

## SCENE I

*A clean, cold kitchen, about 8 o'clock on an early September evening. There are 3 exits, a side exit, stage left, which leads to the outside and the basement stairs, a back exit leading to the back yard and another side exit, stage right, leading to the front hall and the stairs to the upper level. There's an oval kitchen table with four chairs in the centre of the room. The kitchen sink, under the window, is on the back wall.*

**JIMMY:** You won't tell, will you?

**CECY:** What do you think?

*Jimmy looks up at her with pleading eyes. The shattered remains of a broken drinking glass sparkle at their feet. Cecila maintains her most forbidding air.*

**JIMMY:** But it was an accident! You know it was!

**CECY:** Do I?

**JIMMY:** *(groaning)* But Cecy, if you hadn't made me so mad I wouldn't have thrown it at you. It's your fault.

**CECY:** *(walks towards the kitchen counter and carefully sets down her drinking glass, intact)* Don't blame me 'cause you can't control your temper. You'd better clean that up before Mom and Dad get home.

**JIMMY:** You won't tell?

**CECY:** I won't have to. Mom'll notice a glass is missing.

**JIMMY:** But we could always say we broke it doing the dishes.

**CECY:** Ha! When do you ever do the dishes?

**JIMMY:***(muttering, defeated)* I help you sometimes.

*Sounds of doors opening and closing, loud, angry voices, one male and one female, paper bags, thumps and bumps.*

**ANNE:***(continuing from outside)*..and leave me there? You never think, do you? You just barrel right ahead, doing whatever you like.

**BILL:** Enough, all right? Enough.

**ANNE:** You couldn't think for one second what I was

feeling, could you? Not for one second.

**BILL:** (*shouting*) Jimmy! Cecy! Come and help with the groceries!

**ANNE:** And watch where you're stepping. Watch it! The eggs!

**BILL:** I see them. (*sets down another bag of groceries*) Quit panicking. You always panic. (*goes back outside*)

**ANNE:** Kids! Cecy! Jimmy! Where are you? You know you're needed here!

**CECY:** Coming!

**JIMMY:** Here I am! (*looks at the bags and chooses one from the middle to lift up*) Get any ice cream?

**ANNE:** No, take this one first. (*takes away his chosen bag and gives him another*) Be careful. It's got the eggs in it. Here Cecy, you take these two.

**JIMMY:** (*looking in another bag*) Did ya get anything good?

**ANNE:** Don't be silly. It's all good. Cecy, did you get the rest of the beans finished like I asked?

**CECY:** Yeah, they're done.

*They all bring bags into the kitchen and start unpacking them and stuffing cans and boxes and packages into the cupboards.*

**BILL:** That's it. Everything's in.

**CECY:** Mom, when you're done, I need to talk to you, okay?

**ANNE:** Did you remember to check the backseat? Remember the last time you left the frozen meat there.

**BILL:** Oh Annie, for crying out loud, I haven't left meat on the backseat in 20 years. You just never let up do you?

**ANNE:** Look, I'm just making sure we don't have any more expensive mistakes.

**CECY:** Mom?

**JIMMY:** Oh boy! Cap'n Crunch! Can I have some now?

*(he starts clattering about getting bowls and spoons)*

**BILL:** I checked the backseat. I checked the front seat. I checked the trunk and I checked under the hood, all right?

**ANNE:** You don't need to get nasty with me.

**CECY:** Mom..

**ANNE:** What? What is it, Cecy? Jimmy, get out of the cupboard. You're not having breakfast cereal at this time of night.

**CECY:** I need to talk to you. Seriously.

**ANNE:** Oh, Cecy, not tonight. Can't you see we're tired? We've just been fighting crowds and lugging in groceries. It can wait, can't it?

**CECY:** *(suddenly bold)* No, it can't. I'm moving out. Tomorrow.

*Jimmy stops his clattering, Bill and Anne stop putting groceries away and everyone turns to stare at Cecy, who's fiddling with the edge of her blouse.*

**ANNE:** What?

**BILL:** You're what?

**JIMMY:** Wow!

**ANNE:** Jimmy, go upstairs and get ready for bed.

**JIMMY:** Aw, Mom?

**ANNE:** Now! Go!

**JIMMY:** Aw..

**BILL:** Get upstairs mister, right now!

**JIMMY:** Jeez...*(leaves the kitchen)*

*Anne and Bill sit down, not looking at each other. Anne looks at Cecy, Bill looks out the darkening window.*

**ANNE:** What do you mean you're moving out? How? How can you?

**CECY:** *(takes a breath)* I'm moving in with Rick.

**ANNE:** Well that's just nonsense. You'll do no such thing. You're just 16. You've still got school in front of you.

**CECY:** *(not looking at her father. Bill continues staring out the window)* I didn't say I was quitting

school. I said I was moving out.

**ANNE:** *(sits back)* Well I never heard of such a thing. No job, no money and going to live with a boy. You'll end up pregnant, poor and alone in no time. Is that what you want out of life? Is it?

**CECY:** Oh Mom, you don't understand.

**ANNE:** Unless you're pregnant already. That's it, isn't it? That's why all this nonsense.

**CECY:***(angry)* Just because it happened to you doesn't mean it has to happen to everyone you know. God, Mom, give me a break.

**ANNE:** I'll call him. *(getting up and going to the phone)* I'll call him and tell him what I think of his horny little problem.

**CECY:** Mom!

**BILL:** *(getting up to restrain her)* Annie, don't be ridiculous. You can't go calling people like this.

**ANNE:** *(sits down)* You're right, I don't understand. My own daughter. *(starts to sniffle)* I can't bear to look at you. *(she looks down at the table, pulls a tissue from her skirt pocket and blows her nose.)*

**CECY:***(looks angrily at her dad)* You could help.

**BILL:** Calm down, Anne. So Cecy moves out. She would be moving out sooner or later anyway. Better like this when we know where she is.

**CECY:***(in a low tone)* Don't try to convince me to stay or anything.

**BILL:** *(glances at her then quickly away)* Of course we don't want you to go, Cecy. It's not going to be easy for you. And what are you going to do for money?

**ANNE:***(furious)* Rent and groceries and doctor's bills and transportation, not to mention clothes and things for the baby. How can you even think about it? You can't even take care of yourself!

**CECY:** Are you telling me not to have it? It figures that that would be your solution. Get rid of anything that bothers you.

**BILL:***(placatingly)* Cecy.

**CECY:** Oh sure, go easy on her. Take her side. Well, go on, like you always do. Anything to stop from hearing the truth. *(turns away)* I gotta go finish

packing.

**ANNE:** Just a minute, young lady, you're not finished here.

**CECY:***(leaving the kitchen)* Oh yes I am.

*The doorbell rings startling Bill and Anne who look at each other.*

**ANNE:** *(dabbing her eyes and patting her hair)* Just what we need. Company.

*Cecy moves towards the exit but Jimmy has run down the stairs ahead of her.*

**JIMMY:** I'll get it!

*He returns to the kitchen with a tall, good-looking young man.*

**JIMMY***(singsongs):* Cecy! Rick's here!

*Anne starts up, smoothing her skirt and hurriedly shoving her used tissue in her skirt pocket. Bill gets up more slowly and goes towards Rick to shake his hand.*

**ANNE***(murmuring):* If we'd known we were going to

have company...

**BILL** (*shaking his hand*): Rick.

*Rick leaves Bill to go over to Cecy and put his arm around her shoulders. Still teary-eyed, she smiles at him timidly but watches her mother. Anne is at the kitchen counter, pulling out a canister from an upper cupboard.*

**ANNE**(*not turning around*): I'm sure you'll join us for some coffee, Rick?

**RICK:** No thank you, Mrs. Bolton. I'm not staying long. I just came to see if Cecy told you her good news.

**ANNE**(*continuing to set up the drip coffeemaker with her back to everyone*): She certainly started to tell us something. I don't know if you'd call it good news.

**BILL**(*pulling out chairs*): Sit down, sit down.

**JIMMY:** I'll get the extra chair from the dining room.

**ANNE**(*whirling around*): I thought I told you to get upstairs and get ready for bed? Now go!

**JIMMY:** Aw Mom..(*he shuffles off slowly, sits on the stairs just out of his mother's sight and strains to hear*)

**BILL:** Can I get you a beer, Rick?

**RICK:** No thank you, Mr. Bolton.

*Rick and Cecy sit at the table side by side. Bill sits at the end furthest from Anne where she is still fiddling with the coffeemaker. She finally turns it on, turns around, sits at her end of the table and smiles brightly at Rick.*

**ANNE:** So what's all this nonsense about Cecy moving out?

**CECY**(*quietly*): I told you, Rick. I told you they weren't going to like it.

**RICK**(*takes Cecy's hand under the table and holds it reassuringly*): I thought it would be pretty clear. Cecy's new job is much closer to my apartment than it is here and since she'll still be going to school, it makes the most sense.

**ANNE:** What new job? Cecy? (*looking at her with a hurt expression*) You didn't explain about a job.

**CECY**(*sullenly*): You didn't give me a chance.

**RICK**(*enthusiastically*): Cecy's had a fabulous offer to work at the Wilton Symphony!

**BILL**(*beaming at Cecy*) You have?

**ANNE:** Cecy?

**CECY***(flatly, looking down at her hands)*: It's a great job. Working with Brett Elvin to bring classical music into high schools.

**ANNE**: But what about school? How can you go to university if you don't finish school?

**CECY***(suddenly urgent, leaning in towards her mother)* But that's just it, Mom. It's the perfect job for university! I get to train under Brett Elvin! Do you know how many people would kill for that? It'll help me get accepted at McGill and it'll give me an edge for my studies. And I get paid!

**RICK***(proudly)*: She was one of 200 people from around the city who applied and she got it! It's really exciting! You should be very proud of your daughter.

**ANNE**: Of course we are. But Cecy, what kind of job is it? How can you still go to school?

**CECY**: Every Tuesday night I get to be at the rehearsals of the symphony. Then afterwards, I'll meet with Brett and some orchestra members and some other guys and we'll all talk about the repertoire. You know, if it's modern stuff about what it means and if it's Bach, then about interpretation and ancient instruments and stuff. And then each Friday afternoon, I'll be travelling to high schools to meet with kids in the bands and talk with them about what I've learned. It'll be so cool!

**ANNE:** And what about your classes? And your homework?

**RICK:** That's the amazing thing about this program, Mrs. Bolton. The teachers knew about it first. They're gonna let Cecy take extra classes during her lunch hours.

**CECY:** And they're letting me hand in my homework on Mondays so I can use the weekends to catch up! It's so great!

**ANNE**(*sitting back, frowning*): I see.

**BILL**(*getting up*): Mmm, coffee smells like it's ready. Rick, what do you take in yours?

**RICK:** None for me, sir, thanks.

**BILL**(*pulling out cups*): Cecy?

**CECY:** Just black, Daddy, thanks.

**ANNE**(*looking carefully at the table top*): Well I can see this looks like a fun job but I don't see how this helps your university, Cecy. I thought we agreed you were going to study business administration, not music.

**CECY**(*shoulders drop*): Yeah, I know. (*pleading*) But Mom, I could take courses in business along with music. I could even take a course in the music business.

**ANNE**(*accepts cup from Bill*): And how much are you going to get paid?

**CECY**: It's supposed to be fifty dollars a week.

**ANNE**(*looks up sharply*): Supposed to be?

**CECY**(*hesitantly*): Well, the program hasn't been finally approved by the schoolboard yet. But that's just a formality.

**BILL**: So I suppose, Rick, you live closer to Wilton than we do?

**RICK**: Yes sir, I do. I live just inside the city limits. About halfway between Rockwood High and the downtown.

**CECY** (*appealing*): You see, Mom? It all works out so well. I keep going to school, I make some money for tuition and I get to work with Brett Elvin! It's unbelievable!

**RICK**: Cecy, I got the truck for the whole day tomorrow, so we don't have to rush in the morning.

**ANNE**: Now wait just a minute, Rick. I don't want to be rude but this is a family matter and we haven't thought it through yet.

**BILL**: This *is* a bit sudden.

**ANNE**: Now I can see that this is all very exciting,

Cecy, but if the schoolboard hasn't approved it yet, there's no point in doing anything right away.

**CECY:** But Mom..

**ANNE:** And if the job did come through, I don't see how the pay would help pay for rent and groceries and...and..well, whatever else and still help you make your tuition.

**RICK:** Oh she wouldn't have to pay for...

**ANNE:** Excuse me Rick, I wasn't finished. I'm sure you can see too, that economically, it doesn't make any sense for Cecy to pay for what she's getting for free here.

**RICK:** But she wouldn't...

**ANNE**(*kindly*): And it just wouldn't be fair to ask you to pick up her tab. I think you'll all agree that we need to think this through carefully before making any decisions. (*getting up*) It's getting late.

*Everyone pushes back their chairs and stands up.*

**CECY:** But Mom, the truck's coming tomorrow and I'm just about all packed.

**RICK**(*taking her aside*): Cec, we can always get the truck another time. My mom said to make sure your parents say it's okay and I think she's right. We can wait a little while longer.

**CECY:** Oh but Rick! If I don't get out of here tomorrow, I'll never get out! *(looks over her shoulder at her parents who are cleaning up the coffee things)* You don't know them! They'll come up with some stupid logical reasons why I can't do anything I want to and I'll be stuck here forever! *(starts to cry)*

**RICK***(hugging her)* Buck up, Cec. This will happen. They just have to get used to the idea. Don't worry. It'll happen, I promise.

**CECY***(wiping her eyes)*: You don't know, Rick.

**RICK:** Come on. Walk me to the door. *(to Anne and Bill)* Good night Mr. and Mrs. Bolton.

**ANNE:** Good night, Rick. Say hello to your mother for me.

**BILL:** 'Night Rick. Stop by again.

*Rick and Cecy exit. Jimmy backs a little further up the stairs so Cecy won't see him.*

**ANNE:** Shouldn't that shirt have gone in the washbasket this week?

**BILL:** Mmm. *(he's fixing himself a snack of toast, peanut butter and a beer)*

**ANNE***(sitting at the table with her last cup of coffee, slowly flipping pages of a newspaper)* I want to start wallpapering the dining room tomorrow. That print

should go really well with the furniture I think.

**BILL:** Mmm. (*heads out the other kitchen door towards the living room*)

**ANNE:**(*not looking up from the newspaper*) Don't watch TV too late. And that's your last drink!

*But Bill has left the room.*

**CECY**(*calling from the hallway*) 'Night!

**ANNE:** Cecy!

**CECY:** Yeah?

**ANNE:** I'd like to talk to you!

**CECY**(*enters kitchen with trepidation*) Yeah?

**ANNE**(*looking up*): Sit down for a moment.

**CECY:** But Mom, it's late and...

**ANNE:** I said sit down.

*Cecy sits and looks warily at her parent.*

**ANNE:** Are you pregnant?

**CECY:** No-o...

**ANNE:** So why did you lie to me?

**CECY:** I didn't lie. I didn't say anything. You just assumed...

**ANNE:** Letting people assume is just the same as lying. Why didn't you tell me the truth?

**CECY:** But I did tell you the truth. I'm going to move out so I can take this fabulous job. It makes sense.

**ANNE:** It makes no sense whatsoever. Taking a job that pays very little in a field you're not even supposed to be studying makes no sense at all. And how are you ever going to learn to look after yourself if you start by having a boy support you?

**CECY:** But Mom, you and Dad support me right now. What's wrong with my becoming independent a little sooner? That way you only have Jimmy to worry about.

**ANNE:** You don't need to worry about Jimmy. That's my job. And living with a boy is not independence. An iffy job in music is not reality. Surely you know that by now.

**CECY:** It's not iffy. All the teachers have already set things up.

**ANNE:** What do you mean all? Who? Which teachers?

**CECY:** Mr. Hudson and, um, Miss Bella and, well all the teachers that need to.

**ANNE:** Two teachers you've mentioned. Two out of how many are in that school?

**CECY:** Well they're the ones I've spoken with. And they told me all my classes were looked after.

**ANNE:** And how would they know? Do they know every single class you take? Do they know what kind of homework load you're going to have?

**CECY:** Well, they're the teachers. Why would they tell me stuff if it wasn't true?

**ANNE:** And for that matter, do they know what responsibilities you have around here? It's all fine and good for strangers to say you can do extra homework on the weekends, but what about your chores? When are you going to get them done?

**CECY***(defeated, starting to cry)*: You just don't understand.

**ANNE***(decisively folding her newspaper and standing up)*: Someone's who's ready to look after herself doesn't break down into tears every time things get a little rough. Obviously you're not ready for the responsibility of a job, Cecy, never mind just looking after yourself. *(pushes chairs in, closes lights)* I think it's bedtime.

*Cecy, sobbing, walks towards the stairs where Jimmy runs quickly upstairs into his room so he won't be seen. Anne follows Cecy slowly up the stairs leaving only a faint blue glow from the living room lighting up the kitchen. Curtain.*

## SCENE II

*A high school music room at the end of band practice the next day. The teacher, Mr. Hudson, is a short, thin man, in his fifties, trying to project a calm, professional air although he is clearly overwhelmed by his boisterous students. About 30 students are noisily putting instruments away, throwing balled-up papers at each other, laughing and shrieking. A few guys are throwing mock punches at each other in a corner while a particularly loud group of giggly girls are huddled over a magazine. Students are rushing to put their instruments in cases, the cases in a back room, and then to run out the door. Mr. Hudson wanders in a perpetually interrupted circle from the podium where he answers hasty questions about homework, to his office in the backroom to get reeds for a student, back to the podium to discuss a concert, back to his office to find someone else some sheet music, back to the podium to finish the concert discussion until gradually there are fewer and fewer students. The noise level diminishes. Cecy has put her flute away and is standing at the back chatting with Terry, one of the drummers. She's a smiling, heavysset girl of Cecy's age, with dirty brown hair pulled back into a swinging ponytail. Terry has given Cecy her sticks and is explaining how to do a snare roll.*

**CECY:** But it feels awkward, Terr, like holding

chopsticks.

**TERRY:** Ah, you'll get used to it. Besides, it's only your left hand that has to hold the stick that way. Now try it. Try to bounce them.

**CECY:***(slowly hitting first the left stick then the right but only getting one note out of the left while getting two from the right)* Like this? No..no..like this? No..  
*(laughs)* God, this is hard!

**TERRY:** *(laughing)* I know! Until you get the hang of it, it's the craziest thing!

**CECY:***(still trying to get two notes sounding evenly from each stick)* How do you get your left hand to behave?

**TERRY:** You have to relax. Your arms, your wrists, your fingers..everything. Here, I'll show you.  
*(takes the sticks and plays a sharp, snappy roll followed by a snazzy series of rimshots, paradiddles and quick rolls ending with a loud cymbal crash)*

**CECY:***(admiringly)* Cool! How long did it take you to learn to do that?

**TERRY:***(with calm pride)* A while, I can tell you! When I first started, I could barely find the drumhead, no kidding!

*Mr. Hudson walks up to the girls, around to the set of tympani next to the trapset and picks up a set of mallets.*

**MR. HUDSON:***(smiling)*           Sounded pretty good, Terry, but can you do this?

*He proceeds to do a dramatic impromptu tympani solo, finishing by releasing the tuning pedal on the larger drum and getting a comic sliding low note. They all laugh as Terry walks around and sits down at the trapset.*

**TERRY:** Oh yeah? Well, take this!

*She begins beating a solid 4/4 on the kick drum and starts improvising. Mr. Hudson listens for a few moments and then joins in on the tympani. Cecy grins at them for a while, then finds a larger mallet and begins hitting the concert bass drum but only on beat 1 of every 4. The last remaining students grin at the trio on their way out and soon they are the only ones left in the room. Mr. Hudson is the first to create a final flurry of notes, Cecy hits a strong final note and finally Terry crashes 3 cymbals. They're all breathing heavily and grinning at each other.*

**CECY:** That was fun!

**TERRY:** Yeah, man! We should have been recording ourselves!

**MR. HUDSON:** *(pulling a handkerchief out of his trousers and mopping his forehead)* Improvising is the soul of the musical experience. *(sitting down in one of the student chairs and smiling)* Not to mention, just good old-fashioned fun!

**TERRY:** *(begins to cover drums, gather sticks)* So what's gonna be on the test next week, Mr. Hudson?

**MR. HUDSON:***(earnest)* Well, like I explained in class today, Terry, the test will cover the Baroque period so that means the composers, the musical styles...

**TERRY:** *(kindly but impatiently)* Yeah but, are you gonna have essay or multiple choice questions?

**MR. HUDSON:***(permitting himself a grin)* I guess you're just going to have to find out when the rest of the class does, aren't you?

**CECY***(laughing and sitting in another chair):* Well, we had to try, didn't we, Mr. Hudson?

**MR. HUDSON:***(turning to Cecy)* Pretty soon, you'll be teaching us, eh, Cecy? You'll be telling us

what the professionals think of the Baroque period.

**TERRY:***(enviously)* You're so lucky. When's the first rehearsal?

**CECY:***(unhappily)* Um, well, nothing's settled yet. It may not come through.

**MR. HUDSON:***(concerned)* You're not thinking of turning the Outreach Project down, are you? You realize what an honour this is?

**CECY:***(quickly)* Oh, it's not that, Mr. Hudson! 'Course I know what an honour it is. Who wouldn't? It's just that I may not be able to...to organize things so I could do it.

**MR. HUDSON:** But what's to organize? The teachers here have all worked out alternate arrangements. Your young man's mother has agreed to let you stay in their guest room. What could be better?

**CECY:** *(looking down at the floor)* My parents don't think it's a good idea.

**TERRY:***(drops a stick with a crash)* Your parents again! What drips. *(bends down to pick it up)*

**CECY:***(halfheartedly)* They mean well.

**MR. HUDSON:** Cecy, did you explain it carefully to them? All the details?

**CECY:** I tried, Mr. Hudson, really I tried. I told them I'd be making money. I told them I could stay with the Wainwrights. I told them I'd be studying with one of the greatest Canadian conductors and that it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. But my mother thinks I'm too young. She doesn't think I'm responsible.

**TERRY:***(begins noisily rolling the drums all back against the wall so they're out of the way)* Not responsible? Ha! You should see what they make her do around the house, Mr. Hudson! Cooking and cleaning and looking after her brother all the time. If that isn't responsible...!

**MR. HUDSON:***(serious)* Cecy, this isn't just another free concert ticket or extra bit of sheet music. This could be major career move for you, one that could provide a deep foundation for your future. You won it fair and square, based on your own merits. And it's an experimental program. Which means it may not happen again. Are you sure you explained all of this to your parents?

**CECY:***(uncomfortable)* They're not stupid people, Mr. Hudson. Whatever I didn't say exactly, surely they

could figure out.

**TERRY:***(snorts derisively)* I don't know about that. Remember when they didn't remember you were eating dinner at my place, Cec, and they got all bent out of shape about *their* dinner not being ready?

**MR. HUDSON:***(standing up)* I think perhaps I should have a word with them.

**CECY:***(hopefully)* Oh would you, Mr. Hudson?

**TERRY:** Cool! They'll listen to you. They'd be stupid not to.

**MR. HUDSON:***(gently admonishing)* Now Terry, I don't think it's a question of intelligence. I'm sure once Cecy's parents have all the facts presented to them in a calm, logical order, *(peers over his glasses meaningfully at Cecy)* they'll come to a decision that's best for all concerned. *(looks at the large clock on the wall)* It's already after 5. Why don't I drop you girls off home and on the way I can speak with your parents, Cecy?

**TERRY:***(enthusiastically)* Great! I'll just run to my locker to get my books! *(exits)*

**CECY:***(nervously)* Uh, don't you think I should warn

them first, Mr. Hudson? Give them a call?

**MR. HUDSON:***(walks to office and begins to pack briefcase)*What for, Cecy? It's not a formal visit. I'm only going to stay a minute and then I must rush home to see what Mrs. Hudson has planned for us this evening.

**CECY:***(not convinced)* If you say so, Mr. Hudson. I'd better go get my books too. See you.

*Cecy exits. Curtain.*

### SCENE III

*The Bolton kitchen, 6p.m. the same day. Anne, in her office clothes with a half-apron on, is at the steaming stove, harried, stirring, frying and generally rushing. Jimmy is playing with a small toy truck on the table, making engine noises and running it along the table, over the plates and back again. Bill is at his end of the table, reading the newspaper.*

**JIMMY:** Vroom, vr-r-r-r-roooooom...

**ANNE:** I can't hear you. Jimmy, could you play more quietly? What did you say again?

**BILL:***(reading)* I said there was no butter this morning for breakfast. Dominion's has butter on sale this week.

**ANNE:** What do you mean there was no butter? Did you check the freezer?

**BILL:** *(absently)* You know I hate cold butter. This is a really good price for butter. We should put some away.

**ANNE:** Jimmy, must you play right there? You can see I'm trying to fix supper.

**BILL:** Aha! They're closing Pottery Street for construction. I knew it. Those potholes could swallow a truck.

**ANNE:** Bill, could you give me a hand here? I'm trying to serve the stew.

**BILL:***(looking up)* What? Oh yeah, sure. Jimmy, you heard what your mother said. *(folding newspaper)* Put the truck away and go wash up.

**JIMMY:** Okay. Vr-r-r-o-o-o-o-m. *(drives truck over table, up the wall along to the stairs and exits)*

*Sound of door opening. Cecy calls from the hallway.*

**CECY:** Mom! Dad! Mr. Hudson's here!

*They both enter the kitchen. Anne and Bill look at each other for a moment before Bill sweeps the newspaper off the table. Anne quickly puts lids on all her pots and turns the elements off before wiping her hands on her apron and turning around.*

**BILL:***(stretching out his hand)* Mr. Hudson. I'm Bill Bolton and this is my wife Anne.

**MR. HUDSON:** Pleased to meet you. Mrs. Bolton.

**ANNE:***(wipes her hands again before accepting Mr. Hudson's handshake)* Anne, please. Won't you have a seat? *(gently accusing)* Cecy? You didn't mention Mr. Hudson would be coming by?

**CECY:***(dropping her books on the counter, she goes to stand in a corner)* Mr. Hudson drove Terry and me home after band practice.

**MR. HUDSON:** My dropping by wasn't Cecy's idea, Mrs. Bolton. It was quite my own. *(to Bill who is proffering a chair)* No thanks, Mr. Bolton, I won't be staying long. My wife and I have a fairly regular routine on schooldays. She would find it quite

astonishing should I begin to depart from it now.

**BILL:** So what can we do for you, Mr. Hudson?

**MR. HUDSON:** I wanted to make sure you had all the facts about the Music Outreach Program that Cecy has been invited to join. It's a very important project, one that honours our school as well as Cecy here.

**ANNE:***(carefully)* It's good of you to say so, Mr. Hudson. But I understand from Cecy the program hasn't yet been approved by the schoolboard.

**MR. HUDSON:** In essence, that is true. The board has not yet ratified the budget. But you may not have understood that it was through the board's initiative that this program was conceived. Mr. Nelson, the board's Director, is a personal friend of Brett Elvin. It was their initial discussions that created the program.

**BILL:** I see.

**ANNE:** So you're telling me the budget will pass and Cecy will be paid?

**MR. HUDSON:** Most certainly. Now I'm sure you realize the pay is quite minimal. It is only

intended to cover any miscellaneous costs on Cecy's part, travel primarily, extra accommodation, that sort of thing.

**ANNE:***(snappily)* So Cecy is expected to find her own way to all the high schools in Wilton every Friday? Or are we supposed to drive her?

**MR. HUDSON:***(calmly)* Quite the contrary, Mrs. Bolton. Each high school will be making arrangements for its own project visit. We expect that Cecy will be bringing music, notes and possibly audio tapes to each school. The host band will arrange for technical facilities and photocopying and so on. They'll be responsible for meeting Cecy and transporting her to and from the school. As well, each band will be compiling a report on the results of the meeting *(glancing at Cecy)*, as will Cecy, to help the board evaluate the results of such an unusual and exciting program.

**ANNE:***(sitting down)* Well now, Mr. Hudson, you seem to have it all thought out. But I wonder that the board hasn't considered the effects of such a burden upon a child.

**MR. HUDSON:***(jovially)* Now, now, Mrs. Bolton. Cecy is 16 years old, and one of my most responsible and capable students. The search committee which chose Cecy was comprised of teachers, all of whom

have had no little experience in evaluating aptitude. You must allow that they know what they are doing.

**BILL:** The thing is, Mr. Hudson, we can't be driving Cecy about all the time. I work shifts, Anne here works days and Jimmy is still in school. Our schedules are already pretty tight.

**MR. HUDSON:** Yes, I realized that that must be a concern of yours. That's why we must be so grateful to Mrs. Wainwright.

**ANNE:** Who?

**CECY:***(quietly)* Rick's mom.

**ANNE:** What's Rick's mother got to do with this?

*Mr. Hudson glances disapprovingly at Cecy who drops her gaze to the floor.*

**MR. HUDSON:** I'm sorry. I thought you were told. Mrs. Wainwright very generously offered her spare bedroom at no extra charge to the successful candidate. Her apartment is quite centrally located. She feels a duty to carry on the wishes of her late husband, who was an avid supporter of the arts. And being a single parent with a son who works most of the time, she is happy to welcome the company.

**ANNE:***(frowning)* But Cecy, you told me you were moving in with Rick.

**CECY:***(sullenly)* Rick lives with his mother.

**ANNE:***(haughtily)* I guess I should be the one offering you apologies, Mr. Hudson. My daughter led me to believe she would be living alone with her boyfriend. I'm sure as a parent you'll understand that I couldn't be expected to sanction that.

**MR. HUDSON:** *(gives Cecy a quick wink before nodding to Anne)* Mrs. Hudson and I have had our share of miscommunications with our high-spirited youngsters. *(glances at his watch)* And she really will be wondering what has happened to me.

**BILL:** You sure you won't stay for a drink?

**ANNE:***(rising)* Or a cup of coffee?

**MR. HUDSON:** Thank you so much but no. I hope you will allow Cecy to take advantage of this wonderful offer. The first orchestra rehearsals begin in two weeks so time is running short. There are forms for her to fill out, people for her to meet, preparations...I'm sure you understand. *(shakes Bill's hand)* I really must go. Nice to have spoken

with you both. Cecy, I'll see you in class tomorrow.  
Goodnight.

*Bill walks Mr. Hudson out. Anne stares out the window while Cecy nervously watches her. Bill returns.*

**BILL:** Well, he certainly seems to think a good deal of you, Cecy.

**CECY:***(casually)* Oh, he's all right. Most of the class give him a hard time and I don't.

**ANNE:***(remembering dinner, starts up towards stove, reheating and clattering pots)* Set the table, Cecy, and then go find your brother.

*Cecy looks at the table and seeing it is already set, escapes upstairs to find Jimmy.*

**BILL:** It seems like a pretty good idea, don't you think?

**ANNE:***(irritated)* I can't think when I'm cooking, Bill, you know that. Just let me get dinner on the table. *(starts ladling stew into serving bowls)* Could you put the bread and butter out please?

**BILL:***(opening fridge)* Seems to me we pretty much

have to let her go. (*searching*) Looks like we're out of bread too.

**ANNE:***(exasperated)* Oh for crying out loud! (*places last bowl on table, throws spoon back into pot with a crash, wipes hands on apron and goes over to fridge where she produces the loaf of bread*) You just have to look. Cecy! Jimmy! Supper's ready!

*Cecy and Jimmy come running down the stairs and take their places, side by side at the oval table. Bill sits at his end and Anne at hers. They begin to eat, not talking to each other, each intent on his plate.*

**CECY :***(cautiously)* Stew's good, Mom.

**BILL:** Are these the carrots we put up last year? They're all right.

**ANNE:** Mm-hmm.

**JIMMY:** Mom, can I go over to play with Tony after supper?

**ANNE:** No, Jimmy, not tonight. I need your help in the dining room tonight.

**JIMMY:** But Mom, Tony's got the new Rider car and he promised to let me play with it.

**ANNE:** Not tonight.

**JIMMY:** But Mom, all the kids want to play with it and I would get to be the first!

**ANNE:** I said no, Jimmy. Now eat your supper.

**BILL:** What's going on in the dining room tonight?

**ANNE:** I told you last night. We need to put up the new wallpaper.

**CECY:***(worried)* My essay's due tomorrow. I could try and finish it quickly and then help too.

**ANNE:***(eating, not looking at her)* You'll help with the family work before you do your own personal things.

**CECY:***(panicking)* But Mom, it's the first essay for my history course! It's important!

**ANNE:** Well I guess that means you'll be learning how to juggle work and schoolwork that much sooner. Pass the butter please, Bill.

**CECY:***(throwing away all caution)* But Mom, you never said anything about wallpapering this week.

You never gave me a chance to plan.

**ANNE:***(to Bill, primly)* Thank you. *(glaring at Cecy)* You think the world's going to give you a chance to plan? You think there's always going to be someone there to make things easy for you? Well, the sooner you learn about reality, the better off you'll be.

**CECY:***(tears roll down her cheeks)* But it's not fair.

**ANNE:***(angry)* The world's not fair. So what. You think the world was fair to your father and me? You think the world just gave us this house and this food? We had to work hard, just like everybody else. We didn't have the luxury of working parents who met their responsibilities. Your father had to go out to work in the grocery store when he was ten years old. What were you doing when you were ten years old, eh?

*Warily, Jimmy slinks away from the table, unnoticed, and exits upstairs.*

**CECY:**I know you and Dad had it tough but...

**ANNE:** Tough? Ha! You don't know the meaning of the word. Your father couldn't stay at home, his parents fought so much. And I didn't even know my father. He was long gone by the time I was around.

Nothing to eat but bread and baloney. Dessert was bread and molasses. We had no nice house to call home. Oh no. We had a tiny trailer in a dirty old construction area they called a park. All the other kids at school laughed at my old clothes that didn't fit. They picked fights with my brothers who were always dirty and missing teeth. Tough? Tough is having to drop out of school because your mom is so drunk she can't look after her own children. Tough is having to stay up all night watching that your mother's latest boyfriend doesn't find your room instead of hers. Tough is...

**BILL:***(pained)* Anne, you don't have to go over it all over again. We all know the story.

**CECY:** I'm sorry, Mom. I know you had it rough. But things are different now and...

**ANNE:** I'll say things are different. You don't realize how good you've got it. *(she's starting to sniffle and goes over to get a tissue from the top of the fridge)*

**CECY:** But that's why this job is so important. Don't you see? I want to work just as hard as you did to make something of my life.

**ANNE:** Well, why can't you work hard and stay at

home? There's no reason why you have to move out is there?

*Cecy looks hard at her father who suddenly gets up and goes to the cupboard to retrieve more dishes.*

**CECY:** You heard how much travelling I have to do. And Rick's place is much, much closer.

**ANNE:** *(disgusted)* It is that boy, isn't it? You want to start making out somewhere where I won't be able to stop you. Well, you'll see. You'll end up having babies. And pretty soon, you won't be able to do anything but stay at home and wash diapers!

**BILL:** *(with resignation)* Oh, Anne.

**CECY:** *(suddenly angry)* Well, what do you think would happen if I stay here?

*Bill freezes as Anne gasps, looks horrified at Cecy who slumps back in her chair.*

**ANNE:** Cecy?

**CECY:** *(low)* I didn't mean it.

**ANNE:** *(forcing herself to stay calm)* What did you mean?

**CECY:** Nothing.

**ANNE:** (*snapping*) You certainly meant something and I want to know what it is. What is it exactly you think is going to happen here at home?

**CECY:**(*angry*) Things, all right? Things could happen.

**ANNE:** Do you mean to sit there and accuse your... father of...of such despicable...unthinkable behaviour?

**CECY:**I didn't accuse him.

**ANNE:** Oh, don't give me that garbage. You as good as said that you were afraid to stay home because you might get pregnant. Well, just how is that going to happen, eh?

**CECY:**(*furious*) Why don't you ask him? Or are you afraid to?

*Anne slaps her daughter's face.*

**CECY:**Ow! (*tears come but she refuses to let herself cry*)

**ANNE:** How dare you!

**BILL:***(sits down heavily at the table)* Anne.

**ANNE:** Did you hear her, Bill? Did you hear what she's saying?

**BILL:** Anne.

**CECY:**Go on, Mom, ask him. I dare you.

**BILL:** Anne, I'm sorry.

**CECY:**Oh sure, tell her you're sorry. What about me?

**BILL:** Cecy, could you leave your mother and me alone for a while?

**CECY:**You gotta be kidding! So you can tell her what, that it was all my fault? No way. This is *my* life we're talking about.

**ANNE:** Oh my God.

**BILL:***(intense)* Nothing happened, Anne. Nothing.

*He reaches across the table to touch Anne's arm but Anne pulls away.*

**CECY:**Not yet, anyway.

**ANNE:** My God.

**BILL:***(pleading)* Honest, Anne, nothing happened.

**ANNE:***(shrieking)* What do you mean nothing happened? Get away from me, the both of you!

**CECY:***(beginning to cry in spite of herself)* Don't you try that, Mom! You knew! You knew all along!

**ANNE:** What?!

**CECY:***(crying and angry)* I saw your face that night, when I ran to the bathroom. You knew! Only you wouldn't say anything.

**BILL:** Cecy, for pete's sake...

**CECY:***(crying)* And ever since then, you haven't talked to me, not really. You say things like you're listening to me but you're always looking away, or cooking or something. We never really talk.

**ANNE:** I refuse to listen to this...crap anymore.*(tries to get up but Bill pulls her back down)*

**BILL:** For God's sake, Anne, we have to sort this

out!

**ANNE:** Sort out? What is there to sort out? My daughter accuses my husband of...of...of hanky panky and we're supposed to sort something out?

**BILL:** Annie, listen! Nothing happened! Nothing.

**ANNE:***(pulling her arm away, nearing hysteria)*  
You knew what kind of family I was getting away from when you married me, Bill. You knew. And you promised nothing like that would ever happen in our family.

**BILL:** And nothing has.

**CECY:** You call walking into my bedroom when I was asleep with nothing on, nothing? Trying to keep me quiet when I woke up by putting your hand over my mouth was nothing?

**ANNE:***(snapping at Cecy)* What were you doing sleeping in the nude?

**CECY:** Why should it matter, Mom? I have my own bedroom. It's supposed to be private.

**BILL:** *(sighs)* Cecy, for the last time, I was walking by your door. It was open. I thought I'd tuck you in

one last time. I didn't know you weren't wearing pyjamas. When you woke up, I thought you were going to scream and wake everybody up and that didn't seem like a good idea.

**CECY:** Why shouldn't I scream with you standing there and your robe open and...and everything hanging out!

**ANNE:** Bill!

**BILL:** Oh, for crying out loud, Anne, you know how that old robe always slips. She was startled out of a deep sleep and didn't realize it was only me.

**CECY:** Right, Dad, so why weren't *you* wearing any pyjamas eh? Why didn't you close your robe?

**BILL:** *(unhappily)* I wasn't thinking about the robe, Cecy. I wasn't thinking about anything. God. Maybe I had one too many nightcaps, I don't know.

**CECY:** *(muttering)* Great excuse. Drunk again.

**BILL:** *(trying to reach Anne)* You see Anne, don't you? Nothing happened. Cecy was imagining things.

*Anne stands up and begins gathering dirty dishes, not wanting to look at either of them.*

**CECY:***(starting to cry again, but still angry)* Oh, I see what you're doing! You never believe me! You always take his side! Well, if that's the way you are, I don't see why you want me around!

*Cecy gets up and rushes from the kitchen sobbing.*

**BILL:** Annie, please! You've got to believe me.

*Anne methodically scrapes dishes and takes them to the sink.*

**BILL:** You know how dramatic Cecy is. You know how she doesn't always tell the whole story.  
*(impatiently)* For Christ's sake, you should know me better than that.

**ANNE:***(goaded, looking at him)* That's just it, Bill. I do know you. I know you have more than the 'one last beer' at night. And I did see you staggering out of Cecy's room that night.

**BILL:** There, you see? How could I have done anything if I was staggering?

**ANNE:***(fiercely)* That never stopped my mother's boyfriends!

**BILL:** Oh Annie, Annie, I'm not them. Really I'm not. So my robe fell open and Cecy saw me. So I saw Cecy naked. She's my daughter! I used to change her diapers. She doesn't have anything I haven't seen before.

**ANNE:** That's not the point. I trusted you to keep your filthy desires under control. That was the bargain.

**BILL:***(angry)* Maybe if you'd admit to your own desires we'd get somewhere.

**ANNE:***(turns her back and begins filling the sink with water)* Oh, back to that again, are we? You never miss a chance to bring that up.

**BILL:** Oh Annie...

**ANNE:***(piling dishes in the sink and beginning to wash them)* Well, in case you hadn't noticed, we do have two children. And they didn't just appear on our doorstep one fine morning, all nice and clean.

**BILL:***(gets up, finds a clean dishcloth in a drawer and begins automatically drying dishes as Anne washes them)* I know we have two kids. And I know how we got them. I'm not stupid, you know. I'm just saying the thing with Cecy was an accident. I would never

do to Cecy what your father did to you. Never.

**ANNE:***(scrubbing, not looking at him)* So why weren't you wearing your pyjamas?

**BILL:***(reaching to put away a glass in an upper cupboard)* Don't you remember how hot it was that night? The place was stinking hot. People were hanging around outside until midnight trying to get cool, remember?

**ANNE:** *(slowly)* Oh yeah.

**BILL:***(encouraged)* That's probably why Cecy wasn't wearing her pyjamas either. And in fact, *(grins at her)* as I recall, when I finally did get to bed, you weren't wearing much of anything either. *(flicks the teatowel at her bottom)*

**ANNE:***(absently)* Stop it. You know, I wonder if it wouldn't be better that Cecy stay at the Wainwright's. Jimmy's getting older. He's nearly 10. It might be a good idea if there was some distance between those two.

**BILL:** *(continues drying dishes and putting them away)* It's probably only for the school year anyway.

**ANNE:** *(draining the sink)* The thing is, there'll be one

less pair of hands here. Either you're going to have to help more or we're going to have to hire somebody.

**BILL:** There's always Nadia from next door. She's always looking for extra work.

**ANNE:** Nadia's only 12! And not the smartest kid in the world. Still, I suppose if she were supervised...

**BILL:** *(hanging up dishtowel)* I'll mention it to Roy tomorrow. *(walks towards basement exit)* I have to fix that light fixture before we finish that one wall, so start scraping on the opposite wall, okay?

*Bill exits kitchen to go downstairs to the basement.  
Anne wipes her hands, shuts off the light over the sink and exits kitchen to go upstairs.*

#### SCENE IV

*Same night, same time, upstairs in Cecy's bedroom. Cecy is lying on the bed, staring at the ceiling. She's stopped crying but the tears well up every now and then and she brushes them away.*

**ANNE:***(knocks and opens door without waiting for an answer)* Cecy, can I come in?

**CECY:***(sitting up quickly, swings her legs over the side)* You're already in.

**ANNE:***(sitting down on the bed beside Cecy)* That was pretty unforgiveable, what you said downstairs. Your father and I were pretty hurt.

**CECY:***(sneering)* Truth hurts.

**ANNE:** Look, I didn't come up here to fight with you. I came up to tell you that your father and I discussed the situation. And we've decided that you should accept that job, even though it'll mean a lot of hardship for all of us.

**CECY:** Hardship? What, like, you'll have to do your own ironing?

**ANNE:** If you're not willing to talk seriously about this, Cecy, I don't see how we're going to get anywhere.

**CECY:***(relenting)* Oh, all right.

**ANNE:** Now. We'll strike a bargain with you. You can stay at Mrs. Wainwright's and do this job for the school year, as long as you promise to stay out of trouble with Rick. Do you think that you can do that?

**CECY:** *(eagerly)* Of course I can, Mom! I'm not a

child!

**ANNE:** I'm not so sure about that. That was a pretty childish way to behave at supper.

**CECY:***(not wanting to lose the momentum)* I'm sorry. I guess I just got carried away. Rick's mum says I can come anytime and Rick can get the truck right away and I'm almost all packed.

**ANNE:***(pats her knee)* I think the weekend's plenty soon enough for that. *(stands up)* That gives us two more days to get organized. *(looks around the room critically)* I may even use your room for my sewing things until you get back. Now wash your face like a good girl and go downstairs and get the wallpaper for the dining room, okay?

**CECY:***(jumping up)* Sure. And Mom?

**ANNE:***(turns back from the doorway)* Mmm?

**CECY:** Thanks!

## SCENE V

*Same night, same time in the basement. Bill is at his workbench and Cecy is coming down the stairs.*

**BILL:** *(quiet but intense)* Come here, young lady.

**CECY:** *(hesitant)* I'm just getting the wallpaper for Mom.

**BILL:** *(angry)* I said come here!

*Cecy approaches cautiously but Bill grabs her arm and pulls her under the workbench light, away from the stairs.*

**BILL:***(hissing fiercely)* Don't you ever, and I mean ever, tell your mother such a pack of dirty lies again!

**CECY:***(cringing)* They weren't lies!

**BILL:** *(shaking her with both hands)* You know damn well nothing has ever happened between us! Don't you?!

**CECY:***(beginning to cry)* Don't! You're hurting me!

**BILL:***(throws her against the wall)* It's a good thing you're leaving, you little tramp! I've had enough of you and your short little skirts and your perky little tops! You're nothing but trouble!

**CECY:***(cowering and crying)* Don't. Please!

**BILL:** Aw, quit your snivelling. I'm sick of it, do you hear? Sick! A man has a right not to hear whining and complaining in his own home. *(he advances on Cecy, deceptively gentle)* A man has a right to expect a little comfort once in a while, eh, Cecy? Especially in his own home.

**CECY:***(sobbing softly)* No, Daddy!

**BILL:***(stroking her arm, up and down)* Now, come on and be a good girl. Be a good girl for Daddy.

**CECY:***(low, crying)* Please. No-o.

*Cecy shuts her eyes, crying softly as Bill's other hand starts stroking her thigh, working higher and higher under the leg of her shorts. He's pressed her against the wall. He closes his eyes and breathes heavily when suddenly Jimmy comes clattering down the stairs. Throwing Cecy to one side, Bill turns quickly to the workbench and picks up a hammer.*

**JIMMY:***(calling)* Hey, Cec! What's taking you? Mom wants to check that wallpaper.

**BILL:** *(quickly to Jimmy while Cecy hurries to the other side of the basement, tugging at her shorts)* C'm'ere, Jimmy. I want you to take these tools up to

the dining room.

**CECY:** *(in a too-bright voice)* Tell her I'll be right there.

*Cecy picks up a roll of wallpaper and runs back up the stairs before Jimmy.*

## SCENE VI

*The next day, in English class at Cecy's high school. About 25 Students are busily writing while the teacher, Miss Bella, is reading through homework assignments. Miss Bella is tall and thin, about 50, dark hair cropped short and curly around her intelligent face. She glances up from the page she is reading to watch Cecy for a moment, who is busily scratching away. The schoolbell sounds, cuing an eruption of merry voices, slamming books and scraping chairs with faint echoes of the exact same sounds from other classrooms.*

**Miss Bella:***(shouting over the din)* Don't forget class! Five hundred words on modern Canadian writers for next Tuesday!

*4 or 5 students have gathered around Miss Bella asking questions as Cecy slowly closes her books and*

*puts her pens in her pencil case.*

**Miss Bella:***(over the heads of her students)* Cecy!  
I'd like to see you a moment! *(to the group around her)* That's it, you guys. I have no more copies left. You'll have to find that poem in the library, all right?

*Groans and muttered okays as the students leave the class.*

**MISS BELLA:***(to the last student at the door)* Close the door please, on your way out Adele?

**ADELE:** Yes, Miss Bella.

*Adele leaves, shutting the door and Cecy approaches the desk hopefully.*

**CECY:** Yes, Miss Bella?

**MISS BELLA:** Sit down, Cecy. Do you have a moment?

**CECY:** *(glances at the wall clock and then sits on a desk top in front of Miss Bella's desk)* Sure. I'm on a spare now.

**MISS BELLA:** Good. I'd like to talk to you. I was just reading your last essay. It's very good.

**CECY:** *(beaming)* I'm glad you liked it! I wasn't sure about parts of it. You know, especially when the girl decides to strike out on her own. But you said we have to work our imagination muscles like our physical muscles so I figured this was a kind of warm-up!

**MISS BELLA:** *(smiling)* Pretty good for a warmup!  
*(grows serious)* Cecy, I feel like we have a pretty comfortable friendship here, don't you?

**CECY:***(eagerly)* Oh yes, Miss Bella. Especially with how great you've been about the Music Outreach Project.

**MISS BELLA:** Good. Because I need to ask you what could be some difficult questions.

**CECY:***(worried)* You don't think I can handle it?

**MISS BELLA:** Nonsense, Cecy. I have every faith that you can handle that and a lot more. No. It's about your family.

*Cecy shifts uncomfortably.*

**MISS BELLA:** *(indicates the paper she's holding)*  
Your story here has some pretty scary things in it. Now, along with telling you to use your imagination I

think I remember telling you to write from what you know. Isn't that right?

**CECY:** Oh sure. But not just from what you know, right? I mean, we were allowed to make up stuff too, weren't we?

**MISS BELLA:** Certainly you were. And everyone did. *(smiling)* You wouldn't believe how many of your classmates are marrying rich rock stars in their stories! But yours is quite different. And I'm concerned.

*Cecy fidgets.*

**MISS BELLA:** I'm concerned you may be in a situation no-one should have to endure. And I want to help.

**CECY:***(uncertainly)* I don't know what you mean.

**MISS BELLA:***(gently)* You're a very intelligent girl, Cecy. I think you do know what I mean.

**CECY:** The story was just a story, Miss Bella. It wasn't real.

**MISS BELLA:** Maybe parts of it weren't real. But parts of it were, weren't they?

**CECY:***(hangs her head)* Maybe.

*Miss Bella gets up, walks around to the front of her desk and leans against it.*

**MISS BELLA:** Cecy, you've done a wonderful job with your life so far.

*Cecy timidly raises her head.*

**MISS BELLA:** You've always been one of the top 3 students in all of your classes. You've won a very prestigious job in a field you're talented in. You've participated in drama clubs and political groups. You've made friends with teachers and other students. You don't realize it but you've made an impression on a good number of people. All of whom want to help you as you have helped them.

**CECY:** But I wasn't trying to help anybody. I was just having fun.

**MISS BELLA:***(smiling)* Well, that's what happens when people do what they are meant to do. So now that you have this great support system, it's time to let it help you.

**CECY:***(cautiously)* I don't know what you mean.

**MISS BELLA:** Cecy, we know you're having trouble at home.

*Cecy blushes, looks down unhappily.*

**MISS BELLA:***(quickly)* It's nothing to be ashamed of, Cecy. It's not your fault.

**CECY:** *(pleading)* But I didn't tell anyone anything!

**MISS BELLA:** No, you didn't. But perhaps it's time you do.

**CECY:***(flatly)* I can't. You don't know.

**MISS BELLA:** You're right. I don't know about the things you face when you go home at night. But I do know that something must be done. And right away. I understand from Mr. Hudson that your parents have agreed to allow you to move into the Wainwright's apartment. Is that right?

**CECY:** Yes. But it's just for the school year. Just for the job.

**MISS BELLA:** Well, that's a very good first step and you must congratulate yourself. A lot of people

wouldn't be able to get themselves this far.

**CECY:** I just had to do this, that's all. I mean, you can't give up a chance to work with Brett Elvin!

**MISS BELLA:** *(smiling)* You'd be surprised. But Cecy, this is the first step in getting you away from your father.

*Cecy gasps and looks up at Miss Bella, who continues to gaze as warmly and confidently at her as she can.*

**MISS BELLA:** This is a good first step but we must support it with second and third steps until we get you safe and looked after.

**CECY:** I don't know who told you anything about my father but...

**MISS BELLA:** *(gently)* You did, Cecy. In your story. *(lets her think for a moment)* But it wasn't just that. I have suspected for a while that your parents have been abusing you.

**CECY:** But they don't abuse me, Miss Bella! I don't get whipped or locked up or anything like that!

**MISS BELLA:** There are all kinds of abuse, Cecy. The way your parents treat you is just one kind. And

I know this is very difficult for you to hear. But you are special to me. And to Mr. Hudson and to a lot of other people around here.

**CECY:***(horried)* Oh no! They don't all think...they don't all think what you do?

**MISS BELLA:***(carefully)* They think you're very unhappy, Cecy. And they want to help. We all do. And we think we can, if you'll be brave enough to trust us.

**CECY:** *(shrugging hopelessly)* Even if it's true, I don't see what can be done about it. They're my parents.

**MISS BELLA:** I know a very good therapist who could help you, Cecy.

*Cecy looks suspiciously at her.*

**MISS BELLA:** *(gives a short laugh)* He's helped me often enough.

**CECY:** *(astonished)* You?! What kind of problems could you have?

**MISS BELLA:** *(smiling)* Oh, let's just say I don't have the easiest time dealing with authority figures.

**CECY:** (*grinning*) I would never have guessed!

**MISS BELLA:** (*quickly*) You're not supposed to. That's the whole point. A therapist can help you deal with your own limitations so they don't interfere with your everyday life.

**CECY:** (*thinking*) Oh.

**MISS BELLA:**(*earnest*) No-one else has to know anything about it. You can tell anyone who asks that you're going on some errand to do with the Outreach program. And in a way, you are.

**CECY:** Huh?

**MISS BELLA:** The Outreach program will challenge you to present yourself professionally to all sorts of new people, the musicians in the orchestra, the students in the high schools, even the schoolboard, right?

**CECY:** (*slowly*)Yeah, although I hadn't been thinking about that.

**MISS BELLA:** Seeing a therapist will help you develop that professionalism. He'll help you build on your strengths while healing the limitations that could get in the way. You see?

**CECY:** Sort of...

**MISS BELLA:** Now, Mrs. Wainwright says she's expecting you to move in Saturday, right?

**CECY:***(moans)* Oh God, Mrs. Wainwright knows too?

**MISS BELLA:** No, no, Cecy. Mrs. Wainwright doesn't know. It's just Mr. Hudson and myself who know.

**CECY:** Mr. Hudson? Oh, no...

**MISS BELLA:** Cecy, try and think. Your music teacher is one of the people in this high school who cares the most for you. He's helped you blossom from someone who didn't know how to put a flute together to one of the top young musicians in the city. All the extra coaching he's given you, the concert tickets...don't they all show how much he cares?

**CECY:** I never thought of it like that.

**MISS BELLA:** He supports you one hundred and fifty percent, as do I. We both want to help you and we can. Just trust us. Can you do that?

**CECY:** I guess...

**MISS BELLA:** So two days from now, you're going to move in to Mrs. Wainwright's place, right?

**CECY:** *(this she's sure of )* Yes.

**MISS BELLA:** All right, then. Where is your father going to be, these next couple of nights?

**CECY:***(faltering)* I'm not sure.

**MISS BELLA:** He works shifts, doesn't he?

**CECY:** Yes-s, but since he was home last night, he won't be on night shift tonight. Maybe day or afternoon shift. I don't know.

**MISS BELLA:** Terry's a good friend of yours, right?

**CECY:** Yes.

**MISS BELLA:** Could you make plans to sleep over at her house tomorrow night?

**CECY:** I guess so. It wouldn't be too unusual for a Friday night. But it's supposed to be my last night at home. Shouldn't I be at home finishing packing?

**MISS BELLA:** You told Mr. Hudson you were mostly packed anyway right?

*Cecy nods.*

**MISS BELLA:** I think you'll be able to finish whatever's necessary when Rick helps you Saturday morning. Now that leaves tonight and here's my suggestion. I'd like to phone your parents and tell them that there's an Outreach meeting tonight that will go quite late and that you'll stay with me overnight.

**CECY:***(shocked but excited too)* Miss Bella!

**MISS BELLA:** Oh, there's a meeting all right. I won't be lying. I'll just be stretching the truth a little when it comes to how long it lasts. But afterwards, I'd like to take you to meet Geoffrey Linden, the therapist I mentioned.

*Cecy starts up, looking trapped.*

**MISS BELLA:** *(gestures for her to sit down again)* Don't worry, Cecy, please. It's just a meeting to talk. If you decide you don't like Geoffrey, we'll try something else.

**CECY:** *(uncertainly)* I don't know...

**MISS BELLA:** Please, Cecy, give it a chance. At

least once. Just to see what it's like. (*she waits as Cecy nods slowly*) Good. (*stands up*) The Outreach meeting is at 4:00, right?

**CECY:** (*slowly*) Yes.

**MISS BELLA:**(*walking around her desk*) Then I will see you then. And afterwards, you and I will drive downtown to see Geoffrey.

**CECY:**(*looks up, smiling hopefully*) In the MG?

**MISS BELLA:** (*smiling back*) Of course, in the MG! And Cecy, if you need to talk about this with your boyfriend or your best friend, that's probably okay. But I would advise you not to talk about this with anyone else. We're not doing anything wrong here, but these are private matters and best kept that way.

**CECY:** (*gathering her books up*) Yeah. Miss Bella?

*Miss Bella looks up at Cecy.*

**CECY:** This feels pretty strange.

**MISS BELLA:**(*smiling kindly*) I know. It'll get easier soon, I promise!

CURTAIN

## SCENE VII

*The music room during music class, later that same day. A loud cacophony of instruments, student voices and banging and chairs scraping as students put their instruments together and take their places. Mr. Hudson is in his office, surrounded by clamouring kids wanting him to fix trumpets, look at books and discuss the upcoming test. Cecy, flute in hand, is at the back talking with Terry who's moving drums into position and finding mallets. Suddenly, the school fire alarm starts to sound. A mixture of groans and cheers is heard as the students leave their instruments, grab purses and knapsacks, and head cheerfully out the doors. Cecy and Terry move together to one of the exits, Cecy still hanging onto her flute.*

**TERRY:** ...twelve dishes and then there's going to be the main... *(to a student pushing past)* Hey watch it!

**STUDENT:** Watch it yourself!

**TERRY:** Somebody oughta sock you right in the mouth!

**STUDENT:** Yeah? You and who's mother?

*(laughs and continues moving off)*

**CECY:** Jeez, Terry, you sure take chances.

**TERRY:** *(scoffs)* What chances? Ah, he's just an overgrown pipsqueak. *(hoists her packsack higher)* So like I was saying, there's gonna be twelve little appetizer dishes before the main course! Stuff like tiny pizzas and pigs-in-a-blanket. And then we get to the good stuff like roast lamb and rigatoni and ooh, I hope there's lasagna too.

*Cecy and Terry have followed the crowd outside the school doors and they continue talking, standing together. Everyone's now standing around facing the school, talking, joking. Some kids sit on the grass, others throw a football around. A little way off, the teachers gather together, smiling. No-one's unhappy with the unscheduled break.*

**CECY:** You're going to kill yourself by food, you know.

**TERRY:***(grinning skyward)* I should be so lucky! Honestly, it's too bad you can't come too. But my mom says they're being pretty picky about the guests. Only reason we're going is because my mom and my cousin's mom are best friends.

**CECY:** I don't think I'd want to go anyway. I'm not crazy about weddings. Especially when you have to go through that lineup thing. I never know what to say. What dress are you going to wear?

**TERRY:** *(snorts)* Dress? You kidding me? Not in this lifetime. My blue pantsuit will do me just fine.

**CECY:** *(shocked)* Your mom's letting you go to this ritzy wedding in a pantsuit?

**TERRY:** *(softly beating her hands rhythmically against her thighs and nodding her head to keep with beat)*  
My mom's got better things to than worry about my fashion sense. So what are you gonna do tomorrow night while I'm chomping my way to heaven?

**CECY:** *(worriedly)* I don't know.

**TERRY:***(stops drumming her thighs)* Your dad gonna be around?

**CECY:** I don't know. I can never tell what his shifts are anymore. He wasn't supposed to be around this week but there he was.

**TERRY:** *(concerned)* You know, Cecy, I really think it's time you told someone what's going on.

**CECY:** *(sighing)* I didn't have to.

**TERRY:** What? Who knew?

**CECY:** Miss Bella figured it out from some story I wrote for English Lit. Now she's got plans. I'm supposed to stay at her place tonight and, *(suddenly looks around and lowers her voice)* jeez, don't tell anyone eh? I'm supposed to keep this private.

**TERRY:** *(swats her on the shoulder)* Whaddya think, I'm going to squeal it to the world? Man, haven't I been keeping mum all along? So go on. What plans?

**CECY:** The Outreach project has a meeting tonight and then I'm meeting with Miss Bella's therapist. *(looks around)*

**TERRY:** *(whistles, impressed)* Wow.

**CECY:** And afterwards, Miss Bella wants me to stay at her place. I'm supposed to ask you if I could stay at your place tomorrow night. And Saturday, I move out so that would mean I wouldn't go home again until next summer!

**TERRY:** Finally out! Wow, that's great. Oh but, God, Cecy! The wedding! I've got that wedding

tomorrow night.

**CECY:** Don't worry about it. I think Miss Bella's exaggerating a little. I'll stay at her place tonight like she wants. I mean, I'm kind of curious, you know?

**TERRY:** (*grinning*) Yeah. Now we'll know what kind of a place the divine Miss B. keeps anyway!

**CECY:** So that'll be fun. But tomorrow night, I figure I should be all right.

**TERRY:** (*frowning*) But Cec, if even Miss Bella thinks it's too dangerous for you at home, I don't know. Why don't you stay at my place anyway? I can give you my key and I could tell my mom we need to study for a music test.

**CECY:** At midnight? You know you guys won't get back until then.

**TERRY:** (*hesitating*) Well, first thing in the morning then. I'll tell her it's more convenient if you're already here and we can start....

**CECY:** Nah, Terr, thanks but your mom'll never believe it. Besides it's just one night. I've survived this long at home. I'll be okay.

**TERRY:** *(still frowning)* Are you sure? *(brightens)* Hey, I know. What about Sandy?

**CECY:** I thought of her already but she told me at lunch today her family's going camping.

**TERRY:** Camping? Sandy?

**CECY:** *(grinning)* I know. Her fingernail polish will never be the same! It's her dad's idea. Quality time for the family!

**TERRY:** *(sadly)* God, what some folks have to do. My mom wouldn't dare suggest camping to us!

**CECY:** Yeah! You and your brother would run screaming from the house before she could pack a lunch!

**TERRY:** *(dignified)* No way! Gord would just sit on her until she changed her mind!

*They both laugh as the schoolbell rings signalling the 'all clear'. With more boos than cheers, everyone starts to move back into the building.*

**TERRY:** *(picking up packsack)* But seriously, Cec. Why don't you stay over tomorrow night? We could figure out something to tell my mom.

**CECY:** *(shaking her head)* Thanks anyway. Besides, I have to finish packing a few things. *(pokes her in the side)* My diary, for instance!

**TERRY:** *(warningly as she goes the door)* I don't like it.

**CECY:** *(following her)* Since when were you such a worrywart?

*CURTAIN*

## SCENE VIII

*A comfortable room on the top floor of an old Victorian house. Late afternoon sun is coming in through partially shaded curtains. Cecy is sitting nervously in a plush, wingbacked chair facing Geoffrey Linden, a plump, short, kindly-faced man in his sixties who is sitting in a similar chair, away from the desk.*

**GEOFFREY:** So, Cecy, was it a treat riding in Miss Bella's MG?

**CECY:** *(surprised, grins and nods)* You bet. It's tiny but man, is it cool!

**GEOFFREY:** Did it take long to get here?

**CECY:** Not really. I would have been happy to drive around for another hour!

**GEOFFREY:** *(smiling)* I expect you two must have been speeding a little?

**CECY:** *(honourably)* Oh no, Mr...

**GEOFFREY:** Geoffrey, please.

**CECY:** Oh no, *(carefully)* Geoffrey. At least, well, I mean I didn't look at the speedometer or anything but we didn't get stopped by the cops!

**GEOFFREY:** That might have been a little too exciting even for our rebellious Miss Bella!

**CECY:** Rebellious? Miss Bella?

**GEOFFREY:** Well, sure. What kind of car do most teachers drive?

**CECY:** Sedans, I guess. Pretty boring ones, usually.

**GEOFFREY:** While Miss Bella flaunts her bright red sportscar. What would you call that, if it's not rebellious?

**CECY:** *(smiling)* Wow. That's a whole new way of looking at my English teacher!

**GEOFFREY:** Well, Cecy, that's part of what we do here - finding a whole new way to look at things.

*Cecy looks at him and then looks down at the ground.*

**GEOFFREY:** Cecy, coming to see me is a big step and you should congratulate yourself on a very important and adult accomplishment.

**CECY:***(looking at him)* Oh, Miss Bella set it up. I didn't do anything.

**GEOFFREY:** You agreed to come, didn't you?

*Cecy nods.*

**GEOFFREY:** And you're doing your best to talk openly and honestly with me, right?

**CECY:** Um-hmm.

**GEOFFREY:** There's one other important thing we must deal with here at the beginning. *(he leans back in his chair and watches her)* In situations like these, we have to be sure that you really do want help.

**CECY:** *(worried)* Oh, but Geoffrey, I do want help. It's finally starting to feel like I can do something about home but *(tears start)* if you don't want to see me...

**GEOFFREY:** *(warmly)* Of course, I want to see you, Cecy. Please don't worry.

**CECY:** But..

**GEOFFREY:** But the unconscious is a very tricky and very powerful force. We need to convince your unconscious that you are serious and that you mean to free yourself from what's been happening at home.

**CECY:** How do we do that?

**GEOFFREY:** By having you contribute something towards this process.

*Cecy looks at him questioningly.*

**GEOFFREY:** *(gently)* By having you pay me, Cecy.

**CECY:** *(fidgets nervously)* Uh, right, uh Miss Bella warned me..that..uh.. you're very good and you have to pay for quality.

**GEOFFREY:** *(smiling)* Well, that's very good of Miss

Bella. I think you'll find my rates are very competitive.

*Cecy looks wary.*

**GEOFFREY:** And I very often work out payment plans with my clients. Now it seems to me, since this Outreach project that you're part of will be paying you...

**CECY:** *(quickly)* It hasn't been finalized yet.

**GEOFFREY:** *(continuing, calmly)* But you do expect you will receive some type of remuneration.

*Cecy nods affirmatively.*

**GEOFFREY:** Then, if you like, we can work out a small deduction from that money. It doesn't have to be a huge amount. Just enough so that you will always remember that I'm not like your parents or your...

**CECY:** *(giggles nervously)* Oh, you don't look anything like my parents!

**GEOFFREY:** *(smiling)* That's good. What I'm getting at is that I'm not like the people you usually talk to. They may listen, but because of their relationship with you, they may not always respond with your best

interests at heart.

**CECY:** You mean like my mom telling me to study business administration when I want to study music?

**GEOFFREY:** Right. Your mother may be thinking about economics and the marketplace well, maybe her own career aspirations. So she's not looking at your issues from your point of view.

**CECY:** *(slowly)* And you will.

**GEOFFREY:** Exactly. I'll be helping you because you're paying me to. Which means, you can be completely sure that I will always listen very closely to everything you say. And that I will only suggest things that have your best interests at heart. Because that's my job.

**CECY:** *(brightening)* That's kind of cool!

**GEOFFREY:** *(smiling)* I think so, too. So, what do you think? Would you like to go ahead?

**CECY:** *(shyly)* Yes, I would.

**GEOFFREY:** Good. Now, tell me more about this Music Outreach Project that you're part of.

**CECY:** (*happily*) It's an amazing opportunity. I'll get to meet and work with Brett Elvin. (*earnestly*) He's one of Canada's best conductors, you know.

**GEOFFREY:** (*watching her, nods*) Yes. I know.

**CECY:** Well, anyway, he's always looking for new ways to build audiences for his music. And this project is supposed to reach kids, to educate them now before they grow up into ticket subscribers.

**GEOFFREY:** And that's a good thing?

**CECY:** Oh, yes. If you learn to like Bach and Handel and even the new music guys now, when you're young, then you're gonna wanna continue listening to them when you're older. It just makes sense.

**GEOFFREY:** So you're saying that whatever you learn as a child or a young adult will influence the rest of your life?

**CECY:**(*puzzled*) Yeah. I guess so. (*her face clears, she smiles*) I just never put it quite like that before.

**GEOFFREY:** And what are you learning from your parents right now, Cecy?

**CECY:**(*slowly*) I guess I'm learning...to be

responsible....to look after myself.

**GEOFFREY:** *(gently insistent)* Let me be more specific. What are you learning from your father right now?

*Cecy's eyes start to well up.*

**CECY:** Some not nice stuff, I guess.

**GEOFFREY:** Tell me.

**CECY:** Well, I guess I'm learning it's not so great to be angry all the time.

**GEOFFREY:** Is that all?

**CECY:** Um... that I should be careful how I behave around him?

**GEOFFREY:** What is he teaching you about love, Cecy?

**CECY:** *(looking at the floor, confused)* I'm not sure...I don't know...

**GEOFFREY:** Isn't that because what he's showing you is not love?

*Cecy stays silent, looking at the floor.*

**GEOFFREY:** Have you ever had a pet, Cecy?

**CECY:** *(looking up)* No, but I wanted a cat once. But my mom said Jimmy had allergies so I couldn't have it.

**GEOFFREY:** Well, just imagine if you had your own cat. A kitten, let's say. A kitten just playing with string and pouncing on your toes and sleeping all curled up in your lap, okay?

*Cecy is smiling as she imagines this.*

**GEOFFREY:** Now, you are this kitten's parents, let's say father for now. She's too young to know about chasing mice and hiding from dogs so it's up to you to teach her while keeping her safe, right?

**CECY:** I guess so.

**GEOFFREY:** So what would you say if you deliberately locked her outside all night long, where the neighbour's dog could torment her and the big, adult alley cats could chase her and she suddenly had nowhere safe to go?

**CECY:** *(beginning to cry)* I'd say I was a pretty mean

person and should never have been allowed to have a cat.

**GEOFFREY:** And what if you started pulling its tail, stepping on its paws...

**CECY:** (*horrified*) But I wouldn't do that!

**GEOFFREY:** So now, tell me what you're learning from your father?

**CECY:** (*tears rolling down her cheeks*) That I have no safe place?

**GEOFFREY:** (*encouragingly*) Yes...?

**CECY:** That he should never have had children?

**GEOFFREY:** Yes..?

**CECY:** (*whispering through her tears*) That he doesn't love me?

**GEOFFREY:** (*gently*) It seems pretty clear, doesn't it?

**CECY:** (*pleading*) But why would he keep looking after me...and Jimmy, feeding us, giving us clothes and food and stuff if he didn't love us?

**GEOFFREY:** The law demands that children are fed and sheltered and protected. For most parents, love makes them want to provide all these things. But some people just aren't cut out to be parents. If these people find themselves with children, often they do only what is minimally required, by law. But that isn't love. *(pauses)* Do you understand, Cecy?

**CECY:** *(looking at the floor)* I guess so.

**GEOFFREY:** Tell me, did your mother know what your father was doing to you?

**CECY:** *(bitterly)* I think so *(looks at him, fiercely)* but she won't admit it.

**GEOFFREY:** Did she know since the beginning?

**CECY:** *(thinking)* I'm not sure. At first, I wasn't sure myself. I mean, he'd be tickling Jimmy and me, you know? We'd all be rolling around on the floor, laughing and tickling, when suddenly I noticed my dad would start tickling me in funny places.

**GEOFFREY:** What do you mean, funny places?

**CECY:** *(reluctantly)* You know, on my chest or... or on my panties or something. I thought I was imagining it

so I didn't say anything. And he didn't act as if he'd done anything wrong. The next time, when he did it again, I felt really awful about it. 'Cause now I was sure. I got up and left him and Jimmy to fool around.

**GEOFFREY:** You must have felt pretty badly.

**CECY:** *(starting to cry)* I felt so alone...so isolated from the family. I tried to tell my mom then *(picks up a tissue to wipe her eyes and stops crying)* but she didn't believe me.

**GEOFFREY:** What did she say?

**CECY:** *(angrily)* She said to quit being so stupid, that everybody's father tickles everybody and with arms and legs going every which way, how could anyone possibly control where their hands are going.

**GEOFFREY:** *(softly)* That must have made you pretty angry.

**CECY:** And then she said if I was that worried about it, I should just not roll around on the floor. *(looking at Geoffrey, angry)* And that really hurt you know, because it was like saying it was my fault he was tickling me like that.

**GEOFFREY:** So then what happened?

**CECY:** He kept trying to tickle me and I kept avoiding him. Until one day, when my mom took Jimmy to the dentist.

*Cecy looks at Geoffrey to see if she should go on. He looks steadily back at her. She drops her eyes and continues.*

**CECY:** So there was no-one else in the house. I was in the livingroom, dusting like I was supposed to, when he came in. He started tickling me but I couldn't get away this time. He'd grabbed me by the arms and wouldn't let me go. Then he started rubbing one of my arms up and down....and then it was my chest...

*She's grimacing, remembering. Geoffrey waits for a moment. Cecy starts to cry.*

**CECY:** It was so awful. I didn't know where to look. And he was breathing on me and holding me so tightly by the other arm that I got a bruise. (*she wipes her eyes*) But luckily the phone rang and he stopped to go get it. And I ran up to the bathroom and locked the door.

**GEOFFREY:** Did he leave you alone then?

**CECY:** (*grimly*) After he got off the phone, he came upstairs and tried talking through the door with me.

**GEOFFREY:** What did he say?

**CECY:** Oh, stuff about not wanting to hurt me and just wanting to be affectionate. (*grimaces*) Listening to him was almost worse than being with him. (*looks at Geoffrey*) It was like he was begging or something.

**GEOFFREY:** So then what happened?

**CECY:** I still didn't open the door. Then my mom came home. Dad went down to talk to her and I could hear the normal sounds of dinner being started. So I came out. It was pretty easy to avoid my dad for the rest of the evening, for some reason. And when I got a chance, just after doing the dishes, I tried to tell my mom.

**GEOFFREY:** And?

**CECY:** (*tears start to come*) She didn't believe me. She said she was tired of hearing me complain about Daddy all the time and that at least I had a father who loved me and was around. She said I must have imagined him rubbing my chest, that he would never do such a thing. And if I didn't stop bothering her with such nonsense, she was going to have to tell him what I'd said and have him deal with it.

**GEOFFREY:** (*gently*) And what did that mean to you?

**CECY:** (*frightened, looking at Geoffrey*) I knew if she told him what I'd said, he'd hit me.

**GEOFFREY:** You thought he'd beat you?

**CECY:** He'd already hurt my arms when he grabbed me. And when he gets mad, he throws things or kicks things. And this would make him mad.

**GEOFFREY:** So you felt trapped? (*Cecy nods and wipes her eyes with a tissue*) You had no-one to protect you, no-one to confide in?

**CECY:** I told my best friend Terry what was going on but I made her swear not to tell anyone. I knew that if anyone from the outside said anything, my dad would know I squealed and that would be it for me.

*Cecy shifts uncomfortably.*

**GEOFFREY:** Cecy, it's important for you to know that whatever we talk about together, here, is completely confidential. I will never, ever, tell anyone else what you tell me. Unless you tell me to. Okay?

*Cecy nods.*

**GEOFFREY:** Now the first important thing we have to do is make sure you're safe. I understand you're staying with Miss Bella tonight?

**CECY:** (*nodding*) Yes. And she's asked me to ask

Terry if I can stay over at her place tomorrow night.

**GEOFFREY:** And you move out of the house on Saturday morning, right?

**CECY:** Right.

**GEOFFREY:** That's good. That's the immediate future taken care of. We've made a very good start here today and I'd like to build on that. I'd like to see you on Sunday, after you've moved and had a chance to settle in. Then we can map out a game plan for the next little while. All right?

**CECY:** (*questioning*) Sure. If you think it's necessary.

**GEOFFREY:** I do. We want to stop your father from hurting anyone else but we want to make sure you're safe first.

*He stands up and so does Cecy. Geoffrey stretches his hand out to shake Cecy's and she tentatively reaches to shake his hand. Geoffrey places his other hand on top of his and holds it there, steady, letting her feel his warmth.*

**GEOFFREY:** (*looking at her intently*) It takes courage to do what you've done today, Cecy. I admire that. And we're here all of us, Miss Bella, Mr. Hudson and myself, to support you in whatever ways we can.

**CECY:** (*mumbling, embarrassed*) Thanks.

*They walk towards the door. Cecy fumbles for her wallet in her packsack and gives Geoffrey a couple of bills.*

**CECY:** Is this all right?

**GEOFFREY:** *(smiles)* Thank you. That's great.

*Geoffrey picks up a card from the desk and give it to her.*

**GEOFFREY:** Here's my phone number. Please. Call if you need to, no matter what time. Otherwise, I'll see you Sunday at, let's say 3 o'clock. Okay?

**CECY:** *(taking the card and smiling)* Okay.

*EXIT. CURTAIN*

## SCENE IX

*Miss Bella's apartment, about 9 o'clock that night. The lights of the city twinkle through the windows out to the balcony. The livingroom has matching plush couch and armchairs, polished wood side tables. Subdued, moody lighting comes from exquisitely-designed wall fixtures. There's a collection of masks on one wall, everything from African tribal masks and Venetian painted masks with ribbons to the classic*

*comedy and tragedy masks. Cecy stands at the window looking out at the city. Miss Bella enters from the kitchen placing two drinks on the glass-topped coffee table. She walks around the table to sit on the couch and picks up her drink.*

**MISS BELLA:** I'm sorry I don't have anything more exciting than gingerale to offer you, Cecy.

**CECY:** *(turning to her, wide-eyed with wonder)* Oh, gingerale's great, Miss Bella. *(breathlessly)* What a wonderful apartment you have! It's so elegant!

**MISS BELLA:***(smiling)* Thank you. *(looking around)* It took me a while to find various pieces but I am pretty pleased with the way it turned out.

**CECY:** *(coming to sit beside Miss Bella in one of the chairs)* Someday, I'd like to have a place like this. It must be wonderful to be on your own, with just your favourite things around you.

**MISS BELLA:** *(gently)* Is that what you'd like, Cecy? To be alone?

**CECY:***(confused)* Oh, I didn't mean to say you were lonely or anything.

**MISS BELLA:***(smiling)* And I didn't take it that way,

Cecy. Although, to tell you the truth, living by yourself can get lonely sometimes.

**CECY:** *(uncomfortable)* I'm sorry.

**MISS BELLA:** *(laughing)* There's nothing for *you* to be sorry about, Cecy! And don't worry. I'm not lonely very often.

*Cecy looks up and smiles at Miss Bella, relieved to see her laugh. She carefully picks up her drink, takes a ladylike sip, and gently places it back down on the tabletop.*

**CECY:***(happily)* I just thought it must be wonderful to have things around you that you picked out yourself. Nothing handed down or bought at an auction or left over from some relative's place. Just things you, yourself, chose.

**MISS BELLA:** Don't you get to have your favourite things in your room at home?

**CECY:** Oh sure, sometimes. I brought home a collection of rocks once. Pretty ones that I'd collected one summer vacation. But my mom made me throw them out. They were just rocks.

**MISS BELLA:** Were they too huge for your dresser?

**CECY:***(shrugs her shoulders)* Nah, they were just pebbles. My mom kept knocking them over when she was in my room getting things. She finally got so mad she threw one right out the hallway. It ricocheted off the wall and bounced down the stairs and ended up cracking a pane of glass in the downstairs door. *(giggles)* And that's when she made me throw them all out.

**MISS BELLA:** What kind of things was your mother getting from your room?

**CECY:***(picks up her glass and settles back in her chair holding onto it)* My room has the closet with the extra shelves in it. So all the towels and sheets get put in there.

**MISS BELLA:***(looking at her drink)* I guess that's not very private for you, is it?

**CECY:** *(quickly)* Oh, I don't mind. I was lucky to get my own room. I used to have to share a room with Jimmy, my brother. That was one of the best things about moving to this house. *(smiling and remembering)* Finally, getting my own room!

**MISS BELLA:** *(smiling)* I remember being pretty excited when I first got my own room, too. I

was about 15, I think, and I wanted to paint it all black.

**CECY:** *(gasping)* Black?

**MISS BELLA:** *(smiling and nodding)* I had this idea of painting stars on the ceiling and walls so that I would always feel how big the universe really is. *(musing)* And I was going to have a blue floor with the continents painted on it, *(looks at Cecy)* to be the earth, you see, and I was going to hang white Christmas lights all year round. *(sighs)* It was quite the plan.

**CECY:** *(impressed)* And did it work?

**MISS BELLA:** Unfortunately, my dad refused to allow black paint on the walls. *(grins)* So I had to settle for some boring beige colour and I put up star maps instead. By the time I got my own apartment and could have done what I liked, I'd forgotten about it.

**CECY:** Too bad. It sounds wonderful!

**MISS BELLA:** *(conspiratorially)* I think so, too. And you never know. Someday I might yet find the right kind of space to paint the universe! *(sips her drink and places it on the table)* So how did you find

Geoffrey?

**CECY:** *(relaxing)* He was pretty nice, actually. I wasn't sure what was going to happen but we just talked. It was okay.

**MISS BELLA:** He's a good man. Are you willing to see him again?

**CECY:** Oh sure. He said I should come by on Sunday, after the move and all, and we'd sort out what to do next. *(sips her drink thoughtfully)* He seemed pretty insistent about my not going home right away.

**MISS BELLA:** I'm sure he's got good reasons.

**CECY:** I don't know. I mean, I've lived at home all my life. What's another day or two?

**MISS BELLA:** Don't you want to be in a safe place, Cecy?

**CECY:** *(quickly)* Oh yes, it's not that. It's just that leaving my mom and Jimmy and all, so quickly, without really saying why...it just seems kind of strange..not really fair to them, you know?

**MISS BELLA:** *(shifting in her chair)* Well, I don't

know about that. They haven't been fair with you, letting you suffer all this time. And besides, if you really wanted, you could write them a note to explain. *(grins at her)* I happen to know you're a good writer.

**CECY:** *(blushing and grinning)* Thanks. I suppose I could do that. *(snuggling back into her chair)* I guess it's just that right now, it all seems far away and I don't know, not as bad as what everyone thinks.

**MISS BELLA:** *(curls her legs up under her)* Could it be because you're safe now and you don't have to face anything? What if you had to go home, right this minute?

*Cecy looks aghast at Miss Bella who hastens to reassure her.*

**MISS BELLA:** *(quickly)* No, no, Cecy, you're not going anywhere. You'll stay right here, tonight. But I'm just asking you to imagine how you'd feel if you knew you had to go back home. Wouldn't it feel pretty awful?

**CECY:** *(slowly)* Yes. I guess it would.

**MISS BELLA:** And I'm not sure myself....it may be that just getting you away isn't enough. Maybe we should be calling the police.

**CECY:** (*panicking*) The police!

**MISS BELLA:** Think about it, Cecy. Your father's a sick man. And your mother isn't helping him by ignoring things. Even if we get you out of this horrible situation, what do you think is going to happen to your brother?

**CECY:** (*scornful*) Jimmy? Nothing'll happen to him. He's a boy.

**MISS BELLA:** Cecy, when you're out of the house, your father won't just stop. His kind of sickness comes from deep inside him. And if he can't get to you, he'll try to hurt Jimmy, your mother, or anyone else he can intimidate. Where does he work?

**CECY:** (*slowly, not yet convinced*) At an auto shop. He's a mechanic.

**MISS BELLA:** And are there any girls at that shop?

**CECY:** (*urgently*) Yes, but he wouldn't try anything there. It's too public.

**MISS BELLA:** I thought you said he works shifts.

**CECY:** He does, but there are always people coming

and going.

**MISS BELLA:** He gets around Jimmy and your mother coming and going at home, doesn't he?

**CECY:** Yes, but there's only the two of them.

**MISS BELLA:** Try to think calmly about this, Cecy. You know your father. You know what he's capable of. Are you saying you think he'd never try to get one of the girls at work alone in say, the coffee room? Or the bathroom?

**CECY:** (*horrified whisper*) I never thought...I mean, no-one's ever said...

**MISS BELLA:** Is there someone you know at your dad's work?

**CECY:**(*stricken*) Carol! Carol would tell me. At least (*falters*) I would have thought...I mean...I always thought it was just me he was after.

*Miss Bella uncurls her legs and leans in to Cecy, intent.*

**MISS BELLA:** Cecy, by letting us help you, you'll also be helping the other people your father is hurting. And you'll be helping your father by getting

him the help *he* needs. You see that, don't you?

**CECY:** (*shaken*) I guess so.

**MISS BELLA:** I promise I won't call the police right away. (*thinking*) Or maybe it should be the Children's Aid Society. Anyway, it's probably better to think about the next step for a while. (*stands up*) Come on. I think it's time we headed for bed. You can sleep in the spare room tonight. (*smiling*) There are no stars painted on the ceiling but I think you'll find it pretty comfortable.

**CECY:** (*stands too, smiles back*) You're being very nice.

*Miss Bella walks over and hugs Cecy and the two of them walk towards the kitchen exit with their glasses.*

**MISS BELLA:** (*grinning*) Well, who wouldn't be with our star student in the Wilton Symphony Music Outreach Program. You never got a chance to say what you thought of the fabulous Maestro Brett Elvin now that you've seen him up close. Hmm?

**CECY:** (*looks at her quickly in disbelief*) He's so short! I couldn't believe it! But he's very nice, isn't he? And boy, does he talk fast!

*They continue chatting as they exit. Curtain.*

## SCENE X

*The next morning, about 8:30, at the school cafeteria. Rick and Cecy are sitting by themselves at the end of a long table, each with a cup of coffee. Some clattering is going on behind the counters as the cooks begin preparing the lunchtime meal. Other students are wandering in and out getting coffee and juices. At another end of the cafeteria, about 7 kids are holding a meeting of the student newspaper. And other students are scattered at the various tables but no-one comes close to Cecy and Rick.*

**CECY:** So as long as we're finished with the truck by noon, you won't get into trouble?

**RICK:** *(trying to stay patient)* Cecy, I'm not getting into trouble. I'm just saying if we can get the truck back to my uncle by noon, it saves him an extra trip downtown. And I'd like to try to do that, since he's letting us have the truck for free.

**CECY:** I certainly don't have that much stuff so it won't take us long to pack it. It's whether or not my parents will be up and let us make noise that early.

**RICK:** (*exasperated*) Your parents. God. It always comes down to them.

**CECY:** Well, it *is* their house.

**RICK:** What difference does that make? They know we're borrowing someone else's truck. So they know we're on a schedule. And we're not starting at dawn, for chrissake! Ten o'clock on a Saturday morning is late for a lot of people.

**CECY:** Yeah, well, you know my parents. They hate being pressured. If they have to be up early for their own chores, that would be different. But if they're planning a leisurely morning, God help anyone who gets in their way.

**RICK:** But Cecy, you'd think they'd want to cooperate. Their only daughter moving out, first chick leaving the nest and all that. (*grins and chucks her under the chin*) I'll bet they'll be up earlier than you, coffee on and camera waiting, just ready for the big moment!

**CECY:** (*frowning*) Boy, they really have you convinced, don't they?

**RICK:** (*bewildered*) Convinced of what?

**CECY:** *(bitterly)* That they're the best parents since sliced bread.

**RICK:** What's so bad about them? So they weren't ecstatic when you told them you were leaving. My mom sure wouldn't be if I were to tell her I was moving out.

**CECY:** *(bitterly)* Your mom's different! She doesn't make plans at the last minute and expect you to drop yours. She treats you with respect.

**RICK:** Your parents seem nice enough.

**CECY:***(sighs)* Yeah, they always do, to outsiders. They even fool me.

**RICK:** *(shrugs)* Whatever. *(brightening)* My mom can't wait to show you your room! She was so happy when the Outreach person turned out to be you.

**CECY:***(curiously)* Why'd she make the housing offer if she was nervous she'd get a stranger?

**RICK:** You wouldn't ask if you'd known my father. He was great. He lived and breathed music.

*Cecy sips her coffee and watches Rick.*

**RICK:***(explaining)* He never got to have music lessons or anything when he was a kid. His older brother did, but not Dad. He was sent away to school and forced into being a lawyer.

**CECY:** Why didn't he just say no? Quit?

**RICK:** He loved the law too. He enjoyed reading it and understanding it and then making sure everybody else understood it. But all along, he kept playing his violin, as badly as he did. *(smiling)* You should have heard his rendition of 'Good Night Irene'! God, it was funny! Used to hurt my ears but it made my mom laugh and laugh! Her name's Irene, you know.

**CECY:** You're lucky you had a dad who loved music. My parents never cared one way or the other. Except for making me practise out in the garage when they couldn't stand the high notes.

**RICK:** *(looks at her, laughing)* My mom would never make my dad go out to the garage. He'd refuse to go! And besides, she liked hearing his progress. *(grins)* Or not! Anyway, Mom wants to keep his work going on, the trust funds and projects and all. I think it helps her not miss him so much.

**CECY:** *(to herself)* They must really have been in

love.

**RICK:** Well, of course. They got married, didn't they?

**CECY:***(looking at her cup)* That's not the only reason people get married. *(takes a sip and shakes off the mood)* So what's the room like? Did your mom just redo it or something?

**RICK:***(excited)* It's my Dad's old study. It's so cool! You'll love it! All his old sheet music is there, and tons of books. Mom put in a bed where the little couch used to be. There's a big old wooden music stand you can use and a closet and a bunch of empty shelves where you can put your stuff.

**CECY:***(impressed)* Wow! A palace!

**RICK:** And, more importantly, yours is the closest room to the bathroom. *(grinning)* If you're like my mom, I guess you spend all kinds of time in there!

**CECY:** *(blushing)* Ah, no, not really.

**RICK:***(takes her hand across the table)* My mom's room is next down the hall and my room's 'way down at the end. *(smiling suggestively at her)* Mom usually goes to bed pretty early and she's a

sound sleeper.

**CECY:***(uncomfortable)* So am I.

**RICK:***(pressing)* But you won't go to bed too early, will you, Cec?

**CECY:** I'll have homework and stuff to do.

**RICK:** You know what I mean.

**CECY:***(leaning back away from him)* You'll still be working won't you? You haven't quit or anything?

**RICK:** Oh sure. Thursday and Friday nights and the weekends, like always.

**CECY:** *(pulling away her hand)* Any word on whether you'll get that raise?

**RICK:** *(suddenly puzzled)* No, you know, and I don't get it. Why would they make a big announcement like that, give us all memos and things and then not ante up?

**CECY:** *(glancing at the clock with relief, starts packing up her stuff)* 'Cause they don't want you guys all out looking for better jobs, that's why, silly. I gotta go.

**RICK:***(looks at the clock and looks back at Cecy)*  
We've still got 15 minutes. What's the rush?

**CECY:***(continuing packing)* I don't want to be late for class, especially since I stayed at Miss Bella's last night.

**RICK:** Oh yeah. *(teasing)* So what did you guys talk about? Her wicked little MG? Her wild social life? Come on, give!

**CECY:** *(nervously)* Nothing like that. Just girl talk.

**RICK:** *(grinning)* Oh and I suppose I'll be in for lots of that once you and my mom get going.

**CECY:** *(impudently)* You bet. Maybe we'll even paint your toenails pink one night while you're asleep!

*Cecy smiles and tries to stand up but Rick has grabbed one of her arms and starts to rub it rhythmically, up and down.*

**RICK:***(persuasively)* Stay and keep me company a little while longer, eh?

**CECY:** *(whitefaced, she wrenches her arm away and shouts)* Stop it!

*Cecy looks around, suddenly aware of where she is, and that she spoke too loudly. She looks back at Rick's hurt face.*

**CECY:** *(quietly, but she doesn't sit down)* I'm sorry.

**RICK:** *(angry)* I'm tired of this, Cecy. Are you going to tell me what's going on?

**CECY:***(flatly)* I don't know what you mean.

**RICK:** I think you do. And I think you'd better sit down and tell me right now what's going on. *(she doesn't sit)* Or maybe we should just call it quits.

**CECY:** *(scared)* Quits? Just because I didn't want you pulling my arm off?

**RICK:** You know I wasn't doing that.

**CECY:** *(nervously looks at clock again)* Look, Rick, can't we discuss this later?

**RICK:** I won't be put off again, Cecy. Every time I touch you, you wince or shrug or turn away. I don't get it. I thought you liked me?

**CECY:** *(sits, but on the edge of her chair, still holding her books to her chest)* I do, Rick. I like you a lot.

**RICK:** Then what gives?

**CECY:***(pleading)* Can't we talk about this later?

**RICK:***(sighs, calm but fed up)* No, Cecy. You keep saying that and we never do and this keeps on happening. Either you tell me now what's wrong or we're through.

**CECY:** But there's only a few more minutes before class.

**RICK:** So you're late. It's just a class and this is life. So decide.

**CECY:***(tears coming to her eyes)* You didn't use to be so cruel.

**RICK:** *(urgently)* It's not cruel to want a straight answer for once. What is it? Am I too hairy for you? *(Cecy giggles while wiping her eyes)* Too short? Well, what then?

**CECY:** *(quietly, tears brimming)* I don't want to lose you.

**RICK:** Well, cringing every time I touch you is not going to keep me around.

*He waits, refusing to help her anymore. Cecy keeps crying quietly, wiping her eyes with the backs of her hands.*

**RICK:***(exasperated)* Oh, for pete's sake.

*He gets up and goes to the counter for some napkins and brings them back to her.*

**RICK:** Here.

**CECY:***(sniffling)* Thanks. *She wipes her eyes and blows her nose. No-one in the cafeteria is paying them any attention.*

**RICK:** So?

**CECY:** I like you, Rick. I really do.

**RICK:** And I like you.

**CECY:** So can't it just stay like this? I mean what's wrong with just hanging out together like we do?

**RICK:** Cecy, relationships have to grow. They have to develop, go somewhere, or else they die. We've been hanging out now for over a year. It's time for some kind of change.

**CECY:** (*scornful*) And you think it has to be sex.

**RICK:**(*groaning*) I didn't say that. It doesn't have to be anything. But I'd like to think that sex would be part of it one day. I mean, it's only natural.

**CECY:** Sure. To men.

**RICK:** What's that supposed to mean?

**CECY:** It's always men who want sex, who can't be satisfied with just plain warmth and affection.

**RICK:**(*hurt*) What do you think sex is, if it's not warmth and affection?

**CECY:**(*angrily*) You wouldn't understand.

**RICK:** Try me.

**CECY:** (*getting more and more furious*) You think it's all just about holding hands and sweet kisses and moonlit nights? You think it's like the romantic songs? Well, it's not. It's smelly breath and sweaty hands and suffocating blackness. It's not wanting to get caught and being afraid and (*gulps*) being so ashamed afterwards. (*not looking at him*) It's horrible.

**RICK:** Cecy?

*Cecy picks up her coffee cup but the coffee is cold and she puts it back down.*

**RICK:** Cecy, look at me.

**CECY:** *(doesn't look, sullenly)* Why?

**RICK:** Cecy, please?

*Cecy finally looks at him, both defiant and scared.*

**CECY:** What?

**RICK:** Cecy, what you described, whatever that was, it wasn't sex.

**CECY:** Oh no?

**RICK:** No. It wasn't. I don't know who you were with to get an opinion like that...

**CECY:** Does it matter?

**RICK:** I don't know. Maybe you should tell me.

*The school bell rings, warning there are 5 minutes*

*before classes begin at 9. The student newspaper meeting breaks up and most of the other students move towards the doors. Cecy looks quickly at the clock but Rick keeps watching her intently.*

**CECY:***(weary)* Couldn't we talk about this later?

**RICK:** I don't think so. I thought you said I was your first boyfriend?

**CECY:** *(earnest)* You are. You're the first one who ever cared about me, who made me feel like I matter.

**RICK:** This guy, whoever made you feel about sex the way you do...

**CECY:** *(tired)* What about him?

**RICK:** Is he still around?

**CECY:***(curious)* Why?

**RICK:***(fiercely)* Because I'd like to beat the shit out of him for what he did to you.

**CECY:** *(smiles uncertainly)* That would be a big help.

**RICK:** No, really, Cecy. He's done something to you...twisted you or something. I think, maybe,

*(reaches tentatively across the table to hold her hands and she lets him)* maybe you should talk to somebody.

**CECY:** *(smiles at him, bright-eyed with tears)*  
Everybody's telling me that.

**RICK:** *(confused)* Oh yeah?

**CECY:** Terry wanted me to talk to someone. And Miss Bella. And she took me to meet her therapist. That's what we were talking about last night.

**RICK:** *(jealously)* Oh good, you won't talk to your own boyfriend but a complete stranger can get you to open up just like that. *(snaps his fingers)*

**CECY:***(smiling reassuringly at him)* It wasn't 'just like that' I can tell you.

**RICK:***(mollified)* So? What was it like? Did you have to lie down on a couch?

**CECY:***(grinning at him)* No, silly. We sat in chairs, just like normal people. *(gazes into the distance)* It was kind of neat in a way, talking to someone who really and truly wants to listen to you.

**RICK:** *(drops her hands, mock hurt)* Oh, so now I

don't listen to you?

**CECY:** *(quickly pats his hands)* Oh no, not you! I was thinking of my mother!

**RICK:** *(smiles)* Good. *(takes her hands again)* As long as it's anyone but me.

**CECY:** Don't worry. I promise to talk your ears off every night when I get home from school. Your suppertime will never be the same!

**RICK:** *(holds his hands to ears and leans away in fake terror)* Oh no! I can see it now. Between you and my mom I'll never have a peaceful meal again!

**CECY:** *(laughs)* You'd better believe it, buddy! *(looks at the clock)* I suppose I should go to the library and work on my essay.

**RICK:** What, after all this? After you've fought with your parents, went to your first Outreach meeting, met a therapist and stayed overnight at Miss Bella's? Baby, you deserve a treat! As long as class has started anyway... *(they both look guiltily at the clock and then smilingly at each other)*...I've got a great idea. Why don't we walk to the corner store for an ice cream cone? We'll be back in time for the next class.

**CECY:***(wanting to be persuaded)* You think it would be all right?

**RICK:** *(decided)* Definitely. *(starts to pack his own things)* Even Miss Bella would approve a break, *(standing)* I know it.

**CECY:***(also standing, smiling)* And what makes you such an authority on Miss Bella?

**RICK:** Anyone who drives a red MG knows how to have a good time! Come on!

*They walk out of the now empty cafeteria. Curtain.*

## SCENE XI

*Outside the school cafeteria, at lunch time. Rick is chatting with a friend when he sees Terry coming by. He says a quick goodbye and catches Terry by the elbow as she passes and drags her over by the wall, out of the way of the stream of students chattering, and filing into the caf.*

**TERRY:** *(irritated)* Hey! Oh, it's you.

**RICK:** *(pulling her aside)* Terry, what's the story with Cecy?

**TERRY:** (*wary*) What do you mean?

**RICK:** We just about broke up this morning...

**TERRY:** (*curious*) Oh. Just about?

**RICK:** She started telling me this tale. Look, you're her best friend. You must know. This guy, the one who hurt her so bad. Who is he?

**TERRY:** (*deliberately*) Who?

**RICK:** Aw, come on. Quit stalling. You must know.

**TERRY:** (*looking over his shoulder to see if anyone is listening to them*) Look Rick, whatever she tells you, that's your business. And what she tells me is mine.

*Rick looks around too, grabs her elbow again and moves her even further away from the noisy doorway.*

**RICK:** She's in trouble, Terry. Big trouble. And she only has us to help her. Now come on, give.

**TERRY:**           Actually, she's got more than us. Miss Bella and Mr. Hudson to be precise. I think we can trust them to help her.

**RICK:** Mr. Hudson? What's he got to do with it?

**TERRY:** Snap out of it! He was the one who got her the Outreach job, remember?

**RICK:** He didn't get it for her. He just helped her apply.

**TERRY:** Picky, picky. Anyway, he and Miss Bella are hand in hand in this.

**RICK:***(menacingly)* Hand in hand in what, Terr? Spill it.

**TERRY:** *(scornful)* Oh, don't go pulling your he-man stuff with me, man. Save it for the lady who cares.

**RICK:** *(takes a breath)* Look, Terry, she told me some seriously scary stuff this morning. Stuff about sex that she shouldn't know about. No-one should know about. And she wouldn't tell me who the guy is. Now you and I and the whole world knows that I'm the first guy she's ever gone steady with. So who the hell was the guy that hurt her?

**TERRY:** *(shifting her weight, she still keeps looking nervously around)* I don't see that it matters.

**RICK:** Oh, you don't, eh? Some creep who may still be around for all we know puts a trip like this on our best friend and you say it doesn't matter?

**TERRY:** She's being looked after now.

**RICK:** (*biting*) How? Just exactly how is she being looked after? By Miss Bella sending her to a therapist?

**TERRY:** So she told you?

**RICK:** Yes, goddammit Terry, she told me everything but who the guy was!

**TERRY:** (*hesitating*) I don't know. If she didn't tell you, she must have a reason.

**RICK:** (*dogged*) You know how happy Cecy is with me. Well, I'll tell you what I told her this morning. I can't go on in this relationship if she keeps putting up that wall. There's no point. If we can't be intimate... and I mean emotionally as well as physically...if we can't be intimate, then there's no point in continuing. Now, she only told me what she did because I threatened to leave. But I was serious. I won't be shut out. If you won't help me help Cecy, and she won't let me close to her, then I mean it. I'm through.

**TERRY:** This is all very noble and convincing, Rick, but shouldn't you be telling her this? I mean you are having the relationship with her, aren't you?

**RICK:** God, sometimes you're so thick, Terry. I told you. She told me as much as she could this morning. And it was a lot. But knowing what I know now, I want to help even more. Why are you trying to stop me?

**TERRY:** I'm not stopping you, man. Go ahead and help her. But quit asking me to break her confidence.

**RICK:** *(trying to control himself)* All right. Don't break her confidence then. I'd probably be madder than hell if you tried the same thing with me. *(gives her a weak grin and she grins knowingly back)* But just tell me this. With Miss Bella and Mr. Hudson and God knows who else helping her, is she safe?

**TERRY:** *(hedging)* What do you mean?

**RICK:** Just that. Simple question, even for you. A yes or a no. Is she safe?

**TERRY:** *(hesitantly)* Well-I, she's moving out tomorrow...

*They look at each other, growing more and more horrified, Terry with realization she's given it away and Rick with dawning understanding.*

**RICK:** *(absolutely appalled, slowly)* My God!

*Terry now pulls Rick further from the cafeteria door.*

**TERRY:** God in heaven, she'll kill me. Rick, please, you've got to pretend you don't know.

**RICK:** *(shocked)* Are you out of your mind! The most.... *(searching for the word)*.. evil thing she could possibly face and you expect me to pretend I don't know?

**TERRY:** Rick, please! She'll know I'll told you!

**RICK:***(angry)* What the hell does it matter who told me! For chrissakes, Miss Bella knows! Why else would she be bringing in a therapist!

**TERRY:***(looking around)* Please, Rick! Keep your voice down!

**RICK:** How can you stand there, asking me to keep quiet, with this going on? How can you let your best friend go home every night, knowing what you know?

what she's facing?

**TERRY:**           *(angry now, too)* What makes you so goddammed holier-than-thou, eh? Why do you suppose Cecy wouldn't tell you? Probably so you wouldn't run off half-cocked like this.

**RICK:** *(spluttering, he's so angry)* Half-cocked? Half-cocked?

**TERRY:**           Before you go running off interfering in something you don't know anything about, don't you think you should get your own shit together?

**RICK:** What the hell are you talking about?

**TERRY:**           Look, Rick, if Cecy didn't tell you, it's because she's handling things her own way and you have to respect that.

**RICK:***(coldly)* Let me get this straight. You want me to forget Cecy's dad *(venomously whispers the word)* fucks *(normal voice)* his daughter so you can pretend you're respecting her?

**TERRY:** *(frustrated, throws up her hands)* You just don't get it, do you? You just want to ride the white horse in your shining armour and do something, no matter what the consequences.

**RICK:** (*emphasizes each word*) What consequences?  
(*angry and disgusted*) What consequences could possibly be worse?

**TERRY:** (*upset*) I don't know what consequences. Maybe something to do with her brother. But the point is, Cecy didn't want to tell you. She's handled things up until now and tomorrow she's moving out and won't have to deal with it ever again. (*pleading*) So can't you just let her cope with it her own way?

**RICK:** (*still cold*) Tell me this, Terry. Why did Cecy stay over at Miss Bella's last night.

**TERRY:** (*startled*) I don't know. Because of the Outreach meeting, I guess.

**RICK:** Think again.

**TERRY:** (*stammering*) I don't know what you're getting at.

**RICK:** Just this. Miss Bella found out yesterday, didn't she? She found out and she was so worried for Cecy that she wouldn't let her go home, isn't that right?

**TERRY:** (*slowly, thinking*) Maybe. Cecy said

Miss Bella invented the length of the meeting. And, well.. never mind. Besides, Cecy's gone home millions...

**RICK:** (*interrupting*) No, what did you mean 'never mind'?

**TERRY:** (*reluctantly*) Well, it's just that Miss Bella asked Cecy to ask me if she could stay over tonight.

**RICK:**(*pouncing*) You see! You see how serious this is? My God, I don't know why we don't call the police.

**TERRY:** (*lashing out*) Will you stop getting so dramatic!

**RICK:** Jesus, Terry, I really don't get you. What has to happen before you think something is really serious?

**TERRY:**(*upset*) Look man, you don't know. You found something out today that's a little upsetting. So fine. Be upset. But you can't go messing around in a situation that's been happening for a long time!

**RICK:**(*appalled*) You knew? You knew this was going on for a long time and you did nothing?

**TERRY:***(hurt, guilty,angry)* What was I going to do? She swore me to secrecy. And if she didn't tell me, she wouldn't have told anyone. At least this way, she could get it off her chest.

**RICK:** Terry.

**TERRY:** *(imploring)* She said she was handling it, Rick! She made me promise not to tell anyone ever, not my own mom, not anyone. And she told me she had ways of avoiding him. She had tricks. And then she was going to be moving out.

**RICK:** *(sadly)* God, Terry, can't you see? She was too scared to do anything because she was *in* the situation. But you? You could have got help for her. Jeez, you could have told Miss Bella at least.

**TERRY:** Oh, how was I to know that the English lady would turn out to be so good and brave? She doesn't exactly look like someone you could tell such disgusting stuff to.

**RICK:** *(relenting)* I guess I gave Cecy a pretty funny look when she said Miss Bella was helping her.  
*(grinning wryly)* I always flunked her classes so she'd be the last person I'd turn to!

**TERRY:** *(smiling back)* Me too! *(serious)* But Rick,

now don't get excited...

**RICK:** *(anxious)* What now?

**TERRY:** Well, I guess maybe it's like you said. Miss Bella doesn't want Cecy going home.

**RICK:** Well?

**TERRY:** The thing is, my folks and I are going to a wedding tonight.

**RICK:** Shit!

**TERRY:** *(quickly)* I told Cecy she could stay over anyway. I offered her my key and said we could figure out a good story to tell my folks.

**RICK:** And you're going to tell me she refused?

**TERRY:** *(unhappily)* Yes.

**RICK:** *(starts to fidget, looking around)* Shit!

**TERRY:** *(anxious)* She said she'd be all right...

*Rick glares at her.*

**TERRY:** *(looks down)* I know. *(looks back up at Rick)*

Do you think I should tell Miss Bella?

**RICK:** Forget it. Miss Bella's done her share. Cecy's room is ready at home. There's no reason why she can't stay there tonight.

**TERRY:** (*snorts, sarcastic*) And what kind of a story are you going to make up for that? That your mom couldn't wait to have company? That'll go over real good.

**RICK:** I wish you'd concentrate on Cecy for once and quit sniping at me. Besides, you got a better idea?

**TERRY:** (*quietly*) I guess not. (*sighs*) At least she'll be out of there for good and we won't have to worry about her anymore.

**RICK:** I don't know about that. Look, if you see her before I do, tell her I want to talk to her, okay?

**TERRY:** (*warningly*) You think you're going to be able to convince her any more than I could? Especially after this morning?

**RICK:** Especially after this morning, I hope. And you know, it might not be a bad idea for you to have a word with Miss Bella just in case. If Cecy does decide to get all independent with me, it would be

good to have a back up.

**TERRY:** Right.

**RICK:** And Terry...

**TERRY:** Yeah?

**RICK:** I'm just thinking. It's a Friday night and I'll have to leave early for work.

**TERRY:** And I have to leave early for the wedding.

**RICK:** I don't want to take any chances. Why don't you meet me here at 3:30 just so we make sure at least one of us has talked with her?

**TERRY:** Isn't that kind of silly? I mean, I'll see her in English class and you'll see her in your spare.

**RICK:** When's her next Outreach meeting ?

**TERRY:** Oh. I don't know.

**RICK:** Yeah. Me neither. And having her paged would probably really piss her off.

**TERRY:** Oh-h yeah!

**RICK:** So look. Here's the plan. In English class, tell Cecy I want to talk to her before she goes home. And when she's not looking, mention what's going on to Miss Bella. I'll tell Cecy during the spare that she's to stay at my place tonight. And just to make sure we don't miss her, we'll talk with each other at 3:30. Okay?

**TERRY:** Sure. *(They've both started walking towards the cafeteria doors)* And Rick?

**RICK:** Yeah?

**TERRY:** You're right. You guys are good together.

**RICK:** *(gruffly)* I hope we can stay that way.

*They each see their own friends ahead and separate. Exit. Curtain.*

## SCENE XII

*English Literature class, the same afternoon. Students are slowly taking their seats, chatting with each other, laughing. Four or five guys at the back are rehashing a football match, a few girls are reading*

*quietly. Terry is lounging casually near the doorway waiting for Miss Bella and Cecy. One of the girls already at her desk beckons to Terry.*

**ALANNA:** Hey Terry! Is it true your cousin's marrying a millionaire?

*A few other girls look up at this and join the discussion.*

**MARY:** A millionaire?

**SANDRA:** Wow! Does he have a brother?  
*(laughs)*

**TERRY:** Aw, lay off you guys. He's not a millionaire. He's just well off.

**MARY:** How well is well off?

**ALANNA:***(reading from a newspaper clipping)* Well enough to afford the Grand Ballroom at the Wilton Regency! And the Brett Elvin Chamber Players as the band!

*The girls all ooh and aah.*

**TERRY:** *(grinning sheepishly)* He does have a few bucks.

**ALANNA:** A few? It says here the hors d'oeuvres are being created by a top North American chef and that the chef for the main meal is flying in from France! Man!

**SANDRA:** You've got to bring us all back huge doggie bags!

**TERRY:** Don't be so daft! You can't have doggy bags at a posh wedding.

*The noise level drops suddenly as a tall, purposeful man strides into the room and takes his place at the teacher's desk, putting down an armful of books and papers.*

**SANDRA, MARY:(coyly)** Hi, Mr. Thompson.

*Mr. Thompson smiles at them briefly before clapping his hands.*

**MR. THOMPSON:** All right, everyone. Places please. Take your seats and quiet please.

*The students all gradually take their places including Terry who begins to look worried.*

**MR. THOMPSON:** Quiet, please. Thank you.

Miss Bella has been called away for the rest of the afternoon, so I will be listening to your marvelously erudite pontifications on the deeper meanings found within the text of *(looks down at his notes)* Yeats.

*The class titters. Mr. Thompson looks back up and nods at a student near the back.*

**MR. THOMPSON:** Yes, Jack?

**JACK:** *(respectfully)* That's not us, sir.

*More giggling and fidgeting from the class.*

**MR. THOMPSON:** *(politely interested)* Really? *(studies his notes more carefully)* Aha. Quite right, Jack, quite right. I must restrain my excitement for Yeats for the next class. Instead, it will be my pleasure to hear your most original thoughts on modern Canadian literature, is that not right?

*General groans, scuffles, shuffling of paper.*

**MR. THOMPSON:** *(satisfied)* Right. Let's get to it shall we?

*Terry opens her books but continues to glance worriedly towards the door.*

CURTAIN

SCENE XIII

*The cafeteria at 3:00 that afternoon. It's very quiet. A few students are scattered through the room working silently on homework. One or two teachers wander in for a cup of coffee and leave again. Rick is sitting with his coffee at the end of a long table by the door. He keeps looking at his watch worriedly.*

SCENE XIV

*The same cafeteria at 3:30. There are noisy crowds of students running in to meet one another before heading off either to after-school clubs or to the buses seen outside through the windows. Terry is hurrying towards Rick, who stands just outside the doors.*

**RICK:** Did ya see her?

**TERRY:** (*urgently*) They weren't there, Rick, neither of them.

**RICK:** Shit! Cecy didn't make it here for the spare either.

**TERRY:**           *(looking over his shoulder through the windows)* There's my mom's car already. I've gotta go.

**RICK:** You can't just leave it like this!

**TERRY:** What am I supposed to do? Miss the wedding to wait for her?

**RICK:** Would it be so much to ask?

**TERRY:***(angrily)* I don't see you volunteering to miss your precious work for your ladylove's sake.

**RICK:** All right, all right. I taped a note to her locker. She's got to go back to collect her things, right?

**TERRY:**           Unless she's already left the school grounds for the day.

**RICK:** Damn. I wish we knew where they were.

**TERRY:**           I've really got to run, Rick. If she's with Miss Bella and they're late back, I can't see Miss Bella leaving her either at an empty school or at her parents' house. They'll figure something out.

**RICK:** Providing Cecy's up front with Miss Bella and tells her she won't be staying at your place.

*They both start walking towards the outside doors.*

**TERRY:** We've done what we could, Rick. We have to leave it up to Cecy to do whatever she thinks best.

**RICK:** You're such a quitter, Terr. I never knew that about you.

**TERRY:** *(angry)* Fine! You stay and wait for her, then. I've done what I could. *(hurries out the door waving to her mother's car)*

**RICK:** *(to himself)* Shit!

*He, too, leaves the school, walking slowly.*

## SCENE XV

*The same place, just inside the outside doors to the school, at 4 o'clock. The parking lot, while not deserted, has very few vehicles in it and there aren't many students around. Miss Bella, Mr. Hudson and Cecy are walking in, Mr. Hudson holding the door open for the two women. Cecy looks happily lost in another world.*

**MISS BELLA:***(smiling)* Thanks, Mr. Hudson. *(looking around)* Looks like we've missed the after school rush.

**MR. HUDSON:** Just as well. I never did like fighting crowds. Well, Cecy? Back in the real world, eh?

**CECY:** *(breathlessly)* Oh, Mr. Hudson, don't you just wish music was the real world? All day, all the time just like Brett Elvin? *(sighs)* Nothing to do but play and practise and talk about music all day long. What a life!

*Miss Bella and Mr. Hudson smile at each other over Cecy's head as they stop momentarily in the middle of the deserted hallway.*

**MR. HUDSON:** I'll just check in the Music Room to make sure there aren't any surprises

*Mr. Thompson approaches them slowly, pipe in hand, books in the other arm, on his way out the door.*

**MISS BELLA:** *(calling)* Oh, Mr. Thompson! Thanks so much for filling in for me today. How did it go?

**MR. THOMPSON:** Reasonably, Miss Bella, reasonably.

**MISS BELLA:** You didn't have too much trouble with the Grade Nine's?

**MR. THOMPSON:** My dear Miss Bella, your rambunctious Grade Nine's were no trouble at all. *(frowning)* They could, however, use some serious drilling in the elementary rudiments of constructing English sentences. *(shudders delicately)* If I hear one more *(pronounced nasal accent)* "cause he can't", I shall surely go mad.

*Mr. Hudson and Miss Bella chuckle while Cecy looks on, smiling.*

**MR. HUDSON:** Ah, you spend so much time with the scholars of the school that you've forgotten what most students are really like.

**MR. THOMPSON:** *(puts his pipe between his teeth and shifts his books to the other arm)* Thank heavens, Mr. Hudson. *(removes pipe, and turns to Miss Bella)* May I escort you to your car? I seem to be walking in that direction.

**MISS BELLA:** *(flustered)* You're too kind, Mr. Thompson. But I must check in with the office and collect my things. Please don't bother to wait.

**MR. THOMPSON:** *(puts pipe between teeth again and moves off)* Very well. I wish you all good night.

*They all prepare to leave in different directions as Mr. Thompson leaves the school.*

**MR. HUDSON:** I must run. Mrs. Hudson and I are going to the symphony tonight. *(winks at Cecy)* I'll let you know if Brett puts into practice what he was preaching this afternoon!

**CECY:** *(turning to go to her locker)* Hope you enjoy it, Mr. Hudson. Isn't it a Mozart program tonight?

**MR. HUDSON:** Yes, with the Requiem, one of my favourites. *(sings a snatch and conducts)* Dah-h...dee dee dah..dah. *(sighs)* Lovely.

**MISS BELLA:** I'm afraid I must dash too. There's a meeting of the Vintage Car Club that I don't want to miss. Good luck on your move tomorrow, Cecy.

**CECY:** *(smiling)* Thanks, Miss Bella.

**MISS BELLA:** And you won't forget to see Geoffrey on Sunday afternoon?

**CECY:** I'll be there. It's actually pretty close to Rick's place.

**MISS BELLA:** *(edging down the hall towards the office)* Good.

**MR. HUDSON:** I'll give you a lift to Terry's, after we swing by the Music Room

**CECY:** *(looks down at the floor before replying)* Uh, thanks Mr. Hudson, but I'm...I'm not going to Terry's.

*Miss Bella stops to look directly at Cecy. Mr. Hudson is watching her too.*

**MISS BELLA:** *(frowning)* Cecy?

**CECY:** *(hurriedly)* Well, it's just that Terry's got a big family wedding tonight and well, Friday nights I sometimes get to see Rick. *(pleading)* And I rather try to see him.

**MISS BELLA:** *(relaxes)* So you'll be with Rick?

**CECY:** Yeah, *(pauses)* if he can get off work.

**MR. HUDSON:** *(gently)* And if he can't?

**CECY:** Then I'll just wait for him to finish work. I can do my homework while I'm waiting. That way it's out of the way before the weekend.

**MISS BELLA:** *(dubious)* I don't know...

**CECY:** I'll be fine, Miss Bella, really I will.

**MR. HUDSON:** You understand we don't want you to go home alone, Cecy, and unprotected?

**CECY:** I know and thank you but I'll be okay. I'll just wait for Rick.

*Mr. Hudson looks at Miss Bella and shrugs. Miss Bella digs in her shoulder bag and pulls out a pen and paper.*

**MISS BELLA:** *(writing)* I'm usually home by 9:15. If something goes haywire, here's my number. *(gives her the paper)* Call me. I can come and get you.

**CECY:** *(folds the paper into a tiny square and tucks it in her packsack)* Thanks.

**MISS BELLA:** *(looks at her sternly)* Seriously, Cecy. We don't want you going home tonight.

*Cecy looks from Miss Bella to Mr. Hudson back to Miss Bella, faintly flushing.*

**CECY:** Thanks, really.

**MISS BELLA:** All right. Good night, Mr. Hudson.

**MR. HUDSON:** 'Night.

**MISS BELLA:** And good night Cecy, unless I hear from you later.

**CECY:** Thanks, Miss Bella. Have a good time at the meeting.

*The three smile, Miss Bella waves and they exit in different directions.*

## SCENE XVI

*At Cecy's locker in a deserted school corridor. She's sitting cross-legged on the floor, finishing writing in a notebook before she closes it. A textbook is open on the floor beside her with Rick's note marking the place. She looks up at the clock hanging from the ceiling in the hallway. It's nearly 6 o'clock. Far down the hall, a janitor is slowly sweeping the floor. She sighs, shifts position to hug her knees and gazes off into the distance.*

## SCENE XVII

*Outside the cafeteria doors, which are shut. The lights are off inside. Cecy is leaning aimlessly against the wall, packsack on the floor, looking at another clock hanging from the ceiling which says 6:15. The school is deserted. She sighs deeply, picks up the packsack and exits.*

## SCENE XVIII

*The Bolton kitchen, at quarter to 7 that evening. Anne, still in her office clothes, is finishing the dishes. Bill is reading the newspaper at the table. Jimmy is playing with his toy truck on the floor under the table.*

**ANNE:** *(rinsing a plate)* Did you remember to pick up the extra vinegar like I asked you? *(rattles a handful of cutlery under the tap and drops it into the drying rack)* Did you? Bill?

**BILL:** *(absently)* What?

**JIMMY:** *(talking to himself while driving the truck)* ..and then the cops come *(squealing)*  
rrrrrrRRRRRRrrrrRRRRRRrrr...*(makes screeching sound)*  
EERRRR! "All right you. Out of the truck!"

*(continues in a low voice)* So then he gets out of the truck and faces them. One guy against 6 cops....

**ANNE:** *(scrubbing a pot)* I said, did you get the vinegar like I asked.

**BILL:** Oh yeah. It's downstairs in the cellar.

**JIMMY:** *(to himself)*..and he shoots one of the cops BANG! And he falls over dead. And then another one BANG! BANG! And two more fall over dead. "Catch me now,coppers!" and he jumps into the truck, vrrroooooomm, vrrrrroooooommm.....

**ANNE:** *(rinsing the pot)* Do you want sausages for tomorrow night?

**BILL:** Sure.

**ANNE:** Then could you get them out of the freezer, please? I'd like to get everything organized now so I won't be worrying about it tomorrow.

*Bill puts down the paper with a sigh, gets up, steps over Jimmy and goes to the freezer compartment.*

**JIMMY:***(to himself)* Suddenly, RRRRRR!, a huge transport truck is in the way. "Look out look out!" but it's too late and crash! *(flips the truck over on its side)*

He's gone over. But the transport guy hops out of his vehicle and another guy arrives and oooooommmppphhh! they roll it back over...

**BILL:** *(peering inside the freezer)* There are no sausages here, Anne. *(pulling out a package)* How about fish?

**ANNE:** What? *(turns to look at him)* Not there! The downstairs freezer, of course. *(turns back to the sink)* Do I always have to tell you every little thing?

**BILL:** *(heads for the basement stairs)* What else do you need while I'm there?

**ANNE:** Let me think for a second. *(leans against the sink with her hands dripping on the inside edge)* You could bring me up some corn and a package of beans. And oh yeah, could you fill the flour container while you're there?

*Bill was at the head of the stairs. He now turns around and crosses the kitchen again, stepping over Jimmy, to retrieve the flour container and steps over Jimmy again on his way back to the stairs.*

**JIMMY:** *(to himself)* So then she says *(high falsetto)* "My car broke down back there. Can you help me?" *(normal voice)* and he says *(low & gruff*

voice) “Sure lady, where is it?” (*normal voice*) and they go back vrrrooommm...

*Bill goes downstairs. Cecy comes into the kitchen and looks around.*

**CECY:** Hi Mom. Dad around?

**ANNE:** (*turns around*) Cecy. Could you lend a hand here?

**CECY:** (*backing out of the kitchen*) I was just going up to my room to get...

**ANNE:** (*snapping*) Oh come on. There are just a few left and I want to get going so I can get to the stores before they close.

**CECY:** (*grumbling and dropping her packsack on the floor*) All right. (*picks up a dishcloth and begins to dry dishes*)

**ANNE:** (*wiping the counter and letting the water out of the sink*) I thought you were staying over at Terry’s tonight?

**CECY:** I just thought I’d pick up a few things first.

**ANNE:** What kind of things?

**CECY:** *(stumbling)* Um, my music book and uh, a game we were going to try.

**JIMMY:** *(to himself)* So then they drove off and lived happily ever after. *(looks up, in a normal voice)* Hey Mom? Mom, can I have a popsicle now?

**ANNE:** Jimmy, you just finished dinner. Now go outside and play.

**JIMMY:** But you said I could have a popsicle after dinner, remember?

**ANNE:** Not now, Jimmy. Maybe a little later. *(takes off her half apron and hangs it on the inside cupboard door rack while Jimmy runs out of the kitchen)* Your father and I have to go out shopping right after your truck leaves tomorrow, Cecy. That should be around noon, right?

**CECY:** I guess so. The truck arrives at ten and I'm sure we'll be done by then.

**ANNE:** Ten? Does it have to be so early?

**CECY:** *(accusingly)* You said you had a busy day planned. So Rick figured the sooner we were out of your hair the better.

**ANNE:** *(wiping off the table)* I don't see that Rick needed to be the one to make that decision. *(trips on a toy truck)* Jimmy! Come and get your toys! *(to Cecy)* You know what our Saturdays are like. You know the routine. Couldn't you have explained it to him?

**CECY:** But Mom, ten isn't early. And besides, Rick's uncle needs the truck for another job.

*Jimmy stands in the kitchen doorway.*

**JIMMY:** What?

**ANNE:** *(points at the floor)* Come and get your truck. And then go outside and play.

*Jimmy saunters over to retrieve his truck and starts driving it along the walls towards the outside door.*

**JIMMY:** *(to himself)* So then, "We're going on a cross-country tour, Mac!" Vrroommm. So he gets in the truck and drives over the mud to get to the turnoff.. *(exits)*

*Anne picks up her purse from behind the door and the keys from the table.*

**ANNE:** Well, just as long as you don't wake us up. I'll be back shortly. *(calls down the basement stairs)*  
Bill! I'm leaving! *(she exits)*

*Cecy finishes drying the last of the dishes, hangs up the dishcloth, picks up her packsack and goes up to her bedroom.*

## SCENE XIX

*Same time, Cecy's bedroom. There are a couple of boxes packed up in one corner but even so, the room doesn't look that different. Cecy goes to her top dresser drawer, takes out the diary that was hidden under her underwear and stuffs it into her packsack. Then she sits on the bed and looks around. She gets out another larger packsack from the closet and starts to pack her underwear from the top drawer. Engrossed in her work, she doesn't hear the door open.*

**BILL:** Cecy?

**CECY:** *(whirls around, shocked)* Dad! I thought you were in the basement!

**BILL:** *(sits down quietly on her bed)* I thought I heard you. So, is it all set for tomorrow?

**CECY:***(nervously closes the top drawer, opens the second drawer and starts taking out tops and putting them in the packsack)* Yes. I told Mom the truck's coming at ten.

**BILL:** That's good. Your mother and I have shopping to do later on. So. Have you got everything you need?

**CECY:** *(not looking at him)* Think so. It's not like I'm going to the Arctic or anything.

**BILL:** Right. So what's the first thing on the agenda when you get there?

**CECY:** *(starting to relax and still packing, opens the bottom drawer)* I suppose talking with Mrs. Wainwright. I've only met her a couple of times you know. I don't really know her.

**BILL:** She must be some lady. *(gets up and walks slowly over to the packed boxes under the window)*

**CECY:** *(rummaging in a drawer and not seeing him)* Rick says she can be scary when she sees injustice. Like when..oh!

*Bill has come up behind her and put his arms around*

*her waist.*

**BILL:** *(murmuring)* What's the matter? Can't I hug my only daughter goodbye?

**CECY:** *(struggling to free herself)* Daddy no! Stop it! I have to pack!

**BILL:** Sssh. Sshhh. *(holding her fast and rocking side to side)* There's nothing to be afraid of.

**CECY:** *(still struggling, furious)* Stop it! I'll call for Jimmy!

**BILL:** *(still rocking her)* He can't hear you.

**CECY:** *(shouting)* JIMM...

*Bill turns her around quickly and kisses her full on the mouth, muting the scream. Cecy's struggles are no match for his greater strength and Bill has no problem holding her against him with one arm. His free hand goes to Cecy's breast and starts fondling it. He pulls up her top, forces her breast out of its bra and lowers his head to suck on her nipple.*

**CECY:** *(crying and struggling)* They know, you know! Everybody knows!

**BILL:** *(still sucking and fondling her)* Hmmmm?

**CECY:** Miss Bella! Mr. Hudson! They know what you do!

*Bill straightens up and holds her by the shoulders away from him. He looks at her shocked.*

**BILL:** *(fierce)* What do you mean, they know?

*Triumphant but with tears are still rolling down her cheeks, Cecy struggles to cover herself.*

**CECY:** Just what I said. They...

*Bill slaps her hard across the face, knocking her back against the dresser which she tries to grab to keep her balance but can't. She falls on her bum, and puts her hand up to her face.*

**BILL:** *(raging)* You little cunt! What the hell did you tell them? *(grabs her arms and pulls her to her feet, shaking her)* Eh? Answer me! What did you tell them? *(he slaps her again but as he's still holding her shoulder, she remains standing but reels with the impact)*

**CECY:** *(crying)* Don't! Daddy, don't!

*Bill whirls her around and throws her against the bed.*

**BILL:** How dare you spread such a pack of lies to strangers! What the hell were you thinking of?

*Cecy crouches back into a corner of the bed, making herself as tiny as possible. Her nose is bleeding.*

**BILL:** *(looking around quickly and picks up her school packsack)* You think just because you're some godawful hotshot know-it-all *(throws the packsack at her, she covers her face with her arms, it hits and slides down, the buckles scraping)*, you can run around spreading lies *(looks around and picks up the partly-packed packsack)* and filth to half the township *(throws it at her, she cowers, it hits and spills her t-shirts and some underwear out onto the bed)* and I'm supposed to just stand by and let you?

**CECY:** *(crying but angry herself)* You're not supposed to do this!

**BILL:** *(picks up an article of clothing with each word and throws it to one side while mocking her tone of voice)* Oh, I'm not supposed to do this, am I?

*Bill grabs Cecy's ankles and yanks her legs straight out from underneath her so she's now lying flat on her back on the bed. Cecy screams. He slaps her across*

*the face to stop the screaming but she continues. He's on the bed, knees in between hers. He covers her mouth with his big hand and with the other begins to fumble with his trousers. The phone starts ringing. Cecy is screaming and crying but she can barely be heard. Bill has his pants around his knees and starts to move against her even though her shorts are still on. He removes the hand over her mouth to push down her shorts. He lunges at her. She screams.*

**CECY:** *(screaming and crying)* Help! Oh somebody, please! Help!

*The phone is still ringing. The downstairs door bangs open.*

**JIMMY:** *(excitedly, shouting from downstairs)* Dad! Hey Dad! The cops are here! *(aside)* Maybe he's upstairs. *(shouting and running up the stairs)* Dad! Hey Dad!

**CECY:** Jimmy!!

**JIMMY:** *(still running up the stairs)* Cecy? Hey Cecy, the cops are here! Really!

*Bill, dumbfounded, takes a moment before jumping up off the bed and slamming the door shut before Jimmy can get there.*

**BILL:** *(frightened, angry)* Now see what you've done!

*Bill pulls his pants up and fastens his belt while keeping his foot jammed up against the door. Cecy pulls up her shorts and curls up into a foetal position, crying.*

**JIMMY:** Dad!

**OFFICER PETROVICH (male):** *(calling from downstairs)* Mr. Bolton? *(He starts to climb the stairs, heavily. His partner, a female, stands waiting at the bottom.)*

**JIMMY:** *(starts pounding on Cecy's door)* Dad? You in there? Dad!

**BILL:** *(calling)* Uh, just a minute, son.

**OFFICER MURPHY (female):** *(calling)* Jimmy, why don't you come downstairs here.

**PETROVICH:** *(calmly)* Yes, Jimmy, go see Officer Murphy. We'll get your father.

**JIMMY:** *(reluctantly)* Okay.

*Jimmy clatters back down the stairs, the sound fading.*

**JIMMY:** *(off)* Could I see your gun?

**PETROVICH:** *(calling through the closed door)* Mr. Bolton? This is the Wilton Police. Please open the door.

*Bill has hurriedly pushed Cecy's clothes back into the packsack and has tried to tidy himself up a little. Cecy remains curled up on the bed, crying. Bill opens the door.*

**BILL:** *(too jovially)* Well, Officer? What have we here?

*Bill tries to step through the door and close it again but Officer Petrovich sticks his boot into the doorway and pushes past. He sees Cecy and calls down to his partner.*

**PETROVICH:** Murphy! Send the boy outside and come up here!

**BILL:** Look, Officer...

*Petrovich indicates to Bill that he should wait outside the door.*

**PETROVICH:** Would you wait outside please, sir.

**BILL:** Look, there's no need to get all excited here. My daughter just had a nosebleed and came up here to lie down.

**PETROVICH:** Please, sir. Outside.

*Petrovich manoeuvres Bill into the hallway and closes the door gently. He turns to Cecy, who has unfolded herself enough to see him. He crouches down to her eyelevel.*

**PETROVICH:** *(gently)* I'm Officer Petrovich. Are you Cecilia Bolton?

**CECY:** *(still crying but calming down)* Yes.

*She starts to sit up as there is a firm knock on the door. Petrovich stands and opens the door to allow Murphy to enter. Past her head, Bill is standing, fretting in the hallway. Petrovich closes the door behind Murphy who looks at Cecy and then to Petrovich who nods. Murphy takes out her notepad and pen.*

**CECY:** How--how did you know to come?

**PETROVICH:** A Mr. Rick Wainwright called a short while ago, insisting we check in to see if you were

here and okay.

**CECY:** *(sniffing but getting control of herself. She straightens her clothes but keeps her arms over her breasts)* Rick?

**PETROVICH:** What happened?

*Murphy looks around, finds and hands Cecy a few tissues.*

**CECY:** *(gently wiping her nose)* He hit me. He doesn't usually hit me.

*Murphy begins writing.*

**CECY:***(trying her best to be calm and adult-like)* I came up to pack a few things. I'm moving out tomorrow and I wanted to make sure I didn't forget anything. I thought he was in the basement. I didn't hear him when he came in.

**PETROVICH:** Was the door closed?

**CECY:** Yes. I always close it when I'm in here.

**PETROVICH:** Was it locked?

**CECY:** No. There's no lock on the door.

**PETROVICH:** Go on.

**CECY:** Well, I was packing and he came in and started to ask me about Mrs. Wainwright and.. *(starts to cry)* and then he started, you know? I couldn't get away.

**PETROVICH:** He started to hit you?

**CECY:** No, no. He started to.. *(hangs her head in shame)*...to touch me. It was only after I told him that my teachers knew that he started to hit me.

*Murphy is still writing.*

**PETROVICH:** You told your teachers your father was abusing you?

**CECY:** They told me, actually. They figured it out from an essay I wrote. They didn't want me to come home tonight...

**PETROVICH:** But you did anyway.

**CECY:** *(looking at him, then Murphy, imploring)* It was only supposed to be for a few minutes. I was just going to get my things and then call Rick.

**PETROVICH:** Why didn't you call Rick right away?

**CECY:** *(looking down)* Well-I, I didn't think it was worth it. I was just going to wait for him to be finished at work.

**PETROVICH:** But if your teachers and your friends knew it was dangerous for you to go home, why did you go anyway?

**CECY:** *(quickly)* Oh, Rick didn't know it was my father.

**PETROVICH:** I think you might find he does know.

*Cecy thinks about this for a second.*

**CECY:** *(quietly, ashamed)* I guess I thought I could handle it. I guess I thought with my moving out tomorrow, *(hangs her head)*, I don't know. I thought it would be different.

*Murphy flips her notebook shut and moves up to her, crouching to eye level.*

**MURPHY:** *(quietly)* We're going to take you in to the hospital to be examined.

*Cecy flinches.*

**CECY:** Do I have to? Can't I just tell you?

**MURPHY:** There could be injuries, Cecilia. It's important you be treated.

*Cecy nods.*

**MURPHY:** Is there someone we could call who would go with you? Would you like your mother to come?

**CECY:** *(spitting)* My mother! My mother wouldn't care!

**MURPHY:** *(gently persistent)* Someone else, then? Rick?

**CECY:** *(slowly)* Okay. And, could I please call Miss Bella? She's one of the teachers who was helping me.

*Murphy straightens up.*

**MURPHY:** Certainly. *(looks at Petrovich)* First, let's get you out of here.

**PETROVICH:** She can call from the hospital. *(to Cecy)* Can you walk?

*Cecy gets up gingerly.*

**CECY:** Oh sure, I'm fine. *(looks fearful)* But what about my dad?

**PETROVICH:** First things, first. *(looks around and sees her packsacks)* Do you need these?

*Cecy nods and he picks both of them up. He stands behind Cecy and nods at Murphy who is in front of her. Murphy opens the door and they walk out into the empty hallway, single file, Cecy between the two officers.*

## SCENE XX

*The kitchen, same time. Bill is sitting in his usual chair, head in his hands. He looks up as he hears footsteps coming down the stairs. At the same time, he hears Anne, coming in the side door, packages rustling. The phone is ringing.*

**ANNE:** *(calling)* Bill? Bill! Could you help me here please? And what on earth is going on with the police car outside? Jimmy's telling his friends the cops are here at our house!

*Anne continues shuffling her packages.*

**ANNE:** *(exasperated)* Will somebody get that phone?  
Bill? Bill?

*Sensing things aren't right, Anne drops the parcels at the door and hurries into the kitchen where she sees Bill*

**ANNE:** Bill? What is it?

*Murphy appears at the other kitchen entrance, startling Anne.*

**ANNE:** What in the world?

*Then Cecy appears, followed by Petrovich. Bill keeps his head in his hands, not looking at anyone.*

**ANNE:** *(angry)* Will someone please tell me what is going on around here?

**PETROVICH:** Mrs. Bolton, we're taking your daughter Cecilia to the hospital to be treated. And we're charging your husband with assault and with rape.

**ANNE:** Rape? Are you out of your mind? He couldn't get it up long enough to be charged with rape!

**BILL:** *(moaning, but still keeping his head in his hands)* Oh, Annie.

**ANNE:** This has got to be some kind of a sick joke. Cecy? Cecy, look at me. What's gotten into you? *(nervously)* And what happened to your face?

*Cecy has been hiding between the officers but she peeks around Murphy briefly.*

**CECY:** Some joke, Mom. Only nobody's laughing.

*As the realization hits her, Anne backs up a little and sinks into a chair. The phone starts ringing again.*

**ANNE:** Oh, my God. Bill.

**BILL:** *(suddenly looking up at Anne)* I couldn't help it, Annie, honest! *(snarling at Cecy)* If she hadn't had her underwear out all over the place, none of this would have happened.

*Anne gets up in a daze to answer the phone.*

**CECY:** *(sarcastic)* Don't interrupt your life or anything.

*Anne looks blankly at her daughter for a moment and deliberately looks away, picking up the receiver where*

*it hangs on a wall by the back exit.*

**ANNE:** *(politely)* Hello?.... *(suddenly sweetly social)* Miss Bella. *(Cecy starts)* How good of you to call....Yes, Cecy's here.....One moment, please... *(wordlessly she holds out the phone, without looking at Cecy)*

**CECY:** *(bumping over Murphy in her rush to get the phone)* Miss Bella?..... Yes, but.....Well, I just wanted.....*(ashamed)* I know but.....But the police are taking me to the hospital, Miss Bella.....Just a sec..

*Cecy cups the phone mouthpiece and looks to Murphy.*

**CECY:** Which hospital are we going to?

**MURPHY:** Wilton Memorial.

*Murphy turns to Petrovich who nods and gives her Cecy's packsacks.*

**CECY:** *(into phone)* Wilton Memorial.....Okay.....Yes, I'll wait.....I'll see you there...Bye.

*Cecy hangs up and turns to look at Murphy.*

**MURPHY:** *(quietly to Cecy)* Come on, now. Let's go to the car.

*Cecy holds onto Murphy's sleeve, the side furthest away from her parents.*

**CECY:** *(to Anne)* I'm going. *(waits)* I'll be at Miss Bella's after.

*Anne has gone back to sit down. She doesn't answer, doesn't look at her. Cecy looks back to Murphy, teary-eyed. They exit.*

**PETROVICH:** There will be another patrol car along shortly for you, sir. Is there someone you would like to notify? A lawyer perhaps?

**ANNE:** *(snapping)* Since when could we afford to have a lawyer?

**BILL:** *(goaded)* So it's all my fault, eh? I don't make enough money to get a lawyer so you're going to let me rot in hell? Fine wife I've got, eh, Officer?

*Petrovich stands impassively in the doorway, making sure no-one leaves but not looking at either Anne nor Bill.*

**ANNE:** Oh Mr. Bigshot's gonna blame all his stinking

little problems on his wife now, eh? Some tough guy. Well it won't wash, mister. Now everyone will know what kind of a two-faced loser you really are!

**BILL:** Sure, call me names. When all along, if you'd only been the proper sort of a wife...

**ANNE:** Proper? There was nothing proper in what you wanted to do!

**BILL:** *(giving up, putting his head back in his hands)*  
Aw, forget it. Just forget it.

*Silence as Petrovich looks out the window, Anne looks at the floor and Bill remains with his head in his hands. Finally, Anne gets up slowly, goes to the cupboard and begins pulling out cannisters.*

**ANNE:** I might as well make some coffee while we're waiting. Officer, what do you take in yours?

**CURTAIN.**

## SCENE XXI

*Saturday morning, 10:30, outside the Bolton home. A pickup truck is in the driveway with Cecy's boxes in it. The sun is shining. Rick, tense, sits in the driver's*

*seat, anxious to be gone. Jimmy is driving his toy truck along the edge of the stone steps near where Anne, wearing her weekend slacks, is sitting, looking lost. Cecy, a bandage over one cheekbone, stands before her, trying to say goodbye.*

**CECY:** You could always sell the house and get an apartment for you and Jimmy. Maybe even by then, I'll be back and I could get a job to help with the rent.

**ANNE:** *(absently)* Don't be ridiculous, Cecy. You have your career now. You won't be back.

**CECY:** You have a career too. You don't have to stay here. You could move downtown, like you've always said you wanted to.

**ANNE:** And when your father comes back, what then? He'd find no house, no wife, no family...

*She starts to sniffle and reaches into her pockets for a tissue.*

**CECY:** *(starts to get teary-eyed)* Oh, Mom, please. I'm trying to help.

**ANNE:** *(flatly, not looking at her)* Fine help you've been. Get your father arrested. Have all the neighbours see him taken away like a common thief.

**CECY:** *(starts to cry in earnest)* You always take his side, no matter what.

**ANNE:** *(looking at Cecy)* What do you expect, Cecy? He's my husband. What do you think you're going to do when that young man there *(nods in Rick's direction)* disappoints you? You think you're just going to leave him at the first sign of trouble? Especially after he gets you pregnant? *(looks away again)* Life's not that simple.

**CECY:** *(drying her eyes)* I don't know what I think life is. But I do know I sure don't want yours.

*Anne gasps and makes as if to hit her. Cecy steps back and Rick makes a move to leave the vehicle. But remembering the neighbours are probably watching, Anne stretches her raised hand around to the back of her head and casually pats her hair.*

**ANNE:** You really are the most irritating piece of scum. Go on. Get out of my life. Get out of all our lives.

**CECY:** *(starting to cry)* Fine. You know where I'll be.

*Cecy begins to walk towards the truck. Jimmy, shocked by what he has heard his mother say, follows*

*her, truck in hand. Anne looks off into the distance, ignoring them. Rick leans across the front seat and opens the truck door for Cecy who starts to climb in when she realizes Jimmy is beside her. She turns to him and kneels down to his eye level.*

**JIMMY:** *(starting to cry a little)* What Mom said, I'm sure she didn't mean it, Cec. Honest.

**CECY:** *(crying too)* I know, Jimmy, I know. Here.

*She holds her arms open wide and he walks into them. They hug each other for a long while. Finally, they both pull back, wiping their eyes.*

**CECY:** Now you remember to keep all those phone numbers I gave you nice and safe, okay?

**JIMMY:** I put 'em my special truck, the one with the doors that open.

**CECY:** *(smiling through her tears)* That's a good place. Now remember, whenever you want to talk to me, you can call any of those numbers and they'll find me, okay?

**JIMMY:** Can I call you for my birthday?

**CECY:** Sure.

**JIMMY:** And can I call you when I beat Tony at hockey?

**CECY:** Yep!

**JIMMY:** And can I call you after my bedtime?

**CECY:** *(laughing through her tears)* No, I don't think then's a good time. But Jimmy, whenever you want...if you think something funny's going on that you don't understand...or if something scares you...

**JIMMY:** Like what?

**CECY:** Oh I don't know. Anything. I just want you to know you can call me.

**JIMMY:** Aren't you ever coming back?

**CECY:** *(tears roll down her cheeks)* I don't know, Jimmy.

**JIMMY:** *(sadly)* Not even at Christmas?

**CECY:** Maybe. I don't know. But tell you what. I'll call you too, okay? And you can tell me how you're doing and what's happening and stuff, okay?

**RICK:** Come on, Cec. We really should be going.

**CECY:** Okay. *(to Jimmy)* C'm'ere big guy. Just one more hug and then I'm off.

*They hug and Cecy gives him a kiss. Jimmy steps back and Cecy steps up into the truck and slams the door. She looks towards Anne who gets up from the steps, turns and goes back into the house, without looking at them and without a word. Cecy's eyes well up, and then she looks down at Jimmy. Rick starts the engine.*

**RICK:***(calling)* Bye Jim, old man! *(He starts to reverse out of the driveway.)*

**CECY:** Bye Jimmy!

*The truck has gone maybe two feet when Jimmy starts to yell.*

**JIMMY:** Wait! Wait! Cecy, come back!

*Rick groans and brakes. Cecy leans out of the window.*

**CECY:** What? What is it, Jimmy?

**JIMMY:** *(running up to Cecy, he holds up his truck to*

her) Here! So you can go anywhere you want!

**CECY:** But Jimmy! This is your favourite truck!

**JIMMY:** Nah. Tony's got a bigger one he's gonna give me when he gets the new Ranger Rover. See ya!

*Jimmy steps back, waves, and runs into the house without looking back. Cecy cradles the truck in her hands and starts to cry as Rick backs the truck out of the driveway.*

**CURTAIN**

**THE END**

