

THE LABORIOUS DANCE

By Karina Cochran

THE LABORIOUS DANCE

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Characters:

Teresa, 40+, F, earth-mother, class leader

Carrie, 20s, F, noticeably pregnant

Priscilla, 30s, F, very pregnant

Fiona, 30s, F, super-doooper pregnant

Quinn, early 20s, co-leader, doula-in-training

Note on casting:

The women in this play should be diverse. Diverse in age, ethnicity, body type, etc. I specifically envisioned Fiona, Quinn, and Teresa as being P.O.C.

Setting:

An exercise room with soft lighting.

Synopsis:

Three pregnant women of varying backgrounds and demographics bond during a weekend retreat that focuses on preparing for parenting. The weekend is led by an eccentric new age earth mother and a gen z doula who are both passionate about helping new mothers discover their life path. As they explore the "How to be a Mother" curriculum they learn there are no hard and fast rules to parenting, though some experiences are universal.

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SCENE 1

TERESA, CARRIE, FIONA, PRISCILLA, and QUINN stand in a semi-circle. They all wear jingly chiffon skirts in different bright colors over their exercise clothes. Soft, slow music begins to play. The women move a bit awkwardly at first. TERESA starts doing large hip circles. The women follow her lead.

TERESA. Birth circles! Feel the music, ladies! Respond to the music with your body. (*FIONA dances with a bit more enthusiasm. She is a good dancer. CARRIE is clearly uncomfortable.*)

TERESA. Don't be afraid to make that skirt jingle. (*Teresa & Quinn add an extra shake to their hips to make the skirts jingle. Priscilla tries to make her skirt jingle. It doesn't.*)

PRISCILLA. Mine's not jingeling.

TERESA. Like this, dear. (*She shows her. It jingles a bit more.*) Remember this move when the contractions come. What do you do when life gives you a painful situation? Do you sit through it? NO. You MOVE through it. (*The music changes to a faster beat.*) Now improvise! Where does your body want to go? There's no wrong way to dance. (*The girls improvise. Carrie stops dancing and stands in the corner awkwardly. The rest of the women continue to dance, getting more into it.*) Or...if you need a break, take a break. Do what feels best for

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you. This is no place for ego. Rest should be taken and treasured! (*Quinn dances over to Carrie.*)

QUINN. (*hushed*) Are you OK? (*Carrie nods, feeling shy and a little embarrassed.*)

CARRIE. I just didn't really think this retreat involved dancing.

QUINN. Oh yes! Dance is an integral part of the 'How to Be a Mother' curriculum.

CARRIE. But why?

TERESA. Birth circles! Birth circles! (*The music slows back down.*)

CARRIE. The brochure said there would be exercise, but not dancing.

QUINN. Dancing is a form of exercise.

CARRIE. Yes, I know, but-

QUINN. Just do whatever makes you feel comfortable. (*Quinn dances away. The music stops.*)

TERESA. Please, return to the circle. (*Carrie re-enters the circle.*) One hand on your heart. One hand on your womb. (*The women follow this instruction.*) Send love to yourself. Send love to your uterus. (*A moment.*) Deep breath. (*An audible inhale & exhale from the group.*) Welcome to Day One of our third annual Weekend Retreat for Pregnant Women. "How to Be A Mother" is designed to help you prepare for labor, while connecting emotionally and spiritually to yourself, your baby, and the world around you. I'm Teresa. I'm a Woman. I'm a Mother. I'm here. Repeat back to me, ladies, "I'm here."

ALL. I'm here.

TERESA. Claim your space, ladies. I'M HERE!

ALL. I'm HERE! (*Teresa beams.*)

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SCENE 2

The women sit in a semicircle. There are lots of soft pillows and blankets around them.

FIONA. Hi, I'm Fiona. I'm a speech pathologist. I work in elementary schools and help kids with developmental issues. Well, the ones related to speech. I also foster Newfoundlands. They're the giant, mythical looking dogs. Friends have told me I won't care as much about the dogs when the baby comes, but I don't know. I think I'll still care. *(A pause)* Quinn, the co-teacher, told me about this class. *(Quinn smiles and gives a little wave to the group.)*

FIONA. She's going to be my doula. I think Doula's are awesome! *(Quinn gives a thumbs up.)*

CARRIE. What's a Doula?

FIONA. They help you with your pregnancy and labor.

QUINN. We're like Google! But for birth. *(Carrie nods, still a little confused.)*

TERESA. How far along are you?

FIONA. 39 weeks.

TERESA. *(surprised)* 39 weeks?

FIONA. Yes.

TERESA. Well, you could give birth any time!

FIONA. I know, I'm cutting it a little close. But I really wanted to learn "How to Be A Mother."

QUINN. That title may be misleading...

TERESA. There is no one set way to be a Mother.

FIONA. What do you mean?

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QUINN. This retreat gives you space to air your concerns, discuss options.

FIONA. But I'm looking for facts.

QUINN. Well...

TERESA. We do give you information, dear. Studies, statistics, that sort of thing. But there is always room for flexibility.

FIONA. I just want to get it right.

TERESA. And we are here to help you figure out what that "right" answer is.

FIONA. Okay. Well, I want to have a natural birth, so I want to learn as much as I can about pain management techniques.

CARRIE. Natural birth?

PRISCILLA. No epidural.

FIONA. Right. I thought 'How to Be a Mother' could help me achieve my birth plan. I really like having a plan. I read over my birth plan every night and tweak the phrasing in ways that I think will better communicate my needs to the Midwife. (*Quinn puts her hand on Fiona's shoulder.*)

QUINN. We've talked about birth plans, that they don't really-

FIONA. I know!

QUINN. It's like life. Just because you write it down, that doesn't necessarily mean-

FIONA. I know. I know!

QUINN. Just something to keep in mind.

FIONA. Language is important. Communication is important. I don't want to overlook that.

QUINN. That's true.

FIONA. I know that as a speech pathologist. But not everyone knows that. Like, we just talked about the word "natural." What

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does that mean? Does it mean you have your baby at home, in a bathtub? Does it mean that you want to meditate through that deep female human pain? Or, I don't know. Isn't all birth natural?

TERESA. It is. ALL birth is absolutely natural. We are open to ALL birth plans here. And we use the phrase Cesarean birth, dear, not C-Section. (*Teresa looks around to gauge the group reaction.*)

FIONA. It's just, my husband and I...we had a lot of...what's the word here? Trouble, I guess. We had trouble getting pregnant. It was so much trouble it almost wasn't worth the trouble. But now it feels worth it. Isn't it funny how when a troubling time is over, you sort of forget that it ever happened? But your body doesn't forget. Your body carries that trouble around with you. (*A breath.*) That's why I want to have a plan. A plan in place so that my birth isn't any trouble at all. I want that part to be *glorious*. (*She thinks for a moment.*) Women in our society are taught to be quiet. And birth is not a time to be quiet. They are taught to sit in the passenger's seat, but I want to fly the plane. I want to fly the plane of my own birth!

SCENE 3

Each of the women is holding a baby doll that is swaddled in a cloth. They are gently swaying the baby dolls saying "shhh."

TERESA. This is a fool-proof comforting technique.

CARRIE. But what if it doesn't work?

QUINN. It's fool-proof.

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TERESA. Just make a louder hushing sound, dear. (*The women “shhh” louder.*)

PRISCILLA. (*to Carrie.*) You look familiar. Were you at the La Leche League?

CARRIE. The what?

PRISCILLA. The breastfeeding group?

CARRIE. Oh, no. I work at Cici’s. You probably recognize me from there.

PRISCILLA. Oh yes! That place has the most bomb cannoli.

CARRIE. Yeah, but you get tired of it after a while. I’ve worked there forever.

QUINN. Now the burp. Be firm but not aggressive. (*The women burp their dolls. Teresa adjusts Fiona’s burp style.*)

PRISCILLA. I’m new to town, so I hope I can make some Mom friends. Or just any friend, really. I thought Moms would be a good in for me though, considering. (*Priscilla pats her pregnant stomach.*) Do any of your friends have kids?

CARRIE. Yeah, like all of them. (*Priscilla is surprised.*)

PRISCILLA. Really?

CARRIE. Sure, why?

PRISCILLA. Well, it’s just. You’re just so young.

CARRIE. I’m not that young.

PRISCILLA. Come on, you’re like 25 tops, right?

CARRIE. I’m 24.

PRISCILLA. Right? You’re really young.

CARRIE. Okay, I’m young.

PRISCILLA. I’m the very first of my friends to have a kid, and I’m 32.

CARRIE. Okay.

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PRISCILLA. Not that you're TOO young...I don't mean that. It's just different.

CARRIE. I guess.

PRISCILLA. (*laughing awkwardly*) I'm...I'm OLD.

CARRIE. I don't know. I think I'm ready.

PRISCILLA. Of course!

FIONA. Sorry, am I doing this right?

TERESA. I think so.

FIONA. But would my baby have burped by now?

QUINN. Yes, Fiona. Yes.

FIONA. Okay, good.

TERESA. Now rock your babies. Rock, rock! (*They rock their dolls.*)

CARRIE. Besides, once you reach 30 you can have a harder time getting pregnant.

PRISCILLA. That's not true.

CARRIE. Yes, it is! I read about it.

PRISCILLA. Plenty of women have children well into their 40s!

CARRIE. Well, whatever. Who cares?

PRISCILLA. I care!

CARRIE. Okay, sorry.

PRISCILLA. It's misinformation like that that makes women feel trapped and limited!

QUINN. Uhm, Priscilla. You're rocking your baby kind of hard.

PRISCILLA. Oh, sorry.

QUINN. Gently now. With love. Like this. (*She demonstrates.*)

PRISCILLA. Right. Got it. (*Teresa pulls out a colorful bag.*)

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TERESA. Now time for our mindfulness exercise. Please pull an inspirational word from the bag!

CARRIE. I'll take one! *(She pulls one from the bag. Priscilla follows.)*

TERESA. Each card has a special word-of-the-day on it. *(They each draw a card from the bag.)*

CARRIE. Patience.

PRISCILLA. Serenity.

FIONA. Trust.

TERESA. We are going to use our word in a sentence that relates to ourselves and our well-being. *(She draws a card.)* I'll go first as an example. *(She reads her card.)* So I got "SHARP." Humm. Okay, Sharp. I'm not really sure why I put that one in there. That doesn't really apply to this exercise. Okay, let me try again. *(She pulls another one out, reads it, and smiles.)* Okay, this is a good one. JOY! Alright, so I can say, this week I will allow myself to focus on the JOYful moments. Even when I am struggling. Even if I am having pain or sadness, I will acknowledge that pain, of course, as we must. But I will choose to focus on the JOY. *(She looks around the room.)* See what I did there? *(She gets excited.)* I feel JOY when I pet my cat. I feel JOY when I drink a steaming-hot cup of tea. I feel JOY when it rains. I feel JOY when I'm with my daughter...*(She catches herself.)* I mean, both my daughters, that is. I feel joy with both of my daughters. Uhm...I feel JOY when I'm dancing! I feel JOY when I hear music. I feel JOY guiding women through a positive pregnancy experience. YES! I feel JOY being here today, with YOU. *(She beams a smile that radiates positivity.)*

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CARRIE. (*Raising her hand.*) Uhm, does our sentence have to be that long?

SCENE 4

The women all sit in a semicircle on the floor.

CARRIE. Hi, I'm Carrie. I'm 16 weeks pregnant. This is my first child. My husband's name is Daryl. We have a cat. His name is Hopscotch. I work at Cici's as a waitress.

FIONA. Ohhh. I think I've seen you there!

CARRIE. Yeah, probably. I've worked there for a long time. (*A pause.*) So, my Mother-in-law bought me this retreat as a gift. She is really excited about the baby. Like REALLY excited. Kind of annoying actually...but I'm happy to be here, you know, getting empowered, or whatever. (*She shifts uncomfortably.*) My Mom is excited too, but not as much. My brother already has like seven thousand kids, so she's gone through it all already.

FIONA. Seven thousand?

CARRIE. I was exaggerating. He has four.

FIONA. Oh. Four.

CARRIE. I was named after Carrie from the show Sex in the City. I guess that's cool, but my favorite character in the show is Samantha because she works in PR. I think I'd be really good at PR, because I like to listen to people more than I like talking. And it looks fun. Wait, have you guys seen that show? (*The women all nod.*)

PRISCILLA. Yes.

FIONA. I have.

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TERESA. Yes, dear, it's safe to assume everyone in the world has seen it.

CARRIE. Okay. Yeah. It's a really good show. *(She fidgets.)* We find out the gender of the baby at the next appointment. I really hope Daryl will come with me. He said he would, so hopefully he will. We got married right out of high school. Well not, right out, like two years later, but we were "high school sweethearts." *(She smiles.)* I remember as a kid hearing that the divorce rate was 50% and I thought, "wow, that is so high."

But now I'm like, "wow, that is so low." *(She is feeling more vulnerable.)* I mean can you believe HALF of all married people make it? Really half. That's kind of amazing. *(The others chuckle at this comment.)* In this one Sex in the City episode Charlotte said that everyone has two great loves in their life. But I guess I just got one! Haha. *(She laughs, then frowns a little.)* Anyway, that's just a show. That's fiction. This is real life.

SCENE 5

Fiona and Priscilla are on their hands and knees, moving back and forth, humming. Quinn alternates between rubbing Fiona's low back and squeezing her hips, pretending she's in labor.

TERESA. Guttural, ladies. Low tones. Low tones are the most ethereal of all sounds. The sounds of both the Earth and the Universe! It's the low tones that will help the most in a contraction. *(Carrie gently bounces on an exercise ball away*

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from the group. She is not humming.) Quinn, maybe you could give Carrie a turn?

CARRIE. I'm fine.

QUINN. Are you sure?

CARRIE. All good.

TERESA. Okay, as long as you're comfortable. *(She looks at Carrie for a moment trying to read her body language, then turns away.)* Now let's practice the sounds of those contractions! Let's get comfortable working with these new noises in our bodies. *(The girls make some awkward yelling/contraction noises. Fiona is really into it. Carrie just bounces.)*

PRISCILLA. Teresa, you said you could do something to help turn my baby?

TERESA. Yes, thank you, Priscilla. *(Teresa picks up a large sheet and stands behind Priscilla. She wraps it around her stomach and moves the sheet back and forth quickly, like she's cleaning a giant bowling ball.)* Here is an easy move you can do if you have a breech baby. We want to get those babies heads down! *(Quinn cheers her on. PRISCILLA looks ill. Fiona is still pretending to have a contraction.)*

PRISCILLA. Oh. Oh no. *(Priscilla sits up. Teresa stops.)*

TERESA. Are you feeling pain?

PRISCILLA. I'm just nauseous.

TERESA. Oh, okay. Here, relax. Do you want some water?

PRISCILLA. Maybe.

TERESA. I'll get you some. *(Teresa goes to get her water from a pitcher.)*

PRISCILLA. No, I just- *(Priscilla throws up.)*

CARRIE. Woah!

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TERESA. Oh, it's okay. It's okay. Here. (*She hands her the water. The rest of the class has stopped now.*)

PRISCILLA. I'm sorry.

TERESA. Don't apologize. This is just a part of the process.

PRISCILLA. I've had the worst nausea.

CARRIE. I haven't puked at all. Probably because I'm so damn young.

FIONA. Find comfort with the nausea. It means your hormones are doing their job.

PRISCILLA. Yeah, I guess.

QUINN. Flipping a breech baby can be intense. It may have been what made you sick.

PRISCILLA. So is my baby head down now? After that exercise?

TERESA. You'll have to check at your next ultrasound.

PRISCILLA. My next ultrasound isn't for another month.

QUINN. Just keep doing the exercises.

FIONA. (*Proudly.*) My baby is head down! (*She reads the room.*) Just sharing my truth.

PRISCILLA. Are there any moves you can do without a partner? Or without any help. Single. You know, by yourself?

TERESA. Sure! Would anyone else like a handout? (*Teresa holds some pamphlets. Carrie reluctantly raises her hand.*)

CARRIE. Me, I guess? Why do you want your baby head down?

FIONA. If it's breech there's a greater risk for a c-s...a cesarean birth.

CARRIE. Breech means the feet come out first right?

QUINN. Yes.

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CARRIE. I don't think a c-section sounds so bad. I mean, what's the big deal, right?

TERESA. Well, cesareans can have a longer recovery period. It's really a major surgery.

CARRIE. Yeah, but you're all drugged up right? So it's not like you feel anything?

QUINN. There are other...sensations.

FIONA. Cesareans can be traumatic.

CARRIE. Isn't all birth traumatic?

TERESA. I would avoid thinking along these lines. Birth is empowering! Birth is beautiful! Or...uhm...it can be.

CARRIE. Well, I'm taking the drugs.

FIONA. Uhm...wow.

CARRIE. Why wouldn't you?

FIONA. Many reasons. I don't even know where to begin.

TERESA. It's a personal choice. What's right for one woman may not be right for another. Just like what's right for one child, may not work for every child.

FIONA. I guess so.

PRISCILLA. It made so much sense to me, my upside down baby. Everything in my life is so upside down right now. It's like I don't know how to talk anymore. I don't know where I am. *(She stares off in the distance.)* I used to live in an apartment. It was high up in the sky, 6th floor. I could see the clouds, the water. Now I live in a house. It's on the ground level. There isn't any water anywhere. No ocean. When I look out my window I just see a yard, the sidewalk. My apartment was small and my house is big, but somehow I feel more trapped in. Smaller. It's all funky and weird. *(She gets a little teary.)* Someone said the word "Brewskie" to me the other day.

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Brewskie? Just say “beer.” I can’t drink one anyways! (*She wipes her tear.*) Sorry. I think I’m hormonal. At the last ultrasound I found out I was having a girl.

QUINN. Aww!

FIONA. Me too! I’m having a girl!

TERESA. I have two daughters!

PRISCILLA. Yes. It’s exciting. But, for some reason, I realized I was scared. I thought it was going to be a boy. I don’t know why. I just haven’t gotten it all figured out yet. I don’t think I know how to be a woman. How am I going to teach her how to be a girl, when I don’t even know what I’m saying, where I am, what to wear, how to feel? How can I look in the mirror like that? How can I raise a girl when I’m upside down?

SCENE 6

All the women are sitting on the floor.

QUINN. Hi, everyone. I’m Quinn. Short for Quincy. I go by She/Her/Hers. I just received my doula certification last year. Fiona’s baby will be my fifth birth. I’m really excited about it. I’m not going to be one of those revolving-door birthers who leaves after one breech baby, no way, I’m in this for the long haul. I’m dedicated. I’m a Capricorn. That’s just how we are. (*Fiona smiles at her.*) I’m left-handed. My Harry Potter house would be Ravenclaw. My girlfriend’s name is Cheryl. We’ve been together for about a year and a half. She’s in school to be a chiropractor, which is *so great*. We have a parrot named Edgar. I inherited him from my Aunt when she died. He doesn’t say much, but I taught him how to fetch, so that’s pretty neat.

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(She talks with confidence.) People ask me if I want kids a lot. Maybe because of my profession. Or maybe it's just something women get asked. I don't know. I actually don't think I want any, which is weird because I'm obsessed with pregnancy. But being pregnant and being a Mom are actually two very separate experiences. I think people forget that. *(She gets impassioned.)* There's like, this messed up divide in our society around parenting. Like when I tell people I'm a Doula everyone is like, "oh wow that's amazing, the birth process is so beautiful, blah, blah, blah" Then when I ask people if they want kids they're like, "oh gross, kids are sticky, I love sleeping" or something like that. *(She laughs.)* My girlfriend says she doesn't know how to talk to kids. I'm like, just say hello, weirdo. Just say "hi." *(A breath.)* I'm glad Teresa asked me to co-teach this class. I think this can be another outlet for me to help my clients. Anyway, I'm just happy to be here with all you Moms, and I'm happy to be learning as much as I can from Teresa. *(She turns to Teresa, then back to everyone.)* The beginning of life is very important. I want you to remember that. The first two years of a person's life shape who they are more than any other time. So when you're sitting around, holding your baby, thinking you're doing nothing, you're actually doing a lot. Just remember that. You're doing a lot.

SCENE 7

All the women stand in a circle. Quinn is facing Priscilla.

QUINN. So...Priscilla, you have a really beautiful smile.

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PRISCILLA. Thank you. (*Priscilla stares at the floor.*)

TERESA. RECEIVE the compliment, Priscilla. Receive it!

PRISCILLA. Okay.

TERESA. As Mothers we are going to have to get comfortable with receiving help.

PRISCILLA. Okay. I'm receiving it.

TERESA. Go on, Quinn.

QUINN. I appreciate your openness and honesty. You're really...uncensored. Very confident in yourself. I like that. I think your sense of self is really inspiring. Like, your boldness makes me want to be bold too! ... Also, your hair is nice. ...Okay, that's all.

PRISCILLA. Wow, thank you. Can I respond?

TERESA. We must only accept the compliment and move on.

PRISCILLA. Oh okay, well thank you, Quinn I...

QUINN. Don't respond.

PRISCILLA. I'm not.

TERESA. Now Priscilla, you compliment Fiona.

PRISCILLA. (*casually, without malice*) Okay, great. This is easy. I'm so glad I got you! (*Carrie frowns.*)OK, Fiona. You are a very strong, independent woman. You have a clear love of the world, people, animals. It's so cool that you foster all those dogs. I don't think I could do that. It's just amazing.

TERESA. Make eye contact, please.

PRISCILLA. Oh, okay. (*They make eye contact.*)

TERESA. Don't be shy.

PRISCILLA. Okay, uhm...I think you're going to be a really amazing Mother, and I hope we can be friends, like *real* friends. (*Fiona smiles.*)

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FIONA. Me too. When I signed up for this I just thought I'd learn how to be a Mother, but it turns out I've met so many interesting people. *(They giggle.)*

TERESA. Excellent, Priscilla. See how when they made eye contact her body-language shifted? They became more open and aware of each other. Just perfect. Now, Fiona, you compliment me.

FIONA. Okay. Now?

TERESA. Yes, now.

FIONA. So, I've really enjoyed everything I've learned at this retreat so far.

TERESA. Look at me.

FIONA. Right. *(They make eye contact.)* I like your necklace. All your clothes, really. You have a great sense of style. *(Teresa nods without breaking eye contact.)* Uhm, you are clearly very passionate. You've found your calling in life and you do it so well. I'm sure you're a great Mom. You're so good to all of us. *(The other women nod.)* And I'm really glad I came to this retreat. This is like the best I've felt the whole pregnancy, honestly, and you've helped with that, so thank you, really. *(Teresa receives the compliment.)*

TERESA. See how I accepted that compliment? See how I received it? Receiving is almost its own art form. *(Teresa turns to Carrie.)* Now I will compliment Carrie. *(Carrie fidgets.)* Carrie, look at me. *(Carrie looks up at Teresa.)* Carrie, I am so happy you are here. You have a very pleasant aura. It's just wonderful to be around. *(Carrie kind of rolls her eyes.)* I mean it, Carrie. You do. *(Carrie blushes.)* You are beautiful. Stunningly beautiful. Inside and out. And you are strong. Stronger than you know. Perhaps stronger than any one of us

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can even comprehend. You are lovable. In fact, I believe there is a plethora of love in your future. Yes, I see you now, surrounded in light, and just overflowing with glowing, luminous, and radiant love. (*Carrie is tearing up a little, but trying to hide it.*) I want you to know that you are enough, Carrie. You are enough just the way you are. (*Carrie receives the compliment.*)

SCENE 8

PRISCILLA. Hi, I'm Priscilla. (*A pause.*) So, I moved here a few months ago from California. My Dad lives here and a bunch of my Aunts. That whole side of the family just settled here kind of randomly. I knew I needed family support with the baby. They're all really helpful, which is great, because...(*She gets a little shy.*) I'm a single Mom. Or I guess I will be when the baby is born. Right now I'm just single. Single and pregnant! Haha. That could be a reality TV show. Anyway...I'm actually feeling really good about everything as far as that goes. I always kind of knew I wanted like, one baby. I just never could commit to the idea of one man. So hey, here we are! (*She laughs uncomfortably.*) I've been having a lot of nausea with my pregnancy. Once I threw up six times in one day. On days when it's really bad I just watch old movies and try not to move. I remember hearing Kate Middleton had really bad pregnancies. So I just lay on my futon, thinking, "I feel you girl," and pretend I'm the Queen. But she probably has like five hundred maids bringing her La Croix all day long, so you know, that's way better. (*Her tone becomes serious.*) I don't know about you guys, but being pregnant has made me like,

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staunchly pro-choice. I mean, I always was, but if you are seriously going to put your body through this, you better WANT it, you know what I'm saying? (*She shifts her energy.*) I'm a trained set designer. I'm not sure about the set design scene in town. I'll figure that out later. Like I said, my family has been really supportive so I'm just going to make it through the first year with the baby before I do anything big. My Mom used to say that she felt judged for not going back to work. She was a stay-at-home Mom after I was born, and most of her friends had careers. Today, I don't know. I think women get judged for staying home now too, but they also get judged for going back to work. It's like you get judged either way. It's really pretty shitty. (*She becomes angry.*) It's like parenthood is seen as this anti-intellectual choice, and I'm not sure why. Why does it have to be a career or kids? Why can't it just be your life with or without coffee, trampolines, travel, babies, cats, whatever. Why can't it just be LIFE? (*A breath.*) Anyway, I'm really glad I decided to take this class. I thought when I left California I was going to this weird land devoid of culture where everyone just ate corn. And you guys do eat a lot of corn. There is really a shocking amount of corn everywhere. But all-in-all, I'm really happy. And I didn't really realize that until I said it outloud right now, but yeah, I feel good.

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