

WALTER
(exiting)
Naw, I'm sweet enough.

INT. RICHARD LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Walter enters, sits down in his easy chair and turns ON the TV. The Evening News is in progress. He MUTES the volume, closes his eyes and quickly drifts into a gentle sleep...

INT. MONTGOMERY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

LEE and SARAH MONTGOMERY, 38 and 35, Caucasian, live in this substandard home with their four children: JOEY, CARRIE LEE and, from Sarah's former marriage, JANET, age 15, and RALPH, 19.

The television is ON. LEE sleeps in a Lazy-Boy chair with his feet propped up and his mouth, wide-open. He's wearing only his pants and undershirt. A beer can, still in his hand, rests upon his pot-bellied stomach. The volume is almost inaudible above the din of Lee's LOUD SNORES.

CARRIE LEE and JOEY noisily rush in. SARAH is right on their heels and tries to find out what all the commotion is about.

START (SARAH)

SARAH
(southern accent,
whispers)
Okay, okay! What's goin' on here?
You kids gon' wake your daddy up.
And, you know how he is when he's
been drinkin'.

CARRIE LEE
(furious, whispers)
Well, you better tell Joey to leave
me alone or I'm gon' kill him!

SARAH
Joey, what kind of foolishness are
you up to now? I told you 'bout
pickin' on Carrie Lee.

JOEY
(blurts out)
I ain't done nothin' to that girl!

Sarah raises her hand to silence him...

JOEY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
She's just tryin' to get me into
trouble.

SARAH

You both gon' be in a lotta trouble
if you wake Lee up. Now get on
outta here and go outside where you
belong!

CARRIE LEE

(sullenly)

Yes, ma'am.

Joey dashes out the front door and Carrie Lee chases after
him with fire in her eyes.

CARRIE LEE (CONT'D)

I'm gon' get you, you ole fool!

Sarah picks up several beer cans on the floor around Lee.

SARAH

(talking to herself)

No wonder your belly's so big!

INT. MONTGOMERY KITCHEN

JANET sits at the table doing her homework. Sarah enters and
tosses the beer cans in the trash.

SARAH

I thought you were in here cookin'
dinner, Janet.

JANET

I was tryin' to finish this
homework while there was still a
little peace and quiet... Is he
still in there snorin' his fool
head off?

SARAH

I wish you'd try to be nice to Lee.
He really does love you. You and
Ralph. You're like his very own.

JANET

He's not my daddy and never will be
as long as there's breath in my
body. I hate him and you know it!

Sarah walks over and strokes Janet's hair.

SARAH

(sweetly)

But why, sugar? What has he ever
done to you?

START (JANET)

JANET

I just don't like him. He makes me
wanna vomit!

SARAH

Now honey, come on. Don't be like
that. I know how awful Lee can be
sometimes when he gets drunk. But
that's only when he's been
drinkin'.

JANET

(sarcastically)
He's always drinkin'!

Sarah goes over to the sink and starts peeling potatoes...

SARAH

Well, he's gotta have some
pleasure. You know how hard he
works. Lee ain't so bad... Try to
be a little nicer to him. Okay?
For your old mama.

JANET

(looking at her)
You're not old, Mama. But you will
be before your time if you stay
with him.

Sarah turns around and glares at her.

SARAH

Now, what's that supposed to mean?

JANET

I hear you arguin' late at night.
These walls are thinner than you
think. I know a lot more, too. I
know he beats up on you!

Sarah quickly turns away to conceal her embarrassment.

SARAH

Now, that's just not true, Janet!
Where did you get such an idea?!

She fights back tears and tries to remain calm.

JANET

(angrily)
Like I said, I heard you and I seen
you, too.

(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)

All those days when you pretended you had such a bad headache you couldn't come out your room. That's 'cause he had knocked you upside your head and your face was swollen. You didn't put on all that makeup to look cute. You were tryin' to cover up those black and blue marks. Well, if Lee ever lays a hand on me, -- I'll kill him!

Sarah turns around from the sink.

SARAH

Janet, now that's enough! I don't like that kind of talk. It's not showin' respect. After all, you are livin' in his house and he pays all the bills, young lady... Stepfather or not, he's still your daddy; the only daddy you've ever known.

Janet gets up from the table and gathers her school books.

JANET

As soon as I turn sixteen, I'm gon' get me a job after school, and then, I'll be payin' my own way. And, he's not my father! He's nothin' but a bum! A drunken bum!!

She rushes out. Her FOOTSTEPS are heard on the stairs as she runs up to her bedroom... A few seconds later, Lee appears in the doorway, disheveled and rubbing his head.

LEE

What's her problem?
(loudly BELCHES)

Sarah gets a package of hamburger meat from the refrigerator.

SARAH

(nonchalant)
Oh, somethin' at school, I think.

LEE

I bet it's her period. Women always get evil when it's time.

Lee gets a beer out of the refrigerator and opens it.

LEE (CONT'D)

What did you take my beer for?

END