

over my face and I pass out... And that's it, eleven minutes from start to finish. From the water breaking to the baby's birth – eleven minutes.... What?... Yes, she's beautiful. She's got a perfect c-section head, not all traumatized from regular delivery, But I'm still a little freaked out. I'm still in the middle of what-almost-was. I know she's fine, Mom, I do. And I just about got a callous from pushing the lousy morphine beeper. It's set to give you a dose every seven minutes...RIGHT! Seven minutes! I asked the nurse, "What happens if I hit the beeper more than once every seven minutes?" And she says, "Nothing," except they keep a log of your beeps. So now they think I'm Janice Joplin or something...

*(Brief fade – not to black – then lights back up again:)*

**STEE.** *(cont.)* Mum? It's me. She's so sweet it's staggering. Today I laid down next to her on my bed while she napped, and I smelled her head, and thanked God for the millionth time that she's perfect. And then I stuck my face right next to hers and breathed her in; I mean I took in what she breathed out. I just wanted to have her in me again, even for a minute...I won't let anybody visit – I think everyone thinks I'm a little whacked – but I'm just being with her. Yeah, the pain is better too...The doctor gave me some opium knock-off and it doesn't hurt so much. And I held her, and I cried for a long time for all of it, and I think I've forgiven her. And so now we're starting over.

*(Fade out a little then MARIA walks in with her planner, CHARLOTTE enters with a "What to Expect" book – on bench – and ELLEN with photos and photo album to work on – at the table:)*

**MARIA.** I've loved my day planner since the first day I was introduced to it, at a work seminar. I used it every day: it had my daily task list, appointments, important conversations, voicemail records – everything. I lived by this book. When I got pregnant, I even marked the

baby's due date in it, in big bold letters. After I had my baby, I kept using it for all my new mom information – I'd mark when the baby ate and which breast I started on, how many times the baby pooped and peed and who gave what gift. And when I go back to work, I'll use it for all my work stuff and playdates and gymboree lessons. I love my planner. I don't know how people organize their children without one!  
*(MARIA exits.)*

**CHAR.** I always figured I'd have children some day. Doesn't every little girl have a baby doll that she loves to dress and undress and push around in anything resembling a doll carriage? Anyway, I was never very clear on the details, just knew that I'd have children one day...So, I graduated from college and spent my twenties building my career, meeting guys, partying with friends, and the marriage thing happens in my thirties. Then MORE years traveling with my husband, cementing my career, and we finally got around to having kids. So, after much trying and testing, we finally had our first baby. Our little bundle of joy. Or so baby commercials and magazines would have you believe – you know the shots of sweet little crawling, gurgling, dimply babies...I can't believe I was sucked in so easily. After being discharged from the hospital, the visiting nurse showed up to check on us and as soon as I saw her, I burst into tears. The baby had been crying nonstop for the past three hours, my milk hadn't yet come in, and I was exhausted from walking endless laps around the dining room, rocking and cooing and singing to this tiny torturer. And that was just day three of motherhood... *(CHARLOTTE exits.)*

**ELLEN.** Time does strange things once you have a baby in your arms. Everyone says things to you like "cherish your time with them – they will be grown up before you know it..." And on the one hand, you are in awe of the new miracle in your life. Time seems to stand still when you are marveling at all they do and how