

~~LES: BEL I CODESOME~~  
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~~(Smoking. Lights shift.)~~

BEGIN

Scene Nine

*Lights up on on Leslie's house. Smoke. Dinner.*

LESLIE: You smoke!  
JUDY: Smoke put food on your table.  
LESLIE: Well I want boobs.  
JUDY: You have boobs.  
LESLIE: No, I don't!  
JUDY: You've got plenty.  
LESLIE: I'm a B!  
JUDY: That's fine. That's good.  
LESLIE: That's shit. B is for below the radar. I need a C.  
JUDY: How much?  
LESLIE: Five grand.  
JUDY: Five grand? That's too much. It should be cheaper.  
LESLIE: Well I'm sure I could get it done for a sixer of Dos Equis in a Tijuana parking lot. But do you WANT me to look like a thrift-shop water bed?  
JUDY: It can be done for less.  
LESLIE: Not with the skill I deserve and the discretion you desire.  
JUDY: Discretion?  
LESLIE: I'll tell unless you get me them.  
JUDY: Tell what?  
LESLIE: Tell why we have this pile of money now after you resigned from R.J. Reynolds. And even in a white-collar prison for women, I assure you, nobody likes a tattletale.  
JUDY: You are way out of line. *(Beat.)* Four grand is the going rate.  
LESLIE: I've done research. It's five grand. Five installments. One thousand up front. That's less than the lease on your Lexus. All you gotta do is say yes.  
JUDY: Why don't you eat?  
LESLIE: You know. I hate.  
*(Holds up a green leaf.)*  
JUDY: No daughter of MINE doesn't like cilantro!

LESLIE: I hate being in the same room as cilantro. It smells like burnt eyebrows and it tastes like potting soil.  
JUDY: You're just trying to upset me. You know I chose it as the patio ground cover. Next you'll tell me bougainvillea is ugly.  
LESLIE: Tacky! It looks like the front of a Mexican groomsman's polyester tuxedo shirt.  
JUDY: Who taught you to be a racist?  
LESLIE: Grandpa!  
*(Beat.)*  
JUDY: I bought this condo at the top of the market, bankrupted myself for you, so we could have a bougainvillea-covered stucco wall and the aroma of fresh local herbs wafting in through an ocean breeze. I got us out of the dead air of the humid shitty south, and I found a house, a semi-detached home, so we could make a fresh start. *(She lights another cigarette.)* Will you please eat something tonight? At least your crust.  
LESLIE: I don't eat crust anymore.  
JUDY: You used to only eat the crust.  
LESLIE: I'm off carbs!  
JUDY: But I made the fat-free cheddarella mexipizza because I thought you'd eat it. I know it's a little bland, that's why I added the cilantro!  
LESLIE: No carbs, no sugar, no crust.  
JUDY: But it's a honey corn crust, from the *Sauce of the Southwest* magazine I've been getting. And I used the low-fat preparation option. *(Beat.)* You used to slide off the whole top, no matter what I put on it, and just eat the bottom. Even in front of company. It looked like the under side of skin. *(Beat.)* When I had my face-lift, I looked.  
LESLIE: I eat the top now.  
JUDY: You've become more and more like your father.  
LESLIE: That's because, like him, I hate you!  
JUDY: You've gotten that lip thing. That ugly lip thing.  
LESLIE: It's called an adolescent sneer!  
JUDY: No, it's him. *(Beat.)* I spent a thousand dollars on that low-fat lifestyle cooking class. And now it's "no carbs"?  
LESLIE: For now. I'm flirting with the lifestyle of all-engineered nutrition. Powders, bars, and shakes. That's it. Laura and I are losing weight for cheer.  
JUDY: Why do you hate me?  
LESLIE: Because you're old and ugly.  
JUDY: I'm forty-three.  
LESLIE: He left you.

JUDY: He left us.  
LESLIE: Get me my boobs. Or I'll go too.  
JUDY: Where?  
LESLIE: To my father.  
JUDY: You don't even know where he is.  
LESLIE: Yes I do.  
JUDY: You're a little liar.  
LESLIE: We have an epistolary relationship!  
JUDY: You heard that word on Oprah!  
LESLIE: He writes me all the time. I can smell his cologne on the paper. Obsession for Men. I write him all about my feelings. And all about you. He loves me.  
JUDY: Your father wouldn't piss on your burning ponytail! He always thought you were a worthless ugly little girl from the time you were born till the time he walked out our sliding-glass doors. *(Beat.)* No offense, sweetie. He ended up hating me, too.  
LESLIE: You'll never fit in here, Mother. You can't master the local vernacular like I have. You've got dirt under your pastel french tips and everybody knows it.  
JUDY: What do you want from me?  
LESLIE: Tits.  
*(Lights shift.)*

**END**

Scene Ten

*The phone zone. Leslie and Laura talk on the phone. Late at night.*

LAURA: So:  
*(Beat.)*  
LESLIE: She's in.  
LAURA: How?  
LESLIE: Blackmail.  
LAURA: What?  
LESLIE: Told her I'd alert the media to her tattletaling against the tobacco company. It was such a bluff. I mean I know she's an asshole, but I wasn't sure she was a professional one. Now she's margarine on my toasted sesame bagel. *(Beat. Then, angry.)* You can just say!  
LAURA: What?

LESLIE: I've been let down before! You can just say you're not in any more. I knew you couldn't cut it anyway. You're just not Ginsu, like me. YOU'RE A FUCKING BUTTER KNIFE! You believed that crap about "We're not being, we're cheering!" You swallowed their horse pill of lies!  
LAURA: No, no, no. I swear. I just didn't know how to do it. To my dad.  
LESLIE: I thought you were gonna cash the death card!  
LAURA: I couldn't do it. *(Beat.)* He just sits in the backyard, on this stump that used to be our eucalyptus tree? I have to walk over and say, "Dad, come inside. I already put the fajitas into the tortillas and they're getting all gummy." I have to make him come in and eat. Or he just sits there.  
LESLIE: OK. *(Beat. Calm.)* Then, what vulnerability does your father have left? We went through everything else. What does he do for a living?  
LAURA: He's a development consultant.  
LESLIE: What does he do?  
LAURA: He . . . consults.  
LESLIE: Who?  
LAURA: Developers!  
LESLIE: Of what?  
LAURA: Of, lots of stuff. Places. Things. You know.  
LESLIE: No, what?  
LAURA: Well, at this particular point in time, of the Surfswell Plaza Freeway Project.  
LESLIE: Your dad's building the freeway over the endangered wetland and through our second favorite muffin place?  
LAURA: He's not building it, he's consulting! He is mitigating its harmful environmental impact through the implementation of certain standards. Or something.  
LESLIE: This could be perfect.  
LAURA: How?  
LESLIE: We find some flaw in his study, or make one up. Then we blackmail him to reveal it to the press. I'll pretend my aunt is an investigative broadcast journalist.  
LAURA: What does your aunt really do?  
LESLIE: She's a whore.  
LAURA: Oh, OK.  
*(Beat.)*  
LESLIE: You have to think of yourself as powerful. Like . . . an interior decorator! You just fan out the fabric swatches and go, "HERE THEY ARE."  
*(Beat. Serious.)* You think I know how to do stuff? I don't. I just do it