

RAP

Drama

by
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Rap	POC, long extensions	17	female
Danielle	white, neat grey hair	68	female
Jamal	POC, student athlete (football)	19	male

SETTING

Inside a large house in a small college town in New Hampshire.

The stage is mainly taken up with a round 'tower' room that is a bedroom. It has a traditional feel to it, rag rugs on the floor and a 'historical' quilt made of squares of fabric on the bed. There is a set of french doors that open onto a balcony, and lots of photos of Rap's parents and a 17 years younger Dannielle in photos all around the room. There is a full length mirror. There is a fireplace with a mantelpiece that has a 'forest' of 17 Simon Pearce glass Christmas trees, all types and sizes. There is a desk with a jewellery box, on the far corner, with beads and chains spilling out of it. The desk has a swivel chair and a laptop, with an armchair positioned between the french doors and the desk, within arms reach of the swivel chair. The queen size bed has bedside tables with lamps on them.

A door from the bedroom leads onto a foyer space with another door that is the front door to the house. There is a security punchpad next to the front door. The doorstep can be seen as part of the stage, such that someone standing at the front door is seen on-stage.

TIME

2023 - starts in spring, goes through end of summer.

NOTATION

When a character names is followed by an ellipsis, as such:

REESE...

This indicates a non-verbal response to the previous line.

The ellipsis line may be played in many ways: as a pause, a beat, a look, a movement, silence, a smile, a sudden thought, or it can just be used to give the scene some air, some room, some tension, etc.

A slash (/) in the middle of the character's line indicates an interruption or speaking at the same time. The next speaking character should begin her line where the slash appears.

SCENE ONE.

As the audience enters the theatre, *Don't Touch My Hair* (Solange) is playing. There is a projection on the back wall of a tower.

The lights go down. The back wall goes blank. The music ceases.

RAP walks into the bedroom. She's wearing a shorty nightgown holding a stuffed animal.

The lights come up, the projection shows a pine forest tossing in a strong wind. RAP puts the stuffed animal on the bed and goes to the forest on the mantelpiece and picks up a glass tree. She carries it to the french doors and is looking out when DANIELLE comes in. She turns and smiles once she notices DANIELLE.

DANIELLE

I love that forest.

RAP

This one? Or this one?

Rap holds up the glass tree with one hand, and points out the doors with the other. DANIELLE smiles and points to the glass tree.

RAP

Right? I love it the best too.

RAP brings both hands to the glass tree and hugs it.

RAP

Thank you again for giving me one of these every Christmas. They're so beautiful.

RAP puts her tree back on the mantelpiece and goes to Danni and hugs her.

DANIELLE

Still not as beautiful as you. But so much better than the ones out there. I try to make a world for you, and family traditions are part of that. I would give you anything you wanted.

RAP disengages and DANIELLE walks to the french doors and looks out.

RAP

I don't think there's anything out there that I want. Remember when I showed you that news story about the woman getting killed in her car when a tree crashed down on it?

DANIELLE

Was that the soil erosion geography report?

RAP

Yup. Or what about that photo where a man was crushed in his bed?

DANIELLE turns to face RAP.

DANIELLE

What photo?

RAP looks a bit guilty and nervous.

DANIELLE becomes like a stern parent.

DANIELLE

Do I need to check the parental controls for the internet? Was the photo gory? ... Don't answer that. You know you're only meant to be accessing educational material. That was our deal when I let you have the computer.

DANIELLE softens and beckons to RAP.

DANIELLE

Anyway, hon, don't worry. Nothing can get in here. You're safe in your bed. I'll always protect you.

RAP puts down the glass tree and joins DANIELLE at the window.

RAP

I cannot believe that people actually choose to go walking in there. It's full of wolves and coyotes and ticks and.../

DANIELLE

/Nothing you have to worry about in here, my love.

DANIELLE puts her arm around RAP's shoulder, and RAP leans her head on DANIELLE'S.

DANIELLE

Bedtime?

RAP runs to the bed and jumps in.
DANIELLE sits on the edge of the bed.

RAP

Our story first, Danni?

DANIELLE smiles indulgently and pats Rap's head, smooths her cheek. She tucks the bedclothes in around RAP.

DANIELLE

(pleased)

Oh, my little girl, do you never get tired of it?

RAP

No, Danni. Not ever. I wonder about my parents... and you.

DANIELLE

OK then. Once upon a time, I was living in a beautiful house, look... you can see it right across the way there, right next door. Well, I guess it's dark but we know it's right there.

DANIELLE gestures. RAP obediently looks out the french door even though it is dark.

DANIELLE

And one day, my dog started barking and growling. "Hush, Grover" I told him but he would not hush. He was carrying on fit to beat the band, so I went over to where he was pointing to the garden. He was a German setter, you see, so he pointed with his nose and his tail would go all stiff and quivery.

RAP

I wish I'd got to meet Grover.

DANIELLE

Yes, you would've loved him. He was quite a character. Anyway, he pointed right at the raspberry patch in my garden, and what should I see? /

RAP

/ A man!

They both raise their hands in mock consternation and surprise. RAP giggles.

DANIELLE

Yes, a man. The hide of him! In my garden, picking my raspberries! Well, I says to myself, "What is *he* doing here?" So then I say to him "What are you doing here?" He was new to town, had just moved in, and he said "Just picking some raspberries for my wife. She's pregnant you see, and is really suffering cravings."

RAP

Wow. Does every pregnant woman have cravings?

DANIELLE

Most. But your mother was not just any woman. She was special. She had a tower room, you know. At Princeton. And once she had one, she knew that her daughter would have to have a tower room too.

RAP

So she built this house with a tower especially for me.

RAP is clearly providing lines in a well worn story and pattern for the two women.

DANIELLE

Yes, my dear. She did. She must've known that her daughter would grow up to be the most beautiful and talented girl in all the land.

RAP giggled.

RAP

Oh, you always say that! How long did my mother live in her tower?

DANIELLE starts.

DANIELLE

(flustered)

Huh. I've never thought about that. Um...

well, she would've been at Princeton for four years. But she was so much older than you. But back to the story... your mother... I mean, your father...yes, that's right. Your father...I pointed out to Iniko that he was trespassing and that they were actually my raspberries. "I'm so sorry, Ma'am, but really am I not just saving the raspberries from being eaten by birds? Perhaps I could pay you?" And I joked with him that they could give me you. Oh he laughed. "Maybe we could make you her guardian." We didn't even know each other! But then he said "Maybe for the moment just an invitation for dinner would suffice."

RAP

And you went for a delicious dinner, and many thereafter. And you really did become my guardian.

DANIELLE

(starts, pauses, looks expectantly at Rap)

And...

RAP/DANIELLE

(together)

...here we are.

And RAP snuggled in a little to DANIELLE.

RAP

Danni?

DANIELLE

Hmm?

RAP

Danni, tell me more about my mother?

DANIELLE

Didn't we just do more about your mother? Anyway, I'm your mother.

RAP

Oh. Yes, of course you're my mother, I just meant my birth mother.

DANIELLE

Well, just for you. Adéniké Musa was beautiful as well as driven and ambitious. Her hair, like yours, was exquisite and you know a woman's hair is her crowning glory.

RAP

Ugh. That always seems a lot of weight to attribute to some dead cells.

What an odd thing to say! Anyway, she excelled in academia, then was outstanding in administration, then charmed everyone until she was a smash hit in politics. She couldn't put a foot wrong.

RAP

Until?...

DANIELLE

Until....

RAP

The crash?

DANIELLE

If Adéniké Musa said "get me raspberries", then Iniko Musa found them. If Adéniké Musa said "We will leave our baby daughter and fly to the World Economic Forum in Davos", then Iniko Musa flew.

RAP

And the plane?...

DANIELLE

And the plane....

Rap sneaks a hand out from under the covers. She holds DANIELLE's hand. They sit quietly for a moment.

RAP

And they didn't feel a thing.

DANIELLE

No. They didn't feel a thing. And then... whoosh... Just like magic I was over the fence, in your house, and here with you.

RAP

What would I have done without you? I was an orphan. A little baby, all alone...

DANIELLE

Don't be ridiculous, darling. You've never been alone in your life. And you're not really an orphan. You've always had me.

RAP

Oh, I didn't mean to sound ungrateful. It just still makes me so afraid to think about it....I am so lucky to have you.

DANIELLE

Yes. And there is more than a dash of luck in all of this. No aunts and uncles, no grandparents. They had only each other. And when Child Welfare Services turned up all the paperwork was in order, you were in good health, and I already had a home schooling program worked out.

RAP

And you've taken care of me in sickness and in health, ever since.

DANIELLE

Yes, my darling. But now, I've realized we've forgotten something.

RAP

Do we have to?

DANIELLE

Rap! What do you mean? You love our little prayer.

RAP

Yeah, yeah.

RAP rolls reluctantly out of bed, kind of deliberately elbowing DANNI out of the way to do so, and kneels next to the bed, resting her elbows on the edge. DANNI kneels next to her.

DANIELLE

Remember when you were so little that you couldn't see over the edge of the bed, and I could hardly hear you because you'd say the prayer with your face pressed into the side of the mattress? You've been here with me for ever so long. It's a gift from God. Now, off you go...

RAP makes a face and rolls her eyes.

RAP

Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep
If I should die before I wake
I pray the Lord my soul to take.
I will do on Earth as it is done in Heaven.

Up at seven, in bed by eleven.
 Give us this day our daily bread
 I thank Danielle who keeps me fed.
 Forgive me my trespasses,
 As I forgive those who trespass against me.
 Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change
 And the wisdom to know that nothing is free.
 Lead us not into temptation
 But be guided to salvation
 By those around us
 Who know so much.
 Mary and Danielle, full of grace,
 Blessed art though among women,
 Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

Both of the women get up, dust off their
 knees and RAP gets into bed. DANIELLE
 tucks her in again.

RAP

One more question, Danni? I promise last one.

DANIELLE

Mmmhmm?

RAP

Tell me about the quilt, Danni. It always makes me sleep better.

DANIELLE

This quilt has been sewn together by my mother, my grandmother and many before them.
 They sat together and sang and quilted. This cover is part of our family who've lived in
 this area for generations. It will keep you warm and safe and nothing bad from outside
 will ever get in to harm you.

RAP snuggles down. DANIELLE kisses her
 forehead.

RAP

It's like my jewelry that Adéniké left for me.

DANIELLE

Yes, my baby, just like that. A gift from your forebears to protect you. Now sleep tight,
 sweet dreams.

DANIELLE turns off the bedside lamp and the lights go down as DANIELLE exits.

A video on a social media account (any made-up name like UnReel) projects onto the back wall. It has Rap's name on it and she is rapping (the lyrics below) and dancing, swinging her extensions around.

My life is a thing of wonder,
yeah

Though my parents gone
asunder, like yeah

So much ahead of me, gunna,

Bring some thunder, like yeah

Put my head and my heart out
in that sound, my feelings all
'round

Not stayin' down, earthbound,
I'm gunna run y'all aground,
yeah, woo

You gunna hear what I say, my
truth, it go all the way

No keepin' this bitch here
today, I ready to join the
fray

Look at me go, my thoughts are
just so, yeah

Them others just blow,
everybody must know, yeah

Put my head and my heart out
in that sound, my feelings all
'round

Not stayin' down, earthbound,
I'm gunna run y'all aground,
yeah, woo

Here, I come, not stayin' up
in the air, woo

Ain't so dumb, be bringin' you
all that flair, woo

My hair, that flair

My hair, don't care

My hair, lay my soul bare

My hair, y'all say it so fair

My hair, my hair, my hair

The song finishes. We see a number appear in the last still shot of Rap. The number starts going up quickly. 1, 10, 100, 7000, 50,000. The picture and number fades slowly.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE TWO.

RAP is sitting at her desk with a laptop open, but her chair is swiveled around so that she is looking out the french doors. DANIELLE enters. She slowly lowers herself into the armchair positioned next to, and within arm's reach of the desk.

DANIELLE

No more daydreaming. How will you ever get into college if your grades drop, Rap?

DANIELLE is gentle but chiding. RAP rolls her eyes, then swings the chair around to face her.

RAP

Can I have a phone, Danni?

DANIELLE

No.

RAP

That's so hypocritical. You have a phone.

DANIELLE

You don't need one.

RAP

Everyone has a phone.

DANIELLE

You're not 'everyone', Rap. You're special. Anyway, you should know better from the report you wrote about the effect of social media on girls.

RAP

Doesn't it have negative effects on you too, hypocrite?

DANIELLE

Stop sassing me. It's just a necessary evil for me. I'm too old for social media, and I certainly don't want any more contact with people in the real world or the virtual. People are cruel and thoughtless. I'm not missing out on diddly. There's nothing out there that a sane person could want.

DANIELLE waves a vague hand at the french doors.

DANIELLE

For me it's a tool, but for some it is a mirror held up for vanity and insecurity. Rap, I think you're in the best possible position - controlling social media rather than having it control you.

RAP who had not been taking much interest, sparks up, seeing an opening.

RAP

You see, I need it for my career!

DANIELLE

You've been posting just fine till now. I can't see it holding you back.

RAP

I need it for my study.

DANIELLE

That is so clearly not true. Stop this silliness, Rap. What has come over you?

RAP

Nothing.

RAP gets up to gaze out of the french doors again.

RAP

Well, if I can't have a phone, can we have pizza for lunch, at least?

DANIELLE

That we can do.

DANIELLE pulls out a phone and taps into it.

DANIELLE

Usual?

RAP

Eh... can I have half mushroom today?

DANIELLE

Sure.

She continues to tap into phone screen, then puts it away with a flourish.

RAP

Would dogwood and crab-apple scratch my skin, and tangle my hair, and be full of bugs too, Danni?

DANIELLE

I'm afraid so, and we can't let anything ever interfere with the beauty of those long locks of yours.

RAP comes to sit back in her chair to face DANNI.

RAP

It's so pretty outside. I can't believe that. How will I ever know if I don't go out there and check for myself? Maybe it doesn't matter if it's not safe all the time. That's just the price we pay?

DANIELLE

Seriously, you want to pay this price? It's too high. You've got the internet. You can see the madness out there. Gun violence, pandemics, drugs, inequality.../

RAP

/...lack of socio-economic mobility, privacy concerns, immigration, climate change, political violence, corruption, decaying infrastructure, species extinction, a mis-incentivized health system.../

DANIELLE

Come on, darling. It may not look that bad right outside your window but we both know it's the truth. We just can't let it get us down. You concentrate on what you can control. And for you, that is your studies.

RAP

I'd rather be making my music.

DANIELLE

Oh my dear. I understand, I truly do. I just want what's best for you. You can do both.

DANIELLE pauses.

DANIELLE

Applying to college is a nice way to know that you are doing everything that the other children are doing. As a matter of fact, not just that you're doing the same things as other children but that you're the best.

DANIELLE takes RAP's hand.

DANIELLE

You must be the most diligent and high-achieving of women. Your parents are watching to see that you've been brought up right; that you are not only the most gorgeous but also the highest up in that ivory tower.

RAP

(dreamily)

Yes. I can't wait to go to college.

Both women freeze. The lights drop except for a spotlight on DANIELLE, and a soundtrack begins with an audible indrawn breath and DANIELLE'S chest visibly inhales and lifts. DANIELLE puts her free hand to her chest as if she's having a heart attack. There's three seconds of silence.

Then the soundtrack continues with the sound of fast, ragged, shallow breathing like someone on the edge of breaking into tears. DANIELLE'S spare hand goes to her forehead, spread over her eyes. A static noise enters the soundtrack like a radio station that is not totally tuned in. After a couple of seconds, the lights come up but start flickering while voices of a man and a woman alternate.

DANIELLE looks around wildly.

VOICES

You'll be lonely, Danni...If you don't pull yourself together, no-one will want you...
Danni, everyone is scared of you... We can't take you anywhere...

RAP has been frozen. DANIELLE grinds the bones in RAP's hand that she is holding, RAP cries out in pain.

RAP

/Danni, you're hurting me...

It breaks the spell. The lights come back to normal. DANIELLE takes a deep breath, staring into RAP's eyes. Her other hand drops onto their clasped hands. She closes her eyes. This breathing soundtrack starts alone but the actors start their dialogue over it after a few seconds - regular breathing in an easily discernible pattern of 3 intakes and 3 puffs out - like yoga or mindfulness breathing or almost like how they tell pregnant women to breath during childbirth. The soundtrack starts to fade and cuts out after 2 rounds of breath intake/outtake. This might be about 9 seconds of breathing.

DANIELLE

It's the voices.

RAP

(afraid - her voice is shaking)

Danni, you know the voices aren't real. We've talked about them.

DANIELLE

I know that but it doesn't stop them speaking.

RAP

Who do you think is speaking to you?

DANIELLE

That's what makes it so frightening. I don't know them. They're inside me and I can't control them. Mainly I think it's God. But sometimes it sounds like Mommy and Daddy.

RAP

We both know I'm not really going away to college, Danni.

DANIELLE

That's right. You'd only apply. You'll have proven what you need to. You don't actually need to accept any or go. We'll be...

DANNI looks expectantly at RAP, who
reluctantly finishes the sentence with her.

BOTH

Together forever.

RAP

(rote)

I am so lucky that I can learn everything I need to know online and have my performing career from home too. Best of both worlds. I am so lucky. You've always been everything to me.

DANIELLE

And you've been my everything for seventeen years. Those years between my parents and you... I was so alone that it hurt.

RAP

You're not alone now Danni. I'll take care of you. You've been my mother. You've taken care of me. I owe everything to you. I wouldn't want to go away to college anyway. I can do it all online. I'm not missing anything.

DANIELLE

You most certainly are not, my dear. It's all just beer and skipping class. Now bend to your studies. I just want you to become the best woman you can be.

RAP

(scoffs)

Hah, I'm not a woman yet. Just a girl. I won't even be eighteen till next year.

DANIELLE

Semantics, semantics. Logistics, logistics. We're all girls at heart. Womanhood isn't defined so much by our age as by who we are and what we do. And who *you* are... is your art. Are you putting out a new post today?

RAP

Yah booty. Gotta a track picked, but just working on some moves.

RAP jumps up, places a UE Boom in the french doors and presses the button. The soundtrack plays *Let Your Hair Down* (MAGIC!).

RAP flashes out a couple of quick dance moves to the lyrics "*So come on and Baby let your hair down, Let me run my fingers through it, we can be ourselves now*"

Then she sits primly back down again. The song's volume goes down but continues to play softly in the background for the rest of the scene (even when the doorbell music plays loudly over it).

DANIELLE

Well, as long as it makes you happy.

RAP

It does.

She gestures with disdain at the laptop on her desk.

RAP

Lot more than this does anyway.

DANIELLE

I know, honey, I know. But at least when you're not enjoying it, you can console yourself with how much faster you get through the curriculum than those poor chumps in school.

DANIELLE stands up slowly. Her knees are clearly giving her trouble.

DANIELLE

Ah, I wish I had your young knees. Actually I wish I had all your youth... and beauty. Ah but then I do. I have all your youth and beauty to myself, right here where I can see it and touch it every day.

She picks up some of RAP's hair affectionately.

RAP

Danni, when will I be allowed to access the Comments section on my UnReel Account, and read them?

DANIELLE

Maybe when you're 18. Just like your trust fund. We've had this discussion. Stop asking when you already know the answer.

DANIELLE still has her hand resting on RAP's head.

RAP

Danni?

DANIELLE

Yes, darling?

RAP

Is you patting my head a micro-aggression?

DANIELLE snatches her hand back and sits, almost falls, back down.

DANIELLE

Where on earth did you get that idea?

RAP

Internet, of course.

She gestures to the computer, and DANIELLE shrugs with frustration.

DANIELLE

(almost resignedly)

Well I guess I can't fight what I bring into the house. If I could just keep all of that from you...

RAP continues to look at her expectantly.

RAP

So? Don't change the subject.

DANIELLE

Oh... yes. Um. Well, do you think me patting your head is micro-aggression?

RAP

Very cunning, turning it back on me. No, actually let me amend that - very wise to turn it back on me because, as usual, you're right. Really only I can be the one to determine if I think it is a micro-aggression.

RAP ponders for a second. JAMAL appears at the front door in a Dominos uniform, holding a thermal pizza delivery bag, and presses the doorbell. It plays a snippet of the song *Just the Two of Us* (Bill Withers and Grover Washington Jr) - "Just the two of us, we can make it if we try, Just the two of us, building castles in the sky..."

RAP

Do you want to get that? It'll be the pizza.

DANIELLE

I will but I won't let them hurry me.

RAP

I can go.

DANIELLE

No. You know what we've agreed. Stranger Danger.

RAP

OK. I'm just pretty big now and I don't want the pizza to get cold or the poor delivery guy to be waiting and waiting. I can help you.

DANIELLE

My dear, you have to learn not to let other people run your life. Lets's just quickly finish answering your question...

JAMAL rings the doorbell again. It plays the same snippet of the song *Just the Two of Us* -
 “Just the two of us, we can make it if we try,
 Just the two of us, building castles in the sky...”

DANIELLE ignores it.

RAP

No, it's not really a micro-aggression. I know there may be a race element, for the obvious reasons, but it's really just that you're my mother, and you've been touching my head for as long as I can remember. I think it's fine. Plus you do my braids anyway, so you're always touching my hair. I'm tending more towards thinking it's an age/relationship thing. You just still pat my head like I'm a child.

DANIELLE

You *are* my child. And how often have we listened to that Solange song? It's the feelings you wear. Your hair is your glory and your soul. In those moments where I touch your hair, I have that moment of being part of you, invited by you.

RAP

(sings)

It's the feelings I wear...

(speaking)

I love that song. Maybe I should put samples in my next mix. Danni, you know, I think I should be braiding my own hair now. Nearly a woman, right? Semantics. Logistics. Whatever.

JAMAL rings the doorbell again. It plays the same snippet of the song *Just the Two of Us*-
 “Just the two of us, we can make it if we try,
 Just the two of us, building castles in the sky...”

But this time he gets impatient and hits the button multiple times, so it's just the same start of the song over-running each time.

DANIELLE

Ugh, so intrusive. Is pizza even worth it?

DANIELLE starts to slowly stand, looking put out and in evident pain with her knees. RAP jumps to her feet.

RAP

Here, let me. You stay there. I've got this.

She gently guides DANIELLE back into the chair with a gesture of "stay." She goes to the balcony and peers out.

On the stage outside the front door, JAMAL is looking around impatiently.

RAP looks down. JAMAL looks up. They're both on different sides of the stage but the reaction from each makes it evident that their eyes locked. The volume of *Let Your Hair Down* (MAGIC!) goes up - the lyrics this time are "*there she goes, there she goes, there she goes, There's nothing better than my beautiful woman.*"

DANIELLE

You know, sweetheart, you're so lucky that you've never had that awful experience of a stranger touching your hair. You do not want anything to do with strangers in general.

RAP is not listening anymore. She's transfixed.

RAP

I'll go. You stay here.

RAP races across the room. She answers the front door.

RAP

Hey...

JAMAL

Hey...

They stare for more than a beat.

JAMAL

Um, half cheese, half mushroom?

JAMAL holds out the pizza bag. RAP ignores it and continues to stare.

JAMAL

You ordered pizza?

RAP shakes herself back to attention.

RAP

Pizza. Yes. Pizza.

JAMAL deliberately fumbles with taking the pizza box out of the thermal bag, so that he can take as long as possible.

JAMAL

You know, I love that song you were playing as I drove up. Oldie but a goodie.

RAP

You like it too? Let Your Hair Down by MAGIC! I'm thinking I might use it in a mashup.

JAMAL stops fumbling with the bag and box.

JAMAL

I was just thinking that you look familiar. Can I ask you a question?

RAP

Sure. Why not? I'm right here doing nothing else.

JAMAL

You look an awful lot like that UnReel girl - Rap. *Is that you?*

RAP looks away in what could be modesty or false modesty, but then immediately looks back again. The whole effect is of the most charming coyness.

RAP

Yes, it's me.

JAMAL

Holy shit! I can't believe you live in our town. I knew location was turned off, which just added to the air of mystery, but seriously... you live here, out in the woods?

RAP

You know my stuff?

JAMAL

Oooh yeah.

JAMAL visibly tries to dial it back a notch,
and play it cool.

JAMAL

Like, I don't want to come off like a stan or anything, but your songs are lit.

RAP grins. RAP glows.

RAP

Yeah?

JAMAL

Yeah, girl. You are fire.

RAP does almost a little dance, she is so
excited.

RAP

Which song do you like best?

JAMAL

Witch.

RAP

How come?

JAMAL hesitates a moment. And all this
time he's still been holding the half-
unearthed pizza box out at right angles.

JAMAL

Ah, I don't want to sound all sappy and stuff...

JAMAL hesitates a moment more, then
plunges in.

JAMAL

...but when my Mom died that song felt like all I had left. I mean don't get me wrong. I've got a Dad. I love him - great guy, and he's a doctor and all. But he was as wrecked as me, so he couldn't be a huge help. And I just like I felt so broken I couldn't be a big help to him. We were so lost. That longing that you put in that song is the exact sadness and longing that I felt. It was like I could've written that music.

JAMAL takes a deep breath after unburdening himself. RAP is back to just staring at him. He gets nervous.

JAMAL

Oh no. That came out all wrong. I couldn't actually write that music. I have no talent at all. I'm just a football player. Well, not really even that, only just at college. Anyway I didn't mean to insult you. I meant it more like... it felt as if you were singing from *my* heart, as if you're saying what I want to say. It felt as if you already knew me like no one else in my life knew me.

RAP comes to life. She reaches out the space between them.

RAP

I do feel you.

When her hand lands on his arm, sparks fly. She looks at her hand. He looks at his arm.

JAMAL

You know, I've written comments on your account but never got an answer.

RAP

I don't run my own account. I'm just kinda living a quiet life in here.

JAMAL

I would've come to find you sooner if I knew.

RAP

Well, now you know. No need for sooner. You'd better go though. She'll come down and see you.

DANIELLE's loud voice cuts across from the other room. She stays sitting.

DANIELLE

Rap? What's taking so long?

JAMAL and RAP jump apart.

RAP

Go!

JAMAL hands her the pizza box. He is glancing nervously back over his shoulder, he is clearly wanting to follow the command to run.

JAMAL

Can I see you again?

RAP

You know where I live.

JAMAL

But I can't just come over randomly with pizza whenever I like!

DANIELLE starts to slowly rise from the chair with a look of pain on her face.

RAP puts a hand on JAMAL's chest to push him away, but gets caught in the contact again, and is trapped there for a second.

RAP

I'll make an alternate code to the front door.

RAP jerks her head to the security code panel next to the door. One hand holds pizza and the hand on JAMAL's chest stays firmly planted.

JAMAL

What's the code?

He's getting quite frantic now.

RAP

I'll use that song title. Let Your Hair Down. Come back at 2.00am.

JAMAL tears himself from under her hand,
and runs with the empty thermal bag
flapping.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

(PAUSE - BEAT)

SCENE THREE

The soundtrack of Let Your Hair Down by
MAGIC! plays.

JAMAL appears at the front door during the
song, not in Domino's delivery clothes
anymore. He punches in a code at the front
door, lets himself in and sneaks quietly
across to RAP's room. She's standing at the
french doors, wearing pajamas.

*“Go ahead be foolish, No one's on the clock
now, Lying in this simple moment, You don't
gotta worry now, Just let your hair down*

*Tell me when, tell me when, tell me when -
When I can steal a sweet kiss right from you.
I'm diving in, I'm diving in, I'm diving in.
The water's warm right here, here.*

*To me you are more than just skin and
bones. You are elegance and freedom and
everything I know.”*

From the start to the end of these lyrics,
JAMAL takes RAP's face in his hands. She
returns his gesture. They stand like this for
several seconds, staring into each other's
eyes. He starts to stroke her braids. She
leans into it. She takes his hand and leads
him to the bed. They sit on the edge, then lie
down but just lie looking into each other's
eyes with him stroking her hair.

Projected onto the back wall is a large word -
 APRIL. It changes during the scene. MAY.
 JUNE. JULY. AUGUST.

When the music finishes, the month remains
 on “AUGUST”, and RAP and JAMAL go to
 the armchair where she sits in his lap.

RAP

So... where is this relationship heading?

JAMAL

We gon’ take it to the moon, take it to the stars where my head is living these days since I
 met you.

RAP

Be serious, Beyoncé.

JAMAL

OK, Jay, but why do you ask?

RAP

I read about having the talk with your partner.

JAMAL

Which talk?

RAP

About being exclusive.

JAMAL laughs.

JAMAL

You crack me up. If you knew what all my friends are saying about never seeing me
 anymore, and teasing me about not wanting to go out, you’d be having a whole other talk
 with me about feeling suffocated and me being too much.

RAP

But I can’t know that. I don’t see you in the real world with your friends. Or other girls.

JAMAL

Well, come out and see for yourself. My friends would love you. Actually I keep
 forgetting how famous you are. Their faces! They would not believe that I was dating
 you.

RAP

You know I can't.

There's a tense silence.

JAMAL

I'm glad you brought that up. I've been wanting to talk to you about this for a while but... where this relationship is heading depends on where you see your life heading. You're nearly eighteen. What's your plans? Are you going to live in here for the rest of your life?

RAP buries her face in her hands.

RAP

Oh my God, I can't leave here. She'll die. She'll have a fit. She'll kill me.

JAMAL

No matter how much you love her, how much she's done for you, you can't live for her. You have to think of yourself and what you want.

RAP

I owe her so much.

JAMAL

This is not an indentured servitude that you have to work off.

RAP

No, it's love.

JAMAL

That creepy mental case has got you guilted to the max so that she has you all to herself to do whatever she wants. It's not healthy.

RAP

Don't say that! She's not a creepy mental case, she's like my mother. You're being mean.

JAMAL

Sorry if I mis-spoke, but come on, Rap.

JAMAL shakes RAP's arm gently.

JAMAL

You just were saying how you don't get to see the real world and that's true. So then because you've been so isolated it's hard for you to judge Danni. It's not your fault. I'm sorry if it sounds mean but... I'm pretty sure that Danni's got real mental health issues. Everyone in town knows about her. It's common knowledge.

RAP

What do you mean?

JAMAL

Look, I'm not trying to ruin your relationship ... rather than take my word for it, you should do a little research for yourself online...

RAP

Just tell me.

JAMAL

She's pretty well known around the area. Even us college kids have heard of her. She's the kind of lady that if there was a local kid like a Tom Sawyer, he'd be daring other kids to run up and touch this house. Even us college kids have heard of her.

RAP

You know that I still have all the parental restrictions on my internet access, so I can't look.

JAMAL

This is really mainstream information, it's not going to trigger any restrictions. And speaking of which, when are you going to ask her to be able to control your own accounts? It's ridiculous. Not being able to see your own comments.

RAP

She means it for the best. There's some weirdos out there. Danni showed me some comments and how much ugliness there is in the world. I don't think I'm missing anything.

JAMAL

There's also some good people out there.

RAP

Like you?

RAP kisses him.

JAMAL

Yeah, like me. But still, I just think you need to look out for yourself... in here.

JAMAL pulls out his phone and starts typing. Then he shows it to RAP.

JAMAL

Apparently, way back when, she tried to take someone's baby away from them at the pool. She got out of having to be institutionalized because her parents were super-rich and really well-connected. But then I think they kinda just locked her up in their house... I'm just worried that not all the weirdos are 'out there'.

JAMAL gestures out the french doors.

RAP

Just because people are scared of her, doesn't mean that I have to be. It's probably just gossip and superstition.

JAMAL

I'm never going to tell you what to think. But I am telling you to trust your own intuition. Does she ever seem dangerous to you? Like is she a little changeable or unpredictable?

RAP

Well, yes. But isn't everyone?

JAMAL

Well, there's fun, exciting unpredictable, and scary, dangerous unpredictable. And you're the only one who can decide that.

RAP

(slowly, reluctantly)

Mmm, sometimes lately she has been frightening me more, snapping if I ask questions...

JAMAL

This comes all the way back to where we started. I just want you to think about yourself and your own life. You can't dodge it forever. Well, I guess actually you can... no decision is a decision too.

RAP

I can't choose. I want to leave here but I don't want to leave her.

JAMAL

People who don't have a complete fucking looney tune as a parent... Sorry. Sorry. Let me reword that. People who are not living in fear can let each other leave and they keep in touch with each other...

He holds up his phone.

JAMAL

... and are delighted to come back to visit.

RAP buries her face into his shoulder.

JAMAL

I don't want to hurt you or push you. Look, Rap, I'll leave it alone... but I'm serious about you finding information and making your own decisions. And I'm always here to help if you need me. Like if you want to check anything, ask me.

RAP

But that's almost part of the problem. If I want to check anything, I can only ask Danni or you.

JAMAL

Yup, and that's the point. There's only one way to solve this dilemma and get more perspectives.

RAP catches sight of her watch, and jumps off JAMAL's lap, interrupting him.

RAP

Argh, it's 4.00am. You gotta get outta here.

JAMAL quickly heads for the door, then he runs back to kiss her.

JAMAL

You make me lose track of time. I could get lost in you.

RAP

I'm already lost.

RAP looks into his eyes for a romantic beat, then pushes him and he goes.

RAP

And remember to be quiet! Anything by 5.00am and she could be up.

JAMAL shifts into a sneaking pose as he exits the bedroom door and crosses the foyer to the front door. He steps outside, closes it and looks "up" at Rap's balcony. Back in the bedroom RAP has gone onto her balcony and she is looking "down" at the front door (the same posture they had for the initial pizza delivery). She blows a kiss. He waves and exits the stage.

She goes to the computer and starts it. The time of 4.00am is projected onto the back wall.

A projection of a list of article headlines is thrown onto the back wall.

Local Woman Attempts to Abduct Baby - Upper Valley News June 4th, 1973

Students! Beware The Female Boo Radley! - Jack 'O Lantern
September 25th, 1983

Obituary: Peter Clarke, local philanthropist. "Locked-in" Daughter Inherits Fortune - Upper Valley News January 11th, 2001

A time of 5.30am is projected onto the back wall and DANNI enters. She has a line of red that runs from her face and down her neck, across her chest and disappearing under her shirt onto her abdomen.

DANIELLE

Oh, my darling. You're so dedicated.

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE FOUR

A soundtrack of RAP singing is the only audio to this short scene.

They all gonna see me go, go
go, huh

Though me Ma she say no, no,
no huh

He find his way in, he be my
way out

But still make my own path, no
doubt

Yeah, like a budding tree

He see the inside of me

Say the honey to the bee

Need this lovin' to be free,
huh

RAP comes in wearing day clothes, looks at herself in the mirror and folds her braids up onto her head into a bun. She lets them go and opens her jewel box on the desk. She pulls out a pair of large scissors and chooses a string of jewels on a fishing line, snips the line, and lets the jewels cascade into a small bowl. Then she starts threading the jewels into her braids.

Projected onto the back wall is:

“DEPARTES: a hairstyle used by Afro-Colombian hair braiders for slaves to signal when they were ready to escape. Thick tight braids, done close to the scalp, and tied into buns on the top. Sometimes slaves would weave money or seeds in to help them survive after they escaped.”

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE FIVE

RAP is looking at herself in the mirror, side on. She's wearing shorts and a loose top. She's trying to zip up her shorts, but smoothes her shirt so we can see a baby bump. DANIELLE enters. She still has that line of red that runs from her face and down her neck, across her chest and disappearing under her shirt onto her abdomen.

The time is projected onto the back wall.
3.00pm

RAP
(idly)

I think I've put on weight, Danni.

DANIELLE

Don't be doing some crazy body dysmorphia on me, Rap honey. Anyway, look at your skinny arms and legs. You're fine.

RAP

Nah, I just can't get my zipper to go up on any of my shorts.

DANIELLE looks, really looks. She rounds
on RAP.

DANIELLE

What have you done?

RAP
(wide eyed)

Whaddaya mean? Nothing.

DANIELLE approaches RAP. RAP doesn't
back away but the air of danger and menace
is palpable. The lights dim slightly and the
soundtrack of static from Scene 2 comes
back.

DANIELLE

What have you done?

RAP

Nothing!

DANIELLE picks up a glass tree from the
mantelpiece and smashes it to the floor.

DANIELLE

I know what you've done!

RAP

I swear, I don't know what you're talking about.

DANIELLE picks up another glass tree from
the mantelpiece and smashes it to the floor.

DANIELLE

You have done something, and it will be the death of you.

RAP tries to dart past DANNI but DANNI grabs RAP by her braids. RAP screams and puts her hands to her scalp to try to stop the pain. DANIELLE drags her, stumbling and dragging, to the desk, picks up the scissors off the desk where RAP left them after cutting the jeweled necklace.

DANIELLE pulls RAP's neck to be bent at a painful and unnatural angle. As she does the monologue below, she starts snipping off RAP's braids. They drop to the floor like little snakes. A projection onto the back wall is of snake and braids wound together and animated to move/writhe.

DANIELLE

And this crowning glory is probably the cause of it all. Maybe Islamic religions are right. I should've covered it all up. Maybe it was your music. I should never have let you flaunt yourself around so much.

You're a disgrace... You can't be trusted... I should've known all those years ago when your father entered the garden that this would all come to no good. You are a serpent in my nest. Evil. A serpent. A serpent. You lie. You cheat. I cast thee out, Satan.

DANIELLE now drags RAP out the bedroom door and to the front door. RAP is again stumbling, trying to keep her balance with her hands to her head still trying to keep the pressure and pain off her scalp. DANNI opens the front door.

RAP

What are you saying? What about my hair and my music?

DANIELLE

Get out. Get out!

RAP

But why?

DANIELLE

You know why! Don't play the little innocent with me. You pregnant whore!

RAP

Pregnant?

DANIELLE

Like you don't know about these things! I told you about sex years ago in the Adolescent Family Life module. Fourth Grade. You liar! And you're always telling me about all the things you know from the internet.

RAP

I... I... I know but I don't know. I don't have any experience... I... I... didn't think.

DANIELLE

Well now it seems you'll have a baby of your own. That means you're not my baby any more and maybe it could be mine but it'll inherit all your lying and cheating, and no one wants a baby like that.

DANIELLE slings RAP through the door by her hair, letting go and flinging her out. RAP stumbles a couple of steps.

DANIELLE

You ungrateful filthy child. You were everything I had - youth, beauty, love - and you've ruined everything. I did everything for you, and this is how you repay me. I loved you. You were mine. And you gave your love to another. I wash my hands of you.

DANIELLE slams the door shut. Now they speak through the door. RAP is slumped and possibly weeping.

RAP

But what will I do? Where will I go? I've got no money. How do I get into my trust fund?

A thought occurs to RAP.

Oh my God. Do I need an abortion? Are they even legal here? How would I find somewhere? How do I pay for it?

DANIELLE

Should've thought of all this before you betrayed me and got a new best friend. You were *my* baby but now you'll have one of your own.

RAP gropes in her hair and pulls out a jewel.
She looks at it in her hand for a moment,
then grasps it tightly and stumbles off-stage.

The lights go down. A projection begins on
the back wall. It is RAP doing one of her
videos.

Micro-aggression push me, I'm
on a tear

He come in, I say touch my
hair, (like yeah)

That's my glory, my soul, my
beauty so fair

A mistake to lay those
feelings so bare, (ooh yeah)

Why virtue so dear, huh

The way not so clear, huh

Now I livin' in fear, huh

I can't get him near, huh

And now I on my own, no home
and no throne

Stack the odds up against, I'm
up on that fence

Decisions so difficult, them
rules is so dense

Keep my dreams, keep my baby,
can't make no sense

Why virtue so dear, huh

The way not so clear, huh

Now I livin' in fear, huh

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

SCENE SIX

DANIELLE is standing in the foyer which is now strewn with cut-up and torn clothes. She is holding the scissors in one hand, and chopping with the other hand at the family quilt from the bed. It is now all disfigured. Her hair is completely disarrayed, like she's been pulling it.

The time is projected onto the back wall.
2.00am

JAMAL walks up to the front door and starts to punch in the security code. The door swings open and DANIELLE is standing there very still but with the scissors and quilt. It's eerie. He's frightened.

DANIELLE

The beautiful bird is no longer sitting in the tree and she won't be singing any more.

JAMAL

Sorry. Wrong house. I mistook the number.

DANIELLE

The cat has got her and she'll also scratch your eyes out.

JAMAL

What are you talking about? You don't have a cat. Rap?

He is looking visibly nervous and freaked out. He tries to look past DANIELLE and peer into the house. He calls out.

JAMAL

Rap? Are you here? Are you OK?

DANIELLE

So, not a wrong house.

She's smug at having caught him out in the deception.

DANIELLE

You're the one who's ruined her life... But I'll make sure you never see her again!

DANIELLE unexpectedly reaches out to JAMAL, grabs him and rubs her face against his, then kisses him. He could easily have resisted her but it's so quick and unexpected. He steps back and disgustedly wipes his face with his hand.

JAMAL

What the hell?!

DANIELLE

And now you will feel how I feel.

JAMAL

What the fuck are you talking about?

DANIELLE is a disturbing intense presence. She pins him with her eyes. Her speaking of these lines sounds like casting a curse on him. There is the slightest static background noise.

DANIELLE

You will have excruciating pain...
 You will feel like your skin is on fire...
 You will burn up...
 You will feel like your head is held in a vice, squeezed until it would burst...
 You will feel like you have fire ants inside your skin, on your nerves, trying to burst out of your body...
 And the reason that you won't see Rap again is because you will be blind...

JAMAL had been horrified and transfixed,
 but at that, he breaks and steps away,
 looking up at the balcony

JAMAL

You are some sicko, crazy ass, old lady. Rap? Rap?!

DANIELLE

Do you know why all that will happen to you? Do you know why I kissed you?

That brings JAMAL attention back to her.
Curiosity makes everyone waver.

JAMAL

Nope. It doesn't matter. And I don't believe any of it. You're crazy.

But he's wavered, and wonders, and still
stands there while she speaks.

DANIELLE

I have shingles. See here?

DANIELLE traces that line of red that runs
from her face and down her neck, across her
chest and disappearing under her shirt onto
her abdomen. JAMAL tries to keep his
bravado.

JAMAL

Yeah, and so? I remember my Gran having shingles. I can deal with pain. I'm a
footballer. I broke my ankle last season.

DANIELLE

Oh, you will have pain. And you will go blind.

JAMAL stares at her.

JAMAL

What are you talking about? My gran didn't go blind.

DANIELLE

But you will, little prince, you will. Because I curse you. I cast you out of society like I
was. I wish for you to feel all the pain I have felt my whole life. You crept into my castle
and took the only thing I had... the one thing I cared about... the one person who loved
me.

JAMAL

What do you mean took her? I don't have her! Where is she? Rap? Rap!

JAMAL is getting frantic now. RAP runs on-
stage. JAMAL scoops her into his arms.

RAP

Jamal! I've spent hours all over campus looking for you.

JAMAL reaches up and touches her hair.

JAMAL

What has she done to you?

RAP reaches up to touch her hair with one hand and places the other on her belly in the age-old gesture of a pregnant woman.

DANIELLE

I gave that whore what she deserves. I'm just showing people what she really is - a disgraced woman. She's not my baby anymore. She betrayed me and let in the outside world.

RAP

(softly)

Danni. Don't call me that. I loved you. You know I couldn't have stayed here forever. That's not real.

DANIELLE

(soft and broken)

I stayed here forever. It is real.

RAP

I'm not you.

DANIELLE

But you are. You are all of me. You are the heart of me. You can't leave. I remember being so alone that it hurts.

DANIELLE is now weepy and desperate.

JAMAL looks askance and steps away.

RAP

Danni, Danni. You don't have to be alone forever. I can be nearby. I can help.

JAMAL grabs her arm.

JAMAL

(in an aside to Rap)

Are you as crazy as her? You can't stay near her. She assaulted you and massacred your hair. She's nuts.

RAP shakes his hand off. She steps slowly and carefully towards DANIELLE.

RAP

Danni... Danni... it's all right. I still love you.

DANIELLE initially looks longingly at RAP.

DANIELLE

(softly, sadly)

I thought you loved me. I thought you understood but you don't. My voices told me that I would never be loved.

RAP

You know the voices aren't real, Danni.

DANIELLE drops the scissors and quilt and lunges at RAP, grabbing her hair again when she gets close enough. JAMAL starts angling for a way in.

DANIELLE

(shrill, harsh while tussling)

It doesn't matter - because what they say is true. It's all right for you. You won't be alone. You'll have twins and the prince will be blind. I wish you both ill of it. You'll never find each other.

RAP

Danni, stop! I can help you. Just stop/

RAP is interrupted by JAMAL grabbing DANIELLE's arms. She was totally focussed on RAP and didn't notice his lunge.

JAMAL breaks DANIELLE'S hold on RAP.

JAMAL

Run, Rap!!

RAP runs. JAMAL drops DANIELLE's arms.

JAMAL

Twins?

DANIELLE

Yes. And you'll never see yours and Rap's children. I curse you to loneliness and darkness.

Then he races off stage after Rap.

JAMAL

Rap, wait!

THE LIGHTS GO DOWN.

SCENE SEVEN

There is projection on the back wall of a rap being performed by RAP and JAMAL while they are old (as they will appear on the stage) with the year 2073 in the corner.

We old, we gold

We old, we gold

Don't write us off

Gotta lot up top

You hear what we say now...

What your tower, what your
weakness (huh)

Sap your power, never win no
Preakness (huh)

Gimme a hug, gimme a hold

Bring it in, yeah, be so bold

Don't stand back (yeah) how ya
gonna win

Don't hold back (yeah) ya
gotta fold me in

bump my fist, (yeah) bring it
in

Arm round my shoulders,

that's how ya win

Break down that damn tower,
throw yourself out

Take a risk now, if you gotta
scream, well, you shout

Don't stay in no isolation

This life, not for jail, not
probation

That lovin' from afar only got
glue (huh)

Holding together 'cos of what
we been through (huh)

You gotta touch touch touch
(yeah)

That's meanin' so much (yeah)

Break it on down

Throw your weight 'round

Only get this one chance

Get out and dance dance dance
(yeah)

Break down that damn tower,
throw yourself out

Take a risk now, if you gotta
scream, well, you shout

Don't stay in no isolation

This life, not for jail, not
probation

Gimme a hug, gimme a hold

Bring it in, yeah, be so bold

You gotta touch touch touch
(yeah)

That's meanin' soooooo much
(yeeeeaaahh)

There are still photos around the room but they are of JAMAL and RAP with their children at all ages of life. Some awards (Grammy, Emmy, Oscars, Tony) and family photos are on the mantelpiece. The glass trees are gone.

JAMAL and RAP slowly enter the room whenever they are ready during or at the end of the song. They are wearing pajamas and dressing gowns. They are old now (like in the video) and RAP is guiding JAMAL even though he has memorized the way. RAP has long grey extensions, piled up in some kind of arrangement. JAMAL feels along the mantelpiece and picks up a Grammy Award before Rap guides him into his rocking chair, in front of the fireplace, before she gets into hers.

They sit apart, just holding hands comfortably, kicking back.

JAMAL

I never get tired of admiring these, even if I can't see them too clearly. You were a killer, you old lady.

RAP

No one looking at me now would think that.

JAMAL

Oh, you slay.

RAP

Jamal, I don't want to be condescending to the disabled - but you're blind. What would you know?

They both laugh.

JAMAL

Beautiful on the inside.

RAP

You're the temptation! You are a drop dead hottie... and I have great eyesight, so that's a fact.

RAP reaches over and holds her palm to his cheek. He places his hand over it. She leans her forehead against his.

RAP

Speaking of which, have you heard from the kids lately?

JAMAL

Never as much as I would have liked to. I miss having them around.

RAP

Oh, my darling, it's true. It is so hard letting go of those we love. And I know we can talk to the kids whenever we want but... that human touch... that's what it's all about. A phone is not a hug. But those little mischief makers are always here with us. Right here.

RAP points at her head and her heart.

JAMAL

I got you out of a tower once. Those kids'll never get away from me.

RAP

Damn right. No towers in our family. A tower is a state of mind

JAMAL reaches over and plays with RAP's hair.

JAMAL

This is my favorite state of mind. Rap... let down your hair for me.

RAP gets a little shy.

RAP

Oh this?! This is HIB - Hair I Bought.

JAMAL

Don't matter whether it is bought or natural... it's earned, and anyway it's the thought that counts. I love you.

RAP puts her hand up to JAMAL's cheek again and looks into his eyes. He undoes her hair so that it falls around RAP's shoulders.

RAP

And I have always loved you. We found each other in the wilderness, and then we found our way out together.

A PAUSE.

The two old people have a gentle kiss on the lips. Then both turn to the audience, breaking the fourth wall....

These are the general questions to ask, but the actors can choose how they say them, and expand or wait or add extra chat or cajoling - whatever is necessary to get at least some of the audience to stand.

RAP

We have all had our moments in the wilderness. Anyone here ever lived in a tower? OK, that one's a reach. Anyone ever had a relationship with not enough space? And I don't just mean romantic relationship, I mean parents, friendships... If so, please stand up.

Wait while (hopefully) some people stand up. RAP stands up.

RAP

Come on, don't be shy. There's me, at least. You can admit it.

JAMAL

Anyone had a relationship with more space than they wanted? Come on, you stand up too.

JAMAL now stands. Wait while (hopefully) more people stand.

RAP

Has anyone here been able to repair a relationship that had problems? Please stand up for extra credit. You are our most valuable resource.

Wait while (hopefully) more people stand up.

RAP

And so, here we all stand... together... having come through all kinds of trials, all kinds of relationships. So we should let our hair down.

The song *Let Your Hair Down* (MAGIC!) starts playing softly as she talks. The lyrics to the chorus should come up louder as she finishes speaking. Ideally to these lyrics:

*So come on and Baby let your hair down,
Let me run my fingers through it, we can be
ourselves now.*

*Go ahead be foolish, No one's on the clock
now, Lying in this simple moment, You don't
gotta worry now, Just let your hair down.*

RAP and JAMAL start doing cute slow dances, side-by-side, facing the audience, singing along, inviting them by gesture to join in moving/swaying/dancing. They sometimes look at each other when appropriate to the lyrics, having a kiss when the lyrics say it (“*steal a sweet kiss right from you*”). They leave before the song ends, waving good-bye and giving permission for people to leave, so that the audience leaves as they started with a song about hair playing. They can come back for a bow during this if they wish or feel the need (e.g., if people aren't leaving).

FADE TO BLACK.