

BLUE ROSES
by
Sandra de Helen

©2007

to contact the author:

Sandra de Helen

941 NW Naito Pkwy

Apt 404

Portland, OR 97209

USA

503 734 7964

info@SandradeHelen.com

www.SandradeHelen.com

For the all the young women with sex drives that led them into trouble.

copyright © 2006, 2007 by Sandra de Helen

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that BLUE ROSES is subject to a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright law of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, CD-ROM, electronic publishing, audio and video cassette and any other medium of duplication or distribution, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

Inquiries regarding performance and publications rights should be addressed to the author at:

Sandra de Helen
941 NW Naito Pkwy
Apt 404
Portland, OR 97209
USA

503 734 7964

info@SandradeHelen.com

www.SandradeHelen.com

The author welcomes correspondence regarding this and her other work.

Thanks to my Dad for teaching me to read, to the inventors of the Internet, to all the libraries where I've ever checked out a book, and to the International Centre of Women Playwrights for being my cyber support since 1994.

CHARACTERS:

- ROSE 23 year old woman from Boston, with upper class Bostonian accent
- ROSE ISABEL 28 year old woman from St. Louis, Missouri, but with a genteel Southern US accent, such as from Atlanta
- TEE A young African-American woman, working as a nurses' aide.
- FLORA A young woman from the poor working class, working as a member of the cleaning staff.
- DR. FREEMAN 30-40 white neurosurgeon who popularized the lobotomy in the United States in the late 1930's and early 1940's. This actor should be fairly androgynous, rather than highly masculine.

NOTE:

Richie (the young man) is a voice on tape only. The Nun should be played by the man who plays Dr. Freeman.

TIME AND PLACE:

1940. All action except first scene takes place in an asylum. The first scene takes place in a convent, which is very similar, and can simply double. Hospital staff should wear white. The nun wears a habit (or partial at least). The Roses should dress appropriate to their upper middle class status, and in dresses.

(A convent. ROSE MARIE is sleeping on a single bed, with a cover pulled over her head. Downstage is a window, with moonlight streaming through. Upstage is a closed door. NUN in full habit opens the door and peers in. She is fully lit from behind. Still no lights onstage except moonlight.)

NUN

Rosemary? (pause) Are you sleeping?

(Steps in, uncovers Rose's sleeping face. Exits.)

(Beat.)

(ROSE springs out of bed, fully clothed in early 1940's dancing attire. Fishes her handbag from under her pillow, goes to the window, applies lipstick. Stares into darkness, eyes twinkling, searching.)

ROSE

Richie? You out there? (Pause) Too quiet out there.

(She paces back and forth in front of the window, touching her breasts, smoothing her dress over her sides and hips, rubbing her legs together to hear the sound of her stockings rustling. She touches her hair, her face, her cheeks, throws her head back and strokes her throat. In between these actions, she looks out the window, looking for Richie.)

YOUNG MAN

(Offstage)

Rosie? Where are ya, honey? I can't see a thing out here.

ROSE

Up here, ya big lug. Second floor on the right side above the main door. Here, I'll lean closer to the window ...

(ROSE goes up to the window, takes a penlight from her purse and shines it on her bared breast, for an instant, then onto her laughing face)

See me now?

YOUNG MAN

(Offstage, but closer)

I see ya. Loud and clear! How ya gonna get down?

ROSE

Wait right there. I'll come around the back.

(ROSE stuffs her pillows under the covers, then tiptoes to the door, eases it open, slips out, and quietly shuts it behind her.)

NUN

(Offstage) Aha! Where might you be going, Miss Rosemary?

(ROSE and NUN enter. NUN has ROSE'S arm twisted behind her back and is marching her back into her room. NUN forces ROSE onto the bed, after throwing back the covers and putting the pillow at the head of the bed.)

Well? What have you to say for yourself?

ROSE

I don't have anything to say to you, Sister.

NUN

Very well. We'll see what your parents have to say to the Reverend Mother then.

ROSE

Oh, come on, Sister.

NUN

Come on, indeed. Rosemary, do you realize how many times it is that you've been caught sneaking out of the convent after hours? And dressed like a tart I might add.

ROSE

I'm 23 years old, Sister! I shouldn't be cooped up in this convent anyway. I'm a grown woman, with grown desires and needs. I should be out in the world with the rest of my sisters and brothers, not shut up here with a bunch of nuns.

NUN

Your parents know what's best for you, Rosemary.

ROSE

Oh pish.

NUN

Rosemary!

ROSE

What? That's not a swear word.

NUN

Well, it's slang, and it's very close to swearing. You'd better remember to confess it.

ROSE

My parents be damned. Yes, I know ... that's a swear word. And I'm breaking a commandment as well. I don't honor them! Not for this! What did I ever do to deserve to be locked up in this convent? I'm not a child! I'm a grown woman with needs ... I'm getting out of here, and you cannot stop me. Now back off.

(ROSE rises and takes a menacing stance against the NUN, who decides to capitulate, rather than come to blows. ROSE straightens her hair, dress, and stockings, grabs her handbag again, and this time she sashays out the door without a backward glance. The NUN makes the bed, picks up any props that pertain to the convent and exits the room, leaving the door open. She turns one direction, TEE and ROSE ISABEL enter from the other.)

ROSE ISABEL

Don't you just adore that Dr. Freeman? He is so handsome. I would allow him to bite my nipples or put his fingers in my pussy any time he so desired. Wouldn't you do the same, Nurse Tee?

TEE

Now Miss Rose Isabel, you mustn't talk like that. Remember? The nurses get very upset with you when you start talking that sex talk.

ROSE ISABEL

Why, I don't know what you mean. Whatever can you be discussing? What sex talk? And anyway, aren't you a nurse? You're dressed all in white.

TEE

Yes, ma'am. I'm dressed in white, but I don't have a hat. See? I'm what they call a nurse's aide. You remember, don't you? We have orderlies, and cleaning staff, and aides, and nurses, and then there's Dr. Freeman. And sometimes Dr. Watts.

ROSE ISABEL

I don't like Dr. Watts.

TEE

Really? I'm sure Dr. Watts is just fine.

ROSE ISABEL

How would you know? You're just an ignorant fool. Now go fetch me my tea things.

TEE

Miss Rose Isabel, why don't you have a seat over by the window? We're going to get a new patient this afternoon, and maybe the two of you will have something in common.

ROSE ISABEL

I'm hungry. I want a pie. And not a raisin pie, either. A real pie.

TEE

I'll have to see what the menu is for today. Shall I go do that?

ROSE ISABEL

Tell my mother I need some new underwear. My panties are all sticky.

TEE

Now Rose, don't start ...

ROSE ISABEL

Don't call me Rose! Don't call me Rose!

TEE

I'm sorry! Please, just calm down ... I forgot. I mean Rose ISABEL ... Okay?

ROSE ISABEL

Don't ever call me Rose.

TEE

I'm going to go now, Rose Isabel. You just look at a magazine or something while I go get the new patient and bring her in. Okay?

ROSE ISABEL

Bring her in. Okay?

TEE

I'm going to.

ROSE ISABEL

I'm going too.

TEE

No, Rose Isabel, you're not going. Now go back and sit down.

ROSE ISABEL

Sit down and stick your finger up my butt.

TEE

I'm going to have to report this sex talk to the nurses if you don't stop.

ROSE ISABEL

Stop what? I'm not doing anything.

TEE

Okay. Just sit there. Right there. I'll be right back.

(TEE exits)

ROSE ISABEL

(picks up a magazine and begins flipping through the pages. When she comes to recipes with pictures, she lingers, caresses the food, then licks the pages.)

ROSE ISABEL (cont'd)

Needs more sugar.

(idly smooths her dress over her breasts, then reaches into the neck of her dress down into her bra and begins to pull out tissue paper, but just from one side, leaving her misshapen.)

Look at this tissue. Why, it's of the poorest quality. Mother would have a conniption fit if she saw how I was being treated here. A lady like me should have fine handkerchiefs made of the finest linens to stuff her bra, or at the very least a decent facial tissue. This won't do. I must find Dr. Freeman and lodge a complaint.

(TEE enters with ROSE MARIE, just as ROSE ISABEL reaches the door. They nearly collide.)

ROSE ISABEL

Nurse Tee! Thank heavens you've come!

TEE

What is it, Miss Rose Isabel?

ROSE ISABEL

I need to see Dr. Freeman right away.

TEE

Of course you do. But first, why don't you let me introduce you to another Miss Rose? This is Miss Rose Marie. She's just joining us. She's going to be Dr. Freeman's patient as well. You two get acquainted. I'll be back in a jiffy to take Miss Rose to her room.

ROSE

(To Tee) Wait! You can't just leave me here! Who is this? Is she ... I mean, will I be safe with her?

TEE

What an imagination. She's as docile as a lamb. Unlike you. Now just calm down and make nice. *(Raising voice and speaking to Rose Isabel)* You be good to our new patient now, you hear, Rose Isabel?

(TEE exits)

ROSE

You can call me Rose. I don't like my middle name. Just Rose is just fine. How about you? Can I call you Rosie? Or Izzie?

ROSE ISABEL

No! Never call me Rose! Never! Never Rose!

ROSE

(Shaken by the outburst) Well, now, Miss ... Whatever you said your name is ... I didn't say "Rose" did I? Very well, I shall call you Georgia, because that's where you're from, isn't it?

ROSE ISABEL

Why I never! In all my life ... No. Of course I'm not from Georgia. And even if I were, who would want to be called by the proper name of a state? You may call me Rose Isabel.

ROSE

No, you know what? In my family we all have nicknames. And when we like somebody, and well, you're just so likeable, well we give them nicknames. I'm going to give you one. One that I'll bet no one has thought of yet. It suits you, it's related to your given name, and it's proper too, just the way you like it. I shall call you Miss Thorn.

ROSE ISABEL

I've never had a nickname before. Mother says they're common.

(Beat.)

But I think I would rather enjoy being called Miss Thorn. Yes, I shall let you call me Miss Thorn... Rose.

ROSE

So, Miss Thorn, why are you locked up here?

ROSE ISABEL

The security is for my protection. I thought you knew.

ROSE

Knew what?

ROSE ISABEL

Nurse Tee! Take this subject away. This interview is tiresome. Bring me my afternoon snack.

ROSE

Why are you so hard to talk with? What happened to you? Were you born this way, or what?

ROSE ISABEL

If you talk sex talk, the nurses take away your privileges.

ROSE

What about if you speak in non sequiters?

ROSE ISABEL

No one cares. Most people aren't that literate.

ROSE

Wait a second, are you ... are you lucid right now?

ROSE ISABEL

I know what you're talking about, if that's what you mean.

ROSE

So are you faking? Or what?

ROSE ISABEL

It's wearying. Sometimes I know where I am and what people are talking about, and sometimes I seem to be in a different world altogether, do you understand?

ROSE

How long do you have?

ROSE ISABEL

I have no idea.

ROSE

Do you know what happened to you? How you got here?

ROSE ISABEL

My mother brought me, I think. And I was here for a while, seeing Dr. Freeman, but I guess I was violent, and so they gave me a special treatment to make me calm. And to stop me from embarrassing my family.

ROSE

Oh, you mean the sex talk?

ROSE ISABEL

What? The nurses told you about that? Oh my word.

ROSE

I'm sorry if that ... no, Miss Thorn, you told me yourself.

ROSE ISABEL

Miss Thorn? Who's that?

ROSE

Oh, it's just a little nickname I made up for you. You didn't want me to call you Rose...

ROSE ISABEL

Don't call me Rose! Don't call me Rose! Not Rose! Not Rose!

ROSE

Oh God, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to call you that, it's just that you weren't asking me about the nickname, and I...

ROSE ISABEL

No Rose, no thorn, no touching...

ROSE

God help us, what did they do to you?

ROSE ISABEL

I like to put my fingers in my pussy, and I wish Dr. Freeman would put his in there, he has long ones, big around too ...

ROSE

I'm beginning to understand the nurses' position on that rather crude version of "sex talk." Let's change the subject, what do you say? How do you get out of here, um, sweetie?

ROSE ISABEL

My brother comes and takes me on outings. When it's safe.

ROSE

I see. Is he nice looking, your brother?

ROSE ISABEL

He's not going to be interested in you, Rose. He's queer. Nancy Boy, our father always called him. Nancy, prancy, queer as a three-dollar bill. No hope there, I'm afraid. You'll have to get your own brother ...

ROSE

I have brothers aplenty. It's just that they're all under the iron thumb of our father. We all are.

ROSE ISABEL
Did you bring my afternoon snack?

ROSE
Sorry, no.

ROSE ISABEL
A cigarette?

ROSE
Don't smoke.

ROSE ISABEL
You are a useless subject.

(Beat.)

Unless you want to bite my nipples?

ROSE
Nipples, plural? Looks to me like you're a bit lopsided.

ROSE ISABEL
(Looks down at her chest, makes appropriate noise)

Who is responsible for this? Someone has stolen my tissue! Call Dr. Freeman! This robbery must be reported immediately. Theft from a royal is punishable by death!

ROSE
And I thought the convent was bad. At least there everyone was lucid. All the time.

(Goes to window.)

Help! Somebody get me out of here!

ROSE ISABEL
You're never leaving here you know.

ROSE
What do you mean?

ROSE ISABEL
People go on outings. People die. People stay in their beds sometimes. But no one ever just leaves.

(THEY both sigh, and become silent.)

(Several beats.)

(FLORA enters)

FLORA

Well, if you two don't look like two of the bluest Roses I've ever seen.

ROSE ISABEL

Don't call me Rose!

ROSE

Oh, for God's sakes, can you please take me to my room or something, Nurse?

FLORA

I'm just a member of the housekeeping staff, Miss Rose. My name is Flora.

ROSE

Fine, Flora. Please, please, just get me out of here. I can't stand what they've done to her.

FLORA

Let's go. I'll take you to your room. Dr. Freeman will be wanting to see you soon anyway, and you'll need to get ready.

ROSE

What do you mean, get ready?

FLORA

Dr. Freeman likes his patients to wear hospital attire to their appointments. Keeps them in their place.

ROSE

But, I ...

FLORA

Don't worry, we'll get you all fixed up. Come along.

(THEY exit)

(Beat)

(TEE enters.)

TEE

Upon my soul, child, why are you still here all by yourself?

ROSE ISABEL

My subjects are in the fields, going about their chores.

TEE

Right. Come along, then. I'll take you to the recreation room. You can have a snack.

ROSE ISABEL

A snack! Bless your little heart. I'm so famished, I was getting quite light-headed. I thought I was going to have to call the doctor, or at least my maid for some smelling salts.

TEE

No need for all that, we're going to get you fed. Now come along.

(THEY exit.)

(Beat.)

(FLORA enters with mop and bucket.)

FLORA

Crud, forgot the broom.

(Kicks the dirt around with her foot)

There. That'll do.

(Begins to sling the mop around)

(TEE enters)

Hey, Tee! I sure am glad to see you ... wait, you ain't got no charge with you, have you?

TEE

No, I'm all by myself. For a few minutes. Thank the Lord!

FLORA

No shit! Don't get me wrong, I'm glad to have a job, a good state job like this one, at that, but ...

TEE

I'm with ya. They can get a girl down.

Yeah, and I got enough ... FLORA

Don't we all? How is that man of yours anyway? TEE

Who? Jack? FLORA

You got somebody else? TEE

Well.. FLORA

Oh no, you didn't! TEE

We ain't done nothin' ... FLORA

Girl! Jack would kill your ass. TEE

Yeah, I know. FLORA

You better leave one fool 'fore you get another one. TEE

Aw, I got the kids to think of. FLORA

Honey, we both got kids, but we're only kids our damned selves. TEE

I'm near 21. Hell, my mom was a grandmaw when she was 25. FLORA

Ain't talking 'bout years, talking 'bout feelings. Don't you still feel like a kid? I do. TEE

I guess. FLORA

TEE

Who's this man got your panties in a wad?

FLORA

You don't know him.

TEE

He work here?

FLORA

All right, you know him.

TEE

Not George out at the garage?

FLORA

Yes, but like I said, we ain't done nothin'!

TEE

Jack will tear his head off and wring your neck. Girl, George ain't worth it! Don't you know he screws everything in skirts?

FLORA

He thinks I'm pretty.

TEE

Flora Sue, don't fall for that!

FLORA

You sayin' I ain't pretty?

TEE

I'm sayin' the man wants in your pants.

FLORA

I got a floor to mop.

TEE

See you later then. Just watch yourself, missy. You're better lookin' without no black eye.

(TEE exits.)

(FLORA mops viciously, until DR. FREEMAN enters)

DR. FREEMAN

Excuse me miss, have you seen a young woman, a new patient? She should be in my office right now, but she seems to have gone astray.

FLORA

Nobody in here but me and this here mop.

DR FREEMAN

And no one's come through here?

FLORA

I ain't seen no stray patients.

DR FREEMAN

Well, er, well, if you do see// Miss, uh, the missing patient ...

FLORA

I'll be sure to tell her you're looking for her.

DR FREEMAN

It would be much better if you could bring her to me.

FLORA

I'm just a housekeeper, Doctor. Don't you want me to call for an orderly instead?

DR FREEMAN

You seem like a capable young woman, and there's no need to frighten the patient by calling for an orderly. She needs to come in for her consultation.

FLORA

You think I look capable?

DR FREEMAN

I'm an excellent judge of character. I'm sure you're very capable.

FLORA

Well, gee thanks.

DR FREEMAN

I can count on you then?

FLORA

Sure. You bet.

(DR. FREEMAN *exits*)

(She resumes mopping)

(TEE and ROSE appear outside the window. TEE has ROSE firmly in her grasp, although ROSE continues to struggle.)

ROSE

Come on, Nurse Tee, let me go. You can see I'm not insane. If you let me go, I promise I will go so far away that no one will ever hear from me again. You won't get in trouble. I swear!

TEE

I ain't stupid. I let you escape, and it's my ass that gets it, not yours..

ROSE

Please, please, please ... I'm begging you ... I can't spend the rest of my life here, I just can't. Look at me! I'm young, like you. I have feelings, and longings, and dreams, just like you ... If you let me go, I can run away somewhere, I can get a job, I can still have a life.

TEE

I don't know what you did to make your rich ass parents put you in here, and how do I know you ain't insane? Just 'cause you don't talk all crazy like some of 'em, that don't mean nothin'. Why we have women in here don't say nothin' at all. They might be as sane as Eleanor Roosevelt for all I know.

ROSE

No! Look at me, look in my face, look in my eyes, please Nurse Tee, you can't mean it, you can't take me back. Surely you must know what they do here?

TEE

This is the state asylum. Of course I know that. It's a good one too. We got the best doctors in the country, or so they say.

ROSE

Best? Or most famous?

TEE

It's all the same to me. Come on, you're going back in there, you're going to your appointment with the doctor, and that's all there is to it.

ROSE

I won't. You have to let me go! I'll pay you.

TEE

How much?

ROSE

Ten thousand dollars.

TEE

Oh all right. Now we know you's crazy.

ROSE

Oh, of course I don't have it here. I'd have to get hold of my bonds and cash them in ...

TEE

Hah!

ROSE

But I would! I could! And I would, I promise. I'd go back to Boston, I'd get those bonds, I'd cash them all, and I'd send you ten thousand dollars directly to your bank.

TEE

(Bursts out laughing) Girl, you're gettin' delirious. I ain't got no bank, and you ain't got no bonds in Boston. Give it up.

ROSE

But I do! My father's rich. My grandfather was rich. My mother is rich for God's sake! They each and every one of them put away bonds for my education, which I didn't get to have ... so there sit my bonds, just waiting for me to come rescue them.

TEE

Sorry, sister, but somebody else is goin' to have to spring you loose. Unless you got the cash in hand, I can't risk this good state job on the off chance that one: you ain't crazy, two: you got ten thousand dollars in bonds, and three: you're goin' give 'em to me! Hah!

(TEE begins to march ROSE back inside the asylum. ROSE throws herself to the ground and refuses to budge. TEE is forced to drag her offstage.)

(Meanwhile, onstage, FLORA transforms the space she's in to Rose's room, perhaps by adding a coat rack with hospital gown, or rolling in a bed, or whatever works.)

As she exits, TEE enters with ROSE in tow.

TEE

Now, come on, Miss Rose, we got to get you changed for your appointment with Dr. Freeman, and there ain't no two ways about it.

(ROSE changes into hospital gown)

ROSE

Don't think that because I'm going along now means that I have given up. I will escape this institution with or without your help.

TEE

Whatever you say, Miss Rose, just move it. Dr. Freeman is waiting, and he's a busy man.

Shift.

(ROSE stands outside DR FREEMAN'S office. She hesitates. DR FREEMAN is alone in his office speaking into a dictating machine.)

DR FREEMAN

Regarding patient number 5, we are now approximately one year post treatment. She does no work. She experiences delusions of grandeur, expressed as the belief that she is the Queen of England. She continues to talk about sexual behaviors in a crude manner. We had hoped to alleviate this behavior, along with the violence she had previously exhibited. We may have to consider another surgery, although her mother is not capable of funding it, her brother refuses to do so, and the State –at this point – is willing to fund only one per patient. There is the option of *pro bono*...

(ROSE knocks)

Rosemary? Is that you? Come in, come in. Have a seat.

ROSE

Thank you.

DR FREEMAN

How are you feeling?

ROSE

Fine thank you.

DR FREEMAN

Really, Rose? Because when your parents brought you here, they seemed to think you were disturbed. Quite disturbed, in fact.

ROSE

They were the ones who were disturbed.

DR FREEMAN

I see.

ROSE

Do you, Doctor?

DR FREEMAN

Yes, of course.

ROSE

In that case, you can release me.

DR FREEMAN

I'm afraid not.

ROSE

But you said// that you saw...

DR FREEMAN

Your parents have committed you, Miss Rose. Permanently. What I see is that you are projecting your disturbed mind onto your poor parents who have had to put up with your inappropriate anti-social behaviors for several years now. It's time to correct that.

ROSE

What do you mean, correct?

DR FREEMAN

Treat, of course. We offer treatment here. Only the best, the latest, most up-to-date treatment, my dear.

ROSE

I'm not your dear.

DR FREEMAN

I'd like to get to know you, Rosemary, to see whether we can treat you conservatively. Perhaps make some behavioral changes so that you can be released in a year or two and go back to live with your family.

ROSE

A year or two?

DR FREEMAN

Let's try not to focus on the amount of time.

ROSE

But...

DR FREEMAN

You're a very young woman, Rosemary. You'll still be in your mid-twenties.

ROSE

It's just that there's nothing wrong with me now! Who knows what state I might be in after I spend a year or two in this place?

DR FREEMAN

It's good to see you have a sense of humor. That's a definite sign in your favor.

ROSE

Okay, okay, I have a sense of humor, I'll be good. I'll talk if that's what you want. I just need to get out of here.

DR FREEMAN

Is there a young man in your life?

ROSE

Not in here.

DR FREEMAN

Let's dispense with the sarcasm, Rosemary. Let's be straight with each other, shall we? Now, seriously, did you leave a young man behind when your parents brought you in?

ROSE

Just Richie. He was fun, but I don't know if he was serious. We never had a chance to really get to know one another.

DR FREEMAN

Were you intimate?

ROSE

Gosh, you don't beat around the bush, do you?

DR FREEMAN

As I said...

ROSE

We fooled around. I never went all the way with him.

DR FREEMAN

So you're a virgin, then?

ROSE

Um, I never said that exactly.

DR FREEMAN

To whom did you give up your virginity?

ROSE

I don't want to talk anymore.

DR FREEMAN

Very well. We'll talk again soon. You get settled in, get to know the other patients, make yourself at home here.

ROSE

I get it. I'll talk more next time. I'll be prepared, okay?

DR FREEMAN

One more thing, Rosemary. I'm told you tried to escape earlier.

ROSE

I ... I ... Okay, I did. But I wasn't able to, and I see now that I'm just going to have to make the best of it and be a good girl. I won't try it again. Honestly.

DR FREEMAN

Meanwhile, I'm going to prescribe a mild sedative for you, Rosemary, and a sleeping pill for the nights. That should help you make the adjustment.

Shift

(Meanwhile, TEE and FLORA are on break outside the window.)

FLORA

So then what happened?

TEE

I told him to forget about it. If he didn't want to wear no rubber, he could just go jack off behind the shed, because I'm ovulatin' and I ain't about to end up with another kid before I turn 21.

FLORA

Did he?

TEE

What?

FLORA

Go behind the shed?

TEE

Girl, you're nasty.

FLORA

You're the one said it.

TEE

Naw, he didn't.

FLORA

He do it in the house???

TEE

Naw, he thought of somethin' else we could do instead.

FLORA

Girl!

TEE

See how nasty you are? I'm talkin' about we played cards.

FLORA

You did not.

TEE

Well, we coulda'

FLORA

I wish I could get Jack to do that...

TEE

Play cards?

FLORA

No, you know.

TEE

What's the matter with him? Too good?

FLORA

Too much of a hick. His buddies all tell him that real mean don't go down there.

TEE

I'm sorry.

FLORA

Yeah. Guess I'll never know what that's like.

TEE

You mean Jack was the only one?

FLORA

Yeah. I got pregnant the first time too. Stupid ain't it.

TEE

Sad, is what it is.

FLORA

Yeah, pregnant and married at 14.

TEE

I was 16.

FLORA

And now look at us. Old married ladies, working our lives away at the insane asylum, and not even 21 yet.

TEE

Could be worse.

FLORA

What do you mean?

TEE

We coulda been born rich.

(THEY break up laughing and exit)

Shift

(ROSE'S room, midday. ROSE sleeps. ROSE ISABEL enters.)

ROSE ISABEL

Rose? Hey, Rose! Why aren't you up? Are you sick or something?

ROSE

(Groggily) What? What do you mean?

ROSE ISABEL

I mean, it's the middle of the day and I haven't seen hide nor hair of you all day. Breakfast is over, lunch is over, and you missed out on pie. It was raisin pie, but at least it was sweet.

ROSE

You came looking for me?

ROSE ISABEL

Well of course I did! I was that worried about you!

ROSE

Oh my God. You're lucid again, aren't you?

ROSE ISABEL

What's that word "lucid"?

ROSE

It means, um...

ROSE ISABEL

It means in my right mind, right? I'm just messing with you.

ROSE

Well that and wide awake.

ROSE ISABEL

Yes! That's it exactly! When I feel like this, it's as if I've awakened from a long dream ... everything is very bright and loud, and people are so real.

ROSE

But the problem is we never know how long you'll be "awake", and I'm never sure when it's happening.

ROSE ISABEL

I could tell you, I guess.

ROSE

You might not always want other people to know.

ROSE ISABEL

What do you mean?

ROSE

I'm not sure. I can't really think straight myself. They gave me a sedative, and sleeping pills on top of that. And I think they came in and woke me up to give me another sedative. I'm so groggy.

ROSE ISABEL

Oh darling, you have to learn to cheek those pills and take them when you want to, not when they want you to. Here, I'll show you.

(She shows her how to cheek a pill)

ROSE

Thanks. I'll never make it if I'm stumbling around in a daze all the time. So, how about a code sign?

ROSE ISABEL

For what?

ROSE

To let each other know when we're lucid. How about this?

(She holds her thumb and forefinger

in the shape of an "L")

ROSE ISABEL

Like this?

(She makes the code sign)

ROSE

Great! Now there's one more thing.

ROSE ISABEL

What?

ROSE

Believe me, I hate to bring it up. But I have to call you something, and I don't know what that is ... so far, nothing I've come up with works...

ROSE ISABEL

Everyone here calls me Rose Isabel.

ROSE

That seems so formal, and so close to my own name ... and my family always calls the people we're close to by a nickname.

ROSE ISABEL

My mother...

ROSE

Yes, I know, she thinks nicknames are common.

ROSE ISABEL

I don't know how to help you.

ROSE

You remind me a lot of my little sister.

ROSE ISABEL

Oh! You have a sister?

ROSE

I have four sisters and four brothers. The one I'm closest to is my little sister, Patty.

ROSE ISABEL

I always wanted a sister, but I got brothers instead. Two of them.

ROSE

We could pretend to be sisters to each other while we're here.

ROSE ISABEL

I always thought if I had a sister, I'd call her Margaret.

Why? ROSE

You know, like Queen Elizabeth's sister. ROSE ISABEL

Oh oh. (Pause) ... So, before you go, can I call you Patty? ROSE

Like your real sister? ROSE ISABEL

Just like my real sister. ROSE

And you'll be my Margaret? ROSE ISABEL

Will you call me Peggy? ROSE

Oh, Peggy and Patty! That's cute. ROSE ISABEL

Want to brush my hair? ROSE

It certainly needs it ... Peggy. ROSE ISABEL

(THEY giggle)

Shift

*(TEE and FLORA are outdoors
searching everywhere, with
flashlights.)*

(Several beats)

(ROSE is hiding under a bed, in the dark. SHE is lying in the fetal position, clutching a blanket.)

(Several beats)

(TEE and FLORA enter with flashlights, searching.)

FLORA

There, under the bed.

TEE

Rose? Rose, come on out now.

(ROSE whimpers, but does not move)

Come on, Rose, don't make me have to drag you out from under that bed. I don't want to hurt you.

FLORA

I'll get her out.

ROSE

No! No! I'll come out, I'll come out...

(She gingerly scoots out from under the bed, then has to be helped by both FLORA and TEE to her feet, where she sways, nearly fainting.)

Oooh, I ... My stomach! Ow! It hurts, it hurts!

TEE

You'll be okay in a few days, you just need to rest, that's all.

ROSE

But what is it? What did they do to me?

TEE

A little surgery, that's all.

ROSE

Surgery? What's wrong with me?

(Beat)

What's wrong?

FLORA

You going to tell her?

ROSE

Tell me! Nurse Tee, tell me!

TEE

It's no big thing. All the girls get it.

ROSE

Get what? All the girls get what? Ow! Oh my God! My stomach, what have they done to me?

TEE

They tied your tubes is all.

ROSE

You mean they sterilized me?

FLORA

No more babies for you, Miss Rose.

ROSE

No more? No more? I've never had babies. I'm not even married! I'm not even engaged! Hell, I've never even had a steady boyfriend ... and they sterilized me?

TEE

Now, now, Miss Rose, don't get yourself all excited, like I said, they do it to all the girls ... it's to keep you safe.

ROSE

Safe? Safe from whom? Oh my God! I've got to get out of here!

(SHE begins to struggle, but is weak, and FLORA easily holds her down, while TEE administers an injection.)

*THEY wait for its sedative effect,
which doesn't take long.)*

TEE

There, she's out. We can go.

FLORA

I don't see why they care so much. I wouldn't mind having my tubes tied.

TEE

I guess she still wants children someday.

FLORA

Ever seen one of 'em get out of here?

TEE

She don't know that.

FLORA

Yeah. Well, like you said, she'll be all right in a few days.

TEE

I wonder if they're going to do her this week.

Shift

*(ROSE sleeps in her bed. ROSE
ISABEL enters the room, a basket
on her arm.)*

ROSE ISABEL

Wakey, wakey! Rise and shine you sleepy head. Time for your ablutions!

ROSE

What? Oh, Patty. What are you doing here?

ROSE ISABEL

Patty? Where? No, there's no one else here, my dear, just you and your Queen. Now try to sit up, and let me wash your face.

*(She begins to pull a washcloth from
her basket, perhaps a hairbrush,
etc.)*

We want you to look nice, even though you might not feel so nice right now.

ROSE

You're right about that. I feel horrid.

ROSE ISABEL

Quite right! And your breath is dreadful! Don't you have a toothbrush? I'm sure all my subjects were issued toothbrushes ... teethbrush? teethbrushes? How strange. Those words don't sound correct at all.

(She wanders over to the window)

ROSE

I'm sorry, Queen, but I really don't feel up to visitors right now. I need to rest. I had surgery yesterday, or perhaps it was the day before...

ROSE ISABEL

Yes, yes, I know all about it. All my subjects are given surgery. I insist upon it, you know.

ROSE

You insist on it?

ROSE ISABEL

Oh yes, I can't have babies running around here. It would be most unsettling.

ROSE

Yes! God forbid we have anything normal in here! Anyone crying or screaming or shitting their pants!

ROSE ISABEL

There, there, dear. Lie back and let me wash your face.

ROSE

I'm in pain, I need a shot. Where's my bell? Nurse! Nurse!

ROSE ISABEL

They can't hear you. They're all quite busy right now.

ROSE

What? What do you mean.

ROSE ISABEL

It's Wednesday, Rose. Everyone is busy on Wednesday.

ROSE

Why? Doing what?

ROSE ISABEL

Ours is not to reason why, dear.

ROSE

Oh, Patty, can't you come back for just a few minutes? I need you Patty.

ROSE ISABEL

You shouldn't talk to people who aren't here, dear. That could be seen as treasonous. The only reason I'm letting you off this time is that you've just had surgery and you have a little fever. Not to mention really bad breath.

ROSE

I have to think. Give me that hairbrush.

*(ROSE ISABEL gives her the brush.
ROSE brushes her hair.)*

So ... everybody's busy... When you say everybody's busy, do you mean everybody is off the ward?

ROSE ISABEL

It's Wednesday, are you stupid or something?

ROSE

Are there more surgeries taking place today?

ROSE ISABEL

(Laughing) Don't be silly. Everyone has already had surgery.

ROSE

I don't get it... Hand me my toothbrush and some tooth powder and that basin over there, would you? And some water?

*(ROSE ISABEL does so. ROSE
brushes her teeth, and speaks
during.)*

No surgery, nurses off ward ...

(spits)

Are all the patients free to run around loose like you?

ROSE ISABEL

I'm not a patient! I'm the Queen! You're the patient!

ROSE

Yeah, yeah, yeah ... are ANY of the patients running around loose?

ROSE ISABEL

No, silly. They're having their treatments.

ROSE

But I'm not, because?

ROSE ISABEL

You just had surgery. You must be mildly retarded, dear.

ROSE

And you're not having treatment, because?

ROSE ISABEL

I'm the Queen! Enough! Enough! You're giving me a headache.

ROSE

Can't you tell me about the treatments?

ROSE ISABEL

Mornings are really the best time of day.

ROSE

I guess I was lucky to get this much out of you.

ROSE ISABEL

If you don't want people coming into your room at night, you should do what I do.

ROSE

What do you do?

ROSE ISABEL

I put a pitcher of ice water outside my door.

ROSE

In case of thirsty burglars?

ROSE ISABEL

I take it back about the mild retardation; I think your case is a bit more severe. Well, don't worry, the doctors will take care of you.

ROSE

Why can't you be Patty now? I really need my sister.

My sister is Margaret. ROSE ISABEL

You mean Peggy? ROSE

Peggy? ROSE ISABEL

Peggy. ROSE

Peggy. ROSE ISABEL

(She makes the "L" sign)

ROSE
Oh Thank God, Patty! You're back! Patty, I'm so happy to see you, you don't know.

What is it, Peggy? ROSE ISABEL

Apparently, I've been sterilized. ROSE

ROSE ISABEL
Yes, they sterilize all of us. For our own good, they say. They did me right away when I first got here.

ROSE
What's next? Do you know what they do next?

ROSE ISABEL
Some treatment. Something that makes you lose most of your memory. And changes your behavior. Your bad behavior.

ROSE
It must be shock treatments. I've heard of those. Do they hurt?

ROSE ISABEL

I don't know....

(Shifts back to Queen)

I have to go now, dear. Here, I brought you something to read.

(Hands ROSE a monograph written in Portuguese by Antonio Egaz Moniz on Leukotomy. Exits.)

ROSE

Thank you.

(Beat. Looks at the monograph)

Not English. Spanish? Lisboa? Where's that, Portugal? Well, great. I can't read this.

(Flips through. Stops dead when she finds photographs of Moniz performing a lobotomy.)

Oh my God. What is this? What is this? What is he doing to this person's brain?

Shift

(TEE and FLORA, exhausted, lounge outside the sanitarium, talking.)

FLORA

Do you have to rush off home?

TEE

You mean after our shift tonight?

FLORA

Yeah. I just wondered...

TEE

You wanna go get a cuppa coffee or something?

FLORA

I got a problem.

TEE

I told you Jack was gonna beat your ass...

FLORA

It ain't Jack, at least not yet.

TEE

What is it then? The kids? You need a babysitter?

FLORA

Will you let me just say?

TEE

Well spit it out then girl, we ain't got all day out here.

FLORA

I'm late.

TEE

Oh my lord God.

FLORA

It ain't what you think!

TEE

You're saying, you're NOT expecting?

FLORA

I'm saying, you think it's George's, and it ain't.

TEE

Then no problem, right?

FLORA

No! I mean, yes. Yes, there is a problem. I don't want another baby. Not Jack's not George's, not if it was the Second Coming. I don't want another baby.

TEE

You shoulda thought of that before// you let...

FLORA

Don't even finish that sentence. You know how Jack is. And I put my diaphragm in every time he goes out drinking just in case. But he didn't use a rubber, and it had been a few hours since I put in the diaphragm, and anyway, goddamn it, I'm late.

TEE

I'm sorry kid.

FLORA

Sorry don't cut nothing. You've got to help me, Tee. You're a nurse, you know how.

TEE

I'm a nurses' aide! I never did abortions.

FLORA

But you watched. I know you did.

TEE

If I messed up, you could get infected and die.

FLORA

You won't mess up. And if I have another baby, I don't care if I die.

TEE

Oh hell, Flora, you don't mean that.

FLORA

I swear on my mother's grave.

TEE

Your mother ain't dead.

FLORA

Yet.

TEE

I wouldn't even know where to do it.

FLORA

Thank you, thank you, thank you, Tee, I knew you'd come through for me.

TEE

But ... but...

FLORA

I've got it all figured out. Meet me at the lockers after work....

Shift

*(It is nighttime on the ward, after
lights out. ROSE ISABEL returns*

from an outing, wearing hat and gloves, carrying a handbag and a box of candy. She opens the door of her room quietly, sees TEE and FLORA, sets down her handbag and candy, and quietly leaves. She sneaks into ROSE'S room, and stands over her, watching her sleep for a couple of beats. Then she turns on the light.)

ROSE ISABEL

Rose, Rose, Rose, Rose, Rose...

ROSE

What? What are you doing? Why are you standing there calling my name?

ROSE ISABEL

Nurse Tee and Flora are doing sex in my bed.

ROSE

They are not.

ROSE ISABEL

I command you to get up and make them stop!

ROSE

Why do you have a hat on? And gloves?

ROSE ISABEL

I'm the Queen, I'm the Queen, how many times do I have to tell you, I'm the bloody Queen!

ROSE

I've never seen you in a hat and gloves before, that's all.

ROSE ISABEL

Rosie, make them stop ... please make them stop...

ROSE

Seriously, have you been on an outing or something?

ROSE ISABEL

If you don't make them stop, I don't know what I'll do. It's making my head hurt!

ROSE

Okay, okay. Come on. Hand me my robe.

(ROSE ISABEL hands ROSE a robe. She puts it on, and they make their way back to Rose Isabel's room. TEE is just finishing FLORA'S abortion. [Note to director: this should be done with Flora's back to audience, so that we see her splayed knees, and Tee's masked face and gloved hands.] ROSE holds ROSE ISABEL back and motions her to keep quiet. They observe as TEE removes her mask, and helps FLORA to her feet.)

TEE

Steady. Take your time. You okay?

ROSE

Why in the world would you choose this room to do an abortion in?

TEE

No! It's not what you think?

FLORA

Tee, Tee...

ROSE ISABEL

You two were doing sex on my bed. I'm going to tell Dr. Freeman.

TEE, FLORA,

Oh, for God's sake!

ROSE

I'm sorry Rose Isabel, but they truly were not doing anything sexual. Flora had something wrong, and Nurse Tee was fixing her. Isn't that right, Nurse Tee?

TEE

Yes, yes, that's right.

ROSE ISABEL

Why didn't you go to the doctor then?

FLORA

I didn't have the money, Miss.

ROSE ISABEL

You better not have got my bed dirty.

TEE

Don't worry, I'll get it all fixed up like new just in a minute, soon as I get Flora out of here.

ROSE

Is that candy you have there, Queen? There in your shopping bag?

ROSE ISABEL

My favorite!

(She pounces on the bag, opens the box and begins sampling the chocolates. Completely taken away by the candy.)

ROSE

Now then, Nurse Tee. Before you and Flora go out that door, we need to talk.

TEE

I suppose you're going to report me?

ROSE

No, no of course not. I can't do that. And I think Rose Isabel is taken care of.

TEE

Then why we need to talk?

ROSE

I'm concerned about Flora, is she going to be okay?

TEE

I hope so. I never done this before.

FLORA

I'm gonna be okay. You sure you ain't gonna tell nobody?

ROSE

No. That's your business, not mine. I have my own problems.

TEE

Look, we can't bust you out of here. We'd lose our jobs for sure.

ROSE

I'm not trying to blackmail you into helping me.

TEE

I'm just saying.

FLORA

Well I wish you could get out. I wish all the girls could get out. I don't like what I see going on here.

TEE

You like your paycheck though.

FLORA

There's other paychecks in the world.

TEE

Big talk from somebody who's too weak to walk right now.

FLORA

I can walk.

TEE

Let's go then.

ROSE

Be careful, and don't get an infection, that's important.

TEE

I got to get Flora back before Jack gets off of work. Then I got to get home before my own man gets home.

ROSE

Go. I'll clean up here.

TEE

Thanks.

FLORA

Yeah, thanks. You're okay for a rich girl.

(THEY exit)

Shift

(DR FREEMAN'S office. HE is dictating into machine.)

DR FREEMAN

Regarding the Rorschach tests, patient number 66 appears to have an extreme level of sexual fixation. It is phallic rather than oral. This would appear to be congruent with her low interest in food and eating. While I have not been successful in garnering specific information regarding her sexual habits prior to admission...

(TEE knocks)

Yes, come in...

(TEE enters, stands there)

What is it, Aide?

TEE

Excuse me for interrupting, doctor.

DR FREEMAN

That's all right. I don't have a patient. I'm only catching up on paperwork. What's on your mind?

TEE

It's about one of the patients, doctor.

DR FREEMAN

Is she waiting outside the door?

TEE

Oh no sir. I just wanted to talk to you about her for a minute.

DR FREEMAN

And this was something the nurses couldn't handle?

TEE

I didn't want to bring it to them sir. I wanted to talk to you. Not to be out of line or anything, but you're the one that ... well, you're the one that does the cuttin', and I figured you're the one to talk to.

DR FREEMAN

I see. Go on.

TEE

Well. It's Miss Katherine, doctor.

DR FREEMAN

Yes. What about her?

TEE

Well, you know when you first did the surgery, she seemed just fine. So much better in fact. She was smiling and laughing and stuff like we hadn't seen before.

DR FREEMAN

Right.

TEE

But now she can't even hold her head up no more.

DR FREEMAN

(Beat)

Aide, what is your name?

TEE

It's Tee sir.

DR FREEMAN

Thank you, Tee. It felt awkward calling you aide. You don't mind if I call you Tee, do you?

TEE

No doctor.

DR FREEMAN

Well, Tee, as sad as it is, sometimes the surgeries go too far. It's all so new. It seems like a miracle, and it is for at least half the patients we've operated on so far. Of course, that's only 65, but we plan to do thousands before we're through.

TEE

Only half?

DR FREEMAN

Half have had complete success! Complete freedom from the behaviors that had trapped them and their families in a nightmarish existence for years! Don't you see? It's wonderful, in the truest sense of the word. A wonder!

TEE

What about the other half?

DR FREEMAN

Some of them have no relief at all, some have only partial relief ... like Rose Isabel for instance, you know her don't you?

TEE

Yes, she's one of my patients. You're saying she has partial relief?

DR FREEMAN

Yes, unfortunately she still won't work, and she continues to engage in inappropriate sexual talk at times.

TEE

Mm hm. But what about Miss Katherine, is that partial relief?

DR FREEMAN

We don't know yet. It's too soon to tell.

TEE

What's that mean?

DR FREEMAN

As you observed, she seemed fine at first, now she's lapsed into this catatonic state. It may resolve soon, and she'll be her old self.

TEE

How can you keep operating on them when you don't know how it's gonna turn out?

DR FREEMAN

But I just explained how great the odds are that their lives are going to be better.

TEE

Whose lives?

DR FREEMAN

Why the patients', of course.

TEE

Not from where I'm sitting. Looks to me like 50/50 they could be here forever.

DR FREEMAN

Is that so bad?

TEE

You're joking, right?

DR FREEMAN

Look, Tee, they have all their meals, they have safety, they have people like you and me to watch over them day and night. They never have to do a bit of work in their lives if they aren't capable of it. Or, if they can, we have many productive jobs they can do.

TEE

I guess you're right.

DR FREEMAN

I'm glad you stopped in, Tee. I'm glad you asked about your patient. I hope you'll free to come by anytime. You and I are in this together, Tee. We all are. We want to end their suffering, isn't that right? That's what we do here, Tee. We end suffering. That of the patients – when we can – and that of their families, by taking the patients under our wing.

TEE

I never thought of it that way.

DR FREEMAN

I'm going to commend you to your head nurse, Tee. You're a bright and caring young woman. You should get a raise at your next performance appraisal.

TEE

Thank you, doctor!

Shift

(ROSE'S room. FLORA is alone in the room, straightening up, or making the bed, etc.)

FLORA

Left this girl with nothing. I can't imagine. Me and my sisters had more junk than this in our bedroom before I left home and we was poor. Shit, I can't help feeling sorry for these poor little rich girls. All they want is what I want: more ... and instead they get stuck in a loony bin where they'll be "safe" from all their feelings and longings and their folks won't have to worry about being embarrassed by their shenanigans. It makes me mad when I think about it. What their folks ought to be...

(TEE enters and interrupts)

TEE

Flora! I've been looking everywhere for you.

(Beat)

Who were you talking to?

FLORA

Nobody. I was talking to myself.

TEE

Girl, you okay? 'Cause I got something important I need to discuss.

FLORA

I'm all right. I just get worked up sometimes, and got to talk out loud. That's all.

TEE

You sure? 'Cause...

FLORA

Oh, I was just going off about these poor girls here in the hospital, but you don't want to hear about that. You and your great job and everything.

TEE

No! That's just it! Flora, I was just talking to Dr. Freeman// and I realized...

FLORA

You were talking to Dr. Freeman??

TEE

Flora Sue, I need you to listen now. Seriously, just listen up.

FLORA

Okay. Go on then.

TEE

I realized that I'm just as bad as he is. Now don't interrupt me, Flora. I understood that by doing my job here, and by doing it my best, I'm helping him do his. And his job is to do as many of his brain surgeries as he can. He's on a mission. He thinks he's saving the goddamn world! He thinks he's relieving the suffering, and as long as I keep sending in the patients, he's gonna keep cuttin' on 'em. That might be okay if they were all violent, or dangerous or in here because they were murdering people in their beds, but Flora! Look at Rose! There ain't nothing wrong with her. Nothing! You know it and I know it, and what's more she knows it.

FLORA

I know it.

TEE

So... (pause) ... we got to get her out of here.

We? As in you and me? FLORA

I can't do it without your help. TEE

But if we get caught? FLORA

Then we both lose our jobs. TEE

(Beat)

But if we're careful, and we don't get caught ... then maybe we can get other girls out.

All of them? FLORA

Not all of them. Just keep our eyes open. Get the ones like Rose out of here. Have our own underground railroad, sort of. TEE

That'd be exciting! FLORA

Let's start with Rose, okay? TEE

All right by me. FLORA

I got next Tuesday and Wednesday off. Let's do it then. TEE

I'm working Tuesday night. Changed shifts with Elsie. But I got Wednesday off. FLORA

All right. Wednesday night, soon as it gets dark, we'll come with a car. I'll talk to Rose and let her know we're coming and what the signal will be. Shake? TEE

(THEY shake hands)

Shift

(DR FREEMAN is alone in his office, dictating into a machine.)

DR FREEMAN

Regarding the above-named patient, we are now approximately six months post treatment. She does no work. Manifests delusions of persecution. Smiles and laughs when telling of person plotting to kill her. Talk free and irrelevant. Admits auditory hallucinations. Quiet on the ward. Masturbates frequently. Also expresses various somatic delusions, all of which she explains on a sexual basis. Memory for remote past is nil.

(ROSE knocks)

Come in, come in.

(ROSE enters)

Ah, Rosemary. Please, have a seat.

ROSE

Why did you call for me?

DR FREEMAN

I think it's time you and I had another talk, Rosemary.

ROSE

We just had a session yesterday!

DR FREEMAN

I know, you're right. I'm just so eager for us to make progress, and I thought you were opening up. Oh, very well then. Run along back to the ward. But first, I almost forgot, you need an injection of Vitamin B.

ROSE

No injections!

DR FREEMAN

It's a simple Vitamin shot, Rosemary. Everyone has to have them. The food here is just terrible.

ROSE

You noticed?

DR FREEMAN

It can't be helped. It's a state institution, you know that. But we can supplement by giving our patients injections, now roll up your sleeve.

(ROSE complies. DR FREEMAN administers an injection.)

Now then, Rosemary, aside from the food, how are we treating you?

ROSE

Aside from the food and the surgery? I didn't like being sterilized against my will, I believe I mentioned that yesterday when...

DR FREEMAN

Yes, yes, go on.

ROSE

I ... If I could be released ... Doctor ... I feel...

(SHE slumps over in her chair. DR FREEMAN quickly picks her up/drags her to a gurney, straps her down, and administers shock treatment before she wakes up. He puts on a mask and gown, rubber gloves, gets out his ice pick instrument, and is ready for her when ROSE awakes.)

DR FREEMAN

I'm sorry I have to calm your spirit in this way, Rosemary. But you know, your parents are suffering. I just can't stand to see people suffer. Especially mothers. And your mother is a saint, Rosemary. You know that? Oh, good, you're awake. Now Rosemary, Rosie, can you hear me?

ROSE

Wha...

DR FREEMAN

Rosemary, I'm going to need you to recite the Lord's Prayer for me while I operate ... do you remember the Lord's Prayer?

ROSE

Our Father, who art in heaven...

DR FREEMAN

Terrific. Just start again, and go slowly. I'll be just be making little cuts while you speak.
Okay, begin....

ROSE

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day
Thy daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass
Against us.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from Evil
Amen

DR FREEMAN

Good, good, we're almost finished. Now sing "God Bless America".

ROSE

God Bless America
Land that I love
Stand beside her
And guide her...

DR FREEMAN

Nice, Rose, but not so loud, okay?

ROSE

God Bless America
Gland had I love
And besides that...

(stops singing, starts babbling)

No night no night no night no night no night...

DR FREEMAN

Okay! All done here.

(Hurriedly removes instruments, his mask, gloves. Cleans up the patient, and moves her to a wheelchair.)

Shift

(TEE is creeping around the window in the dark. She has a flashlight, but keeps it covered with her hand, shining it only on the ground while she finds her way to Rose's window. Once there, she waits a bit, listening, watching to be sure this is not a trap. When it feels safe, she shines her flashlight at Rose's window, and flashes it three times. Several beats. Nothing happens. She shines her flashlight again and flashes it three times. Again nothing. FLORA creeps up behind TEE.)

FLORA
(Whispering) What's going on?

TEE
Jesus! You scared the shit out of me.

FLORA
Sorry, but you didn't come back.

TEE
She's not answering.

FLORA
What are you going to do?

TEE
What am I going to do?

FLORA
Sorry. What are we going to do?

TEE
I don't know.

FLORA

Should we leave?

TEE

We can't just leave. We have to get her out of here tonight.

FLORA

Well, what then?

TEE

I'm going in after her.

FLORA

Shit. If you're going in, I have to go in. Come on.

(THEY go around the back with their flashlights, and go inside. The ward is dark. THEY stumble over a pitcher of ice water [mostly ice] as they enter ROSE'S room. ROSE sits with her back to the audience, as ROSE ISABEL stands in the dark, brushing ROSE'S hair. TEE and FLORA shine their flashlights on this scene, then turn on the lights.)

TEE

Rose! What the hell? You were supposed to come out. We were out there flashing and flashing...

ROSE ISABEL

I was trying to get her ready ... but she won't make the code sign ... I keep trying and trying, but she won't make the code sign...

FLORA

What do you mean? What's a code sign?

TEE

Rose? What's wrong Rose?

(She crosses to ROSE and turns her chair around. ROSE sits staring into space, drooling.)

End