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Killer Joe

by Tracy Letts

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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KILLER JOE was originally produced by the Next Lab in Evanston, Illinois, on August 3, 1993. It was directed by Wilson Milam. The set and lighting designs were by Robert G. Smith, the costume design was by Laura Cunningham, the sound design was by Chris Peterson, the fight choreography was by Chuck Coyle, and the stage manager was Justin Holmes. The cast was as follows:

CHRIS SMITH Michael Shannon
SHARLA SMITH Holly Wantuch
ANSEL SMITH Marc A. Nelson
DOTTIE SMITH Shawna Franks
KILLER JOE COOPER Paul Dillon

KILLER JOE received its New York City premiere on September 29, 1994 at 29th St. Rep. It was produced by 29th St. Rep (Tim Corcoran and David Mogentale, Artistic Directors) and Darren Lee Cole. The production was directed by Wilson Milam. The set design was by Richard Meyer, the lighting design was by Jeremy Kumin, the costume design was by Elizabeth Elkins, the fight choreographer was J. David Brimmer and the production stage manager was Brad Rohrer. The cast was as follows:

CHRIS SMITH Thomas Wehrle
SHARLA SMITH Linda June Larson
ANSEL SMITH Leo Farley
DOTTIE SMITH Danna Lyons
KILLER JOE COOPER David Mogentale

KILLER JOE was produced in New York at the SoHo Playhouse by Darren Lee Cole and Scott Morfee on October 18, 1998. It was directed by Wilson Milam. The set design was by George Xenos, the lighting design was by Greg MacPherson, the costume design was by Jana Stauffer, the sound design was by Hired Gun/One Dream, the fight choreography was by J. David Brimmer, and the stage manager was Richard Hodge. The cast was as follows:

CHRIS SMITH Michael Shannon
SHARLA SMITH Amanda Plummer
ANSEL SMITH Marc A. Nelson
DOTTIE SMITH Sarah Paulson
KILLER JOE COOPER Scott Glenn

CHARACTERS

CHRIS SMITH – 22 years old

SHARLA SMITH – Chris's stepmother, early thirties

ANSEL SMITH – Chris's father, 38 years old

DOTTIE SMITH – Chris's sister, 20 years old

KILLER JOE COOPER – Mid thirties

SETTING

A trailer home on the outskirts of Dallas, Texas.

Two entrances: a door leading outside, and a hallway leading to the bathroom and two bedrooms.

The living room occupies two-thirds of the set, the kitchen occupies one-third. There is no separation between the rooms, unless it is a small counter extending from the wall. The playing area should be quite small and cramped. A low ceiling is helpful.

The furnishings and decorations in the trailer are seedy and cheap; walls covered with ugly wood paneling; tattered, smoke-stained plastic shades covering the windows; kitchen filled with dirty, mismatched cups and utensils, many of them fast-food giveaways; a hide-a-bed, stained, torn, burned with cigarettes; a coffee table covered with fast-food debris, empty beer cans, and filled ashtrays; grimy refrigerator, filled almost solely with beer; a monstrous television, topped by a snarled and intricate antenna made of coat hangers and tin foil; Taco Bell refrigerator magnets, Dallas Cowboy cheerleader calendar, ZZ Top poster, and other detritus of the poor.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

No pre-show music. Only static from the TV.

No “incidental” or “atmosphere” music within the scenes. All music and sound should be sourced, with the exception of intermission, curtain call, and the scene changes (see below).

Blackouts between the scenes should be covered by the sound of the following scene. For example, Act Two, Scene One ends; blackout, sound of evangelist on house speakers; once scene change is completed, lights rise on Scene Two, and evangelist cross-fades from house speakers to on-stage radio.

Scene changes should be as quick and quiet as possible.

Lighting should appear to be sourced.

The final dinner is wholly improvised, and may take as long as two or three minutes.

As written, the final fight is a map of the dynamics of the scene. Directors and fight choreographers worth their salt will change it as necessary to meet their staging needs.

A NOTE TO THE PLAYERS

The published edition of *KILLER JOE* contains many stage directions designed to help a reader visualize this material. Although you will inevitably incorporate many of these stage directions into your production, you are encouraged to start from scratch, inhabit the characters, and make the play your own.

Ellipses (...) indicate an incomplete thought, or a trailing off.

Dashes (–) indicate an interruption and overlapping.

DEBTS

Acting: Fairuza Balk, Scott Glenn, Jan Leslie Harding, Sarah Paulson(!), Lori Petty, Amanda Plummer, Seth Ullian, Michelle Williams

Agenting: Danielle Ausrotas, Jason Fogelson

Artistic Directing: Ian Brown, Dexter Bullard, Dominic Dromgoole, Harriet Spizziri

Believing, with money: Gary and Teddi Cole, Kelly Curtis, Steve Martin

Casting: Kris Nicolau

Criticizing: Richard Christiansen

Designing: Tim Fletcher, Luke Grimm, One Dream, Chris Peterson, Bob Smith, Jana Stauffer, George Xenos

Potato Peeler Designing: Tim Reinhart

Familiarizing: M & P, S & S, D & D, G & G, G & G

Fighting: David Brimmer, Chuck Coyle

Producing: Michael Codron, Darren Lee Cole, Laura Cunningham, Scott Morfee

Publicizing: Shirley Herz

Stage Managing: Siofra Campbell, Richard Hodge, Justin Holmes, Adrian Pagan

Understudying: Christine Ashe, Allen Burroughs, Mim Drew, Mary Hammett

BIGGER DEBTS

Paul Dillon, Shawna Franks, Marc Nelson, Mike Shannon, Holly Wantuch, Eric Winzenried, and especially Wilson Milam: the six actors and director who helped create this play.

Without their work, talent, faith and love, *Killer Joe* would not exist.

Killer Joe is dedicated to the memory and spirit of
Holly Wantuch, my partner, my conscience, my love.

*“How often have I lain beneath rain on a strange roof,
thinking of home?”*

*Darl, from As I Lay Dying
by William Faulkner*

ACT I

Scene One

(Lights slowly rise. Faint glow of the street lights bleeds through the window shades. Flickering ghost light spills from the TV, tuned to snow.)

(Lightning. Thunder.)

(T-Bone, a neighbor's pit bull with a bad attitude and a chain a few links too long, snorts and barks ferociously outside.)

(Footsteps. Doorknob. Tap on the door.)

CHRIS. Dottie? *(beat)* Dottie?

(The tap grows louder. T-Bone keeps barking.)

Dottie, wake up. It's me.

(The tap grows even louder. CHRIS raises his voice slightly, but he tries to be quiet.)

Come on, Dottie. It's me, goddamn it. Let me in. I'm cold. I gotta piss. Let me in.

(Pause. The voice is impatient, almost yelling. The knock gets louder.)

Shut up, T-Bone! Dottie, goddamn it, wake up! Don't make me wake up the whole goddamn neighborhood! I'm about to piss in my pants!

(Pause. The voice bellows, and the pounding on the door threatens to tear down the entire wall.)

GODDAMN IT, OPEN THIS GODDAMN DOOR BEFORE I BURN THIS WHOLE GODDAMN TRAILER PARK TO THE GROUND! GET OUTTA THAT FUCKIN' BED, RIGHT! FUCKIN'! NOW!

(During the above, SHARLA appears from the hallway and scampers to the door. She wears only a man's sweat-stained t-shirt that falls above her ass.)

SHARLA. Hold on, hold on –

(She unlocks the door, and CHRIS bursts in.)

CHRIS. Goddamn it – ! *(sees SHARLA, heads down the hallway)*

Put some clothes on, for Christ's sake.

SHARLA. Well, hell, I didn't know who you were.

(But he's gone. We hear CHRIS's urine splash in the toilet bowl.)

Close the goddamn door!

(He doesn't. She gets a soda from the fridge, finds a cigarette, lights it. CHRIS returns.)

CHRIS. Why don't you put somethin' on? My God –

SHARLA. I didn't know who you were –

CHRIS. You answer the door like that if you don't know –

SHARLA. Just relax, It's nothin' you haven't seen before,
I'm sure –

CHRIS. Nothin' half of Dallas County hasn't seen before,
Sharla –

SHARLA. – Shut up –

CHRIS. – but that ain't the point. It's freezin' in here –

SHARLA. What do you want?

CHRIS. Is Dad here?

SHARLA. He's asleep.

CHRIS. Dottie's here, isn't she?

SHARLA. Everybody's asleep. It's almost 3:00 in the –

CHRIS. I can tell time, all right?

SHARLA. Adele throw you out?

CHRIS. Yes, goddamn it. I need to talk to Dad –

SHARLA. Why'd she throw you out? Did you – ?

CHRIS. – that bitch –

SHARLA. – hit her again?

CHRIS. No, I didn't – Look, will you please put some clothes on?

SHARLA. My God, I never heard so much –

CHRIS. I'm sorry, it's just a bit distractin' tryin' to talk to your stepmother with her bush starin' you right in the face –

(ANSEL, wearing just his underwear, turns on the lights as he enters from the hallway.)

SHARLA. All right! Jesus –

CHRIS. Thank you.

(SHARLA whacks ANSEL as she exits. CHRIS has grabbed a beer from the fridge and pulled the pot stash from under the couch. He rolls a joint.)

ANSEL. Help yourself.

CHRIS. What'd you do, chop up some clover? Where'd you get this shit?

ANSEL. I bought it from you.

CHRIS. This is that?

ANSEL. What are you doin' here?

SHARLA. *(offstage)* Adele threw him out!

ANSEL. So?! The boy can talk!

CHRIS. So I needed a place to stay, all right?

ANSEL. How come she threw you out?

CHRIS. It's a long story.

ANSEL. Sharla, get me a beer!

(During the following, ANSEL crosses to the TV, flips channels, finds a monster truck rally.)

You didn't hit her again, did you – ?

CHRIS. No, goddamn it, I didn't hit her –

(SHARLA returns, wearing a pair of Ansel's underwear.)

SHARLA. It's not like you never hit her before –

CHRIS. I didn't hit her, okay?

SHARLA. So why'd she throw you out?

CHRIS. None of your goddamn business, Sharla –

SHARLA.

ANSEL.

Hey, I live here – !

Calm down –

CHRIS. Well, Jesus Christ, Dad, I get thrown out in the middle of the night, and I come over here and have to listen to your naked wife givin' me the third degree –

SHARLA. I'm not naked –

CHRIS. Why do you let her walk around here like that?

SHARLA.

ANSEL.

Like what?

It's the middle of the –

CHRIS. She answered the door with her beaver puckered out like it was tryin' to shake my hand –

SHARLA. Hush your mouth –

ANSEL. She didn't know who you were –

CHRIS. That's not the point, goddamn it! I don't want Dottie havin' to look at her own stepmother's pussy!

SHARLA. That's it! I'm goin' to bed! I've heard all – !

CHRIS. Good night.

SHARLA. (*going for CHRIS*) You listen to me – !

CHRIS. Good night. Sweet dreams.

SHARLA.

ANSEL.

Ansel – !

Hey now –

CHRIS. Don't let the bedbugs bite.

ANSEL. (*between CHRIS and SHARLA*) Stop it, Chris – !

SHARLA. He can stay here tonight – !

ANSEL.

CHRIS.

Sharla, honey, now don't
get like that –

Hey, I'll stay as long as I
by God feel like!

SHARLA. – but if he stays any longer, I'm liable to hurt the little bastard!

ANSEL. Sharla, don't go to bed all mad –

SHARLA. Good night!

(*She exits.*)

CHRIS. (*calling to her*) Don't die in your sleep!

SHARLA. (*offstage*) GODDAMN HICK!

(CHRIS lights the joint, takes a long drag, passes it to

ANSEL. They smoke the joint throughout the scene.)

ANSEL. Now look what you did. I'm in the doghouse.

CHRIS. Fuck her.

ANSEL. Yeah, well, you don't live here –

CHRIS. I need to talk to you about somethin'.

ANSEL. I don't have any money for you –

CHRIS. I don't need a lot, but I'm in some trouble –

ANSEL. You're not listenin' to me, Chris –

CHRIS. – and if I can just get a little something to get me
back on my feet –

ANSEL. No, goddamn it, you're not suckin' any more
money outta me –

CHRIS. It's important, Dad –

ANSEL. It always is.

CHRIS. It's a matter of life and death, really.

ANSEL. It always is.

CHRIS. I need six thousand dollars, or some guys are gonna
kill me.

ANSEL. Boy, you better get outta town, and quick.

CHRIS. If you could just give me a thousand –

ANSEL. I don't have it –

CHRIS. I could hold these guys off with a thousand –

ANSEL. Chris. I don't have it.

CHRIS. I wouldn't be in this mess if it weren't for Mom,
y'know –

ANSEL. Oh, I doubt that.

CHRIS. I'm in a jam cause of her, then she kicks me out.

ANSEL. Well, what'd you do to her? She wouldn'ta kicked
you out for no reason –

CHRIS. She's a fuckin' bitch, Dad –

ANSEL. You hit her, didn't you?

CHRIS. Goddamn it, NO! I didn't hit her, I told you –

ANSEL. Then why'd she throw you out?

CHRIS. I threw her up against the fridge.

ANSEL. That's pretty much the same as hittin' her, wouldn't you say?

CHRIS. No, it's not. I barely threw her. There's not a mark on her.

ANSEL. But she threw you out anyway – ?

CHRIS. You wanna know why I threw her?

ANSEL. No.

CHRIS. She stole two and a half ounces of coke from me.

ANSEL. Now, that's bullshit. Your mother doesn't snort cocaine.

CHRIS. I know that, goddamn it, she sold it. Or gave it away to that goddamn Rex. 'Cause the shit was gone, and she's the only other one who knew where it was. Then tonight, after I find it missin', she comes back to the house with her Pinto runnin' like a watch.

ANSEL. You're shittin' me. That piece of shit hasn't run in years –

CHRIS. Y'see? What'd I tell you? So the blow I was plannin' on sellin' to pay these guys back is gone, and now they're gonna kill me. My own mother, for Chrissake. *(beat)* So?

ANSEL. Hm? What?

CHRIS. The money. Are you gonna loan me the money?

ANSEL. No.

CHRIS. That's great. That's just great. You're a regular what's-his-name. I'm fucked –

ANSEL. I never had a thousand dollars in my life –

CHRIS. How would you like to?

ANSEL. What?

CHRIS. Would you like to have fifteen thousand dollars?

ANSEL. Aw, Jesus, another one of your stupid –

CHRIS. Now just hear me out, I got another plan here –

ANSEL. Every goddamn time. How about that farm – ?

CHRIS. Hey, now. Just leave the farm out of it, all right? I'm talkin' about somethin' a lot easier than that.

ANSEL. This oughta be good –

CHRIS. You ever hear of Killer Joe Cooper?

ANSEL. Huh-uh.

CHRIS. He's a cop.

ANSEL. Yeah?

CHRIS. Well, a detective, actually.

ANSEL. Yeah?

CHRIS. And he's got a little business on the side.

ANSEL. What's he do?

CHRIS. He's a killer. He kills people.

ANSEL. Yeah? So?

CHRIS. Mom's got a fifty-thousand dollar life insurance policy.

(beat)

ANSEL. What are you sayin'?

CHRIS. You know what I'm sayin'. Don't look at me like that.

ANSEL. Who's the...?

CHRIS. Beneficiary. Dottie.

ANSEL. The whole thing?

CHRIS. The whole thing.

ANSEL. All fifty-thousand?

CHRIS. Yep.

ANSEL. She didn't leave nothin' to me?

CHRIS. Of course not, you dipshit. Why would she do that?

ANSEL. I'm her ex-husband.

CHRIS. She hates you, Dad. You know that.

ANSEL. Yeah, but still –

CHRIS. What do you think?

ANSEL. About what?

CHRIS. My idea.

ANSEL. How much does a thing like that cost?

CHRIS. I hear he charges twenty-thousand.

ANSEL. Jesus Christ –

CHRIS. This really isn't somethin' we can afford to cut corners on. I'd say it's worth it if we know we're not gonna get caught. Killer Joe's a professional, and he'll do this right.

ANSEL. How do you know? Who told you about this?

CHRIS. Never mind that.

ANSEL. Where are we supposed to get that kind of money?

CHRIS. I wanna hire him on spec. Ask him to do it for free, then give him a cut of the insurance money.

ANSEL. Look, after you pay this guy, you're only talkin' about clearin'...

ANSEL.

CHRIS.

...thirty thousand. Split ...thirty thousand.
that four ways –

CHRIS. Three ways.

ANSEL. How do you figure?

CHRIS. You, me, and Dottie.

ANSEL. What about Sharla?

CHRIS. What about her?

ANSEL. She gets a cut.

CHRIS. The hell she does. She's not family.

ANSEL. She's been my wife longer than Adele has.

CHRIS. It's less money.

ANSEL. It's less money for you.

CHRIS. And it's more money for you.

ANSEL. Yeah? I am the father here, y'know. We're talkin' about my ex-wife. I'm the one who found her. Not you, and not Dottie.

CHRIS. Okay, all right, fine, we can split it four ways –

ANSEL. Hold on just a second here. I haven't agreed to nothin' yet. This is murder we're talkin' about, and I'm not just gonna sit here, noddin' my head –

CHRIS. Look at it this way: is she doin' anybody any good?

ANSEL. Whattaya mean?

CHRIS. Is anybody gonna really care if Mom's not around anymore?

ANSEL. Rex.

CHRIS. You think that dumb son-of-a-bitch would care? He screws anything that can draw breath –

ANSEL. That don't mean he don't care –

CHRIS. Tell you the truth, I think he'd be tickled pink. You should see how she treats that poor bastard.

ANSEL. 'Bout like she treated me, I bet.

CHRIS. Anyway, who gives a fuck about Rex?

ANSEL. Right –

CHRIS. Who else?

ANSEL. Dottie, maybe.

CHRIS. Right, Dottie. Now think of it this way: which do you think would be better for Dottie, havin' ten thousand dollars so maybe she could go to that Amazon school, or havin' a beat-up, old, ugly, naggy alcoholic mother for another twenty years or so?

ANSEL. I see what you're sayin' –

CHRIS. Exactly. So as long as Dottie never knows what we're talkin' about, we're really doin' her a favor.

ANSEL. Yeah...

CHRIS. Let me just call him. Let's just set up a meetin' with the guy, and talk to him. We don't have to decide anything right now.

ANSEL. Okay.

CHRIS. Okay. Okay. Okay, good. Okay, now this's just between you and me, now.

ANSEL. I know.

CHRIS. Cause if Sharla or Dottie find out –

ANSEL. Right –

CHRIS. – they'll be considered accomplices –

(DOTTIE enters, wearing a night gown and robe.)

DOTTIE. Hey, Chris. What're you doin' here?

CHRIS. I got in a fight with Mom.

DOTTIE. Did you build this city all by yourself?

CHRIS. What? Uh, yeah. Sure did. Brick by brick.

DOTTIE. I heard that at the wedding.

ANSEL. *(to CHRIS)* She's asleep.

DOTTIE. I'm not asleep, I'm just workin'.

(She exits.)

CHRIS. You think she heard us?

(ANSEL shrugs.)

Scared the shit outta me. That sleep-talkin' gives me the creeps.

ANSEL. She's gotten worse and worse about it. 'Bout every night now.

CHRIS. I don't suppose she's seein' anybody yet.

ANSEL. No, and I wouldn't hold your breath, neither.

CHRIS. I don't understand it.

ANSEL. You wanna know the truth, I think she's still... you know...

CHRIS. What. A virgin?

(DOTTIE re-enters and gets a comic book.)

DOTTIE. I heard y'all talkin' about killin' Momma. *(beat)* I think it's a good idea.

(She exits. Beat.)

CHRIS. There you go.

ANSEL. Yeah...

CHRIS. ...so...

(Long silence.)

ANSEL. She got that piece of shit Pinto runnin' again, huh?

(Blackout.)

(Sound of the karate movie from the next scene plays over the blackout.)

Scene Two

(Lights rise.)

(Two days later. The shades are up and daylight streams through the window. Rain falls outside. An occasional distant rumble of thunder.)

(DOTTIE is alone, “exercising” in the living room, matching moves with an action sequence from a poorly dubbed karate movie on TV. The volume is ear-splitting.)

(The door to the trailer opens and KILLER JOE COOPER enters, wearing a raincoat and cowboy hat. DOTTIE does not hear him. He shuts the door, stands motionless, and watches her.)

JOE. Looks hard.

(She sucks in her breath and runs into the kitchen. They shout to be heard over the television.)

DOTTIE. Jesus – !

JOE. I didn’t mean – !

DOTTIE. Who are you?!

JOE. Joe Cooper. I’m a friend of – ! Joe Cooper – ! Excuse me! *(turns off TV)* Joe Cooper, I’m a friend of –

DOTTIE. How’d you get in here?

JOE. The door. I knocked, but you had the TV turned up too loud to hear me. I decided not to stand in the rain.

DOTTIE. Well, you scared me to death –

JOE. And I apologize.

DOTTIE. That’s okay. It’s okay.

JOE. Looks hard. From the TV like that. You should get a teacher.

DOTTIE. Yeah...

JOE. *(extends his hand)* I’m Joe Cooper.

DOTTIE. *(shakes his hand)* Hi.

JOE. I was supposed to meet Chris here at 10:30.

DOTTIE. He's not here.

JOE. I'm a little early.

DOTTIE. He's usually late.

JOE. *(beat)* Could I trouble you for a cup of coffee, or – ?

DOTTIE. Oh, yeah, sure I'm sorry. Why'n'tcha sit down?
Can I take your – ?

(JOE removes his raincoat and hands it to DOTTIE, who drapes it over the back of a chair. She prepares a pot of coffee.)

JOE. Can I ask your name?

DOTTIE. I'm Dottie.

JOE. Hello, Dottie.

DOTTIE. Hi.

(He stands and stares at her. She feels his eyes on her, wheels, faces him.)

What?

JOE. Hm?

DOTTIE. Why are you – what?

JOE. Nothin'. I'm just...standin'.

DOTTIE. Okay. *(beat)* What are you? I mean, what do you do?

JOE. I'm a detective.

DOTTIE. Really? Like *Mannix*?

JOE. Uh...no. He's a private detective. I'm in the Dallas Police Department.

DOTTIE. He's not real, either.

JOE. No. I'm real.

DOTTIE. I read it's nothin' like the shows, with car chases and all.

JOE. Lot of paperwork.

DOTTIE. I read some policemen go their whole lives without shooting their guns.

JOE. Probably true.

DOTTIE. Have you ever drawn your gun?

JOE. Oh, sure.

DOTTIE. What happened?

JOE. I've drawn my gun lots of times.

DOTTIE. You ever shot anybody?

JOE. Yes.

DOTTIE. Who?

JOE. Nobody you'd know.

DOTTIE. Did they die?

JOE. They have, yes.

DOTTIE. Wow. I bet you don't like to talk about it.

JOE. No, no. Not that I like to talk about it, but it doesn't keep me up nights. You know.

DOTTIE. Yeah. *(beat)* What's the most exciting thing that ever happened?

JOE. Hm. The most exciting. I don't know. I don't know.

DOTTIE. *(beat)* I bet it's more exciting than anything I ever –

JOE. Oh, wait, I can tell you the funniest thing –

DOTTIE. – Okay –

JOE. – well, maybe not the funniest, but the...oddest.

DOTTIE. Okay –

JOE. When I was a patrolman – do you want to hear this?

DOTTIE. Yeah, sure –

JOE. When I was a patrolman, my partner and I got a call there was a domestic disturbance in progress. Which is kind of misleading, if you ask me, because “domestic” sounds awful homey, and “disturbance” sounds like just an argument. But cops know that domestic disturbances are the calls where you're most likely to get hurt.

DOTTIE. Uh-huh.

JOE. So we took the call, and I was a little nervous. (I hadn't been on the force long, and I still got nervous about domestic disturbances.) When we got to the house, we heard this awful screaming from inside, this shrieking.

DOTTIE. Wow.

JOE. We went into the place, and it was completely dark, and we just followed the sound of this scream back to the back bedroom. I didn't know what the hell to expect –

DOTTIE. – yeah –

JOE. – and we open the door, and suddenly, this huge guy is on top of me, knocks me to the floor, just screaming and clawing at me –

DOTTIE. Oh my God –

JOE. And then it turns out... there's no one else even there. And he wasn't trying to hurt me. He wanted me to help him.

DOTTIE. Why?

JOE. He was in terrible pain. It turns out he had gotten into a fight with his girlfriend. She had been having an affair so, in order to “teach her a lesson,” (that's what he said, “teach her a lesson”) he had doused his genitals with lighter fluid, and set them on fire.

(DOTTIE stares at JOE. He laughs. She joins in the laughter.)

DOTTIE. Oh, I get it. I thought you were serious.

JOE. I am.

(She stops laughing. He continues.)

That poor, miserable bastard set his genitals on fire to teach his girlfriend a lesson. Do you believe that? Guess he showed her. I wonder if she ever got over it.

DOTTIE. Was he all right?

JOE. No. No, he wasn't all right. He set his genitals on fire.
(beat) Oh, boy.

DOTTIE. I had an aunt who set herself on fire.

JOE. Yeah, okay –

DOTTIE. – but not on purpose. She was wearin' a long lace dress, and she got it caught in the furnace, and she died before they put out the fire.

JOE. Really.

(She pours his coffee.)

DOTTIE. They say she's the one in the family I look most like.

JOE. Hm.

DOTTIE. Her name was Viva. Isn't that a great name? She never got married, I don't think.

(She hands him his coffee.)

Are you gonna kill my momma?

JOE. I'm not sure. Why?

DOTTIE. Just curious. *(beat)* My momma tried to kill me when I was real little. She put a pillow over my face and tried to stop me from breathing, 'cause she cared more about herself than her little baby, and she didn't love me like a mother loves a little baby. And she thought she'd done it, and she was happy, 'cause then she didn't have to worry about me eating her food, and sleeping in her bed, and growing up to be the part of her that was cut out and grown into a better thing than she had been, had ever been. 'Cause that would mean the best part of her was me. But she hadn't done it, she didn't give me back to Him, she only made me sick, made me not be for a while; but then I was and she was sad that I was, and that I always would be.

(T-Bone barks as CHRIS and ANSEL approach from outside.)

JOE.

(studies her for a moment, then) How do you know that?

CHRIS.

(offstage, laughing) You charged him how much?

DOTTIE.

Know what?

ANSEL.

(offstage) Fifty bucks.

JOE.

That your mother tried to kill you.

CHRIS.

(offstage) For a lousy spark plug!

DOTTIE.

'Cause I remember.

ANSEL.

(offstage) Hell, he didn't know the difference, dumbass Yankee.

(CHRIS enters, soaking wet. ANSEL, dressed in grease-stained auto mechanic's overalls, is behind CHRIS on the stairs, so he does not see JOE standing in the kitchen.)

ANSEL. About sucked my dick for havin' the right-sized wrench.

(ANSEL now sees JOE and freezes behind CHRIS.)

JOE. Hello.

CHRIS. Oh, Jesus, you must be Joe.

(CHRIS goes to him, and they shake hands.)

Chris Smith. This is my father, Ansel.

JOE. *(shaking hands with ANSEL)* Ansel.

ANSEL. Hey there.

CHRIS. I guess you met Dottie.

JOE. Oh, yes.

CHRIS. Dottie, would you excuse us?

DOTTIE. Yeah, sure.

CHRIS. I mean, could you leave the house? We've got some business to discuss With Mr. –

DOTTIE. I know. *(to JOE)* Good-bye.

JOE. Good-bye, Dottie.

(She grabs her coat, and JOE opens the door for her. She exits, giving JOE a final look.)

CHRIS. *(in the fridge, getting beers)* She's a sweetheart, isn't she?

JOE. Yes, she is.

CHRIS. Like a beer?

JOE. No...no, listen, I don't have a lot of time –

CHRIS. All right, sir, let's get down to it.

JOE. If that's all right –

CHRIS. First off, let me say that me and my father here have never done anything like this before, and...well, to be honest, we don't want to do it, but it's gotta be done.

JOE. That has nothing to do with me.

CHRIS. Okay. Uhh...well, sir, instead of me starting this off, maybe you could sort of tell us the questions we need to ask, or –

JOE. It's really pretty simple. You're going to pay me some money for a service I'm going to perform.

CHRIS. Uh-huh.

JOE. You'll give me particulars about her whereabouts, her schedule, her habits, and I'll act on them accordingly. I won't give you many details about my activities, because the less you know about them, the better for everyone concerned.

CHRIS. All right –

JOE. I only have a couple of rules that I insist on sticking to. Insist.

CHRIS. Okay, yeah –

JOE. If you are caught, if you are implicated in this crime, you are not, under any circumstances, to reveal my identity or my participation.

CHRIS. Oh, of course –

JOE. If you break this rule, you'll be killed. Do you understand?

CHRIS. I –

JOE. I don't mean to sound melodramatic, and I don't want our business relationship to get off on the wrong foot. But I want to be absolutely clear on this point.

CHRIS. I understand.

JOE. (*to ANSEL*) Do you understand?

ANSEL. Yeah.

JOE. My payment is twenty-five thousand dollars, in cash, in advance. No exceptions.

ANSEL. Twenty-five?

JOE. Yes, sir.

ANSEL. (to CHRIS) You told me twenty.

CHRIS. (to ANSEL) I was told twenty.

JOE. Twenty-five. Is that a problem?

CHRIS. We don't have a problem with twenty-five –

ANSEL. Now hold on a second here –

CHRIS. We don't have a problem with twenty-five. That's not our problem.

JOE. What is your problem?

CHRIS. We have a problem with the advance.

JOE. No exceptions.

CHRIS. Sir. I'd just like...let me explain. One of the reasons we're interested in having this done is that my mother holds a very large insurance policy –

JOE. (standing to leave) They usually do.

CHRIS. – and we thought we could interest you in the job if we guaranteed payment after the policy had been covered.

JOE. This really isn't open to discussion. Our conversation is finished.

(JOE gets his coat and moves for the door. CHRIS reaches for him...)

CHRIS. Please, this is important –

(...JOE turns and fires.)

JOE. What did you think this was? “*Let's Make a Deal?*” This is serious business you're fuckin' with here, boy –

CHRIS. I'm aware of that –

JOE. I don't think you are. I don't take you seriously.

CHRIS. This is gonna get done, one way or another –

JOE. Our conversation is finished. I never met you. You never met me.

(CHRIS gives up, goes to the kitchen.)

(to ANSEL) Thank Dottie for the coffee.

(JOE turns to the door, his back to the room. Long pause.)

He slowly turns around to face CHRIS and ANSEL.)

JOE. Of course, we never discussed the possibility of a retainer.

CHRIS. Whattaya mean?

JOE. You know how to reach me. Call me if she's interested.

(Again, he starts for the door.)

CHRIS. Hey, man, are you talkin' about my sister?

JOE. Is that who she is?

(JOE exits. During the following, ANSEL checks JOE from the window, lights a joint, turns on the TV, and finds some auto racing.)

CHRIS. Jesus –

ANSEL. What's he mean, "retainer?"

CHRIS. Whattaya think he means, Dad? He means Dottie.

ANSEL. Yeah, but retain what, exactly?

CHRIS. Just how stupid are you? Are you really that stupid?

(ANSEL grabs a plastic troll, hurls it at CHRIS' head.

CHRIS dodges, and the troll smashes into the wall.)

ANSEL. You watch your goddamn mouth!

CHRIS. What are we gonna do, Dad? We gotta think of somethin'.

ANSEL. We could do it ourselves.

CHRIS. You gonna kill somebody? You can't even tell time.

ANSEL. What do you think we should do, smart ass?

CHRIS. We can forget about the whole thing, or we can... give him Dottie.

ANSEL. GODDAMN IT!

(ANSEL jumps off the couch, fusses with the TV antenna until his reception improves. Then:)

Y'know, it might just do her some good.

(Blackout.)

(Sound of the lottery drawing from the next scene plays over the scene change.)

Scene Three

(Lights rise.)

(SHARLA talks on the telephone, smiling, examining a sheaf of photographs. She wears the red-and-white checkered uniform of a Pizza Hut waitress. The Texas Lottery drawing plays on TV.)

SHARLA. Don't be silly. Nobody's gonna see 'em. *(beat)* What're you so worried about, anyway? It's not like you can see your face in any of 'em. *(laughs)* I doubt it. *(beat)* That little photo shack out in front of the mall. *(beat)* Oh, hell, you worry too much. Just some little pimply-faced girl, never saw one before in her life. *(beat)* None that big, anyway. *(nasty laugh)* What time are you gonna pick me up? *(beat)* 11:30? What do you expect me to – ?

(DOTTIE comes out of her bedroom, wearing a pair of blue jeans and a sweatshirt, crosses to the TV, changes channels, finds Wheel of Fortune. SHARLA casually puts the photographs in a rainbow-colored packet.)

Hold on, Jennie.

(SHARLA covers the phone and speaks to DOTTIE, who is now setting the table for supper.)

Why don't you put on your new dress, hon?

DOTTIE. What for?

SHARLA. We're havin' a guest for supper.

DOTTIE. Who?

SHARLA. I don't know. Some friend of Ansel's. *(back to phone)* Huh? No, It's Dottie –

DOTTIE. We have to dress up?

SHARLA. I just think you look real pretty in your dress.

DOTTIE. I'd rather save it for somethin' special. I'd feel silly just wearin' it for supper.

(SHARLA pauses, then returns to the phone.)

SHARLA. Jennie? I'll call you from work, all right? No, I can't – no, I have to – uh-huh, you me, too. (*She hangs up, sticks her finger into a hole in DOTTIE's sweatshirt.*) Look at that.

DOTTIE. What? It's a sweatshirt.

SHARLA. Why don't you put on your dress?

DOTTIE. I don't feel like it. Is everybody else dressin' up?

SHARLA. I don't know what everybody else's doin'. I'm goin' to work.

DOTTIE. Then what difference does it make?

SHARLA. It doesn't, really. Your daddy just wanted you to look nice.

DOTTIE. Where are they?

SHARLA. They'll be here. They better be. I gotta get to work. (*SHARLA prepares for work, putting on make-up and fixing her hair.*) What're you fixin'?

DOTTIE. Just some casserole.

SHARLA. What kind? Smells like tuna.

DOTTIE. It is.

SHARLA. You gonna make a salad?

DOTTIE. I could, if people're hungry enough.

SHARLA. Some rolls or somethin'?

DOTTIE. No.

SHARLA. I think we got some biscuits in there.

DOTTIE. We got plenty.

SHARLA. Okay. I was just sayin'...

DOTTIE. Was that your boyfriend on the phone?

SHARLA. What do you mean?

DOTTIE. Wasn't that your boyfriend?

SHARLA. I'm married, silly.

DOTTIE. I won't tell Daddy.

SHARLA. I don't know what you're talkin' about. That was Jennie, my friend from high school.

DOTTIE. Is he cute?

SHARLA. Stop talkin' like that.

DOTTIE. I hope he's cute. You should have a cute boyfriend.

SHARLA. Listen –

DOTTIE. I had a boyfriend in the third grade, but I never told nobody. His name was Marshall and he was fat. But he loved me.

SHARLA. You should go out more often –

DOTTIE. It was our little secret, me and Marshall. All the other kids would always make a big show of goin' together, writin' their initials on their notebooks and holdin' hands at recess, but me and Marshall kept it a secret. Nobody at that school ever knew we were goin' together, and nobody at home knew either, even though nobody ever asked. We never saw each other at recess, and we didn't have any lunch together, and we didn't write notes, and he didn't walk me home from school.

SHARLA. When would you see him?

DOTTIE. In class. At school.

SHARLA. I mean alone.

DOTTIE. We didn't see each other alone.

SHARLA. Ever?

DOTTIE. That would've spoiled the secret.

SHARLA. How did you all decide you were goin' together if you never spent any time alone?

DOTTIE. We just knew.

SHARLA. Wait –

DOTTIE. We never had to talk about it. If we'd talked about it, it wouldn't've been what it was, which was true.

SHARLA. What was true?

DOTTIE. Love. We loved each other.

SHARLA. How do you know he loved you if y'all never talked about it?

DOTTIE. He loved me with a pure love.

SHARLA. Well, there's not many like that around, I guess.

DOTTIE. It's Joe, isn't it? Joe's comin' over.

SHARLA. Joe who?

DOTTIE. I don't remember. His eyes hurt.

SHARLA. Huh?

DOTTIE. What?

SHARLA. I don't remember his name, but it was important to Ansel you put on your dress. I guess he wanted to make a good impression. *(beat)* You met him?

DOTTIE. Uh-huh.

SHARLA. What's he like?

DOTTIE. He told me I should get a teacher for my kung fu.

SHARLA. Yeah...

DOTTIE. He had me make him some coffee.

SHARLA. What's he like?

DOTTIE. I don't know...

SHARLA. *(beat)* Well. Anyway. Why don't you put on your dress?

DOTTIE. Okay.

(T-Bone barks outside.)

SHARLA. And you just forget about Jennie, all right? She's just an old friend, and I don't wanna have any trouble with your daddy over an old friend.

DOTTIE. You should have a cute boyfriend.

(ANSEL enters.)

SHARLA. I bet your ears were burnin'.

ANSEL. You all talkin' about me?

DOTTIE. No, sir –

SHARLA. I was just tellin' Dottie how you wanted her to put on her dress for dinner tonight.

ANSEL. *(as he changes channels on TV and finds an episode of Cannon)* Would you, honey?

DOTTIE. Is everybody dressin' up?

ANSEL. Yeah. Yeah, we're all gonna dress up.

DOTTIE. Okay.

(She exits.)

SHARLA. Ansel Ray, get in this kitchen.

ANSEL. What?

SHARLA. When are you gonna tell that girl?

ANSEL. Tell her what?

SHARLA. That it's just gonna be her and Joe.

ANSEL. She's not stupid. She'll figure it out.

SHARLA. You gotta tell her. She doesn't know what to expect.

ANSEL. There's nothin' to expect –

SHARLA. That girl's not like other people, goddamn it. She doesn't put two and two together, like you and me and Chris –

ANSEL. There's nothin' to get worried over –

SHARLA. She's never even been on a real date before –

ANSEL. It's not a date –

SHARLA. Well it's the closest thing she ever had to one, except for some fat kid who didn't even know it –

ANSEL. What fat kid?

SHARLA. Give me the keys. I gotta get to work.

ANSEL. There's no reason to get all bent outta –

SHARLA. You talk to that girl, Ansel, cause you're liable to blow this thing real good –

ANSEL. *(fishing keys out of pocket)* What'm I gonna say?

SHARLA. Tell her the story, for God's sake. Don't make everything so complicated –

ANSEL. What story?

SHARLA. The situation. Tell her why he's comin' over tonight.

(ANSEL is having difficulty extracting the keys from his pocket.)

ANSEL. How the hell am I supposed – ?

SHARLA. I don't know, but if she – look at it this way, if she doesn't know why he's – what've you got in your pockets?!

ANSEL. It's like gum or somethin' –

SHARLA. If she doesn't know what's expected of her, then she might disappoint him. Now did you think of that?

ANSEL. I can't tell the girl how to behave –

SHARLA. Oh, you can't tell anybody anything! Give me those goddamn keys!

(He finally jerks the keys from his pocket, along with a shower of loose change that falls to the kitchen floor. She snaps the keys from his hand, flings the door open –)

ANSEL. Wait, Sharla –

(– and she leaves. ANSEL steps out, calls after her.)

– what fat kid?! *(then, to a neighboring trailer)* Would you tie up that fuckin' dog?!

(Unseen to us, the dog attacks. ANSEL retreats quickly into the trailer, slams the door just in time. T-Bone snaps and growls outside, but eventually gives up. ANSEL angrily picks up a chair, considers throwing it, reconsiders, and becomes hypnotized by the cop show on TV.)

Cannon, you fat bastard.

(He stops, collects his change, pockets it, gets a beer from the fridge, kills a bug, and cackles as he washes its remains down the sink.)

(DOTTIE enters, wearing a sexy black evening dress.)

DOTTIE. Daddy?

ANSEL. Oh, honey.

DOTTIE. What do you think?

ANSEL. You look like a goddamn movie star. Come on over here.

(He grabs a chair and helps her stand on it.)

Turn around.

(She does.)

Like a goddamn movie star.

DOTTIE. I feel funny.

ANSEL. Why?

DOTTIE. I don't know. I feel like I went to school naked,

like that dream you told me about.

ANSEL. Don't feel funny. You're beautiful.

DOTTIE. My butt's too big.

ANSEL. Let me let you in on a little secret: guys like big butts.

DOTTIE. They do not.

ANSEL. (*feeling her butt*) I'm speakin' from experience.

DOTTIE. (*getting down from the chair*) Sharla doesn't have a big butt.

ANSEL. Give her some time.

DOTTIE. Why aren't you dressed yet?

ANSEL. I'm not gonna stay for dinner.

DOTTIE. What do you mean?

ANSEL. Me and Chris have some business to attend to –

DOTTIE. Where's Chris?

ANSEL. He's on his way –

DOTTIE. Then where –

ANSEL. So it's just gonna be you and Joe for dinner.

DOTTIE. (*beat*) I should change.

ANSEL. No –

DOTTIE. Yeah, I should –

ANSEL. No, I think it'd be nice for Joe if he –

DOTTIE. Yeah, I'm gonna go change –

(*She heads back to the bedroom. ANSEL grabs her arm.*)

ANSEL. Whoa, whoa, hold up, honey –

DOTTIE. Let me go, I need to change –

ANSEL. Just listen for a second –

DOTTIE. I have to change –

(*She tries to pull away, but ANSEL grabs her around the waist. T-Bone barks again.*)

I have to change, I have to change, I have to change –

ANSEL. Now, calm down, Dottie, just –

DOTTIE. I have to change, I have to change –

ANSEL. (*more violent*) Hold still, you little bitch – !

DOTTIE. (*hysterical*) I HAVE TO CHANGE!

(**CHRIS** bursts in, and immediately separates **ANSEL** and **DOTTIE**. She collapses to the floor.)

CHRIS. What the hell's goin' on – ?!

ANSEL. She wants to get out of her dress!

CHRIS. So?!

ANSEL. Well, I told her I thought it'd be nice for Joe if – !

CHRIS. Let her change if she wants!

ANSEL. Don't you think she looks nice?!

CHRIS. (*to DOTTIE*) You put on whatever you like –

ANSEL. Now wait a goddamn second – !

CHRIS. Let her change, Dad –

ANSEL. Who the hell do you think – ?!

(**CHRIS** is suddenly in **ANSEL**'s face.)

CHRIS. LET HER CHANGE! (*to DOTTIE*) Go change.

(*She exits down the hall.*)

ANSEL. She looked great.

CHRIS. It's bad enough we gotta give the son-of-a-bitch a present. We don't have to gift-wrap it.

ANSEL. You listen to me –

CHRIS. This whole thing makes me sick.

ANSEL. This is my home –

CHRIS. You don't have a home –

ANSEL. – and I call the shots around here –

CHRIS. Shut up.

ANSEL. Just so you know.

CHRIS. She knows it's just gonna be the two of 'em?

ANSEL. She does now.

CHRIS. Great. Goddamn it. Too bad he didn't meet Sharla first, huh? He coulda dated her instead, and I wouldn'ta minded –

ANSEL. That's my wife you're talkin' about.

CHRIS. Yeah, right.

ANSEL. Look, are you ready? Joe told us to be gone half an hour ago.

CHRIS. Fuck Joe.

ANSEL. He's runnin' this show, ain't he?

CHRIS. I'll leave when I by God feel like it.

ANSEL. Chris...? If we're gonna do this, we should do it right.

CHRIS. Yeah, okay. *(a knock at the door)* Poop.

ANSEL. Dottie?

DOTTIE. *(offstage)* I'm not ready!

CHRIS. Answer the door, for God's sake.

(ANSEL opens the door and JOE enters, wearing a double-breasted suit, a new cowboy hat, and a pair of lizard-skin boots. He carries a bouquet of spring flowers.)

JOE. What are you doing here?

CHRIS. We're on our way out.

JOE. We discussed this –

CHRIS. Don't push it, we're leavin' –

JOE. Hey. That's right, Junior. Don't push it. When we make arrangements, I expect the details to have some attention paid to them.

CHRIS. Let's go, Dad.

JOE. You understand me?

CHRIS. Yeah.

JOE. Good boy. Where is she?

CHRIS. She's changing.

(CHRIS and ANSEL leave. T-Bone barks. JOE takes off his hat, holds it, calls into DOTTIE's bedroom.)

JOE. Dottie? It's me, Joe Cooper. We're alone now. *(beat)* It's okay if you don't want to come out. You stay in there as long as you like.

(He hangs his hat, turns off the TV, puts down the flowers, lights a cigarette, goes to the kitchen, and checks the food in the oven.)

Your casserole smells nice. I think you got a good scald on it. *(beat)* I wish I had a funny story about blind dates or casseroles, but I don't. *(beat)* Maybe one will come to me later. *(beat, to himself)* Maybe not.

(He finds a radio on the kitchen counter, turns it on, flips the dial, and finds a Hank Williams song.)

Hank Williams. From Oklahoma. I don't have a funny story about Hank Williams, either. Or Oklahoma. Well, Oklahoma's kinda funny anyway, right? I grew up lookin' at Oklahoma. From the south bank of the Red River. That's where I grew up. See, when I was a boy, the border between Texas and Oklahoma was actually the middle of the river. If you were fishing on the north bank, you were catching Okie fish. But I caught Texas fish. They probably tasted the same. Some time since then, we gave our half of the river away. Now the whole damn thing belongs to Oklahoma. South bank: that's the border. I'm not sure why we did that, but it makes me mad. Kind of like giving away your... your front porch.

(DOTTIE emerges from her bedroom, wearing her jeans and sweatshirt.)

Good evening.

(She moves past him, into the kitchen, and checks the food in the oven.)

DOTTIE. You said it was scalded.

JOE. No, I said, "You got a good scald on it." Just an expression.

DOTTIE. Oh.

JOE. How are you?

DOTTIE. Fine.

JOE. Do you want to know how I am?

DOTTIE. How are you?

JOE. I'm fine, thank you.

(He gets the flowers and gives them to DOTTIE.)

You look very nice.

DOTTIE. Thank you.

JOE. You're welcome.

DOTTIE. I changed.

JOE. Oh?

DOTTIE. I didn't know just you and me were gonna have dinner.

JOE. Somebody should've told you.

DOTTIE. They did. Just now.

JOE. What did you change from?

DOTTIE. A dress.

JOE. I'd love to see it.

DOTTIE. Are you hungry?

JOE. Famished. *(beat)* Yes, hungry.

DOTTIE. Are you ready to eat?

JOE. Whenever you are.

DOTTIE. Your eyes hurt.

JOE. I beg your pardon.

DOTTIE. Huh?

JOE. May I have a beer?

DOTTIE. Oh, sure.

JOE. I'll get it.

(He gets a beer from the refrigerator.)

DOTTIE. Well, I'll serve dinner.

JOE. That would be lovely.

DOTTIE. What did you say?

JOE. I said, "That would be lovely."

(She begins to set the table for two.)

Can I help you?

DOTTIE. No, that's okay.

JOE. How old are you?

DOTTIE. Twenty.

JOE. And Chris...?

DOTTIE. Twenty-two. *(beat)* You're wonderin' about Daddy.

JOE. Hm?

DOTTIE. Daddy was sixteen when Chris was born. Momma was fifteen.

JOE. So young.

DOTTIE. It was an accident.

JOE. Really.

DOTTIE. They didn't want to get married.

JOE. Why did they?

DOTTIE. I don't know. That's just what they always said.
"We didn't want to get married."

JOE. Do you trust me?

DOTTIE. Not quite.

JOE. Good.

DOTTIE. Have you ever been married?

JOE. Maybe.

DOTTIE. What does that mean?

JOE. It means no.

DOTTIE. How come?

JOE. Because women are deceitful, and lying, and manipulative, and vicious, and vituperative, and black-hearted, and evil, and old.

DOTTIE. *(beat)* Yeah.

JOE. What are you drinking?

DOTTIE. Nothing.

JOE. Can I get you something?

DOTTIE. No, thank you.

JOE. A tall glass of cold beer, perhaps?

DOTTIE. No, thank you.

(She finishes setting the table. She takes the casserole out of the oven and places it in the center of the table.)

JOE. Lovely.

DOTTIE. I'm a virgin.

JOE. I know.

DOTTIE. Okay.

(He helps her into her seat, lights a candle, places it on the table, turns off the lights, and takes his seat.)

JOE. A. Tuna. Casserole.

DOTTIE. Yes.

JOE. May I serve?

DOTTIE. Please.

(He slices some casserole and puts it on her plate, then does the same for himself.)

JOE. It looks delicious.

DOTTIE. Thank you.

JOE. Thank you.

(He waits for her to take the first bite. She gestures, "After you." He takes a polite bite, eyes her, takes a larger bite, growls hungrily, and digs in. She begins eating.)

I'd really like to see that dress.

DOTTIE. It wasn't right.

JOE. May I see it anyway?

DOTTIE. How are you gonna kill Momma?

JOE. Ohhh...that's not appropriate dinner conversation.

DOTTIE. Not unless you poison her.

(He freezes, food in his mouth. She laughs.)

JOE. I'm not sure I'm going to kill your mother.

DOTTIE. How come?

JOE. Because I rarely do that sort of thing. I have operatives.

DOTTIE. What's an operative?

JOE. An agent. An assistant.

DOTTIE. Oh.

JOE. Yes. Someone else will take care of it. *(beat)* Unless, of course, I do it myself.

DOTTIE. So you might?

JOE. Yes. I don't know.

DOTTIE. How will you do it? Or the operatives?

JOE. Well... well, it'll be taken care of.

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