

# ON ISLAND

– From a New Two-Act Play –

BY SUSAN MINOT

*PROLOGUE*

(AMBIENT SOUNDS: GULLS.  
Projection on scrim of MAIN STREET:  
a classic small island street. Behind the  
scrim: MIRANDA SNOW carries a box  
and heavy mooring chain. A man in his  
30s/40s, behind her, drags a wheeled bag,  
looking lost, which indeed he is. JONA-  
THAN is “from away.” He is watchful and  
interested, with a quick innocence.)

JONATHAN

Excuse me.

(Miranda stops.)

Is this... What island are we on?

MIRANDA

North Haven.

JONATHAN

Oh no. I have a feeling I'm on the wrong island.

MIRANDA

Where do you want to be?

JONATHAN

Vinalhaven. I'm not sure I want to be there,  
but that's where I'm supposed to be.

MIRANDA

This is not Vinalhaven.

(Points to the audience.)

That's Vinalhaven.

JONATHAN

It's so close.

MIRANDA

Yes, but the Vinalhaven ferry goes an-  
other way further away. You got on the  
wrong ferry.

JONATHAN  
I did? Ha... Does that happen a lot?

MIRANDA

No.

JONATHAN

No?

MIRANDA

Most people here know where they're going.  
(BLACK)  
(Early morning birdsong.)

SCENE ONE: ISLAND ROAD, DAWN  
(Projection of ISLAND ROAD.  
Fir-lined and narrowing to a point



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**WORDS**

in the distance. A person appears stage right walking a dog. DOG WALKER (CLARA) is mature but ageless. She moves down stage left at a slow pace then back to upstage right, stopping and starting so that she seems to be walking on this road. She is the narrative presence. The other characters do not acknowledge her.)

DOG WALKER

(Entering.)

This is the best time of day on island. Peaceful. The sun not up. Walking the dog. (To the dog.)

Come on, Maisie. Out of there. Sunrise feels like a miracle. The same thing happened yesterday and will happen tomorrow. It couldn't be less of a miracle. Still. You feel the planet beneath you, almost feel it spinning. Islands are more quiet than other places. Sounds carry, as if you were on a stage.

(Motorboats hum in the distance.)

Boats head out to haul their traps. Today is August 3rd. It happens to be my sister-in-law Dottie's birthday. She's going to be 81. Our island is North Haven. In Penobscot Bay. We're one of a hundred islands dotting the bay, mostly unpopulated. Twelve miles long, three at the widest point, and thin as a finger in some places. Our year-round population is 351. In the summer, it's four times that. The summer people come and go.

(Behind the scrim, SUMMER PERSON walks stage right to left.)

Here's one now. Come on, Maisie. Don't know who that is. Mostly I recognize 'em, but less and less these days.

(The sound of a BICYCLE CLICKING BY.)

There's one of the Chandler boys. Look just like their father.

(Sound of a car motor passing. She waves.)

That's my niece, bringing her husband to work down at the Reynolds' place. I know all the islanders: I'm one myself.

(Sound of a baby CRYING.)

The Fosters have a new baby. Got their hands full with two already.

Lots of us are born here and live here all our lives. We get married here, have babies here, are widowed here.

(Behind scrim TWO WALKERS enter stage left to cross right on their brisk morning walk.)



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1ST WALKER  
I'm not kidding, this is the last time we all  
get a house together.

2ND WALKER  
But where else are you going to find?

1ST WALKER  
Me? I'm not moving. They can be the ones  
to move.  
(They exit.)

DOG WALKER  
Summer people aren't always friendly. We  
year-rounders might not look friendly, but  
we are. You just have to bother saying hello.  
(SOUND OF JOGGING SNEAKERS  
ON PAVEMENT. A female jogger, SAL-  
LY WELD, appears from stage right, run-  
ning. She slows down, seeing the dog.)

SALLY  
Look at you, puppy! Morning, Maisie.

DOG WALKER  
Morning.

SALLY  
(Bending to pat the dog)  
Yes, you're Daisy's friend, aren't you?

DOG WALKER  
That's right.

SALLY  
You have a good winter, Maisie?

DOG WALKER  
Not too bad. April always lasts too long.

SALLY  
Winter was hard.  
(Standing, a little disturbed)  
You have a nice walk... Bye, Maisie.  
(Exits left.)

DOG WALKER  
That's one of the Weld girls. I think she's  
the older, Sally.  
(Sound of FERRY HORN)  
The morning boat. Leaves 7:30. Ferry goes  
back and forth three times a day. Come on  
along, Maisie. Trip's just over an hour from  
the mainland. Or America, as we call it.  
(Heading off stage left.)  
Don't go there much. If we can help it.  
(Exits.) ■

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