

# **THE REAL DEAL**

By  
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## THE REAL DEAL

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THE REAL DEAL

*For Megan and Connor*

## THE REAL DEAL

Cast - 2 men, 2 women

Brett - 20s, A stickler for the rules

Jessica - 20s, Fiercely protective caretaker

Marcy - 60s, Full of joie de vivre

Christopher - 30s/40s, Seemingly heartless

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ACT I  
SCENE 1

*TIME: A decade or two from now.*

*PLACE: A living room/foyer. The main entrance is down right and an exit to an off-stage part of the house is up left. The room itself is an opulent amalgamation of lovingly-preserved antiques intermixed with a handful of ultra-modern necessities. The room's centerpiece is an elaborate antique sofa. To its right sits an ornate lamp atop an end table, and a coffee table with a vase of flowers sitting atop it can be found at the foot of the sofa. A medium-sized drinks counter—lined with bottles of various colored liquors, some strangely neon in appearance—is set down stage left. The rest of the set may be decorated with paintings on the walls, a shelf full of dusty old books, and perhaps some antique statuary strewn about. [NOTE: The basic idea is to suggest a room that is teeming with the accumulations of a lifetime of good living.]*

*At rise, JESSICA. enters from off left. Her dress suggests a position of some respect and authority – though not too much authority. More of a “middle manager.” She places a tea service down on the coffee table and does a quick once-over of the room, sweeping away a slight hint of dust, adjusting the flowers in the vase, etc.*

*A door chime (perhaps reminiscent of “The Jetsons”) rings.*

*Jessica stops in her tracks, a look of barely-contained excitement across her lovely features. She crosses back left and calls offstage.*

**JESSICA.** Madame? Madame, he's arrived.

**MARCY.** (O.S.) Please show him in, dear. I'll be there momentarily.

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**JESSICA.** *(Crosses down right to the entrance, primping herself slightly as she goes. She takes a deep controlling breath and opens the door.*

**BRETT.** *stands in the doorway holding a tiny, space-age looking briefcase in his hand. His dress suggests that he has come in some sort of “official” capacity. There isn’t anything particularly striking about Brett. Yet, something about him is making Jessica as giddy as a schoolgirl encountering her latest poster hunk. Forced composure)* Good morning.

**BRETT.** Good morning. *(The pair stand there for a moment. There is an awkward tension between the two of them, not unlike a couple sizing each other up on their “first date.”)*

**BRETT.** I’m sorry... perhaps I haven’t come to the right residence? I was told that this was Saint Cloud Manor.

**JESSICA.** *(Flustered)* Oh... yes! I mean... no... I mean, yes! Yes, you’re... right where you ought to be. *(Another beat. No movement. It’s getting more than a little strange for Brett.)*

**BRETT.** Well, then... May I enter, or would you prefer to just do it right here?

**JESSICA.** *(Snapping out of her reverie)* Oh! Yes, of course. Please come in. *(She motions him in. He does, taking in the opulence of the room.)*

**BRETT.** *(Whistles)* Wow! Take a look at this place! It’s like a museum in here. Did you do all this?

**JESSICA.** Well... you could say that, yes.

**BRETT.** *(Sniffs the flowers and feels the petals.)* Amazing! They seem so real.

**JESSICA.** That’s because they *are* real.

**BRETT.** You’re kidding! *(Brett excitedly picks up the vase and inspects the flowers more closely.)*

**JESSICA.** No. They’re specially grown in a climate-controlled hydroponic greenhouse in the north wing. Along with all our vegetables.

**BRETT.** Vegetables? You mean *real* vegetables? I didn’t think anybody grew them privately, anymore. I like the vase, by the way.

**JESSICA.** Thank you. It’s Hong Dynasty, by the way. Last of its kind. *(Hinting)* Irreplaceable. *(Realizing, Brett gingerly places the flower vase back on the coffee table. The vase wobbles slightly, but Brett quickly steadies it. With a sigh of relief, Brett rises and quickly glances at the*

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*other items in the room.*) So... I guess it's safe to assume that none of this artwork is a reproduction, either?

**JESSICA.** *(Nods)* All one hundred percent authentic.

**BRETT.** *(With a nervous titter)* I'm surprised there isn't a dinosaur skeleton or something in here.

**JESSICA.** *(With a chuckle)* Oh, please. Be serious. Where could we possibly have fit it in here? No. It'll be out in the garden.

**BRETT.** What?!

**JESSICA.** If it ever gets here, that is. Overnight shipping isn't really as... over night as it used to be.

**BRETT.** Well, I have to say that I'm impressed. You should feel incredibly fortunate. Very few people can actually afford to live like this anymore.

**JESSICA.** Yes... I'm... rather proud of the work I've done here. But, surely someone in your position must have visited a number of houses nicer than this.

**BRETT.** Up till today, that number had yet to extend beyond one decimal point. *(Jessica has not been able to take her eyes off Brett this whole time. Finally, Brett's patience and politeness breaks down a bit.)* Do I have something stuck in my teeth?

**JESSICA.** I beg your pardon?

**BRETT.** My fly undone? Or have I suddenly developed some hideous, fleshy growth that only your keen vision is able to detect? 'Cause you've done nothing but stare at me ever since you opened the door.

**JESSICA.** Oh! Please, forgive me. I'm really not trying to put you off or anything. It's just that I've never met... one of you, before. *(Jessica indicates the sofa. Brett crosses to it and sits.)*

**BRETT.** Ah. Well, that explains everything. Think nothing of it. Everybody gets overcome by a little case of the jitters the first time out.

**JESSICA.** I hope I haven't offended you.

**BRETT.** Not at all. Happens all the time with you Virgs.

**JESSICA.** Excuse me? "U-Virgs?"

**BRETT.** Uh, no. Just "Virgs." Sorry. Industry jargon. First-timers, like yourself.

**JESSICA.** Oh. For a minute there, I thought maybe you were referring to

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some sort of musical act.

**BRETT.** There are more abbreviations and acronyms in our business than there were at the height of the personal computing industry. I'm still trying to get the hang of them all, myself.

**JESSICA.** If it's not too forward of me, may I ask how many times you've actually done this?

**BRETT.** Ah. Well, you've caught me, there. I guess you could say I'm still somewhat of a Virg, myself. Only been through roughly fifty sessions or so.

**JESSICA.** I see. Well, I was kind of hoping they might send out someone with just a little more experience under his belt. Pardon the expression.

**BRETT.** Of course. I understand completely... *(Brett conspicuously reaches down into his pants.)*

**JESSICA.** Uh... What are you...?

**BRETT.** *(Brett produces a device similar to a cell phone. Jessica sighs with relief. Brett begins dialing.)* I can have a senior-level representative out here in about a half-hour.

**JESSICA.** *(Crosses to the sofa and sits.)* No. Wait a minute. That won't really be necessary. I'm sure you'll do just fine.

**BRETT.** *(Brett replaces the cell phone-like device, roots around, and pulls out an electronic note pad, much to Jessica's consternation.)* Good. Well, before we begin, there are a couple of minor administrative matters that need attending to.

**JESSICA.** Uh... what administrative matters?

**BRETT.** Please, don't be concerned. It's just a standard series of questions that we're required, under BFR policy, to ask before rendering services. It simply protects your rights and safeguards the Bureau against any unnecessary litigation. An unfortunate necessity in this day and age.

**JESSICA.** Oh, I see. Well, before you dive head-long into all that, can I just ask you one little thing? As a matter of totally insatiable curiosity... why do you have the briefcase?

**BRETT.** What do you mean?

**JESSICA.** I mean... if you keep all your vital... equipment... down there, what could you possibly have stashed in that briefcase?

**BRETT.** *(Purposely cryptic)* To our kind: the most important thing in the



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universe.

**JESSICA.** *(A little freaked)* And... what might that be?

**BRETT.** *(Still serious)* I've revealed far too much as it is. *(Pause)* But, I suppose... if I were to show you, as opposed to telling you, then I wouldn't have actually *said* anything incriminating, would I? *(Brett crosses over to his briefcase and unlatches it. He takes a last look at Jessica.)* Are you absolutely certain you want to know?

**JESSICA.** *(Uncertain)* Yes. No... Yes! Yes, I want to know!

**BRETT.** *(He opens the briefcase. He reaches into it and pulls out... a sandwich. With a wry smile)* Lunch. *(He was messing with her the whole time!)*

**JESSICA.** *(Dumbstruck)* Lunch?

**BRETT.** *(With a confirming nod)* Lunch. Well, not just lunch. I mean, there are also protein bars, a couple bottles of water, and all the necessary forms. Doesn't leave much room for anything else. Besides, my devices are much more easily accessible this way.

**JESSICA.** *(Aside)* Not to mention more fun in "manner" mode...

**BRETT.** *(Closing briefcase)* What'd you say?

**JESSICA.** *(Catching herself)* I said... does this procedure... hurt, at all?

**BRETT.** *(Crosses back to the sofa and sits.)* Hurt? Goodness, no. Wherever did you get that idea?

**JESSICA.** Well, you see... I have this friend who went through it a couple months back. And she told me she never screamed so loudly in her entire life.

**BRETT.** Oh, no. No. Believe me, they were screams of delight, not agony. What your friend experienced was a little phenomenon we refer to as the "roller coaster high."

**JESSICA.** I'm sorry... the what "high?"

**BRETT.** So, what you're telling me is that you *don't* have one of those somewhere on the grounds? A roller coaster was something that used to be ridden for amusement. They were essentially small trams propelled through a self-contained course of track.

**JESSICA.** *(Skeptical)* Really. And what precisely made them so... exhilarating?

**BRETT.** The tram traveled at speeds well over 60 miles per hour. And the

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track itself was purposely constructed into a series of steep vertical drops, sharp curves and rolling loops.

**JESSICA.** Well, that certainly sounds like something that would cause a state of euphoria. Not to mention more than a few upchucks.

**BRETT.** Sorry. It's the only analogy we've got. But, curiously enough, you might find yourself experiencing those very symptoms once the incubation period begins.

**JESSICA.** *(Rises and begins crossing up left.)* I sincerely doubt that's going to be an issue. Well, if you'll excuse me a moment, I suppose I should go get...

**BRETT.** *(Interrupting)* I really don't mean to rush you, but today is our busiest day of the month. The questionnaire can wait; it's really just a formality. We can skip it for now and just get right down to business... *(Brett rises and begins undoing his pants. Jessica stares.)*

**JESSICA.** *(Horrorified)* Excuse me. But what is it you think you're doing?

**BRETT.** *(Down to his underwear)* It's been our experience that clothing tends to get in the way of the process.

**JESSICA.** Woah, wait a minute. You mean to tell me that you just... do it? Right here?

**BRETT.** Certainly. Unless, of course, you'd prefer to go somewhere else.

**JESSICA.** I think maybe I'd better... *(Jessica crosses left to exit.)*

**BRETT.** Fine. *(He follows her closely, leaving his pants around his ankles which, naturally, makes his gait rather silly.)*

**JESSICA.** Where are you going?

**BRETT.** Wherever you are.

**JESSICA.** I really don't think I need to be in the room whenever you... do your business.

**BRETT.** Of course you do. The implantation won't be successful unless we work together.

**JESSICA.** Together...? *(Really shocked now)* Wait a minute. You mean, you... we... we're supposed to...?

**BRETT.** Certainly. "It takes two to mambo," as the saying goes.

**JESSICA.** It's "tango," actually.

**BRETT.** Whatever. Some supposedly "forbidden" Latin American dance.

**JESSICA.** Now, hold on a second. Nobody mentioned anything about that

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to me.

**BRETT.** Well, what were you expecting?

**JESSICA.** I don't know. I'm... I'm a... What did you call me a minute ago?

**BRETT.** A Virg.

**JESSICA.** Right! A Virg.

**BRETT.** There's a comprehensive guide to the procedure available online. Are you telling me that you haven't even read it?

**JESSICA.** Oh, no. No, of course I've *read* it. It's just that...

**BRETT.** Well then, please forgive me, but I'm on a bit of a tight schedule. There are three other sessions scheduled for today and I'm already running behind. *(He moves to undo Jessica's top.)* So, if we're going to do this, it's recommended that you remove your clothing as well.

**JESSICA.** I'll do no such thing! *(She slaps Brett's hands away.)* And neither will you!

**BRETT.** Well, then. How would you suggest we proceed?

**JESSICA.** Couldn't you just... leave a sample? *(She dashes over to the drinks counter. She grabs a glass at random.)*

**BRETT.** Leave... a sample?

**JESSICA.** *(Handing Brett the glass.)* Sure. You could use this.

**BRETT.** *(He momentarily studies the glass. Then, with a laugh)* Oh, no. That particular method was abandoned many years ago. When it was determined that the zygotes couldn't survive outside a host body for more than a few seconds. That's why direct fertilization is now preferred.

**JESSICA.** Oh. *(Beat)* Are you sure? I mean, you won't find any finer quality crystal container anywhere on the planet.

**BRETT.** I must admit, I'm more than a little confused, here. I mean, you *did* call to have me come out here today, didn't you?

**JESSICA.** Well, yes. But you see...

**BRETT.** Then, what's the problem? *(Beat, realizing)* Ah. I think I understand, now. You're beginning to have second thoughts, aren't you?

**JESSICA.** Second thoughts?

**BRETT.** *(Reassuringly)* Look. Your hesitation is completely understandable. To a Virg like yourself, having a new life growing inside your body can seem a bit freakish. But rest assured, it's completely natural.

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There isn't a species on the planet that wasn't doing it for millions of years before...

**JESSICA.** I don't think you quite understand what I'm saying. I am *not* having second thoughts. I haven't even had the *first* thoughts!

**BRETT.** (*Staring at Jessica, dumbstruck. Then, he begins to pull his pants back up. Fighting to maintain calm*) Well. This is a fine turn of events, isn't it? Just so you know, this incident is going to figure very prominently in my daily log. And, on a more personal note, I think it would just be simple courtesy if females like you could make up your minds before you actually *called* the Bureau!

**JESSICA.** What exactly do you mean by "females like me?"

**BRETT.** (*Growing indignation*) Lay-about, debutante princesses with excessive amounts of free time and more money than the entire exchequer of an underdeveloped third-world nation.

**JESSICA.** Woah! Hold on a second, what makes you think I'm...?

**BRETT.** (*Interrupting*) Do you have any idea of how much work goes into preparing for one of these sessions? No, I don't suppose you do. All you have to do is make a call—or log in to the web site—and wait up to five business days for delivery. Well, I've got a news flash for you: the Bureau of Fertility and Reproduction does not exist strictly for your amusement!

**JESSICA.** I never said that you did...

**BRETT.** But, that's precisely what you *think*. Isn't it? You think just because you're able to afford the Bureau's *premium* services that we'll simply be at your beck and call whenever "the mood" strikes you.

**JESSICA.** Why are you getting so upset?

**BRETT.** Why am *I* getting upset? Gee, let's see. While, presumably, you're lounging by your pool, sipping the latest trendy mind-rotting beverages, I'm weeding my way through endless triplicate forms, which then have to be signed off by upper management. And believe me, on most days it would be easier to track down the location of Amelia Earhart's final resting place than it'd be to find one of them. And that doesn't even begin to cover all the hassle of scheduling a visit by a local BFR service representative. But, even ignoring all that mindless administrative rigmarole, what's most upsetting to me—in addition to having my daily schedule completely thrown off due to the insistent claims of a certain

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public transit operator who claims she “knows a terrific short-cut,”—is to finally arrive at my client’s house only to have her tell me, “Sorry. Changed my mind. Please take it back.”

**JESSICA.** Look, this isn’t exactly easy for us either, you know. I mean, I barely even know you.

**BRETT.** (*Realizing*) Well, why didn’t you say so in the first place? We could have avoided all this unpleasantness. (*Almost as an automaton*) My name is Brett.

**JESSICA.** (*Beat. Incredulous*) That’s it? That’s all I get? “Hi. I’m Brett and I’ll be fertilizing your ova today?”

**BRETT.** (*With a shrug*) That’s all we’re required to give. Now, can we please get started?

**JESSICA.** Aren’t you even the least bit curious about who I am?

**BRETT.** Not particularly. What’s the point? In all likelihood, after this morning we’ll never see each other again.

**JESSICA.** (*Disgusted*) With an attitude like that, it’s no wonder you’ve had only fifty sessions.

**BRETT.** (*Exasperated*) You know, ever since you became the dominant gender on this planet, you’ve really gone out of your way to make life miserable for us, haven’t you?

**JESSICA.** I don’t see what you’re complaining about. You get to go hopping from “session” to “session,” seeding our azure fields without having to worry about harvesting the crop! And, best of all, it’s completely legal. Government-sanctioned, even! I’d say you’ve got it pretty good. Even better than in the old days!

**BRETT.** See? Now that’s exactly the kind of ignorance I’d expect from someone like you! In fact, the Bureau is greatly concerned about the repercussions of its work. After all, we are on a very important mission, here!

**JESSICA.** (*Sarcastically*) Oh, of course you are. I’ve seen your ads. “The BFR. Re-building the population – one ‘session’ at a time.” That’s just what this world needs: more of you running around! Isn’t that what got us into this mess in the first place?

**BRETT.** No. What got us into this mess in the first place was you calling the BFR when you knew you were nowhere near ready for conception!

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*(Brett picks up his briefcase and angrily crosses down right to the main entrance.)*

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Jessica! What's taking so long? Is he ready for me yet?

**JESSICA.** Uh... Not quite, Madame.

**MARCY.** *(O.S. Playfully)* You wouldn't be trying to take advantage of his presence for yourself now, would you?

**JESSICA.** No, Madame. Of course not.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Good. Then, please come in here and help me with this garment. Why after all these years they continue to insist on putting the damned clasps in the back of these things is beyond me!

**BRETT.** *(Slowly turns back to face Jessica. With some satisfaction)* I don't suppose you'd care to tell me who that was?

**JESSICA.** My employer.

**BRETT.** Ah. I understand completely, now. Well, your technique's not the greatest I've ever encountered. But I suppose that would be a little too much to expect from a Virg.

**JESSICA.** Technique?

**BRETT.** You were attempting to seduce me just now, weren't you?

**JESSICA.** *(With some disgust)* Seduce you?

**BRETT.** Oh, don't be embarrassed. After all, it's not without precedent. I could fairly easily fertilize you before I moved on to your employer. However, I'm afraid it would be your responsibility to explain the additional charges on her invoice.

**JESSICA.** *(Jessica crosses to Brett.)* Unbelievable! That's all you breeders think about, isn't it? Business, business, business!

**BRETT.** If you knew the amount of commissions senior-level breeders make, believe me, it'd be all you'd think about, too.

**JESSICA.** *(Hurt)* I see. Well, in that case, please don't let me keep you a moment longer from your precious "commission." *(Jessica angrily crosses up left and exits. Brett shakes his head with befuddlement.)*

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Are you finding everything you need?

**BRETT.** Madame?

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* That's what they call me. Those who still respect me, at any rate. What is it they call you?

**BRETT.** Brett.

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**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Rhett? Oh, how wonderfully romantic! I've always loved *Gone with the Wind*. *(In southern dialect)* "I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."

**JESSICA.** *(O.S.)* That's *Streetcar*, Madame.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* I beg your pardon?

**JESSICA.** *(O.S.)* That line is from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Madame. Not *Gone with the Wind*.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Are you sure?

**JESSICA.** *(O.S.)* Quite sure, Madame.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* So, Rhett isn't the one who stands at the bottom of the staircase yelling... "STELLA!!!"

**JESSICA.** *(O.S.)* No, Madame. That was Stanley Kowalski. Rhett Butler was the one who said, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* In *A Streetcar Named Desire*?

**JESSICA.** *(O.S.)* No! In *Gone with the Wind*!

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Oh! No wonder I don't remember.

**BRETT.** *(With a chuckle)* Actually, Madame, it's "B-rett."

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Barrette? No, I'm going to wear my hair down today, if it's all the same to you.

**BRETT.** *(Forceful)* No! It's Brett! B-R-E-T-T!!! My name is Brett!

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* All right, all right. Don't get excited... *(Beat. Realizing what she said)* What am I saying? Please – get excited! Fix yourself something to drink, if you like. *Mi casa, su casa.*

**BRETT.** *(Crosses to the drinks cart.)* Thank you, Madame. *(He inspects a few bottles, then decides on one and pours himself a glass.)*

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* My name's Marcy Anne, actually. Please feel free to repeat it. Frequently. Particularly during our upcoming session. Although I should warn you, I usually only respond to the second half of it.

**BRETT.** You mean "Anne?"

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* And they say you breeders aren't supposed to be particularly bright.

**BRETT.** Why "Anne?"

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* I've always hated the name "Marcy." I swear, before I was even born, my parents were bound and determined to set me on a career path that would lead me straight to head curator in a museum,

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wearing glasses with lenses thick enough to see all the way to Saturn.

**BRETT.** (*Quickly glancing about the room some more. Aside*) Looks like they succeeded...

**MARCY.** (*O.S.*) What'd you say?

**BRETT.** (*Catching himself*) I said... this is a very fine home you have here Madame... Anne. I was telling your assistant that you're most fortunate.

**MARCY.** (*O.S. With a chuckle*) I hope she didn't rattle you too badly. She has a bit of a "mother hen" complex. Anyway, she deserves most of the credit for the house. She makes sure the walls don't crumble around us.

**BRETT.** In that case, she may have the potential to become a fine moth... bearer... someday.

**MARCY.** (*O.S.*) Almost said the "M" word there, didn't you? (*Chuckling*) Don't worry. I won't mention it to your superiors. I know how the Bureau likes to maintain an air of "professionalism".

**BRETT.** Thank you, Madame.

**MARCY.** (*O.S.*) But, really. "Bearer?" Of all the words in our language at your disposal, you couldn't have chosen a better one than that? Good heavens, it makes you sound like you're talking about livestock or something.

**BRETT.** I'll be sure to make a note of that in my report.

**MARCY.** (*O.S.*) Well, since we're on the subject, anyway, what about her?

**BRETT.** What about who?

**MARCY.** (*O.S.*) Your... mother. Bearer? Whatever you call the one who named you? I mean, surely even you must have had one.

**BRETT.** It's... not something we generally talk about, Madame.

**MARCY.** (*O.S.*) For the last time, it's "Anne." Come on. Indulge me a little.

**BRETT.** (*Thinks a moment*) Well, I... I'm afraid can't really say for certain. Once I hit puberty, and was certified fertile, I was conscripted into the Bureau. That's pretty much the only life I've ever known.

**MARCY.** (*O.S.*) Oh. How sad for you.

**BRETT.** Don't get me wrong. I'm... not unhappy about it. I mean, just knowing that I'm now part of the BFR's noble crusade to repopulate the world is very exciting. And personally satisfying.



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**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* In that case, you're a better person than I am.

**BRETT.** Oh, I wouldn't say that. I mean, granted, we haven't met face-to-face yet. But judging by your collection I can see that you have a very discerning, exquisite taste.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Mmmm... I see they taught you everything. Didn't they? Flattery and all.

**BRETT.** No, really. I mean that.

**MARCY.** *(O.S. Patronizing)* Of course you do.

**BRETT.** *(Changing the subject)* So, why did you decide to call this place "Saint Cloud Manor?"

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Oh, I didn't name it. My husband did. Saint Cloud was where he came from. I think he figured since he was never able to go back home again, he'd make this little corner of the world just like it. Right down to the name.

**BRETT.** So, you're... *(Uncertain of the correct word)* ...married?

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* For someone with your advanced level of intelligence, you seem to be having a lot of trouble with those "M" words today.

**BRETT.** I wasn't aware that the ceremony was even performed anymore.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Well, I'm what you might call the old-fashioned type.

**BRETT.** So, where is your... husband, today?

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Out back.

**BRETT.** Tending the garden?

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* I suppose you could say that. I mean, he is resting peacefully under it, after all.

**BRETT.** *(Realizing)* Oh. I'm sorry.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Don't be. We had many good years together. I have no regrets.

**BRETT.** Well... you must have at least one regret.

**MARCY.** *(Enters from left. She is dressed in a sexy nightgown and drapes herself seductively against the entrance way. She certainly is a vision. But for all the wrong reasons.)* Oh? And what's that?

**BRETT.** *(Turning to see her.)* The fact that you've never had a... *(In shock)* ...JUMPIN' JESUS ON A POGO STICK!

**MARCY.** Well... I've never heard of that one before. Is it some new variation of the missionary position?

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**BRETT.** Y... you... you're...

**MARCY.** (*Crosses to Brett*) I'm... always game for something new, if you are!

**BRETT.** You're... M... Mar... Marcy...?

**MARCY.** In the flesh. Well, not quite yet... but soon enough!

**BRETT.** Uh... would you excuse me a minute? (*Brett crosses to the drinks counter, pours himself a healthy one and gulps it down heartily.*)

**MARCY.** I take it I'm not what you were expecting?

**BRETT.** Oh... no. It's just... uh... consuming a copious amount of this stuff prior to a session helps... enhance the experience.

**MARCY.** Years ago, I might have been offended by that remark. But it's all right. You don't have to lie to save my feelings. I know what I look like.

**BRETT.** You... look... lovely!

**MARCY.** Please. I look about as lovely as a hippopotamus in spandex. Really, it's OK. I see myself in the mirror every morning. If I'm not used to it by now, I'm in big trouble.

**BRETT.** Do you mind if I just... sit down for a moment? (*He sits on the couch.*)

**MARCY.** I don't think I could stop you. Even if I wanted to. (*She crosses to join him. Teasing*) Sure you don't want another one? Or can I interest you in a bag, perhaps?

**BRETT.** What would I want with a bag?

**MARCY.** I don't know. Either to put over my head or regurgitate in. Take your pick.

**BRETT.** Uh... no. I'm... fine. Really.

**MARCY.** For a breeder, you're a terrible liar, you know that? You look like you just ran with the bulls in Pamplona. And lost.

**BRETT.** Well... I'll admit, I've had one or two... unusual sessions in the past...

**MARCY.** ...But this one takes the cake, right?

**BRETT.** The cake, the ice cream, the sprinkles on top... hell, all the birthday presents, for that matter!

**MARCY.** I'm not exactly above the feeling myself, you know. I mean, it's not as if I do this sort of thing every day.

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**BRETT.** Can I just ask you one question?

**MARCY.** I'll bet I can guess what it is.

**BRETT.** Well... you're obviously a... more mature lady...

**MARCY.** "Old" is the word you're looking for.

**BRETT.** And you were married for... how long was it?

**MARCY.** 33 years.

**BRETT.** And... I don't suppose... you're a Virg by any stretch of the imagination?

**MARCY.** Well, it'd be pretty sad for me to have lived all these years, had a husband, and still be one, now wouldn't it?

**BRETT.** So then... why? I mean... even with the latest techniques available, it's next to impossible! So... why do you want to... attempt to have another child?

**MARCY.** Who said that was my intention?

**BRETT.** Well, why else would you have called me out here?

**MARCY.** Let me put it to you this way. I know it's not possible for me to get the *end result*. But I still want to go through the *procedure*.

**BRETT.** I'm afraid I... don't follow you.

**MARCY.** It's quite simple, really. All you have to do... is precisely what you came here to do. Except, this time, we don't have to worry about any of the *repercussions*. You see what I mean, now?

**BRETT.** (*Rises, offended.*) I do. And I think it's absolutely despicable! The BFR does not exist for... that!

**MARCY.** Oh, come on! We've all heard the rumors. Every now and then, even one of you from the Bureau will go and perform a session "under the table."

**BRETT.** Well, yeah. We'll do it wherever you like, but... there must be a documented conception!

**MARCY.** Why? You know as well as I do that the procedure isn't entirely foolproof. There are any number of reasons why these sessions don't always result in a conception.

**BRETT.** If all you were after was sexual gratification, there are any number of artificial methods you could use to produce the same result.

**MARCY.** Well, duh! You think I don't already know that? Ever heard of U-Go-Girl products? Little trade secret for ya... (*Indicating living room*)

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...it's what paid for all this.

**BRETT.** I'm not just referring to... "toys." There are natural stimulants that any infertile male can take...

**MARCY.** Well, that's fine if you're the sort of person who enjoys non-alcoholic beer. Or fat-free candy bars. Can't you understand? I want to experience the real deal. Just one more time!

**BRETT.** Marcy... Anne... Madame, what you're suggesting expressly contradicts every edict in the Bureau's code of conduct.

**MARCY.** Oh, please. You could lace a dozen pairs of shoes with the number of loopholes in your Bureau's "code of conduct." I'm just telling you that I know you can use any one of them to your advantage at any time. And, guess what? I don't care!

**BRETT.** Well, you should. With the state of the population today, such an indulgence is wasteful.

**MARCY.** *(Throwing up her hands)* Oh, for the love of the Almighty! Just my luck! All the breeders in the world who could have come to my door today, and I have to get the one with scruples!

**BRETT.** *(Picks up his briefcase and prepares to leave.)* If you'll excuse me, Madame. I have other, less-sordid appointments to make before I call it a day. *(He crosses to down right to the door.)*

**MARCY.** And just how good are the commissions from these "less-sordid" appointments of yours? *(Brett freezes in his tracks. He cannot find an answer for her.)* That's what I thought. *(Crosses to him with some satisfaction.)* Look, Brett. Let me ask you something: would it really be so terrible? *(Takes his briefcase and places it on the coffee table)* I mean, granted, it's a totally egocentric, self-serving indulgence. And I'm certainly not going to be gracing the pages of the *Frederique's of Hollywood* catalog anytime soon. But don't forget: it's people like me whose contributions help keep the cost of your services reduced for the less fortunate.

**BRETT.** That's all well and good, Madame. But...

**MARCY.** But... what?

**BRETT.** I... well... I've never actually done anything like that before.

**MARCY.** *(With a smile)* So... I'm your *first*? I can't tell you when I last heard someone utter those words to me. Don't worry. I promise I'll be

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gentle.

**BRETT.** But... the Bureau...

**MARCY.** You'll both get your money, either way. And, as far as the Bureau is concerned, this will be one of those times that the procedure simply doesn't take.

**BRETT.** I see. *(Beat)* So, there's nothing I can do to talk you out of it?

**MARCY.** *(Shakes head)* Nope. Too late. I already like you.

**BRETT.** *(Beat)* Could you just... give me a minute?

**MARCY.** *(Nods)* Sure. It's the least I could do. *(Marcy crosses left to exit. She turns back to Brett.)* I'll be waiting. *(Marcy exits off left.)*

**BRETT.** *(Brett stands, momentarily lost in thought. He crosses to his briefcase and picks it up, in anticipation of leaving. He thinks a moment, then places it back down on the coffee table. He reaches into his pants and takes out his electronic note pad. He taps in a few figures. His expression changes as he reads the display. He whistles out loud at the amount of commission displayed.)* Wow. That's... really big... *(He nervously taps the top of the device a couple of times, all the while glancing back left. To himself, with a shrug)* What the hell? *(He stuffs the note pad back inside his pants. Then, with a deep breath, turns to exit left into Marcy's bedroom as...Lights out.)*

## SCENE 2

*The living room, approximately half an hour later. Lights up on an empty set. After a few moments, Brett enters from left, wearing only his pants. His hair is disheveled and matted down from sweat. He has a look on his face like he's lost an argument with a Semi. He heaves a sigh and crosses down to the drinks counter, perhaps with a slight limp that wasn't there when he first entered the house. He pours himself a healthy glass, then crosses to the couch, sits and drinks in silence. Marcy enters from left, wrapped only in the bed sheets. Like Brett, her hair is a matted mess, but she attempts to adjust herself to retain some semblance of her composure.*

**MARCY.** Well. That certainly was... an experience. *(Brett rises and*

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*crosses to the drinks counter again. He pours another glass for himself.)* I had a feeling things would be different with you. But, really... I had no idea. *(Brett crosses back to the couch. Simultaneously, Marcy crosses in to him and with one motion, grabs the full glass of liquor out of his hand and chugs it. She hands the empty glass back to Brett and, with a contented sigh, crosses to the couch and sits. Brett stares at her with some disbelief then crosses back to the drinks counter and pours another one for himself.)* I don't suppose you'd be up for another tumble, would you? *(Brett stares back at her again with even greater astonishment.)* I'd be willing to pay extra... *(Brett continues to just stare.)* I'm sorry. I'm being rude. You're not a machine. *(Brett stays at the drinks counter and silently drinks his liquor.)* Well, it's somewhat refreshing to see that some things don't change. Males never want to talk afterwards, do they? Still, I suppose I should be grateful. At least you didn't just roll over and immediately fall asleep. My husband used to do that in his later years. But then again, so did I. *(Beat)* The small talk's not working, is it? Well, in that case, maybe it's just better for you to be on your way. *(Rises and crosses left)* I expect those other appointments you have will be wondering what's happened to you.

**BRETT.** I still have to somehow document what went on in there, you know. Just how would you propose that I explain it?

**MARCY.** I don't know. Use your imagination. Tell them about the hot-and-steamy tryst you had with a beautiful, voluptuous, scantily clad nymphomaniac, who then brought you to her even-more-gorgeous mother.

**BRETT.** I beg your pardon?

**MARCY.** You're right. The mother might be pushing it. Better say an aunt, instead.

**BRETT.** What?

**MARCY.** All right then, make it her a younger sister.

**BRETT.** You're telling me to totally fabricate an entire session in my report?

**MARCY.** Why not? It always worked for *Penthouse Forum*.

**BRETT.** I'm not sure what's worse, here: the fact that in one single session, I've managed to break every sacred rule in our code of conduct...

**MARCY.** Not to mention a handful of the laws of nature.

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**BRETT.** ...Or that you have absolutely no appreciation for the awkwardness of the position in which you've placed me!

**MARCY.** Well, if it's anything like any of the positions you placed me in...

**BRETT.** Must you do that?

**MARCY.** Do what?

**BRETT.** Make everything sound so... banal?

**MARCY.** I'm just trying to lighten the atmosphere in here, a little. No offense, but your post-coital anxiety is beginning to seriously interfere with my afterglow.

**BRETT.** Well, for that, I apologize. It's just that I don't think you truly understand the seriousness of what transpired in there! Or, should I say, what... didn't.

**MARCY.** Oh, you're not going to bring that up again, are you? Honestly, it isn't a big deal.

**BRETT.** But if it were ever to get back to the Bureau that, in addition to violating all of our most sacred principles, I couldn't... actually... bring myself to...

**MARCY.** Well, I'm not likely to say anything, am I? Especially not after getting a better workout than I ever could have hoped for at Silver Sneakers. Look, don't let it bother you. It's nothing you need to be ashamed of. *(Marcy exits off left.)*

**BRETT.** I'm not ashamed. I'm scared stiff.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Could have fooled me.

**BRETT.** *(Sarcastic)* Thanks.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Sorry. Bad choice of words. Actually, I was trying to pay you a compliment. Didn't the Bureau ever explain to you that something like that could happen?

**BRETT.** No.

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* Why am I not surprised? You're only human, you know; despite what your almighty Bureau would have you believe. I mean, given what you go through on a daily basis, your equipment's bound to peter out, occasionally.

**BRETT.** *(Puzzled)* "Peter out?"

**MARCY.** *(O.S.)* You'll have to forgive me if I can't recite the precise

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clinical term for it.

**BRETT.** That's just it. There *is* no clinical term for it. And do you know why there's no clinical term for it? Because it's not supposed to happen!

**MARCY.** (*Entering, now wearing a bathrobe, with Brett's shirt in her hand. She hands it to him*) You think you've got problems? You ought to try spending the day in our shoes.

**BRETT.** I saw some of the pairs in your closet. Thanks, but no thanks.

**MARCY.** What I meant was: you should try going through your life with more internal plumbing issues than a hundred-story skyscraper.

**BRETT.** (*Putting shirt on*) You don't understand. I can't have this happen to me. Not now. Not with the fate of the entire world dependent upon me. (*Marcy rolls her eyes at Brett.*) And a quota to fill!

**MARCY.** (*Begins massaging Brett's shoulders.*) Will you please just *relax*? Haven't you ever heard the expression, "Rome wasn't built in a day?" The world's always gotten by pretty well; even before there was a Bureau. I have a hard time believing that it's suddenly going to end tomorrow if one Breeder happens to have an off day today.

**BRETT.** (*With a calming sigh*) I suppose you're right. Thank you.

**MARCY.** Well now, what's compelled you to say that? If anything, I'm the one who should be thanking you.

**BRETT.** For what?

**MARCY.** Aside from the multiple climaxes? Reminding me what it's like to feel somewhat... human again.

**BRETT.** Well. I have to admit, you're first client I've ever had who's looked upon me as more than a simple stud.

**MARCY.** All I'll say is this is some system the Bureau has set up.

**BRETT.** Well, even you must admit that it's preferable to the old one.

**MARCY.** Oh? In what way?

**BRETT.** Well, thanks to the Bureau, females finally have complete control of the reproductive process.

**MARCY.** What makes you think we didn't have that before?

**BRETT.** Could you easily select the attributes you wanted your offspring to possess from the wide assortment available? Could you establish the location and time in which you wanted conception to occur? All with one simple phone call?



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**MARCY.** Sure. It was called “dating.”

**BRETT.** Yes, but it was so reckless and time-consuming, wasn't it?

**MARCY.** Hey, don't knock it. It worked.

**BRETT.** Perhaps. But, if you'll just indulge me a moment: if things were the way they were before, and I was just some random male you might encounter, would you have even considered mating with me?

**MARCY.** Would you?

**BRETT.** Would I what?

**MARCY.** If, as you say, things were the way they were before, and I was just some random female you might encounter, would you have considered mating with me?

**BRETT.** That depends. Would you still be paying me?

**MARCY.** That's what I thought. See? It wasn't a one-way street back then, either. Believe me, before I finally found somebody, I was rejected more frequently than a loan application.

**BRETT.** But, don't you see? That only proves my point. With the process now under the auspices of the BFR, everybody wins.

**MARCY.** Is that so?

**BRETT.** Certainly. You got what you wanted today, didn't you?

**MARCY.** *(Beat)* Point taken. But the other thing you're failing to consider is that there was more of a selection available back then. So, we could afford to be choosy. Besides, for the vast majority of the population, male and female alike, the courtship process was about far more than simple species propagation.

**BRETT.** You're beginning to sound suspiciously like an X-Comm.

**MARCY.** Well, if I may be perfectly frank, I'm not entirely sure they don't have the right idea.

**BRETT.** If that's the case, then why go through all the trouble and expense of dealing with the Bureau? You could have simply attempted to contact one of them.

**MARCY.** And just what makes you think I didn't?

**BRETT.** *(Stops upon hearing this. He reaches into his pants, takes out his electronic note pad, and begins tapping in notes.)* You realize that I'm required to document this?

**MARCY.** Oh, by all means; be my guest. It should make for interesting

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reading. “This morning, I visited the luxurious estate of Madame Marcy Anne Hess, a somewhat eccentric lady who, in spite of her advanced age, not only succeeded in seducing me into her bed to perform a somewhat verboten procedure, but also revealed to me her plans to get in touch with the dreaded ‘breeder schism’ prior to my arrival.” Your superiors ought to get a real kick out of that.

**BRETT.** *(With some realization, he places the note pad back into his pants.)* I must commend you. You really have been quite thorough about this, haven’t you?

**MARCY.** Honey, I didn’t get where I am today by being careless.

**BRETT.** Perhaps not. But I doubt your husband would have approved of any of this.

**MARCY.** *(Vicious)* Don’t you even think about dragging him into this! You don’t have the slightest inclination about what he would think! He would have done anything in his power to make me happy! And if that damned war hadn’t... *(Visibly upset, Marcy fights in vain to hold back her tears.)*

**BRETT.** Hadn’t... what?

**MARCY.** You know damned well what! After all, it’s the whole reason the Bureau even exists, isn’t it? *(She storms off left. Brett at first makes an attempt to follow her, but then thinks better of it. He picks up his briefcase and prepares to exit down right.)*

**JESSICA.** *(Enters from left. Agitated.)* And just where is it you think you’re going?

**BRETT.** *(To himself)* This day just keeps getting better and better. *(To Jessica)* Look, I’m far enough behind schedule as it is. If I leave now, maybe I can squeeze in two of my three other sessions.

**JESSICA.** Not until you explain why Madame Hess just passed me in the hallway crying her eyes out.

**BRETT.** It’s... complicated.

**JESSICA.** Yeah, I’ll just bet it is.

**BRETT.** Look, what is your problem with me, anyway?

**JESSICA.** Gee, I don’t know. Could it have anything to do with the fact that within five minutes of meeting me, you had your pants around your ankles in expectation of me falling into bed with you?

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**BRETT.** Not at all. The couch would have been more than adequate.

**JESSICA.** You disgust me.

**BRETT.** Why? Because this is what I'm trained to do?

**JESSICA.** No. Because you seem to have so much fun doing it!

**BRETT.** Fun? You think what I do is supposed to be fun?

**JESSICA.** Please! Are you seriously telling me that it isn't? Not even a little?

**BRETT.** I'll admit that even at the Bureau, there are those who, perhaps, take a bit too much... pride in their work. But it is just that: work. It's no different than, say, what it is you do here.

**JESSICA.** Oh, don't even begin to compare what I do here to what it is you do.

**BRETT.** I wouldn't dream of it. It must be so much nobler being an accomplice to a con artist. *(Jessica angrily knees Brett in the groin. Brett crumples to the floor in agony. Through clenched teeth)* Great... Like I don't have enough problems.

**JESSICA.** *(Beat. Growing contrition)* Well... you shouldn't have said that.

**BRETT.** Thanks for the tip. I'll be sure to add it to the list. *(Brett struggles to seat himself on the sofa. Jessica stands uncertainly, then moves to help him.)*

**JESSICA.** Is there anything I can get you?

**BRETT.** You mean apart from a dignity transplant?

**JESSICA.** *(Jessica crosses to the drinks counter and pours Brett a glass of water.)* I really am sorry. It's nothing to do with you, personally.

**BRETT.** Really? Well, that's a load off my mind.

**JESSICA.** *(Crosses back to the sofa and hands him the water, which he begins to drink.)* Do you mind if I ask you something?

**BRETT.** Yes. It *is* as excruciating as labor.

**JESSICA.** Something else, then?

**BRETT.** It doesn't appear that I'm going anywhere. At least, not for a little while.

**JESSICA.** Have you ever seen a birth?

**BRETT.** Of course. The BFR's artificial reality programs simulate the process from conception all the way through to...

**JESSICA.** *(Interrupting)* That's... not quite the same thing. I mean, have

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you ever actually witnessed someone giving birth, first-hand?

**BRETT.** No.

**JESSICA.** So, you've never seen the end result of any of your sessions?

**BRETT.** No. It's not our place.

**JESSICA.** But haven't you ever been curious about what any of them might be like? For instance, what color their eyes or hair are?

**BRETT.** A breeder's primary function is to ensure successful impregnation. Beyond that, we're not involved.

**JESSICA.** And that doesn't bother you, at all?

**BRETT.** Should it?

**JESSICA.** *(Rises and begins pacing the room.)* Of course it should! This isn't the way we were meant to raise our children: in absentia. It's just not right.

**BRETT.** Look. Jessica... right? If I might say so, you seem to hold more than just a passing fascination with this subject.

**JESSICA.** Maybe. What do you care?

**BRETT.** Well, you're the one who brought it up. *(Rises and counters Jessica)* Besides, I must confess to my own peculiar fascination with a certain Virg who, in addition to dispensing knees to the "money area" of certain Breeders, also vehemently denies her own desire to become a Bearer.

**JESSICA.** That's my business, OK?

**BRETT.** Why does the idea repel you so much?

**JESSICA.** Look. I have quite enough responsibilities around here. I don't need compound them with a swollen belly, erratic mood swings, peculiar food cravings and an aching back, OK? Plus the idea of having some creature growing inside of me is just... *(Shivers)* ... creepy. There. Satisfied?

**BRETT.** You'd only be experiencing those symptoms for about nine months or so. It's also possible that you might even bear prematurely.

**JESSICA.** How would you know? You're not involved in the process after impregnation. Do you have any idea how many billion things can go wrong in those nine months?

**BRETT.** The Bureau makes every effort to ensure that incubations lead to successful deliveries.

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**JESSICA.** Yeah? Tell that to *my* Bearer! The BFR sure did a hell of a job looking out for her!

**BRETT.** I'm not sure I'm following you. Obviously, your delivery was successful. Otherwise, we wouldn't even be standing here, having this conversation.

**JESSICA.** You're right. And I wouldn't have had to go through my entire life feeling guilty for committing matricide.

**BRETT.** (*Taken aback*) Matricide? Are you serious?

**JESSICA.** (*Sarcastic*) No, I'm just saying that to try and elicit sympathy from you. What do you think?

**BRETT.** But, how is that possible?

**JESSICA.** (*Shakes her head*) Look, it's not your problem. Just forget it, OK?

**BRETT.** (*Playing it up*) Oh, absolutely. Fine. You know, actually, there is this other issue that's always puzzled me: if the Almighty created us in her own image, why did she give males nipples? I mean, on you I understand their purpose. But, what objective do they have on my body, other than to shrivel up like prunes when it suddenly gets cold?

**JESSICA.** All right, then! If you must know. From what I've been able to ascertain, there was some unforeseen complication during my birth. And although the Bureau's mid-wives were able to pull me through it, my Bearer wasn't so fortunate.

**BRETT.** It's extremely rare. But sadly, on occasion, it does happen. And you would have been their first priority.

**JESSICA.** Well, I sure as hell found no evidence of that afterwards. Thanks to the Bureau's strict policy of confidentiality—between both their clients and their associates—I was left an orphan.

**BRETT.** (*Beat*) I'm sorry. Truly. I know how you must feel.

**JESSICA.** How could you possibly know?

**BRETT.** When you're taken away from your own Bearer at age twelve and given no option but to join an organization you know absolutely nothing about, it tends to give you a little perspective.

**JESSICA.** (*Beat*) Really? I had no idea that's what it was like.

**BRETT.** It's not exactly the sort of thing you go out and publicize. I suppose when you think about things in those terms, you really do begin to

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wonder whether or not the X-Comms are on to something.

**JESSICA.** That's another one of those "trade acronyms," isn't it?

**BRETT.** Sorry. Yes. A sect of breeders excommunicated for performing impregnations without the Bureau's sanctioning.

**JESSICA.** *(Joking)* In other words, for being males?

**BRETT.** *(With a chuckle)* I believe I'm beginning to detect a hint of your employer's influence...

**JESSICA.** She does have that effect. I take it that's what the two of you were talking about?

**BRETT.** You might say we'd begun to broach the subject, yes. I suppose you must have had some idea what she had in mind when she made her arrangements with the Bureau?

**JESSICA.** Actually, I was the one who made the arrangements. Under Madame Hess' direction, of course.

**BRETT.** *(Realizing)* I knew it! That's why your voice sounded so familiar.

**JESSICA.** *(Also realizing)* Really? Well, that certainly would explain the whole dropping-trow incident.

**BRETT.** Yeah, sorry about all that. I tend to be a little absent-minded whenever I get off-schedule.

**JESSICA.** Well... maybe I was being a bit too harsh with you. After all, you were only trying to do your job. *(The pair share a laugh about the whole thing.)*

**BRETT.** So... does this mean you'll reconsider the procedure?

**JESSICA.** *(With a wry smile)* Don't push your luck. *(The pair begin laughing again.)*

**MARCY.** *(Enters from off left. She is now fully dressed as she spies the pair and cannot help but smile herself.)* Don't you both have work to do? *(Jessica and Brett turn to face her, composing themselves at the same time.)*

**JESSICA.** Madame! I'm sorry. We were just... talking.

**MARCY.** *(Crossing in to them.)* Relax, Jessica. It's not as if I caught the pair of you necking on my sofa. Although, that certainly would have been an interesting sight to walk in on, too.

**BRETT.** Actually, I was just preparing to leave, Madame.

**MARCY.** I'm glad you haven't, yet. I feel as though I owe the both of you

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an apology for my behavior today.

**BRETT.** *(Overlapping Jessica)* No apologies necessary, Madame.

**JESSICA.** *(Overlapping Brett)* Think nothing of it, Madame.

**MARCY.** *(Interrupting)* Please! *(Beat)* After all, this is a somewhat momentous occasion. It's not every day that I find myself compelled to offer any sort of penance for my actions. So, if you don't mind, I'd like to follow it through before the compulsion passes. *(Brett and Jessica offer acquiescent nods.)* Thank you. First of all: Jessica, you've given me a great many years of loyal service. And, while today was by no means any exception to that, the things I've asked of you recently have fallen well outside the boundaries of your duties. Therefore, you would be perfectly justified in handing me your resignation and seeking another situation.

**JESSICA.** Is that all you think of me as: some employee, ready to just jump ship at the first sign of rough water?

**MARCY.** Of course not, Jessica. But the last thing I want is for you to get yourself in a bind because of something I've done.

**JESSICA.** You think I care about that... when you've been more than just an employer to me? You've given me more than just an address and an occupation. You've given me a feeling that I belong in this world. A sense of purpose. You've been the closest thing to... family that I've ever known.

**MARCY.** You really mustn't canonize me, Jessica. Heaven knows I'm no saint.

**JESSICA.** True. But it's not like I'm without my own sins. *(Marcy and Jessica share a laugh over this. After a moment, Marcy turns her attention to Brett.)*

**MARCY.** And, Brett...

**BRETT.** *(Interrupting)* I never should have said anything about your husband, Madame. That was indelicate of me.

**MARCY.** No more so than I've been to you.

**JESSICA.** Husband? What husband?

**MARCY.** The man whose headstone is out back. The one the lilies spring up around every April? Haven't I ever mentioned him to you?

**JESSICA.** No, Madame. You haven't.

**MARCY.** It's been so long since I've spoken of him... to anyone. I'd forgotten.

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**JESSICA.** What happened to him?

**BRETT.** He was in the war. Isn't that what you said, Madame?

**MARCY.** Yes. That's right. He went off to fight in that terrible conflict a generation ago. He didn't have to go, but he insisted that it was his "patriotic duty" to do so. The night before he shipped out, we made love. We made love like we never had before. And for three long years I waited for him to return to me. Waited for him to hold me in his arms and love me again. Like he did that night.

**BRETT.** But... he never made it back... alive. Did he?

**MARCY.** Oh, no. He returned from the fighting. But you know that 95% of the men who came back from that cataclysm were never quite... the same, again. Some damned... biological agent, they called it. It changed them. It changed my husband.

**JESSICA.** But he *did* come back. You should be grateful for that. Too many others didn't.

**MARCY.** Believe me. I thanked the Almighty every day for his safe return. But... we never... we never made love again.

**JESSICA.** Never?

**MARCY.** Never.

**BRETT.** Not even... with... what paid for all this?

**MARCY.** Not even. He lost a part of himself in that war that he... and I... never got back.

**BRETT.** I'm sorry. Truly sorry.

**MARCY.** Don't be. He was still the finest man I've ever known. And you can quote me on that in your report.

**BRETT.** *(Reaches into his pants, takes out his electronic note pad, and taps in a few commands. After a moment, he regards Marcy with a small degree of satisfaction. Smiling)* Which report would that be, Madame?

**JESSICA.** *(Aside)* I don't know whether to be touched or disturbed by that.

**MARCY.** *(Smile. Beat)* Well, Jessica. I don't know about you but, after all the activity this morning, I'm famished. Would you please be so kind as to get lunch started?

**JESSICA.** Of course, Madame. What would you like?

**MARCY.** *(Momentarily thoughtful)* Why not surprise me, today? Make



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something you like. (*Jessica nods with a smile. She then exits off left. Brett places the note pad back in his pants in anticipation of leaving.*) You're more than welcome to stay, if you like.

**BRETT.** No. I... I really should be on my way. (*He crosses right to the door. Marcy follows him down. Brett hesitates a moment and turns back to Marcy.*) You wouldn't really have contacted the X-Comms. Would you?

**MARCY.** (*After a moment*) No. (*Beat*) You see? I guess I still have some scruples, after all. (*Brett places his briefcase on the floor, places his hands on Marcy's cheeks and pulls her into a deep and passionate kiss. Although somewhat surprised by this, Marcy does not resist. After a moment, they break and regard each other. Marcy glances down toward Brett's crotch.*) Well... either your note pad's just turned sideways or I'd say you're back in business.

**BRETT.** (*Glances downward*) I'm not sure. Maybe we should try it out. Just to be on the safe side.

**MARCY.** Are you sure about that? I wouldn't want to be responsible for doing any sort of disservice to your other clients.

**BRETT.** I'd be doing them an even greater disservice if I didn't go to them with one-hundred percent certainty. Besides, I seem to recall you mentioning something about paying extra for "another tumble?"

**MARCY.** Those might have been the words I used, yes.

**BRETT.** Well, it's always been my firm belief that the customer deserves to get what she paid for.

**MARCY.** (*Excitedly grabs Brett by the arm and pulls him up left to exit. Calling out*) Jessica! Hold lunch! (*The pair exit off left.*)

### SCENE 3

*The living room/foyer several weeks later. The dimness of the lighting suggests the lateness of the hour. Jessica enters from stage left. She uncertainly paces about the room for a few moments. Finally, she crosses to the table, picks up the phone and hurriedly begins to dial. She glances about nervously as she brings the receiver to her ear and silently waits for an answer on the other end.*

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**JESSICA.** Hello? Yes. Have I reached the main office of the BFR? *(Beat)* Yes, I realize what time it is. But I really need to speak with Brett, please? *(Beat)* Brett. You know – Brett? No... I'm afraid he didn't give me his last name. *(Beat)* Believe me, I'm well aware that's your policy, but it is very important that I talk to him. *(Beat)* Look. I realize you're just doing your job, but can't you give a fellow woman... er, Bearer, Virg, whatever, a break here? I mean, how many Breeders can there possibly be going by that name? *(Beat)* Really? I see. Well... uh... let's see... how can I describe him for you? Well, I wouldn't say that he was particularly attractive. Oh! Nor was he all that un-attractive either, just... very... ordinary. I mean, if you can call someone like that "ordinary"... *(Beat)* I'm sorry. I didn't quite catch that. *(Beat)* Describe his... what??? *(Beat)* Well... I mean... what can you say, right? I mean, you see one you've seen 'em... No. Of course. You're right. Well, it's always sort of reminded me of a toadstool. You know, one of those toadstools you see springing up out of the ground after a decent amount of rain? Not the ones with the huge, spanning, circular tops, of course. Those ones look sort of like a patio umbrella, don't they? No, I mean the kind that are... long and narrow, with a slight curve in the shaft... with an almost bell-shaped head bulging out at the top... *(Beat)* Oh. OH! You meant any *distinguishing* marks on it! I see... Hold on... *(She covers the phone with her hand and closes her eyes in thought.)* What was it she told me? *(Her eyes open wide as she remembers and is embarrassed that she does.)* Oh, Lord. *(Back to the phone)* There's a mole. *(Beat)* On his right... saddle bag. *(Beat)* Thank you. *(Jessica covers her face in utter humiliation as she waits for a reply.)* Brett? Brett, is this really you? *(Beat)* What do you mean, "Who's this?" It's Jessica. *(Beat)* Jessica... The Virg from Saint Cloud Manor? That's right. Listen, is there any way you can come out here tomorrow? *(Beat)* Well... something's happened. And you're the closest thing I know to an expert. *(Beat)* No. No, I can't go into any details over this line. Someone might be listening, and I think the less people know about this, the better! *(Beat)* No. No, this can't wait until the end of the week. *(Beat)* If I had the slightest idea what to do under the circumstances, do you think I'd be calling you? *(Beat)* No! Don't tell your superiors, please! I really need you to trust me on this, Brett. *(Beat)* All right. I'll look for you tomorrow morning. And Brett... thank you. *(She*

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*hangs up the phone and turns to exit up left. Lights out.)*

**END OF ACT I**

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—  
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