

CATHERINE. Mr. Reed?

MR. REED. Ah, Mrs. Donohue. Come in, come in.

CATHERINE. Pearl said you wanted to see me.

MR. REED. Sit. You wanna sit down? Have a seat.

CATHERINE. I'm fine, thank you.

MR. REED. I don't want — This isn't —

CATHERINE. What, Mr. Reed?

MR. REED. I'm sorry. I have to do this.

CATHERINE. Do what? (*No response.*) Do *what*, Mr. Reed?

MR. REED. I'm sorry.

CATHERINE. For...?

MR. REED. I have to let you go.

CATHERINE. *What?*

MR. REED. I'm letting you —

CATHERINE. Please. You ... can't.

MR. REED. I have to.

CATHERINE. But you can't. You can't do this to me. There's no reason —

MR. REED. I'm so sorry.

CATHERINE. *Why?*

MR. REED. You're missing too much work, Mrs. Donohue.

CATHERINE. No! Only a few days. Not that many.

MR. REED. More than a few.

CATHERINE. No more, I promise, no more. Just let me —

MR. REED. (*Cutting her off.*) We run a certain kind of business, Mrs. Donohue. We work a certain way. This is a good place for girls. For healthy girls. I'm sorry. I didn't have to explain this much.

CATHERINE. You didn't *explain* —

MR. REED. But I thought you deserve it.

CATHERINE. I *deserve* it?!

MR. REED. You've been a good worker. You've been —

CATHERINE. You're really firing me?

MR. REED. You've been a great asset to —

CATHERINE. For being sick?

MR. REED. A truly wonderful worker until these past few months —

CATHERINE. It's this *job!* There's something that's making us all —

MR. REED. I'm asking you —

CATHERINE. Mr. Reed, *please* —

MR. REED. You have to leave now.

CATHERINE. What about Pearl? Charlotte? Frances? What about them? What about all the other girls?

MR. REED. Whoever can't do their job will be asked to leave.

CATHERINE. Mr. Reed —

MR. REED. I'm sorry.

CATHERINE. You can't.

MR. REED. They said I could offer you a week's pay. You should take it. If I hear of any other jobs somewhere else, I'll let you know.

CATHERINE. There aren't any more jobs! Haven't you heard, Mr. Reed. There haven't been any jobs for two years! There's nowhere for me to go!

MR. REED. (*Holding out an envelope.*) Here. Take it.

CATHERINE. No.

MR. REED. It's yours. You should have it. (*She hesitates, then takes it. She looks inside.*)

CATHERINE. There's more than a week's pay in here.

MR. REED. There's some from me. Just a few bucks. I remember the day you started, Katie. I liked you. You fit right in. And you didn't rock the boat. I suggest you don't start now. I'm sorry you got sick. I'm sorry I have to let you go. It's my job. It's business, you know.

CATHERINE. No, it's not. It's a crime. (*She tosses the envelope on the floor and walks out.*)