

Triptych Part I
Blood and Bone

Setting: a cozy, rustic cabin. A fire glows in the wood stove. A kettle boils on top. Near the fire, in a rocking chair, sits Eliza, an old woman, who is working on a quilt. She stitches as she talks.

ELIZA: Blood and bone, bone and blood. The needle goes in and out and the thread follows. Sometimes there's a snicker-snack sound when the needle taps the thimble protecting my finger...

She pauses and looks around the room and then squints at the audience.

ELIZA: Our needles are made of metal these days. Shiny bits of steel indistinguishable from any other shiny bit of steel. They're labeled with gauges and sizes and we must choose the best one for the job, and hope it's correct... no, not the darning needles with their wide yes... and no, not the tiny needles used for the finest stitches, but something in between.

She surveys her last bit of work, nods to herself in approval, and goes on.

ELIZA: But before... before all the mass production that took the soul out of handwork we used needles made from bone. Oh, you modern stitchers will wrinkle your noses and call it disgusting, but those bone needles had a bit of a curve to them, made the sewing go smoother, and their points were sharper than what you know.

She adjusts the quilt on her lap, and smiles out at the audience. Is there something sinister about her smile, or is it just the light?

ELIZA: A quilt's not a quilt unless it's been baptized with a drop of the maker's blood, you know. It's like an artist's mark, only more personal, because in the finished work it doesn't show, but the one who left it knows it's there.

She rests for a moment, keeping her hands in her lap, on top of the quilt in process.

ELIZA: Blood and bone, heart and soul. It takes all four to make a quilt.

Curtain.