

After You

By Dave Carley

After You

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Characters

YOUNG ADELE, age 20

YOUNG JEAN, age 20

ADELE, late 70s

JEAN, late 70s

PAUL/JEFFERY, early 20s/18

Time

The summer months of 1938 and sixty years later.

Setting

The Findlay islands on Lake Kawartha.

Staging

The action of the play should be continuous and uninterrupted by blackouts and freezes in the action. All of the characters can be aware of the other characters, at any or all times. There are no conventions in this regard.

Production History

An early version of After You premiered at the Alberta Theatre Projects' 1994 playRites Festival, under the title "Kawartha". The cast and crew was as follows:

YOUNG JEAN – Megan Leitch
 YOUNG ADELE – Gina Wilkinson
 JEAN – Anne McGrath
 ADELE – Joyce Campion
 PAUL/JEFFERY – Chris Mackie

Director: Colin Taylor
 Costume Design: Carolyn Smith
 Lighting Design: Harry Frehner
 Sound Design: Allen Rae
 Stage Manager: Colin McCracken

The first production of the rewritten After You was at New Stages Peterborough, at Showplace Peterborough, in July-August 1998. The cast and crew was as follows:

YOUNG JEAN – Camille Stubel
 YOUNG ADELE – Maureen Kirkpatrick
 JEAN – Charmion King
 ADELE – Corinne Conley
 PAUL/JEFFERY – Jason Jazrawy

Director – Sue Miner
 Costume Design – Brenda Guildenstein
 Set Designer – Al Tye
 Lighting Design – Detlev Fuelbeck
 Technical Director – Don White
 Stage Manager – David Anderson
 ASM – Mary Helen Moes

Acknowledgements

Thank you to: Alberta Theatre Projects, Candace Burley, Joyce Campion, Canadian Stage Company, Margaret Carley, Corinne Conley, Peter Hinton, Jason Jazrawy, Christine Johnston, Charmion King, Maureen Kirkpatrick, Megan Leitch, Chris Mackie, Anne McGrath, Sue Miner, New Stages Peterborough, Patricia Ney, Barbara Reese, Randy Read, David Storch, Camille Stubel, Iris Turcott and Gina Wilkinson.

Act One

It is Sunday night of Labour Day weekend, the last weekend of summer. Jean is standing on a rock, near water's edge. She is wearing robes of generic ecclesiastical persuasion, distinguished only by strips of bogus Native icons, woven down the front.

YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN become visible, standing behind JEAN. They are dressed in light summer wear, 1938-vintage.

Then, in dimmer light: ADELE. She is lying on an old chaise. She looks out to water.

JEAN raises her arms.

- JEAN: We are close now. Very close to God. He is as near to us as the thick waters of this lake, as near as – as near as – damn
- YOUNG JEAN: - As near as the granite
- JEAN: - The granite these waters rub, as near as whatever the pine is supposed to be doing
- YOUNG ADELE: - Buckling.
- YOUNG JEAN: Where's your brain!?
- JEAN: How the hell am I supposed to remember "buckling"? What the hell is a "buckling pine"?
- YOUNG ADELE: It's an image. It's all alone, it's bending from the wind, buckling but unbowed.
- YOUNG JEAN: She knows. She's just embarrassed she can't remember.
- JEAN: - God is very close. You need only turn your faces, lift your faces, raise your faces
- YOUNG ADELE: - Arms

JEAN: - Raise your damn arms, reach up, reach up

ADELE: *(Murmuring under.) Paul (etc.)*

YOUNG ADELE: - Reach through the dazzled skies

YOUNG JEAN: - Through the scatterings of stars

(ADELE is becoming restless in her bed. She continues to murmur PAUL's name.)

JEAN: - Reach across the trackless miles, reach past the scatterings of stars and planets, turn your face to Him. OK, now I'm cooking. Turn your faces to Him, stare through the heat of memory and the nearing frost

YOUNG JEAN: - Through ancient hurt

YOUNG ADELE: - And thwarted dreams

JEAN: - Through approaching sorrow.

(PAUL has begun moving out of the lake. He is coming into the vision of JEAN, YOUNG JEAN and YOUNG ADELE.)

Lift up your head and your heart and taste his warm perfect breath, lift your face, let him brush a kiss across your soul.

(PAUL is now completely in their vision.)

Oh my God.

(YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN murmur this under, as well. The three women are frozen. PAUL continues walking towards them. They seem to inhale deeply. PAUL walks by them. They exhale. PAUL walks to ADELE: she is still murmuring his name. She sees him, reaches up to him. PAUL leans down over her and gently brushes back her hair. He then kisses her long on the lips. ADELE lays back, her eyes closing. She is dying.

The other three women are watching this with absolute intensity.

PAUL crouches at the side of ADELE, kisses her again on the lips, then kisses her with growing passion. There is some kind of response from the other three watching; a long sigh of envy, perhaps.

PAUL slips off.

FOCUS back on JEAN, YOUNG JEAN and YOUNG ADELE. JEAN has raised a pair of scissors; the other two try to restrain her.)

YOUNG ADELE: - Jean don't!

YOUNG JEAN: - You're not thinking!

(JEAN stabs scissors into her robes and begins hacking at the Indian motifs.)

YOUNG JEAN: But we've always worn that.

JEAN: Since when did you care about tradition?

YOUNG ADELE: - They're beautiful!

YOUNG JEAN: - It's just decoration!

JEAN: Not to some people.

YOUNG JEAN: Then some people don't have enough to think about.

JEAN: If a symbol oppresses, rip it out.

YOUNG JEAN: Who could Mary Copeland's felt appliqué oppress?

YOUNG ADELE: Except aesthetically?

YOUNG JEAN: There hasn't been an Indian in that church since it was built!

JEAN: That's not the point. And you don't say "Indian" now.

YOUNG ADELE: What do you say?

JEAN: You say – well – I – I can't remember. But it's not "Indian". That's for people from India. But you don't call them Indians either.

YOUNG JEAN: *(Smelling robes.)* Whew – you’re going to drive them out of there like the Jews from Egypt. Can you still say “Jews”?

JEAN: It depends on the usage.

YOUNG JEAN: How?

JEAN: It can be seen as a pejorative when – you’re trying to distract me.

YOUNG JEAN: - You better air them out. Here.

(YOUNG JEAN helps JEAN out of the robes.)

You’ve still got two hours before you have to wear them – we’ll hang them up.

JEAN: You’re hoping I’ll forget. I won’t.

(Focus back on ADELE. She is coming out of her sleep. She is not entirely comfortable.)

ADELE: *(Murmuring.)* Paul *(etc.)*

YOUNG JEAN: She’s so old.

JEAN: Look at me!

YOUNG JEAN: You know what I mean.

(JEAN is going over to ADELE. She straightens her blanket, touches her face. ADELE reaches up to her. The gesture recalls her initial caress of PAUL.)

JEAN: You’re finally awake?

ADELE: My eyes are open aren’t they?

JEAN: That isn’t always proof with you.

(YOUNG ADELE is moving over to ADELE’s side. YOUNG JEAN can slip away.)

ADELE: I was dreaming.

JEAN: I heard you – you were groaning away

YOUNG ADELE: - Like Hiatus rubbing the dock.

JEAN: Like you had a toothache. Who were you dreaming of?

ADELE: Can't remember. *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* She knows.

YOUNG ADELE: She doesn't have a clue.

JEAN: Eh? Who.

ADELE: *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* Look in her eyes.

JEAN: I could likely guess who.

ADELE: It was less a 'who' and more a 'what'. *(Beat.)* And what a what.

JEAN: Oh.

ADELE: *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* She doesn't miss much; you be careful.

YOUNG ADELE: She's too caught up with her boats.

JEAN: Juice or tea?

ADELE: What's mixed.

JEAN: Juice.

ADELE: Tea.

YOUNG ADELE: Tell her about tonight.

ADELE: What about tonight.

YOUNG ADELE: I'm not going.

ADELE: Of course I'm not going.

YOUNG ADELE: Tell her, dummy.

ADELE: I'm not going tonight.

JEAN: Of course you're not going.

ADELE: *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* She already knew. "Dummy".

(YOUNG JEAN has reappeared.)

- YOUNG JEAN: Not going where.
- YOUNG ADELE: To the end-of-summer service. Women can tell.
- ADELE: The water might be rough.
- YOUNG JEAN: Wait a minute – we’ve never missed.
- ADELE: I can’t sit on those pews that long.
- JEAN: No one’s expecting you.
- YOUNG JEAN: Everyone will wonder. They’re talking as it is. They want to know why Paul left so suddenly and why you’re holed up on your island. It’s just the parade over, then a one hour
- YOUNG ADELE: - I want this summer to end!
- YOUNG JEAN: Nothing’s quite that easy! You got us into this! I’ll get us out! That means I call the shots. Christ Addie, even Archie’s asking questions. And if he’s suspicious...
- ADELE: I can never remember who anyone is. They hide under those tans and dark glasses –
- JEAN: They’ve brought back the boat parade. Haven’t had it since the war and now some Yank over on the narrows thinks we should start it up again.
- ADELE: I can watch it from here.
- YOUNG ADELE: They’ll see it in my eyes.
- YOUNG JEAN: Wear sunglasses. Father’ll be over in Hiatus in a half hour.
- JEAN: I’m supposed to perch in the front of Jeffy’s boat like – like Britannia because some Yankee carpetbagger found out I’m the oldest person on the lake. Americans love history. Makes sense; they’re the ones writing it. And they expect me to give a benediction. From memory! Because someone told the Yank I’m ordained.
- YOUNG ADELE: I really don’t think they’re called “Yanks” anymore.

JEAN: What was I getting you. Juice. *(Checks watch.)* Yes, juice.

ADELE: It's making me sleepy.

JEAN: It's supposed to.

ADELE: I want to see the parade. Does it have to be every half hour?

(JEAN has exited. ADELE is left alone, with YOUNG JEAN and YOUNG ADELE nearby. YOUNG JEAN comes over to YOUNG ADELE, who is looking with binoculars into the near distance. ADELE watches from her bed.)

YOUNG JEAN: Where's he now?

YOUNG ADELE: Coming up to the point.

YOUNG JEAN: He'll grow fins, he's been swimming so much.

YOUNG ADELE: Tiny little fins to match his tiny little horns.

(YOUNG JEAN swats her.)

You like him.

ADELE: So you back off.

YOUNG ADELE: *(To ADELE.)* Shut up.

YOUNG JEAN: *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* - Shut up.

ADELE: *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* In all my life I never once said "shut up".

YOUNG ADELE: *(To YOUNG JEAN.)* A tender spot?

ADELE: That doesn't count.

YOUNG JEAN: No.

ADELE: She found him, she dragged him up here, ergo he's hers.

YOUNG ADELE: Stay out of this. *(To YOUNG JEAN.)* How come you won't talk about him then?

YOUNG JEAN: Nothing to say.

YOUNG ADELE: I don't believe you.

ADELE: Oh – quit fishing.

YOUNG JEAN: There's nothing between Paul and me. Never was. Never will be. There especially won't be if anyone ever thinks I think there ever might be, which I'm pretty sure there won't be.

YOUNG ADELE: - You're mad about him!

ADELE: Finders keepers.

(YOUNG ADELE puts a pillow over ADELE's face.)

(Pushing it off, laughing.) Tramp!

(YOUNG ADELE puts the pillow back.)

(Under, muffled.) Tramp!

YOUNG JEAN: I respect him, he respects me. *(Straightening up ADELE.)* He's nice.

YOUNG ADELE: *(Rolling her eyes at ADELE, who also makes a face, despite herself.)* "He's nice."

(ADELE and YOUNG ADELE laugh.)

YOUNG JEAN: What's wrong with that?!

YOUNG ADELE: Nothing. It's very –

ADELE: Nice. *(Shudders.)*

YOUNG JEAN: Sure it would be – nice

ADELE: - To?

YOUNG JEAN: To have a boyfriend. Other than Archie Copeland. But it's not going to happen. Not in this lifetime. And I'm not wasting my time wishing for things that won't happen. *(Reaching for binoculars.)* But I can look.

YOUNG ADELE: Anyway, he's too much like your father.

YOUNG JEAN: What!

YOUNG ADELE: It's a common manifestation of the female psyche.

ADELE: What do they say about "a little learning"?

YOUNG JEAN: You're crazy!

YOUNG ADELE: It's psychology. That's right up your alley. It's very nearly a science. Some women are attracted to father figures. You, for example. You like Paul because he's exactly like your father

YOUNG JEAN: - He's not!

YOUNG ADELE: - Plug-full of ideology, driven. OK, so the ideology is the polar opposite of your father's – the impulse is the same. Look at him thrashing about our lake like – like an over-motivated pickerel!

YOUNG JEAN: *(Puts down binoculars.)* He's cleared the point.

YOUNG ADELE: So does he dance?

YOUNG JEAN: Of course he dances. I think he dances. How would I know?

(YOUNG JEAN is moving off.)

ADELE: He's a wonderful dancer. One of the best in the world. Which you'll soon discover. Now come here.

(YOUNG ADELE comes and sits with ADELE. YOUNG JEAN is off.)

You're a real piece of work, aren't you.

YOUNG ADELE: I'm romantic.

ADELE: A real romantic piece of work.

YOUNG ADELE: Are you complaining?

ADELE: Your skin is so soft. And your hair – it's so thick.

YOUNG ADELE: It gets me by.

ADELE: It'll get us by so much: literary derision

YOUNG ADELE: - Envy, exile

ADELE: - Wars.

YOUNG ADELE: There's that word again.

ADELE: Wars?

YOUNG ADELE: Jean says there'll be another war in Europe by 1940.

ADELE: Oh, there's always another war coming. But to be young and beautiful again, for five minutes even. I could spout some blank verse, we could drink – what?

YOUNG ADELE: Martinis.

ADELE: No, it was something French. Doesn't matter. Whatever it was, I'd down it, then I'd take them home, to bed.

YOUNG ADELE: Who? *(As ADELE shrugs.)* Name them.

ADELE: Got a phone book?

(ADELE and YOUNG ADELE laugh.)

It's just a blur of huffing hormones now. I gave it all up when I turned sixty. Same year as Jean got ordained. She found God, I turned celibate. Jean called it divine synchronicity. But for me – it was just a rapid decline in opportunity.

(JEAN has arrived with another drink.)

JEAN: Here.

(ADELE sips and makes a negative response.)

I had a taste – it's fine.

ADELE: Too sweet. Too much sugar.

JEAN: I'll try again. And I'll start dinner. We're having it early.

ADELE: Why?

JEAN: What've we been talking about! It's the end-of-summer service at St. Pete's, I'm being hauled out of mothballs for the historical

edification of some Yank, and I have to stand in the front of the lead boat like a *(Sniffs.)* very stink relic.

(YOUNG ADELE is wrapping up ADELE.)

ADELE: I don't want to miss that. But how are you getting there – you paddling?

(YOUNG JEAN is visible, off to one side.)

YOUNG ADELE: - Are we paddling to the dance – or is he swimming, too?

YOUNG JEAN: Father's lending us Hiatus.

(JEAN is moving off, holding her robes.)

JEAN: Jeffrey's taking me.

ADELE: In that awful boat! Where's Hiatus?

JEAN: Hiatus sank!

ADELE: Sank!

JEAN: - In the Back Channel. With dignity. It was rotting and no one wanted to keep it up, so Archie and I sank it. When – 1967. Yes, it was our Centennial project. We sank it in the Back Channel. Archie chopped a hole in the hull and down it went.

ADELE: I hope Archie remembered to jump out.

YOUNG ADELE: “Settling into the thick water.”

ADELE: It's not such a bad way to go.

JEAN: Tell that to Hiatus.

(JEAN is going in, with YOUNG JEAN.)

I'm still taking these abominations off.

YOUNG JEAN: I can't believe you went religious on me. Sometimes you're up there sermonizing – I want to choke at the absurdity of it all.

JEAN: *(Going in.)* You atheists are so delicate.

YOUNG JEAN: Where did I go wrong?

*(JEAN and YOUNG JEAN are off. PAUL has entered.
YOUNG ADELE is standing close to ADELE. ADELE is
plainly distracted by PAUL.)*

ADELE: That awful thing of Jeffrey's. It's like a rocket.

YOUNG ADELE: It shakes the lake.

PAUL: We shake the lake.

ADELE: You can't see over the front and if you look sideways everything's a blur. You want to barf. I'd be terrified to ride in it.

PAUL: You don't have a timid bone in your body.

ADELE: I do now. It scares the wits out of me just looking at it.

YOUNG ADELE: How do you think you got over here in June?

ADELE: Hiatus?

YOUNG ADELE: - Jeffrey brought you in his rocket. You sat up all the way from the marina, your face to the wind, crowing with joy.

ADELE: I was screaming in terror! It's not even wood – it's fibreglas or some such thing! Daddy is rolling in his grave.

PAUL: It's decadent.

ADELE: You'd know.

PAUL: All that polish and spit – just for a couple months' joyriding

YOUNG ADELE: - Does everything have to have a purpose?

PAUL: Your cousin would never ask that.

YOUNG ADELE: Jean's not here. And I think decadent is always good.

ADELE: "Within limits."

YOUNG ADELE: No limits.

ADELE: Big talk.

(JEAN and YOUNG JEAN are coming on scene. PAUL fades off.)

- JEAN: *(Returning with drink.)* I always thought I would pay someone to exhume Hiatus. Give it to Jeffrey. But I doubt his girlfriends would like it, and Jeffy doesn't seem interested in the old boats. So I've left it there, sunk. And to tell you the truth, I can't remember exactly where in the channel it is.
- ADELE: It's a shame to lose that boat. It was the pride of a proud company.
- JEAN: As I recall, you thought Kawartha Canoe was stupid.
- ADELE: I never thought it was stupid! I said you were stupid!
- JEAN: That's right. For wanting to run it.
- ADELE: For giving it away.
- YOUNG ADELE: It's our birthright!
- ADELE: Five pathetic years as a worker's co-op – the proudest boat company in the Dominion, down the toilet.
- YOUNG ADELE: Our grandfather and our fathers built that company.
- ADELE: Yes, they were builders then. Not appeasers. Not guilty liberals, not our fathers
- JEAN: - They were just the same as us. Minus the hindsight.
- YOUNG ADELE: And now you're turning it over to a bunch of uneducated, unmotivated
- ADELE: - Five years. That's got to be a record.
- JEAN: Yes, well, we all commit acts of less than perfect rationality. Which my cousin catches in her rear-view mirror.
- ADELE: I said so at the time!
- YOUNG ADELE: - You're stupid!
- ADELE: See.

YOUNG ADELE: - You're a fool! They'll destroy the place!

ADELE: (*"You've made your point."*) OK OK

YOUNG JEAN: (*Going off.*) – I'm a fool?!

ADELE: Now you've got her going.

YOUNG JEAN: How dare you say I'm the fool! You sit there and call me a fool?!
Go to hell!

(YOUNG JEAN exits. PAUL has come forward a bit.)

JEAN: Wow.

PAUL: - I better go after her.

YOUNG ADELE: She'll be back. It's my cottage. Five four three two one

JEAN: (*With her.*) three two one

ADELE: (*With them.*) two one

YOUNG JEAN: (*Storms back out.*) – You can both go to hell! You have no vision!
I can do it on my own!

(YOUNG JEAN storms off, to applause from JEAN. PAUL appears to follow YOUNG JEAN.)

YOUNG ADELE: Stay.

PAUL: I better not.

(PAUL follows YOUNG JEAN partly off. She is still yelling "Go to hell" from a distance.)

JEAN: One day Jeffy will become proud of the boats we made, and he'll sell his fibreglas horror. He'll restore himself a wood launch, like Hiatus. Next summer the Yank can have a real boat leading the parade. Children will wave. Flags'll dip.

ADELE: And pigs will fly in great, chubby flocks. (*Sigh.*) We were the most beautiful girls on the lake.

JEAN: You were. I had the best boat.

YOUNG ADELE: "The afternoon dazzle".

ADELE: Yes, someone said that.

PAUL: Like a field of diamonds.

ADELE: Was it one of the dreadful Copelands?

JEAN: I married a Copeland!

ADELE: No, far too clever for a Copeland. Especially your husband Archie. The big splash at the shallow end of the gene pool. No, someone else said it.

PAUL: You dazzle me.

ADELE: People said things like that, then.

JEAN: Out of dime store novels.

ADELE: At least they said it.

JEAN: They never meant it. At least Archie would've meant it.

ADELE: He was too stupid to lie. Oh, I did have a certain licentious charm, and you had hair like rapids, wild black rapids. Until you went to university and got that god-awful cut. During your Trotsky phase.

JEAN: I was never a Trot.

ADELE: You were something serious.

JEAN: I wasn't a Trot. Finish your drink.

(JEAN goes to one side and takes robes down from where they've been airing. She begins taking off the Native motifs. ADELE lies back. They mostly watch the next scene. YOUNG JEAN and YOUNG ADELE burst back on, and are embracing, enjoying their reunion.)

YOUNG ADELE: Welcome back, stranger!

YOUNG JEAN: Stranger, yourself!

YOUNG ADELE: You've cut your hair!

YOUNG JEAN: *(Sniffing.)* What's this?

YOUNG ADELE: "Evening in Patee".

YOUNG JEAN: You look so – sophisticated.

YOUNG ADELE: And you look so – intelligent. All that short hair. Archie will be devastated.

YOUNG JEAN: To hell with Archie. God, ten months! Feels like a decade!

YOUNG ADELE: You never wrote.

YOUNG JEAN: Every week!

YOUNG ADELE: Political diatribes don't count!

YOUNG JEAN: They were reasoned arguments. But you – poetry that doesn't rhyme?

YOUNG ADELE: *(Laughing.)* Burn it. I'm moving on to prose.

(YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN are laughing. YOUNG ADELE looks up and sees PAUL, who has entered and has been standing off to one side, watching the cousins' reunion. ADELE has heaved herself into a sitting position, and watches, also.)

ADELE: Oh.

YOUNG ADELE: - Oh!

ADELE: - Paul.

YOUNG JEAN: Addie – Paul Sloan. My cousin, Adele Findlay, the first, the only.

PAUL: *(Shaking hands.)* Hello.

YOUNG JEAN: Paul's staying with us, on Findlay West.

YOUNG ADELE: He's staying on your island.

YOUNG JEAN: *(To PAUL.)* This is Adele's family's island – Findlay East.

PAUL: *(Releasing YOUNG ADELE's hand.)* Jean's told me about you.

YOUNG ADELE: *(Recovering.)* How much?

PAUL: Everything, every last detail

YOUNG ADELE: - Yes, she's accurate, my cousin. A month ago I might have called her predictable. But she's cut her hair and brought you, neither of which was predictable. So now, she's only accurate.

ADELE: Already you're starting.

YOUNG ADELE: Am not!

ADELE: *(Pulling at her.)* Then go inside. Right now. Go, shoo.

YOUNG ADELE: Not on your life. *(To others.)* Time is not predictable, but a clock is accurate. Jean's a regular Big Ben. It's from her father. My father says you should never let facts get in the way of a good story. Jean's father believes in accuracy, a liberal God, and the conservative use of nails.

PAUL: My father believed in repetition and volume.

YOUNG ADELE: Most men do.

(JEAN is watching now.)

ADELE: *(To YOUNG JEAN.)* For the love of God, say something!

YOUNG JEAN: Uh – Paul's got three papers to complete for his degree.

ADELE: No – flirt with him!

YOUNG JEAN: Huh?

ADELE: Flirt!

YOUNG JEAN: This is the perfect place to concentrate on essays.

(ADELE groans in despair.)

YOUNG ADELE: *(To PAUL.)* I've always just seen it as the perfect place.

PAUL: I live in a boarding house – it's very noisy.

YOUNG JEAN: It's right on Dundas and the streetcars – I'm going to borrow a typewriter from the factory.

YOUNG ADELE: Oh, that's nice. Underwoods clattering across the channel. Uh – hmmm. The rap of keys, the slam of returning carriages. Lake Kawartha – home of loons and stenography. *(To PAUL.)* Might my cousin and I have a word?

YOUNG JEAN: Paul – I left Addie's present in the canoe.

PAUL: Sure, sure. I'll get it.

(PAUL exits. YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN watch him go, then square off. JEAN has gone back in; ADELE looks on.)

YOUNG ADELE: Who is he!

YOUNG JEAN: He's a friend. What was all that? The slam of typewriters?

YOUNG ADELE: He's here until August?

YOUNG JEAN: Yes.

YOUNG ADELE: The whole summer!

YOUNG JEAN: He'll be studying all day!

YOUNG ADELE: *(Realizing.)* He's the Trotskyite! He's the one you're always on about in your letters!

YOUNG JEAN: I thought you didn't read them?

YOUNG ADELE: I can hardly wait to hear what everyone says.

YOUNG JEAN: I don't give a shit what they say.

YOUNG ADELE: Ooh – she swears.

(YOUNG ADELE is leaving, heading towards the cottage.)

YOUNG JEAN: Where are you going?

YOUNG ADELE: I'm getting a drink. One of us swears, one of us drinks.

YOUNG JEAN: May I get something for Paul?

(YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN are exiting.)

He is my guest, after all.

YOUNG ADELE: *(Going off.)* Well we certainly don't want to treat him like shit.

*(YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN have exited.
ADELE is sitting up alone. She looks around. PAUL enters,
carrying a parcel.)*

PAUL: Where'd they go?

ADELE: That way. But it's ugly.

PAUL: Jean warned me you wouldn't want me here. You don't like change.

ADELE: I was just going through the motions. The groin'll kick in any minute. So come here prairie boy, come take a load off.

(PAUL sits beside ADELE.)

There. This is nice. It's not often so quiet around here. Jean's been fussing about me all summer like a bug on a screen. I had a little stroke this spring. Well, three of them. Jean and her boy Tom, he's a man now, I guess he must be 50, or 55, or 60; Jean and Tom had to come down to Montreal and rescue me. And a few other things have gone on the fritz. So she's looking after me; but actually she's in worse shape than I am. I can't move, but she's rotting away.

PAUL: What do you mean?

ADELE: Cancer. Oh, it's a terrible thing. You should be able to assign illness. By proxy. I could take it all on and she could hang about these islands for another decade. Where are my manners!?! You thirsty after your trip?

PAUL: A bit.

ADELE: Try a sip of this.

(PAUL tries ADELE's drink; makes a face.)

PAUL: Phew.

ADELE: Bad huh.

PAUL: It's so bitter.

ADELE: Second. Listen. If you and Jean aren't Trotskyites, and you aren't a Bolshie

PAUL: - How do you know I'm not?

ADELE: Too good looking. Only thing I know about politics – the further right you go, the handsomer the men. Jean always hated that theory. You're the exception that proves the rule. So, what are you exactly? Just an ordinary garden variety socialist?

PAUL: Yeah. Sorry.

ADELE: Any seven year plans up your sleeve?

PAUL: Oh, just change the world.

ADELE: Starting with bedding little Miss Adele?

PAUL: It's a beginning. You liberate the libido, you liberate nations. It's all the same revolution.

ADELE: That's socialism?

PAUL: As I practice it.

ADELE: Well I'll be damned. I spent fifty years voting for the wrong party. But listen, if sex is so important to the revolution, why aren't you sleeping with Jean?

PAUL: Maybe I am.

ADELE: Can't fool me. She's desperate for liberation but I'm the one you're sizing up for invasion.

PAUL: Would that be so bad?

ADELE: What's one more army? (*Touching PAUL.*) When I first saw you

PAUL: - You threw a tantrum.

ADELE: That was to cover up.

PAUL: I know.

ADELE: I'm that transparent?

PAUL: Yes.

ADELE: Do you remember my skin?

(PAUL is touching her.)

No – before.

PAUL: Yes.

ADELE: Because I haven't forgotten yours.

(PAUL is unbuttoning his shirt for her.)

It's exactly as I remember.

PAUL: Your hair spreads over the rock.

ADELE: We swim the Back Channel, where no one comes.

PAUL: Adam and Eve.

ADELE: Another couple on the road to hell.

PAUL: But we don't care.

ADELE: We don't care.

(The other three enter. YOUNG JEAN has two beers, one of which she hands to PAUL. YOUNG ADELE has a drink, probably gin, and a small parcel. JEAN has a drink for ADELE.)

YOUNG ADELE: - He can keep Archie Copeland at bay.

YOUNG JEAN: *(To PAUL.)* Hear that? You're on guard duty!

(PAUL is crossing to them.)

JEAN: - Why are you sitting up?

ADELE: I wanted to see over to the Back Channel.

PAUL: *(Holding up parcel.)* It got a little wet in the boat.

YOUNG ADELE: Hiatus is leaking.

JEAN: - That's really bright. You'll topple over and roll into the drink with Hiatus.

ADELE: Wouldn't be such a bad way to go.

(PAUL hands parcel to YOUNG ADELE.)

YOUNG JEAN: You won't like it.

(YOUNG ADELE hands YOUNG JEAN her parcel. JEAN is making ADELE lie back.)

YOUNG ADELE: You'll hate this.

JEAN: Back you go. And here's your drink.

ADELE: Forget rolling into the Back Channel. I'm going to wash away in a torrent of pee.

JEAN: It has to be every half hour.

(PAUL, YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN have raised their glasses. ADELE does the same. JEAN doesn't have a drink, but will reach out and steady ADELE's hand.)

YOUNG JEAN: To summer

PAUL: - To summer

YOUNG ADELE: - To summer

ADELE: - Down the sewer.

(YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN begin opening their presents.)

YOUNG ADELE: Too soft for political tracts.

YOUNG JEAN: *(Opening hers.)* A McGill scarf?

YOUNG ADELE: For those cold picket lines. (*Opens hers; it's a University of Toronto sweater, the same one that ADELE has draped over herself.*) Oh: a U of T jersey.

PAUL: For all those bitter days window-shopping on St. Catherine.

YOUNG ADELE: I don't window-shop.

(Awkward pause.)

YOUNG JEAN: Did you see along the shoreline?

PAUL: It's beautiful.

YOUNG JEAN: Adele writes about it.

YOUNG ADELE: Drop dead.

YOUNG JEAN: Fiction. About the animals.

YOUNG ADELE: Hush up.

PAUL: I'd like to read it.

YOUNG ADELE: You won't get the chance. I'm developing a style. It's not there yet.

YOUNG JEAN: She's very good. She'll be published some day. The book's a – damn – what's the word?

YOUNG ADELE: Allegory. Now shut up.

YOUNG JEAN: The animals stand in for humans and have adventures – it's set right here! There's a passage where a Great Blue Heron falls from the sky right on that rock and

YOUNG ADELE: - Jean!

(Another awkward pause.)

Anyway, I'm new to fiction. Mostly I've written poetry.

PAUL: I know. Jean's shown me some.

YOUNG JEAN: Oh oh.

YOUNG ADELE: She did.

PAUL: Why can't it rhyme?

YOUNG ADELE: Not everything is written for chanting.

(Light down on YOUNG ADELE, PAUL and YOUNG JEAN. PAUL will move away, perhaps "watched off" by JEAN with her binoculars. Focus is now more strongly on ADELE and JEAN.)

ADELE: Let me look.

JEAN: I'm focusing. There.

ADELE: *(Looking.)* The Dobsons have their winter battens up. *(Scanning with her binoculars.)* Is that Tom sweeping the dock at St. Peter's?

JEAN: Probably.

ADELE: He looks ancient.

JEAN: He's a pup. He'll be 60 next March.

ADELE: No!

JEAN: Add it up. He was born in '39, you were 22

ADELE: - I was 21. What the hell year is this? Never mind. I don't want to know. *(Still looking.)* There's something flying back and forth. *(Checks front of binoculars, then looks out again.)* Like a silverfish.

(YOUNG ADELE and YOUNG JEAN have a pair of binoculars between them; it's a bit of a wrestling match.)

YOUNG ADELE: *(Looking.)* Back and forth, back and forth

JEAN: *(Looking.)* - That's our Jeffy. He says his boat's the fastest one on the lake.

YOUNG JEAN: *(Taking binoculars.)* Paul's under tremendous pressure to get his year. His scholarships are hanging in the balance.

(ADELE has stopped watching the lake now, and is watching PAUL swim. Her binocular movements mirror those of YOUNG ADELE and JEAN.)

ADELE: *(Looking.)* Back and forth, back and forth.

JEAN: You'd think he'd find it monotonous.

ADELE: *(Looking.)* So powerful

JEAN: - He's too young for such a big boat.

(JEAN checks her watch.)

Oh – time for a drink. Every fifteen minutes now.

(JEAN exits with an empty glass. YOUNG JEAN and YOUNG ADELE are watching PAUL. ADELE also watches for a while, then dozes off.)

YOUNG ADELE: Why didn't he get his year in May, like everyone else?

YOUNG JEAN: Too busy.

YOUNG ADELE: With you?

YOUNG JEAN: No. Spain.

YOUNG ADELE: *(Mock heroic.)* Spain.

YOUNG JEAN: Christ Addie, would you grow up!

YOUNG ADELE: What'd I do! I say "Spain" and you jump down my throat!

YOUNG JEAN: You didn't say "Spain", you said "Spain". I'm sick of your digs! You know, if you'd read a newspaper you might find it helps your poetry. You want to write about – pinecones and – herons with broken wings – fine, go corner the market. But don't stand there saying "Spain" like he's – like we're misguided fools because it's wrong, it's wrong to mock.

YOUNG ADELE: I'm not mocking!

YOUNG JEAN: You are! You always are!

YOUNG ADELE: It's just me, it's a charming idiosyncrasy.

YOUNG JEAN: It's arrogant and it's just too damn easy.

YOUNG ADELE: We weren't all born bleeding for the world.

YOUNG JEAN: We were born the same. We've made different choices.

YOUNG ADELE: Your choice is better of course.

YOUNG JEAN: Actually, it is. You're so – so goddamn cynical. Oh – you have other words for it. "The pursuit of beauty". "The artist's life".

YOUNG ADELE: You don't understand.

YOUNG JEAN: There are artists – who are creating – who right now are writing and painting and saying things about what needs to be changed, but you're not one of them, Miss Blank Verse 1938.

YOUNG ADELE: Philistine.

YOUNG JEAN: Yup. I'm a Philistine. And proud of it!

(YOUNG JEAN turns and starts to move off, but JEAN is coming back and catches her by the arm. They quarrel out of the earshot of both ADELE and YOUNG ADELE.)

JEAN: So who's being evasive here?

YOUNG JEAN: I don't know what you're talking about.

JEAN: If you're going to fight her, at least be clear what you're fighting over.

YOUNG JEAN: She's a parasite!

JEAN: Uh huh.

YOUNG JEAN: Her writing's worthless!

JEAN: And what did all my diligent labour add up to?

YOUNG JEAN: More than that.

JEAN: I'm not so sure. But I do know what's bugging you. You're mad because deep down you worry you'd give it all up for him. Which would be appalling. Paul's just a fork in the road. Nothing more. A wrenching one, but nothing more.

(JEAN goes off. YOUNG JEAN turns back to YOUNG ADELE. She calms herself.)

YOUNG JEAN: I'm sorry. I'm sorry about the poetry. I'm sorry I showed it to Paul. It's good; I wanted to share it. I'm sorry I yelled at you; you hit a nerve. I'm worn out. I want to yell at the world. Not you.

YOUNG ADELE: Apology accepted. As always.

YUONG JEAN: You wonder why Paul's swimming like that, I can tell you. Things are bad in Spain. Worse than bad. It's over. He won't admit it, he still says he's going over, still wants us to carry on, but it's finished. Mackenzie King's made it illegal to volunteer, the deaths are incredible, the retreats are in full swing. *(Pause.)* A lot of us think this is just a dress rehearsal. Addie, there's going to be a war.

YOUNG ADELE: I know this!

YOUNG JEAN: Then how can you sit back! *(Pause.)* Never mind. Let's not get into it again. *(Sigh.)* Father's going to hit the roof when he sees my grades. I spent more time at factory gates than in class. There's a nasty paradox for you – me shivering with my shoebox, begging money from the poor, so we can send other poor sods overseas to get killed by poor conscripts fighting for the rich. *(Pause.)* And to see it all going up in smoke. *(Pause; relenting.)* And I don't even have a dress for tonight.

YOUNG ADELE: You're coming?

YOUNG JEAN: Time to break old Archie's heart.

YOUNG ADELE: Paul's coming?

YOUNG JEAN: He can swim over. So – the dress?

YOUNG ADELE: Take your pick. And can you bring back my cigs – I think they're on the dresser.

(YOUNG JEAN exits. YOUNG ADELE looks out to where PAUL should be, but can't locate him.)

Where is he?

ADELE: *(Stirring.)* Paul?

(PAUL enters, coming up behind YOUNG ADELE, startling her.)

YOUNG ADELE: Where'd you go? I lost sight –

PAUL: Were you worried?

YOUNG ADELE: Of course not –

PAUL: I swam around the point to the Back Channel. Where's Jean?

YOUNG ADELE: Inside, picking out a dress. She'll be hours. She's such a debutante.

PAUL: Why do I have trouble believing that? So – where's the dance?

YOUNG ADELE: Juniper. *(Handing him the binoculars.)* The island, one over from the Copelands'. *(Aims his binoculars.)* See the pavilion? There's a swing band tonight. But of course – you wouldn't be interested.

(JEAN is watching YOUNG ADELE flirt. ADELE dozes.)

PAUL: What makes you think that?

YOUNG ADELE: Isn't dancing a bit – frivolous?

PAUL: What's wrong with that? I often get a bit – frivolous.

YOUNG ADELE: Prove it.

PAUL: I was walking a picket line the day before we came up here – Jean and I and a few others. We're trudging back and forth, absolutely grim, not a smile for miles, completely unfrivolous. We were singing some fizzy little tune – oh, what was it – 'The Internationale'. And all of a sudden I get this urge to skip.

YOUNG ADELE: Skip.

PAUL: Honest Injun.

(YOUNG JEAN has reappeared wearing new dress.)

YOUNG ADELE: Jean'll be glad you're coming. She can show you off.

PAUL: Why would she do that?

(YOUNG JEAN starts over to them.)

JEAN: Wait.

(JEAN stops YOUNG JEAN and fixes her dress, pulling it tighter at the waist, pulling the neckline down a bit etc.)

I can't believe I'm doing this.

YOUNG JEAN: *(As JEAN is working, to ADELE and PAUL.)* So – what do you think?

PAUL: Looks great.

ADELE: *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* You can top that.

YOUNG ADELE: I better find myself something.

YOUNG JEAN: *(To JEAN, who is still industriously adjusting.)* OK OK, enough.

ADELE: - The yellow one.

(YOUNG ADELE is running off. YOUNG JEAN and PAUL are also exiting.)

YOUNG JEAN: We should go home and get ready.

(JEAN has come to ADELE. She props her up a bit, and keeps her drinking.)

JEAN: Here.

ADELE: Isn't this too much?

JEAN: Every fifteen minutes.

ADELE: I'll start hallucinating. I already dozed off and dreamt about Paul.

(JEAN takes drink away.)

JEAN: OK, we'll slow up.

ADELE: I wish I knew what happened to him. I always imagined he ended up in Africa somewhere, leading a revolutionary movement. Or running a bar for retired Trots, on the Isle of Capri. *(Laughs.)* Here I am, here we are – it's this time and I'm wondering about – him. Stupid eh.

JEAN: Very stupid.

ADELE: The most logical thing would be he went back to Saskatoon and joined the CCF.

JEAN: *(Pause.)* He's dead.

ADELE: Yes, that's possible.

JEAN: No – he is dead. It's quite pathetic really. He fell.

ADELE: How do you know this!?

JEAN: I kept in contact over the years. His – widow wrote me with the news.

ADELE: You were writing to him?

JEAN: Just at Christmas. He had a right to know, to have pictures of Tom.

ADELE: You never told me this!

JEAN: Why the hell would I? What would you have done – hopped the Concorde to England and broken up his marriage? He had a wife!

ADELE: And children?

JEAN: Three. And grandchildren.

ADELE: You never told me.

JEAN: *(Pause.)* I met him once. For tea.

ADELE: You saw him!

JEAN: When I was MP. The only perk I ever got in my fleeting political career – a trip to England. For a conference on cod. Nowadays MPs go everywhere but all I got was one fish convention because the Minister was ill and someone remembered my family made boats. I snuck out of the conference and phoned Paul; he came up to London. Lunch was a disaster. Paul was teaching at some new university. Political thought. Now there's an oxymoron: political thought. He bragged he was a respected academic – there's another one. Said he had tenure, but he was so bitter. He was sarcastic about the boat company – said he knew I'd never make a go of it. Said the co-op model never works. Said I was nuts to go into politics, then spent an hour describing the infighting in his department. It was the longest couple of hours I'd ever spent; Tom

and I enduring the bleating of this tenured old shrew with tufts of hair sprouting from his ears.

ADELE: No!

JEAN: And a mottled, porous nose.

ADELE: No!

JEAN: Obviously a drinker.

ADELE: You took Tom!

JEAN: I was incredibly depressed. But kind of vindicated at the same time. I always knew Paul was a fraud, right from Day One.

ADELE: Did he ask about me?

JEAN: No. *(Seeing her reaction.)* Yes. Of course. He'd read your book. He wanted to know if you'd ever written a sequel.

ADELE: He's dead?

JEAN: Fell. At a garden party. Tripped over a croquet hoop.

ADELE: Paul!

JEAN: Do you hate me for telling you?

ADELE: I hate when you don't tell me things. You really never told me this before?

JEAN: No.

ADELE: If I seem shocked – it's because it's nothing like I'd imagined. I could've invented much better. Skewered by Mau Maus. Strafed by Stukas. But a croquet hoop? *(Starts to laugh.)* Oh Jesus, I don't mean to laugh, but... A croquet hoop?

JEAN: *(Trying to stay solemn.)* Yes.

ADELE: It's so – so

JEAN: - The middle hoop, I believe.

ADELE: *(Now really laughing.)* He was off to fight the fascists.

JEAN: *(Laughing too.)* Face first, right on the damn ball.

ADELE: The red one?!

JEAN: We shouldn't be laughing.

ADELE: Who's laughing?

JEAN: Not me.

(They laugh some more and then that ends. JEAN hands ADELE her drink, and stirs it. ADELE reaches for it with two hands.)

JEAN: We can only hope to go with dignity.

ADELE: That's the best thing.

JEAN: So drink. Drink.

(Lights down on JEAN and ADELE. Music. It's after the dance. PAUL and YOUNG ADELE are on the verandah, dancing. YOUNG JEAN is watching. They have drinks and cigarettes and are wearing their party dresses.)

PAUL: How much proof do you need?

YOUNG ADELE: A bit more.

PAUL: I took lessons.

YOUNG JEAN: When did you have time?

PAUL: Three summers ago, when I worked at the Y.

YOUNG JEAN: *(Cuts in.)* I can't picture you in a dance class.

PAUL: I was lonely. I'd just come to Toronto. I didn't know anyone east of Lake Superior. I was a sitting duck; I'd have done anything for a smile.

YOUNG JEAN: I hate to think of you like that.

PAUL: The gym was full of people just like me: a hundred lonely immigrants from small towns, stopping starting, shuffling about with partners we'd been assigned.

YOUNG ADELE: (*Cuts in.*) May I? I bet there was a stampede for you.

PAUL: I was a wallflower.

YOUNG ADELE: No.

PAUL: Two left feet, couldn't even make conversation because I was too busy counting off.

YOUNG ADELE: My father taught us.

PAUL: You're lucky.

YOUNG JEAN: (*Cuts in.*) Why's that luck? What use is it? God – I am sounding a bit like father. He won't dance – he only works.

PAUL: Which is amazing in itself.

YOUNG JEAN: Why?

PAUL: That he does. Work so much. Your father and your uncle going back to the city every Sunday night, leaving their islands to spend the week at their factory in Ashburnham. If I was your Dad

YOUNG JEAN: - You're nothing like him!

(*YOUNG ADELE cuts in.*)

PAUL: If I was your father, I'd never leave here.

YOUNG ADELE: Isn't that revisionist thinking?

PAUL: Depends on what I do here to fill my time.

YOUNG ADELE: I'll be the soul of discretion.

PAUL: Who was the fellow trailing her all night?

YOUNG JEAN: I can hear.

YOUNG ADELE: Weren't you introduced? That's the famous Archie Copeland.

YOUNG JEAN: Who are you talking about?

YOUNG ADELE: The great tidal bore.

YOUNG JEAN: Oh, Archie.

PAUL: I met him. I mean, “who” is he?

YOUNG ADELE: The Copelands have the third island over. Archie’s been crazy about Jean ever since she shoved him off her dock when they were six. Daddy had to leap in and save him.

YOUNG JEAN: I still hate him.

YOUNG ADELE: They’re fated to marry

YOUNG JEAN: - I’ll rot in hell first

YOUNG ADELE: - And breed hundreds of little Archies.

PAUL: If you hate him so much, why’d you spend the whole night dancing with him?

(YOUNG ADELE swings him out of earshot.)

YOUNG ADELE: Because you were dancing with me.

(Lights back up on JEAN and ADELE. JEAN bends over ADELE who is holding up her drink and making a face.)

ADELE: The Hemlock Society’s going to have your ass.

JEAN: I’ll add sugar.

ADELE: You’d think they’d supply a proper recipe.

JEAN: They did. But it’s very technical. You practically have to be a pharmacist. I’m doing my best.

ADELE: Well something’s wrong. Because I’m wider awake than I’ve been most of my life. Maybe I’m like Rasputin. You’ll have to tie rocks to my ankles and throw me in the Back Channel.

YOUNG ADELE: Sink her with Hiatus.

PAUL: Drop her from the flagpole.

ADELE: Sentence me to a weekend with Archie.

JEAN: I'll get you another drink.

ADELE: Was it something I said?

(YOUNG ADELE and PAUL have stopped dancing near ADELE. JEAN is going in. As she passes YOUNG JEAN she picks up a pack of cigarettes and slaps them into YOUNG JEAN's hand.)

JEAN: You are criminally dense.

YOUNG JEAN: What's that supposed to mean?

JEAN: Don't leave them alone.

YOUNG JEAN: Who. Them? Oil and water.

(With a nod, JEAN indicates to YOUNG JEAN that she should take the cigarettes and gin and get over with YOUNG ADELE and PAUL. JEAN goes off and YOUNG JEAN joins the others.)

I owe you a medal.

PAUL: Me?

YOUNG JEAN: For delivering me from Archie.

YOUNG ADELE: We're somewhat starved for novelty.

PAUL: Ah – I'm a novelty.

YOUNG ADELE: It's been the same old crowd forever. Jean and I know every sweaty palm, every gust of halitosis

YOUNG JEAN: - Who can be trusted to be a gentleman

YOUNG ADELE: - And who can be relied upon to grope. There's the Copelands if you want to die of boredom, and the Dobsons if you just want to die. The Dobson's prove Darwinism. They should have been introduced at that trial in Kentucky

YOUNG JEAN: - Tennessee.

YOUNG ADELE: The Dobson brain cannot grasp machinery. They will die out any day now.

YOUNG JEAN: Last summer Mrs. Dobson gored herself on a can opener and nearly bled to death. And Bill sank their Packard on the long weekend – flew it off the bridge.

YOUNG ADELE: “Just got bored of driving.” And Ann piled their inboard up on the rocks in the Back Channel, almost blew herself to Spain. She got thrown fifty feet, and used the occasion to complete a perfect three point dive with a double pike.

*(YOUNG JEAN has been building up to say something.
YOUNG ADELE notices.)*

What?

YOUNG JEAN: I have something to tell you.

PAUL: Now?

YOUNG JEAN: She has to know.

PAUL: But

YOUNG ADELE: - Tell me what.

PAUL: Why not tomorrow?

YOUNG ADELE: What!?

YOUNG JEAN: I’m – I’m not actually going to spend summer here. I mean, I am, weekends, but otherwise, no. I spent the whole winter thinking, trying to decide what I should do, what I should do with my life. Didn’t really come up with any hard and fast conclusions. Did decide on one thing – it’s something to do with the factory.

YOUNG ADELE: What do you mean?

YOUNG JEAN: I think building boats is just as much in the core of me; it’s what drives me, just as much as these islands are what get you writing. There’s something at Kawartha Canoe that will tie together everything I’ve been feeling this past year. Things were happening everywhere else – and there I was, like I said, begging nickels and dimes, taking from the poor to fight the rich – when in the middle

of Ashburnham there's this factory that my family owns... I'm going to go work there.

YOUNG ADELE: To do what? Type letters? File?

YOUNG JEAN: I don't know.

YOUNG ADELE: Build boats?

YOUNG JEAN: Something.

YOUNG ADELE: And how's that better than this?

YOUNG JEAN: I didn't say "better".

YOUNG ADELE: That's the inference.

YOUNG JEAN: It's not either-or. It's just something I have to do.

YOUNG ADELE: *(To PAUL.)* Did you know about this? You probably talked her into it.

PAUL: It was Jean's idea.

YOUNG ADELE: You've got her so wound up she doesn't know if she's coming or going or why

YOUNG JEAN: - It was my decision!

YOUNG ADELE: Fine. Just fine. So much for summer. My cousin the Trotskyite must be with the people, the people she knows and loves so intimately, and her cousin will not stand in the way of this. Fine, wreck summer, wreck your summer, go to hell, just go to hell!

(YOUNG ADELE exits. PAUL and YOUNG JEAN stare after her. JEAN has seen this and ADELE was snapped awake by the yelling.)

YOUNG JEAN: Was I right or was I right?

PAUL: Why didn't you wait a day or two before springing it on her?

YOUNG JEAN: It wouldn't have made a difference. She hates having her plans disrupted. But hold on, she'll be back. Five four three two one

(YOUNG ADELE flies back out.)

YOUNG ADELE: This island is the preserve of the petit bourgeoisie. Workers of the world can get the fucking hell off!

(YOUNG ADELE slams back inside. Nervous laughter from the others.)

ADELE: I never said that.

JEAN: Oh yes you did.

ADELE: You were the one who swore like a trooper. I had a more eloquent approach to language.

YOUNG JEAN: Garbage.

ADELE: Listen. I want this on the record: I'm nearly eighty. I'm about to cross the bar. And in all my life, in all those years, I have never once, never once said the word "fuck". *(Long pause; clears throat.)* That doesn't count. That was the secondal talking.

YOUNG JEAN: *(To PAUL.)* We may as well go back to my island.

PAUL: - When's your steamer?

YOUNG JEAN: Six p.m. tomorrow. *(Looks at watch.)* Tonight.

PAUL: We better go.

(PAUL heads for dock.)

YOUNG JEAN: Paul?

(PAUL stops. JEAN and ADELE are watching this intently.)

PAUL: Yes?

YOUNG JEAN: Nothing.

PAUL: What.

YOUNG JEAN: Never mind.

PAUL: What!

YOUNG JEAN: It's just that – in twenty summers – Addie and I – we've never fought. So far this summer – we've done nothing but.

JEAN: Keep going...

(YOUNG JEAN seems to be at a loss.)

You could use some – *(Gropes for word.)*

ADELE: Comfort.

YOUNG JEAN: I can't say that.

ADELE: Try.

YOUNG JEAN: *(To PAUL.)* And well – there's this – I don't know how to say this – I could uh use some

PAUL: - Comfort?

(Pause.)

ADELE: For God's sake, give the poor thing a hug!

JEAN: Don't patronize me! He'll hug me – he doesn't need you telling him.

(PAUL has indeed put his arms out.)

See?

(YOUNG JEAN at first almost seems not to understand, and JEAN has to give her a little push. PAUL puts his arms around YOUNG JEAN, his intent apparently to comfort. YOUNG JEAN awkwardly puts her arms around him. JEAN has picked up her scissors.)

PAUL: It's not good fighting.

YOUNG JEAN: We want such different things.

PAUL: The whole world's fighting; maybe it has to be the same here.

(PAUL and YOUNG JEAN stand there for a moment. Then YOUNG JEAN lifts her head, as if expecting a kiss, which might seem the inevitable outcome of such an embrace, in

that situation, so late at night. And then PAUL does kiss her; a highly ambiguous kiss. It's a kiss with a definite beginning and end, a formal structure – and a different meaning for both participants.)

YOUNG JEAN: Race you to the boat!

JEAN: Damn!

(PAUL and YOUNG JEAN race off; PAUL exits completely and YOUNG JEAN stops near JEAN, because she sees JEAN working away at the designs on the stole or vestments.)

Off they go!

ADELE: Archie's sister spent two summers "creating" those! It's the only remotely interesting thing Mary ever did!

YOUNG JEAN: It's the only remotely interesting thing you've ever worn!

JEAN: I thought you hated me being clergy! *(To ADELE.)* So where do you suppose Mary Copeland got the design?

ADELE: Out of her feeble head.

JEAN: Exactly!

(JEAN continues tearing off the panels.)

ADELE: Jean!

YOUNG JEAN: She read a book on 'Native Lore'. Well, maybe not "read". Not Mary. But she looked at the pictures intently.

JEAN: They're not authentic! And they shouldn't be on robes used in a Christian service.

YOUNG JEAN: Indians are Christians!

JEAN: That's not the point.

ADELE: What is the point?

JEAN: I'm not going over to St. Peter's to bless a bunch of Yanks when I'm wearing a lot of pseudo-aboriginal hoo-haw whipped up by some IQ-challenged Copeland. It's politically incorrect.

(YOUNG JEAN and ADELE stare blankly at JEAN.)

To think that I preached in that church for fifteen summers wearing these abominations!

YOUNG JEAN: - You're mad!

JEAN: I may be ancient but I'm not too old to see the light.

ADELE: Mary Copeland will be so upset.

JEAN: Mary's dead! She's been dead for years! Everyone's dead!

ADELE: *(Pause.)* Archie's dead?

JEAN: Extremely dead!

ADELE: You're sure.

JEAN: Positive.

YOUNG JEAN: She dumped his ashes off the wharf.

ADELE: - Because sometimes it was hard to tell with Archie. I'd see him on your verandah, just sitting there, hour after hour, and I'd think, "Oh God, Arch has finally bitten it." And then you'd fire up the barbeque and he'd open one eye. And somewhere on the lake someone'd rattle an ice cube tray. He'd open the other one. And I'd give a big sigh of relief: "Archie's made another Happy Hour."

JEAN: He meant well.

ADELE: You pushed him out of Hiatus when you were eight and he never stopped loving you.

JEAN: We were ten and it was the wharf at Juniper.

YOUNG JEAN: You were six and it was at St. Peter's.

JEAN: He made a good father. Tom worshipped him.

ADELE: Yes, he filled the breach, poor dead Archie.

(JEAN and ADELE share a little laugh.)

YOUNG JEAN: I don't know how you can laugh about it!

JEAN: How else can you deal with death?

YOUNG JEAN: No, I mean, being married to Archie.

JEAN: It wasn't so bad.

YOUNG JEAN: You might have found somebody – better.

JEAN: In my dreams.

ADELE: Mary's going to be devastated tonight, when you get up there all denuded.

JEAN: *(Sighs.)* She won't get past the mothballs.

(JEAN holds robes to ADELE's face. ADELE pushes her away, laughing.)

ADELE: So where's the benediction?

JEAN: In my head.

ADELE: Better write it out. Otherwise you'll forget.

(JEAN and YOUNG JEAN are moving off a bit.)

JEAN: I'm going off the cuff. I've been collecting phrases all summer. Been at it since May. Never had your unholy alliance with words though; when I speak they come out bald. You were famous for yours.

ADELE: My what.

JEAN: Words.

ADELE: Where was I famous.

JEAN: Everywhere. Because of your book. I'll bring it out for you when I leave.

ADELE: Don't bother.

JEAN: Anyway, it's been fifteen summers since I was ordained. It's not going to be sixteen.

ADELE: You have to make this one count – so write it out!

YOUNG JEAN: Hold on here! We were fighting the religion!

JEAN: - It wasn't religion we were against

YOUNG JEAN: - And now you've bought into the whole lie

JEAN: - It was just the way religion was behaving itself. In Spain. But things can change. You're so old-fashioned in your prejudices. It's your youth. Faith scares you. *(To ADELE.)* I have to stand up there and make the words waltz like you made them, and they have to be for Tom and for our grandson

ADELE: - Jeffy

JEAN: - And the granddaughters. Uh.

ADELE: - Whatsit and Whosit.

JEAN: Exactly. I don't want their last memory of me to be me standing there, looking like Pocahontas's worst nightmare.

(JEAN and YOUNG JEAN move off a bit. Focus is on YOUNG ADELE and PAUL, setting up a Mahjong or Scrabble game. They are sitting close to ADELE.)

YOUNG ADELE: Your family – you have one?

PAUL: Yes.

YOUNG ADELE: And they're exotic?

PAUL: Uh – not the word I'd use.

YOUNG ADELE: Exiled nobility.

PAUL: In Saskatchewan?

YOUNG ADELE: European nobles on the lam on the trackless prairie.

PAUL: Try a socialist preacher with a bitter wife. Try four scared kids. Try about twenty pulpits in twenty stinking villages. You know my chief memory growing up? Looking out the back window of our Dodge, watching the gravel spit up as yet another town fades off. Dad purged from another pulpit because he never learned to tell them what they wanted to hear. But that's him, that's a world away. You don't want to know about it.

YOUNG ADELE: I do.

PAUL: I don't want to tell it.

YOUNG ADELE: Why.

PAUL: You'll put it into blank verse. Come on. Tell me about McGill.

YOUNG ADELE: Nothing to tell. I took the required subjects. Lived in residence. We played Bridge. Every night. I'm afraid that's my dominant memory of McGill. Bridge. Did you. Play?

PAUL: No.

YOUNG ADELE: Did Jean. In her dorm?

PAUL: I doubt it.

YOUNG ADELE: Does she have a nice room?

PAUL: I've never seen it.

YOUNG ADELE: We were very good at smuggling men into ours.

PAUL: Perhaps the University of Toronto is stricter about those things.

YOUNG ADELE: She's a good worker. I'm not surprised she's gone off to the factory. And I'm sorry about my little temper the other day. But I miss her.

PAUL: Yes.

YOUNG ADELE: And you – do you miss her?

PAUL: Of course.

YOUNG ADELE: Jean can be very closed-mouthed about things.

PAUL: Then ask me.

YOUNG ADELE: Ask what.

PAUL: What you so desperately want to ask.

YOUNG ADELE: Are you?

PAUL: No.

YOUNG ADELE: Not at all?

PAUL: No.

YOUNG ADELE: Do you want to be?

PAUL: Does she?

YOUNG ADELE: Yes.

PAUL: Is that what she said?

YOUNG ADELE: Do you find her pretty?

PAUL: Jean and I raise money to send volunteers to Spain. We're good at it. We work hard. I'm chairman of the campus group, Jean's treasurer. We go to class, separately, then we go out and raise money. Together. We're not involved.

YOUNG ADELE: She wants to be.

(PAUL grabs YOUNG ADELE's arm.)

PAUL: What do you want from me?

(YOUNG ADELE shakes him off.)

YOUNG ADELE: Nothing.

PAUL: Don't lie.

(PAUL grabs YOUNG ADELE's arm again.)

You've been after something ever since Jean left for the city.

YOUNG ADELE: Don't flatter yourself.

PAUL: I know what it is.

YOUNG ADELE: I don't like my tiles.

(YOUNG ADELE knocks down the wall of tiles.)

You don't know a damn thing.

(PAUL grabs her harder this time, and holds her wrist up.)

PAUL: I know all about you rich girls.

YOUNG ADELE: Ah – it's a class struggle.

PAUL: With one notable exception, I've discovered rich girls can't tell the truth.

YOUNG ADELE: Why bother? The proletariat never listens.

PAUL: I know that rich girls get what they want.

YOUNG ADELE: Why not? They deserve it.

PAUL: Until they get what they deserve. But I look at your cousin and I have hope. When I look at you

YOUNG ADELE: - You see what.

(PAUL has moved his hand from clenching YOUNG ADELE's wrist, to her hand.)

You think it's that easy.

(PAUL lets her hand go.)

Swim back to Jean's island. Go back to your essays. Then, when Jean returns on the weekend from the industrial revolution you'll have something to show for your time here.

(YOUNG ADELE pushes the rest of the Mahjong tiles over. She pulls PAUL to her and kisses him hard. PAUL and YOUNG ADELE exit, in opposite directions. JEAN returns, carrying ADELE's book and wearing her now-correct robes.)

ADELE: What's that.

JEAN: Your book.

ADELE: Why're you tormenting me with that now?! It's a damn slim excuse for a life. Allegorical fluff. *(Pause.)* Does anyone still read it?

JEAN: Of course.

ADELE: Liar. I know what they say. The naturalists hate it because the animals talk. The kids hate it because it's not TV and no one gets killed. The women's libbers hate it because the men hunt and the women cook.

JEAN: - Stop it!

ADELE: It's the truth!

JEAN: *(Reads.)* "Seamless rock. Buckling pine. There are a million rustlings in the dark, a hundred thousand trips of the heart." You were smart to write it for children. They understand it at a level we never could.

ADELE: Oh cut the pretty-pretty, Jean.

JEAN: You won awards!

ADELE: I wrote a trivial kids book that a bunch of wankers decided was an important allegory.

JEAN: You touched a million readers, young and old.

ADELE: With gibberish. Entire forests died so my book could gather dust on library shelves. For God's sake, Jean, I'm dying! Don't bury me with cheerleading!

JEAN: "We lived in harmony once and one day peace would return to the island, but not today."

(Suddenly, ADELE sits bolt upright, her arms pressed about her. YOUNG ADELE appears, and is signaling with her lantern or flashlight.)

ADELE: Jean. Jean!

JEAN: What is it!

ADELE: I need you! You have to help me! You have to help me out of this!

(JEAN is pushing ADELE back down.)

JEAN: It's OK, it's all right (etc)

ADELE: What can I do!?

JEAN: Stop thrashing. Calm down. Calm down. There.

ADELE: *(Quieting.)* I've made such a mess.

JEAN: It's fixed. I'm fixing it. You lie there, I'll fix it all. Now I'm going to get you another drink. I'll be right back.

(JEAN goes inside. ADELE doesn't exactly watch the following, but is aware. PAUL comes out of the water. He walks towards her. PAUL and YOUNG ADELE meet, kiss, begin making love, the same love-making they will be doing when they are caught by YOUNG JEAN in Act II. The lamp dims, with the light coming back up on ADELE. JEAN emerges, with a drink. JEAN sits beside ADELE and props her up gently.)

It's OK. There. Drink this. Take a sip.

(ADELE reaches for the glass, taking it with both hands. She is helped by JEAN.)

Drink. Drink. Drink.

Light fades to black.

End of Act One.

Act Two

YOUNG ADELE and PAUL are sitting on ADELE's chaise. It is very clear they are lovers. ADELE is lying behind them, not yet visible.

YOUNG ADELE: Hard to imagine there was nothing here once but ice. Until just 12,000 years ago.

PAUL: Give or take an era.

YOUNG ADELE: All of a sudden the glacier went north.

PAUL: Looking for whatever great hunks of ice seek.

YOUNG ADELE: Gin. And now people come her to study these rocks. Specialists. Trying to figure out why the glaciers ever wanted to leave.

(Kissing gets a bit heavier.)

PAUL: I don't want to leave, ever.

(Kissing gets heavier.)

YOUNG ADELE: Then don't.

(ADELE is now visible.)

ADELE: I've died and gone to heaven.

(PAUL and YOUNG ADELE turn to her and are laughing.)

YOUNG ADELE: You wish.

PAUL: Anyway, I thought you hated me.

ADELE: From a distance. Hey – watch my drink. Jean'll have a fit if it's knocked over. She'll think I'm procrastinating.

(PAUL and YOUNG ADELE have focused on each other again.)

OK OK, as you were.

PAUL: I won't leave here.

YOUNG ADELE: Maybe I will.

PAUL: When.

YOUNG ADELE: The minute you start making rules.

ADELE: Liar.

YOUNG ADELE: Don't interrupt.

ADELE: - You'll stay away for decades.

YOUNG ADELE: Please?

ADELE: When Jean's bringing up Tom and it drives you mental watching her; you'll come up in the spring and fall but the summer will be too painful

YOUNG ADELE: - May I just have this moment with him?

PAUL: So you're telling me I'm not the first guy in your life?

(ADELE snorts.)

YOUNG ADELE: You already knew that.

PAUL: Are you telling me I won't be the last?

(ADELE snorts again.)

YOUNG ADELE: I could never be that honest with you.

ADELE: I will. You won't be the last. Not by a long shot. And you're nowhere near the best, either.

PAUL: You've gotten awful crabby in your old age.

ADELE: OK, you're in the top twenty.

PAUL: *(Kissing ADELE.)* Top twenty? Come on...

ADELE: Top ten. We're not falling for this. Top two.

PAUL: *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* These past weeks – I’ve seen a whole side to you – Jean always described you as a party girl, but that’s not you.

ADELE: *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* It’s a line.

YOUNG ADELE: If I’m not a party girl, what am I?

PAUL: An artist.

(ADELE heckles.)

There’s a sadness in you, a love for place, something that runs as deep as the Back Channel, something that makes you restless.

ADELE: Soon he’s going to tell you you dazzle him.

YOUNG ADELE: - It’s true I’ve got lots of friends at McGill – true that I went to a million parties and dances. But it never brought me comfort, never. I’d go up to the mountain, and I’d look down at the river

ADELE: - And squint through blurred eyes

YOUNG ADELE: - And tears

ADELE: - And I could almost imagine, just about imagine I was here.

YOUNG ADELE: Just about but not quite. *(To ADELE.)* That much is true, isn’t it?

ADELE: It’s true, all right. All those years I spent in exile because I couldn’t bear to look across that bit of water and see my Tom. Growing up. Over there. Not here. Couldn’t stand the guilt. Or the wanting to tell him, wanting so badly to just let it drop. Casually. In a conversation. “You’re mine, actually.” But I’d see him growing up so happy - over there. I couldn’t interfere with that. So I left him alone.

YOUNG ADELE: This year – even my poetry was lonely. I’d put a word here, a word there. Nothing connected. I was living my year in blank verse – a bit of pleasure here, a moment of happiness there. How many words do you need for that?

ADELE: Not many. *(Recovering a bit; indicates environs.)* It’s gotten rundown. I like it better this way. Jean used to send one of the locals over to do maintenance. Sometimes I’d rent it out. By the time I started coming back, it was tilting and rotting.

PAUL: It reminds me of all the manses I lived in out west – except there’s a difference between choosing shabby and having it forced on you.

YOUNG ADELE: I don’t understand.

PAUL: Jean would.

YOUNG ADELE: I doubt it. It’s ironic. She’s so practical and now she’s in the factory, creating beauty. Beauty en masse – hundreds of boats lined up, waiting for finish, impatient to be launched into uncharted waters. And above it all, the air – dust, sawdust, making the air tangible. The sun cutting through it like a gold shaft, giving it a glow like in the best dream of an Old Master.

PAUL: When I dreamed when I was able to dream, I dreamt of you. Of here. I didn’t know that before.

(PAUL and YOUNG ADELE slip off a bit. JEAN enters and picks her way carefully around them. JEAN props up ADELE with some difficulty, as ADELE now seems a bit weaker, perhaps sleepy.)

JEAN: Not time to sleep yet. I want you to have some food, and watch the flotilla go over to St. Pete’s.

ADELE: With all our American friends.

(YOUNG JEAN emerges from the dock area. She is dressed in city clothes and she runs towards the cottage area.)

YOUNG JEAN: Addie! Paul! Addie!

ADELE: You know, we heard you coming.

YOUNG JEAN: Addie!

(YOUNG JEAN goes off, into cottage area, keeps calling.)

JEAN: Who’s we?

ADELE: Paul and I. He never did go to Spain?

JEAN: There wouldn’t have been much use, really. Not by ’38. He’d have been cannon fodder.

ADELE: He could've gone in '37 or '36. He didn't have to stay in school. He didn't have to come here.

JEAN: He was meant to come here. He was meant to stand on these rocks like a sign at a roadwork, pointing me one way, you the other. But that's all he was. A fork in the road.

ADELE: Ah Jean, I've lived a foolish, selfish life.

JEAN: I wrecked a boat company.

ADELE: I scribbled a lot of blank verse.

JEAN: I went into politics and got the stuffing kicked out of me.

ADELE: I wrote a stupid book with talking animals.

JEAN: I went into the ministry, closed churches.

ADELE: My book did sell jillions. Plus you spent forty years sharing a bed with Archie Copeland! You should be drinking this by the bucket! *(Pause.)* But you raised Tom. And you have grandchildren. Jeffy, those girls, whatever their damn names are. And you've spent the summer taking care of me when someone should've been looking after you.

(JEAN hands her a drink.)

Already?

(YOUNG JEAN has found YOUNG ADELE and PAUL by the water. They've managed to produce a deck of cards. PAUL stands when YOUNG JEAN appears.)

YOUNG JEAN: You're way out here!

PAUL: How's our weary worker?

YOUNG JEAN: Did you get my postcard? Oh God, I've got so much to tell you. Two weeks. *(Pulls out a cigarette, offers.)* Feels like a lifetime! How are you both? Enough small talk; let me tell you about Kawartha Canoe.

PAUL: You built your first runabout.

- YOUNG JEAN: They won't let me near a machine! I report to Will Copeland – Archie's Dad.
- YOUNG ADELE: Who makes Archie look frantic.
- (JEAN will soon edge closer to hear. She will react, under some of YOUNG JEAN - mostly a mixture of genuine pride and a bit of ruefulness at her past naiveté.)*
- YOUNG JEAN: Except at the plant. He's the general manager. He's a petty despot. You wouldn't believe how he treats people!
- PAUL: Isn't there a union?
- YOUNG JEAN: Yes – but it's a Sweetheart one. The stewards are either scared out of their minds by Copeland or, I suspect, bought off.
- PAUL: It must drive you nuts.
- YOUNG JEAN: It'll be changed.
- PAUL: What's he got you doing?
- YOUNG JEAN: Mostly boring stuff. Filing, petty cash. Medical reports. But they let me read everything and I can walk through the plant and talk to anyone I like. The foremen aren't exactly going to complain and, anyway, I spend a lot of time talking to them, too. This is in my blood!
- YOUNG ADELE: Are you OK?
- YOUNG JEAN: One day it's going to be mine and
- YOUNG ADELE: - She's running a fever
- YOUNG JEAN: - Where else is it going? My father's 64, yours is 58. I'm an only child, you're an only child. You don't care about the place. I do. So it'll be mine. *(To PAUL.)* You know how I've been talking about connecting my head and my heart, how working for Spain filled that? Well, this is another way. The difference is, at Kawartha Canoe I'm not plodding about begging nickels. Here I can make real changes. But – I'm getting ahead of myself. You have to see the plant. The boats are beautiful. Hiatus is top of the line. Mostly we build smaller boats – outboards, runabouts, cedar strip canoes. It was Dad's decision – leave the luxury market to

others and go after general sales. And, now the Depression's ending, everyone's buying cottages, sales are booming

- PAUL: *(Bemused.)* – Beauty to the masses?
- YOUNG JEAN: Except, we create that beauty in squalor!
- YOUNG ADELE: We do not!
- YOUNG JEAN: The plant is out of the dark ages!
- YOUNG ADELE: How can you say that!?
- YOUNG JEAN: It's everything we're against!
- YOUNG ADELE: It's the most modern
- YOUNG JEAN: - The machinery is huge and noisy. The saws take your ears off and we don't supply the men with plugs.
- JEAN: There were terrible accidents
- YOUNG ADELE: There's a company doctor!
- JEAN: An old fart who couldn't heal a dog.
- YOUNG JEAN: In the paint shop the varnish fumes strip your lungs. Imagine breathing that for all your working life!
- JEAN: Even today there are men in the hospital with lung problems that began at that plant forty years ago.
- YOUNG JEAN: They get a half hour for lunch and they eat in a stuffy hall just off the plant floor, in all that bad air. Even though there's a perfectly good park down the street.
- YOUNG ADELE: Which we donated to the city!
- YOUNG JEAN: The men who made us the money we donated can't use it.
- YOUNG ADELE: Our fathers made that money! It was their sweat and their brains.
- JEAN: - Whose sweat?!
- PAUL: - The workers did nothing?

YOUNG ADELE: They wouldn't even be there but for our fathers! They'd be out riding the rails, for all I know. Volunteering for Spain. *(To YOUNG JEAN.)* You're being an ass. You should be more loyal. *(Back to PAUL.)* It's not nearly that bad. We make beautiful boats, which give thousands of people transport and pleasure. It also makes money – which buys islands, builds cottages, pays tuition, allows her to run about Toronto gathering her revolutionary nickels

PAUL: - Have you talked with the workers?

YOUNG JEAN: That's the best part! They – some – a few – talk to me. They don't all treat me like I'm the owner's daughter. They resent the fact that no one listens to them. They have ideas. Ideas on how to build boats even better and more safely, really good ideas about design that no one listens to.

YOUNG ADELE: Now it's Daddy's fault?!

YOUNG JEAN: It's the way the place is set up! The designers who work for your father don't dare go to him with their ideas. They think we should start a line of aluminum boats!

YOUNG ADELE: Aluminum!?

YOUNG JEAN: Why not?

YOUNG ADELE: Daddy will just love designing in aluminum.

ADELE: You were so practical.

(JEAN, upon hearing ADELE, remembers her duties.)

YOUNG JEAN: He may have no choice one day. You can press out an aluminum boat in five minutes.

ADELE: - You wanted to switch to tin but the workers didn't.

JEAN: Drink.

ADELE: You were right, of course.

YOUNG JEAN: There's something else.

ADELE: They were afraid of change. Imagine being so afraid of anything but the status quo, you end up doing yourself in.

JEAN: Read the papers. Whole nations are doing it.

ADELE: They were dinosaurs

JEAN: - Drink.

YOUNG JEAN: I'm not going back to school.

(Silence. All four look at YOUNG JEAN.)

ADELE: Oh oh.

JEAN: I could've lead into it better.

YOUNG JEAN: I'm going to stay on at Kawartha Canoe! I'm going to learn everything a person can learn about the business: design, management, marketing. I'm going to make myself an expert.

JEAN: Right on!

(They all swivel and stare at JEAN.)

PAUL: *(To YOUNG JEAN.)* - But Jean

YOUNG JEAN: - Let me finish

JEAN: - Slap your cards down!

YOUNG JEAN: In a decade or so, when it's all mine – I'm going to convert it.

YOUNG ADELE: To tin can boats? Whoopee!

YOUNG JEAN: To a worker's co-operative.

(Pause.)

ADELE: Oh boy.

JEAN: The shit's going to hit the fan now.

YOUNG JEAN: Workers will be owners and owners will be workers.

JEAN: *(Over last.)* "And owners will be workers". I can't believe I said that.

YOUNG ADELE: Are you out of your mind?

ADELE: Yes, that's me.

YOUNG ADELE: That's the dumbest idea I've ever heard.

PAUL: Are you serious?

YOUNG JEAN: Dead serious.

ADELE: As I recall, in your next career

JEAN: - Don't bother

ADELE: - In your next career it was "Voters will be legislators".

JEAN: It was "Trust the public."

YOUNG JEAN: It's not as if it's a new idea. There are co-ops springing up all over.

YOUNG ADELE: Where? Spain? Are they featuring canoe co-ops in Barcelona these days? Two weeks at a factory you've ignored for twenty-one years and now you're going to change the world. I hope you haven't mentioned this to your father.

JEAN: Thank God he died first.

YOUNG JEAN: I still haven't told him I'm quitting school.

ADELE: That alone nearly killed him.

YOUNG ADELE: You've gone 'round the bend.

PAUL: It's an interesting plan.

YOUNG JEAN: *(Pause.)* "Interesting"?

PAUL: It's a big step.

YOUNG ADELE: Backwards.

YOUNG JEAN: I knew she wouldn't understand.

ADELE: - You could be such a prig.

JEAN: Drink.

YOUNG JEAN: She wouldn't understand if I gave her all summer.

YOUNG ADELE: You're acting like a twelve year-old.

YOUNG JEAN: I hoped you'd be a little excited for me, or at least keep an open mind. *(To PAUL.)* But you heard. If I'd marched back from the factory with the latest shade of working girl lipstick – that might've got her on side. Mewled a little blank verse I overheard in that lunchroom hellhole – she'd have thought me very au courant and the factory just the goddamn bees' knees. But no. I have a plan. Plans require thought. Then they require commitment.

(YOUNG ADELE is stalking off.)

And there she goes.

YOUNG ADELE: I've had enough insults.

(YOUNG ADELE exits, but pauses briefly and looks at PAUL. He avoids her look. YOUNG ADELE exits.)

JEAN &
ADELE: Five four three two one

YOUNG JEAN: *(Pause.)* No?

PAUL: She's upset.

YOUNG JEAN: I'm upset!

PAUL: But maybe you should

YOUNG JEAN: - I'm the one with the idea! She won't even consider it!

PAUL: You were awfully harsh with her.

YOUNG JEAN: What!?

PAUL: She only needs educating. She's worried about you. I worry about you.

(JEAN scoffs.)

YOUNG JEAN: You do?

PAUL: Of course!

YOUNG JEAN: But you know I can do this. Don't you? You've seen what I can do when I put my mind to it.

PAUL: - Yes but

YOUNG JEAN: - Then why aren't you supporting me?!

PAUL: I am!

YOUNG JEAN: It doesn't sound like it from here.

JEAN: - Or here.

PAUL: I worry that when you get involved with a company like your family's, you'll lose your perspective. We all start with high goals, but it is capitalism and

JEAN: *(Over.)* - Nuts! Nuts!

(JEAN is exiting in disgust. YOUNG ADELE is watching from a distance.)

PAUL: Perhaps the only way we can keep our integrity is by working for change from the outside.

YOUNG JEAN: Oh that really makes sense. And when change finally happens – scary though – what do you do, sit back, retire?

PAUL: I'm just saying

YOUNG JEAN: - I know exactly what you're saying! You think I'll walk through the portals of Kawartha Canoe and mutate into a raging capitalist. But I'm different. Perhaps that happens to others, but it won't happen to me. If you don't think my principles are strong enough, if you can't believe they won't stand up, maybe it's because... No. Listen to me. Paul – I can walk in there and *(Snaps fingers.)* I can start implementing. I don't have to spend years working my way up and - I have the power.

PAUL: Think about that, too. With one flick of your hankie you can become Lady Bountiful.

YOUNG JEAN: How can you say that! It's irrelevant what I have!

PAUL: Are you sure?

YOUNG JEAN: It only matters how I use it.

PAUL: You're rich. I'm not. It's easy for you.

YOUNG JEAN: Easy? What's ever been easy! Who are you to say what's easy! Who slaved all year fundraising? Who kept the books, who set up the halls for you to speak in? I just about lost my year, for you, for the cause, for what we are doing! Easy? Easy would be to do that. *(Points to where YOUNG ADELE went.)* Easy is being an artist. Easy is sitting on the dock pondering life in blank verse. *(Pause.)* Don't you see, don't you understand how much I need your support now that I have a plan? Turnabout fair play, Paul. I need your support. I need you to say, "Do it."

PAUL: Yes, OK, yes. Do it. You must do it.

YOUNG JEAN: It's not that crazy.

PAUL: It's a good plan.

YOUNG JEAN: And yes, it did only occur to me these past two weeks, but it's not as if I haven't been laying the groundwork all my life.

PAUL: It's a good plan. Come here.

YOUNG JEAN: And I can do it. I will do it.

PAUL: Come here.

(PAUL puts his arms out, pulls YOUNG JEAN to him. ADELE and YOUNG ADELE watch him hug YOUNG JEAN.)

It's an amazing plan.

(PAUL kisses YOUNG JEAN again. This one lasts a bit longer.)

YOUNG JEAN: You support me, don't you?

PAUL: I do.

YOUNG JEAN: It didn't sound like it, for a minute.

PAUL: I wanted to see how serious you were. *(Beat.)* We should go back.

YOUNG JEAN: *(Of the playing cards and things.)* I'll just take these up.

PAUL: Best to avoid Addie right now. Bring them with us. I'll drop them over tomorrow, after your steamer goes.

(YOUNG JEAN exits. PAUL goes to ADELE. JEAN comes back and watches with YOUNG ADELE. JEAN has also mixed another drink. Meanwhile, PAUL hovers near ADELE. When he does, she is calm and wakeful. When he leaves she becomes more agitated.)

ADELE: It's not me, it's my island.

PAUL: *(Kissing her.)* It casts a spell on prairie boys. Makes them act out of character.

ADELE: Hah. The spell won't last. The minute you're back in Toronto you'll forget the breeze hissing, you'll forget Hiatus groaning against the dock.

PAUL: I'll remember me against you.

ADELE: I'll never forget this.

PAUL: "Never forget" implies something is ending.

ADELE: Jean says you're only a fork in the road.

PAUL: What do you think?

ADELE: Will you ever go to Spain?

PAUL: It's too late. It's become a massacre.

ADELE: Will you really become a bitter old professor?

PAUL: With hair in my ears?

ADELE: And you died on a croquet battlefield?

PAUL: And so passes the revolution. *(Caressing ADELE.)* Don't you believe a word of it. I'm off to organize unions in Guatemala.

ADELE: *(Sadly.)* Damn you.

PAUL: I'll be running a little bar for radicals on Capri.

ADELE: Damn you.

PAUL: I'm surprised you never visited. It's very lovely.

ADELE: I never had another man up here, after you. Seems like a waste of a good island, now.

(JEAN has come over. PAUL moves off a bit.)

JEAN: Drink this. It's nearly time. *(To PAUL.)* Get lost.

ADELE: You did a terrible thing.

JEAN: You can eat out here and then you won't miss the boat parade and the sunset.

ADELE: Why didn't you at least tell me where he was?

(JEAN hands ADELE a drink.)

JEAN: You'd have gone to see him.

ADELE: That was my decision to make! You never let me decide anything! You never let anyone decide anything.

JEAN: I've learned, from bitter experience, that it's better not to.

ADELE: Don't you know what that does to people!

JEAN: There was a boat company – need I remind you – that went belly up because the workers wouldn't allow it to modernize. There was a young woman who God knows what would've happened to her if I hadn't taken over

ADELE: - So to save some pain then, I listened to you, did what you said, and I paid for it for the last sixty years, paid for it because I had to sit here and watch you raise Tom

JEAN: - And raise him well. Better than you would have, and you know that. *(Pause.)* And now there's two old women, one dying, the other hot on her heels, and if I wasn't deciding for us – where would we be?

ADELE: Well, I've changed my mind.

JEAN: It's too late.

ADELE: I'm not ready.

JEAN: We can't turn back now. It's all in motion. This is our last chance. Tom wants to drive us into town tomorrow.

ADELE: *(Throws drink down.)* We can stop.

JEAN: No!

ADELE: I'm not the one dying! You're the one with cancer! I could sit here for years.

JEAN: Except it won't be here, will it. Surely you don't believe they'll let you stay here after I'm gone? Who's going to take care of you? Tom? He wanted to slap you in a home after your first stroke. The grandchildren? They think you're an eccentric old bag who can't remember anything after World War Two!

ADELE: I'll go back to Montreal!

JEAN: Who'll line up the homecare? Who'll bang down your door and rescue you after your next stroke? Addie, Addie, if I thought for one second we could make it to another summer, if we could come back here one more time... We can't. There's no alternative. We've talked and talked about this – it's our last day of control.

(JEAN goes off. ADELE is exhausted and lies back. PAUL is hovering within her range of vision. YOUNG ADELE emerges, carrying an oil lamp. ADELE watches for a while, then drifts off.)

YOUNG ADELE: Jean and I used to send each other signals across the channel. *(Puts a board or hand in front of the lamp.)* Three quick flashes means, "Parents in bed – coast clear." She'd hop in Hiatus and come over.

PAUL: It's too risky.

YOUNG ADELE: She's exhausted from the industrial revolution. She'll be out like a light. But swim over. I want that. For you to come out of water.

(YOUNG ADELE and PAUL move off in opposite directions. PAUL passes ADELE, touching her. ADELE speaks to his departing presence.)

ADELE: She did a good job raising Tom. And that Archie dolt made a surprisingly good father. Really took an interest in the boy. Tom's martinis are the envy of the lake. And the grandchildren – Tom's girls (*Strains for names.*) are the two best looking things on the lake and that boy, Jeffy – he's going to break some hearts. (*Pause.*) Nevertheless.

(It is late evening. YOUNG ADELE comes to the front rock, lights the lamp and covers it three times. JEAN is bringing food to ADELE.)

YOUNG ADELE: (*Murmuring.*) Oh you stars, you scattering stars –

(JEAN breaks off a chunk of bread, peels away the crust and hands the soft centre to ADELE.)

JEAN: Take this and eat. Eat this and think of me.

(ADELE eats bread. JEAN hands her a glass.)

Take this and drink. Think of me.

(PAUL emerges from the lake. He goes to YOUNG ADELE and lies down beside her. They kiss, and begin making love.)

ADELE: Can one person really change your life that much?

JEAN: It's the choices you make afterwards.

ADELE: Or the choices people make for you.

JEAN: Yes. I'm sorry. There's no alternative.

(YOUNG JEAN appears. ADELE and JEAN are riveted by her arrival. Their ritual is suspended.)

JEAN: Oh go home. Go home.

ADELE: You can try all you want

JEAN: - Go home

ADELE: - But you can't change things now. Can't go back now.

(YOUNG JEAN brushes past JEAN and goes over to YOUNG ADELE and PAUL.)

PAUL: Jesus!

YOUNG ADELE: Jean!

PAUL: What are you doing here!

YOUNG JEAN: Three flashes means you want me – so I came.

YOUNG ADELE: Go home.

YOUNG JEAN: Odd you didn't hear me. I guess you were preoccupied.

YOUNG ADELE: Go home!

YOUNG JEAN: But I'm not surprised. I'm not. Really. I can't sleep; I'm walking along the shoreline, I see three flashes. I go to the dock. His clothes are piled there. That's called a clue. Like all the other clues I've been too stupid to see you scattering these past weeks. *(To YOUNG ADELE.)* Go inside.

YOUNG ADELE: No.

YOUNG JEAN: I'll deal with you later.

YOUNG ADELE: I'm not going.

(YOUNG JEAN makes a physical threat.)

PAUL: You better go.

YOUNG ADELE: We can talk about this.

YOUNG JEAN: No we can't.

PAUL: Go. I'll see you tomorrow.

(YOUNG ADELE runs off, and joins JEAN and ADELE. YOUNG JEAN stares at PAUL.)

YOUNG JEAN: I'm not sure what to do

PAUL: - Listen to me

YOUNG JEAN: - Oh, that's the one thing I won't do.

PAUL: We should've told you.

YOUNG JEAN: I don't care about this. This is not important to me. I don't care if you're doing this the second I go into town.

(JEAN is coming over.)

But every time I've turned my back – God, I've tried not to notice, to think about this – every time I turn around, even when I turn really slowly, even when I try and warn you I'm turning around to look – you're not there. You're just not there. You don't care about Spain. You don't care about fighting fascism. You don't care about social justice or me creating a workers co-op

JEAN: - You just want to screw my cousin.

PAUL: It's not screwing.

JEAN: What do you call it then?!

PAUL: It's not screwing when I love her.

YOUNG JEAN: Liar!

JEAN: You never loved her!

YOUNG JEAN: How many others have there been – tell her that!

PAUL: She's different

JEAN: - She's the same as all the rest!

YOUNG JEAN: I didn't want to see them, either.

(YOUNG ADELE and ADELE are watching. YOUNG ADELE has perhaps handed ADELE her blanket, and is comforting her.)

JEAN: Get off this island!

YOUNG JEAN: Go!

(PAUL exits in the direction of the lake. YOUNG JEAN falls into JEAN's arms, and sobs.)

JEAN: It's OK.

YOUNG JEAN: I hate him.

JEAN: Say what you really mean.

YOUNG JEAN: I hate him.

JEAN: Say what you mean.

YOUNG JEAN: *(Pulling herself together.)* Never. Never. *(Pause.)* Are you coming?

(YOUNG JEAN goes to the boat area. JEAN follows. Light more up on ADELE and YOUNG ADELE. Underneath, the rumble of Hiatus starting up.)

ADELE: Jean has something up her sleeve.

YOUNG ADELE: You'd think she'd have learned by now.

ADELE: She was born to play God. Born so. But this is beyond her powers even.

(YOUNG JEAN is driving Hiatus, standing up. JEAN stands beside her. They speak over and under each other, and sometimes in unison.)

YOUNG JEAN: I know where you're swimming

JEAN: - He's going down the channel

YOUNG JEAN: - You're swimming for your clothes

JEAN: - He'll cross at the point

YOUNG JEAN: - Clothes you take off for her

JEAN: - You don't need to sweep that way – go straight.

YOUNG JEAN: I know every rock and log in this channel

JEAN: - Get him

YOUNG JEAN: - I know them all

JEAN: Over there!

YOUNG JEAN: Moon on rock, rock and pine

JEAN: - Look! There!

YOUNG JEAN: Your arms. Forking up.

JEAN: Cutting down

YOUNG JEAN: - Your head, black dot, arms glistening in moonlight, forking up

JEAN: - Cutting down, head dipping, pulling in

YOUNG JEAN: - Your good arms

JEAN: - Strong arms

YOUNG JEAN: - Your arms, your head, dipping in, lifting out, your lips, your lips parting for air

JEAN: *(Grabs wheel, pushes a bit, steering.)* Deadhead!

YOUNG JEAN: You can hear me. Bee sting through water. Can you hear me?

JEAN: - He sees us!

YOUNG JEAN: - You turn and see me, see me, see... You know what I want to do. You know I want to grind you into the water, into thick water, I want to bury you

JEAN: - Terror on his face

YOUNG JEAN: - You duck. You head to shore

JEAN: - Terror caught by moonlight

YOUNG JEAN: - You dive! I turn! You head back! You turn! You duck! You surface

PAUL: *(Rearing up.)* – NO!

JEAN: NO!

ADELE: *(Bolt upright.)* JEAN!

(YOUNG JEAN cuts Hiatus' engine, and leans forward, sobbing.)

JEAN!

YOUNG JEAN: Oh God, what've I done.

(PAUL reaches over and hauls himself into the boat. YOUNG JEAN is trying to help him in. JEAN watches.)

I'm sorry oh God I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

(YOUNG JEAN reaches to PAUL.)

I'm sorry I'm sorry

(PAUL hits YOUNG JEAN. She falls back into the boat.)

JEAN: Coward!

(Light up on ADELE.)

ADELE: Jean! Jean!

YOUNG ADELE: She'll be here.

ADELE: Jean!

YOUNG ADELE: She's just getting ready; she'll be right out.

ADELE: Help me, Jeannie!

YOUNG ADELE: Jean! Jeannie!

(YOUNG ADELE restrains ADELE.)

ADELE: Help me!

YOUNG ADELE: Don't thrash about. Calm down. Calm down.

ADELE: I don't want to do this!

YOUNG ADELE: It's too late.

(ADELE is quieting.)

Drink.

(YOUNG ADELE makes ADELE drink. Light up on YOUNG JEAN and PAUL. They are on YOUNG JEAN's island. YOUNG JEAN has a bandage on her face. There's the sound of a boat approaching in the background.)

YOUNG JEAN: I hear Archie. He'll drop you at the Landing and point out Richards for you.

PAUL: I can hitchhike into town.

YOUNG JEAN: Don't be ridiculous. You've got to get there by noon if you're going to catch the train. Richards doesn't charge much. Mostly he taxis people for the conversation. *(Hands over envelope.)* This'll cover it. Take it.

PAUL: Not money.

YOUNG JEAN: You don't have a choice. I told Daddy I fell driving Hiatus but I can tell him the truth, just as easily. This will get you to Toronto. Hand in your essays. I trust you did some work on them.

(YOUNG ADELE is watching from her island with binoculars.)

YOUNG ADELE: She's got a bandage!

PAUL: *(Opening envelope. There's cash and a cheque.)* A cheque? *(Sees amount.)* Jesus Jean.

YOUNG JEAN: Archie's tying up. Go load your things.

PAUL: *(Of the cheque.)* But this –

YOUNG ADELE: He's leaving – why's he leaving –

YOUNG JEAN: That's to get you to England. From there I can only assume you'll rush over to Spain. Nothing to stop you now. You've got your degree and our comrades need a man like you, so good with his fists.

(JEAN has entered in her robes. Focus now back on JEAN and ADELE.)

JEAN: Finish that so I can clean up.

ADELE: I don't think I can go this year.

JEAN: Of course you can't. You can watch the parade from here. *(Pause.)*
We'll miss you though.

ADELE: Not half as much as I, you. I hate those robes all bare.

JEAN: Here's your book. *(Hands photograph.)* And Tom, your Tom. *(Another.)* Jeffy. It's a shame we never had a snap of Paul, to compare. Because there sure is a resemblance. *(Another.)* One of me, when I was MP.

ADELE: You never talk about you.

JEAN: Not my way.

ADELE: But I know how much pain you're in. It's all over your face.

JEAN: Not for much longer.

(YOUNG JEAN and YOUNG ADELE rush out, past JEAN, who's cleaning up.)

YOUNG ADELE: You have to help me!

YOUNG JEAN: I am.

YOUNG ADELE: I can't cope with this!

YOUNG JEAN: Yes you can. I have a plan.

YOUNG ADELE: This happened to a girl at school. But I was being careful.

YOUNG JEAN: Apparently not careful enough.

YOUNG ADELE: I was counting off the days – it always worked before.

YOUNG JEAN: - You're going back to Montreal. People expect you to go back, and that's what you'll do. Nobody here will ever know you're not in school there – why would they? I'll come down with you and we'll find a flat.

YOUNG ADELE: If we knew where Paul was

YOUNG JEAN: - We don't.

YOUNG ADELE: Maybe he left a forwarding address with his landlady. You could check again. He has to know.

YOUNG JEAN: He lost his rights to know anything when he assaulted me, and when he fled like a – like – no, Addie. We do this my way. My way or not at all. Understand?

YOUNG ADELE: Can't you stay with me – until the baby's born?

YOUNG JEAN: I'm going to marry Archie Copeland.

YOUNG ADELE: What!

YOUNG JEAN: I probably would've eventually.

YOUNG ADELE: But you hate him.

YOUNG JEAN: I know what hate is now, and that's not what I feel for Archie. He bores me and all of a sudden that seems pretty benign. I'm going to stay on at the factory – Archie won't stand in the way of that. I can marry him at Christmas. A small wedding – you won't be able to come – we'll plead "exams". You're due in March. Archie and I can adopt.

YOUNG ADELE: Oh God Jean – it's too – it's so

YOUNG JEAN: - Can you think of a better solution?

YOUNG ADELE: How could you have thought of this!

YOUNG JEAN: We don't even need to tell Archie whose child it really is.

YOUNG ADELE: He's not that thick!

YOUNG JEAN: I know there'll be talk. That's inevitable. But with no proof...

YOUNG ADELE: I really want to tell Paul.

YOUNG JEAN: He's in Europe. He's on his way there. Right now. To Spain, I hope.

(JEAN is sitting with ADELE, waiting.)

JEAN: I can hear the boat – that’s Jeffy. Oh Jesus, Addie.

ADELE: Nothing much to say, is there.

JEAN: No.

ADELE: I love you.

JEAN: Ditto.

(ADELE is falling asleep.)

I love you back.

(JEFFREY enters, a typically dressed teenager, probably with the inevitable baseball cap.)

JEFFREY: Yo Gran.

(JEAN hushes him and points at ADELE.)

She OK?

JEAN: She’s exhausted. She’s had a bad day – her worst – and she hasn’t slept much. I’m leaving her out here; if she wakes up she can see the sunset and the parade.

JEFFREY: Won’t she get cold?

JEAN: I’ve got her wrapped up.

(ADELE stirs.)

I suppose we’re going in that horrible boat.

JEFFREY: Full speed, Gran.

ADELE: Paul?

JEAN: It’s Jeffrey.

ADELE: Paul?

JEFFREY: It’s Jeff, Auntie. *(To JEAN.)* Who’s Paul? She’s really losing it, eh?

JEAN: Hush.

ADELE: Why're you here?

(JEFFREY looks at JEAN, who shrugs.)

JEFFREY: I'm taking Gran to church.

(ADELE has drifted off again.)

Ready?

JEAN: Ready.

JEFFREY: *(Taking her arm.)* You stink of mothballs, Gran. Watch you don't trip.

JEAN: Don't worry about me. You concentrate on driving that goddamn boat nice and slowly.

(ADELE stirs. Shifts a bit. JEAN sees her, stops. Turns to JEFFREY.)

Wait. Kiss her.

JEFFREY: What?

JEAN: Please. She'd like it.

JEFFREY: She's asleep!

JEAN: Please. Kiss her goodbye.

(JEFFREY looks doubtful, but he walks over to where ADELE is sleeping. JEAN has exited. JEFFREY leans down to kiss ADELE. He straightens and removes his cap. He kisses ADELE on the cheek. ADELE's hand rises, as if to caress him. JEFFREY stands back up, starts to leave, looks back at ADELE, then walks off. It becomes dark. JEAN is standing on a flat rock, near the water. She is wearing her robes and her arms are raised in benediction.)

Thick waters, seamless rock, buckling pine. Our dazzling Kawartha sky, our unnumbered scatterings of stars. Go in peace,

my friends. Go in peace. Live this year in happiness. Return in safety. God is close. Carry him with you. Go now. Go.

JEAN stands in her robes with the water around her. Light comes up on ADELE, lying in her bed, sheets, blankets white. Moon is on the water. A long wind sigh. Black.

The End.

