

NADINE: (*As if speaking to a small child*) Of course...your medicine. Look at the clock, Mama. What does the clock say? Is the little hand on the six yet? Why, no, it's racing as fast as it can...huffing and puffing. It wants to go to the six but it's being dragged down. Who do you suppose is dragging it down? Hmmm? Why, it's Father Time! The mean old bastard that he is.

LUCILLE: I believe you enjoy watching me suffer.

NADINE: You're not suffering.

LUCILLE: Don't you tell me I'm not suffering!

NADINE: You're just a little uncomfortable. That's all.

LUCILLE: What would you know about how I feel?

NADINE: The doctor said –

LUCILLE: The quack doctor. I know what the *quack's* opinion is.

NADINE: I just think that maybe you should listen to him.

LUCILLE: Why – because he's got a degree? That doesn't give him license to understand my pain.

NADINE: All I'm saying is you pay for his advice you might as well use it. (*NADINE looks at her watch.*) I can't believe this. Where the hell is she?

LUCILLE: Why are you getting upset?

NADINE: Why am I getting upset? Why shouldn't I be upset? The damn concert's in two hours and Her Royal Highness hasn't walked through the damn door yet – damn it!

(NADINE exits to her room)

LUCILLE: You know I don't like that kind of language. (*Calls after her*) If you had used that kind of language around your father, he'd have taken you upstairs and washed your mouth out with soap!

NADINE: I never knew my father!

LUCILLE: What?

NADINE: I said I never knew my father!

LUCILLE: Of course, you knew him. What are you talking about?

NADINE: How would I know him, Ma? He stayed just about long enough to hang his hat and that was it.

LUCILLE: Okay, well I knew him.

NADINE: Barely.

LUCILLE: What's not to know? He was a soldier. He died a hero.

NADINE: He was a salesman and ran off with a bimbo.

LUCILLE: Where did you hear that?

NADINE: Word gets around.

LUCILLE: It was Kelly's mother, wasn't it? Like *she* has room to talk.

NADINE: From the sounds of it he put a shot in her too.

LUCILLE: That's a lie! He would never! Your father loved me!

NADINE: You and half the town.

HELEN: (*Singing offstage*) I can't get no satisfaction. (*She enters Nadine's room.*) I can't get no satisfaction.

(*HELEN enters Nadine's room*)

NADINE/HELEN (*Singing together*): But I try, and I try, and I try, and I try. I can't get no, no, no, no. Hey, hey, hey. That's what I say.

(*They hug, laughing*)

NADINE: Where have you been? Your train should have been here an hour ago.

HELEN: I missed the express. Got stuck with the local.

LUCILLE: You're always sticking up for your sister.

HELEN: Since when?

LUCILLE: Since forever. You two stuck together all the time.

HELEN: That's news to me.

LUCILLE: Remember when we were at the shore and that wave washed her out to sea?

HELEN: Her hat was washed away, not her.

LUCILLE: It could've been her.

HELEN: But it wasn't. She got a little wet, that's all.

LUCILLE: That big handsome lifeguard came rushing down...

HELEN: Because you were screaming about the god damned hat! I'm surprised you didn't send up a flare, call the Coast Guard...

LUCILLE: I was upset.

HELEN: So, you took it out on me.

LUCILLE: Did I?

HELEN: I was grounded - for a week!

LUCILLE: You're the oldest. She was your responsibility.

HELEN: No, Mother, you were the oldest! And you were too busy flirting with the hot dog vendor...

LUCILLE: You don't know anything...what it's like raising kids on your own! If I could charm a free lunch here and there, what business is it of yours? Did you ever go to bed hungry? No, you didn't. And do you know why? Because I was able to use what God gave me. A smile here. A turn of the head there. You'll never know what it's like. Not you, born with a silver spoon in your mouth, wanting for nothing.

HELEN: Yes, Mama, you gave me all this!

(HELEN holds out her arms, indicating the broken-down living room. She instantly regrets her words.)

HELEN: I'm sorry, Mama. I didn't mean that.

LUCILLE: You never had a problem with it in the past.

HELEN: I said I was sorry.

LUCILLE: When you used it as a flophouse, you weren't too good for it *then*. *(HELEN lets out a heavy sigh.)* Will you at least consider staying this time?

HELEN: You know the rules. I just came in for the concert.

LUCILLE: A couple of days, at least?

HELEN: *(Pause)* I'm going to make you some tea and toast. How does that sound?

LUCILLE: One sugar and a dollop of milk.

HELEN: Toast lightly buttered. Strawberry jam on the side.

LUCILLE: And no paper plates!

HELEN: Use the good China. I remember.

(HELEN exits to the kitchen.)

LUCILLE: Helen! One more thing!

(LUCILLE rings her buzzer.)

Ask Nadine for my medicine!

(The lights change, and the room becomes a stark and cold hospital room. It's night. LENNY, a male nurse in scrubs, enters.)

LENNY: You buzzed me, Miz Lucille?

LUCILLE: Charlie? Is that you?

LENNY: No, it's me. Lenny.

LUCILLE: Who?

LENNY: Lenny Becker. Martha's boy?

LUCILLE: Oh, right. I see it now. Little Lenny Becker. What the hell is that you're wearing?

LENNY: I'm the night nurse, Miz Lucille. Did you forget that again?

LUCILLE: For a second there I thought you were my husband, Charlie. (*Confidentially*) I told him about you.

LENNY: Oh?

LUCILLE: How you're always coming around here, poking and prodding and nosing about.

LENNY: And what did he have to say about that?

LUCILLE: He doesn't think I should trust you.

LENNY: And what do *you* think?

LUCILLE: I think he's got a lot of nerve, talking to *me* about trust. The man walked out on me years ago.

LENNY: Did you buzz me for a reason? If not, there are other patients -

LUCILLE: You run along. I'll be fine. Helen's making me some tea and toast in the kitchen.

LENNY: Helen?

LUCILLE: My daughter.

LENNY: I know who Helen is, Miz Lucille. We were in school together, remember?

LUCILLE: Then you must know Nadine. They're peas in a pod, those two. I'm sure you passed them on the way in?