

PRETTY

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A ten-minute play

by Dan Berkowitz

[www.youthplays.com](http://www.youthplays.com)  
[info@youthplays.com](mailto:info@youthplays.com)

AT RISE:

Outdoors. A low wall, made of cinder blocks. Graffiti. Debris on the ground. A waste receptacle filled to overflowing.

CINDY enters. She is 28, drawn and tired-looking. She is pregnant. She half-sits on the wall and looks at her watch.

CHARLEY enters. She is 14. She sees Cindy, starts to approach her, but stops a few feet away.

CHARLEY

Hey.

CINDY

Hey.

CHARLEY

Those are cool shoes.

CINDY

Yeah. Got 'em at Shoe Warehouse. They're designer. Cost \$19.95!

CHARLEY

Wow.

CINDY

Yeah...!

(pause)

It's the rhinestones. They ain't cheap.

CHARLEY

No.

CINDY

Like your hair that way. Pretty.

CHARLEY

Yeah.

CINDY

Makes ya look all grown-up.

CHARLEY

I am grown-up. I'm fourteen.

Cindy laughs.

CINDY

You're fourteen? You ain't fourteen! You're fourteen? Really?

Charley nods.

CINDY (CONT'D)

Shoot! You don't look fourteen. When I's fourteen, I been big up here

(gesturing toward her  
breasts)

two whole years! All the boys after me! Why, when I's fourteen, I'd already had...

She stops. After a moment, she rummages through her purse and takes out a cigarette.

CHARLEY

You shouldn't smoke.

(pause)

The baby and all.

Cindy snorts, pauses, puts the pack away.

CINDY

Trying to quit anyway.

(pause)

You in school?

CHARLEY

Uh huh.

CINDY

You like it?

CHARLEY

It's okay. I like arithmetic. I like numbers.

Pause.

CINDY

That's nice.

CHARLEY

Can I come visit sometime? I could watch the baby...

CINDY

No.

CHARLEY

I'd be careful. You could trust me.

CINDY  
It ain't a good idea.

CHARLEY  
Why?

CINDY  
I tole you before. After what happened with you and Frankie I don't wanna deal with...

CHARLEY  
That wasn't my fault! I didn't do anything!

CINDY  
Frankie is a good man.

CHARLEY  
He was the one who started it. I didn't do anything!

CINDY  
Look, we ain't gonna talk about it, all right?

CHARLEY  
It's not fair.

CINDY  
Things been tough.

CHARLEY  
Things are tough for me too!

CINDY  
(pause)  
When Frankie left, he took everything...

CHARLEY  
Frankie left?!

CINDY  
...even found the money I was hiding in the closet!

CHARLEY  
But if Frankie's gone, you're gonna need help with the baby. I won't take up much room. I can sleep on the floor.

CINDY  
No.

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