

One

-In a house of sticks sat a marchioness and two of her maids. They went there Sundays.

-Isolde had to be a fancy lady. She had a manor specially built for tea.

-Polly was a doll, Wendy a felt horse. They sipped with their pinkies up, of course.

-Isolde's friends would say, in a candid way, that her society was improving, most days.

-Isolde in her hidden house, off in a copse while mother slept. Father gone in a pinstriped suit and a governess hanging clothes, singing Irish.

-Isolde had a dirty cheek; blackish loam smeared on pretty white birch bark and because of the low light, stinging, not seeing, 'twas a splinter buried...

Two

-In the dappled shade, spinney leaves will fade. They hid behind an old wicker chair-seat front gate.

-She must drift outside; dainty, lilting strides, and by fairy craft give her teahouse eyes.

Bridge

-Isolde wants window light! She dislikes parasites! Open the walls and oh, my dear, well that smells lovely!

-But do you hear the sound of a dead and wood bone cracking? There's a foot upon the ground without and the birds have left off laughing!

-Stay within thy castle and mute thy ladies' thread and cotton tongues. Their songs, if sung, would bring the broken stick foot hither!

-Another step draws near! Thy ladies shake with fear! Don't make a sound! Tendrils run along the ground, they're searching, searching!

-Is it alive or dead? Does the footfall have a head? Is it a face with eyes, and has it spied Isolde small and pale with dread?

-And then sepulchral breath slips past teeth all wrong from death. That crooked air won't linger there, it drips and drops on Isolde's hair...

-Isolde tumbles out and away, gone from the woods and into the daylight. She will sip her tea with the governess and listen to mother sleeping!

-Isolde doesn't need a special secret wooded teatime retreat! There's nothing restful about a parlor rank with rot and loud with needlefeet!