

LOUIE. Bella, sweetheart. Don't go to that movie anymore. Don't see that fella again. He may be very nice but he sounds like he's got a lot of whacky ideas, you know what I mean, sweetheart?

BELLA. You promised you would support me ... Jay! Arty! You said you would back me up. You promised.

LOUIE. Back you up with what, Bella? ... The restaurant? The money? Is that what this guy is after?

BELLA. He wants *more* than that.

LOUIE. What could possibly be more than that, Bella?

BELLA. Me! He wants *me*! He wants to marry me! (*SHE starts to cry.*) I want to marry *him* ... I want to have his children ... I want my own babies.

LOUIE. (*Sits back.*) Jesus Christ!

GRANDMA. (*Shocked at this.*) Dot's enough! ... I don't want to hear dis anymore!

BELLA. You think I can't have healthy babies, Momma? Well, I can ... I'm as strong as an ox. I've worked in that store and taken care of you by myself since I'm twelve years old, that's how strong I am ... Like *steel*, Momma. Isn't that how we're supposed to be? ... But my babies won't die because I'll love them and take care of them ... And they won't get sick like me or Gert or be weak like Eddie and Louie ... My babies will be happier than we were because I'll teach them to be happy ... Not to grow up and run away or never visit when they're older and not be able to breathe because they're so frightened ... and never, *ever* to make them spend their lives rubbing my back and my legs because you never had anyone around who loved you enough to want to touch you because you made it so clear you never wanted to be touched with love ... Do you know what it's like to touch steel, Momma?