

Sacrifices

By

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cf. Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion",
Philosophy and Public Affairs 1 (1971)

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ACT I

Scene 1

A hospital ward. Two women lie in adjacent beds. IV cords run between their wrists and stomachs. An oxygen mask covers one of the woman's mouth.

The other woman stirs, then lifts her head up.

CHLOE

(looking around)

What the fuck?

Chloe looks over at the woman, then at the cords. He sits up. She traces one of the cords to her wrist, and examines it. She removes the tape, and begins to remove the needle. A man rushes in.

REPRESENTATIVE

(frantic)

Stop!

Chloe lets go of the needle and turns to face the representative. The representative hurries over to Chloe's bed.

REPRESENTATIVE

(trying to re-tape the cord)

You have to leave that in.

CHLOE

(pulling away)

Where am I? What's going on?

REPRESENTATIVE

Please, let me secure that and then I'll explain.

Chloe hesitates for a moment, then holds out her arm. The representative checks that the needle is secure, then rewinds the tape around it and places Chloe's hand on the bedsheets.

REPRESENTATIVE

Please don't do that again.

CHLOE

Who are you?

The representative turns, walks to the door, picks up a chair, carries it back to Chloe's bedside, and sits.

(CONTINUED)

REPRESENTATIVE

Have you seen me before?

Chloe looks at him for several seconds.

CHLOE

Why?

REPRESENTATIVE

Do you remember me?

CHLOE

No.

REPRESENTATIVE

What's the last thing you remember?

Chloe stares at him, then looks down.

CHLOE

(slowly)

Last night -- I think -- I went out to dinner with someone. We were out for a long time. I started to walk home around midnight. When I got back I realized I didn't have my keys, but my door was unlocked. And then

...

(she looks at the representative)

How did I get here?

REPRESENTATIVE

Someone must have called 911. You were brought in at around 1 in the morning.

CHLOE

(shocked)

Who attacked me? Did they steal anything?

REPRESENTATIVE

The police said it didn't look like anything was taken. You probably came home just after your house was broken into and the robber knocked you out and then fled.

CHLOE

I got hit over the head? Then what's all this?

(she lifts up her arms and shakes the IV cords)

And who's *she*?

*She points at the woman in the bed next to her.
The representative jumps up and grabs her arms.*

REPRESENTATIVE

Please, be careful! Do you know who that is?

CHLOE

No. Why am I connected to her?

The representative sits down again.

REPRESENTATIVE

That's Alison Krauss.

CHLOE

Who the fuck is Alison Krauss?

REPRESENTATIVE

(surprised)

You haven't heard of Alison Krauss?

Chloe shrugs.

REPRESENTATIVE

Oh, she's amazing! Definitely one of best American fiddlers, even outside the genre of bluegrass-country!

He pulls an iPod out of his pocket and unravels the earbuds.

REPRESENTATIVE

Here, listen to some of her songs, they're just--

CHLOE

(loudly)

WHY AM I HOOKED UP TO HER?

The representative stops disentangling the headphone cable, and looks up. Chloe stares back at him. The representative takes a deep breath and shoves the iPod back into his pocket.

REPRESENTATIVE

Well, Alison Krauss was brought in last night just after you. It turns out she has an extraordinarily rare blood condition, most people die at birth but some get lucky and their kidneys are able to adapt and keep them alive. What this means is that when one of these individuals have kidney failure, a regular dialysis machine won't work. They have to have their blood run through the kidneys of one of the few other people with this same condition.

Chloe gapes.

REPRESENTATIVE

We had just done a routine blood test on you, and you have the same blood type. It was ... miraculous.

CHLOE

So you hooked my kidneys up to Alison Krauss? Without asking me?

REPRESENTATIVE

You were unconscious.

CHLOE

So? Don't I have rights?

REPRESENTATIVE

I don't think you understand. To lose Alison, really at the height of her talent right now, would be catastrophic.

CHLOE

That's not my problem!

Chloe starts to remove the tape on her wrist again.

REPRESENTATIVE

(quietly)

You're going to kill her?

Chloe stops, and looks up.

CHLOE

What?

REPRESENTATIVE

If you pull that cord, she'll die. That's as good as killing her.

Chloe pauses, then lets go of the tape.

CHLOE

Fine, I'll wait until you get a volunteer.

REPRESENTATIVE

I don't think you realize how rare this condition is that you and Alison share. We canvassed the blood records this morning. You two are the only two people within five hundred miles.

(pause)

There's no one else.

Chloe stares at the representative, then looks over at Alison Krauss.

CHLOE

And we just happened to both come to the same hospital on the same night? That's ... improbable.

REPRESENTATIVE

It was a miracle.

Chloe looks up from Alison to the representative.

CHLOE

But I can't just sit in a hospital until she gets better. How long am I supposed to be here?

REPRESENTATIVE

We'll reimburse you for the inconvenience. But it shouldn't be longer than nine months.

Chloe explodes.

CHLOE

NINE MONTHS!?

REPRESENTATIVE

We will *fully* reimburse you for the inconvenience--

CHLOE

That's not the point! I have a life to live! I'm not going to throw it all away for nine months because you plugged me into some fiddler!

REPRESENTATIVE

You have to stay here!

CHLOE

Fuck you!

She starts tearing at her cords. The representative leaps to his feet.

REPRESENTATIVE

(screams)

HELP! HELP!

Another man and woman run in, grab Chloe's arms, and hold them down on the bed.

CHLOE

Let me go! What kind of hospital is this?

None of the others answer. The representative looks away, and the other two are busy restraining her.

CHLOE

What hospital is this? Where am I?

The representative removes a handkerchief from his pocket and wipes his brow.

REPRESENTATIVE

You're in St. Francis' Hospital.

CHLOE

They closed St. Francis years ago!
(her eyes widen)

Who are you?

The representative puts his handkerchief away, then turns to face Chloe.

REPRESENTATIVE

I represent the Society of Music Lovers.

Chloe gasps and stops struggling.

CHLOE

And you attacked me last night?

He nods.

CHLOE

And you brought me here?

He nods.

CHLOE

Because Alison Krauss was dying and needed my kidneys.

Pause.

REPRESENTATIVE

Yes.

CHLOE

Because you love her that much.

The representative nods, then pulls out his handkerchief again and dabs his eyes.

REPRESENTATIVE

Yes. I would do anything for her.

Pause.

CHLOE

I understand.

The two holding her look at each other, then at the representative, who turns back to look at Chloe.

REPRESENTATIVE

You do?

CHLOE

Yes.

The two holding her let go. She folds her hands in her lap and looks steadily at the representative.

CHLOE

Last night I went to dinner with a friend of mine. She got a job on the East Coast and she asked me to move out with her. She said that she couldn't go without me. I don't know what I'll do on the East Coast, but I said yes. Because I love her.

She turns over her hands. The cords are all disconnected.

CHLOE

And I'm willing to make sacrifices for the woman I love.

BLACK.