

## **EVERY LIVIN' SOUL**

A play by William Cameron  
©All rights reserved, 2025

### CHARACTERS

Hannah Winship Grey, Mid 40s.

A widowed farmwoman. Generous to a fault and a bit of a dreamer, Hannah longs for a more prosperous future that doesn't include farm labor.

Herk Winship, 40.

Hannah's younger brother. Herk is a farmhand with a taste for adventure and melodrama.

Dot Winship, Mid-late 30s.

Herk's wife. Her religious fervor serves to disguise a broken heart.

Choc, 30.

A drifter, haunted by his past and looking for a new start.

### TIME

October 1934, in the depths of the Depression.

### PLACE

A small farm on the outskirts of East Liverpool in Columbiana County, Ohio. We are approximately 60 miles northeast of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and 50 miles south of Youngstown, Ohio.

All the play's action occurs in the kitchen of Hannah's farmhouse.

### SCENE BREAKDOWN

Act I, scene 1 – Sunday afternoon, 1 pm

Act I, scene 2 – That evening, around 7:30 pm

Act I, scene 3 – Monday afternoon, 3:30 pm

Act II – Monday, about 20 minutes later

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

*The kitchen. In the distance, we hear a biplane flying overhead and dogs barking. It is approximately 3:30 pm on the following day, Monday.*

*There are three freshly baked pies sitting on the windowsill above the kitchen sink.*

*Through the door, we see a man approaching. He is about 30, handsome and fit, dressed in a suit and tie, his white shirt undone at the collar. His pockets bulge, his suit is covered with briars and thistles, his hair is unkempt, and he hasn't shaved in a few days. We will come to know him as CHOC.*

*He approaches the screen door and peers inside. He knocks lightly. Nothing. He knocks again, a little louder. No response. He looks around to see if anybody is nearby. Seeing no one, he pulls the door open and steps inside.*

*He crosses to the pies, picks one up and holds it under his nose, emitting a satisfied "mmm" before putting it back on the windowsill.*

*He runs the water and takes a long, thirsty drink. He wipes his mouth with his sleeve, crosses to the icebox, opens it.*

*There is a bustling noise from outside and moving to the same door but from the opposite direction, we see HANNAH, dressed in work clothes, dirtier and dustier than the day before.*

*Hearing her, CHOC freezes momentarily, shuts the icebox, and looks for an exit, but there is no time. HANNAH calls out.*

HANNAH (OFF)

Charlie!

*CHOC brushes the hair from his forehead and buttons his jacket. HANNAH bursts through the door.*

HANNAH

Charlie? Is that you? What are you doing—  
(She sees CHOC,  
stops.)

Oh. I thought you...

(With sudden alarm)

What do you want?

CHOC

Sorry to scare you, ma'am. I's just helpin' myself to a drink of water and—

HANNAH

You can't just walk in my house and—

CHOC

I sure know better, ma'am, but I was mighty thirsty so I—

HANNAH

Are you that fella they're looking for?

CHOC

What fella?

HANNAH

'Cause there's no money here, mister. Nothing for you to...  
So you just—

CHOC

Ma'am, I ain't here to rob you or—

HANNAH

My brother, he's right out in the cornfields, got a shotgun with him and all I have to—

CHOC

I don't want no trouble, ma'am, I just—

HANNAH

Do you have a gun?

CHOC

A gun? Ma'am, if the police'd found a gun on me they'd a' locked me up for sure.

HANNAH

The police stopped you?

CHOC

Police is everywhere and they're stoppin' everybody. I guess they're looking for that, um, fella you were askin' about.

HANNAH

The bank robber?

CHOC

Is that what he is, a bank robber?

(HANNAH nervously  
sizes him up.)

Ma'am, I don't mean you no harm. Thing is...I am powerful hungry. Know I shouldn'ta just let myself in your fine home. My ma, she'd be ashamed if she knew I busted in on you that way but—

HANNAH

(With a furtive look  
behind her, into the  
fields)

Mister, I can't afford any handouts right—

CHOC

I ain't lookin' for a handout. I got money.

HANNAH

You got money?

CHOC

Ain't much but I'd be happy to pay you if you could see your way to...I could sure stand me a good piece of meat, if you could find it in your heart to...and like I said, I got a little money.

HANNAH studies him, looking him up  
and down.

HANNAH

Your shoes don't look too shiny.

CHOC

Not no more.

He chuckles lightly and smiles a winning smile.

HANNAH

And that suit you're wearing—

CHOC

Gettin' a little ratty, I know but it's all I get left. See, I been looking for work. Thought maybe there'd be somethin' in the mills south of here 'long the river but...ain't nothin' so I been hitchin' my way up. Got a buddy in Youngstown might be able to help me find somethin', so I'm headed north, I guess.

CHOC shrugs, smiles his handsome smile.

HANNAH

Lord, you look just like...

(short beat)

You've been out in those woods. My boy used to play in those woods, come home with those Spanish needles all over him. Just like you got on your jacket.

CHOC looks down at his jacket.

CHOC

Oh, ma'am, I am so sorry. I must look like a wild man.

He steps past her into the doorway, opening the screen door and brushing the Spanish needles off his jacket onto the porch. HANNAH moves away from him into the house, picking up a few briars from the floor.

HANNAH

Whyn't you take your coat off and shake it? That'll—

CHOC

This'll do fine, ma'am.

HANNAH

I think you'll find it easier if you—

CHOC

No, I got it.

He takes a few final swipes at his jacket, having gotten rid of most of the briars.

HANNAH

What were you doing in those woods anyway?

CHOC

Well ma'am, I was...

(CHOC takes one last  
swipe at his  
jacket.)

I was huntin' for somethin' to eat. Thought maybe I'd find me some squirrels or rabbits—

HANNAH

Hunting squirrels? At night?

CHOC

Yes ma'am.

HANNAH

Without a gun.

CHOC

(with a chuckle)

Afraid so, ma'am. I was mighty hungry, not thinkin' real clear I guess. Now, I did find me a nice apple tree and ate some of those. And then I met up these two fellas and they—

HANNAH

What fellas?

CHOC

Just these two fellas. They had some ginger cookies and so I—

(HANNAH starts to  
protest)

They didn't have no guns far as I could tell, if that's what you're...they was just a coupla boys, kids really. Didn't seem like no bank robbers to me. See, I got lost from them and ended fallin' asleep out there in the—

(As CHOC speaks, he  
crosses back into  
the house, letting  
the screen door slam  
loudly behind him  
HANNAH nervously  
backs up a few  
steps.)

Ma'am, you got no cause to be afraid of me. I'm just some weary fella, lost and alone, about to head back out to the highway and stick my thumb out but...well, I caught a whiff of them pies in your window. My ma always put her pies in the window just like that. Wind'd pick up the scent, no matter where in the fields you was workin' you knew supertime was gettin' close. I saw your pies and they

(MORE)

CHOC (cont'd)  
 smelled so good. Made me a little homesick and I know my Ma,  
 she'd never let a soul go hungry and I was hopin' maybe...

He shrugs, looks at her.

HANNAH  
 You grew up on a farm?

CHOC  
 Yes ma'am.

HANNAH  
 Around here or—

CHOC  
 Oklahoma.

HANNAH  
 Oklahoma? Farm didn't blow away in one of those dust storms,  
 did it?

CHOC  
 Still there far as I know.

HANNAH  
 What are you doing so far from home? Why aren't you back on  
 that farm, helping your mother?

CHOC  
 Ain't proud of it but...bein' honest, I just weren't born to  
 be no farmer.

He brushes his hair back, adjusts  
 his jacket, smiles his winning  
 smile. A faint smile flashes across  
 HANNAH's face.

HANNAH  
 What's your name?

CHOC  
 Mitchell. Frank Mitchell. Friends call me Choc.

HANNAH  
 Choc?

CHOC  
 (with an amiable  
 laugh)  
 Yes, ma'am, Choc,

CHOC flashes his charming smile.  
 HANNAH can't help but smile back.

HANNAH looks apprehensively out the window, then to CHOC...

HANNAH

I don't have much in the way of leftovers but...I was cleaning my smokehouse when you come knocking, Mr. Mitchell. Got some spareribs out there. You're welcome to 'em.

CHOC

You are a fine Christian woman.  
(CHOC reaches into his pocket.)

Here, let me—

HANNAH

Won't take money from a hungry man looking for a job. No sir.

CHOC

You are a kind soul.

As she speaks, HANNAH crosses to the kitchen table and grabs a few items piled there, including a newspaper. CHOC tkes notice of the newspaper as HANNAH the items to a counter near the kitchen sink. HANNAH goes to the screen door, holds it open for CHOC.

HANNAH

You wait out here on the porch, Mr. Mitchell.  
(CHOC remains focused on the newspaper.)

Mr. Mitchell.

(CHOC snaps to attention, facing her.)

Not that I don't trust you, just that—

CHOC

I understand, ma'am.

CHOC dutifully crosses out the door onto the porch. Door closes behind HANNAH.

HANNAH

I gotta put away a few things out by the smokehouse then I'll fetch the spareribs, cook 'em up for you.

CHOC

Yes, ma'am.

HANNAH starts to walk off, stops.

HANNAH

Don't you dare make a fool outta me by stealing something from my home and taking off down the road. You do and you'll live to regret it. That's a promise.

CHOC

I wouldn't do a thing like that to you, ma'am.

HANNAH holds his gaze for a beat, nods, and exits.

When HANNAH is out of sight, there is a pause before CHOC appears in the doorway. He looks around, opens the door, moves stealthily to the newspaper, pulls it out and reads. He folds the newspaper, jams it into his pants pocket.

CHOC looks around nervously and heads to the screen door. As he does so, a biplane flies overhead. He stands in the doorway, raising his head to listen and watch.

The biplane roars ominously.

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT ONE