

Sistahs
African American Vernacular English Translation of *Les Belles-Soeurs*
A Foreignization Approach

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Abstract

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In this thesis, in addition to translating the entire play into African American English, I review the history of Black English, its use in American Literature and its translation into French. I discuss the foreignization and domestication approaches used in the translation as defined by Schleiermacher and Venuti. I also compare Tremblay's original play with Burek and Glassco's Standard English translation and my AAVE translation by using Antoine Berman's deforming tendencies as a theoretical and analytical framework to demonstrate how my translation avoids many of the deforming tendencies found in the Standard English translation.

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Introduction

When I first saw *Les Belles-Soeurs* by Michel Tremblay in Quebec City in 1990, I remember wondering what the play would be like in English. I could hardly imagine that Joul would work well in Standard English and after considering several dialectal possibilities like Newfoundland vernacular, Australian, Southern American, Cajun, Jamaican, Brooklyn, Boston, Irish, Cockney, or Asian Indian, I decided that African American English might be an interesting solution. I started studying translation in January 2007 and I found that I was still thinking about that particular question. After having read the translations of *Les Belles-Soeurs* in Standard English by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco and in Scottish English by William Findlay and Martin Bowman, I realized that there still was room for another translation. Therefore, this project will be a translation and commentary of Michel Tremblay's *Les Belles-Soeurs* into African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

There are many reasons why African American Vernacular English is an excellent choice for French Canadian Joul. They are both important variations of French and English. They are both spoken in North America, and to some extent both are spoken in Montreal since there is an African American community in Montreal (Williams 1997: 113). Joul and AAVE were once considered inferior to Standard French and Standard English. Both variations were considered a dialect of the working class and of a repressed people (this is still true today, though less so than in the 1960s). Culturally, African Americans and Quebecers have some common ground. They both had to fight for equality in their own country, Quebecers for language rights and African Americans for

civil liberties. They both have a rich culture of language, literature and music. Both dialects are filled with vibrant expressions, rich vocabulary, and lively intonations.

Why should an American of European ancestry attempt to write in Black English, a sociolect that is not his own? I feel that AAVE is a part of me for several reasons. In the 1970s, I grew up watching African American television shows like: Sanford and Son, The Jeffersons, Good Times, Fat Albert, Different Strokes and What's Happening. I did my first degree in Baltimore, Maryland, where I was exposed to African American English every day for almost four years. I certainly would not be the first white person to write for black characters. Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, Mark Twain, Thomas Dixon, Margaret Mitchell and William Faulkner, to name just a few, all gave voice to black characters in their novels (Rickford 2000: 14).

When I came to Quebec in 1989 from Pennsylvania, I could only read and write French; I learned to speak and understand French in Quebec City. Although I studied Standard French at L'Université Laval, what I learned outside of class was often Joul. In the campus residence, where I spent three semesters, I was meeting Quebecers from all over the province. When I saw movies in French I wasn't able to understand them very well, but when I saw a performance of Les Belles-Soeurs in 1990, I was pleased to discover that I could understand almost every line. The characters in the play spoke like many of the Quebecers I was meeting on campus and throughout the city.

For my thesis, in addition to translating the entire play into African American English, I will discuss the history of Black English, its use in American Literature and its

translation into French. I will compare Tremblay's original play with Burek and Glassco's Standard English translation and my AAVE translation by using Antoine Berman's deforming tendencies as a theoretical and analytical framework to demonstrate how my translation avoids many of the deforming tendencies found in the Standard English translation. I will discuss the foreignization and domestication approaches used in the translation as defined by Schleiermacher and Venuti. I chose these approaches since they adequately provide a good framework for the type of translation into another dialect that I will be attempting with *Les Belles-Soeurs*.

What is dialect? Fromkin and Rodman (1983) state, "When the language spoken by speakers in different geographical regions and from different social groups shows systematic differences, the groups are said to speak different dialects of the same language" (Fromkin & Rodman 1983: 245). Traugott & Pratt (1980) state, "From a linguist's point of view, any language is best viewed as a conglomeration of language varieties which differ with respect to the regional, social, ethnic, sexual, generational, and educational groupings within the society. Standard languages, like Mid-western in the U.S. or Received Pronunciation in England, are simply seen as one variety among many" (Traugott & Pratt 1980: 12). Sociolects are class-based speech (Munday 2001: 104). In this thesis, I will refer to AAVE and Joul as dialects, sociolects, and nonstandard varieties of Standard English and French.

Context

Michel Tremblay

Michel Tremblay was born in Montreal in 1942. His mother was born in Rhode Island though to Quebecois parents and later moved back to Quebec. Tremblay grew up between *Parc La Fontaine* and *le Plateau*, a working class neighborhood of Montreal in the 1940s and 1950s where most people spoke a nonstandard French known as Joual (Jubenville 1998: 9). In 1959, Tremblay finished school at the age of seventeen and wrote his first play, *Le Train*, which was adapted for television five years later. He was a delivery boy for *Les Rotisseries Ti-Coq BBQ* and later worked as a typographer at *l'Imprimerie judiciaire* until 1966. In 1964, he won *le premier prix du Concours des jeunes auteurs de Radio-Canada*. The *Parti Pris* was published at *l'Imprimerie judiciaire* and it was there that Michel Tremblay met Gérald Godin and Jacques Renaud who were in favour of promoting Joual in Quebecois literature.

He wrote *Les Belles-Soeurs* in 1965, although its first performance wasn't until 1968 at the famous *Théâtre du Rideau Vert* (under the direction of André Brassard) (Jubenville 1998: 10). *Les Belles-Soeurs* was considered a scandalous play for two reasons: Firstly, the characters went against the elitist standard because they were working class people living their working class lives. Secondly, it was written in a working class language (including swear words), which went against the elitist norms of the day. The purists wanted Standard French in theatre and novels (Simon 1992: 170). He was the catalyst behind the birth of *Théâtre québécois*, formerly known as *Théâtre canadien français* (Jubenville 1998:42). Tremblay has written a television series, screenplays, musicals,

novels and over twenty plays; he is also a translator. He has won many awards, including four honorary degrees; one is from Stirling University in Scotland for his contribution to Scottish theatre. (Michel Tremblay in Bard of Plateau Mont Royal: February 7, 2009). He still lives in Montreal.

I had the honour of meeting with Michel Tremblay on October 15, 2010 at the Agence Goodwin. I asked him several questions about *Les Belles-Soeurs* and Joual. I also gave him a copy of my translation and read a few pages of it to him. The transcript of the interview is in Annex 1 on pages 51-55.

Les Belles-Soeurs

Les Belles-Soeurs was not the first play produced in Quebec in Joual. *Tit-Coq*, an antiwar comedy/satire about the working class, was written twenty years earlier by Gratien Gélinas in 1948. Although *Tit-Coq* was not written entirely in Joual like in *Les Belles-Soeurs*, much of the dialogue is non-standard French. *Tit-Coq* was extremely popular continuing for two hundred performances in Montreal at a time when a play that went on for fifteen performances was considered a success. Even though the play was successful, it did not serve as a model for other plays since the ‘Horizon of Expectation’ was not present at that time for nonstandard French as it was in the 1960s (Hamelin 1961: 12). In the 21st century, *Les Belles-Soeurs* is still making waves. Inspired by the play, *Geraldine’s Fortune* was released in 2004, a film starring Jane Curtin and Mary Walsh. In 2010, forty-five years after *Les Belles-Soeurs* was written, I went to see the very successful musical version; Daniel Bélanger wrote the musical score.

The story of *Les Belles-Soeurs* is about a housewife, Germaine Lauzon, who wins a million stamps in a contest. These stamps could be traded in for furniture, dishes, and appliances and she would be able to refurnish her entire house. Germaine decides to have a little party and so invites her sisters, sister-in-law and some friends over to help her paste stamps. The play is a drama and a tragedy that is a comedy as well; Tremblay's work is never clearly defined. Each of the fifteen characters has a story, many of which are sad. One sister, Pierrette, had been banned from the house for being 'loose' and for hanging out in nightclubs. One of the girls complains about getting pregnant and Pierrette suggests an abortion. In the end, everybody steals the stamps. Germaine cries, but everybody starts singing *O Canada*, which shows a little bit of absurdity to this play. The whole play is in Joul with the exception of Lisette de Courval who tries to speak proper French, much to the annoyance of her peers. The play mentions several typical activities that housewives in Quebec of the 60s participated in, such as church, bingo and a rosary prayer. The women also complain about housework, children and husbands.

Joul

The French spoken in Quebec differs from French from France in many ways. The Quebecois accent is the first thing Europeans notice. Vowel sounds in Quebec often differ from Standard French: the "a" in *pas* or *pâte* sounds more like an "o"; the "ent" in words like *dents*, *enseignement*, or *bâtiment* tends to be more open; the "i" in words like *simple* or *fil* is more closed; the diphthong "oi" sounds like "oué" as in *moé pis toé*. Most of these differences can be traced back to provinces in France (Tétu de Labsade

1990: 87). Many words and expressions used in Quebec come from Amerindian words like: *caribou*, *ouaouaron* and *canoe*, etc., while others are archaisms no longer used (or used less often in villages or regions) in France like: *barrer la porte*, *il mouille*, *jaser*, *tanner*, etc (Ibid.: 88). Swear words in Quebec differ considerably from France. In France, swear words tend to revolve around the theme of sex (*bordel*, *putain*), whereas in Quebec most swear words are associated with the church: *hostie (ostie)*, *calice (câlisse)*, *tabernacle (tabarnak)*, etc. (Ibid.: 91). There are many anglicisms used in Quebec that are not used in France such as *le muffler*, *caller un pizza*, *c'est le fun*, etc. On the other hand, there are many anglicisms in France that have been replaced with quebecisms in Quebec such as: *la fin de semaine* for *le week-end*, *le stationnement* for *le parking* and *magasiner* for *faire du shopping*. There are also many quebecisms that do not replace English words, but were adopted to express the reality of living in North America such as: *ceinture fléchée*, *tuque*, *banc de neige*, etc. (Ibid.: 94).

Traditionally, Joulal is spoken only in Montreal, while other regions of Quebec speak varieties of Canadian French. However, some people consider all nonstandard French in Quebec to be Joulal. It seems the word itself is a variation of the word *cheval*. At the beginning of the century, new jobs in factories attracted many rural Quebecers to move to Montreal. Over time, many English words entered their everyday language in order to cope with a new reality of English speaking bosses. This mixture of rural French and English became known as Joulal (Tétu de Labsade 1990: 95).

Some typical traits and words in Joulal are the rolled “r” in some areas of Quebec, *moé* for *moi*, *icitte* for *ici*, *po* for *pas*, *sua table* for *sur la table*, *chu* for *je suis*, *y* for *il*, *a* for *elle*, *pis* for *puis*, the letters “t” and “d” become “ts” and “dz”, *marci* for *merci*, *énarver*

for énerver, *pantoute* for *pas du tout*, etc. Some of these characteristics are anglicisms and archaisms. These traits vary from region to region and Joul means different things to different people (Tétu de Labsade 1990: 87). I've noticed that most Quebecers use common Quebecois words like *crème glacée*, *chum*, *blonde*, *cégep*, etc. but might not use contractions such as *pantoute* or *chus*. Others use *pantoute* and *chus*, but might not use *moé* or roll the r's.

Many people think that the word Joul was coined by the editor of *Le Devoir*, André Laurendeau, to describe *le parler populaire québécois*. Even Jean-Paul Desbiens, who wrote *Les Insolences du Frère Untel*, gave credit to Laurendeau. Although it is true that, in 1959, Laurendeau wrote an article about the popular language of Quebec and referred to it as Joul, the word was around long before 1959. However, the word Joul does not start taking on political and ideological weight until the 1960s (Dargnat 2002: 27).

Here is what Michel Tremblay had to say about Joul during my interview:

Jon Eric- How would you define Joul? How has it changed over the last 45 years?

Michel Tremblay- *Le joul est une chose particulière, qui a été inventée par les femmes à Montréal au début du 20e siècle. C'est une espèce de volonté que les femmes avaient de vivre en français à la maison. Elles prenaient des mots anglais que les hommes rapportaient des usines et les traduisaient comme ils entendaient, mais ils les prononçaient en français. Ce qui est formidable avec le joul, ce qui est beau, c'est qu'il est venu des besoins des femmes de parler français. Maintenant, c'est sûr que c'était des gens plutôt ignorants. C'était des gens qui sont pas allés à l'école. Au 20e siècle le joul a beaucoup changé. Ce qui a fait changer le joul le plus c'est l'arrivée de la télé en 1952. On a vu, on a entendu comment les autres parlaient, on*

s'est ouvert au monde. Et, euh, ceux qui parlent joual maintenant, parce que ça existe encore, c'est volontairement. Maintenant, c'est devenu une paresse intellectuelle pour moi, parler joual. On peut garder notre accent québécois sans utiliser les mots jouaux, au pluriel. Alors, qu'à l'époque c'était un besoin, maintenant on sait qu'autre chose existe. Maintenant, qu'on sait qu'autre chose existe, on devrait avoir l'intelligence d'essayer de parler un français meilleur, un peu plus standard, en gardant notre accent. (See Annex page 55)

The use of Joual has also reinforced sovereigntist aspirations by turning the theatre into an ideological launching pad (as with the Quebecois translation/adaptation of Macbeth in 1978 by Michel Garneau). Joual in theatre was inspired in part by American theatre, especially the playwright Tennessee Williams who used the Southern American sociolect in his plays (Venuti 2000: 365). The use of Joual in literature was popular from 1965 to 1973, more or less. Françoise Tétu de Labsade wrote that “*le peuple québécois qu'ils [the writers who used Joual] voulaient rejoindre par le langage ne se reconnaissait pas dans cette forme écrite qui n'était qu'une codification arbitraire de l'oral. Les romans et les poèmes en question ne seront pas lus par ceux à qui ils étaient destinés*” (Tétu de Labsade 1990: 98). Although that might be true for literature, it certainly wasn't always the case for theatre, the lyrics of popular music, or television as can be seen from the popularity of plays by Tremblay, music by Robert Charlebois or *Beau Dompage* and later in television series like La Petite Vie or Les Bougons. These examples demonstrate the orality and desire to listen to Joual, a language that beckons to be heard.

African American English

It is important to distinguish Black English, which is the term given to a variety of English heard throughout the world in the Americas, the Caribbean and Africa, with African American English, referred to as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Ebonics, or Black American English, which is spoken in the United States (McCrum 1986: 184).

Since the first slaves were sent to Virginia in 1619, the English spoken by African Americans has been scrutinized (Fromkin 1983: 259). For more than four hundred years, African American English was seen as an ungrammatical and inferior way of speaking English. However, in the past few decades, African American English has gradually been gaining recognition as a valid variety of English like of that spoken in New York, London or Glasgow (McCrum 1986: 183). Nonetheless, even in the Black community, there are those (like Bill Cosby) who criticize the use of AAVE and strive to promote Standard American English as the norm for the masses, since nonstandard varieties of English can be seen as a hindrance to success.

Black English has its roots with Sabir, a lingua franca used by sailors from the times of the Crusades until the 19th century. Sabir is a mixture of several languages including Spanish, Portuguese and French. Black English words like “pickaninny” from Portuguese, and “savvy” from French most likely owe their existence to Sabir. At first, the slaves communicated in Pidgin English. The word “pidgin” comes from the Chinese pronunciation of business. After a generation of speaking Pidgin English, the language evolved into a creole, probably derived from the Portuguese word *crioulo*, which means a

house-slave. Although it was a simplified version of English, Pidgin English still had rules and grammar (McCrum 1986: 185).

During the slave trade, ethnic groups were separated in order to lower the chances of rebellion. The slaves quickly adopted a type of Basic English, or Pidgin English in order to communicate. (Fromkin 1988: 269). The closest variety of Black English to the original lost Pidgin English of the first slaves is a creole known as Gullah, which is spoken today on the Sea Islands of South Carolina (McCrum 1986: 194). Lorenzo Turner determined that there were 3,938 terms originating from West Africa in the Gullah dialect. Winifred K. Vass, who wrote The Bantu Vocabulary Content of Gullah, discovered 1,891 of these terms as Bantu words that are still used in The Democratic Republic of Congo (Holloway 2003: 13). The isolation of the islands has allowed the Gullah dialect to continue to be spoken by about 250,000 inhabitants to this day. Only recently have American linguists accepted that the many different varieties of Black English around the world have a related continuum (McCrum 1986: 198).

It had been long assumed that British English directly influenced the peculiarities in Southern White English that, in turn, affected African American English. In 1935, a book was published to confirm this belief entitled The Relation of the Alabama-Georgian Dialect to the Provincial Dialects of Great Britain. Even today, the topic is discussed, though it is commonly accepted that West African languages, like Wolof, heavily influenced the sound and vocabulary of Black Americans who in turn influenced the speech of the Southern Whites (McCrum 1986: 203). While visiting plantations in the South, Sir Charles Lyell wrote, in 1849, that white children played with the slave children and consequently picked up ungrammatical English that they kept their whole lives. Until

the age of six, black and white children played together. Although the boys were often sent to the North for education, the girls stayed behind mingling with the slaves and over several generations the Southern Whites began picking up more and more Africanisms in their speech (McCrum 1986: 204).

After the Civil War, most Blacks stayed in the South. However, in the early 20th century, many Blacks left the South for the Northern Cities in order to find jobs in the booming manufacturing industry. Through their rich culture, oral tradition and music, Black Americans began influencing White American English in the North. In the South, Blacks influenced White intonation and sentence structure, while in the North the influence was limited to vocabulary (McCrum 1986: 207). African words like voodoo, tote, banjo, juke, goober, bozo, gumbo and banana have been incorporated into everyday English. Over the years, African American English speakers have enriched the English language with many words like bad-mouth, high five, cool, etc. (Dillard 1972: 118). The word “jazz” comes from the Bantu word “jaja” meaning “to make or cause to dance” (Holloway 1993: 16). During the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement replaced the word “Negro” with “Black” giving rise to terms like Black English, Black History, and Black theatre (McCrum 1986: 218). Cab Calloway, a popular Harlem jazz musician, wrote a list of words in a song called Mister Hepster’s Jive Talk Dictionary. Here are some of the words from his list dating back to 1938. Most of these words and expressions are commonplace in colloquial English, Black and White, today:

“A hummer: exceptionally good- Beat: Exhausted [Ah’m beat! See page 83 of my translation.]- Beat up: sad/tired- Cat: musician in a swing band- Chick: girl- Groovy: fine- Have a ball: to enjoy yourself [Ah have a ball wit’ dem. See page 131.] - Hip:

wise/sophisticated- Hype: build up for a loan/wooing a girl/persuasive talk- In the groove: perfect/no deviation- Jam: improvised swing music- Joint is jumping: the place is lively- Latch on: take hold, get wise to- Mellow: all right/fine- Out of the world: perfect- Pad: bed- Riff: musical phrase- Sharp: neat/smart- Solid: great/swell- Square: an unhip person- Stache: to hide away- Too much: term of highest praise- [She is too much! See page 90.] Yeah, man: an exclamation of assent” (McCrum 1986: 215).

The first thing one will notice with Black American English is the way it sounds. The vowel in “my” and “I” are often pronounced like “mah” and “ah”, and the different vowels in “pin” and “pen” both sound like “pin” in AAVE (Fromkin 1983: 255). [Ah didn’t know... mah stamps... See page 65 of my translation.] [tin times a day! See page 82.] The word “ask” is often pronounced as “ax”. [So he axe me...See page 63.] The unstressed first and middle syllables are often deleted in AAVE in words like: sec(re)t(a)ry, (a)fraid, (be)cause, and (a)bout. [‘Bout twinny-two... See page 65.] [...cuz we paintin’! See page 66.] Studies have shown that Blacks use a wider range of pitch and intonation than Whites and the difference in inflection and tone is immediately noticed (Rickford 2002: 102). These differences are not expressed in writing and would be up to the actors to infer.

The deletion of certain letters is very common in Black American English. The “l” is often deleted when it comes in the middle of a word, as in he’p for help (Clark 1985: 553). [...he’p everyone! See page 67.] The “r” is deleted at the end of a word, similar to but not exactly like in British English, as in yo’ for your. [... you ain’t got yo’ head screwed on right! See page 68.] The “g” is often deleted at the end of a word, especially gerunds, as in walkin’ for walking (Rickford 2002: 104). [Ah’m tellin’ ya Linda... See

page 67.] The final consonant is often deleted, especially if followed by another consonant, as in des' for desk, tes' for test, an' for and, and han' for hand. [An' dat's all she wrote. See page 116.] The voiceless "th" sound is sometimes replaced by "t" or less often by "f", as in tin for thin, tink for think, nutten for nothing, souf for south, mouf for mouth. The pronunciation of "thing" is often more like "thang" (Clark 1985: 553). [...da poor thang, See page 84.] [...Ah don' wanna know nuttin' 'bout it! See page 67.] While researching the frequency of certain spelling variations in rap and dialogue on the Internet, I found more examples of nuttin' than nutten. The voiced "th" is sometimes replaced by "d" or "v" as in dem for them, den for then, and (less often) bave for bathe, mudda or muvva for mother (Rickford 2002: 104). [Den Ah make breakfus'! See page 73.] [...dem keeids... See page 74.] Only two of the fifteen characters in my translation use the "D" sound all of the time while the other characters use it only for emphasis. (See Justification.)

In a New York City survey, 79% of Blacks deleted the final "t" in a word like "just" when the following word began with a consonant, as in "jus' come on over", while only 32% deleted the "t" when the following word began with a vowel, as in "jus' open it". However, with verbs in the past tense as in "missed", only 30% deleted the final "t" sound when the word preceded a consonant and none of the people surveyed deleted the "t" sound before a vowel (Rickford 2002: 108).

In AAVE, there is a greater difference in grammar than vocabulary when compared to Standard English. Geneva Smitherman stated in 1986, "Linguistically speaking, the greatest differences between contemporary Black and White English are on the level of grammatical structure" (Rickford 2002: 109). Sometimes the final "s" is deleted for

plural nouns, though only 1-10% of the time. An exception is made for the words “kids” and “girls” (Rickford 2002: 110). “An’ dem” is used for “and people like him”, as in “John an’ dem” for “John and his friends”. I did not use these last examples in my translation since they are not used very often. The Standard English “these or those books” is often replaced with “them books” or “dem books” in AAVE. [You actually lickin’ all dem stamps? See page 114.] The existential “it is” is often used to replace “there is” and “there are”. [It’s a million of ‘em! See page 113.]

The third-person singular present tense “s” is often deleted, as in “John run” instead of “John runs”, and “it seem” for “it seems” (Dillard 1972: 40). [Heah she go again... See page 72.] In New York City, the third-person “s” was deleted 56-76% of the time (Rickford 2002: 112) and the possessive “s”, as in “that girl’ house” was dropped 57-72% of the time. The future modal “will” is often deleted, as in “she be here soon”. [Whin you think he be back? See page 69.] The habitual “be” is often used in AAVE for repeated actions, as in “He be working every day” (Dillard 1972: 45). [It always be da same wit’ keeids... See page 86.] The verb “to be” is often dropped in the present continuous tense or before adjectives and after pronouns (this is called the “zero copula”), as in “He talkin’ to her now” or “He nice” (Fromkin 1983: 256). [...we paintin’! See page 67] [...she’ stone crazy! See page 88.] The verb “to be” is used more often before nouns, as in “He’s a teacher” and it is not deleted when in the past tense, as in “He was here yesterday”, in the first person singular, as in “I am”, or when the conjugation comes at the end of the sentence, as in “That’s what he is” (Rickford 2002: 115). Here are five present tenses of Black American English as described by Toni Morrison:

1. He runnin’. (He is running.) [Ah bet she’ pushin’ forty-five... See page 118.]

2. He be runnin'. (he is usually running, or He will/would be running.) [Lawd only knows what she be doin' there! See page 126.]
3. He be steady runnin'. (He is usually running in an intensive, sustained manner, or He will/would be running in an intensive, sustained manner.)
4. He been runnin'. (He has been running, at some earlier point, but probably not now.)
5. He BEEN runnin'. (He has been running for a long time, and still is.) (Rickford 2002: 119). [Ah been tryin' ta fo'git mah sistah Pierrette... See page 119.]

The word “done” often replaces “has” or “have” to add intensity, as in “I done had enough” for “I’ve had enough”, [Ah done wasted tin years... See page 143.] though it cannot be used in the negative. “Be done” plus the past participle can sometimes be used to replace “will have” plus past participle, as in: “He be done took” meaning “He will have taken” (Rickford 2002: 120). The word “finna” is sometimes used for a near future event, as in: “I’m finna go soon” for the expression “I’m fixing to go soon” which is also used in White Southern speech (Rickford 2002: 121). [Ah’m finna git me new pots an’ pans... See page 70.] The use of “come” plus “a verb in the gerund” can be used to express anger or indignation, as in this example: “He come walkin’ in here like he owned the place”. As with many other variants of English, “ain’t” is frequently used in Black American English to replace “am not” [Ah ain’t gonna let ya... See page 122.], “isn’t” [Tell me it ain’t you. See page 156.], “aren’t” [Ya ain’t no better than the others! See page 159.], “don’t”, [Ah ain’t gotta pretend ta talk good! See page 75.] “doesn’t” [...she ain’t be worryin’ ‘bout nuttin’! See page 89.], “hasn’t” [No man ain’t nevah bothered wit’ me befo’. See page 104.], and “haven’t” [You ain’t realized that ... See page 68.] (Rickford 2002: 122). Unlike other English variants, “ain’t” in Black American English can be used in the past, as in: “He ain’t go no where” for “He didn’t go anywhere”. The

use of the double negative is common in AAVE as well, as in this example: “I don’t want nothing nobody can’t enjoy” for “I don’t want anything nobody can enjoy”. [It ain’t nobody but mah Aunt Rose. See page 69.] AAVE allows for sentences to begin with “can’t” and “ain’t” to give emphasis, as in: “Can’t nobody beat ‘em” (Rickford 2002: 123). [Ain’t no way we could... See page 66.]

In contrast to Standard English speakers, AAVE speakers do not invert the subject and verb as often in questions, preferring to use rising intonation instead, as in: “This is a microphone too?” [That you, Linda? See page 65.] The use of “whether” and “if” is sometimes dropped in AAVE, as in: “Could you ask her is she (whether she is) Miss or Ms?” and “I asked him could he come (if he could come) with me”. (Rickford 2002: 124) Pronouns are often used to repeat the subject for added emphasis in AAVE, similar to French or Spanish, as in: “My mother, she told me not to come” (Rickford 2002: 125). [Manon, that ninny, she wuz just a peelin’ ... See page 89.] Double or triple models are sometimes used in Black American English, such as: “might could do, may can do, should oughta do, might should oughta do” (Edwards 1991: 167). [There might could be...There should oughta be... See page 102.]

Even if the speaker uses Standard English grammar and vocabulary, many African Americans speak with noticeable difference in intonation and pitch (Jesse Jackson is a good example). It is important to keep in mind that although most Black Americans speak differently from Whites, not all do (Rickford 2002: 4). I have met many Black Americans who speak Standard American English with no discernable difference in pitch or intonation, while others who usually speak Standard English will still use AAVE for emphasis or humour. Most of my African American friends usually speak Standard

English though their pitch and intonation is often different to Standard English. I have also met White Americans who can speak African American English since they grew up in a predominantly Black neighbourhood or who have many African American friends. This phenomenon is even more common today due to the popularity of Rap music.

Theoretical framework

Black English in Literature

Over the centuries, there have been many American authors who have used Black English in their novels including Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, William Faulkner, Harper Lee, Alice Walker, James Baldwin and Maya Angelou. I will briefly illustrate how these authors used African American English and how they were translated into French. These extracts show how AAVE has been used in American Literature over the past three centuries. Although not all of these examples of AAVE have stood the test of time, many of these expressions, pronunciations and grammar uses have remained the same and can be found in my translation.

Edgar Allan Poe, the early nineteenth century author, famous for his tales of mystery and horror, wrote a story in 1843 that inspired interest in cryptography called The Gold-Bug (Thompson 2004: 321). Poe gives the slave character Jupiter a distinct dialect, most likely inspired by Gullah, which is spoken in South Carolina, where the story takes place. (Dillard 1972: 94). Here are two examples of Jupiter's speech and the French translation by Baudelaire:

“Dey ain’t *no* tin in him, Massa Will, I keep a tellin’ on you,” here interrupted Jupiter; “de bug is a goole-bug, solid, ebery bit of him, inside and all, sep him wing-neber feel half so hebby a bug in my life” (Thompson 2004: 323).

-Il n’y a pas du tout d’étain sur lui, massa Will, je vous le parie, interrompit Jupiter; le scarabée est un scarabée d’or, d’or massif, d’un bout à l’autre, dedans et partout, excepté les ailes; -je n’ai jamais vu de ma vie un scarabée à moitié aussi lourd (Poe 1996: 152).

“Why, to speak de troof, massa, him not so berry well as mought be.”
“Dar! Dat’s it!- he neber ‘plain of notin’ –but him berry sick for all dat” (Thompson 2004: 325).

-Dame! Pour dire la vérité, massa, il ne va pas aussi bien qu’il devrait.
-Ah! voilà la question! –il ne se plaint jamais de rien, mais il est tout de même bien malade (Poe 1996: 154).

In these examples, the only trace of sociolect in the French translation is the word ‘massa’ for Master. As a result of this lack of dialect in the translation for the rest of the dialogue, it is almost difficult to imagine that Jupiter would have any differences in his background compared with the other characters in the story. We see this domestication approach to translating Black English in most of the following French translations of black characters in American literature.

Mark Twain’s most famous book, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, is considered a classic in American literature; Ernest Hemingway wrote that all modern literature stems from this novel and it is of such importance that it has thus far been translated into French seven times (Lavoie 2002: 11). Judith Lavoie wrote an analysis of Huckleberry Finn in 2002, entitled Mark Twain et la parole noire. Lavoie analyses the English and French

used in the novel. In the original English, the incorrect and nonstandard speech patterns of Huckleberry Finn, which were common with his dialect of the Mississippi, are corrected and standardized in the French translation by Suzanne Nétillard. Here is one example of her translation for Huckleberry from the first page:

You don't know about me, without you have read a book by the name of "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly (Quoted in Lavoie 2002: 164).

Si vous n'avez pas lu Les Aventures de Tom Sawyer, vous ne savez pas qui je suis, mais ça n'a pas d'importance. C'est M. Mark Twain qui a fait ce livre, et ce qu'il y raconte, c'est la vérité vraie, presque toujours (Quoted in Lavoie 2002: 164).

Her translation does show traces of a relaxed, informal spoken language with *ça, bah!* and *vérité vraie*, etc (Lavoie 2002: 165). However, the few examples of informal speech are not enough to "completely destabilize the expectations of the reader" (Lavoie 2002: 166).

Nonetheless, Nétillard did make use of some Nonstandard French when it came to translating the words of Jim, the slave who was Huck's companion for most of the novel. Here is an example of Jim's speech:

"Yo' ole father doan' know, yit, what he's a-gwyne to do. Sometimes he spec he'll go 'way, en den agin he spec he'll stay. De bes' way is to res' easy en let de ole man take his own way. Dey's two angels hoverin' roun' 'bout him" (Quoted in Lavoie 2002: 154).

-Ton vieux père, il ne sait pas encore ce qu'il va faire. P'têt' qu'il va partir, et p'têt' qu'il va rester. Le mieux, c'est de te tenir tranquille et de le laisser faire comme

il voudra. Y a deux anges qui sont à voltiger autour de lui (Quoted in Lavoie 2002: 154).

Lavoie lists the following examples of dialectal speech in the French translation for Jim: The absence of the negation *ne*, morphological variations such as *je m'ai* instead of *je me suis*, absence of pronouns as in *y avait* instead of *il y avait*, *missié* instead of *monsieur*, etc. (Lavoie 2002: 155). Lavoie explains that Nétillard achieved a difference in speech between Huck Finn and Jim, although she does not recreate Black speech exactly. She also points out that Mark Twain did not recreate Black speech perfectly either (Lavoie 2002: 156). A study done by Lee A. Pederson shows that there are few markers relevant specifically to Black English (Lavoie 2002: 190).

In the French translation of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Suzanne Nétillard, like the other French translations, almost every sentence spoken by Jim (as well as Huck) has the deforming tendency 'the destruction of vernacular networks' as described by Antoine Berman. This fact does not mean that the translation is bad or inferior; on the contrary, Suzanne Nétillard is a reputable translator and her translation of Huckleberry Finn is still read today. The consequence of her standardized French translation is that there is the loss of the dialects that permeate throughout the original. The translation does not transport the reader to the banks of the Mississippi like Twain intended to do with his nonstandard language.

Mark Twain wrote an explanatory note at the beginning of the novel stating that characters use a variety of dialects, "the Missouri negro dialect; the extremist form of the backwoods South-Western dialect; the ordinary Pike-County dialect; and four modified

varieties of this last” (Twain 1994: introduction). This explanation of the different sociolects is left out of the French translations (Lavoie 2002: 151). A note by the editor in Molitor’s translation stated that it was obviously not possible to translate the nuances of the various dialects into French (Lavoie 2002: 152). Nétillard mostly used the domestication approach as described by Lawrence Venuti. However, the names of the characters and places such as the Mississippi and various towns are left in the original English, which implies some use of the foreignization approach. The French translation is enjoyable to read and draws us into the story. The popularity of her translation over the last sixty years should be enough proof for the quality of the work.

William Faulkner is known for using the Southern dialect of the United States in his novels, a sociolect that is similar to African American English in many ways. Annick Chapdelaine and Gillian Lane-Mercier of McGill University wrote an interesting essay entitled *Faulkner, Une expérience de retraduction*, on their retranslation of The Hamlet by William Faulkner. Here is one example of the original and the new translation:

“So me and Pap went on. He had my arm a right smart twisted up in his hand, but when I begun to tell him about what happened yesterday, he changed his mind about licking me.

Fait que moi pis P’pa on est parties. Il me tenait le bras à moitié tordu, mais quand j’ai commence à lui dire ce qui était arrivé hier, il a décidé de pas me fesser
(Chapdelaine 2001: 110).

The team’s retranslation uses Quebecois French instead of French from France, thus getting back to the rural origins of Faulkner’s English (Chapdelaine 2001: 21). Using Quebecois French is an interesting solution to translating the Southern White accent. I

suggest that it could be used to translate other rural North American sociolects, such as spoken in Newfoundland and possibly AAVE.

Joel Chandler Harris started writing about Uncle Remus, a character in the collection of fables who tells the tales of Br'er Rabbit and Br'er Fox, in 1880 (Rickford 2000: 31). Harris memorized the stories and sociolect from the time he worked on a plantation with slaves many years before (Uncle Remus in Wikipedia: April 16, 2011). The language used in these examples provides distinct uses of AAVE, similar to that used by Mark Twain and Edgar Allan Poe, since the speech is supposed to represent how the slaves spoke during the mid 19th century in the Deep South. The text is actually difficult to read due to the many changes in spelling in almost every word. These examples come from the short story "Who Nibbled Up The Butter?" from the collection of stories in The Favorite Uncle Remus.

De creeturs, dey kep' on gittin' mo' en mo' familious wid wunner nudder, twel bimeby, 'twant long 'fo' Brer Rabbit, en Brer fox, en Brer possum got ter sorter bunchin' der perwishuns tergedder in de same shanty (Harris 1948: 252).

"Whar you bin?" sez Brer Fox, sezee.

"I year my chilluns callin' me," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, "en I hatter go see w'at dey want. My ole 'oman done gone en tuck mighty sick," sezee (Harris 1948: 253).

The translations, *L'Oncle Rémus*, by F. Blein, are much easier to read than the original stories, since they are written in Standard French. There are only a few clues that the story might not take place in France. The use of the word *Missié* hints at creole and the name *Frère O'Possum* suggests an Anglophone character. Apart from those two

examples, the story is translated by using the domestication approach. The words in brackets are not in the original.

Missié Lapin Chaparde le Beurre

-Les animaux et les creatures, [dit l'Oncle Rémus en agitant son café au fond de sa tasse de fer battu afin de faire fonder tout le sucre], ils ont continué à devenir de plus en plus familiers les uns avec les autres, si bien que bientôt Frère Lapin, Frère Renard et Frère O'Possum ils ont commencé à mettre ensemble leurs provisions dans le meme hangar (Harris 1949: 50).

- D'où que tu viens? lui dit Frère Renard.

- J'avais entendu les gosses qui m'appelaient, dit Frère Lapin, et il a bien fallu que j'aïlle voir ce qu'ils me voulaient. La vieille est bien malade, qu'il dit (Harris 1949: 51).

Alice Walker wrote The Color Purple entirely in AAVE. Some of the many examples of dialect used throughout the book include the use of the zero copula, dropping the third person singular “s”, “ast” for “ask”, “git” for “get”, “them” for “those”, the use of “ain’t” and double negatives, etc. The language here seems easier to read than the previous examples and then exaggerated at times when compared to modern AAVE. This is because the story takes place in Georgia from the 1890’s to the 1930’s. There is an evolution that takes place in AAVE over the period of time from Mark Twain in the 19th century up until the present, as we will see more of with the next authors.

That a fact? He say.

He come from behind his desk, lean over my chair.

Who your folks? he ast.

I tell him my mama's name, grandmama's name. Grandpa's name.
Who your daddy? he ast. Where you git them eyes?
Ain't got no daddy, I say.
Come on now, he say. Ain't I seen you before?
I say, Yessir. And one time bout ten years ago, when I was a little girl, you give me
a quarter. I sure did preshate it, I say (Walker 1982: 96).

The French translation, *La Couleur Pourpre*, by Mimi Perrin only has no distinguishable examples of nonstandard language though the translation does keep the informal language of the original using spellings such as “*m'sieu*” and words like “*hein*”. Expressions such as “*raconte pas de salads*” and “*j'étais rudement contente*” take the reader back to France (domestication approach).

-Ah bon ? il a dit.

Il fait le tour de son bureau et il vient me regarder sous le nez.

-Qui c'est ta famille?

Je lui dis le nom de ma mère, le nom de ma grand-mère, de mon grand-père.

-Et ton père, c'est qui? Hein? Les yeux, ça vient de qui?

-J'ai pas de père, je lui dis.

-Raconte pas de salads. Je t'ai déjà vue quelque part.

-Oui, m'sieu. Une fois y a dix ans je crois quand j'étais petite, vous m'avez donné des sous. J'étais rudement contente (Walker 1984: 85).

Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* contains many examples of Black English. The setting is in Alabama during the 1930s. The first dialogue is between Calpurnia, the Black nanny, and Scout, the ten-year old Southern White girl. The second dialogue is

between Calpurnia and a Lula, a Black woman at Calpurnia's church. Scout speaks with a Southern accent using features common in AAVE such as "ain't". Calpurnia uses typical AAVE by dropping the "th" before "them", the "ur" in "your", the "a" in "company", the "g" at the end of "ing" words and by using expressions such as "high and mighty".

"There's some folks who don't eat like us," she whispered fiercely, "but you ain't called on to contradict 'em at the table when they don't. That boy's yo' comp'ny and if he wants to eat up the table cloth you let him, you hear?"

"He ain't company, Cal, he's just a Cunningham-"

"Hush your mouth! Don't matter who they are, anybody sets foot in this house's yo' comp'ny, and don't you let me catch you remarkin' on their ways like you was so high and mighty! Yo' folks might be better'n the Cunninghams but it don't count for nothin' the way you're disgracin' 'em- if you can't act fit to eat at the table you can just set here and eat in the kitchen!" (Lee 1960: 32).

"What you want, Lula?" she asked, in tones I had never heard her use. She spoke quietly, contemptuously.

"I wants to know why you bringin' white chillun to nigger church."

"They's my comp'ny," said Calpurnia. Again I thought her voice strange: she was talking like the rest of them.

"Yeah, an' I reckon you's comp'ny at the Finch house durin' the week." (Lee 1960: 158).

In the translation, *Ne tirez pas sur l'oiseau moqueur*, Isabelle Stoianov changes the Standard French in several ways to make it sound nonstandard. She uses "y" for "ils", "ouai" instead of "oui", deletes the "r" in most of the words like *critiquer*, *garcon*, *dévoré*, *rien*, *dire*, *compris*, etc. She also drops the "le" in *table* and *capable* and

contracts several words such as *C'ga'çon*, and *p't'êt*. I see how the contractions could work and how the pronunciation of the “r” would definitely come into play though I’m not sure how effective it is to create the image of dialect by dropping the “r” sound altogether. On the other hand, this translation is certainly Nonstandard French and uses the foreignization approach.

-Y a des gens qui mangent pas comme nous, chuchota-t-elle avec véhémence. Toi t'as pas à les c'itiquer à tab'. C'ga'çon est ton invité et s'y veut dévo'er aussi la nappe, t'as 'ien à di'. T'as comp'is?

-C'est pas un invité, Calpurnia, ce n'est qu'un Cunningham...

-Tais-toi! N'impo'te qui que met les pieds dans c'te maison c't'un invité et va pas p'end'tes g'ands ai'avec comme s'i qu't'étais la'eine! Vot'famille ell est p't'êt mieux qu'les Cunningham mais ça t'pe'met pas d'les mépriser comme ça. Si t'es pas capab'd'te t'ni'bien à tab', t'as qu'à fini'ton déjeuner à la cuisine (Lee 2005: 45).

-Qu'est-ce que tu veux, Lula? Demanda-t-elle d'un ton calme et méprisant que je ne lui avais jamais entendu.

-J'veux savoi'pou'quoi tu t'imballes des gosses blancs dans une église nèg'.

-Y sont mes invités, dit Calpurnia.

Sa voix me parut à nouveau bizarre: elle parlait comme eux.

-Ouais, et j'pa'ie qu't'es invitée chez les Finch pendant la semaine (Lee 2005: 187).

In James Baldwin’s Another Country, written in 1962, most of the language throughout the novel is informal but standard. However, there are a few examples of nonstandard speech in the dialogue between Leona, a white Southern girl, and Rufus, a

black man from New York. Here is an extract with several examples of nonstandard speech used in AAVE as well as Southern White English such as: ain't got, nohow, the use of double negatives and the informal use of Honey.

“Well”, he said, “you ain't going to be drinking alone for awhile.”

She said nothing but she seemed, in the darkness, to tense and blush. She looked out of the window on her side.

“I'm glad I ain't got to worry none about getting you home early tonight.”

“You ain't got to worry about that, nohow. I'm a big girl.”

“Honey,” he said, “you ain't no bigger than a minute.”

She sighed. “Sometimes a minute can be a mighty powerful thing.” (Baldwin 1962: 11).

The translation, *Un autre pays*, by Jean Autret uses informal French with *mon chou* though nothing nonstandard. One unusual thing is that he literally translates the expression “you ain't no bigger than a minute” and adds “as we say in the South”. Rufus is not from the South, Leona is. If they both were from the South, he would not need to explain that and it takes away from the feeling of where we are in the novel. He then mistranslates “a mighty powerful thing” by saying that “sometimes a minute can really be long”. This does not make any sense here.

-Eh bien, dit-il, vous n'allez pas boire seule pendant un bon bout de temps.

Elle ne répondit rien, mais, dans le noir, on eût dit qu'elle rougissait et se raidissait. Elle regarda par la vitre, de son côté.

-C'est bien agréable pour moi de ne pas avoir à vous ramener chez vous de bonne heure ce soir.

-Ni ce soir ni un autre jour. Je suis une grande fille.

-Mon chou, dit-il, vous n'êtes pas plus grande qu'une minute, comme on dit dans le Sud.

Elle soupira.

-Y a des fois où une minute ça peut être drôlement long (Baldwin 1964: 25-26).

Maya Angelou wrote her autobiography, I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings, in an informal but almost Standard English with just a smattering of AAVE uses like 'You children is' and 'momma and poppa'. The setting is in a Black community in Arkansas during the 1930s and 1940s. The translation, Je sais pourquoi chante l'oiseau en cage, by Christiane Besse is written in Standard French with no attempt to show any use of nonstandard or even colloquial language.

Momma stood in front of the tree that we had decorated with silver ropes and pretty colored balls and said, "You children is the most ungrateful things I ever did see. You think your momma and poppa went to all the trouble to send you these nice play pretties to make you go out in the cold and cry?" (Angelou 1969: 53).

Les enfants, vous êtes les choses les plus ingrates que j'aie jamais vues dans ma vie. Croyez-vous que votre maman et votre papa se sont donné la peine de vous envoyer ces jolis joujoux pour que vous alliez pleurer dehors dans le froid? (Angelou 2008: 69).

African American playwright, Don Evans uses AAVE in his play, One Monkey Don't Stop No Show. Some of the many examples of AAVE are: the final consonant is dropped in words like "told" and "correcting"; the auxiliary "did" is contracted into the word

“Whyn’t” and the informal “y’all” is used; “musta” is used for “must have” and “outta” for “out of”; the pronunciation “ah” is added to the end of several words as in “dinnah” for “dinner”; “ain’t” is used a lot as well as double negatives. The setting is the early 80s in Philadelphia. I could not find a translation for this play.

Myra: I done tol’ you about correctin’ me.

Caleb: Whyn’t y’all get a real dog?

Myra: Avery, that brother of yours musta been crazy... musta been stone outta his mind (Evans 1997: 257).

Beverly: Dinnah is served.

Li’l Bits: I ain’t never had no French food except French fries...

Beverly: Ain’t he fine?... Daddy tol’ me I was gon’ like him... Anyway, I like older men... Ain’t none o’ the young ones got no job... (Evans 1997: 273).

These examples demonstrate how AAVE has evolved over the centuries and how it is easier to read a text from the late 20th century than any extract from Uncle Remus, Poe or Twain since there are fewer spelling, pronunciation and grammatical changes in the later texts. Compare this example from “Who Nibbled Up The Butter”: “I year my chilluns callin’ me,” sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, “en I hatter go see w’at dey want” (Harris 1948: 253) to this example from One Monkey Don’t Stop No Show: Ain’t he fine?... Daddy tol’ me I was gon’ like him... Anyway, I like older men... Ain’t none o’ the young ones got no job... (Evans 1997: 273). These extracts (except One Monkey Don’t Stop No Show) also illustrate how, over the centuries, French translation of AAVE has mostly been into Standard, or almost Standard, French (domestication approach).

Foreignization vs Domestication

Friedrich Schleiermacher was a 19th century German theologian, philosopher and translator. He wrote On the Different Methods of Translating in 1813 and was the founder of modern hermeneutics, “a Romantic approach to interpretation based not on absolute truth but on the individual’s inner feeling and understanding” (Munday 2001: 27). Schleiermacher wrote that there were only two methods of translation: the translator either moves the reader towards the author, leaving the author in peace as much as possible, or moves the author towards the reader, leaving the reader in peace as much as possible. Schleiermacher offered the choice between “a domesticating practice, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to receiving cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing practice, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (Venuti 1995: 15). Schleiermacher preferred foreignization and this led Antoine Berman to consider Schleiermacher’s argument as an ethics of translation, giving the translation a place to manifest the cultural other (Venuti 1995: 15). Foreignization disrupts the cultural codes in the target language creating a foreign feel in the reading experience. Venuti suggests that foreignization can be seen as a form of resistance, in the English dominated world, against ethnocentrism, racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism. Some European countries, first in Germany and later in France (during the poststructuralist period), have a history of using foreignization in translation in contrast to the United States and England that prefer the more fluent translation of the domestication approach (Venuti 1995: 16). Domestication is an illusion of transparency by hiding true semantic equivalence in the source text with partial interpretation, thereby reducing or

eliminating differences that translation is supposed to show. Eugene Nida formulated and advocated the concept of dynamic equivalence, which is basically domestication (Venuti 1995: 16). When using dynamic equivalence in translation, the target language is expected to have an effect on the audience equivalent to the effect the original source text was thought to have on the original audience. Hence, the foreign aspect of the text is minimized (Munday 2001: 42).

Deforming Tendencies

Lawrence Venuti is a translation theorist, historian, translator and Professor of English at Temple University. Venuti, like Schleiermacher, preferred foreignization to domestication. Nonetheless, Venuti realized that foreignization is subjective and relative since this type of translation still involves some concepts of domestication as “it translates an ST (source text) for a target culture and depends on dominant target-culture values to become visible when it departs from them” (Munday 2001: 148). Antoine Berman, French linguist and translator, was interested in how foreignization and domestication deal with how much a translation assimilates a foreign text to the translating language and culture and to what extent the differences of that text are evident (Munday 2001: 148). Berman disliked the tendency in translation to ignore the foreign by “naturalization” that Venuti called “domestication”. Berman believed that the proper ethical goal of translation was to “receive the foreign as foreign” (Munday 2001:149). Berman seems to contradict his beliefs on this matter in *L’Auberge du lointain*: “*Malheureusement, le vernaculaire ne peut être traduit dans un autre vernaculaire.*”

Seule les koinai, les langues 'cultivées', peuvent s'entretendre" (Berman 1999: 64). I do not think he was referring to important vernacular languages such as Joual and AAVE since these languages already have proven themselves in works of literature. "Negative analytic" is the term used to describe the examination of the forms of deformation that Berman identifies in his twelve deforming tendencies. He argued that target text generally had a "system of textual deformation" keeping the foreign from coming through (Berman 1985: 286).

In order to describe "negative analytic", Antoine Berman listed the following twelve deforming tendencies (there are thirteen in French) in Translation and the trial of the foreign, translated by Venuti. I will use the deforming tendencies in the next section to compare my AAVE translation to the original French play and the Standard English translation by Burek and Glassco. I will show how my translation into another vernacular was able to avoid some of these deforming tendencies. The twelve deforming tendencies are: Rationalization, which involves syntactic structures like punctuation and sentence order; Clarification, which makes the translation clear by explanation (Berman 1985: 289); Expansion, which makes the text longer with unnecessary overtranslation; Ennoblement, which strives to improve the translation by using a more elegant style or words; Qualitative impoverishment, which lacks the sonorous richness of the original (Berman 1985: 291); Quantitative impoverishment, which implies the loss of lexical variety; The destruction of rhythms, which deforms the word order and punctuation; The destruction of underlying networks of signification, which leaves out important networks of words which give uniformity to the text; The destruction of linguistic patternings, which destroys sentence construction and patternings (Berman 1985: 293); The

destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization, which erases local speech and language patterns; The destruction of expressions and idioms, which replaces idioms or proverbs with an equivalent; and The effacement of the superimposition of languages, which erases evidence of different forms of language (Berman 1985: 295). The English translation left out a thirteenth deforming tendency, *l'homogénéisation*, which unifies the fabric of the original when it is originally heterogenous (Berman 1999: 60).

Comparison and Analysis

The twelve deforming tendencies are impossible to eliminate, or at least impossible to totally avoid in most translations. I will go over several extracts of the translation of *Les Belles-Soeurs* by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco into the Standard English and demonstrate how I was able to avoid some of the deforming tendencies in the African American translation. I decided not to compare Findlay and Bowman's Scottish translation since it is written in a vernacular language like my translation into AAVE, therefore it avoids many of the deforming tendencies found in Burek and Glassco's Standard English translation. The texts start with the opening lines in the original French, the Standard English translation and then my translation into AAVE. I put all colloquial language in **bold** type. As you will see, we are exposed to the richness of Joul from the very first words of *Les Belles-Soeurs*.

(Original) *LINDA LAUZON- Misère, que c'est ça? Moman!* (Tremblay 1972: 15).

(Standard English) LINDA: God, what's that? **Ma!** (Tremblay 1992: 5).

(AAVE) LINDA LAUZON- **Dang**, what's that **Mama**?! (See page 65).

In Burek and Glassco's translation, *Misère* is rendered "God". This would be a destruction of vernacular networks since *misère* is colloquial in Quebec, while "God" is Standard English. The use of the colloquial word "Dang" in the AAVE is in keeping with the vernacular. However, both translations do not convey the sonorous richness of the Quebecois expression *misère*, so they are examples of qualitative impoverishment. Similar to *Moman*, "Ma" and "Mama" are both colloquial for mother.

(Original) GERMAINE LAUZON, *dans une autre pièce- C'est toé, Linda?*
(Tremblay 1972: 15).

(Standard English) GERMAINE: Is that you, Linda? (Tremblay 1992: 5).

(AAVE) GERMAINE LAUZON, in the other room- **That** you, Linda? (See page 65).

Toé is Joulal for *toi* and using "you" which is standard would be destruction of vernacular. "That" for "is that" would make the sentence sound more colloquial though keeping the standard "you".

(Original) LINDA LAUZON- *Oui. **Que c'est ça, les caisses qui traînent dans**' cuisine?* (Tremblay 1972: 15).

(Standard English) LINDA: **Yeah!** What are all these boxes in the kitchen? (Tremblay 1992: 5).

(AAVE) LINDA LAUZON- **Yeah.** What **them** boxes **doin'** in the kitchen? (p. 65).

In this example, the use of “yeah” for yes makes the sentence more informal. Though in both translations, we still have a destruction of linguistic patternings and a destruction of vernacular networks by not rendering “*que c'est ça*” (Joual for *qu'est ce que c'est ça*) into nonstandard English and by adding “the” to “in kitchen”. Moreover, Burek and Glassco’s translation leaves out the verb *traîner* altogether. Nonetheless, the AAVE translation corrects the deforming tendency in part by using “What them boxes doin’ in the kitchen?” “Them” is nonstandard English for “those” and “doin’ ” is nonstandard for “doing”.

(Original) GERMAINE LAUZON- *C'est mes timbres!* (Tremblay 1972: 15).

(Standard English) GERMAINE: They're my stamps. (Tremblay 1992: 5).

(AAVE) GERMAINE LAUZON- **They mah** stamps! (See page 65).

In this example, we see the nonstandard use of the singular *c'est* used before a plural noun. Both Burek and Glassco's translation and the AAVE translation correct this usage, thus making it a destruction of linguistic patternings. However, the AAVE translation keeps the nonstandard language by dropping the verb "to be" with "They mah stamps" instead of "They are my stamps".

(Original) *LES QUATRE AUTRES- J'me lève, pis j'prépare le déjeuner! Des toasts, du café, du bacon, des oeufs. J'ai d'la misère que l'yable à réveiller mon monde. Les enfants partent pour l'école, mon mari s'en va travailler.* (Tremblay 1972: 23).

(Standard English) THE OTHERS: I get up and I fix breakfast. Toast, coffee, bacon, eggs. I nearly **go nuts** trying to get the others out of bed. The kids leave for school, my husband goes to work. (Tremblay 1992: 12).

(AAVE) THE OTHER FOUR- **Ah git up, den Ah make breakfus'!** Toast, coffee, bacon an' eggs. **Ah** have a **helluva time wakin' up da** house. **Da keeids go da school an' mah** man go **da work**. (See page 73).

The first sentence uses Joulal by contracting the pronoun *je* (though this is common in spoken French everywhere) and by using the Quebecism *pis* for *puis*. Burek and Glassco's translation uses Standard English, which is a destruction of vernacular and a qualitative impoverishment. The AAVE translation avoids this by using the vernacular

“Ah git up” for *j’me leve* as well as “den” for *pis*. Although both translations make use of colloquial expressions to convey the expression *J’ai d’la misère que l’yable*, the lack of an exact translation conveying the sonorous richness of the Quebecois expression is an example of qualitative impoverishment. The last sentence is written in Standard French, though the words lend themselves easily to AAVE.

(Original) MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- *Pas le mien, y’est chômeur. Y reste couché.* (Tremblay 1972: 23).

(Standard English) MARIE-ANGE: Not mine, he’s unemployed. He stays in bed. (Tremblay 1992: 12).

(AAVE) MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Not mine, **he outta** work. **He stay** in bed. (See page 73).

In this example of a destruction of vernacular networks, the nonstandard use of *y* for *il* is translated by the standard “he” in both translations. However, in my translation the nonstandard “outta” replaces “out of” and nonstandard third person “stay” is used instead of “stays”. The word *chômeur* in French is a noun while in the English translations an adjective is used. This would be the destruction of linguistic patternings and a possible lexical loss making it a quantitative impoverishment as well.

(Original) *LES CINQ FEMMES- Là, là, j'travaille comme une enragée, jusqu'à midi. J'lave. Les robes, les jupes, les bas, les chandails, les pantalons, les canneçons, les brassières, tout y passe! Pis frotte, pis tord, pis refrotte, pis rince... C't'écoeurant, j'ai les mains rouges, j't'écoeurée. J'sacre. A midi, les enfants reviennent. Ça mange comme des cochons, ça revire la maison à l'envers, pis ça repart! L'après-midi, j'étends. Ça, c'est mortel! J'hais ça comme une bonne! Après, j'prépare le souper. Le monde reviennent, y'ont l'air bête, on se chicane! Pis le soir, on regarde la télévision! Mardi!* (Tremblay 1972: 23).

(Standard English) THE FIVE WOMEN: Then I work. I work like a **demon**. I don't stop til noon. I wash... Dresses, shirts, stocking, sweaters, pants, underpants, brassieres. **The works**. I scrub it, wring it out, scrub it again, rinse it... My hands are chapped. My back is sore. I curse **like hell**. At noon, the kids come home. They eat like pigs, they wreck the house, they leave. In the afternoon I hang out the wash, the biggest pain of all. When that's finished, I start the supper. They all come home. They're tired and grumpy. We all fight. But at night, we watch TV. Tuesday. (Tremblay 1992:12).

(AAVE) THE FIVE WOMEN- **Den Ah** work **like a slave** till noon. **Ah** wash. Dresses, skirts, socks, **sweatahs**, pants, **underweah**, brassieres, **Ah** do it all! **Ah** scrub it, **Ah** wring it, **Ah** scrub it again, **den Ah** rinse. **It's hell**, **Ah git mah** hands all red, **Ah cain't** take it **no mo'**. **Ah** curse. At noon, the **keuids** come back. **Dey** eat like pigs, **dey** tear **da** house up, **den dey** go back **ta** school. In **da aftahnoon** **Ah** hang out **da** clothes **ta** dry. **Ain't dat a bitch!** **Ah cain't** stand it! **Aftah dat Ah** make **dinnah**.

Everyone **come** home, **dey** all in a foul mood, **dey** bicker! **Den** at night, we all watch TV. Tuesday! (See page 73).

In this section, the first expression *enragée* is translated by demon and slave, which makes it a destruction of expressions and idioms in both translations. The Quebecois expression *Là, là* is lost in Burek and Glassco's translation with "then" and only partly regained with my translation of "Den", which makes it another destruction of expressions and idioms. Burek's Standard translation the contracted *J'lave* with the pronoun "I" is a destruction of vernacular networks. I think my translation corrects that by using the vernacular "Ah" for "I". The Quebecois word *pis* is lost in both translations making it a qualitative impoverishment. In my translation, the word *pis* is only partially captured by using "Ah" instead of "I" and then "den" instead of "then". Burek and Glassco's translation of *j't'écoeurée* to "My back is sore" and my translation of "Ah cain't take it no mo' " are examples of quantitative impoverishment due to the lexical loss. My translation conveys the meaning of *j't'écoeurée* more closely and is dialectal so it is not a destruction of vernacular networks like Burek's translation would be. The expression *Ça, c'est mortel!* was translated by Burek to "the biggest pain of all" and by me as "ain't it a bitch", which is a bit more dialectal. Although both translations are colloquial, they do not convey the meaning of *mortel* making them quantitative impoverishment. Burek did not translate the expression *J'hais ça comme une bonne* making it a destruction of expressions. My translation of "Ah cain't stand it!" conveys the colloquial meaning but still lacks the exact meaning of *bonne* making it a destruction of expressions as well. In this short paragraph, I used about forty-six examples of colloquial speech (counting

repetitions) compared to three in Burek's translation. I am not saying that my translation is better than John Van Burek's translation. I am simply stating that my translation conveys a closer representation of sociolect, like Findlay and Bowman's Scottish translation. Findlay stated "Martin Bowman and I felt that by using Scots as our medium of translation we could get closer in letter and in spirit to Tremblay's Quebecois, and his exploitation of different registers of it, than could prove possible using English" (Findlay 1995: 153).

Justification

In my AAVE translation of *Les Belles-Soeurs*, I used the foreignization approach except for one example of domestication regarding the title. Unlike Finlay and Bowman, I translated directly from the original in Joul to AAVE. Findlay stated that Bowman first translated *Les Belles-Soeurs* into a Standard English text since he knew Joul, which Findlay later cast into Scottish English making changes during rehearsal (Aaltonen 2000: 45). Here are some examples of foreignization in the Standard English translation by John Van Burek and Bill Glassco and the Scottish translation by William Findlay and Martin Bowman:

The characters' French names and the French titles, *Mme* for Mrs. and *Mlle.* for Miss are left unchanged. The setting is still in Montreal in 1965. The title, in Burek and Glassco's translation, is also left in French, *Les Belles-Soeurs*. The Catholic religion is kept the same, even though the majority of English speaking Canadians and Scots are

Protestant. The reference to people in France speaking better than people in Montreal is kept, which allows the reader to feel the foreign aspect of the play:

LISETTE DE COURVAL- In Paris, you know, everyone speaks so beautifully and there they talk real French... Not like here... I despise everyone of them! (Tremblay 1992: 54).

I could have chosen to change the setting of Sistahs to New York City, or almost any American city. I also could have given the characters more African American sounding names; even though the French names could be justified by saying the women's families came from New Orleans. I decided to stay with the foreignization approach like the translations by Burek and Glassco and Findlay and Bowman did, thereby keeping alive the Quebec atmosphere of the play. If I had chosen a domestication approach, I feel I would have had to make various changes all throughout the play. Even though there are many Black Catholics in the United States, the majority are Protestant so I would have changed the Catholic references to Protestant (most likely Baptist) references. The rosary scene would become a gospel-singing scene, for example. I would have changed the references made to famous actors from French to American stars. If the play took place in New York City, the four storey apartment buildings with a yard on the first floor in Montreal would be changed to high rises with no yard. When Lisette De Courval speaks about her trip to Paris, I would have to change that to London and make reference to Standard English in England and not French in France. There is also the possibility of updating the play to modern times. That would, however, lead to many changes such as changing Kresge's to Kmart and adjusting references to money for inflation. The

question of abortion would still be morally controversial though the text would have to be modified to compensate for its legalization since the 1960s. However, I did choose to use one example of domestication instead of foreignization when I changed the title of *Les Belles-Soeurs* to *Sistahs* like the Scottish translation of *The Guid Sisters*. Keeping the original title would be another example of foreignization.

Some of these possible changes could be seen as adaptation instead of domestication. David Edney claimed that his directors usually referred to his play translations as adaptations. He thought the word ‘adaptation’ was an expression of approval indicating that the text sounded natural and did not read like a translation. This usage is not usually accepted and Bassnett thought the terms ‘adaptation’ and ‘version’ of translations should not be used at all since they imply more drastic changes than the word translation. Steve Gooch, a translator, stated that he would use the word ‘adaptation’ for plays that serve a secondary purpose such as stating something different from the original (Aaltonen 2000: 45). In my interview with Michel Tremblay, I asked him what he thought of using the domestication approach in his play with regards to changing the setting, names of characters, etc. Here is what he said:

“Il n’y a pas de réponse à ça. C’est prétentieux ce que je vais dire, mais si on le fait pas à Tchekhov pourquoi on le ferait à moi ? Quand on joue une pièce de Tchekhov, ou une pièce de Brecht ou une pièce de Molière, on ne le fait pas. Pourquoi on le ferait ? Does it need it? La réponse c’est ‘Does it need it?’ If it’s not that good of a play you do it to help it. Haha, c’est prétentieux, mais c’est ce que je pense.” (See interview page: 53).

Feedback

Here is some interesting feedback on my translation. After I had finished the translation, I asked an African American friend of mine, Robert Swann, to read it. Here is what he said about it:

“The Black English is very well done in this play. At first, I wasn’t too sure about the spelling but once I got the hang of it, it read smoothly, but I had to read it out loud to understand the full impact (Jon Eric suggested I do so). It seems authentic and if I hadn’t known who wrote it, I might have thought it was done by someone in my family. It made me think of my aunts during the holidays. At times it seemed somewhat exaggerated, but I think it was fine for the drama of it. I do think, regretfully, that there are many people who would not find a translation done by a White American into Black English (Ebonics) very credible. Maybe they don’t need to know.”

I asked Robert’s mother, Retha Swann, to read my translation to see what she thought of it. She is from New York State and has a degree in English. She lived just outside New York City during the 1960s and 1970s. She currently lives in San Diego. Here is what she said about my translation before I made several modifications based on her comments:

“The play was funny. Your spelling is an interesting way to depict African American English in writing. In the 1970s, Blacks did not use the “D” sound very much to replace the “Th” (dem, dat, etc.) as it sounds more like the 1930s or 40s. It was, and is still, used for emphasis and for comedic effect, so you could use it occasionally. Just remove some of them. I think it will be better. These expressions

you asked me about are all good: Ah'd smack the black off yo' face, mah word, Ah cain't believe it, none a' yo' beeswax, tickled, youngins, beat the black off, she got the balls ta be out drinkin', Man alive, ain't nuttin' ta shake a stick at, Sam Hill, Jack Shit, put me down, slacker, you off yo' rockah, and Ah'm all shook up. But the word 'Coins' for money and the expression "Don't even go there" are more 90s. They still could be used in this play so that contemporary audiences can relate. I would not use the expression "ain't got a clue". The expression "in a New York minute" is probably too modern. I would add "girl" to the end of "whatchyou talkin' about" so that it doesn't sound too much like Arnold from Different Strokes. You can use "whoopin" as a synonym for "beating". Hope this is helpful. Good Luck, Retha."

Following Mrs. Swann's advice, I took out the "D" for the voiced "Th" in all but two of the characters, the two older ones, Rheauna Bibeau and Angeline Sauve, since I think they would speak more like people did in the 1930s or 1940s. I also left the "D" in several instances where I thought emphasis was necessary or for comedic effect, like Mrs. Swann suggested I do. I also added "girl" to the sentence "whatchyou talkin' about" on page 76 and changed "beatin" to "whoopin" on page 89 and page 107. I took out "Don't even go there" and replaced it with "donchyou dare" on page 138. I replaced "Ah ain't got a clue" with "Ah ain't got no idea!" on page 144 and "in a New York minute" with "in a heartbeat" on page 150.

One of my African American friends wanted me to take out most of the nonstandard aspects of the language in the translation, with the exception of the pronunciation, which

he agreed with. He thought that since his family and friends do not speak AAVE, it would be realistic to standardize the grammar more. I explained to him that a standard translation had already been written and my translation was meant to sound nonstandard and authentic in as much as it is spoken by certain communities of African Americans. His comments made me realize that speaking Nonstandard English is still frowned upon by many people, including some African Americans. Most African Americans speak both Standard and Nonstandard English (at least to some degree, even if it may only be a question of intonation).

Conclusion

The play, *Les Belles-Soeurs*, takes place during the 1960s but I chose to use 1970s AAVE for several reasons. Mainly, it is because I am more familiar with this particular decade since I grew up watching television series from the 70s. Even in the 80s, I often watched reruns of these shows. Secondly, there are very few television references to AAVE in the 1960s. There was only one series featuring African Americans in the 1960s, *Julia*, and the characters in that show spoke Standard English. There are more references in films during the 1960s, but nothing compared to the 1970s with the dawn of Blaxploitation films, a genre of film dealing with controversial themes surrounding African American culture (Howard 2008: 9). Another important factor is that there were relatively few changes in AAVE from the 1960s to the 1970s. The real changes started with the advent of Rap in the 1980s when hundreds of new slang words were introduced or made more common. Nonetheless, the basic structure of AAVE grammar has remained

relatively unchanged for generations. While writing the translation, I had to imagine how the words would sound, I usually thought of the characters Florence (Marla Gibbs) from the Jeffersons and Aunt Esther (LaWanda Page) from Sanford and Son. Those two characters seem to epitomize charismatic African American women's speech during the 1970s. In translating Les Belles-Soeurs into African American English, I hope I have achieved the feeling of sociolect that the original play offers. My goal was not to create a canon in African American Vernacular English literature translations. There already exists plenty of original works of literature in AAVE dating back hundreds of years (see Bibliography). As stated by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) "The aim of minoritizing translation is 'never to acquire the majority', never to erect a new standard or to establish a new canon, but rather to promote cultural innovation as well as the understanding of cultural difference by proliferating the variables within English: 'the minority is the becoming of everybody'." (Quoted in Venuti 1998: 11). In addition to my lifetime of contact with African American English, I have reviewed my knowledge of AAVE through various sources: reading various works of literature by White authors writing for Black characters as well as reading works by Black authors, watching television shows and films from the 1970s that use AAVE and interviewing some of my African American friends. I intend for this translation to be used in a play performed by African American actors for a North American audience, like the Scottish version The Guid Sisters was a Quebecois play performed by Scottish actors for a Scottish audience. Since the Scottish version was successful in New York City as well as Scotland (Findlay 1995: 149), there would be no reason to think that an African American version would not be successful in Canada or Great Britain as well as in the United States.

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Interview with Michel Tremblay

Jon Eric- Would the Michel Tremblay of the 1960s been surprised to see that in 2010, there would still be a great interest in his play? Why do you think the women of your play still captivate audiences in the 21st century?

Michel Tremblay- *Oui, je l'ai souvent dit, ce n'est pas une pièce qui a été écrite pour être jouée, c'était un exercice de style. J'étais parti de deux personnages qui étaient les deux vieilles qui viennent d'un salon mortuaire, alors je voulais juste écrire (interruption).*

En 1965, j'ai vu un film québécois que j'ai détesté avec André Brassard. Et après, on est allé au restaurant pis on s'est demandé pourquoi on n'avait pas aimé le film en question. On s'est rendu compte que c'était à cause de la langue. C'était un film québécois qui était parlé dans un Mid-Atlantic French. C'était un français que les français ne parlaient pas. Bon, moi je me suis dit je vais essayer d'écrire un petit sketch, une petite pièce de dix minutes juste pour voir si c'était possible de transcrire la langue de ces femmes-là. J'avais pensé à deux vieilles qui viennent d'un salon mortuaire. Au bout de deux jours, au lieu d'avoir deux personnages, on en avait quinze. Alors, c'est une pièce qui a été écrite par besoin, mais c'est pas une pièce qui a été écrite pour être jouée, je pouvais pas imaginer, I was a line typist. À ce moment-là je travaillais dans l'imprimerie, donc je pouvais pas imaginer que cette pièce-là serait jouée. C'était vraiment un exercice pour voir si c'était possible de faire parler ces personnages-là comme dans la vie. Donc, je ne pouvais pas imaginer. La preuve c'est que si j'avais voulu que cette pièce serait jouée un jour, j'aurais pas écrit une pièce avec quinze femmes, parce que je savais déjà que c'était impossible de monter une pièce avec quinze femmes. Je savais que c'était plus facile monter une pièce avec trois ou quatre personnages qu'avec quinze. Donc, non, je ne pouvais même pas imaginer que la pièce serait jouée un jour. »

Jon Eric- *Mais quand la pièce a eu le grand succès, est-ce que vous avez pensé que dans trente ans, elle allait continuer d'être jouée.*

Michel Tremblay- *Non. Ça a pris trois ans avant que John Goodwin, qui a fondé cette agence ici, m'a suggéré qu'il pouvait, peut-être aller à Toronto ou à Vancouver, essayer de vendre la pièce. De moi-même, j'aurais jamais pensé de la faire. Je pensais pas de tout que ce que j'écrivais pourrait sortir du Québec. Les auteurs avant moi, comme M. Gélinas et M. Dubé, écrivaient en français et c'était les acteurs qui mettaient l'accent. Moi, je voulais mettre l'accent dans le texte. J'étais le premier à le faire. Quand on regarde la pièce comme il faut, ces personnages-là sont des stéréotypes de femmes. Il y a celle qui mène une mauvaise vie, il y a la mère de famille, il y a la jalouse, il y a la snob, il y a la petite fille enceinte. Les prototypes qui existent encore aujourd'hui. Même si les timbres n'existent plus, même si le contexte social a changé, les êtres humains restent les mêmes n'importe quand, toujours. Et surtout le fait qu'il y a beaucoup beaucoup d'endroits de théâtre qui lisent d'abord la pièce parce qu'ils apprennent que c'est une pièce avec quinze femmes. Au départ, ça les intéresse beaucoup parce que les femmes partout dans le monde se plaignent que les hommes, les auteurs de théâtre n'écrivent pas pour les femmes. Alors quand ils entendent parlé qu'il y a une pièce qui a été écrite avec quinze femmes, il y a déjà une curiosité. Si ils étaient déçus, ils monteraient pas la pièce, habituellement à cause de ça.*

Jon Eric- What do you think of the musical?

Michel Tremblay- *Le musical que j'ai vu, c'est magnifique. Ce qu'ils ont fait est admirable, c'est extraordinaire.*

Jon Eric- What other plays of yours would you like to be sung?

Michel Tremblay- *Je pense pas à ça. Le projet qu'on a actuellement avec eux, c'est Sainte Carmen of the Main. C'est une de mes pièces. C'est une ben belle pièce. Il fait chanter le cœur, mais le reste de la pièce sera parlé. Sinon je pense pas à ça.*

Jon Eric- If you were to write Les Belles-Soeurs for the first time in 2010, how would the story be different? Would you still choose to write it in Joual?

Michel Tremblay- *Oui je l'écrirais en joual, c'est ben évident. Je pense qu'il faut pas*

penser à ces choses-là, parce qu'on ne peut pas, c'est une pièce qui a 45 ans cette année. Je ne sais pas comment répondre à ça. L'histoire ne serait pas différente, le contexte serait différent. Il n'aurait pas de timbres primes, il y aurait autres choses. Le contexte social serait différent. Mais je pense que la pièce serait la même. La société a eu beau changer, mais les individus restent toujours les mêmes.

Jon Eric- Did you ever consider a Part II? What would happen with Germaine Lauzon and her sisters the following week?

Michel Tremblay- *Non. je sais pas si vous connaissez mes pièces. Même quand la pièce finit bien ou mal, à la fin de mes pièces, souvent on se demande qu'est-ce qui va arriver le lendemain, mais il faut pas l'écrire. Hosanna, par exemple, à la fin de la pièce, quand elle finit de soliloque, elle dit à son chum, « I'm a man, I'm a man », comme il a vécu depuis quinze ans habillé en femme et maquillé c'est formidable pour la pièce. C'est très bien que ça finisse comme ça, mais qu'est qu'il va faire le lendemain? Il faut que le spectateur le demande, mais il faut pas que l'auteur l'écrive.*

Jon Eric- The two translations of Les Belles-Soeurs were basically translated into English using the Foreignization approach. I understand that you would not like to see an adaptation/translation of Les Belles-Soeurs, but how would you feel about a domestication approach? For example, keeping the dialogue and story the same, but changing the characters names, the city, some of the cultural references mentioned (like parks or French actors), and perhaps reference to French in France being changed to English in England.

Michel Tremblay- *Il n'y a pas de réponse à ça. C'est prétentieux ce que je vais dire, mais si on le fait pas à Tchekhov pourquoi on le ferait à moi ? Quand on joue une pièce de Tchekhov, ou une pièce de Brecht ou une pièce de Molière, on ne le fait pas. Pourquoi on le ferait ? Does it need it? La réponse c'est "Does it need it?" If it's not that good of a play you do it to help it. Haha, c'est prétentieux, mais c'est ce que je pense.*

Jon Eric- Do you think les Belles-Soeurs could be made into a film?

Michel Tremblay- No, not really. It was made into a very very very very bad film, four or five years ago.

Jon Eric- Oh it was?

Michel Tremblay- Yeah. What was it called ? *Comment ça s'appelle ? Geraldine's Fortune*. It was horrible! *Ils ont changé le concours. C'est un bon réalisateur, John N. Smith.*

Jon Eric- Do you think the play would have been as successful had you written it in Standard French?

Michel Tremblay- No. It would have been another Dubé play or Gélinas play. We needed to hear that on the stage at that time.

Jon Eric- How did you imagine your play to sound in English before the first translations? Did you have in mind any particular accent or dialect in English?

Michel Tremblay- The first time I saw one of my plays in English, I thought it wouldn't work. I was convinced I would see somebody else's play. So I didn't know how it would sound. I didn't imagine what kind of English it would be translated into. And after seeing it in Toronto, at that time, I thought that every city should have its own translation. So that the people would, I think that a show should be made for the people that are going to see it. It should not be made just for théâtre goers, the people that buy tickets and go and watch it. If it sounds like the people of their own city, it would work better. But that is not possible. But I know that in the United States, they add the accent, they take the same text. When it's played in the West or in the East it is very different.

Jon Eric- Because of the way the actors speak.

Michel Tremblay- They put the accent in the play.

Jon Eric- They don't need to change the words.

Michel Tremblay- No, just the accent.

Jon Eric- How would you define Joul? How has it changed over the last 45 years?

Michel Tremblay- *Le joul est une chose particulière, qui a été inventée par les femmes à Montréal au début du 20e siècle. C'est une espèce de volonté que les femmes avaient de vivre en français à la maison. Elles prenaient des mots anglais que les hommes rapportaient des usines et les traduisaient comme ils entendaient, mais ils les prononçaient en français. Ce qui est formidable avec le joul, ce qui est beau, c'est qu'il est venu des besoins des femmes de parler français. Maintenant, c'est sûr que c'était des gens plutôt ignorants. C'était des gens qui sont pas allés à l'école. Au 20e siècle le joul a beaucoup changé. Ce qui a fait changer le joul le plus c'est l'arrivée de la télé en 1952. On a vu, on a entendu comment les autres parlaient, on s'est ouvert au monde. Et, euh, ceux qui parlent joul maintenant, parce que ça existe encore, c'est volontairement. Maintenant, c'est devenu une paresse intellectuelle pour moi, parler joul. On peut garder notre accent québécois sans utiliser les mots jouaux, au pluriel. Alors, qu'à l'époque c'était un besoin, maintenant on sait qu'autre chose existe. Maintenant, qu'on sait qu'autre chose existe, on devrait avoir l'intelligence d'essayer de parler un français meilleur, un peu plus standard, en gardant notre accent.*

Jon Eric- On page 141, what were the F.B.I. machines?

Michel Tremblay- *It was the first IBM machines. On disait FBI parce qu'elle ne connaissait pas ça. À l'époque les femmes qui travaillaient chez IBM perçaient des trous dans des cartons. Puis, c'est vrai que des femmes faisaient des dépressions nerveuses.*

Jon Eric- On page 151: *les vues françaises, c'est trop réaliste, trop exagéré!* Does she mean to say too unrealistic?

Michel Tremblay- *Elle se trompe avec le mot réaliste, elle pense que c'est exagéré. Elle dit le contraire de ce qu'elle veut dire. Je vais te donner un exemple. Ma mère, qui a été élevée en Saskatchewan, quand elle était fatiguée, elle disait « chu restée » alors que 'rested' en anglais ça veut dire 'reposée', mais elle disait le contraire.*

Extracts of Original Text and Translations

The following extracts from the original play and translations were compared to each other in the previous pages. They are presented here in their entirety for easier consultation.

Les Belles-Soeurs by Michel Tremblay.

(Entre Linda Lauzon. Elle aperçoit les quatre caisses posées au centre de la cuisine.)

Act I

LINDA LAUZON- Misère, que c'est ça? Moman!

GERMAINE LAUZON, dans une autre pièce- C'est toé, Linda?

LINDA LAUZON- Oui. Que c'est ça, les caisses qui traînent dans 'cuisine?

GERMAINE LAUZON- C'est mes timbres!

LINDA LAUZON- Sont déjà arrivés? Ben, j'ai mon voyage! Ça pas pris de temps! (Entre Germaine Lauzon.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ben non, hein? Moé aussi j'ai resté surpris! Tu v'nais juste de partir, à matin, quand ça sonné à porte! J'vas répondre. C'tait un espèce de grand gars. J'pense que tu l'aurais aimé, Linda. En plein ton genre. Dans les vingt-deux, vingt-trois ans, les cheveux noirs, frisés, avec une petite moustache... Un vrai bel homme. Y m'demande, comme ça, si chus madame Germaine Lauzon, ménagère.

J'dis qu'oui, que c'est ben moé. Y m'dit que c'est mes timbres. Me v'là toute énarvée, tu comprends. J'savais pas que c'est dire... Deux gars sont v'nus les porter dans'maison pis l'autre gars m'a faite un espèce de discours... Y parlait ben en s'il-vous-plaît! Pis y'avait l'air fin! Chus certaine que tu l'aurais trouvé de ton goût, Linda...

Les Belles-Soeurs, translated by John Burek and Bill Glassco.

Linda Lauzon enters. She sees four boxes in the middle of the kitchen.

Act I

LINDA: God, what's that? Ma!

GERMAINE: Is that you, Linda?

LINDA: Yeah! What are all these boxes in the kitchen?

GERMAINE: They're my stamps.

LINDA: Already? Jeez, that was fast.

Germaine Lauzon enters.

GERMAINE: Yeah, it surprised me too. They came this morning right after you left. The doorbell rang. I went to answer it and there's this big fellow standing there. Oh, you'd have liked him, Linda. Just your type. About twenty-two, twenty-three, dark curly hair. Nice little moustache. Real handsome. Anyway, he says to me, "Are you

the lady of the house, Mme. Germaine Lauzon?" I said, "yes that's me". And he says, "Good, I've brought your stamps." Linda, I was so excited. I didn't know what to say. Next thing I knew, two guys are bringing in the boxes and the other one's giving me this speech. Linda, what a talker. And such manners. I'm sure you would have liked him.

The Guid Sisters, translated by William Findlay and Martin Bowman.

Linda Lauzon enters. She notices the four boxes placed in the middle of the room.

Act I

LINDA LAUZON: In the name o Christ! Whit's aw this? Maw!

GERMAINE LAUZON (in another room) Is that you, Linda?

LINDA LAUZON Aye! Whit's gaun oan? The kitchen's stowed wi boaxes.

GERMAINE LAUZON: They're ma stamps.

LINDA LAUZON: Whit, thuv come awready? Christ, that wis fastwork.

(Germaine Lauzon enters.)

GERMAINE LAUZON: Aye, it surprised me tae. Jist eftir ye went oot this moarnin the doorbell went an when ah goes tae answer it here' this big fellie. Aw, you'da like him, Linda. Jist your type. Aboot 22, 23 mebbe. Daurk curly hair. Braw wee moustache, ken. Really good-lookin. He says tae me, " Are you the lady of the

house, Mme. Germaine Lauzon?" Ah says, " Yes, that's myself." And he says, "Splendid, I've brought you your stamps." Ah wis that excited ah didnae ken whit tae say. Then two fellies startit cairryin in the boaxes intae the hoose an this ither wan's gien me this big fancy speech. Aw, he wis that weel-spoken, an nice wi it tai, ken. You'da liked him awright, Linda.

SISTAHS, translated by Jon Eric Dietz.

(Linda Lauzon enters. She notices four boxes stacked in the centre of the kitchen.)

Act I

LINDA LAUZON- Dang, what's that Mama?!

GERMAINE LAUZON, in the other room- That you, Linda?

LINDA LAUZON- Yeah. What them boxes doin' in the kitchen?

GERMAINE LAUZON- They mah stamps!

LINDA LAUZON- They here already? Ah cain't believe it! That didn't take long!

(Germaine Lauzon enters.)

GERMAINE LAUZON - Sure didn't! Ah wuz s'prised too! Ya jus' gone out this mornin' whin the doorbell rang. Ah goes ta answer it. It wuz a big brothah. Ah think you'd a liked 'em, Linda. Jus' yo' kinna man. 'Bout twinny-two, or twinny-three, dark curly hair, with a li'l moustache... A real' fine devil. Mmmmm Hmmmm. So he axe me if Ah wuz Madame Germaine Lauzon, lady of the house. Ah say yeah that's me. He says that them mah stamps. Chile! Ah wuz so excited, ya know. Ah didn't know wha' ta say... Two boys brought 'em in the house an' the other boy gave me a kinna speech... He had such a way with words! An' he seemed so nice! Ah jus' know you'd a liked 'em Linda...

Consulted Sources:

Television series:

Julia (1968-1971), The Flip Wilson Show (1970-1974), Good Times (1974-1979), Fat Albert (1972-1985), Sanford and Son (1972-1977), The Jeffersons (1975-1985), Different Strokes (1978-1986) and What's Happening!! (1976-1979).

Films:

Geraldine's Fortune (2004), An Imitation of Life (1959), Check and Double Check with Amos and Andy (1930), Beloved (1991), The Color Purple (1985), St. Louis Blues (1958). Entre les mains de Michel Tremblay (2007)

Blaxploitation Films:

Super Fly (1972), Foxy Brown (1974), The Mack (1973), Let's Do It Again (1975), Cleopatra Jones (1973).

Literature:

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Examples of AAVE

Here is a list of AAVE words and expressions from the translation. Although many of these words, expressions or pronunciations can be found in Standard English or in other sociolects of English, the differences listed here are typical in AAVE and used more frequently. In other words, we would hear them more often in African American communities than in other communities. I found all of these examples in my consulted sources. Each example is only listed once even though it might be repeated several times throughout the text.

Page 65: Mama, That you?, Yeah, Them boxes (those boxes), Doin', They mah stamps, Ah cain't , Sure didn't, Wuz s'prised, Jus', Whin (when), Ah goes, Ta, Brothah, You'd a (would have), 'em (them), yo' (your), kinna (kind of), 'bout (about), twinny (twenty), Mmmmmm Hmmmmm, li'l (little), real' fine devil, axe (asked), them (they're), Chile (child), Ya (You), Wha'ta say (what to). An' (and), Wha'd' he (what did he), Ah dunno (I don't know), tol' (told).

Page 66: Lotta (lot of), Ain't no joke, Ain't no way (there's no way), Goin', Sistahs, Neighbo's, Tanight, Pah'ty, Dontchya, Lemme, It's gonna be (there's going to be), You off yo' rockah, Nevah, Cuz (because), We paintin', Sheeit (shit), Outta (out of), Done had it (I've had it).

Page 67: Nuttin' (nothing), Missy, Ah'm a warnin' ya, git (get), Ain't gonna, Aftah, He'p (help), Lend a han' tomorrow, Axen (asking), Ain't no, Ah'm tellin', Po' (poor), Awready (already) A' (of).

Page 69: Wit' (with), Tanight (tonight), Ovah (over), Evah (ever), Lawd (Lord), 'round Heah (here), Whin you think he be back? (will be back), it fo' you (it's for you), cain't hardly (can hardly), finna (going to, getting ready to-fixing to), whatchya (what do you).

Page 70: Hell no, You watch it, Keeids (kids), Hafta (have to), 'scuse (excuse), 'er (her).

Page 72: ya'd (you would), no way chile, that's all ah evah gonna git, mahself, whay (why), nex' doo' ta her, tiah'd (tired), bustin' mah ass.

Page 73: breakfus', he stay, helluva time, go da work, Den (then), Dey (they), Da (the), Dat (that), ain't dat a bitch!, It be dinnah time, 'em (them).

Page 74: Fools, Ain't no fun.

Page 75: Y'all (you all, everyone), Steel (still), Ah gots ta say (exaggerated for emphasis), Bitchin', Helluva time.

Page 76: Oughta (ought to), Gimme a break.

Page 78: Whatchyou talkin' about , girl? Booty calls, Ho' (whore),

Page 79: Mah Lawd, It's islands, They wen'a fishin', Ya know it girl.

Page 80: Gittin' grief, 'er keeids (her).

Page 81: Nah, Chill out, Whaddy (what do you), We says.

Page 82: You' real' kind, Tin (ten), Man alive, Nex' Saturday.

Page 83: Ah cain't take it no mo', Ah feel ya (I understand you), Thang.
(thing)Like nobody's business, Lawd have mercy, Dat's a damn shame, Mmmmm
Mmmmm Mmm Mmm M!

Page 84: Dat'll learn 'er, Mighty good, What choice do AH got.

Page 85: Ain't it a damn shame, He be makin'.

Page 87: Kin'sa crap, High an' Mighty, She stone crazy.

Page 88: Fo' real, Keeids wuzn't.

Page 89: Girl, you said it! Ain't it da truth, Childrens, Manon be sayin', Ah'd be done,
Beat the black off them (expression), Good ole time, Ya done
good, Ninny (fool), Whoppin', Taters (potatoes).

Page 91: 'stead a' pilin' it up.

Page 92: Tha's the one, Le's, Whaddy mean?

Page 96: Betchyo', 'sides (besides), plen'y a' (plenty of)

Page 102: messin' witchya (with you). There might could be... There should oughta be

Page 104: Ah wuz so embarrassed (used instead of 'blushed' since Blacks show no visible sign of blushing).

Page 107: Ah'd smack the black off yo' face! (expression)

Page 119: Black as mah boots. (expression)

Page 123: Here comes trouble. (common expression)

Page 127: Ah'm gonna 'splain it all.

Page 129: How do it look, Angéline.

Page 131: Ah have a ball wit' dem, Ah'd end up gitten caught.

Page 133: Las' week.

Page 134: he cain't fo'git dat.

Page 138: Donchyou dare, Don' evah try!

Page 143: Ah done wasted tin years.

Page 147: We sure ain't s'pposed ta take, say what

Page 157: All a' y'all!

Michel Tremblay's

Sistahs

A translation of

Les Belles-Soeurs

into

African American Vernacular English

Translation by

Jon Eric Dietz

SISTAHS (1965 Montreal)

ACT I

(Linda Lauzon enters. She notices four boxes stacked in the centre of the kitchen.)

LINDA LAUZON- Dang, what's that Mama?!

GERMAINE LAUZON, in the other room- That you, Linda?

LINDA LAUZON- Yeah. What them boxes doin' in the kitchen?

GERMAINE LAUZON- They mah stamps!

LINDA LAUZON- They here already? Ah cain't believe it! That didn't take long!

(Germaine Lauzon enters.)

GERMAINE LAUZON - Sure didn't! Ah wuz s'prised too! Ya jus' gone out this mornin' whin the doorbell rang. Ah goes ta answer it. It wuz a big brothah. Ah think you'd a liked 'em, Linda. Jus' yo' kinna man. 'Bout twinnny-two, or twinnny-three, dark curly hair, with a li'l moustache... A real' fine devil. Mmmmm Hmmmm. So he axe me if Ah wuz Madame Germaine Lauzon, lady of the house. Ah say yeah that's me. He says that them mah stamps. Chile! Ah wuz so excited, ya know. Ah didn't know wha' ta say... Two boys brought 'em in the house an' the other boy gave me a kinna speech... He had such a way with words! An' he seemed so nice! Ah jus' know you'd a liked 'em Linda...

LINDA LAUZON - So wha'd' he say then?

GERMAINE LAUZON - Ah dunno! Ah wuz so nervous... He tol' me that the company he work fo' wuz real' pleased Ah won the million stamps... that Ah wuz real' lucky... Well Ah didn't know wha' ta say... Ah wish yo' daddy been there... He'd a known wha' ta say, Ah don' even know if Ah said thanks!

LINDA LAUZON – That's gonna be a lotta stamps ta lick! Fo' boxes! A million stamps ain't no joke!

GERMAINE LAUZON - They jus' three boxes. The fourth one's fo' the booklets. But Ah had an idea, Linda. Ain't no way we could lick all them stamps by ourselves! You goin' out tonight?

LINDA LAUZON - Yeah, Robert s'posed ta ca' me.

GERMAINE LAUZON - Ya couldn't wait till tomorrow? Ah had an idea, listen... At noon, Ah called up mah sistahs an' yo' daddy's sistah, then Ah wen' ta see the neighbo's. Ah invited 'em all ta come an' lick stamps tonight. Ah'm gonna have a stamp-lickin' pah'ty! A great idea, dontchya think? Ah got some peanuts, some chocolate, an yo' li'l brothah went fo' soda...

LINDA LAUZON - Mama, ya know darn well Ah be goin' out Thursday nights! That's our night! We goin' to the movies...

GERMAINE LAUZON - Ya cain't lemme alone on a night like this! It's gonna be close ta fifteen of us!

LINDA LAUZON - You off yo' rockah! Ain't fifteen people nevah gonna fit in that kitchen! An' ya know we cain't have 'em in the rest of the house cuz we paintin'! Sheeit, Mama, you outta yo' mind sometimes!

GERMAINE LAUZON - That's right, go ahead an' put me down! Ok then have it yo' way! Ya always git yo' way. Same ole shit! Goddamn life a' misery! Ah cain't even have a li'l happiness without some fool comin' ta screw it all up! Go on ta yo' movies, Linda, go on, go ou' tanight, have it yo' way! Goddamn it, Ah' done had it up ta heah!

LINDA LAUZON - Try an' see it mah way, Mama...

GERMAINE LAUZON - Ah don' wanna see it yo' way, an' Ah don' wanna know nuttin' 'bout it! Don' speak ta me no mo' Missy... Ah sacrificed so much fo' ya an' wha' do Ah git? Jack! Jack Shit! Ya cain't even he'p me out with a li'l favor. Ah'm a warnin' ya, Linda, Ah'm gittin' sick an' tired a' waitin' on ya hand an' foot, you an' the rest of 'em! Ah ain't yo' slave ya know! Ah gotta million stamps ta lick an' Ah ain't gonna do it alone! Aftah all, them stamps there's gonna he'p everyone! Ah need everyone in this house ta pitch in!... Yo' daddy's workin' the night shift, but he tol' me if we don' finish then he'll lend a han' tomorrow! Ah ain't axen fo' the moon! He'p me out fo' once, 'stead of wastin' yo' time with that dumb ass!

LINDA LAUZON - He ain't no dumb ass, ya know!

GERMAINE LAUZON – Oh Ah cain't believe it! Ah always knew you wuz a bit retarded, but not *that* retarded! You ain't realized that he ain't gonna amount ta nuttin'? He don' even make sixty bucks a week! The only place he cain afford ta take ya is the Amherst movie theatre on Thursdays! Ah'm tellin' ya Linda, take it from yo' Mama, ya keep seein' em, an' you gonna end up a loser jus' like 'em! Ya wanna marry a slacker an' be in the po' house all yo' life!?

LINDA LAUZON –That's enough awready, Mama, when you be mad you don' know what you be sayin'! Ok, Ah'll stay home tonight but stop harpin' on me fo' Christ Sakes! First a' all, Robert's gonna git a raise soon, an he' gonna make a lot mo'! An' he ain't as dumb as ya think, ya know! His boss tol' me that he' gonna start makin' some big bucks soon, an' then he' gonna be a manager! When he starts makin' eighty bucks a week, you ain't gonna be laughin' no mo'! Anyway! Ah'll call 'em now. Ah'll tell 'em Ah cain't go ta the movies tonight... Cain Ah invite 'em over ta stick stamps wit' us?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Oh well would ya look at that! Ah jus' git done tellin' ya that Ah cain't stand the sight of 'em, an' ya wanna have 'em ovah tonight! Jesus, Mary an' Joseph, girl you ain't got yo' head screwed on right! Wha' d' Ah evah do ta the Lawd Awmighty that He go an' send me such dumb ass children? Jus' today Ah axe yo li'l brothah ta git me a pound a' onions, an' he comes back with a quart a' milk! What the Sam Hill wuz he thinkin'! Ah gotta repeat everything a hundred times in this house! Who could blame me fo' losin' mah temper? Ah told ya Ah wuz havin' a pah'ty fo' girls, nuttin' but girls. Yo' Robert ain't no faggot is he?

LINDA LAUZON- Awright, awright. You ain't gotta go all Psycho on me ya know
Mama, Ah'll tell 'em not ta come, that's all! Damn! Ah cain't do nuttin' 'round heah.
Ya think Ah wanna stick stamps aftah workin' all day! Cain't ya go clean up in the
livin' room some! You ain't gotta heah everything Ah say ya know!

(She dials a number.)

Hello! Is Robert there? Whin you think he be back? Cain ya tell 'em Linda called?
Yeah Ah'm ok Madame Bergeron, how 'bout you? That's good! Ok then, bye!

(She hangs up. The phone rings immediately.)

Hello! Mama, it fo' you!

GERMAINE LAUZON, enters- You're twinnny years old an' you ain't got the mannahs
whin ya pick up the phone ta say, "just a moment please"?

LINDA LAUZON- It ain't nobody but mah Aunt Rose. Why should Ah be polite wit'
her?

GERMAINE LAUZON, covering up the receiver- Would ya shut the Hell up! She might
hear ya!

LINDA LAUZON- Ah don' give a damn!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Hello! Ah! It's you, Rose... Yeah They heah!... Mmmmmmm
Hmmmmmm! A million! Ah cain't hardly imagine how much a million is, but it
ain't nuttin' ta shake a stick at! Yeah, they gave me a catalogue too. Ah awready had

one, but this one is from this year, so it's bettah... The othah one wuz all beat up... Yeah, there's a lot a' nice stuff ta chose from, you should take a look! It's amazin'! Ah think Ah'm gonna be able to git the whole kit an' kaboodle! Ah'm gonna refurnish mah whole house! Ah'm finna git me a stove, a fridge, kitchen table... Ah think Ah'll take the red one with the gold stars. You see it yet? It is nice! Ah'm finna git me new pots an' pans, new silverware, set a' dishes, sal' n' peppah shakers, the crystal glasses with the "Caprice" design, ya know how nice they is... Madame de Courval got 'em last yeah. She said they cost a fortune! But me, Ah'm gonna have 'em all fo' nuttin'! She' gonna be fumin'... What? Yeah, she comin' tanight! Ah picked out those li'l iron chrome containers that ya put yo' salt, peppah, tea, coffee, sugah, an' everything in. Yeah, Ah'm takin' it all... Ah'm gonna have a Colonial style bedroom set with all the extras. Curtains, dresser mats, that thing ya put on the floor by yo' bed, new wallpaper... No not the ones with flowers. They give Henry a headache whin he sleepin'. Mmmmmmm Hmmmmmm! Ah te' ya, Ah'm gonna have a Beautiful bedroom! In the livin' room Ah'm gonna git matchin' everything with a stereo, a TV, a synthetic nylon carpet, pictures... Mmmmmmm Hmmmmmm! Real nice pictures! Ya know them Chinese pictures in velvet... Whatchya think 'bout that? How long have Ah been wantin' them pictures! Hold on ta yo' hat Girl, Ah'm gonna git me crystal dishes! Yeah, jus' like the ones yo' sistah-in-law Aline got! But Ah think mine's gonna be even nicer! Ah could jus' scream! There's gonna be ashtrays, lamps... Ah think that 'bout covers it fo' the livin' room. There's an electric razor fo' Henri ta shave with, shower curtains... What? Well we gonna put

one in, we cain git one with the stamps! A bathtub, a new sink, new swimmin' suits fo' us all... HELL NO Ah ain't too fat, you watch it sistah! Then Ah'm gonna refurnish the li'l ones bedroom. Ya jus' gotta see what they got fo' keeids bedrooms, it's a sight ta see! With Mickey Mouse everywhere! An' fo' Linda's bedroom... O.K. then you go on an' look at the catalogue latah. Hurry on ovah now, the others gonna be heah soon! Ah told 'em all ta git heah early! Ya know it' gonna take some time ta lick all them stamps!

(Marie-Ange Brouillette enters.)

Ok then, Ah'm gonna hang up now, Madame Brouillette jus' got heah. Awright, yeah... yeah... bye!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Ah gotta te' ya Madame Lauzon, Ah'm jealous.

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah don' blame ya! This is really somethin'! Ya gonna hafta 'scuse me though Madame Brouillette, Ah ain't ready yet. Ah was jus' talkin' with mah sistah Rose... Ah wuz lookin' at 'er from the window... We cain see each othah cross the alley. It's convenient...

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- She comin' too?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Of course, she wouldn't miss this fo' all the gold in the world ya know! Pull up a chair while you waitin' an' have a look at the catalogue. Ya cain see all the nice stuff they got! Ah'm gonna git it all, Madame Brouillette, all of it! The whole catalogue!

(Germaine Lauzon goes into the bedroom.)

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Of course ya'd nevah see me wit' that kinna luck! No way Chile! All Ah evah git is a big pile a' shit, an' that's all Ah evah gonna git! A million stamps! A whole house! Ah te' ya, if Ah didn't hold mahself back Ah'd howl like a hyena! Good things come to dem dat don't deserve it! Wha' d' she evah do, Madame Lauzon, ta deserve this? Nuttin'! Nuttin' at all! She ain't prettier than me, she ain't nicer than me! Them contests shouldn't be allowed! The priest wuz right what he said the other day, them contests should be banned! Whah she gotta win a million stamps an' not me, huh, why! It ain't fair! Ah work hard too! Ah gotta wipe mah keeids asses too! An' mah keeids are even cleaner than hers. Ah work like a dog, dat's whah Ah'm all skin an' bones! While Madame Lauzon, she's a big fat pig! Then Ah gotta live right nex' door ta her an' her nice free house. Ah te' ya, it makes mah blood boil! It really burns me up! Plus, Ah'm gonna hafta put up wit' her shit! It's gonna make her head swell, she' jus' da type! Dat crazy bitch! We' gonna heah 'bout them stamps fo' years an' years! Damn it! Ah gotta right ta be pissed off! Ah don' wanna rot in that hell-hole while Madame Tub a' lard gits ta live a life a' luxury! It just ain't fair! Ah am tiah'd a' bustin' mah ass fo' nuttin'! Mah life is shit! Sheeit! On top of it all, Ah'm po' as hell! Ah'm sick an' tiah'd of livin' this life a' shit!

(During this monologue, Gabrielle Jodoin, Rose Ouimet, Yvette Longpré and Lisette de Courval make their entrance. They all take their spots in the kitchen without

paying any attention to Marie-Ange. The five women stand up and face the audience.
The lighting changes.)

THE FIVE WOMEN, all together- It's a lousy, good fo' nuttin' life! Monday!

LISETTE DE COURVAL (speaks almost standard English)- When the sun's rays start to
caress the little flowers in the fields and the little birds open their little beaks to cry to
the sky above...

THE OTHER FOUR- Ah git up, Den Ah make breakfus'! Toast, coffee, bacon an' eggs.
Ah have a helluva time wakin' up da house. Da keeids go da school an' mah man go
da work.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Not mine, he outta work. He stay in bed.

THE FIVE WOMEN- Den Ah work like a slave till noon. Ah wash. Dresses, skirts,
socks, sweatahs, pants, underweah, brassieres, Ah do it all! Ah scrub it, Ah wring it,
Ah scrub it again, den Ah rinse. It's hell, Ah git mah hands all red, Ah cain't take it
no mo'. Ah curse. At noon, the keeids come back. Dey eat like pigs, dey tear da
house up, den dey go back ta school. In da aftahnoon Ah hang out da clothes ta dry.
Ain't dat a bitch! Ah cain't stand it! Aftah dat Ah make dinnah. Everyone come
home, dey all in a foul mood, dey bicker! Den at night, we all watch TV. Tuesday!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- When the sun...

THE OTHER FOUR WOMEN- Ah git up, Ah make breakfus'. Same ole sheeit, different
day! Toast, coffee, eggs an' bacon... Ah wake up da house, Ah send 'em on their

way. Den Ah iron. Ah work, Ah work, Ah work. It be noon befo' Ah know it an' da keeids are ticked cuz Ah ain't got nuttin' made fo' lunch. Ah make 'em bologna sandwiches. Ah work alllll aftahnoon, den it be dinnah time. We all fight. Den in da evenin' we all watch da TV. Wednesday! It be shoppin' day! Ah walk all ovah Kingdom Come, an' throw out mah back carryin' round those big bags. Whin Ah git home, Ah'm TIIIIIIAH'D. But Ah still gotta make suppah. Whin dey all git home,

Ah'm a real grouch! Mah husband curses, da keeids scream... Den at night we all watch da TV. Thursday an' Friday it be da same ole sheeit! Ah knock mahself out, Ah bust mah ass fo' da bunch a' fools! Saturday, Ah cain't git da keeids outta mah hair. At night, we all watch da TV! Sunday, it be da family's day out: we take da bus ta mah mothah-in-law's. Ah gotta keep mah eyes on dem keeids, put up wit' mah fathah-in-law's dumbass jokes, an' eat da mothah-in-law's grub an' hear everyone go on 'bout how much bettah it is dan mine! Den at night we all watch TV. Ah've had it up ta heah wit' dis life of sheeit! Life a' sheeit! Life a' sheeit! Life a' sheeit!

(The lighting goes back to normal. They all sit down bluntly)

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Well when Ah went to Europe...

ROSE OUIMET- Heah she go again with her Europe. Cain't wait ta hear it! Ah'm sure it gonna go on alllll evenin'! Once she starts, ain't no stoppin' her! She be goin' on an' on with no end in sight!

(Des-Neiges Verrette enters the scene. Quiet salutations are heard.)

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah only wanted to say that in Europe they don't have stamps.

Ah mean, they have stamps, but not these kind. Only stamps for sending letters.

DES-NEIGE VERRETTE- Well that ain't no fun! They cain't git prizes like we cain?

Europe ain't no fun at all.

LISETTE DE COURVAL- That's just not true. It's really lovely anyway.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Well Ah ain't got nuttin' against stamps, they cain come in handy. If it wuzn't fo' stamps, Ah'd steel be waitin' fo' mah meat grinder.

But Ah *am* against these contests!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- What on earth for? They make families happy!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Well that might be, but it sure do make da neighbo's feel like sheeit!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- My Goodness, you sure have a mouth on you, Madame Brouillette! Just look at the way Ah talk. It doesn't hurt to speak well you know.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Ah talk like Ah cain, an' Ah say what Ah GOTS ta say an' dat's all! Ah ain't nevah been ta no Europe so Ah ain't gotta pretend ta talk good!

ROSE OUIMET- You two stop yo' bitchin'! We ain't come here ta bicker all night! Ya keep at it, an' Ah'm gonna cross the street home.

GABRIELLE JODOIN- What on earth is Germaine doin' that she ain't heah yet!

Germaine!

GERMAINE LAUZON, in her bedroom- Ah be right there! Ah'm havin' a helluva time wit' this... anyway, Ah'm havin' a helluva time... Linda, you there?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Linda! Linda! No she ain't here!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Ah think Ah jus' saw her go out.

GERMAINE LAUZON- Don' te' me she ran off that li'l ho!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Cain we start stickin' stamps while we waitin'?

GERMAINE LAUZON- No! Hold yo' horses! Ah gotta te' ya what ta do! Don' start just yet, wait fo' me! Y'all cain chitchat while ya waitin'. Chitchat!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Chitchat, chitchat, how nice...

(The phone rings)

ROSE OUIMET- Jesus! That scared the livin' Christ outta me! Hello! No she ain't heah, but if ya wanna hold on a minute it shouldn't be long, she oughta be right back, Ah think. (She puts down the receiver, steps out onto the porch and yells:) Linda! Linda, the phone!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- So Madame Longpré, how does your daughter Claudette like being married?

YVETTE LONGPRE- Yeah she like it jus' fine. She enjoyin' it. She tol' me all 'bout her honeymoon ya know.

GABRIELLE JODIN- Say, where'd they go?

YVETTE LONGPRE-Well he won a trip ta da Canary Islands. Mmmmmm Hmmm. So they moved up the weddin' date...

ROSE OUIMET, laughing- The Canary Islands? That gotta be full a' birds out there!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Gimme a break, Rose!

ROSE OUIMET- What's eatin' you!?

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Where they at, da Canary Islands?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Mah husband and Ah stopped by there on our last trip to Europe. It's a real' ... a really nice place. The women only wear skirts.

ROSE OUIMET- The perfect spot fo' mah husband!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Well Ah tell ya, they aren't very clean! As a matter of fact, in Europe, they don't bathe!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- That' fo' sure! Just look at that Italian woman next door ta me, she smell somethin' awful.

(The women all burst out laughing)

LISETTE DE COURVAL, insinuating- Have ya ever seen her clothesline on Monday?

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- No, whah?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah've got just one thing ta say: those people don't wear any underwear!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- That ain't so!

ROSE OUIMET- Whatchyou talkin' about, girl?!

YVETTE LONGPRE- Say what!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah swear! Just look next Monday, you'll see!

YVETTE LONGPRE- That's whah they smell ta high heaven!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE - Maybe she hang her drawers in da house outta decency!

(Everyone laughs.)

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Europeans don't know the meaning of decency! All you have to do is watch their movies on TV. It's simply dreadful to see! They kiss in the middle of the street at the drop of a hat! It's in their genes; they're born like that! Ya only need to see the Italian's daughter when she invites over her booty calls... uh... her boyfriends. It's sickening what she does, that girl! Shameful! That reminds me, Madame Ouimet, Ah saw your boy Michel, the other day...

ROSE OUIMET- Not with that ho' again!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- That's the one.

ROSE OUIMET- You musta' mistaken him fo' somebody else! That cain't be him!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Pahleeze! Those Italians are mah neighbors too, ya know!

They were both out on the front balcony... Ah guess they thought nobody could see them.

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- It ain't no lie, Ah saw 'em too Madame Ouimet. An' Ah cain te' ya that they wuz kissin' up a storm!

ROSE OUIMET- Well that li'l scoundrel! Havin' one pig in the house wuzn't enough... When Ah say pig, I mean mah husband... He cain't see a pretty girl on TV without ... without... goin' crazy! Goddamn sex! They nevah git enough of it them Ouimet Men! They all the same in our family, an'...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Come on, Rose, ya ain't gotta hang out yo' dirty laundry in fron' a' everyone...

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Well Ah'd like to hear it...

DES-NEIGES ET MARIE-ANGE- Yeah, ya know it girl!

YVETTE LONGPRE- As Ah wuz sayin' 'bout mah girl's honeymoon...

(Germaine Lauzon comes into the room dressed in her Sunday best)

ROSE OUIMET- Mah Lawd, check you out girl! You goin' to a weddin'?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Heah Ah am girls!

(Greetings, "hello, how are you", etc.) So what wuz y'all talkin' 'bout?

ROSE OUIMET- Well Madame Longpré wuz jus' tellin' us 'bout her Claudette's honeymoon.

GERMAINE LAUZON- Oh yeah? Hello Madame... So, what wuz she sayin'?

ROSE OUIMET- Seems it wuz a real' nice trip. They got ta see all kinna folk. They went on a boat. Ya know, it's islands they visited. The Canary Islands...They wen'a fishin' an' caught fish this big, they say. They bumped into some couples they know... some a' Claudette's girlfriends, so they all came back togethah an' stopped in New York. Madame Longpré wuz jus' fillin' us in...

YVETTE LONGPRE- Well...

ROSE OUIMET- Right, Madame Longpré, it's like Ah say ain't it?

YVETTE LONGPRE- Well Ah mean...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ya cain te' yo' girl, Madame Longpré, that Ah wish 'er lots a' happiness. We wuzn't invited ta the weddin, but we cain be civil anyways!
(embarrassing silence.)

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Ahhhh, it' just about seven o'clock! Time fo' the Rosary!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Oh mah goodness, mah novena fo' Saint Thérèse! Ah'm gonna git Linda's radio...
(She leaves.)

ROSE OUIMET- What on earth she gonna want from Saint Thérèse! 'Specially aftah what she jus' won!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- She might be gittin' grief from 'er keeids...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Cain't be, else she'd a' tol' me...

GERMAINE LAUZON, from Linda's bedroom- Where the Sam Hill she hide it, that radio!

ROSE OUIMET- Well beats me, Gaby, our sistah keeps things to herself sometimes!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- She be tellin' me everything. We all know 'bout yo' big mouth...

ROSE OUIMET- Whaddya mean mah big mouth. You oughta be ashamed of yo'self. Ya know Ah ain't no mo' a big mouth then you is...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Gimme a break, ya know darn well ya cain't keep a secret!

ROSE OUIMET- Ah! Well Ah te' ya... If you think...

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Wasn't it you, Madame Ouimet, who just said you didn't come here to quarrel?

ROSE OUIMET- You there, mind yo' own business! An' Ah didn't say quarrel, Ah said bicker!

(Germaine Lauzon comes back with a radio.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- What the Hell goin' on heah, Ah cain hear y'all way at the othah end of the house!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Ah well, it's our sistah again...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Chill out Rose! You usually the life a' the party... Don' start bickerin' tonight!

ROSE OUIMET- Ya see, we says bicker in our family!

(Germaine Lauzon plugs in the radio. We hear the rosary being recited. All the women kneel. After five or six “Hail Marys” we hear a terrible racket coming from outside. All the women scream, get up and run out of the house.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Good Lawd, mah sistah-in-law’s mothah-in-law jus’ fell from the third floor!

ROSE OUIMET- Did ya hurt yo’self, Madame Dubuc?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Zip it Rose. She surely half dead!

THERESE DUBUC, from far off- You ok, Madame Dubuc?

(We hear some groaning.)

Hold on, Ah’m gonna take the wheel chair off ya! That bettah? Ah’m gonna he’p ya git back in yo’ chair. Come on Madame Dubuc, he’p me out some, don’t jus’ lay there like that! Aooooooh!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ah’m gonna he’p ya Madame Dubuc.

THERESE DUBUC- Thank ya, Mademoiselle Verrette, you’ real’ kind.

(The other women come back in the house.)

ROSE OUIMET- Shut off the radio, Germaine, Ah’m a bundle a’ nerves!

GERMAINE LAUZON- We’ what ‘bout mah novena?

ROSE OUIMET? How fah d' ya git?

GERMAINE LAUZON- The seventh.

ROSE OUIMET- Seven, that's awright. You cain start again tomorrow and nex' Saturday
yo' novena be done!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Yeah but mah novena was fo' nine weeks!

(Thérèse Dubuc, Des-Neiges Verrette come in pushing Olivine Dubuc in her
wheelchair.)

Mah Lawd, Ah hope she wuzn't hurt too bad?

THERESE DUBUC- Nah, she' used to it. She falls outta her chair tin times a day! Man
alive! Ah'm beat! Draggin' dat chair there up three flights a' stairs ain't no joke!
You got somethin' ta drink please, Germaine?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Gaby, git Thérèse a glass a' watah!

(She approaches Olivine Dubuc.)

So how we doin' today Madame Dubuc?

THERESE DUBUC- Watch it now Germaine, she' been bitin' lately! (Olivine Dubuc
tries to bite her hand.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Lawd have mercy you wuzn't kiddin', she dangerous! How
long she been like that?

THERESE DUBUC- Shut off da radio, Germaine, it' gettin' on mah last nerve! Ah'm all shook up aftah what jus' happened.

(Germaine Lauzon reluctantly turns off the radio.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah feel ya, mah dear Thérèse, Ah feel ya.

THERESE DUBUC- Ah te' ya Ah cain't take it no mo'! No mo'! Ya'll don' know the Hell Ah been through since mah mothah-in-law moved in wit' us. Ah! It ain't dat Ah don' love her, da poor thang, she's such a sorry sight, but she' sick an' she' moody like nobody's business! Ah gotta keep mah eyes on her all day long!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- How come she ain't at da hospital no mo'?

THERESE DUBUC- Oh! Ya know Mademoiselle Verrette, mah husband got a raise three months ago, so now da State don' wanna pay fo' his mothah. We'd have ta pay all the hospital expenses.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Lawd have mercy!

YVETTE LONGPRE- Dat's a damn shame!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Mmmmm Mmmmm Mmmm Mmm M!

(While Therese Dubuc is talking, Germaine Lauzon opens the boxes and hands out the booklets and stamps.)

THERESE DUBUC- We wuz forced ta take her outta there. Believe you me she's a real burden. Dat woman, she' 93 years old ya know! I gotta care fo' her like she wuz a baby. I gotta dress 'er, undress 'er, wash 'er...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Sweet Jesus!

YVETTE LONGPRE- Po' thing!

THERESE DUBUC- Ah! It ain't funny! Like dis mornin' fo' example. I tell Paolo, mah youngest: "Mama's goin' shoppin' now, look aftah yo' Granma an' take good care of 'er." Wouldn't ya know whin Ah get back, Madame Dubuc had up an' spilled molasses all ovah herself an' she wuz playin' in it like a jackass! Of course Paolo had long gone! Ah had ta clean the table, the floor, the wheelchair...

GERMAINE LAUZON- What about Madame Dubuc?

THERESE DUBUC- Ah jus' left 'er like that most of the aftahnoon. Dat'll learn 'er! She gonna act like a baby, den Ah's a gonna treat 'er like one, tha's all! An' cain ya imagine, Ah gotta spoon feed 'er!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Good Lawd, Thérèse, Ah sure do feel sorry fo' you!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- You jus' too good, Thérèse!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- It's true, you' mighty good!

THERESE DUBUC- What choice do Ah got? It's the Christian thing ta do!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Ah know you' gonna be rewarded in heaven!

THERESE DUBUC- Ah! But Ah don' complain! Ah just know that the Lawd above is good an' He gonna he'p me through it...

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah swear, ya move me to tears!

THERESE DUBUC- Come now, Madame de Courval, don't git yo'self all worked up!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ah only got one thing ta say, Madame Dubuc, you' a livin' saint on Earth!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Awright, now that Ah handed out the stamps an' booklets, Ah'm gonna git li'l bowls a watah, an' we cain start a stickin', ok? We ain't jus' here ta gab!

(She fills little dishes with water and hands them out. The women start sticking the stamps.)

If Linda wuz heah too, she could he'p me!

(She steps out onto the porch.)

Linda! Linda! Hey, Richard, you seen Linda? We' Ah'll be! She got the balls ta be out drinkin' soda while Ah'm in heah bustin' mah ass! Honey, cain ya tell 'er ta come home right away? You come see me tomorrow an' Ah'll give ya some peanuts an' candy if there' any left! Ok? Go on honey, an' tell 'er ta come back right away!

(She comes back in)

That li'l wench! She promised she wuz gonna stay.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- It always be da same wit' keeids...

THERESE DUBUC! Ah! Ain't it a damn shame!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Don' remind me! Ah cain't even stand ta be in mah house. Evah since mah li'l Raymond started classical studies, he changed, it's somethin' awful. Ah don' even recognize 'em no mo'! It's like he too good fo' us now! Now he started talkin' Latin at the dinnah table! He be makin' us listen to his music, an' on top of it all mah dear sistahs, it sucks! Classical music in the middle of the day! An'

whin we don' wanna watch whin a TV concert be on, he throws a tantrum! If there's one thing Ah cain't abide, it be classical music!

ROSE OUIMET- Yuk, me neither!

THERESE DUBUC- You' right, ya cain't listen ta dat crap. A Cling Clang heah, an' Bing Bang there...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Raymond says it cuz we don' understand it! Wha's there ta understand? Jus' cuz he learnin' all kin'sa crap at school he got all High an' Mighty! Almost makes me wanna take'em outta there, ya know!

ALL THE WOMEN- They' ungrateful! Dem keeids ain't got no respect!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Fill up yo' booklets now, ya heah? Each page gotta be filled!

ROSE OUIMET- Yeah, Yeah, Yeah Germaine, we know how ta stick stamps. We wuzn't born yestahday ya know!

YVETTE LONGPRE- Is it hot in heah or is it jus' me? Cain ya crack da window please?

GERMAINE LAUZON- No, No, No, it's gonna make a draught! Ah'm afraid fo' the stamps!

ROSE OUIMET- Oh git a life Germaine, they ain't no birds yo' stamps, they ain't gonna fly away! Speakin' 'bout birds, that reminds me, last Sunday Ah wen' ta see Bernard mah oldest... Ah ain't nevah seen so many canaries in a house! That house is like a real birdcage. It' all her fault ya know. She' crazy 'bout birds! She cain't kill 'em cuz

she say' she got a good heart. She might be good an' all but enough is enough!
Listen up ya'll, this is a good one...

(Spotlight on ROSE.)

Ah te' ya she' stone crazy! Ah'm a laughin', but it ain't funny in the end. Anyways... at Easter, Bernard bought a cage with birds fo' his two keeids. There wuz a brothah at the pub who needed some fast cash so he sold 'em cheap. We' when she saw 'em , she went gaga an' 'bout fell in love with them birds! She took bettah care a' them canaries than her own keeids, fo' real... Then the females up an' laid some eggs... whin the li'l birds wuz born, Manon thought they wuz so cute, an' started sayin' she didn't have the heart ta kill 'em! She got a screw loose fo' sure! So they kept 'em all! The whole flock! Ah cain't imagine how many of 'em there is, Ah ain't nevah tried ta coun' 'em... Whenever Ah go over there, Ah just about go outta mah mind every time, it's madness! 'Bout two o'clock she opens the cage an' let's 'em out. They fly 'round everywhere an' do their business where they please so we gotta clean it up... So then, when it be time ta put 'em back in the cage, they don' wanna, of course! So then Manon yells ta da keeids: "Git dem birds, yo' mama's too tiah'd!" So da keeids run aftah the birds... It be a real nuthouse ovah there! Ah sneak out ya know! Ah go out onto the balcony an' wait till they catch 'em all!

(The women laugh)

An' them keeids is unbearable! Ah love 'em ta bits, they's mah grandkeeids aftah all, but mah Lawd they cain be annoyin'! Our keeids wuzn't like that, no sir! Ya cain say

what ya wanna but youngins today ain't got a clue how ta raise up their keeids!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Girl, you said it!

YVETTE LONGPRE- Ain't it da truth!

ROSE OUIMET- In our day, we would nevah let the keeids play in the bathroom! Well ya should a' seen it on Sunday! First a' all them childrens ran into the bathroom like it was nuttin' an' turned everything upside down! We' Ah didn't dare say a word, Manon be sayin' that Ah talk too much! Ah could hear 'em an' Ah done had enough ya know. Then they take the toilet paper an' unroll it. Manon yelled: "Come on keeids, y'all gonna make me mad now!" Course they didn't pay 'er no attention! They kept at it! Ah'd be done beat the black off them li'l monsters! They wuz havin' a good ole time, ya know. Bruno, the youngest, cain ya just imagine callin' yo' keeid Bruno, Ah steel cain't believe it! anyways... Bruno, the youngest, got up in the tub all wrapped up in the unraveled toilet paper an' up an' turns on the faucet... He thought that wuz a riot ta say the least! He made some boats with the wet paper an' the watah wuz a splashin' all ovah! Whadda mess! Ah even had ta git mixed up in it. Ah gave 'em all a whoopin' an' sent 'em off ta bed!

YVETTE LONGPRE- Ya done good!

ROSE OUIMET- Manon wuzn't pleased but Ah couldn't jus' let 'em go on like that!

Manon, that ninny, she wuz just a peelin' taters an' listinin' ta the radio. Hell, she jus' too much that girl! Ah guess she happy cuz she ain't be worryin' 'bout nuttin'!

Ah te' ya, sometimes Ah pity mah Bernard fo' marryin' that fool! He should a' stayed home with me, he wuz bettah off...

(She bursts out laughing. The lighting goes back to normal.)

YVETTE LONGPRE- She is too much! Ah love havin' her heah at our get-togethers. She always be makin' us laugh!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Ah! We always be havin' a blast whin she comes ta the parties!

ROSE OUIMET- Ah always say, when it be time ta laugh, then let it roar! Even when the stories be sad, Ah try ta liven 'em up...

THERESE DUBUC- You' lucky you cain say dat Madame Ouimet. It ain't everyone who cain...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ah heah ya, Ah cain't imagine ya wanna laugh much these days... You so givin'! You worry so much 'bout others...

ROSE OUIMET- You gotta think 'bout yo'self sometimes, Madame Dubuc. You nevah git out no mo'.

THERESE DUBUC- Ah ain't got no time! Whin could Ah evah go out? Ah ain't got no time! Ah gotta look aftah her... Oh! An' if dat wuz all Ah had ta do...

GERMAINE LAUZON- What, Thérèse, ya mean there's mo'!

THERESE DUBUC- Don' git me started. Now that mah husband makes some money, mah family thinks we da Rockefellers! Yestahday, one of mah sistahs-in-laws'

sistah-in-law came ta our house beggin' fo' money, again. Y'all know me, mah heart wen' out ta her whin Ah heard her sob story, so Ah gave 'er some ole clothes Ah don' wear no mo'... Ah! She was so tickled... She wuz a weepin' like a willow. She even kissed mah hands.

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ah can see whay! You sure earned it!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Ah fo' one, Madame Dubuc, Ah admire ya!

THERESE DUBUC- Oh go on...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- It's true, you deserve it!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- You sure do deserve our admiration, Madame Dubuc! Ah won't forget ya in mah prayers, Ah tell you!

THERESE DUBUC- Oh! Ah always say that if the Good Lawd put po' folk on earth, then it's up ta us ta he'p 'em out!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Whin y'all finish fillin' up a booklet, 'stead a' pilin' it up on the table fo' nuttin', Ah think it be best ta put 'em back in one of the boxes... Rose, come he'p me, let's empty out the booklets from a box so we cain put the filled up booklets in.

ROSE OUIMET- Tha's a good idea! Good Lawd, there's a lotta booklets! We gotta stick' em all tonight?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah think we cain. 'specially cuz not everybody's heah yet, so...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- So who else comin', Madame Lauzon?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Rhéauna Bibeau, an' Angéline Sauvé are s'posed ta come aftah the funeral service. One of Mademoiselle Bibeau's childhood friends has a daughter whose husband jus' died. Mr. Baril, Ah think...

YVETTE LONGPRE- Not Rosaire Baril!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Yeah, tha's the one...

YVETTE LONGPRE- Ah know him! Ah used ta go out with him! Cain y'all imagine, Ah'd be a widow today!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Hey girls, cain ya believe Ah found the eight mistakes in the newspaper las' week... It's the first time Ah got 'em all... So Ah decided ta enter the contest...

YVETTE LONGPRE- So did ya win somethin'?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Do it look like Ah done won somethin'?

THERESE DUBUC- What on earth ya gonna do wit' all them stamps, Germaine?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ain't Ah told ya? Ah'm gonna refurnish the house! Hold on... Where'd Ah put that catalogue... Ah! Here it is! Check it out, Thérèse, Ah'm gonna have everything in there!

THERESE DUBUC- Say what! All that ain't gonna cost ya nuttin'?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Not a red cent! Them contests is just amazin'!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- That's not what Madame Brouillette was saying earlier...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Whaddya mean?

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Madame de Courval! Really!

ROSE OUIMET- Well Madame Brouillette, ya shouldn't be 'fraid ta speak yo' mind!

You wuz sayin' earlier, that you wuz against them contests cuz only one family cain win!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Well it's true! Ah'm against all dem contests, drawings fo' appliances, trips, an' stamps!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Tha's cuz you ain't never won nuttin'!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- That might be, but them contests ain't fair jus' da same!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Whaddya mean they ain't fair? You sayin' that cuz you jealous an' tha's all! Ya even said so yo'self whin ya came here tanight! We' Ah don' like jealous folk, Madame Brouillette, Ah don' like 'em at all! An' Ah te' ya somethin' else, Ah've done had just about enough a' jealous folk!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Well if dat's how it's gonna be, then Ah'll be off!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah come on, don' go now! Ah'm sorry.... Ah'm just a nervous wreck tanight, an' Ah don' know what Ah'm sayin'! Le's not talk about it no mo'! You have the right ta think what ya wanna, aftah all, it's yo' prerogative. Sit down there and stick...

ROSE OUIMET- She afraid ta lose a worker, our sistah!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Shhh, button yo' lip an' mind yo' own business! You always be stickin' yo' nose where it don' belong!

ROSE OUIMET- What the Hell's yo' problem? You' too much tanight!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Awright, Ah'll stay. But Ah'm steel against them contests!

(From then on, Marie-Ange Brouillette steals all of the booklets that she fills up. The others see her from the start, except Germaine of course, and they decide to do the same.)

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah figured out the mystery word in the Chatelaine last month... It was easy... My first word is the Latin word "felinus" in French.

ROSE OUIMET- A French feline?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Come on... The word cat in French... 'chat'.

ROSE OUIMET- 'Chat' is a felinus...?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Well... yes...

ROSE OUIMET, laughing- Well too bad fo' him!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- My second word is a rodent... well... 'rat'.

ROSE OUIMET- Mah husband, he's a rat, but he ain't no rodent... She crazy with that nonsense!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- My third word is a letter.

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- A love lettah?

LISETTE DE COURVAL, after a sigh- a letter in the alphabet... 'd'. All together it's a game...

ROSE OUIMET- Spin the bottle!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Shut up Rose, you don' know what she's talkin' about! (to Lisette) Scrabble?

LISETTE De COURVAL- It's not too difficult... Chat-rat-d... Charades! (say in French)

YVETTE LONGPRE- Oh! Charades (say in English), What's dat?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah got it right away... it was so easy...

YVETTE LONGPRE- So did ya win somethin'?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Oh! Ah didn't mail in the answer... Ah don't really need to win anything... Ah only did it for the challenge of it... Do Ah look like someone who needs to win anything?

ROSE OUIMET- We' Ah like mystery words, backwards words, hidden words, crosswords, super crosswords... Tha's mah specialty! Ah send out mah answers everywhere... It be costin' me almost two bucks a week in stamps, ya know...

YVETTE LONGPRE- So ya win something yet?

ROSE OUIMET, looking at Germaine- Do it look like Ah done won somethin'?

THERESE DUBUC- Madame Dubuc, le' go a' mah dish a' watah... Great, there she goes an' spills it everywhere! Goddamn it, dat's it!

(She punches her mother-in-law's on the head who calms down some.)

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Mah Lawd, that seemed kinna hard! Ain't you afraid 'a hurtin' her?

THERESE DUBUC- Nah, she' used to it. 'Sides, it's the only way ta settle 'er down. Mah husband's the one who figured it out! It's kinna like a punch on the noggin paralyses her for a few minutes... she jus' stays in 'er corner, an' we git a break.

(blackout. Spotlight on Yvette Longpré.)

YVETTE LONGPRE- Mah girl Claudette gave me the top layer of 'er weddin' cake whin she came back from 'er honeymoon. Ah wuz so proud! It wuz so pretty! Kinna like a church chapel, all made up a' frostin'! There' a red velvet staircase, an' a stage at the end with the bride an' groom. Two li'l figurines all decked out so cute. There's also the priest who blesses them. Behind 'em, there's an altar made a' frostin'. It's a sight ta see! Dat cake cost an arm an' a leg! A six-layered cake, ya know! But it wuzn't all made a' cake cuz that would 'a cost way too much! Jus' da first layers wuz cake, the rest wuz wood. But ya couldn't tell the difference. Mah girl gave me the top layer an' put it under a glass bell. It's so nice, but Ah wuz scared da frostin' would go bad aftah a while... Ya know without air! So Ah took mah husband's knife ta cut a hole in the glass bell. Now the cake be bettah aired out an' won't go rotten!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ah also entered a contest not long ago... It wuz called da mystery slogan... Ya had ta find a slogan for a bookstore... Botter's Bookstore... So Ah came up wit' a good one: "Ya betchyo' bottom dollar it's a bettah bargain at Botter's Bookstore! Not bad, huh?

YVETTE LONGPRE- So did ya win somethin' yet?

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Do it look like Ah done won somethin'?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Listen Rose, Ah saw ya cuttin' yo' lawn this mornin'... You oughta buy a lawnmower!

ROSE OUIMET- Nah! Ole fashioned clippers are just fine fo' me. It he'ps me keep mah shape.

GERMAINE LAUZON- It looked like you wuz havin' one helluva time...

ROSE OUIMET- It good fo' mah health Ah te' ya. 'Sides, Ah ain't got the money ta buy me no lawnmower. An' if Ah had the money, there's plen'y a' things Ah'd buy before that!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Well Ah'm gonna have a lawnmower wit' mah stamps...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- She' startin' ta wear mah patience thin wit' her stamps!

(She hides a stamp booklet in her purse.)

ROSE OUIMET- What in da world do ya wanna lawnmower fo'? Ya live on da third floor!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Oh! Ya nevah know whin it might come in handy. 'Sides, ya nevah know, we could always move, huh?

DES-NEIGES VERRETE- Ah s'ppose she gonna te' us dat she be needin' a new house ta put everything she gonna git wit' her damn stamps!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ya know, we be needin' bigger place ta put everything we gonna git with mah stamps!

(Des-Neiges Verrette, Marie-Ange Brouillette and Thérèse Dubuc each hide two or three stamp booklets.)

Ah cain loan ya mah lawnmower if ya want, Rose...

ROSE OUIMET- Not in a million years! Ah'd be scared ta death ta break it! Ah'd have ta save stamps fo' two years jus' ta pay ya back!

(The women laugh.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- You smart alec!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Tha's a good one! She's da best!

THERESE DUBUC- Ah figured out the mystery word on the radio las' week... It wuz an old voice... The voice of Duplessis... It wuz mah husband who got it... So Ah mailed in twinnny-five letters so Ah'd have a fightin' chance, an' fo' good luck Ah signed 'em Paulo Dubuc, aftah mah youngest...

YVETTE LONGPRE- So, did ya win somethin' yet?

THERESE DUBUC, looking at Germaine- Do it look like Ah done won somethin'?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Ya'll know what mah husband's gonna buy me fo' mah birthday?

ROSE OUIMET- Ah guess two pair a' nylons like las' year?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- HELL NO! A fur coat! We' not a real fur coat ya know, synthetic. Ah jus' don' see no reason ta buy real fur. Nowadays, imitation fur is just as nice an' even bettah sometimes!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Well Ah don't agree...

ROSE OUIMET- Yeah we know, She gotta big ole mink stole!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah always say that nothing can replace real fur. Anyways, Ah'm going to replace mah mink stole next fall. Ah've had it for three years and it's starting to get worn out... Oh! It's still in good shape, but...

ROSE OUIMET- Whay don' ya shut the Hell up ya big liar! We all know sure as shit that yo' husband busts his ass ta buy yo' furs an' pay fo' yo' trips an' he still in debt! Ya ain't bettah off then us an ya think yo' shit smells like roses! Ah'm sick 'a yo' sheeit!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Madame Jodoin, if your husband is interested in buying mah stole, Ah'd sell it to him cheap. That way, you'd have real mink. Ah always say that between friends...

YVETTE LONGPRE- We' Ah sent in mah answers fo' da enlarged objects contest... Ya know the things they blow up so big an' ya hafta guess what they is... We' Ah figured 'em out... There wuz a screw, a screwdriver... an' a bent up hook...

THE OTHER WOMEN- And...

(Yvette Longpré just looks over at Germaine and sits down.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- The othah day, Madame Robitaille's li'l boy Daniel fell from the second floor without a scratch on 'em! Cain ya imagine that?

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Don' forget that he fell in Madame Dubé's hammock while Monsieur Dubé wuz sleepin' in it.

GERMAINE LAUZON- Yeah, poor Monsieur Dubé is in the hospital. He gonna be there fo' three months...

DES- NEIGES VERRETTE- Speakin' 'bout accidents, that makes me think of a joke...

ROSE OUIMET- What is it Mademoiselle Verrette?

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Oh! It's too naughty, Ah wouldn't dare.

ROSE OUIMET- Oh come on Mademoiselle Verrette! We all know you got some juicy ones up yo' sleeve.

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- No, Ah feel bashful tanight, Ah don' know whay...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Come on now, Mademoiselle Verrette, don' make us beg ya fo' nuttin'... Ya know darn well you gonna end up tellin' us yo' joke...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Well awright den. There wuz a nun who got herself raped in an alleyway...

ROSE OUIMET- So far so good!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE= So da nex' day, she wuz found at the back a' the yard all dirtied up, wit' her habit ovah her head... She wuz a moanin' an' not makin' no

sense ya know... So then a journalist wen' up ta her an' axed her: "My Sister, could you tell me something about your terrible ordeal?" So da nun opens her eyes an' mutters: "More! Mo'!"

(All the women burst out laughing except Lisette de Courval who seems shocked and Yvette Longpré who doesn't get the joke.)

ROSE OUIMET- Ah! Tha's a good one there! It's been a long time since Ah heard a good one like that... Ah cain't stop laughin'! Ah really wonder how on earth ya know such jokes like that Mademoiselle Verrette...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Ya know as well as me that her travellin' salesman tells 'er.

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ah beg yo' pardon Madame Jodoin!

ROSE OUIMET- Oh yeah! That's right, her travellin' salesman...

LISETTE DE COURVAL- I don't understand.

GABRIELLE JODOIN- There a travellin' salesman who comes ta sell brushes ta Mademoiselle Verrette every month... Ah think she's sweet on him...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Madame Jodoin, please!

ROSE OUIMET- Anyways, we all cain say that Mademoiselle Verrette got the best brush collection in the whole parish! Ah jus' saw yo' salesman the othah day, Mademoiselle Verrette...He wuz in the restaurant... He surely must a' wen' ta see you?

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Yeah, he stopped by... But Ah swear there ain't nuttin' between him an' me!

ROSE OUIMET- Tha's what they all say...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- What! Mah Lawd, Madame Ouimet, sometimes Ah swear you ain't got yo' head screwed on right! You always be findin' somethin' bad where there ain't none ta be found! He's a decent man, Monsieur Simard!

ROSE OUIMET- Well we jus' need ta know if you's a decent girl! Ah don' git mad now Mademoiselle Verrette! Ya know Ah'm jus' messin' witchya!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Oh, ya scared me fo' a second! How could ya think Ah wuzn't respectable! Henri... uh... Monsieur Simard told me 'bout some plans of his whin he came ta see me... Ah got an invitation fo' y'all from him... He'd like me ta have a demonstration pah'ty, nex' week... He axed me cuz he knows mah house... It would be nex' Sunday... Aftah mass. Ah gotta gather tin of us so Ah cain git mah gift... Ya know, he gives nice fancy cups ta the people who give the demonstration... Real nice fancy cups... Y'all gotta see 'em, they' so pretty! They' souvenirs he brought back from Niagara Falls... Ah'm sure he paid a lot fo' 'em...

ROSE OUIMET- Count me in! Whaddya say girls? Ah jus' love demonstration parties! There gonna be prizes fo' showin' up?

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Well Ah don' know. There might could be... There should oughta be... Oh, an' Ah'm gonna make snacks...

ROSE OUIMET- Sounds bettah than here! Ah steel ain't seen a drop a' soda!

(Olivine Dubuc tries to bite her daughter-in-law.)

THERESE DUBUC- Not again! Madame Dubuc, if ya keep it up, Ah'm gonna lock ya in the bathroom an' ya gonna stay there all night long!

(Blackout, Spotlight on Des-Neiges Verrette.)

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- The first time Ah laid eyes on 'em, Ah thought he wuz ugly... It true he ain't so cute at first glance! Whin he opened the door, he raised his hat, an' he said ta me: "Could Ah interest you in buyin' some brushes, mah dear lady?" Ah slammed da door in his face! Ah nevah let a man into the house! Ya nevah know what could happen... Ah only let in the paper-boy. He's still too young ta be bad. A month later, the brush man came back. There wuz a terrible blizzard, so Ah let 'em in the hallway. Once he got in the house Ah wuz scared, But Ah tol' mahself that he didn't look like a bad man, even if he wuzn't so handsome... He wuz thirty-six an' had a nice haircut. A real gentleman! Such nice manners! He sold me two or three brushes an' he showed me his catalogue. There wuz one Ah wanted, but he didn't have it with 'em, so he told me Ah could place an order. An' he be stoppin' by every month since. Sometimes, Ah don' buy nuttin'. He jus' stops by ta talk fo' a few minutes. He's so nice! Whin he be talkin', Ah fo'git he ugly! An' he knows 'bout so many interesting things. Oh, he travels all over the Province dat man! Ah think... Ah think that Ah love 'em. Ah know it don' make no sense. Ah only see 'em once a month, but Ah'm so happy whin he stops by. It's the first time this done

happened ta me! Da first time evah! No man ain't nevah bothered wit' me befo'. Ah always been, alone. He, he be tellin' me 'bout his travellin', he be tellin' me jokes... Sometimes they' raunchy, but they' so funny! Plus, Ah always kinna' liked dirty jokes. Ah think it's fun ta tell dirty jokes sometimes... Oh! They ain't all bad, his jokes, some are decent. He' been tellin' me dirty jokes fo' a long time. Sometimes, they so raunchy that Ah cain't look 'em in the eye. The las' time he came, he held mah hand cuz Ah wuz so embarrassed. That 'bout drove me wild! My knees turned ta jelly whin Ah felt his big hand on mine! Now, Ah need 'em! Ah don' wan' 'em ta go off fo'ever... Sometimes, Ah dream, jus' sometimes! Ah dream that we married. Ah need 'em ta come an' see me! He da first man who evah took an interest in me! Ah don' wanna lose 'em! Ah don' wanna lose 'em! If he goes away, Ah'm gonna be all alone again, an' Ah need... ta love... (She lowers her head and whispers.) Ah need a man.

(The lights come back on. Linda Lauzon, Ginette Ménard and Lise Paquette enter.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Oh! There you is! It's about time!

LINDA LAUZON- Ah wuz at the restaurant...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah know damn well you wuz at the restaurant! Ya keep hangin' out at the neighborhood restaurants, li'l girl, an' you gonna end up like yo' aunt Pierrette: in a ho' house!

LINDA LAUZON- Gimme a break mama, ya always be makin' a big stink outta nuttin'!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah axed ya ta stay home...

LINDA LAUZON- Ah only wen' ta git some smokes, an' Ah ran into Lise an' Ginette...

GERMAINE LAUZON- That ain't no excuse! Ya knew Ah wuz havin' people ovah tanight, whay the Hell didn't ya come straight back? You tryin' ta tick me off on purpose, Linda, you tryin' ta burn me up on purpose! Ya wanna see me curse in fron' a' everyone heah! Huh, tha's it ain't it, ya wanna see me swear in fron' a everyone? Well Christ Awmighty ya done gone an' made me do it! But Ah ain't finished wit' you yet Missy! Ya jus' wait an' see, Linda Lauzon, you gonna git yo's!

ROSE OUIMET- This ain't the time fo' fightin', Germaine!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- You there, mind yo' own business!

LINDA LAUZON- Ah'm just a li'l late, dang, it ain't like somebody died!

LISE PAQUETTE- It's our fault, Madame Lauzon!

GINETTE MENARD- Yeah, it's our fault!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah know it's yo' fault! An' Ah told Linda not ta hang out wit' backsliders! But NO, she gotta go an' piss me off! Ah swear, sometimes, Ah wanna beat her ta death!

ROSE OUIMET! My goodness, Germaine...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Rose, Ah told ya not ta go stickin yo' nose in othah people's business! Ya hear me! It ain't none a' yo' beeswax!

ROSE OUIMET- Ah'm gittin' sick an' tiah'd a' you! Stop pesterin' me! We cain't let Germaine chew Linda out fo' nuttin'!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- It ain't none a' our business!

LINDA LAUZON- Hey you, Aunt Gabrielle, let'er stand up fo' me!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Linda, if ya cain't be polite with yo' mama, at least be polite with yo' Godmother!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ya see how she is! It always be the same ole story with 'er. An' she sure wuzn't raised ta be like that!

ROSE OUIMET- Speakin' 'bout the way you raise yo' childrens!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Oh Excuse me! How dare you... an' yo' keeids...

LINDA LAUZON- You go, Aunt Rose! Let 'er have it good once an' fo' all! Ah know you cain stand up ta her, mah mama!

GERMAINE LAUZON- What's gotten into you girl, all a' sudden, ya sidin' with yo' Aunt Rose? What wuz it ya said whin she called earlier this evenin', huh, whatchya say? You remember whatchya said?

LINDA LAUZON- That ain't the same...

ROSE OUIMET- So what wuz it she said?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Well it wuz Linda who picked up the phone whin ya called, Mmmm Hmmm. An' she didn't say "just a moment please", so Ah axed her ta be more polite witchya...

LINDA LAUZON- Hey mama, shut up! You ain't gotta say it!

ROSE OUIMET- Well Ah'd like ta know what ya said, Linda!

LINDA LAUZON- Ah didn't mean it, Aunt Rose, Ah wuz ticked off!

GERMAINE LAUZON- She said; "It ain't nobody but mah Aunt Rose. Why should Ah
be polite wit' her!"

ROSE OUIMET- Oh! Mah word... Ah jus' cain't believe it!

LINDA LAUZON- Ah'm tellin' ya Aunt Rose, Ah wuz real' mad!

ROSE OUIMET- Ah nevah thought you wuz like that, Linda! Girl, ya really let me
down, Ah'm real' disappointed with ya.

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Come on Rose, would ya let 'em fight it out themselves!

ROSE OUIMET- Yeah Ah'll let 'em fight it out! Go on Germaine, let yo' daughter have
it! She sure ain't got no respect that girl there! Yo' mama wuz right, ya keep it up an'
you gonna wind up jus' like yo' Aunt Pierrette! If Ah didn't hold mahself back, Ah'd
smack the black off yo' face!

GERMAINE LAUZON- You lay so much as a finger on one a' mah keeids an' Ah'll kill
ya! Ah gotta right to give 'er a whoopin', but ain't nobody else gonna do it but me!

THERESE DUBUC- Would y'all knock it off? Ah'm tiah'd of all this!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Yeah, dis fightin' is too much!

THERESE DUBUC- Y'all gonna go an' wake up mah mother-in-law an' she gonna act
up again!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Well ya should a' left 'er home, yo' mother-in-law!

THERESE DUBUC- Germaine Lauzon!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- What! She right ya know! Ya jus' don' go draggin' a ninety-three-year old woman to a pah'ty!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Madame Jodoin, weren't ya jus' telling your sister to mind her own business!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Oh! You there, Miss stick up 'er ass, you back off! Paste yo' stamps an' shut yo' trap! Cuz if ya don't, Ah'm gonna shut it fo' ya!

(Lisette de Courval gets up.)

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Gabrielle Jodoin!

(Olivine Dubuc, who was playing with a dish of water, spills it on the floor.)

THERESE DUBUC- Madame Dubuc, be careful!

GERAINE LAUZON- Ah Hells Bells! Mah tablecloth!

ROSE OUIMET- Ah! The old bat done gone an' drenched me!

THERESE DUBUC- It ain't so! Ya wuz too far away!

ROSE OUIMET- Why don' ya call me a damn liar ta mah face!

THERESE DUBUC- Yeah dat's right Rose Ouimet! You nuttin' but a Goddamn Liar!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Watch yo' mother-in-law, she' gonna fall!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Here we go again! She layin' flat on 'er ass!

THERESE DUBUC- Somebody he'p me!

ROSE OUIMET- Don' look at me!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Yeah, ya cain pick 'er up yo'self!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ah'll he'p ya, Madame Dubuc.

THERESE DUBUC- Thank ya, Mademoiselle Verrette...

GERMAINE LAUZON- As fo' you, Linda, ya stay outta mah hair fo' the rest of the
evenin'...

LINDA LAUZON- Ah jus' wanna git the Hell outta heah!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ya go on an' try ya li'l brat, an' ya ain't nevah gonna step foot
in here again!

LINDA LAUZON- Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ah hear it all the time!

LISE PAQUETTE- Linda, watch it now...

THERESE DUBUC- Hold yo'self up some, Madame Dubuc, sit up straight! Ah swear ya
goin' all limp on purpose!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Ah'll git 'er wheelchair...

THERESE DUBUC- Thank ya kindly...

ROSE OUIMET- If Ah wuz in yo' shoes, Ah'd push that chair an'...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Don' you start, Rose!

THERESE DUBUC- Oh! Dis is torture!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Well check out de Courval ovah there jus' stickin' her stamps...
Miss High an' Mighty! She don' care 'bout nuttin'! Ah guess she jus' too good fo' us!

(Blackout. Spotlight on Lisette de Courval.)

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ya'd think we were in a zoo! And Léopold told me not to come here! They're living in a different world from us! Ah sure wish Ah hadn't come! Once ya've been on a cruise ship, it sure is hard to come back to this! Oh, Ah can see mahself now lying on a deckchair with a Magali novel on mah knees... And the cruise director was giving me the eye... Mah husband says he wasn't, but he didn't see what Ah saw! A real' fine man! Mmmmmm Hmmmmmm! Ah should have led him on a bit... And Europe! Everyone is so well mannered there! They're so much more polite than here. And you would never see the likes of Germaine Lauzon over there! There are only classy people there! In Paris, everyone speaks proper; they all speak real French, not like here... Ah hate them all! Ya won't catch me coming back here! Léopold was right, they're all so trashy, ya can't be around 'em, ya can't even talk about 'em, ya can dress 'em up but ya can't take 'em out! They're pathetic! We got out of here, and we should never look back! Good Lawd Ah'm so ashamed of them all!

(The lights come back on.)

LINDA LAUZON- Ok, Ah'm gonna go now, bye...

GERMAINE LAUZON- You doin' it on purpose! Ah'm a warnin' ya, Linda...

LINDA LAUZON- "Ah'm a warnin' ya, Linda", that all you cain say, Mama!

LISE PAQUETTE- Now calm down, Linda!

GINETTE MENARD- Jus' stay heah!

LINDA LAUZON- No, Ah'm outta heah! Ah ain't in the mood ta hear her sheeit all night long!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Linda, Ah forbid ya ta leave this house!

VOICE OF A NEIGHBOR- Cain't y'all stop yo' screamin' up there? Ah cain't hear mahself think!

(Rose Ouimet goes out onto the balcony.)

ROSE OUIMET- You there, Whay don' ya jus' git back in yo' house!

THE NEIGHBOR- Ah wuzn't talkin' ta you!

ROSE OUIMET- Yeah you wuz, Ah'm screamin' just as much as the rest of 'em!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Git back in heah, Rose!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Leave 'er alone

THE NEIGHBOR- Ah'm gonna call da police!

ROSE OUIMET- Go on ahead an' call 'em, tha's jus' what we needin' here, some men!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Rose Ouimet, git back in the house! As fo' you, Linda...

LINDA LAUZON- Ah'm leavin' now. See y'all latah!

(She leaves with Ginette and Lise.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- She left! She' gone! Ah cain't believe it! Tha's impossible! She wants ta give me a heart attack! Ah gotta break somethin'! Gimme somethin' ta break!

ROSE OUIMET- Git a hold a' yo'self, Germaine!

GERMAINE LAUZON- She shames me in fron' a' everyone!

(She bursts out crying.)

It's just so...so... disgraceful...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Oh Germaine, it ain't that bad...

LINDA'S VOICE- Oh! Well if it ain't Mademoiselle Sauv . How ya doin'!

ANGELINE SAUVE'S VOICE- Hey there sugah, how are you?

ROSE OUIMET- They' here! Dry yo' eyes, Germaine!

LINDA LAUZON'S VOICE- Not bad, not bad at all...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU'S VOICE- An' jus' where you headed?

LINDA LAUZON- Ah wuz gonna go ta the restaurant, but now that you' here, Ah think

Ah'm gonna stay!

(Linda, Ginette, Lise, Rh auna and Ang line come in.)

ANGELINE SAUVE- Hi everybody!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Evenin' all.

THE OTHERS- Hello, Hello, how ya doin'?

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Madame Lauzon, climbin' stairs to da third floor ain't no picnic!

Ah'm all outta breath!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Have a seat then...

ROSE OUIMET- You outta breath? That ain't gonna be a problem fo' long... You'll see, sistah, she' gonna have an elevator put in with them stamps.

(The women laugh, except Rhéauna and Angéline who aren't sure how to react.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Tha's a good one, Rose Ouimet! Linda, go git some mo' chairs...

LINDA LAUZON- Where? There ain't no mo'!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Go axe Madame Bergeron if she cain lend us a few...

LINDA LAUAON- Come on girls...

GERMAINE LAUZON, speaking quietly to Linda- We cain bury the hatchet fo' now, but just you wait till everyone goes home...

LINDA LAUZON- Ah ain't scared a' you! Ah only came back cuz Mademoiselle Sauvé an' Mademoiselle Bibeau showed up. It ain't cuz a' you!

(Linda leaves with Lise and Ginette.)

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ya cain have mah chair, Mademoiselle Bibeau...

THERESE DUBUC- Yeah, come sit ovah here nex' ta me fo' a while...

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Sit heah, Mademoiselle Bibeau.

ANGELINE SUAVE AND RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Thank ya, thanks a bunch.

RHEANUNA BIBEAU- So Ah see y'all is stickin' stamps?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Yeah. It's a million of 'em!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Mah Lawd! Have ya got far?

ROSE OUIMET- Not bad, not bad... But mah tongue is goin' numb...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- You actually lickin' all dem stamps?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- No, she only messin' witchya!

ROSE OUIMET- Bibeau's just as gullible as evah!

ANGELINE SAUVE- We' gonna give y'all a hand...

ROSE OUIMET, with a hearty laugh- Fo' a second, Ah thought she wuz gonna give us a
lickin'...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Rose, you' really gross!

GERMAINE LAUZON- So how was the funeral service?

(Blackout. Spotlight on Angéline Sauvé and Rhéauna Bibeau.)

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah te' ya, Ah'm in a state a' shock...

ANGELINE SAUVE- But ya hardly knew 'em!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah knew his mama well! You too, remember, we wen' ta school
together! Ah watched dat man grow up...

ANGELINE SAUVE- Yeah! An' now ya see he' gone. But we still heah...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Oh! But not fo' long ya know...

ANGELINE SAUVE- Rhéauna, Paleeze...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah know what Ah'm talkin' 'bout! Ya feel it in yo' bones whin
da end is near! Aftah everything Ah've been through!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Oh! We've both had our share a' sufferin' you an' me.

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah've been through mo' dan you, Angéline! Seventeen operations! Ah only got one lung left, one kidney, an' one breast... Oh! Dey ripped out half mah body...

ANGELINE SAUVE- We' Ah got mah arthritis acting up! But Madame... what's 'er name, uh...anyway. Da dead man's wife, she gave me a remedy... it s'pposed ta be wonderful.

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ya know perfectly well ya already tried everything! The doctors already tol' ya there ain't nuttin' ya cain do about it! Dere ain't no cure fo' arthritis!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Doctors, doctors, Ah te' ya if Ah nevah see one again it'll be too soon! All dey think 'bout is money! Dey bleed us dry, an' den go an' spend da winter in California! Ya know, Rhéauna, da doctor said he wuz gonna get bettah Monsieur... wha's his name, da dead guy?

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Monsieur Baril...

ANGELINE SAUVE- Oh! Yeah, Ah keep fo'gittin'! An' Ah really shouldn't! So, we' da doctor told 'em not ta worry... An' den Monsieur Baril up an'... not even forty years old...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Forty! It's jus' too young ta up an' die!

ANGELINE SAUVE- An' he wen' so fast...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- She told me all 'bout how it all happened. So sad!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Oh yeah? Ah wuzn't there whin she told ya... So how'd it happen?

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Whin he got home from work, Monday evenin', she noticed he wuzn't da same. She axed 'em if he felt bad, he wuz lookin' sick as a dog. He said no. He started ta eat dinnah... Da keeids were fightin' at da table, so Monsieur Baril got mad an' had ta punish Rolande... Aftah dat, he wuz kinna' out of it, ya know... She kept 'er eyes on 'em. She watched 'em close. She said it all happened so quick dat she didn't have time to do nuttin'. All a' sudden he said he wuz feelin' kinna' funny, and he fell face first into his soup. An' dat's all she wrote!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Sweet Jesus! How awful! Jus' like dat! Ah swear mah hair is standin' on end! It's terrible!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- You said it! Ya nevah know whin da good Lawd is gonna come fo' ya. Like da Bible says: "Ah come like a thief in da night."

ANGELINE SAUVE- Dose stories really make mah skin crawl! Ah sure hope Ah don' die like dat! Ah wanna die in mah bed... an' have time ta confess...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah heah ya, Ah wouldn't wanna die without confessin' either! Angéline swear ta me you'll git da priest whin Ah start feelin' bad! Swear it!

ANGELINE SAUVE-Ah know, Ah know, you already done axed me a million times! Ah called fo' da priest da las' time ya had an attack! Ya received communion an' everything!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah'm so scared a' dyin' without receivin' mah las' rites!

ANGELINE SAUVE- You too old ta sin!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Don' go sayin' dat, Angéline! You's nevah too old ta sin!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ah jus' know you goin' straigh' ta heaven, Rhéauna. Ya ain't got nuttin' ta worry 'bout, ya know! Ya notice somethin' different 'bout da dead man's girl? She looked half dead herself!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah think Ah know how she feels! Poor Rolande! She goin' round sayin' dat she da one who killed her daddy! Ya know what Ah mean, dat it' cuz a' her dat he got mad at da table an'... Ah feel sorry fo' her... An' her poor mama! Mmmmm Hmmmmm! Ain't dat a shame! Dat's a big loss! It gonna be hard ta handle!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ah hear ya! Ta lose a fathah! Mind you, it ain't as bad as losin' a mothah, but steel...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Yeah dat's right, it worse ta lose a mothah! Ya cain't replace a mothah!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Did ya see da way dey done up da corpse? He looked like so young! He wuz smilin'... Ya might a' thought he wuz sleepin'. But in da end, he bettah off where he is now... It's like dey always say, it's dem dat stay here who' worse off! He' in a bettah place now... Mmmmm Hmmmmm! Ah steel cain't believe how good dey made 'em up! He looked like he wuz alive.

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Yeah! But he ain't.

ANGELINE SAUVE- But Ah cain't figure whay dey done gone an' put dat ole suit on
'em...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Whaddya mean?

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ya didn't notice? It wuz a blue suit! Ya cain't do dat! He is dead
aftah all! A blue suit is jus' too light! Maybe if it wuz navy blue, but no, it wuz
almost dark powder blue! A dead man' gotta wear a black suit!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Dey might not have a black suit! Dey ain't rich ya know!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Good Lawd ya know ya cain rent a black suit! An' did ya see what
Madame Baril's sistah wuz wearin'? A green dress! In a funeral parlour! An' Chile,
did ya see how she aged! She looks older dan 'er sistah...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Dat's cuz she is!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Git outta heah, Rhéauna, she' a lot younger!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- No she ain't!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Yeah she is, listen ta me Rhéauna! Madame Baril is thirty-seven
or thirty-eight while she...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- While she' over forty!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Gimme a break, Rhéauna!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah bet she' pushin' forty-five...

ANGELINE SAUVE- Dat's all Ah'm sayin', dat she got old, she looks older dan she is... Listen, mah sistah-in-law Rose-Aimée is thirty-six an' dey wen' ta school togethah...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Anyways, it ain't no s'pprise how she aged... wit' da life she leads...

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ah don' know if ya cain believe all dem stories...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah think ya cain! Madame Baril, she tries ta keep it all secret, cuz it's her sistah, but we wind up findin' out everything! It's like wit' Madame Lauzon an' her sistah Pierrette! If there anyone Ah cain't stand da sight of, it's Pierrette Guérin! A real harlot! Such a shame fo' da whole family! Ah te' ya, Angéline, Ah wouldn't wanna see what her soul looks like! Probably as black as mah boots!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Oh come on, Rhéauna, deep down, Pierrette ain't such a bad girl!
(The spotlight goes on Germaine Lauzon.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah been tryin' ta fo'git mah sistah Pierrette fo' a long time now! Aftah everything she done ta us! An' she was such a sweetheart, whin she wuz li'l! An' so cute! But now she just a trollop! Oh! We loved her so much me an' mah sistahs! We spoiled 'er rotten! An' what good it do?... Ah don' git it! Ah jus' don't! Whin our daddy wuz home, he used ta call her his li'l stinker! He loved 'er so much, his li'l Pierrette! Whin he put 'er on his knees, you could tell he wuz a happy man! An' we wuz nevah jealous...

ROSE OUIMET- We used ta say: “She’s the youngest. It’ always be like that, the youngest is the favourite...” Whin she started school, we dressed ‘er up like a princess! Ah wuz already married, an’ Ah remember it like it wuz yestahday! Oh! She wuz jus’ so adorable, a real angel! Mmmmmm Hmmmm. An’ she wuz good at school! Faster than me! Ah wuz nevah nuttin’ special at school... Ah wuz the class clown, it wuz all Ah knew how ta do... But her, da li’l rascal, she sure did bring home a lot of awards! An award fo’ French, an award fo’ Math, an award fo’ Religion... That’s right, religion! She wuz as pious as a nun that li’l girl there! An’ the nuns wuz crazy ‘bout ‘er! So whin we see ‘er today... Mah Lawd, Ah do feel sorry fo’ her sometimes. She surely be needin’ he’p sometimes... An’ Ah guess she’ all alone!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Whin she finished school, we axed her what she wanted ta do. She said she wanted ta be a schoolteacher. She wuz about ta start college whin she had ta go an’ meet her Johnny!

THE THREE SISTERS- Goddamn Johnny! A real devil straight outta Hell! It’ all his fault fo’ her being the way she is now! Goddamn Johnny! Goddamn Johnny!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- She sure ain’t no angel! Ta do what she do, you gotta be pretty bad! Mmmmmmm Mmmm Mmm! Ya know what Madame Longpré told me?

ANGELINE SAUVE- No, what’ she say?

THERESE DUBUC- Ouuuuuuuuuuch!

(The lights come on. Thérèse Dubuc punches her mother-in-law on the head.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Knock ‘er out, Thérèse, once an’ fo’ all!

THERESE DUBUC- Knock ‘er out! You serious? Ah do what Ah cain ta calm ‘er down!

Ah sure as Hell ain’t gonna kill ‘er jus’ ta make you all happy!

ROSE OUIMET- If Ah wuz you, Ah’d push ‘er off the balcony...

THERESE DUBUC- ‘Scuse me? Whay dontchya say dat ta mah face, Rose, Ah didn’t hear ya!

ROSE OUIMET- Ah wuz speakin’ ta mahself!

THERESE DUBUC- You’ chickenshit, huh?

ROSE OUIMET- Who, me?

THERESE DUBUC- Yeah, you, chicken!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Don’ te’ me y’all gonna go at it again!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ya mean there wuz a fight earlier?

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- So who wuz fightin’?

ANGELINE SAUVE- We should a’ come earlier!

THERESE DUBUC- Ah ain’t gonna let ‘er git away wi’ that! She done gone an’ insulted mah mothah-in-law! Mah husband’s mothah!

LISETTE DE COURVAL-Time for round two!

ROSE OUIMET- She’ ancient! She ain’t good fo’ nuttin’ no mo’!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Rose!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Rose! Ya oughta be ashamed a' yo'self! You got a heart a' stone!

THERESE DUBUC- Ah ain't nevah gonna fo'git what ya said there, Rose Ouimet! Nevah!

ROSE OUIMET- Oh! Git outta mah face!

ANGELINE SAUVE- So who wuz a fightin' befo'?

ROSE OUIMET- Ya really wanna know, Mademoiselle Sauv , huh? Ya wan' all the details?

ANGELINE SAUVE- Mah Lawd, Madame Ouimet...

ROSE OUIMET- That way, ya cain go 'round badmouthin' us everywhere, huh, ain't that right?

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Rose Ouimet! Ah don' git mad much, but Ah ain't gonna let ya insult mah friend!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE, on the side- While nobody's lookin', Ah'm gonna take a few mo' booklets!

GABRIELLE JODOIN, who saw her- Whatchya doin', Madame Brouillette?

ROSE OUIMET- Ah ain't got nuttin' else ta say!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Hush! Be quiet an' take dat! (Linda, Ginette and Lise enter with some chairs. There's a lot of commotion. The women all change places. Some of the women steal some booklets and some stamps.) Take some, don' worry!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Don' go overboard now.

THERESE DUBUC- Hide that in yo' pocket, Madame Dubuc... No! Ah said hide
'em!

GERMAINE LAUZON- The butcher boy at the supermarket is such a thief!

(The door opens suddenly. Pierrette Guerin comes in.)

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Hey y'all!

THE OTHERS- Pierrette!

LINDA LAUZON- Mah aunt Pierrette, right on!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Here comes trouble, it's Pierrette!

GERMAINE LAUZON- What the Hell you doin' heah? Ah thought Ah told ya Ah nevah
wanna lay eyes on you again!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Ah heard that mah big sistah Germaine gone an' won a million
stamps, so Ah decided ta come over an' see fo' mahself!

(She sees Angéline Sauvée.)

Well Ah be Goddamned! Angéline! What the Hell you doin' heah!

(Everyone looks at Angéline Sauvée.)

Curtain

ACT 2

(The second act begins with Pierrette's entrance. The last six lines of the first act are repeated here. The door opens suddenly. Pierrette Guérin comes in.)

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Hey y'all!

THE OTHERS- Pierrette!

LINDA LAUZON- Mah aunt Pierrette, right on!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Here comes trouble, it's Pierrette!

GERMAINE LAUZON- What the Hell you doin' heah? Ah thought Ah told ya Ah nevah
wanna lay eyes on you again!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Ah heard that mah big sistah Germaine gone an' won a million
stamps, so Ah decided ta come over an' see fo' mahself!

(She sees Angéline Sauvée.)

We'll Ah be Goddamned! Angéline! What the Hell you doin' heah!

(Everyone looks at Angéline Sauvée.)

ANGELINE SAUVE- Oh mah God! Dey caught me red handed!

GERMAINE LAUZON- What on earth do ya mean, Angéline?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Whay in the world are ya talkin' ta Mademoiselle Sauvée,
you?

ROSE OUIMET- Ain't you ashamed!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- What, we know each othah well, the two of us; ain't that
right, Géline?

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ah! Ah think Ah'm gonna faint!

(Angéline pretends to faint.)

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Sweet Jesus! Angéline!

ROSE OUIMET- She dead!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- What?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Oh come on, she ain't dead! You exaggeratin' again, Rose!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- She ain't even passed out! Y'all cain see she jus' fakin'!

(Pierrette approaches Angéline.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- You keep yo' hands off her!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Lay off, she's mah friend!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Whaddya mean yo' friend!

GERMAINE LAUZON- You really expect us ta believe that Mademoiselle Sauv  is yo'
friend!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Mmmmm Hmmm! She comes ta see us at da club 'most every
Friday!

ALL THE WOMEN- What!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- No way, get outta town!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Just ask 'er! Hey, G line, ain't it da truth what Ah'm sayin'?

Come on girl, quit actin' crazy an' answer! Ang line, now we all know that ya ain't
passed out! Te' 'em all it's true that ya be comin' to the club all the time!

ANGELINE SAUVE, after a moment of silence- Yeah, it's true!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- What the! Angéline! Angéline!

SOME OF THE WOMEN- Dis is awful!

SOME OF THE OTHERS- Dis is terrible!

LINDA, GINETTE, LISE- Dis is Cool!

(blackout)

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Angéline! Angéline!

(Projector on Angéline and Rhéauna.)

ANGELINE SAUVE- Rhéauna, try an' see it mah way...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Git yo' hands off me! Git back!

THE WOMEN- Nevah in our wildest dreams!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah nevah would a' thought you could stoop so low, Angéline! In

a nightclub! An' every Friday night! It cain't be! It ain't possible!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ah don' do nuttin' wrong, Rhéauna! Ah only have a Coca-Cola!

THE WOMEN- In a club!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Lawd only knows what she be doin' there!

ROSE OUIMET- Maybe she be on the prow!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ah swear Ah don' do nuttin' bad!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- It's true she ain't misbehavin'!

ROSE, GERMAINE, GABREILLE- Shut up you devil!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- You ain't mah friend no mo', Angéline. Ah don' even know who you are!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Listen ta me, Rhéauna, ya gotta hear me out! Ah'm gonna 'splain it all, den you will understand!

ROSE, GERMAINE, GABRIELLE- The nightclub! A real den of perdition!

ALL THE WOMEN, except the teenagers and Pierrette- Oh! Cursed place, damned place! Dat's where ya lose yo' soul. Damned drinking, cursed dancing! Dat's where our men lose their heads an' spend all their paychecks wit' those damned women!

GERMAINE, ROSE, GABRIELLE- Damned women like you, Pierrette!

ALL THE WOMEN, except the youngest four- Ain't you ashamed, Angéline Sauvé, hangin' out in a place like dat?

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Angéline! A nightclub is Hell on Earth!

PIERRETTE GUERIN, laughing loudly- If Hell be anything like da club Ah work at, Ah wouldn't mind spendin' all eternity there!

GERMAINE, ROSE, GABRIELLE- Shut yo' trap Pierrette, it's the devil speakin' outta yo' mouth!

LINDA, GINETTE, LISE- The devil? Get real! Listen, it's the 1960's! Clubs ain't the end a' the world! It ain't worse there then anywhere else. 'Sides, they fun! Clubs are fun!

THE OTHER WOMEN- Oh! Blinded youth! Blinded youth! Y'all gonna lose yo'selves,
po' youngins, y'all gonna lose yo' way, den later y'all gonna come home a cryin'!
But it'll be too late! It'll be too late! Watch it now! Watch out fo' dem cursed places!
We don' notice when we fallin', an' when we try an' git up, it be too late!

LISE PAQUETTE- Too late! It's too late! Mah Lawd, it too late!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah hope you gonna at least go an' confess, Angéline Sauvé!

ROSE OUIMET- Ah see you goin' fo' Communion every Sunday mornin'... Havin'

Communion with a sin like that on yo' conscience!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- A deadly sin!

GERMAINE, ROSE, GABRIELLE- We done heard it a million times: "Jus' goin' into a
nightclub is a deadly sin".

ANGELINE SAUVE- Enough awready! Shut up an' hear me out!

THE WOMEN- Nevah! You ain't got no excuse!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Rhéauna, listen ta me! We go way back, we been friends fo' 35

years! Ah love ya, but Ah need ta see othah folk once in a while! You know how Ah
am! Ah like ta have a good time! Ah wuz raised in da church, an' Ah wanna widen
mah horizons. You cain go ta da clubs without doin' nuttin' bad! Ah been doin' it fo'
four years an' Ah ain't nevah done no wrong! Dem dat work there ain't no worse dan
us! Ah wanna meet people! Ah nevah laughed befo' this, Rhéauna!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- There be plen'y a' places ta laugh outside da club! Ya gonna

lose yo' soul, Angéline! Te' me ya won't go back!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Listen Rhéauna, Ah cain't! Ah like goin' there, ya hear me, Ah like it!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ya gotta promise me, or else Ah ain't talkin' witchya no mo'!

Yo' choice! Da club, or me! If ya only knew how it pains me! Mah ole friend cruisin' in da club! How do it look, Angéline? What's folk gonna say seein' you goin' in there? 'Specially since Pierrette be workin' there! Ain't nowhere worse! Ya cain't nevah go back there no mo', Angéline! Ya hear me! Or else our friendship is done! Ya oughta be ashamed a' yo'self!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ya cain't axe me ta stay away from there, Rhéauna! Answer me!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah ain't talkin' ta ya till ya promise not ta go back!

(The lighting goes back to normal. Angéline sits down in a corner, Pierrette Guérin goes to join her.)

ANGELINE SAUVE- Whay on earth did ya go and come here tonight, you?

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Jus' let 'em go on talkin'. They love being drama queens. They know darn well ya don' do nuttin' bad at the club. In five minutes, they ain' t gonna be thinkin' 'bout it no mo'!

ANGELINE SAUVE- That what ya really think? An' whaddya think Rhéauna will do? Ya think she jus' gonna drop it? An' Madame de Courval who's in charge a'

parish recreation, an' who's president of the Alter Society at Our Lady of Perpetual Help! Ya think she gonna keep talkin' ta me? An' yo' sistahs who can't stand ya jus' cuz ya work in a club! Ah'm tellin' ya there ain't nuttin Ah cain do! Nuttin'! Nuttin'!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Pierrette!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Listen, Germaine, Angéline's hurtin', so it ain't the time ta fight!

Ah only came ta see ya an' stick stamps, an' Ah wanna stay! Ah ain't got leprosy! Leave the two a' us alone, an' we'll jus' stay here in our corner! Aftah tonight, Ah'll nevah come back again, if that's what ya want... But Ah cain't let Angéline aw' by herself!

ANGELINE SAUVE- You cain go on an' go home, Pierrette, if ya wanna...

PIERRETTE GUERIN- No, Ah wanna stay!

ANGELINE SAUVE- In dat case, Ah'm gonna be goin' mahself!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Maybe you both should leave!

(Angéline gets up.)

ANGELINE SAUVE, to Rhéauna- You comin'?

(Rhéauna Bibeau doesn't answer.)

Awright den. Ah'll leave da door unlocked...

(She walks towards the door. Blackout. Projector on Angéline Sauv.)

It be so easy ta judge folks. It easy ta judge but ya gotta see both sides of da story!

Da folks Ah met in da club are mah best friends! Ain't nobody evah been so nice ta

me befo'! Not even Rhéauna! Ah have a ball wit' dem; Ah laugh wit' dem! Ah wuz brought up in church halls by Nuns who did all dey could but da po' fools didn't know nuttin'! Ah learned ta laugh when Ah wuz fifty-five! An' jus' by chance! Cuz one night Pierrette brought me into her club! Ah didn't wanna go in! She had ta drag me in by mah coattail! But Ah te' ya, as soon as Ah got inside, Ah realized Ah spent mah whole life without havin' fun! It ain't everyone who has a good time in a nightclub, but Ah sure do! An' Ah sure as Hell have mo' den just a Coca-Cola when Ah go there! Of course Ah have some alcohol! Ah don' drink much but Ah git gitty jus' da same! Ah don' do nobody no harm, Ah treat mahself ta two hours a' fun a week! But it wuz bound ta happen one day! Ah knew Ah'd end up gitten caught. Ah jus' knew it! What am Ah gonna do, mah Lawd, what am Ah gonna do? (Pause.) Good Lawd! We oughta have da right ta have a li'l fun in life! (Pause.) Ah always told mahself Ah would quit goin' ta da club if Ah evah got caught... but Ah don' think Ah cain! An' Rhéauna would nevah accept dat! (Pause.) Aftah all, Rhéauna is mo' important dan Pierrette. (Long sigh.) Da pah'ty's ovah!

(She leaves. Projector on Yvette Longpré.)

YVETTE LONGPRE- Las' week wuz mah sistah-in-law, Fleur-Ange's birthday pah'ty.

They threw her a nice pah'ty. It wuz a lotta us. First a' all, it wuz her family there, ya know! Her husband, Oscar David, herself, Fleur-Ange David an' their seven keeids: Raymonde, Claude, Lisette, Fernand, Réal, Micheline, an' Yves. Her husband's folks wuz there: Aurèle David, an' his wife Ozéa David. Then it wuz mah sistah-in law's mother, Blanche Tremblay. Her father wuzn't there, cuz he dead... Then it wuz the

othah guests: Antonio Fournier, an' his wife Rita; Germaine Gervais wuz there, Wilfrid Gervais, Armand Gervais, Georges-Albert Gervais, Louis Thibault, Rose Campeau, Daniel Lemoyne, an' his wife Rose-Aimée, Roger Joly, Hormidas Guay, Simonne Laflamme, Napoléon Gauvin, Anne-Marie Turgeon, Conrad Joannette, Léa Liasse, Jeannette Landreville, Nina Laplante, Robertine Portelance, Gilberte Morrissette, Laura Cadieux, Rodolphe Quintal, Willie Sanregret, Lilianne Beaupré, Virginie Latour, Alexandre Thibodeau, Ovila Gariépy, Roméo Bacon, an' his wife Juliette; Mimi Bleau, Pit Cadieux, Ludger Champagne, Rosaire Rouleau, Roger Chabot, Antonio Simard, Alexandrine Smith, Philémon Langlois, Eliane Meunier, Marcel Morel, Grégoire Cinq-Mars Thodore Fortier, Hermine Héroux, an' then us, mah husband Euclide, an' me. Goodness, well dat's just about everyone, Ah think...

(The lights go on.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Well, so let's git back at it, Huh?

ROSE OUIMET- Let's do it with a smile!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- We done a lot, huh? Look, Ah awready got all that done...

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- 'Sides what ya done stole...

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Hand some of those stamps ovah here, Madame Lauzon.

GERMAINE LAUZON- Oh! Yeah... Of course... Here ya go, a whole bunch a' them!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Angéline! Angéline! It cain't be happenin'!

LINDA LAUZON, to Pierrette- Hey Auntie!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Hey girl, how ya doin'?

LINDA LAUZON- Oh! Not so good... Ah always be fightin' wit' mah mama, an' Ah

done had 'bout enough! We be at it fo' nex' ta nuttin'. Mmmmmm! If only Ah could leave!

GERMAINE LAUZON- The church retreats' be startin' soon, ya know!

ROSE OUIMET- Oh yeah! That's what they said at Mass las' week.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Ah sure hope it ain't gonna be wit' da same priest as las' year...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Me too! Ah didn't like 'em, that one! He bored me ta tears!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Anyways, there ain't nuttin' keepin' ya from leavin'! You cain come stay wit' me...

LINDA LAUZON- No way! Ah would nevah be welcome back!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- No, it's not the same priest who's coming this year...

DES-NESIGES VERRETTE- No? Who comin' then?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- A man named Father Rochon. They say he's wonderful!

Father Gagné was just telling me the other day that he is one of his best friends...

ROSE OUIMET, to Gabrielle- Heah she goes again with her Father Gagné! She gonna go on all night fo' sure! Ya'd swear she wuz in love with 'em! Father Gagné this, Father Gagné that... We' Ah cain te' ya, Ah don' like 'em much Father Gagné...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Me neither! He too modern. Sure, it nice ta take care a' parish recreation, but he cain't fo'git dat he's a priest! A man a' God!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Oh! Yeah, he's a living saint that man... You should get to know him, Madame Dubuc, ya'd really like him... When he talks, it's like it's the Good Lawd himself talking to us!

THERESE DUBUC- No need ta exaggerate, now...

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah'm telling ya! And the children just love him! That reminds me... The kids at the parish are organizing a talent show in one month. Ah hope ya can all come, it's going to be a fantastic evening! They've all been practicing for ages...

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- What cain we 'spect ta see?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Oh! It's going to be great. There are going to be all kinds of acts. Madame Gladu's little boy is going to sing...

ROSE OUIMET- Not again? He gets on mah nerves, that one. Ah'm tiah'd a' hearin' 'em! 'Sides, since he wen' on TV, his Mama got aw' high n' mighty. She thinks she's a celebrity!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- But little Raymond sings so well!

ROSE OUIMET- Yeah... We' Ah think he looks like a girl with his li'l mouth puckered like a hen's ass...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Rose!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Diane Aubin is going to give a swimming demonstration in the pool... The party is going to be near the public pool, it's going to be so nice...

ROSE OUIMET- An' do ya think there's gonna be any prizes?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Well yes of course! And at the end of the evening, there's going to be bingo!

THE OTHER WOMEN, except the four youngest- Bingo!

OLIVINE DUBUC- Bingo!

(Blackout. When the lights come back on, the nine women are standing at the edge of the stage.)

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ode to Bingo!

OLIVINE DUBUC- Bingo!

(While Rose, Germaine, Gabrielle, Thérèse and Marie-Ange recite "Ode to Bingo", the four other women rhythmically shout out bingo numbers in counterpoint.)

GERMAINE, ROSE, GABRIELLE, THERESE AND MARIE-ANGE- Ah really like

bingo! Ah just adore bingo! There ain't nuttin' in da whole world Ah love mo' dan bingo! 'Most every month da parish be havin' a bingo! Ah git ready two days befo', Ah git all excited, Ah cain't hardly stand it, Ah cain't think a' nuttin' else. An' whin da big day comes, Ah git so worked up dat Ah cain't git any housework done! Mmmmm Hmmmm! Whin da evenin' comes, Ah put on mah Sunday best, an' not

even a hurricane could stop me from goin' ta play! Ah really like bingo! Ah'm tellin' ya, Ah just adore bingo! There ain't nuttin' in da world Ah love mo' dan bingo! Whin we git there, we take off our coats an' go straight ta da playing area. Sometimes, it be da livin' room dat the lady done cleared , sometimes it be da kitchen, an' sometimes it even be in a bedroom. Den we all take our seats, dey hand out da cards, we place our free-space chips, an' den we're off! (The women who are shouting the numbers continue alone for a few seconds.) Ah te' ya, Ah go stone crazy! Good Lawd, it's jus' so excitin', bingo! Ah git all shook up, Ah git hot flashes, Ah hear da numbers backwards, Ah place mah chips on da wrong spot, Ah make da caller repeat da numbers, Ah'm such a mess! Ah really like bingo! Ah te' ya, Ah just adore bingo! There ain't nuttin' in da world Ah love mo' dan bingo! Da game's almost done! Ah got three ways ta win! Two at da top, an' one across! Ah need B 14! Ah only need B 14! Ah gotta have B 14! B 14! B 14! Ah look at da othahs! Dang, dey all got as much chance as Ah got! What am Ah gonna do? Ah jus' gotta win! Ah gotta win! Ah gotta win!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- B 14!

THE FIVE WOMEN- Bingo! Bingo! Ah won! Ah knew Ah would! Ah wuz too close ta lose! Ah won! So what Ah win?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Last month it was plaster dogs to keep your door open, this month it's floor lamps.

THE NINE WOMEN- Ah really like bingo! Ah te' ya, Ah just adore bingo! There

ain't nuttin' in da world Ah love mo' dan bingo! It's a damn shame dey don' have
it mo' often! Ah'd be so much happier! God bless the plaster dogs! God bless the
floor lamps! God bless bingo!

(Lighting back to normal.)

ROSE OUIMET- Mmmmm! Ah'm workin' up a thirst!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Good Lawd! Ah fo' got the soda! Linda, hand out the Coke!

OLIVINE DUBUC- Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola, yeah, yeah, Coke...

THERESE DUBUC- Hold yo' horses, Madame Dubuc, ya gonna git yo' Coke jus'

like everyone else! But ya gotta drink right, ya hear! Don' ya be spillin' it like da
las' time!

ROSE OUIMET- Ah te' ya, she 'bout drivin' me ape-shit with her mothah-in-law...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Rose, you watch it girl! We done had enough fightin' fo' one
evenin'. Ya really wan' mo' drama?

GERMAINE LAUZON- Yeah, jus' take it easy! An' stick! Ya ain't doin' nuttin'!

(Projector on the refrigerator. The next scene takes place by the refrigerator.)

LISE PAQUETTE, to Linda- Ah gotta talk ta ya, Linda...

LINDA LAUZON- Yeah, Ah know, ya tol' me at the restaurant... But it ain't the best
time...

LISE PAQUETTE- It ain't gonna take long. Ah jus' gotta tell someone. You're mah best friend, Linda, that's whay Ah wantchya ta be the first ta know... Ah cain't hide it no mo', it hurts too much... Linda, Ah'm gonna have a baby!

LINDA LAUZON- What! That's crazy?! You sure?

LISE PAQUETTE- Yeah. The doctor tol' me!

LINDA LAUZON- Girl, whatchya gonna do?

LISE PAQUETTE- Hell if Ah know! Ah'm so upset! Ah ain't even tol' mah folks yet, ya know. Ah'm scared mah daddy's gonna kill me! Whin the doctor tol' me, Ah te' ya, Ah jus' wanted ta jump off the balcony...

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Listen, Lise...

LINDA LAUZON- Ya heard us?

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Yeah. Chile, Ah know you in a mess. But... Ah might be able ta he'p ya out...

LISE PAQUETTE- Oh! Yeah? How?

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Well, Ah know a doctor...

LINDA LAUZON- Donchyou dare, Aunt Pierrette!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Come on, there ain't nuttin' ta worry 'bout... This doctor, he be doin' two or three a week!

LISE PAQUETTE- Ah gotta admit the thought has crossed mah mind... but Ah didn't know anyone... an' Ah'm afraid a' doin' it mahself.

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Don' evah try! Now that is dangerous! But wit' mah doctor... If ya want, Ah cain set ya up. In a week from now, it be all done!

LINDA LAUZON- Lise, ya don' wanna do it! That'd be a real crime!

LISE PAQUETTE- What else cain Ah do? There ain't no othah way out! An' Ah ain't ready ta have a keeid! Ya done seen what happened ta Manon Bélair? She wuz too young ta be a mothah. Now she's got 'er hands full an' it ain't gonna git any better!

LINDA LAUZON- An' da father don' wanna git married?

LISE PAQUETTE- Ya know damn well that he up an' dumped me, dontchya? He vanished not long ago! He promised me heaven on earth! We wuz gonna be happy together! He wuz makin' a lot a' dough, an' me, like a fool, Ah couldn't see straight! He wuz forever givin' me all kinds a' gifts. Oh! Ah made the most of it fo' a while. But fo' Christ's sake, this had ta go an' happen! It jus' had ta happen! Son of a Bitch! Ah cain't git a break, nevah! Ah always gotta git a bucket a' shit dumped on me! But Ah want outta this mess! Ah'm tiah'd a' workin' at Kresge's (K-Mart)! Ah wanna go somewhere in life, ya hear me, Ah wanna git somewhere in life! Ah wanna car, a nice apartment, some nice threads! 'Bout the only thing Ah got ta wear are some restaurant uniforms, Mah Lawd! Ah've always been po', always jus' scrapin' by, an' Ah wanna change! Ah know Ah'm not worth much, but Ah want out! Ah might a' come into this world through the backdoor, but God as mah witness, Ah'm

gonna leave through the front! An' there ain't nuttin' that's gonna hold me back! Ain't nuttin' gonna stop me! Later on, you'll see Ah'm right, Linda! In two or three years, ya gonna see that Lise Paquette's gonna be somebody! An' she's gonna have some cash, ya hear?

LINDA LAUZON- You off ta a bad start!

LISE PAQUETTE- You right, Ah done screwed up an' Ah wanna fix it! Ah wanna start from scratch, whin it's aw' said an' done! You know what Ah'm talkin' 'bout, dontchya Pierrette?

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Yeah, Ah hear ya. Ah know what it is ta wanna make a lotta money. Jus' take me fo' example, whin Ah wuz yo' age Ah left home ta earn a livin'. But Ah didn't start by workin' in the Five an' Dime, ya know. Oh no! Ah wen' straight ta the club! That's where the money wuz! An' it ain't gonna be long befo' Ah'm gonna have it made too! Johnny done promised me...

ROSE, GERMAINE, GABRIELLE- Goddamn Johnny! Goddamn Johnny!

GINETTE MENARD- Hey, what's goin' on heah?

LISE PAQUETTE- Oh nuttin', nuttin' at all. (to Pierrette.) We cain talk later...

GINETTE MENARD- What about?

LISE PAQUETTE- Oh! Jus' drop it!

GINETTE MENARD- You ain't gonna tell me nuttin'?

LISE PAQUETTE- Leave me alone, back off!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Come ovah heah, we cain talk some mo'...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Them sodas still ain't here yet?

LINDA LAUZON- Ah'm heah, Ah'm heah...

(The lights come back on.)

GABRIELLE JODOIN- So how much ya pay fo' yo' l'il blue suit?

ROSE OUIMET- Which one?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- You know, the li'l blue suit wi' the white lace 'round the collar.

ROSE OUIMET- Oh! That one... Ah got it fo' \$9.98.

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Ah knew it! Wouldn't ya know that Ah saw it today at

Reitman's fo' \$14.98...

ROSE OUIMET- Git outta town! Ah wuz sayin' that Ah got a good deal...

GABRIELLE JODOIN- You lucky shit! You the best at findin' bargains!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Mah daughter Micheline just changed her job. Now she's

working on those F.B.I. machines.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Oh! Yeah? Seems them machines is terrible fo' yo'

nerves. The girls who work on them machines gotta change aftah six months.

Simonne, mah sistah-in-law's girl had a nervous breakdown cuz a' dem machines.

Simonne jus' called me today ta te' me 'bout it...

ROSE OUIMET- Good Lawd, that reminds me, Linda, someone wants ta talk ta ya on

the phone!

(Linda hurries over to the telephone.)

LINDA LAUZON- Hello, Robert? You been waitin' long?

GINETTE MENARD- So tell me!

LISE PAQUETTE- No! You cain be such a nag! Stop hangin' on me like a leech!

Lemme talk wit' Pierrette a bit. Skedaddle, ya pest!

GINETTE MENARD- Awright, Ah hear ya! Ya sure is happy ta have me 'round whin

there ain't nobody else, but as soon as there be someone else comin' along...

LINDA LAUZON- Listen, Robert... yeah, Ah jus' done told ya five times that they jus'

told me! It ain't mah fault!

THERESE DUBUC- Heah, hide dat, Madame Dubuc!

ROSE OUIMET, to Ginette Ménard who's handing out the Coca-Cola- How's everything

goin' with yo' family, Ginette?

GINETTE MENARD- Oh! Always the same... They be at it all day long... Nuttin'

new. Mama keeps drinkin'... Daddy gits mad... So they be fightin' nonstop...

ROSE OUIMET- You po' girl... An' yo' sistah?

GINETTE MENARD- Suzanne? She's still the smart one of the family! They all nuts fo'

her! She the only one that matters. "She's a good girl. Ya oughta be like her, Ginette.

She made somethin' of her life." An' me, Ah don' matter. They always loved her

mo' then me. Ah know it. An' now that she's a school teacher, ya know, it's jus' too much!

ROSE OUIMET- Oh, come now, Ginette. Ah think yo' being too hard on yo'self.

GINETTE MENARD- Ah know what Ah'm talkin' about! Mah mama nevah

bothered wit' me. It always be Suzanne's da prettiest, Suzanne's da nicest. Ah'm

sick a' hearin' 'bout all day long! Even Lise don' care 'bout me no mo'!

LINDA LAUZON, on the phone- Oh! Shove it! If ya ain't gonna listen, whaddya

want me ta say? Whin yo' not so crabby, call me back.

(She hangs up.)

Ya couldn't a' told me sooner Ah had a call? He let me have it cuz a' you Aunt Rose!

ROSE OUIMET- She' really something. But really wild that girl!

(Spotlight on Pierrette Guérin.)

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Whin Ah left home, Ah wuz head ovah heels in love. Ah

couldn't see straight. Only Johnny mattered ta me. Ah done wasted tin years a' mah

life on that bastard! Ah'm only thirty years old, but Ah feel like Ah wuz sixty! He

sure did make me do some stupid sheeit, that boy! An' me, like a dumb ass, Ah wen'

along with 'em! Son of a bitch! Ah worked tin years in the club fo' him! Ah wuz

pretty, an' Ah brought in the customers. That wuz fine fo' the time it lasted... But

now... Goddamn it, Ah'm sick an' tiah'd of it! Ah could jus' jump off a bridge, Ah

swear! All Ah got left is ta git drunk. An' that's jus' what Ah been doin' since Friday. Po' Lise, she be feelin' sorry fo' herself cuz she's pregnant, an' she's in a jam! But Good Lawd, she's young, that one. Ah'm gonna give 'er mah doctor's address, an' everything's gonna be ok, she's gonna be able to git a fresh start. But not me! Not me! Ah'm too old! A girl who been livin' hard fo' tin years ain't fetchin' no mo' glances! Ah'm last year's model! So try an' 'splain that ta mah sistahs. They ain't gonna understand nuttin'! Ah don' know what's gonna become a' me, Ah ain't got no idea!

LISE PAQUETTE, at the other end of the kitchen- Ah don' know what's gonna become a' me, Ah ain't got no idea! Gittin' an abortion ain't no joke! Ah heard enough stories 'bout it! An' it's worse whin we do it ourselves, so Ah best be goin' ta see Pierrette's doctor! Oh! Whay does this shit always go an' happen ta me! She lucky, Pierrette. She be workin' in da same club fo' tin years, she makes a bundle, an' she's in love. Oh! Ah'm so jealous! Even if 'er family don' love 'er no mo', at least she's happy!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- He dumped me like he wuz takin' out da trash! It's O-V-E-R, ovah! Ah don' wanna see ya no mo'! You too old now, an' too ugly! Pack yo' bags an' scram! Don' need ya no mo'! The bastard didn't leave me a dime! Not even one damn red cent! An' aftah all Ah done fo' 'em fo' tin years! Tin years! Tin years fo' nuttin! Ain't that enough ta kill yo'self ovah? What's gonna become a' me, huh? What am Ah gonna do? A cheap waitress at Kresge's like Lise? Oh! No thank ya! Kresge's is good fo' teenagers an' mothahs, not fo' girls like mahself! Ah' don'

know what's gonna become a' me, Ah ain't got no idea! Plus, Ah gotta be nice here!
Ah ain't about ta tell Linda an' Lise that Ah'm all but done fo'! (Silence.) Yeah...
Now there ain't nuttin' left but booze... Good thing Ah like that...

LISE PAQUETTE, repeating several times during Pierrette's monologue- Ah'm
scared, Good Lawd, Ah'm scared!

(She approaches Pierrette and throws herself in her arms.)

You sure everything's gonna be ok, Pierrette? If ya only knew how scared Ah wuz!

PIERRETTE GUERIN, laughing- Of course, don' worry, everything's gonna work
out, you'll see, it'll all work out...

(The lighting comes back to normal.)

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE, to Des-Neiges- We ain't even safe at the movie-
theatres no mo'! The othah day, Ah wen' ta see an old Eddie Constantine movie.
Mah husband stayed at home. Smack dab in the middle of the movie, wouldn't ya
know dat some ole fart comes an' sits nex' ta me an' starts gittin' fresh! Ah wuz so
embarrassed, as y'all cain just imagine! But Ah mustered up mah courage, got up,
an' let 'em have it in the face wit' mah handbag!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ya done good girl! Me, Ah always carry a hatpin on me

whin Ah go ta the theatre. Ya nevah know what cain happen. So Ah'm ready fo' da fool who tries ta mess wit' me... But Ah ain't nevah had ta use it yet.

ROSE OUIMET- Germaine, yo' Cokes are kinna' warm.

GERMAINE LAUZON- Jus' whin ya gonna stop yo' criticizin', huh, whin ya gonna stop?

LISE PAQUETTE- Linda, ya got a pencil an' a piece a' paper?

LINDA LAUZON- Don' do it Lise, Ah'm tellin' ya!

LISE PAQUETTE- Ah know what Ah gotta do! Mah minds made up an' ain't nuttin' gonna make me change it!

RHEANUNA BIBEAU, to Thérèse- Hey, jus' whaddya think you're doin' there?

THERESE DUBUC- Shhhh! Not so loud! You oughta do the same! Two or three booklets ain't gonna be missed.

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah ain't no thief!

THERESE DUBUC- Come on, Mademoiselle Bibeau, it ain't stealin'! She got dem stamps there fo' nuttin'! An' a million of 'em at that! A million!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- A million or a billion don' change a thing! She invited us ta come an' stick stamps, we sure ain't s'posed ta take advantage of dat an' steal 'em!

GERMAINE LAUZON, to Rose- What those two talkin' 'bout ovah there? Ah don'

like hushed conversations!

(She goes over to Rhéauna and Thérèse.)

THERESE DUBUC, seeing her come- Uh... well yeah... ya just add two cups a'
water, an' ya stir.

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Say what? (Seeing Germaine.) Oh! Yeah! She wuz givin' me a
recipe!

GERMAINE LAUZON- A recipe fo' what?

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Doughnuts!

THERESE DUBUC- Chocolate pudding!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Well make up yo' minds, is it puddin', or is it doughnuts!

(She goes back to Rose.)

Ah'm tellin' ya Rose, there somethin' fishy goin' on here tonight.

ROSE OUIMET, who has just hidden a few booklets in her handbag- No there ain't. It's
all in yo' head...

GERMAINE LAUZON- An' Ah think Linda's been hangin' 'round her aunt Pierrette too
long. Linda, come heah...

LINDA LAUZON- Just a minute, Mama...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah told ya ta come heah! Not tamorrow, but taday!

LINDA LAUZON- O.K. Don' git aw' mad about nuttin'! Yeah, what's the matter?

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Stay with us a bit... You been hangin' 'round yo' aunt too much...

LINDA LAUZON- So? What's wrong wit' that?

GERMAINE LAUZON- What she been talkin' 'bout so much with yo' friend Lise, huh?

LINDA LAUZON- Oh... nuttin'...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Answer the question, whin we talkin' to ya!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Lise wrote somethin' down not long ago.

LINDA LAUZON- It wuz an address...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Don' te' me ya gone an' got Pierrette's address! If Ah evah find out that you wuz at yo' aunt's, you gonna be in fo' it, ya hear?

LINDA LAUZON- Get off mah back! Ah'm old enough ta know what Ah cain do!

(She goes back to Pierrette.)

ROSE OUIMET- Maybe it ain't none a' mah business, Germaine, but...

GERMAINE LAUZON- What then, what is it now!

ROSE OUIMET- Yo' girl Linda's on a slippery slope...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Yeah, Ah know it all too well! But you stay outta it Rose, Ah'll handle it! An' Ah te' ya that she's gonna git back on track soon enough. An' as fo' Miss Pierrette, there, it the last time she sets foot in heah! Ah'll throw her out on her gussied up ass.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE - Have y'all noticed that Madame Bergeron's girl's been gainin' weight fo' some time now?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Yeah, Ah noticed that...

THERESE DUBUC, insinuating- It's funny though, she only gainin' 'round the tummy.

ROSE OUIMET- Looks like there's some lovin' in the oven!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- She be tryin' ta hide it, ya know. But it startin' ta show a bit too much now!

THERESE DUBUC- Ain't it da truth! Ah wonder who could a' done the deed, huh?

LISETTE DE COURVAL- It must be her stepfather...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Ah wouldn't be s'prised at all. He been aftah her evah since he married her mama!

THERESE DUBUC- That cain't be a pretty picture what's goin' on in that house! Po' Monique, she so young...

ROSE OUIMET- We' ya know she kinna' brought it on herself! Dressin' the way she do, it wouldn't take much! Las' summer, ah te' ya, Ah wuz embarrassed fo' her! An' Ah'm hard to embarrass! Ah don' know if y'all remember her red shorts... they sure

wuz short! Ah always said she wuz headin' fo' trouble, Monique Bergeron! She got the devil in 'er, that girl there! She's possessed! Plus, she dye her hair red. No matter what them French movies say about single mothers, Ah don' feel sorry fo' 'em!
(Lise Paquette starts to get up.)

PIERRETTE GUERIN- No, Lise, git a hold a' yo'self!

ROSE OUIMET- Listen, y'all know they be axin' fo' it! Oh! Ah ain't talkin' 'bout the girls who git raped, ya know, that ain't the same thing; but yo' average girl who winds up with a l'il one, we' Ah ain't got no sympathy fo' 'em! It's a damn shame! Ah te' ya, Ah sure wouldn't wanna see mah Carmen comin' home like that, cuz Ah'd knock 'er ass outta the window in a heartbeat. But Ah ain't worried 'bout that happenin', she too much a lady fo' that! No, in mah opinion, unwed mothahs, is good fo' nuttin' sluts who be runnin' 'round aftah men! Mah husband, he calls 'em dickteases!

LISE PAQUETTE- If she don't shut up right now, Ah'm gonna kill 'er!

GINETTE MENARD- Whay? Ah think she makes a good point!

LISE PAQUETTE- Oh! You, git outta heah, git out befo' Ah smack da taste outta yo' mouth!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Ain't you bein' a bit harsh, Rose!

ROSE OUIMET- We' we all know too well that you done seen yo' share a' such madness! Surely, ain't nuttin' gonna shock you! You probably think it's run a' the mill! Well not us! There still ways ta avoid it.

PIERRETTE GUERIN, laughing- Yeah, Ah'll say, Ah know a few ways. Take da pill for example...

ROSE OUIMET- There just ain't no use in talkin' ta ya! That ain't what Ah meant! You oughta know Ah ain't in favor a' free love! Ah'm a Catholic! You jus' stay in yo' world an' leave us alone! Goddamn harlot!

LISSETTE DE COURVAL- Ah think you're overreacting it a bit, Madame Ouimet. Sometimes, the girls that get pregnant aren't to blame.

ROSE OUIMET- You believe everything ya see in the French movies.

LISSETTE DE COURVAL- Just what have you against French movies, anyway?

ROSE OUIMET- Ah ain't got nuttin' against 'em, but Ah prefer American movies, an' that's all! French movies is too realistic, too exaggerated! Ya cain't believe everything they say! In the movies, ya always be feelin' sorry fo' the unwed mothahs, an' it ain't nevah their fault. Any a' y'all know any girls like that? Cuz Ah don't! A movie is one thing, an' life is anothah!

LISE PAQUETTE- Lemme at 'er, that bitch! Big fat cunt! She thinks she cain judge everyone, an' she don' know what she be talkin' about... An' as fo' her Carmen, Mmmm Hmmm, Ah know 'er Carmen, an' Ah cain te' ya dat she ain't all dat! She oughta mind 'er own business 'stead a' shittin' on everyone 'round her!

(Spotlight on Rose Ouimet.)

ROSE OUIMET- Yeah, c'est la vie, an' ain't no Goddamn French movie gonna come along an' tell it like it really is! Oh! It easy fo' an actress to make us feel sorry fo' her in a movie! Mmmmm Hmmmmm. Ah te' ya! Whin her day be done, in the evenin', she be goin' home ta her hundred thousand dollah house, an' she be goin' ta sleep in a bed that's twice as big as mah bedroom! But whin we git up in the mornin', we... (Silence.) Whin Ah git up, in the mornin', he always be there lookin' at me... He waits fo' me. Every blessed mornin', he wakes up befo' me, an' he waits fo' me! An' every blessed night, he goes ta bed befo' me, an' he be waitin' fo' me! He always be there, he always be aftah me, stuck up against me like a bloodsuckah! Damn sex! Oh! They don' talk about that in the movies, ya know! Oh! That ain't the kinna thing they talk about! That a woman gotta put up with a pig her whole life cuz she had the misfortune a' sayin' "Ah do" just once, that ain't interestin' enough! Good Lawd, if that ain't sadder than any movie, Ah don' know what is! Cuz that lasts yo' whole life! (Silence.) Ah sure do regret it, Ah te' ya Ah really do. Ah nevah should 'a got married! Ah should a' yelled "HELL NO" at the top a' mah lungs, an' stayed an' old maid! At least Ah would a' had some peace! It's true that Ah wuz naïve back then an' Ah didn't know what Ah wuz gettin' mahself into. But fool that Ah am, Ah only thought about the "Holy State of Matrimony"! Ya gotta be real stupid ta raise yo' keeids in that kinna' ignorance, real stupid! We' Ah te' ya, mah Carmen, she ain't gonna git mixed up in that, ya hear? Cuz fo' a long time now, Ah been tellin' mah Carmen what men is worth! That way, she cain't say Ah didn't warn 'er! (About to cry.) An' she won't end up like me, forty-four years old with a four-year-old boy on mah hands, an' a pig of a husband who won't understand nuttin', an'

who wants his due twice a day, three-hundred sixty-five days a year! Whin ya hit forty an' ya realize that ya ain't got nuttin' behind ya, an' ya ain't got nuttin' ahead a' ya, that jus' makes ya wanna say ta Hell with it all, an' start from scratch! But women, they cain't do that... Women, they're caught by the throat, an' they gonna stay like that till the end!

(The lighting comes back to normal.)

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Anyway, me, Ah love French movies! Mmmmmm Hmmmmm! They sure know how ta make a sad picture! Ah te' ya they sure cain make me cry, those movies! An' Ah must say that those Frenchmen are much finer than Canadians! Real fine men! Mmmmm Mmmm Mmmm Mmm Mm!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Oh! No way girl, Ah gotta stop ya there! That's just a lie!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Frenchmen, they all short l'il thangs dat don' even come up to mah shoulders! An' they all too effeminate! They all act too girly!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Ah beg yo' pardon! There a lotta them who are real men! Den there's our poor husbands!

GERMAIN LAUZON- Oh! We' if you're gonna use our husbands as examples, then Ah'd hafta agree! But ya cain't compare oranges with apples! Sure our husbands is pitiful, but our actors, they's just as handsome an' just as good as any French from France!

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Anyway, Ah would jus' die fo' Jean Marais! Now that's a man!

OLIVINE DUBUC- Coke... Coke... mo'... Coke...

THERESE DUBUC- Keep it quiet there, Madame Dubuc!

OLIVINE DUBUC- Coke! Coke!

ROSE OUIMET- Oh! Someone keep 'er quiet, we cain't hear ourselves stick! Give 'er some Coke, Germaine, that'll shut 'er up fo' a bit!

GERMAINE LAUZON- We' Ah don' think there's none left!

ROSE OUIMET- Good Lawd, ya didn't buy much! You're still pinchin' pennies!
Hmmm!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU, while stealing stamps- Ah might as well, Ah only need three ta git mah chrome-plated dustpan.

(Angéline Sauvé enters.)

ANGELINE SAUVE- Good evenin' all... (To Rhéauna.) Ah came back...

THE OTHERS, dryly- Good evenin'...

ANGELINE SAUVE- Ah wen' ta see Father Castelneau...

PIERRETTE GUERIN- She ain't gonna even give me the time a' day!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- What on earth could she be wantin' then wit' Mademoiselle Bibeau?

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Ah bet she came back ta say she's sorry. Aftah all, Mademoiselle Sauvé, she's a good person, an' she knows what's right. Y'all will see, everything's gonna work out fine.

GERMAINE LAUZON- In the meantime, Ah'm gonna see how many booklets got done.

(The women straighten up in their chairs. Gabrielle Jodoin hesitates, then...)

GABRIELLE JODOIN- Hey! Germaine, Ah fo'got ta te' ya! Ah found a corset-maker! A lady named Angéline Giroux! Come ovah here an' Ah'll tell ya 'bout 'er!

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- Ah knew ya'd come back ta me, Angéline! Ah'm so happy. You'll see, we gonna pray togethah, an' da Good Lawd is gonna fo'git all dat quick! He ain't crazy, ya know, da Good Lawd!

LISE PAQUETTE- That's it, Pierrette, they done gone an' made up!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Ah don' fuckin' believe it!

ANGELINE SUAVE- Jus' da same, Ah'm gonna say hello ta Pierrette an' e'splain...

RHEAUNA BIBEAU- No, ya'd be best no' ta talk ta her at all! Stay wit' me, leave 'er alone, her! All dat is ovah now!

ANGELINE SAUVE- Awright, if ya insist.

PIERRETTE GUERIN- That's it. She won! Ah ain't got nuttin' left here, Ah'm sick a' all dis sheeit! Ah'm gittin' the Hell outta here!

GERMAINE LAUZON- You the best, Gaby. Ah wuz startin' ta worry, ya know. It ain't just anybody that cain make mah corsets. Ah'm gonna go an' see 'er next week.

(She heads over to the box of booklets. The women follow her with their eyes.)

Mah Lawd, there ain't many done! Where the Heck are they, all the booklets? There ain't nuttin' but tin or so at the bottom! Maybe they ovah... no, the table is clear!

(Silence. Germaine Lauzon looks at all the women.)

What's goin' on heah?

THE OTHERS- Well... Uhhhh... Ah don' know... really...

(They pretend to look for the booklets. Germaine stands in front of the door.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Where mah stamps?

ROSE OUIMET- We' come now, Germaine, look around some!

GERMAINE LAUZON- They ain't in the box, an' they ain't on the table! Ah wanna know where mah stamps are!

OLIVINE DUBUC, taking out some stamps hidden in her clothes- Stamps? Stamps... stamps... (She laughs.)

THERSES DUBUC- Madame Dubuc, hide dat... Jesus Christ, Madame Dubuc!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Fo' da love a' Saint Anne!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Pray fo' us!

GERMAINE LAUZON- But her clothes is filled with 'em! What the Hell is this, she's stuffed with 'em! Here's some, an' heah... Thérèse... Tell me it ain't you.

THERESE DUBUC- Lawd no, really, Ah swear Ah didn't know!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Show me yo' purse!

THERESE DUBUC- Come on, Germaine, if ya ain't gonna trust me.

ROSE OUIMET- Germaine, git a grip!

GERMAINE LAUZON- You too, Rose, Ah wanna see yo' purse! Ah wanna see all yo' purses! All a' y'all!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Ah refuse! Ah've nevah been so insulted in all mah life!

YVETTE LONGPRE- Me neither!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- Ah'm never setting foot in here again!

(Germaine Lauzon grabs Thérèse's purse and opens it. She takes out several booklets.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Well, well, well. Ah jus' knew it! Ah guess it's the same in all yo' purses! Ya thievin' bunch a' whores! Ah ain't gonna let ya git away with it! Ah'm gonna beat the shit outta y'all!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Ah'll he'p ya Germaine! They all just a bunch a' damned thieves! An' they all got da nerve ta judge me!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Show me all yo' purses.

(She snatches Rose's purse.)

Looky here... an' here!

(She grabs another handbag.)

An' heah too. An' mo' heah! You too, Mademoiselle Bibeau? Ya only got three, but ya got some jus' the same!

ANGELINE SAUVE- What! Rhéauna! You too!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Everyone! All 'a y'all! Y'all a bunch a' Goddamn thieves!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- You don' deserve all dem stamps!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Whay you mo' dan any a' us, Mmmmm?

ROSE OUIMET- Ya rubbed our noses in yo' damn stamps!

GERMAINE LAUZON- But them stamps is mine!

LISETTE DE COURVAL- They should be for everyone!

THE OTHERS- Yeah, fo' everyone!

GERMAINE LAUZON- But they mine! Give 'em back!

THE OTHERS- Nevah!

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- There's still a lot in the boxes, let's he'p ourselves!

DES-NEIGES VERRETTE- Yeah, fo' sure!

YVETTE LONGPRE- Ah'm gonna fill up mah purse.

GERMAINE LAUZON- Stop! Keep yo' hands off 'em!

THERESE DUBUC- Here, Madame Dubuc, take these. Here some mo'.

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Come ovah here, Mademoiselle Verrette, there's a ton
here. He'p me.

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Drop 'em now!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Mah stamps! Mah stamps!

ROSE OUIMET- Come he'p me Gaby, Ah took too many!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Mah stamps! Mah stamps!

(There's a big fight. The women steal as many stamps as they can. Pierrette and
Germaine try to stop them. Linda and Lise remain seated in a corner and watch the

spectacle without moving. We hear screams, some women start to fight amongst themselves.)

MARIE-ANGE BROUILLETTE- Those are mine, there!

ROSE OUIMET- You liar! They mine!

LISETTE DE COURVAL, to Gaby- Let go of me! Let me go!

(They start to throw the stamp booklets all over. They all grab what they can in the boxes. Stamps are thrown everywhere, out the door, out the window. Olivine Dubuc tries to move about in her wheelchair and belts out “O Canada”. Some women leave with their stolen stamps. Rose and Gabrielle stay a little longer than the others.)

GERMAINE LAUZON- Mah sistahs! Mah own sistahs!

(Gabrielle and Rose leave. Only Germaine, Linda and Pierrette remain in the kitchen. Germaine sinks into a chair.)

Mah stamps! Mah stamps.

(Pierrette puts her arms around Germaine’s shoulders.)

PIERRETTE GUERIN- Don’ cry, Germaine!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Don’ speak ta me! Git outta here! Ya ain’t no better than the others!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- But...

GERMAINE LAUZON- Go on, Ah don’ wanna see ya no mo’!

PIERRETTE GUERIN- But, ah stood up fo’ ya! Ah’m wit’ you, Germaine!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Git out, leave me alone! Don' talk ta me no mo'! Ah don'
wanna see no one no mo'!

(Pierrette slowly leaves. Linda also heads for the door.)

LINDA LAUZON- It's sure gonna be a lotta work ta clean up all that!

GERMAINE LAUZON- Good Lawd! Oh mah God! Mah stamps! Ah ain't got nuttin'
left! Nuttin'! Nuttin'! Mah nice new house! Mah nice furniture! Nuttin'! Mah
stamps! Mah stamps!

(She bends down in front of a chair and starts to gather up what's left of the stamps.
She weeps heavily. We hear the others outside singing "O Canada". As the song
continues, Germaine finds her strength and finishes singing "O Canada" with the
others, standing up, with tears in her eyes. Stamps rain down from the ceiling...)

Curtain