

Scene 4

*Junior and Suzanne in the car. They drive in silence.
Suzanne is looking over some sheet music.*

SUZANNE. How's she gonna go on? That's what I'd like to know. How's she gonna face life without Daddy Bud? I just don't know how she's gonna go on without losing her mind. *(She waits for a response but doesn't get one.)* Well, I can't decide what to sing. Of course, I don't know how I'll get through it. I swear to God, I don't. I'll probably just fall down on the floor in a big pool of tears. God knows nobody would blame me if I did. All our humiliation and now Daddy Bud has to up and die without seeing you make something of yourself.

JUNIOR. Maybe you could sing "Jesus on the Cross."

SUZANNE. I don't know. That doesn't seem sad enough for a funeral. And God knows it's gonna be sad to be sitting there thinking that your Daddy died knowing we had to sell everything we owned and move into that God-awful trailer just to pay off that big dream of yours.

JUNIOR. Maybe you could set *that* to music, Suzanne.

SUZANNE. I believe I was just stating the facts, wasn't I? You know I loved him too, Junior. He was just like my own Daddy. I was the one that had to go crawling to him like a snake and beg for the money to buy shoes for our children, you know. But I did it. I humbled myself. And do you know why I did it, Junior? It can all be summed up in two little words: "For Love." (*Suddenly slapping "the children" over the backseat.*) I TOLD YOU TO QUIT KICKING THE BACK OF MY SEAT! I know you're hungry! You think I'm not! It'd be nice to stop and get something to eat wouldn't it? Well, maybe we could if your Daddy hadn't lost all our money! (*Back to Junior.*) Love, Junior. That's been the curse of my life. And now we have to face your family with all of them knowing. All of them looking down at us. Laughing at us. Who ever heard of a machine that cleans parking lots?

JUNIOR. That'll do, Suzanne.

SUZANNE. All our money down the toilet, Junior. How do you feel about that? You think I like working at Newberry's? Slaving to keep that wax fruit section looking nice. You think I wouldn't love to stay home and watch soap operas all day like my good for nothing sisters do. That would suit me fine, mister. Let me tell you that right now. I don't want to work, I have to. I'd love to stay home and keep a decent house, cook for you, maybe learn to sew and make some clothes for the children. That's all I ever wanted to be was just a good wife and mother. (*Suddenly slapping "the children" again.*) YOU DO THAT AGAIN AND I'M GONNA TELL YOUR DADDY TO PULL THIS CAR OVER AND THROW YOU ALL OUT IN THE ROAD! How would you like us to just put you out in the road, and drive off and never look back? Then what would you do with no mother and daddy to look after you?

Starve! Starve to death in the road! *(She settles back in her seat, returns to her music.)* Go on and cry, you big babies.

JUNIOR. *(Over his shoulder, quietly.)* Y'all know your Mama loves you. She was just kidding.

SUZANNE. We'll see who's kidding? Don't miss this turn off. I just don't know how they expect me to stand up there and sing. I don't know how I'll do it.

JUNIOR. I'm sure you'll do your best.

SUZANNE. My best? That's a good one. You don't know a thing about it, Junior. In order to do my best, I'd have to have confidence. I used to have confidence. I could have been a professional. I had the talent. I could have married your cousin, Teddy-Wayne, and been the wife of a lawyer. Had a big house with a swimming pool. But no, I couldn't think of myself. That's been my curse my whole life. I never once thought of myself. I had to listen to my foolish heart and get married to a dreamer. A beautiful dreamer who goes out and blows all our money on a big piece of machinery to clean parking lots.

JUNIOR. You're pushing it.

SUZANNE. Did you ever once stop to think that maybe nobody gave a damn about a clean parking lot.

JUNIOR. You're really pushing it.

SUZANNE. And of course, it came as a big surprise to you when everybody just laughed in your face when you asked them if they wanted their parking lot cleaned.

JUNIOR. I'm gonna kill us, Suzanne.

SUZANNE. Don't make me laugh. *(Junior starts swerving the car back and forth across the road.)*

JUNIOR. *(Overlapping.)* I'M GONNA KILL US! I'M GONNA KILL US! I'M GONNA KILL US! I'M GONNA KILL US!

SUZANNE. *(Overlapping.)* STOP IT! STOP IT, JUNIOR! STOP IT! STOP IT! *(Junior slams on the brakes, reaches under the seat and produces a gun.)*

JUNIOR. SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP! I've had it, Suzanne! I'm at the end of my goddamn rope! I can't take it anymore! My Daddy just died! Can you understand that? Can you hear me? Am I getting through that thick skull of yours?

My Daddy just died. I'm thirty-five years old, I'm dead ass broke, I've got no job, no prospects, three kids and worst of all, I'm married to you! Now, shut up! Just shut up! I want some peace, you hear me! You say one more word about parking lots and I swear to God, I'll kill you and me too! You got that? *(Pause.)*

SUZANNE. Tense, tense, tense. You are so tense. Put that away. *(She goes back to her music. He puts away the gun, starts the car, and pulls out on the road. Over her shoulder, quietly.)* Your Daddy wasn't really gonna kill me. He was just kidding. Y'all know your Daddy and I love each other. Buddy, what have you got in your mouth? *(She reaches out her hand.)* Spit that out! Don't pick things up off the floor of the car. You don't know what kind of filth it's got on it. *(She rolls down the window and starts to throw the object out, when she notices what it is.)*

Junior?

JUNIOR. What?

SUZANNE. Do you know what this is?

JUNIOR. No.

SUZANNE. It's a woman's earring.