

CATHY'S KITCHEN

**Cathy's Kitchen**

by

Lynn Howes

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## CATHY'S KITCHEN

**Lynn Howes** lives in Walton-on-Thames with husband David and their two children Evan and Maya. She trained in acting at LAMDA after a degree in English and Drama at Brunel University. In addition to raising her children she works part-time managing two children's performing arts schools. Other works include short performance pieces for children, adapted stories from Maxim Gorky's memoirs and one other play: 'Gemma's Friends' which was first performed in March 2000 at The Blue Elephant Theatre, London.

**Cathy's Kitchen** was developed for a writer's workshop at the Soho Theatre Company in the summer of 2000. It was first performed at The Coward Room of Hampton Hill Playhouse in August 2001 with the following cast: Catherine Messum (Cathy), Sarah-Jane Brindley (Jo), Joanna Viney (Mary).

### Cast:

Cathy  
Jo  
Mary

Dedicated to the Monday baby group:

Caroline	Helen
Jane	Jo
Katie	Mia
Monique	& Myra

SCENE ONE

CATHY'S KITCHEN

*A village bakery shop & café. CATHY - 40's/50's - the owner - is closing up on a Friday evening. She is turning over the "closed" sign on the door. MARY - late teens - the shop assistant - is cleaning the glass fronted chill-cabinet, which is full of wonderful cakes. CATHY and MARY are wearing the bakery uniform, including white net hat. JO - late twenties/early-thirties - a customer and friend of CATHY - is sitting at one of the café tables drinking a milkshake. She gets to the bottom of the glass and noisily sucks up the foam with a straw. JO is over seven months pregnant. She looks into the milkshake glass, looks up, and then lets out a long frustrated scream. MARY looks up at her for a moment then continues cleaning. CATHY sighs but otherwise ignores her. JO gives another, longer, even more frustrated, stifled scream.*

CATHY: How long is he away?

JO: Two more days.

CATHY: Have you got the number?

JO: Yes. But, they'll be out in some bar, drenched in lager. He called last night though. *(Pause.)* If I wasn't pregnant, *I* could be out in some bar drenched in lager.

CATHY: Doesn't sound very nice.

JO: I'm as big as a house.

CATHY: You are not.

JO: A bungalow then. At least as big as a shed. I mean I'm *actually* as big as a shed!

CATHY: Whatever you say.

JO: What're you doing tonight?

CATHY: Sleeping. Why don't you call Christine?

JO: On holiday.

CATHY: On holiday?

JO: Yes, on holiday! You know, on holiday? Having a nice relaxing time by a swimming pool? Sunbathing? Drinking sangria? Generally having a life?

CATHY: Right. I see. Yes.

*MARY puts the cleaning spray and cloth away under the counter, flops her arms down over it and looks pathetically at CATHY.*

CATHY'S KITCHEN

CATHY: God, look at the two of you. Are we cashed up?

MARY: Yes.

CATHY: Shelves cleaned?

MARY: Yes.

CATHY: Floor?

MARY: Yes.

CATHY: Good. I think we're done then. You can go if you like.

*MARY exits into the back of the shop.*

JO: Was I like that?

CATHY: Like what?

JO: As miserable as that? When I worked here?

CATHY: You still are.

JO: Thank you. What's wrong with her?

CATHY: Boyfriend dumped her. Called her up lunchtime. He told her she's boring.

JO: Oh.

CATHY: So she's not very happy.

JO: No. How old is she?

CATHY: Young.

JO: I'm young.

CATHY: I know.

JO: How old is she?

CATHY: Ask her.

JO: Don't you know?

CATHY: Do you want me to ask her?

JO: You should know.

CATHY: I can't remember. Sixteen? Seventeen? Seventeen I think.

JO: Why didn't you say so?

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CATHY: *(Patient.)* I'm not sure.

MARY *returns with her bag. Flops again.*

MARY: *(Sigh.)* I don't know what to do now. He was going to take me into town.

*She droops herself - dramatically - over the counter.*

JO: Haven't you got any friends?

MARY *looks up at JO - hurt.*

CATHY: Oh, that's nice.

JO: I didn't mean it like that. You know what I meant. Can't you go out with your friends instead?

MARY: *(Betrayed.)* You told her!

JO: Go on!

MARY: I don't feel like it now.

JO: Get dressed up and show him what he's missing.

CATHY: She doesn't want to.

MARY: I can't believe you told her.

CATHY *shrugs apologetically - she looks from MARY to JO and back to MARY.*

CATHY: I think I know what we need.

*She goes to the counter and gets out three large white bowls. She takes a pie or treacle tart from the chill display and cuts three slices, which she puts in the bowls.*

JO: *(Watching hungrily.)* Oh, my god.

CATHY *goes to the freezer and takes out ice cream & puts two scoops in each bowl.*

JO: *(Impressed.)* Oh, my god.

*She puts the ice cream away and gets a jug of cream out of the fridge, which she pours into the bowls.*

JO: *(Low, quiet and slow.)* Oh, my, god.

CATHY: Here you are.

CATHY'S KITCHEN

*She brings the bowls over to the table. MARY gets cutlery from the dresser. They begin to eat.*

- JO: *(Various noises of pleasure.)* Why does it taste so good?
- CATHY: Fat and sugar. Instant gratification.
- MARY finds the word "gratification" amusing – giggles - and is immediately embarrassed.*
- JO: But why? It's such a cliché. Women and cake.
- CATHY: There *is* a theory.
- JO: Yes?
- CATHY: The fat/sugar theory.
- JO: *(Pause.)* Well, go on.
- CATHY: *(Matter of fact.)* When mankind were living in tree houses and hunting for food in the forests, there weren't many bakeries about at the time. In summertime there were loads of berries and fruits. You had to get them before the animals ate them all of course. But, because the animals were eating better, *they* tasted better too. Food was plentiful. Then we had to stuff ourselves come September because we knew there might not be anything left to eat until spring.
- JO: *(Not entirely getting it.)* Right?
- CATHY: So we have this impulse. The curse of the modern woman. When we taste - I don't know, a chocolate digestive - our brains say; "Get more! Winter must be coming soon and there won't be any of that left!" We're programmed, genetically; there's nothing we can do about it. The natural impulse is still there. So you can't help it, you're always going to want that biscuit. *(Deadly serious.)* Never trust a woman who doesn't eat dessert. *(Pause.)* Same with men. But not so much, because *we* actually *need* fatty stuff to help our bits and pieces work properly.
- MARY: Is that true?
- CATHY: Got to keep the baby warm with a few good layers of fat. Especially in the cold north/west of the world. That's why the Danes make such great pastry.
- JO: Makes sense.
- CATHY: Course it does.
- JO: It actually takes extraordinary will power to stop myself eating cake all the time.
- CATHY: That's right.

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- JO: And to force myself to eat things like bran flakes instead. And, of course, we don't have to hunt so we don't get the exercise.
- CATHY: That's it.
- JO: So we get fatter and fatter all the time. *(Considers.)* That's very depressing.
- CATHY: Yes, well... It's just a theory.
- MARY: Except that you can go to the gym, or go swimming, or go for a run.
- JO: Punish yourself.
- MARY: Some people like it. I like going to the gym.
- JO: You're not well.
- She scoops a large, defiant spoonful of pudding into her mouth. Pause.*
- MARY: Are Danish pastries Dutch or are they from Denmark?
- JO doesn't know but keeps quiet. CATHY smiles.*
- JO: This is really good Cathy.
- CATHY: I should hope so.
- JO: I'm no good at cakes and puddings. *(Pause.)* I used to make cakes with my mum. For our birthdays, or during the holidays. But the cakes never tasted as good as the cake *mixture*. She used to let us clean out the mixing bowl with our fingers. She drew a line through the mixture across the middle of the bowl with her wooden spoon. Half for me, and half for my brother. I think *she* got to lick the spoon. *(Pause.)* I'd forgotten all about that.
- MARY: I can do crumble.
- JO: *(Competitive.)* Yes, I can do crumble. Apple?
- MARY: Or rhubarb.
- JO: Yes.
- MARY: I like crumble.
- JO: Crumble's good. Not very sophisticated.
- CATHY: A national favourite.
- JO: It's got to be in the top ten.
- MARY: I don't like meringues.



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- CATHY: *(Defending meringues.)* Lemon meringue pie?
- MARY: No. I mean those hard white crunchy things.
- CATHY: Ah. They're pretend meringues. Cheap copies.
- JO: *(Contemplating the word.)* Mer-an-gs. Funny word really. Meringues. Does it mean something? In French or something? Meringues. *(With grotesque chewing face.)* Meringues. *(Pause.)* Stupid word.
- MARY: *(Trying it out for herself.)* Meringues.
- JO: Meringue.
- MARY: Meringue. MER-ang.
- JO: Mer-ANG.
- MARY: Yeah.
- JO: See what I mean? *(Gesturing with her bowl.)* But *this* is great.
- CATHY: Thank you.
- MARY: Did you go to cake school?
- CATHY: *(Serious.)* It's called catering college.
- MARY: *(Almost stroppy.)* Yes. I know. That's what I meant.
- CATHY: Yes, I did. 1973. Nightmare. I was the only girl.
- JO: *(Impressed.)* The only girl? You've never told me that. That's brilliant.
- CATHY: It wasn't. Some schools had loads of girls. I was just unlucky. The boys - the other students - could be really nasty. They made it really hard for me. For instance - there was a torn out page three girl stuck to my locker-door when I arrived every Monday morning. I took it down at first, but it just encouraged them - I started getting Friday's as well, so I left them up after a while. I even started writing comments on them, like "nice g string". I almost got some respect.
- JO: Good for you.
- CATHY: But they did other stuff. They used to hide my hat in the ovens, deliberately spill things on me, or turn the heat up or down when I turned my back to ruin what I was making. One of them even burned my hair. And the Chef's who taught us did everything they could to make me cry - every day.
- JO: That's disgusting. You should have sued.
- CATHY: It wasn't so popular then. They tried all they could think of to get me to give up.

CATHY'S KITCHEN

- MARY: *(Caught up in the story.)* You didn't did you?
- CATHY: Sort of. *(Pause.)* I got a job so I could leave with dignity.
- MARY: Yeah?
- CATHY: I was lucky. I entered a competition and one of the judges thought I was talented. He offered me a job in his kitchen. At The Savoy.
- MARY: *(Impressed.)* In London?
- CATHY: Yes, but it wasn't all glamorous. I started on washing up. Then peeling prawns. Then preparing for one of the chefs. Some days it was just as bad as college. It was still a man's world. The language! Eventually I was promoted up, and worked there for nearly two years. That's where I met Barry, and we fell in love, and my plans changed. He taught me how to make pastry. It was his ambition to have his own little village bakery. Some people dream of owning their own pub, you know, same thing. And we moved here. Took out what seemed to us at the time like a *huge* bank loan, and bought this shop. *(She looks around her.)* Twenty-three years ago. *(Pause. Amazement.)* Twenty-three years. Unbelievable.
- MARY: *(Pause. There is an air of sadness.)* How did Barry? I mean is he...?
- CATHY: *(Guarded.)* Is he what?
- MARY: I'm sorry, Cathy, I don't know. Did Barry die?
- CATHY: *(Laughs.)* No! *(Matter of fact.)* Barry is alive and well and living in the south of France with his French boyfriend. They've got a restaurant. I went there a couple of years ago. It's really nice. Very rustic. Seafood.
- MARY: God.
- CATHY: No, he felt trapped pretty much as soon as we moved in. *(With sadness.)* He was so unhappy. And I loved him you see. I told him to get out and find something to make him happy. I thought he'd travel and get it out of his system, then come home. But he found Claude, and the rest is history. Ancient history now.
- JO: You forgave him?
- CATHY: Yes. I loved him. *(Back to matter of fact.)* Claude's a nice man. Older than Barry. Sensible. They make a fortune in that place. They asked me to come and work with them.
- MARY: Are you going?
- CATHY: No! That was years ago! Anyway, that would have been too strange. *(Attempting a joke.)* Three is most definitely a crowd under those sorts of circumstances.
- JO: Do you still miss him?

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- CATHY: *(Defensive.)* Hundreds of women live alone you know. You can be self-sufficient in life. Emotionally. If you've got an alternative, that's great. I had a good partnership with Barry. I miss that. Sharing things. There are very few people I can talk about baking to, who're really interested. It was his passion. It rubbed off on me. *(Pause.)* Sometimes I daydream about it.
- JO: What?
- CATHY: France. The French are much more sophisticated about bakeries. Patisseries. People over here have very limited palates.
- JO: Thanks very much.
- CATHY: Well, it's true. I tried out all kinds of recipes when we first moved here. People don't want to know. *(Disgusted and accusatory.)* And then they go and buy frozen gateaux. The French would never buy a plastic wrapped cake off the co-op shelf that keeps for years -
- JO: *(Mock defensive.)* But in an emergency...
- CATHY: - full of "e" numbers, and preservatives, and animal fats, and processed flour.
- JO: ...you know, if it's late and you forgot to buy something and you've got your parents coming round. If it was an emergency...
- CATHY: The next time you have an emergency like that, call me. I'd rather come over and make you something myself.
- JO: I will as well. Ha! Got you! You'll be sorry you said that.
- MARY: *(To CATHY.)* You're interesting.
- CATHY: *(Unsure.)* Thank you?
- MARY: You've done stuff. I hope someday I get to do something interesting.
- CATHY: It wasn't that interesting.
- MARY: More than I've done.
- CATHY: I've had more time.
- MARY: I suppose.
- CATHY: You're not supposed to agree with that.
- MARY: Eh?
- CATHY: Don't worry.
- JO: And I'm not interesting?

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MARY: What?

JO: I'm boring.

MARY: I didn't....

JO: No. I'm boring. Statement of fact. I wasn't having a go at you.

MARY: Oh, right.

JO: *(Pause. Contemplating her bowl. Cathy begins to worry that there is something wrong with her cake. Finally.)* What's the male equivalent do you think? - To cake - Lager?

CATHY: Yes. Beer maybe.

JO: Or, probably, that's the alternative to cocktails.

CATHY: Right. Yes.

JO: So what is it? Chips?

CATHY: Chips are unisex aren't they?

JO: Hmmm.

MARY: Kebabs.

JO: Maybe.

MARY: Except I eat kebabs.

CATHY: I don't know how you can.

JO: It makes sense after a night at the pub.

CATHY: People eat some horrible things. Like instant soups, and those noodles.

MARY: I *like* Pot Noodles.

CATHY: *(Horried.)* No you don't!

MARY: I do.

CATHY: You just think you do.

MARY: *(Confused.)* How can I just think I do? If I do then I do.

CATHY: Revolting.

MARY: *(Embarrassed.)* I don't think so.

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- CATHY: It'll catch up with you. You'll wake up one morning and your bottom will be drooping off the sides of your bed. (*MARY has conjured an image of herself in this condition and is frightened by it.*) Don't say I didn't warn you.
- JO: (*Pause. Then sudden burst of inspiration - taking them by surprise and making Mary jump.*) Curry!
- CATHY: Curry?
- MARY: (*Agrees.*) Yeah.
- CATHY: Don't women eat curry?
- JO: Yes, but it qualifies as a group activity for men.
- CATHY: I see your point.
- JO: They can't go out as a gang to a nice little Italian Restaurant.
- CATHY: No.
- Pause. They finish their dessert.*
- MARY: I could go to catering college.
- CATHY: I thought you were going to be a nurse.
- MARY: I was.
- CATHY: Don't you know what you want to do?
- MARY: I know what I *don't* want to do.
- CATHY: That's a start.
- JO: No, that's good! I'm still discovering things I don't want to do.
- MARY: I know I don't want to work in a pub. Or at the service station. Or in a bank. Or anywhere that there's customers really.
- JO: That rules out quite a lot.
- CATHY: Like bakeries!
- MARY: Well I'm not going to work here forever.
- CATHY: (*Joking.*) You see! You give up your time, take an interest, train them, *pay* them, give them free bread -
- JO: I miss the free bread.
- CATHY: - and they leave you.

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MARY: I do like it here, but it's the customers. They aren't all horrible, but the bad ones make them all bad, you know?

JO: Do you get free cakes as well?

CATHY: The ones left over at the end of the day that won't keep.

JO: Can I have my job back?

MARY: People are so rude. And it gets so hot in here. And the uniform doesn't help.

CATHY: It's hygienic.

MARY: It's itchy.

CATHY: It isn't.

MARY: It's really hot.

CATHY: It's smart.

JO: It could be worse. The co-op's is much worse.

MARY: People take the piss out of my hat.

CATHY: That's the hygienic part. I have to wear one too.

JO: And it looks lovely on you.

CATHY *takes off her white hat.*

MARY: I don't want to work anywhere I have to wear a dodgy uniform.

CATHY: Hear that? It's dodgy now.

JO: So... no customers, no uniforms, no pubs, no banks?

MARY: No weekend shifts.

JO: Right.

MARY: *(Thinking.)* Or nights. And I don't want to be stuck in an office, or be an estate agent or anything like that.

JO: I see... There's nothing left.

MARY: I did want to be a nurse.

CATHY: Nurses work nights and weekends.

MARY: *(Pleased with herself.)* Dental nurses don't.

JO: But they have customers.

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MARY: Patients. Who can't talk most of the time.

CATHY: True.

JO: You might have cracked it.

CATHY: And the uniform?

MARY: Oh yeah. *(Disappointed.)* Oh well.

JO: When I was a little girl, I wanted to be a nurse. When you're little you think all nurses do is go around taking temperatures, and giving people jelly and ice-cream, and making people feel better. It doesn't occur to you that they might have to do disgusting things with tubes, and stick needles into people. The worst you can imagine is having to make a few beds. And you don't mind, because you're still at an age where you happily make your bed when you're told. It's all Holly Hobby and Girl's World. Until one day you discover magazines, and pop-music, and fashion, and boys.

CATHY: Not all at once.

JO: No.

MARY: had Take That posters all over my bedroom walls.

JO: Yeah? Mine was Nick Kershaw.

MARY: Nick who?

CATHY: I don't know who either of you are talking about.

JO: A bit after your time.

*Jo and Mary share a naughty smile.*

CATHY: Excuse me! Don't think just because I'm older than your mum that I wasn't ever young. Every generation thinks they've invented life - I sound like my mother now - but it's true. There is nothing new.

JO: I can't imagine you clubbing it in a mini-skirt.

CATHY: Why not? I was a teenager in the sixties. I went to all the big festivals. I went to the Isle of Wight with my boyfriend in 1970.

MARY: *(Unimpressed.)* I've been to the Isle of Wight.

CATHY: Now *you* don't know what *I'm* talking about.

MARY: Yes I do! I went with my auntie Janet. I filled up a glass lighthouse with different coloured sand. I've still got it on my bedroom windowsill.

CATHY'S KITCHEN

CATHY: I'm talking about Joni Mitchell and - No, don't say "Who?" it's too depressing. *(The other two look blank.)* God, now that does seem like a lifetime ago.

MARY: People go to Ibiza these days.

CATHY: Yes. I don't know why. It's not like they get to hear that music live. Music? What am I saying?

MARY: *(Scoffing.)* The Isle of Wight.

CATHY: *(Genuine.)* It's sad.

MARY: *(Mocking.)* Yes it is sad.

CATHY: You'll be asking me what I did in the war next. *(JO & MARY share a look and smile.)* Don't even think about it.

MARY: We're still paying for the sixties. *(The other two look at her.)* That's what my Nan says.

CATHY: Really? *(Pause.)* So what are you going to do?

MARY: I don't know.

CATHY: I mean *now*.

MARY: Oh. *(Thinks. Same tone.)* I don't know. I think I'll just get some chips.

CATHY: *(An idea.)* Can you cook?

MARY: A bit.

CATHY: What?

MARY: *(Louder.)* A bit.

CATHY: No, what can you cook?

MARY: I cook for us at home. And for my Nan sometimes.

CATHY: *(Patient.)* And what do you cook for them?

MARY: Chops. Mince. Mash. Veg. I do the roasties on Sundays, and the Yorkshires.

JO: That's more than I do.

CATHY: So you could then.

MARY: What?

CATHY: You could go to catering college then. If you wanted.



CATHY'S KITCHEN

MARY: I suppose.

CATHY: Do you want to?

MARY: Maybe.

CATHY: Oh, for goodness sake.

MARY: I don't know.

CATHY: On a scale of one to ten, how much would you like to go?

MARY: Uh... Seven? No. Uh, Six.

JO: There's enthusiasm.

CATHY: Why don't you cook for us?

MARY: *(Sarcasm.)* Oh, yeah.

CATHY: Tonight.

MARY: What?

CATHY: You're not going anywhere, are you? And we aren't doing anything. Are we?

JO: I'm not. *(Depressed again.)*

CATHY: See what's in the big freezer, or you could go over the road. I'll give you the money.

MARY: Really?

CATHY: Yes.

MARY: *Really, really?*

CATHY: Yes! Jo?

JO: *(Non-committal.)* Great.

MARY: Ok.

*CATHY takes out her handbag from behind the counter - finds her purse and hands MARY a £20 note.*

CATHY: Here. Look in the freezer first.

MARY: *(A little excited.)* Ok.

*MARY exits out to the kitchen behind the counter. JO is staring at her glass and looks as though she might cry.*

CATHY'S KITCHEN

CATHY: (*Sympathy.*) Two more nights eh?

JO: Two more *days*. Just one more night.

CATHY: You'll be alright.

JO: God only knows what he's up to.

CATHY: Well, hopefully he won't remember.

JO: Oh, yes, that makes me feel a lot better.

CATHY: You should have told him not to go.

JO: He wanted to. It's only a week.

CATHY: Even so. He shouldn't have left you when you're feeling like this.

JO: I didn't know I would.

CATHY: He should be here.

JO: It might be his last tour.

CATHY: All the same.

JO: He won't be able to go to as many games when the baby comes.

CATHY: I don't know. He's never really supported you. And now when you need him, he's off playing football again.

JO: Cathy, please, I thought we were talking.

CATHY: We are.

JO: No. You're lecturing.

CATHY: I don't lecture.

JO: Whatever.

CATHY: I don't.

JO: Just, please, stop telling me how I should do things. Sometimes I just want to talk.

CATHY: I thought we were.

JO: Never mind.

CATHY: (*Concern.*) Are you alright?

JO: I don't know. Mostly. It's a big deal isn't it? Babies.

CATHY'S KITCHEN

CATHY: Yes.

JO: But at the same time it isn't, is it, because people have been getting on with it for... well forever. *(Pause.)* It's weird. It's like I'm turning into someone else. When I got married I changed a bit. I changed my name for a start. Suddenly I was somebody's wife. I got used to that. But now I'm going to be somebody's Mum. That can't be right! I still feel like I'm nineteen! This time last year I was probably on the floor of some pub. I'm not responsible. I've just about accepted I'm an adult. But someone's mother? No way. I feel like I'm too young for all of this. It can't be my life. I don't feel grown up enough. *(Pause.)* Can you understand that?

CATHY: Yes. I can. It's going to be alright.

JO: I know. Yeah, I know. I'm just paranoid. *(Pause.)* I had... When me and Steve were first seeing each other – I got pregnant. *(Pause – CATHY waits for her to continue.)* We'd been going out for about three months – something like that. It was a shock. Things went a bit weird for a while. He asked me to marry him, which was stupid – but nice. Then he disappeared – which was just stupid. Anyway, I had an abortion. *(Pause.)* If you say it quick enough... And then Steve rang me – that night – and apologised, and told me he loved me. And he said if I did want to get married then we should go ahead. How romantic. So I suppose we were engaged since then. Two years before I got the bloody ring though! He was relieved really – when I told him what I'd done. It wasn't major. We hadn't had time to get used to the idea of babies before it was all over. And I was glad that when we did get married it was only because we wanted to. *(Pause.)* But now I keep thinking, you know? – How I should be grateful for this one. – How I don't deserve it because... And I was really overjoyed at first. But now I just want to hurry up and get it over with – the pregnant bit. And at the same time I don't because that's scary too. Actually having a baby. It's like waiting for an exam you haven't prepared for, and you've no idea what questions you're going to get. And it doesn't matter how hard you look at the pictures in the magazines, or how many books you read – you still won't be ready, and it gets more and more terrifying. You'd think after all these thousands of years someone would have worked out an easier way of doing it wouldn't you?

CATHY: Men. Been in charge too long. Give them another twenty years. Then maybe.

JO: Lot of use to me. *(Pause.)* Do you know what Steve said? He said – the drugs are so good nowadays, you probably won't feel a thing!

CATHY: Sounds like Steve.

JO: *(Under her breath.)* Probably won't feel a thing. Stupid idiot. What does he know about it anyway?

CATHY: Don't get me started.

JO: *(Answering herself.)* Nothing. *(Pause.)* You never wanted children?

CATHY'S KITCHEN

CATHY: I did have a child.

JO: Oh? I didn't... I'm sorry.

CATHY: It's alright. He was adopted.

JO: Oh.

CATHY: By someone else, I should say. *(Pause.)* I was fifteen. *(Remembering.)* And that was a long time ago. It was different then. Very difficult.

JO: I didn't know.

CATHY: Nobody does. I don't know why I told you. Perhaps it's seeing you so much. It reminds me. With Steve away - seeing you go into the Co-op by yourself. Do you still feel sick? I felt sick all the time.

JO: No. I'm lucky.

CATHY: I was mad about ice cubes. But then it was a very hot summer. Do you get cravings?

JO: No. And I feel cheated actually. I haven't had any of the fun stuff. I'm not convinced there is any fun part.

CATHY: No.

JO: All I am is fat and angry.

CATHY: Yes. *(Pause.)* Not long now.

JO: No. *(Pause. Worried.)* It's not.

CATHY: You'll be alright.

JO: Will I?

CATHY: I think so.

JO: *(Not convinced.)* Good.

MARY: *(Entering.)* There isn't much in.

CATHY: You'd better go and get what you need then.

MARY: What shall I get?

CATHY: That's up to you, you're the chef.

MARY: *(To Jo. Grins.)* I'm the chef. *(Exits by the shop door.)*

CATHY: *(Smiles to herself – she has had an idea.)* I just need to pop out for something. Are you staying here?

CATHY'S KITCHEN

JO: No, I'll go home and check the answer-phone. What time do you want me back?

CATHY: We'll need a couple of hours. What's the time now? We'd better get a move on. *(Waiting at the door.)* Come on then.

*She ushers a reluctant Jo up and out. Then turns off the light and exits, locking up behind her. Blackout. End of Scene 1*