

# **FAIRVIEW**

*A Play*

**JACKIE SIBBLIES DRURY**

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## FAIRVIEW

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

*Fairview* was originally commissioned and produced by Soho Rep. and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. *Fairview* had its world premiere at Soho Rep. (Sarah Benson, Artistic Director; Cynthia Flowers, Executive Director) in New York on June 17, 2018. It was directed by Sarah Benson. The scenic design was by Mimi Lien, the costume design was by Montana Levi Blanco, the lighting design was by Amith Chandrashaker, the sound design was by Mikhaal Sulaiman, the choreography was by Raja Feather Kelly, the prop design was by Ryan Courtney, the hair and wig design was by Cookie Jordan; the fight director was J. David Brimmer, the dramaturg was Madeleine Oldham, the associate director was Garrett Allen, the production stage manager was Terri K. Kohler. The cast was:

BEVERLY	Heather Alicia Simms
DAYTON	Charles Browning
JASMINE	Roslyn Ruff
KEISHA	MaYaa Boateng
SUZE	Hannah Cabell
MACK	Jed Resnick
BETS	Natalia Payne
JIMBO	Luke Robertson

This production opened at Berkeley Repertory Theatre (Tony Taccone, Artistic Director; Susan Medak, Managing Director) on October 4, 2018. The creative team remained the same with the following changes: the stage manager was Leslie M. Radin. The cast also remained the same with the following changes:

BEVERLY	Natalie Venetia Belcon
JASMINE	Chantal Jean-Pierre
KEISHA	Monique Robinson
SUZE	Brooke Bloom

*Fairview* opened at Theatre for a New Audience (Jeffrey Horowitz, Founding Artistic Director; Dorothy Ryan, Managing Director; Robert E. Buckholz, Board Chair) on June 2, 2019. The cast and creative team were the same as the Soho Rep. production with the following change: the production stage manager was Shane Schnetzler.

#### CAST LIST

BEVERLY

DAYTON

JASMINE

KEISHA

*Then:*

SUZE

MACK

BETS

JIMBO

*Then:*

EVERYONE

#### ACTS

**ACT ONE** appears to be a comedic family drama.

**ACT TWO** watches Act One.

**ACT TWO** pushes further into Act One and tries to drive it forward to make Act Three.

#### A NOTE

Text in [brackets] is optional.

#### A QUOTE

"'Dirty nigger!'" or simply 'Look! A Negro!'"

—From *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon

This, reversed, is the play, in a way.

## ACT ONE

*Lights up on a negro:*

*Beverly is peeling carrots, real carrots,  
on a theater set that looks like a nice living/dining room  
in a nice house in a nice neighborhood.*

*Music is playing.*

*Beverly lip-synchs to the song.*

*She dances and peels her carrots.*

*She dances and peels until the music from the speaker  
goes a little funny.*

*There is a glitch of some kind.*

*It makes Beverly nervous.*

*Beverly glares at the speaker.*

*The speaker fixes itself.*

*Beverly thinks:*

*Everything is fine.*

*Everything is going to be perfect today.*



*And then Beverly does that thing: she looks at herself in a pretend mirror hung on the fourth wall. It's a very normal thing to have happen in a play.*

*Beverly checks hair, outfit, teeth, she looks good. As she applies lipstick, she starts to dance again. Dayton enters with a bunch of silverware. He sees Beverly.*

*Dayton thinks:*

*Ooooh yes, my wife is a sexy woman.*

*Eventually Beverly feels herself being looked at.*

*She turns to discover Dayton, startled, she lets out a little cry:*

BEVERLY: What are you looking at?!

DAYTON: You.

BEVERLY: Me?

DAYTON: That's right.

BEVERLY: You can't just sneak up on people, Dayton.

DAYTON: I can't sneak up on you, you're my wife.

BEVERLY: You say hello, you don't just watch a person.

DAYTON: Sneak up on—Beverly I live here.

BEVERLY: You don't just watch a person, and they don't know you're there,

and you're just standing there just looking at them.

DAYTON: But what if I just like to look at you?

BEVERLY: Can't you look at me And say hello?

DAYTON: Uh-un. Not when you look as fine as you do.

BEVERLY: Oh, Dayton. You can be sweet when you want to, can't you.

DAYTON: Come over here and give me a kiss.

BEVERLY: But I'm so behind! If I don't get these carrots ready—

DAYTON: Beverly Frasier if you don't come over here and show me what you think of me—?

*(She gives him a peck on the cheek, and flees.*

*He chases her, pulls her in for a bigger kiss.*

*She squeals.*

*They are close, and it's sweet.*

*But then she notices the silverware he brought.)*

BEVERLY: And what do we have here?

DAYTON: Silverware.

BEVERLY: I asked for place settings for six.

And what did you bring me?

DAYTON: Six forks, six knives, six spoons.

BEVERLY: Dessert forks and butter knives and serving spoons.

What's a person supposed to eat with that?

DAYTON: . . . Food?

BEVERLY: Oh Dayton. This is Mama's birthday.

And she was already in a mood, when she went upstairs.

Everything must be perfect today.

DAYTON: Beverly. I am here. Here I am. Trying to help you.

BEVERLY: Help me lose my mind is what.

DAYTON: Trying to help you keep it.

So, tell me, woman: what do you want from me?

BEVERLY: I want . . . six forks, six knives, six spoons.

DAYTON: Alright, Beverly.

BEVERLY: I'm going to seat Mama here—

DAYTON: At the head of the table?

BEVERLY: It's her birthday.

DAYTON: It's my house.

BEVERLY: Our house. So, Mama. Me. Keisha. Tyrone. You.

And Jasmine.

DAYTON: You didn't tell me Jasmine's coming.

BEVERLY: Didn't I? Of course Jasmine is coming. She's my sister.

DAYTON: I thought you wanted this dinner to go well.  
 BEVERLY: Dayton, please.  
 DAYTON: That woman knows every thing about everybody and never has one good thing to say about anybody.  
 She's a one-woman FBI NSA KGB.  
 BEVERLY: She's family. And family is / everything.  
 DAYTON: Everything. I know. Shut up Dayton and get the silverware. I know.

*(Dayton exits.)*

BEVERLY: Thank you Dayton.  
 You're a big help.  
 And bring the root vegetables you bought!  
 I need to get them in the oven.  
 And the cheese plate!  
 Dayton?  
 You bought the root vegetables that I asked you to, didn't you?!

Dayton?  
 Dayton!?!  
 How come he can hear me when I'm not even talking to him, but the second I ask him for something he can't hear a thing?

*(A doorbell ring sound.)*

Company's here!  
 Oh no! Company's here!  
 And I'm not ready.

*(Beverly runs around in a last-minute scramble.)*

Oh, I haven't even started the root vegetables, they need at least an hour!

Oh no, Dayton!  
 Oh my lord.  
 Dayton, what did I say about putting beer on my coffee table?

*(A doorbell ring sound.  
 She hides the beer bottle on the set.)*

Like he doesn't care What we look like to people.  
 Dayton, where is the cheese plate?  
 Lord give me strength.  
 Dayton?!  
 Dayton!?  
 Dayton!?!?!?

*(Dayton enters with the cheese plate.)*

DAYTON: I'll answer the door. You finish up in the kitchen.  
 BEVERLY: Oh, I just wanted everything to go well today.  
 DAYTON: Everything's going to be fine. Don't worry.

*(Beverly exits.)*

*Jasmine enters with a bottle of rosé  
 and some flowers for Mama.)*

JASMINE: Haaaaaaaaaaaay! How you doin' baby?  
 DAYTON: Oh, I'm fine, I'm fine, Jasmine.  
 JASMINE: Are you?  
 DAYTON: Yes, I'm doing well.  
 JASMINE: That's not what I heard.  
 DAYTON: Can I take that wine from you?  
 JASMINE: Yes, and put it in the freezer so it gets nice and cold, alright?  
 DAYTON: Got it. Why don't you help yourself to some cheese:

*(Dayton presents the cheese plate.)*

We have an Aged Gouda, a Humboldt Fog, and some lovely Brie.

JASMINE: Oh wow.

I'm off dairy.

But that looks nice though, doesn't it.

DAYTON: I didn't know that.

JASMINE: Mmm-hmm. Can't you tell? I think I look like a snack.

DAYTON: Does Beverly know that?

JASMINE: Well. If my sister cared to know, then she would know.

DAYTON: Alright, Jasmine. Can I get you a glass of wine?

JASMINE: I want the wine I brought.  
I'll wait.

*(Dayton mimes an impression of Jasmine.)*

Jasmine turns to see it,

and he pretends to do something else, and exits.

Jasmine looks at herself in the pretend mirror hung on the fourth wall.

Jasmine checks hair, outfit, teeth.

Eventually music restarts,

without anything onstage initiating it.

Jasmine looks around, like "um, what."

She decides to ignore it. She looks good.

But she's hungry. She eyes the cheese plate.

She looks around to see if anyone is watching.

She goes over and takes a bite of cheese.

*(From offstage.)*

BEVERLY: Jasmine?! You better not be eating that cheese!

*(Jasmine spits out the cheese, hides it on the set, and poses, feigning calm. Beverly enters.)*

JASMINE: Oh, hello Beverly. That's a lovely outfit.

BEVERLY: Dairy free.

JASMINE: What? Oh yes.

I look good, don't I?

BEVERLY: Why do you always have to be

just like how you always are?

JASMINE: You know what?

BEVERLY: What.

JASMINE: . . . It's a special day.

I'm here for Mama's birthday.

She was a wonderful mother to you and me and Tyrone,

she has lived a long and illustrious life,

and I am not trying to disrespect that because you trippin' over some budget Brie and some grapes.

BEVERLY: Jasmine.

JASMINE: Oh, come on girl.

You out here with some President Brie,

ain't cost more than three ninety-nine,

talkin' 'bout special cheese for Mama.

BEVERLY: Please don't start with me today.

JASMINE: I didn't start anything.

You're the one who summons us all to your house

like you the Queen of Sheba.

You're the one who walked in,

no hello, no how are you,

just on me right away about some three ninety-nine cheese. Well.

I might feel some type of way about that.

That's all I'm saying.

BEVERLY: Today isn't about you. And it isn't about me.

It's about Mama.

JASMINE: I know exactly what today is about. Is she here?

BEVERLY: She's upstairs.

JASMINE: Well, let me go up and say hello.

BEVERLY: Oh, Jasmine, don't.



JASMINE: Why are you so nervous?

BEVERLY: I'm not nervous.

JASMINE: What is there to be nervous about?

BEVERLY: Nothing. I just want everything to go well.

JASMINE: It will.

BEVERLY: It has to. It just has to.

JASMINE: Beverly, you are going to give yourself a stroke if you don't calm down.

Sit down. Have a glass of wine. I brought rosé.

BEVERLY: That does sound nice.

JASMINE: It's from France.

BEVERLY: I just put it in the fridge. Do you want a glass?

JASMINE: Why you put the wine in the fridge when I said put it in the freezer.

BEVERLY: You didn't say to put the wine in the freezer.

JASMINE: I know what I said.

BEVERLY: . . . Let me get us a glass of wine.

JASMINE: Well, put an ice cube in it, since it's still warm.

BEVERLY: Alright Jasmine, alright.

*(Beverly exits.)*

JASMINE: You don't have to take a tone with me after you get me all stressed.

And put the rest of the bottle in the freezer, so it gets cold.

You hear that Beverly?

Beverly!?!?!?

Damn. That woman never listens to anybody.

*(Jasmine sneaks back over to the cheese plate.)*

*Keisha enters.)*

KEISHA: Hi Aunt Jasmine.

JASMINE: What the—?! Keisha? You startled me.

KEISHA: Oh, I'm sorry.

JASMINE: It's alright.

*(They do their special Auntie-Niece greeting.)*

How are you Keisha?

KEISHA: Well.

*(Keisha speaks in a run-on-sentence while taking off her jacket and leaving it for someone else to pick up and looking through her backpack and eating some snacks and checking her phone and maybe none of those things but maybe all of them and also other things like she just does Everything That Teenagers Do.)*

Practice ran over Again because Tanya was late Again so Coach made everyone run a lap for every minute she was late

and she was a full seventeen minutes late

so everyone had to run seventeen laps after practice

just because Tanya is obsessed with Jaden

which is insane because Jaden is stupid as hell I'm sorry but he is

he's just dumb

but Tanya is obsessed with him

so she's late to practice every single day

and Erika and I are so frustrated

because we could be a really good team

if everyone would work as hard as I do

like if everyone could work as hard as Erika does

we could be a really good team

but instead it's all a waste of time

because we're just waiting and waiting

waiting for people like Tanya to show up and then

waiting to see what our punishment is

for Tanya showing up late

and it's like sometimes I feel like

I'm spending my whole entire life waiting for punishment and what kind of a life is that do you know what I mean Aunt Jasmine like there has to be more to life than that, doesn't there?

JASMINE: Well—

KEISHA: Where's my mom?

JASMINE: In the kitchen.

KEISHA: Where's Dad?

JASMINE: Hiding from your mom.

KEISHA: Ok. Aunt Jasmine, I need to ask you something.

JASMINE: What's going on Keisha?

KEISHA: . . . Will you please talk to my mom about me taking a year off before college?

JASMINE: Oh, Keisha.

KEISHA: Please, Aunt Jasmine? This is so important to me.

JASMINE: I know, I know.

KEISHA: Six honors or AP classes every year, three varsity sports, choir, debate, yearbook, shall I go on?

JASMINE: You're a very accomplished young lady.

KEISHA: And I'm exhausted.

Now, don't get me wrong. I can't wait for college. But my Soul is exhausted.

I need some time away so that I might replenish myself and gain valuable life experience if I am to truly flourish in academia.

JASMINE: That's very well-articulated, Keisha.

KEISHA: I know! But she just won't listen to me.

JASMINE: Your mother doesn't listen to me either.

KEISHA: Please say you'll at least mention that a gap year is a good idea? Please?

JASMINE: Alright, Keisha, alright.

(*Keisha cheers and does a happy dance.*)

KEISHA: I'm going to jump in the shower.

JASMINE: You better hurry up. Your mother is in a mood.

KEISHA: Yup yup yup. Back down in a flash.

[Thank you Aunt Jasmine, you're the best!]

(*Keisha runs upstairs.*)

*Beverly enters with three glasses of rosé.*)

BEVERLY: Keisha?

Was that Keisha?

I need her to help me with the pie crust.

JASMINE: I can help you.

BEVERLY: No, that's alright. I can do it.

(*Beat.*)

JASMINE: You know, Keisha mentioned that she might want to take a minute before college to—  
BEVERLY: My daughter is going to college.

I went to college. You went to college.

Our mother went to college.

It's not a conversation.

JASMINE: I think your daughter might—

BEVERLY: Are you telling me how to raise my child?

JASMINE: Nope.

BEVERLY: You just bring this glass of wine to Mama.

JASMINE: Alright then.

Mama? Your favorite daughter is here!

I brought a rosé from France!

[It tastes like a beautiful black man I met in Marseille, did I tell you about him, Mama? Ooooh . . .]

*(Jasmine exits.*

*Beverly is alone. She picks up a carrot.*

*A phone ring sound.)*

BEVERLY: Every time.

Hello?

Hi Tyrone.

What do you mean your flight was rerouted?

Oh my goodness.

Well how long will it take you to get here?

Oh my goodness.

Tyrone I told you that you should have come in yesterday.

You act like you're the only lawyer at that firm.

I know. I'm sorry.

It's just it's important that you're here, important to Mama.

It's important to me too.

Alright. Alright.

Well, just hurry up and get here.

*(Beverly hangs up the phone.*

*Dayton has entered.)*

DAYTON: Who was that?

BEVERLY: My idiot brother.

DAYTON: What has Tyrone done now?

BEVERLY: He couldn't be bothered to get here early

like I told him to, no,

and now, he might not even make it to dinner.

Oh, I just can't believe him.

He never puts the family first. He always thinks of himself.

DAYTON: Beverly, calm down.

This dinner is going to be wonderful,

because you're a wonderful cook,

and a wonderful host, and everyone here loves you.

BEVERLY: You're right. You're right Dayton.

Did you bring me those root vegetables?

DAYTON: Um—

BEVERLY: Oh, Dayton, Don't Tell Me you didn't pick up the root vegetables.

DAYTON: I—

BEVERLY: I told you that I needed assorted root vegetables.

DAYTON: Wuh—

BEVERLY: I said assorted root vegetables

and you said what's a root vegetable

and I said anything that grows underground

and you said like what

and I said just look in the store and think about it

and get some of what looks good

and you said oh no no no,

I need specific instructions so that I don't do the wrong thing  
oh no, you said

and so I said, fine,

I need four parsnips, four sweet potatoes, a turnip, a beet,  
and a celeriac

and you said what's a celeriac

and I said a celery root

and you said what's a celery root

and I showed you a picture

and you said that looks nasty

and I said it just looks like a root

and you said carrots don't look like that

and I said they would without genetic modification

and then we argued about the industrialization of agriculture  
and its effects on our concept of what food is supposed to  
look like

and after that argument I said

do you want me to write you a list of the root vegetables  
I need

and you said no, you don't need to write this stuff down



and I said are you sure  
and you said Beverly, I don't need to write anything down  
and I said ok, but do you want me to remind you  
and you said you treat me like some kind of fool  
and I kept my mouth shut.  
And I thought I should remember to remind him anyway  
and I knew that I should have reminded you  
I said to myself you should remind him  
and then I said to myself oh, you don't need to remind him,  
he's a grown man, he knows what he said he'd do,  
he knows how important this is to me,  
he knows everything about this dinner needs to be perfect.  
And Then you come in here and—

DAYTON (*Presenting the root vegetables*): Ta-da!

(*Beat.*)

BEVERLY: One day, I will kill you.  
DAYTON: Not today.  
BEVERLY: Do you hear me?  
I will murder you, one day, mark my words.

(*A timer beep sound.*)

Oooh! That's the short ribs! Dayton, that's the short ribs.

DAYTON: I got it.  
BEVERLY: Don't take it out.  
DAYTON: Don't take it out?  
BEVERLY: Just turn the oven up to four fifty,  
and set the timer for ten minutes.  
DAYTON: Don't take it out.  
BEVERLY: No. Four fifty, ten minutes.  
DAYTON: Four fifty, ten minutes.  
BEVERLY: I'm going to peel these vegetables.  
DAYTON: 1-2-3 Go Team!

BEVERLY: Yes, four fifty, ten minutes.  
DAYTON: Alright, Bev. Alright.

(*Dayton exits.*  
*Beverly is alone.*  
*A door slam sound.*)

JASMINE (*From offstage*): Mama open the door.  
Mama?  
Fine. Be like that.  
(*Jasmine reenters.*)

That woman has lost the little bit [of sense]  
that God gave her.

BEVERLY: Oh, Jasmine, what did you do.  
JASMINE: Me? I didn't do anything.  
All I did was say hello,  
and Mama just went and locked herself in the bathroom.

BEVERLY: Oh my goodness.

JASMINE: I'm not even worried about it.

BEVERLY: Oh my goodness.

JASMINE: It's just Mama being Mama.

Always wants to be in the center of everything.

BEVERLY: If Mama doesn't enjoy this birthday dinner, then—  
JASMINE: Then what?

BEVERLY: I don't know. Jasmine, I just don't know.

JASMINE: Let her lock herself upstairs.

The second she thinks that we're not talking about her,  
she'll come down.

BEVERLY: I hope so, Jasmine. I hope so.

JASMINE: And you know our brother is the same way.

Do whatever he need to do to be at the center of attention.  
Crazy-ass Gemini's.

Every single person in this family is so full of drama  
I don't even know how I stand it.

BEVERLY: I don't have drama.

JASMINE: Girl you got drama.

Tyrone drama, Mama drama,  
you all are like one of those movies.

BEVERLY: What movies.

JASMINE: Like, a family drama.

BEVERLY: What do you mean?

JASMINE: Like a movie.

BEVERLY: What movie?

JASMINE: Come on, girl, you know what I'm saying.

You know, one of those movies that's a family drama:  
Where somebody dead, and what to do with the children  
or somebody dead and what to do with the wife  
or somebody dead and the house ain't paid for,  
and there's all these people that try to help  
but she can't take the help  
and things get worse, and they try to help  
but she can't take the help  
and things get worse,  
until, finally, she takes the help  
that they all have been trying to give her  
for the whole damn movie,  
so that she get the kid  
or get the kid to dance  
or get the dog  
or get the dog to dance.  
And then they all walk on down to the water,  
with a new shirt on,  
and the breeze is blowing,  
and they all look out at that water,  
and talk about how they're not better,  
not yet,  
but they're starting to be.

Mmm, mmm, mmm.

Yes, girl, a good old family drama.

A slice of life.

I love those movies.

You know, nothing big and flashy,  
just watching real stories about real people.

BEVERLY: Nothing real about those kinds of movies.

Those kinds of things just don't happen in real life.

JASMINE: Don't even try to start an argument with me,

what is wrong with you,

can I live?

BEVERLY: We are nothing like the people in those movies.

JASMINE: Can't I just talk about something? Damn.

BEVERLY: Well, if you're sitting there and talking,  
it means that I have to stand here and listen to you.

JASMINE: Fine. I won't say one thing to you.

BEVERLY: Fine.

(Beat.)

JASMINE (To herself): Just trying to make some conversation  
about some nice uplifting movies  
and she's trying to tell me that:  
that doesn't happen to people.

(Sucks teeth)

Like nobody know somebody that's dead  
or got a new dog in their whole life:  
that doesn't happen that's not true.  
Please.

BEVERLY: That's not what I meant.

JASMINE: I. Am not talking. To you. Ok?

(Continuing to herself)

Having a private-ass conversation with myself  
thinking through my own damn thoughts  
and she trying to tell me



that what I am thinking to myself is wrong.  
I'm not even talking to her.

Why she got to have an opinion  
about every damn thought in my head  
like, damn,  
let me think something stupid if I want to for a minute,  
what does it even matter?

And I'm not even being stupid, I'm just thinking to myself,  
and if I want to be stupid when I'm just thinking to myself,  
what is it to you? Huh?

Like if I want to think about something stupid, to myself,  
by myself,  
what is that to you?

Like if I want to think that Beverly is uppity,  
and she like to put on like she better than everybody,  
but everybody know she cheap as shit,  
and I want to say that to myself  
and not say that to anybody else,  
then what's the problem with that?  
Huhn? You got anything to say?

You better not because I'm not even talking to you.  
Damn.

She not that bad.

Beverly's not that bad.

She's just all pent up because her man don't love her right.

BEVERLY: Jasmine.

JASMINE (*To herself*): He don't know how to move right,  
you can see it from how he walk.

Walk around like his balls all heavy. Balls ain't that heavy.  
Unless he got some kind of illness or something.

Is Dayton sick?

BEVERLY: Are you talking to me, Jasmine?

JASMINE: Yeah. Is Dayton sick?

BEVERLY: No.

JASMINE: Well that's good.

But, then, why aren't you two gettin'—

BEVERLY: That. Is. None of your business.

JASMINE: You make it my business when you're acting all crazy.

BEVERLY: I am not acting any type of way.

JASMINE: Mmmhmm.

BEVERLY: I'm not.

JASMINE: Mmmmm-hmmmm.

BEVERLY: What?

(*Keisha enters, dancing.*)

KEISHA: I'm clean! And I'm starving! I feel so great!

(*This repeats as necessary:*

*She's doing a dance where she smells her armpits and rubs her tummy.*)

JASMINE: What is that.

KEISHA: It's my I'm clean and I'm starving dance.

JASMINE: You get that from your grandmother.

That woman has a dance for everything.

You remember her birthday dance Beverly?

BEVERLY: . . . The gown.

JASMINE: That Gown.

BEVERLY: The turban.

JASMINE: That Turban.

Oooh Keisha, your grandmother was something  
back in the day.

BEVERLY: Her birthday outfit was a gown,

JASMINE: an Ivory gown,

BEVERLY: an Ivory gown with golden threads sewn through it.

JASMINE: And a Golden turban,

BEVERLY: Golden turban,

JASMINE: with a big ol' diamond rhinestone at the center.

And she'd work her hands like this,  
like charming the snakes out the gates,

BEVERLY: and her nails would be all,

JASMINE: and she would slither. And then pose.

BEVERLY: And slither. And then pose.

JASMINE: And work her nails. And work her eyes.

And she'd say (*Singing or talking, or some variation*)  
Oooooo, all the men.

JASMINE AND BEVERLY (*Singing or talking, or some variation*):

Oooooo, all the boys

Oooooo, let them see me

Oooooo, let them see me.

DAYTON (*Entering*): Mama Frasier Birthday Dance!

JASMINE, BEVERLY AND DAYTON: Oooooo, the women

Oooooo, the lil' dolls

Oooooo, let them see me

Oooooo, let them see me.

(*Keisha joins in.*)

JASMINE, BEVERLY, DAYTON AND KEISHA: Oooooo, I look good

Oooooo, I know I'm good

Oooooo, let them see it

Oooooo, pray them see it.

(*Keisha looks out toward us and has a soliloquy, which is a theatrical device where a character talks aloud and no one onstage can hear them.*)

KEISHA: It's all just . . . so beautiful!

I love these women.

Joy. And Dancing and Singing!

My future just looks so big and bright,

I can't wait for it to hurry up and Get Here.

I want to know all there is to know and be all there is to be.

But.

But I feel like something is keeping me from all that.  
Something . . .

Yes, something is keeping me from what I could be.  
And that something.

It thinks that it has made me who I am.

It's . . . It's just so confusing.

(*A phone ring sound.*)

DAYTON: Keisha?

KEISHA: What is it, Dad?

DAYTON: Telephone.

KEISHA: For me?

DAYTON: Yes.

(*Keisha exits with phone.*)

BEVERLY: Dayton, is everything ready?

DAYTON: Yep.

BEVERLY: Got the real napkins?

DAYTON: Yes.

BEVERLY: Napkin rings?

DAYTON: Yes.

BEVERLY: Water glasses and wine glasses?

DAYTON: Yes.

BEVERLY: Salad fork dinner fork dessert fork steak knife  
butter knife soup spoon tea  
spoon?

DAYTON: Believe so.

BEVERLY: Alright.

(*Beat.*)

Candles!!!? Did we get Candles?!?

DAYTON: Yes.

BEVERLY: Oh. Good. Everything's going to be fine.

(*Keisha enters.*)

Who was that?

KEISHA: It's nothing Mom. It was just Erika.

BEVERLY: And what does she want.

KEISHA: She just wants to drop something off.

BEVERLY: What.

KEISHA: I don't know. Something . . . for school.

BEVERLY: Mmm-hmmm.

KEISHA: An assignment . . . What?

BEVERLY: Keisha, I don't want your little friend coming over here and interrupting this dinner.

KEISHA: Mom, you need to relax.

BEVERLY: You know your grandmother doesn't like that Erika.

KEISHA: Grandma doesn't have a problem with her.

BEVERLY: Oh, your grandmother has a problem with how you two are together, you better believe that.

KEISHA: . . .

BEVERLY: Now she won't say that to you, because she wants her granddaughter to love her, but your grandmother is a woman with some opinions. Yes. That woman has some opinions.

KEISHA: . . .

JASMINE: Keisha, come on over here and sit with your aunt.

BEVERLY: Keisha doesn't need to talk to you right now, Jasmine.

What Keisha needs to do is to go on in that kitchen, and check on her grandmother's birthday cake, and help her mother out today.

That's what Keisha needs to do.

KEISHA: Fine.

(*Keisha exits.*)

BEVERLY: And don't you stomp in my house if you want to keep living here.

JASMINE: Beverly, you need to calm down. Can't you see—

BEVERLY: If I don't finish chopping these carrots, I am going to lose it.

DAYTON: Bev, I think you better put that knife down.

BEVERLY: If I don't chop these carrots, who's gonna chop them? Hmmn? You?

DAYTON: Put the knife down, Bev.

JASMINE: Beverly, why don't you sit down and have a drink.

BEVERLY: I'm fine.

DAYTON: You are clearly not fine.

JASMINE: What is wrong with you?

KEISHA (*From offstage*): Mom?! I think the cake is burnt.

BEVERLY: (*Gasps*)

JASMINE: Uh-oh.

BEVERLY (*Whispered or silent*): Noooo!!!

DAYTON: Bev, it'll be fine—

JASMINE: Dayton will run out and buy a cake—

BEVERLY: I can fix it.

JASMINE: Won't you Dayton?

BEVERLY: I can fix it.

DAYTON: I'll be happy to get a cake!

BEVERLY: I can fix it.

JASMINE: Why don't you just sit down and I'll get you some wine.

BEVERLY: I can fix it! Alright? Everything is fine!

Everything will be just—

(*Beverly pauses, looking glassy.*)

*Beverly faints, spilling carrots all over the floor.*

*Jasmine and Dayton gasp in horror.*

*Keisha runs in.*

KEISHA: Mom? Mom!

END OF ACT ONE