

Start  
Bud #2

*Francesca picks up the huge bag of laundry the kids have dumped on the floor.*

**FRANCESCA**

How did all these clothes get so dirty? It looks like you've been gone for a month.

**BUD**

They had fun.

*He sets down his bags. Comes over to her for a hug and she lets him have one but has an armful of laundry which she keeps between them.*

**FRANCESCA**

I'm sure they had a good time with you.

**BUD**

I think their fair-going days with their parents might be over. I should go to the barn. What time is dinner?

**FRANCESCA**

I didn't get anything to cook. I thought maybe we'd go out.

**BUD**

Frannie, we've been eating out for days now. We've all been looking forward to one of your good meals. We made bets as to what you'd have waiting for us. I said roast beef.

**FRANCESCA**

All right. It's four thirty. I'll have to go to the market to get some things. I'll take Michael with me.

**BUD**

What have you been eating? Did you forget we were coming home?

*He goes to the refrigerator and opens the door. He sees the leftover stew.*

What is this?

**FRANCESCA**

Vegetable stew.

**BUD**

So put some meat in it and we'll have that.

**FRANCESCA**

Well, if you think that's OK.

**BUD**

Whatever you make is OK. We just want to eat and go to bed. Or I do anyway. The kids are probably going to the movies, so maybe it'll be just you and me. I'd like that. Are you OK?

*She is near tears. But also terrified that something in her behavior will give away her secret.*

FRANCESCA

I'll make some cornbread. It won't be long.

BUD

Sounds good.

*Bud leaves. Tears are streaming down her face. She whispers.*

FRANCESCA

Oh Robert.

*Bud starts to leave.*

BUD

Did you say something?

FRANCESCA

No.

BUD

You did. I heard you say "Oh something." What was it? "Oh" what?

*(beat)*

Ok, I'm going up.

*Francesca waits til he is up the stairs, then grabs the car keys from the side of the refrigerator and heads for the door. And just at that moment, MARGE appears at the screen door.*

*Marge sees that Francesca is near tears.*

MARGE

Frannie? Are you OK?

*(noticing the keys)*

Where are you going?

FRANCESCA

I'm having a little trouble with the heat, I think. That's all. I feel a little faint. I forgot to make dinner. I have to—

MARGE

It's alright. Just take your time.

*Then Francesca pulls herself together and sees that Marge has a box.*

*End*