

Begin part one:

If all goes well, there should be gallons of gin in the lobby. All attending require formal dress. They are handed gin and tonics as the tickets are sliced. For those more demanding whiskey is available. Two grey haired men should smoke cigarettes over a trashcan. When asked to extinguish the flame, everyone should laugh. The crowd is not expected to enter, but, when the social beast of burden decides the show should begin, the lights inside dim. A red velvet curtain, abused, torn, stained, layered in dust, attempts to conceal the stage. After the lights lower, a girl of indiscernible age enters through the aisle. She is anywhere from twelve to twenty-five. In her quivering hand there is a pink Revlon compact. She pauses, opens the compact, and hurriedly applies lipstick. She is aware all eyes are probing her movement—her frame. She wanders onto stage. Due either to her clumsy nature, or simply a malfunction, the curtain falls, most ungracefully, straight down. Margie (the timid wanderer) stares, most embarrassed as she realizes that all the place settings have been laid and all the guests in the land of Simplicity have been accounted for.

Simplicity, Virginia:

It is March of 1997. Night. The humidity is marked to strike but, for now, there is still an occasional breeze to guide the sighs. It is half past nine. Mr. Huxtable Weary should be returning momentarily from the game: yet another loss for the team. Oh, poor Mr. Huxtable Weary. As of now, the kitchen is clean. White table, four pressed wood chairs and a refrigerator with a sign, “God, grant me patience...but hurry!” The floor is yellow linoleum. In the living area there is white carpeting, a white overstuffed sofa, and a crimson La-Z-Boy. Upstairs is the bedroom (and, yes, all may watch the lurid going-ons). If the first floor is illuminated by aggressive fluorescents, the upstairs is lit by a 60 watt bulb in a porcelain lamp and a black and white television. It is to this room that Margie flees. It is optimal to note that this is not her bedroom: just as the kitchen and living room do not belong to the Wearys. Nothing here belongs to anyone, yet it all does. Each person will use the kitchen as his or her own. It is everyone’s, it is no one’s, it is Simplicity.

While Margie has been
bumbling about the stage, a
man in a white Fruit of the
Loom T and chinos has
viewed her from the kitchen.
He has been laughing to
himself. As Margie turns on
the television, he begins to
speak.

Thomas Merton

Well, (chortles once more) I suppose it is difficult for any of us to find our place. (Pauses, prepares, begins). I welcome you to Simplicity, Virginia. It is March 1997. We are nearing the end of the 20th Century. I, of course, will not view the new Millennium in the flesh since I am some thirty years in the grave. My name is Thomas Merton and I invite you into the backyard of redundancy. I must admit, there is nothing quite as striking as being in the same place never been, but here I am, watching over the Wearys, an everybody family who occasionally inhabits this space. Mr. Huxtable Weary and Mrs. Huxtable Weary seem to be on a relentless pursuit of something. Something so grand they can accept the end. The unfortunate perversity is that they appall any form of suffering. How sad it is to learn—Oh, please, no, no. This is a beginning and our time here is not structured to promote grief, rather, reflect on the notion of restlessness in inactivity. Motion that competes with a need for “home.” Home being a variant condition divinely polished by the past. And me being an ever present voice that relies on silence. Amen, God bless, enjoy.

Mr. Huxtable Weary enters the kitchen. He is of unparalleled American beauty. He is tall, glossy, and is blessed with dirty blonde hair and crystal blue eyes. He is muscular and graceful and forever carries with him a kind word, easily dolled out to whoever may pass by. Tonight, though, he is not his usual merry self-- although all his good intentions remain. He turns on a fluorescent light, sets his gym bag on the table, and stands staring into the future. Mrs. Huxtable Weary, who has been eagerly awaiting the return of her husband, enters into the kitchen quietly poised to strike.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary
(kissing the nap of his neck) Huxtable. Oh, I missed you.

Huxtable Weary
(hugging her) Baby, baby, baby, baby.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I'm so sorry about the game.

Huxtable Weary

The boys took it well. But, I guess after losing every game of the season so far--anyway, it's a small college. We're no university--that's for sure.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I made leftovers. (giggles) I mean, I made dinner and now there are leftovers. Silly, silly me. Would you like some. It's meaty. Meaty red sauce for my meaty man.

Huxtable Weary

(smiling) And if anyone knows about my meat (slaps her ass) it's you.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Now stop that. This isn't the locker room. I should hope you don't slap me like you slap the boys.

Mr. Huxtable Weary laughs and goes to the fridge. He retrieves the meaty sauce and begins eating. Mrs. Huxtable Weary laughs and joins him. He reluctantly feeds her. The cold hamburger and Ragu catches on her lips and small chunks of grey meat fall to the floor. This continues for some time. Above the two, Margie prepares for bed. She turns on the lamp and examines herself. She strips down to her underwear and pinches her breasts. A parent calls to her from outside. Only Margie can hear the requests.

Margie

I know! I know it's time for me to go to bed. Jesus! I'm going. I'm--GOING! I know we have church in the morning. Jesus, Dad, I know I have Confirmation class at 7:30! I know. (voice dwindles) I'm listening. YES! I can hear you. I--CAN--HEAR. No, I'm not stupid! You're stupid. You're stupid and mean and I hate you. I don't care.

Mr. and Mrs. Huxtable
Weary put away the meat and

move into the living area:
simple movements of refined
repetition.

Margie

I don't care if you spank me! Spank me then! SPANK ME!

Margie is crimson. She
stares expectantly.

Margie

Do it then.

Huxtable Weary

How was your day, baby?

Margie

Do it!

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Oh, fine, fine, fine. (giggles) Just fine.

Margie

Break down the door!

Huxtable Weary

Do anything?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

No. Not really.

Margie

I don't care about anything anymore!

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Made Folger's.

Margie

One.

Mrs Huxtable Weary

Shopping.

Margie

Two.

Florist. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Three. Margie

Gym. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Four. Margie

The flowers were for Melodie. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

FIVE! I'm halfway there. Margie

She's in the hospital for minor burns. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Six. Margie

Looks terrible, though. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Seven. Margie

Stories. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Eight. Margie

Dinner. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

NINE! Margie

Dishes. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

(quietly) Ten. Margie

Not much really. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Ten. Margie

Sounds nice. Huxtable Weary

Margie goes to the door: no one's outside. She turns off the lamp and gets into bed. The static of the black and white television illuminates her dreams. Mrs. Huxtable Weary moves toward her husband: intentions exposed.

How was your day honey? Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Okay. Except— Huxtable Weary

The game. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Um. Huxtable Weary

You've got red on your hands. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

(laughing) The sauce? Huxtable Weary

No. (giggles) I caught you. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Oh? Huxtable Weary

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

We listened to the game. It ended over two hours ago.

Huxtable Weary

Oh, baby. (goes to slap her ass, she defends) I was with the boys.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

(giggles) I wasn't really worried. (runs her fingers over her breasts.) Baby?

Huxtable Weary

Oh?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Touch? (pause) Meaty?

Huxtable Weary

Mrs. Huxtable Weary, don't you have Sunday school in the morning?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Not 'til 7:30. Touch?

Huxtable Weary

I'm worn.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Please. Please. Hux?

There is a moment of childish
two stepping. Dum, dum,
step.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Touch?

Huxtable Weary

It's raining.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

It's March. It rains.

Huxtable Weary

I know.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Please.

I love you. Huxtable Weary

Yes. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

(laughs) Boy, am I tired? Huxtable Weary

Are you? Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Boy, am I tired. Huxtable Weary

I know—the game. Mrs. Huxtable Weary

She collects her pride and leaves. Huxtable sits on the couch watching a television from afar. Just as he begins to settle, Margie rolls over and turns off the television. Huxtable whines, yawns, and stands. Thomas Merton enters the living area with a blanket and warm milk. He has added a frayed baseball cap to his attire.

And here I thought you'd be in bed. Thomas Merton

Sigh. Huxtable Weary

A penny for a thought. Thomas Merton

Fuck. Fuck. (pause) Fucked. Huxtable Weary

Merton turns a disapproving eye.

Thomas Merton
Devilish deceit? Or simply a lack in judgment?

Huxtable Weary
I love you. I **LOVE** you. I love **YOU**.

Thomas Merton
Please.

Huxtable Weary
I love you and I want to fuck you. I want to fuck you. I want to make love to you. I want to.

Thomas Merton
Sigh.

Huxtable Weary
I can't be here anymore Mister Jones. I should have children.

Margie has a nightmare about children. She leaps out of bed and fumbles for the lamp.

Thomas Merton
Already the Sabbath and no sun?

Huxtable Weary
No. I won't go with you. Into this. Here.

The rain pounds out a lullaby.

Thomas Merton
Tell me, Mr. Weary. Do you believe in her?

Margie finds no boogeyman below her bed. She checks the hall and finds no support. Her clothes are moist. Her crotch is damp.

Huxtable Weary
I'm going running. I won't be here in the morning.

Thomas Merton
Won't you?

Margie can smell herself.
She waits for silence.

Huxtable Weary

Sometimes it's better this way.

Thomas Merton

O, Night. I wonder if any will ever find you the least bit inconspicuous?

Huxtable Weary knows that
he will never leave.

Huxtable Weary

(guttural grunt) They don't even notice I can't do my job. She can. I can't even keep the field. It's brown. The grass just disappears. I swear--I turn on the sprinklers during the week and the stupid fucking grass goes into the atmosphere and dies and leaves me with ruts and a 100 yards of brown. Brown. FUCKING. I swear. Look at me.

Thomas Merton

I can see, my son.

Huxtable Merton

Is this every man? No, no, NO, no, never, no, nope. No, then Mister Jones wouldn't be so upset. Give me something God. Give me something so I won't feel it. So I won't see.

Thomas Merton

Ah, the proverbial prayer of castaways and junkies.

Margie prepares to leave.

Huxtable Weary

Fuck you something good!

Huxtable Weary discovers
the pace of his panic.

Huxtable Weary

I have to slow down. I have to stop this before it starts. I was always a poor excuse for a man. I end up holding the door for half an hour just so every damn person can get through.

Thomas Merton

Basic politeness should never be overrated.

Huxtable Weary

I bought her houses, cars, dogs, cats, stain resistant carpeting. Beads, bangles, the pink Kitchen Aid that I've never seen used. (pause) I'm tired. I'm so tired it hurts. Every morning it hurts a little more. I don't want to go to bed. If I go to bed something could happen.

Margie silently makes her way into the kitchen. She searches through the refrigerator. She makes sure she disturbs nothing but her fancy.

Huxtable Weary

If I go to sleep I'll miss all the things that I've already been left out of. If I go to bed-- that's it. That's that. She's waiting for me in a bed she's already heated up. I bet she's sweating in it.

Huxtable Weary is exhausted. He lies on the couch. Thomas Merton tucks him in. Margie has found her gold. One large cucumber. She fondles the vegetable.

Margie

You looked at me. (giggles) Last week. I saw you! Ooooo, I caught you. You looked at me. You did. Do ya' want to touch me? No, I can't! (laughs) We shouldn't.

Huxtable Weary

I'm not tired.

Thomas Merton

Yes you are. I find it quite confusing, though: I usually have to do something so as to exhaust myself.

In the rain there are two children waiting to come in. A boy a girl/ a man a woman. Either four or forty. The two pinch the other's cheek. Rosy red and smiling. The female in pigtails, the male in overalls. The two watch Margie, sticking out their tongues and giggling. They

are on all fours. Margie slips the cucumber under her skirt. She loses herself to produce.

Margie

Ooo, oh yes. Yes. Please. (laughs) Yes. Ooo. Ahh. Thank you. Thank you so much Mr. Weary.

Thomas Merton

Goodnight, Mr. Weary.

The lights ponder their duty and slowly fade. Morning. Margie is in the bedroom dressing. Primping, posing, preparing. Mr. Huxtable Weary is on the couch. Mrs. Huxtable Weary enters the kitchen and calls out back.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Here. Here. Come here.

The children come crawling.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Oh, you were all alone in the cold last night, weren't you. Soaked through and through. My poor dears.

She teases them with bacon.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Here you go.

The two eat ravenously tearing at the other's fortune. When they finish, Mrs. Huxtable Weary laughs and pets the two.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

If only it were this easy. I suppose my eggs just didn't have time to finish cooking. That's what they say some times. I can hear them say it to their wives. I can hear your father say it when he sleeps in the den. All night. I didn't sleep a wink! Not a blessed wink. I turned over and over and finally rolled right out of bed and onto the grave.

The children laugh and
nuzzle their heads into
Mother's crotch.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

If he were a bit different and I was quite like myself I suppose all this would be—well—
different! HA!

Thomas Merton stirs Mr.
Huxtable Weary awake with
a kiss. He leaps up, stunned
by his morning erection. He
collects himself. Thomas
Merton fades into the back.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Awake? Awake?

Huxtable Weary

Yes.

He wanders in.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I don't have any eggs and the children ate the bacon.

Huxtable Weary

Your class here already?

Margie gazes at her reflection
in the television.

Margie

Yes, Mr. Weary. Here I am. Do you know my name? I'm Margie. Margaret Hallow
Johnson.

Margie gives herself the once
over and decides to remove
her delicates from underneath
her skirt.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Not those kids, silly.

Huxtable Weary

Oh. (pause) Yes.

He looks to the floor.

Huxtable Weary

And have they been walked?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Fine. If that's the way you want to be. Fine! No breakfast for you.

She dumps cereal onto the floor, the children lap up the Honey Bunches of Oats.

Huxtable Weary

Is this because I was on the couch last night? I got tired. That's it.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I'm not having this discussion on a Sunday morning. I have class. I have obligations. I have—

Huxtable Weary

Children? Right, too bad you fed them your eggs.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary screams. The doorbell chimes. She stops, smiles, and bites her lip to give it color.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Come in!

Thomas Merton enters. He is dressed as a priest and carries a cup of McDonald's coffee.

Thomas Merton

Excuse me for drinking. I didn't get much sleep last night.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Oh, no please. I provide breakfast and juice to the kids, but there usually isn't any coffee—I don't want to stunt their growth.

Thomas Merton

Quite wise. So today—today they pick their Confirmation names?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Yes.

Thomas Merton

Quite exciting indeed.

Thomas Merton is not excited. Just as an awkward silence is about to occur, Margie enters.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Oh, Margie. Hello love. I didn't expect you to come through the family door.

Margie is shaken and saddened. And here she thought she could avoid the festivities.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Well, the others should be arriving soon then too. Father?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary leads him into the living room. Margie pauses and looks toward Mr. Huxtable Weary. She stutters a hello. He nods and begins to drip water onto the children that beg at his feet. Margie blushes, straightens her blouse and wanders into class.

Thomas Merton

And here they all come now.

The lights in the living room go off. If anything is seen from the living room it is the faint glow of a Glade Plug-In.

Huxtable Weary

You want food? I don't have any. She locks it up. You want me to touch you?

Thomas Merton

So all of you have gone through your studies and decided to take this last step so as to become adults in the Church.

Huxtable Weary

Touch?

Thomas Merton

Part of receiving the sacrament of Confirmation is taking the name of one of our patron saints. I assume you are all familiar with your saints?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Oh, yes. Aren't we class?

Silence.

Thomas Merton

Silence is golden.

Huxtable Weary

You want it, huh? You want me to touch you?

Thomas Merton

I know I took into serious consideration who my patron saint should be.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Me too. I did too! I knew it—Saint Martha. That's right kids, I told you before! Remember? I took Saint Martha.

Thomas Merton

Yes, well, that is nice isn't it?

Thomas Merton sighs.

Huxtable Weary

You want to go for a walk? You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to put these leashes on you and send you outside. I'll follow you to the gate and open it. That's right, children. You'll be free.

The children paw at his pant leg as he attaches blue and pink leashes to the children (gender specific, of course). He then follows them out.

May I get a glass of water?

Margie

Of course, dear.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Margie enters from the dark only to find the kitchen empty. She tears up.

Now, children, or should I say—young men and women, why don't we take a moment to think about the saint we would choose.

Thomas Merton

Mr. Huxtable Weary enters, quite excited his doings.

Oh, hello, there—Margie?

Huxtable Weary

Yes! Yes, it's Margie.

Margie

Margie takes this simple acknowledgement as her cue.

I **LOVE** you. I love **YOU**.

Margie

Margie?

Mr. Huxtable Weary

She approaches with stealth.

Touch me?

Margie

I'm sorry.

Huxtable Weary

Touch me.

Margie

Think really hard children of who you'd like watching over you!

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Margie

Touch me!

Margie takes his hand and places it on her breast.

Margie

They're firm. I know. They were firmer but the air went out because I touched them too much. That's what Daddy said would happen.

Huxtable Weary

(vacant) Touch.

Margie

You look just like a superhero. Or a movie star. Why aren't you a movie star Mr. Weary?

Huxtable Weary

Margie?

Margie puts her hand on his crotch and begins to unzip his pants. Mr. Huxtable Weary resigns himself to silence. He understands the nothing.

Margie

Let me feel you. Please. I got dressed for you. I waited so long to be brave.

He nods. Margie begins to, awkwardly, perform fellatio on him.

Thomas Merton

Now, you must all remember, it is not necessary that you fulfill this sacrament.

Margie goes to kiss Mr. Huxtable Weary.

Margie

I loved you forever. I watch you. I love you. Kiss me. Did I make you feel good? Touch me. Touch. You make me happy. I bet you didn't know that.

Margie puts his hand up her skirt.

Huxtable Weary

I shouldn't be here.

Margie

I'm sorry. (pause) Do you hate me? You hate me. I'm so stupid.

Mr. Huxtable Weary forces her up against the counter. He inserts himself. Margie feels pain, then relief, then nothing.

Margie

I love you?

Huxtable Weary

No. Fuck me.

Margie

Yes. I love you.

Thomas Merton

It is for the Holy Spirit to come through you. It is inviting in the responsibility of adulthood.

Mr. Huxtable Weary begins to cry. He knows neither why nor how. Margie takes his tears into her breasts believing they are for her.

A moment of pause.

Thomas Merton

And let us steady our selves for the truth. Responsibility is in the hand of all. Who are we to avoid the destruction when we are not blind? I can see 20/20 and I swear I have done 10% of that which I should do. You children, do you know the truth? Or where we went wrong? This morning, at McDonald's, I could have sworn I saw a mother nursing from her child.

Margie tightens her grip on Mr. Weary.

Margie

Oh, Mr. Weary—you should be a star.

The doorbell rings.
Movement, language, the air
stands still. Mrs Huxtable
Weary enters the kitchen.
She stares at Mr. Huxtable
Weary as she crosses the
kitchen floor. She stops.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary
So—is this where babies come from?

The doorbell rings and rings.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary
Come in!

Thomas Merton enters in
flannel carrying a blue and a
pink leash.

Thomas Merton
Oh, Lord on high.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary
Don't mind them. (notices leashes) Where? Oh, God. Huxtable, what have you done?

Thomas Merton
I'm sorry ma'am, tried real hard, just, well, just the brakes out on the Chevy. Meant to
have 'em fixed last month. Guess this is—

Mrs. Huxtable Weary
No, please, merciful God,

Thomas Merton
I'm real sorry.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary
Not the children. No. Please.

Thomas Merton
Nothing I could do. 'Fore I knew it here come two big ole' German Shepards.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary
The children. Our children? Gone?

Thomas Merton

I could get ya some new ones.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Did you hear that Huxtable? Did you hear? Our children are dead.

Huxtable ejaculates.

End part one.

Begin part two:

Evolution comes in many stages, to many different things. Some eight months have passed in the land of Simplicity. There should be no bathroom break. Here we see the remainder of one day stretched to eight months ("one of those days," "don't you hate Mondays," maybe tomorrow."). The kitchen and living room have fallen into slight decay. The white sofa is stained with the grime of unwashed bodies. There are bottles on the table, bottles on the counter, and uncooked meat graying on the floor. Margie is in the living room staring at the locked walls. Mr. Huxtable Weary is off (not unusual in these times). Mrs. Huxtable Weary lies on the bed. She is covered in sweat and tries in vain to remedy the problem by forcing her feet from under the blankets. She has a bottle of vermouth--a most adolescent drunk. Thomas Merton is in the kitchen, his white T now stained, his pants rumpled. He retrieves a bottle of seltzer and begins to speak.

Thomas Merton

On Saturdays, Saturdays when you wake late and the world has begun, there is a tendency for the most amazing wind; wind that catapults you from sleep to wake in the most inordinately pleasant way. Today there is such a wind, unfortunately the Wearys seem quite far removed from the appreciation of such details. Due to the fact that the second part is always the hardest, especially in November, the action seen now is one of listless regret. Mrs. Weary has taken to being a quite miserable drunk. Such a misery that it is as though she doesn't even understand how to embody the visceral motif of drunkenness but is a sloshy shadow of drunken attempt. Mr. Huxtable Weary is still coaching, the team is still losing, but now his job is on the line. This is due to the fact that the one thing everyone admires is ignorant enthusiasm in the face of defeat, something he was well trained in: an enthusiasm that is no longer. And here I am trying to be an undercurrent of understanding, believing that concrete variables can form the apparition of inspiration. No matter. I will follow along and perhaps, one day, this suffering will amount to more than petty ignore-ance.

Thomas Merton wanders out back. Margie is poking her belly. She teeters between hysterical laughter and tears.

Margie

I'm going. I'm going to name you star. Star. Star. Bow. Starbow. (laughs) Rainbow. Isn't that funny, Rainbow? Skittle. Pink. Red. Blue. Green. Purple. I'm having you no matter. Daddy is letting me have you. You, Mr. Weary. I'm having you once Daddy lets me out.

Thomas Merton knocks lightly on the bedroom door and then enters. He is wearing a three piece corduroy suit. He carries a

highball of brandy and an
unlit cigar.

Thomas Merton

Oh, Janice. You look dreadful.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

How did you get in?

Thomas Merton

Remember the rule--no locked doors.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I'm sixteen now.

Thomas Merton

Exactly. We wouldn't want you up here with a boy and a locked door. Your mother and I aren't completely aloof.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Yes.

Thomas Merton

No. Believe me daughter, I know all about adolescence. A state of pure delusions: you as a martyr of well-contained sacrifice.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I love him you know. I love him dearly.

Thomas Merton

(sighs) So is that what is on your mind at this late hour? And who may this boy be?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I can't say his name--I'm too embarrassed. He's famous, I know, but we are meant to be together.

Thomas Merton

Tell me child.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Rock Hudson! He's a movie star and I love him and his name is Rock Hudson and I'll be Janice Hudson and have a dozen babies and even God will love the two of us--together. Everyone will smile when they see us and, and, and...

Thomas Merton takes her
head. She begins to cry.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Fuck you! Fuck you! Give me back my child! Give it to me you bitch!

Margie paces. She minds the tread of her step. There is a power outage. All goes black. When the lights come up, Margie is in the bedroom and Mrs. Huxtable Weary is alone in the kitchen. She opens a bottle of vermouth Mr. Huxtable Weary enters. He is slouching and carries the weight of three lives upon his shoulders.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

There was a power outage. How about that?

Huxtable Weary

Yes.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary approaches him. Intentions opposed.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I see.

She touches his arm.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Touch.

Huxtable Weary

There were two guys who couldn't play tonight. I'm not sure why. They just sat on the outskirts of the field and said nothing to each other. The rest of the team looked like they were in slow motion. They probably were. Practice and all. Practice for what? Don't touch me. And I kept telling them they could go home. Or back to their rooms. Or whatever. But they didn't. How about that? How about the weather. Isn't it something here.

Margie tries the door repeatedly. It is locked. Thomas Merton stands on the

outside dressed as an employee of the United States Postal Service. He knocks.

Margie

It's locked. You locked it.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

(lethargically) Give me this.

Huxtable Weary

(vacant) I parked the car on a hill. The children were inside.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary paws at him as her whining slowly breaks to scream. Thomas Merton pulls a key out of his satchel and opens the door.

Margie

Who are you? Who let you in?

Huxtable Weary

I forgot to put on the parking break on the Volvo. Before I knew it, I turned around the car was out of sight. I knew I should have cracked the windows.

Thomas Merton

We have yet to be formally introduced. That's fine though. In time, my child, in time you shall know.

Margie looks to him with no awe of understanding. A simple plead in a crooked smile.

Huxtable Weary

I chased after them. But it was too late. Right into the lake.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary ends her scream. She rips open his shirt and begins to lick him.

Huxtable Weary

I'm going to bed. Finish your vermouth.

Huxtable Weary picks up the rotting meat and begins to eat. Mrs. Huxtable Weary tires and slumps to the floor.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Give me the baby you bitch.

Huxtable Weary

Believe me. I have tried.

Thomas Merton

I believe you have a letter that needs delivering.

Margie

Yes.

Thomas Merton

Do they bring you food?

Margie

Yeah. He brings me food and I go to school and I can call people but he tapes me.

Thomas Merton

I apologize.

Margie

You're a mailman.

Thomas Merton

For it all.

Margie lifts up the mattress and pulls out a letter.

Margie

It's going to Simplicity. That's all I know. Sorry.

Thomas Merton takes her letter. He sighs and gives one last look.

Thomas Merton

Isn't the moonlight terrible?

Margie shrugs.

Margie

I don't know. I think it's kinda nice.

Thomas Merton leaves the door unlocked. Margie peers out. She resigns herself to the static of the television and lies back in bed. Huxtable Weary sits and eats. Mrs. Huxtable Weary totters.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

(softly) I was saving myself for Rock Hudson. (pause) You'll have to do--won't you.

Huxtable Weary

I don't have any plans for the future.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

That's nice.

Huxtable Weary

Your father hates me.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Father hates no one. Anyone I love, he loves. It's true. No lie. No lies. I lied. Did you lie my darling? Did you lie down this weekend?

Huxtable Weary

I haven't slept.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

No. You haven't. The beds cold. Ice. (giggles remembering her braids) Iced tea? Well, yes, I do believe I will. And that's where we went the first time. They had the worst biscuits and gravy and the sear on the KFC was soggy and black. Who knew? Both worlds. You ate the tapioca and fruit, though. I had the iced tea. I had the iced tea and Father gave that sermon on, on, oh,--fuck.

Huxtable Weary

I haven't slept.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Alone. You haven't slept alone. Neither have I. Neither had I! When the children kept me warm they licked my feet and nuzzled into my crotch.

Huxtable Weary

I have slept alone. Year one. Year two. Year three. Year four. Year five...

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

But you hated them.

Huxtable Weary

Year six. Year seven and on and on and on.

Thomas Merton sits on the stairs loosening his tie and gazing through the window into the kitchen.

Thomas Merton

Do you hear it? The clock chimed a dozen times and each time it appeared to be more sullen than the last. How fascinating. I do believe the insomnia is purely linked to the boredom they have become. I must say, though, I am worn by watching these non-antics.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Would you come to bed with me? Just once more Hux? For old times sake.

Huxtable Weary

I was accidentally asleep—that's all. I tripped over and on and in. So far in. I can't remember your name.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

It's Janice.

Huxtable Weary

Jesus Janice. Janice. Janice. It feels funny. Coming out of my mouth.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

It feels funny hearing it. Isn't that amusing. Give me your baby. Hux? Give me a baby now please. Let's try one more time. Just once. You don't even have to touch me.

Huxtable Weary

It didn't work, it couldn't work.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

You owe me that.

Huxtable Weary

So do you. YOU owe me that.

Huxtable exits.

Margie's restlessness persists: to do what is right. To do what one needs. Margie knows not the personal personality of need. She collects a satchel of useless memorabilia.

Margie

I'm going to take you away from here. What will you need? Hum, hum, dough-dee-lee-me. We're going to your daddy. Makeup, Spice Girls, one jacket and two socks.

Margie makes her way home. She enters the house with a thousand nervous veins exposed. The kitchen is just as she loved it. The madam of the house greets her.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Well, well. (she smiles) The devil strikes again.

Margie feigns confidence and apology.

Margie

Sorry Mrs. Weary.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Sorry. (laughs) He's gone. He left me. I sit alone and stare at the mess you made.

She gazes around the kitchen.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

It's a shame they don't recycle here.

Margie

I have to tell him something.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

And what would that be? (She sniffs out Margie's fear) That you love him? Because that doesn't matter.

Huxtable Weary has made his way to the bedroom. He rubs his eyes so brutally they blaze. He scratches his need, forcing his erection into place. Thomas Merton, dressed in athletic wear, enters. Huxtable hides under the covers.

Margie is moving accordingly.

Margie

He will love me. He has to.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

You stupid girl. And here I brought you into my house to give you relief. To give you something else. But you needed that didn't you? No. No? No. No? You wanted that. You selfish little cunt—

Margie

You didn't have him! I had him inside of me and I STILL DO!

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

(laughs) I knew it. Oh, poor Saint Martha.

Margie

(breaks into hysterical freedom) He touched me! He TOUCHED me. And he did his business in me—not on the floor of the bathroom. He didn't give me carrots and cucumbers from his lunchbox and watch me. (vacant) He wasn't a hundred billion feet away.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

(scathingly) Oh, Margie. He was a hundred billion feet away.

Thomas Merton goes to Huxtable and touches his forehead.

Thomas Merton

Are you warm tonight? Is that why you weren't there? Feeling a little under the covers.

Huxtable Weary

Under the weather.

Thomas Merton

There wasn't anyone waiting for me tonight when I came out of the shower.

Huxtable Weary

I don't wait for you. I just worry that you are all okay.

Thomas Merton

You shouldn't lie.

Huxtable Weary

I'm not lying. I don't.

Thomas Merton

You gaze. Have you ever told yourself what that means?

Thomas Merton caresses his forehead.

Margie

Don't be jealous Mrs. Weary.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

No.

Margie

You are.

Thomas Merton swallows his jest.

Thomas Merton

You do realize that the stars are not moving: it's the Earth. Or any planet for that matter. As far as you know there is nothing much out there with them. Passed them. Between them. Otherwise not here. You are. Have a Coke and a good cry. You'll feel better in the morning.

Thomas Merton hands him a bottle of Coke and some tissues.

Huxtable Weary

You must really hate me.

Thomas Merton

Pardon?

Huxtable Weary

Coming to me when I'm trying to just sleep and turning me over.

Margie

I've got him more now.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Give me the baby you bitch.

Margie

I's mine.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary is a torrent of anger and greed. Vermouth bottles shatter under foot. There is a quiet remedy beneath and between. Thomas Merton can feel the quakes from below. Huxtable is oblivious as he thrusts his crotch into the mattress: whines of terrified want.

Margie

I's mine Mrs. Weary.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I know! You know what. (pause) You can't keep it. Can you? What would you do with it?

Margie

He'll take care of it.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

We have a contract, the two of us, if he takes care of it—it will be with me.

Margie

You said he's gone.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

He never really came.

There is a moment of hushed movement from above and below. There is recognition

of late night recoils, silences,
and soiled revelation.

Margie

You can't have my baby.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Where is your father dear?

Margie

I'll go.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

You can't go. You can't go anywhere when there's nowhere to go.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary takes
her wrist.

Margie

Let go. Please.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I couldn't live with myself if I let you out into the cold. What kind of Catholic would I be if I did have compassion for the sluts and whores of the world? You are one of Jesus' children too. How many months has it been again?

Margie

Eight. It's almost time. I think I'm going home.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Let's not be stupid, Margie. You can't go home now. I'll make a contract with you just like I made with him—only ours will work out better. I'll take that child off your hands and you go. Start a new life. One where you can go and be free. Go to Hollywood even. I bet you'd like that. You'd like to be a star.

Thomas Merton

You're shaking Coach.

Huxtable Weary

Did we lose again? They're going to fire me you know. Hell. Who do I have to support? Her children are dead. The eggs have gone bad. I don't know why I did it.

Thomas Merton

Did what Mr. Weary?

Margie

He loves me. He told me.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I call your bluff.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary begins touching Margie's belly. Margie can only recoil so far. Her disciplined respect for elders traps her between a rock and a hard space.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

He loves you?

Margie

That's my baby.

Huxtable Weary's gyrations increase.

Huxtable Weary

I did it for the boys. You know--the boys.

Thomas Merton

I see.

Huxtable Weary

I did it because that was all I knew. I don't know shit. Once someone told me that I was doing it right. That I knew how to play or some bullshit like that. So I did. Bullshit. I bullshitted all the way through what ever this is.

Thomas Merton

We're going to lose again.

Huxtable Weary

I know.

Thomas Merton

And again.

Huxtable Weary

I didn't know what I liked.

Thomas Merton

And finally you won't be aloud to watch.

Huxtable Weary

One. Year one.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Give me the baby you whore and He will forgive your sins.

Margie

He doesn't think that.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Oh, yes, yes he does.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary is cautious. She steps upon shards understanding desire.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

He will hate you. I lost my children—you may have heard. They went missing and a month later they were found in a ditch along 407. No one was there so they went unidentified. Isn't that a shame?

Margie

I'm sorry.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Margie. I want you to know that He will forgive our sins.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary retrieves a bottle of vermouth from the cupboard.

Thomas Merton

Sleep. It is well past midnight.

Huxtable Weary

I LOVE: them. As I can.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary places her mission on high.

Margie

It's past my bedtime. I should go. (she takes her lip into bite) I'm not trying to do anything mean. I'm not bad. Am I bad?

I cannot be the judge.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

He will save me.

Huxtable Weary

Thomas Merton nears his bed.

Will you be with me?

Huxtable Weary

Forever: the lust between the eyes.

Thomas Merton

Huxtable Weary raises himself. Thomas Merton averts his eyes. Leaving as blindly as he entered.

Goodnight.

Margie

Mrs. Huxtable Weary approaches, disregarding her initial instinct (the bottle), she takes Margie and thrusts her head against the wall. Margie falls.

Goodnight.

Thomas Merton

Night comes. Morning comes. Huxtable is at the kitchen table. His face has sunken. Thomas Merton, as an employee of the United States Postal Service, knocks on the door. Mrs. Huxtable Weary has brought Margie up the bedroom. She hovers over Margie with a most graven expression on her face. A rosary hangs from

her hand. The faint hum of the Hail Mary is heard. It enters and exits on the wisps of her tongue.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Hail Mary,
Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
And blessed is the fruit
Of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
Pray for us sinners now,
And at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Huxtable Weary listens to the door. He is lulled by the rhythmic knocking. Thomas Merton finally opens the door and peers in.

Thomas Merton

Weary? Simplicity?

Huxtable Weary

Yes.

Thomas Merton

Got a letter.

Huxtable Weary

You could have put it in the box.

Thomas Merton

Got all the way here 'fore I noticed inappropriate postage. Thought 'stead of sending it back might get the right change from you. Some letter eh? Very little indication: Mr. Weary in Simplicity. Guess the Virginia's implied.

Huxtable Weary

I'm surprised it was sent.

Thomas Merton

Well, most round here know who you are. Get away with more out here than in the city I guess.

Huxtable Weary

Or less.

Thomas Merton

Suppose that's true too. Suppose you got a right good point there too. Well if'in I can get that change I'll be on m'way.

Huxtable Weary gives
Thomas Merton a buck.

Huxtable Weary

Keep the change.

Thomas Merton ducks out,
quickly returning through the
living room and peering in on
Huxtable's journey into
Margie's crayon driven letter.

Huxtable Weary

Dear God. I'm going to be a father? Shit.

He smiles.

Huxtable Weary

I can do that. Sure I can. Dad. Daddy. Names shit. I'll name you. (laughs in quiet reserve). Margie?

Thomas Merton sighs a nod
of approval.

Thomas Merton

And perhaps purity may be retrieved.

Huxtable Weary

No. (Huxtable crumples the letter) Not now, Mister Jones. I can't be that man.

He grabs his Varsity letter
jacket and leaves. Thomas
Merton reaches for him.

Thomas Merton

Repent and resolve, my son.

Thomas Merton cradles his head in hands. Margie wakes.

Margie

It hurts.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

The swelling will go down.

Margie

Not there. There. (points to her swollen belly) I'm scared. I think it's coming.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

But no, it's too soon.

Thomas Merton pours himself a glass of seltzer water, occasionally tossing bottles and meat into the trash.

Thomas Merton

Shame they don't recycle here.

Margie begins to moan.

Thomas Merton

One. Year pre-one. Birth and the breath of one. Now where have they gone? The two seem to have escaped my view. Attempts at closeted reflection perhaps.

As Thomas Merton reflects on the carbonation, a woman enters carrying a large orange suitcase. She is roughly fifty wearing a yellowing dress. Fabric freely flowing about her frame. Her wiry brown hair knots as she shakes her head in stutters and laughs. Here is Sandy Dennis.

Sandy Dennis

Oh, uh—ha. I'm, am I'm early? Where are they? Boy you would not believe I think it's almost seventy out there. Ha. You never know let me tell you, here we are, November, and it's almost seventy. Hello there.

Thomas Merton

I'm sorry, you must be mistaken. (he pauses and gives her the once over) I'm not sure we even know each other.

Sandy Dennis

Sandy. Sandy Dennis.

Thomas Merton

The actress?

Sandy Dennis

Well, not anymore. I guess not. And you, you sir are Thomas Merton.

Thomas Merton

Thank you. Occasionally.

Sandy Dennis

Well, I occasionally act but now it seems I am here for the son.

Thomas Merton

To take him away?

Sandy Dennis

No, oh no. I'm here to make sure it all goes well.

Thomas Merton

Have you any experience?

Sandy Dennis

Well, ha, thank you for the confidence and yes. I was alive.

Sandy Dennis takes a can of Moxie out of her suitcase. She sits on her suitcase and smiles.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Oh, Lord. There's blood.

Margie panics.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Whore's penance if you ask me.

Thomas Merton

How did you know?

Sandy Dennis

She called the church asking if anyone knew how to deliver a baby.

Thomas Merton

Not now?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Chickens lay eggs every day. Now come on. Plop it out!

Sandy Dennis

Um, upstairs.

Thomas Merton

Shucks, didn't check up there.

Sandy Dennis

This is their time.

Margie

I don't want it anymore! Make it stop.

Thomas Merton

He left. What will happen now?

Sandy Dennis

Nothing I suppose—if fate has her way.

Margie screams.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

How 'bout that. It's a boy. It's even breathing. Looks just like Jesus.

End part two.

Begin part three:

The darkest days pass with only a whimper and daylight unappreciated. Sixteen years have passed. The Weary's abode is clean. The air between smells of Pine-Sol and Vanilla Brown Sugar Softsoap. The dishwasher is going and music plays (Bob Dylan's "Delia"). Sandy Dennis sits on the couch knitting. Every few moments she glances expectantly at the door. Janice is in the kitchen. She folds napkins occasionally testing the soup. She "mmms" here and there to remind herself of her good deeds. The evening glow hums along with the music. There is no question of step or the hereafter. Thomas Merton leans, somewhat resigned, against the wall. He is in his Priest's attire. He picks his teeth and ponders his shoes. He stomps once. Nothing alters. The kettle whistles. Janice pours herself and Sandy Dennis a cup. She watches the Lipton steep. This goes on for at least two minutes. Janice will not miss these minutes. Or check the clock. The water settles and turns. Thomas Merton unpackages a new Fruit of the Loom for himself.

Thomas Merton

Here we are. Sixteen years and little change, I should rephrase, sixteen years and one large change. Huxtable came back not too long after Jesus came. Margie was gone by that point. Janice forced her into the cold without even cleaning up the afterbirth. Margie's name is now one that is spoken in hushed tones at the Winn-Dixie. She had taken off to Hollywood but many say she only made it to Albuquerque, later returning home. The illusion of dreams it seems: never as satisfying as the allure. Jesus soon became John and his father embraced him with quivering awkward arms. The world cycles in and out of minor disillusion. The water weeps for its own moisture. I know not why and I have failed to ask. Sandy Dennis quickly forced her way into the family as a "nanny." She convinced the Mrs. that she had no ideas how to raise a child—this wasn't hard. She understands my place but pesters me with ideas of comfortable freedom. Not that her sufferings do not extend far. I worry she has become blind in death.

Sandy Dennis scoffs.

Thomas Merton

John is just as he should be. A boy of sixteen: full of inquiry and spectacle. He loves his mother and has a very special glint in his eye for his father. I long for Huxtable to understand, but the complacency has only grown more stagnant. The boy gave freedom and prison. And as it is, it is for now.

John runs through the door into the kitchen. His has a slight frame and short legs. John's face borrows a certain beauty from his father, yet his handsomeness is not "All-American." A darker mold with effeminate tones.

Oh, John. Look at you.

Janice

She pinches his cheeks.

Mom. Just stop.

John

I swear you put on an inch every day.

Janice

John? You home, boy?

Sandy Dennis

Sandy Dennis enters with a smile.

Whell. Look at you. How does it feel, uh—sweet sixteen,

Sandy Dennis

It's only sweet sixteen with girls. But I'll take it as sweet as I can get.

John

John. I hope there's no implied meaning there.

Janice

Mom.

John

You know what. I think our Mother's right. I think you grew a whole inch in a day. Where's your father?

Sandy Dennis

Garage.

John

Father is in the other room, John, he dropped by to wish you a happy birthday. Why don't you go in there while Nanny and I get dinner ready.

Janice

Janice and Sandy Dennis continue preparations in the kitchen. John goes to the living room.

Happy Birthday, my son.
Thomas Merton

(nods) Father.
John

How is the doting?
Thomas Merton

John shrugs.

You seem distracted today.
Thomas Merton

No.
John

What hampers the dutiful sons mind on such a joyful day?
Thomas Merton

I'm great.
John

And the convinced remains bitter, eh?
Thomas Merton

John and Thomas Merton
stare.

I don't—(care).
John

Huxtable comes flailing
through the door, John listens
for his entrance. He gives
Janice a cold nod.

Where's the boy?
Huxtable Weary

He's in with Father.
Janice

What that smell?
Huxtable Weary

Janice

Soup. Stew. Beef stew.

Huxtable Weary

He hates stew.

Janice

No he doesn't.

Huxtable Weary

Yes he does. He just won't tell you because he knows it is the only thing you know how to make.

Janice

I won't let you ruin his birthday.

Huxtable Weary

Neither will I.

Sandy Dennis

Oh, will you get a look at this—isn't this the most beautiful sweater.

Huxtable Weary

Picked it up in town. Do you think he'll like it?

Sandy Dennis

Well, ha-uh, I hope so. It's very sophisticated, now isn't it?

Janice

Very nice.

Thomas Merton

You will gain nothing by holding breath to catch a glimpse of the other room.

John

I'll listen if I want.

Thomas Merton

And what, pray tell, are you listening for?

John

The truth.

Thomas Merton

Oh, I see. Truth emerges in the kitchen. (he rests his hand on John)

John

I'm not becoming an altar boy.

Thomas Merton

Oh, well. That's fine.

John

I mean—if you ever thought I would.

Thomas Merton

Hadn't crossed my mind.

Huxtable Weary enters the living room.

Huxtable Weary

Sixteen, eh. What about that?

John sits on the sofa. He picks at a hangnail. Huxtable sits distanced from him.

Huxtable Weary

How does it feel?

John

Like fifteen.

Huxtable smiles. Silence.

Sandy Dennis

Umm. The stew just smells wonderful. Doesn't it? I don't know how you do it, Janice. Everything's so clean. I swear. I do my best around here, but you, you have some kind of touch.

Janice

It's the Swifer—just picks the dust right up.

Sandy Dennis

Yes. Well. That's some invention, isn't it? You know what, you must be very proud of your son. What a good boy. You certainly have produced a fabulous son.

Janice pales and stares at the brown beef and soggy potatoes.

Janice

If you'll watch the stew--I think I need some time.

Sandy Dennis

That time of day?

Janice

We used to have. (pause) We used to have these dogs. Sometimes I miss them. I think I need some time. Some Janice time.

Sandy Dennis

Well, uh-ha, don't let me stop you. You look, you look just beautiful today.

Janice

Oh, it's just an old dress. It's falling apart really. I should really get to the store.

Sandy Dennis

The store can always wait—let me tell you, if I know anything, it'll be there tomorrow. Unless there's a tornado. Oh, geez, but that's unlikely, huh?

Janice

I suppose so.

Janice leaves the stew on and goes to the bedroom. She finds no solace. She stares at the static on the television and brushes her hair.

Sandy Dennis

They're cutting it all down to the ground. Come ten years who knows. Huh? Buckets of beams. That's right. That's how it went. What a day. Today feels like Sunday, doesn't it?

Sandy Dennis laughs and stirs the stew. Thomas Merton enters.

Thomas Merton

I believe them all mystified.

Sandy Dennis

Can you blame them? You're looking a little sullen. You should have some red wine. Gives you color.

Thomas Merton
True. A nice blush.

Sandy Dennis
You know your problem.

Thomas Merton
Please, indulge me.

Sandy Dennis
You believe too well.

Thomas Merton
I believe little in all.

Sandy Dennis
You know how I feel. You know what I see. Huh? I see them. You know, the four of them. All the time. Like those National Geographics from '72 that sit in the corner. The little one knows. I can see it. Here we are, being bludgeoned with nonsense up and down the stairs. Playing the game. I don't think either of us are winning but they understand their loss. And he will know. Then. Whell, to whom are we appealing?

Thomas Merton
In truth the suffering will begin and end and be.

Sandy Dennis
You know what I think. You are a very beautiful man, Mr. Merton.

Sandy Dennis kisses Thomas Merton on the forehead.

Sandy Dennis
It will be learned—in time.

Thomas Merton opens a bottle of wine, crosses himself, consumes a glass, and comfortably dozes off in one of the chairs. Huxtable watches his son quake with anticipation. For what? And for whom? The redundant lapse of fatherly undertakings.

Huxtable Weary

How are you son?

John

I don't know. Fine. Fine. Fine. I'm fine.

Huxtable Weary

So your Mom's cooking you some dinner.

John

I heard.

Huxtable Weary

I see.

John kicks his legs up onto the sofa. He briefly brushes against his father's leg. The two glance up. An uncomfortable shift. John takes his chance.

John

Am I your boy? Yours?

Huxtable Weary

John?

John

I don't know, maybe the last sixteen years. Watching the two of you underneath.

Huxtable Weary

Your Mother and I--love, do love, each other. For you.

John

What the hell is that—for me?

Huxtable Weary

Believe me, John, your mother and I were much more miserable without you. And don't say hell—it's crass.

John

That must have been painful.

Huxtable Weary

It was—something.

John examines his father's frame. He enjoys the ripples, the seams, the conclusions he has made.

John

You're strong.

Huxtable Weary

Gym, I offered to take you when I was coaching.

John

I wish I had arms like you. Or pecs.

Huxtable Weary

It's nothing.

John

It's my birthday, Dad.

Huxtable Weary

(laughs) Of course it is.

John

Tell me something about today.

Huxtable Weary

You know everything.

John

Do I?

Huxtable Weary

You were born on a warm day in November. Your mother had you upstairs in the bedroom. We couldn't get you to the hospital in time. She likes to believe that she saw Jesus when you were born.

John

Did you?

Huxtable Weary

I can't remember what I saw, apart from you, you cried for days. We were worried you wouldn't make it. But you did. You started to calm down about a week into life. You were bronze for a bit. Glowing. It looked like someone left you in the sun and baked you up a little. I think you were just excited.

John

I can't remember anything from my childhood really.

Huxtable Weary

That's why we're here.

John

You don't tell me anything. Even when you do. Nanny tells me.

Huxtable Weary

I don't tell you anything because there is nothing to tell. We live here, I work here, your mother does things—around the house, you go to school. That's it, we live in Simplicity, Virginia. There is nothing of note.

John

You look like a movie star, Dad. I don't. Could I?

Huxtable Weary smiles at his son. Janice begins to hum a Christmas Carol. She stands and decides the time has come. She slowly glides down the stairs into the kitchen. Upon arrival she smells her stew and turns it on high.

Sandy Dennis

Have you recovered my dear?

Janice

I think so. It's the heat.

Sandy Dennis

It's November.

Janice

It's the heat and the excitement. I just can't get over that sixteen years ago today he came into our lives with such a whimper.

Sandy Dennis

How was it? Bringing him into the world?

Janice

Fine. Oh, I don't know. Great. (pause) No one could believe it because I had been sick and in this house for months, so no one had seen me. Isn't that a funny story?

Sandy Dennis

Well, pheflt, you must have left the house. At least once.

Janice

(curtly) I wasn't aloud. I was advised against leaving and none of the doors worked.

Sandy Dennis

Oh, no, he didn't, he didn't lock you in did he?

Janice

Who, yes, my father, no. I mean, sometimes when I was a child he would lock me in my room to keep out the boys, but not here. He died, you know, he died and that's that. I keep my doors unlocked now.

Sandy Dennis

Whell, that's a relief. I must admit, I didn't think that Mr. Huxtable Weary would ever lock you in.

Janice

No. He wouldn't know how. I locked myself in.

Sandy Dennis

Oh, my.

Janice

It was for the baby. It was for John.

Sandy Dennis

I do believe I smell burning beef. Or is that just me?

Janice

Oh, no.

There is a halo of smoke wrapping itself around the stove. The smell of singed beef fills the abode.

Sandy Dennis

Lord, I thought I had been watching it.

Janice

It was me. I just turned it up a minute ago—it happened so quickly. I ruined it. I did. Ruin John.

Sandy Dennis

Ruin, John. Please. I'll tell you what, we'll order some pizza, no one will be the wiser.

Janice

Pizza is a far cry from stew.

Sandy Dennis

Just say you planned it all along.

Sandy Dennis retrieves the phone.

Sandy Dennis

I would like to order some pizza. Toppings? Oh, dear. Hold on. John, boy, you come here.

John comes in as his Mother passes out into the living room.

Janice

You were right. I ruined it. You look more sickly than usual.

Huxtable looks for a connection in vacant eyes.

Huxtable Weary

He was asking questions.

Sandy Dennis

Pizza? Toppings?

John

Meat. Any kind.

Sandy Dennis

Just throw some meat on there. Oh, I don't care, we're not very picky here. Deliver it. Thank you kindly.

Janice

I hope you didn't tell him any stories.

Huxtable Weary

And why is that?

Janice

Because I have no idea what you tell compared to what I tell him. We both decided it was better to tell him nothing.

Huxtable Weary

But he is. He is. Ours.

John can hear moments and cracked retellings. He attempts not to strain but the investigation is inevitable.

Janice

He is what he is and how he will be. Because of us: WE built his past—him.

Huxtable Weary

I don't make anything up in the retellings.

Janice

I hope you do!

Huxtable Weary

I don't make anything up in the retellings because I owe nothing to you.

Janice

Our contract, Hux, the contract for those who did not marry Rock Hudson. The contract which I fulfilled. He wouldn't be here, that's right, he wouldn't be here if it weren't for me.

Sandy Dennis

John boy. John come here. Lord child, what are you listening for?

John

I knew. I know. I'm not his boy.

Sandy Dennis

Whell. I cannot comment on that since it is obvious that you are. They raised you didn't they? You always had clothes on your back. You always had a place to sleep. You were just like their little cub. Warm and safe, fed and washed. Saw it with my own two eyes. Saw it for sixteen years.

John

Nanny?

Sandy Dennis

Yes.

John

Where did you come from?

Sandy Dennis

(smiles) Nebraska.

Thomas Merton jitters awake.
He looks out the window and
warms his hands.

Thomas Merton

And as the sun becomes dimmer, you realize just how early it becomes dark—this time of year.

Sandy Dennis

There are many reasons why we live here. But there are just as many reasons why we are crazy for doing so.

John

Nanny, I'm miserable.

Sandy Dennis

John! I'm surprised in you.

John

I'm miserable because I want.

Sandy Dennis

Spoiled boy.

Thomas Merton

That is good, my son, continue.

Sandy Dennis

Shh. And what is it that you don't have? I would love to know. You have breath. You have luxury, you have health.

John

I want something else. I don't know exactly what it is but it is something that would take me away.

Thomas Merton

You seek freedom it seems.

John

No. Not freedom. Not freedom!

Thomas Merton

Redemption I presume.

Sandy Dennis

Quiet you! Let the boy talk.

John

I don't want freedom. I want to be locked away. Far away. In something other than this.

John leaves. He makes his way to the bedroom and begins to disrobe. He stares at the television and begins to moan. Here he thought he would masturbate. But no. He sits on the bed and stares at his hands. Huxtable Weary leaves Janice on the sofa. She has discovered a bottle of vermouth underneath the sofa and begins to nurse.

Huxtable Weary

Nanny?

Sandy Dennis

Oh, what?

Thomas Merton

You are seemingly alive at the moment, Mr. Weary.

Huxtable Weary

Yes. Where is John? Is he here?

Sandy Dennis

Little bugger went straight up those stairs 'bout a couple of minutes ago. Seemed a little down.

Huxtable Weary

I'll go and try to track him down.

Huxtable Weary enters the bedroom. John is disrupted and frightened. He is in his underwear. Crying, shaking, and otherwise investing little hope in the future.

Huxtable Weary

John. John? John. Stop, please stop, you're scaring me.

John

Touch? Please. (pause) Mr. Weary. Something?

Huxtable Weary

You are my boy. MY boy.

John

I know.

Huxtable Weary

No, you don't. You think you know. How could you know?

John

If you are--my Dad, touch me. Please. Give me something.

Huxtable Weary

Don't look at me like that. I LOVE you. I love you more than anyone else in my life. I love you so much more than I love myself. I hate myself. I could never hate you.

John

Then why don't you touch me? Why do you keep me so far from you? Why didn't you tell me I wasn't your son?

Huxtable Weary

You are my son. Don't you understand?

John

If I were your son I wouldn't be this far from you. Touch me. (pause) Hold me.

Huxtable Weary

I can't. I'll break.

John takes his hand and puts it around his father's neck,

requesting a hug. Huxtable
Weary takes his son's face.

Huxtable Weary

(between sobs) You're the only one I loved. Through all of it. I LOVE YOU. You are the most beautiful man I have ever seen. You are. Gorgeous. And you're mine.

Huxtable kisses his son. John does not evade. He kisses back. John becomes erect. It shows through his flimsy underwear. Huxtable is frightened.

John

You know. Jesus. Touch me.

Huxtable Weary

I can't go on. It hurts.

John can feel his father's erection.

John

Do you like the way I look? Do you like my hair? Do you like my arms?

Huxtable kisses his arms.

Huxtable Weary

They're beautiful. You're so strong,

John

Why didn't you tell me?

Huxtable Weary

Tell you what?

John

Show me—how. How you love me.

Huxtable Weary begins to undress.

John

Show me all the things you never told me.

The doorbell rings. Thomas Merton answers it with reluctance. A Domino's Pizza delivery person stands in the doorway. She is thirty and scarred. There is life seven layers deep: past the ashes from almost two decades of smoking, past the drug crazes, the 211 sexual partners, the scars of birth, of non-birth. Here is Margie.

Margie

I had trouble finding the driveway. So I went through the backyard.

Thomas Merton is stunned, in many more ways than one.

Thomas Merton

There are about twenty pine trees in the backyard.

Margie

I know. I almost hit one. Just got the car washed too.

Thomas Merton

I think I recognize you.

Margie

That'll be 17.50.

Thomas Merton

I believe we have a coupon.

Janice

(calling in) Is that the pizza? We do here (wanders in slightly intoxicated by the vinegar)
I have a coupon for the Tuesday—oh, sweet God.

Margie

It's 14 with the coupon.

Janice

You can't have him back! You hear me. He's mine fare and scare.

Janice retrieves her balance.

Margie

Mrs. Huxtable Weary?

Thomas Merton

Oh, Margie. What has happened to you?

Janice

Don't look at her. Please, please, I'm begging you, please, leave. Oh, no it can't be. You left. You haven't told have you? Have you told them? Do they all know? Do all their wives in the grocery store know? Is that why they don't look at me?

Margie

What are you talking about? I need the money before I can go. I'm also sorry 'bout the backyard. I think there are some tire marks.

Janice

No you can't leave. You can't leave now that you're here.

Janice shuts and locks the door.

Thomas Merton

Mrs. Weary. I am sure that I shouldn't get involved, but would you like for me to leave the room. It seems as though the two of you need to have some sort of discussion.

Janice

There is nothing to discuss. She can't leave. And that's the end of it. You have to go.

Margie

You locked me in. I can't.

Janice

Not outside. Away.

Margie

I did go. Now I'm back. I don't care.

Janice

You do. You would if you saw him.

Margie

I don't care about him. I've lost others. He was in me for eight months. That's all.

Janice

No him! Not him, his father.

Sandy Dennis

Oh my, this is over my head, now isn't it?

Margie

He's back?

Janice

What do you mean?

Margie

You told me left. You told me he was gone!

Janice

He is. He is gone.

Margie

He's here—isn't he? Mr. Weary? Mr. Weary!

Janice

You shut up. You shut up now and go.

Margie

Everyone told me he was gone. He's not with the team. I looked.

Janice

He lost his job because of you.

Margie

Where is he?

Janice

He's where he belongs—with his family.

Margie

You're not it. (pause) I gave you something you could never have. I've learned that. Over the years. I wasn't trying to fucking do anything. I was just trying to do something. For me.

As the rhythm slows: Thomas Merton, Sandy Dennis, Margaret Hallow Johnson, and Mrs. Janice Huxtable Weary sit in the kitchen staring at the pizza that is going cold. Huxtable Weary

has finished fucking his son, John Weary, in the upstairs bedroom. The evening smells of sacrifice and bourbon. Sandy Dennis starts whistling. Whistling becomes humming. Sandy Dennis begins to laugh uncontrollably.

Sandy Dennis

It's a pleasure to be with you. All.

No one smiles. Huxtable Weary pulls out of his son.

John

Dad? (pause) Thank you.

Huxtable Weary gets out of bed. He makes his way to the door. He puts on his son's underwear and goes down the stairs.

Margie

Oh, Mr. Weary. You look like a star.

He begins to shake.

Janice

Hux? No. Hux.

Huxtable Weary

I did. Yes. I fucked my son.

Sandy Dennis pulls out the pizza and begins setting dinner. Thomas Merton clears his throat. The air stills and becomes teal.

End part three.

Begin part four:

Life is the same. The only time spent has been a ten second breath. And, as such, this is the Weary household. Standing amongst the rumble are four skeletons and two souls. The moonlight smells of reheated McDonald's Hot Cakes and coffee. Unfortunately, neither have yet to be made. The night is in full swing. All members have been accounted for. Those in the audience that have dozed off should be nudged awake. Knowing that dawn is just around the bend, they are advised to give it their best shot. The wake of drunken mist. A hangover pre-sleep. Hoping that one may make it home. To a bed. To a lover. To a pillow and a thousand dreams. Those of Simplicity are seeing the end through the same hazy eyes, and so, we begin.

Thomas Merton

So here we are: children of a defiantless nation. Some believe that we are moving as cattle as a herd of sheep whose wool has been shorn to reveal the pink of our mother's nipple. And this is the evening of the Weary's: an everybody family who has turned in their finances for future. A future now undisputed. The destiny of this man is not a psychological farce played in the tune of fate, but, rather, the distracted notion of our interest. Or disinterest. Or inspection. Help is the relation of me to him. He. Him. And here lies the demoralization of one, Mr. Huxtable Weary.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

John? John? John!

Margie sees Huxtable Weary in a light cast by her fourteen year old self.

Margie

You're here. Aren't you?

Sandy Dennis

John?

Sandy Dennis quietly moves past Huxtable. She makes her way to the bedroom.

Sandy Dennis

John?

He does not answer the knock. He covers himself with the sweaty sheet. He stares at himself in the television.

John

The door's unlocked.

Sandy Dennis

Tell me, boy, what do you feel? Are you hurt?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

You, you are the man I always—loved?

John

I'm fine. I'm great. I'm golden.

Sandy Dennis

No. My child.

Thomas Merton puts on a three-piece suit.

Thomas Merton

Janice? The time has come.

Margie

I'm not sorry anymore.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I know.

Sandy Dennis stands in the doorway. Her smile is disjointed. Her flow is a movement of suffice and perform.

Sandy Dennis

Come here, my boy, sit my your Nanny.

She takes her place next to the pillows. She shuts off the television.

Sandy Dennis

Whell, what a day we have had. Huh? What a day. So how do you feel? Sixteen and already a man.

John smiles.

John

Nanny.

Thomas Merton

I can see you are not happy, my daughter.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Hux?

Huxtable Weary

Janice?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Did you touch him with your hands?

Huxtable Weary goes to the fridge and pulls out a side of roast beef.

Huxtable Weary

How about you make us dinner? The pizza's a little cold. Janice, I want you to make dinner for our family.

Huxtable touches her on the small of her back. She smiles in return.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I thought you'd never ask.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary puts on an apron and begins slicing the meat.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Have you seen the children today?

Huxtable Weary

They were in a ditch off 407. Somehow they lost their collars.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Go figure. Those two pups never had a lick of sense.

Margie puts lipstick on her frail face, attempting to cover the wrinkles that have sliced her threads.

Margie

You know, I went to Flagstaff.

Huxtable Weary

Did you now?

There is a moment of nothing/ bright/ fluorescent /disregard.

Thomas Merton

Daughter, I do believe you have yet to introduce me.

Margie/Mrs. Huxtable Weary

His name is Huxtable. Huxtable Weary.

John

I don't see him in my face. You do, don't you?

Sandy Dennis

Oh, my child. I see him so clearly. You could be your father, you know. Really. Just like your Dad.

John

He touched me, you know.

Sandy Dennis

I do.

Thomas Merton

You are sweet my daughter. But you have so much to learn. Let me tell you. There are three ways to hop.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary begins to laugh.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

No there aren't!

Thomas Merton

Up, down, and through.

Huxtable Weary

You look nice Margie.

Margie

Please. Margaret.

John

And then he told me I was beautiful.

Sandy Dennis

Perfect.

Somewhere in Simplicity,
two dogs bark, they come to
the backdoor dressed as
children. Here they will sit,
onlookers 'til their end.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Margaret. Margaret. Margaret. I suppose if I had had a daughter I may have named her Margaret, but, then again. I didn't. Hux? I say, Hux, you know where I got this meat? I got it at the Wal-Mart. They have a butcher there and everything. I went to the store.

Huxtable Weary

You went to the store?

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

I did! I got behind the wheel of the car and I didn't shake. Not once. This was this morning. Before you woke up on the couch. I tried not to wake John since he was next to me. Usually I wake him up when I get out of the bed, but I didn't. All the way to Wal-Mart and back.

Huxtable Weary

I'm proud of you. I am.

John studies Sandy Dennis.

Sandy Dennis

I think they're making you dinner.

John

Who?

Sandy Dennis

Your family. All four.

John knows not the meaning.
He blushes.

John

Nanny? Would you mind? Turning around? I have to put on my underwear.

Sandy Dennis

Oh, my, yes. Whell.

She covers her eyes with her right hand. John stands: his frame is covered in perspiration. He searches for his underwear, finding none, he puts on his father's. He puts on his jeans, a white t-shirt, and white gym socks. When finally prepared, he laughs.

John

You can open now.

Sandy Dennis

Oh, ah, are we decent now?

John

Yeah.

Thomas Merton

Daughter. (he touches Janice's hair) You should tell me. (pause) Why?

The children begin to bark and groan outside. This continues intermittently for the next few minutes.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Father, I am going to have children, white walls, stain-resistant carpeting, and a Kitchen-Aid. I am going to have the closest thing to Rock Hudson. Once I got yours out of me it will heal. And I will wear white bell-bottoms again.

Margie

Oh, Mrs. Weary, you're make-up is running.

Margie retrieves one of the napkins from her place of employment and dabs Mrs. Huxtable Weary's cheeks.

Mr. Huxtable Weary

You can't treat me like this! I deserve nothing. Except that! (gestures toward Mr. Huxtable Weary) I deserve him. We had a contract and you broke it.

Huxtable Weary

This is not the time.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

We had a contract that you would never be—be...! I got you a child didn't I? I got you your SON.

Thomas Merton

And on the sixth day...

Huxtable Weary

He wasn't yours!

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

He is. Now.

Margie

He is. Really. Don't be mad, Mr. Weary. Don't be mad.

Sandy Dennis puts on a sunhat she finds on the coat-rack.

Sandy Dennis

How do I look now?

John laughs.

John

Ridiculous.

Sandy Dennis

Come here boy. You know it's over don't you? (she giggles) They all know. Don't you? (her hysteria grows) You know what you did? Here---let us follow course.

Sandy Dennis takes John's hand and leads him downstairs. Margaret moves toward the stove.

Margie

There's no broth.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary goes under the sink. John and Sandy Dennis enter. John looks at Margie. Margie lights a cigarette. In no way could she decipher the child before her. She pulls at her skirt and ashes onto the table. John finds a voice.

Sandy Dennis

Just like four peas in a pod.

Thomas Merton

And on the sixth day...

Mrs. Huxtable Weary pulls out the Clorox and Pine-Sol. She dumps the cleaner in the pot and turns the heat on. Simmer. Huxtable Weary feels his son. He adjusts his underwear.

Huxtable Weary

So. Sixteen.

Margie recognizes her mistake.

Margie

You? You're my...his.

The chemicals fill the air.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Father. Dinner will be ready soon. Margie, would you set the table.

What occurs is such as this:
the movement is prepared:
the table is cleaned, Margie
stumbles through drawers.
She collects inappropriate
butterknives and forks.
Huxtable feels his son's
arms.

Thomas Merton

And on the sixth day there was much activity.

Thomas Merton pulls at his
tie. He unfastens it and
views his mistakes.

Thomas Merton

Here we are.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

This meat. It's too old. And used.

She pulls a knife out from a
drawer and goes outside. She
pets the children.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Come here, you, come far away with your mother.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary pulls
the children off into the dark.
Huxtable Weary looks to
Margie.

Huxtable Weary

You're a good girl aren't you? You were good.

Margaret Hallow Johnson

Mr. Weary. You aren't Him. Are you? I'm not spellbound anymore. Here in
Simplicity. When you took me away it was only the kitchen. Meat and all. It goes bad.
Don't it now? Don't look at me and give me your child and tell me I'm good. I'm good?

I'm thirty. Stain me. Awake. Don't touch me, Mr. Weary, you're hands are red. And I'm hungry for Sunday supper.

Huxtable looks to his sweaty palms. Mrs. Huxtable Weary enters. There is residual blood upon her hands. She carries two sides of steak. She throws them into the simmering cleaner.

Thomas Merton

I never intended any of this.

Sandy Dennis takes Thomas Merton into her hands.

Sandy Dennis

And here, yes, you see, you see, and here, yes, is the quiet suffer (pause) child. (pause) You must not blame the human.

The four sit at the table.

Huxtable Weary

Thank you, son.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary pour four bowls.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

You may want to blow on it. It's a little hot.

The eight glazed eyes examine the entrée. Sandy Dennis takes Thomas Merton's hand.

Thomas Merton

I'm here.

Mrs. Huxtable Weary

Please go, father, this is my family. The hanger that you slid inside of me ripped the lining. They said it was gone. It wasn't. Was it? It's right here. My home.

Thomas Merton tears off the vest, shirt and tie. He stands

in a stained white t-shirt and slacks.

Thomas Merton

This is the last guess, isn't it? Here you were moving in on time. Or place. Have we taken out the trash? Here goes the riddle. Just as frank and flush as the end. You know the curiosity of the nation of self is that which we can never see. They have seen you? You have, here, you have seen your self?

Huxtable Weary looks to Thomas Merton. He sees the vision of his wake. Thomas Merton strokes his face for old time's sake.

Sandy Dennis

(laughs) Yes. There are pictures and antidotes and the however in between. The voice of the simplest quest is just as important as the dismemberment of circumstance.

Thomas Merton

Do not believe the required halo of self, just as self should never fully rely on guilt. We are seen as we should be? Each suffering a giant upon the shelf of muscular flex. Isn't it Mr. Weary?

Huxtable Weary looks to him and smiles. He looks to his son. John stands taking the soup bowl in hand.

Sandy Dennis

And one day we will all make a Hollywood star.

Huxtable Weary laughs. He rejoices in the family he mistakenly made.

Huxtable Weary

Here's to your birthday son.

Sandy Dennis

Amen.

The family puts soup bowl to mouth. Sandy Dennis brushes her hair behind her ears. Thomas Merton puts

away his bible. He goes to
the bedroom and switches off
the television. The night
comes. The cicadas bark.
And all hushes in Simplicity.

End.