

nothing to — If that kid messes this up — *(Sound of toilet flushing.)* Alright, keep quiet about it. *(Buddy reenters.)*

BUDDY. That was a lovely way to start the day. *(Sees Debra, looks up at clock then back at her.)* Got some plans for the day?

DEBRA. What, I can't get up early?

BUDDY. What's in the duffle bag?

KIMBERLY. That's mine. School project.

BUDDY. Huh. Awful lot of school projects. *(Sound of the electric toothbrush whirring. Buddy prepares a bowl of cereal for Pattie. To Debra.)* You *could* look for a job today. Earn some money to pay me back for that stereo.

DEBRA. Again with that stereo. It's too early, Buddy. And the fact is, you owed it to me. So shut up about it.

BUDDY. What *owed* you?

DEBRA. You agreed to give it to me.

BUDDY. Agreed? I didn't agree to — *(Stops himself.)* You know what? Forget it.

DEBRA. No, you've been forgetting it all week. You throw out these little digs and then retreat back to your corner and it's starting to tick me off.

BUDDY. It's a good day, Debra, don't go pissing on it.

DEBRA. Who brought up the stereo? Was it *me*? Did I bring up the stereo, Kim?

BUDDY. *(Calls off.)* What kind of cereal you want, Pattie?

PATTIE. *(Off.)* Whatever, so long as you put the berries on!

DEBRA. You've obviously got something on your mind. You got something on your mind?

BUDDY. No.

DEBRA. Whaddaya wanna know, Buddy?

BUDDY. Nothin'. I know more than enough. I don't wanna know anymore. You'll implicate me.

DEBRA. Implicate you? You're implicated already. I wasn't the one who —

BUDDY. I don't wanna talk about this, Debra.

DEBRA. Then why do you keep bringing up that piece of junk stereo?

BUDDY. It wasn't a piece of junk! It was vintage!

DEBRA. Did you or did you not agree to give it to me?

BUDDY. Yeah, I did, if you did what you said you would do, which you didn't.

DEBRA. I tried to.

BUDDY. But you *didn't*. *Trying* isn't *doing*.

DEBRA. But I went to *do* it. It's not my fault it *didn't* happen.

BUDDY. *(Notices Kim's listening.)* Alright, drop it.

KIMBERLY. Don't drop it on my account. *(Pattie reenters.)*

PATTIE. I love that electric toothbrush.

DEBRA. We had an agreement.

BUDDY. The agreement — Block your ears, Kim — The agreement was I'd give you the stereo if you went next door and slapped the guy around.

KIMBERLY. What guy?

PATTIE. Mr. Hicks.

BUDDY. Which you did not do.

KIMBERLY. You hired Aunt Debra to beat up Mr. Hicks?

PATTIE. My gums feel so clean.

KIMBERLY. Why would you do that?

BUDDY. Because of his goddamn cabbages. They kept spreading into our yard, and I told him to cut them back. How many times did I tell him, Pattie?

PATTIE. Many times.

BUDDY. And he would just wave his hand, like *I* was the crazy one.

KIMBERLY. So why didn't you beat him up yourself?

BUDDY. He was my neighbor. I can't beat up my own neighbor.

KIMBERLY. You people are freaks.

PATTIE. I had nothing to do with this episode.

DEBRA. You did so. Come on, Pattie, you know damn well what —

BUDDY. Mrs. Denton said she saw a masked intruder crawl in his window. Did you wear a mask?

DEBRA. Yes. A pig mask.

BUDDY. A pig mask? What the hell's the matter with you?

DEBRA. I didn't wanna be identified. You told me to scare him.

BUDDY. I didn't tell you to *kill* him.

DEBRA. I didn't know he had a weak heart. I didn't even do anything. He just took one look at me and dropped dead.

BUDDY. You were wearing a pig mask! If a pig lady crawled in

my window, I'd drop dead too!

KIMBERLY. That's why we left Secaucus? Because you killed Mr. Hicks?

DEBRA. Nobody killed anybody.

BUDDY. Kim, go wait in the car.

DEBRA. The guy just died.

KIMBERLY. With a little help.

PATTIE. He was very old, honey.

DEBRA. I didn't even touch him. It wouldn't hold up in court, I'll tell ya that much.

BUDDY. He shoulda cut those cabbages back like I told him.

DEBRA. It wasn't just cabbages, Buddy —

KIMBERLY. This is so wrong. Don't you even feel bad? *(They all consider this for a couple beats. Then a little too late they say.)*

BUDDY. DEBRA. PATTIE.

Of course I feel bad. I feel just terrible. An awful way to go.

KIMBERLY. I'll be in the car.

BUDDY. Now don't go telling your friends about this, Kim. It's family business. Keep it that way. *(Kim grabs the keys from the hook and exits with the duffle bag.)* Why'd you say anything in front of her?

DEBRA. You brought it up.

BUDDY. Jesus, Debra —

DEBRA. Hey, none of it woulda happened if Pattie hadn't done what she did, so don't go blaming me, Buddy!

PATTIE. Debra, I'm pregnant and easily upset, so don't start in on me!

BUDDY. Alright, now calm down —

DEBRA. If I hear another fuckin' word about that stereo —!

BUDDY. Alright, forget it! You got the stereo, that's it! I'm sorry I ever brought the damn thing up!

DEBRA. I can't wait to get away from you goddamn animals! *(Storms off and slams a door.)*

BUDDY. *(Rummaging in his pocket for nickels.)* Who let her in the house? I never invited her back in. *(Pulls out handful of nickels.)* I lost count of the — I don't even know how much we owe here. *(Buddy adds a few nickels to the pile, then picks up Pattie's cereal bowl and feeds her with a spoon.)*

PATTIE. They don't care about me. Neither of them. I'm preg-

nant, and my leg's broken. I have carpal tunnel and cancer.

BUDDY. You don't have cancer.

PATTIE. Yes I do, plus diabetes and a chipped tooth.

BUDDY. Come on, relax. *(Holds out spoon.)* Take a bite.

PATTIE. *(Mouthful.)* And I do feel bad about Mr. Hicks. He was very sweet.

BUDDY. I know.

PATTIE. I'm gonna miss him.

BUDDY. Alright.

PATTIE. More berries. *(He scoops more berries onto her cereal.)*

BUDDY. She was so upset.

PATTIE. She was born upset. *(They lock eyes.)* What?

BUDDY. It's our fault, isn't it?

PATTIE. Mr. Hicks?

BUDDY. Kimberly. You put our genes together and it comes out poison.

PATTIE. Kim isn't poison.

BUDDY. That's not what I meant.

PATTIE. I know what ya meant, Buddy, and I don't wanna hear it. She's sixteen, we're not gonna start blaming people now. Things get passed on all the time. I got my mother's ass. You think I blame my mother for my ass?

BUDDY. It's not the same, Pattie.

PATTIE. Can you stop? Please? *(She takes another bite of cereal, chews and swallows.)* You're a lot more bearable when you're on the sauce, ya know it? *(Lights crossfade to ...)*

Scene 4

The library. Debra and Jeff are waiting for Kim. Jeff, with a pad and pencil, has been working on another anagram.

JEFF. Debra Watts, right? And Watts is W-A-T-T-S?

DEBRA. Uh-huh.