

Characters:

Jenny: Girl. Seventeen. Minister's daughter. Southern by heritage, wanderer by nature.

Rev. Earl: Baptist minister. Father of Jenny. Fifty-One. Aging but quite alive.

Nancy: Earl's wife. Enjoys her part-time job at florist along with her full-time job—minister's wife.

Andrew: Boy. Seventeen. No heritage. Direction from misdirection. Has watched almost every sunset of his life with Jenny.

Mary: Girl. Eight. Enjoys dolls.

Curt: Boy. Eleven. Likes fishing. That's about it.

Cameron: Boy. Ten. Shy.

Sara: Girl. Nine. "Tom-boy."

Setting: A Baptist church in South Central Virginia. The pews rise upstage facing the simple cross that hangs. It is worn and weak. The aisle between the pews is carpeted red. It is a thin red rug that exposes fray. Stage left there is a thin curtain that separates the meeting room from a kitchenette. Small table with two chairs, none of it matching, sits in the center of the kitchenette. There is a small countertop and sink behind the table. Outside church: off right, Jenny's house, off left, train tracks.

Act I

The curtain opens. No lights. Rev.

Earl's voice is heard:

Rev. Earl.

“Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said, ‘Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ After he placed his hands on them, he went away.”

Lights up. Jenny and Nancy enter from upstage. They seem to be cleaning the aisle.

Jenny

It is really starting to smell like fall. Isn't it?

Nancy

I suppose so. But, it is still only early October. The breeze won't hit for a while.

Jenny

The air just tastes of fall, though.

Nancy

I suppose.

Jenny

Where'd Dad run off to?

Nancy

He went to take a nap before the youth group meeting.

Jenny

Why? Is he coming tonight?

Nancy wanders into kitchenette.

Jenny

You've been running it for the last two years.

Nancy

(Calling out) He just wants to give a talk. I don't know about what.

Jenny enters kitchenette.

Jenny

These kids get enough talks. Shouldn't they get some time just to escape and hang out?

Nancy

I suppose. Here, come help me with the brownies. (pause) No, actually you start making some Kool-Aid up.

Jenny

I thought it was Miss Paterson's week to prepare food for the kids.

Nancy

Well, she's having some problems with, well—

Jenny

Yeah.

Nancy

Is Andrew coming tonight?

Jenny

I guess. He isn't too involved in his church's activities.

Nancy

Those Catholics never are.

Jenny

Mom,

Nancy

Really, it seems like mass is all they need. Such little community.

Jenny

There's community all around. It's not as though you can escape community around here.

Nancy

Church community. That's the most important community for anyone.

Jenny

Anyway, I'm sure he'll be by. He always is. He's working on applications right now.

Nancy

College applications? Already?

Jenny

So have I.

Nancy

Yes. (pause) I suppose you have.

Nancy sits at table with ingredients
she has been collecting.

Nancy

Would you give me a hand, Jenny. I'm so tired.

Jenny

Maybe you should nap.

Nancy

Too much to do. The kids will be here in an hour or so.

Jenny

Speaking of applying, I'm going to need some money for the application fees.

Nancy

I know. Can we not discuss this topic right now, though, you know I like to have your father around when we discuss such things. (pause) You, know, things like this, they're important to the whole family.

Jenny

It is my choice in the end. Right?

Nancy

Growing up. All you kids just growing up. Could you get me two tablespoons of cocoa, Jenny? Really, where does the time go? Thank you, dear. I just, oh, I really must bring some food over to the Walker's.

Andrew enters stage right. Genuflects
before cross. Begins walking toward
kitchenette.

Nancy

Mrs. Walker just went into the hospital. They're not quite sure what it is. I'm sure it is nothing too—Oh, hello, Andrew. How are you?

Andrew

Great Mrs. Randolph. Hey, Jenny.

Jenny

Hey.

Andrew

Can I help you guys with anything? I've been known to make some excellent brownies in my day.

Nancy

Certainly. Maybe you two could actually take over. I think that Earl had the right idea napping before the meeting.

Nancy rises to leave.

Nancy

I'm sure that you two can handle everything fine. Recipes here. Andrew, don't let me forget to give you some tomatoes for your family. Some of the last of the season I'm sure. These years just pass so quickly. Before you know it we'll be into the Christmas season.

Andrew

Thanks, Mrs. Randolph. My mother loves all the fresh vegetables; of course it is Dad who uses them since he is the only one who cooks.

Nancy

Well, wish your parents well for me. There's a potluck this Wednesday. Ya'll are all invited.

Andrew

Thanks, I give 'em the word.

Nancy

I'll be back by seven.

Nancy exits off stage left.

Jenny

So how have you been?

Andrew

Indulging in the dreams of departure. The tickets out are all lining my floor.

Jenny

So I'm guessing that the applications are going well.

Andrew

Oui. Got yours?

Jenny

I've gotten most, some are still on the way. But it's hard looking at them.

Andrew

You don't have to stay here, ya' know.

Jenny

God, I want to leave.

Andrew

Leave. Fly away. Pack your bags and soar. It's not like you couldn't get scholarships to anywhere. Leave the barren flatlands. Go someplace where you can see the dimensions.

Jenny

Yeah. (pause) Are you gonna help me get ready for the kids?

Andrew

I love the kids. Of course I'll help.

Jenny

Well, you don't have to see them all the time. They can get a little—

Andrew

Don't see them. It's not like they aren't scampering about the same avenues that I do daily.

Mary enters from stage right. She is clinging to her doll and begins to bobble through the aisle. She sits to fix her doll's clothes.

Andrew

All lost in their dreams. (pause) Well, maybe not all of them dreaming yet.

Jenny

As if we didn't dream at their age. I'm sure that they dream.

Andrew

Do you remember our dreams then?

Jenny

Don't you?

Andrew

I guess.

Jenny

Sunsets on the hill.

Andrew

Us on the hill. Wanting to be a guy.

Jenny

A guy?

Andrew

Just wanting to be older. Don't you remember?

Jenny

I always wanted to be intellectual.

Andrew

Older.

Jenny

Not just older.

Andrew

Yeah, you and your books.

Jenny

Do you remember all the reading I did up there.

Andrew

That's how I would find you. How I still find you.

A sneeze from Mary in the other room. Andrew jumps off table and runs out.

Andrew

Mary!

Mary

I'm sniff-ly.

Jenny comes to join them

Jenny

What are you doing here?

Mary

Grandpa's sleeping and I didn't want to miss the group.

Andrew

Tissue?

Andrew hands her a tissue from his back pocket.

Mary

Thanks.

Mary rises to take tissue. The doll hangs from her hand and dangles limp.

Andrew

Wanna help us get ready?

Mary

Yep.

Andrew tosses her onto his back for a “piggy-back” ride. Mary giggles.

The three go into the kitchenette.

Jenny sits at the center of the table.

Mary stands on the other chair

watching Jenny mix the batter.

Andrew begins to search around the countertop for other ingredients. It

could be twenty years in the future.

The action continues for a moment in silence.

Jenny

Egg.

Andrew is about to toss the egg.

Andrew

Scrambled?

Mary

No, silly. Cracked. No pieces in the pie.

Jenny

(laughing) Grandpa’s advice?

Mary

No. Grandpa doesn't cook. Sometimes Miss Paterson comes by to cook. She always lets me carefully crack the eggs.

Jenny

Can you pass me that spoon, Mary.

Mary

Yep. (jumps off chair) Are you two friends?

Jenny

(smiling) I suppose.

Mary

Like—*friends*?

Andrew

Hmm, friends such as—

Mary

Like Cameron asked me to be his girl friend?

Jenny

(laughing) We may be talking about two different kinds of friendships.

Mary

Well, are you guys the other one?

Jenny

No. Not quite.

Mary

But you're a girl and his friend.

Jenny

It's a little different with us. I don't think we have genders to one another.

Mary

Gen?

Andrew

Boy, girl. Anyway aren't you a little young, missy, getting involved with Cameron?

Jenny

Mary goes for the older men.

Mary

He's not that much older. He just turned ten, but that is the big one.

Andrew

Big one?

Mary

Two numbers now. I still have one.

Mary is rocking her doll cradled in
her arms.

Jenny

Into the oven?

Mary

Are we having fun tonight?

Jenny

We always have fun. Rev. Earl is talking too.

Mary

About God?

Jenny

That's what he usually talks about.

Andrew

Not to you. You usually get the brunt of the language not found in the bible.

Jenny

Ha, ha.

Mary

Why doesn't God ever come to talk? Wouldn't that be easier.

Andrew

(laughing) I would definitely enjoy that lecture. Of course, it would probably just be a lot of finger pointing at me.

Jenny

God's busy. Plus, he's not really around.

Mary

Where is he? Heaven?

Jenny

I guess that's his home.

Mary

So he died.

Jenny

No.

Mary

But Jesus died.

Jenny

Then he rose.

Mary

Like a bird?

Andrew

Kinda.

Mary

Whoosh?

Andrew

Whoosh. Just like a prayer up to heaven.

Mary

They go, "whoosh."

Andrew

Before you even notice.

Sara tumbles in from stage left. She carries a slingshot and is clad in overalls and a dirty white tee-shirt. Her hair is tattered and tossed.

Sara

I thought I heard you busters in here.

She fires shot at Andrew.

Andrew

Hey, watch it girlie.

Sara

Don't call me girlie, mister.

She fires another pebble.

Mary

Sara, don't you know you can hurt someone with that.

Sara

You wanna do something 'bout it?

Mary

Miss Paterson says not to listen to you threats. You just a meanie.

Andrew

(sarcasm, unnoticed by children) Guys, what would God say about this fighting?

Jenny

(whisper) Man shouldn't breed.

Mary

Do to others what you want done to you.

Sara

Go to hell.

Jenny

Sara!

Sara

No, that's what he would probably tell me.

Andrew

(laughing to himself) What?

Sara

Well, that's what my Dad always tells me. He kinda stumbles outside, glares at me, at slurs, "Sara, look at yourself, you're going straight to hell." So I glare back and spit in his general direction.

Jenny

Somehow, this doesn't sound like a quality living situation to me.

Sara

It's quality. I guess. I just romp around. He just sleeps. I take care of myself.

Sara stares into the bowl on the table; then begins to scrap the sides with her finger.

Mary

Sara! There are raw eggs in there.

Mary snatches the bowl away and carries it slowly over to the countertop. Andrew helps her set it out of Sara and her hands.

Sara

Aw, shucks. Mary, Miss Paterson doesn't know everything. She gives you all these little tidbits and you take 'em all as truth.

Mary

Miss Paterson do know everything. You're just jealous because she comes to my house more'n she goes to yours.

Sara

That's cause your grandpa is too old to be taking care of you. Everyone in town knows that.

Mary

Well, your daddy's not around.

Sara

He's around. He's just always passed out.

Andrew

Come on now girls, lets not talk about this stuff here. We're here to have fun.

Nancy enters stage left and hurries
through church to the kitchenette.

Nancy

Oh, girls, you're already here. How are you?

Mary

Very good Mrs. Randolph, thank you. Grandpa fell asleep and I didn't want to miss group.

Nancy

You mean you walked up here all by yourself. Mary, you should call up to the church so Jenny can walk you up.

Sara

It ain't that far, Mrs. Randolph. Mary is eight. I was running all over town when I was eight.

Nancy

Very true, Sara, but I think you and Mary are a very different breed of girl.

Sara

Yeah, I ain't a prissy girl.

Mary

I ain't prissy, neither.

Andrew

Come on girls.

Sara sticks her tongue out at Mary while Mary holds up her doll to block the insult.

Nancy

Jenny, I have to run over to Miss Paterson's quickly. Your father should be over soon, but until then, you and Andrew hold down the troops.

Jenny

Sure.

Nancy exits out stage right. Sara climbs onto the table.

Jenny

What exactly are you doing?

Sara

Looking at the world. (pause) So when are we going to play games?

Mary

We have to wait for Curt and Cameron. Are the brownies done?

Jenny

Half an hour.

Andrew

Let's go out into the meeting space.

Sara

I like it here better.

Andrew

Rev. Earl is speaking tonight.

Sara

Man, why does he have to talk?

Andrew

I guess he knows what god wants to tell you.

Andrew herds Mary and Sara into the meeting room. Jenny stays to set up the table a bit. The girls start to run around the pews, chasing one another. Andrew genuflects and then sits as the girls giggle. Jenny enters and sits directly across from Andrew. The two girls speed down the aisle.

The lights begin to dim as they near
the cross.

Curtains. End of act I?

Act II

The curtains open to reveal a dark
stage. Andrew's voice is heard:

Andrew

“And the people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.’ Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.”

Mary

Stop reading.

Lights up. Andrew is standing at the
podium as Mary, Sara, and Jenny
line the first row pew directly in
front of him.

Mary

Now I'll play the Reverend and you be Miss Paterson and Jenny'll be her ma and Sara—

Sara

Aww, I'm tired of this game. When are the boys gonna get here?

Andrew

Soon, hopefully.

Sara jumps up and runs downstage.

Sara

I got a better game.

Curt and Cameron come in from stage right. Curt saunters in with a fishing pole slung over his shoulder. Cameron hides behind him. They slowly make their way to the center aisle.

Curt

You ain't got no games. Nobody likes your stupid games anyhow.

Sara

Oh, look. It's the turd twins.

Curt

Shut up, Sara.

Andrew

Curt, don't harass the girls.

Curt

She ain't no girl, anyhow. She's a stupid-

Andrew

So, Curt. Did you just get back from fishin'?

Curt

Yep.

Andrew

Catch anything?

Curt

Nope.

Curt slinks into the back pew.

Andrew

Hey, Cameron! I didn't see you there.

Cameron

(shrugs) Happens lot.

Andrew

So what have you been up to Cameron?

Cameron

Nuthin'

Mary runs over and tackles

Cameron's legs.

Mary

Caught you!

Cameron shrugs her off.

Mary

Cameron Mark Walker! What would your momma say about you tossing a girl off like that? (pause) Pretty one at that.

Cameron

Sorry.

Cameron blushes and gives her a stick from his back pocket.

Cameron

Here, I got you something.

Mary takes the stick enthusiastically.

Mary

A magic wand. Thanks Cameron.

Sara

Mary, that's not a magic wand. That's just a stupid stick.

Mary

No it ain't!

Andrew

Of course it's a magic wand. Watch.

Andrew points the "wand" at Jenny.

Andrew

I now turn you into an angsty nihilist. Poof! See it works.

Mary

(hesitantly) See, Sara. I told you.

Sara

Oh, he's just pretending.

Jenny

Why don't you guys go play outside while the brownies finish cooking. And Curt, remember it's not funny to pull the flowers out of the graves.

The children begin to hurry out
through the kitchenette.

Mary's voice

How 'bout we play tag?

Sara's voice

I prefer smother the prissy.

Jenny

I am not angsty and I am not a nihilist.

Andrew

Merely a joke. Don't get offended. (pause) So what do you believe in Miss Black on Black?

Jenny

It's slimming.

Andrew

As though you have a weight problem.

The two move into the kitchenette.

Andrew

So I'm going north.

Jenny

And how can you be so sure?

Andrew

That's what all the addresses on the envelopes say.

Jenny

All mine say down the road about a mile, lest priority mail, no hurry because no rush is needed when you stand still.

Andrew

Yeah, as if any local school would offer you any opportunity that you need.

Jenny

As though my parent's would offer me opportunity.

Andrew

Apply. Get money. Go.

Jenny laughs as she makes her way
onto the table.

Jenny

And the world looks the same from up here as it did when I was six scampering down below. And I will push on to the top.

Andrew

Top of what?

Jenny

You know, you're the one taking the easy way out. Cause as much mischief as you can here and leave. I'm surprised my parents even let you still come over.

Andrew

Your parents love me.

Jenny

My parents are forgiving.

Andrew

I'm no threat.

Jenny

As though your ideas don't clash with the whole of this town. I thought you were going to give half the congregation a heart attack when you brought little Lily to service a couple weeks ago.

Andrew

Because they thought she was mine?

Jenny

They know better than that.

Andrew

Because they thought she was so pretty in that little dress her momma made?

Jenny

You know why?

Andrew

Because I shouldn't be taking care of other's kids on the Sabbath? Were all suppose to be resting and her momma shouldn't be working?

Jenny

'Cause she's black.

There is an uncomfortable silence.

Jenny, who has been pacing on the

table jumps down. Andrew is by the counter.

Andrew

Yeah. That's no excuse.

Jenny

Excuse for what?

Andrew

What was Mary saying earlier?

Jenny

Let's not pretend that people don't like the staleness. There are some things that still stand because people are comfortable where they are.

Andrew

Well, I hope you're not comfortable because that would be a shame.

Jenny

You know I'm not.

Andrew

And the world looks very different in this corner because I'm not reaching for anything other than sense that shouldn't be a dream.

Andrew moves over to Jenny. He stands quietly at her side as the two stare out into the audience.

Andrew

I'm just tired of sleeping, but I guess waking can be just as hard.

As he finishes, Nancy runs into the kitchen. The two turn quickly as her clicking heels abruptly enter from stage left. She is disturbed.

Nancy

Your father? (pauses trying to hold onto an idea that was never there) Jenny. I need your help.

Jenny

Momma?

Nancy

Get your father. Quickly!

Jenny runs through the church and exits stage right.

Andrew

Mrs. Randolph, are you okay?

Nancy

There's been an incident. I think. (pause) Oh, I don't know. (she sits at the table)

Andrew, could you get me some water? No, no. I should go retrieve him myself.

Andrew, can you and Jenny hold down things here? Of course you can. What am I—oh,

(she begins to tremble) Yes, Earl. I'll get Earl. Dear God—

Nancy hurries out through the church. She pauses in the aisle and stares at the cross. As she is looking

up, Andrew stands in bewilderment.

As Nancy stares, she calls out in a monotone voice.

Nancy

The children.

Andrew looks up.

Nancy

Yes, Andrew. Bring the children in. They shouldn't be playing in the cemetery anyway.

That isn't their place. Yes, bring the children in.

Andrew looks over and pauses before the two simultaneously exit running off opposite sides of the stage. The stage is bare. Jenny runs in from stage right.

Jenny

Momma? Momma?

She stands in the aisle.

Jenny

Momma?

She paces as Andrew enters into the kitchenette.

Andrew

(calling out) I got them out! Their coming in! I found the children!

Jenny rushes into the kitchenette.

Jenny

Andrew?

Andrew

Wha—

Jenny

Is Momma here?

Andrew

You didn't pass her? She went to get your father herself.

Jenny

I was coming from the garden. He was in the garden.

Andrew

What is—

Jenny

I don't know.

Andrew

Your mother looked—

Jenny

Momma never looks so—

The children enter in a rush. They
jump and chase and think nothing of
being called in.

Mary

Curt did it.

Andrew

Curt did what?

Curt

I didn't do nuthin'. (glares at Mary) Snitch.

Sara

Yeah, God doesn't like snitches.

Jenny

(frazzled) Jesus, Mary wasn't snitching on anyone.

Mary

Oh, he knows I wasn't snitchin'.

Curt

Nuthin' to snitch on anyway.

Jenny

Who?

Mary

Jesus.

Sara

Jesus wasn't snitchin', stupid.

Mary

No, *He* knows.

There is a brief silence. The children begin milling around Andrew and Jenny who stand perplexed.

Mary

Hey! Where'd Dolly go?

Jenny

I don't know.

Andrew

Counter.

Mary wanders over to the counter.

Mary

Help?

Andrew retrieves her doll.

Cameron

Is group starting soon?

Cameron sits as the others begin to make their way over. They have settled.

Sara

Yeah, Jenny, where's your pops?

Jenny

Oh, I think that he had an emergency. I think he'll be a little late.

Curt

Does that mean we have to wait for him, then wait for him to talk, then eat brownies?

Jenny

Brownies!

Andrew quickly maneuvers to the oven and pulls out the brownies.

Andrew

It's all good. Caught 'em just in time.

Jenny

Thank God.

Mary

Thank you, God.

Sara

It's an expression Mary.

Andrew

Exactly. Thank you God for all that we have.

Sara

Aw, buzz off.

Jenny

Well, the brownies have to cool anyway, Curt. So, we'll see how long it takes for the reverend to get here. Maybe we'll snack early.

Cameron

Well, what are we gonna do now?

Mary

Game!

Sara jumps off of her chair and flings herself at Mary in one quick motion.

Sara

You're it!

Sara and the others run into the meeting space as Mary gathers herself. She clutches onto her doll, giggles, and looks briefly at Jenny and Andrew.

Mary

Shucks, here we go again.

Mary runs laughing into the space as the others begin hiding under the pews and the podium. Their laughter increases as their activities commence in the adjoining room.

Jenny

I wonder what happened.

Andrew

I know. We haven't laughed like that in ages.

Jenny

No. Why Momma was so upset.

Andrew

Some aged woman probably fell outside the post-office. It was just a hospital run I'm sure.

Jenny

She's usually not that disturbed when it is just the run-of-the-mill old person in need.

Andrew

We'll get news soon enough. You know how things travel round here.

Jenny starts tending to the brownies.

The usual post-oven preoccupations.

Setting up cooling rack, etc. as

Andrew starts fidgeting.

Andrew

No music, eh.

Jenny

It's a distraction.

Andrew

What?

Jenny

Poppa doesn't like distractions in the church.

The children continue their games as their laughter increases. Even Curt and Cameron engage in the activities. The cross stands guard.

Andrew

Seems as though no one around here likes distraction in their lives. (pause) You don't suppose any of this excitement had to do with Miss Paterson?

Jenny stops her fiddling.

Jenny

(quietly) No. She is very respected. She does so much for the community. Just look how much she does for the kids. Of course not (as though trying to convince herself) there would never be anything—no. I'm sure it doesn't have to do with her. She is very revered even though, even though—

Andrew

Even though she's—

As Andrew begins his thought, Curt, who has been teasing Mary about her doll, pulls it away from her in the adjacent room. Mary tries to get a hold of it as he begins running backward down the aisle taunting her with it.

Jenny

People don't think anything but good things about—

Andrew

Well, she and Mary's grandfather do spend a lot of time together. Elderly people "dating" may be cute but not when people are—

Jenny

(angered) People are what?

Andrew

Comfortable.

In perfect unity as Andrew delivers this line, Nancy runs into the kitchenette. She has been crying. The two gaze into her panic.

Nancy

They did it. They did it. They killed her!

As Nancy finishes saying this, Curt tosses the doll behind him. Mary yells as her doll hits the cross. It shakes. Its weariness cannot support the vibration. The small support falters. The cross falls to the ground.

Curtains.

Act III

The curtains open. The stage is dark. There is a red glow emanating from behind the cross that still sits on the floor. This is enough light to reveal a group sitting silently in a circle on the floor, center aisle of the meeting space. A girl's voice is then heard. It trembles. It is scared. It is little Mary's.

Mary

“And now, children, remain in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be put to shame by him at his coming. If you consider that he is righteous, you also know that everyone who acts in righteousness is begotten by him.”

The lights come up very slowly. Slow like molasses. It is only the four children that sit as Mary stands, barely above the other's heads who have advantage of both age and height over her.

Cameron

I'm tired.

Curt

It's early.

Sara

How long do we have to sit here?

Mary

They said they would be back soon.

Sara

I should just walk home.

Cameron

It's dark.

Mary

I think we should stay. Is Jenny's momma okay?

Curt

I helped them get her over to the house. She's prob'ly restin'.

Cameron

Do you guys wanna play a game?

Mary

No. They said to tell stories to keep us busy.

Sara

Well, you ain't tellin' stories you're just reading.

Mary

The bible has stories.

Cameron

I wanna go home.

Curt

Yep.

Sara

Call your parents.

Mary

All our parents are down at the train tracks. You saw all the cars.

Sara

I bet my dad's not. He's all passed out by this time.

Mary

Sara, why don't you tell him you don't like it.

Sara

Who says I don't.

Mary

I'm just saying—

Sara

S'way my poppa lives. Look how your Grandpa lives.

Mary

My Grandpa's great! He's just old.

Curt

Yeah, and he's with a colored woman. You gonna have a colored as a grandma.

Mary stares blankly at Curt.

Suddenly she starts to shake from the ground up.

Mary

We are all colored. Look at you, your more brown than white. And Cameron's more pink'n anything.

Cameron

Momma says I'm rosy.

Curt

You know what I mean, Mary. Your grandpa and Miss Paterson, it just ain't right.

Mary

Miss Paterson is wonderful.

Sara

She is great. Mary's right. Who cares anyway, Curt? Do you care?

Curt

Well,

Sara

(angered) What difference does it make anyhow?

Curt

None. I don't care.

There is silence.

Cameron

Do you think we'll get to eat the brownies later?

Mary

When Jenny and Andrew get back.

Sara

Their not goin' come back.

Mary

Yeah, they are.

Sara

Our parents will come before that.

Cameron

When will the sirens end?

Sara

When they finish. Who knows?

Mary

Someone's hurt.

Sara

Yep.

Curt

Wonder who it is.

Cameron

I hope they're okay.

Curt

(pause) Do you think God will be mad?

Sara

I bet he planned it.

Mary

Course he did.

Curt

Why'd he want the cross to fall?

Mary

(giggles) Oh,

Sara

No, but the Reverend'll be mad.

Curt

Shucks, that means Momma's gonna be mad.

Sara

Nah, they can probably fix it easy.

Mary

What about the train tracks? Do you think they're fixin' the person easy?

Sara

(shrugs) I dunno.

The children begin to move to the
back pew that Mary has been pacing
on.

Sara

Hey guys, let's play a game. Anyone got any ideas?

Mary

Thought you didn't like our games.

Sara

There ain't anything else to do. They'll all be down there for a while.

Curt

Maybe we should fix the cross 'fore they get back.

Sara

(laughs) And how are we gonna do that? It was old. You didn't mean it.

Mary

Maybe if you didn't tease so much, Curt.

Mary jumps up and begins to taunt him. She grabs his hat and begins to tease him.

Curt

Ah, Mary. I don't feel like it.

Mary

Sorry.

Cameron

I'm hungry.

Curt

I bet they didn't see it comin'.

Curt leaps onto the pew.

Curt

Choo, choo, chooooooooooooooooooooo

The children cover their ears as Curt's howling increases to a screech.

Sara

(screaming) Not funny!

Curt

Didn't say it was.

Curt jumps down. The children begin wandering down the aisle. The lights rise in the kitchenette as Jenny and Andrew enter in slowly from stage left. Mary stands at the podium.

Mary

I'll be Mary. Someone be Joseph.

Jenny and Andrew sit at the table on opposite sides of the other facing the audience.

Mary

Cameron, you be Joseph.

Cameron

What are we playin'?

Jenny begins to cry.

Sara

I'll be a disciple.

Sara nudges Curt.

Curt

So will I.

Cameron

I don't want to be Joseph. Remember when we acted it out for the Christmas pageant. I got to be a Shepard.

Mary

Let's make this after.

Andrew rises and goes to comfort
Jenny as her crying increases.

Curt

After what?

Mary

They hated him.

Sara

It's not Christmas.

Cameron

Wish it was.

Mary

Right before he died.

Curt

A new pageant.

Mary

Yep, this one's sad.

Sara

Sirens stopped.

Everything is still as Jenny slumps
onto the floor.

Mary

I always wanted to be Mary.

Jenny

I want to go back.

Sara

Do you think she cried?

Andrew

We can't go back. It's all over now.

Curt

It was her son.

Jenny

Why?

Cameron

Do you think he cried?

Andrew

I guess she couldn't take it.

Mary

He was going to see his daddy.

Jenny

Was it so hard?

Sara

Who's gonna be Jesus?

Andrew

After you stop dreaming.

Mary

You be Mary.

Jenny

Trapped.

Sara

You be Jesus. You always were better than us.

Andrew

Constantly rebuked for who you are.

Mary

No I'm not, Sara. We're all just different.

Jenny

But, it's a life all the same.

Curt

We'll be the bad guys.

Andrew

Eighteen.

Jenny rises in a fit of tears. Mary walks solemnly to the back of the

aisle. Curt and Cameron stand halfway down. Sara kneels in the aisle and begins to weep.

Jenny

She was just starting life. Then to take it all away! To do it to yourself!

Andrew

She didn't do it.

Mary begins slowly walking down the aisle. She slumps. Curt and Cameron yell at her. They tell her to go faster. They tell her she is evil. Sara weeps louder, "Not my son!".

Andrew

They did it to her. She would have never left. She would have never gone to the wind. The train did that for her.

Jenny screams. Sara screams. Mary stumbles.

Curt

Onto the cross!

Cameron

Away with you!

Sara falls at Mary's feet. Mary looks contently down at her. Mary

proceeds toward the cross. Nancy
enters the kitchenette.

Nancy

The service will be tomorrow. I know she was your friend. Poor Lily. All alone without
a mother.

Andrew

She was all alone before.

Nancy

She'll be buried across the street. I'm going out to get some flowers for the grave.

Andrew

Not even allowed to rest on this side of the tracks.

Nancy

I'm sorry.

Nancy exits.

Jenny

I'm going to the hill.

Andrew

The world won't look much different from there.

Jenny

I'll just say goodbye.

Andrew

And the days will end and the days will begin. (pause) I'll come with you.

Jenny and Andrew begin to leave.

Jenny

Will we ever dream like we did?

Andrew

I think our roles have been cast.

The two exit. The children are quietly acting out their abbreviated stations of the cross.

Mary

I came to help you.

Curt

No ya' didn't.

Cameron

Liar.

Curt takes the stick that Cameron gave to Mary (the wand of "magic") and begins to flog Mary. Sara cries and goes to help. Cameron pushes her away.

Curt

Onto the cross!

Cameron

Onto the cross!

Their jeers become louder as Mary stumbles again. Their game of make-believe is no longer.

Sara

Why do you hit!

Curt

Onto the cross!

Mary is on the ground. Curt rushes behind the podium quietly searching. In a nook he finds what he was looking for. Hammer. He pulls down two paintings and pries out the nails that held them to the wall.

Mary

I only came to love.

“To love” is whispered by Mary as the children lift her up. She makes no movement to fight back as she repeats, “to love”. They carry her to the fallen cross. She raises her hands.

Mary

Do it. I don't care. I only came to love.

Her arms outstretched, they do not
even go halfway down the pole.
Curt lifts the hammer and directs the
first nail into her hand. Then the
second. Then her feet. Mary does
not cry. Mary looks up. The others
stare blankly. There is blood
dripping onto their faces.

Mary

I only came to love.

Her head falls. The children exit
stage right. A train passes outside.
The whistle is heard. It seems longer
than usual. It continues as the lights
dim.

Curtains.

