

THE BLUE HOUR

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A Play

by

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Cast of Characters

<u>Jonah Manning:</u>	A 13-year-old boy. 15-years-old in Scene 1 and Scene 28.
<u>Bonnie Manning:</u>	A 15-year-old girl. Jonah's's sister.
<u>Christina Manning:</u>	A 34-year-old woman. Jonah and Bonnie's Mother.
<u>Pastor John Preston:</u>	43-years-old. Pastor of The Last Hope Assembly, Roseglen's Pentecostal church.
<u>Hannah Preston:</u>	A 28-year-old woman. 4 months pregnant starting in Scene 4. Pastor John's wife.
<u>Hank Moffat:</u>	A 54-year-old man. The unofficial mayor of Roseglen.
<u>Margaret Moffat:</u>	Hank's wife. 53-years-old. A devout Pentecostal.

Place

Scenes 1 and 28 take place at The Lethbridge Gaol

The other scenes take place in various locations in Roseglen, Alberta

Time

Scenes 1 and 28 take place in late winter 1949

The other scenes take place in spring and summer, 1947

### Playwright's Notes

Regarding the set and props. Simple is best. Simple wooden frames for the houses for example. The characters could mime eating and drinking, fishing etc. A few things should exist, like the dead ducks, the bucket that holds the fish, the French book, PJ's bibles, Hank and Margaret's bible, Hank's flask, the crib, the sheets of music and Jonah's shotgun. Even the smoking could be mimed. It's important that the lighting be the thing that sets the stage...

Speaking of lighting, each scene does not have to begin in a "lights up" and end in a "blackout"... Transitions should be as smooth as possible.

The characters speak - with the exception of Hannah - with small town Alberta accents, using a relaxed way of pronunciation. It's a natural way of talking, not forced, not self-conscious about using words like "ain't" or "I seen" or "He come". Pastor John slips in and out of this accent at times, depending on whom he is talking to or how he is feeling. Not every "ya" has to be pronounced as "ya". It was written with (mostly) the suggestion of an accent and I leave it up to the actor and the director to work it out...as long as the characters don't sound like they come from the southern United States.

Jonah would've been incarcerated at The Lethbridge Provincial Gaol (Alberta, Canada)...In those days the prison had a large farm (grain, vegetables, cattle, poultry and dairy) and prisoners worked on the farm, supplying food for the prison. They helped build and maintain local roads, as well as other chores that benefited the surrounding community. At this prison, the inmates were not allowed to speak, except for certain times. This policy existed until 1965.

The prison also carried out executions by hanging, with the last one in 1956...

**SCENE 1****Setting:**

*The houses of the small town of Roseglen stand like empty frames against the sky. We see lights that reflect...*

*Spring*

*Summer*

*Fall*

*And then the light of the blue hour...*

*A specific shade of blue seen only for a short while after the sun has set (or just before the sun has risen) and the colours of the sunset fade, leaving behind a deep, rich blue in the sky.*

**At Rise:**

*A young man steps onto the stage. He stands there for a moment taking in the houses and the blue light and then the empty houses recede and the light becomes harsh and bright. It becomes The Lethbridge Provincial Gaol. He walks DSC to an old-style metal chair and sits down facing the audience.*

*He is talking to a new lawyer and is handcuffed. **JONAH MANNING** is 15-years-old.*

*Late winter, 1949.*

**JONAH:** *(He clears his throat).* Mr. Moffat sent ya and I - I wanna thank ya for comin' here...and listenin' to me today... I'm - *(He stops).*

**JONAH** *shifts around in his seat. Pause.*

*...I ain't – (He stops). I'm no good at – (He stops). Well, here there's only them certain times we're...allowed to talk and - (He stops).*

*Silence.*

*I mean... I appreciate everythin' Mr. Moffat's done for me and for doin' this sir, but – (He stops).*

*Beat.*

I – I thought a lot about... what I *should* say to ya today and what I *might* say and I kinda thought well, maybe... if I jus' started talkin' and – (*He stops*).

*I don't wanna die...*

*Pause. He clears his throat.*

Sorry...

*Pause. JONAH collects himself.*

... You see, Mr. Moffat and my... my *Grampa*... well, this is the kinda *story* they'd always tell me... stories 'bout bein' alive and 'bout your place in the world I guess...

...my Mother don't come to see me... no more.....I... that is, she's... (*He trails off*)...

*Beat.*

...My Grampa... well, he worked for the Western Union during World War I... he was livin' in Montana then and not in Stettler and he wasn't no soldier or nuthin' – 'cause of his *heart*. He had Scarlet Fever when he was just a kid and it... it had affected his heart...

*JONAH thinks.*

I don't know if this is the right thing or not...

*Beat.*

...My Grampa, he worked for the Western Union durin' the Great War deliverin' telegrams on a bike - a Western Union Messenger boy always had a bike – he was a bit older than most of 'em and it was their job to deliver the bad news... Anyways, they had their uniform and they had their bike and they was to deliver the telegrams that told families that their sons or daughters was dead... always in the evenin' too, around suppertime... and sometimes he'd know the neighbourhood and sometimes he wouldn't and if he didn't, he'd ride his bike *real* slowly, bein' *real* careful to get the *right* house, to make sure he had the *right* number... and the people inside the houses'd see the Western Union Messenger boy and some, they'd come and stand outside and others'd jus' stand at their doors starin' and some'd jus' stand there lookin' out their livin' room windows... and sometimes they'd yell at him to not stop at their house and others'd jus' be prayin' – their mouths movin' in some sorta prayer – and one time, this one lady, she threw her shoe at him and still... *still* he had to keep searchin' for the right house. The *right* house so he could give 'em the bad news...

...and when he'd reach the right house, he'd get off his bike and all the other houses, the people, they'd go back inside their houses and close their doors and shut their curtains

and then there'd be jus' this one family...jus' this one family waitin'...*waitin'* for him to deliver the news that their child was dead...

My Grampa did what he was supposed to do. He didn't have no trainin' or nuthin'...he'd stand at their door and he'd tell 'em the news and he always stayed with them...And sometimes it was a long time and he held more stranger's hands and heard more women wail for their babies than was right...he saw them at their most...*vulnerable* and they was more devastated than you can imagine and even when he talked about it...his *hands*, well they kinda relived all those times and even though his hands were...were *rough* and...and *worn* from years of work...ya know they told a – a *life*...and even as I sit here today and tell ya mine...it's all...it's all because..I wan' to...to make amends – *and I don't know how to do that* - ...and these (*he indicates his cuffed hands*) well, they tell my life too...there ain't no way to lie with them...

In the evenin' sometimes, you can hear it...

*He listens.*

...ya gotta strain though to make sure it ain't no dream...that you aren't jus' wishin' for it, *hopin'* you can hear it, that it ain't jus' no damn thing you're inventin' 'cause ya want it so bad...you want so bad to...to jus'... jus' *hear it*...hear *her*...

*Quietly at first, we hear BONNIE singing the gospel song, "IN THE GARDEN (words and music by Charles Austin Miles, 1913).*

It's almost always jus' as the sun goes down and there's that...that *light*...do ya know the one I mean?

*Lights on JONAH fade to black.*

## SCENE 2

*The song increases in volume...lights up on BONNIE singing "IN THE GARDEN" in the backyard of her house.*

*Early spring, 1947. Roseglen, Alberta.*

**BONNIE:** ...AND HE WALKS WITH ME, AND HE TALKS WITH ME,  
AND HE TELLS ME I AM HIS OWN;  
AND THE JOY WE SHARE AS WE TARRY THERE,  
NONE OTHER HAS EVER KNOWN...

*There is the sound of a propane-powered gun going off in the distance...BONNIE covers her ears...JONAH (Age 13) walks in carrying two dead ducks and a shotgun. He watches BONNIE and then sneaks up behind her...*

**JONAH:** Boo!

***BONNIE** screams and whirls around to face **JONAH** and he dangles the ducks in front of her.*

**JONAH:** Oooooo...

**BONNIE:** (*Warns*). Get that away from me.

**JONAH:** I like scarin' ya.

*He starts plucking one of the birds. **BONNIE** listens to the propane-powered gun going off in the distance.*

**BONNIE:** Why do they do that?

**JONAH:** Scares the ducks. They fly up, we shoot 'em. It saves the grain on Mr. Jesperson's farm...He said if I helped, he'd give us a couple of his chickens...

**BONNIE:** Some eggs 'd be good...

**JONAH:** Yeah...

***JONAH** throws some feathers at her.*

**BONNIE:** Jonah, I'm warnin' you...

**JONAH:** Yeah, what're ya goin' do?

**BONNIE:** Tell Mama ya weren't at school today.

*He shrugs and keeps plucking the birds.*

**BONNIE:** Ain't ya worried I'm gonna tell her?

**JONAH:** Shit. I ain't worried.

**BONNIE:** Ya need to go to school. (*Beat*). You're the devil...

**JONAH:** I'm scared.

**BONNIE:** (*Whispers*). You're goin' to Hell...

**JONAH:** For what? Dangling a couple of dead ducks at ya?

**BONNIE:** Bein' mean to your sister. It's a commandment. "Thou shalt not be mean to thy sister."

*She starts humming/singing "LA VIE EN ROSE" (Lyrics by Édith Piaf, composed by Marguerite Monnot/Louis Guglielmi, 1945) moving slowly across the backyard. JONAH watches her.*

**BONNIE:** ...QUAND IL ME PREND DANS SES BRAS  
IL ME PARLE TOUT BAS,  
JE VOIS LA VIE EN ROSE...

**JONAH:** That a hymn?

*BONNIE ignores him and continues humming/singing. CHRISTINA enters with a basket of clothes, stops and watches her daughter.*

**CHRISTINA:** Why aren't ya practisin' your hymn?

**BONNIE:** Mama... I was jus'...I was –

**JONAH:** - I asked her to sing that song.

*CHRISTINA looks at JONAH, goes over to him and grabs his ear, pulling him toward the ground. BONNIE goes to her mother...*

**BONNIE:** Mama...Mama...don't, please don't –

**CHRISTINA:** - Why weren't ya at school today?

*JONAH's in pain, but trying not to show it.*

**CHRISTINA:** I asked ya a question -

**BONNIE:** - Mama please –

**CHRISTINA:** - You're not ruinin' this for us...do ya hear me? *(She abruptly lets go of JONAH's ear).* If I get one more visit from that Missus Martin...

*She exits into the house. JONAH slowly gets up and continues plucking the duck.*

**BONNIE:** She didn't mean it – *(She stops).*

*He is silent.*

**BONNIE:** She's busy...is all. She has lots of sewin' to do...she worries 'bout us...*(She trails off).*

*He is silent. **BONNIE** goes to him.*

**BONNIE:** Ya didn't have to do that...

**JONAH:** I'm too big to cry.

**BONNIE:** *Jonah –*

**JONAH:** - *Goddammit, leave me alone.*

*He picks up the ducks and exits. **BONNIE** stands there watching. Lights fade to black...*

### **SCENE 3**

*Lights up on **HANK** and **MARGARET MOFFAT** in the kitchen of their house. **HANK** is sitting at the kitchen table working on some papers and **MARGARET** is peeling a couple of potatoes.*

**MARGARET:** This is the last of them.

**HANK:** Hmmm?

**MARGARET:** The potatoes.

**HANK:** What about 'em?

**MARGARET:** These are the last two.

**HANK:** Do ya want me to go down and get us a couple more?

**MARGARET:** Oh for heaven's sake.

**HANK:** What?

**MARGARET:** You're not listenin'.

**HANK:** Sorry, I'm workin' on these figures.

*Beat.*

**MARGARET:** Is it workin' out alright?

**HANK:** I'm tryin' to balance everythin' out...

**MARGARET:** Pork chops ok?

**HANK:** Yup...sounds good.

*Silence.*

**MARGARET:** Well?

**HANK:** What?

**MARGARET:** *(Sighs)*. Is everythin' ok? *(Beat)*. Hank?

**HANK:** Hmmm?

**MARGARET:** *Hank*. Stop for a moment. Put your pencil down. Are we...is everythin' alright?

*He puts his pencil down and grabs MARGARET's hand, pulling her in and seating her on his lap.*

**MARGARET:** *(Tries to get up)*. Oh, for heaven's sake...you're not twenty-two anymore –

**HANK:** - Listen. *Listen*, we're good. Alright? We're good. It's jus' some of the farmers and some of the businesses in town. The businesses can't pay until the farmers pay and I don't get paid until everyone else and -

**MARGARET:** - Hank –

**HANK:** - *and* I can't stop collectin' the garbage and I can't have Teddy stop jus' 'cause they haven't paid me. It still needs to get picked up, ya see?

**MARGARET:** Yes, I know, but –

**HANK:** - We'll be fine. Some of the farmers have offered me things in the past and I'll jus' take a couple of 'em up on it. The Jesperson's can probably give us some eggs and the Carson's can give us some potatoes. Jus' the way things are done...

**MARGARET:** I know. I jus' don't like feelin' poor. We went through it before durin' the war, with *rationin'* –

**HANK:** - It's not like that. Now fry me up a pork chop.

*He smacks her on the bottom.*

**MARGARET:** Hank!

**HANK:** What? Ya think someone in this town is lookin' in our window? Watchin' a man slap his wife *on* – (*He stops. Looks at her.*)

**MARGARET:** (*A warning*). I won't fix ya nothin' for supper...

**HANK:** Go on, you love me...after all this time. Say it...

**MARGARET:** Old fool.

*She puts her hand on his cheek for a moment. Pause.*

**HANK:** Alright...now, stop worryin'.

*Silence as he continues to work on his papers and MARGARET starts dinner.*

**MARGARET:** Hank?

**HANK:** Hmmm?

**MARGARET:** I'm the music director for this year's revival.

**HANK:** I know.

**MARGARET:** Well...

**HANK:** Don't ask me if I'm goin' to church on Sunday.

**MARGARET:** I'd really like it if ya came with me.

*He is silent.*

**MARGARET:** Well?

**HANK:** I dunno...maybe.

**MARGARET:** It doesn't look good if ya don't...

**HANK:** I don't care.

**MARGARET:** You have to care. You're...the mayor...

**HANK:** That's jus – (*He stops*). It's an honorary title. They jus' need a name in case there's a *problem* -

**MARGARET:** - *Well...*people here look up to you.

**HANK:** *Margaret...* I said, “I dunno”. And that’s just it. I don’t know.

**MARGARET:** It’s jus’ –

**HANK:** - I’m goin’ outside...for a smoke.

*He takes his coat and exits.*

**MARGARET:** *(Calls out).* Hank...

**MARGARET** *watches for a moment, then turns around rattling her pots and pans. Lights fade to black...*

#### **SCENE 4**

*Lights up on PASTOR JOHN in his study. He is sewing a button on a white shirt and whistling the refrain from “ARE YOU WASHED IN THE BLOOD?” (Words and Music by Elisha A. Hoffman, 1878).*

Refrain: ARE YOU WASHED IN THE BLOOD,  
IN THE SOUL-CLEANSING BLOOD OF THE LAMB?  
ARE YOUR GARMENTS SPOTLESS? ARE THEY WHITE AS SNOW?  
ARE YOU WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB?

**PASTOR JOHN:** “And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.”

**HANNAH** *enters.*

**HANNAH:** Let me. *(She takes the shirt from him).* I should be doing that.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I’m perfectly capable.

**HANNAH:** Let me feel useful.

**PASTOR JOHN** *sits and watches HANNAH.*

**HANNAH:** Try emphasizing, “wash away your sins”.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I’m not your father...

*Silence as HANNAH continues sewing on the button.*

**HANNAH:** Jean said she had a little surprise for you to take home after the meeting tonight.

**PASTOR JOHN:** The Jespersons are good people.

*Beat.*

**HANNAH:** John...?

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Teases).* Hannah.

**HANNAH:** Be serious.

*He stands.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** “And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and *wash away your sins*, calling on his name.” Better?

**HANNAH:** *(She laughs).* You’re teasing me.

**PASTOR JOHN:** No. *(He kisses her on the top of the head).*

**HANNAH:** Maybe I could go to the meeting tonight. I could be of some use.

*He moves away.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** That’s not a good idea...in your condition.

**HANNAH** *is silent.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** The Doctor in Calgary said you should rest and *I* want you to rest, isn’t that enough?

**HANNAH:** Yes...I suppose...it’s jus’ that I’m – *(She stops).*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Mother, you’ve waited a long time for this, you’re only a little further along than you’ve been before...

**HANNAH:** *We* have.

**PASTOR JOHN:** What?

**HANNAH:** *We* have. *We*’ve waited a long time for this.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Of course we have. Don’t twist my words *around* –

**HANNAH:** - *I’m not.* It’s jus’ that I’m – I’m...*lonely* here by myself. This town is so small –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - I have to start somewhere –

**HANNAH:** - this is the third town we've been in, in the last two years –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - What're ya sayin'?

**HANNAH:** Nothing.

**PASTOR JOHN:** No, what're ya tryin' to say?

*Silence. PASTOR JOHN puts on the shirt and starts buttoning it up. He stops.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Come here. Hannah...c'mon.

*She looks at him, but doesn't move.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Please...

*Pause. HANNAH moves over to him. They embrace.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Please...be patient.

*Pause.*

**HANNAH:** John?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Mmmm?

**HANNAH:** What if this baby – *(She stops)*. I know God has his plans, his challenges for us, but I'm scared. I don't know if I could take another...loss.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I know.

**HANNAH:** Do you feel like that too?

*He is silent...*

**PASTOR JOHN:** The Lord says, "For I know the plans I have for you, they are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."\*

**\*(Jeremiah 29:11)**

*HANNAH moves away.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Listen to me...

**HANNAH:** I was hoping that you would – *(She stops)*. Here...let me.

*She goes to PASTOR JOHN and finishes buttoning his shirt.*

**HANNAH:** There. You look handsome.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Thank you. *(For buttoning his shirt. Beat)*. Hannah, I'm doin' the best I can. I can't know the future. Only God knows the future. I don't like hearin' about you feelin' alone. I don't. But this life...I've been called to *this life*...

**HANNAH:** *I know...I know. (Beat)*. Myrtle Martin and a couple of the other ladies are coming by tomorrow afternoon.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Good. It's always good to have the ladies of the town visit. It'll be nice for you to have the company.

**HANNAH:** Yes...advantageous you mean...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Don't. Don't be like that. Do you think that your father didn't understand the workings of his church?

*They are both silent.*

**HANNAH:** "Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD..."

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes. *(Beat)*. That's my girl...

**HANNAH:** Proverbs 19:14.

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(He touches her cheek)*...sweet, sweet girl.

*Lights fade to black.*

## SCENE 5

*Lights up on the backyard of the MANNING house. BONNIE is sitting on the ground by the bench reading a book about France. There are other books on the ground beside her. She is softly humming "LA VIE EN ROSE". CHRISTINA exits the house with a couple of dresses over her arm. BONNIE stops humming and slides the book about France under the books on the ground and picks up one of the other books.*

**CHRISTINA:** Why're ya readin' outside?

*BONNIE is silent. CHRISTINA sits on the bench.*

**CHRISTINA:** Look at me. *(Beat)*. I mean it.

**BONNIE** looks at her mother.

**CHRISTINA:** I'm goin' to the church to drop off these dresses for the Pastor's wife. Make somethin' to eat for you and Jonah. *(She waits)*. Didja hear me?

**BONNIE:** *(Beat)*. Yes.

**CHRISTINA:** *(Sighs. Beat)*. Also, take them shirts down from the line. I've washed 'em and whitened them and now all I gotta do is tighten them buttons, make sure they're good and *tight*. *(Beat)*. I think Glory Peter's husband's eatin' too much of that fancy chocolate he sells...

*Beat.*

**BONNIE:** I thought ya said you wouldn't never wash other people's clothes...

**CHRISTINA:** I told Glory I'd do it this time...

**BONNIE:** No, you *said* that ya wouldn't wash other people's dirty clothes. That washin' other people's dirty clothes ain't your job...

**CHRISTINA** is silent. She stands.

**CHRISTINA:** Make somethin' to eat for your brother.

*She exits. BONNIE takes the book about France, makes sure no one is watching and hides it under the house. She takes a rock from the ground and starts drawing a hopscotch pattern in the dirt. JONAH enters.*

**JONAH:** She gone?

**BONNIE:** Yup.

**JONAH** sits on the bench and watches.

**JONAH:** What're we gonna have?

**BONNIE:** Dunno. We ain't got nuthin'. Guess I'm supposed to perform a miracle or somethin'...

**JONAH:** Yeah, do like that miracle of the five loaves and two fish. I'm hungry.

**BONNIE:** *(Laughs)*. How'd you remember that?

**JONAH:** Sunday school that one time. (*Beat*). I only went 'cause Mama said there'd be cookies and things...

**BONNIE** starts playing hopscotch. She tosses the rock onto the hopscotch pattern and begins to move.

**BONNIE:** There's always treats for the kids at Sunday school...

**JONAH:** Yeah, not for me... Missus Martin made me sit on the naughty stool, 'cause I couldn't remember all the words to - to "ZACCHAEUS"... said I was singin' too loud and makin' up words...

**BONNIE** starts singing the words to the Christian children's song, ZACCHAEUS as she is playing hopscotch.

**BONNIE:** ZACCHAEUS WAS A WEE LITTLE MAN  
AND A WEE LITTLE MAN WAS HE  
HE CLIMBED UP IN A SYCAMORE TREE  
FOR THE LORD HE WANTED TO SEE –

**JONAH:** - Your rock landed outside the line.

**BONNIE:** No it didn't.

**JONAH:** Yes it did. Look at it.

**BONNIE** kicks the rock into the square.

**BONNIE:** There. See? Inside the square.

**JONAH:** Cheater.

**BONNIE:** So what? I'm playin' by myself.

**JONAH:** Hopscotch's for girls.

**BONNIE:** That's 'cause ya can't do it.

**JONAH:** I could...*if I wanted.*

**BONNIE:** Sure.

**JONAH:** I could too.

**BONNIE:** Uh huh...

***JONAH** stands up. Beat.*

**JONAH:** Give me the rock then.

**BONNIE:** Whadda ya say?

**JONAH:** *(Beat)*. Please.

**BONNIE:** Please...what?

**JONAH:** I'm ain't gonna do this.

**BONNIE:** Fine.

***BONNIE** turns away. Beat.*

**JONAH:** *Pretty* please.

**BONNIE:** *Pretty* please...?

**JONAH:** *Pretty* please can I have the damn rock.

**BONNIE:** Oooo, the *damn* rock. Hmmm, I dunno. This is a *very* special –

**JONAH:** - *Bonnie*...

**BONNIE:** Here catch...

*She throws him the rock. **JONAH** catches and then throws it.*

**BONNIE:** Ooooh...looks like it's on the line. Miss a turn.

**JONAH:** *C'mon*...

**BONNIE:** I'll let it go...*this time*.

**JONAH** starts playing hopscotch and then singing a combined version of *JESUS LOVES ME* (Written by Anna Warner, music by William Batchelder Bradbury, 1816–1868) and *I AM JESUS' LITTLE LAMB* (written by Henrietta L. von Hayn, 1724-1782).

**JONAH:** JESUS LOVES ME, THIS I KNOW  
FOR THE PREACHER TELLS ME SO  
JESUS LOVES YOU! THOUGH YOU CHEAT  
OFF TO HELL AND FEEL THE HEAT!  
(LOUD) I AM JESUS' LITTLE LAMB  
(LOUDER)YES, BY JESUS CHRIST\* I AM! (\*Said like swearing)

**BONNIE:** What're you doin' back Mama?

**JONAH** stops.

**JONAH:** Mama?

**BONNIE** starts laughing.

**BONNIE:** You should see your face – *(She stops)*.

**JONAH** throws the rock and starts walking away.

**BONNIE:** Don't be a baby. I was jus' jokin'. *(Beat)*. Jonah? Wait, wait... I'm sorry.

**JONAH** stops. **BONNIE** crosses to him.

**BONNIE:** I didn't mean it...ok?

**JONAH:** You don't get it.

**BONNIE:** I do. *(Beat)*. C'mon...please...?

**JONAH** looks at her.

**BONNIE:** That was mean, I won't never do it again.

**JONAH:** Yeah, right.

**BONNIE:** No really. C'mere, I wanna give ya a hug.

**JONAH:** What? No, I don't wan' no stupid hug.

*He moves away.*

**BONNIE:** C'mere... I wanna hug you...

**JONAH:** Get lost.

**BONNIE** starts to chase him. She catches **JONAH** and hugs him tight. He allows it for a couple of seconds and then...

**JONAH:** Ok, ok you're chokin' me...uhhhh...let go of me.

*She lets go. JONAH* pretends to "catch his breath".

**BONNIE:** C'mon, let's go inside and see if there's anythin' to eat.

*BONNIE moves towards the house. She stops.*

**BONNIE:** Better get rid of that. *(She points to the hopscotch pattern in the dirt).*

*Lights fade to black as JONAH uses his feet to get rid of the pattern in the dirt.*

## SCENE 6

*Lights up in the church. The meeting is over. PASTOR JOHN is watching MARGARET tidying up.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** You know when I was 14; I had to learn to cook for myself. I left my Aunt and Uncle's farm to travel with Brother Bob and his Holy Tent of Salvation...

**MARGARET:** I remember him.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I learned how to sew that summer as well. Thing was, it really was a holey tent...

**MARGARET:** *(Laughs).* Hank says he married me for my cooking. But I could barely boil water back then. *(Beat).* You know, it's the little things. I get Herb to bring in that chocolate from England. Same kind my Mother used to use...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Margaret, we haven't known each other very long...

**MARGARET:** *(Beat).* It's Hank. *(Beat).* I'm worried...

**PASTOR JOHN:** He hasn't come to church since I took over.

**MARGARET:** Yes...I'm sorry... I know it's my duty to help and save his soul...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Without salvation...

**MARGARET:** ...He'll go to Hell.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Has he been saved?

**MARGARET:** When he was a boy. And – *(She stops).*

*Beat.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** And?

**MARGARET:** After our son died.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm sorry. I didn't know.

**MARGARET:** It was a long time ago. He died when he was 4 months old. Hank – (*She stops*). It was hard on both of us. I turned to the church and Hank...well, I think he struggled with the idea of our baby...our baby bein' in the lake of fire. Pastor William was always adamant that if you weren't saved, well then... That you'd live in Hell for all eternity...I've gone over and over it in my head for years and –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - Margaret. I believe that God is holy, righteous, and *just* -

**MARGARET:** - yes –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - *and* that we have to have faith that He will do what's best for all infants that...that die –

**MARGARET:** - I'm sorry...I know that your wife is...is with child.

**PASTOR JOHN:** No...*no*, it's alright. I can talk to you about this. The scripture isn't clear on whether or not babies go to heaven. But, just because it's silent on this, doesn't mean that we should make our own conclusions about it. For example...in Samuel, David says that he will join his infant son in heaven...

**MARGARET:** Yes, yes that's right...

**PASTOR JOHN:** And David says, "In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God".\*

**\*(Psalm 62:7)**

**MARGARET:** (*Whispers*). Praise Jesus...

**PASTOR JOHN:** I think what we must have...is *faith*. To have faith and to believe that He knows best.

**MARGARET:** I - I guess that, I thought with Pastor William –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - *I* don't profess to have all of the answers. I've always believed that God will help me find them.

**MARGARET:** Yes...it's jus' that I worry about the lake of fire -

**CHRISTINA** enters with the dresses over her arm.

**CHRISTINA:** - Sorry to interrupt –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - It's alright Christina...*(To MARGARET)*. We'll talk again.

*The two women speak at the same time.*

**MARGARET:** Yes, I hope so. / **CHRISTINA:** I wanted to give these to ya before ya left...

*Beat.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Thank you. Hannah will appreciate this.

**CHRISTINA:** I know that when I was pregnant with Bonnie –

**MARGARET:** - *I should go...*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Margaret. We'll –

**CHRISTINA:** - I'm sorry for interruptin'. I can –

**MARGARET:** - *Christina. (Beat)*. We were done. *(To PASTOR JOHN)*. Thank you. I'll organize the music ya requested and some of my own choices and get it all back to ya before the next meetin'.

**MARGARET exits.**

**CHRISTINA:** She don't like me.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Margaret? I'm sure that's not true.

**CHRISTINA:** No. Her family has been in this town for years and she...she – *(She stops)*. Never mind.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I don't – *(He stops)*. Margaret is devoted to God. She was one of the first people here to open her arms to me and my wife. After Pastor William retired – *(He stops)*. All right. Christina, if this is true or if you believe it to be true...what should you do?

*Beat.*

**CHRISTINA:** Oh, see, now you're tryin' to trick me.

**PASTOR JOHN:** No. I want you to think about what God would want ya to do.

**CHRISTINA:** Turn the other cheek?

**PASTOR JOHN:** I think there's more...

**CHRISTINA:** I dunno. *(Beat)*. This isn't what I wanted to talk to ya 'bout.

**PASTOR JOHN:** What did you want to talk about?

**CHRISTINA:** This summer's Revival.

**PASTOR JOHN:** What about it?

**CHRISTINA:** My daughter Bonnie.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Bonnie. Yes.

**CHRISTINA:** Yes, she's got a beautiful voice. *(Beat)*. I think she should sing.

**PASTOR JOHN:** At the Revival? I don't know. Margaret is puttin' together most of the music. She's the music director –

**CHRISTINA:** - I know there's gonna be everyone singin' –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - Yes –

**CHRISTINA:** - but if ya could jus' *hear* her sing. Her voice is like an angel's voice. It can...it'd bring people closer to God.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Now who's tryin' to trick who? *(Beat)*. Tell ya what, have...

**CHRISTINA:** ...Bonnie.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I know. I've seen her in church...*(Beat)*. Have Bonnie come by Monday night after supper and I can listen to her sing. Tell her to bring her music.

**CHRISTINA:** Thank you. Ya won't be sorry. Her voice –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - *One* thing though. I want you to look somethin' up for me.

**CHRISTINA:** Yessir...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Luke 6:27.\*\*

**CHRISTINA:** You sure know your bible, backwards and forwards.

**PASTOR JOHN:** ...I've always turned to the bible. I still have my first one; worn; well read...it has every slip of paper I used to mark certain passages. It was my best friend when I was a child. Still is...

**CHRISTINA:** Didn't ya have any friends when you was little?

**PASTOR:** Pardon?

**CHRISTINA:** Didn't ya have any friends?

**PASTOR:** Well...God is always first.

**CHRISTINA:** Oh. *(Beat)*. Well, Bonnie'll be by Monday. Right after supper.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Luke 6:27 and read a bit further than that as well...*don't forget.*

**CHRISTINA:** No, I won't. *(Beat)*. Monday...

**CHRISTINA exits. PASTOR JOHN gathers his notes and exits. Lights fade to black.**

**\*\*Luke 6:27 (And a bit further...)**

<sup>27</sup> *But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,*

<sup>28</sup> *Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.*

<sup>29</sup> *And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.*

<sup>30</sup> *Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.*

**SCENE 7**

*Lights up on HANK and MARGARET's kitchen. MARGARET is sitting at the kitchen table looking at sheet music. HANK enters. Silence.*

**MARGARET:** Where've ya been?

**HANK:** Talkin' to Ted.

*Beat.*

**MARGARET:** *Ted. (Pause)*. What were you two talkin' about?

**HANK:** Nuthin'.

**MARGARET:** Nuthin'?

**HANK:** What're ya askin'?

**MARGARET:** It's jus' when ya meet up with Teddy –

**HANK:** - Ted -

**MARGARET:** - With *Ted*, the two of you like to have a...a drink –

**HANK:** - So?

**MARGARET:** Well, it's obvious you've been drinkin' tonight.

*Pause.*

**MARGARET:** Well?

**HANK:** I never said that I wouldn't have a drink...

**MARGARET:** Pastor John says –

**HANK:** - I don't care what Pastor John says.

**MARGARET:** He's a good man. I wish you'd give him a chance.

**HANK:** It's not him. (*Beat*). I dunno...

**MARGARET:** I talked to him tonight. Alone. Until that Christina Manning interrupted us.

**HANK:** Whadda 'bout?

**MARGARET:** I don't know. She was bringin' him some altered dresses for his wife.

**HANK:** No, what were ya talkin' to the Pastor about?

**MARGARET:** Oh. A couple of things. Sit down.

**HANK:** I only had two beers.

*MARGARET reaches for the bible on their kitchen table. She looks something up.*

**MARGARET:** In Corinthians it talks about glorifying God in our body and in our spirit, which means, because we've been redeemed by Christ, we should honour him by –

**HANK:** - What'd ya talk to the Pastor about?

**MARGARET:** I'm tryin' to talk to you –

**HANK:** - I *know* what you're tryin' to talk to me *about*. I've read Corinthians –

**MARGARET:** - Hank, this is important –

**HANK:** - *Margaret...*

*HANK stands up to leave.*

**MARGARET:** Don't go.

**HANK:** I jus' wanna know what ya talked to the Pastor about.

*Beat.*

**MARGARET:** Daniel...

*Beat.*

**HANK:** Why?

**MARGARET:** The Revival is this summer –

**HANK:** - Oh God –

**MARGARET:** - and I think –

**HANK:** - I don't want ya talkin' about Daniel to the Pastor –

**MARGARET:** - Why not? He's our Pastor –

**HANK:** - Yours, not mine –

**MARGARET:** - Ya talked to Pastor William –

**HANK:** - That's different. He buried our son.

*Silence.*

**MARGARET:** I'm not tryin' to hurt you.

*Beat.*

**HANK:** I know.

**MARGARET:** Can we pray?

**HANK:** Yes.

*MARGARET reaches for his hands. They hold hands.*

**MARGARET:** Do ya want to...? (*Lead the prayer?*).

**HANK:** Yes...I will.

*They bow their heads. HANK begins to speak in a low voice.*

**HANK:** Heavenly Father...thank you for this life and for the blessing of our marriage. We ask that you continue to bless us in our holy union and - (*He stops*).

*Beat.*

**MARGARET:** We need your strength daily...

**HANK:** We need your strength daily Lord, to help us serve and follow you. To love one another as we love your Son...

**MARGARET:** In Jesus' name, Amen. (*She smiles at HANK*). Thank you.

*Lights fade to black on MARGARET and HANK.*

## **SCENE 8**

*Lights up on the MANNING backyard. BONNIE is taking the laundry down from the line. CHRISTINA enters.*

**CHRISTINA:** Guess what? You're gonna go see the pastor Monday night.

**BONNIE:** Why?

**CHRISTINA:** Why? Why? Come here...

*BONNIE goes over to her. CHRISTINA wraps her arms around her.*

**CHRISTINA:** Where's Jonah?

**BONNIE:** Inside.

**CHRISTINA:** Call him. No, I'll do it. *(Calls out)*. Jonah! Where is that boy? *Jonah!*

**BONNIE:** Why're ya so happy?

**CHRISTINA:** Because you're going to sing at this summer's revival. You're gonna be a big gospel singer someday, honey.

**BONNIE:** Mama...

**CHRISTINA:** *(Calls out)*. Jonah! *(To BONNIE)*. Did ya eat supper?

**BONNIE:** We had some bread and milk.

**CHRISTINA:** I suppose Jonah put sugar all over his?

**BONNIE:** We both did.

**CHRISTINA:** That boy has such a sweet tooth. *(Calls out)*. *Jonah!*

**BONNIE:** Mama...

**CHRISTINA:** Listen...darling, don't be mad at me. I'm sorry, alright? I'm sorry.

**BONNIE:** It's Jonah ya should say sorry to.

**CHRISTINA:** I'll make it up to both of ya. Where is he?

**BONNIE:** *(Calls out)*. *Jonah?* Come out.

**JONAH** *enters slowly.*

**CHRISTINA:** How'd you like pancakes? Do ya want me to make pancakes for us?

**BONNIE:** Pancakes now?

**JONAH:** I want pancakes.

**CHRISTINA:** *Buttermilk* pancakes it is.

**JONAH:** I *love* buttermilk pancakes. Don't ya *love* buttermilk pancakes Bonnie?

**CHRISTINA:** And do ya know what else I have?

**JONAH:** What?

**CHRISTINA:** Why, Mrs. Jesperson's famous Saskatoon berry syrup.

**BONNIE:** How'd ya get that?

**CHRISTINA:** She brought a little care package for the pastor's wife.

**BONNIE:** You took it?

**JONAH:** I'm gonna eat ten pancakes. No, I'm gonna eat twelve.

**CHRISTINA:** I altered some dresses for the pastor's wife. Don't ya think she'd like to thank me somehow?

**JONAH:** Do ya think I can eat twenty buttermilk pancakes? I think I can. I'm gonna eat twenty.

**BONNIE:** You'll be sick.

**JONAH:** No, I won't. I won't, will I Mama?

**CHRISTINA:** I'm gonna eat twenty pancakes myself.

**BONNIE:** *(Under her breath).* Yeah, right.

**JONAH:** Be happy Bonnie. We're gonna have pancakes.

**BONNIE:** I know Jonah.

**CHRISTINA:** And after? We can sing. And not just hymns neither.

**BONNIE:** We have school tomorrow.

**CHRISTINA:** Oh darlin', ya worry too much.

**JONAH:** Yeah darlin', ya worry too much. Doesn't she Mama?

**CHRISTINA:** Ya can sing some of that french girl ya like.

**BONNIE:** Really?

**CHRISTINA:** Of course. *(She brushes BONNIE's hair from her forehead with her hand).* Of course ya can. I need someone to help me look somethin' up. Luke 6:27...

**JONAH:** I can. I can, Mama.

**CHRISTINA:** Maybe. I think I need Bonnie's help.

**BONNIE:** “*LA VIE EN ROSE*”, Mama. I love that song...

**CHRISTINA:** Sing a little bit for me now.

*BONNIE starts to hum/sing LA VIE EN ROSE moving across the stage. The sun is starting to set. There is a blue light...*

**CHRISTINA:** Look at that light, Jonah. *(Beat)*. It’s pretty ain’t it?

**JONAH:** I guess. *(Beat)*. Are ya really gonna eat twenty pancakes Mama? ‘Cause I can. *(Beat)*. Mama?

**CHRISTINA:** We’ll need some eggs. Go and get us a couple from Mrs. Scott.

**JONAH:** But, it’s late.

**CHRISTINA:** You want them pancakes don’t ya?

**JONAH:** Yes.

**CHRISTINA:** Well, go and ask her then.

**JONAH:** But last time, she said – *(He stops)*. I’ll go.

**CHRISTINA:** Shhhh.... *(She looks at JONAH)*. Haven’t ya gone yet?

**JONAH:** I’m goin’. See Mama? I’m goin’.

*He exits. CHRISTINA watches BONNIE. BONNIE sings to her mother. CHRISTINA hugs BONNIE as the lights fade to black.*

## SCENE 9

*Lights up on the Preston house. HANNAH is sitting in the study with the lights low. PASTOR JOHN enters.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** There you are...what’re ya doin’ in the dark? *(He reaches over and turns a light on)*. Is it the baby?

**HANNAH:** Remember when we first met?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Of course.

*She is silent.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Are you alright? *(Beat)*. Is this about before?

**HANNAH** *is silent.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Well...if you're going to act like a child, I'm goin' to bed. The meeting was long and I'm *tired* -

**HANNAH:** - No, it's not just about before. It's - *(She stops)*. You couldn't keep your hands off of me.

**PASTOR JOHN:** That's not proper, that's not proper for a wife -

**HANNAH:** - *I don't care. (Beat)*. I don't care.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I know how difficult this has been for you.

**HANNAH:** No you don't...*(Pause)*. Eight John. Eight babies...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Don't do this.

**HANNAH:** Eight babies burnin' in the lake of fire...

**PASTOR JOHN:** I don't believe that...

**HANNAH:** You don't know for sure.

**PASTOR JOHN:** We can never *know* -

**HANNAH:** - *Stop*. Stop being a Pastor for a moment and...*just*...be my husband.

*Pause.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I think we should stop.

**HANNAH:** What?

**PASTOR JOHN:** After...this one. If it doesn't...if you, if the baby - *(He stops)*.

**HANNAH:** I think God is punishing me. Or maybe he's punishing us.

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Softly)*. Hannah...

**HANNAH:** The first time, I saw the blood and I knew. I just knew...that my father had spoken to God and told Him that we had fornicated, that the baby was a baby outside of marriage, a baby of sin. I kept thinking that the next baby'd be the one that'd make us real...*real*...but the first one...I sat on the edge of our bed and I looked at myself in the

mirror of my childhood...I smashed it on the floor and it broke into a million pieces and yet I could still see my reflection, only there were these *distorted* pictures of me...do you remember that mirror?

**PASTOR JOHN:** I remember...

**HANNAH:** I walked from our house in Cranbrook to...to Mrs...? What was our neighbour's name there? She was a nice woman...her husband had died recently and her son... he came back from the war with only one arm...do you remember her name?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Agnes...

**HANNAH:** Yes...she had the nicest smelling house. She brought a blanket from outside and covered me with it. She let me lie on her bed and she covered me with this blanket that was still warm...and she held my hand and we waited for you and the doctor to come...do you remember?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes. I ran all the way from the church.

**HANNAH:** You did? I didn't know that.

**PASTOR JOHN:** After Agnes called, I put the phone receiver back into the cradle very carefully and I jus' started runnin', only the thought of you and the baby in my mind.

*Beat.*

**HANNAH:** I used to have a hard time looking at her after that. I'd think of the blood on her sheets and maybe on her mattress and I'd wonder what she was thinking when she had to clean it up...

**PASTOR JOHN:** She was a good woman.

**HANNAH:** Oh John, you say everyone is a good person and I think sometimes you don't even think about it, you just say it. Everyone has a sin nature...you know that and yet you're always saying that this person is good and that person is good...

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm sorry. I don't know what to say...

**HANNAH:** I know.

**PASTOR JOHN:** What do you want?

**HANNAH:** This wasn't what I expected...and please don't bring God up, not this time...

**PASTOR JOHN:** I – I don't know how to help you.

**HANNAH:** I don't want you to *help* me.

**PASTOR JOHN:** *What do you want from me?*

*Silence.*

**HANNAH:** Come here...

**PASTOR JOHN** *walks over and puts his head in her lap.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I do remember seeing you for the first time...in your father's house. So beautiful...

*She strokes his head.*

**HANNAH:** I want to be a real Pastor's wife for you. Right now, I feel like a locked away little bird...isn't that funny?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes.

*She continues stroking his head.*

**HANNAH:** There's something I want to tell you...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Hmm?

**HANNAH:** I'm scared, but I think, I feel...hopeful about this baby...

**PASTOR JOHN:** You do?

**HANNAH:** I'm even further along than I've ever been and yesterday, I – I felt a...a *fluttering*. I wasn't sure, but I felt it again today. I've never felt that before...just stillness...

**PASTOR JOHN** *lifts his head from her lap and looks at her. She smiles at him.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Would I be able to feel it too?

**HANNAH** *takes his hand and puts it on her stomach.*

**HANNAH:** Maybe if we're really quiet...it'll flutter again...

*Lights fade to black...*

**SCENE 10**

*Nighttime. Lights up on the backyard of the Manning house. JONAH is sitting on the ground in front of a bench with his arms wrapped around his knees and his head down. BONNIE comes running out from the house and sees JONAH. She sits on the bench.*

*Silence.*

**BONNIE:** Lemme see your eye. *(Pause)*. Show me your eye...

**JONAH** looks up.

**BONNIE:** Oh dear...you're gonna have a shiner.

**JONAH:** Ya think?

**JONAH** puts his head back down.

**BONNIE:** Mama was really angry at ya. I could hear her all the way upstairs...

**JONAH:** I don't wanna talk 'bout it.

*Pause.*

**BONNIE:** Did ya hear 'bout Simon Jesperson?

**JONAH:** *(Mumbling)*. He's an idiot.

**BONNIE:** What?

**JONAH** lifts his head up.

**JONAH:** I said, "He's an idiot." *(Beat)*. Now go away.

**BONNIE:** Ok. But you'll never guess what Miss St. Paul and Mrs. Martin caught *him* doin' Friday durin' lunch. Him and those other two idiots...

**JONAH:** Don't care.

**BONNIE:** It was pretty funny. *(Beat)*. Ok, I'm leavin'...

*She gets up to go.*

**JONAH:** No...*wait*. Tell me...

**BONNIE:** Jus' a second.

*She moves towards their house and listens.*

**BONNIE:** I was jus' makin' sure – (*She stops*). Ok, last Friday all the girls – most of the girls anyways – we was eatin' our lunch near the fence...ya know, the one separates the schoolyard from Mr. Carson's property? And ya know that stump everyone wants to sit on?

**JONAH:** Yeah...

**BONNIE:** Well, it wasn't there. Strange, right? So, we was either sittin' on the fence or we was sittin' on the ground eatin' our lunches and we hear...like all this noise comin' from the cloakroom side of the school. So Missy Peters puts her finger up to her lips hushin' us, so we all go quietly up to the wall, listenin'...and then we hear Mrs.Martin say, "You boys better not be pullin' your wires!" And alla sudden we see Peter and Sam come tearin' outta the school and Sam's holdin' onto his pants, tryin' to keep 'em from fallin' down and Mrs.Martin's chasin' 'em – her with her girdle so tight – and they're runnin' away and she's huffin' and callin' out to them, "I'm tellin' your parents! You boys have sinned!" Only by now, she can't catch her breath 'cause of her girdle and all, so she stops runnin' and she sees all us girls gawkin' and she jus' sorta waves us away and alla the girls – exceptin' Missy and me – go back to the fence and they're standin' there like...like sheep or somethin', with these dumb looks on their faces. So then Missy waves me over closer to the cloakroom window and the two of us can hear Simon Jesperson cursin' and *cryin'* and we can hear Miss St. Paul talkin' to him and she's tellin' him to hold still or she won't be able to get his foot outta the stump. See...so those stupid boys, they musta dragged that stump inside of the cloakroom so they could get a good look at us through the window, ya know the one that sits high up in there...and that stump, well it's all rotten through and through and Simon's foot went right through it, jus' as Mrs.Martin's catchin' 'em pullin' their wires...

**JONAH:** It ain't funny...

**BONNIE:** Yes it is. It is funny...and *listen*...I heard Miss St. Paul tellin' Simon – and he ain't worth talkin' to in my opinion – I heard her say to him, "it ain't no sin..." and she also said that he shouldn't be doing it at school, that *that* is somethin' he should be doin' in private...

*JONAH is silent.*

**BONNIE:** Ya see?

**JONAH:** Mama said that...what I was *doin'* was –

**BONNIE:** - *I don't care what Mama said* – (*She stops*).

*She moves closer to house and listens.*

**BONNIE:** (*Whispers to JONAH*). Do you wanna see what Miss St. Paul gave me?

**JONAH:** Ok...

*She goes over to the side of their house and reaches underneath and pulls out a book.*

**BONNIE:** She said I could keep it forever, but I told her that I couldn't 'cause – (*She stops*). Well, you know...

*She sits beside JONAH. She shows him the book.*

**BONNIE:** You know ya can't tell her I have this, right?

*JONAH looks at her scornfully.*

**JONAH:** You know I can keep a secret.

**BONNIE:** Yeah... sorry... I know...

*She opens the book and shows him a picture.*

**BONNIE:** See that? That's the Eiffel Tower...

**JONAH:** Where's that?

**BONNIE:** Paris. In a country named France. (*Beat*). You really should go to school more.

**JONAH:** (*Points to a picture*). What's that?

**BONNIE:** It's the Olympia...it's... (*She reads*)...it was a music hall and then it was a movie theatre durin' the war and now...it's a music hall again. There's ballet done in there, music...the can-can –

**JONAH:** - Can-can? What's that?

*She flips through the book and shows JONAH a picture.*

**JONAH:** Those girls are pretty...

**BONNIE:** Don't drool all over the pages.

**JONAH:** (*He shoves the book away*). I ain't. (*Beat*). I don't know why Miss St. Paul gave ya that dumb book.

**BONNIE:** I want her to teach me French. I love the way she talks...

**JONAH:** She don't talk so great.

**BONNIE:** I wanna go to Paris.

*He is silent.*

**BONNIE:** Every night I dream...I dream of *more* –

**JONAH:** (*Quietly*). – Don't go –

**BONNIE:** - of starry nights under different...skies...of bright lights and noisy cities...of *jungles*. Of different people from other countries. Of different colours of skin...and of dark *limpid* eyes. Of wild creatures never seen by another person's eyes...costumes of silk – pink and yellow. Purple robes with rich furs and crowns – not of thorns – but of gold and silver and – (*She stops*). I dream of different places...away from here. Of Paris. The Eiffel tower...of Edith Piaf...her beautiful voice serenading me under a canopy...of stars...of her tears, like drops from heaven...(*She laughs*). Too corny?

**JONAH:** ...Yes...

**BONNIE:** Every night. Every night my dreams, they *envelop* me like...like – (*She stops*). They're *constricting* me. (*Beat*). And still I dream...

**JONAH:** Don't go.

**BONNIE:** I won't leave here 'til I finish school. Then you'll be sixteen and ya can go back to Stettler and live with Grampa.

**JONAH:** Whadda 'bout Mama?

**BONNIE is silent.**

**JONAH:** Whadda 'bout *Mama*?

**BONNIE:** I can't stay here.

**JONAH:** Ya can't leave.

**BONNIE:** I promise I won't leave you 'til I'm 18...

**JONAH:** I...I dunno – (*He stops*).

**BONNIE:** I need you. You're always savin' me. (*Beat*). Ya know what Missy's been askin' them three boys all week?

*He shakes his head 'no'.*

**BONNIE:** She likes to get up real close and ask 'em if they need any help pullin' their carrots from the garden – *(She laughs)*. You should see their faces...*(Pause)*. We should go in.

**JONAH:** Can't we jus' sit here for a bit more?

**BONNIE:** Sure. *(She glances at their house)*. For a bit...

*Lights fade to black as **BONNIE** and **JONAH** sit in silence.*

### SCENE 11

*Lights up on **PASTOR JOHN** in his study. He is sitting at his desk with an open bible in front of him. Voices are heard offstage. **HANNAH** enters.*

**HANNAH:** Bonnie Manning is here with her music.

***BONNIE** stands back, unsure what to do.*

**HANNAH:** John, for heaven's sake... Bonnie, come in...

**PASTOR JOHN:** You'll have to forgive my manners. My wife always keeps me on task.

**HANNAH:** Myrtle – *Mrs. Martin* told me today that Bonnie was one of her very best students.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Is that right?

**BONNIE:** Well, I have Miss St. Paul now. *Mrs. Martin* was last year. She teaches all the little ones.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Myrtle has...a way with our Sunday school children. I believe I heard the littlest Carson refer to her as *Mrs. "Girdle" Martin*.

***BONNIE** laughs.*

**HANNAH:** John! *(She looks at **BONNIE**)*. Honestly, men.

**BONNIE:** Yes, ma'am.

**HANNAH:** That dress is really pretty on you.

**BONNIE:** Thank you. My mother made it for me.

**HANNAH:** Yes, it's just lovely. Isn't it John?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Well now, don't ask me. I don't know what's fashionable these days.

**HANNAH:** (To **BONNIE**). You see? *Men. (Laughs)*. Well, I should let the two of you get to work. Bonnie, would you care for some tea?

**BONNIE:** No thank you.

**PASTOR JOHN:** We're fine, thank you...

**HANNAH:** Of course. (To **BONNIE**). I'm going to put together a little package of preserves and some other goodies for your Mom. I think Mrs. Jesperson snuck in a jar of her famous Saskatoon Berry syrup the other night for us...I think I'll put that in too. Do you think your Mother'd like that?

*Beat.*

**BONNIE:** Yes ma'am...if it's no trouble.

**HANNAH:** No trouble at all.

*HANNAH goes to exit. She stops.*

**HANNAH:** You two just call if you need anything. (Beat). I'll be putting together that basket.

*She exits. Pause.*

*They both speak at the same time.*

**BONNIE:** I brought the music. / **PASTOR JOHN:** Did you bring the music?

*They both laugh.*

*They both speak at the same time.*

**BONNIE/PASTOR JOHN:** *Sorry.*

*They both laugh again.*

**PASTOR JOHN** *walks over to the door and listens.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Maybe we should be a little quieter. My wife, well, she hasn't been feelin' very well lately...

**BONNIE:** Yes, I know. My mother told me that she's...that she's...*(She trails off)*.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes. Hannah is – *(He stops)*. Well, ma femme est...*enceinte*.

**BONNIE:** You speak french?

**PASTOR JOHN:** A very little.

**BONNIE:** How? Why?

**PASTOR JOHN:** I used to travel with Brother Bob and his Holy Tent of Salvation .

**BONNIE:** Have ya been to France?

**PASTOR JOH :** *(He laughs)*. No, but I've been across Canada, the Western part of the States...

**BONNIE:** How come ya know french then?

**PASTOR JOHN:** It's a bit of...an unsavory story. *(Beat)*. *Jacques Pelletier*. A French Canadian who joined our tent after stumblin' in – *(He stops)*. *That's not a story for a young lady*... Anyway, he joined our group – Brother Bob was a powerful speaker – became our handyman for a season, until he fell under a trolley in Edmonton. But the man had been saved.

**BONNIE:** You've been everywhere.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Not France. *(Beat)*. Can I see your song choice?

*She hands him the music to IN THE GARDEN. He looks at it.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** "IN THE GARDEN". *(Beat)*. Will ya sing a bit for me?

**BONNIE:** Yes. *(She laughs)*. I'm a bit nervous...

**PASTOR JOHN:** I could sing with you. Would that help?

**BONNIE:** No...*yes*. *(She laughs)*. Where's your piano?

**PASTOR JOHN:** I – We don't have one...

**BONNIE:** Oh... oh, that's ok...

*Beat.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'll hold the music for us.

*She stands and moves towards PASTOR JOHN. PASTOR JOHN holds the music and BONNIE stands next to him, looking at the music. They look at one another and begin...*

**PASTOR JOHN/BONNIE:** I COME TO THE GARDEN ALONE  
WHILE THE DEW IS STILL ON THE ROSES  
AND THE VOICE I HEAR FALLING ON MY EAR  
THE SON OF GOD DISCLOSES.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Now you...

**BONNIE:** AND HE WALKS WITH ME, AND HE TALKS WITH ME,  
AND HE TELLS ME I AM HIS OWN;  
AND THE JOY WE SHARE AS WE TARRY THERE,  
NONE OTHER HAS EVER KNOWN.

HE SPEAKS, AND THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE,  
IS SO SWEET THE BIRDS HUSH THEIR SINGING,  
AND THE MELODY THAT HE GAVE TO ME  
WITHIN MY HEART IS RINGING.

**BONNIE/PASTOR JOHN:** AND HE WALKS WITH ME, AND HE TALKS WITH  
ME,  
AND HE TELLS ME I AM HIS OWN;  
*(PASTOR JOHN stops and listens to BONNIE sing)*  
AND THE JOY WE SHARE AS WE TARRY THERE,  
NONE OTHER HAS EVER KNOWN.

*Pause.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** That was beautiful...*(Beat)*. I have another song I'd like you to sing...

**BONNIE:** Now?

**PASTOR JOHN:** No, for the revival.

**BONNIE:** Oh...*thank you.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** It has more of the...*passion* needed for the revival. I think Margaret would approve...

**BONNIE:** What is it?

**PASTOR JOHN:** “THERE IS A FOUNTAIN” (*William Cowper, 1772*)...it would be perfect for your voice... For you. Would ya like that?

**BONNIE:** Yes.

**PASTOR JOHN:** You have a gift.

**BONNIE:** Would ya help me with it?

*Beat.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I can do that...

*Beat.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Listen...Bonnie, you have...uuuh, vous avez une belle voix.

**BONNIE:** *Vous avez...* (*She thinks*). What'd you say?

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm pretty sure that I said, “you have a beautiful voice..”

**BONNIE:** Thank you...my Mother says that too. I – I want to sing more than jus' hymns some day... I wanna learn french...can you teach me?

**PASTOR JOHN:** My french isn't very good. Unfortunately though, I know quite a few *curse words* in french. Jacques was a...colorful character.

**BONNIE:** Can ya teach me those? My brother would get a kick outta them.

**PASTOR JOHN:** (*He laughs*). I don't think that'd be a good idea, do you?

**BONNIE:** Oh...yeah, I guess not. (*Beat*). Miss St. Paul said she'd teach me some french. She's taught me a few things already...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Speak french to me.

**BONNIE:** I only know a few things right now. Like, “the cat” is *le chat*, “the flower” is *la fleur*,...and “the beautiful flower” would be *la belle fleur*. I know a few more words, like “eyes” and “hands”...I find the grammer a bit confusing...oh, and I know how to sing, “*LA VIE EN ROSE*”...I'm not sure what it all means...it's a love song, I know that...

**PASTOR JOHN:** I don't know that song...

**BONNIE:** It's new...well, pretty new. It's by this french singer – *who I absolutely love* – Miss St. Paul lets me listen to all her records after school, if I wipe down the boards and do some other chores for her and Edith Piaf is my absolute favourite – *(She stops)*. I ain't...I mean *I'm not* gonna get Miss St. Paul in trouble am I?

**PASTOR JOHN:** No...I mean I – I don't know –

**BONNIE:** - Oh no, I knew I shouldn't have told ya all of this...I should go...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Bonnie, don't worry...what we talk about'll jus' be between the two of us...

**BONNIE:** Can I have the music?

*PASTOR JOHN passes her the music sheets. She looks at his hands.*

**BONNIE :** What did you say before ? *Vous avez de...beau...mains... ?*

*He pulls his hands away.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I...thank you...I...I think it's, "Vous avez *des belles mains*". Hands are always feminine.

**BONNIE:** Oh..."*Vous avez des belles mains*". That's what Miss St. Paul said is hard...getting all of the feminine and masculine things straight...

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Beat)*. Yes, that's always difficult.

**BONNIE:** Well, I better go...

*She goes to exit. She stops at the door.*

**BONNIE:** Thank you...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Next time we can meet at the church. There's a piano there...

**BONNIE:** That would be...wonderful.

*BONNIE exits. PASTOR JOHN hums the chorus from IN THE GARDEN as the lights fade to black.*

## SCENE 12

*Lights up. By the river that winds through Roseglen. **JONAH** is fishing off of a bank just south of the town. **HANK** enters with his fishing rod and gear.*

*Pause.*

**HANK:** Ya gotta give it a little slack.

*Beat.*

**HANK:** That's right. *(Beat)*. How long've ya been at this?

**JONAH:** Since I was little.

***HANK** laughs.*

**HANK:** I meant jus' for today.

**JONAH:** Oh. Sorry. *(He thinks)*. 'Bout an hour I guess.

**HANK:** Catch anythin' yet?

**JONAH:** Yessir...

*He puts down his rod and gets a bucket and shows **HANK** the fish he's already caught.*

***HANK** whistles...*

**HANK:** Three big ones.

**JONAH:** Yessir.

**HANK:** That's quite a black eye ya got there...

**JONAH:** Yessir.

**HANK:** I hope the other fella looks worse.

***JONAH** is silent. He puts the bucket back and starts fishing again. **HANK** reaches into his pocket for his tobacco pouch and rolling papers. He rolls a cigarette, lights it and sits back smoking.*

**JONAH:** Ain't cha gonna fish?

**HANK:** Well, to tell ya the truth, what I usually do is tell my wife I'm gonna do a little fishin' and what I usually end up doin' is comin' down here to smoke a little and – *(He stops)*. Well, I like to jus' sit here and do a little thinkin'...ya know?

*Beat.*

**JONAH:** Well, what happens when ya get home and ya ain't got no fish?

**HANK:** Well, sometimes – *more often than not* – I tell Margaret that the fish weren't bitin' or...sometimes I use my rod and I get a little luck and...well, I'll catch one. (*Beat*). But if she catches wind that you're pullin' in three an hour...well...son, I'm guessin' I'm sunk.

**JONAH:** Sir? You can have one of mine, if you'd like.

*HANK laughs, and then stops when he sees how serious JONAH is.*

**HANK:** That's very kind of ya, but that ain't necessary.

**JONAH:** I only need two today. One for my family and one for my neighbour.

**HANK:** Carson family or Mrs. Scott?

**JONAH:** Mrs. Scott, sir.

**HANK:** That's nice of ya. Her husband Robert used to fish along here, 'fore he went blind...

**JONAH:** Yessir...

**HANK:** It's very kind of you...

**JONAH:** ...maybe ya can do somethin' for me.

**HANK:** And what would that be?

**JONAH:** I was hopin' I could get one of your smokes...sir.

**HANK:** I don't know...

**JONAH:** It's ok. I've smoked before.

*HANK looks at JONAH for a moment and then tosses him the tobacco pouch and rolling papers. JONAH expertly rolls a cigarette and lights it with a pack of matches from his shirt. He inhales and looks over at HANK.*

**JONAH:** Thank you.

*They sit in silence.*

**HANK:** Who taught you to fish Jonah?

**JONAH:** My Grampa.

**HANK:** Where's he now?

*Silence.*

**HANK:** Ya don't have to tell me...

**JONAH:** He... lives up on a farm near Stettler.

*HANK gets up and walks over to the bridge and reaches in behind the pillar for a moment and comes out with a flask.*

**HANK:** You can keep a secret, can't ya Jonah?

**JONAH:** Yessir.

*HANK takes a swig from the flask.*

**HANK:** You know Ted over at the 'Glen?

**JONAH:** Yessir...that fella with the one leg shorter than the other.

**HANK:** That's him. He had polio when he was a kid. Younger than you. *(Beat)*. Well, Teddy...well, he fills up this flask for me and leaves it tucked in over there...you know I can't keep any at the house and what with the Pastor tryin' his damnest to talk Margaret and everyone else who goes to church – *(He stops)*. Anyway...that's jus' 'tween you and me.

**JONAH:** I can keep a secret, sir.

**HANK:** *(Beat)*. I didn't mean to be nosy 'bout your Grampa –

**JONAH:** - *It's ok*. It's jus' – *(He stops)*. Well... *(Beat)*. It's jus' that – *(He stops)*. Well... *shit*...

**HANK:** Ya miss him.

**JONAH:** Yeah... *(Beat)*. I wish I was up there helpin' him. He's got a bad heart... When he was just a kid he had Scarlet Fever and that turned into the Romantic Fever...

*Beat.*

**HANK:** You mean...*Rheumatic* Fever?

**JONAH:** *(Beat)*. Well, my sister *said* – *(He stops)*. Yessir, pretty sure you're right. *(Beat)*. I should get goin'...

**HANK:** It was good talkin' to ya...

*JONAH goes over to the bucket of fish.*

**JONAH:** You got somethin' to put one of these in?

**HANK:** Never mind 'bout that. I know –

**JONAH:** - *No*. No sir, I can't do that. A deal's a deal.

**HANK:** Listen son, I don't want to embarrass ya, but I know ya ain't out here jus' for fun...

**JONAH:** *Alright. (Beat)*. Alright.

*HANK puts his hand out for JONAH to shake. They shake hands.*

**JONAH:** Listen sir. Can *you* keep a secret?

**HANK:** Of course I can.

**JONAH:** Ya see how the river looks all flat and it's slowly movin' that way?

**HANK:** Yup...

**JONAH:** Well there's holes in that river and the fish, well, they don't like to be workin' all the time in the current...you know, they like to rest a little too. So I always put myself right across from *that* tree – ya see that tree over there? And I know there's a hole 'bout halfway out, right from here...and them fish? They like to get a little rest right out there in that hole and if ya put a worm on the end of your hook...why, they think, not only am I gettin' a rest, I'm gettin' a little somethin' to eat too. And 'fore ya know it, ya got a fish to take home. Easy as pie.

**HANK:** That's good advice. I think it'd be nice to bring a fish home today. Fried up nice and quick...yessir, sounds good.

**JONAH:** Yessir.

**HANK:** You say hello to your Mother for me.

**JONAH:** Yessir.

**HANK:** *(Beat)*. You tell her we'll see her at church on Sunday.

**JONAH:** Yessir.

**HANK:** We'll see ya again Jonah...

*JONAH exits. Lights fade to black as HANK stands by the river watching him go.*

### SCENE 13

*Lights up on JONAH drawing on the ground with a stick in the backyard of the MANNING house. BONNIE enters with the sheet music and a small basket.*

**BONNIE :** What're ya doing out here?

**JONAH :** Mama's cleanin' the house.

**BONNIE :** Now? Oh, jeez...

*She sits down beside JONAH.*

**JONAH :** What's in the basket?

**BONNIE :** Some jam and some other stuff from the Pastor's wife.

*He looks in the basket.*

**JONAH :** Mama's not gonna like that.

**BONNIE :** Nope. *(Beat)*. I'll bring it to school tomorrow...

*JONAH opens a jar of pickles.*

**BONNIE :** Jonah, *don't*...

**JONAH:** I'm hungry...*(Teasing her)*. Mmm, these pickles are good - *(He stops)*. And it ain't *Romantic Fever* Grampa had neither...

*Beat.*

**BONNIE:** Who told ya?

**JONAH:** Mr. Moffat.

**BONNIE:** Give me a pickle...

*He hands her a pickle.*

**BONNIE** : I'm singin' at the revival...

**JONAH** : Mama'll be happy.

**BONNIE** : I'm pretty happy too... Pastor John's so great...

**JONAH** : Really? He seems jus' like any old preacher.

**BONNIE** : No, and he's sorta handsome too...

**JONAH** : What? He ain't handsome...he's old.

**BONNIE** : He ain't old. He doesn't seem old...and he's funny too. And he speaks french.

**JONAH** : Sounds like ya got a crush on him or somethin'.

**BONNIE** : What? *No.*

**JONAH**: *(In a sing-song voice).* Bonnie and Preacher sittin' in a tree, K-I-S-S-

**BONNIE** : - *Don't be stupid.*

**JONAH** : Don't call me stupid. I ain't stupid.

**BONNIE** : You don't go to school, you say, "ain't".

**JONAH**: So do you. Ya jus'said "ain't" –

**BONNIE**: - Shut up!

**JONAH**: You shut up!

*JONAH stands up and starts 'dancing' around the stage in an exaggerated form of his sister.*

**JONAH**: Oh, my name is Bonnie, I'm so pretty and I can sing like a bird...la, la, laaaaa...I'm in loooove with the preacher, I'm gonna marry him –

*BONNIE goes over and slaps JONAH across one cheek. Silence.*

**BONNIE**: You shouldn't've said that stuff.

**JONAH** : I ain't stupid.

*He runs off. BONNIE stands watching him. Lights fade to black.*

#### **SCENE 14**

*Early summer. Lights up on the MOFFAT kitchen. MARGARET is cleaning up the breakfast dishes. HANK is at the table with a cup of coffee.*

**MARGARET**: What time is that boy supposed to be here?

**HANK**: He said sometime this mornin'.

**MARGARET**: Well, that's not very helpful...*sometime* this mornin'.

**HANK**: He's thirteen.

**MARGARET**: If we're his new customers, he shoulda let us know exactly when he was comin'. *(Beat)*. And he's workin' on the Sabbath...now that school is out he should come on a weekday...

*HANK is silent.*

**MARGARET**: I jus' think –

**HANK**: - I think it's damn clear what you think. Listen, I know you and the other church ladies like to help out the poorer families in this town with your baskets of perserves, some hand me down clothes, and all the while never lettin' that family forget that you're helpin' them –

**MARGARET**: - Hank –

**HANK**: - *No*. I like this boy. He's shoulderin' a lot and the least – *the least* - we can do is help him out a little and maybe help him keep his pride while we're at it.

**MARGARET**: *Fine*.

**HANK**: What does it say in John about helpin' others?\* \* *(John 3:17. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?)*.

**MARGARET**: I said, 'fine'. There's no need to rub it in...

**HANK**: ...*He's here...*

*She turns away to finish with the dishes. HANK opens the door and JONAH is standing there with a basket of eggs and a pail of potatoes.*

**JONAH:** I brought ya your eggs, Mr. Moffat. I have some potatoes for ya too...

**HANK:** Come in...come in.

**JONAH:** *(Looks over at MARGARET).* Uhhhh, that's ok sir...I have other places to get to and uhhhh...I'm kinda busy and all...

**HANK:** Jonah, come in while I get ya some money...

**JONAH:** Ok, thank you sir.

*He enters and stands awkwardly by the door. HANK exits. Silence.*

**JONAH:** You have a nice house...ma'am.

**MARGARET:** Thank you. *(Beat).* Are ya hungry? I can make ya somethin' to eat. Hank jus' had a whole plateful of pancakes and syrup...

**JONAH:** No ma'am, I ain't hungry. I mean I'm not hungry.

**MARGARET:** Know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna make a sandwich for the road, how 'bout that? We had a ham yesterday and it's gonna go bad, with jus' the two of us here...

**JONAH:** It's ok –

**MARGARET:** - I'm already makin' it. Mustard?

**JONAH:** Yes, ma'am.

**MARGARET:** Would'ya like a glass of milk while you're waitin'?

**JONAH:** No – *(She hands him a glass of milk).* Thank you ma'am...

*He drinks the milk down, wiping his mouth with his sleeve. MARGARET pours more milk in his glass.*

**MARGARET:** Maybe a little slower this time...I'm puttin' a couple of cookies in with your sandwich, they're Pastor John's favourite...

**JONAH:** Yes Ma'am...thank you ma'am.

**MARGARET:** You can call me Mrs. Moffat...

**JONAH:** Ok...Mrs. Moffat...ma'am...

***HANK enters with some money.***

**HANK:** Here ya go...

**JONAH:** That's too much sir.

**HANK:** Well, I'm payin' ya for the potatoes too.

**JONAH:** No sir, them potatoes is for helpin' me last week. I couldn'ta got it done without'cha.

**HANK:** No. I insist -

**MARGARET:** - What didja get done?

**JONAH:** Mr. Moffat here, helped me build my chicken coop.

**HANK:** He was havin' a bit of trouble.

**MARGARET:** Oh, that was nice of ya...when was this?

**JONAH:** Last Thursday ma'a...uhhhh, Mrs. Moffat.

**HANK:** Yessir, we had fun puttin' that thing together.

**JONAH:** Until ya banged your head...I made the doorway a little small...

**HANK:** Jus' right for you...

**JONAH:** Yessir...

**MARGARET:** Well, that was very...nice of you Hank.

**HANK:** It was no trouble at all.

**JONAH:** Well, I got them potatoes from the Carson family.

**HANK:** What did ya do for them?

**JONAH:** I made a deal with Mr Jespersion first...

**HANK:** This boy is gettin' good at wheelin' and dealin'...

**JONAH:** Mr. Moffat's been teachin' me all 'bout 'business practices'.

**MARGARET:** Has he now?

**JONAH:** I helped Mr. Jesperson by cleanin' out alla his coops first –

**MARGARET:** - Now, why wouldn't George've got Simon to do that?

*HANK and JONAH look at each other.*

**HANK:** I think Simon Jesperson is jus'...plain, ole *stumped*...

*He and JONAH laugh.*

**HANK:** I'm pretty sure Jonah here did a bang up job, right son?

*HANK puts his hand on JONAH's shoulder for a brief second.*

**JONAH:** Yessir.

**MARGARET:** Hank...

**HANK:** Oh now Margaret, it was jus' a joke.

**MARGARET:** No, I – (*She stops*). Simon Jesperson is a good boy from a Christian family. There's been too much talk over somethin' that's been greatly exaggerated...

**HANK:** By Miss St. Paul?

**MARGARET:** Well, she's french.

**HANK:** And Myrtle?

**MARGARET:** (*To HANK*). How – how can you do that?

**HANK:** What?

**MARGARET:** Your...*hand*...

*JONAH slips out the door.*

**HANK:** What the hell are ya talkin' 'bout?

**MARGARET:** I think you know.

*HANK notices JONAH has left.*

**HANK:** *(Calls out).* Jonah... *(To MARGARET).* Ya scared him away.

*MARGARET is silent.*

**HANK:** *That – (He stops).* It doesn't mean what ya think it does.

**MARGARET:** It does. I can see it in the way ya act with him...it does.

**HANK:** So what if it does?

**MARGARET:** That boy ain't your son. We had a son.

**HANK:** Had, Margaret...*had.* It's nothin' but an old memory now. It's been thirty years  
–

**MARGARET:** - I don't care...*I don't care. An old memory.* It feels like yesterday he was in my arms –

**HANK:** - Well, he ain't.

**MARGARET:** Don't you say that...how can ya be so cruel?

*MARGARET turns away and sees the sandwich on the kitchen counter.*

**MARGARET:** He forgot his sandwich.

**HANK:** I'll take it to him.

*He goes to the kitchen counter, MARGARET hands him the sandwich.*

**HANK:** Margaret...

**MARGARET:** Jus' go...

*He exits. Lights fade on MARGARET. Lights up on JONAH standing in the MOFFAT's backyard.*

**JONAH:** I didn't mean to cause ya no trouble...

**HANK:** Let's walk Jonah.

*They are silent.*

**HANK:** I think ya got alotta burdens...

**JONAH:** Everybody's got problems.

**HANK:** You're only thirteen Jonah...I – I don't wanna burden ya with more.... *(Beat)*. Listen, I want ya to keep comin' on Sundays with your eggs and I wanna fish with ya, when I got the time and I want ya to know ya can come and talk to me, if ya need someone to talk to or not talk to...understand?

**JONAH:** Yessir...*(Beat)*. What happened to your boy?

**HANK:** It was an accident, jus' an accident that's all. *(Pause)*. We wasn't married very long, jus' a year or so and Daniel was a *small* baby...we had no money...but we didn't care 'bout that...it was hot that summer, very hot and we couldn't stand it no more in the house and we decided to take my Dad's old tent and go campin' north of Drumheller – supposed to be cooler at night – right in the middle of the Badlands, what with them funny shaped rocks and the flatness...like goin' to a foreign land...now, we had heard 'bout the dinosaur bones that was found 'round there and it...made Margaret uneasy...she still wasn't feelin' well, 'cause of the heat and our boy – Daniel – well, he wasn't feedin' properly and Margaret decided to take a nap with him, while I went for a little walk, lookin' for somethin' to burn later on...maybe make some tea when I got back...I was walkin' along and I looked down and I saw these like marks on a flatish rock...like an animal had died on that rock and his bones had become all kinda etched out on there...and I was thinkin' maybe it was dinosaur bones and I could maybe show Margaret and we could discuss it, 'cause that was somethin' good 'bout us, we could talk and argue and it felt like we was always adjustin' our opinions on things, used to make me happy thinkin' 'bout what we'd talk about for the next forty years and that's when I heard it...

**JONAH:** What?

**HANK:** Margaret screamin'...like nuthin' I never heard before and I started runnin', jus' runnin' back to the tent and when I finally get there she's holdin' Daniel and - I'll never forget this – his little face was all red and screwed up tight like he wanted to say somethin', but never got the chance and I took him...and I could still hold him in both my hands and I looked around, not sure what to do or where to go and...nuthin'...there was nuthin' I could do...

**JONAH:** What happened?

**HANK:** It was the heat...it was jus' too much heat for his little body...

*Silence.*

**JONAH:** I'm sorry...

**HANK:** This ain't your burden...I'm not sure I shoul'da told ya...

**JONAH:** It's ok...

**HANK:** I guess it's like it closed Margaret's world, but it felt like it'd cracked mine open more... Ya know, I guess it jus' feels like there's somethin' random 'bout it all...

***JONAH** puts his hand into **HANK's** ...*

**JONAH:** Sir? I jus' wanted to thank you for helpin' me the other day –

**HANK:** - It wasn't no problem –

**JONAH:** - *No sir*, it was – *(He stops)*. Well, it was my birthday and you – ya made it kinda special. It was a good day sir...

***HANK** puts his arm around **JONAH's** shoulder as the light fades to black.*

### SCENE 15

*Lights up on the church basement. There is a piano. **BONNIE** is sitting on the stool plunking on a few keys...**PASTOR JOHN** is standing a few feet away looking at some music sheets.*

**BONNIE:** *(She sings each note. Plunk). I. (Plunk). Love. (Plunk). You.*

*Pause.*

**BONNIE:** I love you.

***PASTOR JOHN** moves to **BONNIE**. He doesn't touch her.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Shhhhh...*(He points upstairs).*

**BONNIE:** *(Whispers)*. Did ya hear me?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes. *(Beat)*. Yes.

***BONNIE** moves away, humming LA VIE EN ROSE.*

**BONNIE:** I think about you...all the time. It's like you're France...

**PASTOR JOHN:** ...when I was nine, I remember after, this one time, I stood very, very still in the barn, breathin' in that smell – *I hated that smell* – prayin' to God to have a wind come up and take me away...like I could jus' stand there in the middle of my Uncle's barn and a big wind would come up and I could be gone...jus' like that.

**BONNIE:** I'm the wind.

*They smile at each other. **BONNIE** moves towards the **Pastor**. He holds up his hand.*

**BONNIE:** *(Whispers)*. When is she gone?

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Whispers)*. She likes to clean up... *Sing for me...*

**BONNIE** begins to sing "THERE IS A FOUNTAIN".

**BONNIE:** THERE IS A FOUNTAIN FILLED WITH BLOOD –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - Stop.

**BONNIE** moves closer to the **Pastor**.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Sing... "IN THE GARDEN."

*He reaches out to touch her hair. Moving away, **BONNIE** begins to sing "IN THE GARDEN..."*

**BONNIE:** I COME TO THE GARDEN ALONE  
WHILE THE DEW IS STILL ON THE ROSES – *(She stops)*.

**BONNIE** begins singing LA VIE EN ROSE.

DES YEUX QUI FONT BAISER LES MIENS  
UN RIRE QUI SE PERD SUR SA BOUCHE  
VOILA LE PORTRAIT SANS RETOUCHE  
DE L'HOMME AUQUEL, J'APPARTIENS

QUAND IL ME PREND DANS SES BRAS  
IL ME PARLE TOUT BAS  
JE VOIS LA VIE EN ROSE...

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Holds up his hand again, listening)*. Stop...

**BONNIE:** What? Oh...it's terrible...you think I'm awful –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - No. It's beautiful...

**BONNIE** moves towards him. **MARGARET** enters.

**MARGARET:** What're ya doin'?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Margaret, are ya finished?

**MARGARET:** Yes. I am. I'm – *(She stops)*. What – *(She stops)*. What was that...that song? *(Beat)*. It's not for the Revival, is it?

**PASTOR JOHN:** No...*no*, it's jus' a song that Bonnie learned in school.

**MARGARET:** In school?

**BONNIE:** Miss St. Paul...

**MARGARET:** *(To PASTOR JOHN)*. That's not right. Someone should talk to Miss St. Paul.

**BONNIE:** She taught it jus' to me.

**PASTOR JOHN:** *Bonnie...* I'm talkin' to Margaret...

**MARGARET:** It's not an appropriate song for a young girl.

**BONNIE:** How do you know?

**PASTOR JOHN:** *Bonnie please -*

**MARGARET:** - It's not in English.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Margaret, this – *(He stops)*. It's innocent...it was just a song.

**MARGARET:** I - I jus' don't think it's proper for her to be singin' anything but the song she's preparin' for the Revivial.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Margaret, you're right; we won't sing anythin' but, "THERE IS A FOUNTAIN". And *I'll* talk to Miss St. Paul...

*Beat.*

**MARGARET:** Alright...*Fine...*but -

**PASTOR JOHN:** - *Margaret*. I said I'll talk to Miss St. Paul and I will.

*Beat.*

**MARGARET:** You're right...*of course*. I've – I've finished cleanin' up. I'll be goin' home now. *(She goes to exit. She stops)*. Oh, I put some of the leftovers into a basket for ya to take home...

**PASTOR JOHN:** ...Thank you, that's very kind of you Margaret...

*MARGARET exits. PASTOR JOHN sits on the piano stool.*

**BONNIE:** You told her. (*As in, "You told her off"*).

**PASTOR JOHN:** Don't.

*Silence.*

**BONNIE:** Should I go?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes.

*BONNIE turns to go and then stops; she walks over to PASTOR JOHN and kneels in front of him, putting her arms around his legs. PASTOR JOHN reaches down and pulls her roughly to her feet. He takes her face in his hands and there is violence in that face grab...*

**PASTOR JOHN:** "For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." \* **(Romans 8:6)**

*PASTOR JOHN takes his hands from BONNIE's face. He looks at her and then slowly and gently he places his hands back on her face.. Blackout.*

## **SCENE 16**

*Lights up on CHRISTINA in the kitchen of the MANNING house. BONNIE enters...*

**CHRISTINA:** I've been waitin' for you. How'd it go?

**BONNIE:** Fine....good. (*Beat*). I'm – I'm tired Mama.

**CHRISTINA:** Do ya want some milk?

**BONNIE:** Ok.

**CHRISTINA:** How 'bout some cookies?

**BONNIE:** Oh yes.

*CHRISTINA pours her a glass of milk and puts a plate of cookies in front of BONNIE. She eats one of the cookies.*

**BONNIE:** These are good. Where 'd ya get 'em?

**CHRISTINA:** Made 'em.

**BONNIE:** Really?

**CHRISTINA:** I had lots of energy today...I also finished Glory Peters' dresses. One day you're gonna dress better than that woman –

**BONNIE:** - *Mama. (Beat).* I am, Mama. *I am.* One day I'm gonna – I'm gonna sing my heart out...

**CHRISTINA:** Ya are...I'm so proud of you.

**BONNIE:** I wanna bath Mama. Would ya run a bath for me? With - *hot* water? That'd feel so good...

**CHRISTINA:** I can boil some water for ya; make sure it's nice and warm.

**BONNIE:** That'd be nice...(Beat). I could sleep right here... (Beat). Where's Jonah?

**CHRISTINA:** I don't know where that boy goes. (Beat). Go upstairs, get undressed and I'll start boilin' the water...

**BONNIE:** Can I wear your robe Mama? It's so soft.

**CHRISTINA:** Of course ya can. Get it from my room. I'll call ya when the tub is full...

**BONNIE:** Hug me Mama...

*BONNIE goes to her mother and they hug. CHRISTINA pulls away first.*

**BONNIE:** Mama?

*CHRISTINA gently brushes the hair from BONNIE's forehead.*

**CHRISTINA:** What is it?

**BONNIE:** Mama...I – (She stops).

**CHRISTINA:** What?

*Beat.*

**BONNIE:** Will ya help me?

**CHRISTINA:** *Baby – ? (She stops).* Ya mean like when you was little?

**BONNIE:** (Beat). Yes Mama...

**CHRISTINA:** Alright, now...*(She gently guides her)*. Go...

**BONNIE** exits. **JONAH** enters from outside. He sees the milk and cookies sitting on the table. He sits down and starts eating and drinking.

**CHRISTINA:** Where ya been?

**JONAH:** One of my chickens died. Dropped dead. *(He snaps his fingers)*. Jus' like that. *(Beat)*. Little Missy...

**CHRISTINA:** Lil' Missy?

**JONAH:** Little Missy *Peters*. I named alla my chickens after someone in town. There's Myrtle Martin, Mrs. Alma Scott and the pretty one with the nice comb? That's Glory Peters -

**CHRISTINA:** - *Jonah* -

**JONAH:** - and she's the queen of the roost too...cluckin' and *preenin'* ...always squawking at the other birds, tellin' 'em what to do -

**CHRISTINA:** *(Laughs)*. - Oh *stop*...that's too funny -

**JONAH:** - and Myrtle? She's got this funny little walk. *(He demonstrates)*. Squawk. Squawk -

**CHRISTINA:** *(Laughing)*. - *Stop* -

**JONAH:** - and Mrs. Alma Scott? She's like all *disapproving*... *(He demonstrates)*. Cluck, cluck, cluck -

**CHRISTINA:** - Stop! *(Laughing)*. Oh my...*(Beat)*. What'd ya name your rooster?

**JONAH:** Preacher...

*Silence.*

**CHRISTINA:** Ya shouldn't have done that.

**JONAH:** Why?

**CHRISTINA:** Ain't right.

**JONAH:** Funny though...*right*?

**CHRISTINA:** Don't tell no one.

**JONAH:** Nope, jus' you Mama...and Mr. Moffat...

**CHRISTINA:** Did he think it was funny?

**JONAH:** He laughed so hard, I ain't seen anyone laugh so hard before... 'cept you...

**CHRISTINA:** Hush. *(Beat)*. Oh...

**JONAH:** What?

**CHRISTINA:** Well, that wife of his.

**JONAH:** Yeah...

**CHRISTINA:** Don't tell no one else.

**JONAH:** Ok.

**CHRISTINA:** Not even your sister. She wouldn't think it's funny.

**JONAH:** 'Cause of the pastor?

**CHRISTINA:** *(Beat)*. Yes.

**JONAH:** Where is she?

**CHRISTINA:** I'm boilin' some water so she can have a bath. *(Beat)*. You can get in after she's done.

**JONAH:** Aaah...I don't wanna.

**CHRISTINA:** When's the last time ya had a bath?

*Beat.*

**JONAH:** *(He shrugs)*. I dunno. Can't remember. *(Beat)*. Know what Mr. Moffat told me today?

**CHRISTINA:** Hmmm?

**JONAH:** Headless Mike jus' died...well, a few months ago...March sometime.

**CHRISTINA:** Who?

**JONAH:** Headless Mike. It was this rooster that lived somewhere in the United States. His owner went to chop off his head and didn't do it right, I guess...and he lived for almost 2 years...

**CHRISTINA:** That ain't true.

**JONAH:** Mr. Moffat said it's true. They took that rooster to some university or somethin', 'cause nobody believed it...and they said it was true.

**CHRISTINA:** A headless chicken....

**JONAH:** Uh huh...and supposedly he'd still act all cocky like roosters do and try to peck at the ground...only he didn't have no head...

**CHRISTINA:** Why would anyone keep him alive?

**JONAH:** Listen to this Mama...they took him around the country and they made over *four thousand dollars a month* on that chicken. Jus' from people wantin' to gawk at an ole chicken with no head...still alive...*but with no head.*

**CHRISTINA:** *Four thousand dollars...*

**JONAH:** Yes ma'am.

*Beat.*

**CHRISTINA:** I want'cha to help me fill the tub...

**JONAH:** Yes ma'am.

*Beat.*

**CHRISTINA:** I can't believe it...walkin' around and everythin'?

**JONAH:** Yup...

**CHRISTINA:** You ain't gonna try that are ya?

*Beat.*

**JONAH:** No.

**CHRISTINA:** *Are you?*

**JONAH:** No ma'am.

**CHRISTINA:** Help me with the tub...(Beat). Bonnie's gonna be a big singer one day...

*Lights fade to black as **JONAH** and **CHRISTINA** exit...*

### SCENE 17

*Lights up on **HANNAH** in the kitchen of the **PRESTON** house. She has been waiting for **JOHN**. He enters.*

**HANNAH:** I have something to tell you...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Not now. I've got work to do...

*He walks towards his study.*

**HANNAH:** But...

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm busy. I'll talk to you later.

*He closes the door to his study.*

**HANNAH:** But... *(She taps on the closed door)*. I have something important to tell you.

**PASTOR JOHN:** What is it? I'm busy.

**HANNAH:** It's the baby, she started kicking...do you...do you want to feel?

*Silence.*

**HANNAH:** John?

**PASTOR JOHN** opens the door and looks at **HANNAH**.

**HANNAH:** John?

*He kneels in front of her and puts his hands on her belly.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** ...oh God...

*He lays his head against her belly. **HANNAH** caresses the top of his head.*

**HANNAH:** I'm so happy. *(Beat)*. Are you happy?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes.

**HANNAH:** A baby...*our baby*. I don't think we're being punished anymore.

**PASTOR JOHN** *is silent.*

**HANNAH:** I can...I can make you some tea? Would you like that?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes, that would be nice.

**PASTOR JOHN** *stands.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm gonna do some work now...

**HANNAH:** Just give me a minute. *(Beat)*. I love you. *(She smiles at him and exits)*.

*Silence as PASTOR JOHN goes to the desk where his bible is. He sits down and with his head in his hands; he begins to pray.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done - " \* *(He stops)*. (\***Matthew 6: 9-13**)

*PASTOR JOHN takes his well-worn bible into his hands and starts pulling out – slowly at first – all of the tabs he's used to mark certain passages and then he starts ripping the pages out, one page at a time. He starts ripping larger sections out and then he rips the bible in half. He stops and attempts to put the book back together. He stops.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Jesus help me...

*He holds the ripped bible against his chest... Lights fade to black.*

## **SCENE 18**

*Lights up. A cool, windy summer day. BONNIE is sitting by the river. Her French book is open in front of her...JONAH enters with his fishing gear.*

**BONNIE:** What're ya doin' here?

**JONAH:** Prayin'...good deeds. *(Beat)*. What's it look like I'm doin'?

**BONNIE:** You should go upstream. I saw Peter Carson up there and he said the fishin' was good.

**JONAH:** How would you know?

**BONNIE:** I saw. He had a whole bucketful...

**JONAH:** Really? I need a bunch...

**BONNIE:** You should check it out.

**JONAH:** I thought ya didn't feel good...

**BONNIE:** I thought I'd read down here.

**JONAH:** *(Beat)*. Well, maybe I'll go and check it out...

**BONNIE:** You should go before Peter catches all of the fish...

**JONAH:** Yeah, ok... I'll see ya...

*JONAH exits. Pause. PASTOR JOHN enters.*

**BONNIE:** *(Smiles)*. John...*(Beat)*. How long've you been waitin'?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Your brother... We should move outta sight.

**BONNIE:** *(She smiles at him)*. Not here?

**PASTOR JOHN:** What? *(Beat)*. No...

**BONNIE:** I was worried you were gonna leave...

*Humming LA VIE EN ROSE she moves towards him, PASTOR JOHN moves away.  
Laughing, she follows him.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Don't - don't do that.

**BONNIE:** I'm the wind...remember?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Yes...

*BONNIE holds her arms out to him. Pause.*

**BONNIE:** ...I love you.

*PASTOR JOHN moves away. Silence.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Your brother... We shouldn't.

**BONNIE:** What're you...? Why - *(She stops. Beat)*. Well, it doesn't matter...*Jonah knows.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** You told him?

**BONNIE:** *(Beat)*. No.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Did you tell him?

**BONNIE:** *Yes*.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Did you?

*She walks towards him.*

**BONNIE:** *No no no no no -*

*He grabs her by the shoulders.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Did you, did you -

**BONNIE:** - *What does it matter?*

*He lets go of her. They both speak at the same time.*

**BONNIE:** Don't let go... / **PASTOR JOHN:** *(Quietly)*...oh Jesus Jesus...

**BONNIE:** *(She reaches out to touch him)*. I'm sorry. It's not true... *(Beat)*. I love you.

**PASTOR JOHN:** *No...*

**BONNIE:** *Yes. (Beat)*. I wanted ya to come. I prayed that you'd come here today. *I prayed...(Pause)*. Please...

*Silence.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Bonnie...*(Pause)*. Sing for me...

*Pause.*

**BONNIE:** *(She struggles to sing)*...QUAND IL ME PREND – *(She stops)*. QUAND IL ME PREND DANS SES BRAS... IL ME PARLE...TOUT BAS... JE VOIS LA VIE EN...ROSE...

*He embraces her.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** ...Let's run away...

**BONNIE:** ...yes. *(Beat)*. A big wind...

*He kneels in front of her and wraps his arms around her. Silence.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** You don't want me...

**BONNIE:** ...you're the world...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Oh god...oh...

**BONNIE:** ...you're...my canopy of stars...

*Silence.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I can't...

**PASTOR JOHN** stands.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I can't do this...

**BONNIE:** Why? *(Beat)*. Why?

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm married. Hannah is – is havin' our baby. I – *(He stops)*.

**BONNIE:** But, I love you. You love me.

**PASTOR JOHN:** No...no. *(Beat)*. We have to forget everything.

*BONNIE turns and grabs the book about France. She pushes the book into his hands.*

**BONNIE:** I don't want this anymore then.... You take it. The stupid music is inside.

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Beat)*. I – I don't need it...

**PASTOR JOHN** holds the book out to her.

**BONNIE:** I don't want it.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Bonnie. Listen...

**BONNIE:** I don't want it anymore.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I can't just -

**BONNIE:** - Go. Leave. Go away...

**JONAH** enters.

**JONAH:** You're fulla *shit* Bonnie – (*He stops*).

*PASTOR JOHN turns and sees JONAH with his fishing pole and gear. Beat.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** (*Nods*). Jonah...

*JONAH is silent.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Bonnie... thank you for the book...

*He exits.*

**JONAH:** Why'd you give *him* your French book?

*BONNIE falls to her knees and looks at her reflection in the river.*

**BONNIE:** *Who do I look like?*

**JONAH:** What was the preacher doin' down here -

**BONNIE:** - *Do I look like Mama? Or do I look like Gramma? We only have that one photo and Mama says I look jus' like her. (She runs her hand through the water. She stops). Oh God...*

**JONAH:** Who cares? Don't matter.

**BONNIE:** You're right...*it don't matter. (Beat). Sit with me awhile...*

**JONAH:** Can't.

**BONNIE:** *Please?*

**JONAH:** *Can't.* I'm busy. I told Herb – I mean *Mr. Peters* – I told him I'd bring him a fish or two this afternoon.

*He puts some bait onto his hook and throws the line into the river.*

**JONAH:** Stupid fish ain't bitin'.

*Pause.*

**BONNIE:** I'm cold.

**JONAH:** Where's your coat?

**BONNIE:** I left it at home.

**JONAH:** *(Sighs)*. Jeez. Here, take mine.

*JONAH takes his coat off and hands it to BONNIE. She puts it on.*

**BONNIE:** *Jonah?* *(Beat)*. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I hit ya that time...do ya forgive me?

**JONAH:** Ya shouldn't have done that...

**BONNIE:** Do ya? Do ya forgive me?

**JONAH:** I'll think 'bout it. *(Beat)*. I ain't stupid.

**BONNIE:** Hold my hand, will ya? Jus' for a bit...

**JONAH:** Hold your hand? C'mon, can't ya see I'm busy?

*He throws the line back into the water. Silence.*

**BONNIE:** Can ya feel it?

*JONAH is silent.*

**BONNIE:** The wind. Can ya feel it?

**JONAH:** Course I can. Ya got my coat on, 'member?

**BONNIE:** I dunno...it jus' blows right through me. *(Pause)*. Ya know, I ain't never even been to Calgary.

**JONAH:** Don't care if I never go.

**BONNIE:** Yeah, I know for you it's jus' Stettler and *Grampa*. *Grampa, Stettler...* who cares?

**JONAH:** *I care...* *Grampa* needs help on the farm – his heart – He needs me. *(JONAH has caught a fish)*. Awww son of a gun...here we go.

*He struggles for a bit and his line snaps.*

**JONAH:** *Shit!*

*BONNIE laughs.*

**JONAH:** *It ain't funny*. I promised Mr. Peters a fish *today*.

*He reels in his line, reaches for a new hook and starts tying it on.*

**BONNIE:** *Who cares?*

**JONAH:** How do ya think we get alla our sugar and flour? Mama?

**BONNIE** *stands.*

**BONNIE:** How 'bout this then? Can ya hear *that*?

*JONAH ignores her. She walks over to JONAH and forces him to look at her.*

**BONNIE:** Can't ya hear it?

**JONAH:** What? What're ya talkin' about?

**BONNIE:** It's like a whisper.

**JONAH:** What is?

**BONNIE:** This...*town.*

*BONNIE lets go of him, moves away and starts turning around and around in circles saying over and over...*

**BONNIE:** This town, this town this *stupid* town – (*She stops spinning*). That stupid...*preacher.*

**JONAH:** What? What're you talkin' about?

*She moves away from JONAH.*

**BONNIE:** ...I love him...

*Beat.*

**JONAH:** ...what...? What did you say?

**BONNIE** *moves towards JONAH.*

**BONNIE:** - *Where's* your gun? Why don't ya kill another bird, kill another one of them ducks –

**JONAH:** - I do it so we can have somethin' to eat, somethin' –

**BONNIE:** - Liar. *Liar*. You are such a goddamn liar. You're all such goddamn liars –  
(*She stops*). Listen. Jus' listen.

**JONAH:** What? What *goddammit*?

**BONNIE:** There, now you're gettin' it.

**JONAH:** What?

**BONNIE:** The...the *phoniness* of this place... everyone is so fake and...and *phony*.

**JONAH:** I – I don't have time for this. You're crazy. I'm gotta go further downstream.  
See if the fish're bitin' there.

*He starts gathering his pole and fishing gear together.*

**BONNIE:** No, *wait*... don't go. Don't go... I'll sing for ya. (*Beat*). I *know*... I'll sing ya  
that song you love...

**JONAH:** *I ain't got time*.

**BONNIE:** Stay with me awhile, 'k?

**JONAH:** *No* Bonnie, I gotta go.

**BONNIE:** Fine...*fine* then. Go. Jus'...*go*.

**JONAH:** I need to catch some fish *today*...and I got some other stuff I need to do –

**BONNIE:** - I said *fine*. Go away.

**JONAH:** You're actin' *crazy*.

**BONNIE:** Go away.

**JONAH:** Why don't ya jus' go home?

**BONNIE:** You go home.

**JONAH:** I can't go home. Can't ya see alla the work I gotta do?

*She starts to walk away.*

**BONNIE:** I don't need you...

*JONAH picks up his rod and walks away. Lights fade to black.*

**SCENE 19**

*Lights up on HANK sitting at the kitchen table eating his dinner. MARGARET is at the sink doing dishes when the phone rings. She goes to answer the phone.*

**MARGARET:** *(To HANK).* Finish up, I'll get it. *(She answers the phone).* Hello? *(Beat).* Teddy? *(Beat).* What's that? *(Beat).* Oh...yes, he's right here - jus' a second would ya, Teddy? Doreen? *(Beat).* Doreen, I know it's you. Get off the phone please...I know, Doreen...but – *(She stops).* Ya need to get off the line. Doreen –

*HANK stands up and takes the phone from MARGARET.*

**HANK:** Doreen? This is Hank. Get off the line. *(Beat).* This is none of your business. *(Beat).* Yes, I know – *(He stops. He looks at MARGARET).* I'll have her call you when I'm off the line...Goddammit –

**MARGARET:** - Hank -

**HANK:** - alright, what is it Ted? I'm finishin' up my supper here – *(He stops).* What's that now? *(Beat).* When? *(He listens).* Uh huh...uh huh...well, Goddammit –

**MARGARET:** - Hank - *(He holds up a hand to silence her).*

**HANK:** - I'll meet ya there. And Teddy? Jus'...jus' try and be calm. You don't wanna worry the Jespersons. 'Fore you know it, this is gonna be all over town... *(He hangs up).*

*He starts to put his coat on.*

**MARGARET:** What is it?

**HANK:** Don't be callin' Doreen –

**MARGARET:** - *What is it?*

**HANK:** Listen...I don't - *(He stops).* The Jesperson's dog...it was doin' some strange howlin' down by the river on his property and George went out to see – *(He stops).* There's a body –

**MARGARET:** - Oh my God –

**HANK:** - a young girl.

**MARGARET:** Who?

**HANK:** Don't know for sure. But Teddy...*Ted* thought...well, he thought it might be the Manning girl.

**MARGARET:** Oh my God...I should –

**HANK:** - Don't do nuthin' 'till I get back, ya hear me?

**MARGARET:** Yes...oh my god...(She whispers). Yes.

**HANK:** Good. (He exits).

**MARGARET** stands still for a moment and then goes to the phone. Lights fade to black.

## SCENE 20

Lights up. Next day. Raining. The **MANNING** kitchen. **CHRISTINA** is wearing her bathrobe and sitting. **JONAH** enters. He puts a couple of pots down where the rain has come in; he grabs a rag and starts wiping the floor...

Pause.

**JONAH:** We need to go home. Back to Stettler... Back to Grampa...

**CHRISTINA:** ...I wanna go down to the river. I wanna lay down in the mud at the bottom of that river and I want them fish – them minnows – I wan' 'em to nibble at my flesh...nibble away 'til there ain't nuthin' left...

Silence.

**JONAH:** I need a dress for her... Somethin' pretty to put her in...

Beat.

**CHRISTINA:** I know about that French book she hid...

**JONAH** is silent.

**CHRISTINA:** I know ya knew about that book. (Beat). Where is it?

**JONAH:** (Beat). Dunno...

**CHRISTINA:** It's gone. (Beat). She had dreams...they ain't worth havin'...

**JONAH:** ...Mama?

**CHRISTINA:** ...It's like she's gonna walk through that door...

**JONAH:** ...I need a dress...

**CHRISTINA:** ...ya look like a drowned rat...

*Beat.*

**JONAH:** I killed the rooster...the cock. *(Beat)*. I'll boil it -

**CHRISTINA:** - I ain't hungry...

**JONAH:** You should eat somethin'. Mama...

*JONAH walks over to his mother.*

**CHRISTINA:** *Don't*. I don't want ya to...*(Beat)*. I could jus' start screamin' and never stop.

*JONAH stops and exits. Lights fade to black.*

## SCENE 21

*Lights up. Same day. It's still raining. The PRESTON house. PASTOR JOHN is in his study frantically looking for the French book. HANNAH enters holding the book...*

**HANNAH:** What're you looking for?

**PASTOR JOHN:** Nuthin'... I - I - *(He stops)*.

*Silence.*

**HANNAH:** She - *(She stops)*. Bonnie was with child...

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Beat)*. Wait. *(Beat)*. What...?

**HANNAH:** Doreen Gross called. She...*overheard* Hank talking to the RCMP in Calgary... *It's all over town...*

*Silence.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Well. I... *(Beat)*. I'm - I'm not surprised. *(Beat)*. She had a - a bit of a reputation. *(Beat)*. That - that nasty business with Simon Jesperson and them other two boys, her and Missy Peters *standin'* -

**HANNAH:** - Why do you have this? *(The French book)*.

**PASTOR JOHN:** What – *(He stops)*. Why were you going through my desk?

**HANNAH:** *Why do you have this book?*

**PASTOR JOHN:** It's – *(He stops)*. I dunno... It's probably one of the children's from Sunday school...*Give it to me...*

**HANNAH:** It has these sheets of music inside. "THERE IS A FOUNTAIN"...and "IN THE GARDEN".

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm too *busy* –

**HANNAH:** - *These are the songs you were working on with Bonnie Manning. (Beat). And what's this song? (She holds up the music for "LA VIE EN ROSE"). It's in French. I've never seen this before...*

**PASTOR JOHN:** You shouldn't have gone into my desk.

**HANNAH** *is silent.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Give it to me. *(She doesn't give it to him)*. It probably belongs to the school. *Miss St. Paul...*

**HANNAH:** I'll talk to her.

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Beat)*. I can do it.

**HANNAH:** No.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I said I'd do it.

**HANNAH:** No.

**PASTOR JOHN:** Give me the book.

**HANNAH:** No.

**PASTOR JOHN:** - *Give it to me – (He grabs her arm. Hard.). I want it. (With his other hand PASTOR JOHN takes the book away).*

*Pause.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm – I'm sorry, but...you wouldn't give me the book...

**HANNAH** *is silent.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm sorry...

*Silence. HANNAH moves to the desk. PASTOR JOHN reaches for her as she walks by him. She shakes him off.*

**HANNAH:** Don't...

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm sorry. I'm - I'm sorry I'm - *(He stops).*

*HANNAH picks up the ripped bible. PASTOR JOHN doesn't touch it.*

**HANNAH:** I thought that *this*...baby - *(She stops).*

*HANNAH puts the bible down and turns to exit. PASTOR JOHN grabs her by the shoulders.*

**HANNAH:** Don't. Don't...*(She struggles to get away. He holds tight).*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I want this baby. No, listen. *I want our baby* - *(He stops. He lets go of her).*

*They look at each other.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm sorry...I love you. I - *(He stops).* Please please please. *(Beat).* You're my wife.

**HANNAH:** This town, *this place.* *(Beat).* This baby... I thought that this would be the one. *(Beat).* All of those other towns -

**PASTOR JOHN:** - *Nothing ever happened.* *(He whispers).* I never touched them...

*Beat.*

**HANNAH:** Oh my God...oh my God...

**PASTOR JOHN:** Hannah...please...

**HANNAH:** ...I'm going home to my dad... I'm going to Calgary...

**PASTOR JOHN:** ...Please...

*HANNAH exits. PASTOR JOHN is left holding the French book. Lights fade to black.*

## **SCENE 22**

*The next afternoon. It's raining...Lights up on **MARGARET** in her kitchen. There is an empty baby crib in the middle of the kitchen floor. **MARGARET** is folding baby clothes. **HANK** enters and stands in the doorway dripping water. He clumsily tries putting his hat on a hook. It falls to the floor...**HANK** stares at it for a second and leaves it on the floor...*

**MARGARET:** Take your boots off...(Beat). I'm makin' coffee.

***HANK** sits down heavily in a chair. He struggles with his boots for a moment and then gives up.*

**MARGARET:** Ted called...

***HANK** is silent.*

**MARGARET:** Didja hear me?

**HANK:** Ted called, *Ted called*...

**MARGARET:** He said you'd been drinkin' and were on your way home...

***HANK** is silent.*

**MARGARET:** Coffee'll be ready in jus' a minute...

**HANK:** Don't wan' any.

**MARGARET:** Doreen called too... Said she saw ya walkin' –

***HANK** slams his fist down on the table.*

**HANK:** Godammit!

*Beat.*

**MARGARET:** Well. (Beat). If ya hadn't been drinkin' –

***HANK** slams his fist down on the table again. Silence.*

***HANK** reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out his flask and takes a swig. He wipes his mouth and takes another drink. **MARGARET** moves away and resumes folding the baby clothes.*

**HANK:** What're ya doin' with them baby clothes?

***MARGARET** is silent.*

**HANK:** I asked you a question.

*MARGARET is silent. HANK takes a step toward the crib.*

**HANK:** What's *this* doin' here?

**MARGARET:** You're supposed to fix it for the Pastor and his wife.

**HANK:** Why can't he fix it himself?

**MARGARET:** He's busy. I told Hannah you'd look it over, tighten everythin' and give it a nice coat of *paint* -

*HANK kicks the crib.*

**MARGARET:** Don't...

*HANK kicks the crib again, breaking a few of the bars. He sits down heavily into his chair. Beat.*

**MARGARET:** You're gonna have to fix that...

**HANK:** The Calgary RCMP called me this mornin' at work. *(Beat)*. That little girl was pregnant...

**MARGARET:** I heard. *(Beat)*. The sixth *commandment* clearly says – *(She stops as HANK reaches for his flask again)*.

**MARGARET:** ...Don't.

*He puts the flask down.*

**HANK:** We had to call the doctor in from Drumheller. Christina had to be sedated. Both the Carson's *and* the Scott's said they could hear her *screamin'* -

**MARGARET:** - "*Thou shalt not kill.*"\* That girl took her own life and the life of her unborn child. Now that child'll forever burn in the lake of *fire* -

**\*(Exodus 20:13)**

**HANK:** - *Stop it with the lake of fire.* Goin' on and *on* about it for *years*. *(Beat)*. I'm goin' to Calgary and pick up her body. I'm gonna take the train in the mornin' and I'll come back in the evenin'... Gonna pay for a coffin. Headstone too...

**MARGARET:** We can't afford that. The church'll pay.

**HANK:** For what? A wooden cross? A pauper's grave? I won't have that...

**MARGARET:** *You won't have that?*

**HANK:** It ain't right. That boy needs somethin'...*good*. Not a cheap wooden cross. Not somethin' that identifies it as cheap, poor –

**MARGARET:** - That's not your place.

**HANK:** I'm makin' it my place.

**MARGARET:** *It ain't your place –*

**HANK:** *(Roars).* – *I'm makin' it mine!*

*Pause.*

**MARGARET:** You're drunk.

**HANK:** Yeah I am. *(Beat)*. I'm doin' it. I'm gonna leave first thing in the mornin'...

**MARGARET:** Don't you be doin' this...

**HANK:** I'm doin' it.

*HANK goes to the door. He picks up his hat and puts it on clumsily.*

**HANK:** I'm goin' back to The Glen for a few more –

**MARGARET:** - *Hank –*

**HANK:** - Why doncha give Doreen a call? Let her know I'm goin' to the Glen. *(Beat)*. Oh Hell, I'll jus' give'er a lil ole wave as I walk by her house...

*He stops.*

**HANK:** ...and give Teddy a call too, will ya? Let him know he can have a drink waitin' for me on the bar...

**HANK exits. MARGARET begins picking up the broken pieces of the crib. Lights fade to black.**

### SCENE 23

*Lights up. Early evening, next day. It's lightly raining. The sound of a train whistle can be heard. JONAH is waiting for HANK. HANK enters with his flask...*

**JONAH:** She's in there, ain't she... I seen ya talkin' to Mr Melynychuk. *(Beat)*. I wanna see her.

**HANK:** Jonah –

**JONAH:** - *I don't care that ya don't feel well sir. You was drinkin' last night too. (HANK puts the flask away).* Everybody knows...

*Pause.*

**JONAH:** I should see her...

**HANK:** That's not a good idea...

**JONAH:** You can't tell me what to do, you ain't my father.

*Beat.*

**HANK:** *Water – (He stops).* Water does somethin' to a body and the...*people* in Calgary did their best, but her casket's gonna stay closed...

**JONAH:** You ain't my father.

**HANK:** If we're gonna do this – *(He stops).* I was drinkin' yesterday. A lot, like ya said and I feel like – *(He stops).*

**JONAH:** Shit.

*HANK sits and pulls out a handkerchief and wipes his face. JONAH stays standing.*

**JONAH:** I don't get it. *(Beat)*. I don't get how she done it...

*Beat.*

**HANK:** She stuffed rocks in her coat pocket. *(Beat)*. To help...*weigh herself down.* As human beings, well...we wanna live. It takes a...*strong will* to kill yourself by drownin'...

**JONAH:** That was my coat she was wearin'...

**HANK:** This ain't your fault...

**JONAH:** Where is she? *(Beat)*. Where's Mr. Melynychuk gonna...put her?

**HANK:** It's – *(He stops)*. The casket's gonna go into the basement. It's cool... Yuri – *(He stops)*. Mr. *Melynychuk* will look after her. There's blocks of ice –

**JONAH:** – *I don't give a shit 'bout that. (Beat)*. I wanna see her. *(Beat)*. Please.

**HANK:** *I don't think –*

**JONAH:** – *No. No goddammit... you don't get to tell me what to do.*

**HANK:** I wanna help you –

**JONAH:** – *No, no, no...fuck this town, fuck everyone. (Beat)*. *Fuck you.*

**HANK:** *Hey. Hey now...*

**JONAH:** She ain't never comin' back and I wanna see her. I don't care if it's been a long day for ya. *(Beat)*. I wanna see her.

**HANK:** *Alright. (Beat)*. *Alright.*

*Pause.*

**JONAH:** Will ya...will ya come in with me?

**HANK:** I will... *(Beat)*. We'll make sure Bonnie has a nice...a *good* funeral...alright?

**JONAH:** No preacher.

*Beat.*

**HANK:** The church people'll *wanna* – *(He sees JONAH's face. He stops)*.

**JONAH:** She said she loved him. That ain't right... What'd it mean when she said she loved the preacher? He's old and married and his wife's gonna have a baby... It ain't right... what he done...ain't right.

*Beat.*

I don't wan' my mom hurt no more...

*Silence.*

**HANK:** No preacher...

**JONAH:** You tell him he ain't doin' the service...we'll just do it up on the hill...no church. *(Beat)*. Mr. Moffat? I'm gonna get back to Stettler somehow – *(He stops)*. I'll make her go...

*Beat.*

**HANK:** I'll get Teddy and we'll start - *(He stops)*. We'll start the diggin' tomorrow.

**JONAH:** I'm gonna dig too...

**HANK:** Ted and I can do it.

**JONAH:** No sir. I've got some things I need to get done and I'll come soon as I can. *(Beat. JONAH walks towards the station)*. Mr. Moffat?

*HANK moves toward JONAH and puts his arm around his shoulders as they enter the station. The sound of the train whistle can be heard in the distance as the lights fade to black.*

## SCENE 24

*Evening, same day. Lightly raining. Lights up on PASTOR JOHN in his study.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Starting to softly hum, ROCK OF AGES, - Augustus M. Toplady, 1776)*. ROCK OF AGES, CLEFT FOR ME, LET ME HIDE MYSELF IN THEE...*(He softly sings)* LET THE WATER AND THE BLOOD, FROM THY WOUNDED SIDE WHICH FLOWED...*(His singing drifts off)*...water and the blood...the blood and the water...

*HANK enters. The two men look at each other. Silence.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm – I'm busy... Preparin' for the funeral.

**HANK:** Family don't wan' ya.

**PASTOR JOHN:** That's not for you to say.

**HANK:** I talked with Jonah –

**PASTOR JOHN:** - He's a child –

**HANK:** - Bonnie was a child.

*PASTOR JOHN is silent.*

**HANK:** And she was with child. *(Beat)*. Jonah knows. *(Beat)*. You *bastard* -

**PASTOR JOHN:** - *You've been drinkin'...*

*Beat.*

**HANK:** Hebrews 13:4.\*

**\*(Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge) - KJV**

**PASTOR JOHN:** *(Beat)*. Please...*go*.

**HANK:** You leave here. Leave in the next couple of days and I won't say *nuthin'*. I won't tell everyone what you've done...

**PASTOR JOHN:** - *No* -

**HANK:** I ain't even sure it's the right thing to do, but I don't want that boy or his mother to suffer any more. You leave and I'll keep this damned secret to myself.

**PASTOR JOHN:** No one'll believe you. *(Beat. Quietly)*. Please...

**HANK:** *Out of my way*.

**PASTOR JOHN:** I'm beggin' you...ya don't understand... I loved her, I loved her -

*HANK pushes PASTOR JOHN who stumbles.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Don't. Don't...

**HANK:** *(As if he is going to strike the Pastor)*. Goddamn you...

*Silence as the two men look at each other.*

**HANK:** *(Quiet)*. Damn you to Hell.

*Pause. PASTOR JOHN goes to his desk and pulls out the French book.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Take this. Put it - *(He stops)*. Put it with her. Please...please *please*...

*HANK takes the book. He exits. Lights fade to black.*

## **SCENE 25**

*Lights up. Same evening. Lightly raining. The **MOFFAT** kitchen. **MARGARET** is trying to put the crib back together...*

***HANK** enters and stares at **MARGARET**. He moves towards the crib and starts breaking it apart again.*

**MARGARET:** ... Don't...Hank...

*He sits down heavily. Silence. **MARGARET** starts picking up pieces of the broken crib.*

**HANK:** Stop.

*She stops.*

**HANK:** This town – (He stops).

**MARGARET:** Every town...

**HANK:** ...I used to love it here... But since – (He stops). Since the war, all them boys that didn't come home. I could list 'em all...(Beat). What's the point? Dead is dead.

**MARGARET:** That's not true. Jesus died –

**HANK:** - I can't talk to you anymore.

***MARGARET** moves to the broken crib and starts picking up the pieces.*

**HANK:** I said stop.

**MARGARET:** (She throws a piece of the crib to the floor). Dammit...

*Silence.*

**MARGARET:** I'm sorry...

***MARGARET** moves towards the crib again.*

**HANK:** No... (**HANK** moves to **MARGARET** and embraces her). No...

*Silence.*

**HANK:** (Quietly). Margaret...

**MARGARET:** ...It's ok. (Pause). It's ok...

*The phone rings.*

**MARGARET:** *(Beat)*. Answer it...

**HANK:** I'm expectin' a call from Teddy. *(Beat)*. He put a call into the RCMP detachment up there, lookin' for help in locatin' the boy's grampa...

**MARGARET:** Answer it.

*HANK looks at MARGARET and then moves to answer the phone.*

**HANK:** Ted? *(Beat)*. Well? *(Beat)*. What's that now? *(Pause)*. Uh huh...*(Beat)*. Christ...*(Beat)*. No, I'll tell him. *(Beat)*. Yeah, I'll see you tomorrow... And thanks Ted...*(He hangs up. Beat)*. That boy's Grandfather was found dead in his farmhouse over *two months ago*...neighbours hadn't seen him for a day or two; his hired hand was lookin' after the cattle, guess it was pretty unusual... They said he'd had a heart attack. Ted said they'd told his daughter by letter... I gotta tell Jonah... Margaret, I - I - *(He stops)*.

**MARGARET:** Go. Take your coat...

*HANK exits. MARGARET looks at the broken crib and then exits. Lights fade to black.*

## SCENE 26

*Lights up. Same evening. The rain has stopped. JONAH is outside in his backyard. HANK enters carrying the French book.*

**JONAH:** Where did you find it?

**HANK:** I gotta talk to ya son, sit down for a minute.

**JONAH:** No sir, I can't. I got things to do. My mother's inside cryin'. She's holdin' onto this dress of Bonnie's. It's like she ain't never gonna stop. I - I ain't sure - maybe we should get the doctor?

**HANK:** Jonah, c'mere a second -

**JONAH:** - If it's about them flowers. I ain't sorry.

**HANK:** Listen -

**JONAH:** - Besides, Missy Peters and Peter Carson too...they helped me dig up some of them flowers and they helped me cart 'em up that damn hill -

**HANK:** - *I need you to listen -*

**JONAH:** - And Sam Melynychuk, he took some of them pots of flowers from his Dad's train station, he loaded 'em up on a wagon and he brought 'em up that goddamn hill too...

**HANK:** ...Jus'...calm down... C'mere... I don't care about the flowers.

*Beat.*

**HANK:** It's your Grampa.

**JONAH:** Is he comin'?

**HANK:** *(Beat)*. No...

**JONAH:** I wanna call him. Can I use your phone?

**HANK:** ...your Grampa's dead.

*Pause.*

**JONAH:** *No sir...no sir...*

**HANK:** Let's go in and talk to your Mom...

**JONAH:** ...*No sir...* I can't - *(He stops)*. I can't take no more...My mom, she's cryin' like she can't stop...

**HANK:** Let's go over to the Carsons, we'll use their phone and call the doctor. Come with me...

**JONAH:** No. I'm - *(He stops)*. I'll stay here...with my mom...

**HANK:** *Just* -

**JONAH:** - *I* - I can't. *(Beat)*. Don't worry Mr. Moffat... I'll stay here...and wait...

**HANK** exits. **JONAH** picks up the French book, goes to the house and puts the book underneath. He grabs his shotgun from there and exits. Lights fade to black.

## SCENE 27

*Lights up. Same evening. PASTOR JOHN is by the river. The rain has stopped. The sun is about to set revealing the light of the blue hour...*

*There is the loud sound of a propane-powered gun going off in the distance. Then the sound of shotguns going off, dogs barking and the sound of people laughing and talking are heard. PASTOR JOHN listens. Silence.*

*JONAH enters and watches PASTOR JOHN.*

**PASTOR:** Almost everybody's over at the Jesperson's...

*JONAH is silent.*

*The loud sound of the propane-powered gun going off is heard again. The sound of shotguns going off, dogs barking and the sound of people laughing and talking are heard. PASTOR JOHN and JONAH listen.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Don't seem fair...shootin' off that gun jus' to scare them birds and then kill 'em...

**JONAH:** It's for the crops...

**PASTOR JOHN:** You shoot any?

**JONAH:** Not today.

*Beat.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** How old are ya?

*JONAH is silent.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** It don't matter. *(Pause)*. I left home when I was 'bout your age. Took on God...*(Beat)*. People wanna...own ya when you're young.

**JONAH:** Nobody owns me.

**PASTOR JOHN:** You believe in free will?

*JONAH is silent.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** There's shit ya can't escape. *(Beat)*. It shapes ya and it forms ya and ya – you can't escape. *(Beat)*. I wanna talk to ya...'bout her... My – my feelin's and –

**JONAH:** - *You ain't got no right to talk 'bout her...You're a sonofabitch.*

*Silence.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** I understand.

*PASTOR JOHN moves away.*

**PASTOR JOHN:** Had a dog when I was a kid. *(Beat)*. Mongrel. A neighbour's dog had had some pups and he was gonna jus'drown 'em...drown 'em all... He said I could have one and I wanted to save them...*all...ya* know, but... Anyways I asked my uncle could I get one and he said, "Yeah, but don't get no bitch, she won't do nuthin' but have more pups". *(Beat)*. I thought he must've been feelin' good that day, forgot how he liked to save things up...

So, I went over to our neighbour's and there were the eight pups and the mother dog. Tired looking old dog... That was hard, pickin' jus one. Which one to save? So, I picked the smallest male – soft brown fur - and wrapped him up in my coat and went back to our farm. *(Beat)*. Didn't stick around to watch him drown the other pups...he was already puttin' 'em in a burlap bag and they was makin' these little mewlin' sounds...*(Pause)*. There are some sounds ya don't forget...

Turned out the pup was blind in one eye... See, at first, I thought he had one brown eye and one blue...but thing was he couldn't see outta the blue. Now, he was fine otherwise...but my uncle thought, well he thought it was the funniest thing, to always come at him from his blind side, kick his legs out from under him. That was my uncle, always comin' at ya from your blind side...

So, it seemed like I was always tryin' to *save* him, make sure he stayed outta the way of my uncle. But the dog, he couldn't help it... he'd see me and come runnin'. Tried tyin' him up, that didn't work...he'whine so much my uncle'd beat him with a stick, and that wasn't fair, him being tied up and not able to get away. *(Beat)*. And my uncle, he'd always use the dog to get at me – *(He stops)*.

*Pause.*

My uncle, ya see? *(Beat)*. There's somethin' 'bout a man, a man who hurts ya – *(He stops)*. Who uses – *(He stops)*. And I could see it, in those moments in the barn...with me - *all his power gone* - there was a - a weakness in his face – but a man who uses someone – someone vulnerable to push the devil outta himself...what kind of man is that?

My uncle'd call Pal into the barn, knowing I'd go in and save him... *knowin' it*.

*Pause.*

So, I shot him – *my dog*. He was layin' in the yard sleepin' and I came up on his blind side and I shot him. Thing is, he didn't see me, but he heard me, 'cause his eye opened and it was like ...he was watchin' me, *seein' me* with that blind eye and it was like he knew what I was gonna do and he jus' lay there trustin' me, 'cause she *loved me... (Beat)*. No, that ain't right...

I always lose my way...I get lost and – (*He stops*). I wanna be good, I wanna be a good man – (*He stops*).

*Pause.*

One tiny yelp...and Pal was gone. (*Beat*). There're sounds ya don't forget... Real or imagined...

*JONAH* walks over to the bridge and reaches in behind the pillar for a moment and comes out with **HANK**'s flask. He opens the flask and takes a drink.

**JONAH:** In the evenin' sometimes, I can hear it...I gotta strain though to make sure it ain't no dream...that I ain't jus' wishin' for it, *hopin'* I can hear it, that it ain't jus' no damn thing I'm...*inventin'*, 'cause I want it so bad...I want so bad to...to jus'... to jus' hear it...hear her... (*Beat*). It's almost always jus' as the sun goes down and there's that...that *light*...

**PASTOR JOHN:** The blue hour...

**JONAH:** Yeah...like that...

*JONAH* takes another swig and offers the flask to **PASTOR JOHN**. **PASTOR JOHN** shakes his head 'no' and **JONAH** puts the flask back behind the pillar.

**JONAH:** Ain't mine...

**PASTOR JOHN:** The French call it "l'heure bleue"... It's that time of day when you don't know if it's day or night...

*Beat.*

**JONAH:** You should leave, jus' go somewhere else...

**PASTOR JOHN:** ... I wanted to come down here, makes me feel closer to her...

*Pause. JONAH* goes over and picks up his shotgun.

**JONAH:** Ya gonna pray?

**PASTOR JOHN:** (*Whispers*). Yes... (*Beat*). I...I'm never gonna see my baby – (*He stops*). I'm sorry, I'm...sorry...*Wait*...jus' a minute. I...I'm not sure. (*Beat*). I don't wanna die –

*JONAH* lifts up his shotgun, pulls the trigger, there is a loud noise and...  
**BLACKOUT.**

**SCENE 28**

*Lights up. The harsh and bright light of The Lethbridge Provincial Gaol. JONAH (15-years-old) is handcuffed and sitting on an old-style metal chair, facing HANK who is sitting across a table from him.*

*Late winter, 1949.*

**HANK:** I want you to talk to that new lawyer. *(Beat)*. Son, this prison hangs people – *(He stops)*.

*Pause.*

**JONAH:** ...I went back to see her that day... *I saw her* – standin' in the water and the current was wrappin' my coat all tight 'round her and she had this stick and she was swirlin' it through the water...using magic she said to write her name...

**HANK:** Jonah –

**JONAH:** - It's all – *(He stops)*. It's too easy...that propane gun and hundreds of them birds flyin' up and the sound of more guns and then them birds jus'...rainin' down from the sky... It's like I could hear their bones breakin' and their wings snappin off 'fore they even hit the ground...

*Pause.*

**HANK:** Hope's all we got. We live our lives, hopin' that things'll get better, that the next step'll be the right one. But ain't that like us humans? Isn't that what we're supposed to do? *(Beat)*. Take my hands...

**JONAH** looks over at the guard.

**HANK:** I talked to that guard. Did ya know he likes to fish now and then?

**JONAH** is silent.

**HANK:** I explained how you're like a son to me. I hope ya don't mind, but I told him that little fishin' trick of yours. *(Beat)*. I don't wanna to give up. *(Beat)*. Take my hands...

**JONAH** looks over at the guard again and then reaches out with his cuffed hands and **HANK** takes his hands in his.

**HANK:** Now you listen...you go in there and you talk to that fancy lawyer and you listen to what he has to say. I'll still be here when you're done...no matter what.

**JONAH:** Yessir...

**HANK:** No matter what...

*Beat.*

**JONAH:** *No matter what...*

*Pause. JONAH lets go of HANK's hands. HANK stands up.*

**HANK:** I'll be waitin'.

**JONAH:** Yessir...

*HANK exits. JONAH is alone. Lights fade to black.*

**End**