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If You Really Loved Me
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BIG DOG PUBLISHING
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If You Really Loved Me

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It ain t that easy
to let yourself die.

-Girl

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DRAMA. In this haunting tale of despair, anger, and fear, a teenaged couple finds themselves on the run with their dead baby in the trunk of their car. Still bleeding heavily from giving birth, Bonnie convinces her boyfriend, Duane, to rob a convenience store in order to get enough money to make it to Florida, where they can start a new life together. But as their journey unfolds, Bonnie sees her chance for happiness unravel. This riveting one-act offers tour de force performances for young actors.

Performance Time: Approximately 25-30 minutes.

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Characters

(1 m, 1 w, 1 flexible, extras)

GIRL: Teenager, thin, wasted-looking; wears a dungaree miniskirt and halter top.

BOY: Teenager, thick, muscular, and dull-looking.

CLERK: Elderly convenience-store clerk.

EXTRAS: As ferry-boat passengers.

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Setting

Country road next to a cornfield. There is an old Chevy Impala with the rear of the car facing the audience. It is parked to the side of the road with its trunk and car doors open.

Convenience store. The side of the storefront is cut away to display the interior. There are shelves of goods, a counter, and a cash register facing SL. The Chevy Impala is parked on the dusty drive SR with its trunk open.

Ferry boat. Backdrop of water and seagulls. The car trunk faces the rear of the stage.

Synopsis of Scenes

Scene 1: Side of a country road next to a cornfield.

Scene 2: White cinderblock convenience store.

Scene 3: Blackened stage.

Scene 4: Ferry boat.

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Props

Beat-up cooler	Handgun
2 Shopping bags	Money
2 Bags of ice	Paper bag
6 Bottles of rubbing alcohol	Bag of frozen beans
Cardboard boxes	Can of tuna
Trash	Package of bacon
Large jar of pickled eggs	

Special Effects

Heavy thunk	Car passing by
Sliding down	Gunshot
Fake blood	Shattering glass
Approaching car	Sound of shrieking seagulls

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Scene I

(AT RISE: An old Chevy Impala [rear of car is visible to audience] is parked by the side of a country road next to a cornfield with its trunk and car doors open. On the ground near the trunk sits a large Coleman cooler with broken seams and yellow insulation showing through. The Boy stares at the cooler. From the opposite side of the stage, the Girl walks toward him, swaying.)

GIRL: I could just die.

BOY: Are you bleeding again?

GIRL: Why do you keep bringing that up for? I told you that stopped. I told you before to stop talking about that. I'm all right. You talking like that's going to bring us bad luck.

BOY: Ain't no such thing as luck. My daddy told me it's all about how you treat Jesus and that's how Jesus treats you back.

GIRL: Yeah, well, I don't want to hear nothing about no daddy or Jesus. You understand me? I done had it with everyone talking about daddies and Jesus'. Ain't nobody in my life ever give me good advice or walk on water. *(She looks like she's about to faint.)* Oh, God!

(Boy rushes to hold her up.)

BOY: You all right? Bonnie, are you okay? I think we got to stop and find a hospital. I can't do this no more. It's too...too...

(Girl puts a hand to his chest to calm him and get her bearings.)

GIRL: I'm all right. It's just the heat. It's just the...

BOY: I think we better –

GIRL: Don't think about nothing, okay, honey? Don't think. I'm all right. *(Pulls away from him and stands fanning herself with her hand.)* Whooooo, Lord, I'm just dying here. You hear me? I'm dying down here. Give me a...

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(She bumps into the cooler. She stares at it, as if in a reverie. She reaches down to tenderly touch the top, stoops farther down, and leans her cheek on it. Boy comes over and startles her with his question.)

BOY: What are you doing, Bonnie?

(Girl stands quickly, embarrassed, and then looks accusingly at the Boy.)

GIRL: Weren't you supposed to take care of this? Didn't I tell you to take care of it for me? That was your job, wasn't it? Answer me!

BOY: I was gonna...I was waiting...I didn't know...what you wanted me to do...how to...

GIRL: You always don't know. Do you? That's your excuse for everything. You don't know.

BOY: What? What do you mean? What are you talking about?

GIRL: Nothing, nothing, nothing. Never mind. *(The Girl walks off to compose herself. She wipes her eyes and shakes her head.)*

BOY: You got to explain things to me, Bonnie. I don't know—

GIRL: I know you don't know. *(Stares at him like an adult at a child.)*
You don't know, and I don't know if I can. That's the point.

BOY: What? What do you mean "the point"?

GIRL: The point, you know? The thing? The thing that you talk about when you're saying that's the point.

BOY: The thing?

GIRL: The thing that's the point. You make a point and the thing that you make is the point. That's the thing...what the point is.

BOY: The point is the thing?

GIRL: Yeah...or is it the thing that's the point?

BOY: I can't figure if it's the thing or the point, Bonnie. Am I supposed to be doing the point or the thing? What thing? What point?

GIRL: Look...let's just forget it. Let's don't fight about it. Honey, the point is, the thing is, what I mean is...we ain't got nothing. Let's don't fight about that.

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BOY: We got each other, right? Right? "Till the mountains crumble to the sea." Right? "There will always be you and me. To the end of time." Right?

(Girl approaches the cooler and stares at it. She reaches for it, pulls back, and then wraps her arms around herself.)

GIRL: Honey? Are you going to do something about this or not? I need to know, because if you're not, I might have to find somebody who can take care of...things.

BOY: No. No. I can do it. *(He looks frantic, thinking. Finally, he lifts the cooler to the rim of the trunk. As he tips the cooler, there is the sound of a heavy thunk and something sliding. The Girl spins away and covers her ears. He holds the cooler balanced on the trunk rim and stares at the long empty road and the fields of brown corn stalks.)* Man, Bonnie. You know what? We been driving for two days, and I got no more idea how close we are to Florida than when we started...dang, maybe we should just go home before something happens.

GIRL: Don't you get anything? When you talk like that, I think maybe your mother was right—you are stupid. *(Boy puts the cooler on the ground. Girl circles him, face to face, but keeping her distance, as she moves to stand by the open car door.)* There ain't no... *(Pause.)* It already happened.

BOY: Well, what do you want me to do? You want I should check the ice? *(He gets no response. He opens the cooler, his hand covering his nose and mouth, and looks at it sideways. He lowers it to the ground.)* It needs more ice. Alcohol too. Dang, honey, it's turning all these colors. Purple. And black. And some yellow. It don't look like it's supposed to be...

(Girl slams the car door shut.)

GIRL: Will you shut up?! *(She moves toward him, but keeps her eyes averted from the cooler.)* I don't want to hear it. Don't you think I got enough on my mind? We don't know where we are, we ain't

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go no money left, and you can't take care of one simple thing for me...

BOY: I thought you knew where we were. I thought... *(There's the sound of an approaching car. Boy faces audience as if the road is out there, his eyes following the progress of the vehicle. He mutters as he speaks.)* Please stop. Please stop, mister. Please take us home. *(He glances at the Girl to be sure she isn't watching.)* Lord Jesus, please help me. Please help us. Please make him stop. I swear, if you make him stop, I will do anything for you. I will...

(Car passes. Resigned, he approaches the Girl. He touches her, holds her, attempts to be tender, but the gesture comes across as sexual. Her response is ambivalent, resigned. She pulls back, strokes his cheek, and takes his hand. She pulls him behind the car, where it will be difficult for passing vehicles to see them.)

GIRL: Honey, look. I been thinking...I'm tired of this. Let's just...let's just... *(Pause.)* This is a free country, right? And things ain't going our way, right? I mean, what was the point of going through all this? We did the right thing and for what? For nothing? You see what I'm saying? Honey? Dammit, honey, somebody has got to owe us something. We're supposed to get what we want, right? Land of the free, right? I mean, if we had some money we could celebrate something...or go somewhere and get lost...or at least get a room with a shower. If we had some money, we could have some opportunities. We wouldn't be stuck with this...we could...God damn everyone to hell! *(She looks at him funny.)* What? What are you looking at me for?

BOY: You know...

GIRL: Well, I don't care no more. My life would've been a lot easier if he had damned some people before they got their hands on me.

BOY: I'm sorry, Bonnie. *(He starts to cry.)*

GIRL: No, not you. That's not what I mean. I mean, we got to do something, honey. We have to do something to get moving

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again. We got to...look, just get behind that wheel and get us moving again.

BOY: Where to?

GIRL: How should I know? Someplace! To do something. To take back our...Owww!

(She doubles over in pain and drops to her knees. Boy rushes to comfort her. He stands over her, his hands touching her head.)

BOY: Bonnie, you're bleeding again.

GIRL: Let's just go.

BOY: I don't know, Bonnie. We should get you help, and, and, I don't know if I can go anymore. I feel like...everything quit on us. I don't know if I can keep moving.

GIRL: *(She speaks as if to herself.)* Oh, Lord, why? Why's it always the same? Don't matter if it's your step-daddy, your brother, the boss at Hardee's... *(She looks up at him now and places her hands on his belt buckle.)* ...you are all alike. You know that? My mama was wrong...it wasn't you, it was all of you. You can't stick with nothing. The littlest bit of trouble, and you want to quit and run home like a knee baby.

(Blackout.)

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Scene 2

(AT RISE: Back of a white cinderblock convenience store. The Impala is parked on the dusty drive SR with its trunk open. The cooler is on the ground. An elderly convenience-store Clerk stands behind the counter near a cash register. The Boy exits the store carrying two shopping bags.)

BOY: I got us two bags of ice and six bottles of alcohol. *(Gently he adds ice to the cooler, then opens the bottles of alcohol and dumps the liquid into the cooler.)* I gotta take a piss.

GIRL: I'll go with you. So you don't get lost.

BOY: I'm just going against the building. I can't get lost there.

GIRL: It's a joke, honey. Jesus.

BOY: Jesus ain't no joke. He rised up from the dead. He's gonna take away all our sins. *(He starts to cry.)*

GIRL: Forget it, honey. Let's just...come on. We're in this together. You and me. That means we do everything together.

(Girl takes his hand and leads him offstage to the back of the building. Pause.)

BOY: *(Offstage.)* Is that blood? That's blood, ain't it? Them red streaks down there...is that blood? Oh, dang it, Bonnie, we gotta get you taken care of, we can't keep on—

GIRL: *(Offstage.)* Will you stop talking about that!?

(They re-enter.)

BOY: But you're leaking out.

GIRL: I ain't leaking out of nothing. Now I told you, that's over. It's no more blood. There must be just some...ketchup or something...on the ground. Now you want to take care of me right, just fix yourself up and let's find us a weapon. *(She looks through the stacked cardboard boxes of trash. The Boy is having trouble fixing his zipper.)* There's nothing here. Not even a

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whipping stick. *(She sees his problem.)* Come here and let me fix that for you... *(She zips his fly for him.)* There. *(She looks at his hands.)* You know, you got strong hands. You could hit or even choke somebody if you had to. What do we need a weapon for?

BOY: Bonnie?

GIRL: What?

BOY: I ain't ever seen a movie where people robbed someplace without a weapon.

GIRL: Well, you ain't seen all the movies in the world yet, have you? I mean, they got some places got more cable channels than your daddy's got hogs. So just don't you be acting like you know everything what all that's in this world. Let's go. I'm sweating like crazy out here. Lord, this must've been how John the Baptist felt. I'm just smothering.

BOY: I don't think you can be smothering with your head chopped off.

GIRL: Well, why don't you try it and let me know. *(The Boy follows, puzzled, as she leads him inside the store, where she performs a twirl, arms open, for the Clerk.)* Oooo, now this is heaven. Cold air...lots to eat and drink. Some people don't appreciate the little things. Some people think they got to have more and more. *(To Clerk.)* You know what I'm talking about, don't you? *(Silence.)* But not me. Lordy, lordy, if I could just have a little of this cold air... you ought to bag and sell it. You ought to—

CLERK: Don't tell me what I ought to. *(Points to Boy with one hand and reaches under the counter with the other.)* I seen you before. You was just in here. I recognize you.

GIRL: Of course you recognize him. He's the quarterback for the high-school team.

(Boy starts to utter a protest, but she waves him to silence.)

CLERK: Ain't no high school here.

(Girl is briefly taken aback. She turns away.)

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GIRL: The county team. The county high school.
CLERK: They don't allow *his* kind on the team.

(Girl decides to change tact. She smiles and comes up almost behind the counter.)

GIRL: This is making me feel better. I been sick, you know? *(In a whisper.)* And I ain't had nobody to help me.

CLERK: What do you all want? Don't try nothing funny.

GIRL: First thing, I want you to just listen to me. I don't believe you're listening to me. You ain't listening to my words. You're just listening to your own ideas.

CLERK: First thing, you just back off. Second thing, I ain't listening to nobody. That's rule number one. That's what my boss told me. Don't never listen to no one talking 'bout what they need. I'm just here to do a job. I don't get paid to listen. Listening gets you in trouble, and I ain't here to do none of that, so don't think you can talk me into nothing, especially not nothing as dangerous as listening.

GIRL: Well, you are gonna listen! What I said was, "I have not been feeling too good."

CLERK: Buy some crackers and ginger ale. You think you're the only girl dumb enough to ever get pregnant?

GIRL: *(As she speaks, she slaps and punches the Clerk.)* What gives you the right? I ain't no whore! Get him, honey! Now. Hit him! *(The Boy steps forward and throws a lazy punch that misses and hits the counter. The Clerk raises his arms to block the second punch.)* Hit him! What's the matter with you? Hit him, I said. *(She lifts a jar of pickled eggs from the counter and throws it at the Clerk. He catches/blocks it, but the eggs spill out all over the counter and floor. The Girl pushes the Boy forward.)* You gonna let him talk to me that way? Take care of him. Be a man.

CLERK: Here now, I ain't fighting you. Take the whole register. That's what you want. Take the whole doggone thing. *(He fumbles as he takes the money out. He tries to hand them the bills.)*

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Here's the 20s, here's the 10s, the 5s, the ones. I'm sorry. Don't hurt me. I got kids. I got grandkids. I'm sorry...

GIRL: I don't want to hear about your stupid kids. You can take your stupid kids and put 'em in a bag and drown 'em for all I care. And don't go giving us money. This is a robbery, and we're going to take what we want. *(She pushes the Boy forward.)* Act like it's a robbery. Punish him!

CLERK: Take it. Please take it. I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

GIRL: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Everyone's sorry. We just live in one big sorry world. Well, you know what? I ain't sorry no more. No one's gonna call me sorry no more. *(She yanks the Boy forward.)* Now hit him! Hit him! Hit him, I said. *(The Clerk is leaning back, beyond the Boy's reach. The Girl races behind the counter and pushes the Clerk's face to the counter so the Boy can punch him. The Boy punches the Clerk on the back. The Clerk howls. The Girl spots something under the counter, lets go of the Clerk, and reaches down to pull out a gun. The Boy freezes. To Boy.)* Well, don't stop. We're still robbing him.

BOY: Oh, no...

GIRL: Don't you "oh no" me. Just you shut up and give me a little help. We're the ones in charge here. We're the ones who get to make the decisions. And I done made the decision that it's our turn, honey. It's our turn. *(She comes around to the front of the counter so that she's facing the Clerk. She points the gun at him and pulls on the trigger but nothing happens.)* This don't work.

CLERK: There's a safety.

GIRL: There's no safety mister, for you or anyone.

CLERK: No ma'am, I mean the gun. There's a safety on the gun. That little do-hickey on the side. Flick it down.

GIRL: *(Looks at the Boy as she speaks.)* Some people still have manners.

(Boy nervously eyes gun.)

BOY: Bonnie, do we have to do this?

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GIRL: What is wrong with you? Now he knows my name. He's going to fly up to St. Peter and get my name off that list and then what? Then what will be left for me? I swear, you ain't got the brains of a possum turd. *(She bangs the gun on the counter in her anger at him. It goes off, shattering glass, the kickback throwing her to the floor. She's dazed and shakes her head, feels at the blood running down her legs onto the floor.)*

BOY: Bonnie! You're spilling out of yourself.

(Boy and Clerk help her up. Boy keeps staring at the floor while the Clerk leans her on the counter. She gathers herself and stands upright, determined to be strong. He goes behind the counter to take out a paper bag into which he starts stacking the money from the register. He hands it to the Girl. She reaches in, pulls out a five dollar bill, and passes it to the Clerk.)

GIRL: *(To Clerk.)* It's for the gas. We may be crooks, but we're honest. We're not just trash, no matter what everybody says.

BOY: She thinks because her name is Bonnie she's supposed to be Bonnie and Clyde.

GIRL: Well, you got to have goals.

BOY: But my name's Duane.

GIRL: Bonnie and Duane. I just don't think it's got the same ring. Bonnie...and...Duane. *(She marshals herself to wave the gun at the Clerk.)* Get on the floor, please, and don't try nothing. Ain't no more time for anybody being a hero.

(Clerk gets down and the Boy and Girl walk to the car. As they're getting in, the Boy slams his hand on the roof.)

BOY: Dang, we forgot to put the gas in.

GIRL: You should've put it in first.

BOY: Well, you didn't tell me to put it in first. You told me to pull out back. You told me to take care of that...the...umm...cooler...first. I was just...

GIRL: Oh, lord, I can't tell if I'm burning up or freezing.

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BOY: What?

GIRL: I said...just go back in and tell him to put the pump on.
And while you're at it, rob him again—we need some food. We
need something to keep us going.

(Lights fade to blackout.)

[End of Freeview]