



Tuna Fish Eulogy

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TUNA FISH EULOGY

A LADDER PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Tuna Fish Eulogy

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CHARACTERS

This play was originally done with four actors—with MAN ONE playing multiple parts. The play could also be done with each of MAN ONE'S roles being played by a separate actor. MAN ONE could also (and has been) be played by a woman.

WOMAN ONE: Ms. Scully

MAN ONE: Mediator
Reverend
Boyfriend
Mother
Father
Cherry's Mother
Cherry's Father

WOMAN TWO: Cherry

MAN TWO: Albert

TEXT NOTE

This is a ladder play. The text appears in columns as opposed to the standard play format. It complicates the life of the actors because they have to read vertically as opposed to horizontally.

Anything that appears on the same line is supposed to be spoken at the same time. Sometimes it is unison text, but sometimes it is not. In that case, you have to decide which text is more important, which voices should be brought to the forefront. The aural quality of this play is very important and the voices should weave together, not compete for volume.

This play also jumps quite frequently from the present to varying points in the past. This should be done through vocal quality and physical gesture, NOT through costume and makeup.

SETTING

This play occurs in many different settings and many different times. A set that reflects the abstract nature of the piece will work better than something realistic.

The light comes up on four solitary figures as MAN TWO sings.

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
			Holy, Holy, Holy All the saints adore thee Casting down their Golden Crown Around a glassy sea.
My fingers I can feel the blood in my fingers. Life is breathing In me	<i>(As Mediator)</i> Life is breathing.	I can feel my fingers I can feel. . . . Life is breathing	
I am so young.			I am alive.
My fingers I can feel the Warmth. I can feel the		I am eighteen again. My fingers I can feel the I can feel the Rose in my cheeks.	
Where are we?	Albert?	My skin. My skin hasn't felt this young in years.	
My hair. My hair is young again. Full of life. Life is breathing In me.	Albert. . . .	Life is breathing In me.	
Who's that? Is somebody there?	Albert?		I'm here.
	We don't have to... Albert?	I can't see. Who's there?	
Albert?	You can go anytime.	Albert?	I'm ready. Let's get started.

ALBERT (MAN TWO) extends a hand out to his mother (WOMAN ONE). She is unsure of him but does take his hand. They come Centre Stage. CHERRY (WOMAN TWO) sits to watch. THE MEDIATOR (MAN ONE), takes both of their hands (like a boxing match) and then breaks them apart.

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>What did you say? You didn't buy milk? You didn't buy milk. I gave you two dollars And you didn't buy... So. Albert. What did you buy?</p> <p>I had to move away after my son died. Albert.</p> <p>I I was a suspect for awhile because of ...</p> <p>Well, there were rumours.</p> <p>Aren't there always. And There...</p>	<p><i>(As Reverend)</i> We are gathered Here today to Celebrate a life. A life far shorter than it should have been, but a life none the less.</p> <p>Albert Scully.</p> <p>He was 12 years old</p> <p>He Was...</p>	<p>Albert.</p> <p>Well...</p>	<p>I didn't buy milk.</p> <p>You said I could...</p> <p>Tuna Fish.</p> <p><i>(sing song)</i> Tuna Fish Tuna Fish Tuna Fish Wish Wish.</p> <p>Albert. I always wanted the other kids to call me Zanzibar.</p> <p>But nobody would. I was going to legally change it when I was old enough,</p> <p>But I...</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>Albert.</p> <p>There wasn't any real evidence against me. They tried to prove I was a bad mother. A good mother would never have had those tins there in the first place. The only fingerprints were his and the sitters. And she said she was trying to take the can away and, after they found his diary...</p> <p>I was a suspect for awhile...but the police and the doctors all said it was suicide. Albert knew what he was doing. He was a smart boy. The people blamed me. The neighbourhood blamed me... The neighbourhood... I'm sorry.</p> <p>Nothing. I just...</p>	<p>Albert.</p> <p>Suicide.</p> <p><i>(As Mediator)</i> What's the matter?</p>	<p>Albert.</p> <p>A good mother would never have had those tins there in the first place.</p> <p>Albert...</p> <p>Where are you hiding?</p> <p>Fair is fair. It's my turn now.</p> <p>Suicide.</p> <p>He was not a normal child.</p> <p>We could have saved him in so many ways.</p> <p>For heaven's sake. This is going to take all day. Couldn't you have found a better place?</p>	<p>Albert. I died an Albert.</p> <p>I'm too OLD for a sitter!!!</p> <p>Today we played Hide and seek.</p> <p>I don't want to play!</p> <p>I don't want to play.</p> <p>Suicide.</p> <p>Go on Mom.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>I was just thinking...</p> <p>It's cold. I was distracted.</p> <p>Do you feel it?</p> <p>You haven't changed. Your face hasn't changed. Albert? Where were we?</p> <p>I was young. I was a single mother. Not to many of us out in the open in those days. I felt out of place.</p> <p>No "Mrs" Cherry. It's just Miss Scully or you could call me...</p> <p>Cherry always used to say things against me to Albert. I didn't stay at home.</p> <p>I bought cookies.</p>	<p>Albert?</p> <p>Ummmm— This is Albert's story</p> <p>(<i>As Reverend</i>) He was always wrinkled.</p>	<p>I can't get the dust off my fingers.</p> <p>I feel fine.</p> <p>Can we get on with this? I have to be home in time to fix dinner.</p> <p>Albert?</p> <p>She's crazy.</p> <p>Mrs Scully.</p> <p>Miss Scully alright, Miss Scully.</p> <p>Albert I would love to take you home.</p> <p>My mom would bake you cookies and iron your clothes.</p>	<p>Mom?</p> <p>Yes?</p> <p>Always.</p> <p>It's been 12 years.</p> <p>This is my story. I hear people call my mom crazy.</p> <p>Cherry always used to say...</p> <p>Why Cherry?</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>I didn't have any extra money.</p> <p>“Trust me Albert”</p> <p>Nobody ever said anything. Not to my face. But I could hear the whispers when I went out. When I walked down the street.</p> <p>Who does she think she is, Miss Scully. Does she think she's better than us, parading up and down without a husband. Up and down the good clean streets of our good town.</p> <p>I'm sure they still talk about it today. That's where she let that child die. Right on the kitchen floor.</p>	<p>And let you take piano lessons.</p> <p>You would love them. Albert you are a child. I know what's best. Trust me Albert.</p> <p>Miss Scully, who does she think she is parading her Un Christian ways as if she were better than us, nose in the air, walking up and down Without a husband Up and down the good clean streets of our good town.</p> <p>That's where she let that child die. Right on the kitchen floor.</p>	<p>But I don't want to take piano lessons.</p> <p>No. I wouldn't.</p> <p>I don't like piano.</p> <p>Trust me Albert. That's what she used to say. Almost every day.</p> <p>Who does she think she is Miss Scully, with her un-clean un-Christian ways parading up and down Without a husband Up and down the good clean streets of our good town.</p> <p>That's where she let that child die. Right on the kitchen floor.</p>	<p>Trust me Albert. That's what she used to say. Almost every day.</p> <p>Who does she think she is Miss Scully, with her un-clean un-Christian ways parading up and down Without a husband Up and down the good clean streets of our good town.</p> <p>That's where she let that child die. Right on the kitchen floor.</p>

WOMAN ONE, WOMAN THREE and MAN TWO continue to whisper “That’s where she let that child die. Right on the kitchen floor.” MAN ONE comes forward as the Reverend, and prepares to address the crowd.

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>Albert shush!</p> <p>I take care of him.</p> <p>Don't you raise your voice at me. Because I said so.</p>	<p>Albert was 12 years old. He was quiet. He was thin. He was unhappy. He loved the choir. He used to hold his hymn book just so whenever we sang.</p> <p>He wanted to join the choir and I said he had to wait until he was thirteen. He was wearing one of his button down shirts that always seemed to be wrinkled. He was always wrinkled.</p> <p>Why was Albert unhappy? It makes my heart ache to know about the pain that lived inside of him. Albert should have had the chance to live a full life. He should have been playing baseball, and hating homework and meeting friends at the skating rink after school.</p>	<p>Honestly Albert, doesn't your mother take care of you?</p>	<p><i>(singing out loud)</i> Holy, holy, holy All the...</p> <p>Stop fussin' at me!</p> <p>IT'S NOT FAIR!</p> <p>Why can't I stay by myself.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>It works doesn't it?</p> <p>I don't care how old you are. You're having a sitter and that's that.</p> <p>I'm not leaving you alone. The discussion is closed.</p> <p>A hundred and one. That's not funny.</p> <p><i>(She laughs and catches herself)</i> Albert.</p> <p>What happened. What didn't I know?</p> <p>The discussion is closed. Look Cherry is crossing the street. What's wrong with Cherry? I thought you liked having her here. Look. Cherry is crossing the street and I have to get to work.</p> <p>I don't know. I don't know.</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p><i>(As Reverend)</i> What's the matter?</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p><i>CHERRY hums to herself. She is humming "Jesus Loves Me." She is trying to bring attention to herself and gradually begins to hum louder.</i></p>	<p>That's your answer for everything.</p> <p>I'm 12 years old. Nobody has a sitter when they're 12.</p> <p>Sitters are for babies! That's why they're called BABY sitters.</p> <p>Don't you trust me? When are you going to leave me alone? When I'm a hundred?</p> <p>That's not funny. Don't do that!</p> <p>Mom.</p> <p>Cherry's coming.</p> <p>Does it have to be her? Can't I have someone else? I just don't want a sitter.</p> <p>I just don't want a sitter!</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>Something. He doesn't listen to me anymore. And we fight so much.</p> <p>You only see him on Sundays. Not for Albert.</p>	<p>He's 12 years old. It's perfectly normal.</p> <p>It's perfectly normal.</p>	<p><i>(Cherry is getting impatient.)</i></p> <p>If I don't get to go soon, I'm gonna scream!</p> <p>Finally. He's five years old. I'm baby sitting. I live across the street. So. One day, I'm reading while I'm sitting and all of a sudden it's quiet which is a bad sign cause when they're loud you know where they are right? When...</p>	<p><i>(Pausing before he speaks.)</i> So go.</p> <p><i>(sing song)</i></p> <p>I bought.... I bought....</p>
<p>What...</p> <p>...did you buy?</p> <p>Do you know...</p> <p>...how much tuna costs? I trusted you Albert. How could you? You know how I feel about</p>	<p>How...</p> <p>...did it happen?</p> <p>I never...</p> <p>...suspected.</p>	<p>...they're quiet, that's trouble.</p> <p>And I thought...</p> <p>...he's dead.</p> <p>Or choking.</p> <p>Or something. Here I was reading not exactly paying attention....</p>	<p>I bought it didn't I? You never trust me with anything. I don't! You never.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>Sorry.</p> <p>Much too young.</p> <p>If I hadn't been so tired.</p> <p>Much too young.</p> <p>I hated leaving him with anyone. But I had to work didn't I? I had to work. I will not take money from anyone, I wouldn't take it from my parents and so I had to work. I had to. I did the right thing. I DID THE RIGHT THING.</p>	<p>He had a favourite hymn.</p> <p><i>(As Mediator)</i> Everyone.</p>	<p>EXCUSE ME</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Where was I?</p> <p>Thank you. I'm only 12 at the time. Probably too young to be baby-sitting. But I got better didn't I? I baby-sat Albert for 6 years didn't I and...Ummmmmm I'm twelve and he's</p> <p>He's five. He should never have been left alone with a sitter at five years of age.</p> <p>EXCUSE ME I AM TALKING. I was told everyone was going to get a chance to talk. Didn't you say that? Everyone, right?</p> <p>So it's my turn.</p> <p>Well excuse me I</p>	<p>Sorry.</p> <p>You were 12.</p> <p>She wasn't too young.</p> <p>Why do you always make excuses?</p> <p>I'm five.</p> <p>Hey. Hey. We're not here to hear excuses. This is my story and all I want to do is present the facts. Whatever you say mom. WHATEVER YOU SAY.</p> <p>Why do you get to</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>I don't like this. I don't like this.</p>	<p><i>(As Reverend)</i> The only time I ever saw Albert smile was when he was listening to the choir.</p>	<p>was there too you know. It's my TURN ALBERT.</p> <p>I've put a lot of thought into this. It's been a few years now and...I've got children now and... What? Why are you looking at me like that?</p> <p>So. Anyway. He was fine. I turned the corner and he was sitting on the floor in front of the cupboard where the canned goods are and he had 10 or 12 tuna cans stacked in small towers. He was as happy as happy could be.</p> <p>Over the years, I always knew where Albert was. Right in front of that cupboard where the canned goods are. It wasn't normal. Who plays with tuna cans?</p>	<p>Yeah? Well so was I.</p> <p>You want to talk? Fine. Talk.</p> <p>Nothing. Go on.</p> <p>123456789101112</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
ALBERT! Don't say it like that.			If I had been allowed to live...
		He was 12 years old for heaven's sake. He was not a normal child.	I'd be 24.
What happened today?	What happened today?		Today, Cherry gave me a haircut?
It looks nice.		You're a disgrace. Sit in that chair. Do as I tell you.	I don't want a hair cut.
Did it bleed?		What if I... What if I...	She cut my ear.
It looks nice.		Don't be a baby and sit still!	OW! Cherry that hurt! You did it on purpose!
Did it bleed?			She cut my ear.
	<i>(As Mediator)</i> Which was it? Did you bleed or not?	Don't you dare get blood on my sheets Albert.	No I guess not.
My mother thought I didn't know how to raise a child. She never said as much. People often described her as a gentle and kind woman. The gentle and kind kind of woman who was gracious enough to			I don't remember. Let's move on.

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>be completely embarrassed and ashamed for me when I told her I was pregnant.</p>			
<p>It was an evil thing to do in those days. It still is, I guess. It was embarrassing to gentle and kind women when their daughters had children with no father to raise them. The father was a useless bum. Very ungentle and unkind which was the idea at the time.</p>		<p>I don't remember a Mr. Scully.</p>	<p>24 to the day.</p>
<p>I don't want anyone touching me!</p>	<p>No father.</p> <p><i>(As Boyfriend)</i> Kid? I don't want no kid and I ain't got no money for no butcher's job neither! Well you can be sure I ain't touching youse again neither!</p>	<p>No father.</p>	<p>No father.</p>
<p>You weren't that good to begin with.</p>			
<p>Mother.</p>	<p><i>(Mother)</i> How could you do this to me? What will your father say?</p>		
<p>I don't care.</p>	<p>Don't care? You should care. What will people think?</p>	<p>What will people think?</p>	<p>What will people think?</p>
<p>I DON'T CARE!</p>	<p>Don't care.</p>		

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
Mother.	Have you been to confession?		
No.	Have you been to confession?		
Mother.	You'll go tomorrow. You will go. I refuse to pay for an abortion.		
I don't want one.	I refuse to let you go to school pregnant.		
I hate school anyway.	We'll get a tutor. It's all over the church.		
	Don't. Care. Who's going to teach Albert to be a man?	Who's going to teach Albert to be a man?	Why does Grandma say I'm adopted?
That's what my father asked me.	<i>(Father)</i> Young Lady! Don't you walk away! I am talking to you.		
Looking back, I don't know what I would have done differently.			
No. No. I don't think so.			Abortion?
Thanks for the tip		You should have been more careful in the first place. It's no excuse. You're too young to know anything.	
Looking back, I just wish...sometimes I wish that I had learned to play the organ. I sit in church and get so lost in		What does that mean?	Like you?

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>the sound. Waves of sound crashing over me. I almost forget where I am. Who I am. Not very religious, I know. I know it's not. I know... but still.</p> <p>If I had been one of the lucky ones, my mother would have disowned me and that would have been that. But no. She used to bring cans of tuna fish as if they were peace offerings. But to me it was as if I didn't know how to feed my own child.</p> <p>She had read somewhere, probably in some dentist's waiting room about the benefits of tuna as</p>	<p><i>(As Reverend)</i> The Scullys came to church every Sunday. They've sat in the same seats in the same pew for as long as I've been here. In fact, Sundays don't seem to be the same without Albert swinging his legs and his mother in her very best Sunday Hat.</p> <p><i>(As Mother)</i> Fish is good for him. Oil is thicker Water is much better for you dear.</p>		<p><i>(singing)</i> Jesus loves me this I know. For the bible tells me so. Little children have one wish. That they might get some tuna fish. That they might get some tuna fish.</p> <p>Tuna fish Sandwich please!</p> <p>Oil is thicker Water is much better for you mommy.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>And whenever she whisked him away, she used to come over and take him without really asking. How many times did I think I would never see him again?</p> <p>He'd come back</p> <p>And he'd stink for days.</p> <p>Tuna in his hair, in his clothes, on his breath. I'd ask her not to give him so much and I tried to live with it. I tried so very hard.</p> <p>I BROUGHT HIM UP JUST FINE! I'm bringing him up just fine.</p> <p>Yes you did.</p> <p>But enough is enough. I won't have it. I won't have any of it.</p> <p>You should. You</p>	<p>It won't hurt him</p> <p>Just for one night. It won't hurt him.</p> <p>Just one night.</p> <p>It's good for him.</p> <p>Someone has to bring him up right.</p> <p>Of course you are dear. I didn't say you weren't.</p>	<p>Someone has to bring him up right</p> <p>Proper mothers stay at home Albert.</p> <p>Oh Albert. You're such a child.</p> <p>I don't remember when he died.</p>	<p>I love Gramma.</p> <p>Did you really think that?</p> <p>Tell me about the sea.</p> <p>Tuna Fish please!</p> <p>TUNA FISH PLEASE!!</p> <p>But I'm at school all day. Why should she be at home?</p> <p>I'm standing right</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>I should have known.</p> <p>I knew I should have thrown those tins away. But after all those years I never suspected he would try to eat them.</p> <p>Cherry.</p> <p>We rented the house from someone my father knew.</p>		<p>Funny.</p> <p>I have this image of Albert sitting on the kitchen floor oblivious to everyone and everything as if those little tins contained gold. They were tuna cans for heaven's sake. But I envied him. Even when I was only 12. Something so simple made him so happy.</p> <p>Do you want to play a game?</p> <p>Do you want to play fish?</p> <p>Scrabble?</p> <p>Hide and seek?</p> <p>I love games don't you?</p>	<p>(Counting cans)</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>10?</p> <p>They were my treasure. I kept them in the cupboard two away from the fridge. Mom had a bad back, she never had any reason to keep anything down there. She hated to bend. It was my own place. My own treasure trove.</p> <p>They reminded me of the sea and of very unordinary places.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>The only thing I let my parents do for me. I knew the type of shack we would have ended up in otherwise. The house was beautiful. I couldn't say no, no matter how much I wanted to.</p> <p>I could never afford anything like it, ever.</p> <p>It was only supposed to be temporary.</p> <p>Don't touch that Albert!</p> <p>It was the only thing I had to give him. A rented house.</p> <p>Best for everyone.</p>	<p><i>(Cherry's mother)</i> The Gypsies have come to the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Don't touch that Albert!</p>	<p>I remember when the moving van pulled up.</p> <p>Mother said the gypsies had come to the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Don't touch that Albert!</p> <p>In retrospect she was still quite young when he died.</p> <p>It was best for everyone when she decided not to live in the house anymore.</p>	<p>There aren't any kids mommy.</p> <p>I never liked the house.</p> <p>It was large and cold and filled with someone else's things. I wanted to live by the sea.</p> <p>I wanted to live in a shack by the sea.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>After the funeral while I was waiting for Albert's... your Remains... I had him cremated. I put his, your, ashes in a wooden box that I found in your room.</p> <p>That's the one.</p> <p>I thought about keeping them, the ashes, but...I took them and went to Nova Scotia and scattered them over the water. I thought he, you, would have liked that.</p> <p>After the funeral,</p>	<p><i>(Cherry's mother)</i> She left all of her things, clothes and the like.</p> <p><i>(Reverend singing)</i> Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty Early in the morning Our song shall rise to Thee</p> <p>I said he had to wait till he was 13 to join the choir.</p>	<p>I was away at school. The queer thing was according to my mother...</p> <p>Not that she had many things. But she just left the key in the mailbox and walked away.</p>	<p>All by myself by the sea.</p> <p>My pencil box. Where I kept my hymn book.</p> <p>I did. It was nice.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>while I was waiting for... My mother put a gloved hand on my shoulder and told me, she said to me in her gentle and kind way that it was better for everyone that he died He died. That was the last time I ever spoke to my mother. She was wearing a dark blue suit and patent leather shoes.</p> <p>I'm living in Nova Scotia with my own boat. I was never told about granddad and his goddamn boats. Fingers that tasted</p>	<p>It was better for everyone that He died.</p> <p><i>(As Father.)</i> Just like my grandfather.</p> <p>My hands leathered and worn.</p> <p>Like salt water and blood.</p> <p>Tough lined skin like</p>	<p>It was better that He died.</p> <p>The days I hated the most were the days Albert came back from his Grandparents. Sure they were far and few between, but all that came out of his mouth was fish fish fish fish fish fish fish</p> <p>Fingers that tasted</p> <p>Salt water. Yuck.</p>	<p>And I'd be a fisherman. That's all I ever wanted to be. Just like my great grandfather I'm living in Nova Scotia with my own boat. And nets and my hands leathered and worn.</p> <p>Fingers that tasted like salt water and blood.</p> <p>Tough lined skin like</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>Can't make a living as a fisherman. What were they trying to do putting foolish thoughts into your head?</p> <p>I'll be just like my great grandfather.</p> <p>He's only 12.</p> <p>You are dead. You're 12 years old and don't give me any crap about knowing and doing. I'm here, aren't I? I don't want to be, that's for sure. And I don't need any more than what I do to myself, ok?</p>	<p>living in hip waders greasy hair and a toothless grin and</p>	<p>He never wanted to sing <i>Mr. Sun</i> or <i>The Wheels on the Bus</i> or play <i>I Spy</i>. It was always the same. "I'll be the fisherman and you be the fish. I'll be the fisherman and you be the fish."</p> <p>You have to tell the whole story Albert. You can't go on and on about being an angel. Can you? I don't think so.</p> <p>I'll be just like my great grandfather. Is there tuna in Nova Scotia?</p> <p>I'm 17. I baby sit 4 times maybe 5 times a week. I'm saving</p>	<p>Now who's interrupting?</p> <p>(<i>Trying to overpower</i>) I'll be a fisherman living in hip waders greasy hair and a toothless grin and I'll be just like my great grandfather</p> <p>I'm 24!!! If you had been a proper mother you would have known and done something!</p> <p>Fine.</p> <p>Fine.</p> <p>Fine!</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>The girl was cheap. How else could I afford her the number of hours I needed?</p>	<p><i>(Reverend)</i> A couple of times Albert came to church by himself. Well, not by himself, with his babysitter.</p> <p><i>(Cherry's Mother)</i> Tom Foolery</p>	<p>for university but Dad's going to pay for me so I don't really need the money so...I'll probably buy a car.</p> <p>Someone needed to look after the boy.</p> <p>I'm a good baby sitter. I like to sing and play games and I don't take any Tom Foolery either. My mother says that. She won't have any Tom Foolery in her house and she doesn't. Children really fascinate me. I want to see how they work. ALBERT. Some people don't know how to handle kids. But I do. I'm going to have a lot of children some day. A whole house full. A gaggle full of children. I don't like being an only child and I'm sure Albert doesn't either. And I'm going to make</p>	<p><i>(sing song)</i> Tuna Tunnnnna Luna Soooooona Ballona Ballooka Tauuka</p> <p>Tiluky tukey Ticky Tacky Tick tacky Tick tack tock Tick tick tock</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>You say that as if it were so easy. So. Easy. So. Easy.</p> <p>Oh does she?</p> <p>Disgraceful. Really.</p> <p>And who is supposed to be feeding you while I stay at home. You? Will you get a paper route and solve all my problems?</p> <p>Deprived of what?</p> <p>Really.</p>	<p><i>(Cherry's Mother)</i> A proper mother stays at home. It's so disgraceful.</p> <p>Single parent children grow up deprived.</p> <p>Fun loving family stuff.</p> <p>Just look at him. Cherry he's got deprived written all over him.</p> <p>She gives the street such a bad name.</p>	<p>my husband go out and earn a living.</p> <p>I want to stay at home with my children. No way would I leave my children with a sitter.</p> <p>A proper mother stays at home. It's so disgraceful.</p> <p>Single parent children grow up deprived.</p> <p>Fun loving family stuff.</p> <p>That's what my mom says.</p> <p>All over you Albert.</p>	<p>Cherry says you're not a good mother.</p> <p>A proper mother stays at home.</p> <p>I didn't say that, Cherry did.</p> <p>Cherry says: Single parent children grow up deprived.</p> <p>They miss out on all the fun loving family stuff.</p> <p>That's what she says.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>Who the hell does he think he is? Who do they think they are? Cherry. Cherry!</p> <p>Albert has... I would prefer... he's been saying...</p> <p>I just think that...</p> <p>But I was his mother not you.</p> <p>Who told you that?</p>	<p>I have to work twice as hard. <i>(As Father)</i> What do you expect from white trash?</p>	<p>And my father says What do you expect from white trash? See what your mother does Albert? It's my responsibility, don't you see that? Yes, Miss Scully?</p> <p>Has Albert been telling stories again, Miss Scully?</p> <p>Don't worry, he won't do it again Miss Scully. Some people don't know how to handle kids, but I do. I'm not afraid to discipline those snot-nosed smug mouthed fat bug eyes spoiled little.... Well. Some children think they can get away with things. The new parenting and all. I believe you can't reason with them. They're only children.</p> <p>Just because you got pregnant doesn't mean you qualify.</p>	<p>That's what she says.</p> <p>And her father says What do you expect from white trash?</p> <p>I don't tell stories.</p> <p>Cherry.</p> <p>CERRY.</p> <p>Hey!</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>What's next?</p>	<p>Ummmmmm . . . Cupboard scene.</p>	<p>My mom, Mrs Shaw, Mrs Walker, Mrs Harrison, Mrs Berry, Mrs Johnson. Well it's true. Albert you are so strange. One moment you're telling her off, the next you're defending her.</p> <p>Albert you are so strange sitting here. Albert you are so strange. May I continue? Thank you. Albert. You are so strange sitting here all alone on the kitchen floor with your little tin cans.</p> <p>Wouldn't you like to play hide and seek?</p> <p>But not too old to play with your little toys I see.</p> <p>Don't tell me what to do there mister.</p> <p>Gold.</p>	<p>Stop it Cherry. You just CUT IT OUT! Leave my mom alone</p> <p>Just cut it out.</p> <p>I don't want to. Not yet. Let's do something else. I don't want to do that yet!</p> <p>They're tuna cans Cherry.</p> <p>I'm too old for that.</p> <p>Cut it out Cherry. Go read a book or something.</p> <p>I want to be alone with my gold.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>I thought you liked Albert.</p> <p>Why are we here?</p>		<p>They're just cans Albert.</p> <p>Can I see one?</p> <p>I've been coming here all these years and you won't let me see just one.</p> <p>Let me see one.</p> <p>I'll ask you once more. Let me see one.</p> <p>I see. Oh yes. Albert.</p> <p>I did. I do. I think of him often.</p> <p>Is that why I'm here? So you can bludgeon some confession out of me?</p> <p>Not at all. Sometimes we must do what we must do. Albert. I pray for you every night.</p> <p>It's very hard work. There's so much to go over.</p>	<p>My treasure.</p> <p>They are not. They help me and...</p> <p>No.</p> <p>No. You can't take them away.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>NO. You can't touch them! Get away from them! Get away.</p> <p>Why don't you tell the truth Cherry?</p> <p>Do you have something you feel you need to confess?</p> <p>You do?</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>Why would he lie?</p> <p>Albert!</p> <p>How is this my fault? He's dead. I lost my influence over him years ago. You are a rich spoiled rotten snob. A spoiled rotten snob and I hated having you in my home and anywhere near my child!</p> <p>Nobody asked you to.</p> <p>Nobody asked you to! Nobody asked anyone to help. I did just fine. I could have done just fine without any of you!</p>	<p>It's not in the notes.</p> <p>Ladies. Ladies. Ladies.</p>	<p>You never said that. WAIT. Wait. Did he say that?</p> <p>You wouldn't dare. You wouldn't dare mock prayer so.</p> <p>YOU ARE SO UNGRATEFUL. Do you see what you created? Do you admire your handiwork? This is your fault. He was your child. You should have known what was going on. I did things just to...I have two beautiful children who absolutely adore me. I AM A PERFECT MOTHER. Do you want to know why I stayed? I stayed because of the child.</p> <p>Someone had to do something.</p>	<p>Well maybe I don't want you to.</p> <p>I did too.</p> <p>Really? Maybe I prayed for your death every night.</p> <p>You were a child. You were a child looking after a child.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>ONE TIME That was one time. It was the week before Christmas. I lost my job.</p> <p>You don't know! He was eight.</p> <p>He was eight years old. Do you remember?</p> <p>I'M ASKING HIM Do you remember?</p> <p>Albert?</p> <p>You know I wouldn't do anything to hurt you. I love you.</p> <p>You see. It wasn't that traumatic.</p>	<p>Albert?</p>	<p>You drank in front of him.</p> <p>It was disgusting. I never forgot and I'll bet Albert never forgot either.</p> <p>Ask him.</p> <p>Of course he does.</p> <p>Albert?</p> <p>Albert!</p> <p>You know I wouldn't do anything to hurt you. I love you.</p>	<p>I was eight.</p> <p>They say that what happens to you as a child is supposed to last a life time...maybe this isn't a good idea after all.</p> <p>What? What is it?</p> <p>Today we played tag. I was it.</p> <p>I'm tired. So tired. Sometimes I wish I could curl up inside myself and die. I'm tired of school, tired of defending myself.</p>

WOMAN ONE	MAN ONE	WOMAN TWO	MAN TWO
<p>How old were you...</p> <p>Why didn't you talk to me?</p> <p>Didn't she?</p> <p>She could have been too upset to come to the funeral. I remember she was very upset that night. She was crying. I remember her in the kitchen with the police trying to hide the body from me. I had to fight with a sergeant so that he would let me hold you. I just wanted to hold you.</p> <p>Yes. Well. Sometimes we do strange things. What's it like to be dead Albert?</p>	<p>How old were you when you wrote that?</p> <p><i>(As Reverend)</i> We are gathered here today to celebrate a life.</p> <p>What's it like to be dead Albert?</p>	<p>How old were you...</p> <p>Sick.</p> <p>Of course I did.</p> <p>It was a very long time ago. Maybe you forgot.</p> <p>I was very upset.</p> <p>I was crying.</p> <p>I tried to hide the body. I tried to hide you from her. I was very upset.</p> <p>What's it like to be dead Albert?</p>	<p>to...</p> <p>Twelve. It was the week before. I don't think Cherry liked me at all. She didn't come to the funeral.</p> <p>Wouldn't I know?</p> <p>When you're dead, nothing slips your memory.</p> <p>You gave that Sergeant a black eye.</p> <p>I'll be 12 forever.</p>



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