

# The Brothers Savage

by Daniel Kessler

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## TIME

*last day of spring, last year*

## SETTING

Denali National Park  
63.904074, -149.234161

## CHARACTERS

<i>Gene</i>	<i>early 30s</i>	<i>who never saw the ocean</i>
<i>Terry</i>	<i>late 30s</i>	<i>who ruled the playground</i>
<i>Adele</i>	<i>early 30s</i>	<i>who ran away at sixteen</i>

## SPACE

*The interior of a cabin built a generation back*  
*On one wall: a string of newly developed photos: "the hike up"*  
*On another: maps, celestial diagrams, newspaper clippings*  
*A long-nosed telescope: rented, broken-in*

SCENE

*Gene walks the space, checking items off a list, while Terry sleeps off a hangover on a makeshift couch.*

*Gene comes across Terry's left-out socks: a negative mark. A pair of women's underwear: a negative mark. He lifts the underwear with a pencil.*

*Gene hovers over Terry a beat. He gently places the underwear on Terry's face. Terry doesn't move an inch. Gene lays the socks on Terry's chest, forming an X. He stands back and imagines the photograph. Then with Terry's camera... Click. Flash. Terry rustles, removing the underwear. Gene returns to checking items off his list.*

GENE

Where'd the time go, Sammy?

TERRY

I think I just dreamt I was in summer camp.

GENE

Did your watch stop?

TERRY

This one kid, he was eating a bar of soap. But he never swore. Why did he never swear?

GENE

You're thinking of that halfway house in Maine. Lots of leaches in Maine.

TERRY

So that's why Ma didn't visit.

GENE

Wouldn't you like to know.

TERRY

The food was so bad, Gene. I thought I'd starve.

GENE

It's okay, baby, you're safe now. Do me a favor. Hold this.

*Gene puts a canteen in Terry's hands, returns to checking his list. Terry strikes the pose of Jesus on the cross.*

TERRY

Mother, I feel wholly redeemed.

*Terry gets his camera, offers it to Gene.*

Take a picture.

*Gene mouths "No Way" and goes about his business.  
Terry puts down the camera.*

GENE

Sun's going down, Sammy.

TERRY

But it's so early in the morning... Was that Gramps' bugle? ... Gramps?

GENE

Don't talk to him. He can't hear you.

TERRY

You know they buried him beneath the floorboards.

GENE

They did not bury him beneath the floorboards. Unless there's a secret hatch somewhere.

*Gene looks around for a secret hatch. He gives up prematurely.  
Terry rolls off the couch and presses his face to the floor.*

TERRY

Some nights, you hear him knocking.

*Terry makes a rhythmic knock.*

GENE

Drink the water, Terry. Water good.

TERRY

Terry, drink the water. Drink the water, Terry.

*He uncaps the water.  
He looks through to the other side of the bottle.  
He drinks.*

GENE

Work. Money. Work. Money. Remember? That's how it works.

TERRY

Am I nothing but a mule? My whole life, have I been nothing but the unholy union between a donkey and a horse?

GENE

You are redemption, Terry.

TERRY

I am redemption. I am redemption and I can hear the dead.

*Terry knocks on the floor again.*

He always knocked like that. That's how you knew it was him.

GENE

You know Gramps died outside a retirement home in Reno.

TERRY

In the bosoms of his loving wife.

GENE

Definitely not his wife. I wasn't supposed to tell you that.

TERRY

His actions always did speak louder than his words... History. Has a way of revealing itself.

GENE

TERRY.

TERRY

WHAT.

*Beat.*

*Terry nods, a heavy, painful nod.*

*He rolls to the hiking pack beside him.*

*He unzips the pockets.*

TERRY

We'll see who history remembers, Gene. Who history forgets... Ain't that right, Gramps?

GENE

First-Aid.

TERRY

Check.

GENE

Nalgenes.

Check. TERRY

Lighters. GENE

Check. TERRY

Food packs. GENE

*Terry shuffles around.*

Terry.

Kidding. TERRY

Spy... gear... GENE

*Terry removes a pair of binoculars.  
Gene gazes at his list—obviously corrupted.*

Check. TERRY

Flask... GENE

*Terry removes two flasks.*

Plural. TERRY

You did not bring a rubber Nixon mask... GENE

*Terry removes a mask from the bag.  
He puts it on his face.*

I AM NOT A CROOK.

We are going to die. GENE

*Gene crumples up the list and throws it in the furnace.*

*Terry marvels at the flickering light.*

TERRY

I have seen death. Do not be afraid of death.

*Terry opens up his arms again to take a Jesus pose.*

*Gene heads to a long-nosed telescope.*

*He adjusts the nozzle—or at least that's what he would call it.*

*He has no idea what he's doing.*

Okay, play time's over. Time for the BIG MAP.

GENE

Every frickin' time, back to the frickin' map.

*He bends down like a football player about to do sprints.*

*He slaps himself in the face repeatedly.*

*He takes the remaining water from the bottle and pours it on his head.*

*He roars like a bear. He finds his center.*

*He addresses the enormous map and others around it.*

TERRY

OKAY... Six square miles. In a triangle.

*He draws.*

GENE

I told you before, it's got nothing to do with us.

TERRY

Ten deaths. Seven weeks.

*He draws a circle around the triangle. Circles it a few times over.*

GENE

Not your problem. Also, *completely* incidental.

TERRY

A range of altitudes, a range of trails... All leading... Here... Wait...

GENE

No.

TERRY

You ever notice we're in the middle of the big red triangle?

GENE

No.

*Gene puts some WD-40 on his hands and tries lubricating the telescope.  
He thinks this is something you are supposed to do. He doesn't know where the idea came from.  
He wipes his hands off on a cloth while Terry studies the big map.*

TERRY

I bet you a hundred bucks I solve the mystery before you do.

GENE

Like I'm making a bet with you.

TERRY

I bet on my blood and my honor as an American and as a man that I, Terrence Savage, the best man in the fifty states, will discover the truth of this mystery before you, and that upon doing so, you will furnish me with five twenty-dollar bills.

GENE

And if I win?

TERRY

I will furnish you with five twenty-dollar bills. Or whatever, you know...

GENE

Whatever? Nice. / Very convincing.

TERRY

Well, you know...

*Beat.  
They shake on it.*

TERRY

A Lannister always pays his debts.

GENE

I better see that hundred bucks.

TERRY

Try to take me down, fella.

*Adele appears with a woodcutter's axe.  
She grabs hold of it and balances its weight.  
She uses it to divide a block of wood.  
Terry heads in.*

TERRY

Lights won't be out for another hour. We're not here to see the stars.



ADELE

Who's that guy anyway?

TERRY

Just a guy I met.

GENE

What. Guy?

*Chop. Chop. Chop.*

TERRY

At the bar the other night. But it wasn't a guy. It was a bear... with big yellow teeth. These claws like jagged pea pods... They don't teach you to fight like that in cop school.

GENE

You were the best damn cop in the northern states, Terry.

TERRY

Damn right he is. The best damn cop a good man ever met. You could'a read it in the papers.

GENE

Hero a' the month.

TERRY

Hero a' the millennia.

GENE

Now look at you. Big bad photo-blogger on a search for the truth.

*Terry pretends to box against these two guys.*

TERRY

So these two wolves jive in, like they own the place, stickin' their whiskers in the air to get a good whiff. Start talking smack to the Denny's lady. In comes this bear, see, and those foggy-headed red-eyed pig-wolves about to take that sweet lady's green, when the bear mauls those shoes right outta their cheap-ass linings.

*Adele chops a piece of wood. She throws it in a pile.*

ADELE

That's a good story, Terry. You should tell more stories like that.

TERRY

But I work for the good guys now. That's where you come in, Gene. You're the spot man.

GENE

Damn right. And the brains, too.

*Terry pulls a news article from his "wall-o-notes".*

TERRY

Ready? You look ready. "Approximately one-point-zero-seven percent of people who enter Denali die there." That's a hundred and eight people total over a history of, about, a hundred and eight years? "Recently deaths have been increasing due to certain geologic activities brought on by a changing climate, including warmer springs and colder winters." You're not wearing your earmuffs, Gene.

GENE

Yeah, yeah.

ADELE

Honey-shorts, your brother's right. You should put on your earmuffs.

*She cuts a log, prepares another. Gene puts on his earmuffs.*

GENE

We're nowhere near the summit. *That's* where people die. These are just campsites.

*Adele chops another piece of wood. Carries off the logs.*

TERRY

*Two* people died last year. Apparently they made it all the way there and back, and on the last night there they were, eating a feast in their little cabin at the foot of that rock when an avalanche came along.

GENE

You shouldn't disrespect the dead in their own house.

TERRY

You, me, the great outdoors. Man and his pet wolf... I could get used to a place like this. Just like home with the right attention... You're chasing fireflies, man. Wait a couple hours. That's a shitty homepage pic.

GENE

You see that there? It's a gradation. That's a precursor. You're not supposed to miss the first stage in your research.

TERRY

That's pretty neat little brother.

*Gene looks over to see Terry lounging.*

GENE

Fuck you.

TERRY

Fuck you, my friend. Fuck you and all your little dreams. (*Gene heads to a side room*) Hey. That's my room.

GENE

What's it got the other one doesn't?

TERRY

I've got the depression real bad. Need a good view or I might go berserk and kill everybody. Your room's got a bigger bed. In that it actually has one.

GENE

If by room you mean a pencil box and by bed you mean a slab of rotted wood.

TERRY

Firstly, you and that fiancé of yours must be the only two people in the world who still use pencil boxes. Secondly, you'll want it for when some forest woman shows up to charm you down to earth. Let me give you a piece of advice. If you're going to get involved with a woman, it has to be somebody who thinks like a man. My ideal woman, / she sees other people. Just like I see other people.

GENE

Why are we talking about this? Maybe I'm looking to find somebody who isn't looking to find somebody all the time.

TERRY

Even if we have exactly what we want, exactly when we want it, we'll just as soon start wanting something else. Take me for example. I hope you don't have any illusions about this. I intent to take things as they come. I don't want to force a structure on something as animal as sex. You get your fingers burned that way. Sarah, God bless her precious little Christian heart, Sarah is the most boring woman I have ever met. Did I tell you 'bout when I fell asleep when she was talking to me?

GENE

It was in the middle of Christmas dinner.

TERRY

Boy, did that piss her off... Look her in the eyes, Gene. There's nothing behind those eyes. Just cobwebs and cleaning supplies. It's a bad deal. You're losing money on this deal.

GENE

There's nothing wrong with being domestic. I travel. She stays still. She's my nest. And I'm her seagull. I bring back the worm and she keeps me warm at night... Who am I kidding? The whole thing blows.

TERRY

There, there. Big brother's got your back. What you need is a pick-me-up. Lucky you, I brought a little something.

*Removes a flask from his pocket.*

GENE

You should know, I don't drink.

*Terry removes a shot glass from his coat pocket.  
He fills it from the flask.*

TERRY

Oh, that's a pity. That's a pity, pal, because neither do I. Not anymore, anyway. I brought this—homemade batch of soda water to—keep you in good stead—through this ordeal you've got to suffer.

GENE

I don't drink.

TERRY

For me, Gene? Look, I know I shouldn't have brought it. But I can't just pour it out. You can't just pour this stuff out. You've got to drink it. Otherwise—otherwise, what's the point?

*Pause.  
Gene takes the glass. Terry pulls over a camera and quickly snaps a shot as Gene swallows it down.*

TERRY

For posterity. *(He pats Gene's back as he coughs his lungs out)* There you go. There you go, buddy. The brothers Savage, under one roof again! How long as it been, three years, four?

GENE

Six. If you don't count that motel in Reno.

TERRY

That was the best birthday anybody ever threw me.

GENE

You told me it was a hospice and you had a day and a half to live.

TERRY

And live we did.

*Terry drinks quickly from the flask, immediately begins pouring a shot for Gene.*

GENE

Terry, you can't do that. You're an alcoholic.

TERRY

Alcoholics drink. It's what they do. What's the point of being an alcoholic if you're not going to drink? Gene, you're not making any sense.

GENE

You're older than I am. Act your age. And come help me with this.

TERRY

And who said I was an alcoholic? I never told you that.

GENE

You just *said*—

TERRY

No, no. I *implied*. You *inferred*. I didn't *say* anything about being an alcoholic.

GENE

Are you—or are you not—an alcoholic?

TERRY

You know, I really care too much about myself to respond to those kinds of questions.

*Long pause.*

GENE

Okay. One more drink.

TERRY

Now that's what I'm talking about.

GENE

JUST ONE.

TERRY

Oh, don't you worry about that. You have as many as it takes. I won't let you forget, I was the first one to get you drunk. Since this be the last day we live, my friend, please let me be the last!

GENE

I mean it.

*He quickly swigs the shot, is taken aback by the taste as Terry pours him another.*

TERRY

Oh, hush. Now, tell me more about this relationship of yours. That's something brothers talk about, isn't it? The great Quest of women. So why's Sarah not as dull as I think.

GENE

Leave her alone.

*Terry takes a swig from the flask.*

GENE

I'm tired of talking about me. I'm going to spend the rest of my life looking at specks in the sky. I could shoot myself in the head.

*Gene drinks, recovers, checks his watch.*

GENE

Shit.

*Gene stands to go.*

TERRY

Gene, we were just getting somewhere!

*Heading outside, opening up his laptop on the table there.*

GENE

Look, Terry, I know you're trying to look out for me. I appreciate it. I do. After this is done, we can drink all you want. We can talk and play board games and do all those things good brothers do. But let's get this done first.

*Terry tries drinking from the empty flask. He looks to Gene's glass.*

TERRY

Mind if I—

*Terry notices that Gene is already on the deck.*

*Terry downs Gene's drink.*

*Recovers.*

*Stands.*

TERRY

Okay. Okay, let's do this.

*Terry puts on his coat.*

TERRY

Are the lights out yet?

*Travels outside to his camera.*

GENE

Any second. Just wait by the camera.

*Long beat.*

Gene?  
TERRY

Yeah.  
GENE

TERRY  
What am I supposed to be looking at here?

*Terry walks around to the other side of his telescope. He picks something off the lens.*

TERRY  
Dead bug.

*He heads inside.*

GENE  
Why am I even doing this...

TERRY  
Cause if you don't get your degree you'll be 140k in debt, you'll have no job, and you'll be stuck forever with the most vacant human ever to walk the earth... Oh yeah, and Mom's paying. I think she called it "Bonding Time." Or—maybe that was my therapist. Either way. You're fucked for the next four days.

GENE  
Nothing like bringing together two lost souls to make you realize how lost you really are. You know, I hear she's dating.

TERRY  
I'm going to pretend I didn't hear that. And I know exactly where I am. 63 degrees North, 150 degrees West... Oh, you weren't—talking about—Oh.

*Gene returns to the telescope. Beat.*

TERRY  
Sometimes you gotta play hard if you're gonna work hard.

*Terry lights the joint and takes a large bit, coughs.*

TERRY  
Jesus. Oh, Jesus. Bless your heart, Ricky. Bless your beautiful Dominican heart.

*Beat.*

GENE  
What am I doing wrong?

TERRY

What's that?

GENE

Every time I try to get close to it—it just—turns onto its back and starts squealing like a pig. Does that make sense?

TERRY

Whatever you say, man.

GENE

I'm always *this close*. Just a *little* too early, just a *little* too soon. *(Beat)* It would be cool to get some results I could actually publish. You know. *Scientific* results.

*Beat. Gene takes a swig of Terry's flask.*

GENE

Sarah, man—she's easy to get along with. But that doesn't mean she's boring, or anything. She's just—

TERRY

Simple.

GENE

Right. Simple. But not—*simple-minded* or anything.

TERRY

Man, I know what you mean.

GENE

But still—it's like she's afraid of something. Afraid of me, but—not of *me*. I can't see anything there is to be afraid of.

TERRY

Your turn.

GENE

What?

*Gene turns to his brother.*

TERRY

It's your turn . . . C'mon, man, it's burning over here!

*Gene crosses, takes the joint, holds it as if to consider, starts outside with it.*

TERRY



Hey, where are you going? Gene? . . . Hold on a seco—GENE.

*Gene flicks it into the snow. Terry starts after it, but he's too late. A stare in the dark.*

TERRY

You're going to die... Gene... I think I'm actually going to kill you...

GENE

GO WORK ON YOUR FRICKIN' BLOG, TERRY.

TERRY

Listen, Gene, because I'm only going to say this once... You have to run... You have to run and get that joint... or I am going to kill you.

GENE

But—

TERRY

No buts about it, bud. If you don't run and get that joint—if there's not weed still in that joint... I will kill you. Because that's it. Two weeks and I brought a single, lousy joint, and if you killed that joint... I will kill you. Now go... GO!

*Gene grabs his flashlight and exits.*

*Terry watches from the doorway until the sound of footsteps disappears.*

*He remembers an exercise, something he tried to forget.*

*He takes deep breaths.*

*He comes back down.*

*Exposed, he listens to the night.*

*He puts the camera to his mouth and turns it on with his teeth.*

*He points.*

*In the briefest flash, a figure appears.*

*Long beat.*

TERRY

Hi.

You hungry?

You need a place to stay?

It's ok. Really.

*Beat.*

A VOICE FROM THE DARK

You crazy?

TERRY

You first.

A VOICE FROM THE DARK

I'm not crazy.

TERRY

I'm no crazier than most people you meet in the woods.

*Beat.*

Bad joke...

*Adele emerges into the light, carrying an enormous hiking pack.*

ADELE

Cool... That your cabin?

TERRY

So you gonna tell me what you're doing?

ADELE

Can we talk inside? ... Please.

*Beat.*

TERRY

Yeah. Yeah, sure.

*He approaches Adele, gets intimately close.*

*He looks her up and down.*

*And down and up.*

Mi casa, su casa.

*Terry starts toward the door.*

ADELE

You know your accent kinda sucks. And you're kinda weird as shit.

*Terry pretends to laugh.*

*It's awkward for them both.*

*Now inside, Adele sees the other pack.*

ADELE

You got a buddy?

TERRY

Nature called. You need something to eat?

*Adele sets her eyes now on a flask on the table.*

ADELE

I could go for some of that about now.

*Terry gestures and Adele takes the flask.*

*She drinks.*

*She drinks much more than expected.*

You got a radio? This one's all messed up.

*Gene enters with the soggy joint, slams the door, and throws the joint in Terry's face.*

GENE

You would not believe the literal shit I stepped in to get this for you, Terry.

TERRY

Gene.

GENE

The next time you send me out to pick up your trash, THAT'S IT. I'm out.

TERRY

Two things. One. Shut the Goddamn door. Two. Do you notice something different about the room?

*Long beat.*

GENE

Is she like your dealer?

*Adele offers her hand.*

ADELE

Adele.

TERRY

She's staying the night.

ADELE

Have to head out in the morning. I have a train leaving tomorrow night.

GENE

What's all that?

ADELE

Just... stuff.

*Beat.*

GENE

You know Terry here used to be Hero of the Month in Punxsutawney.

*Gene starts toward his room.*

ADELE

Like from Groundhog Day?

TERRY

It's a little more treacherous than it sounds. College kids, everywhere. Ivy League, some of 'em... Hey, where are you going?

GENE

I'm not getting any work done tonight. Gonna have to drop the mic on this one.

TERRY

You can't go to bed without eating. We're in the middle of nowhere.

GENE

Fuck you.

*GENE slams his door shut.*

*Beat.*

TERRY

Another drink?

ADELE

Is he...?

TERRY

The company's welcome. We're always looking for someone to get between us—me and Gene. It helps our interactions some.

ADELE

Glad to be of service, I guess. So, where do I hitch up?

TERRY

Oh, we don't have to decide that now... So, whaddaya do?

ADELE

Maybe I steal things.

TERRY

Pretty girl alone in the woods. Who'd a thunk her a criminal mastermind... Well, you know me as well as anyone does. Photographer. Blogger. Town Hero.

ADELE

Look at that.

TERRY

Doing magazine covers the last couple years. Used to be a cop. Right now I'm—transitioning into journalism. If I take a picture of a thing, I might as well tell you in my own words what it is. *(Beat)* So, what kind of person are you?

ADELE

Well, there are only two kinds.

TERRY

The kind to commit a crime. The kind to bring that guy to justice.

ADELE

The sinner and the saint. You've got it backwards. Years of careful study have let me to the conclusion that there is no justice. Everyone's a sinner. Everyone's a saint.

TERRY

That's a paradox.

ADELE

A person's not what they did once, but what they do every day. There aren't different kinds of people because all people are just people. The same rules apply.

TERRY

You didn't give me an answer.

*Beat.*

ADELE

Naturalist... Scientist... Artist... Human... Got anything to listen to?

*Beat.*

TERRY

I brought a harmonica.

ADELE

Something transcendent. Something—more than real. *Really* real. With sugar on top. You got anything like that?

TERRY

I think so.

*Terry heads to Gene's computer. He puts on some Charles Mingus, one of his more mellow and romantic pieces. Jazz fills the cabin. Adele dances alone.*

ADELE

Just that—kiss. (*A few moments after a joyful spin to mellow jazz, she stops before Sarah's picture on the wall*) Something about—the dynamic mind. The human experience. They like to see things that appear to be moving. In photographs everything's still. (*Adele looks at Sarah's face in the photograph, tries to copy it in herself. She poses for Terry, for a beat, smiles and continues. Her eyes are filled with something cool. Her arms move just ever so, like parts of the wind. In her movements, Adele is the embodiment of a winter wind, jagged, awkward, and lighter than anything you've seen. She makes no sound on the floor as she moves*) But in paintings—you know—there's motion. Air—you can draw air—but you can't see it. Welcome to the primate mind... Truth be told, I used to play the violin...

*Terry gets out his harmonica from the bottom of a large bag and starts to play along with the music at a mellow spot. Not expecting it, we hear Terry's soul cry out. It begs for understanding, culls Adele to a spot in a chair on the opposite side of the room. Terry lulls himself to sit opposite her, eventually, worn out completely after a long, dragging, final note.*

TERRY

If you could take over the world, and you could give one country away, which country would it be?

ADELE

It'd be the one with all the gold. Because gold is bullshi—

TERRY

You're beautiful.

*Pause.*

ADELE

You're somewhat sweet.

TERRY

But you're not in love.

ADELE

Love is for musicians and people who think the world's never gonna end. But it's a nice dance. While it lasts.

*They sit and listen to the music a few more beats. They disappear into their own worlds. Gene rushes out of his room.*

TERRY

Genie-boy, we're listening to some Mingus. Join in, we'll have a jam sesh. (*Terry closes the computer*) Oh yeah. And there's a storm a'brewin. The forest rangers say to stay inside.

GENE

What forest rangers?

TERRY

The ones on the radio. Isn't that right Adele?

GENE

What, we have a radio now?

ADELE

Broken.

GENE

Well? Terry.

TERRY

Oh.

GENE

What'd I tell you, we should have come last week. The skies won't be clear.

ADELE

For?

GENE

The project.

TERRY

We know. It's a lofty title. Overwhelmingly descriptive.

GENE

The skies look all right for now... Did I miss the harmonica?

TERRY

'Fraid so.

GENE

Must have been out cold. *(Beat)* Okay, well. No use crying over weather forecasts. Terry, can you get the canned stuff out of your bag.

TERRY

It's in your bag.

GENE

No. Definitely yours.

*Silence.*

GENE

Terry... You packed the food. I watched you pack the food... You *said* you packed the food. Like a half hour ago, you said you had it in your bag.

I was kidding.

GENE

YOU WERE WHAT? ARE YOU...

*Silence.*

*Beat.*

GENE

WE ARE GOING TO DIE.

TERRY

I thought you were bringing it.

GENE

I DIDN'T BRING IT BECAUSE YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE BRINGING IT. THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID. "I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT." THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID.

TERRY

Okay, okay! No use pointing fingers. Look, there's food all over the place... I saw a guy on TV drink his own urine once.

GENE

That's water, Terry. We are surrounded by it.

ADELE

I have a granola bar...

GENE

She has a granola bar.

TERRY

What do you do for food?

ADELE

Once I killed a mouse. I mean typically speaking, I bring a lot more granola bars.

GENE

Typically speaking.

ADELE

I was kinda hoping you guys had something.

WE ARE GOING TO DIE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND? IF WE DON'T FIND SOMETHING TO EAT—

TERRY

I'll take care of it.



GENE  
THERE'S THREE FEET OF SNOW OUTSIDE.

TERRY  
I'll take care of it.

GENE  
What—you gonna take your wallet and go frolicking into town? You'll get lost, you stupid ape.

TERRY  
I'll hunt something.

ADELE  
What?

GENE  
Come again?

TERRY  
Yeah, I'll hunt some food. Come on, I've seen National Geographic. I know how they do it.

GENE  
You don't know the first thing about hunting.

ADELE  
I am sort of hungry.

TERRY  
It'll be great! It's like I've practically done this a hundred times. I'll find a nice squirrel, or a porcupine or—no. NO. Gene, I'mma bring'a back'a BEAR!

GENE  
Even if you could catch a... *bear*... you'd have no way of getting it back.

TERRY  
You just let me figure that out, buddy. You just let me take care of everything. When you see me next, I'll be a certified BEAR KILLER! ... *Bear killer*... *Killer of bear* . . . TO ARMS.

*Terry grabs his hunting rifle. He ensures there are bullets left. He exits. Silence.*

ADELE  
Did he—

GENE  
Yes. He may have also taken some Quaaludes.

ADELE

Not what I was gonna ask, but—good to know... Look, Your brother said it was all right for me to stay.

GENE

Yeah. Yeah—of course. Wherever you want. Make yourself at home.

ADELE

So... Project?

GENE

Astronomy. Dissertation. Terry's... hangin' out.

ADELE

Astronomy. My sister does astrology.

GENE

They're really quite different.

*Beat.*

ADELE

So is that what you're doing up here?

GENE

Yup.

ADELE

I'm on vacation. *(Pause)* You're pretty quiet, huh?

GENE

I don't want any trouble.

ADELE

Trouble? Well, I'm yours to judge. Then again, I'm not the only one being judged.

GENE

So goes the game. Something to drink?

ADELE

I think your brother took care of that one.

GENE

He gets a little ambitious.

ADELE

It'll get you what you want in the end.

GENE

Terry's likes wandering. Comes naturally to him I think. The darker the night, the better... I hope he gets back before the storm hits.

ADELE

Have you seen the lights yet?

GENE

No.

ADELE

They're beautiful.

GENE

No kidding.

ADELE

Saw 'em when I was out the other night. It's like the sky's turning over. Like it's trying to make up its mind about something... What are you looking for?

GENE

You really wanna know?

ADELE

I'm asking.

GENE

Okay, well, I'm looking for a correlation between the patterns in the aurora borealis—the radiation signature—and animal behavior. You've got big cats, big dogs, three dozen bird species, hibernating animals, animals rutting, animals in heat, animals marking their territory—

*Adele grabs him by the coat collar and kisses his cheek.*

*Long beat.*

There's a microphone... in the tree over there.

*Beat.*

To record the birds. There's a nest... And a camera about a half-mile down, and another one at this mouth to a cave we passed on the way up.

ADELE

How scientific.

GENE

It's just a really, really bad joke.

*Beat.*

ADELE  
You flunked out.

GENE  
What?

ADELE  
You did. Admit it.

GENE  
No, I didn't. If I flunked out, why the hell would I be three thousand miles away from home writing a...

*Adele gets in real close and looks him deep in the eyes.*

ADELE  
Because you're angry. You're lost. You don't know what else you've got to lose.

GENE  
You a therapist now?

ADELE  
You lookin' for one?

*Beat.*

GENE  
So are we gonna talk about what—

ADELE  
Bet I know more about the stars than you do.

*Beat.*

GENE  
I doubt it.

ADELE  
Really. I bet I could name every star in the sky right now and I'd be exactly right. You wanna see?

GENE  
Be my guest.

*Long beat.*

ADELE

No. I don't think I'll show you.

*Adele removes a cigarette.*

ADELE

Want one?

GENE

Thanks. I quit.

ADELE

You're a real tease sometimes—you know that?

GENE

I try to make it hard for you.

*Beat.*

*Adele looks out over the deck railing.*

ADELE

Have you learned from your mistakes?

GENE

I like to think so.

*Beat.*

ADELE

It's something I've been thinking about. I do this a lot—wander a lot—probably like your brother.

*Beat.*

You've got a way to go before you figure out what you're looking to find out there.

GENE

Is that any worse than knowing exactly what you want?

ADELE

I guarantee it is.

GENE

Just as soon as you get what you want, you start wanting something else. And what if there's nothing you want? You'll never be let down.

*Adele nurses her cigarette—studies it.  
Pronouncing the words fully:*

ADELE

Want. I—Want.  
I want you to tell the truth.

GENE

You first.

*Beat.*

ADELE

I quit smoking a few times. Didn't work out. I'd climb up on the roof some nights. I *couldn't* be seen, oh no. Were the neighbors to see me from across the street, or *my mother*? No. I could not have my *mother* finding out. It would be like admitting to birthing some fetus late some night and hiding it beneath the pantry. There's just no redeeming it... It's funny. I was so embarrassed. Nothing to be embarrassed about. It's what kids do. We do things like that. We spiral out of control and we just—we do things.

*Beat.*

GENE

You know nobody knows how many stars there are because nobody can find an edge to the universe. We can't calculate any sort of grand mass without an edge. A thing without an edge isn't even a thing. It's everything.

ADELE

Nobody ever saw the stars like I saw the stars. You're wrong. There are so many stars in the sky you couldn't count them if you tried. So many stars you'd get so old you'd turn blind before you finished. But I know exactly how many. I could even count them by name... It must drive you crazy, just looking at a thing and never being able to touch it.

GENE

I guess so.

ADELE

It would drive me crazy.

*Beat.*

GENE

What's that about?

ADELE

It'll help you loosen up. We're just holding hands. It's not like your *girlfriend's* ever gonna find out.

*He backs off.*

ADELE

Come on, I was kidding!

GENE

Would you quit it?

ADELE

Okay. Just trying to be friendly. It's not like there's anybody else out here to be friendly with.

GENE

Can't we just stand here like two people who don't want anything from each other?

*Gene takes out a pack of cigarettes, places two between his teeth.*

ADELE

I mean, we *could*... Hey, what happened to quitting?

*He lights them.*

GENE

It's for quitters. Also it's about the least I can do to stand being in the same room with that guy.

ADELE

He'd never find out.

GENE

Who?

ADELE

You know who. It would be like a secret or something.

GENE

Sorry. Are we—talking about this?

ADELE

What about?

GENE

We're not talking about this.

ADELE

Again. Not too clear on that.

*Beat.*

ADELE

Just if we *were* talking about it, it wouldn't be a betrayal or anything. I do what I want. You do what you want. Whoopdie-do! I don't see what's wrong with it. I mean shit, I am SO board right now.

GENE

Thanks, I guess.

*Adele holds Gene's hand.*  
*Beat.*

ADELE

What's so funny?

GENE

I guess it's nice.

ADELE

It's cold.

GENE

We can't do this.

ADELE

We can't do what?

GENE

That.

ADELE

Okay, do you know what words even are?

GENE

Terry would be upset.

ADELE

Terry wouldn't know.

GENE

No...

GENE

It was a little cold out there.

ADELE

Why are you sitting over there?

GENE

Why are you sitting over there?



Nothing's happening. ADELE

Nothing . . . Nothing? GENE

Nope. ADELE

Nothing. GENE

*Beat.*

I'm only going to kiss you once. GENE

Honestly? This is a lot of work. ADELE

One-time deal. GENE

You got it. ADELE

*They kiss.*  
*Beat.*

So? ADELE

It's like muscle memory, right? You have to do it a few times before you've really got the hang of it. GENE

*A gunshot rings out.*

It's okay. It's just your brother. It's just your brother. Calm down... You really are a nervous little fella, aren't you? ADELE

No. Just—if my brother's caught a bear he might need some... help dragging it in. GENE

You don't really *believe* that. ADELE

GENE

I'm telling you, this guy's reliable. When he sets his sights on something—

ADELE

I don't want to talk about your brother.

GENE

What do you want to talk about?

ADELE

It's not what I want to *talk* about . . .

GENE

Then what, then. What.

*Beat.*

ADELE

Okay. Look over there.

GENE

I'm looking.

ADELE

What do you see?

GENE

I see the stars. I see some . . . red . . . blue . . .

ADELE

And what do you hear?

What do you hear?

*Beat.*

GENE

I—

*The cabin door swings open.*

TERRY

YO KIDS. CHECK THIS OUT.

ADELE

Is he more high?

GENE

Oh my God—he is.

TERRY

I caught a SQUIRREL, man.

GENE

It's covered in blood.

TERRY

Yeah, but—I caught it. *I killed it!* Can you believe that?

*Terry takes out his knife  
And rips into the squirrel's abdomen.  
Gene has to turn away.*

GENE

Yeah, that's great, man...

TERRY

Gotta be careful about the guts. They always talk about that... And when you're finished with 'em...

*Terry tosses the guts out the window.*

TERRY

Use 'em to attract other animals.

ADELE

Great job, Terry.

TERRY

Weak stomach, huh? You know, we should still have that weed, somewhere.

GENE

I gave it to you.

TERRY

You did? Oh, yeah, you did! Hey, we've gotta hit that. It'll help out with both your stomach aches.

GENE

I knew he didn't bring just one.

TERRY

It's purely medicinal.

ADELE

He's right. It really does help.

GENE

Please get off my case.

TERRY

Nobody disturb the baby, okay, I see how it is. You stay in your corner. I'll stay in mine. In the meantime, how about a card game? That's a good normal thing to do. How about it? Adele? You wanna play a card game?

ADELE

Sure. Why not.

GENE

I'm not really in the mood, actually.

TERRY

Oh, that's a pity. I'd have to spit between my teeth to get you to play a game with me.

GENE

There are more important things.

TERRY

There are other things, he says. But does he know of what he says?

GENE

You're drunk and high.

TERRY

I've transcended. There are no other things. Hmm. How is that woman you've got? Remind me of her name?

*Beat.*

GENE

Sarah.

TERRY

Sarah!

ADELE

Sarah.

TERRY

That's right. How is Sarah? Still domestic? You know, specializing in domestic affairs? That degree in uh – you'll have to excuse me.

GENE

Secretarial arts.

*Adele gets another drink.*

TERRY

Secretarial arts! Yeah. She's a real piston, Sarah. She must excite the buttons right off your suit jacket. Hear that, Gramps? Genie wears suit jackets, too.

GENE

He's talking to our dead grandfather.

TERRY

He's buried under the floor boards.

GENE

That is not true. And you're a real shit, Terry.

TERRY

Just lookin' out for what matters.

ADELE

Is she pretty?

GENE

Who?

*Terry nods at Adele.  
Adele is too focused on Gene.*

ADELE

It'd be a shame to think you're stuck with somebody who's no good to look at.

GENE

She does, actually.

*Gene takes another swig.*

ADELE

How'd you two meet? You and, uh—

TERRY

Sarah.

ADELE

Right.

GENE

We met in high school.

TERRY

They were in neuro together.

GENE

Right. We were in class together. That's pretty much the whole story there. Hey, Terry, I think I would like to play that card game.

TERRY

That's what I'm talking about.

*Terry stands to get the cards.*

ADELE

Great idea, Genie!

TERRY

Oh, c'mon. You're on vacation. This is what vacations are for.

GENE

I told you he's adopted, right? The older son, adopted. It's a rarity to be sure. Thank God there's no actual blood between us.

ADELE

So, what's she like? Sarah.

TERRY

Boring.

GENE

I think I've had enough of that for one night.

ADELE

We're getting to know each other. Dive in. Make a mess. She good in bed?

TERRY

He won't say.

ADELE

Oh, I bet she is. You don't see Tiger here checkin' out other girls, do ya?

TERRY

He's the perfect nun.

*As Terry sets up a card game, Gene gets in close to Adele.*

GENE

I don't want to discuss this right now.

ADELE

A girl's allowed to be curious. You never told me you had a girlfriend.

TERRY

Fiancé.

*Gene steps away a little bit further.*

ADELE

Congratulations.

GENE

I didn't think you'd care.

ADELE

Of course I don't care. I've just been playing the wrong game with you.

GENE

I can't possibly think of what game that might be.

ADELE

I'm going to make you wish crawling out of your mother was the most traumatic experience you'd ever have to go through. Excuse me.

*Adele pushes past and takes her seat for the game.*

GENE

You said it was okay.

ADELE

It is. But think of it this way: a game's a game. Games are fun. C'mon, let's have some fun. Hey, Terry, aren't games fun?

TERRY

SURE ARE.

GENE

Fuck you.

ADELE

I think you missed your chance, actually.

*Silence.*

GENE

What are you doing?

ADELE

Just being honest. About my *feelings*. Isn't that what you want, everybody to be honest with each other all the time?

GENE

No.

ADELE

Well maybe you should make up your mind about it.  
Until then, you should finish this little game you've started.

TERRY

What are you guys talking about? I feel like I'm in a room with mice.

GENE

We're not talking about anything.

TERRY

Okay, Kings it is!

ADELE

We can't play Kings with three people.

*Adele takes a granola bar and snaps it in thirds, distributes it.*

TERRY

Of course we can! We'll just have to drink slowly.

*Terry brings out three shot glasses.*

GENE

How'd you know to bring three shot glasses?

TERRY

Prepare, prepare, prepare. You know me. You never know when you might have company.  
Am I right?

*Terry pours shots into each of their glasses.*

ADELE

Sure are. Hey, can I go first?

TERRY

Sure thing. You just take it and flip it.

*Adele flips a card.*

ADELE

Two of hearts.



GENE

Two. That's you. You drink.

TERRY

No. She gets to choose someone else to drink.

*To Terry:*

ADELE

You. You drink.

*Terry takes a shot.*

TERRY

Just what the doctor ordered.

ADELE

You said it. Okay, Gene, your turn.

*Gene draws.*

GENE

Queen. What's queen?

TERRY

Question queen. You're the new question queen.

ADELE

Whenever somebody asks you a question you have to drink.

GENE

I thought it was the other way around.

TERRY

Oh, who cares. Make a mess, man. We're only young once.

ADELE

What intelligent words.

TERRY

I am a very smart man.

ADELE

You are quite the intelligent man. Gene, isn't your brother the most intelligent man? And so handsome?

GENE

Yeah, I guess.

ADELE

You answered my question. You have to drink.

GENE

This is ridiculous.

ADELE

Drink.

GENE

Terry?

TERRY

I didn't make the rules. The woman says you've got to drink, right?

GENE

Yeah, but—

TERRY

You answered my question, ha! I can't believe you fell for that.

ADELE

Two shots!

*Gene drinks his shot.*

*Then Gene downs Terry's shot.*

GENE

Your turn, Terry.

ADELE

So, Terry, what's your woman situation? Now we all know Gene here has a woman back home. How about you?

TERRY

Na, I'm not lucky like Gene here.

GENE

You act like I'm anything but.

TERRY

Oh, hush, you know I love Sarah to death. She's the best woman I ever danced with.

ADELE

Is that so?

*Adele nudges Gene.*

TERRY

That's right. High school prom. Genie here didn't mind, I took her out for a dance.

GENE

It was very touching.

TERRY

Oh, she's a good girl. That Sarah's a keeper, man. I'm telling you.

ADELE

But no such person for you, huh?

TERRY

I'm afraid not.

ADELE

Hm.

*Draws a card.*

*Terry and Adele put their arms up.*

TERRY

Seven. Touch heaven!

GENE

You're kidding me.

ADELE

You don't know what seven means?

GENE

No!

ADELE

Drink twice!

GENE

This must be what going mad feels like.

*Drinks his and Terry's shots.*

*Holds on a second.*

*Genuine concern:*

ADELE

Hey, you okay? You had a lot pretty quick there. You wanna slow down?

Not a chance. GENE

*Pause.*  
*Adele smiles, issuing a challenge.*

Then drink. ADELE

*Beat.*

You're on. GENE

*Gene drinks.*  
*Adele draws.*

Jack. Never Have I Ever. ADELE

What? GENE

TERRY  
THREE FINGERS NEVER HAVE I EVER!

*Everybody puts three fingers up.*

ADELE  
Never have I ever cheated or helped someone to cheat.

GENE  
What kind of question is that?

ADELE  
Answer the question. Never have I ever cheated or helped someone cheat.

*Nobody puts their fingers down.*

Really? I'm impressed. Looks like we've all got our morality about us, at least.

GENE  
Four.

*Everyone touches the floor.*  
*Gene is late.*  
*Gene drinks.*

TERRY

Oh, that's a shame, man. Here, let me drink, too.

GENE

I got it.

TERRY

What kind of a brother would I be if I didn't support you in your time of need?

*Terry drinks.*

Now that feels good.

*To Adele:*

Doesn't that feel good?

ADELE

Sure does.

*Adele touches Terry's leg.  
Gene stands.*

GENE

Hey, Adele, did I overhear something about a radio earlier?

ADELE

Um, yeah, but—

GENE

Why don't I take a look at it? I can do the—mechanical stuff.

TERRY

What like when I told you to put the car in reverse and instead you ran over my cat?

GENE

Terry, didn't you say you had to do something earlier?

TERRY

Did I?

GENE

Yeah, you were going on about getting some film developed. Something like that.

TERRY

Oh, that's right. Yeah, hey, I really should do that... Okay. It's'bin fun...

*Terry stands, wobbles, exits.  
In another space, he drunkenly develops photographs.*

How'd that feel. ADELE

You know exactly how that felt. GENE

Jealous? ADELE

I have some misplaced affections. GENE

Sex, man. It leads to all sorts of things. Listen. There's something I've been meaning to tell you. ADELE

What's that? GENE

I think I...  
Sort of...  
Love you... ADELE

*Long beat.*

What? GENE

*Adele laughs outrageously.*

That's not funny. GENE

*She can barely breathe.*

LOOK AT YOUR STUPID FACE. ADELE

*Beat.*

I'm sorry. Hey. I'm sorry. ADELE  
C'mon, I'm sorry, okay? I'm just having a little fun.

*Gene suddenly kisses Adele, pulling her in.*

ADELE  
What is this—foreplay?

GENE  
I guess you could call it that.

*He kisses her.  
Somewhere along the way—it becomes not just another kiss.*

ADELE  
Huh.

GENE  
Yeah.

*Beat.*

ADELE  
Huh.

*Beat.*

GENE  
Yeah.

*Terry re-enters.*

TERRY  
Okay, now that that's done—how about this game, ah?

*Terry observes the obvious perplexedness of his party.*

TERRY  
You all right, Adele?

ADELE  
Oh, yeah, I'm fine. It's been a long day.  
Hey, Gene, mind if I just shack up on your bed for a bit?

GENE  
Sure. Sure. Go ahead.

ADELE  
Thanks. See you guys later.

*Adele exits.*

TERRY

Gene, there's something I've been meaning to tell you.

GENE

I don't know if now's the right time.

TERRY

I think I'm in love with Adele.

*Beat.*

GENE

Na.

TERRY

Yeah.

*Beat.*

GENE

Na.

TERRY

Yeah.

GENE

Na.

TERRY

Yeah, man. You don't understand what this feels like. I think I really love her. I mean, c'mon, when was the last time you saw me this happy about a girl? I could kill myself. I can't believe I didn't see it before... Hey.

*He pats Gene on the back and almost knocks him over.*

GENE

What?

TERRY

You gotta tell her for me.

I have to tell her?

I drank too much.

Yeah. Yeah, you did.

You feel a certain way, you should talk about how you feel. *We*—should talk about how *me* feel more, you know? Yeah... I did, didn't I... You're right. Duh...



*Hits his forehead on his palm.*

TERRY

Yeah.

*Silence.*

TERRY

It would be nice—though. To be not alone, you know.

GENE

Yeah.

*Beat.*

TERRY

I'm gonna go develop some shit.  
Don't eat dinner without me.

GENE

Sure thing, bud.

*Terry exits.*

*Gene stands alone a moment before knocking on his own door.*

*Adele enters and stands in the doorway.*

*Beat.*

ADELE

I can marry us, if you want. I'm an ordained minister.

GENE

I thought you were a painter.

ADELE

There's a website. You pay a fee. I'm an ordained minister and I can marry us. What do you think about that? Everything you ever dreamed up or wanted? Just a little carnival for two, that'll be our life.

GENE

Just a little carnival for two... Nope.

ADELE

So you're a coward? Funny, I didn't peg you for a coward.

GENE

You don't know anything about me.

ADELE

I think I do.

GENE

I'm dying to hear.

ADELE

You think you're some sort of genius, Gene, but you're just like everybody else. You're just as lonely and just as wanting as everybody else and you don't think I see what you see? You're trapped in this skin, man, it's not right. It's not right to deny yourself so much shit. Why do you deny yourself so much? What, you think you've got to be specific with yourself, is that it? You've got to set some ground rules? You're just afraid you'll slip up. You're *that* wild, you'll slip up!

*Long silence.*

ADELE

What?

*Silence.*

ADELE

Cat got your tongue?

*Silence.*

ADELE

You don't think I know what you want? Look in the mirror, kid. That look that's on your face? That's all you have to see to *know*—beyond any measure of a doubt—at a certain point, you're not just in it for the end result. You're in it for the ride... I can see I've had an effect on you.

GENE

Shut up.

ADELE

You're just between a rock and a hard place, aren't you?

GENE

Shut up.

ADELE

When the day comes to get yours, are you gonna say no? You gonna play make believe with your little telescopes and pads of paper? Green for agony. Purple for lust.

*Gene takes her wrists in his hands*

GENE

Shut up.

ADELE

You've got nothing BUT this. The sooner you realize that the better off you'll be.

*Beat.*

GENE

Don't do that.

ADELE

I could make it up to you—if you'd only give me my hands.

*Gene pushes her wrists harder.*

ADELE

Really. This is starting to hurt.

*Gene immediately lets go, suddenly ashamed.*

GENE

Sorry.

ADELE

What? No. *Don't*—apologize. I mean—you don't have to apologize for a thing like that. I was just letting you know. You know, so you could . . . *adjust*—

GENE

I shouldn't have done that.

ADELE

You don't have to stop.

GENE

I shouldn't have done that.

ADELE

No, but... you did.

*Adele grabs Gene and pulls him in.*

ADELE

Come back.

*Gene follows her lead.*

GENE

What am I doing?

ADELE

You're being young. Haven't you ever wanted to be young? Only happens once after all.

GENE

No. I'm being an idiot. Jesus Christ, what are we doing?

ADELE

We're preparing ourselves for the end of the world.

GENE

Fuck you.

ADELE

No. Listen. This is the smartest thing I've ever come up with in my life, so you better listen: We're preparing ourselves for what's to come. Do you know what's to come?

GENE

No.

ADELE

Everything—the end of the world—everything. It's all to come and we *have* to prepare ourselves! Have as many experiences by the time we die so we can make something *of* it all.

*Beat.*

ADELE

Don't tell me you've never wondered what it would be like. Don't tell me you've never wondered what it might be like at the end of the world, just you and your maker?

*Beat.*

ADELE

You think he's gonna judge you bad for this.

GENE

He might.

ADELE

The big guy loves this shit.

GENE

Really.

ADELE

You know about the Mormons? You know about that whole multiple wives crap?

GENE

Yeah.

ADELE

Well it's crap. But the point is, the big guy called for it. He *told* us it was okay. He *informed* us that we could do this. Sex. It's natural. Have it often. What more proof do you need?

*Gene kisses Adele.*

ADELE

You change your mind yet?

GENE

No.

ADELE

I'm not going half way with this. Neither should you. You want it? Come and get it.

GENE

What.  
Right now?

ADELE

Right now.  
C'mon, you know the terms. Either you want it or you don't.

GENE

That's not the decision.

ADELE

If you want it, come and get it. If you don't, don't. We can continue on imagining we're stars if you'd prefer. I liked that. I liked the part about the never being able to touch them. I thought you'd like that part.

GENE

You'll have to forgive me. This is a little bit of an important decision.

ADELE

Frankly, I don't really care right now.

GENE

This is Sarah.

ADELE

Flawed like everybody else.

GENE

You don't have to ask her. Just look at her face. You can't see a wrinkle in that face. She hasn't frowned a day in her life.

ADELE

Bet she hasn't smiled much either.

GENE

What do you know?

ADELE

I pretend to know a lot more than I do. But then again, so do you. You don't know the answer? What are you looking to prove, thinking you can answer every question there is to ask? You stop being so worried about the results you'll see what's right in front of you.

GENE

You'd think we could find some middle ground here.

ADELE

Come. On. You think that's how this works?

GENE

You've got that right.

ADELE

Marry me.

GENE

What?

ADELE

Marry me. We'll go away somewhere. We'll find some little house and we'll have kids and shit, and do all that. Is that what you want me to say? I need you. Now. And you know you need me just as much as I need you, so what's the problem.

GENE

The problem is your name's not Sarah.

ADELE

The problem is you're afraid you'll call me by her name. Or are you afraid you'll call her by mine?

GENE

Don't tempt me to fuck you. I'll fuck you and then I'll kill you and then where will you be.

ADELE

You almost act as if you want it.

GENE

Nothing helps...

ADELE

I try to tell you, it's your decision. You seem to think ignoring that fact will make it go away. The truth is, you cheated and you feel guilty about it.

GENE

Don't call it that. That's not what it was.

ADELE

You tell me.

GENE

I slipped up. There's no reason Sarah needs to know about that. That's the truth.

ADELE

You feel guilty. Truth is, you'd be a pretty big tool if you didn't. I mean, you are about to cheat on your fiancé.

*Gene kisses Adele.  
Beat.*

GENE

Huh.

*Beat.*

ADELE

But the end result is: you've already justified it. You don't want to hurt her, so you're not telling her. That's what you've done. You've made up your mind about it. So?

GENE

I know.

ADELE

I know you know, but just look at yourself, you fucking mess.

*He kisses her.*

ADELE

You're such a kid.

*He tries to kiss her. She pushes him away. She backs away slowly toward the porch.*

ADELE

Listen, we've got to be in a constant state of conflict. Otherwise—otherwise, what's the point? Don't kid yourself, you live for this shit. *(Beat)* You've got to tell me right now. Are we gonna have a problem after this? I don't want to do this if you're gonna regret it.

No. GENE

You gonna feel guilty after this? ADELE

Absolutely. GENE

That's good. That's really good. ADELE

*Adele and Gene disappear into his room.  
Somewhere during the night, the sky lights up in color.  
Adele comes out to watch from the window.  
Gene follows.  
Adele reaches for the cabin door, sees Gene.*

ADELE  
*(A whisper)* You know you can find more out there than squirrels and soggy joints.

GENE  
*(A whisper)* What are you—*Adele!* ...

ADELE  
*(A smile)* You should bring your camera.

*She's gone.  
Gene follows her out.*

ADELE  
*(offstage)* Come on!

Adele!

*She enters and exits.*

ADELE  
You keep running like that you'll never make it when the world ends!

GENE  
WHERE ARE YOU. ADELE.

*He enters and exits.*

ADELE



FOLLOW MY VOICE.

*Enter and exit.  
They land.*

You know that's not funny, right? Like eleven people died in these woods this year. It's...

*He stands there panting, frozen,  
Their faces are illuminated by the sky.  
Long beat.*

ADELE

Three hundred and forty-six trillion stars and only one that gives life to the likes of us. Way better than a cheap fuck, huh?

*In the cabin, Terry removes photos from a tray  
and hangs them to dry.  
Shots of a man buried in snow in the dead of night.  
Terry and Adele stare into the sky.*

ADELE

What animal am I?

*Blank: Gene flashes a photo of Adele.  
Neither one of them react.*

GENE

You're a caribou. Or a moose.

ADELE

I'll be a lynx.

GENE

You can't be a lynx. I'm a lynx.

ADELE

Gray wolf then.

GENE

A wolf..

ADELE

Only a hundred left in nature, baby. But hey. The government says we're not on the edge of extinction anymore.

GENE

Adele why are you in the woods alone?

ADELE

What are you talking about?

GENE

What are you running from?

ADELE

What are *you* running from.

GENE

It doesn't work like that. I ask you and you tell me.

ADELE

C'mon, Gene, you don't want me anyway. I'm—*fucked* up. You think this shit just happens? You think people just meet randomly in the woods and fall in love? Well, they don't. People don't just meet randomly in the woods and fall in love. They—they get to know each other first. They get to know each other and what they've done with their lives. What sorts of people they are. And then you make up your mind about what sort of person, exactly, you want to love... Gene?

*Beat.*

GENE

Look.

ADELE

Where.

GENE

Over there.

*Beat.*

GENE

It's a grey wolf.

*The stage is flooded by an intense surge of color.  
They both watch the lights in awe. Horror. Shame. Love.  
Blackout.*

*Lights rise on Terry, developing photographs.  
He tacks photos to the wall.  
All of a man buried in show and covered in dirt.  
Different angles and frequencies.*

*He stares at his masterpiece.  
His Big Map, now covered in photos from his camera.*

*Gene appears at the door.  
He closes it.*

TERRY

Gene... GENE.

Yeah.

I've been looking for you. I need you to tell me—I need you to tell me what this is. I look at it and all I can see is black. I can't see anything, but I know it's there. I know there's something there but I can't—

*Beat.*

TERRY

—Oh, my God . . .

GENE

Maybe you should sit down.

*Silence.*

TERRY

I really fucked him up.  
I fucked him up, man.

*Beat.*

GENE

What—the guy from the bar?  
It's not the first time you've hit a guy.

TERRY

No. But I fucked him up. I mean it. Look at that. What is that? . . . What is that, huh? What the fuck is that? Who—who would *recognize* him? The guy looks like he was smashed in the face with a fucking brick.

*Terry pulls down a photograph and pushes it in Gene's face.  
Long beat.*

GENE

What the hell is this?

TERRY

I don't know. How would I know?

GENE

Where did this come from, Terry?

TERRY  
WHAT THE FUCK WOULD I KNOW? I DIDN'T TAKE THAT.

*Beat.*

TERRY  
Oh. No . . .  
Oh my God.

*Beat.*

TERRY  
He wasn't hitting back. He wasn't hitting back so I figured I must be doing something right, so I—I kept going.

*Silence.*

TERRY  
You need to call the police. Gene, you have to turn me in.

GENE  
This is okay. The guy's okay.

TERRY  
Did you see these? He's in pieces, man. He's... oh, fuck, I need that weed. Where'd you put that weed . . .

GENE  
You took it.

TERRY  
I took—that's right. That's right, I—

*Finds it in his pocket, crooked and squished.  
He puts it between his teeth and tries to light it.  
He fails.*

GENE  
Terry, I don't mean to be not understanding right now, but there's some stuff I've been thinking about. I think it's a really good idea if we just go home tomorrow. I think it's a really good idea if we just—leave tomorrow and never come back. We can go see Mom or something. I don't want to be here anymore.

TERRY  
Okay... Gene, there's something else. Gene, there's something about Sarah.

GENE

Don't worry about that. Just—it's okay. This shit happens.

It does?  
TERRY

Sure. Sure it does.  
GENE

Yeah.  
TERRY

Yeah.  
GENE

*Beat.*

I slept with Sarah.  
TERRY

*Beat.*

I—  
GENE

It's why I wanted to come up here. I thought I'd get a chance to tell you. About six years ago, at a holiday party. I slept with Sarah.  
TERRY

*Silence.*  
*Gene drinks.*

I know you did, Terry.  
GENE

*Gene drinks again.*

You know?  
TERRY

She told me.  
GENE

How long have you known?  
TERRY

All along, I guess.  
GENE

We were just kids.

TERRY

We are just kids.

*Beat.*

GENE

I slept with Adele.

*Beat.*

TERRY

We're both a little off, now, aren't we?

GENE

There's something wrong with us, yes, if that's what you mean.

TERRY

I suppose so. I suppose that is what I mean.

*They each drink.*

TERRY

This is nice.

GENE

It is.

*The lights of the aurora borealis fill the stage as the brothers look on.  
Gene takes his wallet out of a zippered coat pocket.  
He lays down five twenty-dollar bills.  
They both drink.  
End of play.*