

Flor Underwater

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A full-length play

A riff on Bertoldt Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children*

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## CHARACTERS

FLOR (a.k.a MAMA) - female, middle aged, Latinx  
CHUCHI - female, teenager, Latinx  
LECHE - female, child, light-skinned Latinx, twin to CAFÉ  
CAFÉ - male, child, dark-skinned Latinx, twin to LECHE  
HIGHWAYMAN - male, middle aged, White  
MONTROSE - male, senior age, White  
HENNY- male, late teens to twenties  
CLUCK - male, late teens to twenties  
GLORIA - female, middle-aged, Latinx  
DALLAS - male, middle-aged, Miccosukee

SETTING: Florida in a distant but not-so distant future.

/ = Interruption by subsequent line

\* = New scene or shift in focus to another part of the space

NOTE: This play is intended to be performed in rising water, either real or creatively suggested. The space itself should suggest the geographic diversity of the play's various settings and moreover, of Florida. The water must come for all of it with the exception of Montrose's estate. I encourage fluidly shifting focus from one part of the space to another instead of scene changes or blackouts.

## ACT I - DESPERATE PEOPLE ARE GOOD FOR BUSINESS

We are near the I-95 overpass. A leathery, weather-beaten man runs through ankle-deep water towards us. In his hand is a scribbled sign: "US VET ANYTHING HELPS GOD BLESS." This is the HIGHWAYMAN.

## HIGHWAYMAN

Hey! HEY! Hold on now! Y'all going south to Miami? I'm not asking for money, juss saw ya'll pass under the bridge over there and was wondering if I can catcha ride. I'm tryin' to go west, cross Tamiami Trail.

No response.

I don't bite. Just heading to the Miccosukee Park and Casino. Know a couple boys on the rez over there. Good boys. They've got good shit. Real good shit. I can take you.

He awaits another response that still doesn't come.

Authorities turn a blind eye to it over there. There won't be trouble.

Beat.

I promise it's good shit.

Small pause.

You know, a big train used to run over that way, delivering rich folks to the furthest reach of the peninsula. West Palm Beach, where we are now, then Miami, then the Keys, then other long-gone places. Y'know, up and down the coast.

Yankees mainly, baking under that hot Florida sun in them big dresses and coat tails. Can you picture? They did away with the train... governer called it "wasteful spending," you know how it goes. Train used to take the special kids--not the retarded ones, the ones with brains-- to their schools. *Magnet*. But those kids...they leave the second they gets the chance to. Children don't grow any better in swampland than civilization.

And the gators, man... they come to take it all back. Mother ocean she's come to take it all back. Man destroys nature, nature destroys man. That's the way of it, right? We got them germs re-animated, the floods... and then the water table. Woo boy, the water table. Once all that saltwater pushes in, there goes the fresh drinking water.

Category two hurricane's churning a little ways off to the east...Atlantic's turned into a damn tea kettle. And we're the tea! Who knows? Maybe she's as doomed from the beginning. Ever since the Spanish put their spikes in her hostile earth.

He laughs.

That why ya'll on your way out of here, or naw?

Small pause.

Truth is, I don't think this drained swampland was made for much more than gators and Indians and cracker cowboys. Yes, sir. Mother nature! She's come to take it all back...

He scoops up a fistful of wet dirt mixed with broken glass and cigarette butts, and offers it as a gift.

Some of it natural, some of it man-made, some of it imported from far off places... Florida. Home. Course them rich Yanks decided to scoot and leave the rest of us behind...you know, the *rinds*.

A pause.

Listen, if you won't take me southwest, can you at least spare some change? A little something might get me a spot for the night...one of the love motels? Shelters are overcrowded. Or even some food?

Another pause.

Oh, fine. Drugs. I'm gonna do drugs with your money. No sense in lying to ya.' The Uncomfortable Times is hard and I'm jus' tryin' to get mine where I can.

A rumba beat sounds in the distance.

Oh shit, oh shit! Hallelujah!

FLOR and her kids, CHUCHI, CAFÉ, and LECHE enter on a busted-up shopping cart in full-throated song.

FLOR

LA DI DA DA DA EH DA DA

CHILDREN

EY MAMA, EY MAMA!  
EY MAMA, EY MAMA!

FLOR

WHEN THE SUN IS BEATING DOWN  
AND THERE'S NO WATER TO BE FOUND  
MAMA'S GOT YOU COVERED, LOVE  
WHEN HER CART BE COMIN' ROUND

CHILDREN

EY MAMA, EY MAMA  
EY MAMA, EY MAMA

FLOR

OR YOU'RE MISSING LUXURY  
ALMONDS, GRAPES, AND SWEET TEA  
MAMA'S GOT YOU COVERED, LOVE  
FILL YOUR POCKETS, COME TO ME

CHILDREN

EY MAMA, EY MAMA  
EY MAMA, EY MAMA

FLOR

OH HAWKING WARES AND SAVING LIVES  
GETTING ON AND MAKING DIMES  
WHERE'S THE TIME TO THINK OR BREAK  
WHEN YOUR SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE

CHILDREN

HAWKING WARES AND SAVING LIVES  
GETTING ON AND MAKING DIMES  
WHERE'S THE TIME TO THINK OR BREAK  
WHEN YOUR SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE

EY, MAMA  
EY, MAMA

FLOR

DON'T JUDGE ME

CHILDREN

EY MAMA  
EY MAMA

	FLOR
WON'T JUDGE YOU	
EY MAMA EY MAMA	CHILDREN
LIFE'S A SLOG	FLOR
WE SURVIVE, WE SURVIVE	THE CHILDREN
¡AGUA! ¡AGUA!	FLOR
WE SURVIVE, WE SURVIVE	THE CHILDREN
DIME TU	FLOR
OH LA DE OH LA DE	THE CHILDREN
	The song comes to an improvised finished.
Mama!	HIGHWAYMAN
Highwayman!	FLOR
Mama.	HIGHWAYMAN
Highwayman. I got good product today. Real good. Chuchi!	FLOR
	Chuchi rummages through the shopping cart and materializes something in a dime bag.
Oh shit! How you get a hold of that?	HIGHWAYMAN

FLOR

I work angles, Highwayman. And you don't work at all.

HIGHWAYMAN

Oh Mama, I need some real bad but I'm empty, Mama. Luck just ain't with me.

FLOR

No such thing as luck.

HIGHWAYMAN

How about a loan?

FLOR

A loan? HA. A loan. ¿Oyeron eso, niños?  
*A loan? HA. A loan. You heard that kids?*

The children snicker in chorus.

HIGHWAYMAN

I got nothing, I tell you.

MAMA

Ain't my problem.

HIGHWAYMAN

A trade? Something, Mama. I can be your bodyguard. For you and the kids. Let me do that for you. Come on now. Ya'll could use some good protection. I'll protect / you from the storm!

FLOR

Psh! My kids got all the protection they need right here.

She beats her chest with emphasis.

Dinero. Money. That's all we 'sept. Right, niños?

CHILDREN

Uh-huh.

LECHE

We're saving for a house up north.

CHUCHI

On a hill. We're going to have nice things.

And no worries.

LECHE

So no discounts, no favors--

FLOR

And no bull shit!

LECHE

¡Eh! No cussing!

FLOR

Oh...okay then, Mama. Ya'll be well, then.

HIGHWAYMAN

He begins to go. A pause. Flor has a change of heart. She gestures to Chuchi who then hands him the dime bag.

FLOR

Just fucking take it.

HIGHWAYMAN

I don't know what to say...

FLOR

Well, I got places to be anyway.

HIGHWAYMAN

I owe you, Mama.

FLOR

And you remember that.

HIGHWAYMAN

Listen, you sure you gonna be okay?

She sucks her teeth.

FLOR

Okay? You know how I come here? Swimming! And I can do it again. My kids all know how to swim. Café! Show the Highwayman how good you swim!

Café dives into the water and swims. She beams.



We know how to survive, me and my kids. So everyone else wanna leave and shit themselves? Good. More business for us. Because we what?

CHILDREN

Survive!

LECHE

I wanna go swimmin', mama! Please! Can I go swimmin'?

FLOR

NO. Your sunscreen'll come off and we got no more left.

LECHE

It'ssohotMama, PLEASE!

FLOR

¡Qué te dije!  
*What did I say!*

Leche sucks her teeth.

FLOR

No me frias huevos, niña.  
*Don't you suck your teeth at me, girl.*

HIGHWAYMAN

(referring to Café and Leche)

They like a ghost and a shadow, your twins. You say they daddy was a mulatto, / that right?

FLOR

Yes, yes. Café!

HIGHWAYMAN

Impressive swimmer, that boy. Your kind are / impressive swimmers.

FLOR

I taught him. It got nothing to do with being Cuban. They swim, They sing, They sell!  
Chuchi, sing the Highwayman a note.

Chuchi obliges. It's beautiful.

LECHE

Can I sing a note too, Mama?

FLOR

No. You sing like shit.

(calling out)

¡Café, mi niño! Vamos!

(to Highwayman)

Daughters are a necessity but sons are a blessing, I tell you.

She whistles through her fingers. CAFÉ exits  
the water.

Nos fuimos.

*Time to go.*

HIGHWAYMAN

Hold up now! Where you off to?

FLOR

Palm Beach Island. Then Miami.

HIGHWAYMAN

Hell yeah!

FLOR

Stocking up on drinkable water. Water table's going to be fucked once the ocean pushes in. It's good news.

LECHE

And we're gonna fuck business up, Mr. Highwayman!

FLOR

I said no cussing!

HIGHWAYMAN

Wait now! I'll walk with ya'll. Hold on there!

Highwayman catches up with them.

My my, Chuchi, you lookin' grown.

CHUCHI

Thank / you.

FLOR

Tss! Get one step closer to my kids and I rip the eyes from your sockets, Highwayman.

CHUCHI

Mama, he's not being inaprop-er-ate

HIGHWAYMAN

I don't wanna fuck your ugly-ass kids,  
Mama! That ain't my speed. But I got the  
message. I'll repay you somehow.

(to Café)

You keep that stroke up, boy.

Highwayman leaves.

FLOR

(to Café)

That Highwayman, Café, no es hombre. Es un desdichado. ¿Oíste? Tú, mi niño, serás un hombre.

*That Highwayman, Café, is not a man. He's a wretch. You hear me? You, my boy, will be a man.*

Leche attempts to sneak into the water. Flor pulls her back by her hair.

FLOR

¿¡Leche, / que te dije, coño!?

*Leche, what did I just say, dammit!?*

LECHE

Ow ow ow ow, Mama! Jesus Christ.

FLOR

And don't take the lord's name in vain.

LECHE

Who cares if I burn?

FLOR

I do.

LECHE

I wanna look like Café...

Flor sucks her teeth and tosses a piece of scrap fabric from the cart to Chuchi.

FLOR

No you don't.

(to Chuchi)

And you! Cover up!

CHUCHI

It's ugly...

FLOR

No hay porque tener las tetas al aire like a slut...men will only see you as a piece of meat! Cabeza, Chuchi. Hay que tener cabeza en esta vida. Now we're going to stock up with Mr. Montrose and then we go to Gloria's house.

*That's no reason to have your tits out like a slut...men will only see you as a piece of meat! Brains, Chuchi! You've got to have brains in this life! Now we're going to stock up with Mr. Montrose and then we go to Gloria's house.*

CHUCHI

We're gonna get to stay with Gloria for the storm, / Mama?

FLOR

Shh! I want you all on your best behavior. Not one step out of line. Is that clear?

CHILDREN

Yes, mama.

FLOR

Louder!

CHILDREN

YES, MAMA.

FLOR

Ok, Vamos! Café, you push! Chuchi, you sing! And Leche?

LECHE

...yes, Mama?

FLOR

Behave.

Café pulls out a pair of claves from the cart and taps out a beat. Chuchi sings as they roll out.

CHUCHI  
 I COME FROM THE PLACE OF HAPPY PEOPLE  
 OH I COME FROM THE PLACE OF HAPPY PEOPLE  
 WITH A HEART AND A SONG  
 NOTHING CAN BE WRONG  
 I COME FROM THE PLACE OF HAPPY PEOPLE

A slight gust of wind. The water ripples.

\*

HEN and CLUCK play cards at a folding table  
 at the gates of an illustrious Palm Beach  
 mansion. Behind the gates is a long, raked  
 driveway. This place, unlike the other places, is  
 dry. The boys are loaded up with guns.

CLUCK  
 Go fish!

HENNY  
 Go fuck yourself. Match. Four of 'em.

CLUCK  
 Goddamn you! Goddamn / you, Hen!

HENNY  
 You're a sore fucking loser, / Cluck.

CLUCK  
 Oh, sore! I'm sore? You're / fucking cheating.

HENNY  
 Yeah, sore. Cheating? You can't fucking cheat at Gold Fish, bro. It's / Gold fish!

CLUCK  
 Go Fish! GO Fish!

HENNY  
 What?

CLUCK  
 It's Go Fish. You said/ Gold Fish.

HENNY  
 Well how then?

Huh? CLUCK

What? HENNY

What / are you-- CLUCK

How can you fucking cheat at Go Fish, huh? HENNY

.... CLUCK

Retard. Slide it over. HENNY

Thank you. Cluck begrudgingly removes a gun from his overwhelmed holster and hands it over.

Fucking rigged. CLUCK

This right here is the fairest thing there is. Chance. HENNY

Ha! Okay. CLUCK

Yeah, it's okay then? HENNY

Yeah. CLUCK

Good. Then we all good then, bro? HENNY

Yeah we good, we good. CLUCK

But are they really?

Look, just take my money instead!

Cluck empties his money on the table.

HENNY

We agreed we were playing for heat!

CLUCK

Well I want to change.

HENNY

Them's is the rules. Shuffle.

CLUCK

I can't do the job without my guns, Hen!

HENNY

Calm down.

(under his breath)

Like you even know how to shoot...

CLUCK

Doesn't give us any of the tools, pay is shit, don't even give us / lunch--

HENNY

We goin' another round or what?

CLUCK

You ever think about that? What it'd be like to take one of these and... you know? Take the house...like we outnumber him, you and me...I mean...

HENNY

.....

CLUCK

He's really great at making jobs and everything.

HENNY

...

CLUCK

And I really I like him.

HENNY

You got two options, Cluck: Be unemployed or be grateful.

CLUCK

I know, I know. It was just a comment, / just a little--

HENNY

Comment on something else. Now reshuffle.

Cluck reshuffles the cards. An agitated silence passes.

CLUCK

You, uh, ever use that jacuzzi out back?

HENNY

What?

CLUCK

I ask if you ever use that ja/cuzzi out back--

HENNY

Yeah I heard what you said. I just wonder why the fuck you said it.

Cluck deals.

CLUCK

....

HENNY

....

CLUCK

Well have you?

HENNY

Yeah. I have.

CLUCK

Shit. Really?

HENNY

Really.

CLUCK

Fuck.

Beat.



With a girl. HENNY

Oh shit. Oh / shit! CLUCK

Fuckhead, you drew me six. HENNY

Cluck corrects his math.  
She was Haitian. Top heavy. You know.

Fuck. Was it nice? CLUCK

Yeah it was nice. Give me your fours. HENNY

Why you going first-- CLUCK

Cause I am. Fours. HENNY

When this happen? CLUCK

What happen? Your fours. Oh the / Haitian? HENNY

Go fish! CLUCK

A while ago. Before Ginny hit. HENNY

Your kings. CLUCK

Jesus Christ. How many times I / gotta tell you it has to be a number!? HENNY

Sorry, sorry. Your fours. CLUCK

I just called four, retard. HENNY

Sixes then. CLUCK

Go fucking fish. HENNY

Beat

The last time he was in Canada on business. Your twos.

Before Hurricane Ginny, huh. She left with that big wave of people, then. CLUCK

I swear to God you say anything to Montrose / I'll-- HENNY

Relax. I won't say anything. CLUCK

He trusts me. And I worked hard for that trust. HENNY

We're good, bro. CLUCK

Cause I'm not gonna kick shit the rest of my life! I'm getting a promotion when that fucker takes over the glades! You say anything and / I'll-- HENNY

I said we're good, bro! CLUCK

A moment.

She have a name?

Who? HENNY  
(maybe feigned absentmindedness)

Haitian chick with the / big-- CLUCK

	HENNY
Everyone has a fucking name. Tens.	
	CLUCK
Damn.	
	He forks over the tens.
	HENNY
Twos.	
	CLUCK
Go fish. Well what was it?	
	HENNY
Why's it any of your business?	
	CLUCK
It's not but I'm wondering is all. Your threes.	
	HENNY
Stop wondering. Go Fish.	
	CLUCK
Okay then, it's a match. Your sevens. I once / knew a Haitian girl.	
	HENNY
Fuck.	
	CLUCK
Fives.	
	HENNY
Go Fish.	
	CLUCK
We're at the bottom of the deck.	
	HENNY
Count 'em out.	
	CLUCK
Three.	
	HENNY
Four.	

Bull shit. CLUCK

HENNY  
(showing his cards)  
Look right there. I want the glock this time.

You gotta say her name first. CLUCK

Those aren't the / fucking rules! HENNY

You gotta say her name first. CLUCK

Those aren't the rules, bro! HENNY

What? You can't say her name? CLUCK

Forget this shit. HENNY

Why? Cause you'll cry? Pussy! You'll cry if you / say her-- CLUCK

Wideline! *(note: pronounced "Wee-da-leen")* HENNY

..... CLUCK

..... HENNY

She was just some chick. That's it. CLUCK

..... HENNY

I want the glock.

Cluck removes his glock and passes it over the Henny.

Play again.

No. CLUCK

Fine. HENNY

If you can't stand a cat five, you probably can't stand to stay, am I right? CLUCK

Another round. HENNY

You wiped me clean, bro. CLUCK

Sorry about Wideline, man. Cluck throws down his cards.

..... HENNY

Chuchi enters, far ahead of her mother and siblings. She croons sweetly.

CHUCHI

MY LOVE DON'T SAY MUCH  
AND WHEN HE DOES IT'S WITH A HISS  
MY LOVE DON'T SAY MUCH  
BACK OF HIS HAND IS LIKE A KISS

MY LOVE DON'T SAY MUCH  
BUT WHEN I FIND HIM IT'S BLISS  
MY LOVE DON'T SAY MUCH  
BUT I'LL / MAKE HIM--

Hey! Yo! No singing on premises. Montrose's orders. HENNY

Cluck claps enthusiastically.

Aw it's fine, Hen. She was being quiet enough. CLUCK

HENNY

Put your dick away. Montrose doesn't want loud noises.  
(to Chuchi)

You got business here?

CHUCHI

Me? No. Just passing through.

HENNY

Then go. This is private property.

CHUCHI

What do you call one of those?

HENNY

I said go!

This?

CLUCK

CHUCHI

In a minute. What's it called?

CLUCK

It's an AR-15.

CHUCHI

Oh yeah? Can I hold it?

HENNY

No! What do you think this is? A gun  
show! Cluck! The fuck is wrong with you!

CLUCK

Oh yeah, yeah sure. It's um, it's pretty  
powerful. Semi-automatic. Really gotta  
know how to use it to make it sing.

CHUCHI

(giggling irresistibly)

Wow. It's heavy.

HENNY

That better not be loaded, Cluck. I said, it  
better not be--

CLUCK

Oh yeah, it is? I don't really feel it.  
(to Henny)  
It's not loaded! Cool it.

CHUCHI

How do you load a thing like this?

HENNY

Jesus. This ain't a master class.

CLUCK

(to Chuchi)

Here let me show you.

Chuchi pockets the crumpled wads of cash on the table throughout the following:

Strike the bolt catch here with the top of your hand. You see that?

CHUCHI

Mhm...

CLUCK

That sends the uh, the uh, the uh bolt forward back into battery. See?

CHUCHI

Wow.

CLUCK

You uh, take the round. Properly insert it--clicks in--insert that into the magazine well, and then maintaining my master grip...

CHUCHI

Ooh. *Master.*

CLUCK

With my dominant hand...

CHUCHI

Your *strong* hand?

CLUCK

Yeah, my shooting hand. Press the release all the way into the rear and let it go forward. That sets off a round.

CHUCHI

Wow.

CLUCK

You like jacuzzis?

Flor enters chanting like a street vendor.

FLOR  
LA FLOR NECESITA AGUA

LECHE  
QUE LE BRINDA EL AGUA A LA FLOR

HENNY  
No, no, no! This is private property!

FLOR  
We're here for business. ¡Chuchi! A mi lado.  
*We're here for business. Chuchi! By my side.*

Chuchi doesn't move.  
¡Chuchi! No te lo voy a repetir.  
*Chuchi! I'm not going to repeat myself.*

CHUCHI  
I'm handling myself.

FLOR  
(between clenched teeth)  
No... te lo voy...a repetir.  
*I'm not...going...to repeat myself.*

Chuchi stands with her mother.

FLOR  
¡Y cúbrete!  
*And cover up!*

Flor emphatically places the shawl around Chuchi's shoulders. Flor calls out past the gates while banging a set of claves.

Montrose! Oh Mon/trose!

HENNY  
What the hell do you think you're doing!?

FLOR  
I'm calling for Montrose, you stupid!

HENNY  
He's not in!



FLOR

Yes he is.

HENNY

No he's not.

FLOR

I know he's in.

(to Cluck)

How much he pay for a fatty like you?

CLUCK

Ma'am, could you / please lower your voice--

CLUCK

What'd you say?

CHUCHI

Mama, please don't make / a scene.

FLOR

Tell me, which one of you is cheaper, huh? Which one he get the deal on?

(indicating Cluck)

Not you. You cost half your weight in food!

LECHE

One's fat and one's thin, Mama!

FLOR

Thinner than a long stream of piss.

CHUCHI

Mama, no / need to be--

LECHE

And fatter than a Thanksgiving turd.

HENNY

You want to taste lead, bitch?

CLUCK

Hey, that's not very nice!

FLOR

You call Montrose down right now and you tell him Flor is here. I don't want to get nastier.

HENNY

I don't care who the fuck you are, bitch! Go before I make swiss cheese out of you and your slut daughter / over there!

CLUCK

Whoa! Cool it, Hen! Just cool it!

FLOR

What did you say about my daughter!?

Café advances on Henny threateningly.

HENNY

Shit! Get back, kid! Get back!

MONTROSE appears.

MONTROSE

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! What's all this?

FLOR

Your security guards are pigs is what!

HENNY

She insulted / us, Sir.

MONTROSE

Florecita!

HENNY

And denigrated my colleague on his weight, Sir.

MONTROSE

Of course she did.

He goes to kiss her. She pulls away quickly,  
coily.

FLOR

My children.

HENNY

This woman's been disturbing the peace, Mr. Montrose! Right, Cluck?

CLUCK

....

HENNY

I'll have them removed right away, Sir.

MONTROSE

How about you take a little break, Henny? And you too...um...

CLUCK

It's Cluck, Sir.

MONTROSE

Right.

HENNY

Sir, for your own security I suggest / that you--

MONTROSE

Have a beer, the both of you.

HENNY

Sir, / she's--

MONTROSE

On me.

HENNY

Your protection is of utmost / importance to me--

MONTROSE

I said it's on me, Henny. Go on.

They exit. Leche climbs Café's shoulders and barks after them like a dog. Cluck waves to Chuchi before leaving.

MONTROSE

Flor, it's been ages. Too long, in fact. I've missed you.

FLOR

Yes.

MONTROSE

Did you miss me?

FLOR

Sí.

Beat.

MONTROSE

Well, you were never much of a sweet talker.

(to the children)

You've all grown quite a bit.

(to Chuchi)

And *you*... weren't you this high last I saw you, Cha...Chi...?

CHUCHI

Chuchi.

MONTROSE

That's right. Short for...

CHUCHI

Esther.

LECHE

Her daddy was a Jew from Boca Raton. Ours was a moo-la-toe.

MONTROSE

That so?

LECHE

Yeah, he was rich. Ours was a real hijo de poo-ta.

FLOR

¡No cussing, coño!

MONTROSE

She's beautiful.

LECHE

Thank you.

CHUCHI

Thank you.

CHUCHI

He meant me.

MONTROSE

Reminds me of you when you were young.

Flor sucks her teeth.

FLOR

*Were* young?

MONTROSE

She looks like you is what I'm saying, Flor. Course, you could have had one that looked like me. Those nights on the Malecón...

FLOR

My children, viejo.

MONTROSE

Your hand in mine. Your bones were small and delicate, like a little bird. You, a scrappy little girl running around Havana in heels.

FLOR

That was a long time ago.

MONTROSE

You were crazy about me then.

FLOR

My children.

MONTROSE

Sneaking out of the house...

FLOR

Never!

MONTROSE

Disobeying your mother!

FLOR

I always obeyed my mother!

(to the children)

¡Niños, I always obeyed my mother!

MONTROSE

Look how she blushes, kids. That's how you know I'm telling the truth.

LECHE

Oooh! Mama, you was bad! You was real bad.

FLOR

*Were*. Speak good.

MONTROSE

Oh and how good her English has gotten. She didn't speak a lick when she first came.

FLOR

Ya viejo...

*Enough, old man...*

MONTROSE

First time, I saw her I knew I had to bring her here with me.

CHUCHI

I thought you said you swam, Mama.

FLOR

I did. He lies.

MONTROSE

At first she said "no" but what she didn't know at the time is that Mr. Montrose never takes no for an answer. The way her eyes would light up when I brought her chocolate from Belgium.

He kisses her hand.

LECHE

Chocolate?

He plants another kiss, maybe up her arm.

MONTROSE

I'm glad you decided to come back.

He moves towards her mouth.

FLOR

Ya, viejo. Ya.

*Enough, old man. Enough.*

Beat.

We need fresh water.

MONTROSE

(perhaps with real hurt)

So it's business you came for then.

FLOR

Sí

CHUCHI

We're going to sell the water after the hurricane. At a preeemeee...um, preemiee..

MONTROSE

Premium?

FLOR

Chuchi!

MONTROSE

Go on, dear.

CHUCHI

After the water table goes under and the value a-preesh-ee-ates.

MONTROSE

Hm. So your Mama learned something from old Montrose, after all.

CHUCHI

We're going to have a house. Away from Florida.

FLOR

(to Montrose)

That's the plan. Now let's get to / business.

MONTROSE

I want to show you something, Chuchi. It'll only take a second, Flor.

FLOR

We're in a rush.

MONTROSE

A second. And then we'll get down to business. Just like you wanted.

Beat.

FLOR

Dale, Chuchi

Chuchi looks to FLOR as if to say, "really?"

Don't be rude.

Montrose takes Chuchi to the gates of his home.

MONTROSE

You see the big house up on that long, elevated driveway up there?

CHUCHI

Yes.

MONTROSE

It was built on that word you said right there. On “yes.” You like beautiful things, Chuchi?

CHUCHI

Yes.

MONTROSE

Tell me.

CHUCHI

Like...silk sheets. Cool weather. Peaches.

MONTROSE

That so?

(to Flor)

Your daughter has the impression that the good life is somewhere else, Flor. Like we’re not dripping with opportunity around here.

(to the children)

Children, how do you stop a charging bull?

No response.

I asked you all: How do you stop a charging bull?

CHUCHI

You talk to it nicely.

LECHE

You kick it! And poke it in the eyes!

MONTROSE

(to Café)

You. Son. What’s your name?

LECHE

Café. He don’t talk.

MONTROSE

Café, listen to me, son...You got these women to take care of. A bull is bigger and stronger than you. It’s got horns, it’s got teeth, it’s got hooves. What do you got?



Café looks down at the inadequacy of his own limbs or pokes at his teeth.

MONTROSE

How are you going to take care of these women?

Café thinks.

It's not a trick question, son. How do you stop...a charging bull?

Café comes up dry.

You climb on it's back and ride, my boy. And you let everyone else run for cover. Those that want to stop it, let them take a horn to the gut. You wanna know why Mr. Montrose is rich? Because he doesn't fight bulls, son. He rides them.

He pats Café on the head.

Alright, Flor, how much you got on you?

FLOR

Sales have been tough.

MONTROSE

You've got to be tougher.

FLOR

And I am. But they've been tough.

MONTROSE

Not much then, huh?

FLOR

Sales have been tough.

MONTROSE

A gallon of drinking water could be gold in the right hands and with the right timing.

FLOR

So?

MONTROSE

So this is what we call an "impasse," Flor. That's french.

She kisses him long and slow.

You do have something after all.

FLOR

Yes.

MONTROSE

My favorite word.

FLOR

Niños, mind the cart. And your manners.

LECHE

Where you going, Mama?

MONTROSE

To ride bulls. Oh and...

Montrose pulls some chocolates from his pocket. He tosses a few to Café and Leche.

They're from Belgium.

He places one directly in Chuchi's hand.

(to Chuchi)

Better than peaches.

They disappear behind the gate. Café and Leche eat with ecstasy and dance. Chuchi tenderly places hers in her pocket. The dance ends.

LECHE

You eat your chocolate yet, Chuchi?

CHUCHI

I'm saving it.

LECHE

Can I have it then?

CHUCHI

No, it's mine.



Leche viciously snorts like a pig in Chuchi's face. Chuchi screams.

Pig!

LECHE

Slut!

Chuchi raises a hand, like her mother, to Leche. Café gets in between them. Chuchi lowers her hand and collects herself once more.

CHUCHI

Jealousy is ugly, Leche.

Beat.

And you'd know all about ugly, wouldn't you?

Leche abruptly snorts in Chuchi's face again.

CHUCHI

AH!

Leche runs to Café. They laugh. Café swims and Leche, after some hesitation, joins him.

CHUCHI

Oh my god! LECHE! She told you not to get into the water! LECHE GET BACK HERE! You idiot! GET BACK!

Flor re-emerges from behind the gate with several gallons of water.

FLOR

¡Niños! ¡Ayuden!  
*Kids! Help!*

Café and Chuchi rush over. Café begins to place the bottles in the cart.

¿Y Leche? Café, where's Leche?

CAFÉ

.....

FLOR  
(to Chuchi)

Where is she?

CHUCHI

I don't know, Mama. She ran off.

FLOR

Ran where? El coño su madre. LECHE! Ven aquí ahora mismo.  
*Ran where? Goddamit. LECHE! Get over here now!*

Leche appears.

I tell you not to stray and you stray! ¡Majadera! ¡Desobediente! Were you swimming /  
ah?

LECHE

I wasn't swimming, Mama!

Flor feels her hair. It's dry.

I wasn't swimming, so you don't have to hit me.

FLOR

Hit you? When have I ever hit you, Leche? When have I hit any of you? There are times I  
want to kill you. But I would never hit you.

Flor gives her a kiss.

(to the children)

Vamos.

LECHE

So we gonna go sell this now, Mama?

FLOR

No. Cuando sea oportuno. Ahora vamos a refugiarnos de la tormenta.  
*No. When it's opportune. Right now we're going to shelter from the storm.*

LECHE

But when do we sell it?

CHUCHI

For the last time, dummy! After the storm. When the water table's gone under and people  
are des-par-rit for fresh water. Des-par-it people are good for business.

## FLOR

Ahora estás usando el cerebro, mi bella.  
*Now you're using your head, my beauty.*

Leche snorts in agreement. Chuchi mouths the word “bella” to Leche and gloats.

It's a long way to Miami so nobody complain about they feet, ah?

They exit tapping out a beat. A gator lazily glides by, stops, and opens her jaws to reveals her massive teeth. She snaps it shut and carries on. The water rises behind her.

\*

The porch of a decayed Miami-style McMansion with half-shuttered windows and furniture half-entered furniture. There are wind spinners and chimes hanging. The breeze pushes through them and makes its own kind of music. GLORIA, a lycra-clad bombshell past her prime, sweeps her porch in preparation for the storm. Maybe the water pushes in and dirties her every effort to clean but she keeps sweeping. Highwayman croons from near the porch. Banjos if you see fit.

## HIGHWAYMAN

SHE WILL BURY ME 'NEATH THE BANYAN TREE  
 AND THAT'S HOW I KNOW IT WAS MEANT TO BE  
 MY OLD LADY AND ME

SOME FOLKS WANT PEACE  
 SOME WANT MONEY  
 NONE OF IT MATTERS  
 LONG AS I GOT YOU, HONEY

IF ONLY MAN EVER WANTED LOVE  
 THE WORLD WOULD BE A DIFFERENT PLACE  
 IF ONLY EVERYBODY HAD WHAT WE GOT  
 THEY'D LEAVE THE LAND WITHOUT A TRACE  
 WITH NO WORRY OF WHO TO BE

OR WHAT THEY'D DONE  
FOR ALL THAT MATTERED WAS THE LOVE

NO WANT FOR NOTHING MORE  
THAN YOUR HAND IN MINE, BABE  
AND THEY'LL SAY IT WAS MEANT TO BE  
MY OLD LADY AND ME.

GLORIA

Nice song

HIGHWAYMAN

Yeah? I wrote it.

GLORIA

Very... *romantic*.

HIGHWAYMAN

I wrote it for you.

Highwayman extends a hand out of affection.  
Gloria throws a coin into his palm.

GLORIA

Bullshit, you didn't / write it.

HIGHWAYMAN

Goddamn, you couldn't put it in my hand, Gloria? I ain't / contagious, you know. 'Sides that ain't what I was reaching for.

GLORIA

Well, I don't know where it's been!

HIGHWAYMAN

(pointing to a spot on the porch)

You missed a spot.

GLORIA

Where?

HIGHWAYMAN

Over there. No! Over there! Oop! There! Another one!

Gloria goes running with her broom.  
Highwayman laughs.

GLORIA

Go ahead. Laugh, laugh, laugh.

HIGHWAYMAN

I'm a good time, give me that at least.

GLORIA

Uy, you stink! The smell!

HIGHWAYMAN

Then let's go skinny dipping, you and me! Let's get the stink off me!

He playfully begins to disrobe.

GLORIA

The fuck you think you're doing!? The neighbors will see you!

HIGHWAYMAN

Neighbors? What neighbors? Those richos scooted outta here and left your poor ass behind. Face it, girl, you're stuck here. With me.

GLORIA

You calling me poor?

Highwayman takes out a crack pipe and lights it.

No, no, no! Not on my porch! No! / Before I throw you off!

HIGHWAYMAN

I ain't on your porch! If you'd let me on your porch then you could throw me off it at least.

GLORIA

It's a disgusting habit.

HIGHWAYMAN

So's that cheap perfume you got on, but I don't say nothin'.



	GLORIA
¡Hijo de Puta! <i>You son of a bitch!</i>	
	HIGHWAYMAN
Just kiss me already, Gloria.	
	GLORIA
What!	
	HIGHWAYMAN
I know you that's what you want to do.	
	GLORIA
Estás loco. <i>You're crazy.</i>	
	HIGHWAYMAN
How long we been doin' this, you and me, mmh?	
	GLORIA
...	
	HIGHWAYMAN
Oh come on, you like it.	
	GLORIA
Pfff.	
	HIGHWAYMAN
Besides, no man ever gonna look at you the way I do, Gloria.	
	GLORIA
Now you're saying I'm old!	
	HIGHWAYMAN
Here we go!	
	GLORIA
Because I'm not / old...	
	HIGHWAYMAN
Gloria--	
	GLORIA
Cause lots of men still / look at me.	

HIGHWAYMAN

Hold on now.

GLORIA

But you? You're one / ugly motherfucker.

HIGHWAYMAN

Shut the fuck up already!

She does.

HIGHWAYMAN

Can I talk?

Gloria gives a gestures of "go on."

'Course people are gonna look at you. But not like me, Gloria, cause you make me sick, right here.

Gloria opens her mouth to talk.

No. Wait.

A beat.

I'm in love with you, Gloria. There. I said it.

Highwayman waits for a response and the continues.

I love you like a lil' bitch, Gloria. You're an illness in me, an inconvenience. You're like a herpes. You're always with me. I'm sick with you. You make me sick.

GLORIA

Un Don Juan de verdad.  
*A real Don Juan.*

Highwayman darts a look.

HIGHWAYMAN

There ain't enough time in the day to think of you. I can't do nothing else. I think about you all day and there still ain't enough time for it. Lots of men will find you beautiful-- don't doubt that-- but if they all felt the way I did, nothing in this world would ever get done. They'd all be losers, like me. Cause that's what you see me as, don't you? A loser. And I'm a loser...and it's cause of you.

GLORIA

....

HIGHWAYMAN

So you see, you did this to me. I could've been rich, you know?

GLORIA

Sopla, niño, sopla.  
*Go on, boy, go on.*

HIGHWAYMAN

So...what about you?

GLORIA

(swatting at herself)

Los putos mosquitos.  
*Fucking mosquitos.*

HIGHWAYMAN

Jesus fuckin' Christ.

Gloria swats at her arm with a loud thwack

GLORIA

What?

HIGHWAYMAN

Fuckin' forget it.

Gloria sweeps in silence.

HIGHWAYMAN

Can I stay in your house with you, Gloria? We can make love while the storm howls on.

GLORIA

¿Y esa gracia tuya?  
*God, you're fresh!*

HIGHWAYMAN

English please.

GLORIA

If my husband hear how you talk, he would / break your skull!

HIGHWAYMAN

Husband? HA! You on more drugs than me!

GLORIA

What!

HIGHWAYMAN

We all know he left you for some little Thai girl in Bangkok. But it's okay, honey, I got old too!

GLORIA

So you *are* calling me old!

Gloria begins swinging the broom at him.

HIGHWAYMAN

Hey whoa! Listen! Listen! LISTEN! Ouch! STOP!

Highwayman grabs the broom, the only thing between them now.

GLORIA

.....

HIGHWAYMAN

I'm sorry! I'm sorry, okay? Truce?

A moment. Something intense, intimate, on the precipice of something, a touch maybe.

GLORIA

I think you should go.

HIGHWAYMAN

....

GLORIA

GO.

HIGHWAYMAN

Say "Hi" to your husband for me.

Highwayman begins to leave as Flor enters, singing out a Rumba refrain.

Flor! Kids! Ya'll look dead. Hey! Water! Mind sparing a bit--

Flor sucks her teeth.

They say it's gone up to a cat three. Ya'll be careful.

Highwayman exits.

GLORIA

¿Flor? ¡Flor! Is that you? Loquita mía.  
*Flor? Flor! Is that you? Crazy. My crazy girl.*

FLOR

Gloria.

GLORIA

Pero Florecita, estás divina. Déjame verte. Qué rellenita estás. ¿Los años, eh?  
*My gosh, Florecita, you look marvelous. Let me get a good look at you. You're thick. Age will do that, am I right?*

Gloria pinches Flor's fat.

FLOR

Lucho como una mula, Gloria. Como bien.  
*I work like a mule, Gloria. I eat well.*

GLORIA

Qué bueno verte, mi amor.  
*So nice to see you, honey.*

CHUCHI

¡Madrina!  
*Godmother!*

GLORIA

¿Y esa belleza, quién es? Ñnooo...pero Chuchi cómo has crecido, mi niña. Qué linda estás. Ven, give your godmother a little kiss. Mis niños, qué bueno verlos.  
*And who is that beauty! Well damn! Chuchi, how you're grown, baby girl! And so beautiful. Come, give your godmother a little kiss. My little kiddos, I'm happy to see all of you.*

GLORIA

And what brings you to Miami, Flor?

FLOR

Café!

Café lifts two gallons over his head.

GLORIA

¿Agua? Pero Flor, eres una santa.

*Water? Flor, you're a saint.*

FLOR

I can sell you a few at a discount in preparation for the hurricane.

GLORIA

Perdón. Sell? ¿A tu amiga de tanto tiempo?

*Excuse me. Sell!? To your oldest friend?*

FLOR

Listen, I'm selling to you before the price jumps.

GLORIA

Uf, qué dura te has puesto, Flor.

*Oof, how hard you've gotten, Flor.*

FLOR

¿Qué te digo, Gloria? Los tiempos han cambiado y yo cambié con ellos.

*What can I say, Gloria? Times change and I changed with them.*

GLORIA

And let me guess...you wanted to stay here too?

CHUCHI

Can we, Madrina?

FLOR

If you think about it, it's a steal. Te digo, la gente se va a volver loca.

*If you think about it, it's a steal. I'm telling you, people are gonna go crazy.*

GLORIA

Bueno, todos tenemos que sobrevivir de alguna manera, ¿no? Tú con tu carrito y yo en mi casa.

*Well, we all have to survive somehow I guess. You with your little cart and me in my house.*

FLOR

¿Y Frank? Dicen que se fue. Lo siento mucho.  
*And Frank? They say he left. I'm very sorry.*

GLORIA

La envidia envenena la lengua, mi amor. Sí...se fue pero me quedé con la casa. Todo bien.  
*Jealousy poisons the tongue, honey. Yes...he left but I got the house. All is well.*

FLOR

Así que sigues en el mismo negocio de siempre.  
*So you're in the same line of work.*

GLORIA

Our business is, how you say, "recession proof."

CHUCHI

What business is that?

FLOR

No le hagas caso a tu madrina, Chuchi.

(to Gloria)

For your information, I'm a saleswoman, Gloria. I do business.

*Chuchi, ignore your godmother. For your information, I'm a saleswoman, Gloria. I do business.*

GLORIA

Claro, mi amor. Quién supiera que esta loca nació en el comunismo.

*Of course you are, honey. Who would have thought that this crazy girl was born under Communism.*

FLOR

Capitalismo, comunismo, con o sin título, es la ley de la naturaleza. Así que... ¿hacemos un cambio?

*Capitalism, communism, call it whatever you want, it's the law of the land. So, are we good to barter here?*

GLORIA

Espérate...did you get this from Montrose?

*Wait...did you get this from Montrose?*

FLOR

...

Gloria laughs.

GLORIA

Bueno. Te felicito, “saleswoman.”  
*Right. Well congratulations, “saleswoman.”*

CHUCHI

I like your bangles, Madrina.

GLORIA

Take one, baby. We’ll be twins. Like Café and Leche.

FLOR

Chuchi, no.

GLORIA

A single bangle, Flor.

FLOR

I don’t want her getting ideas.

FLOR

It’s a gift.

She places it on Chuchi’s wrist.

LECHE

Can I have one too, Tía Gloria?

GLORIA

Claro, mi vida. Estás / rosadita.  
*Of course, baby. You’re a little pink.*

FLOR

You take it off before you go to sleep tonight, Chuchi. It’ll turn your wrist green.

GLORIA

Alguien debería cortarte la lengua, amiga. ¿Pero qué va? La venderías como bistec.  
*Someone should cut your tongue out, friend. But for what? You’d just sell it off as steak.*

They both laugh.

Qué bueno verte, mi amor. De verdad.  
*It’s so good to see you, honey. Really.*



FLOR

Sí...  
Yes...

GLORIA

You know, when your mommy and I used to walk the Malecón together, we'd spend hours getting ready. Well, I'd spend hours. Tú mamá era como un trapito corriendo por La Habana.

*You know, when your mommy and I used to walk the Malecón together, we'd spend hours getting ready before. Well, I'd spend hours. Your mother, on the other hand, was like a dust rag running all around Havana.*

FLOR

Un trapito lindo, no te lo olvides.  
*A beautiful dust rag, don't forget it.*

GLORIA

Sí

Beat.

Bueno, pueden quedarse aquí. Esta zorra sabe que nunca podría echar a estos angelitos míos a la calle.

*Alright, you can stay here. This cunning fox knows I could never could toss my baby angels out onto the streets.*

The kids clap and cheer.

LECHE

(sing-songy)

We're staying at Tía Gloria's, we're staying at Tía Gloria's!

GLORIA

Pero me das unos galonsitos de agua gratis. Es costoso cuidar a esta casa.

*But you'll give me a few of those gallons for free. Keeping this house up ain't cheap.*

FLOR

No.

The kids begin to whine. Maybe Leche and Café tug on Flor's hands

CHUCHI

But, Mama, you already said we could. Where else we gonna go?

GLORIA

No eres la única zorra en este bosque, mi amor.  
*You're not the only fox out in these woods, honey.*

Gloria gives Flor a kiss on the cheek.

Qué bueno verte.  
*So good to see you.*

(to the children)

Ok! Let's get dinner going!

LECHE

Whatcha got?

GLORIA

Chicken and rice, plantains, and you tell no one but...grapes!

THE CHILDREN

GRAPES!?! REALLY?! GRA/PES!?!

LECHE

Grapes, Mama. GrapesGrapesGrapesGrapesGrapesGrapesGrapesGrapesGraaaaaapes!

FLOR

Café, entra el agua, por favor.  
*Café, bring in the water, please.*

He does as he's told.

GLORIA

Mira esos musculos. Dios mío, que cuerpazo tiene el niño  
*Just look at those muscles. Good God, what a body he's got!*

FLOR

Es un niño, Gloria.  
*He's a little boy, Gloria!*

GLORIA

Es un muchacho ya. Acostúmbrate.  
*He's a young man. Get used to it.*

Café beams.

Chuchi, you stay in my bed with me. We'll talk all night like when you were little.

LECHE

Tía Gloria! Tía Gloria!

Hm?

GLORIA

I'm pretty too, right Tía?

LECHE

GLORIA  
 La más bella, mi niña. Chuchi, ven. Café, entra esos muebles ahí mi, niño.  
*The prettiest, sweetie. Come along, Chuchi. Café, bring in all that furniture over there, honey.*

Café does as he's told. They all enter the home. Leche catches her reflection in the water, tries a seductive look maybe, gets angry, thrashes, tears the bangle off her wrist, cries a bit (or something to that effect). Café comes out for her.

I know! Grapes...

LECHE

He takes her inside, maybe after a hug and on his back. The sun begins to set. The sounds of water, crickets, the distant whir from I-95 or what's left of it. A flamingo lands on the porch and drinks from the water. Highwayman sings. He's drunk or high, or both.

HIGHWAYMAN  
 IF ONLY EVERYBODY HAD WHAT WE GOT  
 THEY COULD LEAVE THE LAND WITHOUT A TRACE

Cluck enters secretly.

You! Boy!

CLUCK

....

HIGHWAYMAN  
 You know what the Greeks...them fuckin' Greeks thought?

CLUCK

.....

HIGHWAYMAN

But you know...you know....you know, you know, you know...

CLUCK

I don't got anything on me, / sorry.

HIGHWAYMAN

The puuurrrrest love, the purest love, is between a teacher and his student. Course, they also invented...anal...

CLUCK

...

HIGHWAYMAN

Just remember that, okay? Cause the other kind love is a bitch.

(to the house)

A REAL BITCH.

(to Cluck)

I ain't tryina scare ya, boy. You got some change? Something? Soooooomethiiiiiiing?  
Something for the good, the good, the good... advice?

Highwayman passes out in the water. Chuchi exits the house dressed head to toe in Gloria's clothing.

CLUCK

Hi. Oh Wow. You look... really / good!

CHUCHI

Shh! You bring the car?

CLUCK

Uh, yeah. Over there.

CHUCHI

Good. I can't walk far in heels.

CLUCK

Oh yeah. Right. Ha. Um, where you wanna go?

CHUCHI

Montrose.

Cluck can't believe his luck.

CLUCK

Yeah? Okay! You bring a swimsuit?

Gloria wordlessly steps out and watches them leave. Chuchi nods at her. Gloria sends her off.

CHUCHI

No.

CLUCK

(even more stoked)

Okay! Okaaaaay....That's no problem.

Cluck and Chuchi exit. Gloria sweeps and sees the Highwayman asleep and floating on his back. With her broom, she gently moves him to the steps of her porch, and places his head so it is elevated and out of the water. She gently, maybe even tenderly, places a coin in his open hand and goes inside. A flamingo drinks from the water. The wind stirs the wind-chimes. Highwayman snores.

End of Act I.

## ACT II - THE GLADES

All is still in the high sawgrass, except for DALLAS, a proud Miccosukee, who speaks to us.

DALLAS

The Great Gator.

Café emerges from the water wrestling a alligator.

Friend to the Miccosukee. Part of the Great Circle. Interconnected with all things. When the Spanish first come, the white men, they see her as an enemy. But not us, not the Miccosukee. We see her as a friend.

The gator hisses.

She has two hundred teeth in her mighty jaw. She attacks swiftly, silently, crushing bone to dust with a single snap.

Café taps the inside of her mouth and quickly removes his hand before she snaps her jaw shut.

She is queen of these waters. Her spirit oversees these lands. But...she has a weakness. She cannot see in front of her or behind her. Only to the side. Never perceiving was it to come or what has passed.

Café waves in front of the gator. She does not react.

She is like man in this way.

We, Miccosukee, have not always known her. We, Miccosukee, we are not native to these lands. We come from the north. From Georgia. From other places. But the white man with his bullets and his germ, he forces us here, to the Everglades. But unlike the white man, we have made the Everglades our home in peace, alongside the panther and the python.

But we give thanks to the gator most of all.

We Miccosukee thank her for all that she gives to us. Her meat for food, her skin for leather, her teeth for beads and fine wares...all available for purchase in the Mic-E-Mart Gift Shop.

(to Café)

Okay. Now is when you bullride her.

Leche pops out of the shopping cart, as if suddenly appearing out of nowhere. Flor is with her.

LECHE

Ya! Bullride her!

FLOR

Shh! Get under the blankets!

Café bullrides the gator.

DALLAS

And you hold for pictures. Good. Okay, okay um, where was I? Available for purchase in the Mic-E-Mart...bla, bla, bla...

(back to the audience)

We fight to preserve her home and ours. And here at Miccosukee Park & Casino, we take it a step further by teaching the public what makes her so special. So please...consider making a contribution to The Great Circle Conservation Project on your way out. And don't forget to try our delicious sofkee and gator soup in the MicCoffee, located past the elevators and next to visitor services. *Shonabish*. Thank you.

Dallas drops his noble Indian veneer.

Okay, kid, let her go.

FLOR

He's good, isn't he, Mr. Dallas?

DALLAS

You said he was native?

FLOR

Works hard and won't need no breaks.

DALLAS

And he's native.

FLOR

You can't find anyone better for the price.

DALLAS

But you said he was native?

FLOR

Are you?

DALLAS

Excuse me?

FLOR

He's a good price.

DALLAS

Right. Well, we'll let you know.

FLOR

When? It says immediately right here.

Flor searches her bosom for a flyer. She presents it Dallas. He doesn't take it.

What! Can't you read? Leche!

Leche pops up from the shopping cart.

LECHE

"Hiiii-yer-ring. Gay...GAY-TOR! wrest-lers...ee..mmediately. GOOD PAY! In-Ccludes Room and BEARD."

FLOR

Board. So?

DALLAS

Listen...

FLOR

I dare you to find someone better.

DALLAS

A storm's coming.



And it will go away. FLOR

Attendance is down at the casino. DALLAS

They'll come back. FLOR

The truth is, the budget's tight. DALLAS

You take him or we move on. But you won't find no one for cheaper. And I know if there's one thing you need around here, it's muscle. FLOR

I can pay half of what it says on there. DALLAS

Unbelievable! Is this how you do business? No wonder you people are always getting screwed. FLOR

Excuse me? DALLAS

You pay seventy-five percent. FLOR

Fifty-five. DALLAS

Sixty-five. FLOR

He isn't even Miccosukee! DALLAS

Who here is? FLOR

Me. DALLAS

Then there's a word for you: Indian-giver. FLOR

Get your cart off my / lands and--

DALLAS

Sixty!

FLOR

....

DALLAS

....

FLOR

....

DALLAS

....

FLOR

You need the muscle around here. Let's not play dumb.

DALLAS

Deal.

(to Café)

But long as you're here, you work. Got it? Wrestling will start during peak season.

CAFÉ

....

LECHE

Hey says he can do that.

Flor and Dallas shake on it. Dallas and Café begin to leave. Flor follows with Leche.

FLOR

To the reservation, Leche!

DALLAS

Hold up. Where are you going?

FLOR

Room and board included.

DALLAS

For him. Not you. Employees and tribal members only.

Café begins to argue.

FLOR

No, Café, let me handle this.

(to Dallas)

He's a child.

DALLAS

But he's old enough to wrestle gators.

FLOR

We're his family.

DALLAS

We can't support three of you.

LECHE

Don't take him, don't take him!

FLOR

Leche! Sh! Under the blankets! Should have gone to the Seminoles. *They* know how to run a business!

LECHE

Indian-giver, Indian-giver!

DALLAS

Don't play dumb! You wouldn't be here if the Seminoles wanted him.

Dallas begins to leave.

FLOR

No, no! Please. Wait.

(to Café)

Ándate. Es por tu bien. Y después, tendremos una casa en donde viviremos juntos para siempre. Anda. Estarás seguro ahí.

*Go on. It's what's best for you. And afterwards, we'll have a house where all of us will live forever. Go on. You'll be safe there.*

LECHE

Mama, no. Please...

Café and Leche share a moment.

DALLAS

(to Café)

First thing's first, we get the boards and shutters up. Hope you're ready for some heavy lifting, kid.

He leaves with Café.

LECHE

Now what, Mama?

FLOR

I'm thinking.

A pause.

LECHE

Can we go back to Tía Gloria?

FLOR

Ni menciones a esa traidora.  
*Don't even mention that traitor.*

LECHE

But she has A.C.!

FLOR

¿Venderías tu alma por un poco de aire acondicionado? Hay que tener dignidad en esta vida, Leche.  
*You'd sell your soul for a little air conditioning? You have to have dignity in life, Leche.*

Another pause as Flor thinks.

LECHE

I'm hungry, Mama.

FLOR

Not now.

LECHE

Like, really hungry.

FLOR

Aguanta.  
*Deal with it.*

LECHE

What are we gonna eat?

FLOR

Enough!

Another pause.

LECHE

Can I work for Mr. Dallas too? And live on the rez like Café?

FLOR

You have nothing to offer him.

LECHE

I do too! I can sing! I can sing for the terr-rists.

FLOR

You can't sing!

Leche begins to sing.

¡Cállate! ¿Me quieres dejar sorda?  
*Shut up! You want to make me go deaf?*

Leche grows angry.

LECHE

I can too sing, Mama! I can sing! You're just mad. You're mad cause Chuchi left you.

Flor slaps Leche across the face.

FLOR

Don't say her name. And don't cry.

Leche is motionless.

There are things worse than hunger, you understand?

LECHE

What?

FLOR

Heartbreak.

They sit quietly for a while. The distant sound  
of a fish jumping. The cicadas and crickets sing.  
Their stomachs grumble.

You want to be useful to your Mama?

LECHE

....yes.

FLOR

Then come here.

LECHE

....

FLOR

I said come!

She does.

Give me your hands.

She does.

You see these hands?

LECHE

Uh-huh.

FLOR

They can pull snakes out of holes real quick. Let's see.

Leche swats at the air fast.

Good. And these nails?

LECHE

Uh-huh.

FLOR

They're sharp, a weapon if we need it. And this?

Flor taps Leche's forehead.

This is the most important of all. You are going to hunt tonight. By yourself. I'm not going to help you.

What about the storm? LECHE

The storm is an opportunity, Leche. FLOR

Dis-par-it people-- LECHE

Yes. FLOR

And we're gonna stay...out here? LECHE

A pause.

Mírame. ¿Tú crees que'l huracán es más fuerte que tu Mamá?  
*Look at me. ¿You think a hurricane is stronger than your Mama?* FLOR

... LECHE

¿Qué te pregunté? ¿Tú crees que un huracán es más fuerte que tu Mama?  
*What did I ask you? You think a hurricane is stronger than your Mama?* FLOR

No. LECHE

What was that? FLOR

No! LECHE

Is that hurricane stronger than you? FLOR

No? LECHE

¡Con tu voz!  
*With your voice!* FLOR

NO.	LECHE
What was that?	FLOR
No. No! NO NO NOOOOO!	LECHE
¡Dale! ¡Mi niña salvaje! <i>Get to it! My little wild girl!</i>	FLOR
FUCK THAT HURRICANE! FUCK IT UP! FUCK THAT HURRICANE!	LECHE
¡Eh! No cussing!	FLOR
Sorry.	LECHE
Now go!	FLOR
	Leche lets out an animalistic yelp and scurries off to hunt. She passes Cluck and Henny on a kayak and howls. Cluck sits in front and Henny in back.
Oh shit! You hear that, Hen?	CLUCK
Watch your oar, dipshit.	HENNY
There's wild animals out here, bro!	CLUCK
Your oar, bro! You're turning the damn thing around!	HENNY
I heard something, / Hen!	CLUCK



HENNY

Watch / it! You're fucking up the trajectory!

CLUCK

Goddamn? Goddamn!? The fuck we're out here for!? Wild animals! Bullshit mosquitos.

He slaps a mosquito off his arm

Ow!

HENNY

You've gotta job. Do your fucking job.

CLUCK

I'm doing my job, Hen.

A beat.

Storm's about to roll in. They say it's a Cat 4 now.

HENNY

And that's why you gotta job, dipshit.

CLUCK

I don't like storms, Hen.

HENNY

Stop being a pussy!

CLUCK

...

HENNY

What?

CLUCK

I didn't say anything.

HENNY

"I didn't say anything."

CLUCK

Yeah, / I didn't.

HENNY

Cut the tude. We're here to "build relations" and--

CLUCK

Yeah.

Henny exhales.

HENNY

And then Montrose buys up the rez after shit goes down and then he owns half of the goddamn state. He gets, governor , cause guys like him always get to be governor--

CLUCK

Yeah?

HENNY

And we'll be there with him, by his side, as Secretary of the State. Well, I'll be Secretary of the State. You? I don't know maybe you'll be sucking dicks.

CLUCK

.....

HENNY

Look, you can be my assistant if you do good work. Do good work.

A pause. A mosquito lands on Cluck. He violently slaps it. His rage is palpable.

HENNY

You still on her, bro? Let it go, man. Pussy ain't worth it.

CLUCK

Who said anything about pussy?

HENNY

You're fucking the oar again!

CLUCK

Then why don't we switch, huh? You take front and I'll take / back!

HENNY

You're fucking it / more!

CLUCK

AH! I CAN'T TAKE THIS SHIT!

Cluck throws the oar out into the water.

HENNY  
WHAT THE LITERAL FUCK, BRO.

CLUCK  
I'm not a pussy, I'm not hung up on pussy, and I DON'T. SUCK. DICKS!

A silence. Henny begins to stand in the kayak. It rocks to and fro violently.

What are you doing, dude?

HENNY  
Switching places.

CLUCK  
You're gonna tip it!

HENNY  
You said you want to switch, so that's what I'm doing.

CLUCK  
Not like this!

HENNY  
Well it's the only way.

CLUCK  
Stop, / Hen!

HENNY  
You're in my spot. Get up!

CLUCK  
STOP!

Henny stops.

There's gators and pythons out there, man.

HENNY  
You know what else is out there? The oar! That you threw! With the gators and pythons!

CLUCK

....

Retard. HENNY

Okay, Henny. CLUCK

You dipshit! How can I trust you when you do shit like / this? Huh? How? HENNY

I know, Henny, I know. CLUCK  
(with surprising humility)

A pause. Henny gets back into his spot. The wind picks up just slightly.

You crying up there, Cluck? HENNY

No. CLUCK

But he probably is.

Cause if you're crying, I'm gonna lose my / fucking-- HENNY

I'm not crying, Hen. CLUCK

You sure? HENNY

I'm sure. CLUCK

Cause it sounds like you're crying, bro. HENNY

Well, I'm not. CLUCK

Good. HENNY

Yeah, good. CLUCK

Beat.

Listen, man...pussy comes and goes. HENNY

I just don't like storms, Hen. CLUCK

Who does? People leave. HENNY

What people? CLUCK

Wideline. HENNY  
(quickly, unthinking, instantly regrettable)

... CLUCK

... HENNY

I didn't hear that, dude. CLUCK

Hear what? HENNY

Right. CLUCK

Here. Take my oar and let's get the other one. HENNY

A light drizzle starts. Henny passes Cluck the oar.

I'd make a good assistant. CLUCK

Henny claps Cluck on the back of the neck,  
almost affectionately.

CLUCK

What's that for?

HENNY

Mosquito, bro.

It begins to drizzle.

That rain?

Highwayman, Café, and Dallas enter in a canoe.  
Dallas stands in front. Café rows. Highwayman  
smokes and lounges.

HIGHWAYMAN

Woo! You smell that? That's the best air there is, right before a storm! The wind's  
just...pregnant with it all.

(to Cluck and Hen)

Oh hi, boys!

DALLAS

(to Highwayman)

You're rocking the canoe.

Café effortlessly scoops up the loose oar and  
tosses it to Cluck.

(to the boys)

The kayak rental is up in ten.

HENNY

Some beautiful land you got here, Sir. Pretty...vast.

CLUCK

Yeah it's lookin' real vast.

HENNY

Real smooth operation, the casino and all.

DALLAS

Right. Ten minutes.

HENNY

We do appreciate you making time for us on short notice. Just couldn't wait to get out onto the Everglades. Amazing place.

HIGHWAYMAN

Highwayman come into some money, boys! Here! Take some cigarettes!

Highwayman throws some cigarettes their way.

DALLAS

No, don't do that...

HIGHWAYMAN

Tax free! State don't tax these folks. Lucky sons of bitches!

DALLAS

Scoop those out of the water, will you kid?

Café scoops the cigarettes out of the water.

HENNY

I imagine there's like, a lot cause for concern and shit--I mean, a lot of cause for concern and stuff--with all the storms...and shit. I mean, and stuff.

DALLAS

Look, you tell your boss that we're not parting with any reservation land. Enjoy your remaining nine minutes and thirteen seconds.

HENNY

It's not our place, but maybe you all could use some help around here.

CLUCK

Yeah, the casino kinda blows.

HENNY

Cluck!

HIGHWAYMAN

(to the audience)  
Ya'll lookin' for an airboat ride? They got the best rides in the Everglades. And canoes! We doin' a canoe ride.

DALLAS

Right. Now if you'll excuse me, you'll see I have a client with me at the moment and I cannot talk much longer. I'll remind that you now have only eight minutes left on that rental. Please make your way to the boat house.

HENNY

We're going, we're going! Don't get your loin cloth in a knot.

CLUCK

He's wearing jeans, Hen.

HENNY

It's an expression cause he's-- Oh fuck it!

They turn the boat around, poorly, and make their way off.

DALLAS

The rain's picking up, Café. Time to bring her round.

HIGHWAYMAN

'Scuse me! I'm a payin' customer. I want my full ride.

DALLAS

And how exactly are you paying for this?

Highwayman lifts his shirt to reveal a scar on his chest.

HIGHWAYMAN

Sold a lung to some old WASP. Was hanging on for dear life. Didn't have time to be on no wait list so the Highwayman come to his rescue. At a steep discount, of course. Better than nothing. Let me tell you, Dallas, it pays to have money.

(to Café)

You remember that too, boy.

Highwayman lights three more cigarettes and puffs them at the same time.

DALLAS

Not planning on investing any of it, I see.

HIGHWAYMAN

In what? Stocks? I'm havin' my fun! You should have yours too, Dallas. Cigarette?

DALLAS

(to Café)

You make sure he doesn't snuff any of that out in the glades.



HIGHWAYMAN

Breeze is picking up. Money is a necessity and it's good to have it, all I'm sayin.'

He puffs again.

DALLAS

White people do love money.

HIGHWAYMAN

Well pardon me, Dallas but ya'll ain't dealin' gator skins in that little casino of yours. What wouldja ancestors think?

DALLAS

My ancestors are dead. Besides, you white men made the rules and now the rest of us got play by them.

Highwayman looks down at his arms.

HIGHWAYMAN

Who? Me? I'm white? Holy shit! I'm white, ya'll! I'm white!

He laughs.

Ya'll are doin' just fine, far as I can see. Me? I'm holding a cardboard sign under a bridge most days.

DALLAS

Row faster, Café.

Café complies.

HIGHWAYMAN

I paid for a full ride, dammit! You don't turn this round, Café, or I'm asking for a refund.

Café complies.

DALLAS

Don't listen to him.

Café complies.

HIGHWAYMAN

Know what your problem is, Dallas?

DALLAS

I don't have a problem.

HIGHWAYMAN

Excuse me, you know what the *tribe's* problem is? Ya'll don't bring anyone into the fold. You know how many whites would give they left nut to play Indian out here with ya'll and pour some money into this place?

DALLAS

I'm not talking about this with you.

HIGHWAYMAN

Let 'em fire a bow and arrow or some shit is all I'm sayin'. Tell stories 'round a fire. Sure, you do your dances and wrestle a few gator for 'em, but you don't bring them in. Jews got the same problem. But they got the money and thas the difference!

He takes a luxurious puff.

Ain'tcha part cracker anyway!

DALLAS

We don't want to be white!

HIGHWAYMAN

Caucasian! Let's start bein' po-litically correct / here.

DALLAS

The issue is *we* become *you*, not the other way around.

HIGHWAYMAN

You mean, "Caucasian."

DALLAS

We may be few but we're still here and we're still Indian.

HIGHWAYMAN

That why you got that dark boy rowing your canoe for ya'?

Highwayman takes a pronounced puff

DALLAS

He's native.

Leche scrambles by with a fistful of snakes. She makes animal noises.

LECHE

(to Café)

Look, look, look! Café! Look!

She holds up a fistful of snakes.

DALLAS

What the-- kid! What are you doing out here?

LECHE

We ain't afraid of no hurry-cane!

She howls and scampers off.

DALLAS

Those better be the invasive species!

Café is worried. It affects his rowing.

(to Café)

Whoa! Take it easy, kid! Calm.

CAFÉ

...

DALLAS

Listen, the glades are strong. We've been riding out storms out here for generations and we're still standing. Now let's take her in.

HIGHWAYMAN

Woowee! That's good air right there!

They row away. The wind picks up.  
Highwayman takes a big inhale. Gloria appears on her porch who inhales simultaneously while holding her broom like a scepter.

GLORIA

La vida me ha enseñado a luchar. Cuba me enseñó como luchar. Cuba me convirtió en una palma.

*Life has shown me how to fight. Cuba taught me to fight. Cuba turned me into a palm tree.*

A crack of lightening, the rumble of thunder.  
Gloria laughs. The vegetation begins to whip against the wind. Henny and Cluck appear in their kayak, speaking louder to be heard over the wind.

CLUCK

Hey, Hen! I think we're way over the ten minutes.

HENNY

No shit!

CLUCK

Where do I turn, Hen?

HENNY

What?

Leche arrives to Flor with a fistful of snakes.

LECHE

Mama! Look! Food!

FLOR

The cart, Leche! Secure the cart!

Leche runs to help hold the cart full of water against the wind. Water pushes in vigorously on Gloria's porch. She laughs again and swings her broom.

GLORIA

(screaming over the wind)

*¿No has visto una palma contra el viento? Se dobla y dobla, pero no se parte nunca.  
You've never seen a palm tree against the wind? It bends and bends, but it never breaks.*

Another crack of lightening.

CLUCK

Hen, where do I turn now? Hen?

HENNY

It's coming in fast, dude.

CLUCK

Where?

HENNY

I don't fuckin' know, man! I'm lost!

What? CLUCK

WE'RE LOST! HENNY

The trees bend and shake. Highwayman braces himself against sawgrass, water sloshing over him. Café swims and pushes past him.

HIGHWAYMAN  
Kid! Get back to the rez! What are you doing out here!? Kid?

Gloria loses her broom to the wind.

GLORIA  
(screaming at no one in particular)  
¡La última cosa que me quitarás de esta vida? ¿Me oíste? ¡SINGADO!  
*The last thing you'll take from me in this life? You heard me? MOTHERFUCKER!*

FLOR  
¡Aguanta, niña, aguanta! No dejes que el viento se lleve el carrito!  
*Hold on, baby, hold on! Don't let the wind take the shopping cart!*

Leche and Flor hold on together, the wind whipping them without mercy. Gloria is blown backwards.

¡Coño!  
*Damn!* GLORIA

Don't you let go of it now! FLOR

Henny's oar goes flying out of his hand.

FUCK! I LOST THE OAR! HENNY

You what!? CLUCK

I LOST. THE OAR. HENNY

You lost the oar!?

CLUCK

Leche almost goes flying away too.

Leche!

FLOR

Café appears just in time to grab her by the arm.  
He steadies her and himself against the cart.

¡Café! ¡Regresa!  
*Café! Go back!*

CAFÉ

...

FLOR

¡Café! ¡Obedéceme!  
*Café! Obey me!*

A gust of wind. The cart tip. The gallons of  
water go splashing into the water which now  
turns vicious. Gloria clings to the pillar on her  
porch as water overtakes it.

FLOR		GLORIA
¡EL AGUA!		¡EL AGUA!

HENNY

I don't wanna die, Cluck, I don't wanna die!

FLOR

¡SE VA EL AGUA!

CLUCK

We're not gonna die like this, bro!

HENNY

What!?

Cluck, with great determination, rows the kayak  
against the wind. Café steadies Flor and Leche  
against a tree and dives in after the floating  
gallons.

FLOR

¡CAFÉ! ¡NO!

Café grabs one barrel. Then another. He tries for a third, loses one. It's futile but he pushes on. Leche tries to go after him.

LECHE

I'm coming, Café! I'm coming!

FLOR

NO! Hold onto me!

Café loses the water.

Swim, CAFÉ, Swim! Swim to Mama!

GLORIA

¡Ven! ¡VEN! ¡Estoy preparada para ti!  
*Come! COME! I'm ready for you!*

The water rises.

CLUCK

We're gonna make it, bro! We're gonna make it!

A clack of lightening.

FLOR

¡Ven hacia tu mamá!  
*Come to your, Mama!*

LECHE

Swim! Swim! Swim!

Café lets out a yelp. He disappears under the current. A crack of lightening.

FLOR

Café!

GLORIA

Una palma...  
*A palm...*

Gloria takes an enormous breath and holds. The water rises. Lights out.

End of Act II.



## ACT III - THE WORLD IN WATER

Water everywhere. The vestiges of all that we have seen float by: pieces of Gloria's house, a splintered kayak, etc. Flor sits in a shopping cart alone. She stares into the water searchingly. Leche emerges from the water, coughing and spitting.

Salty! My eyes!  
LECHE

Well?  
FLOR

I'm sorry, Mama...  
LECHE

Oh...  
FLOR  
(dejected)

A pause.

He's swimmin,' Mama.  
LECHE

What?  
FLOR

He's out there swimmin.'  
LECHE

¿Cómo lo sabes?  
*How do you know?*  
FLOR

Cause I can feel it, Mama. Because we're twins, Mama. He's swimmin'. I promise.  
LECHE

That's right. Yes. He's swimming.  
FLOR

Leche climbs into the cart. She is very burnt.

Wait a second, you're done looking? No, no, no. Get back in there.

LECHE

....

FLOR

Leche? There's still the water. We need to/ find the wa--

LECHE

I can't find the water, Mama...

FLOR

But the water's got to be out there too, no? Can you feel it? Try to feel it!

LECHE

I...I don't know...

Leche begins to cry.

FLOR

No! Don't do that! No, no, no. Please! Te necesito fuerte.  
*No! Don't do that! No, no, no. I need you to be strong.*

LECHE

I'm sorry...

FLOR

Stop! You're okay! Do you hear me?

She goes to shake Leche who winces in pain  
from her burns.

LECHE

OW!

FLOR

You're okay!

A pause.

LECHE

I'm okay?

FLOR

Yes. You're okay. And so is your brother. He's swimming...like you said.

Flor lets go of Leche fall silent. A moment passes.

LECHE

I'm okay.

FLOR

Yes.

LECHE

I can feel the water, Mama.

FLOR

That's right.

LECHE

We're gonna get it back.

FLOR

That's right.

LECHE

I'm not gonna cry anymore, Mama, because we're gonna get it back...

FLOR

That's right. Mírame. ¿Estoy llorando?  
*That's right. Look at me. Am I crying?*

LECHE

No.

FLOR

And you know why?

LECHE

Why?

FLOR

Because there's not need to.

LECHE

Because we're not dis-par-it.

FLOR

That's right! But you know who is? All of them out there. So what are we gonna do?

LECHE

We're gonna sell!

FLOR

Yes. They're going to pay upfront. And then we have a house.

LECHE

For you and me?

FLOR

And your brother.

LECHE

And Chu--

She stops herself.

For you, me, and my brother.

FLOR

Go! Find the customers. Make 'em pay up-front. Go!

Flor grabs a piece of drift wood. Leche climbs it. She pushes her off.

Go!

Leche hand paddles vigorously.

\*

Highwayman floats on a broken door and sings.

HIGHWAYMAN

COME WITH ME, MY SWEET JOSEPHINE  
 HERE, PUT YOUR HAND IN MINE  
 TOO MUCH TO LIVE  
 TOO MUCH TO DREAM  
 WE'LL NOT GO BEFORE IT'S TIME

FOR NOW WE DREAM,  
 OF TOMORROW AND TODAY  
 TO DREAM BUT TO DREAM,  
 THERE IS NO SORROW  
 I'LL LEAD THE WAY

He stops his song and scratches at his skin.

A thousand ants under my nails, boy! Jus under ‘em!

He tries to sing and comes to a mumbling stop.

AWAY WE GO  
MY SWEET JOSEPHINE  
MY SWEET JOSEPHINE  
AWAY WE GO

(addressing the audience)

Well God took a long, hard piss didn’t he? Made the world in seven days, wrecked it in one. Like a kid kicking over a sand castle.

COME WITH ME MY SWEET--

Listen, ya’ll got something on ya, fam? A bump? A hit? Somethin’ small. I’ll take whatever it is ya got.

A moment.

COME WITH ME--

Seriously, whatever it is ya got. I’ll take it.

No response.

Nothing then, huh?

Downstream flow a bundle of clothes.

Heyo! What do we have here? A bird or a gator or something for eatin’?

Highwayman grabs the clothes. They’re Gloria’s. He is silent. And then:

Goddamn. You stupid, stupid bitch.

(to the audience)

Nothin’ then, huh. Nothin’ for a man in need?

Highwayman darkens.

You come to the petting zoo but you won’t feed the animals? Welcome to the show, folks! Here it is!

Highwayman lunges forward stopped only by Dallas, who enters in his canoe.

DALLAS  
 Highwayman.

HIGHWAYMAN  
 ....

DALLAS  
 I'm glad to see you're alright. I didn't know if you would be.

The Highwayman groans, itches, and wobbles.

HIGHWAYMAN  
 My skin's on fire, Dallas. Your boys over at the rez got something for me?

DALLAS  
 It's gone.

HIGHWAYMAN  
 Cause my fingers be itchin' somethin' wicked.

DALLAS  
 All of it.

Beat.

Casino's gone too.

Highwayman laughs bitterly.

HIGHWAYMAN  
 Just turn it into a water park.

DALLAS  
 ....

HIGHWAYMAN  
 It's funny. Laugh, you rich son of a bitch.

DALLAS  
 ....

HIGHWAYMAN  
 Cause ya'll are good at makin' a buck. Miccosukee Mouse here for autographs!

A look enters Highwayman's eye. He approaches, dangerously.

What would it feel to be nothing?

Whoa now, stay back...

DALLAS

I'll show you!

HIGHWAYMAN

Dallas draws his pistol.

DALLAS

This is for invasive species.

He cocks it.

Don't make me do it.

Highwayman collapses.

What's happening?

HIGHWAYMAN

Nothing... I'm sorry, Dallas. I'm sorry...

Highwayman curls up with Gloria's clothes.

I'm not feeling good is all.

A pause.

DALLAS

Don't tell me I don't what it's like to have nothing.

A silence. A dead gator floats by belly-up.  
Dallas sets her straight and sends her on.

HIGHWAYMAN  
( to the bundle of clothing)

Poor girl. Poor, poor girl...

DALLAS

Freshwater thing can't survive in saltwater. Hey.... Hey!

HIGHWAYMAN

Hi.

Dallas starts laughing hysterically. Highwayman joins.

HIGHWAYMAN

Woo! You motherfucker! Pullin' a pistol on me like we playing cowboys and Indians!

DALLAS

I'm sorry for that / but you--

HIGHWAYMAN

(indicating himself)

You gotta keep the invasive species in check. I get it.

Dallas pulls a cigarette from his pocket.

DALLAS

This is all I got on me. You promise to be good?

HIGHWAYMAN

Didn't know you smoked, Dallas.

DALLAS

I don't. Usually.

HIGHWAYMAN

Hash? Weed?

DALLAS

Tobacco.

HIGHWAYMAN

That'll do.

Dallas lights it. They pass it back and forth across their respective "boats," and puff.

HIGHWAYMAN

So whatcha gonna do about... this?

DALLAS

A rain dance.

HIGHWAYMAN

Hm.

DALLAS

It was a joke.



Highwayman chuckles.

HIGHWAYMAN

Yeah...ya'll gonna relocate, then.

DALLAS

Not this time. Come hell or high water.

Beat.

Another joke.

HIGHWAYMAN

You're a funny motherfucker, Dallas. Didn't expect it from you.

DALLAS

Indians. We're a riot.

HIGHWAYMAN

Hm.

A silence. And then:

DALLAS

So, a missionary is walking with a chief in the / forest...

HIGHWAYMAN

Wait, who?

DALLAS

A missionary...this is a joke. So a missionary is walking in the forest with an Indian chief. They're walking in the forest cause he realizes that the only thing he forgot to do -- you know, after baptizing the Indians and putting them in tight underwear -- was to teach them English. So they're walking in the forest and the missionary points to a tree and says, "tree." The chief strains hard and says, "tree." They keep walking and the priest points to a rock and says "this is a rock."

HIGHWAYMAN

Wait, the priest?

DALLAS

Sorry, the missionary. The missionary says, "this is a rock." So the chief says "rock" and they walk some more when all of a sudden they hear the sounds of panting from the bushes. And when they part the leaves, there's this Indian couple having hot sex...they're going at it.

And the chief goes “What this?”, and the missionary blushes a little and says, “Man riding his bike.” So the chief pulls out a gun and shoots the guy having sex. Boom! Dead. And the missionary’s flabbergasted. He’s mad. He goes on and says, “I spend all this time trying to civilize and you do this! Why?”

Small pause.

And the chief goes, “My bike.”

They laugh again.

HIGHWAYMAN

Man...

DALLAS

Man.

HIGHWAYMAN

Thanks for the puff, brother.

DALLAS

Thanks for being Miccosukee Park & Casino’s number one customer.

HIGHWAYMAN

You mean, one customer.

Chuchi’s voice rings out in the distance,  
reprising Flor’s opening song.

CHUCHI

WHEN THE SUN IS BEATING DOWN  
AND THE WATER’S ALL AROUND  
MONTROSE GOT YOU COVERED  
MAKING FLOR-EE-DA REBOUND

DALLAS

Fuck. These people again.

Chuchi floats in on a marvelously festooned  
boat and dressed beautifully.

CHUCHI

ALL THE DAMAGE THAT'S BEEN DONE  
IT'S BECAUSE OF OTHER ONES  
BUT MONTROSE GOT YOU COVERED, ALL  
ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE

SO THE TIME'S ARE GETTING WORSE  
N' THE WORLD'S BECOME A HEARSE  
MONTROSE GOT YOU COVERED, ALL  
TO SOOTHE THE PAIN AND THE HURT

DOESN'T TAKE BUT HALF A BRAIN  
TO KNOW THE WHOLE WORLD'S GONE INSANE  
MONTROSE GOT YOUR COVERED, ALL  
HE'S GOT SALVATION IN HIS NAME

MONTROSE  
OH MONTROSE  
MONTROSE

HIGHWAYMAN

Chuchi?

CHUCHI

It's Esther now.

Dallas draws his gun.

DALLAS

You're on private lands, miss. I suggest you split.

CHUCHI

Of course. Mr. Dallas, is it? Permit me a word?

DALLAS

Words are for people who have something to say to each other.

CHUCHI

Take a leaflet at least. Montrose got a spot in his heart for the native people.

Chuchi extends a leaflet. Dallas does not take it.

It's a comprehensive plan to rescue the Everglades with a "rent to own" option. Could be useful.

DALLAS

We're not giving up the land.

CHUCHI

With all due respect, Mr. Tribal Chairman, but you don't have land, not anymore. What you have here is a mess. And you don't expect to clean all this by yourself, do you?

DALLAS

....

CHUCHI

You can throw it out later if you don't want it.

Dallas takes it aggressively.

DALLAS

You take care of yourself, Highwayman. There's all kinds of predators out of here.

HIGHWAYMAN

So long, brother.

Dallas rows away. Chuchi begins to leave.

Hold on, Chuchi, now.

CHUCHI

It's Esther!

HIGHWAYMAN

You don't remember me?

CHUCHI

Of course.

HIGHWAYMAN

Then how come you won't look me in the eyes?

The sound of Leche in the distance.

LECHE

Highwayman, Highwayman, Highwayman!

CHUCHI

Leche...

HIGHWAYMAN

Over here! Finally, something for the itch come along...

LECHE

Highwayman, Highwayman, Highwayman!

Leche enters on a piece of scrap.

Highwayman!

CHUCHI

Leche!

LECHE

(quickly, on a single breath)

Highwayman, saltwater's come in and messed up the table. We got fresh water. Good water. Drinkable water. The best water. And we'll sell it at a really low price but only for you but you gotta pay now and not later and we'll have it delivered but we needs the money now and you definitely need it because there's no good water left and it's a low, low price but you gotta pay now and we'll deliver / it later-

HIGHWAYMAN

Leche! Look who's here.

Leche stares at Chuchi. Chuchi stares back.

CHUCHI

Hi.

LECHE

....

CHUCHI

Can I hug / you--

LECHE

(to Highwayman)

So you want it?

HIGHWAYMAN

You got, you know, that something else Highwayman like?

LECHE

We got water. And we'll deliver it but you gotta pay now, Mr. Highwayman. Low, low / price --

HIGHWAYMAN

Where your Mama at?

LECHE

Makin' sales!

HIGHWAYMAN

You tell your Mama I'll pay when she's got the stuff. A loan.

LECHE

No. You pay NOW.

HIGHWAYMAN

I got nothing now. How about a loan?  
Itchin.' Why don't you and I join rafts  
here and we go find your Mama?

CHUCHI

Leche? Your/ skin, it's--

LECHE

We got all we need right here.

Leche beats her chest with emphasis. Maybe she  
winces after hitting her burn.

You want it or not, Highwayman?

CHUCHI

Leche...

HIGHWAYMAN

Fuck it. Tell your Mama I'll be seein' her.

He begins to row away.

LECHE

No! Please! Low, low price only for you! Highwayman? HIGHWAYMAN!

He exits. Leche thrashes at the water in  
frustration.

GoddamnFuckABitchMother! GoddamnFuckABitchMother!

CHUCHI

LECHE!

Beat.

Do you know who I am?

LECHE

Chuchi, duh.

CHUCHI

I want you to call me Esther now. Your skin, / it's--

LECHE

Shedding. I'm a snake. Hsssss! I'm gonna have new skin, brown skin, beautiful skin.

CHUCHI

Where's Café?

LECHE

He's swimmin'

CHUCHI

And... Mama?

LECHE

Makin' sales! Gotta make sales! Make sales, make sales, make sales!

A moment.

You live in a house now?

CHUCHI

Yeah.

LECHE

What's it like?

CHUCHI

It's nice.

Beat.

I missed you.

LECHE

...

CHUCHI

You want some chocolate? Here.

Chuchi holds out the chocolate. Leche gets nearer, sniffing like a suspicious animal.

I've got lots now. Some are filled raspberry, some are filled with alcohol but this one's just milk. Take it.

She doesn't.

LECHE

Why you here?

CHUCHI

I'm negotiating.

LECHE

So you're doin' business.

CHUCHI

I'm negotiating. For Mr. Montrose.

LECHE

Your nails are long.

CHUCHI

So are yours.

LECHE

Mine are for scratching things up if I need to. What about yours?

CHUCHI

They're just for looking at.

LECHE

K.

Leche begins to leave.

CHUCHI

Wait. I'll come with you.

LECHE

No, thas okay.



I want to see Mama. CHUCHI

Thas okay. We've got each other. LECHE

Here! Cover up! CHUCHI

Chuchi tosses her shawl to Leche. Leche throws it back.

It's so you don't burn more, Leche.

Chuchi tosses the shawl again. Here a game of back and forth ensues.

I'm not burning. LECHE

Yes, you are. CHUCHI

No I'm not. LECHE

You're peeling! CHUCHI

I'm shedding! LECHE

Don't be stupid! CHUCHI

I'm a snake! LECHE

You're a little girl! CHUCHI

Snake! LECHE

Snakes don't talk! CHUCHI

Hsssss! LECHE

Take it! CHUCHI

I don't want it, Chuchi! LECHE

It's Esther! And you're burning real bad! CHUCHI

Stop! LECHE

It's for your own good! CHUCHI

Since when you care if I'm good! LECHE

A beat.

Leche. You're burning. Badly. CHUCHI

I'mNotBurningI'mNotBurningI'mNotBurning I'M NOT BURNING! LECHE

Flor calls from the distance.

Leche? Leche! FLOR

Go. LECHE

I wanna see Mama! CHUCHI

Leche! FLOR  
(from the distance)

Go, Chuchi!

LECHE

No!

CHUCHI

You're not good for her.

LECHE

Flor rows in on her shopping cart.

FLOR

We have fresh water! You pay and we / deliv--

CHUCHI

Mama.

FLOR  
(to Leche)

Oh. I thought you were with a customer, Leche.

LECHE

It's Chuchi, Mama, 'sept she wants us to call her Esther.

FLOR

There's nobody here, Leche.

CHUCHI

Mama! It's me. Chuchi.

LECHE

You mean Esther.

FLOR

Get in the cart, Leche. We have to find customers.

CHUCHI

Mama?

LECHE

What do we say to her?

FLOR

To who, Leche?

CHUCHI  
 Mama, please.

FLOR  
 Vamos.  
*Let's go!*

CHUCHI  
 Mama.

LECHE  
 Can I say goodbye at least, Mama?

FLOR  
 No hablamos con fatasmas. Traen mala suerte.  
*We don't speak to ghosts. They bring bad luck.*

CHUCHI  
 The cart..it's empty!

FLOR  
 ¿Quieres cantar, mi amor?  
*You want to sing, honey?*

CHUCHI  
 There's nothing in the cart!

LECHE  
 You're gonna let me sing, Mama?

FLOR  
 Claro, mi amor. Con toda tu alma.  
*Of course, darling. With your heart and soul.*

LECHE  
 (singing)  
 THE DEVIL BROUGHT / THE BABY

CHUCHI  
 I can get you fresh water, Mama.

Flor throws a hand over Leche's mouth.

You need it, don't you? I can get it for you.

Flor looks her straight in the eye.

Hi, Mama.

Flor sucks her teeth.

Come with me, okay? And I'll get you water.

FLOR

.....

CHUCHI

Where's Café.

FLOR

(to Leche)

He's swimming.

LECHE

(to Chuchi)

He's swimmin.'

CHUCHI

What do you mean/ he

FLOR

HE'S SWIMMING.

A beat.

LECHE

Can I sing now?

FLOR

(unclear if to Chuchi or Leche)

Como quieras.

*As you like.*

CHUCHI

Follow me.

Chuchi begins to sing, as if by habit, and is abruptly taken over by Leche's song. She sings in a sloppy, gravelly-voiced New Orleans jazz style. They sail on.

## LECHE

THE DEVIL BROUGHT THE BABY DOWN TO TAMPA BAY  
 TO DROWN IT IN THE WATER, THAT'S WHAT THEY LIKE TO SAY  
 WITH A KICKIN' AND A FUSSIN', AND "SHH SHH NO YOU MUSN'T"  
 SAY THE DEVIL SOFTLY SWEETLY TO THE LIL SOOKIE BABE  
 SAY THE DEVIL SOFTLY SWEETLY TO THE LIL SOOKIE BABE

"LET HER GO, LET HER GO" I SCREAM  
 SHE GOT HER WHOLE LIFE TO LIVE  
 GOTTA GREAT BIG WORLD LEFT TO SEE  
 "AND I GOT NOTHIN' LEFT TO GIVE"  
 SAY THE DEVIL RIGHT QUICK BACK TO ME

THE DEVIL BROUGHT THE BABY DOWN TO TAMPA BAY  
 TO DROWN IT IN THE WATER OF THE SEA, OH OF THE SEA  
 WHEN HE LOOK DOWN IN IT, IN THE WATER WAS A-GRINNIN'  
 NOT THE DEVIL STARING BACK, IT WAS ME, IT WAS ME  
 OH THE DEVIL STARING BACK, IT WAS ME, IT WAS ME

\*

Cluck and Henny play cards in their boat in  
 front of Montrose's golden gate. Henny is light  
 on guns while Cluck is now fully stacked with  
 them

CLUCK

I said it was a match.

HENNY

You can't call suites! Just nu/mbers

CLUCK

The uzi.

HENNY

No fuckin' way.

CLUCK

That's the rules!

HENNY

*Your* rules.



Oh yeah? HENNY

Yeah! CLUCK

Yeah? HENNY

CLUCK  
(with frightening conviction)  
THAT'S AN ORDER .....bro.

A pause.

Enter Flor, Chuchi, and Leche.

LECHE  
(singing)  
OH IT WAS ME, IT WAS ME, IT WAS ME

No singing on prem-- Oh. Chuchi. CLUCK

Madame. CHUCHI

Yes. Sorry...Mam. CLUCK

Welcome/ home, Madame. HENNY

I'll remind you, Cluck, that manners are very important to Mr. Montrose and myself. CHUCHI

Right. CLUCK

Excuse me? CHUCHI

Of course, Chuchi. I mean, Esther. I mean...Madam. CLUCK



CHUCHI

Are you trying to be smart?

Tension.

No, of course not. You couldn't be even if you tried. Right, Mama?

Leche laughs.

LECHE

You, you, you! Dumb, dumb, dumb!

Flor does not respond.

CLUCK

He should be down in a minute, Madame.

CHUCHI

Perfect. These are our *guests* by the way.

CLUCK

Of course, Mam. Madame.

(to Flor and Leche)

Happy to have you on premises.

CHUCHI

(to Flor and Leche)

It's a beautiful house, Mama. You'll love it. There's air conditioning and the windows are hurricane-proof. And now that the ocean's closer, we think we can market it as "ocean-front" property, maybe build a hotel right in back.

FLOR

....

LECHE

Ooh! Ooh! Mama, can we live in the hotel?

Flor sucks her teeth.

CHUCHI

He says there's real possibility here. Imagine the whole state as an archy..an arche... an archa...a bunch of islands. It'll be like the Caribbean. Or Venice! Boats everywhere. And who knows? With the right equipment, rich people, might come down here *for* the hurricanes... you know, like how they fly over volcanos or chase tornados.

Rich white people love paying to feel scared. Can you believe that? We're dripping in opportunities. You can greet the tourists. Wouldn't that be nice?

FLOR

...

LECHE

Mama, I can greet the terr-rists!

CHUCHI

Mama?

FLOR

...

LECHE

And I can sing too, Chuchi? For the terr-rists?

CHUCHI

Mama, you have to talk to me at some point.

LECHE

But I can keep singin', right?

CHUCHI

I brought you here.

LECHE

For the terr-rists?

CHUCHI

Mama!

LECHE

Chuchi!

FLOR

....

CHUCHI

Can you look at me at least!

(to Flor)

Jesus Christ! Yes, Leche!

LECHE

I can sing for the--

Montrose enters through the gates.

Oh Mr. Montrose, I've brought my / mother and my sister--

MONTROSE

Flor.

CHUCHI

Yes! I decided to have / company--

MONTROSE

You look like hell.

(to Leche)

Little Latte.

LECHE

Leche! Imma sing for the terr-rists, Mr. Montrose! Chuchi said I could so I'mma sing for the terr-rists!

MONTROSE

The terrists?

CHUCHI

Tourists. I told them a bit about our plans for the rich white people, Mr...my love.

MONTROSE

Our plans? Oh, our / plans. Of course.

FLOR

I want to talk to you.

CHUCHI

Mama, let me handle / this--

FLOR

Jamás seré tu criada, mi niña. ¿Entiendes?  
*I'm never to be your maid, my girl. Got it?*

MONTROSE

Ok now, let's make it quick. What do you need?

FLOR

I missed you.

You missed me.  
 MONTROSE  
 Chuchi, go inside. Take Leche.  
 FLOR  
 Excuse me?  
 CHUCHI  
 Go.  
 FLOR  
 This is my house now, Mama, and you don't get to tell me what to do. You don't / get to--  
 CHUCHI  
 Inside, dear. We have business.  
 MONTROSE  
 Chuchi grabs Leche by the wrist.  
 LECHE  
 Not so hard, Chuchi! Can I stand in front of the A.C.?  
 They disappear up the driveway.  
 MONTROSE  
 Right. So, you missed me...  
 FLOR  
 And you? Did you miss me?  
 MONTROSE  
 You want what's true or what's kind?  
 FLOR  
 I just want you.  
 MONTROSE  
 Right. Is that why you only come when you need something?  
 FLOR  
 I'm like a little bird in your hands. Remember? I fly away and I come back.  
 Flor nears him.  
 That's what you like, right? That you can't have me...

MONTROSE

Flor...

FLOR

Pero aquí estoy, en tus manos otra vez.  
*But here I am, in your hands once more.*

MONTROSE

Flor...

FLOR

(singing)

DICEN QUE EL AMOR SINCERO  
ES MUY DIFICIL DE CONSEGUIR  
PERO AQUI ESTOY, PARA TI

MONTROSE

Your voice hasn't changed much over the years.

Flor giggles like a little girl.

FLOR

What has ever changed between us?

Montrose pulls away.

MONTROSE

Why are you here, Flor? I take truth over kindness.

FLOR

I already told you. I / want--

MONTROSE

Truth!

Beat.

FLOR

I need water.

MONTROSE

(maybe with a cynical chuckle)

But of course. Lost it all already?

I also need you. FLOR

Prove it. MONTROSE

A moment.

You want me to...? FLOR

I want you to prove it. MONTROSE

How? FLOR

Be sweet. MONTROSE

You don't like me sweet. FLOR

I want you to be sweet. MONTROSE

FLOR  
Those nights on the Malecón. Your hand around mine. It was always big and warm and soft. They felt different, how soft they were. I remembered thinking, "How can a man have soft hands?"

Yes? MONTROSE

FLOR  
I've only ever been safe in the world when I was with you. The only kindness I've ever known was yours. I was lost, you found me. You taught me. You made me.

Beat.

I love you.

Say it again. MONTROSE

I love you. FLOR

Again. MONTROSE

I love you. FLOR

Flor kisses him. Chuchi reenters with Leche. They stop in their tracks. Montrose abruptly recoils.

I'm sorry. The smell. MONTROSE

... FLOR

I'm sorry. MONTROSE

... FLOR

Do you have anything else to offer? For the water, that is. MONTROSE

.... FLOR

Right. So, if that's all you have... MONTROSE

Montrose turns and sees Chuchi watching.

Oh, uh Esther. How about we go inside.

Wait... FLOR

I've got business to attend to. MONTROSE

Wait! FLOR

MONTROSE

I wish you well.

Flor begins to tear off her clothes.

FLOR

Wait! Wait! I've got something! It's here! It's here! I've got something!

MONTROSE

Flor, what are...Flor, please. The children are here!

She stops.

Don't be so desperate, Flor. It's ugly.

Montrose turns to leave with Chuchi. Flor charges after them and pulls Chuchi by the hand. Leche growls.

FLOR

Vamos, Chuchi.

CHUCHI

What are you doing!?

FLOR

You fat son of a bitch! You've taken enough from me! You're not taking my daughter!

CHUCHI

Mama, / please--

FLOR

This man doesn't care about you! He doesn't love you! He's a parasite! A leech! A bloodsucker! He'll use you up and throw you away, like a flower in the gutter! You're worth more than that, Chuchi. Millions more. He's not your family. We are. This fat fuck things he can buy the world. ¡Pero a mi hija, nunca!

MONTROSE

I gave you everything, Flor. You said it yourself. You're just no good at holding onto things either.

FLOR

Vamos. Ahora mismo.  
*Let's go. Right now.*



Chuchi yanks her hand away.

CHUCHI

I'm not a child.

Chuchi places her hand in Montrose's arm.  
Something inside Flor breaks. FLOR sucks her  
teeth and then spits at her feet.

Ven, Leche.  
*Come on, Leche.*

Leche growls at Montrose.

Leche, ven.  
*Leche, come.*

Leche takes Flor's hand. They begin to leave  
when Leche suddenly whips around and leaps  
onto Montrose.

LECHE

You fat son of a bitch! You fat son of a bitch! You fat son of a bitch!

CHUCHI

Leche, stop! STOP!

MONTROSE

She's tearing my eyes out!

LECHE

ROT IN HELL, ROT IN HELL, ROT IN  
HELL!

MONTROSE

She's tearing my eyes out! Boys! BOYS!

FLOR

No, no! Wait! STOP! DON'T--

Cluck fires a bullet and strikes Leche in the  
back. She falls.

HENNY

Holy shit, dude...

Chuchi faints.

CLUCK

I didn't...it wasn't supposed / to...

MONTROSE

Take her inside.

CLUCK & HENNY

.....

MONTROSE

Now!

Henny and Cluck pick Chuchi up and take her behind the gates. Montrose touches the scratches on his face.

(to Flor)

You see what you did!? You see what...

He exits. Flor takes Leche in her arms.

FLOR

I told you not to curse. Mira que tú eres majadera, hm.  
*I told you not curse. You really are a bad girl, hm.*

A pause. The sound of water.

¿Qué dices? ¿Quieres nadar? Ya, Leche, ya. ¡Okay okay! Quieres nadar como tu hermano, está bien. Dale. Pero don't make me say I told you so, ah? Mi niña linda...dale.  
*What did you say? You want to swim. Enough, Leche, enough. Okay, okay! You want to swim like your brother, fine. Go on. But don't make me say I told you so, ah? My beautiful girl...go on.*

Flor casts her off. She floats downstream, a plume of red trails behind her and stains the water.

FLOR

Oh! ¿Y Leche? Your sunscreen, it's...

Quiet.

Leche.

Flor places herself in her cart. She floats. She sings to herself in a vast, dark ocean.

FLOR

ADORO MIO, CANTAME ALGO AHI  
ALEGRO, MELANCOLICO, LO QUE QUIERAS OIR  
NO IMPORTA QUE DECIDAS  
SOLO QUE SEA LA VOZ DE MI QUERIDA

(Struggling with the words)  
LA VOZ DE...LA VOZ DE...MI...?

She stops singing. She gives up. Silence fills the space. The gentle sounds of rowing approach. Highwayman enters on a raft made of scraps. Clinging to it is a sail made from Gloria's battered clothing. A single bangle is affixed like a jewel. He shakes and scratches at himself, humming something indistinguishable, now in full withdrawal.

HIGHWAYMAN  
Mama? Hey Mama! I was lookin' for you! Wonderin' if ya got that good stuff?

FLOR  
.....

HIGHWAYMAN  
Mama? Hey, Mama?

FLOR  
.....

HIGHWAYMAN  
You wanna join rafts now? You wait right there. I'll come on over to you. Don't get up now, Mama. Don't get up. Yes, Mam, it's gonna be a beautiful night out here. Sky's clear.

FLOR  
.....

HIGHWAYMAN  
It's okay, I'll do all the work. You been good to me, Mama. I don't forget it.

Highwayman gently brings her onboard,  
shaking and trying his best.

You don't need to give me nothing neether, Mama. Just would love your company, is all. You sit right there. Welcome home to the S.S. Gloria!

FLOR  
.....

HIGHWAYMAN

Okay if I put my arm around you like this? Will ya let Highwayman touch ya? Nothing improper, Mama, I promise.

FLOR

....

He does.

HIGHWAYMAN

Sometimes ya go so long without no one touchin' you that you forget what it feels like...

He holds her in silence. She emits a quick, strange sound. Is it a sob? A sigh? A crunch? Actor's choice.

Wouldja look at them stars? Told you they would be nice. You know, they the residue of some exploded planet or some shit from a long time ago. Far, far away, long, long ago. Real nice, though. Course we sometimes make the mistake in thinkin' they up there for *us*...but they don't care, not one bit. They don't know nothin' about us.

Another pause. FLOR is frozen, numb.

You know, we've been doing this a long time, we humans.

FLOR

....

HIGHWAYMAN

Survivin'.

FLOR

....

HIGHWAYMAN

But we keep pushin' on and pushin.' Nice to have someone to push with, though, am I right?

FLOR

....

HIGHWAYMAN

Your hands is cold, Mama. Mind if I hold 'em in mine, warm 'em up for ya? Thanks, Mama.

The sounds of water slapping, crickets, and night. The hiss of an alligator somewhere off.

End of play.