

A STONE'S THROW

a play by

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The Family

MAMMA-LOVE: A sixty-one-year-old mother with a fence of discontent between her children. Raised in a time when music was only strings and horns, she cannot function outside her house. She dresses in pink chiffon that is tattered and moth-eaten. She has the misty eyes of a wren thrown from the nest in a storm.

DILLION: The son. He's nineteen and has a face drawn long and square as if the Creator grabbed his jaw and pulled it like putty, then stuck an index finger in his chin to top off the job. His Army pants are held up with rainbow-colored suspenders. He has no shoes, no shirt, but gives his service to anyone who asks. He wears water-color tattoos on his bare chest.

ELFREDA: The daughter. For thirty years she has been able to escape the conventions of a formal education by pretending to be mentally retarded. She dresses in men's bathrobes, and spends all her time on the love seat. She draws water-color tattoos.

TULLY: The elder son. At thirty-nine, he is fresh out of aspirations. He has the cool aura of a man always cornered and forced into using the soft cooing of his heart to escape. His voice is beautiful. It has the warm quality of rain falling on a canvas tent. His beard is only a heavy stubble. He is a proud man beaten down by the morals of others.

The Outsider

MISTER NETTLES: A farmer with cattle and kin. He wears a cowboy hat and striped overalls. A kerchief hangs from his back pocket. At sixty-five-years, his belly is full and hard. Silver strands stick out from his hat. His tool box is made of splintered wood and rusting nails.

Scene

~~MAMMA-LOVE's living room and the stone bench outside the front of her house.~~

A timeless, dark hole.

Time

~~The day before yesterday.~~

Back then.

Whistle / E - on table. / Whistle all around / E - down to the
cellar / whistle / TULLY? TULLY?

1.

WE ARE IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A LIVING ROOM. THIS LIVING ROOM IS DIFFERENT THAN MOST. THERE IS NO TELEVISION, NO PHONE, AND NO PLUSH SHAG CARPETING. EVERYTHING IN THIS HOUSE IS DUSTY. DRIED MUD COVERS THE FLOOR AND HIDES IN ALL FOUR CORNERS. THE ROOM IS FURNISHED WITH JUNKYARD TRASH. A STAGE LEFT DOOR LEADS TO A PORCH, AND A LONE WINDOW DOWNSTAGES THE DOOR. SPROUTING FROM THE CENTER OF THE LIVING ROOM FLOOR, ARE TWO YAWNING DOORS. THE DOORS LEAD TO THE CELLAR. A BRIGHT, CLEAN WHITE LOVE SEAT STANDS ALONE IN THE CENTER OF THIS ROOM. THE LOVE SEAT IS OLD, BUT IT IS BY FAR THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND THE MOST ELEGANT PIECE OF FURNITURE IN THE HOUSE. STANDING **OUTSIDE** THE HOUSE IS A BENCH MADE OF STONE. THE STONE BENCH IS THE SAME STYLE AND SIZE OF THE LOVE SEAT. THE BENCH IS DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE FIRST AUDIENCE ROW. **INSIDE**, STAGE RIGHT, IS A DINING TABLE PILED HIGH WITH AGED AND YELLOWED NEWSPAPER. A BULBOUS MOUND OF STONES AT LEAST FOUR FEET HIGH ARE UNDER THE WINDOW. A THREE FOOT STACK OF SHATTERED GLASS HIDES NEXT TO THE DINING TABLE. **INSIDE**, THE HOUSE IS BATHED IN A BLUE GLOW. AT TIMES, THE OUTSIDE CHANGES. THE SWING AND ROLL OF THE EMOTION AFFECTS THE MISTINESS AND GLOOM OF THE LIGHTING. **OUTSIDE**, A HARSH WHITE LIGHT SHINES ON THE BENCH. THE BENCH TAKES ON A BARE AND CHILLING SHINE. THE REST OF THE OUTDOORS ARE RICH WITH COLOR. SEVEN INDIVIDUAL THREADS OF DEEP GREEN IVY START FROM THE GROUND AND SHOOT TO THE SKY. THE IVY IS SPACED EVENLY APART, FORMING A WALL OF NATURE BETWEEN THE STONE BENCH AND THE LIVING ROOM. A BREEZE. SILENCE. THE SOUND OF LEAVES RUSHING ACROSS A GRAVEL ROAD. SILENCE AGAIN. A DISTANT WHISTLE. IT IS A CHIPPER WHISTLE. TULLY ENTERS FROM THE BACK OF THE AUDIENCE. THE LIGHT GETS HOTTER, REDDER. ANOTHER BREEZE. THE WIND WHISTLES THIS TIME. TULLY IS WHISTLING THE CHIPPER TUNE AND A DUFFEL BAG DRAGS BEHIND HIM. A BEAUTIFUL, SHINING LEATHER BRIEFCASE TEETERS IN HIS OTHER HAND. TULLY SITS ON THE BENCH. NO MORE WHISTLING. TULLY FEELS THE BENCH WITH HIS FINGER. HE USES HIS FINGERNAILS TO DIG OUT THE DIRT FROM THE CRACKS IN THE CORNER OF THE BENCH. FINALLY, HE PRIES THE CORNER OFF THE BENCH. HE WHISTLES A SLOWER TUNE AS HE PLAYS WITH THE TRIANGULAR PIECE OF STONE. HE FEELS EACH POINT, HIS WHISTLE ACCENTUATES HIS DISCOVERIES.

TULLY

My dearest Mamma-Love. Your smile is larger than the mountains of Utah. Your eyes are more watery than the great lakes of Michigan. Your heart is second to none...second not even to the sun! Gads. I sound like a commercial for a greeting card.

TULLY DROPS THE ROCK. **INSIDE** THE LIVING ROOM, ELFREDA ENTERS RUNNING UP THE CELLAR STEPS. AN EMPTY KETCHUP BOTTLE SAILS PAST HER HEAD. ELFREDA DUCKS AS THE BOTTLE SAILS PAST.

MAMMA-LOVE (OFF)

Stay up there! How many times do I got to tell you that when I'm entertaining my friends, I want my privacy?

ELFREDA PLOPS ON THE LOVE SEAT. CHOKING BACK TEARS, SHE PULLS OUT A SET OF WATER COLOR PENS FROM BETWEEN THE CUSHIONS. SHE TAKES A SCRAP OF PAPER FROM THE FLOOR AND BEGINS TO SKETCH. ELFREDA BEGINS TO HUM A SOFT SONG. OUTSIDE, TULLY DUSTS OFF HIS SHOES.

TULLY

This is gonna be harder than signing my name to a dime store greeting card. Should turn my tail to the wind and hop it back to the University. Hi-ya, Mamma-Love. Sure I'm back. Why? Eh...

TULLY BURSTS OUT IN A RINGING LAUGH.

TULLY

(Cont'd)

This is gonna be more fun than blowing up the bathroom toilet when I was twelve. And I thought my first date with the girl from the seventh grade was hell. Keep up the old energy, son. ~~Choke~~

~~Oh God... what am I gonna do?~~

2A

TULLY PULLS OUT A BANANA FROM HIS JACKET AND PEELS IT. HE TAKES A MOUTHFUL, AND CHOKES. INSIDE, DILLION ENTERS THROUGH THE LIVING ROOM FRONT DOOR. DILLION HAS TWO OF THE BIGGEST BALD, BLACK RUBBER TRUCK TIRES EVER CREATED BY MAN OR MACHINE. HE STRUGGLES TO SQUEEZE THEM THROUGH THE DOOR. ELFREDA IGNORES HIM AND CONTINUES TO HUM. IT IS A STRUGGLE FOR ELFREDA TO CONTINUE TO HOLD BACK HER TEARS AND CONTINUE TO HUM HER SONG. AFTER A FIGHT, DILLION HAS THE TIRES INSIDE. HIS CHEST IS HEAVING AND WE SEE A LARGE, EXAGGERATED CARTOON KANGAROO TATTOO ON HIS SWEATING, BARE CHEST. ~~AND COMBAT BOOTS ON HIS FEET.~~

DILLION

Elfreda, darlin'! I got the graduation present for Tully! Truck tires! He wanted 'em ever since he was my age. Couldn't find the right size yesterday, but today's my lucky day! Had to go to the bottom of the junk heap, but I found 'em no less.

~~DILLION~~ KICKS OFF HIS BOOTS.

ELFREDA

Did you bring me somethin', Dillion?
 Honey, I'm not feelin' lucky right now.
~~In fact, I feel real lonely.~~

ELFREDA CRIES. DILLION DROPS THE TIRES AND THEY ROLL ACROSS THE FLOOR AND BOUNCE OFF THE WALL. DILLION TAKES ELFREDA IN HIS ARMS.

DILLION

What's a matter, Elfreda? Tell your boy
 what's makin' you so sad. I can help.
~~I'll listen, I promise you.~~

ELFREDA

Mamma-Love yelled at me again. I only
 went downstairs cuz it's hot up here, and
 why should she get all the cold to
 herself anyways? ~~She calls me the most
 awful names and I want to lay down and
 cry.~~

DILLION

Here. I got you a special present.
 Flowers. I hope I got the right color.

DILLION TAKES THE FLOWERS FROM HIS BACK POCKET. THE FLOWERS ARE PLASTIC. THEY ARE BEATEN UP AND DIRTY. HE GENTLY EXTENDS HIS PRIZED FLOWERS TO ELFREDA.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

I hope you like 'em. Pretend like I do
 that they have a smell. Maybe you could
 take some of that fancy perfume that
 Tully sent you for your birthday last
 year, and spray 'em 'til they shine.
~~That'd make 'em smell real good.~~

ELFREDA

Tully's perfume got used up the week
 after ~~it~~ opened it. The wind came in the
 window and stole the scent. Never could
 keep enough on so's I could really get a
 good smell.

ELFREDA SNIFFLES BACK MORE TEARS.

DILLION

The perfume only lasted a week? It came
 in a gallon jug!

ELFREDA

That was the first time I ever felt like a real live lady. You know the kind? All hair-sprayed and sweet. Least I know for once in my life how a lady's supposed to feel.

DILLION

All I can give you is presents from the junkyard. I can only give you the trash of others. ~~I'm sorry.~~ I don't treat you real good, do I? X

DILLION SNIFFLES. ~~ELFREDA SMILES,~~ AND GIVES HIM A HUG AROUND THE NECK. X

DILLION
(Cont'd)

I don't mean to let you down. I just don't got the brains like Tully.

ELFREDA

Oh, little one. Don't go gettin' teary eyed over me. This house is filled with your treasures. There's the magazines. I like the pictures in them. And that dining table. That's a right nice piece of wood for free. And don't forget the ketchup bottles. Mamma-Love needs them for her sorrow-water. ~~You're special in your own way, Dillion, and that's why I love you.~~ X

THEY KISS.

DILLION

28
You smell pretty to me every day. You don't need no perfume for me to kiss you. I like you just like this. Dressed in terry-cloth robes.

ELFREDA

Lookey, there. Your kangaroo is runnin' together. I been drawin' you a new tattoo. See? It's an eagle. The sign of free men. It'll ring true on your chest.

DILLION DOESN'T LOOK AT HER AS HE KNEELS IN FRONT OF HER. ELFREDA SPITS ON HIS CHEST AND RUBS AT THE KANGAROO. DILLION ALSO ~~SPITS ON HIS HANDS AND RUBS AT THE TATTOO TOO.~~

DILLION

I like the kangaroo. It was better than the cow.

ELFREDA

Well, your Elfreda knows what's best for her baby. I read all the magazines I can find. I know what's best, believe me. I never fib. I'll take care of us forever. ~~Dillion. You need to keep the skin soft and baby pure for me. Otherwise, the tattoo runs off soon as I draw it on directly.~~ you

ST. DIR
El tickles the end of his nose.

DILLION SNEEZES. ELFREDA LOSES HER BALANCE, AND THE PEN IN HER HAND GOES SKIING OVER DILLION'S CHEST.

TULLY

God Bless.

DILLION

Ow! You scratched me with a felt tip!

ELFREDA

~~You got to listen to your Elfreda. Older sisters know more than baby brothers. You shouldn't run around naked. Gesundheit.~~

OUTSIDE. TULLY GETS UP AND SLINGS THE DUFFEL BAG OVER HIS SHOULDER. HE PICKS UP THE BRIEFCASE, TOSSES THE BANANA PEEL UNDER THE BENCH AND LEAVES. INSIDE. DILLION WIPES HIS NOSE.

DILLION

~~Christians are supposed to say 'God Bless You, Elfreda.'~~

ELFREDA (CONT)

Sweetheart, use a tissue, please. Remember when I used to change your diapers? Course you don't remember, you were a little tiny honey. There wasn't no Mamma-Love around, so Elfreda bathed you, and kissed you, and fed you the finest strawberries from the back yard.

(MORE)



Doris Beth
"The River to Pickle Beach."

S.P.R.
ELFREDA
GIVES DILLION
A ~~STRAWBERRY~~
RASPBERRY
in his belly-
button.

ELFREDA

Used to comb your hair with a soft brush
made from the hair from a Belgium camel's
~~hair~~. Remember, Dillion? You'd look at
me with those sparklin' eyes, and ask me
to love you. You were only six months,
but we understood each other. We had a
~~bond, and still do.~~ Not many people are
as close as we are and that makes 'em
jealous. ~~But we know love, don't we~~
~~Dilly boy?~~ When you sneeze, like you did
just a second ago? You get that same
"love me" look in those glowin' eyes.
You don't have to ask no more.

belly button.

X

X

SLOWLY, ELFREDA TAKES HER LIPS TO DILLION'S. AGAIN, THEY KISS.

2c

DILLION

~~You're good to me, Elfreda. I'll get
some perfume for you one day, I promise I
will. I'll leave this house and come
back a King. I'll even bring you a bunch
of camels. Would you like that?~~

buttons

Camel's belly

X

ELFREDA

~~Don't ever leave me, Dillion. I'd be
alone then. I couldn't take it here
alone with Mamma-Love. She don't like me
so good. And I cry myself to sleep.
Good thing I got you, Dilly. I love you
too much to let you leave me. Promise me
you'll only leave here after I'm dead and
gone and lonely no more.~~

X

X

DILLION

~~Elfreda, that's an awful thing to think
I wouldn't think you dead, ever.~~

X

ELFREDA

Then you won't leave me, baby. Right?

DILLION SHAKES HIS HEAD "NO."

ELFREDA
(Cont'd)

We'll have a calm little life together,
right, Dillion? We'll have our own
babies that need us to comb their hair
and feed them strawberries. ~~Isn't that~~
~~what we both want?~~ I can't wait for the
pleasure.

X

X

I almost forgot.

7.

DILLION GOES TO TIRE

DILLION

Hey. You got an appointment today. I made it for you yesterday like you asked. Don't forget now. They're pretty busy at the doctor's office.

DILLION LAYS IN TIRE

ELFREDA

Lay yourself down and I'll be an artist.

DILLION

Just don't forget the meetin'.

DILLION RECLINES ON THE LOVE SEAT.

DILLION

(Cont'd)

You're a real Picasso. I read about him in one of the books I brought you from the junkyard.

ELFREDA

Dilly-boy, don't talk, honey. The breath lifts your rib cage and heaves your stomach. An artist needs a steady hand and a calm surface...unless...you want another felt-tipped scar....

*M-L's-a-
M-L*

DILLION

Hmm. You're a Picasso. Saint. What am I?

Pappy was a fighter.

*Tully's a wild...
better than being my sister, that is.*

DILLION GIVES OUT A LONG SIGH. AGAIN, ELFREDA'S ARM SLIPS, AND DILLION IS MARKED DOWN HIS CHEST WITH ANOTHER LONG STROKE.

ELFREDA

You are a bad little boy! I ask you not to speak and you stare barefaced back into my eyes and talk anyways. I'm tempted to roll up a sheet of newsprint and bop you squarely on the nose.

ELFREDA GETS ON TOP OF DILLION AND PINS HIM TO THE LOVE SEAT. HER KNEES ARE IN HIS ABDOMEN.

DILLION

Elfreda...I....

ELFREDA

I love you too, baby. Now hush-a-bye.

DILLION

Elfreda! You're squashing the guts outta my mouth!

ELFREDA JUMPS OFF. DILLION CATCHES HIS BREATH. ELFREDA ROLLS UP SOME NEWSPAPER AND SWATS HIM HARD IN THE STOMACH. FOR THE FIRST TIME, ELFREDA'S TONE TURNS HARSH AND FAMILIAR.

ELFREDA

for
Honestly! An artist cannot work with a squirming, sweating canvas! If you don't appreciate talent, then you just get one done permanent at the tattoo parlor and pay for it! ~~I should be reading up on my magazines, but I got to take care of you first!~~

ELFREDA STOPS. DILLION DOESN'T MOVE. SHE CHANGES HER TONE.

ELFREDA

(Cont'd)

I'm sorry, baby. I know you don't like the pain of sharp needles. ~~I don't mean to holler at you. I don't mean to scare you.~~ Your feelin's is too delicate for a boy your age. ~~Don't look so hurt.~~ I said I was sorry, honey, and I meant it.

DILLION

I couldn't catch a wind, that's all. ~~Nothin' bad against you, Elfreda.~~ I like it when I can rinse myself of the old tattoos in the Applegate river. I like the tattoos you make with them pens.

ELFREDA TAKES DILLION BY THE CHIN AND MAKES HIM LOOK AT HER.

ELFREDA

Dillion. ~~You must understand somethin'. This is important, so I'll speak slow so you can read the words formed by my lips.~~ These are not simple pens. Any one person can have pens. But my pens are more special than common store-bought pens. These are multi-rainbowbrite-watercolor-artist's-drawing-utensils-directly-from-France. Repeat what I just said, so's I know you heard me.

gnvr — the fuzz in your belly-button.
9-15-85

9.

DILLION

Multi-nice-watercolor-pens-drawn-from-France? Let me try that one again.

HWO ↙

ELFREDA

You have the general idea. Now. Almost a finished Eagle. Isn't it proud? I know I am.

DILLION'S
MIDPLES ARE THE
HAVE BECOME THE
A EYES OF
IN THE
EAGLE.

WE SEE THE EAGLE. IT IS A STICK FIGURE WITH A FEW FEATHERS. ITS BEAK IS A BANNER READING..."ART BY ELFREDA FROM FRANCE."

Art by Elfreda from France.

ELFREDA
(Cont'd)

You're welcome, sweetie. You're startin' to sprout baby hair on ~~her~~ chest. Fine little strands.

YOU

DILLION

Really?

ELFREDA

I never noticed hair there before.

DILLION

That's because I shave it off, mostly. I don't really think all that hair in my private places and on my legs is pretty. I guess I missed a few on my chest.

ELFREDA FEELS THE BABY HAIRS. SHE FONDLES THEM BETWEEN HER FINGERS. DILLION GIGGLES.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

That really tickles. My whole body's one big tingle.

BABY 2D

ELFREDA PULLS OUT ONE OF HIS HAIRS

ELFREDA

We share mutual tingles.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

DILLION

Elfreda, I been wantin' to ask you this for a long time, but I didn't want to upset you. But, seein' you're already a little angry, I'll give it a whirl. Why didn't you go to school? I had to and so did Tully. But you stay here. You draw and sit and look around and get mad at me sometimes and read your magazines.

alone in the house.

ELFREDA

Now what tick sucked that from your mind?

DILLION

Search me. Doesn't seem fair that me and Tully got to go to school and learn, but you didn't have to, that's all.

ELFREDA

You must understand that I was smart enough not to be forced into the chains of a formal education.

DILLION

I heard Mamma-Love tell Tully once that you pretended to be sick. You ~~led~~ the law, the teachers, even the priest to think you were a mental case. You pretended to be a mental retard, no less! Never had a class in your life because they all thought you didn't understand what they were asking!

ELFREDA

You should keep your ears shut to secrets that don't belong to you. You might jinx someone by revealin' secrets. ~~I know how to survive. That's all you need to know. School only teaches us how to live, not how to survive. I learned how to survive from brother Tully's old textbooks and the Holy Bible and of course, my magazines.~~

be
happy

X
be happy.

DILLION

Is sittin' here all there is? Don't you want to visit the places in those magazines? Don't you need friends?

ELFREDA

Friends like Mamma-Love entertains? Want me to sit down there in the dark and entertain? ~~o~~ Please Dillion. I'm different. Not strange, or horrible, or mean. I'm me, I'm different, and I love you.

DILLION

I love you too. But why does Mamma-Love tell all her friends that you're not her daughter? Why does she tell them that you're her niece?

He's a
black
actor
with a
white
body
skin

ELFREDA

She knows who I am.

DILLION

Why ~~does~~ she lie, then?

ELFREDA

It's time you know that I'm not your blood sister. That doesn't change a thing between us, Dilly. Mamma-Love was...fouled, Dillion, and I happened to be the child that was created that particular steamy night under the Applegate Bridge. I've had a ~~quite a~~ terrible life. Who's my Pappy? They say it's all in the genes, you know, so he's probably a King in France or somethin'. That's what a war does for you. Pappy gone away to fight for freedom, and Mamma-Love gets fouled. I popped out of her sorrowful arms, and been neglected for it ever since. I'm a livin' testament that gettin' ~~fixed~~ is cruel.

DILLION

What's gettin' "fixed" mean?

ELFREDA

Oh, it is a simply terrible thing. The magazines say that a woman goes to a hospital and pays some doctor to go inside her, and ~~kill~~ the baby hidin' in her stomach. It's horrible, Dilly. They showed color pictures in the magazines. Why, I couldn't draw for a week. Just awful.

DILLION

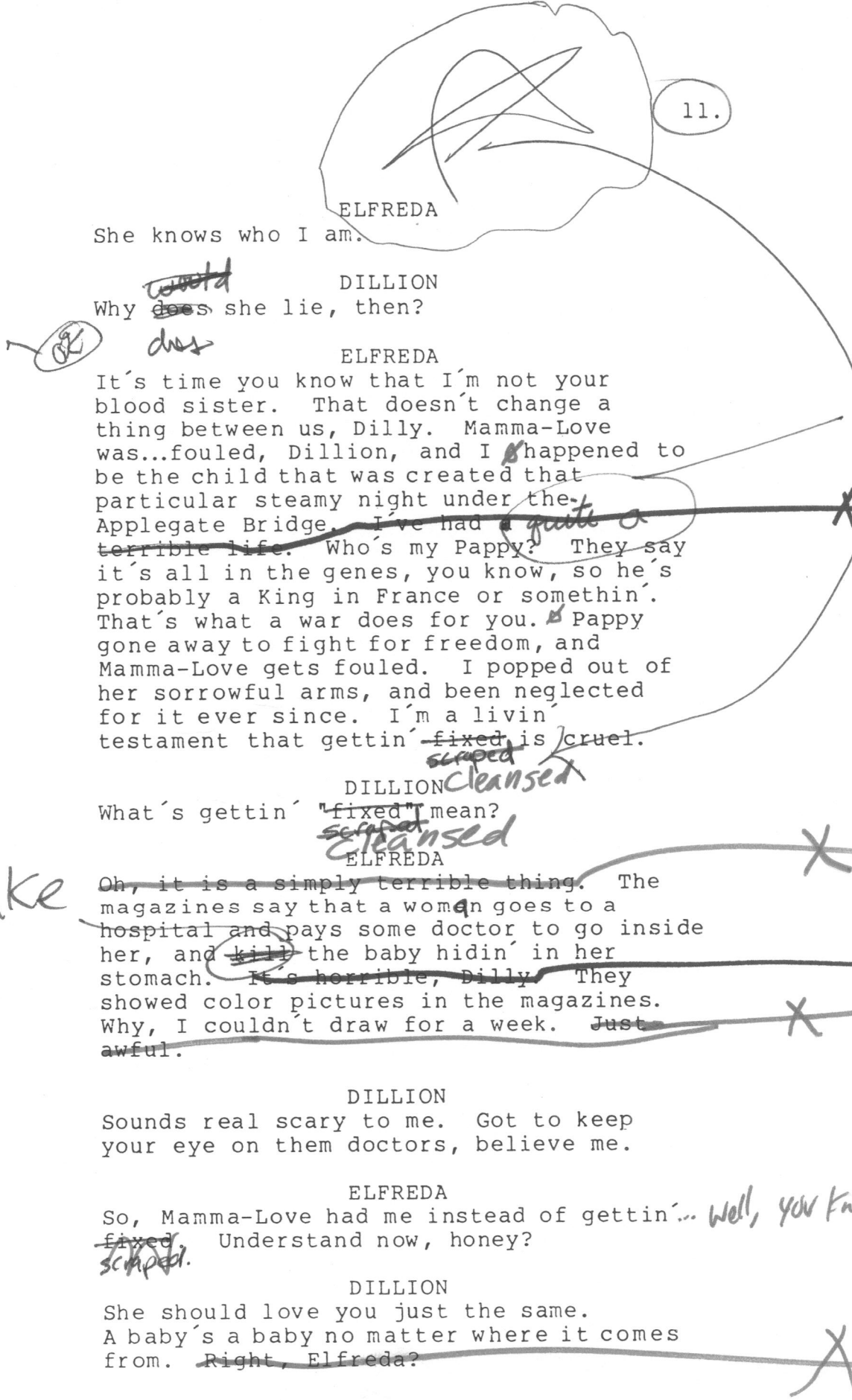
Sounds real scary to me. Got to keep your eye on them doctors, believe me.

ELFREDA

So, Mamma-Love had me instead of gettin'... Well, you know. ~~fixed~~. Understand now, honey?

DILLION

She should love you just the same. A baby's a baby no matter where it comes from. Right, Elfreda?



take

2E
↓



ELFREDA

Dilly-Boy, from now on. When you open your mouth, just kiss me.

QUICKLY

THEY [↑]KISS. A STONE THROWN FROM THE OUTSIDE CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW. THE ROCK ROLLS ACROSS THE FLOOR. DILLION AND ELFREDA SCRAMBLE.

DILLION

Yipes! Sounded like a regular sonic boom! *what a horrible crash.*

ELFREDA

Dillion! Are you all right, sweetie? Who is it this time? Don't get hit in the eye, now darlin'!

DILLION PUTS HIS BOOTS ON.

DILLION CREEPS TO THE WINDOW AND PEEKS OUT.

DILLION

Can't tell. Looks like the people from the church again. Can only see their backs. I wish they wouldn't run away so fast.

(Black)

ELFREDA

~~Clean up the glass, and put the rock with the others. I'm growin' to hate the sound of rocks breakin' glass.~~

(Black)

DILLION

Always gives me the chills when they do that. It isn't fair that we should have to be so scared.

puts on his boots

DILLION PICKS UP THE ROCK AND TOSSES IT ON THE PILE WITH THE OTHER ROCKS. ELFREDA TIP-TOES AROUND THE SHARDS OF GLASS AND LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW. DILLION SWEEPS THE GLASS UNDER THE DINING TABLE WITH A NEWSPAPER.

ELFREDA

Careful, sweetheart, don't cut a toe.

DILLION

Elfreda, I won't cut a toe. I do this every day.

ELFREDA

I'm only expressin' concern for my sweet baby brother, that's all. ~~And don't use that tone with me, please. Thank you.~~

X

DILLION

They don't miss a day, do they? Got to give 'em that. Regular as the sun. Sometimes I forget to get the mail one day, but them... well, they never miss. I don't get why they got to bust a window, though. They could leave a nice long note and stuff it in a greeting card next time and leave it at that. I'd call it even, then. You know? Forgive and get out? A note would certainly be more civil. *Kind* Maybe they don't think we can read.

ELFREDA

Maybe they don't write, Dillion. I really am alarmed at the total cruelty of educated neighbors. People should lead their lives as they wish, not at the constant prodding and the reckless disregard for human feelings by gorillas armed with badges and Bibles.

books
DILLION

I sure know I don't like it when they throw things. ~~Takes too long to clean it all up.~~ We're runnin' out of room to put the trash they leave behind. Yep. I definitely think a note is a better idea. Then we could burn all the paper for fuel and heat the house in the winter. *X*

ELFREDA

Go out there and meet them tomorrow, Dillion. Please? Will you stand up, darlin', and tell them to go away and worry about their own. Will you do it? For me? ~~Tell them to leave our family alone,~~ *somebody has to pay for our grief.* *X*

DILLION

Aw, Elfreda, someday. I could get killed tomorrow, and then, I'd be gone. ~~Who'd take care of you, then?~~ I don't think you want me gone. You wouldn't have a human canvas any more. I wouldn't lose your tattoos for all the junk in Hong Kong. *X*

DILLION KICKS OFF HIS BOOTS.

ELFREDA

The day my child is born, he will be strong. I'll rear him up and his entire life will be dedicated to a single purpose: Defend who's right.

DILLION

You gonna have a baby, honey?

ELFREDA

(a laugh)

Heavens, no! Someday, though, my breasts will be weighted with milk and my infant's lips will kiss the dark skin and be filled with my life.

DILLION

I sure wish I had a kid. He'd go to school, though. That'd teach him how to hunt for the good stuff. School'd teach him trash from the jewels. Of course, I'd be a good Pappy and teach him at least how to write a note in a greetin' card so's he could be a good neighbor.

Kind

MAMMA-LOVE ENTERS FROM THE CELLAR. HER MOTIONS ARE SLOW AND DELIBERATE. SHE CARRIES A KETCHUP BOTTLE IN EVERY POCKET.

3

MAMMA-LOVE

Dilly, Elfreda, I heard a bang. I thought the plaster might have fell on you.

DILLION

'Nuther rock, Mamma-Love. Three so far this week. We got it all cleaned up. Go back down with your friends.

MAMMA-LOVE

Brought my friends up wit me.

MAMMA-LOVE TAKES HER BOTTLES OUT AND SMILES.

2 4/5

DILLION

I got the mess cleared up real good.

MAMMA-LOVE

Good. Good.

MAMMA-LOVE TAKES A LONG DRINK FROM HER BOTTLE. IT PERKS HER UP.

ELFREDA

Dillion and me want to call the law. We want them to bring pistols, so we won't get no more abuse from the animals outside. *okay.*

DILLION

I'll go run and tell 'em to come, right, Mamma-Love?

MAMMA-LOVE

Naw, Dillion. I don't think we need the law. ~~Forget it.~~ X

DILLION

You got a plan, Mamma-Love?

ELFREDA

She don't got a plan, Dillion. She's bubblin' in sorrow-water. ~~We need help, Mamma-Love.~~ X

MAMMA-LOVE *with*
(upcut)

I shouldn't have to put up *with* the arguments of a niece.

DILLION

Shush! I heard someone creepin' outside the window!

ELFREDA

I'm your daughter, Mamma-Love.

MAMMA-LOVE

Please! Not in front of my friends!

ELFREDA

Your friends are bottles of sorrow-water in ketchup bottles! ~~Talk to me Mamma-Love!~~ (Black) X

DILLION

Here they come again!

DILLION RACES FOR COVER BEHIND THE LOVE SEAT. MAMMA-LOVE AND ELFREDA HUNCH DOWN WITH HIM.

ELFREDA

have I died on
~~Admit that I'm your daughter. Please? Then I'll know that all these years you really do love me. Do that one thing for me before we get killed.~~ X

(Black)

DILLION

Elfreda! ~~They'll hear us.~~ They might actually hit one of us if we give 'em the chance!

MAMMA-LOVE

~~And another thing.~~ You get those paints off my love seat. Spent the last of Pappy's benefits on it. It's the only clean thing in this house, and I don't want you ruinin' it. *Understand me, niece?*

ELFREDA

If I'm not your daughter, then Tully can't be your son.

MAMMA-LOVE GRABS ELFREDA'S ARM. MAMMA-LOVE'S VOICE BECOMES STRONG AND LOW. DILLION PLUGS HIS EARS WITH HIS FINGERS.

DILLION

I can feel 'em comin'! They just picked up another rock. Hoo, it's one longer *bigger* than a giant daddy longlegs.

MAMMA-LOVE

Tully is the salvation. He's got brains and hope and a ~~nice~~ smile. He's gonna carry his Mamma-Love away on his strong, educated shoulders. You, at the other end...are the thorn in my side, my kneecap, my throat, and the little pinky on my left hand. *pretty*

TAKES A DRINK in CELEBRATION

MAMMA-LOVE STICKS HER LITTLE PINKY IN ELFREDA'S FACE, ELFREDA BATS AT THE FINGER.

ELFREDA

I'm more your daughter than he is your son.

DILLION

Elfreda? We gonners yet? She's been in the cellar too long. Let her alone!

Pappy's MAMMA-LOVE

Tully is ~~your father's~~ child. But I loved him. That's all that matters.

like he was my own son.

ELFREDA

Yeah, and Pappy and Tully are both gone.

Mamma-Love, we have Pappy's for the looked away. why don't we take it out of hiding and spend it! It's stupid to wait for Tully. We need to see out while we can.

DILLION

Please, Elfreda. Don't go bringin'
that up now!

ELFREDA

Mamma-Love, you know we got all of
Pappy's fortune hidden away in the
junkyard. Let's have Dilly dig it
up. Then we can be free of all this
abuse.

MAMMA-LOVE

Why should we leave? It's safe here.
Our lives are chosen. None of us have
been belted by a screamin' rock, now
have we niece? We'll choose to live our
lives right here. Then, when Tully
graduates from the University... we can
hold our necks straight up...and walk
away proud. Pappy would've liked that.

ELFREDA

Why do we have to wait for Tully?

DILLION

I hear sirens! Doomsday it is!

MAMMA-LOVE

We wait for Tully, because he needs
an education to survive. He needs
to understand the world and his place
in it. Us? We only need to teach
ourselves not to spit up when the world
spins too fast. Nope. I'm not tellin'
where I hid the ~~money~~ ^{jewels}. A fortune is
useless unless you got somebody special
around who understands how valuable it
really is. It's not all that bad, here,
Elfreda. It's all how you tilt your head
when you look at your life, I guess.

ELFREDA

I'm sick of bein' upside down.

DILLION

Keep your voice down.

MAMMA-LOVE

Pappy died in the war. He died so we would live free and be happy.

ELFREDA

Well I ain't neither.

MAMMA-LOVE

Take a number, and get in line, niece.

DILLION

~~You want to get us all hurt? Please, I'm scared.~~

MAMMA-LOVE

Cool it, Dillion.

ELFREDA

~~I came from within you. For three seasons you carried me in your belly. You only adopted Mister Tully The Saint.~~

MAMMA-LOVE

I won't take the blame for actions I didn't cause. You can't force that foulin' on me no more.

ELFREDA

~~You think I asked to live like this? I'd rather be dead than always unhappy. Nobody understands me. *I'm all alone.*~~

DILLION

~~Elfreda! I heard that! Honey, don't say thinks about dyin'. You're so awful when you get mean!~~

MAMMA-LOVE DRINKS FROM A BOTTLE.

MAMMA-LOVE

Next time, Elfreda, I'll call up Mister Nettles. Then I coulda been free of you thirty year ago.

MAMMA-LOVE TAKES ANOTHER LONG DRINK FROM HER BOTTLE. ELFREDA AND
 MAMMA-LOVE BOTH PEEK OVER THE EDGE OF THE LOVE SEAT. SILENCE.
 THEY COME BACK DOWN IN UNISON, AND RESUME.

ELFREDA

~~cleanscraps~~
~~for~~ You didn't though. Mister Nettles didn't
Why do you always hurt my feelings, ~~love~~
Mamma-Love? You treat me like I'm dead.
I need you to tell me you like me, Mamma-
Love. Just say I ain't all that bad. ~~X~~

DILLION GETS UP FROM BEHIND THE COUCH AND TAKES A LOOK OUT THE WINDOW. ~~NO MORE EARS.~~

FOR THE FIRST TIME

DILLION

Well, I guess they're gone. Must've scared them away with all the eyeball scratchin' going on in here.

DILLION TAKES ANOTHER PEEK OUT THE WINDOW, THEN WALKS BACK TO THE LOVE SEAT AND RECLINES.

MAMMA-LOVE

and not alive anymore

Wake up, Elfreda. You're gonna slam into a wall. I'll kick you out if you keep festerin' in me. There are walls all around. Better stop and look before you bust your nose on a brick. Can't make your own rules and get away with it forever. There's a law in nature, too. (Block)

ELFREDA

Nothin' wrong with love, Mamma-Love. It feels good. If you're truly in love, nothin' else matters. ~~X~~

ANOTHER LARGE ROCK SILENTLY SAILS INTO THE HOUSE THROUGH THE BROKEN WINDOW AND SMACKS DILLION SQUARELY ON THE LEG.

DILLION

Hey! It hit me broadside!

DILLION DIVES BEHIND THE LOVE SEAT. HE RUBS HIS LEG.

MAMMA-LOVE

It's makin' me crazy up here. I'm goin' back down. Call me ~~if~~ ^{when} Tully comes home.

DILLION

I can't feel my leg! I been wounded. ~~X~~

ELFREDA

I'll get you a compress, Dillion. It'll make you feel better. Now hush up, sweetie. ~~X~~

up here

DILLION

Stay with us, Mamma-Love. Tully won't be home for a while, so stay safe with us. I got the tires Tully wants. Alls I got to do is get 'em gift wrapped.

(Blaet)
X

MAMMA-LOVE

The child sounds feverish. Better get him to a doctor, niece.

ELFREDA

He's fine, Mamma-Love. I'll take care of him. ~~I'll take care of him like I always had to.~~ *have to.*

MAMMA-LOVE PICKS UP THE ROCK THAT STRUCK DILLION AND TOSSES IT IN THE PILE WITH THE OTHER ROCKS. NEXT, SHE LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW.

DILLION

Stay down, Mamma-Love. They're not throwin' bouquets. ~~Rocks hurt, believe me! Want to see the bruise?~~

MAMMA-LOVE

They're gone. I see the soles of their feets runnin' away. C'mon out brother, daughter.

ELFREDA LEAPS UP.

ELFREDA

You called me daughter!

MAMMA-LOVE

Ooops. ~~OA~~ simple slip of the tongue, niece, due to ketchup.

DILLION

You know Tully doesn't like it when you drink. ~~Maybe you should lay off a while.~~

MAMMA-LOVE

I only drink to quench my thirst for tomatoes.

ELFREDA

Why do you bother puttin' your sorrow-water in those ridiculous ketchup bottles, Mamma-Love? I mean it must be terribly boring to scrape out all the old, crusty tomatoes left on the glass. *Why do you bother?*

And Pappy was a fighter, and his dead... (20)

DILLION

Let me see if I got it yet. If Elfreda's you're daughter, but you call her niece, and Tully's not your son, but you call him a Saint. What does that make me?

MAMMA-LOVE

Pappy

You are the constant reminder that Pappy was a man and not a dream. You don't have your father's spirit, though. Sorry, Dillion. He drank and cursed and didn't let the world saddle him with shame for havin' a bastard in the house. They were all scared of him, 'cause he would throw back. You're a scared, wounded little boy, Dilly. See? Your father would've slapped me to the ground by now for sayin' he was scared out loud. Never would've, though. I loved that man. Keep at it, Dilly. There's always hope that some day his genes'll kick in and you'll be a man. Call me when sweet Tully gets here. Comes home.

COURT
CHILD

Pappy
I

MAMMA-LOVE GOES DOWN THE CELLAR STEPS.

~~BOMB CELLAR SHELTER~~

DILLION

Elfreda? I don't like it when she comes up here and you pick fights with her. She's our Mamma-Love no matter what. I want to start bawlin'. You're both so terribly mean to each other. You better go to your appointment now.

4

ELFREDA

Come over here, sweetie. I'm feelin' better. Mamma-Love and I got a different relationship, that's all. She loves me. She just likes to tease me a little, that's all. Kiss me please.

(Black)

DILLION

You think what we been doin' at night is right? I mean, us sleepin' in the same bed and all?

ELFREDA

~~Dilly! I am the big sister who fed and bathed and loved you when no one else would! I can't believe how you sit there and tell me I'm mean, then turn around and throw it back in my face. Don't you love me any more?~~

ELFREDA BEGINS TO CRY. DILLION HOLDS HER HAND AND PATS HER ON THE BACK.

DILLION

I'm sorry, Elfreda. I didn't know what I was sayin'. I love you, honey. Don't cry now.

(Black)

ELFREDA

~~Don't you know you hurt me, Dillion? This is the thanks I get for dedicatin' my life to you? You make it sound like...like... You make it sound like I break in and foul you every night. It isn't fair. You been touchin' me back. It feels good, doesn't it? We're only actin' out an updated version of playin' house. Don't you want to play with me any more, Dilly? If you don't love me any more, then stop meetin' me half way. Don't tease me. I don't like bein' made fun of.~~

(Black)

ELFREDA WIPES AWAY TEARS. SHE PUTS HER CHIN TO HER CHEST AND LOOKS UP AT DILLION.

DILLION

~~I love you. I'd die for you, Elfreda. I risk my life at the junkyard every day so's I can give you presents. You're my sister.~~

ELFREDA

~~Okay. That's better. I'm sorry, honey. I'll help you clean this place up for Tully.~~

(MORE)

ELFREDA GOES TO THE WINDOW AND FEELS THE JAGGED EDGE OF THE BROKEN PANE OF GLASS. DILLION LIMPS FROM NOW ON. HE PICKS UP NEWSPAPERS, BUT HAS PROBLEMS BENDING HIS LEG.

~~BOING!
[First time we learn about the sister.]~~

ELFREDA
(Cont'd)

The edges are like razors. Like the teeth of a shark. I saw in a magazine once a tooth from a shark that ~~was over~~ ^{tooth} six foot tall. That shark's ~~could~~ ^{snapped} a battleship in two with one yawn.

ELFREDA TAKES HER HAND AWAY FROM THE ^{bared} PANE OF BROKEN GLASS. SHE LOOKS AT HER HAND. IT IS GASHED AND BLEEDING. SHE STARES AT THE COLOR. SHE IS FASCINATED BY THE TEXTURE. SHE HOLDS HER ARM UP, AND HER EYES GET WIDE AS THE BLOOD DRIBBLES DOWN HER FOREARM. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SHE HAS SEEN HER OWN BLOOD. SHE TAKES A HEALTHY FINGER, AND DIPS IT INTO THE STREAM OF RED. SHE TASTES IT CAREFULLY. DILLION CONTINUES TO CLEAN.

DILLION

Yeah, I cut my finger on that glass when I was five. Remember? You rushed me to the doctor and he stitched me up. Took out my own stitches with a butter knife later. Remember? You were mad at me for a week when I did that one. I cut the whole finger. Sliced it like a hotdog bun. Could even see the white tendon wavin' back at me underneath all the red.

DILLION CONTINUES TO CLEAN, AS ELFREDA'S VOICE BECOMES INAUDIBLE TO HIM. HER VOICE HAS A HUSHED QUALITY. SHE HAS FOUND SOMETHING THAT TAKES HER BACK IN TIME.

dream house.
ELFREDA

A lifesaver. Cotton candy swirls in a gingerbread ~~house~~. We need a new sheet of spun sand. I learned to draw gazin' out this window while you were at school, Dilly-boy. It would certainly surprise even you to know that every creature known to man passes by this window once a day every year. Most people are too busy on the outside tryin' to sneak a peek in to notice.

ELFREDA TAKES A SILK SCARF FROM HER ROBE, AND TIES IT AROUND HER HAND. SHE ~~CATCHES HER BREATH~~. HER HAND STOPS BLEEDING.

INTALES.

DILLION

Elfreda. You'll be late for your appointment. ~~They're~~

ELFREDA

I don't want to go ~~alone.~~ *Ac*

7

DILLION

Honey, it's only a doctor. You better go and get that cold looked over. I get worried at night when your cough keeps us up.

X

ELFREDA

Come with me, Dillion. I need you to hold my hand.

DILLION

Every time I go to the doctor, I come home with a cold! Every time it works out that way. Germs is a powerful enemy. Can do more damage than a rock, too. All right. I'll go with you if you want. I'll hang onto your hand,

I walk in. Sit on a steel table, and the doctor tells me I'm sick!

ELFREDA

No, Dilly. You stay here. Wait here for Tully, and make sure Mamma-Love don't break her back goin' up and down the stairs.

and I'll hold my breath and hold my breath. But you open the door.

DILLION

I'll walk you there. I won't get a cold from a doorknob. I'll wait outside for you, Elfreda.

And if they tell me I'm sick it's your fault.

X

ELFREDA

No. I need to go alone. Thanks, Dilly.

DILLION

Okay. If that's what you want, Elfreda. I'll stay here.

X

DILLION TAKES THE SUNDAY COMICS AND BEGINS TO WRAP THEM AROUND THE TRUCK TIRES. ELFREDA PLACES HER WOUNDED HAND IN THE HEALTHY ONE AND EXITS THROUGH THE DOOR. DILLION GETS INSIDE ONE OF THE TIRES AND BEGINS TO ROLL AROUND THE ROOM. HE BANGS INTO THE WALL AND FALLS OUT OF THE TIRE. DILLION BREAKS INTO HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER. TULLY STICKS HIS HEAD IN THROUGH THE BROKEN WINDOW. TULLY SMILES.

5

TULLY

Yoodle, doodle, doodle, doodle!

DILLION

Tully? Is it really you? I'm not seein' quite straight. I must be seein' stars.

NO/CUTS

24.

TULLY

In the bat of a lash and the clench of a fist, it's Tully the Saint! Your bona fide dream come true.

DILLION

Tully the Saint! You came home! You really came home! Boy, what a flashy smile!

DILLION RACES TO TULLY AND HUGS HIM THROUGH THE WINDOW.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

I didn't get your present wrapped! Elfreda keeps me up night with a terrible cough.

TULLY

~~How is dear Elfreda? She doesn't write any more. My, you're a fine looking young lad. You've grown into broad shoulders and a nice, pleasant speaking voice since I saw you last.~~

Been 4 years!

DILLION

~~Come in! Didn't you see Elfreda on the way in? You shoulda walked right past each other. You'd recognize your own sister, wouldn't you?~~

TULLY

~~Well, I made a little pit stop. Maybe she took the backwards route.~~

TULLY TOSSES HIS BAGS IN AND WITH HELP FROM DILLION, TULLY CLIMBS IN THROUGH THE WINDOW. *AND HIS WAUC IS A STRIDE.*

DILLION

Careful, brother! You'll cut an ankle. Are you crazy?

TULLY

(straining)

Need...a...little...ad...venture, son. Damn!

DILLION

You cut your ankle! You're bleedin' like a hydrant! I'll go get the doctor! Stay calm and keep breathin', brother. *Don't*

go in a coma or anythin'.

TULLY

Damn, I scraped my shoe. ~~I'm fine,~~
 Dillion. These shoes are expensive.
 They happen to be highly polished patent
 leather from Brazil and I just ruined
 them. Oh, well, off to the junk heap
 they go.

DILLION

~~It's really fine to see you again, Tully.~~ X
 I didn't get your comin' home presents
 wrapped yet. You're home early.

THEY SLAP EACH OTHER ON THE BACK. DILLION TAKES TULLY'S BAGS AND
 STUFFS THEM UNDER THE LOVE SEAT. TULLY EXAMINES THE ROOM. HE
 PEERS INTO THE CELLAR. **OUTSIDE.** ELFREDA WALKS BY THE STONE
 BENCH. SHE IS SHAKING. SHE SITS ON THE BENCH. SHE CROSSES HER
 LEGS. SHE FEELS HER WRIST FOR A PULSE. ELFREDA STRETCHES OUT ON
 HER STOMACH. HER EYES ARE WIDE AS HER FACE IS SMUSHED AGAINST
 THE STONE. SHE FOLDS HER HANDS UNDER HER HEAD, AND FALLS ASLEEP.
 SHE STOPS SHAKING. **INSIDE.** TULLY DANCES WITH HIMSELF.

TULLY

Stow away the masking tape, throw out the
 wrappers. Sold that big old truck and
 bought me a pair 'o walkin' shoes. Took
 'em right out of the box, strapped 'em on
 and they brought me right to this
 verandah! ~~The same stoop, no less!~~ X

DILLION

Those must be pretty important shoes to
 trade in for an entire truck. I coulda
 got ya ten thousand shoes for one truck.
 I usually wear boots. When I can dig 'em
 up, that is. X

TULLY

Old homestead looks the same. Needs a
 little wax and wallpaper. But I can take
 care of that. I have a lot of time on my
 hands now. I'll get this place fixed
 right up.

DILLION

How'd you get home so fast? I really was
 countin' on a few more months of gettin'
 things lookin' fine. Your teeth are
 sparkin'.

TULLY

I see the same old varmints are tossin' projectiles at my loved ones. Have to to something about that one, eh, Dillion?

TULLY SMILES AT DILLION AND PUNCHES HIS ARM.

DILLION

I'll put in new glass later. I order glass and window putty by the truckload. You sure do have a great big smile.

Tully Shark's

TULLY

It's all magic, Dillion. An illusion of modern dentistry, son. ~~But thank you.~~ Now where's my Mamma-Love? Mamma-Love? Honey, you home?

Nice tattoo.

What is it? A hedgehog?

It's an apple the sign of freedom

DILLION

Say, Tully. She's been lookin' for you to come home somethin' venomous. She's worse. She uses the ketchup to flavor more of her days.

X

TULLY

A peppered past is a little bitter.

I looks fine, Tully

DILLION

Okay. Sounds good.

THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER. OUTSIDE. ELFREDA'S ARM FALLS OFF THE SIDE OF THE BENCH. INSIDE. DILLION AND TULLY CONTINUE TO STARE. COUNT FIVE. BEFORE EITHER OF THEM MOVE.

TULLY

Well, Good to see you, Dillion. You certainly have grown up.

DILLION

~~Me too. You seem different. Mamma-Love, you should know, stays mostly in the cellar. I'm worried bout her. She stays there 'cept to check on one of two things. One, the current count of broken windows, and two, the arrival time of you.~~

X

TULLY

She didn't get my letter.

DILLION

Letter? ~~Did I lose it?~~ No. We got no letter. I check the box twice every day. Sometimes I forget, but I check the box three times on the next day. Hope I didn't drop it in the mud....

TULLY

Take it slow, Dillion. Mamma-Love didn't get said letter, because I forgot to send said letter. ~~Somethin' important must be told directly.~~ The news I have to tell her should...well...it should come straight from my lips and...then stab her straight in the heart.

OUTSIDE. ELFREDA WAKES UP WITH A START. SHE LOOKS CONFUSED. SHE SCRATCHES HER WRAPPED HAND, REMEMBERS THE PAIN AND STOPS. SHE LOOKS AT THE BENCH. SHE BEGINS TO SHAKE AGAIN. SHE EXITS BACK THE WAY SHE CAME. INSIDE. DILLION PICKS UP THE RUBBER TIRES AND LEANS THEM BACK AGAISNT THE WALL OUT OF THE WAY.

DILLION

Well that sure doesn't sound like much fun. ~~I hope it isn't anythin' bad.~~ Why it would break her heart if you had problems at the University.

TULLY

Yeah Yes, well. ~~Nothing for you to steam over, Dillion.~~ I can charm this one under the rug just like I did with the exploding toilet when I was twelve.

DILLION

Please, Tully. Whatever it is, lie to *Mamma-Love.* ~~her? Wait to tell her unless you want to kill her.~~ If you have news any less than you bein' nominated for King, please wait it out. Give Mamma-Love a little time to simply adjust to the excitement of bein' able to hug your skin and ~~smell your~~ *remember the smell of your* cologne. Do you promise or do we got to make a blood pact?

TULLY SALUTES DILLION. THEN, TULLY HUGS DILLION AND AGAIN PUNCHES HIM IN THE ARM.

TULLY

(shouting)

Mamma-Love? Where are you, honey?

DILLION

Smile at her, Tully. ~~That's all she expects from you. I don't think she needs anything more than a smile.~~

TULLY

Mamma-Love! It's your baby boy! Tully the Saint has come marchin' home!

AGAIN, TULLY SALUTES DILLION AS HE MARCHES DOWN THE CELLAR STEPS. DILLION GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR, OPENS IT, AND FINDS ELFREDA STANDING THERE SHIVERING.

DILLION

Glory be! You're there in the flesh! I was on my way to the doctor's office to let you know Tully's home! ~~How's that for a howdy-doo?~~

ELFREDA

Oh. That's good news. Tully's home? Oh, No, Dillion... what're we gonna do now? I had no idea he'd be here so soon. You're not teasin' me now, are you Dillion?

DILLION

I've never lied to you, Elfie. Why should I start now? Ho! He came in through the window like a genuine Santy Clause.

ELFREDA

Santa comes down chimneys, Dillion. We better get you brushed up on your Fairy Tales. I'm gonna need your help on this one.

DILLION

Elfie, you look white as bleach. ~~You don't look so good, honey. You catch a cold at the doctor's? I told you to be real careful in that place.~~

ELFREDA WALKS IN, DILLION CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HER. SHE EMBRACES HIM.

ELFREDA

Hug me, Dilly-boy. I have a chill.

DILLION

Want me to get you a blanket? Elfie, you got me good and scared. I never seen you this shook up before.



ELFREDA

Can you hear my heart beatin'? ~~Faster~~
~~it goes.~~ It's never been loud as this
 before. I can feel it in my toes.

DILLION

What's wrong with your hand? You get
~~cut?~~ Did the doctor hurt you?

ELFREDA

You have to be a man, Dillion. Your
 spine will be straight from now on. You
~~promise me you won't cry?~~

DILLION

~~I won't cry or anything.~~

ELFREDA

Fate tossed me a coin. I called heads,
 caught it, and won.

DILLION

Whad you win? I promise I won't bawl.

ELFREDA

We won ourselves somethin' very special.
 It will need to be kept up. ~~Kept clean~~
~~and safe.~~ No more junkyard huntin' for
 you, no more multi-rainbowbrite-water-
 color-drawings for me. We won ourselves
 a baby, Dillion. We get to take care of
 infant flesh. I'm havin' our little boy,
 Dilly. We made a baby.

DILLION

A baby? I don't get it. ^{You mean} A real live
 baby that breaths and sings lullabies in
 the morning?

ELFREDA

It's a prize package from God. And God
 doesn't make mistakes with children. My
 belly's startin' to swell with pride.
 You're a Pappy, Dillion. Me and the baby
 need you to be strong.

DILLION

But how'd ~~all~~ ^{baby} this happen? This is so
 all very excitin'!

ELFREDA

Honey, as I understand it... that hair you been shavin' off... it was a sign. ~~Your voice is deep now. Your hormones are older than you appear, and at night, when our bodies met, we mixed up a child. You follow? We are chosen, Dillion. Chosen by God. Not everybody can have children, but we can! God doesn't make mistakes. There's no ~~any~~ explanation for me havin' our baby than we're chosen parents.~~

DILLION

A child of our own? I don't believe it!

ELFREDA

I don't fib, Dilly. I'm beginning to glow, though. ~~Can you see a difference? When you look into my eyes, can you see another pair of eyes, younger and more innocent peering back out at you?~~

DILLION STARES INTO HER EYES. HE LOOKS AWAY. AGAIN, HE LOOKS DEEP INTO HER EYES, LONGER THIS TIME.

DILLION

Maybe he's asleep. Do babies sleep with their eyes closed?

ELFREDA

Isn't it wonderful?

DILLION

Wait 'til I tell Tully. He'll be happy to be Uncle Tully the Saint.

ELFREDA

(sharp)

No! You can't tell anybody. We'll wait 'til we have our baby. Then we'll show him off proper. We need streamers and crepe paper and cake with yellow frostin'. ~~We got to plan it all out right.~~

DILLION

I can't keep a secret that long!

When ELFREDA
~~we tell our best and most special
 secret out loud, then it gets jinxed.
 Remember 'bout jinxes? We got to keep
 this quiet, okay?~~

DILLION
 I'm gettin' a very uneasy feelin' about
 this whole day, Elfreda.

ELFREDA
 You're caught up in the sheer excitement
 of havin' a new man in the family. ~~We'll
 be happy forever, Dilly.~~ This baby
 promises us ~~that~~. I love you so very
 much!
*eternal
 happiness.*

ELFREDA KISSES AND HUGS DILLION. HE BARELY RETURNS THE EMOTION.

DILLION
 If I made a blood pact with Tully, he
 wouldn't tell. ~~He might go for a blood
 pact.~~ I'd have to stick myself with a
 needle though....

ELFREDA
 Don't risk it. Don't tell Tully, don't
 tell Mamma-Love...nobody can know. Any
 idea that isn't Tully's...he...well, he
 tries to put it on the ground, and stomp
 the life out of it. Besides, he'll be
 gone in a few days back to the
 University. He can wait nine months to
 find out.

DILLION
~~He does have new shoes. They're pretty
 big and mean lookin' too.~~ *His new shoes could*
 Could stomp a
 baby's head with one rock 'o the heel.

ELFREDA
~~Right. We have a life of our own, Dilly.~~
 Don't let anyone have a chance at ruinin'
 our future happiness together.

baby DILLION
 I'll try to keep quiet, Elfreda. But
 it's not gonna be anythin' easy keepin'
 this a secret. I'm a Pappy, and you're a
 Mamma-Love! Hoo-Boy!

SCENE ONE

TIGHTS BACK UP.

THE LIGHTS DIM. MAMMA-LOVE ENTERS FROM THE CELLAR HOLDING A CAKE WITH BURNING CANDLES. TULLY FOLLOWS HER. MAMMA-LOVE SINGS HAPPY BIRTHDAY A LITTLE OFF TUNE. ELFREDA AND DILLION JOIN IN. THE WHOLE FAMILY GATHERS AROUND TULLY WHO SITS ON THE LOVE SEAT.

Happy Birthday
Happy Birthday
Happy Birthday
to you
and walk

MAMMA-LOVE

Blow out your candles, my darlin' Tully.

TULLY

I don't want to be rude, but I think you should know that...it...isn't my birthday.

MAMMA-LOVE

It's the only song we all know the words to.

TULLY

Okay. What're we celebrating? Why'm I in the hot seat?

MAMMA-LOVE

We're celebratin' your University studies! We're ready for the move to the big house in the city when you are ready to take us along after your graduation.

we'll pack up the day you graduate.

TULLY

University? I never said anything about any University.

TULLY LOOKS AT DILLION. DILLION IS STARING AT THE CANDLES.

ELFREDA

What Mamma-Love means is that when you graduate from college, we won't have to go through this song and sit again. So eat up. This house'll be a hot spark if you don't blow them candles out!

MAMMA-LOVE

Don't get wax on the love seat. That is Pappy's love seat.

TULLY BLOWS OUT THE CANDLES. WE ARE IN THE DARK. DILLION'S TRANCE IS BROKEN.

DILLION

So whad you wish for? I know it's supposed to be a secret, but I got problems with 'em, myself.

ELFREDA

Quiet, Dillion. You keep your promise. People don't tell secrets and neither does Tully.

TULLY

I wished that I could find a way to tell Mamma-Love what's bothering me.

DILLION

Let's cut the cake, first. We can talk later. ~~Let's sing again.~~ Keep smiling, Tully, please?

DILLION STARTS TO SING AGAIN
LIGHTS UP. TULLY IS STANDING BY THE LIGHT SWITCH.

TULLY

I've always been straight and right. If I had the choice of walking around a mud puddle or walking straight through and find my destiny faster...I would always opt for sopping sneakers.

MAMMA-LOVE

Let's hear your story, son. We can wait on the cake. The wax is still moist on the icing.

TULLY

I'm not trying to be cruel. I love you all. ~~I want you to understand that I'm not spiteful.~~ I don't want any yelling or hurt feelings.

Happy Birthday son Tully...

DILLION STOPS SINGING TO SPEAK, THEN BEGINS
DILLION
Light the candles, Elfreda.

ELFREDA

I want to hear this, Dillion. Shush....

MAMMA-LOVE

Sister, brother, temper down.

DILLION, ELFREDA, AND MAMMA-LOVE STARE AT TULLY. HE STARES BACK.

TULLY

I...have withdrawn from my work at the University.

TULLY FLICKS THE LIGHTS OFF. DARKNESS AGAIN.

DILLION

Withdrawn? Tully!

ELFREDA

He quit! ~~Surprise to us all.~~ He's home forever!

DILLION

No, that can't be *the truth.*

TULLY

It is. Don't try to change my mind, I've decided. Let's not confuse love with happiness or kindness with neighbors.

ELFREDA

We're all trapped by Mister Tully the Saint. ~~Dillion! Save me, sweetie!~~

DILLION STRIKES A MATCH. TULLY HAS MOVED ACROSS THE ROOM TO THE DINING TABLE. NO ONE ELSE HAS MOVED. ~~HE~~ LIGHTS THE CANDLES ON THE CAKE. THE LIGHTS ARE STILL DARK. *DILLION M-L*

DILLION

Did you get caught in trouble? You ~~coulda called.~~ I would've helped you out. *and left a*

TULLY COMES TO MAMMA-LOVE. SHE IS SITTING ON THE ARMS OF THE LOVE SEAT.

TULLY

You haven't said a word, Mamma-Love. Mutter at least a syllable. ~~Ask me to explain.~~ Please don't close down. You can paddle my tail if you'll only get angry.

ELFREDA

When will you go back?

TULLY

Never.

MAMMA-LOVE DRINKS FROM HER BOTTLE. SHE BLOWS OUT THE CANDLES. *ONE BY ONE*
DARK AGAIN.

DILLION

She's gonna get worse, ~~Tully.~~ You didn't have to tell her. ~~You didn't have to tell her today.~~ You didn't have to do anything but smile and smell good. *ONE*

ELFREDA

Dillion, I'm feelin' faint. Fan me with
~~the palm of your hand.~~

DILLION FANS HER. HE KEEPS AN EYE ON TULLY.

MAMMA-LOVE

You know how much this wounds your Mamma-
 Love? You was our future. You spit on
 the little dignity we could save after
 bein' beat up daily. ~~Is~~ that's what
 you wanted, Tully? *I hope*

LIGHTS UP. TULLY IS AGAIN BY THE LIGHT SWITCH *AND HIS PALM RESTS
 ON THE SWITCH.*

TULLY *Don't make me*

It isn't, Mamma-Love. ~~Now~~ ~~don't~~ go back
 there! It's horrible! That place picked
 me apart and look at me! I'm trapped
 inside.

MAMMA-LOVE

You won't run away and hide here because
 you can't handle the job of being the
 Saint that'll lift this family up. It
 hurts Tully. I wish you didn't look so
 smug.

ELFREDA

~~We're caught.~~ We can't move up town now,
 right Mamma-Love?

MAMMA-LOVE

No sister. Our feets been chopped off at
 the knees. Hard to run away on bloody
 stumps.

DILLION

Were you scared, Tully? *I know I get*
~~scared~~ ~~sometimes.~~

TULLY

Home is where I belong now. I'll go away
 from here, though. I don't want any
 trouble. I just wanted to tell you all
 face to face. I didn't think a greeting
 card would be fair. I'm no coward.

ELFREDA

We can read a greeting card in our own time, Tully. They're not pushed in our face like whipped cream and custard pies with cherries on top.

MAMMA-LOVE TAKES ANOTHER DRINK.

TULLY

I wish you wouldn't drink so much, Mamma-Love. ~~It frightens me when you do it all the time.~~ If you're mad at me, then at least have the guts to tell me to my face. The sorrow-water in those ketchup bottles can't hear your whispers.

MAMMA-LOVE STANDS. SHE BECOMES TOUGH AND ANIMATED.

MAMMA-LOVE

I'll whisper you a story 'bout bein' scared. You sure you want to hear it? All right. Put yer ears on and I'll start my whisper. I lived a life locked in a bedroom 'til your Pappy climbed up the drainpipe and carried me away in the cradle of his arms. The hours alone in that room were blocks of granite crushin' at my soul. Salvation came in the bottles I found one day in my Pappy's attic. I wasn't supposed to be there. But I was a curious child and didn't care if I got caught. ~~All I wanted was to feel I had somebody.~~ I was lookin' for a friend. I found colored black and yellow water in glass bottles labeled ketchup. The happiness in those bottles have been my only true friends. Bottles don't draw on Pappy's love seat, they don't leave Universities and they're never scared. ~~I can count on 'em every time.~~

TULLY

~~That isn't fair!~~ There's no excuse in the world to make it all right for you to swallow yourself silly and blame it all on me. You're not a ~~baby!~~ You're ~~a my~~ Mamma-Love.

bottle.

MAMMA-LOVE

I scared you 'cause I'm right. I took care of my father durin' the reign of scarlet fever. I loved him. I loved his ketchup bottles. Seein' him peel and colored beet red with fever was the worst I felt. ~~Ever!~~ I'd touch his hand and feel the blood throbbing to cool the tissue. It was 'nuff to break me down. Maybe I even cried. I'm surprised my pillow didn't turn to salt dust. So don't do me any favors and pretend that you got pity for your old Mamma-Love, Tully. Don't pity me unless you're plannin' on liftin' me up and givin' me somethin' better. I'm goin' to be with some friends that care.

MAMMA-LOVE EXITS DOWN THE CELLAR STEPS. TULLY LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW. ELFREDA TAKES DILLION'S HAND.

DILLION

You shoulda waited to tell her. I never went to a University, but I know for a fact that you shoulda waited to tell.

TULLY

My whole life is becoming one massive, green, blubberin', slimy, stinkin', "shoulda."

Tully. Thanks to you!

ELFREDA

Well, We got cake, and nuthin' to celebrate.

TULLY

Celebrations are excuses for forgettin' who you are. To forget one life for the light of a candle.

SILENCE. DILLION STRETCHES, BRIGHTENS.

DILLION

Hey! We can celebrate me and Elfreda havin' a baby of our own.

ELFREDA STANDS AND CINCHES TIGHT THE SASH ON HER ROBE

ELFREDA

Dillion, how dare you jinx us! He has no idea what this means to us!

↑
baby means

ball
 TULLY
 A baby? I heard a curve sail past my forehead. Come again, Dilly? I won't duck this time, I promise.

DILLION
~~We need some happiness, Elfreda. I'm proud to be a Pappy. Tully won't tell.~~ X

TULLY
 What's this about?

(Black)
~~my baby.~~
 ELFREDA
 Nothin'. ~~You just leave, Tully. You're going to hurt us. I know it. I can feel you inside hurtin' me.~~ X

TULLY
 Somebody shine some light on me, here. I don't like things that happen in the dark.

brother
 ELFREDA
~~We don't need you, Tully the Saint. Righteousness and morality belong in your University, not in this house! Dillion, you jinxed us beyond repair!~~ X

TULLY
 Elfreda, calm down.

DILLION
 She went to the doctor today and found out we're gonna be blessed with a baby. ~~I'm so proud. We're chosen, Tully.~~ X

Elfreda says
 ELFREDA
~~Tully, you're an outsider just like me. I know how it feels to be hated, so don't preach to me. You put others in little boxes. If they don't obey, you kick them in with logic. The cardboard box smothers them. And you stand there and laugh.~~ X

TULLY
 This is getting scary. Are you having a baby, Elfreda?

ELFREDA
 No! I am chosen!

DILLION

She has a baby in her stomach. I'm the Pappy.

TULLY

Holy God.

ELFREDA

You shut up, Tully. You can't get God against us! ~~He sent this child to me.~~ He sent it to be raised to fight the people who throw rocks. Just like the little baby Jesus. We got beliefs of our own.

TULLY

Beliefs? Peccadilloes! The Lord giveth, and the law taketh away!

ELFREDA

Love is never wrong, and neither is God!

TULLY

Your love is wrong.

ELFREDA

No, it's not. ~~Never is~~ wrong.

DILLION

Tully, what's the matter? Did I ~~really~~ jinx ~~the~~ baby?

ELFREDA

You pack up, Tully. We got along fine without you.

TULLY

~~Sure you want me gone.~~ When I'm not around watching, anything becomes legal. Love between sister Elfreda and little brother Dillion is wrong no matter who's around.

DILLION

What's wrong? Did I do ~~some~~ wrong?

What

}?

ELFREDA

You're scared like Mamma-Love said.
 You're scared my baby's gonna grow up
 ownin' you and your University.
 He'll...he'll cure cancer...an...my
 baby'll...be president...an...and...he'll
 even get nominated for Pope. Then his
 Mamma-Love Elfreda will be a Patron
 Saint! ~~That's why you're mad, Tully.~~
 You can't stand anyone being taller,
 stronger, and smarter than you!

TULLY

~~Elfreda, listen to me.~~ Honey, you're not
 feeling well. Let me help you.

ELFREDA

Don't use that tone with me, Tully.
 You're makin' fun of me.

TULLY

you'll do time in jail if you have this
 baby. Doing time will tame your
 brotherly love, but you'll get beat up
 and knifed by the other inmates. ~~You~~
~~wouldn't be able to handle that, Elfreda.~~
~~Let me help you.~~ *I can help you.*

ELFREDA

~~People been havin' babies since the~~
~~beginnin'.~~ Me and Dillion...we love each
~~other.~~ I'll teach my baby slow and easy.
 Slow and easy, just like I had to teach
 myself.

TULLY

Don't make me turn you in, Elfreda. ~~You~~
~~know I will if you keep acting this way.~~

DILLION

Why can't Elfreda and me have a baby?

TULLY

Dilly, it'll turn out bad. I shoulda
 come home sooner. ~~I didn't know things~~
~~were so off center.~~ If Elfreda has this
 child...it'll..well, you'll wish ~~you~~ were
 never born alive.

ELFREDA STALKS TULLY.

↓
 both ~~both~~ you

ELFREDA

He's jealous, Dillion. We have love and he doesn't. He's tryin' to stomp on us with those new shoes of his.

DILLION

I don't want to die, Tully.

TULLY

The baby you and Elfreda made will be imperfect. It'll be mentally retarded!

ELFREDA SHOVES TULLY INTO THE PILE OF ROCKS. HE STUMBLES, AND ROCKS SCATTER ACROSS THE ROOM. TULLY ROLLS DOWN THE MOUND OF ROCKS TO THE FLOOR.

ELFREDA

There! You stay right there where you belong with the rest of the rocks!

TULLY

What's the idea? I coulda been killed in a second! Dilly, help me up.

ELFREDA

1,2,3,4
~~It's a trick, Dillion. Why do you say such mean things, Tully? You're just like Mamma Love. Hit him, Dillion.~~

DILLION

Don't you love us any more, Tully?

Me and my baby

ELFREDA

~~we~~ can take it slow and easy....

TULLY STANDS UP, DUSTS OFF HIS CLOTHES. HE IS READY FOR A FIGHT.

TULLY

(upcut)

Slow and easy is right! This kid of yours is gonna need special attention.

ELFREDA

All children are special.

TULLY

You'll give birth to a mongoloid! A stick figure child with no brain. No fault of his own, either. Only the fault of his stupid, loveless parents.

DILLION JUMPS ON TULLY'S BACK. THEY FLAIL AND ROCK ON THE FLOOR.

DILLION
 We do love each other. You shut up,
 Tully!

ELFREDA
 Get him, Dilly! ~~How dare he say that!~~
 He doesn't know when to stop! Smack him
 in the mouth, honey. Box his ears!
 Punch his lights out.

TULLY
 It's all true! You'll spread your legs
 and give birth to a monster. A monster
 with two heads, a twisted spine and
 purple hair!

ELFREDA
 Stop it! Stop saying that!

ELFREDA TRIES TO KICK TULLY IN THE SHIN. INSTEAD, SHE BOOTS
 DILLION IN THE LEG. IT IS THE SAME LEG THE ROCK HIT.

DILLION
 Hoo, Elfreda! I'm in such terrible pain!
 I can hardly breathe!

TULLY
 You'll have a crippled mass of bones and
 flesh. Innards'll pop out of you dead!
 Stillborn and breathless!

TULLY PUNCHES DILLION IN THE SAME LEG. DILLION DROPS OFF TULLY
 AND GRABS HIS LEG. HE TWISTS HIMSELF INTO A PRETZEL SHAPE.

who twisted the same leg the rock hit
 DILLION
 You play dirty, Tully. I wasn't gonna
 hurt you. I was only gonna shut your
 mouth.

hold face
 ELFREDA
 Stay away from me. You're a fibber with
 a capital "F", Tully. Babies are sweet
 and beautiful. All babies are perfect.
 How could somethin' like a monster come
 from somethin' as ravishin' as me?

DILLION
 I can't feel my leg!

TULLY
You're not having the baby.

DILLION
I'm not stupid. ~~I could teach it, Tully.~~
~~You really hurt my leg.~~

TULLY
No, you won't teach it. ~~I'm sorry about~~
~~your leg.~~

DILLION
What we gonna do, Elfreda?

ELFREDA
In all the magazines I ever read, not one
said anythin' 'bout babies with purple
hair.

DILLION
I want my boy!

TULLY
It isn't normal *for you to have a baby.*

DILLION
Explain to me normal.

ELFREDA
Babies are all right. No matter what.

TULLY
You, thank God, don't write the law or
school our children.

DILLION
What's the law got to do with me and
Elfreda's baby?

~~TULLY~~ *spaces*
When it's sister/brotherly love, it moves
directly from the bedroom to the
courtroom. ~~You can't pull the covers~~
~~over your head and hide like a circus~~
~~animal.~~ The judge'll take you both, lock
you up in different cells and put your
purple-haired monster in a museum.
Nobody wants to take care of a
genetically deformed child. Most people
turn their head and sneeze when they see
somebody different. ~~Nobody wants a~~
~~genetically formed adult, either.~~

(Start Her nose)

ELFREDA

What went wrong? ~~I checked it all out.~~
Not one magazine told me I would have a
monster. I only wanted a baby.

DILLION

Remember when I was a little baby, Tully
and I used listen you to read? You'd sit
~~me in a corner~~ and read out loud to me.
I remember you tellin' me somthin' 'bout
"the pursuit of happiness". You said it
meant for me to stand up for my legal
rights. Well, I'm takin' a stand. ^{now}
I want my kid. ~~I want to be happy.~~

under the table

TULLY

Don't stand up when you're sinking in
quicksand. Dilly, ~~make a stand on your~~
~~own.~~ Don't stand on Elfreda's faults.
You'll end up with a busted neck if you
do.

DILLION

My head's a poundin'.

ELFREDA

The Holy Bible says that Adam and Eve
were the only people on earth, right?
The children of Adam and Eve had to have
love with each other. How else could
there be all these people? ~~We~~ love each
~~other.~~ What you're callin' ~~incest~~ is
what started the world!

Me and Dilly

sister/brotherly love

TULLY

You're gettin' ~~fixed.~~ ~~scraped.~~ ~~Cleansed.~~

ELFREDA

No! Please don't make me. Gettin' ~~fixed~~
is a horrible thing. ~~God wouldn't like me~~
~~fixin' myself.~~ Don't tease me with mean
talk like that.

scraped.
Cleansed

don't do it TULLY

If you ~~don't~~ ~~get~~ ~~fixed,~~ I'll tell Mamma-
Love. She'll toss your tail outta here
faster than you can pack.

DILLION

Maybe we should listen to him, Elfreda.

I want ^{my} baby.

ELFREDA

TULLY

job Dillion, go get Mister Nettles. He'll do a *cleansing*
a ~~fixin' job~~ for us.

DILLION STARTS FOR THE DOOR.

ELFREDA

Dilly-honey! Stay with me. Please. I need you. I used to comb your hair...and feed you wild...strawberries. I never asked for anythin' from you ever before.

~~All I want for the rest of my life is our baby.~~

I'll never ask for another thing, Dillion. Don't get Mister Nettles. I'm

beggin' you to stay here *and protect me.*

TULLY

Go Dillion. I mean it.

DILLION

I...I can't have no purple-haired idiot monster for a boy. Elfreda. How could he tell the difference between junk and jewels? I got to go. I love you, Elfreda.

DILLION RACES OUT THE FRONT DOOR. ELFREDA RUNS AFTER HIM. TULLY GRABS HER ARM AND DILLION IS GONE.

ELFREDA

Dilly, come back! He'll kill me! He's crazy! ~~Why are you trickin' me, Tully?~~ Tell me this is a rotten, dirty trick and that you're sorry. ~~I'll forgive you.~~ If you want a laugh, read a funny story, don't tease me.

TULLY LETS GO OF HER ARM. SHE RUBS IT.

TULLY

What happened to your hand?

ELFREDA

Nuthin'. You'll only tease me.

TULLY

I'm not teasin' you; darlin'. You can't have the baby and that's it. You and Dillion are related by blood, see. The same blood doesn't mix as well as totally strange blood does. You have the same Mamma-Love genes and that ~~is bad for~~ ^{spells "trouble" for} babies. ~~Awful things happen when bad blood mixes.~~

ELFREDA

~~You're wrong. Don't bully me into this, Tully. I'll take care of my baby, I promise I will.~~

ELFREDA SITS ON THE LOVE SEAT

TULLY

that You'll have to do more than that. You'll have to take him to special doctors that'll want to know why this child has purple hair. You'll make up a story. *doctors'll* But they'll check the blood. ~~Then a man in a long car will come and take your baby away in the dead of the night. The next day, the man who weighs the scales of justice will shackle you up and lock you away in some hole made of steel. You'll never see your precious, beloved baby monster with red, glowin' eyeballs and bad breath. It'll kill you.~~

Oh you're good at stories, too. You live in a dreamworld. Well, this is real, elfie.

ELFREDA

Won't I don't want to listen to your talk.

TULLY

Imagine sister Elfreda with her pretty multi-rainbowbrite-water-color-artist's-drawing-utensils-all-the-way-from-France trying to draw a misfortunate clump of indignant flesh with no life that you'll try to call a baby. You'll have to introduce it as a pet rather than call it your own child out loud. You'll hide your monster in the closet on weekends and on holidays when friends come over for toast and strawberry jam.

ELFREDA

Help me, Tully. I'm scared.

MAMMA-LOVE CLIMBS UP THE CELLAR STEPS.

MAMMA-LOVE
 What's goin' on up here? I heard the
 scuffle of men's feet

98

TULLY
 We're just talkin' with our fists, Mamma-
 Love.

ELFREDA
 It wasn't supposed to turn out like this.

TULLY
 We need to fix it, then.

MAMMA-LOVE
 Tully, we need to talk.

TULLY
~~Sure, Mamma Love.~~ I'll get up with the
 rooster tomorrow and share a cup 'o Joe.
 We'll talk then.

MAMMA-LOVE
 We need to talk right now. Let's go
 outside and sit on the bench.

(re-written)
✓ it.

TULLY
 How you doin', Elfreda?

ELFREDA
 I'm a little cold.

TULLY
 Will you do it?

MAMMA-LOVE
 Will she do what?

TULLY
 Elfreda? You all right? You know you
 need to do this.

ELFREDA
~~It isn't fair. It's not my fault.~~ It
 wasn't supposed to be ugly.

TULLY
 You'll do it then, darlin'?

MAMMA-LOVE
 Elfreda? You sick?

TULLY

I need an answer before I leave.

ELFREDA CLOSES HER EYES. SHE SHAKES.

ELFREDA

Okay.

TULLY

You'll go through with it?

ELFREDA NODS.

MAMMA-LOVE

Need my help, Tully?

TULLY

We're set. We were discussing family responsibility, that's all.

MAMMA-LOVE

Oh, well listen to Tully, Elfreda. He may not be at the University, but he sure knows how to clean up a house and make it shine.

(re-enters
it.)

ELFREDA NODS AGAIN.

MAMMA-LOVE

(Cont'd)

Good. Where's Dillion? He didn't do a very good job of cleanin' up.

TULLY

He's on an errand for me. I'll help him tidy up before I leave. The place'll sparkle. Right, Elfreda?

ELFREDA DOESN'T RESPOND.

MAMMA-LOVE

Let's go, Tully.

TULLY REACHES OUT AND TOUCHES ELFREDA'S ABDOMEN WITH THE PALM OF HIS HAND.

deadly serious

TULLY

You better not be bigger than life ~~any~~ ~~more~~ ~~I'm~~ ~~at~~ Elfreda. I'm sorry that it has to be this way, honey.

fine I get
met.

by the

INTERMISSION

ACT II

10

49.

ELFREDA TURNS HER HEAD AWAY FROM TULLY. HE SQUEEZES HER SHOULDER. TULLY AND MAMMA-LOVE EXIT. ELFREDA HUGS HERSELF AND BEGINS TO CRY SOFTLY. THE LIGHTS DIM. THE ROOM BECOMES PATCHES OF SHADOW AND LIGHT. ELFREDA IS IN SILHOUETTE. WE SEE HER BODY SHAKING. THE LIGHTS ARE UP FULL ON THE STONE BENCH. INSIDE, DILLION ENTERS AND ELFREDA STOPS SHAKING. A WHIMPER FROM THE BACK OF ELFREDA'S THROAT SNEAKS OUT. BEHIND DILLION IS NETTLES. NETTLES CARRIES A TOOL BOX. OUTSIDE. MAMMA-LOVE AND TULLY ENTER BY THE BENCH AND HE HELPS HER SIT. INSIDE. IN SILHOUETTE WE CAN SEE NETTLES IS WEARING A COWBOY HAT AND A LARGE KERCHIEF STICKS OUT OF HIS BACK POCKET OF HIS OVERALLS. THE WIND HOWLS. THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE SCENES HAPPEN SIMULTANEOUSLY. WHEN ONE SCENE COMES TO LIFE, THE OTHER IS SUSPENDED. THE SOUND OF RUSHING LEAVES.

He carries an oxygen tank.

DILLION
(whisper)

Elfreda? I found Mister Nettles. He hasn't much time.

DILLION CLEARS OFF THE DINING ROOM TABLE WITH A SWEEP OF HIS ARM. NETTLES PLACES HIS TOOL BOX ON THE TABLE. ELFREDA SLOWLY GOES TO THE TABLE. SHE SLIDES DOWN ON THE TABLE ON HER BACK. NETTLES THROWS A SHEET OVER ELFREDA. NETTLES' FLASHLIGHT SHINES BEHIND THE SHEET.

NETTLES

Boy, you stay over there. I don't want any infections to get in my way.

DILLION GOES TO THE OPPOSITE CORNER OF THE ROOM AND STANDS IN A SHAFT OF LIGHT. ~~NETTLES PUTS OXYGEN MASK OVER HER FACE.~~

ELFREDA

Dillion? I'm scared!

DILLION

Over here, Elfreda. ~~I'm right here. Can I hold her hand? She's real scared. I know how it feels to be scared. How 'bout you?~~

real

NETTLES

No you can't hold her hand. You'll contaminate her. Open wide and say "ah," Elfreda.

I'm gonna pump her full of my special concoction. She'll be a dead corpse, but she'll still be able to breathe.

ELFREDA PULLS HER KNEES UP AND OPENS HER LEGS.

ELFREDA

Good-bye, little boy.

NETTLES

I'm gonna numb you up. It'll help if you relax. You won't feel much of anythin'.

ELFREDA

I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die on a dining room table. ~~A dining room table from a junk heap.~~ I don't want to die on a piece of kitchen furniture!

NETTLES

I do fix-it jobs all the time. Haven't lost anybody yet. Cross my heart and hope to die.

NETTLES LAUGHS. IT IS A HIGH-PITCHED AND SEARING TITTER.

DILLION

~~Mister Nettles said we acted fast. That's good 'cause the risk is less. The baby doesn't even look like a baby yet, Elfreda. It's only a small little ball, he said.~~

ELFREDA

~~Don't tell anyone. This is the worst thing...ouch! This is the worst thing that ever happened in my life. It's stinging. It's killin' my spine. So this is what it's like to die. God gave us a gift and we're tossin' it in the junkyard.~~

little

end up

OUTSIDE. TULLY GOES TO ONE KNEE.

TULLY

Thanks for talkin' to me.

MAMMA-LOVE

~~You don't know how much mothers worry. You got me thinkin' such awful things. You didn't kill anybody did you?~~

TULLY

No. I'm not ashamed of what happened at the University. I'm only a little red-cheeked.

MAMMA-LOVE

Tell me what you're not ashamed of.

TULLY

I like the University don't misunderstand me on that count. The trees are golden and the pond has amber ducks that swim in lines. I spent most of my time alone at the water's edge. ~~Nobody else saw what I looked at.~~ The rest of them were too busy takin' classes that'd get money. ~~I was lookin' at them like they were disfigured.~~ I felt like I was the only healthy one. The others didn't even want to be healed. ~~It was like I~~ understood their ugliness.

MAMMA-LOVE

You can't think people will open up quick like a storm and tell all their secrets. First, you got to take 'em out for a soda pop. Then, a box of ice milk in the afternoon. Everybody likes ice milk. Then, when you're at the movies? And you're sittin' in the dark with your arm 'round her shoulders? You lean in and whisper in her ear. You ask her to tell you her worst secret. Once you got that secret... you got ~~em. in~~

INSIDE.

DILLION WRINGS HIS HANDS.

IN HIS SHIRT OF FLIGHT.

DILLION

~~I'm helpin' kill somebody.~~ I'm a Pappy no matter what. I don't get to raise him up, that's all. No father's day card. No neckties for my birthday. No midnight call tellin' me I'm a Grandpappy. ~~I'm alone for the first time and I'm not scared.~~ ~~I'm angry.~~ ~~I'm freezin'.~~

ELFREDA

~~Dillion? I'm dizzy. See what tellin' a secret does? Jinxed. You shoulda kept a tighter lip, sweetie.~~

NETTLES

I'm gone to widen you up now, Elfreda.

ELFREDA

~~Please don't. Just don't. I don't want to go through with ~~it.~~~~

NETTLES

Hey, boy! She don't want to go through with it. What should I do? Hurry up, she don't got much time to sit and decide.

DILLION LOOKS AT HIS FEET. HE SPREADS HIS TOES APART. HE ANSWERS IN ONE BREATH.

DILLION

Go ahead and do it. X

NETTLES

Okay. Most people take at least five minutes to decide if I should go ahead. Whew! We'll be done in time for dinner. E1-1

ELFREDA

Please. X

DILLION

He opens up a bloodless wound. A bullet with no scar.

OUTSIDE. TULLY WIPES THE SWEAT FROM HIS UPPER LIP.

TULLY

It all started after my shift at Monroe Library. It was late, after hours, but I had a key to let myself out. I went upstairs to be alone. ~~I was completely alone.~~ (Mayerlin) X

MAMMA-LOVE

Doesn't sound like a crime to be alone in the Library. ~~You had a key.~~ I don't see why you had to come home. X

TULLY

I got caught.

MAMMA-LOVE

Caught? You steal somethin'?

TULLY

I got caught stone naked in the University's library. I had my clothes folded up all neat and nice in the corner, and the Dean of Libraries walks in on me! There I am, in the glow of an overhead light...with no clothes on and old Mister Floppy flappin' like a dead fish. ~~I didn't even try to explain it to him.~~ The Dean picked me up by the nape of the neck and kicked my tail out of the University for bad moral conduct. ~~Imagine, ruined for being natural.~~ I wasn't hurting anybody's chances but my own.

MAMMA-LOVE

Tully. You had aspirations! You had a hope that would benefit the whole family. ~~What happened?~~

Tully, you've been going to that University for 17 years!

TULLY

~~I was angry.~~ No one cares about amber ducks that swim in rippling lines. I wanted to do something fun, and get close the the edge. So instead of waiting in a back alley for a young Miss to come along with bare legs and a short skirt, I relieved a desire. It was that, or foulin' some innocent co-ed. How could I do anything else?

INSIDE. DILLION SNEAKS OUT OF HIS CORNER AND GETS CLOSE TO ELFREDA.

DILLION

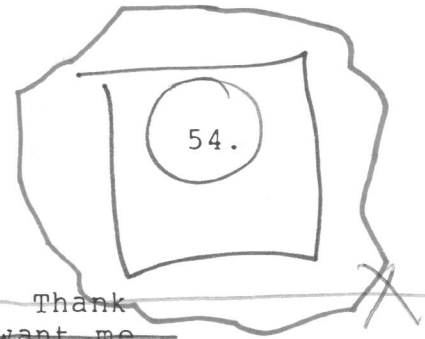
~~You still okay, Elfreda? You ain't said much in the last few minutes. I'm goin' crazy with worry 'bout you.~~

NETTLES POINTS A SHARPENED PIECE OF METAL AT DILLION.

NETTLES

Listen, boy, I told you to get away from here. Now if you keep a sneakin' a peek, I'm gonna withdraw and leave her here on the kitchen table and you can serve her up for a snack after she bleeds to death. Now, move it!

Failed



DILLION

~~I'm sorry. I was only worried. Thank you. I'll stay here where you want me. Do a good job. That's all I want, for everyone to be okay with this is over.~~

NETTLES

Elfreda? I'm gonna do a little ~~scrapin'~~. You won't feel anything at all. Might sound a little like a pumpkin gettin' emptied for a Halloween party.

ELFREDA
(hoarse)

Good-bye, baby boy. I love you.

NETTLES

There! You didn't even scream. Gettin' easier, huh?

NETTLES LAUGHS AGAIN.

DILLION

I love you too. ~~I'm a stone.~~ I'm one of them stones that gets picked up all muddy, then gets cocked back, and gets bashed through our window. ~~Powerless~~ to the advances of my heart. Mister Nettles, farmer by day, doctor by night, pulls my little boy from our insides. He scrapes away the living tissue and we all bleed. Blood stains our clothes, our hands, and gushes from our tongues. All that's life is steel.

OUTSIDE. MAMMA-LOVE STROKES TULLY'S CHIN.

MAMMA-LOVE

Why in the library? Disgusting things should be done late at night behind locked doors. You know that, son.

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TULLY.

~~I didn't fit in. Men and women hold no fascination. But words...the printed page leaps out and grabs me by the throat and won't let me get air. I can touch fame and tragedy with the flip of a finger in the card catalogue. I got naked so I could make love to the world, Mamma-Love. I was showing how much I can love. What does it matter that I did it in the library instead of locked away in some cage?~~

MAMMA-LOVE

You used to be such a sweet boy. Pappy would carry you on his shoulders so you could see the other side. I stayed on the ground to make sure you both didn't trip. I remember that seventh grade girl you took out when you were twelve. You came right home and blew up the toilet. I never saw her ~~again~~ ^{Why?}

or my toilet again. Why?

TULLY

She wanted to burn down the house. Throwing stones wouldn't satisfy her.

MAMMA-LOVE

What did you do to her?

TULLY

~~I didn't tell her that I loved her. I'd stand in front of her after the late movie and have the words "I love you" dancin' on my tongue. I'd open my mouth to let 'em out, but the words would run back down into my throat and choke me to death. I told her I was sorry. I sent her a greeting card with painted flowers on it.~~

→ even

MAMMA-LOVE

~~Sorry can't cover the hurt. Women get hurt by men. The pain continues forever. Love hurts us because we want to sleep, but we got to be holdin' a sick baby under a cold shower to calm a fever. Then, it's time to get up and make breakfast. No more flowers on Mother's Day, 'cause the children don't care 'bout the sacrifices.~~

forget

TULLY

We don't make sacrifices. We make choices.

MAMMA-LOVE

Nobody makes choices. ~~Didn't nobody teach you that yet? All we do is sit and get run over by people who think they know what's right. Don't push us women into somethin' that hurts so much when it's all over.~~

OK

TULLY

Love doesn't hurt.

INSIDE. ELFREDA SCREAMS. DILLION JUMPS.

DILLION

She reached out and I touched her. ~~It felt warm.~~ It became a game. Who would *tingle* ~~feel good~~ first? She always won.

NETTLES

Fine, Elfreda. ~~It won't hurt much longer.~~ You're holdin' very still. That's a good girl.

DILLION

I got to get out. I killed her. *happy* I would go to her in the middle of the night....

ELFREDA

Dilly-honey? I'll draw you a tattoo of this. ~~Later.~~ Let me sleep first.

NETTLES

She's a little woozy. She's talkin' through ~~her~~ *her dreams,* so don't get upset.

DILLION

The midnight moans get traded in for nightmares. ~~I can't stay and face her.~~ My heart's been scraped and tossed in the junkyard for dogs to chew up.

NETTLES

We're done! Houston, the Eagle has landed. Elfreda, keep that kerchief on to soak up the extra blood.

It's over?

Sure

2

57.

ELFREDA

~~I~~ didn't feel like a birth. Where's my child?

NETTLES

I have him. I'll take care of him.

DILLION

You bury ~~him~~! ^{It} Hear me? Put ~~it~~ ^{him} back in the dark where it's warm!

NETTLES

You'll have cramps. Sleep the rest of the day and don't go diving. Stay calm, ~~Elfreda~~. It's over.

DILLION

Playin' house has changed.

OUTSIDE. TULLY AND MAMMA-LOVE ARE LAUGHING.

TULLY

Thanks, Mamma-Love. I need some time to figure out some things. I'll help around the house. I promise.

MAMMA-LOVE

Welcome back, Tully. It's good to have a man back in the house. Maybe you'll go back to that University and you'll find out that they're all runnin' around naked.

TULLY

Thanks for not cuttin' me out, Mamma-Love. I love you.

MAMMA-LOVE

Me too.

MAMMA-LOVE AND TULLY EXIT. INSIDE. DILLION ESCORTS NETTLES OUT.

DILLION

Here's the money. I been savin' it to get some new boots, but you can have it all.

NETTLES

Call again if you need me. She was a hard one to get to yawn all the way, but I gotter open.

DILLION

Is she okay?

NETTLES

Got to go buy some feed for the cattle and vittles for the kin. Call again, *now.*

NETTLES TIPS HIS COWBOY HAT AND DILLION CLOSES THE DOOR AFTER HIM. DILLION STARES AT ELFREDA. SHE IS CRUMPLED UP, SLEEPING ON THE TABLE.

DILLION

Elfreda? Can you hear me at all?

ELFREDA

~~I don't want to go through with it, Dillion. Tell Mister Nettles not to come. The last thing I remember is "don't."~~

DILLION

~~I'm here, Elfreda. ~~Can I get you anythin'~~? Want me to get the water-color-rainbowbrite...~~

ELFREDA

(upcut)

~~I'll make a new tattoo, later, Dillion. ~~I think~~ I have mornin' sickness. Can't you understand I'm pregnant? Ow... terrible dreams are chasin' me.~~

have a baby inside that needs sleep.

DILLION

~~Why'd it have to be this way? I didn't mean to jinx us! ~~It's all my fault~~. I shoulda knowed better.~~

D. RUNS OFF.

ELFREDA

Love isn't bad. Don't let anything change that, baby boy. No matter what it looks like, love is always good. Only your mind stops you from lovin'. After a while, who could know any better?

Scene 2

Light up

~~DILLION RUNS OFF.~~ THE LIGHTS FADE. THERE IS NO SOUND. NOW, A HEARTBEAT. ANOTHER HEARTBEAT. THE HEARTBEATS GET LOUDER AND CLOSER TOGETHER. THERE IS THE SOUND OF FLUID PUMPING. HEAVY BREATHING. MORE FLUID PUMPS. THE SOUND OF WIND. NOW, THE BREATHING BECOMES LABORIOUS. ~~EVERYTHING STOPS.~~ SILENCE, AS THE LIGHTS COME UP. IT IS THE NEXT DAY. WE ARE STILL IN MAMMA-LOVE'S HOUSE. IT IS EARLY AND THE SKY IS PURPLE. THERE IS A NEW PANE OF GLASS IN THE WINDOW. ELFREDA SLEEPS ON THE LOVE SEAT. MAMMA-LOVE STARES OUT THE WINDOW, NURSING HER KETCHUP BOTTLE. TULLY ENTERS WEARING NEW CLOTHES AND HIS DUFFEL IS BAG PACKED, AND HIS BRIEFCASE IN HAND.

from the door. b

TULLY

And here he is! A junkyard dog no more!

TULLY SWINGS HIS ARM TO THE DOOR AND DILLION ENTERS, STILL LIMPING. DILLION IS DRESSED IN THE CLOTHES TULLY PREVIOUSLY WORE. DILLION WALKS ON HIS HEELS. TULLY'S NEW WALKIN' SHOES PINCH HIS TOES. ELFREDA CONTINUES TO SLEEP.

DILLION

~~You sure I don't look like an idiot? These new shoes of yours, Tully, are squarshin' my feets.~~

TULLY

You're lookin' real fine, Dilly-boy. Just like a model from a glossy magazine. You're all set, right? Bags are packed and your shoes are shined? ~~You're on the way.~~

DILLION

~~You sure I look okay, Tully? I never been this enclosed before.~~

TULLY

~~You're a stunnin' sight, boy. Your eyes are bright and ready for a fight. You'll have to beat back all the women with a club.~~

DILLION

~~Oh, I don't know much 'bout women. But, you know that, Tully. I hope I got everythin'. My marbles...my knife... my comic books...I'm ready to go. Told the junkyard good-bye. Gonna miss that the most...Oh. Then...there's Elfreda....~~

the Beast with two backs is Medieval Evil Love.

X

TULLY

Here, Dillion. Won't need this any more. There's toothpaste in there and shoe polish, too. You can use it to stow away your new found jewels.

TULLY GIVES DILLION THE BRIEFCASE.

DILLION

I'm ~~done~~ ^{finished} with jewels. Thanks, anyway. I'll use it for somethin' though, I guess.

MAMMA-LOVE

Where you gonna go first, Dillion? Over the oceans? You're my real baby boy. *You're an angel now, Dilly.*

DILLION

I don't know.

MAMMA-LOVE

You don't forget your Mamma-Love. You come home for summer visits. Maybe you'll even stop by a University. *But, Dillion?*

remember to keep your parts on, okay? Remember to keep your parts zipped, okay?

TULLY

Head up, Dillion. Don't bump into anything. Keep your hands in your pockets. Beware of private places. Keep your shoes shined, and your spirits high. I sound like a greeting card again.

Guts

DILLION HUGS MAMMA-LOVE.

DILLION

I always needed to do this.

DILLION TAKES THE KETCHUP BOTTLE FROM HER AND SMASHES IT AGAINST THE WALL. THE BOTTLE SHATTERS. SORROW-WATER STAINS THE WALL. DILLION TAKES ALL THE BOTTLES FROM HER, AND DESTROYS EVERY ONE.

MAMMA-LOVE

Dillion! You nasty fool!

DILLION

I love you, Mamma-Love. You take care of her, Tully. Don't leave her alone. Don't bother her when she comes up for air. Understand?

TULLY

I understand. You just be careful.

INSERT -- A STONE'S THROW

DILLION TAKES A KETCHUP BOTTLE FROM MAMMA-LOVE AND SMASHES IT AGAINST THE WALL.

MAMMA-LOVE
Oh, you nasty old fool!

DILLION BREAKS ANOTHER BOTTLE AGAINST THE WALL.

DILLION
I love you, Mamma-Love. Take care of her, Tully. ~~Don't ever leave her by herself. Follow?~~

TULLY
I understand.

DILLION BREAKS ANOTHER BOTTLE.

MAMMA-LOVE
Pappy, there's no reasons to break all my friends. ~~I'll be a good girl.~~ Look, Tully's home from the University. Don't wreck my beautiful bottles!

DILLION
I'm Dillion. I'm my own man now.

DILLION BREAKS MAMMA-LOVE'S LAST BOTTLE AGAINST THE WALL.

MAMMA-LOVE
Oh, Pappy. You always did tease me so. ~~You know I got all kinds of friends downstairs.~~ You go outside and throw them bottles at 'em. I love the sound it makes when their rocks shatter the bottles you throw. ~~I'll stay safe down with my friends. You go meet 'em now.~~

TULLY
It's okay, Mamma-Love. I'm here. Pappy's genes just kicked in, darlin'. Stay calm, now honey.

DILLION
Don't bother her when she comes up for air, understand me, son?

TULLY
You just be careful.

M3-367

X

X

X

TULLY HUGS DILLION.

DILLION

I'll miss you.

TULLY

We're here for you, Dillion. ~~It's scary out there alone. Don't let on how scared you really are, though.~~ You always have a home here.

DILLION

Maybe there's more places than home.

DILLION LOOKS AT ELFREDA. SHE IS STILL ASLEEP ON THE LOVE SEAT.

TULLY

~~It's all right, Dillion. It's all taken care of.~~

DILLION

Could you tell her ~~some~~ somethin'?

TULLY

Sure.

DILLION

Tell her that I love her. Or tell her I hate her. Whichever one will hurt her less. ~~Let her decide which one is easier.~~

TULLY

I'll take care of it.

DILLION

Well. ~~I guess I said that I loved you all. I guess I got to turn my back now and leave. I'm about to start burstin' into tears. I better go.~~

DILLION PICKS UP THE DUFFEL BAG AND QUICKLY LIMPS TOWARDS THE DOOR.

TULLY

Sorry 'bout the leg, Dilly-boy!

~~MAMMA LOVE~~

~~Your father'd be proud. Hear me?~~

DILLION SMILES AND NODS. HE IS GONE.

TULLY

Well. Things have certainly been busy.

MAMMA-LOVE

I need to replace a lost friend. I'll be back, Tully.

TULLY

~~You have me. The sorrow-water doesn't need you any more. I need you. Stay here, Mamma-Love. My shoulders are still strong, AND my teeth still shine only for you. Hoo. Take my hand!~~

MAMMA-LOVE

~~The...bottles...help me. You're a sweet boy, but I'm not gonna be leanin' on you. Someday you might up and leave your Mamma-Love. I'm not about to take that chance. I don't like bein' alone, either Tully.~~

MAMMA-LOVE LOOKS AT TULLY. SHE STARES AT HIM UNTIL HE LOOKS AT THE FLOOR. SHE TURNS HER GAZE TO SLEEPING ELFREDA.

TULLY

She had a hard night.

MAMMA-LOVE

Sure is a lazy old goose.

MAMMA-LOVE GOES TO THE LOVE SEAT.

TULLY

Could be. Maybe she's all drained from the excitement of me bein' home for good.

MAMMA-LOVE

~~Tully! There's fresh blood on my love seat! Pappy's love seat! It's stained and ruined for all eternity!~~

TULLY DOESN'T MOVE.

TULLY

Could be that particular time of the month.

MAMMA-LOVE

Oh. Cramps is a bloody curse. Only good thing 'bout babies is that you don't got to poke anythin' inside you for nine months.

TULLY

You go on down. I'll soap it up good and clean. Won't be able to tell it was ever there in the first place. I promise.

MAMMA-LOVE KISSES TULLY ON THE HAND.

MAMMA-LOVE

Good boy. You are a Saint. I knew it all along. I'll be down if you need me.

MAMMA-LOVE EXITS DOWN THE CELLAR STEPS. TULLY SITS NEXT TO ELFREDA. HE SHAKES HER GENTLY.

TULLY

Elfreda? Honey? You wake? C'mon sweetie, it's the mornin' and you should eat somethin'.

OUTSIDE. DILLION WALKS BY THE STONE BENCH. HE LOOKS BACK AT THE HOUSE. HE PUTS HIS FOOT ON THE BENCH AND TIES THE SHOELACE. HE PICKS UP THE BROKEN PIECE FROM THE STONE BENCH TULLY TOOK FROM THE BENCH, AND REPLACES IT. DILLION SLINGS THE DUFFEL BAG OVER HIS SHOULDER AND TAKES THE BRIEFCASE IN THE OTHER HAND. HUMMING A SLOW TUNE, DILLION EXITS THROUGH THE HEART OF THE AUDIENCE. INSIDE. ELFREDA ROLLS OVER.

ELFREDA

Dillion? That you? I got a headache like no other. My head's split into a million parts.

TULLY

It's me, Tully. You took some medicine yesterday. How do you feel?

ELFREDA

Tully? Tully. Saint Tully? I don't know any Tully.

TULLY

I'll fix you a warm breakfast if you like.

ELFREDA

Tully. Let me see...could it be the same Tully who beats up on women and ~~beats~~ bruises innocent children? The Tully who takes the law and sharpens it to his liking, then stabs people in the heart with his morals. Is it that Tully?

TULLY

I'm glad it's all comin' back so fast. I thought it might take you a few days to get your claws sharp.

ELFREDA

I want Dillion.

TULLY

Dillion isn't here, but he loves you. ~~He had to get away for a while. He's takin' a little trip. Me and you? Well, we're a team from now on.~~

ELFREDA

Dilly gone? ~~Did you hurt him too? We were in love! He wouldn't just up and leave me. He told me he loved me. What did you do to him? Don't lie to me.~~

TULLY

~~Settle down, now, Elfreda. All right, then...Dillion hates you terribly. Imagine how you'd feel if the light was turned on and the thing you were in bed with wasn't a candy cane, but a beast with a club.~~

ELFREDA

~~He ran away? I scared him. My first love hates me now.~~

TULLY

Dillion paid Mister Nettles in full. You're lucky I came home in time for this one. ~~You're lucky Dillion was able to get Mister Nettles. He's a busy man.~~

ELFREDA

Mister Nettles? Who's Nettles?

TULLY

Don't play that with me. ~~I'm not in the mood. I stayed here all night to make sure that if you woke up, you wouldn't be alone.~~

ELFREDA

You like to twist the truth, Tully. ~~You twist it so much that nobody can stand to look at it.~~

TULLY

I know you're hurting, Elfreda. You lost something special last night. It's hard to lose two loves in the flash of a day.

X

ELFREDA

You are a twister, Tully. Nothing happened. You're teasin' me again. Your joke is stale and over.

X X

TULLY

Don't tell me that you forgot! You got fixed by Mister Nettles last night, Elfreda. You don't remember gettin' fixed?

cleared

clear it?

X

ELFREDA

I never got... f... f... f... Tully, you've upset me so. I had no operation. I've been here all along. I don't even remember seeing you yesterday.

(Blacks)

X

TULLY

You're sayin' you didn't get fixed last night?

nothin' happened last night?

ELFREDA

Heavens, no! If Mamma-Love would've called Mister Nettles ~~the murderer~~, and got herself fixed... One of those operations... I wouldn't be here arguin' with you. A little baby never hurt nobody. I wouldn't dream of such a thing!

X

TULLY

You think whatever you like. I'm not gonna argue. The situation is under control. That's all I care about. Elfreda, the first job you're going to do -- and you will do jobs from now on -- is to get a towel and soap and get rid of your blood stain from the love seat.

X X

ELFREDA HOPS TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LOVE SEAT.

ELFREDA

Blood? Why, Tully, that isn't a blood stain! ~~Silly, boy. It's a simple little bit of residue left from a cryin', split, deformed multi-rainbowbright-water-color-artists's-drawing-utensil-directly-from-France. No, real blood is a much... darker... red. This is a... pinkish... red. Too light for the real thing. To the untrained eye, it might appear to be blood, but to an experienced artist's eye like mine... well...I can tell it's not blood. Blood stinks when it dries, this here doesn't have a smell. You can even bring your big shot University nostrils over here for a sniff if you don't believe me. Har-upmh. Can't tell blood from ink. Now that's silly. Ha!~~

Wadeau laugh

ELFREDA PEEKS AT TULLY OUT OF THE CORNER OF HER EYE. TULLY STRUTS TO THE LOVE SEAT AND BENDS DOWN. HE SNIFFS. ELFREDA WATCHES. HE TAKES ANOTHER SNIFF. ANOTHER SNIFF, THIS ONE LONGER AND DEEPER.

TULLY

Stinks like blood to me.

ELFREDA

~~Well, it isn't blood. I'd show you the pen itself, but I threw it out. It was leakin'. Don't look at me like that. I hate it when you crunch your eyebrows together. You look like a wolf.~~

TULLY

Whatever. It doesn't really matter.

ELFREDA

Wait. Look at my hand! I cut it on the window yesterday. See? That's where all the blood came from.

ELFREDA UNWRAPS THE SCARF. HER HAND IS HEALTHY. THERE IS NO BLOOD. NO SCAR.

ELFREDA

(cort)
~~Oh. I don't understand. It isn't scratched! Tully, it was cut to the tendon yesterday! I swear it! It's a miracle! I've been healed! Look!~~

TULLY

Um-hmm.

TULLY GOES DOWN THE CELLAR STAIRS. X

ELFREDA

You're jealous, Tully! Can't say one nice thing to anyone. God forbid it should be to your own sister!

TULLY IS GONE. A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. ELFREDA STANDS AND WOBBLER OVER TO THE WINDOW. THERE IS A NEW PANE OF GLASS IN THE WINDOW. SHE CLEARS A CLEAN SPOT WITH THE HEEL OF HER HAND AND PEERS OUT. B

ELFREDA
(Cont'd)

~~Who's there? Go way. Nobody here needs anythin'.~~ X

NETTLES (OFF)

Elfreda? That you? Hello? It's me, Mister Nettles! Remember me? X

ELFREDA GRABS HER CHEST, TURNS OFF THE LIGHTS, AND HIDES BEHIND THE LOVE SEAT. IT IS DARK, BUT WE CAN STILL SEE HER.

ELFREDA

~~Go way. I can't come to the door right now. I just took a bath in the river and I'm drippin'. Wouldn't want to catch a death of cold by steppin' outside. Bye, now.~~ X

NETTLES (OFF)

Elfreda? I only want to talk! Let me in. Open up the front door. X

ELFREDA

Elfreda's not here. This is Louise. (I'm her cousin from France.) I'm very famous in France, and if you leave now, and never come back, I'll give you one of my paintings. You'll be rich, but you got to leave by the count of three to get the painting. I've started... X

NETTLES (OFF)

Let me in, Elfreda.

ELFREDA

I'm Louise from France. I don't know the combination. I told you Elfreda's gone. One! X

OK

NETTLES (OFF)

~~I don't remember there bein' a comby-
nation lock on the door. Wasn't a lock
on the door last night....~~

ELFREDA

~~Go way. I'm callin' the law. Two!~~

ELFREDA HUNCHES DOWN. NETTLES OPENS THE DOOR. IT CREAKS. HE
PEEKS IN.

NETTLES

(whisper)

~~Elfreda! Here I am. Where's the lights?
Ooo. I see the top of yer head.~~

NETTLES SEARCHES ON THE WALL FOR THE LIGHT SWITCH.

ELFREDA

~~Three! Surprise! It's me, Mister
Nettles! Elfreda! I was only funnin',
really. What can I do for you?~~

NETTLES TURNS ON THE LIGHTS. HE TAKES OFF HIS COWBOY HAT.

NETTLES

~~I'm glad you asked, Elfreda. Won't take
long. I'm sure it's only a mistake.~~

ELFREDA

~~I'm so very tired. I think you should
come back tomorrow. Really, it's been a
pleasure~~

ELFREDA PUTS HER HEAD DOWN, TAKES NETTLES BY THE ARM AND TRIES TO
LEAD HIM OUT THE DOOR. NETTLES DOES NOT MOVE. HE IS COURTEOUS.

NETTLES

Sure, see I need to buy some food for my
cows and vittles for my kin, and
I...well, to be truthful, the money you
give me for ~~the fixin' up~~ last night....

ELFREDA

~~Hurry up. You want someone to hear you?~~

NETTLES

The money's no good. I mean, the money's
spoiled rottener than a dead hen's egg.
~~It's phoney money, Miss.~~

ELFREDA

Phoney? How dare you. You were paid and now you want more?

NETTLES

Beg pardon, Miss Elfreda. Maybe I'm not makin' myself clear, I'm sorry. ~~This has never happened to me before.~~ But...the money is fake.

ELFREDA

I'm on to your game. You'll come in every week or so and blackmail me for more money. ~~It'll never stop. You want more hush money. (I'm not an idiot.) My hair isn't purple and my breath is fresh. I been readin' 'bout people like you.~~

NETTLES

Where's Dillion? He can tell me where he got the money. I want to eat, that's all. Honest.

ELFREDA

Dillion's gone. You're not gettin' another cent from me, 'cause you didn't do nuthin' to me.

NETTLES BEGINS TO PACE THE ROOM.

NETTLES

Oh, now I'm startin' to get the stink of the wind. Dillion skipped town on me and ~~thinks he can get away with it.~~ He dug up some phoney frogbacks from the junkyard and now he's ^{waggin'} stickin' his tongue in my face. I don't do ~~fixin's~~ ^{fixin's} for free!

ELFREDA

You go way before I scream foul! I will, too. ~~People'd believe me before they'd believe an baby killer!~~ idiot monster like you.

NETTLES

Scream all you want. ~~No one'll come to rescue an idiot family like yours.~~ The people on the outside are prayin' ~~that~~ ^{and dancing} that the whole ~~you and~~ the whole lot of you up and dies off. Scream. Shred your vocal chords. Only the wind'll come a runnin'.

lot of you ups and drops dead off the edge of the world



ELFREDA

~~You stay way. Don't force me to kill you.
There's an idea. No witnesses to what
happened here last night.~~

NETTLES

~~So you admit that I was here last night.
Start a greasin' my hand.~~

ELFREDA

I admit nothin'.

NETTLES

~~I got a way. You don't know it, but
there's a way I can prove I was here last
night.~~

ELFREDA

~~Try. You try and prove you were here.
You got the wrong house. I'm a good
girl. Good girls don't know men like
you. ~~But you have bad breath, too.~~~~

→ Hair/ Beasts

NETTLES

~~I can prove I earned the money. Every
job fixin' I do, I bring along my
corkscrew. Got it for New Year's Eve
thirty year ago. Before I start on a
woman, I twist that cold steel into
her...let's see...~~

NETTLES WEIGHS BOTH OF HIS HANDS.

ELFREDA

Go on. What about the steel?

NETTLES

I twist the corkscrew into her...
left...yes, that's it. Her left thigh.
I stick it in up close, next to where the
elastic from her panties hugs at the
flabby skin. I turn the skewer and I
push it in all the way 'til I hit bone.
Another quarter turn, and I yank it out!
I pull out a chunk 'o bone, a little
muscle, some skin, and a whole lot of
blood. ~~It's like~~ I'm an artist signin'
my work 'o art.

ELFREDA

~~You wouldn't dare do that. You're tryin' to trick me. I can tell by the look in your eye. Tell me you're makin' up the corkscrew story. Everybody teases me.~~

NETTLES

Oh, I remember you real good, now. It was dark and I'm old, so I don't see too good. I had to yank it out twice. First time I missed your bone entirely. But, boy, the second time! I got it all, plus...a little hair!

ELFREDA QUICKLY PULLS UP HER ROBE AND CHECKS HER THIGH.

ELFREDA

It's healed! See? Nuthin' there but pure white highway. You're a liar! God healed me, just like he did my hand, see?

ELFREDA SHOWS HIM HER HAND. NETTLES SMILES. HE DOESN'T TAKE HIS EYES OFF HER.

NETTLES

I didn't touch you with a corkscrew last night, Elfreda. But since you're caught with your skirt up...how 'bout the money?

ELFREDA

~~I had an itch. No law against itchin' is there?~~

ELFREDA QUICKLY ITCHES HER THIGH AND PUTS HER ROBE BACK DOWN.

ELFREDA (cnd)

I'll not tell you again. Leave, or else I'll do somethin' drastic.

NETTLES

Gimme the cash or I'll throw you down and give you the same problem all over again! This time. I won't fix it.

NETTLES WRAPS AROUND ELFREDA.

ELFREDA

~~No. Stay away.~~

What do you think I am? Some loutche with a left hand?

a missing

What do I

I'm do no butchur

NETTLES

Hey, you're a cutie-pie. Got thick hair
and I like my women feisty. ~~This might
be my lucky day.~~

ELFREDA

Please. ~~You don't understand. It wasn't
my idea. Talk to Tully. I don't
remember what happened. Believe me!~~

NETTLES

Fine by me if you don't want to pay.
I'll take my fee any way I can! Open
wide and say "ah."

ELFREDA

Fire! Tully! I'm on fire! Tully, it's
me, Elfreda, your very own sister!

NETTLES

Nobody ~~crosses~~ me. Especially not you!

TULLY STOMPS UP THE STAIRS. NETTLES RELEASES ELFREDA. SHE RUBS
HER ARMS.

TULLY

What's the problem up here? Elfreda,
why you callin' fire?

NETTLES

There's no fire. Only heat up here's the
risin' temperature in my gut.

TULLY

What's the problem here? ~~Who are you and
just what do you think you're doing to my
sister?~~

ELFREDA

Mister Nettles wants more money.

TULLY

Mister Nettles? ~~What's the problem?~~
Dillion told me that he paid you in full
last night. You better not want a
receipt.

NETTLES

All I want is my due. I got all sorts of people outside lookin' for one reason to storm in here and do some justice. ~~If that's what you want, then okay.~~ Fact is, I saw a whole bunch of people down by the Applegate Bridge a minute ago.

ELFREDA

Don't give in to him, Tully! He didn't do anythin', remember? You said I could believe whatever I wanted to believe.

NETTLES

~~I need the money today.~~ My family's starvin'. I got to go feed my cows in half an hour. Old man Bleecher laughed when I gave him the money. There were little purple kangaroos drawn where the presidents shoulda been.

TULLY

I don't have any money here. I just got in town yesterday. If you could only wait. It'll take a few days to get here by wire. But, I'll help around your farm if you like.

NETTLES

Sorry, Tully, but I can't wait. Hurry and figure somethin' out or I'll go down those steps and tell that bat of a mother of yours that a cleansin' was done on her dinin' room table last night. It'll kill her faster than fifty years 'o sorrow-water ever could.

MAMMA-LOVE WALKS UP THE LAST CELLAR STEP.

MAMMA-LOVE

Jake? Why you here?

NETTLES SHOVES HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKTS AND ROCKS BACK ON HIS HEELS.

NETTLES

Oh, no. Ellen? ~~I...had some business here with the kids.~~ I didn't mean for you to hear anything I said out loud...

TULLY
(upcut)

Go back down, Mamma-Love. ~~I've got things under control here. This here's Mister Nettles, and I can take care of him.~~

MAMMA-LOVE
I know Jake's business.

ELFREDA
He...he wanted to foul me, Mamma-Love.

TULLY
Quiet, Elfreda.

MAMMA-LOVE
Quiet, Tully.

NETTLES
I didn't touch her, Ellen. ~~You know me. You know I would not touch Elfreda. That was the deal.~~

MAMMA-LOVE
No need to touch Elfreda when you used to touch me, eh?

NETTLES
Don't bring that up, now, ~~Ellen. We agreed to never talk about that again. You promised me.~~

MAMMA-LOVE
Tell me why you're here.

NETTLES
Well, it's really very simple. So very simple in fact, that I'll let the... kids tell you.

NETTLES LOOKS TO TULLY AND ELFREDA FOR SUPPORT.

TULLY
Elfreda had a kink in her back. I heard that Mister Nettles here did some body work, so I...fetched him.

ELFREDA

My back's better, now. Thanks, Mister Nettles. Drop in some other day and we'll spend more time. ~~You can go now.~~

TULLY

She's fine, now, Mamma-Love. I'll come with you to the farm, Mister Nettles. ~~We'll talk on the way.~~

NETTLES

The money the kids gave me was fake, Ellen. So's I'm only tryin' to get some money, so me and the family can eat.

MAMMA-LOVE SITS ON THE LOVE SEAT.

MAMMA-LOVE

You all think I'm some sponge with trēmens. I'm past seein' elephants. My brain isn't cotton soaked with special ketchup. You think I'm fragile and if I hear some shatterin' news I might break into a jigsaw puzzle or scream like an ape? Some people have the luxury of breakin' down. ~~But I don't got anyone that cares enough to put me back together if I do break.~~ You can't shut me in my room, because I'm livin' and squirmin' inside you all. And the best part is... I know all your secrets.

NETTLES

I'll leave now. But if I don't get paid, I'll tote that garbage back here and throw it through the window. It's in the junkyard now, but I'll run an dig it up ~~if I get tricked again.~~ I promise you I'll dig it up.

MAMMA-LOVE

Jake. You'll get the money. Elfreda, go down to the cellar and bring me the green ketchup bottle behind the stairs. Run, child.

ELFREDA

~~But, Mamma-Love...he didn't...Tully told me that I don't have to admit anythin' happend here last night... or any other night.~~ Oh, please, Mamma-Love, don't make me.

MAMMA-LOVE LOOKS AT ELFREDA. MAMMA-LOVE HAS TEARS RUNNING DOWN HER FACE. ELFREDA TURNS, AND RUNS DOWN THE STEPS. B

TULLY

I'll leave you both alone. You need some privacy. I'll wait outside by the bench.

MAMMA-LOVE

All this pain for a few dollars, Tully? Why didn't you come and talk to me? Didn't our talk yesterday mean anythin' to you? I thought we came to an understandin'.

TULLY

~~I didn't want to upset you. I'm sorry. I thought I could handle it alone.~~

MAMMA-LOVE

~~You're home now. Nothin' is ever done alone here. So who helped make Elfreda's baby? I know who did the fix-up-job, but who did the act? She never leaves the house.~~

NETTLES

When Dillion came to get me, I didn't know it would be Elfreda. I needed the money. Besides... I guess you should know that it doesn't really matter.

MAMMA-LOVE

You knew it was Elfreda, but you gave her a cleansin' anyways. Don't lie to me again, Jake.

TULLY

What doesn't really matter?

NETTLES DIPS HIS TOE INTO THE FLOOR.

NETTLES

It doesn't matter, son. It doesn't matter if I did a cleansin' last night or not. ~~I only needed the money. Only money for food to feed my family.~~

TULLY

Just what are you chasin' at, Mister Nettles? ~~We're in the seventh inning stretch, so hurry it up.~~

NETTLES MOVES CLOSE TO TULLY AND MAMMA-LOVE. HIS VOICE IS SOFT.

NETTLES
(whisper)

There wasn't anythin' there.

TULLY

Wasn't anythin' where?

NETTLES

Inside Elfreda. I started a usual
cleansin', but when I got inside to empty
the punkin? There was only air. Someone
already been there and carved a smiley
face. Or there weren't nuthin' there to
begin with.



TULLY

Nothing there! What?

NETTLES

I done enough cleansins to be an expert.
An I'm tellin' you that there weren't
nuthin' like a baby hidin' inside Elfreda.

TULLY

A hysterical pregnancy? Her body tricked
into thinking she was really havin' a baby?

NETTLES

Maybe her mind tricked her body.

MAMMA-LOVE

Don't matter if you did, or didn't, Jake.
You came here with every intention and
desire to give Elfreda a fix-up-job.

NETTLES

That's right. And I'll come again if she
needs me. I've watched you for years.
~~You abuse and neglect these kids. (I didn't
want Elfreda to turn into another Mamma-
Love.) People've suffered enough, Ellen.~~

TULLY

Don't be mad at Mister Nettles. ~~it was
my idea. I thought that there was bad
blood involved.~~ If the University taught
me one thing... it was how to seek out a
mess... and put it back the way it should
be. I only applied the principles of
higher education, Mamma-Love.

MAMMA-LOVE

~~I hope God heard what you said about me, Jake. It's gonna cost you another hundred years in Hell. Thirty year ago, you saved your soul. And now, like you did back then, you're tryin' to turn it around an blame me. You came here in the dark last night to try and take away your daughter's child, not me.~~

TULLY

His daughter? You joking? Mister Nettles is Elfreda's Pappy? ~~I'll take a base on balls.~~ I been waitin' for this day for over thirty years. Finally I have someone I can blame for my sweet Mamma-Love's pain. Let's step outside, Nettles.

TULLY ROLLS UP HIS SLEEVES, AND LUNGES FOR NETTLES. MAMMA-LOVE STOPS TULLY.

MAMMA-LOVE

Stop it, Tully. We don't got to sink down in the mud with him. We're a better cut o' folk. ~~He'll get beat up by someone downstairs worse than we ever could.~~

NETTLES

C'mon, boy. I'll step outside. Elfreda shouldn't have to turn to a dark cellar because she's gonna have a little baby. I'll fight you to my death on that one, boy. I don't want Elfreda to suffer.

MAMMA-LOVE

(shouting)

She would, Jake! She would if she was molested at the church picnic. You dragged me by the neck to the Applegate Bridge. You fouled me in the muck and slime. ~~I loved you!~~ You forced me to lead a life alone. You wouldn't marry me. You told me you loved me back. These bottles are because of you, Jake Nettles. ~~Not me!~~ You're the one who set somethin' breathin' and alive in my belly. I only reached out. It's not my fault that it was a glass bottle that held me back.

NETTLES

You lived your whole life on an excuse?
~~That wasn't how it happened and you know~~
~~it! Passion in the dark. I said my vows~~
and I love my wife. But you...you had to
entice me. All that talk of desire and
heat. ~~I made no promises.~~ You led me
there by the hand and gave me the first
kiss. You shoulda let me cleanse you
like I wanted to.

MAMMA-LOVE SLAPS NETTLES ON THE FACE. THEN, MAMMA-LOVE GRABS
NETTLES AND CRIES ON HIS SHOULDER.

TULLY

~~That's my Mamma Love you're insultin',~~
~~Mister Nettles. One more word, and I'll~~
~~kick your tail outside.~~

MAMMA-LOVE

no!

All I wanted was a friend! Somebody that
I could lean against! I wanted a set of
warm lips to kiss. I didn't want a
little baby. I didn't want to marry you.
I wanted to love you!

?

MAMMA-LOVE AND NETTLES STOP. THEY STARE INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES.
THEY DON'T MOVE. ELFREDA ENTERS FROM THE CELL^R, dressed in bits and pieces
of Mama Love's clothes.

ELFREDA

I found the bottle.

ELFREDA GIVES THE BOTTLE TO MAMMA-LOVE. MAMMA-LOVE SMASHES THE
BOTTLE AT NETTLES' FEET.

NETTLES

I don't want the money anymore.

MAMMA-LOVE

You'll take the money and you'll get out.

NETTLES

~~No. I couldn't take the money.~~

MAMMA-LOVE

Just take it, Jake.

NETTLES GETS ON HIS KNEES AND PICKS UP THE MONEY. HE STUFFS THE
BILLS INTO HIS POCKETS.

NETTLES

Now this is only a loan, Ellen. A loan until I can get the herd to market.

TULLY

Hey, Elfreda. I got a hot news flash about you and your sweet little baby....

MAMMA-LOVE

(upcut)

You shush up, Tully. Don't take away her dream, too.

TULLY

Well somebody needs to teach her not to let people push her life around.

MAMMA-LOVE

Saved it all for Judgement Day, Jake. You leave now. And take the mess with you.

TULLY

~~I'll clean it up. You just go. Don't ever come back here. (We won't ever need you again, Mister Nettles.)~~

ELFREDA

I'll help Tully clean it up.

ELFREDA GOES TO HER KNEES AND DELICATELY PICKS UP THE PIECES OF GLASS.

NETTLES

Thanks, Ellen. I...I can feed my family now. Bye. And, I'm...sorry Ellen.

NETTLES STARTS FOR THE DOOR.

MAMMA-LOVE

Jake. I told you to take the mess with you.

NETTLES

The boy here said he'd clean it up.

MAMMA-LOVE

~~I don't want her in the house. I want you to take Elfreda. I raised her as best I could. All I get is pity from you, her Pappy. So it's your turn. Half yours.~~

ELFREDA STANDS AND THE PIECES OF GLASS DROP FROM HER HANDS.

ELFREDA

Mamma-Love! ~~What a terrible thing to say!~~ He's no Pappy of mine! He wanted to foul me!

MAMMA-LOVE

Elfreda. This is your real live Pappy, Jake Nettles. Shake her hand or somthin', Jake. Where's your manners? Elfreda, Mister Nettles is the man who made you under the Applegate Bridge. Give him a hug, Elfreda. Now you know, daughter. Put on your Sunday best, honey. You're goin' to market with Piggly Wiggley.

TULLY

Let's sit down and get this thing worked out. No reason to go diggin' for bones that are restin' warm with the earth.

ELFREDA

~~No. Not him.~~ My Pappy's a King. He's ~~wealthy.~~ Remember the stories you used to tell me 'bout him, Mamma-Love?

ELFREDA LOOKS TO MAMMA-LOVE FOR SUPPORT. ELFREDA IS A SCARED LITTLE GIRL.

MAMMA-LOVE

Ooops. Guess I fibbed then, didn't I, niece?

ELFREDA

~~No! This isn't fair!~~ Mister Nettles isn't no King of the Bahamas. I bet he can't even draw as good as me! What kinda Pappy is that for me, Mamma-Love?

MAMMA-LOVE

Leave. Both of you.

TULLY

Mamma-Love, please.

MAMMA-LOVE

I won't take it no more, son. I don't ~~have to feel ashamed.~~ Let him start makin' up stories about what relation she is. I'm gonna stand tall now that she's off my back.

OK - NO CUTS

82.

ELFREDA

~~You never loved me. Now you're killin' me. I can't remember you ever holdin' me in your arms. Never did you once say I was good. Now I find out you fibbed, and jinxed your only daughter.~~

NETTLES

She's drowned in sorrow-water, Elfreda.

MAMMA-LOVE

Stay out of this, Jake. This is our blood feud.

ELFREDA

~~It's not fair!~~

MAMMA-LOVE

~~Elfreda, put a sock in it.~~

NETTLES

~~I didn't plan this, Ellen. I never planned on showin' up here ever again.~~

ELFREDA

~~You weren't my idea. No. You can blame this all on Tully. I didn't go lookin' for no Mister Nettles. I don't want him for my Pappy!~~

MAMMA-LOVE

Leave Tully out of this.

ELFREDA

~~You always liked him better.~~

NETTLES

~~Let's go, Elfreda. We both overstayed our welcome.~~

ELFREDA

~~Please?~~

MAMMA-LOVE

~~Go.~~

NETTLES

C'mon, daughter. We got animals to feed. I can use your hands 'round the farm.

TULLY

Hold it, here! Doesn't anyone understand why I came back home? I came here to save you. When I left the University, I still carried a special rock in my pocket that I found over thirty years ago in the junkyard. Oh, that stone was a beaut. It had scarlet streaks, violet patches of fog, and it smelled like a fresh hunk of chewing gum. But, I wasn't taken in. I stood outside that window with that old, gorgeous rock in my fist and I got hit smack in the head with a shattering light. ~~I knew that stone had smashed a thousand families through a hundred centuries. My fight was over. It was clear now. I wasn't a man. I was something worse, something darker -- I was an animal in a costume. I had been one all my life, and now my hand was frozen in understanding. I had to get rid of the stone. And I threw it. A perfect pitch. It whistled through the air. The rock splashed when it landed in the river. Don't you see? I had to show you the light. We're not a family. We're rocks with dying heartbeats. I came here to save you from me.~~

ELFREDA

~~But everyone still loves you, Tully.~~
 Saints can't understand that a little hug or a quick kiss is special. My own Pappy saw me through the window and never once did he stop in and open his heart and say how much he really loved me.

MAMMA-LOVE

Why would he tell you that? He never told me that he loved me. ~~I been here alone stuck ever since.~~

TULLY

I love you, Mamma-Love.

MAMMA-LOVE

Good boy, Tully.

NETTLES

Elfreda, you're right. I'm sorry, baby. ~~I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to sneak in if you didn't want me. I wish you coulda kept thinkin' I was a King. That's real nice. I'm not all that bad, Elfreda. I got a good family and a wife that loves me back. I don't enjoy what I do at night. I got a service, that's all. (I'm not like the surgeon who takes goriller hearts and sews them in the heart of man. Think about that goriller's baby for once. That little goriller cries 'cause the mother's dead. Then, the baby goriller dies inside, too. But it don't matter to the surgeon. He'll cut out the little goriller's heart and add it to the pile. I don't like what I do.)~~ All I want is to feed my family.

MAMMA-LOVE

Well, you can feed 'em all now. Take Elfreda. She hasn't had breakfast yet.

ELFREDA

~~I don't want to go with him. If I move in with him, I'll have nightmares for the rest of my life!~~ All I want in the world is for Dilly to come back home to me.

MAMMA-LOVE

You're not stayin' here.

ELFREDA

Mamma-Love, I promise I'll be good!

NETTLES

Come home with me, Elfreda. Just for tonight. We'll see how it goes. In fact, you won't even have to do chores tonight. No, you won't have to do chores for... ~~to~~ nights! Sounds good, eh? You'll have to share a bed, though, and I don't got much money...but we're happy.

ELFREDA

I want more than happiness. I want to be an artist. I want to get out of this awful place!

I want to become an artist
 and then die.

DILLION BREAKS DOWN THE DOOR. HE FALLS TO THE FLOOR. DILLION IS SOPPING WET. HIS CLOTHES ARE TORN AND DIRTY. HIS ARMS ARE SCRATCHED AND BLOODY. DILLION'S FACE IS SWOLLEN AND BRUISED PURPLE. HE HAS NO SHOES. TULLY AND NETTLES EACH GRAB ONE OF HIS ARMS AND HELP HIM TO HIS FEET. 15

TULLY

Dilly! What happened to you?

ELFREDA

~~Dillion! You're here to rescue me! I knew you loved me! Take me away from here, baby.~~

MAMMA-LOVE

Did you have to break the door down?

NETTLES

~~Whoa, boy. That's a mighty big gash on your shoulder.~~

DILLION BEGINS TO CRY.

TULLY

~~Here. Lean on my shoulder. You don't have to talk. Just catch a breath first.~~

ELFREDA

~~You came back. My prayers were answered!~~

DILLION

~~It...was...terrible!~~

TULLY

~~Slow and easy, Dillion. Tell us everything that happened, son.~~

DILLION STANDS ON HIS OWN. HIS HEAD IS DOWN AND HIS SHOULDERS QUAKE AS HE FIGHTS BACK THE TEARS.

DILLION

I...I...I was walkin' down the main rut in the road, see? T-t-t-ully, you know the rut? It has the little black pebbles that crunch and roll when you...walk on 'em? Well, I like that feel...and I was goin' slow. I...~~have~~...new shoes....

DILLION LOOKS AT HIS FEET. HE SEES ONLY HIS BARE FEET. NO SHOES. DILLION SPREADS HIS TOES. HE BEGINS TO CRY AGAIN.

TULLY

I'll get some new shoes for you, Dilly.
Go on. What happened next?

DILLION PUSHES HIS SHOULDER BACK AND STANDS TALL.

DILLION

W-w-w-ell... I was feelin' pretty great.
The sun ~~is~~ warm on my back. I...I...
could feel the heat shinin'...even through
the shirt. And...so...I hear somebody
shout real l-l-l-oud... "there's one,
let's git the old boy!" And I looks
back...an...see half the town a chasin'
after me! Well, I kicked...off my new
shoes...s-s-s-orry, Tully...and I started
to gallop like a horse to get away. But,
they had d-d-d-ogs.

~~ELFREDA NETTLES~~

~~Dogs, too? They never stop with one
terror! They always got to find somethin'
better.~~

TULLY

~~Go on, Dilly. You're doin' great, son.~~

DILLION BEGINS TO CIRCLE. HE GETS CAUGHT UP.

DILLION

Well, pretty soon I had retrievers and
German shepherds chewin' on my arms and
feets, so...I tripped and skinned my
knee an before I knowed it I got people
on all sides kickin' at me with shovels
and I crawled on my knees and they threw
rocks at my back and tore my shirt open
an then they took your briefcase, Tully.
~~I got mad when they did that. I tried to
get it back, but I got hit square in the
eye with a Bible when I reached out for
it. Couldn't see through the blood.~~

ELFREDA

They'll come here next.

NETTLES

I shoulda done this thirty year ago.
 I'll go out and meet 'em. ~~They won't~~
~~know the difference.~~ They only want a
 body to stuff and hang on the wall.
 Maybe then you'll know that I love you,
 Elfreda. I hope it's not too late.

NETTLES STEPS OVER THE DOOR. TULLY GRABS HIS ARM.

TULLY

No, Mister Nettles. Stay here. We gotta
 get outta here, but not by fightin'.
 Dilly, you shoulda run. ~~Never turned~~
~~around and come back.~~ You shoulda got
 out while you could. We're stuck right
 here.

MAMMA-LOVE

~~I'm not steppin' foot anywhere outside.~~
 Let's all run down. We can hide behind
 my bottles.

MAMMA-LOVE DRINKS FROM HER BOTTLE. DILLION SHOUTS. IT IS THE
 FIRST TIME HE EVER HAS RAISED HIS VOICE. EVERYONE LISTENS...

DILLION

Wait! I'm not done! I thought I was
 dead! After I got knocked down a third
 time -- my blood mixin' with their spit
 -- I decided I'd die cryin'. Or die
 runnin' away. So's I reared up an...r-r-
 r-an fast. Ended up in the woods by the
 Applegate Bridge. Sure 'nuf, they
 stopped chasin' me. ~~Ran outta energy all~~
~~of 'em.~~ Alls that was left was t-t-t-he
 dogs. Lost 'em in the swamp. Sat there
 lickin' my wounds 'til they all went home
 for breakfast. Then I snuck it back
 here, and tripped over the top porch step
 and busted sweet Mamma-Love's door in
 two. Sure, 'nuf. I'm back.

MAMMA-LOVE

I love you, Dillion.

MAMMA-LOVE HANDS HER BOTTLE TO ELFREDA. MAMMA-LOVE EMBRACES DILLION. ~~A HUGE STONE WITH SCARLET STREAKS AND VIOLET FOG SMASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW. NETTLES, MAMMA-LOVE AND TULLY ALL DIVE FOR COVER. DILLION RACES TO THE WINDOW AND STICKS HIS HEAD OUTSIDE. ELFREDA STANDS ALL BY HERSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM WITH MAMMA-LOVE'S BOTTLE. ELFREDA HOLDS THE BOTTLE UP TO THE LIGHT.~~

DILLION
(loud)

Stop it! We're not going to sit here and whimper!

DILLION SEARCHES THE ROOM. HE FINDS THE STONE THAT CAME THROUGH THE WINDOW. HE THROWS THAT ROCK BACK OUTSIDE.

ELFREDA
(soft)

~~I too, had the reputation of curious child. I'm surprised my pillow hasn't turned to salt dust. Teach myself slow and easy just how to tilt the head and lose my pain.~~

ELFREDA DRINKS FROM THE BOTTLE. THE SORROW-WATER MAKES HER SMILE. ELFREDA QUICKLY MOVES TO THE CELLAR AND OPENS THE DOOR.

DILLION
(shouting)

We're not museum figurines!

DILLION TAKES SEVERAL STONES FROM THE PILE. HE PICKS UP SEVERAL ROCKS AND CRADLES THEM IN HIS ARMS. ELFREDA CLIMBS INTO THE CELLAR. DILLION CHUCKS ALL THE ROCKS BACK OUT THE WINDOW. AS ELFREDA CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HER, WE CAN BARELY HEAR HER LAST WORDS.....

ELFREDA
(whisper)

~~You fight 'em honey. I'll stay safe down here with my friends. The hours I'll spend alone will be blocks of granite crushin' at my soul. Call me when my sweet little baby comes home from the junkyard.~~ *salt & dust*

ELFREDA QUIETLY CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND HER, AND SHE IS GONE. DILLION KICKS THE PILE OF GLASS. THE SHARDS DANCE IN THE LIGHT. DILLION PICKS UP SOME MORE ROCKS AND PUNCTUATES HIS EVERY WORD WITH A ROCK AS IT SAILS BACK OUT THE WINDOW.

DILLION
(screaming)

We...

DILLION THROWS A ROCK.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

Are...

DILLION THROWS ANOTHER ROCK.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

Not...

DILLION HEAVES OUT ANOTHER ROCK.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

Rocks...

DILLION PITCHES ANOTHER ROCK.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

In...

DILLION THROWS ANOTHER ROCK.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

Here!

DILLION TOSSES ANOTHER ROCK.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

We...

DILLION LETS ANOTHER ROCK SAIL FROM HIS HAND.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

Are...

(MORE)

DILLION SLAMS ANOTHER ROCK OUTSIDE.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

People...

DILLION THROWS ANOTHER ROCK.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

Just...

DILLION THROWS ANOTHER ROCK.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

Like...

DILLION PITCHES ANOTHER ROCK OUTSIDE.

DILLION
(Cont'd)

You!

DILLION THROWS THE FINAL ROCK OUTSIDE.

FINAL BLACKOUT.

Curtain

A STONE'S THROW CONTACT SHEET

1. Rex McGraw	2764 S. 33 rd	483-4052
2. Tim ganser	115 S. Cotner	483-2735
3. David Boles	611o Francis	464-6660
4. Jay thornton	1519 "E" #2	476-8432
5. Brent Schawl	508 S. 12 th	435-5207
6. Nancy Marcy	1944 "B" #3	477-6716
7. Cynthia Totten	1820 "A" #3	435-0085
8. Kevin Paul Hofeditz	1635 Smith	435-4483

1985

YEAR

SEPTEMBER

MONTH

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4 READ-THROUGH	5 READ 1/2 & TALK	6	7
8	9 READ-THROUGH TALK W/ DESIGNERS	10	11	12 READ 1/2 & TALK	13	14
15	16 7:00 Stagger #1 7:30 Stagger #2	17 7:00 #3 8:00 #4 8:45 #5	18 7:00 #6 7:45 #7 8:45 #8	19 Tom 7:00 #9 7:45 #10	20 LEARNING SOCIETY! 8:00 perform	21
22	23 #9 7:00 REVIEW #10 7:45 #11 7:8,9	24 7:00 #11 7:45 #12 8:45 #13 all act II	25 7:00 #14 8:30 #15 9:30 #12 5:30 pm Prod. Meet	26 7:00 REVIEW #15 act	27 BBB 11:30 13 14 15 ← RM Act II	28
29	30 7:00 #1 7:30 #2					

Handwritten notes:
 Charles Livingston
 Oliver
 LEARNING SOCIETY!
 8:00 perform

Handwritten notes:
 Tom
 7:00 #9
 7:45 #10

Handwritten notes:
 7:00 #14
 8:30 #15
 9:30 #12
 5:30 pm
 Prod. Meet

Handwritten notes:
 7:00 REVIEW #15
 act

Handwritten notes:
 BBB
 11:30
 13
 14
 15
 ← RM Act II

MONTH

YEAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 1:00 #7 4:00 #4 4:45 #5 9:30 #6	2 ACT 1 SCENE 1 9:15 - 7 9:10 - 8	3 7:10 #A 4:00 ACT 1 SCENE 2 9:00 APP 10	4 7:00 7:15 #B 9:15 PARTIAL STARS	5 9:30 12:30 10:2
6	7 Whole party	8	9	10	11	12 9-5 light hang <u>Sat. Night?</u>
13	14 9-? light hang	15 16 prop off SCRIPT CHANGE CUT-OFF	17 18 plant set	19	20	21 1:00 lights (TU) 4:00 sound
20	21 BLOODY SUNDAY TECH REHEARAL ACTORS @ 1:00 TECHS @ 12:30 CURTAIN @ 2:00	22 23 RUN THROUGH W/ COSTUMES MAKEUP ACTORS @ 6:30 TECHS @ 6:30 CURTAIN @ 8:00	24 25 FINAL DRESS ACTORS @ 6:30 TECHS @ 6:30 CURTAIN @ 8:00	26 27 A STONE'S THROW ACTORS @ 6:30 TECHS @ 6:30 CURTAIN @ 8:00	28 29 RUN THROUGH W/ COSTUMES MAKEUP ACTORS @ 6:30 TECHS @ 6:30 CURTAIN @ 8:00	30 31 ACTORS @ 6:30 TECHS @ 6:30 CURTAIN @ 8:00
27	28 NO SHOW	29	30	31	1	2 TV TAKE