

# THE HEART OF THINGS

## Casey's audition

spoken word opera  
for actors and soundtrack  
text by Wanda R. Graham  
music by John Plant

Time: Present, early spring / fall, two years later

### Characters

**LES SR, Daddy, Big Daddy**  
40, owner/captain of boat/enterprise The Heart of Things

**ARIEL**  
38 Les Sr's brother, was a fisher

**JUNIOR, LES JR,**  
22-23, son of Les Sr, fisher

**BREN**  
22-23 Les Jr's twin, nonbinary, fisher

**PEARL (NAN)**  
60, Les Sr's Mother, widow

**CASEY DELUCCA**  
21, student, fish packer

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Music copyright 2020 by John Plant  
Drawing by Curtis Botham

## Note from the composer

Wanda Graham's play deals with the struggle for gender equality, sexual identity, suicide, sexual abuse, generational tensions, the intricate web of family relationships, all within the context of the ecological and economic realities of the fisher's life. It manages to do this without preaching, by creating indelible, moving characters and thrusting us into their very particular world. My intention is to shape this world, by creating a medium in which the often subconscious drives behind their actions can be revealed.

The actors speak to a pre-recorded soundtrack, which sustains their rhythmically notated speech.

**Les Sr., 40** is the patriarch of his fishing enterprise. He devotes considerable energy to his business, but he is contemptuous of Fisheries regulations and frequently finds himself in trouble as a result. In his spare time he is an artist, creating strange and magical objects and covering them with sparkles, and seeking solace in his guitar. He has two children, twins, Les Junior and Bren, abandoned by their mother when they were three.

When a boy, **Junior (22-23)** was raped repeatedly by his uncle Ariel, but he has never told anyone. His father's consistent disregard for Fisheries regulations torments Junior, both because of the environmental damage it causes, and because it threatens the future of the enterprise. He turns his anger and frustration inwards, against himself.

**Bren (22-23)**, non-binary, aspires to be accepted as a fisher in this male-dominated culture. They are empathically sensitive to Junior, hopelessly in love with Casey, continually riffing on nanotechnology, while keeping things straight in their potato patch.

**Ariel, 38**, married but unable to have children of his own, has been disabled by a shark attack. Except for his mother Pearl, he is distrusted and disliked by the family, and he responds to their hostility by destroying what he can't have.

**Nan (Pearl, 60)**, Poppie's widow and the mother of Les and Ariel, tries to maintain a fragile peace in this tumultuous household. Her initial girlish spirits are worn down by the tragedies which befall her family.

**Casey, 21**, fish packer, is a young, intelligent, beautiful woman who will not let herself be the prisoner of a romantic relationship if it prevents her from realizing her dreams. She is loved by three members of the family: Junior, Les Sr, and Bren, and she ricochets indecisively among them.

\_John Plant



## Casey's audition: Excerpt 2

21 CASEY

Piano Flute Piano

Fill me up lit-tle

26

min-now in your beau-ti-ful ter-ri-ble place where no one is a-fraid but me if you come

32

out can I keep you with their nets they'll grab you I'm a-fraid you'll ne-ver get a-

37 Fl.

way For-give me lit-tle min-now

46

in this ter-ri-ble beau-ti-ful place where the wind howls rips rooves off

Horn Vla tremolo piano

52

you were made here yes we made you him and him and me

Clarinet

58

and the sto-ries so ma-ny sto-ries

Horn Tpt. Oboe

*mf* piano

68

Grow grow in-side me lit-tle min-now while the stretched world rea-dies to pop

73

no-thing's per-fect wish I could give you a boat a boat to sail the i-cy spray

78

but you would love it I would lose you I would cease to be e-nough