Scene Two

(Morning. The library. **LIBRARIAN** is at her desk, on the front of which is a sign that reads "INFORMATION."
**MRS. SWANSON** enters.)

**MRS. SWANSON.** Good morning. I was hoping to get a library card.

**LIBRARIAN.** Good for you, dear. I think a lot of people figure, "Why bother? I'm just going to die, anyway." Let me just find the form. (**She looks through some paperwork.**)

**MRS. SWANSON.** I wanted to learn more about the area. Do you have any books on Middletown?

**LIBRARIAN.** I should certainly hope so — let me take a look.

(He searches on her computer, believes for a moment that she's found something.)

And... voila. Oops — no, sorry, we don't. There's a wonderful book called Yesteryear in Today's City of Tomorrow. But it's out. It's due next Tuesday.

**MECHANIC enters.**

Hello.

**MECHANIC.** (looking through a magazine, far from the **LIBRARIAN's desk**) I'm listening in on your conversation.

(They briefly look over at **MECHANIC.**)

**LIBRARIAN.** Hi. (searching on her computer) Here's something from the Chamber of Commerce, just to give you a general sense. (**She reads from the screen:**) "Middletown was built on the ruins of other older Middletowns, and, before them, a town called Middenton, which was named for being between two other places, both unknown and now incidentally gone." (**stops reading**) That doesn't sound right. "Incidentally gone." Anyway (**She returns to reading:**), "A thousand years ago, the area was home to the Chakmaw Indian and it was called Inpeetway, which no one knows what it means, but it might have meant, 'You are far away' or, 'Far away from me.' The Chakmaw had a highly developed culture and they thrived in their time, until they disappeared, forever. New residents arrived and looked around."

(**stops reading**) That's not much of a sentence. But I guess it still helps to give us a picture — people kind of lost and smiling. But, okay, let's see, (**She finds her place in the text and continues reading:**) "...arrived and looked around. Today, Middletown is a beehive, a human beehive, of activity and business. Many come to raise families and watch, swollen with civic pride, as their baby draws its first breath of local air. Also, drawn by the excellent clouds and the mostly silent nights, many come here to quietly retire. Middletown. We've got you coming and going."

**MRS. SWANSON.** That's from the Chamber of Commerce?

**LIBRARIAN.** I know. There's a lot it doesn't mention. There's the library, here. And of course, the people. Which is what most places are made out of, if you think about it.

**MRS. SWANSON.** I guess. I'll wait for that other book. (brief pause) We just moved here.

**MECHANIC.** (looking through a magazine, far from the **LIBRARIAN's desk**) I'm listening in on your conversation.

(They briefly look over at **MECHANIC.**)

**LIBRARIAN.** Sorry. You were saying?

**MRS. SWANSON.** My husband and I just moved here.

**LIBRARIAN.** Well, welcome. Is it just you two?

**MRS. SWANSON.** It's just us. He travels. But we're here now. I am. We're trying to start a family.

**MECHANIC.** "Come on, family — start! Start, you bastard!

**LIBRARIAN.** (to **MECHANIC**) Shhhhh. (to **MRS. SWANSON**) Well, welcome to you both. That's wonderful. How long have you been trying?

**MRS. SWANSON.** Almost a year now.