ALMOST, MAINE

PROLOGUE

Music. (Julian Fleisher's original score is highly recommended.) It is a cold Friday night in the middle of winter in a small, mythical town in northern Maine called Almost, Maine. A field of stars — a clear, cold, moonless northern night sky — serves as the backdrop for the entire play. Lights up on Pete and Ginette sitting on a bench in Pete's yard, looking at the stars. They are not sitting close to each other at all. Pete is sitting on the stage right end of the bench; Ginette, on the stage left end of the bench. Music fades. Long beat of Pete and Ginette looking at the stars. Ginette keeps stealing glances at Pete.

START →

GINETTE. Pete, I — … *(Beat. She's about to say, "I love you.")*
PETE. What?
GINETTE. *(She can't quite do it.)* I just — am having a nice time, Pete.
PETE. I'm glad, Ginette.
GINETTE. I always do with you.
PETE. I'm glad. *(Pete and Ginette enjoy this moment together. There's nothing else to say, so … back to the sky.)*
GINETTE. *(Still can't say what she really wants to say.)* And the *stars* are just — ! I didn't know you knew all that stuff! // After all this time, I didn't know you knew all that!
PETE. Well, it's not — … It's just stuff my dad taught me … *(Beat. There's nothing else to say, so … back to the stars. Beat. Ginette turns to Pete.)*
GINETTE. Pete — …
PETE. *(Turning to Ginette.)* Yeah?
GINETTE. I love you. *(Beat. Pete just stares at Ginette. Beat. Pete looks away from Ginette. Beat. And does not respond. Beat. Ginette*

takes in Pete's reaction; deflates; then looks away from him, trying to figure out what has happened. We now have two very uncomfortable people. Pete is dealing with what Ginette has just said to him; Ginette is dealing with Pete's response — or lack thereof — to what she has just said. Big … long … pause. Finally, there's nothing else for Pete to say but the truth, which is:)

PETE. I … love you, too.

GINETTE. Oh!!! *(Huge relief! Pete and Ginette feel JOY! Ginette shivers — a happy kind of shiver.)*

PETE. Oh, are you cold? // Wanna go inside?

GINETTE. No, no. No. I just wanna sit. Like this. Close. *(Pete and Ginette shouldn't be close to each other at all — but for them, it's close.)* I feel so close to you tonight. It's nice to be close to you, Pete. *(She gets closer to him. Beat.)* It's safe. *(She gets closer to him again. Beat.)* I like being close. Like this. I mean, I can think of other … *ways* … of being close to you *(I.e., sex, and they enjoy this sweetly, truly — Pete probably can't believe she brought this up, but he's probably very happy that she did!)* but that's not — … I like this right now. This kind of close. Right next to you. *(She gets even closer to him; leans right up against him. Beat.)* You know, right now, I think I'm about as close to you as I can possibly be. *(She is very content.)*

PETE. *(Beat. Honestly discovering.)* Well … not really.

GINETTE. What?

PETE. *(He is simply and truly figuring this out.)* Not really. I mean, if you think about it in a different way, you're not really *close* to me at all. You're really actually about as far away from me as you can possibly be. I mean, if you think about it, technically — if you're assuming the world is round, like a ball, *(Gathering snow to make a snowball for use as a visual. This works pretty well when little drifts of snow are attached to the bench, with the snowball resting among the drifts.)* like a snowball, the farthest away you can be from somebody is if you're sitting right next to them. See, if I'm here *(Points out a place on the snowball that represents him.)*, and you're here *(Points out a place on the snowball that represents her, and it's right next to him — practically the same place he just pointed to.)*, then … *(Pete now demonstrates that if you go around the world the OTHER way — all the way around the world the OTHER way, equatorially [not pole to pole] — that he and Ginette are actually as far away from each other as they can possibly be. Little beat.)* … that's far. ← END

GINETTE. *(Takes this in. What on earth does he mean?)* Yeah. *(Beat. Disheartened, Ginette moves away from Pete — all the way to*

the other end of the bench. She doesn't feel like being "close" anymore.)

PETE. *(Takes this in: His "interesting thought" seems to have moved the evening's proceedings in a direction he didn't intend. Then, trying to save the evening, hopeful:)* But … now you're closer. *(Because she actually is closer, the way he just described it.)*

GINETTE. *(Puzzled.)* Yeah. *(Perhaps hurt, she gets up and starts to leave. What else is there to do? After she takes barely a step or two, Pete stops her with:)*

PETE. And closer … *(Ginette stops. She turns and looks at Pete, then turns back and starts to leave, but, as she takes another step away from him, Pete again interrupts her step with:)* And closer … *(Ginette stops again. She turns and looks at Pete, then turns back and starts to leave again, but, as she does so, Pete stops her with:)* And closer … *(Ginette stops again; looks at Pete again; turns … and takes another step … and another and another and another and another. With each step she takes, Pete says, " … and closer and closer and closer and closer … " When she is just about to exit, Ginette stops. She is trying to figure out what's going on, what Pete is saying. She looks at Pete; she looks off left; looks at Pete again; looks off left again; and then leaves, taking step after step. With every single step she takes, Pete calls to her, telling her, with great hope, that she's " … closer and closer and closer and closer … " until, eventually, Ginette is gone, exiting stage left, with Pete still calling, " … and closer," with every single step she takes. Unfortunately, with every step she takes, Ginette is getting farther and farther away from Pete. This is not necessarily what Pete intended, and his "closer's" trail off. Music. Lights fade on a sad, confused, helpless Pete. He looks at his snowball. What has he done? And we begin …*