

Grandma⁸²
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LOST IN YONKERS

(She waves BELLA away.)

BELLA. No! You *have* to listen, Momma... When I was in school, I let boys touch me... And boys that I met in the park... And in the movies... Even boys that I met here in the store... Nights when you were asleep, I went down and let them in... And not just boys, Momma... men too.

GRANDMA. Stop dis, Bella. You don't know vot you're saying... You dream these things in your head.

BELLA. I needed somebody to touch me, Momma. Somebody to hold me. To tell me I was pretty... *You* never told me that. Some even told me they loved me but I never believed them because I knew what they wanted from me... Except John. He *did* love me. Because he understood me. Because he was like me. He was the only one I ever felt safe with. And I thought maybe for the first time I *could* be happy... That's why I ran away. I even brought the five thousand dollars to give to him for the restaurant. Then maybe he'd find the courage to leave home too.

GRANDMA. *(Looks at her disdainfully.)* Is dis someting else you dreamed up? Vere vould you get five thousand dollars?

(BELLA opens her purse and takes out a stack of bills tied in rubber bands. She puts it on the table.)

BELLA. Does this look like a dream, Momma?

GRANDMA. *(Picks up the bills and looks at them.)* Vere did you get dis?

(She turns quickly, looks toward her room.)

Did you steal from me? You know vere I keep my money. Nobody else knows but you.

(She throws her cup of tea in BELLA's face.)

You thief!! You steal from your own mother? *Thief!!*



BELLA. (*Screams at her.*) Go on, hit me, Momma! Crack my head open, make me stupid and crazy, because that's what you really think anyway, isn't it?

GRANDMA. Get out of my house. Go live with your thief friend. You vant da rest of the money, go, take it... It von't last you long... You'll both haff to steal again to keep alive, believe me.

BELLA. I don't want the rest of your money... You can have this too... Louie gave it to me. I stayed in Gertrude's house the last two nights... Louie came to say goodbye and he gave me this out of his little black satchel and God knows how much more he had... I didn't ask him. Maybe he's a thief too, Momma, but he's my brother and he loved me enough to want to help me... Thieves and sick little girls, that's what you have, Momma... Only God didn't make them that way. *You* did. We're alive, Momma, but that's all we are... Aaron and Rose are the lucky ones.

GRANDMA. (*Crushed.*) NOOO!! ...Don't say dat! ...Please Gott, don't say dat to me, Bella.

BELLA. I'm sorry, Momma... I didn't mean to hurt you.

GRANDMA. Yes. You do... It's my punishment for being alive...for surviving my own children... Not dying before them is my sin... Go, Bella. Take Louie's money... You tink I don't know vot he is... He stole since he vas five years old... The year Aaron died... And I closed off from him and everybody... From you and Louie... From Gert and Eddie... I lost Rose, then Aaron, and I stopped feeling because I couldn't stand losing anymore...

BELLA. Momma!

GRANDMA. Go open your restaurant, live your own life, haff your own babies. If it's a mistake, let it be your mistake... If I've done wrong by you, then it's for me to deal with... That's how I've lived my life and no one, not even you, can change that for me now.

BELLA. ...There is no restaurant, Momma... He's afraid to be a businessman or a manager... He likes being an