## Madelia

## By apocalypse

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exercise again

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Seventeen-year-old Madelia Aurelia thrashes naked beneath a sweat-soaked bed sheet as she cries out to her foster father.

"Get this baby outta me!"

Quenton Morehead, Baptist minister, squeezes the girl's hand, his dark eyes lingering on the girl's exposed pelvis.

"Don't blaspheme, child, the midwife's on her way." Madelia claws his arms, drawing streaks of blood.

"Where's Virgil???"

"I don't know-"

"Find him!!!"

The minister cringes as the girl's high-pitched screech penetrates his brain like a tuning fork. He hears the front door open and sighs a quick amen.

"Virge??" Madelia stops thrashing.

"Virgil, honey? That you---- you cheatin' whorin" sonuva---"

A heavyset black woman enters. "Calm down, baby, everthin" gonna be just fine."

Madelia tears at the mattress as a contraction grips her torso.

"Vir.....gil!"

The midwife turns to the minister.

"Go on and find him. I can handle things here."

Quenton backs out of the bedroom, then hurries out the front door of the sweltering stucco and into the night.