

WRITING SAMPLES

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ONE – MOTHER

Behind the scrim, MOTHER walks laboriously onstage, breathing intentionally, heavily. She grasps her swollen, pregnant stomach; clearly, labor pains have begun. She calmly, desperately grabs the back of a chair, slightly right of center. She exhales. BASTET saunters on, in front of the scrim, from SL. She looks upon MOTHER for a moment, then turns to the audience.

BASTET

The Venus of Willendorf is one of the oldest figurines ever found, dating back to around 28,000 BCE. She has exaggerated breasts, huge globes that make your eyes snap to her chest. Her hips are wide; you can see every inch of her maternity. And she is stunning. Her breasts and vagina don't exist for mere sexual pleasure; they aren't for us to dissect with judgment and a hard-on. She's a mother. Her breasts are for feeding; her hips are wide to birth her baby and love them with the intensity of a thousand civilizations. She's not an erotic fantasy. She's a talisman.

MOTHER lets out a scream in the background, faltering as she attempts to come around to the front of the chair. RHIANNON enters from SR.

RHIANNON

(to the audience)

The idea of a Venus didn't even exist at the time. Oh, sure, Aphrodite lived—

BASTET

We met her then—

RHIANNON

And she's wondrously attractive, to be sure. But the concept of sexual organs as pornography didn't exist when you humans were born. Fertility was worshipped; the want of a child, the need for a legacy, was of utmost importance, and Woman was magick. Humans need a masculine spark to create life, of course, but Woman... Woman is the artist. She is a goddess in her own right. Centuries ago, that was unquestioned.

MOTHER gasps, clawing at the chair as she tries to breathe. She's clutching the chair, her stomach, her hair, her pelvis, whatever she can reach to distract herself from the pain. The audience watches her labor for a minute: it's both horrifying and mesmerizing.

Suddenly, BASTET and RHIANNON put their hands up in tandem, a spell cast close to the scrim. MOTHER inhales sharply, leaning back, both arms around her stomach. She exhales comfort, and lights suddenly cut behind the scrim to focus fully on BASTET and RHIANNON. They lower their hands.

RHIANNON

My son's name was Pryderi. Pwyll and I loved him more than anything. Shortly after his birth, he disappeared into the night, nowhere to be found. Not in the stable with my beloved horses. Not playing in the fields. Not babbling with my parents in the realm of the fey. He was just gone.

BASTET

When the nurses couldn't find him, they smeared her with the blood of a puppy and told the court she had eaten him.

Beat.

RHIANNON

I was sentenced to carry visitors on my back from the gates of Dyfed to the castle, forced to relive the loss of my baby and my life. But every person I carried, I asked about Pryderi. I would find him. It didn't matter how long it took, or who needed to perish. I'd done more before.

BASTET

Killing rapists, entrapping a malevolent king in an enchanted sack, outriding the fastest of humankind...even my battalions had to admit we were impressed.

RHIANNON

Coming from a King-Killer-Woman-Protector? I'm flattered.

(small conspiratorial beat)

We eventually found Pryderi, in the castle of another, a poor innocent caught in the middle. We brought him home. I turned his kidnapper into a bird. And I mentored my son and his father in the ruling of a most successful kingdom. That is the power of Mother, of Woman. *(beat)*

That isn't to say all women have to be mothers to be worthy.

BASTET

God, no. It's always her choice.

RHIANNON

Motherhood is a big task, not designed for every womb-bearer—

BASTET

I mean, god, I *never* wanted my own kids, and I was the—

RHIANNON

Wait.

(metaphorical record scratch)

We haven't introduced ourselves.

BASTET

Right. We have to do that now.

*Beat as they look out at the audience.
RHIANNON steps forward.*

RHIANNON

My name is Rhiannon, of Wales. Goddess of nature, sexuality, fertility, the moon, and horses.

BASTET

I'm Bastet. I hail from Egypt. Goddess of the home, domesticity, women's secrets, cats, fertility, and childbirth.

RHIANNON and BASTET

Loved and feared in equal measure.

BASTET

Fear makes one forgetful. Even the Gods.

One more beat as they look out at the audience, considering.

RHIANNON and BASTET

This is a re-membering.

Lights out. When they come back up behind the scrim, the two goddesses are gone. MOTHER holds a baby GIRL, cradling her to her chest, then holding her out to gaze upon her.

MOTHER

Hey there, sweet girl. Welcome to the world.

Lights.

TWO – PET

The scrim rises to reveal a meadow. Wildflowers are scattered about, trees lining the backdrop and the sides. There are

sounds of birds chirping, the buzzing of bees, the trickle of a quiet stream. It is idyllic.

GIRL skips on, around the age of 7. She laughs, spinning about, losing her sunhat and picking it up again.

GIRL

Mama, come *on*! Come on, come on, come on, this is the perfect place!

MOTHER

(from offstage, laughing)

Okay, okay! I'm coming, sweetheart!

MOTHER enters to a rather impatient GIRL, jumping up and down on her toes DC. A picnic basket is looped around MOTHER's arm, a blanket balanced precariously on top; a tote bag is thrown over her other shoulder.

GIRL

Right here, Mama! Let's go right here!

MOTHER

Right here?

GIRL

Right here!

MOTHER

Are you sure?

GIRL

Mama! Yes, I'm sure!

MOTHER chuckles, then sets her things down and throws out the blanket, careful to fix any creases. GIRL flops down as soon as there's any hint that MOTHER is done. MOTHER sits down, as well, pulling out a picnic lunch, complete with sweet buns and a lemonade that seems to glow in the light.

MOTHER

And what'll it be today, sweet girl?

GIRL

Sketchbook, please!

MOTHER

No, what do you want to *eat*, goose?

GIRL

Oh! Uh...

(mischievously) The

sweet buns!

MOTHER

Uh huh. Before that?

GIRL

(defeated) Ugh.

The ham, please. Thank you.

MOTHER

You're very welcome.

(As MOTHER goes about fixing her daughter lunch, GIRL pulls her sketchbook and colored pencils out from the tote bag. As she flips through to find what she's looking for, the audience can see several of the drawings: they're good. Really good. Far too good for a 7-year-old. The majority of them are dreamscapes, but, here and there, the night sky is drawn, a myriad of constellations. Finally finding a blank canvas, GIRL begins to draw, her tongue peeking out between her teeth, thoughtful. MOTHER glances over for only a moment.)

What's this picture of, honey?

GIRL

I dreamed it last night. There are three sisters—see? There's their heads, and their arms, and that's where their hearts are—they take care of this really pretty garden, and they sing songs all the time, and they get people to come see their flowers just by singing, kinda like Princess Ariel! Except on land, not in gross water.

MOTHER

That's cool. What are their names?

GIRL

(not skipping a beat, pronouncing these perfectly)

Aegle, Erytheia, and Hesperia.

MOTHER

Oh.

(pauses to consider)

Those are...pretty names.

GIRL

Duh, they're pretty. They're the Hesperides!

MOTHER freezes for a moment. She may or may not recognize those names, and she doesn't know why. GIRL continues happily drawing, unaware of the world. She hums a happy little song to herself, something soft and homey. MOTHER shakes herself out of it, plates her daughter's lunch, and hands it to her.

MOTHER

Here you are, sweetheart. One picnic lunch for my best goose!

GIRL Thanks,

Mama!

Beat as GIRL grabs the sandwich and proceeds to munch while still somehow, ridiculously, balancing her sketchbook and continuing the drawing.

MOTHER

Do you want to talk today, or can Mama study while you draw?

GIRL

(mouth full, as kids are wont to do)

'udy is o'ay. I' dra'.

MOTHER

Hey, you. Swallow first.

GIRL giggles as she does so, then gives MOTHER a toothy grin to prove she has. MOTHER good-naturedly rolls her eyes, then pulls out a beautifully bound, heavily loved copy of the King James Bible. She flips it open to a page marked by a golden ribbon, and begins her studying, eating her own lunch as she does so. For a moment or two, all we hear is munching, colored pencil scratching, and the pleasant sounds of nature.

PASTOR enters from SL. He is a genial man, somewhere between 25 and 30, with an avuncular quality to him. He is kind-faced, someone you feel you can trust. He sees MOTHER and GIRL and smiles.

PASTOR

Well, look who it is! My favorite girls!

BOTH look up and return the smile.

GIRL

Hi, Pastor!

MOTHER

Hey, Pastor!

PASTOR

Hello, hello, loves. What are you up to today?

MOTHER

Oh, it's such a beautiful day, we couldn't let it pass by without a picnic. And this one just loves to draw with the flowers.

PASTOR

Well, when we've blessed with inspiration, we gotta take advantage. Grab hold of it before fall hits and everything dies, right?

MOTHER

Right. And where are you headed, Pastor?

PASTOR

Back home now. I was calling on Marina and her husband, praying with them before they head to clinic. She's already endured way too many needle pokes, the poor woman.

MOTHER

I feel so bad for them. They've been trying for so long now.

PASTOR

I know. They'd be such good parents, too. If only we could all have your good fortune at such a young age.

(PASTOR smiles; MOTHER's is a little more hesitant, but still genuine)

Speaking of young ones: what's the drawing of the day, Miss Sunshine?

PASTOR crouches beside GIRL, peeking over her shoulder. GIRL thrusts it in the air with pride.

GIRL

(triumphant) Hesperides!

She pulls the drawing back to her, smiling at PASTOR. Beat.

PASTOR

I'm sorry, I didn't...I didn't quite catch...

MOTHER

They're three sisters who tend to a garden.

PASTOR

Oh! The Hesperides, that's right! From Hesiod, yeah? Is your Mom reading you Greek mythology already?

MOTHER and GIRL both snap to the PASTOR. GIRL looks mystified; MOTHER is concerned.

GIRL I don't know any Heshesheed...Hesioddity...whatever that thing is. Aegle, Erytheia, and Hesperia came to me in a dream. They sang a really pretty song. And they talked to me.

Beat.

PASTOR

Well, that's certainly—

MOTHER

(overlapping)

Wonderful, honey. You're so creative! So wonderfully, wonderfully creative!

PASTOR

(overcompensating)

Yes. Yes, you are. Of course you are. And very, very talented, too. You'll be the next Leonardo, let me tell you that!

GIRL

I'm gonna be the next *me*, not some stupid turtle!

ALL laugh.

PASTOR

Of course. Our Miss Sunshine is far better than da Vinci or some stupid turtle ever was. Screw the ninjas when we've got Hesperides, right?

(snaps his fingers, turning to MOTHER:) Oh, while I'm here, there was something I wanted to talk to you about.

MOTHER

Sure, what's up?

GIRL

(with a big sigh, already tiring of adult conversation)

I'm gonna go look for moonflowers, Mama. We found some over there last time, remember?

MOTHER

Yes, honey, of course. Go ahead, but

(as GIRL scampers OSL)

stay safe! Be aware! Stay where I can see you!

GIRL

(offstage) I

will!

MOTHER shakes her head, then turns back to PASTOR, who has since seated himself.

PASTOR

My God, wasn't she two just yesterday? Sprouting more every minute, I swear. Growing like the smartest of weeds.

MOTHER

And giving her mother the fullest of heart attacks.

(BOTH chuckle)

So what's up, Pastor?

PASTOR

Right. So.

(small beat)

The elders and I have been talking. We've been...lacking, shall we say, in a female voice for quite some time. Us and the whole church world, really. We need someone besides me and a few stuffy old dudes speaking the word of God. We need someone who understands Him from a female perspective, someone who can communicate with the women of our church in ways that I just can't. We've been trying to brainstorm a women's bible study, but none of us feel comfortable running it.

MOTHER

You shouldn't.

(catches her rudeness) Sorry.

I didn't mean to—

PASTOR

No, no, no, you're right. We shouldn't. We'll never get it. You and your little girl are two of the best examples of piety we have; my wife and I love the two of you; you're the congregation's favorites. We need someone like you to make this work.

MOTHER

Wait. Are you saying that...

PASTOR

We'd like you to run the group. If you wouldn't mind, that is.

MOTHER

I...

(breathy laugh) Yeah. Pastor, I'd be honored. That you would think of my daughter and I is...wow. I'm at a loss. Which I wouldn't be in the group, I swear. I would prepare and bring in queries and listen and—

PASTOR

I know. That's why I chose you.

MOTHER

The wisdom of God and my own experiences within His care is something I never thought I'd be able to share this way, and—

PASTOR

You're a leader in the church, just because of who you are. By raising your little one into such a wonderful young woman, you *are* a leader. As good as me.

MOTHER

I can share so much more than parenting tips, though. I—goodness, I have thoughts on Genesis that we haven't ever addressed in our church. And I have this theory on the Centurion, after looking at some old translations, that I think would really be interesting to bring up, and—

PASTOR

That's great. Really, it is, just...make sure you're steering people the right way, okay? Theorizing is good and all, but we want to give them...certainty, and comfort, and consistency. Yeah?

MOTHER

Of course. Yes. But isn't it also important to look at the text from another perspective, and push ourselves to—?

PASTOR

Let's leave that to the theologians. Not that I doubt how smart you are, but when it's not our place, we shouldn't grab it.

MOTHER

I—

PASTOR

I chose you because of your dependability, your unwavering trust in His word. Your knowledge, your kindness, your maternal what-do-you-call-it...that's all you are, that's all you. I can't wait to watch you bring that to the women of our church.

MOTHER

(deflated) Yes.

*PASTOR laughs, pats her on the back.
MOTHER joins in, forced. GIRL scampers
back on, triumphantly holding a bouquet of
silvery flowers aloft in her hand.*

GIRL Mama,

look! They bloomed!

MOTHER

(still recovering)

Beautiful, honey! We'll find somewhere nice to put them.

PASTOR

(standing, moving to GIRL)

Almost as beautiful as you, Miss Sunshine. Can I have a hug before I go?

GIRL

Sure!

PASTOR kneels and gives her a bear hug. Once he pulls away, he takes her face in his hands.

PASTOR

You're a fantastic little girl, Miss Sunshine. You'll change the world some day. Y'know that? With your talent, and your smarts, and the love of your Father—

GIRL

I don't have a dad.

PASTOR

Of course you do. He's right up there, watching over you.

(GIRL looks up at the sky, squinty-eyed, considering.) He

loves you even more than me and your mom.

GIRL But

Mama loves me more than anything.

PASTOR

Not more than Him. And He'll lead you to greatness, I'm sure.

(PASTOR squeezes the shoulders of a rather confused GIRL, then turns to MOTHER. GIRL shakes off the weirdness, spies a wildflower DL she likes the look of, and goes to pick it.)

We'll figure out the logistics and stuff on Sunday. Sound good?

MOTHER

Perfect. Thank you again, Pastor. I won't let you down.

PASTOR

I know you won't.

Giving MOTHER one last smile, PASTOR leaves, SR. MOTHER is a little defeated. As she composes herself, GIRL produces a stunningly sunny flower. She twirls it in her hand, and, suddenly, it wilts, shrivels, and dies. GIRL's breath catches. She examines it closer.

GIRL Mama.

Mama. *Mama.*

MOTHER

(not turning) What

is it, sweetheart?

GIRL

My flower...look.

Turning, MOTHER sees the dead thing and goes to her daughter, gently pulling the flower out of her hand.

MOTHER

Oh, shoot. That's sad. I'm sorry, honey. But sometimes we have to let the beautiful things go. They go to a Paradise on the other side, where dogs run around them, and cats slink between them, and people have never-ending picnics and drawing time and sunshine. That sounds fun, right?

GIRL

Yeah, but—

MOTHER

That's where this flower went. It's having a great time in that Paradise, with no wilting and no hurt. I promise.

GIRL

No, but the flower, it—

MOTHER

I know, goose. I know.

(strokes GIRL's hair, then stands)

Let's finish our lunch, okay? Then we'll take it back to the car, and maybe we can have a nice little walk.

MOTHER goes back to the picnic blanket, checks to see that GIRL hasn't run off, and halfheartedly resumes her Bible study. GIRL watches in a daze, her gaze almost hypnotic. She looks back to the flowers, then her MOTHER. She murmurs to herself:

GIRL

But it was beautiful just like that. Beautiful.

Lights.

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS OF THE *WILLIAM* -
NIGHT

ANNE sits behind the Captain's desk, a map sprawled out in front of her. She's half-heartedly tracing possible routes, mind clearly elsewhere. One hand remains on her belly. Every few moments, she grimaces.

The door slams open, CALICO JACK storming in. ANNE locks eyes with him for a moment, the silence deafening. CALICO JACK breaks it, tapping his foot and shaking his head.

CALICO JACK

I didn't think you were this low,
Anne.

ANNE

Jack, you're bein' ridi--

CALICO JACK I thought
you were just some clever,
adventurous little girl that
needed out of a shithole
marriage. I didn't think you
were so malicious as to steal my
own crew.

ANNE

I did nothin' except--

CALICO JACK

Perhaps your man was right. You are
a scoundrel, and a whore, and a--

ANNE

(sharply)
Hold your tongue.

CALICO JACK's mouth shuts. He crosses his arms, raises a brow.

CALICO JACK

Was that an order, Captain?

ANNE

Glad to hear you know your place.
(a heavy beat)

Jack, I never meant to steal your crew. I only wanted to get away. I...for once, I wanted more power than just spreading my legs and letting a man take me. But my desire to be someone more than just the informant's wife didn't go so far as to deny you your manhood.

(MORE)

ANNE (CONT'D)

It simply happened. And you will clearly be my right hand man, so shut up and smile. Got it?

CALICO JACK hesitates. After a moment, he drops the defenses.

CALICO JACK

Yes.

ANNE

(meeting CALICO JACK's eyes)

And you will never call me whore again. That word will never leave your lips if you want to survive.

CALICO JACK

I think I love you.

ANNE rolls her eyes, and returns to her map musings. CALICO JACK comes to her side, peers over her shoulder.

CALICO JACK (CONT'D)

What are you planning?

ANNE

A variety of things. I know where the merchant ships are, that's no issue. There's one ten miles away from us that we can easily take at sunrise. They'll likely have medical supplies and food.

CALICO JACK

You are prepared.

ANNE

And I'm finding a...discreet island.

CALICO JACK raises his eyebrows.

CALICO JACK

What, for your numerous liaisons?

ANNE

For childbirth.

CALICO JACK starts, backs up a step or two.

CALICO JACK

...Pardon?

ANNE

I'm with child, Jack. I've known for a while now, have been tryin' to figure out how to get rid of it for nearly as long. My estimation is that the child will be born within four months.

CALICO JACK

You weren't going to tell me this?

ANNE

I'm telling you now. I just need to find an island to birth the child on, then I'll leave it with some native woman and we'll continue on our way. It needs to be somewhere invisible to the British. You know damn well my devil of a husband has already reported us, and we don't know how much time--

CALICO JACK

You're going to be a mother, Anne.

ANNE looks up, sharp. Her eyes are daggers in CALICO JACK's head.

ANNE

Not if I can help it.

CALICO JACK

You'll be one whether you like it or not. Look, we can make plans to--
-

ANNE

I never thought you to be a sentimentalist.

CALICO JACK

I had a father and mother who loved me. We can ensure that you see the child at least--

ANNE

I never wanted to be a mother. Never. Look at you, Jack. You had a loving one, and look at what happened to you. Can you imagine what would happen if I tried to raise a child I never wanted?

A moment of silence passes between the two. The weight is almost suffocative.

CALICO JACK

Whatever you say, Captain.

ANNE

Now leave me. You're dismissed.

After a moment, CALICO JACK leans over to kiss ANNE's forehead, then leaves. After the door closes, ANNE drops her head into her hands, breathing intentionally. A knock is heard.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Yes?

MARY (O.C.)

Captain? May I come in?

ANNE raises her head, recognizing the voice. She wants to say no, but intrigue is killing her.

ANNE

Enter.

MARY enters. Her cheeks are flushed, her eyes bright. She no longer wears a hat, but her hair is tied back in the fashion of a young boy. She strides towards ANNE.

MARY I just wanted to say congratulations, Cap'n. A unanimous vote doesn't happen all that often. I think I've only seen one or two in my time at sea.

ANNE

And how long have you been at sea,
Mark?

MARY

(chuckling)

A long time. Since I was sixteen.
Started as a sailor, joined the
pirate life.

ANNE

No family?

MARY

None. I was married once, but...

ANNE

(sensing the story)

Died.

MARY

Yes.

ANNE

You loved her, I take it.

MARY

I loved him.

ANNE straightens.

ANNE

You're like me.

MARY

In more ways than you think.

MARY gently outstretches her hand, an offering. ANNE, after a hesitation, places hers on MARY's. MARY slips the hand under her shirt, allowing ANNE to feel MARY's naked breast.

ANNE

(smiling)

Is this a seduction, Miss--?

MARY

Mary Read. It's only a seduction
if it's working, Queen Anne.

ANNE laughs, and leans forward to kiss MARY. MARY's hand drifts between ANNE's legs.

It is morning. ELISABETH lays on the bed, robe falling off, contemplating her life choices. Her nerves are eating her alive. We hear a shower offstage. After a moment or two of watching ELISABETH, we hear the shower turn off, a towel leave the rack. CHRISTA appears SR, in the doorway of the bathroom, wrapped in a towel and brushing out her hair.

CHRISTA.

Well, that was a night, huh?

ELISABETH.
(*not rising*) Yeah.

CHRISTA.

I mean, phew! Like...phew! That was a, uh...

ELISABETH.

I don't date girls.

CHRISTA.

Yeah, yeah, you told me. I get it, I so get it. Just wanting to, y'know, revel in the—

ELISABETH.

No, like. I mean. Agh. (*sits up, refusing to face CHRISTA*) I don't date girls. I mean, I didn't. I mean, I don't. I mean, I—I never have before, and it's just, like, super confusing, and—and I...ugh.

Beat. CHRISTA puts down the brush.

CHRISTA.

You did enjoy last night, right?

ELISABETH.

Yeah! That's the problem. I did, I enjoyed last night, I fucking enjoyed it, and now, my brain, it's, like, spinning, and the room is spinning, and, hell, I don't even know how I'm going to get out of here, like—

CHRISTA.

How you're gonna get out of here?

ELISABETH.

Well, I'm a little like a slutty Cinderella now, aren't I? Transformed into some sex goddess, and now I'm back in a frumpy robe and I gotta slip past the non-rat-footman and get home, but my carriage is a frigging pumpkin now, and I'll have to walk, and—

CHRISTA.

Hey. Hey, hey, hey. Slow down. (*sits beside ELISABETH. There is a moment. ELISABETH audibly breathes; CHRISTA rubs her back, hesitant*) What if...what if you just don't leave?

ELISABETH.

That doesn't make any sense.

CHRISTA.

(*gaining excitement, standing when it feels appropriate*)

No, I mean it! (*As if trying out her name:*) Elisabeth—Lis—Elisabeth, why don't you stay? We'll become the next great lesbian lovers. We'll be recluses, like, like, like Virginia Woolf and Emily Dickinson, or like those lady pirates that fought topless, or that one chick that escaped from a convent with her lesbian lover!

ELISABETH.

Please stop saying lesbian.

CHRISTA.

(*undeterred, unstoppable, almost like she didn't hear*)

Except we won't, like, light shit on fire and commit homicide and stuff. We'll stay up here, feeding each other strawberries by candlelight, tracing each other's bodies like sculptors, having dessert once the moon rises, if you know what I mean. (*bites her lip; ELISABETH looks away, flushing*) Ooh! Ooh! And we'll have, uh, Netflix set up on the wall, programmed with only *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* and *The L Word* and a bootleg of *Fun Home!* We'll set up a portrait studio against one wall, with oil painting and peaches and a cherry tree planted outside. We'll live laugh love all the lez-hating Lindsays right outta town! We'll be the best damn lesbian lovers this county has ever--!

ELISABETH.

Christa. Stop. Just stop.

CHRISTA.

Sorry. Too much?

ELISABETH.

(*quietly*)

I'm not a lesbian.

CHRISTA.

I'm sorry, you cut out a bit there.

ELISABETH.

(*emphatic*)

I said, I'm not a lesbian. Not. A lesbian.

CHRISTA.

Well, I mean, I know you said you don't date girls, but, last night, you seemed to really like the whole—
ELISABETH.

That doesn't make me a lesbian! Even the word freaks me out. It's like...like a snake falling off my tongue, like it's—it's slithering and sliding down like a fake orgasm, and I hate it. I hate it, I hate it, I hate it.

CHRISTA.

(wounded)

Oh.

ELISABETH.

No, I don't—I don't hate *you*. *You're* not a snake. I just...I'm not a lesbian. I know I'm not. I've liked dudes up until now. I've slept with dudes up until now. Until you waltzed up to me at Quinn's wedding with your stupid blazer, and your stupid eyes, and your stupid fucking sense of humor, and—and all I could look at was your lips, and all I could hear was your laugh, and all I could feel was the brush of your hand against mine, and—oh my *god*. I don't *know*!

ELISABETH buries her face in her hands.

CHRISTA.

Oh. Um...I'm...I'm glad you like my stupid fucking sense of humor.

ELISABETH.

Not the point, Christa.

CHRISTA.

Still.

ELISABETH.

(heaving a deep breath)

What am I gonna tell my roommate? Or my cat? Or, oh my god, what about my parents?

CHRISTA.

Whoa there, tiger. One step at a time. You just said—

ELISABETH.

You just talked about us being legendary lesbians! Clearly, the one wanting to move fast is *you*! And, if anything, I'd be the Virginia to your Emily, and, *god*, I hate that!

CHRISTA.

Hey, now, Ginny's quite respectable.

ELISABETH.

Stop, okay? Just...just stop. Be serious for two seconds.

A beat. CHRISTA settles down next to ELISABETH again.

CHRISTA.

Look. It's going to be okay. We don't have to decide anything right now.. I mean, we're in some hayloft AirBnB, having had a far better wedding night than our groom and bride did, and there are cows mooing outside, and farmers yelling at their roosters, and we were deep, and I mean *deep* last night, and the whole thing doesn't make sense, and, frankly, it's kinda funny. (*CHRISTA laughs; ELISABETH doesn't. As if a comedian explaining a bad set:*) Like, um...like we're two women who made love in a rural town where we wouldn't be...doesn't matter. Bad joke. Stick it to the man. Um. Okay. (*CHRISTA's turn to heave a breath*) So. You're not a lesbian. You're still interested in guys. You've suddenly found that a vagina is just as good, and you're not sure where you want this to go. That's okay. I...we don't have to put a label on it. There's no reason for that. We can...we can take it slow. Like...like, um...can I kiss your cheek? (*After a brief moment, ELISABETH nods. CHRISTA kisses her cheek, slowly and deliberately*) Can I...run my hand through your hair? (*Same thing.*) Okay. Can I hug you? Or hold your hand?

ELISABETH.

(softly) You

can hug me.

CHRISTA wraps her arms around ELISABETH. After a moment, ELISABETH turns her head into CHRISTA's chest. They sit there a few breaths, just being.

ELISABETH raises her head, and gently presses her lips to CHRISTA's. It is short, but sweet. ELISABETH pulls away.

ELISABETH.

You taste minty.

CHRISTA.

Crest. Extra-whitening.

ELISABETH.

Ah, so that's how you blinded me.

CHRISTA.

Ka-chow. Like Lightning McQueen, baby.

Both women giggle. A beat. ELISABETH pulls away, folding her legs under her.

ELISABETH.

No labels is good. I like that.

CHRISTA.

You don't need to have any. I'm sorry if I pushed.

ELISABETH.

No, no, it's...it's okay. It's okay. I'm sorry I freaked out. (*beat. Nervously:*) Actually, to make it up to me, would you like to go to dinner sometime? I know this great Italian place in Beacon Hill, a real hole-in-the-wall. They have amazing focaccia and bottomless wine. I've...I've, uh, never taken anyone there before.

CHRISTA.

Sounds like my kinda place.

ELISABETH.

My treat.

CHRISTA.

I mean, you already treated me last night—

ELISABETH.

(*this time, she's smiling*) Stop.

CHRISTA.

--so I'll get it this time around.

ELISABETH.

Okay. I'll take that.

CHRISTA.

Let's see where this goes, Ginny.

ELISABETH.

One step at a time, Emily.

As if by unspoken agreement, CHRISTA and ELISABETH lean in, lips connecting. It is slow, passionate. As things begin to get more heavy, hands going beneath robe, beneath towel, there is a sudden screech of a chicken outside, sounding like its death and/or a mating call. The women jump apart with gasps/shrieks/reactions of WTF. When they realize what it was, they laugh.

CHRISTA.

I guess it's time to go find your pumpkin-carriage, Cinderella.

Lights.

INT. LIZZIE'S ROOM - NEARING NIGHT

LIZZIE

Yeah. That's it. Started when I was about fifteen, feeling like something was stalking me in the shadows, and, now, it's like the shadow is in me. Fun stuff.

HENRY

Wow. That sucks, Lizzie. I'm sorry.

LIZZIE

You understand more than most people around here.

HENRY

That's why I can say it sucks.

A pause.

HENRY (CONT'D) I'm

trying to figure out how to control mine. Or at least be able to know when it's going to happen, when Edward--it--when *it* is coming into me. That way I can, y'know, not hurt people.

LIZZIE

You haven't hurt anyone, Henry.

HENRY

No. I have.

LIZZIE

What?

HENRY

I have. I mean, you, and Gabe, and...

(he looks at LIZZIE,
debating)

And my parents. It hurt my parents. It *killed* my parents. I, uh...They died in a car accident, and we think--we *know*--it caused it. Edward killed them.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

I don't remember much, just feeling like the ground was swallowing me whole. I remember Gabe, though...he was the one that found me the first time I was fully the other guy. I went after him. Clawed a nice scar into the side of his neck. Gave him a black eye. I even...I threatened him with a knife, I think. It's all kind of blurry. I just remember...remember waking up to Gabe standing above me, bleeding and scared and holding a baseball bat. The terror in his eyes...I'll never forget it. Sometimes, I...y'know, sometimes I kind of wish he had killed me. Right then and there. All of this would have been over.

LIZZIE

I'm glad he didn't.

HENRY

Yeah, well...thanks, I guess.

LIZZIE

I'm glad you're here, with me. Really. I like you, Henry. I wouldn't be able to like you if your guardian had beat your brains out.

HENRY

(chuckling in spite of himself)

I like you, too, Lizzie. I really do.

Something tangible passes between the two. They both feel it. HENRY's gaze goes to LIZZIE's lips once more. She looks away, and down. Sees his arm for the first time.

LIZZIE

Oh my god, they did *that* to you?

HENRY
What, the burns?

LIZZIE
Uh, yeah, the burns. God, they normally save that until you've been in here at least three months.

(MORE)

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
(looking at his arm,
sighing)
Stay here. Let me grab something for you.

LIZZIE hops off the bed, and opens up one of the dingy dresser drawers. Pulls out a tube: salve, to help the burn. She puts some on her hands and turns back to HENRY.

LIZZIE (CONT'D) I
managed to sneak some of this away from the nurses. It helps. I promise.

She begins applying the salve to HENRY's suffering arms. He sucks in a breath when she first touches him, a mixture of pain and attraction. As she slowly, gently covers the rest of the burns, he relaxes. Both can feel the electricity of the touch.

HENRY
Thank you.

LIZZIE
My pleasure.

HENRY
(grinning)
Your pleasure?

LIZZIE
I mean no problem, smartass.

Still, she smiles. HENRY watches as she puts the tube back in its hiding spot. He bites his lip, butterflies dancing in his stomach.

CUT TO:

INT. GENEVA HALLWAY - NIGHT

JANET lopes along down the hall, giving smiling nods to a few of the nicer nurses, averting her eyes from those she remembers as cruel. Every once in a while, her hand goes to her ribcage: they like to hit her there, and the phantom pangs plague her mind.

As she turns a corner, making her way to her own room, a scream echoes down the hall. Her head snaps to the sound. Nurses race down the hallway, grabbing horrific tools to "help" with the PATIENT. JANET throws herself against a wall, attempting to make herself small.

PATIENT'S VOICE (O.C.)

No! Don't take her away from me; I
love that bear! Please, please
don't take her!

JANET's eyes widen. She looks down at the ground, at the light, at the numbers on the door across from her, anything to ground herself. The PATIENT keeps screaming. JANET squeezes her eyes shut.

JANET

(to herself)

No...no, please no...

Too late. Suddenly we are in a hospital room.

FLASH TO:

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM, MATERNITY WARD - ONE YEAR AGO

JANET lays on a hospital bed, having given birth not long ago, eyes darting between figures unseen. She is clearly distressed.

JANET

Where is she? Where's my baby?

(no reply)

Answer me! Where's my baby girl?

We hear the shifting of doctors' feet.

DOCTOR (O.C.) Miss
Humphrey, I'm afraid your
daughter is gone.

JANET
What?

DOCTOR (O.C.) Your
daughter was stillborn, Miss
Humphrey. I'm sorry.

JANET's eyes well with tears, her face contorting in anger.

JANET
(building to a yell) No. No,
that's not true. No, my baby is
fine, she's fine. You took her!
Why did you take her? You can't
take her! That's my baby, my
baby, my baby girl, you idiots!
(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D) Give
her back! Give me my baby!

Give me-**FLASH TO:**

INT. GENEVA HALLWAY - NIGHT

JANET is breathing heavily, trying to control herself,
staring down the hands of a clockface hanging above her
eyeline.

JANET
(to herself)
Stop it. Stop.

It doesn't work.

FLASH TO:

INT. JANET'S HOME - ONE YEAR AGO

It is the middle of the night. JANET lays wide awake in her
bed, eyes gazing at the ceiling. Tears trail down an
otherwise lifeless face. She sniffs. Rolls over. Sits up.
She's considering something. Her gaze falls upon an item at
the end of her room: a children's book, cover mocking her
with its vibrant colors. Her hands clench to fists. She
attempts to smile; it doesn't work.

JANET
(to the book)
I loved you, baby. I still love
you.

With deliberate movement, JANET rises. Takes, from her nightstand, a small, sharp knife. She exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S PARENTS' ROOM - ONE YEAR AGO

JANET goes to her parents' side, looking down at them. Her breathing has stilled. Though her face is still wet, her lifelessness is eerie.

JANET
(with whispered rage) Why did
you get to be parents? Why didn't
I get to be a mom? (suddenly,
yelling)
Why didn't I get to be a mom?!

Deaf to their shrieks, JANET drives the knife into her parents, again and again and again, until they, too, are lifeless. When it's over, she sinks to the ground, and bursts into sobs.

FLASH TO:

INT. GENEVA HALLWAY - NIGHT

JANET leans against the wall, utterly exhausted. Her face is wet. After a moment, she haphazardly brushes a hand across her face, trying to clear the tears. She spares one last glance in the direction of the suffering PATIENT, and takes off down the hall, trying to escape.

CUT TO:

INT. LIZZIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

LIZZIE and HENRY are both back on the bed, quiet but relaxed. They're enjoying each other's company.

LIZZIE
I understand more than you think,
you know.

HENRY

I never said you didn't.

LIZZIE

I'm not talking about the double personality thing. I'm talking about the...about the death thing. About the wanting to die thing.

HENRY

Oh.

LIZZIE

Yeah. I, um...here.

LIZZIE presents her arms, razor scars and all, to HENRY. Gingerly, as if asking permission, he touches them. LIZZIE swallows.

LIZZIE (CONT'D) I wanted it to be over, too. That feels like it would be so much easier, right? To have it just be one shot, one slice, and you're done. No more dealing with pain. No more dealing with evil.

(MORE)

LIZZIE (CONT'D)

No more trying to decide if you're evil yourself.

HENRY

(sharply)

You're not.

LIZZIE

Are you?

HENRY

I don't know. Maybe.

LIZZIE

I don't think so. I don't know if that means much coming from another psycho, but. For what it's worth.

Both chuckle. HENRY is still tracing LIZZIE's scars.

HENRY

You're beautiful, Lizzie. I want you to know that. You're beautiful. Scars and psychosis and all.

LIZZIE
(taken aback)
Thanks, Henry.

HENRY
Seriously. I mean it.

LIZZIE
I didn't say you were lying.

HENRY
And these scars...they're almost like a painting, Lizzie, like...like a work of art. You can trace constellations in them...like...like how there's constellations in you.

LIZZIE
I haven't seen them in a while, if they're still there.

HENRY
They are.

Their eyes meet. HENRY slowly, gently places his hand on LIZZIE's cheek. She doesn't fight him. His other hand grips hers, thumb caressing. He leans in, preparing for the kiss.