

The Carriage Floor

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CHARACTERS:

LOUISE

REBECCA

DANNY

GRACIE

THE BEARDED MAN

SETTING:

A room lit by candles. A hundred years ago.

IMPORTANT NOTES FOR PERFORMANCE:

The play is divided into two columns for ease of understanding.

- Each column is a conversation between two characters who are not aware of the characters who are speaking in the other column.
- The characters do not speak at the same time unless indicated by adjacent lines
- When one pair is speaking, the other pair does not “freeze” – it simply represents a natural pause in the other pair’s conversation.

The play’s pace is quick and urgent.

*Two women sit on opposite sides of a bed, facing away from each other.
They both clutch their cups of cold tea.
Neither says anything for some time.
The room is lit by candles. Curtains cover the windows.*

LOUISE

I keep thinking about my sister.

GRACIE

Sometimes I think about her.

LOUISE

Who would she be now?

GRACIE

And that night.

LOUISE

Would she be here in this room?

GRACIE

And the choice I made.

LOUISE

Waiting.

GRACIE

I miss my sister.

LOUISE

Not able to leave.

DANNY enters, frustrated

DANNY

Who are you talking to?

LOUISE

Did you find the money?

DANNY

I still can't find it.

REBECCA enters

GRACIE
It's in the house somewhere.

REBECCA
I don't know how you can be so sure.

GRACIE
Because he never made it back to put it
somewhere else.

DANNY
Who were you talking to?

REBECCA
What's wrong?

GRACIE
Why must something always be wrong?

LOUISE
Did I ever tell you about my sister?

DANNY
You have a sister?

REBECCA
It seemed like you were talking to yourself.

GRACIE
I was talking to you.

REBECCA
I mean before I came in.

GRACIE
Doors are an illusion.

LOUISE
Had.

REBECCA
Yes darling you are very mysterious.

LOUISE
Tenses can be so terribly... terrible.

GRACIE
Don't call me darling.

REBECCA
We're alone.

GRACIE
People will get the wrong idea.

REBECCA
No one's here.

DANNY
I didn't know.

GRACIE
Habit can become hard to break.

LOUISE
Of course.
I would have had to have told you.
And we don't... talk.
We've never really known each other have we.

REBECCA
Of course.

DANNY
Why don't you... well...
why don't you come help?

REBECCA
You have to leave this room.

LOUISE
Gracie never would have done this.

DANNY
This?

REBECCA
You've been up here for two days.

LOUISE
Hiding in a room like a princess in a tower.
She was brave. She... shone.

REBECCA
You could look too Darling.

GRACIE
I need to stay in here.

DANNY
Gracie was your sister?

GRACIE
This room was the last place I saw Louise.

LOUISE
Some places are like people:
some shine and some don't.

DANNY
Louise. Darling.
You shine. Believe me you shine.
I wouldn't be here if you didn't.

REBECCA
Louise was your sister...
The one who also died in the crash.

LOUISE
Don't call me Darling.

REBECCA
I'm sorry. I didn't think. I didn't think about the
ghosts this house would hold for you.

GRACIE
You wouldn't be here if it weren't for the
money hidden somewhere in its walls.

DANNY
I don't care about the money.

REBECCA
Why would you say that?

LOUISE
That's what my father said.

GRACIE
I just have to stay. Here. In my tower.

DANNY
Look are you at least going to come
Downstairs when the guests arrive?

GRACIE
Guests?

REBECCA
What?

GRACIE
You're bringing people here?

REBECCA
Who told you?

LOUISE
I forgot about the party.

REBECCA
It was supposed to be a surprise.

GRACIE
Oh god. You can't bring people here.

DANNY
Is something wrong?

REBECCA
They're here for *you*.

LOUISE
No. I mean yes. I mean...

GRACIE
I'm sure it's fine.

LOUISE
She had the same birthday as me.

GRACIE
We weren't twins
but we were born on the same day.

LOUISE
Two years apart.

GRACIE
I think about her.

LOUISE
Who would she be now?

GRACIE
And that night.

LOUISE
Would she be here in this room?

GRACIE
And the choice I made.

LOUISE
Waiting.

GRACIE
I miss my sister.

LOUISE
Not able to leave.

*Both sisters stop talking.
The room gets colder.
Suddenly they both look at the door in panic.*

LOUISE
Close the door!

GRACIE
Close the door!

*DANNY and REBECCA close the door.
LOUISE and GRACIE are panicked. They pace the room, terrified..*

REBECCA
What is it?

DANNY
You're scaring me.

GRACIE
The police were on their way and Daddy was
afraid.

LOUISE
He had been accused of fraud.

GRACIE
But to us it was just a game.

LOUISE
We had become wealthy overnight.

LOUISE
Daddy in the new suit.

LOUISE
Daddy with the new carriage.
I never thought we would own a carriage.

LOUISE
He could have just taken the horse.

LOUISE
But he took the coupe.

LOUISE
where my sister was hiding.
It was a game.

LOUISE
But the wealth had created habit.

LOUISE
Before he left...

LOUISE
...why hadn't I noticed she was missing?...

GRACIE
Daddy in the new suit.
So many new suits.

GRACIE
Daddy with the new carriage.

GRACIE
He loved his coupe.

GRACIE
He could have just run.

GRACIE
The carriage
where my sister was hiding.

GRACIE
Even though she was too old for Hide and Seek.

GRACIE
And we had grown accustomed to happiness.

GRACIE
...my sister in the carriage...

GRACIE
...these were the games we played...

LOUISE
...hide and seek...

GRACIE
...won't you play with us Daddy?

LOUISE
Why were you always so serious Daddy?

GRACIE
Come play with us Daddy. Come play with us.

LOUISE
Two seats in front.

GRACIE
Two seats in back.

LOUISE
This was no mere buggy.

GRACIE
Daddy loved his Coupe.

LOUISE
They found it at the bottom of Rock Creek.

GRACIE
Blown from the bridge above.

LOUISE
Water mixing with wood.

GRACIE
Lacquer flakes in the mud.

LOUISE
But no money.

GRACIE
The money he had stolen.

LOUISE
The money never left the house.

GRACIE
Because my sister...

LOUISE
My brave shining sister.

GRACIE
Reckless with joy.

LOUISE
My sister had taken out the cases
to make room for her body.
Tightly hidden on the carriage floor.

GRACIE
My sister had taken out the cases
to make room for her body.
Tightly hidden on the carriage floor.

DANNY
I had no idea.

GRACIE
Oh Daddy.

REBECCA
No one's here love. Just you and me.

LOUISE
He's here.

LOUISE and GRACIE turn to each other for the first time.

GRACIE
Louise.

LOUISE
Daddy's here.

*Loud, terrifying knocking on the door.
The two sisters blow out their candles.
The knocking continues, louder.
And louder.
Until it sounds like the door is about to break down.
And then. It stops.
Silence.
In darkness, voices.*

REBECCA
Gracie? Darling?

DANNY
Hello?

REBECCA

Who are you? What do you want?

DANNY

Where's Louise?

REBECCA

How do you know about Louise?

DANNY

I'm opening the door.

REBECCA

Don't...

The door opens.

Light pours in from the hall.

A bearded man stands in the frame of the door.

The other characters have disappeared and

Two little girls appear to be asleep in the bed.

The bearded man looks sadly at the two of them

Before approaching the bed.

THE BEARDED MAN

Good night Louise. Good night Gracie.

He kisses them each

And leaves.

*He lingers for a moment at the door before closing it
and plunging the stage into darkness.*

End of play