



# THE DAY EMILY MARRIED

BY HORTON FOOTE



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PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



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THE DAY EMILY MARRIED was presented by Primary Stages at 59E59 Theater in New York City, opening on August 3, 2004. It was directed by Michael Wilson; the set design was by Jeff Cowie; the costume design was by David C. Wooland; the lighting design was by Rui Rita; and the sound and composition design were by Andre Pluess. The cast was as follows:

LYD “BELLE” DAVIS ..... Estelle Parsons  
EMILY DAVIS ..... Hallie Foote  
LEE DAVIS ..... William Biff McGuire  
RICHARD MURRAY ..... James Colby  
ALMA NASH ..... Teri Keane  
ADDIE ..... Delores Mitchell  
MAUD CLEVELAND ..... Pamela Payton-Wright

## **CHARACTERS**

LYD "BELLE" DAVIS, age 75

EMILY DAVIS, age 38

LEE DAVIS, age 75

RICHARD MURRAY, age 40

ALMA NASH

ADDIE

MAUD CLEVELAND

## **PLACE**

Harrison, Texas

# THE DAY EMILY MARRIED

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1

*Harrison, Texas. A bedroom and back sitting room of the Lee Davis home. The bedroom stage right is a small room with a double bed, a straight back chair, and a dresser. There is a window in the room above the dresser. A door connects it with the larger room, the sitting room, stage left. The sitting room has gay floral wallpaper and furniture consisting of a couch, a rocking chair, and an easy chair. There are several family pictures on the wall above the couch. Downstage of the couch, stage left, is a closet. Next to the closet is a gas heater. There is a door upstage left of the couch leading to the kitchen and the rest of the house. A door with a screen door, upstage left center, leads out to a porch that spans the length of the two rooms. There is a window upstage left by the upstage left door.*

*Lyd Davis, 75, tall, thin, angular, erect of carriage and heavily corseted with handsome, almost severe, features, is sitting on a chair by the window, asleep.*

*Emily Davis, 38, her daughter, enters through the porch where Addie, a black woman, is sweeping. Emily is carrying two dresses, a Foley's shopping bag, a pocketbook, and a suitcase. She has on a hat and gloves. Addie holds the screen door of the porch open for her.*

ADDIE. Hello, Miss Emily. I was just coming in to check on Miss Lyd. (*Emily walks into the sitting room and sees her mother sleeping in the rocking chair.*) Did you get her wedding shoes?

EMILY. Yes, I did.

ADDIE. I better wake her or she won't sleep tonight.

EMILY. Yes, I guess you'd better. (*She goes into the small room and closes the door. Addie goes over to Lyd and gently shakes her.*)

ADDIE. Miss Lyd. Miss Lyd. Wake up. Wake up now. (*Lyd opens her eyes and looks up at Addie.*) Miss Emily is home.

LYD. Did she get all her shopping done?

ADDIE. I guess so.

LYD. (*Whispering to Addie.*) Why on earth she wants to get married again is beyond me. (*Closes her eyes and shakes her head.*) I liked Ben. He was a sweet boy. When they got up on the floor it was like a show to watch them waltz. People would give them the floor, but he drank. He was sweet and a gentleman, but he drank.

ADDIE. (*Interrupting.*) Ben. Miss Lyd, what's Mr. Ben got to do with anything? Miss Emily's marrying Mr. Richard in four days.

LYD. (*Closing her eyes and shaking her head.*) Richard adores her. He doesn't want that child out of his sight. He's after her every second to marry him. The trouble is there's nothing for the young people to do here anymore. No one entertains the young people. When I was a girl, there were balls twice a week. They'd turn the whole courthouse over to us, and they built the opera house. That's condemned now.

EMILY. (*Calling.*) Are Richard and Daddy still out at the farm?

LYD. I think so. What are you doing?

EMILY. Unpacking my wedding things.

ADDIE. Want me to help you?

EMILY. No, thank you. I can manage.

ADDIE. (*Fans herself.*) It's been so hot.

LYD. Hot? I nearly froze to death all day. (*She pulls the shawl tight around herself. Richard Murray, 40, comes in the door, upstage left center. He is good-looking and aggressive. He is wearing work clothes.*)

RICHARD. Hello.

EMILY. I'm in here, Richard. (*Opens the door of her bedroom.*)

LYD. Have you been at the farms all day?

RICHARD. Yes, ma'am.

LYD. You must like walking around in those hot fields?

RICHARD. I don't mind it. We were surveying today. That's interesting. *(He goes into the small room. Emily shuts the door behind him.)* Did you say goodbye to everybody at the boarding house?

EMILY. No, they were all gone to work by the time I got there. I looked around my room as I was packing and I thought to myself, how did I ever stand living in a boarding house?

RICHARD. How did you?

EMILY. *(Starts hanging a dress from the suitcase on the back of the bedroom door and putting things on the bureau.)* I don't know. I got to thinking as I was driving back to Harrison today, how we met this last time so by accident. What if you hadn't been in Houston that day and we hadn't passed each other in the street?

RICHARD. What did you think when I asked you for lunch?

EMILY. Oh, I didn't want to go at all. Not that I didn't like you, but I thought, he doesn't know that Ben and I are divorced and now I will have to explain all that to him.

RICHARD. And I thought, she doesn't know I know she's divorced, and how can I tell her without embarrassing her?

LYD. *(Calling.)* What are you doing in there with that door closed?

EMILY. Nothing, Mother.

LYD. Well, open that door and come on out here. Lee would have a fit if he walked in here and found you in there with that door closed.

EMILY. You go talk to Mother. That's what she wants. I'll finish unpacking. *(She opens the bedroom door. She continues hanging up her clothes. He goes out to the sitting room.)*

RICHARD. Mind if I lie down on the couch for a while? I'm beat.

LYD. Go right ahead. *(He lies down.)* Do you have a nice room over in Victoria?

RICHARD. It's all right. Since I've been going with Emily, I'm never there anyway, except to sleep.

LYD. I guess that's the truth. You know, the last time Alma Nash was home she stood me down that you and Emily met in Houston. I said you did not, you met right here.

RICHARD. No, Miss Lyd. We met in Houston. You remember, I only came here five weeks ago, when Emily started her visit. We've known each other at least five years. I met Emily first when she was still married to Ben.

LYD. Oh. *(A pause.)* How does it feel working for an oil crew and moving all the time from town to town, from state to state?

RICHARD. I'm tired to death of it. I believe I've lived at one time or

another in every rooming house in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The day I look forward to is when I have my own house and can settle down and never leave my own yard.

LYD. Well, don't expect Emily to stay home with you. She was born restless, this child. She started driving a car at twelve and from then on Lee and I never saw her except at meal times. (*Lee Davis, 75, comes in through the screen door. He speaks slowly and quietly, but with a great deal of authority.*)

LEE. Hello, folks. (*Goes over to Lyd and kisses her.*) Hello, Belle.

LYD. Hello, Daddy. (*Emily comes out of her room.*)

LEE. (*Kisses Emily.*) Hello, girl. (*Points to Richard.*) I want to tell you something about this young man, Emily. There's not a lazy bone in his body. He knows right now more about my farms than I do. Today, he discovered five acres on my farm that belonged to me and I'd forgotten were ever part of my farm. The man with the place next to mine had fenced it in and claimed it as his own. I would never have discovered it, if he hadn't, on his own, this afternoon, taken a surveyor and decided to walk around my land.

LYD. Why, you don't mean it?

LEE. Yes, I do. Aren't you proud of him, Emily?

EMILY. I certainly am.

LYD. I just wish someone from Richard's family could come to the wedding.

EMILY. Mama, Richard has no family. I told you that.

LYD. Did you? Then I forgot. I'm sorry. Have you told me where you were born, Richard?

RICHARD. Yes, ma'am. I told you. I was born in Georgia. We moved to Louisiana then when I was eight. To Beaumont when I was ten, and then on and on ... My mother died when I was fourteen.

LYD. Do you have a picture of your mother and father?

RICHARD. No, I don't. I have no family and no pictures of a family.

LEE. Well, you have a family now, son.

RICHARD. Thank you.

LYD. I'd think you two were brothers the way you get along. What do you talk about so much?

LEE. We have a lot to talk about, Belle.

EMILY. Mama, what time is supper?

LYD. Six-thirty, same as usual.

EMILY. I'm starved. I'm going out to the kitchen to see if Addie can fix me a snack to hold me over until supper. Are you hungry, Richard?



RICHARD. Yes, I am. (*Emily goes out into the kitchen, upstage left. Richard follows her out.*)

LYD. My God, I've never seen anything like the way he adores that child. He told me if she didn't marry him, he hoped they would drag his body around the courthouse square until he was dead. Daddy, is that window up behind me?

LEE. Yes, it is, Belle. (*Gets up and closes the window.*)

LYD. Isn't that silly? Getting cold this way in the middle of July? Look at my hands. The palms are covered with perspiration. (*They can hear Emily and Richard laughing in the kitchen.*) Do you think that boy can support Emily, Daddy?

LEE. Yes, Belle, I do. He has a very good job. And he has no bad habits as far as I can see. He's well-thought of, too. Thurman May told me he ran into Tom Carter in Houston.

LYD. Who?

LEE. Tom Carter.

LYD. The oil millionaire?

LEE. Ex-millionaire now. He has been a millionaire twice. Anyway, he told Thurman May he knew Richard and thought very highly of him. You're still my flapper, Belle.

LYD. Thank you, Daddy. You're still my jelly bean.

LEE. Here's a little something to buy you a dress for the wedding. (*Reaches in his pocket and gets a large bill.*)

LYD. I've got my dress already for the wedding.

LEE. Well, then buy yourself another dress.

LYD. What do I need clothes for? An old scarecrow like me?

LEE. There's no one around here as pretty as you are. I want to see you get dressed up. I want you to get something red. I've always liked you in red. While you're downtown, I wish you'd stop in the beauty parlor and have your hair touched up. I think it needs it. I like you to look like my flapper ...

LYD. All right, Daddy. (*She begins to cry.*)

LEE. Don't cry, Belle. Please don't cry. I'll do anything you want, if you just won't cry.

LYD. I'm sorry, Daddy. I'm so sorry. It's just that I feel so lonely. I get so lonely here by myself.

LEE. I know. Well, Emily's back home.

LYD. But she's leaving in four days. She'll be gone for good then. (*Gets up and goes to the wall and looks at the pictures.*) I was thinking about Papa the other night. Why, he wouldn't even recognize the

# THE DAY EMILY MARRIED

by Horton Foote

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In Foote's mythical small town of Harrison, Texas, newlyweds Richard and Emily move in with the bride's elderly and anxious parents, Lee and Lyd Davis. Richard seems like the ideal husband for Emily, whose first marriage ended in a sad divorce. When Richard shows himself to be greedy and untrustworthy, tensions in the already-strained family threaten to cleave parents from child.

*"Mr. Foote is a master of the distinctive art of balancing everyday domestic clutter over a pit of existential darkness ... THE DAY EMILY MARRIED emanates an infectious, eerily familiar melancholy that keeps pricking at the memory like a wandering melody. I can think of no other playwright who is as harsh in his sentimentality as Mr. Foote is. His plays may radiate the burnished nostalgia of sepia-tone photographs, but he insists on your feeling that there is more ice than fire in their glow."*

—The New York Times

*"With THE DAY EMILY MARRIED, [Foote] strikes out in a new direction ... absorbing, intermittently comic drama ... a strong play ... well-crafted."*

—New York Magazine

*"Foote's plays are rarely political in the most obvious sense, and certainly THE DAY EMILY MARRIED is not meant to comment on the lust for oil that has dominated Texas history. But in Richard Murray, Foote sets out an American male who dreams of being 'the number one man.' Intended or not, this look at Texas in 1955 brims with a contemporary resonance in a time of a war for oil."*

—The Hartford Courant

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