

High and Splendid Braveries

HIGH AND SPLENDID BRAVERIES

By

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## High and Splendid Braveries

### HIGH AND SPLENDID BRAVERIES

Was written with financial support of the Alberta Foundation of the Arts, the Banff PlayRites Colony, The Banff Centre for the Arts, and Alberta Theatre Projects - many, many thanks.

### DEDICATED TO

My mother-in-law, Angela Matthews, such a polite political protester, who was with me at the unveiling. The Prime Minister, Jean Chretien, who shook my hand and made all the difference. The Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson and Minister Sheila Copps, role models who spoke on the day. Francis Wright, past CEO of the Famous Five Foundation - a force to be reckoned with. Gerald, my Arthur and Emma, my love.

(And of course)

### THE FIVE

Irene Parlby, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy, my favourite.

### MY DEEPEST THANKS TO

Ken Cameron, for asking great questions. Bob White, for everything at Banff and keeping me away from the BIC.

## High and Splendid Braveries

### PLAYWRIGHT MUSEINGS

This is of course, a dramatic literary translation of historic facts. I have borrowed lines from the published authors namely, Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung and Stephen Leacock. There has been the usual weaving and blurring of events to construct the dramatic arc. Initially, I had intended to write a play about The Five, but their lives were so expansive. It would have been a disservice to encapsulate them in a couple of hours on the stage. This being my first historic drama, I almost buried my muse under research. But slowly as things composted in my brain and I started to hear their voices. Emily's the loudest and the most insistent. Then when I was busy with Other Things they would visit and just wait politely. Then Emily started whispering to me, then chatting (which is a polite way of saying nagging) Soon they were following me to work and sitting in the car as I drove. (Emily likes to sit up front) Secretly, I know she wanted to drive. I didn't let her drive the car - of course! But she drove the play, and so it became hers. Her Point of View... I am glad to have been her scribe. (demanding as she is) It was Emily who took me to the unveiling of her statue on Parliament Hill. It was there that I met many influential people, but (and now I drop names) it was at a reception in the Hall of Honour (having been invited by The Honourable Gildas L. Molgat, Speaker of the Senate of Canada) that I met Maggie Tredeau. She was wearing a red rose pin and we began to talk albeit briefly of loss. I began to think about how loss shapes us all. I began to think of Emily's loss and how that may have informed everything she did... In Banff, Emily was excited and insufferable. She took me to a photo of herself dressed as a princess and told me she once dressed up as an Amazon. (naturally) Most annoying was her habit of waking me up in the middle of the night, just to chat. She wanted to make the speeches longer - I wanted to cut them. She wanted a platform - I kept telling her no. We fought a lot. It was such a tiny room and Emily took up a lot of space. I love her but she's a pushy ol' broad.

### CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

EMILY Emily Murphy plays herself.  
HENRIETTA Henrietta Muir Edwards plays herself, Constable, Shopkeeper, and Arthur.  
LOUISE Louise McKinney plays herself, Archbishop, Leacock, and Doctor.  
IRENE Irene Parlby plays herself, both prostitutes Sally and Silvia, Smuggler, Doris, Reporter and Princess Poppy.  
NELLIE Nellie McClung plays herself, Judge, Lawyer, Warden, Madeline, Nurse and the Prime Minister.

### PRODUCTION NOTES

The staging can be done with the furniture from the statues - three chairs and a table. Emily and Madeline are the only ones who can see Princess Poppy. We understand the Princess's influence over Emily is related to the physical contact she has with her.

*She should have had more time to spend*

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*She should have died when she was born*

*She should have worn a crown of thorns*

*She should have been a son*

*She should have been a son*

*She should have been a son*

*She should have been a son*

Kurt Cobain

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## ACT 1

(Loud Cobain - *Been a Son*. House down. Cobain gets quieter, as if blaring from an i-pod. In black a shaky match is lit and then blown out)

BOY (V.O.)

Fuck. Why won't it light?

GIRL (V.O.)

I thought it was just a myth.

BOY (V.O.)

What?

GIRL (V.O.)

They say that in this part of the park no crack pipes can be lit in this magic circle. They blow them out.

BOY (V.O.)

Bullshit.

(A match is lit, it is blown out.)

BOY (V.O.)

What the fuck? Bunch of, dumb, bitches.

GIRL (V.O.)

It's going to snow. Let's go over by the trees before the police do another pass by.

(A third match is lit--)

BOY (V.O.)

Well, you aren't a fucking person, now are you?

(--and blown out. Lights come up on - The statues. Calgary. The Olympic Plaza. Winter.)

EMILY

I object to crack and crank in this circle!

NELLIE/IRENE/HENRIETTA/LOU.

We know.

HENRIETTA

That boy touched my breast!

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LOUISE

He gestured very rudely to me as well!

NELLIE

One minute we're being lorded with ribbon cutting and nice speeches and next, nothing but taunting!

HENRIETTA

It's abuse!

EMILY

And because of that stupid prostitute I'm condemned to be frozen for all time and endure this purgatory.

HENRIETTA

You do talk nonsense.

EMILY

You're right, it's Oct 18th! And I've been standing for it for too long - I'm going to sit down.

(Emily moves from her statue to the chair she was formally standing behind. The other watch then Henrietta and the others also begin to move.)

NELLIE

How did you do that?

EMILY

Against all odds. I turned us into persons before - I just did it again.

(The women unfrozen laugh and hug)

HENRIETTA

How?

EMILY

I just got angry.

NELLIE

Anger is a great motivator.

EMILY

A few hours to play, since it's our anniversary!

HENRIETTA

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Do you suppose somewhere in PEI the fathers of confederation get together once a year?

NELLIE

Well, tonight it's the mothers of confederation turn!

EMILY

I find it fascinating they erected me as a statue when I failed so miserably.

LOUISE

What rubbish.

EMILY

It's true. I wanted to go to the Senate, I wanted to go to Parliament Hill. I failed.

NELLIE

We were successful in some areas.

EMILY

I lost the war.

HENRIETTA

But we won some battles.

NELLIE

We are the famous five after all.

EMILY

Nobody cares.

HENRIETTA

We are on the \$50 dollar bill.

EMILY

Yes, I saw a young man with one of those, he rolled it up stuck it in his nose and used it to snort coke! I'd be insulted but what's the use.

LOUISE

Still things have changed so much. It was a revolution...

EMILY

...and a revolution without the bloodshed.

NELLIE

There was shouting.

LOUISE

And I seem to remember a slap!

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(Emily turns to the others)

EMILY

It started at the church. That is where I think it all started really.  
(Church set up. The table becomes the altar. Glorious stained glass windows bathe mourners in riotous colours. Organ music. Somber.)

(Louise pulls out the archbishop's hat unfolds it and puts it on.)

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Mrs. Murphy, my deep condolences.

HENRIETTA

I think this is pushing things a bit far.

EMILY

That's what we do. Push things a bit far.

EMILY

Archbishop you won't lead the proceedings?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

As much as I'd like to help you in your hour of need, it would be wrong for me to conduct the service.

EMILY

Everyone who has arrived has prefaced every condolence with "if there's anything I can do..."

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

It would give the wrong message to Arthur's' congregation. You must think of them at this time.

NELLIE

Emily, I'm so sorry. How are the girls?

EMILY

They are at my mothers; my father came though.

NELLIE

He came a long way to show his support.



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EMILY

Yes, he always shows his support. It makes up for when he says such horribly, stupid things.

NELLIE

I'm sure his being here shows he loves you.

HENRIETTA

Emily, my dear.

EMILY

Henrietta, thank you for coming.

HENRIETTA

Where else would I be?

(They hug again.)

LOUISE

My dear friend, how are you holding up?

EMILY

Oh, Louise, you know...

LOUISE

This must be very difficult for you. If there's anything you need. Anything.

EMILY

Thanks, Lou.

(Louise finds her seat as Irene comes forward.)

EMILY

Irene, how are things with the UFA?

IRENE

I'll fill you in later. How are you? How is Arthur?

EMILY

Arthur has gone to scribble some notes. He thought the Archbishop would take the ceremony but the Archbishop wants Arthur to do it.

IRENE

Stupid man.

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EMILY

Irene!

IRENE

Well, I never liked him. Pompous-- Listen if you need to chat, a cup of tea, or distractions, outings, political concerns to take your mind off things- you know--

EMILY

Thanks. Right now, I just want to get this over with.

REPORTER/IRENE

I'm with the newspaper.

EMILY

No one, not even Arthur, should be made to bury his own daughter. Make that your headline in tomorrow's paper.

REPORTER/IRENE

You have to believe she is in a better place.

EMILY

Than with her mother?

(Reporter moves away as the Judge comes up to Emily)

JUDGE/NELLIE

My condolences.

EMILY

Thank you for coming Judge.

JUDGE/NELLIE

In good time you'll be able to return to your Women's Institute activities.

(trying to be jovial, wagging his finger)

You women! Coming into the courtroom all the time. I hope all this does lead to prevention of crime and not just fodder for gossip.

(Doctor Lemay tactfully intercedes.)

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Madam Murphy. You were such a vigilant mother. Nobody could have done more than you did.

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EMILY

(gratefully)

Thank you for all you did for her Doctor.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

I wish it were more.

(blows it)

Remember, you can have others.

EMILY

I don't want any more children, and no one could replace her.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

No, no of course not but maybe a boy next time, think of that. A brother for the girls, a grandson for your father. Wouldn't that be something? Something to think about!

(Emily gives him a cold stare. Knowing he has blown it. He shuffles off awkwardly as Henrietta hugs Emily and Irene approaches)

IRENE

Emily, Arthur sent me to get you, he says he wants to get started.

(The Archbishop overhears)

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Yes. It may snow, we don't want to freeze people out at the grave site.

EMILY

Yes, that would be awful.

NELLIE

(trying to cover for the Archbishop)

People talk about the weather when they are uncomfortable, he didn't mean anything.

EMILY

Nellie, I know it's totally stupid but I don't want to put her in the ground when it's snowing either. I spent nine months keeping her warm.

(beat)

But then all of you urged me to get busy with things. So, I went full tilt into the Women's Institute and Parish work.

NELLIE

And I said to truly educate ourselves, since we come from privilege and class, we should observe the court proceedings to see how the other half lives.

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EMILY

Yes, that is where it began, that day in court.

(Nellie sets up the court room)

JUDGE/NELLIE

Stubborn, you are very, very stubborn!

(Nellie rearranges the table and the three chairs into the courtroom)

EMILY

Judge Roberts!

(Judge sits behind the table, the two chairs facing her, calling to order the court. Emily stands in the gallery.)

JUDGE/NELLIE

Madam, you are charged with prostitution and peddling opium. What say ye?

SILVIA/IRENE

(Irene pulls down her dress to reveal her shoulders.)

I'm not guilty.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Please clear the gallery of ladies.

EMILY

We ladies of the Women's Institute agreed that we watch the proceedings to better understand legal matters and to educate ourselves.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Mrs. Murphy, you are holding up the wheels of justice.

EMILY

Furthermore, our Good Works will lessen the number of cases before you. If you impede the Good Works of the Women's Institute then it is you good sir, who stops up the machine of justice.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Very well, you may stay. Mrs. Murphy, you wear me down.

EMILY

You are indeed a wise Judge, your Honour.

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JUDGE/NELLIE

But beware, when the ugliness of the facts are laid bare before you there is to be no swooning.

EMILY

On my honour, Your Honour.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Silvia Myrtle you are charged with prostitution and peddling opium.

JUDGE/NELLIE

You were caught red handed in a hotel with a married man

SILVIA/IRENE

And I don't see him in this courtroom.

JUDGE/NELLIE

And a cache of opium.

SILVIA/IRENE

It wasn't mine I was taking it to Mad Maddie. I swear it wasn't my stuff it belonged to her.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Mad Maddie.

SILVIA/IRENE

Madeline Osbourne.

EMILY

Excuse me, Judge.

JUDGE/NELLIE

No talking from the gallery it's against protocol

EMILY

I won't do it again - I only wanted to tell you, Your Honour, that my friend is Madeline Osbourne and she had nothing to do with it!

SILVIA/IRENE

Liar! Mad Maddie is my friend and it was hers!

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JUDGE/NELLIE

Silence woman! We are talking about the man you robbed. He's a banker, he says you duped him. He declined to testify. So, I shall be lenient in the absence of evidence. But given your criminal history - two years.

(Silvia is hauled off.)

SILVIA/IRENE

Two years! Two years for a poke with the banker!

JUDGE/NELLIE

Take her away. Mrs. Murphy let this be your first lesson. She's a prostitute and an addict. They lie, they cheat, they steal, they take no responsibility for their actions, they blame others for their situation.

HENRIETTA

But you had doubts that day in court.

LOUISE

And Madeline hadn't come to the funeral, so you just had to investigate.

(Rattle of many keys. Prison set up. Warden.)

WARDEN/NELLIE

Terrible weather we're having Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY

Yes, how do you know my name?

WARDEN/NELLIE

I'm the Prison Head Warden, I see you at the court house. What can I do for you? Visiting times are almost over.

EMILY

Oh, I'm here for Mrs. Silvia Myrtle. I saw her in court and...

WARDEN/NELLIE

Follow me, she's in here.

EMILY

Oh, is there another building?

WARDEN/NELLIE

You shouldn't be here, technically, since you're not friend or family.

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(The Warden takes her to an area off to the side.)

EMILY

True, but you don't mind?

WARDEN/NELLIE

They usually send a man for this job. But since it's you.

(Takes her to where the three chairs together form a gurney.)

EMILY

Pardon me?

(Warden pulls back the skirt fold which doubles as sheet on the gurney.)

(Emily gasps.)

WARDEN/NELLIE

Oh, I thought you were here to identify the body. Some mix up. Sorry.

EMILY

I was concerned about her naturally but she had in her testimony mentioned an old school friend's name.

WARDEN/NELLIE

Well, doesn't matter now. I regret to tell you she passed on.

EMILY

(getting angry)

I can see that. Was she sick? Why didn't you call a doctor? She was alright two days ago, maybe a bit thin but... what are those marks?

WARDEN/NELLIE

Well it isn't chicken pox.

(Emily doesn't know)

WARDEN/NELLIE

That's drugs, but she didn't die of that - hung herself in her cell.

EMILY

Oh, no.

WARDEN/NELLIE

Doctor couldn't revive her.

EMILY

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Poor thing.

WARDEN/NELLIE

It happens sometimes.

EMILY

You don't monitor them?

WARDEN/NELLIE

Not twenty-four hours a day. Look you said yourself you're not a friend or family - she was just another prostitute.

EMILY

Treat her with more respect. She was somebody's daughter.  
(Emily covers her back up with the sheet in a tender way.)

(Police station set up. The Constable behind the desk/table.)

EMILY

Constable Mackintosh, I want to be taken to an opium lounge.

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

You mean den. We're not in the habit of giving the public guided tours.

EMILY

I'm looking for an old friend. The woman who knew her was an addict, so I thought that's where I'd start. But I know they're not listed in the business directory and I don't know any other addicts. I thought you'd know.

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

Hey! Howster! I'm tired of this report typing.  
(Changing from brogue to fake cowboy accent)  
I'm gonna go arrest some me some cokies.

EMILY

You'll take me?

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

Howster, I'm taking the, well I can't really say wee,  
(Emily raises her eyebrows)  
but I'm taking the lassie.  
(to Emily)

It's foul smelling like vomit and urine. Skeletons with big eyes lying on filthy coloured, cushions.

(They start walking together.)



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EMILY

If they're going to use the drugs anyway, why not set aside a room in a hospital? That way they'd have access to medical treatment and spiritual council.

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

Mrs. Murphy are you quite prepared for what you'll see?

EMILY

I've heard it all in the courts. I tell you I'm not easily shocked.

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

In the last raid, three of them were doing it under a blanket. They have no morals - the blanket was a tartan!

EMILY

Yes, I can see how it must have upset you. So, you're saying they might be having relations when we go in?

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

Having... no getting high. They don't care about sex on that stuff. They don't care about anything.

EMILY

Will they run when you come in to arrest them?

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

No lassie, it's like scoopin' half dead fish out of a pond. Arresting cokies looks good on a report but that's the demand side. Getting the supply side, now that's work.

EMILY

But surely if you dry up the demand the supply will take care of itself.

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

I'll give you a minute to find your friend.

(Drop in vibrant green and blue silk curtains embroidered with silver dragons. Lounging on the floor Two Faces can be seen by matches they are smoking lit bowls of long clay pipes.)

(Recoiling at the smell, Emily adjusts her eyes to the light and her nostrils to the stench.)

(Princess Poppy wafts from one to the other. Graceful, sensual - She is pure beauty and pure pleasure. She brings comfort and exquisite joy. Emily watches in amazement as Princess Poppy goes under the skirt of an addict. As the addict releases - nirvana.)

## High and Splendid Braveries

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Mrs. Emily Murphy? In an opium den! Now I have seen everything.

EMILY

Madeline?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Mad Maddie Osbourne to you.

EMILY

Tell me that a Drug Ring abducted you and has kept you here against your will.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Can't.

EMILY

You came here willingly.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

I would live in this cave if I could.

EMILY

Your family?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

I need this to keep me from getting sick.

EMILY

That makes you sick.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

(looking longingly at Princess Poppy)

The absence of such.

EMILY

You need feeding, exercise, fresh air, prayer.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

I am beyond rehabilitation. I have already lost my husband, children, position, respect. Everything.

EMILY

I can help you.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

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I only want to see the dragon dance. After one pipe he would dance for me. Now it takes twelve.

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

(entering)

Die you will of the black candle. Arrest will be good for you.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Help me! Emily!

EMILY

I will come and see you tomorrow when the apathetic drugs have worn off.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

You are a meddlesome, shortsighted, old witch. There! That's not apathetic is it.

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

That's enough!

EMILY

Constable Mackintosh, maybe I can help. You have enough for your paddy wagon tonight. Let me take this one home. She doesn't really belong here.

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

On your head be it, Mrs. Murphy.

(Curtains out. Parlour set up. Madeline rocks back and forth maniacally.)

EMILY

Look we were friends since we were children. How does this happen? I named my daughter after you!

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

And, where is she?

EMILY

She was tiny, sick she died. The obituary was published I thought you would come to the funeral.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

And now since you couldn't save her you've taken me on a pet project?

EMILY

(angry)

Sleep! Eat!

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

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I don't want food. Look I need dear sweet Princess Poppy. She saves me. She stops me feeling tired... hungry... She protects me.

EMILY

Princess Poppy is killing you.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

No. I am like a diver without a rubber suit and helmet. I am drowning without her.

EMILY

Well, I'm all you got now. What can I give you? What is it you want?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Another hit.

EMILY

And then what?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Another hit.

EMILY

And then what?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Another hit.

EMILY

And then - what?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Look! I didn't exactly plan this!

EMILY

What did you want before cocaine and heroin?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

That was a long time ago.

EMILY

But, what did you want?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

I don't know.

EMILY

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Yes, you do! WHAT DID YOU WANT?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

(leave me alone)

I used to like picnics, the traveling carnivals, laying in long grass in the hot sun on my belly and painting.

EMILY

Thank you. My daughter has paints. We will get you well and you will use them.

(Madeline starts to shake. Emily hugs her. Madeline pushes her away. Arthur enters)

EMILY

Doris is setting out some tea for you in your room, try to get some sleep.

(Madeline exits and Emily runs up to Arthur.)

EMILY

Arthur, you know how Jesus was with the sick, and went into places that everyone else was afraid of?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

How long will she stay?

EMILY

Until I have cured her and made her whole. Doris is with her serving her tea.

(Knock on the door, Arthur exits. Maddie enters, wildly looks around.)

EMILY

What are you doing out of bed?

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Who's here? You're not going to tie me down are you. I'm weak but I will fight that. My husband did, you know. Tied me to the bed for three days.

(The Doctor enters.)

EMILY

Doctor, we were friends in school but now Mrs. Osbourne is a cokie and a user of opium. Quickly before she rips off all her flesh.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Her craving is due in part, to the uncertainty; as soon as the habitue, realizes that there is no chance of her getting any dope she feels better in the mind.

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MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Fucking French bastard. We should have kicked them all out of this country.

EMILY

Maddie! I don't think the problem is that he is French. I'm sure an English doctor would say the same thing.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

I need a drink. No wait, I'm going to puke. And there's nothing left in my stomach but yellow bile.

EMILY

The bucket is upstairs.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

It's full and I need a new blanket for the bed. Sorry, I shit in that one.

(Madeline runs off. Retching.)

EMILY

Well, there it is then.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

What is?

EMILY

If we can't help the addicts, we shall have to eradicate drugs of this nature from our country, and later America and the world.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

You do that madam. Good day.

EMILY

You don't think it's possible to change the world?

DOCTOR/LOUISE

You are bright and tenacious, Madam Murphy. I've not the slightest doubt that you could change the world, my trepidation lies only in human nature.

EMILY

You flatter me doctor, but I am no brighter and more tenacious than the next. I just do what needs to be done.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

You are so naive, it is almost embarrassing, it makes my toes curl.

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(The Doctor exits. Doris runs on.)

DORIS/IRENE

Mummy. Mrs. Osbourne threw up in my toy chest!

(Doris runs out. Arthur enters.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

What on earth is going on?

EMILY

Arthur, the doctor won't help me. The only thing that is going to help her in this transition is a large quantity of aspirin and brandy.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I can't be seen going to Bootlegger Bills.

EMILY

So, you know where to go. You just won't. Can't you just go at night?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Yes, nobody does that. That's when he's busiest!

EMILY

Look, Jesus drank wine.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily. See reason.

EMILY

And I'm sure if he were here, he would relieve her suffering.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

It would take a miracle.

EMILY

Arthur, we don't have a miracle but we have a way to help her out of her torment and make her whole. Do this for me.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

No Emily. It's wrong.

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EMILY

Fine, then I'll go and you'll have to host Stephen Leacock and Nellie, cause they're both going to be here in half an hour. And while I'm gone you can clean up the puke in the toy chest.

(A stalemate.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(concedes)

Nobody is more stubborn than you.

EMILY

Thank you.

(Parlour. Nellie and Emily sit chairs.)

NELLIE

I've been waiting for you.

EMILY

I'm sorry. I had to run out to the library. I wanted to take out a book on opium and drug enslavement. But there were none.

NELLIE

I should think not. Has the library got your latest Janey Canuck book?

EMILY

I invited Leacock over here to discuss publishers but now I think he should write a book about it. He can do the research and people listen to him.

(Leacock enters.)

EMILY

Mr. Leacock. Thank you so much for coming.

LEACOCK/LOUISE

Mrs. Murphy, how are you? Did you buy my latest book? I'll sign it for you.

(Saved by the bell, Doris enters carrying a small axe)

DORIS/IRENE

Mummy, may I use this as a tomahawk, for our game of cowboysuninjuns?



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EMILY

No, Doris that's a dangerous tool. Put it back where you found it. Don't run and don't touch it again.

LEACOCK/LOUISE

What a sweet girl.

(to Doris)

Shouldn't you be playing with your dollies.

DORIS/IRENE

I find it better not to in this game. My sisters tend to scalp them.

(Doris runs off)

EMILY

Stephen, as a fellow writer...

LEACOCK/LOUISE

And how is the next installment of your amusing little travelogue coming?

(making plucky synonymous with stupid)

Your heroines are so plucky!

EMILY

Well. Listen, I have an idea for a book but I don't have the time to write it. Non-fiction. The drug trade...

LEACOCK/LOUISE

I'm sorry, I don't believe we've been introduced.

EMILY

Oh, I beg your pardon. You know Nellie McClung?

LEACOCK/LOUISE

Ah, Mrs. McClung. The poor Prime Minister, I know him well you know, is besieged by letters from you. It quite interrupts the office. I'm afraid the right to vote would encourage female independence and discourage marriage. And that will take women away from their proper occupations as mothers. It would be race suicide.

EMILY

(looking from Leacock to Nellie)

Oh, no.

NELLIE

You don't really think that?

LEACOCK/LOUISE

## High and Splendid Braveries

Yes. Race suicide. The Prime Minister, I know him well you know, and I were sitting together the other day at a hotel drinking tea. At the next table were a group of Superior Beings in silk, talking. I couldn't help overhearing what they said - at least not when I held my head a little sideways.

(He laughs at his own humour)

NELLIE

That's not funny.

LEACOCK/LOUISE

They were speaking of war.

(imitating)

There wouldn't be war any war, if women were allowed to vote. Women will forbid it. The PM and I hid ourselves behind a little fern and trembled. We were hoping that the Awful Woman would explain how it would end. She didn't.

NELLIE

Let me. After all the world has been fed, housed, cleaned and educated and, if there is any time left over, we will let the men make weapons.

EMILY

The book will go to the Senate or Parliament, since I can't sit in either.

LEACOCK/LOUISE

Women wouldn't want to sit in parliament.

NELLIE

There are women who have stood before wash tubs and behind counters so long that they would be glad to sit anyplace.

LEACOCK/LOUISE

Women should stay out of politics.

NELLIE

Politics simply means public affairs, yours and mine.

LEACOCK/LOUISE

Politics are too corrupt for women.

NELLIE

Mr. Leacock! Is that an admission that you are party to the corruption or that you are unable to prevent it? And in either case something should be done. What is too corrupt for women is too corrupt for men.

## High and Splendid Braveries

LEACOCK/LOUISE

Some things are not fit for women's eyes.

NELLIE

Woman have cleaned up things since time began; and when women get into politics it will be no different.

LEACOCK/LOUISE

But after women have obtained the vote, the question is, what are they going to do with it? Fortunately for us all, women will not elect women. Women do not think enough of one another to do that.

(Doris runs on again)

DORIS/IRENE

I have to hide! Mummy, I told myself that if the Indians did come to kill us in a red rage of anger, you would talk them out of it and Mary would make tea and feed them current buns and get them persuaded to go back and make their baskets and behave themselves...

EMILY

I'm so sorry for the interruptions. Arthur was to have taken them but there was an emergency that he had to go out to- Doris, dear, mummy is trying to work with this gentleman. Also, your squealing will wake our convalescent upstairs.

DORIS/IRENE

Nothing could wake her!

EMILY

Perhaps I should check on her after all.

DORIS/IRENE

Don't worry she's not dead. She's snoring loudly.

EMILY

Doris! That's quite enough Miss Chatterbox. Go get ready for bed, and remind your sisters I have company and to be quiet.

DORIS/IRENE

But it's early--

EMILY

Doris! (Doris exits)

I apologize. Where were we?

LEACOCK/LOUISE

## High and Splendid Braveries

I believe you asked me here to get me to do your dirty work for you, by writing a book. I believe I declined.

DORIS/IRENE (O.S.)

Mummmmy. Mummy, will you come tuck me in? You promised you'd read another chapter...

EMILY

I'll be right there darling.

(Doris enters)

DORIS/IRENE

But I want to know what happens to Huckberry Finn.

(to the men)

She's having the most ever so funnest adventure.

LEACOCK/LOUISE

She is?

EMILY

Yes, and you should hear my rendition of Queen Arthuress and the Princesses of the Round Table!

LEACOCK/LOUISE

Well, I can see I'm getting in the way of your domestic duties. Don't forget to come to my next book launch.

EMILY

And you mine.

(Leacock leaves.)

NELLIE

He just makes me so angry. What a pompous, arrogant...

EMILY

Beloved Canadian author.

(Irene Parlby is at a fairground. A huge United Farmers Association banner is dropped in. Info booth set up.)

EMILY

I met with Stephen Leacock, I know him well you know,

(she smiles at her own joke)

But he declined to write the book so I'm going to.

## High and Splendid Braveries

IRENE

How are you researching?

EMILY

Well, I have a recovering addict in the spare room and I interview professionals in the parlour. So, how do you advocate for change?

IRENE

Usually I say something like "Good morning sir, may I give you this circular? I'm Irene Parlby, President of the United Farmers Women's Association, which I'm sure as you know is to all our benefit. Perhaps you'd like to read it. Or take it home for your wife." And then he says something like "She already reads too much. Reading when she should be patchin' quilts."

EMILY

(having fun with a fake farmer accent)

That's right, little lady. My claim is that it's a mistake for gals to know more than you need to know. Ma wife Whatsherface, was reading, fell asleep and forgot to close the hen house door. Weasel killed 27 hens. And this happened, not because she was exhausted from her work, but because she was literate!

IRENE

Yes, that's pretty much how it goes. Uphill battle. You want to go out with Louise, she's working in parts of the country not yet under the temperance banner. She'll show you how to get things done.

EMILY

That's an idea.

IRENE

The Women's Christian Temperance Union

(Store set up.)

LOUISE

Do you have a poster ready?

EMILY

This shopkeeper won't let us put up a temperance poster when he sells liquor!

LOUISE

So quick to give up! Emily watch an old lady.

(Henrietta puts on green apron and hurries over to assist them. Notices the white ribbons)

## High and Splendid Braveries

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

Ladies! Sisters of the white ribbon, how may I help you? I've some lovely fresh ham? A few figs from abroad? British brandy?

LOUISE

What a delightful sense of humour you have.

EMILY

We'd like to put up a poster in your window.

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

Do you know what WCTU stands for around here?

EMILY

No...

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

Women Constantly Torment Us. Look, it's a lost cause in this neighbourhood, ladies. The companies pay their men on Saturday night, too late for the cheques to be cashed at the banks.

LOUISE

But the saloons are open for this accommodation, becoming rich on a poor man's wage, turning out drunkards.

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

It's never gonna change, never.

EMILY

The union needs to convince the companies to pay on Tuesdays.

LOUISE

I'll write to the banks to cooperate by being open on Tuesday evenings from 7 - 9. They will get more business. Yes, a smart business decision. Was get more business. Yes, a smart business decision.

LOUISE

We'd still like to put up a poster in your window.

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

Bit of a cross purpose.

LOUISE

It was a business decision.

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

## High and Splendid Braveries

How's that then? I reckon if people don't drink, shopkeepers'll actually lose business.

LOUISE

No, not really, men may drink the alcohol, but the majority of the shopping is done by the head of the household.

(let's this sink in)

When the women of the neighbourhood organize they will be shopping at the general stores that don't sell liquor. Even if it means walking three extra blocks with the pram and the children in tow, the women recognize that they can "Vote" with their housekeeping money.

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

Vote? You're not only a white ribboner but you're one of them women's rights women.

LOUISE

Suffrage is a weapon of home protection because it can help stamp out the liquor traffic.

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

A bloody suffragette! You're going to put me out of business!

EMILY

Not if you become one of the favoured businesses. Will you take a poster?

SHOPKEEPER/HENRIETTA

(snatching the poster out of her hands)

Blackmail.

(Emily and Louise leave the Shopkeeper)

EMILY

Listen, I want your advice about something. The Womens' Christian Temperance Union is a force to be reckoned with. With its conviction of purposes, it is making the strongest advancements in the abolition of alcohol. I want to direct that force to the drug trade. I think the U should add a resolution about narcotics. Can you help me get a resolution passed?

LOUISE

You want a specific new resolution added?

I don't know--

EMILY

There are already about 10 extra resolutions already. The use of tobacco for children was a good one but the last one adopted discourages the use of bird plumage for millinery purposes. Which I thought ridiculous. I'm not giving up my hats!

LOUISE

## High and Splendid Braveries

I don't think we can keep adding resolutions. It weakens our intent. Henrietta would surely want to ban the corset; Irene would say we all have to plant our own tomatoes...

EMILY

Listen if the temperance movement won't get behind illegal drug use.

LOUISE

When we've dealt with every still and bootlegger, we'll have time to deal with your problems.

EMILY

They're not my problems.

LOUISE

You've made them your problems. Maybe you've bitten off more than you can chew.

EMILY

Look at this body Lou do you think I ever have problems chewing.

(Arthur is lit by lights reminiscent of candles in the parlor)

EMILY

Candlelight.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I borrowed them from the church. Do you like them? The girls are at my mother's for the evening.

EMILY

Oh.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You have a date with another man?

EMILY

Well...

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I was joking!

EMILY

Arthur you know you're the only man for me.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

But?



## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

I've arranged to meet Dr. Lemay tonight.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You're sick? Or is this about Maddie?

EMILY

Well, he's also a chemist and he's promised to let me see some of this stuff up close. It's all legal. I just don't think the criminals are going to let me have this information.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I suppose that is the safer of the two options.

EMILY

So, you'll let me go?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily, let's not pretend that you ask my permission to do anything.

(Drug store set up, low light. The Doctor gestures to the table. Emily pulls out her note book.)

DOCTOR/LOUISE

If you write about legal opiate manufacturing, I'm sure you will increase your readership. Is that what you want? More people knowing how to make the stuff?

EMILY

Is that it? It looks like a bird's nest. No wonder law enforcement and border patrols have problems. They aren't raw opium taffickers- just ornithologists.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

A smart business decision would be for you to return to writing those Janey Canuk books.

(He lights a match. A small whiff of smoke hangs in the air. Princess Poppy, with her chiffon poppy shawl touches Emily's cheek. Emily is aware of the sensation but not the person. Princess Poppy replaces the wispy shawl with the back of her hand. She strokes Emily lightly.)

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Over and over, I will re-heat the solution straining it through cloths and gradually adding more water, for it is easier to wash the impurities from this solution.

(Emily is distracted by the caressing of Princess Poppy smoke as her hands play with her hair and touch her neck)

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

(trying desperately to stay focused and giggling)

It's remarkably sticky! I've had my hand closed for a few moments and it's difficult to open.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

When all the extraneous matter is removed, I place the solution in a brass vessel, after which it is slowly boiled, the water passing off as steam.

EMILY

(mesmerized and delighted,)

It looks like thick treacle.

(She goes to eat it the Doctor takes it away)

DOCTOR/LOUISE

The residue is called pen yang and is now ready.

EMILY

I'm ready for anything.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

You as my assistant have cooked with me tonight- collaboration.

EMILY

I have cooked up a batch of opium!

DOCTOR/LOUISE

(Notices her condition)

I will open the window to let the smoke out--

(Princess Poppy floats away, Emily is sad to see her go.)

(Courtroom set up. Early morning. The Judge carries a cup of tea)

STENOGRAPHER (V.O.)

All rise, the honorable Judge W. Roberts presiding.

(The Judge looks to the gallery where Emily stands as usual.)

JUDGE/NELLIE

You look as tired as I feel, Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY

I was cooking 'til late last night.

## High and Splendid Braveries

JUDGE/NELLIE

A woman's work is never done.

(Emily steps out of the gallery and on to the courtroom floor.)

JUDGE/NELLIE

Mrs. Murphy, what are you doing?

EMILY

This woman, my client, has asked that I represent her. I've checked with my good friend Henrietta Muir Edwards, an expert in women's law, and she assures me that I may.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Alright. Mrs. Penelope Miller is suing her husband for half the homestead. Interesting, since by law she can't own property. But I'll indulge you today, Mrs. Murphy - this should be entertaining if nothing else.

EMILY

My client believes in God but doesn't believe in religion.

(a twittering from the gallery)

It happened to her at the revival meeting. A Preacher traveled to her village, a very persuasive man. He preached, and said if they confessed their sins then Jesus would forgive them. She was so moved; she confessed a mishap in her girlhood.

(more salacious twitters from the gallery)

So, her husband kicked her out. Not that he wanted too but he felt he had to prove his manliness to his neighbours. "Couldn't live in a house with one who had sinned." Put her out with a dollar. She raised eight children and worked like a slave. Now she works in a hotel in Brandon and her family is lost without her. Her baby not yet weaned.

LAWYER/LOUISE

It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.

EMILY

(turns to the man beside The Lawyer)

And you are the husband? Neighbours talk. Never mind what they say about you and your missus. Your loyalty is to your wife not them. Keep your fool pride. Tell your neighbours that the court ordered you to take your wife back.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Sounds good to me. Are you going to represent the next client as well? It should be a quick morning.

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

You know, Your Honour, if you appointed me a family court judge I could clean up all these domestic trifles for you. Leave you more time for the more important cases. And fishing.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Be careful what you wish for Mrs. Murphy.

(Parlor set up. Emily. Nellie enters)

NELLIE

Emily what is it? I got your message that it was important.

EMILY

I wanted to show you this.

(she shows Nellie a letter)

I received this note through my door.

NELLIE

(reads it)

You've made someone angry.

EMILY

Maybe it's about the book.

NELLIE

Who's your list of suspects?

EMILY

The immigrants who bring it in, any peddler who feels threatened, any buyer who thinks I'm going to dry up sources, the police even for making them look inadequate. Or it could be the shopkeep we blackmailed or anti-temperance people....

NELLIE

That's quite a list. Still, there's no particular threat attached. What does Arthur say?

EMILY

Well-

NELLIE

Emily! You haven't told him.

EMILY

He'll only get all worried.

NELLIE

## High and Splendid Braveries

A natural response. You have to tell him.

EMILY

Shan't.

NELLIE

Fine, then I'll tell him.

EMILY

You won't.

NELLIE

Then tell the police.

EMILY

The police took me to the drug den they'll just blame me.

NELLIE

For the book.

EMILY

Yes, to give to the senators so they can change the laws.

NELLIE

You need to go to the Senate. You know which laws need to be looked at. You write the laws.

EMILY

Nellie...

NELLIE

We are close to getting the vote. Politics is the next logical step. I'm going to run for MLA and so is Irene Parlby as an independent under the UFA. You don't think she's organizing the girls in the United Farmers Association for a bake sale do you?

(Arthur enters)

NELLIE

(continuing; pointedly)

Emily, don't you have something to tell Arthur?

EMILY

Yes. Arthur.

(beat)

I'm going to be a Senator.

(Doris rushes in.)

## High and Splendid Braveries

DORIS/IRENE

(enters)

Mummy, Mrs Osbourne just left out the kitchen door and she took some silver spoons and your clock.

(Police station set up. Dim light, lighting delineates a holding tank. Women crowded on the bar side. Madeline is in a bad way.)

EMILY

I've been worried sick about you! You stole my spoons and clock! You told me to prevent your arrest you were interested in rehabili-

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

I am. I am. I'm so glad you are here. You must help me. I have heard of the reduction clinics in New York. They know there that this "cold turkey" is not right, not humane. It is only by slow reduction that I will get well.

EMILY

You need to stop scratching.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

You'd think insects would wait until I'm under soil before devouring me. You are a Veritable Saint. You have come to me in my greatest hour of need to save me. All others have forsaken and disowned me but you, you will help.

EMILY

I don't know what else to do.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

You are a Christian, wife of a minister, bound by love and compelled to help. Please, appeal to a doctor for script on my behalf. It is slow reduction that will help. Please please please.

EMILY

Try to think of things other than your craving.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

It is a thirst. A thirst that has no end. You have no idea what it is like. None. Christ himself wouldn't turn his back on a leper of society, he held his hand out to the sick and needy, offered comfort and water to the thirsty.

EMILY

I did! You stole my things!

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

## High and Splendid Braveries

I know this man you can...

EMILY

I will get you no drugs!

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

Then you are- you are the Antichrist. You have damned me and my soul and I will die. I shall haunt you all the days of my life.

EMILY

You have your mission. I have mine.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

How can you stand by and not do anything!

EMILY

I promise you I'm going to do everything I can to see these drugs eradicated.

MAD MADELINE/NELLIE

You are so stupid. You can no more stop the flow into Canada, than stop the snow from falling.

(Parlor set up. Arthur reads a pocket bible. Emily bustles in.)

EMILY

I can't stop. I got the idea to talk to the Archbishop about it while --

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

What are you going to badger... I mean, ask him?

EMILY

The church needs to be a bigger player in stopping the drug trade.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Remember this is my boss to whom you speak, don't upset him.

EMILY

Arthur, you make it sound as if I just badger and upset people.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You get tunnel vision sometimes.

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

Sometimes it's hard to keep eye contact with him. I always end up looking at his ears. They seem stuffed with curly grey hairs. It always looks as if he has two grey mice burrowing into his head.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

That is not nice.

EMILY

I know. But you're nice enough for both of us. Well, I'm away. I won't be long.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

So, you won't be joining us for another meal?

EMILY

It won't take very long, two hours at the most. Then we can put the girls to bed and spend a quiet evening together. Promise. You'll put the girls to bed? And read to them?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

What book are you adulterating this time?

EMILY

Treasure Island.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(sternly)

Featuring?

EMILY

(meekly, quickly)

The adventures of the young pirate, Jillian Hawkins.

(Phone rings.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Hello. Oh dear, I'll be right there.

(hangs up)

You'll have to stay home I have to go out.

EMILY

I have to go out!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Well so do I.

EMILY



## High and Splendid Braveries

I have to meet the Archbishop!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I have to administer last rites.

EMILY

Fine you win I'll take Doris with me.

(Emily whirlwinds out)

(Church set up. Stained glass lights. The Archbishop at the altar.)

EMILY

Thank you for seeing me Archbishop. I rather wanted to talk of serious issues. Sorry I'm late and I had to bring Doris, her father was to have taken her but he had to go out.

DORIS/IRENE

See the Partridges.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Your father likes birds.

DORIS/IRENE

Mr. Partridge shot his wife while she was ironing.

EMILY

Doris!

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Ah, a different kind of foul. Your Daddy is a good man Doris.

DORIS/IRENE

But of course, he is.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

What can I do for you Mrs. Murphy, at this late hour, when you should be tucking in your young?

EMILY

I thought the church should be supporting slow reduction clinics for addicts. There is some medical know-how but no political will.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

I believe it is the yellow race that has brought this scourge to our midst and the negroes are following suit. It is not an Anglo-Saxon concern. The church will stay clear of all that mess. I will see to it.

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

My childhood friend became addicted. Both her parents are British. Doris don't play with the holy water.

DORIS/IRENE

I'm baptizing my donkey; he wants to be a Christian!

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

I'm sure your friends' husband was negligent in his duty to protect her.

EMILY

Maybe, with all due respect you don't fully understand the ways - the grip of addiction, Archbishop. I didn't really understand it myself until just recently.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

I will pray for them all.

EMILY

Doris, it's a baptismal font not a swimming pool! Archbishop, I was hoping for a little bit more concrete support from the church.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Their souls are always my concern, but when they break the law it's a job for the courts.

(The courtroom set up. Empty. The Judge eats sandwiches, feet up on another chair)

JUDGE/NELLIE

I've been waiting for you. Didn't see you in the gallery today. It was a long, long day.

EMILY

Me too. I started out the morning at the police station...

(The Judge raises his eyebrows.)

...went home, changed bed sheets, in Maddy's old room. And then I had a meeting in the Cathedral with the Archbishop who referred me to you.

(The Judge and Emily sit side by side feet up. Tired.)

EMILY

What have you been doing all day just sitting on the bench?

JUDGE/NELLIE

I heard your addict friend stole your property. Are you going to press charges?

EMILY

## High and Splendid Braveries

I guess they do all lie.

JUDGE/NELLIE

You know how you were harassing for a special family court to deal with these matters?

EMILY

I'm not trusting my judgment so much after Mrs. Osbourne.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Do you want the end of the story? She'll end up as a prostitute dead or missing.

EMILY

Nobody helps prostitutes but they weren't born that way and they wouldn't with any sanity choose it as a job unless they weren't at the mercy of drugs. These drugs have to be stopped. You in your position have the moral and legal responsibility to clean up the nation.

JUDGE/NELLIE

I have been sitting for ten hours today, without so much as a sandwich or a cup of tea. And may I add, after the day I've had, if it were not a dry province, a tumbler of whiskey would not go amiss.

EMILY

(not)

Your honour, I'm shocked.

JUDGE/NELLIE

When you have been on the bench as long as I, nothing shocks you.

(The Judge hands her a sandwich, which she accepts, they munch a second in silence)

EMILY

I interviewed a man from the border patrol he said no drugs come into the country on his day shift. So, I tell him, they must all be coming in on the night shift. He tells me from midnight to six, there is no shift. You must lobby the government to implement a 24-hour border patrol and --

JUDGE/NELLIE

You're going to put this at my doorstep? Do you think if you were in my place, you would be up to the task?

EMILY

## High and Splendid Braveries

Well, that goes without saying. Look, Canada is a new country we can design and build it to whatever specifications we see fit...

JUDGE/NELLIE

I have looked into it and at this very moment my mind is made up. I have spoken with the Attorney General and he agrees. There is no legal reason why you yourself should not preside over the family courts.

EMILY

I don't underst--

JUDGE/NELLIE

The only thing to dampen your ardor is experience. Emily Murphy, I'm making you the first woman to sit on the bench in Canada.

EMILY

You are not taking me seriously.

JUDGE/NELLIE

Oh, but I did. Look, here's the paperwork on my desk. Finalized. I'm swamped. You are "the right sort of woman" right class, educated, leader in various organizations. You can have the everyday garden variety stuff that I don't want to deal with anymore, you know, wife beater, rapist, prostitute, drunk and your favourite, cocainomaniacs.

EMILY

You really...?

JUDGE/NELLIE

Oh, I did Mrs. Murphy! Or should I say, Judge Murphy. You can take the first five dockets starting at eight o'clock Monday next week. I'll brief you over supper.

EMILY

But, but...

JUDGE/NELLIE

You didn't think we'd take your request, seriously did you? Ha! Caught you! I'm giving you a gavel, think of it as a broom. Under your feminine influence you can sweep the monster from the nation, tidy up the whole country while you're at it. I'll try to find you a robe.

EMILY

But I can't just start next week, I have other responsibilities.... tonight I promised Arthur that—

## High and Splendid Braveries

JUDGE/NELLIE

(roaring)

Mrs. Murphy, you asked for the power, I'm giving it to you. A onetime opportunity, magistrate of the British Empire... take this opportunity or forever - hold - your - peace. Your choice?

(Emily just nods dumbly.)

(Parlor set up. Arthur at the table. Emily reading. Doris swaggers in.)

DORIS/IRENE

You forever hold your peace Cowboy Rex, I'm the sheriff and....

EMILY

Doris, please play quietly! Daddy has to concentrate on his sermons. And I have to read five million law books by next Wednesday.

DORIS/IRENE

Are you writing another book, Mummy?

EMILY

Yes.

DORIS/IRENE

Mummy, why don't you write about pirates and treasure hunters?

EMILY

Well, there are definitely some bad guys and smugglers.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Doris, did you tell your mother why you had to stay behind after school?

DORIS/IRENE

It was racing day and Mr. Burnbeck said it was not nice for little girls to show their legs an' I asked him why, but I was hushed up. I tried to keep my skirts down while I ran. Then I thought of an idea. I put on two pairs of drawers!

EMILY

(delighted)

Oh, my clever darling.

DORIS/IRENE

I might have won but Mr. Burnbeck, told me I was wicked, and made me go back inside.

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

How brave of you!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

How is that brave?! Emily you are raising a protester, a questioner of authority.

EMILY

Get ready for bed, Doris.

(Doris leaves)

EMILY

And aren't we doing a great job.

(picks up her book and then throws it back down in frustration)

They are going to know I am an imposter! I've bitten off more than I can chew! I can't memorize all these laws; my mind is totally saturated.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

So, take a break.

EMILY

I'm going to have to admit my defeat to the Judge.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You'll do no such thing. I'll help you.

EMILY

Arthur you can't help me. You were a theology student. You know nothing about the law!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

He's just given you family law.

EMILY

But the lawyers won't cooperate, they'll trip me up!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You've seen hundreds and hundreds of cases in your work. Just take it one case at a time.

(Doris, comes back ready for bed, and observes her parents.)

EMILY

Arthur - I'm afraid.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Of who?

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

Of looking foolish.

DORIS/IRENE

What would Auntie Nellie say if she were here?

EMILY

Get the thing done and let them howl.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Out of the mouths--  
(Courtroom set up.)

STENOGRAPHER (V.O.)

All rise. Judge Emily Murphy presiding.

(Emily enters and sits at the bench.)

LAWYER/LOUISE

I'd like the charges against my client dropped immediately. Since you are not able to preside over this case.

EMILY

I have been sworn in as a judge. The paperwork was completed as of eight o'clock this morning. I am legally able to preside over this family court in the province of Alberta, Canada.

LAWYER/LOUISE

The province of Alberta has always been too liberal.

EMILY

Leading Canada.

LAWYER/LOUISE

As progressive as the province may be, you are not eligible to judge this case. You have no jurisdiction on this court because you, madam, are not a person.

EMILY

Insulting me will not help your client's case.

LAWYER/LOUISE

If you had the experience and training that I have received in the profession, you would know about the British North American Act Sec. 24.

EMILY

## High and Splendid Braveries

What?

LAWYER/LOUISE

When it was written persons didn't include women.

EMILY

Then the burden of proof is on you.

LAWYER/LOUISE

Madam?

EMILY

If a woman is not a person then tell me, what is she?

LAWYER/LOUISE

(snickers to cohort)

Indeed.

EMILY

(to the plaintiff)

How do you plead?

SALLY/IRENE

Not guilty your majesty.

EMILY

I am a magistrate not a majesty.

SALLY/IRENE

Yes, Your Highness.

EMILY

You may call me "Your Honour". Now listen carefully to me young lady; your lawyer seems inclined to be prejudiced in the matter of females. Do you want him to represent you at trial?

LAWYER/LOUISE

I object!

EMILY

And so do I! I object to being dismissed by you and your entire gender. Let me tell you that today, things are going to change. And you will have to adapt. Either you admit that you can work under a female judge or else I will recommend that you are unable to represent females as clients since you can't even see them as persons. Half your clientele. Half your income. Bend or break Mr. Jackson, it's up to you.



## High and Splendid Braveries

LAWYER/LOUISE

It's not right.

EMILY

Think of it as a smart business decision.

LAWYER/LOUISE

Mrs. Murphy!

EMILY

You will address me as Your Honour. Or else I will fine you for contempt. Now, are you going to proceed or shall I remand your client and have you removed from my court?

LAWYER/LOUISE

My client would like to enter a plea of not guilty.

EMILY

And to whom do you address your remarks?

LAWYER/LOUISE

Your-- Honour.

EMILY

Then let us begin

(The Doctor enters the court)

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Mrs. Murphy, I have been searching for you...

EMILY

Dr. Lemay.

(he already has)

You may approach the bench.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

I thought you should know that Mrs. Osbourne is very, very sick. TB.

EMILY

Don't tell me.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

## High and Splendid Braveries

I will be by later this afternoon to check out your daughters, to see if they have symptoms.

EMILY

(Softly)

Arthur will be home. I'm afraid I have a full docket.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

You do not wish to be there?

EMILY

Of course, I wish to be there! It just isn't possible today on such short notice.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

You were home, every day with your sick baby. Tell me, do you feel guilty now that you are shirking your responsibilities as a mother?

EMILY

(Beat)

My children are well cared for.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

But there's no substitute for a mother's love and care, eh?

LAWYER/LOUISE

When your honour has finished socializing, may I remind you we have a case to try.

EMILY

(looking from one man to the other, bites her lip)

Doctor LeMay I will see you presently,

(to the lawyer)

You may begin.

(End of act one)

## High and Splendid Braveries

### ACT 2

(Parlor set up. Arthur is writing. Emily rushes in.)

EMILY

But the doctor has caught it early. There must be lots he can do.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

He said everything in his power. He will be back the day after tomorrow to see how she is responding to treatment. You don't have to think you did this by bringing home strays.

EMILY

Of course, it's my fault! Arthur, you aren't worried, are you?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

No.

EMILY

How can you be so trusting?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily, after all this time, you have to ask me that?

EMILY

Faith? You are going to pray over this.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

And give her the medicine. Don't worry she'll be up on her pins before you know it.

EMILY

Do you think my place is here?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You have a God given duty to protect home, family and country. What you do in that court of yours is a natural extension of that. Removing criminals from society, restoring justice, that helps to protect this family.

(Emily kisses his forehead. Courtroom set up. The Smuggler, a rough looking man, stands in the witness box.)

SMUGGLER/IRENE

Don't put me away, my wife gets out next month. If you lock me up, we won't be able to be together.

EMILY

## High and Splendid Braveries

(in a foul mood)

I shall consider it further service to society that you won't be reunited to breed.

LAWYER/LOUISE

Objection, your honour.

SMUGGLER/IRENE

Do you at least want to know why I do it, before you sentence me?

EMILY

Because you are curious, you have a sense of adventure or to relieve insomnia. Because you are jaded, discouraged with the world. Or you like to kick start your morning with a little bhang. Or maybe you are just one of the ones who are never happy unless they are indulging themselves!

SMUGGLER/IRENE

I heard you hadn't been a judge long, I guess I was wrong.

EMILY

I guess you were.

LAWYER/LOUISE

My client wonders if he tells you or the authorities some information about the next shipment coming in will it count against leniency of time?

EMILY

I know all the ports.

SMUGGLER/IRENE

Where on the ship to look.

EMILY

(sarcastically)

No, wait don't tell me. I like this game. I'll guess... In the chests of tea? In the beams of the vessel? In the water tank? In the ship's piano legs? In shells? Dolls? Cigars? Lemons?

SMUGGLER/IRENE

I'm guessing this means no reduction in sentencing?

EMILY

That's the first smart thing you've said.

SMUGGLER/IRENE

Rumor has it that you're grumpy because your daughter is sick but I don't think you should take it out on me.

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

Take it out on you? Take it out on you. I know you spent most of your life getting high, lounging around leaving the workers of the world to get on with the business of life. But, on the off-chance you need to supplement your habit by smuggling in a few kilos and say you didn't like the type of work you were doing what would you do?

SMUGGLER/IRENE

I never stuck at a job I didn't like in my life.

EMILY

How fortunate for you. Yes, my daughter is sick and I'd like to be home caring for her. Every minute of every day but I can't. Because, unlike you, I have a sense of duty. And, even if I wanted to quit this job and believe me when I say, today is one of them, I can't. Because then "they" would say "see I told you so, I told you this is a job for men." And so, I can never quit.

(grit teeth, big smile)

So, instead of being at home with my daughter, I have to stay here and spend it with scum like you.

LAWYER/LOUISE

I object your Honour.

EMILY

Me too.

(Parlor set up. Emily rushes in.)

EMILY

How is she?

(Arthur says nothing.)

Arthur?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Sitting up, sewing, drinking a little milk with bread and honey. I sent the girls to my sister's so they won't get infected.

EMILY

I'm just going to pop upstairs, then after supper, I might just go to the church and have a word with The Man myself.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

God is testing our faith; he took our little Maddy. He is love. He is not cruel enough to take two children. I believe it will all come out alright in the end.

(Church set up, no stained glass. Emily, praying. Henrietta enters, waits for her to finish.)

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

Henrietta! Arthur says she's going to be fine,  
(indicates the church)

I'm just covering my bases. I still feel-- what kind of a mother am I?

HENRIETTA

A good one. A role model. You are the first woman magistrate, not in Alberta, but in the whole Empire.

EMILY

The chief defense lawyer says all my judgments aren't legal because the BNA Act says I'm not a person.

HENRIETTA

But he doesn't question your judgment.

EMILY

No. I looked it up though. Any five people acting as a unit can petition the Supreme Court for an interpretation of the BNA Act. So, we could ask them to iron out this little problem?

HENRIETTA

Ironing out political problems is so much better than the domestic kind. Don't you agree?

EMILY

You sound like Nellie.

HENRIETTA

Thank you. So you, me, Nellie?

EMILY

Louise. Irene.

HENRIETTA

Good. Send me your petition when you have it written, that I might have the privilege of signing it first.

EMILY

I came here to make a bargain with God, I would give up my selfish ways and He would see that Doris is alright.

HENRIETTA

You have to fight for what is right and just, Emily.

EMILY

I have to give it all up.

## High and Splendid Braveries

HENRIETTA

Do you want Doris to see you as one who stops when things get difficult? Don't you want her to keep fighting? And when she grows up to be the healthy young woman she was meant to be, do you want another Mr. Jackson telling her she isn't a person?

(Doris' bedroom set up. Emily holds a cloth to Doris' forehead, kneels beside her bed.)

DORIS/IRENE

I know you are a busy being a judge now but maybe we can go to the beach when I get better.

EMILY

I promise.

(Doris reaches under her and gives Emily a sewing sampler.)

DORIS/IRENE

I made a present for you. I was going to give it to you for your birthday, but I think I should give it to you now.

EMILY

Oh, darling.

DORIS/IRENE

I ran out of green thread and had to finish the D in sage, you don't mind, do you?

EMILY

No, not a bit.

DORIS/IRENE

Did I do a good job, mummy?

EMILY

You did a very, very good job, I'm very proud of you.

DORIS/IRENE

Will you say hello to the birds at the lake for me if I don't get to go? Where we dug for buried treasure.

EMILY

I will.

DORIS/IRENE

Katie at school said it's really Peter Pan not Pamela Pan. And that girls can't fly.

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

They can too.

DORIS/IRENE

Mummy, if I go to sleep will I be able to fly?

(Emily nods)

Will I see you when I wake up?

EMILY

(shakes her head)

Maybe not right away, but then I'll come and take care of you again. I promise.

DORIS/IRENE

Am I going to see Madeleine?

(Emily nods)

DORIS/IRENE

Shall I tell her anything?

EMILY

That I miss her and I love her. But you have to keep a secret.

DORIS/IRENE

I promise.

EMILY

Mothers aren't supposed to have favourites, it's wrong.

DORIS/IRENE

Was Madeleine your favourite?

EMILY

I loved her for nine short months before she left us. I loved her very much, but not, not one tenth the amount I love you.

DORIS/IRENE

Am I your favourite?

(Emily nods trying so hard not to cry)

DORIS/IRENE

Good night, Mummy, I'll see you later.



## High and Splendid Braveries

(Emily can't talk she just nods, the tears stream silently down her face, she strokes her daughter's hair.)

(Arthur enters.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily? Oh! No!

(distraught he lays Doris down, kisses her and covers her face)

EMILY

(moves the cover from her face)

She'll smother.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily.

EMILY

Arthur, I know you believe more than I do, but I swear to God - if you say one word, one word about resting in the arms of Jesus, or God calling her home, I swear I will never, ever forgive you nor talk to you ever again.

(Arthur holds out his arms. She goes to him. They cling to each other)

(Furniture off. A grey wash, of sky and lake. Water gull sounds. Emily and Arthur. Cold. Walk on and look out on the water.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Come on Emily, it's cold. I think it could snow.

(Emily pulls the sampler out of her pocket and shows Arthur.)

EMILY

She gave me this before she died; it says "Be Good".

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(Choked)

Sounds like good advice.

(Trying to gain some measure of control)

I'll talk to the girls. They can stay at my sister's for now. But then they can come home for the- I'll make the preparations for the

(Can't quite say "funeral")

Are you coming?

(Arthur walks up the beach, Emily stares out to the waves.)

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

Give me a minute.

(Emily looks out over the water)

Look, I'm just out here digging for treasure.

(Beat)

I know your body is in the funeral parlor, but you're not there. I figured you'd be here. I'm so sorry for a lot of things. I'm sorry I didn't spend as much time with you as I should have. I miss you. I love you. I hope you understand and can forgive me.

(beat)

I'm selfish. But Darling, I only had daughters. You must believe me, I wanted it all for you too.

(beat)

You know the only thing preventing me from walking out into this water to join you, is your sisters. I have to look after them. So, I will... be good.

(Parlor set up. Emily absently picking at the furniture. Arthur enters carrying a brown paper bag.)

EMILY

Where did you go after the graveyard?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I went back to the church, and left my collar on the altar. Then, my girl, I went to Bootlegger Bills.

(Puts the bottle of whiskey on the table. Looks at her challenging her. Long silence.)

EMILY

Make it two.

(Arthur pours out the whiskey into the tea cups and hands it to her. They clink china. Arthur takes a drink.)

EMILY

(Continuing; Emily copies. Recoils.)

It tastes like the devil.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Finish it, it will be good for you.

EMILY

Alright, just this once.

## High and Splendid Braveries

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Medicinal after - it will help you get over her death.

EMILY

(drinking)

I don't want to get over her death. My grief is how I carry her in my arms.

(Long silence, the two continue to drink.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Shall I go into real estate or saw milling?

EMILY

I don't care what you do.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Right now, sailing appeals. I could easily sail away from here.

EMILY

No. No you must never leave me. We're not supposed to need men. But I need you.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I dare say the girls need both of us. Shall I send for them to come home?

EMILY

What if something happens to either of them?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Shush. The girls will be fine. But I do need to keep the money flowing, now that I'm out of work.

EMILY

(the alcohol kicks in slightly.)

The profit margin on drug smuggling is amazing. We could get rich quick. And with our backgrounds we'd be above suspicion. Su-spission!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I'm glad you still have your sense of humour.

(knock at the door.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

There's somebody at the door.

EMILY

## High and Splendid Braveries

Let's invite them in for a drink --

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(looks out the window.)

Mother, Mary and Joseph it's the Archbishop!

EMILY

Archie?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Don't call him that!

(Knock again.)

EMILY

Don't answer it.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

He must have heard about my resignation and come to talk me out of it.

EMILY

Well, we'd better hide this bottle.

(Emily can't find a place to hide it, she sticks it behind the chair)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I'll get the door, drain the cups, girl!

(Emily chugs back the whiskey. The Archbishop enters.)

EMILY

Arsebishop! Arch Arch bishop.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(giggles)

Emily, maybe you'd like to make us some tea.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Actually, I wanted to tell you of rumors of vice that are reaching my ears.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(thinks he's been busted by Bootlegger Bill)

Really, well news certainly travels fast. I only got it today.

## High and Splendid Braveries

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

What today?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Why are you here, exactly?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

It is Mrs. Murphy, I wish to call on.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Of course! I'll go and put the kettle on.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

I came here to tell you that the church does not condone the writing and publishing of your book. We fear it will incite others to reckless behaviours.

EMILY

This isn't going to go away. Do you know how mush is out there?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

It is not necessary for me to know such things. I prefer to focus on goodness. Do not worry your mind over statistics. I told you it's the problem of the Chinaman.

EMILY

Naa, let's not make them the eternal scapegoats for everything.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

These addicts are sinners. I know because they have stolen from the pulpit when we leave the church without supervision. They need to be locked up.

EMILY

It would be better to send her to an institution for the care of addicts, but we have not such hospitals in the Dominion, and no one seems to care whether we have one or not.

(Emily realizes she is poking the Archbishop in the chest in a way she would not have if it hadn't been for the drink.)

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

There is not a dollar in Canada for that purpose.  
(The Archbishop sits dangerously close to the hidden bottle.)

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

People should not hear of these things at all. We are not shocked by evil, only when one speaks of it.

EMILY

## High and Splendid Braveries

That doesn't make sense. Thank you for popping over but it's a waste of your time. Ultimately it is the signatures whether through the Hague Convention or the League of Nations, that shall ultimately deal with the suppression.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

You are just a minister's wife you cannot seriously talk about  
(Mimicking her)  
"taking things to the Hague or the League of Nations!"

EMILY

Firstly, I am a judge and secondly, technically,  
(Puts her finger to her lips as if telling him a secret)  
in case you haven't heard I'm no longer a minister's wife.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

But the church doesn't support divorce.

EMILY

Please go. We are in mourning.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

You are? I'm sorry.

EMILY

Yeah, we didn't invite you to this funeral since you were no help at the first one.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

(stunned)

I, er I...

EMILY

Please go. You're giving me a headache.  
(The Archbishop stands just looking at her.)  
Did you not hear me, Archie?  
(a little louder)  
Try taking the mice out of your ears.  
(Shaking his head, Archbishop leaves.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(entering with a tea tray)

Well, if I hadn't of quit, I'd be fired after that. Have some black tea.

EMILY

(makes a chimpanzee face)

Arthur?

## High and Splendid Braveries

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

What?

EMILY

I can't feel my lips.

(he kisses her)

Not a thing.

(Arthur just grins at her.)

(Outside set up. The line with the rug on it. Emily is pounding on a carpet hanging up on the line, Louise enters.)

EMILY

Is it the carpet pounding or is it my head?

LOUISE

Are you alright?

(She hugs her friend.)

EMILY

Oh Lou, it's awful, when I'm indoors I keep thinking she's outdoors and when I'm outdoors I keep thinking she must be inside. But of course, I'm just going crazy. And, I have a headache.

LOUISE

All your flowers in your garden are dead.

EMILY

I thought it was fitting. They match all the ones inside from the condolence bouquets and wreaths.

LOUISE

Do you want me to water them?

EMILY

I don't care. I'm not ready to resurrect them yet.

LOUISE

When I do my educational tours in schools, I bring out seeds started in water and seeds started in 25%, 50% and 100% alcohol to prove a point. My 100% lot looks like this! Abstinence is the only way. I have covenants that we are getting people to sign. Arthur could spread the word in his sermon next Sunday.

EMILY

Arthur is pursuing another line of work.

## High and Splendid Braveries

LOUISE

Oh? Still, he is a pillar of the community.

EMILY

He is a moderate. He drank in moderation before prohibition. You sign my supreme court appeal. I'll sign your timely covenant.

(Louise starts to say something and then changes her mind)

(Courtroom set up. Emily miles away. Everyone looking at her)

LAWYER/LOUISE

Judge Murphy, given your recent bereavement maybe you should take some time...

EMILY

I sentence your client to five years. Court is in half hour recess.

LAWYER/LOUISE

But this is only the first of the day.

(The court clears, Nellie enters.)

EMILY

I said recess, everybody out!

NELLIE

Please don't lock me away like Emmiline Pankhurst. I'll be a good suffragette I promise!

EMILY

Nellie, what brings you into my courtroom?

NELLIE

I've been worried about you. How is your first day back?

EMILY

I nearly didn't come back.

NELLIE

I know.

(beat)

So, Henri mentioned you were interested in having women proclaimed - women!

EMILY

Audacious of me I know...



## High and Splendid Braveries

NELLIE

Whatever next?

EMILY

Louise had me sign a temperance pledge. In exchange for her support.

NELLIE

We were born for this, you and I. As soon as we are victorious, I'm going to announce my candidacy.

EMILY

I would have been disappointed if you didn't.

NELLIE

You won't be able to vote for me, I'll be outside your riding, but you can support me unofficially. Me in parliament, you in the senate with your book. We'll be a force to be reckoned with!

EMILY

I've stopped writing the book.

NELLIE

Have there been more threats?

EMILY

I don't have the energy to finish it and nobody wants to read it.

NELLIE

Don't let it go to waste.

EMILY

And I'm not sleeping well. And when I do sleep, I keep having the same dream over and over again.

NELLIE

Yes?

EMILY

It starts out, it's a beautiful day. But then one flake of snow falls. And then another. And then another and soon the whole ground is covered. And I am completely unable to move. I am frozen. Children come out to play. They stick out their tongues to catch the snowflakes and it's then that I realize that it isn't snow. It's powdered opium. I am desperate to protect the children who don't know any better. The powder keeps falling and falling and I'm trapped. The whole town is buried under powder and I'm the only one who knows what it is and I'm powerless to save them.

## High and Splendid Braveries

(The courtroom starts to fill up.)

EMILY

We're back from recess, I have to go.

NELLIE

(referring to the sampler she knows Emily has.)

Be Good, Emily. Do Good.

(she exits.)

(The next defendant goes to the witness box.)

EMILY

You are charged with theft over \$20. How do you plead?

SALLY/IRENE

Not guilty.

EMILY

This should be interesting since the report here says you were caught red handed.

SALLY/IRENE

Nobody was hurt, it was just a lush dip.

EMILY

Lush dip?

SALLY/IRENE

He was a great hulk. Twice my size.

EMILY

But drunk.

SALLY/IRENE

I needed the money to feed my daughter, Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY

And your habit.

SALLY/IRENE

I've gone straight now. No drugs!

EMILY

Do you know the nickname the police have given you?

SALLY/IRENE

## High and Splendid Braveries

No.

EMILY

Sally Secreter.

SALLY/IRENE

I never!

EMILY

You hold the dubious honour of being the biggest concealer of drugs they have ever come upon. You do get the prize for the most inventive initiative - rubbing it into white clothing. While in detention, nobody would have been any the wiser had you not been caught sniffing your undergarments.

SALLY/IRENE

I don't really get a prize, do I?

(The next defendant stands)

LAWYER/LOUISE

Your Honour has heard many cases of the ravages of drugs, but this is a case different from all the rest.

EMILY

Oh, the glory of anticipation. I await with baited breath.

LAWYER/LOUISE

Have mercy on this one your Honour. They used to just sniff it or smoke it now they are injecting it. My client is head to foot in carbuncles. Half dead. When she can't afford hypodermic needles, she opens her flesh with a hat pin and uses an eyedropper to deliver her poison. Turn her loose. In two days, I guarantee the problem will not exist.

EMILY

She stands here on charges of negligent homicide.

LAWYER/LOUISE

She had a baby. A boy. Five weeks old. Born addicted. She took care of him the best way she knew how.

EMILY

How did he die?

LAWYER/LOUISE

In her arms. The baby's body had forty-seven puncture wounds from a hypodermic needle.

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

Dear God in heaven. Recess! Recess!

(The court empties out. Emily is fingering the sampler with one hand, the other rubs her stomach. As the Judge enters, she puts the sampler away.)

JUDGE/NELLIE

Judge Murphy, you look more agitated than usual.

EMILY

They are getting worse. They are practically dead, non-creative, non-productive parasites. None of us can help them.

JUDGE/NELLIE

(kindly)

You were going to clear out the corners of the nation. You have the power of your position, your gavel.

EMILY

You knew this would happen when you gave me the gavel and told me it was a broom. A broom that is no more effective than sweeping the tide from the beach.

(Emily keels over)

JUDGE/NELLIE

Mrs. Murphy!

EMILY

It is a pain, I've been getting. It usually passes but right now it is particularly bad.

JUDGE/NELLIE

I don't mean to be indelicate but do you have woman's problems?  
(Beat. Emily laughs at this black humour, he thinks she doesn't understand his question.)

(Hospital set up. Arthur and Nellie there by her side as Emily comes round from her surgery)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You made it ol' girl. I'd say intact but you don't have all the bits you came in with.

EMILY

(groggy in a little pain)

I told him. You make me well; I have much work left to do.

NELLIE

## High and Splendid Braveries

(showing her a letter)

Emily, it's from the office of the Prime Minister. It's our answer. Arthur thought I should be here when you opened it.

EMILY

It hurts - you open it.

(Nellie, tears open the envelope and reads)

NELLIE

He says they deliberated for some time in earnest, but the debate says there is no Latin word to describe a female senator and the name senator does not apply to us.

EMILY

What?

NELLIE

We aren't persons under the law --

EMILY

We are persons in matters of pains and penalties, but not in matter of rights and privileges--

NELLIE

He says the constitution is fixed--

EMILY

We shouldn't read the constitution fixed like a last will and testament, lest it should become one--

NELLIE

There is to be an election soon. Let's try afresh with the new government.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I don't normally open your mail, but I thought with you being in hospital...

EMILY

You saw some of my "fan" mail.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Postmarked Ottawa and some from Nova Scotia...

EMILY

I just throw them on the fire.

NELLIE

## High and Splendid Braveries

Well, with all your political agitation, you're going to have a warm winter!

(The doctor enters, Emily in a fetal position.)

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Mme. Murphy. How is my stubborn patient?

EMILY

Don't speak ill of the dead.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

You are far from dead; the operation was a tremendous success.

EMILY

I am in more pain now than before.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Then take the medication I prescribe.

(Princess Poppy appears to Emily and smiles at her)

EMILY

My whole life is the eradication of those drugs.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Madam Murphy! There is no drug that will replace clinically and therapeutically the opiate group.

EMILY

I have seen the results of that medicine.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Madam Murphy. Use the reason God gave you to be a Judge. You're encroaching on the territory of the martyr.

EMILY

I've seen it take lawyers, journalists, teachers, clergymen, doctors.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

I will not allow your addiction.

EMILY

I won't be a hypocrite.

## High and Splendid Braveries

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Indeed, you are the most obstinate person I have ever met and because of that, I know without a shadow of a doubt that you will not allow your addiction.

NURSE/NELLIE

(hopefully)

In England they force-fed the suffragettes.

EMILY

I can endure pain. I have given birth and I have buried my babies.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Yes, you are strong, but it will take you ten times as long to heal if you do not avail yourself of the rest and sleep these grains provide.

EMILY

Well, okay. I have much to do.

NURSE/NELLIE

Trust me we would all like to see you go home.

(The doctor prepares the syringe and injects it into her vein. She leans back, the effect is remarkable. The doctor and nurse leave. In the shadows, Princess Poppy seduces her, touching her brow and caressing her body. Emily responds to her touch. Her moans of pain turn to pleasure as she surrenders completely.)

(Blackout, a bed light goes on. Emily is sleeping, Princess Poppy is curled up in bed with her. The nurse checks her, the doctor enters.)

EMILY

She is the beneficent fairy that soothed the hurt of the world. She cools the flaming wheels and banks up the fires so that the flow of force is only passive.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Who you?

NURSE/NELLIE

She thinks highly of herself, eh?

EMILY

She is a defender of vitality, a repairer of waste and a balm for hurt minds. Good Princess Poppy!

(The nurse smiles.)

## High and Splendid Braveries

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Cut her dose by three quarters.

(Emily nods off.)

NURSE/NELLIE

Doctor, when are you going to discharge Mrs. Murphy?

DOCTOR/LOUISE

It was better when she was in pain?

NURSE/NELLIE

The healthier she gets the bigger the pain, if you get my drift.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Running you ragged, eh?

NURSE/NELLIE

She says her glimpse of her own mortality has left her fight renewed. She is going to take on the new Prime Minister of Canada.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

I'm fairly certain the PM isn't a drug fiend.

NURSE/NELLIE

No, she's petitioning him. Something about changing the law of the land, being legally recognized as a person.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

You have no wish to be legally recognized as a person?

NURSE/NELLIE

If it'll cut down on these bed pans, I'd be recognized as a bloody sheep.

(Parlor set up. Emily is sitting. Tea cups on the desk. Arthur takes her a tea.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Tea. And earl grey tea not pink tea.

EMILY

(knowing exactly)

I don't know what you mean.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA



## High and Splendid Braveries

Pink tea has always been the code word for you to plot revolutions with tea cups in hand.  
Right under the noses of unsuspecting men.

EMILY

I could never hide anything from you, Arthur.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Are you coming to bed?

EMILY

The Doctor is coming to see how I'm healing.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I know that you are recovering. Just to sleep.

EMILY

Oh, Arthur. You know it's just not about being sick.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Tell me.

EMILY

Most men would leave their wives if they didn't perform their "wifely duties".

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I guess I'm not like most men.

EMILY

And for that I am eternally grateful. I just know that in this lifetime I can never get pregnant again. I know I'm older and it may never happen but all the joy of being pregnant and being a mother doesn't make up for the pain of losing them.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I thought it was something to do with me.

EMILY

Never.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You're scared. That's perfectly understandable.

EMILY

How did you ever get to be so perfectly wonderful?

## High and Splendid Braveries

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(simply)

I just love you, you and the girls. And, I want what's best for you.

EMILY

And I want what's best for you. Thank you for not being the type of man who's honorable in front of his wife by day and then seeks out the services of others by night.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I guess you've heard more than most about all that.

EMILY

More than most.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You could write a different type of book.

EMILY

I do know a lot of things that I never knew before.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Really?

EMILY

I'm sure the church would find fault with a lot of it.

(pause)

But under the sacred covenant of marriage between two people who love and respect each other--

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Are you talking of certain - intimacies that don't result in children?

EMILY

I am.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

But, like you said the Archbishop wouldn't approve.

EMILY

That maybe more of an inspiration to action than a deterrent.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Maybe that's why I said it -

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

Mmmm.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Tell me more about the things you've heard in your court room.

EMILY

I could-

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

But-

EMILY

Or I could just show you.

(A charged moment. Emily reaches out and hooks her finger under his belt. Arthur closes his eyes.)

(Knock on the door.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I'll be upstairs, waiting.

EMILY

That's the doctor, I won't be long.

(Emily takes a deep breath. Pours the tea. The Doctor enters.)

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Don't you dare put that in your mouth!

EMILY

What!

DOCTOR/LOUISE

(Referring to the dish on the table)

Those pastries, those petit fours you're so fond of.

EMILY

Oh, yes. The French have always claimed superiority over the English, it's nonsense of course, but I will concede that they do excel in breads and pastries. As a vice, I don't think it's a bad one, do you doctor?

## High and Splendid Braveries

DOCTOR/LOUISE

The nurse noticed that your urine was sweet smelling. So, I drew blood and sent it away. You are living in a fortunate time. Dr. Charlie Best, an Englishman, but I overlook that, has just signed an agreement with Eli Lilly.

EMILY

What are you going on about?

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Oh, plainly you are diabetic. You suffer from diabetes mellitus. You are lucky we caught it.

EMILY

You're not here to check my incision and grant me a clean bill of health?

DOCTOR/LOUISE

In the past it would have killed you but now you need only to cut out sweets and take medicine.

EMILY

Will you allow me no treats?

DOCTOR/LOUISE

From your girth, I would have to say you are not used to depriving yourself.

EMILY

I'm not giving up my little pleasures.

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Your little pleasures as you call them are killing you. Your pancreas can no longer break down the sucrose. You have abused your body with these little white grains. Sound familiar?

EMILY

Doctor Lemay!

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Continue and you will lose circulation in your feet and limbs. They will be gangrenous and have to be amputated; first your feet then your legs then fingers hands and arms. Do you wish to function as a trunk Madame?

EMILY

Alright! You have made your point. I will cut it out. Leave me your pills and I'll take them. I have much work to do.

## High and Splendid Braveries

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Not pills.

(He pulls out a vial and needle)

EMILY

You're going to inject me!

DOCTOR/LOUISE

The first time, then you will do it yourself.

EMILY

I'm going to shoot up!

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Don't be melodramatic! It is insulin and it is taken intramuscularly. You will use your ample fatty stomach or thigh. Three times a day before meals.

EMILY

Three times a day! I'll be using a needle more than some of the people I prosecute!

(A loud breaking of glass. The doctor picks up a rock on the floor it has a note wrapped around it.)

DOCTOR/LOUISE

Don't read it or touch anything. I'll call the police.

(The Doctor runs out. Emily peels off the note and reads it. The Constable enters and looks around)

EMILY

Constable Mackintosh!

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

You cleaned up the glass. Did you keep the note? May I have it?

(Emily hands it to him, he reads it)

CONSTABLE/HENRIETTA

You seem to have made someone angry.

(takes out a tiny notebook)

Mrs. Murphy, have you ever disagreed with anyone?

(Emily just looks at him, pause, Emily looks at the tiny notebook)

EMILY

Have a seat. I'll get you a bigger piece of paper.

## High and Splendid Braveries

(Pink tea set up. Book launch. The strains of flapper music in the background "Crazy Rhythm", lights twinkle.)

EMILY

(continuing; mid story)

So, I said to the publisher, "Have you read it yet? It is good. And you will publish it. The WI of Canada signed a petition with four hundred and fifty thousand signatures saying I be immediately appointed to the Senate of Canada. This is important. I know that writers don't often tackle these subjects but it's a smart business decision. Blah, blah, blah." And he says "Emily! For God sakes shut up! Why do you always enter a room guns blazing? Of course, it's important; of course, I'll publish it. We're not all bastards you know."

(They laugh. Henrietta hugs her.)

IRENE

We still want to be careful not to be seen as being the better sex.

LOUISE

We're the neighbouring sex, Irene. We want to be able to do some of the things they do, not wage war, but high and splendid braveries.

NELLIE

I am equal to high and splendid braveries.

EMILY

Excellent! A motto for us.

(They toast with tea cups)

LOUISE

Nellie, my dear you look like a flapper!

NELLIE

I find no corset and shorter skirts very liberating.

LOUISE

I thought flappers flirted and smoked and drank gin from homemade stills!

(stops for a moment to hear the singer)

Young man what is the lyric you are singing? What's the use of prohibition?

(Louise crosses over to talk to the singer.)

EMILY

(calling after her)

Louise, Louise, just sit down and drink your tea, not every moment of your life has to be a fight.

## High and Splendid Braveries

HENRIETTA

Emily! Listen to you!

EMILY

Well, I'm off. I'm not going to stand here selling books one at a time, hoping against hope for a groundswell of reason. I'm going to see the Prime Minister and address cabinet myself with it.

LOUISE

Wait until we hear about the results of our petition to the supreme court.

EMILY

He can tell me in person.

(Office of the Prime Minister set up. the PM is flanked by a male secretary and The Archbishop.)

EMILY

Is this to be a private audience with the Prime Minister, or is there to be no separation of church and state?

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

The Archbishop is one of my constituents, just as you are, Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY

Judge Murphy. Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you for seeing me. As I mentioned in my letter, I would like the opportunity to speak to you and your cabinet.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Ah yes, your letters. My office overflows with them!

EMILY

I am in deadly earnest. My desire is to bring about a better world for everyone.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Should I cower Mrs. Murphy?

EMILY

We are not men-haters as our opponents love to picture us.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

I can tell you Mrs. Murphy that you and your temperance sisters are making the problem of illegal drug use worse.

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

How is that?

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

One - drug addiction increases enormously when dry laws go into a community. When alcohol is taken away, a man naturally turns to noxious drugs for the stimulation formerly received from alcohol. Two - narcotic drugs as contraband are more easily conveyed from place to place than alcohol and three the sale of drugs is much more lucrative.

EMILY

On what evidence? You can not substantiate these statements. I very much doubt their authenticity.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

You doubt the Prime Minister? What you are saying is, you think that you can do a better job than we have done so far?

EMILY

Yes.

(beat)

Can I tell you my asylum theory?

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

If you must.

EMILY

In a certain asylum, the management have a unique test for sanity. When any of the inmates exhibit evidence of returning to reason, they give them a test. Out in the courtyard there are a number of water taps for filling troughs, and to each hopeful, a small pail is given. They are told to drain out the troughs, the taps running at full force. Some of them bail away and bail away. The wise ones turn off the taps.

(Beat)

The women and their organizations have been bailing out the troughs of human misery with their little pails... but the big taps of, addiction; ignorance and greed are running night and day. It is weary, discouraging, heart-breaking work. Let me have a chance at the taps.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

The gentlemen would like nothing better than to have women in the Senate but my hands are tied. The BNA Act made no provisions.

EMILY

Prime Minister, you dishonor me.



## High and Splendid Braveries

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

I honour and revere women and I lift my hat when I meet a woman.

EMILY

I am asking for plain, common justice, and you give me hat-lifting?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Now, now don't be uncharitable. The law does not allow the Prime Minister to appoint women.

EMILY

The law needs to change. The PM could influence it if he saw fit. This isn't over yet.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

(laughing)

Is that a threat?

EMILY

No, a prophecy.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

You've exhausted every avenue available in Canada!

EMILY

The final court of appeals of Canadians isn't in Canada. It's in London, England. Next, we appeal the Privy Council of England, the highest court of appeal.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

You wouldn't.

EMILY

I have been looking into the matter.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

No! It's absurd! You cannot take the petition to London.

EMILY

We won't have to if you do the right thing.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

I have done the right thing.

EMILY

There is good news and bad news. The bad news is the total cost as quoted to me by the lawyer is \$23,368.47. The good news is the lawyer's fees are paid by you the government of Canada!

## High and Splendid Braveries

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

(Beat)

Secretary, look into that for me.

EMILY

(Shows him papers)

But we can save the taxpayers all this money if you change your mind.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

It makes no difference what your papers say. I have already decided the matter. You will not go over my head.

EMILY

Prime Minister, what choice are you giving me?

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

(Beat)

If you do this, I will repeal the temperance laws.

EMILY

You wouldn't.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

I'm working to put the responsibility of liquor control with the provinces. They will oversee the licenses for distribution. There's a lot of profit in liquor.

(Pointedly)

It's a smart business decision.

EMILY

Prime Minister!

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Your escapades will cost this office money, I shall have to raise it somehow.

EMILY

It isn't that much!

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

You waste your country's money on a case that will fail!

EMILY

But restricting liquor keeps the families better. My court will overflow with dockets...

## High and Splendid Braveries

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

For you to decide who should and shouldn't drink is preposterous. If you don't want to drink -don't. I'm not forcing you. But leave me to make my own choice.

EMILY

On your head be it. You make poorer the children, and put the bruises on their skin.

(Emily leaves.)

(Ottawa street backdrop. Emily and Arthur stroll down a street outside the Houses of Parliament.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

How did it go?

EMILY

Smells like it's going to snow. Let's go find a tea room before we go back to the hotel and see the girls.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I take it not well. You're not answering my question.

EMILY

In each case of change and progress someone must fall on the barbed wire to pave the way.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Fortunately, old girl you have a tough hide to break the fall.

EMILY

I need to calm myself without pastry. Why must everyone quarrel with me? Really it is quite exasperating and--

(She looks over)

I remember her. Sally Secreter.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Secreter?

EMILY

I forget her real name. She looks a lot better than the last time I saw her. Her prison term must have ended, and she has obviously recovered from her drug enslavement.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

She'll probably thank you. Why don't you go and say hello?

## High and Splendid Braveries

SALLY/IRENE

Mrs. Judge Murphy, in Ottawa!

EMILY

You have rosy cheeks, clear eyes, you look great.

SALLY/IRENE

You! You ruined my life! I had kicked before you incarcerated me. But you locked me up anyway. Because of you I lost my daughter!

EMILY

What?

SALLY/IRENE

She was taken away from me. Moved with the family who were looking after her. Nova Scotia. When I finally found out where she was, it was too late they'd put her to work with the hay. She had asthma; her lungs couldn't take it.

EMILY

I'm so sorry.

SALLY/IRENE

Do you have any idea how much pain you've caused me?

EMILY

No.

SALLY/IRENE

Sent me to be sodomized by that sadist of a prison warden.

EMILY

I had no idea. He seemed decent when we met.

SALLY/IRENE

I bet he did. Did you have tea and crumpets with him with my naked sister just lying there?

EMILY

The woman who hung herself.

SALLY/IRENE

## High and Splendid Braveries

My sister! You were in court that first day. Sitting in the gallery, you and the women's institute to educate yourself about the plight of women. Did you help her? Did you do one thing to make her life better. No, you observed her like a science experiment. The underclass. And when you went to see her, was it to help. No, it was to pump her for information about the whereabouts of your friend. Tell me, when you saw her dead body in the morgue, when you were looking at her puncture marks, did you happen to turn her over and see all the blood from her ass? Did you have tea and crumpets with Sodomite Sam the warden.

EMILY

I can look into these matters when I get back to Alberta. I'm successful at change and political protest.

SALLY/IRENE

I did my "political protest". First with letters to your house and then the last time I was in Alberta to visit my husband - who you put away for extra-long because of spite, you were having a bad day...

EMILY

Your husband was that smuggler.

SALLY/IRENE

They say sticks and stones...

EMILY

Stones? That was all you.

SALLY/IRENE

But A. you have no evidence. And B. I live out of province. C. I'll deny it all. You think you're such a goody two shoes cleaning up the world with your high and mighty morals. You haven't a clue about the pain and injustice you have caused.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily? Emily. Let's go.

SALLY/IRENE

I hate you with every fiber of my being. Hell is even too good for you. I hope you are damned to purgatory forever. Just suspended, able to witness but never fix all the suffering you've caused.

(Arthur takes Emily off. Sally stands and watches them go.)

(Parlor set up.)

EMILY

## High and Splendid Braveries

I can't stop thinking about her.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You can only do what you can do.

EMILY

What's that supposed to mean?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Maybe, you did let the power go to your head in the beginning. Maybe you did let your personal life interfere a little. Maybe you weren't perfect. Deal with it Emily. None of us is.

EMILY

Do you think Mad Maddy's still alive?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

No.

EMILY

No, because you really think that or no, because you don't want me going out to find her.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Dr. Lemay told me, she died. Just before Doris. I didn't tell you then because...

EMILY

Oh.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Do you want some tea?

EMILY

Do you think that Mad Maddy thought I gave up on her?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Does it matter?

EMILY

Shouldn't it?

(Beat)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

## High and Splendid Braveries

Look, the Archbishop will be here in a few minutes. I'm sure it's not me he's here to see. Try to be polite.

EMILY

How tiresome. I had wanted to write tonight. But rest assured I will serve my polite tea, and petits fours.

(The Archbishop enters.)

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Mr. Murphy! It is Mrs. Murphy with whom I wished to to speak.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Of course.

EMILY

Good afternoon, Archbishop. No family member in trouble I hope, as a judge, I can't be bought you know?

(Winks at Arthur)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

That was a little joke, Archbishop.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

I'm here to help you Arthur. With your wife and her folly.

EMILY

Archbishop, what are you talking about?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

You have to be satisfied with attaining the vote and stop this other nonsense.

EMILY

Nonsense?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

I promised the PM I would have a word with you. Guide you. Your wanting to work in the Senate. It is a moral question. It affects the fundamental unit of our society - the family. We are called to make sure that the best laws are enacted for the good of our society.

EMILY

I agree with you about making the best laws. That is why I'm going.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

## High and Splendid Braveries

I called on you to discuss the preservation of the integrity of your marriage.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Archbishop, we have a fine marriage.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Mr. Murphy was it not the overburdening of your family that led you to retire your collar?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

No.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

People tell me you spend a lot of time mothering the girls with an absent wife.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

That is not why I surrendered my collar.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

I care for the preservation of the family. You are so caught up working every day in court and with your travel and book launches and "pink teas". Your work here is what is needed. Raising your beautiful daughters, their care must be above all. Their welfare. God meant for you to do this work. The Heavenly Father designed you for it. To pursue this folly is selfish, wrong and the abandonment of your work here as wife and mother is an abomination.

EMILY

I am a working mother.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

The last time I heard the phrase working mother, it was in defense of a creature who was on third avenue.

EMILY

And what were you doing on third avenue?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily! Archbishop, surely you do not mean to compare my wife to--

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

What I am trying to do is protect your souls from damnation!

EMILY

God will damn me if I go to the senate?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE



## High and Splendid Braveries

It's about redemption--

EMILY

If you want redemption over punishment, I suggest you work with penal institutions--

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Women should be protected by men--

EMILY

Who is running the still? Who is shipping the drugs? Who is paying for the services of the prostitutes? Men. Their penalties under law, minimal at most. Most aren't even charged! But the women who have fallen from grace with such a resounding crash, we lock them up and whip them, rape them and wonder why they hang themselves with their own stockings!

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

You have seen things that a Lady should not have...

EMILY

But I have and now I want justice. I want justice for them all.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Listen, God sent down his only son-

EMILY

And today if God sent down his only daughter, you would see her crucified!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily!

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Yes, I heard you had two daughters who died in this family.

EMILY

(Emily slaps the Archbishop right across the face)

Get. Out. Of my house.

(The Archbishop leaves.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Well, that was certainly not polite tea and petits fours.

(Office of the PM set up.)

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

## High and Splendid Braveries

I have come to warn you, Prime Minister, about Emily Murphy.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Indeed. What revolt is she planning now?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

She slapped me. I've never been slapped before in my whole life! She is unbalanced. She hates men. Heaven only knows what will happen if you appoint her to the Senate.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Brandy? It's perfectly legal, the doctor has prescribed it to me for my nerves.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Emily Murphy has that effect on a lot of people.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

The public understand purposes of liquor for men in our position. Rulers of nations, Kings, emperors it has historic precedence. It is only the commoners who have problems with the beast.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

You know best Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Used wisely it is not the evil those creatures make it out to be. And the trick is not to let the public see the politicians inebriated.

(Beat)

I would like to write a cheque from the government for your good works. \$21,000 to be exact.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

That would be most generous of you, Prime Minister...

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

I would like to, but alas I am unable. There aren't the funds in the coffers. Since it appears that that is the exact amount it will cost this government in legal fees to go to England to uphold an interpretation of the BNA Act that I have already interpreted.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

What a waste of funds. This is exactly the type of mayhem that this problem causes.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Sadly, the public are unaware of such things.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

## High and Splendid Braveries

I shall consider it my duty to inform them, I have various connections.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

That would be most propitious of you - you understand it cannot come from me - my hands are tied.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

We understand each other perfectly, that is the way with men, isn't it?

(Parlour set up. The phone rings. Emily paces and snatches it up.)

EMILY

Yes?... thank you for your opinion. Good day.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

(upset with the interruptions to his writing)

The phone has been ringing off the hook since the article in the paper about the Privy Council costs. Even women are calling to complain.

EMILY

They say it is vanity. They say I'm a trouble maker.

(Arthur/Henrietta says nothing)

And what do you think, Arthur?

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I say we don't invite them to your congratulatory tea when you are on parliament hill.

(Emily kisses him on the forehead)

EMILY

They are eight hours ahead in London. They are deciding tonight. I shall never sleep.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I know one or two tricks to tire you out.

EMILY

Arthur!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

What! You taught them to me.

(Huge shadows of bewigged men are on the wall, they debate in silence. Emily is dreaming the shadows grow bigger and bigger, then - Black. A phone rings, a small light comes on. Emily, her hair tousled, answers.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

## High and Splendid Braveries

Emily? Is everything alright? Did you have your snow falling nightmare again?

EMILY

Oh, Arthur! They just called!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You won!

EMILY

We did!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Congratulations. Senator Murphy.

EMILY

(dancing swinging him around)

I know it's bad parenting, but I want to wake my daughters- I want to shout it out the window, we won, we won!

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

But you're not going to yell out the window, are you?

(They hug)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I'm so very proud of you.

(Emily pulls the sampler out kisses it.)

EMILY

I have to phone the others.

(beat)

Arthur, guess what the lawyer said? This doesn't just affect the women of Alberta and Canada but all those in the British Empire.

(Silence)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

It does? Australia? India? All.

EMILY

Yes.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

A congratulatory pink tea with the girls?

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

We should but Henri is up to her eyeballs with the Victoria Order of Nurses and the other three are MLA's. I think we're all just too busy.

(Press conference set up. The PM at the podium. Emily nearby, Arthur beside her beaming. A Reporter takes photos.)

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Today, I will make history by appointing a woman to the Senate. I am a Prime Minister who moves with the times, a man who rights injustice, who listens to his constituents. And so today I present to you - Cairine Reay Wilson.

(Emily is shocked. The Prime Minister gives a little laugh. Much applause and the clicking of photographs. Arthur, shocked looks from the presentation to Emily.)

REPORTER/IRENE

The new Senator is very slim and youthful in spite of her having eight children. But, Mr. Prime Minister why did you not appoint Mrs. Murphy?

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

(laughing it off as an absurd suggestion)

Mrs. Murphy is a little too masculine and perhaps a bit too flamboyant!

REPORTER/IRENE

But wasn't there a lot of support for Emily Murphy?

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Oh, we never could have had Mrs. Murphy in the Senate! She would have caused too much trouble!

(Emily, Arthur at her side and the Archbishop, square off.)

EMILY

So, I am to be kept in my place after all.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY

Judge Murphy.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Hmm, yes.

EMILY

He brought me here to humiliate me.

## High and Splendid Braveries

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Nonsense. He invited you to witness the introduction of the first female senator. I thought you'd be glad.

(Emily looks around)

EMILY

Tell me, where does he keep the petitions?

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

I don't know what you mean?

EMILY

The petitions with the thousands and thousands of signatures of women who requested, demanded, that I be seated in the senate.

ARCHBISHOP/LOUISE

Only women's signatures?

(Emily is too stunned to answer, Arthur steps in.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Persons. People. Humans Beings. Like your mother.

(The Prime Minister enters)

EMILY

Why?

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

I'm not against all women. I just don't like you. You are speechless. Well, there's a first. Let me elaborate, you are a pest, bull headed and full of yourself. If there's one thing I can't stand it's arrogance.

EMILY

Look in the mirror.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

Et tu Mrs. Murphy. Spend more time looking in the mirror, fix yourself up. Though I suppose makeup can only do so much.

EMILY

I do not decorate, I initiate.

## High and Splendid Braveries

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

You aggravate.

EMILY

Agitate!

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

I know you only recently got the vote and your knowledge of the inner runnings of Parliament rudimentary, but let me remind you of one not so little fact. Senators are not elected, they are appointed. And they are appointed by me. The Prime Ministers of Canada decide.

(Beat)

When you elect a female Prime Minister, you may return and ask her.

EMILY

I've always detested Leacock. But I fear his prediction. Even now women have the vote they won't use it to elect women.

PRIME MINISTER/NELLIE

I've always liked Leacock. I trust this is the last time you will be bothering this office?

(Emily nods and walks slowly away from the Archbishop and PM. She walks past the reporter, clicking photos. Emily watches utterly humiliated. She talks to Arthur while nearby the Reporter calls out to the new Senator.)

REPORTER/IRENE

Mrs. Wilson you're easy on the camera lens!

EMILY

How is that a prerequisite to being a senator?

REPORTER/IRENE

I hear you're easy to get along with people.

EMILY

And I?

REPORTER/IRENE

So slim!

EMILY

A little reserve energy. A little insulation against the slings and arrows of...

REPORTER/IRENE

Tell us about your dress did you have it made special for the occasion?

## High and Splendid Braveries

EMILY

Please, don't let your very first speech be on fashion.

REPORTER/IRENE

Will you support actions for social betterment?

EMILY

(softly)

But not initiate. Not rally. Who will implement all the changes that are to be made? Fund the slow reduction clinics? Write the prescriptions for a sick country?

(Arthur holds her. The lights close on the reporter. Evening. Emily crosses to the line and hangs the carpet on it. Her sadness transforms to anger as she beats it. Arthur comes into the garden concerned.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily, there won't be a fiber on that carpet left!

EMILY

But look at what we did Arthur! Three MLA's! We vote, we preside and now we are legally for the first-time persons.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You always were.

EMILY

That wasn't the end goal! That was just a goddamned technicality.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Emily!

EMILY

One thing to get done on the list before I could implement my changes.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

They will read your book. It will have an impact.

EMILY

Those bastards.

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

Calm down!

EMILY

There need to be reforms. Laws rewritten. We have this window of opportunity. Before the cost to us is, too great.



## High and Splendid Braveries

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

You are too apocalyptic and too pessimistic. By the turn of the next century this will all be historic nonsense. Stop beating that carpet!

(He grabs her. She is spent.)

(Then she puts her hands to her chest. Strains of crazy rhythm.)

ARTHUR/HENRIETTA

I'm going for the doctor.

(Arthur rushes off. Crazy rhythm gets louder, mixed with pounding heart. Emily freezes with the intensity of the pain.)

(Silence.)

(A snow flake falls.)

(Another snow flake falls.)

DORIS/IRENE (V.O.)

(softly)

Mummy.

(Another snow flake falls, followed by more.)

(Then softly Bach Cello suites 2 & 3 - song IV Sarabande.)

(Shadows form in the night. The shadows turn into the oversized silhouettes of the women in the circle.)

EMILY

And here we are frozen again.

HENRIETTA

Emily look. Did you do this?

LOUISE

Oh, Emily look where they put us now!

NELLIE

Oh. My. God.

EMILY

This isn't the crack park.

## High and Splendid Braveries

LOUISE

Emily, over there is the Senate...

EMILY

This is Parliament Hill? I always wanted to...

HENRIETTA

And now you are.

NELLIE

In perpetuity, longer than any Prime Minister.

(Emily smiles. The snow continues to fall.)

Curtain.