



## The Way Widows Walk

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Oil cans. hears breathing. Jumps, knocks over something. Dorcus

It is very quiet there. She backs into the lot, near some tires and oil cans. Hears breathing. Jumps, Knocks over something. Dorcus



terrified  
Laney  
Starts still - Dorcus  
Grabs her  
hand - It's  
me Laney,  
leaps up. ~~The two~~ stare at each other. ~~Each~~ starts to leave when they  
hear bikers. <sup>hooves</sup> They ~~both~~ run in the ~~same direction~~ away from the bikers. <sup>horses</sup>

<sup>horsemen</sup> The bikers stop. Listen. Hear running heels and pursue the direction  
of the sound. The women are running, Dorcus ahead. She turns into

a street, followed by Laney. The street ends with a ~~concrete~~ <sup>sp'</sup> an oyster  
shell and cement wall. Brightly painted and decorated in Mexican

<sup>Two horsemen</sup> designs. The bikers drive into the cul de sac. The women huddle,  
then slide along the shell wall. <sup>boys</sup> The bikers arrive and shine ~~their~~  
lights. <sup>in their faces.</sup>

-Hey look, Petey. WE got two. A spade and a white chick.

The women keep sidling. The <sup>boys</sup> bikers dismount. The women sidling along  
the wall rub against a wooden door at end of the shell wall. They turn  
and bang and fiddle with latch. <sup>While bikers saunter toward them</sup> Laney kicks one in  
groin and barely escapes hands of the other when Dorcus gets door open.  
~~is~~ They run, End up again in the repair shop, parking lot. They try

to get in the garage. It is locked, and they can find no entrance.

or exit. Run through and around broken and stripped automobiles.

Dorcus trips and falls. <sup>stops, turns and</sup> Laney helps her up. They come to a wire fencing  
and climb over it, each pulling and pushing the other. They lose their  
shoes. Run on through back yards, noise of <sup>hooves finally</sup> bikers fades. They sprint

into street, running swiftly but badly without their shoes. Turn toward  
a lit street. See a gas station and go toward it. It is closed. Opposite

is a 7-11 Store (one of those open till two places with overprices  
Kleenex, bread, beer etc.) They go in. The store manager ~~says~~ says we  
are closing up ladies. There are a few customers in the store.

-We need help. Call the police. Oh my god. Look at your hands.

-- Dorcus hands' are bleeding profusely.

-I fell on glass.

-Call an ambulance. You got any money? I lost my purse.



Dorcus shakes her head.

-So did I.

What the hell is the matter with you. Get on the phone. This woman is ~~hurry~~ bleeding!

Laney snatches a box of Kleenex from the shelves. Tears <sup>Both are</sup> it open and hands wads to Dorcus while she blots blood. Whispering curses. Bastards. Sons of bitches.

8888888888888888

In emergency Ward of a <sup>Small</sup> municipal hospital. Lots of Hispanic patients around. Dorcus is sitting in glass topped admission office, while <sup>In Chair - Laney standing</sup>

Laney outside ~~these~~ in the waiting room, begs dimes and then telephones.

-Name?

-Dorcus Atkinson.

-Miss or Mrs.?

For Christ's sake. She's bleeding.

-This will just take a minute. Address.

-34 Cordova Drive. West wood.

-Date of birth

-You can give her some more Kleenex can't you?

--Sorry.

Pushes box toward Dorcus

-Religion?

-None. Yes. No. None.

-Next of kin?

-I don't believe this.

-My mother.

-What is her name?

--Stella Bradford.

-How do you spell that?

-Stella or Bradford?



-Never mind. What is her address.

- 1260 Byant. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

-Is that in San Diego?

-No, Evanston Illinois.

- Any relatiovie in San Diego

-No

-Your doctor

Wycoff Daniels. Herbert Danils.

-Blue Cross or Blue Shield

-Traverls' Group Insruance. At my ;work.

-Where to you work?

-Wkse

-Address

-Will you call a doctor?

-A doctor will see her miss. Now, what seems to be the problem?

Dorcus and Landy exchange glances. Dorcus hold up her hands.

-How'd that happen.

-I Dorcus is in Emergency room. Laney, having begged dimes from patients, calls Andrew, <sup>her</sup> Mother. In between she peeps into window of emergency room. Can't see anything but Dorcus stokinged feet and the legs of a doctor and nurse. She goes in. Dorcus' hands are bandaged.

--Andrew is coming to get us.

At Dorcus' apartment Andrew gets out of car to take Dorcus up.

--I'll take her.

Wycoff I'll just be a minute  
Laney gets out of front seat, Dorcus out of back. Get Super to open door. Laney stand at door.

-Will you be all right?

-Sure

Her boxing glove bandanges she adjust into a fighters posture.

*Danils is Laney's  
dr. Wycoff is Dorcus'*



~~xx~~  
~~Listen I was always proud of myself~~

D Think what you like. I'm not going to apologize for that. I'm not going to apologize for anything. (over)

~~Neither am I.~~

~~I'm not ashamed.~~

D. cont'd Look, we did it right. Right and well. Nobody hurt anybody. I wasn't breaking up a family. and I always felt good about that. I know what that's like for kids and I never wanted to be the reason. I felt good about that. But it's my being black that bothers you doesn't it?

~~Doesn't it bother you?~~

~~Answer me.~~

L. -Yes. Yes it does. You're black. And you're pretty. You were his mistress. Take your pick. I've got enough anger for both.

D. -And what have I got? So have I.

L. -I don't know what are you ~~supposed to have?~~ what have you got to be angry about?

D. - I ~~don't~~ I'm not supposed to get angry? I'm not ~~even~~ allowed to grieve right? You get that part too. Who can I talk to about it? My black friends? My mother?

L. -You went to parties. Andrew said he saw you at parties. That you had a crowd.

D. -You had a family. I had a crowd. You had children. I had miscarriages. You went to the funeral. I went to the movies. One hundred and One

Dalmations. They're spotted, you know. Black and white. After the movies I walked all the way home. When I got home and started walking up the stairs my neck hurt and I realized I had walked all the way home looking at the sidewalk. Not once did I look up.

L. -I'd like to like you but I don't think I can. When he died I thought well that's the end of the future, I'll just have to hold on to the past. But then I found the prescription and then I found you and all of a sudden there wasn't any past either. I hate him for that. For











~~says he will~~ Andrew calls on intercome. Laney sya she call a cab

--How? You can't even undress yourself.

Laney comes in and takes over. in a way. Goes and gets a robe from bedroom. over Dorcus protests. Then unzips Dorcus dress. There is some awkwardness in the beginning as she touches her.

When they are settled Dorcus robed, drinking out of a straw on the table. Laney sipping hot tea, Andrew knosck on door.

--What's going on?

-Oh I forgot you.

-Look I'll take a cab. Take the keys,

-I'm <sup>just</sup> leaving.

-No stay. Save me a trip. I ~~got~~ <sup>have</sup> to go by police headquarters anyway. This is good you know. I mean it was terrible, but wiat till the word gets out that the friends of the rapist tried to rape you two.

~~Andrew~~

-What do you mean?

-We got it made.

Opens the door <sup>Smiling</sup>

- In the shade. Night ladies.

L -What do you think? Is he a creep?

D -Shrugs) He should be in our business.

-Sometimes I think he is.

Silence

<sup>Awkward for L. Thoughtful for D.</sup>

D -Did you hear what they called us (~~Dorcus~~)

L. -Yeah. Chicks. A white chick and a black chick.

-No. a spade and a white chick.

-Bastards.



-There's a difference.

-What difference?

-You were a white chick. Chick. Girl. Woman. Female. I was just a spade.

I don't get it.

-Not a woman. Not a female. A spade. They saw me and they saw my skin. Nothing else. I could have been a man, aboy a three year old child. ~~They~~ All the same to them. They saw your sex, your gender. They didn't see mine.

Silence

-Is there nybody you want me to call? A friend or something? To stay here with you?

-No. I lied in the hospital. My mother doesn't live in Evanston. She used to, but she lives here now.

--You want me to call her.

-No. <sup>We don't get along and</sup> I don't want to explain anything right now.

L -Well I better go.

D -Sure. -

L -See ya.

D -Okay. I mean

L --Look. I'm sorry. <sup>A</sup> About your hands and everything.

D -~~Don't be~~ Sure.

-Will it effect the show? I mean <sup>you're on</sup> you're on television <sup>aren't</sup> aren't you? - <sup>you're</sup> - yes!

L Balck News or something? - <sup>u</sup>

D -It'll be all right. <sup>okay</sup>

L -Lousy casting.

→ Exclusively Black?

D ~~Right.~~



Arriving at waterfront.

~~Driving~~. Laney is calmer now, bewildered, bitter, emotinally naked.

-Tell me something. Would you be feeling any different if she were white?

~~-Is it the fact that she's Black~~  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

-No.

-Sure?

-I'm not sure of anything. All I know is I want her dead and him alive. The fact that she's black, surprises me, and offends me. *And being blind doesn't make it better. She should be he*

-Why?

- Because it means that he wanted a different kind of woman from me.

~~XXXXXXX~~ He didn't want just another woman, and additional woman, he wanted someone entirely different. Entirely.

~~-How is she different, Laney?~~  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ in

*Right*  
-That's true, I guess. Her skin is entirely different from yours.

-Since when did you get to be such a nigger lover.

That's not like you Laney. You're an intelligent.

-I'm hurting. God damn you. There's nothing intelligent about hurt.

All right.

I know. I'm sorry.

~~The water~~ It looks like a comforter. A silk comforter. *m*

Andew turns her about by her shuolders so she can't see the water.

-Laney you need to get back to work, Keep busy. It's over, honey.

Over. Put it out of your mind. We need you and you promised to help.

-I can't.

-Sure you can. *takes her to car.*

-I don't feel comfortable with them. Those women. They're rough and only one speaks English. *entry. She is about twelve. honey not in front*

-They liked you. Enough to stay with the firm.

-That's all I promised.

-That's all you promised me, but you promised them more. They think you are going to work on the case. They need somebody like you, Laney. This town is going to kill them. The way the press tells it five



L: Christ please shut up. I don't scoop the peanut butter with the banana. Take a knife and spread it.

Time: now. Place: Southwestern or Southern California coast town of some size (like San Diego). The kitchen of a bright, airy, lived in house--rather too lived in at the moment. Portable TV going, a child's truck on a table--that kind of thing. But the disarray is not dirt; it's a recent <sup>disorderliness</sup> ~~disorderliness~~. Laney is trying to make space if <sup>nor</sup> ~~nor~~ order, but can't concentrate. Too much light, too many interruptions, TV (or radio-whatever) is killing. But her son Radford is "Watching" <sup>it</sup> while he fixes himself a snack. One feels Laney will endure it rather than silence, or worse, her son's full attention. He is nine. His snack-making however, becomes impossibly nerve-wracking.

Laney: Will you get the hell <sup>the</sup> out of that peanut butter?

Rad: It's not peanut butter. It's mallo mash.

L: Put it up, will you?

R: You said you wouldn't go crazy, Ma.

L: Get away from that jar.

R: But you promised.

L: I'm not going crazy; I'm just asking you to get the hell out of that jar.

R: And you never cursed before either.

L: I didn't have to before.

Christina enters. She is about twelve.

Chris: When Daddy said curses you told him shh, honey not in front of the kids.



L: Christ, please shut up. Rad, don't scoop the peanut butter with the banana. Take a knife and spread it.

Chris: Daddy's been dead ten and a half days now.

R: Ma, make her stop.

L: Stop Christine. You don't count things like that.

C: Why?

L: I don't know why. It's just--oh, the hell with it. Count. Count.

Telephone rings. Laney answers it while the murmur of children lightly quarreling and the TV surround her.

L: Hello. What? Oh, hi Helen. Crazy. They're driving me crazy.

No, I guess not. This is the part Mother told me to expect. I don't know. Just--They sleep in their clothes. Every single night they sleep in their clothes with all the lights on. No. No.

There's no point in waking them up just to put them in other clothes, but it bothers me. But it is better with the lights on. No, but

I leave the television on all night. Well, they're not charming anymore. Rad eats all day, Chris counts. No. Mother's going to take them back with her until school starts. No, no. She's happy

to., Thanks, Helen. You're a doll. Sure, but not right now. I'm not up to restaurants yet. I will. I really will. Bye.

R: Why do we have to go to Delaware?

L: It's only a month. You'll love it.

C: He'll wet the bed. You better tell Gramma he wets the bed.

L: Chris, please.

Christine swings out of the room. Laney continues to



hold and soothe Rad. The doorbell rings. The ringer  
R: I don't. ~~doesn't wait—he enters and shouts~~

C: Stop lying, you liar.

L: Don't use that word. We don't use that word in this house.

C: But he is, isn't he?

L: But it's not the same thing.

R: When you go to sleep tonight I'm coming in there and kill you.

C: Ma, did you hear him? He says he's going to kill me.

L: Nobody's going to kill anybody.

R: Somebody killed Daddy.

L: Radford! Nobody killed Daddy. He, he died. That's all. He died.

R: How can you die if nobody kills you?

L: Oh, honey, you get sick. You can get sick and die.

R: He grabbed his throat.

:L: That's because, because he was trying to get his breath and...

R: It hurt him, didn't it? It hurt him to die.

L: Oh baby. You mustn't think that. It didn't hurt him at all.

R: Are you proof positive?

L: I'm ~~proof~~ positive, sweetheart. Absolutely proof positive.

C: Now you're lying.

L: You watch your mouth young lady.

Flings dish towel at her <sup>with one arm</sup> while she holds <sup>Rad with the other</sup> ~~her son~~.

C: Daddy never lied. Never.

Christine swings out of the room. Laney continues to



L: I'm not doing so well.  
A: You'll be hold and soothe Rad. The doorbell rings. The ringer checked. doesn't wait--he enters and shouts

Where's everybody?

L: Andrew?

Andrew: Yeah. How you?

Gives her a loud smack of a kiss on her forehead.

A: Hey Rad. Everyting okay?

L: He's all right now. Go on ~~h~~ out, honey. Ride your bike or something. And stay away from your sister.

Rad starts to leave, turns back and picks four cookies from a package.

L: Coffee?

A: No. I can't drink real coffee anymore. If it's not in a styrofoam cup, I break out.

L: How is it down there?

A: Crazy. What'd you expect?

L: Did I thank you for the flowers?

A: That's what I came by for. To make sure you thanked the firm for a hundred bucks worth of flowers.

L: Well.

A: Come on Laney, you thanked us a million times. You thanked me, you thanked Crocker, you thanked the receptionists, the janitor.

Laney lowers her head.

A; Hey, I know. It's Okay.

A: How come you got out Laney?



L: I'm not doing so well.

A: You'll be fine. Besides I've got news. The money's Okay. I checked.

L: What money?

A: The insurance, Radford had a good policy with the firm. You're in pretty good shape, actually. Lawyers know how to do these things and Radford was the best. We're gonna miss him.

L: So what? Laney looks as though she might cry.

A: Hup hup hup. None of that. Here, let me put some raw meat in that coffee.

A: Not to look in cupboard for liquor, Pours and talks.

A: Try this on for size. Atta girl. Look, I came over for another reason. Not just the insurance. We need your help.

L: We?

A: Yeah, we. Crocker and Merrill and, one of these days, me.

L: You're going to be a partner now?

A: It's not up to me, but I sure won't turn it down. Rad was my best friend. He brought me in. I was headed for taxes. He's the one who showed me that criminal law didn't have to be scrungy and you could make a living besides.

L: He was more than a criminal lawyer. He was the best civil liberties lawyer this town every saw. The best.

A: You're telling me?

L: Even when we were in law school, he was always the best. The most honest.

A: How come you got out Laney?

L: Okay, okay. So what do you want from me?



L: Two lawyers for parents doesn't make sense. When Chris was born, I thought I'd stay home for just a while, and then little Rad came and. I know what you're thinking, and it's not true. I made up my own mind.

A: I heard you passed the bar the first time.

L: So did Radford.

A: But your score was higher.

L: So what?

A: So we need you. The firm does.

L: You're not serious?

A: Not to come back in. I mean, what we need is a one shot thing. A legal researcher, Footwork and--you know, the kind of stuff.

L: No way. I can't get through lunch without breaking a cup or dropping a spoon down the garbage disposal.

A: Just listen. You remember that case Rad was working on? The Bat women?

L: Of course I remember. Mexicans. One was raped and she got her friends together and they went out and found the guy and beat him up.

A: With baseball bats.

L: Right. baseball bats.

A: He died.

L: I know.

A: So they are up for murder two, at the least.

L: I know that Andrew.

A: And they weren't Mexican. They were Columbians. They work crops out in St. Pedro. ~~xMx~~ Pickers.

L: Okay, okay. So what do you want from me?



I wouldn't apologize to my mother and  
I won't apologize to you. Colors don't  
mean a great deal to me. Kindness does;  
Justice does; and good work. All I  
know is what comes through. When  
I shake hands - what I feel when I  
sit next to some body. What I  
hear in a voice. And that's good  
enough. It has always stood me  
in good stead. I know what you  
ate for dinner, how ~~old you~~ <sup>long ago</sup> you put  
<sup>your</sup> perfume ~~is~~ on. And I know that  
you are not the frightened woman  
you were when ~~we~~ first you knocked  
on my door that day. What your  
husband did for me was important  
and good and precious. I will not apologize



A: They want out. When Radford died, they decided to get somebody else. They don't want out guys. They liked your husband, it seems. A lot.

L: Everybody did.

A: We want to keep the case.

L: Why? Who's paying?

A: It's not that. You know there's no dough with those people. It's well, it's a good case. National press, national TV. All of that.

L: Oh I see.

A: No you don't. It's partly the publicity, but only partly.

the public defender now. Some wetnose that's going to get them life. At least that's what I hear. But they liked Radford, really trusted him, and they might like you.

-I can't <sup>handle</sup> a case, you know that.

-Not handle. We'll handle it. Crocker, me, somebody. We just want them to stay, and we thought you could persuade them. They liked your husband, maybe they'll like you even better. You're a woman too.

-Andy. My life is in shreds now, the last thing I need is six Mexicans with bats. It's all I can do to keep Rad from killing Chris and Chris from killing me.

-Laney. Listen. You do need it. It's not the last thing you need. It's the first thing. Nothing works like work, believe me. Look. You're sending the kids back with your mom. What are you going to do for a month? Vacuum? You passed the bar the first time. You've got a brain. Use it.

-Andy.

-No I mean. What would Radford think? Wouldn't he want you to do this? The case was important to him, you know that. Do it for him. Making You won't have to go in court. Just talk to the women. Talk to them. Explain to them how important it is to have the back-up of a firm like ours. Tell them about all our civil liberties stuff. Come on Laney, do it.



Laney. She's blind.

What?

Blind. You know. - White stick?

You're crazy. I saw her. I met there.  
She's not

A: Yes she is. But every body misses it  
at first.

L: You said she was on TV

A: She is. Good at it too. Better than  
most. Does Braille right on the screen.

~~What Reaction from L.~~

L: I don't care. I'm not going to feel <sup>guilty</sup> about that



*The case is*  
It was important to us because we might get rape ~~xxx~~ law changed in this state., I mean really turn it around. I know it sounds funny coming from me, but it's a good cause, Laney. A woman is raped, in front of her kid. She tells her friends about it and tells them that she knows the guy, knows where he works. They wap him, self defense, right? No, *give* says the state - *be the ones to* premeditated murder. Okay, with a little passion, it's second degree, still. *Make what they did self defense*

-And you want somebody to research witnesses and neighbors? That's junior clerk stuff. Or get a private dectective.. I-m not up to that.

\_no, no. You're missing my point. They want out. They want the public defender now. Some wetnose that's going to get them life. At least that's what I hear. But they liked Radford, really tursted him, and they might like you.

-I can't ~~take~~ *handle* a case, you know that.

-Not handle. We'll handle it. Crocker, me, somebody. We just want them to stay, and we thought you could persuade them. They liked your husband, maybe they'll like you even better. You're a womwn too.

*I'm sorry*  
-No. Andy. My life is in shreds now, *the* the last thing I need is six Mexicans with bats. It's all I can do to keep Rad from killing Chris and Chris from killing me.

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-Andy.

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--Leave them <sup>here</sup> darling. If it snows in August we'll send for them.  
Oh there's the taxi.

L. --Is everything out there?

M. Yes.

L. -Chris where's your travel case?

C -Right here.

L. -Now you two be as good as you can. Don't worry your grandmother.  
I'll call every night.

M --Come on . Come on. That's a sweetheart.

L -Have you got everything Mother.

M --I think so.

L. C all me as soon as you get there.

M -Well there's a time difference you know.....General goodbye confusion  
Mother still chirping, Rad a li-tle pouty, Christ determined.  
Laney closes the door and notices that the <sup>paper</sup> little bottle is still  
in her hand. She slips it into her suit pocket and goes to collect  
her things. ~~Outside~~ Outside in the car, she turns on the ignition, then  
quite suddenly turns it off again and goes back into the house. There  
she picks up the telephone, and dials a number from the <sup>paper</sup> label on the  
bottle.

~~xxxxx~~ When voice answers identifying a <sup>doctor's office</sup> pharmacy, she hangs up.  
Then she looks through the telephone directory, finds another number  
and dials.

Hello. This is Mrs. Merrill. Laney Merrill. ~~xxxx~~ I'm fine thanks.  
Thank you. Yes, <sup>it</sup> I was quite unexpected. No Not at all. He never even  
had a cold. Yes, I know. No, but is the doctor in? No I just wanted  
to ask him something. Well I won't be here, I'm. Maybe you can help  
me. Can you read prescriptions. No no, it's not from Dr. Daniles.  
It's one my husband had and I can't make out. Well yes I could call  
the docotr, but if , I mean since he's not, I mean he won't be needing  
it, I was just curious. Yes it says <sup>OM-V</sup>

She reaads out the perscription.

What's <sup>so</sup> funny? /what? Birth control pills? Are you sure? I guess  
I made a mistake. No. I must have read the wrong. Thank you Miss  
Newburgh. Thank you, Yes. Goodbye.

Laney goes back to her car.. STuffs perscription back in  
her pocket and drives off. Drives along toward the county jail.  
While driving she is remembering her husband. Good times, intimate



-Just because they like Radford, doesn't mean they'll like me. He was a very handsome, magical man. .

-He spoke Spanish. That's what they liked. And they've got a couple of public defenders who speak Spanish too. That's why they want to switch.

-I don't speak Spanish.

-But you're a woman. They will listen to you.

-Do they speak English?

-Some. Take an interpreter. But talk to 'em.

-And that's all? Just persuade them to stay?

-That's all, I swear. You'll be doing them a favor. You want to see some punk mess up their lives? We can get them off. Radford would like that Laney. He'd be sore as hell if after all the work he'd done, those women got ~~xxx~~ screwed by a public defender because you wouldn't help out. If it doesn't work--okay. But at least try.

-Does Crocker want it?

-Of course he wants it. Come in the office. I'll give you all the notes.

--How soon?

-Tomorrow. First thing. There's no time to lose.

s-He would like it wouldn't he?

You kidding? She looks at her wedding ring.

~~He's tap dancing.~~ I bet you right now he's tap dancing.

[illegible]

mmmm mmmm

Laney is sitting <sup>on edge of the</sup> at desk in her husbands study. She is <sup>drinking coffee</sup> reading and rummaging through <sup>papers in his briefcase</sup> notes. Her children are heard through the door and so is an adult female voice. It is her mother.

-You sure about the eggs?

-I'm sure Mother.

-You really should eat something before ten o'clock. The body needs nourishment before ten o'clock in the morning. Otherwise it cranks down.

-I'll pick up something down town.

-It's just as easy form me to whip up the eggs, dear.

-But you ~~have~~ have called the taxi already. You'll miss your plane.

-There's plenty of time. Plenty.

-Mother, no.



-Don't sit like that honey. You'll get that awful roundness in your shoulders. And believe me, it's very hard to get rid of.

-Mother.

-I know what I'm talking about. After your father died it was all I could do to keep my back straight. But I was determined not to walk around this world like a widow.

-What do you mean, walk around like a widow.

-You know. Round shouldered. Like this

Demonstrates

That's the way widows walk. Like the weight of the world is on their back now that their men are gone. It's an awful thing to happen to a women, especially if they're older. But you, your young, you can avoid it. That's right. That's right. Use your spine, not your stomach muscles. See? Look at me. You'd never know in a million years that I was a widow, now would you?

-No mother, *I wouldn't do that omelet.*

-Now let me whip up those eggs.

-I'm going in to the office as soon as you leave, Mother, and I want to look at Radford's notes before I go. I promise I'll get something before ten o'clock.

-Are you sure you ought to be doing legal stuff so soon? I mean.

-Mother, it will be good for me.

-If you say so, *but please Elaine sit straight, will you?*

Mother leaves room. Laney rummages through brief case again. Picks up several papers one by one. Picks up a small white pice of paper and looks at it carefully and with surprise. ~~NO In back pocket she feels a small plastic prescription bottle. She examines it. It is empty and the name and address on it.~~ Chris comes in

Mother. Tell him he can't take his skis. Mother. Mother.

-What?

-His skiis. Tell Rad he can't take skiis on the plane.

-Oh. Rad! Let me send them to you honey. They have to be wrapped and

-I want my skiis.

Mother enters



BW:- Vulnerable. What is it?

L:- Soft.

B.W. You are soft?

No. I'm strong.

L:- Please, I want to help.

But today I - feel like a mother.

gestures, when they were lawyers together, , when he won a case and she congratulated him. <sup>etc</sup> and <sup>etc</sup> son. When she gets to the country jail parking lot, she ~~abruptly~~ pauses for a minute and takes out the paper. reading the ~~address of the pharmacy doctor's~~ doctor's name and the patients name as well. Abruptly she backs out and drives to a local pharmacy. Inside <sup>pharmacy hands him prescription</sup> -It will be a minute, miss.

Laney waits.

--~~Thankxxxxxx~~ What the address, maam?

-It's not for me . They're <sup>for a client of mine</sup> ~~ref my girl friend's~~ I'm a lawyer. the doctor, Dr. Macenroe. She ~~xxxxxx~~ she's in jail now and I have to get these <sup>3</sup> for her.

--She won't be needing these in jail now. He laughs and calls the doctor. Get the address and types it onto the label. Laney takes the package and pays. Outside she reads the address. She gets into her car and drives to the neighborhood. It is a very well established neighborhood, nice newish luxury apartments. Laney parks in front of the address and watches people as they come out. Then she drives off to the jail to see the Bat Women. Has a conversation with two of them.

You are Mrs. Merrill?

-Yes.

-I am sorry.

<sup>Thank you</sup> for your husband.

-Yes. <sup>But</sup> I came to ask you - My husband did a lot of work for you A lot. And I want to help. <sup>help</sup> you. I want to ask you to stay with his firm. They are better for you. They will help you better than anybody else. My husband would want it that way, and I ..

--Why?

-What?

-Why do you want to help?

--Because, because I am alone now. And there is no man in my house now And I have a daughter. And because I am a very very smart woman and a very smart lawyer and I am feeling very vulnerable now. And it would help me to help you.

One of the women translates for the other. Then asks

-You are not from the television?

-Not no. I'm Mrs Merrill. Radford Merrill's wife. I'm a lawyer too



III  
A good one. I passed the bar the first time.

The bat women don't understnad. They exchange words in Spanish.

First Prison: Television people, newspaper people. We don't want to see them.

L: Oh but you must. You should

F.P.: Why?

L: Some, I mean. Let them take pictures of you. So people will know what you are like. That you are women, mothers. Ordinary mothers who wouldn't jurt a fly, except when they are---raped. Or hurt. Or lied to.

F.P.: Lie. Some one lies to us?

L: Well they could, you know. But not my husband. And not me.

F.P.: You want to be oour lawyer?

L: I want to work with the lawyers at my husband's firm. Make sure the case goes right. Make sure you are all tight. That he doesn't get away with it.

F.P.: He don't get away signora. He never do that again. Es M;uerto.

L: What do you say? Will you stay with us?

F.P.: We have no money. Mr. Merrill said for us not to think about money. Do you say the same thing?

L: Yes, I say the same thing. Don't think about money. Just tell me everything you know about the man, how it happened, everything.

F.P.: Are you strong, Signora?

L: Oh, god. I hope so.

Outside, following her conversation with the Bat women, she tal  
ephones Andy to tell him of her success. Through the windows of the booth she can see reporters, clerks, TV crew and a striking black woman walking on the arm of a young black man.



### III

L: I don't think so. I'm from the law firm. Crocker and Merrill.  
Laney is in bed. Papers strewn about on covers. Glasses on, she is talking on the telephone to her son.

L: No, I'm not getting married, honey. What makes you ask me that? But I've been working, that's why I wasn't at home. I did call. Gramma said you were sleeping. All right. Next time I'll make her wake you. I miss you too. I'll try. Maybe next weekend. Good night dear. Be nice to your sister. Love you.

D: To who?  
Hangs up telephone. Gets back to work but cannot concentrate. Gets up and goes into her closet. Reaches in coat pocket and takes out round box of tablets from the prescription she has had filled. She looks in the mirror. Hurriedly, she gets dressed and leaves the house. She drives back to the neighborhood she prowled earlier. Parks. After checking mailbox, goes to an apartment door and rings bell. A black woman opens the door. Laney is startled. The woman in in a robe, the inside of the apartment in dimly lit, but the furnishing are lovely.

Dorcus: Yes?

L: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm looking for 6F.

D:.. This is 6F. Laney goes on. Talking rapidly,

L: Is Miss Atkinson here?

D. Yes. you knew my husband, Radford. Are you a client of his?

L: May I speak to her?

D: You are going through his briefcase. What case was yours?

L: Oh. I used to tell me all his cases. I don't remember which one

D; Do I know you?  
I found the prescription and I got it filled for you. It's not the kind of thing you want to run out of.



L: I don't think so. I'm from the law firm. Crocker and Merrill.  
We're handling the Batwoman case.

D: Oh, Come in. Sorry about the mess, It's been awful these  
last few weeks. What's up?

L: You're Misss Atkinson? Dorcus Atkinson?

D: Uh huh. What did you want to see me about?

L: I found something that belongs to you.

D: To me? Mr. Merrill was handling my divorce.

L: Well it has your name on it.

D: A lo Reaches in her pocket and brings out the box.

L: Now Dorcus streches out her hand, tentatively, but not too far.

D: Sev Laney slaps the box into the outstretched palm. Dorcus jumps  
a littleat the touch. Closes her fingers around the box, lowers  
her head, and opens it. Runs her long fingers over the capsules  
inside. Al stacked in a row.

D: Where did you get these? long time. Divorce can be messy.

L: At home. know he was married? That your lawyers was married and

D: I thought you said you were from Crocker and---who are you?

L: Laney. Laney Merrill.

L: Nobody Dorcus doesn't ~~xxxxxx~~ Laney goes on. Talking rapidly,  
trying not to see the obvious and, or course not seeing it.

L: Maybe you knew my husband, Radford. Are you a client of his?  
He's dead, you knw. Three weeks now. Twenty-two days, actually.  
And I was going through his briefcase. What case was yours? I  
mean he used to tell me all his cases. I don't rmember which one  
you were. Anyway I found the prescription and I got it filled for  
you. It's not the kind of thing you want to run out of.



I miss him & I hate him. (And I  
hate you <sup>blind or not</sup> ~~I know I do~~. But I was  
scared for you back there, with those  
4H cowboys. Really scared. When you fell  
all I could think of was what they'd  
do to you <sup>if I didn't get you out of there</sup>. And I don't want to feel  
any of this



Laney is walking, pacing looking around.

L: Has it come up? Your case, I mean. Or is Andy handling it?

He's taking most of the now. Except the Bat Women, of course.

They didn't want him. Radford spoke Spanish and they liked him,

but then everybody did. Anyway I went down there to try and get them

to stay with Crocker and---So what about you? Have you been turned

over to Andy, or...what's your case again?

D: Divorce. Mr. Merrill was handling my divorce.

L: Oh? How long has he been working with you on it?

D: A long time. It got...very involved.

L: How long is long?

D: Seven years.

D: Laney stops and stares

L: Seven? But that was 1974. My little boy was only two years old then.

D: Sometimes it takes a very long time. Divorce can be messy.

L: Did you know he was married? That your lawyers was married and had two kids?

D: And how I knew.

L: Nobody at Crocker handles divorce cases. Nobody.

D: It was advice, really, Friendly, legal advice.

L: I don't believe you. I don't believe you knew him for seven years.

D: Have it your way. talk about, Civil rights? James Brown, Sammy Davis.

L: We were in Mexico in 74.

D: 73

L: Liar.

D: Then what did you come for?

L: To see



D: Look. This is not fruitful. We have nothing to say to each other. Like you said, he's dead.

L: We did things together. We did everything together.

D: Sure. (Stands)

L: I don't believe it. I don't believe he slept with you. He couldn't have. He would never sleep with a a a

D: Why don't you go. There's nothing to say and I don't want your grief in here with me. I have my own. I can't share it with you.

L; (outraged) Share it with me? It's my grief. Mine. Mine and my children's. Not yours. Don't you say that. Don't you every say that. He loved me.

D: sighs

L: You think he didn't?

D: I think, I think he's dead.

Laney suddenly wants details

L: How often did you see him?

D: Smiling) Often.

L: How often.

D: Once, twice a week. Sometimes more.

L: He talked to you about me.

D: We never talked about you

L: Oh? What did you talk about, Civil rights? James Brown, Sammy Davis.

Her voice breaks.

D: Stop that. You can't come in here and cry. You stop that.

L: That's not what I came for.

D: Then what did you come for?

L: To see



D

D: So, see.

L: But I don't see. I don't see at all.

D: You see all right. What's bothering you? Because I was the other woman, or because I'm a black woman? (Stand)

L: Both. Both.

D: You want an ~~amp~~ apology. Well you won't get it. Not here. At the cemetery maybe, but not here and you can't come in here and cry. You think you're the only widow he left? Is that what you think? We had a good life together/

L: Life? You bitch! You are the worse, the worse thing I know of.

D: Maybe. But I am the best thing he knew of.

Laney slaps her

Dorcus swings and slaps her back

Laney slaps her again

Dorcus falls back into her chair and gropes around for something to strike her with, Finds it and raises her arm then

D: Oh, Jesus. You get out of here. You get out of here.

L; (Backing away. ) Don't you grieve over my husband. Don't you dare, you tramp, you black slut, you.

Runs out of the door.

Dorcus throws the object down, but holds herself in. Will not cry

Here an unwritten scene flashing to when Dorcus and Radford met, knew each other, listened to whispers from blacks and whites alike: "Isn't that Miss Exclusively Black? Well I'll be. I'd say all her news was white. They kill me. Black people get their faces, white folks get their behinds. Makes you sick." etc.



The two women stand together in lobby.

Laney looks at her hands, her arms down her front.

Makes a shuddering sound

-What's the matter?

-I feel...used.

--The same here. He used my TV show like it was his own. ~~Yank it~~

~~Okay, won't you?~~

--Bastard.

D --Gotta go. Take care, Laney.

A young man comes up saying "Ready Miss Atkinson?". He takes her arm.

L --You too.

Dorcus walks away. Laney ~~looks~~ <sup>watches</sup> at her <sup>go</sup> then calls

-Dorcus!

D ~~What~~ Yes? (Turns)

L ~~You have to stop that.~~

Don't do that.

D --What?

Laney runs up to her. <sup>and</sup>

~~Right here.~~

~~she runs~~ <sup>presses</sup> her fingers along Dorcus ~~back~~ <sup>back</sup> shoulders. <sup>Straightening</sup> Straightens her back.

L. Don't stoop ~~It's the way~~ <sup>that way</sup> widows walk. ~~Now do me.~~ Like they can't carry the weight of the world. Straighten up, ~~girl~~ <sup>reach out</sup> now do me.

Straight backed Dorcus presses Laney's spine. They ~~laugh~~ <sup>smile</sup>,

and turn back to back, pressing ~~each~~ <sup>each</sup> shoulder blades ~~of the other.~~ <sup>with her own.</sup>

-(Dorcus) No widows walking here.

Back to back, heads up, Close <sup>laughing,</sup>



taking away my past. And I ~~think~~<sup>too</sup> I hate you ~~xxx~~. because the past he gave you was real. Mine was a lie.

~~Sometimes the~~  
~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~

D -It's not so simple as that. We all have to find our own truth and sometimes the truth is so precious that it has to be protected by a whole army of lies.

L. -But I don't know what to do with it. With what I feel. I don't know what to do with it. I want what those ~~women~~ women had,

(Paces)

L, cont'd Those women in jail. Baseball bats. That's all I could think of when those guys were chasing us, when we were jammed up against that wall. I could feel it in my hands

[ She makes a fist. and swings. Swings again. Keeps on swinging. all around the apartment. Comes up to Dorcus with imaginary bat and "hold" it over her. Slowly brings it down and sits in chair. Her head buried in her hands. Dorcus reaches out to ~~stroke her hair~~<sup>touch</sup>. ~~Can't reach it.~~<sup>Does N't.</sup>

D. --I thought you were Doris Day, I didn't know you could fight.

L. -I thought you were Tina Turner. Shaking. Just shaking. And loud. Very loud and sexy. I thought you were a black chick.

D. -And I thought you were a white chick.

8888888888888888

<sup>Jammed. A lot of press in attendance.</sup>  
Courthouse. The Batwomen are convicted. Dorcus and Laney meet in the lobby. Exchange greetings.

D -Can you believe that?

L. -How could they? How could they do it?

Andrew comes up, separating himself from reporters.

L. --Andrew. Over here.

D --Will you appeal?



A -Absolutely. If they want to, that is.

L -What do you mean if they want to. Of course they 'll want to.

A -Crocker says wait and see.

L -Aren't you handling it?

D -He's got other things to do, Laney. Contracts and stuff.

L - What contracts?

D -Tell her Andy.

A --Ladies some other time.

L -Tell me what.

D -About the ~~book~~ <sup>he signed</sup> contract. The book rights, movie rights. He sold them <sup>trial</sup> now that <sup>the show can begin.</sup> ~~after the show was~~ is over, he can get to work, cleaning up the dough. Conviction makes <sup>much</sup> a better ending doesn't it, Andy?

A --You don't know what you're talking about Dorcus. So why don't you keep your pretty mouth shut. Tight.

L --You knew they didn't have a chance.

A --Look Laney, we tried, we gave it everything.

L -You just wanted the publicity. You made me convince them to stay just so you could handle ~~xxxx~~ the rights.

A --Don't be stupid. We defended them.

L --You didn't care what happened to them. <sup>a nice 4 H Kid and</sup>

A -They i killed a kid , Laney, <sup>The jury didn't Idc it.</sup>

L --A kid! You call that a kid? <sup>what about</sup> Did you see his friends? They tried to ~~xxxx~~ kill us.

A --Us?

L --Yes. Us.

-Well, well well. <sup>You can't bet on a thing, can you?</sup> ~~what a pair.~~

Exits.