Extract from "Beatrice" by Siret Campbell

The characters below, Kristi and Tom are a couple who have been trying for a baby for a long time. These two scenes are from the end of the first quarter of the play.

Scene 6

(Tom is at home.)

Tom *(on the phone)*: No, mum. We don't need/ *(Listens.)* We'll be fine. Yes, yes, it's very kind of you to want to help, but/ *(Listens for a long time.)* Mum, we've talked about this so many times. Of course, you'll come and see us, but... We're not having triplets, one baby at a time is completely manageable. *(Listens.)* Yes, yes. Don't be mad, ok. Sure, we'll talk again another day. Love you!

(Kristi enters. She's silent.)

Tom: What is it? Did something happen?

Kristi: They didn't give me a choice.

Tom: What?

Kristi: They said that they're suspecting some kind of a placenta pathology, and they did an ultrasound, and then... I don't know. I didn't even notice and then there was the contract, and they were saying it's about peace of mind, that they'd know immediately if anything abnormal started happening with the baby, that women don't feel these things immediately and then it's too late...

Tom: What contract? What kind of a pathology?

Kristi: I can't remember the Latin names! They looked like... something horrible was happening. But now I won't have to go to the hospital every day, they can monitor me remotely, and as soon as they notice anything, or anything little thing happens, they'll let us know. I can be calmer like this. It was really scary. I had to sign it.

Tom: You got a brain chip.

Kristi: Yes.

Tom: What kinds of rights did you give to the chip?

Kristi: Monitoring of my internal organs and the baby.

Tom: And those were the categories?

Kristi: No, they were more specific. But the doctors showed me everything that should be included for a safe pregnancy. I can withdraw the rights later on.

Tom: So they're terrifying pregnant women just so they can keep a very close eye on the entire population.

Kristi: Tom, there might be something seriously wrong with the baby and I!

Tom: They're exaggerating some anomaly, abusing people's judgement in vulnerable moments. The watchful corporative presence should look after every single one of us. I wouldn't be surprised if that thing radiates something inside of you.

Kristi: Would it be better if I had to go for check-ups every day? Worry myself sick? Like I haven't done enough of that over the last few years. I wish something could be even a little bit easy during all of this!

Tom: I saw what it did to you and I begged for a long time to stop trying. I didn't want you to go on with it, but you didn't listen.

Kristi: If you didn't actually want to have a child, you could have said so just a little bit earlier!

Tom: That's not what I'm saying!

Kristi: Well, I didn't give up and now we're having a little girl. And by the time she's older, she'll have grown up in a world even stranger than ours and you'll just have to accept the world changes. It's not just you and your world. It's our world now.

Tom: Yes, our world.

(A long pause.)

Kristi: I did another thing with the chip. *(Beat.)* I had my consciousness digitised. *(Tom is about to leave.)* Wait. And I want you to do the same.

Tom: You've completely lost it!

Kristi: Listen to me, please. If anything were to happen to you, I want you to be there for me, in any way. I couldn't do it on my own.

Tom: I'm not going to have anything carved into my brain. I've been patient about all manner of things, but I'm not getting a chip.

Kristi: No?

Tom: No.

Kristi: Under no circumstances?

Tom: No.

(Kristi storms out, Tom remains.)

Scene 7

(Kristi is driving her car. She's upset. Her brain chip, Mootchi interacts through the car audio system.)

Mootchi: Please choose – female or male voice.

Kristi: Female.

Mootchi: You're heading towards city centre. Am I correct?

Kristi: Yes.

Mootchi: Would you like me to find the quickest route for you?

Kristi *(indifferently)*: Yes.

Mootchi: Would you like me to switch on the autopilot?

Kristi: No, I'll drive myself.

Mootchi: Be careful, a dangerous crossing in 200 meters.

Kristi: Thank you.

Mootchi: Kristi, I sense that you are anxious.

Kristi: Yes, I am!

Mootchi: Would you like me to tell you a joke?

Kristi: No.

Mootchi: Would you like me to play some cheerful music for you? For example- *(Starts playing a cheerful song).*

Kristi: No.

Mootchi: Would you like to do some breathing exercises?

Kristi: You're really helpful, aren't you.

Mootchi: At your service.

Kristi: Great.

Mootchi: How about those breathing exercises then?

Kristi: Fine.

Mootchi: Breathe in. Pause. Breathe out. Whilst maintaining your focus on the traffic. Breathe in. Pause. Breathe out. Long breath in. Hold. Hold. Long breath out. Long breath in. Hold. Hold. Long breath out. Keep your eyes on the road. Very good.

(Kristi drives into a tunnel. There's a malfunction in the audio system, a loud unpleasant sound is heard. She tries to give a voice command to no avail. She tries to press something on the display. She looses control of the car and crashes it.

Darkness. An ambulance siren.)

Mootchi *(distorted sound)*: Kristi, you are dangerously close to the curb...