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*This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries,
This Girl Does Nothing*

Written by
Finegan Kruckemeyer © 2011

Recipient of the:
2015 CHASS Australia Prize for Distinctive Work
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First performed by
Amarginados Grupo Teatral
(Buenos Aires, Argentina)

First directed by
Solange Perazzo

Original Production

The first performance of *This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing* took place at the Campo Salles Theatre, Buenos Aires, Argentina, in April 2011 in a production by Amarginados Grupo Teatral. The cast was as follows:

ALBIENNE	Maria Eugenia Gonzalez
BEATRIX	Brenda Kreizerman
CARMEN	Leticia Leiva
NARRATOR	Javier Lopez
NARRATOR	Rocio Fernandez Brandauer

Note: The play is a story told. This could be by one, by some, or by many.

The play was directed by Solange Perazzo, produced by Martina Amiras and assistant directed by Santiago Magarinos. It was performed in Spanish (trans: Solange Perazzo).

Subsequent Productions

- 2011 USA: University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (produced by Pitt Arts)
Denmark: ASSITEJ World Congress, Copenhagen (reading)
Australia: Darlinghurst Theatre, Sydney (reading)
- 2012 Argentina: Campo Salles Theatre, Buenos Aires (Amar Ginados)
Scotland: Imagine, Edinburgh (Frozen Charlotte – reading)
Australian National Tour: Subiaco Theatre, Perth, Casula Powerhouse, Sydney and Q Theatre, Penrith (Barking Gecko, Casula and Penrith)
USA: Lakes Community High School, Chicago IL
- 2013 USA: Pennsylvanian regional tour (Pitt Arts)
Australia: Western Australian state-wide tour (Barking Gecko)
- 2014 USA: Anderson High School, Austin TX
USA: Natick High School, Natick MA
Germany: Theaterhaus Frankfurt
- 2015 Czech Republic: Prague Festival (Prague Youth Theatre)
USA: Arizona State University, Tempe AZ
USA: Da Vinci Middle School, Portland OR
USA: Hemet High School, Hemet CA
USA: Spinning Dot Theatre, Ann Arbor MI
USA: Yocum Institute, Wyomissing, PA
- 2016 Germany: Jungestheater Ensemble
USA: Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green OH
USA: Spinning Dot Theatre, Ann Arbor MI
Australia: Guilford Young High School, Tasmania

Australia: Dubbo Christian School, Victoria

2017 USA: Western Oregon University, Portland OR
USA: Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene TX
USA: Centerstage Youth Theatre, Allen TX
USA: St Marys Catholic High School, Tempe AZ
USA: Lakewood High School, Arvado CO
USA: Frontier Academy Elementary School, Greeley CO
Germany: Theater Gütesloh (Theaterhaus Ensemble)
Australia: Adelaide High School, Adelaide
Australia: Meriden Anglican School for Girls, Sydney

Studied as part of Theatre for Young Audiences courses at New York University, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Texas Austin, and the John F Kennedy Center, Washington DC.

German translation by Thomas Kruckemeyer.

Spanish translation by Martina Amiras.

Polish translation by Joanna Derkaczew.

Prologue: Beginnings

ALBIENNE: Once upon a time, a girl was born.

BEATRIX: And twice upon a time, a girl was born.

CARMEN: And thrice upon a time, a girl was born.

NARRATOR: Until there existed three girls who were sisters, who were triplets.

ALBIENNE: Albienne was the oldest.

BEATRIX: And Beatrix was the next.

CARMEN: And Carmen was youngest.

NARRATOR: And they looked identical, in the same way that when visiting a block of flats, a person may say: 'those flats are identical'. And of course they are right, but of course they are not.

ALBIENNE: Because in one window the curtain is patterned.

BEATRIX: And in one more the curtain is blue.

CARMEN: And in a third there is no curtain at all.

NARRATOR: So all these identical flats end up looking different, because different people live in them. Just as those three identical bodies ended up looking different, because different people lived in them as well.

ALBIENNE: Albienne for instance, enjoyed cake very much and by age nine, her body had become that of a true cake appreciator, round like a gateau and warm like a brioche.

BEATRIX: Beatrix in the middle enjoyed the expelling of energy and the world within which to do it, and would run around outside from sun up to sundown. And so she was a child of the sun through and through, with blonde hair and brown skin and freckles on her nose.

CARMEN: Carmen found the world to be a heavy thing, and carried it upon her shoulders. It was like a school backpack that you know holds important contents, but that you sometimes wish you could just leave on the bus and never have to pick up again. The world she carried made her shoulders small and her eyes dark, though her heart was as large as her sisters – it was just a little smothered by world-carrying, that was all.

NARRATOR: The three sisters lived in a forest and had as their parents a woman, who shall be the mother, and a man, who shall be the father. The mother sewed

up clothes for the people in a village nearby, and the father chopped down trees deep in the woods.

ALBIENNE: But this is only one thing they did, the work thing they did. They also helped to build castles from old boxes, lined up dominoes and knocked them down...

BEATRIX: ...Showed the girls how people drink tea in China and dance in Peru, cooked them dinners/

ALBIENNE: /And cakes.

BEATRIX: And cakes. Had quiet chats in other rooms sometimes, walked alone sometimes...

CARMEN: ...Sat at the kitchen table and played cards sometimes, ran, swam and built good fires when the Winter came.

NARRATOR: All this, and all fit into the first ten years of Albiene, Beatrix and Carmen's life.

ALBIENNE: And the girls knew in their hearts that this happiness they felt...

BEATRIX: Living in that forest with that man and that woman...

CARMEN: It would never end.

NARRATOR: ...Until one day, it ended.

ALBIENNE: That day, I was sitting beside the river, which was full of currents, and eating a cake, which was full of currants as well.

BEATRIX: That day I was balancing at the top of the tallest tree I'd ever climbed, and trying to reach a bird's nest that needed investigating.

CARMEN: That day I was writing at my desk about dragons and thinking about how even things that don't exist can become extinct, just by people talking about them less.

ALBIENNE: And from the river I saw the policeman riding to our house as fast as he could.

BEATRIX: And from the tree, I saw the policeman run to our front door.

CARMEN: And from my room, I heard boots running in, and the putting down of a cup of tea, and then slow muffled talking... And then silence, and finally a long sigh from Papa, the longest sound I've ever heard.

NARRATOR: And after letting out every ounce of air in his lungs, the father breathed in again... and he pulled every daughter that he possessed to him, from out of the trees and off the riverbanks and through the doors of neighbouring rooms. Until there they stood, held in his arms, softly being told that...

ALBIENNE: Our Mama...

BEATRIX: Who we so loved...

CARMEN: Was dead.

Silence.

Scene One: Re-beginnings (Aged 10)

NARRATOR: When someone like a mother is suddenly gone, she is not the only thing that's lost. Many other losses occur as well.

ALBIENNE: Albiene lost her appetite, and no éclair or meringue or black forest or vanilla slice could tempt it back.

BEATRIX: Beatrix lost her sun. Of course it was still there, still hanging in the sky. But it had little to do with her any more – the moon now became her companion as she lay awake at night.

CARMEN: Carmen lost her oddness. Before it was strange, how she was quiet when her sisters were loud. But now the three girls and the father sat around the table in silence. They grew to be clever with their looks, so a certain sad gaze meant, 'pass the milk please' and another said, 'how was school today?' and a third translated as, 'quite good – but I had a maths test and forgot how to do long division, even though I knew it this morning...'

NARRATOR: And slowly – ever so slowly – the seasons passed, and new Spring grass was warmed by strong Summer sun, and then covered by gold Autumn leaves, and finally hidden by bare Winter snow. And then the grass grew again and this meant a year had passed and the girls were now eleven.

ALBIENNE: Albiene began ever so slightly, to rediscover her appetite. A new baker moved to the town with a very handsome son. And Albiene was not sure if it was the tarts that filled the window, or the boy that filled her head, but either way, she grew hungry for life again.

BEATRIX: Beatrix rediscovered the sun. One day her father chopped down the one tall tree that blocked the morning rays from her window. And they poured into Beatrix's room and down upon a photo of her mother. And it warmed her mother, and made her look alive again. And Beatrix could not be angry with the sun anymore.

CARMEN: Carmen rediscovered her backpack called ‘The Weight Of The World’. It happened as she was walking one day and passed a beggar in the town. And he saw her face... and *he* offered *her* some money, as she looked more needy than he. Carmen imagined his story then, and a hundred other stories of other people with other lives. And she acknowledged them all – and picked up the backpack.

NARRATOR: Even the girls’ father began to act differently. He began shaving again, and he whistled occasionally, and once – sitting by himself beside the fire – he laughed out loud, at a joke that could be heard only in his head.

BEATRIX: And one day, when all were sitting around the table, he said:

FATHER: Girls, there’s somebody I’d really like you to meet soon. Her name is/

Beatrice storms from the room. Silence.

FATHER: ...Her name is Eleanor and she shops at a shop where I shop, and she wears her hair up, and if I am honest with you – which I promised I always would be – it seems that her and I enjoy each other’s company very much.

CARMEN: And everything happened very quickly after that.

ALBIENNE: The woman called Eleanor came for lunch. And she brought a cake, and it was sweeter than any I’d had before, and on the top – painted in icing sugar – was the face of the baker’s son.

CARMEN: The woman called Eleanor came for dinner. And she held father’s hand on the edge of the table, and when she started eating I noticed her shoulders were a little bent. And she caught my eye and leant in to me and she said:

ABC: I carry the world sometimes too.

BEATRIX: The woman called Eleanor, who was not our mother, came to live with us. She started working in the garden, in our mother’s garden, and one day when I came outside to see what she had destroyed, Eleanor said...

ABC: I’ve planted a hundred sunflowers for you, Beatrix. I hope that’s okay.

BEATRIX: ...

And I didn’t know what to say after that. So I said nothing... and instead picked up the rake, and rolled up my sleeves, and helped her to smooth out the dirt. And in silence, we worked side by side, until it got dark.

Pause.

NARRATOR: The seasons passed once more and the girls were twelve now, and around the house, little things began to change.

ALBIENNE: In Spring, the cakes that Eleanor baked grew smaller and smaller, until they were biscuits, then buttons, then... nothing.

BEATRIX: In Summer, I went out to the garden with handfuls of sunflower seeds and found that Eleanor had planted... radishes.

CARMEN: In Autumn, I was collecting firewood at the edge of the forest and spied Eleanor heading away from the house. She walked with her shoulders curved like always, but at a point, I saw her look around and then... straighten her back. And her posture – it was beautiful.

NARRATOR: And then Winter came – and it was not a pleasant season. The three girls went to sleep each night listening to Eleanor and their father argue. His beard grew back. His whistling was halted. And then after the arguing, came something worse. A silence fell over the house.

ALBIENNE: Soon it was decided that the three girls should all move into one room.

NARRATOR: And their father (kind and loving as he was, but being a man with a twice-broken heart) he said nothing.

BEATRIX: And when it was suggested that the girls stop eating cake, or playing outside, or worrying about others...

NARRATOR: He said nothing again.

CARMEN: And when finally one night Eleanor suggested something unbelievably mad, unbelievably unbelievable...

NARRATOR: He said nothing a third time, and just stared into the fire (that had gone out long ago).

Beat.

CARMEN: Until finally he spoke.

FATHER: Put on your coats, children. The night is cold and we need firewood.

CARMEN: And this was true. So we did.

ABC: See you shortly girls.

NARRATOR: Said Eleanor – and there was something strange about these words, the girls would agree later. But obediently, politely, they tipped their hats and headed out into the snow, following behind their father.

The four trudge through the snow together, for a long time.

ALBIENNE: We have passed lots of firewood, father.

Silence. They walk on.

BEATRIX: We have not been this deep in the woods before, father.

Silence. They walk on.

CARMEN: We have walked for hours, father. We do not know where we are anymore.

NARRATOR: And there the man halted. And he turned in the snow, which was falling fast, and had covered any footprints that had been laid down. And then he knelt and looked at each girl in turn.

FATHER: Albiene – you are the oldest, and you know cakes like no other. You should taste every experience in this world.

Beatrix – you are a child of the sun, and you warm those around you. You should meet every person in this world.

And Carmen – you are concerned with all except yourself. You should find your place in this world.

I love you three with all my heart. As I have no more use for it... it's all yours.

Beat. He turns and leaves.

ALBIENNE: And once upon a time...

BEATRIX: Twice upon a time...

CARMEN: Thrice upon a time...

ABC: Three girls, who were sisters, who were triplets –

CARMEN: they found themselves alone in a wood.

Scene Two: The Woods and the Decision (12)

BEATRIX: What becomes of children who are left in a wood, Albiene?

ALBIENNE: Different things, Beatrix.

BEATRIX: Good and bad things?

ALBIENNE: ...Just different. We should make a fire straight away, and build some kind of shelter.

This Girl Laughs...

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9

BEATRIX: Yes, and sharpen a rock into a knife, and watch the stars to work out when morning will come, and/

CARMEN: /Our papa has left us. The first thing we should do, is think about that.

Pause.

ALBIENNE: Yes.

BEATRIX: Yes.

CARMEN: Yes.

Albienne laughs. Beatrix cries. Carmen does nothing.

ALBIENNE: You know what has happened, don't you? Papa has set us off into the world. This wood is the doorway to everything that's outside our house and our village and our childhood and our experiences.

BEATRIX: There may be bears out here.

ALBIENNE: And boys out here.

CARMEN: And storms that make great noise out here.

ALBIENNE: We may be great out here.

BEATRIX: Or freeze out here.

CARMEN: We may fall down to our knees out here. The only thing we cannot do, is go back. And that's okay – life is not for going back.

BEATRIX: But we must. We must find papa, and remind him of the wrongness of what he has done.

CARMEN: No. Either he knows and has acted anyway. Or he does not know/

ALBIENNE: /In which case it's too late for him. And so we will travel onwards.

CARMEN: No.

ALBIENNE: No? I thought you said there's no going back.

CARMEN: There is not. And I feel the same about forward. So I'm staying right here.

BEATRIX: But here's nowhere. Here's just... the place we were left. There is no light. There is no sun.

CARMEN: It is night. The sun will come. Will you stay with me?

BEATRIX: No. I'm going back – the way Papa fled. And I'll find him.

ALBIENNE: But he fled, you said it yourself. I go forward – if these woods really are a door, then I'm going outside. I will leave no key under the watering can. I will walk until my legs cannot, or my spirit cannot, or I am finished, or the world is finished. I'm walking away.

CARMEN: Not always, Albiene. Because the world is round and after half a globe's worth of walking away from here, you will start walking towards here. You'll come back up the other side of the planet and eventually find your way to me.

BEATRIX: And I will walk the other way. I'll follow our Papa, follow the sun, going from East to West and find him, But if no Papa turns up, then I'll meet you another time, big sister Albiene, at the opposite end of the world. And maybe we'll be different then and our hair will be much longer, or very short, or combed to one side, or salty from swimming in the sea. Whatever it is, I'll look forward to that.

Silence.

NARRATOR: And then they stood in silence, Albiene the eldest and Carmen the youngest and Beatrix in the middle. And already the sun was beginning to rise over the treetops and a new day was beginning. Which is good, because new days are the best things for starting life journeys. And then...

The three say nothing but come together and hug. They separate and depart.

ALBIENNE: I picked up a strong walking stick from the ground and set off East.

BEATRIX: I rolled up my sleeves and rolled down my socks and set off West.

CARMEN: And I watched them both leave, and thought of clever, poignant things I could have said to them... And I collected twenty or thirty branches piled from smallest to biggest, and then struck a flint, and began my first fire in what would be my new home.

Scene Three: Beatrix and the Ocean (14)

NARRATOR: Beatrix headed West. She had resolved to follow her papa, to follow the sun's path, and when one didn't turn up she just kept following the other. At dawn each day she'd feel the sun rise behind her and warm her back.

ALBIENNE: At noon, she would feel it hanging directly above her head.

CARMEN: And at dusk, she would watch the horizon and see the sun lie down beyond a distant hill. And she would find a hill of her own, and lie down too.

NARRATOR: And so it went, until Beatrix was 14 and arrived one day, at an ocean.

Oceans have a way of turning up in front of you sometimes, just when you're getting sick of walking on solid ground and feel like a change.

BEATRIX: So it was with this one. I looked at the vastness of it...

ALBIENNE: The vast vastness of it...

CARMEN: The humbling majesty of so giant a stretch of water...

BEATRIX: And I decided to tame it!

An ocean is for sailing, and to sail one needs a boat.
So I'll be hammering and nailing, and I'll keep myself afloat.

NARRATOR: Beatrix started building then. Or she would have, if she could have found something to build a boat with. But the shoreline was only made up of rolling dunes, which are perfect for running down while screaming.

BEATRIX: I did this a few times.

NARRATOR: But less good for fashioning into sea-worthy vessels. Finally, after much looking, and much running down and much screaming, she climbed to the top of the highest dune and saw in the distance her old friend the sun.

BEATRIX: Even though it was night.

NARRATOR: And then it was gone, and then it was back. And gone, and back.

ALBIENNE: Intrigued, my sister crossed the sandy hills until she reached it – a tall lighthouse, with a small windmill beside it, for pumping up drinking water.

CARMEN: Intrigued, my sister entered without knocking, and climbed coiling stairs. At the top sat an old lady, at an old table, looking old.

BEATRIX: She cracked walnuts.

LADY: *[Points]* Tea. Sugar. Biscuits.

BEATRIX: Walnut?

LADY: No.

NARRATOR: Beatrix collected up all these things, and while the tea brewed, got started on a Ginger Snap.

BEATRIX: These are good.

LADY: I know. 'S why I have them.

Silence.

BEATRIX: Do you often get visitors?

LADY: Nup... 'S a lighthouse. Whole point of a lighthouse, you don't want no one gettin' near it. If no one ever reaches you, then 's a good lighthouse.

BEATRIX: Hm. [*Beat*] I need a boat.

LADY: 'T for?

BEATRIX: To cross the sea.

LADY: 'S on the other side?

BEATRIX: Not sure – the rest of the world. And my Papa maybe.

LADY: Mm. I went looking for the rest of the world once, when I was a young woman. Ended up here. Old woman now.

NARRATOR: And with these words, Beatrix feels like the whole lighthouse is a teapot, and she is a teabag sitting inside, just filling up and slowly getting heavier and heavier. Crossing the world is hard, she realizes. It would be simpler just to... not.

But then, far behind the lighthouse in the East, the day arrives and the sun rises. And it reminds her...

BEATRIX: No!

LADY: Wha'?

BEATRIX: I'm crossing it.

LADY: 'Kay.

BEATRIX: But I need your lighthouse.

LADY: Wha'? No – 's mine.

BEATRIX: Then you have to come too. This way.

NARRATOR: And Beatrix leads the old lady outside, and asks her for certain things.

LADY: *[Points]* Ropes. Fishing nets. Toolbox.

NARRATOR: Beatrix sets to work.

BEATRIX: I climb to the top of the lighthouse and attach the ropes. Then I tie them to the fishing nets and flings these into the ocean – slowly they start to fill.

NARRATOR: With pike and tuna and lungfish and mackerel and halibut. The fish get angry about being held and they strain to get back to the open water. And as the ropes pull tight, the lighthouse groans and tilts and...

LADY: Oh god.

NARRATOR: It crashes down onto the beach, nearly reaching the ocean. And still the fish strain at the nets and slowly the whole long house is dragged over the dunes and into the sea.

BEATRIX: Quickly! Before we set sail.

I run to the windmill and dismantle the propeller bit from the stand bit. Then I weld it onto the bottom of the lighthouse. In the cellar sits an old tractor engine, and I weld this to the windmill. Finally, I weld the windows shut tight, and just as the lighthouse heads into the surf, me and the old lady dive in the door.

NARRATOR: The lighthouse is pulled under the waves by the million fish all trying to swim down, down and away. So the two women cut the ropes and release the fish. Then they start the tractor motor and the windmill spins into life, sending them purring through the deep, in a giant, sideways lighthouse.

BEATRIX: It's dark down here.

NARRATOR: Says Beatrix, who misses her sunshine. And the old lady reaches over to a switch on the wall and... *[The lighthouse turns on, rotating slowly]*

LADY: 'S better.

NARRATOR: Says the old lady.

LADY: Thanks. Been meaning to get movin' for a while.

BEATRIX: No problem. Walnut?

LADY: No. 'S mine.

NARRATOR: And together they glide through the ocean heading West, ever West, like a super submarine with the sun at its nose.

Scene Four: Albienne and the War (16)

NARRATOR: Albienne headed East.

BEATRIX: Very quickly my sister went from trudging in a flat way, to leaning in a steep way.

CARMEN: She doesn't know what lies ahead, but that's the best thing about hills – they're like a secret you only hear the first words of. They promise they will reveal themselves eventually, but only if you're patient.

ALBIENNE: I have reached the top.

NARRATOR: That was a good thing to say, because that is what a journey must be – a lot of little successes.

BEATRIX: My big sister studied the top of this hill and saw...

ALBIENNE: A cherry tree full of cherries – fantastic.

NARRATOR: And she gobbled a handful and then filled her pockets with hundreds more, and set off. Over the next years, Albienne walked, dropping three cherry seeds every mile – one for each of the sisters.

ALBIENNE: And the trees...

BEATRIX: In their threes...

CARMEN: Slowly grew.

NARRATOR: And so did her reputation. The story of Albienne (who was now 16), this round, wonderful woman with the sweetest sweet tooth, stretched ahead of her from town to town, and people would wait outside their houses with hot chocolate and local cakes. In return, she would share the stories from her four years of walking...

ALBIENNE: The Chiciquaylu tribe in the jungles of the Amazon, settle their arguments by pointing at snakes. If you and someone else are arguing, you have to both run off and find a snake to point at. And whoever does it first wins the argument, no matter what it's about. Brilliant!

BEATRIX: People would *ooh* and *aah* and Albienne would laugh her big laugh, and pick cake from her teeth with a sharp seed she carried, and pat children on the head, and wink at nice men – she truly loved her wandering life.

CARMEN: And then one day while she was resting under a bridge, my eldest sister heard the clatter of hooves above her head. She ran out to see many, many people on horses charging away with the smell of fear pouring off them, and Albienne yelled:

ALBIENNE: Stop! Where are you going, and why ever so quickly?

CARMEN: And a man said:

MAN: Our village – they pillaged! The land that I tillage... Our barrels – the spillage! The Vikings are here!

NARRATOR: The Vikings! On their long, low boats rowing furiously towards land, hiding behind the large waves until... they appeared!

MAN: The Vikings! Run!

NARRATOR: But by then there's hardly enough time. The best you can do is stand out the front of your house with your most expensive possession in your hands and a welcoming smile, and hope they're in a nice mood – which they rarely are. Not on this day either as:

MAN: The Vikings burnt the barns, and chased the people through the muddy streets, and graffitied on the walls, and ran into houses without taking their shoes off, and spat in front of old ladies, and on old ladies, and bloodied their swords on anyone they fancied. It was a horrible thing to watch.

NARRATOR: And so nobody did – they jumped on horses and fled across the bridge for safety. But Albiene would have none of it.

ALBIENNE: Stop running away, runaways! I have never met these Vikings that you talk about, but having heard your story, I don't think I like them! And if it were my village and not your village, I would stand on the roof of the tallest building and yell: 'Go away Vikings!' and don't bother my friends or me anymore. And don't make us get really angry because if we do, you'll feel it in every inch of your Viking bodies. Okay!?'

NARRATOR: And everyone stares at this shouty person who has climbed out from under a bridge, and they say nothing – because it's an unnerving thing to be told big information by little people. Until finally one young girl speaks.

GIRL: But... before when we didn't fight, we lost some people we love. And now if we do fight... we might lose many more people we love. And then we might never be able to see that person we love again, like a sister, or a mother, or a father. Can you imagine what that would feel like?

ALBIENNE: *[Beat]* Yes. I can. I have lost all of those things, at one time or another.

And because I know that feeling, I think maybe fighting (to get back the people you love) is just as important as not fighting (and not losing more people you love). I think... I think if some vikings had taken me, I would like some people to fight to get me back.

NARRATOR: And the crowd of villagers does that murmuring noise, which is a lot of people agreeing. And then a louder murmuring, which is everyone getting very excited that they do all agree. And when the noise is at its murmury loudest, Albienne jumps on a spare horse, sticks a fist in the air, and yells:

ALBIENNE: Charge!!

NARRATOR: And everybody does until a short time later, they arrive back at their village and find...

ALBIENNE: Oh my god! There's thousands of them!

MAN: ...We told you that. You said to not worry and fight. Didn't you?

ALBIENNE: No! What – I said... Oh, you're right, I did. Okay then – fight!!

A giant battle ensues.

NARRATOR: And that day (and for six days afterwards) the biggest, bashiest, bloodiest, roaringest, nastiest, wobbiest, saddest, excitingest battle takes place, with yelling and screaming and horses and boats and blood and hair-pulling and a thousand different noises.

ALBIENNE: ...And then finally a thousand different silences as the villagers stand quietly on the beach and watch the Vikings sail away.

BEATRIX: And this is a good thing, so they are happy silent.

CARMEN: But their village is destroyed, so they are sad silent too.

BEATRIX: And some people who would have been taken away are now free.

CARMEN: But some other people who would have been alive... are now dead. And it all makes no sense.

NARRATOR: Except to Albienne. The young woman stands in the sea, and looks at her sore image in the water – even her reflection aches. But she realizes – she is strong and heroic and can lead people. She doesn't like the blood on her skin, but looking at herself in the ocean, she sees... the blood washes off.

ALBIENNE: My days of eating cake and caring for nothing are over.

NARRATOR: Says the girl, to herself and to the sea. And climbing from it, she picks up the biggest sword she can find, sticks it in her belt, and plants three seeds in the scorched earth, one for each of the sisters. And then – reborn as a Woman of War now – she wanders off along the road.

Scene Five: Carmen and the House (18)

NARRATOR: One sister, Beatrix, she journeys beneath an ocean.
A second sister, Albienne, she walks with a sword.
And a third sister, Carmen... we find her exactly where we left her.

CARMEN: For the first three years, I lived simply, beneath a tree.

NARRATOR: That first Winter, the living was hard and cold, and it was very lucky her posture was so bad, and her shoulders so curved, as this is the perfect shape one needs to keep an icy wind at bay.

ALBIENNE: But then the Spring came, and the tree bloomed, and beautiful little bunny rabbits emerged from hibernation, frolicking happily.

CARMEN: And I ate those rabbits.

BEATRIX: ...And some hares too.

ALBIENNE: And a very large badger.

NARRATOR: And several squirrels.

BEATRIX And a mole.

ALBIENNE: And a raccoon.

BEATRIX: And a dove.

NARRATOR: And then after a while, it was Summer and Carmen built a hammock from strong vines in a shady place, and slept there.

CARMEN: This was comfy.

ALBIENNE: but also for safety, as the animals hated her, and would spend the nights poking her with sticks and keeping her awake, in revenge.

BEATRIX: And then it was Autumn, and if I was a child of the Summer, my sister's season was certainly this one. Because Autumn is all about walking with your jacket pulled tight around you...

CARMEN: Which I like very much.

ALBIENNE: And sitting in trees swinging your legs, thinking about distant friends...

The three sisters are seen connected, but not.

CARMEN: I enjoy this also.

BEATRIX: And saying very little, but always the right thing.

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18

CARMEN: ...It's my way.

ALBIENNE: The Autumn liked my sister too, and it blew the leaves from every corner of the forest right to where she sat, and made a blanket that she pulled up to her chin.

NARRATOR: And then it was Winter – and no one really likes Winter, unless you're with friends. Winter is a season that exists only so one may think about the past (when it was warmer) or the future (when the warmth will return). Its job is to remind us that life has before and afters – which is nice to know in those moments when the present isn't all that good. That is the point of Winter.

And so on the fourth Winter, when Carmen was 18, she busied herself. And she called her busyness:

CARMEN: Building a house!

This is depicted.

NARRATOR: Carmen began by calling a woodland meeting, and offering her apologies to every animal for eating so many of them. Then she explained that she wished to be friends and live among them forever more, but that to do this, she would need a shelter.

CARMEN: And I am too big to fit in your nest.

NARRATOR: She told the jackdaw, called Jack.

CARMEN: Or your warren.

NARRATOR: She told the rabbit, called Warren.

CARMEN: I will need a house, and a house in a wood, needs wood.

ALBIENNE: And with this, all agree. So the beavers chew down trees.

BEATRIX: And the squirrels gather branches, and the worms carry ferns.

NARRATOR: And the badger... does nothing at all – Carmen has eaten his brother earlier that year, and he's still angry, which she completely understands. He just loiters around the edge of the worksite, making rude hand gestures and scowling. Occasionally he'll tip over a wheelbarrow or smash a window – but no one says anything about it.

ALBIENNE: Then in Spring everyone, animal and Carmen alike (except Badger) attach ropes to the structure and heave. And the walls are pulled up to standing. And then the thousands of birds gently lower the roof down.

BEATRIX: And the foxes paint letterboxes, the moles pack the holes, and the slugs slide across every surface, varnishing it with their sticky trails.

CARMEN: And I invite everyone in.

NARRATOR: But animals, it turns out, don't really like being in houses: it makes them feel like pets. So they say thanks, but go back to their homes.

CARMEN: Badger knocks over my bin on the way out.

NARRATOR: And Carmen finds that she's suddenly in a strange situation – she has a house now, which means she'll never be cold again.

But before, when the woman had nothing, she felt quite content.
And now that she has *something*... she finds...

CARMEN: I'm missing things.

NARRATOR: The woman misses company.

Scene Six: Beatrix and the City (20)

NARRATOR: What do people do in lighthouses that pass beneath the water?

BEATRIX: They play cards, and stand at the windows taking photos of new sea monsters, and drink a huge amount of tea.

LADY: 'N eat too many of my biscuits.

BEATRIX: And eventually, after a few years of this, they arrive somewhere.

The lighthouse beam is switched off and it lands on shore. A dark city is depicted.

BEATRIX: It was the harbour of a huge city. And...

LADY: 'S dreadful.

NARRATOR: It really was. The city was... faded.

BEATRIX: In the sky, clouds hung low and covered up the sun like it was a secret.

ALBIENNE: In the skyscrapers the windows were black and gave away no clues.

CARMEN: In the trees, the birds looked awkwardly at one another, not knowing what to say.

BEATRIX: This is the most boring city ever! I feel like I'm going to... explode!

NARRATOR: And she didn't – because that would have been the end of her story.

CARMEN: But she did something: a very... Beatrixy thing.

ALBIENNE: My sister goes into the lighthouse and...

BEATRIX: *[Amidst banging and crashing]* Where is it? Oh come on, this is ludicrous. Not that one. Why am I talking to mys/ Yes! Absolutely yes, there it is!

NARRATOR: Until finally, the lighthouse door bursts open and out steps Beatrix, dressed in every colourful thing she can find... And looking as bright as the sun that she loves.

BEATRIX: Hello boring people!

NARRATOR: Shouts the strange woman who has come out of the sea.

BEATRIX: Why are you all so boring?

NARRATOR: And the crowd says...

Beat.

BEATRIX: Well, what songs do you sing here?

1: Um... none really. This city doesn't have any... songs that we know of.

2: Hang on. There's... that one about '*Hello. How are you today? Good thanks – and you?*'

1: No, that's just called Being Polite. We don't sing that.

2: Oh yeah... No, no songs.

BEATRIX: But that's the whole reason for voiceboxes! It's scientifically proven.

NARRATOR: This is untrue.

BEATRIX: Well, what about your dances? Show me a dance.

2: We do the... *[He mimes something]*

1: That's walking.

2: Oh yeah. No dances either.

BEATRIX: But that's why legs were invented!

NARRATOR: Again, this is a lie.

BEATRIX: And none of you have suntans...

1: Too many clouds.

BEATRIX: Or colours...

2: I'm allergic.

BEATRIX: Or laughter!

1: Um... that sounds nice.

2: What's that?

BEATRIX: Oh come on! Seriously!?! Hold on.

NARRATOR: And Beatrix runs inside again and...

She returns with a lovely old record player.

LADY: 'S mine.

She presses play and dance music begins. She dances and sings, enthusiastic and awful.

BEATRIX: Isn't this brilliant! I don't even know how the words go!

NARRATOR: Finally the song finishes, and...

BEATRIX: Well... that's that then. *[Beat]* Oh look... the sun's out...

Pause. The entire city explodes in applause.

NARRATOR: And suddenly, Beatrix was the most famous woman in the whole city.

Scene Seven: Albienne, Beatrix and Carmen at the Ends of the Earth (22)

NARRATOR: One night, the three sisters found they'd been traveling for ten years, and found also that tomorrow they would be 22. They had grown in the same belly. And lain in the same crib, and dreamt the same dreams. When they laughed they went:

ALBIENNE: Ha.

BEATRIX: Ha.

CARMEN: Ha.

NARRATOR: When they danced, they did this with their hands.

The three ready for sleep, Albienne in a ditch, Beatrix in a mansion, Carmen in her home.

NARRATOR: And when lying in bed at night (whether in a mansion, a ditch or a house in the woods) these three women would say the same simple oath:

ALBIENNE: I am a woman and this was my day.
This I have learnt, and this thrown away.

BEATRIX: This was a good thing, and this was a bad.
Of this I feel guilty, of this I feel glad.

CARMEN: And some things I can change, some I can't fix.
I'm alone but as well, I am part of a mix.

ALBIENNE: I am Albienne.

CARMEN: Carmen.

BEATRIX: And also Beatrix.

ALBIENNE: So wherever you sleep now...

BEATRIX: The other parts of this one...

ABC: I pray do not fear the night.

CARMEN: Soon the morning will come.

They sleep. Night comes. The dawn. They wake.

ALBIENNE: I wake in a ditch. I am strong now and my arms are no longer for carrying cakes. My arms are for carrying arms. My clothes are covered in dirt and blood. Lots of it is my own. Some of it is not my own. I'm 22 today. I laugh less now. My eyes are cold, and my ears are full of the shouts of men. My hair is long.

BEATRIX: I wake in a mansion. Each day I sign autographs, and at night I dance and have parties and eat more than I should, and drink more than I should, and do everything a bit more than I should. I'm 22 today. I laugh a lot, but mostly at the things I say. A giant table is set up for me that's full of a million presents – but from my father, my sisters, there's nothing. My hair is long.

CARMEN: I wake in my house. It's become very full lately. People heard there was a lady in the woods, who could never say no to helping anyone. So first just

three people came – and they enjoyed the situation so much they stayed for a month. Then some dancers arrived seeking lessons, and a cold person wanting blankets, and finally my old schoolteacher for a cup of tea. And we talked about my Papa, who it turned out left long ago, looking for us.

I'm 22 today. I laugh to make other people feel comfy now, and my eyes always watch the teapot to check if it's getting empty. My mouth always holds a needle, as I'm always sewing up people's ripped jackets. My hair is long.

The three comb their hair.

NARRATOR: On their twenty-second birthday, the three sisters look at their waking-up places and they realize... they are not happy. They miss cakes. They miss the sun. They miss a moment for themselves... They miss their sisters.

ALBIENNE: I get up, and hang my sword over my shoulder. Beside me is a giant house and in the window I see a silhouette. That house is not for me though and I walk on to the next battle. But as I go, I notice the sun and think of Beatrix. And the distance, and think of Carmen. And I decide it might be time to head home.

BEATRIX: I get up and a maid brushes my teeth. On the street, a dirty soldier with long, ratty hair looks at me, and I look back. And suddenly I think of Albienne, wherever she might be walking; and Carmen wherever she might be still. And I decide it might be time to head home. Without telling anyone, I go down the stairs, out my door, across the lawn, through my gate and onto the street. I see the sun, and I follow it.

CARMEN: I get up and make tea for the 18 people living here at the moment. And I suddenly think: 'Hang on. 18 is far too many. I would be happy with a sixth of that number. I would be happy with three people to make tea for'.

NARRATOR: And all feel it now, but they don't know why. The earth does though. Because today, in this very moment, Albienne and Beatrix have done it: they've walked right around the world, and reached the other side. They're at their meeting place, but not meeting.

And so now every step they take ahead, is actually a step back, a step back up the planet and towards Carmen and home. And walking home (even when you don't know you are) always feels good.

Scene Eight: Carmen and the Man (24)

ALBIENNE: Another two years passed, and my sister Carmen was 24.

BEATRIX: She could feel in her bones that we were on our way now.

CARMEN: But what they'd find when arriving, I wasn't so sure.

NARRATOR: Strangers lay all over the house, waiting for her to look after them. They cleaned out her fridge, and changed the channel on her telly right in the middle of a good programme, and used her toothbrush without asking. And one day she had enough.

CARMEN: Right! You three eating all my biscuits, and you who just used up the hot water in the shower, and you with the dog that keeps farting in my house, get out! In fact all of you get out!

WOMAN: But...you're the lady in the woods who helps everyone. And we need help.

CARMEN: Well... you've helped yourself to everything, and now there's none left. My help has run out. Go on please – back to the village and tell everyone I'm closing for at least... a fortnight. Maybe three weeks even.

ALBIENNE: And everyone grumbles, and thinks about arguing. But the animals come to the windows and show their teeth, and the birds tap on the roof menacingly, and even the Badger walks in the door and kicks one of the strangers in the knee.

WOMAN: Ow! Alright – we're going... Thanks for everything though.

CARMEN: ...It's okay.

BEATRIX: Says my sister with a smile.

CARMEN: Now bugger off!

BEATRIX: And they leave – a big group of people grumbling through the wood while the Badger throws pebbles at their backs and shakes his fist.

ALBIENNE: Finally my sister has the whole place to herself, for the first time in many years. To begin, she doesn't even know what to do. But then she puts on a cassette tape that only she enjoys, and turns the volume up to loud. Next she cuts her toenails in the living room, and loosens her bra strap, and lies on the sofa eating chocolates someone left.

CARMEN: That's nice. Maybe I was meant to live alone. Maybe some people... just aren't made for people.

Silence as she eats – a knock at the door.

CARMEN: If that's you Badger trying to annoy me, I said bugger off. That goes for animals too. Even ones whose brother I ate!

Beat.

PETER: Sorry to correct you miss... but I am not a badger.

BEATRIX: The very nice looking man, who stands in the doorway, says to my sister.

PETER: I am a Peter. And I do have a brother. But I don't believe he has been eaten recently... by you, or by anyone else in fact.

CARMEN: Oh.

ALBIENNE: Is all my sister can say. And it's strange then – she's a woman who has never much cared about what people think of her, because she has always been too busy thinking of people.

BEATRIX: But suddenly Carmen feels very funny lying on the sofa, and wishes her hair was looking better, and wishes too that she was wearing her green tights right now, the ones with the nice patterns.

CARMEN: Hello!

ALBIENNE: She says too loudly, like someone has taken control of her voice.

CARMEN: Hello... I didn't... what do you need?

PETER: Please. It's very rude to interrupt a lady when she eats chocolates. And I don't need anything. I was just out walking. But then a very abusive badger hit me with a branch and stole my map and ran off this way, and left it at your door for some reason.

BEATRIX: Carmen sees Badger in the kitchen window, winking at her.

PETER: And I thought I would say hello. But it is a bad time.

CARMEN: No!

...No. Please, come in. I was about to make a bolognese. Are you hungry?

PETER: Oh – famished. And I could roll the pasta while you make the sauce. So long as you don't mind cooking for two.

CARMEN: Two is the perfect number I feel like cooking for.

BEATRIX: Says my sister. And she discovers as she says these words, that she is telling the truth – that suddenly this dinner doesn't feel like doing something for someone else. It feels like doing something for someone, plus you.

Silence.

PETER: Great song.

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26

ALBIENNE: Says Peter. *[Beat]* And my sister says:

CARMEN: I'll get the good plates.

BEATRIX: And she does.

Scene Nine: Albienne and the Bakery (26)

NARRATOR: Albienne knew nothing about little sisters finding love in the woods. And she knew nothing about middle sisters walking away from mansions. All she knew about, was war. Until one day...

BEATRIX: It was November, when the snow was starting to fall, that Albienne walked into a village that was like a lot of other villages she'd walked into. On its main street, people sat looking sad and she knew her help was needed. She dropped three cherry seeds into the dirt and approached a woman.

ALBIENNE: You. I see you are depressed, and your friends in the town are depressed. Have you just been attacked?

WOMAN: Attacked? No.

ALBIENNE: Oh. So you are about to be attacked?

WOMAN: Um... not that I know of, no.

ALBIENNE: Ah – so you are the attackers. There is another village and you've decided you must attack them.

WOMAN: Have we? No, I don't think so. Look, sorry to argue, but... we really aren't interested in... attacking of any kind.

ALBIENNE: Oh. But you all look so sad.

WOMAN: We are, we are most sad, because... we're hungry.

ALBIENNE: Hungry... for war?

WOMAN: No. Hungry for croissants. Or some small cakes maybe. Or a, a good packet of biscuits at least. Do you have biscuits by any chance?

ALBIENNE: I have a sword.

WOMAN: Is it edible?

ALBIENNE: No. It's a sword.

WOMAN: I thought as much. Off you go then – good luck with finding an attacking place. I think there are some people killing each other over that way.

ALBIENNE: But... it's my job. This is what I do.

WOMAN: Okay – if it makes you happy.

ALBIENNE: No, it doesn't make me happy - at all. But... I make other people happy.

WOMAN: By killing them?

ALBIENNE: By killing people who want to kill them. I save them. I want to save you.

WOMAN: Well, thanks, but killing anyone won't save us. A pie would though. Lasagne would save us for sure. Problem is our baker left. He fell in love with the chef and as they fled they ran over the butcher. And now we have a bakery and a restaurant and a meat counter, but... no idea what to do with them. That's why we're sad, you see? Our bellies echo.

NARRATOR: And Albiene looks at the sad, hungry face before her. But she looks back as well, back to a time when she was a young woman and she could talk about cakes and sweets and pork crackling all day long.

ALBIENNE: Can I see the bakery?

WOMAN: Sure – the door's wide open. Go on in.

NARRATOR: And she does. Albiene walks in and sees the grain that needs grinding into flour. She sees the poppy seeds that need sprinkling and the bucket that needs to be full of cow's milk. She sees a kitchen that needs no battles, but only heat and movement and the sound of shells exploding.

ALBIENNE: Because a bakery has all the same things as a war zone, except it does the opposite to one.

It takes things that were once lying flat. And it makes them rise.

BEATRIX: My sister makes a decision then, and she goes to the doorway.

ALBIENNE: You – sad-looking woman, come and help me start grinding. And you children over there, run and fetch me lots of water. Young lady, find a cow to milk. And old man with the beard, we need 20 bags of sugar. And get a fire going.

BEATRIX: My sister remembers that day so many years ago when she stood on a bridge and shouted at a village to fight. Now she shouts again – but food is her mission.

ALBIENNE: I swap my armour for an apron, and my sword for a rolling pin, and my angry, brave eyes for shining, busy ones. And all morning, the villagers and I, we bake cakes. And all afternoon we eat cakes. And all evening we sit by a fire and I tell funny stories that are only a bit true.

NARRATOR: The best kind.

ALBIENNE: And then I sleep, my first contented sleep in many long years. I wake, with a smile on my face... And a gasp.

NARRATOR: For there Albiene sees it. The villagers during the night have got the biggest wagon they own, and tied thirty strong horses to it. And then they have lifted the bakery and placed it on the back, a perfect, mobile kitchen.

WOMAN: We've decided. You bake good, and we can't afford to lose you. So we're coming with you. Climb up into your kitchen and we'll get going.

NARRATOR: And having suddenly forgotten its use, Albiene tosses her sword... and climbs aboard. Then, with a firm:

ALBIENNE: Heeyah!

NARRATOR: The village rolls away.

Scene Ten: Beatrix and Papa (28)

NARRATOR: The youngest sister finds happiness with one person that she can sit still with. The oldest one finds happiness with a whole village that she can journey with. And the middle sister... happiness is proving tricky for her.

CARMEN: Beatrix is 28 now and walking back up the other side of the earth. Every kilometre or so she finds three cherry trees that grow together and remind her of her sisters. Each group is a bit taller than the last, and this feels like a good thing, as it lets her know she's heading in the right direction. West.

BEATRIX: But it can be a tiring thing to circle a whole planet if you can't remember what you are looking for.

NARRATOR: And so one day the planet reminds her.

An old man is encountered, watering three cherry trees.

BEATRIX: Hello.

OLD MAN: Hello.

BEATRIX: Can I borrow some of your shade?

OLD MAN: Of course.

You're a traveler.

BEATRIX: Yes.

OLD MAN: You've been traveling a long time.

BEATRIX: How do you know?

OLD MAN: Sunburn, on your shoulders. The sun doesn't like you.

BEATRIX: You're sunburnt too.

OLD MAN: The sun doesn't like me. I had a big garden of sunflowers once, and I let them die.

BEATRIX: That's sad... I had a permanent suntan once. But I let it fade.

OLD MAN: That's sad too.

BEATRIX: Are these your three trees?

OLD MAN: No. But I like threes. And I like trees. And I like these.

With that much sunburn, you must have walked from very far away.

BEATRIX: Yes – from the other side of the earth.

OLD MAN: Oh. I knew some people who lived in that place. And you must have left a long time ago.

BEATRIX: 16 years.

OLD MAN: Funny – me too.

BEATRIX: Because the garden died?

OLD MAN: Something like that.

Silence.

BEATRIX: It's good to see you again.

OLD MAN: *[With tears in his eyes]* It's good to see you too, Beatrix.

So you're heading home now?

BEATRIX: I've been heading home the whole time. But now I'm ready.

OLD MAN: Ah. Does that mean I'm coming with you?

BEATRIX: Yes, Papa. Yes, I think it does.

NARRATOR: And so the man puts down his watering can. The woman steps out of the shade. And without saying much at all – because who needs to really – they walk off.

Scene Eleven: the Birthday (31)

ALBIENNE: Turning 31 is brilliant.

CARMEN: Mathematically, turning 31 is like: turning 13 (which is when you become a teenager) + turning 18 (which is when you become an adult) put together.

BEATRIX: It's the fun of two brilliant birthdays combined.

ABC: That's how brilliant it is.

ALBIENNE: I turned 31 on the shore of a huge sea, where me and my villager friends were camping. On the sand dune beside us was a big hole where they say a lighthouse used to be, that just... disappeared one day.

And my friends collected firewood and filled the hole up with it – the whole hole. And while they did that, I baked and baked, because there's nothing so fun as inventing your own birthday cake.

BEATRIX: I turned 31 on the shore of a huge sea, where me and my papa were camping. On the sand dune beside us was a village with a cherry orchard, to celebrate a woman who once scared away the Vikings and it turned out had the exactly same birthday as me... When I told them, the villagers played music I'd never heard before, and invited me to sing the chorus – because there's nothing so fun as inventing your own birthday song.

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CARMEN: I turned 31 in a house in the woods, sitting on one side of a small wooden table with a candle in the middle. And on the other side sat Peter, smiling at me. And to my left sat Lionel, who is nearly two. And in my tummy sat someone who we don't have a name for yet.

We ate a big dinner together, and Peter my love, he said: Blow out the candle and hope for something. And I did – because there's nothing so fun as inventing your own birthday wish. And the moment I blew the flame, the whole house dropped into blackness and Lionel screamed with excitement, and outside thousands of animals screeched and howled and roared and pecked in celebration.

And the forest cheered for me.

ALBIENNE: My friends danced for me.

BEATRIX: My Papa sang for me.

Pause

ALBIENNE: And through it all...

BEATRIX: ...I could feel in my bones...

CARMEN: ...That you were close by.

Scene Twelve: The Reunion (32)

NARRATOR: We can feel it now... or at least I can. The story is coming to an end. The world and its distances are shrinking. Things seem familiar once more.

ALBIENNE: The smell of the air...

BEATRIX: The sound of that river...

NARRATOR: In the house, Carmen begins putting fresh flowers in vases every day. On two hills, Albiene and Beatrix begin walking down towards a forest. And this is the best thing about hills – they are like a secret you only hear the last words of. They promise they'll explain themselves eventually, but only if you're patient.

CARMEN: One day, from the forest, I see silhouettes on two hillsides and light a fire.

ALBIENNE: One day, from the hillside, I see chimney smoke above the forest...

BEATRIX: ...And walk a little quicker.

NARRATOR: All three sisters fix their hair and without thinking about it, touch their face. They feel lines that were not there once. They feel skin that has grown to fit them.

ALBIENNE: I am full and happy, and my cheeks are round once more.

BEATRIX: I am sunny and warm, and my freckles are out again.

CARMEN: I am cosy and sure, and my belly carries the world like my shoulders once did.

NARRATOR: Soon all stand in a clearing that sits in front of a small house. And they forget themselves now, and look instead at one another.

Silence.

ALBIENNE: I see a mother and wife, standing with a proud man and a shy boy.

BEATRIX: I see a big-hearted baker, with flour on her hands and hundreds of friends.

CARMEN: I see a brave explorer – who has found the thing she went searching for.

Silence, as they study each other.

ALBIENNE: I am a woman and this was my years.
This I now carry, and this disappears.

BEATRIX: This was a good thing, and this was a bad.
Of this I feel guilty, of this I feel glad.

CARMEN: And some things I can change, some I can't fix.
I'm alone but as well, I am part of a mix.

ALBIENNE: I am Albiene.

CARMEN: Carmen.

BEATRIX: And also Beatrix.

ALBIENNE: So here you now stand.

BEATRIX: My long absent friend.

CARMEN: And I'm glad that you're back.

Beat.

CARMEN: It's good to see you again.

ALBIENNE: And you.

BEATRIX: And you.

NARRATOR: And then three sisters (and a village, and a Papa, and a Peter, and a child and all the things that you collect over half a lifetime) they go inside, and take off their boots, and drink tea, and tell a world's worth of stories.

THE END

