

# *the nature of captivity*

by  
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Developed, in part, in the Mabou Mines/SUITE Resident Artists Program;  
mentored by Ruth Maleczek and Terry O'Reilly.

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*Part I – the outside*

*characters*

Justus – the alpha

Nellie – the one that needs protectin’

Lulu – the one always out the house

Gooch – in love with Lulu

*(note on casting - they should feel like mix’match,  
ideally of some color, the more colorfully mixed up, the better)*

*place:*

anywhere

*time:*

just before progress

*“Now Tom Said; ‘Ma, whenever there’s a cop beatin’ a guy  
Wherever a hungry new born baby cries  
Where there’s a fight against the blood and hatred in the air  
Look for me Ma, I’ll be there  
Wherever somebody fightin’ for a place to stand  
For a decent job or a helpin’ hand  
Wherever somebody strugglin’ to be free  
Look in their eyes Ma, you’ll see me.’”  
-Bruce Springsteen, The Ghost of Tom Joad*

Lights up on a salvaged space, broken down, leftover; it looks like the last structure standing.

A few sounds from outside, like the stepping on branches, like broken cement crumbling. NELLIE sits alert.

Something makes its way into the space, NELLIE tenses, but then releases as JUSTUS enters holding a dead chicken.

NELLIE

You scared the shit outta me.

JUSTUS

It's same sound I always make, Nellie, I dunno what you can't tell the difference.

NELLIE

Ya haffta racket everytime you come back, geez.

JUSTUS

I see you lookin' at this chicken, Nellie, don't you be pretending that you ain't.

NELLIE

I can smell it.

JUSTUS

Yea, an what do you smell?

NELLIE

Mostly what I smell is *you*, Jus. Stink much?

JUSTUS

What's a matter?

NELLIE

Nothin', c'mon get that bird over here an let's get it opened up some.

JUSTUS

Why don't we do it just outside right there.

NELLIE  
I heard the shots, ya know.

JUSTUS  
Yea, well *they was loud*.

NELLIE  
So?

JUSTUS  
What.

NELLIE  
Don't mess, Jus, just tell me what.

JUSTUS  
Awh, c'mon, Nellie, here I brought home something special that we could have together an you just sittin' there pretending you don't care.

NELLIE  
I said to get it over so we can open up.

JUSTUS  
And I said let's just step outside a few steps and we'll do just exactly that.

NELLIE  
And I said what was the shots.

JUSTUS  
...tell ya after we eat.

NELLIE  
I dunno how I'm goin' eat a thing if there's gunshots in my mind that ain't been accounted for.

JUSTUS  
There's lots of gunshots ain't been accounted for, Nellie.

NELLIE  
Not when Lulu's still out there, Justus.

JUSTUS  
Lu's fine.

NELLIE  
You seen her?

JUSTUS  
No, but—

NELLIE  
Then how you know?

JUSTUS  
Cuz I looked for her an nothin'.

NELLIE  
The shots, Jus.

(Beat)

JUSTUS  
They hit the bridge, Nellie.

NELLIE  
I weren't askin' about no bridge, Jus, I was askin' about shots.

JUSTUS  
Well who was holdin' up *underneath* that bridge, Nellie?

NELLIE  
Can't you ever just answer me what I ask?

JUSTUS  
They gone, Nellie. They bloodied up on that heap now. (pause) C'mon, Nellie, now it's alright, you cry if you feel to.

NELLIE  
Ain't cryin'. That ain't what I do no more.

JUSTUS  
What is it then?

NELLIE

What is it??? Lu was with them at that bridge that's what it is!

JUSTUS

There was only three shots, Nellie; three shots an three of them. An Lu weren't one of'em.

NELLIE

You went to the heap?

JUSTUS

Where you think I come across this chicken you too stubborn to admit yer salivatin' over

NELLIE

I don't salivate.

JUSTUS

So there I is, at the heap. Checkin'to see if they piled anymore things on top—

NELLIE

You mean, if they was goin'pile Lu on top, don't you.

JUSTUS

You wanna hear my tale or don't you wanna hear my tale? Cuz I can stop tellin'my tale and you can just sit there not knowin'shit.

NELLIE

One uh these days, Jus, yer gonna wanna know something that I got inside my head, yer gonna be salivatin'for it, and you know what?

JUSTUS

No, you tell me what.

NELLIE

I ain't gonna give it to ya.

JUSTUS

So, right there, right in the mess and slop of that ol'heap I come across this sloshing about.

NELLIE

Slosh what?

JUSTUS

Oh, Nellie, I don't even know I can describe it for ya.

NELLIE

Well, what it sound like?

JUSTUS

...like when ya step into something wet.

NELLIE

What it look like?

JUSTUS

...like...

(JUSTUS makes some sort of fucking gesture)

NELLIE

What it scent like?

JUSTUS

...like the nastiest leftover juices you ever seen leftover.

(JUSTUS gags, NELLIE disgusts)

NELLIE

Well, what was the hell was it!?

JUSTUS

It was Gooch, crouched an mountin' some bitch that I would not go inside for warmth. An just as he's squishing into her, Nellie, I could see little squirts of juices sprayin' outta her everytime he pushed it in.

(NELLIE gags)

NELLIE

Jus, *what* is the matter with you, why'd you go an tell me a foul story like that for?

JUSTUS

Because, Nellie, I want for you to appreciate just what the situation was when I turned from watchin' Gooch squish squish, to hear this pit pat pit pat...

NELLIE

Pit pat pit pat?

JUSTUS

Right there, peckin' along behind me was...

(JUSTUS mimes with the chicken)

Pit pat pit pat...

NELLIE

Oh, pit pat, heh, I get it now.

JUSTUS

So forget the Gooch and I get goin' towards it. Thinkin' how it'll feel when I get my grips, then—

NELLIE

Then what, what?

JUSTUS

The shots, Nellie. Three of 'em. One then two then three. So I throw myself down—

NELLIE

And chicken?

JUSTUS

What about chicken?

NELLIE

Did chicken get down, did the chicken get scared the shots?

JUSTUS

Well, you know what, I don't know what chicken done.

NELLIE

Musta done something.



JUSTUS

Well, I guess when I could hear there wasn't anymore shots to come I looked back, and yea, chicken was pit pat peckin' just like before.

NELLIE

You think chicken didn't hear?

JUSTUS

(to chicken) Hey! Hey! Was you heard the shots or nuh uh? Hello??? (pause) Well, what do shots mean to chicken anyways, Nellie.

NELLIE

You think chicken don't know shots?

JUSTUS

Well it don't know they're shots.

NELLIE

How could chicken not know they're shots?

JUSTUS

Same as we didn't know they're shots when we first heard'em.

NELLIE

Yea, but after all that what's happened —

JUSTUS

You have to *learn* shots, Nellie.

NELLIE

How do you know one of those shots wasn't, Lulu? I don't think that you do.

JUSTUS

I waited for them tractor machines to pull up.

NELLIE

Yea, so.

JUSTUS

They put three bodies, Nellie, one, then two, then three. An that's it.

NELLIE

Yea, but you didn't see her, you *don't* know —

JUSTUS

There was nothing else inside that tractor machine, Nellie. If they'd uh kept her, I'd have seen her in the nets with all the other shit they collect. Believe in me, Nellie, Lulu is comin' home.

NELLIE

Maybe she with Gooch, maybe Gooch got right up from that smelly bitch an ran as fast as his legs would allow to make sure that his Lulu was okay.

JUSTUS

Well that is not what Gooch done after them tractors moved off, after they put those bodies.

NELLIE

He helped you with the bodies?

JUSTUS

Nellie. I can't just go atop the heap and start removin' bodies, they'll know we're here.

NELLIE

Oh.

JUSTUS

But even if I had been able, I doubt ol' Gooch woulda been much help.

NELLIE

I don't know why you gotta talk so down on Gooch everyday of his life, what's he ever done to us 'cept love after our Lulu everyday/allday?

JUSTUS

Nellie, I'm gonna give you just one hint as to what Gooch was doin' so special that he did not run after Lu today:

(He touches her nose)

Sniff, sniff.

NELLIE

Hey, what're you touchin' my nose for.

JUSTUS

Because I am trying to get you to use a bit of logic, now what was it Gooch was doin' at the beginning of the story?

NELLIE

So what, Jus.

JUSTUS

So what do you think he went *back* to doin' at the end of the story?

NELLIE

He...he went back to doin' *that*?

JUSTUS

Well, I'm assuming he hadn't finished.

NELLIE

Finish?

JUSTUS

Yea, finish.

NELLIE

How could he wanna finish after where there's been blood!?

JUSTUS

Nellie, only somebody who's never finished could ever ask the question, how could he wanna finish.

NELLIE

Well I'm sorry, but if there are bodies up above, bodies that used to...used to be alive with us —

JUSTUS

Well, doin' that helps.

NELLIE

Oh, you are a nasty, Jus. And that is why you'll never get a family of yer own, you've a rancid mind.

JUSTUS

There ain't a thing wrong doin' that, Nellie. Something you'd know if you ever went outside.

NELLIE

I don't wanna know, Jus, it sounds just about awful.

JUSTUS

Oh, it ain't awful, Nellie.

NELLIE

Oh yes it is, why it uncaring and selfish and apparently it smells awful.

JUSTUS

Smelling awful is part uh what makes it good tho'.

NELLIE

Well excuse me but smellin' awful is not part of what I call good, Jus.

JUSTUS

When yer there, you get a good foothold, an ya just...

NELLIE

Just what?

JUSTUS

You just let go, Nellie. Of everything. Why I used to take my Rose Marie an I'd get that downright slamming, that straight up banging goin on her! Why, it knocked the worry clean outta her. And me.

NELLIE

Well...I'd like not to worry so much about things.

JUSTUS

An yea, my Rose Marie could smell something godawful sometimes, but smellin' her, tastin' her, scratchin' at her, just bitin' into her and hearin' her howl through me, Nellie...it's like there we are usin' all our senses like all at once.

NELLIE

That sounds okay, I guess. But—

JUSTUS

What.

NELLIE

Whys it gotta be so...

(NELLIE gives a fucking gesture)

JUSTUS

Oh, believe you me, Nellie, that is not what you'll be complaining about when it happens for you.

NELLIE

Whys it gotta be so slamming and banging into.

JUSTUS

Just trust, Nellie, when you are layin' there getting' thumped nice an solid, you will be wishin' there was more slamming, more banging into.

NELLIE

An there's another thing, whys it gotta be *me*? Don't I ever get to give it to them?

JUSTUS

I'm sure they wouldn't mind.

NELLIE

Somebody who's sweet on me, who says the most kindest things on me, who'll let me give it to them ever so soft, ever so nice.

JUSTUS

You ever wanna meet anybody you can give it to like that, Nellie, you're gonna haffta put yerself out there.

NELLIE

I'll meet somebody, Jus, and I'll go outside to do it. But not today tho, not with gunshots.

(Beat)

NELLIE(cont)

Now, c'mon, we better get ready this chicken 'fore Lu get home.

JUSTUS

Alright, then, split'her into three parts. You sure you don't wanna just separate it right there in the door way? I'll be right there with ya. We'll even leave the door open.

NELLIE

Justus.

JUSTUS

Small steps, Nellie, if you don't take them, ain't nothin' gonna ever change.

NELLIE

...just I think what if the feathers fly off and give us away that we're here.

JUSTUS

You know they're gonna find us, Nellie.

NELLIE

You don't know that, Justus, I know that you don't.

JUSTUS

Nellie.

NELLIE

Maybe they'll forget to check this spot. Maybe they'll make some of them new buildings so tall that they'll shadow us, make us easy to overlook.

JUSTUS

No, Nellie. They'll come here. With their strange voices and their loud noises. And if they see us still here livin' —

NELLIE

Ma, wouldn't let them.

(Awkward silence)

JUSTUS

Ma's not in a place to help us anymore, Nellie.

NELLIE

You shut up, Jus; she's strong all places. Ma an Lulu are gonna not let them. Cuz their females, females who are strong.

JUSTUS

*Lulu* almost got herself killed today!

(Beat)

I tried tellin' em, but *no* they all had it in their stupid heads they was just gonna go right up to them strange voices/tractor machines and welcome them right on in.

NELLIE

But how come if we was friendly to them, how come they....

JUSTUS

Ever since they showed up in that boat thing uh theirs, you seen'em make one act uh niceness to us]? No, nuh-uh, they not here ta be welcomed, Nellie. They here cuz they want something an they don't care who or what be in their way.

NELLIE

What *do* they care about then?

JUSTUS

I don't know, Nellie.

NELLIE

Well, just cuz it didn't work talkin'to em at the bridge today, that don't mean it won't ever work—

JUSTUS

They don't talk, Nellie, they DO! (pause) You've never seen'one of'em, have you?

NELLIE

They eat don't they? They breathe in an out just like we do. They got hearts, hearts with blood in them, same as we got...

JUSTUS

When this is all over. When this whole distress is done...I'm goin'*cut* one uh them open for you, Nellie. I'm goin'*cut* one uh them open an show you how their insides aren't nothing like how ours are. Any hearts they have probably are made with

JUSTUS(cont)

sharp an harsh edges, any blood they pump is likely thick and ugly-colored like oil, and I'll show you, Nellie, how everything will be twisted and not in the right place. There will be *something* to explain why they do the things they do!

NELLIE

...I don't want you to cut anyone open, Justus. I don't imagine it'll help any.

(Beat)

C'mon, why don't we get ready the chicken'fore Lu get home.

JUSTUS

You wanna do the feathering, so you can make sure none of the feathers fly away?

(NELLIE stops, looks at JUSTUS)

NELLIE

None of the feathers fly away??? (pause) You mean I had a right thought, Justus, what I said about the feathers flying off? You mean I was right about that?

JUSTUS

...yea.

(NELLIE eagerly de'feathers the chicken)

You had a right thought, Nellie, A real right one.

NELLIE

It's nice, you know, Jus, when you say stuff like that.

JUSTUS

Stuff like what, Nellie?

NELLIE

Stuff like about how when somebody done right, instead of how always they've done wrong.

(JUSTUS pulls a piece of meat off the chicken and bites in, then offers to NELLIE who pauses)



NELLIE(cont)

Should we really be eatin', we don't even know where Lu at.

(JUSTUS puts a piece of chicken at NELLIE's nose, she cannot resist, she devours a pull of meat. They begin to feed ravenously, lights remain low over them while across the stage, lights pull up on GOOCH, who waits outside; we hear the sounds of nature; insects, birds, wind. LULU enters. He jumps a bit.

GOOCH

That you, Lu?

LULU

Well, look who it is.

GOOCH

Course it's me, you know I always wait for you.

LULU

What are you looking at me like that for, Gooch?

GOOCH

Are you, hurt or—

LULU

Shot?

GOOCH

Yea, that I guess.

LULU

Do I look shot to you?

GOOCH

No.

LULU

Well, there you go then.

I was so—  
GOOCH

So what?  
LULU

Worried, worried that you—  
GOOCH

That I?  
LULU

I guess they didn't take to kindly to your welcoming wagon, huh?  
GOOCH

If you mean they murdered everyone but me, then no, not too kindly.  
LULU

(LULU begins to laugh, GOOCH tries to join. Soon actual  
laughter takes them both over. A few moments)

Wait, what're we laughing for, that ain't funny.  
GOOCH

We're not laughing because of funny, Gooch, we're laughing because what else is  
there. (pause) Really, Gooch, what else is there?  
LULU

Just us, I guess. And Nellie. Justus too.  
GOOCH

Know what I *have* been thinking about tho', Gooch?  
LULU

I never know what you're thinking, Lu.  
GOOCH

Love.  
LULU

GOOCH

Love?

LULU

Yea, like loving. Like to love. Like being loved.

GOOCH

I'm listening.

LULU

What do you think, Gooch, about loving a different kind than us? A different sort.

GOOCH

How do ya mean?

LULU

I mean look at us. There isn't anymore of us left. And all the love that used to be between our family, yours, it's gone. So now, we'll have to learn to love other kinds of families.

GOOCH

What other kinds?

LULU

You know what other kinds, Gooch. The only other kinds there are now.

GOOCH

Sometimes I can't sleep, so I think about how warm things could be. To lay next to, to be my face alongside some other face. An it don't even matter, I suppose, what kinda face. Any kind. It don't matter.

LULU

I think if I had to, if I was put somewhere with no other things to love, I might. I might be able to. If I had to, Gooch, I think I could love most anything.

GOOCH

'Cept me, huh?

LULU

Gooch, can I ask you.

GOOCH

Do.

LULU

All these years, all these days, you've known there wasn't any chance I'd ever look across at you the same way you look across at me.

GOOCH

Thank you for reminding me.

LULU

So what do you follow me around then for?

GOOCH

I don't stay by you, Lu, because I think I'll change your mind. But what else can I do? It's either be near you or don't be near you. It's an easy choice.

LULU

And you know *they* won't ever change their minds out here, Gooch. They didn't come to this place to change their minds about anything.

GOOCH

Okay.

LULU

So we can either stay hiding out till they find us and be put up on that heap or we can—

GOOCH

But you don't know, Lu, you don't how come they put some in the nets and not others; you don't know nothing about why they do.

LULU

I been watching them, Gooch. An I believe it that if we put ourselves over by that one building, the one where they take all the shit they collect, I believe it that they might figure us for a couple of strays that got loose somehow. An take us on inside. Alive.

GOOCH

Yea, but inside what?

LULU

I don't know.

GOOCH

At night, sometimes I can hear'em. Our kind. Inside that building thing. They don't sound too happy.

LULU

Least they still breathing, Gooch.

GOOCH

Least they're all together.

LULU

So what do you choose, Gooch? Its either wait for that heap or—

GOOCH

You know what I choose, Lu.

LULU

Say it.

GOOCH

You. I choose you, Lu. That's what I'll always choose, no matter what the question.

LULU

It's good to see you're taking this seriously, Gooch.

GOOCH

What about Nellie.

LULU

...I couldn't do that to her.

GOOCH

Oh, just to me, huh?

LULU

If Nellie not once has to see any of this with her own eyes—

GOOCH

She an Jus probably worried for you, Lu.

LULU

You don't mention this to either of'em, Gooch, do you understand me?

GOOCH

I'll never understand you. But okay.

LULU

C'mon then, let's— (pause) What is it? (pause) You sure you're up for this, Gooch, you sure you wanna come with me?

GOOCH

...Lu, that's the only thing I ever been sure of.

(They walk. Lights shift to JUSTUS and NELLIE wiping the grease from their mouths with enjoyment; chicken bones on the floor. Time has passed, it is getting dark. A sound heard offstage, both look up)

NELLIE

It's Lu!

JUSTUS

Stay you down, Nellie, till you hear me say otherwise.

(NELLIE quickly hides herself away. JUSTUS opens the opening. Looks out, then notices something)

Hey, not only can I see yer ugly head stickin' out, but I can smell ya just as good. C'mon now, 'fore yer stink give us away.

(GOOCH enters)

Now *what* is the point of hidin' like that?

GOOCH

I didn't wanna bother you is all.

NELLIE  
That you Gooch?

GOOCH  
Yea, Nellie'belly, it's me.

(NELLIE pops up)

JUSTUS  
Nellie, what did I tell you about stayin' put?

NELLIE  
It's just Gooch, what's he ever brought harm to?

JUSTUS  
If I say it to you ta stay put, than you do that till I un'say it.

NELLIE  
Justus, that don't make no sense—

JUSTUS  
Down, Nellie, now.

(NELLIE gets down)

GOOCH  
Are you just gonna let Nellie stay down like that?

JUSTUS  
Are you a part of this family, Gooch?

GOOCH  
...no, I suppose I'm not.

(Enter LULU)

LULU  
Justus. Nellie.

(JUSTUS glares at LULU, who goes about her business)

JUSTUS  
(to LULU) Really???

LULU  
What.

JUSTUS  
That's all you got to say?

LULU  
Oh, sorry. How are you? Nellie, how's it going?

NELLIE  
Well I didn't get shot, so...y'know, that's good.

LULU  
An Justus?

JUSTUS  
No, I wasn't shot either, Lu. Yourself?

LULU  
I seem to have avoided that for one more day. Good to be home.

JUSTUS  
Yea, *home*. I'm glad you remember that.

LULU  
So...wow, did you all hear the shots today?

NELLIE  
I did!

GOOCH  
I heard'em too.

LULU  
And how about you, Justus, did you hear the shots. There was one, two, three of'em.

JUSTUS  
I can do you better than that—



NELLIE

He was at the heap today!

JUSTUS

Hey Gooch, what happened to that smelly ol' piece anyways, where'd she run off too?

GOOCH

I don't know.

JUSTUS

Ya don't know?

LULU

You don't even know if she's okay, Gooch, if she's even—

GOOCH

She got a hidin' spot. A real good one.

JUSTUS

Good, where is it?

GOOCH

Well, it wouldn't be that good if I went around telling about it.

JUSTUS

Yea, well if they close in on us, maybe we could—

GOOCH

There's no room. It's...it's just room for one, barely that even.

JUSTUS

Oh. Well forget that idea then.

(JUSTUS tosses a piece of chicken at LULU)

Apologies, Gooch, don't mean to tease ya, but, hell, you must be used to that.

NELLIE

What's that supposed ta mean, Jus? Gooch's gotta be hungry, specially after all that thumpin' he been doin'.

GOOCH

Don't you worry about it, Nellie. Justus is right, he's gotta watch out for you and Lu, that's what he's gotta watch out for.

NELLIE

But...if yer hungry, an we got food. It don't make no sense that three of us sit with our bellies okay while one of us not.

JUSTUS

Nellie, we put the chicken into three parts, one for me, you, and Lu. We didn't put it into four.

NELLIE

That's how come Gooch can't eat, cuz numbers?

LULU

Gooch, go on, have a bite, I ain't even all that hungry.

(She tosses to GOOCH, JUSTUS aggressively takes it away and forces it back to LULU)

Jus, it's my share, what do you care what I do with it.

JUSTUS

I am not out there everyday puttin' myself right in the middle of danger for just anyone, Lu. I'm doin' it cuz you two is my family, and Ma set me to take care of you.

LULU

Ma wouldn't have had anybody go starving, Justus.

GOOCH

Please, I don't need anything, I'm not —

NELLIE

You had you some good canned food today, huh?

GOOCH

Yea, Nellie, why I found me three or four good cans almost all the way full. You shoulda seen the way I stuffed my Gooch'belly today. See that, lookit how round.

NELLIE

It don't look round.

JUSTUS

If Gooch wanted help in getting food, he shoulda got his own family.

LULU

He had his own family, Jus, an they died. Yers just happened to not. It ain't his fault to be alone.

JUSTUS

Well then he coulda started his own new family then, couldn't ya, Gooch.

GOOCH

Please don't get a raise in voices over me.

LULU

You didn't start any family, Jus. You just lucked into this one.

JUSTUS

If all this hadn't come about, me an Rose Marie'd have us a family right here in this spot. An there I'd have two families. You tellin' me Gooch can't get one?

LULU

Yer no better than he is, Jus, yer just luckier.

JUSTUS

Life don't have luck, Lu. It has effort. And anybody who has anything will tell you same.

LULU

And anybody who don't have anything, what will they tell you?

JUSTUS

They'll tell you that nothing is their fault, that they just stumbled onto some bad luck. And that's how come

LULU

How come what?

JUSTUS

How come everything.

NELLIE

But, Gooch, tried, Justus, he tried harder than anybody I ever known. He been tryin' with Lulu since I don't even know cuz I wasn't born yet.

JUSTUS

That ain't tryin', Nellie. That's just stupid.

LULU

Oh, really, Jus and why is that.

GOOCH

You all do realize I'm standing right here, right?

JUSTUS

Because it ain't trying if you got no chance, is it?

NELLIE

Awh, he's got a chance, don't he, Lu?

JUSTUS

Yea, Lu, answer her. Do he?

GOOCH

Still standing. Right here.

LULU

And because he doesn't have a chance with me, Justus, what do you propose he do?

JUSTUS

Something else.

LULU

What else.

JUSTUS

Anything else.

LULU

Give me an example.

JUSTUS

Lu, I don't have the first slightest idea what Gooch ought have done with his life besides waste it next to you. I have my own life and family to worry over.

GOOCH

Maybe I should go.

LULU

Don't go.

NELLIE

Yea, stay! That way I got somebody to watch them fight with.

LULU

What if, Justus, I was the last female in existence? What if there were no other females, not anywhere. What would you suggest Gooch do then?

JUSTUS

You know, I really am glad with all the shit that is going on right outside our home, you somehow find the time to drag me into these stupid —

LULU

What should he do?

JUSTUS

...fine, so in this so very realistic scenario, does he have a chance at a family with you or don't he?

LULU

No, he does not.

JUSTUS

With no other choices in life, then yes, I suppose he might as well just follow you around as opposed to bein' —

LULU

What.

JUSTUS

Alone.

LULU

So it's better to settle for almost, than it is to have nothing?

JUSTUS

That's a weird way to sum it up, but okay.

NELLIE

Wait, are we still talking about Gooch and the chicken?

JUSTUS

I doubt it.

LULU

So can he?

JUSTUS

Can he what?

LULU

Have some of my chicken; it is the last piece left

JUSTUS

Yer goin' do what you do anyways, Lu, no matter how much I care. Always have. Matter of fact, it don't even have weight how much somebody love and care for you, do it? Lulu is gonna do what's best for Lulu, everytime.

LULU

Least I don't let hungry go hungry.

(LULU gives piece to GOOCH, who devours it)

NELLIE

Thought you was full up, Gooch?

GOOCH

Maybe them canned foods wasn't as full as I thought, Nellie'belly.

JUSTUS  
So?

LULU  
What.

JUSTUS  
What, did we just meet, like for the first time, is that what you think?

LULU  
Do you think they're ever gonna stop looking for us, do you?

JUSTUS  
Well if we—

LULU  
And if/*when* they do find us, do you think there is any chance they're not gonna just shoot us down, then cut our throats.

(NELLIE gasps)

JUSTUS  
Lovely.  
Nellie, you can thank your sister for how you sleep tonight.

NELLIE  
Is that what...how come they cutting our throats for??? Why would they...cut our throats for???

GOOCH  
Oh, they don't cut *all* the throats, Nellie'belly. Just...you know...most of'em

JUSTUS  
An now you can thank Gooch for you sleep tomorrow night.

NELLIE  
What do they do when they *don't* cut the throat?

GOOCH  
Well—

LULU

Gooch.

GOOCH

Some of 'em they don't cut nothing. They shoot you in the leg, sure—

JUSTUS

Well, this is *much* better.

GOOCH

They have to keep you from running, but then—

LULU

GOOCH.

GOOCH

*Without* hurting, they take you up into a net thing and carry you back to one of their buildings where they let you live for ever and ever.

NELLIE

And ever?

GOOCH

Uh huh, Nellie, just like that.

NELLIE

Well who the heck would want the cut throat thing, let's go do the ever and ever option!

(JUSTUS glares at GOOCH)

JUSTUS

No, go on, Gooch, I'm curious myself how yer gonna back yer way outta this one.

LULU

...maybe he doesn't have to.

(JUSTUS looks at LULU, then grabs her, forcing her outside.  
Split scene, as GOOCH and NELLIE stay inside awkwardly)



NELLIE

That means they want to “have a discussion that I wouldn’t be able to contribute to.”

GOOCH

It’s probably best that way, Nellie.

NELLIE

But I meant what I said, if living forever and ever is something we can do, why don’t we just do that?

(Outside)

JUSTUS

Where you been all day?

LULU

You got something to ask, Jus, ask it.

JUSTUS

Were you over by those buildings? Were you?

LULU

No, Jus, I promise to you, I was not.

JUSTUS

If you think for even a second I’d let Nellie be put into one uh them buildings—

LULU

I wouldn’t either, Jus, of course not.

JUSTUS

Well, I know Gooch didn’t just come up with that scenario all on his own.

LULU

No, neither would I.

JUSTUS

So....?

LULU

I want for Nellie exactly what we discussed; the less she see, the better.

JUSTUS

I'd rather have my throat cut a thousand times than her see just one time what me an you seen.

LULU

Gooch wasn't supposed to speak.

JUSTUS

About what.

LULU

What you agreed with, Justus. We don't have any other choices. We are down to just those two. And I'd rather settle alive than dead.

JUSTUS

We said ta Ma we would not separate. Not ever.

LULU

That was a different world, Jus.

JUSTUS

You, me, and Nellie is the only world there is.

LULU

No, it's not. And maybe if that wasn't how you think, we might—

JUSTUS

Might, what!?

LULU

Don't get me wrong, Jus, I appreciate what you done for us. I do. But...

JUSTUS

Say it!

LULU

Maybe if you hadn't told every family to watch for their own an that's it, maybe we could have helped each other, we could have come together, we could've—

JUSTUS

*That* is how we get by, Lu, that's exactly how Ma got by too. You think she worked herself like she done that for anybody but us three?!

LULU

No, Justus, maybe you don't remember or maybe you don't want to remember, but when we were young, you couldn't tell any of us apart. There'd be so many little ones running around from house to house, and everyone's door was open. There was no this-is-ours and that-is-theirs. It was all everyone's. And it was you, after she got weak, it was you that started telling us to mark what was ours and keep what we had to our own.

JUSTUS

Our mother was not going to be here anymore, Lu, we had to prepare, we had to make sure we had enough for Nellie to—

LULU

Nellie would've had hundreds of enough, she would've been surrounded by it! But instead, she had just you and me. The three of us behind closed doors.

JUSTUS

It wasn't safe anymore.

LULU

It wasn't safe because everyone sitting alone by their separated selves getting picked off one by one. None of us had a chance because for all your protection, Justus, for all your posturing about, all you really did was make everyone by themselves. What do you think your Rose Marie run off for, *if* she run off.

JUSTUS

She's alive, Lu. She's off somewhere safe, I know it that she is.

LULU

Believe what you want, but we are alone here. Even with each other, we are the last ones left. And we have no more choices left to make.

(Inside)

GOOCH

And you see that's how possibility works, Nellie's belly.

NELLIE

I see.

GOOCH

The numbers say while it may be *possible* that you'd live for ever and ever—

NELLIE

And ever, yea.

GOOCH

More than likely—

NELLIE

I'd be shot in the leg, then have my throat cut across with blood all over, before they dump me onto the heap.

GOOCH

Precisely.

NELLIE

I admit I don't know much about it, but I'm beginning to think I hate numbers.

GOOCH

Me too.

NELLIE

And while I like talking to you an all, Gooch, I don't really. I'm gonna see what Lu and Jus are discussing through.

(Enter JUSTUS and LULU. Awkward silence)

GOOCH

So...I'm wondering, as its dark outside an all, if it might be possible I might stay here tonight?

JUSTUS

What for, you been outside in the dark before.

GOOCH

Well, I mean, I guess cuz...everyone else got killed today, that's the main reason, if I had ta pick.

JUSTUS

Don't you stay with that piece from the heap sometimes, isn't that what you do?

GOOCH

...oh, you're right. I'm an idiot. I'll just stay with her, I guess. Well. G'night to you, Nellie'belly, an—

(LULU shoots JUSTUS a look)

JUSTUS

Do you snore?

GOOCH

Yea.

NELLIE

Oh, you goin sleep by Lulu?! That's so nice. See, Jus, not everything got to be so harsh, just the two of'em layin' nice by each other. An there's nothin' nasty about it.

JUSTUS

Well, look, just layin' near Lulu ain't gonna keep you warm, 'specially considering how cold she been to you for....your entire life. You goin' have to go out an scrounge up yer own things to keep warm with, lay on top of.

GOOCH

Is that okay, Lu?

LULU

You don't need to go get yer own anything, Gooch, we got enough right here.

JUSTUS

Oh, no we do not. I had to take some of the shit with our scent an put'em way over past the water to throw'em off where we at.

LULU

Fine, but Gooch, when yer out there, scrounging up, you feel free to bring back whatever you see fit for any of us. There ain't no reason for you to go an put yourself in danger just for yourself. From here on out, there is no more this is for you an that's for me. We're together.

GOOCH

Alright, I'll just be...

(GOOCH moves to exit, nobody pays attention. He exits)

JUSTUS

Yer just givin' him more work, you realize. You put that in his head, he's goin' be out there for three times as long.

NELLIE

You bringing up a lotta numbers today, Jus.

JUSTUS

Nellie, if you don't shut yer mouth, I'm gonna take away a couple of them pillows you like so much an see if you don't stay up half the night tryin' to count how many you got left.

NELLIE

I stay up the whole night anyways, Jus, I dunno what you go thinking half.

JUSTUS

Wha's that mean?

NELLIE

It was numerical, Justus, you oughta understood it real real good

JUSTUS

You ain't sleeping?

LULU

Nobody is.

JUSTUS

Why not.

NELLIE

What was you an Lu discussin' outside?

JUSTUS

Nothing.

NELLIE

Fine, then I don't know why I ain't sleeping. It's a complete fuckin' mystery.

LULU

Its okay, Nellie, let's just nevermind all that, okay?

JUSTUS

Yea, let's just nevermind everything. We'll nevermind what we have each other, we'll nevermind the whole world and just settle, ain't that right.

LULU

Its okay if yer not sleeping, Nellie, pretty soon all that not sleeping'll add up and then guess what.

NELLIE

What?

LULU

Poof, without even noticing, your eyes will shut, and they'll stay shut for a long time, until you aren't sleepy anymore.

NELLIE

And then what?

LULU

Then when you wake up, you won't feel the awful that you do now.

NELLIE

Is that what you an Jus was discussin' out there then, the future uh my sleep patterns?

JUSTUS

The moment you two go over there, Lu. We're done. They'll never let you back out again. We'll just begin breeding and rebreeding underneath them. An that'll be who we are.

LULU

Least I'll be able to sleep.

JUSTUS

Will you, Lu? Or will you always be on alert. The smallest sound, the most distant notice and your whole body will jump up scared. Cuz you'll be in their world, not ours. And no matter how long you stay there, they'll never let you forget that.

NELLIE

Jus, what're you talkin' about, I don't like it, what're you talkin' about.

LULU

Nothing, Nellie. He's just, he just wants us all to sleep better that's all.

NELLIE

You goin' somewhere, Lu. You an Gooch?

LULU

Of course not. Gooch is out gettin' us all stuff. Huh, won't that be nice, Nellie, having one, two, three, four of us in here, just like how it used to be.

NELLIE

I wanna know what you two was yellin' at outside.

JUSTUS

Nellie, I'm sorry. That was my fault. I told her not to go the bridge today, but she went anyways. And well, we know how that turned out. I was just telling her how I told her so. How I wish she'd listen to me, how close she got to bein' hurt, how lucky she was, that once.

LULU

C'mon, Nellie, why don't we lay you down.

NELLIE

I'm not stupid, you know.

LULU

Never stupid, Nellie.

JUSTUS

Just a few years younger is all.

NELLIE

Don't talk numbers to me, Jus! Not once more.



LULU

Sleep, Nellie.

JUSTUS

Listen to yer sister.

NELLIE

Know how come I'm not stupid?

JUSTUS and LULU

Why.

NELLIE

Cuz you two never agree on anything. The only time you two bandy up is when yer lying to me.

LULU

We'll talk about it in the morning.

JUSTUS

We'll talk about it in the *afternoon*.

NELLIE

Why the afternoon?

JUSTUS

No reason, Nellie, I was just trying to disagree with Lu, so you'd feel more at home.

NELLIE

...is it...is it cuz in the afternoon Gooch and Lulu will be out by those buildings, trying to get that net put around them? Is that why, is it...

(A silence. NELLIE breaks down)

LULU

Nellie?

JUSTUS

You okay, Nellie?

LULU

Nellie, c'mon, of course that's not why.

JUSTUS

Breathe, Nellie.

NELLIE

...

LULU

Nellie?

NELLIE

...

(NELLIE weeps)

...how...how could you go out there, Lu, you don't have to go with them, ...there's horrible things out there, ....how could anyone...?

(A single, crystal gunshot is heard from just outside. A bit of commotion, strange voices. Lights focus to NELLIE; we are someplace else, somewhere quiet. NELLIE savors the quiet, we see more strength in her than we have previously seen)

If I was a bullet...I'd be so proud. Always when I hear them go off, even from that very first time...always I imagine: they sit, inside the gun machine. So warm and snug. Other little bullets snug next to them.

(NELLIE acts like a bullet)

(to other bullets) Hey. Hi. Warm in here, isn't it?

An I bet you they don't wanna go. In fact, I bet you they would stay inside that gun machine for all their lives, just sitting, just still. (pause) But I guess that's not what bullets were invented for. Staying put. (pause) They have to go somewhere. Out. Into the world. (pause) But know why it'd be okay to be a bullet? Cuz yougettogososofast! So fast they move that I wanna SCREAM! (pause) And finally, they're someplace else.

(GOOCH appears close to NELLIE, she lands *in* him. There is blood coming out of his chest. NELLIE backs away, scared)

NELLIE(cont)

But a bullet doesn't know where he or she is going. They just go. Because somebody makes them so. Somebody makes them. So they go. I don't think anyone should be made to go anywhere. You should only go where you want to. Bad stuff happens when forced to go. Bad stuff happens. Like that:

(NELLIE watches GOOCH crumple to the floor, wounded.  
NELLIE's light goes out; her quietness ends)

LULU

Omigod, Gooch....

(All frantically surround GOOCH, trying to help)

JUSTUS

Nellie, get me some water then I need ya ta put pressure right here. (pause) Nellie, go!

(NELLIE does)

Lu, you talk to him, let him hear your voice. (pause) Lu!

(JUSTUS digs into the wound, NELLIE pours water)

LULU

Hey there, Gooch, it's me. Lulu. Yea, I'm right here close. Just like you always wanted. With you an not goin' no place. Can you hear me?

(GOOCH gets up and joins LULU *downstage*, while JUSTUS and NELLIE still tend to his body on the floor *upstage*)

GOOCH

Of course, I can hear you, you're talkin' into my ear, love.

LULU

I shouldn'tve sent you out.

GOOCH

You didn't send me, I went.

LULU

I'm sorry, Gooch, sometimes I am *so* sorry.

GOOCH

Just sometimes?

LULU

...how are ya feelin', Gooch?

GOOCH

Well, your brother is trying to dig a bullet out of my chest. I've felt better.

LULU

How did—

GOOCH

Doesn't matter. They woulda got me soon enough, I always come by here at night. To make sure you're okay. To see you're safe.

LULU

...I didn't know that.

GOOCH

Every night.

LULU

Who was it that—

GOOCH

They all look alike to me. (pause) You don't though, you look one-of-a-kind. Holding over me. My God, look at you. If there was anything ever I wanted to be lookin' at while my breathin' stopped....it's you.

LULU

You shouldn't talk like that.

GOOCH

It's true. You're it for me.

LULU

Even when you were at the heap today?

GOOCH

(smiling) You shoulda seen the smell.

LULU

I can imagine.

GOOCH

Know something? (pause) They all smell like that when they're not you.

(LULU looks back at where his body is; worried)

NELLIE

Jus, what's wrong, how come he's shivering like that for?

JUSTUS

Means he's givin' a fight, Nel. I just need ta...if I can just...

(JUSTUS digs further)

LULU

You never give up, do you?

GOOCH

If you don't have what you want, what else have you got.

LULU

They're closeby then?

GOOCH

Yea, this is about the last spot left.

JUSTUS

Come on!

NELLIE

Easy, Jus, you don't wanna bury it in further.

(JUSTUS slips, NELLIE has trouble holding GOOCH's shaking body down)

That's too much blood, too much.

LULU

Hey, lookit me.

(LULU holds GOOCH's face)

You see me?

GOOCH

Oh yea.

LULU

You can do this. You just keep not'givin' up like how you do with me. You hear me?

JUSTUS

He's lost too much.

NELLIE

No, keep tryin, keep tryin'.

JUSTUS

I...I don't know much else I can do.

GOOCH

I think this is it, Lu. I think that's clear.

LULU

No. You're wrong. You're gonna stay the night here with me. Just like how you always asked. Layin' right up close. You'll be wrapped around me like...

GOOCH

You don't have to—

LULU

Shut up. Wrapped around me like...

GOOCH

Like death, Lu?

(LULU kisses GOOCH. Meanwhile JUSTUS stands back up, he and NELLIE looking sorrowfully down at the body)

I can't do nothin'more. JUSTUS

But... NELLIE

Was too deep. JUSTUS

Is he...oh god, is he... NELLIE

Yea. He is, Nellie. JUSTUS

(LULU and GOOCH finish their kiss. GOOCH looks back at his now lifeless body)

I got to go. GOOCH

No, please. Just... LULU

C'mon, Lu, don't make my last sight be you cryin'. GOOCH

I'm sorry all the time for how I was. I'm sorry I wasn't nicer. LULU

Hey, you were honest. And you're here now. GOOCH

But— LULU

Hey Lu. GOOCH

What? LULU

GOOCH

I'm happy. Right at the end...I am. Cuz of you.

LULU

I'm goin' miss you, Gooch. I will. I do.

GOOCH

Know what?

LULU

...

GOOCH

I believe you.

(GOOCH memorizes her neck, then returns to his body)

JUSTUS

Know what he'd say if he could still speak? (pause) "On my last day, I got to give it good an hard to some nameless piece in the morning, and by night I was bein' kissed by the one I love and always will." That's a pretty good day.

NELLIE

Least he never was up on that heap, least he had that.

JUSTUS

They ain't gonna get no more bodies on that heap. They've had their last.

LULU

I don't know if I'm cryin' over him, like who he was...or that I'll never be loved as I was again...

JUSTUS

It's good that you are, Lu, cryin'. He'd appreciate.

NELLIE

How come they gunshot him for though, what'd he do?

JUSTUS

He was here. In their way. That's all it takes.



LULU

They'll be here soon. They will.

(A beat. Lights return over NELLIE; all is quiet)

NELLIE

I know I said earlier how I'd wanna be a bullet  
but...honest, I don't really understand the gun machine.  
like why it was invented for.  
like I've never even seen one. Just only heard how loud. (pause)  
I imagine the gun machine to be very, very heavy.  
And if I were to touch it...it'd be so hot, probably burn my...

(Illustrates her hand)

It's got metal, I know that much. I understand it's fast, like I was saying. And it does that...

(Illustrates GOOCH's body)

...that much I know real good.

I guess I don't understand what they need them for. I mean I get it that they need them to put the bullets go realreal fast. But...why do they even wanna do that?

Why did they bring them along on that boat thing when they got here? What were they expecting to find that they'd need mean things like that for?

And *before* they got here, what did they do with them? Did they make the gun machines go loud on each other, on their own kind?

I got so many questions I'd like to know the answers to, but... maybe I'm better off, maybe I haven't got the mind to understand anyways.

And maybe, oh this might sound awful to say, but maybe I wish their boat thing had sunk down into the cold, cold ocean before they ever landed on our nice-place-ta-live.

(JUSTUS joins NELLIE in her light)

JUSTUS

C'mon, Nellie.

NELLIE

Couldn't we just stay here a little longer, huh Jus? Oh, it's so peaceful here, so quiet.

JUSTUS

You will, Nellie. Pretty soon you'll be able to stay like this an nobody will take you from it. But right now, I need you to come back. C'mon, now.

(End of quiet. Lights back to all)

I'll take his body towards to the water.

LULU

Gooch said they're comin'.

JUSTUS

An he deserve to be put somewhere they won't ever get to him. Now I won't be gone long.

NELLIE

But...how long?

JUSTUS

I'm just headed to Gooch's spot. Not far.

NELLIE

But—

JUSTUS

Lu.

LULU

Don't worry, I wouldn't let Nellie to be left alone, Jus.

NELLIE

Hurry, Justus.

(JUSTUS exits, dragging GOOCH)

NELLIE(cont)

Did you mean what ya said, Lu? 'Bout not leavin' me.

LULU

Of course, Nellie.

NELLIE

I don't think I could make it on my own.

LULU

I don't think you could either.

NELLIE

Well tha's not very a nice thing ta say.

LULU

You're not strong, Nellie. And you never will be.

NELLIE

What if I come with you though...?

LULU

Do you know what caught is, do you?

(NELLIE shakes her head)

Caught is waking up every morning in a place you didn't ever choose or want to be. An you can't ever leave, you can't ever make choices again because they make them for you.

(Lights shift to JUSTUS outside, he sits on the ground, looking soft. We should wonder why he's not hurrying back)

JUSTUS

...I don't know what I'm doin' here, Rose Marie. I promised'em I'd be back quick as I can. But lookit our spot, it's still here...

(JUSTUS lays down, as though besides Rose Marie. A few moments as he spends time with his memory of her. Slowly, a large, looming *shadow* moves in over him)

JUSTUS(cont)

Don't you worry, Rosie, there's just a cloud passin' over that's all. The sun'll be back over you right quick.

(JUSTUS gets up cautiously, looks up towards the shadow)

(to *shadow*) I need you to git out of her sunlight. See you can have this whole everything, the bridge and river underneath it...but you cannot have this one spot. Cuz my Rose Marie is gonna come back to me, an this spot has to be here waitin' just how she remember it by.

(JUSTUS crouches in an attacking position)

See you think I'm crazy. But me, even after all this, I can taste her in every breath I take in and I speak to her with every breath I send out. And I won't let any of your ugliness take that away.

(The *shadow* moves in, JUSTUS growls horrifically with his teeth showing, readying to pounce. Lights shift back to NELLIE and LULU, they are standing frozen, listening to a loud, overbearing engine just outside. Sounds of tractoring over large constructs of wood and nature. Just as the tractor seems to be shadowing over the room, it pauses. The engine roars loudly before going idle. Strange voices)

NELLIE

Can y' see 'em?

LULU

I think they're back behind the tractors. I...I can't see what for though.

NELLIE

I don't wanna see 'em. What do they look like?

LULU

If I can see them, then they can see us, Nellie.

NELLIE

...I thought they would talk like how we do.

LULU

Something's wrong.

NELLIE

But the engines stopped though.

LULU

If Jus is still out there, he's got no way of getting to us.

NELLIE

But—

LULU

An if they wanted to tractor over us, they would have.

NELLIE

What're you talkin' about, what're you even—

LULU

I need you to get yourself hid underneath those blankets now.

NELLIE

But—

LULU

Go on, Nellie! They are going to come in here and if they see you—

NELLIE

I'm going, I'm going!

(NELLIE begins hiding under blankets)

LULU

Now, Nellie, you do not move not even a movement until... Do you understand.

NELLIE

...I do...

(Enter JUSTUS, he is with blood all over. His sisters stare. They look sadly different from each other)

NELLIE(cont)

Jus!

LULU

...what...what happened to you?

NELLIE

...what's that covered all over you?

LULU

What happened!

NELLIE

Yer bleedin'...

JUSTUS

I'm not hurt, it's not me.

NELLIE

But there's blood.

LULU

Justus, lookit me. What happened?

JUSTUS

They're right outside.

NELLIE

Yer not cut, are ya?

LULU

Are you, are you hurt at all?

JUSTUS

Look, I'm not hurt, I'm fine--

NELLIE

But wait, what's the blood for, Jus, I don't understand.

JUSTUS

Please, Nellie.

LULU

It's all over you.

JUSTUS

Look, one day I will explain everything to you, but right now...Nellie, get to the back of the room. Get underneath them blankets an—

NELLIE

I know all about the blankets! Why're you bloody for, why're you—

LULU

Who's blood is that?!

NELLIE

That's so much blood, it's too much.

LULU

Jus?

JUSTUS

Look, its not my blood, now Nellie, get yourself hid. Lu—

LULU

What did you do?

JUSTUS

Please.

LULU

...oh Justus please tell me you didn't—

NELLIE

Didn't what, what?

LULU

Is that what they stopped for, is that why they're outside like that?

NELLIE

Is what why, is what?

JUSTUS

Yes, Lu. They are lookin' for me an they won't stop until they—

NELLIE

Will somebody tell me what!

LULU

How could you...

JUSTUS

They put a bullet to somebody who did nothing with his life but love you. They captured an put a heap uh bodies filled with everyone we know an shared our lives with, every spot of everything we know is GONE...how could I not do—

LULU

They're waitin' on him, Nellie, because he killed one of'em. They were waiting for him to get home. And now he is.

NELLIE

But they don't know. Justus he was quiet. They don't know him to be home.

LULU

I have to go.

NELLIE

Go where, Lu!

(LULU moves towards exit)

LULU

I'm sorry.

JUSTUS

Don't leave yer family, Lu....don't do it...

LULU

I don't have a choice anymore!

NELLIE

They haven't come yet, they've stopped the tractorin', listen, I can't even hear'em no more.



JUSTUS

You can choose to be with your family, Lu.

LULU

This is not being with your family, this is not that.

NELLIE

Yes, it is, here we are, we're right here.

LULU

Nellie, you remember, not a movement.

NELLIE

Please, Lulu...please. Justus, make her stay.

JUSTUS

Lu.

LULU

C'mon now, you two get down, I'm openin' up the door now.

NELLIE

No, don't let her go, Jus!

(NELLIE jumps up towards LULU)

LULU & JUSTUS

Nellie!

(Tractor engines rev up. JUSTUS grabs NELLIE)

NELLIE

...how can we just let go...how can we just let go what we call home?

(LULU opens door, NELLIE surges, JUSTUS holds on)

JUSTUS

NELLIE.

(Just as LULU steps out, three large figures, standing 12-feet tall, with darkened, metallic masks covering their faces enter the room with animal-catching equipment. The moment they are in the space, NELLIE, LULU and JUSTUS drop to all fours. Dogs. The figures surround the family away from the door and pull nets.

LULU submits into a ball.

JUSTUS stands in front of NELLIE.

They loop LULU around the neck, throwing a net on her.

They pull a loop towards JUSTUS however he moves aggressively, growling, ready go pounce. A fourth 12-foot figure enters with a large baton and raises it to JUSTUS, who growls with vengeance in return. Lights out fast. End of Part I)

*Part II – the inside*

*characters*

Justin

Eleanor

Lucy

Goon

*(casting note: same actors as in part I)*

*place*

indoors

*time*

during progress

*"The cry of the poor is not always just,  
but if you don't listen to it, you will never know what justice is."*

-Unknown

*"If the world is saved, it will not be by old minds  
with new programs, but by new minds with no programs at all."*

-Daniel Quinn

**first scene**

*Note: the characters in this part should attempt at a sort of Caucasian, almost upper' class accent, or way of speaking; despite the language. As the play goes on, this attempt should drop.*

Lights up on an seemingly nice room. A spread is laid out, medium end fingerfoods and liquors. Glass glasses, silver' plated silverwares.

Reveal GOON, he looks a bit soiled, he picks at the food curiously and fixes himself a drink with a grin.

Noise of fast footsteps and lauging coming from down the hall.

Bursts through the door LUCY, JUSTIN, and ELEANOR.

They crash excitedly into to the table, ooh'ing and aah'ing as they knock over bottles and foods across the table.

GOON backs up into the shadows, watching.

ELEANOR

Well thank God for the shit!

JUSTIN

Lookit that, Eleanor, I weren't even done with the last bottle uh this, an here I got me a fresh one right here.

ELEANOR

An see this here, Justin, got cheese in it. Lookit, I can't even grab onto it an it start leaking out, see.

(LUCY downs a drink, makes another)

JUSTIN

Well thank you very much, Miss Lucy, for offerin'ta fix *our* drinks.

LUCY

I needed it.

JUSTIN

What, and we don't?

ELEANOR

I know I do. That what happened outside today just about fucked me up—

LUCY

What happened outside today was—

JUSTIN

What happened outside was nothing. Ain't no reason to pay it anymore mind. Do you understand?

LUCY

I just wish it we were done clearing already.

(JUSTIN picks up a bottle)

JUSTIN

Aaight, I want this shit right here.

LUCY

What do you want mixed with it?

JUSTIN

How I know? I ain't ever had it before.

LUCY

Well do you want it just by itself then?

(JUSTIN points out a few more bottles)

JUSTIN

How about some uh that right there, yea, put a little uh that in there with it.

ELEANOR

You know, while you waitin' on him, you coulda already poured me some uh that right there, two times, all way up.

JUSTIN

You in a hurry, Eleanor?

ELEANOR

It's free, ain't it? An if it free, I hurry.

(LUCY passes drinks)

JUSTIN

(to both) Hey. You think there a real difference between the shit they stock us with, an the shit we drank back home? I mean do you think it really that much higher'up? Or it's all just label.

ELEANOR

(swirling her drink)

...well it got the same basic taste. Shit smell the same too.

(She swallows)

But...it go down a little easier, like I can't feel it hit my stomach as much, ya know? Makes me feel...higher'up.

LUCY

It's a higher quality.

JUSTIN

Wha'd I just say "higher'up" for, my amusements?

LUCY

Well, they're not just restocking for no reason.

JUSTIN

Can't you ever just enjoy life, Lu?

ELEANOR

Yea, why you gotta put so much thinking into free food and booze. It's free food and booze, all you gotta do is shut the fuck up.

JUSTIN

(to ELEANOR) Oh, that mouth uh yers is just about the dog in me. Go on, say that again.

ELEANOR

...see, this is me, shutting the fuck up.

JUSTIN

You can't just leave a man hanging like that? C'mon, Eleanor, run that mouth a bit, just from here to here.

LUCY

Justin.

(JUSTIN touches ELEANOR playfully, she plays along)

Ellie, you tell him to back off if you wish to.

(In the exchange, ELEANOR spots GOON)

ELEANOR

Oh, shit!

JUSTIN

What're you gettin' all excited for, I ain't even done nothing worthwhile yet.

(ELEANOR points out GOON, all look)

Well, what the fuck are you supposed to be?

LUCY

Is there something we can help you with? Are you here for —

JUSTIN

Speak, why don't ya.

GOON

'M'called Goon.

JUSTIN

What???

ELEANOR

Was that...a language?

(GOON reaches his hand out)

JUSTIN

Whoa, whoa, whoa, now you say your name is what?

ELEANOR

What kinda name's that? Goon. Sounds like maybe you're parents didn't exactly feel like blessed when you showed up, huh?

LUCY

Is this your first day?

ELEANOR

First day?

LUCY

Ellie, shut up. (pause) Are you here because of today? Because of what happened out there—

JUSTIN

What can we help you with, Goon?

GOON

It is.

ELEANOR

What is.

GOON

My first day.

JUSTIN

You assigned here?

(GOON nods)

LUCY

I'm Lucy, that's Eleanor, and yea, this is Justin.



GOON

Nice to meet you all.

ELEANOR

I don't know its exactly nice, but well, okay. Hi.

LUCY

We didn't mean to...whatever, we just didn't know they'd send us a replacement so soon—

ELEANOR

So, is you custodial?

GOON

I was custodial, yes. But here I am, so I guess I must be moving up.

JUSTIN

They set you to clear?

GOON

I didn't really ask questions.

JUSTIN

So you could be custodial still.

LUCY

Justin, stoppit.

ELEANOR

You here to clean up after us, Goon, huh? You here to pick up what we don't feel like?

LUCY

Nevermind her, Goon.

GOON

I'm not here for custodial, I'm her to clear, just like you all.

LUCY

Are you hungry, do you need anything or—

JUSTIN

Lucy, why don't you freshen our drinks.

LUCY

I really don't feel like making drinks right now, Justin.

JUSTIN

Well that is your job.

LUCY

No, it's not actually. I just been doing it to be cordial.

JUSTIN

To be what?

LUCY

Cordial.

JUSTIN

What you usin'them big words for? Cordial. What that mean?

ELEANOR

Means nice.

JUSTIN

Then why didn't ya just say nice then?

ELEANOR

Maybe she tryin'to impress a certain...newcomer. Maybe she in love.

GOON

I certainly didn't mean to make such a fuss.

JUSTIN

See, now that's a good word. Fuss. It's simple. I can like see it, ya know. Fuss. Now, Lucy, instead of makin'such a fuss of things, why don't you just fix us some drinks. An if you wanna do it for bein'nice, go right on ahead.

(LUCY makes drinks)

LUCY

Goon, would you like a refill?

JUSTIN

I asked first.

(GOON nods, LUCY fixes. All watch as she hands GOON a drink)

GOON

Thank you.

LUCY

Ellie, what would you like?

ELEANOR

What you always askin' me what I'd like, Lucy, you know what I like.

(LUCY fixes)

LUCY

Here ya are, two times.

ELEANOR

All the way up, oh yea, just the way I likes it.

LUCY

Justin?

(JUSTIN walks over to her, up close, then places two bottles in front of her. She fixes from them. JUSTIN raises his glasses)

JUSTIN

To cordial.

GOON

Cordial.

LUCY

Cordial.

ELEANOR

Niceness.

(They clink. A moment)

JUSTIN

So where were you assigned before then, Goon?

(GOON finds his bearings, then points)

You see the way a conversation work, Goon, is that when I ask you a curiosity, you supposed to fill that curiosity. You don't just—

(JUSTIN mocks pointing)

GOON

I have experience, if that's what you're asking about.

JUSTIN

No, it weren't. I asked where you was at.

(GOON points with more authority)

You are one pointing motherfucker, ain't ya, Goon. Why I bet if you could, you'd just answer every fuckin' question with pointing, wouldn't you? "Hey, Goon, how you feelin' today?"

(JUSTIN points down)

"So Goon, what'd you do today?"

(JUSTIN points)

LUCY

Did they tell you why they were transferring you, Goon?

JUSTIN

What it matter why, Lucy, the man is here.

ELEANOR

What'd you mean you got experience, Goon, what'd that mean?

GOON

...

ELEANOR

Look, now he don't say nothin'.

JUSTIN

Yea, c'mon, Goon, you could at least *point*.

GOON

*When* I was custodial, I used to be in charge of cleaning out the containments.

ELEANOR

Ew, Goon, what would you wanna be in charge of that for.

GOON

I didn't choose to, Eleanor, anymore than you all chose be clearers in this place.

ELEANOR

Ugh, that smell, bein'so up'close all the time with'em, don't that make your nose sad, Goon, don't it make sad your senses?

GOON

My nose...adapts.

JUSTIN

So tell me, Goon, how do hosing out a buncha containments get you experience with clearing?

ELEANOR

His nose adapt, Jus, he can't smell no more, he perfect for getting right in there.

LUCY

What sort of experience were you referring to, Goon?

ELEANOR

Watch, I bet he answer when she ask, watch.

GOON

I spent a lot of time with them. Putting their food, cleaning up. Listening to them.

ELEANOR

Listening??? Wha's that mean, they don't talk, Goon.

GOON

Oh, but they do, Eleanor. All night they make sounds, I wondered even if they slept.

JUSTIN

Maybe you not clear on how languages work, Goon, but sounds ain't talking. See, if I do like this:

(JUSTIN burps)

I ain't sayin' shit.

LUCY

What did you mean by listening, Goon?

ELEANOR

Oh, are we sure we wanna hear this, what if it give me the nightmares.

GOON

They scared me at first too, Eleanor. The pitches they would reach to. The guttural'ness of it all. I couldn't sleep not even an hour. But—

ELEANOR

What.

GOON

Pretty soon, I started noticing the patterns. Even noting down the positions of the moon. If it was dry or wet outside. Anything I could think of to just...make sense of them.

JUSTIN

That's an awful lot for custodial, ain't it?

GOON

That's where I was assigned to, Justin. That's where I spent my time. I would have had to completely go out of my way to ignore them if I didn't want to—

JUSTIN

What.

GOON

Wonder what they were saying.

ELEANOR

They just noise, Goon, what you mean saying? You think they was like, what, conversating an whatever, just like we do?

GOON

Not always, but sometimes.

(ELEANOR laughs it up)

ELEANOR

Can't you just see this guy, bein'all like how he is, talkin'to'em cuz he got nobody else to talk to.

LUCY

Shut up, Ellie.

JUSTIN

You talk to'em, Goon, is that what you're here tellin'?

GOON

Yes. I do.

ELEANOR

Omigod, we got us a crazy up in here. Lucy, go on an hide all the sharp things wherever.

GOON

I don't mean we had discussions, Justin, but if you live alongside of something for long enough, you begin to...

LUCY

What were they saying?

JUSTIN

Yea, Goon, I'm awful curious myself, what have they said lately?

GOON

Just that they're scared; that they don't understand what it is we think we're doing.

ELEANOR

What they got to be scared for, they the ones got kept.

LUCY

That's really something, Goon, the way you look at things. Do you think you'll be able to...understand anything tomorrow?

ELEANOR

Omigod, wouldn't that just be like the thing, what if we was out there tomorrow and there be Goon all translatin'an shit.

JUSTIN

Yea, Goon, you know now that I hear more about your...crazy'talent, I do wish they had sent you along earlier tho'. Why we could've been listening to what they got to say this entire time we been here. Coulda used the entertainment. You think, Goon?

GOON

Think what?

JUSTIN

They entertainment?

GOON

Well my nights certainly have gotten more interesting since I learned to...

ELEANOR

Damn, Goon, what exactly do you mean by *entertainment*, what kinda *interesting nights* you talkin'?

LUCY

(to ELEANOR) What is the matter with you?

ELEANOR

What, I'm just sayin'what he—

LUCY

Do you even have a thought running around inside that head of yours, Ellie?

ELEANOR

Yea, fact, I'm havin'one mighty specific of a thought right now. Keep talkin', we'll see how it develop.



(JUSTIN nudges GOON)

JUSTIN

Hold onto yer drawers, Goon, we in for a little show.

LUCY

Yea, you do just have one thought only, don't you, Ellie, that's all your uneducated brain will allow, one at a time, little by little, you just let me know if ever we move to fast for you, you just go on and cut in.

ELEANOR

Goon, I want you to pay special good attention tonight, cuz you goin'hear a shitload uh sounds comin'outta Lucy's room all night. But I don't think you'll haffta translate, they goin'be international as fuck.

LUCY

(to GOON) There are those of us who are here and we work, Goon, and there are those of us who just fuckin'work here.

GOON

Well, I don't know which I am, but I am excited to get outside tomorrow. Being cooped up inside that building for all this time, never seeing the daylight because I'm behind doors all day, I just...well, that is no way for a man to live. We are meant to be outside, I believe. Just like—

JUSTIN

Just like what?

GOON

Well, we were all born outside, we all—

ELEANOR

I weren't born outside, Goon, what you talkin'?

JUSTIN

Yea, was a hospital for me too, Goon. Sorry you had to go through that.

GOON

I just didn't like being assigned inside is all. I wasn't trying to—

LUCY

Trying to what?

GOON

I think I will bring something to the table tomorrow, that's all I'm saying actually. If absolutely nothing else, I will be excited to finally be outside with—

JUSTIN

With?

GOON

You all. And them. All of us.

JUSTIN

Us?

LUCY

Justin.

JUSTIN

You know, if you want, I can let you keep one of'em tomorrow Goon. That way you can go on with your communications an all. You know, so you don't miss out on any entertainment.

ELEANOR

Shut up, Jus. Tha's the stupidest thing I ever heard.

LUCY

Don't listen to him, Goon, he don't even have close the authority to—

JUSTIN

I'm the one doin'it, I got the authority to do whatever it is I want.

LUCY

No ya don't, Jus, *they* tell us what.

ELEANOR

Es true, they tell us the shit.

JUSTIN

*I'm the one on the front lines, I'm the one doin' the work, don't you tell me I got no say, Ellie.*

ELEANOR

You got no say, Jus.

JUSTIN

Goon, what do you say? Would you like to take one for yourself tomorrow?

LUCY

Don't listen to him, he's fulla shit.

ELEANOR

Goon, in all my time, I never seen him not do what he say.

LUCY

Do *you* believe him, Ellie?

ELEANOR

No, but tha's just cuz I know him.

JUSTIN

Goon?

GOON

That's really not necessary, Justin. Thank you for the offer though.

JUSTIN

Awh, come on now, you tellin' me you don't want one for your amusments?

GOON

No. I don't.

JUSTIN

Fine. Still a good idea tho'.

GOON

I think I'll be plenty entertained just by being out there, Justin. I'm even kinda nervous, bout what it's like.

LUCY

I don't know that you'll like it, Goon. It's ugly.

ELEANOR

It ain't all ugly.

LUCY

Mostly it is, Ellie.

ELEANOR

It can be funny tho, Goon. Out there. Sometimes we get to laughin'. Yea, right in the middle the work day, we laughin' like we was on our own time. Oh, can I just let him something funny from today, Jus, just one little thing?

LUCY

Eleanor, just let it.

ELEANOR

When I'm bout to do something I ain't ever done before, I like to get as much information as is possible. So even if this particular funny isn't your type of funny, least you'll be that much more knowing.

GOON

Go on.

ELEANOR

So...we're over by this heap an—wait, you prolly don't know what's a heap, do you?

GOON

I do.

ELEANOR

You do? How you know what a heap is, is that like a thing? Me, I thought it was just our own little whatever. Well, not maybe *little*, cuz between you an me, Goon, it's kinda gotten big. (pause) Oh, you prolly seen it tho', huh?

GOON

No, but I've heard.

ELEANOR

Okay, so we're by the heap this morning about to pile more shit on top, well it wasn't actually shit, Goon, that's not what we do with our shit—

GOON

I get it.

ELEANOR

Well, just in case you don't know we got plumbing. We got plumbing regular. SO, just as we get to the heap, we see...

(She begins laughing, JUSTIN giggles)

...well we see these movements. But not like, well...sometimes when yer heapin' things, they not always dead, ya know. Sometimes they still got the nerves movin'.

But well, this wasn't nerves.

See there was two of *them*. Jus' standin' on the side of that heap an they's doin' like this funny holdin' on, ya know. Almost looked like they was pro'creatin'. An my my, did they stink. You could almost see their stink, all around'em. Like in that cartoon, you know?

So when they heard us comin', they thrown themselves on the side of the heap an jus' played like dead.

So know what we do? We buried one of'em.

Yea, the one in front, the one bein' held onto from behind. W heaped all our shit from the morning right on top of it. Just to see if it could make it's way out from under. You ever do that?

Growin' up. We'd be playin' around the house, an I'd pour all these blankets on top uh our dog, see how long it take for it to figure it all out.

Or how bout like with a baby? Put a blanket over it, just to see if she'll push the blanket away or if you gotta do it for her.

GOON

Did she make it out?

ELEANOR

Who, the baby? Nah, tha's just an example of my story, Goon.

GOON

Today. At the heap.

ELEANOR

Oh, I don't think so. I waited around to see if I saw any movements, you know, of it getting out from under. But it was still as stillness can be. I thought it'd be so cute if it crawled itself out. But nah, probably couldn't figure it out. Needed me to help it. Just like a dog. Or that imaginary baby.

JUSTIN

In this place, you got to know the differences between things, Goon.  
Cuz the better you learn that *them* and *us* ain't even the same...atmosphere, the better you're gonna be at this life.  
A man got to know where he stand with things. What goes where an who belongs to who.

(JUSTIN clinks GOON's glass, downs his drink then throws his glass to the floor; it shatters)

LUCY

What is the matter with you?

ELEANOR

We're gonna get the shards all over our feet.

JUSTIN

Drink up, Goon.

LUCY

Custodial don't come till tomorrow, Jus.

ELEANOR

What if I wanted to sneak out for some eats if I can't sleep tonight. I won't know where to step.

(LUCY and ELEANOR begin picking up shards. GOON downs his drink, JUSTIN urges him to throw his glass, he refuses)

JUSTIN

Leave it be, ladies.

LUCY

Oh, so you'll clean it then?

ELEANOR

An we all know its goin *me* that winds up with cut feet.

JUSTIN

So don't step then.

LUCY

It's gonna stain the floor, it's gonna get all sticky.

JUSTIN

C'mon, Luce, say that again. Sticky sound good comin'outta you.

ELEANOR

We ought take all this spilt glass an circle it around Justin's bed, that's what we ought do.

JUSTIN

Y'hear that, Goon? That is some sweet music, ain't it?

LUCY

No, Ellie, nevermind him, don't even give him the notice.

(LUCY and ELEANOR bent over on their hands and knees, cleaning. They freeze. JUSTIN begins to encircle them, as though they are his prey)

JUSTIN

So...?

GOON

So?

JUSTIN

Which would you?

GOON

Which would I what?

(JUSTIN walks over towards ELEANOR, nudging her sexually from behind with his foot)

JUSTIN

If I could stop time, Goon, an just...do whatever the fuck, well this is the one I'd go to. Ooh, yea, got a nice little shape, got a good scent, hell I think I can scent her from here. An lookit her circumference, just my size, ya know. Ooh yea. An how'bout you then?

(A moment before GOON reluctantly acknowledges LUCY)

That one, huh? Yea, that one's got nice parts to boot. Not necessarily my exact sort, but who we kiddin', huh Goon, either piece'd do, huh!? Ha, look at'em. On the floor like that, just...perfectly placed...

(JUSTIN circles the women, nudging different with his feet)

Know what I'd like, hell I could even do it with her on the floor bent over like so. I'd peel this off like that, pull them down all the way right there, an guess where I'd put myself in. Go on, you ain't ever goin' guess.

GOON

...

JUSTIN

I'd put it right in that little spot right there. Know how come?

GOON

I don't.

JUSTIN

Cuz sometimes we gotta create our own holes, Goon. (pause) Now you go.

GOON

Oh, well it has been awhile since I even come up close to a...I don't know I'd even be able to—

JUSTIN

Go.



GOON

Well, I guess, if I could...stop the time, like you said, I'd probably just wanna be right in there.

JUSTIN

Whoa, whoa, whoa, you can't just rush to the end like that. You gotta paint me through it. Now go on, take'er slow.

GOON

...okay. I guess—

JUSTIN

Not you guess, yer a man, you tell me what you know.

GOON

...I'd want to—

JUSTIN

Not you'd want. Say it like you don't have to want nothin', it's yours.

GOON

I'd pull this back, so it's out of the way. An I would glide these down right about there. An I'd wrap myself around, just right there.

JUSTIN

An the hole?

(GOON points)

See that, Goon.

GOON

No.

JUSTIN

Even in a four-person room, you an me, we're more the same than even they.

(JUSTIN takes GOON's hand, smacks it with bravado. They freeze like that. Meanwhile LUCY an ELEANOR unfreeze)

ELEANOR

Hey, Lu.

LUCY

What is it, Ellie?

ELEANOR

Do you ever get scared to go back outside? I mean after what happened today, I mean what if another one of them things go crazy on us?

LUCY

What do you let him get his paws on you for, Ellie?

ELEANOR

What that my question.

LUCY

I'm trying to answer your question, Ellie. Why do you?

ELEANOR

Well, he goin' do what he do anyways, I'm just keepin' on his good side is all. Geez, what'd you think, I's lettin' him for?

LUCY

If you don't like something, then don't do it.

ELEANOR

I do *not* think you are answering me my question, I think yer sittin' there on your hands and knees and judgin' me like yer not doin' things *you* don't wanna do.

LUCY

You're right.

ELEANOR

No shit.

LUCY

But don't you ever wonder who it really is going crazy out there?

ELEANOR

So do you then, get scared to go back out?

LUCY

I'm scared right now, Ellie, I'm perfectly fucking frightened.

(A tableau of the women on the floor and cleaning, and the men shaking hands above them. Lights down)

**last scene**

Lights up on the same room, restocked.

Enter ELEANOR, she opens a bottle and puts back.

Enter LUCY, she open her own bottle, takes it to the face.

Enter GOON with blood up his arms.

Both stare at him as he takes a bottle with his head back.

The thumping of a man's workboots are heard.

Enter JUSTIN, he looks like he got his ass kicked.

He puts his own bottle to his mouth.

(to GOON) You.

JUSTIN

...

GOON

I said, You.

JUSTIN

And I heard you.

GOON

I want you, to explain to me, just what in the fuck.

JUSTIN

...I might've...got carried away.

GOON

ELEANOR

*That* was carried away?

LUCY

Goon, why don't I fix you a drink.

JUSTIN

Our job was to clear the area, not...

ELEANOR

You scared the living everything right out from inside me.

LUCY

From all of us.

GOON

Good.

JUSTIN

Of course we were scared, there was a fuckin' savage with us.

LUCY

Please, Goon, have a glass, have some ice; cool down a bit, huh.

(She fixes)

JUSTIN

(to GOON) So?

GOON

So what?

JUSTIN

Amuse me.

LUCY

Here.

JUSTIN

Lucy—

(GOON takes drink, drinks)

JUSTIN(cont)

Fine. Now, talk.

ELEANOR

Yea, what was the matter in your head that you'd —  
I can't even mouth it.

JUSTIN

Try massacre.

GOON

I apologize if I frightened you all.

LUCY

I don't understand, Goon, I just —

ELEANOR

What the hell would you do that for?!

JUSTIN

I got you now, Goon, I known there was something, I couldn't put my finger on it, but...you a crazy. That why they reassign you? Talkin' to what don't talk back. Lookin' like how you do. You a nutjob motherfucker an here we are in the same room wit' you.

LUCY

Why don't you just take awhile, Goon. Sit. Just try to —  
Nobody thinks you're crazy.

ELEANOR

That was the bloodiest thing I ever seen with my eyes, so if that ain't crazed, I...I can't even think straight, I wish I hadn't seen that. I wish I hadn't gone back out there.

LUCY

Was it too much for you, being outside again after so long?

ELEANOR

I didn't know they could scream like that. Goon, I never heard a pitch go up that high.

LUCY

Maybe you're sick, Goon, maybe—

GOON

Lookit me. It almost looks like *I* got hurt in all this, don't it? Lookit all this blood.

ELEANOR

*Did* you get hurt?

GOON

No, this is all theirs; it's just same color as ours.

LUCY

Maybe you've been out here too long, maybe, I don't know, maybe—

JUSTIN

Yea, what're you so fucked up for, Goon?

GOON

I see what ya meant about the nerves, Eleanor. The way they shudder.

ELEANOR

Justin right, you a crazy, ain't ya.

GOON

I don't see what I done out there is any more crazy than that heap.

ELEANOR

We was okay to'em, Goon, we put'em a shot so they don't go nowhere, but then we...

GOON

What, Ellie, then you what?

LUCY

We would bleed them by their throat.

ELEANOR

Well, yea, when you put it like that, Lucy, it don't sound so nice, but—

GOON

It's okay, Eleanor, you can talk to me about the heap now, I get it. About heaping things on top, I understand. About that imaginary baby, yea, I can picture it now. (pause) See, you all call me crazy, but...I don't think I'm anymore far gone than you all.

LUCY

It's Ellie's fault. She's just—

GOON

Just what?

LUCY

She's just doing, has been doing, what's she's paid to do.

ELEANOR

...I didn't...I didn't know it that way, I didn't know they...

LUCY

It's okay, Ellie.

JUSTIN

Go on, grab yourself a two-times' all the way up, Ellie. Go on now.

(ELEANOR gets, drinks)

GOON

I know.

JUSTIN

You know what?

GOON

I know you didn't know. (pause) Eleanor, you okay?

LUCY

She's fine.



ELEANOR

No, I ain't. I ain't fine. I ain't fine with this no more.

JUSTIN

Just calm yerself, Eleanor, now we don't have anything else to clear, pretty soon we'll have us new tasks to put, an there won't be none of this to even remember. Why pretty soon, this'll all settle, an we'll have homes put, little ones runnin' around —

LUCY

Don't lie to her, Justin. You have absolutely no idea what happens next.

JUSTIN

*What* have we been doin' here, Lucy, if not making it safe for us to start our homes, begin our families.

LUCY

It's not up to you, Justin. What we do. We'll do whatever work it is they want worked. And it might be scary. It might be every bit as ugly —

JUSTIN

Lucy, cut it. Ellie don't need to hear that right now.

ELEANOR

No, what I need is to get up outta here.

GOON

Eleanor might have a point, you know.

JUSTIN

Goon, shut up.

GOON

Imagine what the outside think of us now.

ELEANOR

An just what is that supposed ta mean, Goon?

JUSTIN

Ellie, don't you listen to him, there isn't anything left out there. We done cleared the entire area, in fact, nutjob motherfucker here cleared the living shit out of it.

GOOCH

Oh, we've cleared the settlements, sure, Justin. But you and I know there is a lot more living outside than what we been clearing. There are thousands of eyes still out there watchin'. Thousands of every size, of every shape. There are so many thousands of different sorts all staring at every move we make now. All of'em scared. And we are the enemy to every single one of them.

JUSTIN

Well, that's just fuckin' great, Goon. So they'll prolly stay hid, won't they? Maybe crawl into our Earth. Breeding under where we walk. Populating our dirt. Why they'll be so many of them down there scared to come out, they'll make the ground earthquake when they move. And that's how we'll go on living. Trying to raise our own families right on top of theirs. Walkin' around every day tryin' to be happy, but just below, right underneath, why there's entire civilizations, of God only knows, wishin' us dead.

ELEANOR

So what, we're just supposed to keep on tryin' to be here, huh? I can't do that, Justin, I can't get used to a life like that.

JUSTIN

No, we'll clear them, Ellie. Every single pocket, every single cluster. One thousand, two, it don't matter. We'll find them cuz we are not meant to be scared' for, Ellie. Livin' on the surface of things? Us up here an them down there? No, nuh-uh, there is a whole world out there, an I'll be damned if I'm goin' tell my children they ought be scared to be a part of it.

LUCY

What do we tell our children then, Justin? Huh? That this is all okay? "Here you are, go an play, an don't you worry about nothing, your mommy and daddy have already murdered everything out the way. So go on. Cuz the entire world is just so beautiful."

ELEANOR

No, nuh uh I don't want children uh mine anywhere near ugliness like this.

LUCY

We can leave, Ellie.

JUSTIN

Now look, I am not going to be made to pay the sins for this lone, nutjob motherfucker. One man do not all of us make.

ELEANOR

I'm goin'tell them. I'm goin'say it that I quit. I can't be here no more. I just wanna go home.

JUSTIN

Look, we have us a roof over our heads, we have us food better than my mouth ever come across, an top shelf shit down our throats.

LUCY

How long do you think they are going to keep re'stocking things for us, Jus?

JUSTIN

Until we feel comfortable bein'here!

ELEANOR

Oh, I won't ever be comfortable here, nuh uh, not me.

LUCY

I knew it, Jus, I knew you was scared.

JUSTIN

'M'not scared.

LUCY

That what all this was for, Justin, don't you see. This room, that spread, everything was for us to just...be okay with everything. That we wouldn't notice as the days turned to years, and the years to generations. We are a living distraction, Justin. And I don't feel like being distracted no more.

JUSTIN

This is our job, Lucy. This is how we do our part.

LUCY

Part of what, Jus?

JUSTIN

This is how it work, if we need to expand out this way, then they need people to clear the area. What is so goddamned complicated about that, huh? An so what if we the ones that do it. Least I got to saving for my children.

LUCY

You say we're expanding? Who is? Us? I dunno about you, Jus, but this is about the same day-in-day-out work that I done back home. My life hasn't expanded one bit. And I' not bein'paid extra to—

ELEANOR

Bleed things by they throat.

JUSTIN

We aren't animals, we do things for the greater good. We do things not just for us, but for our—

LUCY

Children, yea, I got that. What about them?

JUSTIN

The more we grow, the more we have, as a...as a people. The more we have, the more our children will—

LUCY

We will never have what you're daydreaming, Justin. We will never work enough to have more than what we got right here. Our lives, they are fixed. You think you in charge of the clearing? You're not. You're just doing the labor. Nothing more.

ELEANOR

You know, I thought the food an booze was gonna be all the time forever.

LUCY

It's not.

ELEANOR

But d'you know something? Did you ever notice, this room. It's really not that nice. The other night, well, I was drunk as skunks, so I started messin' about with that stuff over there, an that over there. Cuz that's how I do. An you know, they just covered up shit stuff with nice stuff. It ain't really nice underneath. Fact, look to me like a junk space. Where they keep for leftovers.

NELLIE(cont)

An I didn't wanna say nothin' cuz we seemed to be havin' such a time here, but when I saw that, I kinda felt like leftovers too.

(All look at each other. A light shift, they all move with it. Lower. Submissive. Appears GOOCH, he looks around like foreign. A moment. Appears LULU and JUSTUS)

GOOCH

I led them to you, Lulu, I'm sorry.

JUSTUS

Wasn't you that brought them to us, Gooch.

(GOOCH confuses)

I got my temper up an you know how that go

LULU

Things turned out okay, though, Gooch. For me and Justus; Nellie.

GOOCH

Really? Cuz you two look like shit.

JUSTUS

After they come through the door, one of them went a little crazy on us, Gooch. They slit a lot more than our throats when we went.

GOOCH

I'm sorry, Lu.

JUSTUS

What, just her? Ain't you sorry for me?

GOOCH

I am, but just imagining my Lu all—

JUSTUS

Know what's funny.

LULU

What's that?

JUSTUS

Just as they was comin' at me with their devices, I almost wished it.

GOOCH

Wished what?

JUSTUS

For them to just get on with it. To just...let it out on us, all how angry they seem to be, all how lonely they seem to be, all of it, just let it all out on me an Lu cuz—

LULU

Know what's funnier than that? I was thinking the same thing. I was thinking they should just let everything out cuz—

GOOCH

Cuz Nellie?

JUSTUS

Cuz Nellie.

LULU

Cuz Nellie.

GOOCH

I was afraid to ask.

JUSTUS

They didn't get to her, Gooch. They never even laid eyes.

LULU

They were so entertained by me an Jus, yea, she just stayed there an—

(Appears NELLIE)

JUSTUS

Oh, no. Nellie, what're you...what're you doin' here?

NELLIE

Oh, don't worry, ya'll, I don't think I'm really here. I mean, not like ya'll. I don't get massacred or anything like that if that's what you're wondering.

LULU

But—

NELLIE

Nothing will happen to me for quite some time, Lu. Thank you for that.

JUSTUS

You look perfect, Nellie, you look just like...

NELLIE

You remember me by?

JUSTUS

Remember you by?

NELLIE

That's the way you always put it, ain't it Jus. Guess I picked stuff up from you all the time an didn't even know it.

GOOCH

You okay tho', Nellie'belly?

NELLIE

Things are...nice, Gooch, since my entire family got massacred in front of me. Different, but okay, I guess.

JUSTUS

You hurt or—

NELLIE

No, I ain't hurt.

LULU

You look safe.

NELLIE

Well, I am maybe.

LULU

That's all that matters then.

NELLIE

Is it?

LULU

What d'you mean?

NELLIE

Oh, I don't know how to explain things, Lu. Just...my belly is happy. An everything is warm all the time, but—

JUSTUS

What.

NELLIE

I used to *feel* things. I used to feel so many things. For you Jus, Lu an Gooch. But now, just everything goes on an on like one long daytime day. An I can't tell one part from the next cuz it's all just so nice. (pause) An I know sometimes y'all used to scare the Nellie outta me. But, least I could hear my heart inside. Least I could smell when you Jus and you Lu was worried for me, least I could feel the ground when I know something wasn't right. Oh an I used to love eating how we ate. Was like I got to use all my senses. Right, Jus?

JUSTUS

Right.

NELLIE

An now...

JUSTUS

I'm sorry I—

LULU

We should've—

NELLIE

Oh, enough with that. Could be worse. (pause) I should go.



LULU

Where, how come?

(NELLIE shrugs)

NELLIE

...just cuz.

GOOCH

Can't you stay?

JUSTUS

Just a little while more, Nellie.

NELLIE

Can I ask just one thing tho'?

LULU

Anything.

NELLIE

How long do I hafta stay here?

(Lights back to people)

LUCY

We're not stayin' here, Justin. I am through working here.

JUSTIN

So what then?

ELEANOR

We go, we quit.

JUSTIN

What do you think happens if we jump ship, huh? You think work will be waitin' for us back home? You think anybody goin' hire us like that?

No, we got to stay here. Keep employment. I don't see what we got any choice but that.

GOON

I heard pretty soon they goin' have us put a concrete ground outside. That'll keep everyone safe from anything underneath, won't it? I heard they also goin' have us put blinking alert lights, and buildings built so high that they'll crowd the sky. And we won't have anything to worry about, maybe. And the days will be nice, maybe.

JUSTIN

..yea nice...see that, he got a crazy'ass way uh puttin' it, but we goin' be alright here, Ellie, Lucy.

LUCY

No, we're not.

ELEANOR

Let them do their own clearin', killin', an whatever other ugly things they need for. Fuck'em

LUCY

Fuck'em.

(Sounds from outside the room. Intense. All look around scared)

JUSTIN

You two shut your goddamned mouths. What the hell are you doin' talking like that so loud for, huh?

ELEANOR

Who out there, Jus?

LUCY

It's them.

ELEANOR

I know it's a them, but which one, I can't keep track.

GOON

I just hope—

ELEANOR

Hope what?

GOON

I just hope its people.

ELEANOR

Well, what the hell does that mean, Goon.

GOON

People we can talk to. But...

LUCY

What.

GOON

If those thousands of different'sized'eyes have all...

ELEANOR

What, what, say it, you tryin'to put a quake in my heart, geez!

GOON

If all those different sorts, all them different species got together, like all together, like thousands upon thousands all at once, and are...

JUSTIN

What, and are what?

GOON

Going to try an get in here.

JUSTIN

They can't get in, we got doors, we got locks locked.

GOON

What do you think locks an doors will do to numbers like their numbers?

JUSTIN

Look, everybody calm. If it...if it ain't people, if it *is*...like Goon say, we got nothing to worry about, we got a whole settlement of people here to help us.

ELEANOR

Yea, but they gonna help us now, after how we talked 'bout leavin'?

LUCY

We don't have thousands, Justin. Not even close.

JUSTIN

Look, are smarter than them, we—

GOON

It won't matter, they outnumber us. If it is them all gathered up into one...stampeed, we only have a few moments left.

ELEANOR

We could apologize or some shit. We could tell them how it wasn't us. How we're just the workers, we're just the—

LUCY

They won't understand that, Ellie.

ELEANOR

Goon can tell 'em, he can talk.

LUCY

That won't make one difference, Eleanor.

JUSTIN

Well why the fuck not?!

LUCY

Because, we all look the same to them.

(Sounds grow. They seem to be coming from in every direction. A jarring thud hits the doors in the room; all close in close to each other, grabbing hold of each other like family. The doors of the space burst open. A white out followed by darkness.  
CURTAIN. End of Play)