

#### Scene 4

It is night. A light comes up on LEAH, standing in front of a door, upon which she knocks repeatedly. After several more knocks the door finally opens and ZARCONIA appears.

ZARCONIA

(with feigned surprise)

Mama! What in the world are you doin' here?

LEAH

Sweet Jesus, honey, I've been bangin' on this door since the dawn o' time. Don't tell me ya couldn't hear it.

ZARCONIA

We was asleep, Mama. Wally thought he heard intruders, so he sent me down to take a look.

LEAH

Ya husband got scared so *he* sent *you* down?

ZARCONIA

He's gotta heart condition, Mama, you know that. Don't start.

LEAH

Damn right he's gotta heart condition – in as much as he ain't got one.

ZARCONIA

Don't start, Mama – I told ya, we was asleep. Now what on earth is bringin' ya here at this time o' night?

LEAH

It's...it's ya sister.

ZARCONIA

(with mock bewilderment)

Klams? She brought ya here?

LEAH

No, no, she didn't bring me here; she's...she's *why* I'm here.

ZARCONIA

Why? What's wrong? What's happened to her?

LEAH

Nothing. Nothing's happened to her. Klamidia's fine. Least, in herself...whatever that is.

ZARCONIA

Then what's goin' on? I don't understand.

LEAH

I...I don't know how to tell ya this, pumpkin. I just feel so sick an' embarrassed an'...an' most of all sad. Sad for the both of us.

ZARCONIA

What? What is it?

LEAH

She did me wrong, honey. Her own mother, an' she did me wrong...in a terrible way.

ZARCONIA

Klams did?

LEAH

Yes, sugar, Klamidia.

ZARCONIA

But...how? Why?

LEAH

"Why" is a matter between herself, her conscience, an' the good Lord above. An' maybe her lawyer, who knows? But the how...she just gone an' tossed her own mother onto the street is what she did. Threw me out like I was garbage.

ZARCONIA

I can't believe she did that. That's not ma sister. That's not Klams.

LEAH

Maybe it ain't nice to hear. Sure ain't nice to feel inside – deep inside at the back o' yer womb where ya once felt her kickin'. But there it is. An' now she's kickin' me again – right out into the street like some worthless piece o' trash.

ZARCONIA

Mama, that's just awful. I can't hardly believe ma ears.

LEAH

Believe me, honey, it was a hundred times worse for me. It fair cut me to the core. The only thing that kept me from comin' apart completely was the knowledge that I had one true daughter left who's eyes weren't full o' hatred an' spite, but who'd look upon me with the love an' warmth that I needed so bad – oh, baby, so bad you wouldn't believe.

ZARCONIA

That's...that's great, Mama.

LEAH

It ain't great, it's just wonderful. It's the best feelin' in the entire world – knowin' that someone just loves ya for who ya are an' nothin' else. Don't get no better than that.

ZARCONIA

No, it...it sure don't.

LEAH

An' that's why we're here.

Pause.

ZARCONIA

We?

LEAH

Pearl an' me.

ZARCONIA

She's here, too?

LEAH

She's back in the U-Haul, finishin' up her Virginia Slim.

ZARCONIA

Mama...

LEAH

Now, I don't expect us all to be unloadin' everythin' tonight, 'cause y'all gotta be dog-tired, an' Pearl an' I ain't feelin' none too spry neither, after all that drivin', so I say we get some shut-eye an' face it all tomorrow.

ZARCONIA

Mama-

LEAH

No, no, no, I insist. I don't want you an' Wally puttin' yerselves out on our account. We don't wanna be no trouble to y'all in any way at all.

ZARCONIA

Oh, Mama-

LEAH

I mean it - I'm serious.

ZARCONIA

Mama, ya ain't stayin'.

LEAH

Hmm?

ZARCONIA

Ya ain't stayin', Mama. Maybe you...for a little while. But not the both o' ya.

LEAH

What...what's that ya sayin', honey?

ZARCONIA

We just ain't got the room here for ya. We don't have a big place like Klamidia does. This house is small, an' what with all o' Wally's bikes an' games an' shit, we just don't have the space.

LEAH

But, I...I don't understand what yer sayin'.

ZARCONIA

Room. We just don't have the room. We can't take ya.

LEAH

But...but Pearl an' me don't need a whole lot o' space. We don't need a lot o' room. Just...just give us the smallest bedroom, we'll be just fine. We'll make it work. We won't be in ya way – everythin'll be just fine.

ZARCONIA

It's no use, Mama. It just don't make sense right now. Maybe in the future, when we get a bigger place, but the way it is right now, it just ain't possible. Now, whatever quarrels ya might o' had with Klamidia, I'm sure it weren't much o' nothin' once ya blow the dust off it. Why don't ya both head on back there an' tell her how sorry ya are for what ya said an' make up an' make good?

Pause.

LEAH

Apologize? To that stinkin' sack o' dead flesh? Never! Not in a hundred years. I got nothin' more to say to her for the rest o' ma days. The only other thing that reptile's gonna be getting' outta me is a wad o' my spit on her gravestone when the good Lord finally sees sense an' strikes her down.

ZARCONIA

An' I'm sure you'd be sayin' the same about me when the mood struck ya.

LEAH

You, baby? No, never. Never ever. You was always my angel. You was always the one with the biggest heart, so full o' love for ya dear old mama. That's why I'm here, see, sugar? I knew I could count on you to open up ya heart an' arms to yer mama when she needed ya most. I knew ya wouldn't let me down.

ZARCONIA

It ain't gonna work, Mama.

LEAH

What ain't?

ZARCONIA

This game ya playin'. Ya ain't stayin'.

LEAH

What game? I'm ya mama, for God's sake!

ZARCONIA

It ain't gonna work.

LEAH

But ya promised – ya promised me!

ZARCONIA

I didn't promise nothin', Mama.

LEAH

But ya did! Ya did, too! When I gave ya the money ya promised me.

ZARCONIA

I didn't promise, Mama – I agreed is all.

LEAH

It's the same damn thing!

ZARCONIA

No it ain't. Ya don't break a promise. But agreements...well, agreements don't always work out.

LEAH

(helplessly)

But...what am I gonna do?

ZARCONIA

I told ya – go back.

LEAH

I can't go back. There ain't no goin' back.

ZARCONIA

Then I guess yer gonna have to figure it out.

LEAH

(pleading)

But, honey, I'm...I'm beggin' ya. I'm *beggin'* ya!

ZARCONIA

Mama–

LEAH

(dropping to her knees, her voice cracking)

Look at me! *Look* at me! I'm on ma knees for ya, *beggin'* ya! Ya gotta show me there's some lovin' inside o' ya for me. Ya gotta! Ya just gotta!

ZARCONIA

Stop this!

LEAH

(yelling)

Show me!

(at the top of her lungs)

*Show me!*

WALLY appears in the doorway, behind  
ZARCONIA.

WALLY

What in the name o' God's goin' on out here?

ZARCONIA

Nothin' – get back inside.

WALLY

What's all that racket?

ZARCONIA

Nothin' – just Mama.

LEAH

(getting to her feet)

Yeah...nothin'.

(wiping the tears from her eyes)

I'm nothin'.

WALLY

She don't sound too good.

ZARCONIA

She was just goin'.

LEAH

(dusting herself down)

Oh, don't you worry – she's goin'. She ain't gonna be messin' up your nice,  
pretty porch no more.

(bitterly)

But let me tell ya this before I do. Life might o' disappointed me more times than  
not, an' you might o' finally broke my heart for good on this here night, an'  
maybe you ain't got it in ya to look upon me as anythin' more than some used-up,

LEAH (Cont'd)

worthless old bag lady right now...some pain in the ass that's gone an' outlived her use. But just you know this...as long as I got blood coursing through ma veins, I'm gonna find the will to make you an' ya sister curse the day you ever drew breath. I gotta lifetime o' bile all bottled up inside o' me, so you better start prayin' to Jesus 'cause it's comin' your way, an' ya won't know when an' ya won't know where. But when it does come, just know there ain't gonna be no one sheddin' no tears over your stinkin' carcass, 'cause most folks know yer dead inside already. Why else d'ya think all them babies died in yer belly?

(beat)

You got that!

(bursting with fury)

*You got that!*

LEAH turns and rushes off. Pause.

WALLY

Man, she's really flipped this time. She outta be locked up.

ZARCONIA is silent, seemingly preoccupied.

WALLY

I said, she outta be locked up.

ZARCONIA

Mmm.

WALLY

What's got into you? You didn't take any o' that shit seriously, did ya?

ZARCONIA

What? No...no, 'course not.

WALLY

Then what?

ZARCONIA

Hmm?

WALLY

What ya actin' so weirded out about?

ZARCONIA

Oh, I uh...I gotta call from Klamidia earlier.

WALLY

And?

ZARCONIA

Seems Patina an' that man o' hers are fixin' to head over there tomorrow to see Mama.

WALLY

Nothin' wrong in that – 'cept she ain't likely to be there.

ZARCONIA

Klams reckons she's after a share o' the money. She smells a lawsuit.

WALLY

Hooley! What kind of a lawsuit could ya make? It was yer mama's money an' she did what she wanted with it – end o' story.

ZARCONIA

An' what if they claimed she weren't in her right mind?

Pause.

WALLY

Ah...yeah...guess ya got a point there.

(beat)

God damn!

ZARCONIA

Anyway, they want us up there with 'em for moral support or whatever.

WALLY

Good idea. We gotta circle wagons an' nip this in the bud, 'fore they gotta chance to fuck us over. Now come on back inside – I can hear that wind whippin' up.

ZARCONIA steps back through the door, as  
WALLY looks out into the night.

WALLY

Seems to me like there's one mother of a storm brewin'.

WALLY steps back inside and closes the door behind him. The lights fade to black.