

BLOOD RELATIONS

by Sharon Pollock

Member: Dramatist Guild of America
Guild of Canadian Playwrights
Canadian Actors Equity Association
Alberta Playwrights Network
Alberta Writers Guild

Published: NeWest Press: Edmonton, AB *"Blood Relations and Other Plays"*

Playwrights Canada Press Toronto ON *"Collected Works of Sharon Pollock; Vol. One"*

BR is published in various other national and international anthologies

Sharon Pollock
319 Manora Dr. NE
Calgary, AB.
Canada T2A 4R2

Characters

MISS LIZZIE	who will play BRIDGET the Irish Maid.
The ACTRESS	who will play LIZZIE .
HARRY	MRS. BORDEN's brother.
EMMA BORDEN	Lizzie's older sister.
ANDREW BORDEN	Lizzie's father.
ABIGAIL BORDEN	Lizzie's step-mother.
DR PATRICK	the Irish doctor; who may also play THE DEFENSE

Setting

The time proper is late Sunday afternoon and evening, late fall, in Fall River, 1902; the year of the "dream thesis," if one might call it that, is 1892.

There is a dining room and parlor area within the Borden house; an exit from dining area to kitchen and a flight of stairs from parlor leading upstairs, plus a walkway outside the Borden house with some indication of where the birds are kept.

Notes

Set should accommodate free-flowing action. There should be no division of the script into scenes by blackouts, movement of furniture, or sets. There are often soft freezes of some characters while other scenes are being played.

MISS LIZZIE is present observing unobtrusively as "herself" (that being **MISS LIZZIE**) except for those occasions when she, as **BRIDGET**, is taking part in the action, or as noted in Act Two **BRIDGET** is absent from the stage from **DR PATRICK's** entrance to her reappearance as **BRIDGET** after "washing the windows". **BRIDGET's** apron may simply be **MISS LIZZIE's** shawl tied around her waist. There is no need for it to come on or off on those occasions **MISS LIZZIE** is playing **BRIDGET**.

The murders of which **MISS LIZZIE BORDEN** was accused took place in August 1892; her trial and acquittal in June of the following year.

Act One

(Stage directions reflect previous productions)

*Lights up on the figure of a woman (the **ACTRESS**) standing centre stage. It is a somewhat formal pose. She holds a book in one hand, a chocolate in the other. A pause. She speaks:*

"Since what I am about to say must be but that
Which contradicts my accusation, and
The testimony on my part no other
But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me
To say "Not Guilty."
But, if Powers Divine
Behold our human action as they do,
I doubt not than but innocence shall make
False accusation blush and tyranny
Tremble at... at..."

(She wriggles the fingers of an outstretched hand searching for the word)

"Aaaat" ...Bollocks!!

(She raises her script, takes a bite of chocolate)

"Tremble at Patience," patience patience!...

*(**MISS LIZZIE** enters from the kitchen with the tea service. The **ACTRESS'** attention drifts to **MISS LIZZIE**. The **ACTRESS** watches **MISS LIZZIE** sit in the parlor and pour two cups of tea. The **ACTRESS** sucks her teeth a bit to clear the chocolate as she speaks)*

ACTRESS Which... is proper, Lizzie?

MISS LIZZIE Proper?

ACTRESS To pour first the cream, and add the tea-or first tea and add cream. One is proper. Is the way you do the proper way, the way it's done in circles where it counts?

MISS LIZZIE Sugar?

ACTRESS Well, is it?

MISS LIZZIE I don't know. Sugar?

ACTRESS Mmmn. (***MISS LIZZIE** adds sugar with a heavy hand*)
I suppose if we had Mrs. Beeton's Book of Etiquette, we could look it up.

MISS LIZZIE I do have it. Shall I get it?

ACTRESS No.... You could ask your sister, she might know.

MISS LIZZIE Do you want this tea or not?

ACTRESS I hate tea.

MISS LIZZIE You drink it every Sunday.

ACTRESS I drink it because you like to serve it.

MISS LIZZIE Pppuh.

ACTRESS It's true! You've no idea how I suffer from this toast and tea ritual. I really do. The tea upsets my stomach and the toast makes me fat because I eat so much of it.

MISS LIZZIE Practise some restraint then.

ACTRESS Mmmmm.... Why don't we ask your sister which is proper?

MISS LIZZIE You ask her.

ACTRESS How can I? She doesn't speak to me. I don't think she even sees me. She gives no indication of it. *(She looks up the stairs)* What do you suppose she does up there every Sunday afternoon?

MISS LIZZIE She sulks.

ACTRESS And reads the Bible I suppose, and Mrs. Beeton's Book of Etiquette. Oh Lizzie.... What a long day. The absolutely longest day.... When does that come anyway, the longest day?

MISS LIZZIE June.

ACTRESS Ah yes, June. *(She looks at MISS LIZZIE)* June?

MISS LIZZIE June.

ACTRESS Mmmmmm....

MISS LIZZIE I know what you're thinking.

ACTRESS Of course you do.... I'm thinking... shall I pour the sherry-or will you?

MISS LIZZIE No.

ACTRESS I'm thinking... June... in Fall River.

MISS LIZZIE No.

ACTRESS August in Fall River? *(She smiles. Pause.)*

MISS LIZZIE We could have met in Boston.

ACTRESS I prefer it here.

MISS LIZZIE You don't find it... a trifle boring?

ACTRESS Au contraire.

(MISS LIZZIE gives a small laugh at the affectation)

ACTRESS What?

MISS LIZZIE I find it a trifle boring.... I know what you're doing. You're soaking up the ambiance.

ACTRESS Nonsense, Lizzie. I come to see you.

MISS LIZZIE Why?

ACTRESS Because... of us.

MISS LIZZIE You were a late arrival last night. Later than usual.

ACTRESS Don't be silly.

MISS LIZZIE I wonder why.

ACTRESS The show was late, late starting, late coming down.

MISS LIZZIE And?

ACTRESS And - then we all went out for drinks.

MISS LIZZIE We?

ACTRESS The other members of the cast.

MISS LIZZIE Oh yes.

ACTRESS And then I caught a cab... all the way from Boston.... Do you know what it cost?

MISS LIZZIE I should. I paid the bill, remember?

ACTRESS *(laughs)* Of course. What a jumble all my thoughts are. There're too many words running 'round inside my head today. It's terrible.

MISS LIZZIE It sounds it.

ACTRESS ...You know... you do this thing... you stare at me.... You look directly at my eyes. I think... you think... that if I'm lying... it will come up, like lemons on a slot machine. *(She makes a gesture at her eyes)* Tick, Tick... *(pause)* In the alley behind the theatre the other day there were some kids. You know what they were doing?

MISS LIZZIE How could I?

ACTRESS They were playing skip rope, and you know what they were singing? *(She sings and claps her hands together)*
"Lizzie Borden took an axe,
Gave her mother forty whacks.
When the job was nicely done,
She gave her father forty-one."

MISS LIZZIE Did you stop them?

ACTRESS No.

MISS LIZZIE Did you tell them I was acquitted?

ACTRESS No.

MISS LIZZIE What did you do?

ACTRESS I shut the window.

MISS LIZZIE A noble gesture on my behalf.

ACTRESS We were doing lines-the noise they make is dreadful. Sometimes they play ball, ka-thunk, ka-thunk, ka-thunk against the wall. Once I saw them with a cat and-

MISS LIZZIE And then you didn't stop them?

ACTRESS That time I stopped them.

*(The **ACTRESS** crosses to table where there is a gramophone. She prepares to play a record. She stops)*

ACTRESS Should I?

MISS LIZZIE Why not?

ACTRESS Your sister, the noise upsets her.

MISS LIZZIE And she upsets me. On numerous occasions.

ACTRESS You're incorrigible, Lizzie.

*(The **ACTRESS** holds out her arms to **MISS LIZZIE**. They dance the latest "in" dance, a Scott Joplin composition. It requires some concentration, but they chat while dancing a "scandalous" dance of the era, something like the Turkey Trot)*

ACTRESS ... Do you think your jawline's heavy?

MISS LIZZIE Why do you ask?

ACTRESS They said you had jowls.

MISS LIZZIE Did they.

ACTRESS The reports of the day said you were definitely jowly.

MISS LIZZIE That was ten years ago.

ACTRESS Imagine. You were only thirty-four.

MISS LIZZIE Yes.

ACTRESS It happened here, this house.

MISS LIZZIE You're leading.

ACTRESS I know.

MISS LIZZIE ...I don't think I'm jowly. Then or now. Do you?

ACTRESS Lizzie?... Lizzie!

MISS LIZZIE What?

ACTRESS Did you?

MISS LIZZIE Did I what?

ACTRESS You never tell me anything! *(She turns off the music.)*

MISS LIZZIE I tell you everything.

ACTRESS No you don't!

MISS LIZZIE Oh yes, I tell you the most personal things about myself, my thoughts, my dreams, my-

ACTRESS But never that one thing... *(She lights a cigarette.)*

MISS LIZZIE And don't smoke those - they stink.

*(The **ACTRESS** ignores her, inhales, exhales a volume of smoke in **MISS LIZZIE's** direction)*

MISS LIZZIE Do you suppose... people buy you drinks... or cast you even... because you have a "liaison" with Lizzie Borden? Do you suppose they do that?

ACTRESS They cast me because I'm good at what I do.

MISS LIZZIE They never pry? They never ask? What's she really like? Is she really jowly? Did she? Didn't she?

ACTRESS What could I tell them? You never tell me anything.

MISS LIZZIE I tell you everything.

ACTRESS But that! *(pause)* You think everybody talks about you - they don't.

MISS LIZZIE Here they do.

ACTRESS You think they talk about you.

MISS LIZZIE But never to me.

ACTRESS Well... you give them lots to talk about.

MISS LIZZIE You know you're right, your mind is a jumble.

ACTRESS I told you so.

Pause.

MISS LIZZIE You remind me of my sister.

ACTRESS Oh God, in what way?

MISS LIZZIE Day in, day out, ten years now, sometimes at breakfast as she rolls little crumbs of bread in little balls, sometimes at noon, or late at night... "Did you, Lizzie?" "Lizzie, did you?"

ACTRESS Ten years, day in, day out?

MISS LIZZIE Oh yes. She sits there where Papa used to sit and I sit there, where I have always sat. She looks at me and at her plate, and then at me, and at her plate, then at me and then she says "Did you Lizzie?" "Lizzie, did you?"

ACTRESS *(a nasal imitation of Emma's voice)* "Did-you-Lizzie-Lizzie-did-you?"
(laughs)

MISS LIZZIE Did I what?

ACTRESS *(continues her imitation of Emma)* "You know."

MISS LIZZIE Well, what do you think, Emma?

ACTRESS "Oh, I believe you didn't, in fact I know you didn't, what a thought! After all, you were acquitted."

MISS LIZZIE Yes, I was.

ACTRESS "But sometimes when I'm on the street... or shopping... or at the church even, I catch somebody's eye, they look away... and I think to myself, "Did-you-Lizzie-Lizzie-did-yooou?"

MISS LIZZIE *(laughs)* Ah, poor Emma.

ACTRESS *(dropping her Emma imitation)* Well did you?

MISS LIZZIE Is it important?

ACTRESS Yes.

MISS LIZZIE Why?

ACTRESS I have... a compulsion to know the truth.

MISS LIZZIE The truth?

ACTRESS Yes.

MISS LIZZIE ...Sometimes I think you look like me, and you're not jowly.

ACTRESS No.

MISS LIZZIE You look like me, or how I think I look, or how I ought to look... sometimes you think like me... do you feel that?

ACTRESS Sometimes.

MISS LIZZIE (*triumphant*) You shouldn't have to ask then. You should know. "Did I, didn't I." You tell me.

ACTRESS I'll tell you what I think... I think... that you're aware there is a certain fascination in the ambiguity.... You always paint the background but leave the rest to my imagination. Did Lizzie Borden take an axe?... If you didn't I should be disappointed... and if you did I should be horrified.

MISS LIZZIE And which is worse?

ACTRESS To have murdered one's parents, or be a pretentious small-town spinster? I don't know.

MISS LIZZIE Why're you so cruel to me?

ACTRESS I'm teasing, Lizzie, I'm only teasing. Come on, paint the background again.

MISS LIZZIE Why?

ACTRESS Perhaps you'll give something away.

MISS LIZZIE Which you'll dine out on.

ACTRESS Of course. (*laughs*) Come on, Lizzie. Come onn.

MISS LIZZIE Come on what?

ACTRESS Tell me!

(Pause)

MISS LIZZIE Sooo . . . maybe . . . maybe, a game?

ACTRESS What?

MISS LIZZIE A game. ...And you'll play me.

ACTRESS Oh-

MISS LIZZIE It's your stock in trade, my love.

ACTRESS Alright.... A game!

MISS LIZZIE Let me think... let me . . . let me . . .Bridget... yes - Brrridget.

ACTRESS Bridget? (*ACTRESS watches the following*)

MISS LIZZIE We had a maid then, yes, and her name was - Bridget. Bridget, she was a great one for stories, telling stories - and she stood like this, very straight back, and her hair was all... and there she was - in the courtroom! In her new dress on the stand.
"Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"
(*imitates Irish accent*) "I do sir," she said.
"Would you give the court your name."
"Bridget O'Sullivan, sir."

(*Faint echo of the voice of The DEFENSE under MISS LIZZIE's next line.*)
"And occupation."
"I'm like what you'd call a maid, sir. I do a bit of everything, cleanin' and cookin' and -"
(*The actual voice of The DEFENSE is heard alone; he may also be seen.*)

THE DEFENSE You've been in Fall River how long?

MISS LIZZIE (*who continues as BRIDGET while the ACTRESS, who will play LIZZIE, observes*) Well now, about five years sir, ever since I come over. I worked up on the hill for a while but it didn't - well, you could say, suit me, too lah-de-dah-so I-

THE DEFENSE Your employer in June of 1892 was?

BRIDGET Yes sir. Mr Borden, sir. Well, more rightly, Mrs Borden for she was the one who-

THE DEFENSE Your impression of the household?

BRIDGET Well... the man of the house, Mr Borden, was a bit of a... tightwad, and Mrs. B could nag you into the grave, still she helped with the dishes and things
(MISS LIZZIE puts on an apron [a shawl round her waist] and as BRIDGET begins arranging things at the table)
which not everyone does when they hires a maid.

(HARRY appears on the stairs; approaches BRIDGET stealthily. She is unaware of him.)

BRIDGET Then there was the daughters, Miss Emma and Lizzie, and that day, Mr. Wingate, Mrs. B's brother who'd stayed for the night and was –

(as BRIDGET bends over the table HARRY grabs her bum with both hands. She screams)

BRIDGET Get off with you!

HARRY Come on, Bridget, give me a kiss!

BRIDGET I'll give you a good poke in the nose if you don't keep your hands to yourself.

HARRY Ohhh-hh-hh Bridget!

BRIDGET Get away you old sod!

HARRY Haven't you missed me?

BRIDGET I have not! I was pinched black and blue last time and I'll be sufferin' the same before I see the end of you this time.

HARRY You want to see my end? *(tilts his bum at her)*

BRIDGET You're a dirty old man.

HARRY If Mr Borden hears that, you'll be out on the street. *(grabs her)*
Where's my kiss!

BRIDGET *(dumps glass of water on his head)* There! *(HARRY splutters.)*
Would you like another? You silly thing you - and leave me towels alone!

HARRY You've soaked my shirt.

BRIDGET Shut up and pour yourself a cup of coffee.

HARRY You got no sense of fun, Bridget.

BRIDGET Well now, if you tried actin' like the gentleman farmer you're supposed to be, Mr. Wingate-

HARRY I'm tellin' you you can't take a joke.

BRIDGET If Mr Borden sees you jokin', it's not his maid he'll be throwin' out on the street, but his brother-in-law, and that's the truth.

HARRY What's between you and me's between you and me, eh?

BRIDGET There ain't nothin' between you and me.

HARRY ...Finest cup of coffee in Fall River.

BRIDGET There's no gettin' on the good side of me now, it's too late for that.

HARRY ...Bridget?... You know what tickles my fancy?

BRIDGET No, and I don't want to hear.

HARRY It's your Irish temper.

BRIDGET It is, is it?... Can I ask you something?

HARRY Ooohhh - anything.

BRIDGET *(with a quick glance to the ACTRESS)* Does Miss Lizzie know you're here?... I say does Miss Lizzie -

HARRY Why do you bring her up?

BRIDGET She don't then, eh? *(teasing)* It's a surprise visit?

HARRY No surprise to her father.

BRIDGET Oh?

HARRY We got business.

BRIDGET I'd of thought the last bit of business was enough.

HARRY It's not for you to say -

BRIDGET You don't learn a thing, from me or Lizzie, do you?

HARRY Listen here-

BRIDGET You mean you've forgotten how mad she was last time when you got her father to sign the rent from the mill house over to your sister? Oh my.

HARRY She's his wife, ain't she?

BRIDGET Second wife.

HARRY She's still got her rights.

BRIDGET Who am I to say who's got a right? But I can tell you this – Miss Lizzie don't see it that way.

HARRY It don't matter how Miss Lizzie sees it.

BRIDGET Oh it matters enough - she had you thrown out last time, didn't she? By jesus that was a laugh!

HARRY You mind your tongue.

BRIDGET And after you left, you know what happened?

HARRY Get away.

BRIDGET She and sister Emma got her father's rent money from the other mill house to make it all even-steven - and now here you are back again. What kind of business you up to this time? *(whispers in his ear)* Mind Lizzie doesn't catch you.

HARRY Get away!

BRIDGET *(laughs)* Ohhh - would you like some more coffee, sir? It's the finest coffee in all Fall River! *(She pours it)* Thank you sir. You're welcome, sir. *(She exits to the kitchen.)*

HARRY There'll be no trouble this time!! Do you hear me!

BRIDGET *(off)* Yes sir.

HARRY There'll be no trouble. *(sees a basket of crusts)* What the hell's this? I said is this for breakfast!

BRIDGET *(entering)* Is what for - oh no – Mr Borden's not economisin' to that degree yet. It's the crusts for Miss Lizzie's birds.

HARRY What birds?

BRIDGET Some kind of pet pigeons she's raisin' out in the shed. Miss Lizzie loves her pigeons.

HARRY Miss Lizzie loves kittens and cats and horses and dogs. What Miss Lizzie doesn't love is people.

BRIDGET Some people. *(She looks to the **ACTRESS**, an invitation to join in the "game" as **LIZZIE**)* Good mornin' Lizzie!

ACTRESS *(a trifle tentative as she takes on the role of **LIZZIE** with the information she's gleaned from watching **MISS LIZZIE**'s **BRIDGET** interaction with **HARRY**)*
Is the coffee on?

BRIDGET Yes ma'am.

LIZZIE I'll have some then.

BRIDGET Yes ma'am. *(She makes no move to get it, but watches as **LIZZIE** stares at **HARRY** making him very uneasy)*

HARRY Well... I think... maybe I'll... just split a bit of that kindling out back. *(He exits.)*

LIZZIE Silly ass.

BRIDGET Oh Lizzie. *(She laughs. She enjoys the **ACTRESS** as **LIZZIE**, and guides her into her role by continuing to "paint the background.")*

LIZZIE Well, he is. He's a silly ass.

BRIDGET Can you remember him last time with your Papa? Oh, I can still hear him: "Now Andrew, I've spent my life raisin' horses and I'm gonna tell you somethin' - a woman is just like a horse! You keep her on a tight rein, or she'll take the bit in her teeth and next thing you know, road, destination, and purpose is all behind you, and you'll be damn lucky if she don't pitch you right in a sewer ditch!"

LIZZIE Stupid bugger.

BRIDGET Oh Lizzie, what language! What would your father say if he heard you?

LIZZIE Well... I've never used a word I didn't hear from him first.

BRIDGET (*claps her hands in approval, then*) Do you think he'd be congratulatin' you?

LIZZIE Possibly. (**BRIDGET** gives a shake of her head) Not.

BRIDGET Possibly Not is right.... And what if Mrs. B should hear you?

LIZZIE I hope and pray that she does.... Do you know what I think, Bridget? I think there's nothing wrong with Mrs. B.... that losing eighty pounds and tripling her intellect wouldn't cure.

BRIDGET (*loving it*) You oughta be ashamed.

LIZZIE It's the truth, isn't it?

BRIDGET Still, what a way to talk of your mother.

LIZZIE Step-mother.

BRIDGET Yes, still, you don't really mean it, do you?

LIZZIE Don't I? (*louder*) She's a silly ass too!

BRIDGET Shhhh.

LIZZIE It's alright, she's deaf as a picket fence when she wants to be.... What's he here for? (*increasingly secure in her role*)

BRIDGET Never said.

LIZZIE He's come to worm more money out of Papa I bet.

BRIDGET Lizzie.

LIZZIE What.

BRIDGET Your sister, Lizzie. (**BRIDGET** indicates **EMMA**. **LIZZIE** turns to see her on the stairs)

EMMA You want to be quiet, Lizzie, a body can't sleep for the racket upstairs.

LIZZIE Oh?

EMMA You've been makin' too much noise.

LIZZIE It must have been Bridget. She dropped a pot, didn't you Bridget.

EMMA A number of pots from the sound of it.

BRIDGET I'm all thumbs this mornin', ma'am.

EMMA You know it didn't sound like pots.

LIZZIE Oh?

EMMA Sounded more like voices.

LIZZIE Oh?

EMMA Sounded like your voice, Lizzie.

LIZZIE Maybe you dreamt it.

EMMA I wish I had, for someone was using words no lady would ever use.

LIZZIE When Bridget dropped the pot, she did say "Pshaw!" didn't you, Bridget.

BRIDGET Pshaw! That's what I said.

EMMA That's not what I heard.

(BRIDGET exits to the kitchen)

LIZZIE Pshaw?

EMMA If mother heard you, you know what she'd say.

LIZZIE She's not my mother or yours.

EMMA Well she married our father twenty-seven years ago, if that doesn't make her our mother -

LIZZIE It doesn't.

EMMA Don't talk like that.

LIZZIE I'll talk as I like.

EMMA We're not going to fight, Lizzie. We're going to be quiet and have our breakfast.

LIZZIE Is that what we're going to do?

EMMA Yes.

LIZZIE Oh.

EMMA At least that's what I'm going to do.

LIZZIE (*yells loudly*) Bridget Emma wants her breakfast!!!

EMMA I could have yelled myself.

LIZZIE You could, but you never do.

(*BRIDGET enters to serve EMMA*).

EMMA Thank you, Bridget.

LIZZIE Did you know Harry Wingate's back for a visit?... He must have snuck in late last night so I wouldn't hear him. Did you? (**EMMA shakes her head. LIZZIE studies her.**) Did you know he was coming?

EMMA No.

LIZZIE No?

EMMA But I do know he wouldn't be here unless Papa asked him.

LIZZIE That's not the point. You know what happened last time he was here. Papa was signing property over to her.

EMMA Oh Lizzie.

LIZZIE Oh Lizzie nothing. It's bad enough Papa's worth thousands of dollars, and here we are, stuck in this tiny bit of a house on Second Street, when we should be up on the hill and that's her doing. Or her's and Harry's.

EMMA Shush.

LIZZIE I won't shush. They cater to Papa's worst instincts.

EMMA They'll hear you.

LIZZIE I don't care if they do. It's true, isn't it? Papa tends to be miserly, he probably has the first penny he ever earned-or more likely she has it.

EMMA You talk rubbish.

LIZZIE Papa can be very warm-hearted and generous - but he needs encouragement.

EMMA If Papa didn't save his money, Papa wouldn't have any money.

LIZZIE And neither will we if he keeps signing things over to her.

EMMA I'm not going to listen.

LIZZIE Well try thinking.

EMMA Stop it.

LIZZIE *(not a threat, a simple statement of fact)* Someday Papa will die-

EMMA Don't say that.

LIZZIE Some day Papa will die. And I don't intend to spend the rest of my life licking Harry Wingate's boots, or toadying to his sister.

MRS. BORDER *(from the stairs)* What's that?

LIZZIE Nothing.

MRS. BORDEN *(making her way downstairs)* Eh?

LIZZIE I said nothing!

BRIDGET *(holds out the basket of crusts, Lizzie looks at it)* For your birds, Miss Lizzie.

LIZZIE *(She takes the basket)* You want to know what I think? I think she's a fat cow and I hate her. *(She exits but will watch scene)*

EMMA ...Morning, Mother.

MRS. BORDEN Morning Emma.

EMMA ...Did you have a good sleep?

(BRIDGET will serve breakfast)

MRS. BORDEN So-so.... It's the heat you know. It never cools off proper at night. It's too hot for a good sleep.

EMMA ...Is Papa up?

MRS. BORDEN He'll be down in a minute.... Sooo... what's wrong with Lizzie this morning?

EMMA Nothing.

MRS. BORDEN Has Harry come down?

EMMA I'm not sure.

MRS. BORDEN Bridget, has Harry come down?

BRIDGET Yes ma'am.

MRS. BORDEN And?

BRIDGET And he's gone out back for a bit.

MRS. BORDEN Lizzie see him?

BRIDGET Yes ma'am.

*(She beats it back through the kitchen and joins the **ACTRESS** to watch. **EMMA** concentrates on her plate.)*

MRS. BORDEN You should have said so. She have words with him?

EMMA Lizzie has more manners than that.

MRS. BORDEN She's incapable of disciplining herself like a lady and we all know it.

EMMA Well she doesn't make a habit of picking fights with people.

MRS. BORDEN That's just it. She does.

EMMA Well... she may-

MRS. BORDEN And you can't deny that.

EMMA *(louder)* Well this morning she may have been a bit upset because no one told her he was coming and when she came down he was here. But that's all there was to it.

MRS. BORDEN If your father wants my brother in for a stay, he's to ask Lizzie's permission I suppose.

EMMA No.

MRS. BORDEN You know, Emma-

EMMA She didn't argue with him or anything like that.

MRS. BORDEN You spoiled her. You may have had the best of intentions, but you spoiled her.

(MISS LIZZIE speaks to the ACTRESS.)

MISS LIZZIE I was thirty-four years old, and I still daydreamed... I did... I daydreamed... I dreamt that my name was Lisbeth... and I lived up on the hill in a corner house... and my hair wasn't red. I hate red hair. When I was little, everyone teased me.... When I was little, we never stayed in this house for the summer, we'd go to the farm.... I remember... my knees were always covered with scabs, God knows how I got them, but you know what I'd do? I'd sit in the field, and haul up my skirts, and my petticoat and my bloomers and I'd roll down my stockings and I'd pick the scabs on my knees! And Emma would catch me! You know what she'd say? "Nice little girls don't have scabs on their knees!" *(They laugh.)*

ACTRESS Poor Emma.

MISS LIZZIE I dreamt... someday I'm going to live... in a corner house on the hill.... I'll have parties, grand parties. I'll be... witty, not biting, but witty. Everyone will be witty. Everyone who is anyone will want to come to my parties... and if... I can't... live in a corner house on the hill... I'll live on the farm, all by myself on the farm! There was a barn there, with barn cats and barn kittens and two horses and barn swallows that lived in the eaves.... The birds I kept here were pigeons, not swallows. They were grey, a dull grey... but.... When the sun struck their feathers, I'd see blue, a steel blue with a sheen, and when they'd move in the sun they were bright blue and maroon
(cont'd)

MISS LIZZIE and over it all, an odd sparkle as if you'd... grated a new silver dollar and the gratings caught in their feathers.... Most of the time they were dull... and stupid perhaps... but they weren't really. They were... hiding I think.... They knew me.... They liked me. The truth... is -

ACTRESS The truth is... thirty-four is too old to daydream.

MRS. BORDEN (*speaking to EMMA*) The truth is she's spoilt rotten.

(MR BORDEN comes downstairs and take his place at the table. MRS. BORDEN continues for his benefit. MR. BORDEN ignores her. He has learned the fine art of tuning her out)

MRS. BORDEN And we're paying the piper for that. In most of the places I've been, the people who pay the piper call the tune. Of course I haven't had the advantage of a trip to Europe with a bunch of lady friends like our Lizzie had three years ago, all expenses paid by her father.

EMMA Morning Papa.

MR. BORDEN Mornin'.

MRS. BORDEN I haven't had the benefit of that experience.... Did you know Lizzie's seen Harry?

MR. BORDEN Has she.

MRS. BORDEN You should have met him downtown. You should never have asked him to stay over.

MR. BORDEN Why not?

MRS. BORDEN You know as well as I do why not. I don't want a repeat of last time. She didn't speak civil for months.

MR. BORDEN There's no reason for Harry to pay for a room when we've got a spare one.... Where's Lizzie?

EMMA Out back feeding the birds.

MR. BORDEN She's always out at those birds.

EMMA Yes, Papa.

MR. BORDEN And tell her to get a new lock for the shed. There's been someone in it again.

EMMA Alright.

MR. BORDEN It's those little hellions from next door. We had no trouble with them playin' in that shed before Lizzie got those birds, they always played in their own yard before.

EMMA ...Papa?

MR. BORDEN It's those damn birds, that's what brings those kids into the yard.

EMMA ...About Harry -

MR. BORDEN What about Harry?

EMMA Well... I was just wondering why -

MR. BORDEN You never mind Harry-did you speak to Lizzie about Johnny MacLeod?

EMMA I ah -

MR. BORDEN Eh?

EMMA I said I tried to-

MR. BORDEN What do you mean you tried to!

EMMA Well, I was working my way 'round to it but-

MR. BORDEN What's so difficult about telling Lizzie Johnny MacLeod wants to call?

EMMA Then why don't you tell her? I'm always the one that has to go running to Lizzie telling her this and telling her that, and taking the abuse for it!

MRS. BORDEN We all know why that is, she can wrap her father 'round her little finger, always has, always could. If everything else fails, she throws a tantrum and her father buys her off, trip to Europe, rent to the mill house, it's all the same.

EMMA Papa, what's Harry here for?

MR. BORDEN None of your business.

MRS. BORDEN And don't you go runnin' to Lizzie stirring things up.

EMMA You know I've never done that!

MR. BORDEN What she means-

EMMA *(with anger but little fatigue)* I'm tired, do you hear? Tired! *(She gets up from the table and leaves for upstairs.)*

MRS. BORDEN Emma!

EMMA You ask Harry here, you know there'll be trouble, and when I try to find out what's going on, so once again good old Emma can stand between you and Lizzie, all you've got to say is "none of your business!" Well then, it's your business, you look after it, because I'm not! *(She exits.)*

MRS. BORDEN ...She's right.

MR. BORDEN That's enough. I've had enough. I don't want to hear from you too.

MRS. BORDEN I'm only saying she's right. You have to talk straight and plain to Lizzie and tell her things she don't want to hear.

MR. BORDEN About the farm?

MRS. BORDEN About Johnny MacLeod! Keep your mouth shut about the farm and she won't know the difference.

MR. BORDEN Alright.

MRS. BORDEN Speak to her about Johnny MacLeod.

MR. BORDEN Alright!

MRS. BORDEN You know what they're saying in town. About her and that doctor.

(MISS LIZZIE speaks to the ACTRESS)

MISS LIZZIE They're saying if you live on Second Street and you need a house call, and you don't mind the Irish, call Dr. Patrick. Dr. Patrick is very prompt with his Second Street house calls.

ACTRESS Do they really say that?

MISS LIZZIE No they don't. I'm telling a lie. But he is very prompt with a Second Street call. Do you know why that is?

ACTRESS Why?

MISS LIZZIE Well - he's hoping to see someone who lives on Second Street- someone who's yanking up her skirt and showing her ankle so she can take a decent-sized step-and forgetting everything she was ever taught in Miss Cornelia's School for Girls, and talking to the Irish as if she never heard of the Pope! Oh yes, he's very prompt getting to Second Street.... Getting away is something else... *(she watches what follows as the **ACTRESS** responds to **DR PATRICK** as **LIZZIE**)*

DR. PATRICK Good morning, Miss Borden!

LIZZIE I haven't decided... if it is... or it isn't....

DR. PATRICK No, you've got it all wrong. The proper phrase is "Good morning, Dr. Patrick," and then you smile, discreetly of course, and lower the eyes just a titch, twirl the parasol -

LIZZIE The parasol?

DR. PATRICK The parasol, but not too fast; and then you murmur in a voice that was ever sweet and low, "And how are you doin' this morning, Dr. Patrick?" Your education's been sadly neglected, Miss Borden.

LIZZIE You're forgetting something. You're married-and Irish besides-I'm supposed to ignore you.

DR. PATRICK Nooo.

LIZZIE Yes. Don't you realise Papa and Emma have fits every time we engage in "illicit conversation." They're having fits right now.

DR. PATRICK Well, does Mrs Borden approve?

LIZZIE Ahhh. She's the real reason I keep stopping and talking. Mrs Borden is easily shocked. I'm hoping she dies from the shock.

DR. PATRICK *(laughs)* Why don't you... run away from home, Lizzie?

LIZZIE Why don't you "run away" with me?

DR. PATRICK Where'll we go?

LIZZIE Boston.

DR. PATRICK Boston?

LIZZIE For a start.

DR. PATRICK And when will we go?

LIZZIE Tonight.

DR. PATRICK Aah but you don't really mean it, you're havin' me on.

LIZZIE I do mean it.

DR. PATRICK How can you joke and look so serious?

LIZZIE It's a gift.

(SOUND of children's voices and laughter)

DR. PATRICK *(laughs)* Oh Lizzie -

LIZZIE Look!

DR. PATRICK What is it?

LIZZIE It's those little beggars next door. Hey! Hey get away! Get away there!... *(SOUND fading out)* Go!

DR PATRICK They're gone, it's alright.

LIZZIE They break into the shed to get at my birds and Papa gets angry.

DR. PATRICK They're kids, it's a natural thing.

LIZZIE Well Papa doesn't like it.

DR. PATRICK They just want to look at the birds.

LIZZIE Papa says what's his is his own - you need a formal invitation to get into our yard... *(pause)* How's your wife?

DR. PATRICK My wife.

LIZZIE Shouldn't I ask that? I thought nice polite ladies always inquired after the wives of their friends or acquaintances or... whatever.

(HARRY enters and observes them)

DR. PATRICK You've met my wife, my wife is always the same.

LIZZIE How boring for you.

DR. PATRICK Uh-huh.

LIZZIE And for her.

DR. PATRICK Yes indeed.

LIZZIE And for me.

DR. PATRICK Do you know what they say, Lizzie? They say if you live on Second Street, and you need a house call, and you don't mind the Irish, call Dr. Patrick. Dr. Patrick is very prompt with his Second Street house calls.

LIZZIE I'll tell you what I've heard them say-Second Street is a nice place to visit, but you wouldn't want to live there. I certainly don't.

HARRY Lizzie.

LIZZIE Well, look who's here. Have you had the pleasure of meeting my uncle, Mr. Wingate?

DR. PATRICK No, Miss Borden, that pleasure has never been mine.

LIZZIE That's exactly how I feel.

DR. PATRICK Mr. Wingate, sir. *(offers his hand, HARRY ignores it)*

HARRY Dr.... Patrick is it?

DR. PATRICK Yes it is, sir.

HARRY Who's sick? *(In other words, "What the hell are you doing here?")*

LIZZIE No one. He just dropped by for a visit; you see Dr. Patrick and I are very old, very dear friends, isn't that so?

DR. PATRICK Well... (**LIZZIE** jabs him hard in the ribs.) Ouch! It's her sense of humor, sir, a rare trait in a woman.

HARRY You best get in, Lizzie, it's gettin' on for lunch.

LIZZIE Don't be silly, we just had breakfast.

HARRY You best get in!

LIZZIE ..Would you give me your arm, Dr. Patrick? (*She moves away with **DR PATRICK**, ignoring **HARRY***)

DR. PATRICK Now see what you've done?

LIZZIE What?

DR. PATRICK You've broken two of my ribs and ruined my reputation all in one blow.

LIZZIE It's impossible to ruin an Irishman's reputation.

DR. PATRICK I'll be seeing you, Lizzie...

MISS LIZZIE They're sayin' it's time you were married.

LIZZIE What time is that?

MISS LIZZIE You need a place of your own.

LIZZIE How would getting married get me that?

MISS LIZZIE Though I don't know what man would put up with your moods!

LIZZIE What about me putting up with his!

MISS LIZZIE Oh Lizzie!

LIZZIE What's the matter, don't men have moods?

*(They laugh but are interrupted by **HARRY** speaking to the **BORDENS**, and the two women watch the following)*

HARRY I'm tellin' you, as God is my witness, she's out in the walk talkin' to that Irish doctor, and he's fallin' all over her.

MRS. BORDEN What's the matter with you? For her own sake you should speak to her.

MR. BORDEN I will.

HARRY The talk around town can't be doin' you any good.

MRS. BORDEN Harry's right.

HARRY Yes sir.

MRS. BORDEN He's tellin' you what you should know.

HARRY If a man can't manage his own daughter, how the hell can he manage a business - that's what people say, and it don't matter a damn whether there's any sense in it or not.

MR. BORDEN I know that.

MRS. BORDEN Knowin' is one thing, doin' something about it is another. What're you goin' to do about it?

MR. BORDEN God damn it! I said I was goin' to speak to her and I am!

MRS. BORDEN Well speak good and plain this time!

MR. BORDEN Jesus Christ woman!

MRS. BORDEN Your "speakin' to Lizzie" is a ritual around here.

MR. BORDEN Abbie-

MRS. BORDEN She talks, you listen, and nothin' changes.

MR. BORDEN That's enough!

MRS. BORDEN Emma isn't the only one that's fed to the teeth!

MR. BORDEN Shut up!

MRS. BORDEN You're gettin' old, Andrew! You're gettin' old! *(She exits up the stairs.)*

*(An air of embarrassment from **MR. BORDEN** at having words in front of **HARRY. MR. BORDEN** fumbles with his pipe)*

HARRY *(offers his pouch of tobacco)* Here... have some of mine.

MR. BORDEN Don't mind if I do.... Nice mix.

HARRY It is.

MR. BORDEN ...I used to think... by my seventies... I'd be bouncin' a grandson on my knee.

HARRY Not too late for that.

MR. BORDEN Nope... never had any boys... and girls... don't seem to have the same sense of family.... You know it's all well and good to talk about speakin' plain to Lizzie, but the truth of the matter is, if Lizzie puts her mind to a thing, she does it, and if she don't, she don't.

HARRY It's up to you to see she does.

MR. BORDEN It's like Abigail says, knowin' is one thing, doin' is another.... You're lucky you never brought any children into the world, Harry, you don't have to deal with them.

HARRY Now that's no way to be talkin'.

MR. BORDEN There's Emma... Emma's a good girl... when Abbie and I get on, there'll always be Emma.... Well! You're not sittin' here to listen to me and my girls, are you, you didn't come here for that. Business, eh Harry? Let's see what you've got.

HARRY It's a good deal Andrew. I think you're gonna like it.

(HARRY whips out a sheet of figures. The men study them)

MISS LIZZIE I can remember distinctly... that moment I was undressing for bed, and I looked at my knees-and there were no scabs! At last! I thought, I'm the nice little girl Emma wants me to be! But it wasn't that at all. I was just growing up. I didn't fall down so often.... *(She smiles.)* Do you suppose... do you suppose there's a formula, a magic formula for being "a woman?" Do you suppose every girl baby receives it at birth, it's the last thing that happens just before birth, the magic formula is stamped indelibly on the brain Ka Thud!! *(Her mood of amusement changes.)* ...and through some terrible oversight... perhaps the death of my mother... I didn't get that Ka Thud!! I was born... defective.

LIZZIE No.

MISS LIZZIE Not defective?

LIZZIE Just... born.

*(the two women, mirrored images of each other as the **DEFENSE** speaks)*

THE DEFENSE Gentlemen of the Jury! I ask you to look at the defendant Miss Lizzie Borden. I ask you to recall the nature of the crime of which she is accused. I ask you - do you believe Miss Lizzie Borden, the youngest daughter of a scion of our community, a recipient of the fullest amenities our society can bestow upon its most fortunate members, do you believe Miss Lizzie Borden capable of wielding the murder weapon - thirty-two blows, gentlemen, thirty-two blows - fracturing Abigail Borden's skull, leaving her bloody and broken body in an upstairs bedroom, then, Miss Borden, with no hint of frenzy, hysteria, or trace of blood upon her person, engages in casual conversation with the maid, Bridget O'Sullivan, while awaiting her father's return home, upon which, after sending Bridget to her attic room, Miss Borden deals thirteen blows to the head of her father, and minutes later, in a state utterly compatible with that of a loving daughter upon discovery of murder most foul, Miss Borden calls for aid!

Is this the aid we give her? Accusation of the most heinous and infamous of crimes?

Do you believe Miss Lizzie Borden capable of these acts?

I can tell you I do not!!

I can tell you these acts of violence are acts of madness!!

Gentlemen! If this gentlewoman is capable of such an act I say to you look to your daughters.

If this gentlewoman is capable of such an act, which of us can lie abed at night, hear a step upon the stairs, a rustle in the hall, a creak outside the door . . .

Which of you can plump your pillow, nudge your wife, close your eyes, and sleep?

Gentlemen, Lizzie Borden is not mad.

Gentlemen, Lizzie Borden is not guilty.

*(The mirror image breaks as **LIZZIE** steps into **MR BORDEN/HARRY** scene)*

HARRY Now this here figure, it's -

MR. BORDEN Lizzie?

LIZZIE Have you and Harry got business?

HARRY Lizzie. .. I'...I'll ah... finish up later. Later Andrew. (He *exits with the sheet of figures. LIZZIE watches him go.*)

MR. BORDEN Lizzie?

LIZZIE What?

MR. BORDEN Could you sit down a minute?

LIZZIE If it's about Dr. Patrick again, I-

MR. BORDEN It isn't.

LIZZIE Good.

MR. BORDEN But we could start there.

LIZZIE Oh Papa.

MR. BORDEN Sit down Lizzie.

LIZZIE But I've heard it all before. Another chat for a wayward girl.

MR. BORDEN Bite your tongue, Lizzie.

(She smiles at him, there is affection between them. His remark is one he's made to her since she was a child)

MR. BORDEN Now... first off... I want you to know that I... I understand about you and the doctor.

LIZZIE What do you understand?

MR. BORDEN I understand... that it's a natural thing.

LIZZIE What is?

MR. BORDEN I'm saying there's nothing unnatural about attraction between a man and a woman. That's a natural thing.

LIZZIE I find Dr. Patrick... amusing and entertaining... if that's what you mean, is that what you mean?

MR. BORDEN This attraction... points something up-you're a woman of thirty-four years-

LIZZIE I know that.

MR. BORDEN Just listen to me, Lizzie. I'm choosing my words, and I want you to listen. Now... in most circumstances... a woman of your age would be married, eh? Have children, be running her own house, that's the natural thing, eh? *(pause)* Eh, Lizzie?

LIZZIE I don't know.

MR. BORDEN Of course you do.

LIZZIE You're saying I'm unnatural. Am I supposed to agree, is that what you want?

MR. BORDEN No, I'm not saying that! I'm saying the opposite to that! I'm saying the feelings you have towards Dr. Patrick-

LIZZIE What feelings?

MR. BORDEN What's... what's happening there, I can understand, but what you have to understand is that he's a married man, and there's nothing for you there.

LIZZIE If he weren't married, Papa, I wouldn't be bothered talking to him! It's just a game, Papa, it's a game.

MR. BORDEN A game?

LIZZIE You have no idea how boring it is looking eligible, interested, and alluring, when I feel none of the three. So I play games. And it's a blessed relief to talk to a married man.

MR. BORDEN What're his feelings for you?

LIZZIE I don't know, I don't care. Can I go now? *(getting up to leave)*

MR. BORDEN I'm not finished yet!... Sit down Lizzie! *(a moment before she reluctantly sits)*
Now. You know Mr. MacLeod, Johnny MacLeod?

LIZZIE I know his three little monsters.

MR. BORDEN He's trying to raise three boys with no mother!

LIZZIE That's not my problem! I'm going. *(gets up)*

MR. BORDEN Lizzie!

LIZZIE What!

MR. BORDEN Mr. MacLeod's asked to come over next Tuesday.

LIZZIE I'll be out that night.

MR. BORDEN No you won't!

LIZZIE Yes I will! Whose idea was this?

MR. BORDEN No one's.

LIZZIE That's a lie. She wants to get rid of me.

MR. BORDEN I want what's best for you!

LIZZIE No you don't! 'Cause you don't care what I want!

MR. BORDEN You don't know what you want!

LIZZIE But I know what you want! You want me living my life by the Farmers' Almanac, having everyone over for Christmas dinner, waiting up for my husband, and serving at socials!

MR. BORDEN It's good enough for your mother!

LIZZIE She's is not my mother!

MR. BORDEN John MacLeod is looking for a wife.

LIZZIE No, god damn it, he isn't!

MR. BORDEN Lizzie!

LIZZIE He's looking for a housekeeper and it isn't going to be me!

MR. BORDEN You've a filthy mouth!

LIZZIE Is that why you hate me?

MR. BORDEN You don't make sense.

LIZZIE Why is it when I pretend things I don't feel, that's when you like me?

MR. BORDEN You talk foolish.

LIZZIE I'm supposed to be a mirror. I'm supposed to reflect what you want to see, but everyone wants something different. If no one looks in the mirror, I'm not even there, I don't exist!

MR. BORDEN Lizzie, you talk foolish!

LIZZIE No, I don't, that isn't true.

MR. BORDEN About Mr. MacLeod-

LIZZIE You can't make me get married!

MR. BORDEN Lizzie, do you want to spend the rest of your life in this house?

LIZZIE No! No. I want out of it, but I won't get married to do it.

MRS. BORDEN *(on her way through to the kitchen)* You've never been asked.

LIZZIE Oh listen to her! I must be some sort of failure, then, eh? You had no son and a daughter that failed! What does that make you, Papa!

MR. BORDEN I want you to think about Johnny MacLeod!

LIZZIE To hell with him!

(MR. BORDEN appears defeated. After a moment, LIZZIE goes to him, she holds his hand, strokes his hair)

LIZZIE Papa?... Papa, I love you, I try to be what you want, really I do try, I try... but... I don't want to get married. I wouldn't be a good mother, I -

MR. BORDEN How do you know!

LIZZIE I know it!... I want out of all this... I hate this house, I hate... I want out. Try to understand how I feel.... Why can't I do something?... I mean... I could... I could go into your office.... I could... learn how to keep books, I could -

MR. BORDEN Lizzie.

LIZZIE Why can't I do something like that?

MR. BORDEN For God's sake, talk sensible.

LIZZIE Alright then! Why can't we move up on the hill to a house where we aren't in each other's laps!

MRS. BORDEN *(returning from the kitchen)* Why don't you move out!

LIZZIE Give me the money and I'll go!

MRS. BORDEN Money.

LIZZIE And give me enough that I won't ever have to come back!

MRS. BORDEN She always gets 'round to money!

LIZZIE You drive me to it!

MRS. BORDEN She's crazy!

LIZZIE You drive me to it!

MRS. BORDEN She should be locked up!

LIZZIE *(begins to smash the plates in the dining room)* There!! There!!

MR. BORDEN Lizzie!

MRS. BORDEN Stop her!

LIZZIE There!

(MR. BORDEN attempts to restrain her)

MRS. BORDEN For God's sake, Andrew!

LIZZIE Lock me up! Lock me up!

MR. BORDEN Stop it! Lizzie!

(She collapses against him, crying)

LIZZIE Oh, Papa, I can't stand it.

MR. BORDEN There, there, come on now, it's alright, listen to me, Lizzie, it's alright.

MRS. BORDEN You may as well get down on your knees.

LIZZIE Look at her. She's jealous of me. She can't stand it whenever you're nice to me.

MR. BORDEN There now.

MRS. BORDEN Ask her about Dr. Patrick.

MR. BORDEN I'll handle this my way.

LIZZIE He's an entertaining person, there're very few around!

MRS. BORDEN Fall River ain't Paris and ain't that a shame for our Lizzie!

LIZZIE One trip three years ago and you're still harping on it!
It's true Papa, an elephant never forgets!

MR. BORDEN Show some respect!

LIZZIE She's a fat cow and I hate her!

(MR. BORDEN slaps LIZZIE. There is a pause as he regains control of himself)

MR. BORDEN Now... now... you'll see Mr. MacLeod Tuesday night.

LIZZIE No.

MR. BORDEN God damn it!! I said you'll see Johnny MacLeod Tuesday night!!

LIZZIE No.

MR. BORDEN Get the hell upstairs to your room!

LIZZIE No.

MR. BORDEN I'm telling you go upstairs to your room!!

LIZZIE I'll go when I'm ready.

MR. BORDEN I said, Go!

(He grabs her arm to move her forcibly, she hits his arm away)

LIZZIE No!... There's something you don't understand, Papa. You can't make me do one thing that I don't want to do. I'm going to keep on doing just what I want just when I want - like always.

(MR. BORDEN roughly shoves LIZZIE to the floor to gain a clear exit from the room. He stops on the stairs, looks back to her on the floor regretting his action. He'd like to say "sorry" but is unable. Pause, then he continues off)

MRS. BORDEN You know, Lizzie, your father keeps you. You know you got nothing but what he gives you. And that's a fact of life. You got to come to deal with facts. I did.

LIZZIE And married Papa.

MRS. BORDEN And married your father. You never made it easy for me. I took on a man with two little ones, and Emma had been like your mother.

LIZZIE You got stuck so I should too, is that it?

MRS. BORDEN What?

LIZZIE The reason I should marry Johnny MacLeod.

MRS. BORDEN I just know, this time, in the end, you'll do what your Papa says, you'll see.

LIZZIE No, I won't. I have a right. A right that frees me from all that.

MRS. BORDEN No, Lizzie, you got no rights.

LIZZIE I've a legal right to one-third because I am his flesh and blood.

MRS. BORDEN What you don't understand is your father's not dead yet, your father's got many good years ahead of him, and when his time comes, well, we'll see what his will says then.... Your father's no fool, Lizzie.... Only a fool would leave his money to you. *(She exits.)*

(After a moment, BRIDGET enters)

BRIDGET Ah Lizzie... you outdid yourself that time. *(comforting LIZZIE)* ...Yes you did... an elephant never forgets!

LIZZIE Oh, Bridget.

BRIDGET Come on now.

LIZZIE I can't help it.

BRIDGET Sure you can... sure you can... stop your cryin' and come and sit down... you want me to tell you a story?

LIZZIE No.

BRIDGET Sure, a story. I'll tell you a story. Come on now... now... before I worked here I worked up on the hill and the lady of the house... are you listenin'? Well, she swore by her cook, finest cook in creation, yes, always bowin' and scrapin' and smilin' and givin' up her day off if company arrived. Oh the lady of the house she loved that cook - and I'll tell you her name! It was Mary! Now listen! Do you know what Mary was doin'? (**LIZZIE** shakes her head) Before eatin' the master'd serve drinks in the parlour - and out in the kitchen, Mary'd be spittin' in the soup!

LIZZIE What?

BRIDGET She'd spit in the soup!
And she'd smile when they served it!

LIZZIE No.

BRIDGET Yes. I've seen her cut up hair for an omelette.

LIZZIE You're lying.

BRIDGET Cross me heart. They thought it was pepper!

LIZZIE Oh, Bridget!

BRIDGET These two eyes have seen her season up mutton stew when it's off and gone bad.

LIZZIE Gone bad?

BRIDGET Oh and they et it, every bit, and the next day they was hit with... "stomach flu!" So cook called it. By jesus Lizzie, I daren't tell you what she served up in the food, for fear you'd be sick!

LIZZIE That's funny. (*stating a fact – LIZZIE does not appear amused*)

BRIDGET (*starts to clear up the dishes*) Yes, well, I'm tellin' you I kept on the good side of cook.

(**LIZZIE** watches her for a moment)

LIZZIE ...Do you... like me?

BRIDGET Sure I do.... You should try bein' more like cook, Lizzie. Smile and get 'round them. You can do it.

LIZZIE It's not... fair that I have to.

BRIDGET There ain't nothin' fair in this world.

LIZZIE Well then... well then, I don't want to!

BRIDGET Oh Lizzie, Lizzie. . .

MISS LIZZIE (*dropping the Irish accent*) You dream, Lizzie... you dream dreams.... Work? Be sensible. What work could you do?

LIZZIE I could -

MISS LIZZIE No.

LIZZIE I could -

MISS LIZZIE No.

LIZZIE I could -

MISS LIZZIE No!

LIZZIE I... dream.

MISS LIZZIE You dream... of a carousel... you see a carousel... you see lights that go on and go off... you see yourself on a carousel horse, a red-painted horse with its head in the air, and green staring eyes, and a white flowing mane, it looks wild!... It goes up and comes down, and the carousel whirls round with the music and the lights, on and off...and you watch... watch yourself on the horse. You're wearing a mask, a white mask like the mane of the horse, it looks like your face except that it's rigid and white... and it changes! With each flick of the lights, the expression, it changes, but always so rigid and hard, like the flesh of the horse that is red that you ride. You ride with no hands! No hands on this petrified horse, its head flung in the air, its wide staring eyes like those of a doe run down by the dogs! And each time you go 'round, your hands rise a fraction nearer the mask... and the music and the carousel and the horse, they all three slow down, and they stop.... You can reach out and touch... you... You on the horse... with your hands so at the eyes.... You look into the eyes!

(A **SOUND** from **LIZZIE**, she is horrified and frightened. She covers her eyes.)

MISS LIZZIE There are none! None!
 Just black holes in a white mask. *(pause)*
 The eyes of your birds are round... and bright...
 A light shines from inside
 They can see into your heart
 They're pretty
 They love you

(**MR BORDEN** and **HARRY** enter)

MR. BORDEN I want this settled, Harry. I want it settled while Lizzie's out back.

(**MISS LIZZIE** draws **LIZZIE's** attention to **MR. BORDEN** and **HARRY**.
LIZZIE listens. **MISS LIZZIE** watches.)

HARRY You know I'm for that.

MR. BORDEN I want it all done but the signin' of the papers tomorrow, that's if I
 decide to-

HARRY You can't lose, Andrew. That farm's just lyin' fallow.

MR. BORDEN Well, let's see what you got.

HARRY *(gets out his papers)* Look at this... I'll run horse auctions and a
 buggy rental - now I'll pay no rent for the house or pasturage but
 you get twenty per cent, eh? Twenty per cent! Clear profit. Now that
 figure there -

MR. BORDEN Yeees.

HARRY From my horse auctions last year, it'll go up on the farm and you'll
 get twenty percent off the top.... My buggy rental won't do so well...
 that's that figure there, approximate... but it all adds up, eh? Adds
 up for you.

MR. BORDEN It's a good deal, Harry, but -

HARRY Now I know why you're worried! - But the farm will still be in the
 family, no worry there 'cause aren't I family? And whenever you or
 the girls want to come over for a visit, why I'll send a buggy from the
 rental, no need for you to have the expense of a horse, eh?

MR. BORDEN It looks good on paper.

HARRY There's... ah something else Andrew, it's a bit awkward but I got to mention it. Got to mention it Andrew. I'll be severin' a lot of my present connections, and what I figure I've a right to, is some kind of guarantee...

MR. BORDEN You mean - a renewable lease for the farm?

HARRY Well - what I'm wondering is.... No offense, Andrew, no offense, but you're an older man, Andrew... now if something should happen to you, where would that farm stand in regards to your will? That's what I'm wondering.

MR. BORDEN I've not made a will.

HARRY You know best - but I wouldn't want to be in a position where Lizzie would be havin' anything to do with that farm! The less she knows now the better, but she's bound to find out. I hope you don't feel I'm steppin' out of line by bringin' this up.

(LIZZIE is within earshot. They do not see her)

MR. BORDEN No.

HARRY If you mind you come right out and say so.

MR. BORDEN That's alright.

HARRY Now... if you... put the farm - in Abbie's name, what do you think?

MR. BORDEN I don't know, Harry.

HARRY I don't want to push.

MR. BORDEN I should make a will... I want the girls looked after, it don't seem like they'll marry... and Abbie, she's younger than me, I know Emma will see to her, still... money-wise I got to consider these things.... It makes a difference no men in the family.

HARRY You know you can count on me for whatever.

MR. BORDEN If.... If I changed title to the farm, Abbie'd have to come down to the bank, I wouldn't want Lizzie to know.

HARRY Here's what you can do, Andrew. You just send a note for Abbie when you get to the bank! You send a note, she'll say it's a note from a sick friend and come right downtown, meet you at the bank, sign them papers givin' her title, bob's your uncle, simple as that.

MR. BORDEN I'll give it some thought.

HARRY You see, Abbie owns the farm, it's no difference to you, but it gives me protection.

MR. BORDEN Shht, . . Who's there?

HARRY (*whispers*) It's Lizzie.

MR. BORDEN What do you want?...
Did you lock the shed?... Is the shed locked!
Did - You - Lock - the Shed!

(*LIZZIE makes a slow motion that MR. BORDEN takes for assent.*)

MR BORDEN Well you make sure it stays locked! I don't want any more of those damned kids in this yard!

(*an awkward pause as MR BORDEN and HARRY exchange a look*)

MR BORDEN I... . . ah... I think ...we about covered everything, Harry, we'll ah let it go till tomorrow. Tomorrow we'll settle it.

HARRY Tomorrow then. Good enough... Well... I'll just, just finish choppin' that kindlin'. Give a shout when it's lunchtime. (*He exits.*)

(*LIZZIE and MR. BORDEN stare at each other for a moment*)

LIZZIE Papa?

MR BORDEN What is it? (*picking up the papers*)

LIZZIE What are you doing with the farm?

(*MR. BORDEN is going to place the papers in his inside jacket pocket, pointedly not looking at LIZZIE*)

LIZZIE Papa? - Papa!!

(*The faint SOUND of children in the yard at the shed and the birds. It will grow in volume under the dialogue*)

MR BORDEN What?

LIZZIE Papa -

MR BORDEN What!

LIZZIE I would like you to show me what you put, in your pocket.

MR. BORDEN It's none of your business.

*(A faint yell from **HARRY** out in the yard as the **SOUND** of the children is growing more frenzied. **SOUND** from the outside happens simultaneously with, on top of and fuels the argument between **LIZZIE** and **MR. BORDEN**)*

LIZZIE I want you to show me!

MR BORDEN I said it's none of your business!

LIZZIE The farm is my business!

*(Another cry from **HARRY** attempting in vain to drive the children away)*

MR. BORDEN It's nothing.

LIZZIE You show me!

MR. BORDEN I said it's nothing!

*(**LIZZIE** makes a quick move towards her father grabbing his jacket to seize the paper from his pocket. The chaotic **Voices of the children** are building in volume as **MR BORDEN** and **LIZZIE** struggle with each other, her trying to get the paper out of his pocket, him preventing her from doing so)*

HARRY *(bursts in carrying the hatchet)* Kids' in the shed!

MR. BORDEN Jesus Christ!

LIZZIE I wanna see!

MR. BORDEN You and those god damn birds!

HARRY Andrew!

MR BORDEN I've told you time and again!

LIZZIE What about the farm! (*still struggling to get the paper, him holding her off*)

HARRY Andrew!

LIZZIE My farm!

MR. BORDEN You never listen!

HARRY Those kids!

MR BORDEN Never listen!

HARRY them birds!

MR BORDEN (*quickly and smartly he slaps her face*)

LIZZIE Papa

MR BORDEN (*grabbing the hatchet from **HARRY**, turning back to **LIZZIE**)*
There'll be no more of your god damn birds in this yard!!

*(**MR. BORDEN** raises the hatchet and smashes it into the table as **LIZZIE** screams with the **SOUND** of the children's voices at a climatic point)*

LIZZIE Nooo!!

*(**SILENCE.** The **sound** of the voices gone. The hatchet is embedded in the table. **MR. BORDEN** and **HARRY** assume a soft freeze as **LIZZIE** turns to see **MISS LIZZIE** watching)*

MISS LIZZIE I loved them.

BLACKOUT *end ACT ONE*

Act Two

Lights come up on the **ACTRESS/LIZZIE** sitting at the dining room table. A pail for washing windows has been placed near the kitchen exit. It is unobtrusive, not noticeable. **ACTRESS/LIZZIE** is very still, her hands clasped in her lap. **MISS LIZZIE** is near her. She too is very still. A pause.

ACTRESS/LIZZIE (very low) Talk to me.

MISS LIZZIE I remember -

ACTRESS/LIZZIE (very low) No more.

MISS LIZZIE On the farm, Papa's farm, Harry's farm, when I was little and thought it was my farm and I loved it, we had some puppies, the farm dog had puppies, brown soft little puppies with brown, eyes... (the word "eyes" gives her pause, bringing to mind the eyes of her birds) And... one of the puppies got sick. I didn't know it was sick, it seemed like the others, but the mother, she knew. It would lie at the back of the box, she would lie in front of it while she nursed all the others. They ignored it, that puppy didn't exist for the others.... I think inside it was different, and the mother thought the difference she sensed was a sickness... and after a while... anyone could tell it was sick. It had nothing to eat! And Papa took it and drowned it. That's what you do on a farm with things that are different.

ACTRESS/LIZZIE Am I different?

MISS LIZZIE You kill them.

*The **ACTRESS/LIZZIE** looks at **MISS LIZZIE**. **MISS LIZZIE** looks towards the top of the stairs. **MISS LIZZIE** gets up, rests her hand for a moment on **ACTRESS/LIZZIE**'s shoulder, then exits to the kitchen. **EMMA** appears at the top of the stairs. She is dressed for travel and carries a small suitcase and her gloves. She stares down at **LIZZIE** still sitting at the table. After several moments **LIZZIE** becomes aware of that gaze and turns to look at **EMMA**. **EMMA** then descends the stairs. She puts down her suitcase. She is not overjoyed at seeing **LIZZIE**, having hoped to get away before **LIZZIE** arose; nevertheless she begins with an excess of enthusiasm to cover the implications of her departure.*

EMMA Well! You're up early Lizzie.... Bridget down?... Did you put the coffee on? (she puts her gloves on the table.) My goodness, Lizzie, cat got your tongue? (she exits to the kitchen. **LIZZIE** picks up the gloves, **EMMA** returns.) Bridget's down, she's in the kitchen.... Well, looks like a real scorcher today, doesn't it?

LIZZIE What's the bag for?

EMMA I... decided I might go for a little trip, a day or two, get away from the heat.... The girls've rented a place out beach way and I thought... with the weather and all...

LIZZIE How can you do that?

EMMA Do what?... Anyway I thought I might stay with them a few days.... Why don't you come with me?

LIZZIE No.

EMMA Just for a few days, come with me.

LIZZIE No.

EMMA You know you like the water.

LIZZIE I said no!

EMMA Oh, Lizzie.

(Pause. LIZZIE sits twisting the gloves)

LIZZIE I don't see how you can leave me like this.

EMMA I asked you to come with me.

LIZZIE You know I can't do that.

EMMA Why not?

LIZZIE Someone has to do something, you just run away from things.

EMMA ...Lizzie... I'm sorry about the - [birds]

LIZZIE No!

EMMA Papa was angry.

LIZZIE I don't want to talk about it.

EMMA He's sorry now.

LIZZIE Nobody listens to me, can't you hear me? I said don't talk about it. I don't want to talk about it. Stop talking about it!!

(BRIDGET enters with the coffee)

EMMA Thank you, Bridget.

(MISS LIZZIE/BRIDGET sits in the parlor and watches)

EMMA Well!... I certainly can use this this morning.... Your coffee's there.

LIZZIE I don't want it.

EMMA You're going to ruin those gloves.

LIZZIE I don't care.

EMMA Since they're not yours.

(LIZZIE bangs the gloves down on the table. A pause. Then EMMA picks them up and smooths them out.)

LIZZIE Why are you leaving me?

EMMA I feel like a visit with the girls. Is there something wrong with that?

LIZZIE How can you go now?

EMMA I don't know what you're getting at.

LIZZIE I heard them. I heard them talking yesterday. Do you know what they're saying?

EMMA How could I?

LIZZIE "How could I?" What do you mean "How could I?" Did you know?

EMMA No, Lizzie, I did not.

LIZZIE Did – not - what?

EMMA Know.

LIZZIE But you know now. How do you know now?

EMMA I've put two and two together and I'm going over to the girls' for a visit!

LIZZIE Please Emma!

EMMA It's too hot.

LIZZIE I need you, don't go.

EMMA I've been talking about this trip.

LIZZIE That's a lie.

EMMA They're expecting me.

LIZZIE You're lying to me!

EMMA I'm going to the girls' place. You can come if you want, you can stay if you want. I planned this trip and I'm taking it.

LIZZIE Stop lying!

EMMA If I want to tell a little white lie to avoid an altercation in this house, I'll do so. Other people have been doing it for years!

LIZZIE You don't understand, you don't understand anything.

EMMA Oh, I understand enough.

LIZZIE You don't! Let me explain it to you. You listen carefully, you listen.... Harry's getting the farm, can you understand that? Harry is here and he's moving on the farm and he's going to be t here, on the farm, living on the farm. Our farm. Do you understand that? Do you understand that!

EMMA Yes!

LIZZIE Harry's going to be on the farm. That's the first thing. No... no it isn't.... The first thing... was the rent from the mill house, that was the first thing! And now the farm! You see there's a pattern, Emma, you can see that, can't you?

EMMA I don't-

LIZZIE You can see it! The mill house, then the farm, and the next thing is the papers for the farm - do you know what he's doing, Papa's doing? He's signing the farm over to her. It will never be ours, we will never have it, not ever. It's ours by rights, don't you feel that?

EMMA The farm has always meant a great deal to me, yes.

LIZZIE Then what are you doing about it! You can't leave me now... but that's not all. Papa's going to make a will, and you can see the pattern, can't you, and if the pattern keeps on, what do you suppose his will will say? What do you suppose, answer me!

EMMA I don't know.

LIZZIE Say it!

EMMA He'll see we're looked after.

LIZZIE I don't want to be looked after!
What's the matter with you? Do you really want to spend the rest of your life with that cow, listening to her drone on and on for years! That's just what they think you'll do. Papa'll leave you a monthly allowance, just like he'll leave me, just enough to keep us all living together. We'll be worth millions on paper, and be stuck in this house and by and by Papa will die and Harry will move in and you will wait on that cow while she gets fatter and fatter and I – will – sit - in my room.

EMMA Lizzie.

LIZZIE We have to do something, you can see that. We have to do something.

EMMA There's nothing we can do.

LIZZIE Don't say that!

EMMA Alright, then, what can we do?

LIZZIE I... I... don't know. But we have to do something, you have to help me, you can't go away and leave me alone, you can't do that.

EMMA Then come with me!

LIZZIE You know what I thought? I thought you could talk to him, really talk to him, make him understand that we're people. Individual people, and we have to live separate lives, and his will should make it possible for us to do that. And the farm can't go to Harry.

EMMA You know it's no use.

LIZZIE I can't talk to him anymore. Every time I talk to him I make everything worse. I hate him, no. No I don't. I hate her.

(EMMA looks at her brooch watch)

LIZZIE Don't look at the time.

EMMA I'll miss my connections.

LIZZIE No!

EMMA *(putting on her gloves)* Lizzie. There's certain things we have to face. One of them is, we can't change a thing.

LIZZIE I won't let you go!

EMMA I'll be back on the weekend.

LIZZIE He killed my birds! He took the axe and he killed them! Emma, I ran out and held them in my hands, I felt their hearts throbbing and pumping and the blood gushed out of their necks, it was all over my hands, don't you care about that?

EMMA I..... have a train to catch.

LIZZIE He didn't care how much he hurt me and you don't care either. Nobody cares.

EMMA I have to go now.

LIZZIE That's right. Go away. I don't even like you, Emma. Go away!

(EMMA leaves, LIZZIE runs after her calling.)

LIZZIE I'm sorry for all the things I told you! Things I really felt! You pretended to me, and I don't like you!! Go away!!

(LIZZIE looks after EMMA's departing figure. After a moment she slowly turns back into the room. MISS LIZZIE is there)

LIZZIE I want to die... I want to die, but something inside won't let me... Inside something says No. *(She shuts her eyes.)* I can do anything.

THE DEFENSE Miss Borden.

(Both LIZZIES turn, mirror images of each other)

THE DEFENSE Could you describe the sequence of events upon your father's arrival home?

LIZZIE *(unemotional and flat recital)* Papa came in... we exchanged a few words... Bridget and I spoke of the yard goods sale downtown, whether she would buy some. She went up to her room.

THE DEFENSE And then?

LIZZIE I went out back... through the yard... I picked up several pears from the ground beneath the trees... I went into the shed... I stood looking out the window and ate the pears.

THE DEFENSE How many?

LIZZIE . . . Four.

THE DEFENSE It wasn't warm, stifling in the shed?

LIZZIE No. It was cool.

THE DEFENSE What were you doing, apart from eating the pears?

LIZZIE I suppose I was thinking, I just stood there, looking out the window, thinking, and eating the pears I'd picked up.

THE DEFENSE You're fond of pears?

LIZZIE *(a small smile)* Otherwise I wouldn't eat them.

THE DEFENSE Go on.

LIZZIE I returned to the house. I found - Papa. I called for Bridget.

(MRS. BORDEN descends the stairs. LIZZIE and MISS LIZZIE/Bridget turn to look at her. MRS BORDEN is only aware of LIZZIE's stare. Pause.)

MRS. BORDEN ...What're you staring at?... I said what're you staring at?

LIZZIE Bridget?

BRIDGET Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BORDEN Just coffee and a biscuit this morning, Bridget, it's too hot for a decent breakfast.

BRIDGET Yes ma'am.

*(She exits for the biscuit and coffee. **LIZZIE** stares at **MRS. BORDEN** who senses something amiss)*

MRS. BORDEN ...Tell Bridget I'll have it in the parlor.

*(**LIZZIE** is making an effort to be pleasant, to be "good." **MRS. BORDEN** is aware of this unusual behavior. **LIZZIE** feels caught in a dimension other than the one in which the people around her are operating. For **LIZZIE**, a bell-jar effect, simple acts seem filled with significance. **LIZZIE** is trying to fulfill other people's expectations of "normal.")*

LIZZIE It's not me, is it?

MRS. BORDEN What?

LIZZIE You're not moving into the parlor because of me, are you?

MRS. BORDEN What?

LIZZIE I'd hate to think I'd driven you out of your own dining room.

MRS. BORDEN No.

LIZZIE Oh good, because I'd hate to think that was so.

MRS. BORDEN It's cooler in the parlor.

LIZZIE You know, you're right.

MRS. BORDEN Eh?

LIZZIE It is cooler.

*(**BRIDGET** enters with the coffee and biscuit)*

LIZZIE I will. Bridget.

*(she takes the coffee and biscuit, gives it to **MRS. BORDEN** and watches her eat and drink. **MRS. BORDEN** eats the biscuit delicately. **MISS LIZZIE** sits in the dining room and watches.)*

LIZZIE Do you like that biscuit?

MRS. BORDEN It could be lighter.

LIZZIE You're right.

*(**MR. BORDEN** enters, makes his way into the kitchen, **LIZZIE** watches him pass)*

LIZZIE You know, Papa doesn't look well, Papa doesn't look well at all. Papa looks sick.

MRS. BORDEN He had a bad night.

LIZZIE Oh?

MRS. BORDEN Too hot.

LIZZIE But it's cooler in here, isn't it?... *(not trusting her own evaluation of the degree of heat)* Isn't it?

MRS. BORDEN Yes, yes, it's cooler in here.

*(**MR. BORDEN** enters with his coffee. **LIZZIE** goes to him)*

LIZZIE Papa? You should go in the parlor. It's much cooler in there, really it is.

*(He goes into the parlor. **SILENCE** except for the **SOUND** of a loud and slow tick tock of a clock continuing under the scene. The heat hums, the clock ticks, everything is moving through jello. **LIZZIE** returns to the dining room. She sits at the table, folds her hands in her lap, a mirror image of **MISS LIZZIE** at the table. In the parlor **MR. BORDEN** reads the paper. **MRS BORDEN** has her biscuit and coffee. Pause seeming forever)*

MRS. BORDEN I think I'll have Bridget do the windows today. *(pause)*
They need doing *(pause)*
Get them out the way first thing. *(Pause)*
Anything in the paper, Andrew?

MR. BORDEN *(intent on his paper)* Nope.

MRS. BORDEN There never is . . . I don't know why we buy it. *(pause)*

MR. BORDEN *(still reading)* Yup.

MRS. BORDEN You going out this morning? *(pause)*

MR. BORDEN *(looking up from the paper, a quick sly glance to LIZZIE, then a longer look to MRS BORDEN)* Business.

MRS. BORDEN *(low)* Ah business...yes well ... *(pause)* Harry must be having a bit of a sleep-in. *(pause)*

MR. BORDEN *(back at his paper)* Yup.

MRS. BORDEN He's always up by- *(HARRY starts down the stairs.)* Well, speak of the devil - coffee and biscuits?

HARRY Sounds good to me.

(MRS. BORDEN starts off to get it. LIZZIE looks at her, catching her eye. MRS. BORDEN stops abruptly. The clock stops ticking and tocking. A SILENCE fills the air. LIZZIE breaks the silence and the feeling of extended time.)

LIZZIE *(her voice is too loud)* Emma's gone over to visit at the girls' place!

(MR. BORDEN lowers his paper to look at her. HARRY looks at her. Suddenly aware of the loudness of her voice, and everyone looking at her, she continues softly, too softly)

LIZZIE ...till the weekend.

MR. BORDEN She didn't say she was going, when'd she decide that?

(LIZZIE looks down at her hands, doesn't answer. An awkward pause. Then MRS. BORDEN continues out to the kitchen)

HARRY *(clears his throat, then)* Will you be ah... going ... downtown today?

MR. BORDEN This mornin'. I got... Business, at the bank.

(A look between them. They are very aware of LIZZIE's presence)

HARRY This mornin' eh? Well now... that works just fine for me. I can... I got a bill to settle in town myself.

(LIZZIE looks at them)

HARRY I ah, I'll be on my way after that.

MR. BORDEN Abbie'll be disappointed you're not stayin' for lunch.

HARRY 'Nother time.

MR. BORDEN (*aware of LIZZIE's gaze*) I don't know where she is with that coffee. I'll just -

HARRY Never you mind, you sit right there, I'll get it. (*glad to escape, he exits.*)

(LIZZIE and MR. BORDEN look at each other. Pause with unspoken thoughts. Finally -)

LIZZIE Good mornin' Papa.

MR. BORDEN Mornin' Lizzie.

LIZZIE Did you have a good sleep?

MR. BORDEN Not bad.

LIZZIE Papa? (*goes to MR BORDEN*)

MR. BORDEN Yes, Lizzie.

LIZZIE You're a very strong-minded person, Papa, do you think I'm like you?

MR. BORDEN In some ways... perhaps.

LIZZIE I must be like someone.

MR. BORDEN You resemble your mother.

LIZZIE I look like my mother?

MR. BORDEN A bit like your mother.

LIZZIE But my mother's dead.

MR. BORDEN Lizzie-

LIZZIE I remember you told me she died because she was sick... I was born and she died. Did you love her?

MR. BORDEN I married her.

LIZZIE Can't you say if you loved her?

MR. BORDEN Of course I did, Lizzie.

LIZZIE Do you hate me for killing her?

MR. BORDEN You don't think of it that way, it was just something that happened.

LIZZIE Perhaps she just got tired and died. She didn't want to go on, and the chance came up and she took it. I could understand that... Perhaps she was like a bird, she could see all the blue sky and she wanted to fly away but she couldn't. She was caught, Papa, she was caught in a horrible snare, and she saw a way out and she took it.... Perhaps it was a very brave thing to do, Papa, perhaps it was the only way, and she hated to leave us because she loved us so much, but she couldn't breathe all caught in the snare... *(pause)* Some people have very small wrists, have you noticed? Mine aren't.

(There is a murmur from the kitchen, then muted laughter. MR. BORDEN looks towards it.)

LIZZIE Papa! I am a very strong person.

MRS. BORDEN *(off, laughing)* You're tellin' tales out of school, Harry!

HARRY *(off)* God's truth. You should have seen the buggy when they brought it back.

MRS. BORDEN *(off)* You've got to tell Andrew. *(pokes her head in)* Andrew, come on out here, Harry's got a story.
(off) Now you'll have to start at the beginning again, oh my goodness.

(MR. BORDEN starts for the kitchen. He stops, and looks back at LIZZIE)

LIZZIE Is there anything you want to tell me, Papa?

MRS. BORDEN *(off)* Andrew!

LIZZIE *(softly, an echo)* Andrew.

MR. BORDEN What is it, Lizzie?

LIZZIE If I promised to be a good girl forever and ever, would anything change?

MR. BORDEN I don't know what you're talkin' about.

LIZZIE I would be lying... Papa! Don't do any business today. Don't go out. Stay home.

MR. BORDEN What for?

LIZZIE Everyone's leaving. Going away. Everyone's left.

MRS. BORDEN *(off)* Andrew!

LIZZIE *(softly, an echo)* Andrew!

MR. BORDEN What is it?

LIZZIE I'm calling you.

(MR. BORDEN looks at her for a moment, then leaves for the kitchen. DR PATRICK is heard whistling very softly)

LIZZIE Listen...

MISS LIZZIE Listen?

LIZZIE Can't you hear it?... Can't you hear it!

MISS LIZZIE I ... *(shakes her head "no")*
.Oh..I ... now I can hear it.... *(whistling stops)* ...has it stopped?

(DR PATRICK can't be seen. Only his voice is heard)

DR. PATRICK Lizzie?

LIZZIE *(realisation)* I could hear it before you.

(The two women look at each other. MISS LIZZIE moves to pick up the pail unobtrusively set on stage)

LIZZIE It sounded so sad I wanted to cry.

BRIDGET *(turning to look back at LIZZIE, speaking with an Irish accent as BRIDGET)*

BRIDGET Ah, you mustn't cry, Lizzie.

*(she exits with the pail, leaving **LIZZIE** alone)*

LIZZIE I mustn't cry.

DR. PATRICK *(off)* I bet you know this one. *(He whistles an Irish jig.)*

LIZZIE I know that! *(She begins to dance.)*

*(**DR PATRICK** enters whistling. He claps in time to the dance. **LIZZIE** finishes the jig. **DR PATRICK** applauds)*

DR. PATRICK Bravo! Bravo!!

LIZZIE You didn't know I could do that, did you?

DR. PATRICK You're a woman of many talents, Miss Borden.

LIZZIE You're not making fun of me?

DR. PATRICK I would never do that.

LIZZIE I can do anything I want!

DR. PATRICK I'm sure you can.

LIZZIE If I wanted to die - I could even do that!

DR. PATRICK Well now, I don't think so.

LIZZIE Yes, I could!

DR. PATRICK Lizzie-

LIZZIE You wouldn't know! You can't see into my heart.

DR. PATRICK I think I can.

LIZZIE Well you can't!

DR. PATRICK It's only a game.

LIZZIE I never play games.

DR. PATRICK Sure you do.

LIZZIE I hate games.

DR. PATRICK You're playin' one now.

LIZZIE You don't even know me!

DR. PATRICK Come on Lizzie, we don't want to fight. I know what we'll do... we'll start all over.... Shut your eyes, Lizzie. *(She does so.)*
Good mornin' Miss Borden.... Good mornin' Miss Borden!

LIZZIE ...I haven't decided... *(She opens her eyes.)* ...if it is or it isn't.

DR. PATRICK Much better... and now... would you take my arm, Miss Borden?
How about a wee promenade?

LIZZIE There's nowhere to go. *(it seems sadness has replaced anger)*

DR. PATRICK That isn't so.... What about Boston?... Do you think it's too far for a stroll?... I know what we'll do, we'll walk 'round to the side and you'll show me your birds. ...I waited last night but you never showed up... there I was, travellin' bag and all, and you never appeared.... I know what went wrong! We forgot to agree upon an hour! Next time, Lizzie, you must set the hour.... Is this where they're kept?

(LIZZIE nods, she opens the cage and looks in it)

DR. PATRICK It's empty. *(He laughs.)* And you say you never play games.

LIZZIE They're gone.

DR. PATRICK You've been havin' me on again, yes you have.

LIZZIE They've run away.

DR. PATRICK Did they really exist?

LIZZIE I had blood on my hands.

DR. PATRICK What do you say?

LIZZIE You can't see it now. I washed it off. See?

DR. PATRICK *(takes her hands)* Ah Lizzie...

LIZZIE Would you help someone die?

DR. PATRICK Why do you ask that?

LIZZIE Some people are better off dead. I might be better off dead.

DR. PATRICK You're a precious and unique person, Lizzie, and you shouldn't think things like that.

LIZZIE Precious and unique? *(the phrase resonates for her)*

DR. PATRICK All life is precious and unique.

LIZZIE I am precious and unique? ...I am precious and unique. You said that.

DR. PATRICK Oh, I believe it.

LIZZIE And I am! I know it! People mix things up on you, you have to be careful. I am a person of worth!

DR. PATRICK Sure you are.

LIZZIE Not like that fat cow in there!

DR. PATRICK Her life too is-

LIZZIE No!

DR. PATRICK Liz-

LIZZIE Do you know her!

DR. PATRICK That doesn't matter.

LIZZIE Yes it does, it does matter.

DR. PATRICK You can't be-

LIZZIE You're a doctor, isn't that right?

DR. PATRICK Right enough there.

LIZZIE So, tell me, tell me, if a dreadful accident occurred... and two people were dying... but you could only save one.... Which would you save?

DR. PATRICK You can't ask questions like that.

LIZZIE Yes I can, come on, it's a game. How does a doctor determine? If one were old and the other were young-would you save the younger one first?

DR. PATRICK Lizzie.

LIZZIE You said you liked games! If one were a bad person and the other was good, was trying to be good, would you save the one who was good and let the bad person die?

DR. PATRICK I don't know.

LIZZIE Listen! If you could go back in time... what would you do if you met a person who was evil and wicked?

DR. PATRICK Who?

LIZZIE I don't know, Attila the Hun!

DR. PATRICK *(laughs)* Oh my.

LIZZIE Listen! If you met Attila the Hun, and you were in a position to kill him, would you do it?

DR. PATRICK I don't know.

LIZZIE Think of the suffering he caused, the unhappiness.

DR. PATRICK Yes, but I'm a doctor, not an assassin.

LIZZIE I think you're a coward.

(Pause)

DR. PATRICK What I do is try to save lives.

LIZZIE But you put poison out for the slugs in your garden.

DR. PATRICK You got somethin' mixed up.

LIZZIE I've never been clearer. Everything's clear. I've lived all my life for this one moment of absolute clarity! If war were declared, would you serve?

DR. PATRICK I would fight in a war.

LIZZIE You wouldn't fight, you would kill. You'd take a gun and shoot people, people who'd done nothing to you, people who were trying to be good, you'd kill them! And you say you wouldn't kill Attila the Hun, or that that stupid cow's life is precious?
My life is precious!!

DR. PATRICK To you.

LIZZIE Yes to me! Are you stupid!?

DR. PATRICK And hers is to her.

LIZZIE I don't care about her!
I'm glad you're not my doctor, you can't make decisions, can you?
You are a coward.

(DR PATRICK starts off and will exit)

LIZZIE You're afraid of your wife! You can only play games!.... If I really wanted to go to Boston, you wouldn't come with me because you're a coward!
I'm not a coward!!

(LIZZIE turns to watch MRS. BORDEN enter the parlor and sit with needlework. After a moment MRS. BORDEN looks at LIZZIE, aware of her scrutiny)

LIZZIE ...Where's Papa?

MRS. BORDEN Out.

LIZZIE And Mr. Wingate?

MRS. BORDEN He's out too.

LIZZIE So what are you going to do, Mrs Borden?

MRS. BORDEN I'm going to finish this up.

LIZZIE You do that... *(pause)* Where's Bridget?

MRS. BORDEN Out back washing windows.... You got clean clothes to go upstairs, they're in the kitchen.

(Pause)

LIZZIE Did you know Papa killed my birds with the axe? He chopped off their heads. (*MRS BORDEN is uneasy.*) ...It's alright. At first I felt bad, but I feel better now. I feel much better now....
I am a woman of decision, Mrs Borden. When I decide to do things, I do them, yes, I do. (*smiles*) How many times has Papa said "when Lizzie puts her mind to a thing, she does it" and I do. It's always me who puts the slug poison out because they eat all the flowers and you don't like that, do you? They're bad things, they must die.
You see, not all life is precious, is it?

(*After a moment MRS. BORDEN makes an attempt casually to gather together her things to go upstairs. She does not want to be in the room with Lizzie*)

LIZZIE Where're you going?

MRS. BORDEN Upstairs... (*an excuse*) The spare room needs changing.

(*A knock at the back door*)

LIZZIE Someone's at the door...

(*a second knock, MRS BORDEN makes a move*)

LIZZIE I'll get it.

(*LIZZIE exits to the kitchen. MRS. BORDEN waits. LIZZIE returns. She's a bit out of breath. She carries a clean pile of clothes that she puts on the table. She looks at MRS. BORDEN*)

LIZZIE Did you want something?

MRS. BORDEN Who was it?
At the door? Who was it?

LIZZIE Oh yes. I forgot.
I had to step out back for a moment to get –
It's "a note." A message for you.

MRS. BORDEN Oh.

LIZZIE Shall I open it?

MRS. BORDEN That's alright. (*She holds out her hand.*)

LIZZIE Funny, it looks like Papa's handwriting... *(She passes over the note.)* Aren't you going to open it?

MRS. BORDEN I'll read it upstairs. *(starts to leave)*

LIZZIE Mrs Borden!... Would you mind... putting my clothes in my room?

*(She gets half the pile of clothes from the table, **MRS. BORDEN** takes them, reluctantly. Before she can move away, Lizzie grabs her arm.)*

LIZZIE Just a minute... I would like you to look into my eyes. What's the matter? Nothing's wrong. It's an experiment....
Look right into them.
Tell me... what do you see... can you see anything?

MRS. BORDEN ...Myself.

LIZZIE Yes. When a person dies, retained on her eye is the image of the last thing she saw.
Isn't that interesting? *(pause)*

*(**MRS. BORDEN** pulls away and slowly starts upstairs. **LIZZIE** picks up the remaining clothes on the table. The hatchet is concealed beneath them. She follows **MRS. BORDEN** up the stairs)*

LIZZIE Do you know something? If I were to kill someone, I would come up behind them very slowly and quietly.
They would never even hear me.
They would never turn around.

*(**MRS. BORDEN** stops on the stairs. She turns around to look at **LIZZIE** who is behind her.)*

LIZZIE They would be too frightened to turn around even if they did hear me. They would be so afraid they'd see what they feared.

*(**MRS. BORDEN** makes a move, an effort to go past **LIZZIE** back down the stairs, to get away. **LIZZIE** stops her.)*

LIZZIE Careful. Don't fall.

*(**MRS. BORDEN** turns and slowly continues up the stairs with **LIZZIE** behind her.)*

LIZZIE And then, I would strike them down.

LIZZIE With them not turning around, they would retain no image of me on their eye.
It would be better that way.

(LIZZIE and MRS. BORDEN disappear at the top of the stairs. The stage is empty for a moment. Faint SOUND of a grandfather clock chiming the three-quarter hour.

BRIDGET enters. She carries the pail for washing the windows. She sets the pail down, wipes her forehead. She stands for a moment looking towards the stairs as if she might have heard a sound. She picks up the pail and exits to the kitchen.

LIZZIE appears on the stairs. She is slightly out of breath, a few strands of her hair out of place. She is carrying the pile of clothes she carried upstairs. She descends the stairs, she seems calm, self-possessed despite the hair and the deep breathing. She places the clothes on the table.

After a moment she moves to a chair, pauses a moment, then sits down. She sits there, straight back, hands in lap, an appearance of strong self-possession. BRIDGET enters from the kitchen, she sees LIZZIE. And moves on to tidy the room. She casts a glance at LIZZIE every once in a while, increasingly aware of her silence and stillness.)

BRIDGET 'Lo Lizzie ... Lizzie!?

(LIZZIE gives a small slow shake of her head. And BRIDGET, dismissed, returns to tidying. LIZZIE gently grasps BRIDGET's arm as BRIDGET passes near her. LIZZIE doesn't look at BRIDGET; she seems still deep in thought.)

LIZZIE We must, hurry.

BRIDGET *(a small laugh)* And why would we be hurryin', Lizzie?

LIZZIE But we have to.

BRIDGET *(freeing herself from LIZZIE's grasp)* Too hot to hurry, Miss Lizzie.

LIZZIE We must hurry *(she looks directly at BRIDGET)* before Papa gets home.

(A moment as BRIDGET senses something not quite right about LIZZIE, but her discomfort fades somewhat and she returns to tidy, eventually picking up the pile of clothes from the table)

BRIDGET Oh Lizzie, your Papa won't be comin' home for hours.

(BRIDGET finds the weight of the clothes unusual. She puts the pile down, lifts the clothes to see what's concealed in them)

- BRIDGET** He'll not be back till it's - *(she sees the hatchet)*
- LIZZIE** Bridget
- BRIDGET** No
- LIZZIE** I said we must hurry before Papa gets home.
- BRIDGET** Oh Lizzie no.
- LIZZIE** Before Papa Gets Home!
- BRIDGET** *(quickly covers the hatchet)* What have you done.
- LIZZIE** I have it all figured out.
- BRIDGET** What have you done?
- LIZZIE** But you have to help me.
- BRIDGET** Oh no Lizzie no.
- LIZZIE** You know he'd never leave me the farm - Not with her on his back!
But now *(She gets up, BRIDGET moves a bit away from her)*
I will have the farm! And I will have the money, yes, to do what I
please!
And you too Bridget *(she's moving towards BRIDGET who is
avoiding her)* I'll give you some of my money but you've
got to help me!
- BRIDGET** I can't.
- LIZZIE** Don't be afraid, it's me, *(she grabs BRIDGET)*
It's Lizzie, it's me Lizzie, you like me!
- BRIDGET** What have you done?
- LIZZIE** *(whispers)* Don't you want some of my money?
- (Pause and LIZZIE releases BRIDGET moves towards the stairs)*
- LIZZIE** You don't want to go up there.

BRIDGET Oh Lizzie, you've -

LIZZIE No no no no no no no no no some person came in -

BRIDGET No Lizzie -

LIZZIE Some person Broke in and –

BRIDGET No

LIZZIE they killed her.

BRIDGET They'll know!

LIZZIE Not if you help me.

BRIDGET I can't, Miss Lizzie, I can't!

LIZZIE *(grabs BRIDGET)* Do you want them to hang me! Is that what you want! You want them to kill me! Oh Bridget, look! Look! *(She falls to her knees, clutching at BRIDGET)*
I'm begging for my life, I'm begging, on my knees I am begging.
Deny me, and they will kill me, help me, Bridget, please help me, please, I'm begging you, please.

BRIDGET *(a pause)* . . . But . . . *(she touches LIZZIE's face)* but there's nothin' we can do, there's nothin'. . . I mean, I mean what... what could we do?

LIZZIE *(up off her knees)* I have it all figured out -

BRIDGET I don't -

LIZZIE I'll go downtown as quick as I can -

BRIDGET No

LIZZIE and you leave the doors open

BRIDGET but I can't -

LIZZIE and go back outside

BRIDGET but Lizzie –

LIZZIE and work!! Work on the windows!

BRIDGET I've finished them, Lizzie.

LIZZIE Then do them again!!!
Remember last year when the burglar broke in?
Today, some one broke in, and she caught them.

BRIDGET They'll never believe us.

LIZZIE Have coffee with Lucy next door.

BRIDGET But -

LIZZIE stay with her till Papa gets home -

BRIDGET I -

LIZZIE He'll find her then each of us swears both of us swear she was fine
when we left she was alright when we left she was fine she was
fine - It's going to work, Bridget, I know it!

BRIDGET Your papa will guess.

LIZZIE Never guess!!

BRIDGET Your papa -

LIZZIE *(getting ready to leave for downtown)* If he found me here he might
guess but he won't!

BRIDGET Your papa will know!

LIZZIE Papa loves me!!! . . . If he has another story to believe, he'll believe
it. He'd Want to believe it. He'd Have to believe it.

BRIDGET Your papa will know.

LIZZIE Why aren't you happy?!
I'm happy. We both should be happy!

*(LIZZIE suddenly gives BRIDGET a fierce kiss on the lips, then takes a step
back)*

LIZZIE Now *(adjusts her hat)*- How do I look?

*(MR. BORDEN enters. BRIDGET sees him. LIZZIE slowly turns to see what
BRIDGET is looking at.)*

LIZZIE Papa?

MR. BORDEN What is it? ...Where's Mrs Borden?

BRIDGET I... don't know... sir... I... just came in, sir.

MR. BORDEN Did she leave the house?

BRIDGET Well, sir...

LIZZIE She went out. Someone delivered a note. A message. And she left.
(LIZZIE takes off her hat and looks at her father)
...You're home early, Papa.

MR. BORDEN I wanted to see Abbie. She's gone out, has she? . . . Well which way did she go?

(LIZZIE shrugs, he continues, more thinking aloud)

MR BORDEN Well... I... I... best wait for her here. I don't want to miss her again.

LIZZIE Help Papa off with his coat, Bridget....

(BRIDGET is reluctant to do so)

LIZZIE Bridget!

(BRIDGET takes his coat. MR BORDEN will sit on the sofa, read a newspaper)

LIZZIE I hear there's, a sale of dress goods on downtown. Why don't you go buy yourself a yard?

BRIDGET Oh... I don't know, ma'am.

LIZZIE You don't want any?

BRIDGET I don't know.

LIZZIE Then... why don't you go upstairs and lie down. Have a rest before lunch.

BRIDGET I don't think I should.

LIZZIE Nonsense.

BRIDGET Lizzie, I-

LIZZIE You go up and lie down. I'll look after things here.

(LIZZIE smiles at BRIDGET. BRIDGET starts up the stairs, suddenly stops, reluctant to continue. She looks back at LIZZIE)

LIZZIE It's alright... go on... it's alright.

(BRIDGET continues a bit up the stairs, stops and, as MISS LIZZIE, turns, taking off her apron and sits on the stairs to watch. MR. BORDEN lowers the paper he's reading as LIZZIE looks at him.)

LIZZIE Hello Papa. You look so tired.... I make you unhappy.... I don't like to make you unhappy. I love you.

MR. BORDEN *(smiles and takes her hand)* I'm just getting old, Lizzie.

LIZZIE You've got on my ring.... Do you remember when I gave you that?... When I left Miss Cornelia's – It was in a little blue velvet box, you hid it behind your back, and you said, "Guess which hand, Lizzie!" And I guessed. And you gave it to me and you said "It's real gold, Lizzie, it's for you because you are very precious to me."
Do you remember, Papa? *(MR. BORDEN nods.)*
And I took it out of the little blue velvet box, and I took your hand, and I put my ring on your finger and I said "Thank you, Papa, I love you."
...You've never taken it off... see how it bites into the flesh of your finger.
(She presses his hand to her face.) I forgive you, Papa,
I forgive you for killing my birds....
You look so tired, why don't you lie down and rest, put your feet up, I'll undo your shoes for you.
(She kneels and undoes his shoes.)

MR. BORDEN You're a good girl.

LIZZIE I could never stand to have you hate me, Papa. Never. I would do anything rather than have you hate me.

MR. BORDEN I don't hate you, Lizzie.

LIZZIE I would not want you to find out anything that would make you hate me. Because I love you.

MR. BORDEN And I love you, Lizzie, you'll always be precious to me.

LIZZIE *(looks at him, and then smiles)* Was I - when I had scabs on my knees?

MR. BORDEN *(laughs)* Oh yes. Even then.

LIZZIE *(laughs)* Oh Papa!... Kiss me! *(He kisses her on the forehead.)*
Thank you, Papa.

MR. BORDEN Why're you crying?

LIZZIE Because I'm so happy. Now... put your feet up and get to sleep...
that's right... shut your eyes... go to sleep... go to sleep.

(She starts to hum, continues humming as MR. BORDEN falls asleep. LIZZIE still humming, moves to the table, slips her hand under the clothes, withdraws the hatchet. She approaches her father with the hatchet behind her back. She stops humming. A pause, then she slowly raises the hatchet very high to strike him. Just as the hatchet is about to start its descent, there is a BLACKOUT as

MISS LIZZIE *(from the stairs screams)* Noooooo!

(Accompanied by the SOUND of children's voices singing the following verse. Their singing grows increasingly discordant and in volume"

*"Lizzie Borden took an axe,
Gave her mother forty whacks,
When the job was nicely done,
She gave her father forty-one!
Forty-one!
Forty-one!"*

As it nears the end of the verse the last words are very loud, hardly discernible. SILENCE. Then the sound of slow measured heavy breathing, which is growing into a wordless sound of hysteria.

Light returns to the stage, dim light and shadows from late in the day. The ACTRESS stands with the hatchet raised in the same position in which we saw her before the Blackout, but the sofa is empty. Her eyes are shut. The sound comes from her.

MISS LIZZIE moves to the ACTRESS, reaches up to take the hatchet from her. When MISS LIZZIE's hand touches the ACTRESS's, the ACTRESS releases the hatchet and whirls around to face MISS LIZZIE who is left holding the hatchet.

The **ACTRESS** backs away from **MISS LIZZIE** it seems in fear. There is a flickering of light at the top of the stairs.

EMMA (from upstairs) Lizzie! ...Lizzie! You're making too much noise!

An older **EMMA** in a dressing gown, nightcap, eye glasses and gray hair, slowly descends the stairs carrying an oil lamp. The **ACTRESS** backs away from **MISS LIZZIE** and moves into the shadows.

MISS LIZZIE turns to see **EMMA**. The hatchet is behind **MISS LIZZIE**'s back concealed from **EMMA**)

EMMA (scanning the room but misses seeing the **ACTRESS**) Where is she?

MISS LIZZIE Who?

EMMA You know who. (Pause and a stand-off)
It's late.

MISS LIZZIE I know.

EMMA Almost morning.

MISS LIZZIE I know.

(**EMMA** blows the lamp out leaving the room shadowed in early morning light that is slowly increasing. **MISS LIZZIE** with the hatchet behind her back adjusting her position so **EMMA** doesn't see it)

EMMA (sits, preparing to lecture) Lizzie.

MISS LIZZIE Yes?

EMMA I want to speak to you, Lizzie.

MISS LIZZIE Yes Emma.

EMMA About that... "Actress" who's come up from Boston.

MISS LIZZIE What about her?

EMMA People talk.

MISS LIZZIE You needn't listen.

EMMA In your position you should do nothing to inspire talk.

MISS LIZZIE People need so little in the way of inspiration.
And Miss Cornelia's classes didn't cover "Etiquette for Acquitted
Persons."

EMMA Common sense should tell you what you ought or ought not do.

MISS LIZZIE Common sense is repugnant to me. I prefer uncommon sense.

EMMA I forbid her in this house, Lizzie!!

MISS LIZZIE Do you?

(Pause)

EMMA (*backing down*) It's just... disgraceful.

MISS LIZZIE I see.

EMMA I simply cannot-

MISS LIZZIE You could always leave.

EMMA Leave?

MISS LIZZIE Move. Away. Why don't you?

EMMA Why I-

MISS LIZZIE You could never, could you?

EMMA If I only-

MISS LIZZIE Knew.

EMMA Oh Lizzie. Did you?

MISS LIZZIE Oh Emma, do you intend asking me that question from now till
death do us part?

EMMA It's just-

MISS LIZZIE For if you do, I may well take something sharp to you.

EMMA Why do you joke like that!

(MISS LIZZIE turns away from EMMA and EMMA, for the first time, sees the hatchet held by MISS LIZZIE behind her back. EMMA freezes like a mouse as MISS LIZZIE, realizing what EMMA has seen, turns and advances on EMMA who avoids her)

MISS LIZZIE Did you never stop and think that if I did, then you were guilty too?

EMMA What?

MISS LIZZIE It was you who brought me up, like a mother to me. Almost like a mother.
Did you never stop and think that I was like a puppet?
Your puppet?
(growing more agitated) My head your hand, yes, your hand working my mouth. Me saying all the things you felt like saying! Me doing all the things you felt like doing! Me spewing forth! Me hitting out! While you!

(LIZZIE suddenly raises the hatchet as if to strike EMMA)

MISS LIZZIE You -!

ACTRESS Lizzie!!

EMMA *(whispers)* I wasn't even here that day.

MISS LIZZIE *(lowering the hatchet)* I can swear to that.

EMMA Do you want to drive me mad?

MISS LIZZIE Oh yes.

EMMA You didn't... Did you?

MISS LIZZIE Poor Emma.

ACTRESS Lizzie. *(She takes the hatchet from MISS LIZZIE)*
Lizzie, you did.

MISS LIZZIE I didn't. *(she smiles)* You did.

(The ACTRESS looks to the hatchet in realization that indeed she did, then, to the audience, a kind of "Ooops, I did" look)

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY