

### Scene 3

*Night. Inside the house a party is in progress. Loud music from a not-very-good but enthusiastic band. Catherine is alone on the porch. She wears a flattering black dress. Inside, the band finishes a number. Cheers, applause. After a moment Hal comes out. He wears a dark suit. He has taken off his tie. He is sweaty and revved-up from playing. He holds two bottles of beer. Catherine regards him. A beat.*

CATHERINE. I feel that for a funeral reception this might have gotten a bit out of control.

HAL. Aw come on. It's great. Come on in.

CATHERINE. I'm okay.

HAL. We're done playing. I promise.

CATHERINE. No, thanks.

HAL. Do you want a beer?

CATHERINE. I'm okay.

HAL. I brought you one. *(Beat. She hesitates.)*

CATHERINE. Okay. *(She takes it, sips.)* How many people are in there?

HAL. It's down to about forty.

CATHERINE. Forty?

HAL. Just the hard-core partiers.

CATHERINE. My sister's friends.

HAL. No, mathematicians. Your sister's friends left hours ago.

The guys were really pleased to be asked to participate. They worshipped your dad.

CATHERINE. It was Claire's idea.

HAL. It was good.

CATHERINE. *(Concedes.)* The performance of "Imaginary Number" was ... sort of ... moving.

HAL. Good funeral. I mean not "good," but —

CATHERINE. No. Yeah.

HAL. Can you believe how many people came?

CATHERINE. I was surprised.

HAL. I think he would have liked it. *(She looks at him.)* Sorry, it's not my place to —

CATHERINE. No, you're right. Everything was better than I thought. *(Beat.)*

HAL. You look great.

CATHERINE. *(Indicates the dress.)* Claire gave it to me.

HAL. I like it.

CATHERINE. It doesn't really fit.

HAL. No, Catherine, it's good. *(A moment. Noise from inside.)*

CATHERINE. When do you think they'll leave?

HAL. No way to know. Mathematicians are insane. I went to this conference in Toronto last fall. I'm young, right? I'm in shape, I thought I could hang with the big boys. Wrong. I've never been so exhausted in my life. Forty-eight straight hours of partying, drinking, drugs, papers, lectures ...

CATHERINE. Drugs?

HAL. Yeah. Amphetamines, mostly. I mean I don't. Some of the older guys are really hooked.

CATHERINE. Really?

HAL. Yeah, they think they need it.

CATHERINE. Why?

HAL. They think math's a young man's game. Speed keeps them racing, makes them feel sharp. There's this fear that your creativity peaks around twenty-three and it's all downhill from there. Once you hit fifty it's over, you might as well teach high school.

CATHERINE. That's what my father thought.

HAL. I dunno. Some people stay prolific.

CATHERINE. Not many.

HAL. No, you're right. Really original work — it's all young guys.

CATHERINE. Young guys.

HAL. Young people.

CATHERINE. But it is men, mostly.

HAL. There are some women.

CATHERINE. Who?

HAL. There's a woman at Stanford, I can't remember her name.

CATHERINE. Sophie Germain.