

Ultrasound

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A full-length play

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# “Ultrasound”

## Characters

- Jolene (Jo)..... Woman. She is Maddy’s partner. They have been trying to have a baby for four months. She has a myopic work ethic, and intense dedication to Maddy.
- Maddy (Madd)..... Woman. She is Jolene’s partner. They have been trying to have a baby for four months, and she found out that it worked out.
- Angela (Ang)..... Jolene’s daughter, summoned to wrap her head around parenthood.

## Setting

The play takes-place in Jolene/Maddy’s kitchen, Jolene’s basement lab, and the waiting room in a hospital. The kitchen and should be simple settings, but one should be distinct from the other.

## Synopsis

Jolene is a woman so reluctant to become a mother that she has to summon her daughter to help guide her in the process.

## Other Notes

SCENE 1-1

JOLENE enters her lab, followed by MADDY.

JOLENE

Why did you leave me alone? You think that this is all in my head. But you know it's not now, right? You see that the minute you leave me alone, shit goes downhill-

MADDY

You've ruined this night for me. I'm going to bed.

JOLENE

Not without apologizing to me, first.

MADDY

How you acted is my fault, now?

JOLENE

Richard isn't *my* boss.

MADDY

Because *I* yelled-

JOLENE

I never yelled-

MADDY

You were yelling at Richard.

JOLENE

I yelled at the guy who talked to me like I was a little girl-

MADDY

The guy who offered you a job-

JOLENE

*I have a job.* I cure cancer.

MADDY

Well that guy was Richard.

JOLENE

Fine. Yes. I yelled at Richard.

MADDY

*You embarrassed me.*

JOLENE

We're eating. We have a good time. It's just us. You go to the bathroom. And *Richard-*

MADDY

My boss. Let's just make this clear right now that you are talking about my boss-

JOLENE

*Richard* comes up to *me*.

MADDY

Come to bed.

JOLENE

You left me alone. You said you would never leave me alone-

MADDY

You didn't have to say anything! You could have just sat there, waiting for me, as my kind, loving wife, and *shut your mouth*. I didn't need to come back to find my wife *yelling-*

JOLENE

I didn't start this- He called the work that I do *playing*. He said that I was *playing*.

MADDY

He meant that the size of your operations-

JOLENE

He called BioCurious a mom-and-pop shop-

MADDY

He meant the size and scope-

JOLENE

The *size* is perfect. And the scope is that I *cure cancer*.

MADDY

The problem is that you tell people that you cure cancer.

JOLENE

We're isolating a cell in a specific kind of colon cancer which may or may not trigger cancer so we can develop levels of radiation to target it.

MADDY

You *treat* cancer.

JOLENE

Don't wrangle me.

MADDY

I'm not wrangling-

JOLENE

You wrangle assholes at work all day, don't come home and try to do it here.

MADDY

He's not an asshole. He was nice. He apologized. If you gave him a chance to show that to you-

JOLENE

Why would I want to give him a chance. This is our night. On *our* nights, I should only have to see you. I don't need to know *why* Richard is an ass-

MADDY

I'm explaining what it is that he meant. But you're not listening.

JOLENE

What am I not hearing? Tell me what I am not hearing, then, yes, I'll stop. I'll drop it. I'll go to bed.

MADDY

He said that maybe you had gotten too big for them-

JOLENE

I was with them when they were in *John's* basement.

MADDY

And maybe you could use your connections-

JOLENE

Okay. See. *You* didn't listen. He did not say *connections*, only smooth people say *connections*-

MADDY

Your *network*-

JOLENE

Hobbyists say *network*. Use your *network* and sell them some overpriced- Like he was doing me a favor. Like I was stuck at this place, and that he was offering me a chance to do something *more*.

MADDY

He was offering you a job-

JOLENE

Maybe *he* should be the one who gets your 'listening' speech.

MADDY

If you're offered a job that you don't want, say 'no'-

JOLENE

A job I didn't ask for-

MADDY

So it's an honor-

JOLENE

When I'm looking at a menu and munching on *bread*, and wondering if I want to try *soup*, I don't want to be *honored*, or, *hunted*, or to talk to anyone that isn't you. People at work need to stay at work. I don't need to *mingle*, I don't need to be jumped on by some idiot hobbyist who thinks I need to be rescued from a job I LOVE to shill PCR Machines and leave work at work and come home and get a *hobby*. And because you left, I ruined that. I'm on our date for *you*. Not for *him*. And him coming ruined me being alone with you.

MADDY

But we could have been alone after he left.

JOLENE

No, because then there is Richard's *handprint* on the evening. Like he grabbed my glass. Like there was a dirty glass in the middle of the table.

MADDY

No, see, *that's* what ruined our evening.

JOLENE

Richard.

MADDY

No, how you reacted How you let an interruption ruin-

JOLENE

So you want us to go on a date, but you don't want us to be alone=

MADDY

Because I want to go out with you and have people see us together-

JOLENE

Why? You know how I react, you know how I hate the people you work with-

MADDY

I know.

JOLENE

See, this is what I'm talking about. You are punishing me for something that you already knew was going to happen. Do you know what I do with experiments which I already *know* the outcome of? 100%?

MADDY

Jo, let's go to bed-

JOLENE  
I call them *facts* and I DON'T DO THEM.

MADDY  
Having other people want to be in our lives isn't a bad thing-

JOLENE  
Which is why I want an apology. Because other people in our lives is the *worst* thing.

MADDY  
Let's just stop this. The night is ruined. Let's just go to bed.

JOLENE  
I think this illustrates perfectly why we don't need other people.

MADDY  
Excuse me?

JOLENE  
When we go out, we see people, right?

MADDY  
Yeah.

JOLENE  
And I ruin the night every time, right?

MADDY  
It doesn't matter-

JOLENE  
So why should you be put in a position where you have to apologize for bringing me out afterwards? Just don't take me.

MADDY  
We need to *see people*.

JOLENE  
*You* need that. We're good when it's just us. But when you bring other people in-

MADDY  
When I bring-

JOLENE  
Or when they show up unexpectedly

MADDY  
You don't want to have this conversation now.

JOLENE  
Look at the handwriting on our calendar. It's not mine. You bring people in, and when that happens, we get messed up. So if you have to, if you want to *hang out* with people. Do it. You don't need me.

I do need-

MADDY

JOLENE  
Why are you making such a big deal about this-

MADDY  
Because it *IS* a big deal-

JOLENE  
How? I've solved our problem. We don't need other people in our life.

MADDY  
Because I'm pregnant.

Pause.

JOLENE  
No you're not.

MADDY  
Yes, I am.

JOLENE  
It didn't work, we talked about it.

MADDY  
I am pregnant.

JOLENE  
We were standing in this room. We had used the last of the four month supply of MIT, and it didn't work.

MADDY  
I am pregnant.

JOLENE  
Will you stop saying that-

MADDY  
Will you stop thinking that I am lying to you?

JOLENE  
How is this possible.

MADDY  
MIT squirt. We tried for four months, and I know we stopped because we thought it didn't work, but it did. It worked. I'm four weeks pregnant.

JOLENE  
You're pregnant?

MADDY

You can't feel anything. But you can sense him. I'm jumping the gun, here, but I think he's going to be a boy.

JOLENE

You can't know that.

MADDY

I'm going to be a mom, and you're going to be a mom, too.

JOLENE

And you tell me now.

MADDY

I was going to tell you tomorrow

JOLENE

This was the big news. You were going to tell me tonight.

MADDY

I was going to tell you tonight, but you proved, once again, how great you handle change-

JOLENE

I can. If I know its coming. If I can plan for it. Not if it waits until my wife is gone, and ambushes me while I'm picking a *soup* and acts like changing my life is the best thing that can happen to me.

MADDY

What have we been doing for the last four months?

JOLENE

One month. We have been doing *nothing* for the last month. We had been *trying* for the four months before that. Can you see the difference?

MADDY

Well it's going to be a boy. I can feel it. You need to prepare for that. See. This is how I didn't want this to go down.

JOLENE

If you didn't lie, this wouldn't have been an issue.

MADDY

Lying? What are you talking about.

JOLENE

You lied about this dinner being about us. You just wanted to bring someone else into it. You lied that you wouldn't leave me alone-

MADDY

Oh, come on.

JOLENE

And you lied about why you were mad. And then you spring this on me and expect me to be onboard 100% immediately? That's ridiculous, right? I'm not crazy, right?

MADDY

All that I wanted-

JOLENE

I can handle this. I can handle change. You just have to be open with me. Up front with me about what you're really talking about. Because I can't plan for things that come out of nowhere.

MADDY

What are you saying?

JOLENE

I don't think that this is a good idea.

MADDY

...What?

JOLENE

I don't think having this baby is a good idea.

MADDY

Why?

JOLENE

Because I'm not ready for this.

MADDY

You want me to send it back? Like it's undercooked?

JOLENE

No, I just-

MADDY

You just what?

JOLENE

I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do, and this just came *out of the blue*.

MADDY

Four months.

JOLENE

And one month of *nothing*. One month of *nothing*.

MADDY

I guess one month of nothing turned into four weeks of something-

JOLENE

I can't do this.

MADDY

Then why did you agree to do this in the first place?

JOLENE

Because I didn't think it could work!

MADDY

You didn't-

JOLENE

Do you know what the odds are-

MADDY

Well it worked. And I'm pregnant. And I'm going to be the best fucking mom you have ever seen. And you have to figure out how you are going to *actually* deal with this. And you are going to be a mom, too.

END OF SCENE

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Scene 1-2

Next morning. JOLENE is finishing the following list on her whiteboard:

JOLENE  
(reading whiteboard)

Maddy is pregnant...  
With a boy. (Acceptable Names: Newton, Tesla, Bohr, Leonard)  
Who will love science.  
Who will start his lab in our garage at 16.  
Who will sell his first patent at 20.  
Who will get a PHD at 22.  
Who will win the Nobel Prize at 26.  
Who will cure cancer at 30.

JOLENE (CONT)

Okay. Yeah. I can do this.

JOLENE adds...

JOLENE

Who will have a great second mom.  
Okay. Easy. Done. Now I'll get Madd.

ANGELA enters. Walks to the board. Crosses out 'boy'.

ANGELA

I'm not a boy.

JOLENE

What?

ANGELA

It says here I'm a boy. I'm not a boy.

JOLENE

Oh. Sorry.

ANGELA writes 'girl' above it. Starts crossing out names.

ANGELA

And these names suck, Mom2.

JOLENE

*Bohr* could be either-

ANGELA

It's a stupid name. (*writes out:*) ANGELA. That's a name.

JOLENE

I'm not adding that.

ANGELA writes her name over the other ones.

ANGELA points to 'starts a lab at 16'.

ANGELA  
And that's wrong, too. I don't start a lab at '16'.

JOLENE  
15.

ANGELA  
No.

JOLENE  
14.

ANGELA  
No.

JOLENE  
13?

ANGELA  
What's a lab?

ANGELA crosses-out 'starts a lab at 16'.

JOLENE  
This. *This* is a lab.

ANGELA  
Okay, Mom2, this whole board is wrong. Just cross it out for me. I'm not doing this anymore. Let's talk about me.

JOLENE  
That's what I'm doing.

ANGELA  
(points to the board)  
That's not me.

JOLENE  
Yes, it-

ANGELA  
I'm not going to be a little you. And I am going to have issues that you haven't experienced.

JOLENE  
Like what?

ANGELA  
Like... What's that word? I'm not.. It's not racist. What's that *word*? What's that word that means I discriminate against someone- not sexist. Not racist. It doesn't matter.

What I'm saying, is that I think it's okay if I call people 'fag'. And it's not okay just because my mom is gay, you know? But if someone's being a moralfag then that's completely-

JOLENE

Excuse me?

ANGELA

I was on 4chan last night and this (b)tard told me that I should just shut the fuck up because-

JOLENE

You call people that-

ANGELA

(b)tard?

JOLENE

No.

ANGELA

Moralfag.

JOLENE

You can't call people that.

ANGELA

Now who's being the moralfag.

JOLENE

I'm your mother.

ANGELA

I don't recognize your sovereignty.

JOLENE

Just stop talking.

ANGELA

So what's the answer?

JOLENE

To what?

ANGELA

Why are people so uptight when I call them moralfags? See, it's these questions which I'm going to bring up that's not covered on your whiteboard.

JOLENE

Are you my daughter?

I'm mom's daughter.

ANGELA

And mine.

JOLENE

Half mom's.

ANGELA

Half.

JOLENE

Half mom. Half MIT.

ANGELA

MIT?

JOLENE

Yeah, I'm half mom, and half squirt.

ANGELA

And the squirt-half-

JOLENE

Is dominant. MIT gives me my sense of humor. Like, when you troll for pedophiles who ask for Cheese Pizza-

ANGELA

Stop.

JOLENE

But really mean Child Porn.

ANGELA

Stop.

JOLENE

And you send them a picture of Cheese Pizza. But my bigger goal is to embed a link inside the image which leads to a collection of pizza images. So they'd be rickrolled by pizza. Get it?

ANGELA

This is who you are?

JOLENE

Mom's genes can only go so far. You should have seen what undiluted MIT is.

ANGELA

No. We screened the donor. JOLENE

Yeah, I'm healthy. ANGELA

For education. JOLENE

And I'm smart. But I'm a douche, too. ANGELA

Don't say that's word. JOLENE

But I'm a douche, also. ANGELA

And how do I take this? JOLENE

What? ANGELA

You, (b)tards, MIT. What do I do? JOLENE

You're not there. ANGELA

ANGELA crosses out "who will have a great second mom"

Where am I? JOLENE

I don't know shit about you. ANGELA

But I was there. JOLENE

Not for a statistically significant period of time. ANGELA

What? JOLENE

You left. ANGELA

I left Madd alone with you. JOLENE

ANGELA

You left me alone with a megabitch.

ANGELA

You may not understand this, because you're a labmonkey, but I don't respond well to blanket parental threats. So I'm going to pretend that you didn't do that, so we can continue with our conversation.

JOLENE

You don't have to change what you say, just understand what you want, and the audience you're talking to. If you want something from me, and you know I don't have to give it to you, you should choose your words.

ANGELA

This, coming from you.

JOLENE

You're a parasite which is growing quickly inside of my wife and taking her nutrients. If you grew outside of her body, we would target you with radiation. You're cancer. I can treat cancer. Know your audience.

ANGELA

You left me at home with mega-opinionated mom.

JOLENE

Thank you.

ANGELA

A mom that couldn't wrangle both of us. And I am not who is on that board.

JOLENE

You will be-

ANGELA

The only thing that is true on this list is 'Maddy is pregnant'.

JOLENE

And the rest-

ANGELA

Doesn't happen. Are you okay with that?

JOLENE

No, if I'm going to do this, then this list has to happen.

ANGELA

It doesn't.

JOLENE

But I have a plan-

ANGELA

Oh, you do? Good! Let's take me, birth to 8 years. What is your plan?

JOLENE

Like, what programming languages do I want you to know, or what grade level do I want you to be at? Because if you're going to cure cancer by 30-

ANGELA

When does a baby start walking?

JOLENE

I don't know.

ANGELA

When does one start to talk?

JOLENE

I don't know.

ANGELA

First words? First sentence? Motor skills? Stop breastfeeding? Start preschool?

JOLENE

I don't-

ANGELA

What grade should an eight year old be in?

JOLENE

This has nothing-

ANGELA

You have this plan, which I am not going to follow.

JOLENE

You better.

ANGELA

Because I will do great with your rules. You don't even need to rewrite it when I leave, because I'm *not going to do it*, because MIT does not get constrained, and if you try I will fuck your shit up faster than a moralfag on the b-boards.

JOLENE

Don't-

ANGELA

If you don't like how I talk, then maybe you should have *been there*. How about you *show up*, and do something different with me. Try something different with me.

JOLENE

I don't know what to do.

ANGELA

You should change that. You should do something about that. About me. You need a plan, because you will not like what I come up with.

END OF SCENE

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SCENE 1-3

MADDY is on the phone with her sister, LUCY.

NOTE: ( ) are actor directions, *Italics* are directed to her sister, and Normal are to JOLENE.

MADDY's sister is Lucy. The shortened of this is Luc (pronounced Loose)

MADDY

*Your impersonations are always spot on, sis. Yeah, that's what she said. I don't-*

JOLENE enters from the basement.

MADDY

*Hey, I'll call you back in five minutes.*

(she listens)

*Yeah, she just came up.*

(she listens)

*I guess I can stay on the line.*

What is it?

JOLENE

I need to talk to you.

MADDY

So talk to me.

*I haven't told her yet.*

JOLENE

Tell me what?

MADDY

You wanted to talk to me?

JOLENE

What do you need to tell me.

MADDY

*I'm telling her now.*

Luc is taking me to Bangor for the weekend.

*I told her.*

JOLENE

You're going to your sister's?

MADDY

That's what I just said.

JOLENE

I know I messed up, but-

MADDY

Yeah, you messed up.

JOLENE

But I'm sorry, and I need to talk to you.

MADDY

You're apologizing to me?

JOLENE

Yes.

MADDY

Have you changed your position?

JOLENE

Yes.

MADDY

Because I'm only going hang up if there is something different-

JOLENE

I'm going to be here, and I'm going to be a mother, too.

MADDY

*Let me call you back in five minutes.*

JOLENE

I'm sorry about last night.

MADDY

And?

JOLENE

And I listened to what you said. I know how I'm actually going to deal with this.

MADDY

With him. You know how you're going to be in his life.

JOLENE

It was ridiculous for me to even say not to have it. It was short-sighted, and it completely disregarded all of the work that we've put in-

MADDY

Then why did you-

JOLENE

No, listen. I was thinking about it downstairs, there is what we expect to happen, and what will actually happen. We expect it to be great, and we expect it to be smart, and we expect it to get the Nobel at 26-

MADDY

I don't-

JOLENE

Yes, you do. And it's okay. Me too. But there's no guarantee. There's no guarantee that it's going to come out as we need it to.

MADDY

The baby.

JOLENE

Yeah.

MADDY

That's the point.

JOLENE

No, the point is to be the best parents to a perfect baby. It's half you, so that's covered, but its the other half that destroys our plans-

MADDY

It doesn't destroy-

JOLENE

That's what I thought, too. I thought that we screened everything that we could for the squirt, but the tests- science has only come so far. There are things that we can't plan for. We don't know how it's going to come out. Right?

MADDY

Right.

JOLENE

Good, so we should be able to do this in two steps, right?

MADDY

Two steps?

JOLENE

I will be with you for this whole thing, you are not going to do this alone. But after it comes, we should put it up for adoption.

MADDY

You want to give him away.

JOLENE

There's a family that is perfect for this baby. That family is not us.

MADDY

This is what you said last night, you said last night that I should get rid of-

JOLENE

We're not getting rid of, we're exchanging. This isn't just putting it up for adoption. This is a baby exchange program. It comes out a newborn, it cries, it's crazy, it can't talk, and then what? We think we're doing great, but then we break it in ways we can't possibly imagine PLUS there's all this stuff from MIT floating around there. And I shouldn't be trusted with a baby. I wouldn't know what to do with it.

But if we then *adopt* someone we can be sure of. Someone like us. Someone who is maybe a senior in high school, or a freshman in college. Or someone who wants to go to college- it can still be a boy if you want. Then we can screen him, we can talk to him, see if this is a representation of the ideals that we agree on, and then we know what we're getting. Scientist, yes. Driven, yes. Can talk to people, yes. Researcher, yes. We can even look outside of the country if you want.

MADDY

You want to kickstart a child.

JOLENE

Young adult. We've agreed that we can't handle a child. We're on that same page, right?

MADDY

I don't want a random child. I want our child.

JOLENE

But you haven't seen what this kid will do to you.

MADDY

Neither have-

JOLENE

What I'm saying is that you don't know what you're getting.

MADDY

And I'm saying that I do. I know what we can control, and what we can't control.

JOLENE

We're in agreement. All of the things that we *can* control, are perfect. But we need to change the experiment so there's more that we *can* control.

MADDY

We're not changing-

But you just agreed- JOLENE

I'm not agreeing to any of this MADDY

Then why did I come up with a plan if we weren't going to follow it. JOLENE

A plan for *you*. For *you* to- Nevermind. MADDY

MADDY starts dialing-

What are you doing? JOLENE

I'm calling Luc back. MADDY

But we're talking- JOLENE

Your steamrolling- MADDY

But we're having- JOLENE

You don't need me for your conversations- MADDY

I need your *input*- JOLENE

You need me to agree with you, and I'm not going to. MADDY

Why not? JOLENE

*Hey Luc. So I'll just meet you at Cooks Corner?* MADDY

Why not? JOLENE

*Shopping, food, and we can go.* MADDY

I did everything- JOLENE

MADDY

*See you then.*

JOLENE

I have a plan.

MADDY

Yes, for *both of us*. I already know what my plan is. What I don't know is your plan. I want to see a little me running around, being chased by a big you, and I want big you to lift little me up, and read to it, and I want us to cuddle on the couch while he plays with blocks, and I want to know that the best of both of us has been passed down, so that if something were to happen, I still have you, and you still have me. That's what I want. What do you want?

JOLENE

I already told you-

MADDY

Because the baby is not going away, and me with the baby is not going away. You can't control that. You can control what roll you will have in this baby's life.

JOLENE

I did my job.

MADDY

No, that job was to figure out how you could *actually* deal with me being pregnant. I'll be back after lunch. I'll want a decision. You have to figure out what you're going to do, or I'm going with Luc to Bangor.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 1-4

This scene takes place in both the kitchen and Jolene's basement lab.

JOLENE greets MADDY at the door. They walk to the basement as they're talking.

ANGELA is bent over the centrifuge, attacking it with a screwdriver.

I know what I'm going to do.

JOLENE

Hello.

MADDY

I listened to what you said. I actually listened, and I know what I'm going to do with our baby.

JOLENE

For our baby.

MADDY

I had this old centrifuge that didn't work, and I thought, hey, what if I could fix it. How great would it be if this worked and I didn't have to buy another one. And so I'm trying to fix it. I'm trying to really figure out what's wrong with it. And I'm fixing it, and I finally realize why I didn't want to have a baby with you.

JOLENE

They're at the bottom of the stairs.

Excuse me?

MADDY

So the door latch works normally, and the refrigerator compressor turns in response to the temperature setting-

ANGELA

I said-

JOLENE

I can't hear you, turn it off-

MADDY

But the power-light still isn't on.

ANGELA

JOLENE turns the centrifuge off, ANGELA stops talking.

I think I figured out why I didn't want to have a baby with you.

JOLENE

MADDY

-and Lucy was right, you're distracted.

JOLENE

Lucy is never right.

MADDY

Then what are you saying?

JOLENE

I'm saying that this baby isn't mine. Everything that I do every day is change what I'm given. I have a cancer cell that is made to grow, and eat, and grow, and eat until it bursts through its container. I get paid to change it so the more it eats, the smaller it gets. If you give me a cell that wants to do something- it wants to grow, it wants to convert other cells, it wants to replace what you love in your body, my goal is to say 'fuck you and what you want, you're going to die'. There is something in me that says that, that drives me forward.

MADDY

Fuck you?

JOLENE

Fuck. You. That was a gene, born in me, to say that to get the job done. But with this, with our daughter I can't even do that. My role as a parent started when I loaded the ICI, and ended when I squirted it in. Then when the tests were negative, when you weren't pregnant, I became a parent again because I loaded the ICI and I emptied it out again.

MADDY

That's when you became a parent-

JOLENE

Because it's you and MIT- it's your looks and your smile, and your hair and your brains and how you whistle when you laugh and the MIT grad will fill in the gaps with whatever isn't dominant in you and I'll be the one who brought you two together. That is what people will see when they look at us. It is what they'll be thinking. They'll think, *oh, that baby has Maddy's eyes. And that woman there must be her sister.* And that's why I didn't want to do this. Because I have no control. There is no 'fuck you' gene in there.

MADDY

So because he has no 'fuck you' gene-

JOLENE

Because at the heart of it, if I can't control it, I shouldn't be trusted with a baby.

MADDY

We will be doing this together.

JOLENE

You're missing the point. This is an experiment that I have no control over, and I need that control.

So don't control him.

MADDY

But I can. Listen.

JOLENE

JOLENE flips on the centrifuge.

ANGELA

I'm not saying that you didn't already check the motor brushes, but maybe when you checked them the first time for cleaning, you knocked them out of alignment.

MADDY

What am I listening to?

JOLENE

It's working.

MADDY

It's whirring.

ANGELA

Yes, what I'm saying is that you might want to take a look at them again. And re-adjust them.

JOLENE

It was broken, but now its working.

MADDY

It's, like, humming.

ANGELA

Is the power-light on yet?

JOLENE

It's doing more than humming!

JOLENE turns off the centrifuge.

JOLENE

Madd, this is this is better than adoption.

MADDY

A broken-

JOLENE

Fixed-

MADDY

A fixed box-

JOLENE

Madd, I can have some control. She doesn't need my gene. I can give that to her. I can take whatever MIT has, I can change her, and I can make an impact on our child. I can tell her what to do. I can teach our child, I want to teach our child.

MADDY

You want to condition-

JOLENE

Yes, I want to parent. It's using what you and MIT have already given her, and adding to it. And altering-

MADDY

He.

JOLENE

I think you're wrong about that. I am here for all of this.

MADDY

For everything.

JOLENE

For everything.

MADDY

So all of this, because you fixed, your, *thing-*

JOLENE

Let me turn it on for you. It sounds amazing.

JOLENE turns it on again.

MADDY

It's whirring.

ANGELA

Okay, so now that it works, I unplug it again, turn it back over and take the screws I kept on the right side, and first attach the outer shell.

JOLENE

I get to teach that, Madd.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 1-5: 7 MONTHS LATER, KITCHEN

MADDY is sitting at the kitchen table.

JOLENE is trying to make a smoothie.

JOLENE

I can't do this. I can't do this.

MADDY

It's okay.

JOLENE

No, it isn't. I wanted to make you a smoothie.

MADDY

You have the fruit.

JOLENE

But we are out of whole milk. How can I make a smoothie without whole milk.

MADDY

Just give me water.

JOLENE

But then it's not a smoothie.

ANGELA

Skim is fine.

MADDY

Let it go.

JOLENE starts making a smoothie.

MADDY

We need to talk.

ANGELA

With strawberries.

JOLENE

I already got them.

MADDY

Are you listening to me?

JOLENE

We need to talk.

MADDY

Have you been doing the research-

JOLENE

Yes. Which is why I'm so upset about the whole milk. Did you know that it helps brain growth in 11 month olds. They actually ran experiments on kids where they gave some kids milk, and some kids formula, and some kids colored water but the mothers *thought* it was whole milk. That's not right.

MADDY

That's not right. Now the research I've done-

JOLENE

I mean, if you have the parents' consent, why don't you run *real* experiments on children. Then things won't be as murkey for us.

MADDY

You want to experiment on children-

JOLENE

I mean. If whole milk is good for 11 month olds, shouldn't it be could for children in the womb? I don't know. We can't *prove* it, because we're *not allowed* to experiment on children. That's not right.

MADDY

You will not do experiment on our child.

JOLENE

It's not called experimenting, its called parenting. I'm being a parent now. One cup of strawberries, or two?

MADDY

Just the water, please. In the research that *I've* done, it says it helps both parents if they know all of the risks involved-

JOLENE

What risks?

MADDY gets a 'kick'.

MADDY

Oo, he is excited today.

JOLENE

That's the third time in half an hour, are you alright?

MADDY

Completely normal.

JOLENE

Are you saying its normal, or is Lipton saying its normal?

MADDY

We both are. Do you want to feel him, he's moving around a little-

JOLENE

No.

JOLENE continues to cut-up fruit.

MADDY

But it says that we should know what could happen-

JOLENE

This is the second time that you've mentioned this.

MADDY

Because I keep getting interrupted.

JOLENE

What could happen?

MADDY

Pregnancies are weird.

JOLENE

What did the doctor tell you? What's going to happen?

MADDY

Don't freakout.

JOLENE

I'm not freaking out I'm asking a question. You say that you could die-

MADDY

I didn't say that-

JOLENE

You said risks, and risks mean paralysis, or coma, or *death*.

MADDY

We need to be able to talk about what *could* happen-

JOLENE

I don't like this, but we should talk about it.

MADDY

Good, because-

MADDY gets another kick.

MADDY

He is excited today.

ANGELA

Legs!

JOLENE

Okay. You have to put your legs up.

MADDY

I'm not-

JOLENE

This is the fourth kick in 30 minutes, and you're looking pale and talking about *risks* out of nowhere. You are putting your feet up.

JOLENE puts a chair under MADDY's feet.

JOLENE

Does that feel better. Do you feel better?

ANGELA

Thanks.

MADDY

No.

ANGELA

What's the matter?

MADDY

I'm trying to tell you what I-

JOLENE turns on the blender to mash up the strawberries. She turns it off and starts measuring yogurt.

JOLENE

Now what did you research?

MADDY

Nothing.

JOLENE

We did our nightly research. We share it. What did you find?

MADDY

I said nothing. We're moving on.

Where's my water?  
JOLENE

It's coming. What are you doing tomorrow.  
MADDY

Work.  
JOLENE

Like around 3.  
MADDY

It's Wednesday. I work until 6.  
JOLENE

Would you want to come to the Drs with me.  
MADDY

Why?  
JOLENE

Because you might want to-  
MADDY

But you said I wasn't allowed to go after I yelled at Lipton's nurse-  
JOLENE

I know-  
MADDY

Because who works for a doctor, but doesn't *wear gloves* when they shake the hands of a pregnant woman.  
JOLENE

Jo-  
MADDY

Do they know how many germs are in a *normal* drs office-  
JOLENE

They wear gloves now-  
MADDY

Was she fired?  
JOLENE

No, Lisa wasn't-  
MADDY

Why do you want me to go?  
JOLENE

Because you might want to see-  
MADDY

JOLENE  
I knew it. You know the gender.

MADDY  
What?

JOLENE  
You want me to go, and Lipton can tell me the gender, and he can pretend that he did it accidentally, but you did it because you already know and you're tricking me into knowing too.

MADDY  
That's not-

JOLENE  
When I'm the one who wanted to know to begin with. Do you know how hard it is to target research on a genderless baby?

MADDY  
I don't know-

JOLENE  
I was right, wasn't I? It's a girl.

MADDY  
No.

JOLENE  
It's a boy?

MADDY  
No.

JOLENE  
Well what is it?

MADDY  
That's not why I want you to go with me.

JOLENE turns on the blender. Smoothie is made.

ANGELA  
Smoothie.

MADDY  
What is that?

JOLENE pours the smoothie into the glass and brings it to  
MADDY.

It's the smoothie you wanted.

JOLENE

I didn't want a smoothie.

MADDY

You asked for it.

JOLENE

I asked for water.

MADDY

Gimmie!

ANGELA

But I couldn't not make it for you. So I made it with skim.

JOLENE

Gimmie!

ANGELA

I wanted you to bring me water and listen to me.

MADDY

I have been listening.

JOLENE

Then what is this?

MADDY

It's your smoothie.

JOLENE

Jo..

MADDY

Don't get mad because I figured out a way to give you what you wanted in the first place.  
Don't get mad because I didn't allow you to compromise.

JOLENE

I'm not mad.

MADDY

Because I didn't *poison our child*.

JOLENE

Jo.

MADDY

JOLENE

Then drink the smoothie.

MADDY

I just need you to focus on what is going on here. Right now.

JOLENE

I am.

MADDY

If you had, you would have let me share my research, you would go with me to Liptons.

JOLENE

I will do all of those things.

MADDY

There's *doing them*, and there's being willing to do them.

JOLENE

It's the same thing.

MADDY

They are two different.

JOLENE

No, I am still doing what you want-

MADDY

I need you to stop doing what you think I want. People change. Circumstances change. I am trying to give you forward notice of those things. If I say I want water. I need water. Even if I said earlier that I want a smoothie. You're trying to stop everything to get what I want, but nothing stops. You're the only person that is stopped. And because you're stopped, we are all passing you by. Does that make sense?

ANGELA

I want my smoothie!

JOLENE puts the smoothie in the sink, and pours  
MADDY a glass of water.

JOLENE

I get it.

MADDY

Thank you.

JOLENE

Now why do you want me to go to Lipton.

MADDY

Nevermind.

JOLENE

Because I can go.

MADDY

I know you can. Don't worry. It's Wednesday, it's at an odd time.

JOLENE

Are you sure?

MADDY

Yes.

END OF SCENE.

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SCENE 1-6: NEXT DAY

There are three cribs in JOLENE's lab. The whiteboard that had 'the list' now has two lines on it.

WHITEBOARD

Maddy is pregnant...  
I got this.

JOLENE's phone rings, she silences it.

ANGELA

Third time.

JOLENE

She wants to know about the crib.

ANGELA

Have you picked one, yet?

JOLENE

You're not helping at all.

ANGELA

You're not going to listen to me anyway.

JOLENE

We're not going over this again-

ANGELA

Yesterday, I asked for a smoothie.

JOLENE

Ang-

ANGELA

I specifically asked you for a smoothie. That is what I was craving, and you denied me.

JOLENE

I didn't deny you.

ANGELA

Mom denied me, and you sided with her.

JOLENE

It was a decision that we made together.

ANGELA

You had already made it-

JOLENE

Your mother and I make decisions together. End of story. Let's refocus and pick a crib for you. You're going to be sleeping in-

ANGELA

Why does one have baseballs on it.

JOLENE

I thought it would look good-

ANGELA

You did that because you think I might be a boy.

JOLENE

I don't think-

ANGELA

You think mom is right-

JOLENE

I'm not eliminating anything.

ANGELA

Listen to me! Look at me! I am a girl.

JOLENE

That's why I got the other two-

ANGELA

One bright pink. And one solid white. Not a lot of middle ground, here.

JOLENE

I'm covering all of my bases. When Madd gets back from her sister's she's going to make the final decision.

JOLENE's phone rings.

ANGELA

It's the boss, you better get it. She probably knows that you're not sure which crib to get.

JOLENE silences it.

JOLENE

Don't you let me hear you talk about your mother like that ever again. We are *both* working to see what's best for you here. We are *both* trying to figure this thing out.

ANGELA

I want the pink one.

JOLENE  
We'll see.

ANGELA  
I'm a girl, I want the pink crib.

JOLENE  
I'm leaning more towards the blue one.

ANGELA  
Of course you are.

JOLENE  
Let's say you are a boy. Then it's perfect.

ANGELA  
And when I'm a girl?

JOLENE  
You'll be combating gender stereotypes.

JOLENE's phone rings, she silences it.

ANGELA  
*(as maddy)*  
*Jo. That crib better be setup. You've been given a WHOLE DAY to-*

JOLENE  
Wait until you get older and you're pregnant-

ANGELA  
How do you know that I haven't been pregnant already.

JOLENE  
Now you stop right there-

ANGELA  
How do you know that you aren't already grandma2?

JOLENE  
I am not-

ANGELA  
How do you know that I didn't become a crazy tomboy after I slept in a blue babies crib and kissed-

JOLENE  
We won't get the blue crib.

ANGELA

I want the pink one.

JOLENE

We'll settle.

ANGELA

I want the pink-

JOLENE

The white. It's neutral.

ANGELA

It's boring.

JOLENE

It's clean.

ANGELA

Two words. Poop. Fingerprints. You will be sitting in that chair right over there. And you will turn, and *this part* will still be white. And *this part* will still be white. And the bars will be white at the top, but I will wear *these* down to brown. The walls will look so filthy that people will think you raise me in a cave.

JOLENE

You're exaggerating.

ANGELA

And it looks like a sanitarium. You don't want me to be stifled, do you?

JOLENE

Stifled?

ANGELA

Children need color, I need color. I need to have my imagination going! I'll see the white, and I'll be bored, and then I'll look at the instruments over there and I'll be bored.

JOLENE

Bored?

ANGELA

But if I'm in pink. If I'm surrounded by a color that I like, I will be happy, I'll be laughing, I'll be excited, and when I look at you working, I'll carry that over-

JOLENE

Angela.

ANGELA

I really want this crib. I really really want this crib.

JOLENE

Let me call her first.

ANGELA climbs into the pink crib.

ANGELA

Tell her that pink would let her son be more sensitive.

JOLENE checks the messages.

MADDY

Jo, I can't wait to see the crib you picked. But I got an alert from the bank, it wants to know if we bought three of them? Lucy says hi! Can't stop saying how *big* her *little* sister is. Save me.

JOLENE clicks for the next message.

MADDY

If you get this before I get home, my back is kinda acting weird. A lot of pain. Can you please pick up some Tylenol before I get home. And heat up some tea. I think I'll need it.

JOLENE clicks for the next message.

MADDY

Call me back.

JOLENE clicks for the next message.

MADDY

Something is wrong. I don't know. Dr Lipton said it wouldn't- It feels off. It feels like pressure in the wrong spot. Lucy's taking me to the hospital, you should meet me there.

JOLENE clicks for the next message, and walks out.

ANGELA

Mom?

MADDY

Jo, I need you. There's blood. I don't know- I don't know what- Where are you? It's going.. I'm at Portland General. I'm on route to Portland General. I need you.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 1-7: OUTSIDE THE DELIVERY ROOM

JOLENE is in scrubs, waiting to admitted to the delivery room.

ANGELA

No news is good news. They told you to wait and they would let you in. The nurse would come, and let you in so you can see me being born. That's a good sign. She's going to be okay. We've seen this on TV a lot. There's blood, the baby is born early, they put it in an incubator, there's crying, everyone goes home at the end of the half-hour, it'll be great. Mom is lying in bed, just waiting for us to come in. She's wondering what's taking you so long. She's going to yell at Dr Lipton so bad when she learns no one was allowed in. Lipton's going to come through those doors, and that's how we know everything will be all right. Just be hopeful, and think positive, and wait. We have to wait because we have no idea what's going to happen, and there is nothing that we can do. There is literally nothing that we can do. Right?

JOLENE nods.

ANGELA

Aunt Lucy. It looked like she was crying, she wasn't. It was just her gravity shifting. You would tell me that if I walked in when you were in your lab, late at night. You'd say 'Every once in a while, gravity doesn't pull you straight down, sometimes it swings. Sometimes when things go bad, your gravity shifts. If it's bad, you feel the gravity pull inside of you, and after it pulled inside, it pulls straight down.' Sometimes when I'd wander downstairs and you would be sitting in your chair, you'd be staring, and I'd ask you to pick me up and you'd say 'no', you were too heavy, that gravity was shifting.

JOLENE rises, and hugs ANGELA.

JOLENE

I don't want to lose you.

ANGELA

I can take the blue crib. It doesn't matter.

JOLENE

Just breathe.

ANGELA

I'm sorry.

JOLENE

You have nothing to be sorry about. Just breathe.

ANGELA

I'll try.

Just breathe. JOLENE

It's so hard. ANGELA

It's okay. Just breathe. JOLENE

ANGELA starts sobbing.

There. You made it. It's okay. You're safe. JOLENE

MADDY enters.

I'm not coming home, Jo. MADDY

No. JOLENE

You need to sit down. MADDY

No. JOLENE

You need to sit down. MADDY

I'm sorry I didn't pick up, I'm sorry, I- JOLENE

You need to be strong, here. You have to do this. MADDY

No. JOLENE

And you need to take this. MADDY

MADDY offers JOLENE her ring.

I don't want your ring. JOLENE

Give it to her. MADDY

You give it to her. JOLENE

MADDY

Jo.

JOLENE

You put it back on your finger, you raise her with me-

MADDY

...

JOLENE

You raise her with me, when she is 28 and has a degree and a job, and a steady boy-slash-girlfriend for 2.5 years that we *both* approve of, then you can give the ring.

MADDY

Stop-

JOLENE

When he comes through our front door, scared as shit, asking for permission to marry our daughter, so that she will be happy, and in love, and never have to work again, then you can take that ring off of your finger and give it to him. I don't want it.

MADDY

I'm not leaving this hospital.

JOLENE

No, you are.

MADDY

No, Jo. I'm not.

JOLENE

I didn't even want this! I wanted us, together. I wanted us to be happy. I-

MADDY

Take my ring, please. She needs you.

JOLENE

She needs you! I'm fucking useless! She needs her mother, not her fucking Mother2.

MADDY

You *are* her mother. Take it.

JOLENE

Give it to her.

MADDY

I'm gone.

JOLENE

They can bring it with the rest of your stuff, I can't do it.

MADDY

Please..

JOLENE

You said that we would do this together! You promised that we would do this together!

END OF SCENE

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SCENE 2-1

JOLENE and MADDY are in JOLENE's basement lab.  
After the funeral.

Instead of the board that said 'I got this', there are medical  
papers and charts on it.

MADDY

Do you know why that was the worst funeral you had ever been to?

JOLENE

Because it was yours.

MADDY

Because you weren't wearing yellow.

JOLENE

I'm not going to talk to you.

MADDY

Because I had a plan laid out for you. Because I knew how you were going to take it, so in  
order for you not to. In order for you to move on. In order for you to accept change I  
wrote everything down for you. Do you know what the first thing on that list was?

JOLENE

I am too angry to engage in conversation-

MADDY

Wear a yellow dress. You would be in yellow, like the sun, and I would be in blue like the  
fucken moon. But you ruined my funeral.

JOLENE

...

MADDY

You know, if you didn't want to go, then you didn't have to.

JOLENE

I wanted... *(you're trying to trick me into talking to you)*

MADDY

You didn't have to get escorted out of the wake.

JOLENE

...

MADDY

You didn't have to get barred from my funeral.

JOLENE

...

MADDY

You could have just not gone.

JOLENE

Then I couldn't have given your eulogy.

MADDY

And how did that go? Did a lot of people hear it when you were yelling it inside of your parked car?

JOLENE

I didn't want to leave.

MADDY

Then you shouldn't have attacked me-

JOLENE

I wasn't- I'm not talking to you.

MADDY

I'm just saying, if you wanted to go, you would have done what I wanted.

JOLENE

I do everything that you have ever asked.

MADDY

Why aren't you in yellow.

JOLENE

Because when I saw your plan, I realized that you didn't care.

MADDY

I made the plan because I cared. Yellow dress. Open bar. Sun. Moon.

JOLENE

No. You didn't care about me, or about Angela. If you did, then you would still be alive.

MADDY

I cared.

JOLENE

You are a liar,

MADDY

Prove it.

JOLENE goes to board and gets the medical release chart.

JOLENE

How many spaces do you see for names, here?

MADDY

...

JOLENE

Right there. Under Patient Confidentiality Release Form. How many spaces do you see.

MADDY

Three.

JOLENE

And how many are filled in.

MADDY

Jo.

JOLENE

One. And whose name is it?

MADDY

I'm not doing this.

JOLENE

What that means, is that if something happened, and they couldn't reach you- Or if you were- and they needed to talk to someone, do you know who they would have called?

MADDY

...

JOLENE

Say it. You wrote it. Say it.

MADDY

Lucy.

JOLENE

Lucy knew, and your wife didn't. You said we were going to do this together, and you were doing everything alone. I found this when they brought your things- your ring in a box with proof that you didn't care about me- Take it.

JOLENE holds out MADDY's ring.

JOLENE

They got mad. They wouldn't let me put it back on your finger. I tried, but it wouldn't fit and they didn't give me enough time to try the other hand. Take it. I don't want it.

MADDY

Jo, I'm not here.

JOLENE

I went to your wake to do two things. To give back your ring and to give your eulogy. Are you going to take back your ring?

JOLENE puts down MADDY's ring.

JOLENE

Fine. Here's your Eulogy. I wrote down the questions I heard. And I will answer them. Did we need money? *(pause)* That's what I've heard today. Did we need money. No, we were doing well. Did we have a bad doctor? No, Lipton was the best. Did I, just, *hate* my *(wife)*- No. So why, I've heard it today, why didn't I bring my wife to the hospital earlier? Why didn't I put her on bed rest? Why did I still let her go to work for two weeks after she got her diagnosis? Did we need the money? No. My wife didn't trust me with the information that she might die. So because she didn't trust me. Because she didn't tell me that she was sick, that there were complications from month 4 onward, I didn't get to say goodbye. I didn't get to hold her- to be with her because I thought I was doing the right thing- I was picking out a crib.

MADDY

You missed something.

JOLENE

I didn't miss anything.

MADDY

Why did I need to do that?

JOLENE

You didn't. That's what I just-

MADDY

You couldn't handle it.

JOLENE

You didn't give me a chance.

MADDY

How did you react when I was pregnant?

JOLENE

Fine.

MADDY

Were you able to stay for the entire Drs appointment?

JOLENE

Lisa should have been fired-

MADDY

When we shared our research, how many of mine did you actually listen to? Did you come to the appointment with Lipton, or did you have to work?

JOLENE

...

MADDY

I called you while you were picking up a crib, and you didn't answer. You didn't want to know.

JOLENE

I should have known.

MADDY

Then you should have acted like you could have handled it. When Lisa had to take you out of our first appointment, I thought- I thought please, please don't let anything go wrong because I am here alone. I am doing this alone. I was alone when I heard the heartbeat, I was alone when I first saw her, and I was alone when I saw blood at work. I didn't even think, I called Lipton, drove over, but I couldn't be alone, so I called Lucy, and Lipton said that I was fine. But we had to run some more tests. So I got to see our baby moving, and I learned that the heartbeat was odd and that my blood pressure was high and I had too much protein. But at least I wasn't alone, because Lucy was there. So we decided to wait-and-see. I mean, why would I derail you for something that was wait-and-see? I wanted wait-and-see to be about nothing, to add up to nothing. But when we went back a week later, it wasn't. And another week later and it wasn't. And we learned that I was sick and I could die and the only cure was delivery. That was the only cure and I already had done so much of this without you, I couldn't leave you with two months to go and suddenly you had a wife who might die. How would you have taken that?

JOLENE

Not well.

MADDY

Not well.

JOLENE

So because I couldn't handle it, I had to sit in a room where my best friend was lying ten feet away, and will never be back, and I couldn't watch her be buried and I tried to give her her ring back and I couldn't kiss you good bye and I didn't wear yellow, and I couldn't keep Angela.

Pause.

MADDY

What do you mean you couldn't keep Angela?

JOLENE

I could have done it if you were here, but I can't do it.

MADDY

Who has my daughter?

It's mine. JOLENE

Who has my daughter? MADDY

Lucy. JOLENE

Why would Lucy have my daughter? MADDY

Because I can't do this. JOLENE

That's not why- That's not what the plan was. MADDY

That's what happened. JOLENE

We're- We decided to have a child so that we could both live. So that if you were gone I would still have you and if I were gone- MADDY

You are gone. JOLENE

You could still have me. MADDY

When they took you away and I was looking at Angela through the window glass, she was staring at me, and she wasn't saying anything but I knew what her lungs were getting ready to say as soon as she gulped enough oxygen down them. JOLENE

You have to have her. MADDY

I can't. JOLENE

You have to hold her in your arms. MADDY

Why? JOLENE

MADDY  
Because I didn't get to hold you. Because I didn't get to say goodbye and she has my eyes. I want to look at you. I want to be held by you.

JOLENE  
I can't.

MADDY  
And Angela wants that, too.

JOLENE  
She hates me.

MADDY  
She doesn't-

JOLENE  
She should. I killed-

MADDY  
My daughter has no idea what happened. She knows she's alive, and that everyone is sad. And she knows the woman that has been carrying her is gone and that the woman who has been talking to her through my stomach is nowhere to be found. That's what I didn't want.

JOLENE  
All of this is what I didn't want.

MADDY  
This isn't what you wanted, this isn't what I wanted, but it is what has happened, and you need to deal with this.

JOLENE  
I'm dealing with it-

MADDY  
And when did you become such a shitty scientist?

JOLENE  
What?

MADDY  
I mean, I married you because, yes you're beautiful and smart and whatever, but you love what you do. You don't get hung-up-

JOLENE  
This is real-

MADDY  
You put hours of research into one experiment and it fails and you go back and you try-

JOLENE  
But this is real-

MADDY  
How many books have you read? How many parenting books have you read?

JOLENE  
But you-

MADDY  
How many times have you sterilized the *same* bottle-

JOLENE  
Bacteria can grow in anything-

MADDY  
You looked at 20-

JOLENE  
24-

MADDY  
Different kinds of nipples that don't-

JOLENE  
They are fundamentally different in-

MADDY  
And you're going to throw all of that away-

JOLENE  
I can't do this alone.

MADDY  
Everything you've ever done in this basement, you've done alone. I've loved for you all that you've achieved *alone*. I don't take things away from you. I only add. Because you can do anything, alone. How many books have you read about this?

JOLENE  
One night. I can give you one night.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 2-2

JOLENE's lab. She has a bottle in her hand, addressing her baby.

JOLENE

Talk.  
Say something.  
I don't know what to do if you don't tell me.  
I can't do my job if you don't tell me.  
Talk to me. Tell me what you want.

ANGELA

If I was with Mom, right now, I would be happy. But she's gone because of you, and you're not her.

JOLENE

Lucy says that she fed you at 3pm.

ANGELA

I'm not eating for you.

JOLENE

And in thirty seconds it will be 6-

ANGELA

*(repeats for 30 seconds)*

I'm not eating I'm not hungry I'm not eating I'm not hungry I'm not eating I'm not hungry

JOLENE's alarm goes off.

ANGELA

Holy shitfuck, I'm hungry!

JOLENE shakes the bottle to settle the formula.

JOLENE

3 hours, on the dot.

ANGELA

That looks so good.

JOLENE

This is one of the things that I'm going to teach you.

ANGELA

I want to drink that.

JOLENE

The importance of research.

Gimmie that- ANGELA

JOLENE hands ANGELA the bottle. ANGELA starts to drink, when-

Not too fast- JOLENE

What the hell is this? ANGELA  
*(spits it out)*

Formula- JOLENE

I'm a newborn- ANGELA

And it has all the nutrients and probiotics- JOLENE

Are you retarded? A one-week old needs mother's milk- ANGELA

This has all of- JOLENE

I want mother's milk- ANGELA

This has- JOLENE

I want mom's milk! ANGELA

This- JOLENE

I want mom! ANGELA

... JOLENE

I want mom! ANGELA

Drink this. JOLENE

I want mom. ANGELA

I can't give you- JOLENE

Because you killed her. ANGELA

She had a complication- JOLENE

Which she didn't tell you about- ANGELA

I know. JOLENE

Why didn't she tell you? ANGELA

She didn't feel like she could. Eat. JOLENE

Why? ANGELA

Because she didn't think- JOLENE

Why? ANGELA

Because in the past- JOLENE

Why? ANGELA

Because I need more time to plan- JOLENE

Why? ANGELA

Because if I can't plan, then I can't control, then I can't do anything. JOLENE

This wasn't planned. ANGELA

No. Please eat. JOLENE

ANGELA  
So you can't do this.

JOLENE  
I can, if you eat.

ANGELA  
If you can't do this, then I shouldn't be here.

JOLENE  
Eat.

ANGELA  
That's why I should go to Lucy's.

JOLENE  
You're with me tonight.

ANGELA  
I'm hungry. I want to go there now. Aunt Lucy talked to me last night.

JOLENE  
I want you to eat.

ANGELA  
She gave me a bottle of formula, and let me drink as much as I wanted. And I just held on to her, and she held on to me, and before I drifted off, she said that she wants to keep me forever. And when I woke up, she gave me more formula. As much as I could drink. And it felt like I imagined mom would feel.

JOLENE  
You don't know *mom*-

ANGELA  
Whose fault is-

JOLENE  
*Mom* would want you to.

ANGELA  
I wouldn't know-

JOLENE  
Then I should talk to you about your mother. About Maddy.

MADDY enters.

MADDY  
I want you to.

JOLENE

When you get older, when you get older and attached to someone, and love them very much. They stop being someone you're in love with, they stop being a part of you. They start *being* you. And for eight years, your mother has.

MADDY

-Had

JOLENE

Had been me. So when she left- when she passed, I was -am, Gone. The inside of me just vanished, and... There's a vacuum in there. It's... It's like my gravity is shifting and I'm just drawn inward... And I spent all night thinking about it... That's not the kind of, of *parent* you deserve.

MADDY

I love you.

JOLENE

But it's the one you're stuck with. So, please. Can you try it? Just, try to have some. Just a little.

ANGELA starts to drink.

JOLENE

See, All these books. A lot of people overthink this. You only cry if you're tired, dirty, or hungry. And you're hungry. Done. Easy.

ANGELA

This is the best-

JOLENE

Okay. Time's up. Give me the bottle.

JOLENE takes the bottle from ANGELA, who was still drinking it.

ANGELA

-the fuck?

JOLENE

All studies agree that giving a shortened eating schedule allows for a better digestive system when your older. We will wait three minutes, and I will give you the bottle again.

MADDY

Jo-

ANGELA

But I want more.

JOLENE

You don't know what you want. Two more minutes.

ANGELA  
Give me more!

MADDY  
Maybe you should-

JOLENE  
If you get agitated, it's going to reset the time.

ANGELA  
I want more food!

JOLENE  
Now it's up to three minutes, again. Calm down.

ANGELA  
Fuck off.

JOLENE  
If you keep yelling like that, then your food can't digest and you're stuck with an upset, shitty tummy!

MADDY  
You don't have to yell-

ANGELA  
All I know is that I am hungry, and you took my food away from me.

JOLENE  
It's going to help in the long run.

MADDY  
She doesn't know-

JOLENE  
Listen, either I'm the mom, or I'm not the mom. Either I decide what's best for my daughter or I have no idea what the I'm doing.

MADDY  
You need help-

JOLENE  
Well guess who isn't here to help me? Guess who is completely alone? Guess who actually has to do this?

MADDY  
You are not alone.

ANGELA  
Feed me!

JOLENE  
Then feed her.

MADDY leaves.

JOLENE

(to ANGELA)

You have two minutes left.

ANGELA

If you don't feed me, right now, I'm going to remember this. I'm going to remember this and when I can eat on my own I will eat and eat and eat because I'm afraid that you're just going to take it away from me.

JOLENE

It's been two minutes.

JOLENE gives ANGELA the bottle.

ANGELA

At work, do they award you for trying?

JOLENE

I gave you your bottle, drink.

ANGELA

Do they give you a paycheck if you try, or if you get results? Mom2, in the real world, can I get by on trying, or do I actually have to succeed?

JOLENE

You have to succeed-

ANGELA

You're trying.

JOLENE

I'm learning.

ANGELA

You're failing. You're not ready to be a mom, because you can't be ready.

JOLENE

I'm ready.

ANGELA

Mom's right. She didn't want to say this in front of you, but-

JOLENE

You haven't talked to-

ANGELA

She talked to me when you weren't around. When you were in the basement or at work, she said that you're not ready. That you can't handle me, that at your best you're half a parent.

ANGELA

But I disagree. You're not half a parent. You're a widow. And that's all you are right now. I don't deserve to be with someone who can't even be half of one. Mom and I agree. I should go live with Aunt Lucy.

JOLENE

I'm not going to do that.

ANGELA

Mom wants it.

JOLENE

Maddy is gone.

ANGELA

Because of you. Because she didn't trust you-

JOLENE

You are mine.

ANGELA

I am too much for you. Give me to family, give me to someone who wants me, who knows how to take care of me, who feels like mom.

JOLENE

I feel like mom.

ANGELA

Then hold me.

JOLENE

I can't.

ANGELA

C'mon, my cute little fuckin hands are reaching to you. My eyes are looking into yours. Life me up. Hold me. Tell me how it feels.

JOLENE

I can't-

ANGELA

Way to fail at-

JOLENE

I don't fail.

JOLENE holds ANGELA

ANGELA

What the fuck is this?

JOLENE and ANGELA's lines overlap.

JOLENE

I'm holding your legs. Your legs are fine.  
Well lift your head up, then. I'm holding  
you fine. But I can't do this. I can't do  
this.

ANGELA

It's like I'm being held by a black hole!  
Cold fucken empty, my legs are gonna fall  
off, you're breaking my neck!

JOLENE

Lucy's not your mother.

ANGELA

She feels like it. Call her.

END OF SCENE

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SCENE 2-3

JOLENE is sitting in her lab with the phin in her hand.  
MADDY is sitting on the lab table, and ANGELA is lying  
in a pink crib on the other side of the room.

ANGELA

If you keep me here, I will make you regret it!

JOLENE

For the nine months that you were pregnant, Angela never yelled at me.

ANGELA

When I'm 10, I'm going to sneak out of this prison, and go with my dirtbike boyfriend to  
get my tongue pierced by his cousin.

JOLENE

I don't know our daughter at all.

ANGELA

And then we'll crash at his parent's house! Who just got out of jail!

JOLENE

It's like nothing I can do is good enough. Please. She needs you, she needs her mother.

MADDY

I'm not coming.

ANGELA

And they'll allow us to get married on their front lawn, and Aunt Lucy will give me away,  
and I won't tell you until after it happened!

JOLENE

Please. Come back. Just for tonight. You can go in the bedroom, and hold Angela, and  
then you can come in here and I'll give you a back massage and I'll hold you in a way that I  
haven't figured out yet, so you'd be comfortable all night.

MADDY

I'm never going in there, Jo.

ANGELA

Do you hear me? And when I have a kid, I'm going to call him *Dirtbike*, after his father, who  
pays money to play online poker!

JOLENE

I have to call, I can't do this. I can't be in a house with someone who doesn't listen to me,  
who can't talk to me, who even when she's not yelling, she's blaming me.

MADDY

Love... Sit down. Close your eyes. Can you feel this? (*she touches JOLENE's cheek*) I will  
always be here to hold your hand when you're walking alone, to stroke your cheek when  
you're sad, and to hold you at night.

JOLENE tries to touch MADDY's hand.

MADDY (CONT)

Don't try to touch it. Just feel it on your cheek. And I will never leave you. Ever. You know that, right? And it makes me so happy that I can still do these things. But I can never go into that room, and i will never get to hold my daughter, and I will never get to comfort her when she's upset. But you get to do all of that. You have to be both us, here. Because all I can do is hold you here, right now.

I miss you so much.

JOLENE

So does Ang.

MADDY

I'm talking about you.

JOLENE

I'm not here. She is.

MADDY

MADDY helps JOLENE put on her wedding ring.

JOLENE crosses to ANGELA.

ANGELA

I don't care that you miss mom. I don't care that you're trying hard. I don't care that you've never done this before. I don't care, because-

JOLENE

Because I've only been talking about me. I do miss your mother. I will always miss her. I am trying hard, and I haven't done this before. I am your mother, and I am proud to be your mother. But, look at me. I didn't come in here to talk about me. I know about me. I have no idea what to do with you.

ANGELA

I know.

JOLENE

I want to fix that. What is wrong?

ANGELA

I miss her. (*slight pause*) And I know that I never knew her, but a part of my body felt like I should. I feel like I should have known her. I've spent so much time with her, that I wanted to know her. I want to know what she feels like.

JOLENE

Amazing.

ANGELA

I want to know what she would say when she lifts me into the air, I want to know what pictures she'd show around the office of me. And now I can't.

JOLENE

I'll tell you about her, baby.

ANGELA

I felt it, as I was being born. I felt me breathing and taking her breaths away as I did it.

JOLENE

That's not what happened.

ANGELA

I did. I could feel it. And I'm sorry, I'm so sorry-

JOLENE

Why are you sorry?

ANGELA

Because I killed mom. I killed her, and-

JOLENE

No, you didn't.

ANGELA

Yes, I did. I felt it. I felt me breathing and taking her breaths away.

JOLENE

You didn't take anything, baby.

ANGELA

I'm so sorry. It should have been me. She should have lived and I'm sorry that I messed everything up-

JOLENE holds ANGELA

JOLENE

Your mother was an amazing woman. And you will know everything about her. But right now, you need to know that you didn't take her breaths away. She gave them to you. She was so brave, and amazing, and patient, and she decided that I got this, and that you needed breathes more than she did. You didn't take anything baby, she gave them to you. She gave them to you because she wanted me to get to love you. And I do.

They hold each other as the lights go out.

END OF PLAY