

FAMILY

Celine Song

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Family

By

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Cast of Characters

ALICE:

LINUS:

DAVID:

Scene

The house their father built.

Time

Current day.

LISTEN

There are many white flowers on stage.

ALICE, LINUS, and DAVID are in black, mourning.

LINUS and DAVID are wearing suits, three sizes too big. ALICE is wearing an oversized black dress. Their shoes are too big.

The three of them are sitting in three comfortable chairs, directly addressing the audience.

They do not turn to look at each other at all in this chapter, even when addressing each other. They face forward towards the audience and move as little as possible.

Silence.

Silence.

Silence.

ALICE

When it's all quiet like this, I start to hear very strange things through the walls of our house. Things I'm not sure I am supposed to hear. For example, I hear things like: "Plastic surgery for the facebook generation."

Those words just come to me, from this lovely fog, so light and not at all thick - like a vapor - it just comes to me - "plastic surgery for the facebook generation" - and I sit and I listen, and then I mention it to myself, briefly - and then I send it right through my body.

No problem. No harm done.

And then I listen again, I listen more. "A governor rapes his fifteen year old daughter." "Husband dead for two months, wife doesn't notice."

When I hear "Teenager sells virginity online", I imagine that somehow the teenager bottles her virginity in a jam jar and wraps it with bubble wrap and puts it in a cardboard box and writes the buyer's address and "fragile: this side up" -

ALICE points up.

ALICE

And then she mails it.

And the person who receives the package reviews the product online and says "fast response, quick delivery, item in okay condition - there is a small dent in it."

I mention it to myself, and then let that pass right through me.

"Twenty-eight thousand military suicides." I don't quite understand that. But I take it as is, I accept it - and then it's over.

"My condolences for your father's death, Alice. He was a good man."

What?

"Your father was a good man."

It takes a little more to swallow that one, but I wait for a bit - and without fail it goes right through my body and is never heard from again.

I keep listening.

And listening:

LINUS

"Your father was a good man."

DAVID

"Your father was a wonderful man."

LINUS

"Your father was a hard working man."

DAVID

"Your father was a hard working man."

LINUS

"Your father was a very hard working man."

DAVID

"Your father was a very hard working man."

LINUS

"Your father was a builder."

DAVID

"Your father built your home."

LINUS

"Your father built this home."

DAVID

"Your father built this home you live in."

LINUS

"Your father was a beautiful man."

DAVID

"Your father was a beautiful man."

LINUS

"Your father had beautiful eyes."

DAVID

"Your father had beautiful lips."

LINUS

"Nose, hand, neck."

DAVID

"Ears, shoulders."

LINUS

"Your father was a good man."

ALICE

These are my half-brothers Linus and David. We grew up together in this house our father built. The three of us are wearing black because we are just coming from our father's funeral.

DAVID

Our father died of a heart attack.

ALICE

The three of us have the same father, but we each have different mothers. All of us are unemployed, technically. But we know how to occupy ourselves. For example, Linus is writing a screenplay.

LINUS

Interior. Living room. Night.

ALICE

Linus also goes to the gym.

LINUS

I like to work out before I work.

ALICE

Linus is the son of our father's first wife.

LINUS

My mother is a giant.

ALICE

She's not with us.

LINUS

She's not dead.

ALICE

No, she's not dead.

LINUS

If you say "she's not with us" they might think -

ALICE

She's not dead. She's just not on this earth.

LINUS

If you say "she's not on this earth" they might think -

ALICE

(pointing up)
She lives up there now.

LINUS

If you point up and say -

ALICE

She's not dead. She's in space. Linus's mother is an astronaut.

LINUS

My mother is an astronaut. She's in space.

ALICE

She went up there in search of something.

LINUS

In search of what, we don't know.

ALICE

But she went up there in search of it.

LINUS

She is a giant.

ALICE

She is eight foot two.

LINUS
No, eight foot three.

ALICE
Right. Eight foot three.

LINUS
Our father loved her. He made love to her in this house.

DAVID
I imagine it must have been awkward.

ALICE
But she wanted to get out of this house.

LINUS
The house was too small.

ALICE
The house is not small.

LINUS
She thought the house was too small.

ALICE
That's because she is a giant.

LINUS
She is. My mother was always hunched over because the ceiling was too low. She soon developed a hump on her shoulders.

ALICE
Our father was an architect.

DAVID
"Your father was a builder."

ALICE
"Your father was an architect."

LINUS
My mother is an astronaut.

ALICE
The day Linus's mother decided to launch into space, she had a conversation with our father. It went something like this:

LINUS
(as LINUS's mother)
"I have to get out of here. There is something fundamentally wrong with this house you built."

(as father)
 "But darling, don't you like it here in this house? Is it not comfortable? Is it not warm?"
 (as LINUS's mother)
 "Something stinks."
 (as father)
 "What?"
 (as LINUS's mother)
 "Something stinks."
 (as father)
 "Nothing stinks."
 (as LINUS's mother)
 "There is a muffled buzzing of the flies."
 (as father)
 "There is silence."
 (as LINUS's mother)
 "I can't breathe in here."
 (as father)
 "Yes, you can."
 (as LINUS's mother)
 "This house is broken."
 (as father)
 "This house is not broken."
 (as LINUS's mother)
 "This house is broken."
 (as father)
 "This house is not broken."
 (breaking character as his mother)
 "I'm an astronaut."
 (as father)
 "You're not an astronaut."
 (breaking character as his mother)
 "I'm an astronaut."
 (as father)
 "You're not an astronaut."
 (breaking character as his mother)
 "I'm an astronaut."
 (as father)
 "Okay. Then let me help you launch into space."

ALICE

And then our father wrapped his hands around her throat.

LINUS

And he squeezed -

ALICE

And squeezed -

LINUS

And he squeezed harder -

ALICE

And he squeezed harder still -

LINUS

And her eyes rolled up -

ALICE

And up -

LINUS

And up -

ALICE

And up -

LINUS

And up -

ALICE

And then she launched into space.

Silence.

LINUS

She is not dead.

ALICE

No, she's just in space.

ALICE points up.

ALICE

She attended our father's funeral via satellite.

She wanted to say how sad she was that her husband had died, but the signal kept breaking up her face and we couldn't really see her eyes.

And that's the story of Linus's mother.

After Linus's mother went to space, our father met David's mother.

Beat.

ALICE

David reads all the time. Only non-fiction. And he speaks about fourteen languages.

DAVID

French, German, Mandarin, Cantonese, Urdu, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, Korean, Danish, Czech, Russian, Japanese, Greek.

ALICE

But he writes his blog posts only in three languages,
all of them dead.

DAVID

Latin, Ancient Greek, Sanskrit.

ALICE

David is the son of our father's second and final wife.

(beat, then to DAVID)

Can I be honest about your mother, David?

DAVID

Yes.

ALICE

Your mother was not very nice to look at.

LINUS laughs.

LINUS

Understatement.

ALICE

He's right, she was really very ugly.

DAVID

She was hairy.

LINUS

Understatement.

ALICE

She had hair.

DAVID

She had a beard.

ALICE

A full beard.

DAVID

She had a neck beard.

ALICE

She had a breast beard.

DAVID

A foot beard.

ALICE

A hand beard.

DAVID

An ass beard.

ALICE

She had a beard down there, too. And up her belly.

LINUS

She was interesting to look at, let's put it that way.

ALICE

She would shave all day every day but every night, by the time our dad got home from his job as an architect, she would be covered in hair all over again.

DAVID

She worshipped our father.

ALICE

She did. I am jealous sometimes that she had someone to worship. That is a privilege many go without. Don't you think so, David?

DAVID

Yes.

ALICE

Every night she would be on her hairy knees for him.

DAVID

Every night, nine p.m. on the dot.

ALICE

Every night she would take his shoes off.

DAVID

Then take his socks off.

ALICE

Roll up his pants.

DAVID

Take a towel.

ALICE

Wet the towel.

DAVID

Warm the hands. Touch the feet.

ALICE

Lift the feet.

DAVID
 Left first.

ALICE
 Then right.

DAVID
 Wipe the feet.

ALICE
 Left first.

DAVID
 Then right.

ALICE
 Scrub.

DAVID
 Carefully.

ALICE
 Gently.

DAVID
 Every night.

ALICE
 On her knees.

DAVID
 She really loved him.

ALICE
 He loved her too.

DAVID
 He loved her, yes.

ALICE
 Yes.

DAVID
 He loved her so much.

ALICE
 Yes.

DAVID
 He kicked her.

ALICE

Yes, once his feet were clean, he would kick her with his clean feet.

LINUS

The rule was clear, from the start:

ALL

(as their father)
"Freaks shalt be kicked."

DAVID

She would then crash into the coffee table.

ALICE

And crash into the wall.

DAVID

And crash into the bookcase.

ALICE

The books would fall.

DAVID

Down.

ALICE

She would yelp.

DAVID

The bookcase was down.

ALICE

And then from the floor she would look up.

DAVID

Up.

The three of them look up.

ALICE

At our father.

DAVID

Who would look down his beautiful nose with his beautiful eyes.

ALICE

He would raise his beautiful architect's hand.

The three of them raise their hands.

DAVID

He would gesture for her to come towards him.

The three of them gesture.

ALICE

And she would crawl towards him, on her hairy knees,
her hairy nose bleeding.

DAVID

He would stroke her face.

*The three of them gesture stroking a person's
face.*

DAVID

He would raise his hand and -

The three of them raise their hands and -

ALICE

(gesturing)

Slap her!

LINUS

(gesturing)

Scratch her!

ALICE

(gesturing)

Shove it down her throat!

LINUS

(gesturing)

Shove it up her ass!

ALICE

(gesturing)

Shove it in her ears!

LINUS

Eat it, bitch!

ALICE

Eat it, you saggy breasts!

LINUS

Eat it, you ugly hag!

ALICE

Eat it, slut!

LINUS

Cunt!

(beat, then very sympathetically to
DAVID)

Your poor, hideous mother.

ALICE

Your poor, hideous mother. She died from falling down
the stairs.

DAVID

She tripped.

ALICE

I am not sure why our father slept with her. She was
such a freak, with hair covering her whole body.

LINUS

I know why.

ALICE

Why?

LINUS

Charity.

ALICE begins laughing.

LINUS joins her.

*After a moment of hesitation, prompted by ALICE
and LINUS, DAVID joins them too.*

They stop abruptly.

Silence.

ALICE

It's my turn now, isn't it?

Now that we know about Linus and David and their
mothers, it's my turn to tell you a little bit about
myself and my mother.

I am unemployed, like Linus and David. But I also know
how to spend my time.

I spend my time doing a lot of watching films and
television and reading a lot of books and magazines and
discovering a lot of music and visual art. All that to
say that I am a massive intaker of culture.

In a way, I am a professional listener.

I am the daughter of our father's twenty year affair with his own sister. We always had a feeling that he loved my mother slash aunt more than he ever loved David's mother or Linus's mother. He really built this house for her, this house we grew up in, this house we continue to live in.

No problem. No harm done.

LINUS

"Your father was a good man."

DAVID

"Your father was a good man."

LINUS

"Your father was a good man."

DAVID

"Your father was a -"

ALICE

The thing you should know about my mother is that she was a deeply misunderstood woman.

LINUS

"Your father was a good man."

DAVID

"Your father was an okay man."

ALICE

Many people thought she was a crocodile or a screaming cat -

LINUS

"Your father was a good man."

DAVID

"Your father was an okay man. He was a -"

ALICE

- because she *sounded* like a crocodile or a screaming cat -

LINUS

"Your father was a good man."

DAVID

"Your father was a deadly man."

ALICE

- but my mother really was a human being.

LINUS

"Your father was a good man."

DAVID

"Your father was a bad man."

LINUS

"A good man."

DAVID

"A cruel man."

ALICE

Still I am listening, sitting in this room with my half-brothers -

"Tell them the truth, Alice."

"Tell them the truth about your mother and her head, Alice."

"Tell them about her extra face, Alice."

Well, maybe later. Right now, I just want to sit in my dead father's house that he built for his sister and listen.

DAVID

"Your father used to beat all his wives."

LINUS

"Your father provided for you."

DAVID

"Your father used to beat all his children."

ALICE

Wait.

LINUS

"Your father provided for you."

ALICE

Wait. Shhhh. Do you hear that?

LINUS

"Your father provided for you."

ALICE

Shhhh. Do you hear the hum coming from beneath us? The
 mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.
 Brrrrrrrrrooooooooooooooooooooooo.

DAVID

"Your father has a crawl space."

LINUS

"Your father built your home."

ALICE

There is a buzzing. Buzz, buzz, buzz. What is that?

DAVID

"There is a space underneath the floorboards."

ALICE

What is that?

DAVID

"He hollowed out a space there."

ALICE

Oh - oh, I hear it clearly now. I know what it is.

LINUS

"Your father built your home."

ALICE

It's the muffled buzzing of the flies.

DAVID

"Your father built a space underneath the floorboards.
 What is it for? What is it for?"

ALICE

Shhhhhhhh.

Silence.

ALICE

(lightly)
 There is something really wrong with this house, isn't
 there?

ALICE

Well, it certainly wasn't me. Was it you?

LINUS

No.

Beat.

LINUS

You know, I have a keen sense of smell. I'm like a dog. I'm like a bloodhound. I can tell when something stinks - I can smell it from a mile away. And let me tell you now, that something definitely stinks in here.

LINUS turns to ALICE.

LINUS

Sister.

ALICE

Brother.

LINUS

Something stinks.

ALICE

What?

LINUS

Something stinks.

ALICE

Nothing stinks.

LINUS

Something stinks.

ALICE

Nothing stinks.

LINUS

It smells like shit in here.

LINUS turns to DAVID.

LINUS

Brother.

DAVID

Brother.

LINUS

Something stinks.

DAVID

I can't smell anything.

LINUS

You can't smell *this*?

DAVID

Did you know, there is a crawl space in this house.

ALICE

For those of you who do not know a lot about architecture, a crawl space is literally a space just large enough for someone to crawl through, built under the floorboards.

DAVID

Maybe something died in there.

ALICE

One builds crawl spaces for insulation. Our father wanted us to stay warm.

DAVID

Maybe something got lodged in there and couldn't get out, like a rat or something. Maybe that's why it stinks so bad.

LINUS

(incredulous)
Just a rotten rat?

DAVID

A really big rotten rat. Or maybe a dead raccoon.

LINUS

I have a keen sense of smell and trust me, it doesn't smell like a rat.

The three of them eye each other suspiciously.

Silence.

The three of them look disturbed.

ALICE gets out of the chair.

ALICE grabs the flowers.

ALICE goes to LINUS with the flowers.

ALICE
Hi Linus.

LINUS
Hi.

ALICE offers a bunch of flowers to LINUS.

LINUS takes them.

ALICE
Breathe in.

LINUS sniffs the flowers.

ALICE
Isn't that better?

LINUS
Hardly.

Beat.

ALICE goes to DAVID.

ALICE
Hi David.

DAVID
Hi.

She offers a bunch of flowers to DAVID.

DAVID
No thanks.

Beat.

ALICE changes completely in her demeanor and throws the flowers she offered DAVID down on the ground and steps on it, violently.

Beat.

Her demeanor completely changes again.

ALICE
(smiling)
Hi David.

DAVID
Hi.

Beat.

DAVID
I'm sorry, Alice.

ALICE
It's okay.

Beat.

DAVID picks up the stepped-on flowers and sniffs them.

ALICE
Isn't that better?

DAVID
Yes, it is better. Thank you for these, Alice.

ALICE
You're welcome.

ALICE puts her hand out.

DAVID is not sure what the hand is for.

DAVID
What do you want?

ALICE
Aren't you going to pay?

DAVID
Pay for what?

ALICE
The flowers.

Beat.

DAVID
How much?

ALICE
That will be three strands of hair please.

DAVID
Three?

ALICE
Yes, three strands of hair.

DAVID
That's very expensive.

ALICE
That's what it costs.

DAVID
Two strands.

ALICE
Three.

DAVID
Two.

ALICE
Three.

DAVID
Three is really a lot for some flowers.

ALICE
Three.

DAVID
I'm sorry, Alice, but that's really a lot. I can't afford it.

ALICE
What do you mean you can't afford it? Aren't you hairy like your mother?

DAVID
She was hairy. I'm not.

LINUS
Will you two just shut up for a second? I am trying to work on my screenplay.

ALICE
Sorry, Linus.

DAVID
Sorry.

LINUS shuts his eyes.

ALICE
(whispered to DAVID, quickly)
You owe me.

DAVID

(to LINUS)
It really wasn't me, Linus.

LINUS

(to hurt DAVID, still to the audience)
He stinks because his mother was an animal.

ALICE stifles a laugh.

LINUS

(to the audience)
My mother on the other hand is an astronaut. That's why I have so many awesome qualities. Good looks. Charisma. Imagination. I have a spectacular imagination, because I inherited it from my mother, whose imagination was so spectacular that it launched her into space.

This is also why I am a good screenwriter.

I know this is not politically correct, but I just have to say that given all the evidence, David is probably the reason our house smells.

DAVID

(to LINUS)
No, I swear. It's really not me.

ALICE

"Tell them the truth, Alice."

"Tell them the truth about the back of her head."

LINUS glares at DAVID and ALICE.

They stop talking completely.

LINUS shuts his eyes again.

LINUS

Interior. Living room. Night.

Interior. Kitchen. Night.

Interior. Dining room. Night.

Interior.

Interior.

ALICE

Linus.

DAVID

Our father died of swine flu.

ALICE

Our father died of swallowing a thumb tack.

DAVID

Who knows.

ALICE

Who knows.

LINUS

(upset)

Where is this smell coming from?

DAVID

Who knows.

ALICE

Who knows.

DAVID mutters something under his breath.

LINUS

What?

DAVID

Nothing.

LINUS looks at DAVID suspiciously.

LINUS continues to sniff.

DAVID

Our father died of eating a peanut.

ALICE

Of explosive diarrhea, really explosive - it exploded his pelvis.

DAVID

Of old age, peacefully.

ALICE

Of a gunshot from the bushes outside our house.

DAVID

Who knows.

ALICE

Who knows.

DAVID mutters something under his breath.

ALICE

What are you muttering about, David?

DAVID

My theory that this is not actually a house, it's really inside an empty tin can.

There is some evidence to suggest that it's inside an electronic paper shredder, but nothing to really convince me.

Of course, it's been suggested again and again that it's inside a plastic bottle, but I think people who believe that are crazy.

ALICE

That's interesting.

So when are you going to pay me back for the flowers, David?

DAVID

Soon.

ALICE

How soon.

DAVID

Very soon.

ALICE

Well, it better be soon. Your hair is losing its value every second.

LINUS

Something's wrong. I think something's wrong.

What is it? If it's not fart, then what is it? What smells this bad? What stinks?

LINUS continues to sniff.

DAVID and ALICE watch him in silence.

LINUS gets out of his chair.

LINUS follows his nose, like a hound.

It leads him to the floor.

LINUS realizes that it's the floor that stinks.

LINUS bends down.

LINUS knocks on the floor.

LINUS

Hello?

LINUS presses his nose to the floor.

LINUS looks up.

LINUS

What do you think is underneath?

ALICE and DAVID look at LINUS.

LINUS looks back down at the floor.

ALICE and DAVID look at each other.

TASTE

ALICE and DAVID continue to look at each other.

LINUS remains on the floor, his nose still pressed against the floor.

ALICE and DAVID sniff each other.

The two of them speak, ALICE, lightly and gleefully, and DAVID, heavily and sorrowfully.

ALICE

(to DAVID)

You smell like dead animals.

DAVID

(to ALICE)

You smell like dead animals.

ALICE

It's the house.

DAVID

Your armpit smells like the sewer.

ALICE

I don't bathe.

DAVID

Do you think I have too much hair?

ALICE

Maybe.

DAVID

Do you think I have too little hair?

ALICE

Maybe.

DAVID

Do I have fangs?

ALICE

Maybe.

DAVID

You're not even looking.

ALICE

Maybe.

DAVID
Do you think I have scales?

ALICE
Maybe.

DAVID
I hope I don't have scales.

ALICE
I feel alone.

DAVID
I feel alone.

ALICE
I miss my mom.

DAVID
I miss my mom.

ALICE
Your mother was really not nice to look at.

DAVID
Your mother was beautiful.

ALICE
Your mother was always on her knees.

DAVID
Your mother was loud. So loud. So very loud.

ALICE
Your mother never spoke a word. Was she mute?

DAVID
I was born here.

ALICE
Me too. Born and raised.

DAVID
I was born here. Born and raised.

ALICE
Born and raised.

DAVID
I need a mother.

ALICE
You need a mother.

DAVID
I'm cold.

ALICE
Wear a jacket.

DAVID looks at ALICE.

DAVID tries to move towards ALICE.

ALICE
I'm not a jacket.

DAVID stops.

DAVID
Sorry.

Silence.

ALICE
I want a boyfriend.

DAVID
I want a girlfriend.

ALICE
I'm so tired.

DAVID
I'm so tired too.

ALICE
My back hurts.

DAVID
My finger tips are raw.

ALICE
My stomach turns.

DAVID
My neck hurts.

ALICE
I'm tired of this stench.

DAVID
I'm tired.

ALICE
I hate waking up in the morning.

DAVID
I hate waking up in the morning.

ALICE
I hate my clothes.

DAVID
I hate my shoes.

ALICE
I hate my hair.

DAVID
I hate my socks.

ALICE
I hate my nails.

DAVID
I hate these floorboards.

ALICE
I hate these walls.

DAVID
I hate breathing.

ALICE
I hate eating.

DAVID
I hate shitting.

ALICE
I hate being awake.

DAVID
I hate this.

ALICE
I hate that.

DAVID
I hate that too.

ALICE
And that. I hate it.

DAVID
I hate everything.

ALICE
I hate everything.

DAVID
I want a girlfriend.

ALICE
I want a boyfriend.

Beat as they look at each other.

Beat as they look around the stage.

Beat as they look back at each other.

ALICE
Will you be my boyfriend, brother?

DAVID
Yes. Will you be my girlfriend, sister?

ALICE
Yes.

They don't move.

ALICE
Brother-boyfriend.

DAVID
Sister-girlfriend.

ALICE
Will you lick me?

DAVID
Yes.

ALICE
Are you going to do it?

DAVID
I'm going to try.

He doesn't move.

DAVID
I'm going to try.

ALICE

Okay.

When?

DAVID

Now.

ALICE

Okay.

He doesn't move.

DAVID

I'm trying.

ALICE

Okay.

He doesn't move.

ALICE

Try harder.

He doesn't move.

ALICE

(lightly)

You really are a worthless animal, aren't you?

DAVID grimaces.

ALICE smiles.

ALICE

Like mother, like son.

LINUS knocks on the floor.

LINUS

Hello? Hello?

ALICE

The three of us are not very good siblings now, but when we were younger, we used to play all kinds of games together, like "doctor" or "librarian". My favorite was "factory."

Do you remember "factory", David?

DAVID

Yes.

ALICE

It was so fun. It was my favorite game.

DAVID

It was.

LINUS knocks on the floor.

LINUS

Hello? Hello?

LINUS knocks on the floor.

ALICE sticks her tongue inside DAVID's mouth.

ALICE takes it out.

ALICE

What did you think of that?

DAVID

I thought that was awful.

ALICE

Could you tell that I don't brush my teeth?

DAVID

Yes. Your mouth smells like a dumpster.

ALICE

Do you like it?

DAVID

No.

ALICE

Do you want to see my underwear? It looks like a dumpster.

Beat.

DAVID

I think that'd be awful, don't you think?

ALICE smiles.

LINUS loudly bangs on the floor.

ALICE and DAVID look at LINUS.

LINUS

(genuinely wondering)
Who's there?

Are you a dead rat?

Are you a burst pipe?

Are you a stiff raccoon?

DAVID mutters something under his breath.

ALICE

Linus.

LINUS looks up at ALICE.

ALICE

Your mother is an astronaut, Linus.

ALICE points up.

LINUS

Right.

ALICE

Your mother is an astronaut.

LINUS

My mother is an astronaut.

LINUS returns to his chair and sits down.

LINUS points up too.

DAVID

It's probably just mold spores and dust mites' shit. You know, water sometimes gets in a crawl space and then when it vaporizes, it takes all that crap up to the living room.

DAVID points up too.

DAVID

It's just basic architectural knowledge.

The three of them sit in silence, pointing up.

LINUS

My mother is an astronaut.

ALICE

"Tell them the truth, Alice."

"Tell them the truth about your mother, Alice."

Oh, fine. I'll tell you.

This is the truth about my mother. My mother had an extra face on the back of her head, which could not speak or eat, but could laugh and cry. That is why my mother was always screaming like a cat. She thought the face was a twin sister she devoured in the womb or some parasitic spirit - and she didn't know what to do, the doctors didn't know what to do.

She couldn't eat, unless force-fed. She would bite the nurses trying to bathe her, so they would strip her and blast her with water from a garden hose. She couldn't sleep. She could only rest after passing out from the exhaustion of screaming. But even then, she would wake from night terrors.

Our father would sometimes knock her on the head so that she could pass out and finally get some rest. And then he would undress her limp, resting body - he would climb on top of her -

DAVID drops his arm from exhaustion.

DAVID points down at the floor.

ALICE

- and then, she was pregnant with me.

She gave birth to me quietly. She didn't scream. The pain of childbirth was nothing compared to her daily pain of living.

She died from exhaustion.

LINUS drops his arm from exhaustion.

LINUS points down at the floor.

ALICE

No problem. No harm done.

ALICE drops her arm from exhaustion.

ALICE points down at the floor.

Silence while LINUS, DAVID and ALICE point down at the floor.

LINUS can't stand it and drops to the floor.

He begins tearing open the floorboards.

ALICE and DAVID clap and cheer, encouraging LINUS. They encourage the audience to clap and cheer too.

LINUS makes a hole on the floor.

ALICE and DAVID stop clapping and cheering.

LINUS leans down to peer through the dark crawl space through the hole he made on the floor.

SEE

LINUS is looking into the dark crawl space through the hole he made on the floor.

ALICE is watching LINUS. DAVID speaks:

DAVID

(to the audience)

The English term monster derives from the Latin word *monstrum*, which literally means *omen*. It shares its root, *monstrare* which means *to show*, with words such as *demonstrate* and *monstrance*. The word *monstrare* can be further traced back to the word, *monere*, which means to warn. Ancient Greeks and Romans believed that the things we call monsters, such as a man-eating half-bull half-man Minotaur, are sent down to a community by the gods to warn them of their misguided ways, as a kind of an omen. They are a symptom for the society's hidden cancers. When the mythological hero-king Oedipus unknowingly committed the crime of incest, the gods sent a half-human half-lion man-eating monster called Sphinx down to his kingdom to punish and reveal his sins. In this way, monsters are divine lessons.

ALICE

What do you see, brother?

LINUS looks up, his face blank.

LINUS makes a frantic gesture to express what he saw, but he cannot.

LINUS tries again, this time with grunts and mumblings, but he cannot.

LINUS tries again, desperately humming a song, but he cannot.

LINUS simply points down, at the hole on the floor.

LINUS returns to his chair.

A brief moment of silence.

DAVID goes to the hole on the floor.

DAVID looks.

DAVID returns to his chair.

ALICE goes to the hole on the floor.

ALICE looks.

ALICE returns to her chair.

A brief moment of silence.

DAVID, ALICE, and LINUS all let out a single scream.

DAVID begins to weep.

ALICE begins to laugh.

LINUS begins to kick the chairs.

DAVID begins to kick the chairs.

ALICE begins to weep.

LINUS begins to laugh.

DAVID begins to laugh.

ALICE begins to kick the chairs.

LINUS begins to weep.

A full beat as they express their horror madly.

They stop.

ALICE

(to the audience, smiling)

You want to know what we saw in there, don't you?

(lying)

It's filled with flowers. Flowers of many many colors - every color imaginable. It's a field of flowers down there. It is so beautiful. I really love flowers. They smell so good.

LINUS and DAVID laugh hysterically, exhausted and on the floor.

ALICE

"Tell them the truth, Alice."

"Tell them the truth about the thing you saw."

Do you want to know?

Do you really want to know?

Do you really, really, really, really want to know?

You think you want to know, but do you really want to know?

Really?

Are you sure?

Fine.

Okay, fine.

If you insist -

Here it goes:

Inside the crawl space our father built for insulation, to keep us warm, there are bodies of three women. The first corpse is a giant woman astronaut. The second is a woman covered with hair. The third is a woman with an extra face on the back of her head. A swarm of maggots are living on them.

It turns out the voices whispering those horrendous things are that of the flies living inside the walls and the floor of our house. The fog that speaks is actually a swarm of flies that the maggots grew up to become.

Shh, listen.

Listen, here it comes now:

A voice comes, the low, booming voice of a stranger fly, the leader fly of all the flies that live with us, the god-like voice of the house I live in:

"President supports poisoning our children with dish soap."

"A pair of comfortable grey sweatpants elected as the Secretary-General of the UN."

"A person's ears are connected to their nipples."

"Thinking about a cat's asshole leads to pregnancy."

I listen and I listen and I try to swallow all that.

But this time - *this* time, for some reason, it doesn't pass through me quickly. It gets stuck. Maybe it went down the wrong hole and -

And I am a little offended.

It just ruffles my feathers a bit.

And so I ask them:

How can you say these things? Are you allowed? Is anybody checking to see if you are telling the truth, or that at least you are trying? Who told you that you could say anything you want and get away with it? Who gave you the freedom to speak?

And the flies answer:

"No one gave us the freedom to say these things. No one gave us a permit. No one allowed us. We just speak. We just say whatever comes to mind. We don't say these things to hurt you, or because we believe in it - we say these things because we feel like it, because we can."

Okay. So you say anything you want?

"Anything we want."

Anything goes?

"Anything goes."

Okay.

Okay then.

Then I am going to say whatever I want, too.

I am going to say whatever comes to mind:

Linus is an awful screenwriter.

David is a coward and a hunk of butter.

I am a violent person.

No, I really am. Violence raised me. Violence bore me, I was fed on violence, I learned from violent books written by violence - and I don't mean the violent video games or violent movies or violent music or violent paintings.

I mean the buzzing of the flies that fill the space under our feet, held back from filling this room by a thin layer of wood.

My mother was raped, David's mother was beaten, Linus's mother was strangled and our father is not quite human. Our father is a force, like gravity.

Our father is not dead. Our father is still breathing.
He is still speaking.

Do you hear it? His voice?

Buzz, buzz, buzz.

DAVID

Buzz, buzz, buzz.

ALICE

"Tell them the other thing, Alice."

"Tell them about you."

About me?

What about me?

Oh.

Oh, you mean *that*.

Do you want to know?

Well, if you must know, I have inherited my mother's
condition.

*ALICE turns around and on the back of her head is
a human face, planted in her skull.*

ALICE

(facing away from the audience)

My extra face does not make a sound. It is a very quiet
face, unlike my mother's. It doesn't laugh, or cry - so
unlike my mother, I sleep like a baby every night. I
don't bathe. I have a big appetite. My second face is a
well-behaved face. My second face is my friend. But
sometimes it asks some strange questions:

THE FACE

What's your favourite colour?

Is it pink?

Mine's pink too.

What's your astrological sign?

Is it Pisces?

I am Pisces too.

THE FACE

If you could make out with one celebrity in the world,
which one would it be?

Is it Johnny Depp?

I would pick Johnny Depp too.

What flavor pop tart are you?

Are you strawberry?

I am strawberry too.

Do you love vampires?

Which spice girl are you?

Are you ginger spice?

I am *definitely* ginger spice.

Who is your best friend?

Is it me?

Is it me?

Is it me?

ALICE

My face doesn't like to bathe, but neither do I.

DAVID

I am horrified of this house. There is something really
wrong, isn't there?

LINUS

My mother is an astronaut.

Long silence.

LINUS shuts his eyes and works on his screenplay:

LINUS

Interior. Living room. Night.

Interior. Living room. Night.

Interior. Living room. Night.

Interior. Living room. Night.

LINUS

Interior. Foyer. Night.
Exterior. Porch. Night.
Exterior. Outside. Night.
Exterior. The supermarket. Night.
Exterior. Car dealership. Night.
Exterior. The Great Wall of China. Night.
Exterior. Taj Mahal. Night.
Exterior. Big Ben. Night.
Exterior. The North Pole. Night.
Exterior. The clouds. Night.
Exterior. Moon. Night.
Exterior. Venus. Night.
Exterior. Jupiter. Night.
Exterior. Mars. Night.
Exterior. Pluto. Night.
Exterior. All the planets. Night.
Exterior. Stars. Night.
Exterior. All the stars. Night.
Exterior. The galaxy. Night:

A beautiful and very tall astronaut exits from her spaceship, and walks up to the aliens. No, she sort of floats to the aliens, because there is no gravity and also because she is skipping, like a kid. "I come in peace," says the astronaut. "We receive you in peace," say the aliens. "Thank you for having me. It smells wonderful here. Nothing stinks," says the astronaut. "Where are you from", the aliens ask. Astronaut points upwards and says, "From up there."

LINUS points up, utterly peacefully.

The moment of utter peace is however brief.

LINUS keeps his finger pointed up for as long as he can keep it up. His arm begins shaking.

LINUS drops his arm from exhaustion.

LINUS points down at the floor.

LINUS

Interior.

Interior.

Interior. Living room. Night.

Interior. Living room. Night.

Interior. Living room. Night.

Interior. Living room. Night.

He doesn't want to stand on any part of the floor.

He makes frantic gestures to express his horror.

No one understands.

DAVID begins pulling his hair.

He pulls out four strands of hair.

One by one.

DAVID holds them out to ALICE, who is still facing away from the audience.

DAVID

Here, I'm paying you back for the flowers you sold me, with interest.

ALICE takes them and feeds them to her extra face. Her extra face thinks it's delicious.

DAVID pulls out a handful of his hair.

DAVID holds it out to ALICE.

DAVID

Will you be my girlfriend, please?

ALICE shakes her head, still facing away from the audience.

DAVID

I would like you to be my girlfriend, please.

ALICE shakes her head.

DAVID

Please?

Beat.

ALICE takes the chunk of hair.

ALICE feeds the chunk of hair to her extra face.

Her extra face thinks it's delicious.

ALICE takes out a toenail clipper, clips a fingernail and hands it to DAVID.

DAVID eagerly takes it.

DAVID eats it.

It tastes awful.

ALICE turns back around to face the audience and her extra face is out of sight.

Silence.

ALICE

I think I should leave.

I can't live here anymore. I'm leaving.

LINUS

Sure, whatever.

DAVID

Whatever.

ALICE takes her shoes off.

ALICE places them neatly where her feet are, steps to the side, crouches down, and begins to speak to her shoes:

ALICE

Come on, Alice. Let's get out of here.

Come on, before it's too late.

Come on, Alice. *Walk.*

Walk.

Walk.

Nothing moves.

LINUS takes his jacket off and covers the hole on the floor.

TOUCH

Long, long silence.

ALICE, DAVID, and LINUS drag their chairs, thrown all about, back to where the chairs were in the beginning of the play.

This is the restoration of order.

They shake hands.

LINUS with DAVID.

DAVID with ALICE.

ALICE with LINUS.

The three of them sit down.

Silence.

Silence.

Silence.

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID

Ow.

Beat.

DAVID

Why did you hit me?

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID

Ow, why did you -

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID

Why -

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID

Just tell me what I did wrong. What did I do wrong?

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID

Do you want some of my hair? You can have all the hair I have.

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID

I'll pull them all out, I'll go bald, I'll shave - you can have all my hair - whatever you want.

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID

I'm sorry, I don't know what I did wrong, but I'm really sorry.

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID opens his mouth.

LINUS hits DAVID.

DAVID growls like a dog.

LINUS hits DAVID, harder.

DAVID growls like a dog.

LINUS hits DAVID, harder still.

DAVID does nothing.

DAVID is totally still.

Silence.

LINUS

Are you sorry, David?

DAVID

I'm sorry, Linus.

LINUS

It's alright.

LINUS moves.

LINUS

Why did you flinch?

DAVID

I didn't.

LINUS
I saw you flinch.

DAVID
I didn't.

LINUS
Are you calling me blind?

DAVID
No.

LINUS
Are you calling me a liar?

DAVID
No.

LINUS
Why did you flinch?

DAVID
I thought you were going to hit me again.

LINUS
Why would you think that?

DAVID
Because -

LINUS hits DAVID.

ALICE
(to the audience, whispered)
The rule was clear, from the start.

ALL
"Freaks shalt be kicked."

LINUS
Are you sorry, David?

DAVID
I'm sorry, Linus.

LINUS
It's alright. I forgive you.

LINUS moves.

DAVID does all he can to not flinch.

LINUS pats DAVID on the back.

ALICE

Why is Linus such a horrible person?

LINUS

I am a horrible person because my father was a horrible person.

ALICE

Why is Linus such a horrible person?

LINUS

I am a horrible person because I have a chemical imbalance in my brain.

ALICE

Why is Linus such a horrible person?

LINUS

I am a horrible person because of the internet.

ALICE

Why is Linus such a horrible person?

LINUS

I am a horrible person because David provokes me. David is the horrible person.

Beat.

ALICE

Why is David such a loser?

LINUS

Because he is a loser.

ALICE

Why is David such a loser?

LINUS

Because he is a loser.

ALICE

Why are you such a loser, David?

No response.

ALICE

Why are you such a loser, David?

DAVID opens his mouth.

DAVID looks at LINUS.

DAVID shuts his mouth.

LINUS hits DAVID.

LINUS

Did that hurt?

DAVID

Yes.

LINUS

(in pain)

Why do you make me do this to you?

DAVID

I'm sorry, Linus.

LINUS

Why do you do it? Why do you hurt me this way?

DAVID

I'm sorry, Linus.

LINUS

You crying?

DAVID

No.

LINUS

(lovingly)

You are, you crybaby.

DAVID

Am not.

LINUS

You are.

(good-natured)

Crybaby.

Alice laughs.

LINUS

(good-natured)

Crybaby.

ALICE

(good-natured)

Crybaby.

LINUS
Crybaby.

ALICE
Crybaby.

LINUS
Crybaby.

ALICE
Crybaby.

LINUS
Crybaby.

ALICE
Crybaby.

LINUS
Crybaby.

ALICE
(cruelly)
Crybaby.

LINUS
(cruelly)
Crybaby.

DAVID falls off the chair.

LINUS
(kicking the dog that's down)
Crybaby.
Crybaby.
Crybaby.

DAVID curls up in a ball.

ALICE stops LINUS.

ALICE
Hey, come on.
Come on.
Be nice.
Let's play nice.
Let's play a game.

Let's play a game, please?

This game is called "doctor and patient".

Let's play "doctor and patient".

DAVID shakes his head.

LINUS

Let's play "doctor and patient", crybaby.

LINUS becomes a doctor.

DAVID becomes a patient.

LINUS bellows:

LINUS

Open your mouth!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Raise your arm!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Take these pills!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Pull your pants down!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Now lie down!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Now close your eyes!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Now die!

DAVID tries.

LINUS

Now die!

DAVID keeps trying.

LINUS

Are you dead?

DAVID opens his eyes.

DAVID

No.

LINUS

Die!

DAVID tries again.

Beat.

DAVID

I can't.

LINUS hits DAVID.

ALICE laughs.

LINUS

Are you sorry, David?

DAVID

I'm sorry, Linus.

LINUS

It's alright. I forgive you.

ALICE hands LINUS some flowers.

LINUS takes them.

LINUS sniffs the flowers.

LINUS throws them down on the floor.

ALICE hands LINUS some more flowers.

LINUS takes them.

LINUS sniffs the flowers.

LINUS throws them down on the floor.

ALICE hands LINUS some more flowers.

LINUS takes them.

LINUS sniffs the flowers.

LINUS

(lightly)
What stinks so much in here?

DAVID mutters something under his breath.

LINUS

What?

DAVID

I said it's you. You are the thing that stinks.

LINUS hits DAVID with the flowers repeatedly.

LINUS stuffs the flowers in DAVID's mouth.

DAVID coughs them out.

LINUS continues to beat DAVID.

ALICE stops LINUS.

ALICE

Hey, come on.

Come on.

Be nice.

Let's play nice.

Let's play a game.

Let's play a game, please?

This game is called "librarian and book-borrower".

Let's play "librarian and book-borrower".

DAVID shakes his head.

LINUS

Let's play "librarian and book-borrower".

Beat.

LINUS becomes a librarian.

DAVID becomes a book-borrower.

LINUS

No, you can't borrow that book, it's a reference book!

DAVID doesn't borrow that book.

LINUS

Be quiet in the library!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Your library card is expired!

DAVID makes a gesture to demonstrate his despair over the expired library card.

LINUS

Now line up the books neatly!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Now alphabetize them!

DAVID does.

LINUS

Now die!

DAVID tries.

LINUS

Now die!

DAVID keeps trying.

LINUS

Are you dead?

DAVID

I'm trying.

LINUS

Die!

DAVID tries again.

Beat.

DAVID can't.

LINUS kicks DAVID.

ALICE laughs.

LINUS

Are you sorry, David?

DAVID

I'm sorry, Linus.

LINUS

Are you very sorry, David?

DAVID

I'm very sorry, Linus.

LINUS

It's alright. I'm sorry too.

Beat.

LINUS

You farted.

DAVID

No.

LINUS

You did.

DAVID

I didn't.

Beat.

ALICE

(amused, to DAVID)

Liar.

LINUS

(viciously, to DAVID)

Liar.

ALICE

Liar.

LINUS

Liar.

ALICE

Liar.

LINUS

Liar.

ALICE
Liar.

DAVID hides under the chair.

LINUS drags DAVID out from under the chair.

LINUS
Liar.

ALICE
Liar.

LINUS
Liar.

ALICE
Liar.

LINUS
Liar.

ALICE
Liar.

LINUS
Liar.

Beat.

LINUS
Liar.

DAVID
Yes.

LINUS
Liar.

DAVID
Yes.

LINUS
You farted.

DAVID
Yes.

LINUS
You farted.

DAVID blows raspberries.

DAVID

Yes.

DAVID blows raspberries.

DAVID blows raspberries.

DAVID blows raspberries.

ALICE

Hey, come on.

Come on.

Be nice.

Let's play nice.

Let's play a game.

Let's play a game, please?

Let's play "factory".

Beat.

LINUS, DAVID and ALICE take all the flowers and bring them to the middle. They all sit down, in a row:

LINUS tears out the petals from the flowers, one by one.

ALICE counts the petals out into clusters of five.

DAVID takes the petals and lines them up, neatly.

They continue in silence until the petals are all sorted into neat clusters of five.

Silence.

Silence.

Silence.

Silence.

Silence.

ALICE reaches down and grabs a cluster of petals.

ALICE puts it in her mouth.

ALICE

Give me your hand.

LINUS raises his hand and leaves it hanging there.

It is unclear what he intends to do with it, slap her or stroke her or even give her a high five.

ALICE leans in and puts her cheek in his hand.

LINUS strokes her face.

LINUS slaps her hard.

ALICE is thrown across the room.

ALICE looks up, smiling.

ALICE

Do you want to see my underwear? It looks like a dumpster.

LINUS

Yes, please.

ALICE lifts her dress and shows LINUS her underwear.

ALICE

Do you really think I'm a freak, brother?

LINUS

Yes, sister. You are a monster.

ALICE jumps LINUS and the two begin taking each other's clothes off.

ALICE is on top of LINUS with her back towards the audience, pulling at his trousers.

The extra face on the back of her head looks at the audience and speaks:

THE FACE

Do you think maybe we should burn this house down?

DAVID buries himself in the flower petals.

EPILOGUE

Three chairs, again restored exactly as they were in the beginning of the play.

LINUS is sitting in his chair.

ALICE is sitting on LINUS's lap.

DAVID is still buried in the pile of flower petals, his jacket pulled over his head.

Silence.

Silence.

LINUS and ALICE point to ALICE's stomach.

They continue to point at ALICE's stomach for the remainder of the scene.

They never stop pointing at ALICE's stomach.

LINUS and ALICE begin a conversation:

LINUS

Baby.

ALICE

Baby, baby.

LINUS

Baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby
baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby
baby baby -

ALICE

Oh, baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby
baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby
baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby
baby baby baby baby baby -

LINUS

Baby baby?

ALICE

Baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby -

LINUS

Oh, baby! Baby!

ALICE

Baby baby baby baby!

LINUS and ALICE laugh.

ALICE

(to the audience)

Pregnancy makes me want to bathe and brush my teeth. I am the last of the women in this house and I have come to accept and celebrate the responsibility. I realized that I have to become our father's new wife. It is because of this that I so happily carry this child in my womb, despite these aches in my joints.

Motherhood magazines say a pregnancy changes a woman, and I agree. Before I became pregnant, I was a pile of flesh sitting in a chair.

But now -

Everything is falling into place now.

I feel beautiful.

I hope my baby also has an extra face on the back of her head.

My baby. Born and raised.

Baby.

Baby.

Baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby -

LINUS

(to the audience)

More and more I am convinced that the architects are the only true contributors to society. I certainly want my baby to grow up to be an architect. No doubt about it.

ALICE

Baby, baby.

LINUS

Baby baby baby baby baby!

ALICE and LINUS smile.

ALICE

Hi David.

DAVID
Hi.

ALICE
Are you excited about your new niece?

DAVID
I am.

ALICE
Are you thrilled that you are going to be an uncle?

DAVID
I am.

ALICE
David.

DAVID
Yes?

ALICE
Will you come and sit with us?

Beat.

DAVID, with his jacket still over his head, goes over to ALICE and LINUS.

DAVID tries to sit next to ALICE and LINUS, but -

ALICE
I'm sorry, David, but that chair is for our baby.

DAVID
Sorry.

ALICE
Could you sit in the other chair?

DAVID
Of course.

DAVID sits in the other chair.

Beat.

ALICE
I think you'll be a wonderful uncle, David.

DAVID
I think so too.

DAVID begins muttering under his breath.

ALICE

(to LINUS, lovingly)
Baby, baby.

LINUS

(lovingly back to ALICE)
Baby.

ALICE

Baby baby baby baby.

LINUS

Baby. Baby.

ALICE

Baby. Baby, baby.

LINUS

Baby.

ALICE

Baby baby.

LINUS

Baby. Baby. Baby baby baby baby baby baby baby baby
baby baby baby baby baby baby baby -

*DAVID's muttering begins to overlap LINUS's loving
speech and it becomes louder and louder - better
and better heard - and eventually the audience can
hear clearly what he has been muttering:*

DAVID

- burn it down, burn it down, burn it down, burn it
down, burn it down, burn it down, burn it down, burn it
down, burn it down, burn it down, burn it -

End of play.