

Meghan: It's bad enough we have to smell DEAD ANIMALS cooking in the kitchen, and then she called me "smarty-pants gingerbread" and I don't even know what that means **and** she said she doesn't even have to respect me.

Portland: Meghan, you need to focus on getting ready for school. I can't be late today.

Meghan exits, taking her cereal cup with her. Portland looks at her mom. Eileen continues reading the newspaper, takes a puff from her unlit cigarette. Portland turns to the sink, and Eileen looks over at her. The veil lifts and we can see the love in Eileen's eyes, the admiration she feels for her daughter.

Portland: (back turned) You need to be a little kinder to Meghan, Mom. Maybe less abrasive?

Eileen makes a noisy business of turning a page in the newspaper.

Portland: She's at such a difficult time in her life. An important time. She needs love. And encouragement.

Eileen doesn't respond. She starts tinkering with a box of art supplies at her feet. There is a long silence. Portland absentmindedly tidies the kitchen.

Portland : Mom, you know, I had a lot of issues and stuff when I was Meghan's age. And you were . . . you weren't . . . I want things to be different for Meghan. You weren't emotionally there for me and I want . . .

Eileen: Stop.

Portland: I'm not going to stop. You need to hear this.

Eileen: You did this already, Miss. I heard it already.

Portland: Not everything, Mom. (*pause*) If you're going to stay in this house you are going to have to be kinder and more (*struggles to find the word*) *compassionate* with Meghan.

Eileen: Okay, put it on my list: more *compassion*.

Portland: Mom, I'm serious. It's so stressful. Too much. *(A beat before Portland whispers with a combination of anger and grief)* This is **my** house.

Eileen: *(nonchalantly)* You're right. You suppose I should leave?

Portland: And go where, Mom? Where would you go?

Eileen: *(indifferently)* Exactly. So if you're going to do me any favors can you do them with your mouth shut?

Portland: Mom! Seriously?

Enter Craig. He can read the room. He gives Portland a kiss on the cheek and pours himself a cup of coffee.

Meghan (os): Mom, where are my blue socks?

Portland: Which ones? *(starts rummaging through a laundry basket)*

Meghan: The ones with the peace signs.

Portland: *(holding up a sock)* Dirty, kid.

Meghan: Mommy, oh my gawd! Those are the socks we're supposed to wear for Social Justice Club.

Portland: I taught you how to do laundry. It's time you start!

Meghan (os): I am so sick of everything in this house!

Craig: Eileen, what time do you need to be at the studio?

Eileen: I have a painting lesson at four o'clock.

Meghan enters.

Meghan: I don't have any clean socks.

Portland: Here are the blue socks with the peace signs.