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Available for reading in English, German, Polish and Spanish

Scene One

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 Albienne, 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.