

Scene 9

SETTING: Home office.

AT RISE: DAUGHTER is writing at her desk,
very focused.

(Enter MOTHER)

MOTHER

I'm leaving now.

DAUGHTER

(Looks up from her writing)

Have a nice trip.

(Returns focus)

MOTHER

I should be back by lunch tomorrow.

DAUGHTER

Have fun. Say hello to Dorothy for me.

MOTHER

Do you remember where my insurance information is?

DAUGHTER

(Without looking up)

Top drawer. Safe travels.

(MOTHER turns to leave, takes
a couple of steps, then turns
back.)

MOTHER

I took out another accidental death policy yesterday.

DAUGHTER

Um hmm.

MOTHER

I made you the beneficiary.

DAUGHTER

Okay.

(MOTHER turns to leave again,
takes a couple of steps, then
turns back.)

MOTHER

If anything should happen...

DAUGHTER

Nothing's going to happen.

MOTHER

If...

(DAUGHTER keeps working.)

MOTHER

I would want my service-

DAUGHTER

Mom, I know. And if you're worried, just don't go.

MOTHER

No, I'm going. I told Dorothy I'd come.

DAUGHTER

Then go.

(MOTHER receives the comment
as if she's been slapped.)

MOTHER

I'm leaving now.

DAUGHTER

Have a nice trip.

(MOTHER exits. DAUGHTER looks
up, sighs, and returns to her
work. MOTHER re-enters.)

MOTHER
One more thing.

DAUGHTER
(Looking up)
Yes?

MOTHER
My life insurance policy.

DAUGHTER
Top drawer.

MOTHER
And don't forget-

DAUGHTER
I'm the beneficiary.

MOTHER
Yes. But nothing...

DAUGHTER
...is going to happen.

MOTHER
But if it did-

DAUGHTER
Mom. Stop.

MOTHER
I've always loved "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

DAUGHTER
Look, Mom, if he's such a friend...

MOTHER
What are you saying?

DAUGHTER
Nothing. Never mind.

MOTHER

No, please continue.

DAUGHTER

We've had this conversation before.

MOTHER

Refresh my memory, please.

DAUGHTER

You are totally picking a fight.

MOTHER

You needn't ridicule my faith.

DAUGHTER

What time is Dorothy expecting you?

MOTHER

I am not afraid, no matter what you think.

DAUGHTER

(Back to her work)

Tell Dorothy I say hello.

(MOTHER exits in a huff, only
to return a few seconds later.)

MOTHER

My diamond necklace, and your Grandmother's pearls-

DAUGHTER

Mom. It's a twenty-minute drive to Dorothy's. On a divided highway. With very little traffic. You've made the drive a hundred times.

(MOTHER is silent.)

DAUGHTER

No. I'm working.

(MOTHER exits stiffly, only to
return a few seconds later.)

MOTHER

I'm going now.

DAUGHTER

(Without looking up from her work)
Say hello to Dorothy for me.

(MOTHER exits, only to return again,
this time wringing her hands.)

MOTHER

The photo albums-

DAUGHTER

For Pete's sake, Mother!
(Gets up brusquely and grabs
her car keys)
Come on. Looks like we are going to die together.

MOTHER

What?

DAUGHTER

It looks like we are going to die together in a fiery automobile
accident on our way to Dorothy's.

MOTHER

What a horrible thing to say.

DAUGHTER

We'll throw the albums in the trunk and wear the family jewels
and blaze our way into glory!

(pause)

MOTHER

You are just like your father.

(SCENE CONTINUES)

Scene 11

SETTING: Hartfield's office.

AT RISE: HELEN, wearing sensible flats, looks over training information for new employee, GENEVA. Sound cues from *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* work well throughout this scene.

(Enter GENEVA, wearing power heels and carrying a large tote. They notice each other's shoes.)

HELEN

(Warmly)

Welcome to Hartfield's!

GENEVA

(Giving HELEN a cool once over)

Hello.

HELEN

Hartfield's is a wonderful company. You'll love it here.

GENEVA

Mmm, hmm.

HELEN

And Gail is wonderful, too. You'll like Gail.

GENEVA

Mmm, hmm.

HELEN

And I'm easy to get along with...

(GENEVA does not remark.)

HELEN

Well, we have a lot to cover, so let's get started.

(She hands GENEVA a binder)

These are our operating procedures.

(GENEVA gives a perfunctory flip through the binder, and then hands it back to HELEN, who looks surprised.)

GENEVA

I know this company values initiative, so I've taken the liberty of outlining some new operating procedures.

(SHE pulls her own binder from her tote and hands it to HELEN . . .)

(SCENE CONTINUES)

HELEN

. . . Let's move on to page three-

GENEVA

That's enough for today, Ellen.

HELEN

Helen. It's Helen.

(All shoe changing is choreographed in the style reminiscent of an Old West duel – staring down, facing off, paces. Shoes may be put on with a gunslinger's flourish.)

Next day...GENEVA and HELEN exit board meeting. HELEN wears heels. GENEVA wears higher heels.)

GENEVA

That went well. Don't you think?

HELEN

I suppose.

(Enter GAIL)

GAIL

Great ideas, Geneva! The board was so impressed. We're meeting again tomorrow to put together an action plan. Helen, can you get an agenda together ASAP?

HELEN

Certainly. And, I, uh, have a couple of ideas, too. Could I add them to the agenda?

GAIL

Of course! Hartfield's values initiative! I'm off. Lunch meeting across town.

(Next day...HELEN and GENEVA
exit board meeting. HELEN wears
higher heels than the day before,
as does GENEVA.)

HELEN

That went well. Don't you think?

GENEVA

I suppose.

(Enter GAIL)

GAIL

Great ideas, Helen. The board was so impressed. We're meeting again tomorrow to put together an action plan for your ideas. Can you get an agenda together ASAP?

HELEN

Certainly.

GENEVA

Gail, if I may, just one more idea?

(SCENE CONTINUES)

Scene 4

AT RISE: MOTHER, is laboring at birth. Her friend, CAROLYN, attends to her, wiping her brow and giving encouragement.

Her DAUGHTER reads a letter.

DAUGHTER

My Dearest Daughter,

Firstly, it was 1962. Secondly, religion. Pregnant daughters, unwed pregnant daughters, well. If I had been allowed to keep her, yes, you would have had a big sister. Or maybe you wouldn't have been born at all because then I wouldn't have met your father, or at least, you may not have been mine. Oh, who really knows? All I know is that I love with the whole of my heart. And I wish for you these things:

1. That you keep what is yours to keep.
2. That you are truly you, and no one else.
3. And that you find and keep around you people like my friend, Carolyn, who, when the nurses called me a "slut", yelled-

CAROLYN

Fuck off you prissy bitches!

DAUGHTER

-at Our Mother of Charity Hospital, in 1962. She was ahead of her time.

Love,
Mom

(END SCENE)