

INCOMMUNICADO

A play by Lee Gundersheimer

For Woodie King Jr.
Who believed in me as he did so many others

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Lenore Press

Incommunicado

Cast Of Characters:

Joli Gibson a young black woman from Wales, originally from
the Caribbean

Jaz Gibson- her identical twin sister.

The action of the play is continuous the use of masks (part of the girls love of role playing) is integral to the action in the first act. Projections or slides can be implemented as budgets allow. We are in Joli's mind; however, so realism and actual set pieces shouldn't be an issue. Use abstract movable objects that can be utilized over and over.

Act One

The Caribbean Island children's song "Brown Girl In The Ring" is playing and fades as the lights come up on a young Afro-Caribbean woman, who appears to be in her late twenties or early thirties. She looks at the audience very tentatively and finally begins to speak.

JOLI. Hello. If you only knew how-- terrifying it is for me to do that. Just to...even say...hello. *(Takes a deep breath.)* Christ, you should feel my heart. It's flitting like a hummingbird's must. Thump-a-ta, thump-a-ta, thump-a-ta. My palms are so clammy and cold. Got frogs for hands, or so I've been told. The doctors say there'll come a day it'll be so easy. A reflex thing. Actually why I'm talking with you today. Others do it without so much as a thought; I'm sure most of you. "Good Day. How are you? Bloody awful weather, eh?" Nothing much, a little conversation. Chin wag. Communication. All right, then. Not so bad. *(A deeper breath.)* The most important thing I wanted to tell you- rehearsed even- was whatever you wish on, the secret things you dream of, long for- call them what you will, fantasies, fears, whatever. The things we've tucked off deep in the conscious, where none may find them. I implore you- these secrets: cherish them. Treat each as a priceless treasure. For they are the gems of a most private estate. If you doubt me in the least, think of the quiet days, the very ones when long ago loves, or deep seeded hates are spread about your bed and sorted through. Like a collection, you see, we take them and hide them away, lock them off in a sort of safety deposit box of the soul. Am I making a muck up of this, trying to explain? Maybe this'll work. People often say, "I loved him so there were no secrets between us, we shared all." But don't believe them. 'Cause sharing all is not about trust, or fondness. It's about torture. Only those who are held captive, under pain of death, reveal all. Of this one thing, take it as gospel. There is nothing more precious, more valuable than privacy. I know, for I never once had it myself. My sister shared my every secret. Each and every last one. For how else can you explain that she often knew bits of me I'm not sure I knew myself. Or why at times we spoke words from separate mouths and yet the same sentence. Oh, I hear you now saying, "that's not uncommon. Lovers often feel that way, families, even friends." And certainly twins. Twins above all others feel such a bond. They used to put us to death right after birth, you know. The devil's own, not to be trusted. Well, I've no trouble understanding that one now, thank you very much. I am speaking of a closeness that went well beyond kinship- beyond all reason. I can only put it to you like this, there were times that I honestly felt her madness, like some fever or virus, tangible, fighting to become my own. You see, to begin to understand us you must know, all our lives, my most inner need, my deepest longing was simply to be-

Another Afro-Caribbean woman, identical in appearance to the first, appears in another pool of light.

JAZ. Alone.

JOLI. I'd never known solitude, such a simple thing, mind you. What it felt to be-

JAZ. She'll chew your ear off with that one forever, if you let her.

JOLI. Certainly moments here and there.

JAZ. Not as if I followed her to the bog.

JOLI. And once they even separated us.

JAZ. The truth of the matter is without me, she'd never exist.

JOLI. We were born just moments apart.

JAZ. (*Quickly*)I was first, mind you!

JOLI.
They say the only times one can count
solitude, no worry of interruption-

JAZ.
And if she'd never appeared, on
if she'd simply refused to
follow me out-

JOLI.
Absolute peace and calm- the only two
the grave and the womb.

JAZ.
If I'd been born without times are
her clinging to me
Grabbing hold a me- not
wanting to let go.

JOLI.
All else is-

JAZ.
Would I have known
this-

TOGETHER. Chaos.

JAZ. You see, she'll say it was her idea.

JOLI. And she'll tell you it was all her doing.

JAZ. And actually-

JOLI. If you must know-

JAZ. The truth of the matter is-

TOGETHER. I honestly can't remember.

TOGETHER. Neither of us can.

JAZ. We played together-

JOLI. Learned to walk together-

JAZ. Shared the same cot, we did.

JOLI. So it was the natural course for us to learn to talk together-

JAZ. And then, more importantly, to not talk together.

TOGETHER. (*A beat.*) Incommunicado.

They begin a childlike ritual like Paddy-Cake during this.

TOGETHER. (*Whispering.*) To deny communication.

TOGETHER. (*Whispering.*) As in solitary confinement.

JAZ. Silence-

JOLI. Became-

TOGETHER. (*Whispering.*) Our victory.

JAZ. So somehow-

JOLI. At some point in time-

JAZ. We decided to keep ourselves to ourselves.

They begin to walk about the stage in perfect time with each other.

JOLI. Maybe it was all the moving about. Dad was in the forces, you see, The R.A.F.

JAZ. Maintenance, mind you, not piloting. Nothing ever so romantic as that.

JOLI. Never spent above two years in the same place.

JAZ. It was easier to only need each other

JOLI. Bother anyone else. They'll be gone before winter.

They stop.

JAZ. But I'll never leave you. You've got me till all's blue.

JOLI. The greatest of my fears, me dear.

They begin to walk again.

JAZ. So it was always just Joli and me. And we kept ourselves to ourselves.

They perform some kind of precision turns.

TOGETHER. "In secret kept, in silence sealed."

JOLI. Though it was she who wished it more. I often wanted to smile, to say hello.

JAZ. *(Stops walking.)* She'd have us mixing with all sorts, the cowbag!

JOLI. But I could feel her will- *(Stops as well. A low hum or tone is heard.)* She was always the stronger, you know.

JAZ. I was first!

JOLI. Her stare, willing me not to give in- *(Jaz begins to stare at Joli.)* to reach out. Always in her eyes. Don't you dare! You mustn't! Don't- you-

The background tone stops. Joli is quiet now, with her head bowed. A long beat.

JAZ. And silence.

JOLI. No wonder they called us the Two Mutes.

JAZ. The Quiet Girls.

TOGETHER. The Toungeless Twins.

JOLI. We never spoke to a soul 'till we were five. And then only to family.

JAZ. Never to anyone else. Not even to teachers.

A loud school bell rings, and it is helpful if a slide or projection of the girls with their heads bowed appears.

JOLI. (*Assuming the character of a teacher, with a mask.*) Now class, we would all like to welcome our two new transfer students, the Gibson sisters, Jasmine and Jocelynn. They've come all the way to our little town in Wales from Kingstown, Jamaica. And that's an island where? Does anyone know?

JAZ. (*As a "nerdy" student with a mask.*) Ohh! Ohh! Sister Thorton!

JOLI. (*As teacher.*) Alright, Tabitha, have a go.

JAZ. (*As student.*) Off the coast of Greece?

JOLI. (*As teacher.*) No, anyone else? Jamaica is an island where? You, Katelynn?

JAZ. (*As another student with a new mask.*) Somewhere off the coast of Africa, from the looks of 'em.

JOLI. (*As teacher.*) Now then, Katelynn, I'm certain we can be a bit more welcoming now, can we not? But your guess is almost spot on. The people of Jamaica, and therefore our newest chums here, are from a climate right close to the equator, similar to that of the dark skinned African Negroes, though their island is located in the middle of the Caribbean. Which is an Ocean. Rather close to that of Cuba, is it not?

JAZ. (*As other student.*) Probably can't even speak Queen's English, the two of 'em. Swahili or some such mumbo-jumbo. Sister Thorton's speaking at you- she teacher, you student.

JOLI. (*As teacher.*) Katelynn-

JAZ. (*As other student.*) Well, they're spooking me, the two of 'em. The way they just stare at you. Give me the heebie-jeebs.

JOLI. (*As teacher.*) Katelynn!! Well, we are all in for a treat. The Gibson girls will now recite the poem I assigned to them for memorization. (*The girls are now moving side by side without masks and are standing in front of the projection of themselves.*) Girls? Proceed!

TOGETHER. (*They recite in very rapid speech, sounding almost like gibberish*) Invictus-William-Ernest-Henley-out-of-the-night-that-covers-me, black-as-the-pit--from-pole-to-pole, I-thank-whatever-gods-may-be-for-my-unconquerable-soul. In-the-fell-clutch-of-circumstance-I-have-not-wincenor-cried-aloud. Under-the-bludgeonings-of-chance-my head-is-bloody-and-unbowed. Beyond-this-place-of-wrath-and-tears-looms-but-the-horror-of-the-shade-and-yet-the-menace-of-the-years-finds-and-shall-find-me-

unafraid. It-matters-not-how-strait-the-gate-how-charged-with-punishments-the-scroll. *(They pause for effect, as if forgetting for a moment.)* I-am-the-master-of-my-fate! I-am-the-captain-of-my-soul!

They enjoy a very quick moment of irreverent laughter and snap back to silence. The school bell rings again.

JAZ. *(As interviewer with a new mask.)* Mrs. Gibson, were the girls always in such bad form?

JOLI. *(Now her mother with a mask.)* De Twinies?

JAZ. *(As interviewer.)* Yes. Did they always speak at people in such an odd fashion?

JOLI. *(As her mother.)* If dey spoke a'tall. We were lucky to get de time of day off dem, so we glad for the udder. Didn't seem so odd after long, just faster, dat's all.

JAZ. *(As interviewer.)* Did it never give you cause for alarm? Were you never worried?

JOLI. *(As her mother.)* To a point, but dey were good little girls for de most part. No trouble a'tall. Look at most children nowadays. Spikes trew dem noses, tattoos from head to foot. I read just a week ago last of two boys chopped off them own parents heads. Boiled dem in a soup. Who's to know nowadays. It's in de air. I did mention to de husband- I said, "Peter, do you tink we ought to worry?"

JAZ. *(Now like her father with his mask, after a toilet flush is heard.)* 'Bout what? I fixed de leak in de bog.

JOLI. *(As her mother.)* Not de bog, de Twinies.

JAZ. *(As her father.)* Dem just backward about comin forward s'all. Just be glad dey keep to them room like dey do!

JOLI. *(As her mother.)* I heard dem meself, you know.

JAZ. *(As her father.)* Heard dem what?

JOLI. In dem room. Laughin and carryin on.

JAZ. Well den. Where's de worry?

JOLI. Peter, dey play at us, pretend to be us. Using Jasmine's masks...

JAZ. What's dis you're sayin now?

JOLI. Put me ear to de door, and I could hear dem. Mimickin us, and de boiyz. Dem teachers, even Fadder Clancey. Talkin just like us. Playin all de parts. Dey do whole episodes. Hour after hour.

JAZ. I like de sound of dat. Let dem keep at it, make some money, go on off to Hollywood or get a show on de BBC, set us up for life. You really hear dem talkin about me?

JOLI. Not just about you, as you. Jasmine de one who does you.

JAZ. She do?

JOLI. And Fadder Clancey. And Joli, play me. Very good, actually. But de minute I knock on de door- silence. Not a peep. And now I dink dey listen. I mean, for me. Not dat I do it all de while, I mean, eavesdrop. Aft'r all, dey need dem privacy. I'm aware of dat. But I was worried is all.

JAZ. Did you ever stop to tink it was dem way of stoppin you from worry? Dat dey might have known you was listenin and wanted you to hear?

JOLI. You mean dey planned de whole ting?

JAZ. Bingo.

JOLI. What is de point a dat, for Christ's sake-

JAZ. Some people have foolish ways of gettin what dem want, if dem shy and all. I remember dem used to say you wouldn't say boo to a goose. But didn't you get Clara Fontaine to come ask me out just to see if I say no, I want to go to de dance wit you?

JOLI. What you goin about now?

JAZ. Didn't you trap me, get your best friend who you knew never had an eye on me, to ask me out, hopin it bring me round to you.

JOLI. Bring you round? Is dat what you tought all dese years? Dat I trap you into all dis?

JAZ. I can't be bottered wit all dis now. I'm only tryin to make a point.

JOLI. What? What blastin point were you trying to make?

JAZ. I have no idea now, like anytin else in dis house, it dam well fell trough de cracks.

JOLI. Well, maybe if you botter to stay home a night and no go to your local or wherever it is you go. Stay here one night and make do, dere may be no cracks to fall trough. Where you off to now?

JAZ. I was just tryin to make a point about de Twinies. Dat dey probably can hear you breatin down dem bleedin necks, like you do us all round here. So maybe it's dem way of sayin bloody leave us de hell alone. For once in your life keep your nose out of utter people's affairs.

He opens an imaginary door and leaves slamming it shut. Though not there a door slam is heard.

JOLI. Oh, dat's a right nice choice of words, dat one. Affairs. Go on den, what do I care. Go on off wit your hartlot, nor your fat-bellied friends, what do me care. What do me care if we people wonder how could we possibly let dem lock demselves up in dem room, all day and night, not a sound 'cept a fart for Fadder Clancey....

JAZ. Pardon me girls, I'm getting on you know, and the first thing the good lord takes is the digestion. Now then, do either of you sweet souls know why I've been asked to speak with you? Well, your good parents, and a fair number of your teachers, actually, let us be frank, most of our fair community, have expressed a concern with what they feel are the beginnings of a somewhat difficult, rather anti-social attitude. It's not so much the strutting about the street, standing, sitting, even drinking your tea in perfect time together. I must say I envy the precision in that. I can't get my boys to reach the altar the same time, let alone swing the chancery in unison. No, it is your refusal to become part of Fishguard, to interact in any way with others that is grieving us. Remember, the good Lord wants us all to be special chums. So now, my children, how can we be of service to you? How can we help you feel more a part of our community?

The loud sound of a camera shutter is heard. They begin to imitate various members of the community, first as workmen.

JOLI. Monkeys, hey monkeys, want a banana?

JAZ. Look, what jungle did they come from?

JOLI. More bloody foreigners-

JAZ. Wogs!

JOLI. Yeah, wogs! Come to live off the dole.

The camera shutter noise is heard again. Now they are housewives.

JAZ. Look at their hair, looks like they both been dragged through a hedge backwards.

Again the camera sound, now the girls are a mother and daughter.

JOLI. No, Victoria Ann, come away from there, don't be bothering those nice girls. *(Whispering as she smacks her daughter's hand. Jaz as the daughter begins to wail)* You stay away from them you hear me? Who knows what their kind is capable of!

The camera shutter happens one last time.

JAZ. *(Back to imitating Father Clancey)* Now then, what more could we possibly do to make you feel more at home? *(Joli makes the sound of a phone buzzing. She also mumbles the sound of the other party on the phone as the conversation continues.)* Hang on, dears. Father Clancey? Yes, Tom? Well you tell them they threaten us I can play at that game as well. Sorry, just one minute, ladies. It's not all blessings and benedictions, you see. Yes, I'm in conference right now, I will ring you back in a few mos, we need to straighten this out today. As soon as- I am able! Now, where were we, ah yes, you see girls we need you to feel at home here, follow? *(Silence.)* Yes, well I don't know any other way round it, so I guess that will be all for today. *(Joli hands him a piece of paper.)* What is this? *(Reading.)* We, Jasmine and Jocelyn Gibson have taken a holy vow of silence. We have vowed just as the Benedictine Monks and Saint Harold before us not to speak. As their speech was saved for a better world, a world free of sin, so shall ours be. For it is our solemn belief that this is not a worthy place; it is full of deceit and corruption. And that only by abstinence, can we remain pure of its evils. At which time, once all these temptations have been removed, we will gladly raise up our voices in thanks, but until then, we will remain like our brothers and sisters before us, *(Jaz stops using the Father Clancy mask and moves next to her sister)* quietly in prayer, cloistered away from the dragons-

TOGETHER. Incommunicado...

JAZ. *(Whispering)* That should give us years before they know what to do with us

The two girls begin to sing the second verse of the children's song as they move together: "Show me a motion, tra-la-la-la-la, Show me a

motion, tra-la-la-la-la, Show me a motion, tra-la-la-la -la, for she looks like a sugar in a plum, plum, plum" and are now in their room.

JAZ. Now, let's play a round of O.E.D.

JOLI. I need to work...

JAZ. You promised.

JOLI. After I finish the first chapter.

JAZ. But you haven't even started. It'll take months.

JOLI. Why don't you make another mask?

JAZ. I don't want to. They're stupid anyway.

JOLI. What happened to "a tradition as old as civilization itself?"

JAZ. That was when they mattered. When they were even worshiped. Now, a mask is just a toy. Kid's stuff. Oh, bugger it. No matter to me. You're the one with all the dreams, aspirations. You're the one who's written two whole novels-

JAZ. Yeah, rejected by every publisher.

JOLI. But you've written them, that's what counts. Two novels. And you're only fifteen. That's probably a record for all we know. What have I done?

JOLI. You mean besides get up my nose? You sculpt. And carve. And paint. You used to adore it.

JAZ. I did. I do. I'm just tired of pretending to be other people. That's all masks do, become other things. What about me?

JOLI. Then make a mask of you.

JAZ. I have that already. I have you.

JOLI. You're about to tip me well and truly over the edge.

JAZ. I don't know who I am, Jol. Honest, I haven't the slightest clue.

JOLI. None of us do. That's why there's work. To help us forget the fact.

JAZ. What if I never find out?

JOLI. That's why you need to create. To try and discover.

JAZ. Or even worse, I may find out and hate what I see. Besides you're the one with all the talent.

JOLI. That's ridiculous.

JAZ. Well, it's what you think. Isn't it?

JOLI. Don't start that song.

JAZ. Tell me it's not what you think. Tell me you weren't, just the other day, when I showed you my latest mask that you weren't sitting there thinking: "That's a nice one, quite nice. But it's no novel." It was drawn all about your face. (*Pause as Joli tries to ignore her. Jaz holds up her latest mask.*) You didn't even know who this one was.

JOLI. I still don't.

JAZ. You see. What good is it. It's Robin Leach, dammit.

JOLI. Who?

JAZ. Robin Leach, the interviewer!

JOLI. (*Using her Robin Leach mask.*) Oh! He's a right proper wanker, he is... Welcome back, this is Robin Leach, and we are speaking, of course, to renowned author Jocelyn Gibson's devoted-

JAZ. Ha!

JOLI. (*As Robin Leach.*) Twin sister Jasmine, who knew the reclusive yet brilliant writer better than most of her husbands, or her lovers. Tell me, Miss Gibson, how difficult was it living in the shadow of your sister for so many years.

JAZ. 'Twas a nightmare actually Robin, every moment of it.

JOLI. (*As Robin Leach.*) Of course we are speaking of her unequalled success and fame.

JAZ. Tragic is it not. For you see how delusional she was, Robin, quite "doo lally tat." Loved to fancy herself the celebrity.

JOLI. (*As Robin Leach.*) How sad, indeed. Yet why did you choose to stay

by her side all those years? You could have gone off, moved far away. At least into a room of your own. Yet you forever chose to stay, why was that?

JAZ. Because if the truth be told, Robin, the poor selfish slag would have been lost without me. I made each of the day to day decisions. She was quite helpless, actually. For example, it was me who chose each of our outfits each and every day since grammar school. She couldn't have managed dressing without me.

JOLI. (*As Robin Leach.*) Was it not true that these matters never concerned her. She couldn't, as she once said "give a lump of shit about the day to day world?"

JAZ. Sad, isn't it? You can see she was quite deranged. For as we know, Robin, the day to day world is where most of us exist, however tragic we may believe it to be. Do you know she once told our beloved Sister Thorton, our headmistress, when asked what she aspired to? She said, Actually, I'd like to be a criminal."

JOLI. (*Taking off the mask*) You're such a cheat, the biggest cheat of all. That's what you wrote. And she stood you in the corner for it with a bible on your head. She asked me what I wanted to be and I said, "an anchorite. I wish to live as you, yourself, sister, off from the world."

JAZ. "Only I shan't be a nun, for I'm not at all certain that God ever existed.

JOLI. I was only being honest.

JAZ. She chucked you out of class! For that one.

JOLI. (*Back to Robin Leach.*) Yes, but we were discussing you on this program, were we not?

JAZ. That was her last day of class, Robin. They slammed the door on her. So as a gesture of solidarity, I, too, refused to return.

JOLI. (*Again lifting the mask.*) And that was all your scheme as well. Mine was only a suspension. You're the one who insisted we give over, never return-

JAZ. It wasn't I who said the Bronte sisters locked themselves in a room to learn and so would we.

JOLI. (*Back to Robin Leach.*) But Jasmine, if the day to day decisions were always yours, a fact I do believe you, but a few moments ago, attested to. Would it not follow suit it was your idea to drop your studies?

JAZ. Ah ha...Well, yes, and no, Robin. *(The tone is heard in the background again slowly building.)* You see, my sister became my studies. For it was there, in that small upstairs room in Fishguard, that I stumbled on the shocking and still controversial theories that would make my reputation.

JOLI. *(As Robin Leach.)* However minor that has shown itself to be.

JAZ. Greatness may be only measured in its ability to go unmeasured. Never forget the fact.

JOLI. *(As Robin Leach. Fighting for control of the microphone with Jaz)* So from that day forth-

JAZ. I began my studies on the demon known as Genius-

JOLI. *(As Robin Leach. Escalating the fight.)* From the Latin, jinni-

JAZ. Meaning demon spirit -

JOLI. *(As Robin Leach.)* Or guardian-

JAZ. Often holding power over another!!

There is a loud knock at the door. The sound of the tone is gone. The girls immediately stop fighting and are silent. Another knock. After a long beat Joli defiantly goes to the door and opens it. A bright white light is seen. Jaz runs to the door and slams it in someone's face.

JOLI. She's our mum, you know. Where is the hurt in my saying: "Hello."

JAZ. I expect next you'll want to set the table, and sit and have tea, or supper, listen to them chew, and mumble on about the tele, and the weather, and chat about bugger all except what's really worth talking about.

JOLI. No. That would be dreadful. You're right. At least we focus ourselves on the important things, like art and literature, philosophy-- and men. But a simple "Hello, Mum" might not be such a horrible thing.

JAZ. Go on. Have a go, you'll see. Throughout history, torturers would always wait for the first flinch, the first sign of pain, of weakness; and it was on that mark, the very spot that caused the prisoner to cry out, that they concentrated on. *(She picks up Joli's work and begins reading.)* Chapter One. "Cleveland. God, why was I born in Cleveland, "Brad thought, gazing out the bedroom window at the dull and boring city with its cloud of smog, like a blanket of doom waiting to-" Cleveland doesn't have smog.

JOLI. How would you know, you been there?

JAZ. No, have you? Never. So how would you know if it does?

JOLI. Because it's a city, in the States. And every bleedin city in the State's got smog.

JAZ. Not San Francisco. It has fog.

JOLI. Fine, apart from San Francisco.

JAZ. Cleveland's not known for smog, that's all.

JOLI. Oh, and what's it known for? Huh, Miss Bossey-Boots? Name one thing Cleveland's known for.

JAZ. Cleves. Well, it is the Land Of Cleves, so it must have been known for 'em at some point. I haven't a clue what the bleedin city's known for, it gave us Brad, and for that I will evermore be grateful.

JOLI. Look, it was your idea to have me write about him.

JAZ. I gave you permission to use his name. Not to steal him. (*She has taken out the Brad mask.*) Brad Walker.

JOLI. Listen to you. Brad Walker... I wished you'd told me you'd decided to go boy-mad.

JAZ. You're the one reminding me of him. I hadn't thought of him once today.

JOLI. You'd swear the sun shined out of his backside.

JAZ. Did you see his jeans, Jol. Yesterday, did you notice them?

JOLI. Yeah, Stone-wash, they call them. He bought them in California.

JAZ. I meant how tight they were. Could see it all. His whole willie. How the bloody hell do you know where he bought them?

JOLI. He told me himself. Well, you were asleep. Two pints and you're always asleep.

JAZ. I'll murder you, you touch my Brad. Hear me?

JOLI. Jesus, Jaz! Keep your hair on!

JAZ. And I've changed my mind, I don't want you even writing about him, thank you very much. He's mine! I spotted him first!

JOLI. For the record, that's not true! After we toppled over the Pressbottom's postbox, I saw him first. Staring over at us, and I said, "Uh. Oh. We're in the shitter now."

JAZ. No, I'd already spied him, and that's when you got all worried.

JOLI. Because he walked himself right towards us. Staring right at us.

JAZ. And there you were trembling like a jellywobble. (*As she takes Joli's hand to enact the scene*) Jesus, your hands are cold. Always are.

JOLI. 'Cause you took most of Mom's blood. Left me with just enough to get along.

JAZ. Got frogs for hands, do you know that? Cold blooded.

JOLI. At least, I'm not cold-hearted.

JOLI. And that's when he kicked old lady Cromwell's postal box right end over!

JAZ. (*Wearing the sacred Brad mask, now as Brad.*) Ha-Yah! Just like this! Like Bruce Lee. He's the coolest. If your gonna destroy someone's private property, be cool about it. (*Joli remains silent.*) You two ever hear of Bruce Lee? Naw, probably not. Not living in this shit hole. Nothing cool ever comes around here.

JOLI. I thought he was going to tell on us.

JAZ. (*As herself*) No, Jol! He wanted to show us the proper way that's all. A true fellow juvenile delinquent.

JOLI. (*Taking the mask and becoming Brad.*) Damn, you two really do look exactly alike. Even up close. Spooky. Hey, want a smoke? I said, "want a smoke?" (*Jaz takes it.*)

JAZ. Thank you ever so kindly. For the "smoke".

JOLI. (*Ripping off the mask.*) You cheeky bugger. As many times as I have wanted to talk to some one. Merely be friendly but you get all elbows out,

and first race out of the gate you bat your eyes like some two-bit flit: "Thank you ever so kindly?"

JAZ. (*Taking back the mask. As Brad.*) Don't mention it. Hey, what did you just say. Come on, I heard you.

JOLI. She said, "Thank you ever so kindly!"

JAZ. (*As Brad.*) You can speak. Jesus, you've got everyone fooled, you know that? They think you're mutes. The Tommy Twins. That's what they call you. You know like the Who song: "See me, feel me." That's what they hum after you walk by, you know when you walk by like a bunch of Nazi pigeons, in perfect step. You guys must practice that, huh. Cause that ain't easy. Weird ass thing to do, but you have to admire the precision. So the Tommy Twins can talk after all. Okay, okay, that's cool. 'Cause so could Tommy, in the song. He was just suffering from some trauma or some shit. Scared to talk. Is that what is going on with you two? You both suffering some trauma? Okay, okay, cool. I wouldn't talk much either, if I was you. Not a whole lot worth talking about 'round here anyway, that's for sure.

JOLI. "Game Of Death."

JAZ. (*Taking off the mask*) I wanted to whack you for that one.

JOLI. For what? You began it. "Thank you ever so kindly..."

JAZ. That worked.

JOLI. So did "Game Of Death".

JAZ. (*As Brad.*) Game Of Death?

JOLI. Nineteen Seventy Eight. Director Robert Clouse. Bruce Lee's final film. Also starring Chuck Norris and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Lee died during production. Years later, the director completed the film-- using doubles.

JAZ. (*As Brad.*) Oh, okay, cool. Jesus, I had no idea where you were going there for a second. Yeah, I love that movie. Game Of Death. Ain't that the truth. My man, Bruce Lee. (*He does another soaring karate kick.*) So, my name's Brad, Brad Walker, and you are? Okay, okay, you can be Spooky and you are definitely Psycho. Until I get a better name for you. It'll be the Spookster and the Psycho girl. Anyway, I gotta be doing some other shit now, so it was really a pleasure to meet you two. Spooky, take care of this one here; she kind of scares me, okay? What are you gonna like follow me now or what? Okay, Jesus. I'm heading over to the lot behind the school. There's a shed there where I like to sit and get high. You two do that? Get

stoned? Why bother. You both are so out to lunch anyway, maybe I need a little of what you two are on. I'm from Cleveland, Ohio. That's in the States. Where are you two from? Okay, okay, just let me get used to this one sided conversation shit. I'll get the hang of it. Anyway, like I said, I'm from Cleveland and that's considered like the furry asshole of the United States of America, but it is like Shangra-Fucking-La compared to this place. Anyway, my Mom's mom was born here, and she and my father like split. Anyway, she's a teacher. Third grade. And I'm a drop out. Ninth grade, so I guess I got her beat by six. Ha! I work at the grocery, produce, when I feel like it. Some days I can't deal with it. The bullshit. I'm the one who gets to hide all the rotten berries at the bottom of the carton and puts the nice big fat ones, the juicy ones, on top. To cover them up and make you think you're getting your money's worth. And some days, I don't know, maybe it's fucked up, but I don't like being so corrupt. Even in produce, they'll try and screw you. Want some? (*A joint.*)

JOLI. And you took it!

JAZ. (*Taking off the mask.*) I lost all control near him, Jol, I don't know why.

JOLI. I liked what he said about the berries.

JAZ. I liked his bum. I wanted him ever so much, Jol. I could almost taste him.

JOLI. So how was it you passed out?

JAZ. I didn't pass out-

JOLI. Didn't you? Another beer later, you were snoring.

JAZ. You are a piece of work, dear sister. You truly are.

JOLI. Hhmmfff... (*The sound of a snore.*)

JAZ. And what does all that have to do with it, I flipping well'd like to know? He was going to be mine regardless, the only question was when. And how. So I began planning my seduction. It would rival Circe for its witchery, Bathsheba for its breathlessness. I practiced how I would lie myself out on the grass out behind his shed-

JOLI. Never mind it was dead of winter-

JAZ. We'd never feel the cold.

JOLI. Freeze your tits off, you would.

JAZ. Alright! Since I knew you'd be no help, I devised a reserve plan, a right stroke of genius, it was.

JOLI. She had us follow him for days-

The theme from Mission Impossible plays.

JAZ. We trailed him, watching for three weeks, his each and every move. Secretly spying. Sometimes the other side of the street. Sometimes in disguise. (*The theme song fades out.*) Then giggling all the way, we rushed back, to report in our journal.

JOLI. The "Brad Books" we named them. I'd no time for any other writing.

JAZ. The journals were your scheme.

JOLI. And I told you why, if he was to be my first, then there must be a record. For posterity.

JAZ. You see, I decided once Brad was mine, all mine, I would then share him. Let my sister eat from the same tree. Just like in the legends.

JOLI. I was terrified, but rather moved by the gesture. And I did ever so much like what he said about the berries. Besides it made such sense, we had gone through so much else together.

JAZ. So we plotted our seduction.

JOLI. First playing the spy. She had us track him.

JAZ. Then late night phone calls, just to hear his voice.

She dials the phone; Joli answers as Brad.

JOLI. Hello? (*Jaz giggles and hangs up. Waits a beat then dials again.*) Hello? Look, I know it's you, so leave me the fuck alone, okay?

Jaz dials again.

JOLI. (*As Brad.*) Call again, I'm gonna fucking bloody kill both of you! Assholes!

JAZ. You see, it's working...To perfection.

JOLI. If you say...

JAZ. Certainly!

JOLI. The what's worse, she had us actually go into his flat. Into his room! His bedroom! Gone were the days of graffiti and knicking from shops. Now we were breaking and entering.

JAZ. Well, we're no longer children, were we? We were nearly sixteen. No more schoolgirl games. Besides, what better way of knowing which side to butter a man's bread on than a bit of espionage.

“The Mod Squad” theme song begins

JOLI. It was just like the cinema, or the Avengers-

JAZ. Charlie's Angels.

JOLI. Through an open window, jam the lock of a screen door and you're in.

JAZ. I've always felt if you want to sincerely become acquainted with a person, espionage is key. I have no interest in seeing the walls they've put up. Built to cope with the outside.

JOLI. Their shell.

JAZ. I want to climb up over those walls, secretly if I can, and get inside their mind-

JOLI. Crack open that shell.

JAZ. Rummage through their safe keepings. Their true feelings, their desires.

JOLI. She'll steal into your soul, this one will.

JAZ. And the kitchen is not where we keep who we are. That you find in the bedroom.

The music ends and the lights change to represent the bedroom.

JOLI. Men are barmy, if you ask me.

JAZ. They are for the most part unorganized.

JOLI. Stuff was strewn everywhere. Girlie books, records.

JAZ. (*Looking at a pinup or a projection on the wall.*) I'm sweeter than she, aren't I, Jol?

JOLI. That's all plastic and touch ups.

JAZ. I tried on his jacket, still rich with his smell.

JOLI. And we were smoking a joint we found in his pocket-

JAZ. I love him so much, Jol. I found the center of my universe. (*She takes another drag. The sound of a door closing.*) Oh bloody hell, do you hear that?

JOLI. Come on! In the cupboard!

JAZ. No! I decided he ought to discover me lying atop his bed. Like an offering... So still wearing his jacket, I chose my best pose.

JOLI. (*From in the closet.*) What if it's his mum?

JAZ. Don't you muck this up, Jol!

JOLI. (*Becoming him, with a mask on.*) Well, I was right, it wasn't "the center of the universe." It was his younger brother, Ralph. (*As him.*) Jesus! Who the hell are you?

JAZ. I'm waiting for Brad. Said he'd be just back.

JOLI. (*As Ralph.*) Brad? He's gone to Brighton, with a bunch of mates. For a fortnight. All these Welsh birds got faces like the back of a bus. I said, "can I go?" He said, "fat chance in hell." So I say fuck him.

JAZ. You're right. Sod him!

JOLI. (*As Ralph.*) Where're you going?

JAZ. Well if he thinks I'm waiting in here for a bloody fortnight, he's mistaken.

JOLI. (*As Ralph.*) How did you get in here any way?

JAZ. Dark Magic. Here. He can keep his bloody jacket as well.

She opens the pretend closet, sees Joli and slams it shut.

JOLI (*As Ralph*) Who in the hell was that? In there. (*Opens the door.*) Oh, see I knew it. You're the two psycho girls, he told me about. Come on out, okay. (*The doors slam shut.*) Jesus, what's wrong with her.

JAZ. Haven't a clue. It's the same at home. Spends hours in our basement deep freeze. She's keen on confined spaces.

JOLI (*As Ralph*) He said you were fruit loops but this is tripping.

JAZ. So you're Brad's brother?

JOLI (*As Ralph.*) Name's Ralph. I know, stupid name. Try living with it. One day I'll blow my old man's head off for being so creative. So I bet Brad's probably never mentioned me. I'm like the pimple on the buttock of his life. That's about how important I am to him. What's yours?

JAZ. Huh?

JOLI (*As Ralph.*)Your name.

JAZ. Bathsheba. My mum's creative too. My mates call me Sheba. Sheba. And I thought I had it rough. What's hers? The one in solitary there.

JAZ. That's my sister Jezebel. Jezzie for short.

JOLI (*As Ralph.*) Hey, Jezz. Get out much? Ha! Wow, this is too cool.

JAZ. So, Ralph, you and you brother have... discussed us?

JOLI (*As Ralph.*) Yeah, I guess. I mean, you call like every morning at what, two A.M. and he gets pissed 'cause he knows it's you, and he says "what a bunch of fucking losers." You know, stuff like that. But don't take it personal or nothing. He says the same shit about me, too. Hey, I'll go get some beers. I mean if you want to kill some time and all.

JAZ. Okay... So...

JOLI (*As Ralph.*) So... Okay. Back in a minute.

JAZ. Joli does like to take her cupboard nap, just about now. (*After another inhale.*) No hurry.

JOLI. Cupboard nap? What in the hell was that?

JAZ. Well, you explain why your sister's tucked off in a clothes basket, the bottomside of a cupboard.

JOLI. Had no problem with the why you were stretched out like some raspberry tart atop his bed.

JAZ. Because all I'll need is for baby brother Ralph to tell big brother that he's sweet on me, and quicker than a greyhound, Brad'll come around.

JOLI. Jaz, he's kicking up the sand in Brighton. And we've got faces like the back of a bus.

JAZ. He talked about us Jol. We're etched onto his brain.

JOLI. He called us "fucking losers." Hardly seems etched -

JAZ. That's just it. Us. It's because we are always a "us." How inconvenient. He would never feel comfortable expressing his feelings, thanks to you.

JOLI. There are times when you right terrify me, Jaz, honest you do- (*Jaz grabs Joli.*) Now what are you on about?

JAZ. Get back in there. Two's a party, and three's inconvenient.

JOLI. I'm not for back in there.

JAZ. Yes, you are.

She pushes Joli in. Sound of the closet door slamming.

JAZ. And that is when it happened. On a bright wonderful day in early April. In his bedroom, I gave myself to him. That was when I became a woman.

JOLI. Bullocks! (*The lights shift to the start of the show look. The sound or tone is heard in the background and it slowly builds in intensity.*) Christ, Jaz. Why do you insist on twisting everything round? Honestly, I don't recall, ever, a thought of yours based in reality.

JAZ. Reality?

JOLI. Yes.

JAZ. Reality's a might relative, wouldn't you say? Given the circumstances. I'm not the one quibbling with the hereafter.

JOLI. And just what the bloody hell are you doing here anyway? I hoped to Christ I was rid of you?

JAZ. I never asked to be here-

JOLI. Then go! Please! Nobody's keeping you.

JAZ. Nobody but you, Luv.

JOLI. Why? Why is it so difficult for me to be ever and truly rid of you?

JAZ. You almost were- once.

JOLI. That was an accident, you know as well as I.

JAZ. Come, come, reality, Jol. Don't leave out the juicy bits.

JOLI. And-

JAZ. The down in the muddy ditch of it-

JOLI. I never meant that, damn you! That was your fault!

JAZ. Don't work up a sweat over it, Jol.

JOLI. You are never going to forgive me of it, are you?

JAZ. Not true, Jol. I do forgive you. You were right all along. With me gone life would be tickedy boo!

JOLI. I never wished you gone.

JAZ. T'was your greatest desire, love, you said so yourself. *Aud Infinitum.* (*To audience.*) You did hear her say it, did you not?

JOLI. Please, Jaz. Please! Just leave it be. Christ, I've no will for this.

JAZ. Now, that's the point, Jol. Isn't it. No will. No will of your own.

JOLI. What ever you say, Jaz.

JAZ. Then do us a favor, get back in the cupboard, so I can finish telling our story.

JOLI. What cupboard, there is no cupboard. See? Christ! It's all bullocks! All of this is. This is nothing but a tedious game- a never ending match of charades. A voyage round both our failed imaginations. See, dear sister that's the point of it. It's all just in here. You and I are trapped.

She sits, giving up. The tone is gone

JAZ. Come on, Jol. They've come to hear our story. (*Not knowing what to do now, and truly nervous the story has come to a stop.*) People love hearing about us, you know that. Tell 'em a story 'bout a coupla freaks- makes them feel a little bit saner. Jol! Alright, let's do it. Let's really shake things up a bit. Let's tell 'em the bits that have never been told. (*to audience*) Fasten your seat belts, ladies and gents, it gets really odd from here on out.

JOLI. What?-

JAZ. You wanted to tell them the truth, right? All right then let's give it a go. Let's do it. Ralph and I went for a walk, cause he had this place he wanted to show me.

JOLI. (*Joli realizes that Jaz is giving her a gift of telling the truth and continues, unsure.*) And they left me in the cupboard.

JAZ. And.

JOLI. And the two of them were slobbering all over each other, panting as hard as a bunch of overworked mules.

JAZ. He said he wanted me. I must admit a nice thing to hear even if it does have a possessive bend to it.

JOLI. And I heard them leave. Lucky for me, or I might still be sitting in there-

JAZ. And we shared a few beers as we walked.

JOLI. And I followed them. (*A soundtrack to this scene begins. Enigma's Principles of Lust works very well if available.*)

JAZ. We walked to the back of beyond, through this old graveyard.

JOLI. And they kept stopping ever so often to lick each other to death.

JAZ. And then inside this old chapel. It was cold and overcast, dark. Like some Gothic novel. He'd broken a window long ago and we snuck in. "I'm going to show you paradise," he said. It was beautiful. Stone walls, a crude carved altar, and covered in candles. He said he stole them himself off his brother's grocery and brought them there to read at night, and he went about lighting them all, and I was glad; it was getting to be cold-

JOLI. It made the light dance all over the walls, and it caught the stain glass just right. It was quite magical.

JAZ. And I was lying on the altar and he unbuttoned my blouse, and he took off his shirt, and he'd five baby blonde hairs on his chest. I'll never forget. I took them to be a sign of manhood, and I remember kissing him and nuzzling his chest. I know making love in a church sounds a bit odd. But making love in a graveyard church, take my word on it, is just the wildest. Like thumbing your nose at the face of death.

JOLI. It felt to me as if affirming my own aliveness. I am not one of them. (*Jaz is glaring at her.*) Forgive me for interrupting, go right ahead.

JAZ. Not at all. For that was just when you decided to cut in anyway.

JOLI. For she had once again passed out.

JAZ. I did not pass out. I was catching a bit of repose... It had long gone past twelve...

JOLI. So there she was, snoring away on the altar, and him fumbling with her bra and rubbing up against her. So I removed all of my clothes save for my mack, cause it was cold as a scotsman's balls in there, and I stepped forward out from the shadows and I said, "Hello Ralph." And I dropped my mack. "Welcome to paradise." And he was just standing there gazing at first, stupefied.

JAZ. Thought he'd seen the dead come back to life knowing the looks of you naked.

JOLI. Yes, well you don't know, for you were sound asleep.

JAZ. So, she had it off with him.

JOLI. Yes, I gave myself to him.

JAZ. See, never would I have done that.

JOLI. Nor could you, in your condition.

JAZ. I was saving myself for Brad. Just using baby Ralphie to get at him.

JOLI. Fine by me, because Ralph was soon to be my husband, and I his wife.

JAZ. His what?

JOLI. I never told you, but it's true.

JAZ. You never told me what?

JOLI. That he married me. And I him.

JAZ. When?

JOLI. Right there. In the church. He told me how much he wanted me.

JAZ. Not a right choosey bloke was he.

JOLI. And I said that he had to take my hand in marriage first, being we were in a chapel and all that.

JAZ. When did standing about in the altogether, swearing devotion before you do yourself silly on the cold church floor, become known as holy matrimony?

JOLI. When a man drops to his knees and pledges his devotion-

JAZ. A man would pledge allegiance to a mackerel if it was standing in front of him knickers down, promising to give it a pull.

JOLI. Nevertheless, I got on my knees alongside of him, and I said my vows, and we kissed a solemn kiss-

JAZ. And then she had it off with him.

JOLI. And then we made love. On the third pew. Because you were snoring away up there on the altar. But I remember, the sting of pain, and the strange clumsiness, and then how fast our hearts were beating, and how much sweat despite the cold. And that it finally felt just as I thought it would, only ever so much better, and when it was over I whispered in his ear: "Darling, I will remember this day forever, and how much I loved you." And he rolled himself off of me and accidentally tumbled to the floor. And we were laughing, and that's when I caught sight of you again. It had been but a few minutes, but for each one of them, I had actually forgotten you. And as I laid there on the floor in his arms for the next ten, one for each you stole into this world in front of me, leaving me behind, only after savoring each one, I told him what you had promised to do in aid of me. And he said "what?" I insisted that I would never want to share him with another, but this one thing I'd sworn, and he said "okay, cool." And he stood himself up rather

awkwardly, and I led him over to you. And watching him kiss you was oddly not painful in the least. I felt reassured knowing I already knew the taste.

JAZ. And I remember waking up and seeing all those candles again, and feeling him trying to put himself inside me, and being so relieved that I'd woken up and wasn't missing it all. And that's when I saw you standing there, in bugger all but your mack, and holding that candle, with that look on your face, so generous, and I knew. Right then and there, I was certain. So I tried to get him off of me, but he just kept pushing and prodding. So I kicked my feet out at you. And finally I could reach you-

The stage begins to glow with fire. Slowly it will begin to build and take over the entire stage. The tone is heard in the background

JOLI. That's why the candle fell. All this time I've been angry at myself for being so clumsy.

JAZ. I was furious. How could you betray me like that?

JOLI. That was the first fire we raised.

JAZ. And as enraged as I was, I remember nothing could match that fire. Those flames had created more fury in seconds than I could bring to a lifetime.

JOLI. The candles soon became puddles of wax from the heat. But oddly we weren't even the least bit afraid.

JAZ. I remember thinking if I burned alive it wouldn't matter.

JOLI. So we grabbed you and pulled you out of there. And you were kicking and scratching at us. And the look on your face. I knew then you'd never forgive me.

JAZ. I hate you, Jocelyn Gibson. I have always hated you, and I always will.

JOLI. And why? Because I finally won. I finally beat you to the mark. I touched this before you, and it feels wonderful! And what's more, I do not give a sod what you think. Nor do I feel I ever will again. So what do you have to say to that?

Jaz spits squarely in Joli's face. Fire effect and the tone are gone. Long Pause. Joli slowly wipes the spittle from her face.

JOLI. So that is why you had us break into all those shops.

JAZ. I had you? Look, dear girl, nobody forced you to do anything. You and your baby Ralphy had a right sweet time of it, pilching from the grocery.

JOLI. But it was your idea.

JAZ. Payback for Brad being such a twit, yeah. And it was fun.

JOLI. But the fires, the school, that was to pay me back, wasn't it?

JAZ. No, that was because they had asked for it long ago! Bloody nuns.

JOLI. You were angry at me, Jaz! Don't you see?

JAZ. Don't flatter yourself, sister dear. I'd been angry since a child. Tossed every toy from the crib- you should know, you were there. "Play with the nice dolly, Jaz" Yeech, out it went. Face it, I've the "bent on destruction" in my nature. You've no idea how hard it is to live in a wrong-headed world when your only wish is to set it right. And raising a fire's a bit more gratifying than chucking your rattle, or yanking your dolly headless. Light yourself a fire, and all can be set right-in a snap!

JOLI. Then why did you phone the police all those times.

JAZ. Wasn't it you who always said we need to "open the door" and communicate more? Besides it's no fun unless you up the stakes, give the poor gits a bit of a chance. (*Into phone.*) Good evening, Constable Bowdon. We just thought you'd like to know the school's caught fire. Which school? Constable. I'd venture if you raise yourself from your desk and put down the fish and chips, and give a look out of the window, whatever school has smoke coming out of the windows and paint melting off the walls, that would be the one I'd put my pay packet on. It's been a true pleasure as always, Constable. Ta-Ta for now.

JOLI. You wanted it to happen. You wanted us to be caught, didn't you? You wanted to punish me.

JAZ. Don't be such a twit Jol, Christ. You never could appreciate a good gag, could ya?

JOLI. It's why you had us turn to a life of crime.

JAZ. "Life of crime?"

JOLI. We'd never started a single fire before that graveyard.

JAZ. It was only a phase.

JOLI. A phase? What was next? Blowing up bridges?

JAZ. Next was fratricide.

JOLI. The truth is you snapped. You couldn't stand it. Could you. That's what your eyes said. You couldn't stand that I was finally first at something.

JAZ. I couldn't've cared less. It was Brad that mattered to me, not your puny Ralph. Not your Ralphie. Your "husband" of what? Two weeks, three days and a couple of pokes.

JOLI. At least he took a liking to me, nothing like yours, ran for the bloody hills each and every time he caught sight of you.

JAZ. And yours was ever so devoted. So much so, his whole family set sail with not so much as a word for you.

The lights change to Brad and Ralph's house. The girls are inside.

JOLI. They're gone, Jaz.

JAZ. Pulled a midnight flit. The place is empty. Jesus, this effing town is gonna be even more boring now, 'inn it. I never even got to kiss him Jol. My Brad. I'll never know the taste of my true love's lips. Where the bloody hell have you gotten to now?

JOLI. In my cupboard.

JAZ. I worry about you Jol, do you know that? Sometimes I think you need a right serious tune-up.

JOLI. I don't think I can manage it, Jaz. I can't walk home every day and look at this place. We should have burned it down long ago, rather than your Brad's shed.

JAZ. Bloody brilliant. *(She exits from the light.)*

JOLI. Where are you going? Jaz? Fine, leave, why not. Everyone else does. *(Singing another children's song.)* "I don't love nobody and nobody loves me. All I want is my Ralphie, to come and dance with me" I'm not sure I'm equipped for this Jaz, that I've got what it takes to get through a whole life. After all I'm the runt of the litter. And they always toss the runt out. Drown her, or something. I honestly could have loved him, Jaz, I could have. All I wanted was to matter. I wanted my books to matter, nobody wanted them. I wanted to matter to you, you hate me. I really thought with him, I mattered.

And for a few moments, I did, I know I did. Wrapped in his arms, I mattered. Didn't I? I guess not.

JAZ. Okay, Jol, say good-bye to the Walker flat. Come sundown, it'll be dust and ash.

JOLI. What have you gone and done, Jaz?

JAZ. I let our fire out again. She was getting hungry, anyway. You were right, we should've done it long ago. She's having supper herself in the basement, right now. No more of that god awful plastic paneling. Jol, get your skates on? She's hungrier than I thought.

JOLI. Good, I'm glad.

JAZ. I knew you would be. They deserved it after all, didn't they?

JOLI. So do we...

JAZ. I can't hear you mumbling in there. Come on out. *(She tries the door.)* Jol, quit playing the fool and get your knickers out here!

JOLI. No, Jaz. Leave me be.

JAZ. The smoke is getting thick out here, silly, we've not much time. Joli, I really have no wish to sit through another of your po-faced pouts.

JOLI. Leave me alone, Jaz. Please.

JAZ. She's hungry today, Jol. Ate herself right through that plastic basement and is all over the first floor. She's taking no prisoners today.

JOLI. Let me stay here, Jaz. Let me stay in my husband's house.

JAZ. Your husband is history, dearsweet and so's this house. *(She is tugging on Joli now.)* And I've no design on-- Christ, when did you get so bloody fat.

JOLI. I said, leave me be.

They fall and Joli gets up, threateningly.

JAZ. Jesus, Jol, look behind you, your mack. Your mack is on fire. Come here, Damn you, your mack! *(She is trying to pull her out of the house.)* Here, there's a ditch. The water.

JOLI. I hate you, you shit.

JAZ. Yeah, not as if you're sweet pudding to me...

JOLI. What are you doing?

JAZ. Your back is still smoking, there's water here.

JOLI. You know we can't swim for nuts.

JAZ. Good, you've wanted to die, any luck, you'll drown.

JOLI. Not here, I don't want to die in a ditch!

The lights change as they slide down into the drainage ditch and go underwater. Their movements should be slow-motion and the lights and sound should begin to feel submerged until they break the surface and are gasping for air. They are clinging to each other at first and then fight to get free to breathe. Weird sirens can be heard approaching. Once they break the surface the lights and sounds immediately change to realistic.

JOLI. I hate you, dammit!

JAZ. I'd no idea it was so deep.

JOLI. I hate you more than you've ever hated me!

JAZ. Let go, Joli!

JOLI. I hate you, I hate you, I hate you!

JAZ. Christ, Joli, I can't-

They are submerged again. Lights and sound are again distorted. Joli is trying to drag her sister deep down. She lets go and makes her way up for air. She breaks the surface and the lights and sound are normal and she hears the fire engines and police. It is clear there are many trucks and people around. Some are yelling "this way, around here, go in through here."

JOLI. Jaz? They've found us Jaz? Jaz? (She looks around, unable to find her sister.) Jaz!

She ducks back underwater. Finds Jaz and pulls her head up out of the water. They are both gasping for air. Joli finds the edge of the ditch where they can stand and then sit in more shallow water.

JOLI. Jaz? Jaz?

JAZ. I'm sorry. I'd no idea it was so deep, honest.

JOLI. You twit, I thought I'd lost you.

JAZ. Don't be daft. I'd never give you the satisfaction. You want it too much.

JOLI. I thought you were gone.

JAZ. Stop your sniveling, where's your worry. You hate me, remember.

JOLI. No, I don't. I love you. I love you, Jaz.

JAZ. My ears must be full of muck.

She hugs her sister tightly and they won't let go of each other.

JOLI. I love you ever so much.

JAZ. Get a grip on it, Jol, or you'll drag us under again.

They kiss. It grows out of the extreme emotion and should not be strange at all. But then they kiss again, and again, and finally they stop giggling like breathless schoolgirls. A bright light is flashing on them. A cry of "here they are, they're out here in the ditch" is heard on a blowhorn.

JOLI. Now what are we going to do?

Jaz puts her finger up to her lip as if to say "Sshh." Over the blowhorn we hear a voice scream: "Alright raise your hands up. Put them high in the air. Now!!!" The girls slowly, very slowly raise their arms high over their heads. They are still kneeling on the ground. They move in perfect synchronization again for the first time in awhile. The voice continues: " We are arresting you." The girls slowly touch the two hands closest to each other, and then grasp them together, a sign of support. The lights are very bright now, so bright they cause the girls to squint. The last thing we hear is the blowhorn saying "We are arresting you both. You are not obliged to say anything. Anything at all." Blackout.

End Of Act One.

ACT TWO

Joli is sitting by herself in a pool of light. Her legs are pulled up tightly and her arms are wrapped around them almost as if she is a ball.

JOLI. A riddle for you. What do you get when you take two girls who have spent most of their lives locked in a single room, wishing nothing more than to be removed from the outside world, and toss them in jail? I trust the irony's not lost on you... But for a long while, they thought it best to keep us in separate cells, and that was sheer agony. Like being unable to breathe-

Lights come up on Jaz in a separate pool of light. Sitting in exactly the same position. She has a tape recorder. Jaz's voice can be heard. Followed by Joli's. They are imitating two doctors.

VOICE. How long have they both been like that?

ANOTHER VOICE. Almost two weeks.

VOICE. Two weeks? And no food?

ANOTHER VOICE. No, sir.

VOICE. And they just lie about the floor, like that.

ANOTHER VOICE. No, not always. Sometimes they stand.

VOICE. How nice. Must be a treat...

ANOTHER VOICE. Well, it does break the tedium.

VOICE. For you, or the girls?

ANOTHER VOICE. Both, sir. Except sir, there is one peculiarity.

VOICE. You mean apart from the near catatonic behavior and the refusal to eat?

ANOTHER VOICE. Yes. They often stand for hours at a time. Perfectly motionless.

VOICE. Pity. I thought you were going to say they broke out with a little tap dance every now or then.

ANOTHER VOICE. Not as yet.

VOICE. Perhaps you ought to try music?

ANOTHER VOICE. Oh, sir, I have. And books, sir.

VOICE. I was merely pulling your –

ANOTHER VOICE. Sir, I even gave them a tape recorder. You know, thought they might talk to it, since they won't to us. And it worked, they are talking.

VOICE. Only to each other.

ANOTHER VOICE. True, a bit at a time. And only on tape. And only as us.

VOICE. Well, did you try putting them together?

ANOTHER VOICE. What, the tapes?

VOICE. Christ, Tippit. No, the girls.

The girls are now rising, moving side by side, in perfect time.

ANOTHER VOICE. Of course. Doctor Stewart. I'm no fool.

VOICE. Could hang a jury on that one, I'm certain... So when you put Ying here, in with Yang what did we get? Harmony and bliss?

ANOTHER VOICE. They stood there together, perfectly motionless. Still no talking...

VOICE. Is it possible they knew you were listening in?

ANOTHER VOICE. Not to my knowledge, no, sir.

VOICE. Wait a minute, play that bit back again, please.

The sound of a tape rewinding.

ANOTHER VOICE. They stood there together, perfectly motionless. No talking...

VOICE. Is it possible they knew you were listening in?

ANOTHER VOICE. Not to my knowledge, no sir.

VOICE. Wait a minute, play that bit back again, please.

The sound of a tape rewinding.

VOICE. Shut the damn thing off. You bloody fool, they're playing games with us. They think this is nothing but a game here.

Joli picks up the recorder and the two of them start recording a new scene.

I'm well aware of that, sir.

Damn voice doesn't sound even a bit like me. Does it.

Actually, sir, I'd say-

Not a damned bit. But the other has you and your waffling "Yes sirs" down to a tee.

I'd say they've got us both spot on, sir.

Would you? Well, any more bright notions since the recorder?

Actually, sir, I have.

No wonder they've got it in their heads it's a game with you their doctor. What'd you give them this time? A can of petrol and a book of matches each...

I've given them two sessions a day together outside, for fresh air, and they've begun to eat.

Bravo. At least they won't die before the bloody trial.

Only there's one other odd bit, sir.

Face facts, Tippit, it's all queer. Everything to do with the two of them's off center.

This is even more so than most, sir.

I'm not sure we've time for it today-

They take turns eating. One for the other.

Enough!

One stuffs herself and the other stops eating altogether. Then just like that, they switch roles.

JAZ. Turn the damn thing off! Christ, Jol. *(She has turned the recorder off.)* They don't have to know everything.

JOLI. Then, let me eat, please. I'm starving....

JAZ. Do you want to go into that courtroom looking like some fattened goose for the slaughter?

JOLI. No-

JAZ. Look at your cheek bones. See, for the first time. You've actually got cheek bones.

JOLI. I do? I do, don't I! Still, Jaz, I'm so weak. I'm not as strong as you.

JAZ. All the more reason to hold out. Two more days. Then we switch. Trust me, Jol. It's working. It's all about control...They lock us in, tell us when to eat, but they can't make us. Remember, together there's fight in us. We've got them running scared now, do you want to go and ruin that?

JOLI. I've got an idea. I'll be you. Then I get to eat today and they'll still think I haven't.

JAZ. What?

JOLI. I'll go back to your cell, and you go to mine. How would they know the difference.

JAZ. That's a bloody great idea.

JOLI. Talk about control. They won't even know which one of us they've got.

A loud buzzer rings. The girls move in perfect step but this time Jaz goes to Joli's spot and Joli to Jaz's. A door is heard slamming on Jaz's cell and a bright light shines on Joli. Jaz enters the pool of light slowly, playing Dr. Tippit.

JAZ. Hello there, Jaz. How are you feeling today? *(Joli says nothing.)* You understand it is imperative that I can construct a full psychological profile

for your defense. Until now it has been obvious that you've been reluctant. But there has been quite a new development. And Doctor Stewart and I felt you should know. Yesterday your sister Jocelyn came forward and gave a full deposition. (*Joli's eyes widen, but she does not move.*) She placed full blame for the fires and damage to property on you, saying the events were all your idea and that your will was too much for her to resist. She then begged for us not to tell you for she was certain that you would find her deceitful.

JOLI. (*Muttering to herself.*) From the Latin capere, de cepere, to seize. Deceive...to ensnare...

JAZ. (*As Dr. Tippit.*) I understand how shocking her severing such a vital trust, must feel. It must be devastating for you. I'll look in on you tomorrow. Good day, Jasmine.

Jaz exits the area of light .

JOLI. Delude, dupe, fool, hoodwink. Those cheeky bastards. Imagine if we hadn't swapped, you'd be at my throat sure as I'd be at yours. I'd stake my life the old turnips giving you the once over right now.

Joli steps forward and becomes the other doctor as the lights come up on Joli's cell area with Jaz inside.

JOLI. Each and every fire, your scheme, part of your master plan. You lit the matches, you spread the petrol, she just happened to be at your side. For three long hours she regaled us with the years of abuse and torture, and I might add it is not a pretty picture she paints. It's not a story that inspires thoughts of clemency. So, Joli, you just continue sitting there biting your tongue. Keep believing that the box hasn't been opened. That the lid is still locked tight. But the truth is the world full of tricks and devilry now, and if you choose to keep silent, she's doing the talking for the both of you.

Two loud cell doors slam shut. The lights change to outdoors and the girls immediately begin to play a slow motion game of paddy cake as they sing: Ha ,Ha , I lost my bra, I don't know where my knickers are."

JAZ. See, isn't this fun?

JOLI. Fun? This is your notion of fun. I'm famished.

JAZ. Then eat. That's right, go on. We'll both eat. They'll not know what to make of that.

They begin to eat from trays in front of them. In perfect time.

JOLI. Now what? Do we go at each other's throats and pretend to feel cheated?

JAZ. It's what they expect.

JOLI. Certainly have years of practice at it.

JAZ. But what's to gain from it? They'd have cracked us.

JOLI. Studying us right now, you can make bet on that. The soup's not bad.

JAZ. Tastes like warm paint. You're just hungry that's all.

JOLI. I thought you'd betrayed me, Jaz. For a moment there I thought you'd truly done it. Then I remembered I was you, and he was actually accusing me, and I knew I'd never done it. That would mean I'd be betraying myself, and I would never be party to that.

JAZ. That's it!

JOLI. What?

Jaz kisses her sister quickly.

JAZ. You've done it again

JOLI. Careful they're spying on us, remember? We should be at blows with one another not blowing kisses-

JAZ. Sometimes I'm in bloody awe of you sister, honest I am. You are much more clever than I, without a care to be. It's brilliant.

JOLI. Well, of course it is. Flipping amazing, if I came up with it. So what is it?

JAZ. Follow me.

JOLI. That I can do.

They march in perfect time back to their rooms and into their separate interrogation lights.

JOLI. If I may-

JAZ. I've decided to-

JOLI. Set down my own-

JAZ. Side of the story.

JOLI. She was right.

JAZ. She was right.

JOLI. It really was all my doing.

JAZ. I was the one calling all the shots.

JOLI. So, since I'm at fault-

JAZ. Since she was indeed innocent-

JOLI. Punish me.

JAZ. Sentence me.

TOGETHER. But let my sister go free!

JOLI. Signed Jocelyn Gibson.

JAZ. Signed Jasmine Gibson.

But you're Jasmine Gibson-

And you're Jocelyn-

JAZ. No, I'm quite sure that I'm not.

JOLI. I'm right certain you're wrong.

JAZ. I'm Joli?

JOLI. I'm Jaz?

Wait, let's get this, once and for all, straight-

Are you absolutely certain?

JAZ. Joli?

JOLI. Jaz?

JAZ. Jaz.

JOLI. Joli.

Two loud metal doors slam.

JAZ. Out of the night that covers me-

JOLI. Black as the pit from pole to pole.

JAZ. I thank whatever gods may be -

JOLI. For my unconquerable soul!

The lights flash brightly over and over and the camera shutter sound is heard each of the five times and the girls pictures are on two panels that appear to be windows into their cells. The effect should be now that the two parents are looking in on their daughters.

JAZ. Do you hear dat, Suz? Dey don't even know de which from which?

JOLI. Neider did you half de time. Dis one here's Jocelyn, and dat one wit de frown's Jasmine. Of course, I'm certain, I'm dem Mudder aren't I? Baked dem in my own oven, fought fourteen hours to get dem in dis bleedin world, and for what? Have dem turn our home into a sideshow. Reporters, blastin photographers.

JAZ. It's alright, Luv. Never difficult for me wife to sort them out.

JOLI. Cause, dey never look at'all de same to me. Oh, I know dem faces are similar, but you've got to look past a face. Me not talkin appearances. It's the feelin you get from dem's what I'm onto. Look at de fierceness behind my Jaz's eyes, she had dat from a little girl. Grab at everythin that way, always life or death wit her. Teethin was no picnic wit dat one, me tellin you. And Jol, she a studier. Stare at you for hours, she will.

JAZ. Confound me dey did, from day one. Me could never get one pull away from de udder. Dey cry for hours, but I guess you catch on to dat. But dey was always good little girls, sur. Odd as de day is long, but never a bit of trouble.

JOLI. Dere you go paintin dem never a problem. Keep it up, and de papers be callin you loony as well.

JAZ. Upset she is 'cause dat Daily bloody Mirror says it all our fault.

JOLI. Not ours, mine! Mudder of de two demons, de caption say. "How on eart could a mudder not know".

JAZ. But it the God's honest trut, we'd no idea. Good little girls dey were.

JOLI. You try livin wit it. Years dey spent tuck off in dem bedroom, not so much as a Hello or a Goodnight Dad, your own daughters. Never once a real hug or a goodnight kiss. You own little girls who never once could even look you straight in the eye, could never once in de whole of dem lives just say "love ya--Mum".

JAZ. Suz... All dis attention is a bit of a strain on us, see. Two more interviews dis morning. One all de way from London. Mind you, most be good about compensatin for our time.

JOLI. Got a right little earner on the go, dis one does.

JAZ. Don't be makin more over it dan dere is. Spent her whole life swearin chalk was cheese, dat one did.

JOLI. An dis one's tellin me need a bizness manager...

JAZ. So if dere is anyting else me can be in aid of- if them need anytin at'all

JOLI. Don rush me, man-

JAZ. Suz. Remember what the magistrate say. Patience and give de doctors all de help we can. All up to de experts in dese cases. Is really in dem hands.

JOLI. Experts...

JAZ. Remember, de one on de left is Joli...

JOLI. Joli de one who watches...

JAZ. And Jaz she de one who frowns...

The two cell doors slam at the same time. Joli runs to catch her mother. The tone is heard.

JOLI. Mum!

JAZ. Don't you dare!

JOLI. I-

JAZ. Don't-

JOLI. Just-

JAZ. You-

JOLI. I jus-

JAZ. Dare!

Joli is silent. The tone stops.

JOLI. I'm sorry, Mum. I'm so, so terribly sorry...

JAZ. So am I, Mum! Sorry I ever spent the whole of my life confiding in this one. Look at her all fretful and worried, seen worms with more spine. Please sir, don't lock us away, I'm so terribly sorry...

JOLI. I am sorry-

JAZ. Did you hear that, she's sorry. How many do you think with their backs up to the wall, haven't felt piles of regret? I'll bet Jack the Bloody Ripper was sorry too, wasn't he. Once they caught him.

JOLI. They never did catch him.

JAZ. 'Cause he worked alone.

JOLI. 'Cause he never called the police.

JAZ. You saying this is all my fault?

JOLI. And he was too sorry. Why he stopped killing. They never caught him, but he stopped.

JAZ. Besides he did call the police, or sent them letters and telegrams. Even a kidney. Bastard was a genius. Posted them a human kidney. Dared them to try and find him.

JOLI. I wonder how he did it.

JAZ. Wrapped it up and stuck it in a box-

JOLI. Wonder how he stopped. Obviously something drove him to it, but he found a way to just stop.

JAZ. Who says he stopped? Probably just found a new way to channel his aggression. Took up pounding veal.

JOLI. Don't you ever regret this, Jaz? Regret all we've done?

JAZ. I regret having to listen to this feeling pissing sorry for yourself. That's what I regret. Listen, sister dear, in the grand scheme o'things, I'd say regret's about as useful an emotion as ambition. What the bloody hell does either get you for your trouble? Look, you want to be part of their scheme, deal with their tricks and deceit, go right ahead. You want to live in their world, let them squash your individuality and reward you with nothing but conformity, go ahead. Let them mold you into a nice cookie-cutter sugar and spice little girl, but I'm not for it. I'd like to believe in the game, Jol. You asked, so okay I'll tell you the honest to Christ truth. I'd like to believe the good ones finish ahead. If I thought for a moment that might be true, I'd be a ruddy, effing saint, I would. But I got nothing to go on there, you see. I've only Father Bleeding Clancey telling me the way to heaven is charity and kindness, while he's holding the phone with some politician who's been and done and bought and sold his soul and most every one else's long ago. And the only saints I see are nothing but statues and stain-glass that were tortured and maimed for their troubles ages ago. Why I've never needed dark glasses out of doors, like most do, Jol. The sun's just not all that bright to me.

JOLI. Ten minutes.

JAZ. What now?

JOLI. My world's been just as dark. But for ten minutes, it was different.

JAZ. Look, you say what ever the bloody hell you want to tomorrow in that courtroom. When they call on you, ask you how you plead, you say "I had it off with a boy for ten minutes in a graveyard and now I'm sorry, I'm so terribly sorry." "I'm innocent, she's the one, my sister's the one" It doesn't matter to me, and neither do you. From this moment on, you are rid of me, dearest sister. I am no longer yours.

A loud gavel bangs and the two girls move slowly center and back to back.

VOICE OF JUDGE. That you jointly entered as trespassers and stole therein four phonics tapes, two electric pencil sharpeners, a pair of scissors, and one copy of Oxford Collection of Verse and Poetry. And finally that you again jointly, without lawful excuse, damaged by fire the Our Lady, Queen Of Martyrs School, intending to damage such property or being reckless as to whether such property should be damaged. What say you to the charges, Jasmine Nicole Gibson, guilty or not guilty?

JAZ. Guilty.

VOICE OF JUDGE. What say you to the charges, Jocelyn Caroline Gibson? Guilty or not guilty?

She is trembling, terrified.

VOICE OF JUDGE.. What say you to the charges?

She is still unable to speak.

VOICE OF JUDGE. Guilty or not guilty? You must respond to the charges, Miss Gibson, or we may proceed no further. You do understand the allegations put forth for you to respond. (*Joli is barely able to shake her head.*) Then how do you plead? Either guilty or not guilty. Miss Gibson?

JAZ. “Beyond this place of wrath and tears, looms but the horror of the shade. And yet the menace of the years, finds and shall find me”?

JOLI. “---Unafraid”?

VOICE OF JUDGE. Order, please.

JAZ. “It matters not how straight the gate-“

TOGETHER. “How charged with punishments the scroll.”

JOLI. “I am the master of my fate!”

VOICE OF JUDGE. Order!

JOLI. “I am the captain of my soul!”

VOICE OF JUDGE. Jocelyn Gibson-

JOLI. Guilty! I am-- guilty, your honors.

JAZ. That was your finest hour.

JOLI. Don't be daft.

JAZ. You should have seen yourself, Jol. You were right wonderfully defiant. Joan of Bloody Arc could have learned a thing or two from you.

JOLI. It got us life, you fool.

JAZ. Horseshit.

JOLI. Convinced them there was no help for us, I'm sure of that.

VOICE OF JUDGE. I am satisfied from the evidence that has been placed before me that both defendants are suffering from a psychopathic disorder. *(The voice continues on sentencing them as they comment.)* I am further satisfied that their disorder is of such a nature as to warrant their detention immediately for medical treatment.

JAZ. Our bets were down before the horse left the gate, Jol. The whole bloody sham didn't last but one hour.

VOICE OF JUDGE. I have regard to all the circumstances of the case, including the nature and number of offenses, and comparable methods of dealing with them.

JAZ. Kept us for months and the whole damn thing was done in forty five minutes.

JOLI. Because we were so bloody damn guilty. Left journals, made phone calls.

VOICE OF JUDGE. And have come to the conclusion that the only suitable course is an order under section 60 of the Mental Health Act.

JAZ. So we were guilty, neither of us ever bloody denied that. But did we deserve this? To be locked up with murderers and lunatics?

VOICE OF JUDGE. Therefore I shall make an order for their detention in Broadmoor hospital. *(Pause. Joli and Jaz stop look at each other and straight ahead.)* It further appears to me, having regard to the nature of the offenses and the number of them, that there is a danger of their committing further offenses if released. Therefore I think the order I make must be-- without limit of time.

A loud gavel bangs, and the lights shift to cell darkness as two doors slam.

JAZ. A life sentence for a stapler and some books?

JOLI. And a few fires.

JAZ. Was a phase.

JOLI. Was it? "I want to be the best arsonist ever." That's what you wrote. The best ever.

JAZ. Got that from you. Ambition. No good doing a thing unless you wish to be great.

JOLI. Face it, we were a bloody menace. Knotted so tightly together, we couldn't be untied.

JAZ. So throw us into a cell in Broadmoor with the rapists, the killers, the demented, the deranged, and let us rot?

JOLI. What would you do?

JAZ. Exactly what I did. Turn my back on the whole lot of them.

JOLI. And on me.

JAZ. Not at first, not for the first ten years. Only after you were hell bent on bettering yourself. With your Doctor Tippit.

JOLI. We needed help.

JAZ. You needed help. I was doing bloody fine, thank you very much.

JOLI. Sure long as you had enough Depixol- (*A bell rings. The girls put out their hands and receive their pills*) - in you.

JAZ. Did make the day feel a bit more cheerful.

JOLI. Cheerful?

JAZ. I always say a little Depix cocktail- (*The girls swallow their pills with cups of water*) and count the decades floating by.

Projections now occur as if the walls or panels are televisions and the girls both hold remotes and press them. There is no other movement save the popping of pills than a channel is changed.

JAZ. Look, sister dear, they've cloned a fish. The Chinese have. First time an organism was an exact reproduction of itself. Other than us, mind you. We never got the recognition we deserve. And soon we will be obsolete, they'll be clones of every poor sod running around to pull up your knickers for you. And to think it'll all have started with a fish. Cloned themselves a fish, the Chinese have. Well, they always were bloody good at Maths and Science.

JOLI. They tried to rescue the Yanks in Iran.

JAZ. Who the Chinese?

JOLI. No. The Americans. The ones being held hostage. Tried to storm in and bust them out. It didn't work. Eight men were killed.

JAZ. Bloody armies. Good for nothing. Should have called on the Men From U.N.C.L.E. or Mission Impossible. Tonight's episode: Mission Bust - Out- Iran!

JOLI. Wish they'd break in and bust us out.

JAZ. "Operation Fire Girls".

JOLI. More like "Two Fish Drowning".

JAZ. I'll drink to that.

Bell rings. They take a pill and swallow water and change the channel.

JOLI. They shot John Lennon.

JAZ. Who?

JOLI. Some deranged fan. He died.

JAZ. See what hope gets you for your trouble?

JOLI. Maybe you're right, Jaz. Maybe there is no God.

The bell rings. They take a pill. Drink. And change the channel.

JOLI. They released the hostages, Jaz.

JAZ. Yeah, but they elected Ronald Reagan. Before only a handful were hostage, now the whole damn bloody country is.

The bell rings. They take a pill. Drink. And change the channel.

JOLI. They shot the Pope.

JAZ. No!

JOLI. Yes. He was just wounded.

JAZ. Like Reagan.

JOLI. Yeah.

JAZ. One shot and they get John Lennon...

JOLI. Stop it. Who next, I wonder.

JAZ. True. They're out there taking pot shots at Popes now. Can't get much closer to the Almighty than that. Still in a hurry to get out of here, throw your hat back in with that lot?

The bell rings. Joli takes a pill and swallows it. Drinks.

JAZ. That's my dear old girl. (*She pops her pill.*) I knew there was some reason I loved you. (*She toasts.*) Here's to another year of floating through.

They change the channel.

JOLI. We invaded the Falklands.

JAZ. The who?

JOLI. The Falkland Islands.

JAZ. Where the bloody hell are they?

JOLI. Off the coast of Argentina.

JAZ. Really.

JOLI. Apparently the Argentines want them back.

JAZ. Why?

JOLI. Doesn't say. Just says they established a presence.

JAZ. No, I mean what the bloody hell do we want them for? What are they known for?

JOLI. Who the Argentines?

JAZ. No, the bleeding Frickland Islands.

JOLI. Falkland. Sheeping mostly.

JAZ. Sheeping?

JOLI. Yes. 90 percent of the residents are shepherds.

JAZ. We invaded some bloody islands five thousand miles away of the coast of bleeding South America for some sheep?

JOLI. It appears so.

JAZ. I'm going back to sleep. Wake me up if the sheep win.

JOLI. They didn't. We did.

JAZ. What do you mean, the thing's already over?

JOLI. Happened a month ago. We've been out of it for a month. Missed the whole bloody war.

JAZ. Hardly a war if the thing is over before it starts.

JOLI. Margaret Thatcher called it the most significant British Naval Victory since World War II.

JAZ. How difficult is that. It's the only British Naval victory since World War II. Probably had to dust the damn battle ships off. She must feel right proud kicking the shit out of some Spanish sheep. Wake me up for some real news next time, otherwise leave me drool.

*The bell rings. They take a pill and drink. Then change the channel.
The Charlie's Angels theme song is heard.)*

JAZ. I love this show, Charlie's Angels. Can you think of anything more

daft? Farrah Fawcett is swimming along in the middle of ocean, and her hair was perfect. Bitter cold and sharks but not a curl undone. I'd give the world to try that. Just swim out and out till there's nothing but sea on all sides. What's with you today? (*Joli doesn't respond. She seems miles away.*) Bit too many cocktails before dinner, luv? I'd do it underwater though. I'd swim the whole way underwater. Just dive deep down and start swimming. I love the way it felt to move underwater, didn't you, Jol? Like floating through pudding. Nothing had any weight. Hey, sister, I'm talking to you. See like you. Underwater, and still able to breathe.

JOLI. Like fish.

JAZ. That's right. Your Chinese fishes, the ones just alike, only we're Siamese fighting fishes. Swimming along, mile after mile, fathom after fathom. Way down deep under the dark sea.

JOLI. I can't breathe.

JAZ. Sure you can.

JOLI. I can't. I can't breathe.

The bell rings and the girls reach for their pills this time Joli does not swallow hers but puts it in her pocket secretly. They change channels.

JAZ. They've got all new girls now. Jol. All the originals, the first Angels are gone. Charlie had to recruit himself a whole new crew.

JOLI. Things change.

JAZ. Let me write that one down. Pearls of wisdom. Things change. Bloody brilliant.

The bell rings they reach for their pills. Again Joli does not swallow hers but puts it in her pocket.

JAZ. See now- fuck this! (*For a moment Joli fears she's been caught.*) Cheryl Ladd's a twit. This second lot's nothing but a bunch of twaddle-makes you long for Farrah and Victoria Principal. See Jol, what good is it. Can't even count on your Angels to stay put more than a season or two. But you can count on me, can't you Jol?

JOLI. (*Pretending to swallow her pill.*) 'Till all's blue.

JAZ. That's me girl. 'Till all's blue.

*They change channels. But this time the lights come up only on Jaz.
She cannot stop changing the channels.*

JAZ. Fuck, where is it? Charlie? Damn you, don't you desert me too!
(JOLI. enters.) Where were you?

JOLI. Had to spend a penny...

JAZ. For the last hour?

JOLI. Oh, before that Matron wanted me to tidy my cell.

JAZ. Bitch wouldn't even give me my pills. Said they was on to her.

JOLI. She's scared of you's all, Jaz. You did threaten to turn her in.

JAZ. It's about control, Jol. She thinks she's got me, took me awhile, but I found a way to get her.

JOLI. You look terrible.

JAZ. Careful, dear. I'm you, you're me. Think you look any sweeter? Look in the mirror, luv.

JOLI. Look at your face. It's white as paste. You are only awake to eat and fall asleep. You used to make us laugh at least. You never smile anymore. When was the last time we laughed.

JAZ. I'm sitting in a maximum security lockup, Luv. Not bloody Brighton. And I'm here for life. Not much to let loose a bellybreaker about. And you aren't much aid. All you talk about is who died. Obsessed by it. Who killed who.

JOLI. I feel dead's, why. They're killing us, Jaz. We were brilliant, bloody fantastic.

JAZ. What?

JOLI. There was a time when no one could touch us.

JAZ. That was up here, Luv. All in here.

JOLI. How can you say that to me? How can you, of all people?

JAZ. Would someone please be good enough to inform my sister that the

dais she's lecturing from is in actuality the padded chair in the recreation room of a loony bin. Last I looked.

JOLI. You're the one who could always convince me. I loved you so for that.

JAZ. And that was your gravest mistake, my dear. Should have gone on hating me. I was in a word, mistaken.

JOLI. We had dreams.

JAZ. We were delusional.

JOLI. No. Please, Jaz. Don't let them win!

JAZ. Listen to her. All proud and haughty. Win what? A lounge suite? A bloody cruise to T-T-Tahiti with your precious Doctor T-tippit.

JOLI. What are you on about now?

JAZ. Leave me the ruddy hell alone, and give me my pills. I said give them over to me. Now! I said!

JOLI. I heard what you said. I'm not deaf.

JAZ. You think because you decide to go crying to some doctor for help, I give a shit? I could care less-- (*Long pause.*) Just give me the pills, damn you.

JOLI. How do you know?

JAZ. Know what?

JOLI. About the doctor.

JAZ. About your lies and deception?

JOLI. I'll tell you; I wanted to tell you. Christ, don't you think I wanted to tell you?

JAZ. Well, I certainly didn't hear you try. All I'm hearing is lies.

JOLI. I'm telling you, aren't I?

JAZ. Just give me the sodding pills-

JOLI. How is it lies if I'm bloody well telling you.

JAZ. Because it's post facto, my dear. It's after the fact. If a husband's dipping his wick elsewhere, but has the decency to confess, does that mean he never cheated?

JOLI. This isn't cheating, Jaz. My God, do you even hear yourself? We are not husband and wife. Look at how unbelievably confused the boundaries are between us-

JAZ. Ah, there she goes with the boundaries, crap again. And you wonder how I knew?

JOLI. It just proves how misguided our roles-

JAZ. What, what is my role, huh? What has always been my part in the bloody drama? To aid you, to help you get through it. Choose your jumper, how to wear your hair, match your shoes. You even thought I helped yank you out and into this world. Well I got a bloody surprise for you, Luv. *(She throws a letter at her sister.)* The jobs yours from now on. Always has been. We were sorely mistaken.

JOLI. What is this now?

JAZ. It's from Mum. Read it. Says she's answering your post. Again. Love's hearing from you, so many times, after all these years.

JOLI. I wanted to tell you. Jaz. I just didn't know how.

JAZ. Incomunicado.

JOLI. You would have forbidden it, persuaded me to not to.

JAZ. She's so glad you've been seeing the doctor. For what, about a month now? From the Latin capere, de cepere, to seize. Deceive... to ensnare.

JOLI. You were always sleeping, most of the day now. You'd packed it in.

JAZ. No, Luv. I was treading water. But now, yes. Now I'm packing it in.

JOLI. "First about the zodiac information you requested. I don't know why you felt all these years that Jasmine was born first. I promise you I never told you that."

Jaz reaches for the pills.

JOLI. Stop it. Did you read this?

JAZ. Matron gave it to me. Thought I was you. Ironic, don't you think?

JOLI. "You Jocelyn were born first, at 9:05 A.M. It was Jasmine"-

JAZ. Give me the-

JOLI. You read this?

JAZ. Could give a bloody shit!

JOLI. "It was Jasmine who followed just over ten minutes later" Stop it!

The pills drop and scatter all over the floor. Jaz tries to collect them as if someone had dropped diamonds.

JOLI. "She took her sweet time about it, you see. Was in no hurry. Might be why she frowns so."

JAZ. Give me that!

JOLI. No. It was me all the time.

JAZ. Give it to me! *(Jaz rips up the letter.)*

JOLI. Oh, good show, Jaz. What does that do? You think that'll change anything?

JAZ. And you think what happened ages ago will?

She tries to take a pill.

JOLI. No! Enough!

Joli slaps her across the face and grabs the pill. Jaz sits a minute, stunned. She slaps Joli. Joli slaps her back, harder. Jaz goes to slap her again, and Joli grabs her hand.

JOLI. Enough!

JAZ. You fucking, bloody, bugger, twat, shit! You are dead to me. Do you hear. Dead to me forever!

JOLI. Sorry, Luv. But you are mine. Dear sister, you are mine till all's blue. You're my sister and I love you-

JAZ. Well, sod you. It's over.

JOLI. No, it's not. It's just beginning. Damn you, listen to me, It's not over. They're building a clinic. In Wales, near home, Jaz. And it'll be ever so much nicer than here. We'll be able to sit outdoors, there's going to be a park and a garden, and Doctor Tippit said he'd recommend us both for transfer. Do you hear? Transfer us out of here, Jaz. To a minimum security clinic. After ten years, not life. But we have to want to get better. We have to try. We have to show signs of improvement.

JAZ. You improve. I'm for the status quid pro quo.

JOLI. We'll die in here.

JAZ. Have to die somewhere. This place is as good as any.

JOLI. No, it's not. Jaz, please, listen to me. It'll take time to build the clinic, a few months- Doctor Tippit-

JAZ. Sod, your doctor Tippit. Sod him and his hairy ears.

JOLI. He cares about us both, Jaz.

JAZ. Got shrubs growing right out of his ears. Don't see how you can even look him straight in the face.

JOLI. Do this for me, please.

JAZ. Out of the shit that covers me.

JOLI. For us.

JAZ. I am the one to masturbate, I am the Captain of my stuff.

JOLI. What? What did you just say?

JAZ. Christ... my head. (*Holding her throbbing head, then seeing Joli looking concerned and reaches for her.*) What? What in the bloody hell, do you want?

JOLI. I want to go home. Please, Jaz. Let's go home. (*Jaz answers by sitting down on the floor. Joli is now standing over her.*) We have to be examined one last time, both mentally and physically before they will sign the final release. Dr. Tippit took care of the psychological exam, thank God. But please, don't babble on in there.

JAZ. Shhh. Keep your voice down, are you daft? You know they listen in. He doesn't think it's a good idea. Jol. I talked to Charlie. Charlie and the other Angels don't think we should go ahead with it.

JOLI. Don't start in with the Charlie's Angels crap again.

JAZ. Charlie doesn't know if you've the stuff to make it.

JOLI. Charlie is a bleeding actor, on a stupid show. From the states. It's a show, Jaz, on the tele.

JAZ. Of course it's a show. But that show's just a show. That's how he gets on the tele. Then he can talk to us.

JOLI. He's not talking to you, Luv. The show is years old, it's a re-run. Bunch of bimbos with polyester hair. It's made up, it's not real.

JAZ. It is, Jol. This is very real. You have to see past the show. The show within the show. Only a very few can hear it. In here, you see. You have to be on the frequency. To pick it up. That's alright. If everyone could, there'd be no need for us Angels? But don't you worry, I know he's just testing me, see if I'm ready for the mission, Jol. I'll be alright. I know it's dangerous, but I'm ready. *(She looks hard at her sister.)* Are you, Jol. Are you ready?

JOLI. Christ, don't muck this up, Jaz. You're burning up. You've got fever.

JAZ. It's nothing at all, just a bug. Touch of the flu. It's damp in here that's all.

JOLI. This is never going to work.

JAZ. Don't wimp out on me now, what would Charlie say?

JOLI. I've no bloody idea.

JAZ. He'd say, "you're on your own from here, girls."

She reaches her arms out to Joli. The lights change to a single pool of light. The girls walk arm in arm, Jaz supported by Joli.

JOLI. That was your finest hour, Luv. They thought it was just a bad fever. They believed you. Twenty tests and they couldn't find anything wrong.

JAZ. Doctors...

Jaz collapses. Joli helps her to the ground and sits with Jaz 's head in her lap, like a strange portrait of Madonna and Child. Joli is touching her forehead.

JOLI. And we made it out, walked out of Broadmoor arm and arm. And we got to the new clinic and eight hours later, you were gone.

JAZ. I'm ready, Charlie... *(Slowly Jaz closes her eyes.)*

JOLI. Viral Myocarditis, they said. Very rare. A virus that lives in the blood not the muscle, so it gives no warning, but it can do its work in less than twenty four hours. It moves into the heart and inflames the muscle, completely destroying it. The "silent virus" it's called. I'm so sorry, Jaz. I was more worried about getting out, than losing you. I had no idea. You were obviously sick, I should have done more. All I wanted was to be out of Broadmoor. I remember even thinking, oh, Christ, die, why don't you, but don't mess up this chance. How could I be that selfish. How could I have said that. Die, why don't you...?

JAZ. *(sitting right up)* You still don't get it, do you? How long is it going to take for you to figure it out? Months later-

JOLI. A year. It's been a year, today.

JAZ. Alright, even worse. A year today they buried me, and you still think it was your fault. I worry about you, Jol. Who made all of the decisions? Who dressed you for twenty some odd years? Who gave you the titles for all your books and stories? Who hated the outside world, never felt the bright sun, despised reality so she dragged you from one locked room to another? Who found the most permanent maximum security locked room of them all, bloody Broadmoor, and threw us both in? Me. That's who.

JOLI. I tried to get us out. To escape.

JAZ. You did get us out. You did escape. And you had every right to want to. The sun burns in your eyes, Jol. You toss about a church floor with a boy, in the throes of passion, wanting nothing more than to affirm your own aliveness. Me, I wanted nothing more than to die. I wanted to die, Jol. Don't you see? Because I couldn't ever stand the living. I never could. Probably why you were born first. I never wanted a part of this world to begin with. Wouldn't be surprised if you didn't reach in, and yank me out.

JOLI. Because, I needed you, Jaz. Christ, I need you. I still do.

JAZ. Oh, stop, you're blubbering, I'm right here. I didn't really die of some virus, Jol. That's just what your doctors need to write on their charts, collect

their pay. We both know only one of us could make a go of it. Always said glue the two of us together, we'd have a fighter. Well, you've me to all's blue remember? But I'm where I should be now. *(She points to Joli's head.)* Poking at you from in here. *(And her heart.)* And here. I hung on long as I could for you, Luv. Then I died of relief. I died to let you get on with your life. So, please, do me a favor and stop making a muck of it. Get out there and talk to some people.

JOLI. I am. *(She points to the audience.)* I have been. It's part of my therapy.

JAZ. Therapy... Christ, I'm glad I'm dead. Had me drawing naked pictures of my Dad. So, go on, talk.

JOLI. Hi!

JAZ. You said that hours ago. Don't tell me I died for nothing.

JOLI. I can't talk to both them and you. They'll think I'm daft.

JAZ. Luv, most of your adult life was spent in a lockup for the criminally insane, of course they think you were daft. But if you want, I'll stay out of the picture.

JOLI. Just while I finish.

JAZ. But I'm here whenever you need me, though to them, I'm...

She lifts her hand and makes the "Ssshhh" sign in front of her lips and Joli does the same. In perfect time with each other. And the lights go out on Jaz.

JOLI. It's been a year now since I lost her, and it is true that sometimes I feel as though she is right by my side jabbering away. All my life my greatest wish was to be alone. I now realize I can never have that. Will never be truly alone. And nothing in the world makes me happier. That is my new secret, my new desire. To carry her with me always. And so I, uh, do, implore you. Your secrets. Whatever they are, please-- cherish them. Forever. I've talked so long the sun is going down. Doctor Tippit says I'm just trying to make up for lost time. Still, I'm glad we had this chance to meet, to get to know one another. To communicate. Good night.

The lights fade to black.

End of Play