

+Side 1

Opening Scene (pgs 1-18)

Characters:

Abby Scotty Marilyn

SCOTTY

Hey, Abby. You didn't want to come down to the dining room?

ABBY

(Doesn't look up from her iPad.) Am I there?

SCOTTY

That's alright, I brought some lunch up for you. *(Places the tray near her.)*

ABBY

Why bother? I can't taste anything.

SCOTTY

I know, I'm sorry.

ABBY

Going on two months now. Which may be a blessing given what they serve down there.

SCOTTY

It's very common. Losing your sense of taste.

ABBY

No, it isn't.

SCOTTY

I've seen it with a lot of our residents. It's usually the medications. Certain combinations do funny things.

ABBY.

Oh, are you a doctor now?

SCOTTY

No. The plate's right there when you get hungry. It's shrimp marinara.

ABBY

It doesn't matter what it is. It all tastes like sand to me.

SCOTTY

Okay. *(He makes the unmade bed over the following.)*

ABBY.

How long is that woman here?

SCOTTY

What do you mean?

ABBY

It's been three weeks. And she never stops talking. How long is this supposed to go on?

SCOTTY

This is where she lives, Abby.

ABBY

Well yes, for now, but I meant —

SCOTTY

Not just for now. Indefinitely. This is Marilyn's room. Same as you.

ABBY

But I thought she was being 'moved as soon as a bed opened up. And from what I hear, that fat woman on the first floor died last night.

SCOTTY

Mrs. Moore. Her name was Mrs. Moore.

ABBY

Well I can't keep track of everyone's name. You knew who I meant. She's dead isn't she?

SCOTTY

She passed away, yes.

ABBY

Then there's an open bed.

SCOTTY

I think Marilyn prefers this room. She said she likes the view of the park. She's very happy in here.

ABBY

But everyone wants the first floor. It's closer to everything. And I've always had my own room, Scotty.

SCOTTY

That's not true.

ABBY

Most of the time. That Spanish lady was here for a few months, but after / her —

SCOTTY

If there's space, we try to accommodate you, but there's not always space. And you don't have a private room.

ABBY

Not officially maybe.

SCOTTY

If you and your family want to pay for a private room —

ABBY.

If I have to have someone in here, why can't it be someone quiet?
What about that woman without the voicebox? She seems nice.

SCOTTY

So is Marilyn. You just need to give her a chance.

ABBY

That woman is troubled, Scotty. I think there's something wrong
with her. She's always trying to make little bets with me.

SCOTTY

What do you mean, bets? What kind of bets?

ABBY

Just the stupidest things. Guessing games and quizzes. This
morning she wanted to race me to the elevator. Last night she bet
me she could balance a slipper on her head.

SCOTTY

Could she?

ABBY

I don't know, I rolled over. You have to get her out of here.

SCOTTY

I can't force her to leave, Abby.

ABBY

Management could. Charlie Hastings would've done it.
He always made sure I had my own room.

SCOTTY

Well, Charlie doesn't work here anymore.

ABBY

Which is a shame. Charlie liked me.

SCOTTY

I like you too. But, I'm not in charge of room assignments. Miss Larusso is.

ABBY

Well you're friends with her, aren't you? I see you in her office all the time watching those cat videos or whatever they are. They must be very funny the way you two carry on.

SCOTTY

They aren't cat videos.

ABBY

No?

SCOTTY

Not all of them.

ABBY

Can't you talk to her?

SCOTTY

You talk to her. Be your own advocate.

ABBY

Oh that never works. Besides, Miss Larusso doesn't like me.

SCOTTY

Because you're mean to her.

ABBY

Her problem is, she has no sense of humor. Charlie Hastings thought I was hilarious.

SCOTTY

Because he was drunk.

ABBY

You leave that man alone:

SCOTTY

He had a terrible drinking problem, which is why he was fired.

ABBY

All I know is, he did whatever I asked him to. If he were here, that woman would've been gone by now.

(Marilyn enters.)

SCOTTY

There she is!

MARILYN

Here I am!

SCOTTY

How you feeling, Marilyn?

MARILYN

I feel great, thank you. Just back from my walk.

SCOTTY

Oh, are you doing that now?

MARILYN

Every day after lunch. Twice around the park. Me and Alice and Sally. Mr. Hantz comes along sometimes. I've invited Abby but she doesn't like the exercise.

ABBY

It's not the exercise I don't like.

MARILYN

Did you make my bed, Scotty? I've told you that you don't have to do that. I'm only gonna mess it up again. I'm a restless sleeper.

ABBY.

Also she snores.

MARILYN

It's true!

ABBY

I had to get earplugs.

MARILYN

My Oliver used to boot me out of bed. Usually it's the husband on the couch, but with us it was me. Poor man.

ABBY.

My very thought.

MARILYN

(Chuckles at that.) Isn't she awful, Scotty?

SCOTTY.

She is, yes. She's awful.

(As he exits.)

I'll be back.

MARILYN

We missed you in the dining room. You should see it down there. They have it all done up for Halloween now. Pumpkins up on the walls, skeletons, black cats. You'd love it.

ABBY

Why would you think that?

MARILYN

They're like classroom decorations. And Mr. Hantz said you used to be a teacher. Grade school, he said. I don't know how he got it outta ya, you won't tell *me* anything.

ABBY

(Looks to the windowsill.) My plants are droopy.

MARILYN.

But teacher makes sense. I can picture it. I bet you were very stern with the children.

(Abby grabs the watering can and heads into the bathroom. We hear the water running.)

I was an office manager. In my husband's business. Did I mention he was a skydiving instructor?

ABBY

Several times.

MARILYN

We were based down at Alexandria Field. I could tell you some stories, boy. My children run the business now. They're good kids. And they'd do anything for me.

(Abby comes out of the bathroom with the watering can filled. She waters her plants over the following.)

Did you hear that Mrs. Moore died? Poor thing. Went in her sleep. Such a nice woman.

ABBY

Such a nice room.

MARILYN

Room?

ABBY

It's too bad she's dead, but silver linings, right?

MARILYN

How do you mean?

ABBY

That room is prime real estate in this place. First floor -between the mailboxes and the day room. Less walking, more space.

MARILYN

Are you thinking of changing rooms?

ABBY

What? No, I'm not thinking of changing rooms.

MARILYN

Oh. You sound so enamored of it.

ABBY

I'm not. I only mentioned it because I thought you might want it.

MARILYN

Oh no, I'm perfectly happy where I am. There's much more sunlight up here.

ABBY

No there isn't.

MARILYN

(Moves to the windows.) Sure there is, we don't have that building blocking our view like they do downstairs. And I can see the park from up here. There's your bench where you like to sit and read. It's a lovely view.

ABBY

I guess I've never noticed.

MARILYN

Well that's a waste, with you so close to the window. Maybe you'd like to swap beds?

ABBY

I would not.

MARILYN

No, I don't blame you. It's the nicest spot in the room.

(Abby, annoyed, may go back to reading. Marilyn takes a child's painting from her dresser, smiling.)

Did I show you this? My grandson made it for me. Caleb. So sweet. Do you know what it is?

ABBY

A Pap smear?

MARILYN

It's a fire truck.

ABBY

I don't see it.

MARILYN

He loves fire trucks. Ambulances too. Anything with a siren. He can hear one from blocks away. He gets this big grin, and flies to the window to see them pass by. They make him so happy.

ABBY

That's creepy.

MARILYN

Creepy?

ABBY

Those sirens are blaring because people are dying.

MARILYN

(Chuckles.) Now come / on.

ABBY

They are. Or their homes are going up in flames. Or there's a car accident, or some old man has fallen down some stairs. That's what those sirens mean. People in pain.

MARILYN

Caleb doesn't know any of that. It's just a fire truck to him.

ABBY

Well, when you've heard as many sirens as I have... They're nothing to be happy about. Is he alright? In the head I mean, or is he a little...

MARILYN

What kind of question is that?

ABBY

Well if he's chasing after fire trucks, you have to wonder. My son never did that. Normal boys don't do that.

MARILYN

Of course they do. You're just trying to get a rise out of me. *(Pause.)* So you have a son, huh? What's his name?

ABBY

Barbara. *(A moment, then Marilyn turns her attention to Abby's tray of food.)*

MARILYN

You should eat. There's cobbler. It's very good.

ABBY

You know I can't taste anything.

MARILYN

Oh is that still going on?

ABBY

You know it is. *(Looks under the lid.)* And I love cobbler.

MARILYN

I know, I'm sorry.

ABBY.

I don't think you are. I think you're gloating. I think you're angry I made fun of your grandson's painting. *(Takes a bite of the cobbler.)*

MARILYN

Oh, I don't get angry.

ABBY

(Beat.) You don't get angry.

MARILYN

Not anymore, no. There's really no point. It always leads to an ugly place. And I don't care for ugly places. *(Beat.)* How's the cobbler?

ABBY

Tastes like paste.

MARILYN

It's peach. I remember you mentioning it was your mother's specialty, so I put in a special request.

ABBY

(Shoves it aside.) Well it's much too late for peaches. It's a summer fruit.

(Marilyn takes out her Sudoku puzzle book and sits on her bed.)

MARILYN

Have you tried these? Sudoku? I do them every day to keep my brain limber. Sudoku. They're from Japan.

ABBY.

Yes, I know.

MARILYN

Would you like to try one?

ABBY

No thank you. *(Marilyn looks disappointed. She works on her Sudoku. After a couple beats...)* What do you mean, you put in a special request?

MARILYN

I talked to Miss Larusso. I said, "Is there any way to get some peach cobbler on the menu?" And she said, "I bet we could arrange that, let me talk to the kitchen."

ABBY

You just asked her. And she said, "No problem"?

MARILYN

She's very nice to me.

(Scotty enters with their medication.)

ABBY

Did you hear that, Scotty? Miss Larusso is very nice to Marilyn.

SCOTTY

Well Marilyn is very nice to Miss Larusso. Funny how that works.
(Gives Marilyn her pills in a paper cup.)

MARILYN

(Re: her cup of pills.) Say bartender, can you make mine a double?

SCOTTY

Oh, I think you've had enough, ma'am. I'm afraid I'm gonna have to cut you off. *(They have a little laugh.)*

MARILYN

(To Abby.) We do that every day.

ABBY

Yes, I know.

(Marilyn swallows her pills down, then hands the cup back to Scotty. He moves over to Abby, and hands her her pills.)

SCOTTY

Here you go.

ABBY

(To Scotty.) Talk to Larusso for me. Please. Just put in the request.

MARILYN

What request?

ABBY

Chicken and dumplings. If you can ask for cobbler, I can ask for dumplings. *(Downs her pills.)*

[SCENE TRANSITION]

MARILYN

Did Scotty show you his card? He's an actor, you know.

ABBY

You're an actor?

SCOTTY

Well, not professional.

ABBY

No?

MARILYN

Give her a card, Scotty.

ABBY

Yes, Scotty, give me a card.

SCOTTY

Sure. Here ya go. *(Gives her a postcard.)*

MARILYN

He was handing them out at lunch. It's a postcard for the play he's in.

SCOTTY

It's not a play.

MARILYN

Oh, I misunderstood. I thought it was a play.

ABBY

(Reading from the card.) "Beelzebub's Den."

SCOTTY

It's a haunted house.

MARILYN

Well that's even better than a play.

SCOTTY

Some friends of mine rent out a warehouse in Pottsville every year and decorate it, and we get into makeup and costumes. It's pretty scary.

ABBY

Weird thing to invite residents to.

SCOTTY

I thought it'd be fun for everyone to see what I do outside of this place.

ABBY

Does Miss Larusso know you want to give us all heart attacks?

SCOTTY

No one's gonna have a heart attack.

ABBY

It says on the card, "Heart-stopping horror!" Heart. Stopping.

MARILYN

I'd like to go.

ABBY

Yes, I think that's a wonderful idea. You should go.

MARILYN

I'm gonna!

SCOTTY

Excellent! Thanks, Marilyn. That puts me at thirty-nine!

ABBY

Thirty-nine what?

SCOTTY

Tickets. Me and my buddies need to sell forty each to break even on the cost of that warehouse.

MARILYN

Oh, you have to come, Abby. You'd make it forty!

ABBY

No, I don't think so.

MARILYN

He needs to sell tickets! And we should support Scotty and his dreams.

SCOTTY

It's not exactly a dream, it's just —

MARILYN

All the nice things he does for everyone around here?

ABBY

What nice things?

MARILYN

Making our beds, bringing our pills.

ABBY

That's his job. He's not changing your sheets because he's nice, he's doing it because that's what he gets paid to do.

MARILYN

It's a twelve-dollar ticket. Throw the kid a bone.

ABBY

I will not. (*Beat.*)

SCOTTY

And you wonder why people won't do *you* any favors.

ABBY

What favors? Larusso?

SCOTTY

You want me to talk to her for you, and yet —

ABBY

Now wait a minute. Are you saying you'd be more inclined to put in a good word if I went to your spook house?

SCOTTY

All I'm saying is, it would've been a nice gesture. That's all.

ABBY

I didn't realize you were a scratch-my-back kinda guy, Scotty.

SCOTTY

Well, you don't really know me, do you.

MARILYN

You know, I'm happy to talk to Larusso if you really want dumplings so badly.

ABBY

No, I want Scotty to do it. He knows the kind I like.

SCOTTY

(*Beat.*) I do. And if you're a little nicer I can try to get them for you.

ABBY

Fine. I'll see the damn show.

SCOTTY

Yes! Forty!

[END OF SCENE]

+Side 2

Haunted House (pgs 19-28)

Characters:

Abby
Marilyn
Zombie Butler
Clown
Woman in White

Ominous music, creaking doors, and screams of terror. Lights up on the entrance to Beelzebub's Den. Marilyn and Abby enter. Marilyn already looks spooked. Abby gives her a little nudge forward.

ABBY

Keep walking. Down the hall they said.

MARILYN

Stop pushing me.

ABBY

God, it smells in here, doesn't it? Like cat piss and pot.

(A Zombie Butler in Victorian dress. appears.)

ZOMBIE BUTLER

Good evening, weary travelers, and welcome to my master's home.

MARILYN

Thank you.

ZOMBIE BUTLER

Down this hall lies only despair and torture. Dare ye enter?

MARILYN

We dare! We dare!

ZOMBIE BUTLER

Very well. (*Screams:*) STEP INTO THE MOUTH OF HELL!

ABBY

Oh for godsakes.

(He disappears. The women approach a wall of framed Victorian portraits.)

MARILYN

(Re: one of the paintings.) Oooh! Doesn't this one look like Mrs. Moore?

(There is a screech of music as the painting slides open to reveal a horrific screaming clown in the frame!)

CLOWN

(Screaming.)

BLEEEEEEEEEEEEEHHHHH!

MARILYN

(Also screaming.)

AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

(Abby didn't even flinch. The clown giggles and the painting slides back into place. Marilyn tries to catch her breath.)

MARILYN

Oh my lord, my heart is thumping right out of my chest!

ABBY

Well what did you think was gonna happen?

MARILYN

(Grabs Abby's hand.) Feel it.

ABBY

No.

MARILYN

Feel my heart.

ABBY

I don't want to.

MARILYN

Feel it!

ABBY

Would you let go of me!

(Abby snatches her hand away. The Zombie Butler appears at the end of the hall.)

ZOMBIE BUTLER

This way, weary travelers... This way.

(They continue on, and eventually the space opens up into a torture chamber. The spooky music continues over the screams of torture. In the middle of the room is Scotty. He is dressed in old-time prison stripes and strapped into an electric chair.)

Step in, don't be shy. I'd offer you a seat, but this one seems to be taken.

MARILYN

Oh look, it's Scotty! *(Gives an excited little wave.)*

SCOTTY

(As prisoner. Panic and desperation.) Oh, thank god you're here! Kind strangers, have mercy upon me! There's been a terrible mistake. I don't belong here!

ABBY

That makes two of us.

SCOTTY

(As prisoner.) Please, they're trying to kill me. You have to stop them. It's not my time! IT'S NOT MY —

*(The Zombie Butler has thrown a giant lever.
Lights flash and park as volts of electricity shoot
through the prisoner.)*

TI -AMGGGGGGHHHH!!! AMGGGGGGHHHH! NOOOOOOOOO!
AAGGGGGHHHH!

*(The butler switches the electricity off, and Scotty
slumps in his chair...)*

This is it then. Never to see the sky again. Nor my home. Nor the people I love...

MARILYN

He's very good.

ABBY

Yes, such a nuanced performance. *(Scotty gives Abby a look.)*

ZOMBIE BUTLER

Say your goodbyes, cretin! *(Throws the switch again.)*

SCOTTY

*(As prisoner. As if electricity is running
through him.)*

AMGGHH! NOOOO, I'M NOT READY TO DIIIIIIII—!

*(He dies. The electricity is switched off. Scotty
slumps with his eyes closed Abby chuckles.
Marilyn looks traumatized.)*

MARILYN

Aren't you scared?

ABBY

No, I don't get scared. Certainly not of this nonsense. (*A giggle echoes through the chamber...*)

VOICE OF THE CLOWN

Teeheeheeheehee!

ZOMBIE BUTLER

Here comes the master's underling. Come to collect the body.

(The giggles get louder, and the clown creeps into the light of the room.)

VOICE OF THE CLOWN

Teeheeheeheehee!

MARILYN

Oh god, that damn clown. It's so disturbing. Look at him.

CLOWN

Tra-la-la, the master will be pleased. He loves fried food. (*He whips around suddenly to face the women.*) And what is this? Some aged meat?

ABBY

Rude.

CLOWN

Teeheeheehee!

(The clown pulls out a chainsaw, which roars to life – BZZZZZZ. Marilyn screams, the clown cackles.)

ZOMBIE BUTLER

This way, ladies! Escape while you can!

[SCENE TRANSITION – NO SCOTTY]

(The women flee the cackling clown and find themselves in another corridor. They pass a cemetery scene - maybe the Grim Reaper wanders among the graves.)

MARILYN

What do you mean you don't get scared?

ABBY

Haven't been in years. That's what happens when you live long enough. Things disappear. Just like my taste buds. Just like your anger. Everything 'goes eventually.

ZOMBIE BUTLER

Don't dawdle, ladies.

MARILYN

I bet I could find something you're scared of.

ABBY

No.

MARILYN

How about this. I try to find something that makes you scared. And you try to find something that makes me angry. That'd be fun!

ABBY

I'm not betting you, Marilyn!

(They come upon a child's nursery, all gauzy and WHITE. An empty white crib. A rocking horse. A Woman in White sits in a rocking chair, cradling a baby. A toy piano plunks out the notes of a lullaby.)

WOMAN IN WHITE

(Hums a lullaby.) La-lala-laaaa-la la-la-la. La-lala-laaaa-la, La-la-laaa.

MARILYN

(Loudly whispers to Abby.) I find that very unsettling.

WOMAN IN WHITE

(To her baby.) Shhh. It's alright. I won't let them take you. It's okay, Mama's here, you precious baby boy. Mama's here.

VOICE OF THE CLOWN

Teeheeheehee. I smell plump, succulent newborn for my master.

WOMAN IN WHITE

(Panicked.) Oh no, he wants my baby.

MARILYN

The clown wants her baby.

WOMAN IN WHITE

(Turns on the women.) You brought him here! You led him to my baby boy! Get out before he —

VOICE OF THE CLOWN

Tra-la-la ... tra-la-la ...

WOMAN IN WHITE

Oh no, it's too late! Weve been discovered!

VOICE OF THE CLOWN

Pink little toes, and pink little ears ...

(The Woman in White grabs a large crucifix and thrusts it at Marilyn.)

WOMAN IN WHITE

You, take this crucifix!

MARILYN

Oh god!

WOMAN IN WHITE

(To Abby.) And you, take my baby.

ABBY

No thank you, I don't want I to —

WOMAN IN WHITE

(Tosses the baby at her.) TAKE HIM! And let no evil come upon him!

(Abby catches the baby. The Woman in White runs and leaps into the crib to hide. Abby looks down at the baby, oddly intrigued by all of this. The clown emerges from the shadows.)

CLOWN

Ahh, the nursery. That means there are children about. Come out, come out, wherever you are ...

MARILYN

He's looking for that baby.

ABBY

I know.

MARILYN

Don't give it to him.

ABBY

I know!

CLOWN

(Whips around) Ohhh, if it isn't my *old* friends. And what is that in your arms? Why, it's a wee babe. A morsel for my master!

(He moves in for the baby, and Marilyn holds out the crucifix defiantly.)

MARILYN

BACK!

CLOWN

(Recoils.) Nooooo!

MARILYN

BACK you demon clown!

CLOWN

Nooooo! Not the crucifix! The sight of it burns me!

MARILYN

You shall not take his child! Begone!

CLOWN

Agggggggghhh!

MARILYN

Begone, I say!

CLOWN

(Retreating into the shadows.) You have repelled me! My master shall hear of this! *(Giggly sobs as he exits.)*

WOMAN IN WHITE

(Leaps out of hiding.) You did it! You saved my baby! Thank you!

MARILYN

You're welcome.

WOMAN IN WHITE

(Turns to Abby.) Please, may I have him back?

(Abby doesn't move. She's still looking down at the baby, cradling it protectively.)

MARILYN

Abby?

WOMAN IN WHITE

Please, madame. I want my boy.

*(A moment, and Abby looks up at them.
She reluctantly hands the baby back.)*

Ohh, there he is. Nothing will ever harm you. *(Singing her lullaby.)*
La-lalalaaaa- la la-la-la. La-lala-laaaa-la, La-la.

ZOMBIE BUTLER

Let us depart, ladies.

*(But Abby doesn't move; she is still transfixed by
the woman and her baby.)*

Next room, Madame.

MARILYN

Abby? It's time to go.

*(Abby finally joins Marilyn and they head for
the exit.)*

WOMAN IN WHITE

La-lala-laaaa-la la-la-la. La-lala-laaaa-la, Lala- laaa.

*(The lights fade on the Woman in White rocking
her baby.)*

[END OF SCENE]

+Side 3

The Bet (pgs 29-38)

Characters:

Abby Scotty Marilyn

Lights up in Abby and Marilyn's room. Abby is puttering about anxiously when Scotty lets himself in.

ABBY

Oh good, you're back! I've been on pins and needles all morning. You did it? You talked to Larusso?

SCOTTY

I did.

ABBY

Oh thank god! I knew you'd do it. And just in time! I don't think I could've taken another day with that woman. So when is she out?

SCOTTY

She's not.

ABBY

(Beat.) What?

SCOTTY

Larusso denied your request.

ABBY

Don't tell me that. Do not say that to me.

SCOTTY

I told you it was a long shot.

ABBY

You explained the situation? How there was an empty bed downstairs / and how — ?

SCOTTY

It's a no-go, Abby. I'm sorry.

ABBY

You promised to help me. You said if I went to / your —

SCOTTY

I said I would *try*.

ABBY

Try! Try! Story of my life! Everyone tries! And nobody does.

SCOTTY

The problem is, Marilyn doesn't want to leave. And Miss Larusso doesn't wanna pull her out of here. What am I supposed to do?

ABBY

Charlie Hastings would've figured it out. He hauled all manner of people out of this room. You clearly don't give a shit.

SCOTTY

Don't say that.

ABBY

You obviously have your favorites, and I'm not one of them.

SCOTTY

I don't pick favorites. I try to treat every resident with the same kindness and respect.

ABBY

Ha!

SCOTTY

You may not believe this, but I actually want you to be happy.

ABBY

Well you failed, because I'm not.

SCOTTY

And I'm sorry about that.

ABBY

You're sorry? I'm the one who dragged herself to that asinine spook house for nothing. (Moves to her watering can.) You're a terrible actor by the way.

SCOTTY

(*Beat.*) Did you just say I'm a terrible actor?

ABBY

(Watering her plants.) I'm just being honest. If you go and invite me to something like that, I'm gonna give you my review.

SCOTTY

(*Beat.*) Right.

ABBY

Twelve bucks for that shitshow.

SCOTTY

You want your money back, Abby?

ABBY

That'd be a step in the right direction.

SCOTTY

Fine. (*Rummages in pocket for money.*)

ABBY

Well don't get upset.

SCOTTY

(*Throws a few bills in her direction.*) Here, take it. Take it!

ABBY

If you wanna be a real actor you're gonna need some thicker skin.

SCOTTY

Don't tell me what I need to be a real actor. You don't know anything about it.

ABBY

There's only seven I dollars here.

SCOTTY

That's all I have right now! I'll go to the ATM at lunch!

(Turns to leave, but then comes back at her.)

But you know... for the record, Charlie Hastings did not do you any favors.

ABBY

No?

SCOTTY

No. He was not pulling residents out of this room as a favor to you; he was doing it as a favor to them.

ABBY

Alright, if that makes you feel better.

SCOTTY

There wasn't a single person placed in this room who didn't want out of it within a week. This may come as a shock, but you're apparently not the easiest person to live with.

ABBY

Hey, I don't know what Charlie had to put in the records / but —

SCOTTY

It's not the records, it's common knowledge. No one wanted to live with you. Charlie got so sick of the room change requests that he just stopped putting people in here.

(Abby stops watering and faces him.)

I did my best with Larusso, despite what you may think, but she made it very clear — not only will she not eject Marilyn from this room, she said it's my job to keep her here, because god knows if Marilyn does leave, we may never be able to fill that bed again.
(Silence.)

ABBY

Okay. Thank you for clearing things up.

(Scotty stands there for a moment, already regretting saying all this.)

SCOTTY

Look, I'm sorry —

ABBY

No-no-no, don't do that. Don't be sorry. I *like* the truth. I'm not thin-skinned like you are. You don't need to worry about me,

SCOTTY

(Beat.) Okay.

ABBY

I do want the rest of that money though.

(He regards her. Then Marilyn enters with a tray. It has a couple covered plates on it.)

[SCENE TRANSITION - ABBY & MARILYN]

SCOTTY

There she is!

MARILYN

Here I am!

SCOTTY

How was breakfast?

MARILYN

Delicious. They were about to close up the dining room, so I got you a few things, Abby.

SCOTTY

What a sweet lady. I'll be back.

(Scotty exits. Marilyn places the plates on the table closest to Abby.)

MARILYN

There's some scrambled eggs under this plate, and a little sausage. And this is a waffle. I put the syrup on the side. I know you say it all tastes the same, but I thought I'd give you some options anyway. *(Looks to her.)* Everything alright?

ABBY

My request was denied.

MARILYN

No chicken and dumplings then?

ABBY

That was never what I wanted.

MARILYN

No, I didn't think so. I assumed you were trying to get me booted from this room.

ABBY

(Beat.) You knew.

MARILYN

You're not one for subtlety.

ABBY

Look, some people like having someone around. I'm not one of those people.

MARILYN

I'm not transferring downstairs.

ABBY

Well you're gonna have. to transfer somewhere, because this isn't working out. We're just not a good match. Now I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings —

MARILYN

It doesn't.

ABBY

Well ... good. Then you understand what I'm trying to say.

MARILYN

I do. But I don't think it's true.

ABBY

No, it is.

MARILYN

I think we're a fine match.

ABBY

I don't enjoy your company.

MARILYN

That's alright. I like the view, and the sunshine. And I don't mind your personality.

ABBY

I don't like you. It's that simple. I don't like you, and I want you to go.

MARILYN

If you're so unhappy, maybe you should take Mrs. Moore's bed.

ABBY

(Beat.) Oh my god, is that what this is? A shakedown? Are you trying to take this room for yourself?

MARILYN

No.

ABBY

Because I have been here four years, and you are not going to displace me! I have earned this room, and I am staying in it!

MARILYN

Oh good. I'm glad to hear you say that. I prefer you stay as well, but you seemed intent on our not living together.

ABBY

You prefer I stay.

MARILYN

I do.

ABBY

Why?

MARILYN

Because you remind me of my husband.

ABBY

(Beat.) Oh, lord.

MARILYN

He was all pushback and bluster too. And I got very good at working around that. It's sort of my area of expertise. If I lived with him, I can certainly live with you.

ABBY

Marilyn —

MARILYN

You need to stop. Because I'm not leaving. (A stalemate. Neither woman budes. A few moments pass, and then Abby reluctantly has to accept that it's come to this ...)

ABBY

What if I took your bet?

MARILYN

(Beat.) My bet?

ABBY

If I win, will you go?

MARILYN

Which bet are you talking about? Balancing the slipper?

ABBY

No, the one you made at the spook house.

MARILYN

Where I try to scare you?

ABBY

If you can do that, then you win. Unless I make you angry first.

MARILYN

Then you win.

ABBY

Nice and simple.

MARILYN

(Beat.) What are the ground rules?

ABBY

Scotty can't know.

MARILYN

Oh, I'd hate to keep a secret from Scotty.

ABBY

Scotty. Can't. Know. If he does, he'll blab it to Larusso, and she'll shut it down.

MARILYN

(Beat.) Okay. What else?

ABBY

Just that you agree to leave this room if I win.

MARILYN

And what if I win?

ABBY

You get to stay.

MARILYN

But I already get to stay. I live here. What more do I get?

ABBY

(Beat.) What more do you want?

MARILYN

I want the bed by the window.

ABBY

(Beat.) Okay.

MARILYN

Then I'm in. Bet?

ABBY

Bet.

[END SCENE]

+Side 4

Skydiving (pgs 59-60)

Characters:

Lewis

(In the transition we hear the deafening roar of an airplane engine rise up. Lewis, a jump instructor appears in a pool of light, yelling over the sound of the airplane.)

LEWIS. HEY AGAIN, FOLKS. I WANTED TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING SKY HIGH ADVENTURES FOR YOUR OUTING THIS AFTERNOON, AND TO BRIEFLY TOUCH ON A FEW THINGS AS WE MAKE OUR ASCENT!

JUST A REFRESHER — FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW... OR CAN'T REMEMBER, MY NAME IS LEWIS, AND I'M HERE TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD TIME AND ARE SAFE AND SECURE! THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER! I'M HAPPY TO REPORT THAT WE'RE EXPECTING CLEAR SKIES AND IDEAL FLYING CONDITIONS TODAY!

NOW THERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO REVIEW AS WE MAKE THE CLIMB! THE HARNESS THAT YOU'RE WEARING IS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO CONNECT YOU TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR, SO YOU WILL WANT IT TO BE TIGHT AND SECURE!

(***)

YOU'VE ALSO BEEN OUTFITTED WITH A PAIR OF GOGGLES AND A HELMET. THE HELMET IS EQUIPPED WITH A MIC, AS WELL AS A TWO-WAY RADIO THAT WILL ALLOW YOU ALL TO STAY IN COMMUNICATION DURING YOUR DESCENT! IN A TANDEM DIVE, YOUR INSTRUCTOR WEARS THE PARACHUTE PACK ON HIS OR HER BACK, AND SO LONG AS YOU STAY CONNECTED TO ONE ANOTHER, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF!

+Side 5

Benjamin (pgs 96-104)

Characters:

Benjamin Abby

BENJAMIN

I didn't realize she was sick.

ABBY

In the head, you mean? Oh, she's not sick. She's diabolical.

BENJAMIN

She seems so sweet.

. ABBY

That's what makes her so diabolical. (After a moment, Benjamin looks around.)

BENJAMIN

So this is nice. It's a nice place. I would've come to visit sooner, but I had no idea where you were.

ABBY

Well, I wanted to leave a forwarding address, but you were otherwise engaged. (*Beat.*)

BENJAMIN

You look good.

ABBY

I am good.

BENJAMIN.

Me too. Much better than I was. And I'm working. Odd jobs mostly. Drywalling and things like that. Nothing big, but it pays the rent. I think you'd be proud.

ABBY

Where are you living?

BENJAMIN

In Freehold. With Zoe.

ABBY

I don't know who that is.

BENJAMIN

No, I know. She's, uh ... pretty great actually. You'd like her.

ABBY

Well I hope it sticks, because if it doesn't work out in Freehold you can't live here. Too many people in this room as it is.

BENJAMIN

I know, Mom.

ABBY

I wanted a private room but there wasn't enough money for that. Actually I wanted to stay in my own house, but it was hard to make those payments with an empty bank /account.

BENJAMIN

Okay, you don't need I to —

ABBY

Are you clean, Benjamin? (*Beat.*)

BENJAMIN

Yeah. Almost two years now.

ABBY

Well that's good. If you are in fact / clean.

BENJAMIN

I am, Mom.

ABBY

Good. That's good. But you'll forgive me for not patting you on the back. If that's what you came for, then you're out / of luck.

BENJAMIN

That's not what I came for.

ABBY

No? "I think you'd be proud."

BENJAMIN

Are you not?

ABBY

I was proud, Benny. The first time you got clean. And the second time and the tenth, and after twenty years of you saying you're clean, it gets a little hard to muster an "Atta boy, kiddo."

BENJAMIN

I bet.

ABBY

But congrats, you're not sticking needles in your arm. Neither am I. Neither is anyone else in this building, except maybe the diabetics. And yet nobody's proud of us. Not for being clean. Because, guess what? You *should* be clean. You *should* be.

BENJAMIN

You're right.

ABBY

I know I am. (Pause.) But you're doing better.

BENJAMIN

Yes. Much.

ABBY

So you'll be able to pay me back then? (No response.) So not that much better. Can I safely assume you didn't meet this Zoe woman on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange then?

BENJAMIN

No, I didn't meet her on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

ABBY

But on *some* kind of floor, I bet.

BENJAMIN

(*Chuckles.*) You just let me know when you're finished getting in your punches.

ABBY

Oh it's gonna be a while I think.

BENJAMIN

Then I should probably sit down.

ABBY

What do you want here, Benny?

BENJAMIN

I don't want anything. Your friend / called *me*.

ABBY

She's not my friend.

BENJAMIN

Well, regardless, I'm here. We might as well catch up.

ABBY

Right. I remember how this scene goes now. You come to catch up, and the next day I notice that things are missing.

BENJAMIN

I'm not gonna / take anything.

ABBY

Jewelry, radios, the change jar.

BENJAMIN

Jesus. When did you get so mean?

ABBY

Oh it just happened, in dribs and drabs.

BENJAMIN

Because of me?

ABBY

I didn't say that.

BENJAMIN

It's what you think though. All the bad stuff that / happened —

ABBY

Don't tell me what / I think.

BENJAMIN

Daddy, and the house, and you getting fired. It was all my fault.

ABBY

No, that's not what I think. Maybe that's what you think, but it's not what I think. The bad stuff wasn't all your fault. *(Beat.)* Just mostly. *(Beat.)*

BENJAMIN

That's fair.

(Silence. A momentary truce.)

ABBY

Marilyn and I have a bet, by the way. That's why you're here. If she scares me, she gets the bed by the window. So she broke into an office, stole my file, and dragged you here hoping I'd flinch.
(*Beat.*)

BENJAMIN

That's kinda nuts.

ABBY

You have no idea.

(A nice moment between them. But then...)

I think you should probably go. (*Beat.*)

BENJAMIN

I don't wanna go.

ABBY

Why not?

BENJAMIN

I just ... wanna spend a little time with you. Is that crazy?

ABBY

No, not crazy at all. We all want things. I certainly did. I wanted to stay in my house, I wanted a healthy son —

BENJAMIN

Would you stop?

ABBY

I wanted holidays and neighbors and barbecues and a garden —

BENJAMIN

You had that. Don't pretend you never had that.

ABBY

Well I wanted *more* of it. I wanted it to keep going. It does for most people / after all.

BENJAMIN

I know. I know / it does.

ABBY

I wanted to get old with Daddy, and take trips to Hawaii, and go to your wedding, and *grandchildren* that I could *squeeze*, and *spoil*. I wanted a *lot of things*, Benny. So no, it's not crazy to *want* to spend time with me. I spent years *wishing* you would want that. But you seemed to want. other things more. And now it's too late.

BENJAMIN

Don't say that.

ABBY

Why not?

BENJAMIN

Because I'm here.

ABBY

For now. But you'll go away again. You always do.

BENJAMIN

I won't / this time.

ABBY

Which is what you always say. And I know you mean it when you say it. But then you slip, you can't help it.

BENJAMIN

Well I'd love to give you a *guarantee* / but I can't.

ABBY

That's my point, you can't. And I'm too tired to be disappointed again. It hurts too much when it doesn't work out. And it seems to never work out.

BENJAMIN

(Pause.) So you're done then. The store's closed. You're gonna spend the rest of your life in this room stewing about I all the things —

ABBY

Stewing? I'll have you know, I have a very active and satisfying life here. There are activities and trips and walking groups — And I jumped out of a plane last week! *(Beat.)* Well maybe jumped isn't the right word, but / still.

BENJAMIN

What are you talking about?

ABBY

It doesn't matter, the point is, don't wag your finger at me and tell me that I'm done. I'm not done.

BENJAMIN

You're just done with me.

ABBY

Don't. I have put in my time with you. I have done more than my fair share of parental duty. I don't owe you any more. *(Beat.)* I'd like you to go now.

BENJAMIN

(Beat.) Alright.

(Benjamin pulls a photo from his pocket. Abby doesn't look at him.)

Can I give you something before I do?

ABBY

I prefer you didn't.

BENJAMIN

Mom —

ABBY

Benny, please. Just ... leave.

(This is more effortful than cold. Abby, whether we see it or not, is trying to hold it together.)

BENJAMIN

Okay. (Puts the photo back in his pocket.) Your friend has the number at Zoe's if you wanna reach me.

ABBY

She's not my friend.

BENJAMIN

No, I know.

(Benjamin regards his mother, then exits. After he goes, Abby takes a few moments to collect herself. After a while, Marilyn reenters.)

+Side 6

Friction (pgs 105-111)

Characters:

Marilyn

Abby

MARILYN

He didn't stay long. (*No response.*) Is he coming back?

ABBY

No, I don't think he is. (*Silence.*)

MARILYN

Look, Abby, I didn't mean to make trouble.

ABBY

Right.

MARILYN

I knew you might be upset, but I like to think that I was also doing something nice for you. He's your only child after all /and –

ABBY

Is there something wrong with you?

MARILYN

I'm sorry?

ABBY

I knew you were odd, but now I realize there might actually be something *wrong* with you.

MARILYN

You're mad at me.

ABBY

To pull *family* into this — ?

MARILYN

Now wait a second, *you* did that first. You pulled family into it first. The police records, and calling up pretending to be my / daughter —

ABBY

Pretended! I didn't actually bring your family here!

MARILYN

But they came!

ABBY

Because you told them to! You asked for their help! You drugged me and got I them to —

MARILYN

Only because you started it! You made it personal the minute you ridiculed Caleb's painting.

ABBY

You tracked down my *estranged son!*

MARILYN

I thought it would make you happy. I thought if you saw how well he was / doing...

ABBY

Then what, Marilyn?! I'd see the light, and my heart would grow three sizes today?

MARILYN

I think one size would've been plenty.

ABBY

Don't do that. I'm riot the mean one here, you are, so don't try to flip this around and pretend that you were trying to do me a favor.

MARILYN

I was!

ABBY

You might have everyone else fooled, but I see who you are. Flitting around here, rubbing my face in your happiness. Bragging about your children when you know damn well it's a sore spot / for me.

MARILYN

I did *not* know that! How could I? You refused to tell me anything about your family!

ABBY

How lucky, your kids visit, and take you to lunch, and paint pictures!

(Grabs Caleb's painting.)

MARILYN

(Re: the painting.) Be careful with that.

ABBY

(Holds it up.) This? *(Pretends to bobble it.)* Whooooa-ohhh.

MARILYN

Gimme that painting, Abby.

ABBY

(Moves away from her.) No, I don't think I will.

MARILYN

You're obviously mad that I won, but you don't need to lash / out at —

ABBY

You didn't win. I was surprised to see him, but I wasn't scared.

MARILYN

Yes, you were.

ABBY

Of Benjamin?

MARILYN

I could see it on your face!

ABBY

I think someone's finally getting angry.

MARILYN

BECAUSE YOU'RE A CHEATER!

ABBY

(Chuckles.) Look at you.

MARILYN

ADMIT YOU WERE SCARED!

ABBY

ADMIT THAT YOU'RE ANGRY!

MARILYN

PUT THE PAINTING DOWN!

ABBY

OR WHAT?

MARILYN

ABBY — !

(RIP! Abby tears the painting in half. She does it again and again. It's in pieces. Silence.)

Okay.

ABBY

Okay?

MARILYN

We're done.

ABBY

Are you angry?

MARILYN

I am. Congratulations. You win.

ABBY

Seriously? That's all it took? If I had known that, I would've ripped up that stupid painting a long time ago.

MARILYN

Maybe I made a mistake bringing Benjamin I here —

ABBY

Maybe?

MARILYN

— but despite what you think, there was kindness in it. What you just did was the opposite.

ABBY

Gimme a break. It's a finger painting. He'll make you another one. He'll make you a hundred of them if you want.

MARILYN

That's not the point.

(She begins to gather up a change of clothes and some toiletries.)

I'm going downstairs. I'm sure Charlene won't mind if I sleep in Mrs. Moore's bed.

ABBY

It's your bed now.

MARILYN

(Grabbing clothes.) Well done, you got what you wanted. You've chased me off, just like you've chased off everyone else who dared to walk in here. Just like you chased off Benjamin.

ABBY

Goodbye, Marilyn.

MARILYN

(Continuing to grab clothes.) You've hit some bumps in your life. I know you have. More than most. But still.

ABBY

Still what?

MARILYN

You can't give up on people. Once you do, it's all over. *(Beat.)* Benjamin asked me to give this to you by the way. *(Hands her the photo.)*

ABBY

(Looks down at the photo.) When?

MARILYN

Just now, when he left. He said you refused to take it.

ABBY

I don't even know what it is.

MARILYN

It's a baby photo, Abby.

ABBY

(Flips photo over and reads.) "Gideon," it says. Who's Gideon?

MARILYN

Your grandson. He was born three weeks ago. Congratulations.

(Everything stops. Abby looks from Marilyn to the photo, trying to process this. Marilyn grabs her pillow and blanket.)

I'll get the rest of my stuff later.

ABBY

(Re: the photo.) Benny didn't tell me.

MARILYN

Sounds like you wouldn't let him.

ABBY

You'd think it'd be the first thing he'd mention.

MARILYN

Maybe he was trying to ease into it.

ABBY

Benjamin never eases into anything. He's a very abrupt person.

MARILYN

Yeah, well, people change.

(And with that, Marilyn exits. Abby stares down at the photo as the lights fade.)

[END OF SCENE]