

# LINEAGE

By Anne Flanagan

# LINEAGE

© 2025 by Anne Flanagan

**CAUTION:** Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that performance of **LINEAGE** is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of The United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth) and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission of which must be obtained from the Author in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for **LINEAGE** are controlled exclusively by Next Stage Press. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance written permission and paying the requisite fee.

## **SPECIAL NOTE**

Anyone receiving permission to produce **LINEAGE** is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author.

## LINEAGE

*For Katy and Nora; both loving mothers and remarkable women.*

# LINEAGE

## Characters

**Jess** - Female. Caucasian. Early 40s.

**Greg** - Male. African American. Early 40s.

**LaTonya** - Female. African American. Late 30s.

**Trey** - Male. African American. Early 20s.

**\*Madison** - Female. Teenager. Greg's daughter.

**Pastor Rick/Victor Frankl/Jesus of Nazareth/Joan Crawford/L'il Abner** - Caucasian male; mid 30s - 50s.

**\*Neanderthal Woman / Rosalind Franklin/Mother Teresa / Emily Gibbs** - Adult female, age/race open.

\* Madison and Neanderthal Woman/etc. may be double cast.

## Setting

Southern California. Present Day.

## Author's Note

Dash (-) indicates a cut off or overlapping dialogue.

Jess can be a LOT; find her softness and humor when & where you can.

Feel free to update slang and any references to current events.

# LINEAGE

## ACT I

## LINEAGE

### **Prologue**

*JESS holds an I Pad, listening to a new age podcast. (Think gamelan music and wind chimes.)*

**PODCAST.** I freely release the old.

**JESS.** I freely release the old.

**PODCAST.** I joyously welcome the new.

**JESS.** I joyously welcome the new.

**PODCAST.** My past does not define me.

**JESS.** My past – *(Abruptly swipes the I pad.)* Who am I fucking kidding?

### **SCENE 1**

*Southern California. We're in a rather generic condo, like the furniture show room at Macy's. Jess and GREG sit on the couch.*

**LATONYA.** *(Offstage)* I'll just be a minute!

**JESS.** It's going well, don't you think?

**GREG.** Yeah, I do.

**JESS.** Me too. She specifically wants an interracial couple and she said we're the first she's asked back to her place.

**GREG.** Yeah. But don't say God.

**JESS.** Huh?

**GREG.** At lunch, you said "God, I ate too much."

**JESS.** So?

**GREG.** She's religious.

**JESS.** Oh, come on.

**GREG.** Seriously, she might be offended.

**JESS.** Offended by me? What about you - blackin' it up?

**GREG.** I'm not -

**JESS.** Please! At lunch, you're like "Keepin' it real", "Word!" and "True Dat!"

**GREG.** Don't you want her to like us?

**JESS.** *(She gives Greg a quick kiss.)* Not by frontin', Homes.

## LINEAGE

**GREG.** I am black.

**JESS.** But you're not "Yo, yo, yo" black.

**GREG.** Say's who?

**JESS.** Greg, you're a geneticist from Ohio.

**GREG.** They're some mean streets in Cleveland.

**JESS.** They weren't in your neighborhood.

**LATONYA.** (*LATONYA enters carrying a tea tray.*) Tea time!

**JESS.** You have a beautiful home.

**LATONYA.** Thanks. It was a steal. Foreclosure.

**GREG.** Lucky.

**JESS.** Well, not for the previous owner.

**LATONYA.** They didn't pay their mortgage. God helps those who help themselves, right?

**JESS.** Uh - sure - I mean, self-sufficiency's good... Look, we're not wildly religious. I hope that's not a problem.

**LATONYA.** It's fine, I read your file.

**JESS.** Oh, of course.

**LATONYA.** And your web site. Cute photo.

**JESS.** Thanks. It's ancient, old head shot, but thanks.

**LATONYA.** Your particular church doesn't matter. I just want this baby to be raised in a good Christian home.

**JESS.** Um - Absolutely! Yes.

**LATONYA.** Accept Jesus into his heart. Or hers.

**JESS.** Jesus. Exactly.

**LATONYA.** Your file did say Christian, right?

**JESS.** Um, our file says I was raised Catholic.

**LATONYA.** So, you're Catholic.

**JESS.** Not really, but I'm not *anti*, and Greg's daughter attends Saint Mary's Academy.

**GREG.** It's very strong academically.

**LATONYA.** You do believe in God, right?

**GREG.** If you look at it from a scientific perspective -

**JESS.** Totally! Maybe not in the *God* God sense but we absolutely believe in an omniscient presence or, like, an all-powerful, knowing, um - thing.

## LINEAGE

**LATONYA.** All knowing is right. End of the day, God'll determine what church this child goes to. Now, my son Elijah, he's at Divine Pathways just like me. *(She points to a framed photo.)* He was the leader of our youth ministry, before he joined up.

**GREG.** Good looking boy. What's his division?

**LATONYA.** U.S. Army. 82nd Airborne.

**GREG.** 82nd? Sweet!

**LATONYA.** They're in Afghanistan now.

**JESS.** Afghanistan? You must be worried sick.

**LATONYA.** I don't fear for Elijah because I set the intention he'll be safe and so it will be.

**GREG.** Probably the best way to look at it.

**LATONYA.** The only way. Your thoughts shape your life. You think it, you believe it, you live it out.

**JESS.** You sound like that book that was all the rage years ago, by that Australian chick.

**LATONYA.** The Secret.

**JESS.** Yes! She was broke but wrote herself a check for million dollars and by God, she made a million dollars.

**LATONYA.** It's the Law of Attraction. See, your brain's like a magnet -

**JESS.** Right, something about frequencies and electrons -

**GREG.** It's ridiculous.

**LATONYA.** No, there is scientific proof -

**GREG.** It's junk science. Like phrenology. Or cold fusion.

**LATONYA.** I'm telling you; they did this experiment -

**GREG.** That would be impossible. What's the control?

**JESS.** There might be something to it; self-fulfilling prophecy and all.

Sometimes I think if I hadn't been so afraid of failing, I'd still have a career -

**LATONYA.** Absolutely. You invited failure by thinking about it.

**JESS.** I wouldn't say *invited*.

**LATONYA.** You should've envisioned success.

**JESS.** I should've done a lot of things but, ultimately, people don't drown in floods or die of cancer because they were thinking about floods or cancer.

People drown in floods because they live below sea level. They die of cancer

## LINEAGE

because they smoke.

**GREG.** People be crazy.

**JESS.** Or cancer runs in their family or they're just unlucky.

**LATONYA.** You make your own luck. With God's help.

**JESS.** That sounds like victim blaming. I mean, sorry, cliché alert: sometimes bad things happen to good people.

**GREG.** Yep, people be crazy!

**JESS.** Greg.

**LATONYA.** Change your thoughts, you change your life. Pastor Rick says it better. Tell you what, he's speaking at tonight's service, you should come.

**GREG.** I gotta get back -

**JESS.** We'd love to!

**GREG.** How long is it?

**LATONYA.** Not long, maybe three hours. For real, it'll change your life. It did me. I was a single mom, a drop out, no plan and then I got church'd. The Lord wants to prosper you. After I got directionally solid, I started my business and now I'm a top seller on the Sacred Shopping Network.

**JESS.** That's awesome!

**LATONYA.** That's God's plan. Live a purpose driven life, keep your thoughts in line with your goal, pray with intent and you're rewarded. I make money, good money, and I help lift up my community.

**JESS.** Giving back! So important.

**GREG.** Jess volunteers at the youth center.

**LATONYA.** Teaches literacy, yeah, I read that.

**JESS.** It's more like tutoring. How do you - like, food drives or -

**LATONYA.** Through my business. I serve my community by keeping my money in the community.

**JESS.** Oh, I meant more like charity or -

**LATONYA.** We donate product to the women's shelter.

**GREG.** Tax write off, smart.

**LATONYA.** True, but it helps the women look their best.

**JESS.** But - they're homeless.

**LATONYA.** Don't mean they gotta look it.

**JESS.** That's - awesome!



## LINEAGE

**LATONYA.** Point of fact, we're starting a men's line. Can I get your feedback, Greg? I'll give you some samples.

**JESS.** Greg loves samples!

**GREG.** Sure.

**LATONYA.** I'm hoping to expand into hair. We're working on a relaxer. No lye, no lie. You know what I'm talking about.

**GREG.** Oh, yeah. My Mama put that mess on me once, I had scabs all over my forehead.

**JESS.** Your mom relaxed your hair?

**GREG.** When we lived in Shaker Heights.

**LATONYA.** *(She rises.)* Products are in the garage.

**JESS.** Awesome!

**LATONYA.** Be right back. *(LaTonya exits.)*

**JESS.** Jesus.

**GREG.** "Awesome?"

**JESS.** She's nothing but cliches and platitudes.

**GREG.** Like "good things happen to bad -"

**JESS.** "People be crazy"?! And now we've gotta go to the fucking service.

**GREG.** Thanks to you.

**JESS.** We have to get this child, if for no other reason than to rescue it from that Christian Prosperity bullshit. "God's gonna bring me a Lexus 'cause I prayed for it." And that crap about giving back? I'll bet those homeless women need money or job training a Hell of a lot more than hair gel.

**GREG.** It's an open adoption. Do you want to do the 'Praise Jesus!' act for the next eighteen years?

**JESS.** Yeah, much better we get a twelve-year-old meth head.

**GREG.** Just saying -

**JESS.** "Open" simply means we exchange some e-mails and send photos at Christmas. My back hurts. *(Stretching, Jess notes the inscribed couch pillows.)* Ooh, look. Preachy pillows! "With God All Is Possible."  
*(Giggling, Greg and Jess read the pillows.)*

**GREG.** "His Pain; Your Gain."

**JESS.** "Walk the Talk."

**GREG.** "Have a Blessed Day."

## LINEAGE

**JESS.** Boring.

**GREG.** Okaaaay - "He Will Cover You with His Feathers."

**JESS.** Gross. "Don't - " Wait - what?! "Don't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus?!" Seriously?! Look! (*Jess lurches forward to show Greg; then freezes.*) Oh, No - my back. Oh no, oh no, oh no. I did it again.

**GREG.** (*He tries to help her move.*) Let me -

**JESS.** No, don't pull me! I can't - God Damn it!

**GREG.** Maybe HE heard you.

**JESS.** Ow, help me sit.

**GREG.** God done smote you.

**JESS.** Not funny.

**GREG.** (*He glances at the window.*) Here she comes.

**JESS.** I hate the world.

## **SCENE 2**

*Jess slumps in the driver's seat of her car, stuck in traffic. VICTOR FRANKL lounges in the backseat. NEANDERTHAL WOMAN rides shotgun.*

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** Raising another woman's baby? It's not right.

**JESS.** Sorry, did I ask for your opinion?

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** Your subconscious did.

**VICTOR FRANKL.** Yes! As I write in my much-lauded memoir, "Man's Search for Meaning" -

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** (*Groaning.*) Here we go.

**VICTOR FRANKL.** You must listen to your conscience.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** You must perpetuate your genetic line.

**JESS.** My genetic line sucks.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** But you're still here. You exist.

**JESS.** True, but - okay, like Greg says there's a "happiness" gene, right?

HTT-something. It can be long or short; long means happy, short not so much. How much you wanna bet my entire family tree stems from one short gene-d, depressed troglodyte?

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** Dunno. I'm Neanderthal, not Homo Sapien.

## LINEAGE

**JESS.** But some of the DNA is the same, right?

**VICTOR FRANKL.** There was inter breeding, ja.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** Before y'all made us extinct.

**JESS.** Sorry.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** Shit happens.

**VICTOR FRANKL.** No matter if ze child is genetically yours, you love it. Love is ze highest goal to which man can aspire.

**JESS.** I love Greg but I'm still pretty... unsettled.

**VICTOR FRANKL.** What you cannot change, you must rise above -

**JESS.** I know! I listen to the meditations, do the affirmations. I even keep a gratitude journal. Like Oprah.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** You go, Girl.

**JESS.** I'd attend LaTonya's stupid church if I thought I could trick myself into believing in it. Any of it.

**VICTOR FRANKL.** Ahh, an existential vacuum. You question ze very point of life itself -

**JESS.** No. There is no point.

**VICTOR FRANKL.** Ze point of life? Meaning. To make sense.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** The point? Procreation. To carry on.

**VICTOR FRANKL.** Love! I loved my wife.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** Survival! I survived the mammoth!

**VICTOR FRANKL.** I survived the Holocaust.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** It's not a competition.

**JESS.** Yes, but WHY you? Why did you survive the holocaust and not your wife? Why was your neighbor gored and not you?

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** I got out of the way.

*(Offstage, a bell starts ringing softly, gradually growing louder and louder during the following exchange.)*

**JESS.** Why does she get a baby she doesn't even want and I -

**VICTOR FRANKL.** When we are unable to change a situation, we must change ourselves.

**JESS.** But what if you can't? What if you got the short gene? What if this shit's hard wired?

**VICTOR FRANKL.** Then you are gefickt. Ze doorbell will not stop ringing.

## LINEAGE

**JESS.** Doorbell? We're in a car.

**NEANDERTHAL WOMAN.** What is "car"?

**VICTOR FRANKL.** Sie müssen an die Tür. *(You must answer the door.)*

*(The ringing bell grows louder, carrying over to Scene 3.)*

## **SCENE 3**

*LaTonya's living room. On the couch, Jess startles awake. The ringing continues as she hobbles to the door.*

**JESS.** Go away! I can't - Aw, crap. *(She cracks the door, leaving the chain in place.)* Yes? *(TREY leans into the opening.)*

**TREY.** Tee here?

**JESS.** Who?

**TREY.** Tee. LaTonya. She home?

**JESS.** No.

**TREY.** Who're you?

**JESS.** I'm – uh, you should probably come back later. *(Closing door.)*

**TREY.** Hey! Hold up! I'm her brother, Tee's little brother.

**JESS.** Oh. Sorry, she's not here.

**TREY.** Cool. I can wait. *(He tries to enter but Jess won't unchain the door.)*  
I'm her brother. For real.

**JESS.** Hang on. *(She grabs her cell phone and calls)* Babe, can you ask LaTonya if her brother - what's your name?

**TREY.** Trey.

**JESS.** If Trey can come in - *(Aside to Trey)* It's just, I don't know you - *(On phone)* Huh? Ok. You too. Bye. *(Jess hangs up and lets Trey inside.)*

**TREY.** Where's Tee? She cool?

**JESS.** She's at church.

**TREY.** Oh. You working for her?

**JESS.** No - I'm - I don't know if she wants - um, it's a business deal of sorts.

## LINEAGE

She can tell you about it, they'll be back soon.

**TREY.** They?

**JESS.** She's with my husband.

**TREY.** What kind of business you running?

**JESS.** I'm not - Did LaTonya know you were coming 'cause she didn't say -

**TREY.** Nah - I just swing by, see how she's doing.

**JESS.** Well. She'll be back soon. I'm Jessica.

**TREY.** What's wrong with your neck?

**JESS.** I pulled a muscle in my back.

**TREY.** You should ice it.

**JESS.** (*She waves an ice pack.*) Greg, my husband, we - we wanted to check out LaTonya's church, to hear the - uh, man that's speaking tonight, but I threw out my back so they went without me.

**TREY.** How'd you do your back, playing ball?

**JESS.** Ha! I'm like the least athletic person in the Universe.

**TREY.** You more the cheerleader type.

**JESS.** Oh Hell no. No geriatric cheerleader here. I'm a failed actor.

**TREY.** I seen you in anything?

**JESS.** I said 'failed' so probably not. Theater. Crap TV.

**TREY.** That it?

**JESS.** I was supposed to play Nancy on The Corporation -

**TREY.** The Corporation - yeah!

**JESS.** Yeah, well, they replaced me. With what's her name.

**TREY.** Sheila -

**JESS.** Oh, *believe* me, I know her name.

**TREY.** Why? You piss somebody off?

**JESS.** Yes. No? I don't know. Apparently, I didn't 'test' well with focus groups in the Midwest, which I would take as a huge compliment except that *had* they liked me, my whole life would've changed. Or not. Anyway, the window of opportunity for women in Hollywood has a very narrow opening. I missed it.

**TREY.** What're you doing now?

**JESS.** Good question. I checked the Failed Actress Playbook but all the options suck.

## LINEAGE

**TREY.** Options?

**JESS.** Yoga Teacher. Life Coach.

**TREY.** Life what?

**JESS.** Coach. There's also Real Estate Agent, New Age Nutritionist or Marry Rich and/or become a Super Mom. So. I've been tutoring and that feels... good, actually, and I've been studying photography but that's like a hobby, not my passion - though do I even have a passion? Or is that something you lose in middle age, along with your abs? Every self-help book I've read, and I've read them all, they say "find your bliss" but isn't that just another cliché like "Live each day as your last"? Which is total bullshit; if you really lived each day like your last, you'd be fat and broke and probably on Death Row. I was passionate about acting but I wasn't, like, willing to be homeless to do it. But maybe I could have tried harder or hung in longer... Then again, failure is as much my family's heritage as our eye color. It's in us, on a cellular level. We are a people steeped in defeat. Don't ask me why - I've downloaded every damn TED talk there is on failure but guess what? They're all given by highly successful people. There's never like a middle-aged swimmer who came this close to the Olympics but now she coaches at the YMCA and lives in her brother's basement. No, instead there's Diana Nyad who's like eighty and swam around the world or something. I want to hear from the washed-up swimmer; how does she get through the day with a chorus of "Loser! Loser!" blasting in her head? Everyone says, "Start a podcast; write a blog" but, really, the last thing this world needs is another fucking podcast. I guess I'm treading water, except, no, I can't even do that because I fucked up my back, for which I've taken pain killers, and I think they *juuust* kicked in.

**TREY.** You think?

**JESS:** Plus I was drinking wine, which is probably not a great idea.

**TREY.** Probably not.

**JESS.** But it's so good.

**TREY.** Tee do know her wine.

**JESS.** And it's not like she can drink it.

**TREY.** Why not?

**JESS.** Well, I mean, not until the ba -oh. Nothing.

**TREY.** Bay?

## LINEAGE

**JESS.** Never mind.

**TREY.** Bay what?

**JESS.** Anyway -

**TREY.** Baby?

**JESS.** No.

**TREY.** Was you gonna say baby?

**JESS.** What you talkin' 'bout, Willis?! You're too young, it was a TV show.

**TREY.** So is Tee -

**JESS.** Not now, man! (*Jess pretends to slap herself.*) There's a war on!

It's from a play. Greg and I saw this horrible play about strangers trapped in an underground bunker. For two very long hours, they stomped around on stage slapping each other and shouting, "There's a war on!" So now we do that. When we want to change the subject.

**TREY.** Is Tee pregnant?

**JESS.** I was changing the subject.

## **SCENE 4**

*Lights shift focus to Greg and LaTonya at Divine Pathways Mega Church.*

**GREG.** Damn, it's packed! Ain't no church, it's a football stadium!

**LATONYA.** At any service, we've got like six thousand people. And that's not counting folks who tune in online.

**GREG.** Where're the fire exits?

**LATONYA.** Elijah was baptized right up there.

**GREG.** That screen, is it IMAX?

**LATONYA.** (*Displays her phone.*) I put 'Lijah in a little sailor suit, so cute.

**GREG.** Aw. Think I had one of those. Mom made me wear it to Jack and Jill. You ever do Jack and Jill?

**LATONYA.** Didn't exactly have a chapter 'round where I grew up. Oh, look at that little cutie up there all in green. Baby looks like a lima bean.

**GREG.** Ha - remember Garanimals?

**LATONYA.** Color match tags, right?

**GREG.** Yeah. My mom loved her some Garanimals.

## LINEAGE

**LATONYA.** I would've liked that. Factually, I would've like anything with a tag on it, 'stead of second hand. Elijah never wore hand me downs, I made sure of that. What's your prayer request?

**GREG.** My...?

**LATONYA.** What do you want? I pray to build my business, finish my degree, travel, farthest I've ever been is Fresno, and for family, of course. Gonna pray for you tonight, what do you want?

**GREG.** Yeah, I'm not really a "prayer" guy.

**LATONYA.** Something with your work? What're you working on?

**GREG.** I'm looking at leukocyte basal gene expression for correlations between social interaction and a pro-inflammatory/anti-antiviral skew in immune cells.

**LATONYA.** I don't know how to begin to pray for that.

**GREG.** I'm good.

**LATONYA.** Don't y'all want a baby?

**GREG.** Oh, yes, of course. Jess, she really wants a child and we've tried but... Sorry, I'm not trying to strong arm you into choosing us.

**LATONYA.** No, I got it. So, I heard what Jess wants, what about you?

**GREG.** Oh, well, me too. It's just, Jess really, really does and I already have a daughter and, well, kids - don't get me wrong, they're great, but - it's hard too. It can be so terribly hard.

**LATONYA.** Mmm mm.

**GREG.** That came out wrong. I just meant -

**LATONYA.** No worries, you're preaching to the choir. Children can lift you up but oh boy can they pull you down. I love my son, but I'm done, y'know? So, when this baby came along, I knew God didn't mean it for me. I'm just the vessel.

**GREG.** That's admirably selfless.

**LATONYA.** Or is it selfish? Like, enough with parenting, it's me time. I don't know. Family in general, they can be a blessing but also, they can knock you right off your path. They can smother you if you let them. That's why I keep God at the center of my life. Without Him, I think I'd drown. *(She smirks.)* 'Cause you know us black folks can't swim.



## LINEAGE

### SCENE 5

*LaTonya's living room.*

**TREY.** Is Tee pregnant?

**JESS.** I have no idea.

**TREY.** You got kids?

**JESS.** No. Well, yes, a step daughter but she's fourteen. I didn't raise her.

**TREY.** What she like?

**JESS.** She's her mother's daughter.

**TREY.** What's her Moms like?

**JESS.** She's a bitch.

**TREY.** Huh. Is Tee pregnant?

**JESS.** I don't - forget I said anything, OK? I don't know you. I don't really even know LaTonya -

**TREY.** But you're in her house.

**JESS.** True dat. Aiy, now I'm doing it.

**TREY.** What?

**JESS.** Nothing. Look, the one thing I can tell you for sure is that I am definitely, undeniably, unequivocally not pregnant. What time is it? They should be back by now. We've got an hour drive home.

**TREY.** L.A.?

**JESS.** Land of perpetual gridlock.

**TREY.** Go Metro.

**JESS.** I know, I should. It doesn't go everywhere though. Anyway, I need to drive, that's when I do my best thinking. Stuck in traffic, let the mind wander.

**TREY.** I guess.

**JESS.** Are you even old enough to drive?

**TREY.** I'm twenty-four.

**JESS.** No! Prove it. Lemme see your license.

**TREY.** Don't got a license.

**JESS.** A ha!

**TREY.** I lost it.

**JESS.** You should take better care of your toys, Dear.

## LINEAGE

**TREY.** I should stop driving drunk, Ma.

**JESS.** Oops. Sorry.

**TREY.** Shit happens.

**JESS.** Yes, it does. To shit happening. *(She raises her wine glass.)* To lost licenses and shattered dreams and dried up ovaries and Mount Veeder Cabernet. L'Chaim.

*(Greg and LaTonya enter. LaTonya pointedly does not acknowledge Trey, instead she very precisely removes her coat, hangs her keys, etc.)*

**GREG.** Hey, Babe. How're you feeling?

**JESS.** Getting there.

**GREG.** *(He hands Jess a "GO GOD!" flag.)* They have a gift shop.

**TREY.** Hey, Tee.

**JESS.** Wow! How was it?

**GREG.** Everything you'd expect and more.

**TREY.** Wanted to see how you're doing.

**LATONYA.** Should have called first.

**TREY.** You're not so dependable about calling me back.

**LATONYA.** Seems every time I do, it costs me money.

**GREG.** Well, we should hit the road.

**TREY.** You gonna introduce me or what?

**JESS.** Trey! This is Greg. Greg, Trey.

**TREY.** There's a war on, Man!

*(Trey feints as if to slap Greg, then holds out his hand. Greg is confused.)*

**JESS.** I told him about the play.

**GREG.** Oh. Right! *(He helps Jess stand.)* We should head home.

**JESS.** Ow - careful.

**LATONYA.** It was a blessing to meet you both.

**JESS.** Oh, I'm so glad to hear that! If you need any more info from us, just -

**TREY.** You never told me what y'all are doing here.

**LATONYA.** Greg's trying out some of my products. Maybe get us in stores up in LA.

**TREY.** *(To Jess)* That your big secret?

**LATONYA.** What big secret?

**JESS.** No big secret.

## LINEAGE

**GREG.** We really need to -

**LATONYA.** What secret?

**TREY.** Why they here. Like, maybe to sell some of your product, like you said, or maybe you're pregnant -

**LATONYA.** What?!

**TREY.** And you're working a deal with these rich, white people -

**GREG.** White?

**TREY.** You act white.

**JESS.** Well, we're not rich. That's for damn sure.

**LATONYA.** What did you tell him?

**JESS.** Me? No, I didn't say -

**TREY.** 'Cause Lord knows Tee don't need no baby getting in her way.

**LATONYA.** Shut your mouth.

**GREG.** Okay, well -

**TREY.** Uh oh, losing your cool, Tee.

**GREG.** Thanks again -

**LATONYA.** You need to leave. Now.

**GREG.** We need to leave now. (*Greg starts to propel Jess towards the door.*)

**JESS.** Don't pull me!

**TREY.** Tell me I'm wrong. Look me in the eye and tell me I've got it wrong.

**LATONYA.** You're wrong.

**TREY.** Yeah? Ok. None of my business anyway, right?

**LATONYA.** Right. And you're talking nonsense and don't know a thing about anything and I would never sell a baby; it doesn't work like that -

**TREY.** True, some Mamas raise their children.

**LATONYA.** Just go.

**GREG.** Look, man. (*He grabs Trey's arm.*) Maybe you should -

**TREY.** Get off me!

**LATONYA.** I'll call the cops.

**JESS.** Greg. Back off.

**TREY.** You're that cold?

**LATONYA.** Try me.

**TREY.** Nah, nah, I'll go, a'ight? I'm gone.

**GREG.** Yeah, us too. Thanks for the -

## LINEAGE

**TREY.** I just - fuck!

**JESS.** *(She whispers to Greg.)* My purse.

**TREY.** How come it's only me, huh?

**GREG.** *(To Jess)* What?

*(Jess points to her purse on the other side of the room. Greg starts towards the purse but stops midway, unsure of what to do.)*

**LATONYA.** What is wrong with -

**TREY.** I seen a recruiter today, about the Air Force.

**LATONYA.** Okay, good.

**TREY.** Nah, nah, Air Force be OUT. Guess why, Tee?

**LATONYA.** I don't -

**TREY.** 'Cause I got a fucking record! How come nobody didn't tell me? Before I took the plea? I was only holding, not selling, I shoulda never plead out, never, but nobody told me and now I'm fucked. I'm always fucked. Not you, Tee. You got your TV gig, your white girl hair, this place - and you don't answer for shit. Me, all I do is answer for shit. Shit rains down on me. I'm buried in shit but you, you walk away clean. Why's that, Tee? Why's it always me who's got to pay?

**GREG.** Sorry, I just need to get Jess's -

**TREY.** She told you I'm her brother, right?

**JESS.** No, you told me -

**TREY.** Why don't you tell the truth, Tee?

**JESS.** He's not your -

**TREY.** Hell, no!

**LATONYA.** *(With resignation.)* No. He's my son.

## LINEAGE

### SCENE 6

*Spotlight on LaTonya, holding a brightly colored bag. She is On Air at the Sacred Shopping Network.*

**LATONYA.** Divine Divas! Here at the Sacred Shopping Network we know God created us in His own image, but sometimes that image could use a little help! Ready to lift up the spirit with today's Blessed Bonanza? Let's see what's in the bag!

*(Light expand to include Jess at her home. She's on the phone.)*

**JESS.** Look, I just want my deposit back. Because I'm not going to the conference. Because upon reflection, I realize one cannot Transform Thyself, Transform the World. I don't care what Deepak says.

**LATONYA.** *(She pulls a lip stick from the bag.)* Oh! "Rise Up" Lip Shine!

**JESS.** Also, because I read the New Yorker.

**LATONYA.** Remember, we send a percentage of each sale to our troops overseas. Shout out to my son Elijah and the 82nd Airborne!

**JESS.** Yes, the New Yorker, which I try to read each week but they come so fast and furious, it's hard to keep up, and sometimes I avoid them all together because whenever I meticulously comb through the film and theatre section, I inevitably spot an actor I've worked with or slept with or both -

**LATONYA.** *(Raising a small bottle.)* "Immaculate Complexion!"

**JESS.** Instead, I read the science section because I'm not bitterly jealous of any physicists and there's a study that says children who experience trauma - like Oh, say a depressed, alcoholic, suicidal parent - that because of said trauma, their brain chemistry, their very DNA, is damaged. Permanently.

**LATONYA.** Our prayers for flawless skin have been answered!

**JESS.** So, on top of the crap genes I inherited, apparently whatever good DNA I was born with, my parents chipped away at it until it turned to dust. Their fingerprints are engraved in my fucking brain.

**LATONYA.** Hallelujah! "Golden Halo" high lighter!

**JESS.** Actually, I do think my language is called for.

**LATONYA.** All these miraculous products at one amazingly low price!

## LINEAGE

**JESS.** What I don't think is called for is charging twelve hundred bucks for a weekend of chants and yoga with the ridiculous promise it'll change anything.

**LATONYA.** Like the Bible says, HE has made everything beautiful –

**JESS.** It won't.

**LATONYA.** - in its time.

**JESS.** Face it. No one's coming back as anything other than the loser they already are.

## **SCENE 7**

*Greg's lab. On a keyboard, Greg plays a brief sequence of musical tones.*

**GREG.** That's a mosquito. *(He plays a different sequence.)* Yeast.

*(Plays another sequence of notes.)* Oxytocin. DNA, right? It's composed of long strings of molecules and we can detect patterns in DNA code by assigning a musical tone to each amino acid.

*(After each word, Greg will play a different chord.)* Cytosine. Thymine.

Guanine. Adenine. Put 'em together and you get this: *(He plays a brief melody.)* Fungi. Or this. *(Another melody.)* Collagen. And even though more than 99% of human DNA sequences are the same, every so often slight differences, or alleles, pop up in the genetic structure. These particular allelic combinations influence who we are. You can literally have your own song. For example, this is me. *(He plays a melodic, happy riff.)* Here's Jess. *(He plays a minor key.)* Thing is, your DNA could be mutable. To a degree, obviously your phenotype's not going to change but Methylation? For you slackers, that's the process whereby a methyl group is added to the DNA nucleotide cytosine. *(He plays a "C" chord.)* Or adenine.

*(He plays an "A" chord.)* Just one carbon and three hydrogen atoms, it's a tiny marker that can attach to DNA and control a specific gene. And since these markers are affected by external factors like diet, you can control your DNA. Sort of. *(He begins to stroll away from the Lab.)* We widely accept the psychological benefit of social interaction, but is there is physiological benefit as well? Can we literally alter our physical health, on a cellular level, by

## LINEAGE

forming deep social bonds? (*Greg enters his Living/Dining room, joining Jess and MADISON, who are each engrossed in their phones.*) I think we can.  
(*He sits and immediately looks to his phone.*)

## SCENE 8

*Jess and Greg's living room. Eclectic furnishings, many books, Walker Evans on the wall. Jess, Greg and Madison continue to scroll/text on their phones. Off stage, a timer DINGS. Jess exits to the kitchen.*

**GREG.** (*His eyes glued to his phone.*) Biology homework?

**MADISON.** (*She, too, is focused on her phone.*) Done.

**GREG.** Mendel?

**MADISON.** Lamarck.

**GREG.** Oh? Theory of Inheritance of -

**MADISON.** Acquired Characteristics. Yeah. Lamarck's an asshole.

(*From Madison's phone, we hear the PING of an incoming text.*)

**GREG.** Lamarck? Why?

**MADISON.** Giraffe didn't stretch its own stupid neck.

(*We hear a WHOOSH as Madison sends a text message.*)

**GREG.** True, but you know the cell is controlled by the epigenome, right?

**MADISON.** Whatever.

**GREG.** It just means "above the gene." They're chemical markers, they switch genes on and off.

(*Jess enters with two glasses of wine, placing one before Greg.*)

**GREG.** Thanks. Well, these chemicals can be changed by external influences.

**MADISON.** Amazing.

*Ping!*

**GREG.** Like your diet or environment, and those changes can be inherited.

**JESS.** So I really can blame my parents.

*Ping!*

**MADISON.** Pfft. Mom got a boob job and I still have no tits.

*Whoosh!*

## LINEAGE

**GREG.** That's not what -

**JESS.** Amy got a boob job?

**MADISON.** So what?! She had to, to date. She has to compete with, like, models because it's LA and her husband left her.

**JESS.** Your Dad didn't leave her, she -

**GREG.** Jess.

**JESS.** But she should know -

**GREG.** Jess -

*(Ping! Off stage, the timer DINGS. Jess exits. Greg goes back to his phone. Madison continues to text.)*

**JESS.** *(She enters with a casserole dish.)* Phones away, please. *(Greg slips his phone into his pocket. Madison does not.)* Careful, this dish is hot.

**MADISON.** What is it?

**JESS.** Tofu Carbonara. It's vegetarian.

**MADISON.** I'm vegan.

**GREG.** Since when?

**MADISON.** DUH! I've been vegan for like EVER.

**JESS.** Fortunately, it's vegan too. Madison, no phones at the table.

*Ping!*

**MADISON.** I can't eat that.

**JESS.** It's vegan.

**MADISON.** There's pasta in it. I'm allergic to gluten.

**GREG.** Since when -?

**MADISON.** Mom's homeopath said.

**GREG.** We'll see what Dr. Nardin says.

**MADISON.** Why can't you just take my word for it?!

**GREG.** I don't disbelieve you.

**MADISON.** Mom's right, you think you know everything!

*Whoosh!*

**JESS.** I could heat up last night's -

**MADISON.** Seriously?!

**JESS.** We've got those soy burgers -

**MADISON.** Ugh - processed plastic.

*Ping!*



## LINEAGE

**JESS.** Well, eat around the pasta then. And phones away please.

*(Madison drops her phone to her lap, where she continues to text/scroll/etc. Jess looks pointedly to Greg, who waves his hand like "What can you do?")*

**GREG.** Maddie, it's your mother's Thanksgiving this year, but Jess and I still want to celebrate with you, so we're thinking we'll do so the day before.

*Whoosh!*

**JESS.** We can cook here or book a table at Pinot.

**MADISON.** Whatever. Can I bring a date?

*Ping!*

**GREG.** No.

**MADISON.** Why not?

**GREG.** It's just family.

**MADISON.** She's coming.

**JESS.** I'm family.

**MADISON.** You married my dad; you're not related to him.

**JESS.** Good thing, otherwise it'd be incest.

**MADISON.** Gross!

**GREG.** Jess -

**JESS.** Well?!

*Ping! Whoosh!*

**MADISON.** So, can I?

**GREG.** What?

**MADISON.** Bring a date!

**JESS.** You're dating?

**GREG.** No.

**MADISON.** Why not?!

**JESS.** Have we met him?

**GREG.** You're fourteen.

**MADISON.** So? So?! GOD!! It's not like I'm a virgin! *(Jess looks to Greg; how does he want to handle this? Greg stares at his plate, avoiding them both.)*

**MADISON.** Because I'm not. A virgin. Well?!

*Ping!*

**GREG.** No date.

## LINEAGE

*Ping!*

**MADISON.** What the fuck?!

**GREG/JESS.** Language.

*Ping! Ping!*

**MADISON.** Whatever! I'm gonna be gone all that week anyway. Mom's taking me skiing.

**GREG.** No, she's not.

**MADISON.** Uh huh. Her new boyfriend, Cooper - he's an actor, a *real* actor, he's on TV, he's got a condo in Aspen.

**GREG.** You're with us the Wednesday before.

**MADISON.** I don't want to be with you! I want to go skiing!

*Ping!*

**GREG.** It's in the agreement.

**MADISON.** SERIOUSLY?! FUCK THIS!

**JESS/GREG.** Language.

**MADISON.** OHMYGOD!

**GREG.** I'll call your mother tomorrow.

**MADISON.** Whatever. She's already bought the tickets.

*Ping!*

**JESS.** *(To Greg)* More pasta?

**GREG.** Thanks.

**MADISON.** For your information, I'll be gone at Christmas too.

**GREG.** What's at Christmas?

*Ping!*

**GREG.** Madison? What's at Christmas?

*Ping!*

**GREG.** Madison –

*Ping!*

**JESS.** Jesus Christ, would you stop with the fucking PHONE?!

**MADISON.** DAD!

**GREG.** Jess -

**JESS.** Well?! Do something!

**GREG.** Maddie, please.

**MADISON.** *(Slams her phone on the table.)* Happy?!

## LINEAGE

*(The phone continues to audibly buzz and Ping! Jess and Greg eat while Madison dramatically picks noodles out of her food.)*

**JESS.** *(To Greg.)* Live from Lincoln Center's on tonight.

**MADISON.** Seriously, I'm uber allergic.

**JESS.** I definitely want to watch it.

**MADISON.** One bite and I could die.

**JESS.** They're doing Medea.

*Ping!*

**MADISON.** Hey! Let's play the Thanksgiving game! You know, we all say what we're thankful for.

**GREG.** Good idea, Baby Doll. Well, I'm grateful to spend time with my family and -

**MADISON.** I'm grateful that I'm gonna be at Mom's for Thanksgiving, and pretty soon I'll be able to drive there whenever I want, and when I'm eighteen, I can legally change my last name.

**JESS.** *(She drops her fork.)* I'm done. *(Jess exits. Door SLAMS. Madison grabs her phone and resumes texting.)*

**GREG.** Must you be so unpleasant?

*Whoosh!*

**GREG.** Why are you so unpleasant?

*Whoosh!*

**GREG.** Well?

**MADISON.** Guess it's my nature.

*Ping!*

**MADISON.** Or my environment.

*Ping!*

**MADISON.** Or maybe those chemical switchy things.

*Ping! Ping!*

**MADISON.** Or maybe it's you.

*Whoosh!*

## LINEAGE

### SCENE 9

*Divine Pathways' Coffee Shop. PASTOR RICK sits, sipping coffee. Another cup sits across from him. La Tonya enters.*

**LATONYA.** Pastor Rick, I thought I might find you here. Oh, sorry, are you -

**RICK.** No, it's just me. That coffee's for Him.

**LATONYA.** I don't want to interrupt your date with Jesus.

**RICK.** You're not. I think He stood me up.

**LATONYA.** Maybe He's just running late. *(She sits at the table.)*

**RICK.** *(After a long silence.)* I wanted to call you. Many times. But you said no and I respect that.

**LATONYA.** I needed some time.

**RICK.** I'm happy to see you back in Choir.

**LATONYA.** Thanks. *(Long pause.)* I'm pregnant. *(Pause.)* So. *(She clears her throat.)* Sorry, I didn't mean to spring it on you like that. And I don't want anything from you, I already signed up with an agency. They've got some real nice couples, dying to adopt. I just, I felt you should know. Plus, once I start to show, you know how church ladies talk, and I didn't want you thinking I was running around.

**RICK.** I would never think that.

**LATONYA.** At one time, it wouldn't of been too far from the truth.

**RICK.** This is - wow.

**LATONYA.** Tell me about it.

**RICK.** It's my fault. I never should have -

**LATONYA.** We never should have -

**RICK.** No, I'm the one who -

**LATONYA.** Rick, I'm pretty sure the Lord's forgiven us. Maybe it's time you did too.

**RICK.** Right. So. Okay. Okay. Adoption?

**LATONYA.** Open. I'll get pictures, if you ever wanna see them.

**RICK.** Yes. Maybe. I don't know. What will you do about work? When you start to... show?

**LATONYA.** I'll stand behind a counter. I pretty much do anyway. The

## LINEAGE

network won't care, as long as my numbers're good.

**RICK.** But what will you say? When folks ask who the father -

**LATONYA.** I'll say it's none of their business.

**RICK.** Okay. Sure. Do you think... do you think maybe I should step down?

**LATONYA.** As Pastor? No!

**RICK.** But -

**LATONYA.** We made a mistake. Once. I am not busting up your marriage or this church over one mistake.

**RICK.** Tonya -

**LATONYA.** And we've created a gift. For someone in need.

**RICK.** But -

**LATONYA.** That's the only way I can frame this and be right with the Lord.

**RICK.** Yes, of course. You're right.

**LATONYA.** I know.

**RICK.** But it - it doesn't feel right.

**LATONYA.** I know.

**RICK.** At least not right now.

**LATONYA.** I know.

**RICK.** Because right now it feels awful.

## **SCENE 10**

*Jessica's in her car, listening to a meditation podcast. ROSALIND FRANKLIN perches next to her in the front. JESUS OF NAZARETH posts up in back, smoking a blunt. Franklin is British. Jesus is from South Boston.*

**NEW AGE VOICE.** I am overflowing with joy.

**JESS.** I am overflowing with joy.

**NEW AGE VOICE.** The Universe supports me.

**JESS.** The Universe supports – *(She abruptly turns it off.)* Jesus!

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Yeah?

**JESS.** Oh, I didn't mean you, Jesus - Hey, why are you in my subconscious?

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Beats me.

## LINEAGE

**JESS.** Christ.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Yeah?

**JESS.** No, sorry, not you, just - how can anyone believe the Universe supports them? From what I see, the Universe is a sadistic bitch.

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** Cite your evidence?

**JESS.** War, famine, my stepdaughter.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Don't forget cancer. Cancer sucks.

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** I had cancer. Thirty-seven years old and tits up.

**JESS.** See?! The Universe sure as hell didn't support you.

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** Bloody bad luck it was. Then again, I chose to work with radiation.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Smooth move, Madame Curie.

**JESS.** No one knew the dangers of radiation back then and she's not Marie Curie, dumb ass, she's Rosalind Franklin.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Who?

**JESS.** She - she discovered DNA, right?

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** To be precise, I identified the diffraction patterns of DNA's molecular structure.

**JESS.** Yeah, that.

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** But who won the Nobel Prize? Sodding Watson and Crick with their bloody Double Helix.

**JESS.** It should've been you.

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** Well, I was dead at the time.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** That's life.

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** That's sexism.

**JESS.** Exactly! Had you been born at a different time, or lived longer, you'd have won. But you weren't, through no fault of your own. It's so arbitrary.

It's so unfair. How do you *live* with that?

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** She didn't. She's dead.

**JESS.** But why? To what end?

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** I dunno.

**JESS.** You should know, you're Jesus.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** This convo's a bummer.

**JESS.** Why did she die at thirty-seven and Hitler lived to be - well, I don't

## LINEAGE

know how old he was but you get the gist.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Don't yuk my yum, Man.

**JESS.** Because the Universe is a bitch. Or God is, presuming there even is a God. Is there?

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** Sorry. They make us sign a NDA.

**JESS.** Or not God, exactly, but something that's accountable?

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Buzz kill, Dude.

**JESS.** Is there some entity that, in the end, is present? To catch you? To even the scales? Something that says, "Hey, wow, you were dealt a shitty hand. My bad. Let me make it up to you." Well? Is there? Jesus?

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** No.

**JESS.** No, you can't tell me or no -

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** No, nothing.

**JESS.** Nothing meaning you can't say or nothing meaning -

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Nothing meaning there's NOTHING.

**JESS.** Oh! (*Sadly.*) Oh.

**ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** You weren't supposed to tell her.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** She forced it, Dude!

**JESS.** But... why?

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** How the fuck do I know? What do you people want from me?! Is the Universe supportin' you? Dude, the Universe ain't supportin' shit! The Universe be wicked indifferent, yo. Why ya think I'm high all the time? It's mad depressing! There's no Higher Authority, no Great Plan - DAMN ME! It's just shitty random chance and alls I'm tryin' to do is get through this massive clusterfuck without LOSING. MY. SHIT. So why doncha get outta my grill and take your foot OFF my fricken neck?!

(*Awkward silence, then Jesus sneezes.*)

**JESS / ROSALIND FRANKLIN.** God Bless you.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH.** Shut the fuck up.

## SCENE 11

*Jess and Greg's living room. Jess is huddled on the couch. Crumpled tissues dot the floor around her. Greg enters.*

## LINEAGE

**GREG.** Looosey, I'm hooome. What's wrong?

**JESS.** LaTonya didn't choose us.

**GREG.** Oh. She say why?

**JESS.** No. I bet it was God. Or the absence thereof. I should have slapped a stupid 'Jesus fish' on the car. Or hammered a nail through my hand.

**GREG.** I'm sorry, Babe.

**JESS.** And now we have to start all over. DAMN it. What's wrong with us? We're good people. We're organ donors. We recycle.

**GREG.** You don't.

**JESS.** Every other couple in our group has been matched.

**GREG.** They're a lot younger.

**JESS.** Not the lesbians. They're our age exactly and one of them is deaf.

**GREG.** Maybe it's just not meant to be.

**JESS.** You want to go older? A toddler?

**GREG.** No - not... It's just - all the tests, the drugs, lawyers, adoption -

**JESS.** We could try international.

**GREG.** Maybe we should stop.

**JESS.** But not Romania, those kids end up murderers.

**GREG.** Jess.

**JESS.** Maybe not *all* of them.

**GREG.** I don't want to do this anymore.

**JESS.** Adopt? But invitro's like twenty thousand -

**GREG.** Jess -

**JESS.** Insurance might cover some of it.

**GREG.** I don't want another child.

**JESS.** What?

**GREG.** I'm sorry. I don't.

**JESS.** Yes, you do. You do.

**GREG.** No.

**JESS.** You're just tired, it's exhausting, all these ups and downs.

**GREG.** No -

**JESS.** We'll take a break. Close our file for a few weeks.

**GREG.** I can't.

**JESS.** A few months, then.



## LINEAGE

**GREG.** I can't... (*He hunches over, head in his hands.*)

**JESS.** Honey, talk to me. What's going on?

**GREG.** It's just... I've been a parent since I was twenty-four.

**JESS.** You're a great Dad.

**GREG.** These past few years, they're so - difficult - I wasn't expecting... and now Madison's in high school, I'm seeing a light at the end of the tunnel and when I think of starting it up all again, my chest – freezes.

**JESS.** Nerves. It's normal.

**GREG.** It'd be another twenty years before I'm free. I'll be an old man.

**JESS.** You'll be sixty.

**GREG.** Sixty-three.

**JESS.** What is it you want to do that you can't do with children?

**GREG.** I don't know... research. Travel. Read more.

**JESS.** I see you've really thought this through.

**GREG.** Don't -

**JESS.** "Travel?" Jesus Christ, Greg!

**GREG.** You know I'm a finalist for the NIH grant. Word is that I'm probably going to win. It's going to be a ton of work and we're already under fire for the Nature article, well, I'm not personally, but the project is by association and -

**JESS.** That's great news, really, but it's work stuff. And there will always be work stuff. We can't let it interfere with -

**GREG.** It's more than 'work', it's -

**JESS.** Okay, a passion, whatever -

**GREG.** Which you immediately dismiss -

**JESS.** I'm not dismissing it! I don't understand it, but I'm not -

**GREG.** I don't want the responsibility of another child.

**JESS.** So, don't. Leave it to me.

**GREG.** It doesn't work that way.

**JESS.** Seriously, I'll do it all.

**GREG.** I'm sorry.

**JESS.** No. No! You can't do this. You can't. I was so clear. Our first date, I told you. I wasn't a bitch about it but I made it very clear that I wanted children -

**GREG.** Back then, I did too.

## LINEAGE

**JESS.** Back then?! Four years, Greg. I told you I wanted a family -

**GREG.** We have a family -

**JESS.** No, you have a family.

**GREG.** But Madison -

**JESS.** Yeah, what about Madison? You've never, never welcomed any parenting from me where she is concerned, so don't try to invent some "Mom role" for me now.

**GREG.** She looks up to you.

**JESS.** She's a total bitch to me.

**GREG.** She's fourteen, she's like that with everyone.

**JESS.** And who's fault is that? You've had years to curb her shit but you're too scared to say boo to her and now you're *surprised* to find these teenage years *difficult*?! Wake up, Greg, she's partly a monster of your own making!

**GREG.** Maddie has nothing to do with -

**JESS.** Ha! It's no coincidence that this 'epiphany' of yours comes right after she was here for a solid week and it was a fucking nightmare.

**GREG.** Do not analyze me.

**JESS.** You're the scientist, examine the evidence! The writing's been on the wall for -

**GREG.** Back off -

**JESS.** You told me to stay out of it, so I did, and now I'm PAYING for it?!

**GREG.** God Damn, Jess, what about you?

**JESS.** What?!

**GREG.** Every day it's drama, you're never happy, you're always dissatisfied or depressed or pissed off -

**JESS.** Not every day.

**GREG.** More than most. It's exhausting. I don't know how to help you -

**JESS.** You can build a family with -

**GREG.** I'm sorry you're sad. I'm sorry you hate yourself. I'm sorry you've had some shitty breaks but -

**JESS.** You do NOT tell a woman in her late thirties that you want kids, trick her into marrying you -

**GREG.** Trick?!

**JESS.** And when the window on her fertility slams shut and it's too late for

## LINEAGE

her to find someone else, you tell her you've changed your FUCKING MIND?! Who DOES that?!

**GREG.** I didn't -

**JESS.** Then keep your word!

**GREG.** What? Have a child with you just because I said I would?

**JESS.** Yes!

**GREG.** That's crazy.

**JESS.** No, what's crazy is you making a unilateral decision that affects us both. You should have told me the minute you started having second thoughts. Why didn't you SAY any-

**GREG.** THIS is why.

**JESS.** We could have TALKED about it!

**GREG.** You don't listen. -

**JESS.** Instead, you just BAM. This is something we need think about -

**GREG.** I've thought about nothing else for the past week.

**JESS.** A week?! It takes you half a year to fix the back porch step but only seven days to fuck up my entire life?!

**GREG.** I'm not -

**JESS.** This is a deal breaker. It is.

**GREG.** Jess -

**JESS.** I'll leave you.

**GREG.** I don't want that.

**JESS.** Then don't be a selfish asshole who -

**GREG.** People change!

**JESS.** But you said. It's a verbal contract.

**GREG.** You want a child? Go! Have a child!

**JESS.** With you.

**GREG.** Can we just -

**JESS.** Don't do this. Please don't do this. Do you want me to beg? I will.

**GREG.** No.

**JESS.** Please.

**GREG.** I can't. I'm sorry. I am so sorry.

*(Jess drops to the floor, sobbing. Greg reaches for her.)*

**JESS.** Get off get off don't touch me get off!

## LINEAGE

**GREG.** *(He retreats to the couch.)* Sorry.

**JESS.** You should go.

**GREG.** Where?

**JESS.** Wherever. Just get out.

### **END OF ACT ONE**

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—  
ORDER A COPY AT [WWW.NEXTSTAGEPRESS.COM](http://WWW.NEXTSTAGEPRESS.COM)***