

ACT II SCENE II - Designated Recreation Time

Lights up on MORREY and JOANNA in the rec room. The two chairs have been pushed together to serve as a bench SR.

MORREY is squatting JOANNA, who is piggybacking on MORREY's shoulders. Showoff.

JOANNA

I think this should be considered cruel and unusual punishment.

MORREY

Rhonda's using all the weights. They only gave us, like, three. And this is not nice for me, either. Your little bony hip is digging into my spine.

JOANNA

What number are we on?

MORREY

Wait- You weren't even counting?

JOANNA

The smell of B.O. is distracting me.

MORREY

You mean Rhonda's swamp ass?

JOANNA

Just put me down! (*She does.*) They can't even call this recreation. There's nothing else to do here except tossing a tennis ball against the wall.

MORREY

What? You don't like playing with balls?

JOANNA

Not unless they're in my mouth! Haha! Ha! Ha. Um.

MORREY

You should save some of those jokes for your stand-up act.

MORREY finds the jump ropes.

MORREY

My old yoga instructor said these tighten your glutes so much, it could cure a divorce. Not that you have any problem being a tight-ass.

She tosses the jump rope to JOANNA. She swats at it like bugs.

MORREY

(Starts to jump)

How did you pass middle school P.E. You had to be bullied.

JOANNA

I was. You were a part of it.

MORREY

I think you're misremembering. *(Breaking:)* It was the pigtails.

JOANNA

I *told* you my mom- how are you so good at that?

MORREY

It's a basic skill, Jo. And you used to be good at it, too. We'd jump rope all the time. Remember, that little game we played-what was it called-

JOANNA

Oh, on the playground? Um-

MORREY

God, what did we call it-

JOANNA

It was something so stupid, like, Hot...Hot Foot?

MORREY

That is not what we called it.

JOANNA

It was something like that though.

MORREY

No, I think it was-

JOANNA

Oh! Oh! Hot Seat, Hot Feet!

MORREY

Oh! Yes! Such a shitty name.

JOANNA

We were, like, nine, Morrey.

MORREY

So uninspired.

JOANNA

I used to kick your ass at that game.

MORREY

Sure.

JOANNA

I did, you would always get tripped up and start singing the 50 Nifty United States to remember the jumping rhythm.

MORREY

Okay? I was nine.

JOANNA

I bet I could still wipe the floor with you.

JOANNA starts to try skipping rope.

MORREY

Oh yeah?

They squat, getting ready to begin the game.

JOANNA MORREY
Hot Seat, Hot Feet! Hot Seat, Hot Feet! Hot Seat, Hot Feet! Hot Seat, Hot Feet!

MORREY
Sixty, forty, twenty-one!

JOANNA
Cat on the roof, baked in the sun!

MORREY
Eighteen, seventy, thirty-nine!

JOANNA
Old Man Juno passed his prime!

JOANNA MORREY
J-U-N-O GO, FEET, GO! J-U-N-O, GO, FEET, GO!

MORREY
What's my favorite color?

JOANNA
Red. Duh. That's easy. Where was I born?

MORREY
Saint Joseph Hospital in Denver, and when the doctor held you up, you peed on him.

JOANNA
Hehe yeah.

MORREY
What breed are my dogs?

JOANNA
Pongo and Scottie are dalmatians. Pongo is cuter.

MORREY
I'm telling Scottie when we get out.

JOANNA

No, stop, he's still a sweetie, he's just a little ugly. He's doing the best he can with what he has.

MORREY

Cruel. Cruel!

JOANNA

Ugh, that's not what I meant- okay, whatever, um, who's my celebrity crush?

MORREY

Tom Hanks.

JOANNA

In Forrest Gump.

MORREY

In Forrest Gump.

MORREY

What's my favorite drink?

JOANNA

It- um- it used to be Dos Equis in college, but when you were 21 you were determined to start liking martinis. Which is- *so* gross, by the way.

MORREY

Okay little miss strawberry daiquiri.

JOANNA

It's a whimsical drink!

MORREY

Fine. Those were easy. When was the last time I talked to my dad?

JOANNA

(Stops jumping rope.)

Two years, five months, and twenty seven days on Wednesday. It was on your 20th birthday. He didn't send you a card.

MORREY

(Stops jumping rope. Beat.)

Do you ever think we know too much?

JOANNA

We wouldn't be in jail if we didn't.

MORREY

No, I mean, I don't know if we should be so... interwoven. If that makes sense. It's almost like we're the same person. And if that's true, then they can't just choose one of us. There'd be no "us" to choose from.

JOANNA

...Isn't that the way we wanted it?

Long beat. MORREY is wrapping the jump rope tighter around her hand. She is nervous for the first time.

MORREY

I'm not saying we shouldn't have done it. If we even did it. That wouldn't be fair, because the alternative is *you* lying in that closet instead. Maybe not now, but eventually. You know that.

JOANNA

I know that. You know that.

MORREY

I know that. Mike knows that.

JOANNA

Knew that.

MORREY

Knew that. (*Beat.*) I mean, you loved someone who can trap a life, and hold it in his hands like glass. Something he can throw to the floor and shatter when he wants to see an explosion. His highest expectation of you was to be a little puddle, one he could step in just to see the ripples he created. Just a crush, then a first kiss, a couple dates, and "ring by spring." Fresh out of college with a husband and a mortgage. You were only what he could do to you. So...so he became what we could do to him. (*Beat.*) Allegedly. There's this heartbeat that isn't there anymore, so yours gets to go on. It's justifiable, but they don't know that. And they won't know that. And the lawyers that the state pays don't care about that. All they see is evidence that turns the spotlight on one person because only one finger pulled the trigger. Legally, they can only pin one of us. And they want us to choose who it is.

Long beat as they sit in this realization.

JOANNA

Men have gotten shorter times for worse.

MORREY

I know, but we're women. They're scared of angry women, Jo.

JOANNA starts to unravel the jump rope around MORREY's hand.

JOANNA

(Methodical, detached, unlike what we've known her to be.)

There's a courtroom definition of innocence, Morrey. It has to do with evidence and witnesses and proof, and at the end of the day, it doesn't even matter if innocence is true, it just has to be easy. It has to be believable. The jury needs to feel good about themselves when they walk out of the courtroom and drive home to their condo. They're tired, behind on work, and a little pissed that they had to get up at six in the morning and sit on a hard, wooden bench and there's no moment where they consider that they have shifted something unchangeable in a person's life. Destiny's, just, whatever they ate for breakfast. Responsibility, Morrey. That's- That's what they decide is innocence. And you can't justify responsibility.

JOANNA takes the jump ropes and hangs them on the back of the chairs.

JOANNA

We know that we're innocent. In our terms. We can fall asleep at night. They can't. It's sure a hell of a lot easier to take the evidence and consolidate the blame onto just one person. That's what the lawyers are thinking, that's what the jury will think, that's what anyone who sees us on the eight o'clock news will know. *We* are only what can be done to us. We are both the puddle, Morrey.

Beat. MORREY stands and takes JOANNA into a hug.

MORREY

We're one fucking puddle, that's for sure.

Blackout.