Bar Harbor in about 15 minutes flat!

We knew about the fire, but Bar Harbor had been off limits to non-essential personnel since many days before, so we had not seen the full extent of it, until old Tom stopped at the crest of Mcfarland’s Hill to survey the situation. It was like a scene from that Dante’s inferno there. I thought to myself, “Is this the work of God, or The Devil?” It made ya feel small, and hunted, like a child dodgin’ the wrath of a madman! “Look,” Tom shouts, pointin’ to the main fire line off to the northwest. “It’s headed this way! We got no time to lose.” Then we flew into downtown Bar Harbor. We no sooner made it, when they closed Eagle Lake road until further notice.

Well, we got down to lower Main Street and started haulin’ stuff out of houses and movin’ it to the ball field. After 3 or 4 hours of luggin’ furniture at a trot, we were sweaty and tired, but glad to be pitchin’ in! About 2 o’clock in the afternoon, some fella come tearin’ up the street on a motorcycle, stopped in front of the house we were emptying, and asked old Tom if his truck and crew would report to the Fire Station as soon as possible. So we flew up to the ball field with furniture we had on, unloaded it and drove ‘er for the fire house. We pulled in and the dispatcher told us there was a pumper crew, out of fuel up to Eagle lake,

and they desperately needed to get two fifty five gallon drums of gasoline to ‘em. The trouble was, fire was now blockin’ the main road. So, we were to attempt the Breakneck Road up along Duck Brook, get up above the fire line and then try and cut over onto the carriage roads and back down Eagle Lake, through the recent burn-over, to the fire truck and crew at the boat landin’.

They loaded the one ton, and off we went, two boys, an old man, and 110 gallons o’ gasoline, strapped on a truck with square wheels! We made it to the turn off at Duck Brook Road all right, and then things begun to get interesting. It was so hot, I felt like I was gettin’ a sunburn, and the wind was whippin’ up smoke devils 20, 30 feet tall with charred tree branches, thick as your arm churnin’ around inside of them! As if that weren’t quite enough, Shorty jabs me with his elbow. “Do you you smell gas?” he asked, sniffin’.

Old Tom Seavey jammed on the brakes, and we piled out. It was so hot that we could see gasoline fumes shimmerin’ of’f em 55 gallon drums like a mirage. At that point, me and Shorty thought we were pretty much done for, but old Tom Seavey took out his pocket knife and started in cuttin’ the leather and horse hair seat cushions off the truck bench. Then he turned to us and said, “You boys take these seat covers down to Duck Brook and soak hell out of e’em. Then get back up here fast as you can. About scared silly, me and Shorty took them seat covers, scabbled down the bank to the brook and soaked ‘em like Tom told us. Then up we climbed, the smoke, heat, and howlin’ of the fire storm, growin’ more ferocious by the second!

“No time to tie em down boys!” Tom hollered. “Jump in the back, hold them cushions on the barrels best you can and pray for deliverance!” We did as we were told, and off Tom flew with me and Shorty opposite each other in the back, our butts against the dump body and our knees jammed against the two barrels of gasoline, kinda drapin’ over the wet seat covers, tryin’ to hold em on the drums and keep our selves in the truck while she was careenin’ and bouncin’ through the burnin’ woods!

The heat and smoke and wind reached a crescendo that seemed sure to suck that little dump truck up off the road into oblivion. I had no idea how that old man could see where we were goin’, but I guess he must a’ driven through a lot o’ blindin’ snow storms in his day, ‘cause he kept her out of the ditch, and we must of set some kinda speed record for driven’ on carriage roads!

Then. all at once, we burst out of the smoke, crested Mcfarland’s Hill for the second time that day and witnessed an entirely different scene than what we’d driven through earlier. The colorful autumn world in flames had turned black and white. The trees now skeletons with

smoke and cinders scudding through their charred limbs in the stiff breeze. From the look of the scenery, it was hard to believe we weren't goin' to a funeral, instead of a fuel delivery.

We come to the entrance road to Eagle Lake boat landin', and it looked grim indeed. Nothing but smoldering trunks, all the way down to the water. Then we saw the pumper. Them firemen, in a last ditch effort as the tree tops were exploding over them, rolled that truck right down into the lake, and the men were settin on top of it. It's an image that I'll never forget.

By the time we got that truck out of the lake and fueled it up, it was well passed dark. I saw and learned a lot of things that afternoon...and not in a classroom. But when Shorty and me climbed out a the truck in my dooryard, we did get an English lesson. Mother started chasin' poor old Tom Seavey around his truck with her broom and taught us some words we'd never learned in school, not even on the playground!

**(BLACKOUT.)**

**11 more pages of fun to the end**