

THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE WAR

a play in two women

by Jennie Webb

WORKING DRAFT

Jennie Webb

1977 Escarpa Drive

Los Angeles, California 90041

323/255-5520

jenniewebb@earthlink.net

THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE WAR

Characters: **Woman 1**, who is substantially older than
Woman 2, who is well into her child-bearing years

Setting: **A single playing area without walls where unseen forces are at work.**
There are several large windows in the floor.

The only piece of furniture onstage is a single bed which is not unlike a hospital bed, but not definitively so.

The bed, costume pieces and properties should all have a timeless, almost suspended, feel.

NOTE: Woven into the action of the play is an accompanying textual score, written for two male voices, live and recorded. The score includes media coverage of wars and "uprisings," reports on police action and military policy, accounts of war crimes, sounds of the battlefield, clinical details from hospital records, violent crime statistics, and psychological diagnostic criteria.

The score begins with an overture, which is heard at full volume: a montage of news broadcasts. Thereafter, the score is present at various levels—most times only a hum or subliminal undercurrent. The score is arranged so that the timing, content, pacing and tone of the various movements supports and provides a counterpoint to accompany the two women onstage.

It is suggested that this aspect of the play be carefully orchestrated in performance to enhance the audience's visceral experience of the play, not to distract from it. At the same time, the integration of the score seeks to stretch the boundaries of our collective ability to screen out or censor unwanted information. And also to tap into each individual's capacity to single out selected words, phrases or themes which may resonate on a personal level.

—the play is performed without an intermission—

THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE WAR

In black we hear the overture to the play's score.

OVERLAPPING MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENTS (LIVE): TONE IS PRESENTATIONAL, WITH INCREASING EXCITEMENT

VOICE 1, male (political statement to live crowd, 1917):

Ladies and gentleman, America is at war!!!

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 2000):

In the bloodiest moments yet, it looks as if the violence will surely escalate as more clashes between Israelis and Palestinian fighters erupt in the Gaza strip.

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1974):

Lasting 11 days and 11 nights, it was the most successful air bombardment ever. With over a hundred thousand bombs dropped over Hanoi, the death toll rises to—

In the darkness underneath the score, we hear Woman 1.

She begins to wail, a high-pitched scream which might at first be mistaken for falling bombs or rockets, until her sobs settle deep down inside of her chest. Something tells us that although her sorrow is genuine, this woman is genuinely impressed with the sound of her own emotions and wishes to explore the possibilities.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1950):

General MacArthur's Tokyo headquarters has issued an estimate that since June 25th, North Korean losses are close to 200,000 with approximately 40,000 prisoners being—

Her low cries build in intensity and volume, becoming lamentations which reach the proportions of a Greek tragedy.

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1942):

Through the pea-soup fog that has been aiding the Germans we can see wrecked American equipment, a telling sign of the pounding the U.S. troops took—

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1995):

Following the second massacre in Sarajevo by the Bosnian Serbs, NATO systematically bombed strategic points from the air, destroying—

VOICE 1, male (hearing statement, 1947):

There is no doubt as to where a real communist's loyalty rests. Their allegiance is to Russia, not the United States!

We hear a short, self-satisfied sigh—a signal that the proper dimensions and theatricality have been attained.

Lights come up to reveal two women on a single bed, surrounded by several large windows in the floor.

Woman 1 rocks back and forth, holding Woman 2 in her arms. Woman 2, in a slip, is not moving. Woman 1 wears a simple dress which buttons down the front over a slip, a sweater, stockings & shoes.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):

We've just heard our man in Jerusalem utter two of the most chilling words in the English language: Nerve Gas.

After a moment, Woman 2 softly sighs.

PACE BEGINS TO ESCALATE AND VOICES OVERLAP TO A GREATER EXTENT.

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1949):

(gunfire, shouting) We're now seeing scenes like this all over France, the arrest of Reds, forces used to crush—

Almost unconsciously, Woman 1 lets out a sympathetic cry in concert with Woman 2, but subtly topping her.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):

(screaming, airplanes) On the streets of Baghdad, people scurrying, screaming, running for cover—

Woman 2 sighs again, followed by Woman 1.

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1975):

(gunfire, explosions, shouting) There's no way to shoot these people! Five or six hundred troops on this bridge, fighting maybe a dozen or so people, maybe twenty at the most, communists—

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):

(explosions, air raid sirens) We have no further details at this time. People have been told to go to their shelters, again, a missile attack on Dehrain—

Soon the cries, moans and wailing of the two women together grow louder, their voices comprising what becomes almost a duet.

VOICE 1, male (political statement, 1918):
 (crowd noises) **It is agreed that American troops should be brought to France as rapidly as Allied transportation facilities will permit—**

Almost operatic.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):
 (explosions, air raid sirens) **We still do not have full information—**

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1973):
 (gunfire, explosions) **—the cobras are going in but it seems that the North Vietnamese have got a 37 millimeter anti-aircraft gun—**

Almost sexual.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):
 (explosions, air raid sirens) **—but we do have some details: they are fully armed and loaded—**

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1943):
 (engines) **—and the pilot is inside! We can see him, moving, struggling—**

Even painful.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):
 (air raid sirens) **It all happened too fast, everyone here is just trying to figure out—**

Their screams alternate and feed off one another as Woman 2 leaps out of bed. Woman 1 also stands. The two women are apart on either side of the bed.

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 1973):
 (gunfire, screaming) **—firing air bursts, shrapnel exploding in the air—**

Screaming as one, the women turn to face one another—Lucy & Ethyl.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990 cont'd):

(explosions, air raid sirens) **And stay tuned right here, for THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE WAR!**

The screams stop.

VOLUME DECREASES SIGNIFICANTLY.

he score shifts to a low level, suggesting perhaps a television in the background.

SCENE FROM A 1930s MOVIE, LIVE ACTORS SHIFTING TO RECORDED VOICES: THEATRICAL, DRAMATIC.

WOMAN 1:

You're feeling better.

Pause.

VOICE 1, male (radio announcement):

After a week-long artillery bombardment, an attack was launched across the river Somme. Officials report that the German losses were heavy, but with a gain of only kilometers, British troops also suffered 57,470 casualties.

WOMAN 2:

Yes.

Woman 2 crumples onto the bed.

VOICE 2, male (patient):

(feebly) Oooohhh . . . Waaahh . . . Water!

WOMAN 1:

Are you hungry?

Pause.

VOICE 1, female (nurse):

I'm here soldier. But I can't give you water. You've been shot in the stomach! One drink of water would be the end of you!

WOMAN 2:

What is today?

VOICE 2, male (patient):

I thought it was already the end of me . . . Am I the only one who made it out alive?

WOMAN 1:

The 7th.

VOICE 1, female (nurse):

Shhh. Rest now. You shouldn't be getting so excited.

WOMAN 2: Oh.

Woman 1 straightens the linens on the bed around Woman 2.

VOICE 2, male (patient):

I am, aren't I? Don't tell me none of them made it, sister . . . Russell? Clarkson? Jonesey? Old Jonesey?

I'm still sore.

WOMAN 1:

I would expect so!

WOMAN 2: Is it Tuesday?
Silence.

VOICE 1, female (nurse):
Shhhh. Keep still. You mustn't disturb your dressing.

WOMAN 2: Is it February?
Silence.

VOICE 2, male (patient):
Sister . . .

WOMAN 2: Is it raining?
Silence.

VOICE 1, female (nurse):
Quiet now! Shhh!

VOICE 2, male (patient):
I'm not going to make it, am I? You might as well tell me.

WOMAN 1: Did you say you were hungry? Today is chicken. But I don't like how they make it. Too much salt. You would think that they would watch that, be aware of that. Salt in things. And I'm amazed that they serve caffeinated coffee. Coffee with caffeine. I was wondering why I couldn't sleep, because I had just assumed . . .

VOICE 1, female (nurse):
Hush! Of course you are! I'll see to it that you do. We all will.

VOICE 2, male (patient):
We all . . . ?

WOMAN 2: *(looking down through a window)* No.

VOLUME DECREASES FURTHER. SCENE SHIFTS TO RECORDED VOICES.

WOMAN 1: No?

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
Hello, Terry.

WOMAN 2: It's not raining.

VOICE 2, male (patient):
Jonesey! Am I glad to see you, man. I knew they couldn't get you, Jonesey!

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
Not me and not you, Tiger! And it's Lieutenant, now!

VOICE 2, male (patient):
You don't say!

WOMAN 1:

No.

WOMAN 2:
No.

WOMAN 1:
No. Not in August.

WOMAN 2:
Not in August?

Woman 1 moves away from the bed.

WOMAN 1:
Sometimes in August, but it's a warm rain, a muggy rain. I'm not sure whether it should even be called rain: it's really like water floating and settling and hitting you—not even in drops; more like splashing against you in globs.

WOMAN 2:
I am hungry.

WOMAN 1:
I am, too. But I'm not hungry for chicken.

WOMAN 2:
I'm not hungry for chicken.

WOMAN 1:
I don't think I've ever been hungry **for** chicken. Chicken isn't one of those things that you crave. You just eat chicken because it's there, or because there isn't anything else, or because you can't think of anything else. So you eat chicken.

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
While you've been in here getting your carburetor adjusted, we've had some shaking up in the ranks! Now the way I see it, in a couple of days you'll be ready for more Heinies, and you'll win the war all by yourself!

VOICE 2, male (patient):
If they'd let me outta' here, I would!

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
They will in no time, I'll bet the Legion of Honor on it.

VOICE 2, male (patient):
So the whole story: How's the rest of the squadron?

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
Not so good. Nothing's left of the old outfit, and the war's gone completely sour. The Heinies have now got little tri-planes, and these things can go fast! Like performing, flying poodles! We could use you 'cause it's time for the big push, Terry.

VOICE 2, male (patient):
I don't know, Jonesey—

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
Lieutenant.

VOICE 2, male (patient):
*Lieutenant! Lying here, I've been doing some thinking
. . .*

VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
Thinking! That doesn't sound like you! Terry the tiger—a man of action. Who liked the taste of blood from the first. Who couldn't get enough after his first kill—

WOMAN 2:
I'm not hungry for chicken.

WOMAN 1:
Especially not when it's cooked with too much salt. I could never stand salty chicken. Some people can, some people even like it! I suppose the people who cook it like it, but even that's hard for me to comprehend. How can they possibly eat it? **Especially** after cooking it!

WOMAN 2:
Now I'm not hungry at all.

WOMAN 1:
But I **love** salty snacks! Chips and pretzels and popcorn and crackers—the saltier the better. Couldn't you just die for a big, crunchy bag of chips right now? Unless they were those salt-free chips. I can't **believe** anyone would actually buy those. Can you imagine? Salt-free chips. What's the point?

WOMAN 2:
I'm sure I don't know.

WOMAN 1:
Of course there are salt people and there are sweet people. And maybe the sweet people would buy them because they just don't . . .
.
No. I cannot make that leap, I truly can't. Because I am a salt person and I cannot personally stomach artificial sweeteners. Sugar-free? Honestly! If something is supposed to be sweet, it should be sweet. And if something is supposed to be salty, it should be salty.

WOMAN 2:
Like chicken.

*VOICE 2, male (patient):
That's just it.

I was thinking of the first time I went up.

I don't mind telling you, it took me awhile to persuade Old Mother Hubbard to spring into action!

I saw him ahead of me, I was on his tail, but I didn't let him have it. I steadied my ship to take aim, but I couldn't shoot. And I know if a flyer hesitates for a moment, he makes himself a perfect target for the chump behind him—*

*VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
What are you saying to me, Terry?*

*VOICE 2, male (patient):
That's what happened to me, Jonesey! It happened the first time I went up and it happened the last time.

That's why I was hit.

I looked at his face, the poor guy in front of me, and in a flash there it was—I felt like a butcher. I saw all of those iron crosses hanging over my bunk. All of them, dead soldiers.*

*VOICE 1, male (lieutenant):
But—*

*VOICE 2, male (patient):
Since I've been here, that's all see! 47 crosses, 47 dead men, but the first one of them was me!

Flying high over this country that isn't even mine, killing boys I'll never meet. . .*

WOMAN 1:
Like chick . . . You **are** feeling better, aren't you?

*VOICE 2, male (patient cont'd):
. . . how could I not be the one that's dead?*

Woman 2 sits up on the edge of the bed.

REPORTS (RECORDED): FLAT, DRY.

WOMAN 2:
Yes.

*VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914):
The wounded man's left leg had been shot away at its junction with the body, and was a horrible sight. He had lost a tremendous amount of blood, and was almost dead on arrival.*

WOMAN 1:
Did you say you were hungry?

WOMAN 2:
I'm sore.

I sent for the Surgeon Travis, and got the patient's clothes cut away rapidly, and had him placed on the operating table.

WOMAN 1:
Of course you are!

WOMAN 2:
And I don't remember why.

We then administered one pint of normal saline subcutaneously, and started to trim up the stump—which consisted of a ragged end of skin, fascia, muscles, nerves, and vessels, longer anteriorly than posteriorly. In fact, there was scarcely enough flap left to cover the stump.

WOMAN 1:
You don't.

WOMAN 2:
I don't.

WOMAN 1:
I guess I'm not surprised.

WOMAN 2:
Did we . . .

After having made a few cuts in clearing away the ragged ends, the patient died.

WOMAN 1:
Did we . . .?

WOMAN 2:

I remember having a conversation, talking to you.

We were talking about me. And him.

And I was telling you how difficult it's been, but you know that it's been hard, right? Because I've been telling you, but because you can see, too, right? I can't remember things.

Or sometimes I think . . .

WOMAN 1:

What?

WOMAN 2:

I remember us having the conversation, but it was in front of your house, and . . .

WOMAN 1:

My house?

WOMAN 2:

And I know I haven't been there. I mean, not lately.

WOMAN 1:

No.

WOMAN 2:

So I don't know if I got that mixed up . . .

WOMAN 1:

About being in front of my house?

WOMAN 2:

Or if I just made the whole thing up.

VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):

The ward room now contained eleven cases, and most of them were restless and groaning in agony.

VOICE 1 (RECORDED) CONTINUES UNINTERRUPTED AS VOICE 2 (LIVE) INTERJECTS, BELOW & ON SUCCESSIVE PAGES AT INDICATED POINTS CORRESPONDING TO WOMEN'S DIALOGUE.

ON-AIR BROADCAST (LIVE): INTENSE, HUSHED.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):

What have you heard from the Pentagon or other sources about this attack, John?

VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):

Fresh doses of, morphia were also administered . . . and iced water, soda water, and brandy, to various cases as thought fit.

The next case we took had had a restless night, and it was obvious that there was much blood in his pleural cavity. His color was bad, likewise his pulse.

Chloroform was administered.

WOMAN 1:

The whole what?

VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):

Examination showed that a fragment the size of small coin had entered his upper chest and had tracked downwards, finally emerging through a large ragged hole just below the heart.

WOMAN 2:

This has been bugging me. Did you tell me to leave him?

WOMAN 1:

Did I?

WOMAN 2:

Did we have a conversation where you told me to leave him, because I can remember it as clear or even clearer than anything else, than us right here, right now, and I don't know why you would tell me . . .

In fact, soon after the injury the heart could be seen emerging with each thrust. A piece of the sixth rib had been carried away leaving a gaping wound.

WOMAN 1:

I didn't. I wouldn't.

This wound was enlarged, a piece of the rib removed, and a search was made for bleeding points.

WOMAN 2:

No, I didn't . . .

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):

Do we have anything else imminent from our lines at the moment?

Pause.

You didn't tell me to leave him?

VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914):

This search could not be prolonged owing to the patient's condition, so I swabbed out the blood from the left pleural cavity, and a considerable amount of gauze was inserted therein.

WOMAN 1:

(shaking her head "no") And you've been here.

WOMAN 2:

And **you've** been here.

WOMAN 1:

And I've been here.

WOMAN 2:

And I've been here.

Silence.

Woman 1 sits on the opposite edge of the bed.

WOMAN 1:

You haven't eaten.

WOMAN 2:

I'm not hungry.

Silence.

Woman 2 stands, and moves over to a window. Woman 1 takes off her shoes and slips under the covers.

It's . . . *(shaking her head)* I feel like it's been forever.

WOMAN 1:

(smiling) Hmnmnmn.

WOMAN 2:

I know it hasn't.

WOMAN 1:

Been forever?

WOMAN 2:

No, I know it hasn't.

WOMAN 1:

No, it has . . .

VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914):

He rallied considerably, but later on hemorrhage occurred, and he died two or three hours after operating.

Cease fire sounded at 11:15 a.m. after we had been working two solid hours in a confined atmosphere, and a temperature of 105 degrees Fahrenheit.

With our clothes were saturated with blood and perspiration, we began making arrangements for the receipt of about 80 German wounded.

The worst sight was a poor fellow who had his face literally blown away.

His right eye, nose, and most of both cheeks were missing.

His mouth and lips were unrecognizable.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):

Let me ask you, John, if all of our crew there are well? Is everything all right with you aside from what's going on outside?

WOMAN 2:

What?

VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):

The tongue and nasal cavity were exposed, part of his lower jaw was left and the soft tissues were severed from the neck under his chin, so that the face really consisted of two curtains of soft tissue hanging loosely from the forehead, with a gap in the center.

WOMAN 1:

Hmmnm?

WOMAN 2:

It **has**?

WOMAN 1:

What?

The case was so bad that I had no hesitation in giving a large dose of morphia immediately.

WOMAN 2:

It hasn't. You don't know. It can't have been. *(short pause)* I used to say things like "forever" and not know what they meant.

The patient lingered from four to six hours afterwards in spite of repeated liberal doses of morphia.

WOMAN 1:

Oh! No. I'm sorry, I forgot.

WOMAN 2:

"Forever is a long time." Is that from somewhere? Or just something people say?

Another face injury was almost as bad. Practically the whole right side of the face was completely blown away.

Pause.

I don't really care. It's a stupid thing to say. Forever is forever. It's not a long time. It's forever. People don't know.

One had not time to examine these cases for minute details . . .

Pause.

I'm hungry! I'm hungry and my teeth hurt!

Woman 2 begins to walk uneasily. Woman 1 begins to laugh.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 1990):

John, all we can see is darkness. Are you able to see anything out of your hotel window?

What?

WOMAN 1:
 "My mouth hurts because it needs food, I'm so hungry!" (*short pause*) He said.

*VOICE 1, male (medical report, 1914 cont'd):
 . . . but they were very instructive, and showed how hard it is to kill a man with face injury.*

WOMAN 2:
 Right. Your son.

Altogether four deaths occurred among the German wounded.

WOMAN 1:
 My son. My baby.

MEDIA REPORTS (RECORDED): A WEIGHTED WARNING, HEAVY DISAPPROVAL

Pause.

WOMAN 2:
 Are you cold?

*VOICE 2, male (on-air editorial, 1970):
 When the French were here, they used to call the road that runs from Hue northward towards Hanoi "The Street Without Joy."*

WOMAN 1:
 My feet are cold.

WOMAN 2:
 I'll get you an extra blanket.

Well, the city of Hue itself has now become the city without joy.

WOMAN 1:
 No, this is fine. It's only my feet.

WOMAN 2:
 I'll get you a blanket.

Thirty thousand bodies of civilians are dead, the victims of communist occupation buried in mass graves.

WOMAN 1:
 No.

WOMAN 2:
 For your feet. Didn't you tell me you do that at night? At your house? A special blanket just for your feet.

WOMAN 1:
 No, but yes! I do! I did!

WOMAN 2:

A foot blanket!

VOICE 2, male (on-air editorial, 1970 cont'd):

They were shot, clubbed to death, or buried alive.

WOMAN 1:

A foot blanket?

WOMAN 2:

A foot blanket!

WOMAN 1:

Is there such a thing?

Records at the civilian hospital in Ben Tre provide bloody and convincing evidence of how Vietnamese civilians suffered at the hands of the U.S. military.

WOMAN 2:

If it's a blanket for your feet.

WOMAN 1:

It's just a blanket.

WOMAN 2:

Just for your feet. It's a foot blanket.

WOMAN 1:

It's not **just** for my feet.

A total of 1,882 civilians with war-connected wounds were treated by the hospital, and of that number only 451 were wounded by Viet Cong fire.

WOMAN 2:

That's what you said. A blanket just for your feet.

WOMAN 1:

No, it's not just **for** my feet. I just put it on my feet.

WOMAN 2:

So it's a foot blanket.

WOMAN 1:

There's no such thing!

WOMAN 2:

But you have one!

WOMAN 1:

No! It's not a foot blanket. I could use it for other things!

VOICE 2, male (on-air editorial, 1970 cont'd):

The remainder, 1,431 civilians, were wounded by what is called, in the irrational parlance of Vietnam, "friendly fire," or U.S. firepower.

WOMAN 2:

But do you?

WOMAN 1:

No, it's—

American soldiers had come to Vietnam to win Uncle Sam's war.

WOMAN 2:

Just for your feet! A foot blanket.

WOMAN 1:

I—

WOMAN 2:

He said he'd kill me.

They were prepared to stand up and fight . . .

PAUSE .

WOMAN 1:

What?

WOMAN 2:

He said he'd kill me if I left him.

WOMAN 1:

No, he didn't.

. . . but they had not come expecting this.

WOMAN 2:

He did. He said he'd kill me if I ever left him.

WOMAN 1:

No, he didn't. He's not going to kill you. He never said that.

This was not the kind of war they had come flying thousands of miles to find.

WOMAN 2:

You think I'm making it up?

VOICE 2, male (on-air editorial, 1970 cont'd):

WOMAN 1:

Not making it up.

*What they had been told, by those who they thought
knew best, was that this was a war of attrition .*

. . .

WOMAN 2:

You think I'm imagining it?

WOMAN 1:

Not imagining it, but you said . . .

*. . . the kind of war they fought best, as in
Korea.*

WOMAN 2:

I know. I know. I mix things up.

WOMAN 1:

You don't remember.

*But they were soon to find out that this was not
the way of their enemies . . .*

WOMAN 2:

Maybe.

WOMAN 1:

I think maybe.

. . . the communist guerillas. . .

Pause.

WOMAN 2:

And maybe not.

. . . the Viet Kong.

Silence.

SILENCE.

WOMAN 1:

Are you cold?

WOMAN 2:

No. No, I'm . . .

Woman 2 collapses into the bed.

WOMAN 2:

I'm tired. I'm so tired.

Woman 1 wraps her arms around Woman 2.

WOMAN 1:

I know.

WOMAN 2:

And I'm so very tired of, all the time, being tired.

A warm light glows from the windows beneath them. Then, a white light fades up on the bed.

WOMAN 1:

The light is nice.

WOMAN 2:

It's not.

WOMAN 1:

The way it hits the bed.

WOMAN 2:

It's horrible. Makes me feel like a specimen.

WOMAN 1:

It warms the place up.

WOMAN 2:

I hate it.

ANNOUNCEMENT (RECORDED): SOMBER, STENTORIAN

VOICE 1, male (presidential announcement, 1945):

A short time ago, an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima. And destroyed its usefulness to the enemy. That bomb has more power than 20 thousand tons of TNT.

This is an atomic bomb. The atom bomb is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The Japanese began the war from the air at Pearl Harbor. They have been repaid many fold, and the end is not yet.

This is an atomic bomb—a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. We are now prepared to destroy, more rapidly and completely, every productive enterprise the Japanese have in any city.

WOMAN 1: Makes it almost cozy.

WOMAN 2: No.

WOMAN 1: Makes it feel alive.

WOMAN 2: I might as well be dead.

WOMAN 1: No . . .

WOMAN 2: Yes!

Woman 2 moves away from Woman 1.

I prayed the most terrible thing.

Pause.

I prayed that he would die first. *(short pause)* I really did.

Pause.

WOMAN 1: Light is so important to me. I can be almost anywhere if there's good light. Lots and lots of light. It opens a space up. Makes a space breathe.

WOMAN 2: Out loud.

VOICE 1, male (*presidential announcement, 1945 cont'd*):
This is an atomic bomb. The atom bomb is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake, we shall completely destroy Japan's power to make war.

This is an atomic bomb—a harnessing of the basic power of the universe. The force from which the sun draws its power has been loosed against those who brought war to the Far East. If the Japanese do not now accept our terms, they may now expect a rain of ruin from the air.

This is an atomic bomb. The atom bomb is a harnessing of the basic power of the universe . . . the like of which has never been seen on this earth.

VOICE 1 (RECORDED) CONTINUES UNINTERRUPTED UNTIL TEXT IS EXHAUSTED; VOICE 2 (RECORDED) BEGINS AT INDICATED POINT CORRESPONDING TO WOMEN'S DIALOGUE, OVERLAPPING VOICE 1.

MEDIA REPORTS (RECORDED): HISTRIONIC, DEADLY SERIOUS.

VOICE 2, male (*newsreel, 1945*):
Now the take off, of an atomic missile bound for Nagasaki! A terrifying moment indeed, and from a great altitude we see the atomic explosion.

WOMAN 1:

And different places have different light. Different kinds of light.
Different qualities.

WOMAN 2:

I don't know who heard me.

WOMAN 1:

Almost different personalities.

WOMAN 2:

I don't know if he did.

WOMAN 1:

Different deities.

WOMAN 2:

I don't know if I wanted him to.

Woman 2 lays her head on Woman 1's shoulder.

It hurts my eyes, the light.

WOMAN 1:

Hmnmnm.

WOMAN 2:

Everything hurts.

WOMAN 1:

I know.

Woman 2 stands.

VOICE 2, male (newsreel, 1945 cont'd):

(explosion) Look at that! The phantasmal swirl of atomic energy soars upward in a column capped by a mushroom shape. A whirlpool of elemental fires rising to 60 thousand feet.

This is the second atomic bomb to hit Japan.

We will remember that the first atomic bomb gave a sudden fighting stroke in this war to completely wipe out Hiroshima. That city, the size of Denver, was ceremoniously annihilated, turned into flattened wreckage in a blinding instant.

Now, Japan has no choice but to surrender in the face of atomic obliteration!

Our enemy must bow low to that column of doom . . .

WOMAN 2:

I want to get dressed.

WOMAN 1:

Do you want to eat first?

WOMAN 2:

(speaking too loudly, as if to someone beyond the playing area)
I want everything first!!

CUT ABRUPTLY.

VOLUME INCREASES.

Woman 1 sits upright. The score can be distinctly heard.

The white light on the women quickly becomes brighter and harsher.

Woman 2 looks up and around in the prolonged silence.

VOICE 2, male (newsreel, 1945 cont'd):

. . . the awesome force towering to the heavens,
 crowned with a stupendous mushroom of elemental
 disintegration!

SCENE FROM A MODERN CARTOON (RECORDED): HYPER-DRAMATIC.

VOICE 1, male (super-hero):

I don't trust this silence. Something's definitely
 not right.

VOICE 2, male (side-kick):

What is this place, Rex?

VOICE 1, male (super hero):

We're under the golden spider's headquarters, Muggo.

VOICE 2, male (side-kick):

Whaaaaat?

VOICE 1, male (super hero):

Calm down, my friend. We're down so deep their
 spinning forces can't possibly detect us!

ELECTRONIC NOISE.

VOICE 2, male (side-kick):

Whoooa! What was that?!!

VOICE 1, male (super hero):

Look out behind you, Muggo!!!!

WOMAN 2:
 I ...
 I'm sorry.
 I am.
 I'm being terrible. I'm such a brat I can't stand it and I don't know how you can.

WOMAN 1:
(the beginnings of a chill in her tone) I can and you can.

WOMAN 2:
 I can't—

WOMAN 1:
 No!?!

WOMAN 2:
 I ... I don't know.

WOMAN 1:
 You don't?

WOMAN 2:
 And ... Um ...
 That's the thing about it. It's, um ... that ...

VOICE 2, male (side-kick):
 Ahhh

VOICE 1, male (super hero):
 Janna! Come here! Use your invisible force-field, and quick!

HIGH-PITCHED SPACE SOUND.

VOICE 2, female (super hero):
 Holy handrails, Rex! It's not working! What is that thing?

VOICE 1, male (super hero):
 I don't know, but let's see how it reacts to heavy artillery!

GUNSHOTS, SOUNDS OF FIGHTING.

VOICE 2, female (super hero):
 Gadzooks! It's got us surrounded, Rex! Where's Muggo?

VOICE 1, male (super hero):
 Never mind about Muggo, Janna! You're hit!

VOICE 2, female (super hero):
 Rex! All of my super powers are gone!

VOICE 1, male (super hero):
 We've got to get you out of here, Janna!

VOICE 2, female (super hero):
 We've got to get Muggo! We can't leave him in here!

VOICE 1, male (super hero):
 Muggo's dead, Janna. And you don't want to see what they did to him!

WOMAN 1:

If you've got something to say, why don't you just say it?

WOMAN 2:

Because I . . . I just wish I **knew**, you know? If I could only remember . . .

WOMAN 1:

(icily) Do you think anybody knows? Be thankful you don't remember. I've spent my entire life trying to forget things. You're a lucky girl, a very lucky girl. Everyone says so.

Woman 2 appears almost frozen.

The lights on the women fade to a comfortable level.

Woman 1 sighs a long sigh, and begins the process of removing her stockings and placing them on the foot of the bed. She tells the following as a fairy tale, or a fable—a Sunday School lesson.

I used to put up these little houses every Christmas. Not exactly miniature, but little; little houses made of paper, of cardboard, but they were colorful, and they had the coating on the roofs which made it look like it had snowed. It was glitter, but not glitter. It shimmered.

And there were holes in the backs of the houses for lights. I'd put Christmas tree lights in the holes, stringing them all together. White ones, but I suppose I could have put colored ones in.

I collected those houses. Some were from my mother, my grandmother . . . There were maybe some that were older than that.

VOICE 2, female (super hero):

What are you . . .

Jumpin Jeepers! There was nothing in the mission about this! We can't let them get away with it!

VOICE 1, male (super hero):

Janna, pull yourself together! Look out!

VOICE 2, female (super hero):

Help me Rex! Help Me!

VOLUME DECREASES, BUT SOUNDS OF VIOLENCE & GUNFIRE CONTINUE AND ONLY GRADUALLY FADE UNDERNEATH VOICE 1 (RECORDED), BELOW.

NARRATIVES (RECORDED): EMPTY, DARK.

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 2000):

"I remember a Chechen female sniper. We just tore her apart with two armored personnel carriers, having tied her ankles with steel cables. There was a lot of blood, but the boys needed it."

These are the words of an unnamed Russian soldier, describing recent occurrences in Chechnya. The statement reflects a widespread feeling among Russian soldiers that their actions, no matter how violent or cruel, are necessary and will have no recourse from official sources. In fact, according to several Russian soldiers interviewed for this report, more often than not, violent actions of rape, torture, looting and executions receive accolades from peers and even official commendation.

"You need to make sure that they feel as much pain as possible," says one Russian soldier. "You don't want them to die too fast because fast death is an easy death. On one hand it sounds bad, but on the other hand, it's easy to get used to."

WOMAN 1 (cont'd):

I'd make a snow scene with them, a village. The snow was cottony, but it was spun nylon, I think. And it had gotten a bit yellowed but I didn't mind that, I liked it. It gave it a old-fashioned feeling to me.

There must've been, oh, thirty or forty houses. Different shapes, different sorts of houses. Some with porches. And a church. With a light, or a place for a light, in the steeple. There were no people. My son always wondered where all the people were. I liked it that there were no people. No tracks in the snow.

I would spend hours setting up that village. Every Christmas. I'd put it up right after Thanksgiving. I wouldn't take it down until after the New Year—Twelfth Night. I'd take it down on Twelfth Night. And only I knew that's what it was. This was my secret, that it was Twelfth Night. Which is the start of Carnival. In New Orleans. So as I would pack each house neatly away in its box, as I would gather up the snow and put it in a special bag, I would think of a wild, raucous, racy New Orleans Carnival.

I would put it all away and even that was my own little festival.

Woman 1 takes off her sweater and lays it alongside the stockings.

They're gone now, those houses. The snow, too, I suppose. And the lights. All of it.

The two women are standing, and face each other from opposite sides of the bed.

Because they found out. What it meant to me. I had somehow slipped and I let them know.

VOICE 1, male (newscast, 2000 cont'd):

Earlier this year in the small town of Aldi, Russian soldiers engaged in a documented, day-long orgy of killing, arson, and rape. At least sixty people were summarily executed that day, the oldest was eighty-two, the youngest not quite one.

"Our house was burning," says a teenage girl. "And when I entered the yard to look for my family, I saw my mother's body lying by the gates, almost cut in two, face down in a pool of blood. She was on her knees, bent over. The left part of her head was smashed. There were bullet wounds on her left side. The body almost split in two when I tried to lift it."

It is unclear what precisely motivated these units to commit the mass murder these civilians. The violence could not have served any military purpose. There are accounts of spontaneous armed resistance to the Russian soldiers by the civilian population, individually or collectively. And second-hand reports of the rape of several women during the rampage have surfaced. In one incident, soldiers reportedly gang-raped four women and strangled three of them, leaving the fourth for dead.

REPORT (LIVE): HOLLOW, RINGING.

VOICE 1, male (report, 1993):

The 1951 definition of a refugee excludes victims of female-specific experiences such as bride-burning, forced marriage, forced abortion or compulsory sterilization, and cannot begin to account for the nearly 20,000 women in the former Yugoslavian republic who have been systematically savaged by Serbian forces in special rape camps . . .

WOMAN 1 (cont'd):

They threw everything away.

And I had to let them.

Silence.

WOMAN 2:

(covering) Yes.

WOMAN 1:

(brightly, unbuttoning her dress) Look at you! The middle of the day and still in your nightclothes! We'll not tell, will we?! We'll just be two girls, having a day off.

WOMAN 2:

That'll be . . .

WOMAN 1:

Won't it, though! Come, come come!

Woman 1 guides Woman 2 onto the center of the bed. Woman 1 is behind Woman 2, stroking her hair.

You, you, you. Your mother must have been so proud of you. If you were my daughter I'd certainly be proud of you.

WOMAN 2:

Hah . . .!

WOMAN 1:

Do you think your mother would mind if I just gobbled you up, said you were mine?

VOICE 1, male (report, 1993 cont'd):

. . . nor the reports of crimes against women by Muslim and Croatian soldiers in the Balkan war.

SILENCE.

NARRATIVES (RECORDED): ARBITRARY, SING-SONG (CONTRARY TO TEXT).

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 2000):

Turkish law tells us that killing a blood relative is punishable by death. However, the legalities shift if the brutal act is a so-called "honor killing," in which a young woman is killed by a father or brother after she has "stained" the family's honor . . .

WOMAN 2:

I . . . I don't think so.

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 2000 cont'd):

WOMAN 1:

Good! Because that's almost what it's like, isn't it?

. . . by engaging in behavior which is interpreted as sexually or socially inappropriate. In these cases, the murderer is likely to receive a sentence of as little as six years in prison, and be out in two.

WOMAN 2:

I don't . . .

WOMAN 1:

It must be hard for her, your mother, to see you like this.

WOMAN 2:

I . . . What? What did you say?

WOMAN 1:

For her to see you. Like you are now.

A woman's "dishonor" having been the result of a rape does not alter the situation in the eyes of the law. The fact that her violation rendered her "un-clean" is always considered in weighing the "mitigating circumstances" of the case, and a reduced sentence is inevitably invoked for the woman's murderer.

WOMAN 2:

Like I am now . . .

WOMAN 1:

Because you're still her little girl! You're her darling. And every teeny scrape or bump, it's the end of the world! That's the way it is for all of us.

WOMAN 2:

(considering) Every teeny scrape or bump . . .

WOMAN 1:

The end of the world! The whole world! Our very own bundles of joy . . .

"For us, such girls are no different from dogs or the rats on the street," says a merchant who killed his 14-year-old daughter after she had been raped.

Woman 2 tries to turn her head. Woman 1 holds her face forward.

OICE 2, male (newscast, 2000 cont'd):

WOMAN 1:
I'll bet you were a handful, though! Weren't you? After awhile?
He's shown me pictures of you, and you certainly gave everyone a
run for their money!

*A survey found that as recently as 1997, honor
killings took the lives of nearly 400 women in Yemen,
52 in Egypt, 25 in Jordan and approximately 300 each
year in Pakistan.*

WOMAN 2:
(laughing) I don't really know about that!

WOMAN 1:
Oh, you do!

WOMAN 2:
No, I . . .

*"Honor is a virtue that only a man can possess, and
can only be soiled by a female body," states a Turkish
lawyer. Thus, the honor killings commonplace in many
Arab nations are justifiable as long as there is a
"suspicion of immorality on the part of the victim,"
according to a Human Rights Commission in Pakistan.*

WOMAN 1:
With your fine features, and your soft skin . . .

Woman 1 strokes her cheek.

WOMAN 2:
I . . .

WOMAN 1:
If I had skin like yours, you'd never be able to stop me, and that's
the truth! So soft, so smooth, like a kitten.

*Recent victims include a wife and mother of a three-
year-old, shot dead while she was sleeping because she
was seen talking to the wrong man, and a 12-year-old
girl whose throat was cut by her 17-year-old husband
because she had gone to the movies without his
permission.*

WOMAN 2:
A kitten? The skin of a kitten?

WOMAN 1:
Yes!

WOMAN 2:
Really!

WOMAN 1:

Sure! But me? I have a complexion just like an old war horse!

Woman 2 laughs.

It's true! A battle nag! No one ever chased after me for my skin, let me tell you!

WOMAN 2:

You're . . . you're being very sweet, you don't have to . . .

WOMAN 1:

I'm not, I just say what I see!

Woman 1 runs her fingers over Woman 2's face. Woman 2 shuts her eyes.

Not a bruise to be found. No one need ever know.

Woman 2 opens her eyes. She then touches her face.

WOMAN 2:

No. No bruises. Not anymore.

WOMAN 1:

Time heals everything!

WOMAN 2:

No marks. No evidence. Not from a teeny scrape, right?

WOMAN 1:

Right!

WOMAN 2:

Not from an incidental bump . . .

VOICE 2, male (newscast, 2000 cont'd):

One young woman was on her honeymoon, but because she married a man of whom her father did not approve, her head was cut off and paraded down a Cairo street.

And yet another woman was stabbed to death by her father on her wedding night, because her husband proclaimed that she had not been a virgin.

"If she's mmoral, it's the man's duty to kill her," a local Muslim leader insisted, applauding his friend's actions.

It was later discovered that the new husband was impotent, and lied to protect his own honor because he could not prove his wife's pre-marriage virgin state by participating in the local custom . . .

WOMAN 1:
Of course not!

WOMAN 2:
An innocent hump . . .

Woman 1 forcefully hugs Woman 2.

WOMAN 1:
Ohhhhh!!

WOMAN 2:
Owwwww!!

WOMAN 1:
Feeling all better now, are we? Good, good good. Now, up we go!

Woman 2 moves away from Woman 1. Woman 1 removes her dress, and lays it on top of her other articles of clothing on the bed.

Wearing only a slip not unlike the one Woman 2 wears, Woman 1 settles into bed.

WOMAN 1:
Now tell me a story, will you? I haven't been sleeping well. It doesn't have to be long, I don't even care what it's about. Just the sound of your voice will put me right out, dear. It does it every—

Woman 1 is suddenly fast asleep.

Woman 2 looks at Woman 1. Woman 1 starts to pick up the dress, then abruptly scatters the clothing across the room. Holding her breath, she quickly looks around her, then directly at the audience.

She moves to a window where the stockings worn by Woman 1 have fallen, and looks down into it.

*VOICE 2, male (newscast, 2000 cont'd):
. . . displaying a bloody rag outside of their marital chamber the night of the wedding.*

CUT ABRUPTLY.

SILENCE.

REPORT (RECORDED): AS IF FROM A SPY FILM—OILY, SEDUCTIVE (CONTRARY TO TEXT).

*VOICE 1, male (report, 1993):
After the discovery of hidden military records, the Japanese government released documents . . .*

Woman 2 picks up the stockings.

She leans against the foot of the bed and seductively begins to put them on.

She addresses the audience—a prostitute to an impotent john.

WOMAN 2:

You were the first one I wanted to see when I woke up. Did you know that? Does that surprise you?

Probably not.

I should have figured you wouldn't be there.

But when I did see you, I almost laughed. Really. Because I . . . was bigger than you were. Even small, helpless me, who needed help to eat and stand and walk and go to the bathroom. Somehow I was bigger than you. Stronger than you. Better than you, the bloody, mangled thing that I was.

Why? Because people hated you. Because people blamed you. I didn't blame you. I . . . well, maybe I did blame you. Maybe that's why I felt stronger. Maybe I hated you, too.

I couldn't tell them who had done it. I didn't *remember*, I don't *remember!* That night there was only . . . my body as a witness. Not myself. But it might as well have been you.

Part of me was afraid that it had been you.

VOICE 1, male (report, 1993 cont'd):

. . .which confirmed the systematic recruitment of women for army brothels during WWII. Research has uncovered that as many as 200,000 girls and women were part of the Japanese program of "comfort women."

According to one woman's testimony, at 17 she was kept in a house with 30 other girls and raped every night by 20 to 30 soldiers. It is believed that the government forcibly enslaved women from Korea, Philippines, Burma, China, Taiwan, Indonesia and the Netherlands to serve as prostitutes for the country's armed servicemen from 1937 to 1945. According to one woman's testimony, at 17 she was kept in a house with 30 other girls and raped every night by 20 to 30 soldiers. Research has uncovered that as many as 200,000 girls and women were part of the Japanese program of "comfort women." Hundreds of women survivors have come forward, and the Japanese government was recently forced to reverse its position of denial, admitting the atrocities but still not providing any compensation for its war-rape victims. According to one woman's testimony, at 17 she was kept in a house with 30 other girls and raped every night by 20 to 30 soldiers.

Research has uncovered that as many as 200,000 girls and women were part of the Japanese program of "comfort women" over the eight-year period, and that more than one half of the girls and women died as a direct result of the treatment they received. According to one woman's testimony, at 17 she was kept in a house with 30 other girls and raped every night by 20 to 30 soldiers. Figures bear out that if an estimated 20,000 comfort women were actively held at any given time, and if these same women were raped at least 10 times per day, at least 200,000 daily rapes were arranged by the Japanese authorities and carried out by its soldiers—200,000 rapists each day.

WOMAN 2 (cont'd):

That'd be funny, huh?

Woman 2 explores her body.

Because now, you were the one that was afraid of me.

Afraid of my body. My skinny, weakened body which I didn't recognize and couldn't use. You were afraid of where it had been and who had been in it. What had been done to it. Because it wasn't you?

What a joke that would be.

I remember the first time after. I pretended to be scared, for your sake. I pretended to be small, for your sake. To be a crushed flower, a fractured doll, a delicate animal. You didn't want me to hurt, you didn't want it to hurt. I didn't care.

I almost wish it had hurt, what you were doing. When you touched me and you looked at me. And when your eyes were closed and you told me you'd imagined what had happened to me.

But no.

I don't remember what it was like before. What I was like before. All I could do was pretend.

Did you not see . . .? Or did you not *care*?

VOICE 1, male (report, 1993 cont'd):

According to one woman's testimony, at 17 she was kept in a house with 30 other girls and raped every night by 20 to 30 soldiers. Research has uncovered that as many as 200,000 girls and women were part of the Japanese program of "comfort women." With these rapes occurring at least five days per week, calculations give an estimate of at least 1 million rapes per week, or 4 million per month, or nearly 50 million per year—conservatively, almost 400 million rapes and rapists against the women of Korea, Philippines, Burma, China, Taiwan, Indonesia and the Netherlands. According to one woman's testimony, at 17 she was kept in a house with 30 other girls and raped every night by 20 to 30 soldiers.

Because of increased pressure by women, modern-day war-time rape has come under serious scrutiny at international tribunals established to address war crimes across the globe. According to one woman's testimony, at 17 she was kept in a house with 30 other girls and raped every night by 20 to 30 soldiers. Although it has been given new attention, rape during war-times is by no means a newly-condemned crime; rape thus characterized has been condemned by international law for centuries. It is no surprise that the focus of attention concerning victims of rape during war-times is currently that of compensation—

QUICK FADE

SILENCE

A tray of food appears.

Woman 2 quickly puts on the dress worn by Woman 1, and slips on the shoes.

WOMAN 2):
(bellowing) **TIME TO EAT!!**

Woman 1 wakes up luxuriously, as if out of a '40s movie.

WOMAN 1:
 Oh, hello! It's you again! I was having the most delightful dream!

WOMAN 2 :
(roughly uncovering the tray) **Here.**

WOMAN 1:
 And what do we have today?

Woman 1 picks up a huge rack of ribs.

WOMAN 1:
 Well! This is a surprise!

WOMAN 2:
 Yes, it's my job to keep you on your toes.

WOMAN 1:
(with bubbly laughter) Oh is it? You're certainly doing it well, that's for sure! *(under her breath)* **BUTTONS.**

Woman 2 begins to fix her buttons, then breaks down crying.

WOMAN 2:
 I'm sorry, I'm sorry . . .

WWII NEWSREELS (RECORDED): ENTHUSIASTIC, STYLIZED.

VOICE 2, male:
(music) Battle-weary but victorious, American GIs and Tommies of the British 8th Army meet in a joyful allied victory celebration in North Africa. For the first time in this war, Broadway and Piccadilly join hands!

VOICE 1, male:
(music) In the greatest amphibious operation ever attempted, a pre-dawn naval bombardment prepares the way for allied soldiers to assault the Normandy beaches, and claw out a desperate foothold on the continent of Europe!

VOICE 2, male:
(music) And Paris is liberated! As French troops lead the way, the Allies march into the historic city which has been under Nazi occupation for the past four years! The hard fighting French Second Armored Division get a welcome they will never forget as they enter their beloved Paris!

Woman 1 looks around.

WOMAN 1:

(sotto voce) Stop it! Stop that right now!

WOMAN 2:

I can't . . .

WOMAN 1:

Don't you dare do this to me . . .

WOMAN 2:

(recovering) Champagne?

WOMAN 1:

Don't mind if I do! How lovely! And Alstroemeria? My favorite flowers.

WOMAN 2:

Finish everything and . . .

WOMAN 1:

Don't tell me! Strawberry Shortcake? Cherries Jubilee? Peach Melba?

WOMAN 2:

Squash.

Pause.

WOMAN 1:

Butternut?

WOMAN 2:

Crook-neck.

VOICE 2, male:

(music) The main body of the American army re-supplied now and groaning like a juggernaut, the U.S. boys are rushing towards the Czar. Nazi resistance seems to be crumbling, and to all appearances nothing can stop our troops from driving into the heart of Germany!

VOICE 1, male:

(music) Supported by medium bombers and fighter bombers flying countless sorties against German positions, elements of the Third Army, spearheaded by the Fourth Armored Division, drive into the besieged city of Basteaux to relieve its eighteen thousand defenders on the day after Christmas. The Third Army moved farther and faster, and engaged more divisions in less time, than any other army in the history of the United States!

Pause.

WOMAN 1:
(laughing) Well, I never! All right, then! Crook-neck squash it is! *(starting to eat)* So, where is he?

WOMAN 2:
 Where is he?

WOMAN 1:
 Yes. *(prompting)* "Where is he?"

WOMAN 2:
 Oh! *(short pause)* Your "bundle of joy." He's in the nursery.

WOMAN 1:
 Yes!

WOMAN 2:
 Yes.

Pause.

WOMAN 1:
 "In the nursery . . .?" *(short pause)* "He's . . ."

WOMAN 2:
(picking up her cue) He's the most beautiful baby, really he is. Everybody says so. The most heavenly boy I've ever seen. It's a treat just being around him. From the moment he was born, my life was changed, too. The whole world is a better place.

That boy! it's been my pleasure caring for him, putting him to sleep, looking after him, feeding him, burping him, cleaning him. I've found that he drools to rival a champion St. Bernard, that boy! He pees vintage wine, his shit smells like orchids—

VOICE 2, male:

(music) Streaking the sky with vapor trails, American heavy bombers hurl tons of explosives. The target is Berlin, and our air power crushes Nazi war centers! The Russians capture the Nazi capital, and the European war ends, with the guilty war makers meeting their end.

RECORDED VOICES SHIFT TO LIVE ACTORS; PACE & TONE MORE INSISTENT, DRIVING.

VOICE 2, male (cont'd):

Finally, the world is rid of the evil creature whose **megalomania— megalomania— megalomania** took millions of lives, whose criminalities were revealed to be of such depraved depths that he perished after disclosing his final atrocities!

VOICE 1, male:

(music & cheering) Victory in Europe is followed by a modern version of a triumph which brings to mind **conquering— conquering— conquering— conquering** Roman generals of old. General Ike bids a **heartfelt farewell— heartfelt farewell— heartfelt farewell** to Britain, and our colors fly over Berlin, a sign to the Americans in the occupation. It's the flag which was hoisted in captured Algiers, then in Rome—the flag that will be hoisted over Tokyo!

WOMAN 1 (cont'd):

Remember that, will you?

WOMAN 2:

I'll remember.

VOICE 2, male (cont'd):

. . . **nothing left— nothing left— nothing left—
nothing left— nothing left— nothing left— nothing
left— nothing left— nothing left— nothing left—
nothing left— nothing left—**

CUT ABRUPTLY.

Woman 2 picks up the sweater worn by Woman 1 from the floor, and starts to put it on.

MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENTS (RECORDED): SEETHING HATRED, DISGUST.

Oh. Are you cold?

WOMAN 1:

Don't you worry. I don't want to muss myself; the photographers are coming in soon.

VOICE 1, male (official statements, 1992):

Following a jury verdict which found four LAPD officers innocent of charges resulting in the beating of Rodney King, South Central Los Angeles fell victim to a violent and fatal explosion of arson and gunshots.

WOMAN 2:

(putting on the sweater) Oh.

WOMAN 1:

I probably shouldn't, but is there any more . . . ?

In the first hours after the verdicts, police and medical emergency teams put the death count at nine, with another 138 injured.

Woman 2 empties the last of the champagne into the glass, then turns the bottle upside down in an ice bucket.

WOMAN 2:

(to herself) I like doing that.

Yesterday, a national television network reported receiving information concerning white motorists being pulled from their cars and beaten by crowds of black youths. An emergency medical services source described the situation in the area as being, "extremely fluid," adding that all available teams have been placed on alert and that fire department medic units have been dispatched throughout the city.

WOMAN 1:

Doing what?

WOMAN 2:

The bottle.

WOMAN 1:

Oh, yes. *(draining her glass)* A sense of completion.

Woman 1 throws her glass on the floor. It shatters.

WOMAN 1:

And the mark of a celebration, too! (*short pause*) Keep up with me, girl!

WOMAN 2:

Right.

Woman 2 picks up the pieces of broken glass.

WOMAN 1:

Did you ever notice the color of broken glass?

WOMAN 2:

The color?

WOMAN 1:

Of the edge. Of a thick piece of broken glass. Not like that stuff. A real piece of glass.

WOMAN 2:

Oh! A **real** piece of glass.

WOMAN 1:

A slab of glass. Not window glass. Like table tops or shelves.

WOMAN 2:

Uh huh.

WOMAN 1:

The thicker the slab the better, the better color. It's a blue-green, almost a sea green, mixed with a sky blue. Hints of color rather than a color itself. More light than color. A color which is luminous. Aquatic. Opalescent? No, how would you put it?

VOICE 1, male (official statements, 1992 cont'd):

On the second day of the uprising, upwards of 40 fires were burning out of control, and teams responded to more than 150 fires city-wide. At least 5 people have been shot by police in the Inglewood, and Los Angeles has declared a local state of emergency. More than 2,000 National Guardsmen have been called in to aid during the disturbances.

The deaths are now at 38, and reports confirm more than 1,250 people injured, 3,6000 structural fires, hundreds of businesses looted, and more than 3,000 people arrested. With a dusk to dawn curfew established in the city, 4,000 National Guardsmen have been brought into the area, units supplemented by an additional 4,000 US Marine and Army troops.

Fourteen-hundred people were arrested as rioting spread throughout San Francisco's downtown. In Las Vegas, a group of 200 went on a rampage . . . Nevada National Guard . . . Seattle besieged by large mobs.

WOMAN 2:

I wouldn't.

VOICE 1, male (official statements, 1992 cont'd):

*In New York City, a gang of 400 black youths . . .
vandalizing buildings . . . protestors caused injuries
. . . more than 80 arrests . . . acts of violence in
Atlanta, Georgia . . . over 300 arrests . . . damage .
. . . injuries . . .*

WOMAN 1:

It's hard to describe that color, is what I'm trying to say. But I think that's the most beautiful color in the world. There's something pure about it. Cool and clear and pure. And that's the color his eyes are *FADE*.

Silence.

SILENCE.

Woman 2 looks at the pieces of broken glass in her hands.

STATISTICS (RECORDED): DIRECT, CUTTING.

She has cut herself. She places the glass on the tray, along with the remnants from lunch, and the tray disappears.

VOICE 2, male (official findings, 2000):

*A woman is raped in America every two minutes. Every
15 seconds a woman is the victim of some sort of
battery.*

WOMAN 1:

I suppose they'll be bringing him in soon.

WOMAN 2:

(with a laugh) You do, do you?

*A woman is beaten by her husband every 7.4 seconds and
domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to
women between ages 15 and 44 in the United States.*

WOMAN 1:

Yes! Before we go home. I'd think they'd bring him in for the best possible photo opportunity.

Woman 2 plays along, speaking to the playing area at large.

WOMAN 2:

Oh, yeah. I'm sure that's what will happen. *(short pause)* Hey! Did you have any preference as to his outfit? I think they've chosen the trucks, but maybe you'd like the blue puppies.

*One in five women victimized by their spouse or ex-
spouse report that they have been a victim of a series
of at least three assaults in the last six months.*

WOMAN 1:

Trucks! How perfect!

WOMAN 2:

Or the puppies. You know, to match his eyes.

VOICE 2, male (official findings, 2000 cont'd):

Sexual assault is reported by 33% to 46% of women who are being physically assaulted by their husbands.

WOMAN 1:

Pupp . . . No. That's not the same blue. Baby blue is not the same blue.

WOMAN 2:

No?

WOMAN 1:

No.

Over two-thirds of violent victimizations against women were committed by someone known to them; 31% of female victims reported that the offender was a stranger. Approximately 28% were intimates such as husbands or boyfriends, 35% were acquaintances, and the remaining 5% were other relatives.

WOMAN 2:

So trucks, then!

WOMAN 1:

Oh, yes. Colorful, busy, geometric trucks. Trucks with shapes. Trucks with animals. Trucks with fruits and trucks with vegetables. Trucks and truck drivers.

Woman 2 laughs.

WOMAN 1:

Yes? What's so funny?

Each year an estimated 500,000 women were the victims of some form of rape or sexual assault. Thirty-four percent of these victimizations were completed rapes, and an additional 28% were attempted rapes. Reports show that approximately 68% of rape victims knew their assailants.

WOMAN 2:

I'm sorry. I was just thinking of an outfit with truck drivers. Decorated with pictures of truck drivers.

WOMAN 1:

And?

WOMAN 2:

So I'm sorry, that's all.

WOMAN 1:

Oh. Good.

Pause.

I wish I had a mirror.

WOMAN 2:

You look fine.

WOMAN 1:

That's really beside the point. I just wish I had a mirror.

WOMAN 2:

Well, you don't.

WOMAN 1:

No. I don't.

Pause.

WOMAN 2:

I don't . . . Do you . . . Can I . . . Should . . .

WOMAN 1:

No. Nothing.

Pause. Woman 2 reaches out to Woman 1.

No!!! Don't touch me!! You've blood on your hands!

WOMAN 2:

I'm sorry!

Pause.

VOICE 2, male (official findings, 2000 cont'd):

One of every six women will be raped in her lifetime.

Twenty-two to thirty-five percent of women who visit medical emergency rooms are there for injuries related to ongoing partner abuse.

Female victims o

Female victims of violence by an intimate were more often injured by the violence than females victimized by a stranger.

Sexual assault continues to represent the most rapidly growing violent crime in America.

WOMAN 1:
But shouldn't they be bringing him in soon?

*VOICE 2, male (official findings, 2000 cont'd):
Seventy-five percent of rape victims require medical
attention after the attack . . .*

Pause.

WOMAN 2:
Are you serious?

*. . . and almost half of completed rapes result in non-
genital physical injuries.*

Pause.

WOMAN 1:
Yes?

*The most common genital areas injured are the mouth,
throat, wrist, arms, breasts and thighs, injured by
bruises, lacerations, bite-marks and scratches, with
3% requiring overnight hospitalization.*

WOMAN 2:
You are. You're serious.

WOMAN 1:
Yes!

WOMAN 2:
Oh! Wow!

*Twenty-nine percent of the attacks were completed
using some sort of weapon.*

WOMAN 1:
Wow?

WOMAN 2:
Because I thought . . .

WOMAN 1:
What?

*Data indicates that of 683,000 women who were forcibly
raped last year . . .*

WOMAN 2:
I just didn't know, that's all.

WOMAN 1:
(unravelling) So what are you saying?

WOMAN 2:

I'm not saying anything. I'm sorry.

VOICE 2, male (official findings, 2000 cont'd):

. . . eighty-four percent did not report the offense to the police.

WOMAN 1:

Yes. We've established that.

Ninety-two percent of the women who were physically abused by their partners did not discuss these incidents with their physicians.

WOMAN 2:

What is wrong with you?

Fifty-seven percent did not discuss the incidents with anyone.

WOMAN 1:

(completely undone) There's nothing wrong with me! Just bring me my goddamn son!

CUT ABRUPTLY

SILENCE

Pause. Woman 2 moves to Woman 1.

WOMAN 2:

(sotto voce) You know I can't do that. You know that can't be done.

Woman 1 is crying.

WOMAN 2:

I am sorry. I really am.

WOMAN 1:

No, I . . . Do you . . . Do you think that . . . I hate to ask you this, but . . . Do you think that you could . . . cut my toenails?

WOMAN 2:

Yes. I could cut them.

WOMAN 1:

Good. I feel awfully silly asking you to. But I can't do them myself. Isn't that ridiculous? A grown woman not being able to cut her own toenails. But I can't.

WOMAN 2:

I can. I will. Do you have clippers? *(to the playing area at large)*
Are there any clippers?

*REPORT (RECORDED): AS IF FROM A 1950s GOOD HOUSEKEEPING TV
SPECIAL—PAINFULLY UPLIFTING, CONDESCENDING (CONTRARY TO TEXT).*

Silence.

VOICE 1, male (military report, 1951):

*(musak) It is important to note that combat forces in
general will always be buoyed by discussion of combat.*

WOMAN 1:

(recovered) Oh, well. Then I shall just have claws on my toes.
Bear-like claws on each of my toes. My toenails shall grow so long
that they will click on the tiles as I walk. They will grow so long that
they will curl beneath my feet and I'll bounce when I walk, as if I'm
wearing springs. Or maybe I shant walk at all, but be wheeled
about in a little cart. You'll push me, won't you?

*An innate strength of the American infantryman in
Korea is his impressive capacity to recover from
weapon failure in the middle of combat, and relating
these experiences can only serve to bolster a
fighter's efficiency.*

WOMAN 2:

Sure! I'll . . . *(beginning to giggle)*

WOMAN 1:

You find my predicament amusing, do you?

WOMAN 2:

You could . . . You could bite them.

*Interestingly enough, in nearly all company after-
action critiques, the malfunctioning of the carbine
was noted in weapons details. Some men would report
two or three carbines failing within one action.
Whether carbine misfires were incidental or during
fighting was unclear, but the weapon's failure
statistics ranged from 30 to 85%.*

WOMAN 1:

(tittering) Now there's a thought. Although I was never a fingernail
biter. But that doesn't preclude me from becoming a toenail biter,
now does it?

WOMAN 2:

No! It doesn't.

WOMAN 1:

(yelling) Who needs clippers! I'll just sharpen my teeth!

*Other useful information: Numerous examples have been
recorded of a service pistol being used with killing
effect at the 10 - 25 yards range in perimeter defense
when no other weapon was available.*

The laughter begins to subside.

WOMAN 1:

Oh, dear.

VOICE 1, male (military report, 1951 cont'd):

And mention of AA multiple mounts is justifiable when summarizing weapons in the Korean defense.

WOMAN 2:

Yes?

WOMAN 1:

No, I didn't mean, **you**, dear, I just meant, **oh**, dear . . .

The quad-50 (M16) has a great tactical flexibility in ground fighting, and a visibly preferential demoralizing effect upon enemy over the Bofors twin-40. Taking the Korean record as a model, no other weapon will depress enemy firepower quicker and more fully, and discourage the enemy from taking action—with the understood exception of an air strike with napalm and rockets.

Laughter again consumes Woman 1. Woman 2 is genuinely amused.

WOMAN 2:

Oh . . .

WOMAN 1:

Dear!

Pause.

Oh, Dear!?!?!? (short pause) Hah! (laughter)

The necessity for a sharp killing tool at the end of a rifle is well documented in Korean operations. However, the Army Corps remains stubborn in championing the idea that the bayonet causes aggression in its men. In one company, the bayonet was used with killing effect only twice.

The joke has worn thin for Woman 2. Still giddy, Woman 1 begins to sing.

Oh, Dear! What can the matter be . . . (laughter) Dear, Dear!
What can the matter be . . . (laughter) Oh, Dear! What can—

WOMAN 2:

You really want to know?

Therefore, the significant contribution for the bayonet has been proven to be that of restoring the spirits of soldiers in need of a combat morale boost.

WOMAN 1:

(without a trace of humor) **DON'T.**

CUT ABRUPTLY.

SILENCE.

WOMAN 2:

—what the matter is?

Woman 1 shakes her head, focused on Woman 2.

WOMAN 2:

Why is it always me? Why does it always have to be me? It's always, always me.

Silence.

That can't be true.

Pause. She looks up or out for confirmation, before making a quick recovery.

Do you want something to eat? Are you hungry? *(short pause)*
No, that's right. *(short pause)* So. How do you feel?

WOMAN 1:

(measured) I feel fine.

WOMAN 2:

Great. *(short pause)* Then you don't need me.

Woman 2 begins to turn away, but stops herself.

It **is** always me, isn't it?

WOMAN 1:

(closing her eyes) I feel a nap coming on.

WOMAN 2:

It's always me and you're always fine.

WOMAN 1:

Not unless I get my eight hours!

REPORTS (RECORDED): IMMEDIATE, PROFESSIONAL.

VOICE 2, female (report of medical procedures, 2000):

The physical examination should start with non-threatening areas, such as the eyes, ears, nose and throat.

The presence, size and location of trauma not in the genital area should at this time be documented.

The genital examination follows the examination of the head, the lungs, the abdomen and musculoskeletal system

Engorgement of the labia or clitoris may last for one to two hours after injury.

WOMAN 2:

And I'm not.

VOICE 2, female (report of medical procedures, 2000 cont'd):

The condition of the hymen should be noted with special attention to any perineal trauma such as erythema, abrasions, tears or bruising.

WOMAN 1:

Plus cat naps.

WOMAN 2:

I'm not fine and I'm not going to be fine.

Also, it is advisable to examine the patient's thighs for semen stains, urine or pus.

WOMAN 1:

Just to rest my eyes.

WOMAN 2:

That's it, isn't it?

The presence of bleeding, tears and hematomas need also be noted.

WOMAN 1:

Why don't you come sit with me. Just for a bit.

VOICE 1 (RECORDED) CONTINUES UNINTERRUPTED UNTIL TEXT IS EXHAUSTED; VOICE 2 (RECORDED) BEGINS AT INDICATED POINT CORRESPONDING TO WOMEN'S DIALOGUE, OVERLAPPING VOICE 1.

WOMAN 2:

You must be amazed that it's taken me this long.

WOMAN 1:

I know it's against the rules, but I don't suppose anyone will mind.

WOMAN 2:

I'm certainly amazed.

VOICE 1, male (report of police procedures, 2000): Photographs of any bruises, wounds or marks found on the victim should be taken by a police photographer, preferably one of the same gender as the victim. It should be noted that often details of bruise patterns do not develop until two to three days after infliction.

Her eyes closed, Woman 1 pats the bed.

Pause.

Fine.

Woman 2 gets into bed and puts her arms around Woman 1, who sleeps.

WOMAN 2:

How funny.

I really never thought I was that sort of person. But apparently I am. It's amazing.

Every time something new happened, something new and terrible that only happens once in a person's life, I thought, "Okay, **this** is it." Now it gets easier. Now I'll have the kind of life that everybody else has. I'll get through this and I'll cry and grieve and heal and make potato salad with real mayonnaise and all of the eggs I want. Because this is it! Wow! But I got through it.

It's laughable, really, that it was me getting through it, that it was happening to me. Because it was supposed to be somebody else. The kind of person that, well, likes that sort of thing. Or not really likes it, but looks for it. Somewhere deep down they look for it. They do, I think. They ask for it.

But something must have gotten messed up, because here it was, and it was me! But I'm not . . .

Except I finally figured out that it **was** me. Supposed to be me. Always me.

And always you.

1, male (report of police procedures, 2000 cont'
Did you know all this? Or just make sure of it?

SILENCE.

Woman 2 takes a pillow and calmly smothers Woman 1 as if she were an infant in a crib.

Woman 1 wakes and struggles to no avail.

VOICE 1, male (report of police procedures, 2000 cont'd)

Bitemarks on the victim should be likewise photographed, and a forensic odontologist should be contacted so that impressions of the bitemarks can be obtained. If there is any reason to believe that the victim was drugged, a urine toxicology screen should be requested.

Evidence to be collected includes but is not limited to: clothing, debris, fingernail cuttings, known head hair, oral swab and smear, saliva sample, dried secretion specimen, pubic hair combings, genital swabbing, vaginal swab and smear, anal swab and smear, and known blood samples. The victim should be advised not to bathe, douche, urinate or otherwise alter her physical self, or engage in activities which could destroy or contaminate evidence essential to the investigation such as semen, saliva, hairs, etc.

Officers should be aware that the victim may be extremely afraid of seeing or having potential contact with the offender. If the offender is released pending trial, the victim may have safety concerns.

A steady, deafening noise sounds. Covering her ears, Woman 2 runs from one side of the playing area to another, as if looking for an exit.

WOMAN 2:

*(to the playing area at large) **Now!?** Now you do something?!
You can't . . . I won't . . .*

Woman 2 collapses onto the floor.

WOMAN 1:

(holding her throat) I . . . Water . . .

A huge amount of water falls upon both women.

Woman 2 jumps to her feet. Woman 1 spits out water like a cartoon character.

WOMAN 2:

Fuck!

Woman 2 strips off the sweater. She again speaks to the playing area at large.

Fuck you!

The noise stops.

Woman 1 stands up on the bed.

WOMAN 1:

I don't suppose there's fresh linens handy. It looks as if I've wet the bed!

Woman 1 begins to strip the bed.

WOMAN 2:

I'm not doing this any more. I'm not.

A MODERN COURTROOM (LIVE): ACCUSATORY, INTIMIDATING.

VOICE 2, male (lawyer):

If it pleases the court . . . The accuser says she doesn't remember much of what occurred. Yet this woman says she attacked, beaten, sexually assaulted . . . when she was "out walking," at 12:30 am.

"Out walking." In a major metropolitan area. "Out walking" at half past midnight. And when she was found by neighbors at 2 o'clock in the morning, was it because of a terrified scream? Her shouts for the police? No! It was by her "loud moaning sounds."

She was making those moaning sounds, lying under the bushes, "With her blouse pulled up and her panties around her ankles." A half naked woman, moaning in the bushes in the middle of the night? Where is the criminal here? This event was nothing but an illicit sexual assignation gone awry! This woman was not the victim of a crime, but of her own bad judgement! The real victim here is the system, and she is to blame.

CUT ABRUPTLY.

A 1945 COURTROOM (RECORDED): GRAVE, POWERFUL.

THREE STRIKES OF A GAVEL.

SOUNDS OF MURMURING VOICES.

VOICE 1, male (judge):

Defendant, Joachim von Ribbentrop, on the counts of the indictment of which you have been convicted . . .

WOMAN 1:

(cheerfully) Ohhhhh . . .VOICE 1, male *(judge cont'd)*:

. . . Count One: Conspiracy to Wage Aggressive War,
 Count Two: Crimes Against Peace, Count Three: War
 Crimes, and Count Four: Crimes Against Humanity . . .
 the tribunal sentences you to death by hanging.

WOMAN 2:

And neither are you.

WOMAN 1:

(laughing) I'm not, am I?

WOMAN 2:

No . . .

*Defendant Rudolph Hess, on the counts of the
 indictment of which you have been convicted, the
 tribunal sentences you to imprisonment for life.*

WOMAN 1:

And if I don't, who will?

Woman 1 takes the bedclothes, and flits about the playing area, mopping up water.

WOMAN 2:

No one will do it. That's the point. No one should do it.

WOMAN 1:

Oh, really?

*Defendant Albert Speer, on the counts of the
 indictment of which you have been convicted, the
 tribunal sentences you to 20 years in prison.*

WOMAN 2:

Yeah.

WOMAN 1:

Well! That's that, then!

Defendant Hermann Wilhelm Goering . . .

WOMAN 2:

It can be that, then.

WOMAN 1:

You . . . you're making a big deal out of nothing.

WOMAN 2:

What?

Woman 1 rings out the sweater.

WOMAN 1:

Oh, you silly, you! You're making a mountain out of a molehill, a problem where there is none . . .

Woman 2 takes off her shoes, and throws them out of the playing area.

What are you doing! You can't . . .

An alarm sounds.

WOMAN 2:

It **is** a big deal. It's a really, really big deal.

Many, many shoes appear.

Woman 1 grabs two shoes and moves to Woman 2.

WOMAN 1:

(sotto voce) Here!

WOMAN 2:

No.

WOMAN 1:

You can't go around like that! You have to —

VOICE 1, male (*judge cont'd*):

. . . on the counts of the indictment of which you have been convicted . . .

. . . the international military tribunal sentences you to death by hanging.

CUT ABRUPTLY.

PAUSE.

A MODERN BATTLEFIELD (LIVE): REALISTIC, GRITTY.

VOICES BEGIN SOTTO VOCE. SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE, EXPLOSIONS, RUNNING.

VOICE 2, male (*soldier 1*):

Here!

We're over here!

VOICE 1, male (*field officer*):

You there!

Get together a couple of men and go see what's ahead! We're going down in groups. Now. Run all the way. Go!

You. Get on the radio. Organize some guys for the next team, we're gonna go out in ten. Let's go.

VOICE 2, male (*soldier 1*):

Jesus!

VOICE 1, male (*field officer*):

You, you, and you, let's go!

WOMAN 2:

I don't. I don't have to. And you don't have to.

Woman 1 picks up shoes, then the sweater, then the bedclothes.

WOMAN 1:

(with too much innocence and volume, for the benefit of someone beyond the playing area) What are you talking about? **Me . . .**

Woman 1 pushes forward another pair of shoes.

WOMAN 2:

I'm not putting those on.

And listen to what I'm saying: it's not going to happen again.

WOMAN 1:

(laughing) You're talking about it like it's some great tragedy, for goodness sake!

WOMAN 2:

Yeah! I am!

The score begins to grow louder.

WOMAN 1:

Well! If you're going to walk around in a living hell, you might as well put some shoes on your feet! There might still be broken glass!

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

We need some water, sir! We have to have water!

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

We'll get water once we get their strong points!

Go! I said go!

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

I can't see a thing, sir! The smoke's too thick.

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

There's nothing I can do about it! Get your men moving! Get going!

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

But it's like there's nothing there, sir! There's nothing there to fire at!

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

Find something, then! Do the best you can! Just fire! Shoot the hell out of 'em!

SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE, SHOUTING.

VOLUME BEGINS TO INCREASE.

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

Sir! They're coming from everywhere! They've got us surrounded!

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

How many men did they get? How many've you got left?

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

I don't know. There's no way of telling

WOMAN 2:

I hope there is broken glass!

I hope there's loads of it, sharp and jagged and dirty!

I hope the shards of glass cut into your feet and rip them to shreds. I hope your little dainty feet become julliened strips of skin and blood which leave streaks of bright red everywhere you walk. That way you can see where you've been.

Woman 1 jumps up on the bed with a shoe in each hand.

Don't you dare put those on.

WOMAN 1:

Don't be ridiculous. I'm not wearing stockings.

Woman 2 savagely tears at her stockings.

WOMAN 2:

That's too bad. It'll be harder for you to imagine what it feels like.

Woman 2 rips off her dress.

She is on a battlefield.

Having hands on you and under you and inside you that aren't your own and aren't even like hands.

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

*I want you to get up there and see what in the hell's going on! Now, go! Go! **Go! Do you hear me?!***

SOUNDS OF EXPLOSIONS

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

Sir!

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

*They should've sent reinforcements. They should be here. Where are those men, goddamn it? **What are you waiting for? Tell them to move it!***

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

But sir . . .

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

Just go straight ahead! Straight ahead, god dammit! With every man you have!

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

*You heard him! Everyone, **Go!** That's a direct order. **Attack!***

VOICES 1 & 2, male (soldiers):

Ahhhhh! Attack! Let's go! **Behind you!** Ahhhh! **Look out!** Ahhhh! Ahh! **Go!**

SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE.

VOICE 2, male (wounded soldier):

Ahhhhhh! **Ahhh!** **I've been hit!**

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

Medic! Medic! Where? Where'd they get you?

VOICE 2, male (wounded soldier):

It's my chest! I can't feel my chest!

WOMAN 2 (cont'd):

More like claws.

Huge, hard claws, stone claws wearing rubber gloves, except they're hot. Like burning coals that sear your flesh everywhere they touch and bore through you like skewers, touching places in the carcass that once was you, places you never thought they could find, you never knew were there. Reaching places so deep that even your bones aren't your own.

Woman 1 gets down from the bed to salvage the strips of the stockings and the dress.

Woman 2 jumps up on the bed.

So what am I now, a mountain or a molehill?

The score is at a significant volume.

Both women are like drowned animals, naked except for their wet slips.

Woman 2 goes after Woman 1.

They circle each other with the bed between them.

WOMAN 2 (cont'd):

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

Can you stand up? Get on your feet!

VOICE 2, male (wounded soldier):

*I can't, I can't! **I can't feel anything!***

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

Drop the gear. Drop it!

VOICES 1 & 2, male (soldiers):

Ahhh! They're coming in! He's gone! Leave him!

Ahhh! Look out! Go! Go! Get out of here!

SOUNDS OF RUNNING, EXPLOSIONS, SHOUTING.

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

*Hold up over there! You got two men who can go with me? **Follow me!** We're going now!*

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

*We've got too many wounded! **I don't know who's left!***

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

I don't care who you've got! Just move! Either we take that hill or they do!

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

There's no way we can get up there alive! I don't want to lose any more men! We'll never be able to make it!

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

We'll make it!** We don't have any choice but to make it! **Do you hear me?

SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE, SHOUTING, EXPLOSIONS.

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

Sir! We've got no chance! We need more men!

Or a ditch. Am I a huge ravine? A bottomless canyon?

A dark, wet, deep hole.

That you've fallen into. That I've sucked you into.

And every step we take we go deeper, and blacker, and thicker, and we can't even lift our feet out of the muck, and everything that happens to me, happens to you. And we have to go down further and look at everything and feel everything and smell everything and know that it has happened, it is happening and—

Woman 1 climbs onto the bed and throws the pile of wet laundry at Woman 2.

WOMAN 1:

I know!

Woman 2 has been knocked to the floor.

Don't you think I know?!!!

Woman 2 does not move.

Don't you think I've been there? Don't you think I feel it? Every time?

Woman 1 moves to Woman 2 and removes the wet material from her face.

You forget . . . he's my son.

Woman 1 drops the bundle back on Woman 2 and walks away.

Silence.

The bed disappears.

Woman 2 peels off the wet material and stands.

WOMAN 2:

Fish sticks.

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

We don't have any more men!

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

There aren't enough of us—

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

It'll have to be enough! We're going to do this!

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

We can't, it's suicide! I'm not gonna give that order!

VOICE 1, male (field officer):

I'm the one giving the goddamn order!

VOICE 2, male (soldier 1):

It's all over, sir! We've gotta retreat! It's over!

CUT ABRUPTLY.

SILENCE.

VOICES 1 & 2, male (soldiers):

(sounds of breathing)

SLOW FADE.

SILENCE.

Pause. Both women look like they've emerged from a shipwreck

WOMAN 1:

Fish sticks?

WOMAN 2:

When I was sick. That's all I wanted to eat, was fish sticks.

VOLUME RESUMES AT LOW LEVEL.

WOMAN 1:

Fish sticks.

MODERN RECORDS (RECORDED): CLINICAL, DETACHED.

WOMAN 2:

But he didn't like the smell. In the house.

VOICE 1, male (medical records):

Blood pressure 130 over 90, pulse 120 ranging down to 80 depending on patient's agitation level. Respiratory rate is variable but roughly 16.

WOMAN 1:

Of fish sticks.

WOMAN 2:

So I'd eat them in the car. I'd make them after he'd left for work. And open all of the windows. And wrap them up, for later. To eat in the car.

The patient has a markedly swollen right malar and mandibular complex, gross facial swelling and injuries, obvious scalp lacerations although there are no palpable skull fractures.

WOMAN 1:

But, the smell . . .

WOMAN 2:

I'd put them right into the car. After I cooked them, in a box. I'd store them in the car, to eat for later.

Pupils are 6 millimeter right eye, 8 millimeter left eye, bilaterally reactive. Tympanic membranes appear to have a slight bulge but are otherwise without blood despite direct trauma to the eye.

There are no obvious fractures or septal hematoma. The patient presently has no localizing or focal neurologic finding.

WOMAN 1:

The fish sticks.

WOMAN 2:

And tartar sauce. They come with tartar sauce.

WOMAN 1:

Oh.

WOMAN 2:

I didn't know it then, but I'd given up. And I had a car full of fish sticks to show for it.

WOMAN 1:

Oh.

Woman 2 picks up a stiletto heel, and throws it out of the playing area. She watches it as if she's skipping stones on the surface of a lake.

WOMAN 1:

I didn't remember that he didn't like fish sticks.

Woman 1 throws a shoe.

WOMAN 2:

Not the fish sticks, the smell.

WOMAN 1:

Oh.

Both women throw shoes.

How did you drive? With a car full of fish sticks?

WOMAN 2:

I didn't drive. I just ate.

VOICE 1, male (medical records cont'd):

A neurosurgical consultation has been requested and a CT examination will be done to evaluate the patient for possible intracranial lesion.

Post concussion syndrome and brain stem contusion characterized by significant closed head trauma have both been documented. A question of a basilar skull fracture has been raised, but no definitive statement has been made.

Evidence of trauma after an assault is documented, but I am unable to assess the areas of mouth and her neck because of lack of cooperation due to the patient's agitation.

There is question of sexual assault and rape response was called.

The throwing of footwear continues.

WOMAN 1:
And he never knew?

WOMAN 2:
He never . . .

Woman 2 hurls a pump.

He never looked. He never saw.

WOMAN 1:
And you never drove.

WOMAN 2:
No. I just gave up.

Pause. There are no more shoes.

WOMAN 1:
Then you were smart.

WOMAN 2:
What?

WOMAN 1:
You were smart! He never knew!

WOMAN 2:
No . . .

Woman 1 picks up the wet linens and torn clothing, draping them on herself.

VOICE 1, male (medical records cont'd):

The patient is very labile, exhibiting limited awareness of deficits. At the time of my initial examination, the patient was noted to be intermittently lucid with bouts of thrashing and moaning.

The patient continues to exhibit extreme perseveration both verbally and motorically. At this time, she has lost her ability to ambulate and transfer safely and requires constant supervision and assistance.

Mood and affect are notably fluctuating and the patient does show some signs of hysteriod affect. The patient is disoriented and does not know where she is. Confusion is such that she was unable to recall any events immediately preceding her hospitalization or relate biographical information.

Thought process appears to be somewhat illogical and scattered at the present time with notable perseveration

WOMAN 1:

It all worked out well enough, didn't it? No one got hurt. Except the car of course. The upholstery's probably taken a beating, don't you think? But nothing a little detailing can't fix! And a hanging air freshener! Something like "Alpine Dream." Or "Coconut Beach Escape." We could go together, if you'd like!

VOICE 1, male (medical records cont'd):

She can converse and answer questions appropriately. However, she has times of garbled speech. Patient's attention span was limited to a few seconds. During the examination, patient was rolling in her bed and complaining of pain in her head and right thigh.

WOMAN 2:

I feel like screaming.

Pause.

The patient is not overtly psychotic, but certainly becomes agitated quite easily.

WOMAN 1:

No?

WOMAN 2:

No. Not anymore.

Pause.

She is notably perseverative asking questions over again, having difficulty shifting sets and is not able to follow instructions consistently.

WOMAN 1:

Of course not. I . . .

Woman 1 lets the material fall from her body.

Clothing items begin to appear, one by one. It's like a gentle snowfall of dresses, coats, lingerie, blouses, slacks . . . Neither woman makes any attempt to reach for the garments.

Even during periods of motor restfulness, she does have considerable scattering of her thought process. The patient was found to be only partially oriented to the general points of reality.

WOMAN 2:

I shouldn't have done it. Looking back, that seems so clear, so easy. But I remember thinking that I just couldn't fight anymore. I didn't want to fight anymore. Everything was just so hard. I couldn't get well. I just gave up.

Woman 2 looks at Woman 1.

WOMAN 2:

He's your son but you forget who he is.

WOMAN 1:

(matter-of-fact) I don't imagine it's very helpful at a time like this, but you're wrong.

WOMAN 2:

Am I?

WOMAN 1:

Oh, yes. Completely.

WOMAN 2:

Really!

WOMAN 1:

Yes! He's my son. I haven't forgotten. *(short pause)* I couldn't possibly forget.

WOMAN 2:

I don't understand.

WOMAN 1:

None of us can forget.

WOMAN 2:

Then—

WOMAN 1:

You **don't** understand.*Pause. Both women watch the falling fashions.*

And I also . . . I'm very . . . I'm sorry, I don't know how to . . .

VOICE 1, male *(medical records cont'd)*:*It is noted that she regularly cries and has fits of screaming during the night. Patient remains continually combatant and agitated. She became quite restless during my consultation with one or two episodes of yelling. The question has been raised about severe hysterical disorder including conversion symptoms . . .*

VOICE 1 (RECORDED) CONTINUES (REPEATING PARAGRAPH ABOVE) UNTIL VOICE 2 (RECORDED) BEGINS AT INDICATED POINT CORRESPONDING TO WOMEN'S DIALOGUE, BELOW.

MODERN REPORTS (RECORDED): AN ACADEMIC DIRGE.

VOICE 2, male *(psychological report)*:*The essential feature of Antisocial Personality Disorder . . .*

WOMAN 2:

I wasn't looking for an apology.

WOMAN 1:

No! I wasn't going to apologize!

WOMAN 2:

You . . .

WOMAN 1:

I was going to say that I don't blame you!

WOMAN 2:

You don't blame me?

WOMAN 1:

Not at all! I know that's what you thought, that you think. But I don't blame you. *(short pause)* I know—

WOMAN 2:

I don't—

WOMAN 1:

I know that you blame me, of course!

WOMAN 2:

I do?

WOMAN 1:

Of course! I blame me, too! I am . . . at fault. Not entirely, of course. But now is not the time to shun blame, is it? There is fault that is mine, and mine alone . . . *(short pause)* And some that I'm willing to share!*VOICE 2, male (psychological report cont'd):**. . . is a pattern of disregard for, as well as a violation of the rights of, others which is pervasive. This begins in early adolescence and continues into childhood.**The pattern is variously referred to as Psychopathy, Sociopathy, or Cysocial Personality Disorder. To be diagnosed, the individual must be at least 18 years of age and exhibit some symptoms of Conduct Disorder before age 15. These symptoms of Conduct Disorder include causing physical harm or exhibiting cruelty to people or animals, deliberately destroying property or forcing someone into sexual activity.**Antisocial behavior as a pattern usually continues into adulthood. Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder are commonly aggressive and may repeatedly commit acts of physical assault, including sexual assault.**Woman 1 meets Woman 2's stare.*

WOMAN 1:

I know. You don't have to tell me. There are things I should have, I could have . . .

Woman 1 catches sight of a familiar outfit.

But that's just it. I couldn't have. I didn't know what else I could do. So there was nothing else to do. You don't understand. You can't. There is no should. This is all I've known. I don't know any other way, so this is what I do, this is what I have done, what I will do. This is all I can do!

WOMAN 2:

That's not true.

WOMAN 1:

Oh! It is! I tried once. Something else! *(short pause)* And my hands fell off.

WOMAN 2:

Your hands didn't fall off.

WOMAN 1:

They did!

WOMAN 2:

They didn't.

WOMAN 1:

They did! You think these are real hands? You think these are my hands? If they were my hands they wouldn't have let . . . They wouldn't have waited . . . They would have stopped . . .

The clothing stops.

VOICE 2, male (psychological report cont'd):

Because they have features in common, other Personality Disorders may be confused with Antisocial Personality Disorders, and antisocial behavior which occurs only during the course of Schizophrenia or a Manic Episode should not be diagnosed as the former.

Those with Histrionic Personality Disorder have a tendency to be impulsive and reckless, but individuals will be more exaggerated in their emotions and rarely actually engage in antisocial behavior.

Those who are diagnosed with Paranoid Personality Disorder are motivated by a desire for revenge rather than personal gain or a wish to exploit others.

Paranoid Personality Disorder is marked by a pervasive distrust and suspiciousness of others, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts. The subject may be preoccupied with unjustified doubts about the loyalty or trustworthiness of friends or associates, or be reluctant to confide in others because of unwarranted fear that the information will be used maliciously.

WOMAN 1 (cont'd):

And if these were my eyes they would have seen. They would have seen things, noticed things, looked with horror at things, terrible things that should never happen to anyone, should never be allowed to happen. And if these were my ears I would have heard your screams, your moans. Like an animal, like a wounded cat crying in the bushes. Waking up neighbors. I would have heard them calling the police. The voices, the sirens. And I would have felt the pain, your terror, and my own absence. If they were mine . . .

I can't do it.

Silence.

Billows of fabric begin to wind onto the playing area.

WOMAN 2:

Amazingly life-like, these hands.

WOMAN 1:

Aren't they?

WOMAN 2:

And your eyes! The surgeon did a remarkable job.

WOMAN 1:

(crying) Yes. She did.

Woman 1 looks at her hands in front of her, then holds them to her chest.

So, I suppose it'd be a shame not to put them to use.

WOMAN 2:

Right.

VOICE 2, male (psychological report cont'd):

This disorder is common among biological relatives of those with the same disorder. Biological relatives are also at increased risk for Somatization Disorder—in which the subject has a long history of repeated non-reality-based physical complaints which result in treatment sought or social or physical impairment—and Substance-Related Disorders.

FADE.

SILENCE.

VOLUME GRADUALLY INCREASES.

MODERN DIALOGUE (LIVE): EXHAUSTED, NUMBED.

VOICE 1, male (phone conversation):

She's definitely improving. It's hard to see sometimes because we've been here, but the doctors are all very optimistic.

She still doesn't sleep through the night, but she's got long periods where she's not agitated and seems like herself.

And she knows who we are, most of the time.

They did tests today and until we get the results we won't know whether there's any brain damage.

WOMAN 1:

I . . . do you think maybe I need more time? I'm not feeling well,
and I think maybe . . .

VOICE 1, male (phone conversation cont'd):

*But the neurologist says it looks good. That her
disorientation and . . . her outbursts . . . could be
caused by cerebral swelling. We just have to wait.*

WOMAN 2:

You're fine.

WOMAN 1:

I'm not that strong of a woman, you know . . .

*Like I said, nights are hard. We've been taking turns
staying with her. She's confused a lot. She seems to
remember some stuff around the attack, but not the
attack itself.*

WOMAN 2:

(laughing) You're not that strong . . . Have you forgotten who his
mother is?

Silence.

*They say she was maybe knocked out before . . . but she
fought back. I mean, that's why she's alive.*

Both women look out at the audience and at the flowing streams of fabric.

WOMAN 1:

Are you sorry you never had children?

Woman 2 looks at Woman 1.

*It could be we never find out what happened. The
memory may be totally gone.*

WOMAN 2:

Are you sorry you did?

Woman 1 meets her eyes.

Well, we have to be careful. She shouldn't be alone.

WOMAN 1:

Are you?

*Because there's some part of her that knows. Even if
she doesn't remember.*

Lights from floor windows illuminate the cloud-like piles of fabric and both women. The last lines of the score are heard, and the stage fades to black.

End of Play