

PRETTY

A short drama by
Dan Berkowitz

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CINDY, a twenty-eight year-old pregnant woman.

CHARLEY, a fourteen year-old girl.

(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.)

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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