

YOUNG WOMAN (*at the door*). Here I am. (*She wears a little white gown that hangs very straight. She is very still, but her eyes are wide with a curious, helpless, animal terror.*)

HUSBAND (*starts toward her – stops. The room is in shadow except for one dim light by the bed. Sound of girl weeping*). You crying? (*Sound of weeping.*) What you crying for? (*Crosses to her.*)

YOUNG WOMAN (*crying out*). Ma! Ma! I want my mother!

HUSBAND. I thought you were glad to get away from her.

YOUNG WOMAN. I want her now – I want somebody.

HUSBAND. You got me, haven't you?

YOUNG WOMAN. Somebody – somebody –

HUSBAND. There's nothing to cry about. There's nothing to cry about.

The scene blacks out. The music continues until the lights go up for Episode Four. Rhythm of the music is gradually replaced by the sound of steel riveting for Episode Four.

Begin Scene

EPISODE FOUR

Maternal

Scene: a room in a hospital: bed, chair. The door in the back now opens on a corridor; the window on a tall building going up.

Sounds: outside window – riveting.

Characters in the scene

YOUNG WOMAN
DOCTORS
NURSES
HUSBAND

Characters seen but not heard

WOMAN IN WHEEL CHAIR
WOMAN IN BATHROBE
STRETCHER WAGON
NURSE WITH TRAY
NURSE WITH COVERED BASIN

At rise YOUNG WOMAN lies still in bed. The door is open. In the corridor, a stretcher wagon goes by. Enter NURSE.

NURSE: How are you feeling today? (*No response from YOUNG WOMAN.*) Better? (*No response.*) No pain? (*No response.*) NURSE takes her watch in one hand, YOUNG WOMAN's wrist in the other – stands, then goes to chart at foot of bed – writes.) You're getting along fine. (*No response.*) Such a sweet baby you have, too. (*No response.*) Aren't you glad it's a girl? (*YOUNG WOMAN makes sign with her head 'No'.*) You're not! Oh, my! That's no way to talk! Men want boys – women ought to want girls. (*No response.*) Maybe you didn't want either, eh? (*YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'. Riveting machine.*) You'll feel different when it begins to nurse. You'll just love it then. Your milk hasn't come yet – has it? (*Sign – 'No'.*) It will! (*Sign – 'No'.*) Oh, you don't know Doctor! (*Goes to door – turns.*) Anything else you want? (*YOUNG WOMAN points to window.*) Draft? (*Sign – 'No'.*) The noise? (*YOUNG WOMAN signs 'Yes'.*) Oh, that can't be helped. Hospital's got to have a new wing. We're the biggest Maternity Hospital in the world.

I'll close the window, though. (YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'.) No?

YOUNG WOMAN (*whispers*). I smell everything then.

NURSE (*starting out the door – riveting machine.*) Here's your man!

Enter HUSBAND with large bouquet. Crosses to bed.

HUSBAND. Well, how are we today? (YOUNG WOMAN – *no response.*)

NURSE. She's getting stronger!

HUSBAND. Of course she is!

NURSE (*taking flowers*). See what your husband brought you.

HUSBAND. Better put 'em in water right away. (*Exit NURSE.*) Everything O.K.? (YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'.) Now see here, my dear, you've got to brace up, you know! And – and face things! Everybody's got to brace up and face things! That's what makes the world go round. I know all you've been through but – (YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'.) Oh, yes I do! I know all about it! I was right outside all the time! (YOUNG WOMAN makes violent gestures of 'No'. *Ignoring.*) Oh yes! But you've got to brace up now! Make an effort! Pull yourself together! Start the up-hill climb! Oh I've been down – but I haven't stayed down. I've been licked but I haven't stayed licked! I've pulled myself up by my own bootstraps, and that's what you've got to do! Will power! That's what conquers! Look at me! Now you've got to brace up! Face the music! Stand the gaff! Take life by the horns! Look it in the face! – Having a baby's natural! Perfectly natural thing – why should –

YOUNG WOMAN *chokes – points wildly to door. Enter NURSE with flowers in a vase.*

NURSE. What's the matter?

HUSBAND. She's got that gagging again – like she had the last time I was here.

YOUNG WOMAN *gestures him out.*

NURSE. Better go, sir.

HUSBAND (*at door*). I'll be back.

YOUNG WOMAN *gasping and gesturing.*

NURSE. She needs rest.

HUSBAND. Tomorrow then. I'll be back tomorrow – tomorrow and every day – goodbye. (*Exits.*)

NURSE. You got a mighty nice husband, I guess you know that? (*Writes on chart.*) Gagging.

Corridor life – WOMAN IN BATHROBE passes door. Enter DOCTOR, YOUNG DOCTOR, NURSE, wheeling surgeon's wagon with bottles, instruments, etc.

DOCTOR. How's the little lady today? (*Crosses to bed.*)

NURSE. She's better, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Of course she's better! She's all right – aren't you? (YOUNG WOMAN *does not respond.*) What's the matter? Can't you talk? (*Drops her hand. Takes chart.*)

NURSE. She's a little weak yet, Doctor.

DOCTOR (*at chart*). Milk hasn't come yet?

NURSE. No, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Put the child to breast. (YOUNG WOMAN – 'No – no'! – *Riveting machine.*) No? Don't you want to nurse your baby? (YOUNG WOMAN signs 'No'.) Why not? (*No response.*) These modern neurotic women, eh, Doctor? What are we going to do with 'em? (YOUNG DOCTOR *laughs.* NURSE *smiles.*) Bring the baby!

YOUNG WOMAN. No!

DOCTOR. Well – that's strong enough. I thought you were too weak to talk – that's better. You don't want your baby?

YOUNG WOMAN. No.

DOCTOR. What do you want?

YOUNG WOMAN. Let alone – let alone.

DOCTOR. Bring the baby.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor – she's behaved very badly every time, Doctor – very upset – maybe we better not.

DOCTOR. I decide what we better and better not here, Nurse!

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Bring the baby.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR (*with chart*). Gagging – you mean nausea.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor, but –

DOCTOR. No buts, nurse.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Nausea! – Change the diet! – What is her diet?

NURSE. Liquids.

DOCTOR. Give her solids.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor. She says she can't swallow solids.

DOCTOR. Give her solids.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor. (*Starts to go – riveting machine.*)

DOCTOR. Wait – I'll change her medicine. (*Takes pad and writes prescription in Latin. Hands it to NURSE.*) After meals. (*To door.*) Bring her baby.

Exit DOCTOR, followed by YOUNG DOCTOR and NURSE with surgeon's wagon.

NURSE. Yes, Doctor.

Exits.

YOUNG WOMAN (*alone*). Let me alone – let me alone – let me alone – I've submitted to enough – I won't submit to any more – crawl off – crawl off in the dark – Vixen crawled under the bed – way back in the corner under the bed – they were all drowned – puppies don't go to heaven – heaven – golden stairs – long stairs – long – too long – long golden stairs – climb those golden stairs – stairs – stairs – climb – tired – too tired – dead – no matter – nothing matters – dead – stairs – long stairs – all the dead going up – going up – to be in heaven – heaven – golden stairs – all the children coming down – coming down to be born – dead going up – children coming down – going up – coming down – going up – coming down – going up – coming down – going up – stop – stop – no – no traffic cop – no – no traffic cop in heaven – traffic cop – traffic cop – can't you give us a smile – tired – too tired – no matter – it doesn't matter – St. Peter – St. Peter at the gate – you can't come in – no matter – it doesn't matter – I'll rest – I'll lie down – down – all written down – down in a big book – no matter – it doesn't matter – I'll lie down – it weighs me – it's over me – it weighs – weighs – it's heavy – it's a heavy book – no matter – lie still – don't move – can't move – rest – forget – they say you forget – a girl – aren't you glad it's a girl – a little girl – with no hair – none – little curls all over his head – a little bald girl – curls – curls all over his head – what kind of hair had God? no matter – it doesn't matter – everybody loves God – they've got to – got to – got to love God – God is love – even if he's bad they got to love him – even if he's got fat hands – fat hands – no no – he wouldn't be God – His hands make you well – He lays on his hands – well – and happy – no matter – doesn't matter – far – too far – tired – too tired Vixen crawled off under bed – eight –

there were eight – a woman crawled off under the bed – a woman has one – two three four – one two three four – one two three four – two plus two is four – two times two is four – two times four is eight Vixen had eight – one two three four five six seven eight – eight – Puffie had eight – all drowned – drowned – drowned in blood – blood – oh God! God – God never had one – Mary had one – in a manger – the lowly manger – God's on a high throne – far – too far – no matter – it doesn't matter – God Mary Mary God Mary – Virgin Mary – Mary had one – the Holy Ghost – the Holy Ghost – George H. Jones – oh don't – please don't! Let me rest – now I can rest – the weight is gone – inside the weight is gone – it's only outside – outside – all around – weight – I'm under it – Vixen crawled under the bed – there were eight – I'll not submit any more – I'll not submit – I'll not submit –

The scene blacks out. The sound of riveting continues until it goes into the sound of an electric piano and the scene lights up for Episode Five.