New Jersey
By Claudia I. Haas

claudiaihaas@gmail.com

CAST: 2
ALIESHA (f) 20-24, a dreamer
JAKE (m) 20-24, a realist

AT RISE, ALIESHA is seen with some potted plants. All is ugly and bare. Car horns from the nearby highway might be heard. ALIESHA is arranging the plants. JAKE enters.

JAKE
Again? How much money are you spending on plants?

ALIESHA
We live in the Garden State. New Jersey's supposedly the freakin’ “garden state” and look! Can this area be more gray and foreboding?

JAKE
You can't plant all of New Jersey. Not on your paycheck.

ALIESHA
I'm only planting the ugly parts. Marigolds for the highway exits, petunias and violets for the city lots – I'd really like to do delphiniums but they are too expensive.

JAKE
You’ve already spent close to two hundred dollars/

ALIESHA
Three hundred. And I’ve barely made a dent.

JAKE
The cupboards are bare – you know that. We’re living like Old Mother Hubbard who went to the cupboard to give her poor dog a bone. But when she was there, the cupboard was bare and so the dog had none.

ALIESHA
We don't have a dog.

JAKE
We don’t have a bone.
ALIESHA
We don’t need a bone.

JAKE
We need ... cereal!

ALIESHA
Can you help get these plants in/

JAKE
Milk! Coffee! Please, Aliesha – the deal was I paid the rent and you paid for food and there's no food. Or drink. No caffeine. I need my caffeine.

ALIESHA
Are you going to help?

JAKE
You’re serious – you’re going to spend your entire paycheck on plants for New Jersey?

ALIESHA
I’m taking a stand! Wish-washy Aliesha is finally committing to something. I will make New Jersey "the Garden State" in reality. Down with meaningless license plate slogans! Up with truth and beauty!

JAKE
How about making New Jersey “the food state?” I need food! I’m crumbling.

ALIESHA
Jake! That’s brilliant! I could make New Jersey the “Vegetable Garden State!” Then we can come to the city lots and pick our food. We’ll be gatherers. And we’ll feed the state!

JAKE
Can bacon be a part of the equation? Can you grow bacon?

ALIESHA
Kale! Healthy and ornamental kale! The garden shop’s a few blocks away. Do you have any money? Kale’s about $3.99 per plant.

(ALIESHA exits and JAKE follows.)

JAKE
Not kale! Please Alicia! Anything but kale!

END OF PLAY