

The Edge of the Forest
a fairy tale for grown-ups

*When Zina decides it's a good last day for her dotty mother, she packs a basket.
Her sister just wants some of the poppy seed cake.*

Characters

Zina, dressed in work clothes
Abigail, stylishly dressed
Their Mother, sweet, dotty, energetic

Note to actors:

Slash marks (/) indicate the point at which the next speaker begins.
The key to playing these characters is to portray them without sentimentality.

Set:

A rocking chair.

*MOTHER, dressed in a housecoat, enters, sits in the chair, looks around,
exits. ZINA, enters.*

ZINA

Mother? (*Calling off left*) Mother? (*Calling off right*) Mother? (*growing frustration*)
Mother? I can't (*Sits down, takes off her boots. Listens.*) Mother? (*Takes off socks. Lies
down. Mother enters, sees Zina. Picks up her shoes and socks.*) What are you doing?

MOTHER

I'm just

ZINA

Leave them there

What? MOTHER

Leave my shoes, please. ZINA

I'm just going / to MOTHER

Leave them alone. ZINA

I was just going to MOTHER

Leave my shoes and socks where they are. ZINA

/ All right. MOTHER

If I wanted them somewhere else / I'd ZINA

All right. Thought I'd tidy the / place up a little MOTHER

I just took them off. I just took them off this / minute ZINA

All right. No harm done. If you want to keep them with you, nooo problem. MOTHER

I don't want to keep them with me. It isn't some kind of Anal Retentive Problem. ZINA

Of course not, dear. I didn't mean to suggest MOTHER

You didn't mean to suggest – ? ZINA

You just want them with you. / That's fine. MOTHER

ZINA

I just took them off. If I wanted them put away I'd have put them / away myself.

MOTHER

You look so comfortable there I just / thought

ZINA

Looked. I looked comfortable. I am no longer / comfortable

MOTHER

That's too bad, dear. Are you hungry?

ZINA

If I said, "Yes," what would you do about it?

MOTHER

I'd...I'd suggest we go out for lunch.

ZINA

/ Right.

MOTHER

I'd say, won't you let me take you out /for a nice - ?

ZINA

Dinner is at 7:00, Mother. I'm cooking.

MOTHER

You're cooking? How nice! What a wonderful / treat.

ZINA

I'm cooking lasagna. You like lasagna.

MOTHER

No I don't....I'll just have a little vanilla ice cream.

ZINA

When we sit down to dinner you'll say, "What is this interesting concoction?" I'll say, "Lasagna." You'll say, "Isn't this the life? Having someone cook for me? I can't believe I'm so lucky."

MOTHER

Oh I will, will I? You must be psychic.

ZINA

I am. I'm psychic.

MOTHER

What's wrong with my sweet sweet gir-rel?

ZINA

I have to make a decision and I'm wishing you were around.

MOTHER

Ta da! I am around. It's me. Here in the / flesh.

ZINA

I'm wishing you were around and totally compos mentis.

MOTHER

Girl, I'm a lot more compos mentis and habeas corpus than you'll ever be. (*SHE laughs.*)

ZINA

Maybe so. May-bee soooo.

MOTHER

Maybe sew. Maybe crochet. Maybe knit. /Maybe purl (*SHE laughs.*)

ZINA

I'm wishing you were around to help me make the decision.

MOTHER

Maybe pearl. Maybe Ruby. Maybe / sapphire.

ZINA

I'm wishing you were around to run through the / pros and cons

MOTHER

Maybe diamond. Maybe zirconia. Maybe / emerald.

ZINA

I'm wishing you were around to give me a run for my money.

MOTHER

One for the money, two for the show, three to get / ready

ZINA

I think you have to go, Mother.

MOTHER

Go? Where?

ZINA

Go away. Out there.

MOTHER

There doesn't seem to be too much out there. Trees. A little hill. Woods.

ZINA

Well, we haven't got an ice floe.

MOTHER

You want me to go out there? When?

ZINA

Soon.

MOTHER

Ahhhh.

ABIGAIL enters.

ABIGAIL

How are we all doing?

ZINA

Fine

MOTHER

Fine

ZINA

Fine fine.

ABIGAIL

What's up?

ZINA

Not bloody much.

MOTHER

Isn't it a pretty time of year? I love how it looks when the leaves start to / turn.

ABIGAIL

Is there any of that good bread left?

ZINA

Poppy seed? It's in the basket. I've packed a basket for Mother.

Oh? ABIGAIL

Oh? MOTHER

It's time, I think. ZINA

/ Time? MOTHER

Already? ABIGAIL

ZINA
(To ABIGAIL) This has been coming on for ages. Where have / you been?

MOTHER
(sings) "Rock of ages, cleft for me."

ABIGAIL
 No one ever tells me / anything.

MOTHER
 What does that mean, "cleft for / me?"

ZINA
 You could have been in on it from the beginning. I don't want to be in charge / of every

ABIGAIL
 Fine. I just came in for a piece of that bread.

SHE starts to exit.

ZINA
 Where are you going?

~ FOR THE REST OF THE PLAY PLEASE CONTACT THE PLAYWRIGHT ~