

STONE PEBBLE GIRL
By: C.E. Turnage

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CHARACTER NAME	DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
BIG MAMMA JUDY	Mother of Maypole, washed up lounge singer	39	Female
MAYPOLE	A know it all, smart mouth, product of her region	15	Female
TWYLA	Judy's sister, Maypole's Aunt	41	Female
AIKA	Maypole's Mute best friend. Mixed Race.	16	Female
JIMMY	Maypole's Uncle, Twyla's husband	45	Male
KOKA	A travelling black jazz clarinetist from New Orleans; Kokopelli.	58	Male

SETTING:

Time: 2017, but the ageless feel of a rural community

Place: Magic City Trailer Park--New Mexico

SUMMARY:

When a stranger comes to Magic city trailer park a group of close minded people are confronted with someone who's not like them.

Act 1

SCENE 1.1

An overbearingly large man plays a clarinet high in the air like he's going to blow the moon right out of the sky. He sucks in a big breath. He's illuminated but his surroundings are tar black. He's a bone weary traveller. The howl of wind, the shifting of sand, the passage of endless time.

KOKA

There's a place in this world where stillness is measured by the grains of sand you can trap under your foot. Where silence is counted in the croaks of locusts and the hisses of roaches scuttling up dry paper walls that can be punched through before they can be re-wallpapered.

This place in the world is in the heart of the southwest, in the climb of canyons the color of cherry red virgins, pink satin baby bows, and fire orange that will sear your skin till it's blacker than me.

He smiles.

Those livin' here...they don't like that much.

He plays his clarinet. It almost sounds like wind.

The stranger in the strange land. The danger in a dangerous place. The voice that ain't like the voices that have been voiced for generations on generations.

Another riff.

No...here they are gods who spit out the lukewarm residents who *migrate*. Who weren't born into the countless sun up sun down hours of *this* place.

The wind howls. He plays his clarinet.

But even without change...the inevitable is inevitable...And difference's burden is railroaded on the break-backs of fast wind.

Change is *here*. Wherever *here* is.

And its reception is met with the burning off of the old...

So that new roots grow.

An expansive dust bowl. Hot air, so bone dry it makes you suffocate on your own spit. The ground is yellow cracked diseased skin dusted by gritty sand that blows ankle high. The sky is endless and dark. New Mexico.

A thin, you could blow her over with a breath, woman stands on stage surrounded by pointed moonlight. It's a natural earth made spotlight. She's dressed to the nines in an over the top dated black sequin dress that's two sizes too small for her. Her face is caked with makeup, somewhere between expensive hooker and clown make up. The wind blows the giant feathers that adorn her hair and she raises her hands to the sky. Above her the rest of the cast of characters hold big silver bowls that reflect the light. They watch her in awe, oggling her. The sound of a truck rumbling down the highway in search of something. The yellow headlights of a "truck" flash on the woman as well. She is all brightness surrounded by oppressive black. Her sequins are blinding. She smiles, a large toothy, minus a few teeth, grin. Her arms are covered in track marks. She sings like she couldn't stop if she tried.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(Singing)

I need somebody, who'll ease the pain
 Of this dust bowl doomed place, I'm livin' in.
 I need a martyr who'll jump on the spear
 To give me a reason to get through the year.
 I'm lookin' for love where I ain't looked before
 Someone new, someone who will open a door
 There's gotta be some change here
 before I go deranged here
 I'm looking for a magic someone
 Who has a magic touch
 And I don't really think
 I'm asking for much.

Maypole, a young girl with forest green hair drops her big silver bowl and it clatters next to Big Mamma Judy who screams. The lights go up revealing a trailer park. A big tattered, weather worn banner hanging down reads "Magic City". There's picnic tables and benches and various colored Adirondack chairs surrounding a big fire pit. The sky is the slate grey of moonlight shining through clouds. Maypole, Aika, Twyla, and Jimmy all stand on the pepto bismol pink picnic table. Maypole quickly jumps off, nearly on top of Big Mamma Judy and scoops up her bowl.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Fuckin' hell, Maypole. What do you think you're doin'?

MAYPOLE

Well, 'Scuse me. Didn't mean to interrupt your *song*.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You lil' shit.

TWYLA

Judy...

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Twyla, it's my kid. Don't croon at me like I need reprimanding when It's my turn to reprimand.

Big mamma Judy reaches out like she's gonna smack the back of Maypole's head.

TWYLA

She didn't mean anything by it Judy.

JIMMY

She's a klutz.

Maypole smiles.

MAYPOLE

A real butterfingers.

JIMMY

A real insurance policy.

MAYPOLE

A walking disaster.

TWYLA

Would you two stop it?

Twyla puts her hand over her very pregnant swollen belly and winces.

Can't tell if you're givin' me or the baby a headache.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You've been waitin' to sabotage this since you found out it was happenin'.

MAYPOLE

Well, 'scuse me if I don't feel like strokin' nobody's egos on bonfire night. Right Aika?

Aika, a tall skinny girl with licorice black hair, doesn't respond. Jimmy takes her hand.

JIMMY

Come on black beauty, gotta say somethin' right?

Aika is silent. Jimmy's frustrated. He squeezes her hand a little too tight.

MAYPOLE

Me and 'Ika had a whole plan and you thought..."Oh look at me, finally back home" and first thing you're gonna do is put on a show? You promised me pancakes.

TWYLA

It's two a.m. Ain't nobody around here in the mood for pancakes.

JIMMY

Bullshit you're not.

TWYLA

You don't know nuthin'.

He eyes her pregnant tummy. She smiles at him. Maypole smiles.

MAYPOLE

Perfect time for pancakes.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(To Twyla)

I left you my kid and you made her screwy in the head.

MAYPOLE

If you don't like it you can go on and take your show on the road 'gain. See if I care.

She throws her bowl at Mamma Judy. She goes over to a speaker that's resting on one of the picnic tables and presses play.

Angsty punk rock girl music comes on and Maypole starts swinging her hips. They all watch her, they can't help it. She's a magnet.

'Sides. Your songs are shit. Jimmy's gonna take me to a *real* concert. We're gonna surf the crowd, and mosh pit, and get shirtless and...ain't you Uncle jimmy?

JIMMY

"Uncle Jimmy" listen to that/ sorghum sweet shit.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You been to a real concert. You came to mine.

MAYPOLE

Yeah and you sang your shitty songs straight at me. All achy hearts, and croonin' and

She makes a vomit noise.

That ain't real. You ain't famous. Where's your album?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I sold 'em. Got none left.

MAYPOLE

You ain't even ever got *one*.

The horny toads are 'bout to have their babies. And once they do Jimmy's gonna take me and 'Ika to celebrate at a real concert! Before all the hard work kicks in.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You wouldn't know hard work if it bit you in the ass kid.

JIMMY

Hey, she's a good employee leave her 'lone.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

What you payin' her in then Jim? Little debbies and pop songs?

MAYPOLE

And concerts. Suits me fine.

Maypole breaks out into a happy dance. Jimmy grabs Aika and spins her around.

TWYLA

You'd think priss here was preening. Would you stop it. You're gonna make yourself dizzy.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Hell, you'd think she was strip teasing, the way she swings that green hair around. What the hell did y'all let my daughter do when I was gone?

She looks at Twyla.

Hope you got better parenting skills than that, cause you turned her into a lil' shit.

She heaves a big disappointed sigh.

A lil' shit with bad hair.

MAYPOLE

It's not bad! It's...there's no green out here. I'm the palm tree in the desert, right Uncle Jimmy? It's what he said. Like a...a...

JIMMY

A mirage.

MAYPOLE

Yeah a mirage...cause I'm so fuckin' delightful to look at.

She laughs hard and in Mamma Judy's face.

I'm a good girl. You just ain't been around to see it.

Big Mamma Judy laughs.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

And I'm a mermaid. Get over it kid. You don't have any kind of *good* bone in your body. Now stop dancin' like a cat in heat.

Aika tenses up, Jimmy notices.

JIMMY

Hey, you keep makin' fun of squirt over there, I think black beauty might just say somethin', ain't that right lil' girl?

He squeezes her cheeks. Aika winces.

MAYPOLE

Don't call her that. She don't like it.

Jimmy looks shocked. He drops his hands.

JIMMY

How ya' know?

MAYPOLE

I just do.

Maypole rubs her arm uncomfortably. Big mamma Judy laughs.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You gave the biggest talker this side of satan's ass hat volcano a mute friend, Jim. She's gonna snap at you for the girl. She thinks she can talk twice as much now.

Maypole sticks her tongue out at Judy who sticks her tongue back.

TWYLA

I think it's sweet. Everybody needs somebody.

Twyla looks a little forlornly to Jimmy. Maypole goes and slings her arm around Twyla, helping the pregnant woman down from the table. She kisses her cheek.

MAYPOLE

See? I gotta, mamma. It's just me and 'Ika in the world of big people and she doesn't do anything. So I have to do it all.

Aika gives Maypole the finger. Maypole laughs.

See?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You don't make up for, in full measures, what those who won't do, don't do. You'll blow yourself up that way. Implode in one great big ball of hot air.

JIMMY

You know what that makes you, squirt?

He hops off the table and scoops Maypole up swinging her around.

Our little green headed-palm tree in the desert-*star*.

Maypole squeals, absolutely delighted.

MAYPOLE

(About Twyla's pregnant stomach)

You should name it that! When it comes out!

Her. TWYLA

It'd be a cute star. MAYPOLE

She'd make a cute Starla. How bout it Jimmy? TWYLA

No. Just star. MAYPOLE

What a fuckin' moron. BIG MAMMA JUDY

Maypole pinches her mom's arm. Big mamma Judy starts chasing her through pinned up clotheslines that have white sheets. Maypole takes a bucket of water and holds it ominously.

You wouldn't dare.

Maypole sticks her tongue out at Judy and Splashes the water (Possibly blue confetti) all over the sheets. She shrieks and runs. Judy chases her. Jimmy grabs Aika's waist.

Hop down, black beauty. JIMMY

Don't do that, Jim. TWYLA

Why not? JIMMY

He kisses Aika's cheek. Twyla grabs his arm.

No. TWYLA

No. He kisses her cheek. She backs up.

He kisses Aika's cheek.

No! That not a word you ever hear in your life before?

JIMMY

Oh come on, I'm high. I'm happy. Can't you just...

Twyla goes over and works on the laundry.

Look at you. You can't stop being domestic even if you grew a bone of adventure.

Twyla snaps up.

TWYLA

What's that supposed to mean.

JIMMY

Nothin'...just...

He pushes Aika in front.

Nuthin' like black beauty here. Who knows where she came from...that exotic face. On her bare feet too.

TWYLA

Come here girl. Help out.

Aika pinches and shoves him away. He grunts.

JIMMY

You just don't got that sense of adventure--not same as her.

TWYLA

I put up with your shit, don't I?

Jimmy hugs Twyla and rubs her belly.

JIMMY

Wonder why?

A pause.

Black beauty don't even think I got shit to put up with.

Twyla smacks his chest.

TWYLA

It's not smart of you to call her that.

JIMMY

Oh come on, girl was talkin' shit through her teeth. Like she always does. I know lil 'Ika. She don't mind...do you? Or at least she don't say she mind.

He stares Aika down. She backs away from him.

I can call her what I want.

Twyla sighs.

TWYLA

I'm just...

JIMMY

Jealous

He waggles his eyebrows. He's joking but Twyla looks at him with real concern.

TWYLA

Worried. You been gettin' awful close with the two of them, like it's completing a family that's just supposed to be you and me. You invite her in--and you--I don't like it.

JIMMY

But it's not just you and me is it?

A pause.

TWYLA

I thought...

JIMMY

You thought.

Twyla growls.

TWYLA

Maypole's not livin' with us no more.

JIMMY

Yeah, so?

A pause.

TWYLA

She gonna keep livin' with us?

JIMMY

Where else she gonna live? Just look at her? She's all kinds of displaced. You gonna kick the girl out?

He touches her stomach.

TWYLA

You gonna keep/ on...

JIMMY

Would that be the best example...for it.

TWYLA

Her.

What if I kick her out, Jim? What if?

JIMMY

Don't do it. Please?

She sighs.

TWYLA

Fine.

She continues to work. She wipes away sweat. Jimmy watches her and Aika toil.

JIMMY

Hey...you don't look so good, you gonna be okay?

TWYLA

Nuthin' I just...

JIMMY

What?

TWYLA

You don't want to know, kay?

JIMMY

Babe, what do we got if not honesty between us?

TWYLA

You been gettin' attached to 'em for so long that I'm just...feel like it might break your heart. When they go. And they're gonna go Jim. She's gonna go.

JIMMY
Yeah?

A pause.

TWYLA
Yes. And you're mean when your heart's broken. You're real mean.

JIMMY
If they go...

Jimmy takes a sheet from Aika. Their hands meet. She evades his grasp. She goes to the fire pit and grabs the fluid and matches. She lights it. Orange light billows. She backs away, hunched over, staring at it mesmerized. The moon glows. Jimmy touches Twyla's tummy.

They go...And then we'll have it.

TWYLA
Her.

JIMMY
Yeah. Sure.

Twyla grunts as the baby kicks. Jimmy smiles.
It agrees with me.

TWYLA
The sun would agree with you if you said it was ice cold.

She kisses her husband and starts to exit.
I'm goin' inside.

Twyla exits. Jimmy stands behind Aika. He takes her long black hair in his hands and twists it, a shitty braid. The wind howls. Aika's fingers twitch. Jimmy notices. He notices every little thing about her.

JIMMY
Black Beauty...

A pause.
Watcha' doin'?

A longer pause.

You wanna' hit me?
 You wanna' cry?
 You wanna' say something?

She doesn't. He tugs her hair, too hard to be gentle. Aika winces.

Started painting this batch of horny toads with May. She's real good at the spots. Can see things real up close. But she don't see things for what they are.

A pause.

Not like you do.

He leans over and kisses her cheek. She smiles.

You wise beyond your years?

Her fingers twitch.

You an idiot?

Her fingers twitch.

Best part is no one's gonna ever know are they? You're the mirage, ain't you Black Beauty? Real exotic.

He pats her cheek. He goes over to the table and grabs a little corn husk doll in a dress. It looks like Aika.

Here go...

He pats Aika's head.

Black Beauty and her foal.

There's a shriek and Maypole runs back on. Mamma Judy hollers from offstage.

BIG MAMMA JUDY
 (Off-stage)

You think I'm lettin' you get in the big bed tonight you can kiss your chances goodbye you lil' shit!

MAYPOLE

Go cool her down will ya?

JIMMY

She doesn't listen to me. Only one she ever might listen to is Twyla and *it's* kickin' her.

MAYPOLE

Come on Uncle Jimmy, please?

She bats her eyelashes.

JIMMY

Oh god, if that ain't the damned face of "wanting" something.

MAYPOLE

You can go talk to her. I want to be with 'Ika.

JIMMY

Not me?

MAYPOLE

There's too much of you.

Jimmy acts as if being shot. He lies on the table, dead.

What are you doin'?

JIMMY

I'm being wounded.

Jimmy squints his eyes at the two girls.

JIMMY

What do you two have planned, anyways? Bet 'Ika wants me included.

MAYPOLE

Bet she doesn't.

JIMMY

Bet she does.

MAYPOLE

Doesn't, right 'Ika?

Maypole looks to Aika who shakes her head no.

See?

She sticks her tongue out at Jimmy. Jimmy glares at Aika.

JIMMY

You don't want me?

MAYPOLE

We can't. Girls only. It's moon night! Right 'Ika.

Aika stares at the fire.

That's why she made us the corn husk dolls! We're gettin' rid of our girlhood!

Jimmy chokes uncomfortably.

JIMMY

(To Aika)

Do I even want to know?

MAYPOLE

We're gettin' rid of old toys--and...you know *kid* things.

JIMMY

What a damned dirty word.

MAYPOLE

It is.

JIMMY

Aw--but squirt...

MAYPOLE

Uh. Uh. No way...don't "aw you squirt" me. It's bullshit.

JIMMY

I don't remember you bein' such a pain in the ass when you moved in with us.

MAYPOLE

Well...you had to rub off on me sooner or later.

Jimmy nudges her shoulder. He pats her cheek.

JIMMY

You seem all grown up to me.

He winks at her.

You go on...*play*/. Do whatever it is your...I'll talk to your mom.

MAYPOLE

I don't play.

Maypole sticks her tongue out at Jimmy. Jimmy sticks his tongue out back. She pokes his side, he pokes hers. She flips him off and he gasps.

(defiant) What?

JIMMY

Well...guess I was wrong--you are. All grown up.

She shoves him and he laughs. He begins to exit and halts mid thought.

Don't think I'll forget though. I don't do too well not bein' included in things.

He glares at Aika.

MAYPOLE

Yeah, yeah. Go on and get old man.

Maypole plops down next to Aika by the fire. She pulls a little cornhusk doll that looks like her out of her pocket.

MAYPOLE

You gave mine a big nose. You really think it looks like that?

Maypole makes a face that flattens her nose. Aika smiles.

Your nose isn't small either.

Aika nuzzles against Maypole's cheek.

Get off, you weirdo.

Aika keeps bothering her.

You're more a mother than mine ever was.

Aika stops. She touches Maypole's face. She kisses her cheek.

Love's important ain't it. And trust. It's about who you can trust.

She takes Aika's hands.

I trust you unconditionally. You trust me?

Aika hesitates and before she can answer Maypole's moved on.

Come on! On the count of three?

Aika shrugs.

You have to be excited at least.

Aika fake grins. She stands she draws a circle with her foot around the fire. Maypole watches her.

To bad Jimmy's not a girl. He'd make this fun.

Aika stiffens--looks to Maypole.

I think you like him better than me.

Maypole snorts.

Ha. Yeah right. You ain't never even smiled at anyone else.

Aika flips Maypole off and simultaneously cymbals crash like rolling thunder. Maypole jumps looking in the distance.

You do that?

Sometimes I think you're like...a desert god. Cause you're all...look at you, and sneaky, and mysterious. Do you control the weather 'Ika?

Aika nods. Maypole laughs.

You're pretty good. Makin' it easy. To be whoever people want you to be. Aren't you exhausted?

A pause.

There must be magic in silence. I just can't find it.
It's trust I guess.

A pause.

You must trust us a lot. Me, Twyla...Jimmy--to be so quiet around us.

She tucks her head into her knees. A ball. Koka appears with his clarinet playing softly behind them. He hits an off note and everything goes black except for the light of the moon on him. He claps his hands and a cloud of glitter dusts the top of his head like kissing stars in the sky. The Sound of big Mamma Judy's voice. Koka accompanies her on the Clarinet when he's not talking.

KOKA

The stone pebble girls who found themselves kicked off the canyon clattered all the way down to the bottom--then stopped.

They hit crags. They broke backs. They bent shapes. They were beaten by the very substance they were made of.

And at the bottom...more stone pebble girls.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(Singing offstage)

Sally watched as she flied through the sky.
 Dreaming of days that wouldn't go by.
 Sally watched with her head held high
 As she was waiting for her dreams to die...

KOKA

Little girls who live here are a few feet shorter than their imagination. They watch their friends grow and they're jealous. They watch their friends fall...and they're jealous.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(Singing offstage)

Now sally's left alone just to cry.

Aika is uplit by the orange glow of the fire she hovers her hand over it.

They're jealous of mothers, mamma's who sing words of growth into the breath of their daughters. Jealous of the words of crooning lullabies that did more harm than good-- because harm is personal--harm is for *them*. Pebbles kicked off the cliffside--like to fall.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(Singing)

Little girls who want their hair to grow.

A surreal red light illuminates Big Mamma Judy. She's peeling off her black lounge singer dress as fast as she can, tear marks streaking down her face. She takes off her garter and wraps it around her upper arm like a tourniquet.

KOKA

They tell themselves that harm is just a product of region.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(Singing)

Find out it's better just not to know.
 Sally reaped what Sally sowed.
 Now Sally's all alone and awfully cold.

Koka hands her a hypodermic needle. She takes it, greedily.

KOKA

These little stone girls long for something soft. So they collect stuffed animals, real animals, thin skinned people they can cut.

They're jealous of the caretakers who snuggle and cuddle and nuzzle and joy into the new lives of "if's, maybe's, when's" and a twenty four hour labor.

Blue cool nurturing light illuminates Twyla who stands watching over Jimmy who is meticulously painting a sculpture of a horny toad. She touches his shoulder and he flinches.

They're jealous so they do the unthinkable--run towards the unthinkable--face the inevitable. And they do somethin' stupid.

All lights out except for the two on Koka and Aika.

They *change*.

Twyla and Big Mamma Judy step into the light. The two of them drop a long string of positive pregnancy tests like a yo-yo or a jacob's ladder. The cymbals crash. Aika with her hand over the fire sticks her tongue out to catch a drop of rain. Koka shakes his head "no" at her. He hands her a deflated balloon. She takes it and inflates it slowly, with the percussive well planned breath of a musician. Koka plays the clarinet to the inflation. Aika takes the balloon and raises her shirt, sticking the balloon on her stomach. She pulls the shirt down. A pregnancy belly. She shamefully sticks her tongue back in and her hand uncurls dropping its own line of positive pregnancy tests.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(Singing)

"Oh Save me" was Sally's last song
I never thought my life could be so wrong.
Oh save me was sally's last cry
But girls who change, are left to die.

KOKA

But they don't change for the better. They don't change by choice.

A flash of specific light. A giant pink cross plus sign. Koka plays a long mournful jazz riff, something antagonistic to Judy's song. Aika opens her mouth and moves it to the tune "singing" the clarinet piece. She is the wind, the instrument. She raises both hands above the fire.

She takes the balloon from under her shirt and inhales the breath inside of it until it is once again deflated. She shoves it in her pocket.

They change for the permanent.

The lights black out. The simple orange glow of the fire and nothing else. Koka has disappeared. The girls faces are all shadows. The positive pregnancy test strings are gone.

MAYPOLE

'Ika?

Aika nods.

You look kind of sick.

Aika nods.

You ready?

Aika nods fervently.

To no more bedtimes.

Aika puts up a one on her hand.

To boys and sex and alcohol and freedom.

Aika puts up a two.

To being held *responsible*.

Aika puts up a three.

WE ARE WOMEN!

Maypole let's out a howl of absolute juvenile joy. Aika starts too but no sound comes out...and for the first time, she's crestfallen about it. The two girls throw their little cornhusk dolls into the fire just as the sound of an engine is heard. Bright lights flood the stage as headlights blind the girls and they both squint trying to see who.

Maypole's eyes get big. She screams. Aika holds her putting her hand over Maypole's mouth. Koka enters in his ragged travelers clothes. He takes one look at the girls and smiles, a large toothy grin. Maypole is tense and silent. Aika goes over to Koka and takes his hand, tentatively shaking it.

MAYPOLE

And who the fuck are you?

KOKA

There's a place in the canyons miles apart. Over by Antelope where the rocks are more purple lilacs than formations of mud and clay. In that place if you whisper on one end you can hear it on the other. Like it was said in broad daylight from one lover's mouth to her mounts ear. In that place plans are hatched, confessions are made, truths and trusts are broken and displayed for every person within that canyon's reach. There is no silence there. The breath of a broken pebble girl. It's much the same. But had she ever taken that breath before?

A pause.

MAYPOLE

What, cat got your tongue?

He looks at Aika and smiles. He grabs her shoulders and shakes her. Maypole lunges at him.

Don't you touch her!

KOKA

I'm here.

He collapses to the ground and his clarinet rolls to Aika. She picks it up. She blows in it. The lights narrow to her. She makes sound. Before the sound is complete Maypole interrupts yelling for Jimmy. He comes bolting, followed by Twyla.

JIMMY

What the hell, Maypole?

Maypole looks at the large passed out Koka.

(To Twyla) Go get a glass of water.

She runs to get a glass.

Whatcha got there black beauty?

He takes the clarinet from her. She tries to pull it back from him but he's got it.

You scared.

You're shakin' real bad.

She shakes in rage.

No reason to panic. I gotcha.

She reaches for the clarinet.

He hugs her. She keeps trying to snatch the clarinet. Look he's probably lost. He looks...He's probably just homeless. Wants some food. Everybody's hungry. Probably a drunk. Look at him. People like him...they're always drunks.

He spits at the ground by Koka's feet.

Why?

MAYPOLE

Twyla returns with a cup of blue confetti. Jimmy leans down like he's gonna feed it to Koka. He hurls it in his face. Koka sputters and sits up.

See? Always the same.

JIMMY

Time to wake up. Get on. Come on...get up.

He helps Koka stand to his feet. The man lumbers. He starts to lurch and falls straight on Maypole. She screams. Big Mamma Judy enters, wearing a convenient long sleeved shirt. She looks clammy. Her pupils are constricted. Her breaths are slow. Her lids droopy.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Fuck all this noise...what y'all doin' out here anyways? I thought you was comin' to bed May.

She sees Koka leaning on Maypole. She leans against the picnic table and laughs.

(To Jimmy) You lettin' my daughter fuck around with a *black* man? Don't sound like you, Jim.

MAYPOLE

I ain't fuckin' 'round with nobody.

JIMMY

Don't know where he came from. Squirt called, I came runnin'.

Judy snorts.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

All your lil' girls have your penis up between your legs like a beat dog's tail.

Twyla is trying to help Koka off of Maypole.

MAYPOLE

Get him the fuck off me.

JIMMY

He's drunk. I can smell him.

TWYLA

You're just sayin' that cause...

JIMMY

Cause what?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Cause you're an ignorant piss.

TWYLA

You don't seem to be acting any better. Come down from your high horse and your better than here attitude, please.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Oh, look at you gettin' teeth.

TWYLA

Sorry.

JIMMY

Smell 'em Twyla, I ain't lyin'.

TWYLA

I don't smell anything.

JIMMY

Men like him are always drunk.

Judy grins.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

'llways drunk.

A pause.

Jim would know wouldn't ya? Takes a drunk to know a/ drunk?

JIMMY

Doesn't it Judy?

TWYLA

Stop it.

Judy goes over to Koka and leans up to breathe in his face.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

There's not a better scent than a licorice tongue soaked in whiskey, anyways. Well 'en. Come here licorice and Mamma Judy 'll help fix you up and we can...

Twyla goes to judy and leads her to an Adirondak chair
. I'm tryin' to have a...constati...a consterna...consversation *Twyla*.

MAYPOLE

Don't bother with her. She's high on somethin'.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

And you're gettin' fucked by a *black* man. You're uncle Jimmy hates that.

TWYLA

My husband's the first to come out here and take care of him. You couldn't be bothered when your daughter was screaming.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I'm here ain't I?

Judy sits and puts her feet out, too close to the fire. Aika picks up Judy's feet and moves them safely away. She pats Judy's cheek.

JIMMY

Black beauty and her foal.

Aika grimaces.

KOKA

Here. I'm here.

TWYLA

Are you...um...sir...can you...How'd you get here? Do you want us to call someone? Can we call you someone?

MAYPOLE

Whatcha doin' here. No one ever comes here.

Koka slumps, he eyes Maypole.

KOKA

You always cross your arms like that?

MAYPOLE

You touched Aika. I'm makin' sure you ain't gonna grab me too.

JIMMY

Excuse me?!

Maypole glares at a grinning Koka.

KOKA

You know, just cause they crossed, don't mean I don't know you got fingertips on the ends...and fingertips. They meant to be used...cross your arms and the blood stops flowin' to 'em. And soon enough you ain't gonna be able to feel nothin'. Like perm'nent calluses.

MAYPOLE

Why don't you just get back in your truck and go back to wherever you came from. You ain't from here.

KOKA

But I've been lookin' for *here*.

MAYPOLE

There ain't nuthin' worth lookin' for.

He goes over and shakes Aika's hand.

KOKA

I think there is.

MAYPOLE

You back away from her.

Jimmy pushes koka back.

JIMMY

You step back.

KOKA

Sir, I've been searchin' for a sound.

Maypole snorts.

MAYPOLE

How 'bout your tires hittin' pavemnet.

KOKA

Look, I've been halfway cross the country. I just wanna place to stay. I'll keep on travellin' but...I need a home for a while. This seems a nice place.

Mamma Judy smiles.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

He can stay with us.

MAYPOLE

Bullshit.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

He can have your room, baby. You can even have the big bed.

A pause.

Or better yet, stay with your aunt and Jimmy. They ain't gonna want to see you go yet. Since you're just so *good*.

TWYLA

Judy, you just got her back.

Judy laughs.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Trust me. Ten minutes of the lil' shit is enough *back* for me.

JIMMY

He ain't gonna stay.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You don't wanna fight me Jim.

JIMMY

Come on, out you go.

He shoves at Koka. Aika goes over to Jimmy and snatches the clarinet from him. She takes Koka's hand. He stays. She blows in the clarinet as hard as possible. The note is piercing and eternal. The wind howls, the lights shift. The focus is entirely on Aika. Koka smiles.

KOKA

Yeah.

Aika blows again.

That's it. That's what I'm lookin' for. That's worth stayin' for.

He holds out his hands, an offering.

Ya' mind?

He takes the clarinet and starts to riff. Aika is watching, delighted. She stands up a little straighter. She poses a little more sexually. She looks mature. Maypole notices.

MAYPOLE

She's gonna keep him. He stays.

JIMMY

What do you mean?

MAYPOLE

She always gets her way. She can convince you of anything. And she's gonna keep him.

JIMMY

Bullshit.

MAYPOLE

Aika, he's bad news. A stranger. We're good here.

Aika shakes her head no.

You got me. You don't need him.

Aika indicates to the clarinet.

You got me.

Aika touches Maypole's cheek and holds Koka's hand.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You heard the mute kid. He's stayin' with us. Live with it or leave it.

MAYPOLE

Just like you do?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Yeah, baby.

She winks at Maypole kissing the top of her head. She goes over to Koka who hands the Clarinet to Aika.

KOKA

You got breath. Wind. Come on. Blow in my face.

Aika looks timid. Maypole growls.

MAYPOLE

Leave her 'lone! You're a fuckin' pervert.

KOKA

No. No. Come on...she's got it. She's got eight hurricanes and a tropical storm livin' in her lungs. I can feel it. Blow.

Aika blows straight in his face. Jimmy grabs her shoulders and hauls her away from Koka.

Just keep practicin' sugar. You're gonna get it down in no time.

Aika smiles. Mamma Judy sashes over to Koka and wraps her arms around his neck.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You're gonna get it too.

She breathes in his face. Koka puts his arm around Judy and sneers.

KOKA

Somebody best check your liquor cabinet. Wouldn't surprise me if there ain't any left.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Oh there's plenty of liquor left just not...

He twirls Judy around and she laughs. It's almost sweet.
Without hesitation Maypole charges at the couple. She
drags her mom off who falls onto her.

MAYPOLE

Christ, would you act like a grown up.

Judy belches in Maypoles face. Maypole gags.

Stand up!

Judy pulls Maypoles' hair.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Gone and ruined the one good thing I made.

Maypole shoves at her mom.

MAYPOLE

Get off me! You're a slut, and an addict, and a *leaver*, and now you're gonna...gonna...
Fuck a black man!
GET OFF!

She shoves Judy over who lands on the ground with a
thud. Judy laughs hard.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Oh look, Jimmy--a kid born with the same misguided hate that's in you.

MAYPOLE

Maybe if I didn't have a whore for a mother...

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Born of a whore, makes you a whore.

Maypole spits.

Mister, I don't know who you are, but look at my kid...ain't she a lady.

MAYPOLE

You stay away from her. You don't belong here.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Ooh, Lookie at baby, all sweet, sincere, and protective.

MAYPOLE

You don't have enough sense to make your own decisions.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

And you got enough to make 'em for everybody?
 Who's the loudest one here? You. Who makes all the noise? You. Two musicians and a couple that fights more than they talk, baby, and you still seem to be screeching over all of 'em. What did I fuck up to make you so loud?

Judy puts her hand to her forehead like she has a headache.

MAYPOLE

Singing your bullshit broken hearted blame blues at your kid doesn't exactly comfort them. Hittin' up in our apartment when I was trying to do Saturday morning cartoons...yeah...I was bred in a real quiet environment. And all the assholes who squeezed past the chain in the door really *loved* the quiet, right mom?

Judy squeezes maypole's cheeks painfully, she makes maypole's lips move. Spit seeps out the side of Maypole's mouth and she can't talk. Judy's trying to injure.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Talk, fuckin' talk, talk all you do is put your small ideas in other people's mouths.

KOKA

You're talkin' most. Right now.

Judy smiles. She laughs hard, releasing Maypole.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(To Maypole)

Look, May. Someone to keep you on your toes. That's what you need. Someone to shove you, right the fuck on over.

Judy leers at Koka.

Wanna topple me?

Maypole growls and goes after Judy. Koka touches her shoulder.

KOKA

That's your mamma. You don't got respect, either?

MAYPOLE

That's the second time you've touched little girls without their permission first.

Koka's stunned. He removes his hand and holds it up in the air in surrender.

You can play the victim once you're gone.

A pause.

JIMMY

You heard the kid, get.

Aika takes a step in front of him. Jimmy winces. He grabs Aika's arm and hauls her over to his side of the field.

MAYPOLE

Get.

KOKA

Where I'm from lil' girls are taught to grit manners out of their clenched teeth. Not *spit* through 'em.

Koka spins on his heel. He heaves a sigh and holds his palm out. Submission.

I'll be takin' my instrument.

Aika shakes her head no.

I don't go without it.

Aika shakes like a leaf. She shakes her head "no" furiously.

Don't force me to do somethin' these people'll blame me for.

Aika retreats behind Jimmy.

JIMMY

Did you just fuckin' threaten her? You barge in here, a stranger in *our* place, and you threaten our girl?

KOKA

That's not what I/ said.

JIMMY

Maypole, you hear that?

MAYPOLE

Think I did.

Koka addresses Aika. He touches her arm.

KOKA

Look, I didn't mean no/ harm.

JIMMY

Don't touch her.

A pause.

KOKA

Can I have the clarinet back, please?

Jimmy huffs.

JIMMY

You don't speak to her. She's a kid. You wanna talk, talk to me.

KOKA

(To Aika)

You gonna make me fight for mine and mine alone?

Aika holds out the clarinet like she's gonna hand it over.
She looks at Maypole with pleading eyes.

MAYPOLE

(To Jimmy)

She's saying you should beat him up.

Aika glares at Maypole.

She wants you to gut him, Jimmy. Get him out.

KOKA

What sun rotted your core and made you so sour through and through.

Jimmy grabs Koka.

JIMMY

What did I tell you about talking to the little girls.

Jimmy charges toward Koka but Twyla steps in front of him. He bumps into her pregnant belly and she winces.

TWYLA

Come on Jim, let him leave. It doesn't have to be a fight. Look Mr. Maybe you should just, turn around, pick up, and go.

KOKA

(Gesturing to Jimmy)

That its daddy?

Twyla hesitates.

Yeah.

Koka nods.

Put me up for the night.

Twyla hesitates.

TWYLA

Don't know/ if I can.

KOKA

You seemed nicer than that.

Twyla hangs her head. Shame.

JIMMY

Don't you talk to my wife.

KOKA

Seem like you're limiting who I can and can't talk to.

JIMMY

And maybe I am. I've got every right.

MAYPOLE

Invader.

Judy cackles she crawls over to Koka.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

He ain't got green skin, it's just...*black* as sin. He looks like he stepped out of the city and you country fucks don't know how to deal.

She kisses his calf. Koka shakes her off.

KOKA

Give me the clarinet.

Aika tries to duck around Jimmy but he pushes her back.

Then I'll take it from you.

JIMMY

You come near Black Beauty and you'll see all the limits I got for you.

KOKA

It's my livelihood. I need it back.

JIMMY

You're livelihood is beggin' on street corners. Pestering good people with some two cent instrument ain't nobody asked for.

KOKA

Whatever you believe--just give it here.

Koka is nose to nose with Jimmy and puts his hand on the instrument with Aika. Aika touches Koka's face. Jimmy's eyes have blood lust. He grabs Aika's wrist, pissing off Koka. The lights snap and all goes dark except the glow of the moon.

Projection: Cave drawings etched into stone. Stick figure men spearing the back of a Mammoth.

Shiny white and blue easter grass string drops behind the group like rain.

In this place--here--was history--Mammoths pounded pavement to the local cornerstore over highways that paved their tracks. Beasts were titans of industry led by hard tusks, fat bottoms. Chased by little men who couldn't see that far past the top of their heads. Mammoths so big they could see the violence come their way. They were taller.

The whole cast squat. Caveman like. Koka looms above. So the hate looked smaller then it was. Slower then it was coming. Mamma of little man circles. It's cornering at its finest. A skill white mothers have in mind to teach their babies who corner their lesser men. Watch her swollen belly, bump away the nightmares of husbands who abuse.

Twyla snaps at Jimmy. A pause.

The mammoth finds escape.

A pause.

But little man is fast with his hate.

Jimmy swings his fist at Koka.

And the mammoth has no where to go where he won't be chased. So he stays.

Jimmy turns to Aika and beckons her over in slow motion.

As fast with hate, little man is fast with sex.

Father demands it.

Mamma will gut her kid, if her kid jumps in the way of her ecstatic, erotic, hopefully exotic--will be if they bag the mammoth-escapades.

Big mamma Judy charges towards Koka and maypole
grabs her. Judy shoves Maypole off.

And mama's baby's are left at home in cradles they outgrow. They hide in bushes, imitating the haphazard tracks of the hunting party...stalking it like it stalks prey. The legacy of the hunting party is quick to eat itself *and* the mammoth.

Aika backs away with the clarinet trying to hide. A cymbal
crashes. The sound of rain.

And the Mammoth. Great. Woolly. Hunted. Is left in isolation. The stranger to aggression. Only his feet destroy the grass he trods as he retreats to the safety of "away from the community"--if he can.

Koka takes a methodical step away from the group.

Thud.

He takes another step back.

Thump.

Cymbals crash. He goes over to Aika and takes the clarinet
from her hands.

But fighting-man's attention is snapped by the quickest twig.

Koka plays a note. Everyone looks towards him.

And they all commune back...

The cast draw their hands in pantomimes of spears and
arrows.

Projection: Hunters eating mammoth meat.

To kill the Mammoth.

Koka plays and the cast start a tribal dance. The string rain
picks up. The cymbals crash. The dance becomes a hunt.

They corner Koka. They shove at him and his notes spike, squeak, the music is chaos. Aika runs towards the fight and she grabs back the Clarinet. She stands in front of Koka as Jimmy rears his fist back. He punches. Aika and the clarinet fall to the desert floor.

And in the melee, bad hunters get stepped on.

The cymbals crash and the stage goes pitch black. Streaks of strobe lights like lightning. They catch on the shiny Easter string to imitate a storm. Koka kneels and hoists Aika in his hands. She's a rag doll. Jimmy bars his way.

MAYPOLE

(To Koka)

What'd you do! What'd you do!

Koka backs away.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

He ain't touched the girl this was all Jimmy.

TWYLA

He didn't mean to, he was just protectin' her.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

From *what?*

Jimmy growls and starts to grab at Judy but Koka stops him.

KOKA

You knocked her cold. Let's not keep her in the rain, right?

Jimmy shakes. He takes a step back. Maypole touches his hand.

MAYPOLE

You didn't mean to...I know it. She knows it. It was *him*.

TWYLA

Take her inside. It's pouring out here. Take her back to our trailer.

Koka looks nervously to Jimmy who looks like a man on fire.

JIMMY

Striped canopy. Red shutters. Can't miss it. Put her in the big bed. Please.

Koka nods and shields Aika from the rain. He starts to carry her away.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(To Koka)

But you're comin' back to stay with me.

TWYLA

Judy...

Judy grabs Twyla's lips.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Give me what I want.

Twyla sighs. Jimmy shields her from the rain.

MAYPOLE

I want him gone by mornin'.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Oh, baby. It's cute that you think I'd let you have say in who comes in and out of my house.

MAYPOLE

I've lived their longer.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I got the keys.

Twyla grabs Maypoles' hand.

TWYLA

Get out of this. I'm not makin' soup if the two of you catch your deaths.

Twyla looks up to Jimmy.

I can't believe you. I really can't.

JIMMY

You didn't stop me.

Twyla tries to take his hand. He's unresponsive. She leads him away. Maypole and Judy are left outside. Judy sticks her tongue out trying to catch the rain. She raises her arms. A big gush of wind and her skirt flies up and behind her. She's a little kid. Maypole tries to leave.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Where you think you're goin'?

MAYPOLE

Home.

Judy laughs.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

And where's that?

Maypole sinks into the Adirondack chair. She sticks her own tongue out and for a minute the two are exactly the same.

MAYPOLE

They're takin' care of 'Ika.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Yeah, they are.

MAYPOLE

So you take care of me.

Judy laughs.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Oh, baby girl. I'm takin' care of me tonight.

Maypole stands and kicks the plastic chair over. She starts to exit.

MAYPOLE

I'm sleepin' on the table then!

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Hope you like what you hear baby! Hope you like what you hear.

The cymbals crash and Mamma Judy raises her hands.
 She pushes up her sleeves revealing her track marks again.
 She spins in wild circles and laughs like a crazed woman.
 The strobes continue to flash as the lights of the fire go
 out.

She sings.

I got somebody, who'll ease the pain
 Of this dust bowl doomed place, I'm livin' in.
 I got a martyr who'll jump on the spear
 To give me a reason to get through the year.
 I've found a good love where I ain't looked before
 Someone new, someone who will open a door
 There's gotta be some change here
 Before I go deranged here
 I've got my magic someone
 Who has a magic touch
 And I don't really think
 He's asking for much.

END SCENE I

SCENE 1.2

A Passage of Time

Koka sits in an Adirondack chair lit by the sun. He plays his clarinet lazily. He's in boxers and a white t-shirt. Comfortable where he is. Judy stands behind him rubbing his shoulders. The stage looks hot as hell.

KOKA

There's a place in this world where love changes the way people will talk to you. They tolerate you. They don't fight they just stare like you've got a growth on you. But, it's just the love of a white woman they don't know how to refuse. And months pass and everyone hates you the same.

They just don't talk about it. For shame. For fear of bursting a bubble.

He plays a tune.

Funny thing about bubbles...you gotta be made of the same substance as them to pass through. And you're not---that substance. So they just...stare.

Aika walks behind them with a silver bowl, a revolution of a day. The lights turn into a night sky behind her and she dumps glitter from her bowl like stars and exits.

Stare.

Twyla walks by with a bowl full of sand. The lights turn to daytime behind her, another revolution and she sprinkles the sand and exits.

And your protection...

Jimmy walks with a silver bowl, a revolution of a day. The sky turns to night. He sprinkles the glitter and exits.

Judged love.

Maypole walks by with a bowl of sand. The lights turn to day and she sprinkles her sand. The lights shift to night and she throws up a handful of glitter. Day time, she sprinkles more sand, night time, a handful of glitter.

But, the stares keep comin' and you're backed into the corner they make for you. Waiting for the spears and arrows...to pierce through the thin white veil you got huggin' on you in the nighttime.

Maypole exits. The sun rises and beats down on the two on stage. Judy rubs Koka's shoulders as he lazily plays. She hums along for a while. Aika walks in. She looks at Koka and hesitates. She looks terrified. He holds out the clarinet to her and she shakes her head "no". He frowns.

KOKA

That girl still stayin' with jimmy?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Yeah. Guess. May's never home which suits me fine. Figure she's there with that one.

KOKA

(About Aika)

She looks sadder.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You know her so well?

Judy pouts.

KOKA

It takes a little girl to be jealous of a little girl.

Judy sticks her tongue out at Koka.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Hand me the lotion?

He hands her a bottle of lotion.

Take your shirt off.

KOKA

I ain't doin' that.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Why?

Koka doesn't answer. He kicks at the ground playing his clarinet.

'fraid someone's gonna say something bout the black that's underneath that white.

KOKA

I wish you wouldn't.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

What? You hate people watchin' you?

A pause.

Why do you do it then, the music?

'Cause I did it for the stares. Didn't you?

Koka is silent.

You judgin' me?

A pause.

You are ain't ya'?

KOKA

It ain't in me to judge. Been judged back quite a bit.

Judy laughs.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Baby, nobody's judgin' anything negative 'bout you. They just couldn't. You're two hundred and five pounds of special.

Bullshit.

KOKA

He shoves her off. She worms closer to him giving his cheek a smack. He smiles.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

They just don't understand you. Nobody from any kind of claustrophobic hole like this one has any kind of clue 'bout who you are. You're the boogy man to 'em. You gonna take what they have and run. They don't know a thing about you and they can't think past their small minds to get to know you. Ain't your fault. Ain't theirs. It's just what here is like.

Koka grimaces and shoves her off again.

Here?

KOKA

Judy nods proudly.

It's as simple as that?

Silence.

Got fired from my last job.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You givin' 'em slack?

KOKA

Why would you think that?

A pause.

I'm me. And those patrons weren't happy 'bout it.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

It ain't like that here. They ain't gonna oust ya.

KOKA

How long you been out? You don't know what this place is anymore.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I do.

KOKA

Really? How long?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Years?

KOKA

Cause it's exactly like that here, Jude.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I'm different.

KOKA

Are you?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

How could you say that. I think you're beautiful.

KOKA

And why? Cause I look like this? Cause I'm me?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Everybody's beautiful cause of who they are.

KOKA

That's not what I meant and you know it.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

There were these black jazz singers out in LA. At the club I performed--Mamma Ray's. They'd watch me sing and they'd *beg* to sing with me. They'd be so desperate to get up on that stage I could see the beads of their sweat from a mile away. And that blue light--they were all smiling teeth until they got up there with me, and it was like--seeing myself in a big ole' mirror, the way they looked at me. Like they wanted me.

A pause.

I want you to look at me like that.

A pause.

You remind me of them.

He puts his hands over his eyes.

Is it such a shame to want to keep that around here.
It ain't so wrong to want you to worship me right?

Koka looks at her sharply.

KOKA

You don't make it easy to like you.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Baby, there ain't been nothin' easy about me since the day I was born.

Maypole enters with Aika. She has Aika dressed up with a handkerchief on her head.

What the hell you think you're doin'? She's dark. She ain't Arab.

She reaches for Koka's hand but he dispells her.

MAYPOLE

She's a gypsy. Ain't ya?

Aika sees Koka and blushes taking off the veil.

Ain't ya?

Aika and koka stare.

I said ain't ya?!

Maypole pinches Aika's arm. Aika jumps.

'Ika dances. She's good at it to.

Ika smiles. Without a word Koka starts playing a melody on his clarinet eyeing Aika. Judy glares at the girl.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Well? You gonna dance or are you gonna fuckin' gape?

MAYPOLE

Come on. Dance.

Aika is still.

MAYPOLE

You're makin' me look like shit. You always do that.

She pouts. Aika touches her shoulder and Maypole shrugs her off.

Don't do that. You're just placating me. I don't like it.

Judy laughs.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

It ain't the dumbass who makes you shitty, babe.

MAYPOLE

Dance!

Maypole shoves at Aika. It's meant to be playful but it's not. Maypole puts the veil on Aika's head. She still doesn't dance. Maypole puts the veil on her own head. She does a very stereotypical "gypsy" dance.

MAYPOLE

Come on! It ain't fuckin' hard.

Aika blushes as Judy laughs.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Didn't I raise a regular slut.

Maypole stops dancing about to move on her mom but Koka stops playing and looks at Ika raising an eyebrow.

KOKA

Dance?

Aika hesitates. She shakes her head no. She grabs the clarinet from Koka and begins to play a very basic melody. Koka laughs. Aika makes a movement meaning "You dance" to Koka. Koka holds up his hands in surrender.

KOKA

Fair is fair.

He does a little dance to Aika's bad playing. He stops.

I think you can do better though. May I?

He holds out his hands for the instrument. She hands it to him. He plays a melody.

Please. I'd like to see you dance.

Maypole crosses her arm and huffs. Aika takes the handkerchief and uses it as an accentuation of her arm not a face covering. She dances but this is not the gypsy dance. This dance is personal. It's heritage. It's hers. Theirs. Koka and hers shared. And it's strong. Jimmy and Twyla enter the space. Twyla plops down in an Adirondack chair and stretches. Jimmy is entranced.

JIMMY

Hey, black beauty. You make a real good dancer.

Aika stops immediately. She drops the handkerchief and Koka stops playing. This is not a thing Jimmy's invited to comment on. Koka stands. Judy pulls his arm. Aika puts her hand on his arm as well and Judy glares at her.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

May...your friends a lil' handsy.

KOKA

Gotta go wash up.

He rubs at his face. He winks at Judy.

Y'all can get on without me anyways.

Judy lets him go but Aika hangs on for dear life.

It won't take long. You'll be fine.

MAYPOLE

She knows that.

Koka walks away but Aika's not letting go.

She knows that.

After peeling off Aika's hand Koka exits.

Maypole and jimmy both glare after him.

JIMMY

(To Aika)

What you want him for? He ain't got nothin' for you.

TWYLA

I like his playin'.

JIMMY

That ain't music worth listenin' to.

TWYLA

It feels old. Like something you need. I like it.

JIMMY

I wasn't askin' you. Aika's a good dancer--couldn't even dance to it right, could you 'Ika?

She stares him down. Twyla watches them.

TWYLA

How would you know what she dances like?

Jimmy winks at Twyla.

JIMMY

He needs to go.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

A month and you still can't be in the same space as him? Christ, thought you could man up more than that. But you're a sensitive fuck who can't get one foot past your hate. Can't even share a space.

JIMMY

Y'all look cozy.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Baby, he's in my space every night.

TWYLA

Judy.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Such a fuckin' prude. What, that baby came straight from immaculate conception? Jimmy's been fuckin' you since long before you got married. Don't think I didn't hear you in the hallways every night. You were gettin' it long before me and Koka.

Maypole gags.

JIMMY

He's just gettin' ready to leave you.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

What makes you say that, Jim? Hatred, bigotry, just plain bein' an ass?

JIMMY

Judy, look at him. He's not here to keep a woman. They never are. You're a pit stop on the road to that fuck.

Judy stands and spits at Jimmy's feet. She starts to exit. 'Kay then but you're just fetishizing him cause you can't stand to be *home*. Where you're just like everyone else. You got a different, unwanted, *black*, boyfriend--and that makes you special.

Judy stops. She tenses up. She goes over to Jimmy and spits on his shoe. She gives him a wide missing teeth grin. She goes over to Maypole and pats her cheek.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I see why you stick with your uncle, baby. He's as fucked as you.

She kisses Maypole's cheek and exits. Maypole growls. She goes over to the hanging up sheets and starts tearing them down. In her frustration she doesn't realize she's letting them brush the floor.

TWYLA

Honey, you're gettin' yellow all over the feet of those sheets. Pick 'em up. I ain't washin' 'em again.

Aika sits and Jimmy goes and sits next to her. Maypole picks up the sheets.

MAYPOLE

Sorry.

TWYLA

She's just tryin' to piss you off.

MAYPOLE

I know that.

TWYLA

Did it to me all the time.

Maypole hands Twyla the end of a sheet. They fold it together.

MAYPOLE

That bitch couldn't even be nice to you, 'en what's she good for?

TWYLA

I helped out mamma in the kitchen and Judy would get so mad that there wasn't enough room in there for all three of us that she'd spit in everyone's tea.

Maypole gags.

But we all just drank it anyway. She wanted a reaction. And we weren't gonna give it to her. Drink her shit. Swallow it down. It's the only way to cope with her.

MAYPOLE

I'm not that nice.

TWYLA

Neither am I.

MAYPOLE

How can you stand him?

TWYLA

He ain't the meanest one here.

Maypole looks confused.

I'm not a fighter, May. Never have been. I'm good with things--staying. The world--calming. I'm not one for bickerin and fight. He doesn't bother me--he's like a bee. He comes to pollinate. To be here. To see what's over that hill. And then he flits off to the other nearest flower. You don't bother the bee, you don't get stung. And I'm real good a not botherin' the bee.

MAYPOLE

He's takin' things away. He's takin' mamma from me.

TWYLA

Did you want her?

MAYPOLE

I don't like--I don't like the way he's lookin' at us. At Aika.

Twyla touches Maypoles cheek.

TWYLA

Maybe it's time to learn to share, baby.

MAYPOLE

Nobody told me I'd have to.

Twyla nods and grimaces. She touches her stomach. She whispers Jimmy's name but he's up and fiddling with the radio.

TWYLA

I think there's somethin' wrong.

MAYPOLE

Did you drink? Jimmy makes me want to drink sometimes.

Twyla laughs and grimaces again.

TWYLA

It's not time for it yet but I can feel how restless it is. Things born here keep wanting to move on, disappear. But I've been here all along. I've been with Jimmy my whole life. And I'm content. I'm fine. I'm good. He seems--different. And--he's--

MAYPOLE

That's cause he don't belong here.

TWYLA

Jimmy--I mean.

MAYPOLE

He's just nervous. And he should be. You should be.

Twyla rubs her belly.

TWYLA

Kiss it for luck. I'm just bein' superstitious.

Maypole kisses Twyla's stomach.

TWYLA

He brought you a new bunch. He won't let me see 'em anymore. They're only for you--
And Ika. Shows her too.

Maypole's eyes light up. She runs over to Jimmy who's still fiddlin' with the radio. There's only static.

MAYPOLE

Did you fuck it up?

JIMMY

It was like this. I was just tryin' to find a good station.

MAYPOLE

Pull out the stash.

Jimmy grins. He pulls out a sack and dumps it on the table. Different shaped and sized horny toad cast iron statuettes tumble out.

He reaches into a pocket and pulls out a handful of craft paints and a few brushes. Maypole grabs one and a brush.

Have they really gotten this big?

JIMMY

They're growin'.

MAYPOLE

They're gonna put me out of a job. You're gonna be able to see the markins' just fine.

JIMMY

Nah. It's nice havin' you 'round anyways.

He looks up at Aika and smiles.

You wanna join me and squirt.

Aika sits next to Maypole and Jimmy smiles. He pulls out some paper plates and squirts the paint on them. He hands a plate to Maypole. He takes his and dips his brush in black paint. Like lightning he leans across the table and streaks it across Aika's nose.

Black/ Beauty.

Before he can finish Aika smacks him hard across the cheek and runs. Maypole grabs her arm first.

MAYPOLE

Christ! What's the matter with you!

Aika makes a noise like she may vomit and darts off-stage. Twyla and Jimmy stand. Twyla makes a face at Jimmy.

TWYLA

Stop. I'll get it. I'll clean up your mess.

She follows after Aika. Jimmy rubs at his cheek. He can't help but stare after them. Maypole paints the finer details on the horny toad.

JIMMY

She's right and pissed.

Maypole reaches out and touches his cheek

MAYPOLE

Are...are you okay?

JIMMY

It's fine. She hits hard but not enough to sting.

Maypole's shaking.

Are *you* okay? What's the matter?

Maypole shakes her head.

May, talk to me.

MAYPOLE

I don't know her. I don't know...she's...how could she hit you.

She traces the hit on his face.

How could she...why would she just hit someone who's been there for both of us every step of the way. Where would she even be without you? On the streets? Livin' in a roach infested hole with her burn out brother? She has a life here. You've given her a life here and she just--I don't know the girl who hits the best man in the world across the face.

JIMMY

Come on/ you don't mean that.

MAYPOLE

She's been ignoring me. Not playin' not...she doesn't...she doesn't want to be with me anymore. Not when he's around. It's like she's orbiting him. I pull her away and she snaps back up like a rubber band at his feet.

Jimmy tenses.

She didn't even dance.

JIMMY

What?

MAYPOLE

She...she didn't dance. She didn't do it. When I told her to. She did it after. For him. For Koka.

Maypole cringes. Jimmy is a storm cloud.

JIMMY

She was dancin' for *him*, for that son of a bitch! He's got a white woman and he wants some dark skinned bitch too? Wants to play both?

A pause.

MAYPOLE

She's not a bitch.

JIMMY

I'm pissed at him not her.

Maypole nods.

MAYPOLE

He ain't playin' my mom. Right?

JIMMY

Oh, really? And what would you know 'bout it?

MAYPOLE

I hear 'em. Every night. They love each other.

Jimmy grimaces and spits on the ground.

They wouldn't...it wouldn't...you only do that in love, right? Like you and Aunt Twyla?

Jimmy laughs. He rubs Maypole's head.

What a good kid I made you into.

Maypole knocks Jimmy's hand away.

MAYPOLE

What's that supposed to mean. I told you. I'm not a kid.

JIMMY

Well then, think you can handle some truth?

Maypole nods. He leans in close--her confident. How could she not love him.

Men like *that*...who look and act like him. They're into two things. Takin' away what's yours and fuckin' your women. And he don't care how he's gonna do it. He's gonna take and he's gonna run. He's gonna grab. He's gonna run. He's gonna thief, he's gonna run. And he gets out fast in the night cause it's made for people like him to *hide*. He ain't worth trustin' May. He don't love your mom. He's fuckin' her, good. And she lets him because she's been 'round 'nough of them in the city. She ain't like she used to be. But you best bet he's gonna take more than her before he's done. And he's gonna fuckin' *run*. He ain't educated. It's the only thing he knows.

Maypoles deadly quiet. She hits the radio.

MAYPOLE

Shit Static noise.

She fiddles with it. Nothing works. She's pissed. She hits it hard. She hits it again and again.

She *danced* for him.

A pause.

That's for us. Not--it's *gross* dancin' for him.

JIMMY

She don't know how to be in charge of herself yet. She needs a real man in her life to show her. To teach her to feel respectful. Like I did...for you.

MAYPOLE

You're a good man Uncle Jimmy.

He rubs her head again and she bats it away.

But stop doin' that!

A pause.

You think he's doin' that? To her. You think...you think what he's doin' to mamma he's doin' to her?

Maypole curls her hands into fists and hits the table as hard as possible.

Because I will fuckin' gut him. I will hang him from the banner by the toe and I will slit open his belly with a pair of scissors and I will drain him of every last drop until the sand here is redder then it is orange and he will suffer for it.

JIMMY

Passion's good for you kid. Don't blow it out to hard though. You won't have any left when you actually have to stand for somethin'.

She starts dotting the horny toads again.

MAYPOLE

She's just not seein' it. The small stuff. She just sees him, staring at her over the top of his instrument.

A pause.

He's takin' her from me.

Jimmy smiles.

And I *hate* him.

JIMMY

Proud of you kid. Stickin' up for yourself.

He rubs the top of her head and she swats him away.

MAYPOLE

I'm not a kid. Kid's don't change things. Kids don't make people realize that there's poison in the room. But I will. I'm gonna, Jimmy. You and me both.

Jimmy holds up his hands.

JIMMY

They don't listen to me much. Your mamma--no way. That's all on you/ (kid).

Before he can say kid she cuts him off with a look. Jimmy smiles. He starts painting a horny toad.

MAYPOLE

I wish things never had to change.

JIMMY

Me too.

MAYPOLE

I wish mamma never came back.

JIMMY

You don't mean that.

MAYPOLE

Everybody's acting different, now that she's back. And she--she brought him with her. She's....she's just...different than us and it throws everything off balance.

JIMMY

Things stay the same they get stagnant.

MAYPOLE

Not with you and Twyla. And y'all havin' a baby and all...that's change, but it's good change. And that baby belongs here. Mamma's been...touched by all her tours and bullshit. And I don't like her talking about it. She doesn't...she kept herself from me. She doesn't get to tell me what it was like without me. I don't want to know.

Cause if she says it's better--which she does all the time--well fuck her. That's not here. Here we have other issues. We have our own problems and she acts like they don't exist. But she never had to deal with dirt devils, and wells running dry, and she always had clothes that were new. And she left me behind to/ not have that.

JIMMY

Have it worse.

MAYPOLE

Well yeah. And it's not fair. And she....she just doesn't seem like she fits here much.

A pause.

JIMMY

Bet she'd act more like your mamma if he weren't around.

MAYPOLE

Yeah?

JIMMY

Women do weird voodoo things with men like him in the room.

MAYPOLE

Like he's magic?

JIMMY

Or some kind of devil.

MAYPOLE

Fuck the devil.

She spits. Jimmy grins.

JIMMY

Yeah kid--fuck the devil.

The clouds shift, the sky is the yellow of a sun shinging through slate grey clouds. It makes everyone glow.

Koka enters. He sits in an Adirondack chair.

KOKA

Where'd Judy go?

JIMMY

Thought you said you was gonna' clean up?

Koka grimaces.

KOKA

I did. You seen her?

Silence.

JIMMY

He look clean to you?

MAYPOLE

Doesn't look like it from here. We gotta shit shower. Maybe stay in a hotel. Nearest one's an hour out.

A pause.

KOKA

Maypole, you seen your mamma?

MAYPOLE

Don't you/ talk 'bout.

Jimmy shuts Maypole up with a hand on her arm. She stills.

JIMMY

Let me.

She nods.

Why don't you go look for her.

Koka grits his teeth.

KOKA

Think I'll stay here. Y'all all got a real sense of communion in this spot.

He plays his clarinet. The tension is cold butter thick. Maypole purposefully turns up the static noise. Koka plays louder. Maypole turns up the radio again.

Nothin' but static. KOKA
 Yeah. MAYPOLE
 Not much to listen to. KOKA
 Neither is that. JIMMY
 It's jazz. KOKA
 Never liked it. JIMMY
 Not surprised. Somebody told me as a kid, "gotta be a smart one, to like jazz". Gave me this clarinet. KOKA
 Jimmy stands.
 Think your insultin' me? JIMMY
 Koka kicks at the ground.
 Wouldn't dream of it. KOKA
 A pause.
 Bet you're dreamin' 'bout other things--right? JIMMY
 'Scuse me? KOKA
 Jimmy clenches his fist--is he gonna fight?

JIMMY
(To Maypole)

Told you kid--watch your back.

KOKA

Seems like you're doin' it for her.

JIMMY

As I should.

A pause. Jimmy looks like he's about to charge. Maypole tugs on his arm.

MAYPOLE

Finished one.

She holds up a finished photorealistic horny toad statuette. Jimmy smiles. It's not worth the fight yet.

JIMMY

Come on. I got a better radio in our trailer. Let's move this some place with less trash.

Maypole and Jimmy gather the things. They leave one paint jar. Maypole stops in front of Koka. She kicks dirt up at his feet.

MAYPOLE

Know...with all this wind--lots of dirt gets kicked up. Probably gotta wash up twice. If you want to scrub all that black off--your boots.

Koka takes Maypole's hand in a flash quicker than anyone can see and kisses the back of her hand. She gags. He smiles. Jimmy and Maypole exit. Koka is left alone. He visibly sags, relaxing. He plays his clarinet at full volume. The light shifts and the lights turn sunset glowing pink. Where everything is radioactive.

KOKA

When Stone pebble girls decide it's time to start fallin' they roll to the very edge. They peek over, lookin' for something to clatter on. Looking for other pebbles to take with them to the rock carpeted canyon floor.

Aika peeks her head from around a corner. She's holding her hand.

They crane their necks and their spines snap in place--their decision growing them an inch taller before compressing the bones in one final squeeze of fear.

Aika tucks her hair behind her ear.

But in that moment of tallness-longness...she reaches her hands high to the sun and she prays for that pebble to take down with her. A pebble not unlike herself.

She goes over and sits by Koka he jumps. The lights snap back to normal.

You back there the whole time? Didn't want to join in the fun?

She touches his cheek.

You think they're mean?

She shakes her head no.

You think he's mean?

She shakes her head yes.

You know--when you hang out with a mean soul--things got a way of rubbin' off if you rub hard enough.

She grimaces shaking her head firmly no.

And Maypole...stands awful close to him.

Aika takes his face and forces him to look at her. She shakes his head no.

Little girls are easily influenced. Especially by men like him.

She wrings her hurt hand on accident and winces.

Let me look at that.

He sucks in a breath through his teeth.

That looks like it's gonna be a nasty bruise. You take someone down?

She shakes her head no.

Bet you left a mark though didn't ya'?

She shakes her head no.

It's no use. Takin' vengeance when the only person it hurts is you.

She slams her hand on the chair. Koka holds his hand up in surrender.

Maybe I'm wrong.

She takes his instrument from him.

Hey now.

She plays, it's an almost perfect melody.

You got an ear on you. You played before?

She shakes her head no.

All natural talent on you. Knew you were something special. The minute I saw you.

She covers herself up making her small. She glares at Koka. He's not understanding her.

It's cause of your lips.

He touches the corner of her mouth.

They're just the right shape for

She bites him hard and he recoils his hands.

Shit. Didn't mean anything by it. I swear. I--you got the right lips for the reed. For makin' noise. For playin'. You've got good clarinet lips.

She scoots away from him.

Why would you even--

He sighs, patting her hand.

It takes somethin' really awful...for you to think that.

She hangs her head, ashamed.

Hey now, ain't your fault. Things done to you--are at you, not from you. You're more than whatever made you fight.

A pause. He fiddles with his clarinet.

I'm gettin' tired of this old thing. I need new inspiration. I need...someone like me. Who can--change things. Change how I feel. I need to tell someone all the things someone told me. Let it out, ya know?

She looks confused.

Sometimes you gotta scream. Got it?

Aika nods fervently. She points at herself. A pause.

You gotta scream too, kid?

Aika sags back against the chair with a big outburst of air. An imitation of a scream. Koka laughs. Her eyebrows furrow. She does it again. He laughs harder.

She whacks him with her bad hand and she winces, and “screams” again. Koka stops laughing.

Someone hurt you bad, didn’t they?

She nods.

And you just gotta live with it. It’s just what’s “normal” right? For you?

She points at him.

Yeah. Me too.

She plays the clarinet. He leans back and closes his eyes.

You know, you’re the only person I feel like I can do this around. Think I haven’t slept since I got here.

Aika snorts.

What you tryin’ to say?

Aika full on “laughs”. Koka laughs louder.

Yeah, you know it here.

He reaches out and tickles Aika. Aika giggles and giggles.

This is the most fun either of them have had in months.

You got a good smile, kid. You’re one of the good ones. The people who can make you feel home with the shine in their teeth.

She grins at him.

Tell you what? You wanna go with me and get one? Sometime soon. Sometime at night when they won’t notice we’re gone. You want to go into town and buy you a clarinet too?

Her eyes go wide. She nods rapidly.

I got money saved up in my piggy bank. Bet you got some too?

She hesitates and then shakes her head no, she looks shamed.

It’s okay.

She sniffs, almost crying.

Hey...no big deal. You want one that bad, it’s yours.

We’ll do it then. That way--I go and you’ll have your own.

She looks at him sharply.

I gotta go at some point, before I start wearing out my welcome.

She makes a face.
You're right. Already done that. Guess I'll be goin' soon.

This time her eyes go wide in fear and she grabs Koka's
arm. She shakes her head no.
I'm not the kind of man who stays.

Aika grips his arm harder.
I'm not. And I can't be. This place don't grow flowers, it grows weeds. Don't use those
big eyes to convince me otherwise.

She punches at his chest and it hurts her hand.
You're doin' more harm to yourself than the men you're trying to hurt. We need to fix that.

She nods blinking away tears. He pats her head.
You got paint on your nose.

She grimaces. Koka licks his thumb and rubs at it.
Maypole enters coming back from the paint jar and stops
cold in her tracks.

MAYPOLE

You touchin' her?

Koka stands, puts his hands up and backs away from
Aika.

(To Aika) What are you even doin' here? Thought you ran off after smackin' Jimmy for no
reason.

Koka picks up Aika's hand.

KOKA

That how you got it?

MAYPOLE

He's awfully familiar with you.

KOKA

We were havin' a conversation.

MAYPOLE

She's mute. She don't have conversations. Not without me there. She needs me.

Koka addresses Aika.

KOKA

That right?

MAYPOLE

That's *right*.

A tense pause.

KOKA

Well, you go on then. Don't stop for our sakes. We're doin' fine. You need your paint?

MAYPOLE

You waitin' for me to come back?

She eyes Aika.

KOKA

Thought you might need it. Figured you'd come back.

Maypole doesn't move. Koka goes and gets the paint. He tosses it to Maypole.

Don't need you stoppin' checkin' in on us, do we?

He looks to Aika. Aika agrees. Maypole is stung.

MAYPOLE

I stop when I feel like she needs protecting.

A pause.

KOKA

From me?

MAYPOLE

Maybe.

Koka steps to May. He takes her hand, fatherly.

KOKA

May, I've been round for months and I haven't done a single thing to hurt you. Why would I?

May backs away quickly. All fear.

MAYPOLE

Cause I can scream.

A pause.

KOKA

What are you saying?

MAYPOLE

Nothin'. Just...she can't.

Koka looks between Aika and Maypole

KOKA

Maybe there's no reason to feel safe around anyone. Not here.

Aika shakes her head no at him. She takes Maypoles hand and places it on top of hers, and then places her hand on top of Koka. Koka grins at her.

Guess, it's a learnin' curve. Right, Black beauty?

Aika gags.

MAYPOLE

Don't call her that!

Aika almost vomits.

(To Aika) What's wrong with you?!

Aika leans over her chair and heaves.

KOKA

I shouldn'tve--I just thought...isn't that her nickname? That's what Jimmy calls her.

MAYPOLE

It's okay comin' from him! Look what you did!

Aika spits at him.

KOKA

What'd I do?!

Aika is hyperventilating, she stares at Koka. She fake "Screams" He understands. He tries to take her hand but she recoils, hissing. She gags again.

You gonna be sick?

Aika nods. Tears in her eyes. He takes her hair and pulls it out for her face. Maypole shoves at him.

MAYPOLE

No! Back off! I do that.

She replaces Koka's hands, holding Aika's hair back.

KOKA

I'll go grab a bucket from the kitchen.

MAYPOLE

Yeah, the best thing you can do is leave.

He sighs and runs off. Maypole twists Aika's hair into a braid. She visibly relaxes at Koka disappearing. She presses her hand to Aika's forehead.

MAYPOLE

What's gotten into you? You're actin'...not like you. 'Ika...what's wrong? You ain't got a fever.

She touches Aika's neck. Aika flinches.

What's wrong with you. You ain't hot.

She looks at Aika's neck.

You flushed?

A pause. Maypole runs a finger over a shape on Aika's neck.

Sometimes the men who came and visited us--when I was with mamma on tours...they'd leave presents in the form of scrapes and bruises. Got abused just cause they didn't want their--their *fuck* to have a kid. But she did. I'm real used to the kinds of marks people can take--can be given...

You got a mark on your neck--the shape of a palm. A large palm. A man's palm.

She turns Aika's face so their looking each other in the eyes.

What's this bruise, 'Ika?

Aika puts her palm over it.

What is this?

Somebody hurting you? Maypole grabs Aika's wrist hard.

Who's hurting you! Maypole twists Aika's arm.

Who! Aika points at Maypole's chest.

Aika stabs Maypole's chest with her finger. Maypole let's go.

Sorry...I just...what's wrong? What's wrong with you?

Aika shakes her head no.

Can't we just go back? Go back to burning off our dolls? Maybe we should've never done it.

Aika points at the fire. Maypole laughs.

Can't take it back, right? Things seem like they got harder. After bonfire night. They did...didn't they?

Aika grabs Maypole's face and presses their foreheads together. Maypole shoves away.

And I feel like it's cause you're leaving me.

A pause.

You are, aren't you? I can feel you wanting to leave.

A pause.

The winds been blowing harder 'round here. It's been kicking a lot of shit up. And everybody's getting antsy. Even Twyla's in her own world. Ready to take off and change. The only things permanent are me and Jimmy.

Aika gags.

God, please don't puke.

Aika touches her stomach carefully. Maypole watches her.

Your stomach hurt real bad?

Aika looks up sharply. Quickly making an effort not to touch her stomach.

What was that? You--

Maypole reaches for Aika's stomach but Aika bats her hand away.

You're gonna hit me now?

Maypole glares at Aika. She reaches for the tummy again.

Are you hidin' something?

Aika shakes her head no, too rapidly.

Lift up your shirt.

Aika is frozen. Maypole reaches for her and Aika scoots back, falling off the chair. Maypole is stunned.

Lift up your shirt!

Aika scrambles trying to run away. Maypole lunges at her. Pinning her down.

You never tell me things! You gotta tell me things! I tell you everything!

They tussle!

Raise up your shirt!

Maypole forces Aika's shirt up. Revealing faded bruises and a little baby bump. Maypole straddles Aika, heaving for breath. There's a moment--and then Aika turns to the side and vomits. Maypole slowly backs off of her. Sinking into the Adirondack chair.

Twyla had morning sickness something fierce. Cleaned her vomit from the sink for a month.

A pause. Maypole reaches out again, touching Aika's barely pregnant belly. Aika puts her hand on top of Maypole's. Maypole freaks out trying to run.

Uh-uh. No way.

Aika grabs Maypole's hand.

Let go of me! What?! That's not--that's not possible 'Ika. It's just not.

Aika puts Maypole's hand on her stomach. Maypole shoves as hard as possible. Aika grunts and shoves at Maypole trying to get her off.

Come back! I'll punch it out of you! I'll sucker it right out of there. Cause you can't have a baby?! Are you kiddin' me? You--Aika....

A pause.

It's him isn't it?

An eternity of shock. Aika nods. She starts to form a word with her lips but Maypole interrupts not paying attention.

It's Koka.

Aika is stunned.

He's coming to get you away from me, ain't he. That's how he knew to go get you that bucket. Why you was gonna be sick. That's how he knows--and that's why you're so kind to him because he's trickin' you. Ika---no.

A pause.

He's fuckin' you. Jimmy said it. That's not okay. You have to give consent for that. And you can't give any.

Aika shakes her head rapidly no.

I'll kill him for that.

Aika grabs Maypole shaking her.

No! Let go! Let go of me! Don't defend him! People like him don't know how to earn. They just take-- it's what Jimmy said. He did. He told me. And he was right. But now I can take care of you. Now we can figure out. We'll take him down. We'll find some way to take him down. You and me 'Ika. We'll tie him to the back of a pickup and drive him to the edge of a canyon. That fucker will stay here until he's destroyed and then we'll show him the curb I always meant to show him.

Aika backs away from Maypole.

What are you doin'?

Maypole reaches for Aika but Aika holds her hands up raised in defense.

'Ika?

A pause.

You think *I'm* gonna hurt you?

Aika takes a large step back.

That son of a bitch.

Maypole hugs Aika who fights and tries to shove her off.

It's okay. It really is. I'm a woman. I can't hurt you.

Aika shoves Maypole off.

Horny toads bite when they're scared. They'll come at you. Stepped on a nest once and almost bit clean through my shoe. Jimmy got me steal toe boots now so I can't get hurt.

Aika gags. She's having a panick attack. Maypole squeezes her again, tight, oppressive. She holds Aika's hair back.

I'm so sorry 'Ika. I'm so sorry it happened to you. That it *had* to happen to you. What I'm sayin' is I know you're just scared. You wouldn't shove me off otherwise. But it's gonna be okay cause I'll just get thicker skin and I'll protect you. I won't let him touch you anymore. I'll tell Jimmy and he'll take care of you. We'll take care of it.

Aika shoves Maypole away and runs off stage. Maypole is left alone. She sinks to the ground. The wind stirs and the lights shift. A blue spotlight shines on Maypole and a bright red one comes up on Judy back in her lounge singer dress. Koka appears under the light of the moon. The cymbals crash. Judy sings.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(Singing)

Sally watched as she fell apart
Knew that hell would keep her broken heart
Sally would never know a life that would start
For Sally, misery had played its part.

KOKA

And down went the little stone pebble girl--knocking over boulders--changing the face of cliffs--echoing in the whole of *here*--all on her own.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Oh, save me was sally's last cry
The bed I made won't be where I lie
When Sally disappeared no one knew why
'Cause no one looked up to see Sally fly.

Koka stands on top of a picnic table.

KOKA

Changing the way that right "here" could look.

He raises his clarinet in the air, the mirror image of Kokopelli.

Big mamma Judy takes a silver bowl and she raises it like a moon over Maypole's head. Then with a big thundering crash she drops it violently and the lights black out.

END ACT 1

ACT II

SCENE 1

We see the common area as it was in act one, but now surrounding it are the minimalistic insides of trailer homes being separated by white sheets to compartmentalize them. We see the inside of Twyla and Jimmy's bedroom. There's a rocking chair for an expectant mother, and some kind of make shift bed covered by a blue quilt. We see the inside kitchen area of Judy's trailer with a water basin instead of a sink, and a tub full of lukewarm used bath water (confetti). In the very corner of the stage is a pile of fire wood made into a pseudo tent. Aika's corner. There's pictures hung up of different famous women of color. She has piles of magazines, a pair of scissors, and a gun. Aika is tucked away there sleeping. Inside her trailer compartment, Judy peels down to her underwear and gets in the tub. She lays her head back and breaths in a trance. Twyla rocks in the rocking chair and Jimmy's stretched out on the bed, snoring. Koka stands on the picnic table and plays his clarinet.

KOKA

Back in Louisiana they got all kinds of singing birds that keep you up at night.

Twyla sighs.

Keep you up in the mornin'. Make you wish you was dead at 2 in the afternoon.

Twyla stands and sits next to Jimmy stroking his head.

And when you lookin' for sleep--they lookin' for sex.

Twyla tries to poke Jimmy awake.

Always the man--crying, and screamin' and beggin' till the AM hours of shut up before I get you with my gun.

Jimmy rolls over and groans.

But none of 'em's worse then the barn owl--

Jimmy hits Twyla's hand away hard.

Who sounds just like a screamin' woman in the middle of the night.

Twyla goes back to her chair.

But the lady owl know--she don't mess around with the man screamin' so loud.

Twyla rocks.

She don't like his matin' song--she slit his throat before it's done.

All lights out except for the ones on Twyla and Jimmy's trailer. In eerie blue light Aika comes forward. She carries the clarinet, a pair of scissors, a few magazines that have been cut up and images stolen, a pair of white cotton underwear with strawberries on them, and her pregnancy balloon, deflated, from act one. Jimmy and Twyla are frozen in a tableau as she enters their space. She lays the magazines out neatly in a row. She lays the underwear underneath it. She climbs on top of Jimmy, straddling him facing the audience. She takes the balloon and ritualistically expands it, placing it inside of her shirt. She is now "pregnant". She takes the clarinet and she plays a song. Pink light shines on Twyla who stands and walks to the edge of the bed. She picks up the magazines first and then the underwear. Aika finishes her song. She gets off of Jimmy unbuttoning his shirt and exposing his chest. She takes the scissors and leaves a long jagged cut up his middle. Then she cuts a haphazard lock of her own hair. She takes the balloon out of her shirt and inhales the breath in it. She places the hair in Twyla's hand and drops the scissors on the bed. She exits and goes back to her space. She puts the shorter strand of hair in front of her face as if she's mourning its loss. Normal light illuminates Twyla and Jimmy's trailer. Twyla picks up the magazines and plops them on Jimmy's sleeping gut. He jumps.

JIMMY

Fuckin' hell, Twy.

TWYLA

You're not gonna talk to me like that. No more.

He rubs his eyes.

JIMMY

You wake up on the wrong side of the bed?

TWYLA

I woke up in the middle of the night--couldn't sleep. Thought I'd read--half the pictures have been cut out of these.

And then I thought--you know what--I don't want to know, so I went to the bathroom--thought I'd do some cleanin', and what did I find tucked halfway behind the toilet but these.

She throws the underwear at his face.

And sittin' on the counter there's a pair of scissors--and--what is this Jim? Hair? Fucking hair? Her hair?

Jimmy folds the underwear and places them on the bed.

I told you I didn't want to see her here. I don't want any mention of what's happenin' in this place. I don't want anyone to come in here unannounced and--what if Maypole walked in? Saw this?

He doesn't answer.

She'd leave us--she'd break--she'd never love you again that's for damn sure.

Jimmy rubs his face.

JIMMY

Christ, Twy. There's always excuses. Reasons. She's livin' here. Maybe she's a slob. Maypole ain't smart. She's not gonna ask questions.

Twyla hits Jimmy's arm.

TWYLA

Are you hurtin' her? That girl. Christ, Jim, I mind my own business but are you hurting her?!

JIMMY

What kind of man do you think I am?

TWYLA

I want out--out of this nightmare.

Jimmy stands and runs to Twyla, smoothing down her hair, shushing her. She beats him away.

Don't you touch me. Not when you been touchin' her. All night touchin' her. All day findin' ways to touch her. So don't you fucking touch me!

She shoves him. He laughs.

JIMMY

What you afraid she's gonna rub off on you?

Twyla sinks.

TWYLA

I love you--you--you do things--you say things--I'm gonna leave you. I have loved you. But I swear I'm gonna...

She sits on the bed.

JIMMY

Hey...no. Nonono. Shh..baby, you're not gonna walk out. No--I mean...

He gets on his knees and rests his head against Twyla's stomach.

Are you really gonna walk out now? Now that we finally got what we want? So many precious years--so much pain for both of us.

He squeezes her wrist a little too hard and she winces.

What'd you say? I get mean when my heartbreaks? You don't want that.

He kisses her stomach.

We finally got it--you and me--a little girl. You gonna be the one who--who forsakes it?

TWYLA

Why do you like her?

JIMMY

Excuse me?

TWYLA

Why--why can't you--why am I not enough? Why do you invite her in here. She doesn't belong.

JIMMY

And you *shame* me?

TWYLA

That's not what I/ meant.

JIMMY

Yeah it is.

A pause.

TWYLA

She's not better than me.

JIMMY

I know.

TWYLA

Then why do you choose her?

JIMMY

It's not that.

TWYLA

Jim, why do you let her into our home? Why do you--maybe if you just explain it? Because I don't understand. I'm...I'm better than her. I am. I know I am. So...why?

JIMMY

If you don't like the answer, you gonna walk out?

She's silent.

And where would you go, huh? Where would you walk to? You don't got a car--that's mine. You don't got a family left outside of here---your bloods spilt all over this place and there ain't a town you can go where you got those bonds. You gonna leave Judy? You gonna let her rot? We both know she's gonna overdose the minute you're gone. You still gotta stay for Maypole. You stayed for her before...you gonna leave her now? You gonna abandon her? No...all your veins are tied up in this land here...so where you gonna go, if you don't like the answer.

TWYLA

I can make it on my own.

JIMMY

And when you kill this...

He pokes her stomach hard.

That thing we worked so damn hard to get...you're gonna have no one to blame but yourself. What then? You gonna let the buzzards pick your skin off? You gonna give up--die with it? What are you gonna do Twyla? So many options? And every time you seem to stay right here. And that's enough, ain't it?

He stands and pets her hair.

Aren't I enough? Isn't this kid enough. I love you. I love you so much that I don't want to hurt her by fuckin' you. It's a courtesousness, Twy. I'm being courteous to you and to our little--Starla? Didn't you like it?

Twyla nods.

Courteous, you see? Sweet--because if I had my way...

He walks her back towards the bed. Her knees hit and she sinks. He lays her back and kisses at her neck.

I'd have you screaming my name so everyone in this little hell hole could hear it. You're my wife. But I just want to be nice to you--and you know me...I got a lot of...

He continues to kiss all up and down her body.

I got a lot of pent up energy--lots of--feelings and I don't want to take them out on you, do I?

Twyla shakes her head no.

It's better for you this way, baby, don't you know that? And bruises--don't show up on her like they do on you, ya know?

A pause.

TWYLA

You don't love her 'cause she's young?

Jimmy freezes. He stands backing against the wall.

JIMMY

Excuse me?

TWYLA

You don't--you don't...she's a kid, Jim. And...

She touches her stomach and looks at him.

JIMMY

Are you sayin' I'm a pedophile?

TWYLA

No I--

JIMMY

Have I ever touched a hair on Maypole's head?

TWYLA

No, but I...

JIMMY

Have I ever once hurt her, your sister's daughter. Have I ever once made her uncomfortable or treated her less than blood?

TWYLA

Of course not.

JIMMY

Then how dare you, how dare you walk in here--my home--accusing me of terrible things.

TWYLA

Don't you puff up/ on me.

JIMMY

How fucking dare you accuse of being anything but a good/ man.

Twyla stands. She charges at Jimmy.

TWYLA

I swear to god, Jim, you're gonna let me talk. You're gonna hear what I have to say and you're gonna sit down and take it. No one ever taught you to listen? Well, I'm gonna. You're bringing a kid into our bed. And I've been letting you do it because---because--

JIMMY

Because it takes me off of you.

She hits him in the shoulder and he winces.

TWYLA

Don't you dare.

JIMMY

Admit it. You'd rather someone else get the brunt. Let the little strange girl, the little mute girl, the little *black* girl get beat as long as it keeps you from me. You're just as selfish as I am. You want her here, in my bed just as much as I do.

He takes the scissors and he holds them near Twyla's hair.
She squirms.

You don't like the same games--you're not--well--you've just had it better. You can't understand her. That's frustrating you isn't it? Has nothin' to do with me...you just...feel fuckin' guilty.

TWYLA

I can leave anytime I want.

JIMMY

Go then.

He sits on the bed and puts his feet up. Twyla runs around the room, gathering things up. Jimmy laughs.

Did you grab your brush?

Twyla grabs a brush from the counter.

Probably gonna want those photos too?

Twyla grabs photos of Maypole and Judy.

Gonna want to take those baby quilts with ya.

Twyla grabs them and hurtles them at Jimmy with a scream.

You're pretending to pack, but you're not goin' anywhere. If anything you're just makin' more things for you to do later--so you never have the time to leave me. You're safe here--you just hate admitting it.

Twyla growls and charges at Jimmy. She hits his chest hard. He howls in pain.

TWYLA

What's wrong with you.

JIMMY

Nothin'--get the fuck off me.

She pauses. She unbuttons the top button of his shirt. He grabs her hands.

No.

She pushes past him to unbutton more.

You ain't gonna like it.

She tries to unbutton and he holds her off easily, laughing.

God you're like a fucking gnat--you ever go away? Stop buzzing?

You ain't pissed at me...you're pissed at you. Look at you--small--inferior--so much like a little desert beetle--pickin' off the skin of dead bones. That's all she is--dead bones. Don't that make you feel a little better?

Twyla stops fighting him. She looks him square in the eye and kisses his cheek.

TWYLA

Yeah. You're right--I do feel better.

Jimmy grins and lets Twyla go.

JIMMY

That's my girl.

She turns and he slaps her butt. She tenses. She walks to the door.

TWYLA

I'm not. I'm really not. I might have been once, Jim? But...No more. And I don't just feel better--I feel fantastic. 'Cause anyone finds out about this--and your dead bones too. And I'll pick your skin off for the rest of my life.

She exits. The lights black out on their bedroom. The lights rise on Big Mamma Judy in her tub. Aika sprints into the room. She looks around hurriedly for Judy. She pulls on Judy's arm desperately trying to yank her out of the tub.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Get off! Get off me! What the fuck's gotten into you!

Aika pulls the gun out from behind her back. She aims it at the "door" to Judy's trailer.

Well shit, you've just about gone bat-shit haven't you?

Aika turns the gun on Judy.

Holy hell, no, girl, get that fuckin' thing off my throat before you do something stupid.

Judy stands and Aika runs and hugs her, covering her naked body. Judy tries to pry her off.

Christ, kid. Let me get some clothes on.

Twyla reaches for a robe near by her. She wraps it around herself. Aika desperately graps at Judy shoving the gun in her hands.

Look little mute girl--May might got you all figured but you gotta fuckin' talk if you want me to figure this one out.

Maypole bursts through the “door” into the space. She’s enraged.

MAYPOLE

Where is he?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Mind tellin’ me how priss got a gun?

Maypole eyes it. She looks at Aika with pity. She kisses the top of the girls head.

MAYPOLE

You had this the whole time? You--I’m so sorry ‘Ika.

Maypole reaches to take the gun from Judy but Aika stands between them. She shakes Judy’s arm.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

What the fuck you do, May? She looks screwy in the head.

She knocks on Ika’s head.

You are ain’t you?

Aika knocks Judy’s hand away and seizes the gun back.

MAYPOLE

It ain’t her fault. She--you don’t need to know. Where is he?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Aw, fuck. I don’t know. Who the hell you talkin’ ‘bout. I was in here trying to enjoy a bath and in y’all waltz to ruin it all. Like always. Do you ever take a break form bein’ a cunt May? Don’t think I’ve ever seen it.

MAYPOLE

You’re so stuck on bein’ mean to me that you don’t even see what’s happening! I don’t need you. Go--take your bath. Come on ‘Ika. Give me the gun.

Aika shakes her head no.

Hand it over. And I’ll get him.

Judy plucks the gun out of Aika’s hands.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Woah there. Hold up. Ain't nobody "gettin'" anybody. Now come on--who you lookin' for.

Maypole goes over to Aika and tries to lift her shirt. Aika bats her away.

MAYPOLE

Come on. Show her.

Maypole tries again.

Show her 'Ika. I'm doin' this for you. I'm helpin' you.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You ain't helped a damn soul in your life. Leave her be.

MAYPOLE

She's pregnant.

Judy laughs.

I'm serious.

Judy grabs Aika's cheeks.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

And who the hell next to Satan's ass that volcano is fuckin' you?

Aika bites Judy. She tries to grab the gun.

Uh-uh. Who? Who is it?

Maypole crosses her arms.

MAYPOLE

Who do you think?

Judy laughs and it's loud, and echoing.

He's a bad man.

Judy grabs Maypole's arm and twists hard.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Bad. You don't know bad, baby. You ain't ever had bad come around and knock on your door at 3 a.m. wanting to know if you kept your kid's bedroom locked at night. You ain't never had bad that hurt like a freight train but you had to take it or there went the only apartment you could afford.

You ain't ever seen the way bad can bite and bruise and beat you out of every dream you ever thought you might have. I kept you from that shit--I kept you from bad. And Koka--he ain't bad.

MAYPOLE

Then why'd you assume it was him I was talkin' 'bout.

Judy slaps Maypole hard across the face. Maypole struggles to try and get the gun.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You're a sorry bitch, with no sweet bone on you.

MAYPOLE

Give it. Half the time you're so high you're gonna accidentally shove it up a nostril and poof, bye bye mamma, why'd you ever fuckin' come back?!

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I'm not gonna let you hurt an innocent man. I'm not gonna let you be--hurt someone--be like Jimmy. I'm not gonna let my kid be this way. I have a say in how I raise you, now sit down and be quiet. I'm cuttin' off your talking priveleges.

Maypole screams in frustration beating at her mother.

MAYPOLE

You didn't ever want me as your kid. What makes you think you can start being a mamma now.

Judy pinches the shit out of Maypole's arm.

Shit. Ow! That hurts.

Judy rolls her eyes and spits in her hand rubbing it on Maypole's arm trying to get rid of the pain. Maypole snatches the gun.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Give me the gun.

Maypole starts laughing hysterically. Aika grabs the gun and breaks away.

Great--now she's gonna shoot someone she don't mean to shoot.

MAYPOLE

Oh she means it.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Well, grab it from her. She can't have that thing.

MAYPOLE

Why, you 'fraid she's gonna kill him? She should! He deserves it.

Aika slams the door to get their attention. She puts a finger to her lips, silencing them.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You came to me, baby. Just give me the gun. We don't want nobody hurting do we.

Judy moves as if she's gonna grab the gun but Maypole lunges quicker.

MAYPOLE

'Ika! STOP! You'll hurt yourself! Let me help you.

Maypole grabs Aika's arm, but Aika bites her. Maypole yelps and Aika escapes out the door. The light follows her, going off on Maypole and Judy and tracing Aika to her little room. She takes the pictures of celebrities down and holds them closely. She runs to the communal area. She sits on an Adirondack chair and doubles over panting. She stares at one of the pictures and holds the gun like she's got all the confidence of an actress. She points it toward Jimmy's trailer. She poses a couple of times like that. Her hands start shaking. She holds the gun and aims it high at the sky, weak and not at all confident. A spotlight appears, illuminating Koka, who plays his clarinet.

KOKA

There's a space in this world where the scuttle of roaches is so loud that the indecision in half made up minds is muted. This is the place where good people come to harm. In this place fear is riding a chariot race across dusty landscapes to get to the honest to god outcome of its force. This is the place that our stone pebble girls go to sleep in. Wake up in. Escape from. Come home too. In this place--it's okay to pull the trigger--because it sounds louder than you.

She pulls the trigger but there's no sound.

Bang.

Nothing's as loud as fear.

Aika puts her other hand up and on the gun as well, aiming for the moon. Headlights from a truck blind her. The sound of an engine turning off. A car door slam. Koka jumps from the table carrying his clarinet and a brand new clarinet case. He sees her and grins.

My music girl. What'cha doin' out all lone. Ain't nobody keepin' you company?

He walks a few steps towards her before he notices the gun. He's chilled.

You gonna shoot the moon right out of the sky if you're not careful.

She jumps. The gun clatters to the earth. She has tears in her eyes. He sits by her.

You were gone when I came back. Figured Maypole had you. Was taking care of you.

He brushes a tear from her eye.

But you don't look very taken care of. Do you?

She shakes her head no. He moves his foot and crumples one of the pictures. Aika quickly snatches them and hides them in her arms.

What'cha got here?

She shakes her head no.

You won't show me? I promise, I'll keep it a secret. We can share it. I'm real good at sharing secrets.

He reaches for one of the pictures. She bares her teeth at him.

But it's only if you want to. You make that call.

He sighs and sits patiently by her.

Went out for a while...missed you the whole time. It's an awfully cold world out there without a friend.

She shows him the picture of the actress with the gun. Magazine clippings? Growing up my mamma did this all the time. Filled up scrapbooks of her favorite people in the world--all of them in movies.

He gestures to the picture.

You look like her.

Aika shakes her head no. She holds the picture up in the light to examine it.

I think you do. You could be a movie star. Walk around with bug-eye sized sunglasses and fancy dresses. Think it would suit you.

Aika shakes her head no and shoves the picture back at him. He shoves it back towards her.

I do. I think you deserve it. That's a life for someone as good as you.

He folds the paper and places it in her palm.

Hold on to it tight enough you just might get it. I wanted to be recognized like that once, you know. Must feel good. Being recognized.

Aika sinks. He taps her chin.

Hey now. You're gonna be, kid. Nobody's got sound like you.

Aika beams.

Ahh, there now, there's that million diamond dollar smile I knew I could get if I just tried hard enough.

He stares at the gun.

Girls with smiles as pretty as that...

He picks the gun up and puts it behind him.

Don't need guns, do they?

She frowns. And takes the gun back. Nodding resolutely.

Fine then. But maybe--let's do this.

He switches the safety on and puts it at the ground between them.

That way nobody's too close to doing something they'll regret. Okay?

She nods. She eyes the clarinet case. She points to herself.

KOKA

You felt so bad and--I thought--well, no better way to cheer you up really.

She reaches for it.

Hey now, can't just hand it over when there's no special occasion to be had.

She reaches for it again.

Is it your birthday?

She shakes her head no.
Well it ain't Christmas.

She shakes her head no.
Is it...easter, or valentines day--but then again this ain't no chocolate bar.

She lunges for the case.
Oh but I know what it's for.

He ruffles her hair.
You're my favorite person, ain't ya?

She beams again. Nodding vigorously.
You gotta treat it good okay? Pull it out, real slow.

She takes the case. She pops the locks. She smiles and nudges Koka.
Yeah, I always like that sound too.

She opens the case and the light catches on the red velvet interior. The tar black clarinet with its silver buttons gleams. It's all in pieces and Aika frowns. She holds up a piece confused. She looks frustrated. She looks betrayed.
Hey now, suck that bottom lip back in.

She tries to fit the pieces together.
That's the best part. Don't you worry. Every bit of this instrument--even the way it's formed. It's all from you. It's all an extension, a piece, a sound of your mind. With love...

He picks up two pieces fitting them together.
You marry these ends together until they click into place, just so. You fit the mouth piece on--where those lips of yours are gonna blow the biggest storm this little woodwind ever has seen. It's your marriage between you and this clarinet.

He goes to fit the mouthpiece but Aika stops him. She takes it from him and clicks the ends into place. Koka smiles at her.
And finally, you fit in the reed. Just the thinnest, most breakable, damaged and distressed piece of wood you ever seen. It's been beaten, bruised, shaved down to almost nothing, till it's almost disappeared all together. It's so easily overlooked because you got this...

He shakes the clarinet.
And this is big, and bold, and beautiful. It's all the racket but none of the work.

But it won't do its job worth nothing if you don't slide this disappearing piece of wood into the right spot--into where it feels home and comfortable. And then--slide it in your mouth, like you been doin' like I been teaching you--and blow. Hard.

Aika makes a small sound.

Do you believe that's the best you can do?

Aika holds a finger up stopping Koka. Silencing him. She makes another small sound.

Come on, blow harder.

She puts her hand on his chest shoving him. Silencing him again.

Okay, okay.

He holds his hands up in surrender.

Every artists got their own time.

She stands. She blows. Aika plays a melody that's haunting, that breaks worlds, that's loud and powerful. She smiles, then blows again. The lights flare like bombs going off, illuminating the inside of the trailers. Maypole pulls Judy back and away from the door in a violent slow motion struggle. Jimmy kisses down Twyla's front to her belly in slow motion. The lights dim on them as Aika continues to play. She hits an off note and the lights flare red on the inside of the trailers. Judy pushes Maypole backwards into the confetti tub and holds her down. Twyla pushes Jimmy away from her and back into the rocking chair. She rips open his shirt and she sees the long scar running up it. She backs away from him--terrified. The lights dim on these scenes as Aika continues to play. Once more the lights flare on the inside of the trailers--this time blue--and all of them are hurt, and bruised, and fighting, low to the ground. Aika climbs onto the picnic table and stands on top of it. Everyone except Aika pulls out silver bowls and holds them up, facing towards the girl with the clarinet. The light catches the bowls and they reflect a spotlight on her as she plays her very loudest. She takes a deep breath and blows. The note is an eternity long and all the lights go black as it echoes. Slowly the normal daylight returns and Aika has stopped playing. Koka gazes at her in complete awe. She is stunning. Aika bows, her smile shines. Koka applauds her. Stunned. They laugh.

KOKA

Every once in a while a strange place becomes familiar and the people you were smart enough to collect--they feel like family. And when they do--that desolate place--it becomes worth fighting for. Every hunter needs a tribe. Every mammoth needs a home. And every stone pebble girl only feels safe fallin' when she's surrounded by other rocks.

Twyla enters carrying a small floral suitcase. They watch her. She's got blood on the front of her shirt. Aika goes to her and inspects her.

But every home you find--was a home that got lost. Changed.

A pause.

Twyla?

She flinches.

TWYLA

Don't say my name. Just...don't. You know--he's been paintin' them damn horny toads as long as I can remember. He keeps 'em locked up in little containers--they go crazy. All scuttlin' legs and gnashing teeth--bleeding from their eyes. Distressed. I'm getting kind of sick of it. And he'll just observe 'em. Watch 'em. Make little replicas that him and May can paint up real nice and--and he bonds with people over them. But not with me. They scare me.

KOKA

You okay?

Twyla shakes her head "no". She turns to Aika.

TWYLA

Think I know why you're all quiet now.

Koka takes her hand.

KOKA

You're shaking so hard you'll crack your teeth. What happened to you?

TWYLA

Help me.

KOKA

With what?

I gotta go. I gotta go. TWYLA

Where you going to? KOKA

Can you help me? TWYLA

I need your truck. Koka crosses his arms.

What for? Why you got blood down your front? KOKA

Y'all can come--should come too. But I need to get out of here--fast. Please. TWYLA

You look like you just got spooked by something. / Come sit. KOKA

Come on let's go. TWYLA

Get down from there. Koka and Aika are statues.

She holds out a hand to Aika, but Aika backs away almost falling off the table.
I've done wrong by you, not been there for you, ignored you when you needed me, I've not done my job for you and for that, I'm sorry. But we need to go, Aika. You and me. We need to go.

She tries to pull Aika down from the table. Aika resists.
Koka puts his hand on Twyla's shoulders.

What do you mean by scaring her like that? KOKA

I hurt him--but not enough. We need to get out. I need out. And you got a truck so I need you. Got it? I hurt him and now we don't got much time. TWYLA

Him? KOKA

TWYLA

I was gonna tell. I was gonna tell. I promise. The very first day. The very first time. 'Ika...I promise. I was gonna tell.

KOKA

You need to stop it. You're scaring her. And I'm not having that.

TWYLA

I know I haven't been good to you. I've given you nothing but judgement but I need your trust right now. She needs your trust right now. And we got minutes maybe seconds before you're a dead man walking. So please...get your key. Get your truck. Let's hit the road and she comes with us. Nobody gets left behind.

KOKA

What about Judy?

TWYLA

What about her? She's not good to you. Nobody brought up here will be.

KOKA

She's not the kind of person who can take many more people leaving.

Twyla laughs.

TWYLA

She doesn't give two shits about you. She just likes to kick up drama like it's sand. Blow it around in everyone's face till she gets bored or it becomes old hat. You'll do that, and then she'll drop you on your ass or let Jimmy get you when he wants. They'll all watch you burn for something if you don't keep your lips tight and hide in a shadow somewhere. Come on. Come with me. Let's get out of here. There ain't nothing right. I've known it. I know it. And I'm sorry I didn't do anything about it sooner.

Koka sits.

KOKA

You gotta slow down. What happened?

TWYLA

What happened? You came and blew everything wide open. Exposin' shit that wasn't meant to be exposed.

Koka sits. Stubborn.

KOKA

We're fine where we are. Right?

Aika walks toward the edge of the picnic table and trips.
She starts to fall but Koka catches her.

Right?

Aika touches his face and shrugs.

If need be I'll take the girl and go but--I'm not taking you. I don't--I don't trust you.

Twyla shakes him hard.

TWYLA

Bastard take me with you or I'll see fit to it that Jimmy guts you from the inside out. Start the fucking car.

Koka stands and backs Twyla up.

KOKA

There's no reason for violence.

Twyla laughs cruelly. She goes over to Aika and without any kind of ceremony lifts her shirt up. The lights to pink as Twyla pulls out the pregnancy balloon from her pocket and inflates it with her breath. She shoves it under Aika's shirt. Aika takes the balloon and let's the air go. Pulling her shirt down, tears in her eyes.

TWYLA

Oh yes. There is.

KOKA

Aika?

She nods.

But...

TWYLA

It's Jimmy's. He's been doing whatever the fuck he wants for months. And he wants her. The rest of us are carrion on the side of the road.

Now take us out of here before there's actual consequences.

Koka looks slapped. He points at Aika.

KOKA

These are actual consequences. Do you think it doesn't matter just because they're hers?

TWYLA

They don't! They don't matter! I can't let them.

Koka shakes her.

KOKA

How did you let this happen?

He goes over to Aika. She stands strong.

I knew you were hurt. How did I not stop it?

She touches his cheek. She stands at the top of the picnic table. She inspects herself as if to say "I'm fine". Twyla pulls him away towards the car.

TWYLA

C'mon.

He yanks away. She pulls again. He yanks again.

KOKA

Have you even flinched yet? Have you even cried? Batted an eye over...

Twyla pulls on his arm again.

Of course you haven't.

TWYLA

He will kill me. If he sees this...the suitcase, and the truck, and the--if he sees this. He'll kill me.

KOKA

You're supposed to be a mother--you're supposed to--

TWYLA

It was her or me, okay?

Aika sets down her clarinet. She takes it apart and puts it in its case. She goes over to Koka and reaches in his pocket. She pulls out his keys. She extends them to Twyla. She mouths the word "Go". She takes the pregnancy balloon, inflates it and puts in under Twyla's shirt. She touches it lovingly and mouths "Go" again. She drops the keys into Twyla's palms.

Twyla reaches out to hug Aika but Aika steps away from her and shakes her head “no”.

TWYLA

I'm sorry.

KOKA

Do you really think that's enough?

Twyla walks away.

If you go--you're a coward, just saying it.

If you stay. You're brave. And you're being it.

TWYLA

He'll come out to find me. And when he does...It's better if you're not here.

Twyla exits. There's the sound of an engine starting. Headlights flood the space with light. Aika waves at the retreating car. She takes one of the magazine clippings of the confident actress and hands them to Koka. She mirrors the image holding the gun towards Jimmy's trailer. Koka takes the gun from her.

KOKA

We gotta be the better man.

Aika nods. She tucks her case under one of the chairs. Hiding it. Koka hands her his clarinet. She plays. The lights shift on Koka.

Boom.

He takes a step back. The shadows rise around Jimmy's trailer.

Thud.

The lights on Jimmy's trailer are blood red.

There goes the mammoth retreating. The mammoth hesitating. The mammoth correcting for having ways that are its own.

“Retreat” screams the muscles of the mammoth. But no more.

His warrior son says stay.

Aika looks up at him and smiles. She takes his hand.

The mammoth has a family to go home to. A reason to retreat, but sometimes that family stands with him--and mammoths together--have the power to crush white bones.

Koka stomps his foot and twists it like putting out a cigarette.

Defensive--the Mammoth's spine snaps straight up--and The mammoth and the stone pebble girl--they're the same in this--as they fall, they rise.

Koka pushes Aika a little behind him. She moves back in front of him. Looks back at him and mouths "no".

The hunters take up their spears and they plan, but the mammoth has the power on his side--the power of survival--and a reason...

He puts his hand on Aika's shoulder.

To do it. So the mammoth's rally--the hunters rally.

They can't live together in a non-violent world. Not until they develop. Not until they change. So they war. And when they war...

Projection: Mammoth and hunter charging each other.

There's always someone caught in the middle. Damage inspires damage, and things clatter when they fall.

The sound of a silver bowl dropping. The sound of applause. Slow methodical claps. Jimmy saunters casually on-stage. He's got blood on his lip, on the side of his head, where he's been hurt. He smiles and spits blood out through his teeth. Judy enters with Maypole clawing at her, trying to pull her away. Judy goes straight to Koka. She kisses him long and hard. Maypole growls at her.

BIG MAMMA JUDY
(To Koka)

Baby, I've been lookin' for you.

MAYPOLE

How dare you touch him?! How dare you lay a finger on that--that fucked up monster.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Suagr, Don't worry. I'll lay a finger on anyone I want--it's my right.

Koka shoves her off of him.

What's wrong with you? Do you know what those two brats are saying about you?

KOKA

Don't use me as a war between you and blood.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

They've been talkin' big lies/ and you're in the crosshair. You want to stay there or do you want me to help you out.

KOKA

I'm a big boy. Can fight my own battles.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You couldn't just a month ago.

KOKA

A lot changes in a month.

He pulls Aika close.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Those lies--they can stab right to the gut like a knife. You want that?

MAYPOLE

I don't lie. I won't lie. Because I'm better than trash like you and him. You're the worst kind of human being. Standing by someone who'd...who'd...hurt a little girl.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Oh shut up. I wasn't even talkin' to you.

MAYPOLE

No you're ignoring me and talkin' to a--a...

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You can't even use your grown up words to talk about this. Baby, you don't know the fight you're pickin' so stop clawing at straws and back down. Go home. Take a nap. Suck on your bottle, and leave this for the grown ups to figure out.

Aika puts an arm on Judy and shakes her head "no".

Get off me!

MAYPOLE

You're the reason she's like this. You're the reason she's hurting. You just stood by him. Let him have everything he wanted. And he took. He took and he takes just like Jimmy says. He's a thief, and a...a...

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You keep stuttering like that, how's anyone gonna believe you?

MAYPOLE

He's a *rapist*. You could tell the minute you saw him.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

No. You could, baby. Because you've been bred and raised like a pig--fed such hate--that you become it.

KOKA

Can I talk?

Maypole charges at her but Jimmy grabs her waist and pulls her to him.

MAYPOLE

Let go of me! Let me! I want to hurt them! I want to/ hurt them!

Jimmy shushes her and hugs her. Aika moves as if to pry them apart but Koka stops her with an arm. Aika bats him away and goes over to Maypole. She takes her friends hand and tugs her away from Jimmy. They hug fiercely.

I wouldn't let them hurt you. Not if I had known...not if I...I should've done something when he first got here.

Aika shakes her head "no" at Maypole. She tries to drag her to Koka.

I ain't goin' near him.

Aika drags her.

What do you think you're even doing? He'll--he'll do what he did to you...to me.

Aika blanches and lets Maypole go. She hits Maypole's arm hard.

What is wrong with you?!

Aika turns Maypole to face Jimmy and points.

Maypole sees the blood and wipes it away, gently, lovingly.

Did *he* do this? Did you...

She turns to Aika.

Did you tell him? Did you try to protect her?

Aika grabs her trying to pull her away, but Maypole bats her hand away.

He's hurt.

Aika points at herself. "I'm hurt"

He's hurt, let me...

Aika tugs at Maypole.

Stop it!

Maypole hits Aika who jumps. She runs back over to Koka. She growls. Frustrated.

What happened to/ you?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(To Koka)

You gotta get out of here, kay? They're sayin' shit that's gonna get you hurt.

MAYPOLE

I'll kill him. For you, Uncle Jimmy. You've done nothing but love--and take care of us. Make sure we all stayed safe and home here and--and my mamma's a fucking traitor and-- I'll kill him. I'll rip out his heart and put it under your shoe so you can squish it.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(To Koka)

Go on. Get out of here 'kay? You need to go. Take the girl and go.

Jimmy's blood drips onto Maypole's hand.

MAYPOLE

Uncle Jimmy, you're...

She turns on Koka.

You hurt my family and I'll make you pay!

She starts to charge Koka but Jimmy wraps her up again stopping her.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Come on! Why aren't you movin'. Go!

She pushes Koka. He's rooted.

I said go, you idiot! GO!

She shoves him so hard he stumbles. Aika wraps her hand in his to stabilize him. She reaches out and stops Judy.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

What's this?

Judy backs off shocked. She starts laughing hard. She chokes on the laugh, spitting, almost vomiting.

What is this?! Really?
You're a sick and selfish prick.

She heaves.

Did my daughter tell me the truth? Did she--

She grabs Aika.

And you're standing by him? You're taking his hand? You're *protecting* him?!

She claws at Koka's arms.

Is it true?

Judy grabs his shirt and shakes him.

Is it *true*?!

She picks up the gun and holds it at his throat.

Are you fuckin' her? Is that why she's swollen up with some fucking parasite? Is it yours?!

MAYPOLE

I told you!

Judy hits Koka.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Tell me.

She hits him harder.

TELL ME! I DESERVE TO KNOW!

KOKA

Do you? After everything. After all you said about not being like them. After everything you saw away from here--the world widening up--you'd still believe that of me?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

How could I not?

KOKA

Just look at me--who I am.

Judy looks at their held hands.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I'm goin' off of looks. It's all I got.

KOKA

Yeah. You are.

She sinks.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

If I accused the wrong man--so be it.

KOKA

So be it.

MAYPOLE

Shoot him.

Judy laughs.

Mamma, do it. Then we can all go back to good.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Good? There ain't a good bone in your body.

MAYPOLE

I was right. I told you right. And he deserves to pay. Mamma, think about it. He stayed with us. He used me to get close to her. He used me. Your only kid. Your only daughter. He used me to lie with a little girl. What if it had been me? What if it had been? He deserves what's coming to him.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

But it wasn't you, was it?

Maypole spits at Judy's feet.

MAYPOLE

You wouldn't care if it was.

He was gonna leave you. Don't protect him now--now you know the truth--you protect him now and you're just...you're part of it.

A pause.

Shoot him.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You're so out for blood, lil girl...then you do it.

She shoves the gun in Maypole's hands. Aika starts to run for it but Koka holds her back. Jimmy takes the gun away, easily.

JIMMY

You don't need this.
Girls don't need guns.

MAYPOLE

Give it back! I wanna kill him.

Jimmy laughs.

JIMMY

Good on you kid. Always first to stick up for what's right.

Maypole nods.

But sometimes what's right can get you into trouble.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Because it's all kinds of wrong.

MAYPOLE

Please? I--I owe it...to 'Ika. Give it to me?

KOKA

Nah, he needs it for protection.

MAYPOLE

You come near him/ and I'll...

KOKA

I'm not gonna do nothing. But I'm gonna say something. How long did you think you were gonna last before you broke everything? How long did you think you could convince the world to be as *hateful* as you/ are. You drove out your wife--you never had anyone else. You got her? May? You only got her cause you got her ignorance. You got her not knowing. And when that changes...you'll lose everything.

MAYPOLE
 Jimmy ain't hateful.

JIMMY
 Where's my wife?

KOKA
 Dunno.

JIMMY
 Where is my wife.

KOKA
 From the blood on your head--don't think she wants to be found.

MAYPOLE
 Twyla did that?

BIG MAMMA JUDY
 She needed to leave your ass ages ago.

JIMMY
 You let her leave?

KOKA
 Aika, here, gave her the keys to my truck. Took off just a few minutes ago. Had a suitcase too. Don't think she's coming back.

JIMMY
 People like you are born and bred liars. Why didn't you go with her? You ain't smart enough?

Koka sits in an Adirondack chair.

KOKA
 Way I see it. This is home now. Ain't feelin' like leavin' it.

MAYPOLE
 Aika. Come on. He ain't got you now. Come over here and we'll get rid of him.

KOKA
 I never had her--wasn't keepin' her nowhere. Girl's like wind. She blows when she wants.

He tosses his clarinet at her. She catches it and smiles.

MAYPOLE

No. He's got you confused. He don't love you 'Ika. That's not what this means. He's just using you and I know that must be hard for you to understand but...

Aika stands in front of Koka.

What are you doing?

KOKA

Makin' her own choices.

Jimmy laughs.

JIMMY

Quite the show you're putting up black beauty. Quite the brave face you got goin' on.

She sticks her tongue out at him.

You lil' shit, I'll show you what's what.

He starts to approach her but she flinches. He stops.

Black Beauty? You really gonna give up everything? You really gonna throw away me--for him? I'm better. You're happier with me. I know it.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

How...she *tell* you?

JIMMY

Back off, cunt!

MAYPOLE

Uncle Jimmy?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Hear all the harmful words he uses, May? He's got a good face to put on. A painting as fine as your horny toads.

Big mamma Judy stands in front of Aika.

But he's real scared to tell the truth. He don't wanna lose nobody--he don't want his power to poof away. So he keeps lying, but there's only so much damage someone can do...and all it takes is fresh eyes to blow that shit right open.

She turns to Koka.

Thank you for that.

Maypole, honey...I know you're stupid--but I was hopin' a little less than you are.

But I guess you're still just a kid. Wouldn't expect you to pick apart the real monsters from the fake ones.

A pause.

It's your baby ain't it, Jim?

Maypole takes a step back. The lights shift.

KOKA

Down, Down, Down goes a new stone pebble girl.

MAYPOLE

What?

BIG MAMMA JUDY

That's how it is, kid. People like jimmy got a lot of hate stored in their guts. People like Jimmy are gonna get locked up for life. They're gonna tear you apart behind prison bars. Do you know what happens to men like you? Men who hurt little girls? They don't get anything they don't deserve. And I'll make sure to come visit you everyday--ask you about every new pain you have.

JIMMY

Oh shut it. You ain't gonna tell nobody nothing. You're just a nigger loving whore.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Look who shows their true colors. You're a racist piece of shit.

JIMMY

You been fuckin' him over since the first day he got here. Your true colors been showin'.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I love him.

JIMMY

No you don't, you been using him. He's yours. That's all you want. Someone to own. All he is to you.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(To Koka)

That's not true.

KOKA

I think it is.

A pause. Twyla can't deal with this.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Twyla trusted you.

JIMMY

Twyla knew me. She wasn't about to stop me. She watched it happen. She was part of it. She ran cause she got spooked.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

If I found out you hurt her/ I'll...

JIMMY

What? Drink yourself to death? You don't have power. You don't got anything.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I trusted you--with my kid.

JIMMY

Did you? Really? Or were you to anxious to get out of this hellhole.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I should've known. I should've...

She looks at Aika.

I'm sorry nobody ever cared about you.

Koka stands in front of Aika.

KOKA

That's just not true.

Judy smiles.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You are a good man.

She takes the clarinet from him. A pause.

Should've known. Should've always known.

She kisses Koka.

I probably could've loved you. But--people like us...

She laughs.

Did we really ever have a chance. But oh baby, you are *so* good.

JIMMY

Just a whore. Selling yourself to any piece of trash who will spread your legs open. You're kind of people make me sick. Things like him aren't good.

He spits.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

You're just sad cause the only one who'd fuck you didn't have a say in the matter.

Jimmy roars.

MAYPOLE

Don't talk about 'Ika that way.

JIMMY

Shut the fuck up, kid. You don't got a bone in this fight.

MAYPOLE

Like hell I do.

BIG MAMMA JUDY
(To Jimmy)

You hurt my daughter? My sister?

JIMMY

What if I did. Ain't nothin' you could be doin' about it.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

I'd rip out your throat and feed it to the first animal that crosses tracks in this sand.

JIMMY

You'd be too high to stop me.

Big Mamma Judy charges him. They tussle. Judy beats at him with the clarinet.

KOKA

The mammoth's don't realize that the hunters will turn on each other. They're not ready when the meat is too precious to split equally among the party. They just watch and hold their own throats...hopin' that the big one goes down so the little one's all that's left--a foot print fom not existing. So...

Boom...

Thud...

They retreat in fear--but fear breeds harm and harm breeds...

The gun misfires. Maypole jumps.
Bang. One less hunter...one less person to save.

BIG MAMMA JUDY

Baby...

Blood gushes through her teeth and dribbles down her
chin.

If you're gonna purge this place of bad. Let it be him.

She slumps towards Jimmy who steps back. Judy heaves.
Coughing up blood. She grabs a silver bowl full of
sand...drops it over her head and exits into darkness.

KOKA

Change takes with it those who can't come to its grips.

Judy lets the bowl clatter behind her. There's stillness...
The scuttle of roaches--so loud--it can drowned out sorrow...

BIG MAMMA JUDY

(Offstage singing)

I need somebody, who'll ease the pain
Of this dust bowl doomed place, I'm livin' in.
I need a martyr who'll jump on the spear
To give me a reason to get through the year.
I'm lookin' for love where I ain't looked before
Someone new, someone who will open a door
There's gotta be some change here
before I go deranged here
I'm looking for a magic someone
Who has a magic touch
And I don't really think
I'm asking for much.

KOKA

So loud you forgot how loud that monster roared.

Koka goes over to a stunned Jimmy. The cymbals clash,
the Easter grass falls, it's raining.
Are you really gonna leave her out here? After all you've done.

JIMMY

I didn't...I...Maypole?

Koka puts his hand on Jimmy's shoulder.

KOKA

Didn't mean to...did you. Wrong person dead.

Jimmy tries to grab at, hurt Koka, but he's desperate.
Koka grabs the gun from Jimmy. He turns the safety on
and slides it over to Aika.

You've done enough...protecting yourself.

To Aika

It's up to you kid.

Aika goes over to the broken clarinet and picks it up. She
makes a torn and said sound--but it's a sound all on her
own. She hears it. She does it again. She smiles through
tears and puts the gun down.

Be the better man.

She picks up the broken clarinet and hands it to Koka.

MAYPOLE

You--you shot her. I...I listened to you. I trusted you. And...

She breaks.

You killed my mom. How can I--I can't trust you again.

JIMMY

I didn't mean too.

Maypole rushes him. She shoves at him.

MAYPOLE

Because you meant to shoot him! Or her! You could've shot 'Ika! You...you...I have been
listening to the wrong person...I have been--I have been loving the wrong person and the
whole time...he wasn't the one to judge...he was the one to run to and you let me fear him
when I had no right to.

She goes over to Aika.

And you trusted me but I didn't listen. I didn't--I never listened.

She pushes Jimmy.

Get out! Leave! GO! Don't you ever show your face here again. You do and I'll...we'll...destroy you. I will make sure that your own fucking lizards eat you alive. I'll lock you up in their cages and I'll make sure they get your eyeballs first so you can't judge another man again.

He opens his mouth to speak and Maypole shoves him again.

You say a word--you say a single word to her and I will cut your tongue out. You will wonder the rest of your days in the desert--dying out--not talking to a single soul. You will not be human. You will not be *recognized*. And no one. NO ONE. Will ever accept you into their home again. And when I find your bones picked over on the side of the road I won't even cry for you. I trusted you...I trusted you and I am a worse person for it.

She shoves Jimmy again.

Go!

He doesn't move.

GO!

She goes over to the picnic table and takes all of the horned frog art supplies. She dumps them on the ground and smooshes them at his feet. He opens his mouth to speak but Aika comes up to him and squeezes his cheeks together, drawing blood.

You don't have her permission to speak.

Aika shoves Jimmy. She mouths "Black Beauty" at him. She goes over to the gun aims it at him and mouths "Go". He runs off. The wind howls. Aika takes a step towards Maypole but she steps back.

MAYPOLE

Don't.

Aika backs away, hurt.

I don't--I don't deserve your love. Support.
I don't deserve you.

KOKA

Why don't you let her decide that.

Maypole glares at him, and then softens.

MAYPOLE

You are--a good man.

Aika rushes to Maypole and hugs her tight.

I'm sorry...I'm...I'm so sorry.
But that's not enough. I know that.

Maypole hugs her back fiercely. The glow of the fire illuminates them. Cymbals crash. The rain pours. Maypole leads Aika to the fire.

Can we...can we burn something? Get rid of it?

Aika gathers the crushed Horned frog art supplies. She hands them to Maypole. Maypole nods. Maypole cries. Loudly.

There must be magic in silence. You have such magic and...I just can't find it.

KOKA

It's not really yours to find.

Maypole nods.

MAYPOLE

On the count of three.

Aika holds up one finger.

You have to smile, you know. You gotta be happy about this.

Aika takes Maypole's mouth and turns it into a smile with her fingers.

Oh...guess I was the one not smiling.

Aika "laughs".

Are you ready?

Aika makes a gesture to mean "Are you"

I feel like a monster.

KOKA

Don't put that responsibility on her.

Aika mouths "Burn them". She holds up a "1" again.

MAYPOLE

Yeah?

A pause.

Okay.

To being a better friend.

Aika holds up a "2".

To being a better listener. To just being better.

Aika holds up a "3". Maypole laughs/cries.

And to shutting the fuck up.

Aika pats her cheek and rolls her eyes.

I really didn't know.

She takes Aika's arm and shakes it.

God... 'Ika. I really didn't know. I really didn't know...I really didn't...

She starts to get hysterical. Aika puts a hand over Maypole's mouth. Maypole nods.

I'm---I'm gonna go. Okay?

KOKA

You sure?

MAYPOLE

I haven't been a good person to you.

KOKA

You haven't.

MAYPOLE

Right.

A pause.

You should stay here.

KOKA

I'm planning on it.

MAYPOLE

Maybe you can teach me the clarinet?

KOKA

Maybe...if I want to.

MAYPOLE

Right. If you want to.

She starts to walk away.

KOKA

She's never gonna force you out. She's not gonna make you go.

MAYPOLE

She will if she wants to.

Aika shakes her head no.

You probably should.

Maypole looks at the bowl her mother dropped. She picks it up and walks.

KOKA

You're sure.

MAYPOLE

Yeah. I'm sure. I'm really sure.

She exits. Koka gathers pieces of paper, the magazine clippings.

KOKA

These got a little torn up.

She points to herself.

You too?

The lights shift.

KOKA

The stone pebble girl finally reached the bottom of the cliff. After miles of falling, shaping, knocking against the surfaces that kept trying to change her. She finally got there. Down went the stone pebble girl until she could go down no farther. And on the way she had been made into something brand new. Her surface had cracked to reveal the sparkle of something only she knew was right there the whole time. And when she got to the bottom of that cliff she saw them. Saw them waiting. A thousand other stone pebble girls...who looked...

Aika nods. Aika smiles and shoves the photos in her pocket. She makes her sound again. Koka beams. He sits on the picnic bench and examines his broken clarinet. He starts to blow into it but Aika puts a finger to her lips, hushing him.

She gets out her new clarinet and pieces it together. She gets up on the picnic table standing on top of it. She plays her melody.

KOKA

And sounded just like her.

It's the loudest yet. Koka beams up at her. She raises her clarinet high in the air, he plays his broken one hunched over and down. The mirror images of Kokopelli. The cymbals crash. The cast with their silver bowls stand behind them shining a spotlight on the two, who have found their home.

END PLAY.