

AMANDA. I sure am glad we can talk about these things. *(She rises.)* Are we through?

MIRIAM. No. When you gave Warren back his watch it kind of ... embarrassed him, I guess. He really wants you to like him. I want you to like him. And you and I know we've had some problems in the past about this. But ... you're older now. And you-know-who is no longer with us. *(A devious laugh from upstairs.)* And between you and ... your friend, any man I brought home here didn't stand a chance.

AMANDA. *(Too innocent.)* What did I do?

MIRIAM. You intimidated the hell out of them, that's what —

AMANDA. If they're that insecure —

MIRIAM. Lemmie give ya a tip kiddo: men — on the whole — are scared to death of women.

AMANDA. Why?

MIRIAM. For one thing, we're smarter than they are. And they've got this thing about ... how they always have to be in charge — they have to have all the answers. And when they're confronted by a kid who has a 160 IQ — a kid who loves to show it off, I might add — then they get intimidated. And nothing runs faster than a man who feels intimidated — trust me. You'll learn this when you start dating. And then when you-know-who would show up —

AMANDA. I'm beyond that mother.

RANDOLPH. *(From upstairs.)* Hah!

MIRIAM. Well I'm glad of that. Because you're a strange enough kid without him around. *(The phone rings.)*

AMANDA and MIRIAM. Mrs. Simpers.

MIRIAM. Spare me.

AMANDA. *(Into phone.)* Hello Mrs. Simpers ... I just knew it was you ... no, the other offer still stands ...

MIRIAM. *(Whispering.)* What other offer?

AMANDA. It's not important who the other party is —

MIRIAM. *(Loudly.)* That's because there is no other party!

AMANDA. *(Hand over receiver.)* Will you stop it!

MIRIAM. Where'd you learn to lie like that? *(Miriam — in a good mood — decides to bust on Amanda, who manages to keep a*

*straight face when on the phone.)*

AMANDA. No ... but I'll tell you what I am willing to do —

MIRIAM. Oh please ... tell us — tell us ... *(She begins to tickle Amanda, who tries to move away.)*

AMANDA. Since you've been such a loyal customer in the past, all you have to do is match the other offer — *(Hand on receiver.)* Come on ... cut it out ... *(Into phone.)* That's right — still 1300 dollars ... *(She falls to the floor. Miriam keeps it up.)* Okay ... get back to me later. *(She hangs up and releases the laughter, scrambling away from her mother. They both sit on the floor, out of breath.)* What's the matter with you?

MIRIAM. I'm in a good mood.

AMANDA. I think she heard you —

MIRIAM. *(Picking up the quilt.)* Good. I don't wanta sell it to her Manda. She'll put it on display in the guest room. *(She twirls it around her like a cape.)* Quilts are meant to wrap up in.

AMANDA. Careful. You might pull a stitch.

MIRIAM. Don't insult me — this is quality workmanship. *(She tosses it over Amanda's head, covering her.)*

AMANDA. I like you better in a bad mood. *(She removes it and begins to fold it up.)*

MIRIAM. Whatta ya say — let's not sell it. *(Amanda simply shakes her head and keeps folding.)* I'm serious Manda. I don't think I wanta sell it. *(Amanda hands Miriam the quilt and moves to the desk.)* A painting I can knock out in a few days, but this ... this took a lot of time, picking the right colors ... mixing, matching ... textures ... *(She stands, holding onto it. Amanda crosses to her holding a ledger.)* It's sort of like giving birth. Better. It didn't destroy my hips. *(Amanda opens the ledger.)* Put that away.

AMANDA. This past January we were forced to buy a new furnace, remember?

MIRIAM. Yes.

AMANDA. And where did the down payment come from?

MIRIAM. The elves brought it. I forget.

AMANDA. *(Patiently.)* It came from the money we'd set aside to pay the school taxes, which are due at the end of the month — although 863 dollars a year to perpetuate that moron factory they call a school is a little ridiculous. Now, if I went