

**BABY BLACK JESUS - PLAY ONE**

A Short Stage Play

by

Vincent Terrell Durham

**CAST:**

DARRYL - Black, 20s to 30s.

RICHARD - Black, 20s to 30s.

MRS. JOHNSON - Black, late 40s to late 50s,

**Setting:** Darryl and Richard's new apartment.

LIGHTS UP:

*(Moving boxes sit on the floor of an otherwise empty apartment.)*

*(DARRYL and RICHARD are heard outside the apartment door.)*

DARRYL (O.S.)

No. We're not doing that.

RICHARD (O.S.)

It's tradition, Darryl.

DARRYL (O.S.)

Not for people just living together.

RICHARD (O.S.)

You don't want us to have bad luck, do you?

DARRYL (O.S.)

Only if you let me do it to you.

RICHARD (O.S.)

Of course. There are no roles in our relationship.

*(The apartment door flings open. RICHARD crosses the threshold with DARRYL lifted up in the air like a new bride.)*

RICHARD (cont'd)

Welcome to our new life together.

DARRYL

I get so excited every time I see this place. I found the perfect sofa and love seat to put right over there. Your artwork is going to look great covering these walls. Now put me down and let's go back out the door.

*(RICHARD places DARRYL down to the floor. DARRYL walks to the apartment door. RICHARD doesn't budge.)*

DARRYL (cont'd)

What are you doing?

RICHARD

Standing here.

DARRYL

Why?

RICHARD

Because I hope you don't think you're going to carry me across the threshold.

DARRYL

You just promised, no more than a few seconds ago.

RICHARD

That was the only way I was going to get you to hop up into my arms, but I'm not about to let a man carry me across the threshold.

DARRYL

But you just carried a man across the threshold.

RICHARD

Yeah. That's how it should be.

DARRYL

Wait. You don't want a man to carry you across the threshold, but it's okay for you to carry a man across the threshold?

RICHARD

Yes, I don't have a problem with that.

DARRYL

You don't have a problem with it because you think I'm the woman.

RICHARD

You said that not me.

DARRYL

That's what you're implying by not walking out that door and letting me carry you across the threshold. You said our relationship had no roles.

RICHARD

All relationships have roles. I'm Billy D. Williams and you're Diana Ross.

DARRYL

Are you serious? You really see me as the woman in our relationship?

*(DARRYL is temporarily distracted by the thought of being Diana Ross.)*

DARRYL (cont'd)

The Mahogany Diana Ross or Lady Sings the Blues Diana Ross? *(realizing he's lost focus)* Wait, wait, wait a minute--

RICHARD

Mahogany Diana Ross.

DARRYL

Listen. If you don't let me carry your Black ass across the threshold, you will be sleeping on the sofa every night, once it arrives from Restoration Hardware.

*(RICHARD relents and starts walking towards the apartment door.)*

RICHARD

It's usually the man who has to sleep on the couch. I'm just saying.

*(RICHARD and DARRYL exit out the door. Several seconds of tussling and bickering is heard. The door flings open with RICHARD carrying a thrashing DARRYL in his arms.)*

DARRYL

Put me down. Put me down. Put me down.

*(RICHARD opens his arms and DARRYL drops to his feet.)*

RICHARD

It's not my fault you're the weaker sex.

DARRYL

We're the same sex. Carrying me across the threshold isn't supposed to turn into a wrestling match.

RICHARD

Can't we just leave it at me carrying you across the threshold? That's how I always pictured starting my life with the person I loved.

DARRYL

But wasn't that always with a woman?

RICHARD

Only up until, I saw Donnie Campos naked in the boy's shower. After that, I only ever imagined carrying a 15 year old, bowlegged, Italian boy across the threshold.

DARRYL

Are you still looking for a 15 year old, bowlegged, Italian boy to carry across the threshold?

RICHARD

Shhhhh! You can't say that out loud. Are you crazy? We have neighbors who don't know us yet. Are you trying to get us put on some kind of list?

DARRYL

You didn't answer the question.

RICHARD

You are the only person I hope to ever carry across the threshold; my beautiful, African-American, knock-knee, middle-aged boyfriend.

DARRYL

You were so close to making me feel special.

RICHARD

I think you're very special, which is why I love you. Which is why we are about to start a beautiful life together.

DARRYL

When are you going to tell your mother about this beautiful life we're about to start together?

RICHARD

Soon.

DARRYL

I should have stopped dating you the minute you introduced me as your best friend. Didn't she ever wonder why she was just now meeting your best friend?

RICHARD

I go through a lot of best friends, but you're the first one I ever carried across the threshold.

DARRYL

I don't want to live here as your pretend roommate.

*(RICHARD begins walking towards the apartment door.)*

RICHARD (cont'd)

Let's go. Let's get this nightmare over with so we can start living happily ever after.

DARRYL

I don't want you to do it unless it's something you really want to do.

RICHARD

Yup. You're certainly not the woman in this relationship. Let's go.

*(RICHARD and DARRYL exit. Several seconds pass.)*

MRS. JOHNSON (O.S.)

RICHARD!

RICHARD (O.S.)

MOM!

*(RICHARD, MRS. JOHNSON and DARRYL enter the apartment.)*

RICHARD

You should have told me you would be stopping by.

MRS. JOHNSON

Why was Darryl lifting you up in the air?

RICHARD

He was testing his strength.

DARRYL

And my patience.

*(MRS. JOHNSON looks around, taking in the apartment for the first time.)*

MRS. JOHNSON

Look how big your apartment is. It's a lot of room for one man.

DARRYL

One man?

RICHARD

It's not that big, Mom.

MRS. JOHNSON

Reverend Jones should be here any minute to walk through the house and bless it for you. You're welcome to stay, Darryl. The more people praying the more blessings.

DARRYL

I plan on staying because I live--



RICHARD

In the building. Didn't I tell you, Mom? Darryl lives in the same building.

MRS. JOHNSON

Top or bottom?

RICHARD

I beg your pardon?

MRS. JOHNSON

Top or bottom? Does he live above you or below you?

DARRYL

Versatile.

MRS. JOHNSON

Versatile?

RICHARD

He used to live upstairs but he just moved to the first floor.

DARRYL

Maybe Reverend Jones can stop by and bless my apartment when he's done blessing Richard's bachelor pad? I'd love for you to see it, Mrs. Johnson. It could use a woman's touch.

MRS. JOHNSON

I'm sure you got your own mama. Have her touch it.

RICHARD

Reverend Jones won't be blessing anybody's apartment. You're two days early. Reverend Jones is scheduled for the 19th. Today is the 17th.

*(MRS. JOHNSON scrolls through her iPhone, checking dates.)*

MRS. JOHNSON

Are you sure? I could have sworn I had something set up for you on the 17th. *(pause)* My mistake, son. You're right. Reverend Jones is on the 19th. Delivery of your new sofa and love seat is scheduled for the 17th.

DARRYL

You bought us a sofa and love seat?

MRS. JOHNSON

Us?

RICHARD

Mi casa, su casa is what I always tell Darryl.

DARRYL

Mi casa, su casa. Really?

MRS. JOHNSON

Richard has horrible taste. I'm not about to let him furnish his first apartment on his own.

DARRYL

He won't be doing it his own. Has Richard ever told you about Donnie Campos?

MRS. JOHNSON

That good looking bowlegged Italian boy? *(to RICHARD)* He used to be your best friend. He spent that one Christmas with us. It was the first time he ever saw a Baby Black Jesus. Whatever happened to him?

RICHARD

We grew apart.

MRS. JOHNSON

You go through best friends too easy. I hope you plan to stick around Darryl.

DARRYL

It doesn't seem likely.

RICHARD

Don't listen to him, Mom. He's not going anywhere. Add him to your Christmas Eve seating chart.

DARRYL

Christmas Eve seating chart?

RICHARD

Christmas Eve dinner is a family tradition at my mom's house. We eat, drink, exchange gifts and place Baby Black Jesus into the manger with Joseph and Mary.

DARRYL

They Black too?

MRS. JOHNSON

Of course. We're traditional. I'll sit him next to your Aunt Thelma. She'll think he's cute.

*(DOORBELL RINGS)*

MRS. JOHNSON (cont'd)

That must be your new sofa and love seat. *(to RICHARD)* Hurry up and open the door. You're going to love it.

DARRYL

I'll get it Mrs. Johnson. I was just on my way out, for good.

RICHARD

Don't leave, Darryl. I promise to fix this later.

DARRYL

Fix it now.

RICHARD

Right now?

DARRYL

Right now.

RICHARD

Mom, I have something to tell you.

MRS. JOHNSON

Can it wait? Your sofa and love seat are here. Plus I want to measure the windows for drapes.

DARRYL

Drapes?

RICHARD

Mom, Darryl and I-- Darryl and I--

DARRYL

You can do it.

RICHARD

Darryl and I--

DARRYL

Love--

RICHARD

Your enthusiasm. We love your enthusiasm, but I already bought a sofa and love seat earlier today. Darryl helped me pick it out.

DARRYL

That wasn't even close.

MRS. JOHNSON

That's okay. You can cancel the order in the morning. What do you two know about decorating?

DARRYL

More than your son is willing to tell you.

*(DOORBELL RINGS)*

MRS. JOHNSON

We really should open the door.

DARRYL

Open the door, Richard. Let's see your new furniture.

*(RICHARD opens the door and stares out in disbelief.)*

RICHARD

Hi.

*(Seconds pass. RICHARD is frozen.)*

MRS. JOHNSON

Is it your sofa and love seat?

RICHARD

Yes, being delivered by Donnie Campos.

MRS. JOHNSON

That bowlegged Italian boy?

*(DARRYL crosses to the door.)*

DARRYL

Hey, Donnie. We were just talking about you and the first time you met Baby Black  
Jesus. Why don't you have a seat on the sofa and let us carry you across the threshold?  
Richard's been waiting all his life for it.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF PLAY