The Tragedies of Daisy and Violet:
A Shakespearean Tragedy Inspired by the Lives of Daisy and Violet Hilton

by

Carly Brooke Feinman
Class of 2016

A thesis submitted to the
faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in English

Middletown, Connecticut April, 2016
Dedication

I’d like to dedicate this play to Daisy and Violet Hilton, two unique women who lived courageously and unapologetically.

Acknowledgements

There are many people without whom this play could not have been written.

To my thesis advisor, Dr. Harris Friedberg, thank you for your support, guidance, and meticulous attention to detail.

To Quiara Alegria Hudes, thank you for teaching me what plays are, and for telling me I can write them.

To my parents and sister, thank you for your unconditional support and for responding to my panic-stricken phone calls with humor and wisdom.

And to Emily, my teammate and best friend, thank you for being my library buddy and for listening to my ideas, my doubts, my terrible jokes; you helped me more than you know.
CAST OF CHARACTERS (in the order they appear)

MOTHER- ageless, not quite human
SISTER DOTTIE- 50
DOCTOR-50
DAISY- 60
VIOLET- 60
BUTCHER JOE-40
TOMMY-13

SETTING

Charlotte, North Carolina
December, 1969
SCENE I

Mother stands on a bloody bed. She holds a flower above her head. The flower drips blood. The sound of two heartbeats, soft and spotty.

MOTHER

Childhood despair of monsters ‘neath the bed
Stem not from foolish musings of the mind.
Demonic fright is born from truth itself
Detectable by the clean sense of youth
Though by adults this sense is left behind.

The sound of two heartbeats overlapping, ominously, stronger and more steady.

By hell itself the ghastly thing was built
I tried to kill’t and felt not gloom nor guilt
My gut grew round, grotesque and sorely bruised
My womb filled up by two so grossly fused.
For nine months straight it feasted on my flesh
It drank my blood until we were enmeshed.

The sound of two powerful heartbeats overlapping. Then, the sound of distantanguished cries. The cries are muffled.
With an ear-splitting crack the monster came
Emerging so quick from the depths of my shame
“Just die!” I cried, as I reached for the throat
The beast’s arrival made me a scapegoat.
I swear its gums felt sharp, its fists were tight
The midwife held me back with all her might.
I should have smothered it and washed my hands but
Satan himself had very different plans.
And so the beast still lives, still roams around
But to its hardened fate it shall stay bound.

*The heartbeats stop. All is silent.*

My offspring damned, my heinous little spawn
The foulest thing I ever came upon.
Here is the prophecy I penned myself:
One half will cause the downfall of the other
And th’other half will choose to kill itself.

*She plucks two petals from the flower. The petals drop to the floor.*

The tree shall split, the nightmare will be had
The rain will come but you will not be quenched.

(Pause)

As you wither like a thirsty flower

Let my words lure you to that final hour.

Blackout.

SCENE II

The church. Night. Sister Dottie sits at the organ, playing. It is a simple lullaby. It takes a darker turn. There’s a knock at the door.

SISTER DOTTIE

Who knocks upon locked gates at this late hour,

And with such vicious haste and ceaseless nerve?

Indistinguishable shouting heard offstage.

SISTER DOTTIE

Who raps upon church doors at such an hour?

The knocking continues vigorously. Sister Dottie hurries to the door and opens it a crack.
DOCTOR

I trust you’ve been expecting my arrival.

You surely recognize your old companion,

Don’t you, Sister?

_Sister Dottie opens the door a little more to examine the face._

SISTER DOTTIE

(Aside)

His face does seem a foreign thing indeed.

(To the Doctor)

And where do you presume I know you from?

DOCTOR

Most recently you summoned me to serve

The Hilton twins through written correspondence.

However you and I met years ago

In church in North Dakota. You recall?

I was an altar boy and you sang in

The choir. We were the closest friends until

I went away to university.

You also went away but never told
Me where you went. There was a rumor that
You ran away to be with Sally Mae,
The preacher’s daughter. Surely that was nothing
But silly fabrication fueled by gossip.
But anyway, it’s me. I’ve found you now.

SISTER DOTTIE
Edward? It’s you! My dearest friend from home,
The doctor come to help my cause! Come in.

Sister Dottie opens the door completely to let the Doctor inside. He coughs.

Excuse my less than kind reception here,
I offer you my warmest welcome now.
Are you alright? You seem to have a cough.

DOCTOR
Oh yes. The flu’s been going ‘round back home
But do not fret, sweet Dottie. I am well.
(He pauses. After a moment, he speaks hesitantly.)
There’s something I’m obliged to tell you now,
Before the consult with the twins takes place:
A surgery like this has many risks.
SISTER DOTTIE
And you have mentioned these to me before.

DOCTOR
There’s still one risk I’ve yet to share with you,
And I’m afraid this risk is worst than all
The rest combined.

SISTER DOTTIE
What danger have you failed to share with me?

DOCTOR
The chance that both survive is very low.

SISTER DOTTIE
How low?

DOCTOR
Can’t be much more than fifty-fifty.

SISTER DOTTIE
The odds you shared with me in your last letter
Were far more hopeful. Why deceive me and
Why wait ‘til you’ve arrived to tell the truth?

DOCTOR
I didn’t mean to lie to you, it’s just
Much harder to convey these things on paper,
But now that we are face to face, I’ll share
For it is proper protocol to state
The risk at hand. This shouldn’t alter the
Agreement that the Hilton twins have made.

SISTER DOTTIE
About that...the agreement... I must also
Confess a piece of truth to you. The twins
Have not approved the terms of the agreement.
In fear, I’ve yet to bring it up with them.
They don’t know you exist or that you have
The capability to surgically
Partition them once and for all. With hearts
So hard and cold, they don’t trust anyone.
I tried but couldn’t formulate the words
With which to tell them of our plan,
Our plan to split the two apart. I fear
Such bold and risky surgery would not
Sit well with them. They have a fear of doctors,
A fear that stems from years of harsh abuse.
Forgive me, Edward, but I feared that if
I brought it up with them, they would respond
Defensively with hatred seated deep
Within their souls. They’ve been conditioned not
To trust. That is the greatest scar they bear.

DOCTOR
Why have these twins such hatred in their soul?

SISTER DOTTIE
Souls.

DOCTOR
Come again?

SISTER DOTTIE
Each twin has a unique and separate soul.
I beg of you, say “souls” instead of “soul.”

DOCTOR
Why have these twins such hatred in their souls?

SISTER DOTTIE

They’ve lived through horrors you could not imagine.

DOCTOR

I’ve heard about their lavish lives, their fame,
The decadence and years of wild antics.
However, I have yet to hear about
The so-called ‘horrors’ you’re referring to.

SISTER DOTTIE

Please sit. This story’s not for faint of heart.

*The Doctor sits. As Sister Dottie recounts Daisy and Violet’s lives, photographs of the twins from various eras are projected onstage.*

The Hilton twins were born amidst a strange
And violent storm. The winds arrived just as
The sun rose red above the tiny and
Oppressive Brighton flat. The mother was
Nineteen, unmarried, ill-prepared for labor.
She screamed and flailed upon the bloodied bed
Until the babies came. Then Kate, the mother,
Refused to even touch the blaring babes.
The midwife had to suckle them all night
With sterile bottles of cow’s milk. Again,
The midwife, Mary, tried to place the girls
Into their mother’s wretched, whoresome arms
But Kate refused the babes outright and cried
“Expunge that ugly, frightful thing from sight!”

DOCTOR
How can a woman show such awful spite
To babies that she birthed herself? I don’t
Believe such hatred is within the realm
Of possibility.

SISTER DOTTIE
She hated them.
Kate deemed the girls to be a punishment
Sent from the damned Beelzebub himself.

DOCTOR
A punishment for what?
SISTER DOTTIE

Birthing a bastard.

SISTER DOTTIE pulls a newspaper clipping out of her pocket and reads from it.

The news caused quite a roar. The headlines read:

(Pointing to various headlines)

“Brighton’s Joined Twins” in big bold letters, see,

“An Extraordinary Birth” on the front page.

You see? Their fame was destined. They’ve been stars

Since birth. Their birth was heard around the world.

DOCTOR

I’ve heard that much, but where’s the cruelty there?

SISTER DOTTIE

The story’s just begun. Sit still and listen.

The article continues thus, “New twins

“Just born! The strangest freak of nature has

Just seen the light at Brighton,” See the photo?

(Pointing to the photo of Daisy and Violet as babies on the next page)

The author then explained their ailment here:
“A servant girl has given birth to twins
United at the hips by one thick mass,
Forever bound as one by flesh and bone.”

DOCTOR
The rightful term is “pygopagus twins.”
Sisters whose forms unite them back to back,
Their spines so ghastly bound right from the base.

SISTER DOTTIE
The midwife saw much prospect in the “freaks”
And bought the twins from Kate at two weeks old.

DOCTOR
Bought?

SISTER DOTTIE
Acquired as property, like animals.
Now Mary ran a standard local pub,
And let the public poke and prod the girls,
But for a cost, that is. And business boomed.
To keep the girls in place she’d chant this rhyme:
“I’m not your mother. She gave you away.”
Now you are mine so do just as I say.”
At two months old she took them on the road
To show in bars, in carnivals and fairs,
Displayed the girls around the great, wide world.
While in Berlin a surgeon pitched his skills
To separate the twins once and for all
But Mary jilted his kind offer since
Her living did depend so heavily
Upon the fleshly bond between their spines.
So on the travels went to yonder lands:
Milan and London, Glasgow, Melbourne too.
At eight years old they flew across the pond
And made it to America at last,
And that is where they rose in affluence.

DOCTOR
And how exactly did they earn their wealth?

SISTER DOTTIE
From working day and night for years on end.
Those girls were milked for all they had, then more.
Playing outdoors with other little kids,
Running around, consuming sweet treats—all
Those normal, childhood pastimes? Quite forbidden.

And so the twins lived quiet, modest lives,

Always obedient and docile when

Faced with authority. So perfectly

Professional, in fact, some even

Suspected that they lied about their age,

That they were grown adults just masquerading

As kids. All lies of course. Where was I dear?

Oh right. And so the twins worked day and night,

Deprived of any childhood. Meanwhile, Mary

Was pocketing their earnings, spending cash

Unsparingly. They lived this way throughout

Their early years and well into their teens.

DOCTOR

So many years they lived as slaves…

SISTER DOTTIE

It’s true.

Their meals withheld if they spoke up too loud

And whippings if they botched a song onstage.

DOCTOR
What wretched lives they lived, and for so long.

SISTER DOTTIE
It wasn’t ‘til their twenties that they were
At last emancipated lawfully
In court. Then, finally, they got to press
Their lips against the champagne flute of freedom.

DOCTOR
They must have flourished after that.

SISTER DOTTIE
They did.

They made up for lost time, surviving on
Fine caviar, rosé, and gentlemen.

DOCTOR
And gentlemen? You mean to tell me they—

SISTER DOTTIE
Indeed. Men were quite smitten with the pair
And they would fall in love from time to time.
At times they’d even fall for the same man.
A man named Billy Oliver did woo
The two in such an equal manner that
They were his lovers for some many years.
Th’affair was something like a Grecian tale,
That was until the lawsuit from his wife.

DOCTOR
A lawsuit from his wife? You’re kidding me!

SISTER DOTTIE
She sued them for a hefty penny, claiming
They plotted to estrange the weak and helpless
Affections of an older, married man.
‘Twas quite the scandal. Every paper wrote
About the raunchy things the three would do.
They never did receive much privacy.
They moved on to the next one fast enough
And this went on for years and years you know,
Blue Steele, Don Galvin, Harry Mason, boy!
You see the girls made up for much lost time.

DOCTOR
And all these men were shared by both the girls?
SISTER DOTTIE
Oh no, they didn’t share most men at all.
While one would be in bed with one of them
The other would chew loudly on an apple
Or read a book. They had a solid system.

DOCTOR
I can’t see how a man could be okay
Performing under such strange circumstance.

SISTER DOTTIE
I wouldn’t dare believe the tale myself,
But trust me when I say it is the truth.

DOCTOR
Forgive me, sister, but I still don’t see
The anguish you alluded to before.
With romance, pleasure, leisure and the rest,
How can you say they lived such painful lives?

SISTER DOTTIE
It wasn’t long ‘fore Vaudeville lost its shine
And when it tanked the girls were out of luck.

They tried their hand at acting in a film,

But sadly it did not do well at all.

And since the film got horrible reviews,

The girls were out of work for quite some time.

It wasn’t long before they had to sell

Their pride and do burlesque in grimy clubs,

Reduced to stripping to get paid. Throughout

This period, they found themselves involved

In many scandals. Nothing was below

Them if it got them in the papers. They

Were shamed not only for their desperate act

Of selling sex appeal in clubs, but they

Were also laughed at by the public for

Their many marriages that failed. The twins

That once were known for talent and charisma

Were now known for their mortifying failure.


DOCTOR

I’d no idea they fell so far and from

Such height. Their lives seem to be tragedies.

(Pause)

I must confess, I heard a rumor that
One twin had a persuasion for the ladies.

SISTER DOTTIE

There’s not a speck of truth to that. That’s just
A dirty, loathsome rumor! Don’t you dare
Repeat what you have said to anyone!

*(Dottie takes a moment to compose herself from her outburst.)*

I’m sorry. I hate to hear false rumors
For rumors are detested by my Lord.

*(She takes a deep breath.)*

So now you see the sadness of their tale.

DOCTOR

It pains me so to think about their fall
From fame. I can imagine how that would
Have crushed their spirits. Such a tragic tale…

SISTER DOTTIE

And even at their peak, when they had wealth
And fame, the girls were never satisfied.

DOCTOR

When all the world was watching them with glee,
They had no satisfaction even then?

SISTER DOTTIE
You have to understand the scars they bore.
From years of cruel oppression they were scarred.
Because they were rejected by their mum
And raised by warders who regarded them
As nothing more than lawful slaves of theirs,
The sisters came into the spotlight hurt.
The trauma they endured when they were young
Remained within their bloodstream all those years,
So when they came into their own at last,
As pretty women of such skill and fame,
Their thirst for love was pathological.
It was, and is, a thirst that can’t be quenched.
Perhaps the only love that could have helped
Was love from kin, but that they never saw.

DOCTOR
They never were approached by relatives?

SISTER DOTTIE
Not even once. Although one almost had…
DOCTOR

I beg of you, what did they almost have?

SISTER DOTTIE

It pains me so to even think the word.

DOCTOR

For heaven’s sake just spit it out.

SISTER DOTTIE

A child.

A baby. Daisy had a baby girl.

The only thing that could have saved their hearts.

DOCTOR

What happened to the daughter Daisy birthed?

SISTER DOTTIE

Although she tried, th’abortion was denied.

Without a mother of her own how could

Poor Daisy think of being one herself?
DOCTOR

What happened to the daughter Daisy birthed?

SISTER DOTTIE

The girl was sold.

DOCTOR

Just as her mother had?

SISTER DOTTIE

It’s said that history repeats itself.

DOCTOR

My God, they’ve lived such agenizing lives.

A moment of silence.

DOCTOR

So how exactly did they end up here?

SISTER DOTTIE

Although they tried to stay afloat, they sunk

And lost all fame and fortune they had earned.
Somehow by grace of God they landed here,
So Charley Reid who owns the Park-N-Shop
Took pity on the girls and hired them up,
So now they work in produce at his store.
We house them in a trailer park nearby.
The church made quite a deal with them you see:
They come to church; we help them pay their rent.

DOCTOR
I don’t know what to say to such a tale.

SISTER DOTTIE
Just say that you will do the surgery.

DOCTOR
You have my word.

SISTER DOTTIE
Oh, blessings be with you!

DOCTOR
I’ll see the girls at work tomorrow morn’.
I’ll talk to them and let them know the plan.
SISTER DOTTIE

Bless you, Doc. Bless you, bless you, bless you, bless—

DOCTOR

I’ll see you in the morning, Sister.

SISTER DOTTIE

Right.

DOCTOR

I bid you a goodnight.

SISTER DOTTIE

To you as well.

The Doctor and Sister Dottie exit.

SCENE III

Daisy and Violet in the produce section of the market. The store is empty. Daisy flicks on the radio to the oldies station. A tune they know comes on. They squeal with
excitement. Daisy picks up a broom and Violet picks up a mop and they begin
dancing to the music.

DAISY

(To the broom)

Oh, how this music moves me Buddy-boy,
And how your graceful toes do glide around!

VIOLET

(To the mop)

Oh James, my dear, this song is wonderful!
Let’s show these goons what dancing really is!

Daisy and Violet continue dancing. Daisy hands the broom to Violet and Violet hands
the mop to Daisy. They switch partners. An old party trick.

DAISY

It’s nice to be in your embrace old James!

VIOLET

My sister failed to tell me of your skill.
Your feet move with such fluid charm and poise!
DAISY and VIOLET

I just might have to steal you from my twin!

_Daisy and Violet burst out laughing. While they were dancing, a few customers filed in. They wait for Daisy and Violet’s service. Butcher Joe enters. Daisy and Violet continue laughing and dancing, and accidentally go to step in opposite directions. They feel a soft ache in the flesh connecting them. They wince._

DAISY

We used to be much more in sync, my love.

VIOLET

My love, we used to be a lot of things.

_Daisy and Violet laugh lightheartedly. Butcher Joe turns off the radio._

BUTCHER JOE

All you do is dance and sing and play around like little girls. It never stops. You’re truly the worst workers I’ve ever had. Were you this incompetent when you were stripping? Hmm? Were you this mouthy when you were having your orgies with those freaky men? You should be glad I only pay you two the wages I’d normally pay just one person, or else I would have fired you years ago. Maybe if I cut you two in half you’d be able to do your jobs better, hmm? _(He mimes cutting the two apart at_
the flesh that joins them. Daisy and Violet cringe. He laughs.) Cut it out and do your goddamn job. Don’t make me cut you down the middle. (He laughs and walks away.)

Daisy and Violet put the broom and mop away, clearly shaken by the threat. The Doctor enters with Sister Dottie.

VIOLET

(All in one breath, not looking up)
How’d ya do mister, whattaya want from us?
(Then, noticing Sister Dottie, Violet mimes tipping her hat at Sister Dottie.)
Good afternoon my lady. How d’you do?

Sister Dottie smiles shyly. Daisy courteously turns to the Doctor.

DAISY

She means, how may we be of help to you?

DOCTOR

Three to four pounds of Fiji apples please.

VIOLET

Macintosh make for better pies you know.
DAISY

It’s true. You plan on baking apple pies?

VIOLET

We do expect you bring us each a slice.

DAISY

She jokes around. We don’t expect that, sir.

VIOLET

That’s not a joke. You owe us each a slice
With ice cream scoops atop the gooey heap.

(Suggestively)

Still hot and oozing sweetness from the oven,
I do expect ‘twill dribble down my chin.

Sister Dottie quietly waves to Violet, who bashfully returns the gesture.

BUTCHER

Teasing the customers again, are you? Bothering this innocent gentleman?

DAISY

Of course not, sir, we’re working very hard.
VIOLET
Yes sir, we’re taking orders left and right.

BUTCHER
(To the Doctor)
You been bothered by these broads, sir? They been heckling you?

DOCTOR
Oh not at all. They’re helping me, you see?
I’m buying apples for a local group.
(To Daisy and Violet)
I hate to let you down but I don’t bake,
These apples are for children of the church.

VIOLET
(Child-like)
And why do kids get all their snacks for free?

Daisy hands the bag of apples to the Doctor.

DAISY
Anything else you need from us today?
DOCTOR

In fact there is one thing I need from you—

VIOLET

We weighed your fruit, that’s all you get from us.

SISTER DOTTIE

Give him one moment of your time, Violet.

(Whispering to Violet)

He might just be the answer to our prayers.

BUTCHER JOE

Enough! That’s quite enough. It’s time to work. Sister, these gals are on the clock.
I’m sure you understand they can’t be talking to no doctors while they’re working.

SISTER DOTTIE

Of course. I was just leaving anyway.

DOCTOR

(Pointing across the street)

Then after work let’s meet inside the park.
VIOLET

(Whispering to Sister Dottie)

Will you be there as well?

SISTER DOTTIE

(Whispering to Violet, subtly squeezing her hand)

Of course I will.

DAISY

(Aside to Violet)

You think he wants to chat about a deal
For us to be the stars of a new show?
He looks like a recruiter, doesn’t he?

VIOLET

(Aside to Daisy)

One final chance to make it big again!

DAISY

(Coldly)

We’ll meet you at the park at six o’clock.

BUTCHER JOE
Alright, alright. Now get to work you lazy little shits. The fruit ain’t gonna weigh itself.

SISTER DOTTIE

(Whispering to Violet)

‘Til six o’clock. Take care for now, my sweet.

SCENE IV

Dusk at the park. The Doctor and Sister Dottie sit on a park bench.

DOCTOR

I now see what you meant by “hostile folk.”

You think the twins will really come tonight?

SISTER DOTTIE

Of course they’ll come. They trust me over all.

DOCTOR

You seem to be acutely close with one.

The vibrant one, which one is that again?

SISTER DOTTIE
I’m sure I don’t know what you’re referencing,
I have no partiality to one.
I view them both as children under God
My care for them is far from personal.
Compassion from the Lord compels me thus,
It’s but the quiet duty of a nun.

DOCTOR
I could have sworn you whispered to that one—
What is her name again? Violet? That’s it.
You aren’t closer with that half, Sister?

SISTER DOTTIE
Of course I’m not! That’s just preposterous!

DOCTOR
I don’t mean to offend you I just thought—

SISTER DOTTIE
Think less. Now look alive, they come this way.

Enter Daisy and Violet.
DOCTOR

Good evening to you both.

DAISY

And to yourself.

DOCTOR

It is my pleasure to be here with you.
I’ve heard about you both for years. It’s quite Surreal to meet you in the flesh. And I Must say, your beauty far exceeds what I Expected from the photographs I’ve seen.

DAISY

That’s very kind of you to say to us.

VIOLET

But kindness doesn’t pay the monthly rent So let’s cut to the chase. Why are you here?

DOCTOR

I’m here because I want to help you both.
VIOLET

Where do you work? Which circus sent you here?

DOCTOR

I don’t work for a circus. I’m just a…

(He looks nervously at Sister Dottie, who motions for him to continue.)

I am a doctor from New York.

DAISY

Doctor?!

(Aside)

The talons of a vulture I now see,

So sharp and thirsty for our flesh. They yearn

To snatch us up and make us bleed. The brute

Does long to shove his beak beneath our skin

And tear the meat that binds our bodies thus.

The vulture’s wingspan is quite vast and yet

His hunger’s vaster still. The vultures have

Been flying ‘round the globe since we were young

With scalpels, knives, and chisels in their grip

And yet we have outrun them all these years.

Together we run faster than they fly.
VIOLET

What kind of doctor did you say you were?

DOCTOR

I am a surgeon, and a good one too.

SISTER DOTTIE

He says he can perform a surgery—

DAISY

I know exactly what he wants to do.

He craves our blood. He wants to chop us up!

VIOLET

Stay calm, sweet Daisy.

DAISY

No no no no no!

VIOLET

We should at least allow the man to speak.

He’s travelled far to try to help us out.
The Doctor takes a stethoscope from his briefcase. He places it around his neck.

DOCTOR

You know, a quick examination would
Allow me to prepare a formal file.

The Doctor extends an arm out, reaching toward Daisy. Daisy pushes his hand away.

DAISY

I will not speak with you at greater length.
In fact, I will not speak with you at all.

Daisy tries to walk to the left, but at the same moment Violet tries to take a step toward the Doctor to the right. A painful tug. They feel the flesh between them throb.

VIOLET

Daisy, this is not just your choice to make.
Consider how this will affect me too—

DAISY

(Coldly)
You promised me we never would be split.
SISTER DOTTIE

We better give the two some time alone.

DOCTOR

But if they’d let me just examine them—

DAISY

Just leave! We’ll speak of this no further. Leave!

SISTER DOTTIE

(Whispering to Violet)

This was our only chance.

VIOLET

(Whispering to Sister Dottie)

I’ll talk to her.

Violet blows a kiss to Sister Dottie. Sister Dottie smiles. Doctor and Sister Dottie exit.

Daisy and Violet alone in the park. The tension’s thick as fog. Lights out.

SCENE V
Late evening. Butchering room. Butcher Joe takes a knife to a cow’s thigh. Tommy, his son, looks on in disgust. Tommy has a piece of meat on the counter before him. Clearly he is supposed to be cutting into it, but he cannot bring himself to even pick up the knife. Butcher Joe doesn’t notice.

BUTCHER JOE

Watch carefully, Tommy. You gotta do this just right or you waste half the cow. (Pause, then he takes a deep breath.) Take the knife and slide it gently into the cow’s skin. Gotta be very gentle at first. Like your mother’s always tellin’ me, gotta start off gentle before ya get to the poundin’. (He laughs at his own joke. It goes right over Tommy’s head.) Now that you’re inside, you should be able to find the bone. Now all you gotta do is follow along the bone—(He looks up to discover Tommy has not been following along.) Whatcha doin’, boy? How are you supposed to learn if you don’t pick up your knife?

TOMMY

Can’t I just watch? I don’t wanna touch it.

Butcher Joe angrily slams his knife down on the counter, struts over to Tommy, picks up his knife and places it in Tommy’s hand.

BUTCHER JOE
Let’s try this again, shall we? You slide the knife into the skin. When it’s just the tip of the knife that’s under the skin, wiggle the knife ever so slightly to find the bone and then—

TOMMY

Dad, I can’t. I can’t do it. It’s a cow and I mean, I like cows and—

BUTCHER JOE

Alright. Let’s imagine, just for a moment, that this isn’t a cow. Let’s imagine it’s…let’s imagine it’s the twins. This half is Daisy, see? And this half is Violet.

TOMMY

Okay.

_Tommy picks up his knife and follows his father’s instructions._

BUTCHER JOE

So what you do is, you have to slide the knife in under the skin along the bone that joins them. Right above their asses, see? Right between the flesh that binds the spine to the top of the cheeks. Gotta separate the old hags, you see?

TOMMY

I see.
BUTCHER JOE


TOMMY

That’s it?

BUTCHER JOE

That’s it.

SCENE VI

Early morning. Daisy and Violet asleep on the bed. A bang on the window. All is still for a moment. Another bang on the window. Violet wakes up. She sees Sister Dottie at the window. She rubs her eyes, making sure she isn’t still dreaming. Daisy remains fast asleep.

VIOLET

Am I deceived by weary eyes or is
It she, the one for whom I wake each day,
The only soul, besides my twin, for whom
I truly care? Thick morning fog obstructs
My view and yet she is a star. Those two
Profoundly emerald spheres send burning flares
In my direction now. Those eyes do tear
A hole right through my ribs so that I’m forced
To catch my breath. I love those eyes more than
I’ve ever loved myself.

_Violet remains in bed but reaches and opens the window. Sister Dottie pokes her head in._

SISTER DOTTIE

Is she awake?

_Daisy coughs in her sleep. Violet peeks over at Daisy, sees that she is still fast asleep, then shakes her head._

SISTER DOTTIE

Well since she’s still asleep I can profess
My lips do thirst for one delicious kiss.

_They kiss._
VIOLET

So strange and wonderful that I should wake
To see you here when you were just with me
In my own dream. You held me in your arms
So tight the sea breeze barely reached my skin.

SISTER DOTTIE

You dreamt we lounged in bliss along the coast?

VIOLET

We stood upon a tiny boat, a boat
That’s meant for only two. We sailed away
So far away from sandy coast we could
Not see a single tree, we only saw
The bluest skies and oceans clear as glass.

SISTER DOTTIE

That sounds like quite a lovely dream indeed.

VIOLET

I’ve yet to share the most amazing part.
As I, still in the dream, did pull away
From your such dreamy lips, I turned and there
Was no one by my side.

SISTER DOTTIE

No Daisy there?

VIOLET

No Daisy there. I was all by myself. And in this liberation I was able To be with you. You see, my dear? Because I had no one through which I had to pass All of my hopes and plans, I simply chose, And I chose you. I chose you in a heartbeat. And so we sailed away into the blue. This dream brought me such joy that as I woke I thought I’d start to cry. That was until I saw you here and joy was thrust upon Me once again.

SISTER DOTTIE

But what if I told you Your dream was more than just a dream, that it Was but a glimpse into our future, that Our fates were linked eternally, that we
Could run away together, run so far
Away from this small town and fill our lives
With such incessant joy we’ll not remember
The time we had to live apart in shame.

VIOLET
Don’t say such things that cannot be. You raise
My hopes for such a futile dream. My dreams
Are bound. They’re bound by my connection to
My sister, bound by promises I’ve made
To her. I’ve vowed to never leave her side.
You know this, dear. So please do not scratch at
The wound I’ve tried so hard to heal. It hurts.

SISTER DOTTIE
This doctor can perform a surgery
To separate the two of you so you
And I can be together finally.

VIOLET
But Daisy never will agree to it.
There’s not a doctor in this world that she
Would trust.
SISTER DOTTIE

It is the only way for us
To be together, Violet.

*Daisy coughs.*

VIOLET

I know that.

*Daisy coughs again, more violently.*

SISTER DOTTIE

Oh no, I think I just heard Daisy stir.

VIOLET

You better go. I promise I will try
To talk to her. I’ll do my very best.

SISTER DOTTIE

I know you will, my sweet. I love you to
The furthest star that shines in the night sky.
VIOLET

Go now.

*Sister Dottie leaves and Violet closes the window. Daisy, still asleep, sits up, coughing violently. She reaches an arm out as if trying to grab someone.*

DAISY

Come back! Don’t go away, I changed my mind!

VIOLET

Daisy, it’s just a dream. Come on, wake up.

DAISY

Please. Please! Come back!

VIOLET

Daisy, wake up!

*Daisy wakes and looks at Violet.*

DAISY

I had the most horrific dream. I was—
Daisy is too panicked to speak. Violet strokes Daisy’s hair, comforting her.

VIOLET

Tell me everything.

DAISY

It was the worst dream that I’ve ever dreamt.
I was alone and in the strangest city,
A city that I’ve never seen before.
I was inside an empty restaurant.
It was so dark and still. I sat forlorn,
So lonesome at a table set for two.
Then out of nowhere someone else appeared,
A teenaged girl with curly hair. She looked
Just like the two of us. I asked her for
Her name but she did not respond. She looked
Familiar, like I’d known her years before.
She looked so scared, like she was lost, like she’d
Been left behind, forgotten. She looked so
Misplaced. So I stood up and tried to walk
To her, but as I did a wall appeared,
A glass wall, thick and reaching to the ceiling.
I pushed upon the glass and kicked it hard
And as I did the girl began to cry.
She hung her head and bawled. I saw the tears
Cascading down her chin onto the table.
Her back convulsed so violently in fact
I thought she might be sick. I tried again
To break the glass but with each kick and punch
The wall grew stronger, thicker. And the girl
Cried harder and I screamed louder and she
Collapsed upon the hardwood floor and I
Could not do anything to help. And then
Her name came to me suddenly: Rosie.
And I remembered everything. I knew
Exactly who she was and why she was
Alone. She was my baby girl. She was
My flesh and blood. The daughter that I gave
Away. Just as my mother did to me.
To us. It all came back to me at once.
The hiding of my shameful secret and
The clinic that turned me away, and then
At last, the papers that I signed. That last
Embrace. One final squeeze. Then handing her
And now she wailed all by herself, so scared
And I could not do anything but watch.

I watched her weep and crash upon the floor.

And then I woke. It felt so real, Violet.

VIOLET

Daisy. You can’t still blame yourself—

DAISY

I’m a monster. A monster!

VIOLET

Daisy, no!

DAISY

I did the wicked deed. I chose to part

With her. It was my choice. And I chose in

A heartbeat. Left her all alone. I left—

VIOLET

Daisy, please stop. It was a dream, a dream.

They are silent for a long time. With great discipline, Daisy slows her breathing.

When she has calmed herself down enough, she speaks.
DAISY
Promise.

VIOLET
Promise what?

DAISY
That you won’t leave me. Promise that you’ll stay
With me forever.

VIOLET
Where else would I go?

DAISY
Promise.

A *long silence*. *Violet realizes the severity of what she is promising. She is promising not to go forward with the surgery. She lets this sink in for a few breaths before she speaks.*

VIOLET
I promise.
It starts to rain. After a few moments, a bolt of lightning hits the tree outside their window, splitting the trunk in two. Violet watches the tree split. It thunders and she starts to cry.

**SCENE VII**

*Sister Dottie in the empty church. She kneels before a candle-lit altar. She prays.*

**SISTER DOTTIE**

I pray to you, oh God above, for I’m

In desperate need of wisdom only you

Can send. My Lord, allow my faith to be

Complete and unreserved. Let my heart be

Filled up with humble joy, with inner bliss

And sacred peace. Allow your light to shine

Into the deepest cracks that plague my chest,

Into the bitter, broken fragments that

Leave splinters in my heart. I’m overcome

With fear, my Lord. I fear the love I feel

Will send me straight into the pits of hell.

Can I, a lowly nun who’s dedicated

My life to you, feel love for her? It’s sin.
I know it is a sin to love her but
I also think it’s sinful not to nourish
All love, no matter where it’s planted. I’ve
Attempted to put out the flames that plague
My heart. I’ve tried to squelch the flames with water.
I’ve tried to put it out with wind. I’ve tried
To pray this love away and yet, it’s there.
It’s there the moment that I wake. It’s there
Within my dreams in sleep, it’s there when I
Am praying that it leaves my heart. It’s there.
It has become a part of me, just as
Essential as the very blood that flows.
She has become a part of me. I know
I couldn’t live without her, yet her twin
Seems set on ruining the plans I’ve made.
The doctor’s come so far to help me out
But Daisy will not listen to a word
He says. I beg of you, my Lord, please change
The heart of Violet’s twin. Let Daisy see
That Violet needs me just as much as I
Need her. I do believe it is our fate
To be together, even if it is
A sin. I would burn happily in hell
Forever if it means I get to spend
My life with my sweet Violet. Hear me, Lord.
Forgive my wickedness and hear me please.
I beg of you, for it is life and death.

A door slams. Sister Dottie turns and is surprised to see the Doctor at the door.

DOCTOR

I’m sorry for my unrequested presence.
I have a horrid feeling in my gut
About the twins I’ve come to help. I fear
They’re ill, perhaps beyond repair. It’s strange.

SISTER DOTTIE

I must confess I have a queasy feeling
Down in my gut, but can’t place why. So please
Tell me exactly what you fear, Edward.

DOCTOR

It’s hard for someone like me to admit,
Someone so set on solving things with facts,
With observations, math and science, see?
And yet this feeling that I have stems not
From logic. Rather, it’s derived from dream.

I had a dream that both the twins were ill
And vomiting profusely on the floor
And in this dream the two of them were cold
And huddled in each other’s arms beside
The radiator of their tiny home.

I wouldn’t normally be trusting of
A dream, but this did not feel like a dream
At all. It felt like I was standing in
The room with them, watching as they shivered,
Unable to pick up the phone to call
For help. Unable to move my own legs
Or arms. Unable to do anything
To help at all. And then I woke, and this
Is where it gets a little strange. I woke
And had the feeling that I still was in
The dream. I woke and couldn’t move my legs
Or arms, I couldn’t make a sound. It was
As if the dream bled into life. This lasted
For several moments, then I made a sound
And moved my limbs and started walking here.

SISTER DOTTIE
You think it could have been a premonition?

DOCTOR

I don’t know what it was. I only know
I’ve never felt so terrified before.

SISTER DOTTIE

The twins are scheduled for a shift today.
Let’s pay a visit to the Park-N-Shop
To see if they showed up to work. I pray
We find them there.

(Aside)

My Lord, let them be safe.

SCENE VIII

Daisy and Violet huddle around the radiator. Violet spoons soup into Daisy’s mouth.

VIOLET

One moment you are fine, the next you’re sick.
And just our luck, the power’s out. This storm
Is unlike anything I’ve seen before.
DAISY

I blame the doctor for this heinous storm
And for this flu as well. He’s brought with him
Disease of body, mind, and now even
Of weather. Everything was going fine
Until he came into our lives. He is
A brute. He carries darkness on his back.
His evil, foreign germs afflict me now
Just as his wickedness brought in the fog,
The dark and heavy clouds that bring the rains
Which cause abhorrent mutilation of
The land, just like the cold dismemberment
He wishes to inflict upon us both.

Daisy breathes heavily, trying to catch her breath. Violet strokes her hair and feeds her a spoonful of soup.

VIOLET

You have to save your strength. Don’t waste your breath
On undeserving individuals
Such as the doctor. He’s not worth your breath.

Daisy continues to catch her breath. Violet feeds her another spoonful of soup.
VIOLET

Remember when we were sixteen and all
Our circus friends closed down the place for the
Whole day? They closed it just for us. They called
It Hilton Sisters day. We got to go on all the rides and
We even got to pet the animals,
And finally we had the chance to see
Our friends, the other freaks, perform their acts.
It was the most fun we had ever had,
Do you remember Daisy?

Daisy is lost in the memory. She smiles.

DAISY

Yes, of course.
It was the best day of my life. That is,
Of course, until we got home late and got
The belt. Those welts were on my back for two
Whole weeks. But that’s just how it was back then…

VIOLET
I must have blocked that part from memory.

*Violet spoons more soup into Daisy’s mouth. Daisy has a coughing fit and spits the soup out. She vomits.*

VIOLET

Oh no.

*Violet holds Daisy’s hair as she vomits. When the vomiting subsides, she runs her fingers through Daisy’s hair and pats her back lovingly.*

**SCENE IX**

*The Doctor and Sister Dottie arrive at The Butcher’s door. He answers the door, still wearing his bloody apron, butcher knife in hand.*

BUTCHER JOE

What are you doing here? I’m busy working. Meat’s not gonna cut itself.

SISTER DOTTIE

I’m sorry for disturbing you but I’m Afraid I haven’t heard from either twin

Since yesterday. Their phone is off the hook
And I must say I have an awful sense
That something’s wrong. Please tell me they’re inside
Your door. That they showed up to work today.

BUTCHER JOE
They’re not. They never showed up for their shift.

DOCTOR
Perhaps this is a regular occurrence?

BUTCHER JOE
Don’t get me wrong. They’re not the best workers. They’re lazy, they fight with customers, they bicker, they dance around like my store is a goddamn stage. But they’re hardly ever late. And they never miss a shift. It’s that show biz work ethic I think. After so many years of it, it just becomes a part of you, don’t it?

SISTER DOTTIE
Oh no. My fears have been confirmed. Something is wrong. I sense it in the depth of my Marrow. The twins are not okay. We need To go and find them. Please, allow us to Borrow your car so we can drive to them.
I hardly ever ask a favor but
I’m desperate. Please. This matter’s urgent and—

BUTHER JOE

I’m sorry, Sister, but I just got this car. It’s a good car, you know. Not cheap. I’m not cheap. And there’s a storm coming. A strong one. It’s been all over the news. Haven’t you seen the news? It’s a storm like we haven’t seen in years. A storm like that could do serious damage to a car, you know. I can’t afford to fix the damages should that happen. My hands are tied.

SISTER DOTTIE

If something’s wrong with them we’ll be too late
If we must walk on foot. We need the car.

BUTCHER JOE

Well you can’t have it. Leave my property.

DOCTOR

But—

BUTCHER JOE

And when you see the hags, let them know they’re fired. I’ve had it with their shit.
Butcher Joe slams his door shut. The Doctor and Sister Dottie are defeated for a moment. Then, Sister Dottie places one foot in front of the other. The Doctor notices. Together, they start walking.

SCENE X

Daisy and Violet lay on the ground by the radiator. They are shivering. Violet is wrapping gifts. When she finishes wrapping a gift, she places it under their modest Christmas tree. The lights go out. They flicker for a moment, then turn on completely once again.

DAISY

Who are those presents for? Are they for me? I want a snow globe! No. I want a jewelry box! No no no! I want a…what’s it called? A…A gun! Pow! I want a gun!

VIOLET

I told you, Daisy. These are Christmas gifts.

They’re for the children of the church. You helped Me pick them out last week. Remember, love?

DAISY
Yes, yes of course I remember. We’re the tiny little elves in Santa’s Workshop.

Making toys for the children. Placing names on the naughty list. Look! The snow is falling! It’s sparkling in the sky!

VIOLET

We’re in North Carolina, dear. You’re ill.

DAISY

Oh stop it Mr. Grumpypants. I’m not even a little bit sick. I’m a healthy little elf! A tiny little snow elf working away in the—

VIOLET

Shush. Rest your voice and rest your mind. You need

To try to take it easy. Save your strength.

DAISY

Blah, blah, blah! You’re a sour little elf today, aren’t you? You’re a sharp and foul elf! *(She spits on Violet)* Get away from me, you stinky thing! Get away! Leave me alone!

VIOLET

Daisy, you’re going mad!
Daisy vomits.

DAISY

No I’m not. You are going mad! You wicked—

VIOLET

There’s blood. My god, you just...you vomited—

DAISY

(Closing her eyes) Easy peasy lemon squeezy…ring around the rosie…Rosie, Rosie, Rosie, Rosie…

Violet looks at Daisy and is relieved to see she’s fallen asleep. Violet continues wrapping the gifts. It is silent for a long time.

VIOLET

You hungry, dear? You want more soup? Or juice?

Silence.

VIOLET

Daisy?
Daisy is dead. Violet stares at her sister’s body.

VIOLET

No. No you’re just asleep, you’re just asleep,
You’re… Daisy you need to wake up, wake up!
Now, Daisy, now! Wake up now! Wake! Wake! Wake!

Violet pounds her fists violently into Daisy’s chest. She exhausts herself but keeps going. When she cannot go any longer, she brings her hands to her mouth.

VIOLET

No.

Violet is silent for a long time, staring at Daisy. Violet shakes her head in anger.

The lamp’s still on, it flickers on and on
But nothing in you flickers on. It all
Turned off when you just broke your promise to me.
We made a promise, Daisy. You promised.
You promised me I’d never be alone
But here I am and… here I am, alone.
Anger becomes fear. Violet touches Daisy’s face. It’s cold and it startles Violet. Violet hyperventilates.

What’s this? This frigid, sallow form that lies
So still before my eyes? I haven’t felt
So cold a cheek, so strangely blank a face.
The lips that sung such pure, angelic notes
Sit stagnant as a buried rock. Those lips
Can’t make their music anymore, cannot
Speak confidence into my punctured soul
When I am broken down and must be fixed.
Those eyes, discerning with judicious care
Kept my heart safe from avaricious brutes,
From cruel contention I so often spurred.
What’s there to spur now that my audience
Has come to naught before my very eyes,
Now that I have no one with which to share
The glee that used to come from teasing men
And taunting senseless youths? I will not speak
A word to anyone without my sister.

A pause. Violet strokes Daisy’s hair.
Is there a note to play, a song to sing
When all the world is burned, in smitherens?
When life is but a pile of blackened ash
Which smothers all the budding seeds before
They reach the surface of the futile soil.
There won’t be any sprouts for there will be
No spring. Incessant winter will drag on
And on until the world is desolate
And black, until the sky rains glacial death.
No pretty hand will pluck the petals from
The gentle style of a spring flower, no—
A Daisy shall not grow on earth again.

She looks around the room. She shivers. A long silence. When she speaks, she speaks to Daisy.

So this is what it is to be alone?
Such violent silence I have never heard.
One moment you’re my sister, then I blink
And in an instant you’re transformed into
A corpse. To think I was the one who tried
To tell you to go through with surgery,
To separate yourself from me, when now
I would give anything to have you back,
To hear your breath beside my ear, to feel
The gentle squeeze, your hand on mine. I need
Another moment with you. Just one more.
I need to tell you all the things I kept
Inside. I need another chance to show
You that you’ve always been my purpose here,
You’ve always been the reason that I wake.
The truth is that I couldn’t wake alone.
I’m sure the doctor could perform it still,
The surgery to separate me from
Your cold and frightening empty bag of bones,
And surely Dottie would be thrilled by that
For then we’d have the chance to be together,
But none of this shall come to pass because
I couldn’t wake without you by my side.
I will not wake without you by my side.

A pause. Violet turns away from Daisy. She turns her chin up to the ceiling, pointing
towards the heavens. Violet has made a decision.

Let this be the last morning that I wake,
Let this be the last dreadful sight I view,
Let this be the last day I live to see.

*A crash of thunder. The lights flicker on for a moment and then go out again.*

**SCENE XI**

*The Doctor and Sister Dottie arrive at Daisy and Violet’s door. Sister Dottie knocks on the door. No response. She knocks again. Still no response. She tries to open the door. It is locked.*

**SISTER DOTTIE**

Oh no, the awful feeling’s roiling in

My gut. What should we do? It’s very bad,

The door is locked. We must get in!

**DOCTOR**

Stand aside, Sister.

*The Doctor takes a few steps back.***

**SISTER DOTTIE**

(Aside)

Dear God, please let me not find what I think
I’ll find within these walls. My heart would not
Be able to continue beating should
I find a wilted flower.

_The Doctor kicks in the door. The door comes down. He enters the home. He gasps._

_Sister Dottie runs towards the door but the Doctor holds her back._

SISTER DOTTIE

Let me in!

DOCTOR

Stay back, dear Sister.

SISTER DOTTIE

No! I need to see!

_Sister Dottie pushes past the Doctor. She sees Daisy and Violet on the ground. Her knees give out and she collapses on the floor. The Doctor rushes to her side._

SISTER DOTTIE

Violet!
Sister Dottie, collapsed on the floor, crawls frantically towards Violet. When she gets to Violet’s side, she holds Violet’s face in her hands. The Doctor kneels down and checks Daisy’s pulse.

DOCTOR

There is no pulse.

SISTER DOTTIE

There’s got to be a pulse.

Sister Dottie shakes Violet violently. Violet opens her eyes and smiles. She speaks softly.

VIOLET

At last my Dottie’s by my side.

Sister Dottie is startled. She jumps.

SISTER DOTTIE

I’m here, my love. I’m here. Are you in pain?

VIOLET

The only thing my body feels is love.
I had another dream just now. We sailed
Across the open sea like in my other dream.
There was no boat beneath our feet. We were
The ship ourselves. You wrapped your arms around
Me tightly and we soared along the water’s
Surface, and up ahead there was an island.
And I could see that on the island sat
A table set for you and me. For you—

_Violet coughs uncontrollably. She struggles to catch her breath._

**SISTER DOTTIE**

_(To the Doctor, in a panic)_

She’s losing color. Call an ambulance.

_The Doctor runs into the other room to use the phone. Sister Dottie rubs Violet’s back as she gasps for breath._

_(Voiceover)_

Her face is turning blue, her ear is bleeding.

She doesn’t have much time but doesn’t know
She’s near the end. She doesn’t have a clue.

_(To Violet)_
Please tell me more about your dream, my love.

*Violet stares deeply into Sister Dottie’s eyes. She doesn’t speak.*

**VIOLET**

*(Voiceover)*

What do you say to someone when you know

It is your final chance to say goodbye?

She cannot know that this is all there is.

The curtain’s closing, stage lights dimming, the

Conductor tenderly sets down his wand.

She cannot know I chose this fate, that I

Decided not to live without my twin,

That she was not enough to keep me here.

I wonder if she could have been enough.

Perhaps she could have been enough. Oh God!

Perhaps she could have been…it’s too late now.

*Violet starts to cry. Her crying soon becomes desperate coughing. She cannot catch her breath.*

**SISTER DOTTIE**

Violet? Violet, what’s wrong?
VIOLET

(Speaking through coughs)

I see the curtain closing in on me,

The audience is on their feet and I—

Violet cannot breath. She grabs at her throat.

SISTER DOTTIE

Violet! Violet!

Violet frantically grabs at her throat. She thrashes. Then she is still. Violet is dead.

The Doctor enters.

DOCTOR

What’s wrong?

SISTER DOTTIE

She’s dead!

DOCTOR

Sister—
SISTER DOTTIE

Leave! Please. I need to be alone with her.

DOCTOR

I’ll wait outside.

The Doctor exits. Sister Dottie holds Violet in her arms. She kisses Violet’s lips gently. She weeps.

SISTER DOTTIE

I thought my God had given me a love
To last, but in reality He gave
Me nothing but a shadow. Shadows seem
To be so tangible, as though you could
Reach one hand out and gently pet the thing.
And yet it isn’t possible to touch,
To hold, to kiss because eventually
The sun must shift and take the shadows, leaving me
With nothing but a hollow ache. I loved
The shadow God had given me with all
My soul, with such a warm and naive heart.
But now the sun sails back across the sky
And takes my Violet far away. And now
That she has gone away I doubt that there’s
A God at all. What sick and twisted brute
Would place a sparkling diamond in my palm
And then in the same breath reach back into
My hand and rip the diamond out so that
I’m left with nothing but the memory
Of how it sparkled. That’s no God of mine.

*Sister Dottie stands and walks into the kitchen. She opens a drawer and pulls out a large knife. She stares at it for a moment, then walks with it back over to Violet. She sits beside Violet and strokes her hair with one hand while the other hand holds the knife firmly. She stops stroking Violet’s hair and instead uses that hand to grasp the cross around her neck. She looks up and speaks.*

SISTER DOTTIE

I’ve dedicated my whole life to you.
I’ve studied, prayed and served you without question,
With blind and dumb commitment to your word.
My faith’s been tested many times before
And I have always held on strongly to
You still. But now I’ve lost all faith. It’s gone.
My eyes are clear. At last I see the truth.
You’re nothing but a figment of the mind,
Built over generations and
Passed down to those who trust too much, to those
Who crave an answer to the hardest question:
What am I doing here? I fell into
The trap and only now am I set free.
But freedom doesn’t taste the way I thought
It would. It tastes like lies, regret, like hate
And bitterness. It tastes like wasted life,
Like dry and stormy winds that suffocate
The soul. It tastes like pain. It tastes like death.

_Sister Dottie pulls a pen out of her pocket. She finds a piece of paper. She writes as she speaks._

**SISTER DOTTIE**

“These presents that you find below the tree
Are from the Hilton sisters. Please deliver
These gifts, so wrapped in sweetness, to the kids
That go to our dear church.” That’s what they wanted.
That’s what my Violet wanted. As for me,
Into the grave with Violet I shall go
Where I’ll rest easy with my love at last.
Sister Dottie places the note atop the pile of gifts. She walks back to Violet and rests at her side. She picks up the knife and stares at it. She kisses Violet gently upon the lips. She takes a deep breath and plunges the knife into her stomach. As the knife enters Sister Dottie’s flesh, a bolt of lightning illuminates the room. She groans and is dead. Blackout.

A few moments of perfect darkness. A deafening crash of thunder. As the thunder subsides, a spotlight shines down, revealing Mother standing atop a bloody bed. She takes a moment to take in the scene. She seems quite pleased. She removes the bloody knife from Sister Dottie’s gut and raises it above her head. The knife drips warm blood. All is silent.

End.