

**Clair**  
**By**  
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## CHARACTERS

CLAIR: Grandmother of Dontae and Jimmy, African American, walks with a limp. 60s.

EDNA: Clair's sister, African American, 60s.

DONTAE: African American, Older brother of Jimmy, late 20s.

JIMMY: African American, Younger brother of Dontae, mid-20s.

BERNICE: African American slave spirit, teens.

Kyoko: Girlfriend of Jimmy, mid-20s, Japanese.

MOLLY: Girlfriend of Dontae, late 20s, White.

NOAH: White childhood friend of Dontae, early 30s.

Laverne: African American, Mother of Dontae and Jimmy, late 40s.

Koffe: African, fiancée of Laverne, late 40s.

Fred Johnson: FBI Agent.

Man: Young man.

## SETTING

A rundown double sided family home in Bryn Mawr, PA. The only poor black street on the edge of a wealthy white area known as "The Mainline".

Time  
August 2008

ACT I

SCENE 1

*Clair is sitting on her porch staring out towards the audience like she is in a trance. She doesn't move an inch.*

*Bernice is working in a garden, some distance from the porch. She waves at Clair. This seems to go on for longer than it should.*

*Edna strolls onto the porch. She is not able to see Bernice. She's wearing a t-shirt with a picture of Barack Obama. She is curious as to what Clair is looking at.*

*Bernice picks up a basket full of veggies. She takes a tomato out of the basket, dusts it off a little and takes a bite. The juice from the tomato streams down Bernice's arm. As she is chewing, she walks toward the porch. Clair is mesmerized the whole time. Bernice walks on the porch and as she is about to step into the house she takes an exaggerated bite of the tomato.*

*And we begin.*

Edna

Hey Clair.

(No response)

Clair.

(Still no response)

CLAIR!

(She waves her hand in front of Clair's face.)

Clair

Oh. Oh hey, Edna.

Edna

What has gotten into you? What are you seeing out there?

Clair

Oh, nothing. I'm just daydreaming is all.

Edna

I hear you on that one. I had me a nice dream about "B.O." today.

Clair

About "B.O."? Why in the world would you be daydreaming about "B.O."??

Edna

I'm not talking about no damn body odor. I'm talking about my hunnie Barack Obama.

Clair

Oh lord.

Edna

Don't "Oh Lord" me.

Clair

Does Benson know he's your "hunnie"?

Edna

He doesn't need to know all that. He just needs to know I'm voting for him.

Clair

And so are all the colored folks around here. That still doesn't make him your hunnie.

Edna

We'll see. (pause) But doesn't the idea of a black man becoming the leader of the free world make you all hot inside?

Clair

Edna!

Edna

And he is not just regular black... He is one of those swirled up blacks, cause he's mixed with that Irish blood. Very exotic. It makes me feel a certain way, Clair.

Clair

Come on now Edna! Can we take it down a notch? You're starting to make a scene on this porch that I am not comfortable with.

Edna

Come on Clair. Think about it. Barack Hussein Obama, every day, is going to be telling all those white folks what to do. What money to spend on what. What missiles to launch. And what countries to take over. GOD. DAMN.

Clair

Stop it, Edna. I'm going to call Benson and tell him you out here acting a fool and have him come and get your behind off my porch.

Edna

So what.  
(pause)

I wish I never had gotten married to that fool.

Clair

You have been married for 42 years, and now, it's a problem?

Edna

Now that we are going to have a black president, I can speak my mind.

Clair

What you sayin Edna? He hasn't even been elected yet.

Edna

Well, I can feel it comin. I can just taste it. Change is coming. And there is going to be a certain freedoms with it. A freedom where I can be who I wanna be. I could call up Benson right now and say "You know what? I'm out! I have put up with your bullshit all these years and I'm moving on"

Clair

That's nonsense, Edna. You could've left him anytime you wanted to. This is not communism. This is America. Home of free and land of brave ...or something like that. You don't need the president to be black to leave your husband. You just need to pay a lawyer.

Edna

Yeah, but it wouldn't look good on our community. All these pressures to live or just survive in a white man's world forced us to stick together at whatever cost. And if that meant staying with someone you have despised for a long time, then so be it... Hell, I wanted to be single after the first year I was married, but during those times, it seemed like the whole world's eyes were on us. We couldn't sneeze the wrong way or we would've been on the front page of a newspaper. "Black People Sneeze Strange! The world wonders If they are humans or aliens from another galaxy!"

Clair

You are crazy!

EDNA

No, I'm not crazy, I'm being honest. From now on, I'm going to be really honest.

Clair

Ok.

(Pause)

Edna

Like, what is wrong with your grandson?

Clair

What? Which one?

Edna

You know, the confused, conspiracy theory one. Where the hell did he come from?

Clair

Now, wait a second here Edna. There is not going to be any bad mouthing of one my boys around here!

Edna

Ok. OK. But can I ask you one question?

Clair

It better not be some crazy nonsense.

Edna

Is he gay?

Clair

What?

Edna

Is he GAY?

Clair

What?

Edna

Is he a homo?!?

Clair

What are you asking?

Edna

Does he pack the fudge, Clair? Jesus! I'm trying to be nice in describing it. Now, you just made me get all nasty with it.

Clair

(Agitated)

Why are you asking this? Huh?

Edna

I was just wondering?



*(Long awkward pause.)*

Edna

You know I saw him hanging with another fellow by the duck pond not long ago..

Clair

What??

Edna

Yup. I didn't want to mention it to you cause I knew it might upset ya...

Clair

*(pissed)*

Now, you know that don't mean anything. It could've just been a friend. What were you doing over there anyway?

Edna

You know the doctor said I needed to get some exercise, and what better place to do some walking than that hilly ass duck pond. I've been seeing many things since I started to walk there. I see many things most people don't know I'm seeing.

Clair

You are such a fool. Obama has really done a number on your brain.

Edna

Ok then, I won't tell you what I saw your innocent grandson doing there while I was innocently trying to do what the doctor prescribed.

Clair

*(Looks concerned)*

Well, that is none of my business. And really none of yours. He's a grown adult and he wasn't hurtin nobody... You know what? It's time for me to get some dinner ready and time for you to go....

*(Clair and Edna eyes spot somebody in the near distance. They're both shocked at what they are seeing. The person is now close to them. It's actually two people. Jimmy AND Kyoko approach holding hands.)*

Jimmy

Hi, Grandma. Hi Aunt Edna. This is my girlfriend, Kyoko.

Edna is dismayed especially after all the crap she just talked. Clair now has a smile on her face. Relief.

BLACKOUT

Act 1

Scene 2

*A room on top of a garage is glowing with only sunlight coming in as single back window. It's damp and cold. And it feels like mold could seep through the walls at any moment. There are sounds of footsteps climbing a creaky staircase. Dontae's face can be seen at the door of the room. Behind him, ahead of a female can be seen. Dontae jiggles the door handle and simultaneously, he pushes the door with his shoulder. The door pops open.*

Dontae

And Voila!

Molly

Oh My God Donald. Someone could get hurt on those stairs.

Dontae

Don't worry...

*(Dontae tries to turn on the lights. They come on for a second, then flicker and go out. He turns on and off the switch again, and nothing happens.)*

Dontae

The place just needs some attention paid to it. It's old but still solid.

Molly

Those steps don't seem solid to me.

Dontae

Don't worry they will be taken care of. It's only temporary. Now, let me see if I can fix these lights.

*(Dontae heads down those sketchy stairs searching for a fuse box. Molly inspects the room further. She hops on the bed. It's nothing special. She gets up and walks around and notices.....)*

Molly

There's no bathroom?!

*(She looks around again. She sticks her head out the door.)  
Donald! Where is the bathroom?*

Dontae

What?

Molly

I don't see a bathroom up here.

Dontae

Oh! That's because there isn't one. We have two in the house.  
Did the light come on?

Molly

No.

*(Dontae enters)*

Wait. So every time I have to use the bathroom, I have to go  
to the house?

Dontae

Yeah. I forgot to mention that, but it's not far.

*(Dontae on a chair and unscrews a lightbulb)*

Maybe we need a new light bulb. Hell, I should've checked that  
first!

Molly

But those damn stairs, Donnie.

Dontae

I'm sorry. Don't worry I will take care of it.

*(Dontae takes a look at the time, nervously)*

Also, before you meet with my Grandma

*(pause)*

Um...she will be calling me..... DONTAE. Just so you don't get  
freaked out cause.....

Molly

Dontae? Why's that?

(pause)

(pause some more)

Why is that Donnie??

(pause)

Wait. Your real name is NOT Donald???

*(Dontae looks as though he commits a horrible crime, and Molly looks like she is about to execute him for one.)*

Blackout

Act 1

Scene 3

Jimmy and Kyoko are sitting around a rectangular wooden kitchen table. Clair pours vinegar in a boiling pot of collard greens. There are many other pots on the stove cooking away.

Kyoko

Can I help you with anything Miss Ellis? Anything at all?

Clair

No. You just relax. You are a guest in my home. Someone decided to surprise me with another guest is all.

Jimmy

Sorry Grandma, I just didn't want to make a big deal of it. Do you mind if Kyoko stayed over for a few days? I want to show her where I grew up.

Clair

Sure of course, and it wouldn't have been a big deal. A heads up on how much food I needed to prepare would be nice.

(Clair looks at the time.)

Jimmy

Well, it sure looks like you have prepared more than enough food. Is Aunt Edna coming for dinner?

Clair

Well...you know her. Sometimes, she just shows up.

(Clair nervously checks the time again. Then looks out the window)

Jimmy

Are you Ok? It seems like you are waiting for someone.

(Jimmy notices Dontae and Molly coming down the garage stairs)

Jimmy

What the hell! What the hell is he doing here?

Clair

Now, Jimmy! I didn't want to make a big deal about this.

Jimmy

Damn it. You could've at least warned me!

(Kyoko is surprised by all the excitement.)

Kyoko

What is it, Jimmy?

(She also notices Dontae and Molly)

Who are they?

Jimmy

Well, that is my brother I was telling you about. And that must be his new woman. A Blonde as usual...

Clair

Now, Jimmy, this is why I didn't want to tell you cause you wouldn't show up, but WE need to talk about something.

Jimmy

What do I need to talk to him about?

Clair

Not just you and him. But for us...

*(Pause)*

*Dontae and Molly enter.*

Clair

There's my boy.

Dontae

Hi Grandma.

*(They hug and kiss.)*

This is Molly. I mentioned her to you.

Clair

You sure did. He has talked very highly of you.

*(Clair gives Molly a big bear hug. Dontae is taken aback by her physical engagement.)*

Clair

Molly, this is my other grandson, Jimmy.

Molly

Hi.

*Jimmy*

*Hi.*

(Pause)

Clair

And his girlfriend, Ky...Kyo...Kyoca.

Jimmy

Key-Yo-Koe.

Kyoko

Hi, nice to meet you.

Molly

Nice to meet you as well.

(There is a long awkward pause.)

Clair

Ok. let's all have a seat. The food will be done in a few minutes.

*Everyone sits.*

*(Dontae and Jimmy stare at each other resentfully.)*

Jimmy

So, What brings you to these parts, Dontae.

Dontae

What do you mean?

Jimmy

Why are you here?



Dontae

You mean, you don't know why I'm here?

Clair

I was waiting to get you all together before we chatted and now is not the time. Let's have some supper first anyway.

Dontae

Well, it's probably better you're not involved anyway.

Jimmy

What?!

Clair

OK, now. Let's cool it. Especially since we have guests.

*Jimmy stares at Dontae suspiciously.*

*(pause)*

Clair

So, Um Key-Yo-Koe where are you from hunnie?

Kyoko

I'm from Jersey. Montclair.

Clair

Oh. OK. That's interesting.

*(Slight pause)*

Kyoko

But my parents are from a small city right outside of Osaka. We moved here when I was 10.

Clair

And where did you guys meet?

*(Clair moves slowly towards the refrigerator.)*

Jimmy

Are you sure you don't need help? Kyoko is a great cook.

Clair

Come on now Jimmy. Don't mess with me and my kitchen.

*(Clair notices Edna coming.)*

Clair

*(to herself)*

*Oh dear.*

*(Edna enters.*

*She is taken aback by the people she sees at the kitchen table.)*

Edna

Hey Clair.

Clair

*(Pulls Edna to the side)*

Edna, now I don't want any mess from you. You better mind your manners.

Edna

*(To Clair)*

Don't worry. I'm just here to join the rainbow coalition.

*(She laughs.)*

Edna

*(To Clair)*

It looks like that ad. What do you call it? It's like Gap or something.

*(She laughs again.)*

Clair

I told you to watch your manners, Edna. Or you can leave quick as you came.

Edna

Ok. OK. I'll behave.

*(She turns to the table.)*

Edna

Hey everyone. For the young ladies who I do not know. My name is

*(Extreme emphasis on her name)*

Edweena Mae Ellis,

but you can call me Edna for short. And you?

*(She gestures towards Kyoko.)*

Kyoko

Um. I'm Kyoko Nishimura.

Edna

Oh. OK. Nice to meet you.

*(Has no idea how she would pronounce it...)*

*(Edna then turns to Molly.)*

Molly

Um. I'm Molly Smith.

*(Molly almost embarrassed of how plain her name is.)*

Edna

Nice to meet you as well.

(slight moment)

And it is good to see you two strapping young men together again. It's been a while.

Dontae

It's good to see you too Aunt Edna.

Edna

Dontae, I hear you're doing big things in the finance world. You working at one of those fancy Hedge fund organizations.

Dontae

Well, sort of.

Edna

Don't be modest. We need someone from around here doing big things.

Dontae

Well, I'm working on it. I just started a new job at a private equity firm. A group of guys left, or should I say they were let go, from Goldman Sachs after the recession and they started their own firm. I'm working closely with the head of the company, but I will eventually start my own company.

Edna

Ok. That sounds exciting.

(Pause)

And Jimmy...

(Slight pause)

Well, Jimmy helps Clair out around here all the time. Just as sweet as he can be.

*(Jimmy is not amused by this compliment.)*

*Jimmy*

It's called unemployment. I'm on unemployment at the moment.

*Edna*

Ok. OK.

*Clair*

So... Are you staying for dinner or you going to sit here and chat.

*Edna*

No, I have plans. I just stopped by to say hello. Hello!

*Clair*

OK, then. Goodbye.

*(Clair verbally pushes Edna out the door.)*

*Edna*

Goodbye yaw.

*Dontae*

*Molly*

*Kyoko*

*Jimmy*

*Bye Auntie.*

*Bye.*

*Nice to meet you.*

*Bye.*

Clair

Sometimes that woman...

(Pause)

You know what? There is something you can help me with. You guys can set the table.

*(Clair piles some silverware and napkins on the tabletop that has a flowery tablecloth.)*

Molly

Let me...

*(Molly grabs the silverware and napkins and places them on the table. As she is placing a fork and knife next to Kyoko, but Kyoko pulls from her purse a long blue colored box with bright gold Japanese writing. She opens the box and her tiny fingers removing.....chopsticks.*

*No words are spoken. Just stares for a long moment...)*

Kyoko

What?

Blackout

Act 1

Scene 4

*In a small dining room right off the kitchen Clair and Dontae are going through some papers that are pulled out of file cabinets.*

*Clair is pulling files out of the cabinet and Dontae is reading through them.*

Clair

So it looks like you and Molly are doing well. So you guys are living together now?

Dontae

For the most part. She goes back to her place now and then.

Clair

Oh, I see. So, no real commitment yet.

Dontae

I guess not.

Clair

Is that your doing or hers?

Dontae

Um, well, I guess it's a little of both.

*(Clair hands Dontae a folder of papers.)*

Dontae

I mean I'm trying to get this new job in order and find a new place. And thanks again for letting me stay here while I do that.

Clair

No problem, sweetie. Things will work out.

Dontae

So, what's going on with Jimmy?

Clair

He's doin alright Dontae, He does work now and then. You know how picky he is...

Dontae

Yeah. I know with his conspiracy theories and shit.

*(Clair gives Dontae a look.)*

Sorry, I mean it's just ridiculous how he thinks, and I tried to talk to him about it, but I just can't anymore, it's like talking to lava concrete. And this girl he has, how long have they been together?

Clair

Not long.

Dontae

I figured.

Clair

Dinner was the first time meeting her. But she seems nice.

Dontae

Yeah, well wait til she finds out that he doesn't believe in making money. She will be out real quick.

Clair

Be nice Dontae, and you know that's not totally true.

Dontae

But what's going to happen when she finds out he...well...you know.

Clair

We do not know if that's true at all...they are only rumors!

Dontae

Ok. Ok...

*(Dontae notices something in the paperwork.)*

Dontae



Ok. Here is something. So starting in January 2004, the government has owned the house?

Clair

Oh, It has been that long?

Dontae

Yeah, because you hadn't paid school taxes in 4 years prior to that.

Clair

Why should I pay for these rich kids to go to school, when I only receive government payments, which I'm thankful for, but it is not enough to be paying 7,000 dollars in taxes every year.

Dontae

7 grand!?!?

Clair

Yes, baby. I didn't want to get you involved in this. I was a little embarrassed. But I prayed on it and now I feel like I'm doing the right thing.

Dontae

You paid this whole amount while we were in school?

Clair

Yes, but it was much less back then.

Dontae

You did this for us?

Clair

I was doing it for everyone apparently, cause when Y'all finished school I was still paying. After a few years, the price went up so high that I just couldn't afford it anymore. So I just stopped. And then they took the house.

Dontae

But it says for 7 years. So after 7 years, you will get it back.

Clair

Yeah, I know. But I'm not sure I will be around then.

Dontae

What??? Don't talk like that...

(Pause)

Clair

Villanova University offered a pretty sum to buy the house from me, but I turned them down.

Dontae

Really?

Clair

Yup. This house is our heritage. And I don't want no frat boys or girls tearing down what our ancestors worked so hard to build.

Dontae

How much were they offering?

Clair

Stop it Dontae! We are not selling this house!

Dontae

Ok. I'm sorry. Our Heritage...

Clair

So keep it out of your mind. I wanted you and your brother to figure out how to keep this house in our bloodline.

(Pause)

Actually, I was hoping YOU could figure it out.

*(Donte pauses for a moment and then realizes what she means.)*

Dontae

You mean, you are leaving the house for me?

Clair

Yes, baby. To you. I think you are the only one around here with enough sense about money and will take care of what our family worked so hard to have.

Dontae

What about Jimmy?

Clair

I don't know. I was going to leave it to the both of you but...Jimmy 's beliefs are a little bit out there.

Dontae

I know! He needs to get a job.

Clair

I know. I think he will be alright. He just needs to find his own way.

*(Molly enters the room full of sweat, dressed in workout clothes. She carries a workout bag with a pair of boxing gloves around her neck.)*

Dontae

Hey babe.

*(They kiss.)*

How was the class?

Molly

It was great as usual. But I need a shower. Hi Miss Ellis.

Clair

Hi dear. You can shower upstairs. I will set out some towels for you.

Molly

Ok. That would be great.

*(Clair exits upstairs.)*

She's nice and accepting of me, I think. Nothing like you warned.

Dontae

Well, that is surprising...

Molly

Are we on for dinner tonight? Just us...

Dontae

Actually, something has come up at work and I need to head to the office. Not sure when I will be done.

Molly

Oh. OK.

*(Molly is disappointed.)*

Dontae

But maybe we could have a little meeting before I go...

Molly

*(Playfully)*

Oh. I would like that.

*(They kiss.)*

Dontae

I will meet you upstairs after you wash all the stink off.

*(He laughs.)*

Molly

Whatever. DONTAE. AKA Donald. We still need to talk about that.

*(Molly exits up the stair.)*

*Dontae exits through the kitchen out the back door leading towards the garage apartment.)*

*(A few moments later Kyoko slithers down the stairs. Looks to see if anyone is around, and plops on the couch. She picks up the remote for the TV, she fiddles around with it, she can't seem to figure how the hell to turn it on. She notices another remote. She picks that up and fiddles around with it presses all the buttons but nothing... Frustrated she slams her fists*

*into the couch. Then she notices another remote on the TV stand. She grabs as well... Presses the power button BUT AGAIN NOTHING!*

*Enters Jimmy. He grabs one remote she had already tried, presses a button, then he grabs the other remote she had pressed as well. He presses one button....BINGO! The TV Is on.*

Jimmy

And you can control the channels with this remote...

Kyoko

What the hell.

Jimmy

Yeah, I know...

*(Kyoko changes the channel to a basketball game, The Philadelphia 76ers vs. the New York Knicks is playing. She is happy, she re-plops onto the couch. Jimmy just watches her with amusement.)*

Kyoko

Is this OK... Does anyone else need the TV? I'm sorry I should've asked first...

Jimmy

It should be fine. Grandma usually uses the TV to watch her soaps. None are on today, so it's all yours.

(Pause)

I'm going out back to meditate if you need anything.

*(He kisses her on the forehead.)*

Kyoko

OK.

(Pause)

Jimmy, was that Ok what I did last night? With bringing my own eating utensils.

Jimmy

It just threw everyone off a little. Don't even worry about it. We don't get many Asian guesses in our house..... Actually...

(Pause)

Holy crap!

(Slight pause)

You are the first Asian person to ever step foot into this house.

Kyoko

So it's the first time chopsticks were ever used at your dinner table. OK. I see...

Jimmy

Wow. My family has never had any Asian friends.

Kyoko

OK.

*(Jimmy is engaged with this thought as he leaves the room. Almost in a trance.)*

Bye...

*(No response from Jimmy.  
He has already left.  
Kyoko returns to her game.  
Clair enters from upstairs.  
She notices the basketball game.)*

Clair  
Hey Kyoko. What are you watching?

Kyoko  
(shyly)  
Basketball.

Clair  
Who's playing.

Kyoko  
It's the Knicks vs. the Sixers.

Clair  
OK. So you like basketball. I love me some basketball.

Kyoko  
Me too.  
*Clair takes a seat.*

Clair  
And it's the Sixers. I love me some Sixers. Well not today's team, they're no good. Do you like the Sixers?

Kyoko  
No.

Clair  
No. Then who?

Kyoko



I love the Knicks.

Clair

Wait, hold on. You mean to tell me we have a New York Knicks lover in my house right now!

*(Clair shakes her head.)*

*(Kyoko can't tell if Clair is serious or not so she treads lightly. But She can't hide her serious love of the Knicks no matter what.)*

Kyoko

Yes. I've loved them ever since I was little growing up in Japan.

*(Clair can't believe it.)*

Clair

Really. I love basketball too. But I usually listen to it on the radio it's how I grew up with it. It's more exciting to me that way.

Kyoko

I have two words for you, Miss Ellis. John. Starks. One of the best players ever!

Clair

Oh. OK. Well, I got 2...um I mean 4... Um. um. I got 3 words for you. Dr. J... Championship.

*(Pause)*

John Starks ain't got no championship. Close but he ain't got any.

*(Pause)*

Our championship year we had Bobby Jones, Moses Malone, Andrew Toney, and the glorious Maurice Cheeks, with that wavy hair...OH MY. All of them could have beat down your puny little John Starks and that Knicks team back then.

Kyoko

We have old Japanese say: Warui wa ne naruto. Watashi, anta no sono kanaisou mo nai yume tsubusa-sentakunai mitai.

Clair

Say what now...

Kyoko

It means: "I'm sorry, Naruto... I don't want to crush that impossible dream of yours!"

Clair

You called me a Nar- what I 'm no Nara anything..

Kyoko

My 1994 Knicks would have destroyed your 83 sixers... Ewing is better than anyone on that team. Period.

Clair

Oh, Lord. You have done lost your mind now. Well like Dr. King said You had a Dream!

*(Enters Jimmy.)*

Jimmy

Hey. Hey. Hey. What is going on in here?

*(Pause)*

Clair

Nothing. We were just having a friendly discussion about basketball.

Kyoko

Yup. That is all. Just chatting about the Knicks.

Clair

Sixers.

Kyoko

Knicks.

Clair

SIXERS.

Kyoko

KNICKS!

Jimmy

Ok. OK. I get it. They both are horrible franchises.

Kyoko

Clair

Whatever.

Whatever.

Blackout

Act 1

Scene 5

*In the garage apartment, Dontae is working on his computer. Sitting next to him is a stack of papers. He checks something on paper, compares it with info on his computer- something doesn't look right- he circles something on the paper. Noah opens the door...*

Noah

Knock. Knock...

Dontae

Oh, hey man. How are you doing?

Noah

I'm doing better than you are, cause I'm not working on a Saturday.

Dontae

Well, shit needs to get done. Besides, I'm new and want to impress. I wanted to thank you again for helping me get this job.

Noah

Oh, I didn't do much I just introduced you to the head of my department, and then you went on to bedazzle them with your charm.

Dontae

Well, thank you.

Noah

I'm about to go golfing with some of the boys, and I will let them know you are working hard, even on a Saturday...

Dontae

That would be helpful.

Noah

Come on, it's the least I can do for my dear old friend. I'm glad you are part of the team, Donald. Oh, and I'm glad you went with my suggestion about the name thing.

Dontae

I still can't believe I had to do that. I sent out almost 100 resumes with "Dontae" and no one called. When I changed to "Donald", after just 5 resumes sent out, I got called in.

Noah

But you should've done a little more research on that one company because they sure went down quick.

Dontae

Man! I was just happy to get an offer. I grab that job as fast as I could. If it wasn't for the market crash they would've been alright.

Noah

Yeah, the crash scared a lot of people. So much so that we might have a damn (slight pause) a... Democrat as our next president.

Dontae

What?

Noah

I don't know what makes people think these damn liberals can change the financial markets around. These pussy asses started this mess with their wussy policies, to begin with. And those damn regulations!

Dontae

But Obama seems to be a smart one.

Noah

A smart what?

Dontae

Liberal. What the hell did you think I meant.

Noah

Wait. Are you sweet on Obama?

(Pause)

Are you thinking about voting for him??

Dontae

In these times, I just think he might be what's best for our country right now.

Noah

What? You are going to vote for a Liberal. A fucking Liberal! What has gotten into you, Donald?

(Pause)

We were ruthless in The Young Republicans club when we were in college. You yourself were thinking about running for office as an Ultra conservative. What is going through your mind NOW?

Dontae

We liked the young Republicans because we were intelligent, we were leaders, and we didn't take any crap from no one.

Noah

Yes. That is right.

Dontae

And I feel Obama possesses those same qualities no matter what party he's running for. He seems more like a conservative to me. Well, more of a liberal conservative.

Noah

Are you out of your skull!

(Pause)

Are you sure that's what it is??

Dontae

What do you mean?

*(Noah stares at Dontae as to say "you know what I mean".)*

Noah

Come on...are you sure it's not because of.....

*(He points to Dontae's skin. Dontae thinks about it for a second.)*

Dontae

No!

No, it's not because he's black. It's all about his character. He has a great character.

Noah

Well, I beg to differ. He is the most liberal piece of shit to ever run for office in the history of politics! I think you are making a huge mistake.

*(Molly enters the apartment. She is freshly clean with a towel on her head.)*

Dontae

Hey babe. You remember Noah, don't you?

Molly

Oh yeah. It's been a while. How are you doing?

Noah

I'm fine, even with some change of events. You are looking lovely as ever Molly...(slight awkward pause) Look, Donald, I need to be going. You should rethink what we talked about.

Dontae

I don't see anything to think more about. Have a good game of golf.

*(Awkward moment)*

Noah

Well, it was good seeing you again Molly.

*(He exits.)*

Molly

Damn. It seems like everyone is in a bad mood.

Donate

What do you mean?

Molly

Well, I think your Grandmom and Kyoko got into an argument.

Dontae

Really?

Molly

Yeah. And I think it was over basketball.

Dontae



Oh yeah...I know.

(Pause)

Do you think I could lose my job if I vote for Obama?

Molly

What?

Blackout

Act 2

Scene 1

*It's late at night. Clair is in the kitchen at the stove. She pours some milk into a pan, and she turns on the flame. She takes a box of Tastykakes, cream-filled krumpets, from the cabinet. An eerie feeling races down her spine. As she turns towards the table, a shadowy figure appears.*

Bernice

You sure didn't have to talk to that girl like that...

Clair

Holy crap! You scared the Bejesus out of me.

Bernice

Yeah, I've been known to do that.

Clair

Well, stop it.

Bernice

How am I supposed to stop it? All I have is the sound of my voice.

Clair

Ok. OK.

Bernice

Why did you get into an argument with that young girl... You should've let that go.

Clair

I don't know. She just bugged me.

Bernice

Really? That is all?

Clair

Yeah, sort of.

(Pause)

How is she going to sit there and tell ME about basketball? What does she know? I mean how does she know?

Bernice

You mean how does she know because she's Asian?

Clair

No. I mean yeah. That's not what it's about.

Bernice

Up until last week, you were calling all Asians - Oriental.

Clair

It's sort of about that...

(pause)

Bernice

Come on, spit it out. I have all the time in the world, literally, But you only have a limited amount of time. And I'm trying to help you out with your human endeavors. So talk to me, Clair.

Clair

Ok. It's just... Does she want to be with my boy because he reminds her of all those basketball players she's been watching since childhood? Almost a fetish type of thing?

Bernice

Oh, I see... A Black fetish?

(pause)

Many different races of people play basketball. So don't judge so quickly. We could say the same thing about him... They fetish them Asian girls' something fierce.

Clair

Yeah. I know... Well, I guess it's better than him coming home with a...

(pause)

with a...

Bernice

With a guy. He has never said he was gay, so why do you keep bringing it up?

Clair

Cause, I keep hearing things.

Bernice

Do you mean from Edna?

Clair

Among others.

Bernice

Stop listening to "gossip" Edna. She's just going to irritate you, Clair. Do you hear me?

Clair

Yeah, I know, and she does.

Bernice

Don't let anyone take your happiness away from you no matter how persuasive they may seem.

Clair

Got it.

(pause)

But what about you?

Bernice

What do you mean?

Clair

You said this week we could talk about you. How you came here and why you're giving pep talks to earthlings like me instead of flying around in the heavens...

Bernice

Pep talks? Girl, When I came to you, you were losing your mind. You were seriously depressed. The medications weren't working anymore. And you started praying like 3 times a day. Nothing was working.

Clair

Yeah, I know.

Bernice

You were still depressed about your son who, well you know. God rest his soul.

Clair

Yeah, I know.

Bernice

Your grandson's mother has been missing for a long time. Your one grandson is a Conservative Republican and only seems to date white girls, ...you complain, complain, complain.....

Clair

I get it...

Bernice

I was just sick of listening to all that mess from afar...

Clair

OK! I get it. Damn!... You sure are one snarky son of a gun.

(Pause)

(Clair seems ready to leave)

Bernice

But to be fair...

(pause)

Well, let's see..... North Carolina is where I came from in America. My mother and father were never together, considering he was her master. He was the one who sold us off. We ended up here in Bryn Mawr cause my momma was a hard sell back south because she was a tweener.

*(Clair looks at her with confusion.)*

You know kinda like basketball. She didn't fit into one specific position. She wasn't light skin enough, and wouldn't kiss anyone's ass enough to work in the house, and too frail to work in the field. She was between two posit...

Clair

I get it. Damn.

Bernice

Well, the north was more lenient about those things. During that long buggy ride, I got sick, I mean really sick. I couldn't move half of my body. Those white folks saw that and condemned me as useless. They dug a ditch and threw me in it. "But she is breathing!" My momma yelled. But they paid her no mind. They held her back with their white crusty hands. As they covered me, dirt shot down my throat as I tried to yell for my Momma. It suffocated me... The last thing I remember seeing were tears coming down my momma's face. She was helpless. And that happened right across the street there.

*(She points in the direction of the porch.)*

That parking lot is where they used to sell us, and the little dirt area next to it is where they buried me.

(Pause)

Clair

So, that's why the garden?

Bernice

Yup. Trying to make something beautiful out of ugliness,  
And that's why the one day I saw you crying with such deep  
pain... Well...

(Pause)

Clair

Well, thank you. You came in a time of need.

Bernice

Still, I can't help but think of my momma when I look at that  
once disgusting area. Well, the flowers and veggies help...

Clair

But aren't you with your momma now? In heaven?

Bernice

How many times do I have to tell you? That kinda relationship  
stuff is over when you get here. Listen, when I'm trying to help  
you out while you are living in this earthly body. You need to  
start paying attention. Damn.

Clair

Jesus, you sure have a mouth on you!

Bernice

So. You are so stubborn sometimes.

Clair

Sometimes, you better watch your mouth. Or...

Bernice

Or what?

Clair

Or...

(Pause)

Or...

(Clair is speechless)

Bernice

Just start paying attention a little better and everything will be alright.

Clair

I am paying attention! Living is not easy and it's something YOU haven't had to do for a long time!

Bernice

Easy Clair.

Clair

What, you only lived an emotional life for like 15 years.

Bernice

Hey! In my time that was pretty long.

Clair

And you didn't experience tough times?

(pause)



Living can suck. All the shit we have to do just to get by, and just end up in debt-financially and emotionally. It's just ridiculous.

*(Kyoto begins to enter but retreats when she sees Clair speaking)*

Bernice

I understand...

Clair

How do you understand? When you were a slave, you woke up in the morning and you would go to the fields or those big fancy houses, and 'yes' I know you worked hard, but did you have to think about what job you needed to do? Or how you were going to eat? Or what bills needed to be taken care of? Or how you were going to pay for all those GOD DAMN FUCKING TAXES!

*(Short Pause)*

Sometimes, I'd rather be dead.

*(Longer Pause)*

Bernice

Ok. Now, are you done with your bitching and whining?

Clair

What kind of asshole therapist are you?? Shouldn't you be more comforting? Or at least get me to think more positive?

Bernice

Oh lord! Here we go with you lazy humans and your positive thinking crap. So, I'm not a nice spirit, get over it! I am trying to help you out by being as honest as possible.

Clair

OK. So, I can't think positive is what you're saying?

Bernice

No. I mean yes, you can have positive feelings, and experiences, but you HAVE to deal with the negatives. Make sure they are negatives, to begin with, and not your ego avoiding tough situations or wanting something you don't need, and then getting your feelings hurt when you don't get it.

Clair

But these white people seem happy all the time. They are always reading those positive thinking books....

Bernice

Stop comparing yourself with these fools. Those fools bought positive feeling books from other fools who are just trying to take all the money out of your pocket. Those smiles you see are fake. Those smiles are for other people to see. If you see them in their quiet times, when they are alone, they are miserable. They are as emotionally confused as you are.

(Pause)

Well, anyway you need to get some sleep, so you can be less emotional and more productive.

Clair

Ok.

Bernice

And stop watching so much TV.

Clair

Ok.

*(They both get up to leave. Bernice is still chatting. Her voice fades out as she exits.)*

Bernice

Do you know how much time you waste watching other people's fake lives on TV?

*(When they are gone, Kyoko pops out from the other room, she shakes her head in disbelief.)*

Act 2

Scene 2

*Jimmy is lying in bed reading a book titled "The Best That Money Can't Buy: Beyond Politics, Poverty, and War." by Jacque Fresco. Jimmy's room is small and looks like it hasn't changed in decor since he was a little kid. His bed is barely full size and barely fits two people. Kyoko enters the room still shocked by what she witnessed in the kitchen.*

Jimmy

Hey babe, listen to this. "Deeply rooted cultural norms that assume someone must lose for someone else to gain (scarcity at its most basic) still dictate most of our decisions. For example, we still cling to concepts of competition and accept inadequate compensation for people's efforts, (i.e., minimum wage)." "If our system continues without modification involving environmental and social concerns, we will face an economic and

social breakdown of our outworn monetary and political system.”  
Damn!

Kyoko

I know babe. It's great, but how many times have you read this book.

Jimmy

About 5 times, but I pick up something new every time I read it. Like this...

*He turns to another saved page.*

“ Resolving conflicts on the basis of mutual “understanding” is a myth. For example, the likelihood of Jewish people resolving their conflict with Nazis through a free exchange of views is extremely remote, if not impossible. The same would be true if a well educated African American attempted to resolve conflict with white supremacist organizations. Or a scientist tried sharing the theory of evolution with a religious fundamentalist. This illustrates that humans, as yet, are not rational beings.”  
Man, oh man, Jacque Fresco is amazing.

Kyoko

Yes. Jacque Fresco is smart. I get it.

(Pause)

Does your grandma take any medications?

*(Jimmy is so involved with his book that he doesn't hear this.)*

Jimmy

That's why it's hard for me to communicate with certain people because they're not rational... Especially my damn brother.

Kyoko

Jimmy?!?! Is your grandmother well?

Jimmy

What do you mean? What happened??

Kyoko

Well... I think I saw something.

(Pause)

She was talking to herself.

Jimmy

What? I mean who doesn't talk to themselves. I do it all the time.

Kyoko

You do?

Jimmy

Yeah. It's not a big deal. Nothing to freak out about.

Kyoko

But she was...It seemed like she was having a full conversation with someone who wasn't there. They, I mean, she got into a deep argument.

Jimmy

Are you sure about this, Really?

*(Kyoko is starting to doubt herself.)*

Kyoko

Yes. I mean I think so... I was going to get some water and then I saw her sitting at the table. I was going to apologize to her for how I acted with that basketball conversation...you know how I can get passionate about the Knicks...

Jimmy

I sure do.

Kyoko

I was about to approach her...then I saw her arms moving around like she was expressing herself to someone, but no one was there. She was cursing at someone or something, and I could've sworn you said she doesn't even allow cursing in this house.

Jimmy

And she doesn't.

Kyoko

That's why this whole scene looked odd. Does Dementia run in your family?

Jimmy

No. Not that I know of. I just think you are blowing this way out of proportion.

Kyoko

I don't think so...unless...

*(Kyoko looks uneasy as she studies the room with her eyes.)*

Blackout

Act 2

Scene 3

*Dontae is lying in bed working on his computer, his iPad, and his phone. He is focused. Molly is lying next to him studying the cracks on the ceiling.*

Molly

So.....

It's Dontae?

*(No answer)*

Or do you prefer Donald?

*(Still no answer)*

I mean I prefer Donny, actually.

Or Don. Yeah, I like Don. Like Don Johnson from Miami Vice.

I used to watch that show in reruns on some channel when I was in college.

*(Dontae is too focused on his work to engage in her conversation.)*

I can dig Dontae, Dontae. I don't see any reason why you had to hide it from me. But Donald...well I am not a fan ...but

Dontae

What are you saying to me right now? I have this project I'm working on and the deadline is creeping up on me.

Molly

What I'm saying is... why did you choose the name, Donald? What is wrong with your real name?

Dontae

You don't like Donald. What's wrong with Donald?

Molly

You sound like one of those rich arrogant assholes who play golf all day and cheats on his wife all night. And besides, it's not the name your mom gave you. Does your family know about this?

Dontae

First of all, I haven't seen my mother in years so why would she care? Second, the rest of my family doesn't need to know. And If they did know my reasoning, it would be alright with them.

Molly

And what reasoning would that be?

(Pause)

Dontae

My resume.

Molly

You're what?

Dontae

My resume.

(Pause)

Dontae doesn't look good on resumes to potential employers.

Molly

Are you serious?

Dontae

Yeah.

(Pause)

When I lost my crappy job at JP Morgan, I tried applying for jobs everywhere, all the big banks and then I tried the small banks. I couldn't get an interview with anyone. Then Noah suggested I change my name a little...at first, I was like "this is ridiculous!" Then weeks went by and still nothing, then I said to myself "what do I have to lose." And I'm sitting watching news about the election and Donald Trump pops up on the screen. He was talking to a reporter about how he thought



Hillary Clinton was such a great person and how she would make a great president. And it just clicked. Donald and Dontae are close enough. And Donald Trump is known to be a big money man. And that was it...

Molly

Like I said "Donald"=Rich-Arrogant-Asshole; who plays golf all day and cheats on his wife all night. Oink-Oink-Oink!

Dontae

Well, at least, the NAME is associated with money.

Molly

But doesn't that make you feel "fake"?

Dontae

It was just to get an interview. It's the hardest part for black folks, especially in the corporate world, IS to get in the door. Luckily Noah worked there as well.

Molly

But wait. If Noah worked there, why would you have to change your name? Wouldn't his reference be enough?

Dontae

You would think so, but it wasn't.

Molly

Damn.

(Pause)

Dontae

You know what Molly...

(Pause)

Being in the finance world is not like anything how I thought it would be. I thought once I started making money or making a bucket load of money for others, then green would be the only color they would see... But I was wrong. Dead wrong, and it's even making me see other black folks in a horrible light. I'm even seeing them as criminals or stupid..... I can't believe this. I can't believe I'm saying this. What is happening to me?

(He gets emotional)

Being black always seems to be an issue.

Molly

At least you are aware of it.

*(Molly holds Dontae. They kiss.)*

I'm always aware of it when black women see us together.

Dontae

You mean like at the supermarket the other day?

Molly

Yeah. I mean damn, it's 2008 already and they act as they've never seen an interracial couple before. I can literally see steam rising from the top of their heads when I hold your hand. It seems like you don't even notice.

Dontae

Oh, I notice, it's just that I don't care. I have been going to that supermarket for years, and none of those women ever paid me no mind. They never even looked me in the eyes when I was paying for my milk. But as soon as I walk in there with a white

girl. Well, OMG what do we have here? I get all kinds of looks like "how dare you?!" "You sell out!". I wish I could've gotten this much attention when it was just me and my milk.

Molly

Why would they ignore you like that? I mean you're good-looking, sweet, and generous. You lacked some style before you met me, but you weren't that bad.

Dontae

I don't know...

(Pause)

But you know what really bothers me?

(Slight pause)

It's the way white men talk to you right in front of me.

Molly

What? What do you mean? Talk? Men can't talk to me?

Dontae

You know what I mean.

Molly

No. I don't.

Dontae

They flirt with you right in front of me like I'm not even there. Like I'm invisible. They would ask you on a date if I didn't interject with some fake conversation. They are taking off your clothes with their eyes...

Molly

Are you serious? Do they do that? And you exaggerating?

Dontae

Yeah, they do it all the time.

Molly

How come you never said anything?

Dontae

I thought you knew. And I thought we had a quiet understanding of what was going on.

Molly

I had no clue, babe. So you think those guys were rude like that because you're black?

Dontae

Rude? Rude?? They dismiss me.

Molly

What do you mean "they dismiss" you?

Dontae

I AM NOTHING TO THEM!

(pause)

So much so, KNOWING we are a couple, they still feel like they could steal you away from me.

Molly

Like I am property!?!?

Dontae

Yes.

Molly

Well, fuck you Donald, or Dontae. Whatever the hell you want to be called. I'm no one's property! Don't you ever think that thought in your fucking head again? No white guy is ever going to take me away from you. That's just stupid talk.

Dontae

But maybe another black guy?

Molly

*(She punches him in the arm.)*

NO FUCKING GUY...

*(Pause)*

OK. No one is going to steal me away from you. If I want to leave, it will be because I want to leave. It will be about me. Not some nimrod.

*(Pause)*

And I wish I could say I understand what it's like to be black, but I can't and never will. But the one thing that I promise is to stand up to any racist MF'er who I ever encounter. Even you.

*(She punches him in the arm.)*

Dontae

Ow! Damn! All those classes are making you think you're all tough now.

*(He moves all his stuff out of way and grabs her. She flips him over and pins him quickly. He maneuvers his way out. They play wrestle as- Black Out)*

Act 2

Scene 4

Clair sits on the porch staring out to the audience like she is in a trance or meditation.

Bernice is working in the garden.

Edna enters with a shopping cart. Inside the cart is one large watermelon. Edna is now wearing more Obama accessories. Along with a sweatshirt, she now has on an Obama hat and a large Obama pin.

Edna

Hey Clair.

*(No answer.)*

Clair.

*(No answer.)*

Clair!

*(Still silence.)*

CLAIR! Shit!

Clair

You need to watch your mouth around here.

Edna

I have been trying to get your attention. I am technically not in your house so I can use the language I want. Besides, you are just staring out into space and all.

Clair

I just didn't see you there.

*Clair still staring out in a daze.*

Edna

And you also didn't hear me either. What are you staring at anyway? There's nothing there but a freakin' parking lot.

Clair

Do you think it's true?

Edna

What's true?

Clair

The slaves and all. Being you know....over there?

Edna

That's what this is all about? I guess so. Anything is possible. But why, are you worried about that now?? Slavery. Huh?! Come on Clair its 2008 baby.....

*Clair finally notices the watermelon in the shopping cart.*

Clair

What in god's name is that?

Edna

(Very Proud)

It's a watermelon.

Clair

I can see that, but why are you walking around with a watermelon in a shopping cart???

Edna

It's just something I picked up at ACME Grocery.

( proud of herself)

I've been thinking about this for a long time. Finally, I don't have to feel self-conscious about buying a full-size watermelon. All these years, I had to buy the chunky style from the salad bar. Today I felt it, at first, I was just going in there to pick up some Icy Hot for my muscles cause they've been sore from all the working out I've been doing. But as soon as I walked in, I saw it, they had this big fruit display with the main fruit, a big old watermelon. Then it hit me. I'm going to buy this ONE. (pause) But I waited, Clair, I waited till only white people were around. I pulled that melon down, and it was a heavy son of a bitch. This young black man, who worked there, came up to me." Can I help you, ma'am?" I said, and I threw him some young folk slang, "Nah, I got this!". He sat there and laughed. So I rolled that bitch into a position where I could handle it. I bent my knees and contracted my butt, that's a thing now, that's what they tell you to do in them workout videos, you gotta contract your butt to protect your lower back. That's what I did, and I picked up that son of a bitch like it was nothing. Trying to walk with that bitch was something else, I felt like I could have picked up and carried a car if she wanted to that day...and oh Clair!

(she laughs)

You should've seen the look on all those white people's faces when I placed that what big Ol hunk of melon on the checkout counter. Well, I thought it was the fact that they never seen an old black woman carry a watermelon through an ACME like that before. It was partly that, but also when I had lifted the melon it had pulled my dress up, so my panties and stockings were showing. So I pulled them down right quick, it was no big deal. So the white checkout man looks at me, he looks at the melon, he looks at me again and my Obama attire... Oh! I was ready to let him have it... I was ready to let him know how long I have been waiting for this moment. To be able to walk in a store with my



head held high and buy a WHOLE watermelon, or fried chicken, or pigs feet without feeling like white folks judging me as a common nigger! I was ready to explain to this cracker what his people did to us with all the gory details, and what buying this simple fruit means to me, means to us!  
(pause)

Clair

And what happened.

Edna

Do you know what this fool said to me? He said, "This one looks ripe and ready to go". "What?" I said. He said it again. Surer than before. "This one looks really ripe and ready to eat, ma'am". What the fuck did he mean by that?

Clair

He meant you got a good watermelon...

Edna

I know... god damn it! The fucker knocked the wind out of my sails is all. To be honest, after I fixed my dress from being stuck, none of those white folks paid me no mind. Even the white manager came over and asked if I wanted the watermelon delivered. I said "No" I can do it by myself. So here...here you go Clair. You can feed that United Nations you now have in your house.

Clair

Edna, you are just as crazy as you can be...

*(Edna straggles off stage.)*

Blackout

Act 3

Scene 1

Kyoko is cooking a traditional Asian meal at the stove. She guides Jimmy along as he tries to help. The watermelon sits on the table.

Kyoko

Can you grab me the soy sauce from the cabinet?

Jimmy

Do we have Soy sauce?

Kyoko

No, but I went out and bought some. I had to buy everything. You guys had nothing I needed.

Jimmy

What did you expect? I told you that you're the first Asian person to set foot in this house.

Kyoko

Well, I thought most Americans were at least familiar with soy sauce.

Jimmy

Well, we are not most Americans.

*(Clair enters. She's taken aback at what she witnesses.)*

Clair

What in the....

What is going on in MY kitchen?

Jimmy

Kyoko wanted to surprise you with a meal that she sometimes makes for me.

Clair

She "sometimes" makes for you? You two sure have spent some time together. And how come this is the first time I've met her? I didn't know you dated um... I didn't know you two were even dating.

*Clair reluctantly sits.*

*(Pause)*

Kyoko

Well, Jimmy says he wanted to make sure that this was the REAL thing before I was allowed to meet you.

Clair

So is this the REAL thing?

Jimmy

I think it is.

Clair

Oh. Really? OK.

*(Enter Dontae and Molly.)*

*(A moment later, Bernice walks in as well. She walks around the kitchen, and she tries some of what Kyoko is cooking. She gracefully waves her arms around. The lights flicker. No one has seen this except for Clair. Bernice gracefully exits.)*

Dontae

Oh. I thought when you told us to come to dinner I thought you were...

Clair

Kyoko took it upon herself to make us a nice Orien... Asian meal. Wasn't that nice of her.

Molly

That's great! I haven't had good Japanese food since my mom took me out in Houston.

Clair

Oh, you're from Texas. You don't have one of those accents though.

Molly

I took many theater classes when I was in school and they trained the accent out of me.

Clair

Oh. So you're an actress?

Molly

Well, not really anymore. I work in advertising. But if an opportunity came along, who knows, because I miss the theater.

Dontae

Really?

Molly

Yeah. I thought we talked about that.

Dontae

No. I don't think so..

Molly

Well, you know how much I loved acting and dancing.

Jimmy

Did you dance too? Kyoko is a dancer or used to.

Molly

Really Kyoko? Did you dance for a company?

Kyoko

No. But I tried. I lived in NYC for a while. I was trying to dance for the Alvin Ailey dance company. OMG, they are one of the best companies I have ever seen. The company toured Japan when I was little and it inspired me to dance. They have just amazing dancers with beautiful alignments. A very disciplined company.

Clair

You mean that black dance group in Harlem or something.

Jimmy

They are mixed now, Grandma.

Kyoko

Yeah. Really mixed, and the company is in Midtown, Manhattan.

Molly

Alvin is from Roger, Texas, just a short drive from where I'm from in Houston. They even have a street named after him there.

Dontae

This is all interesting and wonderful, but I would love to eat something before I get back to work. I know that is not something some of you are familiar with(looks at Jimmy), so I will eat anything Asian you put in front of me.

*(Molly nudges Dontae.)*

Molly

Come on be nice. I just think you are little hangry

Clair

Hangry?

Jimmy

It just means his hunger is making him angry. Or it just makes him an ass, or just a little more an ass than usual.

Kyoko

Ok, Jimmy... I think you need something to eat too.

Jimmy

That's OK, unlike some people I have a plethora of patience.

Dontae

You should use that plethora and get yourself a job. And stop mooching off of Grandma.

(Awkward pause)

Clair

Come on now Dontae, you know Jimmy helps out a lot around here.

Jimmy

Don't you mean 'Donald' grandma? I think you meant to call him 'Donald'...Isn't that right DONALD?

Clair

What? What is he talking about Dontae? Why should I call you Donald? That doesn't make any sense.

Jimmy

Cause he is ashamed of his name Grandma. It sounds too black I suppose...

*(Molly and Kyoko are now sitting and are slouched down feeling uncomfortable.)*

(pause)

You know all this info is on the internet, Donald. Donald E. Montgomery to be precise. And it's clever to make your middle name your last and your last name the middle...

Dontae

So what Jimmy? I was doing the best for my future. Something you have no care in doing. I heard what you said before we came in, you think this (he points to Kyoko and back to Jimmy) is real? How is it? How in the hell are you going to pay for anything? A place to live? Food to eat? Clothes to wear? And what about kids, your future. YOU DON'T HAVE A FUTURE.

Jimmy

Because I live in the present. You don't even know what living is. All you do is gamble all day with other people's money.

Dontae

It's a job!

Jimmy

Gambling in the stock market is a job???

Dontae

Nothing on this planet would work without the stock market. It is everything America was built on and believes in, and the rest of the world wishes they could be like us!

Jimmy

You talk nonsense. Your beliefs are built on an outdated system that causes more harm than good all over the world. I have a question. How much money have you made from the "market" so far? (pause) huh? (pause) Not much I bet cause those rich white guys are making the money. In the stock market, you need money to make money and YOU, you are just the farmer watering their fields. Or a slave picking their cotton.

Dontae

I AIN'T NO MOTHEFUCKING SLAVE! I am a well adjusted human being living with the realities of life. YOU are living in the clouds. Reading and quoting from all those stupid books! Money equals life. You are too lazy to deal with getting a decent job so you can raise a family. Or maybe your ridiculous life of a bisexual is your way to hide from your responsibilities of being a man!

(Long awkward pause)

Kyoko

A what? A bisexual?

Dontae

Oh, you didn't know, Kyoko? Well, I'm sure you could've looked it up on the internet.

Clair

ALL RIGHT! THAT IS ENOUGH!

(pause)

Have you finished with your whining?

Dontae

No, actually. Tell him, grandmother.

Clair

Tell him what?

Dontae

You know about the house.



Clair

Come on Dontae, we don't have to discuss that here and now. You have already exposed enough.

Dontae

No. I would like to talk about it now.

Molly

I think you guys need to talk alone.

Kyoko

I agree.

*(They both leave.)*

Clair

What is wrong with you two?!

Dontae

I'm fine. Jimmy is the one who has the problem. Like where is he going to live?

Jimmy

What?

Clair

Come on now Dontae.

Dontae

You know what, I like Donald better, so call me that from now on.

Clair

Your mama named you Dontae so I'm going to call you Dontae!

Dontae

If you haven't noticed she is not around, she's never been around, so I can do what I want.

Jimmy

You're a fool, DONTAE!

Dontae

We will see who the fool is when I put your butt out on the street, so you can finally fend for yourself.

Jimmy

You?

Dontae

Yes me. The house will be in MY name. And YOU will have to learn to fly, bitch.

(Jimmy looks at Clair in disbelief. He exits abruptly.)

(As Jimmy leaves Noah can be seen at the front door.)

Clair

You know that was not right, Dontae.

Noah

Knock. Knock.

*(The tension is thick.)*

Is everything alright? I can come back later.

Clair

Yes.

Dontae

No.

Dontae

No. Everything is fine. We were just having a family discussion.

*(Clair exits in a huff.)*

Noah

It doesn't seem fine.

Dontae

Well, it's fine for now.

Noah

OK.

*(pause)*

So, how is work going?

Dontae

Um, it's alright. A lot more work than at JP Morgan. But nothing I can't handle.

Noah

Ok. That's good to hear. Good to hear. Good-to-hear...

Dontae

Is something wrong?

Noah

Nothing's wrong. I was playing golf with Jessup. Don't worry. He says you are doing a great job.

(pause)

Maybe too good of a job.

Dontae

What does that mean? How can someone do too good of a job?

Noah

He said you emailed him something.....something you found on numerous accounts he said he never assigned you.

Dontae

But I found some discrepancies in a few of my accounts linked with these other accounts. The accounts looked kind of shady, and I thought he should be aware of the issue.

Noah

I hear what you're saying.

(pause)

You shouldn't work so hard. I know you want to make a good impression, but you should enjoy yourself as well.

Dontae

But I do enjoy this work.

Noah

Other than work. Look, Jessup wants you to come to the club, hang out, smoke some stogies, play some rounds, and schmooze a little. Does that sound good?

Dontae

Yeah, I guess.

Noah

Ok. That's good. We will make that happen soon.  
(Molly enters.)

Molly

Oh, hey Noah.

Noah

Hey.  
(awkward pause)

Well, I gotta go. We will chat more.  
(He exits.)

Molly

I don't know about him. He's a little odd.

Dontae

Yeah, he is a little strange at times but harmless.

Molly

If you say so.  
(pause)

So, you sure caused some firestorm.

Dontae

Well, it had to be done. He is so fucking immature. I can't take it.

Molly

But in front of everyone?!? Why did you have to do it that way? She is out there on the phone talking, so fast in Japanese with tears just streaming down her face. Why?

(pause)

Huh? Why?

(He says nothing)

If you ever, and I mean ever talk that way about me in front of other people, we are over! And I would NEVER speak to you again!

(She turns to leave)

Dontae

Where are you going?

Molly

Home.

(pause)

I fell in love with you because you were sweet, kind, and driven. Even with all the Republican stuff, which you know I don't agree with, but growing up, my father who also was a conservative, "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" kind of guy just like you. So maybe that's why I was attracted to you as well, but... I.I...I...

Dontae

Why are you leaving? I did nothing to you.

Molly

It's not what you did, but what you didn't do.

Dontae

What? What the hell are you talking about?

Molly

You should've stuck up for your brother....

*(She heads out the door, but turns to Dontae.....)*

*(pause)*

My brother was gay too.

*(She leaves.)*

*(Dontae is dumbfounded.*

*He doesn't move.)*

Dontae

"Was?" Come on, that's not the only reason....

*(Before he finishes she leaves.)*

Act 3 scene 2

It's the middle of the night and Clair is in the kitchen stirring a small pot of warm milk. A weird feeling comes over her. The lights flicker a little. It's Bernice.

Bernice

Wow. That was some interesting night you had. Very entertaining.

Clair

Look, Bernice, I'm not in the mood.

Bernice

I can see why. Some real info got put out in the open.

Clair

What am I doing wrong? What?

*(Clair is almost in tears.)*

I thought I was doing the right things. I followed God's words. I prayed and I even followed YOUR words.

Bernice

Trust me things will work out. It's just the beginning. The first thing that needed to happen was honesty. And we had some of that tonight and then some didn't we...

Clair

Yeah, I guess. But what good will it do?

Bernice

Healing. And that's a good thing.

Clair

I hope you are right.

Bernice

Trust me.

*(pause)*

You are a good woman, Clair. And you are loved. Just remember that. Don't be so hard on yourself and enjoy the moments. You



have limited time here. So enjoy it. Also, you need to get out more. You know the sun? ... Get into it more often.

Clair

I get it. I get it...you keep telling me these things, but they don't affect how I feel today.

Bernice

I know everything seems daunting. But just remember to breathe. Deeply.

*(Clair just put her head down like she has stopped listening.)*

Clair?

*(She doesn't answer.)*

Clair, I need you to breathe for me. Look at me, Clair, I need you to breathe.

(pause)

Take a deep inhale.

(Clair contemplates. Then a moment later she inhales. And exhale.)

Again. Take a deep inhale.

*(Clair does again)*

And exhale.

*(Clair continues this repetition.)*

Clair, children are like a rose bush. You need to make sure they are planted in good soil. Water them, not too little or too much. And make sure they get plenty of sunshine. The roses will then grow when they want, and how they want. Just enjoy watching them sprout beautiful rose petals. BUT, be careful of the thorns.

(Clair is calm)

Clair

Thank you.

(Clair moves towards Bernice as if she is going to hug her.)

Bernice

Nope. Sorry. I don't do that. I'm not the hugging kind. Kidding, I'm black matter. You would just go right through me...

Clair

But I can see you.

Bernice

Do you really see me?  
(Clair looks befuddled.)

*Black Out*

Act 3 scene 3

It's morning. Kyoko is lying in bed, turned away from Jimmy who is sitting up reading a book. Kyoko's face is puffy from a long night of crying. Jimmy sits the book down and looks at Kyoko. He attempts to say something to her, but nothing comes out. He goes back to reading. He makes another attempt, but the same

result. Quiet. Kyoko's mind is elsewhere, then she turns to Jimmy.

Kyoko

I...I...

(pause)

*(She is almost in tears.)*

I don't...

I don't... Um

I'm not sure if...

(pause)

I don't know if I can do this anymore.

(long pause)

I just can't.

Jimmy

Why?

Kyoko

I just can't.

Jimmy

I didn't do anything to you.

Kyoko

I know. I just...

Jimmy

Do you think this is fair?

Kyoko

Maybe, I'm not a good person because someone else would deal with this better but...

Jimmy

But not you? Huh?

Kyoko

Yeah. Not me... I'm sorry Jimmy. I just can't.

Jimmy

Then go.

*(Kyoko gets out of bed and begins to dress.)*

Kyoko

I'm sorry.

Jimmy

Just go. Just leave.

*(Kyoko packs a small bag.)*

Kyoko

I'm sorry Jimmy, It's just too much for me...

Jimmy

Just shut up and go.

Kyoko

I'm sorry.

*(She exits.)*

Jimmy sits in the bed not knowing what to do or even how to move right now. He twitches. And then, starts rocking back and forth as he is going to have a breakdown.

*(a few more moments of this and then he spots the book he was reading and picks it up. "Freedom From the Known" by J.*

Krishnamurti. He turns a few pages in and begins to read, first to himself and then out loud.)

Jimmy

"Fear is not love, dependence is not love, jealousy is not love, possessiveness and domination are not love, responsibility and duty are not love, self-pity is not love, the agony of not being loved is not love, love is not the opposite of hate any more than humility is the opposite of vanity. So, if you can eliminate all these, not by forcing them but by washing them away as the rain washes the dust of many days from a leaf, then perhaps you will come upon this strange flower which man always hungers after."

(pause)

(Jimmy closes the book. He wants to scream. He wants to cry. He throws the book across the room.)

*Blackout*

Act 3

Scene 4

Dontae is chaotic in the apartment over the garage. The place is in disarray. He is frantically shredding papers. He stuffs the papers in a trash bag. He grabs his laptop computer and heads for the door, at that moment Molly emerges at the front door. Dontae is surprised. He puts the bag down by the door.

Molly

Hey. Are you busy?

Dontae

Um, I was just going to the office to take care of some stuff...

Molly

Ok. I just wanted to talk. I'm sorry I left so abruptly. It was a lot to process, and my brother is a painful subject for me and.....

Dontae

I know. Look, I just need to take care of a couple of things and will be back. But please stay. I want to talk to you.

Molly

Ok.

Dontae

Great. I will be back soon. OK?

Molly

Ok.

(Dontae begins to exit.)

Dontae

Don't leave.

Molly

Ok.

(Dontae exits.)

(Molly sits on the couch.

She notices what a real mess the place is in. She gets up and starts to straighten up. When she is satisfied enough with the cleanliness she sits back on the couch. She takes out a book from her bag and begins to read. It's the same book Jimmy was reading "Freedom From The Known, by J. Krishnamurti"...a few moments later BANG. BANG. BANG! Molly jumps. BANG. BANG. BANG! Again.)

Noah

Hey D! It's me man open up!

(Molly sits a moment. Maybe, he will go away. He seems agitated.)

(BANG.BANG. BANG!)

YO! Open up. It's an emergency!

(Molly has had enough. She goes and opens the door. Noah has had a few drinks. Maybe more than a few.)

Molly

Hey, Noah. Donald, I mean Dontae is not here. He had to run out.

Noah

Shit. Um... DO you know when he will be back?

Molly

I don't know. All he said was he wouldn't be long.

Noah

Shit. Ok.ok.ok. Um, do you mind if I just stay here cause I need to talk with him?

Molly

Did you call or text him?

Noah

Yeah. He did respond.

*(Noah stumbles a little.)*

Molly

Sure. You can wait here. Is there something wrong? Are you okay?

Noah

I'm fine. Everything's fine. I just have some business to discuss with my man, Donald.

Molly

Ok.

*(Molly goes back to the couch and picks up her book. Noah lurches around the apartment as to be looking for something.)*

Molly

What are you doing?

Noah

Ah. Nothing.

*(He sits on the couch with Molly. He notices the book she is reading.)*

What's that?

*(He reads the cover.)*

"Freedom from the Known"? "Krish-near-murti"?

Molly

Krish-na-murti. It's Spiritual Philosophy.

Noah



Oh. You one of those girls?

Molly

One of what girls?

Noah

You know. Those hippie-dippie girls. Peace and Love. Love everybody and everything...

Molly

Yeah. I guess...

Noah

Oh. That's why...

Molly

That's why what?

Noah

Oh. Nothing.

(Awkward pause)

(Noah jumps up.)

Does Donald have anything to drink around here?

Molly

Water.

Noah

No. I mean anything a little harder.

Molly

No. His mother keeps a dry house.

Noah

Isn't that surprising...

Molly

What did you mean by "that's why"?

Noah

You sure do ask a lot of questions for a pretty southern girl.  
I have a question for you?

(pause)

Does Donald treat you right?

Molly

What??

Noah

Well, I know he's probably doing something right with you.

*(Noah laughs.)*

Molly

I think you need to leave.

Noah

Hey, I'm just stating the obvious. But, what I want to know is  
if you are with him for anything more than that?

Molly

GET OUT!

*(Molly jumps up to distance herself from Noah.)*

*(Noah moves closer to Molly.)*

Noah

Have you ever dated a white guy before? Or have all these hippie-dippie books kept you from that?

Molly

You're a fucking child! A spoiled fucking child!

(Still, Noah moves closer to Molly.)

Noah

I'm just trying to help you out. Sometimes we end up places in life and wake up one day and say "how the hell did I end up here?!?"

Molly

Why the fuck would you care about me. You know nothing about me!

Noah

Come on..... I know.

Molly

The fuck you do. You know nothing.

*(Noah moves extremely close to Molly. He caresses her face gently. They intensely lock eyes. Molly gently takes Noah's hand, the same hand he used to embrace her face, She twists his wrist then elbow into a standing armbar. Noah screams in excruciating pain.)*

Noah

You fucking bitch! You're breaking my arm!

Molly

I could break your whole body if I wanted to.

*(Noah struggles to break free, but the more he struggles the greater the pain.)*

Noah

OK. OK. OK... I'm sorry.

*(Molly twists even harder)*

Please. Please. I'M SORRY!

*(Molly releases him.  
He gathers himself.)*

You're crazy!

Molly

No. Fuck this. You ALL are crazy!

*(She grabs her bag and exits.)*

*BLACKOUT*

Act 3 Scene 5

Clair, Dontae, and Jimmy are sitting at the dining table eating dinner in silence. The only thing that can be heard is the sound of forks hitting the ceramic plates. A long moment passes by.....

Clair

This house, oh my goodness, if this house could speak it would say so many devastating and beautiful things, but this house has been here for me, for all of us, for so many years... I could not fathom it going into some outsiders hands. This is our heritage. (Pause) You know that 15 people used to live under this roof at one time. Not long after slavery, my great-grandfather built this house with his bare hands, well that's how that tale went anyways. And his wife, my

great-grandmother would help every relative that she could to escape from the south. They would set up a reading quarters right over there on the side of the living room and that's where she would teach them to read. Letting this house go would be a tragedy. I will not let it go on account of bitterness between you two. The both of you not getting along is just petty and your relatives from the past will haunt you if you let this house go and let those folks at the university turn it into some damn frat house. Donte, I'm trust in you that you will never let that happen. If that happens I will haunt you my damn self. And you will let your brother live here as long as he need be! Do you understand?!?

Donte

But grandma...

Clair

This is not a discussion. (In and a loud and unearthly voice, different from her normal voice.) I HAVE SPOKEN!

(Then, the kitchen light dims a little like a storm just moved in and is sitting right over the house. The lights flicker a few times. But no one at the table notices. Then somewhere in the back of the kitchen, Beatrice appears. It looks like she is floating. She does some movements with her arms, around in the air, as if she is casting a spell. Beatrice floats around the table, she does an elaborate dance and then disappears.

*Then: The doorbell rings.*

Clair

I wonder who that could be. Was one of you having someone coming for dinner?

Jimmy

Dontae

No

Not me...

*Clair gets up and answers the door.*

*At the door stands Laverne, a tall, well-built woman. And Koffe, a tall, also well built, dark complexioned man. He has a slight accent. He is wearing a suit and a top hat. Both are well dressed and look like they could be catalog models.*

Clair

Laverne?

Laverne

Hi Clair.

Clair

Oh my goodness! I can't believe what I see...

*(She grabs Laverne and hugs her. They both get emotional.)*

Laverne

I missed you, Clair. I really did.

Clair

It's good to see you, and you are looking well.

Laverne

This is my fiance, Koffe Owusu.

Clair

Fiancee?

Laverne

Yes. He is from Ghana. Actually, that's where I live.

Clair

Africa? Oh my goodness.

*(Clair sits down. All this news is a bit much for her.)*

Koffe

It is a pleasure to meet you, Miss Ellis. I've heard a lot about you.

Clair

Sorry, but I don't know anything about you.

Laverne

Well, he's a lawyer in Ghana. And now, he's in the process of taking the bar exam in New York City.

Koffe

I've been studying day and night, so she can be closer to her family. But, I also have some family in Long Island.

Clair

Well, that is terrific...

Laverne

And Clair..... I have been clean for eight years. Nothing. No drugs. No alcohol. Just some fattening food is my only guilty pleasure. Well, it's part of my job now. I'm a chef. I opened a small soul food restaurant in Ghana and everyone went crazy for it..

Koffe

She is a wonderful cook. You taught her well, Miss Ellis.

Clair

This is all wonderful news.

(Pause)

But I think there is a couple of men you need to be reacquainting yourself. Donte! Jimmy! Come in here for a second.

Laverne

They're both here?!?

(A moment later Jimmy and Dontae enter.)

Jimmy

Yeah, grandma...

(He stops abruptly when he sees his mother)

Mom?

Dontae

What's going on?

(pause)

Mom?

Laverne

*(She cries.)*

My boys!

(pause)

*She holds her arms out for a hug, but both are reluctant to embrace her at first, but then give in. It's a long embrace. We can hear sobs, sobs, sobs.....as we go to blackout.*

Act 3

Scene 6



Clair is now working in the garden, not far from the porch, she seems blissful.

Enters a man in a suit. He looks lost.

Fred

Excuse me! Is this 200 Landover Rd?

Clair

Yes. Can I help you with something?

Fred

Yes, I'm Fred Johnson from the FBI.

Clair

Oh. Really?

Fred

Yes, ma'am.

I'm looking for a Donald E. Montgomery? I was told I could find him here.

Clair

What is this all about?

Fred

I'm working on an investigation that involves his employer. And I was told I could find Mr. Montgomery here. I need him to answer a few questions for me.

Clair

Well, no one by that name lives here.

Fred

I was told he might be staying here.

Clair

I'm sorry, but no one by that name is staying here. And I don't run any B & B. Only family stays here.

*(The man checks his info.)*

Fred

You haven't heard of Donald E. Montgomery living in the neighborhood?

Clair

Nope. Sorry. I will keep a look out for you if I do hear something.

Fred

Ok. Here is my card. And if you do hear anything, could you just give me a call?

Clair

I surely will.

Fred

Thanks. You have a good day.

Clair

And the same to you.

*(Fred exits.)*

*(Clair quickly goes back to her work.)*

*(Several moments later)*

*(Edna enters dressed in a cleaning maid type outfit. She is in a somber mood. She holds a letter.)*

Clair

Hey Edna.

(No answer)

What are you up to? I thought you would be throwing a big Obama celebration party.

Edna

I'm not in the mood.

Clair

Ok. You were the one who said you were going to party like it's the end of the world. You went on and on, and now you're not in the mood?

*(Edna hands Clair the letter.)*

What's this?

Edna

He left me.

Clair

Who?

*(Clair reads the letter.)*

Edna

Benson. He left me, Clair. Can you believe it? He even typed the letter. I didn't know he even knew how to use a computer.

Clair

But I thought you wanted it to be over? Isn't that what you said?

Edna

No. I said I wanted to leave HIM. Not HIM leaving ME!

(Edna cries.)

I wanted to leave him, damn it!

Clair

Sorry to hear. Well, he's gone, isn't he?.

Edna

Yeah, I guess so. I didn't realize it would hurt this bad...

(Pause)

*(Clair consoles her.)*

Well, I guess at least you've had some good news.

Clair

I guess you could say that. I haven't felt this good about my family for a long time. Laverne is a chef and owns a restaurant in Africa!

Edna

Wow. That sure is something.

Clair

Yes, it sure is. And you know what? I think our family can now heal. I mean really heal from the pain and truly live our lives with honesty.....

*(Clair stops in mid-sentence because she sees something in the distance.)*

Edna

What?

*(Edna turns to see what Clair sees. They both are statue still, with mouths on the floor. A few moments go by. We now see what*

*they see. Jimmy is holding hands with a young man, and is walking towards the house.)*

*Clair*

*Oh, shit.....*

*Black Out*

*End of Play*



