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Asleep on a Bicycle
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More Great Plays Available From Original Works Publishing

CHEESE

by Laurel Ollstein

3 males, 4 Females

Synopsis: Welcome to Tillamook, Oregon, "the land of cheese, trees and ocean breezes." Griffin, a cheese sculptor, struggles in his marriage to Cindy, who lives in denial over the loss of their young son. Enter, Billie, Cindy's best friend, a knocked-up, wanna-be Hollywood actress, running from her failures. The secrets they keep and lies they tell fester and spoil like the rotting cheese that surrounds them, in this twisted, modern, Kaufman and Hart-esque laughter. When the truth is revealed, the comedy is as sharp and the cheddar.

Keeping Faith

by Mark Scharf

2 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: Ed and Jane are not about to let their 18 year old daughter Faith marry 45 year old Hartsell (Hart) Edward Thomas Williams IV – even if he does own “Hartsell’s Patio Furniture.” So, on the day before the wedding, they do what any parents would do: they kidnap Faith and drive into the wilds of Arkansas to hide out until things cool down or Faith changes her mind. With Hart and the police in pursuit and Faith refusing to play victim, Ed and Jane have their hands full in this dark comedy which is part extremely-dysfunctional-family-fun and part political commentary.

Asleep on a Bicycle

by

Tony Foster

**This play is dedicated to the Elephant Theatre Company,
my creative home.**

The world premiere production of *Asleep on a Bicycle* was produced by the Elephant Theatre Company (David Fofi, Artistic Director; Lindsay Allbaugh, Producing Director; Gina Marie Soto, Managing Director) in Los Angeles, California on September 6, 2008. The production was directed by David Fofi, assisted by Kelly Hill; the producer was Lindsay Allbaugh, with associate producer Gina Marie Soto; the set and lighting design was by Joel Daavid, assisted by Noelle Leiblic and Matthew Richter; the costume design was by Louis Jacobs and Kimberly Overton, with construction by Ronda Dynice Brooks; the sound design was by Matthew Richter; original music was composed by Lanfair Field; the prop supervisor was Tom Stanczyk; the stage manager was Shannon Simonds. The cast was as follows:

LINDA	Gina Garrison
JEFF	Nelson DelRosario/Robert Foster
ZADIE	Cheryl Huggins
MARGUERITE	Patricia Rae
GROVER	Josh Breeding/Ryan Radis
GIOVANNA	Maya Parish
PENNY FARTHING	Alexandra Hoover/Tara Norris
BUTTONS	Jade Dornfeld
ROSALIE	Deanna Cordano

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LINDA	<i>she who dreams</i>
JEFF	<i>husband</i>
ZADIE	<i>mother</i>
MARGUERITE	<i>Sister</i>
GROVER	<i>brother</i>
GIOVANNA	<i>movie star</i>
PENNY FARTHING	<i>foremother</i>
BUTTONS	<i>offspring</i>
ROSALIE	<i>another woman</i>

Time:

The present, deep in Linda's dreamscape

Place:

About three inches above Los Angeles

ASLEEP ON A BICYCLE

ACT ONE

***SETTING:** Deep in LINDA's dream state, about three inches above Los Angeles. Up center is a large, awesome tree with massive branches spread out over the entire stage. Lush and green. Embedded among the leaves is a bicycle, obviously forced in by way of an accident. The landscape surrounding the tree is a series of lumps covered by many white sheets, giving the scene an aura of wintertime.*

***AT RISE:** Downstage and off to the side is a bed. In it is a woman, sleeping on her right side under the covers. Her head is under the pillow held down by her arm. Beside her and sleeping outside the covers on his back is JEFF. He is an average guy in his thirties and dressed only in white briefs. At the foot of the bed is a cat, curled up in a ball and fast asleep. From behind the tree, LINDA tiptoes around. She is a thirty-something dressed in pajamas, much like the woman in bed. She smiles giddily in her dreamland. LINDA looks at the couple in bed, then speaks to the audience.*

LINDA: Shh. I'm sleeping. I'm having one of those deep, luxurious slumbers. Stage five in sleepy-time land. In a moment, I'm sure I'll go into one of my reoccurring dreams. They've been lovely of late. Hi. I'm Linda. That's me. I like to sleep on my right side with my pillow over my head. And that's Jeff, my husband. We just had breakup sex. I think. Oh, and that's our cat.

(SOUND of FLASHBULBS. CAMERA FLASHES. GIOVANNA PARADISI runs on, escaping the paparazzi. She is an unaffected star of the Italian cinema circa 1960. She is in her thirties and dressed in a disguise consisting of a scarf over her head and sunglasses. See appendix for all English translations.)

GIOVANNA: No, no. Per favore. Basta paparazzi. Vi prego.

LINDA: *(to the audience)* Here we go. This is the dream.

GIOVANNA: Un attimo di solitudine, paparazzi, è tutto ciò che chiedo. Abbassate le vostre macchine fotografiche.

LINDA: *(to the audience)* I know it's reoccurring, but I forget what happens next. Let's watch.

GIOVANNA: Troppo a lungo mi avete proibito di contemplare la mia stessa mortalità. *(sees LINDA)* Posso aiutarti?

LINDA: Giovanna?

GIOVANNA: Sì.

LINDA: Giovanna Paradisi?

GIOVANNA: Sì. Cosa vuoi?

LINDA: Forgive me. I don't speak Italian, but... I love you. I mean, I love your work.

GIOVANNA: Ah, sei un fan. Mi dispiace Tesoro ma ho smesso di firmare autografi. Ci sono troppe lettere a mio nome.

LINDA: I don't know what you're saying, but it's so beautiful. You have such a way with your native tongue. I've seen all your films from the 50's and 60's. I'm not sure what any of them were about, but...

GIOVANNA: Sì.

LINDA: Plus I think I'm a little dyslexic. All those words... flashing on the bottom of the screen. It caused great anxiety. And you know what? That's not cinema.

GIOVANNA: No.

LINDA: It's too much pressure on your audiences. I mean really. Who has time to read?

GIOVANNA: Non ho idea di quello che stai dicendo.

LINDA: You know, I work in the industry too.

GIOVANNA: Cosa?

LINDA: I work... in the business. Uh, cinema. Me. Hollywood.

GIOVANNA: Ah. Sì, Sì.

LINDA: Receptionist.

GIOVANNA: Quello non lo conosco. Chi c'era?

LINDA: Temp to perm. At a talent agency. Jeff is in the business too. He's a manager of a video store. We're what you call a showbiz family. Even our cat. She had her "fifteen minutes" on a local news show. The segment was about a boy who nearly got killed by a runaway bus. But if you look real close in the background, there's our baby in the left hand corner of the screen, waving. It's very exciting in Los Angeles.

GIOVANNA: Hai intenzione di tenermi qui a lungo? Sono tra i film in questo momento e pensavo che questo potesse essere un buon momento per suicidarmi.

LINDA: Sorry, would you like to sit down? You see, I've just fallen asleep and I've got some time to kill.

GIOVANNA: Cosa?

LINDA: Sit. Would you like to sit? You know, um... Sit. (*squats to show her*)

GIOVANNA: Non mi serve il bagno.

LINDA: What?

GIOVANNA: Sono una stella del cinema. Noi non caghiamo.

LINDA: Sit. Sit down. Rest. Um, here.

(*LINDA yanks off one of the white sheets to reveal an office desk and two chairs. A phone and a screenplay sit atop the desk. As LINDA gestures for GIOVANNA to sit with her, a movie poster drops down from one of the tree branches. It is a typical design for a 1960 Italian movie, depicting GIOVANNA as half nun/half prostitute. The title is "Perdere il vizio."*)

LINDA: (*continued*) This is where I work. I've only been with the talent agency for three months, but I've talked to so many famous assistants. Please. Have a seat.

GIOVANNA: Cristo. Ma questa è un'audizione?

LINDA: Can I get you anything? Coffee? Tea?

GIOVANNA: No. (*sees the poster*) Ah!

LINDA: Yes. That's your movie. It hangs in my office. Do you recognize it? From 1960.

GIOVANNA: Ho vinto il premio come miglior attrice al Festival del Cinema di Cannes.

LINDA: Yes. Cannes. Didn't you win an award or something? This is my favorite movie of all time, where you play a half saint, half whore struggling between faith and lust.

GIOVANNA: Sono stata la suora più famosa del mondo... fino a Julie Andrews.

LINDA: Sorry?

GIOVANNA: Io. Una suora. (*putting her hands together in prayer*)

LINDA: Ah, yes. A nun. Very convincing.

GIOVANNA: Non volevo recitare quel ruolo all'inizio. Ma poi ho sentito una voce che mi diceva di farlo. E quella voce veniva direttamente dalla mia vagina.

LINDA: I'm sure the industry has changed a great deal since your time in the 60's. Did you have hold buttons on your phones back then?

GIOVANNA: (*deep in reverie*) Sono stata scoperta a diciannove anni dal grande Fellini.

LINDA: (*to the audience*) Isn't this a crazy dream? I mean, I don't speak a word of Italian. Yet there she is: My favorite movie star of all time. (*looks at her*) It's a shame she kills herself in 1971. I mean, what a loss. I sort of wish there were subtitles now. But I kinda like not knowing what's going on. What does it mean? What does it mean?

GIOVANNA: (*overlapping*) Da allora ho lavorato con i migliori registi. Sei film con Fellini, due con Truffaut... Poi è venuto Bergman, Godard, David Lean, uh, Preminger, Billy Wilder, Kubrick... Orson Welles... um, Hitchcock...

JEFF: (*half asleep, turns*) Ciao bella...

GIOVANNA: (*turns and sees JEFF*) Chi è quello?

LINDA: Hmm? Oh, that's Jeff.

GIOVANNA: Il tuo amante?

LINDA: He's my husband. For now. Or are you referring to our cat?

(*The phone on the desk RINGS*)

LINDA: (*continued*) Oh crap. The phone. This happens in the dream too. The phone is constantly ringing. I'm like a slave to it. One of these days, it's going to be that dreaded call from the hospital with the bad news. Will you excuse me? (*answers*) Stupin, Aspis and DeButts. (*to the audience*) Those are my bosses. (*into the phone*) Mr. Stupin? I'm sorry, but he's still in Hawaii. (*another line RINGS*) Please hold. (*answers*) Stupin, Aspis and DeButts. Yes. I'm transferring you to Mr. DeButts right now. One moment. Yes. We received the script. I'm not at liberty to say. I'm just a temp. (*pushes buttons*) Bob? Your mother's on the line.

(*LINDA hangs up. During the phone call, GIOVANNA has noticed the cat and has been trying to get its attention by making kissing noises and slapping her thigh.*)

LINDA: (*continued*) Sorry about that. It's been a stressful week at work and the next Jewish holiday is a long way away. What are you doing?

(*GIOVANNA is now standing over the bed*)

GIOVANNA: Se fosse il tuo amante mi preoccuperei. Non credo che tu sia quella accanto a lui.

LINDA: Oh no. Please. Don't wake us up. We've just fallen asleep after a rough night. There was dinner, yelling, dessert, crying and then the most amazing breakup sex. I think you understand.

GIOVANNA: Lo sono.

LINDA: I said the word divorce. For the first time. It sounded so awful. How do you say it in Italian?

GIOVANNA: Divorzia.

LINDA: Oh. That doesn't sound much better, does it? Weren't you married like six times in your life?

GIOVANNA: Gli uomini sono come le melanzane alla parmigiana.

LINDA: I'm sorry?

GIOVANNA: E' tutto a posto, Linda. Nemmeno io so cosa significa. Gli italiani sono pazzi. Arrivederci.

(GIOVANNA exits)

LINDA: Arrivederci.

(JEFF snorts and rustles in bed)

JEFF: Who's there?

LINDA: It's no one, Jeff. Go back to sleep.

JEFF: *(half awake)* I thought... you were someone else...

LINDA: Shh. Quiet down.

(JEFF turns and spoons the woman next to him and falls back asleep.)

LINDA: *(to the audience)* That was close. I wouldn't want Jeff to see what I've been dreaming about these last few weeks. I mean, they've been a little bizarre.

(ZADIE enters in her nightgown. She is a young woman. As she comes up from behind the tree, we see that her face is slathered in shaving cream. From the tree trunk, ZADIE pulls out a retractable mirror and begins to shave her face.)

LINDA: *(continued)* Excuse me, but don't I know you?

(ZADIE nods)

LINDA: *(continued)* Are you going to tell me?

(ZADIE shakes her head)

LINDA: (continued) Well, I'm Linda.

(ZADIE, not impressed, gives her a salute.)

LINDA: (continued) OK. You're a woman. Shaving her face. You're either a figment, a composite, or... Uncle Wally in drag.

ZADIE: Cut me a fuckin' break.

LINDA: Mom?

ZADIE: (now with clean face) Yes.

LINDA: You're so young.

ZADIE: Thank you. Did I miss a spot?

LINDA: Just a little right there. Why are you shaving your face?

ZADIE: I don't know. Why am I sober?

LINDA: Well, Freud would say that since I have no memory of my father, I always saw you as both parents in one.

ZADIE: Freud was a motherfucker.

LINDA: He was not.

ZADIE: OK, but he was thinking it. (calling out) Linda! Grover! You'll be late for school. Breakfast is getting cold. (runs out)

LINDA: (to the audience) Was my mother ever that young?

(The phone RINGS)

LINDA: (continued) Oh crap. Don't answer it, Linda.

JEFF: (stirs) Honey... Honey... The phone.

LINDA: Flippin' A. (answers) Stupin, Aspis and DeButts. No, Mr. Aspis is on a conference call. No, this is Linda. I'm just a temp. Yes, we did receive the script. Yes, I believe he read it over the weekend. I'm not at liberty to say, but I'm sure he'll call you as soon as he's able. (hangs up, then to the audience) I lied. This script's been sitting here all month. I'm supposed to do coverage on it, but I'm having trouble. Some of my dyslexia, yes. And I do love the medium so. It's just that... Well, I finished reading it and... some things just shouldn't be put to film. It's a true art form. How can I possibly write coverage on this. It's so... It's... It's... (pauses, then holds up the script for the audience to see) Pussy by Bugsy Lipshitz. A psycho-thriller about an eighteen-year-old girl who wakes one morning and discovers that she has a talking vagina. (pause) Did I miss something here? Am I not

open-minded enough? (*pause*) I swear to God. Her vagina is the protagonist. It has the best speech in the third act. And the girl turns out to be the bad guy. The owner of the vagina. They finally duke it out at the climax. There's blood and orgasms. It's like *Jekyll and Hyde* meets *The Kinsey Report*. Pages and pages of gratuitous nudity. I pity the poor actress. And the special effects alone will cost a fortune. There's a scene in here where she spreads her legs, camera zooms in for a close-up, and the pussy recites "Fuzzy Wuzzy Was a Bear." And the denouement... Pure gold. (*reads from the last page*) "As the pussy exits the window, it turns to the dead girl and says: 'We may have been inseparable, but you'll never take away my baby.' Fade out." Someone paid for this script. High six figures. And who is this Lipshitz? I'm irked.

(*A BICYCLE BELL is heard*)

LINDA: (*continued*) I hate this phone. (*answers*) Stupin, Aspis and De-Butts. Hello?

(*BICYCLE BELL*)

LINDA: (*continued*) Oh. Wait. That's not the phone. (*looks up*) Why it's... Aw, it's a little bird. Well ring-a-ling-a-ling to you too, little fella. No, wait a minute. That's no bird. It's a bicycle caught up in a tree. It looks sort of like mine. And it needs help getting down. I should call the fire department. (*goes to the phone and dials*) Hello, fire department? Hi. It's Linda. Fine, thank you. What's that? Yes, we received the script. I'm not at liberty to say. I'm a temp. (*hangs up*) Geez. Everyone's a film major in this town.

(*The woman beside JEFF twitches a bit and kicks him. JEFF wakes and sits up to address the body beside him.*)

JEFF: Ow. Honey... You're kicking me.

LINDA: I'm sorry, Jeff. Go back to sleep. Dream of happy thoughts.

(*JEFF can't quite make out where the voice is coming from. He yawns, then lies back down with his back against the woman's back. MARGUERITE enters, dressed in full nun's habit with a camera around her neck. She is also a young woman.*)

MARGUERITE: Linda! Grover! You'll be late for church. Don't want your souls to burn in hell.

LINDA: Shh! Not so loud. Please, Sister. We're sleeping.

MARGUERITE: Oh please. It's the day of God, for Christ's sake.

(*SOUND of a HAND BELL.*)

MARGUERITE: (*continued*) Did you hear that? An angel just got his wings.

LINDA: I'm sorry, but I thought it was the sound of a bicycle in trouble.

MARGUERITE: Excuse me, dear child. We nuns can certainly tell the difference between a bicycle bell and an angel earning his wings.

(*BICYCLE BELL*)

LINDA: What was that?

MARGUERITE: That was a bicycle bell. What are you? Tone deaf?

LINDA: They sound the same.

MARGUERITE: Then I guess you're going straight to hell, aren't you? Just kidding. (*pauses, then sighs*) I love award shows, don't you?

(*MARGUERITE pulls off a white sheet to reveal a link of velvet rope between two brass stanchions. Once set up, she stands behind it.*)

LINDA: Um, I do... actually. Particularly when they show clips of all the dead people.

MARGUERITE: The stars, the red carpet, the gowns.

(*HAND BELL*)

LINDA: Bicycle bell?

MARGUERITE: Angel.

LINDA: Shit.

MARGUERITE: (*prepares her camera*) I mean, all the riches, sex, irresponsible behavior. And who is the first person they thank when they win that award? God. I'm just saying.

(*HAND BELL & BICYCLE BELL*)

MARGUERITE: (*continued*) Oh, that's an easy one. You can guess that. Come on.

LINDA: An angel on a bicycle?

MARGUERITE: Very good.

LINDA: That's ridiculous.

MARGUERITE: Tell that to the Father, the Son and the makers of Schwinn. (*looks out*) Oh, look! Giovanna Paradisi!

(*SOUND of a CROWD CHEERING.*)

MARGUERITE: *(continued)* Giovanna! Giovanna! Autographo, por favor! Giovanna! I love you!

(GIOVANNA saunters across the stage in front of LINDA and MARGUERITE. She is dressed elegantly. The CROWD CHEERS. With a droll face, she waves to her adoring fans.)

GIOVANNA: Grazie. Grazie a tutti. Andate a vedere il mio film. Perché ho giurato di tagliarmi le vene se sarà un fiasco al botteghino. Grazie!

MARGUERITE: Giovanna! Over here!

(MARGUERITE flashes a picture of GIOVANNA. She becomes outraged and goes directly to her)

GIOVANNA: Dannazione a voi, paparazzi! Travestita da suora? Puttana! Ti sputo addosso! *(spits)*

MARGUERITE: Ooo, that language. It's so much fun.

LINDA: Giovanna.

GIOVANNA: Oh, ciao amore. Grazie a Dio un essere umano. Cosa ti porta qui?

LINDA: I want to introduce you to a friend of the family's. This is Sister Marguerite.

MARGUERITE: *(all smiles)* Hello. Bona... uh... bon, whatever. You know. Bon bon. I wish you the best of luck tonight. I really want you to win. I've been praying like a mad woman. Could I... sneak in for a quick photo? *(starts going over the rope)*

GIOVANNA: Niente foto! *(confiscating the camera)* Stupido pinguino!

MARGUERITE: *(going back)* All right.

GIOVANNA: Arrivederci. *(exits)*

MARGUERITE & LINDA: Arrivederci.

(ZADIE enters wearing just a bra and slip. She holds a brown dress and a yellow dress.)

ZADIE: The way you two gawk and drool. They're just people.

LINDA: She was part of the greatest movement in Italian cinema.

ZADIE: It's just a movie.

MARGUERITE: Hi, Zadie.

ZADIE: OK, ladies. Which one? I can't decide. *(holding up both dresses)*

MARGUERITE: Well, you know which one I'd chose. And I know you'll pick the opposite.

ZADIE: Linda?

LINDA: Doesn't matter, Mom. They're both pretty.

MARGUERITE: I like the yellow one, Zadie.

ZADIE: Brown it is.

MARGUERITE: See? I told you. *(exits)*

LINDA: Going someplace special?

ZADIE: *(hanging the yellow dress on a tree branch)* Not really. I like to look my best, just in case.

LINDA: For Mr. Right?

ZADIE: *(getting dressed)* Darling, do you have anything to drink around here?

LINDA: Coffee? Tea?

ZADIE: Baby... *(sings)* I like New York in June. How about you?

LINDA: *(to the audience)* That's code for "Get Mommy a Manhattan."

ZADIE: You make them so well.

(LINDA pulls a sheet off a rolling bar. She begins to make the requested cocktail)

LINDA: You taught me.

ZADIE: No dear, that was Uncle Wally. He made the best cocktails of any drag queen I know. The family despised him, but I loved him. We shared a great many belts together. *(pause)* Around the waist, I mean.

LINDA: I know what you mean.

ZADIE: Brothers are nice to have.

LINDA: They are.

ZADIE: Even if they have a penchant for pantyhose. Zip me.

(LINDA puts down the completed drink, which ZADIE immediately goes for. LINDA zips ZADIE up while she sips.)

ZADIE: *(continued)* Ah. That's more like it.

LINDA: How old is that dress, Mom?

ZADIE: What do you mean? I just bought it.

LINDA: You wore that when I gave you the big news.

ZADIE: What big news, honey?

LINDA: I think I'm getting married, Mom.

ZADIE: (*pause, looks at her*) Oh?

LINDA: I know I'm getting married. We are. Definitely.

ZADIE: (*unenthused*) Jeff?

LINDA: Who else?

ZADIE: Well that's interesting.

LINDA: You don't approve.

ZADIE: Honey, you can do whatever you want.

LINDA: You don't like him, do you?

ZADIE: It doesn't matter, Linda. You love him, right?

LINDA: I think so.

ZADIE: You think so. That'll be a nice phrase for the invitations.

LINDA: It's going to happen, Mom. Can you be a little nice?

ZADIE: What? I'll be there. I'll wear the yellow dress. I'll buy you a blender. Jesus Christ on a bike.

LINDA: Doesn't matter anyway. Forget it.

ZADIE: I'm sorry, Linda. I didn't mean to upset you.

LINDA: Let it go.

ZADIE: I just want you to be sure. Marriage shouldn't be taken lightly.

LINDA: Look who's talking, Mom.

ZADIE: What?

LINDA: You were never married.

ZADIE: Yes, exactly. I never loved your father.

LINDA: That's terrible to say.

ZADIE: The feeling was mutual.

LINDA: That hurts. It really does.

(*ZADIE shrugs and finished her drink. LINDA looks at the couple in bed.*)

LINDA: (*continued*) Now look at us.

ZADIE: Linda...

LINDA: That's nine years lying in that bed.

ZADIE: Linda, honey..? Baby...

LINDA: Nine years.

ZADIE: (*sings*) *I like New York in June. How about you?*

LINDA: (*contemplates for a moment*) Just one more. (*makes a new cocktail.*)

ZADIE: Thank you, sweetheart. Have one.

LINDA: No thanks.

ZADIE: (*sees the bed*) Oh. And you have a cat.

LINDA: Yeah. You knew that.

ZADIE: Did I?

LINDA: We named her Buttons.

ZADIE: How fiercely connubial you three are. How's Jeff in bed?

LINDA: He's fine.

ZADIE: As long as your needs are being met. Most men haven't a clue.

LINDA: He's very considerate. Serene. He was an animal tonight.

ZADIE: Maybe I had him all wrong.

LINDA: (*serving her drink*) It was breakup sex.

ZADIE: Oh.

LINDA: Didn't even ask for a trial separation. I went right for the kill and said divorce.

ZADIE: Linda, I'm sorry.

LINDA: Now you have a real reason to wear your yellow dress.

ZADIE: Come on. I'm not that cruel. What happened?

LINDA: I think I'm going crazy, Mom.

ZADIE: No.

LINDA: Seriously. I'm on the verge of snapping my cap. I feel like I'm this close to murdering someone. Or running away. There's a great, ugly anxiety outside waiting for me to get back. You know, my waking life.

ZADIE: What do you mean?

LINDA: Well, this is a dream. I'm safe here.

ZADIE: I don't know what you're saying.

LINDA: You're not really here, Mom.

ZADIE: I see. And where am I exactly?

LINDA: Mom. You're 80 years old. Lying in a hospital bed.

ZADIE: Sure, sure.

LINDA: It's true.

ZADIE: Hush, dear. Mommy's getting toasted.

LINDA: And if I'm truly going insane, Mother, I only have you to blame.

ZADIE: Me? A cuckoo bird? How dare you.

LINDA: Mother...

ZADIE: *(to the audience)* I like to sleep with my head at the foot of the bed. Not so strange.

LINDA: Mother! You know full well that crazy runs in the family. And I'm just bringing up the rear.

ZADIE: Linda, stop. OK? Crazy people don't know they're crazy. That's what makes them crazy. You think you're crazy, therefore you have rational thought, ergo you're just being hormonal or something, so I wouldn't worry about it. *(pause)* Am I really 80 years old?

(LINDA nods)

ZADIE: *(continued)* And I guess I'm not doing too well.

LINDA: You're in a hospital bed as we speak.

ZADIE: *(sings)* *I like New York in June...*

LINDA: No more, Mom.

ZADIE: *How about you?*

LINDA: You've had enough.

ZADIE: *I like a Gershwin tune...*

LINDA: You're going to die.

ZADIE: *(pause, then quietly)* Fuck you, honey.

(ZADIE exits. LINDA talks to the audience)

LINDA: Apparently, there is someone in our family tree who actually was bonkers.

(An old portrait drops down from a tree branch. It is of a woman from the 1870's. Cobwebs hang from its frame.)

LINDA: *(continued)* That's her. She was a great, great, great, great grand something-or-other on my mother's side. Late 1800's. Look at those eyes. It sat in a dusty corner of my grandmother's garage. Her name was... I don't know. Penny Farthing or something ridiculous like that. It's a long story, but if I had to give you a logline...

(THUNDER and LIGHTNING. PENNY FARTHING enters from behind the tree, holding a bloody ax. She is directly from 1870.)

PENNY: I chopped up my husband with an ax! *(cackling)*

JEFF: *(tossing and turning)* Honey... Honey...

PENNY: Chop! Chop! Twenty little pieces!

JEFF: No!

LINDA: Stop that. You're scaring him. *(goes to JEFF)* It's OK, Jeff.

JEFF: A woman... with an ax...

LINDA: *(soothing him)* It's just a bad dream. Shh. Quiet down. It's OK.

(JEFF is lulled back to sleep. He snuggles up to the woman, practically suffocating her with his arms and legs wrapped around her.)

PENNY: What a pussy.

LINDA: Nice going. We were having a nice time in slumber-land until you showed up.

PENNY: So that's him, eh?

LINDA: Yes.

PENNY: The husband.

LINDA: Yes.

PENNY: *(pause)* Want me to kill him for you?

LINDA: No. No thanks. Just go away. I don't like you.

PENNY: That's no way to treat family.

LINDA: That portrait scared the shit out of me as a kid.

PENNY: Are you sure you don't want me to hack off a foot or something? I won't mind.

LINDA: Thanks anyway. I want to divorce Jeff. Not chop him up in little bits.

PENNY: A pinkie toe.

LINDA: No, I said. Besides, it's not his fault. I'm the one with the problems. So in a way, I'm saving him.

PENNY: La-de-fuckin'-dah. Do you mind if I set this down?

LINDA: No.

PENNY: Thanks.

(PENNY brings the ax down on top of the desk, allowing it to stick there.)

LINDA: So why did you kill your husband? Besides the fact that you're one quart shy of a gallon.

PENNY: He never made a list.

LINDA: Excuse me?

PENNY: I would send him on errands, right? The grocer for instance. To pick up a few things. I would tell him what I needed and he would head out. And I'd say, "Well, aren't you going to write it down?" And he'd say, "No. I've got it all right here." *(tapping her forehead)* He would come back from the store and there would invariably be that one item missing. Or worse, he'd bring home something that was never on the list to begin with.

LINDA: Wow. Jeff does that too.

PENNY: And I'd say, "What the hell were you thinking? Do you have your head up your ass? Were you too busy jacking off in the frozen goods section that you couldn't remember the broccoli or tampons or whatever the fuck I needed?!" What ever happened to this? *(tapping forehead, then in mocking tone)* "Honey, don't worry. I got it all in here." How hard is it to write things down, you stupid asshole?

LINDA: *(to JEFF)* Yeah!

PENNY: I mean, what the fuck! I send you out to do a simple chore...

LINDA: And he fucks it up!

PENNY: Exactly.

LINDA: How hard is it to put pen to paper?

PENNY: How hard, Jeff?

LINDA: Give me that ax.

PENNY: Now you're talking.

LINDA: What am I saying? I can't do that.

PENNY: Sure you can. It's easy. Listen. The day I discovered the bicycle was the day my husband found himself butchered twenty ways 'til Tuesday.

LINDA: Excuse me?

PENNY: The bicycle, Linda. I have been set free from the confines of my corset and enjoyed the newly found pleasures of bloomers.

LINDA: My goodness.

PENNY: Linda, I swear. It's like I'm riding the devil. He reddens my face with the sheer velocity. My hair is unfurled, my nipples hardened. My legs have become thick with muscle through incessant pedaling. And the bicycle seat... Linda, have I mentioned the bicycle seat?

LINDA: What of it?

PENNY: More glorious a stimulant than my husband ever was.

LINDA: Too much information.

PENNY: Do yourself a favor.

LINDA: I have a bicycle, thanks.

PENNY: Then what's he still doing here?

LINDA: I'm confused at the moment.

PENNY: Want me to kill him for you?

LINDA: Look, go back to your portrait, would you? I love my husband. I mean, I'm pretty sure.

MARGUERITE: (*enters*) Pray for us sinners. Now, and at the hour of death. Sorry. Didn't mean to disturb you guys. Tree pruning? So you're Penny Farthing.

PENNY: Who's this?

MARGUERITE: Hi. I'm Sister Marguerite, and I've always wanted to meet you. Um, Father Ocansey is out playing golf at the moment, but I'd be happy to take your confession if it's convenient.

PENNY: What confession?

MARGUERITE: Your husband's murder. You know, that pesky little thing we call mortal sin.

PENNY: Hacking away at my husband was an act of mercy on my terms. Where was God when I needed him?

MARGUERITE: I'm sorry, could I interrupt for just a moment and ask for an autograph? (*pulls out a pen and paper*)

PENNY: I'm famous?

MARGUERITE: Well, until Lizzie Borden comes along.

PENNY: Bitch.

(*PENNY takes the pen and paper and draws instead.*)

MARGUERITE: Now you must realize, Ms. Farthing, that what you've done goes against all that is laid out for us in the Holy Scripture. Although your story would make an interesting movie-of-the-week. But heed the Word of God, Ms. Farthing. (*looks down at the desk*) If I may quote a passage from the Gospel according to *Pussy* by Bugsy Lipshitz. (*looks up*) I'm sorry. I got distracted. Um, where was I?

LINDA: It's no good, Marguerite. The thought of hurting Jeff is already there. I'm a terrible person.

MARGUERITE: (*goes to LINDA, arm around her shoulder*) Don't say that, Linda. It's not too late to make amends.

PENNY: Doesn't anyone care I'm going to hell?

MARGUERITE: For Pete's sake. Say three Hail Mary's and we'll call it a day.

PENNY: All right. Hail Mary. Hail Mary. Hail Mary. You're right. I do feel better. I'm outta here.

(*PENNY pins the paper to the trunk of the tree. We see that she has drawn a picture of a Penny Farthing bicycle.*)

PENNY: (*continued*) And Linda? I'll leave you my ax in case you change your mind. (*exits*)

MARGUERITE: Now why don't you tell Jeff you made a mistake.

LINDA: I don't want to wake him.

MARGUERITE: Oh go on, Linda. He'll forgive you. He loves you.

LINDA: Why are you being so nice to me?

MARGUERITE: I've always thought of you as a daughter.

LINDA: We're not family.

MARGUERITE: You and I have a lot in common. You realize.

LINDA: I don't see it.

MARGUERITE: *(to the audience)* Lately, I've been sleeping on the couch. I can't seem to face that bed right now.

LINDA: I'm sorry.

MARGUERITE: I'll be turning 80 this year. And I'm still as spry as ever. Doesn't seem fair, does it?

LINDA: Thanks for being at the hospital. For Mom.

MARGUERITE: It's what I do.

(MARGUERITE exits. LINDA turns to JEFF and crouches beside him, whispering.)

LINDA: Jeff? Jeff, honey? Wake up for a minute. I want to talk to you.

(JEFF rustles, slowly opening his eyes)

LINDA: *(continued)* That's it. Hi. Hi, sweetheart.

JEFF: *(sits up, squinting at LINDA)* Who's that?

LINDA: It's me, Jeff.

JEFF: *(rubbing his eyes)* Is it?

LINDA: Yeah.

JEFF: God... I thought... Aren't you supposed to be in bed with me?

LINDA: I am, honey.

JEFF: I don't understand. How are you-?

LINDA: This is a dream state. We're communicating through our brain-waves.

JEFF: We are?

LINDA: I'm not really here. I'm beside you in bed. Can you sense that?

JEFF: Yes.

LINDA: See, we are deep in the recesses of sleep. Stage five. With me?

JEFF: I think so.

LINDA: And I felt that this would be a good time to talk to you.

JEFF: OK. This is amazing.

LINDA: Isn't it?

JEFF: So we're still asleep, right?

LINDA: Yes.

JEFF: All... what? Three of us on this bed?

LINDA: It appears to be.

JEFF: And you and I are talking to each other through our brainwaves.

LINDA: Hi, sweetie.

JEFF: Hi. God, you look beautiful.

LINDA: Thank you.

JEFF: I mean, you're cute when we're awake. But for some reason, you are exceptionally radiant in this dream.

LINDA: Thank you, Jeff. That's nice. Listen, I wanted to talk to you about tonight.

JEFF: Tonight?

LINDA: I want to apologize for my behavior.

JEFF: Really? Geez, you know, it was no big deal.

LINDA: I feel terrible about it. I don't know what's wrong with me, you know?

JEFF: Well, honey. Was it something I did?

LINDA: God, no. Jeff.

JEFF: I mean, you enjoyed your dinner, right?

LINDA: Yes, it was delicious. Thank you. It's just that, I don't know, when I'm stressed out or I've having a bad day... Things have been on my mind, and sometimes I don't know what I'm doing. And when you came home from work, I, like, just had to...

JEFF: Puke it all out.

LINDA: Exactly.

JEFF: I'm sorry you're not feeling too well these days. I wish I can help you through it, if you'd only tell me.

LINDA: I know, I know.

JEFF: You don't talk.

LINDA: I'm bad at that. I tend to keep it all inside.

JEFF: But we're talking now, aren't we?

LINDA: That's right. We are.

JEFF: And that's a good thing.

LINDA: It is.

JEFF: Hi, sweetie.

LINDA: Hi, sweetie.

JEFF: (*grinning*) And I hope you liked your little treat. You know. After dinner.

LINDA: (*smirking*) Oh, I did. Very much.

JEFF: Yeah?

LINDA: Yeah. You're an animal.

JEFF: No, you're an animal.

LINDA: You're an animal.

JEFF: No. You.

LINDA: Jeff, I hope we have many more good years together.

JEFF: I'm sure we will. If you stay off the streets.

LINDA: Excuse me?

JEFF: Don't want you to get hit by a car or anything.

LINDA: I'm careful, Jeff.

JEFF: Oh really? What about the time you got stuck up a tree?

LINDA: When?

JEFF: And we had to call the fire department.

LINDA: You lost me.

JEFF: The tree. Like that one.

LINDA: (*looks up*) Of course. That's my bicycle.

JEFF: Bicycle? You don't know how to ride a bicycle.

LINDA: Of course I do. What are you talking about?

JEFF: What are you talking about?

LINDA: I don't think we're talking about the same thing.

JEFF: I don't think so either. Maybe it's...

LINDA: What?

JEFF: Bear with me here. Maybe we're not communicating because our brainwaves aren't as compatible.