

# These Walls

Book & Lyrics by Caitlin Collins  
Music by Matthew Lowy

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CAST

Young Liz (mid to late twenties)  
Young Jeff (mid to late twenties)  
Liz (early sixties)  
Jeff (early sixties)

TIME

The present, and 35 years in the future, simultaneously.

PLACE

Liz and Jeff's home, at once old and new.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

1. Hello, Home
2. If These Walls Could Talk/PJ Underscore
3. 35 Years
4. Mel and Joseph Underscore
5. Goodbye, Home

**These Walls**

The inside of an empty house.  
Hardwood floors. No furniture.  
Sunlight streams through the windows.  
There is one small “Bless This Mess” needlepoint  
hanging on the wall in an unobtrusive spot.

*The handle to the front door jiggles but the door doesn't open.  
The sounds of a key fumbling and muffled voices.*

**YOUNG JEFF** (*off*)

The key won't -

**YOUNG LIZ** (*off*)

Try the other way, turn it like –

*The door opens.*

**1.) Hello, Home**

*In burst Young Liz and Young Jeff, in their late-twenties.*

**YOUNG LIZ**

We did it!  
HELLO, HOME!  
SAY HELLO (*to Jeff*)

**YOUNG JEFF**

HELLO, HOME!

**YOUNG LIZ**

THIS IS *OUR* HOME!  
WE LIVE HERE NOW

**YOUNG JEFF**

WE LIVE HERE NOW.  
MAN, THAT TRAFFIC SUCKED

**YOUNG LIZ**

YEAH, THE ROADS WERE FUCKED

**YOUNG LIZ & YOUNG JEFF**

BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER  
BECAUSE WE'RE HOME.

**YOUNG JEFF**

Wait, we didn't do the thing.

**YOUNG LIZ**

What thing?

**YOUNG JEFF**

The *thing*, the threshold thing, come back out here, Liz.

**YOUNG LIZ** (*following him*)

What are you talking about?

**YOUNG JEFF**

Ready? 1,2,3 –

*Jeff jumps into Liz's arms. She screams and half-drops him.*

**YOUNG LIZ** (*laughing*)

Jeff!!

*He scoops her up, and carries her back inside. They kiss.*

**YOUNG LIZ**

HELLO, WALLS!  
SAY, HELLO

**YOUNG JEFF**

... We talk to walls now?

**YOUNG LIZ**

GLAD TO MEET YOU  
WE LIVE HERE NOW

**YOUNG JEFF**

WE LIVE HERE NOW

*He tries a light switch*

**YOUNG JEFF (CONT.)**

LOOK, THAT BULB IS OUT  
THAT'LL NEED SOME GROUT (*re: a tiled part of the entryway*)

**YOUNG LIZ**

BUT IT HARDLY MATTERS  
BECAUSE WE'RE HOME

WHOD'VE THOUGHT  
FROM THAT FATEFUL STUDY HALL -

**YOUNG JEFF**

- ONE DAY WE'D BE TALKING TO THIS WALL?

*She rolls her eyes/chuckles.*

**YOUNG JEFF**

HELLO, HOME

**YOUNG LIZ**

HERE WE ARE

**YOUNG JEFF**

OUR OWN HOME

**YOUNG LIZ**

WE'RE ADULT-ING  
IT'S KINDA WEIRD

**YOUNG JEFF**

IT'S FRICKIN' WEIRD

**YOUNG LIZ**

LOOK, I PACKED SOME BEER!

**YOUNG JEFF**

CHEERS TO BEING HERE

**YOUNG JEFF & YOUNG LIZ**

AND TO ALL THAT MATTERS  
NOW THAT WE'RE HOME

**YOUNG LIZ**

It feels so much bigger without any furniture. Can we afford to fill it?

**YOUNG JEFF**

Oh, we'll fill it.  
I'M THINKING HOT TUB THERE

**YOUNG LIZ**

Obviously.  
DISCO BALL

**YOUNG JEFF**

Yeeees.  
AND OF COURSE OUR LOVE WILL FILL IT ALL

**YOUNG LIZ**

Aww, Gross!

*Liz plops down on the floor.  
Jeff joins her.  
They sip their beer.*

**YOUNG LIZ**

What's that cliché, the one about –

**YOUNG JEFF**

I thought real writers hate clichés –

**YOUNG LIZ**

Shut up – “If these walls could talk, what would they say?”  
What do you think these walls will say?

**YOUNG JEFF**

Right now they're probably saying, “Damn, these new people are way hotter than that old couple.”

*Older Liz enters in her early sixties.  
She walks right by Young Liz and Jeff, stands and surveys the room.*

**LIZ**

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...

**YOUNG LIZ**

No, I mean years from now.

**YOUNG LIZ**

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...

**YOUNG JEFF**

What will these walls say, years from now?

**YOUNG LIZ**

Yeah.

**YOUNG JEFF**

THEY'LL SAY, "LIZ IS PERFECT,  
AND JEFF, HE'S NOT BAD,  
AND THEY ARE THE BEST MOM AND DAD."

**YOUNG LIZ**

... They will say that, won't they?

**YOUNG JEFF**

Absolutely.  
I mean, not like, imminently –

**YOUNG LIZ**

Right, like, in three to five years they might say that.

**YOUNG JEFF**

Yeah, or like, two to four years. Who knows?

**YOUNG LIZ**

Who knows?  
HELLO, LIFE  
HERE WE ARE

**YOUNG JEFF**

OUR NEW LIFE

**YOUNG LIZ & YOUNG JEFF**

JUST IMAGINE THE THINGS IN STORE

**YOUNG LIZ**

TINY LITTLE FEET



**YOUNG JEFF**

CUTE ENOUGH TO EAT

**YOUNG LIZ & YOUNG JEFF**

WE'LL HAVE ALL THAT MATTERS  
NOW THAT WE'RE HOME

*They kiss.  
Older Liz notices the "Bless This Mess" needlepoint on the wall.  
She starts to take it down, then changes her mind and leaves it hanging.*

**YOUNG LIZ**

I just remembered how many Diet Cokes I had on the road, I have to pee soooo bad.

**YOUNG JEFF**

Wait, now I do too.

**YOUNG LIZ**

Don't you dare, I called it – OH MY GOD WE HAVE TWO BATHROOMS NOW!!

**YOUNG JEFF**

TWO BATHROOMS!

*They both run offstage as  
Older Jeff enters the front door, in his early sixties.*

**JEFF**

Welp, the movers are off. Pretty sure I heard glass shatter as they pulled out.  
You about ready, Liz?

**LIZ**

I guess so.  
God, look at this place.

**JEFF**

It's strange isn't it.

**LIZ**

It feels smaller somehow.

**2.) These Walls /PJ Underscore**

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...

**JEFF**

Shh! Listen...

(wall voice) "Jeff was right. Should've gotten the hot tub."

**LIZ**

Ha.

**LIZ & JEFF**

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...

*Young Liz and Young Jeff re-enter.  
Young Liz has pulled out a measuring tape.*

**YOUNG LIZ**

48 inches... My writing desk could fit here, don't you think?

**YOUNG JEFF**

Sure!

**YOUNG LIZ**

And you know what could go riiiiight over here? The dog bed!

-

**YOUNG JEFF**

You know I'm not a dog person.

**YOUNG LIZ** (*impishly*)

We'll see.

*Young Liz pulls Young Jeff out the front door.*

**LIZ**

Oh my god! I forgot we slid the couch over where PJ scratched up the floor!

**JEFF**

(*with love*) PJ!! ... Maybe we should get a new dog.

**LIZ**

I don't know.

**JEFF**

Let's do it! I think it'd be really good for you.

**LIZ**

We'll see.

**3.) 35 Years**

IF THESE WALLS COULD -

**JEFF**

I'm gonna do one last sweep.

*Jeff exits.*

**LIZ**

THIRTY FIVE YEARS  
OF BIRTHDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS  
AND DAYS THAT WE'LL NEVER GET BACK

THIRTY FIVE YEARS  
OF DISHES AND GROCERIES  
AND QUESTIONS WE'LL NEVER UNPACK

THIRTY FIVE YEARS  
OF MOMENTS AND FRAGMENTS  
WRAPPED UP AND LABELED AND GONE

WHAT'S THE TOTAL OF THIRTY FIVE YEARS  
AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MOVE ON?

*Liz has been staring at the front hallway closet.  
Jeff, who has re-entered, has been watching her.*

**JEFF**

Once we get settled, and you start having some extra time on your hands, you can write that novel of yours.

**LIZ**

Ha, right...

*Liz takes a deep breath and walks over to the closet.  
She opens it and stares at height measurements that are checked off inside the door.  
There are two sets of markings, each in a different color,  
one labeled Melanie, one labeled Joseph.  
She traces Joseph's markings.*

**LIZ**

30 INCHES  
32 INCHES  
35 INCHES  
41 INCHES  
43 INCHES  
46 INCHES  
48 INCHES  
48 INCHES  
48 INCHES  
48 –

*Jeff hugs her.  
They stand in a long embrace.*

**LIZ**

Even after all this time, I feel like we're abandoning him somehow.

**JEFF**

We're not aban –

**LIZ**

- I *know* we're not, obviously, but I - ... This is really hard. It's *allowed* to be hard.

*She turns away.*

**JEFF**

Of course. I just - ... sorry...

*He looks away.  
From off we hear –*

**YOUNG JEFF**

Careful, that one's heavy!

*Young Liz enters with a large box,  
Young Jeff is in right behind her with other boxes.*

**YOUNG LIZ**

Did I tell you my sister doesn't believe me that we never fight?

**YOUNG JEFF**

She's just jealous of our mad communication skills.

**YOUNG LIZ**

Yeah she is.

*They do a goofy high five on their way back out the door.*

*Jeff slowly puts an arm on Liz,  
she responds to his touch,  
he embraces her from behind  
and they stand in a backwards hug  
They look at the measurements, each reminiscing silently.*

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