

# PERUSAL SCRIPT



A play by  
**Eric Samuelson**



Newport, Maine

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## **MIASMA**

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TITLE LOGO courtesy of Plan-B Theatre Company,  
Salt Lake City, producers of the Premiere Production.

**MIASMA** was commissioned by Plan-B Theatre Company [Jerry Rapier, Producing Director; Cheryl Ann Cluff, Managing Director] in Salt Lake City, Utah and developed from “THE BUTCHER, THE BEGGAR AND THE BEDTIME BUDDY” from SLAM 2004 at Plan-B. It received its full-length world premiere September 4-24, 2006 with the following cast and crew:

Ben	<b>Ron Frederickson</b>
Claire	<b>April Fossen</b>
Jorge	<b>Joe Debevc</b>
Liz/Liza/Beth	<b>Christina Thurmond</b>
Director	<b>Adrienne Moore</b>
Set	<b>Randy Rassmussen</b>
Lighting and Props	<b>Cory Thorell</b>
Sound	<b>Cheryl Ann Cluff</b>
Costumes	<b>Jacquelin Cintura Bryce</b>
Stage Manager	<b>Jennifer Freed</b>

#### **CAST — 2f, 2m**

**CLAIRE MORSE**— age 34, mother of four, daughter to Ben & Liz, flashback to age 17, and age 9

**BEN MORSE** — over 55, built a beef producing empire by any means he could

**JORGE** — 50s, illegal immigrant, rose to Ben’s assistant by doing whatever was asked

**LIZA POTTER MORSE** (Ben’s 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, 35 years younger) — **LIZ RADIBONE MORSE** (Ben’s 1<sup>st</sup> wife) — **BETH MORSE** (Ben & Liz's daughter and youngest child) (All played by the same actress.)

**Time:** The distant past, the recent past, the present, the future. In and around the fictional city of Lakota, Nebraska.

**Production Note:** In this play, a double dash (–) indicates an interrupted line. An ellipsis (. . . ) indicates a pause, a collecting of thoughts.

The play shifts from active to narrative at the drop of a hat. Transitions should be smooth and quick, with little, if any, break in the action. These flashbacks are integral to the play.

**MIASMA** by *Eric Samuelsen*. About 85 minutes. CAST of 4 -- 2M 2F. (*Suitable for Professional & College/University & Community groups.*) A dissection of family, racial and sexual politics set against the backdrop of the beef industry. "Miasma" thoughtfully mines the drama of a family ripped apart by a father's corporate vision. Its ripped-from-the-headlines themes are thoroughly plowed - dwelling on the exploitation and stench of the beef packing industry, built on the backs of a workforce of immigrant laborers. Sensitivity rating: The play includes profanity (primarily the slang term for cow manure), descriptions of animal slaughter, brief sexual references. Not for children under 14. **ORDER # 3028.**

**Eric Samuelsen** taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who has designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at *Mormoniconoclast.com*. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with many illnesses. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

# **MIASMA**

*(Lights up on CLAIRE, BEN, LIZA, JORGE.)*

**CLAIRE:** Go on. Take a whiff.

**LIZA:** He's many years older than I, and millions richer. I share his bed and all that goes with it. I will never gnaw bones again.

**JORGE:** Lakota, Nebraska. A town that stinks.

**BEN:** Deep, full breath. Fill your lungs!

**CLAIRE:** There's just one Lakota exit off Interstate 80. The closest towns are twenty eight miles to the east, thirty one to the west. But off the exit, you'll find no gas stations, no convenience stores, no fast food, if you can appreciate that irony. No one ever stops.

**LIZA:** They can't take it.

**BEN:** It's vital, it's alive! Sinew and bone and red, raw meat!

**JORGE:** It's their town. I learned that many years ago; I adjusted to it. You become more than bilingual; Spanish, English, the language of power, the language of beef.

**LIZA:** We still elect a mayor and city council: someone else to maintain infrastructure.

**JORGE:** I find someone pliable, as I am pliable, someone serviceable, as I am serviceable. A mayor named Garcia. A city council: Rios, Fernandez, de Puerta.

**LIZA:** Lakota. Some years ago, the state police set up a speed trap on the interstate just outside town. They made quite a haul. It's amusing, to see the cars speed up as they begin to get a whiff.

**CLAIRE:** It's bullshit. Literally bull shit, bovine excrement.

**BEN:** If you can smell it, you can taste it.

**CLAIRE:** Cattle know. They hear the whirling knives, the bellowing terror. Sometimes they panic, which is bad, slows up the line. They shit themselves in fear. And when they die, their bowels loosen, just like humans.

**LIZA:** Ben wouldn't live anywhere else. And I live with Ben.

**CLAIRE:** It's not one smell, of course. There are . . . gradations of stink. Death and blood to the north. Shit to the east and south.

**LIZA:** You cope. In time, you thrive.

*(Gestures to CLAIRE.)*

The Beggar's first visit.

**BEN:** Claire!

**CLAIRE:** Daddy.

**BEN:** I'll get my checkbook.

**CLAIRE:** Liza.

**LIZA:** Claire. Who is it this time? Peter again? Terry?

**CLAIRE:** Peter. You know us so well.

**LIZA:** He's starting a business?

**BEN:** I can't find my checkbook anywhere.

**LIZA:** It's in my purse. I left it at the office.

**CLAIRE:** I can come back tomorrow.

**BEN:** Where are you staying, honey? We can put you up here.

**LIZA:** Ben. . . .

**CLAIRE:** I can't stay.

**BEN:** Nonsense. We'll make up a bed in the guest room.

**CLAIRE:** I have a hotel room in Kearney.

**BEN:** All the way in Kearney?

**LIZA:** You'll send us the hotel bill, of course.

**CLAIRE:** I'm okay, thanks. It's closer to the airport.

**BEN:** Damn checkbook. Liza, where did I put that thing?

**LIZA:** I told you, it's in my purse.

**BEN:** We'll wire transfer the money.

**CLAIRE:** Sixty thousand. If that's okay.

**BEN:** Fine, fine. Happy to do it.

**CLAIRE:** Wire transfer. I didn't know you were that adept with computers, Daddy.

**BEN:** It's Liza. She's a whiz.

**CLAIRE:** I'm sure she is.

**LIZA:** You can trust me. If he says to send it, I'll send it.

**CLAIRE:** Of course. Daddy?

**BEN:** Yes?

**CLAIRE:** On my way in, I stopped to see Jorge. He wasn't in his office.

**LIZA:** No.

**BEN:** Worker problems.

**LIZA:** (Warning him.) Ben.

**CLAIRE:** But he'll be back?

**BEN:** He's been pretty busy.

**CLAIRE:** I can wait.

**BEN:** Well. Can you stay for dinner?

**CLAIRE:** And that's a test. Taste is related to smell, of course, a meal in Lakota can literally taste like shit. But I wanted to see Jorge.

**LIZA:** What do you say?

**CLAIRE:** We could make it a foursome.

**BEN:** I don't know if Jorge will be able to—

**CLAIRE:** We could call him.

**BEN:** Yes. If he has his cell phone with him, I've had to talk to him about that, sometimes he just can't—

**CLAIRE:** Daddy. Please. You know what Jorge means to me.

*(Awkward pause.)*

**LIZA:** A foursome, then. We could go out. We haven't been out in forever, Ben.

**BEN:** A good thick filet, Claire, what do you say? You don't get a good Nebraska steak every day, not out there in Atlanta.

**CLAIRE:** Restaurants in town all have sealed doors. Daddy hates that; his dream is an open air steakhouse.

**LIZA:** So that's settled.

**BEN:** Sit down a second, Claire. Catch me up, what's everyone up to?

**CLAIRE:** Daddy. You've got a business to run.

**BEN:** Nonsense, knew you were coming, cleared the whole afternoon. My daughter's in town; business can wait.

**CLAIRE:** There are rules, boundaries, to a conversation with my father, some set by him, a few by me. My husband, my kids, Peter, Terry, Terry's wife, their kids, that's all fair game. Beth, well, I don't like to talk about Beth. But she's Daddy's favorite, of course, his one farmer. So Daddy will bring her up, how proud he is of her, and I can usually steer it to Beth's daughter, who I probably know better than she does. Mom is out of bounds.

**BEN:** So, Peter. Starting a business?

**LIZA:** Again.

**CLAIRE:** A floral shop. He's already got a location, and a contract with FTD.

**BEN:** Fine, fine. Good for him. In Cincinnati?

**CLAIRE:** Well, Covington, across the river.

**BEN:** That's right, he just bought a house.

**LIZA:** After we provided the down payment.

**CLAIRE:** I've seen it. Peter had us over for Thanksgiving. It's nice.

**BEN:** Three bedroom. Though why Peter needs a three bedroo—

**CLAIRE:** Well, Daddy, you never know. Peter has a girlfriend now.

**LIZA:** We heard something about that. Hispanic?

**BEN:** Is she legal?

**CLAIRE:** She's a loan officer.

**LIZA:** A banker, good.

**CLAIRE:** She seemed very nice. We liked her.

**BEN:** About time that boy settled down.

**CLAIRE:** Yes.

**LIZA:** This floral business. Does he have a business plan?

**CLAIRE:** I expect he does.

**LIZA:** Can he fax it to me tomorrow?

**CLAIRE:** He just asked me to come.

**LIZA:** And beg. On his behalf.

*(Pause.)*

It is, after all, what you do.

**BEN:** He has to know he's welcome here. We'd love to see him again, any of you, Terry, Peter.

**CLAIRE:** They know that. Terry, with the kids, they're busy. You know how it goes.

**LIZA:** Plus they hate the smell. They hate Lakota.

**CLAIRE:** That's not at all true, Liza. We all grew up here.

**BEN:** Well, good for Peter. Finally making something of himself, a new business.

*(Pause.)*

Did I tell you we'd been to see Beth?

**CLAIRE:** And so it went, so it always goes when I visit. Family news, strange tensions.

**LIZA:** They won't any of them come. They send Claire. Every time.

**CLAIRE:** I come because I can.

**LIZA:** The rest of them can't bear it, the town, Ben. Me.

**CLAIRE:** It's always difficult to ask for money. To . . . yes, all right, to beg. And we think we have valid reason to dislike Liza.

**LIZA:** I'm the evil stepmother.

**CLAIRE:** But really, it's the town. What's become of the town. The miasma.

**LIZA:** A floral shop. How many businesses is this for Peter? Seven? Nine?

**CLAIRE:** Poor dreaming Peter, dull, pedantic Terry. They're not up to it, seeing. Breathing.

**BEN:** I just have one rule. Someone has to ask me in person. They can send Claire, that's okay. But not



by phone, not a letter, email. I need to stand haunch to haunch with 'em. My flesh and blood.

**LIZA:** And I look at her and I wonder, why do you do it? Why do you demean yourself, begging. For them, for the family.

**CLAIRE:** I can put up with an evening of Liza, in order to have a few minutes with Jorge. But it does get harder. Every few months, when Peter or Terry or Mom make the call, that cringing apology in their voices. Can you do it again? Can you make yourself eat shit one more time?

**JORGE:** Claire.

**CLAIRE:** Jorge.

*(They embrace.)*

I stopped by your office.

**JORGE:** Some things I had to deal with.

**LIZA:** Are they going to . . . ?

**JORGE:** No.

**BEN:** You're sure? You talked to the Morenos?

**JORGE:** I'm sure.

**BEN:** They could cause us a shitload of trouble, you know.

**JORGE:** It's taken care of. I'm sorry, querida, you come to visit and we bring up these unpleasant subjects.

**CLAIRE:** I know what you do, Jorge. You know that.

**JORGE:** *(Comically condescending.)* Ah, querida. This part, this is hard to think about. Perhaps not good for a little girl.

**CLAIRE:** *(Laughs.)* Hijo de puta.

**JORGE:** *(Laughing as well, To BEN.)* You hear what she calls me, Ben? The things she says to me?

**BEN:** *(Uncomfortable.)* Yes.

**LIZA:** Well. Jorge, I expect you could join us for dinner?

**JORGE:** I have to do a few things first.

**CLAIRE:** 'Things I have to do.' 'Something I had to take care of.' Jorge, we want you to come to dinner. That's an order.

**JORGE:** An order, from little Claire. I can only say yes to that.

**CLAIRE:** It's so good to see you again, Jorge.

*(They embrace.)*

**BEN:** I don't know what to make of those two. 'Friends,' and that's my doing, damnit.

**LIZA:** Jorge forgets his place when he's around her.

**JORGE:** My place is to betray my people. My job is to be Ben's Judas.

**BEN:** His job is labor relations.

**LIZA:** You grab whatever edge you can in business.

**BEN:** But labor costs, that's not a small edge.

**LIZA:** Economies of scale; that's how we survive these days.

**BEN:** The market's never been tighter.

**LIZA:** Ben realized the undocumented worker bonanza years before I came on the scene. He was a visionary that way.

**BEN:** They work hard, the illegals, in constant fear of la migra. You can put 'em in a barracks, hire their wives or girlfriends to cook up their beans and tortillas. Health insurance; hell, you don't even have to worry about workman's comp.

**LIZA:** In the South, in the old plantations, the best overseers were fellow slaves.

**JORGE:** That was me. That was my job.

**LIZA:** That, and anything else Ben asked of him.

**CLAIRE:** Jorge took me to the slaughterhouse for the first time when I was nine. Daddy ordered him to. The miasma was making me ill; the doctors pretended it was vitamin deficiency. They're company doctors, of course. I needed to know where the smell was coming from. For me.

**JORGE:** Your father told me I was to show you . . . what you wanted to see..

**CLAIRE:** Yes. Thank you. Gracias, is that right?

**JORGE:** De nada. It's nothing, not a problem.

**CLAIRE:** I feel kinda stupid about this.

**JORGE:** Why?

**CLAIRE:** You're probably really busy. You don't have time to do this.

**JORGE:** It's a nice break for me.

**CLAIRE:** Really?

**JORGE:** Really. Today, my job is to show little Claire anything she wants to see.

**CLAIRE:** Nine years old, watching the knives, the hammers, hearing the cattle bellow. It took me awhile to make sense of it. At first I was only aware of the blood pooling around my boots, the long silver knives flashing in the cold-room. It was a slow day, they told me, only about two hundred eighty head.

**JORGE:** We've done four hundred.

**CLAIRE:** You can tell, those days. You count the bandaged workers. That fast, that close to the knives, you see more injuries.

**JORGE:** She didn't cry, she didn't flinch away. She stood there, quiet, solemn. Tranquilidad.

**CLAIRE:** I should say that I've been a vegetarian ever since. But I do still eat meat.

**JORGE:** You need to see the whole operation. We should not start here, at the slaughterhouse. We

should start at the feedlot.

**CLAIRE:** That's how I learned about the birds and the bees, watching a specialist vet draw semen from a young bull. Watching the bull mount a dummy, then three teaser cows, finally the vet guiding it into the warm artificial vagina, the semen collector. I was ten.

**JORGE:** Every day, I asked her, are you sure you want to see this? This next part, this is hard to think about. Perhaps not good for a little girl. And every day, she'd nod. She wanted to see everything.

**CLAIRE:** Year after year, Jorge would take me to the slaughterhouses, the packaging plant, the feedlots, the bone yard. I saw the stunners and the stickers. I saw the processing rooms, freezing cold, the men and women, all of them Hispanic, wearing chain mail like medieval knights, their long knives flashing inches from each other on the conveyers.

*(On-stage costume change. LIZA becomes BETH.)*

**JORGE:** Everything. Even the boneyard, though that, I resisted. Not a proper sight for a little girl.

**CLAIRE:** I learned every bit of my father's business from Jorge. He was my friend, my compadre.

**JORGE:** My job was to be what Ben wanted, but my joy was Claire. I picked her up at school, took her to the orthodontist. I took her to 4-H, or selling girl scout cookies. I taught her how to ride a horse, how to curry and brush.

**CLAIRE:** He taught me Spanish, he taught me math. He was who I talked to about my family. He was who I talked to about boys.

**JORGE:** And we went to the park. Sometimes just Claire, but all the kids went.

**CLAIRE:** The park was just outside town, with a jungle gym and slides and a merry-go-round and a huge, clean sandbox. Best of all were the swings. They were tall, well anchored swings, and you would sail into the sky, it felt like. I was not a coordinated child, and it took me a long time to master the lean back, lean forward you needed to swing yourself up and back.

**BETH:** Hey, I was good on that swing. You were a spaz.

**CLAIRE:** Beth. My sister. And yes, she was good on the swing.

**BETH:** I was better than you at everything.

**CLAIRE:** It didn't matter. I always had someone to push me, as long as I wanted, hours if I wanted. I always had Jorge.

**BETH:** You were the one needed a push. Not me.

**CLAIRE:** When we were children, Mom was still around. She hadn't lost herself yet, born again and gone. But she was busy, riding, doing Daddy's books. It must have been easier for her, to turn us over to Jorge.

**BETH:** We weren't supposed to play with the other children. *Bullshit*. I play with anyone I want to.

**CLAIRE:** Some mothers were kind to me, kind enough not to punish a child for her father's actions.

**BETH:** A minimal kindness, that.

*(Suddenly, they're both children.)*

Jorge has sex with boys.

**CLAIRE:** What?

**BETH:** He does. I've seen him.

**CLAIRE:** You don't know anything. You're just a little kid.

**BETH:** I was playing over by the barn, and I saw Jorge kissing a boy. And I asked Daddy about it. And he told me Jorge had sex with boys.

**CLAIRE:** You don't even know what that means.

**BETH:** I've seen horses do it. The one horse climbs on the back of the other one. He has a great big thing and he puts it--.

**CLAIRE:** I don't want to hear this!

**BETH:** I didn't see Jorge do that. But he was kissing a boy and that's the same thing.

**CLAIRE:** I'm telling Mom!

**BETH:** She already knows. I told her.

**CLAIRE:** Mom!

**BETH:** Shut up! Stop yelling for Mom!

**CLAIRE:** You're lying, you never told her! Mom!

**BETH:** Shut up!

*(Twisting CLAIRE's arm behind her.)*

You're older than me, but I can still hurt you. You know that, Claire. Call for Mom again and see what happens.

**CLAIRE:** Mom. . . .

**BETH:** I told her. I said I saw Jorge kissing a boy. She said Jorge's going to hell, and he can't push you anymore.

**CLAIRE:** She did not!

**BETH:** You think Jorge's so great. But he's nothing but a faggot.

**CLAIRE:** He is not!

**BETH:** Is too. Daddy said.

**CLAIRE:** Shut up, Beth. Shut up shut up!

**BETH:** Jorge and a boy sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G.

**CLAIRE:** Shut up!

*(She runs off. JORGE comes up to her.)*

**JORGE:** Querida? Are you all right?

**CLAIRE:** Beth hurt me.

**JORGE:** What did she do?

**CLAIRE:** Nothing.

**JORGE:** I will tell your father this.

**CLAIRE:** No! Don't, Jorge, it'll just make things worse.

*(She hugs him.)*

I love you, Jorge. You're my best friend in the whole world.

**JORGE:** I love you too, querida.

**CLAIRE:** Can we go to the park?

**JORGE:** Ah.

**CLAIRE:** What?

**JORGE:** Your mother says she will take you to the park.

**CLAIRE:** She never does.

**JORGE:** We should do as your mother asks, querida.

**CLAIRE:** Jorge? Do you. . . .?

**JORGE:** Do I what?

**CLAIRE:** Never mind. It's stupid. Beth being stupid. Mom . . . .

**JORGE:** Claire. Listen to me. For now, you go to the park with your mother.

**CLAIRE:** Beth did talk to her.

**JORGE:** She is your mother.

**CLAIRE:** You're my friend, Jorge. She can't say we can't be friends.

**JORGE:** She said . . . .

**CLAIRE:** I say we're friends, we're always gonna be friends. She can't stop us, no one can!

*(Pause.)*

**JORGE:** No. You're right. She cannot.

**CLAIRE:** Okay.

**JORGE:** Good. Yes. But for now, perhaps we do not go to the park so often.

**CLAIRE:** And for a year, I hardly saw him. The loneliest year of my life. Mom hadn't gone off the rails yet, that was still a couple of years off. But she was a rancher's daughter, with old west attitudes and old time-religion. We had to wait her out, wait until Mom lost herself again, riding her horses, fighting with Dad. And Jorge was allowed to teach me again.

**JORGE:** Are you able to stay up tonight?

**CLAIRE:** Why?

**JORGE:** I talked to your father. I think you're ready to see it. The worst job in the world.

**CLAIRE:** The worst job in the world.

**JORGE:** Cleanup crew at the slaughterhouse.

**CLAIRE:** Oh.

**JORGE:** It's the late shift. They start at midnight. You'd best go home, get some sleep. I'll pick you up.

**CLAIRE:** What makes it the worst job in the world?

**JORGE:** You'll see.

**CLAIRE:** Okay. Hey, Jorge.

**JORGE:** Yes?

**CLAIRE:** You hungry?

**JORGE:** A little.

**CLAIRE:** We could stop and get something. On me, I just got my allowance.

**JORGE:** No, thanks.

**CLAIRE:** Come on, Jorge. You said you were hungry.

**JORGE:** I can't.

**CLAIRE:** Why not?

**JORGE:** Things to do.

**CLAIRE:** The thing is, I'd been in Daddy's office that morning; he'd forgotten his lunch. Jorge was already there at eight.

**JORGE:** A little problem I have to take care of for your father.

**CLAIRE:** Well, geez. You can stop for ten minutes. Get something to eat.

**JORGE:** No time.

**CLAIRE:** You picked me up at school today. For no reason; I can take the bus.

**JORGE:** Your father doesn't like you to take the bus.

**CLAIRE:** Jorge, what do you do for my father anyway?

**JORGE:** Anything he asks.

**CLAIRE:** I know that, but . . . Run errands for our family. And then skip dinner to catch up on your work.

**JORGE:** It is what your father asks of me.

**CLAIRE:** A job's one thing, Jorge. But this is crazy. You gotta tell him he's working you to death. It's too much. In fact, why should you, I'll do it, I'll tell him exactly what I—

**JORGE:** No.

**CLAIRE:** Jorge, he's my Dad. I'll march right in there today, and—

**JORGE:** Claire! There is something you need to know.

**CLAIRE:** Okay.

**JORGE:** Your father has asked me to take care of you. Pick you up, take you where you need to be,

help you with your Spanish homework, yes?

**CLAIRE:** Sure.

**JORGE:** I am glad to do it. Your father, he must love all his children the same—Peter, Terry, Beth. You. All the same. But me, I am a friend of the family. I am allowed to have favorites, no?

**CLAIRE:** I know what you mean.

**JORGE:** So. We have been friends. I have grown to love you.

**CLAIRE:** I love you too, Jorge.

**JORGE:** As if you were my own daughter.

**CLAIRE:** I know.

**JORGE:** I mean this. You are very especial to me.

**CLAIRE:** Well, you're very especial to me too, Jorge.

**JORGE:** Yes. But I tell you this so we understand each other. If your father were to tell me to do this, I would take the shovel from the back of this truck, and I would smash it on your head. And throw the body in the bone yard. It would feel like a knife in my own heart. But, yes, I would do this. If he told me it must be done.

**CLAIRE:** And I looked over at his face, tears running down his cheeks, shining in the dome light of the pickup cab. We did not say one more word to each other all the way home. And yes, that night, when he came to our house, I almost stayed in the house. I almost decided not to go with him to the slaughterhouse. But I did. We stayed up until three in the morning, watching his crew do the worst job in the world.

**JORGE:** Hosing blood and hair and cow shit off the slaughterhouse floor with disinfectant.

**CLAIRE:** Poison sloshing around their boots, green clouds of chlorine, the men wearing cloth masks like doctors.

**JORGE:** I want good masks for my men, their coughing. I have no money from Ben for good gas masks.

**CLAIRE:** And he shared that with me, his humiliation and pain, I watched with him as men he knew, men he cared about destroyed their own lungs so they could send a few dollars home to Mexico. And he knew them, he loved them, he helped them. I knew that night he was still Jorge, my dear tormented friend. I saw what it cost him, to do what he did, to be who he was. And I still felt safe in his truck.

*(To JORGE.)*

I know why you wanted me to see this. You want better masks for your men.

**JORGE:** I have asked your father.

**CLAIRE:** He said they cost too much.

**JORGE:** Yes.

**CLAIRE:** Okay. Thanks, Jorge.

**JORGE:** De nada.

**CLAIRE:** And that was how I began my career as a beggar. Gas masks for the clean-up crew.

**JORGE:** Never for herself. Only for others.

**CLAIRE:** And in time, my father agreed.

**BEN:** Okay. What is it this time, honey?

**CLAIRE:** I don't want Jorge to take me places anymore.

**BEN:** What? Why, what did he do?

**CLAIRE:** He does everything, Daddy. How many hours does he work for you a day? And then playing chauffeur for me? I'm seventeen.

**BEN:** He doesn't mind. It's part of his job.

**CLAIRE:** What *is* his job?

**BEN:** Whatever I say it is.

**CLAIRE:** He's gonna quit on you, Daddy. I want him to.

**BEN:** He'll never quit.

**CLAIRE:** Daddy, the way you work him—

**BEN:** Jorge likes his job, okay? He works hard because he loves it.

**CLAIRE:** That's not true.

**BEN:** It's true as far as you're concerned.

**CLAIRE:** What hold do you have on him?

**BEN:** Okay. You're old enough to know this, I guess.

**CLAIRE:** I think I am.

**BEN:** Honey. Jorge's a faggot. A queer.

**CLAIRE:** I know he's gay, Daddy. I've known for years.

**BEN:** Me, I don't give a shit. But that Mexican culture, honey, all that macho crap. That Catholic, 'you're gonna roast in hell for it' shit. His parents are still alive, he has five brothers. Most of 'em back in Mexico. He probably sends half his money home. They find out, they won't take it, they'll never write to him again.

**CLAIRE:** This was years ago, of course, long before Hispanic gay pride marches. Being gay was shameful, something you hid.

**BEN:** See, I caught him. Him and this other kid, Juan something. Caught 'em right out by the boneyard. Must have been fifteen years ago.

**CLAIRE:** He hates the boneyard.

**BEN:** Thing is, he was a pretty good worker, one of the first illegals I'd hired. Didn't really wanna fire him.



**JORGE:** What will you do with me?

**BEN:** I haven't decided.

**JORGE:** La migra?

**BEN:** Maybe. Maybe I write your family back, where? Juarez? Hermasilla?

**JORGE:** I will leave. No phone calls, no trouble for you.

**BEN:** Claire, honey, you gotta understand, I've got competitors that'll cut my balls off they get the chance, and I'm riding a very thin margin. And the best place for me to cut costs is labor.

**JORGE:** Adios, señor.

**BEN:** Maybe we could come to an understanding.

**JORGE:** Como?

**BEN:** The other kid, Juan, I could see he was no good to me. I've seen it in cattle. They give up. But Jorge, he was different, he had some dignity. Something he still could lose.

**JORGE:** Como, señor?

**BEN:** A raise, maybe, for starters. What are you getting now?

**JORGE:** Three fifty.

**BEN:** So let's make it seven.

**JORGE:** Seven?

**BEN:** Siete.

**JORGE:** For to do what?

**BEN:** Absolutely anything I say.

**JORGE:** Tarjeta verde?

**BEN:** Green card? We'll see.

**JORGE:** *(Nods.)* What of Juan?

**BEN:** We'll set you up, get you an apartment. Get you out of the barracks. Him? Do anything you want with him.

**JORGE:** Why?

**BEN:** I think it might be a good business decision.

**CLAIRE:** A business decision.

**BEN:** Honey, twenty five years ago, hardly any meat packer was using illegals. I was the first, and I couldn'ta done it without Jorge. Smooths things over, tells 'em how things are gonna be. Brings in the new ones, and shows 'em their jobs. You wanna know the secret to my success, it's finding one wetback faggot and figuring out what to do with him.

**JORGE:** Every night, I pray to the Virgin to take this away from me, to take away this weakness. To intercede for me, to beg the Holy Father, my Maker, to remake me. And I pray without faith and

without honor, because God makes men altogether, totalmente, and I am what He has made. The Virgin did hear me pray, this I know. God didn't change me. Now, I wouldn't want him to. Instead, he sent me Claire.

**CLAIRE:** Daddy, can we talk?

**BEN:** Sure, honey. What's on your mind?

**CLAIRE:** Jorge.

**BEN:** Okay.

**CLAIRE:** I've been thinking about what you said, how valuable he is to you. And he's been showing me the business, you know, and I think I have a feel for how it works. I think you could use him more effectively.

**BEN:** How's that honey?

**CLAIRE:** Two things.

**JORGE :** And that is why Ben paid for me to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Agribusiness, specializing in Grazing Livestock Systems, from the University of Nebraska. And now, I have salary. I have benefits. I have many advantages my people are denied. Denied by me, their Judas.

**CLAIRE:** But the bigger problem, Daddy, is la migra. He's still an illegal.

**BEN:** And I hit the roof. But she never let up, not one day for months. That Claire, she can always talk me around.

**CLAIRE:** And so Jorge and I were joined in holy matrimony.

**JORGE:** Marriage for la migra, to make me legal, a citizen.

**BEN:** Twenty years older than she was, and a wetback fairy to boot. Immigration wasn't crazy about it. But I do have some pull in Washington.

**BETH:** Jorge. Whore-gay. What's unbelievable is how much of their business he knows. I've told Liza. The time will come when he betrays them.

*(She changes back to LIZA.)*

**CLAIRE:** And that night, our wedding night together, me and my beloved friend Jorge, in a marriage we would never consummate, he held me in his arms, and kissed me with such tenderness. And I knew that must feel strange and wrong to him, as strange and wrong as kissing a woman would feel to me. But in his kisses and in his caresses was all his kindness, and all his gentleness, never thinking of his own pleasure, only concerned for mine, and I felt cherished, and yes, truly loved. And we never spent another night together, and we had the marriage annulled a few months later, as soon as Daddy heard from his Congressman that it would be safe. And I've married again, of course, to my Robert, and when we make love, I feel the same tenderness, the same consideration. I've been so blessed. I know that both my husbands have loved me.

**BEN:** Now, Jorge, you're absolutely certain we're not going to have problems tonight.

**JORGE:** I got Señora Moreno alone. Her boys were angry, and making threats--this is their sister we're

talking about, after all. It's okay. I'll pull Juanita off clean-up, and we'll pay for the abortion. It's fine.

**LIZA:** She agreed?

**JORGE:** The child would just be a monster. The doctor told her.

**LIZA:** What else does she want?

**JORGE:** What do you mean?

**LIZA:** Señora Moreno. What else did you promise her?

*(Pause.)*

**JORGE:** Another teacher for the school.

**BEN:** Damnit, Jorge, every time I send you to negotiate, you promise some new—

**LIZA:** Excuse us, Claire.

**JORGE:** Ben, a labor citation now, plus if the Church gets involved, that new priest—

**BEN:** I pay you to save me money!

**LIZA:** Ben! Claire's here!

*(A pause. CLAIRE laughs.)*

**CLAIRE:** Oh, please. Daddy, I've known every part of what you do since I was nine.

**BEN:** This is a rough business, sometimes, and I don't want my little girl—

**JORGE:** If she wanted to turn you in, she could have done it years ago.

**BEN:** Claire, I'm sorry. You're not Beth, you're not tough like she is. I worry about you knowing these sorts of—

**CLAIRE:** I'm thirty four years old, Daddy. I'm the mother of four children.

**BEN:** I just wanted a nice dinner, just a nice family dinner with my daughter.

**CLAIRE:** So let's do that.

**JORGE:** Yes.

**LIZA:** Jorge, you're absolutely certain this isn't going to blow up in our faces?

**JORGE:** Absolutely certain.

*(They stare at each other.)*

**CLAIRE:** There was no way Liza should have gotten close to Daddy.

**LIZA:** I'm from Gnaw Bone Indiana. That's a real place, gnawed to the bone. I was born Anita Philpott, my Dad ran a bait and tackle shop. You'uns wouldn't know me then, thick Hoosier accent, bad teeth and skin. I was not the girl you see now.

**CLAIRE:** None of us have quite forgiven what she did to my mother.

**LIZA:** I vowed age of seven, I would never gnaw another bone. And I haven't, not without dollar signs at the tip and root.

**BEN:** I met her in Chicago, we went to a steakhouse, afterwards, we went for drinks. We'd known each other six hours and she had me pawing at the ground.

**LIZA:** Between his ranches and the slaughterhouses, I knew what he was worth.

**BEN:** I can still rut like a bull.

**LIZA:** Thanks be to Viagra, that's actually true.

**CLAIRE:** That's their myth.

**JORGE:** I don't know why they try to convince Claire. They know I will tell her the truth.

**CLAIRE:** They did meet in Chicago, at a USDA conference on emerging international beef futures markets. What she doesn't want people to know is that she was there as an environmentalist.

**LIZA:** My high school teachers never mentioned college, not for Gnawbone kids, not then. I had to figure it all out, how to study, how to think. Somehow got into Purdue, and somewhere in there, I became Liza Potter, lost the accent, stopped returning phone calls from home. Majored in Agricultural and Biological Engineering, got C's my first year, B's the next, A's my last two. That got me an interview with the USDA.

**CLAIRE:** There was no reason Daddy should have even attended her session. She was the laughingstock of the conference.

**LIZA:** I *was* there as an environmentalist. I'll admit it. But a very Republican kind of environmentalist. I'm all about private/public partnerships. Spent my time in government looking for the right ship to jump to.

**JORGE:** She was there to talk bullshit about bullshit.

**LIZA:** I sense that some of you may be somewhat resistant to this. But experimental data suggest that the excreta of cattle may be our most sadly underutilized natural resource. There is energy in ruminant end product. Properly designed biodigesters could practically end all petroleum imports by the year 2010. Biodigested organic waste generates methane gas—generations of boy scouts, sitting around camp fires, call them blue darts. And methane could be used for cooking, lighting, transport. Gobar gas, as we call it, biogas, is a renewable energy force.

**BEN:** Bullshit.

**LIZA:** Excuse me.

**BEN:** You're talking bullshit. Making money off bullshit.

**LIZA:** Mr?

**BEN:** Ben Morse.

**LIZA:** Liza Potter.

**BEN:** You're saying there could be money made in bullshit. Cowshit.

**LIZA:** I am indeed.

**BEN:** What about regular shit?

**LIZA:** Any organic waste. You wanna see a car that runs entirely on chickenshit?

**BEN:** You wanna show me over dinner?

**LIZA:** I have a flight back to Washington tonight.

**BEN:** You spoke for forty-five minutes, and I'm the only rancher who stayed to the end. So what I suggest is, you reschedule your flight. And spend dinner explaining how bullshit's gonna make me richer.

**CLAIRE:** So, dinner, drinks, his hotel room. She gave two weeks notice the next morning, flew back with Daddy the next evening.

**JORGE:** And I had another boss.

**CLAIRE:** How did she do it? Peter and Terry and Beth and I, we'd stay up late nights, trying to figure it out. Daddy loved Mom, we knew that, even when they were fighting. Jorge got it out of Ben one night after work, over whiskey sours.

**JORGE:** At dinner that night, Liza asked Ben the right question.

**LIZA:** Ben, what is the future of the beef industry?

**BEN:** Why don't you tell me?

**CLAIRE:** And she gave the only answer that could have seduced him.

**LIZA:** Poultry.

**JORGE:** It's what we're doing.

**BEN:** We've already turned herbivores into carnivores—

**JORGE:** Cud chewers into cannibals.

**LIZA:** And I think in time we can make money every time they fart or shit.

**JORGE:** But the step we spent our lives on, the big one, the dream.

**CLAIRE:** The reason Lakota stinks.

**JORGE:** Turning a ranch into beef-producing version of a poultry farm.

**CLAIRE:** He brought her home. Told Mom he'd hired her, his new executive VP. A demotion for Jorge.

**BEN:** Installed her in the office next to mine.

**CLAIRE:** And in his bed.

**LIZA:** What happened in Chicago was a first for me; a married man. I was always . . . selective.

**CLAIRE:** They've never married. That's some consolation. We know she's in his will, but we don't believe Daddy's cut us out completely.

**BEN:** She became my partner in ways Liz never would be.

**CLAIRE:** I'll give him this. Mom didn't have to catch him. He came clean. He told her what was going on.

**BEN:** I didn't fight her. Not the way I could have.

**LIZA:** Ben made it as amicable as possible.

**CLAIRE:** Beth went her own way afterwards. We knew she would. She's the toughest one of us.

**LIZA:** The beggar's second visit.

**BEN:** Claire.

**CLAIRE:** Daddy.

**BEN:** I've got my checkbook somewhere.

**LIZA:** You were so mysterious over the phone. Who is it this time?

**CLAIRE:** Terry. An opportunity, a post doctoral fellowship in Leeds.

**BEN:** Leeds? Where the hell's Leeds?

**CLAIRE:** England, Daddy. He thinks twenty thousand dollars. . . .

**BEN:** Better make it twenty five. Leeds? They don't study bugs here, in the good old US of A?

**CLAIRE:** Microbes, Daddy. It's a wonderful opportunity for him.

**BEN:** England. They have mad cows in England. Not here!

**LIZA:** Don't worry about the checkbook, Ben. I'll send the money.

**BEN:** That's fine, then, fine. You tell Terry to come out here sometime. We have a hell of a problem with bugs out at the plant.

**LIZA:** They keep changing the guidelines on us, it's difficult to track.

**CLAIRE:** I'll mention it to him.

**BEN:** On and on, about anti-biotics in the meat, about MGA, hormones. . . .

**LIZA:** Ben, we've been over this.

**JORGE:** Claire.

**CLAIRE:** Mi querida.

*(A kiss.)*

**JORGE:** Terry's wife is expecting again?

**CLAIRE:** Yes, they're very excited. Hey, how about you? You're with someone now? Rodrigo?

**JORGE:** Three months. Fingers crossed.

**CLAIRE:** Do I get to meet him? Tonight?

**JORGE:** Of course.

**BEN:** Son of a bitch. Terry's gonna be a father.

**LIZA:** We knew that, Ben.

**BEN:** Nobody tells me anything.

**CLAIRE:** I wrote you Daddy, as soon as they knew.

**LIZA:** You saw the letter, Ben.

**BEN:** Well, maybe so, maybe so. You've got to get Terry to come out. The go-bar gas, the biodigesters, we're about ready to go on line.

**JORGE:** We're still in the experimental phase.

**LIZA:** Still, we've seen some very exciting results. Preliminary, but still. Most encouraging.

**CLAIRE:** I'll mention it to him.

**BEN:** He could tell 'em! Our meat's safe! He's a scientist!

**CLAIRE:** Well, he's going to Leeds.

**BEN:** Of course, right.

**LIZA:** He's not on fellowship?

**CLAIRE:** No.

**LIZA:** He's a little old to be starting a post-doc.

**BEN:** He's doing fine. Just took him some time to find his footing.

**JORGE:** Are they hoping for a boy?

**CLAIRE:** I don't know that they have a preference.

**BEN:** Sometimes it takes time. For a young man to figure out who he is, what he wants to do. Don't worry about Terry. Terry's fine.

**LIZA:** That's right, Ben.

*(Pause.)*

**BEN:** You staying for dinner?

**JORGE:** Please?

**CLAIRE:** Well, I pretty much have to, don't I? If I'm going to meet this Rodrigo.

**JORGE:** You will like him, querida. I am certain.

**CLAIRE:** I know I will.

**JORGE:** And Liza had to let him come. But I know how much she hates Rodrigo.

**CLAIRE:** That's the last thing they want, for Jorge to find an equal, a partner. One day he'll realize his own strength. And he knows too much.

**LIZA:** Rodrigo must join us, of course.

**CLAIRE:** Rodrigo scares them.

**BEN:** Terry should come home. He should join the family business.

**JORGE:** That's Ben's dream. His family together, all of them, working in Lakota.

**CLAIRE:** But if they really knew Jorge, if they knew him like I know him, they'd know he's no threat. Three people he loves need Daddy to stay rich.

**JORGE:** Four, counting Claire. Not Beth. But Peter. Terry. And Liz.

**CLAIRE:** My mother.

**LIZA:** That marriage was essentially dead by the time I arrived on the scene.

**CLAIRE:** No! There was a time, it *was* a marriage. A real marriage. Why else, when Daddy finally went rutting in another stall, did he do it with a woman who looked so very much like Mom?

*(Costume change. LIZA becomes LIZ.)*

**BEN:** Liz. My first love, my first great partnership.

**CLAIRE:** I've heard the story so many times. The great ride.

**BEN:** She spent her days with that Bible, watching religious nuts on the TV, and she went off her head.

**CLAIRE:** The horsemen of the apocalypse. White for conquest, red for war, black for famine.

**LIZ:** *(Strangely matter of fact.)* And the Lamb opened the fourth seal, and I heard the voice say, "Look!" I looked, and behold, a pale horse. Its rider named Death, and Hell close behind. And they were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

**JORGE:** We kill cattle with hammers, a blow to the head, and then slash its throat.

**BEN:** The town is fine! It's a good smell, a rich smell! We're building something here! That's the vision I wooed you with!

**CLAIRE:** But sometimes, a vase or something would start to fall and you could see how quickly she could still move when she had to.

**BEN:** The first time I laid eyes on Liz was at Burwell, at the rodeo. My Dad and I; two man roping. And she was barrel-racing. Skinny little thing, dark hair in a pony tail behind her Stetson. She rode hard, all knees and stirrups, hugging her horse close to the barrels. She was just fourteen.

**LIZ:** It was my first time at Burwell. Riding Savannah, a three-year-old Morgan Daddy bought for me to train. We'd worked the barrels I don't know how many hours, at a walk, a trot, a lope, a gallop.

**BEN:** She had great balance in the saddle, not leaning into turns. You lean, the horse leans, and you lose seconds. She kept a tight pocket, maybe looked a little out of control, but the best ones always do.

**LIZ:** Just kept repeating it in my head, 'Whoa, turn, look, line up.'

**BEN:** She scored a seventeen, I remember, good for fourth. She was on a Morgan, which hurt her, I remember wondering why she wasn't on a quarter horse, and then I thought—she's a little girl, Morgans are prettier.

**LIZ:** I was okay with fourth. Burwell's a big rodeo, and it was my first. I thought the crowd would scare me, all that noise, I thought it might spook Savannah. But she handled like she'd been racing for years.

**BEN:** That was a good ride.

**LIZ:** Thanks.

**BEN:** I like your horse. A Morgan can be a good little racer. You find her easy to train?

**LIZ:** Yeah.

**BEN:** You ridden quarter horses much?



**LIZ:** My Daddy has a six year old mare. I know they're supposed to be better for barrels, but I like my Savannah.

**BEN:** I have a nice little bay colt I maybe could sell you, if you're interested.

**LIZ:** You'd have to talk to my Daddy.

**BEN:** Yeah. Anyway, good ride.

**LIZ:** Ben tells me that conversation took place. I don't recall it; I was too excited, about competing, about the crowd noises from the grandstand.

**BEN:** I knew so much about her. I knew that she had trained that Morgan herself, but that she had other horses too, horses she groomed and looked after, horses she thought of as hers. She gave 'em names: Socks, Blackie, Patches; not the names you'd see on any register, but the names those horses responded to. Me talking to her, I was just an old man who told her something she already knew, that she was a great rider already at fourteen.

**LIZ:** And in time, he talked to my Daddy, and he sold us that quarterhorse bay. I called him Happy. Sixteen hand: I raced him as a gelding.

**BEN:** Three years later, I went to Burwell again. I hadn't competed in years, but it's not a bad place to meet folks, talk business. See who's getting out, what spreads might be available. And I saw her again.

**LIZ:** By then I was doing barrel racing and trick riding, both. I won as often as I lost. And I knew Ben a little—everyone knew Ben Morse by then.

**BEN:** Miss Radibone.

**LIZ:** Liz.

**BEN:** Liz, then. That was a good ride.

**LIZ:** Thank you, Mr. Morse.

**BEN:** Ben.

**LIZ:** Ben.

**BEN:** Looks like that bay worked out for you.

**LIZ:** That's right, you're the one sold him to us.

**BEN:** You still own that Morgan?

**LIZ:** Savannah. Yeah, she's still mine. But a quarterhorse is better for competition.

**BEN:** Listen, I'm gonna be in Fort Robinson next week, Harrison after that. And I was wondering if I could see you. Socially. Take you to a dance in Chadron, maybe.

**LIZ:** Well. That's quite the offer.

**BEN:** What do you think?

**LIZ:** What I think and what I know may be different things.

**BEN:** How do you mean?

**LIZ:** What I think is, you're ten years older than me. What I know is, I'm still in high school. And what I expect is, my parents will set their minds hard against it.

**BEN:** They don't know me.

**LIZ:** Maybe they don't want to know you, you buying property up and down the state.

**BEN:** Maybe they haven't heard the whole story.

**LIZ:** Maybe not. What they know is, you're twenty seven and I'm seventeen.

**BEN:** Does that matter to you?

**LIZ:** Some.

**BEN:** You say so, I'll leave you be.

**LIZ:** I didn't say that either.

**BEN:** I have a vision, Liz. I have a plan.

**LIZ:** Do you now?

**BEN:** I'm gonna make a fortune where other folks barely make ends meet. And I'm gonna do it all with you at my side.

**LIZ:** And that's what you think?

**BEN:** That's what I know.

**LIZ:** But is that what God wants for you?

**BEN:** Haven't given it much thought.

**LIZ:** You should. Man should know God's will for him.

**BEN:** I know my own mind.

**LIZ:** Good for you. I know this, too. I'm not going to any dance in Chadron with you.

**BEN:** All right.

*(He turns away.)*

**LIZ:** You know Piney Ridge?

**BEN:** I believe I can find it.

**LIZ:** In a couple of days, I thought I'd make that my morning ride.

**BEN:** I've heard it's beautiful.

**LIZ:** I thought maybe I'd leave around six.

**BEN:** That's a good hour to go riding.

**LIZ:** So what I'm thinking, if a couple of folks should happen to meet on the trail, it'd only be companionable to ride together.

**BEN:** Be the friendly thing to do.

**LIZ:** Sociable, exactly.

**BEN:** There's safety in numbers, out on a trail.

**LIZ:** I surely do believe in rider safety.

**BEN:** In a couple of days, you say?

**LIZ:** Two. Wednesday. At six.

**BEN:** I did note the time.

**LIZ:** Good. Listen, cowboy, Mr. Rancher with a vision. You're not gonna be taking me to any dance in Chadron right off. We're not going sparking, or to some picture show. You want to court me, you're gonna have to ride.

**CLAIRE:** The ride. Up Piney Ridge, down the slope, across the Niobrara River.

**BEN:** I figured I could keep up with a little girl. But she knew her horse, and that horse knew the trail. I'd borrowed a horse from a friend, borrowed some tack.

**LIZ:** And Ben hadn't ridden in months. He was soft, getting flabby.

**BEN:** She was flying. It was all I could do to keep up, and I was feeling it. By the time she finally slowed, my legs hurt, calves of my legs, the middle of my back hurt, my shoulders hurt, and, yes, my ass was one big open sore.

**LIZ:** If he wanted to court me, he was gonna have use some muscles he hadn't used for awhile.

**BEN:** And when the ride was over, she grinned at me. 'Great ride' she said. Tossed her head back, and rode off.

**LIZ:** See ya tomorrow.

**BEN:** Wait. Hang on. Tomorrow?

**LIZ:** I've got chores. Let's say around ten. Pack a lunch.

**BEN:** That's it? See you tomorrow?

**LIZ:** I told you cowboy. You're gonna have to learn how to ride again.

*(LIZ moves off. BEN stares at her admiringly.)*

**BEN:** Damn. Saddle sores are way worse the second day. I damn near gave her up that very minute.

**LIZ:** Soft old pickup rancher.

**BEN:** What I needed was a two hour bath and three days bed rest. And I had meetings that whole afternoon.

**CLAIRE:** And so they rode. Every morning that week. Every morning the next week.

**BEN:** Every day, the same response. A flip of her pony tail, and see you tomorrow.

**LIZ:** We stopped for lunch.

**BEN:** Oh yeah. We stop, and guess who gets to rubdown both horses while she sets out a blanket and a picnic basket.

**21 more pages to the end of the play**