

A Racial Divide

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## Cast of Characters

ALICIA:

BEN:

MARY:

JAMES:

BETTY:

KING:

ACT IScene 1

*ALICIA and BEN are a married couple sitting on their living room sofa. She is in her 30's and black. He is in his 30's and white with blond hair and blue eyes. On his cellphone he is playing Sweet Home Alabama by Lynyrd Skynyrd.*

ALICIA

(Irritated)

Could you stop playing that damn Lynyrd Skynyrd song?

BEN

(Startled)

I love Sweet Home Alabama. Hmm. It never bothered you before.

ALICIA

(Angry)

Well it sure does now.

BEN

Why?

ALICIA

If you haven't noticed, I'm black. Sweet Home Alabama is the national anthem of the racist South that's all wrapped up in the Confederate flag.

BEN

Who knew?

*He clicks off the song.*

ALICIA

You won't like hearing this.

BEN

You can tell me anything.

ALICIA

Are you sure?

BEN

We're always candid with each other.

ALICIA

I'm changing perspective on our marriage.

BEN

(Shocked)

What?

ALICIA

Ever since the George Floyd killing, all the talk about police brutality, systemic racism and the Black Lives Matter movement, I'm looking at our relationship through a different lens.

BEN

Alicia, we've never seen each other through the prism of color.

*She stands up, clearly agitated.*

ALICIA

Perhaps you haven't, Ben. But I sure as hell have. My parents disowned me because I married a white man. That sure puts our marriage starkly into black and white for me.

*He stands and is silent for a moment.*

BEN

We've always thought love is colorblind.

ALICIA

(Empathically)

Is love colorblind? I don't think so.

BEN

If the globe had only one climate, we'd all be one race.

ALICIA

(Sarcastic)

And if the globe only had jelly beans on the menu, we'd all be diabetics.

BEN

(Firmly)

You're not black to me. You're Alicia. And I shouldn't be white to you. I should be Ben.

ALICIA

It's been that way since we've met. But that was then. This is now.

BEN

(Exasperated)

Hmm. So now you see me as a member of the Klan?

ALICIA

Of course not. But we shouldn't pretend that color doesn't make a difference in our society. Or our home.

BEN

(Loudly)

Do you still love me?

ALICIA

Yes. But.

*He walks so close to her their noses almost touch.*

BEN

(Shouting)

But? What do you mean but?

*She takes a step back.*

ALICIA

(Sharply)

I'm torn between being your wife and being me. I'm being split in half. A racial divide that's tearing my soul apart.

*He sits back down and sighs.*

BEN

I had no idea you were suffering this much torment.

ALICIA

We're finally having the conversation about race in America that we needed for 400 years. And it took us until now in 2020 to have that conversation.

BEN

But it must be a dialogue, not a monologue.

*She starts pacing.*

ALICIA

For centuries it's been a monologue, with the whites doing most of the taking. When my parents disowned me, I was cut off from my roots, severed from my identity as a black woman. I'm a racial orphan.

BEN  
Alicia, you're being overdramatic.

ALICIA  
(Yells)  
Bullshit! I can no longer be myopic to color.

BEN  
Tell me how you've been a victim of racism?

ALICIA  
Fortunately I've mostly escaped the abuse of racism.  
Except for high school.

BEN  
What happened?

ALICIA  
My high school was almost all white. I was skinny,  
shy and kept to myself. So my nickname soon became  
The Licorice Stick Bitch.

*He smiles.*

BEN  
No wonder I love you so much. When I was a kid I  
loved black licorice. Please let me lick you.

*She rolls her eyes, then frowns.*

ALICIA  
Give me a rain check.

BEN  
I'll embrace your evolving blackness because I  
embrace you. Hmm. Wear cornrows if you like.

ALICIA  
Don't patronize me.

BEN  
Sorry.

ALICIA  
You don't have to be black like me. You're white.

BEN  
Things are changing in this country. We have an  
enlightened relationship with the flexibility to  
allow us room for growth.

*She unexpectedly smiles.*

ALICIA

So you're saying it's OK if I get fat?

BEN

I've always thought you're hotter than asphalt in the summer.

ALICIA

Did you use that analogy because asphalt is black?

BEN

Not intentionally. Hmm. How about hotter than white heat?

ALICIA

Kiss me.

*They kiss. But only for a brief moment. Then she takes a step back.*

ALICIA

I'm not sure I can do this anymore.

*He glares at her.*

BEN

(Angry)

I can't fucking believe this. Our marriage suddenly is in jeopardy because some racist white cops killed some blacks?

ALICIA

(Very angry)

You'd better fucking believe it.

*She stares defiantly at him.*

BEN

What did I do wrong except for being born white?

ALICIA

But do you have to be a whiter shade of pale? Even an albino has more color.

BEN

That's what you get when your ancestors are from Sweden.

ALICIA

A shame they didn't live in Spain or Sicily.

*He stands and embraces her.*

BEN

You and I never have seen things in either black or white. The world is gray. And if we have kids, so will they.

*She smiles.*

ALICIA

As gray as dishwater.

*Then she frowns.*

ALICIA

How can I justify being in an interracial marriage in a time of growing black consciousness? How can I live with bringing children of mixed race into a world polarized by color?

BEN

Love. You can justify it by our love for each other. And hopefully someday the world will be filled with people of mixed race and everybody is colorblind.

ALICIA

You believe in fairy tales. Who knows? Maybe my love for you was simply a fairy tale.

*She starts to cry. He tries to hug her but she pushes him away.*

BEN

Fuck skin cancer. I'll start going to a tanning salon for an hour a day. In no time flat I'll be darker than a grilled chicken.

ALICIA

But underneath you'll still be white meat.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)



ACT IScene 2

*Alicia and Ben are standing in their living room. She is wearing a Black Lives Matter tee, black leather pants and a black beret.*

BEN

You're not wearing one of your usual pin-striped business suits.

ALICIA

I'm going to a Black Lives Matter rally. I have to look the part.

BEN

God forbid you wear your white cocktail dress.

ALICIA

If we're going to save our marriage, you must starting seeing me as black.

BEN

And apparently getting blacker every minute.

ALICIA

Is that a shot?

BEN

Just talking about your growing self-awareness.

ALICIA

We all need to grow our self-awareness. The Black Lives Matter is a start. The ghosts of our enslaved ancestors still make us feel a racial yoke around our necks.

BEN

There's no yoke around your neck in this house.

ALICIA

I was a fool, swallowing the Kool-Aid that the existence of race ended when I walked through our front door.

BEN

To me it did.

ALICIA

I've got to go or I'll be late for the rally.

BEN

God forbid.

ALICIA

I'm going to a rally supporting the defunding of police.

BEN

We should reform the police, not defund them. If somebody breaks into our place at three in the morning, calling 9-1-1 may be a moot point if there's a shortage of cops.

ALICIA

Your snoring would scare him away.

BEN

Your facemask may make him think you're a hardened criminal.

ALICIA

You know damn well I need the eye mask because your snoring makes me a light sleeper.

BEN

It's like I'm sleeping with a female Lone Ranger.

ALICIA

You left out an adjective. You forgot black.

BEN

Again. I don't see you as black.

ALICIA

Well, you'd better start. Because I'm black and beautiful. And I want to defund the police.

BEN

I support rooting out systemic racism in police departments. The problem is bigger than just a few bad apples. It branches out to limbs of bad apples.

ALICIA

The whole tree is rotten and needs to be uprooted. You want to know why?

BEN

Enlighten me.

ALICIA

Since the days of slavery, the myth of the predatory  
(MORE)

ALICIA (CONT'D)

black man has instilled fear in whites and has justified their violence against black individuals and communities.

BEN

Which is why when a white officer sees a black guy wearing a hoodie, he immediately suspects trouble.

ALICIA

The killings of black men by white police officers highlights their fear of black men. They see the stereotype of the black man as the violent aggressor, even if he looks like a frail microbiologist.

BEN

What's the answer? Have all black cops?

ALICIA

Of course not. If we're going to retain police departments, all officers have to be educated to erase the poisonous myth that black men are predatory.

BEN

American society at large has to be educated about that.

ALICIA

Sadly, many Americans will turn deaf ears to it. But the Black Lives Matter is a start.

BEN

I'm coming with you to the rally to protect you in case the protest gets out of hand.

ALICIA

It's a peaceful protest.

BEN

You never know when violence could erupt despite good initial intentions.

ALICIA

I don't want you to come with me.

BEN

(Very angry)  
Why the hell not?

ALICIA

Because you're white.

*He slams his right fist into his left palm.*

BEN

(Loudly)

Fuck that. I'm going with you. I've seen plenty of whites at the protests.

ALICIA

But we're a couple. That might offend some people.

BEN

Who gives a shit? Interracial couples are commonplace.

ALICIA

Still.

*He picks up a throw pillow and angrily throws it across the room.*

BEN

(Loudly)

So you never again want to be seen in public with me? Hmm. Are you suddenly ashamed you're married to a white guy?

ALICIA

Don't be silly. It's just that Black Lives Matter marches are different.

BEN

I'm not so sure I know you anymore.

ALICIA

I'm still Alicia.

BEN

Then let me go with you.

ALICIA

No.

BEN

Then you're no longer the Alicia I fell in love with.

ALICIA

My parents also have been transformed by the Black Lives Matter movement. They've always disdained

(MORE)

ALICIA (CONT'D)

whites but now they sound radicalized.

BEN

How would you know? You haven't talked to them since our wedding day.

ALICIA

They called me at work today. They said they would restore me to their will if I agreed to divorce you and reclaim my black heritage and black roots.

BEN

(Angry)

What? They're trying to buy you back? Are you suddenly a piece of property at some slave auction?

ALICIA

(Mad as a hornet)

Fuck you. That's uncalled for.

*She pauses. Takes a deep breath.*

ALICIA

(Calmly)

They're also willing to give you a sizable financial settlement if you agree to the divorce.

BEN

They can stick their money up their black asses. I can't believe we're even having this conversation. What did you tell them?

ALICIA

That I would consider their offer and talk to you.

BEN

(Screaming)

Fuck Black Lives Matter. And fuck your parents. Our lives matter. Yours and mine. Together.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 3

*Alicia and Ben are sitting at their kitchen table, drinking coffee.*

ALICIA

Don't get upset, but something about your music besides Lynyrd Skynyrd upsets me.

BEN

I like all sorts of music.

ALICIA

You love Procol Harum's A Whiter Shade of Pale. I'm sensing a theme here.

BEN

I know where you're going with this. Seeing it through color. I also love Hendrix, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, The Supremes, The Temptations, Beyonce and Alicia Keys.

ALICIA

Sometimes I think you only married me because of your crush on Alicia Keys.

*He laughs.*

BEN

That way when I scream out Alicia while orgasming, you can't tell her whether I'm thinking of you or fantasizing about her.

ALICIA

Diabolically clever.

BEN

Since I'm white, I never want to hear you listening at home to that rap song Kill D'White People.

*He then flashes a big smile.*

ALICIA

You're making that up.

BEN

It's for real.

ALICIA

I would never listen to a song like that.

BEN

I know. Just busting you.

ALICIA

But I just might kill if you don't start squeezing the toothpaste from the bottom.

BEN

Nobody's perfect.

ALICIA

I'd have to be perfect to figure out how to make my racial awakening work without screwing with our marriage.

BEN

To further prove my love for you, this is my last cup of coffee with cream in it.

ALICIA

So what about my parents' offer?

BEN

I don't want their money. I don't want a divorce. I see no reason why we can't continue being man and wife even in an era of rising black consciousness.

ALICIA

I'm not so sure. I love you but I miss my parents. Our estrangement has been gnawing at my insides.

BEN

So you're seriously considering their offer?

ALICIA

I'm contemplating it and it's tearing me apart. I'm straddling a racial divide here.

*She starts crying.*

BEN

Trust in our love and it'll all work out.

ALICIA

So says the white guy.

BEN

It breaks my heart that your parents disowned you.  
(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

Marrying me was a real act of courage by you. Which is why I cherish you and will support your racial evolution.

ALICIA

Thank you. Evolution is the correct word. I'm hardly a racial revolutionary.

BEN

Thank God. I was worried you'd make me paint the whole house black.

ALICIA

Not yet anyway.

BEN

Hear from your parents again?

ALICIA

My dad texted me. Wants to know if I made a decision yet. I told him I'm mulling it over.

BEN

Meanwhile I'm dangling from my nuts in limbo.

ALICIA

When I was younger I wished my parents were more enlightened on race. Now I wonder if they were right and I was wrong.

BEN

Alicia, you've got to be kidding me.

ALICIA

Nope.

BEN

Just because you're married to someone of a different race, it doesn't mean you dislike your race. It means that you're open to finding the best qualities in a person, and don't have preconceived ideas about race.

ALICIA

What eats at me now is how you and I as a couple are treated by the outside world. We're either an object of fascination or derision.

BEN

And you think this is only to get worse?



ALICIA

Precisely.

BEN

Maybe not. Since China is kicking our ass, soon yellow could be the color of choice in America, not black or white.

ALICIA

That would be perfect. We could stay married without friction and eat Chinese every night.

BEN

Unless, of course, I drop you for a Chinese beauty who can turn Beijing roasted duck, Kung Pao chicken and sweet and sour pork into objects of worship.

ALICIA

Your China doll couldn't cook you a scrumptious meal of black-eyed peas, fried chicken, pigs feet, pinto beans, cornbread and banana pudding.

BEN

Doubtful.

ALICIA

Even if she could, she'd likely make you eat it with chopsticks.

BEN

We all do dumb things in the name of love.

*She laughs wickedly.*

ALICIA

Like marrying a white guy.

*He stands up and gives her a withering look.*

BEN

(Angry)

You don't fucking mean that. That's not Alicia talking. That's the new black goddess, the mother of her race, speaking.

*She slaps him in the face, then quickly kisses his cheek.*

ALICIA

(Contritely)

I'm so sorry, Ben. I can't believe I hit you.

BEN  
You're in racial turmoil and it's churning up your insides.

ALICIA  
I wish we both were purple or green. Anything but black and white.

BEN  
We're both human. And in love. Color doesn't have to define us unless we let it. Or allow others to let it.

ALICIA  
We don't live in a bubble.

BEN  
We don't have to. We're not alone. Ten percent of the population comprising 11 million people are in interracial marriages in America.

ALICIA  
I wonder how many of them now are questioning their decision.

BEN  
Just a hunch but I don't think they all are going to suddenly exchange gunfire.

ALICIA  
They should exchange recipes for racial harmony in a mixed marriage and share it with us.

BEN  
I think your problem is that you have black skin with a white soul.

ALICIA  
You may have something there. My parents are racist so as I child I subconsciously must have adopted a course correction.

BEN  
That speaks volumes about your character.

ALICIA  
Which is why I have a crescendo of noise in my head driving me nuts.

BEN  
I feel your pain.

ALICIA

You can't feel my pain because you're white and I'm black.

BEN

I can feel your pain because you're my wife.

ALICIA

I don't want to hear that bullshit. Leave me alone.

BEN

You need spousal support.

ALICIA

(Angry)

Not when the spouse is fucking white.

BEN

(Yelling)

OK, enough of this crap. I know I'm fucking white and you're fucking black. Get over it.

*She angrily picks up a table lamp and throws it against the wall.*

ALICIA

(Screaming)

I can't! And I won't!

*He grabs a large white vase and throws it on the floor, shattering it.*

BEN

(Loudly)

Can't have a white vase in our house now can we?

ALICIA

(Bellowing)

I want to break you into pieces.

BEN

Why the fuck not? You're already breaking my heart into pieces.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 4

*Alicia and Ben are sitting up in bed, talking.*

BEN

I saw an online video that relates to us.

ALICIA

About?

BEN

Interracial newlyweds went to a Black Lives Matter rally right after their wedding, still in wedding dress and tuxedo. The protesters surrounded them and cheered them.

ALICIA

Powerful.

BEN

That couple resonated with the protesters because they were happily in love as equals.

ALICIA

Equality. That's what these protests are all about.

BEN

Like those newlyweds, couples like us bridge the racial divide.

ALICIA

Thank you for sharing that with me. It helps me better reconcile our marriage with the Black Lives Matter movement.

BEN

Please embrace your heritage. It will only imperil our marriage if you let it.

ALICIA

Different but equal.

BEN

It seems the Black Lives Matter movement wants to recast everything with a black dimension. And the media is falling in lockstep.

ALICIA

How so?

BEN

In magazine and newspaper articles whenever blacks are referenced now, the b is capitalized. Whenever whites are referenced, the w is lower case.

ALICIA

The AP style book now capitalizes black in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense.

BEN

Why not capitalize white?

ALICIA

The Columbia Journalism Review says black reflects a shared sense of identity and community while white carries a different set of meanings.

BEN

Even in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense?

ALICIA

Columbia says capitalizing white in this context risks following the lead of white supremacists.

BEN

They're obviously fine with following the lead of black supremacists.

ALICIA

Not everything is black and white.

BEN

No. Just black. Print journalists are pandering to blacks.

ALICIA

Then get your news from TV because you won't be able to tell whether they're putting black in caps or not.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 5

*Alicia and Ben are sitting on their living room sofa. Her cellphone rings and she answers it.*

ALICIA

What? Are you OK? (pauses to listen) Thank God. Did he cuff you or make you drop to your knees? (pauses to listen) At least he wasn't an asshole. Tell me. Was the cop white? (pauses to listen) Of course he was. Figures. He profiled you because you were jogging in your upscale neighborhood. Next time jog in daylight in a predominantly black neighborhood. (pauses to listen) I imagine you're fucking pissed. (pauses to listen) I'm sure you are. How's Joy handling this? (pauses to listen) I can imagine. Well thank God you didn't do anything stupid and give the cop a reason to shoot you. (pauses to listen) I love you, big brother. Bye.

*Ben leans over to comfort her but she pushes him away.*

ALICIA

(Angry)

See what fucking white cops do to blacks? Now it's happened to my family. In our society black lives don't matter and haven't ever since they first brought us over in damn chains and enslaved us.

BEN

I'm sorry. What happened to your brother is horrible. and inexcusable. I feel your pain.

ALICIA

You can't feel my pain because you're white and I'm black.

BEN

I can feel your pain because you're my wife.

ALICIA

I don't want to hear that bullshit. Leave me alone.

*Ben grabs his cell and makes a call.*

BEN

Chief, my name is Ben Shaw. I'm an attorney. Yes, the same Ben Shaw who was an assistant DA before going

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

into private practice. I'm calling in reference to my brother-in-law, Sam Johnson. He was profiled and stopped by one of your officers for making the mistake of jogging at night in his own neighborhood. I doubt that Sam would have been stopped if he were white. (pauses to listen) Glad you're familiar with the incident. I want both you and the officer to issue him an apology. (pauses to listen) Both of you will? Great. Thank you. I'll text you Sam's phone number. Have a good day.

*He ends the call. She leans over and kisses him on the cheek.*

ALICIA

Thank you. I guess not all white guys are devils.

BEN

And not all black guys are angels.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 6

*Ben is sitting on the sofa. Alicia walks in.*

BEN

I have a proposal for you.

ALICIA

What?

BEN

A temporary separation. You date a black guy and I'll date a white woman.

ALICIA

You're serious?

BEN

Deadly.

ALICIA

OK.

BEN

Then we get back to each other and compare notes. If we find that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, we'll file for an amicable divorce.

ALICIA

Suppose one of us is happy with our new partner and the other isn't?

BEN

As the Pied Piper once said, tough noogies.

ALICIA

The Pied Piper said that?

BEN

He coined the phrase.

ALICIA

I accept your proposal.

BEN

Try to find someone who not only is the polar opposite of me in color but also in temperament and beliefs.



ALICIA

Love that. I'll do the same. That way we'll be able to better evaluate our relationship.

BEN

I'm betting both of us will find that life is best with us together.

ALICIA

We shall see.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT)

ACT IIScene 1

*Ben is drinking at the bar in a country-and-western saloon with BETTY CRACKER, a trashy white redneck in her 30's.*

BETTY

Ain't Southern Comfort great? It's my favorite likker.

BEN

Since this is my fourth glass, it's growing on me.

BETTY

Have a fifth and it be growin' on you like moss on a tree.

BEN

Not sure I want a fifth glass.

BETTY

Not a glass, darling. A bottle.

BEN

So tell me about you.

BETTY

On a first date I usually like only to drank, get nekked and screw. No chit chat. But since you be so cute, I be makin' an exception.

BEN

Thanks.

BETTY

I'm from Pulaski, Tennessee. My given name was Mary Bragg. Legally changed it to Betty Cracker to better reflect who I am.

BEN

You gotta be you, babe.

BETTY

My grandfather and father are Klansmen. I hate blacks. Anything black. I use salt but no pepper. I only drink coffee with cream. I only have white cats. I shoot black cats.

BEN

Hmm. I'm detecting a pattern here.

BETTY

I adore listening to I Wish I Was In Dixie Land. I have The Dixie Chicks tattooed on my boobs. Wanna see them?

*She starts unbuttoning her blouse.*

BEN

Not here.

BETTY

Hell, I know the bartender real well. You could fuck me on this bar right now and he wouldn't mind if I promise to give him sloppy seconds.

BEN

But we haven't finished talking.

BETTY

You and your fuckin' talkin'.

BEN

What else should I know about you?

BETTY

I have a large Confederate flag on my front lawn and a Robert E. Lee portrait in my livin' room. I can suck chrome off a trailer hitch even with peas stuck between my teeth.

BEN

Lovely. What do you do for a living?

BETTY

Workin' ain't much of a livin'. When I've been without a sugar daddy, I've delivered mulch or sold tars or made sammiches.

BEN

What do you think of white cops killing unarmed black guys?

BETTY

I feel sorry for them white cops. There's so much black on black crime the white cops can't tell the good blacks from the bad blacks because they all look alike.

*She pauses to fart and belch.*

BEN

What if I told you that your hatred of blacks is foolish?

BETTY

I'd say you be fuckin' stupid.

BEN

Black and whites are separated only by a different level of epidermal melanin.

BETTY

(Chuckling)

What's epidermal melanin? Black shoe polish?

BEN

I can see if you were anymore of a deep thinker, you'd be in Mensa.

BETTY

Hey, no menopause for me yet. Enough jive talk. Let's go to my place and fuck each other's ears off.

BEN

No can do. I can't get it up because I took some shrapnel in my nuts during my tour of duty as a sniper in Afghanistan.

BETTY

Sorry to hear that. Thank you for your service. But fuck off. I don't waste my time datin' a guy with no operatin' joystick to ride on.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIScene 2

*Alicia is sitting in a restaurant drinking coffee with KING BLACK, a muscular black militant in his 30's. He's wearing a black beret and a Black Panthers tee.*

KING

Let me ax you a question. Don't you just hate people who be putting cream in their coffee?

ALICIA

Cream dilutes the taste of black coffee.

KING

Right on, sister. As distasteful as interracial marriage.

ALICIA

Tell me about you.

KING

You want me be confessing everything on our first date?

ALICIA

Yes.

*He smiles.*

KING

You be an undercover cop?

ALICIA

Of course not. Not a big fan of cops.

KING

You be in the Black Lives Matter movement?

ALICIA

Of course. You?

KING

Not militant enough for me. The Black Panthers had it right.

ALICIA

Huey Newton and Bobby Seale?

KING

Two righteous dudes. OK, here's the scoop on me. I hate whites. I always dress in black. I always listen to the theme from Shaft in my car. My black car. I'm hard as a rock. I'm so ripped I look like I was mined, not born.

ALICIA

I can see you're very built.

KING

Wait until you see my big black cock. I ain't goin to lie to you. Granite's not as hard as my big black cock.

ALICIA

Oh, my.

KING

I be pouring chocolate milk on my cereal. When I be buying a hoagie, I be removing all the meat, cheese, tomatoes, lettuce, onions and peppers from the white roll. And then I be putting all that good shit between two slices of dark rye bread.

ALICIA

That must be rather messy.

KING

Damn fucking right. It leaves all kinds of shit on the table and kitchen floor. Which is why my black Labrador Prince Black always has onion breath.

ALICIA

Now I know your dog's name. What's yours?

KING

It was Lee Smith. Legally changed it to King Black.

ALICIA

What do you do for a living?

KING

Preschool teacher by day, nightclub bouncer by night. I love beating up drunk white guys and not getting arrested but paid for it.

ALICIA

Tell me about your personality and your favorite hobbies?

KING

I'm meaner than a junkyard dog with bad teeth and rabies. I love to crochet. I could crochet you a blanket for those cold winter nights when I'm not there to light your fire.

ALICIA

How sweet of you.

KING

And I love to fuck with white cops by walking up to them and staring at them. But they won't touch me because I'm such a hard ass.

ALICIA

Do you like my black ass?

KING

Damn right. Let's go home to my place and your black ass can meet Prince Black.

ALICIA

I won't have sex with you unless you put a ring on my finger.

KING

I'm allergic to two things. Marriage and whites. How about if I put a ring in your nose?

ALICIA

Nope.

KING

How about if I put a ring in my nose?

ALICIA

Only my finger.

KING

Your loss, bitch. Can't nobody fuck better than me. Shit, I guess we just be friends.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIScene 3

*Ben and Alicia are sitting on their sofa.*

ALICIA

The last month seemed like an eternity.

BEN

Because you missed me?

ALICIA

Because the weather was colder than a white witch's tit.

BEN

It seemed like forever to me.

ALICIA

Because you missed me?

BEN

Because I missed you helping with the housework.

ALICIA

So who's going to go first?

BEN

Ladies first.

ALICIA

I defer.

BEN

This isn't like an NFL team deferring the opening kickoff.

ALICIA

But I insist.

BEN

As you wish.

ALICIA

Thank you.

BEN

OK, I dated a caricature of a white bigot. She doesn't even like black clouds or black jelly beans. Her personality sucks. She's meaner than the guys who  
(MORE)



BEN (CONT'D)  
ran the Spanish Inquisition. She'd scare a Turkish  
prison warden. Apparently she'll screw any guy who's  
not black.

ALICIA  
Lovely. So? Her or me?

BEN  
You, of course.

ALICIA  
I should be flattered. But if the bar was any lower,  
a gecko could step over it.

BEN  
I wanted to experience the polar opposite of you.  
Believe me, I did. Hmm. How about your experience?

ALICIA  
The only thing you and he have in common is that you  
both walk on Planet Earth. This guy makes black  
radicals look like Mr. Rogers. He's one vicious  
motherfucker of a racist. A guy who despises even the  
whites of his eyes.

BEN  
So who do you pick? Him or me?

ALICIA  
Him. So pack your bags, white boy.

*He looks absolutely stricken.*

BEN  
You shitting me? I couldn't feel sicker in my stomach  
right now if I had just swallowed a tarantula that  
was swimming in my lobster bisque.

ALICIA  
Don't forget. This was all your idea.

BEN  
I never imagined you'd pick the other guy.

ALICIA  
Overconfidence can be such a curse.

*He is clearly crushed. He hangs his head in  
silence for a couple moments.*

BEN

(Softly)  
I'll start packing.

ALICIA

My divorce lawyer will be contacting you shortly.

*He stands up and slump shouldered, he begins to walk away. She bolts out of her chair and grabs him from behind. Startled, he whirls around and she gives him an enormous hug and a deep, long kiss.*

ALICIA

You deserved that for putting me through a month of hell. While we were apart, I realized more fully how perfect you are for me. You're my man. No matter your color. Until death to us part. We'll make our marriage work and still embrace the Black Lives Matter movement.

BEN

Hmm. I don't know whether to make love to you right now or kill you for screwing with me like that.

ALICIA

Pick the first option, lover boy.

BEN

I know we both picked extreme polar opposites to date, but through that we realized our relationship works best for us.

ALICIA

Right back at you. I also realized that since you're enlightened, you're the perfect white guy to be married to in the Black Lives Matter era.

*He laughs.*

BEN

I'm even woke when I'm asleep, huh?

ALICIA

You got it, babe.

*They embrace and kiss tenderly.*

BEN

So how do we handle our relationship going forward?

ALICIA

Never forget that true love is colorblind.

BEN

There's something else, babe.

ALICIA

What?

BEN

Your parents. How do we get them to accept you back into the family while remaining married to me?

ALICIA

Paint you black or give them brain transplants.

BEN

How about we invite them for dinner?

ALICIA

They'd never come. And if by some miracle they did, don't take your eyes off your food and drink. They could poison you.

BEN

Come on, they can't be that prejudiced. They live in a mostly white neighborhood.

ALICIA

They live like hermits. They have no interaction with their neighbors.

BEN

How about we drop in on them?

ALICIA

They likely would fill you with buckshot.

BEN

You're making too light of this.

ALICIA

Humor eases my pain. It rips my insides apart that I can't have you and them in my life.

BEN

We'll find a way. I promise you that.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIScene 4

*Alicia and her parents JAMES and MARY, both black and in their 50's, are eating in the dining room. The table has several serving dishes and is set for three.*

JAMES

Glad you finally came to your senses and realized who you are and where you come from. Ben, uh, is not one of us. Cannot ever be one of us.

MARY

The Black Lives Matter movement has shown us that it's important to take sides.

JAMES

Can't bridge sides unless you forfeit your heritage.

ALICIA

Black Lives Matter preaches equality, not necessarily separation.

MARY

You just need time to get over your relationship with Ben, you know?

JAMES

This meal is delicious.

ALICIA

Only the best for my folks. And there's cherry pie for dessert.

JAMES

My salivary glands already have shifted into third gear.

*Ben walks in smiling warmly and sets a fourth table setting for himself. Clouds of malice suddenly trespass across the faces of James and Mary as Ben sits at the table and fills his plate.*

MARY

Oh, Lawdy.

JAMES

This cracker is joining us? If so, your mother and I  
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)  
are leaving.

BEN  
Welcome to our home. It's nice to finally meet you.  
I'm Ben.

JAMES  
(Angry)  
Fuck you! You're the white bastard who stole our  
daughter from us. Come on, Mary. Let's get the hell  
out of here before I castrate this white  
motherfucker.

MARY  
We aren't breaking bread with a white man, you know.

BEN  
Calm down, folks. You'll have fun breaking my balls  
along with the bread.

MARY  
My heavens.

JAMES  
How dare you speak to us disrespectfully.

BEN  
No disrespect intended, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. But  
please do not disrespect your daughter. She's knocked  
herself out to prepare us a delicious meal so we can  
discuss your proposition.

*Ben suddenly stands up, turns around and  
displays a bullseye circle on the back of his  
tee shirt.*

BEN  
Now I literally and figurately have a bullseye on my  
back. But let's flip the switch and make you two  
targets.

*Ben ducks under the table, pulls out a nerf ball  
gun and laughing, shoots James and Mary with  
several nerf balls.*

*James, in a rage, stands up and slams the table  
hard enough to rattle the plates and glasses. He  
then picks up a dinner roll and fires it at Ben,  
hitting him the stomach. Then James starts  
laughing. As do Mary, Alicia and Ben.*

JAMES

Now that we're done playing games, let's cut the bullshit and get to the point. We're under the impression you two, uhhh, had agreed to a divorce.

BEN

We love each other. Why divorce? I could say you two are the bastards for making Alicia decide between you and me.

JAMES

You just said it.

BEN

It needed to be said.

ALICIA

Mom and Dad, just enjoy the meal and get to know Ben. You might find that he's a pretty good guy even if he was dumb enough to be born white. He did go to bat for Sam with the cops.

*James glares at Alicia, then Ben, then Mary.*

MARY

James, we can at least be civil over dinner, right?

JAMES

I hate being duped. Especially by our own daughter. But what the hell.

*James gives Ben a death stare. Ben in turn smiles.*

JAMES

So, Ben. Tell me. You must not have a prejudiced bone in your body, umm, if you married a black woman.

BEN

I grew up in an interracial neighborhood. Different shades of color were abundant and no big deal. My parents are liberals who always have embraced diversity.

JAMES

Which is why you didn't care that Alicia is black?

BEN

Exactly. She's beautiful. And black. More importantly, she's beautiful inside and we have a great chemistry together. I can't imagine being

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)  
married to anybody but her.

ALICIA  
Me either.

MARY  
You know, my husband and I have valid reasons for being distrustful and even disdainful of whites. Which is why we were totally blindsided and hurt when our daughter married you.

BEN  
Unlike me, I guess Alicia isn't a product of her environment.

ALICIA  
It wasn't like I was looking for a white guy so I could be rebellious against my parents. I just met Ben. And fell in love.

JAMES  
So what's this white guy have that thousands of black guys don't?

MARY  
What's so special about him that you were so quick to throw away your past? And us with it.

ALICIA  
Remember, you guys were the ones who gave me such a heartbreaking ultimatum.

JAMES  
So tell us about Mr. Whitey Wonderful here.

ALICIA  
He's kind. Considerate. Intelligent. Witty. An accomplished attorney. Fun. Faithful. Sweet to me. And unlike my parents, he loves me unconditionally.

JAMES  
First of all, I'm humbled to be in the presence of, uh, St. Ben here. Perhaps we should have brought incense. I feel like genuflecting. Second, that's a cheap shot about us loving you conditionally.

MARY  
Damn right. You marrying a white guy against our will warranted that ultimatum.

BEN

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, what did whites do to you to make you despise all of us?

JAMES

What the fuck didn't they do? Whites fuck blacks every day. And sometimes they literally fuck us. Like you do with our daughter.

ALICIA

(Screams)  
Daddy, that's uncalled for!

BEN

Damn right.

MARY

I was only one of three black girls in my high school class. The white girls bullied and belittled us constantly. Used to take turns dumping white flour on us. As a result, I hated school. I was terrified and my self-esteem was shattered. It took me several years to recover and realize I had value as a person. A black person.

ALICIA

Oh, Mom. I'm so sorry to hear that. You never told me that before.

MARY

I wanted to spare you that. I'm glad you didn't experience what I went through.

BEN

Perhaps that's because whites today are less prejudiced than they were a generation ago.

JAMES

Umm, I don't know about that. We should have shared our experiences with Mary. Then maybe she wouldn't have married you.

MARY

Then when I got an office job the damn boss was an even bigger racist than George Wallace. All the other people in the office were white, you know. They showed the copy machine more respect than me even when it was malfunctioning. I got every shitty assignment.



ALICIA

That's terrible. And so demeaning.

MARY

Amen.

ALICIA

Daddy, what was your experience?

JAMES

I was the only black on my high school football team. The first black in the entire league. My own teammates were always tormenting me before, during and after practice.

BEN

How so?

JAMES

Messing with my equipment. Putting peanut butter and jelly on my shoulder pads. Hiding my spikes. Gluing my thigh pads to my hip pads Squirting mustard inside my helmet. Stuffing my locker with watermelon rinds.

BEN

Sorry, man.

ALICIA

Gross.

JAMES

It was worse on the practice field. During scrimmages they would cut block me, trying to screw up my knees. Always going for my knees. Or head. Getting concussions from my own teammates. Our white coaches would look the other way. One day after practice my teammates taped me to the goalposts and took turns pissing on me.

BEN

Man, that sucks. It must have been worse in games.

JAMES

Damn right it was. If we were comfortably ahead or hopelessly behind, my teammates wouldn't block for me to make me look bad. I was a running back and an easy target. White opponents always were going for my knees and head. Gouging my eyes in pileups. The white refs would look the other way.

BEN

Those guys were all prejudiced punks. Not all white guys are like that. I played high school football with and against blacks. Never once did I go out of my way to hurt one of them or make a teammate look bad.

*James laughs heartily.*

JAMES

That's because you're Mr. Whitey Wonderful.

BEN

Hardly. Both of you had terrible experiences with whites in high school. But those who tormented you were kids. How can you judge whites as a whole based on that?

JAMES

Come on, man. Adult whites are just as bad. They profile us. Overlook us when it comes to promotions or board invitations. Blacks still are secondary citizens when it comes to health care, education and employment opportunities.

MARY

I wish I had a dime for every time a white person assumes I must have five kids and no husband just because I'm black.

JAMES

I, uh, make a lot of money as a CPA. I should be CEO of the company. But I'm not. Because I'm black. No question about it. If I were an albino dwarf with pinkeye, I would have been CEO hands down.

MARY

James is a marvelous accountant and a born leader. But his company has screwed him for years.

JAMES

My hostility towards whites is rooted in their collective air of superiority and entitlement.

MARY

Since your father hasn't strangled Ben yet, I assume we're staying for dessert.

JAMES

I'm craving cherry pie more than my next breath. So dismembering Ben will have to wait.

*James laughs.*

ALICIA

I forgot to mention that Ben was a professional kickboxer.

*Ben laughs.*

BEN

And I never lost to a black guy.

JAMES

That was a delicious dinner, Alicia. Your mother taught you well.

MARY

Now it's time for your decision. Are you divorcing or not?

ALICIA

The Black Lives Matter movement has stoked your racial pride and prejudice to a higher level, leading you to further box me in this corner.

BEN

Black Lives Matter from my perspective is inclusive.

ALICIA

It's not an either or situation.

JAMES

Blacks should be with blacks, whites with whites, Asians with Asians. Elephants don't mate with giraffes.

ALICIA

Daddy, that's not a reality in a world where races and cultures are no longer cloistered in their own environments.

*Alicia's cell beeps with a text. She looks at it and gives Ben a quick nod.*

MARY

I loved being with you today, Alicia. But I will never see you again, or even talk to you again, if you don't agree to divorce this white boy.

ALICIA

You do what you must. But first I want you to meet two people who hopefully will reinforce to you and  
(MORE)

ALICIA (CONT'D)

Daddy that people of different colors, cultures and belief systems can accept each other, respect each other and, yes, even love each other.

JAMES

Mary, we don't have time for this nonsense. We're out of here.

*The doorbell rings. Ben rises, leaves the room, and returns with Betty and King.*

BEN

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, say hello to Betty Cracker and King Black.

BETTY

What's happening, y'all?

KING

We brothers have the white folks outnumbered in here.

*He laughs. Nobody else does. Alicia gets up and hugs Betty and King. She gestures for them to sit around the table with them. Ben pulls up a couple more chairs.*

BEN

As Alicia and I considered your proposition of us divorcing so she could reconcile with you, we dated other people. I dated Betty and Alicia dated King.

ALICIA

As you can see, King and Betty are the polar opposites of Ben and I. King wasn't for me and Betty wasn't for Ben. So we introduced King to Betty, two unabashed racists.

KING

Man, I still want to turn whites into tapioca pudding. But Betty be the one for me. It's not just the great sex. We have a chemistry and share a sense of humor. Together we shock the fucking shit out of people.

BETTY

I was all for settin' blacks on far. But King sets my heart on far. We love to fuck with people's minds. King will jokingly call me Black Betty and then play the song Black Betty by Ram Jam on his phone.

JAMES

I, uh, don't always see things through the prism of color. You two are black and white but both of you are insane.

KING

We accept our differences. I'm OK with her never touching the black keys when she plays the piano. I don't even mind that she makes me wear a white robe when we make love.

MARY

My God, what was your first date like?

BETTY

We be sittin' in a bar, starin' hate in each other's ahz. Then, bam! We fell in love.

KING

We celebrated by going to a gun gallery. She be pretending she shooting blacks of course and I be pretending to shooting whites. Now I ax you? Ain't that one helluva fucking first date?

MARY

My word, Alicia. These two are friends of yours?

ALICIA

They taught Ben and I that two polar opposites can love each other and not allow each other's racial perspective to intrude on their relationship.

BEN

They reinforced for us that blacks and whites can love each other in a BLM world without sacrificing their core beliefs.

ALICIA

And such a relationship potentially can eventually expand and enlighten those beliefs.

BETTY

Until I met King, I hated all blacks. Now I make exceptions like King and Alicia. I'm OK with King forcing me to eat black licorice when I love red licorice.

MARY

Do your parents accept your relationship?

*King and Betty both laugh uproariously.*

BETTY

The first time our parents met our fathers be fixin' to knife each other and our mothers be fixin' to poison each other.

KING

Yeah, it was intense at first. Then they realized that even bigots can fall in love with the wrong person who actually is the right person if you be colorblind. I ax you isn't that something?

BETTY

Nuthin' could have shocked me more than my daddy accepting King. I wouldn't have believed if I hadn't seen it with my own ahz. My daddy and his daddy have gots gobs of hate for blacks. Now my daddy doesn't even call King the N word, let alone threaten to lynch him.

KING

It took a lot for my old man to accept us. He been in prison for eight years for killing a white dude who was cheating him at cards.

BETTY

King and me be livin', breathin' proof that love can bridge even a whopper of a racial divide.

KING

We consider it a small first step for mankind. And for our folks who no longer want to hang their child's significant other.

ALICIA

Daddy, so if their fathers could accept their relationship, why can't you? You're not half the badass their fathers are.

JAMES

My principles, like my roots, run deep.

MARY

And both your mothers came around to accepting your relationship?

BETTY

Yes. They even exchange recipes. Once upon a time my mother would have choked on soul food. Now she loves it. She even listens to soul music. On low volume, of course.

KING

There was a time when I would've beat the fucking shit out of Ben because he was an assistant DA who put some of my brothers in jail. Then I got to know him and discovered he's pretty cool. At least for a white dude. I even call him my vanilla bro.

BETTY

King and me learned people are either cool or jerkoffs and those traits come in both colors.

KING

You don't get to know somebody until you spend time together. When Ben and Alicia introduced me to Betty, I took one look at her and figured there was a better chance I'd wind up shooting her than screwing her.

*King laughs. And so does Betty.*

BETTY

My first glance at Ben I wanted to be slicin' that big pork chop with my carvin' knife. I ain't got much schoolin' but even I knows as the world revolve people evolves.

KING

Now we go together like ham hocks and collard greens.

BETTY

Give your son-in-law a chance. Get to knows him before you throws away your daughter like a piece of trash. Believe me, I knows trashy people. Alicia is not trash.

JAMES

Betty, I want to see how colorblind your love for King has made you. So I've got a hypothetical for you.

BETTY

A hypo what?

JAMES

Suppose you woke up in your bed one night to find, umm, my wife and I lying on either side of you?

BETTY

I bleeve I'd sheet my panties.

JAMES

Assuming you didn't, would you have, ahh, a threesome  
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)  
with us or commit a double homicide?

BETTY  
I love me some Oreo cookies. Sandwiched between you  
and your wife, that's just what I'd be.

JAMES  
So you'd choose love over hate?

BETTY  
Damn right.

*James bolts from his seat and pounds his chest  
as he stands up and looks heavenward.*

JAMES  
Lawdy! Lawdy! You can take me now because these two  
fucked-up racial stereotypes have just convinced me  
that my wife and I have to spend a little time with  
Alicia and Ben.

*Alicia squeals with delight and rushes over to  
kiss her father on the forehead.*

ALICIA  
Oh thank you, Daddy! I love you.

MARY  
Well, if an old oak tree like my husband can bend a  
little, so can I. If we get comfortable with Ben,  
Alicia can be part of our lives as well.

BEN  
I hope I pass the audition.

JAMES  
Hell, if King passed his audition, I'd say Ben should  
pass with flying colors, black and white.

ALICIA  
I love you so much, Mommy and Daddy.

*Alicia rushes over to kiss her mother on the  
cheek.*

MARY  
I can see that true love is colorblind, you know?

ALICIA  
And it can make their loved ones colorblind, too.



BEN  
The power of love is much more than a great song.

JAMES  
Ben, it's time you brought out the whiskey. I want to do shots with my son-in-law and his unlikely friends.

KING  
Now you be talking, brother.

BEN  
Johnnie Walker Scotch Blue Label ok?

KING  
I done said Ben was a righteous dude even if he white.

MARY  
James, perhaps we should consider a threesome with a white woman sometime to, uh, minimize our racism.

JAMES  
(Shocked)  
Hush! You're a God-fearing woman, Mary.

MARY  
After tonight's conversation, my belief systems are shot to hell.

ALICIA  
Mother, nobody said change is easy.

JAMES  
A white son-in-law I can accept but a sex freak for a wife is a bridge too far.

MARY  
I'm not suddenly a sex pervert. I just want to replace hate with love.

KING  
Right on, sister!

BETTY  
Amen!

JAMES,  
Mary, I prefer you express your, hmm, love for a white woman by giving her a box of cookies instead of jumping into bed with her.

BEN

Sounds like I just joined a loving, colorblind  
family.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF ACT)

ACT IIIScene 1

*Betty and King are standing in her living room.*

BETTY

Why don't you take me along when you go out with your friends? Ashamed of me?

KING

Let me ax you why I'm never invited when you party with your friends?

BETTY

My friends hate your black ass.

KING

My homies hate your white ass.

BETTY

Folks always be askin' why my conscience don't bother me for screwing a black man. They say God gonna punish me for that mortal sin. That even six showers a day with holy water ain't gonna wash me clean.

KING

Whatcha talking about? God love people of color. You think Jesus be white coming from Galilee? Hell, no.

BETTY

So we never do nuthin' together but fuck. And now I be thinkin' that Betty Cracker shouldn't be nekked with no black man. Must be the Lord whispering in my ear.

KING

When we not screwing, I be bored with you. You a typical white woman with tapioca for brains.

BETTY

With nasty insults like that, no wonder I be drinking more likker. Living with a black man is growin' on my nerves.

KING

Watch your tongue, honky!

BETTY

You think you're good kumpny?

KING  
I be more comfortable with black folk.

BETTY  
I'd rather set a spell with my people. My white people.

KING  
What happens when the fire be flickering in our loins?

BETTY  
We hitch our wagons to lovers of our own color.

KING  
I be worrying we end up shooting each other.

BETTY  
I get the vapors sometimes, sweating if you gonna strangle me in my sleep.

KING  
Love be turning to hate right quick.

BETTY  
We be the wrong species for each other.

KING  
We be fighting human nature.

BETTY  
We done rode into Breakup City. And now I can replace those damn black curtains with white curtains in my bedroom. And throw out the pepper in my kitchen.

KING  
I be sniffing some big black ass before you have time to switch curtains.

BETTY  
We be civil about this. I won't call you the N word and I won't knife you.

KING  
I won't be smacking your white ass redder than a tomato or making you swallow my shotgun.

BETTY  
I guess we learnt that only the climaxes are colorblind.

KING

Amen, sister.

BETTY

I ain't your sister. That be incest. And that be very sick and twisted.

KING

Just a figure of speech. Ain't no fuckin' way my sister be white.

BETTY

Your skin be black. But your soul be blacker.

KING

You be the ugliest Snow White I ever done seen.

BETTY

Nuthin' pretty about love turned to shit. Speakin' of shit, there be a reason they don't make black or brown toilet paper.

KING

Dogshit turn white sittin' in the hot sun. Nuff said.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIIScene 2

*Alicia and Ben are sitting on their living room sofa.*

ALICIA

Betty and King broke up.

BEN

(Startled)

What?

ALICIA

She called me. Said the only thing they had in common was sex. Once that cooled a bit, their unabashed racism shipwrecked their relationship.

BEN

A cock and a cunt can carry a relationship only so far.

ALICIA

Do you have to be so crude, Mr. Potty Mouth?

BEN

OK. Penis and vagina.

ALICIA

Betty and King were instrumental in convincing my parents that an interracial relationship can work. Now what?

BEN

Don't tell them. After all, your parents weren't socializing with them.

ALICIA

Not sharing with them seems wrong. But now that they've accepted you, I don't want to spoil that.

BEN

Exactly.

ALICIA

I've a bigger concern. If it didn't work for Betty and King, are we next?

BEN

Of course not. King and Betty are ridiculous bigots.  
(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

We're not racists like them.

ALICIA

We are more tolerant.

BEN

We're more than tolerant. Accepting is a better word.  
If you need two words, try open minded.

ALICIA

We are...still, I feel somewhat conflicted.

BEN

Again? Don't do this to yourself. Or us. We're past  
all that.

ALICIA

I keep telling myself we're soulmates. And souls  
don't have skin.

BEN

Making black and white a moot point.

ALICIA

But suppose we don't have souls?

BEN

Of course we have souls. Especially blacks. Their  
hymn singing in church is pure soul.

ALICIA

I don't go to church. And I can't carry a tune even  
with the help of a forklift. So I have no soul.

BEN

Our love isn't about theology.

*He laughs wickedly.*

BEN

There's too much lust accompanying it.

ALICIA

Want me to worship you as a deity and sprinkle you  
with incense?

BEN

Works for me.

*Their doorbell rings. He gets up and answers the*

*front door.*

BEN

Mary and James. What a pleasant surprise.

*Mary and James walk in and Alicia walks over to join them.*

JAMES

Sorry for not calling first.

MARY

We wanted to stop by and make sure you two were OK.

ALICIA

Why wouldn't we be?

JAMES

We just heard the news that King and Betty broke up. Your mother bumped into King at the liquor store.

ALICIA

Liquor store? Mother, you hardly drink.

MARY

I do now that the world has turned upside down.

BEN

Just found out about King and Betty. A shame.

MARY

Since they were somehow your preposterous role models, we hope you don't follow their example.

JAMES

Especially now that we've seen how good Ben is for you, Alicia.

MARY

We've grown quite fond of you, Ben.

BEN

I'm honored.

JAMES

(Laughing)

Don't be. Mary and I simply have developed a macabre sense of humor in our dotage.

ALICIA

Despite what happened to Betty and King, Ben and I  
(MORE)



ALICIA (CONT'D)  
are sticking together.

MARY  
We were hoping you'd say that. You two aren't extreme racists like they are. I can't believe they ever hooked up.

JAMES  
It's almost like they're parodies of racists. Their extremism made us realize that we were wrong to be prejudiced all those years.

MARY  
We had good reason to be. But we should've been strong enough to get past it.

JAMES  
King and Betty showed us the absurdity of racism. But you two showed us how a racial divide can be bridged.

MARY  
A bridge made of love.

*Alicia starts crying. Ben gives her a comforting hug.*

JAMES  
This is no time for tears of sadness.

ALICIA  
These are tears of joy. I love it that you two have grown to love Ben.

*James and Mary giggle.*

JAMES  
Love might be a stretch.

MARY  
For now, we're good with fond.

ALICIA  
I hope you'll be more than fond with this news: I'm pregnant.

*James and Mary both hug their daughter. All three are crying.*

ALICIA  
If it's a girl, her name probably will be Mary. If  
(MORE)

ALICIA (CONT'D)

it's a boy, his name likely will be...Ben.

JAMES

(Sadly)

Ben?

BEN

(Laughing)

She's kidding. It just might be James.

ALICIA

Perhaps we could go biblical and name him King James.

*The four start pacing back and forth, rubbing their chins for inspiration. Occasionally they bump into one another.*

BEN

I have a suggestion. Meridian.

ALICIA

Hey, I like that.

BEN

It means equal distance from the extremes and is a unisex name.

ALICIA

It connotes equality. That works for me.

MARY

Meridian also is an imaginary line on the Earth's surface from the North Pole to the South Pole.

JAMES

Meridians also are a circulatory system of energy in acupuncture.

MARY

Meridian sounds like a bank. Keep it simple. Mary or James.

BEN

Since our child will be biracial, how about Caramel? It can work for a girl or a boy.

ALICIA

Caramel is mostly sugar so how about Sugar as a unisex name?

BEN  
How about we name the kid simply X and let he or she decide the name at age 7?

ALICIA  
You're going to trust a kid with a responsibility like that?

MARY  
Suppose the kid comes up with Cotton Candy? Or Thor or Olaf or Bubbles?

JAMES  
Or Tinker Bell or Peter Pan?

BEN  
How about Blended or Golden Child?

JAMES  
Copper or Bronze?

ALICIA  
Enough already! I'm the mother. The name just could be Jayden. It's unisex and means God has heard.

BEN  
Perfect. God indeed has heard about our love.

MARY  
God forbid the child grows up to be an atheist. Then what?

JAMES  
Merely a sign that God has turned a deaf ear.

BEN  
With the state of the world, some people think God already has turned a deaf ear to mankind.

MARY  
Or rather mankind has turned a deaf ear to God.

JAMES  
(Exulting)  
I got it! Your multiracial child will herald a new beginning for our families.  
*They all stop pacing.*

BEN  
Everybody in my family is dead but me.

MARY

Then a new start for our family.

JAMES

Herald means the child should be named Gabriel for a boy and Gabby for a girl.

ALICIA

Gabriel primarily is a boy's name but can be used as a girl's name. If it's a girl, we'll let her decide if she goes by the nickname Gabby.

BEN

Gabriel Shaw it is.

MARY

Now we need a middle name.

ALICIA

That's for another day. I'm exhausted.

MARY

If you think you're exhausted, wait until the child wakes up several times a night.

JAMES

(Laughing)

Alicia, when you were a child I swore you were either an insomniac or the hungriest child ever.

MARY

(Giggling)

That's coming from a father who slept through most of your cries during the night.

JAMES

Can't help it if I'm a sound sleeper.

MARY

Not anymore. You get up every two hours to pee.

JAMES

Wish they made sleeping pills for aging bladders.

ALICIA

(Giggling)

Too much information from my parents.

MARY

Get used to bodily functions. Your whole life soon will center on your child's peeing and pooping.

BEN

A shame babies aren't born already potty trained.

JAMES

And put the disposable diaper industry out of  
business?

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIIScene 3

*Alicia and Ben are sitting on their living room sofa. She obviously has been crying.*

ALICIA

It's been five days and I still can't believe it.

BEN

I don't want to believe it.

ALICIA

Never should've went to that damn Black Lives Matter protest. Never, never, never.

BEN

You had no idea things would get out of hand.

*She pounds her sofa seat with her fists and starts crying.*

ALICIA

(Angrily)

That fucking white cop!

BEN

We both were just running for cover when he came out of nowhere and tackled you.

ALICIA

Notice he tackled the black woman, not the white guy with her.

*They sit in silence for a couple moments.*

ALICIA

Thank you for pulling that cop off me and chewing him out.

BEN

I was so fucking pissed that I didn't give a shit if he arrested me.

ALICIA

I don't condone violence, but I loved it when that white cop got hit in the head with a flying bottle and knocked out.

BEN

He deserved it. You miscarried because of him.

ALICIA

He killed our baby.

BEN

I hope he has a reserved seat in hell.

*He leans over, dabs her moist eyes with a tissue  
and kisses her gently on the forehead.*

BEN

I don't think your parents will ever overcome their  
grief.

ALICIA

Or their renewed hatred of whites.

BEN

I'm not surprised they're again insisting you divorce  
me. Their period of acceptance of whites was too  
brief.

ALICIA

Their newly hatched tolerance didn't have time to  
take root in loose topsoil.

BEN

It was no match for their deep roots of hatred toward  
whites.

ALICIA

They're even more entrenched now in their demand that  
I divorce you or be cut off from them and my  
inheritance.

BEN

They could've given you more time to grieve without  
laying that bullshit on you.

ALICIA

This time I'm not torn. They want me to leave you by  
tomorrow. Fuck them. I'm sticking with you.

BEN

And I'm with you.

ALICIA

The last few days you've been my rock while they're  
home ranting about whites. They didn't even try to  
(MORE)

ALICIA (CONT'D)  
comfort me.

BEN  
Can I get you anything? Iced tea or water?

ALICIA  
I'm good.

BEN  
Are you done with BLM?

ALICIA  
I still support their causes but I'm no longer going to be active.

BEN  
Because of the baby?

ALICIA  
Of course. But more than that. I'm going to stop trying to change the world. It was fucked up long before I got here and will be fucked up long after I'm gone.

BEN  
Really?

ALICIA  
From now on, my focus is on our world. You and me along with any children we may have.

BEN  
We also need to carve out time for fun.

ALICIA  
Damn right. How about a trip to Sweden? No racial discord there.

BEN  
Followed by a trip to Jamaica. No racial discord there either.

ALICIA  
Your family's dead. My family is dead to me. Even my brother has stopped talking to me.

BEN  
We're orphans.



ALICIA

We'd be alone if it weren't for each other.

BEN

We have friends. And hopefully have kids.

*Alicia chuckles.*

ALICIA

If we have five kids, we'll pray to be all alone at times.

BEN

You never are alone if you have a loved one in your heart.

ALICIA

Just make sure you don't piss me off and slip down to my gallbladder.

BEN

I hear gallbladder attacks are more of a bitch than you.

*She grabs a throw pillow and playfully tosses it at him.*

ALICIA

Suddenly I have a craving for vanilla fudge swirl ice cream.

BEN

Nothing beats chocolate ice cream.

ALICIA

If you're expecting me to say that vanilla ice cream is best, you'd be better off waiting for Godot.

BEN

I'm not. Chocolate and vanilla swirl soft ice cream in a cone is the best thing ever this side of heaven.

ALICIA

Speaking of heaven, why are the angels white and not black? And why is a pure soul white and a wicked soul black?

BEN

Those are stereotypical extremes. The average soul is part saint, part sinner and dishwater gray.

ALICIA

In a recent poll, nine out of ten average souls eating Thanksgiving turkey preferred dark meat over white meat.

BEN

Enough of this coloring crap. Coloring should just be for crayons. Our multiracial relationship rocks just like creamer rocks black coffee.

ALICIA

Don't forget the brown sugar.

BEN

Just listen to us talking. We can't stop talking about color. Why don't we become advocates for ending racism?

ALICIA

Hey, I like that. We don't need to join an organization. We can write a book. And start a podcast.

BEN

There already are a zillion podcasts. Our voices will be lost in all that white noise.

ALICIA

White noise?

BEN

Noise containing many frequencies with equal intensities.

ALICIA

What about black noise?

BEN

Black noise is the absence of all frequencies and sounds.

ALICIA

Total silence?

BEN

Exactly.

ALICIA

Figures. So we'll make plenty of noise on our own.

BEN

We can look at pathways to end systemic and internalized racism.

ALICIA

We have to transform more people into anti-racists so we can dismantle white supremacy.

BEN

We have to incinerate the myth that racism is unavoidable.

ALICIA

We have to educate people to look beyond race. If race no longer matters, there is no need for racism.

BEN

A herculean task.

ALICIA

But not impossible. Preaching the irrelevancy of race is not a novel approach. Novelist Toni Morrison said it best.

BEN

What did she say?

ALICIA

There is no such thing as race. None. There is just a human race. Scientifically, anthropologically.

BEN

She's right. Skin color is a fact. Race is not a fact. Just a cultural and historical interpretation.

*She laughs.*

ALICIA

That just may be the biggest understatement ever.

BEN

We'd better get started. Changing the world isn't a 9 to 5 job.

ALICIA

But before we can educate the masses, we have to start with my parents.

BEN

Good fucking luck with that.

ALICIA

And then onto Betty and King.

BEN

Fuck it. Let's take up golf instead.

ALICIA

Or join a swingers club.

*They both laugh.*

BEN

You a swinger? The world truly is upside down.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IIIScene 4

*Alicia is sitting in her living room. The doorbell rings. She walks over and opens the front door. Her eyes suddenly resemble fried eggs.*

ALICIA

(Sternly)

What are all you doing here?

*Her parents and King walk in. They all look angry.*

JAMES

Alicia, you're coming with us. Now!

ALICIA

(Angry)

The hell I am!

MARY

It's for your own good.

ALICIA

What the fuck are you here for, King?

JAMES

King is the muscle in case your honky husband won't let you go.

ALICIA

(Screaming)

BEN! BEN! COME in HERE. QUICK!

*Ben races into the room.*

BEN

What the hell is this?

JAMES

We're here for Alicia.

BEN

She's free to go. But she wants to stay here with me.

ALICIA

Damn right.

MARY

We're her parents and we're afraid your latent racism will bubble up someday and you'll kill her.

*Alicia and Ben laugh hysterically.*

BEN

That's total bullshit. She's perfectly safe with me. Today and forever.

KING

If Alicia don't be packing her things now, I'm gonna bust you the fuck up. Everybody knows crackers are pussies.

ALICIA

Did you forget Ben was a professional kickboxer?

KING

But can he wrassle?

*King lurches forward to tackle Ben. But Ben backs him up with a punishing left sidekick to the head, followed by a crunching left hook to the temple and a devastating right cross to the jaw. King is staggered and then Ben levels him with an explosive right roundhouse kick to the head.*

*Ben extends a hand to King and helps hoist him up from the floor. Ben then chuckles.*

BEN

My old man once told me never to bet on the white guy when he's fighting a black guy. My daddy would've dropped a few bucks on this one.

*King rubs his jaw and smiles.*

KING

So you caught me with a couple lucky punches and kicks. Big fuckin' deal.

BEN

I didn't want to do this. You're a friend.

ALICIA

Mother and Daddy, do you now realize how utter insane this is? Ben and I still are grieving the loss of our child and you bring this nonsense into our house?

JAMES

A white cop killed your child.

ALICIA

What does it matter now if it was a white cop or a black cop or a purple cop? Dead is dead.

MARY

It matters to us.

ALICIA

(Yelling)

Then I disown you. If you two bigots are too fucking dumb to realize by now how good Ben is for me, fuck you and the black horse you rode in on.

JAMES

(Sternly)

How dare you speak like that to your mother and me.

MARY

I don't like your tone, young lady.

ALICIA

I feel sorry for you two. Love is indeed colorblind. But you're too blinded by color to see it.

BEN

James and Mary, do you believe in the Bible?

JAMES

Damn right.

MARY

Of course.

BEN

Genesis 2:24.

ALICIA

Therefore shall a woman leave her father and mother and shall cleave unto her husband.

JAMES

I thought it was the other way around.

MARY

A man shall leave his father and mother.

ALICIA

It's called equality of the sexes.

*James scratches his chin.*

JAMES

Mary, perhaps we should go home and rethink this.

MARY

I told you we were being too hasty with this.

KING

I best be going. Gotta pick up Betty at the beauty parlor.

ALICIA

You two are back together?

KING

Call it a love-hate relationship. It's complicated.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF PLAY)