



THE DAY EMILY MARRIED

BY HORTON FOOTE



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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

town he was born in, if he came back. The opera house is condemned, the 1915 storm got nearly all the frame stores, and what was left the fire took. I remember those beautiful trees Papa planted around the courthouse square and when those men came to cut them down, he took his gun and stood there for two days and nights guarding those trees. They cut them down, though, when he died. They say we have to have progress. They've torn the courthouse down and put up that new one that looks like a block of sulphur, it's so ugly. All that Papa would recognize around the square is the statue of the sheriff that was killed by the desperado and the monument to the Confederate dead. A restaurant behind us, a filling station cross the street, he wouldn't even recognize me with my face lined and my hair dyed. But my back's straight and I've tried to watch my figure like he said ladies should.

LEE. Belle ...

LYD. Yes, Daddy.

LEE. We got an offer again for the house.

LYD. I remember you told me at dinner. Fifteen thousand?

LEE. No, twenty-five.

LYD. That's right. Twenty-five. I declare. Well, money isn't everything.

LEE. No.

LYD. It isn't as if we needed it. If we did, I'd feel we'd have to think about it. (*Lee has closed his eyes.*) Daddy, you look tired. Did you work hard today?

LEE. Yes, I did.

LYD. Here, let me take your shoes off. (*Kneels down and starts to remove his shoes.*) You've been so good to me all these years. I want you to know that I couldn't have asked for a nicer husband. I was talking to some ladies the other day, and they were bragging about their husbands, and I said, "Ladies, are you all through?" They said, "Yes," and I said, "I have a husband who has never said a cross word to me, and every morning of my life has brought me two slices of bacon and a poached egg and toast and coffee to my bed and kisses me and says, 'Eat your breakfast,'" and they said, "Well, you can't beat that," and I said, "When God made Lee, He threw the pattern away." (*Lee has his eyes closed again.*) Daddy. Daddy. You're falling asleep in your chair. Come on. Lie down on the couch, Daddy.

LEE. I'm not asleep, Belle. I was only thinking. We're neither of us getting any younger. What would you think of Emily and Richard

living here with us after they're married? You're not feeling well so much of the time, if anything happened to me ...

LYD. Daddy, don't say that.

LEE. Well, if it did, Belle, you and Emily would have a lot of responsibilities.

LYD. I don't want to think about it. I've only one request of God and that's that he take me first. I don't want to hear you talk about such things.

LEE. Belle, we have to be practical.

LYD. No, I don't. I don't want to talk about it at all.

LEE. All I'm saying, Lyd, is that since everything we have here will belong to Emily someday, why shouldn't she stay here with her husband?

LYD. Whatever you want to do, Daddy, would suit me fine. I just don't want to talk about our leaving each other anymore. That's all. If we ever have to be separated I want God to take me first.

LEE. I want to sell the rest of the farms and set Richard up in business. He has a fine head on his shoulders. People like him. He'd do well in business here.

LYD. Daddy, if you sold our land, wouldn't you miss farming?

LEE. I'd like to rest, Belle. I'm very tired. I've been tired for a long, long time.

LYD. Are you, Lee?

LEE. Yes.

LYD. Then whatever you say, Daddy. Whatever you want to do. Yes, sir, I wish you could have seen those ladies' faces. I just sat there and listened and I said, "Ladies, are you all through?" and they said, "Yes." And I told them, "When God made Lee, He threw the pattern away." (*Emily enters from the kitchen.*)

EMILY. Daddy, can I see you for a minute?

LEE. Certainly, kid. Getting excited about the wedding?

EMILY. Yes, I am, Daddy. (*She goes into the small bedroom and he follows her.*)

LEE. I think you're going to be very happy, kid. I think it's going to be all different this time.

EMILY. I think so, too. (*A pause.*) Richard spoke to me last night about his working with you, and our living here after we're married.

LEE. He said he would. It occurred to me it was the wise thing to do.

EMILY. It was very sweet of you to suggest it, and we both appreciate your thinking of us and asking us to stay.

LEE. It would certainly give us great pleasure. Like I told Richard. I've never had a son.

EMILY. Daddy, we can't stay here.

LEE. You can't?

EMILY. No. I told Richard I would think about it, and talk it over with you, but I don't want us to. *(Lee goes over and shuts the bedroom door. He seems badly disappointed.)* I'm sorry, Daddy.

LEE. Your mother would like you to stay. Richard told me he would. *(A pause. Emily doesn't answer.)* I wouldn't ask him to farm. He must have told you that.

EMILY. Yes, he did.

LEE. I'd sell the farms and invest in a business for him. And we would give you our bedroom and we would stay in here. I was going to suggest re-doing the whole house for you.

EMILY. No, why should you spend money on that when you know in a few years you'll sell it for a filling station anyway. I wish you'd sell it now, while you can get such a good price for it.

LEE. I asked your Mother again about selling it. She doesn't want to.

EMILY. I know it just won't work, Daddy.

LEE. Belle gets so lonesome when you're not here.

EMILY. I'm sorry. *(A pause. He looks at Emily.)*

LEE. Well, all right, kid. If you feel that way, we'll say no more about it. *(A pause. He reaches in his pocket and takes out a check.)* Use this on your honeymoon.

EMILY. No, thank you. You can't afford to do this. You've done enough for me.

LEE. You'll hurt me very much, if you won't take it. I want you to have it, Emily. *(She sees he is very hurt.)*

EMILY. Oh, all right. *(Kisses him.)* I think you're the sweetest and most generous person in the whole world.

LEE. I think you're pretty nice yourself. I wouldn't trade you for anything I've seen yet, I know that. I think I'll take your mother for a little ride before supper. She hasn't been out of the house all day. It will be good for her to get out. *(Goes into the sitting room.)* Would you like to go for a little ride, Belle?

LYD. Aren't you tired?

LEE. No, I rested while I was sitting up in the chair.

LYD. All right. *(She gets up and starts for the screen door. Lee follows. Emily comes into the sitting room. Richard comes into the room from the kitchen and opens the window.)*

EMILY. I spoke to Daddy.

RICHARD. What did you say?

EMILY. Just that we shouldn't live here together. *(A pause.)* Daddy gave me this check to spend on our honeymoon.

RICHARD. He can't afford to do that.

EMILY. I know, and I didn't want to take it, but he looked so hurt that I accepted it anyway.

RICHARD. Give it to me. I want him to take it back. I don't want him giving us things whether I stay here or not. *(She gives him the check and he puts it in his pocket.)*

EMILY. You're disappointed we're not staying, aren't you? *(Richard doesn't answer.)* I was afraid you would be. I know that you think living in one place, having a family around you, is the most wonderful thing in the world. *(A pause.)* Honey, it was a mistake that Ben and I ever lived here.

RICHARD. Emily, I've told you and told you I don't want to hear about Ben Lacque. I can see him drunk any day of the week on South Milam Street in Houston. I know all about him. I'd like to punch him in the face for the way he treated you. *(A pause.)* I'm sorry. I don't know why I got so excited. *(A pause.)* What did you want to tell me?

EMILY. Nothing.

RICHARD. Yes, you did. Something about you and Ben ...

EMILY. It doesn't matter. *(A pause.)* When I was a girl I used to hate coming into this room. It seemed like a museum, with all of Mother's pictures around. I could never somehow think of them as my family, but only as Mother's. I used to dream of them one day coming home and finding all the pictures gone. Even now, I'd like to turn the faces of everyone of them to the wall.

RICHARD. Why, Emily?

EMILY. Because they remind me of how unhappy I was growing up here. In my ballet costume. In my party dresses. Mother was determined to make me the belle of the ball, the most popular girl in town. But the more she told me what to wear and what to do to make myself popular, the more awkward and ill at ease I became. I tried to explain that to Mother, but she just got upset and said I was making the whole thing up, that I was popular. At fifteen they bought me a car. I can remember the years by the cars I've had. A yellow Buick, a green Chevrolet, a red Ford. I'd get up at eleven and ride with whatever girl I was friendly with at the time. Round and round the square I'd ride. And then I met Ben. He sold burial insurance and Mama and Daddy

couldn't bear that, so he gave it up, but they didn't like his next job either, collecting laundry, so he gave that up, and Daddy told him if he didn't drink for six weeks he would buy him a business. We sat here in this room and watched and waited to see if he would pass the test. Well, he didn't. He stopped it for three weeks and then he came home drunk and he and Daddy had a big fight and we had to leave.

RICHARD. Emily, do you think anybody is going to tell me what to do? Do you think I'm Ben? Do you think I'm weak?

EMILY. No, but maybe I am. (*A pause.*) I don't want to live here with them. Is that so wrong? Oh, I want to be alone with my husband. I want my freedom. I want my own home.

RICHARD. You'll have your own home someday. The finest house anyone has ever had. I'm going to get you a lot of things before I'm through. Clothes, jewels, fur coats ...

EMILY. I don't care anything about fine clothes, or a fine house.

RICHARD. But I do. I wouldn't feel like a man or a decent husband if I can't get these things for my wife. And I'm going to get them. There are wonderful possibilities here. I want your father to go into the oil business with me. It's what I'm ready to do now. I've spent twelve years working hard in the oil fields. Studying, learning. I've investigated every independent setup on this Gulf Coast, and now I know I'm ready to go out on my own. I know a lot of men in the business that respect me and that I respect. I know one man that has leased some land, and I agree should pay off handsomely. He's trying to finance the development of it now.

EMILY. Who is he?

RICHARD. Tom Carter. I admire him as much as any man I know of. I think he knows more about oil and where it can be found than any man in this state.

EMILY. I thought he was broke?

RICHARD. He is. That's why I thought we could make a good trade with him now. He needs cash, and he'd be easy to bargain with. We could get a lot for our money.

EMILY. Have you and Daddy talked about all this?

RICHARD. (*Laughing.*) Yes. That's all we've talked about this last week, whenever we've been together. He's asked to meet Tom Carter. There's also an insurance business for sale around town that he's asked me to look into and I've agreed.

EMILY. All right. Let's say you and Daddy do go into business. Why do we have to live here?

RICHARD. For their sake. *(Takes her hand.)* Emily, I've tried every way I know how to keep from worrying about this, but you're going to have to know. Your daddy isn't well. He's had two heart attacks. The doctors have told him that if he doesn't slow down soon, he'll just fall over dead one of these days. He told me about it when he asked me to live here.

EMILY. Why hasn't he told me?

RICHARD. Because he didn't want you to be worried. He had his last attack when you were still living in Houston. We're just both going to have to help them now, Emily. Your daddy has confided a lot in me. Do you realize when he sells the rest of the farms he'll have to invest in a business in order to live? I've looked at his books. I know exactly how things are. It's a shame. Hard as he's worked all his life. What gets me is the money he's loaned out through the years, that he never collected. Do you realize that your Uncle Davis died owing him ten thousand dollars? Jack Cleveland has been borrowing money from him for at least ten years. He let him have it at three percent interest. He just pays the interest back year after year and doesn't even try to pay anything back on the debt.

EMILY. Well, Jack Cleveland has no money.

RICHARD. I know, honey. But your father doesn't either now. He can't afford to do business like this any longer. Jack Cleveland has farms and he's agreed that if he can't pay him back, that it's time he protects himself by taking his land. *(A pause.)* And what about your mother? What's going to happen to her? I haven't said anything, I hate to spoil your father's hopes, but I think she gets worse every day. She turns on gas stoves in the middle of summer and forgets to light them. She's wandered to the river twice and Addie has to be sent to get her back. She needs help. The doctors here aren't equipped to help her. She needs a specialist, or a sanatorium.

EMILY. *(Crying.)* I'm sorry.

RICHARD. Now come on, Emily.

EMILY. I'm sorry, honey, I'm too upset to talk anymore. I don't know what's the best thing to do. I'd do anything in this world to help them, but I don't know honestly if our staying here is the solution. *(Lyd comes in.)*

LYD. It's too windy out in that car for me. *(She goes to her chair and pulls the shawl around herself.)*

EMILY. Where'd Daddy go?

LYD. He'll be along in a little while. He said he had some business

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