

Hystoria

Scenes 1-3

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SCENE 1

The lighting is dim. Interior of a small living room. Upstage left is a bookshelf, in front of it is a plain colored two-seater couch. A small coffee table is placed in the center of the room, atop of it sits an empty vase. Downstage right is a small child's cradle. We see JUNE, an attractive young woman in her early twenties. June is wearing a thin light pink nightgown, her curly hair out of place in all directions as she frantically paces back and forth with an inconsolable baby wrapped in blankets. We do not see the child's face, we only hear its frantic, tormented screams. Downstage left, underneath a tall, skinny lamp sits an old woman in a rocking chair. She is wearing a bathrobe and fuzzy slippers. She rocks steadily, calmly, paying no mind at all to June and her crying baby.

JUNE

Oh, what do you want? I did everything right. I fed you, didn't I? All that milk, and then you went and spit it up ten minutes later, didn't you? Yes you did! Oh yes you did! Right all over my favorite blouse, too. And you cried then too! As if it had been your shirt ruined. My mother bought me that shirt you know. For my birthday. Before you were even born. Many years ago. Before you were even an idea. But I guess you shed enough tears for both of us, I guess that's what you do now, isn't it sweetie, just strip me of all my feelings and hoard them for yourself! I mean, what would you possibly have to cry about? You little parasite. I take care of you. I feed you. I cater to all your needs. That's what I do now, remember? I bathed you, didn't I?

The child wails louder.

JUNE

Shut up! I put you to sleep! I wrapped you in blankets so you wouldn't get cold! I played the godforsaken lullaby music that your father insists will "foster an inquisitive mind". I take care of you, don't I? Don't I? Why are you crying? Why are you crying!?

(CONTINUED)

## THE OLD WOMAN

It was the serpent.

*June turns to look at her with a stony look on her face. She turns back to the baby in her arms, and her composure crumples.*

## JUNE

Mommy wants to sleep, baby. Mommy wants to sleep and never wake up. Mommy wants to die, sweetheart. Won't you let her? Pretty please, with a cherry on top? My pretty little girl. Mommy wishes you had never been born. Mommy wishes you would just go away. Won't you stop crying, baby? Won't you let Mommy rest? I try so hard, don't you think so? I try so hard to be good to you. To love you. I try, I really do.

*The baby is silent for a moment. June lights up with relief and then loses it when the child resumes screaming once more, this time even louder than before.*

## THE OLD WOMAN

As one consumes, the other is consumed.

## JUNE

(shaking the baby now)  
Shut up! Shut up! Shut UP!

*Now the lights turn on, painfully. The crying ceases completely. THE FIANCE enters the room wearing a long trenchcoat. June stands perfectly still, caught. The old woman continues rocking wordlessly in the background.*

## THE FIANCE

June! What are you doing!

## JUNE

*Th-the baby! It - I mean, she - wouldn't stop crying. And I...I...*

## THE FIANCE

June. What baby?

## JUNE

*What are you talking about? Our baby, our beautiful baby girl, the daughter you've always wanted. What*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUNE (cont'd)  
*was her name again? Delilah? Or was  
 it Lilac?*

THE FIANCE  
 June. Please. We've been over this.  
 There is no baby.

JUNE  
 There's no baby? Of course there's  
 a baby! Just because I mix the  
 names up doesn't mean -

THE FIANCE  
 You had a miscarriage.

JUNE  
 (blinks) I did?

THE FIANCE  
 Go to bed, June. Please. Just get  
 some rest.

*He walks towards her slowly, reaches out to touch her arm  
 but she violently jerks it away.*

JUNE  
 But if there's no baby then who  
 have I been -

*The "baby" drops to the floor, revealing nothing but a pile  
 of blankets. JUNE stares at her feet, mouth gaping in  
 horror. The Fiance just looks at her and sighs.*

*(They freeze.)*

## SCENE 2

*A young girl runs into the room and plops onto the couch.  
 She is grinning gleefully and wearing a bright yellow dress  
 with a white collar and short, puffy sleeves. Her socks are  
 white and her shoes are shiny and black with buckles. She  
 wears a flower in her hair. June enters, is wearing a simple  
 brown house dress, does not seem to notice or even see the  
 girl. She steps on the pile of blankets, furrows her brow in  
 confusion and picks them up one by one, folding each  
 carefully and placing it in the cradle. When she has  
 finished this, she takes to dusting off the coffee table,  
 lifting up the empty vase and turning it over in her hands  
 thoughtfully for a moment. As always, the old woman rocks  
 steadily in her chair. June is startled by the booming voice  
 of The Fiance. He enters the room, a bouquet of sunflowers  
 in hand. He takes off his trenchcoat and hangs it on the*

(CONTINUED)

*coat rack. He walks over to June and kisses her cheek as he loosens his tie.*

THE FIANCE

How's my favorite lady? How are you feeling?

(he touches her stomach gently and smiles)

JUNE

(grimacing) I'm alright. How was work?

THE FIANCE

(placing the flowers in the vase)

Great! In a few days, our proposals are being presented to the Board. Whoever's portfolio is most impressive is going to be promoted to Assistant Director, so I've been trying to pull in extra hours. I'm exhausted. Starving, too. What's for dinner?

JUNE

Oh my goodness! I spent the whole day cleaning...I didn't even remember to cook...I was so tired, and just about to sit down when you came in...I'm so sorry.

THE FIANCE

Alright, no worries! We'll order in! What are you in the mood for?

THE DAUGHTER

Pizza!

THE FIANCE

How does pizza sound?

JUNE

Oh, I don't know. All that cheese. You know how much it upsets my stomach.

THE DAUGHTER

Chinese food!

THE FIANCE

Alright, so pizza is out. How about Chinese, then? You love that fried rice.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

I do, don't I? All those grains,  
thousands of 'em. So yummy.

THE FIANCÉ

What do you want to eat, June?

JUNE

I don't know. I'm not even hungry.

THE FIANCÉ

Well, you can't not eat, think  
about -

THE FIANCÉ

- the baby.

JUNE

- the baby.

JUNE

I know, I know.

THE FIANCÉ

You know, I thought you'd be more  
excited when the doctors told us we  
were having a girl. Have you  
thought of a name yet?

JUNE

Not yet.

THE DAUGHTER

My name is!

THE FIANCÉ

Lavender, maybe? Peony?  
Lilac?

JUNE

Gee, I don't know how I'll ever  
choose.

THE FIANCÉ

Think it over, June.

JUNE

You know, I have been thinking it  
over. And I've come to a very  
important realization. Why don't  
women ever name little girls after  
themselves? We could have ourselves  
a June Jr.

THE FIANCÉ

(laughing) If that's what you want.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

Anyway, why don't you go pick something up from the bakery downtown? I'll have whatever you're having. Surprise me.

THE DAUGHTER

Can I come with you, Daddy?

THE FIANCE

Are you sure?

JUNE

Yes. I'll be right here when you come back.

(she kisses his cheek)

I love you. Bring home something good.

SCENE 3: THE INTERLUDE OF ROSES

*The room is dim lit, and empty except for the Old Woman, who never leaves anyway. Enter "Baby Girl", though she is slightly older now. She is wearing the exact same attire as before but instead of a four year old girl, she now appears to be eleven or twelve, her hair in two solemn braids. She stands erect center upstage, hands behind her back.*

THE DAUGHTER

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet, said the beloved Juliet. But I am not beloved. Nor am I a rose. And I am nameless. A seed planted in soil unfertile, but still commanded to rise. I get my warmth from a winter's sun, and my petals are plucked for sweetness. Perfumes are curated from my dreams and adorn the breasts of the sorrowful and the passionless, that they might mask their lifeless vessels with beauty. Ghosts among us. I, too, born out of obligation but not of love. And what will they call me?

THE OLD WOMAN

Medusa.

THE DAUGHTER

Delilah, he said. Lily, he said. Rose, he said. Violet, he said. Jasmine, he said. Daisy, Iris,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THE DAUGHTER (cont'd)  
Lavendar. And the petal falls, and  
the petal falls.

THE OLD WOMAN  
"For any unfortunate soul whose  
gaze should fall upon that wretched  
Medusa shall surely turn to stone."  
You are the serpent, your beauty  
made of snakes, your existence a  
defiance.

THE DAUGHTER  
Does Juliet pray for me? Is it me  
of whom she speaks, am I the rose  
whose sweetness goes unnamed?

THE OLD WOMAN  
(rocking quickly)  
It was the serpent who poisoned the  
apple! The vile fruit of the viper  
casts its seed in my womb, and I  
can only weep.

THE DAUGHTER  
And the petal falls, and the petal  
falls. And what will they call me?

THE OLD WOMAN  
Medusa.

THE DAUGHTER  
And what will they call me?

THE OLD WOMAN  
(rocking so furiously  
she almost falls out of  
the chair)  
Medusa! Medusa! Medusa!

BABY GIRL  
JASMINE. AZALEA. VIOLET.  
ROSE!

*The Daughter falls to her knees now, and bows her head  
solemnly.*

THE OLD WOMAN  
And the petal falls?

THE DAUGHTER  
And the petal falls.

BLACKOUT.