



AFTER THE ORCHARD

a new play inspired by Anton Chekhov's
The Cherry Orchard

Production

After the Orchard was first produced by the National Arts Centre, Ottawa, in September 2005. In the cast were Ellen David (Caroline), Paul Dunn (Jeremy), Jerry Franken (Jack), Peter Froehlich (Len), Carolyn Hetherington (Aunt Faye), Niki Landau (Donna), Nicola Lipman (Rose), Patrick McManus (David), Michelle Monteith (Trish), Harry Nelken (Morris), Alex Poch-Goldin (Sasha) and Philip Warren Sarsons (Andrew). Marti Maraden was the director, with design by Christina Poddubiuk (set and costume), John Munro (lighting) and Peter McBoyle (sound). The assistant director was Abebe Addis, Laurie Champagne was the stage manager and Jane Vanstone Osborn was the assistant stage manager.

Characters

ROSE LEVY, a widow.
LEN, her brother.
FAYE, Rose's sister-in-law.
SASHA, Rose's eldest son.
CAROLINE, Sasha's wife.
JEREMY, their son.
DAVID, Rose's middle son.
ANDREW, the youngest son.
DONNA, Andrew's wife.
JACK SKEPIAN, a real estate agent.
MORRIS, owner of a nearby cottage.
TRISH, Morris' granddaughter.

Setting

Act 1. Living room of a modest Ontario cottage; mid-July.
Act 2. The backyard; one week later.
Act 3. In the garden; end of summer.
Act 4. The living room; that fall.

AFTER THE ORCHARD

ACT 1

Living room and kitchen of a modest Ontario cottage. A door leads to the backyard, and the lake beyond. It's mid-July. JACK SKEPIAN, waits, looking out the window. The silence is broken by the loud drone of a cicada. DAVID LEVY, enters, holding a coffee cup.

DAVID Still waiting, Mr Skepian?

JACK Hm? Oh, you scared me, you young rascal.

DAVID Thought you might have heard me come in.

JACK Lost in thought.

DAVID The country air does that to you.

JACK I suppose that's true. Is that why you come up here, then?

DAVID Actually, it doesn't have that effect on me. In fact, Mr Skepian, with me it's just the opposite—I come up here to gather my thoughts. It's in the city where I feel lost.

JACK Isn't that funny? Well, different strokes, eh?

DAVID Indeed.

JACK Look, call me Jack, would you?

DAVID Yes, alright. (*getting his coffee*) Sure I can't offer you a coffee?

JACK I'd better not.—But would you mind if I make a little observation? I've been waiting here, oh, forty minutes I suppose. And in that time you've come in three times for coffee.

DAVID I don't really drink it. It's just an excuse to leave my desk. There's a coffee maker in the guest house, but if I used it, I wouldn't be able to go through my ritual, you see, of letting the coffee go cold, getting up from my desk, walking back to the main house, pouring out the cold stuff, filling my cup again—

JACK Writer's block, is that it?

DAVID If only. No, my problem is I write too damn much. Too many words. They just pour out of me. The trouble is, I don't know when to stop, when to say "it's finished," and walk away.

JACK Well, you're making a living at it. That's good, I suppose. (*pause*) Tell me, do you ever have your plays put on at the little theatre here? They do some very good things. Very funny. I saw one last year, took my daughter, it was about this young woman who worked in a flower shop, and was about to be married, only

it turned out that her sister was dating the same man. Well, naturally, the second man was the first man's twin.

DAVID That's good.

JACK It was very funny.

DAVID stares into his cup of coffee.

But, um, are you working on a play at the moment?

DAVID No. I'm working on television at the moment.

JACK Ah, now that's smart; that's where the money is.

DAVID Yes.

Pause.

JACK You think she'll remember me?

DAVID Course. She used to talk about you all the time. That's why the name rang a bell the minute you introduced yourself. "Jack Skepian, the one that got away."

JACK Is that how she put it?

DAVID Something like that. A simple twist of fate and I'd be calling you Dad instead of Jack.

JACK Well.

DAVID How long did you date?

JACK Not long. A month or so, perhaps. A month in the summer, August in fact, just before I left for—well, I had a job out west. Your mother was going to stay in town, go to technical college, so I couldn't really ask her to wait for me. I remember telling her that. I could see from the expression on her face that she probably wouldn't. And really how could I ask her to? How do you ask someone to put her life on hold for you? Well. She cried. I cried. We walked for block after block, all along Harbord, and down Spadina, we just kept walking. We may have held hands, I don't remember. Then we were at the waterfront and had to stop. I remember there was a tanker out in the distance, and I think we didn't say a word, just watched it inch forward on the horizon. *(pause)* She was the belle of the ball, let me tell you, not a prettier gal for miles around.

DAVID Still is.

JACK I don't doubt it. And of course that fall, she met your father. I got to know him a little when I came back. Wonderful man.

DAVID Yes. *(pause)* That was quite a walk.

JACK Yes.

DAVID All up and down Spadina?

JACK Mm.

DAVID It's funny, I—I'd forgotten til you just mentioned it—my father—well, before he became ill—I was going to write a piece for a magazine about him. We were going to go for a walk together, all along Spadina, he was going to tell me what the street was like back in the 40s when he came.

JACK Your father was a wonderful storyteller.

DAVID Boy, ain't that the truth. One of his best was about how, after the war, when he came over, a fresh-faced kid, missing his family—all of them back in England—a Jew in a city where there weren't that many, at least none that he knew, or none that he could find—and one Sunday morning, feeling lost and depressed, he went looking for a cup of coffee. That's all he wanted, a cup of coffee. So he started to walk, all along College—

JACK Yes. And a Sunday in Toronto then—

DAVID Nothing open.

JACK Ghost town.

DAVID And the more he walks, the more depressed he gets, and he's thinking, "I just want to be home, I want to be with my family, I just want to go home." Well, he gets to Spadina, he turns the corner, and—what does he see?—He sees shop windows full of Stars of David, and menorahs and tallises... he sees delis and he sees men in felt hats and païs... and he thinks, "I'm home."

Pause.

JACK Course it's all Chinese now.

DAVID sees TRISH sweeping up outside.

DAVID Excuse me. (*slides open the door*) Trish, you don't need to do that.

TRISH I don't mind. The garden's so overgrown and, well, I just think your mother would like it if it were a bit neater.

DAVID Well, I'll come help you in a minute.

TRISH It's fine. You're working. I like to do it. Hello, Mr Skepian.

JACK Ms Siegel. What a nice surprise. I haven't seen you for a year, maybe longer. I hear all kinds of things about you. Your grandfather tells me you're out to change the world.

TRISH Not just now. I'm only trying to fix up the garden. (*to DAVID*) The tools are all in the shed, you know. Just the way he left them. It's a little strange to—. Anyway, I'll just get back to it.

DAVID Don't do too much, alright? It's pretty hot out.

TRISH Not in the garden, though. It's shady. Did you know that the shade from just one elm tree has the cooling power of four air conditioners?

JACK Well, you learn something useless every day.

TRISH Do you think they'll be here soon?

DAVID Any minute, I expect.

TRISH I'll just tidy up a bit.

She goes off. DAVID slides the door shut.

JACK Ha. "Air conditioners."

DAVID is staring out.

It is a nice garden, though. Tell me, how long's it been since your father passed on?

DAVID Three years this August.

JACK Is that a fact. Goodness. You know I only heard about it after the shiva. Otherwise, of course, I would have come.

DAVID You sent a card, though. My mother appreciated that.

JACK Yes, I did send a card. She mentioned it, did she?

DAVID Of course. Of course.

JACK Tell me, how's she getting on?

DAVID Most days she's fine. It took her two years to start getting rid of his things. And for a long time she wouldn't come up here. He built this place with his own hands. She came up once about a month after he died and it just about did her in. This is the first time she's been back—you picked an interesting time to drop by.

JACK Well, I'm up here every so often. She still has the house, in Toronto?

DAVID No. She didn't want to leave it, but it became too much for her to keep up. We finally convinced her to sell. She got a good price, though, enough for a condo and then some.—She's alright.

The sound of two cars pulling up outside.

Here they are.

JACK Look at that, I'm shaking like a schoolboy. Funny, isn't it, I suddenly got so nervous, a shot of adrenaline just— (*puts a hand on his stomach*) Do me a favour, would you? Don't introduce me. I'll just stand there, I won't say anything. I want to see if she recognizes me. It's been such a long time. I saw her once at a wedding, but that was twenty years ago. I meant to call her after that, but, well.

JACK and DAVID go outside. The stage is empty. A motorboat speeds by in the distance.

Offstage noise increases. Enter ROSE, SASHA, CAROLINE, ANDREW, DONNA, LEN, JACK and DAVID. Voices, off—a babble, none of it

heard very clearly: "Put a light on."—"Ow."—"Watch it, dumbkopf."—"Careful, careful."—"Jack?"—"In the flesh."—"I can't believe it."—"I brought one percent milk."—"We're drinking soy."

ROSE Who moved the couch?

SASHA What are you talking about?

ANDREW Ma, where do you want this stuff?

ROSE The couch is supposed to be there, against the wall. I don't like it here.

SASHA Where do you want it?

ROSE Where it always was.

SASHA begins to move it.

Sasha, careful, with your back.

SASHA My back's fine.

ROSE David, Andrew, help him. And what used to be here? The bookcase, the one your father made.

DAVID I took it into the guest house.

ROSE No, it doesn't belong in the guest house.

CAROLINE *(calling off)* Jeremy!

SASHA Who said you could put it in the guest house?

ANDREW The nerve! Ow!

ROSE Be careful! And where are all the books?

DAVID I put them in boxes, in the shed. Mom, they're just old paperbacks—no one's looked at them in years, I was going to donate them to Goodwill.

ROSE No, I don't—Just put everything back. I want everything the way it was.

CAROLINE *(calling off)* Jer-e-my!

DONNA I can bring in the books.

ROSE I don't want you carrying nothing, the boys can get it.

DAVID "Anything," Mom, you don't want her carrying any—

SASHA *(about the couch)* Like this, Ma?

ROSE Back a little.

SASHA Who moved it in the first place?

DAVID Shoot me.

CAROLINE Where did Jeremy disappear to? I asked him to help unload.

LEN Who's hungry?

ROSE We just ate.

LEN You call that a meal? David, we stopped at that little burger place—and it was packed, like always!

CAROLINE Sash.

LEN Half an hour I stood in line.

CAROLINE Sash, the kids are standing on the dock without life jackets.

SASHA So tell em to put em on.

LEN Ah, they're fine, they're fine. Those burgers were terrible. Not the way they used to be, but still people stood there, and it was hot, too, and the line-up went right outside, almost to the highway.

DONNA They were dripping with grease, I could only eat half.

ROSE Mine was good.

LEN Rose, I'm telling you, the quality's gone way down. But it's a habit with people—you come up here for the weekend, you've got to stop at the burger place.

CAROLINE (*calling outside*) Jordan! Adam! Life jackets!—I don't care! They're in the trunk, get them and put them on or you can just come inside!

ANDREW No, please, anything but that. Then mine'll want to come in.

CAROLINE I don't see Jeremy.

LEN The drive up was terrible. Used to be you could make the trip in ninety minutes. But, look, we left at one, and it's almost four! That's twice the usual time.

SASHA Well there's twice the usual cars.

DONNA Mom, why don't you rest, you look a little tired.

ROSE I tried to sleep on the way up, but I couldn't. And all last night I was tossing and turning. I started watching a movie at one, and I couldn't stop.

LEN What movie are you watching at one in the morning?

ROSE (*overlapping after LEN's "watching"*) I don't know, something about a spy, but I couldn't stop watching. And I was so nervous about coming up here. But now that I'm here, and my children are with me—and Jack, I can't believe you're here.

CAROLINE (*going*) Boys!

JACK (*handing her the flowers*) Brought these for you.

ROSE Oh, they're nice. Someone put them in water.

DONNA Here, Mom, let me.

JACK Rose, I was sort of hoping we could catch up or something.

ROSE I'd like that. We'll go into the garden.

JACK Oh fine, fine.

ROSE Jack, I can't get over it. We were kids together.

JACK Yes, it's funny, isn't it? (*as they leave:*) I was telling your David—we were having a lovely talk—I was saying to him that the last time I saw you, we walked down to the water. And now, here we are, and it's good Lord forty, forty-five years later, and we're meeting at the edge of the water again. Well, it's just a little coincidence, isn't it?...

They've gone. SASHA has drifted out by now. LEN follows ROSE and JACK out. DONNA fusses in the kitchen, then goes. ANDREW and DAVID remain.

ANDREW I'm exhausted. The flight back was a nightmare. No, check that. The whole trip was a nightmare. What a stupid idea. Mom was practically in tears the whole time. She kept talking about "the last time we were here," or "This is the house where he was born."

DAVID Well, it was good of you to go.

ANDREW You don't know what I've been through. The whole time we were in London, it was freezing. The food was terrible. And Caroline never shut up; kept trying to patch things up. But everything she says is just a trick. I don't know why they had to come. On top of it all, London must be the most expensive city in the world—worse than Toronto. That didn't matter to Mom. She insisted on paying for everything. Meanwhile, I'm trying to keep her from bursting out crying every five seconds.

DAVID I know, I know.

ANDREW (*beat; sighs*) Did you talk to the guy from the planning office?

DAVID Yeah.

ANDREW And?

DAVID There's no way around it; the cottage is too close to the water.

ANDREW So what are we supposed to do? Pick it up and move it back?

DAVID Well. Yes. We have until Labour Day. I got a couple of quotes. One says seventy-five, another says ninety.

ANDREW *Thousand?*... Where are we supposed to get that kinda money?

DAVID Believe me, I've been asking myself the same question. I was thinking Mom could put in some of what she got from the house, and the three of us could—

ANDREW “What she got from the house?” David, there’s nothing left from that. She has no money.

DAVID How’s that possible? She cleared thirty thousand from the house.

ANDREW I’m telling you. I was at the condo a few weeks ago, took a look through her bank statements—there’s just a few hundred dollars in there. And she’s still trying to pay her taxes from two years ago. One night in London, after the kids had gone to bed, Sasha starts talking to Mom about the cottage, about how much it must be worth by now, how Dad always saw it as an investment.

DAVID No, he didn’t. He never saw it that way. He always said he built this place for—. Anyway, it’s not really up to Mom, is it? Dad left it to the three of us; did Sash forget that, or what?

ANDREW I don’t think so. I just think he wanted her blessing.

DAVID Her blessing’s got nothing to do with it. We’re not selling.

Beat.

ANDREW I don’t know.

DAVID What do you mean, “you don’t know”? You love this place.

JACK sticks his head in.

JACK Sorry. Left my briefcase somewhere. Sorry.

He goes. DAVID stares after him.

ANDREW What?

DAVID Nothing. It’s just—he dropped by all of a sudden. Mom hasn’t been here in three years, and the day she comes back there’s a real estate agent with an armload of flowers.

ANDREW ...I wouldn’t put anything to it.

Beat.

DAVID You think Sash might have called him?

ANDREW Sash? Why?

DAVID Just—no, you’re right.

ANDREW Why would he do something like that?—Look, the two of you ought to talk things over. Whatever’s between you, just talk about it, just sit down and be honest with each other.

DAVID What’s the point? You know how he is—it’s impossible to have an honest conversation with him.

DONNA returns with a load of books.

DONNA With who?

DAVID Santa Claus.

DONNA ...Drew, would you mind looking after the kids? I want to go for a swim.

ANDREW Sure. Now?

DONNA Well. Never mind. *(to DAVID)* Where's Liz and the kids?

DAVID Stayed in Toronto. I came up here to get some work done.

Some jet skis go by.

ANDREW God I hate those things.

DONNA Why don't you go have a nap?

ANDREW Yeah. *(lies on the couch)*

DONNA I didn't mean there.

ANDREW I'm too tired to go upstairs. I'll just close my eyes a minute. Besides, I love this couch. It's a great couch.

DAVID The springs are going.

ANDREW It's got character.

DONNA, at the window, about to head out.

DONNA Oh, Jeremy's down there. He's such a great kid.

Silence. SASHA comes in, wearing a jogging outfit.

SASHA Who died?

DONNA We're just having coffee. *(beat)* Are those the sneakers you picked up in London?

SASHA "Sneakers"? They don't really call them that anymore. Anyway, I'm going for a run. Anybody wanna join me? *(sees ANDREW has fallen asleep; creeps up to him)*

DONNA Leave him alone, he's tired.

SASHA bends down and barks loudly in ANDREW's ear; ANDREW wakes with a start, upsetting a coffee cup.

DAVID Nice going.

SASHA Now look what you did.

ANDREW What happened?

SASHA Don't know. You were barking in your sleep. That's a sign of creeping dementia. Runs in the family, you might want to have it checked out. Remember how they found Zaydie Levy wandering down the 401 one day? "Just going for a walk." Anyway, now that you're up, you wanna go for a run?

ANDREW (*lying back down*) Sure.

SASHA does some stretches. Sound of a distant train.

It's three years since Dad died. We were all in this room, just like this, when they took him away. I started to get the shakes, and someone sat me down. Every muscle in my body seized up. Donna, you sat with me, calmed me down. A train was passing by then, too. I can't believe it's been three years, though. I can't believe it.—And the garden's a mess. We really ought to fix it up.

DONNA I thought she hired someone.

DAVID The guy's useless. I mean look at it.

ANDREW We could do some work on it.

SASHA Wouldn't bother. Anyway, where would you start?

Pause.

ANDREW We did alright, though. We brought him here, just like he wanted. This is where he wanted to die, not in that hospital. It was the last thing he said, do you remember, before he couldn't speak anymore. The nurses and doctors all said he wouldn't survive the trip, but we knew he would. Mom held his hand the whole way up, she kept stroking his forehead and saying he was going to be alright.

SASHA Do you have to keep talking about it?... Just don't talk about it when Mom's around. You know how she gets. The slightest thing.

DAVID So we're not supposed to talk about him?

SASHA Not the end time. You have to get that awful stuff out of your mind, you have to push it away, remember the good things about him. If you can.

ANDREW lies down again.

DAVID Well. I oughta get that bookcase.

Enter FAYE, holding a box of chocolates.

Hello Auntie Faye.

FAYE Hello Andrew.

DAVID It's David.

FAYE Oh stop joking. Little whippersnapper, you're always joking with me. Would you like a chocolate?

DAVID Oh... thanks.

SASHA What's the vintage on those chocolates?

FAYE Just bought em the other day.

SASHA (*sotto*) That could mean ten years ago.

FAYE I wouldn't mind a coffee.

DAVID prepares a coffee.

Where's your father, boys?

Beat.

SASHA He's not here. He died, Aunt Faye.

FAYE When did he die?

SASHA Long time ago.

FAYE Oh.... Where's Lou?

SASHA Lou died.

FAYE Did he? Was he here?

SASHA Yes, he was here. Then he got sick.

FAYE You boys are all so handsome. We had a nice time in London. Your father got into some awful trouble. He used to ride the tram without paying!

SASHA Catcha later.

SASHA goes.

DAVID (*handing her a coffee*) Here you are, Aunt Faye.

FAYE Oh, a coffee! Isn't that nice? I was just thinking I might like a coffee.

Enter ROSE, JACK, LEN and MORRIS, a neighbour. ROSE and LEN are trying to remember the words to a song.

ROSE How did it go, do you remember? "Hail, hail, the gang's all here..."

LEN joins in.

LEN & ROSE "What the heck do we care, what the heck do we care."

(*louder*) "Hail, hail, the gang's all here—why the heck should we care now?"

LEN Ha ha ha!

ROSE We kids used to sing that.

LEN A long time ago, and look at us now.

JACK Time marches on.

LEN What's that?

JACK I said, time marches on.

LEN Uh huh.

ROSE Look who stopped over.

DAVID Hello, Morris.

MORRIS Hello, hello. Nice day and so on. Came to find my granddaughter. We're going to the movies. There's a fellow nearby and—you won't believe it—he turned an old farmhouse into a movie theatre! It's something else, I'll tell you.

ANDREW I'm going to lie down.

ROSE You look so tired. I want you to see a doctor.

ANDREW Because I'm tired?

ROSE It's just... your father, he was always so tired at first...

DAVID Mom, please. First of all, what he had, it's not hereditary, the doctors said so.

MORRIS What do doctors know anyway? We used to think they knew everything, but it's obvious, take a look around, they don't know a thing. All these new diseases, and the doctors haven't got a clue about any of em. Those little bacteria are a hell of a lot stronger than human beings are, stronger, and a lot smarter, too.

ANDREW Mom, I'm just tired from the trip. And the kids don't let up. Matthew always climbs into bed with us, and he won't go to sleep until I've read him three books.

ROSE I just worry. You're my baby. You'll always be my baby.

ANDREW Well. I'll see you later.

ANDREW goes.

LEN He looks just like you, Rose. He always did, more or less, but he looks just like you when you were his age.

ROSE He didn't sleep much in England. Something was bothering him, but he wouldn't say what. None of my boys like to talk about what's bothering them. Just like their father.

MORRIS When you get right down to it, we're just guinea pigs. When I found out about my prostate, I said to myself, "That's it, that's the end." So to speak. The doctors were talking about surgery and this and that. Then my granddaughter, she started giving me all kinds of books and articles, all kinds of stuff about diet, exercise. David, if it should ever happen to you, and I pray to God it doesn't—

DAVID Thank you.

MORRIS I just want to say one thing: cranberries. Blueberries are fine, too, but *cranberries*.

ROSE The important thing is that you've got your health back.

FAYE Where's Sidney?

Beat.

ROSE Would someone get me a coffee? The coffee in England was terrible. So bitter. And they charged for it an arm and a leg.

FAYE Why isn't Sidney here?

DAVID Bookcase.

DAVID leaves.

ROSE Well, here we are. I feel like... I don't know, it's strange to be here without... I missed coming here. It's so nice to get away to the country. But everything's changed so much, in just a few years. Even the town, it's gotten so big, and there are so many people. We stopped to pick up a few things and we had to circle for ten minutes just to find a parking spot. It wasn't until we got closer to the cottage that things started to look the same. That's nice coffee.

JACK Well, I should be going. I have a meeting in the city first thing in the morning. I was hoping we'd have a chance to talk, Rose. It's a little disappointing.... You look wonderful, but then you always did.

MORRIS Better than wonderful. She looks like a new woman—I feel twenty years younger just looking at her!

FAYE I can't find Lou.

ROSE sighs.

LEN Lou died, Faye.

FAYE He did? What's wrong with me? I can't remember things.

ROSE (*rising*) There's something wrong with this chair.

LEN The back's loose. It needs to be glued.

ROSE One of the boys can fix it.

FAYE Where's Sidney? Why isn't Sidney here?

ROSE And the deck—some of the boards are coming apart.

JACK Frankly, the whole place is coming apart. I mean it's obvious. I had a look around before. The roof's leaking in the back room; half the eavestroughs have fallen off; there are cracks in the ceiling. (*looks at his watch*) There's a long list. I can't go into it now. Just take a good look around, you'll see what I'm talking about. So you see maybe this new by-law's not such a bad thing. On the one hand, it means that, yes, the cottage is now too close to the water and it's going to cost an extraordinary amount of money to push it back; on the other hand, there's an opportunity here.

ROSE What do you mean, "opportunity"? Opportunity for what?

JACK Just listen for a second. Do you realize that your property line extends from the forest to practically half way round the lake, right to Morris's place? That's why no one's been able to build on that whole side. You own it! All you've got to

do is clear the forest, and the gardens, knock this place down, and you'd have room for five or six small cottages, which you can rent for three thousand a month—each! And if you and Morris here sell together, why you can double all those figures!

LEN That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

ROSE I don't understand.... "Knock this place down?"

JACK Or, if you don't want to do that, just sell it outright. There would be a bidding war like you've never seen. Could go as high as six, seven hundred thousand. Just think what you could do with that money. I could personally put you in touch with several people I know who are looking to buy up here. And this is an ideal spot. Close enough to town but without a lot of traffic nearby. The thing is, you've got to decide soon. Right now it's a seller's market, but you never know, it could turn around in a month.

ROSE Jack, I don't think you understand—Sidney *built* this house. And the garden, he spent so much time out there...

JACK And he did a very good job. But the times have caught up with him, or with his work anyway—the town says the cottage is too close to the water, so either you move it or you tear it down and start all over. I say the time has come to move on. The cottage is practically worthless; but the land it's sitting on is worth fifty times what Sid paid for it.

ROSE How can you say it's "worthless"? We spent forty years up here; every weekend in the spring and fall, and in the summer we were here almost every day.

LEN This house was written up in the Peterborough *Examiner*.

JACK (*looks at his watch*) It's up to you, of course. But decide, and soon. You're sitting on a gold mine, and you don't even realize it.

FAYE They were always building things, Sid and Lou. Bookcases, chairs, tables—people used to say, "The two of you should open a carpentry shop."

ROSE Sid was always trying to show the boys how to make things.

FAYE They've forgotten it all. Sid and Lou loved to work with their hands. Not like now. Now it's all made for you, and if it breaks, out it goes in the trash, and you buy a new one to take its place.

LEN Faye, drink your coffee.

FAYE Oh, did someone get me a coffee? How nice.

Pause.

MORRIS Well, and how was London? Did you see any shows?

ROSE We saw the Andrew Lloyd Webber, but it wasn't up to his usual.

MORRIS The theatre here did *Fiddler on the Roof*. It was a big production.

ROSE Oh I love that one. We did that one at the synagogue. You should have seen Sid, he played Tevye, and everyone said, “You should be on the professional stage!”

LEN bursts into a rendition of “If I Were a Rich Man,” until cut off by JACK.

JACK The point is, when Sid bought this place, it was still pretty far from the city. But now Toronto’s grown so much that people need to go even farther looking for a summer place—never mind summer, nowadays they build for year-round use. I personally know the widow of a dot-com multimillionaire who’s tearing her hair out looking for a place to build a new summer home. She has three kids, and they need a lot of space. Just say the word and she’ll write you a cheque for seven hundred and fifty thousand.

LEN Look, we don’t want to hear it.

DAVID returns, carrying an old bookcase.

Careful, David.

ROSE There it is. It’s the very first thing your father made by himself. Look, he carved his name into the back. And the date.

LEN It’s 40 years old—on the button. How about that? Calls for a celebration. How about we all go into town tonight, to that Italian restaurant?

ROSE Oh yes, let’s do that, and I’m buying.

LEN You’re not!

MORRIS You know, some of the stuff at my place is a hundred years old.

LEN Yes, but this—Sid *made* this. (*holding an imaginary wine glass*) Blessed art thou, O Lord Our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has given us this wonderful bookcase.

ROSE Amen! He loved to make things, especially for the grandchildren. Do you think they remember him, the children?

DAVID Sure they do.

ROSE Sometimes they point at his picture and I say, “That’s your Zaydie,” and they say, “I know,” but I don’t know if they’re just saying it.

LEN I never had Sid’s skill. Whenever I tried to make something, it would come out all crooked. The only thing my hands were good for was crunching numbers. That’s not something you remember. But a bookcase, just look at it... he left it behind, he left it for us to look at, to talk about. Sid was a strong man, you know. Right to the end. I’ll never forget shaking his hand, the last time I went to see him. He—well.

Pause.

JACK Well, anyway I should—

LEN “Hail, hail, the gang’s all here! What the heck do we care...”

JACK I should be going.

CAROLINE enters, holding a cell phone.

Those aren’t much good up here, I’m afraid.

CAROLINE Hm? Oh. Hello, Jack. No, you’re right. I can’t get a signal.

JACK Try down by the water, that sometimes works.

LEN Throw it in while you’re at it. Used to be, you’d go to the cottage, you didn’t *want* someone to call you.

CAROLINE Now, now, Len, the 21st century’s just around the corner.

LEN I’ll be waiting with a mallet.

JACK Caroline, I’ll join you, if you don’t mind. I’ve got a couple of calls to make myself. And then I really have to get going, it’s, goodness look at the time. (*goes about shaking hands*) Goodbye, Len. Morris, see you again. Nice talking to you, young man. (*to ROSE*) I kind of hate to leave. But you think about what I said now. You’ve got to act sooner than later. Now I really have to go. Should be smooth sailing into town.

He goes, following CAROLINE out. DAVID takes note.

LEN Money grubber. Even as a kid, he was always playing the angles. Five ball in the corner pocket—and your money in his.

ROSE He’s a good agent, that’s all. He sees a property and right away he thinks about selling it.

DAVID Who’s selling?

LEN No one, it’s just a lot of talk.

MORRIS People have been trying to get me to sell forever. A few years ago, I found a note tucked in the door. “If you should ever want to sell, please call me.” And there was a name and a number.

ROSE As though you’d sell something that held so many memories!

MORRIS You know, I was reading the other day in the paper, one of these big shot developers, a real macher, talking about how these millionaires and movie stars are moving in around here.

ROSE You’ll never believe who bought a place just on the other side of the bridge. What’s her name, the movie star, well, she used to be on television, oh, I can see her, she was on that show where people jumped out of the walls—well, they

didn't exactly *jump*, but they were behind the wall and they would peek out and say a joke.

MORRIS Yes, exactly, and she's putting up a mansion and a huge fence. Well, the neighbours of course started complaining, and this big shot, you know what he said? "Who cares? Their time's over."

LEN Who's time?

MORRIS *Our* time.

LEN I never heard such a thing.

Silence.

MORRIS Once in an orange moon, I think to myself it would be nice to leave a little money to the grandkids.

ROSE My father always used to say, "if you need money, it'll turn up."

MORRIS Yes, and he was right. The Lotto's up to seven million tomorrow; you never know!

ROSE Well, that's the last of the coffee. Should we make a reservation for the restaurant?

DAVID Why don't we stay in tonight, hm? I'll cook.

ROSE You sure? You're so busy.

DAVID I want to.

ROSE Liz and the kids coming?

DAVID Maybe next week.

LEN (*at the window*) The garden still looks good. I don't know what that Skepian's talking about. That path Sid made, with the lights all along it, I wish we had something like that.

DONNA The zinnias are beautiful, Mom. Should I bring some in?

ROSE Well, they might have bugs. Just leave them, I think. (*beat*) The garden's so overgrown. It's not the same, nothing's been the same, nothing will ever be the same.

LEN You don't have to sell.

ROSE Sometimes I look out there, I think I see Sid... he used to love to sit there, in the arbour... there's so much to be done. He'd be out there right now, if—

TRISH suddenly appears in the doorway. ROSE starts.

TRISH Sorry. Didn't mean to scare you.... I'm back for the summer. I just wanted to say hello, see how you are.... I was just tidying up, hope you don't mind.

MORRIS You don't remember my granddaughter? I don't blame you!

ROSE Trish? (*embracing her*) Oh, Trish, Trish... he thought of you as one of his own... he always said, "If I had a daughter..."

TRISH It's alright.

ROSE Now he's gone, he's gone... why? Why did he have to go so soon? (*recovers*) I'm sorry. It's not fair, I shouldn't cry like this in front of you.—Trish, what happened to you? You're all grown up, you're a young woman.

TRISH The other day, a waitress called me "Ma'am."

ROSE You were just a girl when Sid died; it was so cute the way you'd always come over to help out. Now look at you, you look like a boy.

TRISH I'm just wearing my hair up—see?

ROSE Gorgeous. I used to have hair like that when I was your age.

TRISH It's still so pretty.

ROSE Come with me, we'll go sit in the garden. Faye, would you like to come outside? Someone give Faye a hand.

MORRIS (*helping FAYE to her feet*) Upsadaisy.

ROSE (*exiting, to TRISH*) You're in school?

TRISH It's a little complicated...

Exit ROSE, TRISH, MORRIS and FAYE. LEN and DAVID remain.

LEN My sister has no idea about money; she never did. Sid always took care of the finances.

DAVID She does like to spend money. And then complain about never having any. I'd like to know what happened to what she cleared from the house. Andrew says there's hardly anything left.

LEN It's like a disease with her, only there's no cure. I've thought of a hundred ways to get her some money, but none of them amount to anything. If only we'd gotten our fair share of the inheritance. You must know about that. My father—your grandfather—was one of six kids, and a rich uncle left them a huge pot of money, almost a million dollars. Only by then your grandfather had passed away, and the others didn't want to let your mother and me have his share. We wanted to have a Beth Din—bring in a rabbi, get it all sorted out. Well, the five of them met and, as the story goes, they all but one voted to hold the Beth Din, only it had to be unanimous, so that was that. Apparently, one of them—we don't know the schmuck's name—stood up and yelled, "When it comes to money, I have no religion!" And then he stormed out. That was the last time we spoke to any of them, and that was twenty years ago now. That's all it takes to rip a family apart, even the closest ones. Mind you, I did once get a note from Aunt Gerty, when your grandmother died. She was the nicest of the

bunch. She lives in Montreal. I could give her a call, or... I tell you what, maybe Sasha could ask his in-laws.

DAVID I don't think so.

ANDREW appears in the doorway.

LEN Why not? Caroline's parents are filthy rich.

DAVID Filthy's right; they wallow in it. Besides, they don't much like us. After all, Caroline married beneath her station. We're the poor country cousins as far as they're concerned. Her family treated my parents like peasants. At the wedding even—had us in a separate room at the reception.

LEN I remember. They served us cold cuts and pop.

DAVID And when Sasha and Caroline separated a few years ago, her family cut him off—wouldn't even talk to him, like he was dirt, like he was nothing, not even human. But the way they treated my parents, that was the galling thing. Especially my father—they couldn't stand him, because he didn't dab the corners of his mouth with a linen napkin. But he had principles, which is more than I can say for those people.

LEN Alright, David, but they're not monsters. And don't start turning your own parents into saints. After all, your father, for all his good points, and he had a lot, but he treated your mother pretty rotten. Maybe you don't remember; more than a few times she was at our house, in tears, saying how she wanted to leave him. She doesn't talk about that now; seems like she wishes the shiva had never ended.

DAVID Andrew's here.

LEN Uh? (*pause*) You know, I think I've got something in my eye. I've been trying to blink it out... anyway, did I mention what happened at the bank?

ANDREW comes in.

DAVID I thought you went for a nap.

ANDREW I couldn't sleep.

LEN You've got your mother worried sick. You've got us all worried. You're a good kid, you're always thinking of others first. But you've got to think of yourself, too.

ANDREW Sure. Listen, Uncle Len, you've been wonderful with Mom, but you can't go around saying those things.

LEN I've always had a big mouth.

ANDREW I mean why were you saying those things?

LEN You know I never realize what a schmuck I sound like until it's too late. Like saying a prayer for the bookcase. I don't know why I do things like that.

FAYE returns.

FAYE Where's Sid? I can't find him anywhere.

LEN Faye, why don't we go sit down on the dock? You could use some fresh air. *(to the boys)* Maybe it'll make her sleepy. Anyway, boys, don't you worry about this business with the cottage. I've fought harder battles than this; I'm a man of the 40s—they didn't call us "the greatest generation" for nothing.

DAVID Len, you weren't in the war.

LEN Well I would have been if we hadn't won it so quickly. Anyway, the point is, we were different back then, we grew up with different values. I'm not the sort of man who backs down to anybody. No, sir, you'd have to be a real somebody for me to back down to you.

ANDREW Thanks, Uncle.

DAVID We appreciate it.

FAYE *(angrily)* Len, come on!

LEN I'm coming, I'm coming...

LEN, reprising "If I Were a Rich Man," exits with FAYE.

ANDREW I'm so tired. I brought some work up with me, all these books I have to read for the "new curriculum." A friend of mine says the government's out to destroy the school system. I wish they'd hurry up. Anyway, I start to read and fall asleep. Then as soon as my eyes are closed I wake up again. *(beat)* Do you think what Mom said, do you think it's possible?

Pause.

ANDREW Do you think what Mom said, do you think it's possible?

DAVID Andrew, it's not hereditary. Stop thinking that. You're over-tired, that's all.

ANDREW Yeah. You're right. I know you're right.—Still, there's a clinic in town. I might just have them run a test.

DAVID If it'll make you feel better.—Anyway, I'm going to the guest house. While it's still standing. Gotta finish this script. You wouldn't believe what they pay in television—American television especially. Staggering, really. My agent's put me up for a series. He thinks I've got a pretty good shot at it. About vampire cops. They're cops, who are vampires... or something. Anyway, if it happens, I can put some money towards the cottage. Course I'll have to move to Los Angeles, so I don't know how much use I'll be getting out of it.

ANDREW To Los Angeles? With Liz and the kids?

DAVID Well, we gotta figure that out.

Outside, someone's been playing a guitar.

That's Jeremy; he's pretty good. I keep telling myself to learn guitar. *(hesitantly)* I called home earlier. Wish I hadn't. When I spoke with the kids I had a funny sensation. I didn't understand what it was til later: they don't feel like they're mine. I felt so distant from them; like I was talking to someone else's kids. I always thought of myself as a good father. "A good father." When Dad was—when we brought him back here—and we each went in to talk to him... *(long pause)* I sat on the bed. I held his hand, stroked his hand. I knew what I wanted to say, only I wasn't sure I'd find the breath to say it with. You know, I was so afraid to touch him. Even to touch him. Imagine that, nearly forty, and afraid to touch your own father... I managed to calm myself. I leaned over, I said "You've been a good father." And—he said—Dad said—he whispered—"Liar." *(seeing that ANDREW has fallen asleep.)* ...Sleeping like a baby.

SASHA enters, slightly winded from his run.

SASHA Hey, we need to talk.

DAVID Yeah. Can it wait, though? I really need to get some work done.

SASHA Sure.

DAVID goes. SASHA goes to ANDREW, is about to startle him, as before. Stops. Covers him with a blanket.

ACT 2

A few days later. The backyard of the cottage, near the guest house. A sloping hill gives way to the lake. It's late afternoon. JEREMY strums on a guitar. CAROLINE is applying sun block. SASHA has been for a swim and is lying down. DAVID stares out at the lake, taking the last drag of a cigarette, which he stamps underfoot. He has his laptop computer with him. And a scotch.

CAROLINE They asked me for my birth certificate at the liquor store yesterday. Can you believe it? I said, “My God, don’t tell me you think I’m anything less than *eighteen*.” And the lady behind the counter, this big beefy woman, said, “Nope, but we got caught selling to minors, so they’re making us card everyone now.” But the way she said it, and the look she gave me. The stupid hick. I’m telling you the people around here have no manners, none. They dress horribly, they’re out of shape. Not that I should talk. Look at this. *(She pinches her waist.)* I have *got* to get rid of this. Can you believe I’ve had four children? *(pats her stomach)* This is the hard part. *(applies sun block to her legs)* When I was younger I was into gymnastics. High beam, floor, horse, I did all that, and I was good too. I went to the provincial finals and won all kinds of medals. I wanted to go to the nationals, but they were in the week before exams, so my father said absolutely not. It’s too bad. I had all these thoughts of going to the Olympics. I was really that good. There’s no telling what my life might’ve been like if I’d followed through. *(lays back, puts cucumbers over her eyes)* No telling at all. *(pause)* I know I talk a lot. It would just be nice if someone answered back once in a while. You guys are all the same. You’d sooner talk about some stupid hockey player and how much he should be paid and blah blah blah. You’ll talk about it for hours. But ask you to open up, express how you feel...

JEREMY plays guitar and sings:

JEREMY “Think I’ll go out to Alberta, weather’s good there in the fall/
Got some— *(hits the wrong chord, picks up)* —“Some friends that I can go working for...”

CAROLINE Jeremy, for God’s sake. Your voice, dear. Really, if you want to sing you should have taken singing lessons. Your father and I offered to send you but you had other things on your mind.

JEREMY continues to strum.

You could do with guitar lessons while you’re at it.

JEREMY I just like to goof around.

CAROLINE Let other kids goof around. You have to apply yourself seriously to everything you take on in life. I can’t stand laziness. You can choose to become whatever you want, just as long as you’re the best at it in the world. There’s

no point in being second best. No one remembers second best. No one wants second best. Remember that.

JEREMY (*sings*) “Four strong winds that blow lonely/Seven seas that run high.”

CAROLINE Ugh.

DONNA wanders in, joins in the song.

JEREMY & DONNA “All these things that won’t change, come what may.”

They hum, looking for the words...

CAROLINE It’s Woodstock now.

DONNA I always get lost there, too.

JEREMY Is this bothering you, Uncle David? You came up here to work.

DAVID It’s fine. It’s nice. How do you know all those songs?

JEREMY Found all my dad’s old albums.

CAROLINE One more reason to get rid of them all. I mean, *Joni Mitchell*.

JEREMY “They paved paradise, put up a parking lot, oo wha wha...”

CAROLINE Jeremy, Jeremy, that wasn’t a request, dear.

JEREMY strums.

DAVID Did you have a good time in London?

JEREMY Great time. I’d like to go back.

SASHA Tell him to get his grades up and he *will* go back.

CAROLINE It’s not just his grades. His whole attitude has changed in the last year. I don’t know what’s gotten into him. He’s become so sullen and impolite. And look at the way he dresses; shapeless t-shirts and filthy jeans. I keep telling him that appearance means everything; it tells the world you’re confident, that you care, that you’re respectful.

JEREMY Why don’t I just shoot myself and save you the trouble?

CAROLINE Don’t be a child, Jeremy.

JEREMY continues to strum.

DONNA It’s so nice to get away. I’m sort of dreading going back to the city. There’s so much to do in the house. We’re having the basement redone. I have three quotes, each one hugely different from the last. I haven’t done any back-to-school shopping; the kids all need new clothes. Plus we finally decided on getting a second car, now that Andrew’s going to be working so far out of town. I’m going to take a cooking course. It’s through the synagogue. They show you how to prepare all the holiday meals; like, the real way to do it. Passover, Rosh Hashanah. Everything.

SASHA Do you know much about books? David?

DAVID Books?

SASHA Publishing.

DAVID Publishing books?

SASHA Yeah, some guy called me the other day, asked if I'd be interested in writing a book on prozac.

DAVID Oh yeah.

SASHA You know, are we over-dependent on it, over-proscribing it to our kids, and what exactly is attention deficit disorder.

DAVID Right, right.

SASHA Personally I favour a return to shock therapy. What do you think I should charge for it?

DAVID Shock therapy?

SASHA The book.

DAVID Depends on who it's for. Is it a textbook?

SASHA Dunno.

DAVID Or is it aimed more at the general, you know, public?

SASHA Don't know.

Pause.

So you don't know.

DAVID Well—.

SASHA It's fine, I know another guy who—it's fine.

DAVID I could get you some information.

SASHA Don't worry about it. (*yawning*) Donna, you should talk to Caroline's father about the basement.

DONNA No, I don't want to impose.

SASHA He won't mind.

CAROLINE (*pointedly*) He never does.

Pause.

DONNA Anyway—

CAROLINE It's no problem, Donna. In fact he's got a new development going in about ten minutes from you. He can send a couple of his men over; the basement will be done in a week.

DONNA Really, I couldn't. Your father's done so much for us already.

CAROLINE It's important to help each other out. We're family.

DONNA That's so nice of you.

SASHA (*reading the paper*) Hey, listen to this: "scientists have discovered a giant ant colony that stretches all the way from northern Italy to western Spain."

DAVID That's a lotta ants.

SASHA Whole lotta ants.

DONNA Oh, that reminds me I made a really nice pesto—different—with walnuts instead of pine nuts—will the kids eat it, or should I throw on some chicken fingers and fries?

DAVID The thing I don't get is how you went from an ant colony to pesto—could you just walk me through that?

DONNA I don't know. I just thought of all those ants, and how we had a terrible ant infestation in the backyard. They were coming up through this one little hole, and there must have been hundreds of thousands of them, it was the most disgusting thing I've ever seen, and the kids were crushing them. So I guess crushing ants reminded me of crushing things up. It's funny how you think of things.

CAROLINE Mine will eat the pesto, it sounds delicious, I don't know about the others. What kind of pasta are you using?

DONNA Fettuccini.

CAROLINE Really? Because it's so nice with the little thin ones.

DONNA Spaghettoni?

CAROLINE No, no. It starts with a "p." And you let the noodles come to room—I don't suppose we can get fresh pasta anywhere? Nevermind—you let it come to room temperature, then toss it with the pesto, not too much, just enough so it's nice and green, you know? And just a light salad. Anyway, do what you think is best.

DAVID Hold the cucumbers.

DONNA goes. JEREMY returns to "Four Strong Winds."

JEREMY (*sings*) "All these things that won't change—"

CAROLINE Oh God, he's back to that.

JEREMY "—come what may."

CAROLINE Jeremy, would you stop that awful *moaning*?

JEREMY stops playing. Starts to walk away.

Where are you going?

JEREMY For a walk.

CAROLINE Don't go too far. It'll be dark soon.

JEREMY It's pretty dark now.

JEREMY goes.

CAROLINE Are you ever going to speak to your son again?... Sasha?... I see, now it's me you're not going to talk to. Fine. (*removes the cucumbers, sits up*) Don't talk to me. Don't talk to anyone. I'm sick of it. Sick of it.

SASHA (*as CAROLINE leaves*) The thing about these ants is that they work really well together. Like, there's red ants and black ants, and usually they fight to the death, but these ants, somehow, they've learned to work cooperatively, toward a common goal.

DAVID They must have seen a therapist.

SASHA Yeah. Listen, when Andrew gets back, the three of us should talk. About the cottage, I mean. Skepian's right, it's falling apart. We've already let half a week slip by. If we sell now—

DAVID I thought you wanted to talk when Andrew gets back.—I mean, if you want to talk now, that's fine. But uh, you know. The three of us own it, so.

SASHA Yeah. Sure. We can wait. The thing is, we don't want the town deciding this for us, right? I mean there's nothing we can do about the zoning stuff—the house has to move. That's all there is to it. Now I don't know about you, but I don't have a hundred thousand dollars lying around. Matter of fact, things are a little tight right now. So it seems to me —

DAVID Look, are we waiting for Andrew or not?

SASHA You want to wait for Andrew, we'll wait for Andrew.

DAVID That's all I'm asking. Why is that so difficult?

SASHA *Look...* Forget it.

SASHA goes.

DAVID *Shit.*

Tries to get back to work. Can't. Puts the laptop aside. Makes a cell phone call.

(*too loud*) Jenna, hi, it's David Levy. Is Ted around?... Thanks.... Ted, David. Good, good. Just wondering if—oh, sorry. (*normal level*) Just wondering if we've heard anything about—uh huh. Uh huh. So we don't know when they're gonna decide. Uh huh.

JEREMY and TRISH wander in. She's showing him photos. Their dialogue overlaps with the end of DAVID's phone call.

Okay, so it's just wait and see. Alright, well I—hello? Hello?

The connection lost, he switches off. He gets to work.

TRISH This is where we stayed.

JEREMY Cool.

TRISH This is us at the fishing village.

JEREMY Who's this guy?

TRISH Oh, that's Luke.

JEREMY "Luke."

TRISH He's this really cool guy from Vancouver, runs the Peace & Justice Centre. They arranged the whole trip. Here's where we set up the information booth, to show the farmers how to apply for loans from the Millennium Fund.

JEREMY We should go somewhere else.

DAVID It's fine. Keep talking. Try to sound like teenagers, though, would you? I'm trying to write a scene where two young lovers trip over the naked, decomposing body of a hooker. That ever happen to you?

CAROLINE *(off)* Jeremy!

JEREMY hangs his head.

JEREMY *(to himself)* Just five seconds.

DAVID Hey, listen. I know a guy around here with a wood chipper. If you want, we could—

CAROLINE *(off)* Jeremy, inside please. You left your things lying all over the floor, now I'd like you to come and pick them up.

JEREMY Back in a sec.

He goes. DAVID continues to work. After a moment.

TRISH Cool shirt.

DAVID Hm?

TRISH I said I like your shirt.

DAVID Oh. It belonged to my father. It was the only one I could find that fit. He was a trim young fella til he hit, well, thirty. But he never threw a damn thing away. Let me see your pictures.

TRISH I thought you were working.

DAVID *(types)* "Oh my God, noooooooooo!"

He repeatedly presses the letter "o." Puts the laptop down. TRISH hands over the photos. Notices his shirt.

TRISH Those collars are back now. And, look, I love these little tabs on the sides.

DAVID That's a hell of a shot.

TRISH We were on top of this rickety old truck going about a hundred K down a mountain pass.

DAVID Jesus.

TRISH Yeah, and it was raining, too, and foggy. Three kids held my legs so I could get the shot.

DAVID I think it's terrific what you're doing. I always wanted to travel to distant places. Give of myself.

TRISH Is it too late?

DAVID Fraid so. I'm in my Disappointed Years. That's where no matter what you do, everybody's disappointed. Apparently I'm due for a turnaround. A friend of mine says that when the dog star circles the hunter... or the fish, or... well, when something circles something else, all will be well.

TRISH I don't understand. You're like this incredibly successful guy.

DAVID (*laughs*) Now you sound like a teenager.

TRISH It's true.

DAVID No, my dear. I'm a failure. A 40-year-old failure. I've failed at everything really. I'm in a sort of catastrophic retreat. You ever been to Alaska?

TRISH Nuh uh.

DAVID I was there one time, took a little boat ride out to the glacier. The ice was blue, I forget why. Something to do with... I forget. Someone on the boat explained to me that the glacier was moving forward and backward at the same time. "Catastrophic retreat." (*hands back the photos*) Thanks for your memories.

TRISH I have more. Not mine. Look. I found some photos in the shed, in a little box of nails. And this list of things to do in the garden.

DAVID (*reading*) "One: trim roses. Two: transplant hostas. Three—" (*stops reading*)

TRISH I love this photo.

DAVID Look at that. In his sailor's outfit.

TRISH He worked on a minesweeper, didn't he?

DAVID In the radio room. They called him Sparks. God, he always loved the sound of water. He sought it. The back yard of our house was right next to the highway. He'd sit out there and listen to the traffic. He said it sounded like waves. And up here, he was always just a few steps from the water. Listen to it. Like the lake is breathing.

Pause. He hands back the photos and list. Lights a cigarette.

TRISH You okay? Maybe I'll go rescue Jeremy, huh?

DAVID nods. Voices, off. DAVID puts out the cigarette, sticks it in the pack. Enter ROSE, LEN and JACK.

JACK You've got to decide, and quickly. Just tell me, yes or no, are you interested in my plan?

ROSE Who's been smoking?

LEN Hello, David. Finished writing?

DAVID Yeah.

JACK I'm waiting for an answer—yes or no.

LEN David, we went to town for lunch. You should have come with. We passed by the theatre; it was packed. People were lined up around the block. I said to Rose, I said, "We ought to go in there and ask them why they never do plays by David Levy." She said, "Oh, he'd be so angry if we did that."

ROSE I didn't say "angry."

JACK One word!

LEN (*yawns*) Sleepy. I need to go for a run. Where's Sash, maybe he'll go with me.

DAVID He went for a swim.

ROSE So late?

DAVID (*under his breath*) Christ.

ROSE (*peering out at the lake*) I worry about him. Him and Caroline, something's wrong, I can tell. Money. It's always money. It's her, though. She spends like it's going out of style. And he works like a dog to keep up. I know he likes to spend, too—just like his mother.

LEN Can you believe she tried to pick up the bill today?

JACK I wouldn't hear of it.

LEN You wouldn't believe this place, David. Twelve dollars for an appetizer! And when it came, like this. (*indicates a small portion*) I said to the waitress, "Excuse me, does this come with a microscope?"

ROSE The look on her *face*.

LEN "Because I can't *find* it." She didn't like me at first. But by the end, I was cracking with the jokes, I was making with the faces—then I said to her, I said, "You have a nice smile, you know that? You ought to bring it out more often." You'll never guess, David, she started to cry, ran into the kitchen.

ROSE We could hear her from our table.

LEN Like I insulted her. All I said was she had a nice smile.

JACK She does. But she's had a very hard life. I happen to know her a little. Wanted to be an actress; it never worked out for her. Now listen, Rose—

LEN So—what—she's not used to people being kind to her?

JACK I don't think that's it.

LEN I never heard of such a thing. Tell a pretty girl she has a nice smile—she weeps! But that's how it is with me. People are always taking what I say the wrong way. Isn't that right, Rose?

ROSE Always, since we were little kids.

SASHA enters, towelling himself off.

LEN Here's Johnny Weismuller already. How was the swim?

SASHA Good, good.

DAVID Break the record?

SASHA Nah, I started cramping up.

ROSE Oh God, where?

SASHA Ma, it's nothing, a little cramp.

ROSE My boys never tell me what's wrong.

SASHA (*laughing*) I just *did*.

JACK Don't you people understand that unless you do something—and quickly—your cottage is going to be condemned?

LEN Everything's under control. I spoke with Aunt Gerty; we had a good talk. She said she never wanted things to end up the way they did.

ROSE It's a shame, to lose your family. What have you got if you haven't got your family?

LEN She finally told me who it was voted against us. Morton Fink. As if we didn't know. I always said, "Fink—you're a fink." I said it to his face one time; he nearly punched me.

ROSE He was a real piece of work, that Morton.

LEN Once a Fink, always a fink.

JACK People, people.

LEN Anyway, Gerty said she'd be happy to loan us some money.

JACK How much?

LEN Two, maybe three.

JACK "Two, maybe three"! You need seventy-five thousand—*at least!* And that's just to push back the main house. The guest house has to come down, too, or

did you forget about that? Then there's going to be extensive repairs. I'll tell you something, once you move a house, it's never the same; and *this* house, my God, it'll be a miracle if it's still standing after the move. I mean forgive me for saying this, but you people have no idea what's going on; you have no business sense at all.

ROSE Tell us, then, Jack.

JACK I've told you. I don't know if I should scream, or cry, or fall down dead in a faint. You people have the opportunity of a lifetime and you—

Len suddenly bursts into an imitation of Walter Huston's character from "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre," dancing and waving his arms back and forth.

LEN Ee hee hee! You crazy fools! Yer sittin' on a gold mine, a gold mine I tell ya, and ya don't even know it! Ee hee hee!

JACK You're an idiot!

LEN Ee hee hee!

JACK starts to go.

ROSE Jack, wait. Don't go. Stay for dinner. We'll talk it over with the boys.

LEN Well, I think I'll go for a swim.

ROSE Before dinner?

LEN Ach.

LEN goes.

DAVID Well. I have to make a phone call. Mr Skepian.

JACK Good to see you again.

DAVID goes. SASHA goes into the house. ROSE and JACK are left alone.

ROSE I have a bad feeling. I keep thinking the house is going to fall down, and all of us inside it, just collapse on our heads. I'm so afraid all the time. I can't even say what it is. I can't put a finger on it.

JACK Well, Sasha would call it dime store Freud, but if you don't mind my saying, I think it might be nothing more than guilt. Inside, you know the best thing to do is move on, but you feel beholden to Sid's memory. But I'm telling you, Sid himself would probably agree that the best thing to do is take the money and run. I always said he was a smart man.

ROSE I look at his picture and he says, "Rose, don't sell!"... I keep thinking he'll be angry with me. He had a terrible anger. The fights, it was so hard, and the children heard every word. I almost left him.—Things didn't turn out the way he'd hoped. He had to drive an hour to work and an hour back, every day. He hardly ever saw the boys, even on weekends. But he worked so hard, and then

he felt like he just never got a break. Being turned out of the house, that was the worst; I pawned my wedding ring just to make the mortgage, but the next month there was nothing. They put our things on the lawn. We went to live with my parents... it was alright at first, but my mother and Sid did *not* get along. She thought I could have done better; she never said it. She thought it. And my father—God rest him—

JACK The best of men.

ROSE Oh boy was he ever. I never saw him angry, not once in his life. I was his princess; he'd take me to all the shops on his route—he was a window-washer—they called him The Mayor of Spadina—And he'd take me to Mendel's Shoes, and Mr Mendel was always so happy to see me. One time I wanted heels—oh, I wanted them so badly—and my mother said, "No heels!" When we got to the store, my father said, "Mr Mendel, this girl wants heels!" And when we got home—the look on my mother's face! And my father said, "I can't deny her a thing, Rachela, not a thing." (*through tears*) Daddy, Daddy.

JACK goes to her.

JACK There now, Rose. There now.... I see him in you, Rose. I see his spirit in you. You're a wonderful woman—you never seem to get any older; you have the spirit of a woman half your age, Rosey.... Good Lord, did you hear that? I called you "Rosey." Ha! Like the way I did. Like we were still a couple of teenagers. Oh God, Rosey, the way you lit up a room.

ROSE I still can, buster!

JACK There you go! That's the Rosey I fell in love with!

Pause. She breaks from him, gently.

ROSE It's cooling down. That wind.

She takes out a kerchief, wraps it around her head, ties it beneath her chin. Music is heard.

JACK Listen to that. It's coming from across the way. Looks like a wedding.

ROSE I love Klezmer music.

JACK They don't play it like that anymore. Now it's all these bleeps and bloops, who needs it? (*He takes her hand.*) Rose. Sweet Rose. The way I'm seeing you right now, it was just like the last time I saw you. You'd wrapped a kerchief around your head, it was so windy by the lake. You held yourself tight. I knew it would be the last time I'd see you. I couldn't understand it. I thought, probably she thinks I'm not good enough for her. I thought, maybe my father scared her off. He was an idiot, that man; he knew nothing, he taught me nothing. One time I came home from school. My teacher had called to say I was slacking off. The old man was waiting for me. "You're lazy," he said, gave me a whack across the back of my neck, called me a good-for-nothing, said I'd never amount to anything, all kinds of things he said, and sent me to my room. I was maybe nine

or ten. There wasn't even anyone around to comfort me.... I didn't meet a kind soul in this world til I met you, and that's the God's honest truth. I don't think there's another person in this world like you, so incapable of hate. I can't tell you how many times I wondered about how things might have turned out differently, if only I'd had some sign from you, not even a word, but a sign, as we went on our walk, a sign that you'd wait for me.

ROSE ...What walk, Jack?

JACK ...Why...

LEN enters, with FAYE. LEN holds a sweater for her.

LEN Faye, Sid died.

ROSE Oh God.

FAYE He did?

LEN Yes, Faye, a long time ago. Now, will you put this sweater on? It's cold.

ROSE She keeps saying it, over and over. I can't stand it anymore.

FAYE Let's go for a walk. It used to be so nice to take a walk by the river. We'll hop on the tram.

LEN She thinks she's in London.

FAYE What'd you say?

LEN I said, it's too far to walk. We have to drive.

FAYE Now, how much is the fare? What's happened to my head? I can't seem to remember anything. What's wrong with me? I've gotten so old.

LEN You'll outlive the bunch of us, Faye.

FAYE Got married when I was sixteen. Three kids by the time I was twenty, and would have had a fourth but we lost that one. We were always losing them then. Mum lost three—maybe more. The police came to arrest her one time, they accused her of smothering her own children.... Well, maybe it was true. No one ever found out for sure. All I know is, she didn't take the pillow to me, or to Sid. We used to have much bigger families back then. Nowadays it's one child, two at the most, and, oh, how they're spoiled. It's all because of that women's liberation. All of a sudden, women didn't want to stay at home. They wanted to go out and get jobs. Everything got so mixed up; no one knows their place anymore. The other day I saw a man pushing a stroller through the park—in the middle of the day! (*seeing JEREMY approach*) Oh, Sid, there you are!

ROSE It's not Sid you stupid old woman! Stop asking for Sid, do you hear me? Stop it!

Pause.

FAYE What's she talking about? Are we going to the river or not?

LEN Sure we are. We'll just wait here for the tram, Faye.

FAYE Oh, that's alright then.—She oughtn't to yell at me.

Enter ANDREW, DAVID (holding a replenished glass of scotch), JEREMY and TRISH.

LEN Here they are, the young and the reckless.

ANDREW Hey, Mom.

DONNA enters.

ROSE Andrew... David... come here, come here. (*embracing them, tight, almost squishing them*) I love you so much, do you know that?

DAVID Got a rough idea.

DONNA Dinner'll be ready soon. Caroline's got it under control.

JACK Good Lord, we just had lunch not too long ago. I tell you, hanging around with you people is bad for my waistline.

ROSE Where were you a whole day?

ANDREW I had a couple of errands to run in town.

DONNA Trish, that is a fabulous skirt. Did you make it?

TRISH Mm hm.

DONNA It's *so* pretty. You could start your own line.

TRISH I just do it for myself.

ROSE She's going into fashion design at Humber College.

JACK Oh? I thought she was going into activism.

TRISH Ha ha.

JACK Oh, where's your sense of humour? You gotta laugh once in a while; it's good for the soul. Tell you what. Why don't the bunch of us go into town tomorrow and see the play they're putting on? My treat. A couple of friends of mine saw it, said it was very funny, very "risqué."

DAVID (*acting a buxom blonde*) "Oh, Mr Abercrombie, there's something I need to get off my chest."

JACK You don't approve. I suppose you don't like those old fashioned plays. Well, I like a corny joke and a few plot twists. Not like your modern plays, where nothing happens and everyone's depressed—including the audience. And your plays—

DAVID Which you've never seen.

JACK I've been told about them. I know people who see them. And I've read about them. Why do you say those things about Israel? About the Jews?

DAVID What things?

JACK You write that Israel's to blame for everything that's wrong over there. Don't you understand, young man, you contribute to the bad feelings against the Jews.

DAVID *Rubbish.*

JACK Instead of talking about the bad things, you should write about the achievements.

DAVID Of—?

JACK The Jews. Why is it that everywhere we go, we blossom? We become leaders in practically every field—not just in business, or medicine or law, where you'd expect, but in journalism, education, the arts—practically anything you can think of, and out of all proportion to our numbers. Just look at the statistics, and you'll see it's true: the Jews always do better than the rest.

DAVID You know, if you said that with a German accent, it wouldn't sound so good.

JACK My point is, the Jewish people are indestructible; our enemies have been trying to kill us off for centuries, but we endure; we adapt, but we always stay true to our core being, which is a deep love for all humanity.

DAVID Tell that to the Palestinians.

JACK Well, there he goes again.

ROSE Really, do we have to talk about this?

JACK Look, you're a talented fellow. No one's telling you what to write. All I'm saying is, why not use your talent for something less destructive? Why depress people? I'll tell you what: I'll give you a suggestion, and you can take it or leave it. It seems to me that what we really need now is a play about intermarriage. Think about it; it's a big problem. The Jews are marrying themselves right out of existence.

DAVID I really think "Bridget Loves Bernie" was the last word on the subject.

JACK Now you're making fun, but I'm telling you—in fact, I was talking to a Rabbi not too long ago, and he said, "Jack, intermarriage is a scourge; a second Holocaust."

DAVID Good God.

JACK Well, someone ought to write about it.

DONNA It sounds pretty interesting, actually, I'd see that.

DAVID (*mincing*) "Sounds pretty interesting actually, I'd see that." (*holding up a glass of scotch*) To mediocrity! Common sense art for a Common Sense Revolution!—I came up here to get away from this kind of idiocy.

DONNA Now I'm an idiot?

ROSE David!

DONNA I don't appreciate that.

DAVID I'm not talking about you, I'm talking about him. Don't tell me what "the people" want! Who are you to speak for "the people"? It's "people" like you who keep "the people" from hearing or seeing anything *except* the sort of crap you're advocating.

JACK I merely said—

DAVID I mean you go around, you sell, you sell, you buy, you sell, well we're not selling.

ROSE David, what's wrong with you?

LEN I think he's on drugs.

DAVID Look, what exactly are you hanging around here for? We've already told you, we're not interested in your offer.

JACK I don't know what you're so angry about, young man.

DAVID And that's another thing—quit trying to put me in my place with that "young man" stuff.

JACK Oh, you've "lived," have you?

DAVID I mean it's funny you just happened to be in the neighbourhood the other day. First time in three years my mother's been here, and you just happen to have a For Sale sign in your back pocket.

JACK Now look. I think you'd better watch what you're saying.

DAVID I don't watch what I'm saying. Gets me into all sorts of trouble.

DONNA I think we should stop this.

DAVID (*overlapping*) Where's the scotch?

ROSE Haven't you had enough?

DAVID (*pretending to be staggering drunk*) "Is there an officer, problem?"

JACK You're very sure of yourself, aren't you?

DAVID I mean, don't you own enough? Can't you leave *some* to the rest of us?

ROSE *David.*

DAVID Never mind, never mind.

JACK It's alright. It doesn't bother me. I'm used to it. Anyway, he's supposed to say things like that, otherwise his fellow artists will think he's a sell out. You should try running a business some day. Spend a year balancing the books—or even a month, an hour. It's not so easy to do what I do. But that's alright. You think what you want.

ROSE Please, let's change the subject.

DONNA I saw a really good show on TV the other day.

DAVID She said change the subject, not the station.

DONNA Well, I—

ROSE Go ahead, don't listen to him.

DONNA No, it was just, it was on one of the educational channels. I just sort of flicked it on, and—. There were two people, and they were talking about, was there any progress made in the last hundred years? Like, were we moving forward or backward?

LEN Definitely forward. That's my answer.

DONNA Well, I guess it depends on how you measure it. I suppose in terms of science and medicine, we're moving forward. But what about poverty, war, hunger. Those things are all still with us, we haven't figured out a way to eradicate them, and it doesn't look like we ever will.

JACK That doesn't mean that we're not moving forward. It's sad to say, but those things will always be with us.

DONNA But why? That's what I can't understand. And the thing is, people don't seem to care about it anymore. Oh, once in a while there's a benefit for the homeless or something, but mainly we sort of don't care. Like, why? Are we basically a selfish, uncaring, you know, people? Or did we become that? It really bothers me. And I think, are my kids going to think any differently? The junk they watch on TV, the video games, the movies, it's all—none of it's *about* anything. It's like they're being brainwashed into believing that the One True Good is making profit, and to hell with anyone who gets in your way. It just—it makes me so sad...

ROSE Donna?

DONNA I'm sorry. It just makes me so upset. I wish I could do something. I want to do something. I just don't have the time.... Anyway, it's a nice sunset.

JACK Glorious.

Suddenly a loud boom is heard, in the distance. They all react.

ROSE What was that?

JACK I don't know. It sounded like it was coming from across the lake.

LEN It sounded like a rifle shot.

DONNA Do you think it's poachers?

JEREMY No. Look. They're shooting off flares. There—see? Just kids, goofing around. Having fun.

Another blast is heard.

ROSE Oh, it's horrible.

FAYE It was like this during the raids. We went to the basement, all of us. We all sat there, huddled together, in the dark. No candles, nothing. Sidney was away at war; we wondered if we'd ever see him again.

ROSE Let's go into dinner. Come on, children.—David?

DAVID Be there in a minute.

ROSE Come, Andrew.

JACK Look, I have to say it one more time—unless you come up with the money to meet the order, the planning office will take over the property. You've already let one week slip by. Please, think about it. Think!

Everyone goes except TRISH and JEREMY. JEREMY strums the guitar.

TRISH It's so nice out here.—Your mom doesn't much like me, does she?

JEREMY She thinks we're in love.

TRISH laughs. JEREMY keeps picking away at the strings, absentmindedly.

I don't want to go to university. My dad's not talking to me. I thought I'd come here and figure it out. Something about this place. But I'm not figuring it out. I'm even more confused than before. This used to be a kind of home.

TRISH Jeremy, the whole world is our home. The world is an amazing place, filled with amazing people and incredible places. You need to break away, Jeremy. You do. If you live your life the way they want you to live it, do you think you'll be happy? Do you think *they're* happy?

She stops him playing guitar.

Your grandfather was a great man—a giant—you know why? Because he had principles. He stood for something, and you knew what it was. He used to tell me great stories about fighting the Brownshirts in London; he and his friends used to go chasing them down the streets, get into fights. Sometimes they got beat up, but the point is they stood up to the fascists.

CAROLINE enters, unseen by TRISH and JEREMY. JEREMY continues to strum the guitar.

Your family pretends to be these great liberals, who care about social justice. But in the end, they only care about themselves. Like your Aunt Donna, saying nobody cares. That's so wrong. How can we live in such a big country, and the people be so small? (*beat*) You see that cottage there? I basically grew up in that place. Every summer and just about every weekend I was there. I know every island in this lake. Now I want to get to know the world like I know this place.... There's going to be this amazing gathering in Seattle, in November. All the big powers are meeting to talk about global this and global that, and

then there's going to be all these other people, from all over the world, coming together to have a real discussion, to talk about what really needs to happen, what matters to the rest of us. Come with me.

JEREMY I'd like to. Only...

TRISH Only you need permission? You don't, Jeremy. You're an adult. You can do whatever you want...

He tries to kiss her.

Don't do that.

JEREMY Sorry.

CAROLINE Jeremy? Dinner.

JEREMY I'm not hungry.

CAROLINE That's fine, but you can come sit at the table with the rest of us....
Jeremy.

JEREMY heads in, very suddenly.

TRISH See you, Jeremy.

JEREMY gives her a wave, disappears.

CAROLINE Nice night.

TRISH Yeah. The weather's been nice.

CAROLINE All set for first year?

TRISH Pretty much.

CAROLINE That's nice. So's Jeremy.

TRISH Yeah. I should get going. Goodnight.

CAROLINE Night.

CAROLINE stands there a moment, looking out at the lake. Music from the wedding can be heard again. She wipes away tears. A third loud boom is heard. The sky lightens momentarily. Blackout.

ACT 3

The garden. Late August. A winding path from the house leads to an arbour with a built-in bench, room enough for two people to sit. It's early evening. CAROLINE, DAVID and ANDREW, waiting for news on the fate of the cottage. From inside the house come the sounds of klezmer music. Company has been invited.

ANDREW What's taking them so long? They should be back by now.

CAROLINE Who knows? Could be anything. Maybe the planning office is going to grant an extension.

DAVID Doubt it.

Pause.

ANDREW Got the results back. They can't find anything.

DAVID This the second test?

ANDREW Just want to rule out everything. Anyway, there's one more test they can run.

CAROLINE Are you still not sleeping, dear?

ANDREW Not a wink.

MORRIS *(off)* Sounds wonderful! You don't happen to know "Alle Breder"?... Terrific... I haven't heard that in years! *(entering)* Ha ha! You know, this was a lovely idea, this little party. Your mother's tickled. She had tears in her eyes before. Maybe I'll dance on a chair! I feel like doing something, uh, what's that word?

DAVID Impulsive.

MORRIS Yes. Then again, my count's gone up, just a bit, just a bissel. I can't understand it. I was always healthy as a horse. My father—*olev ha'shalom*—had a wonderful sense of humour, and he used to say—ha ha ha—that—ha ha ha—that—*(beat)* Now what was I going to say?

CAROLINE Morris, we were just—

MORRIS Ah, I remember: he used to say, "We Siegels are descended from the horse that Caligula made senator," and—you see—well, it always seemed funny to us.

CAROLINE That is funny. It's just, we're having a little conversation.

MORRIS Mm?—Oh! Oh, I see. Yes. Don't let me bother you. Not to worry. That's just the way I get when I don't sleep. *(sitting down)* I won't say a word. Matter of fact, I'll probably just nod off. Didn't get much sleep last night, all this business with the property. I don't suppose there's been any word.

ANDREW Not in the last five minutes, no.

JEREMY and TRISH wander in.

DAVID You sure you weren't descended from a mule instead of a horse?

MORRIS What's that? I don't think so. You know I've never seen a mule.

DAVID They have very big ears.

CAROLINE Jeremy.

MORRIS That's right. And they always seem so sad.

CAROLINE Jeremy, why don't you show Morris those pictures from London?

MORRIS London? Wonderful. Haven't been there in twenty years. More.

CAROLINE They're in the living room, on the bookcase.

MORRIS (*being led out by JEREMY*) It's very expensive, you know.

ANDREW Well... maybe, maybe it's a sign, if, you know, if it's taking this long. Maybe something's being worked out.

DAVID No doubt.

CAROLINE Here he comes again.

Enter MORRIS, in a panic, followed by JEREMY.

MORRIS Where is it? I had it on me. I know I had it on me when I was out here.

JEREMY He's lost his wallet.

MORRIS I just took a hundred dollars out of the machine.

They all search for the wallet.

I was sitting right here. And I...

TRISH Here it is.

MORRIS Oh, thank God. (*kisses the wallet, then searches it*) Let's see... twenty, forty, sixty... Visa, Mastercard, Shoppers, Second Cup, all here, all here—look, I have three free coffees saved up.

CAROLINE Trish, be a darling, take your grandfather in for a drink.

MORRIS Yes, a drink, I could use one. (*heading off*) It's a terrible thing to lose your wallet. I remember one time, I turned the house upside down. The cab was waiting outside, but what could I do?

CAROLINE Jeremy.

MORRIS It was a terrible dilemma, because the meter was running the whole time...

CAROLINE We need a little privacy.

JEREMY Oh. Sorry.

CAROLINE Why don't you go find your cousins?

JEREMY They're playing video games. I'm gonna take a walk.

CAROLINE Don't go too far. There was a fox wandering around loose before.

JEREMY, behind CAROLINE's back, pretends to dig his claws into her neck, then goes.

DAVID Look, let's go into the guest house. We'll never be able to talk out here.

ANDREW What else is there to say? We know the situation. We'll just have to wait til they get back. Still, I wish they'd call.

CAROLINE They'll call when they have some news. These things take time. Careful negotiation. You boys wouldn't know that, because it's just not your world. That's not meant as a criticism. But if you boys wanted to go into business, you would have, instead of doing what you do, which is important. It's important what you do. You boys are terrific, you really are. It's such a shame we don't see you. Our kids love playing with each other. You saw how they were when they all got together—well, David, not yours, because they haven't been here, but, well, you know what I mean. Now, I know part of the problem is we live so far apart, but let's face it, it's been a difficult few years these last years. Sasha feels it. He knows he's drifted apart from you boys. He came into my family and I think he felt—well—he felt more at home somehow. He became so friendly with my brothers, he felt a real camaraderie with them. But now—maybe it's your father passing, I don't know—Sasha really wants to know you again. You know—and we've said this many many times—you're always welcome to stay with us, whenever you're in Montreal. David, you've been there a few times lately and haven't called—we know because your mother tells us everything—but you must believe me, please, that we want to see you. You can stay with us. I know hotels are so expensive, and there's no need for you to take another room when you could have an entire basement to yourself. Andrew, the same goes for you and Donna. All we have is each other. We saw that when your father died. It was so moving to see how you boys came together, and supported one another. At the funeral, when you all walked in together, and your mother in the middle, it was so powerful, so moving. I can't say enough about you boys. If we all try, I mean really try, we can be close, we can be close again, like we were in the beginning. You must believe me; that's what I want.

DAVID No agenda, huh?

Silence.

ANDREW I'm going inside.

He lingers a moment, then goes.

CAROLINE You always think there's an agenda.... You know, it's—. (*CAROLINE dabs at her eyes.*) It's very difficult. Maybe you won't believe this, but when I first came into your family, I felt so... I was happy. Your parents were so welcoming. They didn't expect a thing from me. I could see you didn't have much, but when I saw how much love there was in that house, I... Sasha always talks about how hard it was, growing up, and having so little. But he always says, you know, there was something he had that other kids... (*DAVID is looking away.*) I'm trying to talk to you. When did you start disliking me? I really would like to know, I would, because I don't deserve it, I don't, I don't.... You know there's something I can't quite get out of my mind. I think about it every once in a while. At my wedding, when we were all dancing, you kissed me. I mean, everyone was kissing me, giving me congratulations. But the kiss you gave me...

DAVID I was drunk.

CAROLINE Was that it?

ROSE and DONNA enter.

ROSE Hello, my children, can I sit with you?

CAROLINE Of course, of course. You know, I cannot get over your hair. I just love what they did with it.

ROSE For what they charged...

CAROLINE Please, it was the least we could do.

ROSE Hello, David.

DAVID Evening.

ROSE ...Still no word. What could be taking so long?

CAROLINE It's not an easy thing they're doing. Stop worrying. Did the kids do their play for you?

ROSE Oh, they did. It was so cute! They even made costumes.

DONNA They rehearsed for a week at home. Were you surprised?

ROSE I never knew I had such talented grandchildren. And that thing Jeremy wrote, it's so beautiful. David, you should hear it. (*beat*) The music stopped. Someone ask the musicians if they want something to eat.

DONNA Sure.

DAVID I'll go.

DAVID goes.

ROSE Something's on his mind. He won't say. They take after their father.—Sasha shouldn't have hired the band. I love the music, but it must have cost an arm and a leg.

DONNA Ah, just a leg. They gave us a deal. They're the guys who played that wedding last month, remember? Across the lake. Turns out the guy who plays the clarinet, the, the—

ROSE The clarinetist.

DONNA —is a cousin of my mom's. I was talking to her—my mom—and I said “Mom, there was this fabulous”—you know—“klezmer band playing at the hotel,” and she said, “I'll bet you that's Ron Katzenbaum, he always plays up there.”

ROSE I just wish they'd call.

DONNA So—wait, I'm not finished. So I called the hotel, I said, “Was that Ron Katzenbaum?” And... sure enough...

ROSE I can't think straight. My mind's, it's all over the place. I've got goosebumps.

CAROLINE Let me get you a sweater.

ROSE Look at my skin. I used to have the softest skin. All winter, everybody would be putting on the lotions and the creams, and I wouldn't have to do nothing. Now look. Corn Flakes.

CAROLINE You have beautiful skin. You look incredible. You have—you know what it is? You *glow*.

ROSE I glow?

CAROLINE You glow! But you *are* cold, and I'm going to get you that sweater.

CAROLINE exits.

ROSE Oh, I'm so frightened. I was sitting in the cottage just now and I don't know if by tomorrow they'll let me sit in it again.

DONNA ...Oh, hey, I meant to tell you. I was downtown the other day, and you'll never guess, I went into Harbord Bakery.

ROSE It's still there? We used to walk over there for bagels practically every morning. Me and Faygie and Lettie and Hilda—we were so tight. We did everything together. Faygie died five, six years ago. She was such a beautiful woman, never lost her looks. We used to tap-tap-tap all the time, between the houses you know? Her bedroom was right opposite mine, like it was a duplex, and when we figured that out, oh that was so much fun, we figured out a code, like—what's it called—

DONNA Morse?

ROSE No, not—yes, Morse, that's right. Well, there was just a wall between us, and we'd send each other secret messages. Now she's gone. They're all going. And... well, I'm not going to be here much longer...

DONNA Yes you are, a long time.

ROSE Please God.

DONNA Look what's happened in the last few years. You're a new woman. You work out, you go out, you travel. You've got so much ahead of you. Hey, Andrew and I were talking, we're thinking about going to Cuba.

ROSE Cuba?

DONNA Next winter. You could come with us.

ROSE What do I need with Cuba?

ROSE slaps at a bug.

Still so buggy.... It's good you're going away. Things are better?

DONNA Well, we hardly see each other, we're so busy.

ROSE You're having sex?

DONNA Uhh...

ROSE (*seeing him*) Here's Jeremy.

DONNA (*looking heavenward; sotto*) Thank you.

ROSE My first grandson. Come sit with me.

DONNA I'm gonna see what the kids are up to.

JEREMY Level Six, I think.

DONNA goes.

ROSE Nu, my grandson, have you thought some more about school?

JEREMY Mm hm.

ROSE It starts in a week, "mm hm."

JEREMY I just don't care about it.

ROSE Pish pish. You've got so much going for you. You could do whatever you want. America, you can go to another time. It's not going anywhere. Jeremy, what's on your mind?—Are you speaking to your father? (*He shakes his head.*) What's gonna be with you. It's not right, a son doesn't talk to his father. He cares so much about you. He wants you to do well.

JEREMY Only because it'll make him look bad if I don't.

ROSE That's not true.

JEREMY It is, though. He just wants me to—

ROSE "He"? If my father ever heard me call my mother "she," oh, he'd get so mad. "She"? "She"? Who's 'she'?"

JEREMY *My father*—all he wants is to be able to brag about us at the club. It doesn't matter if what we're doing is important to us. Like, I don't want to go to school. "Jeremy, you've got to get an education. You'll never get anywhere without an education." My parents want to control everything I do, the way I look, the way I think.

ROSE Now—

JEREMY They don't even want me to see Trish; all we're doing is hanging out. They think we're going to fall in love or something, when all we're doing is talking. I don't know anyone like her, she's so smart, she has great ideas, she's been all over the world. She says we have to stop thinking about money all the time.

ROSE She can say that because she *doesn't* have to think about money. Who do you think pays for her trips all over the world? Her grandfather.

JEREMY All I meant...

ROSE You're just a boy, Jeremy. Please God when you're a man, with a wife and children and a house and a good job, we'll have this conversation again. You don't know what's coming. You're so young, so young. I can't understand why you children are so angry at your parents. I loved my parents, we all did back then. They didn't let us do whatever we wanted, they were strict, but they were our parents, so we listened. Now I see that's changing, and I can't understand why. I can't understand nothing—anything.

Beat.

I didn't want to come back here. But now that I'm here, I don't want to leave. He was always so relaxed up here, not like in the city, and every summer I was reminded of the man I fell in love with. He's angry now. He's angry we're letting it fall to pieces. Just like when I sold the house in Toronto—he was angry about that, too, I could tell, the way he looked at me from his picture. My hand was shaking when I signed the contract, I had to hold it steady. I could hardly breathe. But they made me, my boys, they forced me into it, they said the house was too big, they said I couldn't take care of it, and I didn't want to, I didn't want to— (*takes out a tissue to wipe her eyes; a letter falls from her pocket to the ground*)—my own children, my own children, they made me leave my house.—What am I saying? Don't listen to me, Jeremy. I don't know what I'm saying. I don't mean it.

JEREMY But it's true. Everything you're saying is the truth.

ROSE It's not! It's just terrible things that get into your head, in the middle of the night, and it all seems to make sense, but when you speak them, they sound like lies, and that's what they are.

JEREMY It's not lies. You give them everything, and they never give you anything back. And the way my father talks about Zaydie, it's disgusting. And my mother, she pretends to be so nice, but she's cruel, she's mean, she's—

ROSE (*takes him by the shoulders*) Be quiet, be quiet, be quiet! You don't know what you're saying! You don't know why people are the way they are. You don't know anything. You're just a boy!—Oh no, no, Jeremy, please, please, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Jeremy. Don't listen to me today, I'm so upset, I don't know where to turn.

JEREMY runs out.

Jeremy! Please don't!

She follows him off. DAVID comes in, scotch in hand, picks up the envelope, reads the letter. The klezmer band begins to kick it up in the next room. Sound of dancing, stomping, hand clapping, cheering. ROSE returns. DAVID looks up from the letter.

DAVID Sorry. I think this is yours.

ROSE What is it?

DAVID A note. From Skepian.

ROSE —Oh, it must have fell out of my pocket...

He hands it back to her.

DAVID Fallen, Mom.

ROSE My son, the writer. I guess he still fancies me...

DAVID You think?

ROSE He says some nice things...

DAVID He's a salesman. I mean... it's not you he wants, Mom, it's the property.

Pause.

I mean—ah shit.

Something crashes in the house. The music stops. There is laughter. DONNA runs in, laughing hysterically.

ROSE What's going on in there?

DONNA It's—ha ha ha!—Andrew, he—ha ha ha!—He was trying to dance on a chair and—a ha ha ha!—It *broke!* He's—he's—

ROSE Is he alright?

DONNA Yeah, he's fine—landed right on his ass—ha ha ha!—The look on his face! A ha ha ha ha ha!

ANDREW comes in, moving gingerly. DONNA bursts out laughing again.

ANDREW Hilarious.

DONNA I'm sorry. Ha ha ha!

The music starts again—a slow piece. FAYE enters.

FAYE It's nicer out here. Not so loud.

DONNA (to *ANDREW*) You okay?

ANDREW Yeah, just great.

DONNA Come on. Let's dance. We hardly ever do this. We used to go out all the time.

ANDREW If you insist.

She helps pull him up; he slips; they both tumble to the floor, then burst into hysterical laughter.

FAYE Crazy kids.

DONNA (still laughing) Come on.

DAVID Suddenly he was 70 years old.

ANDREW I feel it.

DAVID How you doing, Faye? Can I get you something?

FAYE Hm?

DAVID You like the music?

FAYE Hm?

DAVID Come on, Faye.

Takes her by the hand.

FAYE Hee hee hee! Oh, my! It's been so long since anyone asked me to dance.

DAVID Well, we figured you were taken.

FAYE Oh, go on with you! Crazy kid!

JEREMY enters during—

We used to go the dance every Saturday, me and Sid. He just liked to stand there, pretending he was Humphrey Bogart, leaning against a pillar, one hand in his pocket, the other holding a cigarette. (*looking at JEREMY*) Isn't he handsome? Who's that?

DAVID That's Jeremy.

FAYE Oh. What's your name?

DAVID Luigi. Luigi Mortadella. I'm a count. And a-one and a-two...

ROSE Jeremy.

She embraces him, kisses him on the forehead.

If only you knew how much I love you children, if only you knew.

JEREMY It's alright. I understand.

They dance.

ROSE You don't, though. But it's alright. It's alright. You kids are so good to me. It's so nice when you come for a visit. The condo is so quiet. I can't get used to it. And that awful buzzer when I let people in. Whatever happened to a doorbell? But you'll come, you'll always come, you'll find a nice girl, you'll bring her to me, we'll walk to the mall for a coffee. Only you have to go to school, you hear? And shave off that mustache! It looks terrible.

JEREMY I don't care how I look.

CAROLINE enters, with a sweater.

CAROLINE Here you go, Mom.

ROSE Brr, thank you, it's so chilly all of a sudden.

CAROLINE Let me help you. (*helps ROSE with the sweater*) David, there's a phone call for you. Los Angeles.

DAVID Thanks.

DAVID helps FAYE to her seat, then goes.

ROSE I'm sweating.

FAYE laughs to herself.

What's she laughing at?

FAYE (*as though talking to someone*) Go on with you!

MORRIS enters.

MORRIS Rose... Rose!... I just heard!... Isn't it wonderful?

CAROLINE Morris...

MORRIS (*sings along with the music*) Hee hee! That's one of my favourites. Boy, they don't write em like that anymore. Let's dance, Rose... a little celebration... come on, come on... I can't believe it...

ROSE What are you talking about, Morris?

MORRIS I'm talking about starting a new life! Yes, the old one is over, and to hell with it. I'm still, well, not young, but I've got years in me yet. But didn't you hear? I just had a call from my lawyer. The sale's gone through. I got ten thousand over the asking price! Isn't it wonderful?

ROSE But—I didn't know you were selling.

MORRIS It's time for other people to move in, Rose. Let's face it: our time *is* over.

ROSE But—

MORRIS So, you see—

JACK and SASHA enter. LEN is with them, downcast, holding a shopping bag.

FAYE There you are. And no coat? It's cool out.

LEN It's not so bad.

JACK Greetings all.

ROSE What's going on? Someone tell me.

JACK Thanks for the warm welcome.

ROSE Would someone tell me what happened?

SASHA In a minute, Ma. We're just waiting for David.

CAROLINE He's on the phone.

SASHA I told him to come out.

ROSE Jeremy, run, get your uncle.

As they wait:

FAYE What have you got there?

LEN Picked up some bagels... not very good bagels... buns with holes in the middle, but they'll do... haven't eaten a thing all day... herring... from a jar, but...

ROSE Len?

LEN Starving. Cream cheese, two kinds. This one has chives in it.

ROSE What happened?

LEN Well, it's... the thing is, they really...

ROSE Well?

LEN These aren't bagels.... No one outside Montreal knows how to make a decent bagel anymore...

ROSE Someone tell me... I can't stand it...

DAVID enters.

Here's David. Len, tell me. Sasha—

JACK The property's been sold.

ROSE But...

JACK We couldn't get an extension.

ROSE But *sold*, I don't—

DAVID Wait a second.

JACK Just listen.

DAVID No. I want to know how—

JACK I'm trying to explain.

DAVID I'm not talking to you! Listen! It isn't *possible*. It isn't *possible to sell* because we own together, my brothers and I *own* it—do you understand? You *can't* buy this house, you can't buy this lot, you can't—

JACK I didn't.—Alright? You need to know something. I didn't buy it.

DAVID Then—?

SASHA I did.—I bought it. I mean—I'm going to buy it. From you. From the two of you.

DAVID and ANDREW look at one another.

LEN You see, they—they figured it out. They figured a way.

JACK There's a clause in the will—it's called a shotgun clause. It allows for one of you to buy the other ones out, to make an offer to the other ones, and then the others ones can accept it, or better it. But you can't refuse it. It's right there in black and white.

ANDREW I never heard of it. I never even read the will.

JACK No. Well. The thing is, you have a set number of days to respond; you have fifteen days, if you want, to better the offer. The offer is—

DAVID Just a second.

JACK You should know that—

DAVID I'm not talking to you. (*to SASHA*) Is this for real?

SASHA It's the only way. The planning office wouldn't grant an extension; they just didn't want to hear it. We had to go in there with a back-up plan or we'd be screwed. Caroline's parents offered to put up the money.

DAVID To buy us out?

SASHA It's a good price.

JACK It's an excellent price. You're getting full value, I can tell you.

DAVID I don't— (*to JACK*) —Would you be quiet, it's got nothing to do with you.

LEN I wouldn't say that.

DAVID (to **SASHA**) You're buying—you're buying us out—

LEN He's not keeping it. He's going to turn right around and sell it to Skepian. Five ball in the corner pocket.

Beat.

DAVID Is that true?

SASHA Guys, listen—

DAVID You are.

JACK You have to admit—it's a brilliant scheme. Although, "scheme," that makes it sound a little sinister, doesn't it? And it's not! It's not at all! In time, you'll see that. I hope you will. Because the fact is, you were going to lose this place; it would have been put up for sale, and then who knows what price you'd have gotten? But now, thanks to Caroline's parents, you're going to reap quite a reward. Then, yes, I'm going to take it off Sasha's hands. You boys aren't in the development business; you don't want to be. You have your lives, you all need money—who doesn't—and now you'll have it. I'm even willing—listen, let's not have hard feelings—this is about business, nothing more, nothing less—but at the same time, just to show how I feel about you people, I'm going to give you the first option on the cottages.

DAVID Cottages.

JACK There's room for fifteen, maybe more, once we clear the forest. Tennis, a practice green, all kinds of—yes, a resort, it's just what's needed now. All these weekend families—summer people—a week or two away from the city. But at the same time, if you want, I'd be happy to set aside one of the cottages for your year-round use—I'm going to winterize them, too—did I mention that? I've got all kinds of ideas. (*looks out the window*) I can't believe it. I've had my eyes on this place for a long time. (*unable to restrain himself*) Ha ha! Good God, I can't believe it! Tell me it isn't happening, that it's only a dream, or I've gone mad, something, anything. Not this, though, it isn't possible. Is it? Is it mine? It is. Christ Jesus, it's mine. If my old man could see me now—lazy, that's what he said—took me out of school, I still remember the day, I'd just gotten home: "You're going to have to work"—I didn't get to finish high school. My last day, I remember looking down at my feet as I walked home, I knew I'd never take that walk again, I wanted to remember every step; the next thing I knew, I was on a train, heading west. Now look at me! I'm Jack Skepian! *Goddammit!* They had nothing, my father and his father, they were ignorant, they didn't read, they drank themselves stupid every night, and me, I swore to myself, on that train ride, I said *goddammit* I'm not going to be kept down. I'm not going to give in to bitterness, or anger, I'll work, I'll work a hundred times harder than the next man. (*goes to the doorway*) Hey! Strike up the band or something! Play it loud, too! Wake up the dead!

The music plays.

Ha ha! Right on cue!

ROSE has sunk down on a chair and is weeping.

Rosey, listen to me. Fifty years, Rosey. How different things could have been. What a mess we make of our lives, and we don't even know we're doing it til it's too late.

DAVID Leave her alone.

JACK Of course, I was only—

DAVID Just go, would you? Would you just go? Would you go?

JACK straightens himself; takes a moment, then goes.

JACK (*off*) Ha ha! Now that's what I call dancing! Come on everyone!

SASHA Guys, we'll talk in the morning, huh?

No one answers. SASHA goes; the others drift out as ANDREW leads ROSE into the house. DAVID stays behind.

ANDREW It's alright, Mom. Mom, it's for the best. It really is. You'll see. There was nothing else to do.... Mom, will you come and stay with us? Come and live with us for a while, as long as you want. We don't want you to be alone, Mom. You can come, you can stay with us. Next summer, we can travel. France, maybe, or Italy. You've always wanted to go there. There's so much ahead of you, Mom. Mom, we love you. Mom... Mom...

TRISH wanders by.

TRISH I heard. It's awful.

DAVID Yeah.... I hate this country.

He goes. She watches. JEREMY moves to her. She goes.

ACT 4

Last day of September. The living room. Nearly empty. A few boxes are scattered about, still being filled with loose ends. Suitcases wait to be picked up by the door. A couple of pieces of furniture—the bookcase, a chair or two—have also gone unclaimed.

JEREMY is putting trinkets into a box. SASHA is picking up loose ends, going through a few boxes that have yet to be sorted. LEN hovers. JACK stands waiting. He has brought two bottles of champagne and some glasses. DONNA is looking through a garbage bag stuffed full of clothes, separating items into piles to keep and to give away.

SASHA Ever seen so much junk?

SASHA goes to pick up the bookcase.

LEN I think David wants that.

SASHA Up to him.

JACK Amazing how big it looks with everything taken out.

A truck engine is heard from outside.

SASHA Is that the truck from Goodwill? (*goes to the door*) Hey! Hey!

DONNA They ran out of room.

SASHA What?

DONNA On the truck. Anyway, there's not much left. We can take the rest in the van and drop it off on the way home.

JACK How about a farewell toast? I meant to bring some from Toronto; the liquor store in town doesn't carry quite the same inventory. Still.

Pops a cork. Pours. No takers.

No?... Well, seems a waste. But, if you're not going to drink, then neither am I.

SASHA Bad luck not to toast. (*takes a sip*) Mm. Disgusting.

JACK That's expensive stuff.

SASHA Just needs to chill. I'll put it in the fridge.

JACK Uh... the power's off.

SASHA Oh.

LEN It's cold enough in here, just leave it out.

JACK It is cold, isn't it. I have to say, I've always loved this time of year.

DAVID enters during this speech, carrying a box filled with books. He finds a place to sit, and begins looking through the books.

The leaves are changing colours; you can feel the change in the air. It's the real new year. Harvest time. That's why Jewish New Year makes so much sense—it's the only new year that goes by the natural calendar. I mean it really *feels* like we're starting a *new year*.

LEN Or ending one.

JACK Well of course. Of course. This year, by the way, I'm starting a new tradition. I'm holding a Rosh Hoshanah dinner for homeless Jewish men.

DAVID Former clients?

Beat.

SASHA I'm gonna take another look around. We should think about heading out soon. Kids still down at the dock?

DONNA They're taking turns with the paddle boat.

SASHA exits, making a call on his cell phone.

LEN Find something, David?

DAVID Just some books, in the crawl space.

LEN I'll take this to the car. (*goes*)

JACK (*checks his watch*) Well, I ought to get going. I've got a bit of a drive ahead of me.

DAVID *The Chosen.* (*tosses it aside, picks up another*)

DONNA (*holding up a coat*) Jeremy, you should have this jacket.

JEREMY Nice.

DONNA It's back in style now. Your grandfather was quite the clotheshorse.

DAVID (*another book*) *Why Do They Hate The Jews?* (*beat*) *Volume Four.*

TRISH enters, wearing a coat.

TRISH You're still here.

DONNA It took us the whole weekend.

TRISH I heard a truck leaving, I thought—anyway, I just wanted to say goodbye. Jeremy, you haven't seen my hiking shoes, have you?

JEREMY Hm?

TRISH I think I left them out back. Could you help me look?

JEREMY In a sec.

DAVID (*another title*) *The Practical Handyman*. (*looking through it*) One of Dad's old books. He used to sell em from a van. Anything to make a buck.

JACK (*yawns*) Scuse me. Well, I really ought to hit the road. There's a piece of property I'm going to look at. But that's how it is with me, I work on one project, and the second it's ready to go, I'm on to something else, even bigger. Whenever I look at my hands, and they're not doing something, I think, "Do something!"

TRISH Well, we'll be gone soon, so you can get on with your important work, clearing the land, putting up cheap housing.

JACK I don't know about the cheap part, but I'll drink to the rest of it. (*offers her a glass*) It's warm, but still bubbly. What do you say?

TRISH No thanks.

JACK I suppose you think the grapes were stomped on by ten-year-old orphans making a dollar a week for their labours.—Well, you've got your principles. I can respect a person with principles. It's cynics I don't much care for.

DAVID (*reading*) "How To Make a Bookshelf."

DONNA is holding up a sailor's hat.

DONNA Would you *look* at this hat?

DAVID Here, toss it over.

She does. DAVID puts it on.

DONNA Perfect.

DAVID goes back to looking through the books. DONNA takes a bag of clothes outside.

JACK (*to TRISH*) So, you're off to Seattle, gonna give those finance ministers what for?

TRISH That's right.

JACK Did you pack your bullhorn? "Turn off your air conditioners!"

TRISH You need new material, Mr Skepian.

JACK You're right. Maybe David could write me a few jokes.

DAVID You'd still have to work on your (*beat*) timing.

JACK laughs.

TRISH Well. Goodbye.

DAVID Take care of yourself.

JACK Onward, Christian Soldier!—You know, I meant what I said just now, about having a lot of respect for you. You should hear some of the things this

girl has to say. I was at her grandfather's the other day, and boy did she give me an earful. It's a lot of nonsense, but it comes from the heart.

From the distance comes the sound of a large truck approaching.

We may see the world differently at the moment, but life goes on, anyway.

TRISH Well, you learn something useless every day.

JACK steps outside.

Jeremy? I have to go soon.

JEREMY Okay, well. Goodbye.

TRISH Goodbye?

JEREMY Well, it's not like I'm ever gonna see you again.

TRISH Don't say that.

JEREMY When would I see you?

TRISH I don't know, I—it's just weird to think that.

Beat.

JEREMY You going to school?

TRISH What? No, I'm, no, I'm gonna wait a year. You?

JEREMY I kinda had to go. It's good, though. I've got a pretty cool prof. He's all about The World Bank. First day, he was like, "Okay, what do you all want to do with your lives?" People started raising their hands, you know? Like, "I want a house. A family. A car. A swimming pool." And he just kept nodding his head, and then he said, "You people are all so middle class. Don't any of you want to *change the world*?" Then there was like this silence. It was pretty cool. I'm gonna take these things out to the car.

As he goes, TRISH following—

TRISH There's still room on the bus, you know. I mean, if you're interested...

JACK has stepped back in.

JACK Tell me, did that TV series work out for you?

DAVID No. I was, however, the runner-up.

JACK Well, that's a shame. Keep plugging away.

DAVID (*bitterly*) "I'm alright, Jack."

JACK Young man, can I give you a word of advice? Don't take things so personally. You're far too sensitive. The world doesn't owe you a damn thing. It's you who owes the world something. Your anger isn't going to do you any good. It'll eat you alive if you're not careful. Your father struggled with it. I could see it in him, the couple of times I met him.

ANDREW enters.

ANDREW Mr Skepian, would you mind keeping your trucks off the property til we leave?

DAVID See what I mean about timing?

JACK Yes, yes, you're right. I'll tell them myself.—Oh—fellas, listen, I need to speak to your mother before I go. A private matter; would you let her know?

ANDREW Sure thing.

JACK goes.

Have you seen Auntie Faye? David?

DAVID No.

ANDREW Do you think you could take her in your car? I mean, we could take her in the van... but, there's all this stuff. A truckload already went to Goodwill and there's still so much *stuff*. *(beat)* Maybe we can fit her in. It's just, the home's not too far from you. You'd just have to hand her to one of the nurses. Or not.

DAVID Fine.

ANDREW If you don't want to do it—

DAVID *(sharply)* I just said I would.

ANDREW Look—

SASHA enters.

SASHA There isn't an empty box around, is there? Caroline wants to take a couple of hostas uhh—

DAVID Hostages?

SASHA shoots him a look. He finds a box with a few trinkets, empties them into another box.

Get what you wanted?

SASHA What?

DAVID Nothing.

SASHA What did you say?

Pause.

It was the only way out.

DAVID For whom?

SASHA All of us. You can't see it right now. Don't make Skepian out to be a bad guy. He offered to let you take one of the cottages; you turned him down.

DAVID Who said anything about Skepian being the bad guy?

SASHA (*overlapping*) Okay. You want to have it out? Cause I'm tired of your pissant little comments. (*growing angry*) There's only one person in this room who figured a way out of this mess—and it wasn't you.

ANDREW Guys.

SASHA (*in DAVID's face, following him around*) If we'd left it to you, we'd have come away with *nothing*. But, no, you want to hold on to things. *Things*. (*He knocks over the bookcase.*) That's all they are, and this *place*, it's *nothing*. Well, alright, you got a nice little payday.

DAVID You got a nicer one.

SASHA I'll slap your fucking face. (*waits; then:*) Now have you got something to say to me? Have you? Have you got something to say?

SASHA stares DAVID down; DAVID walks away. SASHA scoops up the box, goes. DAVID goes to the bookcase.

ANDREW You alright?

DAVID Fine.

ANDREW Guess we should load the rest of this. Are you taking the bookcase?... David?—You want me to see if I can fit it in the van? I can strap Donna to the roof or—Oh. Did I mention we're gonna do Rosh Hoshanah dinner at our place this year? Mom—she—you know—I don't think she's up to having it at the condo. Donna and I got to talking about it and—

DAVID Sounds good.

ANDREW Yeah. Now that Mom's getting older, I guess we need to start taking turns with these things. (*sits*) I got the test results back. Negative. They don't know what it is. They said I was just over-tired. Anyway, it's a bit of a relief. I was thinking... well, you know. You get all irrational at times like this... I mean—when you think—you think something's wrong with you—you imagine the worst. And even though they tell you there's no way your father could have passed anything down to you, still, you think...

DAVID Goddammit.

ANDREW David?

DAVID Goddammit, goddammit...

ANDREW puts a hand on DAVID's shoulder.

Don't worry about it. I'll be fine. Oh yeah. We'll be fine. It's okay. Dad didn't pass anything down to us. Nothing in the blood. (*points to his head*) Just here. (*to his heart*) Just here.

DAVID pours and downs a glass of champagne.

I need a place to stay. Can I stay with you?

ANDREW Of course.

DAVID Just for a little while. Just til things get sorted out...

ANDREW Yes, yes, as long as you like.

DAVID Alright, thanks.

Enter ROSE, LEN and CAROLINE.

LEN Well, let's get going. Traffic's going to be awful, just awful. We should have had lunch, but—tell you what, we'll stop at the burger place. We should—for old's time sake, huh? My treat!

ROSE Is it time to go already? (*looks around the room*) This room looks so big with everything gone. I haven't seen it like this since the day we moved in. This place, this place. So much happened here. The kids spent their summers here. David, do you remember the time you crawled out of your crib, and we had no idea where you were?

DAVID No.

ROSE We were sick with worry. Oh, David, David, let me hug you. Have you been crying?

DAVID No.

ROSE It's alright. My boys, they never cry. But you can cry, it's alright, today of all days, so much is ending.

ANDREW Beginning, Mom, beginning.

LEN That's right! There's no reason to be upset anymore. Just think, before the sale, we were all upset and worried—because nothing was settled. That's the worst. But now the sale's gone through—life goes on. Am I right?

Pause.

Anyway, there's no reason to be sad anymore. Look, boys, even your mother cheered up a little, didn't you, Rose?

ROSE I'll be fine. Everything will be fine.

She is helped into her coat.

I feel like that weight's been lifted off my chest. I still don't know what it was.

ANDREW Mom, we're gonna have Rosh Hoshanah at our place this year.

ROSE Are you? I was hoping one of you would do it.

ANDREW We'll take care of everything.

ROSE You won't! I'm going to do all the cooking.

ANDREW You don't have to.

ROSE As long as I've got two hands, I'll cook. We'll have brisket, chicken soup, cabbage rolls, maybe I'll do a duck.

ANDREW We don't need that much, Mom. People don't eat that much anymore.

LEN Don't listen to him, Rose. You just go ahead and make what you make.

ROSE I'll stay with you tonight, Andrew. Do you mind?

ANDREW Course not.

ROSE The condo's so quiet, I can't get used to it.

CAROLINE One of these years, we have *got* to have the seder in Montreal. Will you promise me you'll come?

ROSE Oh, that would be wonderful. Caroline. I'm so glad you and Sasha worked things out. I know you two love each other. Listen, Sasha's father and me, we had our rough times, too. But we got through them.

CAROLINE Mom, did I tell you? You're looking so well these days.

ROSE You mean it?

CAROLINE You know I do.

All go, except for ROSE.

ROSE (*barely audible*) ...I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

JACK enters.

JACK All alone, I see. (*beat*) Will you have a glass of champagne with me?

ROSE Maybe a little. But *just* a little. It goes right to my head.

JACK Well, that's what it's supposed to do. (*as he pours*) Well, let me get to the point. Rose... (*pause*) I don't know how you're going to feel about this... it's a crazy idea... I'm sort of embarrassed to propose it, after everything that's happened.... What the hell...

ROSE L'chaim. (*They drink.*) Go on, Jack.

JACK Well, I wanted to talk to you about the garden.

ROSE ...The garden?

JACK Yes, Rose. It's a real work of art. I was looking at it earlier. I was talking to my architect. I said—and this is the God's honest truth—I said, "Can we not incorporate this garden into the plans?" He knew exactly what I was talking about. Can I show you? Would you mind? I know you want to be on your way, but let me show you... (*takes out some drawings, spreads them over the bookcase*) Now, here's the property. You see, this is forest at the moment. Of course that's all going to be cleared. Now, the cottages will be here and here... tennis courts... playground... the main office and store will be here... this, right here, where I'm pointing—Rose?

ROSE Yes, I'm listening.

JACK Yes. Well, this is where the house is now... and you see how the garden would become part of the grounds, a sort of focal point—that's what my architect called it, anyway. We'd have to do some work on it, of course, it's a bit of a mess, frankly—but essentially we'd keep it the same. A sort of... what... a sort of monument to what used to be here... to Sid, if you will.—We could even—tell you what, this just came to me, we could even put a plaque there, explaining the history of the grounds. Now what do you think about that?

ROSE A plaque sounds very nice.

JACK Yes. Then you think it's a good idea. Naturally I want your blessing.

ROSE That's very nice of you, Jack.

JACK No, no, listen, it's the least I could do. And—what am I thinking?—Well, clearly I'm *not* thinking, but everything's happening so fast—of course we'll put *your* name on the plaque, as well.

ROSE I don't think so, Jack.

JACK Are you sure?

Pause.

I understand. Yes, of course.... Well. It was so good to see you again, Rose, after all this time. You're a lovely person, but then you always were.

He prepares to leave.

You know, I don't think I'm going to need my coat, after all. It's cool, but very pleasant. It's funny, I remember some years where by now we'd already have an inch of snow on the ground. Now look at it, beautiful and sunny. The leaves will have turned. Should be spectacular. (*looks at his watch*) Ought to make it back before dark.

ROSE Safe drive.

JACK And you. Are you alright, Rose?

ROSE I have my family. They're my monument. How could I not be alright?

JACK Goodbye, Rose.

ROSE Goodbye, Jack.

They embrace. They kiss, once, on the lips.

JACK Goodbye. Sweet lady.

JACK goes. ANDREW, LEN and JEREMY enter.

ANDREW We're ready to go, Mom.

LEN The moment of truth. Here we are. We're about to leave this place for the last time. Amazing. Amazing.

SASHA, CAROLINE, DONNA and DAVID enter.

Nearly everyone's here. I can't believe it. Where did the time go, Rose?

ROSE It went, it went.

LEN Someone needs to say something.

ROSE You do it, Len.

SASHA Uh oh.

LEN Well. (*sings*) "Hail, hail, the gang's all here! What the heck do we care? What the heck do we care?"

Other begin to join in until everyone is singing.

ALL "Hail, hail, the gang's all here! Why the heck should we care now?"

LEN One more time!

ALL "Hail, hail, the gang's all here! What the heck do we care? What the heck do we care? Hail, hail, the gang's all here! Why the heck should we care now?"

After a moment.

SASHA Alright, let's get this show on the road.

ROSE One more look.... They're going to keep the garden.

LEN Is that right?

CAROLINE Sash?

SASHA Yeah. Alright, everyone. Safe drive. Bye, Mom.

ROSE Goodbye, darling. Drive safe, you hear? And call me when you get home.

SASHA Yeah. Uncle Len, we'll see you for Rosh Hashanah?

LEN You bet.

SASHA So long guys. Take it easy. Jeremy, let's go. Let's go.

JEREMY Goodbye, everyone.

LEN So long.

SASHA Jeremy, did you tell Uncle David about the essay you wrote?

JEREMY Dad.

CAROLINE Oh, tell him. He wrote an essay on one of your plays, and got an A.

ROSE Come here, Jeremy. Let me give you a kiss. Be good. And study hard, do you hear me?

SASHA He will. Come on, kid. (*heading out with JEREMY*) We'll listen to the game on the way home.

LEN Are you ready, Rose?

ROSE In a minute, in a minute.

LEN Why don't you boys get your things ready? We'll see you outside.

ANDREW and DAVID go.

ROSE and LEN are left together. They have been waiting for this; they throw their arms around one another, hold each other tight, and sob quietly, not wanting to be overheard.

ROSE It's all gone, Len. He's gone, and now this place, and I can't say goodbye, I don't want to say goodbye.

ANDREW *(off)* Let's go!

ROSE One last look... he used to sit there...

ANDREW *(off)* Mom, come on!

ROSE I feel like my whole life's gone by, and I haven't lived it.

LEN Don't say that, Rose... you can't think that way... come on... you'll see... everything will be fine when we get home... you'll see... you'll see...

They go off together. The stage is empty. FAYE enters.

FAYE Where is everyone?... Lou?... Must be in the shop.... Cold.... Look at my hands.... How'd my hands get so old?... I could do with a coffee.

DAVID enters.

DAVID Faye. We should get going.

FAYE Oh, there you are. Which one are you again?

DAVID David.

FAYE That's right. Where's your father?

Pause.

DAVID In the garden.

FAYE Oh, he loves his garden. What's he doing?

DAVID Just sitting there.

FAYE Let's go see him.

DAVID No, he doesn't want to be disturbed. He just wants to be left alone now.

FAYE He likes being alone. Always did. Except one time. It was in England. Mum and Dad ran a pub, we lived up top of it, so they didn't think nothing of leaving us on our own upstairs. One time, Sid was having a nap, and they left him. He woke up, there was no one home, it was dark, no one thought to leave a light on. He was only five or six; he climbed out of bed, started walking, calling for Mum, calling for Dad, for me, somebody, and no one answered. Finally Mum heard him. He wasn't crying, just scared. He said, he thought he'd been left

alone, he thought everyone had gone and forgotten about him. But we didn't forget him. We knew he was there.

DAVID That's right. That's right. (*pause*) Come on, Faye.

FAYE Where are we going?

DAVID Home.

He helps her out. The door closes.

The end.

AFTER THE ORCHARD—DELETED SCENES

The following two scenes were cut from the play after the second draft. Some of the dialogue was retained (in slightly different form), but the character of Kate was not.

—JS

[From ACT 2.]

DAVID Look, are we waiting for Andrew or not?

SASHA You want to wait for Andrew, we'll wait for Andrew.

Enter KATE.

Hello.

KATE Hi.

DAVID Oh... Kate. Hi.

KATE Just dropping by that book.

DAVID Right. Sasha, this is Kate. Kate, my brother.

SASHA Well. Think I'll go for a swim. Gonna see if I can beat my old record.

Seven minutes, eighteen seconds to the other side and back. Nice to meet you.

KATE And you.

He goes.

Sorry. I couldn't wait anymore. I felt like an idiot sitting in the car. Like a spy.

Pause.

I hate this sneaking around.

DAVID You look beautiful.

KATE Please. I'm a mess. My stomach's churning like a whirlpool. I don't know what it is.

DAVID Come here. Sit with me.

KATE Your family.... Anyway, I can't stay. Another packed house tonight. The entire run's sold out.

DAVID Hurray.

KATE The show's awful. I feel like such a fake up there. I look out into a sea of white hair. White hair and glasses, row upon row of white hair and glasses. And I'm standing up there and I'm saying lines that have no connection to anything—awful, stupid lines, and I'm standing in a bra and panties and giant bunny ears, and I'm saying lines like (*in a British accent*) "I wonder what's keeping Walter?"; saying these awful stupid lines to a sea of white hair and

glasses, and I hear laughter, wave after wave of laughter, and I get sick, I get sick to my stomach. (*pause*) I'm thirty-five years old. I keep trying to tell myself it's not over, casting agents will see me in this play and see that I'm good and things will turn around, and by this time next year I'll be making my acceptance speeches, only for real. But no one comes; "it's a little too far," they say; "something came up." And you begin to understand that the reason you're standing in a bra and panties and bunny ears in an old barn before row upon row of white hair and glasses is that that's exactly what you deserve, because, after all, you're not very good. And no matter how many times you sit and watch your rivals and think, "I'm better than her," the fact is that you're the only one who thinks it. And though you're being paid, you're doing nothing more than glorified community theatre; you'll never rise above that level.

DAVID I know how you feel.

KATE It's not the same for you. You're respected.

DAVID laughs derisively.

It's true. You know it's true.—When the run is over, I'll be back in the city, teaching drama to seven-year-olds; catering; commercial auditions. I was asked to audition for a reading. (*beat*) I can't do it anymore. I have to make some decisions. Finally. Things have to change.

Pause.

DAVID My agent called this morning. A new TV show just fired half its staff writers. The producer called about my availability. I might have to go down this weekend for an interview.

KATE Down...?

DAVID To L.A.

KATE And if you get the job?

DAVID I'll move there. Make a pile of money. How hard could it be to write "Freeze! Put the gun down!" Easy. "Awright, you scumbag—where'd you dump the body?" Piece of cake. "It's ovuh between us Charlie—you're takin' the fall."

KATE You might be better at it than you think.

DAVID Yeah. That's the problem. I might end up staying. Anyway, it's not gonna happen.

KATE Don't say that.

DAVID What should I say?

Pause.

Will you come back tonight? I really need to see you.

KATE I'm not comfortable with your family being here. I feel like—.

DAVID Like what?

KATE Never mind. It's stupid.—Look, I have to tell you something. Henry called.

DAVID Oh?

KATE He's coming down tomorrow. Wants to take me to dinner.

DAVID takes out a cigarette, lights it.

DAVID And why not?

KATE Don't be angry. I can't wait for you anymore, David. It's been almost five years, do you know that? On and off, for five years, and we keep finding each other. Sometimes you find someone, and you long to be with that person; you ache for that person. But finally if he's not available to you, you have to move on.

Pause.

DAVID I called home earlier. Wish I hadn't. When I spoke with the kids I had a funny sensation, and I didn't understand what it was til later: they don't feel like they're mine. I felt so distant from them; like I was talking to someone else's kids.

KATE You're a good father. You love your children. I've seen it.

DAVID *(beat)* "A good father." When my father was—when we brought him back here—the three of us went into talk to him. Together. It was something we had to do, to tell him, to say to him... *(long pause)* Andrew was sitting on the bed, holding his hand, stroking his hand. He said, "You've been a good father." And—he said—Dad said—he whispered—"Liar."

KATE David. I love you so much. What can I do?—Oh God, your family's coming. I have to go.

DAVID Yeah.

She starts to head off.

Please. Come back tonight.

KATE I'll try.

She goes. He takes a drag off the cigarette; stomps out the end, puts it back in the pack. Enter ROSE, LEN and JACK.

JACK You've got to decide, and quickly. Just tell me, yes or no, are you interested in my plan?

ROSE Who's been smoking?

LEN Hello, David. Finished writing?

DAVID Yeah.

ROSE David, what is it?

DAVID (*wiping his eyes*) Allergies.

ROSE I don't know why you won't take something for them.

DAVID I'll be fine.

• • •

[*From ACT 4.*]

ANDREW I got the test results back. Negative. They don't know what it is. They said I was just over-tired. Anyway, it's a bit of a relief. I was thinking... well, you know. You get all irrational at times like this... I mean—when you think—you think something's wrong with you—you imagine the worst. And even though they tell you there's no way your father could have passed anything down to you, still, you think—

DAVID Well, you're fine.

ANDREW Yeah. I guess.

Pause. They stand there. KATE enters, buoyant.

KATE Hi.

ANDREW Oh.

KATE Kate. You're Andrew. We met once before.

ANDREW Right. (*sensing KATE and DAVID want to be alone*) I'll just throw a few more things in the van.

DAVID Why don't you tell Mom that Jack wants to see her?

ANDREW goes.

What are you smiling about?

KATE You won't believe what happened. I mean it's incredible. Is that champagne? I have to have some. Just one sip, I have a matinee. (*takes a sip*) Mm. Oh. That's awful, but it's wonderful. Oh, David. (*She throws her arms around him, kisses him.*) A producer came to see the show last night—he has a cottage around here; anyway he came backstage, he— (*through tears*) Oh my God, it's so incredible. (*recovering*) He loved the show, he said it was the funniest thing he's seen in years, and he wants to bring it to Toronto—a thousand-seat house—he wants to transfer the show, just the way it is—with the cast. Can you believe it? David, do you know what this means? I mean—I'll believe it when I sign on the dotted line and everything, but—everyone I know says he's the most wonderful man, and he was so warm to us, just so kind and—ha!—He was wearing the most awful clothes, so when he came backstage we all thought this must be someone's Uncle Charlie or something but—then he said who he was and we all just about died! In fact, Henry's

done a show with him before, and he said it was the most wonderful fantastic experience of his life. Oh, David, David, finally—finally things are turning around. You know? I really think they are, and darling, darling— (*stroking his face*) I want us to be together, I want to be with you, I just love you so much, I wanted so much to share it with you last night, there was a chair next to me at the bar, it was empty, and I just imagined you sitting there, with your arm around my shoulders, whispering in my ear, oh God, listen to me, I'm so—I'm so—after all these years, and I was just about ready to give up. He's going to take the show just as it is, we're going to start in October—one of his other shows fell through. It's just a dream, it really is. Kiss me. Kiss me. I don't care if someone walks in.

They kiss. Pause.

That was cold. That was so cold. Can't you be happy for me?

DAVID Why? Because now you get to be in a bullshit play in a thousand-seat house?

KATE Don't do that.

DAVID So you can get to feel like a fraud on a larger stage? Alright, I'm happy for you. When it's over you can bronze your bunny ears.

KATE Don't do that. I know why you're doing this.—If you're going back to your wife, just tell me.

DAVID I'm not going back.

KATE Have you left her?

DAVID I left her a long time ago. I just didn't get around to telling her.

KATE Are you going to tell her?

DAVID Probably not.

KATE Are you're going to stay?

DAVID Probably.

KATE Sometimes I want to shake you, I want to shake, shake, shake you.—Please, talk to me. Just make a decision.

DAVID I can't. I can't.

KATE David...

DAVID I can't. I think about my own parents, how long they stayed together, and why; maybe they didn't even know why. Maybe they just hung on, because the alternative was even worse.—My family's coming. You'd better go.

KATE When I get back to the city...

DAVID Don't wait for me, alright? Please don't.

She goes. DAVID drinks a glass of champagne; then another. Enter ROSE, LEN, ANDREW and CAROLINE.

LEN Well, let's get going. Traffic's going to be awful, just awful. We should have had lunch, but—tell you what, we'll stop at the burger place. We should—for old's time sake, huh? My treat!

ROSE Is it time to go already? (*looks around the room*) Is someone taking the bookcase?

DAVID I'm taking it.