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PRANDY. I never thought you'd act like this—

CLINT. I wouldn't've acted like this if you'd been straight with me! But you just couldn't do that, could you? So you set up this whole big bullshit routine, you got your sister here to protect you, you had it here at Kelly's place, so he'd have to watch! You made me look like such an asshole, such a fucking dumb ass jerk!

PRANDY. I didn't mean to—

CLINT. How many times have you done this to me?!

PRANDY. I—

CLINT. I don't want to hear it! This was the last time, baby. You were never straight with me, not for one minute, were you?

PRANDY. Clint, you know that isn't true. How can you blame this all on me? You love to make love to me, just like I love it. And now when something comes from it that neither of us wanted, you act like it was all me—

CLINT. Yeah? . . . You listen to me, Prandy. Just this one time. Okay? I've been around a lot. And I never got a chick knocked up before. You know why? Because I was goddamn careful. Not just for me, for them, too. I didn't want to dump some chick with a baby and then split on her! I didn't want to be one of those guys who brag about the kids they've never seen! Like my old man did! . . . So I was careful. (*Takes her arm, holds it, forcing her to look at him.*) Look at me. Look at me! . . . You were the first one I trusted. You swore to me you were taking those pills. I trusted you. (*Drops her arm.*) PRANDY. . . . if we want to . . . we can be happy about this.

CLINT. No way. No way, baby. You jumped at this one all by yourself. You know, I might've liked it, you having my baby . . . if you really wanted that. But you didn't even ask me. I know why. You didn't want a baby, even mine. You just wanted to nail me good. You knew I was gonna cut loose for the first time in my life, and you tried to take it away from me.

PRANDY. That's not true! It just happened!

CLINT. Fuck it, what's the use! . . . Don't come home tonight. I'm warning you. (*Grabs jacket, starts for door.*) I'll see my stuff out by tomorrow.

PRANDY. (*Terrified.*) Clint! You can't go just because of that! I'll do anything you say. I just want you to love me.

CLINT. I know you, baby. It gets in the way. (*Closes door, Maura goes past her and out. Maura waits a moment, sees in. Prandy is still standing where he left her, perfectly motionless.*)

MAURA. Prandy . . . ?

PRANDY. He's going.

MAURA. Maybe he'll change his mind.

PRANDY. No. He's going, and I did it.

MAURA. Why did you have to tell him this way—?

PRANDY. I don't know, I thought . . . oh God, what an gonna do without him?

MAURA. It'll be okay. I'll help you. (*Prandy laughs. Then, with effort.*)

PRANDY. Baby . . . thanks. But you can't help me. God, I should've known, I should've known! But how can he be such a pig about it? He really thinks I'd have a baby just to keep him here! (*Looks at Maura.*) You think he's right. I swear I didn't . . . Oh, God damn him!

MAURA. If you say you didn't—

PRANDY. Why would anybody want his kid! He is a moron, he can hardly talk! Can you imagine the kind of kid we'd have together? Christ!

MAURA. Don't talk like that.

PRANDY. Oh who cares how I talk? It's over. It's over . . . oh my God . . .

MAURA. Look, why don't you come back to my place? You can even move in, if you want to—

PRANDY. Oh, great. The whore and the nun in a one room apartment. (*Seeing that Maura is hurt.*) I'm sorry. But I can't really picture it, can you?

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MAURA. I just don't think you ought to be alone.  
 PRANDY. Alone . . . I never thought he'd leave me. I was afraid he would. But I never believed he would.  
 MAURA. We should talk about the baby. That's what's important now.  
 PRANDY. And I'm stone broke. That bastard, I know he won't leave me a dime.  
 MAURA. Listen, I've got money saved.  
 PRANDY. You do? How? I make more in two nights' tips than you make in a week!  
 MAURA. I don't buy anything.  
 PRANDY. That's true. You've had the same sneakers since eighth grade.  
 MAURA. And I save any extra money I get . . . like from Gram on my birthday, you know . . .  
 PRANDY. She gives you money? She doesn't even send me a card.  
 MAURA. I've got three hundred dollars. You can have it.  
 PRANDY. Three hundred dollars! . . . Oh, thank you, baby! (*Hugs Maura.*) I hate to take your money, but there's no one else to ask. I sure couldn't get it from Gram.  
 MAURA. Yeah. Gram'll be pretty upset over this. But she might get used to it—  
 PRANDY. (*Overlap.*) Are you crazy? If Gram finds out, I'll die! If you tell her—  
 MAURA. I'm not going to tell her! But . . . I mean, she'll have to know, eventually—  
 PRANDY. Oh no, she won't! No one's going to know. (*Slight pause.*)  
 MAURA. (*Grusbead.*) You don't want to keep it?  
 PRANDY. His baby?  
 MAURA. But . . . it's not just his, it's yours. It's part of you—  
 PRANDY. Terrific, that's all I need—  
 MAURA. —and it's a member of our family. I mean, Prandy, I might never have a baby.

PRANDY. Oh, you think we ought to raise the kid together? You and me and Gram? (*Laughs.*) Jesus, the whole world'd feel sorry for the poor little bastard!  
 MAURA. Don't! (*Pause.*) Okay. Okay, you're upset now, and you're mad at Clint. We don't need to make any big decisions right away.  
 PRANDY. (*Softly, almost to herself.*) Oh, yeah?  
 MAURA. Well, you don't look very pregnant—  
 PRANDY. Three months. I quit eating so it wouldn't show. I have to do it right away.  
 MAURA. No, please wait, a couple months, at least! What about it hurt?  
 PRANDY. . . . A couple months? . . . Don't you know *anything*—?  
 MAURA. I'm sure you don't have to sign adoption papers all the baby's born. And that way, you'll have time to think about it. Who knows, maybe you *will* want to keep it—  
 PRANDY. Shut up, Maura! (*Pause.*) No one else but you. (*Pause.*) I'm going to have an abortion. (*Pause.*)  
 MAURA. You can't do that.  
 PRANDY. No? Come and watch.  
 MAURA. Prandy, you can't do that! You'd hate yourself!  
 PRANDY. Worse than now? Don't try to talk me out of this. I've lived with this for months, and I know what I have to do. I have to get rid of it *now*, before I . . . I don't want to talk about this—  
 MAURA. "Get rid of it!" How can you talk like that? He's a person, he's someone real—  
 PRANDY. I don't believe that!  
 MAURA. Yes you do, I know you do! He's already there! But do nothing! Let him grow, let him be born—  
 PRANDY. I can't! I can't stand six more months of this! I'll do this week, that's all. (*Pause.*)  
 MAURA. You meant to do this all along. All that stuff you said about " . . . the thing you just can't walk away from is another life . . ." That was all fake, all lies!

PRANDY. No! No, it wasn't! I do believe that, Maura. That's how it ought to be. And I was really hoping Clint would want it. If he'd wanted it, I would've tried. But I would've fucked it up, but I would've tried . . . But *alone?* I'd *hate* that kid, I'd make a psycho out of him, and he'd hate me—

MAURA. Then at least have the baby and give it up! I'll help you, I'll be with you every step—

PRANDY. I would go out of my mind! Maura. I wake up every morning with a clot in my throat. I have to swallow to breathe. Before I even open my eyes, I feel it pressing on me, and I think, "What is it?" And then I remember. I'm pregnant. Oh my god, I'm fucking pregnant! (*Starts to cry.*) How can he leave me alone, he knows how scared I am without him!

MAURA. (*Puts her arm around Prandy.*) Okay, it's scary. But if you accept it, like you said, it could be so wonderful—

PRANDY. He hates me for having his baby.

MAURA. (*Stunned.*) Is that why you want to get rid of it? So he'll come back?

PRANDY. Stop talking! Don't you understand? I don't want to think about it! If I think about it, I'll go crazy!

MAURA. You don't have to go crazy. You do it to yourself!

PRANDY. You scare me, baby. You think it's so easy to be strong. I can't clamp off my feelings, like you do!

MAURA. Prandy!

PRANDY. I wish you could have my dreams. You know what I keep dreaming? That I have the baby, and I kill it.

MAURA. I don't believe you.

PRANDY. Oh, you don't? (*Cool, controlled, suppressing tremendous anger.*) In the dreams I'm ugly. Fat and ugly. I think about that a lot, you know, where I'd be if I weren't pretty. Life must be hell for the ugly crazies.

MAURA. Quit saying "crazy!" Quit talking like this! This isn't how you are!

PRANDY. You don't know how I am, you don't want to

know. Last night I drowned the baby. In my dream, I drowned it. We were at Gram's house, you and me—

MAURA. (*Moving away.*) I'm not going to listen to this—

PRANDY. (*Pursuing her.*)—and I had the baby in the thumb. You and Gram were downstairs watching television.

—at the cord with nail scissors, you know those little gold — of Gram's? They were in the dream. Then I filled the — with water, and I held the baby under—

MAURA. Shut up! (*Slaps Prandy. They stare at each other, galled. Then.*) I'm sorry! Prandy—

PRANDY. Making a baby is making another mess . . . just myself. (*Collects her cape, sees Clint's scarf, after a beat, sets it there.*) I'll come and get the money tomorrow.

MAURA. I won't give it to you.

PRANDY. (*Long beat, then.*) You little bitch.

MAURA. (*Very shaken, but steadfast.*) It's murder. I won't — for it.

PRANDY. You think I deserve this. You're jealous, because I have a lover, and you have nothing!

MAURA. That's not true! A baby's not a punishment! I'd — to have a baby!

PRANDY. You really do want me to give it to you!

MAURA. Yes, I'd take him, before I'd see you—

PRANDY. Well, don't kid yourself. I'd never give you my baby. Never in a million years! He'd grow up to be tied in — not, like you!

MAURA. You tried to use that baby to make Clint stay. Now you want to kill it to make him sorry. I'm not going to — help. It's murder. And somewhere in your mind, you — planned it. (*Pause. Prandy is very shaken by this. Maura is — equally shaken. Prandy gathers her forces for one last at — tempt. Quietly.*)

PRANDY. You don't know how low I get. You never let me — all you. Clint's the only one who knows, and now he's gone.

When I have those dreams that make me wake up sick and — making . . . and I feel that panic pressing on me, on my

chest, my mouth . . . if I'm all alone and I can't get away from it . . . what would you call that . . . if I hurt myself? Would you blame yourself for that? Would you call it murder?

MAURA. (*In tears.*) If I give you that money, I'll never forgive you.

PRANDY. (*Coming to her.*) Yes, you will! You will, if you love me. (*Prandy embraces Maura, who stands rigid, weeping.*)

FADE

END OF ACT ONE

ACT II

Scene I

*Three months later, June, a balmy evening. Kelly is alone. The place is messy. The painting and the folded easel are stored in the corner. Clint's scarf is on the hook. The plant that Maura brought in Act I is dead. On the stove is a large pot of chili with a ladle in it. On the table and floor are a bowl and spoon, an empty Oreo bag, various dishes and glasses.*

*At rise, Kelly is sitting on the floor, D. Spread before him are a large muslin cloth and, resting on this, some pieces of unfinished wood, shaped to make a cradle when they are fitted together. Kelly has a paintbrush and dishes of paint. He is preparing to paint a design along the borders of the cradle. An old Dylan song plays on the stereo, the song with the refrain: "Oh mama, can this really be the end, to be stuck inside o' Mobile with the Memphis Blues again?"\* The stereo is turned way up and Kelly is singing along and imitating Dylan. Prandy enters along the platform. She carries her shoulder bag, wears old jeans and a workshirt, has her hair raked up on her head, slapdash. She enters without knocking.*

RANDY. Hi, baby.

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