Elizabeth’s a Woman (24)

ELIZABETH: I’m a little teapot, short and stout; Here is my handle, here is my spout... When I start to whistle, hear me shout; Tip me over and pour me out.......  
FIRST WOMAN: Elizabeth....?  
SECOND WOMAN: What are you, Elizabeth?  
SECOND MAN: Are you a little girl?  
FIRST MAN: She’s just a child. Hear the little girl’s song?  
SECOND WOMAN: No, she’s a beautiful woman.  
FIRST MAN: Oh’ She’s beautiful now, is she?  
FIRST WOMAN: You are lovely, Elizabeth  
SECOND MAN: Are you, Elizabeth? Are you beautiful?  
ELIZABETH: “I’m a little teapot, short and stout”  
SECOND WOMAN: You are a little girl  
FIRST WOMAN: Sing the children’s song.  
ELIZABETH: No, No, I’m a woman.  
SECOND MAN: A woman!  
FIRST MAN: Did you hear that? Elizabeth Willow’s a woman!  
SECOND WOMAN: She’s twenty four years old sir.  
FIRST WOMAN: You’r a woman, and you’re very. . .  
SECOND MAN: You’re very. . .  
SECOND WOMAN: Very. . .  
FIRST MAN: Very. . .  
ELIZABETH: I’m very pretty  
SECOND MAN: Good! Very good!  
ELIZABETH: I’m a woman and I’m a pretty woman.  
FIRST MAN: Beautiful  
SECOND WOMAN: Elizabeth Willow is the loveliest woman in all Jackson, Indiana  
FIRST MAN: And the song?  
ELIZABETH: I can sing what I want in my room
FIRST WOMAN: But you don’t speak.

ELIZABETH: In my room, my chair, my thoughts-

SECOND WOMAN: You’re Silent-

ELIZABETH: All of them are mine “When I start to whistle, hear me shout!”

FIRST MAN: Then you are a little girl!

SECOND WOMAN: No Elizabeth Ann is twenty four, sir.

FIRST WOMAN: A woman, sir

SECOND MAN: A dancing woman.

FIRST WOMAN: Elizabeth Willow is the finest dancer in all of this Jackson.

FIRST MAN: Is that true?

ELIZABETH: “I’m a little teapot, short and stout”

ELIZABETH: “Here is my handle, here is my spout”
SECOND WOMAN: Here are my hips and here is my mouth

ELIZABETH: “When I start to whistle, hear me shout.
Tip me over and pour me out.”
FIRST WOMAN: Dress me up and take me out.

ELIZABETH: “I’m a little teapot, short and stout.

ELIZABETH: “Here is my handle here is my spout”
“When I start to whistle, hear me shout”
“tip me over and pour me out.”
CHORUS: Please come take me, spin me about
Dress me up and take me out.

ELIZABETH: I’m a pretty .... Teapot?

CHORUS: “Beautiful” “Wonderful” etc. . .

ELIZABETH: Inside and out. Here are my hips and here is my mouth.

CHORUS AND ELIZABETH: Please come take me, spin me about. Dress me up and take me out.

ELIZABETH: Take me out! Take me out! Take me out!

FIRST MAN: Then you’d like to go out?!

ELIZABETH: Yes!

FIRST MAN: I’ll take you out dancing!

ELIZABETH: No! No, thank you. . .

SECOND MAN: Ah, but you love to dance!

ELIZABETH: I just don’t feel like it right now.

SECOND MAN: But everyone dances! Name one person in all of Jackson who doesn’t dance! Baptists excluded.

FIRST WOMAN: Elizabeth Ann Willow
SECOND MAN: All right. Name one person on Shepherd Street who doesn’t dance!

SECOND WOMAN: Elizabeth Willow! Not a step.

SECOND MAN: Okay, okay, for five points – name one person in this room who doesn’t dance!

FIRST MAN: It’s right on the tip of my tongue,

ELIZABETH: Would you stop it?

FIRST MAN: Elizabeth Willow! 21 ½ Shepherd Street! – Can’t dance at all!

ELIZABETH: Why the men come to take me out constantly, sir

FIRST WOMAN: Can Elizabeth go here? Can she go there?

SECOND WOMAN: The phone never stops ringing.

FIRST WOMAN: Rings off the wall!

SECOND MAN: The next song then

ELIZABETH: I’ll need time to prepare, sir.

SECOND MAN: Then the song after?

ELIZABETH: I’ll need time, I said.

SECOND WOMAN: It’s her chair, you see.

ELIZABETH: A girl needs time to get herself ready for such things.

FIRST WOMAN: Elizabeth can’t dance

ELIZABETH: In Jackson anyway . . . What with so many me calling me anyway . . .a girl needs to make sure she picks the right dress for the right man, sir.

FIRST MAN: How many songs then?

FIRST WOMAN: Can’t you see her condition?

ELIZABETH: It’s that I have things to do, and –

SECOND WOMAN: She can’t.

ELIZABETH: - just at the moment, I think-

FIRST WOMAN: Elizabeth Willow is crippled

ELIZABETH: Please understand! It’s just that I can’t-

FIRST MAN: (overlapping can’t) Can’t you do anything, Elizabeth?!

Anybody Home? (8)

NANCY: Mrs. Willow?? Mrs. Willow?? Anybody home?!

ELIZABETH: There’s someone here...
I’m a good mother (1)

BETH: She was born in October. In May she took sick with the flu. I stayed off the phone and tried not to worry so much, because I knew that she was my first, and all mothers worry too much with their first, but my child’s temperature – my baby’s temperature went up to a hundred and six. Well I rushed her into the doctors of course. We were all so afraid of the hospital then. Everyone said the surest insurance of giving a child polio was to take her into a hospital ward where everyone else had the disease. So I held her and nursed her and I took her home. And after the fever was gone . . . after the fever receded she couldn’t move, didn’t move, never will move . . . I don’t know what else I could do. What could you do? I’m a good mother. I’m a good mother. I know that.

Nancy’s Visit (8)

NANCY: Mrs. Willow?! Are you guys to home in there?

ELIZABETH: She’ll leave real fast if you don’t hurry, Mama.

BETH: Elizabeth, I’ll answer the door. Now sit up straight, child.

ELIZABETH: Yes’m.

NANCY: You all sleeping or something?!?

ELIZABETH: We’re coming!!

BETH: Don’t yell, Elizabeth. Now lower your voice, dear, and speak like a lady. Such a tizzy over a simple little child at the door.

NANCY: Mrs. Willow!!!???

BETH: Yes?

NANCY: Hi. You’re home.

BETH: Yes, we’re home. How are you today, Nancy?

ELIZABETH: (Calls) Who is it, Mama?

NANCY: I don’t wanta bug you nor nothing. You want me to come back tomorrow? You busy?

ELIZABETH: (Calls) Zat you, Zelda?

NANCY: It’s me! Nancy Mathews!

ELIZABETH: Hey, Nancy!

NANCY: Hey, ‘lizabeth Ann! Whatcha doing up there?

ELIZABETH: Nothing! You wanta come in?

NANCY: My mother send me over to ask if it was okay if I maybe played with “Lizabeth Ann.

BETH: Why that’s very nice of you, Nancy.

NANCY: She said I should come over right now this minute and not tomorrow like I said I oughta. Mrs. Willow, you want me to put my shoes on fore I come in your house or gonna bring her out here?

BETH: Why don’t you put your shoes on?
People of the heart (8)

BEN: I’d like to tell you a story, Elizabeth Ann.

NANCY: My mother says I shouldn’t wear out my welcome.

BEN: I was little once too, you know, and I can remember my own father setting me down to talk. I don’t think your grandfather loved anything more than a good story.

ELIZABETH (Calls) Nancy, are you coming in?

NANCY: (Calls back) Soon’s I get my shoes on!

BEN: He was a huge man, you grampaw, with arms on him like the limbs of an oak tree. And the hands on that man. . .

BETH: The next time you knock, Nancy Mathews.

NANCY: Yes ma’am.

BEN: Your grandfather said to me, “Ben” he said-

NANCY: Can I look at her now?

BETH: Can you look at her? At Elizabeth?

BEN: He says, “People come in all shapes and all sizes, Ben Willow. Some’s fat and some ain’t – some’s skin’n’bones and some ain’t”

BETH: She looks the same as you do, child.

NANCY: No, she don’t! She don’t look like me a bit.

BEN: And then there’s the people God puts on this earth to show us how it’s what’s in the heart here that counts, you understand?

BETH: She has poliomyelitis.

NANCY: Polio?

BETH: Very good.

ELIZABETH (Impatient) Mama??

BEN: Now I know you’re getting old enough to see how’s you ain’t quite the same as the rest of this Jackson. But the people in Jackson couldn’t care two cents how you look, little girl – they are a people of the heart.

Is that what your mother told you? (8)

NANCY: My mother sent me over on account of she says Elizabeth’s lonely prob’ly . . . since her legs are falling off.

ELIZABETH: (Calls) Hey, Nancy Mathews? What’re you doing?”

BETH: Is that what your mother told you?

NANCY: Hey, ‘lizabeth Ann!
ELIZABETH: Nancy, go on over under the window where I can hear you guys better! Yell up from under the window!

BETH: You tell your mother I won’t have her sending the neighborhood over as if this house were some sort of free show. You tell her I will not have my daughter made fun of. Do you understand me, Nancy Mathews?

NANCY: I gotta go ‘lizabeth Ann!

ELIZABETH: Hey, Nancy?! Talk to me from under the window! Don’t go! Mama, don’t let her leave . . . !

BETH: Now there’s no point to fretting about that silly little girl.

ELIZABETH: But Mama-

BETH: Now, hush. It’s all right . . . why don’t we two just find something to do, huh? Come on, I’ll read you a story.

**Ghost Story 1 (18)**

MADDIE: Well go on, ya lunkhead – finish your story

TIMMY: Yeah, I’m not even scared yet.

CLARANELLE: Shhhhh!

MADDIE: C’mon, c’mon!

JEREMY: And then the hand is all gory and bloody and chasing this guy around in his house see? So’s he can’t get away from it nowhere.

CLARANELLE: It chased him clear up the attic?

MADDIE: What do you thin, stupid?

JEREMY: You’re scared is what you are.

CLARANELLE: I don’t get home before dark, my mother’ll beat me blue . . .

TIMMY: Shhhhh!

JEREMY: And then he hears is coming . . . tap, tap, tap, … after him - each of them fingers reaching up for his neck. And when he turns around. **Blaaaaaaaahhhhhhh! (Jeremy throws his own hands around his neck and makes choking sounds.)** It’s got him around the neck!

TIMMY: (Scared) Aw, that’s bull.

JEREMY: Come right up outa this graveyard, the hand did!

MADDIE: You figure the hand’ll kill girls too?

JEREMY: (Big gesture) Anybody!

CLARANELLE: I don’t like being out here in this old bone bed a bit. . .

MADDIE: Scaredy cat, you are.

CLARANELLE: Am not.

MADDIE: Are too.
CLARANELLE: Am not, dumbhead.

MADDIE: Are too, chicken brain. You’re scared of nothing but a buncha old dead people, Claranelle Reese.

TIMMY: Think that’s something you shoulda seen what me and Kenny White did a couple nights ago

CLARANELLE: D’you see the hand, Timmy?

TIMMY: Huh uh. Worse, Lots worse.

JIMMY: I bet.

TIMMY: A hundred times worser! You just ask Kenny White you don’t believe me. We was down here and Kenny looks over by the river and there they was. . .

MADDIE: What was?

TIMMY: Just a’ moving and a’ floating. . .

MADDIE: What?

TIMMY: Legs!

CLARANELLE: Legs?

TIMMMY: Yeah, like these ones, lunkhead! (He grabs Claranelle’s legs and she squeals) Just out there walking and a’walking on that river with no body hooked up on em or nothing

JEREMY: Boy!

CLARANELLE: Criminee!

TIMMY: Kenny White hadda run home, he was so scared. But I stayed and looked at em. Out there walking and walking on that water like they was in a movie or something. You woulda peed your pants, Maddie Louise!

JEREMY: Not me, Timmmy. I woulda looked right with you.

CLARANELLE: Meee tooo!

MADDIE: (Half overlapping.) Meee tooo!

TIMMY: You know where those legs come from, don’t you?

CLARANELLE: Graveyard?

MADDIE: River?

TIMMY: Huh uh. They’re that cripple-girl’s.

JEREMY: (After giving it a half beat’s thought) Naaaahhh!

TIMMY: Just you wait and see if they ain’t out here this very night, Jeremy! That cripple-Willow, she takes em off every night and sends em out walking! She does!

MADDIE: My mother says she’s sick, that girl is.

CLARANELLE: She only can’t walk is all.

TIMMY: She’s got legs made outa metal, ya dummy.
MADDIE: Ooooo . . .

TIMMY: I betcha she’s crazy.

MADDIE: Like a old witch or something . . .

JEREMY: (Suddenly truly scared.) I see em! There they are!

TIMMY: Where?!

JEREMY: Over there! (They’ve all scooted back a bit in a flash, sort of huddling together)

CLARANELLE (Meekly.) I ain’t scared a bit. . . (Maddie’s ventured out a few yards to have a look-see. More disappointed than anything she chases Jeremy on hands and knees.)

MADDIE: Awwww, them ain’t nothing but a bunch of old rotted logs, You think you’re so smart!

TIMMY: (Once again brave.) Some night you’ll hear em coming through the woods and crashing through the trees - like the sound of metal spoons banging and scraping together, only ten times louder’n that even- snickerty-snack! Snickerty-snack! – them legs keep on coming and you can’t hide from em, she’s got em so witched! Them legs get ahold of you and. . .

MADDIE: (Sudden) Listen!

TIMMY: Huh?

JEREMY: I hear em! (Beat and tableau as they look out over the audience as if they were the river:)

CLARANELLE: I’m getting home to my mother and stay there. . . (Exit)

Look at the figures (5)

BETH: Oh my lands, Ben, we haven’t got that kind of money!

BEN: Then we have to borrow.

BETH: And what are we gonna borrow on Ben? The car? – set the Chevy up as collateral? Just how much money do you think the bank is going to loan us when we tell them they can have a seventeen and a half year old Chevrolet if we fall behind?

BEN: You’re not looking at the figures here, Beth. Bob Morgan and I worked out the whole thing out on paper here.

BETH: Ben, we just can’t afford it.

BEN: If you’d look at the figures you’d see where I’m coming from! Now, if I quit loading trucks-

BETH: And go into business with Robert A. Morgan. In the automatic carwashing business? Benjamin, I have lived here all my life and there is nothing is more outlandish than the idea of automatic carwashes in Jackson Indiana!

BEN: They’ve worked over in Evansville, they work in Indy, and there’s no reason why we can’t turn a profit here!

BETH: Fine then! You quit loading trucks- you go ahead and quit a good job for some scheme that Robert Morgan thinks, only thinks is going to put us ahead!

BEN: It’s like talking to thin air to talk to you Beth! Don’t you see what and opportunity we have here?
BETH: Ben, all I see is an unhappy man who dislikes his job, and has a wife and child to support. And you know something Ben? There’s not a thing unusual about it. Most people are bored to tears with their work. They hate what they do. They don’t like their jobs any more than you, Ben. But they go to work everyday because people do not make a living by scheming. And it’s a white trash dream to think anything else.

BEN: I’ve spent the last two nights talking with Bobby Morgan and it’s all down on paper, Beth. There is no way we can lose money!

BETH: Fine- then quit your job, Ben, and you phone Doctor Harris and tell him we don’t know when we can pay off our medical bills, or how much more we can afford to do for our daughter, and –

BEN: Don’t you see, I’m only thinking of Elizabeth –

BETH: You’re not thinking, period! (She starts to walk away. He stops her for a moment with his voice.)

BEN: Listen to me! If you’ll just look at the figures –

BETH: I don’t want to look at anything.

BEN: (As she exits) Beth!

**Jackson’s Finest Dancer (24)**

ELIZABETH: I could dance if I wanted. . .

BEN: (To himself) Beth, don’t ask me to keep working there. . . (exits)

ELIZABETH: I don’t feel like it right now or I’d just get out of this chair and show you. . . why sometimes I go into Indianapolis, with my hair shining and my clothes so pretty. . .and the men. . .the men everywhere around me: talking and telling me their secrets while we dance. . .

FIRST MAN: And there is something so fine about the way you sweep across the floor. . .

SECOND MAN: So light and full of grace. . .

ELIZABETH: Why, I’m the finest dancer this Jackson’s ever known sir! (The women lead the Men away from Elizabeth, as if they’re protecting her.)

SECOND WOMAN: You’ll have to wait your turn like everyone else, sir-

FIRST WOMAN: A girl needs her time to prepare, sir! (The men set on the steps as if dejected, the women start treating Elizabeth as if she were the most beautiful girl in the world in the most wonderful beauty parlor in the world)

SECOND MAN: What I need is a woman.

FIRST MAN: She dances with everyone else, but does she dance with you? – does she notice me?

SECOND WOMAN You’d look so fine in a soft white dress Elizabeth. Something pale and shining.

FIRST WOMAN: The color of the moon when it rises.

ELIZABETH: I like to wear dresses that are sideless and sleeveless and backless and silken.

SECOND MAN (Asking the First Man to dance, quite formal ) May I?

FIRST MAN: My pleasure, I’m sure.
SECOND MAN: (As they dance) You dance so well!

FIRST MAN: You really think so?

SECOND MAN: Divine, Divine!

FIRST MAN: All the men tell me I have nice legs.

FIRST WOMAN: No sleeves, no sides, no back (the women giggle and laugh, totally involved with Elizabeth, but Elizabeth begins to notice the men)

FIRST MAN: Oh, the men come to take me out constantly sir.

SECOND MAN: Then you don’t mind the drive?

FIRST MAN: Oh, I don’t mind the drive to the dance hall at all.

SECOND MAN: No?

FIRST MAN: It’s the walking that throws me off, (He begins to gimp around like a half-crippled dancer) Once I get the walking part down I figure I’ll be able to dance up a storm.

SECOND MAN: But I thought you loved to dance!

FIRST MAN: I do, I do! It’s just that I’ve got a slight touch of the palsy, you see? Tends to make me fall down a lot.

ELIZABETH: (To the women) Tell them to stop!

FIRST WOMAN: To stop what, Elizabeth?

FIRST MAN: But I’ll get the hang of it!

ELIZABETH: Listen to me!

SECOND WOMAN: Listen to you?

FIRST WOMAN: Listen to her?

SECOND WOMAN: But she hasn’t spoken in years –

FIRST MAN: Maybe I can work out a tap routine. (The first man is sitting on the second man’s bended knee, sort of like a dummy. He lifts one of his legs with his hands.)

SECOND MAN (As the leg drops.) Lovely!

ELIZABETH: They’re laughing at me!

FIRST WOMAN: Then get up and stop them –

FIRST MAN (Immediate shift) Get up, girl!

SECOND WOMAN: Get out of the chair –

SECOND MAN: Get up, Elizabeth –

ELIZABETH: I don’t want to!

FIRST WOMAN: Oh, but you dream of it!
SECOND MAN: You wish for it –
SECOND WOMAN: You imagine it –
FIRST MAN: And then you sit there! *(Slightly overlapping every line now, building to here scream)*
FIRST WOMAN: And sit there –
SECOND MAN: And sit there –
SECOND WOMAN: And all you do is sit and wish –
FIRST MAN: And sit and wish –
FIRST WOMAN: And sit and wish –
ELIZABETH: *(Screaming)* Leave me alone! *(There is a moment of quiet, the chorus turning away from Elizabeth, beginning to leave her slowly,)* No! Wait, please wait. . . Why just today, just this evening, there were several men calling me weren’t they? Several men all wanting to see me at once. . . *(The chorus turns back to her, smiling in control of the dream again)*
SECOND MAN: Then you’d like to go?
ELIZABETH: Yes!
FIRST MAN: And we’ll dance like we always have?
ELIZABETH: Of course we will, sir . . . There are twenty four dresses in my closet – all silken and all new. . .
FIRST WOMAN: The phone never stops ringing!
SECOND WOMAN: Elizabeth Ann Willow is the most beautiful woman in Jackson.

ELIZABETH: There’s a dress for each man who takes me dancing, and a man for each year sir, It’s my memorial, you know. *(Elizabeth begins to speak with an almost southern accent. Beth starts singing off stage during the speech below.)* My mother wouldn’t hear of my keeping a man. It just scares her to death to think of it. “The very idea, Elizabeth Ann!” … but I will keep a dress for you, sir . . . I’ll bring it neatly for mother.

**Polly Wolly Doodle (3 months)**

BETH: I went down south for to see my Sal, Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day; My Sally am a spunky gal, Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day. Fare thee well, Fare thee well, fare thee well my farie fae, For I’m goin’ to Louisiana, for to see my Susyanna, Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day. . . Oh, child, you’re a pretty one. . . “fare thee well, fare thee well, fare thee well my fairie fae.” Your eyes are wondrous, child, simply wondrous. . . You know, Doctor Harris told your father he thought you were about the pretties little baby he’ ever seen. So fat and sassy, your Papa says. Oh, he figures you’re bound to eat us out of house and home as healthy as you are! My word, the amount that must be going on in that tiny little body of yours – seems like so much to do for such a little ting. All that breathing and heartbeating and digesting and messmaking. . . I wonder at times why we live or how much money it’s gonna cost your poor Papa to pay for all this babyying. You are gonnn love your Papa! . Fare thee well, Fare the well, fare thee well my fairie fae, For I’m goin’ to Louisiana, for to see my Susyanna, Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day. . .

**Gossip at the IGA (18)**

EMMA: Good to see you, Judith!
JUDITH: Morning there, Emma! (as they hug) Bless you.

EMMA: It’s a nice one, isn’t it?

JUDITH: It’s what I like about his IGA – the way they keep the windows good and wide and so nice and clean so’s you can see what kind of day it is you’re gonna be cooking for.

EMMA: My husband never gives me enough for the shopping and then he complains when the ice box is empty.

JUDITH: Your Woodrow still out, is he?

EMMA: Yes, he and that Russel Taylor came in early, ate every egg in the house, and went right back out to the searching.

JUDITH: There’s mighty strange folks by that river you’re knowing. Ungodly persons.

EMMA: I know it as well as I’m standing her, Judith, But they’ll find her soon

JUDITH: Seems half of Jackson’s out searching.

EMMA: I know for a fact the whole of the Moose Lodge is lending a hand

JUDITH: Poor thing. Stuck out them marshes all night -

EMMA: Breaks your heart, Judith.

JUDITH: It does.

EMMA: D’ja notice there’s a special on chicken this week? It’s a real good bargain.

JUDITH: My Robert’s not much on chicken, Emma Mathews. Upsets his tubes, so he tells me.

EMMA: How is Robert doing?

JUDITH: He’s thin. Eats like a bird.

EMMA: (Juicy Gossip) You know Beth Willow was in here this morning.

JUDITH: No –

EMMA: Right before you walked in.

JUDITH: And?

EMMA: All she bought - the whole of the IGA chock full of food - and the only thing she bought is coffee, Folgers.

JUDITH: Oh, my word! That tells you something right there.

EMMA: Up all night, worried half sick-

JUDITH: I’d imagine!

EMMA: Breaks your heart, Judith.

JUDITH: It does for a fact. Oh, here. Let me get the door for you dear.

EMMA: (As they walk off) Troubles?

JUDITH: Tell me about it –
What’s gonna happen to you? (17)

BEN: (Teasing nice) Well I guess my best girl doesn’t like me no more. I reckon in the middle stages of my middle ages I’ve just become boring I guess.

ELIZABETH: Oh, now, Papa, you know that isn’t true.

BEN: You’d think a man’s only daughter might want to spend an occasional evening around the house with her boring old dad now and then

ELIZABETH: Papa, I’m home all the time. I’m just going over to Zelda’s, that’s all.

BEN: You oughta send me a postcard as much as I see you.

ELIZABETH: You are just full of hot air, Mr. Willow.

BEN: (Softly) Yeah, I suppose . . . Honey, what’s gonna happen to you?

ELIZABETH: Gonna happen?

BEN: What’re you gonna do with yourself? You’re gonna be eighteen years old pretty soon. Finished with schooling. Time’s like a conscience; it catches up with you. What do you think you might want to do?

ELIZABETH: Zelda and me, we’d been talking a lot about –

BEN: Elizabeth, Zelda won’t be here forever. She isn’t well, honey. Now that’s just a fact and there’s nothing you can do about that.

ELIZABETH: Papa, don’t talk like that, will you? Zelda’s just fine.

BEN: Your mother spoke to Doctor Harris a few days ago, and –

ELIZABETH: (Sarcastic.) What does he know?

BEN: Zelda as dystrophy, honey. It doesn’t get better.

ELIZABETH: It might.

BEN: No, it doesn’t. It won’t. You’re gonna have to face that. You understand?

ELIZABETH: (Quietly) Yes, sir . . .

BEN: Elizabeth, I just want you to think about yourself for a change. That’s all I’m trying to say. Alright?

First Kiss (15)

ELIZABETH: Alright, Papa.

SKEETER: Oh, for pete’s sake. Elizabeth Ann, I don’t know what in the heck you’re so nervied up about.

ELIZABETH: (Glad to see him) Skeeter, I’m not nervous.

SKEETER: All girls are nervy, Elizabeth Anne. They’re born with the jitters. Nervy as all get out.

ELIZABETH: Skeeter, I only get this way around . . .
SKEETER: Boys?

ELIZABETH: How’d you know that?

SKEETER: Cause I’m the same way! With girls, I mean.

ELIZABETH: Really?

SKEETER: It’s my face, I guess.

ELIZABETH: Skeeter, I think you look real fine.

SKEETER: Same to you, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH: (Smiles embarrassed.) Thank you.

SKEETER: Yeah, well, be better get cracking here, huh? I’m gonna be the first kid in the history of the Methodist Church to flunk confirmation.

ELIZABETH: Okay, here’s a question. Don’t peek.

SKEETER: I don’t need to.

ELIZABETH: “What is your only comfort in life and in death?” . . . Skeeter, that’s the question. . .

SKEETER: I know! Uh, that, uh . . . that I . . .

ELIZABETH: Belong

SKEETER: I belong - right. Uhh . . .

ELIZABETH: Body and soul.

SKEETER: Right, soul and the body.

ELIZABETH: Not to myself . . . but . . . to . . .

SKEETER: Jesus.

ELIZABETH: Good!

SKEETER: I’m as sharp as a bowling ball.

ELIZABETH: Say it again Skeeter

SKEETER: I’m as sharp as a bowling ball.

ELIZABETH: Skeeter Robins! (Skeeter concentrates harder this time through . . .sort of kneeling beside her.)

SKEETER: Okay. My soul and my body . . .

ELIZABETH: Yes?

SKEETER: They don’t belong to me.

ELIZABETH: Very good.

SKEETER: But to . . . uh . . .
ELIZABETH: Yes?

SKEETER: They belong to, uh . . .

ELIZABETH: Go on . . .

SKEETER: To . . . (They kiss a simple first kiss. Slight pause. They’re both embarrassed and sort of thrilled all at once)

ELIZABETH: We better do the next question.

SKEETER: Boy, this church stuff is really something else, ain’t it?

ELIZABETH: Something . . .!

**Ghost Story 2 (18)**

JEREMY: Hey you know what I did? All by myself I did?

MADDIE: What’d you do, big shot?

JEREMY: I climbed that big maple tree outside the Willows. I could see in her winder real good.

CLARANELLE: You think you’re so smart, Jeremy – I asked my mother and she says Elizabeth Will never hurt nobody.

MADDIE: Well your mother doesn’t climb trees, Maddie Louise! And your mother never seen her unscrewing the legs right from off of her body like I did.

TIMMY: Unscrewing em and unscrewing em –

CLARANELLE: She don’t unscrew her legs!

TIMMY: She’s got little metal hooks right in her bones, I think, where she takes em off and sends em out walking, I think.

CLARANELLE: You’re lying!

TIMMY: She ain’t really a person, I think

MADDIE: Legs screwing right off her, Claranell . . .

JEREMY: Like she’s a machine . . .

CLARANELLE: (In conclusion) She sure is weird, that girl

MADDIE: Real weird. . .

TIMMY: Unscrewing em and unscrewing em . . .

MADDIE: It’s sure getting dark . . .

CLARANELLE: I wanna go home . . .!

**Church Gossip (24)**

JUDITH: Troubles? I swear those people have troubles we don’t even know about, Emma.

EMMA: Tell me about it.

JUDITH: I remember when she was confirmed –
EMMA: Elizabeth Willow?

JUDITH: Yes

EMMA: Right alongside my own Nancy.

JUDITH: Time flies –

EMMA: I wonder what changed that girl so?

JUDITH: It was that incident down at the river if you’re asking me.

EMMA: I wouldn’t know, Judith.

JUDITH: Something unnatural must happened to her at the river that night.

EMMA: It’s only the talk of the town.

**Church Catechism (24 & 15)**

BEN: “What is the chief end of man?”

ELIZABETH: (From Memory) “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

BETH: That’s my baby.

JUDITH: To shut herself up in that house all these years –

EMMA: She don’t speak to a soul, Judith.

JUDITH: Not in years and years.

BETH: “What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him?”

ELIZABETH: “The Word of God is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.”

JUDITH: She is perfectly quiet closed up in that house.

EMMA: Shut herself up like the dead

BEN: “What is God?”

JUDITH: It was that incident down at the river if you’re asking me.

BEN: What is God?

EMMA: Perfectly silent . . .

**Zelda’s Funeral**

REVEREND: “And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them” Thus reads the Word of God. The Lord gave: and the Lord hath taken away.

CONGRGATION: Blessed be the name of the Lord

REVEREND: Let us pray. O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst take little children into Thine arms and bless them’ open now our eyes, we beseech Thee, to perceive that it is of Thy goodness. . .

ELIZABETH (Focusing on the flowers, whispering.) . . . Zelda. . .
REVEREND: Let us rejoice in the knowledge that here suffering has ended, her soul found its rest, and her body been made whole again. World without end. Amen.

ELIZABETH: . . .Zelda, listen to me. . .

REVEREND: Ashes to ashes

CONGREGATION: Ashes to ashes.

ELIZABETH: Zelda. . .!

REVEREND: And dust to dust –

CONGREGATION: Dust to dust –

ELIZABETH: Zelda? Listen to me . . .Zelda. Last night I was in bed, see? And I could hear them talking – my parents in their room, whispering to each other’ and the kids outside my window: girls talking to boys and the boys trying to tease them under my window. . . .Zelda, I could hear them and I tried: I tried not to listen, wanting my hearing to go away. I said, if my hearing is gone then my thought is gone; and if my thought is gone then my mind is no longer hurting . . .and I dreamed it would make it be me, Zelda . . .I dreamed I could make it me that was gone and not you at all. I dreamt a dream of your dying. (She begins to grow more passionate, more lost . . .) Your muscles are melting away and you can’t stop them from turning to nothing in side you. And you have to eat, and you have to breathe, and you have to think: you can’t stop the thinking inside yourself even while your body grows useless underneath you. You think, I’m dying now . . .I’m really dying now . . . and you can almost tell how many weeks there’ll be before you lungs become too weak to hold the air you want’ and when they begin to collapse, then you know that too. Your muscles are turning to water. You know that you’re suffocating inside your own body, and still while you’re dying you think of it. (she lifts her U. foot off of the footrest and places it on the ground - - she must lift her legs with her hands and arms, treating them as perfectly motionless) Because the dystrophy separates the muscle from the bone – (and as she takes her other foot off the footrest she speaks the next line) The mind form the body (She sings the empty footrest into the side of the chair; crashing metal against metal, and lowers herself out of the chair; she wants to be closer to the grave. To be near it. Elizabeth should be far enough away from the flowers to allow her the room to be prone on the floor, the room to pull herself to them just a foot or two. She uses her upper body so her face is up, her eyes in the light.) And last year you came to my room and my father had to carry you, Zelda. He sets you beside me like an infant to hold, and you cannot even talk then – you’re sixteen and then seventeen and you cannot force the muscles to move enough to say even a word. (soft, remembering) But it’s all right still. We can sit still. We can sit and touch and hold and the world don’t matter anymore, Zelda. . .nothing matters (incredibly intense now, all rage and anguish.) Zelda, it isn’t right for this to happen to you! I wish it was me who was gone now and not you at all! Nothing changes for me – nothing changes in me, Zelda – Nothing! (Slowly) Nothing, nothing ever changes. . .

Open the door (18)

BEN: Elizabeth! Please open the door. Now there is no need for you to be sulking alone in your room like this, honey. Nobody really meant to yell at you, you understand? (knocks again) Elizabeth! Now open the door! If you want to move to this place in Evansville so badly, then don’t you think we better talk about it some? You need to be a little more patient with you mother and I, honey. We forget sometimes how big our little girl’s gone and gotten on us. Elizabeth! Please open the door. I’m trying to tell you I’m sorry, don’t you see? All we want is what’s best for you, honey. Elizabeth, won’t you talk to me please?

You’re 24 (24)

FIRST MAN: Such a pretty, pretty, girl. . .
ELIZABETH: I don't know which dress in particular I’ll be choosing for you, sir, but it will be a particularly nice dress. . .

FIRST WOMAN: And silk stockings, of course.
SECOND WOMAN: Appearance, appearance,

SECOND MAN: (on bended knee) Then we’ll dance right away?

ELIZABETH: In just one moment sir.
FIRST MAN: The next song then?
ELIZABETH: Please understand, I’m only telling you –
SECOND WOMAN: But Elizabeth –

ELIZABETH: No!
SECOND MAN: The song after?
ELIZABETH: You’re not being –

FIRST WOMAN: Of course she will! Elizabeth, tell the gentleman you’d be honored to dance.
SECOND MAN: When I first came in tonight, I looked at the lights and I saw the wood of the floor shining so polished and pretty –

ELIZABETH: Please don’t –
FIRST MAN: And I looked over the girls –
SECOND MAN: Over all the girls

FIRST MAN: And I says, Her. I want to dance slow and close with that woman.
SECOND WOMAN: (sarcastic) Her? But she doesn’t dance, sir!
ELIZABETH: (overlapping) Why me, sir? I’m afraid I’m much too young to be –
FIRST WOMAN: Elizabeth Ann, you’re not too young to be anything, are you? You’re twenty four now.
ELIZABETH: I swear I don’t know what you’re talking about. Why I’m –
FIRST WOMAN: Twenty four.

FIRST MAN: (taking her hand) May I?

ELIZABETH: (Not pleasant) You’ll wait your turn please, like everyone else, sir
FIRST MAN: The next song then?
ELIZABETH: You’ll wait your turn, sir!
SECOND MAN: How many songs do you wait, Elizabeth?
FIRST MAN: One song? You’ll wait just one more song?
SECOND MAN: Two songs? Just two more?

ELIZABETH: I would like to sit please.

FIRST WOMAN: But, Elizabeth!

FIRST MAN: Three songs then?

SECOND MAN: Five songs? Six?

FIRST MAN: Seven? . . . (The Chorus begins trading off numbers, counting and building in intensity until they are screaming the word/number “24”)

ELIZABETH: (Overlapping totally, responding to the counting) I don’t know how many. Can’t you hear? Don’t you understand? I would like to sit! I only want to sit! Now listen to me and shut up! I said, shut up! Shut up . . . Shut up . . . Shut up . . . (This continues until the Chorus reaches “24”)

ELIZABETH: Shut Up! Shut up! CHORUS: Twenty four! Twenty four!

ELIZABETH: (Only voice, screaming) SHUT UP - ! (Tableau, the chorus simply looking at her. She continues in anger.) You are always listing things! Lining things up in rows as if putting them in rows is suddenly going to make my mind make sense of it – but there is no sense in it! You put things in lists that are backwards and wrong and turning inside my mind until I don’t know where I started anymore! (Quieter, sifting through thoughts) And I want to remember: and then you make me remember and I look at the remembering and I feel the remembering and my stomach turns to knots because of it. Do you see what I’m trying to tell you? (the chorus turns away from her) Talk to me. . . . please, I have no one to talk to but you now. . . . please, please talk . . . please speak. . please. . .

It’s a beautiful dress (15)

BETH: Oh, Ben . . . Benjamin, it’s a beautiful dress. . .!

BEN: I think it’s pretty.

BETH: Did you pick this out for her all by yourself?

BEN: Sure I did. Well I had a little help from the lady in the dress department, but I’ll take all the credit you’re willing to give me.

BETH: Don’t you dare tell me how much you spent, Ben

BETH: Well I want her to have a good time

BETH: How much?

BEN: Did you notice the lace here? The ruffles? Beth that is fashionable stuff.

BETH: How much?

BEN: Forty six dollars. . .

BETH: Oh, my lands!

BEN: Think she’ll like it?

BETH: She better just love it is what! Forty six dollars?
BEN: Yeah, I was throwing the cash around J.C. Penny’s like boys throw a ball. People dodging the money.

BETH: Elizabeth’s sure looking forward to this. I hope he’s a nice boy.

BEN: Sure he’s nice. He’s a good Methodist, I’m half sure there’s some kind of rule about Methodist boys being good escorts.

BETH: Oh Ben

BEN: It’s those dang Presbyterians that cause all the trouble.

BETH: I just hope they have a good time, Ben

BEN: Jackson High threw a pretty nice affair the year we went, the way I remember.

BETH: You didn’t dance. You just sat at the table and stared at the girls.

BEN: Beth, I was looking at you the whole time. You were so pretty.

BETH: Were?

BEN: Are, I mean are.

BETH: It’s a wonder I kept dating you at all Ben Willow.

BEN: Must be my charm, honey.

BETH: Yeah that must be it.

Will you take me to prom? (15)

SKEETER: Now wait a minute, Elizabeth – you want me to what?

ELIZABETH: Skeeter, we’ll have the best time.

SKEETER: Let me get this straight. You’re asking me to my own prom?

ELIZABETH: (thinks he’s teasing) Skeeter, we talked about it last week.

SKEETER: Oh

ELIZABETH: (Excited, rushing ahead) My father wasn’t gonna let me go, because he says girls shouldn’t date till they’re sixteen, you know – but my mother says proms are different, see? So Papa said, “Well if he really wants you to go- “

SKEETER: Now slow down, Elizabeth. You told your mother we’re going to the Jackson High Prom?

ELIZABETH: Sure, I told everybody, Skeeter. Nancy Mathews and Cindy Sue White and the lady next door – plus I told Zelda. I told her before I told anybody. She’s really happy about it, even though she can’t go. Do you think maybe afterwards we can stop by and see her? She hasn’t been feeling too well and –

SKEETER: (thinks he has it) I know – I know what you’re doing! You’re joking, aren’tcha?

ELIZABETH: (smiles because he’s smiling.) No.

SKEETER: You’re not?

ELIZABETH: Skeeter, my father bought me the most beautiful dress. I can’t wait’ll you see it. I practically died.
SKEETER: You’re really serious about this? –

ELIZABETH: (Concerned for the first time) Well sure. Don’t you want to go Skeeter?

SKEETER: Look, Elizabeth –

ELIZABETH: I’ll help you pay for your tux if you want. My mother says you should rent one to match my dress. It’s really important to match. And my father can drive us since you’re not old enough yet and –

SKEETER: Elizabeth, I can’t take you to the Jackson high Prom. . .!

ELIZABETH: Last week you told me –

SKEETER: I thought you were kidding Elizabeth Ann! I didn’t think you were serious!

ELIZABETH: But, Skeeter, you said –

SKEETER: What are you out of your mind? We can’t go to the Prom! Now look, Elizabeth, the rest of the kids are gonna be getting here any minute and you can’t be talking about all this in front of them, so just –

ELIZABETH: They already know, Skeeter. Everybody knows.

SKEETER: (quietly) You told all the guys?

ELIZABETH: (quietly) I told all the girls and they told the guys. I imagined you like me.

SKEETER: I do like you Elizabeth. . .!

ELIZABETH: I mean, you kissed me and –

SKEETER: Did you tell em that too? Elizabeth, what am I gonna do now?

ELIZABETH: Skeeter, I’m really sorry

SKEETER: What’d you have to tell the whole town for?! (Elizabeth exits quickly, not wanting to cry in front of him.)

ELIZABETH: I’m sorry! I’m sorry!

SKEETER: Aw, Elizabeth. . .! Hey, Elizabeth, wait!

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**Opportunity of a lifetime (5)**

BOBBY: Look to be working pretty hard there, Ben Wilow.

BEN: How are you, Bobby?

BOBBY: Find, Ben, fine. You speak to her again?

BEN: Yeah, we talked.

BOBBY: And?

BEN: And I got a job right now, that’s all.

BOBBY: Ben, you are fixing to pass up the opportunity of a lifetime right here. Do you realize that?

BEN: Bob I have a wife and a child to think of.

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**Dueling Arguments (18 & 5)**
BETH: Don’t you talk to me like that! I’ve been there. I’ve seen this institution.

ELIZABETH: I don’t care what you’ve seen, Mama!

BOBBY: Ben, we are not talking nickel and dime here. We’re talking money dropping in them slots day in and day out, buddy.

BEN: I got a job.

BETH: You may be eighteen years old and you may be through with your schooling, young lady, but you are not nearly so old or so big that you can sit here and back-talk your own mother!

BETH: Mama, I’ll do whatever I want!

BETH: Elizabeth, that institution is huge, do you understand me? You’ll be lost the second you come in the door.

BEN: Now look here Bobby Morgan –

BOBBY: If you were thinking you’d see that what it takes to get ahead in this world is the willingness to take a risk here and there, Ben Willow.

ELIZABETH: I want to go see for myself. They’ve got apartments there –

BETH: Dormitories. I saw them. Non bigger than a closet, those rooms.

BOBBY: If you want to sit down here at the depot loading boxes until you die, then you go right ahead and do it, Ben.

ELIZABETH: And there are people there who want me –

BETH: But this is your home! You belong here!

BOBBY: The man who says, “This! This is what I’m sinking my life into – this is what I’m taking my risks for and laying my money down on.” That’s the man who gets something done in this world, Ben Willow.

BEN: If Elizabeth was your child then you’d know, Bobby. You’d know what I’m saying.

ELIZABETH: Mama, there’s nothing here for me! Zelda’s dead. School’s over and there is nothing for me to do here but sit in this room and sit in this chair and wait for someone to carry me down the stairs! Well I won’t live like that!

BETH: Don’t you scream at me, Elizabeth –

BEN: Don’t you be telling me what to do, Bobby.

BOBBY: You look where I am in another five or ten years, pal. You sit down here at this depot with your boxes and just you look real close in another few years.

ELIZABETH: I’ll talk any way I want!

BETH: Elizabeth! You can’t go to Evansville! Don’t you see? You’re crippled! (quick beat. Beth steps back.) I’m sorry. . .

BEN: I’m sorry, Bobby. I’m sorry if I misled you.

BOBBY: Not like you’re gonna be, pal.

BETH: Elizabeth? Please let me apologize (Beth looks at her daughter for a second, then turns and leaves the room. Elizabeth has turned away from her mother; she won’t look at her)

BOBBY: Yeah, you sit down here, Ben Willow. Here with your boxes; loading and unloading –
BEN: I heard what you had to say, Bob. I got work to do. (Ben turns away.)

BOBBY: Sure, Ben, Sure. You work, man. Just you work. . . (Bobby exits. Ben watches him leave and then exits himself as Elizabeth whips her chair around full front. She’s intensely angry, frustrated.)

I am not an invalid! (18)

ELIZABETH: I am not an invalid! (as she takes her feet out of the footrests) They don’t see; they don’t see . . . it’s as if they’re all blind – (As she lowers herself out of the wheel chair, being sure only to use her upper body. . .throws chair and climbs down stairs) I would rather live among deaf and blind people than people who cannot hear what I tell them or see what I’m saying to them in this house in this Jackson as if they’re all blind to the stairs and the curbs and the cars and the people who talk and don’t listen and don’t even see me as if I am melting away! I will not be kept in this house in this town like a misbehaved child when all that I want is to leave. . .(And she’s in her chair now, her feet in the footrest; she says;) I have to leave. . .(and Elizabeth wheels her chair off with determination, with strength)

Ghost story 3 (18)

TIMMY’S VOICE: Wooooooooooooooooo! Woooooooooooooooooo!

MADDIE: What’s that?

CLARANELLE: I dunno. . .

CLARANELLE: You don’t get me outa here right now I’m screaming as loud as I can till my mother comes. (Timmy’s howls have continued over the above dialogue. Now he enters and speaks. He stomps across the set like a ghost.)

TIMMY: (Ghost voice) This is Elizabeth Willow’s legs speaking . . .wooooooo. . .this is her legs and we’re all unscrewed from off of her body and looking for little kids to stomp dead!

MADDIE: Oh, you knock it off, Timmy.

TIMMY: (Ghost voice) I’m not Timmy – I’m Elizabeth Willow’s legs!

CLARANELLE: Elizabeth Willow ain’t gonna hurt nobody!

TIMMY: You just never seen her hurting nobody.

JEREMY: I seen her unhooking the legs right off from her body. Me and Kenny White did.

MADDIE: Aw, I bet you flunk second grade, you’re so dumb! That girl couldn’t hurt us a bit.

TIMMY: Unhook em and say to em: Legs – you go out there tonight and you stomp on some people. Legs – you go out there tonight and don’t you come back till you find somebody and kick em dead!

MADDIE: Ooooooo!

TIMMY: You know the only way to keep em from murdering folks, don’tcha?

CLARANELLE: Run?

MADDIE: Hide?

TIMMY: Nope. Them legs’re afraid to hurt anything when they hear preaching.
MADDIE: What?

CLARANELLE: I don’t believe that.

TIMMY: Anything hears the worda God is washed clean – can’t hurt nothing.

CLARANELLE: Sure

MADDIE: How you know that?

TIMMY: Just ask the minister, you don’t believe me. Power of prayer’ll protect you from harm.

MADDIE: Is that really true?

JEREMY: I hope so. I hear something coming.

MADDIE: Huh?

TIMMY: You Guys, something’s moving out there. . .!

CLARANELLE: Maddie Louise, what’re we gonna do?

MADDIE: Hide. . .!

TIMMY: You guys – hurry . . .

CLARANELLE: I’m scared. . .

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Thanks for the ride (18)

ELIZABETH: I thank you for the ride down here, Billy

BILLY: Yeah, well you sure you don’t want me to wait for you? It’s dark as the devil tonight. Not that I’m scared of the night time or nothing.

ELIZABETH: No.

BILLY: You be careful down here. You know the bone yard’s just right over there.

ELIZABETH: Billy, I just want to be by myself for awhile. Thank you for the ride. (Billy exits)

ELIZABETH: (as she wheels) Zelda. . .(and as she nears and reaches the graveyard) Oh, Zelda. . . I had to come see you before I left, Zelda. I’m gonna leave. I am gonna leave Jackson and I just had to come say goodbye to you. Zelda, it feels like so much has happened since you passed away, and at the same time like nothing - like nothing’s the same without you. Nothing’s the same and nothing ever changes. You remember we use to talk about moving somewhere, about living someplace different (kids enter) Zelda, I’m gonna try to do that. . .There’s a Center, they call it, this place in Evansville that I heard about, Zelda, and –

BRACES ATTACK (18)

JEREMY: Look at her. . .

TIMMY: There she is. . .

ELIZABETH: (Turning) Who’s there?

JEREMY: I told you I seen her. . .
ELIZABETH: (Frightened.) Who is that? Billy, is that you?

MADDIE: Shhhhh!

CLARANELLE: I'm so scaret. .

ELIZABETH: What are you doing out here? What do you want?

TIMMY: Come on, Jeremy

MADDIE: Start praying.

JEREMY: Look at her legs. Look at em.

ELIZABETH: (Realizing it's just kids) Hey . . .hey, what're you kids doing out here?

TIMMY: (Scared) Jeremy, she's moving. . .!

ELIZABETH: You kids aren't scared of me, are you?

CLARANELLE: Don't let her getcha!

JEREMY: (Grabs the wheel by a handrest) I got her! I got her!

MADDIE: Jeremy!

JEREMY: (As Timmy takes the other handrest.) Grab her chair!

MADDIE: Hurry! (The two boys have grabbed the wheel chair and swung it around, and dump Elizabeth out of it, as soon as they grab her wheel chair Elizabeth's reaction starts:)

ELIZABETH: What are you doing? Let go of me! Let go of my chair! Why are you doing this? No! You can't do this to me! Stop it! Leave me alone! No – no! (and the kids overlapping her)

JEREMY: Dump here out of the chair!

CLARANELLE: Timmy, watch out!

TIMMY: She's heavy!

JEREMY: Harder! Lift harder!

MADDIE: Hurry, you guys! (all of the above lines are thrown in, overlapping in pandemonium. And suddenly Elizabeth's on the ground – the chair slams back down on its wheels – the boys step back from it a half step and girls step back from Elizabeth.)

JEREMY: (Suddenly half panicked) What do we do now?

CLARANELLE: She's moving!

TIMMY: Maddie, you take her chair! Get it outa here!

MADDIE: I got it! I got her chair!

TIMMY: Dump it in the river! (Maddie runs off-stage with Elizabeth's chair)

ELIZABETH: . . .stay away from me. . .

JEREMY: Claranelle, your part! Say your part!
TIMMY: Pray!

JEREMY: Get her legs – grab her! (and the two boys take Elizabeth by the legs to rip off the braces)

(all of this happens at the same time during the ripping of the braces)

CLARANELLE: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” Hurry up, you guys! Hurry! (The Hurry! Part can come whenever the first brace come off – then immediately back to it.) Thou prepares a table in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever –” (as soon as Timmy yells that he has the second brace off) Amen!


ELIZABETH: (overlapping) No! Leave me alone! You’re hurting me! You’re hurting my legs! No, don’t touch my braces! Please! Please, don’t touch me! My legs! no! Nooooooooo (Building to the first brace coming off.) My legs! My knees – you’re hurting me! – My legs – my legs – my legs!

KIDS: She’s screaming! – I’m getting it! It’s coming loose! – hurry Timmy! – Jeremy, help me! – hold her down – I got it! I got the other one! (Timmy lifts the brace high in the light so it shines, turning it” all the kids are still now, looking at it. Silent for a moment, then)

MADDIE: (Whispering) Look at em shine. . .

ELIZABETH: (Barely audible) . . . Papa. . .( the kids look at her, beginning to fear what they’ve done)

TIMMY: (Quiet) We better get home. (Elizabeth moans or tries to, we hear her breathing)

Speak to us child (24)

BEN: The seed was planted in the full of the moon.

BETH: The sky full with clouds and water.

BEN: We loved then, your mother and I, in the full of the moon in the summer night.

BETH: We would lie in bed until dawn then, telling our secrets and planning you birth.

BEN: I said, There is a life between us. . .

BETH: There is a hope between us. . .

BEN: There is a bond, I told her, a child planted in the full of the moon and she is our daughter.

BETH: And we love our daughter. . .

BEN: Our Elizabeth. . .

BETH: . . .Elizabeth?

BEN: . . .Elizabeth Ann?

BETH: Speak to us, child. . .
BEN: Talk to us... 

BETH: Why don’t you speak, child? 

BEN: My daughter: without voice. . .

BETH: (as if she’s distant) Elizabeth. . .?

BEN: My daughter: silent. (the lights rise on Elizabeth and the Chorus. Elizabeth seem different now: broken now. The Chorus is gentle and loving and grouped around her.)

**Broken (24)**

SECOND MAN: The next song then?

FIRST WOMAN: Oh Elizabeth Ann. . .

SECOND WOMAN: You are beautiful, Elizabeth. . .

FIRST MAN: And we will dance and dance and dance. . .

FIRST WOMAN: Elizabeth ?

ELIZABETH: (She sings quietly, just staring as if to herself half speaking half singing)

“I’m a pretty teapot inside and out. . .
Here are my hips and here is my mouth. . .
Please come take me spin me about. . .
Dress me up and take . . .me out. . .”

END OF PLAY