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Night mother pdf script

'Night, MotherWritten by Marsha NormanCharactersJessie CatesThelma CatesDate premieredDecember 1982Place premieredAmerican Repertory TheaterCambridge, MassachusettsOriginal languageEnglishGenreDrama 'night, Mother is a play of American playwright Marsha Norman. The play won a Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1983 and was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Play. The play is about a daughter, Jessie, and her mother, Thelma. She begins with Jessie, calmly telling her mother that by morning she will be dead, while planning to kill herself that very evening. The subsequent dialogue between Jessie and the mother slowly reveals the reasons for her decision, her life with her mother and how well she planned her own death, culminating in a disturbing but inevitable climax. [2] Synopsis The play takes place over the course of a single evening in the living room/kitchen of an isolated house, shared by Jessie and her elderly mother Thelma. Tonight, Jessie carefully organized the house and made other detailed preparations for the future, while explaining the changes to Thelma, who does not immediately notice anything unusual. Finally Jessie asks where her father's gun is stored; Thelma tells him. It's only after Jessie gets the gun, Thelma questions Jessie's strange behavior. Jessie explains that she plans to commit suicide at the end of the evening. Thelma, terrified, at first assumes that Jessie is unhappy with their life together. Jessie calmly assures her that she is simply tired of life and has been for some time. Thelma speculates that Jessie's unhappy marriage, her divorce, her murderous son, the loss of her father, her epilepsy or pity and disgust that other people feel about her illness, are at the root of her depression; Jessie also rejects these reasons, stating that her motives are simply hers and have nothing to do with other people, including Thelma. Gradually, the two reveal long-hidden truths: Thelma admits that Jessie's seizures began as children, but remained untreated for decades, with Jessie herself unaware of her symptoms, while Jessie confesses the true causes of her failed marriage. Throughout all, Thelma occasionally bursts into hysteria in which she tries to get along with Jessie. Jessie deviates from her mother's reasoning by continuing to calmly explain the mundane responsibilities Thelma must assume once Jessie is dead, including what to do immediately after Jessie's suicide. Thelma rejects everything, believing Jessie would drop her plans if Thelma refuses to cooperate, but Jessie says she will kill herself regardless. By the end of the evening, Thelma concludes that she never really knew her daughter and realizes that their long conversation has changed the nature of their relationship, but Jessie says it's time for her to go, say 'night, mother, mother, closing in her room. As Thelma begs and knocks the door, the shot rings, singing Thelma. After a moment to collect, she begins to carry out the instructions Jessie left for her. [3] Characters Jessie Cates: A divorced woman who lives with her widowed mother. It's an epileptic who's had seizures most of her life. Nothing in life went for this woman, including raising a son who turned out to be a disappointing loser. She suffered with severe chronic depression, which was never treated. In the play, her long-standing despair was temporarily eased by a decision that has her unusually peaceful and talkative. The usual grey and unstable physical energy of this woman have given way to a new goal that is expressed in productivity and detached humor. Thelma Mama Cates: A widow, she begins to feel her age and has easily allowed her depressed daughter to come and take care of all the details of her life. She sees life the way she wants it to be, rather than it is. He talks fast and likes to talk. She is a simple country woman who didn't want much and could find a way to be happy with whatever she had, even if it meant lying to herself and others. She doesn't need intimacy in relationships, but she's energized by social situations. Casting History Character 1982 A.R.T. 1983 Broadway cast 1st National Tour cast 1985 London cast 1986 Film cast 2004 Broadway revival cast 2017 Philadelphia Cast Thelma Cates Anne Pitoniak Mercedes McCambridge Marjor Y Anne Bancroft Brenda Blethyn Susan Blair Jessie Cates Kathy Bates Phyllis Somerville Susan Wooldridge Sissy Spacek Edie Falco Allison Deratzian History of the Norman production wrote the song in 1981, was developed at the Circle Repertory Company, and premiered at the American Repertory Theater with Robert Brustein in Cambridge, Massachusetts. [4] This production was transferred to the Broadway at the John Golden Theatre with the same cast and was directed by Tom Moore. It opened on March 31, 1983 and closed on February 26, 1984, after 380 performances. She received 4 Tony Award nominations: Best Play, Best Actress in a Play (both Bates and Pitoniak) and Best Director (Tom Moore). The Broadway cast transferred to Off-Broadway at the Westside Theatre in 1984 for 54 shows. [5] A U.S. The National Tour was launched after the Broadway production closed. Phyllis Somerville, who was Kathy Bates' Broadway understudy, played Jessie for the tour. Mercedes McCambridge was nominated for the Helen Hayes Award for her performance as Mother in the Washington D.C production. [6] [7] The first London production began in 1985 at the Hampstead Theatre, directed by Michael Attenborough. [8] Pitoniak and Bates starred again in a 1986 at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. [9] The first Chicago production was released in 1986 at Wisdom Bridge Theatre, with Sarajane Avidon and Elizabeth Moore. [10] A Broadway revival began at the Royale Theatre on November 14, 2004 and ended on January 9, 2005, after 65 performances and 26 previews, starring Brenda Blethyn and Edie Falco and directed by Michael Mayer. [11] A Philadelphia-based production began on September 14, 2017 at the Centre Theater in Norristown, Pennsylvania, starring Allison Deratzian and Susan Blair and directed by David Deratzian. [12] Film adaptation Main article: 'night, Mother (film) Sissy Spacek participated in the Broadway production and loved the song so much that it began to work on a film version. Anne Bancroft was cast as a mother. Marsha Norman adapted her own play for the film's screenplay. Tom Moore, who directed the Broadway play, also directed the film. The film added several characters, while the play featured only two performers. The film received mixed reviews and was not nominated for an Academy Award, although Bancroft was nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Actress in a Film – Drama. Spacek was nominated for an Academy Award that year for Crimes of the Heart, another film adaptation of a play released the same year. [13] Ben Brantley's response, in his review of The New York Times about the 2004 revival, wrote: ... these two first class actresses are never quite home in their roles.... Mrs. Norman's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama... looks more artificial than two decades ago. [11] Analyzing the 2004 renaissance, Elyse Sommers wrote in curtainup.com that Blethyn's performance is superb and that Falco embodies a woman who has given up life as something resembling fun and optimism. She expressed reservations about the psychological authenticity of the piece. [14] The Marsha Norman Awards also won the Susan Smith Blackburn Award for his work. [15] References ^ Carmody, Deirdre. 'Night Mother' Wins Pulitzer Prize April 19, 1983 ^ Night Mother summary accessed 11/23/2016 ^ Los Angeles Times night,mother accessed 11/23/2016 ^ Helen Hayes Awards 1986 accessed 11/23/2016 ^ London Theatre archive accessed11/23/2016 ^ Los Angeles Times review accessed 11/23/2016 ^ Chicago Tribune review accessed 11/23/2016 ^ a b Brantley, Ben. Don't worry about it. Review. Mother-Daughter Angst, Death in wings The New York Times, November 15, 2004 ^ Theater, Presented by Centre. 1880 Theatre presents the night, Mama' at the Centre Theatre in Norristown. Montgomery news. Taken 2017-08-31. ^ New York Times accessed 23/11/2016 ^ Sommer, Elyse. A review - 'Night, Mother curtainup.com, November 16, 2004 ^ External Links 'Night, Mother, 1983 production at Internet Broadway Broadway 'night, Mother, 2004 production at the Internet Broadway Database Retrieved from Download & View Night-Mother-script.pdf as PDF for free 劇翻] Night Mother Marsha Norman Characters JESSIE CATES -- Jessie is in her thirties or forty years, pale and unstable, physically. It's only in the last year That Jessie has gained control of her mind and body, and tonight, she's determined to stay in control. She wears pants and a long black sweater with deep pockets, one of which contains a notepad and can't be a pencil behind her ear or a pen cut at one of the pockets of the sweater. Jessie usually doesn't feel like talking. Other people have rarely found her strange sense of humor funny. She has a peaceful energy this night, a sense of purpose, but is clearly aware of the time that passes moment by moment. Oddly enough, Jessie was never as communicative or enjoyable as she was tonight, but we need to know that she wasn't always like that. There is a familiarity

between these two women that comes from having lived together for a long time. There is an abbreviation to talk and a sense of routine comfort to how they relate to each other physically. Of course, there is also the worsening of the routine. Thelma CATES -- Thelma is Jessie's mother in the 1950s or early 60s. She began to feel her age and so takes her easy when she can, or when she serves her goals of letting someone help her. But he talks fast and likes to talk. She thinks things are what she says they are. Its robustness is more of a mental quality than a physical one at last. She's talkative and a goofy, and this is her home. NOTE OF THE AUTHOR Time is present, the action starting at approximately 8:15. Clocks on ceiling in the kitchen and on a table in the living room should run throughout the show and be visible to the public. There will be no break. The piece takes place in a relatively new house built on a country road, with a living room and connecting kitchen and a central room leading to the bedrooms. A firing cable in the lobby ceiling releases a ladder leading to the attic. One of the bedrooms opens directly in the hallway, and its entrance should be visible to everyone in the audience. It should, in fact, be the focal point of the whole set and the lighting should make it disappear completely sometimes and draw the whole set into it to others. It's a point of both treat and promise. It's an ordinary door that opens to absolute nothingness. This door is the point of all action and the greatest care should be given to the design and The living room is crowded with magazines and catalogues of needles, needles, and candy dishes. Examples of mom's needles are everywhere -- pillows, Afghans and duvets, dollies and carpets, and they're pretty nice examples. The house is more comfortable than dirty, but there are quite a few to keep in place here. He's more personal than charming. It's not weird. Under no circumstances should Jessie and Thelma's set and dressing judge Thelma's intelligence or taste. It should simply indicate that these are very specific real people who happen to live in a certain part of the country. Heavy accents that would further distance the audience from Jessie and Thelma are also wrong. Act Mom hums a strange song as she stretches out to get to the cakes in a kitchen cupboard. She can't see them, but she can feel around for her, and she's eager to have one, so she's working pretty it. She finds a cake, covered coconut, raspberry and meringue filled kind known as a snowball, but sees that there is one missing from the package. She's calling Jessie, who seems to be somewhere else in the house. THELMA (Unpacking cupcake.) Jessie, it's around the last snowball, sweetie. Put him on the list, okay? And we don't have Hershey bars anymore, and where's those brittle peanut? think Dawson was back in it. I should put a big mirror on the refrigerator door. That'll keep him away from my goodies, won't it? Did you hear me, darling? (Then more for her.) I don't like it when the coconut falls. Why is coconut going off? (Jessie walks in from her bedroom, carrying a stack of newspapers.) Do we have old towels? THELMAAaCola of you you are! JESSIE (Holds a towel that was on the news stack.) Towels you don't want anymore. (And lifting the mother's snowball shell.) What about the swim towel Loretta gave us? Beach towel, that's the name. Do you want it? (Mom nods no.) - 3 - THELMAcCue you did there? JessieAnd a big piece of plastic like a rubber sheet or something. Garbage bags would do if it were enough. THELMA's making a big mess, Jessie. It's already eight o'clock. JessieMaybe an old blanket or towels I got in a soap box once? THELMAI said don't make a mess. Your hair is pretty black, dear JESSIE (Continue to look for kitchen cabinets, finding two or three more towels to add to her stack.) It's not for my hair, Mom. How about some old pillows anywhere or a foam pillow in a backyard chair would be great. ThelmaYou haven't forgotten what night it is, have you? (Holding his fingernails.) They're all chipped, see? I've been waiting all week, Jess. It's Saturday night, sweetie. JESSIEI know. I got it in the program. THELMA (Moving to the living room.) Do you want me to wash, wash them now or do you want a mess of yourself first? snowball.) We don't have any more. We. Did I say that already? There's more coming tomorrow. I ordered you a whole case. -- 4 -- THELMA (Checking the TV Guide.) A whole case will be old, Jessie. JESSIEe can go in the freezer until you're ready for them. Where's Daddy's gun? THELMAIn the attic. JESSIEWhere in the attic? I watched you all sleep and couldn't find him anywhere. THELMAUna of his shoeboxes, I think. DJESSIEF of shoes. I've already looked. THELMAE good, you didn't look good enough then. It's that box from the ones he was wearing to the hospital. When he died, they told me I could have them back, but I never liked those shoes. JESSIE (Pulling them out of your pocket.) I found the bullets. They were in an old milk. THELMA (As Jessie starts for the gym.) Dawson took the rifle, didn't he? Give me that basket, dear JESSIE (Take the basket for it.) Dawson better not have taken that gun. THELMA (Stop her again.) Now my glasses, please. (Jessie returns to get glasses.) I told him to take those rubber boots, but he said they were for fishing. (Jessie gets for the cleaning spray, and cleans Mom's glasses for her.) - 5 - JESSIEE's too lazy to go up there, Mom. Or maybe he's just smart. That floor isn't very stable. THELMA (Getting a piece of knitting.) It's not a floor at all, honey, it's a blackboard once in a while. Measure this for me. I need 15 cm. JESSIE (As it measures.) Dawson could probably use some of those clothes out there. Someone should have them. You should call the Salvation Army before everything falls on you. 15 cm exactly. THELMAIt's a lot of sure! As long as you don't go there. JESSIE (Turning to go again.) I'm paying attention. THELMA What do you want the gun for, Jess? JESSIE (Don't come back this time. Opening the staircase in the lobby.) Protection. (She sets the ladder as the mother speaks.) THELMAYou takes TV far too seriously, honey. I've never seen a killer in my life. It's too far to come for what's here to steal. I've never seen one. JESSIE (Taking her first step up.) Except Ricky. - 6 - THELMARick is mixed. That's not a crime. JESSIEBreak your hands. I'll be right back. And dry them. Dry your hands until I get back or you won't leave, okay? THElmai thought Dawson told you not to lift those stairs. JESSIE (Going up.) He did it. THELMAI don't like the idea of a gun, Jess. DJESSIE (Call down from the bridge.) Which shoebox, remember? THELMABlack. JESSIECua was black? THELMA The shoes were black. JESSIECare doesn't help much, Mom. THElmai isn't trying to help, sweetie. (No response.) We don't have anything anyone would want, Jessie. I don't even want what we have, Jessie. JESSIE, but neither do I. (Mom now stands up and crosses to stand scale.) THElmaeaa over there before he had a seizure. I can't come and get you. - 7 - JESSIEI know. THELMA, we're going to hand it over to them when they come, is that it? Whatever they want, criminals. THAT's a good idea, Mom. THELMARick will grow out of this and be a very good boy, Jess. But I gotta tell you, I wouldn't want Ricky to know we have a gun in the house. JESSIEHere it is. I found him. IT's something Ricky's going through. Maybe he's with some bad people. It needs some time, sweetie. He'll go back to school or get a job or one day you'll get a call and say he's sorry for all the trouble he's caused and invite you to dinner in one place. It's not for him, it's for me. THElmai didn't think you were going to shoot your own boy, Jessie. I know you felt the need, well, all we felt the need to shoot someone, but we don't. I don't think we need... JESSIE (Interrupt) Your hands aren't washed. Do you want a manicure or not? THELMAYes do, but ... JESSIE (Moving to the chair.) Then wash your hands and stop talking to me about Ricky. The two rings he took were the last valuable things we had, so now he started picking on other people, door to door. I hope they locked him up sometime. I'd hand him over, too, if I knew where he was. JESSIEEvery word. Wash your hands and that's the last time I tell you. (Jessie sits down with the gun and starts cleaning it, pushing the cylinder out, checking to see that the cameras and barrel are empty, then putting some oil on a small patch of cloth and pushing it through the barrel with the push rod that was in the box. The mother goes to the kitchen and wash her hands, according to the instructions, trying not to show her concern about the gun.) THELMAI should have made you bring down that milk carton. Agnes Fletcher sold hers to someone with a flea market for \$40 apiece. JESSIEI turns around and picks him up in a minute. There's a cart wheel there. There's even a churn. I'll take everything if you want. THELMA (Coming now, taking over now) what are you doing? JESSIEBar must be clean, Mom. Old dust, dust gets into it... JESSIEI told you. THELMA (Getting for the gun.) And I told you, we don't have criminals here. JESSIE (Quickly pulling it at her.) And I told you... (Then try to be calm.) The gun is for me. - 9 - THELMAWell you can have it if you want. When I die, you'll get everything anyway. JESSIE (Jessie returns to get glasses.) I told him to take those rubber boots, but he said they were for fishing. I told him to go fishing. (Returning to the couch.) very funny, very funny. JESSIEI are. THELMA (Fast, irritated.) You're not! Don't even say that, Jessie. HOW do you know if I didn't say it? You want to be a. You lie in bed or maybe brush your teeth and hear this... noise in the hallway? THELMAKill yourself. JESSIEI film me. In a few hours. THELMAIt should be time for your medicine. JESSIEA's already got it. THELMAThen what's wrong with you? JESSIEHere's nothing. Have a good time. THELMA You're feeling good. You're going to kill yourself. JESSIE waited until I felt pretty good, actually. THELMA's not making jokes, Jessie. I'm too old for jokes. - 10 - JESSIEIt's not a joke, Mom. (Mother watches for a moment in silence.) THAT gun's no good, you know. He broke it right before he died. He dropped her in the mud one day. JESSIESeems O. K. (Jessie spins the camera, locks the gun and pulls the trigger. The gun is not yet loaded, so all we hear is click on, but it will certainly work. It's also obvious that Jessie knows how to handle a gun. Mom can't talk.) I had Cecil's ready there, just in case I couldn't find that, but I'd rather use Daddy's. THElmaActi bullets are at least 15 years old. JESSIE (Take out another box.) These are from last week. THELMADE where did you get them? JESSIEFreed Dawson store told me about. THELMAAawson! JESSIEIa told her I was worried about the powders. He said he thought it was a good idea. He told me what kind to get. THElmai he had any idea... JESSIEI took it as a compliment. He thought I'd be interested in things. He finished telling me all about the bullets and then he said we should talk like that more often. - 11 - THELMAAnd where was I while this was going on? JESSIEon the phone with Agnes. About the milk carton, I think. Anyway, I asked Dawson if he thought they were going to send me some bullets and he told me he was calling me, because he knew they'd send them if he told them. And he was absolutely right. There they are. THELMAHow could he do that? JESSIE's just trying to help, Mom. THElma And then I told you where the gun is. JESSIE (Smiling, enjoy this joke.) See? Everybody does what they can. THELMAI told you it was for protection! JESSIEI! However, I'm still doing your nails. Want to try the new Chinarybrow color? THELMAWell, I'm calling Dawson right now. We'll see what he has to say about this stunt. JESSIEA Dawson has nothing to do with this anymore. THElmahe's your brother. JESSIE's that's all. THELMA (Gets up, moves to the phone.) Dawson's going to stop this. Yes, he will. He's going to take the gun. - 12 - JESSIEIf you call him, I'm going to have to do it before he gets here. As soon as you turn off the phone, I go into the bedroom and lock the door. THELMAYou won't! It's a crazy conversation, Jessie! DJESSIEDawson will be here in time to help you clean up. Go ahead, call him. Then call the police. Then call Home. Then call Loretta and see if she'll do your nails. (Mom goes straight to the phone and starts to dial, but Jessie is quick, comes up behind her and takes the receiver out of her hand, putting it back down. Jessie, firm and quiet.) I said no. This is private. Dawson's not invited. THELMAJust me. JESSIEI doesn't want anyone here anymore. Just the two of us. If Dawson comes, he'll make me feel bad that I didn't do it 10 years ago. THElmai, I think we'd be better call the doctor. Or what about the ambulance. You like that driver. Know. His name is Timmy? To get you someone to talk to. JESSIE (Returning to her chair.) We're done talking, Mom. It's you. Get. THElMA, are we going to sit like every night in the world and then you're going to kill yourself? Jessie's not responding.) You're going to miss it. (Again, there is no answer.) You'll get to a vegetable. Would you like that? Shoot your car? You know what the doctor said about getting excited. You're going to stick your gun in and have a seizure. - 13 - JESSIE I think I can kill myself, Mom. YOU don't want to kill yourself, Jessie. You're not even mad! (And Jessie smiles, or laughs quietly, and Mom tries a different approach.) People don't really kill themselves, Jessie. No, Mom, it doesn't make sense, unless you're retarded or crazy and you're as normal as them, Jessie, for the most part. We're all afraid to die. JESSIE's not, Mom. I'm cold all the time anyway. THELMA'sta is ridiculous. JESSIE, it's exactly what I want. It's dark and quiet. THELMA'so is the backyard, Jessie! Close your eyes. Stick cotton in your ears. Take a nap! It's quiet in your room. I'm going to leave the TV off all night. JESSIEAdesot quit, I don't know if it's quit. So no one catches me. THELMA You don't know he's dead. It might not be quiet at all. If it's like an alarm clock and you can't wake up to never stop it. JESSIEDead is everyone and everything I ever knew, gone. The dead man is quietly dead. THELMAIt's a sin. You're going to hell. JESSIEUuh-huh. - 14 - THELMAU will be! JESSIEJesus killed herself, if you ask me. THElmaE you're going to hell just because you say that, Jessie, please! JESSIE (Original Surprise.) I didn't know I was thinking about it. THELMAJessie! (Jessie's not answering. Put the loaded gun back in the box and move into the kitchen. But my mom's afraid she's headed to the bedroom. Mom, in panic.) You can't use my towels! They're my towels. I've had them for a long time. I like towels. JESSIEI asked you if you wanted that swim towel and you said you didn't want it. IAnd you can't even use your father's gun. It's mine now. And you can't do it in my house. JESSIEOh come on. THELMANo. You can't do it. I'm not going to let you. The house is in my name. DJESSIEI must go into the bedroom and lock the door. so they don't arrest you for killing me. They'll probably test your hands for gunpowder anyway, but you'll pass. THELMANU in my house! I! I knew you'd behave like this. I wouldn't have told you. - 15 - THELMAHow should I act? Shall I tell you to move on? O.K. of me, sweetie. I might try it. What took you so long? JESSIEThere's no point fighting me for this, that's all. Do you want a cup of coffee? YOUY day is coming, Jessie. Don't you want to know what I got you? JESSIEYou me, Loretta got me a new, pink coat, probably, and Dawson got me new slippers, too small, but they go with the robe, he really says. (Mom can't talk.) Right? (It seems Jessie's right.) I'll be back in a minute. (Jessie takes the box of guns, puts it on top of the stack of towels and garbage bags and takes them to her bedroom. The mother, alone for a moment, goes to the phone, picks up the phone, looks at the bedroom, starts to form and then replaces the receiver in her cradle while Jessie returns to the room. Jessie asks, in silence. They have lived together for so long, there is very rarely no reason for one to wonder what the other was about to do.) THELMAI started, but I didn't. I didn't call him. JESSIEGood. Thank. THELMA (Starting from, a new approach.) What's this about, Jessie? - 16 - JESSIEAabout? (Jessie now starts the next task she had on the program, which is refilling all the candy jars, taking the empty documents out of boxes of chocolates, etc. Mom generally snitches when Jessie does this. Not tonight, though. However, Jessie offers.) THELMAcCue I did? DJESSIENothing. Do you want a caramel? THELMA (Ignoring candy.) You're mad at me. JESSIEI's not a bit. I'm worried about you, but I'm going to do everything I can before I go. We're not going to stay tonight. I made a list of things. THELMAcCue things? DJESSIEHow the washing machine works. Things like that. THELMA You grew up wearing dirty clothes? JESSIE No. THELMAI know the washing machine works. You put the clothes in. You put the soap in. You get it on. Waiting. JESSIEYou'll have something else. You don't just have to wait. THELMAAnything else you find to do you're still waiting mainly. Waiting is the worst part. Waiting is what you pay someone else to do, if you can. -- 17 -- JESSIE (Nod.) O.K. Where do we keep the soap? THELMAI could find him. JESSIEeet? YOU're upset about washing, we can get Loretta to do it. JESSIEOh now, that might be worth staying to see. THELMAE wouldn't in her life, would it? JESSienope. THELMAcCue happened to her? JESSIE thinks she's better than us. She's not. JESSIEThe repair number of the washing machine is on a small card glued on the side of the THElmaLoretta doesn't have to come here anymore. Dawson can leave her at home when she comes. And we won't even see Dawson if it bothers you. Does it bother you? DJESSIESure that yes. Be sure to clean the lint tray every time you use the dryer. But never put on your homemade shoes, it'll melt your feet. THELMAcCue does Dawson, which bothers you? - 18 -- JESSIE tells me Jess like she knows who she's talking to. They always wonder what they do all day. I mean, I wonder about that, but it's my birthday, so it's mine to wonder, not his. THELMA's are just an accident, Jessie. It's nothing personal, honey. They don't even want to be your family, they just are. JESSIEThey know too much. THELMAAbout what? JESSIEThey know things about you, and they taught her before you had the chance to say whether you want them to know or not. They were there when it happened and it doesn't belong to them, it belongs to you, only they understood. Like my mail order bra was delivered to her home. THELMABy accident! JESSIEAll the same ... They opened it. They saw the rose buds on it. Chewy mint? THELMA (Shaking Her Head No.) What do they know about you? I'll tell them never to talk about it again. Is it Ricky or Cecil or does it suit you or your hair falls out or you drink too much coffee or never leave the house or what? JESSIEA doesn't like their words. The grocery account is in Dawson's name when you call. The number is on a whole list of numbers on the back cover of the phone book. - 19 - THELMAWell! Now we're getting somewhere. None of them ever set foot in this house anymore. JESSIE, it's not them. Mother. I wouldn't kill myself just to get rid of them. THELMATake the room when they come, anyway. JESSIEI stays as long as I can. Besides, they're coming to see you. IBecause I stay in the room when I come. JESSIE, it's not them. THELMAThen what is it? DJESSIE (Check the list on her notepad.) The grocerwon won't be delivering on Saturday. And if you want the order on the same day, you have to call before 10. And they won't deliver less than \$15. What I'm doing is telling them what we need and telling them to add cigarettes until it reaches \$15. THElmai's Ricky. You're trying to get to him, Jessie, if I thought I could do this, I would have stayed. THELMA Make him sorry he hurt you, then. That's it, isn't it? UHc hurt me, I hurt him. We're almost even. THELMAYou're going to tell him the killing's okay, with you, you know. You want him to start killing again? There's nothing wrong with that. My mom did it. - 20 - JESSIEOnly a matter of time anyway, Mom. When the call comes, you tell Dawson handle it. THELMAHoney, nothing says these calls are There's going to be a new problem he's going to have. Could you get one that has a job, that he's getting married, or why don't you join the army, wouldn't that be nice? JESSIE if you call Sweet Tooth before you call the grocery store, Susie will take your fudge with the grocery store and it'll all come out together. Make sure you talk to Susie, though. Don't let them put it in a bag like this one, remember? THELMARick my come, you know. What if he calls us? UHc isn't Ricky, Mom. ANYone could call us, Jessie. JESSIENot Saturday night, Mom. THELMAThen just griss it? Are you sick? If your gums swell again, we can take you to the dentist tomorrow morning. JESSIE No. Can you order your medicine or do you want Dawson to do it? I've got a note for him, and I'll add that if you want. YOUr THELMAmI doesn't look good. That's what I thought yesterday. JESSIECare was just grass. I'm not sick. - 21 - THELMAEpilepticis sick, Jessie. JESSIE's not going to kill me. (A pause.) If it were, you wouldn't have to. THELMAI don't have to. JESSIENo, I don't know. That's what I like about her. JESSIEI's not up to you. THELMAJessie! JESSIEI wants to hang a big mark around my neck, like my dad would be in the barn. He went fishing. THELMAIn alike here. JESSIE (Smiles.) Exactly. THELMAI meant here in my house. JESSIEI knows you did it. THELMAA weren't supposed to move back here with me. If you had kept your cottage or found another place when Cecil left you, you would have made at least some new friends. He had a life to lead. He had your own things around you. Give Ricky a place to come and see you. You shouldn't have come here. DJESSIEMaybe. THElMADar I didn't force you, did I? - 22 - JESSIEI f was a mistake, we did it together. You got me. I appreciate that. THELMA You didn't have any business being by yourself right then, but I can see you might want a place of your own. You could be as close or as far as you wanted. A grown woman should... JESSIEMama ... I'm not feeling very well and I have no reason to believe it's going to get any worse. I'm tired. I'm hurt. I'm sad. I feel used. THELMAItirs why? JESSIEI's all. THELMAcCue does that mean? JESSIEI can't say it better. THELMAWell, you're going to have to say it better because I'm not going to leave you alone until you do. What were the other things. Hurt... (Before Jessie can answer.) You had all this ready to tell me, didn't you? Did you write that? How long have you been thinking about this? JESSIEOff and on, ten years. All the time, since Christmas. THELMAcCue happened at Christmas? JESSIENothing. THELMA'so why Christmas? - 23 - JESSIE'sta is. On the nose. (A pause. Mom knows exactly what Jessie means. She was there, after all, Jessie, putting candy bags away.) See where all this is? Red tots in the front, sour balls and horehound mixed together in this one bag. New packages of toffees and licorice right there. THELMAGo back to your list. Are you hurt by what? JESSIE (Mum knows very well.) Mother... THELMAO. K. Sad about what? Nothing sad is happening right now. If it was after the divorce, it would make sense. JESSIE (Look at her list, they open the drawer.) This drawer has everything in it that there's no better place. Extenders, radio batteries, extra lighters, sandpaper, masking tape, elmer glue, pawns, that sort of thing. The traps are under the sink, but call Dawson if you have one and let him do it. THELMA'Sad about what? JESSIEa way things out. THELMA's not pretty good. What things? JESSIEOh, everything from you and me to Red China. - 24 - THELMAI think we can let the Chinese out of this. DJESSIE (Cross back to the living room.) There's extra light bulbs in a box in the hallway closet. And we have a few safety packs in the fuse box. Things are candles and matches at the top of the broom closet, but if the lights go out, call Dawson and stay quiet. But don't open the refrigerator door. Things will stay calm there as long as you keep the door closed. THELMAI asked you a question. JESSIEI read the paper. I don't like things. And they're no better there than here. THElmai you're doing this because of the papers, I can fix this! JESSIEThere's more on TV. THELMA (Television Kicks.) Get it out then! JESSIE, you wouldn't do that. THELMAAPri look at me. JESSIEWhat would you do all day? THELMA (Desperate.) Sing. (Jessie laughs.) And I would. You want to look? I'll sing till morning to keep you alive, Jessie, please! -- 25 -- JESSIENo (Then with affection.) It's a funny idea, though. What are you singing? THELMA (Has no idea to respond to this.) We have a good life here! JESSIE (I'm going back to the kitchen.) I called this morning and canceled the papers, except for Sunday, for your puzzles, you'll still get this one. THELMALet's to get another dog, Jessie! You liked a big dog, didn't you, that king dog, didn't you? JESSIE (Washing hands.) I liked that dog King, yes. THElmai I'm so stupid. He's the one going under the tractor. JESSiewho makes him stupid, not you. THELMATo bring it up. JESSIEI's O. K. Handi-serves and sponges under the sink. THELMAAM could get a new dog and keep it in the house. Dogs are cheap! JESSIE (Now getting great pill jars out of the cabinet.) Not THELMA'something to take care of. JESSIE I had you, Mom. -- 26 -- THELMA (Frenetic starts filling pill bottles.) You're doing too much for me. Can Bottles of pills all day, Jessie, and change the shelf paper and wash the floor when they pass. Look at me. You don't have to do anything else in this house if you don't want to. You don't have to take care of me, Jessie. DJESSIEI knows that. You let me do it so I had something to do, didn't you? THELMA (Achieving this was a mistake.) I'm not doing it as well as you, I just wanted to say if it makes you tired or makes you feel used... JESSIEMama, I know you used to ride the bus. Riding the bus and it's hot and bumpy and crowded and too noisy and more than anything in the world you want to get off and the only reason the world doesn't get off is it still 50 blocks from where you're going? Well, I can go down right now if I want to, because even if I ride another 50 years and get off then, it's the same place when I retire. Whenever I feel like it, I can get off. As soon as I'm tired, it's my station. I've had enough. THELMAYou feel sorry for yourself! JESSIEThe plumber's air is also under the sink. THELMA'Don't have fun! Who promised you you had a good time? Do you think I had a good time? - 27 - JESSIE I think you're pretty happy, yes. You have things you like to do. JESSIECa crochet. THELMAI will teach you to crochet. JESSIEI can't do anything beautiful, Mom. THElmaA'sy good one don't come looking for you, Jessie. You could work some puzzles or put in a garden or go to the store. Let's call a taxi and go to A&P. JESSIEI has been shopping for two weeks already. You won't need toilet paper until Thanksgiving. THELMA (interruption.) You're acting like a kid, Jessie. You're upset and everyone's boring and you have nothing to do and you don't like me and you don't like to go out and you don't like to sit inside and you never talk on the phone and you don't watch TV and you're unhappy and it's your fault. JESSIE's it's time for me to do something about it. THELMA's not like killing yourself. Something like... buying us all the new dishes! I'd love that. Or maybe the doctor would let you get your driver's license now, or I know what to do right now, rearrange the furniture -- 28 -- JESSIEWell that do that, if you want. I always thought that if the TV were somewhere else, you wouldn't have such a glow on it during the day. I'll do whatever you want before I go. THELMA (Seriously scared of these words.) You could get a job! JESSIEI took that phone sales job and I didn't even make enough money to pay the phone bill, and I tried to work at the hotel shop at the hospital and they said that I made people very uncomfortable smiling at them the way I did. THELMAYou can hold books. You kept your father's books. JESSIEDar no one checked them. THELMAWhen he died, they checked them out. That's when they took my books. IBecause without him, there was no business, Jessie! JESSIE (Put pill bottles away now.) You know I couldn't work. There's nothing I can do. I've never been around people all my life until I was in the hospital. I could have a crisis anytime. What good would a job do? The kind of job I could find would make me feel worse. THELMAJessie! - 29 - JESSIEI's true! THELMAIt's what you think is true! JESSIE (Hit by the clarity of that.) Yes, that's right. It's what I think is true. THELMA (Sterist.) But there's nothing I can do about it! JESSIE (Quietly.) Not. It can't be. (The mother collapses, if not physically, at least emotionally.) And there's nothing I can do about my life, changing it, making it better, making me feel better. I like it better, make it work. But I can stop him. Turn it off, turn it off like the radio when I don't want to listen to anything. It's all I really have that belongs to me and I'm going to tell you what's going on with it, and it's going to stop. And I'm going to stop it. So. Let's have some fun. THELMAAve a good time. JESSIEWe can't keep shacking all night. I mean, I could ask you things I've always wanted to know and you could make me some hot chocolate. The old way. THELMA (In Despair.) Cocoa is needed, Jessie. DJESSIE (Get it out of the cabinet.) I bought cocoa, Mom. And I'd like to have a caramelized apple and make your nails. - 30 - THELMA You didn't eat a dinner bite. JESSIE. THELMADE of course not. I mean, (smiling a little.) of course, you can have a caramel apple. JESSIEI thought I could. THELMAI makes the best caramel apples in the world. JESSIEI know you know. And you don't get cocoa like mine anymore. JESSIett takes time, I know, but... THELMA Salt is the trick. JESSIE'Trouble and everything. THELMA (Backing away towards the stove.) It's no problem. What problems? Put it in the pan and mix it. All right, let's go. Good. Caramelized apples. Cocoa. O. K. (Jessie goes to the counter to get her cigarettes back while mom looks for the right pan. There are short smiles and maybe the mother cleans her throat. We have a truce, for now. An authentic one, but still restless. Jessie, who has been constantly moving from the beginning, now seems pleased to stand. Mom starts looking for a pan to make cocoa, getting all the pans in the cupboards in the process. Looks like she's making the mess on purpose, so Jessie's going to have to shut them down again. Mom is buying time, or trying to, and entertaining.) - 31 - JESSIEAre you talking to Agnes today? THElmaShe's calling me from a pay phone this week. Only God knows why. It has a perfectly good trimline at home. JESSIE Well, do you feel it? THELMAcCue is she one day, Jessie? Nuts. IIs Jessie she really crazy or just stupid? THELMANo, she's very crazy. He was probably using his pay phone because he had another problem with the fire at home. JESSIEMother ... THELMA are serious! Agnes Fletcher burned down all the house she lived in. Eight fires and she must have a new one any day. JESSIE Not! THELMA (Really enjoy it now.) It wouldn't surprise me at all. JESSIE Why didn't you tell me that earlier? Why isn't she locked up somewhere? THELMABecause no one was hurt. I'm guessing. Agnes woke up every body to watch the fires as soon as she put them in. JESSIE'sta is thoughtful, I think. - 32 - THELMAO once she set the porch chairs and served the lemonade. JESSIE (Shaking her head.) The real reason? THElMA The houses they lived in, you knew they were going to fall anyway, so why wait, that's all I could do about that. Agnes likes to feel an accomplishment. JESSIE (Think about it for a minute.) Good for her. THELMA (Finding the pan she wants.) Why are you asking about Agnes? A cup or two? JESSIEOne. She's your friend. No marshmallows. THELMA (Getting milk, etc.) You must have marshmallows. That's the old way, Jess. Two or three? Three's better. JESSIEThree then. Is her whole house burning? Her clothes and pillows and everything? I'm not sure I believe that. THELMAWhen she was a girl, Jess, not now. A long time ago. But he still has it in him, I'm sure of it. JESSIEe wouldn't burn down her house right now. Where would he go? He can't get Buster to build him a new one, he's dead. Was able to burn it? - 33 - THELMAE interesting, though if she did. You never know. AND you know, Mom. He wouldn't. THELMA (Forced to admit, but reluctant.) I don't think so. Why is he wearing all those whistles around his neck? THELMAWhy does a house full of birds have? JESSIEI didn't know she had a house full of birds! THELMAWell, she does. And she says I'm following her home. I know for a fact he's still paying for the last parrot he bought. You have to keep your life full, she says. He says a lot of crap. (Jessie laughs, mom goes on, convinced she's getting somewhere.) It's all okra eats. You can't just eat okra with two meals a day and expect to get rid of the balsams. She's gone crazy. JESSIEE really eats okra twice a day? Where does he get it in winter? THELMAWell, she eats a lot. Maybe not two meals, but... JESSIEMore than an ordinary person. THELMA (Start to get angry.) I don't know how much okra an ordinary person eats. - 34 - JESSIEDo you know how much Agnes okra eats? THELMANo. JESSIEHow many birds does she have? THELMATwo. JESSIEThen what are whistles for? THELMAEie are not real. Just some little plastic on a necklace she won bingo and I just told you about it because I thought I might get a laugh at you for once, even if it wasn't the truth, Jessie. Things don't have to be true to talk about them. JESSIEWhy won't she come here? (Mom is suddenly quiet, but cocoa and milk are in the pan now, so light the stove and start shaking.) THELMAWell, now, what a good idea. We should have taken more cocoa. Cocoa is perfect. JESSIEExcept you don't like milk. THELMA (Another attempt, but not as energetic.) I hate milk. It covers your neck as badly as okra. Something really disgusting about it. JESSIE's because of me, isn't it? THELMANo, Jess. DJESSIEYes, Mom. - 35 - THELMAO. K. yes, then, but she's crazy. She's as crazy as they are. She's crazy. JESSIEWhat exactly is it? Did I say anything once? Or did he see me in crisis and fear that I might have another one if he came or what? THELMAI guess. JESSIEYou're what? What did he say? You must have given yourself a reason. YOUr THELMA are cold. JESSIEWhat difference does it make? THELMAcCa corpse, she says, and I'll be one pretty soon so it is. JESSIE'sta is crazy. THELMA'sta is Agnes. Jessie shook the hand of death and I can't take the risk of catching. Thelma, so I'm not coming and you can understand it or not, but I'm not coming. I'll come down the alley, but that's all I can do. JESSIE (Laughing, relieved.) I thought he didn't like me! He's afraid of me! How about this! I'm scared of myself. THELMAI could get her to come here, Jessie. I could call her right now and she could bring the birds and come visit. I didn't know you ever thought of her. He owes me one. - 36 - JESSIENo, it's okay. I wondered about it. When I'm in the hospital, does she come here? THElma Her kitchen is just a little thing. When he comes here, it feels like... (Toning it down a bit.) We all like a stage change, don't we? JESSIE (Game along.) Of course I do. Besides, there are no birds to sink. THELMAI I hate those birds. Say I don't understand them. What's to understand about birds? JESSiede what agnes likes, for one thing. Why am I staying with her when she might be out with the other birds. How much water they need. What their singing means. Flies. What they think Agnes is. THELMAWhy do you need to know so much about things, Jessie? There are so many things I could ever see. JESSIethat you could ever figure out, you mean. You shouldn't have lied to me about Agnes. THELMAI didn't lie. You've never asked before! JESSIEYou lied about burning all the houses and how many birds he has and how much okra eat and why not come here. If I have to keep getting the truth out of you, it's going to take all night. - 37 - THELMAAcCue what's okay with me. I'm not sleepy. JESSIEMama ... THELMAEverything right. Ask me what you want. Here. (And they come to an uncomfortable stop, as cocoa is ready and mom pours in the cups Jessie has ready.) JESSIE (As mom takes the first sip.) Did you love my father? THELMANo. JESSIE (Delighted that Mom understands the rules better than she.) I didn't think so. Where you really 15 when you married him? THELMA The way he said it? I'm sitting in the mud, he's coming along, he's pulling me into the kitchen, she's been there ever since. JESSIEYes. THELMANo. It was a big fat lie, everything. He just thought it was funnier that way. Oh, my God, this milk here. JESSIE Cocoa helps. THELMA (Thank you for agreeing on this, at least.) It's not enough, is it? You can still taste it, can't you? DJESSIEYeah, it's pretty bad. I thought my memory was bad, but it's not. It's milk, all right. - 38 - THELMAIt's a real waste of chocolate. You don't have to finish it. JESSIE (Put her cup down.) Thank you, though. THELMAI should have known he would not succeed. I knew you wouldn't like it. You never liked it. YOU never loved him or did anything and you stopped loving him or what? THELMAEi felt sorry for me. He wanted a simple country woman and that's what he married and then he held against me the rest of my life as I would have had to change and surprise him in some way. Like I'd remember that one day he was sitting on the porch and I told him to get a shirt and he walked in and took one and then he said, very quiet, but in the end, you're right. Thelma, did I take you? If God wanted people to walk around without clothes, he would have born that way. JESSIE (Sees Mom's Pain.) He didn't mean anything about it, Mom. THElmaHe didn't say a word he didn't have to, Jessie. That was probably all he's been telling me all day, Jessie. So if he said it, there was something to it, but I didn't realize that one out. What did that mean? JESSIEI doesn't know. I liked him better than you, but I didn't know him any better. - 39 - THELMAHOh I Could Love It, Jessie. I didn't have anything he wanted. (Jessie's not responding.) He got his share, though. You loved him enough for both of us. You followed him like a... Jessie, all man did was cultivate and stand... and try to think of someone to sell the farm to. JESSIEOr make me a friend out of pipe cleaning and sit back and smile like the man with the stick about to dance and I didn't want to get hard about it. Or stay with a sick cow all night and leave me a chain of sleepy elephants on my bed in the morning. THELMAOR just sit. DJESSIEI liked to stay. Great old faded blue man seat. Quiet. THELMAAgnes gets more talk from her birds than I got from you two. He could have had that fishing mark around his neck in that chair. I saw him staring at the water. I saw him looking at the weather. I got where I could practically see the boat myself. But you, you knew what he was thinking and you're going to tell me. JESSIEI doesn't know, Mom! His life, I think. His corn. His boots. Ne. Things. Know. I don't know, Jessie! You had those little quiet conversations after dinner every night. What were you talking about in whispers? - 40 - JESSIEWasn't whispering, you were just in the whole room. THELMAcCue you talked about? JESSIeltalked about why black socks are warmer than blue socks. Is there anything you can tell Mom? You were jealous because I'd rather talk to him than do the dishes with you. THELMA was jealous because you'd rather talk to him than anything! JESSIE reaches across the table for the little clock and starts to wind it.) If I had died in his place, I wouldn't have taken you that's how I did it. JESSIEI would not have expected to do so. THELMAATanci what would you have done? JESSIEVine visit. THELMAOh I see. He died and he got you stuck with me and you're upset about it. JESSIE (I get up from the table.) They're out here. He didn't want to. I shouldn't have come here. We've been through this before. THElmasaa maybe you think that if I loved him more, or not at all, he would still be alive. JESSIEI never thought about it. THElMAEL was bad for you, Jessie, don't joke about it. He said you were a runt and he said it from the day you were born and said you didn't stand a chance. -- 41 -- JESSIE (Take the can of sugar and start refilling the sugar bowl.) I know he loved me. THELMAcCue what if he did? It didn't change anything. I shouldn't have done it. THELMAEL never went fishing. Never. His box was full of chewing tobacco and all he did was drive up to the lake and sit in the car. Dawson told me. And Bennie from the bait shop told Dawson. They all laughed about it. And he was coming back from fishing and all he had to show was... a whole family of pipe cleaning -- chickens, pigs, a dog with a bad foot -- was creepy weird. I got sick of looking at them, and I hid his pipe cleaning a few times, but he always had more somewhere. JESSIE thought it would be better for you after she died. You'd be interested in things. Breathe better. Change somehow. THELMAIn what? Queen? An official in a shoe store? Why would I? Because he said so? (Jessie nods.) Well, I'm not here for his entertainment and I'm not here for yours either, Jessie. I don't know what I'm here for, but I don't think about it anymore. (Realizing what all this means.) But I bet you. You wouldn't have killed yourself if he was still alive. It's a good thing to figure out, isn't it? -- 42 -- JESSIE (Filling the honey jar now.) That's not true. THELMAOh right? Then why were you asking about him? Why did you want to know if I love him? JESSIEI didn't think you did it, that's all. THELMAFine then. You were right. Are you feeling better now? JESSIE (Clean the jar with honey carefully.) It feels good to be right. Thelma didn't matter if I loved him. It didn't matter to me or to him, and that doesn't mean we didn't get along. It wasn't important. We didn't talk about it. (Sweeping the vessels on the cabinet.) Take all these pots to the porch! JESSIE For what? THELMA leave me this pan. (She jerks open silverware drawer.) Bring me a knife, a fork, a large spoon and the can opener and put them where I can get them. (Start throwing knives and forks into one of the pans.) DJESSIEDon't do that! I just straightened that drawer! THELMA (Throw the pan in the sink.) And toss all the plates and glasses. I'll use paper. Loretta can have what she wants and Dawson can sell the rest. What are you doing? THELMAI won't cook. I never liked it anyway. I like candy. Wrapped in plastic or coming in bags. And tuna. I like the tone. I'll eat tuna, thank you. JESSIE (Removing the pan from the sink.) What if you want to make apple butter? You can't make apple butter in that little pan. What if you leave carrots on cooking and burn that pan? THELMAI doesn't like carrots. JESSIEWhat happens if the stabberies are good this year and you want to go picking with Agnes. THElmai will tell him to bring a pan. You said you'd do whatever I wanted! I don't want a bunch of pans to clutter my closets I can't get to anyway. Throw them out. Every last one. JESSIE (Collection of pots.) I'm putting them all back, I'm not taking them to the porch. If you want them, they'll be here. You're going to bend over and take it, like you're going to have the cocoa one. And if someone else comes here to cook, they'll have something to cook in, and that's it! THELMAWho's going to come and cook here? DJESSIEAgnes. - 44 - THELMAIn my pots. Not in your life. JESSIEThere's no reason why you two shouldn't live here together. It would be cheaper for both of us and someone to talk to. And if the birds bother you, well, one day when Agnes comes out to get her hair done, you could take them all for a walk! THELMA (As Jessie straightens the silverware.) That's why you're bugging me about Agnes. You think you can rest easy if you bring me a new babysitter. I don't want to live with Agnes. I barely want to talk to Agnes. He's just around. We're just going back, that's all. I'm not letting Agnes near this place. You don't get off that easy. JESSIEO. K. Then. It's just something to think about. THELMAI doesn't like things to think about. I like things to go on! DJESSIE (Close the silverware drawer.) I want to know what Daddy told you the night he died. You came out of his room and said I could wait with him if I wanted, but you're going to look at Gunsnoke. What did he tell you? He had nothing to say to me, Jessie. That was why I left. He didn't say anything. It was his last chance not to talk to me and he made the most of it. -- 45 -- JESSIE (After a moment.) I'm sorry you didn't love him. I feel sorry for you. I mean. He seemed like a nice man. THELMA (While Jessie goes to the fridge.) Are you ready for your apple now? JESSIE'Soon that we're done here. Mom, don't worry. YOU won't like the apple either. It'll be just like cocoa. You didn't like eating at all, did you? Any! What have you been living with all these years, toothpaste? JESSIE (As she starts to clean the refrigerator.) Now you know that the milkman comes on Wednesdays and Saturdays and leaves the order empty in an egg box and you give Dawson his bills once a month. THELMAmai do that orangeada? JESSIEI's not orange, it's just orange. THELMAI's going to take something. I thought I wasn't doing this anymore. You stopped ordering it. JESSIEYou have to drink milk. THELMAI'm not. I'm not. That hot chocolate was the last one. Hate. JESSIE (Getting trash under the sink.) I told them to deliver a liter a week, no

He didn't know what was in you. Maybe he can see. different now, but you won't know that until you go see it. Or call him! right now! He might be home. - 52 - JESSIEAnd what to say? Nothing's changed, Cecil, I'd like to look at you, if you don't mind? Not. She loved me, Mom. Didn't know things were falling around me so they do it. I think he did the right thing. He just gave him another chance, that's all. I told him I'd leave Ricky and you and everything I love here if he took me with him, but he couldn't, and I understand that. (A pause.) I wrote the note I showed you. I wrote it. Not Cecil. I said I'm sorry, Jessie, I can't fix everything for you. I said I'd always love myself, not Cecil. But that's how it felt. ☐Then he should have taken you with him! ☐JESSIE (Raising the garbage bag she filled.) Mom, you don't pack your trash when you move. ☐You're not going to call yourself trash, Jessie. ☐JESSIE (Taking the bag to the big trash can.) Just a way of saying it, Mom. I'm just thinking about my list, that's all. (Opening can, putting the trash in, then securing the cover.) Well, a little more than that. I was trying to say it's okay that Cecil left. It was... a relief in a way. I was never what he wanted to see, so it was better when he wasn't looking at me all the time. - 53 - THELMAI will make the apple now. ☐JESSIENo thanks. You take the manicure and I'll be right back. (Jessie ties the large garbage bag into the box and replaces the small garbage bag under the sink, all the time desperately trying to regain her composure. The mother looks, from a distance, his hand reaches unconsciously on the phone. Then he's got a better idea. Or rather she thinks of the only thing left and is willing to try it. Maybe she's even convinced it will work.) ☐THELMAJessie, I think your father had little... JESSIE (Interrupting it.) Garbage night is Tuesday. Tell him as late as you can. Davis' dogs get into it if you don't. (Now, replacing the garbage bag in the can under the sink.) And keep ordering the heavy black bags. It's not paid to buy the cheap ones. And I have all the ties here with the hammers and all that. Take them out of the box as soon as you open a new one and put them in this drawer. They'll get lost if you don't and the rubber bands or something else won't work. ☐Thelmai must have had seizures, too. I think he sat down and had little seizures. I read this a long time ago in a magazine, how little it fits going, just small blackouts where maybe their eyes don't even close and people just call them spells of thought. - 54 - JESSIE (Getting slipcover out the laundry basket.) I don't think you want this manicure I've been looking forward to. I washed this cover for the couch, but it's going to take us both to put it back. I know that's it. That's how it was. The magazine said that some people don't even know they had one. ☐JessieDaddy would have known if she'd had seizures, Mom. ☐ThelmaMother in this story has kept track of her seizures and has had 80,000 of them in the last 11 years. ☐JESSIEThere when you wash this lid, it'll dry better if you put it wet. ☐THELMAJessie, listen to what I'm saying. This lady had between five and five hundred seizures a day and lasted maybe 15 seconds each, so of her life, she'd only lost about two weeks in total and she had a full-time secretary job and an IQ of 120. ☐JESSIE (Must be amused by the mother's approach.) You want to talk about seizures, don't you? ☐THELMAYes. Yes. I mean... JESSIE (Interruption.) Most of the time I didn't even know I had one, I just woke up with different clothes feeling like I was being run over. Sometimes I feel like I'm starting to turn around or hear myself screaming. And sometimes there's this stupid feeling a little bit before it, but if the TV's on, well, it's easy to miss. (As Jessie and Mom replace the lid sliding on the couch and The Afghan on the chair, the physical fight somehow mirrors the emotional in conversation.) - 55 - THELMAI can tell when you're about to have one. Your eyes are getting so big! But Jessie, you didn't... JESSIE (Taking this.) looks? Crises. ☐THELMA (Reluctant.) Different every time, Jess. ☐JESSIEO. K. Pick one, then. A good one. I think I want to know now. ☐There's not much to say. You just... I crumple, in a pile, like a puppet and someone cuts the strings at once, or like the firing squad in a Mexican movie, just slips on the wall, you know. You don't know what's going on? can you not know what's going on? ☐Jessie's busy. ☐TheLMACare isn't funny. ☐JESSIEI don't laugh. My head turns and Falls and then what? ☐THELMAWell, your chest tightens and comes out and you talk like you're warm, you suck air in and out like you can't breathe. ☐JESSIEDo it for me. Give the sound to me. ☐THELMAI won't be. ☐Jessieyeah. I felt like it could be. - 56 - Your THELMACura bites down and I'm going to get your tongue out of the way quickly so you don't bite. ☐Jessieor you. And I bite you, don't I? ☐THELMAM you once caught very well. I had to get a tetanus! But I know what to look at now. Then you got bruised and the jerks started. Like I'm sitting there and I'm stinging you with a cattle prod or you're sticking your finger in an outlet as fast as you can. ☐JESSIE Sparkling like a crazy dog all the time. ☐Thelmal'ts bubbling, Jess, not foam as the overflowed washing machine, for God's sake, is bubbling like a baby spitting up. I'm just going to get a damp cloth, that's all. And then the jerks slow down and get wet and it's over. Two Tops. ☐JessieHow do I get to bed? ☐THELMAHow do you think? ☐Jessie's too heavy for you right now. You're doing it? ☐Thelmai call Dawson. But I'll clean you up before he gets here and make him leave before you wake up. ☐You could leave me on the floor. ☐Thelmai you want to wake up in a nice place, okay? (Then make a real effort.) But Jessie, and that's why I brought it up! You haven't had a seizure in a year. A whole year, you realize that? - 57 - JESSIEYeah, his phenobarb about right now, I guess. ☐THELMATu bet it is. You may never have another one! You might be through with it forever! ☐JESSIE Could be. THELMAYou you are. I know you are! ☐JESSIEI am definitely fine. I really am. Double vision is gone and my gums don't swell. No rashes or anything. I feel just as good I've felt in my life. I even feel like worrying or getting crazy and I'm not afraid it'll start a match if I do. I'm just moving on. ☐THELMAOf course you do! You can even yell at me if you want. I can take it. You don't have to act like you're visiting here, Jessie. This is your house, too. ☐JessieThe best part is I got my memory back. ☐Your THELMAMie was always good. When you couldn't remember things? You always remind me what... jessiebecause I made lists for everything. But now, I remember what things mean on my lists. I see dish towels and I used to wonder if I should have washed them, bought them or looked for them because I can't remember where I put them after I washed them, but now I know it means packing them, they're a gift for Loretta's birthday. -- 58 -- THELMA (Finished with the couch now.) And you went looking for your lists, I noticed that. You always know where I am now! (Then suddenly worried.) Loretta's birthday isn't coming, is it? ☐JESSIEI has made a list of all birthdays for you. I put yours on you, and I put yours on it. (A little smile.) So you can call Loretta and remind her. ☐TheLMALet takes Loretta to Howard Johnson and takes those fried clams. I know you like that roll of clams. ☐JESSIE (A slight pause.) I'm not going to be here, Mom. ☐THELMACe we talked about? You'll be here. You're fine, Jessie. You're starting over. You said it yourself. You remember things and... JESSIEI won't be here. If I'd ever had a year like this, to think straight, by now, I'd be gone by now. ☐THELMA (Not advocating, ordering.) No, Jessie. ☐JESSIE (Folding the rest of the laundry,) Oh, yes, Mom. Once I started to remember, I could see what everything added up to. ☐THELMAConcits are over! - 59 -- JESSIEIt's not the seizures, Mom. ☐TheLMAThen i'm to give them to you, but I didn't! ☐JessieIt's not a crisis! You said it yourself, the medicine takes care of seizures. ☐THELMA (interruption.) Your. He gave you those seizures, Jessie. He gave it to you like green eyes and straight hair. It's not my fault! ☐JessieAnd what if she had little seizures? It's not inherited. I fell off my horse. It was an accident. ☐ThelmaCal wasn't the first time, Jessie. You had a seizure when you were five. ☐JESSIEI didn't. THELMAYou did! You were eating a popsicle and you went downstairs. He gave it to you. It's his fault, not mine. ☐JessieWell, you took the time to tell me. ☐TheLMAHow do you say that to a five-year-old? ☐JessieWhat did the doctor say? ☐THELMAHe said kids have them all the time. He said there was nothing to do but wait for another. ☐Jessiedar, I didn't have another one. (Now there is a real silence.) Are you telling me that I had seizures all the time when I was a kid and you just told me that I fell or something and that it wasn't until I had fit when Cecil was looking for that disturbed someone to find out what the problem was with me? - 60 - THELMA wasn't all the time, Jessie, and they changed when you started school, more like your dad. Oh, that's been some swell time, sitting here with you two turning and off like bulbs some nights. ☐JESSIE How many seizures have I had? ☐THELMAYou never hurt yourself. I didn't let you out of my sight. I got you every time. ☐Jessiedar, you didn't tell anyone. ☐ThelmaJessie told your business. ☐Jessie, you were ashamed. ☐THELMAI didn't want anyone to know. Least of all you. ☐JESSIELeast of all, I. Yes, of course. It was mine to know, Mom, not yours. Did Dad know? ☐THELMAHe thought you were... You fell a lot. That's what he thought. You were careless. Or maybe he thought I beat you. I don't know what he was thinking. He didn't think about it. ☐Jessiebecause you didn't tell her! ☐If I told him about you, I'd have to tell him about it! ☐JESSIEA doesn't like that. I don't like it at all. ☐THELMAI didn't think you'd like it. That's why I didn't tell you. - 61 -- JESSIEI'd known I was epileptic, Mom, I wouldn't have hidden a horse. THELMAFace you feel like a freak, is that what I should have done? ☐JESSIE Just take the manicure tray and sit down! ☐THELMA (Throwing it to the floor.) I don't want a manicure! ☐JessieDoesn't look like you, no. ☐If you say you didn't, you didn't. ☐THELMA (Starts to decompose.) Maybe I fed you something wrong. Maybe you had a fever some time and I didn't know it fast enough. Maybe it's a punishment. ☐Jessie for what? ☐THELMAI don't know. Because of what I felt for your father. Because I didn't want any more kids. Because I smoked too much or Didn't eat well when I was carrying you. There must be something I did. ☐JESSIENo. It's just a disease, not a curse. Epilepsy means nothing. It just is. ☐THELMAI'm Talking about the seizures here, Jessie! I'm talking about this murder. I have to be the one who's going on here. You wouldn't have done this if it wasn't. I didn't tell you anything or marry you to the wrong guy or I took you and I let your life get rid of you or all that. I don't know what I did, but I did, I know. It's all my fault, Jessie, but I don't know what to do now! -- 62 -- JESSIE (Exasperated to have to say this again.) It has nothing to do with you! ☐Everything you do has to do with me, Jessie. There's nothing you can do, wash your face or cut your finger without doing it to me. That's right! You might as well kill me as you do, Jessie, it's the same thing. This has to do with me, Jessie. ☐JessieThen what happens if not! What if it has everything to do with you! If you're all I have and you're not enough? What if I could take the rest if I didn't have you here? What if the only way to get rid of you is to kill myself? What if it is? I can still do it! ☐THELMA (In Desperate Tears.) Don't leave me, Jessie! (Jessie stays for a moment, then returns for the bedroom.) Not! (Mom grabs her arm.) ☐JESSIE (Carefully take your arm away.) I have a box of things I want people to have. I'm going to get it for you. You... Rest for a minute. (And Jessie's gone and Mom's headed for the phone, but she can't even pick up the phone this time, and instead, she bends over to clean the bottles that spilled out of the tray. Jessie returns carrying a box in which food was delivered. It probably says Hershey Kisses or Starkist Tuna. Mom is still down on the floor cleaning up, hoping that maybe if she just makes it look pretty nice, Jessie will stay.) - 63 - THELMAJessie, can I live here without you? I need you! You should tell me to stand up straight and tell you how good I look in my pink dress and drink my milk. You should go hang up so I know we're safe overnight, and when I wake up, you should be there making coffee and watching me get older every day, and you should help me die when the time comes. I can't do this on my own, Jessie. I'm not like you, Jessie. I hate silence and I don't want to die and I don't want you to leave, Jessie. Can... (You have to stop for a moment.) to wake up every day knowing that you have to kill yourself so it doesn't hurt anymore, and I've been here all along and I haven't even seen it. And then you gave me this chance to make it better, to convince you to stay alive, and I couldn't do it. ☐Jessie told you just to explain, so you don't blame yourself, so you don't feel bad. You couldn't say anything to change my mind. I didn't want you to save me. I just wanted you to know. ☐THELMAStay with just a little more. Just a few years. I don't have that much to do anymore, Jessie. And as soon as I die, you can do whatever you want. Maybe with me gone, you'll have all the peace you want, right here in the house. And maybe one day you'll put some begonias up the ride and just get the rain right for them all summer. And Ricky's going to get married by then and bring your grandkids and you can sneak them a candy when their dad doesn't look and then he'll be very happy when they go home and let you shut up again. - 64 - JESSIEYou don't see, Mom, everything I do ends like this. Could I believe you'd understand? Could I believe you'd like a manicure? Could we hold hands for an hour and then I could shoot myself? I'm sorry about tonight, Mom, but that's exactly why I'm doing it. ☐JESSIEI knows that. So it's just a matter where I'd rather be. ☐THELMALook, maybe I can't think about what you should do, but that doesn't mean there's something that would help. Find it yourself. Think about it. You can keep trying. You can be brave and try harder. You don't have to give up! ☐JESSIEI I'm not giving up! That's the other thing I'm trying to do. And I'm sure there are other things that might work, but it might not work. I need something that works. This is going to work. That's why I chose him. ☐THELMADar something could happen. Something that could change everything. Who knows what it might be, but it might be worth waiting for! (Jessie's not responding.) Try another two weeks. We could have more discussions than tonight. ☐JESSIENo, Mama. - 65 - THELMAI will pay more attention to you. Tell the truth when you ask me. Let me tell you a word. ☐JESSIENo, Mama! We wouldn't have any more discussions like tonight, because the next part made the last part so good, Mom. No, Mom. That's my opinion. So I say what I thought about everything and say no. To Dawson and Loretta and the Red Chinese and Epilepsy and Ricky and Cecil and you. And me. And hope. I say no! (Then go to Mom's on the couch.) Let me go easy, Mom. ☐TheLMAHow can I let you go? ☐JessieYou can because you have to. That's what you've always done. ☐THELMAYou are my child! ☐JESSIEI are what happened to your child. (Mum can't answer.) I found an old picture of myself. And it was someone else, not me. There was someone pink and fat who had never heard of illness or loneliness, someone who cried and fed, and stood up and was held and hit, but did not hurt anyone, and slept whenever he wanted, just closing his eyes. Someone who mainly just put up there and laughed at the colors waving around her head and chewed on a polka-dot whale and found himself knowing someone new trick almost every day and over and drooled on the sheet and felt my hand pulling my duvet back over me. That's who I started and this is the one that left. (There is no self-pity here.) That's what this is all about. It's someone I lost, it's mine. Who I've never been. Or who I tried to be and didn't get there. Someone I've never waiting for and never came. And he never will. So, see, it doesn't matter what else happens in the world or in this house, even. I'm what was worth waiting for and I didn't. Me... that could have made a difference to me... I'm not going to show up, so there's no reason to stay, except to keep you company, and that's... not reason enough because I'm not... very good company. (A pause.) I have I. - 66 - THELMA (Knowing that she must tell the truth.) Not. And neither do I. JESSIEI didn't have this weird thought, well, maybe it's not that weird. Anyway, after Christmas, after I decided to do this, I would sometimes wonder what could keep me here, what would be worth staying for, and you know what it was? It was maybe if it was something I really liked, it would be maybe if I really liked rice pudding or cornflakes for breakfast or something that might be enough. THELMARice pudding is good. JESSIENot for me. ThelmaAnd aren't you afraid? JessieFread why? ThelmaI'm afraid of her, for me, I mean. When my time comes. I know it's coming, but... JESSIEYou don't know when. Like in a horror movie. THELMAYeah, sneaking up on me like a killer on the loose, hiding in the backyard just waiting for me to have my hands full in a day and I should protect myself anyway, when I don't know the looks and I don't know the calls coming time me like this or whether it will hurt or take a very long time or what it doesn't do before it happens. - 67 - JESSIEA you still have plenty of time. THELMAI forget for what, right now. JessieFor whatever happens, I don't know. For the rest of your life. For Agnes burning down one more house or Dawson losing her hair or... THELMA (Fast.) Jessie, what was said? I can't just sit here and say O.K., kill yourself if you want. JESSIESure you can. You just did. Say it again. THELMA (Really scared.) Jessie, please! (Quiet horror.) You dare! (Furious.) You dare! Do you think you can leave anytime you want and watch TV here? No, you can't, Jessie. You make me feel like a fool because I'm alive, child and you're wrong! I love it here, and I'm going to stay here until they make me leave, until they drag me screaming, and I mean screaming in the grave, and you're really smart to get away with it before that, because, honey, you've never heard such a noise in your life. (Jessie's coming back.) Who am I talking to? You're already gone, haven't you? I'm looking through you! I can't stop you because you're already gone! I think you think everyone will about you now! I think you think that's going to confuse them. yes, since Christmas, you've laughed at yourself and you thought, boy, everyone's going to have a surprise. No one's going to be surprised, honey. He's just like you. Do it the hard way. It's my girl. (Jessie gets up and goes into the kitchen, but Mom follows her.) Do you know who they're going to be sorry for? Me! How about this! Not you, me! They're going to be ashamed of you. Shame on you! If anyone asks Dawson about this, he'll change the subject as soon as he can. He's going to talk about how much he has to pay to park his car these days. - 68 - JESSIE Leave me alone. THELMAI'ts the truth! JESSIEI should have given you a note! THELMA (Screaming.) Yes! (Then, suddenly, understanding what she said, almost paralyzed by the thought of her, she slowly turns to face Jessie, almost whispering.) Not. No, I... You may not have thought about all the things you said. JessieIt's O.K., Mom. (And the mother is also unconsciously from the emotional devastation of these last few moments. She sits at the kitchen table, wounded and angry and so desperate. But she seems almost numb. She is so far beyond what is known as pain that she is virtually untouchable and Jessie knows this, and speaks quietly, watching for signs of recovery. Wash your hands in the sink.) I remember you liked the preacher who made Dad's, so if you want to ask him to do the job, it's okay with me. THELMA (Not an answer, just a word.) what. JESSIE (Putting on the hand lotion as she speaks.) And choose some songs you like or let Agnes choose, she will know exactly which one. I cleaned the dress you wore to my dad's. You looked really good in this. - 69 - THELMAI I don't remember, dear JESSIEAnd it won't be so bad once your friends start coming to the funeral home. You'll probably see people you haven't seen in years, but I've been thinking about what I should say to you over this nervous part when you first come in THELMA (Simply repeating.) JessieI'm going to see their flowers, they'd love that. And when I say, I'm sorry, Thelma, you say, I appreciate you coming, Connie. And then ask their garden was this summer or what they're doing for Thanksgiving or how their kids... THELMAI I don't think I should ask about their children. I'll talk about what you have on, which is always good. And I'll have some crochet working with me. JessicaSi Agnes will be there, so you may not have to talk at all. TheLMAMaybe if Connie Richards comes, I can get her to tell me where she got that Irish wire, she calls it. I know it doesn't come from Ireland. I think it only comes with a green wrapper. JESSIEAnd be sure to invite enough people home afterwards so that you get enough food feed them all and have some left for you. But don't let anyone take anything home, especially Loretta. - 70 - THELMAI Loretta will receive all food set, honey. It's only fair that we let her drink macaroni or something. ☐JESSIENo, Mama. You have to be more selfish from now on. (Sitting down now with Mom.) Someone has to ask you why I did it and you say you don't know. That you loved me and you know that I loved you and I sat tonight like every night of our lives and then I came and I kissed you and I said, Night, Mom, and you heard me pushing my bedroom door and the next thing you heard was the gunshot. And whatever the reasons I had, well, you think I took them with me. ☐THELMA (Quietly.) It was personal. ☐JESSIEGood. That's good, Mom. ☐TheLMA That's what I'll say, then. ☐JESSIEPersonal. Is that what I'm saying to Dawson and Loretta? I sat and kissed me, night, Mom? They'll want to know more, Jessie. They won't believe this. ☐JessieWell, then, tell them what I did. I filled the jars with candy. I cleaned the fridge. I made some hot chocolate and put the lid back on the couch. You had no idea. All right, what's going on? I think it's better that way. If I know we talked about it, they really won't understand you let me go. (Mom's not responding.) It's private. Tonight is private, yours and mine, and I don't want anyone else to have that. - 71 - THELMAO. K. then. ☐JESSIE (Standing behind mom now, holding her shoulders.) Now, when you hear the shot, I don't want you to come in. First of all, you won't be able to enter alone, but I don't want you to try. Call Dawson, then call the police and then call Agnes. And then you're going to need something to do until someone gets here, so wash the pan with hot chocolate. Wash that pan until you hear the doorbell and I don't care if it's an hour, you keep washing the pan. ☐Thelmai's going to give me calls and then I'm going to sit down. I don't need anything to do. What will the police say? ☐They're going to do the gunpowder test, and they're going to ask you what happened, and by then, the ambulance will be here and they're going to come pick me up and you know how it goes. Stay here with Dawson and Loretta. Keep Dawson here. I want the police in the room first, not Dawson, okay? ☐TheLMAWhat happens if Dawson and Loretta want to go home with them? ☐JESSIE (Returning to the living room.) That's up to you. ☐THELMAI think I'm going to stay here. All they have is Sanka. ☐JessieMaybe Agnes could come and stay with you for a few days. - 72 - THELMA (Standing now, looking in the living room.) I'd rather be alone, I guess. (Going to the box Jessie brought earlier.) You want me to give people those things? ☐JESSIE (They sit on the couch, Jessie holding the box on her lap.) I want Loretta to have my little computer. Dawson bought it for. You know, but then she saw one that she liked better and couldn't bring them both home with Loretta counting every penny so she does it, so she gave me the first one. It would be fun for her to have it now, don't you think? And all my slippers are in a bag for her in my closet. Tell him I know they're going to fit in and I haven't worn any and make sure Dawson hears you tell him that. I'm glad she loves Loretta so much, but I want her to know that not everyone has her big legs. THELMA (Taking computer.) O. K. JESSIE (Getting back in the box.) This letter is for Dawson, but it's more about you, so read it if you want. There is a list of gifts for you for at least twenty more Christmas and birthdays, so if you want something special you better add it to this list before you give it to him. Or if you want to be surprised, don't read that page. At Christmas, you mostly get things for the house like a new carpet in the bathroom and needles, but at Christmas, you're going to cost it a lot and you'd never think about it. - 73 - THELMAAnd do you think it will go for it? Jessie I think she's going to feel like a real jerk if she doesn't. Me telling him to like that. This number is where you call Cecil. I called him last week and he answered me, so I know he still lives there. TheLMAWhat do you want me to tell him? Jessie Tell him we talked about him and we only had good things to say about him, but mainly tell him to find Ricky and tell him what I did and tell Ricky that you have something for him, here, from me, and come and get him. (Take a bag out of the box.) THELMA (The bag feels empty.) what is the problem? JESSIE My watch. (Put it in the bag and get a ribbon out of the bag to tie around the top of it.) THELMAEi will sell it! That's the point. I appreciate he hasn't already stolen it. I'd like to buy him a good meal. THELMAEi will buy drugs with it! JessieWell, then, I hope he gets some good drugs with her, Mom. And the rest is for you. (Teaching the tape mom now. Mom takes things and looks at them.) -- 74 -- THELMA (Surprised and pleased.) When did you do all this? During sleep, I think. JESSIEI I think. I tried to shut up. (As mother is puzzled by gifts.) They're just little gifts. For whenever you need one. It's not bought gifts, just things I thought you'd like to look at, pictures or things you think you've lost. Things you didn't even know you had. You'll see. Thelmai, I'm not sure I want them. They'll make me think of you. Jessie, they're not going to do that. It's just stuff, it would be a free tube of toothpaste I found hanging out the door one day. THELMAOh. All right, then. JessieWell, maybe there's a nice present out there somewhere. It's Grandma's ring she gave me, and I thought you might. Can. to have it, but I didn't think you'd wear it if I gave it to you right now. ☐THELMA (Taking the box to a nearby table.) Not. Probably not. (Returning to face her.) I'm ready for my manicure, I guess. You want me to wash my hands again? ☐JESSIE (Standing.) It's time to go, Mom. - 75 - THELMA (Starting from it.) No, Jessie, you have all night! ☐JESSIE (Like Mom Grabs Her.) No, Mom. ☐Thelmal'ts not even ten o'clock. ☐JESSIE (Very calm.) Let me go, Mom. ☐THELMAI can't. You can't leave. You can't do that. You didn't say it was going to be so soon, Jessie. I'm scared. I love you. ☐JESSIE (Get your hands away.) Let me go, Mom. I said everything I had to say. ☐THELMA (Standing another minute.) You said you wanted to do my nails. ☐JESSIE (Taking a small step back.) I can't. It's too late. ☐THELMAN's not too late! ☐Jessie doesn't want you to wake Dawson and Loretta when you call. I want him to still be standing and dressed so he can get over it. ☐THELMA (As Jessie claims, Mom moves in on it, but carefully.) They'll wake up fast, Jessie, if they have to. It doesn't matter here, Jessie. You know. We're not done yet. We've got a lot of work to do here. I don't know where my recipes are, and you haven't told me what to tell Dr. Davis when he calls or how much you want me to tell Ricky or who I'm calling to pick up the leaves or... - 76 - JESSIEDon't try to stop me, Mom, you can't do it. ☐THELMA (Grab it again, this time hard.) And I can't! I'll stand in front of the lobby and you can't get past me. (They are struggling.) You're going to have to take me down to get rid of me, Jessie. I'm not going to let you... (Mom fights Jessie at the door one in battle, Jessie gets rid of her and.) JESSIE (Almost a whisper.) Night, Mom. (Jessie disappears into her bedroom and we hear the lock door just as Mom gets to her.) ☐THELMA (Sipete.) Jessie, please! (And pounds on the door.) Jessie, let me in. Don't do that, Jessie. I'm not going to stop screaming until you open this door. Jessie. Jessie, please! Jessie, please! What if I don't do any of the things you told me to do! I'm going to tell Cecil what a miserable man he was to make you feel like that, and I'm going to give Ricky's watch to Dawson if I feel like it and the only way you can make sure I do what you want is to come here and make me, Jessie! (Ponding again.) Jessie, please! Stop, stop Know! I've been here with you the whole time. How do I know you're so lonely? (And the mother stops for a moment, breathless and frantic, putting her ear to the door and when she doesn't hear anything, she rises back straight up and sits again.) Jessie, please! Please! (And I heard the shot, and it sounds like an answer, apparently not. In shock now.) Jessie, Jessie, ... Forgive me. (A pause.) I thought you were mine. (And she leaves the door and makes her way through the living room, around the furniture, as she didn't know where she was, didn't know what to do. Eventually, she goes to the stove in the kitchen and picks up the hot chocolate pan and carries it with her on the phone and holds it on while she dials the number. She looks down at the pan, holding it tight as her life would depend on her. She hears Loretta's answer.) Loretta, let me talk to Dawson, honey. -- 77 -- THE END

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