

LET. HER. RIP.

A Story from the Crosshairs of Major Events in 1888

“Remember the Matchgirls!”

-John Burns

Dockers Labour Activist (1889)

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CONTENT WARNING

Strong language, descriptions of violence, police brutality, misogyny, sexual assault, and familial loss

CHARACTERS

(CHARACTER NOTE: Character's last names should not appear in any program or cast list)

AHUNNA (NANA)- 17-25 years old. Of Nigerian descent. Not as sheltered as her friends want to keep her. A Match Woman. Driver of change. Natural leader. Hungry to get her hands dirty in the fight for a better life. A light in a very dark world.

LIZA- 40-70 years old. Born in Birmingham, but moved to London as a teenager. A Match Woman. A mother. A widow. Doesn't want much. Doesn't need much. Doesn't have a lot of fucks to give.

EM- 25-40 years old. Irish, or is she? Brilliant. Connected. Worldly. Alcoholic. Fiercely protective, to a fault. A fabulous performer, as the base of the lie is always truth.

SETTING

Whitechapel, London, August-November 1888, Em's modest East End flat

SYNOPSIS

LET. HER. RIP. is the story of comradeship, activism, and ferocity which lies in the crosshairs of the Match Women labor movement and the Jack the Ripper murders of 1888. Behind the scenes labor leaders, Em, Liza, and Nana are busting their lady balls to make the East End safer for women and all working people, when the headlines move away from their accomplishments to the mysterious man mutilating women in the streets. Women they know. Women of their community. Neighbors and friends. They support and reignite each other in their fight against deadly misogyny, police brutality, personal demons, problematic saviorism, social reform, and a better life for all poor East End women. But as tensions come to a head, who will make the final rip?

PUNCTUATION NOTES

Dashes (-) at the end of a sentence mean you are cut off from finishing your thought.

Dashes (-) within a line mean you cut yourself off from finishing a thought.

Ellipses (...) mean you don't know what to say next, but the struggle is still active.

A beat (*beat*) or .. is a breath.

A forward slash (/) means the next line begins at the denoted place. Someone will be talking over you. And how does that make you feel?

Parentheticals ((Whatever you say.)) Is a throwaway, nearly under the breath.

Text in italics and brackets ([*I love you*]) is your subtext.

SCENE 1: 8/7/1888

(A very plain, very gray, very bare East End flat that discloses absolutely nothing about its inhabitant. The sounds of women happily, raucously, definitely rudely singing in the streets rise and move through the air. Shouts of support, shouts of victory, shouts of dissent can all be heard. Three voices grow louder. Louder. They're coming up the stairs.)

EM, NANA, AND LIZA

*We'll hang old Bryant on a sour apple tree,
We'll hang old Bryant on a sour apple tree,
We'll hang old Bryant on a sour apple tree,
As we go marchin' on.*

(The door is unlocked and EM, NANA, and LIZA practically flood the room, singing, dancing, living their beeeeeeeest fucking lives. As they should be. It's a good day.)

EM, NANA, AND LIZA

Glory, glory, hallelujah, glory, glory hallelujah,

LIZA

(echoing) Halle- fuckin-lujah!

EM, NANA, AND LIZA

*Glory, glory, halle-fucking-lujah,
As weeee gooooo march-in' oooooooooon!*

(Celebratory hubbub, joy, shouts, hugs, and commotion. EM realizes the opportunity, and pulls the newspaper out from under her arm and puts it on the table.)

EM

Nana! Come here. Read this.

LIZA

Not *now*, for / fuck's sake.

EM

YES NOW! Nana, come.

NANA

Em, I know what / it says-

LIZA

She knows, I know, (*goes to the window to shout it out and celebrate*) ALL OF LONDON
FUCKING KNOWS, so let the wee one enjoy a moment of fun without breaking a / lesson atop
her head.

NANA

I *am* standing right here, / you know, and I can-

EM

I don't care if Parliament, the devil, or Queen Vic herself *know*; it's one thing to live this yoke,
but I tell you something, it's real different to read for yourself what Bryant and May have to see
with their own eyes.

NANA

Uuuuu/uunnnngggggghhhhhh.....

EM

(Oh yes, it's so hard being you.)

LIZA

(It is, hard being her, and me, / and you too for fucking sure.)

EM

(Oh sing me / another, Liza.)

NANA

UUUUGGG/GGHHHHH!

EM

READ. THE *FUCKING*. PAPER.

NANA

... "Maat-k-hhu. Mat-ku-hu"

EM

"-tch"

NANA

"Match Girl's Str- Strick"-

EM

There's an "E" at the end, long "I."

LIZA

Long indeed; I was still young when she started.

EM

Liza, don't be a cunt. Long "I."

NANA

"Match Girl's Strike Ends in Vick-vick..."

EM

Sound it out...

NANA

"Vick-tore-ee," oh! *Victory!*

EM AND LIZA

VICTORY!

EM

Victory indeed.

LIZA

In-fucking-*deed* indeed, don't need to be afternoonified / to see that!

NANA

She's not wrong though, sweeter to read it yourself.

EM

(*To NANA*) And just think of the gnashing of teeth when Bryant and May saw it in black and white! (*To LIZA*) (And at least she *wants* to be a literate leader of a union.)

NANA

But read it they did. Because it happened. And we made it happen. It happened, because of us.

LIZA

(*pulling a flask out*) Well if I can't drink to that, slap my left tit and call me Sue.

EM

You know which tit's your left one there, Sue?

LIZA

Shut your sauce-box and direct me to the cups.

EM

The cabinet just there.

NANA

Pour! Pour! While I read us some more! "T-heh-ee"-

(*EM peeks over NANA's shoulder*)

EM
“The.”

LIZA
Oh God...

NANA
I knew it but your hovering makes me nervous!

EM
May I?

LIZA
Take it! Before I have a fucking stroke.

(EM reads while NANA grabs 3 glasses, and LIZA pours the whiskey. EM never touches hers)

EM
“The London society was shocked and astonished at the revelations concerning the wages paid to the girls of Bryant and May's matchstick factory at Bow. The wages of the adult women employed in the factory averaged from 3 to 9 shilling a week, during which they had toiled from half-past six in the morning until eight at night. And the wretched wage-rate was further reduced by fines from the company for little mistakes or carelessness, all while the girls were forced to eat their scanty meals amid the phosphorous fumes of the factory. The result of the latter was in many cases ulceration of the jaw-bone.”

LIZA
Hurts like hell too!

NANA
(With affected class) Another nip?

LIZA
(Joining in the game) Oh! Don't mind if I do.

(LIZA sneaks another small pour, they clink and drink, pinkies out)

EM
“Directly, a woman appeared with a swollen face and cheeks.” Well, that explains what's happening with that gibface of yours, doesn't it?

LIZA
Jump up your own twat; I got the phossy-jaw!

EM

“The foreman ordered her to have her teeth *drawn* on pain of dismissal.”

LIZA

He sure fucking did!

NANA

Whose twat should he jump up?

LIZA

Nobody’s! Ugly little fuck.

EM

“This shameful system of oppression was exposed in a weekly paper by journalist and advocate, Annie Besant”-

LIZA

To Annie Besant!

NANA

To Annie Besant! And Em, her dirty little snitch!

(LIZA laughs too hard, NANA and EM look at her)

LIZA

... Sorry, thought you said “dirty little snatch.”

EM

May I continue? (Dirty little-?) “The foremen were instructed to direct the girls to sign a statement that Annie Besant's charges were untrue,” But the Match Girls said?

NANA

NO!

LIZA

FUCK NO, YOU DIRTY SNATCHES!

EM

“So the foremen tried terrorism. In one department, a young girl supporting her invalid mother at home was threatened with dismissal”-

NANA

(Choking in shock) Oh my God, they’re talking about me...

EM

“Still, she and all refused.”

LIZA

Sure fucking did, *(to NANA)* you dirty little snatch!

NANA

So, this “snatch” thing..

EM

“The next morning, she was dismissed on a frivolous pretext, whereupon the whole factory threw down their work and came out on strike, one of the finest examples of spontaneous united action on record; and the first decided revolt among the working women of London.

LIZA

(*shouting it out the window*) Working women of Londooooon!

NANA

AND their dirty little snatches!

(*LIZA and EM give NANA a look of distaste.*)

NANA

Too far. I heard it.

EM

“For two weeks the strike went on. Bryant and May threatened, denied, abused. Meanwhile the young women stood by one another as their courage, steadfastness and determination drew sympathy from all sides.”

NANA

Yeah, Scotland Yard seemed real sympathetic clubbing heads on your march to Parliament.

LIZA

Truth.

NANA

Or so I heard. *Somebody* locked me in her flat and didn’t let me go.

EM

Stand by it. Much too dangerous for you. “The tide of public opinion set so decidedly against the company and its big dividends, that Bryant and May gave in, *unconditionally.*”

LIZA

Say it AGAIN, you dirty little snatch!

NANA

So she can say it, but I can’t?

EM

“Bryant and May gave in, unconditionally! The managers swear they had not known the real state of affairs”-

LIZA

BALLS!

EM

“All fines and deductions are to be abolished, and Mr. Bryant out of his great generosity”-

NANA

“Greeeeeeeeeeaaaat generosity!” What a dick...

LIZA

Oh yes! Thank you Mr. Bryant! Thank you for greasing up all those years of fucking us sideways.

EM

“Mr. Bryant is going to build a dining hall, and the company will graciously permit the women to form a trade union.”

(Celebration erupts. While reading, EM pushes her shot closer to LIZA, and takes her used cup to the sink. LIZA continues drinking out of new cup, none the wiser)

EM

“The strikers have won, the excitement is over”-

LIZA

But the drinks just started!

EM

“But the moral effect of their action remains. The spontaneous, united action of these unorganized and apparently submissive and helpless women has given a shock to capitalist security. If by their sudden, unpremeditated revolt they have won what they desired, what is to prevent the same thing from happening on a larger scale with equal success? If the hope of a little relief from suffering can inspire these down-trodden women with such high courage, perhaps today is a vivid glimpse of the reign of plenty which will spring from free cooperation without masters or laws.”

LIZA

Cheers to that!

NANA

Cheers to us.

EM

Cheers... to *tomorrow*.

Wait now, what's tomorrow?
NANA

Besides a massive hangover?
LIZA

Tomorrow, we get to *work*.
EM

You think they'd give us a day to celebrate cutting off their balls.
LIZA

A union's a lot of work.
EM

And we've got no time to lose.
NANA

The fuck we don't. We been working for months, years to get to today. We stuck it to Bryant and May, got what we wanted, and tomorrow, my feet'll be going up and I'm letting you know, they're planning on staying there for a wee bit.
LIZA

(LIZA puts her feet up on the table, EM knocks them off.)

Get your nasty kebs off my table.
EM

Better than my dirty snatch.
LIZA

Put *that* on my table, good luck getting it back.
EM

She's right.
NANA

She is? You a snatch snatcher, you sneaky snatch?
LIZA

For the love of all that's holy stop saying "snatch!"
NANA

Yeah Em, knock off the filth, you grubby little cunt.
LIZA

NANA

My point is, if we want change, real change, at Bryant and May, for other working women, working men [!], factory workers, dockers, every poor East Ender struggling to, *just live*, today isn't the end of anything. It's only the beginning.

EM

The beginning.

NANA

The end of a strike, the beginning of a movement.

EM

Of a new way of life.

NANA

Of better days, for all women.

EM

All people. ... Liza?

LIZA

What?

EM

Liza, you know / damned well-

LIZA

I know, all for one, one for all, ta-ra-ra boom-de-ay, snatches stick together, all that.

EM

Sticking them together is grounds for arrest.

LIZA

Wouldn't be my first time being nibbed by police!

EM

Or mine.

NANA

Or mine.

LIZA

Life's not been fair to us lot. But after today, maybe, things will be better. At wee bit better. At least.

NANA

That's nice.

Don't get fucking used to it.

LIZA

There she is.

EM

To Bryant and May. And the balls they lost on Fairfield Road.

LIZA

To the balls they lost on Fairfield Road.

LIZA, EM, AND NANA

(THEY cheers, LIZA and NANA drink, and they celebrate)

SCENE 2: 8/8/1888

(The next morning. LIZA's face down at the table hung over AF. EM's making tea.)

Sugar for your tea?

EM

(EM looks to LIZA. No response)

Spot of milk?

EM

(No response)

A strapping young lad gamahuching you back to consciousness?

EM

(Without lifting her head, LIZA gives a thumbs up)

Well, I sure don't have one of those-

EM

You don't?

LIZA

Not on me.

EM

Or me, unfortunately.

LIZA

(LIZA lets her head fall back on the table for fear of being sick)

EM

Settle for some hair of the dog?

(LIZA says nothing, but gives her a thumbs up)

EM

Probably the best thing for you anyhow. I don't think there's a lad you could handle at the moment.

(EM grabs the flask that's still on the table and pours a nip into LIZA's tea)

LIZA

Balls! There's no lad who could handle *me*.

EM

Seven years a widow? Might be some truth there.

(NANA comes barging in, hands full of newspapers, papers, and the Victorian equivalent to Leslie Knope binders.)

NANA

Am I late?

EM

Not at all. Liza's still in bed.

LIZA

You can't *still* be in bed when you've not been to bed.

NANA

That's one way to look at it.

EM

Oh, she's not looking at anything but the tabletop.

LIZA

Which needs a good cleaning by the way.

EM

So do you, but I wasn't going to say anything.

(LIZA doesn't lift her head, but gives EM the middle finger)

Can we get to work? The agenda for the day is...

NANA

People.

EM

People.

NANA

(LIZA farts, surprising them all, including LIZA.)

Sorry for the trump there.

LIZA

But not just other Match Girls-

EM

Match Women

NANA

Thank you, Match Women. A wider circle of accountability.

EM

Other factories.

NANA

Exactly.

EM

(A beat. Then, EM and NANA are suddenly struck by the rankness of LIZA's fart.)

Dear lord / above that's rank.

NANA

Your soul to the / fucking devil!

EM

Leave me alone! / I'm ill!

LIZA

(EM opens the window.)

You sure you're / not dead?

NANA

EM

Could've told us your arse was a portal for demons, you know!

LIZA

I'm sorry! Continue.

EM

Back to it. (And hopefully you didn't scare the paint from my walls.)

NANA

Em?

EM

Right. Your victory sets a precedent that workers everywhere deserve the same rights you just won. They're hungry, but not yet organized. Eager, but no structure. If you can get your demands, and those of jam girls-

NANA

Women.

EM

Jam *women*, dockers, tailors, to be consistent, unified, and public. I mean, Bryant and May have already been ordered to comply.

NANA

So other employers *have* to fall in line.

EM

Making it harder for Bryant and May to fuck you over when the headlines move on, which they will. *Soon*. The more unified workers are, the more employers will have their feet to the fire, the bigger the chance of real, lasting improvements. A strike is one thing. A movement's another. And a movement's insurance is its latitude.

LIZA

Lata- What the fuck are you on about?

NANA

We need other factory workers to form unions too.

LIZA

Now why didn't you just say that?

EM

(Oh my / god.)

NANA

When our strike ended, others walked out.

EM

But now you've got to find them.

NANA

Exactly. I figured, if the papers talked about me, and Liza, what's to stop them from singling out leaders from the other factories?

EM

Very smart.

NANA

So I nicked a copy of every paper I could find to-

LIZA

You shouldn't be nicking things.

EM

Oh, now you want to be a contributing member to the conversation?

LIZA

Fuck off.

EM

She's right though, don't be nicking. If you need coin, come to me.

NANA

You sitting on a bunch of coin, are you?

EM

Maybe.

LIZA

Bollocks.

NANA

Starting a movement involves some trouble.

EM

Yes, but you're young, smart, unencumbered by old age and sour disposition.

LIZA

Fuck off!

NANA

Our hands *will* get dirty.

EM

But you need to keep yours as clean as possible for as long as possible, so don't be nicking.

NANA

Anyway, my point was, I got the papers to see if anyone was arrested in the walkouts yesterday. Probably a good start on finding names.

EM

Find anything?

NANA

Not much. A mule loose in Covent Garden, West Enders' missed connections, a prostitute named Martha Tabram stabbed 39 times in Spitalfields.

LIZA

Well, she isn't going to be much help to us, is she?

EM

(Scolding) Real nice, Liza.

LIZA

Thought it was pretty clever myself.

EM

I'll talk to Annie today. See if Miss Besant has any contacts within the other factories.

NANA

We need leaders, yes, but we need legs too. Liza and I are working all day. Someone's got to spread the word, make connections-

EM

Collect money. Movements ain't cheap.

NANA

Right. Legs we can find. I'll chat with the wives at the Peabody when I get home tonight.

EM

Liza, what about your sisters? Emma's husband still working on the docks?

LIZA

Not no more. Been out of work for months, just interloping around the place. It's made Emma a real cunt to be around.

EM

Worse than you? (Hard to / believe.)

(Now aren't you so fucking / funny?) LIZA

What about your little sister? NANA

Chick? She'd cross bite us soon as look at us. LIZA

She's not nearly as bad as you say. EM

The hell she's not! LIZA

High flyer at a party, / she is. NANA

But collecting money? I put my neck on the line to get her that tin-stamping job in Wolverhampton. Wasn't a week until she got caught filching the coffers. LIZA

So not Chick, you're saying. EM

FUCK NO / not Chick! LIZA

Fine. EM

(*continuous*) Did I tell you she got some bloke's initials tattooed on her arm? LIZA

It's / fine. EM

Oh my God, / she did? NANA

On her fucking *forearm*! LIZA

Can we / get back- EM

She did not!

NANA

She fucking did! A Irish fucking bark's initials ON HER FUCKING FORARM!

LIZA

We get the point! Not Chick!

EM

FUCK NO, NOT CHICK!

LIZA

As much as I appreciate your sparkling conversation-

EM

You're welcome, yeah.

LIZA

Remind me *why* you want to be in on this?

EM

(*beat*) And miss out on all the fun? And someone's got to look out for the wee one here. Keep her in line, fighting the good fight, out of trouble and such.

LIZA

I don't need looking after.

NANA

Balls you don't!

LIZA

And I'm not that wee.

NANA

Balls you're not!

LIZA

And if you're unionizing Match Girls-

LIZA

Women.

NANA

(*To NANA*) Fuck that; I'll be a 'girl' long as I can get by with it.

LIZA

EM

(Too late.)

LIZA

Fuck off; my point is, I been at that factory longer than anyone.

NANA

No longer than Ma.

LIZA

But your Ma isn't there anymore, now is she?

NANA

No, / she's-

LIZA

Yeah, sure puts a stop to your working days having to pull a rotten jawbone out of your own mouth, doesn't it?

(Well that was too far, wasn't it?)

NANA

... It really does.

LIZA

What happened to your Ma... It shouldn't happen to anyone.

EM

No, it shouldn't.

LIZA

And I'll be damned if anything like that should happen to you. *That's* why I'm here.

NANA

Thank you.

LIZA

Yeah *[not a big thing.]* .. Your Ma was- is, real top notch.

NANA

She was.

LIZA

Oh God, I'm going to shoot the cat.

(LIZA goes and pukes outside the window, someone on the street shouts up at her.)

VOICE FROM THE STREET

What the actual fuck?!

LIZA

Fuck off.

(LIZA nearly makes it down to the table, she's inches away from sitting down, when she has to address that fucker outside, slaps the table, goes back to window.)

VOICE FROM THE STREET

My hat! You ruined my / fucking hat!

LIZA

Will you shut the fuck up? Civilized people are trying to have / a conversation up here!

VOICE FROM THE STREET

I don't give a shit! God, it's soaking through. You ruined / my best fucking hat!

LIZA

You know, I got a glimpse of it before and from what I can tell, I've done you an improvement.

(LIZA slams the window and turns back to see EM and NANA, stunned)

EM

... Feel better now?

LIZA

Much! What are you waiting for? We got work to do. Bully! CRACKING UNIONS
MOTHERFUCKERS!

SCENE 3: 9/1/1888

(The flat is empty. Still. Then, someone is coming up the steps, the door is unlocked and EM comes running in. NANA waits in the doorway)

NANA

Do you know where you left it?

EM

Would've sworn it was here on the table. (How do you lose a secret password / to your first union meeting?)

NANA

When did you get it?

EM

Just this afternoon.

NANA

And you know it made it back to the flat?

EM

Yeah, Liza was dabbing her sweat with it.

NANA

Maybe she still has it!?

EM

No, when I told her it what it was, she made me take it back screaming, “Best be glad I only sweat north of the border.”

NANA

Well / sure.

EM

Oh my God where is it?

NANA

I’m sure we’ll / find it.

EM

Dozens of strangers are waiting for us to turn / up and I have-

NANA

Just take a breath; getting panicky / isn’t going to help..

EM

I’m *not* PANICKY!

LIZA

(From the street below) Hey! Did you find Annie Besant’s secret password?

EM

(Going to window) Real discreet there / Liza!

LIZA

Why bother reading and writing if you can’t just memorize the fucking thing, so loss and tit sweat don’t / ruin our first meeting!

EM

Tell me you didn't use it on your tit sweat you / nasty, little-

NANA

(Going to the window and moving EM out of the way) Liza! Em is going to find the.. *thing*, very soon, but she could do with less.. encouragement.

(EM finds the note)

EM

Oh thank fuck, here / it is!

NANA

Thank GOD! Where the devil was it?

EM

Under your shite.

NANA

Not important. Moving on. Let's on with it!

(NANA and EM run out of the flat, forgetting to lock the door. They make their way down the steps. Silence. Steps coming back up the stairs. EM rushes through the door followed closely by NANA.)

EM

Goddamn it / all to hell.

NANA

We're going to be / late!

EM

I KNOW! I know I know / I know I *know*.

NANA

They might all leave / before we get there.

EM

(continuous) I KNOW I KNOW I KNOW / I KNOW!

(LIZA comes up the stairs)

LIZA

Just leave it unlocked / goddamn it to fucking hell.

EM

Right, because I might rather enjoy being robbed of all my money, food, and belongings / all at a go.

LIZA

As long as they're doing the robbing, could they nick a few of those stairs so we don't have to climb Mount fucking Everest whenever I come see your / ugly face?

EM

It's 15 steps! My / God woman!

LIZA

I GOT THE PHOSSY JAW!

EM

IN YOUR LUNGS?!?!

NANA

STOP THAT AND HELP ME FIND THE- Jesus Christ it's in the fucking door.

(NANA rests her forehead on the door jam; LIZA laughs uncontrollably)

EM

Alright that's- *(Grabs the key)* Alright. I have the key, the password,-

LIZA

Your mind?

EM

Lost that long ago. Let's take a moment. A deep breath. *(breath)* Right. *Now*, let's go to our first meeting, of union leaders. As leaders.

NANA

Let's.

LIZA

I'm up for that, yeah.

EM

With our heads held high.

NANA

Eyes on the prize.

LIZA

Tits free of sweat.

You didn't. EM

You'll never know. LIZA

Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay? NANA

Taaaaa-ra-ra Boom-de-ay! EM

(NANA and LIZA join in. EM makes a show of putting the key and note safely away and they head down the stairs, their voices fading.)

EM, NANA, AND LIZA

Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay!
Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay!
Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay,
Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay,
Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay,
Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay,
Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay...

(A moment of peace before footsteps rush back up the stairs, the door is unlocked, and NANA comes running in quickly followed by a flustered EM and LIZA)

NANA
I KNOW I KNOW I
KNOW!

EM
Leave the girl alone. She
can't lead a union meeting
without her notes.

LIZA
Oh my fucking fuck, I don't
remember a time before we
were leaving for this fucking
meeting!

(NANA goes to the table and gets her notebook out from under several newspapers, when a picture in one of the papers catches her eye.)

You got it, yeah? EM

.. Yeah. NANA

LIZA
By all means let's spend *more* time in this flat / before-

EM

You alright?

NANA

This woman, I- She was killed last night.

LIZA

So? Another Friday night in Whitechapel, yeah?

NANA

Says she was stabbed in the belly, her sides and her- I- .. What's this word?

(EM takes a look, winces)

EM

“Vagina.”

LIZA

Sick fuck.

NANA

Stabbed in her vagina?

EM

Twice.

LIZA

Sick fuck!

EM

We really / should-

NANA

I knew her.

LIZA

The gutted bird?

EM

This- *(glances at paper)* Mary / Ann-

NANA

Polly. She goes- *went by*, Polly. Polly Nichols.

LIZA

..Whitechapel life's not easy, love.

NANA

No, it's not.

LIZA

.. Well. Let's not run into the bloke who did that on the way, yeah?

EM

Are you alright / to-

NANA

Yeah. *(forced chuckle)* Yeah. No sense in-. Yeah- Yes. Let's go.

EM

Nana, it's alright if you-

NANA

No. Whitechapel is a- It's hard. Especially for us. *(Holds up her notebook)* Which is why we do this. .. Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay?

LIZA

Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay!

EM

Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay.

(LIZA and EM keep the song going, if not a bit less enthusiastically, on their way out and down the stairs. NANA gathers her notebook, puts the papers back, lingers on Polly's picture, just a moment, locks the door and leaves.)

SCENE 4: 9/13/1888

(EM looks out the window, LIZA waits, not terribly patiently)

EM

She was at work today, yeah?

LIZA

Yeah.

EM

She seem alright?

LIZA

Yeah.

EM

You think she's been a bit off lately?

LIZA

Yeah.

EM

Ask me what I'd do without your brilliant conversation.

LIZA

My guess is worry, then worry more, and then worry about having to pull the stick out of your ass all by yourself. There's no sense worrying about her.

EM

We should be worried. A third woman got ripped apart just Saturday, all alone in the dark.

LIZA

Fine. No sense worrying 'til it's dark.

EM

I bet Annie Chapman would have liked someone worrying about her before dark.

LIZA

Who the fuck is Annie Chapman?

EM

The woman killed Saturday.

LIZA

How the hell do you remember her name?

EM

Because I read it.

LIZA

You read the funnies column every day, but you're still dry as my muff.

EM

She died, alone, getting ripped apart. (Someone should remember her fucking name.) I should go check with Nana's ma at the Peabody. See if she came home yet.

LIZA

Lot of good that'll do. She's gone loony from the Phossy jaw.

EM

Fine. If you have ideas, I'd love to hear them.

LIZA

She'll get here. And fuck knows we got work to do while we wait. This week's meeting's got to be cracker.

EM

The meetings *are* cracker.

LIZA

Oh yeah? You got music?

EM

No.

LIZA

Drink?

EM

No.

LIZA

Anything more fun than a stick in the eye?

EM

There's a new speaker / who is-

LIZA

UGH! Stab me with the fucking stick! That's- You know, what the fuck happened to you? You used to be fun. Real fun. Mad as hops. Now look at you! Fine Fenian you are.

EM

I was never a Fenian.

LIZA

Balls.

EM

Girls can't be Fenians.

LIZA

Balls! Did you hang out with them?

EM

Yeah.

LIZA

Did you shag them?

EM

(*scoff*) Yeah.

LIZA

Did you plant bombs for them?

EM

I told you that in secret!

LIZA

Relax, the wee one's not here; did you plant bombs for them?

EM

Yeah, but it was a dud, never went off.

LIZA

The Fenian you shagged or the bomb?

EM

..Real nice.

LIZA

Doesn't change that we got a meeting in three days and nothing planned.

EM

We have plenty planned.

LIZA

BALLS! You got speakers. Boring, dry, cut my left tit off because that sounds more fun than your fucking speakers.

EM

It's important to hear the stories / of the workers that-

LIZA

Yeah yeah, "Lost some teeth, but not my pride." "Lost a toe, but not my pride." "Lost my twat by not my pride." What you're asking these women to do? It's a big thing.

EM

It's a big thing what we're *doing* here. And we're doing it for them. Their kids. And not just / that but-

LIZA

Do you know what it takes for a young ma to get herself to these meetings? To convince her man (if she has one) to watch her 17 kids, all screaming for her tit, so she can hear your fucking speakers? They've kids to feed. Siblings to watch. Men to fucking satisfy because, God forbid, they don't have a place to stick their cock for one fucking night. And you wonder why less women came last week than the week before. They need a fucking break. A night for themselves. A good time, you know, like you might've had back before Annie Besant stole your joy, pluck, and fucking sense of humor.

EM

.. Music. Yeah?

LIZA

.. Yeah.

EM

And drink.

LIZA

Yeah. And (I don't know) maybe some dancing.

EM

We'd need a band.

LIZA

Yeah. An Irish band would be cracker. And aren't we in luck; surely you know a fair few / of them.

EM

Why do you seem to think all Irish people know all other Irish people?

LIZA

Oh, I'm sorry, can you *not* think of multiple Irish bands of the top of your head?

EM

(scoffs) I do, but-

LIZA

Who would have thunk it? There it is. A cracker meeting that'll keep them coming back.

EM

.. Thank you.

LIZA

Yeah! .. And uh, sorry about I said, earlier, about that Beasant cunt. Sorry. Annie. And I like her. And you are still fun. When you're not being a real twat.

EM

Thank you.

LIZA

Yeah. So! You never answered. Was it the bomb or the Fenian that didn't blow off?

EM

Bet your tit it was just the bomb.

(LIZA and EM both laugh.)

SCENE 5: 10/1/1888, Early Morning

(Late enough into the night it's nearly morning. Quiet. Until footsteps are heard coming up the stairs)

LIZA

EM! ... EM!! EM COME OPEN THIS DOOR RIGHT FUCKING NOW!

(Neighbors are starting to be heard protesting the noise)

LIZA

Oh yeah, keep singing at me and suck my fanny! EM! OPEN THE DOOR!

(A very sleepy EM comes out of her bedroom and unlocks the door, LIZA pushes a made up NANA through the door. She's wearing torn lace and her cheeks are pinked.)

LIZA

Get your arse / in there.

EM

What in the bloody hell / is going on?

LIZA

You like to tell her, or should I?

NANA

There's nothing to tell! / (Jesus Christ)

LIZA

The fuck there's / fucking not!

EM

Tell me what?