

THE BROKEN STATUE

A PLAY

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A Play

Based on the Novel
The Broken Statue

by

Bob Perry

The Broken Statue

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William Perry
1936 N. Union
Shawnee, OK 74804

While some characters and events in this piece may be historically accurate, this is a work of fiction. Characters, names, incidents, organizations and dialogue in this play are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

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CHARACTERS

Mary

Old Charlie

Mrs. Dingle

Mrs. Berry

Charlie

Lydie (Pronounced “Ly-de”)

Daniel Craigan

George Marland

E.W. Marland

Elizabeth

Walt Johnson

Jody/Gardner

Act I

Scene 1

(Old Charlie and his granddaughter Mary in the evening.)

MARY

Where did they find the statue, Grandpa?

CHARLIE

They dug it up in a vacant lot here in Ponca City...the statue's been lost for years.

MARY

Why do you come look at it every night? What's so special about this piece of rock?

OLD CHARLIE

It's a part of history. Something lost so long and then found...it's exciting. I want to see them put the pieces back together.

MARY

Grandpa, you come every night. There's got to be more.

OLD CHARLIE

Well...I knew her.

MARY

You knew the woman in the statue?

(Old Charlie sheepishly nods.)

Why didn't you say so? Why haven't you told everyone? Did you know her well?

OLD CHARLIE

I knew her quite well at one time.

MARY

Did you know her “quite well” before Grandma?

OLD CHARLIE

It was nothing like that. We were young and her life was...complicated.

MARY

So...you know the story of the statue?

OLD CHARLIE

I do...such a tragedy.

MARY

Why?

OLD CHARLIE

Well, I saw it happen like a spectator in a theatre. The characters were noble yet flawed. Eventually forces outside their control crushed them. Poor girl, she had so much and wanted so little. She was beautiful, but she was more than that. She had her own kind of strength. You know that grit you need to get through life. This broken statue is like her broken life...and the broken lives of others.

MARY

Sounds interesting. How does it begin?

OLD CHARLIE

The story of the statue is about opportunities and opportunities lost. It begins with Ernest Whitworth Marland or as folks around here called him, E.W..

(Mary and Old Charlie move toward exit.)

E. W. Marland came to Ponca City before World War 1 with big dreams that ignited an oil boom. E.W. and his wife Virginia owned a large mansion off Grand Avenue that included an eight-acre garden and a golf course on the grounds. The Marlands had everything they could want in life except children, so they adopted Virginia's nephew and niece, George and Lydie Roberts. E.W. controlled 10 percent of the petroleum production in the world back then and was famous for his extravagant lifestyle, elaborate foxhunts, and the lavish parties he threw at his Grand Mansion. As Lydie's friend, I was invited to many of these parties and...what parties they were!

(Old Charlie and Mary exit.)

(Charlie enters.)

(Walt Johnson works as a laborer)

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry enter with E.W. Marland who directs preparations for a party.)

MRS. DINGLE

E.W. Marland, this looks to be your biggest party yet!

E. W. MARLAND

Everyone seems to find an invitation to the Oilman's Ball.

(Charlie walks close.)

MRS. BERRY

Hello, Charlie McDonagh.

CHARLIE

Mrs. Dingle, Mrs. Berry. How are you this evening?

MRS. DINGLE

Very well.

MRS. BERRY

Very well indeed!

(Lydie Marland enters.)

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry move to the background.)

CHARLIE

How's Miss Marland this evening?

LYDIE

Just Lydie to you.

CHARLIE

I can't get used to the new name either. You'll always be just Lydie to me. Looks like it'll be quite a party.

LYDIE

I think so. I'll see you, Charlie. Maybe we can dance later.

(Lydie and Charlie exit.)

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry enter.)

MRS. DINGLE

I don't like to talk—

MRS. BERRY

But?

MRS. DINGLE

Mr. Marland has not been too particular about his party guests tonight.

MRS. BERRY

I think everyone in the state is here! I've seen our congressman and the governor's over there! Isn't that the bootlegger with the governor?

MRS. DINGLE

It's bad enough to let the politicians and bootleggers in, but that Daniel Craigan is lurking about.

MRS. BERRY

This is the Oilman's Ball and he is an oilman.

MRS. DINGLE

Not a very scrupulous one! I've heard stories.

MRS. BERRY

Oh do tell!

(Daniel Craigan enters interrupting them.)

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Good evening...ladies.

MRS. DINGLE

Good evening Mr. Craigan. It's quite an evening.

MRS. BERRY

Quite an evening indeed.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

I guess. You seen Marland around?

MRS. DINGLE

He and George are over there.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

How about that sweet little niece of his?

MRS. DINGLE

Mr. Craigan, you know Lydie's been adopted by the Marlands.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Don't care too much about their relationship, but I'd like to know Marland's "daughter" a little better.

MRS. DINGLE

Mr. Craigan! I've never heard such a vulgar insinuation!

MRS. BERRY

Me either.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

I bet you haven't. *(To Mrs. Berry.)*

But, I'm not so sure about you. *(To Mrs. Dingle.)*

(Mrs. Dingle marches off, Mrs. Berry follows. Daniel Craigan exits as E. W. and George Marland approach.)

GEORGE

Who's with Lydie?

E.W.

The new man I hired in accounting.

GEORGE

Want me to look into it?

E.W.

Good idea.

(E.W. exits. Charlie enters.)

GEORGE

Charlie, see that guy with Lydie?

CHARLIE

Who is it?

GEORGE

One of our employees. Mr. Marland won't approve. It's bad enough I have to chase Walt Johnson away without dealing with someone who works for the company. Go get Lydie away from him.

CHARLIE

I think sometimes you invite me to these parties just to keep other guys away from Lydie.

GEORGE

That's exactly why you're here...Now go.

(George exits. Lydie enters.)

CHARLIE

Hello Lydie.

LYDIE

I see I've been caught. Who sent you, George or Mr. Marland?

CHARLIE

George. Hope you don't mind.

LYDIE

I wonder why you're willing to do the Marland men's dirty work? If Mrs. Marland was feeling well, she could make them behave.

CHARLIE

So you do mind?

LYDIE

Not at all...The gentleman that was trying to entertain me was a tremendous bore, worse than most. All he could talk about was himself.

CHARLIE

You were putting on a good act.

LYDIE

Thank you. These parties are filled with arrogant know-it-alls.

CHARLIE

I hate those kind of guys.

LYDIE

You know what I mean. You're not arrogant, just irritating.

CHARLIE

People that think they know everything are a real irritant to those of us that do know everything.

LYDIE

(Lydie laughs.)

I'm glad George trusts you to protect me, I do need someone around who can still make me laugh.

(In a more serious tone.)

How's Walt?

CHARLIE

Fine. He's keeping busy.

LYDIE

I wish he could be here tonight.

CHARLIE

I saw him working earlier.

LYDIE

You know what I mean. George is impossible with him and Mr. Marland's not much better. They throw these big bashes for me then browbeat any boy that shows any interest.

CHARLIE

Looks like you're showing a lot of interest tonight.

LYDIE

Just an act...mainly to keep those two off track.

(Lydie looks around as if seeing if she's alone.)

I love living in Ponca City. I could have never dreamed I could live like this, but sometimes it's so inconvenient. Don't you wish sometimes it could be like that first summer when we did what we wanted without all this staged entertainment?

CHARLIE

Sometimes.

LYDIE

I'd like to go swim in the river or just sit on the bridge with Walt and talk without all these distractions.

CHARLIE

I guess you're still kinda hung up on Walt?

LYDIE

Of course...He's not like these, pampered gentlemen. Walt's genuine. You still see him don't you Charlie? Does he ever mention me?

CHARLIE

Only every other word.

LYDIE

And how about you...are there any young ladies you're telling him about?

(Charlie blushes and turns away.)

There is! Who is it?

CHARLIE

I was on my way to ask Elizabeth Cassidy if she would like to dance before George collared me.

LYDIE

Elizabeth! She would be perfect for you. You should definitely ask her to dance.

CHARLIE

You're mocking me, right?

LYDIE

Oh no...Elizabeth's a sweet, dear girl. She would be perfect for you. I'll introduce you.

(Elizabeth enters. Lydie introduces Charlie and Elizabeth then exits.)

LYDIE

Elizabeth!

(Elizabeth enters.)

ELIZABETH

Hello, Lydie. Thanks for inviting me to the party.

LYDIE

Told you it would be fun.

(Elizabeth smiles.)

Have you met my friend, Charlie?

ELIZABETH

No.

LYDIE

Consider yourself introduced. Elizabeth this is my good friend Charlie McDonough. Charlie, Elizabeth. I've got to run... You two have fun.

(Lydie exits.)

CHARLIE

It's a wonderful party.

ELIZABETH

Yes.

CHARLIE

Your father's the dentist in town, right?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

CHARLIE

Would you like to dance?

ELIZABETH

(Elizabeth looks uneasy.)

No...No I can't.

(Elizabeth walks off.)

CHARLIE

Maybe some punch, horseshoes...anything?

(Charlie exits. Lydie enters giggling about Charlie's awkwardness with Elizabeth.)

(Daniel Craigan enters and grabs Lydie.)

LYDIE

You're a vile, coarse man.

DANIEL CRAIGAN:

Come on missy, your "daddy" has cost me plenty through the years. I think some time with old Daniel Craigan might even things up a little.

(Lydie struggles to get away. Walt enters to separate Lydie from Daniel Craigan.)

WALT

Get your hands off her!

(The commotion causes E.W. to enter. Charlie, Mrs. Dingle, and Mrs. Berry also enter.)

E.W.

What's going on here! Get off him and get back to work!

(Walt releases Daniel Craigan.)

WALT

He was—

E.W.

That will be all.

(Walt leaves and is consoled by Lydie as they exit.)

What do you have to say for yourself, Craigan?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

I thought your niece or daughter or whatever you call her these days looked a little lonely...I was just trying to give her some attention.

E.W.

You're a brute and bully...always have been. Get out.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

What about that famous Marland hospitality? Always so polite and well-bred...when you're not trying to squeeze every other oilman out of business.

E.W.

You've had too much to drink. I let you come this evening because you are supposed to be an oilman, but you can leave now! Escort yourself out or I'll do it for you.

(Daniel Craigan leaves.)

E.W.

The show's over...let's all get back to the party.

(Everyone but Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry exit.)

MRS. BERRY

That Johnson boy has sure grown up.

MRS. DINGLE

Yes... Yes he has.

MRS. BERRY

I haven't seen his mother in a while.

MRS. DINGLE

Oh Mrs. Berry...you're so naïve. I don't like to talk—

MRS. BERRY

But...

MRS. DINGLE

His mother has quite a reputation...I understand she's one of Daniel Craigan's...women.

MRS. BERRY

You don't say!

MRS. DINGLE

You know me, I don't like to talk.

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry exit as Walt enters followed by Lydie.)

LYDIE

(Lydie comes up playfully behind Walt.)

Have you been avoiding me?

WALT

No way. I've had my eye on you all evening...I've just been discreet.

LYDIE

I hate discretion...when it keeps me away from you.

(Lydie approaches Walt and they embrace before E.W. Marland enters to interrupt them.)

E.W.

What the?... You!

WALT

Good evening sir...

E.W.

Be quiet!

E.W.

Lydie, have you lost your mind? Your reputation will be ruined if someone saw you here rubbing up against this boy.

LYDIE

We were just taking a walk.

E.W.

A walk! Is that what they call it now?

LYDIE

But...

E.W.

But nothing, There's no discussion. Go to your room.

(Lydie leaves. Walt begins to leave.)

E.W.

Stop! We have some things to talk about.

(Walt stops as Lydie walks away.)

I've never seen such behavior young man. She's only seventeen and you're...

WALT

Eighteen, sir.

E.W.

You're a hired hand working at this house. This is not acceptable. What if one of the guests had been here instead of me to see this behavior? I have nothing against you son, but you'll never be worthy of Lydie.

Your family...your family has a reputation that would make a roughneck blush. Lydie is preparing for a life that you cannot imagine. You'll cripple her ability to find the kind of family that will generate a legacy...a family heritage.

(Walt listens quietly but defiantly.)

I just want you to know that you can't see Lydie. I think it best if you don't speak to her again—ever.

WALT

I can't do that...Lydie and I are in love.

E.W.

What!

WALT

Lydie and I are in love. We have been for a while and we'll be married after I save some money.

E.W.

(E.W. laughs in disgust and disbelief.)

That's not possible. I would never allow it. Lydie would be completely disowned. Trust me son, you'll never marry Lydie.

WALT

We've talked it over. I don't need your money. I'll make it on my own.

(E.W. doesn't know how to respond.)

If you really knew Lydie...If you ever listened to her, you would see she doesn't care about the money...this life...or all of this attention. She's a good person, with a kind heart, and that's good enough for her. You're the one crippling her ability to be happy.

E.W.

First, you're fired. Second, you're never to set foot on any Marland property again. If you do, I'll have you shot!

(Walt exits. E.W. exits.)

Scene 2

(Lydie and Charlie enter the next day.)

LYDIE

It was terrible. I've never seen Mr. Marland so angry.

CHARLIE

Walt told me. He said Mr. Marland was going to have him shot if he came back on the grounds.

LYDIE

Mr. Marland told me that if I ever saw Walt again he would ship me back to Pennsylvania as far away from "that boy" as possible.

CHARLIE

What are you going to do?

LYDIE

I don't know. I can't live without him, but I don't want to let down Mr. Marland, either. Mr. Marland was so disappointed last night. I tried to reason with him and talk about Walt's good qualities. They're both so much alike, but Mr. Marland would only talk about the future and being practical. I don't know what to do. I'm a mess.

(Lydie looks off almost talking to herself.)

I wish I'd never come here. I wish Walt and I could have met and just been a regular couple somewhere else. Charlie you know him. Walt can do anything he wants in life. He's got greatness in him. I don't understand why Mr. Marland can't see it.

CHARLIE

People see what they want to see.

LYDIE

I suppose.

(In a more playful tone.)

How did the dance go with Elizabeth?

CHARLIE

You set me up. She turned me down flat.

LYDIE

She turned you down because her church doesn't dance. They don't believe in music or something. I had to talk for hours just to get her to come to the party.

CHARLIE

Thanks for the warning.

LYDIE

Don't worry, Elizabeth really likes you. She asked me to see if you would invite her out sometime or maybe go to a church meeting. I think you should. You would be a cute couple.

CHARLIE

I'll see.

LYDIE

I'm worried about Walt. I've never been to his house. I don't even know where he lives.

(Charlie looks away without answering.)

Charlie, do you know where Walt lives or not?

CHARLIE

Yes...but...it's not in the best part of town.

(Charlie and Lydie walk to lighting that becomes darker and gloomier at Walt's home.)

CHARLIE

Stay here and I'll get Walt.

(Charlie moves away from Lydie. Walt enters and does not see Lydie immediately.)

WALT

Charlie? What are you doing here?

CHARLIE

Lydie's worried about you.

WALT

You brought Lydie here!

(Lydie moves closer to Walt. Walt turns his back on them.)

CHARLIE

This may not be a good time, Lydie.

(Lydie looks around and follows Walt while Charlie stays in the background.)

LYDIE

Walt?

(Walt does not acknowledge her.)

What's wrong?

WALT

You have no right coming here. No right to be here. I...

(Walt looks away embarrassed.)

LYDIE

It's all right Walt. It's okay...It doesn't matter...It doesn't matter to me.

WALT

I didn't want you to see this place. I never wanted you to see how we live.

LYDIE

It's just a neighborhood, Walt. It's just four walls where you live. It's not what you are. Trust me, I've seen worse.

WALT

My mom...she's not well. All she does is stare at the wall.

LYDIE

I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do?

WALT

Yeah. Let's get out of here for a while and take a walk.

(Walt suddenly realized Charlie is there.)

You can come too.

CHARLIE

Thanks. But I've got some things to do.

(Walt and Lydie exit the stage.)

(Charlie walks alone a few seconds until Lydie comes back to him crying.)

CHARLIE

What's the matter?

LYDIE

Walt's been drafted.

CHARLIE

What?

LYDIE

He's been drafted into the army.

CHARLIE

When?

LYDIE

He leaves next week. I begged him not to go. I told him I would run away with him, but he said he had to go. Said it was his duty.

CHARLIE

Do you think—

LYDIE

Do I think George or Mr. Marland had something to do with his being drafted...it's possible. They certainly could have gotten that done, but I don't know.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 3

(Walt and Charlie in front of the train station.)

WALT

It's just you and me again. We've had some great times at this train station.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

WALT

I always like the train station...It's like a gateway to the world.

CHARLIE

Be careful over there.

WALT

Ah...you don't have to worry about me.

(Walt looks around for any sign of Lydie.)

CHARLIE

I still think Mr. Marland had something to do with this.

WALT

It don't matter. Do you think she'll come?

CHARLIE

If it's within her power she'll be here, but Lydie doesn't always have the final say in her life.

WALT

You don't understand, my friend, Lydie's one determined woman.

(Conductor calls "All aboard." People in the station start talking and looking at the entrance of Lydie from off stage.)

LYDIE

Walt! Don't go.

WALT

I have to go.

LYDIE

Be careful.

WALT

Charlie's already told me to do that.

LYDIE

(Lydie looks at Charlie and then back to Walt.)

Be careful for me.

WALT

I will...for you. I will be back for you.

LYDIE

I'll be waiting.

WALT

I'll hold you to that.

LYDIE

There's not one thing you can do that will change that war so be careful...don't be a hero.

WALT

A hero might look pretty good to a French girl.

LYDIE

Don't be a hero and don't even look at any French girls.

WALT

I won't look at anything but that North Star, because I know you'll be walking in the night, looking at it too.

LYDIE

You know me pretty well. You look at that star every night and know I'm thinking of you.

WALT

That's a deal.

LYDIE

Take this.

(Lydie hands Walt a picture of herself.)

WALT

Your picture. This is better than any star. I'll look at it every night too. I wish I had a picture for you.

(Conductor calls "last call all aboard.")

LYDIE

I'll carry you in my heart. I love you, Walt Johnson.

(Walt and Lydie embrace and kiss.)

WALT

You know I love you, Lydie.

(Walt exits. Charlie and Lydie left behind.)

LYDIE

You think he'll be okay?

CHARLIE

He's Walt...He'll be fine.

(Lydie exits.)

(Charlie walks around to pass time and then picks up a letter.)

CHARLIE

Lydie!

(Lydie enters.)

I got a letter from Walt.

LYDIE

What does it say? I haven't seen a letter in weeks. Mr. Marland keeps intercepting them.

CHARLIE

He's safe...but it sounds rough over there.

LYDIE

My poor Walt.

(E.W. Marland enters. Lydie hides the letter.)

E. W.

Lydie, time to go.

LYDIE

Yes, Mr. Marland.

(E.W. and Lydie exit leaving Charlie as Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry enter.)

MRS. DINGLE

Did you see the papers?

MRS. BERRY

Oh my yes...A big sale at the furniture store downtown.

MRS. DINGLE

Not that...you ninny...about that Johnson boy.

(Charlie hears and gets a paper.)

MRS. BERRY

Oh my...what has he broken this time?

MRS. DINGLE

He hasn't broken anything...he's a hero! The paper says, "Private Walter Johnson, of Ponca City, Oklahoma, mounted a supply pony with six French soldiers and charged a machine gun position." They're giving him a medal.

(Lydie enters and Charlie brings paper to her.)

LYDIE

What does it say?

CHARLIE

Four French soldiers were killed, but Walt and two others continued the attack. Walt's horse was shot out from under him, but they secured the position and fired until the machine gun overheated and jammed. Then they used rifles and pistols to hold off the Germans. He's been awarded a medal from the French Army. Walt's a hero! The whole town is talking about it.

LYDIE

He told me he would be careful and look at him now!

CHARLIE

It doesn't surprise me.

LYDIE

Do you remember...

CHARLIE

Do you remember...

(Both characters speak at the same time.)

LYDIE

The time he fought Daniel Craigan for me?

CHARLIE

That's exactly what I was thinking. I can just imagine Walt charging head long into the whole German army.

LYDIE

Seriously, do you think he's all right?

CHARLIE

I'm sure he is. Walt would say, "Don't worry."

LYDIE

He always says, "Don't worry," but worry's all I do.

CHARLIE

We've got to think the best.

LYDIE

You're right. That's what Walt would do.

I'm being selfish going on about my worries all the time. How's Elizabeth? She never comes around to see me.

CHARLIE

Elizabeth's fine. I see her every day. We're going to be married.

LYDIE

Charlie! You two will be perfect...Walt and I are engaged.

CHARLIE

What!

LYDIE

There's no ring or anything, but we promised each other that we would marry each other, no matter what.

CHARLIE

Does Mr. Marland know?

LYDIE

Heaven's no. Things have been going better at home, since I've quit my flirting, Mr. Marland is much less suspicious. I'll tell him, but Mrs. Marland has been so sick and I don't want to burden him now. I hope Walt and Mr. Marland will be great friends someday.

CHARLIE

Maybe.

LYDIE

Do you think Walt will come home now?

CHARLIE

It's possible. He's a hero. They might send him back to recruit or sell bonds or something.

LYDIE

I hope so. I miss him so much. I'm tired of looking at the North Star thinking of him...I want to look into his eyes.

CHARLIE

If I know Walt...he's thinking the very same thing.

OLD CHARLIE

(Old Charlie and Mary enter.)

Walt left as a boy from the wrong side of the tracks and returned a hero. Walt and Lydie's secret engagement was still a secret to everyone in town. Walt was still not welcomed at the Grand Mansion. While Mr. Marland was building a vast oil empire, Daniel Craigan barely managed to survive with only occasional successes.

(Daniel Craigan and Walt Johnson dressed in work clothes visit and shake hands.)

Craigan's luck was about to change, however. Walt started out as an underpaid hand on one of Craigan's wells but soon advanced. The boy who had once taken Craigan to the ground was now a man making him a lot of money. It seemed everything Walt touched turned to black gold. Walt was smart and energetic. Craigan started drilling one gusher after another even with the most used up and antiquated equipment. The Craigan Oil Company would never be a serious competitor to Marland Oil, but Walt Johnson was making a name for himself inside and outside of Ponca City.

MARY

How about you and Grandma?

OLD CHARLIE

We married shortly after Walt returned. We were very happy. Walt and Lydie were still being careful.

(Old Charlie and Mary exit.)

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry enter.)

MRS. DINGLE

It's too bad Virginia is under the weather. I don't like to talk, but—

(Mrs. Berry rolls her eyes.)

I hear Virginia is not doing well at all...she hardly ever goes out anymore.

MRS. BERRY

It's lucky for Mr. Marland that Lydie takes care of things...she's quite an accomplished hostess.

I haven't seen that handsome Walt Johnson lately.

MRS. DINGLE

I don't expect to see him here anytime soon.

MRS. BERRY

I don't know, I hear he's never far from Lydie.

MRS. DINGLE

Tell what you know.

MRS. BERRY

I don't like to talk, but—someone said Lydie was at church sitting by Walt Johnson.

MRS. DINGLE

That could be a coincidence.

MRS. BERRY

They were holding hands...right in church!

MRS. DINGLE

Well, I never—

MRS. BERRY

I don't expect you ever have!

MRS. DINGLE

I hear he brought in another well for Mr. Craigan last week.

MRS. BERRY

People say he's got a nose for oil.

MRS. DINGLE

He's smart enough to stay away from E.W. Marland.

MRS. BERRY

Don't be so sure.

MRS. DINGLE

Why not?

MRS. BERRY

Because he's coming up the walk.

(Walt enters. E.W. Enters to confront him.)

E.W.

What do you want?

WALT

I've come to see you, sir. Would you like to talk here, or inside?

E.W.

I don't see that you have any business in my house or at this party for that matter, so I guess you can say what you will...then leave.

WALT

I've come to ask your permission to marry Lydie.

E.W.

That's preposterous. What makes you think she has any interest?

(Lydie enters to stand by Walt.)

LYDIE

It's true Mr. Marland. I do love him. We've been secretly engaged since before the war.

(E.W. stands in stunned silence.)

WALT

I've saved some money. It may not be much to you, but it'll get us a comfortable start. Craigan's being bought out by a group from Bartlesville and I'm moving after I finish this last well. I won't go without Lydie, if she'll have me.

(Lydie's body language says the answer will be yes.)

I'll be back tomorrow afternoon for an answer.

E.W.

You have no idea who you're dealing with! Just because you have a pathetic little job with Craigan Oil, don't think you amount to anything!

(Walt squeezes Lydie's hand as she gives him a kiss on the cheek. E.W. extends his hand.)

Lydie, come with me.

(Lydie exits reluctantly with E.W.. Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry exit gossiping leaving Walt on stage.)

(Charlie enters.)

WALT

I guess you heard.

CHARLIE

I think the whole county has heard by now.

WALT

Marland blew up. Lydie wanted to elope, but that wouldn't be right. I still think Marland's a good guy and I wanted to give him a chance to do the right thing.

CHARLIE

He must have come undone.

WALT

Pretty much—made a comment about my “pathetic” little job with Craigan.

CHARLIE

What *are* you doing working for Craigan? He’s drunk half the time and barely keeps his equipment operational.

WALT

Craigan’s the price I have to pay for Lydie. I made some money and enough of a reputation to get a better job over at Bartlesville.

CHARLIE

What’s going to happen?

WALT

Lydie’s coming with me to Bartlesville. I have no idea what Marland will do. I hope he gives us his blessing, but I don’t see that happening.

CHARLIE

I don’t see E.W. Marland giving in to an ultimatum.

WALT

Me either

CHARLIE

Do you worry—I mean about keeping Lydie in a standard she’s used to?

WALT

Lydie and I have talked about it. You probably don’t know much about Lydie before she came here.

CHARLIE

Not really.

WALT

She doesn't like to talk about it. She hasn't always been rich. Sometimes money costs too much. Lydie will like living a more ordinary life. When you own a lot of stuff, the stuff owns you. Lydie feels trapped sometimes.

CHARLIE

You want to eat supper?

WALT

Naw... You know Charlie, you always helped me dream big and believe in myself...that's a lot to do for any person to do, but...I'm heading out to the well. I want to see if I can finish this one before I get Marland's answer tomorrow.

(Walt starts to step away.)

Charlie, would you be my best man?

CHARLIE

Sure...I would be honored.

WALT

We've had some great adventure. I wouldn't be the same person I am today without you and I've always depended on you like a brother. A person's as small as their fears, or as big as their greatest aspiration. You always let me dream big and believe in myself, Charlie...and that's a lot to do for any person. I'll see you at the wedding.

(Walt exits.)

(Charlie exits.)

Scene 4

(Lydie alone before George enters.)

LYDIE

Good morning, George.

GEORGE

Good morning, sis. That was quite a scene yesterday.

LYDIE

Have you seen Mr. Marland this morning?

GEORGE

Thought he'd be the last person you'd want to see.

LYDIE

I wanted to talk with him.

(Sound of an explosion.)

What was that?

GEORGE

I have no idea—thunder maybe? Listen, you can't really be thinking of marrying Walt Johnson?

LYDIE

I'm beyond thinking about it. He makes me happy George...and I'm not ever really happy anymore unless he's around. I wanted to see Mr. Marland...They're so much alike...surely, he can see Walt's potential.

GEORGE

I don't know.

LYDIE

I've got to try.

GEORGE

Well...you'll have to pick another morning. He headed out before dawn.

LYDIE

So early?

GEORGE

I guess he had things to do.

LYDIE

That's odd.

GEORGE

(Starts to leave.)

Sis...good luck, no matter what...I know I've not been much help to you, but I do want you to be happy...and I know Mr. Marland wants that too.

LYDIE

Thanks George.

(George exits and leaves Lydie alone.)

JODY

(Jody enters.)

Miss Marland?

LYDIE

Oh! You startled me.

JODY

I'm sorry. I'm Jody Kincaid from the sheriff's office. Is your father around?

LYDIE

No. I haven't seen him all day. Is everything all right?

JODY

There's been an accident at Craigan's well. You probably heard the explosion. We're going to need some of Marland Oil's equipment. I was hoping to catch your father.

LYDIE

Was anyone hurt?

JODY

One killed...and one hurt real bad.

(Lydie drops the cup she is holding.)

LYDIE

Which one was hurt real bad?

JODY

Walt Johnson. I'm afraid it's real bad.

LYDIE

I've got to see my Walt! I have to know he's okay. I've got to see my Walt!

JODY

You can't go right now, Miss Marland. The doctors...they...well they say there's no hope. They don't see how he's survived this long. He's—not going to make it I'm afraid.

LYDIE

They don't know Walt...I know he'll be all right.

JODY

The doctors are doing their best, but...he's not going to make it.

(Lydie collapses.)

JODY

I need some help!

(George enters to help Jody take Lydie off stage.)

OLD CHARLIE

(Old Charlie and Mary enter.)

Walt had been to war and seen unspeakable horrors. He knew he had no chance, but for Lydie he fought on for three days. Lydie spent those miserable hours hoping—praying for a miracle. Walt Johnson died at nine o'clock, on a Saturday morning, on April 19. To this day, I cannot think of him without shedding a tear in my heart.

MARY

That must have been terrible for you, Grandpa.

OLD CHARLIE

It took a long time to get over Walt's death. I was struck by how quickly everyone else got on with life. The oilfield was a dangerous place where men risked life and limb on a daily basis. People were hardened to the personal tragedies that happened routinely in this harsh environment. It should not have been a surprise when others took this loss in stride, but Walt Johnson had been my friend.

MARY

What happened to Lydie?

OLD CHARLIE

Lydie struggled with the loss. She disappeared into the confines of the Grand Mansion and no one saw her for months. E.W. Marland didn't have time to reflect on the misfortunes of the past as he continued building his empire. He took Lydie on a European trip as the storm clouds of destruction gathered, although they were still invisible to him.

(Preparations for a Marland party.)

Time passed and I got on with living life. Elizabeth made a home out of our house by putting all the little details together that only she could appreciate. I was a fledgling new lawyer with a shingle hung in an office window close to the courthouse and hungry enough to take almost any case. As things got back to normal, the gossip about Walt Johnson's death spread around our small town.

(Old Charlie exits.)

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry enter at a party.)

(E.W. walks by to greet the two women.)

E.W.

Mrs. Dingle...Mrs. Berry. As always, a pleasure to have you grace my party.

MRS. DINGLE

Thank you.

MRS. BERRY

Thank you indeed.

(E.W. exits.)

MRS. DINGLE

I don't expect E.W. Marland would be so friendly if he knew what I think I know.

MRS. BERRY

Oh, I do know you don't like to talk, but please tell me what you think you know that Mr. Marland won't like if you knew...or whatever you just said.

MRS. DINGLE

I think it's mighty suspicious what happened to poor Walt Johnson.

MRS. BERRY

You mean—

MRS. DINGLE

I have my intuition. Mr. Marland didn't like the boy and left early that morning. No one knows where he was at—

MRS. BERRY

And no one around here would dare ask!

MRS. DINGLE

Makes one wonder.

MRS. BERRY

Indeed and doesn't Lydie looks radiant tonight?

MRS. DINGLE

Yes, she is so helpful. I don't like to talk, but—

MRS. BERRY

You mean there's a "don't like to talk" about Lydie?

MRS. DINGLE

She looks radiant because she has a new man in here life.

MRS. BERRY

Who?

MRS. DINGLE

Someone said she was at Charles McDonagh's house just the other day.

MRS. BERRY

I say—

MRS. DINGLE

Exactly.

(Lydie enters.)

MRS. DINGLE

Lydie, you look beautiful tonight.

LYDIE

Thank you. Have you seen Charlie?

(Charlie and Elizabeth enter. Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry give each other a look.)

MRS. DINGLE

Looks like the McDonaghs just arrived.

(Charlie and Elizabeth enter. Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry exit.)

LYDIE

You made it!

ELIZABETH

Everything is beautiful.

CHARLIE

I've ever seen this many people here before.

LYDIE

Everyone wants to be at the Oilman's Ball. I don't know the half of them.

(E.W. steps up to address the crowd.)

E.W.

Welcome to my home.

(People enter to listen to E.W.'s speech.)

By the looks of things, we've about outgrown the Grand Mansion. I've just returned from an extended vacation in Italy with Lydie and have brought a few of its treasures back to Ponca City. As I look around, however, I find no walls suitable for their hanging and not enough room to accommodate my many friends and associates, so tonight I have invited you here to make an important announcement.

MRS. DINGLE

Do you think they're leaving Ponca?

E.W.

(E.W. ignores comment.)

While in Florence, I was privileged to stay in a palace of magnificent and inspiring beauty. Tonight I would like to announce that this palace will be reborn in even more splendor in Ponca City.

(Everyone applauds and the crowd shakes hands and congratulates the men. Lydie approaches Charlie and Elizabeth while everyone exits.)

LYDIE

The band's playing a waltz. Could you dance with me for old time's sake?

CHARLIE

I don't really dance anymore, Lydie.

LYDIE

Don't be silly.

CHARLIE

Honestly, I don't think I remember how.

LYDIE

Please, Charlie. There's really no one else I want to dance with tonight. Elizabeth won't mind. You two might not have ever met if we hadn't been dance partners.

ELIZABETH

Go ahead, Charlie, I could use a good laugh.

(EW enters.)

E.W.

Charles, my first friend in Ponca City. I've got someone I'd like for you to meet. You ladies won't mind? Could you come now, Charles?

CHARLIE

Sure. It will keep me from embarrassing myself.

(E.W. and Charlie exit, leaving Elizabeth and Lydie.)

ELIZABETH

Lydie, may I speak with you?

LYDIE

Of course.

ELIZABETH

I've noticed a change in you since you've come back from Italy.

LYDIE

Really? I hope it's for the good.

ELIZABETH

I'm not sure.

LYDIE

Is anything wrong, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

I know Walt's death affected you. The whole town knew it. It took Charlie a long time to recover and I suspect you took it hard also. It's been my experience that a woman who has lost a man is only satisfied when she's found a new love. Since you've returned from Italy, you've been playful, cheerful, and flirty.

LYDIE

I think the trip to Florence...

ELIZABETH

Are you in love with my husband?

LYDIE

What?

ELIZABETH

Are you in love with my husband?

LYDIE

No! When Walt died, I think a part of me died with him. I spent weeks that turned into months that turned into two years where I just struggled to move each day I struggled to find a reason to go on. Your Charlie...and I emphasize your Charlie, was the one person that was able to get me going again, who explained to me that I had to move on. I don't have many people I can trust.

(Lydie's demeanor transforms to an anxious, nervous manner.)

Maybe it was a bad idea for me to want to dance with your husband tonight, but I've danced with him so many times before. I was dancing with him the night he asked me to introduce you two. It's so difficult for me to have friends, especially male friends, my own age. It seems sometimes like everyone I know is older. I'm so sorry.

ELIZABETH

(Superficial laugh.)

You must think me fantastically insecure.

LYDIE

I must be more discreet in the future. I probably need to stay completely away. People in this town will talk...just like they talk about Mr. Marland.

ELIZABETH

I think I may need to apologize. *(Looks off)* Oh, Charlie is waving at me, Lydie. I must go. *(Takes Lydie's hands)* Come see me...I mean that. *(Lydie smiles and nods)* Come by anytime.

(Elizabeth exits leaving Lydie alone for a few seconds. A shaken Lydie then exits.)

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry enter.)

MRS. DINGLE

I don't like to talk—

MRS. BERRY

But?

MRS. DINGLE

That Daniel Craigen's here and he's already had too much to drink. He had a fight in the garden before the party even started...and have you seen the way he's been looking at Lydie and following her about.

MRS. BERRY

Poor Lydie...she seems so lost.

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry exit before Lydie enters followed by Daniel Craigen.)

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Things must be a little lonely for you these days.

(Lydie doesn't respond.)

With Johnson gone, you must need a little...company.

(Lydie turns to go. Daniel Craigan grabs Lydie to turn her around. She throws champagne in his face.)

E.W.

Get your hands off her!

DANIEL CRAIGAN

I'm just having a little conversation.

E.W.

Get out!

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Why? I'm just trying to keep your "daughter" company.

E.W.

You've had too much to drink.! Escort yourself out or I'll do it for you.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

I'm not leaving. This girl and me are fixing to dance.

(Daniel Craigan grabs for Lydie. E.W. punches Craigan, knocking him to the ground.)

E.W.

I've wanted to do that for a long time. Get him out of here!

(Men help Craigan off stage.)

Are you okay, Lydie?

(Lydie nods nervously. E.W. doesn't seem to know what to do and exits.)

(Lydie is alone for a moment and starts to cry.)

(Charlie and Elizabeth enter.)

ELIZABETH

You're thinking about Walt, aren't you?

LYDIE

It's...just been so hard.

ELIZABETH

Since Walt's...gone?

(Lydie nods.)

LYDIE

I don't know what to do with myself.

CHARLIE

I miss him, too.

(Charlie, Lydie, and Elizabeth exit.)

(Old Charlie enters with Mary.)

MARY

Do you need to stop for a while, Grandpa?

OLD CHARLIE

Yes, sweetheart. Let's take a little break.

(Mary and Old Charlie start to exit.)

MARY

So that's why she disappeared for all those years. She couldn't get over losing Walt.

OLD CHARLIE

No. Lydie's tragedies happened after Walt's death.

MARY

What!

OLD CHARLIE

When we come back, I'll finish the story. You see—
Lydie was the daughter of the most powerful and
richest man in Oklahoma, but her marriage...let's just
say Lydie's marriage shocked everyone.

MARY

(Pulling Old Charlie off stage.)

Hurry up Grandpa! I want to hear the rest.

INTERMISSION

ACT 2

Scene 1

OLD CHARLIE

(Old Charlie and Mary enter.)

Construction started on E.W. Marland's Palace on the Prairie with a scope and scale reminiscent of one of his great refineries. The details of the mansion consumed much of E.W. Marland's time and most of Lydie's. It would be months before I saw her again.

MARY

What about E.W.'s wife?

OLD CHARLIE

Virginia Marland was almost a forgotten part of E.W.'s past success. Her health steadily declined and she died before the Palace on the Prairie was completed. For E.W. there was little time to mourn—he had a business he was trying to save. Lydie spent countless hours guiding the artisans through their task to make sure every detail was authentic on the new mansion.

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry enter.)

(Charlie enters to hear their gossip.)

MRS. DINGLE

They're taking over the board.

CHARLIE

This is awkward...I didn't mean to eavesdrop.

MRS. DINGLE

Eavesdropping is very bad.

MRS. BERRY

Very bad indeed...Almost as bad as gossiping.

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry look at each other.)

CHARLIE

Again, I apologize, but I thought I heard something about a board.

MRS. DINGLE

Geraldine Adam's husband went aboard a ship last month.

MRS. BERRY

Oh...and Mr. Peters had to use a board on his son the other evening.

MRS. DINGLE

And Mrs. Peabody gets so bored at the preacher's sermon that she falls asleep.

MRS. BERRY

Mr. Jones is resigning from the school board.

CHARLIE

Again, I'm sorry...I'm really sorry.

(Charlie begins to walk away.)

MRS. DINGLE

(Almost as an afterthought.)

Of course those men were in town who said...now what was it? They were going to take over the board.

CHARLIE

Thank you...I've got to go.

(Charlie exits the stage.)

MRS. DINGLE

Would you like to know more about Mrs. Peabody?

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry exit.)

(E.W. enters followed by Charlie.)

CHARLIE

Mr. Marland...do you have a minute?

E.W.

What the devil is it, Charles? I'm busy.

CHARLIE

I caught wind of a rumor that J.P. Morgan is in town.

E.W.

Morgan's in town?

CHARLIE

(Charlie nods.)

There's talk of getting control of Marland Oil.

E.W.

(E.W. is stunned, but quickly recovers.)

This is serious. I knew Morgan had been rattling his saber, but I had no idea he would be this bold... I need to get on the phone.

(Charlie begins to exit.)

Charles...you may have saved my company.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 2

OLD CHARLIE

(Old Charlie and Mary enter.)

It was the beginning of the end for Marland Oil.

MARY

What caused the problems?

OLD CHARLIE

Who's to say what the reasons were, but E.W. blamed the eastern bankers. The spring foxhunt was a pleasant distraction from the distasteful battle for control of Marland Oil. Lydie rode a tall dark horse named Rosenbar. Lydie put me on a horse that was short, old, and lazy. We ended up at the gang's old hang-out, near Red Bud Creek Bridge.

(Old Charlie and Mary exit.)

(Charlie and Lydie enter.)

LYDIE

How can someone live in Oklahoma and ride so poorly?

CHARLIE

Some of us find a car more comfortable. What are we doing here?

LYDIE

This has always been one of my favorite places. I've traveled the world and seen many great places, but I always find this place...familiar. You and Walt brought George and me here on our very first day in Ponca City. Do you remember?

(Charlie nods.)

This is where Walt asked me to marry him.

(Charlie uncomfortable talking about Walt.)

As a lawyer, you have something called client attorney privilege, don't you?

CHARLIE

If a client tells me something, I'm ethically obliged to keep that information confidential.

LYDIE

(Lydie hands Charlie money.)

Will twenty dollars buy me client attorney privilege?

CHARLIE

(Charlie refuses to take the money.)

Lydie what's wrong? Are you in some kind of trouble?

LYDIE

Am I in trouble? I think I am trouble.

(Lydie works up the courage to speak.)

Charlie. I'm getting married... You're surprised I see

CHARLIE

I...I am...I had no idea Lydie. That's great, I had no idea you were even seeing anyone.

LYDIE

I don't think anyone does.

CHARLIE

What do George and Mr. Marland think?

LYDIE

(Lydie takes a deep breath.)

George doesn't know.

CHARLIE

Is it that Jo Davidson? Elizabeth told me—

LYDIE

It's not Jo... You can't tell anyone. You can't even tell Elizabeth. You will promise, won't you?

CHARLIE

Sure.

LYDIE

Charlie, I'm marrying Mr. Marland.

(An awkward silence as Charlie doesn't know how to react.)

You can't tell anyone Charlie. I took a risk telling you, but I had to talk to someone. You're always so easy to talk to.

(Charlie just stares at her.)

Charlie? Please don't... please don't look at me that way.

CHARLIE

I...I

LYDIE

I can't bear you looking at me that way. I expect it from everyone else, but not you. It's too much.

CHARLIE

How Lydie? He's your father.

LYDIE

He's not really my father Charlie. You know that... I was the niece of Mrs. Marland. I'm no blood relation to

Mr. Marland. You know better than anyone that he never really treated me like a daughter.

CHARLIE

But he is old enough to be your father and you are Lydie Marland...you are legally his daughter.

LYDIE

He's not that old. I'm 28...lot's of 28-year-old women would marry a handsome millionaire of his charms and you know that he seems much younger than his age.

(Charlie still does not know how to respond.)

I have no one, Charlie. You have Elizabeth. I have nobody. I want a family I can call my own before I'm too old. I've never talked to my friends in Ponca City about my life in Flourtown before coming here. We were poor for sure, but there were other things, bad situations back there that...that are better forgotten. I have always felt safe with Mr. Marland. I need to feel safe. I need to belong to someone.

CHARLIE

Lydie, this will cause a stir in town.

LYDIE

I know. People are such gossips but...he needs me...and I need him.

CHARLIE

Do you love him?

LYDIE

(Lydie turns away.)

I respect him...I think I love him Charlie. I'll never feel like I felt for Walt, but yes, I love him and I feel as close to him as any man I've met since. That's why I

came here to tell you. I knew if I could convince you here in this place where I feel so close to Walt...that my love for him might be genuine.

This will be a practical solution to my happiness and I feel I can make Mr. Marland happy too. He desperately needs someone since Aunt Virginia passed. You know him Charlie...you know how charming and kind he can be. I feel we will be a happy couple. I think I can be a good partner for him. You need to know that he's always been proper toward me and I respect him very much.

CHARLIE

How will you do it? I mean will you have a big wedding?

LYDIE

Heavens no, Mr. Marland would never want so much publicity. We're leaving in a couple of weeks to have the adoption annulled, then we will be married there...by a justice of the peace I assume.

CHARLIE

Lydie, I'm happy for you. I've seen a change in you...a vibrancy since you have returned from Florence that I think you must be in love. Elizabeth thought as much the first time she saw you back in Ponca City. I hope you will be happy.

LYDIE

Me to...We need to be getting back. I'll wager the poor fox has been killed or gone forever by now.

(Lydie and Charlie exit.)

Scene 3

(Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry enter.)

MRS. DINGLE

Can you believe?

MRS. BERRY

Can you imagine?

MRS. DINGLE

Lydie Marland certainly had an extraordinary day. She started the day as Miss Lydie Marland, transformed by a judge to Lydie Roberts only to be wed as Mrs. Lydie Marland.

MRS. BERRY

I heard they honeymooned on train trip through Canada.

MRS. DINGLE

Moved into that fancy new house and then...Mr. Marland lost his company.

MRS. BERRY

I heard they lost almost everything.

MRS. DINGLE

It didn't keep him out of the United States Congress.

MRS. BERRY

With this depression going on...we need something.

MRS. DINGLE

But Lydie...can you believe—

MRS. BERRY

Can you imagine?

(Charlie enters and walks close to the women.)

MRS. DINGLE

Especially after what happened to poor Walt Johnson.

MRS. BERRY

It makes sense now.

(This statement gets Charlie interested.)

MRS. DINGLE

I don't like to talk, but—

MRS. BERRY

I know exactly what you mean.

CHARLIE

Excuse me ladies.

MRS. DINGLE

Hello Mr. McDonagh.

MRS. BERRY

Hello Mr. McDonagh.

CHARLIE

Do you think it's appropriate to gossip in the middle of town?

MRS. DINGLE

Oh no...Gossiping is very bad.

MRS. BERRY

Very bad indeed.

MRS. DINGLE

I always say that I don't like to talk—

CHARLIE

But it seems to come out anyway?

MRS. BERRY

We weren't gossiping.

MRS. DINGLE

We would *never* do that.

CHARLIE

But ladies I just heard you talking about Mr. Marland and Walt Johnson. Walt was a good friend of mine and Lydie still is. I prefer that you—

MRS. DINGLE

We weren't gossiping—

MRS. BERRY

We were just rehashing some facts.

CHARLIE

(In a dubious tone and body language.)

Facts?

MRS. DINGLE

Yes.

MRS. BERRY

Yes indeed.

MRS. DINGLE

Penelope Peabody...you know the woman who falls asleep in church *every* Lord's day?

MRS. BERRY

She has a friend—

MRS. DINGLE

Who has a son who worked for Sheriff Finchem—

MRS. BERRY

Back when the accident occurred.

MRS. DINGLE

E.W. Marland was at Daniel Craigan's well-site not an hour before the explosion. He and poor Walt had an argument—

MRS. BERRY

And then KaBoom!

CHARLIE

You're telling me E.W. Marland was at the well-site the morning Walt died?

MRS. DINGLE

Absolutely...In fact, Mrs. Peabody's friend's son is right over there. He'll tell you.

(Jody enters. Charlie excuses himself and moves across stage to Jody.)

CHARLIE

Hello...Are you the son of a friend of Mrs. Peabody?

(Charlie grimaces at the introduction.)

JODY

I'm Jody.

CHARLIE

Jody...Good to meet you. This sounds crazy, but I was talking to Mrs. Dingle and Mrs. Berry. They were telling me this wild tale that E.W. Marland was at the well-site the morning of Walt Johnson's accident.

JODY

He was there—

(Hesitates then thinks.)

But I really can't talk about a case.

CHARLIE

I understand, but Walt was a close friend of mine. Did you actually see Mr. Marland there?

JODY

(Jody looks around nervously.)

Of course not...we got the information from Daniel Craigan. He's the one that made the report. He was the only person there.

CHARLIE

Did the Sherriff investigate...I mean what was done?

JODY

(Nervous and agitated.)

Like I said, I can't really talk about a case and talking about E.W. Marland is not good business around here.

CHARLIE

Listen. Marland may be the next governor, he's married to a friend of mine, and you're insinuating he was at a

potential crime scene. You can tell me now or answer to a subpoena.

JODY

I don't know nothing...If you want to know what happened that morning talk to Craigan.

CHARLIE

Craigan?

JODY

He's moved to Texas—But you didn't hear it from me.

*(Jody exits abruptly leaving Charlie behind.
Lights fade.)*

Scene 4

(Daniel Craigan sitting at a table slightly drunk.)

(Charlie enters.)

CHARLIE

Mr. Craigan?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

(Looks at Charlie suspiciously.)

Do I know you?

CHARLIE

Charles McDonagh ... from Ponca City.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Yeah...they call you Charlie...Charlie McDonagh.

CHARLIE

Yes.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

You were friends with Johnson?

CHARLIE

Yes, we were good friends. Could I have a moment of your time?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Sure...have a seat.

(Charlie sits down.)

Want something to drink?

CHARLIE

No...I just wanted to talk to you about Walt Johnson.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Johnson was a smart kid...smart and ambitious.

CHARLIE

Yes, I think he would have done well if it hadn't been for the accident.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

(Takes another swig of his beer.)

Yeah, the accident.

CHARLIE

Were you there that morning?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

We were pushing to get this well done—We pushed too hard.

CHARLIE

What was Mr. Marland doing there?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Marland...I don't know exactly. Yeah he was there. I'd been at the site all night, Johnson came about midnight to relieve me, but I stayed out there to sleep.

CHARLIE

I heard that Marland and Walt argued.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Argued...I don't remember that. It was loud everyone shouts at a well-site.

(Craigán thinks and then gives an insincere laugh.)

You think Marland had something to do with Johnson's death?

CHARLIE

I think...I think it's odd that Walt and Mr. Marland had a confrontation the night before Mr. Marland shows up at a well-site that's not his to have another argument the morning of Walt's death.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Marland...He's always at the wrong place at the wrong time.

CHARLIE

So you think maybe he—

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Kid, I don't like Marland and he don't like me. I bet even you can figure that out. Believe me, I would be the last person to help Marland. He's arrogant and thinks he's some kind of nobility. He can find oil like it's a gift from God. I'll grant you that. Johnson had the gift too. In fact, Johnson and Marland were a lot alike, except Johnson was a good Joe. Marland's got the worst timing in the world. He didn't know when to sell in 1907 and even though I tried to tell him, he didn't figure out some of his own people were taking his company and giving control to Morgan.

CHARLIE

So you don't think he had anything to do with Walt's accident?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

I was there. Johnson and Marland didn't have an argument. They talked, but neither one of 'em shouted or cursed or anything. I don't know what they were talking about, but they shook hands when Marland left and Johnson was in a great mood after that.

CHARLIE

You say it was a friendly conversation?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

I wouldn't say friendly, but it was mutual. It wasn't heated.

(Charlie thinks silently.)

Listen kid. It's the oil patch. Accidents happen. This was a bad one, but it was just an accident. I would love to stick this on Marland just to bring him down a notch or two, but Marland liked the kid.

CHARLIE

How do you know that?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

He told me.

CHARLIE

When?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

At Johnson's funeral. Johnson was marrying his daughter.

CHARLIE

How do you know that?

DANIEL CRAIGAN

Johnson told me after Marland left that day at the well. He told me he wouldn't be leaving for Bartlesville after all. Said he was staying in Ponca City to get married.

CHARLIE

Thanks...Thanks Mr. Craigan.

DANIEL CRAIGAN

What's the hurry...have another drink with me.

CHARLIE

No thanks...I have a train to catch.

(Charlie exits.)

(Daniel Craigen exits.)

Scene 5

(Lydie enters, followed by E.W.)

E.W.

Lydie, are you okay?

LYDIE

The room was stuffy—I couldn't breathe.

E.W.

(E.W. moves closer to Lydie to comfort her.)

I didn't notice, but I guess the luncheon was crowded today.

LYDIE

I know this is a big day for you and I'm sorry to be such a distraction. I'll be all right in a minute or two.

E.W.

It's not every day your husband announces that he's going to be governor.

LYDIE

It'll take more than announcing you'll be governor. We'll have to campaign. I'm afraid you'll be away too much and—people are such busybodies.

E.W.

We ran the campaign for Congress and won with no problem.

LYDIE

Everyone in Kay County knew you. This is a statewide race.

E.W.

So, we'll get to meet new people.

LYDIE

That's what worries me.

E.W.

People will fall in love with you, Lydie—just like I did.

LYDIE

You know there's more to it than that.

E.W.

You're not worried about our age difference, again? I am not ashamed to have a pretty, intelligent wife who happens to be a few years younger than myself.

LYDIE

People will talk. I hear the things they say behind my back.

E.W.

(E.W. steps close to Lydie and holds her shoulders gently.)

I'm going to win this governor's race, Lydie and you'll be the finest first lady this state's ever seen. I don't care a whit what people think.

LYDIE

That's the difference between us, Ernest. You don't worry about anything and I worry about practically everything. I'm afraid of what people will say about us...how they might use me to hurt you.

E.W.

(E.W. laughs good-naturedly.)

I'm used to dealing with oilmen and politicians. I don't think public opinion can be more scandalous than that bunch.

LYDIE

It's a little overwhelming, I guess.

E.W.

You're doing fine, Lydie. Just fine.

LYDIE

I do like taking care of you.

E.W.

I don't know what I'd do without you.

LYDIE

(Gently pulls a piece of lint of his jacket.)

You'd have lint on your jacket, that's for sure.

E.W.

That's not what I mean.

LYDIE

I know. Thank you for letting me take care of the little things, though.

E.W.

I've got a surprise for you.

LYDIE

A surprise?

E.W.

Remember Jo Davidson?

LYDIE

Of course. I saw a lot of him when the mansion was built. Such an energetic fellow—I wonder how he's doing?

E.W.

You'll find out.

(Lydie looks puzzled.)

Jo's coming to work on a special project for me.

LYDIE

I thought everything was done at the mansion.

E.W.

It is, but Jo's going to carve three more statues—one of me, one of George, and one of you.

LYDIE

A statue of me?

E.W.

Yes!

LYDIE

What would I wear? How should I wear my hair? Should I wear jewelry? I won't have time to pose.

E.W.

Jo doesn't have anyone pose. He likes to work from casual observation and talking with people. He got to see plenty of us during the construction and he's excited about the project.

LYDIE

I don't know.

E.W.

Too late. I've already told Jo to order the limestone—the finest he could find. He's sculpted some of the most important people in the world. It's only fitting that he carves our statues.

LYDIE

Where will you put them?

E.W.

(E.W. smiles.)

Mine will be in front of the office downtown and George's will go to the west of the house...And for your statue, I have a special spot selected on the north vista. *(Affectionately.)* I'll be able to see it every morning from the breakfast room.

LYDIE

You spoil me.

E.W.

That's my intent.

(E.W. talks in a more serious tone while standing close to Lydie.)

Listen Lydie, I know this marriage isn't easy on you. You're a private person, but people are counting on us in this campaign. Times are tough and I can help—But I need you to stand with me.

(Pause.)

I love you more than anything in this world.

LYDIE

And I love you too, Ernest...I always will.

(E.W. and Lydie kiss initiated by E.W.)

(Lydie smiles coyly.)

Mr. Marland, what will people say, if they find their future governor kissing during his big luncheon?

E.W.

Mrs. Marland, I could care less!

(E.W. offers Lydie his arm.)

May I escort you back to our party?

LYDIE

Mr. Marland, I'll go with you anywhere you want to go.

(E.W. and Lydie exit stage arm in arm.)

Scene 6

OLD CHARLIE

(Old Charlie and Mary enter.)

E.W. Marland believed in the rugged toughness of the Oklahoma people. He won the governorship in a hard fought campaign serving as governor with Lydie as his gracious first lady.

MARY

How did Lydie do?

OLD CHARLIE

The newspapers fell in love with Lydie, as E.W. had predicted. They called her a princess. Although Lydie was a shy person who fiercely valued her privacy, she attended many functions and posed for countless pictures to the delight of the press in Oklahoma City. She even lent her sense of style to the Governor's Mansion in Oklahoma City. Lydie and E.W. kept the Palace on the Prairie open during the governorship. They hosted parties and foxhunts in the grand manner that was the Marland style.

MARY

What kind of governor was Mr. Marland?

OLD CHARLIE

E.W. took over during the darkest days of the great dust bowl. He struggled to get his agenda implemented, but still proved he had the old Marland magic, as the state discovered oil in the front lawn of the state capital during his term of office. E.W. had been to Washington D.C. as a congressman and wanted badly to return as a senator. He ran twice for the United States Senate, but the voters were not on his side this time. E.W. and

Lydie returned home to Ponca City. E.W. had to sell the great house he had built. It was turned into a monastery.

MARY

A monastery...after all those lavish parties?

OLD CHARLIE

Yes. E.W. and Lydie moved into a more modest house that had been the chauffeur's quarters. Lydie was happy to be home with her husband and out of the public eye in their cozy new home. E.W. Marland's company was out of his control, his political career was finished, and much of he's previous wealth was gone—but as always, Mr. Marland had big dreams of rebuilding Marland Oil. Time was not on his side this time.

(Old Charlie and Mary exit.)

(E.W. Marland sits in a chair.)

(Charlie enters.)

(Lydie enters.)

LYDIE

Charlie!

(Charlie looks around.)

CHARLIE

How's Lydie?

LYDIE

I'm fine.

CHARLIE

It's good to see you. I guess you and Mr. Marland are settled in?

LYDIE

Yes, we're doing fine. The cottage is very comfortable.

CHARLIE

Is everything all right?

LYDIE

Yes...things are fine...it's just...Charlie, could come see Mr. Marland. He hasn't felt well for several months and has been cooped up inside. I think he would really enjoy the company.

CHARLIE

Of course.

LYDIE

He enjoys visiting so much and frankly not many people have been to see him lately. I'd really appreciate it.

(Lydie hesitates.)

Charlie, before we go in, I need to tell you something. He's—Mr. Marland's had a stroke. He may not quite be like you remember but—he'll love seeing you.

(Charlie moves to E.W..)

CHARLIE

Good afternoon Mr. Marland.

E.W.

Charles...Look Lydie, it's my first friend in Ponca City.

CHARLIE

I guess I did meet you coming right off the train.

E.W.

You did. Lydie, Charles carried my bags to the Arcade Hotel my first day. He thought I would give him a nickel, but all I had for him was advice.

CHARLIE

Never miss a chance to make a new friend.

E.W.

You remember after all these years!

CHARLIE

But you did take me to the ranch.

E.W.

We did have a great day at the 101 Ranch, didn't we?

CHARLIE

I remember. That's the night you found out I was part Indian.

E.W.

That was good information to have. You should know by now Charles that I didn't leave very much to chance. I was an old lawyer like you are now. I knew it was better to know the answers to questions before you asked them. Your mother's relation to the Ponca was a good connection for me. It's sad to see how the 101 Ranch has declined. It was a true Oklahoma treasure.

(Charlie nods in agreement. E.W. speaks to Lydie.)

This kid and Walt Johnson were always into something. I was coming back from the field one day when that Johnson kid hurled a rock at Craigan's car. I knew Craigan was a hot head so I rode as hard as I could.

Before I got there, Craigan had slapped the kid silly. Do you remember?

CHARLIE

I could never forget.

E.W.

That Johnson kid would never back down from anything. I had to step in between them or I think the kid would have fought Craigan.

CHARLIE

We caused a lot of trouble, I guess.

E.W.

You were just being boys.

CHARLIE

It was a great place to be a kid.

E.W.

Craigan was always in my business. I guess I was always worrying too much about him. He tried to warn me about Haman and Morgan you know.

CHARLIE

No.

E.W.

I was always so focused on Craigan and Morgan that I didn't see what was happening in my own backyard! Emotional thinking will blind you every time.

(Charlie nods in agreement.)

Sometimes you get so blinded by the battle you forget the war you're fighting. I have no regrets though. I've

lived well and made plenty of friends. As soon as I feel better, I'm going to get more active about developing some properties around here.

LYDIE

It's time to take your medicine.

CHARLIE

I've got to be going.

E.W.

It was good to see you Charles...don't be a stranger.

CHARLIE

I'll be seeing you.

(Charlie walks away before Lydie catches him.)

LYDIE

Thanks Charlie.

CHARLIE

No need to thank me...It reminded me how special it's been to know E.W. Marland. How are you doing, Lydie?

LYDIE

Fine. It's nice being isolated, but Mr. Marland does enjoy the company. Thanks again.

CHARLIE

Any time.

(Light focuses then slowly fades on E.W. Marland.)
(Old Charlie enters.)

OLD CHARLIE

E.W. Marland came to Ponca City with big dreams. On October 3, 1941, the dream was over. E.W. Marland died in the arms of his beloved Lydie...of a broken spirit some said. I like to think he had given all that he had to give.

MARY

He must have been quite a guy.

OLD CHARLIE

E.W. Marland was a man most people liked. He had been a risk taker and innovator. He was the epitome of the oil wildcatter and entrepreneur. He had made and lost a fortune, but he had made numerous fortunes for others. Most people who knew him were better for it and that is saying a lot for anyone's life. For E.W. Marland the dream was over. For Lydie, the nightmare was just beginning.

Scene 7

(Lydie enters in the evening light.)

(Charlie enters.)

CHARLIE

Lydie?

(Lydie walks a few steps as if she might walk away before stopping.)

It's Charlie.

LYDIE

Charlie?

CHARLIE

Lydie. How are you doing? I haven't seen you in ages.

LYDIE

I'm out for a walk, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I see. You always did like to walk in the evenings.

LYDIE

Yes. People don't bother me in the evenings...but it's good to see you Charlie. How's Elizabeth?

CHARLIE

She's fine. We've come by a couple of times to visit, but you're a hard woman to catch.

LYDIE

Yes. I suppose I am. I've been so busy.

CHARLIE

There never seems to be enough time, does there?

LYDIE

How's your son?

CHARLIE

He's at Fort Sill in Lawton—training to be an artillery observer.

LYDIE

I've been to Fort Sill. George and Mr. Marland used to go there to play polo. I'm sorry to hear that he's off to war. War is such a terrible thing. I'll pray for him.

CHARLIE

Thank you, we are too.

(A brief silence as Lydie starts to walk off.)

I noticed your statue's missing? Have the monks who bought the mansion moved it?

LYDIE

(Lydie laughs insincerely.)

They found the statue a little too...provocative, I think.

CHARLIE

It was a good likeness.

LYDIE

Mr. Marland always liked it. They discreetly asked if I had some place to store it.

CHARLIE

Where did you store it?

LYDIE

I didn't. I paid a gardener five dollars to destroy it.

CHARLIE

Destroy it!

LYDIE

I told him to break it, smash the face first.

CHARLIE

Lydie, that statue should have been preserved.

LYDIE

I saw no point. The woman in the statue doesn't exist anymore. I'm not sure she ever did. I had it destroyed and taken away, because the image disturbs me.

(Charlie sighs.)

All my men have left me, Charlie. My dear Mr. Marland's gone. George has moved away. I have no one Charlie, just memories.

(Silence.)

I'm so alone. I don't think anyone's as alone as I.

CHARLIE

Lydie, I can't imagine the loss you're feeling now, but I think you need to talk to somebody. You've got to get on with your life.

LYDIE

My life might have been different if Mr. Marland and George hadn't screened my romances so carefully. They would interrogate anyone showing the slightest interest in me. I remember that I was infatuated with a young Frenchman. He was handsome and sophisticated. I think he was a Count or something. We were getting along famously until George gave him the interview. None were good enough and now look at me.

CHARLIE

You still have a lot to give.

LYDIE

I lived my life. I loved Walt. He was the one they couldn't run away. Walt was so brave and was so much like Mr. Marland. Walt stood up to Mr. Marland and Mr. Marland respected him for that.

CHARLIE

You used to say they would someday be friends.

LYDIE

I did. Walt and Mr. Marland had the same kind of dreams. They dreamed big for themselves and for everyone around them.

(Charlie nods.)

I learned to love Mr. Marland. He was so kind to me. I was always so proud of him. I wish I could have given him children. He did love children you know.

CHARLIE

Yes, he was always good to me when I was a boy.

LYDIE

Some days I long to let it all go and let other people untangle the messes, but that would be just one more way I failed Mr. Marland and everyone else who ever cared for me. I'm not as brave as people think. Nobody can make it alone and now I'm all alone. I don't know why they treated Mr. Marland like they did. All he wanted was to build jobs and help people, but they wouldn't let him alone. They kept coming back over and over again for their pound of flesh. And now they'll be getting it from me.

CHARLIE

Who are *they*?

LYDIE

It's good you don't know all that's gone on Charlie. They tried to ruin Mr. Marland in that last election and they used me to do it. You can't imagine the horrible things they said about Mr. Marland...the horrible things they must think about me.

I'm leaving Ponca City, Charlie.

CHARLIE

What?

LYDIE

There's nothing here for me but gossip and bad memories. I just want to be left alone.

(Lydie leaves.)

CHARLIE

But Lydie...Lydie.

(Charlie exits and Old Charlie enters dressed for a funeral.)

OLD CHARLIE

That's what happened. In February in 1953, Lydie left Ponca City. She loaded up her Studebaker, some clothes, paintings, and \$10,000 in cash. Lydie drove out of town and vanished for 22 years. The *Saturday Evening Post* wrote an article about it in 1958, but for most, Lydie Marland faded from memory. Oh, there were reports. She was seen in New York City, San Francisco—someone said they saw her working at a motel in Independence, Missouri and she marched as Vietnam War protester in Washington D.C.—no one but Lydie knows the true story of those mysterious years. In 1975 at age 75, Lydie moved quietly back to Ponca City. E.W. Marland's Palace on the Prairie was for sale and Lydie helped convince the citizen of Ponca City to purchase the property from Felecian Sisters by writing an impassioned letter. She moved back into chauffeur's quarters where she lived the rest of her life. She developed a few friends in her neighborhood and although she was never again socially active, she was interested in other people and would sometimes walk up to the mansion as a tour was being given, much to the delight of the many guests to the mansion.

(Old Charlie collects himself.)

Lydie passed away July 25, 1987 at 87 years of age. She was laid to rest next to her beloved Mr. Marland in the family's mausoleum. A memorial service was held in the Inner Lounge of her great Palace on the Prairie where all those magnificent foxhunts and parties had happened. Elizabeth was gone from me by then, having passed away the previous winter. I went to Lydie's service alone. I thought Lydie's story was over, but there one last surprise to her extraordinary life.

(A man comes up to Old Charlie.)

GARDENER

Mr. McDonagh?

OLD CHARLIE

Yes.

GARDENER

I know you was a friend of Mrs. Marland.

OLD CHARLIE

I was.

GARDENER

There's something been bothering me for a long time. I've kept it to myself, 'cause Mrs. Marland told me too, but now she's gone and I think someone should know.

OLD CHARLIE

Know what?

GARDENER

I'm the one that broke up that statue. I hated doin' it but Mrs. Marland said, "Break it, smash the face first then throw the pieces in the river."

OLD CHARLIE

You're the one that destroyed her?

GARDENER

Only thing is, I didn't exactly do what Mrs. Marland said.

OLD CHARLIE

What do you mean?

GARDENER

I had to break it 'cause she was watching. Broke the face first, just like she said, but it was a pretty statue and I didn't wanna just dump it in the river so I—buried it.

OLD CHARLIE

You know where Lydie's statue is?

GARDENER

It's been a long time, but I know pretty close where the spot is.

(Hands Old Charlie a map.)

OLD CHARLIE

Thank you.

(Two men take off flower stand, leaving the statue. Old Charlie turns to watch. Mary enters.)

MARY

Grandpa?

(softly)

Grandpa?

(louder)

Grandpa!

CHARLIE

Humm?

MARY

It is a beautiful statue, Grandpa. It's great that the town is putting it back together. Why do you come every night to look at her?

OLD CHARLIE

The statue being put back together, symbolizes the true spirit of the kind of people E.W. Marland admired. People who would put the pieces of their lives back together again and again, just like the pieces to Lydie's broken statue.

(Image of Lydie's statue.)

MARY

Was any of that story true?

OLD CHARLIE

Only the unbelievable parts.

(Adlib as they exit.)

THE END

If you enjoyed *The Broken Statue play*, look for these Bob Perry novels:

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