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SF PERUSALS

Slasher

by Allison Moore

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830
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World premiere in the 2009 Humana Festival of New American Plays at ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE

SLASHER was written and developed with the support of the Bush Artists Fellowship and Playwrights' Center McKnight Advancement Grant

SLASHER was first produced at the 2009 Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theater of Louisville on March 6, 2009. The production was directed by Josh Hecht, with scenic design by Paul Owen, costume design by Jennifer Caprio, lighting design by Russell Champa, sound designer by Matt Callahan, properties design by Doc Manning, dialect coaching by Rinda Frye, and fight direction by K. Jenny Jones. The production stage manager was Robin Grady, the production assistant was Melissa Blair, and the dramaturg was Amy Wegener. Casting by Alaine Alldaffer Casting. The cast was as follows:

FRANCES MCKINNEY . . . . . Lusia Strus
CHRISTI GRACI AND OTHERS . . . . . Christy McIntosh
MARC HUNTER . . . . . Mark Setlock
SHEENA MCKINNEY . . . . . Nicole Rodenburg
HILDY MCKINNEY . . . . . Katharine Moeller
JODY JOSHI. . . . . Lucas Papaelias

CHARACTERS

SHEENA MCKINNEY – 21, girl-next-door kind of pretty. Not book-smart, but a survivor.

HILDY MCKINNEY – 15, Sheena's little sister. Smarter than Sheena, but less capable in a crisis.

FRANCES MCKINNEY – 40-50, their mother. Angry, thwarted feminist with a questionable disability. Gets around her house with the aid of a li'l rascal scooter. Loud.

MARC HUNTER – 35-40, a D-list director and recovering alcoholic and sex addict. Tells everyone he's younger than he is.

JODY JOSHI – 23, an undergrad film school dude. Capable, knows his stuff, but kind of a kiss-ass.

CHRISTI GARCIA – 23-30, Assistant Director of the Holy Shepherd Justice League. Very put together, as if she's always ready to make a statement on camera. Not to be underestimated.

BRIDGET/MARCY/BETH/MADISON – attractive young women who are killed in various ways, all to be played by the actor playing CHRISTI GARCIA.

WOMAN/CAR HOP/RADIO ANNOUNCER/NEWS ANCHOR – also to be played/voiced by the actor playing CHRISTI GARCIA

SETTING

In and around Austin, Texas, 2007. Frances' run down house; a Hooter's-style bar; a Sonic drive in; another house where they film.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

As the play progresses, Sheena's life begins to resemble a horror movie; acting and production choices should reflect this.

PROLOGUE

(Flash back, 1992. The construction site. Darkness. Night. Sound of rain.)

WOMAN'S VOICE. No…no, please…

(A crack of thunder, and a flash of lightening reveals **FRANCES***, searching for the source of the voice.)*

(Another flash of lightening, and we see two shadowy **FIGURES** *– a* **WOMAN** *and* **MARC***. They are outside on the deserted construction site.* **MARC** *crouches over the* **WOMAN***, who lies in a compromised position.)*

WOMAN. No!

(A loud crack of thunder. The **WOMAN** *lets out a piercing scream.)*

*(***FRANCES***, her face twisted in rage, gives a primal yell in response.)*

(blackout)

(In the darkness, the sound of **FRANCES** *falling violently.)*

Scene One

(Present day. Sound of rain continues.)

(Sound of a car door slamming.)

HILDY. *(offstage)* Wait!

SHEENA. *(offstage)* Run!

(Sound of the two girls squealing as they run through the rain. Sound of keys in the door. Lights up as the front door opens into the living room of an old house. **SHEENA** *and* **HILDY** *step into the house, shaking off the storm. They carry a bag of groceries and a box from a chicken joint.* **FRANCES** *lies awkwardly on the floor. She wears an old bathrobe and slippers. A motorized scooter sits empty on the other side of the room.)*

FRANCES. I've been waiting for you.

SHEENA. *(annoyed)* Jesus Christ.

HILDY. Mom! Are you all right?

SHEENA. What happened.

FRANCES. What do you think happened?
Get my scooter.

*(***HILDY** *gets the scooter.)*

SHEENA. Let her get it herself.

FRANCES. Thank you for your concern, Sheena.

SHEENA. The physical therapist showed you how to get up.

FRANCES. According to her I should be training for a damn marathon.

SHEENA. Walking ten minutes three times a day is not –

FRANCES. I FELL.

(As **HILDY** *helps* **FRANCES** *into the scooter,* **SHEENA** *reaches into* **FRANCES***' pocket, grabs a bottle of pills.)*

SHEENA. How many did you take?

FRANCES. Give me those!

*(***SHEENA** *dodges* **FRANCES***, counts the pills.)*

I've been lying on the floor for three hours, all you care about is how many pills –

SHEENA. Is today the eleventh?

HILDY. Tenth.

(to **FRANCES***)*

We got chicken?

FRANCES. It's not enough that I'm disabled, you have to humiliate me, too. Why don't you call Marshall Davis, huh? He would loooove to see me lying on the floor, not able to get up. He'd pay to see that. Get me flat on my back so everybody at city hall can take their turn –

SHEENA. Mother!

FRANCES. STEPPING ON ME.

You can stop counting. I've been a good little cripple.

SHEENA. Today is the tenth, your prescription was refilled on the first –

FRANCES. So I took an extra –

SHEENA. FOUR extra –

FRANCES. Whatever –

SHEENA. Which is why you were passed out for three hours and forgot to tell me Hildy's practice was cancelled.

FRANCES. It was a choice between taking a couple of extra pills and screaming in agony for half the day! Now give them back.

*(***SHEENA** *hands* **FRANCES** *the pill bottle.)*

SHEENA. Did you hear from that attorney?

FRANCES. Coward. Ball sucker.

HILDY. You want ice tea?

FRANCES. No thank you, dear.

SHEENA. So he's not taking the case.

FRANCES. Didn't even have the guts to call me himself. Made his secretary do it for him.

SHEENA. Hildy?

HILDY. *(to* **FRANCES***)* There's mashed potatoes?

*(***SHEENA** *gathers her things to leave.)*

FRANCES. She's probably not even his secretary. He just employs her so he can claim the blow jobs as a business write off.

SHEENA. Please eat something tonight.

FRANCES. Where are you going?

SHEENA. I picked up a bunch of shifts.

FRANCES. Well, there goes the dean's list.

SHEENA. How else are we going to fix the AC?

FRANCES. You wouldn't have to pick up shifts if they weren't paying you third-world wages –

SHEENA. They're not.

FRANCES. Two dollars and fourteen cents an hour is what women in Mexico make for pulling used limes out of Corona bottles.

SHEENA. I'm late.

FRANCES. You know why they get away with paying you that? Because most tipped workers are WOMEN. If you got the other servers together to protest, stage a walk-out –

SHEENA. We'd be replaced in a day and a half, and then *no one* in this house would have a job.

(to **HILDY***)*

I'm closing tonight, do you have a ride in the morning?

HILDY. Yep.

FRANCES. They underpay you on purpose to force you to giggle and flirt and generally debase yourself so all the dickless little men will leave you a big tip!

SHEENA. I do NOT debase myself!

(IMMEDIATE SHIFT TO:)

Scene Two

(The bar. **SHEENA** *takes off her jacket revealing a tight v-neck T-shirt that reads 'BUSTERS' in big letters across the chest. It's her uniform. She picks up a tray and quickly puts on a big smile for* **JODY** *and* **MARC** *who sit at a table in the bar.)*

SHEENA. Hey Jody!

JODY. 'Sup, Sheena.

SHEENA. Be right with you.

*(***SHEENA** *exits.* **MARC** *watches her go uncomfortably, like he's in a dentist's office.)*

JODY. So you were saying?

MARC. I was saying, what I was saying is, that it's an allegory.

JODY. Absolutely –

MARC. Which is the case with most horror movies, the good ones, anyway. They tell us about our deepest fears, not just personally but as a society.

JODY. Definitely.

MARC. Take *Hostel*, right? The whole movie trades on this fear that super rich Europeans *get off* on torturing Americans.

JODY. Well, yeah, but, I mean. They do, right?

(Beat. **MARC** *does not laugh.)*

Just, illustrating your point –

MARC. That's good.

JODY. That we really think rich dudes are total sadists –

MARC. When you let that underlying fear inform every shot, *that's* when you transcend the genre. That's what separates the break-out hit from just another slasher flick – *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* being the original example.

JODY. Oh man, from the word go that film is unbelievable –

MARC. Because of the threat. That's what was so revolutionary.

JODY. Well, that and Tobe Hooper's insane editing – I mean, forty edits per minute –

MARC. Blah blah blah, fine. His editing is great, but it would have meant nothing if he hadn't –. At a time when the media's favorite whipping boy was the so-called 'Me Generation,' he makes a film that says: yes, young people do smoke pot and drink beer and have sex, *but they are innocent.* The threat comes from the adults.

JODY. I see what you mean.

MARC. And not adults like "The Man" or "The Suit," no no no no no. It's the *family.* The movie hits on this deep fear that the family structure itself is ultimately responsible for the most unspeakable violence and terror.

JODY. Absolutely.

MARC. This project I'm working on now, it's really about what happens to a man when he's forced to, to repress and even hate his own, natural, sexual desires.

JODY. Right.

MARC. He should be loving these women – they're beautiful young women – he *wants* to love them, but he's been told that sex is evil. And so he has to kill them.

JODY. Yeah.

*(***SHEENA** *re-enters and waits on them.)*

SHEENA. I'm back.

MARC. You are.

SHEENA. What can I get for you?

MARC. Club soda and lime, please.

SHEENA. You got it.

(to **JODY***)*

And I already know what you want –

(She starts to exit.)

JODY. Actually, can I, uh, just get an ice tea?

SHEENA. Um. Sure?

JODY. Thanks.

*(***SHEENA** *exits.)*

MARC. You're a regular, huh?

JODY. Well, half the filmmakers in town hang out here, so if you want to know what's going on –

MARC. It's the hub.

JODY. Exactly.

MARC. When I was here there was a place off Magnolia, I hope to God it's been condemned. Can't remember how many times I found McConnoughey or Zellweger passed out on the bathroom floor there –

JODY. Right.

MARC. Oh wait, that was me!

JODY. Right.

MARC. Had a little tendency to, uh, overindulge –

JODY. I've been there, brother.

MARC. But you don't drink anymore?

JODY. Oh. I'll have a beer now and again, just –

MARC. Just not now.

JODY. Well, this is a meeting, right?

MARC. Is it? I mean, you called me, buddy.

JODY. All right, okay, so. So I heard through the grapevine that you need a first assistant.

MARC. Interesting. What else did you hear?

JODY. Nothing, really.

MARC. Uh-huh.

JODY. Well, just that you've got a 21-day shooting permit up in Round Rock that started today, but Jenna Long pulled out of her contract yesterday and took most of your investors with her. But since you're on the hook with the Texas Film Commission and you've already paid up your insurance and deposit on cameras, you're planning to shoot anyway.

MARC. Wow.

JODY. It's a pretty small town.

MARC. Let's assume what you've said is, more or less true. Why should I give you the job.

JODY. I'm ready, dude. In the past two years I've shot and cut five short films, three of them horror.

MARC. But you've never worked on a feature.

JODY. Well –

MARC. Because, see, here's the thing: if we miss a shot, Jody, if we have to do extra set-ups because someone's not paying attention, I'm literally throwing money away.

JODY. I hear you, brother –

MARC. Not *my* money. But money that I worked very hard to raise. This film gets made in the next twenty days, or it does not get made – and it not getting made is not an option.

JODY. I'm Johnny on the spot –

MARC. You graduate already?

JODY. Um, technically, no, but –

MARC. You're still a student.

JODY. I'm just missing, like, a math class –

MARC. *You can still access the editing room at the University?*

JODY. Oh. Oh! Yeah. Definitely. Access is easy, brother.

MARC. The first assistant is gonna have a lot of responsibility.

JODY. I can handle it.

MARC. And it's gonna be old-school. I'm talking twenty-three hours a day and being grateful for that one hour off. So I need to know: how bad do you want this.

JODY. I'd sell my mom for it.

MARC. Is your mom hot?

JODY. Not really.

MARC. It's a joke.

JODY. Right.

MARC. Sort of.

JODY. Um –

MARC. I'm joking about your mother, specifically – I mean unless you're lying to me and she's one of those really hot moms –

JODY. No.

MARC. Because I have a rule now about not dating anyone under 30, so.

JODY. Oh.

MARC. It's a recent thing.

JODY. I mean, that's cool, man –

MARC. It is. It is cool. You should try it.

JODY. Sure.

MARC. I'm telling you, once you date a woman who is 32 or 33, 35 even? How old are you?

JODY. Twenty-three.

MARC. Talk to me when you've lived in L.A. for fifteen years.

JODY. So does this mean –

*(***SHEENA** *brings their drinks.)*

SHEENA. One soda with lime and one ice tea. Can I get y'all anything else right now?

MARC. I'm so sorry I didn't mention this before, but – is it Sheena? I like kind of *a lot* of lime.

SHEENA. Oh –

MARC. I should have said something when I ordered –

SHEENA. Let me get you another one.

MARC. You don't mind?

SHEENA. Not at all! You just want one or two or –

MARC. One will be fine. Thank you.

*(***SHEENA** *exits, he watches her go.)*

God, I miss Texas. You have no idea.

JODY. So, the location is in Round Rock?

MARC. It's dynamite. It's suburban and rural all at the same time. I swear to God, find the right location, and you're halfway there.

JODY. I just saw your film, um, *Initiation Rites*? And the locations in that are –

MARC. You what.

JODY. Your movie, from last year?

MARC. How did you, where did you get it.

JODY. I downloaded it.

MARC. Great.

JODY. Did I do something wrong –

MARC. They said they were never going to release it –

JODY. I was just online, and – I mean, you directed that, right, it's yours?

MARC. Did I direct it? Yes, if you can call it "directing" when you're forced to cast five of the six principals with relatives of the investor, and then deal with his demands that entire scenes be re-shot to show his girlfriend at a more flattering angle –

JODY. Yo, I didn't mean to –

*(***SHEENA** *brings the lime,* **MARC** *puts up a finger to stop her.)*

MARC. Which I would have done in the first place, if she'd HAD a flattering angle.

(to **SHEENA***)*

The way you walked across the bar just now to deliver a slice of lime to an agitated but I assure you a very grateful customer – you displayed more intention in that simple action than the lead so-called actress in *Initiation Rites* did for a single moment in the entire movie.

SHEENA. She must've really sucked.

MARC. That, Sheena, is the understatement of the year. The entire film was a waste, except for maybe one shot.

JODY. *The scene in the woods!* With the low angle shot looking up at her. I mean, right?

(Beat. **MARC** *sees that* **SHEENA***'s interested.)*

MARC. Go on.

JODY. It was right after, what was her name –

MARC. *"Gabriella."*

JODY. Right. She's just buried the guy. She takes a step, and the camera is right there. Her bare foot sinks into the mud and you slowly pan up her body. There's blood and dirt caked on her arms and legs, and the trees are towering up behind her. And it's like: she's as powerful and as silent as those trees.

MARC. That's the one.

JODY. It's a great shot.

SHEENA. It sounds cool.

MARC. *(to* **SHEENA***, this is all for her)* We got on location and it just came to me. That's the thing about directing, you gotta be open all the time, filming in your head constantly, "What if we shoot it this way, what if we put the camera there –"

SHEENA. Right.

JODY. That is so true –

MARC. *(still to* **SHEENA***)* To make a great film, you prepare, you prepare, and then you throw it all out the window and fly.

JODY. Right on, brother.

MARC. Don't say 'brother,' it makes you sound like an asshole.

JODY. Um –

MARC. Scream for me.

SHEENA. Excuse me?

MARC. I'm sorry, I'm being rude. Marc Hunter, I'm a film director.

SHEENA. I figured that out.

MARC. I'm going to be shooting a movie here in town and it just so happens that I need to recast a couple of roles.

SHEENA. Um, I'm not an actress.

MARC. Why don't you let me be the judge of that.

SHEENA. You want me to just scream? Right here in the bar.

MARC. I don't want you to 'just scream.' I want you to scream like…like you're all alone in a house. You're house

sitting, friends of your parents. You thought it would be fun. Make your boyfriend a fancy dinner, make love to him in front of the fireplace. But your boyfriend won't be there 'til late and you're upstairs in that king-sized bed, all alone when you hear a noise: drip, drip, drip. It's coming from the attic. You call your boyfriend, he says it's probably just a leak. Get a bucket, he says, and he'll deal with it in the morning. So you find a bucket and a flashlight and ascend the creaking stairs into the deep darkness of the attic. You reach the top of the steps, pull on the light string, and click: the bulb is burned out. You don't want to go, but you have to now. You take a step, flash the light in front of you, and you see a pool of blood, it stretches back to an old wheel chair that's been tipped over, blood gathering beneath it, and there it is, drip, drip, dripping right in front of you and you look up to the rafters and you see it:

SHEENA. *(Screams. It's a knockout.)*

MARC. Yes!

JODY. Wow.

MARC. You were right there, you really saw it –

SHEENA. Holy crap –

MARC. You're brilliant! Pretty but not too pretty, with that believably innocent quality – but at the same time I totally buy that you'd put up a hell of a fight –

JODY. Oh yeah!

MARC. You are the perfect Last Girl.

SHEENA. The last what?

MARC. The Last Girl. The last one to be killed. You're not SAG, or AFTRA are you?

SHEENA. What?

JODY. No.

MARC. *(He hands her his card.)* Email me your address, I'll get you a contract tomorrow. Shooting starts Thursday morning.

SHEENA. But, I have class. And I work and –

JODY. So ditch!

SHEENA. I can't just quit my job.

MARC. Well, Sheena, I hate to tear you away from all this, but, um: I'm offering you a role in a feature film.

SHEENA. How much do I get paid?

MARC. The non-union rate is five-hundred a week. Principal shooting starts Thursday, and it goes without saying that you need to be 100 percent available, because as it turns out, time actually is money, and we're already behind schedule.

SHEENA. I want ten grand.

JODY. What?

SHEENA. Ten grand, plus a percentage of gross.

MARC. I'm sorry, the non-union rate is –

SHEENA. I make $500 a week here.

MARC. All right, okay, fair enough.

I'll tell you what: we can do $800 a week.

SHEENA. No.

MARC. We don't normally negotiate this kind of thing –

SHEENA. If I'm the last girl to get killed, that means I'm in most of the movie.

JODY. That's true.

MARC. *(to* **JODY***)* Shut up.

(to **SHEENA***)*

I'll give you fifteen-hundred dollars a week, But that's it –

SHEENA. Ten grand, plus a percentage of gross.

MARC. Only investors get gross!

SHEENA. Then I want twenty grand.

MARC. Okay, did no one ever explain that when you negotiate, the high bidder generally comes down toward the low bidder until you reach a compromise somewhere in the middle?

SHEENA. You just hired a girl in a bar with no experience to play the last girl in your movie? Shooting starts the day after tomorrow, you're already behind schedule

and I'm guessing every day you spend looking for a new last girl is gonna cost you a hell of a lot more than twenty grand.

MARC. I'll give you ten grand.

SHEENA. Twenty.

MARC. Ten, plus one percent net –

SHEENA. No –

MARC. Two percent net –

SHEENA. I don't believe in net –

MARC. Fifteen grand, and that's my final offer.

SHEENA. Done.

MARC. Thank God –

JODY. Holy shit –

SHEENA. I'm in the movie?

MARC. Welcome to *Blood Bath.*

SHEENA. Oh my God! I can't believe it! I'm so excited! I have to, I have to go quit my job!

*(***SHEENA** *exits.* **MARC** *slams his club soda, gets up.)*

MARC. I have to get out of here, I have to explain to my one remaining investor what the hell just happened.

JODY. But, wait! You never actually said –

MARC. You're in. You'll get gas money, cold tacos on the set and two points net – and don't even think about negotiating.

JODY. You are not gonna regret this, broth – Marc.

MARC. Stop by my hotel in the morning and pick up the script. And start tracking down a meat hook, the biggest claw-foot bathtub you can find, and a wheel chair.

(Sound of whirring)

(IMMEDIATE SHIFT TO:)

Scene Three

(Frances' house. **FRANCES** *whirs by on her scooter. A knock is heard. She opens the front door to reveal* **CHRISTI***, who stands holding a clipboard.)*

CHRISTI. Hi, how are you doing today?

FRANCES. That depends, are you Mormon?

CHRISTI. Um, *no* –

FRANCES. I like the Mormons. You can say anything, they just smile.

CHRISTI. I'm Christi Garcia, I'm Assistant Director of the Holy Shepherd Justice League? We're in the area to let people know about an important issue that –

*(***FRANCES** *slams the door in* **CHRISTI***'s face, cutting her off.* **CHRISTI** *knocks again.* **FRANCES** *opens the door.)*

CHRISTI. Are you aware that there's an abortion clinic being built across the street from the mall? It's going to be six blocks from LBJ high school.

FRANCES. Sounds convenient.

*(***CHRISTI** *hands her a flier.)*

CHRISTI. Holy Shepherd is staging a protest tomorrow, all the information is right here –

FRANCES. What's to protest? Get an abortion, stop for an Orange Julius, still make it to cheerleading practice.

CHRISTI. Cynicism comes from a lack of hope, Mrs…?

FRANCES. *MS.*

CHRISTI. It comes from deep despair. I am living proof of what young people can accomplish when they reject our any-thing-goes culture and embrace the values of self-respect and chastity.

FRANCES. I bet you're a big hit at parties.

CHRISTI. I refuse to stand by and let the cancer of immorality spread unchecked. When you decide you want to take action, when you're ready to help create a better society –

*(***FRANCES** *slams the door in her face once more. There is another knock.)*

FRANCES. Look, I already –

(She opens the door, **JODY** *is standing there with a script.)*

You're definitely not a Mormon.

(NOTE: if **JODY** *looks very clean cut, please change* **FRANCES***' line to: "Oh good, a Mormon!")*

JODY. Um, I'm looking for Sheena? I need to drop this off for her. Is she here –

FRANCES. What is this.

*(***FRANCES** *grabs the script from him.)*

JODY. The script, for the movie? Are you her mom? Marc asked me to drop it off and –

FRANCES. *Blood Bath.*

JODY. Yeah.

FRANCES. A film by Marc Hunter.

JODY. It's actually not bad –

FRANCES. Marc Hunter –

JODY. A couple of clever twists, and –

FRANCES. Marc with a 'C' –

JODY. He's the –

FRANCES. Smarmy, beady-eyed hustler who went to school here?

JODY. Hey, you know him!

*(***FRANCES** *zips into the house, taking the script.)*

(She pops a handful of pills.)

JODY. So, okay, I mean, you are Sheena's mom, right? Sheena lives here?

FRANCES. Get out.

*(***FRANCES** *starts to charge him.)*

JODY. I'm going, I'm going!

FRANCES. Wait!

(He stops.)

What exactly is Sheena doing with this movie.

JODY. She's in it? She's, like, the main girl.

FRANCES. I see.

JODY. She's gonna be amazing. You should hear her scream.

FRANCES. Oh, I will.

(IMMEDIATE SHIFT TO:)

Scene Four

(Sonic Burger. The car. **SHEENA** *in the driver's seat. She leans out to order into the drive up box.* **HILDY** *sits next to her.)*

DRIVE UP VOICE. *(garbled mess)*

SHEENA. Hi, two chicken strip dinners, an order of chili cheese fries, and two diet cokes please.

DRIVE UP VOICE. *(more garbled mess)*

HILDY. Get something for Mom.

SHEENA. I did. I'm going out, genius.

HILDY. With who?

SHEENA. None of your business.

*(***SHEENA** *puts on a pair of very hip sunglasses.)*

I do have a life.

HILDY. When did you get those?

SHEENA. Today. I needed a new pair.

HILDY. That why you were so late?

SHEENA. Actually, I was late because I was getting the muffler replaced. The muffler on this car that takes you everywhere – not that you even noticed that you couldn't hear me coming four blocks away.

HILDY. Oh. Yeah, it is a lot quieter!

SHEENA. Look, you need to start taking more responsibility.

HILDY. I already clean the whole house.

SHEENA. For rides, for getting yourself to and from places. I'm not gonna be around forever, so you need to get used to it.

HILDY. What's going on.

SHEENA. What's going on is that I'm 21 years old, I'm supposed to have my own life, not be taking care of you all the time. I'm not your mother.

HILDY. I know that.

SHEENA. Plus I've been cast in a movie.

HILDY. What?!

*(***CAR HOP** *arrives with bags of food and drinks.* **SHEENA** *passes them off to* **HILDY**, *gives the* **CAR HOP** *a bill.)*

CAR HOP. Two chicken strip dinners, one chili cheese fry, two diets, nine forty-seven.

HILDY. You're lying!

SHEENA. Here's ten, keep the change.

CAR HOP. Thanks.

*(***CAR HOP** *exits.)*

HILDY. You're a marketing major!

SHEENA. So?

HILDY. Seriously?

SHEENA. *Yeah.* The director is in from LA. He came in to Buster's last night with this film guy I kind of know and the next thing, he's offering me a part.

HILDY. It's not porn, is it?

SHEENA. NO!

HILDY. I'm just asking.

SHEENA. It's a horror movie, all right, and I'm the lead, I'm the last girl.

HILDY. The last what?

SHEENA. The last girl, the last to be – I'm basically the main character, so I have to be on the set all the time. You're gonna have to get rides and figure out dinner and stuff.

HILDY. Have you told Mom?

SHEENA. *No*, and you're not going to either.

HILDY. She's gonna freak.

SHEENA. She is a freak.

HILDY. You know how she gets about horror movies –

SHEENA. Which is why no one is telling her.

HILDY. You don't think she's gonna notice you're gone all the time.

SHEENA. Not as long as her prescription doesn't run out.

HILDY. When she finds out, I want to be there to see it.

SHEENA. Do you know how many girls would kill for a chance like this?

HILDY. Oh, sorry, I assumed you were going to *be* killed –

SHEENA. I'm serious!

HILDY. Or forced to saw off your own arms, or get gutted by a maniac or whatever –

SHEENA. *They're paying me fifteen thousand dollars, okay?* Fifteen grand that's gonna fix the AC and pay for your SAT prep course, and get me the hell out of here when I graduate so I don't end up working at Buster's for the rest of my life. So I don't really care right now about Mom's "feminist critique of the horror genre." Because let me tell you something: *It cannot be exploitation when they are paying me this much money.*

HILDY. This is gonna be so rad.

SHEENA. You know what? Tell her. I don't care. She can't stop me. I mean, seriously, she hasn't left the house for almost a year. What's she gonna do?

(IMMEDIATE SHIFT TO:)

Scene Five

(Frances' house. **HILDY** *and* **SHEENA** *step into the house holding their Cokes and the Sonic bag.* **FRANCES** *sits on her rascal, ready for battle. She holds the copy of the script.)*

FRANCES. You.

HILDY. Uh-oh.

SHEENA. What is that?

FRANCES. This?

(She rips a single page from the script.)

SHEENA. Don't!

FRANCES. Oh, I thought you didn't know what it was.

SHEENA. Where did you get it.

FRANCES. I was actually hoping that you DIDN'T know –

SHEENA. Give it to me –

FRANCES. Because this, *this* is a chronicle of female degradation, one hundred and five pages in which a virginal young woman named "Sloan" is terrorized –

*(***FRANCES** *rips another page.)*

SHEENA. Mother!

FRANCES. *(and another)* sexually objectified –

SHEENA. Stop!

FRANCES. *(and another)* TORTURED AND RAPED AFTER BEING BATHED IN ANOTHER WOMAN'S BLOOD.

HILDY. Gross.

FRANCES. No, Hildy. "Gross" is a booger. "Gross" is vomit, or feces. *This* is a contagion in which the most reprehensible acts are packaged as entertainment – not just entertainment, but as TITILATION, so that men like Marc Hunter will continue to think that it's HOT to see women RAPED AND KILLED! I am going to track him down and cram every single page down his throat, page after page until his dangly little uvula is castrated by a thousand paper cuts and he chokes on his own blood! Or maybe I'll just burn it.

*(***SHEENA** *makes a quick grab for the script, but* **FRANCES** *zips away on her scooter. A chase.)*

SHEENA. I won't let you!

FRANCES. Where are the matches!

SHEENA. I am doing this movie!

FRANCES. OVER MY DEAD BODY!

SHEENA. I can arrange that!

FRANCES. I will lock you in the closet before I let that happen! I will force-feed you the collected works of Betty Freidan! I will not allow you to be tortured and humiliated –

SHEENA. I WANT TO BE TORTURED, OKAY?

FRANCES. What did you just say.

SHEENA. I want to be tied up, and look scared and scream my head off, and you know why? BECAUSE IT'S A MOVIE.

FRANCES. I am not hearing this.

SHEENA. I AM IN A MOVIE! I'm the STAR! And I didn't just get the part! I NEGOTIATED! I demanded more money and I GOT IT! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE PROUD OF ME!

FRANCES. I'm supposed to be proud you want to be degraded?

SHEENA. IT'S NOT REAL, MOTHER! I'M IN CONTROL!

FRANCES. You're actually retarded, aren't you?

SHEENA. You know what? I'm outta here.

*(***SHEENA** *bounds up the stairs, sound of drawers opening and closing.* **FRANCES** *comes to the foot of the stairs, talking up at* **SHEENA**.*)*

FRANCES. I always knew you weren't smart, but I didn't think you were actually STUPID. Have you learned NOTHING? Watching me bang my head on the glass ceiling, day after day –

*(***SHEENA** *reappears at the top of the stairs.)*

SHEENA. You haven't worked in years.

FRANCES. I HAVE CHRONIC FATIGUE!

SHEENA. You want to stop me from making this movie? Here's your chance: come up here and stop me.

(An expectation.)

FRANCES. Don't mock me.

SHEENA. I dare you. Walk up these stairs and admit that there's nothing wrong with you, and MAYBE I won't do the movie.

HILDY. Sheena, what are you doing?

SHEENA. The choice is yours, Mom.

HILDY. You know she can't go up stairs.

SHEENA. Oh yes she can. She just doesn't want to.

FRANCES. That's not true.

SHEENA. I want you to admit that you're a lazy, bitter drug addict –

HILDY. Sheena, stop it.

SHEENA. Who would rather rail about injustice than GET A JOB –

FRANCES. You're beyond cruel.

SHEENA. What's cruel is pretending you're too tired to even walk across a room, and forcing your daughter to support you so you can spend all your time screaming that you've been discriminated against.

FRANCES. I HAVE been discriminated against –

SHEENA. The city gave Marshall Davis that cleaning contract because you couldn't do the job.

FRANCES. I DID the job.

SHEENA. You took a whole day to clean one floor!

FRANCES. Hello! I'm DISABLED, of course it's going to take me longer.

*(***SHEENA.** You are such a victim! God! You talk about how people are so afraid of strong, powerful women "like you." But no one is afraid of you, and you know why? Because you don't DO ANYTHING! Ever since Dad left you've done nothing! Well, I'm actually DOING something now, and you can't stop me.

*(***SHEENA** *disappears onto the second floor.)*

FRANCES. Oh, so this is your big statement? Well, I've got a question for you: Who controls the film? Who controls the money, huh? I'll give you a hint: it's not you! You and the rest of your generation, you're all too busy getting boob jobs and counting carbs to notice that WOMEN ARE STILL ROYALLY SCREWED. They pat you on the head, tell you discrimination is over. Who needs equal rights when you've got the WNBA? They trot out Condoleeza Rice once a month like she's the EQUALITY BONG so you're all too stoned to notice that WE STILL ONLY MAKE 76 CENTS ON THE DOLLAR!

*(***SHEENA** *barrels down the stairs with a bag of clothes and climbs over* **FRANCES** *like she's a piece of furniture.)*

SHEENA. Get out of my way.

FRANCES. I am not going to let you – OW!

HILDY. Stop it!

FRANCES. You are NOT taking my car.

SHEENA. It's MY car, mom. I bought it after you totaled the last one ramming into Marshall Davis' Expedition!

HILDY. Where are you going?!

FRANCES. If you do this movie, I am disowning you, Sheena. I'll never speak to you again.

HILDY. Mom!

SHEENA. Fine.

HILDY. Sheena!

SHEENA. She's all yours.

HILDY. You can't leave. What am I supposed to do?!

SHEENA. You're the genius. Figure it out.

FRANCES. They've turned my own daughter against me.

SHEENA. No, you did that all on your own.

(IMMEDIATE SHIFT TO:)

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