

*** The actions onstage continue after Beverly faints Like . . . ok . . . something like:

Keisha runs over to Beverly.

Beverly says she's fine.

Keisha and Dayton help Beverly off the floor, while she's insisting that she's fine.

Jasmine pours a glass of wine for Beverly . . . and a glass of wine for herself.

Jasmine brings wine over to Beverly.

Dayton gives her a look and asks Jasmine to get Beverly a glass of water.

Jasmine gives Dayton a look and says that she knows what's best for her sister.

Keisha remembers that the burning cake is still in the oven, and runs into the kitchen.

Dayton says he knows what's best for his wife.

Jasmine and Dayton start to argue, and Beverly asks for water.

Jasmine and Dayton both say I'll get it and start toward the kitchen. Keisha comes bursting out of the kitchen holding a smoking cake pan with oven mitts.

All wave away the smoke.

Jasmine goes to the kitchen to get Beverly a glass of water.

Beverly takes Dayton's hand and tells him that she loves him, and that she just wants the day to go well.

Dayton comforts Beverly and he says a monologue that is something like: "Did I ever tell you about my ninth birthday party? Well, it was supposed to be great and my dad had planned it all perfectly, and I was so excited, but then no one I invited came, and so it was just me and my dad eating birthday cake, and it was the best birthday I ever had."

Beverly and Dayton have a moment, it's sweet.

Jasmine enters with a glass of water and is like do you want it or not.

Keisha enters: like Dad you need to get a cake.

Beverly takes the water and takes a sip.

Dayton grabs his wallet and car keys and goes out to buy a cake.

Beverly goes over and starts picking carrots up off the floor, and asks Jasmine to help.

Jasmine looks at her outfit and is like I'm not getting on the floor in this.

Keisha goes to help.

Beverly feels a little woozy.

Keisha is like, Mom, you just fainted, I've got it.

Jasmine leads Beverly over to sit and gives her a glass of wine, and pours herself another glass.

Beverly asks Jasmine if she's had enough wine.

Jasmine says that she's fine, and says something about their mother.

Beverly is like our mother can hear you.

Jasmine is like good! and repeats what she said shouting up the stairs so Mama can hear it.

Beverly is like don't even start with her, you're drunk.

Jasmine is like I am not drunk and trips.

Beverly is like, omg are you ok?

Jasmine is like look, I didn't even spill my wine, I'm fine.

Keisha is like, omg, you guys are crazy, what should I do with these carrots I've picked up.

Jasmine is like I know what to do with them, and is like hold my wine, and she takes the carrots, cutting board and whatever else out the front door.

Keisha is like Jasmine is cray and Beverly is like Jasmine is cray and Jasmine comes back in dusting off her hands and is like, work is done for the day, I thought this was supposed to be a party.

Beverly is like, did you just throw my cutting board on my front lawn?

And Jasmine is like, YUP, and turns on some music.

And Beverly is like I can't believe I have to go out and get my cutting board, oh, And my knife.

And Jasmine is like leave it, it'll be there tomorrow.

And Beverly recognizes the song, and is like I love this song, but also

Jasmine you are crazy and I'm still mad at you.

And Jasmine is like you love me, we're sisters.

And Keisha is like, oh now I know what song this is!

And they all do a dance to it, like an electric slide-type dance.

And Keisha is like I dance so much better than you old ladies.

And Beverly is like, who are you calling old, I can get down, uh uh uh.

And Jasmine is like I didn't know you still had it in you.

And Beverly is like, yeah, putting it down, uh uh uh.

And Jasmine is like yeah, uh uh uh.

And Keisha is like double time uh-uh uh-uh uh-uh.

And Dayton comes in with car keys and cake from the store and is like he-ey it's a party.

And Beverly is like at least put the cake down.

And Dayton is like oh I can dance with this cake

and does like the roger rabbit or something while holding the cake.

And everyone's like whoooo!

And everyone goes back into the electric slide-type dance.

And they dance all over the space,

and start to get the table set for dinner.

In some order, and with lots of other things happening:

*They dance and set the table.
 Jasmine pours Keisha some wine,
 and Beverly takes the wine away from Keisha.
 They dance and get the centerpiece and candles.
 Jasmine moves the centerpiece
 and Beverly moves it back
 and Jasmine moves it again
 and Beverly moves it back again.
 They dance and put out plates of fake food and bowls of fake food,
 and Dayton dances over to the TV and dances while watching the
 big game.
 And Beverly dances the remote control away from him
 and he dances back into the kitchen to help,
 and they dance and put out a whole other set of plates of food and
 bowls of food,
 dancing so joyfully and so Well,
 and the fake foods get stranger and stranger,
 in different ways, some of it is faker and some of it is less food-like,
 and the family brings it all out of the kitchen while dancing,
 and smiling, with glee,
 and puts it on the table, piling it up,
 maybe till it threatens to overflow the table,
 and maybe at one point there is a conga line of fake food
 and it's so fun and joyful,
 and eventually they're finally done bringing out food
 so they dance themselves to their seats, grinning,
 and they dance-applaud Beverly for making this beautiful meal,
 and Beverly dance-accepts,
 and then they all sit down at the table for dinner,
 and Beverly gets ready to call up the stairs for Mama.*

END OF ACTION OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

BEVERLY: Mama?

Mama? Can you come down here please?
 We're ready for you.

(A new song starts. Entrance music for a good-hearted black grandma.

"Mama" comes to the top of the stairs.

It is Suze, one of the women who has been listening.

She's wearing something like an ivory gown with golden threads.

And on her head, something like a golden turban

with a rhinestone at the center.

All look at her.

She looks at them.

She Descends The Staircase.

She has a Moment.

*And at an appropriate moment in the music,
 the volume dips down for Beverly's line:)*

Oh, Mama, you look beautiful.

Doesn't she look Beautiful, Jasmine?

JASMINE: Oh, yes. Just gorgeous.

BEVERLY: Do you think you might give us a little dance today, Mama?

DAYTON: Let the woman be.

BEVERLY: I'm not bothering her.

JASMINE: Happy birthday, Mama.

BEVERLY: Should we say grace? Let's join hands.

Keisha, take your grandmother's hand, what's the matter with you.

(Keisha does.)

Beverly, Jasmine and Dayton bow their heads.

Keisha looks at Suze.

Suze beams. She looks at all of them, and at us; she can't help it, she's just so happy to be here.)

Thank you, heavenly father, for bringing us together, for giving us all that we have, for hearing our pain and hearing our joy and guiding us through our lives as best you can, dear lord.

[Thank you for the roof over our heads, for the floor under our feet.]

Thank you for watching over us, for listening to our prayers, for hearing our fears,

for guiding us in accordance with your divine plan.

Thank you, heavenly father, for giving us this food, that will nourish our bodies, just as you nourish our souls. Amen.

DAYTON AND JASMINE: Amen.

BEVERLY: Alright, let's eat!

DAYTON: This all looks amazing, Bev.

(Jasmine and Dayton start serving themselves. Beverly hovers nervously.)

BEVERLY: Thank you Dayton.

DAYTON: You've outdone yourself. Don't you think so, Jasmine?

JASMINE: Well, I haven't tasted it yet.

BEVERLY: Mama, do you want me to fix you a plate?

(Suze looks at her.)

Alright, then. I'll get all your favorites.

Keisha, what's the matter.

JASMINE: Why aren't you eating baby?

KEISHA: It's not . . . Um. I'm just confused. I guess.

JASMINE: What's the matter Keisha?

KEISHA: I'm just a little out of it. I—

BEVERLY: Drink some water.

KEISHA: Yeah. I'm gonna just sit down for a second.

JASMINE: You are sitting down.

KEISHA: Yeah. Just a second.

JASMINE: What's the matter with her?

BEVERLY: I don't know. Teenagers.

(Keisha sits on the floor and watches Suze.)

Is this enough food for you Mama?

Dayton, do you think this is enough?

DAYTON: It's fine, Beverly.

BEVERLY: Okay, here you go. Do you want me to cut it up for you, Mama?

DAYTON: She can do it, can't you Mama Frasier?

Just let her be, Bev.

BEVERLY: You're right. Sorry Mama. Ok everybody, let's eat.

(They pretend to eat.)

DAYTON: Mmmm, mmmm, Mmmm! Dang, Bev!

You outdone yourself this year, boy.

BEVERLY: Is it alright?

DAYTON: It's delicious, isn't it Jasmine.

BEVERLY: I was worried that the potatoes would be too salty.

JASMINE: They are a little salty.

DAYTON: Well, I like 'em.

JASMINE: They're very tasty.

DAYTON: Delicious!

JASMINE: When you get a bite of something less Flavorful with them, it all balances out.

BEVERLY: What do you think, Mama?

DAYTON: Mmmm, Mmmm, Mmmm. Good.

BEVERLY: Dayton, you're going to choke.

JASMINE: Can you stop worrying over everybody?

DAYTON: She has a point Bev, you gotta relax.

JASMINE: If you don't relax, how's anybody supposed to even try to enjoy this flavorful food you've prepared?

DAYTON: Take it easy, Bev.

Let's all just take a minute and calm down and eat.

(They all pretend to eat.

Keisha has an aside:)

KEISHA: I just feel like something is wrong.

I have a pit in my stomach and my heart is—

SUZE *(To Keisha, aside)*: I felt the same way when I was your age.

(Keisha jumps up, startled, because Suze has entered her aside.)

I was your age once.

KEISHA: What—what—

SUZE: Oh, Keisha, I understand you, more than you realize.

I've known you since you were born.

KEISHA: *(Glares)*

SUZE: Alright. That's alright.

But you can talk to me. I'm here to listen.

(Suze makes a vague hand gesture, like a conductor.

The music comes back on.

The conversation picks up where they left off.)

JASMINE: I'm telling you, if you load up your fork, you get a bit of that salty food on there with the food that isn't seasoned, and it all balances out.

BEVERLY: Come over here and get a plate Keisha. I thought you were hungry.

DAYTON: Let the child alone, Bev.

JASMINE: Is there any butter in the potatoes?

BEVERLY: Oh. There is.

JASMINE: Well, that's dairy, isn't it?

BEVERLY: Yes. It is.

(Their eyes meet—a showdown. Jasmine relents.)

JASMINE: I just wish I'd known.

(Beat.

A doorbell ring sound.)

DAYTON: Keisha, will you get the door.

(Beat.)

BEVERLY: Keisha?

JASMINE: I'll get it.

BEVERLY: Keisha, what's the matter?

KEISHA: I'm fine.

DAYTON: Your mother needs you today Keisha.

(Jasmine enters.)

JASMINE: It's Tyrone. He made it after all.

(Jimbo makes an entrance with music, stunting.

He's probably wearing a baseball cap and some sneakers.

Maybe a chain.

He raps along to his entrance music for us and the family, and he might try to get the crowd on their feet. The whole entrance should probably end with a bad-ass pose.)

JIMBO: How you doin' Mama?

Sorry I'm late, y'all.

JASMINE: It's not a problem.

DAYTON: Hey there Tyrone.

(Jimbo dabs.)

Yup, alright.

JASMINE: We're all so glad you're here.

BEVERLY: We didn't wait for you to start, since I didn't know if you would make it.

JIMBO: Well, I did.

BEVERLY: Yes, you did.

DAYTON: Beverly.

JASMINE: You must be so tired from your flight.

JIMBO: I'm fuckin' spent.

SUZE: Tyrone. Language.

JIMBO: Sorry. Mama.

What's up with Keisha?

BEVERLY: She's just resting for a moment.

I don't think she's feeling well.

JIMBO: I bet she ain't.

BEVERLY: What is that supposed to mean?

JIMBO: How you doin' Keisha?

JASMINE: Keisha, your uncle said something to you.

JIMBO: What's the matter Keisha?

SUZE: Leave Keisha alone.

DAYTON: Can I get you a glass of wine, Tyrone?

JIMBO: Let me get a beer.

BEVERLY: With dinner?

DAYTON: Oh, sure, I think we have a few in the fridge, don't we Beverly?

BEVERLY: I'll check.

JIMBO: Dope dope dope.

(Beverly exits.)

JASMINE: So, Tyrone. How is work?

JIMBO: What?

JASMINE: Do you think you're going to make partner?

JIMBO: I don't know.

Why isn't there music on?

Isn't there supposed to be music on?

SUZE: That's enough, Tyrone.

JIMBO: Come on! I want to dance! Five, six, seven, eight:

(Upbeat music comes on.

Jimbo starts dancing.

Jimbo gets Suze up and dancing.

Somehow they know the same dance.

They do that thing—like an exaggerated wave,

and Jasmine and Dayton jump up and join in.

Keisha marks it.

Beverly reenters with a bottle of beer,

and joins in while holding a beer.)

BEVERLY: What's all this?

JIMBO: We Frasier's love to dance.

DAYTON: You Frasier's do love to dance.

JASMINE: We Frasier's love to dance.
 BEVERLY: We Frasier's love to dance.
 JIMBO: No no no. This isn't the kind of beer you'd have.
 BEVERLY: What do you mean, Tyrone?
 JIMBO: Don't you have like . . . I don't know
 a forty or something. Like a Colt 45?
 BEVERLY: . . . I'll check.

(Beverly exits.)

JIMBO: This is fun.

(A doorbell ring sound.)

I bet it's that girl from Keisha's school.
 SUZE: Alright now, Tyrone.
 JASMINE: What girl?
 SUZE: Maybe you don't need that beer.
 DAYTON: I'll get it.

*(The music shifts to Mack's entrance music.
 The dancing shifts accordingly.
 Mack enters, choreographed within an inch of all of our lives.
 There might be a costume reveal. There is at least one wig reveal.
 There might be a death drop.
 Mack is dressed like a drag version of a black teenage girl.
 Think glitter. Think sequins. Think confetti.
 Mack lip-synchs, vogues, and flirts until
 there is maybe a final pose, and hold for applause . . .)*

MACK *(To Suze and Jimbo)*: Was that too much?
 I didn't want her to be boring.
 JIMBO: No, that was dope.
 MACK: Thank you.
 SUZE: You guys are ruining everything.

MACK: Oh my god, relax.
(To all:)
 I am Erika!
 Haaay!
 Fabulous? Obviously.
 Adorable? Of course.
 A bad bitch? The baddest.
 Do I feel naughty? I do.
 Are we loving it? We are.
 Am I here for Keisha? Absolutely.
 Hey girl.

(Beverly enters with a forty of Colt 45.)

BEVERLY: Oh. Hello Erika.
 MACK: Hello Beverly.
 DAYTON: Erika, do you want to stay for dinner?
 MACK: I wouldn't want to intrude!
 BEVERLY: Well, thanks for stopping by—
 MACK: I wouldn't want to impose!
 JASMINE: Mama, you don't mind if Erika stays, do you?
 SUZE: Me?
 JASMINE: It's your party, Mama.
 MACK *(To Keisha)*: I have what you asked for.
 KEISHA: . . .
 MACK: You know. The, um, assignment.
 KEISHA: . . .
 MACK: That you told your family that we talked about
 on the phone.

(He presents an envelope.)

KEISHA: I didn't ask for anything.
 JIMBO: Beverly, what is that now?
(Beverly takes the envelope.)

KEISHA: Mom!

MACK: That is for Keisha!

JIMBO: What is going on with your daughter?

BEVERLY: What kind of assignment is this?

JIMBO: Aw sheet.

JASMINE: Don't ask her, open it.

KEISHA: Aunt Jasmine.

BEVERLY: Don't start Jasmine.

JASMINE: I'm not starting anything.

DAYTON: This is ridiculous. Give it here.

JIMBO: Open it, Damon.

SUZE: Dayton.

JIMBO: Right.

JASMINE: What is it?

DAYTON: It's—it's—

MACK: No! Don't say it.

Keisha, I didn't want it to come out this way.

JIMBO: It's a pregnancy test!

KEISHA: What?

MACK: What?

BEVERLY: What?

SUZE: No!

DAYTON: What do you need that for Keisha?

KEISHA: I don't—I don't—I don't—

JIMBO: Oh, Keisha.

MACK: It is a love letter!

JIMBO: It is a pregnancy test!

(It is a pregnancy test.)

MACK: Fine.

JASMINE: Oh my lord.

BEVERLY: Keisha. Baby. Are you pregnant?

KEISHA: Mom, no.

DAYTON: Keisha.

KEISHA: It's like literally I don't—

JIMBO: Whose baby is it?

KEISHA: I am not pregnant.

MACK: Oh, Keisha.

KEISHA: I'm just—I'm not pregnant.

JASMINE: But how do you know?

KEISHA: Because I'm not—there's no—I don't understand what's happening right now.

MACK: Because she and I—

BEVERLY: I'm so disappointed in you.

KEISHA: But I'm not—

MACK: Because she and I are—

SUZE: Oh, Keisha, just tell your mother and I what happened.

We'll forgive you.

MACK: You are ruining everything.

JASMINE: You better take that test, Keisha.

KEISHA: But I'm not pregnant.

DAYTON: Can't you see that your mother is hurting?

JASMINE: You better go on up to the bathroom and take that test.

KEISHA: But—

JASMINE: If you ain't done nothing wrong, then you don't have anything to worry about.

(Keisha shuts her mouth, takes the test, exits.)

Mmmn.

BEVERLY: I don't believe it.

JASMINE: Mmmn mmmn mmmn.

BEVERLY: I just can't believe it.

JASMINE: Mmmn mmmn mmmn mmmn mmmn.

JIMBO: It is what it is.

Babies having babies.

MACK: Grandma Frasier is going to have something to say about this.

SUZE: I love Keisha unconditionally.

BEVERLY: Let me see that.
 BETS AND SUZE (*In unison*): You better let your mama see it.
 Stop it.

This is my—
 Stop it.
 Stop.

JASMINE: Let me see the damn test.

BEVERLY: What does it say.

JASMINE: It's—it's—

JIMBO: It's positive. Like I said.

BEVERLY: Oh my lord.

DAYTON: Let me see that.

KEISHA: Dad—it's not.

DAYTON: My little girl.

KEISHA: Daddy I'm not pregnant!

I can't be. Erika and I are—

MACK: Right! I thought we were—

KEISHA: Get away from me.

MACK: You're so cruel.

BEVERLY: You lie to me.

KEISHA: Mom.

BEVERLY: You running around doing who knows what
 with who knows who—

KEISHA: Mom, I'm not—

BEVERLY: Stop it Keisha. Just stop.

JIMBO (*Softly*): Shit's about to get real.

BEVERLY: Coming in my house

sitting at my table

eating my food

looking me straight in my face

and lying to me.

KEISHA: Mom—

BEVERLY: And I couldn't see it because you're my daughter and
 I love you,

but the scales have fallen from my eyes,

MACK (*Softly*): Mmn-hmm.

BEVERLY: and now I don't even recognize you.

MACK (*Softly*): Poof, be gone.

BEVERLY: You are not the daughter I raised.

KEISHA: No I am, Mom. I'm—

BEVERLY: My daughter wouldn't throw her whole future away.

My daughter would go to college, get an education.

SUZE (*Softly*): Poor Keisha.

KEISHA: I'm going to college.

JIMBO: Then whatchu gonna do with your baby, Keisha?

SUZE: I'll take care of the baby.

JASMINE: You've already raised your family, Mama.

BETS: My children have grown! It is my time to shine!

JASMINE: You've earned your rest.

BETS: I want to sing jazz!

SUZE: No, Jasmine, talk to me.

BETS: You are boring.

SUZE: I'm not boring. I just want . . .

(*She attempts a beleaguered mammy/maid voice*)

I wanna take care of the baby.

KEISHA: There is No Baby.

I am going to go to college.

I just want to find myself before I go—

(*Jimbo takes out a stack of bills and eviction notices.*)

JIMBO: There ain't no money for college, Keisha.

BEVERLY, JASMINE, DAYTON, MACK, SUZE AND BETS: What?

JIMBO: That dream is dead. Dead!

KEISHA: What are you talking about.

DAYTON: What's that you've got there?

JIMBO: Don't pretend like you don't know.

BETS: What has Dayton done now?

MACK: You know Uncle Tyrone got that tea.

(Jimbo hands the bills to Dayton.)

DAYTON *(Reading the bills)*: Past due. Past due.
 BEVERLY: What?!

JASMINE: Oh my goodness.
 DAYTON: I don't understand this.
 BEVERLY: But I've seen you make the payments, the mortgage payments, every month.

DAYTON: I pay my bills.
 JASMINE: Where's the money gone, Dayton?
 SUZE: We're not losing the house, are we?
 DAYTON: We are not losing the house.
 JASMINE: Dayton, where's the money gone?
 DAYTON: I don't know!

SUZE: We started off with nothing.
 Worked for everything we had.
 I worked my fingers to the bone, cleaning other people's houses,

BEVERLY: But you never—
 SUZE: Just so, one day, I could buy my own.
 BEVERLY: You never worked as a maid, Mama.
 SUZE: And just like that. It's gone.
 BETS: What on earth was that?

JASMINE: Where did all the money go?
 JIMBO: Gambling.
 ALL (OR MOST): *(Gasp!)*
 JASMINE: No.
 JIMBO: Yup.
 JASMINE: Who?
 BETS: Dayton.
 ALL (OR MOST): *(Gasp!)*
 DAYTON: What?
 BETS: It must be.

JASMINE: Of course.
 SUZE: No!
 BETS: Yes.

JASMINE: When did it start?
 MACK: What's gonna happen to Keisha?
 SUZE: What have you done to this family?
 BETS: What's going to happen to us all?
 JASMINE: When did the gambling start?
 DAYTON: It's not gambling, it's just fantasy football.
 I don't understand this.

JASMINE: Then where did all the money go?
 BETS: If it's not gambling, it's drugs.
 ALL (OR MOST): Drugs?!

BETS: It's a common story.
 SUZE: Who's on Drugs?
 MACK: . . . Jasmine!

ALL (OR MOST): *(Gasp!)*
 JASMINE: You better take my name outta your mouth, Erika.
 MACK: Sorry, I don't know why I thought—it can't be Jasmine.

JIMBO: Is it . . . Beverly?
 ALL (OR MOST): *(Gasp!)*
 BEVERLY: Me?

JIMBO: I knew she was hiding something.
 DAYTON: Oh, Beverly.
 BEVERLY: I'm not—what drugs?

JASMINE: You have been acting funny.
 BETS: She fainted!
 SUZE: She's just tired.

JASMINE: She's been on edge, making mistakes,
 BEVERLY: I have not!
 JASMINE: She's been slipping.
 SUZE: She's not on anything, is she?
 BEVERLY: I'm not Mama.
 DAYTON: This is serious Beverly.

JIMBO: Who been giving you drugs, Bea?
 SUZE: She's a strong woman, trying to provide for her family,
 not some—

BETS: Crack woman!
 SUZE: Please don't finish my sentences.
 BEVERLY: Dayton, I don't know what this is all about.
 DAYTON: Stop lying Beverly.
 Just stop.

MACK (*Softly*): Ooooooh.
 DAYTON: Have you been lying to me for so long?
 So long that it just comes naturally to you?

JASMINE: Well it's not just her, Dayton, is it?

ALL (OR MOST): (*Gasp!*)

KEISHA: What?

JIMBO: Damn.

DAYTON: What are you talking about.

JASMINE: I knew it.

I just knew it.

Dayton is sick.

DAYTON: I'm not sick.

JASMINE: Lost the house, Beverly's on drugs, all this stress.

Come on now.

DAYTON: I'm not sick.

MACK: I think he is.

JASMINE: Oh I know he is.

MACK: What do you think he has.

JASMINE: Dayton what do you have?

MACK: Is it diabetes?

JASMINE: You got diabetes, Dayton?

MACK: Or worse!

JASMINE: Worse?

MACK: Like heart disease.

JASMINE: You gonna have a heart attack, Dayton?

MACK: Or, worse.

JASMINE: No!

MACK: Something venereal.
 JASMINE: Oh my goodness!
 MACK: Like syphilis.
 JASMINE: You got syphilis, Dayton?!
 DAYTON: Syphilis?!
 SUZE AND BETS: Lord lord lord!
 DAYTON: I don't have syphilis!
 JASMINE: How could you.
 MACK: Who have you been sleeping with, Dayton?
 JIMBO: What?!
 DAYTON: Beverly I haven't—
 JASMINE: Don't you talk to her.
 JIMBO: How dare you!
 DAYTON: But I haven't—
 BEVERLY: Why, Dayton, why?
 JIMBO: How dare you cheat on my sister!

(*Jimbo throws food at Dayton.
 Dayton ducks and it hits Bets.*)

Mama!

Mama I'm sorry—

BETS: What kind of a son throws food at his mother
 on her birthday?

MACK: It's a food fight, bitches!

KEISHA (*Aside*): I need to ask you something.

SUZE (*Aside*): Of course. Keisha. You can ask me anything.

You know that don't you.

KEISHA (*Aside*): I know that you think you know what's best for me—

SUZE (*Aside*): I do, Keisha.

KEISHA (*Aside*): But—

SUZE (*Aside*): I've known you since the moment you were born. I have watched you.

I brought you here and I watched you grow. Blossom.

KEISHA (*Aside*): But—

SUZE (*Aside*): Make beauty, out of . . . out of nothing,

KEISHA (*Aside*): Please—

SUZE (*Aside*): despite such hardship,

I'm so sorry that you've had to go through that, but I've watched you find such strength,

and I'm in awe of you and what you've accomplished, I'm so proud of you and I am so happy for both of us, for all I've done to make you who you are.

Oh, Keisha.

You don't know what it means to me.

To see this lovely girl who I have watched for her entire life—

KEISHA (*Aside*): No.

I have known You for My entire Life.

SUZE (*Aside*): Keisha.

KEISHA: Stop.

Please, stop.

(*Everything stops, or gets let go.*

All listen to Keisha.)

I know what you're going to say because . . .

Because you have told me every story I have ever heard.

(FOOD FIGHT.

Jimbo, Mack, Bets and Suze are the aggressors, for the most part.

Surprising things happen.

Some of it is silly, but eventually the silly gives way to violence

that feels more consequential.

Something is actually broken.

The set feels destroyed.)

And I . . . I need you to listen.
 Because I need to ask you something.
 SUZE: Alright, Keisha. What do you want to ask me.
 KEISHA: I . . .
 I don't know.
 I can't hear myself think.
 I can't hear anything but you staring at me.
 SUZE: I don't know what you're asking me to do Keisha.
 KEISHA: I think I need to ask you . . . to not be here.
 Or to let me not be here?
 SUZE: You're not making sense. Maybe you should sit down.
 KEISHA: I don't need to sit down.
 I need to ask you to leave
 so that I can have some space to think.
 I can't think
 in the face of you telling me who you think I am
 with your loud self and your loud eyes
 and your loud guilt—
 I can't hear myself think.
 SUZE: I don't know what I did to make you treat me this way.
 All I've done, all I've ever done, is to try to be good to you.
 KEISHA: Stop telling me that.
 Stop telling yourself that.
 Please. Just stop.
 SUZE: You're not telling me what you want me to do Keisha.
 KEISHA: I know. Because I don't know. I just want to . . .
 I want to know what that space is.
 What that space would be like.
 For me.
 Without.
 Without you—
 What should I call you.
 SUZE: Hmmn. What would you want to call me?
 KEISHA: Not Grandma.

(Beat.)

SUZE: That's. That's fair.
 KEISHA: I'd call you.
 Not Grandma.
 I'd call you.
 SUZE: You'd call me white.
 KEISHA: I'd call you white. Yes.
 Do you mind that?
 SUZE: Why would I mind that?
 KEISHA: I don't know.
 SUZE: Do you want me to leave?
 KEISHA: . . . no.
 But do you think I could . . .
 but what if I could . . .
 SUZE: What if you could what?
 KEISHA: What if we all could . . . what if we all could . . .
 SUZE: Could what?
 KEISHA: It would be too hard.
 SUZE: We all could what?
 KEISHA: And the same people who are always caught in between
 would be caught in between.
 SUZE: What if we all could do what?
 KEISHA: Do you think I can ask them that anyway?
 SUZE: Ask them what?
 KEISHA: To switch?
 SUZE: To switch what?
 KEISHA: Do you think that I could—
 What if I could?
 But if I could ask the folks
 who call themselves white
 to come up here,
 do you think they would?
 Could I ask them to come up in here,

so that we could go down out there?
Do you think I could ask the folks
who call themselves white
to do that?

To switch for a little while?
How should I ask them, if I could?

Could I say,
Hi, white people.
Come here, white people. Come on up here.
If you're physically able to.

*(Keisha steps through the fourth wall.
It's as simple as that.)*

Could I say,
Come up here folks who identify as white,
you know who you are.
You can choose to come up here
to where I've always been, where my family has always been.
Sit on the couch.

Make yourself a plate.
Look out from where I am.
And let me and my family go out
to where you've always been.

Could I say that?
Could I ask them that?
How should I ask?
If I asked would they do it?
How long would it take?

Would it help if I told them that the show is ending?
Would it help white people to come up here
to where I've been
if I tell them that we'll all leave soon?

That there are things in motion already?
That we are all going to leave anyway?
Could I tell them that those seats are not theirs,
even though they paid for them?
That no one can own a seat forever?
That no one should?

Could I say,
See, there's Terri.
She's our stage manager.
She's amazing.
She's white.
She's coming up here.
You can come on up here too.

[Maybe you stand on the stage.
Maybe you stand near the stage.]
Leave your coats. Leave your bags. Leave your things.
Just stop worrying about your things, for a minute
and worry about where you can go
what you can do to make space for someone else
for a minute,
if you could.

Do I sound naive?
Does that matter?
Do I have to keep talking to them
and keep talking to them
and keep talking only to them
only to them
only to them
until I have used up every word
until I have nothing left for
You?

I've been trying to talk to You.
This whole time.

Have you heard me? [Thank you.]
 Do I have to tell them that I want them to make space for us
 for them to make space for us?
 Do I really have to tell them that?
 Do I have to tell them why I want them to go up there
 for them to go up there?
 Why I want them to sit on the sofa
 and sit on the chairs
 and sit on the carpet
 and touch the walls
 and touch the fake food
 and touch your own face pretending to look in a mirror
 but really looking into the lights?

They're bright aren't they?
 Should I tell them that the lights are there
 to help people see them,
 not to help them see anything?
 So I could be out down here with all my people of color?
 With all my colorful people?
 And we could be all of us together alone?
 And if I were to be out here with my colorful people,
 could I tell us a story?
 If I were out here, just us, I'd want to tell us a story.
 A story about ending.
 Or about leaving.
 Or about remaining.
 And how they're all the same thing
 if the same people do them.
 But that's not the story I want to tell us all.
 If I could tell the story I want to tell us,
 my people,
 my colorful people,
 you would hear it

if I could tell it,
 and it would be something like
 a story about us, by us, for us, only us.
 But that's not telling the story.
 If I could tell the story I want to tell, it would begin like this:
 Once upon a time, there was a bright little girl
 who knew that if she worked twice as hard as—
 No.
 That's not what I wanted to tell.
 Once, there was a little boy born with the deck stacked—
 No.
 Once, there was an exceptional—
 It's difficult because I've already heard so many stories.
 It's hard to find the one I'd wanted to tell.
 It would be something like . . .
 Once . . .
 Well, not once,
 not at all once.
 Many many many times,
 there was a person who worked hard,
 a person who tried to work hard,
 and tried to do their best,
 and tried to do well by their family,
 and tried to be good, and tried to do better.
 Many many times they tried this.
 And so.
 The person became who they always were—
 who we all always are—
 A Person Trying.
 So they tried and they tried and they looked around
 at the mountains of effort

JACKIE SIBBLIES DRURY

that they had built with their trying
at the piles of half-built bests
at the heaps of family
at the hills of good enough hills and better next time,
and as they looked around,
as they took in the view,
they saw what they had done to make the life
that they had lived.

And they looked to the left and saw what you had done
to try to make the life that you have lived,
and they took in that view.

And they looked to the right and saw what you had done
to try to make the life that you have lived,
and they took in that view.

They took it all in.
And in their estimation
they found all of it,
their view over all of it,
the sum of all of it,
to be fair.

END OF PLAY