

THIRST FOR EDEN

By
Christopher G. Smith

THIRST FOR EDEN

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THIRST FOR EDEN

Thirst For Eden was originally produced at the Rochester Repertory Theatre, Rochester, MN featuring the following cast:

Jake Adams Robert Frankel

Daniel Cain..... Michael Dennis Johnson

Faith Hilary Stellner

John Barleycorn....Rick Dahl

Directed by Cheryl Frarck

(Thirst for Eden) received a reading at Proud Haddock Productions in London, England, featuring the following cast:

Jake Adams.....Oliver Beamish

Daniel Cain Charles Aitken

Faith..... Alexandra Evans

John Barleycorn.. Rob Carter

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CAST: 3 Men, 1 Woman

JAKE ADAMS	A powerful writer in his early 60's.
DANIEL CAIN	Jake's son. In his early 30's.
FAITH	Jake's companion. 29 years old.
JOHN BARLEYCORN	Jake's inner voice. A charming drinking buddy.

TIME: Early 1960's.

PLACE: Jake's Northwoods cabin.

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JAKE ADAM'S Northwoods cabin. Sunset. End of summer. Early 1960's. The set should be representational. Walls are merely suggested, windows are floated. The cabin is made up of three main rooms. On the main floor is a living area and small kitchen. One level up is the bedroom and Jake's study. In the main area an occasional fishing or hunting trophy can be seen on the "walls." On a coffee table in front of the couch sits a drawer from an old steamer trunk. It is filled with old papers and photos. Off to one side is an old chair. A sideboard used as a bar is against one wall, as is the gun case. The gun case is unlocked; the door is ajar. One shotgun is missing. Up one level on stage left is the bedroom. On the bed lies the missing shotgun in a breech position. Two shells are on the bed. As the lights come up, DANIEL is standing near the front door. Daniel is in his early 30's. He is tan, unshaven, and dressed casually. His army duffel bag and backpack rest beside the door. Standing between the bedroom and the gun case is JAKE ADAMS. He is a powerful man in his early 60's. His hair and beard are grayish white. The shotgun in the bedroom is his.

DANIEL. So, do you get much writing done here?

JAKE. Writing?

DANIEL. Yeah, that's why you're here? Fleshing out a new book...

JAKE. Book? *(Laughing)* Jesus, I am a book.

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DANIEL. If this is a bad time... (*Daniel moves towards his backpack.*) I didn't expect you here. The cabin is usually quiet now.

JAKE. Too quiet!

DANIEL. What are you doing here? Someone said you were on a lecture tour.

JAKE. That? I grew tired of talking about myself. (*Laughing*) You wouldn't believe what they found in my work. Scholars! You can dig too deep, you know? So what trouble brings you to "The Wilderness."

DANIEL. No trouble. I love it here. We had some good times here.

JAKE. Yes. We did, didn't we? Good summers.

DANIEL. Too bad I missed this one.

JAKE. What do you mean?

DANIEL. This is the first time I got up here this year, and now it's time to close up.

JAKE. Close up?

DANIEL. This is the weekend. It's the same one every year.

JAKE. Not now!

DANIEL. It's end of the season, Jake.

JAKE. The hell... So, my summer's over. (*Jake closes the gun case.*) I haven't finished my work, Daniel. Are you working?

DANIEL. I'm in between jobs.

JAKE. I see.

DANIEL. I spent my summer up in the Boundary Waters. It was good. You know I'm writing again.

JAKE. Good for you. What about?

DANIEL. Mostly nature pieces? Fishing? Muskies?

JAKE. Trying to make a buck off the old man's name?

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DANIEL. No. I earn my own way. I'm writing for sporting magazines.

JAKE. They pay anything?

DANIEL. Not great, but it helps me get by.

JAKE. Don't set yourself up for failure like that. If your going write tackle something big. You could get an advance.

DANIEL. I'm not sure that's for me. I'll stick with the articles.

JAKE. Yeah? That's how I started but I tell you, they chew up your time, and you don't get much pay for it.

DANIEL. I know, but I'm enjoying it.

JAKE. That's too bad. I always hoped you'd want to get a degree and do something with your life. I'll never understand why you didn't finish college.

DANIEL. Pop, that was almost ten years ago.

JAKE. Yeah? I know. Closed book. It's just I wished you'd finished. I wanted more for you.

DANIEL. Well, I'm happy now. If you'd like to read some...

JAKE. I would. That would be nice but ah... Sorry, I was right in the middle of something...

DANIEL. You're working? I understand. The place is yours. So, you'll close up then?

JAKE. I'm not leaving now.

DANIEL. No, but when you do, remember to drain the pipes. Last year one burst...

JAKE. I know how to close up a cabin.

DANIEL. I know you do. It's all yours then. *(Pause)* It was good seeing you again. *(Daniel turns to go.)*

JAKE. Wait a minute, Danny. You drove a long way. Are you thirsty?

DANIEL. Some other time...

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JAKE. *(Laughing)* At my age there may not be another time. *(Crossing to him.)* Come on boy, we've been away awhile. It's too late to drive. My work will keep. What do you want?

DANIEL. I'm fine.

JAKE. No, no... I'm sick of typing. You stay. Tonight will be special. *(Jake exits into the kitchen.)*

DANIEL. Pop! *(Under breath)* Damn it... *(Daniel looks at the door deciding what to do. He crosses to the gun case and then moves to the couch and sits. He looks through some of the items in the old steamer trunk. He stops on one picture and studies it closely. He is caught up in the warmth of the photo and doesn't notice Jake reenter with the drinks. Jake looks kindly at Daniel. Then he crosses and puts his hand on Daniel's shoulder. Daniel looks up and sees Jake. Still lost in the moment he speaks.)* Is this mom?

JAKE. *(Looking)* Yes, it is. *(Very tender)* That was in Paris. We were very happy then.

DANIEL. She's beautiful.

JAKE. Yes. She was. I think that was the happiest I've ever been.

DANIEL. In Paris? Mom said you were broke then?

JAKE. We had nothing. I was nobody, but we were in love and that was everything.

DANIEL. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to...

JAKE. That's alright. Good memories. *(Jake hands him the drink. Here. Daniel doesn't take it.)*

DANIEL. Jake, don't do this to me.

JAKE. Do what?

DANIEL. I didn't come here for trouble.

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JAKE. So why did you come? (*Laughing*) Your old man cause trouble? Ah, people make it up.

DANIEL. I don't want to be responsible.

JAKE. I'm feeling great tonight. No dark moodiness.

DANIEL. I'd like to, Pop... (*Jake sets the drink down in front of Daniel.*)

JAKE. Good. This will make up for those birthdays I missed. Like when you turned twenty-one? This can be your right of passage.

DANIEL. You go ahead.

JAKE. So, what's the problem?

DANIEL. No problem, I just don't feel like drinking.

JAKE. For Christ's sake, boy. I've been staring at the typewriter all day. I could use some company. If you don't want to drink with me...

DANIEL. It's not that. You know what happens.

JAKE. I'm good now.

DANIEL. Jake!

JAKE. Oh the hell with it.

DANIEL. Nothing's changed. It was great seeing you, too, Pop. Sorry we missed you at the funeral. (*Daniel begins to exit.*)

JAKE. Get back here. (*Daniel stops.*) Don't take some cheap shot and exit. I didn't breed a coward. If you have something to say, say it.

DANIEL. She was only your wife.

JAKE. My ex.

DANIEL. So, she didn't mean anything?

JAKE. She meant everything.

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DANIEL. You have a funny way of showing it. The least you could have done was send some flowers. It was a God damn embarrassment.

JAKE. They couldn't locate me. How was I to know? Your mother was a wonderful woman, and I felt bad as hell for not being there.

DANIEL. If that's your story...

JAKE. I don't owe you an explanation. Believe what you want. I know what's true. Is that what dragged you all the way out here? Memories?

DANIEL. No. I came to close up. It's time. I'm just passing through.

JAKE. To where? Leave an opening Daniel. *(Crossing to him.)* We should talk. We're family. We are all the family each other has left.

DANIEL. I suppose I should be honored. To spend time with Jake Adams, "The Great American Author." I've read this is a rare privilege.

JAKE. Don't believe everything you read. I create fiction, remember?

DANIEL. Besides, people change, right?

JAKE. Right before your eyes. Cheers. Go ahead, it's the good stuff. *(Daniel reluctantly picks it up. He gestures to the pictures.)*

DANIEL. So, what's this? Research on the long-awaited autobiography?

JAKE. No, no. Just the old times.

DANIEL. I never knew you to be sentimental.

JAKE. For God's sake, boy, this is supposed to be friendly, remember? *(FAITH enters. She is in her late 20's. She is*

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returning from swimming and is wearing a robe over her swimsuit. She is toweling her hair dry.)

FAITH. The water is cold tonight. Feels like fall. *Faith notices Daniel.* Oh, hello. Sorry, I didn't know we had company.

JAKE. Faith, this is my son.

FAITH. Son?

DANIEL. Yeah. I'm Daniel.

FAITH. Oh, Ah... Well, ah. I'm Faith.

JAKE. He came to close up.

FAITH. Oh, yes? I see... Why don't I go change.

JAKE. No, wait! The room is a mess. Let me pick up.

FAITH. Jake!

JAKE. No please, I need... You talk. *(Jake crosses quickly into the bedroom. He searches for a place to hide the shotgun. He places it in the hope chest under a blanket.)*

FAITH. *(awkwardly)* Daniel? I'm confused.

DANIEL. Yeah. It's ahh...

FAITH. Yes, it is. Very. *(beat)* I never heard from you again.

DANIEL. Yeah, I'm sorry. I don't know what to say.

FAITH. Daniel, I didn't know...

DANIEL. You wouldn't.

FAITH. How could I know? The different last names... You never mentioned him.

DANIEL. No, I didn't. That isn't important now.

FAITH. It is to me.

DANIEL. We were a long time ago.

FAITH. It doesn't seem so long.

DANIEL. No. It doesn't. *(pause)* But now, you're with Jake?

FAITH. Well, I'm here. It's complicated.

DANIEL. I'll bet.

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FAITH. How does he seem to you?

DANIEL. Mildly hostile. But that's normal for Jake.

FAITH. This isn't a good time for Jake. The writing isn't going well. *(Faith looks at the liquor.)* ...and the drinking doesn't help.

DANIEL. Come on. I just got here.

FAITH. Why are you here?

DANIEL. I close up the cabin in the fall. I thought the place would be empty. Why is Jake's here?

FAITH. Jake won't go.

DANIEL. What?

FAITH. It's not good. He won't leave. I've tried, but... *(Jake enters.)*

JAKE. *(To Faith)* So what do you think, kid?

FAITH. There's something familiar about him.

JAKE. Not too much, I hope. Sorry boy, she's mine. *(Jake kisses her. She reacts uncomfortably.)* Daniel's tried his hand at this writing nonsense. But he doesn't like the family name. He signs his work "Daniel Cain," like a bad seed. Well, off with you. We want to visit.

FAITH. It was nice meeting you. *(Faith exits to the bedroom.)*

DANIEL. Unbelievable.

JAKE. What's this? Parental disapproval?

DANIEL. How well do you know her? She's pretty young for you.

JAKE. *(Laughing)* Pretty and young. That's the point.

DANIEL. This is really awkward. I should leave.

JAKE. Don't worry. I haven't changed my will.

DANIEL. Why do you say those things? Have I've never asked you for anything?

JAKE. Christ, kid, can't you tell when I'm teasing?

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DANIEL. Maybe not. I haven't seen you in years.

JAKE. Well, I am. *(Pause)* You know if you need anything...

DANIEL. I'm fine.

JAKE. OK.

DANIEL. But how are you, Pop?

JAKE. What do you mean?

DANIEL. Well, I heard you just kind of dropped off the map. This is the last place I expected to find you.

JAKE. A person has a right to privacy.

DANIEL. Sure, but it doesn't really add up. You missed the funeral. It was in the papers, on the news. You must have heard.

JAKE. What do you want from me son?

DANIEL. The truth. What's going on? I heard you cut out on a lecture tour. That's not like you to turn down money.

JAKE. Maybe I have enough.

DANIEL. And what about this girl? You just show up here with her. What are you doing here, Jake?

JAKE. Didn't your mother explain things?

DANIEL. Come on Jake, cut the crap.

JAKE. I've got you curious, haven't I? A mysterious return? The old writer and a younger woman. Sounds like the start of a story. Will it be tragic or comic? It all depends on how you write it. I'll give you this one.

DANIEL. No. This is your story. Where did you find her?

JAKE. Ah, that's the beauty of it. They find me. *(As Jake speaks, the lights come up on the bedroom area. We see Faith searching through the hope chest for an extra blanket. She finds the shotgun and holds it for a moment thinking. Then she carefully replaces it back in the chest. All this action takes place as Jake speaks.)* I am the great romance they seek in

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thousands of graduate theses. They think my writing is brilliant, almost scripture, like a gift from the gods. So they fall in love with my work, and they think they fell in love with me until they discover I'm just a shadow of it. Sadly, I've become the last living remnant of that lost and troubled generation. They think through me they can make love to Fitzgerald and Hemingway. That's why they find me fascinating! And I find them a pleasant distraction. Does that give you a running start?

DANIEL. Whatever. *(Daniel pours himself a drink.)* This whole conversation is sliding into a very weird area.

JAKE. *(Laughing)* I've shocked you. At my age, I'll consider that a compliment. *(Faith steps out of the bedroom.)*

FAITH. Jake?

JAKE. What is it?

FAITH. *(Sadly)* Good night, Jake.

JAKE. Join us?

FAITH. No. You take it easy. Good writing needs rest.

JAKE. Good night.

DANIEL. Good night. *(Faith exits. She closes the door and crosses to the bed. She sits on the edge and stares at the hope chest sadly.)*

JAKE. Well, boy, the night is just starting. *(Jake and Daniel drink together. The lights fade.)*

SCENE 2

Later that night. Living room. Both men have been drinking. Daniel seems more affected by it. Jake seems to be in control. When he drinks, he becomes a talker. Jake is in his element. He moves about telling his hunting story. Daniel sits on the floor

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leaning against the couch listening. On the coffee table sits a half empty bottle.

JAKE. I'd been waiting in that stand for hours, hoping to get one good shot.

DANIEL. Yeah, I know the feeling.

JAKE. Nothing.

DANIEL. *(Laughing)* Yeah.

JAKE. Not a God damn sign of life in the whole forest. Only a cold little wind kicking up the snow and making me feel damp and tired. Well just as I turned away, something moved past the corner of my eye.

DANIEL. Ah, no.

JAKE. Yeah. I slowly turned, shotgun ready and there...

DANIEL. Where?

JAKE. You want to hear this one? Because I ...

DANIEL. I'm with you. I'm with you.

JAKE. Alright. Not fifty yards in front of me is a ten-point buck standing... proud and still in the clearing. What a sight!

DANIEL. I bet.

JAKE. Looking down the barrel, I saw a rack to make this cabin proud... Damn.!

DANIEL. What happened!

JAKE. *(Laughing)* Well, my heart's just banging, Ka-Thunk-ka-thunk-ka-thunk. You know how it gets before you shoot?

DANIEL. *(Laughing)* Yeah, it's primitive.

JAKE. Inside, with all that sound, I knew that buck was mine. He knew it, too. You could see it in his eyes.

DANIEL. Scared shitless.

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JAKE. No! No. He didn't move. Just stood there in his prime, still. Waiting.

DANIEL. What an animal.

JAKE. I never saw anything like it.

DANIEL. So did you shoot?

JAKE. I have my shotgun right on him.

DANIEL. So shoot!

JAKE. And he's just looking at me. Incredible.

DANIEL. So shoot!

JAKE. Well, I move a little, to spook him? And the son of a bitch comes right at me.

DANIEL. Come on...

JAKE. Honest to God...

DANIEL. Nah...

JAKE. I swear all I had to do was pull the trigger. But how could you take an animal like that?

DANIEL. Easy. BLAM!

JAKE. Yeah. *(Laughing)* But it was better in motion. I stepped behind a tree and just watched him glide by. All power and muscle. Vanishing into the woods. I never fired a shot.

DANIEL. Good story!

JAKE. Hell of a story!

DANIEL. Yeah.

JAKE. And the damn thing was true! Sold on the first submission! "Most imaginative," they said. I just wrote what happened. *(Lost in thought)* That's how all good writing is...

DANIEL. Good drinking story.

JAKE. Hmm? *(Laughing)* Oh, right. So, you tell me one. Tell me about your summer in the Back Waters?

DANIEL. Boundary Waters.

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JAKE. *(Laughing)* Oh, right. Well?

DANIEL. Not much to tell, pretty quiet up there.

JAKE. Must have one decent adventure. Bear eat your tent or anything?

DANIEL. *(Laughing)* Nothing that dramatic. A couple of nights ago, I sat out a hell of a storm in a tent.

JAKE. See? Now that's something. It was a big storm; it took out my oak.

DANIEL. The one above the beach?

JAKE. Right. Tree must have been over a hundred years old. Crack! It just screamed coming down. It looked solid, but the insides were hollow. Not much left now but pine, birch, second generation, scrub trees. So, the storm...

DANIEL. Well, what's left to say after that? It was a lot of wind, and lightning...

JAKE. Yeah, go on.

DANIEL. Well, you saw it.

JAKE. You killed it.

DANIEL. What?

JAKE. The story! Dead as hell. No follow up. You have to take me in. Lie a little. Get me to buy it. If you tell it enough times, you'll believe it's true. But don't just say, "A lot of wind!"

DANIEL. Sorry, it wasn't that exciting.

JAKE. Then make it up! You threw it away. Told it like a woman.

DANIEL. Enough Jake. *(Daniel sets down his drink.)* It's late.

JAKE. Are you sure you want to be a writer? Damn, boy...

DANIEL. Enough! Alright? I wasn't trying to impress you or dig for a great theme. I have no need to do that. I thought we

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were just talking. You know? Like regular people talk. *(beat)*
I'm need to go to bed. It's late. I have a long drive tomorrow.

JAKE. *(Laughing)* To where? You don't have any job. Stay
awhile. Where do you have to go?

DANIEL. Don't worry. I have places to be.

JAKE. Sit down. We'll talk. Maybe I'll take a few days off.

DANIEL. Like it would matter now, right?

JAKE. That's it. Let it out. Get a little fight back into you. Feel
your blood boil. Ready to take me on?

DANIEL. Anytime old man. *(They study each other.)*

JAKE. I like it. There's hope for you yet. Relax. We can bash
each other's brain out later. Go buy yourself a beer.

DANIEL. Jake! It's late.

JAKE. So what? How often do we get to visit?

DANIEL. *(Holding back anger)* I'll make some coffee. We
need it. *(Daniel exits into the kitchen. Jake waits a beat, then
crosses to Daniel's backpack and removes a notebook. As Jake
begins to read, JOHN BARLEYCORN appears from the
darkness. John Barleycorn is Jake's inner voice, therefore only
Jake sees him. He is Jake's hidden thoughts and feelings. He is
a friend and a tormentor. But mostly he is a fun drinking buddy.
Jake sees him as a friend. He is slick, sexy and charming. John
Barleycorn's appearance should seem natural, but slightly
jaded. Perhaps a black tux from the 20's. Jake reads Daniel's
notes.)*

JAKE. He is good.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Proudly)* Damn good.

JAKE. *(Not looking up)* Needs polish, but...

JOHN BARLEYCORN. A natural. He's the one, Jake.

JAKE. It's not the same. The boy has no discipline.

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JOHN BARLEYCORN. You've always known it. Maybe hoped for it. He'll surpass you.

JAKE. What about Paradise Dawning? And Breakers Rock? And what of Eden's River? Eden's River taught in the universities. The novel of my generation.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. An echo of the lost generation. Always so close, Jake. But not great. Not like F. Scott, or Hemingway. And what about Wolfe? That's genius. Always one step behind. But Daniel! A new race.

JAKE. Danny doesn't even want it. He dabbles. No discipline. Writing is all discipline.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Like a litany)* One thousand words a day. Everyday.

JAKE. Up with the sun. Finished before noon.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. But Daniel is special. He is Elsa's child. Your one true love. She smiles through his work.

JAKE. She does, doesn't she.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. You can see her in him. Can't you?

JAKE. Yes. Makes me miss her. He has her eyes.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Daniel could be the one.

JAKE. It's a hell of a price to pay. Everyday. One thousand words. No exceptions, no excuses. Paid my dues with every dawn. And for what? *(Daniel enters. He sees Jake with his papers.)*

DANIEL. Oh boy. Here it comes. Tell me what you think? *(John Barleycorn fades away. Jake points to the notes.)*

JAKE. It's good, very good, but it needs polish...

DANIEL. Sure, that's just the draft.

JAKE. No really. Even rough. Your writing has a beauty, something unique, but it's too poetic for the magazines. You are

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wasting your time with them. They pay by the word. So they'll hack it. This is too much, far too much description.

DANIEL. I disagree. I'm trying to put the reader in the setting, right at the river.

JAKE. Just offering a little professional advice, that's all... Over written. (*Inwardly*) It's not my style.

DANIEL. It isn't. Wasn't meant to be. It's just an article for a few bucks. I'm not trying to be novelist.

JAKE. (*Struggling within himself*) But maybe you could be. Strike big with a first novel like I did. Eden's River. It sold twenty thousand copies on the first printing. No one had done that before!

DANIEL. So why does this article have you thinking about that. Why are you bringing up that old book now?

JAKE. Well, things are a little dry lately. But what does it matter? Nothing mattered after Eden. Eden's River made my mark.

DANIEL. That's not the life I want. Thanks, but I didn't come here for advice on writing Jake.

JAKE. So why are you here?

DANIEL. I told you. To close up. That's what I do every year. Why do you keep asking?

JAKE. Because I don't buy the answer.

DANIEL. This was an accident, my being here now. Do you think I was looking for you? Not everything is about you Jake.

JAKE. Daniel. I'm sorry. Your writing shows real promise. Really. It's just my writing is not... Well, it's coming. It's just a little slower than usual. But it's... It's good. Finest I've ever written.

DANIEL. Good for you.

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JAKE. I mean if you can't write, what the hell's left? Writers don't retire! That's why you have to learn to take criticism, to be a good writer. To survive. That's how I learned. (*Distantly*) Heard it from the best.

DANIEL. I don't want to be a great writer, Pop.

JAKE. The very best.

DANIEL. Writing is just a way to pick up a little cash so I can travel. (*Lights fade on Daniel. John Barleycorn appears by the gun case.*)

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Ah, a memory play.

JAKE. (*Laughing warmly*) Yes, yes. When we were in Hollywood.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. (*Smiling fondly*) Remember the story Jacob.

JAKE. My work was read by the best. Hemingway. Fitzgerald. (*John Barleycorn removes a shotgun from the cabinet.*)

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Now how shall we color it? (*Loading shells.*) Green with envy? Black as a lie? (*He clicks the barrel shut and aims at Jake.*) Or surround it with the smoky color of whiskey.

JAKE. Yes, we all needed money then. I've always needed money, and Hollywood smelled of it. (*John Barleycorn is surprised. He lowers the shotgun.*)

JOHN BARLEYCORN. The truth, Jacob? Swimming deep tonight. Very well. (*He returns the shotgun to the case.*) Stark white light. (*He snaps his fingers.*) Reality. (*John Barleycorn crosses to the table and sits. Jake crosses as he speaks.*)

JAKE. Most of what we wrote wound up in the trash. Not "visual enough." The smart ones learned the system. Some tossed paper clips in the trash all day. We were studio window

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dressing really, nothing more. But the money was steady if you played the game. Fitzgerald was there frustrated, vacillating, like an old man. I polished the novel, Eden's River, the one I started in Paris. One day I showed him the roughs. I knew it was special. (*Jake sits at the table across from John Barleycorn, who now plays the part of F. SCOTT FITZGERALD. He reads and then pauses.*)

JOHN BARLEYCORN. This is good. Needs work at points, but... this is good!

JAKE. (*To Daniel*) The son of a bitch loved it! It was killing him to hold back.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. ...and if you dropped the first chapter, it would be marvelous.

JAKE. The first chapter? (*Aside*) The best twenty pages I'd ever written! Rewritten! Polished to perfection. I could have killed him. Cut the entire reason I'd written the book?

JOHN BARLEYCORN. The first chapter isn't necessary. Start here with the conflict in place. Flush out the background later, if at all...

JAKE. (*Aside*) Unbelievable! I grabbed the manuscript, what was left of the bottle and stormed out. (*Lights fade on John Barleycorn. Jake crosses to the bar.*) The rest of the night was spent reading, re-reading. Searching for some way out. By morning I'd drunk myself sober. But damn it, that Princeton bastard was right. He knew his stuff. With the first twenty pages out, it sold twenty thousand copies. First printing. Unheard of... Scott was right. (*Lights up on Daniel.*)

DANIEL. Good story... So, what did you do?

JAKE. I was young. Arrogant. Scotty was so kind to me, but he was ill and I saw that he was weak. And youth has no

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compassion for weakness. I had no idea then how hard it would be at the end.

DANIEL. So, did you thank him for the help?

JAKE. I did. In the cruel way I did things then. I sent him a motivational message. See, I knew he was dry, "Writer's Block," so I mailed him a bottle of whiskey with an autographed copy. It said, "Nothing like good writing to make you feel like a man. I hope this primes your pump."

DANIEL. Nice Pop. Maybe that's why I don't want to be a writer.

JAKE. Bullshit. What's this article for? Fun? Writing's not fun, it's a pain in the ass. Is this for money? You'd find more money sweeping floors. You are just unable to commit to anything.

DANIEL. I don't write out of a commitment. Thank God I don't have to. It's different for me. It's sad but, my writing is our only tie, because that's something you're interested in. But that's it. You don't really know me.

JAKE. I know this. I know how to make a living at it. You leave that starving artist crap to some other loser and start fighting for what you want. Roll out at six a.m. Every day and put down one thousand words. No exceptions. It's all discipline, discipline. Talent without discipline is nothing.

DANIEL. Why the sudden need to pour out fatherly advice? It's a little late, Jake. I've been listening to you all night, and I haven't heard one thing worth saving. You want to tell me something? Tell me something real. Tell me something that counts. Not stories and rules you made up in your head.

JAKE. So that's what you want from me, a "lasting truth?" Alright, I'll tell you something "real." In this life you have to

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fight for what you want. And you never learned to fight. Your mother was a wonderful woman, but she gentled you.

DANIEL. How would you know? You were never there. I don't think you get to make that call from a distance.

JAKE. Fair enough. So what do you want? What are looking for? I see you crawl in here, no direction, no job, a wanderer. Like life kicked you in the ass. If you want to survive, better come back swinging. I've no respect for cowards, Daniel.

DANIEL. *(Simply)* That's it, isn't it? The bottom-line stuff. The Jake Adam's chew-glass-and-never-blink bullshit. I never measured up for you, did I?

JAKE. I never said that.

DANIEL. You didn't have to. Nobody measures up in your book Jake. Who could? Nobody real. Not anybody that questions things. But that's not you; you just plow straight ahead with your black and white rules for life. That's what it's all about for you, isn't it, Jake? Being one tough solitary son of a bitch. *(Jake sucker punches Daniel out of the blue. He knocks Daniel to the floor. Daniel stands back up.)* Alright. Now that was real. An authentic moment father and son. At least we understand one another.

JAKE. Daniel...

DANIEL. No. I'm fine.

JAKE. Daniel.

DANIEL. No. I'm good. It just... Drinking... You know? I'll sleep in the boat house. I'm heading out in the morning. *(Daniel exits.)*

JAKE. Danny... Danny... Damn it. *(Lights fade to black.)*

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SCENE 3

Jake's study. Late night. The room is dark, lit mostly by moonlight through the window above the desk. This is Jake's private place. It is filled with books and memorabilia. The steamer trunk sits open beside the desk. As the scene begins Jake is seated at the typewriter. Faith crosses from the bedroom to the gun case and returns the shotgun. The light is dim. She locks the case and crosses to the door of Jake's study. She thinks about knocking but then stops and crosses back to the living room area. She picks up the empty glasses, returns them to the bar, and then sits sadly on the couch. Lights fade on Faith. Jake rips a piece of paper from the typewriter.

JAKE. Damn! This sounds stale. It's all wrong. *(He tosses the paper into the trash. He paces for a moment. Then sits and turns on a reel-to-reel tape machine.)* Let's try this stupid thing. A little dictation. *(Jake looks through the trunk and selects a photograph.)* I'm looking at a picture of Elsa... must be 1925 or 26, when we lived in Paris... She's standing before that little cafe, the one around the corner. What was the name of that? *(Pause)* Gone now. Wrote there in the mornings. God, she was beautiful... so young. We both were. Wrote for hours. The words came so easily then, effortlessly, one thousand words a day. Everyday. Fitzgerald was crying about having block and I was filling up notebooks! I marched home at the end of the day with great piles of words, and Elsa would gently help me separate the wheat from the chaff. We had no money at all. We watched the mail like hungry pups, hoping a story would sell. They seldom did then. So poor and so damn happy. What did

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she see in me? We were fools. *(Trying a new approach)* I'm trying to lock in on that time. What made it magic? What drew us to Paris? Elsa and I were so in love. Best writing I ever did. *(As Jake finishes Faith crosses up to his door. She gently knocking.)* Elsa?

FAITH. *(beat)* It's me. *She enters.*

JAKE. *(Smiling. Pleasantly surprised)* Faith. What are you doing up?

FAITH. I can't sleep. And you?

JAKE. I'm writing.

FAITH. You need your sleep. Why don't you go to bed.

JAKE. In a moment. When it's finished.

FAITH. It's never finished. Get some sleep. It'll still be here in the morning.

JAKE. I need to work.

FAITH. Tomorrow.

JAKE. I can't sleep.

FAITH. Jake, it's Alright...

JAKE. Please, I feel strong here. With the boy back here... It feels full of memories.

FAITH. Good ones?

JAKE. Given time they all are. Some always are. *(Small laugh)*

FAITH. What?

JAKE. Things remembered. The bits of people you save. It seems strong now... That late winter night in Paris. I woke to an empty bed. As if waking and the world had ended. Then in the night I heard it, quietly, gently, a lullaby. She was singing so softly, trying to quiet him, so I could sleep. So I could write. I remember so clearly, lying there, listening... Wanting to capture that moment exactly as it was, and at the same time knowing

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that my putting it into words would somehow make it less.
Thank God, for once I just left it alone. I simply listened.
Listened as the boy quieted, and the song became a sleepy hum.
My world seemed whole, complete. We're strangers now.

FAITH. Daniel?

JAKE. Seeing him again tonight, I had hope. But it was all decided a long time ago. For as long as I can remember, all I've ever wanted to do is write. Family was second. I couldn't make both work.

FAITH. I'm sure he understands.

JAKE. My son with the distant name? Nothing's left. All bonds completely shattered. He's his mother's child. I sense her presence in him. Reminding me...

FAITH. It's late, Jake. You're tired. Time to go to bed.

JAKE. I'm no good to you there.

FAITH. That's not why I'm here. Please, go to bed now.

JAKE. Let me work. It defines me.

FAITH. Jake! How can I help you if you won't let me? Talk to me.

JAKE. I don't know how. I have to write it out.

FAITH. What? What do you have to write that you can't say? Talk to me. That's why I'm here. If everything you need is locked in that old box, why am I here? Why should I stay? Why should your son?

JAKE. Please, not now. Let me write. Something's finally coming. *(Jake begins putting something on paper. She watches a moment, then leaves. She walks down the steps. As she reaches the bottom, the lights shift. John Barleycorn steps out behind her. He wraps a white shawl from the 20's around her. They become Jake's memory of himself and Elsa. Jake speaks*

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into the tape recorder.) I see her now as she was. As I was, young, strong. An image sharply focused. A man and a woman. A life beginning, inside. My words are fractured. Fragments. Incomplete. But the memory...

JOHN BARLEYCORN. The memory.

JAKE. I remember something about...

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Something about her...

JAKE. Her eyes.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Remembering)* They were brown.

JAKE. Yes, a chestnut brown. But when they'd smile at me...

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Indescribable.

JAKE. Maybe it was Paris.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. It was her.

JAKE. Something about the times we lived in.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. It was in her eyes.

JAKE. Unable to describe them. Only pictures in my mind.

Vivid. (John Barleycorn touching her.)

JOHN BARLEYCORN. The touch of her skin...

JAKE. Soft and alive again, beneath my hand.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Remembering)* The way she looked with her hair down.

JAKE. Indescribable.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. How strong I felt holding her, touching her. Her body is warm.

JAKE. Memories burn, but words elude. Pictures without sound.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Feelings beyond words.

JAKE. Desire, but unable to touch.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Only in memory. *(He pulls her close. They kiss very passionately.)*

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JAKE. So alive in memory. *(Jake clicks off the tape recorder in anger. He steps away from it. John Barleycorn removes the shawl from Faith. She exits to the bedroom lights fade on her.)*

What's the point? Is this how it ends? Talking memories into a machine? *(John Barleycorn picks up the bottle and two glasses and climbs the stairs to Jake.)* Every beginner knows you don't just jump in without a sense of direction. You can't be like Faulkner and ramble around without a subject. Drift off on a stream of consciousness. *(Pause)* I'm so close. Damn, this is frustrating.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Relax Jacob. It will come. *(He pours him a drink.)* This will help.

JAKE. Not now. Always when the work is finished.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Understanding)* It's never finished, Jacob. You're too close to it. This will help you put on a little distance.

JAKE. There's a novel in this trunk. I can feel it, smell it. Time cured.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Of course, Jake, maybe a great one. Just step back for a moment. Let it bubble up to the surface.

JAKE. What the hell. Maybe you're right.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Warm Laughter)* That's the spirit. *(They clink glasses. Jake looks off.)* Nothing wrong with a little now and then. Helped Jack London, you know.

JAKE. Hell of a writer, London. Learned discipline from him. Up with the sun. Polished off his work before most men wake.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Justifying)* It helps the imagination. When you are young it's all instinct, straight from the heart. It's not like that when you mature. So much more pressure to succeed. Just relax.

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JAKE. I'm so close.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Of course you are. But you need to unwind, have some fun. Like Scott and Zelda at the parties, remember? Jewelry soup! *(Hearty laugh)* Hemingway and James Joyce, "Deal with him Hemingway, deal with him!" Dylan Thomas had a good time, and what about O'Henry?

JAKE. Sauce writing.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Sure, but look at the amount of work. Incredible.

JAKE. That's how it ends? In a sloppy mess? I'd rather go clean.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. No, just for the weak ones. Sure, William Seabrook and Jack London wrote their little embarrassments at the end. But who remembers? Try to find those books. They're gone, forgotten. They were weak. Cowards. *(Laughing)* Some say London drank himself to death.

JAKE. An accidental overdose. He wasn't drinking, it was pain killer. How do things get so screwed up? *(Anger)* London wasn't weak. He sailed the seas, explored the Klondike, a part of that gold rush. London was a man's man.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Laughing)* I know, I know. Relax. It isn't important. They couldn't handle it, Jake. But you're different. A toast. *(They raise their glasses.)* To Jake Adams "Great American Author." *(They clink glasses and drink. Jake moves quickly to the trunk.)*

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Anything flowing?

JAKE. Nothing. Damn. Why this box? Why now? *(John B sets down his glass.)*

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Speaks with compassion)* Maybe it's time to stop Jake. Why ride it all the way out?

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JAKE. Maybe if I dive deep enough... There has to be something more.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Or maybe there's only more water. *(Soothing)* Just relax. Let the tide pull you out. Out where there's no need to swim anymore. No need to struggle. Breathe in water. No fear there, only silence. Below the surface the water is still. There's the quiet that you seek. Back to the warm dark quiet of birth. Feel it, Jake. Breathe in water, no need to write. Breathe in water and sink. *(Jake is nearly lulled to sleep by John Barleycorn, but he is holding the photo in his hand, and it pulls him back.)*

JAKE. Not yet not yet. Debts to pay. First the book.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *(Angry)* And then another, and another. It never ends! You always want something more. It's never good enough...

JAKE. This one will be enough. It'll pay the bills and explain it all. Finally set the record straight. Explain to the boy who I am. Why I had to do it. Maybe finally form a connection.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. It's a long journey to the end that way. Even a strong man can get lost, forever. Better follow me. Drink deep.

JAKE. No, I have to finish. I need to understand.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. You'll only find frustration, not answers. *(Jake turns on the tape recorder.)*

JAKE. The Paris years...

JOHN BARLEYCORN. Never great, Jacob. Drink deep. *(John Barleycorn fades back into the darkness. Jake kneels before the trunk.)*

JAKE. I never saw it at the time, not as I do now. So tired. So unbelievably tired. But it's here. Somewhere in this box. A final

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treasure! I can feel it. Something left behind. It will come, no worry. *(beat)* It will come. *(Jake is left alone in the darkness. He stares off. Waiting. Lights fade to black.)*

SCENE 4

The cabin living room, early morning. Faith is sitting on the couch with a stack of papers, working through them. The shotgun is missing from the gun case. Daniel enters. He crosses to his pack and begins to gather his things. He takes out a shirt from his duffel bag and changes shirts. Faith is momentarily distracted as he does this. There is an obvious sexual chemistry between Daniel and Faith.

FAITH. You're up early today.

DANIEL. You too. Why so ambitious?

FAITH. Bills to pay, contracts overdue... Don't ask.

DANIEL. Yours?

FAITH. Funny. All Jake's. He doesn't want to deal with this.

DANIEL. Artists.

FAITH. It's not good. He's been living off the tax account since I met him. I mean someone has to take care of this. *(She looks at Daniel hoping he'll volunteer.)* It would be better if it was family.

DANIEL. Hey, we're not that close. I bet you'll do just fine.

FAITH. So what brings you out at this hour?

DANIEL. Best time to drive. No traffic.

FAITH. You're leaving?

DANIEL. I can't stay.

FAITH. Daniel...

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DANIEL. I should go. It's a long way back.

FAITH. Wait. Jake will want to say goodbye. I'll find him.

DANIEL. Don't bother. We said goodbye last night.

FAITH. Yeah, I know. I heard.

DANIEL. We've haven't got along since I was a teenager. It's OK. Some people don't.

FAITH. Jake felt terrible about last night.

DANIEL. He always does.

FAITH. He just can't say it.

DANIEL. I know Jake's terrible with words.

FAITH. *(Smiling)* Daniel! Jake needs you now. Please stay.

DANIEL. Jake doesn't need anybody. He never did. I have to go.

FAITH. Don't go. I need you. I need your help. We Should talk.

DANIEL. About us? Or about Jake?

FAITH. Maybe both. Would you like some coffee?

DANIEL. *(Smiling)* Sure, coffee would be fine. *(She pours him a cup.)* Where is Jake? I don't hear his tapping.

FAITH. I'm not sure. The study is empty.

DANIEL. Taking a morning off? Jake is getting soft in his old age. Good coffee. I'd forgotten. *(embarrassed)* I'm sorry.

FAITH. Daniel. It's Alright. This doesn't have to be awkward.

DANIEL. But it is.

FAITH. *(Smiling)* Yes, it is.

DANIEL. You look... You look good.

FAITH. So do you. How did you get so tan?

DANIEL. "A wanderer's tan," as Jake would say. I spent my summer up north in the Boundary Waters.

FAITH. Alone?

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DANIEL. (*Small laughter*) Just me and the bears.

FAITH. How was it?

DANIEL. Nice. Very quiet. No people. Just miles of clear water out in front. I'd almost forgotten you.

FAITH. Did you want to?

DANIEL. I didn't expect to see you again. See you here! I mean... Well, how did this happen? Does he know?

FAITH. Are you kidding? I didn't know until I saw you last night. Why didn't you tell me? The whole time we were together...

DANIEL. It just never came up.

FAITH. That's not very original.

DANIEL. I never brought it up.

FAITH. No, you didn't. Why not?

DANIEL. I like the distance.

FAITH. And living as "Daniel Cain" gives you that?

DANIEL. It does. For a time, until the past catches up. I don't know why I try. Someone always figures it out.

FAITH. So why do it?

DANIEL. I guess I got tired of being the son of somebody famous. At least as Daniel Cain, you knew me on my own terms. I liked that. It's hard to explain, but that's how I deal with it, or avoid having to deal with it. And you?

FAITH. What?

DANIEL. How do you deal with it? With him? Are you happy?

FAITH. He needs me.

DANIEL. That's not an answer.

FAITH. I need to be needed.

DANIEL. Are you a part of him?

FAITH. What do you mean?

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DANIEL. Are you together? Is there love?

FAITH. Was there love between us?

DANIEL. I thought so. It was special, but I couldn't handle it.

FAITH. I could have helped.

DANIEL. I'm sorry we ended badly.

FAITH. I was never sure we ended. I just woke up one morning and you were gone.

DANIEL. It wasn't you. I was very happy when I was with you.

FAITH. Me too. So, what happened?

DANIEL. Maybe we got too close. Maybe I'm not very good at being happy... I didn't know what to say. *(Pause)* I sound like the old man. Maybe we are the same. So, what did you tell him?

FAITH. Tell him? I haven't had a chance. Last night he was... This is a very difficult time for Jake. He's very troubled.

DANIEL. He's a writer. They change when they work. All that up with the sun. Discipline. You know?

FAITH. No, he's different now. You were here last night. Did that seem normal?

DANIEL. Don't ask me what normal is. I grew up with him. It's always like that. He's fun and has a few drinks and then... It turns. To me last night was normal.

FAITH. That's just it. I mean the way he drinks?

DANIEL. That's his image. A man's man. Line them up and place your bets. You've read the books. Heard the stories. What did you expect?

FAITH. Not this.

DANIEL. It's a hard reality. Jake's better on paper.

FAITH. He wasn't like this when we met.

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DANIEL. When was that?

FAITH. About a year ago, on the lecture tour.

DANIEL. That's not much of a track record but go ahead. How did you meet him?

FAITH. I was hired to coordinate part of the lecture tour. They brought me on to handle publicity. There's a job. Jake was brilliant in public but full of hell in private. His parties were legendary.

DANIEL. I'll bet.

FAITH. He was great fun. We played baseball in the lobby at the Waldorf!

DANIEL. Sounds like Jake.

FAITH. You want to tell him to stop. But how can you? I'd love to get away with what he does.

DANIEL. Life on the edge.

FAITH. Maybe.

DANIEL. So what's the problem?

FAITH. Maybe he's stopped living it. He seems like a shadow.

DANIEL. He seemed in fine form last night.

FAITH. Not really, not like he was before. He hasn't been the same since your mother died.

DANIEL. Oh please, the man didn't even make the funeral. "Off hunting" or some damn story. So don't tell me he's grieving.

FAITH. Daniel, you weren't there. When we found him in that hotel, he was a....

DANIEL. What hotel? Wait a minute. I never heard anything about that.

FAITH. You didn't know? Of course not. I'm sorry. You wouldn't know.

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DANIEL. What happened at this hotel?

FAITH. You'll have to ask Jake. It's not my place to say. They told me to handle the situation. Just get him out of there.

Quietly. No press! So I packed Jake up and all his notes in a box in the car and asked him where to drive. He said, "North." We came here.

DANIEL. And you've been here ever since?

FAITH. Yeah.

DANIEL. That's crazy. Why would you do that?

FAITH. Well, it was my job.

DANIEL. That's more than you'd for a job.

FAITH. What was I supposed to do? He seemed so alone in the world, just lost.

DANIEL. Jake? Come on.

FAITH. You don't know him, Daniel. And you don't really know me.

DANIEL. Obviously.

FAITH. He won't leave. You try to get him out.

DANIEL. Why stay? What's here?

FAITH. His old books? His old life? There's something he can't leave.

DANIEL. Well, he can't stay here.

FAITH. I'm not so sure. When we first arrived, this place was great for him. Jake spent his days alone, fishing, walking, very quiet times. I just let him be. It seemed as if it were helping.

DANIEL. What's changed?

FAITH. After a couple of weeks, he started writing again, or tried to. I watched as he sat there, day after day, silently staring at the box.

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DANIEL. Jake ran out of words? That's new. *(beat)* Well, what did you do?

FAITH. I tried talking, but that didn't help. I tried lots of things. Then one night, after the whiskey had numbed him, I gathered his notes and led him to the beach. *(Reliving it)* I built a fire out of driftwood and slowly fed it until the core was white with heat. Jake watched but he was distant. I waited patiently until the moment was right. Then I lifted the box and slipped the entire contents into the fire. Imagine. One hundred thousand words, months of frustration, gone. Nothing. Simply turned to dust.

DANIEL. Everything he'd written? My God, what were you thinking?

FAITH. I could see it was killing him. He couldn't write anymore. Not really.

DANIEL. But still, to replace it... Impossible.

FAITH. Exactly.

DANIEL. He didn't stop you?

FAITH. Sure, he scrambled for the fire. But it was too late. I watched as he just fell, broken in the sand. After a while I placed his head on my lap and brushed the sand from his face. I held him as we watched the fire die. When it was over, he made a low empty sound, like a soul leaving. *(beat)* Later, I swam out into the lake. I left him alone to choose. Finally, he joined me in the water. He never said a word, but I think he understood. *(back to reality)* It seemed as if the trouble had ended. I thought he was free.

DANIEL. But things have changed?

FAITH. Ever since that damn trunk arrived. Jake's obsessed with it.

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DANIEL. What's he doing?

FAITH. What writers do. Hunting for something, an idea to run with. But I don't think he has another book left in him.

DANIEL. That's confidence.

FAITH. Look at him, Daniel. Did you take a good look? It's gone. Sometimes I hear him in there counting words over and over again. As if he hopes the numbers will change. It's time to stop. Why did you have to send that trunk?

DANIEL. Because it was his. I was tired of cleaning up his messes. I didn't know anything was wrong. What was I to think? He wasn't at the funeral. Didn't even send a card. No note, nothing. So I made the apologies for him. I made all the arrangements, settled her estate, and packed up the house. That's when I found this old trunk he'd dragged back from Paris. It was his and I just didn't want anything to do with it. So, I paid the postage and sent it off with a tracker, hoping it would find him somewhere. Maybe he'd want it. It's his life, let him deal with it. I don't think I can help you here.

FAITH. Daniel, you're his family.

DANIEL. I'm his son. We are related. That's it. We have been a family for a long time.

FAITH. It doesn't just stop.

DANIEL. I'm no so sure.

FAITH. Was it ever good?

DANIEL. When I was little. He'd take me with him fishing or hunting. He was very good, so patient. Out in nature he was a whole different guy. That was special. He wasn't the great novelist. He was just my dad.

FAITH. So what happened?

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DANIEL. My parents divorced. I hardly ever saw him after that and when I did it was like, well, last night. I guess we just grew apart. Lost contact. Jake does his thing now; I do my own. We don't connect anymore. I wish we did.

FAITH. He needs you now. You have to help him. I can't make him stop writing. I can't get him to leave here.

DANIEL. Then you leave. Sounds like you've done more than you were asked. He can take care of himself.

FAITH. That's just it, I'm afraid to leave him. I'm afraid for him.

DANIEL. Afraid of what?

FAITH. I'm half afraid he'll hurt himself.

DANIEL. Jake? Come on. Where did you get that idea!

FAITH. Sometimes things he does, sometimes things he says.

DANIEL. Like what?

FAITH. Do you know he had a gun last night?

DANIEL. What are you talking about?

FAITH. When I went to bed last night. I found a shotgun in the hope chest.

DANIEL. So what?

FAITH. Well, it's not my gun! Jake always keeps the guns locked up. You know?

DANIEL. Yeah, he's big on that.

FAITH. So why hide this one? And why rush to clean up the room last night?

DANIEL. Maybe the shotgun was there for a while. Could be lots of reasons. Did you ask him?

FAITH. I couldn't. He seemed so down last night after you left.

DANIEL. Oh come on.

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FAITH. No, you didn't see him. He felt bad. He was happy to see you Daniel, but then...

DANIEL. It was nothing. We were just blowing off steam. That's how it is. So did you ask him what he was thinking of doing with the shotgun?

FAITH. No. How could you ask someone that? Maybe I'm wrong. I couldn't ask. Could you ask someone that?

DANIEL. If they were thinking of killing themselves? No. Nobody asks people that. So what did you do?

FAITH. I just locked it in the gun case and went back to bed. What else could I do?

DANIEL. It sounds like you did fine. Jake's a complicated man. Nobody knows what he's about. I wouldn't worry. *(Daniel crosses to the gun case.)* Show me which gun.

FAITH. It's the old one, right near the edge.

DANIEL. Where?

FAITH. I put it on the right side.

DANIEL. I don't see one. What did it look like?

FAITH. I don't know. It was old-fashioned. *(Faith crossing to him.)* It's not here.

DANIEL. Give me the key. *(She does. He removes the shotgun.)* It's not this one?

FAITH. No, it's old.

DANIEL. Or this one?

FAITH. Daniel, it's not here. Jake's not here. Where is he?

DANIEL. Don't get upset. He probably just went hunting.

FAITH. I should have checked this morning. I should have told you right away. What if something happens?

DANIEL. Stop it. We don't know if there's any trouble. Jake hunts all the time.

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FAITH. This doesn't feel right.

DANIEL. Deal with the facts. All we know is Jake's not here. I mean, think about it. He's not a suicide. "Suicide's for cowards," he always says that.

FAITH. Something's wrong, I know.

DANIEL. Calm down. It's Alright. What do you really know?

FAITH. I don't know, a shotgun's missing. Jake's been so depressed. He talks of death a lot, and then last night he tried to... *(Loud gun shot heard offstage and distant echo.)* Oh God, Daniel, what if I was right? *(Faith runs out the door.)*

DANIEL. You don't know that. It's just a gun shot. *(Daniel runs out the door after her.)* Faith! *(Blackout.)*

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