

Paradise Street

A new play by
Constance Congdon

2010 Production Script, with revisions
May 22, 2010

CAST
{all female}

JANE
TJ
MOTHER
SUSAN B
WILMA
POLICEWOMAN,
CHAI
ANDREA
MAVIS
LYDIA
COLLEGE SECRETARY
NURSE
MARTA
JOJO
MIMI MANNING
AMINDA

The play was originally workshopped in June 2005 at the NYTW Vassar retreat. It was directed by Erica Gould and performed by Quincy Tyler Bernstine, Cindy Cheung, Lynn Cohen, Judith Hawking, and Colleen Werthmann. In June of 2006, another draft was read at The New Harmony Project. In July, 2008, it received a fully-staged reading at the Just Add Water Festival at Portland Center Stage, Portland, Oregon. Jane Unger of the Profile Theatre, directed it.

PLACE: Five-College Area in Western Massachusetts
TIME: Now

PARADISE STREET CAN BE DONE WITH 7 - 8 ACTORS.

ACT ONE

~Scene One~

[Rainstorm outside. T.J. enters the hallway of a classic New England colonial house. A wingback chair and a beautiful little table next to it sitting on an expensive Persian rug are surrounded by stacks of boxes, some of which are partially opened—a few knick-knacks have been unpacked and one, in particular, is prominent—it’s a replica of one of those fat lady Venus figures from Malta. T.J. is dressed like a male trucker but with no hat and is very wet. Next to her is JANE, dressed well, very expensive and chic under a stylish raincoat. JANE xs off and down a hall—we hear her knock on a door]

JANE *[offstage]*

Mother? Someone needs to use the bathroom.

[No answer]

Mother?

[JANE re-enters]

My mother's in there. She'll be right out.

[the phone rings]

Sorry.

[JANE exits to answer the phone]

[Lights up on JANE, in another area, on the phone]

Jane Cavett.

Liz, I've been meaning to call you. I know my manuscript is late. But Mother and I just moved in, barely.

[T.J. listens, and looks around at the apartment]

Well, it was a last-minute hire!! And, get this, they gave me a faculty apartment!! And I have a couple of students—haven't met them yet. And otherwise, all I need to do is to be available for the random question—

[T.J. looks around into the hallway toward the bathroom. But the door is still closed, so she just stands there, wet.]

Oh, anything from what the Mayans ate or the hegemonical assumptions of the peasant-controlled patriarchy as opposed to the pagan-phobic, Euro-centric church in 16th-Century Spain.

[T.J. starts to examine her surroundings. She's never seen anything quite this expensive]

And no one's darkened my door—no curiosity, I guess. Anyway, this apartment's not only great—it's cheap. Good thing. Now that I've got Mother, no dinero. So I leased a car! A hybrid! Well, it's a Lexus, but it's the most fuel-efficient model.

[TJ crosses into the living room, goes to the chair-side table, opens the little drawer and looks inside, finds a little trinket, pockets it.]

Yes, Liz. I know I'm babbling, but this manuscript will be worth the wait. Trust me.

Look, I know Marxist feminist theory was my “brand.” But I had to make a change. I mean, no one is interested. That's why I switched back to the Mayans and, well, grants were available for pre-Columbian research and not for essays on Neolithic Maltese Venus figures and their implied hegemony or anything about female identity as seen through the lens of capitalistic—

[T.J. goes to the boxes and looks inside, for something else to steal]

I know I had a following! I know that! *The Hegemony Journal*. “Heg-emony Crick-ets”--they called themselves that, but what they were was just a small group of nerdy feminazis and all I got from that were lots of obsessive e-mails. They didn't even know what I looked like! But I was their goddess. Well, show me the money!

[TJ spots the Maltese Venus figure. She picks it up and likes the weight of it]

I have the media disc in my purse—

[TJ puts the Venus figure back and freezes where she's standing.]

JANE pokes her head back in and speaks to TJ

I'd appreciate it if you stayed in the hallway. You know, the rug. And absolutely no smoking.

[JANE disappears again to continue her phone call. T.J. returns to the "hall" and waits]

What I have to offer--stay with me on this, Liz--is a text that hasn't gone through the patriarchal sieve, indeed, mill of hetero male interpretation. Most books are lousy with the male gaze, you know?

"Gaze"—the male gaze—nothing to do with homosexual—
G-A-Z-E. Right.

Look, I have someone here.

You're kidding. It's a woman. She needed a RIDE. I'm going to give her my plastic raincoat--that disposable one I got on the Great Goddess cruise of the Greek Isles. Now there's another book someday.

[TJ can't resist—she dashes to the Maltese Venus figure and pockets it, returns to hallway]

I know. I'm Mother Theresa and Fredericka Stark.

Oh, that's right. They're both dead.
Good night.

I'm exhausted. Driving in the rain is exhausting.

T.J. Real nice car.

[She hangs up the phone, re-emerges, speaks to T.J.]

Say, I know what I can do, I'll give you a raincoat. I have an extra one—There.

JANE You can keep it.

T.J. Yeah.

JANE Well, there you go.

[T.J. says nothing]

You can really keep dry now.

[T.J. says nothing]

Aren't you going to put it on?

T.J. Sure.

[T.J. puts on the raincoat]

JANE There. It fits.

It looks good on you.

You could wear the bag as a hat.

[long beat as no one moves]

So. If you walk out the front door and turn left and go to the end of the block--it's a long block--but, anyway, that road that's going East and West is 10 and you get right on that and stick out your thumb and someone will pick you up, as I did.

[T.J. is silent]

So, I know you want to get going.

[T.J. is silent]

Well, here. Let me take you out on the front stoop and show you--

[T.J. Doesn't move]

I think you want me to drive you.

[JANE calls to her MOTHER]

Mother??

Mother??

[to T.J.]

Shall I drive you?

T.J. Where?

JANE Where you need to go.

T.J. You don't want to go there.

JANE Look, ever since you got in the car, I felt--. I mean, if you're in trouble, there are several women's counseling services I could--

T.J. No.

JANE But, there are people who want to help, and--

T.J. I want your car.

JANE Okay, I'll just get the keys. . .

T.J. Give me the keys.

JANE No, I have to be the driver--the insurance, you know.

T.J. The keys?

JANE I don't understand.

T.J. I want your car.

JANE I said I'll drive you--

T.J. I don't want you. I want your car.

JANE But, but you can't have my car. It's mine.

[T.J. Says nothing]

Look, I'm not going to give you the keys to my car.

[T.J. is silent]

JANE That's absurd. What you want is absurd.

T.J. Is. . .what?

JANE Absurd.

T.J. Thanks.

JANE For what?

T.J. The word.

JANE Absurd?

T.J. Use it again.

JANE Life is--absurd sometimes.

T.J. That's not how you used it before.

JANE What.

T.J. Not "life." "What I want" is absurd. That's what you said.

JANE Well. . .yes.

T.J. Why? Why is what I want "absurd"?

JANE Because you want--you said you wanted. . .my car.

T.J. That's right. Give me the keys.

JANE Look, you get out of here right now!

T.J. I need counseling.

JANE Yes, you do! You certainly do! I mean, really. You do.

T.J. Give me the name of someone, some counselor, and I'll drive there.

JANE I'll drive you.

[Suddenly and efficiently, T.J. coldcocks JANE on the head with the Maltese Venus sculpture she just picked up. JANE falls behind the chair and is still. T.J. looks closely at JANE, then kicks her violently. T.J. finds JANE's purse and car keys and exits. After a beat, MOTHER enters, walking with a cane. She is concentrating on her walking and doesn't notice anything, in fact, she calls for her daughter in the direction of the kitchen]

MOTHER Jane! Janie!! It's time for the news.

[MOTHER lowers herself into the chair, opens the drawer to the little table, finds the TV remote and clicks on the TV, sits back to enjoy herself]

Let's see what's happening in the world.

[Blackout. Sound of sirens. Silence]

~Scene Two~

[T.J. is traveling in JANE's car. She flings the Venus figure out the window. She is pushing buttons on the radio, trying to get something she likes]

T.J What's this?

Shit.

What's this?

Shit.

What's this?

NOTHING BUT CRAP!!

[Then a Public Radio station—some classical music]

What in the fuck is THAT?

How do you change the stations on this--

My hand hurts!!

MY HAND HURRRRTSSSS!!!!!!! FUCK YOU, RADIO!!! FUCK YOU!!!!!!

Oh, speed limit, speed limit, speed limit. Cool. Coooooool.

[She gets the radio tuned between two stations, so that all you hear is static. This pleases her. She turns it up]

Oh YEAH, BABY!!!!!!!!!!!!!! WOOOOOOOH!!!!!!

[She hits the gas and speeds up]

[end of scene]

~Scene Three~

[A POLICEWOMAN is interviewing MOTHER. The chair has been moved and MOTHER is sitting in it, staring straight ahead. She holds the phone in her hand. JANE's body has been removed. There is a blood stain on the floor.]

POLICEWOMAN Does your daughter have any enemies? Has she been acting strange lately?

[MOTHER doesn't reply]

I know it's painful, Mrs. Cavett, but we do need something to go on.

[MOTHER doesn't reply]

Anything would be helpful, any--

MOTHER That stain on the floor.

POLICEWOMAN Yes?

MOTHER Someone should do something. Is someone going to do something?
Blood. . .is very, very bad. It seeps into the wood.

POLICEWOMAN Do you have anyone to stay with you?

MOTHER *[she can't hear]* Soda water. I'd do it but I have trouble bending over.

POLICEWOMAN DO YOU HAVE ANYONE TO STAY WITH YOU?

MOTHER "1"—is for fire. I pushed "1", didn't I?

POLICEWOMAN Yes, you did the right thing.

MOTHER We don't know anyone here. We're new to the area. We haven't even had a visit from the Welcome Wagon. Do they do that anymore?

POLICEWOMAN I don't know. IF YOU COULD HELP US--

MOTHER What do you want me to do?

POLICEWOMAN WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR DAUGHTER?

MOTHER She can't help you she's gone.

POLICEWOMAN TELL US WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR DAUGHTER.

MOTHER Why are you yelling at me?

POLICEWOMAN I'm sorry.

MOTHER What?

POLICEWOMAN I'M YELLING SO YOU CAN HEAR ME.

MOTHER You sound angry. And I've done nothing wrong. Besides, you are a public servant and I pay your salary through taxes which I, or my daughter Jane pays them, really, by working very hard. She was in this place below Mexico and had to be outside and a real bug got in her typewriter computer, so she couldn't press the 'm' button. Do you know how hard it is to write something about a place below Mexico without the "m" button?

POLICEWOMAN WHAT HAPPENED HERE?! I'M NOT ANGRY.

MOTHER Two men came.

POLICEWOMAN [*writing*]. YES.

MOTHER In that door.

POLICEWOMAN DID SHE KNOW THEM?

MOTHER No time to find out.

POLICEWOMAN SO HOW DID THEY GET IN?

MOTHER They just walked in--just burst in.
It was awful.

POLICEWOMAN You're doing well. Good. KEEP GOING.

MOTHER They treated her badly. One of them hit her on the breasts. Indignities--his mouth on her.
I told them to stop!!

POLICEWOMAN DID YOU GET A GOOD LOOK AT THEM?

MOTHER Oh yes. I was sitting right here.

POLICEWOMAN DESCRIBE THEM.

MOTHER Black shoes and suitcases. Short hair.

POLICEWOMAN WHAT WERE THEY WEARING?

MOTHER Trousers and shirts. No ties.

POLICEWOMAN Were--WERE THE MEN WHITE OR BLACK?

MOTHER I think it's impolite to mention one's race, don't you?

POLICEWOMAN NO.

MOTHER They were both Negroes. With patches on their shirts.

POLICEWOMAN Patches? PATCHES ON THEIR SHIRTS?

[MOTHER points to the POLICEWOMAN'S uniform]

MOTHER Like that. With writing on them.

[POLICEWOMAN realizes that MOTHER didn't see anyone and has mistaken the paramedics for the perpetrators]

One of them PUT HIS MOUTH RIGHT ON MY DAUGHTER'S!!

POLICEWOMAN Yes, well. Well find someone to take care of you tonight—just as long as it's not me that's all I ask, baby Jesus.

[POLICEWOMAN exits]

MOTHER And then there were lots of lights. And then you burst in, too. What's happening? WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHAT'S HAPPENING?

[MOTHER gets up and tries to destroy the television with her cane]

MOTHER THE STORIES FROM THE TELEVISION HAVE LEAKED OUT INTO MY HOUSE!!!

[POLICEWOMAN re-enter and grabs cane away from MOTHER and manages to get hit a few times before she can restrain MOTHER.]

Jane? Janie? Where are you?

[To POLICEWOMAN]

Where did you say my daughter went?

[POLICEWOMAN just looks at her]

[end of scene]

~Scene Four~

[JANE enters in a prom dress, wearing her hospital wristband.]

JANE I'm in the fucking dress, Mother. Okay? And it's just as horrible as I knew it would be. Who invented the wrist corsage? The same white male—let's hope he's dead—who invented high heels. And all the underwear you have to wear under these. I forgot to put on my panties.

[She bends down quickly to check—it's true—not panties. Sound of faint music.]

I love this song. it's Journey. . .

[sings]

... and drifted apart,

And here you are by my side.

And I come to you with open arms. . .

. . . He sounds like a girl almost. What's the politics of that? Oh, I love this song. This wrist corsage has got to go--

[She stops abruptly because she sees the hospital bracelet on her wrist]

Huh.

[She exits]

~Scene Five~

[MOTHER with the POLICEWOMAN, outside a hospital]

MOTHER This hearing aid makes everything sound the same. And it's not the same. I know that. People think you're stupid when you're old. I don't know where I am.

POLICEWOMAN You're outside the hospital.

MOTHER I don't want to go in!

POLICEWOMAN You made that clear, Mrs. Cavett.

MOTHER I don't want to go back in there. Too much noise.
[POLICEWOMAN lights up a cigarette]
 I know that those men that broke in were some of you.

POLICEWOMAN They were the paramedics, yes.

MOTHER *[about the cigarette smoking]* I used to do that. I resigned

POLICEWOMAN You mean you quit.

MOTHER You have all the answers.
[POLICEWOMAN looks at her watch]
 I'd like to go home. No one will come to get me. I don't have any friends here. None of my friends are left. My daughter doesn't have friends. She works. That's what she does. What should I do? I can't go back with that stain. . . on the floor.
 My child was being. . . harmed and I was in the bathroom. Without my hearing aid. I was useless. "Someone needs the bathroom," is what I think she said--Jane. Who was there that needed the bathroom? I didn't know. What good is it to raise them to grow up if you can't protect them after all those years? My life is wasted. Will she live? Will she have scars? On her face? Raising a girl is so different. They need to be perfect. They can't have any scars.
 Is she in there?

POLICEWOMAN Yes.

MOTHER Can she be. . . seen?

POLICEWOMAN I don't know yet.

MOTHER Good bye *[MOTHER takes her hearing aid out of her ear]*

POLICEWOMAN THAT WON'T HELP, MRS. CAVETT.

MOTHER I CAN'T STAND ANY MORE YELLING.
 And I can't go in there. I can't go in that building and see her hurt. Do me a favor? You're a nice woman--Kill me. I won't tell. Make it look like a suicide. You must know a way to do that. Please. She takes care of me. I can't live by myself anymore. I had to leave my retirement house. I don't understand how to pay bills. I don't understand anything. Please. Just take your gun--
[MOTHER grabs for the pistol in the holster and POLICEWOMAN has to deal with her roughly to get her to stop]

POLICEWOMAN No. Stop it. Stop it! Mrs. Cavett!!! Stop it!!

MOTHER Help me. Help me!
[She dives for the gun again and almost gets it this time. POLICEWOMAN pushes her down onto a bench and handcuffs her]
 What am I going to do?

POLICEWOMAN You're going to pull yourself together you spoiled old white woman. I am sick of you.

MOTHER I can't hear you. I told you, I can't hear you.

POLICEWOMAN I'm counting on that. Give me that hearing aid.

[POLICEWOMAN searches MOTHER for the hearing aid, finds it, then tries to put it into MOTHER'S ear]

MOTHER Ow!! You're hurting me! Either kill me or leave me alone!

[POLICEWOMAN exits with MOTHER]

[end of scene]

~Scene Six~

[T.J. is driving in Jane's car. A young female hitchhiker, SUSAN is in the passenger's seat. She is dressed in some Carhart gear.]

SUSAN Awesome car.

T.J. Uh-huh.

SUSAN Lexus, RX. Hybrid.

TJ Put your money right here in my purse. This taxi ain't free.

SUSAN I really like your purse. Is it Japanese? It's nice.

TJ You don't think I could have a nice purse? Huh? 'Cause I do!

[In the purse, SUSAN finds the media disc with JANE's manuscript on it]

SUSAN Hey, let's listen to your CD.

TJ What the fuck are you doing?? Look, you little cunt—you put things INTO my purse. You don't ever take anything OUT!.

SUSAN Woa. Lighten up on the offensive language.

TJ The WHAT??? Are you saying I don't speak good???

SUSAN N-no.

TJ YOU ARE SAYING I DON'T SPEAK GOOD??!!

SUSAN N-no. I appreciate the ride. Sorry

TJ You think you're so great in your little outfit. You are wearing work clothes. You do any work?

SUSAN It's just fashion, sort of. I don't care that much about costume, actually.

TJ "Costume." You in a fucking movie or something?

SUSAN I feel that we have gotten off on the wrong foot. I would like to apologize for everything I've said thus far.

TJ Does that include, "I appreciate the ride sorry"?

SUSAN N-no.

[beat]

TJ Well, what shall we talk about now? We're getting along so good.

SUSAN D-did you have a bad day or something? *[TJ laughs a lot at this]*

TJ You're so happy. You're so sure of yourself, walking along in the dark, fucking la-de-dah. Well, put this into your happy, la-la head. You are a pigeon. You are like deer meat in December. There are just too damn many young girls in the world and those numbers need to be less. All the drivers out there who picked up young girls, killed them and dumped their bodies and no one ever found out and these "drivers" live their lives and no one ever knows? They have pets. They fuck their wives They have some kids. They even have lawns and shit that they take care of. They even go to fucking church. Except they have this dark secret they take to their graves. And the girls? One more face on a milk carton. One more stray shoe by the side of the road. One more shallow grave in the woods.

SUSAN You know, let me out here.

T.J. Scared you?

SUSAN No. I just decided to go somewhere else.

T.J. Why?

SUSAN That's why I'm hitching, so I can do what I want.

T.J. No one gets to do what they want. If they did, the world would be gone.

SUSAN I just want to—

T.J. Because people would kill whenever they wanted to. And that would make other people want to kill and then the world would be gone.

SUSAN Look--I just changed my mind and want to go to some friends that live near here and hang out.

T.J. Where do they live? We could both go there. I'd like to meet some new people. I'm pretty tired of all the old ones.

SUSAN I--I--they might not be home. . .

T.J. Okay. How about up there?

SUSAN Good.

T.J. It's the middle of nowhere.

SUSAN That's okay.

T.J. Okay. Jump out.

[T.J. stops the car. SUSAN starts to get out. T.J. guns it and they take off again. SUSAN screams]

T.J. No screaming or I will fucking kill you.

SUSAN I hurt my hand!! In the car door! It really hurts!! **[beat]** Maybe we can be friends.

T.J. Eat shit. YOU THINK THIS IS A FUCKING SITUATION COMEDY?!!!!

SUSAN Watch that truck!

T.J. Why? *[T.J. swerves and laughs. Sound of car horns]*

SUSAN Help me, Jesus.

[end of scene]

~Scene Seven~

[In the hospital. A darkened room, except for a blue light in the area of JANE's bed. Sounds of heart monitor, etc.—vital signs. JANE is there but not seen.]

MOTHER'S VOICE *[offstage]* Jane! Janie! Where are you? Come and get me out of here. Janie. *[to whomever can hear her]* I am Mrs. Foster Cavett and I don't belong here. Someone dumped me in this wheel chair! The police in this town are incompetent!!

NURSE'S VOICE *[offstage]* Mrs. Cavett! Please be quiet! Do you want to see your daughter or not? If you do, you need to be quiet.

MOTHER'S VOICE *[offstage]* I am the sick one. You clearly do NOT understand that. I'm the one who needs help.

NURSE *[rolling MOTHER into the room in a wheelchair]* Oh, I can see that. But right now you're here to see her.

MOTHER But I don't see her.

NURSE She right there, in the bed.

MOTHER All I see are machines! I want to talk to somebody! I want to talk tan administrator.

NURSE Mrs. Cavett, your daughter is going to need you.

MOTHER I can't hear you. *[NURSE exits]*

JANE *[from the dark]* Ma--

MOTHER Janie? It's Mother. Janie? It's Mama.
[JANE moans in pain]
Nurse? Nurse!! NURSE!!

NURSE *[entering]* What is it?

MOTHER Get me out of here. I'm bothering her.

[end of scene]

~SCENE EIGHT~

[TJ and SUSAN next to a drive-up ATM, but with the passenger's side next to the machine. TJ has a tire iron and has it in the SUSAN's ribs. She applies pressure and the SUSAN does what she's been told to do]

SUSAN I can't get it to work.

TJ Bullshit.

SUSAN No, really. I think there's something wrong with my numbers.

TJ There's nothing wrong with your numbers.

SUSAN Oh, wait! I just remembered! I have a new account and but the numbers, the new numbers I haven't memorized them yet.

TJ That's supposed to be your lie? It's sad. You're pathetic. Now get some fucking money out of that machine!! And if it's less than a thousand dollars, I will use this on you. I'll beat your fucking brains out.

SUSAN I'm not going to do it. I'll just sit here and somebody will come long and they'll see—

TJ What?

SUSAN This situation.

TJ What they'll see is me beating you bloody with this sissified Lexus tire iron but it's still hard enough to make a bloody mess out of your face.

SUSAN But they'll recognize you and send you to prison.

TJ No, they won't. You know why? Because I'm invisible. If you saw me in some parking lot, you wouldn't even look at me. And if you looked at me, you wouldn't see me, You know why? 'Cause people like me, we all look alike. Poor white trash. There are the fat ones and the skinny ones. Period.

SUSAN People like you? I don't think there's anyone like you.

TJ You hope. NOW GET ME SOME MONEY OR I'LL SMASH YOUR TEETH OUT WITH THIS THING! GO!

[SUSAN relents and put in her numbers. There's a hum and whir and SUSAN takes the money from the machine. SUSAN hands TJ a stack of 20s]

TJ You count them.
[SUSAN begins counting the 20s quickly]
Out loud!!

SUSAN 20-40-60-80-100—my hand hurts.

TJ Give me the money.

SUSAN 20-40-60-80-100. 20-40-60-80-100. 20-40-60-80-100

[beat. TJ waits]

TJ That's all?

SUSAN My account—I can't take more than \$400 a day.
Here—you try it.
Try it!
My password is "19-99-33."
Try it!!!

TJ See? You're trying to run things. But it's not like that.

SUSAN If you want more money, then just break into the ATM. The money's all in there. In that little machine. I'll help you!!

TJ If we break in there, the alarms will sound and you'll get me arrested!! We're gonna keep driving until it's tomorrow. That dumb-shit bank won't know if the sun has come up or not—after midnight, we'll be at another ATM and we will get another four hundred dollars.

SUSAN I don't have any more money in—
[SUSAN sees the look on TJ's face and just shuts up. TJ sees SUSAN's fear of her]

TJ Now we're getting somewhere.
[TJ floors the accelerator pedal]

[end of scene]

~Scene Nine~

[JANE enters, wearing graduation academic regalia]

JANE If I can just get through this day, I'll be happy, finally. Oh, the empty ceremonies of the patriarchy. I'm not wearing any panties. Again. Huh. Again? It's these robes. Medieval. Medi—Evil. Medium evil. What is that beeping sound? So irritating. Mother. Oh god I hope she likes her seat. If she doesn't, I'll never hear the end of it. "Jane? Janie? Why did you put me with all the fat sweaty people?" Oh, is it time? It's time.

[She throws her mortar board into the air, then shifts immediately into protecting herself from falling mortar boards]

JANE (cont.) Ow! These things—OW! Hurt.

[She exits. Re-enters and picks up her mortar board]

What am I thinking? If I ever get an academic job, I'll need this.

[Exits again, and then re-enters in another place]

I was just here.

[Exits again. Re-enters at the first place she exited]

This is weird. Very, very Escher.

[She exits]

~Scene Ten~

[The side of the road. TJ is wearing JANE'S bag and holding SUSAN from behind, SUSAN'S neck in the vise of TJ's arm. SUSAN'S arms are held behind her back by TJ's other arm. They are sitting]

TJ So what do you think the stars are, huh? / They could be anything, you know. When I was holding you back there, while you pissed?/ And helped you with your little chickenshit panties. Why you wear jeans those beat up jeans and special little tiny underpants? Anyway, I was holding you, so you didn't get yourself wet and I thought a funny, you know, thought--sort of passed through my mind--I could be a mom.

I could take care of a kid. It's not disgusting--all that body stuff--when a person can't do it without you, when a person would mess themselves if you weren't there. I know you thank me for that--keeping your special panties clean. / So what do you think the stars are, huh? / ARE YOU LISTENING TO WHAT I'M SAYING HERE?

[TJ makes SUSAN nod her head]

SUSAN I--I--I--I--

TJ You look like someone who goes to college.

SUSAN No.

TJ You could afford it. I know how much those jeans cost.

SUSAN K-Mart.

TJ Yeah. Like you even know where one is. Where is the nearest K-Mart? Huh? Huh?
This haircut cost a bundle.

SUSAN I did it myself.

TJ HOW? HOW DID YOU DO THE BACK?!!

SUSAN With a mirror.

TJ My ass! No one can do that! Do you know why?

SUSAN No.

TJ Because it's backwards! Because you see backwards in a mirror! What do you think I am--STUPID??
[no answer from SUSAN]
You'd better talk fast.

SUSAN Like Alice in Wonderland.

TJ What kind of crack is that?

SUSAN No crack. It's not a crack.

TJ What did you mean?

SUSAN It's a book.

TJ What is.

SUSAN Alice in Wonderland.

TJ I've got you by your neck and you're talking about a BOOK?

SUSAN Alice goes through a looking-glass and goes into a land where--

TJ A looking glass is a mirror.

SUSAN Right.

TJ You trying to fuck with me? You think I don't know shit like that?

SUSAN No. Yes? No!

TJ I can read!!

SUSAN I'm sure you—

TJ Let's go. Stand up.

SUSAN I'm weak. **(pause)**I can't breathe.

TJ You can talk--you can breathe. Come on.

[They stand as one unit and then TJ gets the SUSAN walking like a big doll, kicking her feet from behind]

Walk, walk, walk, Alice. / Alice.

[SUSAN stops suddenly and butts TJ in the groin with her ass. Then turns around and butts her head into TJ's solar plexis, and runs off. This headbutt has knocks the breath out of TJ, making her gag. It takes her a few beats to recover and when she does, she hears the sound of the ignition of the car starting]

Fuck me! No way!

[sound of the car peeling off in its exit]

I should have let you wet your pants. Now what the hell am I gonna do? Huh! Huh!

I'm fucking lost in the middle of fucking nowhere!!!!

[sound of car disappearing off into the distance]

YOU LITTLE UPPER CLASS PUSSY PRICK!!!

I LOVED THAT FUCKING CAR!!

[end of scene]

~Scene Eleven~

[JANE enters, wearing only her hospital gown]

JANE Where's the class? Where's the fucking class? I can't be late for my first class. I'm the fucking teacher! But. . .time is a construct—lateness is a construct—school is a construct—this building is. . .a. . .construct of male architectural. . .there's that fucking beeping again!

[She feels what she is wearing, or not wearing and is beginning to understand]

Oh Christ oh no.

[She exits]

~Scene Twelve~

[SUSAN is speaking on a cell phone]

SUSAN Tatyanna. Oh, I'm sorry. Candelaria. Whatever. Get my mom.
 She's not?
 Where is she? At the club?
 I thought she was finished with that! Don't the damned Equadorians have enough aid? Oh, sorry, Candelaria.
 Of course I know that's a totally different country!
 No, I never thought that—you're too tall. *[To be from Ecuador!]*
 You-are-fine-as-you-are-I-am-sorry.
 Mea culpa. Yo stupido Americano!!!
 American-AH. Yes, I know your language honors gender differences in a more complete way.
 I'm not being disrespectful--I'm just scared.
 I've been arrested.
 You need to tell her I'm at the police station in Ludlow, Massachusetts.
 Policia. Sta-ti-on-ay en Ludlow.
 Lud--low.
 Write it down?
 SHE NEEDS TO COME AND GET ME!!!!
 Estoy en prisionay!
[POLICEWOMAN enters]
 AYUDA!!

POLICEWOMAN *[taking her cell phone back, checks the number SUSAN just dialed, notes it]* Yeaaaah. So. Back to faculty housing on Paradise Street. These academics—they live in their own high-falutin' world, don't they? Students must *hate* that. Right? I mean, who lives on Paradise Street? Who the hell does she think she is? I'M ASKING YOU A QUESTION.

SUSAN I don't know.

POLICEWOMAN You don't know what?

SUSAN Who the hell she thinks she is?

POLICEWOMAN So you do know her.

SUSAN No!

POLICEWOMAN Never been to Paradise Street.

SUSAN No!

POLICEWOMAN Me, either. Been looking for it all my life. Until last night. So here is this woman, this *visiting scholar*—it says here—just moved in, with her crazy mother, No one knows her, so who will miss her? Right? So she might have drugs, Or money for drugs. Because you're tapped out of both and Mommy and Daddy won't—

SUSAN I didn't do it!

POLICEWOMAN So you didn't assault this woman—Jane Cavett. Jane Cavett is her name.

SUSAN Yes, that's right! I mean, NO, I didn't!

POLICEWOMAN Yes or no?

SUSAN NO!

POLICEWOMAN Which is it?

SUSAN You're trying to confuse me.

POLICEWOMAN Your confusion is not my fault.

SUSAN Then why is it happening?

POLICEWOMAN Because you're lying?

SUSAN I'm *not* lying! I don't do that.

POLICEWOMAN But you steal. Isn't stealing a form of lying?

SUSAN I—I don't know.

POLICEWOMAN These philosophical questions stump you? Boy, somebody's parents really wasted their money. You've never even been on Paradise Street.

SUSAN That's right.

POLICEWOMAN But it's across from a dorm.

SUSAN Not MY dorm!

POLICEWOMAN But you know which dorm. And yet you've never been on that street.

SUSAN I live across campus.

POLICEWOMAN That's quite a hike. Were you winded when you got there? Did you ask for a drink of water? And she let you in.

SUSAN NO.

POLICEWOMAN Then how did you get in?

SUSAN I don't know!

POLICEWOMAN Or you don't remember how you got in. Because you were stoned out of your mind. Do you remember how you stole her car?

SUSAN I didn't. Steal. Her car.

POLICEWOMAN *Then how is it that you were apprehended driving a stolen car registered to her?*

SUSAN I took it from the other woman.

POLICEWOMAN This "OTHER" woman who kidnapped you.

SUSAN Yes.

POLICEWOMAN So, here you are—just strolling on the *interstate* miles from your school when this "Other Woman" drives up and grabs you.

SUSAN She didn't grab me.

POLICEWOMAN Oh, you went willingly?

SUSAN At first. Then she scared me and I wanted to get out but she wouldn't let me.

POLICEWOMAN But you did get out. You told me that was when you stole the car from HER.

SUSAN I had to pee.

POLICEWOMAN And she let you out for that?

SUSAN But she held me, you know, while I did it. And then I bumped her in the stomach real hard with my but and turned around and used my head.

POLICEWOMAN That must have been a first for you. / And that's when you took the car.

SUSAN Right.

POLICEWOMAN You were running with your pants down.

SUSAN No, she had helped me pull them up.

POLICEWOMAN Oooooo. She sounds scary.

SUSAN Look! She abducted me!!

POLICEWOMAN Where'd you get the ignition keys?

SUSAN She left them in the ignition. So I wouldn't steal them from her. When I was, you know, peeing.

POLICEWOMAN Let me see your hands.

SUSAN You gonna tell my fortune?

POLICEWOMAN You're in some movie, aren't you? Right now. People are eating popcorn, watching you. Go down the drain. With your little life.

[POLICEWOMAN grabs SUSAN'S right hand roughly and examines it]

That hurt? Definitely a contusion developing here.

SUSAN OW!!

POLICEWOMAN You hit that woman. With some heavy object. And that would leave a mark on your hand. AND HERE IT IS!! This woman, the first woman, not the "Other Woman" you made up—she may die. It's circumstantial, but you are fucked. See? I told your fortune after all.

SUSAN I'm not saying another word! **I don't have to.** Miranda! Miranda!

POLICEWOMAN That your name and home address? **[READS name off of the paper]** "Susan B". What's your middle name?

SUSAN It's just the initial. Come on! I'm telling the truth? Why would I fucking lie about my middle name??

POLICEWOMAN Maybe you have to lie about everything. Maybe that's how you keep track. It's all lies.

SUSAN I'm named for Susan B. Anthony!!

POLICEWOMAN This Susan. She doesn't have a middle name? What is she? Your partner in crime?

SUSAN Susan Fucking B. Fucking Anthony spent her life fucking working for equal fucking rights for women!!!

POLICEWOMAN Never fucking heard of her!

SUSAN She's the reason we have the vote!! She went to jail for it!!!

POLICEWOMAN What was she in for?

SUSAN Voting Illegally.

POLICEWOMAN You need to keep better company!! Now listen. Your name is on the list of students enrolled in a class with Jane Cavett.

SUSAN What? What class?

POLICEWOMAN Something unreadable about "Hedge Anonymity in 16th Century Something—archy."

SUSAN I enrolled in a class with some teacher they hadn't hired yet!! I've never even been to the stupid class!! I didn't even want to take it!! My advisor said I had to!! None of this is my fault!!!!

POLICEWOMAN SO YOU TOOK THIS WOMAN OUT BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE SOME CLASS? OR WERE YOU JUST BORED?? AND DID YOU NEED HER LEXUS BECAUSE YOUR BMW WAS DIRTY?? AND THE MERCEDES WAS IN THE SHOP??? OR DID YOU JUST NEED THE MONEY FOR YOUR HABIT? I LOVE THIS—SO MANY MOTIVES, WE CAN PICK ANY OF THEM!

SUSAN I want a lawyer. Hey! I'm entitled to a lawyer!

[POLICEWOMAN grabs her arms and starts checking for needle tracks—doesn't find any. Looks on her neck]

POLICEWOMAN Open your mouth.

[She uses a little flashlight to check for needle marks in the gums]

Take off your shoes. And socks. *[POLICEWOMAN exits.*

SUSAN takes off her shoes and socks.]

[POLICEWOMAN re-enters, wearing rubber gloves. She examines SUSAN's feet between the toes.]

Stand up.

[SUSAN does].

Unzip.

[SUSAN does. And POLICEWOMAN uses flashlight to check in SUSAN's panties, pulling them out and looking down into them. She finds nothing]

Sit down.

[SUSAN does that. And POLICEWOMAN starts probing SUSAN's mouth, opening the cheeks to look for needle marks. SUSAN is making noises but can't speak with the cop's fingers in her mouth]

If you bite me, you will pay for it.

[POLICEWOMAN is done]

There.

SUSAN Your hands were on my feet and in my crotch and then you put them in my mouth!!!

POLICEWOMAN Well, gosh. I'll try to remember the next time I check you for tracks—maybe later today, when we go over your story again. You wouldn't be shooting up inside your asshole, would you?

SUSAN I have my rights!

POLICEWOMAN Listen, you little, perfect mall girl. You were in the woman's car. And you might as well claim you were abducted by aliens because that's how flimsy your story is. And no truckload of fancy lawyers are gonna save your fancy little ass. Let's go.

SUSAN Mommy!! Mommy!!

[end of scene]

~Scene Thirteen~

[Outside a convenience store—TJ is eating a Twinkie she just bought. She is freezing. A young woman, CHAI, comes up to her, holding a cup of coffee]

CHAI Excuse me.

[TJ doesn't answer]

Excuse me.

TJ Yeah?

CHAI. You dropped this.

[hands her a credit card. TJ takes it and pockets it.

CHAI offers her the cup of coffee]

Here. / Come on. I can see you're cold and everything.

[CHAI hands her the coffee. TJ takes it, takes off the lid, smells it.]

I didn't drink out of it.

[TJ can't resist and starts hungrily drinking it]

Are you who I think you are?

TJ Nope.

CHAI Are you Jane Cavett?

TJ I'm not anybody.

CHAI No. Everybody's somebody. You taught me that. If you are whom I think you are. 'Cause I kinda read your name. On your card.

TJ Why you reading somebody else's credit card?

CHAI You are so kinda combative, so male-identified. I'm not criticizing. I just didn't expect it. I read one of your essays and it changed my life. I lacked courage. I lacked cultural context, as a woman, but your essay on the de-codification of the hegemony of Western capitalist and cultural memes. . .wow. Just wow.
[beat] So I thought you'd be strong, yeah, but still, you know, fem.

TJ What kind of crap is that?

CHAI Oh! Oh man, I didn't mean—I didn't mean to—

TJ Than why'd you do it, if you didn't mean to?

CHAI There's Jane Cavett. That honesty. / I just wanted to. . .talk to you.
[hands her a candy bar]

Here. Have my Mounds.

TJ *[unwraps it and begins to devour it]* God, I love these Mounds to death.

CHAI I believe that we humans need to do service by helping each other and so I'm helping you and besides it's some kind of major destiny that brought us together because I read one of your essays and I thought it was brilliant. It was in this very special, small journal called "Hegemony Cricket."

TJ You wanna buy me a sandwich? I've been walking. My fucking sister stole my car.

CHAI That sucks.

TJ Yeah. Break Mom's heart and everything. Wish I knew where she was. I'd like to set her straight.

CHAI I just bought this cheese and ham thing. / Want it?

[TJ tucks into it in a major way]

God. You are so carnivalesque / I don't think it's possible that you're NOT that Jane Cavett.

TJ Is there more than one?

CHAI I mean, you're the writer, aren't you?

TJ I'm whoever my credit card says I am. / I like to keep things simple like that.

CHAI Oh, it is you, it is you. You write so eloquently about irony as a meme-maker in the language of the Other. You tell the truth about the rigidity of female identity in a capitalistic hegemony. You are really something.

TJ Not really.

CHAI Oh, yes you are! Oh yes, you are! Anybody who has written as cogently as you have about post-post-modern feminism is somebody, believe me. I could just stand near you all day and wait for the next quanta of eloquence to come out of your mouth.

TJ Is there a Mickey Dee's around here?

CHAI O-okay.

[end of scene]

~Scene Fourteen~

[JANE, still in her hospital gown, enters at a dead run and is blocked by an invisible wall.]

JANE Where?

[She tries to exit another way, is blocked]

Where?

[tries another exit, is blocked]

Where?

[running from exit to exit, blocked at every one of them]

Where? Where? Where?

WHERE??

[suddenly, she's at the edge of a large hole. She tips forward, looks down, raises her arms to keep her balance, but it doesn't work]

I'M FALLING!!!!

[Blackou. end of scene]

~Scene Fifteen~

[At CHAI'S apartment. LYDIA, the roommate, is there, a sincere college intellectual, a little stoned and smoking a joint. TJ is eating whatever is available. There's trash from Mac Donald's everywhere.]

LYDIA CHAI and I found your essay in the Fourth Wave Wymyns' bookstore in a little journal called the Orchid? Used to be called Qwim? It was a reprint from that Hegemony Cricket cyber zine. Anyway, we think you are some kind of undiscovered genius. And here you are--like your life is a deconstructed slash reformatted collage of what it means to be a male. I mean, your costume and entire presentation of self enacts a truly performative engendering of an already embodied identity in the context of a previously established and overwhelmingly heterosexual cultural matrix. And more people need to experience that. Live.

TJ You got something to drink?

CHAI Here's some Odwalla.

TJ You got anything to put in it?

CHAI Like... what?

TJ Gin.

LYDIA That is so cool.

TJ Vodka? *[takes a hit off the joint]*

CHAI I've got a couple of miniatures of something.

[Goes to get them. Returns. Hands TJ two miniatures]

Old Grandad.

[TJ takes it, opens it and pours it into her Odwalla drink. Then takes a swig. It's not good but she's happy to have the booze]

TJ What's the other one?

CHAI Dickel. These were jokes—cause this one looks like a dick and Old Grandad was, you know, an old guy—

TJ *[Taking the Dickel miniature and swigging some of it]* It's better as a chaser.

LYDIA You probably have realized by now that I created an awful gaffe earlier by using an entirely reactionary discourse as the background by which I was trying to describe your performance of self so that any attempt I might enact at erasing, or at least destabilizing, that pre-existing metanarrative I subjected you with can only be grounded in a marginalized and abjectified decentralized subject-position, a place I can't imagine you ever inhabiting. *[silence]* I hope you're not angry with me.

TJ Hell, no.

LYDIA Wow! *[turns to CHAI]* Wow.

CHAI You're not quite what we expected.

TJ Oh yeah. Well, I'm not myself on account of feeling marginalized by your gaffe.

LYDIA I'm so sorry.

TJ Just don't let it happen again.

LYDIA I won't.

TJ Because the patriarchy is watching. And all the male gaze, too. It's lousy.

LYDIA I knew you were a genius and I expected that kind of brilliance but I didn't expect, and I hope this isn't another gaffe, I didn't expect wisdom.

TJ Oh, you always need to expect that kind of shit because if you don't, it might come to your doorstep and no one's home. I'm sleepy so I'm going to sleep. *[TJ goes to sleep]*

CHAI *[trying to wake her up]* Jane? Jane? JANE!!

LYDIA We could, like, watch her sleep.

[They sit and watch her for a beat]

Woa, she is out.

CHAI Let's surprise her and French braid her hair.

[CHAI help put a blanket over TJ and lights down on LYDIA French braiding TJ's hair]

[end of scene]

~Scene Sixteen~

[SUSAN still in custody and on a payphone]

SUSAN Yeah, Mom.

The lawyer isn't here yet. Well, they won't let me wait.

Couldn't you hire that guy—that guy who did your divorce?

Why not? You paid him enough.

No! No, I'm not complaining. I know I'm in trouble, but it's not my fault!!

I was fucking kidnapped!!

No, I wasn't hitching!!
 I'm telling you she grabbed me!!
 They say I assaulted this professor and now she's in the hospital.
 I DON'T KNOW THE WOMAN AND NO IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MY GRADES THIS SEMESTER!!
 This lady—woman, okay WOMAN—that she stole the car from.
 Of course, I don't. I don't know anything about any of this.
 The bitch who kidnapped me!!
 WOMAN OKAY WOMAN W O M A N!!
 Rough Trade? Where in the hell did you get a term like that?
 Lesbians don't have rough trade, Mother
 No, I'M NOT A LESBIAN!!
 YES, I WOULD TELL YOU!!
 STOP TRYING TO BE HIP AND HELP ME!!

OFFSTAGE VOICE Ya done with the fucking phone or not??

SUSAN Okay, I have to ask this. Are you sure a woman lawyer will be.
 . .strong enough?
 Those are lawyers on television, Mother.
 She needs to convince them I don't have a motive!! What would I want with a used Lexus? I HAVE A FUCKING TRUST FUND!!!

OFFSTAGE VOICE You got one minute!!

SUSAN Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Right. It's so unjust, Mother.
 I mean, what good is it being rich if they still put you in jail whenever they want to?

OFFSTAGE VOICE Thirty seconds!
[But SUSAN has already hung up the phone]

SUSAN My name is Susan B Gore-Austin and I don't belong in this place!! I am innocent!!! I am a good girl!!!
 I mean, WOMAN!! I AM A GOOD WOMAN!!!

[FEMALE GUARD comes from nowhere and, without, pausing, sweeps SUSAN offstage. end of scene]

~Scene Seventeen~

[JANE enters, exhausted. She sits on stage floor and then tips over. NURSE enters, speaks to her but doesn't move]

NURSE Come on. There you go. We're going to get you propped up here. Fluff these pillows, get you straightened around. That's what we need. Right?

You've been flailing around a bit, but now you're quiet. There, there.

[JANE sits up]

Open those eyes?

[JANE looks at the NURSE]

There you are. Hi. Welcome back. Come on, keep those eyes open.

Stay awake. You're fine, you're fine, you're fine.

[JANE stands]

There you go. Hello. You've been really sick and we had some scares but you're doing good now. I bet you want to know what day it is. It's Tuesday.

Jane? Stay with us. Don't close your eyes. You have flowers here you haven't seen.

[JANE begins the slow walk to the NURSE]

There you are. Hello. Are you hungry? Doctor's taken the trach tube out and now we have some jello. Let me turn on the television.

[NURSE produces a TV remote and clicks it—suddenly there's the sound of the world flooding in—a mix of broadcast, music, people talking, traffic, babies crying, dogs barking, wind, rain. This stops JANE]

Hey, don't doze off now. We need to keep you awake. Come on. Join the world. It's waiting for you.

Oh! And look what's here! RED jello.

[JANE runs to the NURSE, like a child to a mother]

That's a girl. That's a good girl.

[NURSE DISAPPEARS. JANE speaks to ANDREA, who is sitting next to her]

JANE Marx. Hegemony. Thousands of years before all the writing about, One, a mode of thought, and Two, this particular word for hierarchical systems, the Mayans thought the wheel was the symbol of death so they refused to use it to travel with death rolling you along, away from everything. No wheels at all and they still invented time. And women knew it already because they tended the dead. Women were clocks themselves because of their menses and the moon was round and a wheel but someone knew it wasn't flat. A ball, some young boy played that dangerous game and said this black ball is like the moon? Therefore. Chuck Close painting a portrait with paintings Close up but far back a face of a woman who paints the Golden Mean. See? Flat. Not like a saddle. A riderless horse the bears of heaven would never ride. But a rabbit—a rabbit could be in the moon. So how did the schism come? It's the counting, counting, counting, counting, count of down feathers as units of consciousness, calling it time. And they kept score in the game as soon as they had time, had death. They had all the parts of time including number of breaths. And then life was a collection of units. So life became a fearsome thing because it became only a matter of Time. Then trying to catch it, to stop it—no—and running from it and each other. And a watch disappeared. Like that. I think it was mine. With the woven band. And now we've come to this: if Hopi men do the weaving, who does the fabric of the universe? Who has it? I never saw it. I'm the voice in my head that never shuts up. Only it's someone else's voice. But it's running. After the Mayans.

ANDREA That's better, but I couldn't quite hear all the syllables. Now watch my mouth as I say it. "My mother lives in a house--with me."

JANE I have complex thoughts. I have ideas. I am not some table trying to learn to speak in forks and elbows!

ANDREA Okay. That's better. But next time through, try to get the "t""h" in "mother." "Th" "th"--try it--just the "th" for me.

JANE Use your dog ears. There's got to be some frequency you can turn to. The Mayans left only writing and we hear them!

ANDREA Don't get upset. Everything is all right. Just slow down and try one sound. Right now you're moving your jaws too much and you might bite your tongue. Here.

[ANDREA grasps JANE's head between her hands and then begins to move JANE's jaw for her]

See you don't have to open your mouth that wide. I think you're doing that out of frustration. Most of the time we don't speak with our mouth open like that. Watch me.

Hello, Jane. How are you today? See? My mouth opened an inch at the most. Hello, Jane. How are you today? Here, honey, try to say something.

JANE *[every effort she can muster goes into trying to making herself heard and understood]*
F u c k y o u.

ANDREA Fantastic! You got the "F" the "K" and the "Yuh" sounds and those are difficult. Now try the "th".

JANE You are a stupid cunt and I can't believe you're doing this for a living.

ANDREA Not coming through. Try it again.

JANE CUNT WHORE PUSSYTWAT BITCH!

ANDREA It's all right to be angry, but I didn't get one word of what you said. / Now let's go back to making ourself understandable.

[end of scene]

~Scene Eighteen~

[At LYDIA'S AND CHAI'S APARTMENT. TJ has awakened with her hair in a French braid]

TJ What the fuck did you do to my hair? You fucking fucks. Where are you, you little pussies!

[LYDIA and CHAI enter in their nighties, chasing TJ around while holding a cheap full-length mirror like you buy at Target. They are trying to get her to look at herself in it. Instead, TJ has started to tear at the hairdo until she catches herself in a mirror. And as soon as that happens, TJ becomes transfixed.]

Damn.

CHAI We were overcome with this compulsion—

LYDIA --to exercise our atavistic rituals of grooming.

CHAI I mean, what girl—woman doesn't like a makeover?

TJ You made me look like a fucking hooker!!!

LYDIA Our intention was to bond much like primates in the wild.

TJ I look like some fucking bar slut!!

CHAI Here. Take it all down then.

LYDIA I'll help you. Shall I help you?

TJ Don't touch me! / Now leave me the fuck alone!!!
[They exit. Long beat, as TJ makes certain she's completely alone before she speak - [softly, to her image in the mirror]
 Who the fuck are *you*?

[end of scene]

~Scene Nineteen~

[MOTHER, sitting in her wheelchair, is with ANDREA the Speech Therapist, who is sitting in an office furniture type chair and holding a manila folder. JANE sits in a chair.]

MOTHER What do you mean, disabled? I'm the one who's disabled.

ANDREA I know it's a shock.

MOTHER She woke up.

ANDREA She had a severe head injury.

MOTHER She's young.

ANDREA Mrs. Cavett, your daughter took a major blow to her frontal lobe. Her speech is impaired and will probably stay that way for the rest of her life. She has balance problems and a weakness in her left arm from permanent nerve damage. And so there's this dichotomy of who she was and what she has become.

MOTHER **Whom** she has become. Not "what."

ANDREA Of course. I'm sorry, I meant "whom."

MOTHER No, you didn't. You meant "what." As if she's no longer human.

ANDREA I think we've taken her as far as we can.

MOTHER Is that another way of saying the health insurance has run out?

ANDREA Jane had no health insurance, Mrs. Cavett. That's why you had that talk with the hospital administration about payment. Remember?

MOTHER Jane does all of that. My husband used to do all of that sort of business, then Jane took over because she's so smart.

[MOTHER looks at JANE sitting silently]

How will I manage if she's disabled? Who will do the shopping? Who will get me my meals? Who will drive me to the doctor? Who will buy me another television?

ANDREA Someone will come to the home and help with the transition.

MOTHER The transition? To what?

ANDREA There may come a time, Mrs. Cavett, when you might have to go to work to be the breadwinner for the family since your daughter is permanently disabled.

MOTHER But Jane's fellowship.

ANDREA There's no money left in the fellowship.

MOTHER I expect that if you call the college, / But... The phone doesn't work. Janie didn't pay the bill. I told her to. But she didn't.

ANDREA She was in a coma.

MOTHER She didn't want to wake up! She didn't want to come back! You made her come back!! And I made her come back, too. And now she's mad at me for that. She won't talk to me.

ANDREA She has speech problems.

MOTHER If she wanted to talk to me, she would.
[to JANE]
 And she knows that.
[back to ANDREA]
 You may go now. And thank you for your time.

ANDREA Mrs. Cavett, this is my office.

MOTHER I'm going to stay here until the world goes back to the way it was before.

ANDREA Look. I came in this late especially to talk to you. And now I'm going home. Jane? Jane. Why don't you come with me and I'll take you back to your room.

JANE Not yet. Listen. Hundreds and hand-written, Illustrated. Astronomical. Calculations. Stories. History. Descriptions. And they burned it. Without reading a word. We need to learn from history.

ANDREA What do you want, Jane? Slow down.

JANE Worse than Alexandria. How many teeth does a jaguar have? It may be wrong, but it would be nice to know, wouldn't it? Wouldn't we care to know? You see, wait! Wait! Noooooo,

ANDREA Jane, you're getting agitated. Don't --

JANE Look. The sun—somebody stole the sun. Not a myth—this really happened. And the sun rises and sets in there because that's all it knows. It doesn't know it's in that cave. But we have to rescue it. And there are songs floating around in there. And poems. And stories. Lots of untold stories. And I know where it is. The sun cave, Andrea. And you have to help me, Andrea, Andrea.

ANDREA My name! I heard my name! Good job. But the rest---

JANE Just listen to me. Just listen. Please. Please.

ANDREA I'll get your memo board.

MOTHER Jane? I have to go to the bathroom.

JANE *[about Andrea approaching with the memo board]*
 Don't. Don't. Just listen. Listen carefully.
 NOOOOOOOOOOO!

[JANE flings the memo board away]

MOTHER Jane? What are you doing? What is all this? This is not what we do. Now I have to go to the bathroom and I need you to take me. Jane? Janie, do you hear me!

[JANE, xs to MOTHER and wheels her out. ANDREA follows]

[end of scene]

~Scene Twenty~

[SUSAN, enters dressed in prison orange, using a mop to wipe down the stage or part of it. It should seem as though the mopping that we can see her do on stage is a continuation of a big job that began offstage so when she mops herself into a corner, she is trapped. There's no way out except by walking some distance over her work.]

SUSAN Crap!

[end of scene]

~Scene Twenty-One (A)~

[JANE enters using a walker. She lowers herself into her mother's wingback chair. Then she notices the wetness, gets herself up and turns over the seat pillow and sits back down. COLLEGE SECRETARY, a woman, enters]

COLLEGE SECRETARY I just let myself in I hope that's okay.

JANE O—Kay. W-wel--

COLLEGE SECRETARY *[Interrupting and talking even faster—JANE'S speech impediment getting to her]*
The dean would have come but she's so busy. We're all busy.
Everyone is busy. This time of year. Any time, actually. The fellowship office sent over this to give to you..

JANE What?

COLLEGE SECRETARY It's a day-runner. With a calculator. It's an academic calendar. See? September to September. I get them for all the faculty so they said it would be okay—good, really—to give you one, As a good-bye gift.
[long beat]
I'm on my lunch hour, actually. Some of the other secretaries and I walk at lunch instead of eat. That's why the running shoes.

JANE Y—you nee—d to—

COLLEGE SECRETARY Why don't you use your memo board?
[COLLEGE SECRETARY finds a plastic write and erase memo board where JANE has tried to hide it. JANE nods vigorously in the negative]

Because it's easier. For anyone who has to talk to you.
I just have to—I need to say this: I didn't agree with the way they treated you and a lot of us secretaries thought it was terrible. They could've bent the rules and let you stay in college housing

until you got better. After all, you were a guest of the college and you wouldn't have been here if they hadn't invited you and so it's kinda their fault. Because you would've stayed where you were wherever that was—

JANE Mmmm—eggs—ee—k—k-o

COLLEGE SECRETARY

Don't they have a lot of crime down there? Or maybe I just think that because Mexicans are always getting arrested trying to cross that river whatever it is. But it's so weird that you would come up here and be a victim of a crime. And in such a nice house, too. What about that chair?

[JANE doesn't answer]

I'll just have physical plant take it away. Oh man, the old smelly furniture they give you in college housing. Table's nice. And the keys! Oh god, can't forget the keys. I wouldn't want to face Darth Dan without the keys. We call him that because he's so 'Oooooo' about the keys. No one ever wants to face him when they've lost keys.

[JANE opens the little drawer in the table and gives her the keys]

Where are you going?

[JANE gets memo board and writes a big question mark on it, shows it to secretary]

[Horn honk]

Hey, your ride is here.

[JANE exits using the walker. COLLEGE SECRETARY yells out the door to whomever is JANE'S ride]

She's on her way!

[COLLEGE SECRETARY exits]

[SCENE 21 B]

A continuation of the scene, cross-fade to JANE, using her walker, making her way across the stage, slowly. as CHAI and LYDIA appear. They wave]

CHAI *[to TJ as JANE]* Ms. Cavett? We're over here!

[But it is not to JANE, they are waving at. It is TJ, hair done and looking just like JANE before the assault, coming towards them, carrying lots of shopping bags from upscale department stores. She drops the bags and CHAI and LYDIA run to pick them up, but are stopped by TJ's entrancing new look]

TJ What the fuck?!! These shoes are fucking HELL.

LYDIA Wowww.

CHAI Yeahhhhhh.

TJ You mean, this is all it takes? God, this world is full of crap.

[She kicks her bags towards CHAI and LYDIA and exits. CHAI and LYDIA grab the bags and run after her]

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

~Scene Twenty-Two A~

[Months later. In the evening. With a cane, JANE enters the downscale apartment she shares with her mother. JANE is dressed in a rumpled version of a woman's "power suit." She's been out looking for a job. She sits, exhausted, in a blue nylon camp chair (Linens & Things \$7.25).]

MOTHER [offstage] Jane? Jane?

JANE Yes.

MOTHER Jane?

JANE Yes.

MOTHER Janie?

[JANE can't bring herself to talk any more]

JANE W-WHAT!? W-WHAT do you W-Want?

MOTHER Are you home?

JANE N-NO.

MOTHER *[entering]* You are, too. You're right here. Do you know where the manicure set is? When we've moved, when those huge hairy men came and moved us, everything got discombobulated and I can't find half of the things—

JANE W-which Half?

MOTHER Well, dear, that question doesn't make any sense. See? This is part of your problem now. You don't make sense all the time. And it makes it difficult for me, your mother. Because having a daughter who doesn't make sense all the time is confusing for me and I am easily confused. I just had a thought. At your job interviews, do you have to speak? Maybe they won't notice that way.

[MOTHER exits, then RE-ENTERS]

Oh. What are we having for dinner?

[JANE doesn't respond]

Oh, I see. You are tired. And dinner is too much. I understand.

[MOTHER wanders off]

I had something, a little snack, at six or so.

[MOTHER re-enters, then wanders off again]

I guess I'll just lie down and wait for morning to come. And be thankful when it does or something like that.

[She exits]

Good-night.

[JANE can't seem to stay awake. She nods off...]

--Scene 22 B--

... and is suddenly awakened by--]

VOICEOVER *[PA in the office]* Number eighty-one.

JANE *[to anyone who can hear]* Eight--tee? I--have. . . eighty.

VOICEOVER Stay in line. You won't get your benefits unless you stay in line.

JANE I was in – line.

VOICEOVER Number eighty-two.

JANE I have--num-ber eigh-ty!

[JANE xs towards a door. A WELFARE OFFICE EMPLOYEE emerges from behind another door]

WELFARE EMPLOYEE Hey, hey, where do you think you're going? Wait until your number's called.

JANE My number—

WELFARE EMPLOYEE Look around you. There a lot worse-off people than you. You never been to the welfare office before?

[The WELFARE EMPLOYEE disappears again behind the door]

VOICEOVER Number eighty-four.

JANE But, Eight—tee. Where Eight-tee?

[The WELFARE EMPLOYEE re-emerges and walks briskly past JANE]

TH--Th-they. . .skipped. . .eightee--three.

WELFARE EMPLOYEE Is your number eighty-four?

JANE No—

WELFARE EMPLOYEE Then, why do you care? *[She exits]*

JANE I – I –

VOICEOVER Number eighty-seven

[beat]

Number eighty.

[Just then, the stage goes black.]

MOTHER *[from offstage]* Janie? Jane! Did you pay the electricity bill? I told you!!

[End of scene]

~Scene Twenty-Three~

[The Gyno-Herstorical Seminar. TJ, as Jane, sits at a dias, with a microphone in front of her. She is being introduced by MAVIS, an expensively dressed academic in her thirties]

MAVIS And those are just some of the achievements of our guest, Jane Cavett. And we want to thank her chauffeur, Lydia MacDonald-Stein, a brilliant student I had the pleasure of teaching when I was at the Other School whose name we won't mention. Ms. Cavett is going to present a paper on the position of women in Mayan hegemony, with a soupçon of Marxist theory, we hope. . .or something else. She said she didn't want to read something, but rather dialogue with all of us. And she agreed to join in our continuing discussions of gyno-future in the twenty-first. Another thank-you goes to our sponsor who supplied the funds for Ms.

Cavett's visit. Thank you, Ms. Panda-Panji-Rabinowitz. Where are you, Pan? Pan? There you are! Our benefactor everyone. And her fan club, the Hegemony Crickets are here as well.

[sound of the clicking of toy crickets. MAVIS smiles and says evenly]

Stop that.

[to TJ]

And now the floor is yours, Jane.

TJ *[leaning into the mic]* Hey.

[sound of toy crickets clicking an ovation. MAVIS glares. Cricket sounds peter out.

Pause as they wait for her to say something]

I'm Jane Cavett.

[sound of one stray toy cricket.]

MAVIS Well, I'll ask the first question. What do you think, Jane, of the hegemonic problematization of gender-based issues? Isn't that just a co-opting by the patriarchy of another paradigmatic take-over, coup, if you will?

[TJ just stares at her. MAVIS smiles, waiting for an answer.

TJ leans into the microphone]

TJ I will.

[beat. MAVIS doesn't get it]

MAVIS Oh. That is it! "I will." Instead of being Bartleby, the Scrivener, you are Jane, the willing participant! My will is my hegemony. Let it rule me. Because it's mine. I am Pinocchio—Pinocchia—and my will is my Hegemony Cricket, that meta-mythological creature of conscience, not unlike the Sphinx, but choosing cajolment of the master over murder through devourment.

TJ Right.

MAVIS So let me ask you this, a confrontational yet essentialist question but inspired by your essay: "Phallogocentric and Class-Ignorant Assumptions That Rule the Engenderment of Identity Issues in Cultural Anthropology"—
- In reference to the male organ: to the extent that its absence or presence transforms an anatomical difference into a major classification of humans, and to the extent that, for each subject this presence of absence is not taken for granted, is it not reduced purely and simply to a given, but, in fact, is the problematical result of an integra-and intersubjective process--the subject's assumption of his own sex?

TJ No.

MAVIS Would you care to elaborate?

TJ No.

MAVIS So, can I conclude from these almost zen-like answers of yours, these koans which we, the audience, pack with meaning, that you are taking a stand against anthropological sophistries?

TJ Yeah.

MAVIS I see through you, Ms. Cavett. The performative nature of this event is dominated, i.e., controlled by your presentation of self, this monosyllabic creation constructed from metanarratives that shriek out against the paradigmatic dominant, class-ignorant movement that feminism has become.

TJ What? Now see, you're so close to saying something I think I agree with. But I don't know what the fuck you're saying.

MAVIS Oh, oh, here we go. What the fuck I am saying. "What"—implying an already constructed hidden paradigm of identification; "the" assumption of the recognition of individuation of the next word, "Fuck"—

rich with levels of implication, allusion, illusion of and to a gynocentric co-opting of the domination in the act; “am”—how can we begin to unpack this verb without deconstructing all of western history; “

TJ You need to shut up!

MAVIS Yes. Our own language—we need to find it and stop remaking the language of the patriarchal—

TJ What you need. What all you rich little cunts need is a job—or two—or three because that’s what it usually takes to make enough money to pay the rent and feed yourself. I’m going to tell you how to make ketchup soup, so you might want to write it down in one of those notebooks of yours. Okay—go into a Mickey Dee’s and get some packets of ketchup—they just don’t leave them out any more, so you need to pretend you’re getting them for someone else, someone in a car. And then you say, “Oh—and an extra cup, so we can share the milkshake with my grandma.” Do not say “drink” or they’ll give you a tiny, crappy cup. You need a cup that will hold some milkshake and not collapse as “Grandma” drinks from it. Then you need hot water and don’t go looking for it in some restroom because none of them run it any more. So leave the Mickey Dee’s and go to a Cumby or a Circle-K or a 7-11. Walk in and go to the coffee maker place they all have, waving your cup, like “I just need to heat up my tea,” or “dilute this crappy coffee I got at MacDonald’s I shoulda bought your coffee.” Go to the hot water spigot—it’s usually part of the Bunamatic or whatever coffee maker they have—pour the hot water into your cup, while pocketing some salt and pepper packets and a stirrer and walk out saying “Thanks!” And then tuck yourself away somewhere outside because now you’re going to cook. Empty all the packets of ketchup into the hot water, as many as you’ve been able to get, stir, and then add the salt and pepper because ketchup is way too sweet—and then enjoy it. It’s free soup. And those of you with the toy cricket things whatever? Stuff them up your twats.

MAVIS Any questions? Anybody? Anybody? Please?

[end of scene]

~Scene Twenty-Four~

[JANE, DOROTHY, TAMMY (all but except TJ,) are onstage and wearing blue Mega Mart vests. They’ve been singing the MegaMart song, except for JANE. DOROTHY is leading them to tune of MY COUNTRY TIS OF THEE]

DOROTHY
and TAMMY:

Megamart is our home
From which we’ll never roam.
We’re happy here.
Our customers are great
On the floor, we’re not late
Megamart, you’re the one
Best store in America.
M! E! G! A! Squiggly! M! A! R! T!

DOROTHY Okay. First of all, the squiggly sucks. It’s supposed to be your whole body, not just your hips because if you use your hips it looks like you’re a stripper. And Tammy, yeah, hon, Just use your shoulders and hips to make the squiggly. You were looking like an Indian dancer I mean from India. And they’re another religion so we can’t do that or every church in this town will come over and make us do some, you know, Christian movement whatever that is. Sorry, but I have to speak my mind. We’re not in one of those Moslem countries. Okay? I have to be me. I have freedom of speech. And it’s not against God or even Allah or Jesus, god knows. I love Jesus. Who wouldn’t? And I go to church. Sometimes. So I’m not—well, whatever—let’s get back to the song.

[looks at clock]

Oh dangit. We have to be on the floor in two minutes. No time to pee, Let's get at our stations. Store is opening in—four minutes.

[to JANE]

Except you, kid.

So what's up with you? You weren't singing. Everybody's supposed to sing.

JANE can't.

DOROTHY Everybody can sing. You don't even have to be on key or anything. Didn't you listen? It's not like we're the—ah—Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

JANE don't want to

DOROTHY Well, who does? It's seven thirty in the effing morning! But we all do it. Because it's our job. So what makes you so dang special?

JANE *[her emotion causing her to lose her ability to separate her words]* I am one of the NOT special people. I know that.

DOROTHY Hey, kid. Take a Midol or something. Then come back and do these returns. Big sale in the junior department over the week-end and those little girl and their mothers are such pigs. I mean, look at this—stuff. All these little items go with other little items to make some outfit.

[Picking one of the items up]

Oh, this is cute.

[Throw it back into the bin]

So either take a Midol or take these returns out on the floor and put them all where they belong.

[JANE exits in the "dressing room" area of the store, where TAMMY is.

DOROTHY separates more clothes and with a vengeance]

Why do I have to work with the handicapped? Can you tell me that, huh, God? This damned doo-gooder policy like that's gonna make everyone forget that everything in here is made by children in China and we're working our butts off for six dollars and fifty-cents an hour.

TAMMY*[offstage]* Either do something about it or shutup, Dorothy!

DOROTHY Tell me what to do and I'll do it!

[WILMA, an older woman, enters, pushing another bin of clothes.]

WILMA All this crap was found in housewares. Most of it is clothes. People just wander around picking up shit and dropping it when they're tired of it.

DOROTHY Watch your language, Wilma. You know how that—

WILMA Sorry, hon. I'll do these for you.

DOROTHY *[whispering about JANE]* Use the crip, okay? Please. She needs to snap out of it.

WILMA Where is she? *[indicates offstage, where JANE is]* Come on, hon. Come on out. No one's gonna hurt you.

DOROTHY No, somebody already did. Unless she was born that way. She's got a crease in her skull your can see if you look real close at her hair.

[JANE enters]

WILMA There she is. . .Miss America.

DOROTHY I thought I was that. No, it's you, Wilma. You're Miss America.

TAMMY *[offstage]* We all are, Dorothy. In our own special ways.

PA ANNOUNCEMENT Would all associates meet at their spots for a good morning check-in?

TAMMY *[offstage]* If this is another hug session, I ain't doing it!
[JANE exits into the backroom again]

WILMA Come on back, hon.

TAMMY 'Less they get us flu shots!

WILMA Come on. Don't give up!

[WILMA goes after JANE. end of scene]

~Scene Twenty-Five~

[Outside the auditorium. TJ is pacing, revved up from her speech. LYDIA and CHAI join her].

TJ Where's that check? I'm supposed to get paid for this!
[LYDIA hands her an envelope, TJ tears it open]
We'll have to look for one of those check-cashing places.

LYDIA Chai and I have something to tell you.

CHAI We were quite hurt at first about the crickets up our...vaginas remark. But now we see that you are right.
We allowed symbolization—

LYDIA --infantilization!

CHAI --of an idea to mask the real issues. And we are heartily sorry.

MAVIS *[entering. Pushing TJ to emphasize the she means business]* Who are you?!! You tell me right now!!! Who are you??

TJ Whoa, lady!

CHAI What are you doing to her?

MAVIS At first I thought, "Clever presentation. And then, bad joke. And then poor woman. She's obviously brain damaged or something and I need to cover for her, so she won't be humiliated." And then I'm the one who is humiliated!! I don't know who you are but you are not Jane Cavett or anyone who writes for academic publications. And here I am out there, in front of all my students and several of my colleagues, trying to go in all directions like some Chihuahua on linoleum. "Oh, you must mean this, or you must mean that," flinging jargon around to cover my ass 'cause you are waving your fraudulent ass for everyone to see.

LYDIA Are you saying that she's not Jane Cavett?

MAVIS I've never met Jane Cavett, but this woman is a fake and an imposter.
[MAVIS grabs the check out of TJ's hand and tears it up]

TJ What are you doing, you crazy bitch!

MAVIS I want her out of my sight.

CHAI Jane, what is she talking about?

TJ Oh, whatever.

LYDIA And what's that about you being assaulted?

MAVIS Jane Cavett was assaulted by a student.

[to TJ] And here I thought you were so brave coming out and speaking so soon after your injury.

LYDIA I'm so sorry, Professor Pratt—

MAVIS It's all right, dear. You just drove the car. And your obviously Lesbian African-American friend named after a drink you can get at Starbuck's is besotted with—whoever this is. **[MAVIS exits]**

LYDIA You're not Jane Cavett?

TJ Ummm, let me think. No.

LYDIA You lied to us!

CHAI Oh my god—who are you?

TJ Someone you're in love with.

LYDIA You deceived us!

TJ Stop being such a couple of pussies. You decided I was Jane Cavett. You HELPED ME be her. And you know what? I like it. I fucking love it to death. I like these clothes, too. I have legs and they look damn good.

CHAI You used me! You broke my heart!!

TJ Wow! I am strong, I am the SuperCUNT!!

LYDIA You disillusioned me!

TJ That's good. You should write me a thank you note on that pretty paper you can get in the drug store. I figured out that "dis" on the front of a word means 'not' so I just gave you a dose of "NOT illusion" and that's good.

LYDIA I can't believe it. I can't believe another woman has treated me this way!

TJ That's what equal rights is all about, baby. We can fuck over whoever we want to fuck over.

CHAI I—I could kill you right now!! You deserve to die!

TJ No. I CAN'T die now. You know why? I'll tell you. Me—this girl here got up in front of a whole room of those educated twats and spoke and they paid me one thousand dollars cash money.

LYDIA They got mad at you!

TJ Sure they got mad but that's conversation. We were conversing! And you know what—
[to CHAI]
Stop crying, Jesus!

--They listened to me. Cunts who wouldn't have given me the time of day.
THEY FUCKING THOUGHT I WAS SMART!!!

LYDIA They thought you were dangerous.

TJ Yeah. . .that, too. I gotta figure out how to com-bine the two. Because I figured it out. I'm NOT DUMB. I'm IGNORANT!!! Hey, why didn't you tell me I was ignorant!! You're supposed to be my friend and everything.

CHAI It never occurred to me.

TJ Oh, come on!! Why didn't you ever say, "Hey, TJ, you're ignorant!"

LYDIA Because, first of all, we never knew your real name!

CHAI Because we thought you were Jane Cavett! And she's not ignorant!

LYDIA And, TJ, don't get madder than you already are, but you do NOT take criticism well.

TJ Fuck you!! I do, too!! But it doesn't matter because I am HAPPY! I AM FUCKING HAPPY!!

LYDIA You don't sound happy.

TJ Well, I AM and nobody better fuck with this feeling or I will fucking KILL THEM!!

LYDIA You. Get out. Of our lives.

CHAI Yes, get out. GET OUT!!! GET OUT!!! GET OUT!!!! GET OUT!!!!

TJ Whoa. Okay.

LYDIA Don't come near me. Or her.

TJ What about my stuff? I want all my cool stuff!!

LYDIA We'll leave it on the porch

CHAI Don't knock on the door.

TJ Or what?

CHAI I'LL CALL THE FUCKING POLICE ON YOU YOU FUCKING PIECE OF SHIT!!!

TJ *[about CHAI's foul language]* Now there. There you sounded like a REAL person!! You can thank me for that!! Oh, you want me to leave you alone. You pussies. The fucking world is run by pussies!! For other pussies!!

[end of scene]

~Scene Twenty-six~

[MOTHER sits in her wheelchair with MARTA, a pleasant home medical aid. MARTA has some objects on her lap]

MOTHER I don't understand why you're here.

MARTA Social Services sent me.

MOTHER Social Services? We're not ready to receive guests. We need a better house for that.

MARTA Because your household needs two incomes. And because your incontinence is preventing you from being a valuable member of the workforce.

MOTHER Incontinence? I'm not sure I know what that means.

MARTA Mrs. Cavett, I believe you understand what I'm saying. Your case worker feels that you need some help accepting your situation and then moving on into the future

MOTHER My situation? That I'm living in a slum surrounded by colored people?

MARTA Your neighbors aren't "colored people." They are largely from Indonesia and Puerto Rico.

MOTHER And what's this about "moving on into the future"? If I could move, I would move. If my daughter made enough money to allow us to move, I would move out of here in a second! And tell me this, why do you speak American English nearly perfectly and then suddenly put on an accent when you say words in Spanish?

MARTA I am one-fourth Cuban. Marta is a Cuban name.

MOTHER That's not enough to have a Spanish accent. My daughter speaks Spanish, but she says "porto rico" like the rest of us. Do you speak Spanish?

MARTA No.

MOTHER And my neighbors *are* colored. If I'm white, they are colored. When I look at my skin, I see light peach. And that is the color of paint you would buy if you went to the paint store and wanted to paint a room "flesh-toned."

MARTA All right, Mrs. Cavett,

MOTHER Don't patronize me. If you disagree, say so.

MARTA I know you are operating out of your fear right now and trying to push me away, but I'm not leaving, Mrs. Cavett. I'm here to talk about your gynecological exam.

MOTHER I have cancer.

MARTA No. No, you don't.

MOTHER What are you doing with my medical records???

MARTA The free clinic had the report faxed to our office. My speciality is in-home medical—

MOTHER Your fax machine knows I have female trouble?

MARTA Incontinence. And the fax machine doesn't care—it's seen worse. Oh, alright, since we are dealing with such personal matters as urine leakage, we should be completely honest with you, as a matter of trust. Your daughter asked us to visit you to talk to you about your leakage because it keeps you house-bound.

MOTHER My daughter asked you to come and talk to me like this?

MARTA Now. What has happened is that the pelvic floor—

MOTHER *[becoming more alarmed]* What floor!!? Where!!?

MARTA Inside you.

MOTHER I am sure I have no such thing.

MARTA Yes, you do and it has weakened and your bladder has prolapsed--that means it has fallen a bit. Because of this, you have leakage issues.
[beat]
But the good news is—there is treatment.
What you need to do is contract the vagina and release it several times a day, You can do this anywhere and that is the beauty of it.
So, let's try one.
Are you ready?
Contract. Hold. Release.
And another one.
Contract. Hold. Release.
Now you need to do several sets of these a day. For the rest of your life, This will build up your pelvic floor.

MOTHER I need to be alone now. I'm tired.

MARTA You need to build up your pelvic floor.
Now let's do some calisthenics. I'll do them, too. I do them every day, several times a day.

MOTHER While you've been in my house??

MARTA They're a habit.

MOTHER While we've been talking??

MARTA Look, I think you may need a little helper with this.
[MARTA reaches inside her purse and pulls out a small, long box. She takes the lid off and produces a phallic-like object and sets it in front of MOTHER]
Now, this is a Kegel exerciser. It opens up. Here. And you put two springs in it—there are different sizes to make exerciser bigger for more advanced muscle building. Now what you do is lie flat as if you're having a gynecological exam, on your bed, and insert the exerciser into the vagina. Then Contract. Hold. Release.
[MARTA demonstrates by squeezing the exerciser inside her fist]
Contract. Hold. Release. You'll want to put some lubricant on it before you insert it, of course. And here's a condom for it. That's a little medical advisor joke. It's good to have a joke about these things, you know.
Now this one is for you. Use it, get used to it, make it a part of your daily life and everything will improve.
Do you have any questions?

I'll leave you all of this. And these contact numbers—I circled my name.

Oh, and you want to keep the Kegel exerciser clean. So you should wash it, but only with soap and warm water. Don't use any cleansers because they do leave a residue that you will be able to feel inside your vagina. You don't want that. No, we don't want our

vaginas to be irritated.

[making a puppet vagina with her hand and talking through it with some special puppet voice]

“Don’t irritate me. Keep that Kegel exerciser clean—“

MOTHER That’s enough.

MARTA *[as puppet vagina]* “—before you put it in me.”

[picks Kegel phallus up and makes it talk]

[as Kegel phallus]

“I’m going to make you stronger, Virginia”

[puppet vagina voice]

“How did you know my name? Are you trying to manipulate me?”

[Kegel phallus voice]

“All vaginas are named Virginia.”

MOTHER You may go.

MARTA Mrs. Cavett, you have to have a sense of humor about these things—

MOTHER Don’t tell me what I have to have, young woman of obviously foreign birth, and what good is a sense of humor that you “Have to Have?”

MARTA I was born in Chicago. And I’m leaving.

MOTHER *[to the exiting MARTA]* And the “thing” I’m supposed to have a sense of humor about is MY THING!!! And now listen to me! I’m sounding as vulgar as this vulgar world!!

[MOTHER clears her lap of everything MARTA has put there—the Kegel phallus, the paper work, then tries to wheel off, can’t. In her rage, she stands up]

Oh great. I can walk now. Even God has turned on me.

[she exits, walking in a halting manner, but walking]

[end of scene]

~Scene Twenty-Seven~

[Pawn Shop. Jo-Jo of JO-JO’S WOMAN HELPING WOMYN TWENTY-FOUR/SEVEN BARTER CENTER is going over a list with TJ. TJ is dressed well and is more comfortable in the new persona and costume]

JO-JO So, damn, you’ve cleaned house alright. This is a lot of stuff you got here—enough for three people.

TJ I’m, like, divesting myself of the empty objects of this patriarchal market economy.

JO-JO Do you have anything left?

TJ Hell, yeah. Me.

JO-JO That’s it. Isn’t it. That’s all that matters.

TJ I’d like cash.

JO-JO No banks, either.

- TJ** And one more thing. I know you do fake IDs.
- JO-JO** Wait a minute. I dunno. . .
- TJ** See, Jo-Jo, May I call you that? I really want to start over. I'm turning my will and my life over to the Great Goddess. And that includes my name. I want a new name.
- JO-JO** I do these IDs for women who are abused and need to escape their abuser.
- TJ** Well, what if the abuser is the male hegemony. What if the abuser is the fucking phallogocentric entire world?
- JO-JO** It's important what you just said. I never know what those words mean exactly but when someone is throwing them around, I know—number one, they're smarter than me, and, number two, what they're saying is important. But I still don't know about this fake ID thing.
- TJ** I thought I'd let you pick my new name. It's all about identity and its fucking fluidity.
- JO-JO** Alright. Alright, then.
Lynda Carter.
- TJ** Cool name. But I like the name Alice. Could we get that in there, somewhere?
[JO-JO writes it down]
- JO-JO** Lynda Alice Carter.
[going back into her work area]
I'll have this for you in a minute.
[offstage]
Where you going next?
- TJ** I don't know. I'll let the GG guide me. I'm sure She has something awesome in store for me.

[end of scene]

~Scene Twenty-Eight~

[JANE's apartment. JANE and WILMA enter. They are carrying fast food.]

- JANE** Mo-ther? Some one's here.
[to WILMA]
Probibally—prabil—PROBABLY—a—a—sle—SLEEPING. One bedroom her.Me. Here.
Thanks ride. Cold.
- WILMA** Look, precious, you should just write this all down because your speech is driving me crazy.
[WILMA sees the memo board and magic marker]
Oh. So I'm not the only one who can't stand to hear you talk. I mean, I know you're doing your best, I know that.
[WILMA hands JANE the memo board and marker]
Okay. So how much do you—you got me talking like you. Okay, how much do you pay for this place?
[JANE writes it]
Yeah. You need another job—get a graveyard shift!
[JANE writes something else]
Including utilities. Well, your mother is going to have to do something. Doesn't she have any skills?
How old a woman is she?

[JANE writes]
Seventy Two?
[JANE writes]
More like a hundred.

JANE *[spoken]* An old hundred.

WILMA You get some disability?

JANE For me?

WILMA I meant for your mother, sugar. But now that you mention it, I was wondering if you was deaf or something like that. And had to learn to talk later.

JANE No. Head injury. Don't remember.

[WILMA points to the memo board and JANE starts writing again]

WILMA *[reading what Jane writes]* You were robbed?
Took your car!
A woman?
A rich little bitch.

JANE *[speaks]* Yes.

WILMA *[reading as JANE writes with intensity]*
She got a good lawyer got time served plus two years but that's only because I lived.

JANE I wish I had died.

WILMA Oh honey, don't say that.

Look, life is worth living. It really is. Honey. Believe me. It is. Do you believe me?

[JANE shakes her head NO]

You're just feeling this way because of your blood sugar. Now, listen to me. Blood sugar is everything. You gotta watch it. It will take you out. I'm not kidding. You'll be halfway down the front of some building you jumped off of and you'll remember, "Shit! Crap! I'm not really suicidal, it's my damn blood sugar!" That's why you need to eat.

[WILMA opens the fast food and gives JANE a cheeseburger. JANE tucks into it with enthusiasm]

All this food—

JANE *[mouth full]* Two dollars!!

WILMA See? Didn't I tell you?

The double cheeseburger—that's a dollar. Then, instead of the pop, Coke, whatever, you get the ice cream cone—it's cheaper and has more bulk. How can you get meat, real meat—not bologna, not hot dogs—and cheese and bread for a dollar? Cooked already? If you bought them separately, they be a lot more and then, if you're like me, where you gonna cook anything? Hey, it's time. You need to go to bed.

JANE Wilma? Stay.

WILMA No, sugar. I got to get home.

JANE Where?

WILMA I live in my car. Hey, a lot of people do. It's the cheapest housing you can get. All you pay is car

insurance and gas and a license and inspection every year.

JANE a lot of. . . money.

WILMA About a hundred and sixty dollars a month. Can't get an apartment for that. I'm saving up for an apartment but I need two months rent to get one. There are some cute ones right off seventy-five, there at the interstate. I priced them—six-fifty a month. So that would be I would need thirteen hundred dollars to get one of them. But I'm saving. Got a couple of parking tickets I had to pay. Stupid. I move the car all over the city so the police don't get a bead on me because once they do, they'll make it their business to hassle you, like you're a public nuisance. So I got to be careful. And I usually am. I've been living like this for two and half years—that's two winters. But what I do then is I go ahead and pay to get into one of these garages, like under the mall. And I stay there for the worst nights. It's worth it. And when it's all too much, I get a motel room out on the old highway. They're desperate for customers so I can get a room for fifty-dollars a night at the old Budgetel. Take a long, long bath, watch TV. It's heaven. I got six hundred dollars saved so by next September, a year from now, I can move into an apartment, I hope.

JANE You could—

WILMA Nuh-uh. Nope. Nice of you and everything, but I've got my spot picked out and I need to get going. Besides, I'm dying for a cigarette. I know they're expensive, but, dammit, I got a right to some pleasure in this life.

JANE Smoke here.

WILMA Baby, you're real sweet. But I'm not gonna stink up your nice apartment.

JANE Please.

WILMA I'm going to get a ticket.

[WILMA xs to comfort JANE]

This is how they get us. We can't be mean like them. We can't be heartless like them. So we take care of each other. And so everybody has a little less. And we never get out of the hole.

[Lights fade on WILMA lighting up her cigarette and JANE leaning against her]

~Scene Twenty-Nine~

[MEGA-MART. MOTHER is wearing a red vest that looks more like a cloth sandwich board. It says, "ASSOCIATE SHE speaks to various people coming in]

MOTHER Welcome to Mega-Mart.

Welcome to Mega-Mart, sir. Oh sorry, Ma'am

Welcome to Mega-Mart. . . .Ma'am?

Welcome to Mega-Mart. Whose little lovely child are you? Stay away little girl.

Welcome to Mega-Mart. Ho lah!

Welcome to Mega-Mart. Kah nee chee wah. Oh, you're not of foreign birth. I'm sorry. You orientals are so attractive, I was distracted.

Tammy? Tammy? I'm about two hours past by break time. Tammy? I've been standing for over four hours—welcome to mega-mart—and, by the way, I wasn't paid for the overtime. My hours didn't match up with my records. There must be some mistake. Welcome to Mega-Mart. I know I'm talking loud in front of customers but I can never find management when I need to speak about these things.

Welcome to whatever.

Tammy? I'm afraid if things don't get better here for me and for my fellow employees, I'm going to form—I've never done it before but I've seen it in movies—I'm going to form a union.

[Suddenly, there is the deafening sound of helicopters circling overhead]

VOICEOVER Would Associate Mrs. Foster Cavett please come to Room 101 for a sharing and caring session?

MOTHER I made them use my full name. Where is Room 101?

EDNA *[offstage]* The loading dock.

MOTHER Oh, They want me to look at a new shipment of lamps. I know a lot about lamps. I had some very nice ones.

[A female MEGA-MART CORPORATE EXECUTIVE, enters, wearing a power suit and sunglasses]

EXECUTIVE Come with me. *[MOTHER follows the EXECUTIVE off]*

MOTHER I hope there are no more of those hideous monstrosities in floral shapes. They don't look like lamps. People are confused—is it a lamp or a planter? Slow down. Miss? Miss? I just got out of wheelchair! Miss!

[end of scene]

~Scene Thirty~

[The offices of an editor, Mimi Manning. She answers the phone]

MIMI This is Mimi.

Aminda!! I can't be with you all day!! You're going to have to take some responsibility for your life and your actions!! I mean, if you want to kill yourself, I can't stop you!! I paid for Vassar and you flunked out. I paid for Bard and had to pull strings to get you into there and you flunked out. Do you know how hard it is to flunk out of Bard once you've been accepted? They try everything to graduate their students—that's the unwritten agreement they make with the parents. Pay a huge tuition and we guarantee that your child will graduate if it takes the entire faculty and a semi-tractor-trailer full of meds to do it!! But you still managed to flunk out. I'm at the end of my rope!!

[TJ enters]

[MIMI pretends she's talking to her cleaning woman instead of her fucked-up daughter]

Yes, Zeenya. Finish the floors and then you can go home. Das vedanya.

[MIMI hangs up the phone]

Jane Cavett.

So this is what you look like.

TJ Yeah.

MIMI You've bounced back from your accident—what was it?

TJ I was assaulted. By some crazy bitch who wanted my car.

MIMI I can't imagine what it must have been like.

TJ Yeah. It was some kind of hell alright.

MIMI Did it, and I know this must be a tender topic, affect your speech?

TJ Uhh--yeah. My words aren't as refined as they should be and I have trouble controlling my emotions.

MIMI Well, I don't want to agitate you, but your manuscript is unsaleable. Liz sent it over after she finally received it and couldn't bring herself to tell you that. It's clearly about the loss of a civilization rather than having anything to do with post-modern feminist politics. And no one wants to read another book about the Mayans!

TJ What the fuck? But I'm a teacher at a college and I'm supposed to be this undiscovered genius.

MIMI Who told you that?

TJ You mean I did all this work and you're telling me that it won't sell?

MIMI That's right. It's not saleable. Yes. And I'm glad we got it out in the open and now I can tell Liz I saw you. Good. Fine. Excellent. So work on something I can sell and get back to me or to one of my assistants when you've finished it. So you can go. And I'll see you—. The elevator is. . .Are you alright?

TJ So this is the world I'm in now--the world where people ask each other if they're alright. And everybody is because they have their basic needs met. But they still say they're alright, which they are, in these pitiful tones so we're supposed to think how noble they are to say they're alright when we think, because they want us to, that deep, deep, deep down inside they are hurt and lonely and sad and nobody understands them. No one knows their inner pain. "Oh, but I'd love to give you two hundred dollars towards your rent but you see, I'm too sad right now. I'm on my way to therapy or I have just left therapy and my inner child needs comforting so I'm going to go buy it a brand new boat and a lifetime supply of Odwalla Healthy Smoothies and those new earphones that cut off all the sounds of the world except my own heart which is bleeding for you and all the poor poor poor pure poor living in the garbage heaps with their noses stuck in gluebags like skinny ponies by the way could I get a pony for my child's birthday party only I want a chubby pony that reminds me to send two hundred dollars to the Save Animals Fund."

MIMI Are you aware of how angry you are right now? Shouldn't you take your meds or do your breathing—whatever you've developed to control your anger? Because head injuries can change people in significant ways.

TJ Tell me something I don't know. Oh, and that tone you just used on me? That sounds like I just barfed or farted a big long one.

MIMI What I'm saying is that these things you've been saying to me? In your agitated state? They should be in the book. It's much more alive than that arcane, pretentious crap that's in here now. People want to read things they can understand.

TJ Just tell me what people want and I'll give it to them! All my life I've been trying to find something I can do that people will pay for—and pay good money for—not shit money for cleaning toilets and doing people's laundry and waiting on their drunken asses in all-night diners

or selling them piles of crappy snack food in the mini-mart and smiling. No, something that I can sell that they will buy for decent money. Money to live on. Money to keep from taking everybody's shit. Money to sleep on and when you wake up it's still there. That kind of money!

MIMI And that's what I can sell—your voice, your real voice. I say, dump the Mayans—they're gone and you were only using them as a paradigm for Islam and everyone will know it. What I can sell is life and truth. But for the popular market. Wise-cracking anti-establishment, balloon-popping, irreverent humor I can sell. When things are bad, people need to laugh more. That's why oppressed minorities have the best humor. I mean, who's funnier that the Irish or the Jews or the Blacks. . .black people? Oppression equals HUMOR. Armenians! I mean, who's funnier that the Armenians?

TJ But I'm not funny. I AM NOT FUCKING FUNNY!!

[MIMI laughs a lot at this]

MIMI Sorry. But you are. Sometimes the thing we're best at is so close to us that we can't see it.

TJ Okay. Okay. Well, let's just clear everything away, huh? I want to use my real name now. I'm not Jane Cavett. I am Lynda Alice Carter—Lynda with a “y.” Read my ID.

MIMI But you said you were Jane Cavett.

TJ News flash. I never was. I just used poor Jane's misfortune for my own benefit. Because you wouldn't have seen me if I hadn't. Fact is, I'm from Jane's community and I haven't been able to stomach the crap she's been handing out. I know I got things to say, important things, but I could never get anywhere with any of my ideas.

MIMI Where are you staying?

TJ Hotel.

MIMI Where?

TJ Over there by the. . .thing.

[long beat. MIMI looks at TJ]

MIMI You're going to move in with my daughter. It's a nice place with no pets but there are plants that have to be watered. And there's a computer. I need someone to watch her. She's trying to get off oxycontin and who knows what else.

TJ Sounds. . .okay, I guess.

MIMI Here. Here's four hundred and thirty-two dollars from my petty cash. You'll be getting an advance in a check from—

TJ Just give it in cash money directly to me.

MIMI You don't trust the patriarchy at all, do you?

TJ Hegemically speaking, no one should trust anyone. Because the low want to bring the high ones down, mug them, really, and the high want to keep what they got so they don't want the low to even touch them with their failure cooties.

MIMI Put that in your book!! That is pure gold! And keep my daughter clean! And all will be available to you.

TJ I want that in writing.

MIMI You're a lot smarter than people think you are, aren't you?

TJ Fuck yeah. Absolutely. I mean fuck, yeah.

MIMI I'll send the paperwork over to Aminda's apartment—that's my daughter's name. I'll get a car to take you to your. . .hotel. . .and then to my daughter's apartment. It's a two-bedroom in Turtle Bay.

TJ That's great. I'd love to get out of this city.

MIMI Ah, good.

Just take the elevator down to the garage. So we have a deal?

[they shake hands and TJ exits. MIMI gets on phone.]

Ahmed?

Oh, okay. Carlos.

Woman on her way down. Very sketchy. But she'll do as a babysitter until I can find another rehab for Aminda.

Take her where she needs to go and then to Aminda's.

She doesn't know shit about New York. But that's good. She'll stay where we put her.

[end of scene]

~Scene Thirty-One~

[MOTHER sits in the dark in the cheap chair from Linens & Things. She is no longer wearing her ASSOCIATE apron. JANE enters, carrying Chinese food take-out]

JANE You still sitting in the dark?

Mother, every--body gets fired sometimes. I been fired—oh—three four times? We'll be alright. I'm working that shift at Cumby. And I'm feeling better better. And you are, too? Mother. Look! Both of us walking on our own.

MOTHER What is that horrible smell?

JANE Moo-shoo pork. And chick--en fried rice. Two fortune cookies.

MOTHER We're eating take-out prepared by immigrants.

JANE Pedro and his fam--ily have been here for gener--ations, Mother.

MOTHER I am hungry.

JANE Shall we op--en our fortune cookies--first?

MOTHER Oh god! No fortunes. Let's just eat.

[end of scene]

~Scene Thirty-Two A~

[In MIMI's daughter's (AMINDA) apartment. TJ is trying to work on the computer

but it's getting the best of her]

TJ Fuck! Stop! Stop doing that!!
 [AMINDA walks over to the computer and pushes a button, walks away]
 What did you do?

AMINDA **[groggy]** Num lock. Pushed it.

TJ Okay, I got it. Thanks.

AMINDA Yo. *[she exits]*

TJ Fuck
 *[at computer, something else is out of control. AMINDA strolls in, pushes a button
 problem solved.]*
 What that time?

AMINDA Cap lock. Don't lock. Wanna get high? I'm high.

TJ What the fuck?! You're supposed to be getting clean. You're gonna make me look bad. I'll lose this place to stay. What did you take?

AMINDA Some. . .thin.

TJ Well, we're gonna find out!

[TJ grabs AMINDA and puts her fingers down her throat, making her gag. They exit in this position. Sound of barfing offstage. Then more barfing. Then more barfing. Then a flush. Then the sound of a shower running and AMINDA yelling from offstage]

AMINDA It's cold!! Dammit!! What the hell? What are you—JESUS CHRIST WHAT THE FUCK!!!
 My mouth tastes GROSS!!

TJ Turn around!

AMINDA You turn around! Fuck you!

[TJ re-enters room, finds a big roll of duct tape and exits into the bathroom again. Sounds of lots of swearing from AMINDA, then silence. A couple beats more and TJ and AMINDA re enter. AMINDA is wrapped up, swaddled, in a big towel that is taped around with duct tape. She looks a little like a mummy or a giant papoose and can barely walk. TJ is moving her along. TJ props AMINDA up and goes back to the computer]

AMINDA Is this necessary?

TJ YES. I have work to do. Fall asleep and I'll slap you awake!

[Lights fade as TJ stares at the computer screen.

--Scene 32 B--

Lights come back up and TJ is bleary-eyed at the computer. She shakes her head to wake up and then sees that AMINDA has fallen asleep]

TJ Oh Christ.

[TJ goes over to AMINDA and lowers her in mummification on to the floor, slaps her awake and then rolls her around like a log until AMINDA is wide awake]

Can you hear me!!

[AMINDA nods]

SAY SOMETHING!!

AMINDA Peanut butter sandwich.

TJ You're all right. I'm gonna get some writing done. I'm using pencil and paper. Fuck this computer. I'll get you some food later.

AMINDA *[lying on the floor]* That's alright, I'll just stand here.

TJ Fuck!!! *[T.J. Stands AMINDA up, leaning against something]*

AMINDA Feels good to lie down.

TJ If you die on me, I will fucking kill you!!!

AMINDA I'm fine, yo.

[TJ grabs all the coffee she can reach and starts feeding it to AMINDA]

TJ You know what I was thinking while you were in there puking your guts out? I was thinking that Hegemony happens. That you can't keep it from happening. So the thing is to find the strings that all those whoever they are at the top of the Hegemony are, you know, pulling. And then to jerk those strings real hard and out of their hands or shimmy up one 'til you can get to the pulling end and then grasp that sucker tight in you hand and hold on and don't let anyone take that string away from you. I have been all my fucking life at the wrong end of the string!

And you know what, Aminda? Aminda?

AMINDA Yo.

TJ Say, yes, T.J., Jane, Lynda—what is my fucking name? Anyway, stop saying “yo” because you are not a rapper, okay? You are a young woman, or will be, if I have to stay up all night and walk you around until you're sober.

AMINDA Okay.

TJ Alright. Tune into me here. Eye contact. Eyes open. I am going to write this book, even if I have to carve it into your arm. Because you know what, you spoiled little twat? Poverty does not make you noble. When you have nothing, morality and ethics are luxuries. And that's why rich people make me mad when they don't use their morals or their ethics and do evil shit just because they're, like, greedy. They don't ever have to lie, steal and cheat to live, but they do it, anyway. I want a good life. I don't want to be so fucking angry all the fucking time!!!

AMINDA Stop yelling aw-ight? I'm okay, aw-ight? Make me a sandwich. Or I will. I will. Okay, okay? You need to chill. Besides, my mother isn't going to give you a fucking book. She's going to take your sayings that you're so, like, full of? And make them into one of those daily calendars where you rip off the pages. Because you're, like, a poor risk. Yo. And she knows you'll never finish the book, never thought you'd finish it. And mainly because my mother fucks everyone over. Yo. All you are is a big babysitter for a big baby that's me. YO!

TJ YOU ARE NOT HELPING ME WITH MY ANGER!!!

AMINDA I'm incapable of helping anyone. Haven't you noticed? I'm a fucking drug addict!!

[TJ exits. AMINDA hops around]

AMINDA Hey! Hey! Don't leave me!! Hey!!

[door slams. TJ is gone]

[end of scene]

~Scene Thirty-Three~

[SUSAN B., in prison, mopping again, but efficiently]

SUSAN You forgot all about me, didn't you? Well, turns out circumstantial evidence is enough if they're fed up with the likes of young stupid white girls whose mothers have given up on them, but that's in the past, so just pay attention 'cause I'm going to tell you how to make Jell-O wine. You get a package of Jello from the prison store, add some water and stir and you let it sit for weeks and finally it ferments and you drink it. And if you don't throw up, you can get a little buzz on.

Now about sex. A lot of inmates have sex in here but you need to do it with the guards and on the down low—that's authentic Black talk I learned from my roommate—the one before last. Because any handholding or hugging or touching even is not allowed *among* us inmates. And sex is okay with the guards until it's found out and your special guard gets walked off the property, never to return. If you are a lesbian, then you are shit out of luck because the guards are male. I've decided to be celibate for health, safety, and self-respect reasons.

You can get drugs if you really have to have them. But you can't count on steady delivery so the best thing is to clean-up and stay clean. I do mopping and one of my jobs is cleaning up the dry-out tank. When someone is coming off drugs, they shit a lot of green liquid and can't always make it to the toilets. They tremble and gag a lot and want to die and say so but they're too weak to even jump out of a window or hang themselves with sheets, not that they could get away with that anyway with everybody watching.

Most of the women in here have felonies related to drug use and selling and usually it's the boyfriend or husband who is doing the business and they get swept up in the raid, too, and they're usually stoned because they are users so they're too out of it to get away. And they wouldn't leave without their children. And then the children, well, they'll be here someday probably.

I'll tell you something. What I miss most is just privacy. The only way I can have it is to pull the covers over my head. And it's a relief. To do that. Because all we have is the television and that is enough to make you want to puke. All these voices of people who are acting so all you hear is this hyped up talk and shreds of music and recorded laughter, There's nothing stupider than watching a bunch of depressed women staring at a sit com with a laugh track. They're like these huge, sad gods staring at the little box full of tiny people having great lives.

Being in here has made me a better person. And that's what I'm going to tell the parole officers. This was meant to be because there are no accidents so it's part of God's plan for me.

Oh yeah, and I've been born again and accepted Jesus Christ as my personal savior.

It was something to do.

[She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a small tape recorder and speaks

right into the mic]

So that's it for now, Mom. Call me sometime.

[She turns the tape recorder off and exits cleanly because this time she didn't mop herself into a corner]

end of scene

~Scene Thirty-Four~

[A year later. A bus stop with one of those clear plastic shelters. JANE waits. She's dressed pretty much like TJ was at the beginning of the play. A FEMALE BUS DRIVER enters, waits. Gradually more people enter, wait. No one should have an umbrella or a raincoat and the sudden storm that happens further in the scenes should catch them all by surprise]

DRIVER Oh man. I'm going to be late for work.

WOMAN 1 You drive these buses? That's funny.

DRIVER It's not my route. Don't blame me. They don't have enough drivers but they won't hire more. Stingy motherfuckers.

WOMAN 2 This is the 23A, isn't it?

WOMAN 1 The bus that never comes.

WOMAN 2 Whose decision was it to put a shelter here and not over there, too?

DRIVER Don't look at me. "Hegemony happens", y'all.

WOMAN 2 You got that calendar, too?

WOMAN 1 "The low want to mug the high ones, and the high want to keep what they got."

DRIVER "All you unemployed, don't touch me with your failure cooties".

[TJ enters. She's dressed in a uniform from some hourly-wage business, and looks a bit more "girly" and cleaned-up than at the beginning of the play]

DRIVER I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm walking over to 4th to get the 110.

WOMAN 2 I'll go, too. I can't be late for work. *[They leave]*

WOMAN 1 But there's no shelter there. *[looks at her watch]* Damn.

*[they all exit, leaving JANE and TJ.
Sound of thunder in the distance]*

JANE They will get wet.

TJ *[about her work uniform]* I knew I shouldn't wear this thing. I thought I was saving time.

[They look at each other, then look away]

Maybe I can make a run for it.

JANE You're gonna need a raincoat.

[TJ and JANE turn their heads to look again. Lights down as they stand, locked in each other's gaze]

End of play