

M'LYNN. You're looking well. Is Jackson at the house?  
SHELBY. No. You know how twitchy he gets. I sent him to look for stocking stuffers.  
M'LYNN. Good thinking.  
SHELBY. Uh. Jackson and I have something to tell you. We wanted to tell you when you and Daddy were together, but you're never together, so it's every man for himself. I'm pregnant.  
M'LYNN. Shelby?  
SHELBY. I'm going to have a baby.  
M'LYNN. I realize that.  
SHELBY. Well . . . is that it? Is that all you're going to say?  
M'LYNN. I . . . what do you expect me to say?  
SHELBY. Something along the lines of congratulations.  
M'LYNN. . . . Congratulations.  
SHELBY. Would it be too much to ask for a little excitement? Not too much, I wouldn't want you to break a sweat or anything.  
M'LYNN. I'm in a state of shock! I didn't think . . .  
SHELBY. In June. Oh, Mama. You have to help me plan. We're going to get a new house. Jackson and I are going house hunting next week. Jackson loves to hunt for anything.  
M'LYNN. What does Jackson say about this?  
SHELBY. Oh. He's very excited. He says he doesn't care whether it's a boy or girl . . . but I know he really wants a son so bad he can taste it. He's so cute about the whole thing. It's all he can talk about . . . Jackson Latcherie Junior.  
M'LYNN. But does he ever listen? I mean when doctors and specialists give you advice. I know you never listen, but does he? I guess since he doesn't have to carry the baby, it doesn't really concern him.  
SHELBY. Mama. Don't be mad. I couldn't bear it if you were. It's Christmas.  
M'LYNN. I'm not mad, Shelby. This is just . . . hard. I thought that . . . I don't know.  
SHELBY. Mama. I want a child.  
M'LYNN. But what about the adoption proceedings? You have filed so many applications.  
SHELBY. Mama. It didn't take us long to see the handwrit-

ing on the wall. No judge is going to give a baby to someone with my medical track record. Jackson even put out some feelers about buying one.

M'LYNN. People do it all the time.

SHELBY. Listen to me. I want a child of my own. I think it would help things a lot.

M'LYNN. I see.

SHELBY Mama. I know. I know. Don't think I haven't thought this through. You can't live a life if all you do is worry. And you worry too much. In some ways it's a comfort to me. I never worry because I know you're worrying enough for the both of us. Jackson and I have given this a lot of thought.

M'LYNN. Has he really? There's a first time for everything.

SHELBY. Don't start on Jackson.

M'LYNN. Shelby. Your poor body has been through so much. Why do you deliberately want to . . .

SHELBY. Mama. Diabetics have healthy babies all the time.

M'LYNN. You are special. There are limits to what you can do.

SHELBY Mama listen. I have it all planned. I'm going to be very careful. And this time next year, I'm going to be bringing your big healthy grandbaby to the Christmas festival. No one is going to be hurt or disappointed, or even inconvenienced.

M'LYNN. Least of all Jackson, I'm sure.

SHELBY. You are jealous because you no longer have any say-so in what I do. And that drives you up the wall. You're ready to spit nails because you can't call the shots.

M'LYNN. I did not raise my daughter to talk to me this way.

SHELBY. Yes you did. Whenever any of us asked you what you wanted us to be when we grew up, what did you say?

M'LYNN. Shelby, I am not in the mood for games.

SHELBY What did you say? Just tell me what you said. Answer me.

M'LYNN. I said all I wanted was for you to be happy.

SHELBY. O.K. The thing that would make me happy is to have a baby. If I could adopt one I would, but I can't. I'm