

**HUSBANDS AND WIFE**

**a play in two acts  
by Tom Baum**

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Characters (in order of appearance)

**MATTHEW**, a white man in his thirties

**PORTIA**, a white woman in her thirties or forties

**PARNELL**, an African-American man in his thirties or forties

**WOODY**, a white man in his twenties

**MAKAYLA**, an African-American woman in her thirties or forties

**KING**, a handsome white man in his forties

**SUPER**, a handsome white man in his forties

Act I is set in the main room of a farmhouse.

Act II is set in the main room of a city apartment.

The time is the present.

## ACT I

*(Lights up on The living room/dining room of a modest farmhouse somewhere in the rural South. A couch, piled with unsorted laundry; a sideboard, a cart with liquor bottles, a set of weights and a padded workout bench. Two shaded windows. Three doors—one to the front porch, one to the kitchen, one to the rear of the house.*

*Sound of a knife clattering to a kitchen floor.)*

MATTHEW: *(off)* Fucksticks!

*(MATTHEW enters, in an apron, sucking on a bleeding thumb. He examines it.)*

MATTHEW: Fuck me fuck me fuck me. *(then)* Stop, Matthew. It's not a tragedy. Breathe.

*(He takes two deep meditative breaths, proceeds to finish setting the table.*

PORTIA *enters through the front door, dressed for business, carrying a handbag, a briefcase and a bag from BECK'S HARDWARE. She locks the door behind her and lovingly watches MATTHEW as he sets the table, and now and then stops to suck on his thumb.)*

PORTIA: What happened, sweetie? Did you hurt yourself again?

MATTHEW: Portia, oh gosh, you startled me. Yes, silly me, I cut myself dicing the carrot. You asked me to sharpen the knives and the first time I used the big one I sliced myself.

PORTIA: Let me see, where? Oh don't be silly, it's barely a scratch.

MATTHEW: You don't think it needs stitches?

PORTIA: Shh, it doesn't even need a Band-Aid.

MATTHEW: Maybe some Bactine. The ground turkey could have salmonella.

PORTIA: Matthew.

MATTHEW: Right. Sorry. Can I get you a drink?

PORTIA: I'm dying for a drink. Cuervo silver.

MATTHEW: Uh-oh. Portia's bummed.

PORTIA: I don't say I'm not, but how could you tell?

MATTHEW: (*pouring*) Vodka when you're happy, scotch when you're angry, tequila when you're depressed.

PORTIA: God, you're so smart, I love you. What's for dinner, hon?

MATTHEW: Piccadillo. Minus the olives and the salt. (*hands her the drink*) What? What's that face? Did I pour too much?

(PORTIA *eyes the tequila MATTHEW's handing her as if it's poison. Then, with a what-the-hell gesture, she drinks it all the way down.*)

MATTHEW: Whoa, Portia...you are upset.

PORTIA: It's this damn drought, that's all.

MATTHEW: More payouts?

PORTIA: Monumental payouts. I may have to quit selling drought insurance. You hear from Woody yet?

MATTHEW: Not a word.

PORTIA: Me neither.

MATTHEW: It's been four days now. This time I'm getting really worried.

PORTIA: Has it really been four days? Hit me again.

MATTHEW: You sure?

PORTIA: (*uncertainly*) Yes.

(MATTHEW *pours. PORTIA stares at the glass in her hand. Then starts to put it aside.*)

MATTHEW: Make up your mind, do you want it or don't you? Seriously, Portia, what's going on? Did something happen at Beck's today? (*hint of prurient interest*) Did that idiot clerk get handsy again?

PORTIA: Just a lot of ugly breathing. (*drinks*) He was trying to sell me a stud finder. I'm like, "Don't worry, I've got it covered," and he's like, "Sure, you don't have any trouble finding studs."

MATTHEW: Oh Jesus. Implying what?

PORTIA: He was just being a douche.

MATTHEW: No. He must be hearing the rumors. (*stricken*) Oh God.

PORTIA: Matthew, stop. I'll have to quit telling you things, and that would make me sad.

MATTHEW: Please don't do that, no, you're right.

PORTIA: You know you like it when people hit on me. That pig farmer who's always coming on?

MATTHEW: I know. It's my weakness.

PORTIA: It's not a weakness, hon. It's part of your charm.

MATTHEW: But I wish I could be a breadwinner. Take some of the heat off you.

PORTIA: Oh really, where would you work?

MATTHEW: That pig farm's only a couple of miles. I could try to get up the courage. You could put in a good word with your admirer.

PORTIA: Sweetheart...he thinks I'm unattached.

MATTHEW: Right. Of course. I'm not thinking straight.

PORTIA: What would you do, blow pig brains for eight bucks an hour, come home to me stinking to high heaven? And you know how I love your smell. It's so...homey.

MATTHEW: Homey like a bakery?

PORTIA: Homey like Matthew. Homey like nothing in the world.  
*(cozies up)* Don't worry, hon. One of these days you'll get over  
 your fears. Just like you built up these lovely muscles.

*(PORTIA caresses MATTHEW's arms and shoulders. They start  
 to make out, more and more urgently. MATTHEW lifts PORTIA  
 up.)*

PORTIA: *(surprised; delighted)* Whoa. Look at you!

*(MATTHEW raises PORTIA's skirt, carries her to a wall. They  
 start to make love.*

*PARNELL enters through the front door, in a Carl's Jr. outfit,  
 holding a grocery bag, calmly locks the door behind him. He  
 carries the grocery bag toward the kitchen, exits, returns, poking his  
 head in. MATTHEW catches sight of him. It breaks his rhythm.  
 PORTIA and MATTHEW disengage.)*

PARNELL: Don't stop on my account. Up-against-the-wall sex?  
 Good job, bro. Groceries you wanted are in the kitchen. I think  
 your onions are caramelized.

MATTHEW: Doesn't matter. We're not having piccadillo.

PARNELL: Why not? I was looking forward to piccadillo. I love your  
 piccadillo.

MATTHEW: Portia's not hungry.

PARNELL: Again? You didn't eat last night either. What's the matter, babe?

PORTIA: Nothing's the matter, don't you start stressing. *(to MATTHEW)*  
 You already diced the carrot and browned the onions, go right ahead and  
 make piccadillo.

MATTHEW: Are you sure?

PORTIA: It's Woody's favorite too.

MATTHEW: If he ever gets here.

*(MATTHEW exits into the kitchen. PORTIA picks up the tequila  
 bottle, pours herself another drink...then sets it aside.)*

PARNELL: No word from the kid, huh?

PORTIA: It's been four days now. I'm trying not to worry. No hats on the bed!

(PARNELL *has tossed his Carl's Jr. hat on the couch.*)

PARNELL: Babe, it's a sofa.

PORTIA: It pulls out.

PARNELL: OK, if you say so.

PORTIA: Now kick your leg up three times.

PARNELL: Seriously?

PORTIA: Seriously.

(PARNELL *kicks the edge of the sofa three times.*)

PARNELL: That didn't feel weird at all. Who taught you that ritual, your daddy?

PORTIA: Are you kidding? Superstitions are from the Devil.

PARNELL: Right, I get it. That's fucked up.

PORTIA: Daddy had his own rituals.

PARNELL: I'll bet he did.

(PARNELL *sits down beside PORTIA. They cozy up.*)

PORTIA: Like the time Momma caught me playing with myself.

PARNELL: Uh-oh.

PORTIA: Oh yeah. There was this pond out back of the mission center? Right, so here was Daddy's punishment. He empties out a coffee can and tells me to "move the pond."

PARNELL: Move it to where?

PORTIA: There was this vacant lot next door. He goes, "Portia, you're gonna move this pond off my property."

PARNELL: No way.

PORTIA: He makes me dip the coffee can in the water, carry it over to the vacant lot, and dump it. Till way after it got dark. Dead of winter, icy cold water. Nearly froze my fingers off.

PARNELL: Fucking sadist. I bet he was watching the whole time.

PORTIA: No, that was Momma.

PARNELL: Right, I should have known.

PORTIA: Rocking away on the back porch.

PARNELL: While Daddy was upstairs, no doubt...diddling one of his church ladies.

PORTIA: That's how he worked it. Two birds with one stone.

PARNELL: Did it stop you masturbating?

PORTIA: What do you think?

PARNELL: I think you had it worse than me. At least my momma never punished me for sex. She was too busy having it all day long.

(MATTHEW *enters.*)

MATTHEW: You forgot the red and yellow peppers.

PARNELL: I did? I'm sorry. So leave out the peppers.

MATTHEW: I can't leave out the peppers. Peppers are the whole point of piccadillo.

PARNELL: OK, forget piccadillo, we'll get a pizza. (to PORTIA) If you're not gonna use that drink, I'll take it off your hands. Where is Woody, any thoughts?

PORTIA: He's supposed to be bussing tables, but I'm starting to have my doubts.

MATTHEW: So am I.

PARNELL: You're too nice to him, that's why he keeps fucking up.



PORTIA: He breaks my heart.

PARNELL: That's no excuse.

PORTIA: Please, can we have a little sympathy? His momma, leaving him in Santa's lap, and never came back to the mall?

PARNELL: You're right. That's a life-changing event.

PORTIA: Your momma was a whore, but at least you had a momma. What did that do to Woody's head?

PARNELL: And now he fucks up to test you.

PORTIA: And that's why I'm extra nice to him. Go pick up the pizza, OK, doll?

PARNELL: Why don't we have it delivered for a change? I'll put a twenty in the mailbox, tell them to leave the pizza there.

MATTHEW: Yeah, that won't raise any suspicions.

PORTIA: Shh, sweetie, it's a good idea. Call them.

MATTHEW: *(on phone)* Yes, hello. I'd like to order one large pie, half anchovies, half plain....183 County Road 22. You can't see the house from the road, we'll leave a twenty in the mailbox...What do you mean, why? Why would you ask me why?

*(PARNELL grabs the phone from MATTHEW.)*

PARNELL: Because we've got a case of TB in the house. *(hangs up; to MATTHEW)* Man, you gotta learn to think on your feet.

MATTHEW: But why would they ask me that question? I feel like the whole world is closing in.

PARNELL: 'Cause you're staring at the walls all day. Time to get the ya-ya's out. Give me ten reps.

MATTHEW: Not now. My heart's beating too fast.

PORTIA: Listen to your mentor. Parnell knows what he's doing.

MATTHEW: If I have an aneurysm, it's on both your heads.

(MATTHEW *does bench presses, wincing nervously.*)

PARNELL: No no, take the tension out of your face. Put it where it belongs. (*to PORTIA*) Maybe he oughta start on Xanax, what do you think?

MATTHEW: (*from the bench*) Xanax is poison.

PARNELL: Since when?

MATTHEW: You get Alzheimer's sooner.

PARNELL: OK, then we'll put you on testosterone.

MATTHEW: Great. Then I'll be angry and worried....(*strains; finishes*)...Ten.

(MATTHEW *gets off the bench, nervously takes his pulse. During what follows, PORTIA gets on the bench, and behind MATTHEW and PARNELL'S back, proceeds to do 16 bench presses.*)

PARNELL: Tell me, stud...you ever think of growing a beard?

MATTHEW: Why would I ever do that?

PARNELL: Portia loves beards, don't you, babe?

PORTIA: (*from the bench*) I'm partial to them, yes.

PARNELL: Women make progress, men grow beards. Historical fact.

MATTHEW: Mine comes in Amish.

PARNELL: Well, don't worry, dude, you'll go through puberty soon. What's the first thing you wash when you take a shower?

MATTHEW: Why?

PARNELL: Just go with it.

(MATTHEW *mimes taking a shower, passing his hands over his face.*)

PARNELL: Just as I suspected. You start with your face.

MATTHEW: What about it?

PARNELL: Not your pits.

MATTHEW: Eventually, sure.

PARNELL: Women wash their faces first. When men start wearing makeup, they'll begin with their faces. When you examine your nails, how do you examine them?

(MATTHEW *extends his fingers and looks at his nails.*)

PARNELL: Exactly. That's how women look at their nails. A man, he does this. (*he demonstrates*) Makes a fist.

MATTHEW: Maybe a violent man.

PARNELL: No, every man. Just sayin'.

(PORTIA *finishes her reps.*)

PORTIA: Sixteen.

MATTHEW: Sixteen?!

PORTIA: That's a personal best. (*rises dizzily*) Whoops.

(PORTIA *gropes for support.*)

MATTHEW: Portia, ohmigod, what's the matter?

(PARNELL *grabs MATTHEW from behind.*)

MATTHEW: Leggo, what are you doing? Portia, are you OK?

PARNELL: Leave her alone, she's fine. Come on, tough guy. Let's put those muscles to use.

(MATTHEW *squirms in PARNELL's grasp, suddenly flips him on his back. PORTIA watches them wrestle, bright-eyed, turned-on, fighting her dizzy spell. PARNELL finally flips MATTHEW face down.*)

MATTHEW: Let me up, you damn ape!

PARNELL: What did you call me? Did you call me ape?

MATTHEW: Yes, I called you ape.

PARNELL: Boy's grown a pair. He's about to lose 'em though.

(PARNELL *applies an armlock.*)

PORTIA: Time! That's a punishing hold, Parnell. Get off him.  
Now.

(PARNELL *lets MATTHEW up.*)

PORTIA: (*to MATTHEW*) Next time he rags on your manhood,  
don't take the bait.

MATTHEW: (*to PARNELL*) I've heard all I want to hear about my  
testosterone levels. I'll match mine against any man's, including  
yours.

PORTIA: That's the ticket. Good job, hon.

(*Doorbell. They all go on alert.*)

PORTIA: That can't be the pizza already.

MATTHEW: No, it certainly can't.

PARNELL: Then who the fuck is it?

MATTHEW: (*calls*) Are you from Domino's?

(*Doorbell again.*)

WOODY: (*other side of door*) Open up! It's me!

PORTIA: Finally. Please don't land on him. I'll handle this.

(*PORTIA steadies herself, unlocks the door. WOODY enters.  
He's got a four-day growth. PORTIA locks the door behind him.*)

WOODY: Hey.

PARNELL: Hey yourself. Where the fuck have you been?

PORTIA: Parnell, what did I just say? (*to WOODY*) Sweetheart,  
you look terrible. Sit down.

(WOODY *sits*. PORTIA *sits beside him, puts her arm around him.*)

PORTIA: Why'd you ring the bell, what happened to your keys?

WOODY: Um, I lost them?

PORTIA: Why didn't you call?

WOODY: 'Cause I didn't have my phone?

PORTIA: You lost your phone too? Oo, you're shivering. Oh Woody, sweetheart, are you speeding?

WOODY: I was, yeah, at one point.

PORTIA: OK, so help me out here: Where are you getting the Ritalin?

WOODY: Same place as always. From the pharmacy.

PORTIA: Sweetheart...Matthew found your stash in your sock drawer. You've got enough of that drug to last till next Christmas.

WOODY: Right, that stash. I bought 'em off some high-school kid. Sorry I lied, you gonna send me to my room?

PORTIA: I'm considering it, hon.

WOODY: Well, I already been in a room. Did you know they added two brand-new cells at the sub-station? I think I was the first dude to sleep there. I mean the walls were gleaming. No mattress, no pillow, I don't think I slept a minute. The desk guys were pretty nice, though. They made me a Western sandwich in the morning. It was delicious.

PORTIA: Woody...sweetheart...what were you doing in jail?

WOODY: OK. I got into this hassle at the library?

PORTIA: What were you doing at the library?

WOODY: Improving my mind. I'm thinking of getting my high-school degree.

PORTIA: What time of day was this?

WOODY: Around midday.

PORTIA: When you're supposed to be bussing tables.

WOODY: That's correct.

PORTIA: In other words, you got fired.

WOODY: It was a mutual decision.

PORTIA: And what happened at the library?

WOODY: This dude called me pussywhipped.

PORTIA: What dude?

WOODY: Guy who was waiting for the computer.

PORTIA: Why did he say you were pussywhipped?

WOODY: Or maybe he called me a pervert. Something that started with a "p." And then I must have sassed the judge, 'cause he asked was I on drugs, and I told him prescription drugs and he court-ordered me to counseling.

PARNELL: Aw fuck.

WOODY: And they kept my cell phone, that's why I couldn't call. They were holding it as evidence.

PORTIA: Evidence of what, sweetheart?

WOODY: Video I took of the guy. After I decked him.

PARNELL: That's fucked up.

PORTIA: When do you see this caseworker?

WOODY: I already seen her. Don't worry, I didn't tell her anything. I said I was living with my mom and dad.

MATTHEW: No, you didn't.

PORTIA: Not a good answer, hon.

PARNELL: You could have lied.

MATTHEW: You could have said nothing.

WOODY: That's not how it works. They made me sign a contract. To do anything she felt was necessary. To deal with my substance issues. And my anger management.

PORTIA: You don't need anger management.

WOODY: According to her I do.

PORTIA: She's wrong. That guy provoked you. I'm proud you stuck up for yourself. Come here.

(PORTIA *cradles* WOODY.)

PORTIA: What was this woman like?

WOODY: She was black.

PORTIA: Apart from that.

WOODY: Pretty confident. Asked a lot of questions. Kinda scary.

PARNELL: You could always ask to be transferred.

MATTHEW: To what?

PARNELL: Another facility.

WOODY: Where? There's no other Center for miles.

PARNELL: I'd vote for a city. I mean if it ever came to that.

WOODY: Or California. They're ahead when it comes to tolerance. And I hear it never rains on the weekends.

PARNELL: Or Utah. I mean since we're talking. They struck down a law against polygamy.

MATTHEW: That was male polygamy. Utah's man-friendly, not woman-friendly.

WOODY: What about France? I wouldn't mind seeing Paris. Or Germany. I've never been to Europe.

PARNELL: Toilet paper's too coarse.

PORTIA: Guys?

WOODY: What?

PORTIA: How about we all calm down.

MATTHEW: She's right. Everybody take a breath.

WOODY: Just because I said you were my parents.

PARNELL: So long as you stick to that lie.

WOODY: Otherwise, no problem.

PARNELL: Our noses are clean.

WOODY: There's no law against co-ed living.

MATTHEW: They'd have to close half the colleges. Portia?

*(PORTIA is pouring herself another glass of tequila.)*

PORTIA: What? If I want to drink, I'm gonna drink.

MATTHEW: On top of these dizzy spells you're having?

PORTIA: What? It's the gluten.

MATTHEW: Gluten is bullshit.

PORTIA: It's not bullshit. I may have celiac disease.

PARNELL: Oh, babe.

PORTIA: It's manageable. I'm not dying.

MATTHEW: Who made this diagnosis, you?

PORTIA: My doctor.

MATTHEW: Why haven't I seen a bill? Or an E.O.B.?

PORTIA: Maybe they haven't sent it yet.



MATTHEW: I'll tell you what I did see. About three weeks ago. You bought an E.P.T. Digital Pregnancy test. You left the CVS receipt on the kitchen counter.

PORTIA: I was late. I'm not late anymore.

MATTHEW: No, because you peed on a stick and now you're pregnant.

PARNELL: Are you, babe?

MATTHEW: Yes or no, Portia?

*(Pause.)*

PORTIA: *(to MATTHEW)* You don't miss much, do you, hon?

WOODY: So you are pregnant.

PARNELL: That's what she just said.

MATTHEW: You mind telling us who the father might be?

WOODY: Yeah, how far along are you?

PARNELL: Are you mental? Last one in doesn't mean a damn thing. *(to MATTHEW and WOODY)* Who didn't use a condom?

WOODY: I know I did.

PARNELL: So did I. *(to MATTHEW)* What about you?

MATTHEW: Double condom.

PARNELL: Well lah-di-dah.

MATTHEW: Condoms fail one in five times. You have sex three times with a condom, chances the sperm gets through are 50-50.

PARNELL: Always does the math. *(to MATTHEW)* I'm ready to bet money you're not the daddy.

MATTHEW: Why?

PARNELL: Your boys have a longer way to travel.

MATTHEW: You have no way of knowing that.

PARNELL: I deduced it. You've never been naked in front of us.  
We've both been naked in front of you.

MATTHEW: Maybe I'm embarrassed by my nine-inch dick.

PARNELL: In your dreams.

PORTIA: It's no dream.

PARNELL: Nine inches?

PORTIA: Give or take.

MATTHEW: We've never actually measured.

WOODY: Maybe we're better off not knowing.

PARNELL: How big his dick is?

WOODY: Who the father is. If it's Matthew, the baby's legal. *(to PARNELL)* But if it's you or me, that's proof we've all been living in sin.

MATTHEW: Woody's got a point. If you know anything, Portia, now's your chance.

PORTIA: Hey. If I could wave a wand, I'd want it to be all of yours.

MATTHEW: That's beautifully put.

PARNELL: But completely non-responsive.

PORTIA: Maybe one of you was dying to be a father.

PARNELL: I've always wanted to be a dad. Doesn't mean I went in bareback.

WOODY: I never had a dad, so I'm neutral on the subject.

MATTHEW: I'm no different from any male of any species. My DNA wants to be passed along. But our personal feelings don't matter. You've already come to a decision about your pregnancy.

PORTIA: Oh is that right? You've been reading my mind?

MATTHEW: I don't need to read your mind. I've seen you put poison in your body.

PORTIA: Poison. You're always so melodramatic.

WOODY: Yeah, my mom smoked and drank with me, all nine months. And she claimed she wanted me. Though she took that back later.

MATTHEW: *(to PORTIA)* What about your religion?

PORTIA: If the Baptists are against it, I'm for it. And that includes the a-word.

WOODY: You'd have to drive to another state.

PARNELL: *(to MATTHEW)* You'd go along with her. Get you out of the house at last.

WOODY: So you want her to get rid of it.

PARNELL: I didn't say that. I'm just weighing the considerations.

PORTIA: Well, stop weighing! What's gonna keep us all together? That's the only consideration. If having this baby is gonna split us apart, hell yes, I'll drive anywhere I need to. This child does not yet exist, I don't care what my daddy would say, or any other Baptist asshole. We exist. The four of us. And we're gonna continue to exist, or die trying. I love you all too much to sacrifice what we've built together.

MATTHEW: Oh my. I think I'm going to cry.

*(Doorbell.)*

PARNELL: That must be the pizza.

MATTHEW: Ohmigod. We forgot to leave the money.

PARNELL: Guess they're not afraid to get TB.

PORTIA: Who's got a twenty?

PARNELL: *(takes out wallet)* Here, I've got it. Who wants to answer the door?

MATTHEW: *(takes money)* I'll handle it. I called it in.

PARNELL: Dude, you sure?

PORTIA: Let him. He needs practice with people.

MATTHEW: Everybody scatter.

*(The others move out of range of the door. MATTHEW goes to the door, opens it. On the other side is MAKAYLA, holding a briefcase.)*

MATTHEW: Um...you're not from Domino's.

MAKAYLA: No, sir. I'm from Family Services.

MATTHEW: *(panicking)* Right. Um...excuse me a second.

*(MATTHEW shuts the door in MAKAYLA's face.)*

MATTHEW: *(sotto)* What do we do?

PARNELL: *(to WOODY; sotto)* Is that your caseworker?

WOODY: *(sotto)* Sounded like her, yeah.

PARNELL: *(sotto)* Did you know she was coming?

WOODY: *(sotto)* Did I? I don't think so.

PORTIA: *(calls)* Can I ask what this is about?

MAKAYLA: *(other side of door)* It's about your son, ma'am.

MATTHEW: *(sotto)* Please don't let her in.

WOODY: *(sotto)* It's part of the deal. Otherwise, they could lock me up.

PARNELL: So you did know this would happen. Jesus. *(sotto; to PORTIA)* Say he isn't here.

MATTHEW: *(sotto)* It's not like she's got a warrant.

PARNELL: I vote we ask her to come back another time. And I'll make myself scarce.

MATTHEW: *(sotto)* I agree.

WOODY: (*sotto*) I say no, 'cause I don't want to go to jail.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Nobody's going to jail. I'll deal with this. (*calls*)  
I'm coming.

(PORTIA *opens the front door.*)

PORTIA: Sorry for the delay, didn't mean to be rude. You're  
Woody's counselor?

MAKAYLA: I'm his therapist, that's right, ma'am. (*puzzled*) Are  
you Woody's mom?

PORTIA: Yes, I'm Woody's mom. Can I ask what this is about?

MAKAYLA: I guess Woody didn't explain?

PORTIA: He's as surprised as we are.

MAKAYLA: Well, that surprises me. He signed off on his treatment  
plan, and that includes home visits. May I come in?

PORTIA: Actually...we were about to sit down to dinner.

MAKAYLA: Yes, he said this would be a good time to catch you.

(MAKAYLA *eases past PORTIA, enters.*)

MAKAYLA: Hello, everybody. I'm Makayla. (*to MATTHEW*)  
May I know your name?

MATTHEW: (*uneasily*) I'm Matthew.

MAKAYLA: Matthew. Hello. (*to PORTIA*) And yours?

PORTIA: Portia.

MAKAYLA: (*to PARNELL*) And you are?

PARNELL: Parnell. Family friend. On my way out, actually, when  
you rang the bell.

MAKAYLA: And where is Woody's dad?

MATTHEW: (*tightens*) I'm Woody's dad.

MAKAYLA: (*disbelieving*) You're Woody's dad.

PORTIA: (*at window*) That's right, he's Woody's dad. Tell me, who drove you here?

MAKAYLA: I drove myself, why?

PORTIA: Then where's your vehicle?

MAKAYLA: (*hint of unease*) I parked around back. Where the fire road begins.

PORTIA: Why did you do that?

MAKAYLA: In case the neighbors get nosy? We want to keep all this confidential, don't we?

PARNELL: Can I ask what you're driving?

MAKAYLA: A Civic, why?

PARNELL: That's a lady's car, isn't it.

MAKAYLA: I believe that's its reputation, yes.

PARNELL: You never see a woman driving a Porsche, do you?

MAKAYLA: Not too many Porsches in this town.

PARNELL: Women, they don't like to tear through traffic, making tons of noise.

MAKAYLA: Sports cars are pretty gendered, that's true. Can we please get started?

PARNELL: Just trying to grease the wheels.

MAKAYLA: Consider them greased. Why don't we all sit down?

PARNELL: Maybe you'd care for a cup of coffee?

MAKAYLA: (*sits*) Thank you, I've had.

(MAKAYLA *sits on the couch, next to the unfolded laundry.*)

PARNELL: Very pretty outfit you're wearing. Like your shoes too—

PORTIA: (*interrupts*) Parnell, you don't need to be here for this.

PARNELL: Right, like I said, family friend. On my way out.

MAKAYLA: I see the table's set for four. (*to PORTIA*) Were you expecting anybody else?

PORTIA: No, we asked Parnell, and he changed his mind.

MAKAYLA: Well, I'd like you to stay, if it isn't too much trouble.

PARNELL: No trouble at all. Happy to stay.

(*MAKAYLA takes out a notepad.*)

MAKAYLA: Matthew, mind if I ask how old you are?

MATTHEW: (*tightly*) I'm older than I look.

PORTIA: We both are. I was carded till I was 30. Matthew still gets carded, if the place is dark enough.

MAKAYLA: (*to PORTIA*) Woody tells me you sell insurance.

PORTIA: That's correct. Drought, livestock, hail, tornado...the whole package.

MAKAYLA: You're aware of his substance issues?

PORTIA: Yes, we're aware.

MAKAYLA: (*to MATTHEW*) And how would you describe your, um, marital relationship?

MATTHEW: Great.

PORTIA: We get along great. Hardly ever fight.

MAKAYLA: So Woody says.

MATTHEW: Um, can I share something?

MAKAYLA: Please. That's what we're here for.

(MATTHEW *summons his courage.*)

MATTHEW: Whenever I have to toast Portia... you know, at an anniversary party? This is what I say....I say, "I've envied a lot of people a lot of things in my life. But I've never envied anybody else's happiness."

PORTIA: Always brings a tear.

MAKAYLA: And would you say the feeling's mutual?

PORTIA: Totally.

WOODY: I can attest to that. Speaking as the scapegoat.

PORTIA: What do you mean, Woody, you're not a scapegoat.

WOODY: No, Makayla was telling me about this. You guys are all happy and devoted, but you're hiding all these other issues, which I act them out, I'm the problem child, I'm like a buffer between you... and that's why I'm still living here. I'm the sick glue that holds you two together. Do I have that right, Makayla?

MAKAYLA: I'm pleased you absorbed that so completely. Tell me, do y'all go to church?

PARNELL: Are you kidding? Portia here is a Bible-hugging Baptist.

PORTIA: I'm a preacher's daughter.

MAKAYLA: I haven't seen you at church lately. In fact, not at all.

PARNELL: She goes to the other one.

MAKAYLA: Only one Baptist church in this town.

PORTIA: It's miles from here.

PARNELL: Real fire and brimstone stuff. Can't get her fill.

PORTIA: And I have to confess, it's made me kinda self-righteous, which may have affected my child-rearing behavior. I like this scapegoat concept. We're gonna have to think seriously about that, (to MATTHEW) right, darling? Seems right on the money. Was there anything else, Makayla? Like I said, it's our dinner hour.



MAKAYLA: Well, now that you mention it...(to PARNELL) I notice some laundry here that might belong to you.

PARNELL: Right, the Black Power T-shirt.

MAKAYLA: Are would these also be your pajamas? With Che Guevara's picture?

PORTIA: OK, you're embarrassing Parnell. He never learned to use a washing machine. That's why he brings his laundry here.

PARNELL: (to MAKAYLA) You mind if I ask you a question? What's a foxy lady doing in this line of work?

MAKAYLA: I don't think a social worker's looks have anything to do with her competence.

PARNELL: Are you married?

MAKAYLA: Let's keep this focused on the family. And everybody's place in it.

PARNELL: No, but I'm curious, you ever go out with a client? I know I'm crossing a boundary, but I find you highly attractive.

PORTIA: (*sharply*) Parnell, she's really doesn't need to hear that. (to MAKAYLA) Sorry.

MAKAYLA: Woody, is this confusing you? Your mom with these two men around the house?

PORTIA: I'm not "with" these two men. I don't know what you mean by "with."

MAKAYLA: Woody, you want to tell them what you told me?

WOODY: I don't remember what I told you.

MAKAYLA: You said (*consults notes*)...There's a man staying at our house, and he's black.

WOODY: Right, now I remember. I wanted to prove I had a black friend. I got the feeling you thought I didn't like black people.

MAKAYLA: Whatever made you think that?

WOODY: Isn't that what all black people think? White people are nervous around them? Aren't we all nervous around each other? Men and women, young and old, black and white, red and blue, Christian and Jew—

PORTIA: Woody's a little confused. Parnell is between apartments.

MAKAYLA: Is that right. Between apartments. (to PORTIA) So I'm curious...who did you marry first?

PORTIA: What do you mean, first? I've only been married once.

MAKAYLA: To Matthew?

PORTIA: Yes, to Matthew. You want to see the certificate?

MAKAYLA: Yes, and while you're at it, I wouldn't mind seeing Woody's birth certificate. 'Cause I'll bet everything I own you're not his mom and dad.

PORTIA: That's it. We're done.

MAKAYLA: I'm afraid we're far from done. Y'all are gonna need some friends in this town, and till I get some honest answers my hands are tied.

PORTIA: We have all the friends we need, thank you very much. I'm not your client. Neither is Matthew, neither is Parnell. Woody's your client, and you don't need to see him in our house.

MAKAYLA: OK. You can refuse family therapy if that's your choice, but then I'm obliged to tell you: Your non-compliance will become part of a subpoenaable record, and Woody could end up in prison instead of in my care. Is that clear to y'all? I hope so. Y'all are skating on very thin ice here.

PORTIA: (pause) What exactly do you need to know?

MAKAYLA: Are you married to Parnell?

PORTIA: How many times did you hear him say it? He's a family friend.

MAKAYLA: Family friend with benefits?

PARNELL: Portia, you don't have to answer that.

MAKAYLA: You just answered for her. How about your “son”?  
You married to him?

PORTIA: No.

MAKAYLA: So Matthew is your only legal husband.

PORTIA: That’s correct.

MAKAYLA: Well. That’s a blessing, anyhow.

PORTIA: We’re not Mormons. No angel told me to take 40 husbands.

MAKAYLA: You’re living like some Mormons.

PORTIA: We’re living like a lot of people. Is there a law against a woman having multiple sex partners? Maybe in Saudi Arabia. Nobody here can stone us to death, or put us in the stocks, or burn us at the stake, or mutilate my vagina. We haven’t broken any laws.

MAKAYLA: Well. *(pause)* I’m afraid, in this county, the law’s what the King says it is.

WOODY: Are you the King?

PORTIA: I think she’s talking about the police.

MAKAYLA: Yes, in this town, we’re talking about Sheriff King.

PARNELL: White dude?

MAKAYLA: The whitest. I take it y’all take turns? In Portia’s bed, I mean.

WOODY: Except when Parnell snores. He gets banished to his own room.

MAKAYLA; *(to PORTIA)* And you regard all three men as your husbands?

PORTIA: Why, that offends you?

MAKAYLA: My values don’t come into it. I don’t judge. I meet you where you are. Unless bodily harm is involved, I’m not mandated to report anything to anyone.

WOODY: We're not harming anybody.

MATTHEW: We're not the Manson family.

WOODY: We're just four people who love each other,  
heterosexually that is, trying to make ends meet.

PARNELL: In my opinion we're the future. We're the shape of  
things to come.

MAKAYLA: I wouldn't post that on Facebook, if I were you. I'm  
guessing you've noticed...this county isn't just red. It's blood-red.  
People around here think gay marriage is a gateway to bestiality.  
(*tightens*) And don't get me started on interracial sex. (*recovers*)  
No children living here, that's a plus, unless you've got some hiding  
in a back room?

PORTIA: (*uneasily*) There are no children living here.

MAKAYLA: Were you planning on having any? With any of these men?

PORTIA: I wasn't planning on it, no.

WOODY: A lot of animals are polygamous.

MAKAYLA: I'm sorry, what?

WOODY: No, it's true. Crickets, polecats, pipefish. Camels.  
Whales. They're all polygamous.

PORTIA: OK, sweetheart. That's not really helping.

WOODY: A lot of primitive people too. The Inuits, the Aleuts...and the Masai.  
Yeah, the Masai, in Africa, can you believe it, a bunch of grown black men letting  
a woman boss them around? No white people, though, except for those  
Mormons. That's because there aren't any white primitives. Not counting that  
tribe in Russia.

MAKAYLA: What tribe?

WOODY: In the Caucasian Mountains? And they all turned out to be  
accountants.

PORTIA: Woody's just messing with you.

WOODY: No, I read that someplace. And the Sell-ticks, in England?  
They were Polly Andrews.

MATTHEW: Polyandrous, he means.

WOODY: Yeah, and you know why the head of the penis is shaped like a wedge? It's in case there's another man's sperm in the vagina. The penis is like a spoon, it scoops the other dude's sperm right out. Now why would there be another dude's sperm in there? If the woman was living with a bunch of dudes, that's why. And why is she living with a bunch of dudes? Because until DNA was discovered, there was no way to tell which dude knocked her up. And since all the dudes were possible dads, they'd hang around and care for the kid, instead of killing the baby, the way monkeys and lions do.

*(Stunned pause.)*

PORTIA: Is this what you were doing in the library?

WOODY: Pretty much, yeah. Until I got hassled.

MATTHEW: Why on earth would you Google that?

WOODY: People like to read about themselves.

PORTIA: But sweetheart...you weren't reading about us.

MATTHEW: It's people's idea of us.

PARNELL: It's the Ritalin. He gets super focused.

WOODY: *(thinks)* Yeah, like right now. And if I'm high, don't you have to turn me away? Wasn't that the deal? I can't be high in a session?

MAKAYLA: That was the contract you signed.

WOODY: Well, doesn't that mean we can't continue?

MAKAYLA: I'm making a one-time exception. *(to WOODY and PARNELL)* Have either of you been married?

WOODY: Me? Never.

PARNELL: Twice, thanks for asking.

MAKAYLA: White women, I'm guessing?

PARNELL: You're very intuitive, aren't you.

MAKAYLA: I'm trained to be.

PARNELL: Wife one...my high-school girlfriend...we were voted Most Inseparable, and it lasted six weeks. Wife number two...marginally white...meaning she was tattooed all over, including the soles of her feet. And way into S&M.

MAKAYLA: And were you into S&M?

PARNELL: So long as it made her happy. That's always been my goal with women. "Beteem the winds of heaven not to visit her face too roughly."

MAKAYLA: Shakespeare. I'm impressed.

PARNELL: "...Blow me about in winds! Roast me in sulphur! Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!" I played Othello in high school. Not that anybody came to see me. Momma was too busy with her "clientele."

MAKAYLA: What sort of clientele?

PARNELL: The kind that pays for sex.

MAKAYLA: Your momma was a prostitute?

PARNELL: When her stash ran low, she was.

MAKAYLA: So what happened with the tattooed wife?

PARNELL: Portia happened. We met, I fell in love, she told me Matthew came with the dinner, that suited me fine.

MAKAYLA: And Woody, when did you meet Portia?

WOODY: Total blind luck. I was working at an orchard, picking apples. Portia came in to buy apple juice, we hit it off right away.

MAKAYLA: (*to PARNELL and MATTHEW*) And how did you feel when Woody came into your lives?

MATTHEW: I was ready to be four.

PARNELL: The more the merrier.

PORTIA: Is it my turn? Because you've made us feel so safe, Makayla, I'm gonna tell you something. My dad, the Baptist preacher? He cheated on his wife every chance he got. With as many women as he could.

MAKAYLA: Did your mom know?

PORTIA: You bet she knew. Never called him on it. Surrounded by his harem and never breathed a single word.

PARNELL: Enabler! WOODY: Enabler!

WOODY: I feel like we learned a lot today.

MATTHEW: I feel cleansed.

PARNELL: That's a good word for it, cleansed. Thank you, Makayla. You're the best.

MAKAYLA: You're welcome. Can I ask y'all favor?

PARNELL: Anything.

MAKAYLA: Stop kissing my ass. (to MATTHEW) How long since you left the house?

PARNELL: I told you she was intuitive.

MATTHEW: It's been a while now, why?

MAKAYLA: That could be impacting Woody's drug use. Along with the jealousy issues in this house.

MATTHEW: What jealousy issues?

MAKAYLA: OK. One way to deal with jealousy is to pretend you're not jealous at all. Put it completely out of your mind. And prove it's out of your mind by living in a fashion that tests your faith.

WOODY: Wow. That's deep.

MAKAYLA: Parnell...that must have been traumatic, knowing your momma was having sex for money with all those men.

PARNELL: That's why they're called motherfuckers.

MAKAYLA: So you tried the honest way. Conventional marriage.

PORTIA: And it didn't work out, and he ended up here. Everybody's got a story, so what?

MATTHEW: We're a loving, functional family. How many of those do you know?

MAKAYLA: Not all that many, in my line of work. Look, I think we made a good beginning here. I want to thank y'all for sharing as much as you did. Next time we'll get into these jealousy issues a little more deeply—

*(Doorbell.)*

PARNELL: That's gotta be Domino's. *(to MAKAYLA)* You want to stay for pizza?

MAKAYLA: *(uneasily)* That's a very nice offer, but I really can't.

PARNELL: Boundary violation. I get that. Maybe next time.

*(Doorbell.)*

MATTHEW: *(calls)* Just leave it on the doorstep.

PARNELL: Dude, we gotta pay for it.

MATTHEW: Right, who's got the twenty? *(remembers)* I do. I have the twenty. *(calls)* Coming!

*(MATTHEW takes out the twenty, heads nervously for the door. The door pounds.)*

KING: *(other side of door)* Sheriff's department.

MATTHEW: *(recoiling)* Ohmigod.

PARNELL: *(sotto)* Fuck.

WOODY: *(sotto)* Who's that, is that the King?

PORTIA: *(sotto)* Makayla?



MAKAYLA: (*uneasily*) Yes, that's King.

PARNELL: (*sotto*) What the hell is he doing here?

MATTHEW: (*sotto*) I don't even want to guess.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Everybody quiet. (*to MAKAYLA*) That includes you.

(MAKAYLA's *phone rings.*)

PARNELL: What the fuck—?

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Is that him calling?

MAKAYLA: (*looks at phone*) Yes, it's him.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Why is he calling you? Let it go to voice mail.

MAKAYLA: I can't do that.

PORTIA: Why the hell not?

MAKAYLA: It's complicated. Please let me deal with this.

(MAKAYLA *answers her phone.*)

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) Hello?...Yes, I know, I can't talk now, I'm with the client....The whole family...No...No...Oh, God, why....Just be patient, I'll see what I can do...Give me five minutes, OK?

(MAKAYLA *hangs up.*)

MAKAYLA: He wants to talk to y'all.

PARNELL: No fucking way.

PORTIA: Is this why you parked by the fire road? So the Sheriff wouldn't see your car?

MAKAYLA: That did cross my mind, yes.

PORTIA: Why didn't you warn us?

MAKAYLA: I was praying he wouldn't show up.

PARNELL: (*at window*) He's still there. His car's not moving.

PORTIA: What made you think he might be paying us a visit?

MAKAYLA: Woody, you want to speak to that?

WOODY: No! Speak to what?

MAKAYLA: Those polygamy sites you were surfing in the library?

WOODY: Right. Oh yeah. What about them? Oh. Christ. Did I leave a page open?

MAKAYLA: And you didn't clear history.

WOODY: Right. I clocked that dude and took off. Oh man. I'm terminally dumb.

PORTIA: Don't say that— MAKAYLA: Don't call yourself that—

MAKAYLA: Impulsive isn't dumb.

MATTHEW: It's not like you were looking at kiddie porn.

WOODY: No, I fucked up royally. I oughta give myself up.

PORTIA: Hon, stop, you're being silly. You're already in the justice system.

WOODY: Yeah, but you guys aren't.

PORTIA: We don't belong in the justice system. Any more than prostitutes or pot-smokers do. Isn't that right, Makayla?

MAKAYLA: (*uneasily*) I don't want to see anyone in prison.

PARNELL: But the King might.

MAKAYLA: And I'll fight to keep you out. That's a promise.

PORTIA: (*to WOODY*) So you stay right where you are.

WOODY: Yeah, I couldn't leave you now. When the baby could be mine? Could you, Parnell? Matthew, I know you couldn't. I don't think any of us is made that way.

PARNELL: Great green Jesus.

WOODY: What? (*realizes*) Oh. Oops.

MAKAYLA: Well. This puts a whole new light on things. May I ask who the father is?

PARNELL: Ask all you want, nobody's gonna tell you.

PORTIA: It doesn't matter who the daddy is. Nobody's gonna know.

MAKAYLA: Well, unless it's Parnell's. Then the world's gonna know. And the people in this town are not gonna like what pops out.

PORTIA: They're not gonna know, because I'm not having it.

MAKAYLA: (*tightens*) I see. (*to the men*) And how do y'all feel about that?

MATTHEW: (*shrug*) It's Portia's body.

MAKAYLA: That's one school of thought.

PARNELL: Why, you got a problem with that? Oh wait. We have another Baptist in the house. And I bet you're hard-shell like Portia's daddy.

MAKAYLA: You'd win that bet. Gentlemen, can we have the room? I'd like to speak with Portia for a moment.

PORTIA: I have no secrets from these men.

MAKAYLA: It's important. All I need is a minute.

PORTIA: I'll give you thirty seconds. Go on, guys.

PARNELL: (*to MAKAYLA*) Don't be trying to brainwash her. You'll be pissing in the wind.

(MATTHEW, PARNELL, *and* WOODY *exit*.)

MAKAYLA: I know just what you're going through.

PORTIA: So? That's what you get paid for.

MAKAYLA: Aren't you afraid of the blowback?

PORTIA: I was a Baptist until I knew better. I've outgrown that bullshit, and so should you.

MAKAYLA: Well, I can't. (*sotto*) At this point I almost wish I could.

PORTIA: "Judge not that ye be judged."

MAKAYLA: That's about the size of it.

PORTIA: How far along are you?

MAKAYLA: Ten weeks. You?

PORTIA: About the same. Black man or white man?

MAKAYLA: I've already said too much.

PORTIA: Fine. Your thirty seconds are up.

MAKAYLA: Just one more question?

PORTIA: What?

MAKAYLA: How do you ever put up with three men? Most women I know can barely stand to live with one.

PORTIA: It's heaven on earth.

MAKAYLA: I find that hard to believe.

PORTIA: And sometimes it's hellish. Just like the usual arrangement.

MAKAYLA: Would you ever take on more?

PORTIA: If the right man came along.

MAKAYLA: Would you ever take on a woman?

PORTIA: Why, are you volunteering?

MAKAYLA: I don't believe you would. Your momma was weak. Let her husband walk all over her.

PORTIA: That's right, so?

MAKAYLA: So I believe your heart is closed to women.

PORTIA: Quit trying to analyze me, all right? I've had enough of your "intuitions" for one day.

MAKAYLA: I'm not trying to analyze you. (*sudden cry of despair*) I'm just so damn confused! Don't get me wrong, I do see the happiness in this house, for all I know you're the future of marriage on this planet, but hell's bells, anybody with half a brain knows right from wrong. What if everybody lived the way you do?

PORTIA: Wouldn't be enough women to go around. Otherwise, I'd be OK with it.

MAKAYLA: Anything goes, is that what you're saying?

PORTIA: Anything that doesn't hurt somebody.

MAKAYLA: Then you'd better keep that baby. 'Cause you're gonna be hurting it permanently if you don't.

(*Sound of more vehicles arriving. Car doors slamming. MATTHEW, PARNELL, and WOODY enter.*)

PARNELL: Y'all hear what's going on out there?

MATTHEW: Sounds like more than one vehicle.

WOODY: (*at window*) Yup. Two black-and-whites and a Humvee.

MAKAYLA: You're lucky he didn't bring the tank.

PORTIA: (*at window*) Christ. One of them's carrying a rifle with a scope.

MATTHEW: Who do they think we are, the Branch Davidians?

PARNELL: We don't even own guns. (*to MAKAYLA*) Portia made me sell my .380.

MATTHEW: (*at window*) Look at that. They're eating our pizza. I'm going out there, tell them to get off our property.

PORTIA: Matthew, don't be idiotic.

MATTHEW: It's time I manned the fuck up.

PORTIA: Matthew, stop, where are you going?

*(MATTHEW makes a sudden move toward the front door. The door suddenly pounds.)*

KING: *(other side of door)* Open up please.

*(MATTHEW recoils from the door.)*

MATTHEW: Ohmigod, I can't do this.

KING: *(other side of door)* I have a warrant to search these premises.

MAKAYLA: *(sotto)* Don't listen to him. He's lying.

PORTIA: *(sotto)* How do you know?

MAKAYLA: *(sotto)* It's the way he talks to his wife.

PORTIA: *(sotto)* You've heard him talk to his wife?

MAKAYLA: *(sotto; uneasily)* The whole town has heard him. Let me try to deal with this.

*(MAKAYLA starts to call a number on her phone, as SHERIFF KING gets on a bullhorn.)*

KING: *(on bullhorn)* Maybe you can hear me now. This is Sheriff King. There's a hard way to do this and there's an easy way. I sincerely hope you make the right choice.

*(His cell rings.)*

KING: Yello.

MAKAYLA: *(on phone)* It's me, Sheriff. First of all, put away that bullhorn, unless you want this event to go viral. I happen to know four neighbor families who can hear every word you're saying. Now if you've really got a warrant, slide it under the door... No...Are you kidding me?...Forget it, King, I'm not doing that...*(listens helplessly)*

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Put him on speaker.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) Just a second, Sheriff. (*sotto, to PORTIA*)  
Why do you want to do that?

PORTIA: (*sotto*) I want to hear what he's saying.

MAKAYLA: (*sotto*) I promise you, you don't. (*on phone*) Yes, I'm  
here, they're waiting to see your warrant—

(PORTIA *grabs the phone from MAKAYLA.*)

MAKAYLA: What are you doing? Please give that back.

(PORTIA *puts the phone on speaker.*)

KING: (*on speaker*) ...Listen, I get it. You're a nice person, you  
don't like to judge people. Well, being nice to these deviants is  
being nasty to me. Not judging them is a judgment on me. Helping  
them is hurting me and everything I'm sworn to defend. (*more*  
*quietly*) And baby, by the way, when you see me in church?  
You've got to remember to say hi. People are starting to get the  
wrong idea. Last night was not just a booty call, I wasn't fishing for  
information, I really needed to see you...Hello?

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Tell him you'll call him back.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) I'll call you back.

(MAKAYLA *hangs up.*)

MAKAYLA: I can explain.

PORTIA: No need to explain. I had you pegged the minute you  
darkened our door. King's the one who knocked you up, isn't he?

MAKAYLA: Oh God.

PORTIA: Yes or no?

MAKAYLA: Yes.

PORTIA: Call him back. Keep it on speaker.

(MAKAYLA *redials.*)

KING: (*on speaker*) Makayla, what's going on in there? What are they doing to you? Are they hurting you?

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) They're not doing anything to me. I'm conducting a session, and you're interfering.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Tell him to call off his dogs.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) King, can you please let me do my job?

PORTIA: (*sotto*) If he doesn't, you'll never talk to him again.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) Please, King. If you ever want to see me again, tell your men to stand down.

KING: (*on speaker*) Whoa, baby, can they hear you?

(PORTIA prompts MAKAYLA, shakes her head no.)

MAKAYLA: (*lowers voice*) No, they let me have the room.

KING: Well, I'm this close to asking for a divorce.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) You've heard that one before.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) I'm getting a little tired of your promises, King.

KING: (*on speaker*) Baby, I'm trying like hell, my wife's fighting me tooth and nail. And she's got the church on her side. I still want to have your child.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) You didn't want it last time I checked. You just wanted me to have it.

KING: (*on speaker*) I was trying to keep you from sinning. Things are in a different place now.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) Are you telling me you're willing to have a half-black baby?

KING: (*on speaker*) Absolutely.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) They'll strap you to a horse and run you out of town.



KING: (*on speaker*) I can live with that, if you're beside me.

PORTIA (*sotto*) Tell him that's bullshit.

MAKAYLA: (*sotto*) No, he means it. He's very tender-hearted.

KING: (*on speaker*) Sweetheart, are you there? Seriously, I don't care what they do to me. I love you, Makayla. And you said you loved me. Were you lying?

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) No, King, I wasn't lying.

KING: (*on speaker*) Half-black is no crime. Unlike what you're dealing with in there.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Tell him you support us one-hundred percent.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) These folks haven't committed any crime. They're not armed, they got no program, no manifesto, this is not a sex cult. They're basically decent people, and they've found a way to live together. Better than most, I have to say.

KING: (*on speaker*) Whoa. This isn't the Makayla I know.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) It's a new world, King. Time we all got used to it.

KING: (*on speaker*) No way. This is Stockholm Syndrome.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) I am saying it of my own free will. Do you really want to hold a bunch of press conferences? You sweat whenever you have to sing in church. Seriously, hon, back off or I'll tell the world about us, and the world includes your wife.

KING: (*on speaker*) I'll take my chances. High time the world knew about us.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Tell him you've got evidence.

MAKAYLA: (*sotto*) What evidence?

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Tell him there's a video.

MAKAYLA: (*sotto*) I can't do that.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) You'd rather see us all in jail?

MAKAYLA: (*relents; on phone*) Are you forgetting the video?

KING: (*on speaker*) What video?

MAKAYLA: (*on phone; with difficulty*) You don't remember? You were wasted on Ecstasy and Jim Beam.

KING: (*on speaker*) I remember being wasted, I don't recall you making any video.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) All it takes is one mouse click.

KING: (*on speaker*) I know you'd never do that. You and me, we can't ever quit each other. How many times have we tried? Hello? Makayla?

(MAKAYLA *has hung up.*)

PORTIA: Good job.

MAKAYLA: I hated saying all that.

WOODY: Is it OK now? We can stay in this house?

MAKAYLA: Oh you can stay, sure, if you want rocks thrown through your windows every blessed day. By sundown every bigot in town will know who you are and what you stand for. They may have room-temperature IQs, but they know how to tweet. (*to PORTIA*) You won't sell another policy. And good luck finding new jobs.

KING: (*on bullhorn*) OK. I'm giving y'all five minutes to end this peaceably. Come out with your hands locked above your heads.

MATTHEW: God help us. We're toast.

PORTIA: Honey...if I get us out of this, promise you'll try to look on the bright side in the future?

MATTHEW: Yeah, OK. If.

WOODY: I promise to get my high-school diploma.

PARNELL: I'll find more dignified work.

PORTIA: I'm gonna hold you to your promises. *(to MAKAYLA)*  
Call him back.

*(MAKAYLA redials.)*

PORTIA: Now give me the phone.

MATTHEW: Portia, be careful.

PORTIA: Give it to me.

*(PORTIA takes the phone as KING answers.)*

KING: *(on speaker)* Hi, baby. I can't afford to stall anymore, I'm getting weird looks from the troops.

PORTIA: *(on phone)* You're a little sensitive about what people think of you, aren't you, King?

SHERIFF: *(on speaker)* Who's that? Who am I talking to?

PORTIA: *(on phone)* This is the lady of the house. We know all about you and Makayla. We are totally in the loop.

*(Pause.)*

KING: *(on speaker)* Right. So what do you want me to do?

PORTIA: *(on phone)* Tell that man with the rifle to get off my roof.

*(Pause.)*

KING: *(on bullhorn and speaker)* Everybody stand down.

MATTHEW: Did he mean that? Didn't sound like he meant it.

PARNELL: *(at window)* That sniper isn't moving.

PORTIA: *(to MAKAYLA)* How far up the fire road did you park?

MAKAYLA: Around the first bend.

PORTIA: Give me your keys.

MAKAYLA: Please. I need that car for my work.

PORTIA: You'll get it back. *(to the men)* Everybody? We'll go out by the storm tunnel.

WOODY: We're leaving?

PORTIA: That's right, sweetheart.

WOODY: For good?

PORTIA: Yes, hon. Get ready to be a fugitive.

WOODY: What happens to our equity?

PORTIA: It's history. *(to MAKAYLA)* We'll let you know where we ditch your car.

MAKAYLA: What'll you do for wheels?

PORTIA: Try to buy new ones.

MAKAYLA: Better do that fast. Before they freeze your bank account.

WOODY: They can't do that! We're not Russians!

PORTIA: We're worse than Russians, sweetheart. What are you all standing with your thumbs up your butts? You got stuff you want to take with you, get it now and get it fast.

MATTHEW: *(in distress)* Ohmigod.

PORTIA: What is it, sweetie?

MATTHEW: I mean I never go outside. I'm always afraid of something happening, and now there's a sniper on the barn roof.

*(WOODY takes a vial of pills out of his pocket.)*

WOODY: Here, bro. Take one of these.

MATTHEW: What is it?

WOODY: Oxycontin, 15 milligrams, immediate release. It's a great de-stressor.

MATTHEW: Portia, is this all right with you?

PORTIA: *(to WOODY)* Oxycontin?!

WOODY: Yeah, it helps me come down from the Ritalin.

PORTIA: I'll deal with that later. *(to MATTHEW)* Whatever gets you out that door. Now go pack.

*(MATTHEW downs the pill. MATTHEW and WOODY exit. PARNELL hangs back.)*

MAKAYLA: You'll let me hear from you now and then?

PORTIA: I don't see how. I call you, they'll know our location.

MAKAYLA: What about an obstetrician? I could probably scare up a referral.

PORTIA: I'll worry about that, thank you.

MAKAYLA: *(hopefully)* Five can live as cheaply as four. I believe that's what God wants.

PORTIA: Or not. I don't pretend to read God's mind.

PARNELL: *(at window)* Sniper's still there.

PORTIA: *(to MAKAYLA)* Call King. *(to PARNELL)* Didn't I tell you to pack?

*(PARNELL exits. MAKAYLA redials.)*

KING: *(on speaker)* Yello, I'm here.

MAKAYLA: *(on phone)* That sharpshooter's still on the roof.

KING: *(on speaker)* First I gotta know you're safe.

MAKAYLA: *(on phone)* I'm safe. Please, baby, get him down.

KING: *(on speaker)* And those cult people don't come out? I'll look like a damn fool. You can't possibly be siding with this...this matriarchy. I promise we'll get married. I'll call my wife right now, tell her everything, send me that video, that'll force her hand.

PORTIA: *(sotto)* Tell him it's too late.

MAKAYLA: (*on phone*) It's too late, King.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Tell him you've had it with his fat white ass.

MAKAYLA: (*sotto*) He's not fat.

KING: (*on speaker*) Makayla, I'm starting to get real antsy here.

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Tell him to go fuck himself.

MAKAYLA: I can't. Don't make me.

(PORTIA *grabs the phone*. MATTHEW, WOODY, and PARNELL *appear in the doorway, with suitcases.*)

PORTIA: (*on phone*) Goodbye, King. She's had it with your Jesus-loving, wife-cheating, white Christian ass. You're no better than we are, and she knows it.

KING: (*on phone*) I want to hear her say that.

MAKAYLA: (*sotto; to PORTIA*) I can't.

PORTIA: (*on phone*) She doesn't want to talk to you, King.

KING: (*on speaker*) Then she leaves me no choice. I've gotta charge her with obstructing justice.

MAKAYLA: (*to the heavens*) God, please tell me what to do.

PARNELL: (*to MAKAYLA*) He means that about busting you? He'd do that to the woman he loves? Allegedly loves?

MAKAYLA: He's mad enough to do it, yeah.

PARNELL: You want that? Portia, you want that?

PORTIA: It's not about what I want. Come on, we're out of here.

WOODY: Bye, Makayla. I'll miss our sessions.

MATTHEW: Me too, Makayla. Nice knowing you.

PORTIA: Enough goodbyes. Get moving.

(PORTIA gives MAKAYLA her phone back and exits.  
MATTHEW and WOODY follow. PARNELL lingers in the  
doorway. )

KING: (*on speaker*) What's next, women hooking up with horses?  
Schools closed on Ramadan? A midget President? (*on bullhorn  
and speaker*) I've been patient, I've been reasonable, now I'm  
taking you all to court, and that includes you, Makayla. I want to  
see you come out first, and I'll give you three. One...two...three...

(MAKAYLA looks toward where PARNELL is waiting.)

PARNELL: (*to MAKAYLA*) Your call, sweetheart.

(PORTIA reappears in the doorway.)

PORTIA: Parnell?

PARNELL: What? You want to her to go to jail? Could you really  
live with that? I know I couldn't.

(*Pause.*)

PORTIA: How much gas is in your car?

MAKAYLA: I filled it last night.

PORTIA: We'll need to alter the plates.

(PORTIA exits.)

PARNELL: I'd take that as a yes.

MAKAYLA: Didn't sound much like a yes.

PARNELL: I'm saying it for her.

(MAKAYLA turns off her phone.)

KING: (*on bullhorn*) Fine, go to hell, if that's your choice. One more minute  
and we're kicking down the door. THIS IS STILL AMERICA!

(MAKAYLA heads for the door, joining PARNELL. They exit together.  
*Blackout.* END OF ACT I.)

## ACT II

*(Sound of an el train. Lights up on the living room/dining room of a four-bedroom city apartment. Three doors, one to the unseen hallway, one to the unseen kitchen, one to the apartment hallway. Very sparsely furnished, with a dining table set for four, minus napkins. One curtained window.)*

*The sound of the el train fades, revealing the sound of a crying baby coming through a baby monitor, and MATTHEW's voice:)*

MATTHEW: *(off; through the monitor)* Please stop crying. I know you're hot and sticky, I'm trying to help you, sweetheart. What happened to your passy? Ohmigod, your passy's on the floor. I'll find you a new passy.

*(MATTHEW enters, in an apron.)*

MATTHEW: Calm down, Matthew. She's not dying.

*(MATTHEW digs frantically in a drawer, finds a pacifier. Exits.)*

MATTHEW: *(off; through the monitor)* Here. You want this? You don't want it? What's wrong? Use your gestures. Where does it hurt? What are you doing? Are you pointing to your ear? Does your ear hurt? Shh, here's your passy. Passy's your friend. That's good. That's better. I'm here if you need me. God knows I'm not going anywhere.

*(MATTHEW enters.)*

MATTHEW: She's OK. She'll be all right. There you go again, Matthew. Getting sick over nothing.

*(MATTHEW takes a notebook out of his pocket, makes an entry in a log.)*

MATTHEW: *(as he writes)* 5:26pm. Polly's fever up to a hundred and two. I flashed on a tiny coffin.

*(PORTIA enters through the front door, casually dressed. She sees MATTHEW writing intently in his notebook.)*

PORTIA: Matthew?

MATTHEW: What? Yes. Sorry. Hi.



PORTIA: What are you writing in your log?

MATTHEW: You know, the usual. "Matthew, you're freaking out over nothing."

PORTIA: Shh, come on, what happened?

MATTHEW: Nothing happened. Polly wouldn't stop crying.

PORTIA: She's not crying now.

MATTHEW: I know. She lost her pacifier. She's up to a hundred and two.

PORTIA: Since when?

MATTHEW: Since just this morning. I think it's an ear infection.

PORTIA: What makes you think that?

MATTHEW: She kinda pointed to her ear? I've been teaching her to sign. You've seen her do this, right, when she's hungry? (*mimes fingers to mouth*)

PORTIA: No, I've never seen that.

MATTHEW: Well, she does it. I taught her that.

PORTIA: Hon, why don't you ease off on the training. She's not Pavlov's dog. And I don't think that notebook is helping.

MATTHEW: Don't let Makayla hear you say that.

PORTIA: I'll say it to her face. I think calling yourself out is making you more anxious. She's not your daughter, hon.

MATTHEW: But I'm the one who's here. I'm the day nurse. I'm the one who has to feed her, and change her, and take her temperature...whoa, but you're right, I hear you, I'll try to de-attach. How was your day?

PORTIA: I realized something this afternoon.

MATTHEW: What?

PORTIA: I miss those hanyockers.

MATTHEW: Of course you miss them. All those regular customers. They adored you.

PORTIA: I don't know if they adored me, but they never hung up on me. "Not interested." "Take me off the list." "Call me one more time, I'll hunt you down and kill your whole family."

MATTHEW: Oh God, there she goes again.

*(Sound of baby crying. WOODY enters from the hallway. He looks as if he hasn't slept in days.)*

WOODY: Is somebody gonna calm Polly down? It's impossible to study with all that wailing.

PORTIA: Buy some earplugs, sweetheart. Which module are you studying?

WOODY: The hardest one. Math. *(to MATTHEW)* Uh, I had trouble with the trapezoid. I couldn't derive the area.

MATTHEW: You split it into two triangles. Sum of the bases times the height, divided by two.

WOODY: The sum of two triangles. That's so cool.

*(The baby cries louder.)*

PORTIA: My turn.

*(PORTIA takes off her windbreaker, exits.)*

WOODY: Is Polly sick? She sounds like she's in pain.

MATTHEW: At least she's making noise. When she's just lying there asleep I can't help thinking of SIDS.

WOODY: Yeah, well, we've got a real problem, dude, not an imaginary one. Both toilets are stopped up now. We're gonna have to pay a plumber.

MATTHEW: No. Absolutely not. No plumber's coming into this apartment.

WOODY: So OK, I'll ask the super.

MATTHEW: Whoa, what super?

WOODY: Guy lives in the basement. That window below street level? Right, sorry, you never go out, how could you know about that window? The lady above us, she's got the same drainage problem.

MATTHEW: How do you know that?

WOODY: She told me. She feels sorry for us. She was like, "I'm just one person, and you're so many."

MATTHEW: How does know how many we are?

WOODY: She sees us going in and out. Don't worry, she's a nice old lady.

MATTHEW: I don't care how nice she is. You're not to talk to nice old ladies or anybody else.

WOODY: Dude...I didn't speak to her first. I was getting the mail, she asked did we have a plumbing problem. What was I supposed to do, pretend to be deaf? No, that wouldn't make her suspicious. Come on, it's not like we're unique or anything. Those Puerto Ricans on six? They got four generations living up there.

MATTHEW: Just zip it. Hello and goodbye. And don't talk to the super either. Especially not the super.

*(PORTIA appears in the doorway, putting on her jacket again.)*

PORTIA: *(soberly)* Don't wait dinner for me.

MATTHEW: Why, where are you going?

PORTIA: It's up to a hundred and four.

MATTHEW: No way, that's impossibly high. Are you sure?

PORTIA: I took it twice.

*(PORTIA exits toward the hallway.)*

MATTHEW: Ohmigod. I knew it. *(calls)* Don't take her on the subway. Her immune system is depressed.

*(PORTIA re-enters, with a baby carrier and a bag of supplies. Sounds of crying are coming from the carrier.)*

MATTHEW: Did you hear what I said? No subway, no filthy cabs. How far is the hospital? You think you can make it on time?

PORTIA: There's an Urgent Care on Broadway. I'll walk it if I have to.

MATTHEW: Are you sure? That could jostle her! What about Uber? Forget it, they share everything. *(as she goes)* Be careful!

*(PORTIA exits.)*

MATTHEW: I hate it when I'm right. Why did we ever sell the car?

WOODY: To pay for groceries. Settle down.

MATTHEW: All those city germs out there. Poor little thing.

WOODY: Matthew? Make a note in your little notebook. 5:35pm. Baby's fever went up, I lost my mind.

MATTHEW: No. This isn't catastrophizing. This is real. Leave me alone, take advantage of the silence, go study trapezoids.

*(WOODY exits. MATTHEW puts napkins at each of the four table settings. A key turns in the front door, and PARNELL enters. He's carrying a shopping bag and a hard hat and he's grown a beard.)*

PARNELL: Hey, dude.

MATTHEW: Yes, hello. I'm not chattable right now.

*(MATTHEW starts for the kitchen.)*

PARNELL: Whoa, where you going? I got something for you here.

*(PARNELL takes a chest-expander out of the shopping bag.)*

MATTHEW: *(worried)* What is it?

PARNELL: It's a Captains of Crush chest-expander. To go with your hand-gripper.

MATTHEW: (*tightly*) Thank you. That's very thoughtful.

PARNELL: Did I see Portia getting into a taxi?

MATTHEW: Oh God, I told her not to take a taxi!

PARNELL: Why the hell not?

MATTHEW: She's got Polly with her. Portia took her to the Urgent Care on Broadway.

PARNELL: Jesus, no, what happened?

MATTHEW: A hundred and four, that's what happened.

PARNELL: Christ. Did you call Makayla?

MATTHEW: Do you think we should?

PARNELL: Fuck, I don't know. She's at work.

MATTHEW: Why add to her worries.

PARNELL: She's got enough shit chasing her.

MATTHEW: We'll wait till we hear from Polly.

(WOODY *enters.*)

MATTHEW: What?

WOODY: So would the volume of a pyramid be like a triangle?  
Area of the base times half the height?

MATTHEW: Times a third of the height.

WOODY: Why a third? I don't get that.

MATTHEW: Don't bother me about this now! Google it!

PARNELL: When are you taking the actual test?

WOODY: Next month.

PARNELL: Matthew needs you to grow a beard.

WOODY: *(to MATTHEW)* Why?

MATTHEW: Never mind why, I can't discuss this now.

PARNELL: Either that or wear a fake one. And a broad-billed hat.  
These exam rooms have surveillance cameras.

WOODY: Come on... we're here eight months. Some bounty hunter  
would've tracked me down by now.

MATTHEW: What do you mean, "me"? It's not just you. It's all of  
us. We're all obstructing justice. Do they email the high-school  
diploma? If they don't, we're gonna need a P.O. box.

WOODY: Stop. Enough. Y'all are harshing my study buzz.

*(WOODY exits. MATTHEW collapses into a chair, breathing  
hard.)*

PARNELL: Dude, don't kill yourself over this. Babies are known  
for their fevers.

MATTHEW: Yeah, like you're not worried. Yikes, my chest is  
thumping. I think it's hypertensive angina.

*(PARNELL hands him the chest-expander.)*

MATTHEW: What, and make it worse?

PARNELL: Do it.

*(MATTHEW eyes the chest-expander dubiously.)*

PARNELL: I'm ordering you. Nice and steady.

*(MATTHEW starts exercising. A key turns in the front door lock.  
MAKAYLA enters, casually dressed.)*

MAKAYLA: Hey, guys.

PARNELL: Hey, sweetheart. How you doing.

MAKAYLA: I'm maintaining. (*to MATTHEW*) Look at you, you've got a new toy.

PARNELL: I bought it for him.

MAKAYLA: Well, aren't you the sweetest. How's my baby doing? (*no answer*) Matthew? You've been with her all day.

(*MATTHEW stops exercising.*)

MATTHEW: OK, but don't get alarmed—

PARNELL: (*quickly*) Portia took her for a walk.

MAKAYLA: Why should that alarm me?

PARNELL: Polly was fussing a little. Portia thought the fresh air might calm her down.

MAKAYLA: It does smell in here, for a fact. I think that's yesterday's tilapia. Doesn't anybody bother to take out the garbage?

(*WOODY enters.*)

WOODY: (*to MATTHEW; excitedly*) There's an amazing proof of the volume on line. You divide the pyramid into step pyramids, and take the limit. It's fucking awesome. All high school should be on YouTube.

MAKAYLA: Woody, come here a second.

WOODY: (*as MAKAYLA looks in his eyes*) OK, I know what you're after. I'm preparing for my GED, I've gotta be pumped.

MAKAYLA: OK. Next time you're tempted to take a pill, ask yourself, do I really need it?

WOODY: I already asked. Answer was yes. I'm saving one Ritalin for the actual exam, and then I'm done.

MAKAYLA: What about the Oxycontin?

WOODY: I'd flush them, but both toilets are stopped up. Kidding. I'm done with that drug.

PARNELL: Thanks to you, Makayla.

WOODY: And I'm finished with the math prep. On to vocabulary.  
With all celerity.

(WOODY *exits*.)

MAKAYLA: So Matthew, the garbage?

MATTHEW: Me? Why not Parnell?

MAKAYLA: Because Parnell isn't scared to leave the apartment.

MATTHEW: I've got dinner to finish.

MAKAYLA: After you take out the garbage.

MATTHEW: You don't think we're rushing things?

MAKAYLA: No, dear, we're starting small. You'll survive the trip,  
I promise.

MATTHEW: Easy for you to say.

(MATTHEW *exits toward the kitchen*.)

MAKAYLA: I used to get paid for this.

PARNELL: But you're working wonders anyway. Any kids spit up  
on you today?

MAKAYLA: No, today was vomit-free. Well, except for the one-  
percenter mommies. They make me nauseous. They bring their  
nannies to a birthday party, spend the whole time gabbing on their  
phones. I'm like, "Please talk to your kids, you want them to grow  
up stupid?" And they all have two therapists.

PARNELL: The mommies?

MAKAYLA: The kids.

PARNELL: You're joking.

MAKAYLA: I wish I was. A "floor therapist" who plays with them,  
another one to make sure they don't wet the bed. But I love how  
you're bonding with Polly. I hear you talking to her all the time.



PARNELL: Sometimes I pretend she's my baby.

MAKAYLA: You don't have to pretend. You're like a father to her already.

PARNELL: Yeah, I always wanted a mixed-race child...except I was betting on the wrong fetus.

MAKAYLA: I'm starting to see King in her.

PARNELL: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

MAKAYLA: If I'm honest? Mixed.

PARNELL: Was King your first white man? If you don't mind me asking.

MAKAYLA: I don't mind and no he wasn't. Though he might be my last.

PARNELL: Here's hoping.

MAKAYLA: I was beaten up twice for going with white guys. Once by a man, once by a woman.

PARNELL: Both of them black?

MAKAYLA: Both black.

PARNELL: Sick fucking world.

MAKAYLA: I know. *(pause)* Your beard's coming in real nice.

*(MAKAYLA reaches up to touch PARNELL's beard, then pulls her hand back as MATTHEW enters from the kitchen with a tied-off garbage bag.)*

MATTHEW: If I'm not back in two minutes, that means I've had a heart attack.

*(MATTHEW exits with the garbage bag.)*

MAKAYLA: I've been praying over that man. He's using up his heartbeats.

PARNELL: Were your other white men rednecks?

MAKAYLA: You know he could be very loving.

PARNELL: No, I don't know that.

MAKAYLA: And he was very handsome. And I'm shallow.

PARNELL: I'd like to drown him in cold water.

MAKAYLA: Oh goodness me. My grandma used to say that!

PARNELL: Nice. I never had a grandma.

MAKAYLA: Everybody has a grandma. Generally two. Unless your momma was your daddy's sister.

PARNELL: I wouldn't put it past them. Maybe that's why I never knew my grandma.

MAKAYLA: So it was just you and your momma?

PARNELL: Me, Momma, and the "motherfuckers." And neither of my wives was fat, in case you were wondering. Some brothers, they look for the sisterly silhouette. Not me. Both skinny white bitches, in fact.

MAKAYLA: Between the two of us.

PARNELL: Coupla turncoats.

MAKAYLA: (*pause*) Listen, about last night.

PARNELL: We don't have to talk about last night.

MAKAYLA: It was a long time coming.

PARNELL: Sweet while it lasted. As far as it went.

MAKAYLA: It can't go any farther, can it.

PARNELL: I don't know, can it?

MAKAYLA: That's not for me to say.

PARNELL: I can say it for you.

(PARNELL starts to kiss MAKAYLA. Sound of a key in the front door. They pull back. The door opens. PORTIA enters, with the baby carrier. No sound is coming from it.)

PARNELL: Hey, babe.

PORTIA: Hi. Hello, Makayla.

PARNELL: Uh...did you enjoy taking Polly for a walk?

PORTIA: (*taking the hint*) The walk, yes, the walk was fun.

MAKAYLA: Why didn't you take the stroller?

PORTIA: I'm sorry, what?

MAKAYLA: Polly's more comfortable in her stroller.

PARNELL: Yeah, no, that was my bad. I thought, you know, she's upright in the stroller, might not sleep as soundly.

MAKAYLA: You've seen her sleep in her stroller.

PARNELL: Of course. I know. That's all she ever does. (*looks in carrier*) She's still sleeping. So cute.

MAKAYLA: (*to the baby*) Hello, sweetheart. (*looks up*) Hey, Matthew. How'd it go?

(MATTHEW enters, minus the garbage bag.)

MATTHEW: I was totally freaked and then I wasn't. I think I'm ready for the next step.

PORTIA: Why, where did you go?

MATTHEW: You didn't see me? I took out the garbage. I feel so empowered all of a sudden. I feel like I could go practically anywhere.

MAKAYLA: Good job, Matthew. Be sure to make a note.

PORTIA: (*to MAKAYLA*) You encouraged him?

MAKAYLA: No, I ordered him. (*re baby*) I'll take her now, if you don't mind.

PORTIA: Why would I mind? Here.

MAKAYLA: (*takes carrier*) Thank you.

PORTIA: No problem.

(*MAKAYLA exits with the baby carrier. PORTIA waits till she's out of earshot.*)

PORTIA: (*lowers voice*) They saw me right away. Polly's got roseola. The doctor said she'll have a high fever for three days and then maybe a rash. I was so relieved I almost kissed her. She said every mom with a roseola baby feels like that.

MATTHEW: You said you were the mom?

PORTIA: Yeah, it was simpler that way.

PARNELL: Did they ask who the dad was?

PORTIA: No. A few fishy looks. One of the nurses asked if Polly was adopted. Why didn't you tell Makayla where I went?

PARNELL: I didn't want to scare her.

PORTIA: "Beteem the winds of heaven not to visit her face too roughly."

PARNELL: You know I can't stand to see women unhappy. You got a problem with that?

PORTIA: Did I say I had a problem?

PARNELL: It's my policy towards you too.

PORTIA: Really? Lately I haven't noticed.

PARNELL: Well, whose fault is that?

PORTIA: Maybe neither of ours.

PARNELL: Meaning what?

PORTIA: (*sotto*) Meaning I'm the one who had to lug Polly to the E.R. While you're sparing her mother's delicate feelings.

PARNELL: Hey. You're in a mood, don't take it out on me.

MATTHEW: It's that horrible telemarketing job.

PARNELL: It's undermining your dignity. I wish you'd quit.

PORTIA: You can wish all you want. Our nut is twice what it used to be, with half the income.

PARNELL: Makayla does her part.

PORTIA: Are you kidding? She barely makes minimum wage. You're basically a gofer on those construction sites.

PARNELL: We're adjusting. It's time you did.

PORTIA: Who says I'm not adjusting?

MATTHEW: You're being a sourpuss. Can we not continue this at dinner? I'm ready to serve.

(MATTHEW *exits.*)

PARNELL: Portia.

PORTIA: What?

PARNELL: Hello.

PORTIA: Hello.

PARNELL: We shouldn't be fighting.

PORTIA: I know it, hon. I'm sorry.

PARNELL: (*uneasily*) I'm sorry too.

PORTIA: (*suspicious*) For what? I was the bitch.

PARNELL: Nothing. Forget it.

PORTIA: What have you got to be sorry for?

PARNELL: (*recovering*) I'm sorry you're not happier.

(PARNELL *starts to take* PORTIA *in his arms.* MAKAYLA *enters.*)

MAKAYLA: Excuse me for interrupting... I think Polly's running a fever.

PORTIA: She's got a hundred and one.

MAKAYLA: How do you know?

PORTIA: I took it on our walk.

(MATTHEW *enters with a crockpot.*)

MATTHEW: Yes, and poor thing, she starts screaming the second she sees the thermometer. We can all sit down. You too, Makayla. She's fine, don't worry, hundred and one is practically normal.

(MAKAYLA *sits.* MATTHEW *starts ladling out a stew.*)

PORTIA: Why's the table only set for four?

MATTHEW: Woody's studying.

PORTIA: He should eat. (*calls*) Woody? Dinner's on the table.

WOODY: (*off; calls*) Not hungry!

PORTIA: (*calls*) Yes, you are. Get your butt out here.

(WOODY *enters.*)

PORTIA: Sit down. Not good to starve your brain.

WOODY: (*sits*) The less I eat, the less I shit.

PORTIA: Does that mean the toilet is still misbehaving?

WOODY: Both toilets.

PARNELL: And I'm gonna take care of it. Don't anybody stress.

WOODY: You're working construction, that doesn't make you a plumber. I still say we need the super.

PORTIA: Well, that's not gonna happen. We don't want the super here, do we, hon.

WOODY: OK. This nice lady...that I talked to...that I couldn't help talking to...she said the super has to enter all the apartments to deal with the backup. If we try to stiff him, they could evict us.

PORTIA: Woody, sweetheart...how can you expect to get a GED if you can't follow simple directions?

MAKAYLA: Portia, that's a little harsh.

PORTIA: *(to MAKAYLA)* I recommend you stay out of this. *(to WOODY)* You were told not to talk to anybody. That means anybody in the building, including the super.

WOODY: Oh you're all so pusillanimous! If I can't follow directions, how come I just aced the math practice test? I'm in the fucking 95th percentile.

MAKAYLA: Woody, that's fantastic. Congratulations.

WOODY: *(to PORTIA)* And I can tell you what that means.

PORTIA: You got an A. Good job.

WOODY: It means if a hundred people took the test, I was in the top five. If a thousand people took the test, I was in the top 50. If ten thousand people took the test—

PORTIA: We get it. You understand percentiles.

WOODY: And after I get my GED? I might even take the actuarial exam. I like working with numbers.

PORTIA: And we love you for it. How much Ritalin did you take today?

WOODY: I took one pill yesterday. I'm saving one for the real exam.

PORTIA: *(to MAKAYLA)* I thought you were getting him off the drug.

MAKAYLA: We don't believe in abstinence. We believe in self-determination.

PORTIA: You believe in jargon, that's what you believe.

MATTHEW: Portia.

PORTIA: Forget it, let's eat. Oh wait. Maybe we oughta say Grace first. (to MAKAYLA) Since you seem to be calling the shots these days.

PARNELL: Babe, attempt to chill, OK? (to the table) Folks have been hanging up on her all day.

MAKAYLA: I warned y'all about this.

PORTIA: Warned us about what?

MAKAYLA: Never mind, it's not my place.

PORTIA: What do you mean, it's not your place? Say what you were gonna say.

MAKAYLA: Your jealousy issues.

PORTIA: I hear that word "issues" one more time, I'm gonna put someone out of their misery.

MAKAYLA: You think you're God's gift to men, that doesn't mean you know what's best for Woody.

PORTIA: I never claimed to be God's gift.

MAKAYLA: You think God put you on this Earth to make men happy. What the men are doing here, you're not so clear on that.

PORTIA: (to the table) Anybody care to comment?

PARNELL: Makayla, I know you don't mean to be insulting, but seriously, dial it back.

PORTIA: Makayla knows exactly what she's doing. She's planting ideas in all your heads. That's been her agenda since day one.

MAKAYLA: Oh you mean ideas like "independence"? "Self-reliance"?

MATTHEW: We're interdependent. And proud to be that way.



MAKAYLA: Meanwhile you haven't left the house since you met Portia.

PORTIA: See how she distorts things?

MATTHEW: I have never felt kindly toward the great outdoors.

PORTIA: (*to MAKAYLA*) You think I'm corrupting these men? Check yourself, lady.

MAKAYLA: OK. Paranoia alert. I've been celibate ever since I came here.

PORTIA: Who said anything about celibacy? Anybody ever hear me say that word?

MAKAYLA: Every signal you send out.

PORTIA: Parnell, you want to speak to that?

MAKAYLA: What are you asking Parnell for?

PORTIA: Oh give me a break.

MAKAYLA: You know what? I'm sorry now I let you name my baby.

PORTIA: Why, what name did you have picked out? Shaquanda? Cataniqua? Shay'Nay'Nay? I did you a favor by naming your baby. She'll earn twice as much in her lifetime with a name like Polly Andrews.

MAKAYLA: Tell me, Portia. How did your preacher daddy feel about black people?

PORTIA: He thought they were creations of the Devil, like Jews and homosexuals. Why?

MAKAYLA: The older we get, the more we resemble our parents. It's called Return of the Repressed.

PORTIA: More horseshit. When did I show you anything but tolerance?

MAKAYLA: Oh, is that what you do, you tolerate me?

PORTIA: It began with love, but that's what it turned into.

MAKAYLA: Sorry, I don't think ever felt the love.

PORTIA: Well at this rate it's not coming back.

MAKAYLA: All I felt? Was the jealousy. You were jealous of me from the jump. That's the only reason you agreed to take me in, to prove you were above it all. You beat the jealousy out of these men, but you forgot to include yourself. Now you're jealous of my baby. I warned you not to have that abortion. That's why you've turned so bilious and mean.

PORTIA: Fuck you.

MAKAYLA: Whoa. You don't talk to me like that.

*(PORTIA rises. PORTIA and MAKAYLA get in each other's faces.)*

PORTIA: Get out of my apartment.

MAKAYLA: You don't get to say that either. My name is on the lease as much as yours. *(to the men)* Can't you see what's happening here?

MATTHEW: Frankly, I don't. Everybody stop screaming, or I'm gonna start screaming myself.

WOODY: Yeah, I feel like all the vocabulary just flew out of my head.

PARNELL: I like a catfight as much as the next man, but both of you back the fuck off.

WOODY: You have a friend here in Portia. While you were baby-sitting other people's kids, she was sitting with your baby in the E.R.

PARNELL: Aw fuck.

MAKAYLA: The E.R.?!

PARNELL: *(to WOODY)* When are you gonna learn to keep your pie-hole shut?

MAKAYLA: When was Polly in the E.R.?

PARNELL: It's nothing to worry about. She's got roseola. Three days and the fever's gone, it's like measles only totally benign—

MAKAYLA: I know what roseola is. Why did y'all keep this from me?

PARNELL: We didn't want to frighten you.

MAKAYLA: I'm her momma, for heaven's sake! Is there some rule about this I don't know about?

PARNELL: It's a Portia rule. She puts our pleasure before her pain.

MAKAYLA: You mean like a good mother.

MATTHEW: No, like a lover.

MAKAYLA: If she truly loved you, she'd let you go.

MATTHEW: We're not baby birds. Nobody's throwing us from the nest.

MAKAYLA: From where I sit? You're all a bunch of Momma's boys. (*to PORTIA*) Your daddy kept a harem, and you've turned these men into your sex slaves.

WOODY: I can't take this any longer. I'm going to the library, and chances are I'm not coming back.

PORTIA: Woody, sit the fuck down.

WOODY: No, you know what? All this studying, it's freed my mind. Next time you see me, I'll be selling insurance.

PORTIA: Don't be silly. You're tweaking. (*to MAKAYLA, who has risen*) Where are you going?

MAKAYLA: Back where I belong. I tried to help out this family and now according to you I've ruined it. I'll leave you to pick up the pieces.

PARNELL: What pieces, what are you talking about?—

(*MAKAYLA heads for the back of the apartment.*)

PARNELL: Makayla, come back, you're being stupid—you haven't ruined anything...please.

(PARNELL *grabs her.*)

MAKAYLA: Let me go. I can't do this.

(PARNELL *unhands MAKAYLA. She exits.*)

PORTIA: You fucked her, didn't you?

PARNELL: I don't like it when you talk like that.

PORTIA: Did you fuck her, I asked you.

PARNELL: What if I did?

PORTIA: Then we all oughta know about it.

PARNELL: Well, I didn't, all right?

PORTIA: Something happened. Your nose has been open ever since she waltzed into our lives.

PARNELL: Like there's a law against that. We had a moment.

PORTIA: A moment.

PARNELL: A literal moment. Happy now?

PORTIA: What stopped you?

PARNELL: She's not that into me, OK?

PORTIA: She's into anything she can get.

PARNELL: White men, her whole life. We're a pair of traitors, her and me.

PORTIA: You sound regretful, Parnell.

PARNELL: About what?

PORTIA: Not sleeping with Makayla. Instead of me.

WOODY: That's true, bro, you sounded really lugubrious.

PARNELL: It wasn't instead, and it didn't last two minutes. What are y'all getting on my case for? (to WOODY) What's the last time you and Portia did the level dance?

WOODY: I've been storing up my sperm. For my brain's sake.

PARNELL: It's not a heavyweight fight, it's a fucking high-school equivalency exam. (to MATTHEW) What about you, stud?

MATTHEW: I've been doing my share, right, Portia?

PARNELL: Well, so have I, so there you go.

WOODY: We've gotta get back to the *status quo ante bellum*. *Bellum*, that's Latin for war. Bellicose. Belligerent.

PORTIA: I didn't start this war.

WOODY: Well, I surely didn't. I'm feeling very sad right now. My brain doesn't work on sad. (to PORTIA) Why don't you go talk to her?

MATTHEW: I don't see why Portia has to lower herself.

WOODY: It's not lowering herself. It's being a grownup. Where are you going, Parnell?

PARNELL: (*starts out*) I have to make this right. I was the one who fucked this up.

PORTIA: No you didn't fuck this up, what are you talking about?

PARNELL: Yeah, I did. I fell in love.

PORTIA: What else is new?

PARNELL: What else is new?! That's your answer?

PORTIA: Falling in love is your default mode.

PARNELL: Yeah, well, it's harder loving two, and that's a fact.

WOODY: I still love you, Portia.

PORTIA: I know you do, sweetheart. That's not the point.

MATTHEW: I'd rather be liked than loved.

PORTIA: You're easy to love, hon.

MATTHEW: I know, but I'm hard to like. Portia's right, Parnell, you're being ridiculous.

PORTIA: Yes, so sit your ass back down.

PARNELL: No. You can't boss me on this. You're a hero, Portia. You're a pioneer. But even pioneers have to settle for less than the territory they've conquered.

PORTIA: Now you're just talking crazy.

PARNELL: *(heading out again; to MATTHEW)* I thought it was pretty eloquent.

PORTIA: Parnell, seriously, come back here—

PARNELL: Seriously, stay out of it.

*(A knock on the door. PARNELL stops in his tracks.)*

PARNELL: Who the fuck is that?

PORTIA: *(sotto)* Everybody quiet.

*(Another knock. PORTIA goes over to the door. As she looks through the peephole, a key turns in the lock. PORTIA tries to throw the deadbolt, but too late. The SUPER barges in. He's wearing a Superman T-shirt, dragging a carton tied with a ribbon, and a toolbox.)*

PORTIA: Whoa, what do you think you're doing? Who are you?

SUPER: Oh, right, sorry... should have called on you folks when you moved in. I'm the superintendent here. Hence the T-shirt. Dorky, I know, but good for morale. UPS left you this package, and seeing as you've got plumbing problems, I thought I'd kill two birds with one stone. Unless I've come at a bad time?

PORTIA: Well, you have. You've come at a very bad time.

SUPER: Says "Babyland" on the package. *(to PORTIA)* Are you the mom?

PORTIA: Yes, I'm the mom.

SUPER: I see. OK.

MATTHEW: Who's the package from?

SUPER: I don't see a return address. Might be a gift card inside.

PORTIA: Well, thank you for dropping it off. Now if you could please let us have our privacy.

SUPER: Yeah, sure, go ahead with your dinner, I'll see if I can fix your toilets. How many bathrooms in this apartment? Just the two, am I right?

PORTIA: Just the two.

SUPER: For how many people again?

PORTIA: Just what it says on the lease.

PARNELL: And we'll be dealing with the plumbing problems.

SUPER: You'll be liable for any damage.

PORTIA: We'll take that chance.

SUPER: Suit yourselves. Could I trouble you for a glass of water? I kinda wore myself dry lugging that package up those stairs.

PORTIA: You've got your own sink. It's only five flights down.

SUPER: Or I wouldn't say no to a beer.

PARNELL: Dude...we're not interested in socializing at the moment.

SUPER: Yeah, that's what I've been hearing from the other tenants. You people keep to yourselves. Sort of makes me wonder why.

PARNELL: One of these days we'll have you over. We'll have a Christmas party for the whole damn building. Meanwhile, thanks for coming.

(PARNELL *eases the SUPER out the door, shutting it.*  
MAKAYLA *enters from the hallway, wheeling a suitcase, promptly exits again.*)

PARNELL: (*calls*) Babe, whoa, where do you think you're going to?  
That's not even your suitcase.

MAKAYLA: (*off*) To get Polly. I can't be a traitor anymore.

PARNELL: (*calls*) Whoa, wait, you don't want to do that. Not without me.

(MAKAYLA *re-enters as PARNELL shuts the door on the SUPER.*)

MAKAYLA: You mean that, Parnell?

PARNELL: If that's what it takes to keep the peace.

MAKAYLA: (*alarmed*) Ohmigod!

PARNELL: Don't act so shocked. I thought you'd be thrilled.

MAKAYLA: (*aghast*) Who let him in?

(MAKAYLA *is staring...toward the front door, which has opened again...staring at KING.*)

PARNELL: What, this dude? He barged himself in here.

MAKAYLA: Oh my God in heaven.

KING: Hello, Makayla.

WOODY: You two know each other?

MAKAYLA: Yes, we know each other.

KING: My lucky day. (*re suitcase*) Looks like I almost missed you.

WOODY: What does he mean by that? (*to KING*) Have these two been meeting behind our backs? And y'all got on me for talking to a nice old lady?

PORTIA: Woody...honey... he's not the super.



WOODY: Then who...oh Christ.

PORTIA: That's right, hon.

WOODY: How did he get the super's keys?

MATTHEW: Yes, how did you, King? You must have a warrant.

KING: That's right, I have a warrant.

PORTIA: May we see it please?

KING: You're Portia, correct?

PORTIA: Who else would I be?

KING: (to MAKAYLA) She claims the baby's hers.

MATTHEW: Makayla...don't talk to him till we see his warrant.

MAKAYLA: How did you find me, King?

KING: Yeah, took me a while to track you down...until I stumbled on that doula you hired. It's our baby, isn't it? Of course it is. You wouldn't have murdered our precious creation. Did you have a difficult labor?

PORTIA: Makayla, seriously, you don't have to answer his questions.

KING: Look, I'm sorry it didn't work out with these folks. I only ever wanted what's best for you.

MAKAYLA: Oh, is that right? You were ready to throw me in jail.

KING: I said a lot of rash things that terrible day. I regret every nasty word. But you were pretty high-handed with me, too...which is perfectly OK, I forgave you those lies, 'cause I knew they were coming from her. Wanta open up the present? Or should we wait till we're back home?

MAKAYLA: King...are you high?

KING: No need to be sarcastic.

MAKAYLA: No, I'm asking, 'cause you've lost a bunch of weight.

KING: There's a very good reason for that. Shall I go get our baby?

MAKAYLA: She's sleeping, King.

KING: She. I knew it. I guessed right. Don't worry, I'll be careful not to wake her.

*(KING starts for the door that leads to the back of the apartment. MATTHEW steps in his way.)*

MATTHEW: Show us your warrant. Or we're calling the police.

KING: I promise you don't want to do that.

*(MATTHEW takes out his phone, starts to key in a number. KING reaches behind his belt, takes out a small handgun, points it at MATTHEW.)*

KING: I really hoped it wouldn't come to this.

PARNELL: Oh shit.

KING: Makayla, why don't you go get her.

MAKAYLA: First put away the gun.

KING: The minute we're out of here.

MAKAYLA: You really expect me to go with you now?

KING: I know you still have feelings for me.

MAKAYLA: I don't deny it. At this moment it's mostly fear.

KING: Don't be afraid. We can make a good life together. My wife gave me the divorce.

MAKAYLA: *(testing)* We'd live together in that town?

KING: *(uneasily)* Sure. Absolutely. If that's what you want.

MAKAYLA: *(testing)* You, me, and Polly.

KING: Is that her name? I like that name.

MAKAYLA: You won't get re-elected.

KING: (*uneasily*) I'm willing to risk it. (*to the room*) And if Makayla and me come to an understanding, I promise not to charge y'all.

PORTIA: Charge us with what?

KING: Well come on, here's Makayla's client, who skipped on a court order. And y'all made that possible. You've been hiding a wanted man. Makayla comes with me, we drop all charges.

MAKAYLA: Hon, please don't put me in that position.

WOODY: Don't worry, Makayla. He can't arrest me.

KING: (*uneasily*) Who says I can't?

WOODY: I am in legal possession of one Ritalin tablet. I will consume that tablet before I take my GED. After that I'm clean and sober, all credit to Makayla. With Makayla's expert help I fulfilled my treatment contract. The judge never said where therapy had to happen. Well, it happened right here.

KING: (*uneasily*) The judge might not agree with that assessment. (*to MAKAYLA*) I'm starting to get that antsy feeling, babe! Go get Polly now.

MAKAYLA: (*helplessly, to the room*) What am I supposed to do?

MATTHEW: Stay right where you are. I'm curious, Parnell. What kind of gun is he pointing at us?

PARNELL: From here I'd say...that's a Ruger LCR revolver.

MATTHEW: Would that be the gun he was issued?

PARNELL: No, that's a lightweight piece. Basically a lady's gun.

MATTHEW: That's what I was thinking too.

(MATTHEW *starts toward* KING.)

PORTIA: Matthew, no, be careful—!

KING: (*backing away*) Listen to your wife. Your wife knows best.

MAKAYLA: King, don't shoot him, please, I'll go with you!

MATTHEW: Gimme the gun.

KING: Get back! Don't make me do this!

*(KING points the gun, sweeping it around the room. Everybody ducks except MATTHEW, who continues advancing on KING. KING suddenly puts the gun to his own temple.)*

MAKAYLA: Sweetheart, no!

KING: Come with me, baby, or I'll do it, I swear to God, I'll kill myself—

*(MATTHEW grabs KING. They struggle a moment.)*

PARNELL: Watch out, bro—

*(MATTHEW wrests the gun away.)*

WOODY: All right, Matthew!

PARNELL: Fucking awesome. Give it here, dog.

*(MATTHEW gives the gun to PARNELL, pins KING's arms. PARNELL opens the gun.)*

PARNELL: It's empty.

MATTHEW: Frisk him, Woody.

*(WOODY frisks KING. Finds two pieces of paper.)*

WOODY: What's this? This isn't any warrant. This is a flyer for Hal's Auto Body.

KING: The other one. That's the warrant.

WOODY: *(examines other piece of paper)* This is what you showed the super? He must have been shitfaced. This is our old address. I say we defenestrate this motherfucker.

PORTIA: King, are you even Sheriff anymore?

KING: Let go of me please, I'll answer all your questions.

PORTIA: Matthew, let him go. (to KING) What are you doing now? Putting flyers behind windshield wipers?

KING: No. (pause) I'm a security guard.

PORTIA: Where?

KING: Piggly-Wiggly.

PORTIA: I haven't seen a Piggly-Wiggly in this area.

KING: It's nothing to see, believe me.

PORTIA: In fact, there aren't any Piggly-Wiggly's in this entire state.

MATTHEW: I believe that's right.

PORTIA: So what do you say, King?

KING: That's not where I'm working.

PORTIA: So where?

MAKAYLA: Portia, don't make him say. He's suffering.

KING: I'm not working anywhere.

PORTIA: You're unemployed.

KING: Yes, OK, I'm unemployed. The truth? I've been too downhearted to look for a job.

MAKAYLA: Where have you been living?

KING: At a Motel 6. Until my funds ran out.

MAKAYLA: Oh Lord.

KING: Yeah, after you left town I kinda went to pieces.

MAKAYLA: That's why you haven't been eating.

KING: That's when I bought that gun. With my severance pay. After I lost the recall.

MAKAYLA: But no ammunition.

KING: I went back and forth on that. (*on the edge of tears*) Without you in my life...I didn't want a life.

MAKAYLA: Oh hon.

KING: My only comfort was my love for you.

MAKAYLA: I know, hon. Shh, it's OK to cry.

KING: I was too chickenshit to make us legal. Told myself all manner of lies. Marriage is for gay people. Doesn't work for straights anymore. Least not for damaged goods like me. Am I lying, fellas? Y'all know what failure feels like. It's a nightmare you think will never end. Can I please see my daughter now?

MAKAYLA: Portia?

PORTIA: (*to MAKAYLA*) She's your baby.

KING: (*heartfelt*) I'm sorry about that sniper on the barn roof.

MAKAYLA: Don't wake her, though. Her fever needs to sleep.

KING: I wouldn't think of disturbing her.

MAKAYLA: And while you're at it? Wheel the suitcase back into that room.

(*KING exits with the suitcase. MAKAYLA watches him from the doorway.*)

MAKAYLA: (*to PORTIA*) He's really hurting.

PORTIA: I know he's hurting. If I admit to jealousy, you promise to stop harping on the subject?

MAKAYLA: That's a great first step.

PORTIA: All I asked was yes or no.

MAKAYLA: Yes.

PORTIA: (*to PARNELL*) I can deal if you can. What do you say?

PARNELL: I wish I knew how to cry. Gets them every time.

PORTIA: Yes? No? Which?

PARNELL: (*resignedly*) I'm willing to give it a shot.

PORTIA: Matthew, set another place for dinner.

WOODY: Really?

PORTIA: Do I hear any other objections?

MATTHEW: Not from me. Not at the moment.

WOODY: No objection here. The dude's been through hell, and I wouldn't want to exacerbate his anguish. That would be retrograde.

PORTIA: Makayla?

MAKAYLA: Please. Set another place.

PORTIA: The motion is carried. Woody, pull up another chair.  
Parnell, open his present.

(PARNELL *starts to open the present*. KING *enters*.)

KING: She's so beautiful.

MAKAYLA: Isn't she?

KING: I think she looks like both of us.

MAKAYLA: How could she not?

KING: Her forehead's burning up.

MAKAYLA: It's roseola. Three-day fever. Nothing to worry about.

KING: I feel like I'm gonna pass out from happiness.

PORTIA: Sit down, King. Take some nourishment.

KING: Thank you, ma'am. (*re box*) That's gonna require some assembly.

(PARNELL *has opened the box*. *Inside is a pink two-wheeler, in several parts*.)

MAKAYLA: This must have cost you.

KING: My last nickel.

MAKAYLA: Very generous of you, King.

KING: (*to MAKAYLA*) I know things can never be the same between us.

MAKAYLA: (*softly*) No, but they can be different.

KING: We could make it legal...if that would help.

MAKAYLA: One day at a time, King.

KING: (*re PARNELL*) You're promised to this fella here.

MAKAYLA: I'm not promised to anybody, King.

KING: Well...just to be around y'all. And help raise my beautiful daughter. That's heaven enough for now.

PORTIA: No, you're gonna have to pull more weight than that.  
Parnell, when you report for work tomorrow, see if there might be another job at the site.

PARNELL: You mean that?

PORTIA: No, I'm just talking to hear myself talk.

MATTHEW: For me, too. I can haul stuff if there's nothing else available.

PARNELL: Well, I'll ask. I can't promise anything.

PORTIA: (*to KING*) And if Parnell can't find you a job, you're gonna have to find one for yourself.

KING: (*to PORTIA*) Understood. This is real kind of you, ma'am.  
And I have to say, you're much different than what I pictured.

PORTIA: How did you picture me?

KING: Not as tall. Not nearly so attractive.

PORTIA: Well, thank you, hon.

KING: And I'm happy to take a look at your toilets. I'm pretty handy with a snake.



PORTIA: (*hint of flirtation*) I'll bet you are. Let's eat.

(*One by one, everybody has taken seats at the dining table.*)

MAKAYLA: Before we dig in...would anyone mind if I did say Grace?

PORTIA: So long as you don't make a habit of it.

MAKAYLA: Let's all join hands.

(*MAKAYLA, seated between PARNELL and KING, takes their hands. PORTIA joins hands with PARNELL and MATTHEW. They all bow their heads.*)

MAKAYLA: Dear Lord. Thank you for this food and for the blessings you shower upon us every single day. Grant us the wisdom to forge new paths in the economic wilderness—

KING: Wait. Sorry. Is there a contract I have to sign?

PORTIA: No, hon, there's nothing you have to sign. Go on, Makayla.

MAKAYLA: God give us the will to grow with the times. Feed our hopes, fortify our faith and protect us from those who would judge us with their backward thinking. Forgive us our trespasses, our biases, and our lusts. God bless Polly and God bless Portia. God bless this entire family. God bless America.

KING: Amen.

EVERYBODY ELSE EXCEPT PORTIA: Amen.

(*Pause.*)

PORTIA: Amen.

(*As they all start to eat...fade out. Music up: The Louvin Brothers singing "I Love the Christian Life." END OF PLAY.*)