

# HIGH AND SPLENDID BRAVERIES

By Caroline Russell-King

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## DEDICATED TO

My mother-in-law, Angela Matthews – such a polite political protester – who was with me at the unveiling; Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who shook my hand and made all the difference; Governor General Adrienne Clarkson and Minister Sheila Copps, role models who spoke on the day. Also to Frances 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; Elizabeth Stepkowski Tarhan, for her insight.

## PLAYWRIGHT MUSINGS

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, things composted in my brain and I started to hear their voices, Emily's the loudest and most insistent. 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 but she drove the play, and so it became hers. Her Point of View. I am glad to have been her scribe demanding though 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 Trudeau. She was wearing a red rose pin and we talked, albeit briefly, of loss. I began to think about how loss shapes us all. I thought of Emily's losses and how they 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. She's a pushy ol' broad and I fell in love with her.

## CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

The play can be produced with as many as 23 actors or with doubling.

Actor #1 F	Emily Murphy
Actor #2 M	Archbishop, Judge, Leacock, Reporter 2, Doctor, Smuggler
Actor #3 M	Reporter 1, Warden, Arthur, Shopkeeper, Farmer, Allen, Prime Minister
Actor #4 F	Nellie, Silvia, Princess Poppy, Doris, Nora, Secretary
Actor #5 F	Henrietta, Madeline, Irene, Clerk, Sally, Louise, Nurse, Reporter 3

The casting can also be done with five women with cross-gender casting.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

The staging can be done sparkly with the furniture from the statues: three chairs and a table moved into different configurations. Or, it can be designed as palatially as you'd like.

The Famous Five were all real people, as was Stephen Leacock. The rest are amalgams and/or fictitious. Certain events did happen historically, specifically and generally; the rest is conjecture and imagination (I was privy to none of it.)

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.

It is understood that the V.O. is heard in Emily's head and isn't a ghost or voice from beyond.

*She should have had more time to spend  
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

ACT 1

(Some realm. At the open, live Emily is in the same position as her statue for a second. She then gestures for Archbishop to sit. Enter Archbishop.)

ARCHBISHOP Mrs. Murphy! (He doesn't sit.)

EMILY Archbishop.

ARCHBISHOP Did you hear the news? I just came from Sir John.

EMILY Ah, yes.

ARCHBISHOP It was hard to console him ... hauled away like yesterday's rubbish! They took him down, wrapped him in foam, and strapped him to a flatbed truck.

EMILY He served this country for half a century, protected our fishing and lumber, thwarted the American annexations and invasions—

ARCHBISHOP The Americans were canny.

EMILY That is the politest thing you could call them at the time. Sir John protected our national interests. He united the country from coast to coast like pearls on a string.

ARCHBISHOP There were some issues of corruption with the CPR string.

EMILY No enterprise that monumental goes without a hitch.

ARCHBISHOP I suppose.

EMILY Was it the Chinese who called for the removal of his statue because of the treatment with the workers laying the line? So many lives lost.

ARCHBISHOP No, it was the Natives.

EMILY Because of Louis Riel's execution?

ARCHBISHOP No, because of the residential schools....

EMILY The residential schools came under the jurisdiction of the church, Archbishop.

ARCHBISHOP The church had a duty of care to save the poor little heathens' souls.

EMILY You were cruel, there was—

ARCHBISHOP Order. There was order. We enforced discipline with corporal punishment. We had our own rebellions to quash.

EMILY So because no statue of *you* exists, they remove his?

ARCHBISHOP Governments come and go, kings toppled, countries conquered, boundaries redrawn. In flux, only heaven's constant. The church floats above all the consternation untouched, moral, immortal.

EMILY Better they should have dismantled a church–

ARCHBISHOP Even if they did, you can't destroy our faith, we endure–

EMILY Archbishop, beside the gossip of the day, to what may I attribute this visit?

ARCHBISHOP Why, Emily Murphy! I only come to comfort and console *you*.

EMILY Oh, is that what you're doing? Why would I need... oh, you think I'm next? That they will pluck me from the circle, maybe raze us all–

ARCHBISHOP I'm sure the rumblings I hear will come to naught.

EMILY Of what am I accused? Or any of us?

ARCHBISHOP Well ...

EMILY Well nothing! Nellie secured the votes for women.

ARCHBISHOP Not all–

EMILY Henrietta helped all women. She started the Victorian Order of Nurses, the first YWCA. Louise was the first woman to be elected to the Alberta legislature. Before her, we could not own property!

ARCHBISHOP (Sneer) She was one for the temperance movement; banning alcohol.

EMILY There were so many men under the spell. Drinking the money for the food and clothing of children. And Irene! Also elected! She established municipal hospitals, dental clinics–

ARCHBISHOP She was for the sterilization of the mentally infirm–

EMILY It was seen as a solution, a kindness. For all the girls, mentally infirm, manipulated by the men, and left to deal with the aftermath. It was logical, it was reasonable–

ARCHBISHOP It was eugenics.

EMILY And my crime?

ARCHBISHOP You didn't help up all those behind you equally....

EMILY And? I sense there's more.

ARCHBISHOP Your attitude with the Chinese. Some might see you as racist–

EMILY At first, I associated the importing of such substance with the Orientals because opium came from the Orient.

ARCHBISHOP We don't use that word anymore.

EMILY It's from the Latin, for east–

ARCHBISHOP It's Eurocentric, connotations laden with colonizing–

EMILY Colonizing! Archbishop, surely you can't be lecturing me, given that the church, with soup bowl in one hand and in the other hand–

ARCHBISHOP Saved a lot of souls. And now I am here to help, should your statue be the next to be un-plinthed, relegated to a dusty warehouse or smelting pot like our poor Founding Father. And confidentially he drank–

EMILY You are hardly breaking a confidence. We *all* know he drank, and I suspect why–

ARCHBISHOP Oh, and you purport to know–

EMILY His son died young. I know the unending pain of the death of a child. That was the beginning for me. You were there. It started at the church...  
  
(Church. The table becomes the altar. Glorious stained-glass windows bathe mourners in riotous colours. Organ music. Somber.)

ARCHBISHOP (Pulls out his mourning sash) Mrs. Murphy, my deep condolences.

EMILY Archbishop, you won't lead the proceedings?

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

NELLIE           (Enters) Emily, I'm so sorry.

EMILY            Nellie!

NELLIE           How are the girls?

EMILY            They are at my mother's. My father came, though.

NELLIE           He came a long way to show his support.

EMILY            Yes, he always shows his support. It makes up for him saying such horribly stupid things.

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

HENRIETTA       (Entering) Emily, my dear.

EMILY            Henrietta, thank you for coming.

HENRIETTA       Where else would I be? (They hug.) My dear friend, how are you holding up?

EMILY            Oh, you know....

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

HENRIETTA       Irene sends her love and condolences. She would have been here but she is with the United Farmers Association. So many meetings. Politics!

EMILY            How is the battle going?

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

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

NELLIE           Stupid man.

EMILY            Nellie!

NELLIE           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. No one, not even Arthur, should be made to bury his own daughter. The Archbishop says, “you have to believe she is in a better place.”

NELLIE            Than with her mother?

                      (The judge approaches Emily)

JUDGE            My condolences, Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY            Thank you for coming, Judge.

JUDGE            In good time you'll be able to return to your Women's Institute activities and forget all about this.

EMILY            My nine-month-old baby died. Why would I want to forget about this?

                      (Doctor Lemay tactfully intercedes.)

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

EMILY            (Gratefully) Thank you for all you did for her, Doctor.

DOCTOR            I wish it were more. Remember, you can have others.

EMILY            I don't want any more children. And no one could replace her.

DOCTOR            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.)

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

                      (Archbishop enters and overhears.)

ARCHBISHOP      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 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.

NELLIE           Take all the time you need. The Women's Institute and parish work will be there when you come back.

EMILY            The group is split because half of them say we don't really know the issues other women face because we come from a different class.

NELLIE           We can't just cross the tracks and observe them like a science experiment!

EMILY            I know where we can sit and observe and see how the other half lives. Arthur was called as a witness once. I went to watch... we can sit in the gallery of the courtroom!

NELLIE           Courtroom?

*(Courtroom.)*

CLERK            All rise. Judge Roberts presiding.

*(Judge Roberts enters and surveys the room.)*

JUDGE            Emily Murphy!

EMILY            *(Waves)* Judge Roberts!

*(Judge sits behind the table, Emily stands in the gallery.)*

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

SILVIA            *(Sulky)* I'm not guilty.

JUDGE            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            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            Very well. You may stay. Mrs. Murphy, you are very stubborn.

EMILY            You are very wise Judge, Your Honour.

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

EMILY            On my honour, Your Honour.

JUDGE            Silvia Myrtle, you are charged with prostitution and peddling opium. You were caught red-handed in a hotel with a married man—

SILVIA            And, I don't see him in this courtroom.

JUDGE            And a cache of opium.

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

JUDGE            Mad Maddie?

SILVIA            Madeline Osbourne.

EMILY            Excuse me, Judge.

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

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

JUDGE            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.

NELLIE            Madeline didn't come to your daughter's funeral.

EMILY            Leave it to me to investigate. I'll talk to her after the case is over.

NELLIE           Where? In a tea room? She's going to prison.

EMILY            Then I'll visit her there.

NELLIE           Emily!

                    (Prison. Rattle of many keys. Warden enters.)

WARDEN          Terrible weather we're having, Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY            Yes. How do you know my name?

WARDEN          I'm the Prison Head Warden—

EMILY            Yes. Sam MacDonald, right?

WARDEN          I saw you at the court house. What can I do for you? Visiting times are almost over. But I can't imagine you know anyone here.

EMILY            Oh, I'm here for Mrs. Silvia Myrtle. I saw her last week in court...

WARDEN          Follow me. She's in here.

EMILY            Oh, is there another building?

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

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

                    But you are with the W.I.

EMILY            True. You don't mind?

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

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

EMILY            Pardon me?

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

WARDEN          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            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            Well, it isn't chicken pox.

                         (Emily doesn't know.)

                         That's drugs. But she didn't die of that. Hung herself in her cell.

EMILY            Oh, no.

WARDEN            Doctor couldn't revive her.

EMILY            Poor thing.

WARDEN            It happens sometimes.

EMILY            You don't monitor them?

WARDEN            Not 24 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 Silvia back up with the sheet in a tender way.) What about her family?

WARDEN            (Scoffs) All her friends would be cokies, opium users.

EMILY            Well then, Mr. Sam MacDonald, I want to be taken to an opium lounge.

WARDEN            You mean den. I'm not in the habit of giving the public guided tours.

EMILY            I'm looking for an old friend. This woman claimed to have known her. So that's where I'd like to go. I know they're not listed in the business directory and I don't know any other addicts. I thought you'd know where to go.

WARDEN            Of course I know where to go; I used to be a constable on the force.

EMILY            You'll take me?

WARDEN            (Calling off to a colleague) Howster, I'm taking the ... well I can't really say wee ... (Emily raises her eyebrows) but I'm clocking off early to take this lassie on a field trip.

EMILY            You are very kind.

WARDEN            It's foul-smelling like vomit and urine. Skeletons with big eyes, lying on filthy coloured cushions. (They start walking together.)

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.

WARDEN            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.

WARDEN            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?

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

EMILY            Did they run when you came in to arrest them?

WARDEN            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.

WARDEN            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 lit 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.)

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

EMILY            Madeline?

MADELINE            Mad Maddie Osbourne to you.

EMILY            Tell me that a drug ring abducted you and has kept you here against your will.

MADLINE        Can't.

EMILY            You came here willingly.

MADLINE        I would live in this cave if I could.

EMILY            Your family?

MADLINE        I need this to keep me from getting sick.

EMILY            That makes you sick.

MADLINE        (Looking longingly at Princess Poppy) The absence of such.

EMILY            You need feeding, exercise, fresh air, prayer.

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

EMILY            I can help you.

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

WARDEN         (Entering) Mrs. Murphy, the police are outside. I explained your presence; they have given me 30 seconds to come get you before the arrests begin.

MADLINE        Take me with you!

WARDEN         Die you will of the black candle. Arrest will be good for you. Mrs. Murphy, we have to leave, lest you want your good name tied up in all this.

MADLINE        Help me! Emily!

EMILY            I will come and see you tomorrow in lock-up when the apathetic drugs have worn off.

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

WARDEN         That's enough!

EMILY            Mr. Mackintosh, maybe I can help. You can tell the police that they have enough for your paddy wagon tonight. Let me take this one home. She doesn't

really belong here. You can release her to me. I'm very respectable, my husband is a minister and I head the W.I.

WARDEN            On your head be it, Mrs. Murphy.

(Parlour. 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!

MADELINE        And where is she?

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

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

EMILY            (Angry) Sleep! Eat!

MADELINE        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.

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

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

MADELINE        Another hit.

EMILY            And then what?

MADELINE        Another hit.

EMILY            And then what?

MADELINE        Another hit.

EMILY            And then ... what?

MADELINE        Look! I didn't exactly plan this!

EMILY            What did you want before cocaine and heroin?

MADELINE        That was a long time ago.



EMILY            But, what did you want?

MADELINE        I don't know.

EMILY            Yes you do! WHAT DID YOU WANT?

MADELINE        (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.)

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

                      (Madeline exits as 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           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, looking wildly around.)

                      What are you doing out of bed?

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

MADELINE        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.

MADELINE        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.

MADELINE        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          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          You do that, Madame. Good day.

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

DOCTOR          You are bright and tenacious, Madame 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          You are so naïve it is almost embarrassing. It makes my toes curl.  
  
(The Doctor exits. Doris runs on.)

DORIS            Mummy. Mrs. Osbourne threw up in my toy chest!  
  
(Doris runs out. Arthur enters.)

ARTHUR          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          I can't be seen going to Bootlegger Bill's.

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

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

EMILY            Look, Jesus drank wine.

ARTHUR            Emily. See reason.

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

ARTHUR            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            No, Emily. It's wrong.

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            (Concedes) Nobody is more stubborn than you.

EMILY            Thank you.

                      (Parlour. Nellie and Emily sit in chairs.)

NELLIE            I've been waiting for you.

EMILY            I'm sorry, Nellie. 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          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            Mummy? May I use this as a tomahawk? For our game of cowboys 'n injuns?

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          What a sweet girl. (*To Doris*): Shouldn't you be playing with your dollies?

- DORIS 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 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 I'm sorry, I don't believe we've been introduced.
- EMILY Oh, I beg your pardon. You know Nellie McClung?
- LEACOCK 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 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 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 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        Women should stay out of politics.
- NELLIE            Politics simply means public affairs. Yours and mine.
- LEACOCK        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.
- LEACOCK        Some things are not fit for women's eyes.
- NELLIE            Women have cleaned up things since time began. And when women get into politics it will be no different.
- LEACOCK        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 in again.)
- DORIS            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 currant 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            Nothing could wake her!
- EMILY            Perhaps I should check on her after all.
- DORIS            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            But it's too earl—
- EMILY            Doris!

(Doris exits)

I apologize. Where were we?

LEACOCK 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 (Offstage) 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 But I want to know what happens to Huckberry Finn. (To Mr. Leacock) She's having the most ever so funnest adventure.

LEACOCK *She* is?

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

LEACOCK 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.

(A Fairground. Irene Parlby is hanging a United Farmers Association banner on the info booth.)

EMILY Hello, Irene. You are so busy I hardly ever get to see you anymore. I did just see Nellie; she came to tea with Stephen Leacock – I know him well, you know – (she smiles at her own joke.) I wanted Stephen to write a book about the drug trade, but he declined so I'm going to.

IRENE How are you going to research it?

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

IRENE            Watch.

                  (A farmer enters.)

                  Good morning sir, may I give you this circular? I'm Irene Parlby, President of the United Farmers Women's Association, which, as I'm sure you know, is to all our benefit. Perhaps you'd like to read it. Or take it home for your wife.

FARMER         She already reads too much. Reading when she should be patchin' quilts. Little lady, it's a mistake for gals to know more than you need to know. Ma wife was reading, fell asleep and forgot to close the hen house door. Weasel killed 27 hens.

EMILY          And this happened, not because she was exhausted from her work, but because she was literate.

FARMER         Pah! (Spits and exits.)

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.

                  (The street outside a store.)

                  Is this where you fight your battles, Louise? On the streets.

LOUISE         I hear from the ladies you've been visiting courts and jails and opium dens.

EMILY          Touché, Louise. Show me how it works.

LOUISE         Here, put on your Women's Christian Temperance Union white ribbon. White for purity, ribbon because everyone will have access to it. (She pins a ribbon on Emily.) Easily identifies members of the WCTU. 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. (Enter a shopkeeper in a green apron. He hurries over to assist them, notices the white ribbons.)

SHOPKEEPER   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    Do you know what WCTU stands for around here?
- EMILY            No ...
- SHOPKEEPER    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    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 to 9. They will get more business. Yes, a smart business decision. We'd still like to put up a poster in your window.
- SHOPKEEPER    Bit of a cross purpose.
- LOUISE           It was a business decision.
- SHOPKEEPER    How's that, then? I reckon if people don't drink, shopkeeps'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 (lets 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    Vote? You're not only a white ribboner but you're one of them women's rights women. Suffragettes!
- LOUISE           Suffrage is a weapon of home protection because it can help stamp out the liquor traffic.
- SHOPKEEPER    You're going to put me out of business!
- EMILY            Not if you become one of the favoured businesses. (Beat) Take a poster.



SHOPKEEPER (Snatching the poster out of her hands) Blackmail.

(Emily and Louise leave the Shopkeeper.)

EMILY Louise, I want your help. The Women's Christian Temperance Union is a force to be reckoned with. With its conviction of purpose, 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 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 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?

(Parlour. Arthur is lit candles )

EMILY Arthur! Candlelight?

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

EMILY Oh.

ARTHUR You have a date with another man?

EMILY Well ...

ARTHUR I was joking!

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

ARTHUR But?

EMILY I've arranged to meet Dr. Lemay tonight.

ARTHUR 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 I suppose that is the safer of the two options.

EMILY So you'll let me go?

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

(Drug store. Low light. The doctor gestures to the table. Emily pulls out her notebook.)

DOCTOR 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 traffickers – just ornithologists.

DOCTOR If you write about legal opiate manufacturing I'm sure you will increase your readership.

EMILY It's a smart business decision.

DOCTOR 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 touches Emily's cheek with her chiffon poppy shawl. 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 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.)

EMILY (Giggling and trying desperately to stay focused) It's remarkably sticky! I've had my hand closed for a few moments and it's difficult to open.

DOCTOR 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 The residue is called pen yang and is now ready.

EMILY I'm ready for anything.

DOCTOR You as my assistant have cooked with me tonight – collaboration.

EMILY I have cooked up a batch of opium!

DOCTOR (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. Early morning. The Judge carries a cup of tea.)

CLERK All rise. The honorable Judge W. Roberts presiding.

JUDGE (The Judge looks to the gallery where Emily stands as usual.) You look as tired as I feel, Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY I was cooking 'til late last night.

JUDGE A woman's work is never done.

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

JUDGE Mrs. Murphy, what are you doing? You can't be on the courtroom floor – go back to the gallery.

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 (Pause) 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. We are still waiting for Mr. Miller's lawyer.

(Mr. and Mrs. Miller stand before the Judge.)

EMILY I have things to do; he should be on time. 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 to, 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.

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

EMILY She didn't foul that nest. Your comments should be to the husband. (She addresses 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.

(Mr. Miller looks at his wife and nods imperceptibly.)

JUDGE Sounds good to me. (Hits his gavel.) Are you going to represent the next client as well? It should be a quick morning.

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 Be careful what you wish for, Mrs. Murphy.

(Garden. Emily is beating the carpet. Nellie enters.)

NELLIE Emily, what is it? I got your message that it was important. And why are you beating the carpet? Where is your help?

EMILY My housekeeper has bursitis and I've relieved her of this particular duty. And while I abhor mopping and dusting, I've discovered I like beating the rugs.

NELLIE And what was the important part?

EMILY Here. (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 I'm writing about Canada's drug trade, use of and subsequent consequences. I've been interviewing–

NELLIE Poking your nose in–

EMILY Research!

NELLIE Who's on your list of suspects?

EMILY Could be anyone. 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. (beatPause.) 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 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'll just blame me. Poking my nose in, didn't you say?

NELLIE Who's going to read this book? Is it just salaciousness?

EMILY No, it's a wake-up. I want the Senators to buy it so they can change the laws.

NELLIE And if they don't buy it?

EMILY I'll give them all copies. They hold the key.

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 continues, pointedly.)

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

EMILY            Yes. Arthur ... I'm going to be a Senator.

(Doris rushes in.)

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

ARTHUR           I'm calling the police!

(Police station. Dim lighting delineates a holding tank. Women crowd 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-

MADELINE        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.

MADELINE        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.

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

EMILY            Try to think of things other than your craving.

MADELINE      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!

MADELINE      I know this man, you can–

EMILY          I will get you no drugs!

MADELINE      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.

MADELINE      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.

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

(Parlour. Arthur reads a pocket bible. Emily bustles in.)

EMILY          Arthur, I can't stop. I got the idea to talk to Archbishop about it while–

ARTHUR        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        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        You get tunnel vision sometimes.

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        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            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 spend a quiet evening together later. Promise. You'll put the girls to bed? And read to them?

ARTHUR            What book are you adulterating this time?

EMILY            Treasure Island.

ARTHUR            (Sternly) Featuring?

EMILY            (Meekly, quickly) The adventures of the young pirate, Jillian Hawkins.  
  
(Phone rings.)

ARTHUR            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            Well, so do I.

EMILY            I'm meeting the Archbishop!

ARTHUR            I'm administering last rites.

EMILY            Fine. You win. The girls will be alright by themselves for a bit.

ARTHUR            Not Doris. She takes after you; she'll get into no end of trouble.

EMILY            I'll take Doris with me. (Emily whirls out, grabbing a recalcitrant Doris.)  
  
(Church. Stained glass. 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            See the Partridges.

ARCHBISHOP    Your father likes birds?

DORIS            Mr. Partridge shot his wife while she was ironing.

EMILY            Doris!



- ARCHBISHOP Ah, a different kind of foul. Your daddy is a good man, Doris.
- DORIS But of course he is.
- ARCHBISHOP 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 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.
- EMILY My childhood friend became addicted. Both her parents are British. Doris, don't play with the holy water.
- DORIS I'm baptizing my donkey. He wants to be a Christian!
- ARCHBISHOP I'm sure your friend's 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 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 Their souls are always my concern, but when they break the law it's a job for the courts.
- (Courtroom. Empty. The Judge eats sandwiches, feet up on another chair.)
- JUDGE I've been waiting for you. Didn't see you in the gallery today. It was a long, long day.
- EMILY Me too. Housekeeper had bursitis, my best friend robbed me, was arrested, and I visited her in lockup. Then home, changed bed sheets, and then a meeting in the Cathedral with Archbishop, who referred me back to you. So, I dropped off Doris to the care of her father and now I'm here.
- (The Judge and Emily sit side-by-side, feet up. Tired.)
- What have you been doing all day just sitting on the bench?

- JUDGE            So your addict friend stole your property. Are you going to press charges?
- EMILY            I guess they do all lie.
- JUDGE            You know how you were harassing me for a special family court to deal with these matters?
- EMILY            I'm not trusting my judgment so much after Mrs. Osbourne.
- JUDGE            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 if they weren't at the mercy of drugs. These drugs must be stopped. You in your position have the moral and legal responsibility to clean up the nation.
- JUDGE            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            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            Yesterday, 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 an–
- JUDGE            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            Well, that goes without saying. Look, Canada is a new country; we can design and build it to whatever specifications we see fit...
- JUDGE            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           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           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, cocaineomaniacs.
- EMILY           You really...?
- JUDGE           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, bu–
- JUDGE           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–
- JUDGE           (Roaring) Mrs. Murphy, you asked for the power, I'm giving it to you. A one-time opportunity, magistrate of the British Empire. Take this opportunity or forever - hold - your - peace. Your choice?
- (Emily just nods dumbly.)
- (Parlour. Arthur at the table, Emily reading. Doris swaggers in.)
- DORIS           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 Monday.
- DORIS           Are you writing another book, mummy?
- EMILY           Yes.
- DORIS           Mummy, why don't you write about pirates and treasure hunters?

EMILY            Well, there are definitely some bad guys and smugglers.

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

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

EMILY            How brave of you!

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

EMILY            Get ready for bed, Doris. Show daddy that you can still do as you're told.

                    (Doris skips off.)

                    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          So, take a break.

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

ARTHUR          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          He's just given you family law.

EMILY            But the lawyers won't cooperate. They'll trip me up!

ARTHUR          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            Of who?

EMILY            Of looking foolish.

DORIS            What would Auntie Nellie say if she were here?

EMILY            Get the thing done and let them howl.

ARTHUR            Out of the mouths ...  
  
(Courtroom.)

CLERK            All rise. Judge Emily Murphy presiding. (Emily enters and sits at the bench.)

LAWYER           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           The province of Alberta has always been too liberal.

EMILY            Leading Canada.

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

EMILY            Insulting me will not help your client's case.

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

EMILY            What?

LAWYER           When it was written, persons didn't include women.

EMILY            Then the burden of proof is on you.

LAWYER           Madame?

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

LAWYER           (snickers to cohort) Indeed.

EMILY (To the plaintiff) You, Sally Brightwell (ironic because you are neither), are charged with passion. How do you plead?

SALLY Not guilty, your majesty.

EMILY I am a magistrate, not a majesty.

SALLY 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 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.

LAWYER It's not right.

EMILY Think of it as a smart business decision.

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

EMILY And to whom do you address your remarks?

LAWYER Your ... Honour.

EMILY Then let us begin.

(The doctor enters the courtroom and approaches the bench)

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

EMILY Dr. Lemay, (he already has) you may approach the bench.

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

EMILY             Don't tell me.

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

LAWYER           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 1

ACT 2

(Parlour. Arthur is writing. Emily rushes in.)

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

ARTHUR 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 No.

EMILY How can you be so trusting?

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

EMILY Faith? You are going to pray over this.

ARTHUR 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 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. Smuggler, a rough-looking man, stands in the witness box.)

SMUGGLER Don't put me away; my wife Sally gets out next month. You locked her up before.

EMILY I separated her from her poison; maybe not slow reduction but reduction nonetheless—

SMUGGLER If you lock me up we won't be able to be together.

EMILY (In a foul mood) I shall consider it further service to society that you won't be reunited to breed.

LAWYER Objection, Your Honour.



- SMUGGLER Do you at least want to know why I do it, before you sentence me?
- EMILY (Factiously) Because you are curious. Because you have a sense of adventure. Because you have to relieve your insomnia. Because you are jaded, discouraged with the world. Because you like to kick-start your morning with a little bang. Or maybe you are just one of the ones who are never happy unless they are indulging themselves!
- SMUGGLER I heard you hadn't been a judge long ... I guess I was wrong.
- EMILY I guess you were.
- LAWYER 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 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 I'm guessing this means no reduction in sentencing?
- EMILY That's the first smart thing you've said.
- SMUGGLER Rumour has it that you're grumpy because your daughter is sick, but I don't think you should take it out on me.
- 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. You need to supplement your habit by smuggling in a few kilos. Clean up, get a proper job, pull your weight.
- SMUGGLER My life is fine if only it's not interrupted by the likes of you. And I did have a proper job once, but it were boring. 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 so, this is a job for a man." 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            I object, Your Honour.

EMILY             Me too.

                      (Parlour. Emily rushes in.)

EMILY             How is she

                      (Arthur says nothing.)

                      Arthur?

ARTHUR            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            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. Emily praying. Henrietta enters, waits for her to finish.)

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 of Canada for an interpretation of the BNA Act. So, should we 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, five petitioners – 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.

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

DORIS I know you are 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 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 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 Did I do a good job, mummy?

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

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

EMILY           They can too.

DORIS           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           Am I going to see baby Madeleine?  
  
(Emily nods.)  
  
Shall I tell her anything?

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

DORIS           I promise.

EMILY           Mothers aren't supposed to have favourites. It's wrong.

DORIS           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           Am I your favourite?  
  
(Emily nods, trying hard not to cry.)  
  
Good night, mummy. I'll see you later.  
  
(Emily can't talk. She just nods, the tears streaming silently down her face. She strokes her daughter's hair. Arthur enters.)

ARTHUR          Emily? Oh! No! (Distracted, he lays Doris down, kisses her and covers her face.)

EMILY           (Moves the cover from Doris's face.) She'll smother.

ARTHUR          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.)

(A grey wash of sky and lake. Water gull sounds. Emily and Arthur, cold, walk and look out on the water.)

ARTHUR 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 (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.)

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 parlour, 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. (Pause) 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.

(Parlour. Emily holds the sampler up to her cheek. Arthur enters, carrying a brown paper bag.)

EMILY Where did you go after the graveyard?

ARTHUR I went back to the church and left my collar on the altar. Then, my girl, I went to Bootlegger Bill's. (Puts a bottle of whiskey on the table, looks at her, challenging her. Long silence.)

EMILY Make it two.

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

It tastes like the devil.

ARTHUR Finish it. It will be good for you.

EMILY Alright, just this once.

ARTHUR 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 Shall I go into real estate or saw milling?

EMILY I don't care what you do.

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

(Knock at the door.)

There's somebody at the door.

EMILY Let's invite them in for a drink....

ARTHUR (Looks out the window) Mother, Mary and Joseph, it's Archbishop!

EMILY Archie?

ARTHUR Don't call him that!

(Knock again.)

EMILY Don't answer it.

ARTHUR 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 I'll get the door. Drain the cups, girl!

(Emily chugs back the whiskey. Archbishop enters.)

EMILY Arsebishop! Arch... Arch... bishop.

ARTHUR (Giggles) Emily, maybe you'd like to make us some tea.

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

ARTHUR (Thinks he's been busted by Bootlegger Bill) Really. Well, news certainly travels fast. I only got it today.

ARCHBISHOP What today?

ARTHUR Why are you here, exactly?

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

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

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

ARCHBISHOP 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 inshtution 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 Archbishop in the chest in a way she would not have if it hadn't been for the drink.)
- ARCHBISHOP    There is not a dollar in Canada for that purpose. (Archbishop sits dangerously close to the hidden bottle) People should not hear of these things at all. We are not shocked by evil; only when one speaks of it.
- EMILY            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 shuppression.
- ARCHBISHOP    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            Firshly, 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    But, the church doesn't support divorce.
- EMILY            Please go. We are in mourning.
- ARCHBISHOP    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    (Stunned) I, er I...
- EMILY            Please go. You're giving me a headache.
- (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          (Entering with a tea tray) Well, if I hadn't have quit, I'd be fired after that. Have some black tea.
- EMILY            (Makes a chimpanzee face) Arthur?
- ARTHUR          What?



EMILY            I can't feel my lips.

                    (He kisses her.)

                    Not a thing.

                    (Arthur just grins at her.)

                    (Outside. 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. It's faith-based reason and scientific. 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.

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. Emily is miles away, everyone looking at her.)

LAWYER 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 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 Emmeline 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, Henrietta mentioned you were interested in having women proclaimed ... women!

EMILY Audacious of me, I know.

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 death threats?

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

NELLIE Don't let all your research be for naught; you've worked so hard.

EMILY            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. Maddy and Doris are there. 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.

(The courtroom starts to fill up.)

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

NELLIE            (Referring to the sampler she knows Emily has) Be Good, Emily. Do Good.

(Nellie exits. The next defendant goes to the witness box.)

EMILY            Sally Brightwell! Back in my court again. You are charged with theft over \$20. How do you plead?

SALLY            Not guilty.

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

SALLY            Nobody was hurt; it was just a lush dip.

EMILY            Lush dip?

SALLY            He was a great hulk. Twice my size.

EMILY            But drunk.

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

EMILY            And your habit.

SALLY            I've gone straight now. No drugs!

EMILY            Do you know the nickname the police have given you?

SALLY            No.

EMILY            Sally Secreter.

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

EMILY            No, you get a year.

SALLY            Don't send me to prison.... my sister went to prison and never came out–

EMILY            (Gavel) Next!

                      (The next defendant, Nora Parker, sways gently on the stand.)

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

EMILY            Oh, the glory of anticipation. I await with bated breath.

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

EMILY            Dear God in heaven. Recess! Recess!

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

JUDGE 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 (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 Mrs. Murphy!

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

JUDGE 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. Arthur and Nellie there by her side as Emily comes around from her surgery.)

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

EMILY (Groggy and in a little pain) I told him. You make me well. I have much work left to do. (Sees her friend) Nellie?

NELLIE (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 debaters say 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 la–

EMILY            We are persons in matters of pains and penalties, but not in matter of rights and privilege–

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

EMILY            You saw some of my "fan" mail.

ARTHUR           Postmarked Ottawa and some from Nova Scotia....

EMILY            I just throw them on the fire.

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

                          (The doctor enters. Nellie pulls Arthur away, Emily in a fetal position.)

DOCTOR           Madame Murphy. How is my stubborn patient?

EMILY            Don't speak ill of the dead.

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

EMILY            I am in more pain now than before.

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

EMILY            I have seen the results of that medicine.

DOCTOR           Madame 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 I will not allow your addiction.

EMILY I won't be a hypocrite.

DOCTOR 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 (Hopefully) In England they force-fed the suffragettes.

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

DOCTOR 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 (Pause) Well, okay. I have much to do.

NURSE 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 Who, you?

NURSE 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)

DOCTOR Cut her dose by three quarters.

(Emily nods off.)

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

DOCTOR           It was better when she was in pain?

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

DOCTOR           Running you ragged, eh?

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

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

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

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

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

ARTHUR            Tea. And earl grey tea, not pink tea.

EMILY             (Knowing exactly) I don't know what you mean.

ARTHUR            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            Are you coming to bed?

EMILY             The doctor is coming to see how I'm healing.

ARTHUR            I know that you are recovering. Just to sleep.

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

ARTHUR            Tell me.

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

ARTHUR            I guess I'm not like most men.



EMILY                   And for that I am eternally grateful. I just know that in this lifetime I must 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                I thought it was something to do with me.

EMILY                Never.

ARTHUR                You're scared. That's perfectly understandable.

EMILY                How did you ever get to be so perfectly wonderful?

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

EMILY                More than most.

ARTHUR                You could write a different type of book.

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

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

EMILY                I am.

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

EMILY                That may be more of an inspiration to action than a deterrent.

ARTHUR                Maybe that's why I said it...

EMILY                Mmmm.

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

EMILY            I could ...

ARTHUR          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          I'll be upstairs, waiting.

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

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

DOCTOR          Don't you dare put that in your mouth!

EMILY            What!

DOCTOR          (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?

DOCTOR          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          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          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          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        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        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.

DOCTOR        Not pills. (He pulls out a vial and needle.)

EMILY            You're going to inject me!

DOCTOR        The first time, then you will do it yourself.

EMILY            I'm going to shoot up!

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

                    (Emily peels off the note and reads it.)

EMILY            They usually mail them.

DOCTOR        (Reading over her shoulder) You seem to have made someone angry. (Takes out a tiny notebook) Why don't we make a list of suspects. Mrs. Murphy, have you ever disagreed with anyone?

                    (Emily just looks at him. Pbeat. Emily looks at the tiny notebook.)

EMILY            Have a seat. I'll get you a bigger notebook.

(Publisher's office. The publisher sits behind his desk. There is a sign for Thomas Allen Publishers.)

EMILY (Fast and agitated) Have you read it yet? It is good. And you will publish it. I've worked on it for so long and at such great cost. It's not a Janey Canuck book – it's much more important than that. And it's not just a cockamamie woman's musings. It's well-researched, there are photographs! I need this. And I have much support. 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 import–

ALLEN Emily Murphy! 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.

(Transition scene: Emily leaves the office and shows great emotion/relief. Arthur then comes on with an envelope. She opens it. It is the book! This moments transitions into a pink tea. Book launch. The strains of flapper music in the background; "Crazy Rhythm", lights twinkle.)

(They laugh. Henrietta hugs Emily.)

HENRIETTA A toast to the author!

NELLIE Louise and Irene send their love. Louise said to remind you, we still want to be careful not to be seen as being the better sex.

HENRIETTA We are the neighbouring sex, Nellie. 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.)

HENRIETTA Nellie my dear, you look like a flapper!

NELLIE I find no corset and shorter skirts very liberating.

EMILY Good job Louise isn't here; she thinks flappers flirt and smoke and drink gin from homemade stills! (Stops for a moment to hear the singer.)

NELLIE Young man, what is the lyric you are singing? What's the use of prohibition? (She crosses over to talk to the singer.)

EMILY (Calling after her) Nellie, Nellie, just sit down and drink your tea. Not every moment of your life has to be a fight.

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.

HENRIETTA 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. The PM is flanked by a female secretary and Archbishop.)

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

PM 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.

PM Ah, yes, your letters and petitions. Thousands. My office overflows with them!

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

PM Should I cower, Mrs. Murphy?

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

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

EMILY How is that?

PM 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 cannot substantiate these statements. I very much doubt their authenticity.
- ARCHBISHOP    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) Let me tell you my asylum theory....
- PM                If you must.
- EMILY            In a certain asylum, the management has 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.
- PM                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 dishonour me.
- PM                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    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.
- PM                (Laughing) Is that a threat?
- EMILY            No, a prophecy.
- PM                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.
- PM                You wouldn't.

EMILY            I have been looking into the matter.

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

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

PM                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!

PM                (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.

PM                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?

PM                (Beat) If you do this, I will repeal the temperance laws.

EMILY            You wouldn't.

PM                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!

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

EMILY            It isn't that much!

PM                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....

PM                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. Your legacy will make poorer the children and put the bruises on their skin.

PM                I am revered. All Prime Ministers have statues erected for them, and their names engraved in perpetuity in the history of this nation. You with your book are not even a footnote.

                      (Arthur paces outside the Senate down the hill a ways)

EMILY            Arthur, I thought we were meeting at the hotel. Look at this grass – you’ve been pacing!

ARTHUR          This is the Senate building. I thought I’d find out where you’ll have your new job. 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          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          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 notices a woman) I remember her. Sally Secreter.

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

SALLY            Mrs. Judge Murphy, in Ottawa!

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

SALLY            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 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 Do you have any idea how much pain you've caused me?
- EMILY No.
- SALLY Sent me to be sodomized by that sadist of a prison warden. Sodomite Sam.
- EMILY Sam McDonald? The Scottish man? I had no idea. He seemed decent when we met.
- SALLY 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 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 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 They say sticks and stones...
- EMILY Stones? That was all you. The rocks through my window, the letters...
- SALLY 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 Emily? Emily. Let's go.

SALLY 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.)

(Parlour)

EMILY I can't stop thinking about her.

ARTHUR You can only do what you can do.

EMILY What's that supposed to mean?

ARTHUR 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 No.

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

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

EMILY Oh.

ARTHUR Do you want some tea?

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

ARTHUR Does it matter?

EMILY Shouldn't it? (Beat)

ARTHUR Look, 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 petit fours.

(Archbishop enters.)

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

ARTHUR            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            That was a little joke, Archbishop.

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

EMILY            Archbishop, what are you talking about?

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

EMILY            Nonsense?

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

ARTHUR            Archbishop, we have a fine marriage.

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

ARTHUR            No.

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

ARTHUR            That is not why I surrendered my collar.

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

EMILY And what where you doing on third avenue?

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

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

EMILY God will damn me if I go to the Senate to change laws to shut down the imports of–

ARCHBISHOP It's about redemption–

EMILY If you want redemption over punishment I suggest you work with penal institutions–

ARCHBISHOP 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 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 Listen, God sent down his only son–

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

ARTHUR Emily!

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

EMILY (Slaps Archbishop right across the face) Get. Out. Of my house.

(Archbishop leaves.)

- ARTHUR            Well, that was certainly not polite tea and petit fours.
- (Office of the Prime Minister.)
- ARCHBISHOP    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.
- EMILY            I've apologized for that a hundred times!
- PM                Children!
- EMILY            What is taking so long for you to decide?
- PM                I have asked you here to witness how things really get done on "the hill." Sit down and observe. Brandy, Archbishop?
- ARCHBISHOP    Thank you.
- EMILY            But—
- PM                It's perfectly legal; the doctor has prescribed it to me for my nerves.
- ARCHBISHOP    Emily Murphy has that effect on a lot of people.
- PM                The public understand purposes of liquor for men in our positions. Rulers of nations, Kings, emperors – it has historic precedence. It is only the commoners who have problems with the beast.
- ARCHBISHOP    You know best, Prime Minister.
- PM                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    That would be most generous of you, Prime Minister....
- PM                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    What a waste of funds. This is exactly the type of mayhem that this problem causes.

PM                    Sadly, the public are unaware of such things....

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

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

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

EMILY                So this is how it is to be. Brandy and bribes. You still are no match for the power of the WI.

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

EMILY                Yes? (Beat) Thank you for your opinion. Good day.

ARTHUR              (Upset with the interruption 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 says nothing). And what do you think, Arthur?

ARTHUR              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              I know one or two tricks to tire you out.

EMILY                Arthur!

ARTHUR              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.)

                          (Black. A phone rings, a small light comes on. Emily, her hair tousled, answers.)

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

EMILY            Oh, Arthur! They just called! It was unanimous!

ARTHUR          You won!

EMILY            We did!

ARTHUR          Congratulations. Senator Murphy.

EMILY            (Giddy) I want to wake my daughters. I want to shout it out the window, “We won! We won!”

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

                      (They hug.)

                      I'm so very proud of you.

                      (Emily pulls the sampler out and 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          You made women persons in Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, Malaya, Nigeria, Kenya, the Bahamas.... All.

EMILY            Yes. We paid for Lord Sankey. He's a judge who really understands. It was he who phoned. He said “The exclusion of women from public office is a relic of days more barbarous than ours.”

ARTHUR          A congratulatory pink tea with the girls?

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.

ARTHUR          And you are going to be even more busy. Are we to move to Ottawa?

                      (Press conference. Prime Minister at the podium. Emily nearby, Nellie beside her beaming. A reporter takes photos.)

EMILY            Nellie, thanks for being here.

NELLIE          Where else would I be?

PM 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. Nellie, shocked, looks from the presentation to Emily.)

REPORTER #2 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?

PM (Laughing it off as an absurd suggestion) Mrs. Murphy is a little too masculine and perhaps a bit too flamboyant!

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

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

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

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

ARCHBISHOP Mrs. Murphy.

EMILY Judge Murphy.

ARCHBISHOP Hmm, yes.

EMILY He brought me here to humiliate me.

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

EMILY And the petitions with the thousands and thousands of signatures of women who requested – demanded – that I be seated in the Senate?

ARCHBISHOP Only women's signatures?

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

NELLIE Persons. People. Humans Beings. Like your mother. (Prime Minister enters.)

EMILY Why?



- PM 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 is arrogance.
- EMILY Look in the mirror.
- PM 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.
- PM You aggravate.
- EMILY Agitate!
- PM 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. (Pause) 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.
- PM I've always liked Leacock. The man has a sense of humor; you might learn from him. He'd find this funny. I know I do. I trust this is the last time you will be bothering this office?
- (Emily nods and walks slowly away from 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 #3 Mrs. Wilson, you're easy on the camera lens!
- EMILY How is that a prerequisite to being a Senator?
- REPORTER #3 I hear you're easy to get along with people.
- EMILY And I?
- REPORTER So slim!
- EMILY A little reserve energy. A little insulation against the slings and arrows of ...
- REPORTER Tell us about your dress. Did you have it made special for the occasion?

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

REPORTER        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.)

                      (The Garden. Evening. Emily crosses to the line and hangs the carpet on it. Her sadness transforms to anger as she beats it. Arthur enters.)

ARTHUR          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          You always were.

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

ARTHUR          Emily!

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

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

EMILY            Those bastards.

ARTHUR          Calm down!

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

ARTHUR          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".)

                      I'm going for Dr. Lemay.

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

(Silence.)

(A snowflake falls.)

(Another snowflake falls.)

DORIS (V.O. softly) Mummy.

(Another snowflake falls, followed by more. Bach cello suite #1 in G major. Shadows form in the night. The shadows turn into the oversized silhouettes of the women in the circle.)

EMILY And here I am frozen again.

HENRIETTA Emily, look. Did you do this? Look where they put us!

NELLIE Oh. My. God.

HENRIETTA 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. Archbishop enters. Wordlessly he seems to communicate “For now.”)

END