

# Excavating Escondido

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**PROLOGUE**

IRVIN

(To Gathered Audience) All right guys – here’s the deal. Excuse me, I’m talking could you please listen to me. Listen, I had no idea so many of you would be coming – I hope it’s cool, I didn’t tell them I was bringing anybody. So, I guess we just need to wait for the signal. The person that started the facebook group is sending out a text with where to meet. Did you all bring a shovel or pickaxe or something? (waits for response) No? (sighs) Ok, well, I hope it’s still ok. Look – while I’m waiting for the text, could you all turn your phones off? We don’t want to alert the cops or anything if all our phones went off at once, so all sounds need to be squelched. Sir, I didn’t see you turn off your phone – you wanna mess this operation up or what?

[He gets a text; checks his phone]

All right, it’s on. So, when we get there – just don’t say anything, ok? Let me do all the talking.

[They walk to position #1. All contemporary characters are converging on position #1]

**SCENE 1**

LAELIA

[A girl dressed in black w/ shovel, Motions for the crowd to get closer, counts them – not including audience]. Okaaay. So, I guess this is the crew. Before we get started, Lemme check everyone's here. [checks list] Icecreamluvr?

MADISON

Here.

LAELIA

Ladeezluvme98?

ADRIAN

Here.

LAELIA

100showtunes?

CHEYENNE

Here. Hi Laelia!

LAELIA

Cheyenne – screen names only. *I told you.*

CHEYENNE

Oh, yeah. Right. Forgot. Sorry. Won't do it again. Sorry. Continue. ... Please.

LAELIA

Musicman1000?

JOLYON

Here.

LAELIA

Cantwaittogetouttahere2014

GLORIA

Yup.

LAELIA

Powermuscles?

MANNY

Here.

LAELIA

Runwaystar99?

CYNTHIA

Right here. [sees that boys are checking her out and smiles]

LAELIA

Disneyprincess?

KILEY

Here.

LAELIA

Shy\_guy\_lol

MARTIN

Here!

LAELIA

Bigkahuna33

IRVIN

Right here.

LAELIA

[re: audience] Bigkahuna, what's the deal?

IRVIN

Hm?

LAELIA

You know the rules. Only the people I selected from the group could come.

IRVIN

Yeah. But don't worry – they're cool. Right? [He checks in with the audience]

LAELIA

Don't worry! We're about to dig up the park. That's not exactly legal. How do I know we can trust these guys?

IRVIN

Oh, they won't tell anybody.

GLORIA

She's right, Irvin, uh, I mean, what are you again? Kahuna?

IRVIN

BIG Kahuna.

GLORIA

Uh huh. So- not only do we not know we can trust them, but when we dig up this treasure, we'll have to split it between everybody.

IRVIN

Don't worry. They're with me – I'll split my slice of the profits with them. I'm not really in it for the money.

ADRIAN

Not in it for the money? Dude, when I find that gold, I'm gonna buy a car [insert cool car].

CYNTHIA

Like you're even old enough to drive!

ADRIAN

You know you'd wanna ride with me, mama.

CYNTHIA

Anyway... Let's trust kingkahuna or whatever and get on with it. I can't take too long. I need to drive up to LA early in the morning for an audition and I need my beauty sleep. Where's the map or whatever – let's start digging.

MADISON

(seeing Booster, a homeless man approach) Um, uniqueleader?

LAELIA

(ignoring Madison) Look, all in good time. First I need to lay out the ground rules. I'm the one that found Juan Alvarado's story about gold mining at the history center, and I'm the one that figured out that where Arthur Bieber –

(the group starts giggling about the name Bieber)

the guy at the hotel that weighed up all the gold - hid his stash of gold was right here in the park. So, I get a double portion when we dig it up.

MARTIN

Bieber? Like Justin Bieber?

MADISON

[raising hand] excuse me?

LAELIA

Seriously. People. My plan is that we break into pairs...

MADISON

Excuse me?

LAELIA

So, let's make sure there's at least one shovel per pair... Did anyone bring a metal detector?

CHEYENNE

Laelia!

LAELIA

What!  
[Cheyenne signals that Madison has a question]

MADISON

What about that guy over there?

JOLYON

Yeah – that guy.

LAELIA

What, you never saw a homeless guy before?

MADISON

Is it... safe?

GLORIA

Oh my god that is so S.P.

JOLYON

What?

GLORIA

That is so San Pasqual High School – just chill. He’s not gonna bite.

MADISON

What do you mean that is so San Pasqual High School?

GLORIA

I mean you’re snobby, stuck up, sheltered and afraid of real life, like homeless people.

JOLYON

Hey – you don’t know us.

ADRIAN

We know enough. Just look at you – all fitted up in Abercrombie for the robbery.

MADISON

Jolyon, maybe we should go?

JOLYON

No way – I’m not letting them bully us.

MADISON

Maybe my mom was right. About the other schools being so ghetto.

ALL EHS/OG

What? You called us Ghetto [improv protests, gets louder]

ADRIAN

It could be worse, we could go to ESCO! (crowd erupts)

MANNY

Well, your school might as well be in Mexico! (crowd erupts)

JOLYON

Your schools combined are so poor, we couldn't get a pool because it would be unfair. (erupt)

IRVIN

At least there are people in our school darker than THIS (he motions to his white T shirt; crowd erupts)

KYLIE

STOP! Enough! STOP! Look we don't all have to like each other, but we do have to work together. Who cares what side of town we come from, or what we're wearing, or whatever. The way I see it is: this *town* is ours, so this *gold* is ours, if we can find it, we're all one step closer to getting out of here.

[there is a general groan of agreement among, them pierced by BOOSTER's laughter. He throws an empty Sunkist can into the group]

BOOSTER

(to audience) Here they go again. They all want to leave.

IRVIN

What the? Did you just chuck a can at us?

BOOSTER

They didn't always want to leave. They just wanted to get here. Dang 21<sup>st</sup> century....

CYNTHIA

Mental alert. Let's just get going, ok?...

BOOSTER

Today's kids – can't appreciate what they've got. Don't even consider themselves neighbors.



JOLYON

Look, sir, we didn't mean to disturb you. Is this your... Are we in your, um, ... territory?

BOOSTER

Is that a shovel you're carrying, kid? [refers to soft pack guitar on Jolyon's back]

JOLYON

Um, no... it's a guitar actually.

BOOSTER

Guitar? Nice. I used to play in the band. The Escondido Band of 1889.

JOLYON

Um, 2009?

BOOSTER

Nope. [lets it hang, a beat] So, you're here to dig up treasure, huh?

LAELIA

What's it to you?

BOOSTER

I know all about the treasure.

CYNTHIA

Sure he does. [makes "he's crazy" loopy fingers]

BOOSTER

There is treasure here, right here in Grape Day Park.

CHEYENNE

Really?

BOOSTER

Yep. But maybe not the kind you're looking for. Maybe the kind you *need* though.

ADRIAN

What? Look, let's get back to the plan – this dude is crazy.

BOOSTER

You don't need shovels for this treasure. I got it all right here. Carry it with me all the time.

IRVIN

Where? In your shoes?

BOOSTER

No, in my cart. (Takes a few things out of his cart and juggles them).

MANNY

Cool! [he goes to look at cart] Um, I don't see any gold. Buuuuut... I do see a lot of Sunkist soda. What's this? [reaches in]

BOOSTER

[with alarm] Don't touch anything!

MANNY

Don't worry, it's only a box of raisins.

BOOSTER

Only a box of raisins!!!! Only a box of raisins!!!!

MANNY

Yes?

BOOSTER

Have you ever *been* to 1893??? ... [under his breath] only a box of raisins!

LAELIA

Can we PLEASE get back on track?

BOOSTER

Back on track. Back on track. Just like the Thomas Brothers always used to say... Funny, you don't look like a Thomas.

LAELIA

[wondering if she should be offended] What's *that* supposed to mean? Look mister, I don't know who you are but we've got a job to do. So if you wouldn't mind just stepping aside out of our way so we can

BOOSTER

You don't want to dig up the treasure? It's right here, I told you.

LAELIA

What the? Look we don't have much time, so

BOOSTER

We have almost a hundred twenty five years.

MARTIN

Wha?

BOOSTER

Of Escondido, Incorporated. Right here. In my cart. The *treasure*. People would come from far and wide. It was my job to get them here. That's why they call me Booster. And now, all of you just want to leave as soon as you can. But... [thinking] maybe if you just saw some of the treasure... you'd see it another way.

LAELIA

Ok, guys – I am sorry about this. Let's just head over to the other side of the park and start there. [group has sense of packing up to go]

MANNY

Dang I'm hot. Hey, mister, mind if I grab a soda?

BOOSTER

Sure you want to touch the treasure? Are you sure you're ready?

MANNY

Well, I'm really thirsty. So... if I could just have one? I'll give you a dollar for it.

BOOSTER

[considers] Why not. No charge. [he reaches in to get a can].

MARTIN

[to Manny] Hey! Come on, dude –

BOOSTER

Enjoy the ride! [He hands the can to Manny. Everyone looks. Manny reaches for the can, and holds it with Booster.

**TRANSITION 1**

SOUND: Clocks gonging, ticking chiming. FLASH MOB, watched by teens and audience. MUSIC: clips of Music mixed with time sounds. Clips are iconic tunes that carry us back from present to turn of the century. CROWD: SPINNING. RUNNING. CHAOS. Eventually flashmob forms a line inviting audience to move to next location.]

**BOOSTER**

Quick. This way. [Mob moves everyone towards train station}

**SCENE 2**

[Music. A dance, a Virginia reel, is happening on or near the train platform. ]

KYLIE

Where are we?

BOOSTER

More like “when are we”.

KYLIE

Huh?

BOOSTER

The treasure in my trolley. It got us here. Looks around 1890?

CHEYENNE

Hey, I think someone’s coming!

[The five Mrs. Thomases enter – these names will change for historical accuracy.]

MRS THOMAS 1

(warmly) Ah! You’ve finally arrived! We do hope your journey was not too arduous. (doesn’t give time for response). Oh, the train from Oceanside is habitually late these days. Did you have a good ride? My, my what *interesting* attire you have come in. [contemporary characters react]

(Teens are dumbstruck)

MRS THOMAS 2

Oh, shush, Annie, you can see they’re exhausted!

MRS THOMAS 3

But perhaps not too tired to dance!?! It looks like so much fun.

MRS THOMAS 4

We do know how to throw a good party, don’t we gals!?

MRS THOMASES ALL

Oh, yes (etc).

MRS THOMAS 5

(to audience) Well, sit down, won't you – rest up a bit to get your dancing legs ready. (She et al guide the audience to sit). Perhaps a bit of lemonade? [Lemonade is served to the audience]

MRS THOMAS 1

Oh! You wouldn't believe it, Betty – I heard my Albert over there talking to Mr Moon and taking all the credit for this anniversary party!

MRS THOMAS 2

Oh, that's a good one. Saying "yes dear" does not a party make!

MRS THOMAS 1

Mr. Moon takes credit for time itself!!

MRS THOMAS 4

Oh, tut, I've seen you in his shop. Isn't there a new clock from his store on your dining room wall? And doesn't Albert have his own Mr. Moon pocketwatch? And didn't you suggest TODAY for our celebration because Mr. Moon predicted the weather would be perfect?!

MRS THOMAS 1

Well... I just think that slogan for his shop is a little boastful, is all.

MRS THOMASES ALL

"Does Escondido run on sun or *moon* time?"

MRS THOMAS 1

I hate to admit it. It's catchy. (they all agree)

MRS THOMAS 5

(to Martin) Do *you* have a pocketwatch from Mr. Moon.

MARTIN

Um, no, I don't have a watch. I just use my phone.

(he gets an idea and takes a selfie with him and Mrs Thomas 5; Cheyenne sees this\_

CHEYENNE

(shouting to group) Hashtag Selfie Sunday! (They all start taking selfies. Mrs. Thomases are very confused)

MRS THOMAS 1

(Taking charge) Anyhoo, as for our husbands, it's sweet, in its way, they're getting all the credit for founding this town.

MRS THOMAS 3

Oh, Emma, if you hadn't made my Charlie start off to California in the first place, we'd all still be sitting in Kansas right now.

(all Thomases react like that would be horrible).

MRS THOMAS 4

(playing fair and proper) Not that there's anything wrong with Kansas. It's just so... so...

MRS THOMAS 5

Flat.

MRS THOMAS 1

Boring.

MRS THOMAS 2

Dull.

MRS THOMAS 3

Small-minded.

MRS THOMAS 4

Going-nowhere, nothing-ever-happens, stuck-in-a-rut, simpleton, land-locked, dreary, monotonous, mind-numbing, *can't wait to get out of there!* (They all stare at her, shocked, she changes her tone to sugar sweet) Not that I would say an unkind word against that lovely state. Ahem.

MRS THOMAS 1

Well, though we may not show it, we all feel the same, Delilah. And, look at us now! Celebrating the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our own town! Escondido!

MRS THOMASES ALL

(dreamily) Escondido!

MRS THOMAS 1

Yes, ladies, we can be proud of our Escondido Land and Town Company.

MRS THOMAS 2

Our Railroad!

MRS THOMAS 3

Our upstanding community!!!

MRS THOMAS 1

Indeed! Carol, that idea to give away land to any religious organization for free was genius!

MRS THOMAS 2

That's right, dear – really did the trick!

MRS THOMAS 3

“Building a community by establishing pillars of community.” (sighs) Of course, Charlie is taking all the credit for that one.

MRS THOMAS 1

Well they always *do*, don't they.

MRS THOMAS 5

Men!

MRS THOMASES ALL

Men!

IRVIN, MARTIN, MANNY, ADRIAN, JOLYON

Hey, we're not that bad (etc)

CONTEMPORARY GIRLS AND MRS THOMASES ALL

Yes you are (etc)

MRS THOMAS 3

And let's not forget Elizabeth's idea to get the Booster Salesman on board to help get more of the “right people” here to our town.

MRS THOMAS 5

Well, he's a great Booster! (nods to Booster)



BOOSTER

Thanks, ladies.

KYLIE

They know you?

MRS THOMAS 1

Have some more lemonade, Booster – you deserve it!

MRS THOMAS 2

I wonder if in a couple hundred years from now, anyone will ever know what we Thomas Wives did here.

(they all sigh understanding the answer is probably “no.”)

MRS THOMAS 1

Dears, the history books may not write our whole story – they may forget our names altogether – but *everyone* knows behind every successful man is a smart woman.

MRS THOMAS 2

A determined woman!

MRS THOMAS 3

A persuasive woman!

MRS THOMAS 5

A charismatic woman!

MRS THOMAS 4

A not-in-Kansas woman!

MRS THOMAS 1

That’s right! (to audience/teens) Well, that is why we are so happy you could join us! We really are proud of our endeavor here. Escondido! Don’t you just LOVE it?!

GLORIA

Um, yeah?

MRS THOMAS 2

Oh!, Girls, come here! Don't hide in the corner – we must introduce you to our guests.

(Felicita granddaughters shyly approach). Guests, I would like to introduce you to [insert names] – they are direct descendants of Felicita!

GRANDDAUGHTERS

Hello.

IRVIN

Felicita? Like where there's a KFC?

ADRIAN

And a 7-11?

MANNY

And a Jack in the Box?

MRS THOMAS 1

A who in a what?

GRANDDAUGHTER 1

Our grandmother, Felicita La Chappa! Daughter of the Chief of the San Pasqual Indians. You know, she patched up the wounds of an American soldier during the Battle of San Pasqual!

GRANDDAUGHTER 2

And then they fell in loooooove. And lived happily ever after.

GRANDDAUGHTER 3

Well... at least to now... she's still alive. She's really old.

GRANDDAUGHTER 1

Really really old. Nearly 100.

JOLYON

Felicita La Chappa! I did a report on her! She's buried at the San Pasqual Indian Cemetary.

TEENS

(Teens react – what a nerd)

JOLYON

You can google her.

GRANDDAUGHTER 2

What?! She's not *buried*! She's sitting over there in the shade, silly! (points across park)

MRS THOMAS 1

Anyway, you girls shouldn't be up here with us. You should dance!

GRANDDAUGHTER 1

We don't have anyone to dance with.

MRS THOMAS 2

Well, I'm sure our guests have rested enough. Ask them!

GRANDDAUGHTER 1

(To Manny) Would you dance with me?

MANNY

What? Um

(Granddaughter 1 takes him by the hand)

Me? (he gets pulled into the dance. The kids laugh at him)

(Granddaughter 2 asks Adrian to dance).

ADRIAN

Wha? Me?? No, I don't dance.

GRANDDAUGHTER 2

C'mon it's easy.

CYNTHIA

(teasing) It's easy Adrian

GLORIA

Yeah, it's easy Adrian

ALL TEEN GIRLS

Yeah, Adrian, it's easy – dance with her (all teasing in their own way).

(Adrian gets pulled into dance. Granddaughter 3 invites everyone to dance, and they do – Maybe Jolyon joins w/ music on harmonica?).

MRS THOMAS 2

(to audience) Youngins. Lovely aren't they? They're our future. (she watches them dance).

**Sound: Train Whistle**

Sound Blows and all the historical characters disappear.

KYLIE

What happened?

BOOSTER

It was time for them to go.

KYLIE

They *knew* you?

BOOSTER

Yep. I've been around awhile, you might say. Came to town in 1886.

KYLIE

Wait – I'm totally freaking out. How do we get back home?! To Escondido?

BOOSTER

This is Escondido.

KYLIE

I mean Escondido – 2013!!

BOOSTER

We'll just have to see which piece of treasure in the cart will get us there. Now let's see...

KYLIE

You mean, you don't know?

BOOSTER

Nope, we just have to try our luck till we get it right. Who wants to try next.

[they look at each other with shock/horror/confusion/excitement]

MADISON

I will!

TEENS

(the teens tease and gently bully her! "you sure you're brave enough" "be careful" "don't mess this up" etc)

LAELIA

Shut Up! (To Madison, sincerely motions for her to do it, with a "we trust you" feeling)

MADISON

[Reaches in and pulls out a spittoon, she does not recognize it]

## **TRANSITION**

SOUND: time sounds again, underscored with sound of roaring fire. Flash Mob waving orange fabric pieces guides audience to next position. This transition represents the fire of 1904 that fuelled the economic need of the next scene taking place in 1905.

**SCENE 3**

(On the porch of the Victorian House - We are at Leo Escher's barber shop, Leo has Mayor Sig Steiner in the chair, getting a shave; 4 other men are in a line waiting for a cut or shave. They are the Spit and Argue Club, when we arrive the men are in the middle of a lively debate. The men waiting are all chewing tobacco and spitting in a spittoon – maybe there's one shared spittoon among them.)

ERIC (MAN 1)

Well, I for one am looking forward to it. Burn The Bonds! Erase the debt and get on with our lives. (to audience) Hey Hey! More folks for the bond burning. I see you've all got your buttons! (To Martin) Maybe you can convince George here that this bond burning is gonna save this town.

MARTIN

The what?

ERIC (MAN 1)

The Bond burning. You got your button on!

MARTIN

I don't know...

RAUL (MAN 2)

He probably feels the way I do, Harry - That *erasing* a debt rather than *paying* a debt is not the moral way, the American way, right?

MARTIN

Um

ERIC (MAN 1)

Of course it's the American way! This is America, and this is the necessary step to keep the town running, here in *America*!

ANTHONY (MAN 3)

All I know is, I bought my lot for two thousand dollars, and now it's worth a bail of hay. Let's get water back to this dust bowl, get our grapes growing and get back to prosperity, right kid?

MANNY

Huh? Me? Um, yeah, *prosperity!* Right!

ERIC (MAN 1)

(to Anthony (Man 3)) You're not the only one with a sob story. Hey, Leo – hurry up! (re: audience) you got a whole crowd waiting.

LEO

You won't want me to go too quick when it's your neck under the razor.

RAUL (MAN 2)

Five years we ain't built a house in this town. And everyone complainin everywhere about their property values going down, right kid?

MANNY

Uh... yeah... My folks bought their place for four hundred thousand and now they need to short sell it for two hundred thousand something.

(Pause)

ERIC (MAN 1)

Hey someone get this kid a drink of water – he's obviously had too much sun.

DANIEL (MAN 4)

And what about the water flume going up in smoke!

ANTHONY (MAN 3)

Our only way of getting water down from that dam!

RAUL (MAN 2)

Look – once we burn these bonds tomorrow we gotta stop talking about the past and think about the future. We gotta get people back here.

ERIC (MAN 1)

How? People ain't exactly shoppin around for a new place to settle.

RAUL (MAN 2)

Shopping! Say, why don't we set up a day to sell the town, you know, have a big celebration, a parade, something to attract folks from all around. And when they get here, get Booster to show off the town – ride them around the vineyards, see the yield on the grapes.

DANIEL (MAN 4)

How's that gonna work?

ERIC (MAN 1)

I see, like an Escondido Day.

RAUL (MAN 2)

Or a Prosperity Day

ERIC (MAN 1)

Or a Recovery Day

ANTHONY (MAN 3)

Or a Halleluja Day

RAUL (MAN 2)

A Sunkist Vale Day

ERIC (MAN 1)

A Vineyard Day

ANTHONY (MAN 3)

A Rise Like The Phoenix Day  
(pause)

MAYOR SIG STEINER

How about Grape Day?  
(pause)

ERIC (MAN 1)

Nah, we need something catchier.

MAYOR SIG STEINER

Hey Booster, What do you think?

BOOSTER

Sounds good, Mayor Steiner. I like the Parade idea.



MAYOR SIG STEINER

We'll hold a grand celebration that people can't resist. We'll rally the citizens to show off our Sunkist Vale with pride. The whole community will come together with an eye to the future. Visitors will get swept up in our spirit, cheer, and the tastiest grapes in all of California. Let's celebrate Grape Day!

ANNA ESCHER

(enters with Ruth Steiner) Leo, you almost ready to go home?

LEO

Got a rush on, sis. Gonna be a little while.

RUTH STEINER

We'll take you home, won't we Sig?

MAYOR SIG STEINER

Yes, dear. (rises to leave) Let's get this bond burning day done, and then we'll look to Grape Day. Gentlemen, (tips his hat and they all turn to exit, Anna waves flirtatiously as she leaves)

RAUL (MAN 2)

Hey - I got an idea - a beauty contest... for Grape Day "Queen"

MEN (ALL)

Great idea, terrific, etc. (various ways of expressing interest... )

LAELIA

Wait a second, there hasn't even *been* a Grape Day yet? We're nowhere near home. Booster, what year is this?

BOOSTER

1905. Bond burning. Grape Day won't happen for another 3 years.

CYNTHIA

Oh my god this is taking FOREVER. We need to get back home.

BOOSTER

Well, who would like to take a gamble on some treasure?

CYNTHIA

Yes! Let's just get out of here! [She reaches in the trolley and finds a stack of letters]

**TRANSITION**

SOUND: time sounds underscored with water sounds. A large piece of shiny blue fabric is run across the park for the audience to follow. The fabric is waved and stretched to represent flood of 1916. Audience follows along the side of it until we reach the veterans memorial beside the grove of trees. Fabric disappears.

**SCENE 4**

LAELIA

Booster, what time have we arrived in?

BOOSTER

We are not in a fixed moment in time. We are in a recurring time.

LAELIA

Huh?

BOOSTER

We are in *wartime*.

[The following letters, here written in full are edited and intercut as the actresses, dressed in period costumes, but all in white to have a ghostly feeling, come out from behind the trees and slowly move down towards the audience. The sense that these letters are all being written in different times and one time – wartime. This letter scene is underscored with beautiful music].

WW1

October 3, 1917

Dear Jacob,

Thank you so much for your letter. You can't imagine how wonderful it is to hear you are safe and well. I was imagining you experiencing your first ever real Autumn, the kind like we had before coming to California. Are the leaves changing? Are there cool breezes? Ah! The Santa Ana winds are coming in here.

I wish you could only know how much the whole town is rallying with so many men gone to fight. Daniel school early with the rest of the class to help pick fruit, and he does so tirelessly. Father, as well as most of the men, are working three hours extra in the evenings. I don't always see him before I go to sleep. No one wants to be called a slacker. And everyone is busy filling barrels with rubber, newspaper, bones, peach pits - you name it.

Grand Avenue is dark at night... and ten days ago, I walked straight into one of those new palm trees in the center of the street! I had a peach-sized welt over my left eye for a week! Why did they have to plant those trees in the first place! For the past three years, Grand has looked a lot less Grand to me! I liked it wide open.

On a positive note, after much debate, they decided to go ahead with Grape Day Celebrations this year. Thank goodness it's going down for Grape Day! I am thinking of competing for queen next year! What do you think? Your little sister isn't so little.

We love you so and are so proud of you. Stay Safe and Be Brave,

Your loving sister

WW2

September 2, 1944

Dear Harry,

Gosh, what to tell you first. I miss you ever so much, you can't know. I thought I had a million things to tell you, but now nothing seems important but the thought of seeing you again.

The war effort has hit the school hard, and what I had thought might be a boring last year of home economics, with all the rationing, has turned into a mighty effort to can and preserve all sorts of everything. And the number of new recipes we try to create with beans! You wouldn't believe it. And you wouldn't want to taste it

either. By the way - we still have tape on all of the windows at the school. Those Japanese submarines are still off the coast of Oceanside, they say.

Other than food, the latest drive was for scrap rubber, and the whole town went crazy pulling rubber off old cars and tractors. Dad hurt his back pulling tires off the De Soto. He's still laid up in bed, barking requests at us. I hear Escondido pulled in the most rubber of any city that participated. But now we're having to share rides into and around town to save on fuel. They're calling it "carpooling." With this heat, I wish there was a pool in the car!

Oh - guess what? Remember that soldier from Minnesota that parachute-dropped into town and ended up having dinner at Betty Smith's house? Well, apparently, he has just written to her asking her to marry her when he gets back from the war! Isn't that wonderful!! It must be just marvelous having your sweetheart propose to you - wink, wink.

I keep thinking about your last night at home... and our drive up to the teepee. Sometimes I kiss my pillow recalling those moments. I hope telling you that doesn't make you think any less of me.

I know you can't tell me where you are or what you're up to, but I am sure you are doing your best. Please write to me as soon as you can.

Love,

Arlene

## VIETNAM

April 5, 1968

Dear Michael,

I think the world has gone crazy. I can't even imagine what it's like over there in Nam. Even Walter Cronkite said we should bring our troops home.

Mom told me not to write to you because she thought it would make you too upset, but I have to let you know something, and I hope you are sitting down. Dr. King was murdered yesterday in Memphis. I'm so sad and mad and want to scream at the world. They killed Martin Luther King, Michael!

After I heard the news, I just put on my Sly and the Family Stone record and blasted it. I knew it wasn't the right thing to do, but I had to block it all out. Mom just cried all night.

Michael I just want you to come home safe from that stupid mess so that you can see me graduate! Fifth graduating class from Orange Glen High School. Maybe I'll just have to flunk so that you can see me graduate next year! But if I do graduate this year, I'm gonna wear my new bell bottom jeans and suede fringed vest under my gown. Hoo! Don't tell Mom - I gotta hide them in the back of the closet.

Stay safe and come home soon big bro,

Dee

February 28<sup>th</sup> 1991

Dear Joe,

Hope you are doing well and looking after yourself? Me and Joe Junior miss you so very much!

Were you involved in any of the things we have seen in Kuwait on the news in the last couple of days - I know you can't tell me, but it did look super scary.

So let me tell you what we have been up to. Guess what little Joe started on solid food this week and guess what else he screwed his face up just like you do when you have eaten too much!. I took tons of photos and will send when they are developed. Surprise! I stopped perming my hair.

Robinsons May is the same old same old, good days and bad days - nice people and cranky people at the mall. It's a steady job, I guess.

Did you like the mix tape I made for you? - "Everybody Dance Now!" I hope you did some of your special "moves"!!

Did I tell you I miss you yet?!

Some of the girls from work dragged me down to Cruisin' Grand last Friday it was fun, great to see some of the old crowd from school. Isn't it strange that we all used to be so close all the time and now we hardly see each other at all.

Did I tell you I love you yet?

It was cool to see the old cars and the old timers - Gosh , one day will that be us???

It seems from the TV that this will all be over soon in the Middle East and that you might be on your way home. - I really hope so. The house is empty without you plus, the kitchen is still waiting to be re modeled

All our love

Me and little Joe

## AFGHANISTAN

December 24, 2012

(holding a smartphone up towards herself)

Hey Chance!

Happy Christmas Eve!!! I'm sending you this youtube video in case we don't hook up on skype tomorrow.

How's Afghanistan? Not much happening here ... as *usual*. I've pretty much slept all through this beginning of Christmas break because I worked so hard to study for tests. Seriously - I like pulled two all nighters. I have no idea if it paid off. Chemistry was like *so hard*.

Ummmm, what else... They finished the express lane on the 15 so now mom is home half an hour earlier to scream at me. (sarcastically) yay!

Dad and Linda said they can't come down to visit until after New Year's. Which is probably good because Mom is so pissed at him. Apparently Linda is HUGE! I'm kinda excited to be a big sister - though I'll like have to do it by remote control. Whatever.

It's seriously lame - you know how I love Christmas shopping? but this year, I like had NO time - I bought target gift cards for everyone. Ugh. LAME!

Anyway, we all miss you and love you and can't wait for you to get back home. Not too long now. Um, I wish I had more news... but nothing's really happened since we skyped last time. Sooo...

I love you big bro!!!

Bye.

Bye.

Ok, 3, 2, 1 (she clicks off the video)



(A WW2 male soldier arrives and is reunited w/ the WW2 letter girl. All ghosts exit, leaving the modern characters, Booster and the audience]

MARTIN

That was so nice! I'm like gonna cry.

GLORIA

Who has time to write letters? You can say what you need in a tweet. #throwbackthursday.

BOOSTER

Well, you know it's part of history. It's not just what you do, what we say is remembered. How do you want to be remembered? Have you ever thought about it? (to audience) Have *you*? Here's your chance. In order to move on from here, each one of you needs to write it down. Take these (he distributes postcards and pens. The postcards are pre-printed with a message to the audience to write a note to the future saying "I want to be remembered as:\_\_\_\_")

GLORIA

What are we supposed to do with these?

BOOSTER

You can write something, you can draw a picture. Whatever you want. It's your future.

MARTIN

I'm going to say I want to be remembered as someone who cares.

(The cards are passed out. The audience completes the message on the card "I want to be remembered as..." The cast collects them. Once Booster has them all in his cart, he speaks)

BOOSTER

Now I've collected all your messages, we can move on.

SOUND (Peppy 1950s drive in intermission music coming from the Sculpture Garden beckons the audience)

**SCENE 5**

Drive In Movie Intermission Sound; audience is led to sculpture garden.

The audience is seated in sculpture garden- turned drive in movie theatre. Once the audience is settled, Four Escondido High School Cheerleaders enter.

CARMEN

Hey Everybody! Don't run to the concessions stand yet - Let's hear it for our Escondido Cougars!!

50S TEENS (ALL)

wooh!

BETTY

We crushed Oceanside today!! 28-7!

50S TEENS

(cheering)

MARIA

Come on cool cats:

BETTY, MARIA, CARMEN, ISABELLA

Run the Ball / Down the Line / Cougars Reign in Fifty-Nine!

CROWD

(cheers)

BETTY, MARIA, CARMEN, ISABELLA

(leading crowd) HEY! ALL YOU COUGARS!

CROWD

HEY! ALL YOU COUGARS!

(repeats.... Then... WHOO!)

(Cheering dies down, the cheerleaders exit to get snacks, Cheyenne, Laelia and Gloria enter)

CHEYENNE

Hey! All You Cougars! (to Gloria-)C'mon

GLORIA

I'm not cheering for EHS. I go to Orange Glen.

CHEYENNE

But, It's so... Everyone's having such a good time. It's fun.

GLORIA

For you maybe, you go to EHS. I don't feel too welcome.

LAELIA

Well, I go to EHS, but seriously? I'm not cheering.

CARMEN

Yoo Hoo! Hey girls, wasn't that a great game today?

CHEYENNE

Um, yeah! Go Cougars!

CARMEN

Escondido High School is bound to be number one this year, don't you think?

GLORIA

I really don't know.

BETTY

Oh, are you not from Escondido?

GLORIA

Yeah, I'm from Escondido.

BETTY

So, you're a Cougar!

GLORIA

No, I'm a Patriot.

MARIA

Well, we're all patriots! "I like IKE!"

## CARMEN &amp; BETTY

"I like IKE"

GLORIA

No, I mean I go to Orange Glen High School.

ISABELLA

Hm? Where's that?

GLORIA

In Escondido.

BETTY

(laughs) No, really. Where are you from?

GLORIA

Escondido.

BETTY

Well, I'm from Poway, but I go to Escondido High School.

MARIA

I'm from Valley Center – I go to Escondido High School.

ISABELLA

I'm from San Marcos – I go to Escondido High School.

CARMEN

I'm from Escondido... you see where this is going. So where are you really from?

GLORIA

Um, I...

CHEYENNE

She's such a kidder! She's visiting from, um, Riverside.

CARMEN

Nifty! Well, welcome to Escondido! Did you come to the bonfire last night! Really put us all in the mood to rally together today.

LAELIA

I guess we missed it.

CHEYENNE

Uh, I was there, it was totally the most awesome bonfire ever. Like, OMG! Seriously totes the most bonfirey bonfire ever.

(silence, confusion from cheerleaders, shame from contemporaries).

um, Go Cougars.

BETTY

Well, we don't want to miss the start to the next show.

CARMEN

Yeah we better get back to our cars! Nice to meet you, gotta split.

(girls exit)

LAELIA

"The most bonfirey bonfire ever"?

(Irvin, Jolyon and Cynthia enter)

IRVIN

Hey – pretty weird, huh? I don't think I've said the word "Cougar" so much in my entire life.

JOLYON

No one's heard of San Pasqual High School.

GLORIA

Or Orange Glen.

CYNTHIA

It's kinda nice.

IRVIN

Well, you go to EHS, you *would* say that.

CYNTHIA

No, it's kinda nice how everyone is like *united*. The rival is Oceanside, not each other.

(Two girls run in)

KATIE

Hey Everybody! Some dipsticks from Oceanside burned a big "O" on our football field.

ATHENA

Those stinkers are gonna pay!

CROWD

What? No way? We gotta check this out! (etc, all exit running).

GLORIA

Wow. They moved fast. Remind me not to mess with their field.

IRVIN

Now all that's left is us and these guys. (audience)

CYNTHIA

Well, I guess it's time to split. Where's Booster?

BOOSTER

(enters, patting his tummy) Drive-In Hot Dogs. Man, I miss those. (beat, the group is staring at him). What? Ready for the next show? It's *Attack of the Giant Leeches*. That one cracks me up.

LAELIA

Ew. No. We are so outta here.

BOOSTER

Really? So quick to leave? I thought you'd like this place.

GLORIA

What with miss "Ra Ra Escondido" and her pals?

LAELIA

Yeah, those girls were unreal.

GLORIA

Right?! (they high five, maybe? At least some mini-moment of agreement)

BOOSTER

Why? Because they liked where they came from?

LAELIA

No.. They were just so... “go cougars”.

BOOSTER

Why don't you feel that way?

LAELIA

I don't know, because I don't.

JOLYON

Escondido is just so

GLORIA

boring

IRVIN

dull

CYNTHIA

Small-minded

BOOSTER

Didn't we just hear that about somewhere else? This is *your* town, so if you don't like it, why don't you do something about it?

(They stare at him like he's nuts).

Look, I'll get us out of hear. But this time, I'm choosing the destination.  
(he reaches in the cart and pulls out a travel bag of some kind)

**TRANSITION**

Walk through Orange Trees,

Students along the way deliver personal info

My Name Is

I am XX years old

What I like about Escondido is:

What I don't like about Escondido is:

Audience passes 8-12 students along their way to the next scene.



**SCENE 7**

In the sunken courtyard by the Cal Club behind the CCAE concert hall. When the audience arrives, the group of teens is already “trapped” there. Audience settles.

BOOSTER

(entering) Ah, here you go. This is the spot for you.

MANNY

Where are we? I mean, *when* are we?

BOOSTER

No place. No time. *Yet*. This is the future. Completely blank slate. Depends on the past. Which hasn't happened yet.

KYLIE

Um, so it's unwritten – so it's *nothing*? Why would you bring us to no man's land?

BOOSTER

I sent you all on this adventure for a reason. Remember - It wasn't the treasure you wanted, but it sure is the treasure you need.

KYLIE

What do you mean? How could we *need* this?

BOOSTER

I brought you here so you could figure it out. Figure out why I let you touch the treasure. If you figure it out, you'll find your way home. Now, if you don't mind...

LAELIA

Wait. Where are you going?

BOOSTER

Oh, I'm going to get another one of those drive-in hot dogs. I never could eat just one. See you back in 2013. Don't take too long.

MARTIN

You're leaving us?

(Booster continues to go)

How could you just leave us? Don't leave us! Please don't leave us! (Booster's gone). OMG he left us.

ADRIAN

So, now what are we gonna do?

MARTIN

Well he said we had to figure out why he took us here

LAELIA

Hmmm. So why does someone need to go on a whacked out trip through time?

MANNY

Well I never got to travel!

CYNTHIA

Why did we have to talk to him in the first place?! Why didn't we just walk away from him in the park?

IRVIN

It was Manny. He needed a drink and couldn't wait for us to go to Starbucks like a *normal* person.

MANNY

He had like a hundred cans of Sunkist in his cart, how was I supposed to know they were portals to a parallel universe?

CHEYENNE

Stop picking on him, it wasn't his fault.

GLORIA

What are you his mother? Let him fight his own fights.

KYLIE

Stop, that won't get us anywhere. We need to figure this out.

GLORIA

Well, what about our "unique leader", she had the whole plan in the first place.

LAELIA

When I said we'd dig up Escondido, this wasn't what I had in mind.

JOLYON

(starts playing his guitar)

CYNTHIA

Yeah, you can't blame her, we all showed up for the same reason.

ADRIAN

And what was that?

CYNTHIA

Gold. Everyone wanted Gold.

IRVIN

I just came for the experience. I think they did, too.

JOLYON

(starts singing his blues song "I hate all you people, you guys are the worst, especially Esco... " etc)

LAELIA

(to Jolyon) DUDE. What's up with the song.

JOLYON

Sorry, just thought we might be here for a while...

CHEYENNE

Wait... how does that go?

KYLIE

(Sings amazingly) "I hate all you people" ...

ADRIAN

Ah... we don't have time for this! – put it away.

KYLIE

You're just jealous you don't have a talent of your own.

ADRIAN

I've got talent!

KYLIE

Oh, yeah – like what.

ADRIAN

(he does something ridiculous, like gives a Zoolander Blue steel kind of look).

IRVIN

Dude, seriously – we are trapped in the time space continuum, and that’s what you got? Really?!

CYNTHIA

Ugh! We seriously need to think about this and get ourselves home.

(pause, they think.)

GLORIA

(sarcastically) Well, this is going really well.

MADISON

Well, I’ve had enough. The homeless guy said this is our town, and I’m going to make sure of it.

(She reaches in her backpack and grabs a spray can).

JOLYON

What are you doing?

MADISON

I’m tagging this up. This town is mine, This wall is mine. When they get here in 2020 or 2143 or whenever we are, they’ll know I was here.

JOLYON

What?

IRVIN

I did not see that coming.

MANNY

You can’t do that.

MADISON

Why not?

MANNY

It's just – not right.

LAELIA

Yeah, and hey - It's not just *your* town and *your* wall, it's all of ours – did you ask our permission.

MADISON

Do I have your permission?

TEENS (ALL)

No!

MADISON

Give me one good reason why I shouldn't tag this wall.

JOLYON

It's destructive.

CYNTHIA

It's ugly

MADISON

Uh huh.

CHEYENNE

This is our place – all of ours. If you don't care about it, who will?

MARTIN

Yeah, How do you expect anyone else to respect it here, if you don't.

MADISON

Why do we need *anything* from anyone else?

MARTIN

Yeah, why *do* we need anything from anyone.

KYLIE

Look, I might not like it here all the time, I may leave the second I get out of high school, but I'm not going to trash it while I'm here.

GLORIA

You were going to dig up Grape Day Park!

KYLIE

That's different – I was going for gold, and besides – the idea that someone came before us and left something here to be found was... pretty cool.

ADRIAN

And, I wasn't just going to ruin something. I thought we'd fill in the holes we dug up, dang.

(pause)

CNTHIA

I may sound really stupid saying this, but it was kinda nice seeing so many people in the past really loving it here and wanting it to succeed, and stuff.

MANNY

Yeah – I've never seen so many people happy to be here. And there wasn't even much here!

IRVIN

But what was here was *nice* - You don't see any one of those people loving how it is *now*.

CHEYENNE

But maybe that's not because of how it is now, maybe it's just because of how life is now, like so busy.

JOLYON

And everyone working somewhere *else* – I mean my mom drives to Oceanside everyday and my Dad works in San Diego.

KYLIE

And all the different schools – it all gives us a different impression of what Escondido is.

GLORIA

And separates us.

MADISON

I tell you one thing, when we get home – *if* we get home – I'll be so glad to be there.  
(She puts the can back in her backpack).

(silence)

MARTIN

It's almost like we've lost faith in our town.

ADRIAN

Now, that's corny.

CYNTHIA

But true.

MADISON

How do you get faith in a town? I mean if you don't have it.

JOLYON

Good question.

MARTIN

You can't just change a whole town.

KYLIE

But I guess you can change your attitude. Or try to.

MARTIN

Or think about what you can do to make it better.

KYLIE

Or how you can bring people together.

LAELIA

I guess you start by asking the question.

SOUND: Happy Parade Music

(A stream of images representing Escondido's History pass by the outside wall of the courtyard. Booster is a part of it)

BOOSTER

Follow along. This is the way home.

[Cast and Audience Follows to courtyard outside the Lyric Court].



**CLOSING**

The cast is gathered in a tableau. Booster speaks to them. Scene musically underscored.

**BOOSTER**

Welcome home. Now that you've seen what's come before you, how do you want to be remembered?

**CONTEMPORARIES**

We want to be to be remembered as

**MRS THOMASES AND GRANDDAUGHTERS**

The ones who made a difference.

**CONTEMPORARIES**

We want to be remembered as

**BARBER SHOP CAST**

Unique in our own way

**CONTEMPORARIES**

We want to be remembered as

**CHEERLEADERS**

team players

**LETTER CAST**

individuals

**CONTEMPORARY BOYS**

The ones who got out alive.

**MRS THOMAS AND GRANDDAUGHTERS**

We want to be remembered as

**SAN PASQUAL HS CONTEMPORARIES**

Dedicated young adults ready to take on the future.

**EHS CONTEMPORARIES**

The ones willing to succeed under any circumstances.

## ORANGE GLEN CONTEMPORIES

Diamonds in the rough.

ALL

We want to be remembered as

LAELIA

The originals, who made an impression on Escondido here and now.

ALL

We want to be remembered as.

We want to be remembered as.

We want to be remembered.

(The ensemble exits leaving the contemporaries)

BOOSTER

We want to be remembered as (Reads from 5 audience cards)

IRVIN

Hey Booster, Thank you for taking us on this journey.

BOOSTER

Thank you for taking all these folks. ... And Thank Laelia for finding my message about the treasure in the park.

LAELIA

What? That was *you*? Why would...?

BOOSTER

You know, everyone says nothing happens here , but today something happened. We made history. (to audience:) Together. C'mon, let's make some more.

(He tips his hat and starts walking straight through the audience, the teens follow. Behind the audience we discover the rest of the cast lined up with their backs to the audience, their shirts reading "ensemble". Booster and the modern teens join the line. They turn to face the audience, bow, turn back around. Take 5 steps, turn, hold hands and bow. Then, they split and run into the distance until they disappear. Among the trees and architecture of the park.)