

THE CHAMPAGNE ROOM

a play by Tom Baum

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Dolph, 30s, a handyman

Galen, late 20s-early 30s, his younger brother

Maryjo, 50s, Dolph's mother-in-law

Eileen, 30s, Dolph's wife, a stripper

Julie, early 20s, Eileen's sister, an ex-debutante

The play is set in Maryjo's living room. The time is the present.

Act I

Scene 1

(Night. The living room of a tract house in central Florida. Left, a doorway leads to an unseen foyer. A single window faces an unseen street. Right, a doorway to an unseen hallway. The furniture—couch, two chairs, sideboard, hatrack, wet bar, TV, stereo—is shabby in places, the décor feminine. The TV is tuned to QVC. Two sconces on the wall, and part of the drywall cut away for electrical repair. The day's mail is on an end table.

DOLPH, in work shirt and jeans, enters, followed by GALEN, in jeans and a hoodie, carrying a toolbox. DOLPH is on his cell.)

DOLPH: *(on phone)* —Karen, I give you my solemn promise my brother won't fall off the roof. Yeah, he's a few bricks shy of a chimney, but he's very sure-footed...Well, those skylights of yours are a two-man job... *(lightly)* That's a very tempting offer, Karen, but what do we tell my wife?... Sure, you're free to get other estimates...Goodbye, Karen. *(hangs up)* Fucking juicehead.

GALEN: Who was that?

DOLPH: What do you mean, who was that. What other Karen do we know.

GALEN: I didn't hear you say Karen.

(DOLPH pulls down Galen's hood. He's on his iPod.)

DOLPH: Take that out of your ears and maybe you'd hear better.

(GALEN takes the iPod out of his ears.)

GALEN: Karen Lassiter, with the mansion? She kept cooling her tits on her Diet Coke? The one who wants to fuck you?

DOLPH: That's the one.

GALEN: Does she know you don't have your contractor's license?

DOLPH: Are you kidding? Everybody knows I did a year in Ludville. That's probably why she wants to fuck me. And that means she doesn't want you around. *(sorting through mail)* Why do they keep sending us these magazines. They must have gotten their zip codes messed up. *(leafing through)* Look at this shit. Look at what rich people buy. *(re a bill he's opened)* What the fuck...Maryjo?!

GALEN: What? What is it?

DOLPH: Are you kidding me? What could possibly use all this current?
Maryjo!?

(MARYJO enters, in a housedress and slippers.)

MARYJO: I didn't hear you come in, what is it?

DOLPH: (*shows her the bill*) What have you been doing that uses
all this juice?

MARYJO: Oh my. That is a lot of money.

DOLPH: That is more than a lot of money. That is money we don't have.

MARYJO: And we've been using those twisty bulbs too.

GALEN: I hate those twisty bulbs.

MARYJO: Oh hon, so do I. You flip the switch, they don't go on right away.

GALEN: Like they resent you're using electricity.

DOLPH: Will both of you try and focus? Any moment now they're
coming for my truck, and now this electric bill for fifteen hundred
dollars. Have you been leaving all the TVs on again?

MARYJO: You know I hate to walk into a silent room. Maybe that
sconce is the culprit? I'm getting real tired of looking at that hole in the wall.

DOLPH: And I'll tell you what I'm sick and tired of. Is the extra
six hundred dollars in gas money to chauffeur you to the church
of your choice. How many cold calls did you make today?

MARYJO: Three or four? Dolph, honey, I get so discouraged.
Half the things they ask me, I don't know what to say.

DOLPH: You take their number, you say, my son-in-law Dolph will call you back.

MARYJO: But they want me to quote prices. The ones that
don't hang up. I'm just not cut out for it, that's all. I'd sooner do phone sex.

GALEN: If we had a website, you wouldn't have to cold call. If
we had seed money, that's what I'd put it into, a website.

DOLPH: Listen to yourself. We can't even afford groceries, and you're talking about seed money.

(A door slams.)

Christ. What's my wife doing home? *(DOLPH hides the electric bill in a drawer.)* Not a word about this bill, you understand? She's stressing enough lately, I don't want her freaking out.

(EILEEN enters, carrying a purse and a tote bag.)

DOLPH: So. You're home early. Slow night?

EILEEN: That's one way of putting it, yeah. Hi, Galen.

GALEN: Hi, Eileen. What's in the bag?

EILEEN: You want to know what's in the bag? This is what's in the bag.

(She takes out three bottles of champagne, puts two in the wet-bar fridge, opens the third.)

DOLPH: So, um, everything OK at work?

EILEEN: Not really, no.

MARYJO: You know what, honey? I think Vern is overworking you. I hear you come in, most times it's after three. In my day, Vern's Bar and Grill never stayed open past one.

(The champagne pops.)

EILEEN: Momma, you want some?

MARYJO: No, thank you, I have church. What are you drinking, this is Dom Perignon. What are you buying this for. We can't afford this. Vern doesn't even stock this.

GALEN: Who's Vern?

DOLPH: Stay out of it, dude.

MARYJO: What are we celebrating?

EILEEN: The end of servitude.

MARYJO: Don't tell me. Vern fired you? Honey, what did you say to Vern.

EILEEN: I didn't say anything to Vern. And no, he didn't fire me.

GALEN: I never heard of this Vern.

DOLPH: Did I tell you to shut up?

GALEN: Yeah, you did. I remember.

(GALEN puts his iPod back in his ears, and during the following, takes the electric bill out of its hiding place.)

MARYJO: OK, whatever happened, it's about time. Vern's Bar and Grill was good enough for me, but I never wanted it for my daughter. You got a new job lined up, that means?

EILEEN: No, Momma. I don't have a job lined up.

MARYJO: Oh Lord. Have a job before you quit a job.
What, you asked Vern for a raise and he wouldn't give you one?

EILEEN: It's got nothing to do with Vern, OK?

MARYJO: Honey, please don't jump down my throat. I'm nervous enough today. Pastor Huggins asked me out for coffee. You think I should go?

DOLPH: Why shouldn't you go?

MARYJO: You know, the racial issue.

EILEEN: Black never stopped you, Momma.

MARYJO: What do you mean, it never stopped me.

EILEEN: Come on. That black man you brought home?
Bodybuilder? With the diamond earrings?

MARYJO: OK. You're talking about Amos. The one who raised pit bulls.

EILEEN: OK. I didn't know what his hobby was—

MARYJO: It wasn't a hobby and Amos had nothing to do with you.

EILEEN: Other than you brought him into our house? In front of Daddy, in front of God, in front of the entire neighborhood wondering which one of the two of them made you pregnant!

MARYJO: Sweetheart? You don't know what you're talking about. Ancient history. It's out of my mind, and that's where it belongs.

EILEEN: Well, it's not out of mine, OK? I walk through this house, it's like ghosts are living in every room. I can practically hear them laughing.

MARYJO: Honey, I know what you mean. They're not laughing at you.

GALEN: Um, Dolph? You want to look at this?

DOLPH: What. What is it.

GALEN: (*showing bill*) It says here, we weren't charged for electricity since last November. While they were changing the meters.

EILEEN: Let me see that. (*snatches bill from Galen*) Oh shit. This is all we need. This is the absolute last straw.

DOLPH: (*to GALEN*) Did I put that away for a reason? Eileen just lost her job and now you freaked her out.

GALEN: I forgot you said not to say anything.

DOLPH: You forgot. You forget everything. You don't remember because you don't listen. You don't reason. You don't think.

MARYJO: Dolph, stop berating your brother! Galen, come on, honey, come with me. Your brother's had a very hard day.

GALEN: I had a hard day too.

MARYJO: We all had a hard day. It's been a hard hard year and it's getting harder. Galen?

(GALEN *has taken a hammer out of the toolbox and is brandishing it at DOLPH.*)

EILEEN: Dolph, look out!

DOLPH: Dude...what are you doing.

MARYJO: Galen, put down that hammer.

(GALEN lunges at DOLPH as if to bash him with the hammer.)

DOLPH: Go ahead, man. Take your best shot.

(GALEN flails awkwardly at DOLPH. DOLPH grabs the hammer away.)

GALEN: I wasn't gonna do it. I was kidding.

DOLPH: I know you were kidding. You don't really want to hurt me.

GALEN: It hurt me when you hit me with that xylophone mallet. *(points to the top of his head)* You broke my fountainel [*sic*]. Made me stupid.

DOLPH: Dude, that's just a theory. I don't even remember doing it, OK? So calm down.

MARYJO: He's right, Galen. Why don't you go in the kitchen, the dishwasher's leaking again. Go along, hon. Fix it. I know you can.

(GALEN puts his iPod in his ears and exits.)

MARYJO: Dolph, you make me want to cry sometimes. Why can't you lighten up on your brother. And why can't he forgive you for something you say you didn't do. Every night I pray for harmony in this family.

EILEEN: Momma, you're wasting your prayers. Next time you talk to God? Ask him to lend us the money to pay for our truck. And this damn electric bill. And every other damn thing we owe. Otherwise, we're all gonna be living on the street before this month is out.

(MARYJO exits. DOLPH closes the door, lowers his voice.)

DOLPH: So what the hell happened? Billy didn't let you work?

(EILEEN has taken several bills out of her purse. She hands them to DOLPH.)

DOLPH: Thirty-five dollars? That's it? That's all you made tonight?

EILEEN: A hundred less the tip-out. Plus the three bottles of champagne I liberated. And how was your day?

DOLPH: Karen Lassiter is threatening to hire someone else to do her skylights.

EILEEN: Because you won't fuck her?

DOLPH: That's the drift. She doesn't want Galen along on the job. Just me.

EILEEN: So you gonna do it?

DOLPH: No, I'm not planning on fucking her.

EILEEN: We might all sleep better if you did.

DOLPH: No. You couldn't live with that, and neither could I.

EILEEN: Can you think of another option? I can't at the moment.

DOLPH: Just stop talking like that, OK? Did Billy pick another fight with you? What was it this time?

EILEEN: My tats. Billy goes, "I don't like them." "Since when? You never said anything before." He goes, "I found out my grandfather was orthodox Jewish. He wouldn't approve." Total loony bullshit, but fine, I slather on more makeup. He's like, "I can still see them." By now the makeup's so thick it's like I've got a skin disease. "I can still see the oil derrick." I start to lose it. "It's not an oil derrick, it's a Celtic symbol, and your grandfather's about as Jewish as Pat Robertson." He goes, "That's another twenty-dollar fine." And then comes the punch line: "There's another way to pay these fines."

DOLPH: Fucking douchebag.

EILEEN: He goes, "I bet your hubby wouldn't mind." Exact words.

DOLPH: I'll fucking kill him.

EILEEN: OK, so cut to an hour later. I go up to this guy, big fat guy with a comb-over. He's getting loaded and I ask him, does he want to go to the Champagne Room. He says OK, so up the stairs we go. I'm watching Billy over my shoulder and when I turn back around this guy's got it out and it was dark in there but he had his dick pierced right through the foreskin.

DOLPH: No way.

EILEEN: He had this huge old ratty-looking foreskin and there was a pair of ruby studs in it. I'm telling him to put it back in his pants and Billy's staring at us the whole time.

DOLPH: Christ Almighty.

EILEEN: Is this turning you on?

DOLPH: No.

EILEEN: Too bad. I thought it might be.

DOLPH: Don't start. The guy's got his dick out.

EILEEN: No, now it's back where it belongs and nothing more about it, till after the guy leaves and Billy comes charging up to me. I'm like, oh no, here comes another fine and he goes, "You're outa here." "What do you mean, I'm outa here?" "You were jerking that guy off." Which was totally untrue. Then Billy goes, "I can't afford to get raided again, what if he spreads it around we're giving handjob?" I just popped. I couldn't take it anymore. I don't remember half the things I called him.

DOLPH: About fucking time.

EILEEN: Can you blame me?

DOLPH: But in other words, you're done.

EILEEN: What, you want me to go back there?

DOLPH: I didn't say that, did I. Do you really want me to fuck Karen Lassiter for money? Because that's what it amounts to if we're both out of work.

EILEEN: No, I don't want you fucking Karen Lassiter.

DOLPH: Then maybe you oughta think about kissing Billy's ass.

EILEEN: Sweetheart, I burned the bridge. I've been 86ed from the entire chain. He sent out the email, right while I was standing there. What are we gonna do now? If you lose the truck, we're history.

DOLPH: All right, gimme a second. Let's assume all these fines were bogus. How much does he owe you?

EILEEN: Couple of grand.

DOLPH: That's enough to keep the wolf from the door. What time does Billy close up these days?

EILEEN: Never later than two.

DOLPH: Is there a safe in the office?

EILEEN: Dolph. Honey. All the girls heard my meltdown. The regulars too. We're the first place the cops'll look.

(She drinks. Pause.)

EILEEN: The only way we could bring it off? Is if we're living someplace else. Which I don't think we're prepared to do that, are we? Relocate?

DOLPH: What difference where we end up? How are you gonna get a straight job in this town? Who doesn't know where you've been working the last two years? Besides you-know-who.

(MARYJO has entered.)

MARYJO: Galen's feeling better, poor baby. He's doing a good job on that dishwasher. *(to EILEEN)* Honey, I hear they're looking for an assistant at Carleton Realty. I can call Joey Carleton if you want.

EILEEN: Joey Carleton's not going to hire me.

MARYJO: Well, how do you know that.

EILEEN: Because Joey Carleton's a fat porn-loving slob who cheats on his wife.

MARYJO: Really? You've seen him at Vern's with another woman?

EILEEN: I've seen him, but not at Vern's.

MARYJO: Where then?

EILEEN: You really want to know how I know?

DOLPH: No. Eileen. She really doesn't.

EILEEN: No, you're right, she doesn't want to know, just like Daddy didn't want to know what was going on with Amos or any of those other men. Do your ignorance a favor, stay out of my fur.

(EILEEN slams out of the room.)

MARYJO: I was only trying to help.

DOLPH: Maryjo, I know you mean well. Let me and Eileen deal with the financial situation.

(DOLPH exits in the direction EILEEN went. GALEN enters.)

GALEN: Dishwasher's working fine. One of the bolts was loose on the motor mount.

MARYJO: Good job, hon. Now maybe have a look at that hole in the wall?

GALEN: Dolph said not to touch that sconce. He said I'd fuck it up.

MARYJO: Well, he's got to learn to trust you, or you'll never get anyplace. Lord, I can't get over Eileen. Quitting her job, when she knows we're dead broke?

GALEN: Well... you know.....I think Billy actually fired her.

MARYJO: What do you mean, Billy? Who's Billy?

GALEN: Did I say Billy? I meant, you know, what's his name.

MARYJO: Vern.

GALEN: Vern. Yes. That's who I meant. Vern.

MARYJO: They're not the same name at all.

GALEN: I know they're not. I get confused.

MARYJO: Hon, I know you do. It's been hard on everybody. But no reason we should be at one another's throats. Dumping on your loved ones, that feels natural. But it's wrong. Politeness towards all, that's what Pastor Huggins preaches, that's the key to family success.

GALEN: Not money.

MARYJO: Money helps.

GALEN: And a husband.

MARYJO: A husband can help and a husband can hinder.

GALEN: And you didn't want yours.

MARYJO: What do you mean, I didn't want my husband. I didn't leave Curtis. Curtis left me. Left me without a penny and six months pregnant. Pregnant by Curtis, you understand?

GALEN: Not that black man Amos.

MARYJO: First Eileen, now you. No, not by Amos.

GALEN: So what was Amos doing here? Was he messing with Eileen? I've heard her say as much.

MARYJO: I refuse to continue with this discussion. Where did my son-in-law get to? He's supposed to drive me to my fellowship meeting. (*calling*) Dolph? I need you!

GALEN: Why do you even go to church? What good has God ever done us?

MARYJO: Galen, hush. You shouldn't blame God for what happened to you. (*calls*) Dolph?

GALEN: I don't blame God. God made me. Dolph tried to unmake me. With a xylophone mallet.

MARYJO: Honey, you know he regrets that.

GALEN: No, he claims he doesn't remember. He's the retard.

(DOLPH *enters*.)

DOLPH: (to MARYJO) What? What do you want?

MARYJO: I need you to run me to church. Right now.

(MARYJO *exits.*)

DOLPH: What did you say to Maryjo? Why is she so upset?

GALEN: We were talking about Amos. That black man who hung around here? Before we came into their lives?

DOLPH: That's a sore point with Maryjo, OK? Not to mention my wife.

GALEN: Eileen was fired, wasn't she?

DOLPH: That's right. Can you manage to keep that to yourself.

GALEN: The only girl at Bare Essentials with natural tits. Where's the justice? What do you think we should do now?

DOLPH: I haven't made up my mind yet.

GALEN: I could help you get back at Billy.

DOLPH: Yeah, what would your contribution be?

GALEN: Rent the car. Watch the door.

DOLPH: No rental car. That's traceable.

GALEN: I'd pay cash.

DOLPH: Dude, you have to show them your driver's license.

GALEN: OK, the truck then. I know where we can get two license plates. Cut them in half, weld them together, that wouldn't be traceable. It's the right thing to do, Dolph. Billy owes her big time.

(MARYJO *enters.*)

MARYJO: Are we ready, Dolph?

DOLPH: Yeah, yeah, let's go. (to GALEN) What we were talking about? Let's make that Plan B.

GALEN: B for Billy.

DOLPH: B for Billy.

MARYJO: Who's Billy? Why do you keep talking about Billy?

DOLPH: *(to GALEN)* Not one more word. Come on, Maryjo.
Pastor Huggins is waiting.

*(MARYJO exits with DOLPH. GALEN puts on his iPod. Sits.
Stares. Takes off his iPod. Takes out his cell.)*

GALEN: *(on phone)* Or-land-do, Flo-ri-da. The number for Flo's Gun and Pawn? It's a gun store. *(jabs at button)* No, I don't want to be recorded, I didn't mean a gun store, that's Plan B, I meant the Greyhound bus terminal! I want to buy a ticket to West Palm Beach....Yes, I'll wait. I'm waiting....Oh hey. I like this song. This song's great. This song's about me.

(The hold song fades up as the lights fade to black.)

Scene 2

(Two days later. The hole in the wall has still not been sealed up. DOLPH is consulting a frayed sheet of paper. EILEEN enters, in a blazer and long skirt, hair pinned up.)

DOLPH: *(to EILEEN)* Why are you so dolled up?

EILEEN: I've got an interview. You heard from Galen yet?

DOLPH: No. I've left him six messages, his battery must have run down. What kind of interview?

EILEEN: Some kind of business office. In Deltona.

DOLPH: Deltona! Why so far away? Are you being a little paranoid?

EILEEN: There was nothing closer, OK? That I could even qualify for. And for your information, I used to have regulars from Ocala. That's 80 miles away. If I get past the pre-interview I may have to stay over.

DOLPH: I hate that, but all right.

(DOLPH gets on his cell.)

DOLPH: *(on phone)* Hello, this is Dolph, with D & G Home Improvement, I left a card in your mailbox?

EILEEN: I can't watch you do this.

(EILEEN exits.)

DOLPH: *(on phone)* We're gonna be in your neighborhood this week, doing an estimate on one of our regular clients...Hello?

(No answer. GALEN enters. DOLPH ends the call.)

DOLPH: Where the fuck have you been the last two days? Why didn't you answer your phone?

GALEN: I was searching for a rainbow.

DOLPH: Galen...I don't need your crazy shit right now, OK?

GALEN: It's not crazy. And you can stop making cold calls. She's here.

DOLPH: Who's here?

(DOLPH goes to the window.)

GALEN (*calls*) It's OK, you can come in.

(JULIE enters, casually dressed, hair pinned up, expensive shoes, huge engagement ring.)

JULIE: Hi! I'm Julie.

DOLPH: Is that right.

JULIE: And you must be Adolf.

DOLPH: Not Adolf. Dolph.

JULIE: Right, who would name anybody Adolf. Like naming somebody Osama. I'm Julie. Sorry to barge in like this. We tried to call ahead, but Galen's phone was on the fritz.

DOLPH: That's your car out there? The Prius?

JULIE: Uh-huh. The color's kinda shocking isn't it. What's up with that, anyway? Why is every car gray or black or silver? When did we all stop liking colors? I was gonna get a red car, then somebody told me cops tend to pull you over if you're driving a red car. But a yellow Prius, I never saw one of those before, and at night, or a parking lot, ohmigod, you can see my car a mile away. I'm so happy with my choice.

DOLPH: OK, slow it down, whoever you are. How do you know my brother?

JULIE: (*to* GALEN) I thought you said he...Ohmigod. This is so embarrassing. I guess I'm your sister-in-law?

DOLPH: You guess?

JULIE: I am. I'm your wife's baby sister. Hello? The one who was given away? For adoption? (*to* GALEN) You didn't warn them. I could crawl under that rug.

DOLPH: Oh Jesus. How did he find you?

JULIE: From the adoption papers. (*to GALEN*) Isn't that right?

GALEN: In Maryjo's rolltop. One of the drawers was jammed, Maryjo asked me to fix it. It was this fat manila envelope wedged behind it. There was a big smiley face on the envelope, except it wasn't smiling, it was crying. I mean who wouldn't look inside, a crying smiley face. Maryjo wanted me to see it—otherwise why ask me to unstick the drawer?

MARYJO: (*off*) Galen?! You're back?

JULIE: Is that my...my mom?

DOLPH: That's who it is. We're in here, Maryjo!

JULIE: Ohmigod. I am so not ready for this.

(*MARYJO enters.*)

MARYJO: Galen! Where on God's earth have you been? Oh, hello, did I interrupt something? I'm Maryjo.

JULIE: Yes, I know.

MARYJO: I'm sorry, have we met?

JULIE: No, but we were really really close once. Ohmigod, that just fell out of my mouth. I have a slight problem in that area. OK. Start over, Julie. I've heard a lot about you and I feel like I know you. I'm Julie.

MARYJO: Julie?

JULIE: Julie Abernathy?

MARYJO: Julie Abernathy. That's your name. Not your married name.

JULIE: I'm not married. Not yet. Almost. No, Abernathy is my parents' name.

MARYJO: Your parents' name is Abernathy.

JULIE: Yes.

MARYJO: Excuse me, I have to sit down.

DOLPH: You got more than you prayed for, Maryjo.

MARYJO: What's happening. How did you get here.

GALEN: She drove. Her car's outside. It's a Prius.

MARYJO: A Prius. That's a real nice car.

JULIE: I'm enjoying it.

MARYJO: Do they really get the mileage they say? I hear you can't see to back up. I heard a woman in Ovieda ran over her own child in the driveway, killed it, isn't that the worst thing you ever heard in your life?

(MARYJO starts to tremble.)

JULIE: Ohmigod, are you OK? Here. Breathe. Do like me. Inhale fast.

MARYJO: I can't—

JULIE: Through your nose. Quickly. Now exhale through your mouth. Again. Again. Listen, I'm really sorry. Galen told me he warned you all.

MARYJO: Julie with an e? Or without an e?

JULIE: With an "e."

MARYJO: Isn't that amazing? I never told them you were Julie. You're still living with them? In West Palm?

JULIE: Not with them. Near them.

MARYJO: Dolph? Galen? I need some alone time here.

DOLPH: Come on, dude. She means you and me.

GALEN: Why? I was the one who found her.

DOLPH: Yeah, and now we've got work to do.

GALEN: What work? We don't have any work. We're broke. We're desperate. I told her all about it.

DOLPH: Dude, I said come on.

(DOLPH *and* GALEN *exit*.)

MARYJO: You have to make allowances for Galen. He's got some brain issues.

JULIE: He says Dolph bashed him with a hammer.

MARYJO: A toy hammer. When they were kids. Dolph says it never happened, but Galen holds a grudge. You haven't met Eileen yet, have you? You will. She was bartending at this place I used to work at? And now, fingers crossed, she's off looking for a new job. Your skirt is so lovely, what is that fabric?

JULIE: It's linen?

(MARYJO *suddenly bursts into tears*.)

MARYJO: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

JULIE: Shh. It's OK.

MARYJO: Why didn't they tell me you were coming. Look at the state this house is in.

JULIE: No! Your house is amazing!

MARYJO: You must be so angry with me.

JULIE: I'm not angry. Why would I be angry?

MARYJO: I couldn't keep you. Curtis, my husband, your biological father, he ran off on me. I was six months pregnant.

JULIE: Galen told me. That's so horrible.

MARYJO: It was all I could do to raise one girl. I was bartending right to the end of my term. I was mixing a margarita when my water broke.

JULIE: You did what you had to do.

MARYJO: No, but it's worse than that. The agency gave me thirty days to change my mind, and I didn't think twice. I was totally without funds, your big sister Eileen was acting out at school, I couldn't bear to bring you into that world. I wanted you to grow up in proper circumstances, not in white trash hell.

JULIE: But this isn't white trash hell.

MARYJO: Thank you, but it will be, unless we get some relief pretty soon. Which I'm praying we're going to get, since God doesn't give us more than we can bear. That doesn't account for suicide, does it? I wonder what Pastor Huggins would say to that....But why am I talking about suicide? You're here now.

JULIE: Yes, I'm here.

MARYJO: I couldn't try to find you.

JULIE: You signed an agreement. I understand.

MARYJO: No no, you don't understand. I don't go out anymore. I'm totally dependent on Dolph. He's my American Express Card, I never leave home without him.

JULIE: It's fear of the marketplace.

MARYJO: What is.

JULIE: Agoraphobia? In ancient Greece, the agora, that was where people sold their wares? The only women allowed in the agora were prostitutes. It's like in the Middle East, a woman doesn't wear a veil? That says she's fair game.

MARYJO: So what are you saying. I'm afraid of looking like a whore?

JULIE: Exactly.

MARYJO: Because, you know, I have this teeny little crush on Pastor Huggins? OK, and maybe this whore thing keeps me from having coffee with him. Oh Lord, you are so smart! You make me so proud of my DNA!

(MARYJO *hugs her. Then darkens again.*)

MARYJO: So when did your folks tell you?

JULIE: Tell me what? About being adopted? They never told me. In high school, we had genetics? Two blue-eyed parents, and me with brown? I went totally nuts for a while. I even hired a private detective. Then the doorbell rings and there's this Galen person standing there. An angel in a hoodie. Like a dream come true.

MARYJO: Tell me, sweetheart, do you have to be at school or work or anything?

JULIE: No, I graduated. I've been temping at this travel agency, but business is terrible. I'm trying to save up for art school.

MARYJO: Your folks won't help you?

JULIE: It's my mom's fault. She went to Clemson, so I had to go to Clemson. She never worked a day in her life, why should I have to. She came out, so I came out.

MARYJO: Oh. Well. That's all right. Is she well off too?

JULIE: Who, my mom? Yes, my parents are both crazy rich.

MARYJO: What about your fiancée? I couldn't help noticing the ring.

JULIE: Yes, Bryce comes from money.

MARYJO: Bryce?

JULIE: My fiancé.

MARYJO: Bryce is a man?

JULIE: Yes of course he's a man.

MARYJO: But he doesn't mind?

JULIE: Mind what?

MARYJO: You being a lesbian?

JULIE: I'm not a lesbian.

MARYJO: You said you came out. Like your mom.

JULIE: A debutante like my mom.

MARYJO: Excuse me?

JULIE: Me and my mom. We were both debutantes.

MARYJO: Not lesbians.

JULIE: Debutantes come out. At a ball. With carriages and gowns and swains and the whole ridiculous deal.

MARYJO: Swains.

JULIE: Escorts.

MARYJO: Galen!

GALEN (*off*) What?

MARYJO: Dolph? Galen? Come here please!

(GALEN and DOLPH *enter*.)

GALEN: What's the matter? Aren't you two getting along?

MARYJO: We're getting along famously, thank you. Julie will be staying the night. You did plan on that, didn't you, dear? Don't say no, I couldn't stand it.

JULIE: Yes, Galen made me pack a suitcase.

MARYJO: (*to* GALEN) I want you to put clean sheets on your bed. (*to* JULIE) His room's over the garage, it's got its own bathroom. (*to* GALEN) You'll sleep in Eileen's bed tonight.

JULIE: I'll go get my stuff. (*to* GALEN) Bye sweetheart. (*to* DOLPH, *more softly*) Bye Dolph.

(JULIE *exits*.)

MARYJO: Her folks never told her she was adopted, can you believe it? That just rots me. I should have put it in the agreement.

DOLPH: And we're her new family, is that the idea?

MARYJO: That's up to Julie, isn't it.

DOLPH: Maybe you'd like her to move in.

MARYJO: Maybe I'd like it, but she happens to be engaged. To a very wealthy young man—that ring she's wearing must have cost a fortune.

GALEN: And you should see her folks' house. It's bigger than our city hall.

MARYJO: Don't you see, this is what I've been praying for, a safety net. The hard times we've been through, plus Eileen giving up her bartending job.

GALEN: *(to DOLPH)* And you without your contractor's license. She felt real bad about that.

DOLPH: Did you tell her why I can't get one?

GALEN: Why would I ever do that?

DOLPH: You did, didn't you. Shit. *(takes out phone)*

GALEN: Knowing you're a jailbird didn't stop her from coming.

DOLPH: If I know the type, it turned her on. I mean think about it. A guy she's never seen shows up on her doorstep, what does she do, she unchains the door, takes his word for it, jumps in her Prius, drives all the way to a town she's never been, and now you tell me she's engaged to be married, doesn't that all sound fishy to you?

GALEN: Could be a good thing. First she opens her pussy, then her purse.

MARYJO: Galen, hush, that's vile.

GALEN: And just in case, there's still Plan Billy. *(aside to DOLPH)* I've got my eye on a Beretta. Flo has a nice selection.

MARYJO: *(at window)* A nice selection of what, honey?

GALEN: Um, curtains? To decorate Julie's room?

MARYJO: That's a sweet thought. Oo look. She brought two suitcases.

GALEN: Yeah, and you shoulda seen how fast she packed them.

MARYJO: I'm gonna go help her. Galen, the bedsheets?

GALEN: Yes, right, I'll get them.

MARYJO: *(to DOLPH)* Opportunity has knocked. And you, you'd better listen. And do something about that hole in the wall. It reminds me of the hole in my heart.

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(The next morning. Sound of a power drill. Lights up on DOLPH. He's enlarging the hole in the wall. JULIE enters, casually dressed.)

JULIE: Morning! *(no answer)* I said, good morning!

(DOLPH turns off the drill.)

DOLPH: Yeah, hi.

(DOLPH resumes drilling.)

JULIE: I guess you're busy.

(DOLPH turns off the drill.)

DOLPH: What did you say?

JULIE: I said, it looks like you're working.

DOLPH: Yeah, I'm working. You sleep OK?

JULIE: Until those birds woke me up. Do you get those every morning?

DOLPH: *(resumes work)* What birds.

JULIE: I think they're mourning doves? *(imitates sound)*

DOLPH: I don't hear any birds.

JULIE: Really? Are you depressed?

DOLPH: Birds don't interest me.

JULIE: Depressed people don't hear birdsong.

DOLPH: Who says they don't?

JULIE: My psych professor at Clemson. I helped myself to breakfast, can I get you anything?

DOLPH: Yeah, I'd like a Spanish omelet, side of sausages, and a bowl of strawberries and cream.

JULIE: I'll see what I can do.

DOLPH: Forget it. We don't have any strawberries. Or sausages. Or cream.

(DOLPH *starts poking in the hole with a pliers.*)

JULIE: Where's Galen?

DOLPH: In church. With Maryjo. As soon as I get this rewired, I've gotta go pick them up.

JULIE: So we're alone for now.

DOLPH: Yeah. We're alone.

JULIE: And my sister is where? Excuse me, your wife.

DOLPH: She's at a job interview in Deltona. I left her a message you were here, but she hasn't gotten back.

JULIE: I hope the interview's going well.

DOLPH: You and me both.

JULIE: Are we alike?

DOLPH: You and Eileen? How would I know? Yeah, there's a certain resemblance.

JULIE: More than between a Great Dane and a Chihuahua?

DOLPH: Excuse me?

JULIE: I mean, if you were like an alien just landing on Earth, you wouldn't go, OK, that's the same animal, let's see what these creatures have to say to us. Although I did see a Great Dane and a Chihuahua having sex once. I'm not making that up.

DOLPH: You're neither of you dogs.

JULIE: Well, thank you, Dolph.

DOLPH: Light years away from dogs.

JULIE: Do you mind if I ask, who named you Dolph?

DOLPH: My dad. Named me after Hitler.

JULIE: You're kidding. Why?

DOLPH: He wanted me to have what he had. A crappy childhood.

JULIE: I know exactly what you mean.

DOLPH: I doubt that very much. *(pause)* He used to make me blow out the sun.

JULIE: Blow out the sun?

DOLPH: As a punishment.

JULIE: For what?

DOLPH: Doing what boys do. In their spare time.

JULIE: Oh. Oh. He caught you in the act?

DOLPH: Yeah, he caught me. He takes me outside, he goes, "You see that sun up there in the sky? That blazing hot sun? I want you to blow it out." *(blows)* Like that. He goes, "Keep doing that." I'm like, what the fuck. But what choice do I have. Pretty soon I'm dizzy from breathing, and he keeps coming out of the house to check. "Blow it out! Blow it out!" all day long and finally it's sundown and he's standing there watching me, I'm hyperventilating like a motherfucker and the sun slips down below the trees and he's like, "You see? You blew it out."

JULIE: That's awesome. I mean it's horrible.

DOLPH: And no food or water either, all those hours. Sadistic fucking jerk.

(A sizzle from inside the wall. Sparks fly. DOLPH flings the pliers aside.)

DOLPH: Fuck!

JULIE: What happened?

DOLPH: Fucking Galen. He flipped the wrong breaker. I swear he's trying to kill me.

JULIE: Seriously, are you all right? Can I get you anything?

DOLPH: Yeah. I feel like my heart just stopped.

(DOLPH *sits on the couch*. JULIE *opens the wet bar*.)

JULIE: I don't see any brandy. There's champagne open.

DOLPH: That'll have to do.

(JULIE *pours two glasses*.)

JULIE: Wow, this is Dom Perignon 1999. This is like a hundred dollars a bottle.

DOLPH: That was a gift.

JULIE: You must have some rich friends.

DOLPH: No. Only you.

JULIE: I'm glad you think of me as a friend. (*toasting*) To new and better relationships.

DOLPH: Cheers. So you're getting married, huh?

JULIE: Supposed to be.

DOLPH: Big wedding?

JULIE: If my mom has her way. You didn't?

DOLPH: Are you kidding? We got married at city hall. No ring. Lady was there bailing her husband out of jail and lent us hers for the ceremony.

JULIE: That's sweet. (*dabs at her eye*)

DOLPH: What's the matter? It's not that sad a story.

JULIE: There's something in my eye.

DOLPH: Maybe a piece of drywall. It's sawdusty in here. Lemme look. (DOLPH *peels down JULIE's eyelid*.) You got a tissue?

JULIE: In my bag.

(DOLPH rummages in JULIE's bag, comes up with a tissue.)

DOLPH: All right, look up. Now look left.

JULIE: Are you and my sister happy?

DOLPH: We've been happier.

JULIE: She's a really lucky girl. Now me, if I brought you home, my parents would totally freak out. I don't mean you, I mean a clone of you. But that wouldn't work, would it. Clones start out as babies. You'd be way too young for me.

DOLPH: At least for twenty years.

JULIE: I'd hate to wait that long.

(JULIE suddenly kisses him.)

JULIE: Ohmigod. Did I just do that?

DOLPH: Yeah, you just did that.

JULIE: Wow. I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me. That was totally uncalled for.

(A door slams, off. DOLPH disengages. EILEEN enters.)

DOLPH: Hey.

EILEEN: Hey yourself. What's going on? Who are you? Your name isn't Karen, is it?

JULIE: No, it's Julie. Dolph and I were just catching up.

DOLPH: You didn't get my messages.

EILEEN: No, I didn't get your messages. (to JULIE) Who are you and why are you here and why are you drinking champagne with my husband this early in the day?

JULIE: Dolph got an electric shock. There wasn't any brandy.

EILEEN: She keeps calling you Dolph.

DOLPH: She's entitled to call me Dolph.

EILEEN: What do you mean, she's entitled. Who is she to you.

DOLPH: Quit pacing and sit down. Julie's my sister-in-law.

EILEEN: What do you mean, your...Galen? Galen got married? No way.

DOLPH: No, Galen's not married.

EILEEN: Then who...ohmigod.

DOLPH: That's right.

EILEEN: Oh Jesus.

JULIE: Uh-huh.

EILEEN: You're my...you're my baby sister.

JULIE: Galen tracked me down. What happened at your interview?

EILEEN: Who told you about my interview?

JULIE: Dolph did. I'm very interested. I'm concerned.

DOLPH: She's concerned. How did it go?

EILEEN: I'll tell you how it went. You thought I was being paranoid? Well, the guy who interviewed me, he used to come in all the time.

JULIE: Oh. That's too bad.

EILEEN: What do you know about it?

JULIE: Nothing. That just popped out.

DOLPH: So you hit it off or you didn't?

EILEEN: Oh, we hit it off. He couldn't take his eyes off me. You should have seen this office. It was like the moon. You wouldn't believe the jobs people have. Assistant to the marketing coordinator

for client services global division, what does that even mean, what kind of person does that kind of work.

JULIE: Almost everybody.

EILEEN: I'm sorry, did you say something?

JULIE: No. Go on. *(to herself)* Shut up, Julie.

DOLPH: Did he offer you a job?

EILEEN: No, but he offered to take me dancing.

JULIE: Oh. That's too bad. I mean it's nice. I mean it's sort of appropriate. Inappropriate, I mean.

EILEEN: What are you trying to say?

JULIE: Nothing. I don't know. Dolph, could you leave us two alone? I need to ask your wife some things.

EILEEN: No. Why? Dolph, stick around.

JULIE: *(to DOLPH)* Don't you have to go to church? Pick up Galen and Maryjo?

EILEEN: She's really up on this family, isn't she.

DOLPH: Looks that way. And seeing as your reputation precedes you as far as Deltona, that seriously reduces our financial options. Nice chatting with you, Julie.

(DOLPH exits.)

JULIE: He's got a lot on his mind, doesn't he.

EILEEN: Don't we all.

JULIE: I feel like I've come at a bad time.

EILEEN: You have, that's right. You've come at a very bad time.

(EILEEN picks up DOLPH's half-finished champagne, downs it, refills the glass.)

JULIE: Um, I'll have some champagne too?

(EILEEN *pours her a glass.*)

JULIE: Listen, when you walked in just now, I'm sorry if you got a wrong impression.

EILEEN: I believe it was the right impression. So did you meet our mom?

JULIE: Oh yes, it was amazing. That's so awful what our dad did. Leaving her in the lurch like that.

EILEEN: (*studies her*) I guess Amos wasn't your father after all.

JULIE: Amos?

EILEEN: Black guy she brought home, the year she got pregnant.

JULIE: Ohmigod. She slept with him?

EILEEN: With our father in the house.

JULIE: You saw that.

EILEEN: He was living here.

JULIE: What, like a daily threesome?

EILEEN: Yeah, and then some.

JULIE: What do you mean, "then some"?

EILEEN: Nothing. Forget it.

JULIE: They were messing with you?

EILEEN: Yeah, I don't know. There were other guys too. Do you mind if we don't talk about this? Would that be OK with you?

JULIE: She brought men home all the time?

EILEEN: Yeah, whatever, it's over.

JULIE: You don't remember who specifically.

EILEEN: Specifically what?

JULIE: Messed with you?

EILEEN: If I remembered, I'd know, wouldn't I? Drop it.

JULIE: Yeah, OK, I'm sorry. *(pause)* Do you want to see my dad?
My other dad.

(JULIE takes out her iPhone, starts bringing up photos.)

EILEEN: What is he, an admiral?

JULIE: No! That's his yachting outfit. This is my mom. In her gardening hat. That's her tennis-ball vine. Seriously. She's trying to breed a kiwi that'll bounce. She was born in Charleston, but she's got this weird English accent? When I was like ten years old, I asked my dad why does Mom talk so funny? He actually slapped my face. I can't say anything bad about either of them. They always stick up for each other. They're like an egg. He's the white and she's the yolk.

EILEEN: Go back. You skipped one.

JULIE: Right. Um, that's Bryce. My fiancé? With my mom. My mom loves Bryce. She married a Bryce. They both love Bryce. When Bryce comes over, it's like I'm not there.

EILEEN: He's kinda gorgeous.

JULIE: I wouldn't really know.

EILEEN: What do you mean, you wouldn't know? There he is.

JULIE: I mean I've never seen him naked. He has this huge apartment with umpteen different rooms and he only ever wants to do it is in the bedroom with the lights off. And he won't use candles because he's allergic to paraffin? And he lies there with his socks on and his boxer shorts and half the time I have to go down on him for twenty minutes before he gets hard and he never returns the favor. And he can't make love in my place because he says it makes him feel like he's defiling me, can you believe it? *(drains her glass)* Hit me again.

EILEEN: *(pours for them both)* Dolph and I haven't had sex in months.

JULIE: Ohmigod, really?

EILEEN: Except oral. And he phones it in.

JULIE: Do you orgasm?

EILEEN: I pretend to.

JULIE: I'm terrible at that.

EILEEN: It's not his fault. He has to drive all these miles in ridiculous traffic. And nobody's renovating and they never respond to his solicitations. All the blood is going to the worry part of his brain, and none left over for his dick.

JULIE: We're in a limp-dick economy, that's for sure.

EILEEN: Yeah, how would you know.

(EILEEN starts to pour again. The bottle's empty.)

JULIE: There's another bottle in the fridge. Don't get up, I'll get it. Do you mind if I ask you a personal question?

EILEEN: Probably. What?

JULIE: You think all those guys she brought home—is that the reason you went in that direction?

EILEEN: What direction?

JULIE: The direction from being messed with. I know you said not to bring that up, but I can't help it, I'm curious in about a hundred different ways. And seriously, I'm not judging you.

EILEEN: Judging me about what? What the hell are you talking about?

JULIE: Because I don't know if I'd have the balls. The dancing, I could see myself doing that. But not to, you know, give happy endings.

EILEEN: Oh Jesus.

JULIE: Once Galen got started I couldn't shut him up. He said Dolph was cool with it. That's so weird. I mean it's great.

EILEEN: It's how we met.

JULIE: Really? That's kinda romantic, isn't it.

(Pause. They both drink.)

JULIE: So could you teach me?

EILEEN: Teach you what?

JULIE: To get over my fears.

EILEEN: Fears of what?

JULIE: Strange men. I don't mean weird strange. I mean strangers. Men in the street. Men in these offices where I temp. I always feel their eyes on me. I know I'm cute, I've been told I have a good body, but it freaks me out, and I figure if I just, you know, got in a situation where I was controlling the situation, where it was my job for men to look at me, just for a night, maybe I'd get over this paranoid feeling. About men.

EILEEN: You're kinda high now, right?

JULIE: I'd be so grateful. I'm a very good dancer.

EILEEN: There's more to it than dancing.

JULIE: The happy endings.

EILEEN: No. No happy endings.

JULIE: I thought when you get the guy alone—

EILEEN: No. There are laws. Laws that got me fired for something I wasn't even doing, but that's another story.

JULIE: OK. I'm actually glad to hear that. Not that you got fired, the part about not having to give handjobs. Because that I couldn't do. Not with a stranger. Not even with Bryce. I mean it's so boring.

EILEEN: What does Bryce have to say about all this?

JULIE: Are you kidding? He'd dump me in a heartbeat. My parents would disown me. Please. I want this. I'll even pay you for the lesson, if you'll let me.

(Pause.)

EILEEN: All right, get up. Show me what you've got.

JULIE: Seriously? You want me to strip? Here?

EILEEN: Unless you want to go in cold to the audition.

JULIE: OK. Wow. I don't know.

EILEEN: Listen, I've had a long day, I think I'll go crash.

JULIE: No. I want to do this. I need to. I'm desperate. Please don't go.

(Pause. EILEEN turns on the stereo.)

EILEEN: You ready?

JULIE: Yeah, just a second.

(JULIE chugs back her glass.)

EILEEN: OK, here we go. Bare Essentials is proud to present...the newest addition to our fabulous family...Tiffany! Go. Action. Now.

(JULIE starts to strip. Awkwardly.)

EILEEN: OK, wait. You're hiding your eyes like it's amateur night. You gotta meet them eye to eye. Isn't that why you wanted to do this? Control the situation?

JULIE: Yes. You're right. I'm sorry.

EILEEN: Stop apologizing, just do it....Just kinda writhe in place....There you go....Better....No, don't snarl...Put some lovelight in your eyes....OK, less lovelight.... Caress down here, like you're about to pleasure yourself...then stop, wink...that's good...Pretend you're rubbing a dick with your body....No no, that's too much, can't touch your nipples, just juggle your boobs...Press them together, that's good....Spank your ass....Good....Good.... OK, you're finished dancing, you know what happens now?

JULIE: I get a guy to drink with me?

EILEEN: If they're willing to pay for sit time. Where you really want to go is the Champagne Room. Rules there, you gotta keep your body three feet from their face. They're apt to ask you about your boobs, tell them you got them early, that's a guaranteed turn-on. Be careful about running your mouth too much. Most of them have wives and they're sick of listening to them.

JULIE: Dolph isn't?

EILEEN: Dolph isn't what?

JULIE: Sick of you?

EILEEN: Are you asking me or telling me?

JULIE: Neither. Forget it. Sorry I brought it up. Will you tell your people I'm auditioning?

EILEEN: They're not my people anymore. I'm banned from all their clubs.

JULIE: Why?

EILEEN: For giving a tug job. Which I didn't. I kneed the guy's ugly dick, that's all I did. Billy, that's the manager, he's a total effing douchebag and I'm warning you now, he will try to get into your million-dollar panties. I wouldn't fuck him, so he kept on fining me. Like two thousand dollars total.

JULIE: That's horrible.

EILEEN: Don't worry, we're planning to rectify the situation.

JULIE: You're gonna sue him?

EILEEN: Something like that. Do you need to shave? You don't want more than a landing strip.

JULIE: I haven't waxed in like a month.

EILEEN: Well so, you'll have razor bumps, but they won't show till tomorrow. How about your boobs?

JULIE: What about them?

EILEEN: It helps if they're natural. Billy needs to fill the gap.

JULIE: Oh. Yes. Definitely natural. Feel.

EILEEN: (*feels*) They're real. B cup?

JULIE: No, I'm a C.

EILEEN: Yeah, they feel nice.

(*JULIE suddenly kisses EILEEN.*)

EILEEN: (*levelly*) And we'll have to fix your hair. The customers don't like it up.

(*EILEEN unpins JULIE's hair. JULIE kisses EILEEN again. SOUND of a car door slamming, off.*)

EILEEN: Shit.

JULIE: Those were thank-you kisses.

EILEEN: Yeah, right. Are all rich girls as twisted as you?

JULIE: I wasn't being incestuous.

EILEEN: Of course you weren't.

JULIE: Bryce never compliments my boobs.

EILEEN: Just hurry up and dress.

JULIE: How can I ever repay you? Seriously.

EILEEN: I'll think of something. Um, you better take off the engagement ring. The men are apt to go soft at the sight of it.

JULIE: Right, I get it. I'm supposed to look available.

(*JULIE takes off her ring. Starts to put it in her purse.*)

EILEEN: I don't know if that's the safest place. In case somebody snakes your bag. Why don't I hold onto it.

(*EILEEN takes the ring, drops it in her own bag.*)

EILEEN: Oh, and one more thing?

JULIE: What?

EILEEN: If I catch you fucking my husband, I'll kill you both.

(GALEN enters, iPod in his ears, with grocery bags. Stares at JULIE as she finishes buttoning up.)

GALEN: *(to JULIE)* You changed your hair. It's down instead of up. *(to EILEEN)* And yours is up instead of down.

EILEEN: Thanks for noticing. How was church?

GALEN: You wanta know what I prayed for?

JULIE: You're supposed to keep that to yourself. Like birthday wishes.

GALEN: I don't think God was happy with my prayer. I think I was asking for too much.

(EILEEN closes her bag, with JULIE's ring inside.)

EILEEN: Don't be too sure.

(DOLPH and MARYJO enter.)

MARYJO: Well, hello you two! *(to EILEEN)* Dolph said you were back. Eileen, can you believe it? This sister of yours? Is this a miracle or what?

EILEEN: Yeah, she's a godsend.

JULIE: And so is Eileen.

MARYJO: Isn't that adorable! They've bonded already! Look at you. My two girls. I feel like I'm living in a dream. How'd the interview go, Eileen?

EILEEN: It didn't.

MARYJO: Didn't they like you?

EILEEN: Not for the job they were advertising.

MARYJO: What did they want you for?

EILEEN: Skip it, Maryjo.

MARYJO: Well, at least we'll eat tonight. When would you all like dinner?

JULIE: Um...I don't think we're eating here tonight?

EILEEN: We're not. *(to JULIE)* Let's get it done.

MARYJO: Get what done? Where are you rushing to? I bought corn, I was gonna bread some pork chops, I was thinking we could play some games afterwards.

JULIE: That's so sweet. Another time.

EILEEN: We'll see you later, Momma.

DOLPH: Whoa, wait, where are you two going? *(to JULIE)* Don't let her buy you dinner, we can't afford it.

EILEEN: Dolph, calm down, I'm dealing with the situation.

DOLPH: Calm down!?! They're coming for my truck tomorrow!

(EILEEN and JULIE exit.)

MARYJO: So I guess we're only three for dinner.

DOLPH: Make that two.

MARYJO: Why, where are you going?

GALEN: He's going to Karen Lassiter's.

MARYJO: At this hour?

GALEN: He's gonna start work on her skylights. *(mimes breasts)*
Headlights, more like it.

DOLPH: Dude, leave it alone. *(takes out phone)* We're desperate, Maryjo, in case you hadn't noticed. Only time Karen could be at home.

MARYJO: Why does she have to be at home? All you need is your ladder and your tools. "People eager for money pierce themselves with griefs."

GALEN: Amen to that.

MARYJO: Oh well. *(to GALEN)* I guess it's just you and me, hon.

GALEN: No, ma'am, it's something I have to do too.

MARYJO: Well, I can take a hint, can't I. Excuse me for trying to make a difference!

(MARYJO exits. GALEN picks up the pliers DOLPH dropped. DOLPH is keying in a number on his phone.)

GALEN: So did you talk to Julie?

DOLPH: *(on phone)* Yes, hello, Karen? It's Dolph...Yeah, I'll hold. *(to GALEN)* Talk about what with Julie? She knows we're up against it. Didn't volunteer a thing.

GALEN: I think Julie's head is someplace else. I saw them being lesbians.

DOLPH: You're hallucinating.

GALEN: Why else would Julie's hair be down.

DOLPH: It's what girls do. They play hairdresser. What are you talking about, lesbians.

GALEN: Julie, anyhow. So, you gonna poundfuck Karen Lassiter?

DOLPH: That was Plan A, wasn't it?

GALEN: Yeah, that was Plan A.

(GALEN peers in the hole with the pliers. DOLPH starts to warn him about the electric shock, hesitates.)

GALEN: What about Plan Billy?

DOLPH: I can't be two places at once, can I.

(GALEN reaches into the hole with the pliers...and at the last second DOLPH stops him.)

DOLPH: Dude? That line's still hot.

(GALEN backs away from the hole.)

GALEN: You weren't even gonna warn me, were you?

DOLPH: Did I warn you or didn't I? Jesus.

GALEN: We're gonna go talk to Billy, right? Get what's coming to us?

DOLPH: When the time is ripe.

GALEN: I hear you.

DOLPH: No, not wink wink. When I decide.

GALEN: I hear you loud and clear.

DOLPH: Galen...will you stop listening with your crazy-brain!

(GALEN recoils as though hit on the head with a hammer. DOLPH gets back on his cell.)

DOLPH: *(on phone)* Yeah, I'm still here, are you home?...Great, I'll be there in fifteen minutes....No, my brother's not with me, I'm coming alone.... Eileen's out for the evening, thanks for asking....Yeah, I'm looking forward too. I promise you won't be disappointed.

(DOLPH exits.)

GALEN: I hear you.

(GALEN puts on his iPod. Sings along. Takes a pistol out of the pocket of his hoodie, then an ammo box, and loads the pistol. He points the gun at an imaginary target.)

GALEN: Well, hi there, Billy. How you doing tonight?

(Blackout. END OF ACT I.)

ACT II

(The next morning. Predawn light. MARYJO is praying.)

MARYJO: Dear Lord, it's Maryjo. I believe I've figured out why you're so upset with the people on this planet. It's not the mess we've made of family life, not that I haven't, who knows that better than you. I look up at the night sky, and what I see, there's a modesty about the heavens. Whereas a city at night, all those lights in the high-rises, the headlights going one way and the brake lights the other, it makes your constellations look puny by comparison. We humans are greedy, we're trying to surpass you in our works. The hurricanes...the forest fires... the salmonella...You're telling us to pay attention to the things that truly matter. Case in point: my long lost daughter Julie. I thank you for sending her, and I'm praying she can see her way clear to helping us in our family's dire time of need. Give me strength to bear my solitude, and help me one day to drive myself to church. And may I please get back to sleep this morning.

(MARYJO exits. EILEEN and JULIE enter. JULIE's wearing glitter makeup and three-inch heels. She proceeds to pour two glasses from an open bottle of champagne.)

JULIE: —Billy was like, OK, you can start tonight, but I have to ask you a question. He goes, "Do you steal?" What was I gonna say, yes? I'm like, "Steal what?" He goes, "For example, Dom Perignon." Did you take his Dom Perignon?

EILEEN: As partial payment. What else did Billy say?

JULIE: He said, no touching guy's dicks.

EILEEN: Meaning what? Referring to me?

JULIE: Not by name, but yes, he's totally obsessed with you. And ohmigod, he's just full-on scared of Dolph.

EILEEN: How do you know he's scared of Dolph?

JULIE: OK. He goes, this girl, used to work here, her husband put a guy in the hospital, ended up in prison, and that's why I bought a shotgun. Ohmigod, I'm getting the whirlies again, I have to sit down. No, don't turn on the light. Can we just sit here in the dark for a while?

EILEEN: (*worried*) I didn't know Billy kept a shotgun.

JULIE: I was like, what's going on, does he know I'm your sister, is that why he's telling me about Dolph, do you and I look that much alike?

EILEEN: Yeah, I don't know. A shotgun, that's intense.

JULIE: Whoa, look at my feet. They're so blistered!
(*sniffs*) And I've got this weird smell in my nose.

EILEEN: Alcohol, nicotine, testosterone. It's the magic mixture.

JULIE: I know! Oh, and I was talking about my boobs, like you recommended? Suddenly this guy grabs my hand and puts it down there and I swear to God it was like a Right Guard can. He tipped me like two hundred dollars. (*fishes in bag*) Here it is. This is all of it. The whole night. Can you see? I can't seem to focus.

EILEEN: There's more than a thousand dollars here.

(MARYJO *enters*. EILEEN *sees her*.)

JULIE: That's awesome for the first time, right? But ohmigod, the things you hear people say. There was this whole group of women on a Girls Night Out, right next to the stage, and the whole time I was up they were like whispering to each other, evaluating me, and they were all so fat and ugly I wanted to murder them one by one!

EILEEN: Um, Julie?

(MARYJO *turns on a light*. JULIE *shrieks at the sight of Maryjo*.)

MARYJO: Sorry, hon. Didn't mean to scare you. Where have you two been?

JULIE: Um, clubbing?

MARYJO: Were you driving with that bottle open? Are you both hammered?

JULIE: No, just me.

MARYJO: Girls Night Out, did I hear you say? Is that why you took off your engagement ring?

JULIE: Ohmigod. What did I do with it? What did I do with my ring? I'm totally blanking.

EILEEN: You took it off.

(DOLPH enters, unseen. Stands there silently.)

JULIE: But where did I put it.

(JULIE dumps out her bag. EILEEN sees DOLPH. Signals him to keep silent. DOLPH sinks into a chair.)

JULIE: It's not here! I lost it! I lost my ring! Ohmigod...

EILEEN: Dolph?

(Silence. DOLPH has a thousand-yard stare.)

EILEEN: Honey, what's the matter? Say something. Are you just getting home?

DOLPH: *(coming to)* Yeah, I'm just getting home. Galen come in?

EILEEN: Galen wasn't with you? You went to Karen's alone, didn't you? Oh shit.

DOLPH: Don't worry about it.

EILEEN: No, you don't get it. *(sotto)* Billy bought a shotgun.

DOLPH: How do you know that? *(to JULIE)* What are you all dressed up for?

EILEEN: Maryjo, why don't you go back to bed, OK? I need to talk to my husband.

MARYJO: Yeah, well I'm staying right where I am. Julie, that's the third time you've looked through your bag.

EILEEN: *(to DOLPH)* What happened at Karen Lassiter's? *(no answer)* I'm not gonna jump down your throat, I just want the bottom line. Did you get paid?

DOLPH: No, I didn't get paid.

EILEEN: What happened? She didn't invite you in?

DOLPH: Oh, she invited me all right. Offered me a rum and Coke.

MARYJO: Why's Karen Lassiter giving you alcohol?

EILEEN: Momma, butt out, I'm conducting this investigation.
So what did you do?

DOLPH: I said no thank you, I'm working.

EILEEN: And what did Karen say to that?

DOLPH: She got a little upset. I went up on the roof to start on the skylights while she finishes her drink. She comes out on the patio and her shirt's unbuttoned to the navel. I pretend not to notice. Next thing I know she's screaming at me, calling me all kinds of names, faggot this, faggot that, I hope you end up living in your truck, you poverty-row asshole.

EILEEN: So what did you do?

DOLPH: I climbed down, I put away the ladder, and I drove away.

MARYJO: Good for you, Dolph.

EILEEN: So where have you been in the meantime?

DOLPH: I-95 South. (to JULIE) I blew out the sun. Then after the sun went out I drove some more. I was sleep-driving. Until I got stopped.

EILEEN: Oh God, for what.

DOLPH: My headlights were off. Cop writes me a ticket. I'm sitting there sweating. Is he gonna run a check? Because by now I'm halfway to Miami and definitely in violation of my parole. He hands me the ticket and I'm free to go. Finally I pull over into a rest stop and I park under a palm tree and the moon is staring down and I'm staring back. I never felt so fucking miserable in my entire fucking life. (pause) But then I made myself feel better.

MARYJO: How?

JULIE: I know how. What your dad caught you at.

DOLPH: That's right. Three times. One after the other.

JULIE: I felt like that. All through college. I was so homesick I couldn't control myself. Poor Dolphie.

DOLPH: Yeah, poor Dolphie. (*examining bottle*) Did this champagne come from where I think it came from?

JULIE: Can't I tell him, please? I feel like part of the family now.

EILEEN: Julie, just button it.

DOLPH: That's what I thought. I'll say she's part of the family. Congratulations.

MARYJO: Congratulations for what? What in heaven's name is going on here? Eileen? I want to know where you and Julie went tonight and why you're so worried about Galen. Hello? I'm talking to you both. I'd like an answer please.

JULIE: It was only me and don't blame Eileen. Bare Essentials was all my idea.

MARYJO: What were you doing at Bare Essentials? Where did you hear about such a place?

EILEEN: From me, Momma.

MARYJO: (*to EILEEN*) You've been working there? At Bare Essentials? Bartending?

EILEEN: No, Momma, not bartending.

MARYJO: Don't tell me you've been stripping.

EILEEN: OK, then I won't tell you. I'm a stripper, Momma, that's my profession. Has been for years and years. And now you're part of this family.

DOLPH: (*to MARYJO*) What did you think helped pay those bills, when we were still paying them? A bartender's tips? I know you can count higher than that.

JULIE: Please don't fight. I told you, it was my choice.

MARYJO: Yes, and why on earth? A girl with your—

JULIE: A girl with my what? My advantages, my privileges, is that what you were going to say? My advantages are what gave me all these fears.

MARYJO: Fears of what?

JULIE: Fears of men looking at me. Undressing me with their eyes. And by strange I mean any man my family didn't choose for me. Well, I got over those fears tonight, and you can't blame Eileen because the second Galen told me what the deal was I knew in my heart what I had to do.

MARYJO: Galen knew? Everybody knew excepting me?

EILEEN: Momma, you've got your head stuck so far up God's ass you never know what's going on.

MARYJO: Blaspheme all you want. It's Christ who keeps us all from going to Hell. But even Jesus has his limit.

EILEEN: And you're one to talk, aren't you.

MARYJO: Meaning what?

EILEEN: Why didn't Dad fight harder when Amos showed up? Why did he roll over and play dead? All those other guys you brought home, why didn't he ever once kick your butt? Did Jesus forgive you for Amos? Was that within his limit?

MARYJO: Forgive me? What are you talking about?

EILEEN: Maryjo—the truth—was I messed with by any of those guys? Amos, for example?

MARYJO: Amos? Oh my goodness. Not a chance.

EILEEN: By Dad?

MARYJO: Oh honey no. What put that idea in your head. Your daddy? Curtis didn't hardly mess with me, except for those couple few times.

DOLPH: What did you mean he didn't mess with you?

MARYJO: Oh Lord no...Eileen was his precious little angel.
Sometimes I think...

EILEEN: Say it. Sometimes you think what.

MARYJO: God forgive me, I believe he turned gay so he
wouldn't mess with you.

EILEEN: Gay.

MARYJO: That's my theory. Ugly as it sounds.

EILEEN: Dad was gay.

MARYJO: You never suspected.

EILEEN: No, Momma.

MARYJO: Gay as paint. You remember I was tending bar at
Vern's? I used to let you crayon at the back table? Amos came in
one night—don't you remember, he had the pinkest hands! And
those booming eyes! That man could suck the dreams out of a
sleeping baby. Anyhow, your daddy came by the bar to take me
home—we only had the one car—and Amos came along home with
us, and they took it from there. Don't you remember, Curtis and
Amos used to wrestle each other in the kitchen?

EILEEN: I remember Curtis pushing him.

MARYJO: They did more than push each other. That was your
daddy, he liked to throw his weight around. A bear is what he was.
That beard of his, and those Pendleton shirts, but queer as a
maypole all the same.

EILEEN: They ran off together? Dad and Amos?

MARYJO: Right before my third trimester. And then he followed
his bliss to Key West. God knows if they're still together. He was
kinda slutty, your daddy, bless his heart.

JULIE: Were you still married? When you had me?

MARYJO: No. It was a little tricky, but I got it annulled. So
technically speaking, yes, you were born out of wedlock. I never
hid that from your folks.

JULIE: (to EILEEN) That's why you started stripping. Not because you were messed with. To prove you could turn men on. Control their eyes.

DOLPH: And you liked it, didn't you.

JULIE: Yes, I liked it. So did you, didn't you, Eileen.

EILEEN: While it lasted, yes, I did.

DOLPH: You gonna pursue this new career?

JULIE: I just might.

DOLPH: Yeah, why not. Beats temping. Beats waitressing. Beats a whole lot of things. You make a better living, not that you ever need to make one, do you, sweetheart?

JULIE: Why are you being so hostile?

DOLPH: Hostile? I'm not being hostile. I'm sick of this family beating around the bush. You feel like you're one of us? Do your part. Call me a beggar I don't care. It's no news to you, we're in a terminal situation here.

JULIE: I wish I could help.

DOLPH: Oh come on, you "wish"?

JULIE: Do you want to see my credit card statement? Do you know how close to my limit I am? I can barely pay my rent.

DOLPH: What about a trust fund?

JULIE: Not until I'm married, I can't touch it. Don't you get it? I'm in the same boat you are.

DOLPH: Same boat. Your daddy's yacht, that's the boat you're in. You don't want to help us out, fine, just don't try and bullshit us. You're a flaky rich girl who got her rocks off for one night and now you know how the other half lives, you're going home to safe and sorry.

JULIE: I wish you didn't feel that way.

DOLPH: It's the truth. Just go.

JULIE: Is that what you want, Eileen? *(no answer)* Listen, you guys all think I'm so naïve. Ohmigod I knew from the second Galen walked into my apartment he was there to hit me up for money. And you guys were so cute about it, I couldn't help playing along. Maybe I was selfish, maybe I was slumming, all I know is I had the best time of my life tonight. Up on that stage, looking down at all those hungry faces, I suddenly realized I don't have to settle for anything in my life and I surely don't have to answer telephones to pay for art school. Thank you, Eileen, and now I think I will just get out of all your lives forever.

(JULIE exits, holding back tears.)

MARYJO: Eileen, are you just going to sit there after that?
She's your sister, she was crying.

EILEEN: Momma, let it be. Your prayers have been answered again.

(JULIE re-enters.)

EILEEN: Or not.

JULIE: Can't go anywhere without my keys.

(JULIE scoops her effects into her bag and starts out again. Stops in her tracks.)

GALEN enters, in his hoodie, iPod in his ears, carrying an object wrapped in newspaper. His arms are cut up and his pants legs are bloodstained.)

EILEEN: Galen?!

MARYJO: Galen, ohmigod, you're bleeding!

DOLPH: Dude, what happened? Are you OK? Say something.

(DOLPH pries the iPod away, tosses it on the couch. GALEN is staring at JULIE.)

JULIE: Um, I think maybe I should go.

(GALEN bars the way.)

GALEN: So how did your night go, "Tiffany"?

JULIE: You were there, huh? I didn't see you.

GALEN: 'Cause you were totally trashed.

DOLPH: What were you doing there, dude?

GALEN: Oh like you don't know. (to JULIE) When you fell on your knees, was that a dance move?

JULIE: No! I got dizzy from twirling around that pole.

GALEN: How much did that guy tip you? The one whose package you were kneeling.

JULIE: You saw that? You were there in the Champagne Room?

GALEN: On my way to the john, yeah, I stopped to have a look. I have to say, overall, for your first time you were pretty good. In fact you inspired me.

JULIE: Inspired you how?

GALEN: When I saw Billy oggling [*sic*] you on stage. The stupid smirk on his fat ugly face. He looked like a man about to eat his children. And then when you came off the stage, how he fondled your ass. That kept me focused. Then of course I found out he's bankrupt. That made me happy.

DOLPH: How do you know Billy's bankrupt?

GALEN: I heard him in the men's room. He goes, "I just lost my best girl." That's you, Eileen. He's like, "I fucked up. I want her back. She brings in the customers and I'm going broke."

DOLPH: Did Billy see you in the men's room?

GALEN: How could he? I was in a stall.

EILEEN: What were you doing in a toilet stall?

GALEN: Waiting.

MARYJO: Waiting for what, hon?

GALEN: For the place to clear out. Finally it got quiet but the cleaning lady didn't come in, which I think somebody oughta bust her about that. So finally I opened the bathroom door and peeked out. All the windows blacked out, no streetlight coming in, it was like one big huge vagina. I thought I was home free. But there was

nothing in the register. *(to DOLPH)* You should have told me Billy had a safe. I had to smash a window to get out, that's when I cut myself.

MARYJO: Did anybody see you?

GALEN: The guys in the chopper.

DOLPH: What chopper?

GALEN: I heard one circling.

EILEEN: Are you sure you didn't dream it?

GALEN: No! I knew you'd say that! I didn't just dream it! I'll prove it to you!

(GALEN picks up the TV remote.)

DOLPH: Dude, it's not gonna be on TV.

GALEN: How do you know? Maybe it is. *(to JULIE, who's gone to the window)* Julie, stay away from the window, there could be SWAT team watching.

DOLPH: Galen? Settle down. *(snatches remote)* There wasn't any chopper. You didn't get any money. You didn't take anything.

GALEN: I didn't say I got nothing.

DOLPH: What. What did you take.

(GALEN unwraps the newspaper from the object he brought in. Inside is a talking wall fish.)

GALEN: It's for you, Julie.

JULIE: Oh. Thank you, Galen.

(GALEN flips the on-off switch.)

TALKING FISH: *Who's the hottie?*

JULIE: Thank you for thinking of me.

DOLPH: You're welcome. Take the fish and go.

JULIE: Are you sure?

TALKING FISH: *Who's the hottie?*

DOLPH: Turn it off and go home.

JULIE: Eileen?

EILEEN: Yeah, I think you'd better.

JULIE: Well, OK. Maryjo? I'm sorry I couldn't stay longer.
Eileen? Thanks for everything.

(JULIE turns off the fish and heads for the door. GALEN steps in front of her and takes out the pistol. JULIE freezes.)

JULIE: Ohmigod. Be careful.

DOLPH: What are you doing? Put the gun away, dude.

GALEN: Shut up. You're not the boss of me. *(to JULIE)* We need to discuss what you owe this family.

DOLPH: She doesn't owe us anything. Give it here.

GALEN: No. You're my bitch now.

DOLPH: Galen, you were never my bitch.

GALEN: *(to the others)* Was I his bitch or wasn't I. Everybody knows my story. If he woulda had a scissors instead of a mallet I'd be missing a dick instead of a coupla marbles. Admit it. You wanted me dickless or dead.

DOLPH: Dude—what I really did to you, it wouldn't have harmed a hair on your head.

GALEN: With my head as soft as I was? You could've split my skull.

DOLPH: Give me the gun and I'll make a full confession.

GALEN: Stay away. How can I trust you.

DOLPH: I'm your friend.

GALEN: We can't be friends. We're brothers.

(GALEN *cocks the gun.*)

DOLPH: OK. Here it is. Here's all that happened. There was no hammer. There was no mallet. One time, one time only, I let you hold my dick.

GALEN: No you didn't. Why did you do that?

DOLPH: You asked if you could hold it.

GALEN: And you said yes.

DOLPH: I said yes. Twelve years old, you're not thinking all that critically.

GALEN: You're lying. If I was twelve I wouldn't forget it.

DOLPH: I was twelve. You were six.

GALEN: Six? I was six years old and you let me jerk you off?

DOLPH: There wasn't any jerking. Not that I recall.

GALEN: Fuck difference does that make. You fucking pervert!

(GALEN *raises the gun.*)

OTHERS: (*variously*) "No!" "Galen!"

(GALEN *fires wildly. DOLPH winces reflexively. Then realizes he isn't hit.*)

DOLPH: Dude. What the fuck.

GALEN: You're right. My bad.

(GALEN *points the gun at his own head. More screams of "No!"*)

DOLPH: Hey. Galen. Don't.

GALEN: Stay away. If you never hit me then I'm naturally defective.

DOLPH: Dude, you're not defective.

GALEN: Why did you let me hold your dick?!

DOLPH: I did it out of love. Seriously. That was how I was feeling at the time. I love you, dude. Never too late to say it.

MARYJO: We all love you, Galen.

JULIE: I loved you the minute I set eyes on you.

EILEEN: Everybody loves you, Galen.

(GALEN *turns away. Sounds of sobs.*)

DOLPH: Hey. Come on. Every kid gets messed with, one way or another. Dude? I'm sorry I did it and I'll never yell at you again.

(GALEN *spins around, laughing.*)

GALEN: Gotcha! I'm smarter than you all!

DOLPH: OK, you just proved it. Now calm down.

GALEN: You swear you never brained me with the mallet?

DOLPH: Honestly, dude? I think Dad made that up. That's what I think happened.

GALEN: It explained me.

DOLPH: What was he gonna do, blame his DNA?

GALEN: Yeah....Remember he made us cut the grass with a scissors? And the blades had to be yay high?

DOLPH: And all the same height.

GALEN: Took us a week to mow the lawn.

DOLPH: And by that time the grass was ready to be cut again.

GALEN: Why did he do that, Dolph.

DOLPH: That's what power means to some people. Making other people feel like shit.

GALEN: Yeah, but his own kids.

DOLPH: Even more reason.

JULIE: (*at window*) Um, Eileen?

EILEEN: What?

(*JULIE is pointing out the window. EILEEN looks.*)

EILEEN: Oh boy. Dolph?

DOLPH: What is it?

EILEEN: Police car at the curb.

GALEN: You see? I was right! I am news!

(*DOLPH looks.*)

DOLPH: All right, everybody stay put.

JULIE: No, wait. They're not getting out. They're pulling away. False alarm.

DOLPH: You sure?

EILEEN: Um, no. They're re-checking the house numbers.

DOLPH: Shit. They're gonna think I planned this caper. OK. Fine.
As ye sow, so shall you reap.

EILEEN: Dolph, don't you get Biblical on me. Let's think this over.

DOLPH: There's nothing to think about. I'm fucked. I might as
well give myself up, save you all the embarrassment.

MARYJO: Dolph? Stay where you are.

DOLPH: Maryjo, keep out of this.

MARYJO: No, you keep out of this. No more foolishness! Galen?
Look at me. Give me the gun.

GALEN: No way. I want to reap too.

MARYJO: Galen, do you want to burn in Hell?

GALEN: No, ma'am.

MARYJO: Then hand over the fucking gun.

(Stunned, GALEN hands over the gun to MARYJO.)

MARYJO: Eileen? Julie? Step back from the window. *(starts for door)* Stay put till I come back.

EILEEN: Momma, you can't go out there.

MARYJO: What's stopping me? Fear of the marketplace, isn't that right, Julie?

JULIE: That's right.

MARYJO: I'm not a whore. I never was a whore. *(to EILEEN)*
I was laboring under your delusion. No more. My mind is now
clear as the open air. Dolph, put this in a safe dark place.

*(MARYJO hands DOLPH the pistol, slams a hat on her head,
and exits. EILEEN and JULIE watch from the window while
DOLPH hides the gun in the wet-bar fridge.)*

GALEN: What's she gonna do?

DOLPH: I don't know, but we're letting her do it.

GALEN: Can I ask you something, Dolph?

DOLPH: Yeah, what.

GALEN: Are you sure you didn't come?

DOLPH: When you were fondling me? I doubt if I even got hard.

JULIE: They're getting back in the cruiser!

DOLPH: Are they leaving?

EILEEN: No. They're just sitting there.

(MARYJO enters.)

DOLPH: What's happening? Why aren't they coming in?

MARYJO: I told them we might have a case of TB in the family. *(to GALEN)* They want you down at the station house anyhow. I promised you'd cooperate. You may have to spend the night.

GALEN: No way! Dolph's the one they came for, isn't he?

MARYJO: But he wasn't the one who smashed the window, was he? He didn't steal any talking fish. Do you want your brother to go back to the pen?

GALEN: Um, no? But I don't want a butt-fucking either.

MARYJO: Honey: that only happens at the prison level. You're not going to prison, OK? Because this is what you say—Galen, are you listening to me? You're gonna tell them the truth. You went to Bare Essentials, to see the girls, and you fell asleep on the toilet. That's a common thing with you.

GALEN: That never happens to me.

DOLPH: Focus, dude.

JULIE: You have narcoleptic tendencies.

MARYJO: Narcoleptic tendencies, thank you, hon. *(to GALEN)* If the subject comes up, you spent some weeks in psychiatric care. Be sure to mention that.

GALEN: Why didn't I make a phone call?

MARYJO: Give me your phone.

(GALEN hands over his cell. MARYJO smashes it on the table.)

GALEN: What about the phone in Billy's office.

MARYJO: You didn't want to use it. You didn't have permission.

GALEN: That's retarded.

MARYJO: That's what we're going for, hon. You couldn't call out, the doors were double-locked, you panicked.

EILEEN: What about Billy's wall fish?

JULIE: I took it.

MARYJO: She took it. If they ask. And don't worry, I'll be there by your side the whole time. Dolph, the keys to the truck, please? (to GALEN) If they arraign you, I'll post your bail. Julie, it's time you paid for your stripper lessons.

JULIE: Oh. Yes. Right.

(JULIE takes her winnings out of her bag. Hands over some of the money.)

JULIE: Will this be enough?

GALEN: Plus for the website.

JULIE: Right, the website.

(JULIE hands over more.)

JULIE: Can I keep one of these bills? I'd like to frame it.

MARYJO: Keep a five-spot. Galen, say goodbye to Julie.

GALEN: Goodbye, Julie. It was nice meeting you.

JULIE: Good luck, Galen. I'm so glad you got in touch with me.

MARYJO: We're all glad you did. Let's go, before they come barging in here with surgical masks.

GALEN: Bye Eileen. Bye Dolph. I was helpful, wasn't I?

DOLPH: You're saving my ass. Now go.

(GALEN exits. MARYJO follows.)

MARYJO: Julie? You stay in touch now, promise?

JULIE: Yes, Momma, I promise.

MARYJO: Dolph? Eileen? Don't expect dinner from me tonight. I might stop by the rectory, see what Pastor Huggins is up for.

EILEEN: OK, Momma.

DOLPH: Drive safely, Maryjo.

MARYJO: *(to JULIE)* My best to your folks.

(MARYJO and GALEN exit. Stunned pause.)

JULIE: Well...I guess I should be going, too. Eileen, thank you again for a fantastic evening. Dolph, I loved getting to know you, please be good to my sister.

(JULIE starts out, remembers the fish, picks it up, starts out again.)

DOLPH: You're forgetting something else, aren't you?

(JULIE stops. DOLPH shoots a look at EILEEN. Pause. EILEEN opens her bag and takes out the ring. Hands it to DOLPH, who hands it to JULIE. JULIE looks at it...considers...then marches up to EILEEN, who flinches as JULIE grabs her hand. JULIE slips the ring on EILEEN'S finger.)

EILEEN: What about your fiancé?

JULIE: What about him.

DOLPH: Bryce is gonna want the ring back.

JULIE: Well, he can't have it.

EILEEN: What are your folks gonna say?

JULIE: I don't know and I don't care. Any luck, they'll stop speaking to me for a long long time.

EILEEN: *(re ring)* I don't know what to say. In all the furor I forgot I had it.

JULIE: Sure you did. No worries. It's been great.

(JULIE starts out, stops, gives DOLPH a deep lingering kiss.)

JULIE: Now we're even. Goodbye, Sis.

(JULIE exits. DOLPH sinks exhausted onto the couch. EILEEN sits next to him. SOUND of mourning doves cooing outside the window.)

EILEEN: *(re ring)* Wonder how much Flo's Gun and Pawn would give us for this ring.

DOLPH: Bad karma, babe.

EILEEN: Yeah, maybe you're right.

DOLPH: 'Cause it sounds like Billy needs you back.

EILEEN: It does, doesn't it. *(pause)* I never believed you bashed Galen with that mallet.

DOLPH: Neither did I. *(pause)* Listen to those doves.

EILEEN: It was your dad. He laid that on you.

(Pause)

DOLPH: I remember the day he caught us throwing snowballs. He was coming home from work and Galen didn't recognize his car. Hit him square on the windshield.

EILEEN: Yikes.

DOLPH: So now comes the punishment. There was this pond out back of our house. Dad empties out two coffee cans and he tells us to move the pond. There was this vacant lot next door. "Boys, you're gonna move this pond from here to there." So we start in. We dip our cans in the water and dump them in the vacant lot. All day long we're moving water from one place to the other, till way after it got dark. Dead of winter, icy cold water and no way we could ever make a dent in that pond. The whole time Dad was watching from the back porch with this grin on his face. Galen nearly froze his fingers off. I had to ride him to the E.R. on my bike.

(EILEEN kisses DOLPH. Pause.)

EILEEN: Wanna do it?

DOLPH: Do you?

EILEEN: Yeah. Are you up for it?

DOLPH: I could give it a try.

EILEEN: Not just oral, OK?

(EILEEN turns on the stereo. Starts to dance.)

The door opens. GALEN enters. Watches. EILEEN catches sight

of GALEN. Stops dancing.)

GALEN: They said I could have my iPod.

(DOLPH finds the iPod on the couch, hands it to GALEN. GALEN starts out. EILEEN resumes her dance. GALEN stops to watch. MARYJO appears in the doorway.)

MARYJO: Hon? The powers that be are waiting.

(GALEN eases toward the doorway. MARYJO and GALEN watch as EILEEN starts to take off her clothes. After a few moments GALEN puts on his iPod. Music rises. MARYJO exits. GALEN lingers a moment before going. EILEEN strips for DOLPH, the lights slowly fading as she climbs into his lap. The birds sing. The music soars. END OF PLAY.)