

Small Al, Bruce, Al

Adult ALISON enters and crosses to her drawing table. Next to the table, on the floor, is a battered cardboard box. She rummages around inside of it, looking for something to draw. She finds a ring of keys. She arranges it on her table, picks up her pen, and begins to draw.

Music in.

Enter SMALL ALISON.

SMALL ALISON.

← **START HERE**

Daddy, hey Daddy, come here, okay? I need you.

What are you doing? I said come here!

You need to do what I tell you to do!

Listen to me.

Daddy!

Come here, hey right here, right now, you're making me mad.

Listen to me.

Listen to me.

Listen to me.

I wanna play airplane

I wanna play airplane

I wanna play airplane

I wanna put my arms out and fly

Like the Red Baron in his Sopwith Camel! No wait-

- like Superman

up in the sky

Til I can see all of Pennsylvania

BRUCE enters with two battered cardboard boxes.

BRUCE. Hey, gimme a hand.

ALISON. (*Remembering this encounter.*) Right, right, right.

SMALL ALISON. What'd'ja get, Daddy?

BRUCE. It's from Clyde Gibbon's barn. What a haul.

He said, "Take what you want," and I said, "You sure, Clyde?" He said, "It's all junk to me," so I said, "Alright, Clyde, alright." Come here. Look.

Small Alison looks on as he combs through the box.

You go to auctions, yard sales, comb the dump and crap, there's crap, there's crap, there's-

He pulls out a wrinkled clump of cloth.

Ah! What's this?

SMALL ALISON. More crap?

BRUCE. (*Rapturously inspecting the wadded fabric.*) No-

Linen

This is... linen

Gorgeous Irish linen

See how I can tell?

Right here, this floating thread, you see?

That's what makes it damask

And the weight, the weight, this drape

And the pattern, crisp and clear

See how it's made from matte and shine

It's tattered here, but all the rest-

How beautiful

How fine

Okay, okay... What else?

Crap...

Crap...

Dead mouse.

SMALL ALISON. Ooh, can I have it?

BRUCE. It's all yours.

What's this?

He pulls a grey metal coffee pot from the box.

Silver

Is this... silver?

Is this junk or silver?

*With polish we can tell
 I love how tarnish melts away
 opening to luster
 And the mark, is there a mark?
 Yes, this stamp, you see right here?
 That's how the craftsman leaves a sign
 that he was here and made his work
 so beautiful, so fine
 This has traveled continents to get here
 And crossed an ocean of time
 And somehow landed in this box under a layer of grime
 I can't abide romantic notions of some vague "long ago"
 I want to know what's true,
 dig deep into who
 and what and why and when,
 until now gives way to then*

ALISON. Did you ever imagine I'd hang on to your stuff, Dad? Me neither. But I guess I always knew that someday I was going to draw you. In cartoons. Yes, Dad, I know you think cartoons are silly, but I draw cartoons. And I need real things to draw from because I don't trust memory.

*Re: an identical metal coffee pot she's taken from
 her box.*

*But god, this thing is ghastly!
 You were so ecstatic when you found it at a yard sale
 No, no, wait—
 In Mr. Gibbons barn
 It all comes back, it all comes back, it all comes back
 There's you
 And there's me
 But now I'm the one who's forty-three
 and stuck
 I can't find my way through
 Just like you
 Am I just like you?*

ALISON.

*I can't abide romantic notions of
some vague "long ago"*

BRUCE.

*A sign that he was here
and made his work*

ALISON & BRUCE.

*I want to know what's true, dig deep into why
and what and why and when,
until now gives way to then.*

***All the characters who will make up this story
(i.e., Alison's memories) swoop in and assemble
the Bechdel house while singing various "la-la's"
as Alison, Small Alison, and Bruce sing:***

SMALL ALISON.

*Daddy, hey daddy
come here, okay? I
need you. What are you
doing? I said come here
I wanna play
airplane
I wanna play
airplane
I wanna play
airplane*

BRUCE.

*What is true
This has
traveled to
get here
So beautiful

Beautiful is
what is true*

ALISON.

*What is true
Oh-

I wanna play
airplane

I wanna play
airplane
What is true*

***Bruce lies on the ground and pushes Small Alison
up into a game of airplane. Overjoyed, she laughs
as she flies.***

→ ALISON. Caption: My dad and I were exactly alike.

SMALL ALISON. I see everything!

ALISON. Caption: My dad and I were *nothing* alike.

SMALL ALISON. I'm Superman!

ALISON. My dad and I... My dad and I...

***Bruce's attention shifts and he unceremoniously
dumps Small Alison back down to the floor and
exits.***

SMALL ALISON. Daddy come back!

ALISON. Caption: Sometimes my father appeared to enjoy having children, but the real object of his affection was his house.

JOHN and CHRISTIAN are playing with blocks and trucks. HELEN is practicing piano. Bruce rushes in with big news.

END

BRUCE. I just got a call from Eleanor Bochner! Allegheny Historical Society! She was calling about the house tour!

HELEN. Oh, that's wonderful!

BRUCE. *(Suddenly panicked.)* She's on her way over right now. I'm not sure what to do. This place is turned upside-down... I'm not dressed.

HELEN. *(Taking the situation in hand.)* Go take a shower.

BRUCE. But—

HELEN. Take a shower, get yourself ready.

Bruce exits.

Kids? An important lady is on her way over here to see the house— Listen to me, please— This is one of those times you need to do what I say quickly and without any shenanigans.

He wants the Hepplewhite suite chairs back in the parlor

Move the GI Joe

It can't be on the floor

He wants the Dresden figurines back in the breakfront

A stinky messes up the period décor

Get the lemon Pledge and dust the—

These should face the same direction

He wants it vacuumed

The surface gleaming

He wants it closer to the door

He wants—

He wants—

He wants—