

ADELE

A Play

By

Murray Mednick

For Blanche

CHARACTERS

ADELE: Fifties, slim, anxious. An actress.

SAMUELSON : 60's. A psychologist.

DR. SCHINE: An M. D.

JANE: Adele's older roommate. A healer and masseuse.

GRACE: Adele's younger roommate.

EVE: Another roommate.

NORMAN: A theater director.

OTHER VOICES, OFF: Adele's **MOTHER**. Son, **NATHAN**. Two **DOPE DEALERS**

(STAGE is more or less empty, except for chairs for the actors. No entrances or exits. Scene changes are made by standing, sitting, moving seats, postures, tones of voice, etc., and quick lighting changes. Stage directions, not spoken, are in parentheses. Lines V.O. or from the past are in italics.)

1.

ADELE: Why do I feel that I'm not entitled to my own respect? Makes no sense at all.

SAMUELSON: Are we trying to make sense?

ADELE: I'm trying to understand. It's so important that I understand. So I stop having the panic attacks. I know it's anxiety. That's common knowledge. My blood pressure goes up, which causes an anxiety attack, which causes my blood pressure to go up. I think that's what happens. I looked at the computer. In the doctor's office. And it said "essential hypertension." I thought, "Jeez, what the hell is that? Look what's happening." I just want it to go away. I want it to stop. He gave me

blood pressure meds. They have side effects. Headaches. Chest discomfort. Constipation. "Stay with it for a while. And call your shrink," he says, "that's part of the prescription."

SAMUELSON: Your doctor did call me. Dr. Schine.

ADELE: He thinks I'm falling apart.

SAMUELSON: Are you?

ADELE: I've been having panic attacks. And I don't know if I want to do this anymore. Get myself over here and talk about myself endlessly, and then figure out a way to pay for it. I'm an artist, an actress. As you know. *(Pause)* Should we go back as far as High School?

SAMUELSON: Why not?

ADELE: Remember? A long time ago. He meant well, the Principal. I was getting into fist fights with boys and I refused to speak about it. Once, I got all the way to the Principal's office, blood on my mouth, leaning against the walls. He looked at me, like, what's up with this? I didn't say nothing. Ward R. Young was his name. A Gentile. My teachers, they all meant well. Jews, mainly, socially conscious types, like it used to be in the old days. They knew my situation. I was reading all night and getting to school late in the morning. Dr. Young said it was okay. Said I could come to school at lunch time. And the teachers gave me a scholarship when I graduated, so I would become a teacher and my life would be saved. Albany State Teachers College. They were very kind. But I didn't go there. I wanted to act. No way I was going to Albany State. Brooklyn College was where I went. I was an honors student there, believe it or not.

SAMUELSON: Why wouldn't I believe it?

ADELE: I kind of messed up, though. I was going to auditions, when I should have been going to class. Working as a waitress. No one was interested. Amateur stuff.

SAMUELSON: You see what you did?

ADELE: No.

SAMUELSON: You took it back. You were an honors student.

ADELE: I don't know what I meant by doing that. This is something I always do? Take it back?

SAMUELSON: Yes.

ADELE: I'll say something good, and then I'll take it back. Right. I should feel worthy of my own memories and thoughts.

SAMUELSON: Yes. The teacher of my teacher thought of it as a plague. You don't feel equal. So you can't have problems. You can't have a hair out of place. You have to be buttoned up at all times.

ADELE: Oh.

SAMUELSON: You don't feel worthy of your own intelligence.

ADELE: Why don't I?

SAMUELSON: There could be many causes: education, family, rank, class, race –

ADELE: It's a political question, isn't it?

SAMUELSON: You could say that, yes.

ADELE: It's like Kafka, isn't it? It is like Kafka. His accusers were his superiors.

SAMUELSON: They were superiors, yes. Authorities.

ADELE: The harsh judgment, followed by a feeling of shame. I'm intimidated. It's true. I think that's true. I'm looking at myself and I think that's true. On the other hand, I can't believe it. But it seems like it's true. It's painfully true. I don't want to be that way. Maybe you have a pill, Doc? Why not? I think I'm a lower class of person. So I don't have the right to feel equal. You should have a pill for inferiority. I feel inferior. I feel like there's a light on me, like I'm on stage, in a performance.

SAMUELSON: And you'd better know your lines.

ADELE: Yes. And I have to get it right. Actually, I don't know what I was trying to say there. I want change now, because I'm going to forget. I'm going to forget what I said, what I myself said, forget what I said. I'm going to forget. I was having...panic attacks, panic attacks. I never had them before, before maybe a month ago. I never had them before.

SAMUELSON: When do they start?

ADELE: There's no trigger. There's no trigger, they happen by themselves, for no apparent reason. No apparent reason. Stress. I don't like stress. I never liked stress.

SAMUELSON: Who likes stress?

ADELE: I'm alone. I feel alone. Maybe that's a trigger, right there. Maybe that's a trigger, for the panic attacks. I walk into my apartment – nobody is there and I'm alone. And I think: "My God, I'm alone. My life is a failure." And then my blood pressure goes up and I start to sweat, a cold sweat. And then my blood pressure goes up. I think I'm having a heart attack. It's like Cinderella and her evil stepmother, only the evil stepmother is in me. And my real mother was not, shall we say, nurturing. That's her. I just heard her talking, my original mother. Huge sweats. Cold sweats. Terror.

SAMUELSON: It figures to go back to childhood. Childhood. Where people looked down on you. Take a look at Erickson, Eric Erickson. "Childhood and Society."

ADELE: I got intimidated. *"They have it harder in China. They have it harder in India. They have it harder than you. All you have to do is obey your mother. They stacked us up like cordwood and now they're doing it again. Would you have got on the trains? You. I'm asking you."* It's a question she was always asking. About the trains. *"The Vatican Bank kept the money of the dead Jews of Europe. Insurance money. They still have it."* You know, to the death camps. And the Vatican Bank.

SAMUELSON: Yes, I do know.

ADELE: *"People are animals. Animals don't do the shit we do. They hunt. They eat. What do you think you're doing? That's her, Doc. And I'm feeling sorry for myself, which I know is a form of looking down on myself. "You go over to the Bronkowskis and you eat over there and you don't bring anything home for me to eat, not a bone, not a piece of meat or glass of milk! A piece of fruit! Your own mother! What's wrong with you? There's something wrong with you, you don't bring home anything for your mother! Look how they treat you, look how they treat you! Like a nobody, like a piece of shit, they're like the fucking Nazis! And look how they treat your mother!"* She thought I was a hot little piece of shit. *(Silence)*

SAMUELSON: What are you thinking?

ADELE: I was thinking, I'm not aware, I'm not aware that I'm obedient to everyone else, look up to everyone else -- especially sexually, where people, you know, take advantage. There was this guy, we'd have sex and then he cursed me out and beat the crap out of me. Called me a bitch and a whore. And then he'd call a few days later and apologize and invite me out again. And I'd go along with it. I agreed with him, that I'm lower. Is it a question of class?

SAMUELSON: More like rank.

ADELE: I tried to please. I don't know if I can do it. Have confidence. You know, I'm up there on stage and I'm pretending that I know what I'm doing. Well, I shouldn't have said that. I'm not sure about that. I DO know what I'm doing. The play takes

care of you, if you're prepared, if you obey the rules. I'm always obedient. I'm always obedient. Anyway, the question is moot.

SAMUELSON: Moot?

ADELE: I was going to say, it's a lie. I'm really not. Obedient. I sent her checks for years. I was working as a waitress. Years and years of the same letter, every month, word for word. I wanted to do the right thing. The same letter, month after month. The woman was mad. I feel at home in the theater. I feel okay. I feel happy in a theater, any theater, more happy than at home.

SAMUELSON: Have I told you the story about Bruno Betelheim?

ADELE: Yes.

SAMUELSON: I'll tell you again. He was my teacher at the University of Chicago. One thing he was very angry about was that the Jews didn't fight back. So he used to tell this story. This was in '42 or '43, before he was ransomed. He was in a camp, and they were rounding people up for selection – who would go directly to the gas chambers – and one of the German guards recognized one of the young Jewish women they were about to murder, that she was a famous ballerina, and he singles her out to do a dance for him. At first she's confused. She doesn't know what to do. She's half-naked, she's on line to be killed, but the German guard insists and pushes and prods and hits her, and she starts to dance. And something awakens in her. She remembers who she is. She dances next to this German officer, grabs his gun and blows his brains out with it.

ADELE: Yes!

SAMUELSON: He told that story a lot. If you are nothing, if you have no identity, no reason to live, no family, no occupation -- you don't defend yourself, you don't fight.

ADELE: People won't see a play unless there's a TV star in it. And you have to say in one word what the play is about, or they don't understand it. The country is like on a third-grade level. And then you got all these murderers and racketeers running around destroying the world in the name of God and religion. What's going on? Okay, I'll stop. The whole thing is so stupid, I can't fucking believe it. Sorry. Sorry about the cussing.

SAMUELSON: You're allowed, Adele. I work for you.

ADELE: Sorry. It's my mother. I got it from her.

SAMUELSON: Anyway, that's what they did, that's how they did it. They stripped away everything until you were ready to die, in a kind of trance.

2.

(They change positions – time has passed.)

SAMUELSON: What happens when the anxiety attacks begin?

ADELE: My blood pressure goes up, I get anxious and my blood pressure goes up. I break into a sweat and I think I'm going to die. And I need a doctor and someone to hold my hand or take my blood pressure or give me intravenous ativan, or whatever it was. And I get confused. In these so-called panic attacks. It's humiliating. On the other hand, I can teach my class. I can teach my acting class. I don't have a problem with it. I'm on, and when I'm on, I'm on. I mean, I'm functioning well and my mind is working fine. There was only one thing that was odd, which is that I missed a call. I somehow made it up in my mind that I hadn't been called, and I had been. An audition. That was scary. I sort of talked myself into something, and then I heard my name called. It was a reading, and I did the reading, and I did it well. I can still do my auditions. And I can do them well. Right now, I'm waiting for a call.

SAMUELSON: Good. From whom?

ADELE: The Casting Director.

ADELE: His name is Norman something. I'm hoping for serendipity, as I find my way. I'm okay on stage, but the rest of me is me.

SAMUELSON: You still have the Spinoza Society.

ADELE: In the first place, I'm Jewish. As you know. I was a convert, you know. So was Spinoza. They say. Not an easy thing to do. It was hard. When they took me away from my mother, I joined the goodness of another tribe, Jane's tribe, one of my roommates's tribe. Gentiles. When I converted back, the Rabbi wasn't easy on me. I learned a lot from him. I'll tell you about it sometime. No, I'll tell you about it now. The Law and the Covenant. You make a deal with Yahweh, or the Lord. So you and Him are tight and He'll take care of you. So then the Europeans killed a third of the Jewish people. So it can't be about that, right? I mean, I converted back because of my blood, because of my soul, because of my name, my ancestors. It's impossible to explain any of it. It makes no sense. On stage, I ride the audience attention. It's like surfing, like a magic carpet. You ride, and your mind is active, you're alert.
(SAMUELSON gestures that the session is over.)

3.

(ADELE is alone. Her posture is slightly different.)

ADELE: I'm the daughter of a survivor. Something serious. We're all going down. The animals know. The spirit-world knows. My Grandmother's entire family was

murdered in the Ukraine. Their neighbors locked up the whole town's Jews in a barn and then they burned the barn down. Talk about panic. Imagine. With kerosene. They needed no help from the Germans. It was the beginning of the end of the civilized world. The final devolution of Man. *(Pause)* Let's go on a shooting spree. To the Ukraine. We'll knock on doors and shoot some of those idiots. That's my mother talking. "Now." Too late now. Conversion is not going to help. Going around being cool is not going to help. Revenge is not going to help. *(Pause)* I wouldn't mind a taste. Bullets into those stupid heads. "They're not like us, the Gentiles," she says. "They have different beliefs. Like an automatic after-life." *(Pause)* For there to be an afterlife, we'd have to have an attention as hot as the sun, an attention as hot and fine and vibrant as the heat of the sun, an attention that corresponds with sunlight. *(Pause)* I don't think you got that. It's right there in the First Cause. "So. Why did you become a Jew again?" You know why, Mother. Because I am a Jew. Because the Jews are Chosen. Yes. To illuminate the world. So. There are entities who watch over the Jews....

(Standing) I'll tell you how I know. Last night before I went to bed, I got down on my knees and I said a prayer for all the Jewish children at Aushwitz. And I went to bed. I slept wonderfully well, and when I got up – usually I'm a mess when I get up in the morning – but I felt great, wonderfully well, and at peace, like I never do. I had had a dream. In my dream there was a Being, a black Being, who had wings. *(Falls to her knees)* The wings were pointing down, and he was looking at me with these kindly eyes, and communicating, not talking, but telling me something with his Being, like an angel, a Black Angel – he was saying that all those murdered Jewish children were all right, that they were being taken care of, and they were all right. That everything was all right. And I believed him. *(Rising)* I was on my knees....One problem is the past. I have a lot of bad memories. What do we do with the past? The humiliations of the past? How do we make all our memories good ones? That's a real question, a moral question. A religious question.

(Sitting down) You didn't get it. You didn't get what I was saying. You can't go around having panic attacks. It's not good for your career. It's not good for the family. It's a medical condition. It's not a spiritual or a family condition. It's not a career condition. Anyway, you can't control it. It's not like you have any control. You can't meditate yourself out of it. Like some people think they can. I won't mention any names. Maybe a swami or a yogi. A Buddhist. A Spinoza person. This is what happened with my doctor, Dr. Schine.

4.

(DR. SCHINE takes her pulse.)

DR. SCHINE: Your pulse is fine. Any fibrillation?

ADELE: What's a fibrillation?

DR. SCHINE: Irregular heartbeat.

ADELE: No. I broke into a heavy sweat.

DR. SCHINE: Chest pains?

ADELE: A little. Yes.

DR. SCHINE: Now?

ADELE: No.

DR. SCHINE: You are a little clammy.

ADELE: Yeah.

DR. SCHINE: But I think you're having another anxiety attack.

ADELE: I feel like a complete idiot.

DR. SCHINE: You've felt like that since I've known you.

ADELE: I'm sorry.

DR. SCHINE: Don't be sorry. It happens.

ADELE: A complete idiot.

DR. SCHINE: Stop that.

ADELE: Okay.

DR. SCHINE: I'll give you a prescription for ativan, and a blood pressure med, but you'll also have to see your shrink. Will you do that?

ADELE: I've done it already.

DR. SCHINE: Good. Ask him to call me.

ADELE: Why?

DR. SCHINE. I want to talk to him.

ADELE: What about the ativan?

DR. SCHINE: Take it if you feel something coming on. Don't take too much of it. I'll call it in. Rite-aid.

ADELE: Thanks, Doc.

DR. SCHINE: *(To someone off)* Take her home. No, take her to rite-aid, then take her home.

ADELE: Humiliation.

5.

(ADELE is alone.)

ADELE: I might have an audition. It's a special, by invitation. I never miss an audition. I think it's a movie. About Cinderella. Disney. I have to be there. It's a special event, and I'm very competitive. There's competition amongst actors. I want to be one of the chosen. The chosen few. The chosen.

MOTHER: "The Accused. The murderers of God."

ADELE: Cinderella goes to the ball. Who is to be her true love? Trials and tribulations, not unlike Kafka, only more personal, just as drastic, but subjective, because of inferiority and persecution. *(Stands)* So I go to this fucking audition. It's a big part. It's not Cinderella. It's a comedy on ABC. It could change my life. I'm sitting there, and nobody is there. Nobody else is around. Finally, I go up to the desk and I ask the girl what's going on. She looks me up and the auditions are already over. My manager sent me at the wrong time. So humiliating. I call my manager and the man says he made a mistake. I say how could you make this fucking mistake, when my career is on the line? All my life I've been waiting for this, you asshole. And then he says - I don't know why he says this - "I think I'm afraid that if you get something good, you'll leave me." I couldn't fucking believe it. Can you imagine? I started crying and I cried for a whole day. My roommate, Jane, had to get hold of me and calm me down. I fired the sonofabitch immediately. Now, I'm not sure what I'm going to do.

6.

(ADELE is alone.)

ADELE: I was born Jewish. I don't have to take that back. We don't know why this all happens, but you can't rule out cause and effect. It has a lot to do with childhood, and culture, and other things. History and time. *(Pause)* But it's not the whole picture -- you're no mark in the theater, Adele, as an actress. You'll fight for a part. You'll show up for a part and you'll fight. I'm happy in a theater. Any theater. Auditioning or not. Because I have an identity there. I have an identity there that I

respect, like the ballerina. She realized who she was and shot the Nazi sonofabitch. Which brings me to the fear of death. *(Pause)* I don't want to die like a dog.

SAMUELSON: You have a prejudice against yourself.

ADELE: That's Samuelson, my shrink. My mother never looked me in the eye, never touched me, except to hit me. She used a broom or a coal shovel. The shovel had sharp edges. The wicked witch. I got up in the freezing cold to help her start the stove going in the kitchen. She was often ill-tempered. It was so cold. We'd go outside to get the coal and bring it in and kindle the coal fire. And then we'd light the other stove in the front room, which was a wood burner. We slept with all our clothes on. Sometimes she'd get pissed off and hit me with the shovel. One day, when I was about eleven, I defended myself. I held her arm up before she could strike me. I said, "If you ever do that again, I'll kill you." And I think I meant it. She never hit me again, not with the coal shovel. I moved up into the attic, which had no heat. There I would read, when it was quiet, until four or five in the morning. The Principal let me come to school late, in the afternoon. No problem. Maybe I'm getting this mixed up. He was very kind. And so were the teachers. Very kind. They gave me a scholarship. Their own money. And the synagogue gave us food and clothes and money. Very embarrassed old men with beards. At Passover, they brought boxes of matzos. They'd come and go quickly. Leave the boxes at the door. For Jews to be in that miserable situation. It's a *shondah*. Though it wasn't uncommon in the old country. *(Pause)* They collaborated. The motherfuckers collaborated. The *sheyna yidn*, the leadership, the big shots, they collaborated with the Germans, the French, everybody. That's why no one talked about it. No one wanted to know. I do have a prejudice. They collaborated. The motherfuckers collaborated. No one wanted to say. No one wanted to know. *(Out)*

7.

(ADELE alone.)

ADELE: All religions are the same. I don't even think of Judaism as a religion, though they made it tough to get back in -- it's a collection of tales and precepts and sayings and arguments. A way of life, a tribe. A race. A culture. Holidays. You put ten Jews in a room and you got ten different forms of Judaism. This was true even in biblical times. Like Maimonides said, in "A Guide for the Perplexed." That certainly fits me.

GRACE: You wouldn't acknowledge our Savior. There's the problem right there.

ADELE: Fuck you.

GRACE: No, fuck you.

ADELE: You're an ignorant, mean piece of shit, Grace. *(To Aud.)* That's one of my roommates, Grace. *(Out)*

8.

(SAMUELSON and ADELE.)

ADELE: There's another person in me. An entity. She's me. And she scares me. She continually attacks me. She sounds like my mother. Harsh. And the village and the neighborhood and the relatives. I'm writing a play about this. "Cinderella." *(Pause)* I am okay then. When I'm writing. When I am acting. I was always okay, then. And now. On the stage. Because I respect that in myself. I was always all right, intellectually speaking. And a talented actress. I was always all right on that end of things. It's all the other stuff, the social stuff, where this harsh other person is in me, who feels like me. When I'm writing, or acting, she's not there. So far. I have a couple of hours, when writing. Then, at a certain point, I know the rest is bullshit, so I stop. Then this other person comes back. She comes back in my head to attack me.

SAMUELSON: You think of yourself as lower-class, a second-class person.

ADELE: I'm not aware of it. It's subtext. I don't feel I can stop her. So I'm frightened. I can't stop her from attacking me. And it's me, it's in me. *(Silence)* And she never had a kind word for my father. I don't think she liked men very much. She hated my father, I can tell you that.

SAMUELSON: They were lucky to be able to have time together. Your parents, I mean.

ADELE: Oh, bullshit. They had no clue. In my mind they are the same person. My mother, my father. They get all mixed up in my mind. I hate people, actually. I hate them all.

9. *(GRACE and EVE)*

GRACE: She has an idea about herself, some kind of superiority.

EVE: How far off is that?

GRACE: Some sort of Jewish thing. Intellectual and talented.

EVE: That's the trouble with the Jews.

GRACE: Well, that's part of it.

EVE: And she's a reverse-convert. I'm just saying.

GRACE: Meaning she has all the racial characteristics.

EVE: Right.

GRACE: So she doesn't need to be so proud in the first place.

EVE: Right. Smart and talented are also Christian virtues.

GRACE: Of which she has none, really. She 's an anti-Christian.

EVE: They're full of spite.

GRACE: The Christians or the Jews?

EVE: I meant the Jews.

GRACE: You can be very confusing.

EVE: Life is confusing.

GRACE: I know it is. Like panic attacks.

EVE: She's not that old.

GRACE: Right. She's old enough to not have panic attacks. We can't have panic attacks. She needs to have more poise inside. More quiet. For the young in her acting class. For her family and friends. Though she doesn't have many friends.

EVE: She has a few in the theater world.

GRACE: The theater world.

EVE: The theater world.

GRACE: What kind of world is that?

EVE: Egotistic and attention-getting.

GRACE: Attention is everything. Where she's not a star. No, she's no star. Though she thinks she is one. And she's alone, and she hates it. And she hates us.

EVE: You took the words right out of my mouth. (*Knock at the "door"*) Oh, that's Jane. (*"Enter" JANE*)

GRACE: Hi, Jane.

JANE: Where's Adele?

EVE: She's not here.

JANE: The little bitch. Why not?

EVE: She didn't say.

JANE: Well, she can't complain now that we never invite her to talk. Can she?

GRACE: She'll complain anyway. Complaining is one of her things. Attributes. I was going to say.... never mind.

JANE: What, that it's a Jewish trait? Complaining?

GRACE: Yes.

EVE: We know each other's minds, don't we?

JANE: No, we don't. It's the usual baloney, Eve. *(JANE and GRACE "exit". ADELE turns downstage, where she joins EVE.)*

EVE: How's it going?

ADELE: It's tough to be sick all the time. Depressing. It's depressing. What does that mean, spiritually? Is it a kind of crime? The shrink is helping me. All that self-deprecation. Must be some kind of crime. A criminal offense. You're supposed to be happy. Happy, happy, happy. Otherwise, you're dead. I was having panic attacks, and I lost faith. I lost faith in myself. My blood pressure took it away. I got the blood pressure meds, finally.

EVE: Are they working?

ADELE: They seem to be.

EVE: What's the count?

ADELE: 135, 140, around in there.

EVE: That's almost normal.

ADELE: Yeah. And I'm still seeing my shrink. It was part of the prescription. Hysterical woman having an anxiety-attack. He wrote the prescription and he made me see my old shrink and he talked to him on the phone. I don't know what they said.

DR. SCHINE: She's panicking. You know her background?

SAMUELSON: Yes, I do.

DR. SCHINE: She needs to be talking to someone. She could be having a breakdown.

SAMUELSON: I understand.

DR. SCHINE: Her blood pressure is very high, which could lead to a stroke. I gave her pills for that, but she really needs the therapy to go along with it.

SAMUELSON: We'll see if she calls.

DR. SCHINE: She'll call.

ADELE: So I called.

EVE: Seems good, Adele.

ADELE: Why?

EVE: Is it helping you?

ADELE: Yes.

EVE: So, it's good.

ADELE: You're so rational, Eve. Apparently, my mother was not my friend. Never a kind and encouraging word. Never even gave me a look. A hitter. But it wasn't just that. You want to hear more?

EVE: I'm not sure I do. No.

ADELE: It was the rest of the society, also, who looked down on this poor, fucked up kid.

EVE: You seem much better now.

ADELE: Then what?

EVE: Than before.

ADELE: No more panic attacks.

EVE: Good. We need you back at the Spinoza Group.

ADELE: What for?

EVE: We need everybody. People who can think. Obviously.

ADELE: It's ironic, no? I converted in the other direction. I was a Jew who became a Gentile who became a Jew again, and Spinoza was a Jew who went the other way.

EVE: No one knows for sure. He could have been practising in secret.

ADELE: I doubt it. He lived in solitude. Like me. I imagine him that way. A great example of the Jewish mind. Him and Maimonides. Some people thought he was a convert also. But he wasn't. Not Maimonides. That was just a rumor, I think.
(Awkward pause)

EVE: How's the writing?

ADELE: I'm trying to say everything I possibly can. It's too much, probably. But who knows when I'll get another chance?

EVE: Can you come to a meeting soon?

ADELE: I don't know. *(Pause)* I don't believe in God.

EVE: *(Ironic)* I'm shocked. What do you believe in?

ADELE: Nature.

EVE: Nature is in the image of God.

ADELE: Life is too random for that kind of reasoning.

EVE: Not for people like us.

ADELE: We're not the same kind of people. You're a Christian and I'm a Jew. I don't know if I believe in anything, to tell you the truth. Seems foolish. Even Nature, which will vanish, eventually. So what is reality? A mirage? A visualization? A trial? A dream? A silence? An electrical phenomena? What is it? During a panic attack, it's all suffering, that's all it is, pure suffering. The Earth is failing, and it's because of us, and it has no meaning at all.

EVE: I don't agree with you.

ADELE: Not after the Shoah.

EVE: I don't agree.

ADELE: No, you wouldn't. *(Steps away. JANE with GRACE)*

EVE: The woman has a problem.

JANE: We all know that.

EVE: Personally, I think she's schizophrenic.

JANE: You don't know anything about it.

EVE: She's at least two different people.

GRACE: Plus the Actress.

EVE: What's with the panic attacks?

JANE: Nobody knows, really. It may have had something to do with blood pressure. She gets stressed, her blood pressure goes up, she gets anxious about being anxious, and her blood pressure goes up.

EVE: I think the stress is because she doesn't want to do what she's doing. She doesn't want to go to the Spinoza Society, and she doesn't want to be with us, and she doesn't want to act.

GRACE: She's writing a play now.

EVE: And she doesn't know if she's a gentile or a Jew.

JANE: She knows. She's a Jew.

EVE: Which is pretty heavy.

GRACE: And she has all these strange ideas.

JANE: Remember, she lost a son. *(Pause)* And before she came to us, her mother was a madwoman. And she's converted twice now.

EVE: I think she needs help, Jane.

JANE: She's doing that. She's getting help.

GRACE: What's this play she's writing all about?

EVE: Probably about us.

GRACE: Yes. No question.

JANE: The first conversion was because of the Ressurrection—she wanted to see her son again. It was something she wanted desperately to believe. And the second one was also about Ressurrection –

GRACE: Because she couldn't believe.

JANE: Right.

EVE: And now?

JANE: Now, I don't know.

GRACE: I think she's nuts.

JANE: No. She thinks she's supposed to serve. The inferior serves. So she thinks she's supposed to find a solution. (*"Re-enter" ADELE*)

GRACE: Oh, look who's here.

EVE: Speak of the Devil.

JANE: Are your ears ringing?

ADELE: Yes, they are. You were talking about me.

GRACE: You're the only person worth talking about.

EVE: On earth.

JANE: How are you?

ADELE: Actually, I'm the finest actress in the city. It's not only a question of talent, although that's true -- talent is important, talent is a given. It's a question of skill. Skill is better than talent, because I know what I'm doing, and that's why I can write a play, as well, because I know what to do. I'm a triple threat.

JANE: I didn't follow that. Did you, girls?

EVE: No.

ADELE: There's me watching me and then there's my character, based on me.

JANE: I don't know if I like this particular Adele.

SAMUELSON: When you say, "actually" it's apologetic. You're not supposed to be equal, or more than equal.

ADELE: Oh.

GRACE: What?

ADELE: Nothing. *(To JANE)* You remind me of my mother. She never liked me. She never actually looked at me. Actually. Which is odd. To never look at a person. Your own daughter. But character counts. Everything counts.

JANE: Excuse me?

ADELE: So, in that sense, you're responsible for who you are. One is. If you drink too much, or take drugs, or fool around, or steal, whatever, or have a panic attack, even so, it's your responsibility. No excuses.

JANE: I'm not like your mother.

ADELE: No, definitely not.

ADELE: You're like one big time high-functioning, greedy kraut.

JANE: I didn't hear that. Did you, girls?

ADELE: My mother couldn't hardly function. You function like gangbusters. You make a good living and do your spiritual thing with your dying cancer patients and my mother was picking in the garbage and sending me out to beg.

JANE: Don't start resenting me now.

ADELE: You have such a classic German face. And you over-charge. It's like a borderline con. Taking advantage of the old and the sick.

JANE: Did you hear me, Adele?

ADELE: While you preach them your spiritual salami.

EVE: Adele.

ADELE: Spinoza, indeed. I'm not just resenting you now. I've been onto you for a while.

JANE: That's enough.

ADELE: It's never enough. *(Long silence)*

EVE: This is new.

GRACE: This is definitely new.

JANE: Hopefully, it'll pass. *(Pause)* You're not being fair, Adele. Or just.

ADELE: I'm sorry. *(Pause)*

JANE: We'll let it pass. *(Pause)* How's your blood pressure today?

ADELE: I didn't take it today.

JANE: Would you like a session? A freebie?

ADELE: No.

GRACE: You should take your blood pressure.

ADELE: I'm too agitated now.

JANE: A massage?

ADELE: No. *(Turns away.)*

JANE: Maybe later.

GRACE: I can't believe I heard this.

JANE: She's agitated.

EVE: You can't take that shit from her, Jane.

JANE: It's alright. She'll calm down with my therapy massage.

ADELE: Therapy, indeed.

JANE: She always feels better afterward.

ADELE: *(Turning back)* She puts her hands on their heads and then she caresses them a little -- arms, legs, shoulders -- and then she holds their hands and tells them death is just another thing that happens, and God is always with them, so death is just a transformation of energy.

JANE: That is exactly what happens.

ADELE: You don't know what happens. God is watching, and everything is okay. No need for anxiety or panic attacks. Go ahead and die. Her hands are warm, though. It

really is very nice. And then you get up and wonder, “what just happened?” A hundred a seventy-five bucks just happened. Where’d you learn that stuff, Jane?
(“Exit” JANE)

EVE: Now, you did it.

GRACE: Why’d you call her a Kraut?

ADELE: She is a Kraut. You’re all Krauts. You should get down on your knees and wash my feet, like your famous God. And then you should repent, like the pieces of shit you are.

GRACE: I could slap you.

ADELE: Go ahead.

GRACE: I won’t.

EVE: Maybe I will.

ADELE: Go ahead. *(Pause. EVE punches ADELE to the floor, “exits.” Lights.)*

10. *(SAMUELSON and ADELE.)*

ADELE: So, she punched me in the mouth.

SAMUELSON: Oh. You punched her back?

ADELE: No.

SAMUELSON: Why not?

ADELE: She fled.

SAMUELSON: I see.

ADELE: Otherwise, I might have.

SAMUELSON: I see.

ADELE: Punched her back. Probably not. Otherwise, maybe I would have. Stood up to her. High blood pressure or not.

SAMUELSON: You might have.

ADELE: A change in behavior for sure.

SAMUELSON: It's not the blood pressure.

ADELE: What is it?

SAMUELSON: Psychological. You avoid confrontation.

ADELE: I did call them krauts.

SAMUELSON: Right.

ADELE: So that's good.

SAMUELSON: You do think you can fix yourself.

ADELE: I do?

SAMUELSON: But that's what you hired me for.

ADELE: I think I can fix myself?

SAMUELSON: Yes.

ADELE: Where'd I get that idea?

SAMUELSON: It's common. But it doesn't happen that way.

ADELE: Why do I think I can fix myself?

SAMUELSON: It doesn't happen that way.

ADELE: That I'm responsible?

SAMUELSON: It happens by itself.

ADELE: That I can't brag? That I can't have an ego?

SAMUELSON: Because you don't feel equal.

ADELE: How much of that is a moral question?

SAMUELSON: Moral?

ADELE: About character.

SAMUELSON: Because you don't feel you have the right.

ADELE: Why not?

SAMUELSON: We don't know, really.

ADELE: I was thinking I could find a solution. But there is no solution.

SAMUELSON: This is the solution.

ADELE: People believe in things. Solutions. *(Pause)*

SAMUELSON: The Interpretation of Dreams.

ADELE: Is what?

SAMUELSON: Is the first book of modern psychology. A hugely important book. And Freud knew it. So he held off publication for a year, or so, until it was 1900. Because it was significant that way. 1900.

ADELE: You're saying this is new?

SAMUELSON: Yes, this is a relatively new science.

ADELE: Nobody knows anything.

SAMUELSON: Maybe not.

ADELE: About anything.

SAMUELSON: I didn't say that.

ADELE: Let me try this on you.

SAMUELSON: Okay.

ADELE: My son was a junkie because I was a junkie. He died from shooting up. Of Aids. Dirty needles. Now it's all revealed. But what does it mean? According to celebrity junkies, it means that they didn't love themselves. Low self-esteem. Plus something nagging them inside. Something was definitely nagging me inside. I always thought it was a class issue. And now I'm thinking it was a class issue. And now you're saying it's a class issue –

SAMUELSON: Not feeling equal, not feeling the right.

ADELE: I have to think about that. I don't know how to think about that. How is it connected to panic attacks? It's intolerable to lose a son. It's a bottomless sorrow

that never ends. Why do people send their sons to die? It's so messed up. Abraham and Isaac. Gone to the slaughter, one reason or another – territory, pride, water, land, clean air, God, you name it --

SAMUELSON: Slow down, Adele.

ADELE: I can't slow down. My heart is going too fast. And it's all so crazy.

SAMUELSON: Slow down.

ADELE: I have an audition today.

SAMUELSON: More's the reason.

ADELE: Why did I become a junkie? Why? A nice Jewish girl like me? *(Laughs)* An intellectual! An actress!

SAMUELSON: You wanted to feel equal for a minute.

ADELE: Yeah, it all goes away then. It all goes away. *(Breaks into tears.)*

SAMUELSON: Adele.

ADELE: But I don't exactly know what I mean by that. Sorry. I live a lonely life. *(Pause)* I don't know how to accept it. I blame myself for it.

SAMUELSON: It's not a crime.

ADELE: Holy shit. *(Silence)* I don't know what I meant by that. *(Silence)*

SAMUELSON: What's with the Spinoza Society?

ADELE: What's with what with the Spinoza Society?

SAMUELSON: How did you get involved?

ADELE: Here was a smart Jewish guy who got excommunicated. Baruch Spinoza. Rang a bell with me. I was always converting or re-converting. In my head. I don't know how they could excommunicate anybody. There is no such thing in Judaism. All synagogues are local. They just said to Spinoza -- you're an atheist -- take a hike. So he lived in a room somewhere like an ascetic and kept his nose down. It was his rhythms, the way he reasoned his way mathematically. Created a rhythm. If this is true, then such and such is self-evident. *(Pause)* I don't know, actually.

SAMUELSON: You're taking it back again.

ADELE: I think I was attracted to his rhythms.

SAMUELSON: What about his ideas?

ADELE: I think he was too much in his head, actually. He should have fought it out with the Rabbis. I don't know what I meant by that.

SAMUELSON: You're doing it again. Taking it back.

ADELE: Debate. Dialectic. *Dahvening*. The three D's.

SAMUELSON: The three D's?

ADELE: I just made that up.

SAMUELSON: Go on, though. Don't back off.

ADELE: The whole Jewish community had been expelled from Spain, as you know, and they had barely created this community in Holland, and they were scared of losing it. They kept their heads down. Spinoza comes along, who is very smart and he has a whole new idea about God, based on Nature, the laws of Nature, which is heretical to the Rabbis. Which it was. God is above Nature, for the Orthodox, or something. Anyway, there's a word for what he did. Syllogisms. To love God doesn't mean that God exists. You could be loving the idea of God. Actually, he goes into that a little. For him, that was a kind of proof.

SAMUELSON: Thank you.

ADELE: The Rabbi, when I was converting back to my religion of birth, was a hard-ass and a shmuck. Rabbi Pelsenberg. It was all memory and midrashic argument and prayers three times a day, and what was for men, what was for women, and what was kosher, and so on. I don't think Spinoza was into that stuff and neither was I. I just stopped it and identified myself as a Jew again and forgot, mostly forgot, the virgin birth and the Resurrection and all that....Spinoza didn't become a Gentile, either. He kind of got it from both ends.

SAMUELSON: So what did you do?

ADELE: At the Society?

SAMUELSON: Yes.

ADELE: Meetings. Talks. Discussion. Nothing too serious. This was after I had cleaned up, and it was kind of a relief. No more rehab. Not to talk about drugs for a change. *(Pause)* I used to feel shy with my own son. I was shocked by that. This

urge to perform, to please. Embarrassed by it, by my own insecurity with my own son.

SAMUELSON: Teenagers are hard to deal with.

ADELE: I feel bad about it right now. He wouldn't say much. I couldn't get him to talk. He was always hustling me for one thing or another. Money for gas, money for clothes, money for dope. On and on. Never asked me how I was or what I was doing. Selfish sonofabitch. Junkies are like that. I know. I was one myself.

SAMUELSON: Not for long.

ADELE: No. Long enough. Too long. Definitely hurt my so-called self-esteem, such as it is, such as it was. Like none at all. Such a cliché. Nice Jewish girl, talented actress, shooting up in hallways, backstage, filthy bathrooms, throwing up in cabs. Lots of fun.

SAMUELSON: It helped you to feel equal for a minute.

ADELE: It got me off the anxiety train for a minute. And now I'm in danger of panic attacks.

SAMUELSON: And feeling sorry for yourself.

ADELE: That's what my older roommate says. Jane.

SAMUELSON: I don't think that's so bad. Pitying yourself maybe is in the right direction.

ADELE: What do you mean? *(Pause)*

SAMUELSON: You loved your son?

ADELE: Yes.

SAMUELSON: You had compassion for him.

ADELE: Sometimes. Sometimes I wanted to shoot him. Sometimes he'd get this look in his eye and I had no idea where he was. Somewhere else, entirely. And I'd panic. And ask him what he was thinking. And he wouldn't answer me. I'd panic, and ask him again.

ADELE: What are you thinking about?

VOICE OF NATHAN: Nothing.

ADELE: *You must be thinking about something.*

VOICE OF NATHAN: *I'm not.*

ADELE: *You're not here.*

VOICE OF NATHAN: *Mom?*

ADELE: *Yeah?*

VOICE OF NATHAN: *Don't ask me shit like that. Everything's fine.*

ADELE: *And then I'd feel my heart sink, in absolute shame. (Pause. SAMUELSON withdraws.)*

11. *(Lights. ADELE is standing. The CASTING DIRECTOR, NORMAN, enters and takes a seat.)*

NORMAN: Hello.

ADELE: Hi.

NORMAN: Nice to meet you.

ADELE: Thank you.

NORMAN: Thanks for coming over.

ADELE: Sure. *(Pause)*

NORMAN: Have a seat. *(ADELE sits.)* Relax.

ADELE: I am relaxed.

NORMAN: Sorry. *(Pause)* So, to start with: don't act.

ADELE: What is that supposed to mean?

NORMAN: Sorry. I'm worn out. I've been seeing a lot of actors and they all act too much.

ADELE: I'm not that kind of actress.

NORMAN: You know, they feel like they have to write the play. They feel like they have to sell it, show it, interpret it, because the writing is so bad, the actor has to fill

in the meaning. We're not doing that kind of play. We're doing a play where the writing is perfect, where the actor needs to be behind the writing, not in front of it.

ADELE: I think I agree with you.

NORMAN: You think?

ADELE: I agree with you.

NORMAN: Good.

ADELE: I'm writing a play myself. And I want the audience to hear the writing.

NORMAN: Yes, I've heard about you and your career.

ADELE: Some career. From whom?

NORMAN: The Spinoza Society. I used to be involved over there.

ADELE: Jane?

NORMAN: Jane something.

ADELE: My condo partner.

NORMAN: Yes.

ADELE: Interesting.

NORMAN: Did you bring anything to read?

ADELE: Read?

NORMAN: For the audition.

ADELE: No. Don't you have sides?

NORMAN: No. We ask people to bring something in – something they know, something they like.

ADELE: I don't have anything. I didn't actually realize --

NORMAN: Okay. Maybe we can find a script --

ADELE: Wait a minute. I can do something from my own, uh, work in progress. From memory. Do you mind?

NORMAN: No. Please.

ADELE: Should I do it here?

NORMAN: No. Take that chair if you like. More light there.

ADELE: Okay. I'll stand.

NORMAN: Fine. *(Pause)*

ADELE: This is from something called, "Cinderella." That I'm writing. It's an abstract version of "Cinderella," and this is someone talking about Prince Charming.

NORMAN: Go.

ADELE: "The Prince of the Kingdom is on another level – the level of myth, or symbol -- goodness and truth – and accuracy. That is: his aim is sharp and persistent. He will find the right bride, or he will live the rest of his life alone. He'll make that sacrifice, rather than the wrong choice, and be lonely, and uncomfortable with his attendants, who will lie to him and create obstacles in his way -- political, romantic, family obstacles. His life will be difficult and dangerous, because he can't trust those around him, and he's isolated from the truth, and from himself. And so he will pity himself, and loathe himself for pitying himself, and be afraid of the so-called authorities that he has himself placed above him, who scrutinize and judge him, so he is embarrassed to open his mouth in order to utter his despair." *(Pause)* I think I'll stop there.

NORMAN: Interesting.

ADELE: Thanks.

NORMAN: Reminds me a little of Kafka.

ADELE: Yes, that's what people say. Just not as good. But I have a genius level photographic memory for dialogue.

NORMAN: Congratulations.

ADELE: I made that up.

NORMAN: No problem.

ADELE: We all write about ourselves. *(Pause)* Is that it?

NORMAN: For now.

ADELE: Thank you.

NORMAN: You're welcome. (*NORMAN withdraws.*)

12. (*SAMUELSON and ADELE. They settle.*)

ADELE: I'm not feeling so good.

SAMUELSON: What happened?

ADELE: I got whacked.

SAMUELSON: Whacked?

ADELE: Whacked. I got killed.

SAMUELSON: What happened?

ADELE: I went to get my ears cleaned. This is a doctor I know, a surgeon. She cleans my ears. I have a lot of ear wax, so I know her. (*Silence*)

SAMUELSON: Go on.

ADELE: So I rush over there because I couldn't hear anything well – but my pulse, I was hearing my pulse, which is really weird -- and at first she said she wasn't there, then I get an email saying she's there, if I want to come over – which was a warning sign – and I get there, and she's alone. First, the door won't open, I start to leave, the door opens, and there she is in her white coat – Marie – 45, 50, -- wild eyed, messy hair – alone.

SAMUELSON: She's a doctor?

ADELE: She 's a surgeon, eye, nose, mouth. And she starts talking. She's still a good-looking woman, charged-up, she says, by the drugs she took earlier because her brother in law and her father-in-law threw her to the ground and hurt her neck. They threw her onto hard concrete. Her husband had just died. They were trying to get her house away and had to take her into court. They were trying to destroy her. Litigation was the worst thing you could go through, and America was the worst place in the world to endure it, although Canada wasn't so great, either. I hadn't sat down in the chair yet. She had a French accent, she's from Montreal, and had spent a lot of time in Paris, where she learned the art of surgery. But first, she told me about the North of Canada, the wilds of Canada, where she learned surgery the hard way, because it was so primitive up there, and you had no choice, you had to do it. She took a penny out of a kid, with no knowledge of how to do it. She just did it. Kid swallowed a penny, and they told her to get the penny. I still hadn't sat down. I was

standing there. Her brown eyes darted around, glancing into mine once in a while. It began to dawn on me that maybe she was stoned. But I don't think that was it.

SAMUELSON: What was it?

ADELE: I think she was flipping out. I think she was Mad, with a Capital M.

SAMUELSON: And you were intimidated?

ADELE: I was more and more intimidated, and more and more aware of it happening to me. It was almost like I began to shrivel. She began to loom over me and I got smaller and smaller. She couldn't stop talking.

SAMUELSON: She was hysterical.

ADELE: She was more than hysterical.

SAMUELSON: You were frightened.

ADELE: I was terrified.

SAMUELSON: Your mother.

ADELE: My mother, and God knows what else.

SAMUELSON: Like what?

ADELE: Aging, something to do with aging, or blood pressure, or something. She went on and on -- about this huge tumor she cut off of this guy's neck when nobody would go near it, about a knife she took out of a man's head -- all kinds of circus-like surgical episodes she had accomplished with derring-do and panache, and how she was born to be a doctor since the age of eight, and on and on from there. Finally, I get into the chair, and she does my ears while she continues to talk. My blood pressure was 143 over 80.

SAMUELSON: Not bad.

ADELE: No, high, but not bad. I'm feeling pain in my head and my heart was pounding and I'm worried about having a panic attack, but I was also fascinated -- I was watching a madwoman. And I was trapped.

SAMUELSON: Intimidated.

ADELE: You said that. Yes, I was. I couldn't get out of there. And she was the one who'd told me about the blood pressure in the first place, last time I was there. It was her. She had taken my blood pressure and freaked out and freaked me out.

(Pause) Yes. I was intimidated by a woman, a crazy woman, and earlier I had been intimidated by Eve.

SAMUELSON: Why?

ADELE: Well, she kept hanging around and hassling me about things like men and marriage and sex and all that crap.

SAMUELSON: You had two confrontations in a row.

ADELE: I can't stand it anymore, being intimidated by everyone on earth.

SAMUELSON: You're not allowed to have problems, because you don't feel entitled to your own respect.

ADELE: I wish you'd stop saying that.

SAMUELSON: Not a hair out of place.

ADELE: She had to cope with one tumor on the side of a guy's head in Paris, a huge lump, nobody would deal with it, until she stepped up -- as the French Canadian champion of fearless surgery, and just cut the guys lump off, blood streaming onto the floor while the nurses looked on aghast and admiringly, or so she said. On and on, feats of heroism supported by God.

SAMUELSON: Tumors?

ADELE: Yes. There were a few of them. Tumors. She wasn't afraid of them. Do you believe in God?, she asked. Sometimes, I said. I do. She said. He's the only one you can talk to. There is no one else. You can't trust them. Only God. I talk to him and I pray. It's the only thing that helps. Everyone else is trying to hurt you. She had a point there. Her relatives were claiming she was crazy and couldn't handle things and was not entitled to the community property. *(Pause)* And then she checked me for tumors and I almost jumped out of my seat.

SAMUELSON: Did she clean your years?

ADELE: Yes, somewhere along in there. I'm not sure what she did. But I feel like I've lost my mind. I have no idea who is talking now. I absolutely loathe not being able to stand up to people.

SAMUELSON: It's getting better.

ADELE: No, it's not.

SAMUELSON: Yes, it is. You're allowed to have problems.

ADELE: I can't stand up to Eve, who wants me to get out of the house, and I can't do it.

SAMUELSON: But you did stand up to her.

ADELE: I held her off. Barely. I guess. Sort of. And then I did a monologue for Norman and it was an absolute lie. A total fake.

SAMUELSON: When was this?

ADELE: Yesterday. I should go back to Eve and tell HER to get the fuck out.

SAMUELSON: Maybe so.

ADELE: But I can't. Because everyone in the world is superior to me.

SAMUELSON: It's neurosis. You're allowed.

ADELE: It was fake.

SAMUELSON: What was fake?

ADELE: The monologue was fake. The whole thing was fake. My whole career is fake.

SAMUELSON: You don't believe that.

ADELE: I do right now.

SAMUELSON: You had two confrontations and it set you back a little.

ADELE: It definitely set me back. I felt trapped. *(Pause)*

SAMUELSON: Do you need the rest room?

ADELE: Yes, thank you. *(SAMUELSON sits.)*

14. *(Lights. ADELE and JANE.)*

JANE: I don't remember this person.

ADELE: He mentioned your name.

JANE: I still don't remember this person.

ADELE: The Spinoza Society.

JANE: Does not ring a bell. I'm not that involved anymore. Your friends still go.

ADELE: They're not my friends. They're my roommates.

JANE: Right. Roommates. What's his name?

ADELE: Snow Storm.

JANE: That's a name?

ADELE: Not a real name. He's one of those futuristic code guys who are going to change the world with computer codes. Intelligent machines that will make a new world. People will have new names, like "Snow Storm." Like the Indians. If there are still people around. *(Pause)* They're freaks, these guys. They're dreaming. *(Pause)* People are already machines. *(Pause)* They've made a lot of digital money, so their bells have been dinged.

JANE: People are machines?

ADELE: Yes.

JANE: What's the point?

ADELE: These kids are right, in a way. Their aim is to be more intelligent. But whoever or whatever programmed the evolution thing made some mistakes. Didn't work out too well. So these silicon kids want to re-program the whole operation.

JANE: Good luck with that.

ADELE: They're full of shit.

JANE: Like everything else?

ADELE: Right. *(Pause)*

JANE: How's the therapy going?

ADELE: Great. You don't have to help me find a gig, Jane.

JANE: I had nothing to do with it. I don't know this guy, Norman. Really. Is he an actual theatre person?

ADELE: I think he is. He seemed to know what he was talking about. And he knew my history. He researched me.

JANE: Well, that's interesting.

ADELE: Why?

JANE: Means he's seriously looking for someone.

ADELE: Someone weird.

JANE: I wouldn't say that, necessarily.

ADELE: No, but it's what you were thinking.

JANE: Hostile, Adele?

ADELE: I hate that word.

JANE: What did I do this time?

ADELE: Deep down you have contempt for me.

JANE: That's your neurosis talking, your inferiority complex.

ADELE: Skip the jargon. It's because I'm smarter than you.

JANE: Yeah, I was studying Spinoza while you were shooting up in johns.

ADELE: Look where it got you.

JANE: Look where it got you, smart-head. Panic attacks. Therapy. Hypertension.

ADELE: I hate that word.

JANE: You hate a lot of words.

ADELE: And I'm Jewish.

JANE: That's sheer paranoia. A phobia.

ADELE: No, it isn't. We've earned it. Hatred for Jews has become organic to the planet Earth. Because of envy. That's why these silicon idiots are idiots. Hitler and his thugs didn't think they were wrong. They thought they were making a change for the good. They wanted to clean up the gene-pool, change the DNA programming. Purify. And, after two thousand years of Jew-hating, most of Europe went along with it. America went along with it. Never forget that. And now we got

these Islamic imbecile freaks to deal with. The purification of the Earth. And now we got to cope with these digital maniac billionaire creeps.

JANE: Well, I didn't follow your reasoning entirely, and I don't entirely agree.

ADELE: Which is it? You didn't follow, or you don't entirely agree?

JANE: Both.

ADELE: Anyway, what did we do? We sang the *Shemah* in the gas chambers. "Hear O Israel, the lord is God, the Lord is One." The muslims stole that formulation from us, by the way.

JANE: You don't have to project that paranoia on to me. You know I'm not an anti-Semite. And neither are the girls.

ADELE: Yes, they are.

JANE: It's just talk.

ADELE: Talk will do it.

JANE: Take it back. *(Pause)*

ADELE: For you, I will. I'll take it back.

JANE: Spinoza was a Jew, after all. And so was Christ.

ADELE: And so were Einstein, Freud and Marx. Who created the modern world.

JANE: True. I admit that.

ADELE: Sorry. *(Pause)* I am, Jane. *(Pause)* I don't think you're an anti-Semite.

JANE: Thank you. What was the play about?

ADELE: Which one? Norman's?

JANE: Yes, the one you read for.

ADELE: I didn't read anything. They didn't have sides. I did something from my "Cinderella." He seemed to like it. Hard to tell. I liked it. *(Pause.. JANE withdraws.)*

15. *(ADELE alone.)*

ADELE: *(To Aud.)* So, I've been having strange sleeps. *(Pause)* Not easy to talk about. *(Pause)* Not dreams so much as sensations. Heavy blocks of wood or ice. *(Pause. "Enter" SAMUELSON. He sits.)* Before I'd go on a date, I'd be sure I'd find a way to do a little performance for this person. It could be only a second or two, like a bright smile, or a giggle, or a laugh. I'm sure this is really common. Guys fall for it all the time. It's a signal, you know, that it's all right to make a move. Go on to the next moment.

SAMUELSON: Totally normal.

ADELE: I'd have felt better if my son was in the same city. I didn't have to see him. But I'd feel better if he was merely in the general vicinity. He never called. Unless he needed a ride, or money, or a place to stay. Otherwise he was completely indifferent. He didn't give a shit about me, really.

SAMUELSON: He was a junkie.

ADELE: I know what it means to be a junkie.

SAMUELSON: It wasn't the same for you. It was more experimental for you, a life experience, and you were able to quit. He wasn't.

ADELE: I wanted to get into the Spinoza Society. They would have taken me anyway. They take everybody. It was all in my imagination. It took eighteen months to kick the methadone. Eighteen months of no sleep and pain in the central nervous system, in the solar plexus. *(Pause)* There is Evil in the world.

SAMUELSON: Pardon?

ADELE: Because methadone is in it, among other things. The world. Evil stuff, invented by the Germans. I could go on, but it's not what we're talking about.

SAMUELSON: We can talk about anything here.

ADELE: We're talking about high blood pressure and hypertension and panic attacks. Approaching the theory that they are connected to anxiety, due to low self-esteem and the stress of living.

SAMUELSON: Is that what we're talking about?

ADELE: Everything seems to have gotten worse since I've had these attacks.

ADELE: I feel like a complete idiot.

DR. SCHINE: You've felt that way before. I'll give you some pills for the blood pressure, but you also need to see your therapist. Will you do that? And ask him to call me.

ADELE: It's so humiliating. Dr. Schine making me see you.

SAMUELSON: I know it is.

ADELE: I can't stand it anymore. *(Pause)* I guess I can. *(Pause)* No, I can't face it.

SAMUELSON: You are facing it.

ADELE: Alone.

SAMUELSON: No, with me.

ADELE: I'm alone.

SAMUELSON: Your son loved you. And you loved him. And you loved your mother.

ADELE: No, I didn't. None of that is true.

SAMUELSON: As children we identify with our parents.

ADELE: Isn't that weird?

SAMUELSON: No, it's normal.

ADELE: I feel like I've been alone my entire life.

SAMUELSON: Very dramatic.

ADELE: Yes. That's what I do. Went to an audition the other day, in fact.

SAMUELSON: Good!

ADELE: They haven't called back yet.

SAMUELSON: Interested?

ADELE: I think so. Yes. A man named Norman. Something "experimental." We'll see.

16. *(Lights. "ENTER" GRACE and EVE.)*

GRACE: Panic attacks lately?

ADELE: No. Fuck off.

GRACE: I was reading somewhere, there's danger of a stroke.

ADELE: Did you hear what I said?

GRACE: Yes. "Fuck off."

ADELE: Fuck off.

EVE: No, you fuck off.

ADELE: Brilliant.

GRACE: Stroke danger.

EVE: How's the theater business?

GRACE: Mom told us.

ADELE: Great.

EVE: What's up?

ADELE: Sky's up.

EVE: Brilliant.

GRACE: You never know.

ADELE: Fuck off again.

GRACE: Thank you.

EVE: How old was Nathan?

ADELE: I'm not telling you.

EVE: When he died.

ADELE: Seventeen. I was thirty-four. His father left right after. Okay?

EVE: He was a drunk. The Father.

ADELE: Ned. He was definitely a drunk. He broke all the windows and left. Thanks for bringing it up.

EVE: You're welcome.

GRACE: And you?

ADELE: Me, what?

GRACE: What happened to you?

ADELE: I had gone back to school. I was an honors student at Brooklyn College.

GRACE: In what?

ADELE: Theater. Then I left.

EVE: You became a junkie.

ADELE: No, I had already been a junkie. Thank you, very much.

EVE: Well, it can be confusing.

ADELE: Me, too. It's confusing to me, too.

EVE: I'll bet.

GRACE: And then you converted.

ADELE: Yes.

EVE: Why?

ADELE: I was following Spinoza, who had never actually converted, as far as we know, and I wanted to see my son again. It was no big deal. It was mainly an acting thing. An inner performance, so to speak.

EVE: And then you converted back? *(ADELE nods)*

GRACE: How did you do that?

ADELE: I stayed who I already was.

EVE: Boy, is that confusing.

ADELE: Yeah, it is.

GRACE: Could lead to panic attacks and/or stroke.

ADELE: Fuck off, Grace.

GRACE: I'd be careful, if I were you.

ADELE: You're not me.

GRACE: Luckily for me.

EVE: Sure you want to be on stage?

ADELE: I'm sure.

GRACE: If you get the part.

ADELE: I'll get it.

EVE: Because of the stress.

ADELE: I don't know what the part is yet.

GRACE: I couldn't do it.

ADELE: No, you couldn't.

GRACE: I could if I tried.

ADELE: I don't think so.

GRACE: Why not?

ADELE: Acting is not pretending.

GRACE: You were pretending to be a Gentile.

EVE: She's got a point there.

ADELE: Acting is about intelligent speech, which leaves you out. Oh, forget it. I wanted to be myself. A Jewess. They tried to exterminate us. Remember? It's a reason for Jewish solidarity forever.

EVE: What about the religion?

ADELE: Religion has nothing to do with it.

GRACE: What's "intelligent speech?"

ADELE: Not like yours. It's a learned art.

GRACE: Okay, okay. Talk straight for a change.

EVE: It was a simple question.

ADELE: I am talking straight. You don't give me any credit.

EVE: We try.

GRACE: Give an example.

ADELE: Take Spinoza. You know something about Spinoza.

EVE: You know we do.

GRACE: Continue.

ADELE: You have these men I was telling you about, physicists, moderns, figuring out the origins of the Universe. In Kabbalah, which apparently Spinoza knew, above the Tree of Life and below the Tree of Life, is Absolute Nothing. *Ein Sof*. The modern view is a combination of quantum theory and Einstein's theory of relativity.

EVE: Another Jew.

ADELE: Right. Where was I?

EVE: Spinoza.

ADELE: Spinoza was trying to use geometry – theorems and axioms and propositions – to prove the mind of God. Based on the laws of nature. Including the laws of ethics and morals and so on. In modern mathematics, the Universe began with the Big Bang by itself, out of Nothing, which is inherently unstable, and then expands, balanced by the relation of energy of movement and gravity. So....

EVE: So?

ADELE: I got lost there.

GRACE: Take a breath. *(Pause)* Take another breath.

EVE: Avoid stress.

ADELE: The mind of God. *(Pause)* I think what he meant was that God was existence itself. Which arose out of Nothing. *(Silence)* Sorry. I made a jump there. I'm not sure of what I'm saying. What I said. Sorry.

GRACE: You apologize a lot.

ADELE: I know I do. It's a bad habit.

GRACE: Though it sounded intelligent.

EVE: Incomprehensible.

GRACE: Really. *(Pause. "EXIT" EVE and GRACE.)*

17. (ADELE.)

ADELE: *(To Aud.)* I was talking to my roommates. Grace and Eve. For some reason, I was trying to explain the origins of the Universe. They didn't get it. I didn't get it, either, so I started apologizing, which I do all the time. I apologize for my very existence. It's a joke. No wonder my son ignored me. I wasn't important to him at all, except for being a money source and providing a place for him to hide out, to chill. So what's the point? Excuse me? He shot up with his girlfriend. He was very deferential and easily influenced. Like me. Amazing how the human mind works, if it works at all. People are people, and needy. I need to forgive and forgive. Give in advance. Americans like dope, and alcohol. And guns. And cars. And money. And T.V. And so does the rest of the world. *(Pause)*. He, Nathan, ended up dying. In a hospital, tubes coming out all over him, begging to die. With his eyes. *(Pause)* Here comes the Casting Director. *(Light change. NORMAN joins ADELE. Pause.)*

NORMAN: What's with the Annunaki?

ADELE: They were Sumerian gods. People from another planet. They helped mankind form civilization on earth. At the right time, they're going to come back. There'll be a war, and the Annunaki will save us.

NORMAN: Like the Messiah.

ADELE: A lot like the Messiah. Supposedly, I look like them. The Annunaki. I think I do, actually. *(Coquettish)* Yeah. And those little hats. *(Pause)* Your idea of a digital plan and a new world order is also Messianic.

NORMAN: I'm glad you brought that up. I'd like to consider you, if that's all right.

ADELE: Consider me for what?

NORMAN: The lead.

ADELE: The lead?

NORMAN: Yes.

ADELE: The lead in what?

NORMAN: In our play.

ADELE: Consider me? What does that mean?

NORMAN: Consider. Think about?

ADELE: Think about?

NORMAN: My play.

ADELE: Where's the play?

NORMAN: We're not there yet.

ADELE: You're not where yet?

NORMAN: On the page.

ADELE: Not on the page?

NORMAN: Not yet. We're working with code. Algorhythms, numbers.

ADELE: I have no idea what that means.

NORMAN: A certain planned randomness.

ADELE: Where's the fucking play?

NORMAN: It's like a recipe.

ADELE: Sorry.

NORMAN: No, I totally understand.

ADELE: What do you understand?

NORMAN: Where you're coming from.

ADELE: You're offering me the lead in a play that doesn't actually exist?

NORMAN: Actually, it exists.

ADELE: Where is it?

NORMAN: It's in my head.

ADELE: Great. *(Coughs)* You're offering me the lead in a play that doesn't exist anywhere but in your head. Why?

NORMAN: You'd be great in it.

ADELE: Why?

NORMAN: I don't know why.

ADELE: Well, that's honest. Can you say more? *(Silence)* That's all right. Never mind. But I can't agree to anything that doesn't exist. Even I have written, am writing, a play that's on the page. On the page. You heard some of it.

NORMAN: Well, that's partly why I'm considering you.

ADELE: Thanks a lot. But I can't take you seriously.

NORMAN: I understand.

ADELE: Maybe something more substantial next time?

NORMAN: Yes. *(Pause.)*

18. *(JANE sits down with ADELE. Pause.)*

JANE: Did you meet? With the casting director?

ADELE: Yes. Norman. For nothing. Nothing's there. Nothing at all. Like everything that exists. Nothing. A bubble in time. Time in the bubble. Whatever. Nothing.

JANE: You sure know how to negativize.

ADELE: Is that a word?

JANE: Probably not.

ADELE: I have no idea what this guy Norman is talking about. And I don't know who is talking to when I speak. So I don't know. Even now. We seem like we're being nice to each other, even though I'm harboring a lot of resentment at the way he talks. This digital messianic nonsense.

JANE: What else is bothering you?

ADELE: I couldn't be a Christian. I couldn't live up to it. No matter what I did.

JANE: Spinoza did.

ADELE: You don't know that. Nobody knows anything about Spinoza or anything else. Fuck this guy, Norman. Anyway, I'm Jewish, thank God, because you can take it any which way, or no way at all. I mean the Old Testament. The Torah. It's not like a total dogma and you can't misinterpret it, like the Koran, because there's too much of it and it goes every which way. So the result is openness and diversity. We don't go around preseltyzing or killing people for not being Jews, or the right kind of Jews, or something weird like that.

JANE: There are different kinds of Christians, too.

ADELE: Like this guy Norman – the Casting Director – he's into something else entirely, where he thinks there'll be machines, that we'll evolve, via technology, into a better machine, more rational, more sound mentally, and thus a better world arises. *(Pause)* I think he's wrong. It's another form of messianic thinking. I'm just saying. I'm thinking aloud. *(Pause)* There I go again – taking it back. It's like I'm not worthy of having an actual opinion. He's really helping me, Samuelson. Spinoza would say that Nature was a machine and that the brain, the wiring, was God. *(Pause)* Actually, I don't know what he would say. *(Pause)* I did it again. Took it back. *(“ENTER” GRACE. JANE stands.)*

GRACE: Where you going, Jane?

JANE: I have an acolyte.

GRACE: You still doing that?

JANE: Sometimes. When I'm needed. *(“Exits”. Pause.)*

GRACE: Are you kosher?

ADELE: Are you kidding?

GRACE: No. I thought that was a legitimate question.

ADELE: You'd know it if I was.

GRACE: How?

ADELE: Never mind. You'd notice. You don't know nothing about it. But I'll tell you one thing, which is – I was thinking about this earlier – I appreciate it more now. It creates a path to obedience. People need to be obedient. Because of all the inner chaos. There needs to be something larger to obey. Some order inside. Laws to

obey. That's why all the rules and regulations in Leviticus, and so on. It's a lot, all day long, food and clothes and behavior. Fasting. Prayer. Holidays. Order and obedience. Makes for a kind of sanity.

GRACE: Not for you, though.

ADELE: I'm not so much a religious person.

GRACE: How's your play coming?

ADELE: I'm getting there. I don't want to jinx it by talking about it. A certain kind of energy coming down. Very fine.

GRACE: I'm just asking.

ADELE: Don't ask me. I'm thinking.

GRACE: What are you thinking?

ADELE: I can't think and talk to you at the same time.

GRACE: What's it about?

ADELE: Human life on earth.

GRACE: Come on.

ADELE: Orifices.

GRACE: Adele...!

ADELE: I'm an anal intellectual. Don't talk to me now.

GRACE: What are you going to do with it?

ADELE: With what?

GRACE: Your play.

ADELE: I don't know, Grace.

GRACE: You're an actor, but you've never written a play before.

ADELE: So what? As soon as the audience has to think, the game 's over. Life on Earth: Murder and Mayhem.

GRACE: That's a really bad attitude.

ADELE: Go away, Grace.

GRACE: No. I live here.

ADELE: Okay. Just don't talk to me anymore.

GRACE: Is there any sex in it?

ADELE: Good question.

GRACE: I think there should be. It's entertaining.

ADELE: I agree with you. Orifices. The trouble is, I haven't had any lately. Penetration. But I'm thinking about it.

GRACE: What are you thinking?

ADELE: None of your business. *(Pause)* I've changed my mind. Sex is stupid, really.

GRACE: You've got a point there. I agree. See you, Adele. *(Exits)*

ADELE: Bye, bye. *(Pause. "Enter" NORMAN.)*

19. *(Lights up.)*

ADELE: "So...Cinderella goes into the woods...No...Yeah, she goes into the woods...basically she's looking to score...not the woods...she goes up to this apartment in the projects...two black guys are there...one of them is young, a teenager, and the other one 's a big dude in his thirties...they can't believe there's this little Jewish woman by herself buying some dope...there's like hardly any furniture...just a couch and a chair and some packs of dope and paraphenalia..."

(VOICES OFF, from the past: two young black MEN and ADELE:)

Where you from, Lady?

ADELE: Long Island.

Where in Long Island?

ADELE: Great Neck.

What the fuck you doin' from Great Neck?

ADELE: That's were I'm from.

What the fuck.

What you want?

ADELE: What you got?

Who followed you?

ADELE: Nobody.

ADELE: "So...she realizes she's scared and she's made a mistake, but she's dope sick, and the boy on the street – another black kid—sent her up there, saying it was all cool, nothing to worry about, and he stayed outside...she wonders about that, but she's deferential as usual, believing everybody is above her, including this illiterate dooper black kid on the street, so she dutifully follows instructions, and now she finds herself in this project hell-hole with two dangerous dopers who don't like her...No, it's not that...they do like her...a woman alone, not too old, and she's fuckable, a white Jewish woman junkie and not bad-looking and fuckable, if she's really alone...it's an unusual opportunity..."

Who sent you up here?

ADELE: Peewee.

Peewee?

Peewee?

ADELE: Yeah. I could go now if it's not right.

We know him.

Where is he?

ADELE: He 's downstairs.

On the street?

ADELE: I think so.

What you want?

ADELE: Three or four bags maybe. Are you guys holding?

ADELE: "She's using the lingo of the day...and trying to act cool, but she's starting to shake, she's starting to tremble...they look at her arms."

She's got marks.

Yeah.

Show us the money, woman.

ADELE: "So...she pulls out some of the money...because she knows an old junkie trick, which is you don't show all your money, you just pull out some of it with a movement of your hand in your pocket, separating out some of the money, but these guys know the trick and the kid grabs her arm and takes the money and hangs onto her arm..."

What's your name?

ADELE: "She was going to say Cinderella, but instead she says:"

ADELE: Rita.

Take a look in the hall. (Pause)

ADELE: Enough of that stuff. My memory isn't what it once was. It never is. One of the flaws in the structure of the human brain. It's a bunch of titilation, mainly. I'm not sure it ever happened. I have fantasies. I have seen some porn. The decadence of the West. Yeah. These days, I'm not interested in that kind of thing.

NORMAN: But it still happens, of course.

ADELE: How would you know?

NORMAN: One has friends.

ADELE: You have friends?

NORMAN: I won't answer that.

ADELE: On the street? Junkies? You don't seem the type.

NORMAN: I'm not.

ADELE: Nerds who shoot dope.

NORMAN: You never know.

ADELE: No, you never know. These Islamic fanatics, for example, they want to cover up their women so they're not distracted from worshipping God -- can you imagine what's going on their heads?

NORMAN: Yes.

ADELE: Power, rape, killing, torture, chaos. Life on Earth. You're going to change that? You're going to make a play about that? Digitally? Rationally?

NORMAN: Spinoza was into it a long time ago, you know. The naturalistic universe, based on laws, theorems -- back to the First Cause.

ADELE: Yeah, yeah. I know.

NORMAN: You don't sound like you believe in it.

ADELE: I don't. I quit. Things just happen. I believe that T-shirt: "Life is hard and then you die." My son did, too. He believed it, too. Nathan.

NORMAN: You're really not that far from us, spiritually speaking.

ADELE: Yes, I am. I don't know if I believe in anything, really. Not even psychoanalysis. Though they make a good case. Erik Erickson. Freud. All those people. Very digital. I don't know what I meant by that.

NORMAN: Must be lonely for you.

ADELE: Yes, it is. It's lonely as hell. You've got a world war developing between fundamentalist, radical Islam and the West, while people go to basketball games, the stock market rebounds, people look for jobs, actresses go to auditions, and then you've got these freaks, like you, talking about the digital revolution, as if the human being will turn into a system of equations and algorithms that will create a new world. Did I get that right?

NORMAN: No.

ADELE: It's baloney, anyway. That's what they say over and over again and make a lot of money. Which is what they really want. And the primary target, for these idiots and crazies and fanatics, as always, is the Jews. And I am a Jew.

NORMAN: You're paranoid. It has nothing to do with anti-Semitism.

ADELE: Yes, it does. You're talking about the culture. Who created the culture? Who created the world of Commerce, of Thought? Who goes to the theatre? We do. They're going to come after us, Norman. Bearded imbeciles with kalashnikovs and machetes and tanks. They'll torture and kill right way. Forget the gas chambers.

The earth will be covered with blood. Then there'll be a change. The blood will create new substances, the land and air and water will change, and new creatures will appear. Maybe the Annunaki. But, in my opinion, there'll be no justice for people like us, and no revenge, as usual. Is that what you're getting at?

NORMAN: No. You've got a kind of reverse chauvinism. The glory of the persecuted Jew. I'm talking about new codes. New patterns. Ways of understanding. Like Spinoza's mathematical approach, his geometry, but we have a new technology now, that can support the ideas. His and others. Like your idea of the Annunaki.

ADELE: Yeah, digital Annunaki.

NORMAN: Right.

ADELE: I'm not inspired.

NORMAN: No?

ADELE: No.

NORMAN: Can we meet again soon, Adele, and talk some more?

ADELE: Yeah, Norman, if you bring something real with you. Something that makes sense. *(Pause. "Exit" NORMAN.)*

20. *(ADELE changes position. SAMUELSON joins her. Pause.)*

ADELE: So I got a little over the top there. With Norman. And I don't really give a damn. The thing is, I don't remember key phrases, like "buttoned up," and being "neurotic" or "treated like a pet," or any of that.

SAMUELSON: You don't need to remember phrases.

ADELE: Because the situation is dire.

SAMUELSON: Dire?

ADELE: This creature which has evolved for no reason, as some people have observed, like a virus, eating everything around it. A complicated organism with a complicated brain, built to eat and shit and copulate and reproduce, and survive, and that's it. *(Pause)*

SAMUELSON: That was good.

ADELE: What do you mean, "good?"

SAMUELSON: Eloquent.

ADELE: *They pushed us into ghettos and walled us in until we stank to high heaven. Dropping dead on the streets.*

SAMUELSON: Excuse me? Did you say something?

ADELE: Kids these days – they know nothing about the Shoah. My own son wasn't interested in it. He was interested in other things. Like getting high. But he got his own taste of misery. Maybe he learned something. But I don't know what I'm talking about, either. I wasn't there. *(Pause)* There I go again. Taking it back.

SAMUELSON: You're angry.

ADELE: Yes.

SAMUELSON: You have a right to be angry.

ADELE: I know that. And I want revenge. I heard myself say it. I heard myself think it. I imagined certain... actions. But what good would it do? They're all dead now. And people's brains are not wired to remember anything. Morally, we are still... I don't know what. *(Bursts into tears.)* Sorry.

SAMUELSON: Why? You're allowed to cry.

ADELE: *(Weeping)* At least we, the Jewish People, are interested, at least we care about memory, and thought, and language, and books.

SAMUELSON: Yes, I agree.

ADELE: And they'll start trying to kill us again, the envious assholes. They're doing it already. I'm sorry. It's become part of the ecology of the Earth. *(Pause, recovers.)* Let's change the subject.

SAMUELSON: Okay.

ADELE: It's planetary. Sorry.

SAMUELSON: Have you been auditioning?

ADELE: No. Talking to Norman.

SAMUELSON: Depressed?

ADELE: Yes. So what? I was just thinking, Spinoza knew nothing of all this.

SAMUELSON: I disagree. He knew a lot. His work followed right after the Inquisition. It was still going on, in fact.

ADELE: You're right. I'm sorry. God, I've got to stop doing that. Saying "sorry" all the time.

SAMUELSON: You will. It'll happen by itself.

ADELE: It's like everything is happening by itself. Bad line. Could be a line from Norman's non-existent play. Maybe there is no real play. He keeps asking me to write something or do something. It occurred to me recently -- it could be about the money.

SAMUELSON: The money?

ADELE: Yes. From my roommate, Jane. She's the elder of the group and they seem to know each other. I sound like I'm being paranoid.

SAMUELSON: Are they nice to you?

ADELE: Most of the time. I did my re-hab and they took me in. I should be grateful. And she does a great massage, Jane. *(SAMUELSON looks at his watch.)* Are we done?

SAMUELSON: Yes.

ADELE: You think I can start coming once a week again?

SAMUELSON: No. Let's give it a little more time, as we're doing.

ADELE: It's expensive.

SAMUELSON: I know. Think of it as an investment in your future. *(Pause. ADELE frowns.)*

21. *(ADELE joins NORMAN.)*

NORMAN: You ever write about your ex?

ADELE: My husband?

NORMAN: Yes.

ADELE: Of course, I do. Not very edifying. Why?

NORMAN: Just curious.

ADELE: Curiosity killed the cat.

NORMAN: We have an outline.

ADELE: What do you mean, "an outline?"

NORMAN: We're going to improvise. From the outline.

ADELE: You never told me.

NORMAN: I thought I told you.

ADELE: You didn't.

NORMAN: That's why I asked about your play.

ADELE: Why?

NORMAN: Well, it's good material.

ADELE: Isn't that stealing?

NORMAN: I mean, as an example of the kind of thing people can bring to the project. Not that we want the lines from your own play. Just so we know you can bring the right material to the project. That's what's attractive to us.

ADELE: Bring material?

NORMAN: Yes. Perhaps something from your own work or life that can fit our theme. It's an experiment.

ADELE: I don't know if I want to do that.

NORMAN: Well, that's understandable.

ADELE: What's the outline?

NORMAN: I thought I told you.

ADELE: I don't have a clue.

NORMAN: We want to talk about life as it might be organized by new digital processes, the new Physics, the Cybernet. Synthetic DNA. New ways of approaching the design of cities, sociology, government, politics. Another way of living. About saving life on earth. About the possibility of another environment, one sustainable by humans, or some kind of humanity –

ADELE: That's not an outline. It's an idea.

NORMAN: It's an important idea.

ADELE: I don't know if I can bring anything to it.

NORMAN: You're all around it.

ADELE: What does that mean?

NORMAN: You have experience. You have your own ideas. You have the chops. You can write and act.

ADELE: Thanks, but where's the story? There has to be a story.

NORMAN: It's an experimental approach to a theatrical performance. A theme, with the dialogue filled in mostly with improvisation by the actors.

ADELE: I can write lines. I can say lines.

NORMAN: We know that.

ADELE: But they need to be about something meaningful for me.

NORMAN: Of course. Let me send you what we have. You can study it and see what you think.

ADELE: That might be good.

NORMAN: Great. I'll do that.

ADELE: And the improvisation?

NORMAN: Yes?

ADELE: Does it happen during performance?

NORMAN: No, once we have the language, we'll set it.

ADELE: Because that's so important, don't you think? – the rhythms, the diction, the characters, the dialogue –

NORMAN: Yes. We'll set all that. But we'll leave room for impromptu surprises. It's been done before. It can be something different and unique, because the actors have created their own characters and dialogue.

ADELE: Where was this process done before?

NORMAN: In New York.

ADELE: Did it work?

NORMAN: Some people think so.

ADELE: Okay. Send me some stuff.

NORMAN: I'll do that. (*"Exits" happily. ADELE re-joins SAMUELSON.*)

22.

ADELE: So then I was questioning my memory. Maybe he had said things I'd forgotten. And then I thought, "What about my own survival? I don't give a damn about life on earth." On the other hand, I want to be on stage, I want to do something. My own play. But nobody wants to hear about my crazy, sadistic mother and my junkie son, who died, and my own junkie life, and re-hab, and re-converting, and so on. It's all a mess.

SAMUELSON: You don't like to talk about all that, do you?

ADELE: No. I could jinx it.

SAMUELSON: You don't feel like you deserve it.

ADELE: No.

SAMUELSON: Why not?

ADELE: I don't know why. It's the way I grew up. Scorned by society. Life won't survive on earth, not this life, so it's all a gamble anyway. (*Pause*) It's an interesting idea. Improvising.

SAMUELSON: Improvising?

ADELE: Yes, I've never done it. Except in class. But it's taking advantage of the actors. I don't know how I feel about that. And I know what you're going to say – that I don't feel the right to have feelings. I don't feel I have rights. And that would be true, too.

SAMUELSON: It's a cultural norm. Second-class citizens are considered to be servants. They are supposed to curtsy and be of service.

ADELE: I had some good teachers, thank God, or I would have ended up dead in somebody's bathroom, a needle stuck in my arm.

SAMUELSON: Probably so.

ADELE: Or on the street with my throat cut. But I never remember.

SAMUELSON: You don't have to remember, we need to keep talking.

ADELE: It helps me to remember.

SAMUELSON: Takes time. It's an inside job. Takes time.

ADELE: You always say that.

SAMUELSON: Because it's true.

ADELE: Do I have to keep coming twice a week?

SAMUELSON: Yes, I think so -- for now. Like I said, think of it as an investment in your future.

23. (JANE and ADELE)

JANE: But that's a part of any spiritual path – to bow and be of service.

ADELE: I know, but I went too far in that direction. I was *dahvening* before everybody, in front of everybody. Overdoing it.

JANE: Were you?

ADELE: Wanting to please. No hair out of place.

JANE: I never noticed. You sure about this person?

ADELE: Who? The Casting Director, Norman?

JANE: No. Your psychiatrist. Samuelson.

ADELE: He's a psychologist.

JANE: Let's back up a minute.

ADELE: Too much obedience.

JANE: We were talking about what's-his-name.

ADELE: Samuelson.

JANE: Seems like he's going too far in the other direction.

ADELE: The strangest thing is that I imagine myself one way, and in reality I'm the total opposite. Who has panic attacks.

JANE: Did you hear what I said?

ADELE: Yes. The shrink. He's fine. Did you hear what I said?

JANE: You're not who you think you are. That's true of everybody.

ADELE: I guess that's right. I think it's only me who 's deluded. *(Pause)*

JANE: How's your play going?

ADELE: It's going, more or less.

JANE: Are we in it? Me and Grace and Eve?

ADELE: There's no way to avoid that. A person writes about what's happening to them. But I think you have to be careful about putting real people in your play. People are sensitive. All writers do it. Speaking of the Casting Director, Norman? *(Pause)* Are you listening?

JANE: Yes. I'm listening. What about him?

ADELE: I don't know if he's scamming me or not. He says he knows you.

JANE: You told me. I do know him, slightly. He came to a few meetings.

ADELE: Would you give money to his project?

JANE: No. I don't think so.

ADELE: Okay. Thanks.

24. *(ADELE and SAMUELSON. Pause as they settle into their chairs.)*

ADELE: I am feeling a little more libido, as they say.

SAMUELSON: You're coming back to life.

ADELE: It's not that I wasn't looking around, I was looking at butts a little, looking at crotches, automatically. But I wasn't going to start anything, either. Just going to auditions and writing.

SAMUELSON: You're feeling more equal. More respect for yourself.

ADELE: I think that's true. I hope that's true. I don't feel like getting into actual sex that much, but it's on my mind a little bit.

SAMUELSON: You had given up.

ADELE: Yeah, I guess I did. I'm not sure what happened.

SAMUELSON: It's not so hard to understand. You were a junkie, you lost your son, your husband – who broke all your windows and left you stranded – you tried to begin a new life – eventually, you started having panic attacks.

ADELE: What a mess.

SAMUELSON: You see what you just did?

ADELE: Yes.

SAMUELSON: Unnecessary.

ADELE: The panic attacks hit bottom. They say you have to hit bottom. I hit bottom right there. I do want to work. Which brings me to Norman and his far-out experimental project. True, there's a little libido there. He's a smart, good-looking guy. Young. But that's not it. I thought he had passed the test.

SAMUELSON: The test?

ADELE: I thought he had passed the test – as someone I might like -- but now I'm not so sure. He's not coming up with the material. And the other thing is...I'm not coming up with it, either. I'm not interested in any of that salami that he's into. What does he expect is going to happen? Digitally, no less. It's like a phony Utopia. Never works, never. And dangerous, dangerous.

SAMUELSON: You do that sometimes. Repeat. The second "dangerous" is apologetic.

ADELE: They got away with it. The Germans. Don't you think?

SAMUELSON: I do. Yes. But what's to be done?

ADELE: I meant everything I said.

SAMUELSON: I know you did. *(Pause. "Exit" SAMUELSON. GRACE and EVE "enter.")*

25.

GRACE: You could look for a job.

ADELE: I am looking for a job.

EVE: I mean, you seem to be over your health problems.

ADELE: I'm not.

GRACE: What kind of job?

ADELE: I'm an actor.

GRACE: We know you're an actor.

ADELE: So?

EVE: The panic attacks, the depression, that's all.

ADELE: I'm over the panic attacks.

EVE: That's what I'm saying.

ADELE: I'm taking blood pressure meds.

GRACE: You used to teach.

ADELE: What does that have to do with anything?

GRACE: The auditioning isn't going anywhere, is it?

ADELE: Yes, it is.

GRACE: Oh? Where?

ADELE: I may have a part in a play.

GRACE: Oh. What's the part?

ADELE: That's the thing. It doesn't exist yet.

GRACE: Great.

EVE: Insane.

ADELE: It's a very interesting premise.

GRACE: Which is?

ADELE: The digital salvation of the world.

EVE: Insane.

GRACE: Where are the characters coming from?

ADELE: Supposedly us. The actors. Through improvisation.

EVE: Can you do that?

ADELE: I don't know. And I'm writing a play myself.

EVE: You can't make a living writing plays.

GRACE: And you have trouble writing.

ADELE: I know that.

GRACE: So that's why we're saying: get a job, Adele.

EVE: You did use to teach.

ADELE: You said that already.

EVE: You made a decent living.

ADELE: The two plays could be connected. The stuff I'm writing or not writing could somehow contribute to this guy's idea. Norman's. I told you about him. He knows Jane. He used to be associated with the Spnioza Society.

EVE: Norman.

GRACE: The guy's a flake.

EVE: The guy's a con.

ADELE: You think he's a con?

EVE: Definitely.

GRACE: He hung around and chatted people up, but he didn't do anything.

ADELE: What was he supposed to do?

GRACE: I don't know. Make coffee. Clean up. Contribute an idea once in a while. He's obviously bright.

ADELE: Well, that's the thing.

GRACE: What's the thing?

ADELE: That he's bright.

GRACE: Lots of people are bright.

EVE: Then what does he want?

ADELE: I think it's Jane. I think he wants her money for his play. That's what I think.

GRACE: Tell him to forget about it.

ADELE: I want to be on stage.

EVE: Good luck. (*GRACE leaves. ADELE and EVE stare at each other.*)

ADELE: Remember you hit me.

EVE: I remember.

ADELE: I'll get you back for that.

EVE: Try it. (*Exits.*)

26. (*Enter* NORMAN.)

ADELE: Did you ever see *Night and Fog*?

NORMAN: Yes. Years ago.

ADELE: What did you think?

NORMAN: I was sick to my stomach.

ADELE: It's only thirty-one minutes long. I mean, the movie.

NORMAN: Long enough. And he got in there early. It had only been ten years. One camera. Plus the German footage. Black and white and color. That was a big deal in those days. I remember there was one shot, it showed a French policeman guarding some Jewish prisoners. The French government wanted it out of the film, or they wouldn't let it released. So Resnais had something painted over the man's hat so you wouldn't know he was a *gendarme*. Nobody noticed, and they released the film. (*ADELE bursts into tears. NORMAN takes her in his arms. ADELE subsides.*)

NORMAN: I've done some research.

ADELE: Good for you.

NORMAN: There is Divine Reason. In the Tree of Life. The central column. I think Spinoza knew all about the Tree.

ADELE: I'm sure he knew about the Tree of Life. But I don't think he ever converted.

NORMAN: The Theme is Guardian Angels.

ADELE: Yes. I read your outline.

NORMAN: Oh. Good.

ADELE: Not so good.

NORMAN: Why not?

ADELE: Not such a good outline.

NORMAN: Why not so good?

ADELE: I do like the idea of Guardian Angels. Reminds me of the Anunnakki. You know who they are?

NORMAN: Not exactly.

ADELE: They're like guardians. Originally, like I said, they were Sumerian gods -- I think. Some people think they came from another planet. They came to help us. Some of them merged with us. Some people think they'll come again to save us. It's like your idea of a digital revolution, a new species, with new kinds of thinking, new information, and so on. It's just like the Anunnakki. Perhaps they could work like a metaphor. The Anunnakki.

NORMAN: No. This is something I entirely believe in.

ADELE: Suit yourself.

NORMAN: So you won't participate?

ADELE: It's hubris, you know, to think human reason can fix things.

NORMAN: God – or nature -- hasn't done too well with it, either. So we might as well give it a shot.

ADELE: I'll do something. Something will happen, and I'll feel right, and I'll do it.

27. (GRACE, EVE, and ADELE. Pause.)

GRACE: You ever going to have sex again?

ADELE: No. Obviously.

GRACE: Why not?

ADELE: I'm not interested.

EVE: Maybe that's why.

ADELE: Why what?

EVE: You have anxiety attacks.

ADELE: I don't have anxiety attacks.

EVE: You did have anxiety attacks.

ADELE: Not any more.

EVE: You're gay.

ADELE: I'm not gay.

EVE: What are you?

ADELE: I don't know what I am. I'm sexless. Androgynous.

GRACE: You did have a child.

ADELE: I was seventeen years old.

EVE: So what are you?

ADELE: Basically, I'm a junkie.

EVE: No. Besides that. Sexually.

ADELE: An actress. Androgynous.

EVE: You play tough women.

ADELE: It's easy. Even you could do it.

EVE: Thanks.

ADELE: Well, maybe not.

EVE: Thanks, again.

ADELE: I have a feminine side. I just go there. Works well.

EVE: What about Norman?

ADELE: He 's barking up the wrong tree, as far as that goes.

GRACE: You talk to your shrink about this?

ADELE: Of course.

EVE: I wouldn't be so high-fallutin' with Norman.

ADELE: I'm not high-fallutin' and I don't need to get laid.

28. *(Pause. ADELE re-joins SAMUELSON.)*

ADELE: Grace and Eve think I should talk with you about sex. It's sort of been a hidden issue. Cinderella, she gets her man in the end. Basically. I look in the mirror, and I see what you see.

SAMUELSON: Which is?

ADELE: Neither here nor there. Tall. Skinny.

SAMUELSON: Attractive.

ADELE: Come on.

SAMUELSON: Some people might think so.

ADELE: Some. I haven't had any anxiety attacks lately, so it must have been the blood pressure.

SAMUELSON: Anxiety attacks are caused by anxiety.

ADELE: I do feel I have the ability and the smarts. I do feel competent.

SAMUELSON: There's a difference between confidence and ability.

ADELE: Good point. Very good.

SAMUELSON: Thank you.

ADELE: So what do I do about Norman? *(No answer)* I want to be on stage. *(Pause)* I don't feel much libido. *(Pause)* That's the thing about heroin. Sex is pretty much out of the picture. You're basically a dope processing machine. *(Pause)* I did talk to Jane. She more or less said "No," about Norman. She's not the type to support experimental theatre operations. *(Pause)* I do feel a little more libido, lately.

SAMUELSON: You're getting better.

ADELE: You said that.

SAMUELSON: It's true.

ADELE: Like Cinderella.

SAMUELSON: Yes.

ADELE: Thanks.

SAMUELSON: You're welcome.

29. *(“Enter” JANE. Pause.)*

ADELE: I'm having trouble sleeping.

JANE: It's anxiety.

ADELE: Do you have anxiety?

JANE: Sometimes.

ADELE: Why didn't you re-marry?

JANE: I didn't feel like it.

ADELE: Made you anxious.

JANE: Definitely.

ADELE: Did you have offers?

JANE: Of course, I had money.

ADELE: You like being alone, don't you?

JANE: Must be that theatre guy, Norman.

ADELE: Not really, though he does make me think at night.

JANE: At least now you know how to do things. Before Spinoza, I didn't know anything. Not how to cook or clean or make the bed or anything. Laundry. Shopping. Banking. Paying the bills. None of it. They put me to work in the Spinoza Society, and I learned. I learned how to paint there. How to be with others, to some extent, though I prefer solitude. About Norman: I think he's un-moored. I don't know if that's a word, but what I mean is, that he's not sure of his tools. You're one of his tools at the moment. And you're not sure about being used.

ADELE: No. I'm not.

JANE: Would you like a massage one day?

ADELE: Of course, I'd love one!

JANE: You got it. Put it in my book. Maybe Friday?

ADELE: Yes!

27. (*NORMAN "enters." Pause.*)

NORMAN: One is sailing without a sail. One has to catch the wind some other way. And I don't think improvisation is a bad way to go. Rehearsed, ordered improvisation. Improvisation as a way of sailing. Of catching the wind. Once we get sailing, we'll have it. And it belongs to all of us.

ADELE: I've heard all that before.

NORMAN: We'll sign a legal agreement.

ADELE: I've done that before, too. Didn't mean zilch. The story guy gets the credit. The idea is yours, actually. The outline.

NORMAN: Right. And the structure. And the connectors. Which will come from me. I'd call it a kind of poetry. Poetry of the future. Mathematical. Geometrical.

ADELE: Very Spinoza.

NORMAN: Digital.

ADELE: I don't believe in any of it.

NORMAN: That's okay.

ADELE: Salvation – it's not happening. The trouble starts with holier than thou righteousness, and then they start killing people. You have a secular, scientific fantasy, Norman. I just believe in being on stage.

NORMAN: Right. What about the Anunnaki?

ADELE: What about them?

NORMAN: They seem to fit the theme.

ADELE: They're an entertaining idea. But if they're supposed to be looking out for the Jews, they haven't done a very good job of it. And I'm not sure about the connectors. What are the connectors?

NORMAN: They are bits. Key words, themes. Poems, numbers. Phrases. Organized to hold things together. The motif is the same: a new world, created consciously, by a new species of Man.

ADELE: That was a Nazi idea, you know. The new eugenics of Europe and the world, a world without Jews. You see how full of shit that is? Excuse me for asking, but are you Jewish?

NORMAN: No.

ADELE: That's a strike against you. Do you know why Jews are so important in the intellectual life of modern times? One such idea is Relativity. And we know in our bones that what we have today, including our lives, could be gone tomorrow. I stole that from Erik Erickson.

NORMAN: Put it in your text.

ADELE: We'll think about it.

NORMAN: So, how are the Guardians treating you?

ADELE: Don't wiseacre.

NORMAN: Sorry.

ADELE: The Annunaki? Not too well. Sometimes they're there, sometimes not. Mostly, they're not. But I'm being helped by working on my play. I have a character. She even has a name – *Marie*. She's a surgeon, and she 's mad. She rants and raves. She 's very interested in modern technology, of course. But mainly it's the human body, and sex. She is from Canada, Marie -- Montreal, but she spent a lot of time in Paris. Bi-lingual. But unhinged. She can't stop talking.

NORMAN: Sounds interesting.

ADELE: Will she fit into your plans?

NORMAN: Definitely.

ADELE: I'll work on it. But it'll have nothing to do with the New Man, digital or otherwise.

28. (*SAMUELSON and ADELE.*)

ADELE: I go to a meeting last night. Jane has been nice to me, so I decide to go to a Spinoza Society meeting. I go to the meeting. First of all, I'm late. Then I say this arrogant thing, which seemed familiar – the arrogance – then the meeting drags on, and instead of letting the secretary end the meeting, I ended the meeting. I ended the meeting kind of abruptly, which is kind of like breaking a protocol. I didn't feel guilty at first – I felt justified – and then it started: "You hurt their feelings, you broke a rule, you're arrogant, they hate you," and so on and so forth.

SAMUELSON: You're tired of all that.

ADELE: Yes. That's why I quit. But it was arrogance.

SAMUELSON: Well, you can't have a hair out of place.

ADELE: You keep saying that.

SAMUELSON: Because it's true.

ADELE: It's a cliché already.

SAMUELSON: I'll try and put it another way.

ADELE: Was it the arrogance?

SAMUELSON: I wasn't there.

ADELE: What about conscience?

SAMUELSON: What about it?

ADELE: Justifying arrogance – it's not right.

SAMUELSON: And you can't have a hair out of place.

ADELE: No. I think I see what you're saying. *(Pause)* I do.

29. *(ADELE joins JANE. Pause.)*

JANE: I ran into Norman at the Society.

ADELE: He ran into you on purpose.

JANE: So he did. Mentioned you in dulcet tones.

ADELE: That's nice. Madmen and gangsters.

JANE: You mean Norman?

ADELE: No, not Norman. I mean the rest of the world. I like Norman. He just wants to get his play on. You can't blame him for that. And his method is interesting. It can have an interesting effect on an audience. And I have a character for him. "Marie."

JANE: What is his method?

ADELE: Improvisation. Improvisation to find the material, the content, so a lot of it comes from the actors. That bothers me. But also, because of that, it ends up too topical and it can't last. It kind of reflects the culture of the times, which I guess is okay, since he's talking about the end of this world and the beginning of another.

JANE: The End of Days.

ADELE: Right. It's a new version of the Second Coming. But humans, as we know them, will be obsolete. He thinks machines will survive and make a new world. It's bullshit, of course.

JANE: I wonder what Spinoza would think.

ADELE: He's turning over in his grave. I was also dreaming of madmen and gangsters. We're on the same page. Of neglect and abuse, and panic attacks and stomach pain, and blood pressure, and blood spattering on walls, and sewers blown up, and viruses and the Holocaust – and I think I might want to write my own play, not Norman's.

JANE: Massage tomorrow?

ADELE: Right. Yes. Thanks, Jane. *(ADELE re-joins SAMUELSON. Pause.)*

30.

SAMUELSON: So. You talked to Dr. Schine?

ADELE: On the phone.

SAMUELSON: He could hear in your voice that you were better?

ADELE: I think so. He filled my re-fill. I've known him since my junkie days. He always comes through. And I'll always be a junkie.

SAMUELSON: Why do you say that?

ADELE: It was "getting off" then, in the argot of the streets. I always want to get off the train, the hard ride. Nowadays the first impulse is to shoot up and it's still attractive -- and then I think better of it.

SAMUELSON: What do you think then?

ADELE: No way I'd go back to that terrible, humiliating life. I kicked methadone, you know, which nobody on earth is able to do.

SAMUELSON: You did it. Give yourself credit.

ADELE: Took eighteen months. I wanted to join the Spinoza Society. Also, it neutralized my whole libido thing. Junk does that. And then came the panic attacks.

SAMUELSON: And now?

ADELE: The libido is starting to resume a little. I'm a little attracted to Norman, sexually speaking. More than a little. But I'm not going to let it affect me, for the time being. *(Pause)* Another thing – now I've forgotten what I was going to say.

SAMUELSON: It'll come to you.

ADELE: Something about my step-sisters. It's the strangest phenomena. I feel like I'm talking about another person. *Adele*. Who once had a panic attack at the Spinoza society. It threw me into despair. I felt like a "worthless worm," as Jane used to say.

SAMUELSON: Your confidence was destroyed.

ADELE: Yes. I'm feeling better now. I feel okay. The contrast is amazing. So I decided to get even with Eve.

SAMUELSON: For punching you?

ADELE: Yes.

SAMUELSON: How did it go?

ADELE: I took a swing at her.

SAMUELSON: And?

ADELE: She grabbed me by the hair. And threw me on the bed.

ADELE: Don't!

EVE: Now you'll get what you deserve, bitch!

ADELE: No!

ADELE: And then she started tearing off my clothes and kissing me and biting me. *(Sounds of a sexual struggle.)* At first I fought her off, and then I gave in. She grabbed me. I liked it and I didn't like it. I didn't like being forced. I liked it and I didn't like it. I'm definitely not better yet.

ADELE: In truth, I just made that up. Let's see if he can tell.

SAMUELSON: Adele?

ADELE: Yes.

SAMUELSON: Did you just make that up?

ADELE: Yes, a little projection, a little spice. For my play. Mainly, I was thinking of Norman.

SAMUELSON: Not your style.

ADELE: No, but I might use it on stage. I had a certain feeling about Marie. And she reminded me of a terrific photographer I had read about in the New Yorker, also French...Her name might well have been Marie, as well.... Sorry. Oh.

GRACE: *Adele doesn't come anymore to the society.*

EVE: *People come and go, like Michaelangelo.*

GRACE: *That's not Eliot's line.*

EVE: *She's like a totally different person.*

GRACE: *Yeah, and there's a glimmer appearing in her eye. I think it's her ego re-surfacing.*

EVE: *She 'd better watch it.*

ADELE: My ears are burning. *(She takes a theatrical posture "on stage," and becomes MARIE:)* "I was in the North Woods up there in Canada and they had nothing there and this man comes into the clinic with a lump the size of a volleyball on his neck and nobody would deal with it, and I was still an intern, but I had the balls, I was the only one, and I volunteered, me, and I got some local anesthetic, and I cut the damn thing off, blood was all over the floor, but I did it and got it done and nobody else would do it, it was me, alone -- I wasn't married at that time, I was an intern, before I went to France, and the guy lived, I think, we didn't have digitals or cell phones even, it was unheard of, but I had the balls, I was always heroic that way -- I don't know why that is, when I was only nine, or eight even, my mother said you have God on you, or an Angel, you're going to do wonderful things, be a hero -- and I was, thank God, and I hope you believe in God, because I do, I talk to Him, because there's no one else to talk to, you know what I mean, there's no one else to talk to on this earth, definitely not my husband, *cest la vie*, he can go fuck himself, but he died, now his whole family is trying to disown me and take the house and all the money, with lawyers and going to court every fucking day -- it's like going directly to hell, but I can talk to God, thank God. *(Onstage, all become an audience for ADELE.)* There was a kid came in there, he had swallowed a penny, and no one knew how to get it out, or would even try, but me, me -- I took my scope and went down there and got that penny, or the kid would certainly have choked to death, and then, later on, in France, where I met my husband, and I thought he was a good guy, even normal, but he was mean, and dirty, and he didn't believe in God, and now his entire family is trying to kill me, with that fucking American court...." *(Applause)*

31. *(ADELE and SAMUELSON. Pause.)*

SAMUELSON: It's the suffering one fears, usually.

ADELE: Still, why should we strive so hard to please?

SAMUELSON: It's human.

ADELE: We're destroying the earth with poisons and plastic. As we speak. So, how can all that digital language turn itself into a play? And how is the play going to help? None of what I said today may be true. None of it. Where were we?

SAMUELSON: I'm not sure.

ADELE: If I went out, I mean back to the street, I think I'd shoot up a big O. D. An over-dose. The quick rush and out.

SAMUELSON: No more revenge?

ADELE: You know, there was a Jewish brigade of the British Army in World War II. Legend has it, that after the war, in '45, a bunch of them went on a revenge raid into Germany. It was a targeted raid, not random.

SAMUELSON: Was it true?

ADELE: I don't know. Top secret. Nobody talked about it. But it makes me feel better for a minute.

SAMUELSON: And now?

ADELE: I feel depressed now.

SAMUELSON: Why?

ADELE: I was reading Saul Bellow the other day. An essay he wrote. Wonderful man, wonderful writer. Very intelligent. It was about what a novelist should do, which is to establish the measure of Man, the stature of Man, to raise his measure as a Human Being. And we don't want to do that because we avoid the "edge of life," as he called it. There's a lot of resistance. The whole idea of Man as a worthy spiritual being....

SAMUELSON: Good thing your acting teacher took hold of you when she did.

ADELE: I wish I could remember her name. She got me my first shrink. Nice woman. She had the same name as me, only German-style, Feurstein, Firestone. Nice woman. I didn't understand anything at the time. I'm not sure I do now. Where was I? Oh, my mother taught me to read when I was small. I was four or five. Four. I watched her disintegrate, you know. She wasn't always....She taught me to read and write. She walked me to the corner to go to school. DeKalb Ave. and Koskiosko St. There were only three kids in the family at the time. My father had a job for RKO, driving cans of film around. Then she started to crack. Attention. I don't remember

much. No more attention. She was somewhere else. My friend, Norman – did I tell you about my friend, Norman?

SAMUELSON: Your friend?

ADELE: Yes, Norman. Now I forget again what I was going to say. Oh, he was telling me how lucky I was, how I had a kind of guardian angel, because good things happened to me, like talent and intelligence, and finding a new home and the Spinoza Society, and so on. And sometimes Jane says things like that. And I noticed that I liked the idea. I liked the idea that I had a guide, a Guardian Angel, that it wasn't all up to me. No. Not me alone. There is an Angel, watching over me, the way the Anunnaki watches over the Jews.

SAMUELSON: The who?

ADELE: The Anunnaki. Never mind. Is it time?

SAMUELSON: Yes. *(Blackout)*

The End

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