

LAUREL: Okay, like you asked me. About your growing up and stuff.

JAKE: All right.

LAUREL: When was the first time you got laid?

JAKE: I said no sex.

LAUREL: You said no Daddy. How old were you your first time?

JAKE: (*Beat pause.*) Seventeen.

LAUREL: That's old. Did it hurt?

JAKE: (*Laughing in spite of herself.*) Laurel!

LAUREL: Francine told me it kills the first time.

JAKE: Who's Francine?

LAUREL: Her parents run the Baker bar. You know. She's got this frizzy blond hair.

JAKE: I'm not sure I—

LAUREL: Double-D tits.

JAKE: Oh *her*. Sure I know her. How could you miss her? You guys are friends?

LAUREL: Sure. She's the only person anywhere near my age. When you and Daddy sell fish, do you spend much time in Baker?

JAKE: Not usually. Why?

LAUREL: I don't know, nothing. I was just wondering if you might know some people.

JAKE: Like who?

LAUREL: Just some people. (*She offers JAKE gum.* JAKE *shakes her head no.*) You know a guy called Mick Beale?

JAKE: Dick Beale.

LAUREL: Mick. Mick. Mick Beale. He's tall with a dirty blond beard? He's got a sailboat called the *Layla*? (*JAKE shakes her head.*)

JAKE: I don't know him. Mick Beale.

LAUREL: You know Ted Osterman? Him and Mick sailed up from Santa Cruz. You might have seen him with Francine.

JAKE: Oh, do they date?

LAUREL: *Date*, god. Nobody dates.

JAKE: Well what do you call it?

LAUREL: Fucking.

JAKE: You said Francine is your age?

LAUREL: She's sixteen.

JAKE: And how old is Ted?

LAUREL: I don't know. Younger than daddy.

JAKE: All right—

LAUREL: He's *fourteen* years older than you.

JAKE: I'm aware of that, Laurel.

LAUREL: Are you in love with him? (*JAKE does not answer.*) I said—

JAKE: I heard you.

LAUREL: Cause if you are you got a few surprises.

JAKE: What's that supposed to mean?

LAUREL: Oh, nothing.

Hothouse

Megan Terry

Characters: Jody (19), Roz (late 30s)
Setting: A small house in the fishing village of Edmonds (near Seattle), spring, c.1955

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Jody is a "pretty young woman. When she is funny she is cute; when she is sad, intensely beautiful." She and her boyfriend, David, have been dating for six weeks. She lives at home with her grandmother, Grandma's boyfriend Banty, and her mother, Roz.

Roz is "an extremely beautiful woman—earthy, charged with energy. She emanates sex; her eyes shine with life, but often cloud with confusion." Roz is still married to Jody's father, Jack. She has a boyfriend, Andy, whom Jody refers to as "that spider brain" and "mooch."

Roz's best friend from childhood, Doll, is having an affair

with her husband. Roz and her boyfriend go on a bender and bring Doll back to the house. Roz tells her their friendship is over and throws her out. Roz and Jack intend to get a divorce, which Jody vehemently opposes.

It is late. Grandma goes to sleep, leaving Roz and Jody alone.

Note: Ray was Jody's first love. He was killed in Korea.

ROZ: Want a night-cap, honey? (*Sings one line of:*) "Amapolla, my pretty little poppy . . ."

JODY: (*Walking backward.*) I'll finish this one. I need a clear head tomorrow. David is coming all the way from school for lunch.

ROZ: My God, is he still around? Isn't that a little long for you to be going with the same guy?

JODY: (*Offended.*) Is it?

ROZ: But I have a date with the lawyer tomorrow. I won't be here for lunch. Invite him for dinner instead.

JODY: I'm not sharing this one with you. I want to be alone with him.

ROZ: He's not our kind of people. That time you brought him down for a drink, he was so tight-assed, I don't know how he got the whiskey in his mouth. What's he do besides live off the G.I. Bill?

JODY: Plays piano in that new trio at the Lakewood.

ROZ: I don't drink at that horse piss place anymore. Why that cheap bastard even waters his bar whiskey. I watched him—it isn't even fresh water—he keeps it in an old douche bag . . .

JODY: David's really good . . . You've got to hear him. (*Starting for the phone.*) I'll phone him we're coming. Let's put on our coats and go down there right now.

ROZ: It's too late. Besides, they won't let me in the Lakewood for a few days. They need to buy some new chairs. I did 'em a favor busting those worm-eaten stools—some old barfly coulda got killed falling through the rotten wood. No, I just don't think that boy is our kind of people.

JODY: He has good manners. You haven't seen any before.

ROZ: (*Feeling more and more threatened by the thought of David.*) Ah, he's still wet behind the ears.

JODY: (*Snapping back.*) How can you say that about a man, who's fought in the war.

ROZ: There's more than one kind of war.

JODY: He's twenty-five years old.

ROZ: Baby balls!

JODY: Well, stay here then. I feel like seeing him, and right now!

ROZ: Don't go. Let's have another drink together.

JODY: I don't feel like it.

ROZ: I'll sing to you. Come on, get out the uke, and play for me.

JODY: Take the uke down to the boat and sing Dad back home? ROZ: He can drop dead! Come on, I'll teach you. God knows you can't carry a tune . . . I can't understand it.

JODY: I can, too, carry a tune. David says he could make me into another Anita O'Day. He says I can understand complicated musical forms.

ROZ: Get her! Complicated musical forms my little white ass! You can't even sing the melody to "Flaming Mamie" against me.

JODY: If you'd stop brain-washing me, maybe I could.

ROZ: O.K., smart ass, match me. (*She gets set to do a song.*) They call me Flaming Mamie.

I'm a sure fire scorcher. (*JODY joins her.*)

I'm the hottest baby in town.

And when it comes to lovin'

I'm a human oven

I really burn men down.

(*She gestures to JODY to really give but JODY falters and stops singing.*)

JODY: O.K. You're the end. I give up. Goodbye.

ROZ: You're going to bed. (*Coming out of her entertainer role.*) You're not leaving this house.

JODY: Yes I am.

ROZ: You'll do nothing of the sort.
 JODY: Don't pull that on me.
 ROZ: You heard me.
 JODY: You're drunk!
 ROZ: Who's drunk?
 JODY: We are.
 ROZ: Don't you talk to your mother that way! Who are you—
 JODY: I don't know, but I'm damn well going to find out. (*She makes for the door, but comes back grabbing ROZ by the shoulders.*) Listen, go and talk to Dad. Please. He's the one who's always come to you. You go to him for a change. See what happens?
 ROZ: He'd puke in my face.
 JODY: What'll happen to you two if you divorce?
 ROZ: He started it, I didn't. Who cheated first?
 JODY: It takes two.
 ROZ: Yeah, let's dance. "Pardon me boy, is that the Chatta-nooga choo choo . . . track 29—" etc. . . . (*She dances.*)
 JODY: (*Throwing herself back on the daybed.*) Screw it! . . . since Ray was killed, I tuned out on the world. Out! Out! Out! And I'm gonna stay out!
 ROZ: You can't bring back the dead. Try not to think about it.
 JODY: Momma . . . ?
 ROZ: Your one and only . . . (*Still dancing.*)
 JODY: (*Struggling to get out the words.*) Why? Is Andy better than Dad? Or were you just trying to make Dad jealous or what is it all about?
 ROZ: (*She stops and looks at JODY. She feels uncertain.*) You know all about the birds and bees.
 JODY: (*Definite.*) I'm talking about you . . .
 ROZ: (*Shrugging.*) I don't get you.
 JODY: Mother . . . is Andy better in bed?
 ROZ: (*Refusing to comprehend.*) Better than what?
 JODY: Better than Dad.
 ROZ: (*Quietly.*) It isn't that. Jack . . . Jack . . . is . . . was . . .
 JODY: (*Rushing—to cover the pain of asking.*) I know it couldn't

always be like your honeymoon or something, but didn't anything last? Don't you ever . . . you know . . . get longing for him, ache for him?
 ROZ: (*The cool charm back.*) Your dad's a good lover. That's why I married him.
 JODY: Well, he didn't dissolve after the ceremony, did he?
 ROZ: (*Seriously trying to reassure JODY.*) You were a love child. A real love child.
 JODY: What happened then?
 ROZ: (*Tries to pour a drink.*) Oh, you know. The damn fishing season. He'd be gone months at a time.
 JODY: (*Aggressive.*) But you loved him, didn't you?
 ROZ: (*Defiant.*) Sure, I loved him . . . what is this?
 JODY: (*Struggling again.*) I need to know . . . I need to know for my own life.
 ROZ: (*Justifying herself.*) Well, so many things got broken up. He was gone in the South Pacific four whole years. He left me alone four whole years, for God's sake.
 JODY: Well, other women . . .
 ROZ: Look, baby, you and I both know I'm no Mrs. Miniver.
 JODY: (*Getting up from the bed.*) Please try to tell me, it's harder for me to ask than for you to answer. But I've got to know. I've been worried sick you'd leave each other, and if you really do, then I've got to know why. If it's stupid game-playing jealousy, and crud like that, I'll kill you.
 ROZ: Hey there, simmer down. Sometimes I don't get you.
 JODY: You don't have, because I get you. But David mixes me up. Or I mix him up. Oh God! (*Blurting.*) How do you keep it straight, who you're with.
 ROZ: (*Slowly—trying to clue in.*) When you're having a love party?
 JODY: Right.
 ROZ: What's the problem?
 JODY: Then there shouldn't be any effort?
 ROZ: (*Drinking.*) You're in orbit, kid.
 JODY: I get confused.
 ROZ: The whole joint's confused.

JODY: When I'm with David, when I'm having the best time with him, when I forget who . . . what I am . . . is it because I'm pretending?

ROZ: (*In control again.*) Relax. David don't know the difference. When I'm with Andy I pretend he's Clark Gable, and he probably closes his eyes and thinks I'm Betty Grable. If he can think.

JODY: Which is doubtful. (*Slowly watching ROZ.*) How long has it been for you and Dad?

ROZ: (*Defiant.*) Well, hell, it isn't my fault. He moved back to his boat a whole month ago.

JODY: Well, when did you sleep with him before he moved out?

ROZ: (*Pours herself a drink.*) It was . . . it was . . . what difference does it make?

JODY: When?

ROZ: Oh, it must have been on my birthday or something. He always wanted to love me on my birthday, it was the nicest present he could think of to give me.

JODY: That's over a year ago then, because your birthday was three weeks ago, and he left a week before that!

ROZ: (*Puts her glass down.*) My God!

JODY: What's the matter with you? Why do you two stay away from each other so much?

ROZ: I never realized it was such a long time. (*She sits.*)

JODY: (*Trying to kid.*) You're a real danger to the boys. Eh? Well, you put up a great front!

ROZ: Jody, baby, do you think . . .

JODY: You're the only one who can really know.

ROZ: What do you mean?

JODY: Maybe it's his fault. Maybe he doesn't want you any more.

ROZ: What do you mean he doesn't want me? All I have to do is touch the back of his neck and his hair stands up. What do you mean, he doesn't want me?

JODY: Prove it.

ROZ: All right. All right. You'll see!

JODY: When?

ROZ: I'll send him a telegram.

JODY: I bet you're afraid to be alone with him.

ROZ: Are you kidding?

JODY: You hardly ever are. We always got a house full of people ninety four hours a day. You have to dump the beds over to find a place to sleep.

ROZ: (*Attacking.*) What have you been doing? Are you sleeping with that college punk?

JODY: (*Yelling.*) It's not because I haven't tried.

ROZ: Be sure you take care of yourself.

JODY: Don't worry.

ROZ: You don't know the trouble you can get into.

JODY: Oh, Mother, please. I'm not a moron.

ROZ: Miss know-it-all! Well, make your own mistakes.

JODY: Thanks. I don't mind if I do.

ROZ: Stop fighting with me!

JODY: Well, you stop fighting with me . . .

ROZ: I don't want to fight.

JODY: Neither do I. Why'd you come home so late?

ROZ: I couldn't let Jensen get away . . .

JODY: That's so dumb! What you want to grind Doll into the mud for? That's too easy. You should go get Dad to come home.

ROZ: I don't know how.

JODY: Just try, just go and say: Jack, come home. I want you.

ROZ: (*Quietly—by rote.*) Jack come home. I want you. I want you. Oh God, I do want you . . . I'll think about it. I will, I'll try to think about it.

JODY: You damn well better. Sometimes I could shake you 'til the booze curdles. (*Very tired and emotionally exhausted, she gets into her bed.*) Will you sing to me now? Not all those jazzy things, but something . . . what did you say your voice used to be called?

ROZ: Contralto? But now it's plain old whiskey tenor.

JODY: That's it, contralto. I wonder if mine would be contralto?

ROZ: It would be if you could carry a tune.

JODY: I'm going to learn.

ROZ: You can't learn it, you got to feel it.

JODY: Then I'll learn to feel it. (*A little desperate.*) Mother . . . sing! Sing contralto.

ROZ: Go to sleep, baby. (*She covers her with blanket.*)

Close your eyes up tight my honey

Momma sing a song so funny

'Bout a little yellow hen

She had baby chicks and then . . .

(*She brushes hair off JODY's forehead.*)

Turaloooo-*ra-loo-ra-loo*

Turaloooo-*ra-loo-ra-loo*

(*She picks up glass of whiskey; sips, gazing at JODY.*)

I should have had lots like you. Why didn't I have lots and lots of chicks. I have so much love to give. So much to give.

Oh Jack, damn your hide.

In the Boom Boom Room

David Rabe

Characters: Chrissy (young), Susan (young)

Setting: Philadelphia go-go bar

Premiere: Vivian Beaumont Theatre, New York City, 1973

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Chrissy has just left her job at the A&P to become a go-go dancer. A sweet-natured, inarticulate woman, she is struggling to come to terms with the brutal facts of her life: a mother who tried to abort her, a father and uncles who beat and molested her as a child, and the mixed-up or violent men in her love life. The hope in her life is the pure and genuine joy that she feels while she dances. She loves and studies dancing; she dreams about being the best. As hard as Chrissy's life has been, she is fundamentally naïve, too innocent to realize that

the seamy world of go-go dancing will plunge her even deeper into the violence and degradation she is fighting to escape.

Susan is the emcee of the go-go club where Chrissy dances. She is a proud, fiercely confident woman who is putting herself through college with the money from her club work. Susan is bisexual and strongly attracted to Chrissy.

CHRISSEY: How's the coffee?

SUSAN: Fine. (*Silence.*)

CHRISSEY: You never been interested in astrology, huh?

SUSAN: No; why? (*As she crosses to the table and settles a little wearily down on a chair.*)

CHRISSEY: It's got a long history. Greeks, even.

SUSAN: (*Who has been rotating her neck.*) My neck is killin' me.

CHRISSEY: Want me to give you a rubdown? I will; I know how. (*Moving behind SUSAN, her hands beginning to work on SUSAN's neck.*) Boy, I just sat up the other night all night sittin' in a chair, I was waiting to yell "Fire!" I couldn't not think there was gonna be a fire and I was worried no one would warn us.

SUSAN: (*Laughing a little, as if CHRISSEY has been telling a joke.*) That is probably true. But no reason to sit up all night.

CHRISSEY: And I'm the one who spit in Melissa's shoe.

SUSAN: My God, Chrissy, did you really?

CHRISSEY: Oh, she's so good. You know she is. I'll never be that good. It's 'cause she's ballin' that nigger.

SUSAN: Would you say that to their faces?

CHRISSEY: I don't know. Maybe. Like I been doin' a number a funny things lately. See, I was in New York last week 'cause I just wanted to be and get outa stupid Philadelphia, so I got in this bar and was picked up by this funny little soldier in a soldier suit. He kept talkin' how he hadda go to the war and he was very afraid though he was actin' other. So when he got me back to the hotel, he kissed me. I put my tongue real deep into his mouth, till I felt him turn on. Then I left