

POMADE

Book for Musical

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by

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WORKING DRAFT
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ACT I

SCENE 1

(Ferguson Home. It is Sunday Morning. The furniture is plain and simple. There are pictures of the family and a few religious items such as a cross, holy bible and picture of Christ. A staircase is center stage and a dining table is up stage left. The living room is down stage right. Loula is up and moving about. She is ready for church and preparing breakfast. She carries a mixing bowl and stirs it while calling to her family.)

LOULA

Sterling? Jesse? Duke? Y'all get up. Y'all hear?

(She pauses at the bottom of the staircase and stares upward.)

LOULA

It's almost six o'clock. Y'all gonna oversleep. Get up. Y'all hear?

(She crosses to the dining table and sets the bowl down.)

LOULA

Y'all think I'm playing.

(She searches quickly nearby and brings forth a switch. She swings it solidly and turns back to the stairs.)

LOULA

I'll show you who's playing.

(Songs starts and Loula sings: "GET OUT OF BED (GET UP)")

Get out of bed. It's time to start moving.
Get out of bed. There's chores to be doing.

Now I said, wake up sleepy heads.
You better get up. I said to wake up.
It's time to get up.

Get out of bed. It's time to quit napping.
Get out of bed or tails I'll be tapping.

Now I ain't saying it no more.
I said to get up or after my switch
I'm gonna go.

Take a bath. Wash that face.
Hit them arms before you leave this place.

Comb that head. Make that bed.
You should have got up the first time I said.

Brush them teeth. Scrub them nails.
Come and eat breakfast 'cause it's getting stale.

Feed the chicks. Check the hens.
You should have got up when I told you when.

Get out of bed. It's time to start jumping.
Get out of bed. I better hear something.

Now get them feet from under them sheets.
Come out of those dreams and work up some steam.
It's time to get up.

Get out of bed. Y'all know I ain't playing.
Get out of bed. The last time I'm saying.

Do y'all hear? Let me make myself clear.

I mean shake a leg. I ain't gonna beg.
I said to get up.

I don't want no sass. Y'all better dash.
I said to get up.

(During the number Loula has gotten her switch and swings it.)

LOULA

Y'all get up.

(The Boys jump out of bed and scamper.)

LOULA

Get.

(She hits STERLING on the behind.)

STERLING

Mama.

LOULA

Don't mama me. Go get ready for church.

(She swings again and Sterling dashes off. She looks after him and shakes her head. She crosses, then pauses. A frown comes over her face and she turns forward.)

LOULA

Ludiwici. Ludiwici. Get up. You hear? I told you 'bout staying up late watching that TV! Get up. We got to get ready. Y'all got chores.

(She exits quickly with the switch. Lights out.)

LUDIWICI

Mama.

(There is noise as the set changes. Voices of the family are heard off-stage as they get ready.)

STERLING

(off-stage)

Mama you seen the pants to my black suit?

JESSE

(off-stage)

Mama you iron my shirt?

DUKE

(off-stage)

Ludiwici quit slow poking. Hurry up and get out the bathroom.

LUDIWICI

(off-stage)

I ain't slow poking.

LOULA

(off-stage)

Y'all quit that yelling.

STERLING

(off-stage)

Duke you got my black and white striped tie?

DUKE

(off-stage)

I ain't seen it.

STERLING

(off-stage)

You had it on last week. I saw you with it.

DUKE

(off-stage)
I told you, I ain't...

JESSE

(off-stage)
I got it. It's in the closet.

LUDIWICI

(off-stage)
Mama. Mama where's my dress. The one with the ribbons on it.

LOULA

(off-stage)
I told you to put it out last night so I could iron it.

LUDIWICI

(off-stage)
I did. You just didn't see it.

LOULA

(off-stage) D
on't tell me. You just hurry up.

(The noise subsides and lights up on the family seated at the dinner table. All heads are bowed as Loula finishes praying.)

LOULA

And we thank you for these blessings. In our sweet saviour's name. Amen.

FAMILY

Amen.

(Chaos erupts immediately at the table as the siblings grab for food. A young girl struggles for her share. She is LUDIWICI. Loula glares at them.)

LOULA

Y'all better act like Something.

(They calm.)

LUDIWICI

Stop boy. Mama.

(Sterling and Ludiwici fight over a piece of sausage. Sterling wins and quickly cuts it and devours his spoils.)

LUDIWICI

Mama. Sterling got my sausage. Mama. Sterling.

LOULA

Alright. Sterling behave.

STERLING

(eating)

I ain't doing nothing Mama.

LUDIWICI

Yes you did. You took my meat.

LOULA

Ludiwici. Hush. There's plenty.

LUDIWICI

That was mine.

LOULA

Did you hear me child?

LUDIWICI

That was my sausage.

STERLING

Didn't have your name on it.

(Loula stares at him. She takes his plate and holds it to Ludiwici.)

LOULA

Here.

STERLING

Mama.

(Loula eyes him and he watches helplessly. Ludiwici takes her folk and spears the remaining sausage from his plate gleefully.)

LOULA

I don't want to hear no more now.

LUDIWICI

There.

(She sticks her tongue at him and eats contented. All eat.)

LOULA

Y'all don't be late for practice this evening.

(She glances at her sons.)

LOULA

Y'all hear?

BOYS

(in unison not enthused) Yes ma'am.

(Ludiwici snickers and Loula looks at her.)

LOULA

When you plan on combing that head girl.

(The Boys chuckle. Ludiwici looks down.)

LOULA

And you better not be late either.

LUDIWICI

Yes ma'am.

(Loula rises chewing her last mouthful of food and glances at the clock on wall.)

LOULA

Lord. Y'all done got me late messing around this morning. Sisters Bennett and Bird both supposed to be coming by...

(Knock on door.)

LOULA

Lord have mercy. Duke and Jesse. Y'all feed the chickens and bring in the eggs. Sterling clean up the table.

(She hurries and takes off her apron.)

LUDIWICI

Ha ha.

LOULA

You too Miss Grown.

LUDIWICI

Mama.

LOULA

I ain't got time girl. Get moving. And do something to that head.

(She exits hurriedly.)

LOULA

Y'all finish getting ready. We got to leave by 8:30 for Sunday school.

(The siblings grumble. Sterling teases Ludiwici and musses her hair more.)

LUDIWICI

Stop boy.

(She swings aimlessly and he dodges out of the way. Lights out.)

(Blackout.)

**Act 1, Scene 2: EDGE OF TOWN/COLCOCK'S BAR - SUNDAY
Afternoon**

(It is the outskirts of Crossway - a small southern town. It is the summer in the '60s during the civil rights era. Though Crossway is removed from the tumultuous events of the time it is experiencing changes of its own. Lights up. JESSE and STERLING enter stage and cross. A sharp dressed MAN and WOMAN enter and pass them hurriedly. They go to the edge of the stage. The Man knocks in a pattern on a door. The door opens and they exit stage. Another COUPLE enters and passes them.)

JESSE: Excuse me. Good evenin'.

(The couple glances at them then dashes to the door.)

JESSE: Could you tell me where I could find the

(The Man knocks in rhythm and the door opens. They exit stage. The Boys stand and watch. A WOMAN enters and steps to the door. She knocks and the Boys move to her.)

JESSE: 'Cuse me, but is that the

(The door opens and the Woman exits stage. A DERELICT enters and staggers across stage. He stares at the Boys then raises his collar and slides to the door. The Boys stare as he knocks on the door. It doesn't open and he knocks again.)

STERLING: Hey. Ain't that

(The Derelict glances at the Boys then pounds the door hard.)

DERELICT: It's me Foster Banks. Let me in. Y'all know me.

(The door opens quick.)

VOICE: Quiet. Come on.

(The Boys look at each other and Foster exits stage.)

STERLING: That was Foster who stay at the house. You reckon he saw us. He might tell Mama he seen us.

JESSE: I don't care. You saw how he was actin'. He looked drunk. He pro'bly didn't know who he was lookin' at. You seen how those other people was actin'. Don't nobody want to be seen. Come on.

STERLING: How we gonna get in? That was a special knock.

JESSE: Foster didn't use no special knock.

STERLING: That's cause they know him.

JESSE: So what. We'll just say we know Colcock.

(He knocks and nothing happens. He knocks again.)

STERLING: I told you. It's a special knock.

JESSE: Ain't no special knock. I'll show you a special knock.

(He pounds the door and laughs. Someone grabs his hand and stops him.)

JESSE: Hey.

(The BOUNCER appears and looms over him.)

BOUNCER: What's your problem boy?

JESSE: I'm sorry. I didn't know if you could hear me over the music.

BOUNCER: I can hear you fine. I'm sittin' right here by the door.

(He releases Jesse's hand.)

JESSE: Owww. That's good to know.

BOUNCER: Look boys. No soliciting. What y'all selling anyway? Candy or something?

STERLING: We ain't your boys. And we ain't selling no damn candy either. We want to come inside.

BOUNCER: What? You must be crazy. You boys ain't old enough to drink.

STERLING: I done told you. We ain't your

JESSE: Sterling. Like my brother said we want to come inside.

BOUNCER: And like I said you boys ain't old enough to drink.

STERLING: I'm

JESSE: I am. But that don't matter. We don't want to drink. We want to see Colcock.

BOUNCER: Colcock know y'all comin'? He a busy man. He ain't got time for no games.

JESSE: This ain't no game.

STERLING: Yeah. We got business.

BOUNCER: What kind of business?

STERLING: None of yours.

JESSE: Look. Tell him Jesse and Sterling Ferguson here. It's about us singing at his new club come this Saturday.

(The Bouncer regards them and retreats. The door closes and the Boys wait.)

STERLING: You think he gonna let us in?

JESSE: He ain't got nothin' to do with it.

STERLING: You sure?

JESSE: Yeah I'm sure. He just work for Colcock.

STERLING: You right. Who he think he is askin' us all them questions. He ain't no

(The door opens quickly and the Bouncer appears.)

BOUNCER: Quiet. Come on.

JESSE: Colcock

BOUNCER: I said quiet.

(They exit and lights down. Lights back up inside Colcock's Bar. PEOPLE are already there and mingle. Roy enters stage and the Boys follow him on. People look then turn away.)

STERLING: Jesse look.

(They look at the Women.)

JESSE: Wow. Where them

(The Bouncer stops. He turns and looks at them.)

BOUNCER: Y'all don't understand do you? Y'all talk too loud. You inside a club boy. You got to speak easy.

STERLING: What?

BOUNCER: What you think? You out in a field somewhere? Speak easy. Know what I mean?

JESSE: Yeah.

STERLING: Yeah.

BOUNCER: You got to be cool. Smooth.

(He walks with a strut.)

BOUNCER: You got to be with it. You got to speak easy. Dig?

(The Boys mimic the Bouncer.)

BROTHERS: Yeah. We dig. You got to speak easy.

MUSICAL NUMBER: "SPEAK EASY"

Don't get too loud
And not too strong
Or you won't be
In here for long.

Don't get too bold
And go and shout.
Better hear me now
Or you'll be out!

Got to speak easy.
Keep it light and low.
Got to speak easy
Or out the door you go.

Got to speak easy.
Keep it to a hum.
Got to speak easy
Or you're gonna have to run.

Now don't get upset
By those that might
Want to go
And pick a fight.

They ain't learned
My lessons well.
Let's just hope
They live to tell.

Got to speak easy.
Things are gettin' tight.
Got to speak easy.
We're gonna jump tonight.

Got to speak easy.
Tonight we get a crowd.
Got to speak easy.
But y'all don't get too loud.

Say it soft
Really gentle.
Speak it cool
Like a be-bop tempo.

Keep it smooth.
Keep it quiet.
We don't want
To start no riot.

Got to speak easy.
Y'all try to keep it down.
Got to speak easy.
Or we'll all be goin' downtown.

Got to speak easy.
Lower it a bit.
Got to speak easy.
Just go find a place to sit.

BOUNCER: You got to speak easy.

(The Bouncer leads the Boys. They follow him and gaze at the Women. The Women throw them glances and smile.)

BOUNCER: While you here you got to be cool. Understand?

(He stops and the Boys run into him.)

BOUNCER: I said cool fool. Watch it. Mr. Jones. Here they are.

(He leaves the Boys at the bar with COLCOCK JONES. He sits on a stool facing away from them and turns around reading a folded newspaper. A BARTENDER works behind the bar.)

COLCOCK: How can I help you boys.

JESSE: I'm Jesse. This Sterling.

COLCOCK: I know you boys. I heard you before in church. It's been awhile. What can I do for you?

JESSE: We heard you was looking for new talent for your new club.

COLCOCK: I am. Why? You boys know somebody interested?

STERLING: Yeah. Us.

COLCOCK: You boys want to audition? This ain't no gospel sing church kinda thang.

STERLING: We know. We ain't gonna sing no gospel. We got an act. We been workin' on some real soul stuff.

COLCOCK: Really?

STERLING: Yeah. Maybe you heard us sing before, but wait till you hear us now.

COLCOCK: What you waitin' on?

STERLING: What?

COLCOCK: What you waitin' on? If you cats so bad let me hear you.

STERLING: But

COLCOCK: But what?

JESSE: Our other brother's not here. He's the third part in our three-part harmony.

COLCOCK: Look boys I'm sorry. I'm a busy man. Now's your chance. Let's hear y'all sing two-part harmony or you can depart.

(The Boys look at each other.)

JESSE: All right?

STERLING: All right. Uh. Could I get a drink of water first.

(Colcock motions and the Bartender fills a glass and hands it to Sterling. Sterling gulps it down.)

STERLING: Thank you.

BOYS:

We got big dreams
Of things that will be.
We got big dreams
Of things that we'll see.

We got big dreams
And we'll git us some.
We got big dreams
Of good things to come.

COLCOCK: That it?

JESSE: Yeah.

COLCOCK: Well

STERLING: With our other brother we really cook.

COLCOCK: I don't know.

JESSE: Wait and see. I'm tellin' you. We'll stop the show.

COLCOCK: Your Mama know 'bout this?

STERLING: We grown. We do what we want.

JESSE: Look. This our business.

COLCOCK: I asked does your Mama know?

BOYS: No sir.

COLCOCK: Good. All right. We got rehearsal this Wednesday night. Eight o'clock. Don't be late.

STERLING: Wednesday? But Wednesday

JESSE: Quiet. Colcock? How much money

COLCOCK: We'll talk terms later. Besides this y'all first gig. You'll get basic scale.

(Colcock motions the Bouncer and he returns.)

JESSE: How much

BOUNCER: Hey. Keep it down.

JESSE: All I want to know is how much is

COLCOCK: See the gentlemen out. Will you?

BOUNCER: Yes sir Mr. Jones.

COLCOCK: See you boys on Wednesday.

BOUNCER: This way fellas. Mr. Jones will see you later.

STERLING: Thank you Mr. Jones.

JESSE: Yeah. Thank you sir. We'll see you on Wednesday.

BOUNCER: Okay. Follow me.

(The Bouncer crosses to the door and the Boys follow. They glance around as they cross.)

STERLING: Hey. Can we hang out a little while.

JESSE: What? Are you crazy?

STERLING: Jesse. Look at them women. I bet you they from Sweet Valley. You know what they say 'bout them Sweet Valley girls. They sweet through and through. Just look at 'em.

JESSE: Yeah. Look. You right.

(The Boys stop and stare. The Bouncer grabs them and pulls them to door.)

BOUNCER: I don't think you boys understood. Mr. Jones said he'll see you on Wednesday. Good night.

STERLING: Could I use the bathroom.

(The Bouncer tosses them off-stage.)

JESSE: Hey. Wait a minute.

(The Boys stumble back on-stage and straighten themselves up.)

STERLING: Shoot. I was this close to talkin' to a Sweet Valley girl.

JESSE: I know. Come on. We better get back home.

STERLING: Shucks.

(He looks back at the bar.)

JESSE: Come on man. We gonna be late.

(He walks and leaves Sterling.)

JESSE: We'll be on the inside real soon. Right?

(He looks around and sees Sterling standing.)

JESSE: Sterling. Come on man. Sterling.

(He returns and grabs his brother.)

JESSE: I can hear Mama now. Come on.

(He yanks him along.)

STERLING: Ouch.

JESSE: Come on man. Let's get out of here.

(They trot off stage and lights out.)

Scene 3: ROADSIDE/HOME - SUNDAY Late Afternoon

(Lights up. Outside down the road from the Ferguson home. Off-stage the occasional sound of engines is heard from a nearby highway.)

LOULA: (off-stage) You just git on outside. I tired of seein' you plopped down in front of that TV every chance you git. Go on.

(A door slams off-stage.)

LOULA: (off-stage) Ludiwici. Keep on. You hear? I gone git my switch.

(LUDIWICI enters the stage stomping her feet.)

LUDIWICI: I don't ever git to watch nothing.

(She sulks then starts to skip. A loud engine is heard and she runs to the edge of the stage and waves. A loud horn returns her greeting and she jumps with delight.)

LOULA: (off-stage) Ludiwici. Stay away from that highway. You here?

LUDIWICI: Shoot. I don't ever git to do nothing.

(She turns and kicks at the ground then skips across stage. Another loud engine approaches. She turns and runs to the edge of the stage and waves.)

LOULA: (off-stage) Ludiwici.

(Ludiwici freezes and slowly turns away.)

LOULA: (off-stage) I said stay away from that road.

LUDIWICI: Shoot.

(A loud bus engine approaches and idles off-stage. It opens and closes its door and takes off. Ludiwici watches but glances back at the house. Off-stage a WOMAN coughs and mumbles.)

WOMAN: Dog gone ignorant ass bus driver. I wonder where the hell he learned to drive a dag gone bus.

She enters stage with dust on her heels. Ludiwici stares. The Woman is striking. She is beautiful and has sex appeal. She wears a miniskirt and an afro. This is CAT. She fans the dust away and coughs. She carries a large suitcase in one hand and a smaller piece in the other and balances her pocketbook strap on her shoulder. She wears platforms and starts to walk with a limp.)

CAT: What in the world?

(She drops her luggage and looks down. She raises her foot and sees that her heel is broken.)

CAT: I'll be dog gone. I knew it. That dag gone bus driver.

(Ludiwici watches Cat.)

CAT: Damn it.

(Ludiwici recoils.)

CAT: If it ain't one damn thing it's another. I'll that son of a

(Ludiwici gasps and Cat looks. Ludiwici grimaces and squints her eyes.)

CAT: What's wrong with you?

(Ludiwici relaxes but is still a little uncomfortable.)

CAT: What is it?

LUDIWICI: Nothin' 'cept you was 'bout to cuss.

CAT: That all got you actin' like that?

LUDIWICI: Mama say cussin' a sin.

CAT: Oh? Where Mama at right now?

LUDIWICI: Home.

CAT: Where home at?

LUDIWICI: Over there.

CAT: Good. Long as your Mama over there she can't hear me. And what she don't hear she won't have to worry 'bout.

LUDIWICI: But Mama say

CAT: Look chile. I'm grown. I do and say what I want to when I want to. But I ain't got time to be worryin' 'bout what your Mama think about me cussin'. That dag gone bus driver caught my heel in the door when I was gettin' off that bus. Now it's broke.

LUDIWICI: Is them real shoes.

CAT: What you mean is they real shoes?

LUDIWICI: Nothin' 'cept I ain't never seen nobody in town wearing shoes like that. I seent them on TV though.

CAT: Good. I don't suppose nobody in this backward ass place would have a need for shoes like these since there probably ain't no place to go. But let me explain. I'm from the city and in the city where you have a million places to go and a million things to do everybody who is anybody wears shoes like this.

LUDIWICI: They do.

CAT: For real.

LUDIWICI: Men too.

CAT: Men too.

LUDIWICI: Wow. Wait till I tell Mama that men be wearing high heel shoes in the city.

CAT: They ain't high heel shoes. They called platforms.

LUDIWICI: Platforms? They got high heels?

CAT: Don't matter. They still called platforms.

LUDIWICI: Oh.

(Ludiwici stares at her.)

CAT: What's the matter now?

LUDIWICI: Nothin'.

CAT: Then what you starin' at?

LUDIWICI: Nothin'.

CAT: Then what's wrong? Something else done broke on me? My slip showing?

LUDIWICI: No ma'am.

CAT: No ma'am?

(She is uncomfortable with the greeting.)

CAT: Well what you lookin' at? You ain't never seen nobody just get off a bus?

LUDIWICI: Yes ma'am.

CAT: Then what is it?

LUDIWICI: Your. Your hair.

CAT: My hair?

(She feels her hair.)

CAT: What's wrong with my hair?

(She grabs her purse and pulls out her compact. She opens it and studies herself in the mirror.)

CAT: Ain't nothin' wrong with my hair. It's just a little mussed that's all. I been ridin' that bus. What you expect?

LUDIWICI: I don't know. You didn't git a chance to comb it today?

CAT: What? Well I'll be. I keep forgittin' I'm in the country. You prob'bly ain't seen this hair style yet. They call it an afro. This how they wearin' it in the city.

LUDIWICI: It look like a bush.

CAT: You right. They call it that too. It's almost like yours.

(Ludiwici is offended and shies away.)

CAT: I'm sorry. I was just playin'. Ain't nothin' wrong with your hair. You go up north you'll fit right in.

(Ludiwici doesn't quite know how to take it, but turns back to Cat.)

LUDIWICI: How it feel?

CAT: Like hair. See.

(She bends her head down and Ludiwici feels it.)

LUDIWICI: It's so soft. You got good hair. Why you wear it like that?

CAT: To show black power.

LUDIWICI: Black power?

CAT: Black power. You know. Like the Black Panthers and Malcolm X and Angela Davis and Dr. King? I keep forgittin'. Y'all probably still call each other colored 'round here?

LUDIWICI: Yes 'um.

(Ludiwici stares as Cat opens her purse and pulls out a pick with clenched fist on the end. She raises it to her head.)

LUDIWICI: What's that?

CAT: This here a pick. It's for pickin' out your afro. If you wear a 'fro you got to have a pick.

(Ludiwici watches as Cat holds her compact and picks out her hair.)

LUDIWICI: I bet if Mama straightened it you'd have long hair.

CAT: Never mind that. I got more to worry 'bout than havin' straight hair right now.

(She puts away her pick and compact and looks at her heel. She glances up and Ludiwici stares at her.)

CAT: What's your name?

LUDIWICI: Ludiwici.

CAT: Ludiwici?

LUDIWICI: Uh-huh. Ludiwici Menzalee Ferguson.

CAT: What kind of name is that?

LUDIWICI: I don't know. The kind my Mama give me I guess.

CAT: Ludiwici Menzalee Ferguson. Uh. Uh. Uh. I know I'm in the country now.

(She gathers her things.)

LUDIWICI: What's your name?

CAT: Cat.

LUDIWICI: Cat?

CAT: Well that's what my friends call me.
(She looks and Ludiwici gazes at her.)

CAT: Ain't nobody ever told you it's rude to stare?

LUDIWICI: Yes 'um. It's just

CAT: Just what?

LUDIWICI: It's just that you so pretty.

CAT: What?

LUDIWICI: You the prettiest woman I ever seen my whole life.
(Cat looks at her then chuckles.)

CAT: Girl please.

LUDIWICI: I mean it. You as pretty as them women be on TV.

CAT: You need to quit.

(She chuckles and pulls out cigarettes from her purse.
Ludiwici watches and Cat searches for matches.)

CAT: You got a light?

(Ludiwici's eye light up.)

LUDIWICI: Me? No ma'am. I ain't allowed to play with matches.

(Cat searches her purse and pulls out matches.)

LUDIWICI: You gonna smoke?

CAT: I sure am.

(She lights her cigarette and Ludiwici is shocked.)

LUDIWICI: Mama say it ain't ladylike for a woman to smoke.

CAT: Well I can't help what your Mama say. But I'm a lady and I'm gonna smoke.

(She enjoys herself and Ludiwici watches her.)

CAT: Chile you prob'bly ain't never seen such a pretty woman smoke a cigarette in your whole life either. But you're gonna have to cut out all that starin'.

LUDIWICI: Yes ma'am.

CAT: And about that ma'am thing. Can you cool it?

LUDIWICI: Ma'am?

CAT: I ain't nobody's Mama and I ain't nobody's ma'am. Yes or no will do fine.

LUDIWICI: But Mama says all children supposed to show respect to their elders.

(Cat coughs and rises. She throws the cigarette down and steps it out. She turns to Ludiwici.)

CAT: Now you just wait a second chile. Don't be callin'. I done told you I ain't nobody's Mama and I ain't nobody's elder either.

LUDIWICI: But Mama

CAT: Ain't here damnit.

(Ludiwici winces.)

CAT: What's the matter with you? Jumpin' like that?

LUDIWICI: Nothin'. It's just that Mama don't like no cussin'.

CAT: She don't?

LUDIWICI: Mama say people shouldn't cuss because children end up hearin' it and start cussin' too.

CAT: Your Mama's right. Children shouldn't cuss.

LUDIWICI: She say nobody should cuss.

CAT: Well your Mama don't know everything. And like I said before what she don't hear won't hurt her. Good Lord.

LUDIWICI: Mama say it's a sin to use the Lord's name in

CAT: All right girlfriend.

(She takes out another cigarette and Ludiwici looks at her.)

CAT: How old are you?

LUDIWICI: I'll be thirteen my next birthday. I'm the baby. I got three brothers and

CAT: They don't cuss?

LUDIWICI: Sometimes when they home 'round Mama they forgit. They slip and she beat 'em.

CAT: She do?

LUDIWICI: Uh-huh. She take her switch and go to town.

(Ludiwici mimics her Mama using the switch.)

CAT: Do tell. Mama don't play? Do she?

LUDIWICI: Uh-huh.

CAT: Sound like we'd be like oil and vinegar.

LUDIWICI: What you mean?

CAT: Never mind. Which way is town?

LUDIWICI: Crossway that way.

CAT: Crossway? I ain't goin' to Crossway.

LUDIWICI: Where you goin'?

CAT: Never mind that. I told that bus driver to let me off at the next city. I thought he said this was Crawfordsville. Crossway ain't big enough to spit in.

LUDIWICI: Yes it is. They be spittin' all the time.

CAT: It ain't no city.

LUDIWICI: We got a downtown and stores.

CAT: It still ain't no real city.

LUDIWICI: We even got a movie house.

CAT: I don't care 'bout no dag burn movie house. I need a room and some food. I been on that bus almost two days. I need a bath and something to eat damnit.

LUDIWICI: (she jumps) Mama say it's a sin to curse.

CAT: I told you me and your Mama might not just - Oh forget it. It don't matter. We'll prob'bly never meet. I'm catching the next bus out of Dodge. When does the next bus come through here?

LUDIWICI: Tomorrow.

CAT: Tomorrow? Damnit. I'll be a

LUDIWICI: Please stop cussin'? Mama might hear you.
(Ludiwici is tense and looks toward the house. Cat realizes she is upset and cools down.)

CAT: That sure is a fine lookin' house. Ain't no place like home.

(She lights her cigarette and sits on her suitcase.)

CAT: No place like home.

(She lowers her head and drops her cigarette. She steps it out and sobs quietly. She wipes tears from her face. Ludiwici crosses to her.)

LUDIWICI: Why you cryin'?

(Cat sniffles and pulls herself together.)

LUDIWICI: You sad?

CAT: Yeah. I'm sad and hungry and tired.

LUDIWICI: You hungry?

CAT: Girl I've been on that bus since yesterday. The only thing I've tasted lately is the dust off this road.

(She sniffs her underarm.)

CAT: I'm musky. And look at my clothes. My hair's a mess. I'm alone and lost.

LUDIWICI: You ain't lost. You in Crossway. And you ain't alone cause I'm here.

CAT: I might as well be. I feel like shhh

(Ludiwici covers Cat's mouth with her hand.)

LUDIWICI: Sh. Mama might hear you.

(Cat glares at her and quickly pulls her hand away.)

CAT: Girl don't touch my face. You must be crazy. I don't let nobody touch my face.

LUDIWICI: I'm sorry.

CAT: You better be. Touchin' my face like that.

LUDIWICI: But Mama might

CAT: I don't care 'bout that.

MUSICAL NUMBER: "I FEEL LIKE...SH!"

Girl next time
Better think twice.
Before you give
Words of advice.

You see I ain't
Nobody's fool.
Ain't nothin' here
From no old school.

I feel like...
Sh! Mama don't like hearin' no cussin'.
I feel like...
Sh! And if she do she'll do a lot more than fussin'.

I feel like...
Sh! You better listen at what I'm sayin'.
I feel like...
Sh! You think I am but I really ain't playin'.

Girl I been ridin'
A long hard way.
And I don't like
What it is you say.

You see my butt
Is sore and numb.
I sure could use me
A little taste rum.

I feel like...
Sh! Why you keep talkin' like that for.
I feel like...
Sh! Come on promise don't say it no more.

I feel like...
Sh! Just use some sense before talk and think.
I feel like...
Sh! And if she ask you say you don't like to drink.

Chile look at me
I'm rank and rumped.
Just git on away
And let me grumble.

My feet is hurtin'
I do declare.
Git on away
So I can swear.

I feel like...
Sh! I know she's gonna wonder where it is I been.
I feel like...
Sh! I'll just tell her that I made a new friend.

Right now I feel like...
Sh! I think she's list'n you better take care.
I feel like...
Sh! 'Cause if you don't you might need a prayer.

Girl I got troubles
That I ain't told.
Did I tell you
That the bus was cold?

I ain't sorry
That I complain.
You would too
If you felt my pain.

I feel like...
Sh! You better listen now you better hush.
I feel like...
Sh! And when you 'round Mama just please don't cuss.

I feel like...
Sh! Try to hold it back or keep it low.
I feel like...
Sh! I kinda have a feelin' she's already gonna know.

All I need's
A little rest.
Take a bath,
Slip on a fresh dress.

Could use a meal
And a little wine.
Have a cigarette
And I'll feel just fine.

I feel like...
Sh! Come on just please cooperate.
I feel like...
Sh! And I'll see 'bout gittin' you a plate.

I feel like...
Sh! Please listen I ain't playin' no joke.
I feel like...
Sh! And if she ask you, you don't like to smoke.

Well I don't know?
Hell I'm already here.
Might as well listen,
Dinner time's near.

Let's not tarry.
Don't want to make them wait.
I'll even help out with the dishes.
But let's not be late.

I feel like...
Sh! All right we might as well go.
I feel like...
Sh! She prob'bly be waitin' at the front door.

I feel like...
Sh! Okay come on I'll take a chance.
I feel like...
Sh! And if she ask you don't like to dance.

I feel like...

Sh!

LUDIWICI: Come on. Let's go. (she grabs Cat's hand and small suitcase) But please just don't cuss. Please.

(Cat grabs her large suitcase and hobbles a few steps.)

CAT: Okay. Wait. Let me change my shoes.

(She pushes her suitcase over and opens it. She searches and pulls out a fancy pair of shoes.)

LUDIWICI: I like 'em, but I don't know?

CAT: What?

LUDIWICI: They look like dancin' shoes.

CAT: They is dancin' shoes.

LUDIWICI: You got somethin' less fancy?

(Cat puts the shoes away and searches again. She pulls out plain flats.)

CAT: Will these do?

LUDIWICI: Perfect.

(Cat puts them on and Ludiwici studies her.)

LUDIWICI: You got a different dress?

CAT: I can't change out here.

LUDIWICI: Can you pull it down some?

(Cat obliges and Ludiwici smiles.)

LUDIWICI: That's better. Now your hair.

CAT: What?

LUDIWICI: Can you comb it down or put a scarf over it?

CAT: Chile. The things I do.

(She pulls out a scarf and folds it. She pushes her hair back and throws the scarf over her head and ties it.)

LUDIWICI: Okay. You look fine. Mama won't mind how you look now. I know she'll let you stay for supper. Let's go.

CAT: Girl I tell you. It ain't easy bein' a modern woman in today's world.

LUDIWICI: And after we finish eatin' we can watch some TV. We just got it. I was watchin' it just now. Till Mama made me come outside. But we can watch it together.

(They exit stage and lights down. Lights up on the living room of the Ferguson home. It is furnished simply. There are pictures of the children, trophies that the boys have won and some religious objects. LOULA FERGUSON is heard off-stage in kitchen. Pots clang and she talks on the phone.)

LOULA: (off-stage) Girl I couldn't believe it myself. And she never blinked an eye. Looked right at me.

(Ludiwici leads Cat back on stage. She tiptoes to the kitchen and listens. They hear Loula on the phone.)

LOULA: (off-stage) Sister it's one of those things. I just pray. We have to love our enemies and Lord knows she's mine.

(Ludiwici turns and the floor creaks.)

LOULA: (off-stage) Ludiwici? That you?

(Loula peeps on-stage still on the phone.)

LOULA: Ludiwici?

(She sees Cat and gives Ludiwici a hard look. She exits.)

LOULA: (off-stage) I'll talk to you later Ozetta. I got to go.

(Loula enters and removes her apron. She looks at Ludiwici and Cat and circles round them.)

LOULA: Ludiwici Ferguson. Where you been?

LUDIWICI: No where Mama. Just outside.

LOULA: Don't just outside Mama me. You been playin' up near the highway haven't you? And who this? I told you 'bout bringing strangers home. I thought you learned your lesson. You done forgot? Where's my switch?

(She puts down her apron.)

LUDIWICI: No Mama. Wait. This here Cat. The bus driver let her off at the wrong stop.

LOULA: Bus driver? So you was up near the highway. You think I'm playin' with you girl?

LUDIWICI: No ma'am.

CAT: Please Mrs. Ferguson let me explain. I got off the bus at the wrong stop. I was lookin' for help me when I saw your daughter. She was minding her business playing way off from the road. She wasn't nowhere near that highway. I walked to where she was and started talkin' to her.

LOULA: Where you goin'?

LUDIWICI: To the city.

CAT: Actually I'm coming from the city. New York City.

LUDIWICI: New York City?

LOULA: Ludiwici.

LUDIWICI: Wow. You really comin' from New York City? Really? I never knew anybody from the city 'cept Aunt Ella, Uncle Tip and Sylvester.

LOULA: Ludiwici. How can I help you Miss

LUDIWICI: Mama Cat wants to rent a room.

LOULA: What?

LUDIWICI: I told her you might do it because you could use the extra money.

LOULA: I see you two been doin' a heap of talkin'. I'm sorry Miss. What was your name? (she extends her hand and Cat shakes it)

CAT: Cat - Catherine. Catherine Carnegay.

LUDIWICI: Catherine Carnegay? That's so pretty.

LOULA: Ludiwici. I'm sorry Miss Carnegay. I'm Loula. Loula Ferguson.

CAT: Pleased to meet you. Call me Cat - Catherine.

LOULA: I'm sorry Catherine. But I normally don't take in strangers. Unless they recommended by somebody I know.

LUDIWICI: Mama she a nice lady. See how pretty she is?

LOULA: Yes. I see.

(Cat looks around the room and studies the pictures.)

CAT: You have a fine lookin' family. Them your sons?

LUDIWICI: Yeah. Them's my stupid ole brothers.

LOULA: Ludiwici.

CAT: And look at you Ludiwici. You cute as a button.

LUDIWICI: I am? You hear her Mama? Cat say I'm cute as a button.

LOULA: Ludiwici. You know better. You address Catherine as Miss Carnegay. She's your elder.

LUDIWICI: But Cat say

LOULA: Ludiwici. You sassin' me. I'm sorry Catherine. And besides that musty ole attic ain't big enough for a flea.

LUDIWICI: It was big enough for Uncle Mandy. And he a lot bigger than a flea.

LOULA: Where's my switch?

LUDIWICI: But Mama. She ain't got no place to stay.

LOULA: I'm sorry.

(Ludiwici cries.)

LUDIWICI: But Mama. Where she gonna go? She ain't got no place to stay.

LOULA: Ludiwici you just hush up all that fuss. Else you gonna have something to cry 'bout for real.

CAT: Don't cry Ludiwici. I'll be okay.

(Ludiwici runs to her and hugs her tightly.)

LUDIWICI: Where you goin'?

CAT: I don't know. But I'll be fine.

LUDIWICI: Don't go. Please don't leave.

LOULA: Girl you done lost your mind? Hush up all that foolishness.

LUDIWICI: Shoot.

LOULA: What?

LUDIWICI: Shoot my foot.

LOULA: I'm gonna shoot your behind. Soon's I find my switch.

LUDIWICI: Please Mama.

(Loula searches for her switch and Ludiwici rushes to her crying. The front door opens and Jesse and Sterling enter. They laugh and enjoy themselves.)

JESSE: Man did you see Foster's face when they took him away?

STERLING: That was one sad joker.

JESSE: That nigga tried his best. One minute yelling and screaming. The next crying like a baby. That was some show.

(They laugh then realize they have walked into one of Ludiwici's fits. Their chuckles subside.)

STERLING: Mama they done locked up Foster Banks. Public drunkenness. You shoulda seen him.

LOULA: What? Foster Banks that was livin' here? Under my own roof? I ain't never seen him drinkin'. He was always quiet as a mouse.

STERLING: The reason you ain't never seen him drinkin' was he been going over to Sweet Valley doing it. He was quiet as mouse 'cause by the time he got home he was out cold.

JESSE: He finally broke down and tied one on real good though. Called the police on him for disturbing the peace.

LUDIWICI: Don't nobody want to hear you.

LOULA: Ludiwici I'm 'bout tired of you.

STERLING: What's the matter with the cry baby? (he musses her hair and she pushes him away)

LUDIWICI: You better leave me alone.

(He continues to play with her.)

LUDIWICI: You better leave me alone.

(She slaps him back and they fight. Loula moves to them.)

LOULA: Sterling. Ludiwici. Stop it. Right now. I don't need you comin' in botherin' her more.

LUDIWICI: Mama please. I'm sorry. Can she stay for dinner? Please Mama. She ain't ate all day.

JESSE: Who ain't ate all day nappy head?

LUDIWICI: None of your business.

LOULA: Girl have you lost your mind? Inviting strangers to dinner?

LUDIWICI: Mama please?

JESSE: Who y'all talkin' 'bout?

STERLING: Yeah?

(They glance around the room and spot Cat. They freeze and stare. Ludiwici runs to Cat and grabs her hand. She wipes her face and stakes her claim.)

LUDIWICI: This my friend Cat. And you better not mess with her.

LOULA: Ludiwici. (gentler, appreciative of Ludiwici's comment) Ludiwici quit showing out. All right. She can stay for dinner.

LUDIWICI: Yeah.

(She screams and dances in circles with Cat.)

LOULA: Ludiwici quit that dancin' and actin' a fool.

JESSE: Hey Mama. With Foster locked up now you got an extra room.

STERLING: Yeah Mama. In case anyone is looking for one.

(Loula looks at them and crosses the room.)

LOULA: I'm tired of you children standin' 'round tellin' me what to do. Ludiwici go on and set the table. Take Cat with you.

(Ludiwici pulls Cat by the hand and they exit stage.)

LUDIWICI: Come on. It's this way.

(The Boys stare as Cat exits.)

LOULA: Boys don't y'all got chores to do.

(The Boys are in another world and focus off-stage.)

STERLING: Jesse am I dreaming? Was she for real?

LOULA: Jesse? Sterling? Y'all hear me?

JESSE: I think she was for real, but I'm not sure. Let's double check.

(Loula goes to bookcase and reaches up. She pulls forth her switch.)

LOULA: I'll show you for real.

(She swings the switch at them and hits on their behinds.)

LOULA: This for real. You want to double check something? Just double check them chores before you come back inside.

(The Boys dodge her and run off-stage.)

LOULA: Lord give me strength.

(Lights out.)

Scene 3: THUNDERBIRD'S GAS & GARAGE - WEDNESDAY Morning

(Inside the garage of a local gas station. Sterling and Jesse work on a car. DUKE works on another.)

STERLING: Man I think we done worked on all the cars in Crossway this week.

JESSE: And then some.

STERLING: I'll sure be glad when it's quittin' time. I plan on havin' me a good ole time tonight.

JESSE: Baby brother finally turnin' eighteen. Can't wait for his little party.

STERLING: Man be quiet. You prob'bly be the first one eatin' cake.

JESSE: Hey. And what if I do?

STERLING: Nothing. You can eat the whole thing all I care. I got more important business.

JESSE: Like what? You plan on tryin' to git you some tonight?

STERLING: Man you stupid.

JESSE: Sterling's gonna git him some. Sterling's gonna git him some.

STERLING: Man shut up. I been done got some.

JESSE: You have?

STERLING: Forgit you man. You just worry 'bout gittin' some yourself.

JESSE: Man that ain't my problem. You better shut up anyway. Else I'll take all your little girlfriends 'way from you.

STERLING: You can have them.

JESSE: I can?

STERLING: I'm tired of these country girls who ain't been nowhere. I'm ready for a city woman. I'm gonna be busy with Cat.

JESSE: Cat?

STERLING: That's right. Cat. She's the finest woman I ever seen.

JESSE: You wouldn't know what to do with it if you had the chance.

STERLING: That's all right. But I'd sure enough learn. Quick too.

JESSE: Man please.

(Duke crosses.)

JESSE: What you think Duke?

DUKE: Huh? 'Bout what?

STERLING: 'Bout what? 'Bout Cat.

DUKE: She's okay.

STERLING: Okay? You ain't never had nothin' like that before.

JESSE: You ain't neither.

STERLING: You don't know.

JESSE: I seen them girls you be talkin' to. (he barks)

STERLING: What about them girls you done dated? (he scratches)

JESSE: Man you can forgit it. I'm tellin' you. Cat ain't interested in no boy. She wants a man.

STERLING: I got your boy.

JESSE: Don't git upset brother.

STERLING: If you so much man why don't you go after it?

JESSE: You forgittin'. Jesse Ferguson don't chase no woman. They comes after me.

STERLING: You just mad she ain't looked your way.

JESSE: Hey my plate is full. (rubs belly) And so am I.

STERLING: You ain't never turned done nothin' in your life.

JESSE: And I ain't never been turned down neither.

STERLING: You full of it all right.

JESSE: You don't need to be worryin' 'bout Cat no way. She be smilin' real hard every time Duke comes around.

STERLING: Man you crazy.

JESSE: I'm tellin' you. If anybody's gonna git it, it's him. What about it Duke?

DUKE: What?

JESSE: Man what's wrong with you. You been actin' mighty strange lately.

DUKE: Nothin'.

JESSE: Nothin'? You and Yvonne doin' all right.

DUKE: Yeah. We okay.

JESSE: Y'all ain't been talkin' much on the phone. Y'all usually be talkin' every chance you git.

DUKE: You need to mind your own business.

JESSE: Hey I'm just concerned.

DUKE: I been havin' a lot on my mind.

JESSE: Yeah. Ever since Cat came to town.

DUKE: I ain't interested in Cat.

JESSE: Maybe not. But she interested in you.

DUKE: You don't know what you're talkin' about. I got a girl.

JESSE: That might be your problem. You been goin' steady over a year now. What you gonna do? You know women start thinkin' 'bout gittin' married 'fore long.

DUKE: Man shut up.

JESSE: Maybe it's time to see what fresh fruit needs pickin'.

DUKE: Cat ain't all that fresh.

STERLING: She fresh enough for me.

DUKE: Help yourself.

JESSE: I'm tellin' you man. Cat be lookin' real hard when you be around.

DUKE: Sound like you be lookin' real hard yourself.

JESSE: All right. I done told you. You gonna miss out.

DUKE: Don't worry 'bout it. Worry 'bout finishing up that car. You got a couple more to work on.

STERLING: That's his problem. Always minding everybody else's business instead of his own.

JESSE: 'Cept yours. Cause you ain't doin' much of nothin'. Especially with Cat.

STERLING: Why don't you quit runnin' your mouth and do some work like Duke said.

JESSE: You just mad cause I'm next in line. Cat don't want no boy.

STERLING: Man shut up. Keep on with that boy talk and I'm gonna show you

DUKE: Why don't both y'all shut up and start workin'.

JESSE: Hey. I just don't want to see baby brother git hurt.

STERLING: I ain't gonna be the one to git hurt. Quit worryin' 'bout me and look out for yourself.

JESSE: I heard that before.

STERLING: Man you don't know nothin'. Just shut up.

JESSE: You better listen to me. I know women.

STERLING: You don't know nothin'. You ain't seen the way me and Cat be lookin' at each other.

JESSE: Lookin's one thing. Lovin's another. All you doin' is dreamin'.

STERLING: Man be quiet.

JESSE: I'm tellin' you. You better listen up and stop wastin' your time. All you got is big dreams.

STERLING: Yeah I got big dreams. And when they happen they'll be even bigger.

JESSE: What? Gittin' Cat.

STERLING: Naw. I'm talkin' about money. And everything you can git with it.

JESSE: Now you talkin'.

STERLING: I'm talkin' about havin' in the finest house.

JESSE: Yeah. Right next to mine.

STERLING: I'm talkin' about havin' the finest clothes.

JESSE: Next to mine.

DUKE: Maybe y'all didn't hear me. Thunderbird ain't payin' y'all to talk. How 'bout you start earnin' some of that big money you gonna be needin' for them big dreams?

JESSE: Man you can't make that kinda money workin' in no garage.

STERLING: We gonna make our money singin'.

DUKE: Singin'?

JESSE: That's right man. Singin'.

DUKE: Y'all is dreamin'.

STERLING: What? You don't think we can do it?

DUKE: Nope.

STERLING: Why?

DUKE: How y'all plan on bein' professional singers in Crossway?

JESSE: We ain't gonna be in Crossway. We goin' to the city.

DUKE: What city?

STERLING: The big city. Detroit. New York City.

JESSE: Maybe even L.A.

DUKE: How y'all gittin' there?

JESSE: We don't know. But we gonna do it.

STERLING: Yeah.

DUKE: Man both of y'all got big dreams. Big daydreams.

MUSICAL NUMBER: "BIG DREAMS"

Listen little brothers,
It's time you understand.
Takes more than just believin'
That one day you'll be livin' grand.

You got to have your hopes,
But you got to make some plans.
Life means more than dreamin',
If you want to be a man.

You got big dreams
And I suppose nothin's wrong
With your big dreams,
But you got to move on.

Because the big dreams
That we once had as kids
Are the big dreams
Of which you need to git rid.

Well now don't be singin' 'bout
No pie in the sky.
For things down here on earth
Much that ain't gonna buy.

What your heart desires
Might make you do a crime.
So be careful what you do
Unless you want to do time.

Because your big dreams
Take plenty of green
If your big dreams
Will ever be seen.

So chase those big dreams
You better move fast.
'Cause in your big dreams
You might come in last.

Let me extend my thanks
For your words of advice.
They couldn't have been much colder
Unless they was ice.

I hope that you don't think
Your words' heaven sent.
Could you change your tune?
Do you git my hint?

Because my big dreams
They may not come quick.
But with my big dreams
I'm gonna stick.

I'll git my big dreams
And leave you alone.
I'll have my big dreams
And you'll have your moans.

Now we know what it takes
To make our dreams come true.
So talk about the weather
Or think up something new.

No one ever said
Life's just 9 to 5.
So 'cuse my ignorance
While I take a dive.

In my big dreams
I'll be flat on my back.
With my big dreams
And an ice cold six-pack.

Oh no my big dreams
Don't grow on no trees.
But oh my big dreams
One day I will see.

The problem is y'all think
That y'all already grown.
Well Mr. Know-It-All himself
The problem's your own.

The problem is you want
To have it all right now.
The problem is your mouth.
Shut it or I'll show you how.

The problem might slip up
And slap you in your face.
The problem might git slapped
And hit the floor someplace.

The problem is you don't
Know any more than us.
So git your act together
Before you start to fuss.

'Cause in our big dreams
We'll have it all.
And in our big dreams
We'll be sure to call.

In our big dreams
And in our big ole nice pad.
In our big dreams
We'll smile and be glad.

In our big dreams
We'll have plenty of gigs.
In our big dreams
We'll eat just like pigs.

In our big dreams
We're gonna ride high.
In our big dreams
We might even fly.

In our big dreams
We'll go straight to the top.
And no our big dreams
Won't ever stop.

DUKE: Do what y'all want. It ain't my problem. Y'all just young and crazy. You'll see.

JESSE: See what?

DUKE: 'Bout your dreams. You'll see.

STERLING: What's the use Jesse? It's like talkin' to Mama.

DUKE: Yeah? Well maybe if you'd listen to her your head wouldn't be filled with so much nonsense.

STERLING: Says you. You don't know nothin'.

JESSE: Tellin' us 'bout plannin' for the future. I don't see you makin' no plans.

DUKE: (pauses) I have.

STERLING: Yeah. What? You still be here when we long gone.

JESSE: See. Like I said. You don't even know what you want. Why don't you follow your own advice.

DUKE: I have.

JESSE: Whatever.

DUKE: I haven't told nobody.

JESSE: Told nobody what?

DUKE: I prob'bly should've said somethin' by now.

JESSE: 'Bout what?

DUKE: I'm joinin' the army.

JESSE & STERLING: What?

DUKE: I said I'm joinin' the army. I ain't said nothin' to Mama yet.

JESSE: Quit kiddin' man. You ain't joinin' no army.

DUKE: I'm leavin' next week.

STERLING: What? You serious Duke?

DUKE: Yep. Sure am.

STERLING: Man you gotta be kiddin'. You can't go in the army.

JESSE: You gotta stay here. We got to keep the group together.

DUKE: Ludiwici play good enough. Y'all can sing my part.

JESSE: I'm talkin' 'bout us.

STERLING: Yeah. Us.

DUKE: Us who? It's just about what y'all want? Huh? Can't nobody else have their dream. Well I'm sorry. I gotta do what I gotta do.

JESSE: You ain't gotta do nothin'. 'Cept stay here. Once we git the group goin' we'll be travelin' all over the place.

DUKE: Mama and y'all'll be fine.

JESSE: Man I ain't talkin' 'bout Mama and us. I'm talkin' 'bout us. You, me and Sterling.

DUKE: What?

JESSE: We got a group. At least we suppose to have one.

STERLING: We suppose to sing at the opening of the club tomorrow night.

DUKE: What?

STERLING: You suppose to sing with us.

DUKE: What? I know y'all dreamin'. I ain't gonna be singin' at no club come Saturday. And neither is y'all.

STERLING: But we done

DUKE: Boy if Mama was to find out she'd beat you raw. You know they tryin' to keep that place from openin' up.

JESSE: She ain't gonna find out. We ain't gonna tell her.

DUKE: I will.

JESSE: Why? Just cause you don't want to do it? That ain't right.

STERLING: You said we was grown. We can do what we want.

DUKE: I said y'all think y'all grown.

STERLING: I am. I'm turnin' eighteen.

DUKE: Boy age don't

STERLING: Stop callin' me boy.

DUKE: Age don't make you grown. Common sense do. And it sound like y'all ain't got much.

JESSE: It don't matter. We gonna do it anyway. With or without you.

DUKE: Go ahead. I don't care. I got enough on my mind.

STERLING: You gonna tell Mama?

DUKE: Why you worried if you so grown?

STERLING: I ain't worried. I made my choice. I'm a man. Can't you accept that?

DUKE: Keep on dreaming. I don't care. But long as you here in Crossway do it on your time not Thunderbird's. Get busy.

STERLING: You can have Crossway and everything in it. I'll take my dreams.

DUKE: That's about all you got anyway. (he crosses)

STERLING: You ain't got nothin'.

(Duke exits.)

STERLING: What we gonna do now?

JESSE: Why you askin' me? How I know?

STERLING: You know everything else. What about Saturday?

JESSE: What about it?

STERLING: Duke said he whatn't gonna sing.

JESSE: What I'm supposed to do?

STERLING: Why'd you ask him so late for?

JESSE: You heard him. He whatn't gonna do it no way.

STERLING: You been tellin' Colcock we been practicin' with Duke. How you gonna explain?

JESSE: It don't matter now anyhow. We know the song. We don't need Duke. Besides. You got a mouth. You coulda said something to him if you was so bothered.

STERLING: You the one supposed to be in charge.

(Jesse crosses and Sterling follows.)

STERLING: So now it's just you and me. What about the money Colcock said he was gonna pay us all three of us? And we done went ahead and rented that extra tuxedo for Duke?

JESSE: Man stop worryin'. Just stay calm.

STERLING: There you go. Don't worry. Stay calm. You better hope Colcock don't worry and stay calm. We'll end up with nothin' 'cept two beatin's. One from Mama and one from him.

JESSE: Ain't no one gonna git beat. By Mama or Colcock. She ain't gonna know. I'll just tell Colcock Duke sick or something.

STERLING: What if he don't buy it?

JESSE: I don't know.

STERLING: What good is that? We countin' on that money.

JESSE: Man stop buggin' me. You need to keep it cool. Like a bebop tempo.

STERLING: You better hope we don't get bebopped on the head by Mama or Colcock.

JESSE: Come on. Let's finish up.

(They work on the car and lights out.)

Scene 5: DOWNTOWN - WEDNESDAY Morning

(Lights up. Several stores line the street. Loula and Cat walk down the sidewalk. Ludiwici scampers ahead of them and glances through store windows.)

CAT: That sun sure is hot. It must be high noon.

LOULA: We ain't had much rain to cool things down. It's been hot like this for a while. After while you just git used to it.

CAT: I'll never get use to this weather. It's just too darn hot.

(Loula shoots her a glance, but Cat doesn't notice. Loula turns and Ludiwici rushes to another window.)

LOULA: Ludiwici stop runnin' 'round like somethin' wild. You actin' like you never been out the house. You hear?

(Ludiwici obeys and sulks back to her mother.)

LOULA: I can't be runnin' all over town with you. I got business to take care of. Come on.

(They cross and Ludiwici lingers behind and looks.)

LOULA: I got too many things to do. Here you is runnin' left and right.

LUDIWICI: Mama. Mama can we go

LOULA: No. I done told you. Now hush.

LUDIWICI: I don't ever git to do nothin'.

LOULA: Don't be sassin' me. Hush up now. Before I find me a switch.

(EMMA WASHINGTON enters stage.)

EMMA: Loula.

(Loula, Cat and Ludiwici pause.)

LOULA: Emma.

EMMA: Afternoon.

LOULA: Afternoon yourself.

(Emma eyes Cat.)

EMMA: Afternoon.

CAT: Afternoon.

EMMA: I don't believe we've met?

(She extends her hand and Loula watches.)

CAT: Hi. My name is Cat.

EMMA: Cat?

CAT: Oh excuse me. Catherine Carnegay. Pleased to meet you. (she shakes her hand)

EMMA: You new in town?

CAT: I'm just passing through.

EMMA: From where?

CAT: Up north.

EMMA: Oh? How long you going to be in town?

CAT: Oh I don't know. Maybe a few of days. We'll see. I want to experience some of y'all's southern hospitality.

(Loula gets restless.)

EMMA: Oh well then. Loula I guess you gonna have to put Cat under lock and key. What with them young bucks of yourin. I'm sure they'd show her all the southern hospitality she'd ever want to see.

LUDIWICI: They better not mess with Cat.

LOULA: Ludiwici. Mind your manners. Excuse us Emma. I got to be goin'. I got business to take care of. 'Morning.

EMMA: 'Morning Loula. Ludiwici. Pleased to meet you Miss?

CAT: Carnegay. But just call me Cat-therine.

(YVONNE and ROOSEVELT WASHINGTON enter stage.)

EMMA: Yvonne. Roosevelt.

(She motions them over and they cross.)

EMMA: I was just saying goodbye to Loula and Ludiwici here. This here is Cat. I mean Catherine Carnegay. She visiting from the north. Staying with Loula while she in town. Right Loula? Excuse my manners. This is my daughter Yvonne. And my son Roosevelt.

YVONNE: Pleased to meet you.

ROOSEVELT: Good morning Miss Carnegay. I'm very pleased to make your acquaintance.

CAT: Well. Good morning to you. My but aren't you the proper gentleman.

ROOSEVELT: Good morning Mrs. Ferguson. Hey Ludiwici.

(He smiles at her and she sucks her lips and looks away.)

YVONNE: Duke didn't mention y'all having company in town.

EMMA: (to Cat) Duke is Yvonne's beau. (to Loula) Cat ain't related to you is she?

(Loula nods no.)

EMMA: I didn't think so. (to Yvonne) She just taking a room there till she move on.

YVONNE: Oh? Where you heading?

CAT: I don't know. I got off the bus at the wrong stop. I was headed to Swee (sneezes)

LUDIWICI: Bless you.

CAT: Thank you. Crawfordsville. But I kind of like it here. It's a nice change from the city.

EMMA: Loula I have let you hold me long enough. Come on Yvonne and Roosevelt. We have tarried long enough. We must be going. We have some more shopping to do. Good day y'all. (she crosses then pauses and turns back) Oh Loula. Too bad about that nightclub opening up near Antioch. Y'all probably have just about given up all hope? Huh Loula? I guess there's not much y'all can do anyway I suppose. But the members of Ebenezer would never allow such a transgression near our sanctuary.

LOULA: I don't know who you

YVONNE: Mama.

EMMA: Oh my goodness. (glances at watch) Where has the morning gone? We simply must be going. So nice meeting you. Y'all take care.

(She crosses and exits stage followed by Roosevelt. Yvonne looks back and exits.)

LOULA: That woman done worked my last nerve. Every time I see her. Every chance she gits. She always say something to git my goat.

CAT: She's just what we call ignorant up north. Can't help herself.

LOULA: From what I hear she been the main one gossipin' 'bout that nightclub openin' up near Antioch. I might not've been the first one in line down at the courthouse to keep that place from openin', but I was there.

CAT: She just jealous.

LOULA: Huh. Always puttin' on airs like the world revolve around her.

CAT: Loula don't pay her no mind. She's just trying to get next to you.

LOULA: She done got next to me. Next time she come 'round I'm gonna put my

CAT: Loula. Come on now. Don't be acting like this 'round Ludiwici. You supposed to be settin' a Christian example.

LOULA: I know. Lord I know. Just give me strength.

(She looks and Ludiwici looks through store windows.)

LOULA: I'm sorry. Come on Ludiwici. We got to git goin'.

LUDIWICI: Mama can we go inside

LOULA: Ludiwici I done told you. I got business to take care of. I ain't got time to be chasin' you.

LUDIWICI: But Mama

LOULA: That's enough now. I don't want to hear no more. You hear?

CAT: Loula. Let the chile stay with me? We can do some browsing while you tend to your business. We'll be fine.

LUDIWICI: Can I Mama? Can I stay with Cat? Please?

(Loula pauses and considers.)

LOULA: I guess it'll be all right. You just better mind and behave yourself. You hear? And don't be askin' Cat to buy you nothin'.

LUDIWICI: Yes ma'am.

LOULA: I mean it. I shouldn't be too long. Let's meet back up here at Stein's at one o'clock. I'll see y'all then.

(She crosses stage and exists.)

LUDIWICI: Where we gonna go? You gonna buy somethin'?

CAT: I don't know honey. I'm in the buyin' mood, but my purse ain't. I think I just want to look around. Maybe find a bargain someplace. Where's the best place to shop?

LUDIWICI: I like "Cunningham's" 'cause they got the best toys. Mama say "Taylor's" got the nicest clothes. But I ain't never really been inside.

(She glances up at the "Stein's Five & Dime" sign then turns back to Cat.)

LUDIWICI: "Stein's" got nice toys too. They got everything.

CAT: They do?

LUDIWICI: Uh huh. This where we got our TV set. They got clothes and toys and candy and everything.

CAT: Okay. Sounds good to me. Let's go in.

(They exit. The set changes to the inside of the store. Shelves and racks of merchandise are pushed on. Cat and Ludiwici enter stage. Ludiwici glances around and grabs Cat's hand and pulls her.)

LUDIWICI: The toys is over this way. Come on.

CAT: Wait a minute chile. I ain't interested in no toys. You go on. I'm going to look in the Women's Dept. Don't get lost now. You hear?

LUDIWICI: Yes ma'am.

CAT: If you need to find me that's where I'll be.

(Cat exits stage. Ludiwici rushes to the shelf of toys and stops at the dolls.)

LUDIWICI: They got new dolls.

(She gently touches the box that contains one.)

LUDIWICI: They so pretty. All of them. They all so pretty. I wish I had one.

(She looks and finds a black doll behind the others.)

LUDIWICI: Look. A colored doll.

(She grabs the box and pulls it close.)

LUDIWICI: You the prettiest one here. I never seen a colored doll before. You almost pretty as Cat.

(MRS. TUCKER enters stage and stops. She is white and is a store clerk. She stares at the girl, then strides to her and takes the doll from her.)

MRS. TUCKER: Children are not allowed to touch the merchandise. Especially no colored children.

(Ludiwici watches innocently as Mrs. Tucker puts the doll behind the others.)

MRS. TUCKER: We don't allow unsupervised children in our store. Especially no colored children. Where's your Mama?

LUDIWICI: She's

MRS. TUCKER: Well? Is she here?

LUDIWICI: No ma'am. She

MRS. TUCKER: Well you'll just have to leave.

LUDIWICI: But

(Mrs. Tucker pushes her to the door.)

LUDIWICI: But my

MRS. TUCKER: We don't allow no stray colored children coming in off the street handling our merchandise.

(Cat enters and stops. She watches Mrs. Tucker push Ludiwici to the door.)

MRS. TUCKER: Our store policy strictly forbids unsupervised children in the store. And a colored child.

CAT: Get your hand off that child.

(Mrs. Tucker and Ludiwici stop. Mrs. Tucker turns to Cat.)

CAT: You heard me. I said get your hand off that child.

MRS. TUCKER: Are you talking to me?

CAT: Yes. And I ain't tellin' you again.

(Cat moves to her quickly and Mrs. Tucker backs away.)

CAT: Who do you think you are? What's your name?

MRS. TUCKER: Uh. Um. Uh.

CAT: You ain't had no right pushin' that girl like that. I better not ever see you do that again. Especially to no colored child.

MRS. TUCKER: I. I.

CAT: If you want to push somebody try me. See where that gits you?

MRS. TUCKER: Well I

CAT: What's your name? Where's the manager?

MRS. TUCKER: Well I

(Cat glares at her and she scrambles off. Ludiwici snuffles and wipes her eyes.)

CAT: Ole bitty. Don't let her scare you. You got to speak up or people'll run right over you. Understand?

LUDIWICI: Yes ma'am.

CAT: Come on chile. I ain't finished lookin' yet.

(They cross and Cat looks at merchandise.)

CAT: Now you stay 'round here where I can see you.

LUDIWICI: Yes ma'am.

CAT: Don't worry about that ole bitty. She don't scare me none. You go 'head and look at whatever you want.

(She looks at a couple of items then exits. Ludiwici looks around.)

LUDIWICI: Them dolls was so pretty. Maybe I can git Mama to buy me the colored one. Maybe Cat'll buy her for me. She was so pretty.

(She passes the ribbons and barrettes.)

LUDIWICI: She had the prettiest hair. With the prettiest ribbons.

(She picks up a ribbon and holds it to her head. She glances in the mirror.)

LUDIWICI: They was all so very pretty.

MUSICAL NUMBER: "ALL THE PRETTY THINGS"

See the pretty things
That's all around.
All the pretty things
That's to be found.

All the pretty things
Lined up so neat.
All the pretty things
Would be my treat.

I have got a wish.
It is to git
A pretty little doll
With dress to fit.

A precious little thing

For me to hold
I'd put her in her carriage
and take a stroll.
All the pretty things
And all the toys.
All the pretty things
Would bring me joy.

All the pretty things
I want to touch.
All the pretty things
I want so much.

See all the pretty
Dresses there?
I'd like to try them on
But I don't dare.

All the pretty shoes
In I would dance
When Mama wasn't home
I'd take a chance.

See the pretty bows
And ribbons there.
I'd like to tie them
Up in my hair.

A red barrette
So all could see
The pretty little girl
That I would be.

All the pretty things
I want to git.
All the pretty things
I ain't got yet.

All the pretty things
I wish was mine.
All the pretty things
That I could find.

When time would come
For me to eat
A plate of fudge
Would be my meat.

A lollipop
And bubble gum
Then washing dishes
Would be fun.

I wonder would it help
To throw a fit?
Git on the floor
And cry and sit.

I wonder would she listen
If I'd say please.
Maybe git down
On my knees.

All the pretty things
I'd keep for me.
All the pretty things
They'd never see.

All the pretty things
I could possess.
But only if
Mama says yes.

I'd buy for her
A nice big hat.
And something for
My new buddy Cat.

I'd pick out for her
A leather purse
And maybe then
She wouldn't curse.

All the pretty things
That make me glad.
All the pretty things
I want so bad.

All the pretty things
That I would own.
All the pretty things
Would make me grown.

(Mrs. Tucker and MR. STEIN have entered stage near the end of Ludiwici's song and watch her. He is an older white man and owner of the store. Ludiwici sees them and freezes.)

MRS. TUCKER: That's her. That's the girl. I told her we don't allow no unsupervised children in the store. And here she is dancing with the merchandise.

(Mrs. Tucker strides to her.)

MRS. TUCKER: I told you we don't allow no unsupervised colored children to be touching the merchandise. (she snatches the ribbons from her hand)

MR. STEIN: Mrs. Tucker.

(Cat enters stage and sees. Mrs. Tucker looks at her.)

CAT: I done told you.

(She strides to Mrs. Tucker who backs away. She ducks behind Mr. Stein.)

MRS. TUCKER: There she is. That's her. That's the other one.

CAT: The other one?

(Mr. Stein steps between her and Cat.)

MR. STEIN: Just a minute miss.

MRS. TUCKER: I tried to tell her we don't allow no unsupervised colored children in the store.

MR. STEIN: Mrs. Tucker.

CAT: And I told you I better not ever see you treat nobody's child like that again. Especially no colored child.

MR. STEIN: Please. Just calm down Miss

CAT: Carnegay. Catherine Carnegay.

MR. STEIN: Mrs. Tucker was just following the rules. We don't allow any unsupervised children in the store.

CAT: I don't care about no rules. That don't give her the right to treat no child that way.

MR. STEIN: She was just following the rules.

CAT: She didn't have to go hurt the chile's feelings. Callin' her colored. Grabbin' and pushin' her. She wasn't hurtin' nothin'.

MR. STEIN: Mrs. Tucker is that right? Were you pushing the child.

MRS. TUCKER: Mr. Stein. She wasn't cooperating.

CAT: Wasn't cooperating? With some crazy woman pushin' you out the door? Let me show you what I mean. (she goes for Mrs. Tucker)

(Loula enters stage and watches.)

MR. STEIN: Just a minute now.

(Mr. Stein crosses between Cat and Mrs. Tucker. Loula crosses in.)

LOULA: Cat? What's goin' on?

CAT: That ole bitty over there been botherin' Ludiwici.

MR. STEIN: Ma'am there's no need to call names. I told you she was just following the rules.

CAT: The child wasn't breakin' no rules.

MRS. TUCKER: Yes she was. She was dancing around with the merchandise. You didn't see. You weren't even here.

CAT: Don't tell me where I was and what she was doin'. She was where I left her. I know she wasn't hurtin' nothin'. She's a good child.

MR. STEIN: That may be true. But she was dancing.

LOULA: Ludiwici?

LUDIWICI: Yes ma'am.

LOULA: Was you dancin'?

LUDIWICI: (sobbing) Yes'um.

LOULA: What? I told you to mind Cat and stay out of trouble. And dancin'? Come here girl.

LUDIWICI: But Mama

LOULA: I said come here.

CAT: Now Loula. It wasn't her fault.

LOULA: Yes it was and I don't want to hear it.

(Ludiwici sniffles and walks to her. Loula grabs her and pulls her close.)

LOULA: I'm sorry if my daughter caused any trouble. (opening her purse) I'll pay for anything that she broke.

MRS. TUCKER: Fortunately I was able to prevent any merchandise from being damaged.

MR. STEIN: I know Mrs. Tucker was harsh. We didn't mean to hurt the child's feelings. Mrs. Tucker didn't mean to hurt the child's feelings. Did you Mrs. Tucker?

MRS. TUCKER: No sir. I'm sorry.

MR. STEIN: There now. I guess no harm was done. We do have rules and regulations Miss. They're intended to help prevent situations like this. Not cause them. Haven't I seen you in the store recently?

LOULA: Yes sir. I bought a TV here last weekend. I'm Loula Ferguson.

MR. STEIN: I thought I remembered you.

(He smiles and they shake hands. Mrs. Tucker is annoyed.)

MR. STEIN: I'm sorry about this incident Mrs. Ferguson. We do appreciate your business. Mrs. Tucker didn't mean no harm. It seems everybody's a little on edge these days.

CAT: Some a little more on the edge than others.

LOULA: Cat. Well I'm gonna make sure it don't happen again. Let's go.

LUDIWICI: I'm sorry Mama.

MR. STEIN: Don't be hard on the girl. Please come back. (to Cat) Good day Miss. (to Mrs. Tucker) Mrs. Tucker could I see you in my office.

(Mrs. Tucker crosses quick and exits followed by Mr. Stein. Loula starts off and pushes Ludiwici. Cat follows.)

LUDIWICI: Mama I didn't mean to cause no trouble.

LOULA: Just hush. I don't want to hear nothin' from you 'till we git home.

CAT: Loula you got to listen. It wasn't the chile's fault.

(They exit and lights out.)

Scene 6: BUZZARD'S ROOST - SATURDAY Afternoon

(Inside the local movie house up in the balcony reserved for black patrons. Seats face the screen. They are almost full. There is noise as PEOPLE eat snacks and chatter. Jesse and Sterling enter with Cat. Ludiwici and Roosevelt follow. Ludiwici carries popcorn and Roosevelt carries sodas. She watches as he has a couple of close calls.)

JESSE: Y'all hurry up. What's takin' so long?

LUDIWICI: It's Roosevelt. He almost done dropped the sodas.

ROOSEVELT: No I didn't.

LUDIWICI: You better watch where you goin'.

(She trips and popcorn flies.)

JESSE: Ludiwici. There you go. See what you done did? Always tryin' to tell someone else what to do. Need to mind your own business.

(Cat takes the sodas from Roosevelt.)

CAT: Jesse stop. It was an accident. She didn't mean to do it.

STERLING: She always messin' up somethin'.

CAT: Jesse give her some money so she can go git some more.

JESSE: I ought to make her use her own money.

LUDIWICI: I ain't got none.

JESSE: Well that just too bad. I guess you ain't gonna be eatin' no popcorn then.

CAT: Jesse quit tormenting the girl. You see she's sorry about what happened.

JESSE: She ain't sorry. She just putting on an act so you'll feel sorry for her. (reaches in pocket and retrieves his wallet)

STERLING: Hurry up and git the popcorn before the show start.

JESSE: I don't see you pullin' out no dollars. Here (he gives money to) Roosevelt. You git it. And don't you go droppin' it this time either.

(Roosevelt takes the money.)

ROOSEVELT: Yes sir.

CAT: Y'all promised me some "Good and Plenty." Please.

STERLING: (he gazes at her then urgently hands Roosevelt more money) Git Cat some "Good and Plenty's" too.

ROOSEVELT: Yes sir. Come on Ludiwici. You can help.

STERLING: Y'all got enough money? Did you give 'em enough?

JESSE: I gave 'em enough to get me and Cat some popcorn.

STERLING: What about me?

JESSE: What about you? You grown now. Remember. You work. Got your own money. You

STERLING: I don't care about all that. I paid for most the first time. Remember.

(Jesse gives Roosevelt more money and Cat watches.)

CAT: Did y'all give them enough so they could git a treat?

JESSE: Treat? They gittin' popcorn and soda.

STERLING: And since they ain't payin' that sound like treat enough to me. They don't need nothin' else. Besides. I think Ludiwici got money. She just puttin' on.

CAT: Y'all ought to be shame. Treatin' these children like that. I guess that makes you feel grown huh?

STERLING: All right. Here. Git some Milk Duds or somethin'. (hands Ludiwici more money) Hurry up before the picture starts.

LUDIWICI: Yipee. Thank you Cat. Come on. Let's go.

(Ludiwici bolts off and Roosevelt rushes off behind her.)

BOYS: Thank you Cat?

(The Boys watch them exit then cross to seats. Jesse leads them to a row of empty seats up near the front.)

STERLING: Is these the only seats you could find?

JESSE: Yeah. Unless you find where they hid the rest. They a bunch downstairs.

(A piece of popcorn hits Sterling in the head and he waves the air. He looks back and takes his seat.)

STERLING: We ain't got no knee room.

JESSE: Plenty downstairs. Once they take you outside you'll have even more.

STERLING: Just be quiet.

JESSE: No you be quiet. Just relax. Once the movie starts you can hang your feet over the edge. Why you think they call it a roost up here?

STERLING: I don't care why they call it nothin'. I ain't no chicken. I don't like havin' to sit up here no way.

CAT: I agree with you Sterling. It's a shame black people still settlin' for second best in this day and time.

(She cuddles up to Sterling and Jesse watches. Sterling looks at him and smiles.)

STERLING: That's what I'm talkin' 'bout.

JESSE: Just be quiet.

(The film starts and "Coming Attractions" is displayed. Ludiwici and Roosevelt enter with the popcorn. Duke and Yvonne enter. They go to the others already seated.)

YVONNE: How y'all doing? Hi Cat.

CAT: Hi Yvonne. Hi Duke.

DUKE: Hi.

CAT: Y'all made it just in time.

(Sterling and Jesse roll their eyes. Everyone sits. There is some random talking on-stage consisting of: calls for the show to start, whistles and calls for quiet. The picture begins. First there are assorted film clips featuring blacks in roles as flyboys, cowboys and sex symbols. The audience approves. People clap and some cheer. Off-stage WHITE VOICES mumble loud enough to be heard complaining about what's on the screen, to take it off, to start the real movie. The picture changes and shows film clips of blacks as slaves, sambos, living in squalor, mammies and maids, dancing and grinning across the screen. Off-stage there is laughter and cheers as White Voices enjoy themselves. Blacks boo and complain about what's on the screen. They become restless. The negative images repeat and the White Voices' laughter and cheers become louder. The blacks rise slowly. They turn and stare into the audience. The images flash across their faces onto the screen behind them. The images repeat and laughter from the White Voices fills the theater. The Blacks chant quietly, then louder. Soon their voices drown out the laughter of the White Voices.)

BLACKS: No. No. No more.
No. No. No more.
We ain't goin' back. No more.
We ain't goin' back. No more.
No. No. No more.
No. No. No more.
We ain't goin' back. No more.
We ain't goin' back. No more.

WHITE VOICE: Y'all niggers shut up.

(The Blacks freeze and stare. The movie flashes across their faces brightly. They start again.)

BLACKS: No. No. No more. No. No. No more.

WHITE VOICE: I said y'all niggers shut the hell up.

(Someone throws trash and hits Sterling.)

STERLING: What? (more trash is thrown on him and he rages) Y'all shut up. We done took enough. We ain't taking no more. We ain't taking no more.

(Jesse, Cat, Duke, Yvonne, Ludiwici and Roosevelt stare at him. Sterling grabs a bag of popcorn and tosses it into audience.)

JESSE: We ain't takin' no more.

WHITE VOICE: What? You nigger bastard. I'll teach you a lesson.

STERLING: Come on. If you think you can. Come on.

JESSE: Sterling.

(They face each other.)

BLACK VOICE: Enough is enough.

BLACK VOICE: We ain't gonna take it no more.

WHITE VOICE: Please. Will everyone return to their seats. Please. We don't want no trouble.

(The picture changes and images of the old south flash on the screen: sharecroppers, poverty, the young and old, shanties on dirt roads in squalid communities, "whites only" and "colored only" signs, Dixie flags, Klan members in sheets, burning crosses, lynchings, burned and bombed buildings.)

BLACK VOICE: We're tired.

BLACK VOICE: We ain't gone take no more.

WHITE VOICE: If y'all don't calm down I'm callin' the police. Y'all hear.

(The picture changes and images of protest flash on the screen: lunch counter sit-ins and freedom rides, clashes during marches, freedom marchers being pelted by stones and bottles, dogs and water canons attacking people, different black leaders spreading the message, the March on Washington, King speaking. Police sirens are heard and lights flash on-stage.)

BLACK VOICE: We're not gonna take no more. We're not gonna take no more.

SHERIFF'S VOICE: This is the police. We order you to disband immediately. Do you understand? We order you to disband immediately or we will open fire.

(All hell breaks loose and Blacks run across the stage. Flames burn on the screen. Gunfire is heard and bullets flash. Bodies fall and people scream. Others stop and help drag those fallen across the stage.)

SHERIFF'S VOICE: We will open fire.

(More gunfire is heard. The picture changes and more images from the '60s flash on the screen: King's assassination and funeral, troops fighting in Vietnam, the shootings at Kent State, the riots and cities burning. Flames fill the screen. Off-stage bombs explode and people run. Some are wounded and are helped off by others.)

BLACK VOICE: Times ain't a changing. They done changed.

WHITE VOICE: You niggers shut up.

(WHITES bolt onto stage and fight with Blacks. Ludiwici and Roosevelt are trapped in the conflict and scramble back and forth terrorized across the stage.)

CAT: Ludiwici.

LUDIWICI: Cat. Cat.

(Cat runs to them, but is knocked to the floor. She keeps calling for them, but eventually gives up and reluctantly escapes. During the number there is a stylized fight between the Whites and Blacks. Also during the number there are some that try to stop the fighting, but they are struck and pushed aside.)

MUSICAL NUMBER: "RIOT"

No more chains to shackle
Freedom in our souls.
No more grinnin' jigs.
We're tired of those roles.

The good ole days are gone
Of riding in the back.
But how far have we come
From standing in the rack.

It's time to riot
And tear this place apart.
It's time to riot.
Don't matter where we start.

We need to riot
To make the pages turn.
We need to riot
And see some buildings burn.

When I see my people
Trapped in our despair
I know it's got to change.
It's more than just unfair.

It's time to make a stand
For all things great and small.
We have to rise together
To shake down these ole walls. (Cause divided we will fall.)

We got to riot.
We ain't afraid to fight.
We got to riot.
We got the power and got the might.

It's time to riot
And make the world take heed.
It's time to riot
'Cause they ain't heard our pleads.

Shipped back overseas
To fight for what's not here.
Dyin' for a dream.

The reasons should be clear.

The bullets are the same
Except who bears the gun.
No matter where we are
The task must still be done.

Let's start a riot
And make the people hear.
Let's start a riot
And give them back our fear.

We need to riot
And make the people see.
We need to riot
And show that we are free.

The terror that we see,
The beatings that we take,
Our strength is in our souls.
Our spirit you can't break.

The more you keep up down
The harder we will try.
There's no turnin' back.
We're not afraid to die.

It's time to riot
And kill the ignorance.
It's time to riot.
Let's move, now is our chance.

It's time to riot.
Don't say we should forgive.
It's time to riot.
We must if we must live.

Why do I burn down my buildings?
Why do I burn down my home?
Freedom's an empty word
When there's nothing that you own.

We're tired of the beggin'
For scraps you leave to eat.
The journey will be traveled.
The destination will be sweet.

It's time to riot
For all that we have done.
It's time to riot
And show that we are one.

It's time to riot
To uplift our race.
It's time to riot
And try to save some face.

A face I see
Just like my own
Except the hate
And lighter tone.

The choice is clear,
Yours to decide.
I am your equal
And will not hide.

It's time to riot
And make a better mix.
It's time to riot.
This world we got to fix.

It's time to riot.
We're through, we've had enough.
It's time to riot.
Let's go burn down some stuff.

Riot.
For the blood and tears,
Riot.
That has flowed for years.

Riot.
For the souls we lost.
Riot.
Time to pay the cost.

Riot.
For the day to come,
Riot.
When the war is won.

Riot.

(The number ends. The flames on the screen die down as the picture ends. The fighting continues and sirens sound and police lights flash brightly.)

SHERIFF: (off-stage) This is the police. We don't want no trouble. We just want y'all to come on outside. Peacefully. Y'all hear. Come on out.

(All freeze and the fighting stops. All rise and look into the audience. Jesse and Sterling stand defiant. Ludiwici and Roosevelt stand center stage huddled together in terror. The off-stage sirens die down. The police lights stop flashing and a bright search lights shine across stage on faces and people. Everyone remains frozen. It is quiet. Eyes dart around stage.)

SHERIFF: (off-stage) If y'all got weapons I want you to throw them out right now.

(All just look at their clenched fists and each other.)

SHERIFF'S VOICE: Y'all git movin'. We don't want no trouble. Come on out with your hands up.

(The Whites exit first walking slowly. The Blacks slowly raise their clenched fists and exit. Lights out.)

INTERMISSION

Act II, Scene 1: HOME - SATURDAY Late Afternoon

(Back at Loula's. WOMEN are there to get their hair done. Hair is in various stages of being done. The Women chatter.)

STELLA: Yes girl. That's what I heard. Said she was rude and disrespectful. The manager almost had to throw her

(Loula enters hurriedly and crosses.)

LOULA: Lord have mercy. What time is it? (glances at her watch) Goodness gracious. I got to git movin'. I got to be at the church by eight.

STELLA: What's goin' on Loula? Y'all not havin' service tonight? Is you?

LOULA: Church business. That's all.

SHELIA: On Saturday night? Seem mighty strange.

LOULA: Nothin' for you to worry 'bout sister. Sometimes the Lord works in strange ways.

SHELIA: Do tell.

LOULA: Where's that Cat? Y'all seen Cat come in?

SHARON: No Loula. Ain't nobody come in 'cept us. Cat? Who Cat?

SYLVIA: Sh. She boarding here with Loula. She from up north. Passing through town. Emma Washington told me she one of them fast northern girls.

STELLA: I bet she was the one actin' up in Stein's.

SYLVIA: You reckon.

SHELIA: I don't know. Could be

LOULA: Well I hope she hurry up and git here. I'm gonna need help to finish up all these heads.

STELLA: Loula what y'all gonna do about the club opening up tonight?

(All eyes turn to her and Loula glares at her, then looks at the others.)

LOULA: Why y'all so concerned about what the church is goin' to do? What y'all doin'? I don't even see most of y'all in church less'n it's Christmas or Easter.

(She looks at Stella who turns away.)

LOULA: If y'all so worried you'd be there every Sunday.

STELLA: Huh. Antioch ain't even our church.

SHARON: Loula you just upset. That's all. Everything'll be fine. Y'all won't even know the club be there.

LOULA: That's 'cause it won't be.

(She stops at Sylvia and combs her hair.)

SYLVIA: So where's that new girl that's suppose to be helpin' you out?

LOULA: She'll be here directly.

SYLVIA: How long she gonna be stayin' with you?

LOULA: Don't know. Soon as she git on her feet.

SYLVIA: Oh? Where she from?

LOULA: (she get rougher with Sylvia's head) She got off the bus from New York.

SYLVIA: (winces) What she doin' here?

LOULA: She was headin' back to Sweet Valley and got off at the wrong stop.

WOMEN: Sweet Valley?

(They gape at Loula. She looks at them and they turn away quick. They chatter and glance at Loula trying to hear.)

SYLVIA: You got a girl from Sweet Valley stayin' here? And you got men in the house?

LOULA: What you sayin'?

SYLVIA: Ouch. Nothin'. Nothin' Loula. 'Cept you know what they say 'bout them girls from Sweet Valley.

LOULA: I know what they say. But I got good boys. I ain't worried.

SYLVIA: Ouch Loula. I know you do. But they ain't boys no more. They grown.

LOULA: Who grown?

SYLVIA: Well Duke and Jesse of legal age ain't they. And just try to tell Sterling he ain't grown. He always been a mannish type since he was a sprout.

LOULA: What? You don't know what you talkin' bout. Them my boys. They know better. As long as they in my house they gonna mind what I say. To hear you talk you'd think they was your'n.

SYLVIA: I don't mean no harm Loula. They come by it naturally. Mama always talkin' about how charming they daddy was. She say he was quite the ladies man.

LOULA: (stops combing) Your Mama always talkin' bout what? Lord have mercy. I ain't got time for this nonsense.

SYLVIA: I didn't mean to upset you Loula.

LOULA: My boys know long as they livin' in my house they got to follow my rules. They may think they grown, but they ain't too big to git beat. And they know it. I don't allow no foolishness goin' on in my house. Now come on out for your shampoo.

(Loula crosses and Sylvia rises.)

STELLA: Yeah. But she don't know how they be carrying on out in the streets.

(Loula turns back quickly.)

LOULA: What was that?

STELLA: Uh. I said if they don't mind you they ought to get beat.

(Loula looks at her, then exits. Sylvia follows her out And rubs her head. Cat enters and stops in doorway. She fixes herself and listens.)

STELLA: That Loula don't know nothing 'bout them boys.

SHELIA: It seem like just a few weeks back Jesse was chasing after me like a thirsty man lookin' for water in a desert.

SHARON: And you know Duke never did get over that crush he had on me when we was in high school.

STELLA: Them ain't no boys. Them men. And you can't tell me some fast thang from Sweet Valley ain't gonna cause more than just a little bit of commotion round here.

(The screen door slams closed and Cat enters. All turn to her.)

CAT: Good afternoon.

WOMEN: Good afternoon.

CAT: How you ladies doin'? I'm Cat. I'm boarding here at Loula's. You might have heard. And I'll be helping Loula with y'all heads. Excuse me.

(She crosses and exits out to the kitchen. The Woman are embarrassed and stare at her as she exits, then look at each other.)

WOMEN: Well.

LOULA: (off-stage) Cat. Where you been?

CAT: (off-stage) I'm sorry Loula. The picture ran late.

LOULA: (off-stage) I didn't know where you was. Come on girl. I'll never finish up all these heads by myself.

(Loula enters stage followed by Cat.)

LOULA: Where's Ludiwici and the boys?

CAT: They stopped off for some ice cream. I told them I had to git on back to help you out. They'll be on directly.

LOULA: I'm runnin' late. I thought you'd been here already. I got to be to the church by eight. Start combing out the rest of these heads and get 'em ready for me.

CAT: Don't you worry 'bout nothin'. What you don't finish I can take care of.

STELLA: Take care of what?

(Cat turns calmly and all look away.)

CAT: Whatever needs to be taken care of. I'm a licensed beautician. I been to school. Any kind of do you want I can fix it.

WOMEN: Really? You can? For real?

CAT: Yes. I can. For real. Let me grab my smock. I'll be right back.

(She exits and the Women watch as she leaves. They turn back to Loula.)

STELLA: Loula? She really been trained to work on hair?

LOULA: If she say so. I ain't got no reason to believe she ain't.

SHELIA: You seen her license?

LOULA: No I ain't. But if y'all so worried why don't you ask to see it? Worried 'bout whether she been trained to work on hair.

STELLA: Well Loula. She ain't done much with her own.

SHARON: Stella. Maybe she just forgot to comb it before she went out.

LOULA: For your information that's how they wearin' it in the city. It's called an afro.

SHELIA: A what? Afro? Well they can keep it.

STELLA: They can wear it any way they want up north, but I don't want her comin' here messin' up my hair.

LOULA: Look like you'd be thankful somebody would even try to do somethin' with that head of yours. They couldn't make it no worse.

STELLA: Huh. You'll never catch me walkin' 'round in public like that. Lookin' like some kind of African bushlander. Afro. Huh.

(Cat enters and carries magazines.)

CAT: All right ladies. Who's first? (all turn away from her) Oh. If you're interested, here's my beautician license.

(All turn back to her.)

LOULA: There you go Stella. Ain't that what you wanted to see?

CAT: That's okay Loula. I'm proud to show it. Anyhow I brought down some of my beautician magazines with all the latest styles. (to Stella) You may be surprised to see the afro is not the only way we wearin' our hair up north.

(The Women rush to Cat and snatch the magazines away from her.)

WOMEN: Git outta my way. Give me one. Let me see. I want to try something new. Let me see.

CAT: Y'all don't mess up my magazines.

LOULA: Let me get back out to the kitchen. I got heads waitin' on me.

CAT: You go on. I can handle these hens.

(Loula exits. The Women flip the pages and snap their fingers at what they see in the magazines.)

STELLA: This one is me.

SHARON: No it ain't. That's me girl.

SHELIA: (snatches magazine) Honey y'all both wrong. It's me.

STELLA: Now wait a minute. I saw it first.

SHELIA: That's all right. You can see it first again. When I'm wearin' it on my head.

(She crosses with her magazine and exits stage into kitchen.)

STELLA: Huh. Let me see some of them magazines.

SYLVIA: You better git on 'way from here. Ou I like this one. I'll be lookin' good to-ni morrow in church.

STELLA: Give me that book.

(She snatches the magazine and scans. The Women flip through the magazines and chatter delighted at what they see. Off-stage are heard sound effects of hair being pressed and straightened: frying, sizzling and popping. The Women exit and reenter with fabulous hairdos.)

MUSICAL NUMBER: "SNAP, CRACKLE, POP!"

Sisters don't be so rude.
Now just wait your turn.
You'd think in all these years
That you would have learned.

Now don't you try to snatch
This book out my hand.
'Cause you might feel a slap
And won't be able to stand.

Snap,
Just sit on back and sip you some tea.
Crackle, Pop!
If you want your hair done don't mess with me.

Snap,
Don't be cuttin' in just wait your time.
Crackle, Pop!
Or you will end up the last one in line.

Now pick you out a style
That's quite unique.
But not something so new
That you look like some freak.

Just don't be pickin'
The same thing I do.
Don't want to go out walkin'
And see my same do.

Snap,
There's plenty here for choosin' a different new look.
Crackle, Pop!
Just make sure you choose from a different book.

Snap,
Don't think too long, but you better think wise.
Crackle, Pop!
I don't want to go out steppin' and be surprised.

Improve your taste.
Go for glamour and class.
But I know that in your case
That's quite a big task.

I seen hair like yours before.
I know it's a curse.
'Cause when you try to comb it
Don't you need a nurse?

Snap,
Try something new with fashion and flair.
Crackle, Pop!
But I know that they can't do much with your kind of hair.

Snap,
Git on your knees and plead if you must.
Crackle, Pop!
And make sure they shampoo to take out the crust.

Now don't be kind
Do whatever it takes.
Curled or crimped
As long as it's baked.

Just want some waves
Silky and smooth.
'Cause I'm a well-bred lady
With nothin' to prove.

Snap,
Take your time I want it done right.
Crackle, Pop!
Don't want to have to act up and go start a fight.

Snap,
You know what I want it's right here in the book.
Crackle, Pop!
Don't tell me you can't do it I know you can cook.

I think I've found one
That I might want.
I think I'll choose
This here nice big bouffant.

I think I want mine cut
Just like that girl Ross.
I think y'all better search for
The sense y'all done lost.

Snap,
I know that I'll be lookin' like some Hollywood star.
Crackle, Pop!
People will stop and wonder if you come from afar
(Yeah, outerspace.)

Snap,
Don't hold no grudges cause you don't look as good
Crackle, Pop!
The problem is you can't - shoulda would if it could.

I want mine teased
In a nice big beehive.
I'll be lookin' so good
I may not survive.

I want mine nice and straight
To blow in the wind.
I'll be lookin' so good
It will be a sin.

Snap,
Just lay it out don't matter the do.
Crackle, Pop!
Whatever I end up with I'll look better than you.

Snap,
Please don't make me laugh no way that could be.
Crackle, Pop!
With four eyes like yours you'd think you could see.

Fix mine up like Lena's.
I could be as fine.
Girl how you feelin'?
I think you gone blind.

I think I'll wear an orchid
Just like Lady Day.
Well pardon me for sayin',
But please girl, no way.

Snap,
Ou I like that miss that's a cute little cut.
Crackle, Pop!
Couldn't say it to her face, but don't she look like some
nut.

Snap,
Now don't git too risqué with that latest French swirl.
Crackle, Pop!
You know this town ain't ready they'll say you done gone
crazy girl.

How'd you think I'd look
Wearin' this one to church?
How'd you think you'd look
Sittin' up on a perch?

I hope that it don't rain,
Then I would be through.
She should hope it better does,
Might improve the do.

Snap,
Girl you lookin' good, what book is that from?
Crackle, Pop!
Maybe I should go back and try out that one.

Snap,
Don't be offended if I choose what you got.
Crackle, Pop!
Don't be offended, but it's best that you not.

Now I done told you once
Better heed my call.
Because when you least expect it
You might take a fall.

Just resign yourself
To reality.
Ain't no way on earth
To look as good as me.

Snap,
Stand back don't git too close, I know that you mad.
Crackle, Pop!
I see you green with envy, well that's just too bad.

Snap,
You had your chance to choose, you waited too long.
Crackle, Pop!
Just go rest your nerves at home where you belong.

Snap, Crackle, Pop!
Snap, Crackle, Pop!
Snap, Crackle, Pop!
Snap, Crackle, Pop!

(The Women gather and admire their hairdos. Those finished prepare to leave.)

STELLA: That Cat know she can work on some hair.

SYLVIA: I'm gonna be lookin' real good. In church.

STELLA: Huh. You ain't foolin' nobody.

SYLVIA: Hush. I'll be lookin' good wherever I go.

(They laugh. SISTER PHULLIPS enters hurriedly and all look.)

SISTER PHULLIPS: Evenin' sisters. Y'all done heard the news?

STELLA: What news?

SISTER PHULLIPS: About the trouble in town.

SHARON: Trouble in town?

STELLA: No we ain't heard. What trouble in town?

SISTER PHULLIPS: Chile they almost done had a riot.

WOMEN: A riot?

SISTER PHULLIPS: Daisy Hall just told me. Mildred Frazier called her.

STELLA: What happened?

(Cat enters and sees Sister Phullips talking to the Women. She crosses to them.)

SISTER PHULLIPS: They had trouble down at the movie house. Some white folks called somebody nigger and that was it.

SHARON: Naw.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Yes ma'am. Said they was lined up outside the movie house. Then they walked them single file down to the jail house. White and black both.

SHELIA: Well that's good.

CAT: What's good about it? All they gonna do is let them white boys go and keep ours locked up.

(They look at her, then turn back to Sister Phullips.)

STELLA: Who they take in?

SISTER PHULLIPS: Don't know. Couldn't see no faces. They was coverin' up. Must've been shamed.

(Loula enters and notices the Women gossiping.)

LOULA: Evenin' Sister Phullips. Now don't be holdin' up these ladies from leavin'. They got to be well rested for church tomorrow.

STELLA: Loula you ain't heard. They almost done had a riot down at the movie house.

LOULA: What? A riot at the movie house? Y'all just talkin'.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Unh-unh Loula. They was witnesses. Mildred Frazier seent it.

LOULA: Huh. Cat that's where y'all went. Was there any trouble while y'all was there?

CAT: No Loula. Weren't no trouble.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Whatn't no riotin' goin' on?

CAT: A riot? Wasn't no riot. Though I been known to start a few here and there.

(Some of the Women roll their eyes at her.)

LOULA: So you didn't see nothin'?

CAT: No ma'am. But it was a double feature. We left before the second show started.

SISTER PHULLIPS: See. She don't know. She weren't even there.

LOULA: Well who they take in if y'all know so much.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Like I said. Couldn't see no faces. They was coverin' up they heads up like they was shamed.

LOULA: The shame is somebody's Mama havin' to go down to the jail house to get her child out. Good Lord. Right here in Crossway. Sweet Jesus.

CAT: Was it that bad?

SISTER PHULLIPS: Well all I heard about was some fist fightin' goin' on. I don't think nobody got hurt bad.

LOULA: It don't matter. Just think about what coulda happened. Some poor mother havin' to put her child in the ground. Over what? Some nonsense. Then they'd a been burnin' the town down for real. It's a shame.

CAT: But Loula you don't even know what happened.

LOULA: It don't matter. Prob'bly just a bunch of trouble makers on both sides.

CAT: Well I don't blame them. If they'd a called me a nigger I'd a done the same thing too.

LOULA: For what? Like what you do is gonna keep white folks from callin' somebody nigger.

CAT: What else could they do? I'm glad they didn't let them crackers call 'em no niggers. Slavery days over.

LOULA: I ain't talkin' 'bout no slavery days. I know slavery days over. Just go and try to tell that to some of them white folks 'cross the tracks. I'm thinkin' 'bout the poor mother who got go down to the jail house to git her child out worried if he dead or alive.

CAT: If I was the Mama I'd be proud my child stood up.

LOULA: Well I just hope nobody got hurt. If anything happened at all.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Oh it happened. Just wait. You'll hear about it.

LOULA: Lord have mercy. Look what time it is. I got to git ready. Can you handle things here?

CAT: Yes ma'am. I'm sorry Loula. You go on. I can finish up here.

LOULA: Thank you.

(Loula crosses.)

CAT: Oh Loula. I'll be goin' out for a while after I finish up here.

(All look at her.)

CAT: I was goin' through the phone book and ran across a name I knew. I called her up and it turns out she's a friend I went to high school with. I told her I would visit her and her family tonight.

LOULA: Good. Enjoy yourself. I'll see you when you git in. I'll be right with you Sister.

SISTER PHULLIPS: I'll be here.

(Loula exits.)

CAT: All right ladies. Y'all need to git out of the way and git goin'. I got a few more heads to finish up here.

STELLA: Cat wait a minute. I got a curl outta place. It won't take but a second to fix.

CAT: That's how you s'pose to wear it.

STELLA: Oh.

(A Woman peeps on stage from the kitchen.)

JACKIE: Come on Cat. It's gettin' late and I got things to do.

CAT: Wait a second. I'll be right there.

JACKIE: Waitin' broke the wagon down girl. Come on.

(Other Women leave and Cat crosses to the kitchen.)

SHARON: Bye Cat. Thank you.

SHELIA: Oh yes. Thank you Cat. I knew you knew what you was doin'.

STELLA: That's what I was tryin' to tell y'all. Girl you know you can work on some hair.

SHARON: Come on sisters. It was a pleasure Cat.

(They exit and Loula rushes in dressed with a bible in her hand. One of the Women and Sister Phullips talk.)

LOULA: All right Cat. I'm gone. When the children come in tell 'em dinner's on the stove. Sister Phullips you finished or you got more news to tell. See you later.

CAT: All right Loula. See you.

(Loula and Sister Phullips exit. Yvonne peeps on stage.)

YVONNE: (whispering) Cat. Cat.

CAT: Yvonne. What you doin' here?

YVONNE: Is Mrs. Ferguson here?

CAT: No. She just left.

(Yvonne enters.)

YVONNE: Duke asked me to come. We got out before the police came. They arrested Sterling and Jesse. Ludiwici and Roosevelt got caught up in it too. They took them all down to the station.

CAT: What? They got no business takin' children to jail.

YVONNE: Duke went to see if Thunderbird could get them out. He said maybe you could help. If you have any money layin' round.

CAT: If I had money layin' round I sure wouldn't be in this dead-end backward ass place.

(Yvonne stares at her urgently.)

CAT: Just a minute.

(Cat rushes off and Yvonne paces. Woman enters from the kitchen.)

JACKIE: Where Cat? She s'posed to be in here workin' on my head. It's gettin' late and I got things to do.

(Cat rushes back on with her purse.)

JACKIE: Cat? What you doin'? You gonna make me late.

(Cat goes to her and calmly escorts her back to the kitchen.)

CAT: I'm sorry. I promise you. I'm comin'. (she pushes her off-stage.) I'll be right there.

JACKIE: (off-stage) I got business.

(Cat goes back to Yvonne. She opens her purse and takes out her wallet and gives her money.)

CAT: Here take this. It's all I got. Soon as I finish here I'll bring whatever else I make down to the jail house.

YVONNE: Thanks Cat. Thank you.

CAT: Go on now. Get on back to Duke.

(Yvonne exits and Cat crosses and exits.)

Scene 2: JAIL - SATURDAY Early Evening

(Sterling and Jesse sit in a jail cell along with other Blacks. Sterling sings.)

MUSICAL NUMBER: "BIG DREAMS" (REPRISE)

Big dreams,
Where did they go?
Big dreams,
I wished I know.

Big dreams,
They dry up fast.
Big dreams,
Why don't they last?

Big dreams
That could have been.
Big dreams,
But who knows when.

Big dreams
Pass by quick.
But to my big dreams
I'm gonna stick.

(Off-stage keys rattle and the cell door opens. They look and rise to see. A GUARD and several PEOPLE enter and cross.)

GUARD: You see your boy?

MRS. JENKINS: No. Wait. Yes sir. That's him over there. Otis Jenkins. That's him.

GUARD: Which one?

OTIS: Me. Here. Here I am.

GUARD: You mighty anxious to git out of there huh? That's how it always is. Y'all don't think about the consequences 'til it's too late.

(He unlocks cell and motions for OTIS to exit.)

GUARD: Come on out. I hope you learn from this mistake son. Maybe next time you'll think before you do something stupid.

MRS. JENKINS: Don't you worry officer. Won't be no next time once I git through tannin' his hide. Come on Otis.

(His mother pulls him across the stage.)

OTIS: Yes ma'am.

(They exit. Duke rushes in followed by Yvonne and THUNDERBIRD JONES.)

GUARD: Anybody else here see anybody inside they want to get out?

DUKE: Yes sir. My brothers. I'm here to git them out.

GUARD: I don't know if the sheriff will allow it. You need to be the parent or legal guardian.

THUNDERBIRD: Officer I'm the boy's uncle.

GUARD: Where's their Mama or Daddy?

DUKE: My Daddy's passed. And my Mama's out of town.

THUNDERBIRD: I'm lookin' after the boys while she's gone.

GUARD: Un-huh. Well you ain't done such a good job of looking after them have you? I don't know. I'm gonna have to check with the sheriff.

(There is clamor off-stage. Cat enters followed urgently by the SHERIFF.)

SHERIFF: Now listen here miss. We don't want no more trouble. We was just tryin' to keep the peace.

CAT: Peace? What peace? You don't keep the peace by scarin' little children bringin' them down to the jail house. No tellin' what you done done to the boys you claim you had to arrest.

SHERIFF: Listen miss. The manager of the movie house called with a complaint. The only way we could restore order was by goin' in and arrestin' the troublemakers.

CAT: Why didn't you keep the peace and restore order by lockin' up some of them white boys involved?

SHERIFF: You wasn't even there. You don't know

CAT: I know if both colored and white was involved then both colored and white should've been arrested.

SHERIFF: You don't know what happened. You didn't see who started it.

CAT: I - it don't matter who started it. We know who gonna get the blame and be arrested. Don't we. It's always the same. That's why we fightin' for civil rights.

(The Sheriff shakes his head. Cat rushes to the Boys.)

CAT: Sterling. Jesse. Y'all all right?

STERLING: Yeah Cat. We okay.

JESSE: Yeah. We fine.

CAT: Duke. Yvonne. Y'all gettin' the boys out.

DUKE: The guard said he didn't know if we could git them out. Said that they parent or legal guardian was the only ones that could git them out.

CAT: Nonsense. We got the bail money. That's all they want anyway.

SHERIFF: We don't want your money. We didn't arrest the boys anyway.

CAT: Whatever you call it. They still locked in a jail cell.

SHERIFF: We was just holding them in custody. Till they folks could come git 'em. And I had a few words with 'em.

THUNDERBIRD: The guard said he got to check with you sheriff. I told him I'm the boys' uncle. They Mama out of town. Sheriff you know how boys git when they start feelin' they oats and ain't nobody 'round they got to mind. They didn't mean no harm.

SHERIFF: All right. Let 'em go. But you be sure to tell they Mama what happened. If I have any more trouble out of these boys I'm gonna lock 'em up for real. We got a peaceful community here. And we gonna keep it that way.

THUNDERBIRD: Thank you sheriff. I really do appreciate your understandin'.

SHERIFF: Just let this be a lesson to y'all. There's a certain way you have to behave in this world. Even when your Mama ain't around.

CAT: There certainly is. And right is right. It don't matter if you white or black.

SHERIFF: You know I been tryin' to be understanding, but

CAT: Good. It's about time. Black folks been understandin' for the longest. It's about time white folk started.

SHERIFF: Listen girl

CAT: Girl?

SHERIFF: Listen Miss. I know you upset, but you ain't helpin' the situation none.

CAT: I ain't helpin'? I ain't the one who locked them boys up. I ain't had nothin' to do with it. You the one who ain't helpin'.

SHERIFF: Now listen here. I done had about enough of your sass.

THUNDERBIRD: Please your honor. She just a little upset. I'll take care of her.

CAT: You'll what?

THUNDERBIRD: Come on now. Just simmer down.

CAT: Don't come on just simmer down me. They got Loula's boys locked up like some hoodlums. And they just about frightened the children to death.

SHERIFF: My men didn't have no choice. They was with the others.

CAT: It's always the same. The police ain't got no choice. So they beat us down. Well what about us? Black folks is tired. We done took just about all

THUNDERBIRD: (grabs Cat and pushes her ahead) Please your honor. If you release the boys to me I'll be sure they Mama know all about it. Once she git through with 'em you won't have no more trouble out of 'em. Nobody will. They really good boys.

SHERIFF: All right. Just git on out of here. Who's your lady friend any way? I ain't seen her 'round town.

CAT: Lady? You wouldn't know a

THUNDERBIRD: (covers her mouth) Oh she just passin' through. Visiting. Kin from up north. Thank you sir. Thank you. Evenin'.

(Thunderbird pushes Cat across stage. She stops and rips his hand off her face. She blasts Thunderbird and he leads them off-stage.)

CAT: You must be crazy. Touchin my face. I don't let nobody touch my face. You ain't got no business coverin' my mouth. I'll say what I want to say. When I want to. And to who I want to. You ain't got no right keepin' me from tellin' the Sheriff what he need to hear.

(The Sheriff watches and lights out.)

Scene 3: THE CLUB - SATURDAY Night

(Lights up on the inside of Colcock's new club. Last minute preparations are made. Sterling and Jesse enter stage and carry suit bags. Music vamps underneath throughout scene.)

JESSE: I guess this it. Huh?

STERLING: Yeah. I guess it is. You nervous?

JESSE: Naw. You?

STERLING: No way man. This what we been waitin' for. This it.

JESSE: No turnin' back now.

STERLING: No way.

COLCOCK: (off-stage) Them Ferguson boys made it in yet?

BOUNCER: (off-stage) Yeah. They just got here. They went on back.

STERLING: What you gonna tell Colcock 'bout Duke?

JESSE: Nothin'. Unless he asks.

STERLING: You know he's gonna ask.

JESSE: Don't worry 'bout it. We'll cross that bridge when we git to it. Come on. Let's git ready.

(They exit. Final decorations are completed. PEOPLE enter. Off-stage horns blow and tires screech.)

OSCAR: (off-stage) Hey. Watch where you goin'.

TYRONE: (off-stage) You watch it. You almost hit my ride.

OSCAR: (off-stage) If you wouldn't a been tryin' to cut in and wait your turn

TYRONE: (off-stage) Aw shut up.

OSCAR: (off-stage) What? Shut up? Who you talkin' to?

TYRONE: (off-stage) I'm talkin' to you. That's who.

OSCAR: (off-stage) We'll see 'bout that.

(Car doors slam.)

BOUNCER: (off-stage) All right. Y'all just hold it. Ain't gonna be no fightin' here tonight. Y'all can just cool down or take it somewhere else.

TYRONE: (off-stage) This nut almost hit my car.

OSCAR: (off-stage) Who you callin' a nut?

TYRONE: (off-stage) If the shoe fit wear it.

OSCAR: (off-stage) I'll show you where it fit. Jive turkey.

TYRONE: (off-stage) Jive turkey?

BOUNCER: (off-stage) I said cool it.

(More People enter. Some couples. Some singles. Some pass and greet each other. Some drop their heads to avoid being seen. Some take seats at tables. Others stand at the bar or against the walls.)

RENEE: Ou weee Bonnie. They done fixed this place up nice.

BONNIE: It sho don't look like the place it used to.

RENEE: It's 'bout time Crossway got a nightclub like they got in the city.

BONNIE: That's what I say.

(Other Women look then turn away.)

STELLA: Huh. How they know what they got in the city? They ain't never been out of Crossway they whole life.

SYLVIA: Don't you know it. They ain't nothin' but country bumpkins.

(The first two Women have overheard and approach them.)

RENEE: What y'all know? Y'all ain't never been no place neither.

STELLA: I never said I was. Y'all the ones talkin' 'bout what nightclubs look like in the city.

BONNIE: Don't be tellin' us what we be talkin' 'bout. Y'all need to mind your own business. Y'all ain't nothin' but a bunch of ole busy bodies tryin' to start somethin'.

SYLVIA: Who you callin' ole?

(The Bouncer pushes through.)

BOUNCER: All right ladies. What's the problem here?

RENEE: Ain't nobody got no problem.

BOUNCER: Then what's wrong?

STELLA: Ain't nothin' wrong. We was just discussin' personal business.

BOUNCER: Well y'all try to keep your personal business quiet. I wouldn't want it to git out in the streets.

(The first two Women cross.)

RENEE: They just a bunch of cacklin' hens. Think they know everything. I better not hear them sayin' nothin' else 'bout me tonight.

BOUNCER: Ladies.

STELLA: Huh. Ole local yokels ain't never been nowhere. Don't even know what they talkin' 'bout. They better not cross my path no more tonight.

(The club fills with People and music.)

STELLA: What? That hussy got my dress on.

JACKIE: My dress. Why that tramp.

(Jackie strides to Stella. The Bouncer approaches them and the pass and glare at each other.)

RENEE: Hi. Ou girl you lookin' sharp.

JACKIE: Please girl. You the one.

RENEE: Thank you honey. But you know you lookin' good. Ou. And your hair. Where'd you git it done?

JACKIE: Over at Loula's. She got a new girl helpin' her.

RENEE: That ain't that Sweet Valley girl from up north is it?

JACKIE: Uh-huh. And she can work on some hair. Well I'll talk to y'all later.

(Other Women cross and meet.)

MADELINE: Hey girl. How you doin'? You lookin' too good chile.

RENEE: Thank you girl. You mighty clean yourself. I like that dress you wearin'. Did you see the twins?

MADELINE: Yes girl. So embarrassin'. They ought to know better than to just shop in Crossway and think ain't nobody else gonna buy the same thing.

RENEE: Tell it girl.

(She turns and another Woman has on a similar outfit.)

WOMEN: Well.

(They cross. A Man passes Stella and steps on her foot.)

STELLA: Hey. Watch where you goin'.

OSCAR: Sorry ma'am.

(People dance.)

SYLVIA: Ouch. My foot.

TYRONE: I'm sorry baby. You wanna lead?

(At the bar a Man closes in on Renee.)

LAMONT: Can I buy you a drink?

RENEE: (she turns to him annoyed) Why (and likes what she sees) E - S.

(Further down the bar.)

ANDRE: Have another?

BONNIE: I guess. Why not. (wiggles to the music) This place sure is fun.

ANDRE: And it's only just begun.

MC: (off-stage) Ladies and gentlemen. (crowd quiets)
Ladies and gentlemen thank you for coming out tonight for our grand opening. We've lined up an evening of live entertainment for your enjoyment including some local talent just startin' out. The show'll begin in just a few. So relax, have some drinks and enjoy yourself.

CHURCH VOICES: (off-stage) Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

(CHURCH MEMBERS enter and cross at the edge of the stage. They carry signs condemning the club.)

CHURCH MEMBERS: Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

BONNIE: What's that? What's goin' on?

(Patrons rush downstage and stare at the Church Members.)

CHURCH MEMBERS: Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

BONNIE: Who it is?

ANDRE: Just a bunch a ole folks.

BONNIE: Ole folks? Doin' what?

ANDRE: Look like they carryin' signs protestin'.

BONNIE: Protestin'? Protestin' what?

ANDRE: I don't know.

JACKIE: They prob'bly from Antioch. I heard they was plannin' on doin' somethin' tonight.

(They look at her.)

JACKIE: Somebody in town told me.

CHURCH MEMBERS: Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

JACKIE: I hope didn't nobody see me comin' in here.

(She retreats to back.)

ANDRE: Come on baby. Don't worry 'bout them. You heard the man. Let's party.

CHURCH MEMBERS: Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

(Church Members exit and Patrons resume to party.)

STERLING: (off-stage) What's that? You hear that Jesse?

JESSE: (off-stage) There you go. Don't start with no questions.

STERLING: (off-stage) But Jesse.

JESSE: (off-stage) Just finish gittin' ready.

CHURCH VOICES: (off-stage) Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

STERLING: (off-stage) Jesse.

JESSE: (off-stage) I done told you. Come on.

CHURCH VOICES: (off-stage) Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) Whatn't that Cat?

SISTER BLOUNT: (off-stage) Where?

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) Over there. Sneakin' in.

SISTER BLOUNT: (off-stage) I ain't sure. What she look like?

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) That was her. That hussy. I told you. And she told Loula she was visitin' friends tonight.

SISTER BLOUNT: (off-stage) She visitin' friends all right. Did you see her Loula?

LOULA: (off-stage) See who?

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) Cat. She went into the club.

LOULA: (off-stage) What? When?

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) Just now. Too late. You done missed her.

LOULA: (off-stage) You sure it was her?

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) Sure as the nose on my face.

LOULA: (off-stage) It couldn't have been Cat. She visitin' friends.

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) So she said.

(Cat enters surrounded by several Men.)

STELLA: Ain't that Cat? Who she think she is actin' like that?

SYLVIA: And what she wearin'? Dressed like an ole street walker. She just a tramp. I ought to tell Loula.

(Stella looks at her.)

SYLVIA: Well I thinkin' somebody should.

STELLA: Don't you worry. Somebody will. And when they do Loula'll put her behind out fast.

SYLVIA: Right in the streets where she belong.

STELLA: With the other stray cats in the neighborhood.

(Men approach them.)

OSCAR: Y'all gonna sit around talkin' all night?

TYRONE: Yeah. Y'all wanna dance?

WOMEN: (looking them over) No thanks. (they turn away)

MEN: (exasperated) Women.

(Another Man goes to the Women and both eye him hungrily. The other Men watch as he chooses Sylvia and dances with her.)

OSCAR: I'll never understand them.

(They walk away.)

MOJO: (off-stage) Cat. Cat Carnegay. Cat.

(cat looks, then crosses.)

CAT: Y'all excuse me.
(Men follow her.)

TYRONE: Your name Cat? How you git a name like that?
(Cat passes Stella who looks away.)

CAT: Evenin' Stella.
(Stella looks and mumbles.)

STELLA: Evenin'.

OSCAR: Wait a minute. You wanna dance?

JACKIE: Watch that cigarette. You almost done burnt my dress.

STELLA: He should have. It might've helped it out.
(Duke enters and is pushed aside by MOJO.)

MOJO: 'Cuse me brother. Cat. It's me. Mojo. Mojo Wilcox. Now where she went?

(Cat darts through the crowd and escapes. Duke moves slowly and stays in the shadows. Cat glances back and spots him.)

CAT: Duke.
(She moves to him.)

TYRONE: Cat where you goin'?

CAT: You don't know me. Don't be callin' my name.

MOJO: Cat.

STELLA: Who that callin' for Cat?

SYLVIA: Who cares.

STELLA: I sure could use another drink.

SYLVIA: So could I.

STELLA: Huh. These tired country Negroes don't know nothin' 'bout how to treat a lady.

TYRONE: Uh. Can I buy y'all a drink?

STELLA: Uh. Certainly.

SYLVIA: Well. Some gentleman.

STELLA: Don't worry girlfriend. I'll sip for two.

SYLVIA: It sure is hot in here. Tell 'em to cut on the air conditioner.

STELLA: Air conditioner. You better git one of them church fans at the door.

TYRONE: What time the show start? I'm ready to party.

STELLA: He need to take his black butt home.

TYRONE: Say what?

STELLA: I said I hope I brought my comb. 'Cuse me while I freshen up.

TYRONE: Okay. You want a drink?

SYLVIA: Why yes.

JESSE: (off-stage) Hurry up Sterling. It's about time for us to go on.

STERLING: (off-stage) All right man. I'm ready. How I look?

JESSE: (off-stage) Fine. Let's go.

(Cat stands with Duke and Mojo approaches.)

CAT: I didn't know you was comin' here tonight. Yvonne with you?

DUKE: No.

CAT: You here by yourself? Your Mama know you out here tonight?

DUKE: No'am.

CAT: You know they out there picketin'.

DUKE: I saw them.

CAT: They see you?

DUKE: I don't think so.

CAT: I hope not.

DUKE: They see you?

CAT: I don't care if they did. I been grown.

MOJO: Cat. Cat. It's me Mojo. Mojo Wilcox.

(He arrives and Cat grabs Duke's arm.)

MOJO: Cat? You remember me? I'm from Sweet Valley. I used to live down the road from you and your folks. Don't you remember the Wilcox's?

CAT: Uh. I'm sorry. You must be thinkin' 'bout someone else.

MOJO: Then how I know your name? I tell you I know you. I remember you. Don't you worry. Before tonight's over with you'll remember me too.

CAT: Uh. I'd like you to meet my date tonight. (Duke is surprised) Duke Ferguson meet. What was your name again?

MOJO: Mojo. Mojo Wilcox.

CAT: Yes.

DUKE: Pleased.

MOJO: Likewise. How long you known Cat?

CAT: We been together for a while.

MOJO: Heck. I known Cat since she was a little ole runt. Always wantin' to be grown. Never did listen to your folks. How they doin'?

CAT: They doin' fine. Everybody doin' fine. Honey can we git a drink?

DUKE: Uh.

MOJO: Let me. What y'all want?

DUKE: Uh.

CAT: I'll have a rum and coke. What you want baby?

DUKE: Uh.

CAT: He'll have a beer.

MOJO: Okay. I'll be right back.

DUKE: Cat I can't be drinkin' nothin'.

CAT: Why not?

DUKE: You know Mama.

CAT: Why you worried? She ain't here.

DUKE: Somebody might say somethin'.

CAT: Ain't too many in here gonna be able to say much 'bout nothin'.

DUKE: Well.

CAT: When it's free? Don't worry.

DUKE: Why you tell him I was your date?

CAT: You know how mens gits in clubs. They think just cause you by yourself anything goes. And if they buy you a drink forgit it. Well not me. Don't worry. Yvonne ain't here. And she don't associate with these types no way.

DUKE: Well.

CAT: Just relax. So why you came out here tonight all by yourself? Curious?

DUKE: No. Sterling and Jesse

CAT: They comin' out too?

DUKE: Uh. Maybe.

CAT: Oh well. The more the merrier.

(Mojo returns with the drinks.)

MOJO: Here we go. Rum and coke and beer.

CAT: Thank you.

DUKE: Thanks.

(He holds the beer awkwardly. Mojo raises his glass for a toast.)

MOJO: To old friends.

CAT: And new ones.

MOJO: I tell you it's good to see you girl. And you lookin' so good. That north must've agreed with you. You lookin' better than from when I remember you in Sweet Valley.

CAT: Thank you.

(Mojo presses closer to her.)

MOJO: How long you was up north. You didn't mind the cold? That's one thing I'd never git used to. Cold. You know what I mean? And to think a tender, sweet thang like you

(He presses closer.)

MC: (off-stage) Ladies and gentlemen.

CAT: Ou. Listen. They 'bout to start.

MC: (off-stage) Ladies and gentlemen. Once again welcome to our grand openin'. We know y'all been waitin' for the entertainment. So without any further delay. We are proud to present the debut of a new group. Local boys who got their sights set high. They want to make it to the big time. The Big City. Let's hear it for Jesse and Sterling Ferguson. The Favorite Sons.

(Song intro begins and spotlights flash around the stage.)

PATRONS: Who? What? The Ferguson boys? It can't be. I don't believe it. They Mama know they here?

CAT: (chokes) Sterling and Jesse?

(Loula and other Church Members enter and cross.)

LOULA: You sure that was Duke you saw?

SISTER PHULLIPS: Yes I'm sure. What you think? I'm seein' things?

LOULA: No sister. But you said you saw Cat too.

SISTER PHULLIPS: I did. Don't be tellin me. You was the one who didn't see her.

LOULA: Well I can't see nothin' 'cept a bunch of flashin' lights and shadows.

SISTER PHULLIPS: What? Let me look. They dancin'. That's what it is. Carryin' on scandalous right near the church. It's a sin and a shame. And to think someone livin' in your very own house, not to mention your own child

LOULA: Don't you worry nothin' 'bout that. I can take care of Cat. As for Duke. I want to make sure that was him you saw.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Oh it was him all right. No doubt in my mind 'bout it.

LOULA: Well I can't see nothin'. Come on. We goin' inside.

SISTER PHULLIPS: What? I ain't goin' into no den of iniquity.

LOULA: Well you can stand at the door.

SISTER PHULLIPS: You ain't leavin' me outside.

(She hurries behind Loula and they exit. Jesse and Sterling run onto stage. Patrons cheer and applaud.)

STERLING: Hey Jesse. Let's tell the people what we're after.

JESSE: Yeah. Let's tell 'em where we're headed.

STERLING: Where we're goin'. How it's gonna be.

JESSE: All right brother man. After you.

MUSICAL NUMBER: "BIG CITY"

I'm gonna see the lights
Shinnin' big and bright
In the big city.

I'm gonna see the sites

High as kites
In the big city.
I'm gonna reach and grab
That brass ring.
And maybe too
I'll find my queen
In the big city.

JESSE: What? Now you listen.

I'm gonna go downtown
And eat in style
In the big city.

Then cruise uptown
And hang out a while
In the big city.

I'm gonna walk the strip.
Check out the town.
I'm gonna lay some dice
Out on the ground
In the big city.

STERLING: Man I don't know.

JESSE: Don't know what?

STERLING: 'Bout what you sayin'.

JESSE: What I'm sayin'?

STERLING: You just talkin' 'bout hangin' out. You ain't said nothin' 'bout them pretty young thangs.

JESSE: Oh.

I'm gonna find some one
And have some fun
In the big city.

She's gonna be so fine
And be all mine
In the big city.

She'll fall in love
Well that's too bad.
Cause I break hearts
And leave them sad
In the big city.

STERLING: Man you got the wrong attitude.

JESSE: Wrong attitude?

STERLING: You got no class.

JESSE: Class? Who talkin' 'bout class? Unless you
talkin' 'bout the school of good lovin'. Where I instructs.

STERLING: You don't even know what I mean. Listen hear.

I'm gonna find my love
And make her mine
In the big city.

For what she wants
Spend my last dime
In the big city.

Romance will be
The best there is.
Won't be no hurt.
Won't be no tears
In the big city.

JESSE: Man you crazy.

STERLING: What?

JESSE: You forgit why we goin' to the big city? You want
to git married you can stay here.

STERLING: What? Not me.

JESSE: All right then. Tell me somethin'.

I'm gonna find one girl,
Well maybe two or three
In the big city.

They'll want to stay,
But man I'm free
In the big city.

I'll have the time
Of my life.
Maybe someday
Think about a wife
In the big city.

JESSE: That's better.

Now the ones you leave
I'll take for me
In the big city.

Can't help myself
I'm just greedy
In the big city.

I'll have my fill
And seconds too.
There's just enough
For me and you
In the big city.

STERLING: All right Jesse. Let's break it down for the people. Hit me.

JESSE: Ugh.

(Duke watches. Jesse and Sterling notice him grooving.)

STERLING: Now y'all understand where we're goin' and how it's gonna be?

JESSE: I don't think they heard you brother.

STERLING: I said do y'all understand where we're goin' and how it's gonna be?

PATRONS: Yeah.

JESSE: I don't know. Can somebody help us out?

(They scan and stop on Duke.)

JESSE: Yeah. We talkin' to you brother. Can you give us a hand out here?

PATRONS: Yeah.

(Duke joins them.)

JESSE: You been listenin' to the song?

DUKE: Yeah.

STERLING: You know what we talkin' 'bout?

DUKE: Yeah.

STERLING: Well.

They gonna know you
When by you ride
In the big city.

They'll see the glare
From your smile so wide
In the big city.

Won't be no doubt
That you around.
They'll be a shine
Though the sun gone down
In the big city.

(Jesse and Sterling aren't amused.)

DUKE: All right. Let me tell it straight.

Better make some room
For these brother's here
In the big city.

But if you won't
Don't have no fear
In the big city.

Cause there's no doubt
That they will be
The baddest thang
You'll ever see

In the big city.
There's gonna be so much
For us to git
In the big city.

And when we start
We just won't quit
In the big city.

Workin' hard
Night and day.
Workin' hard
Even when we play
In the big city.

We gonna take it right
Straight to the top
In the big city.

Our big pay day
Won't ever stop
In the big city.

I'm gonna take my check
Right to the bank
And hold my nose
Cause I sure will stank
In the big city.

We'll have the girls
And have the green
In the big city.

Don't be askin' why
We be so mean
In the big city.

I'm gonna have my cake
And eat it too.
Gonna have a boy
Shine my shoes
In the big city.

Cause time will tell
And your Mama too.
So don't forgit
Look for you know who
In the big city.

(Song ends and Patrons cheer.)

MC: (off-stage) All right. Let's hear it for the Favorite Sons. Yeah. In the Big City. That's it. All right. Y'all think they gonna make it?

PATRONS: Yeah.

MC: (off-stage) All right. It'll be a few more minutes before the featured attraction. So y'all relax and keep buyin' them drinks.

(Cat rushes to the Boys. Mojo follows her.)

CAT: You guys were great. I didn't know you cats could cook like that.

STERLING: Thanks Cat.

JESSE: Yeah. Thanks. Duke. What you doin' here. I thought you said

DUKE: I know what I said. I wanted to come to show y'all... To let y'all know... Man I'm here. Ain't that good enough.

(Loula and Sister Phullips enter and stop at the sidelines. The Bouncer stops them from entering.)

SISTER PHULLIPS: What is it? What's goin' on?

LOULA: I don't know. I can't see nothin' 'cept a bunch of people.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Move over. Let me see.

BOUNCER: All right ladies. Y'all either gonna have to pay to come in or git out the way so others can.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Well I'll be. I'd never pay none of my hard earned money to come into this shanty of sinners. Go head Loula.

BOUNCER: What's it gonna be?

LOULA: (off-stage) Come on sister. Let's go.

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) What? You said you was goin' in. You gonna let you own child shame you in public? Everybody in town gonna know he was out here.

LOULA: Please sister.

SISTER PHULLIPS: It's a shame.

BOUNCER: All right ladies. Out of the way. We got people tryin' to git in.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Wait a minute. You don't know me. Git your hands off me. Let me go.

(The Bouncer pushes the Loula and Sister Phullips out. Mojo approaches Cat who stands near the Boys.)

MOJO: 'Cuse us. But we got a lot of catchin' up to do.

(He grabs Cat's arm and pulls her.)

MOJO: How 'bout another drink baby.

CAT: Hey.

MC: And now ladies and gentlemen. Without any further delay we present our featured performer. This young lady is from Sweet Valley fellas. And you know what they say 'bout them Sweet Valley girls.

MEN: They sweet through and through.

MC: She's been up living up north for awhile. Now she's home visiting. Ladies and gentlemen. Cat.

(Musical cue. Cat hears it and pulls away from Mojo.)

CAT: Wait a minute. That's my song. I gotta go.

(She breaks away and rushes to the mike just in time to start her song.)

MUSICAL NUMBER: "DOIN' THE DO"

I got a new thang
I want y'all to hear.
Just hear that guitar
a scratchin' your ear.

You hear that bass

just a thumpin' the beat.
You know them drums
will git you out of your seat.

Doin' the Do.
Just feel the rhythm a mak-in' you jerk.
Doin' the Do.
Now watch yourself or you might git hurt.

Doin' the Do.
Do what I say don't be askin' me why.
Doin' the Do.
Just git on up you got to give it a try.

Now cut the lights.
You don't need to see.
Who you dancin' with
don't mean nothin' to me.

Now do the dog.
Just go 'head and bark.
It's even better
doin' it in the dark.

Doin' the Do.
It don't matter what it is that you do.
Doin' the Do.
Just got to make it kind of funky too.

Doin' the Do.
Grunt like a hog to show you feelin' good.
Doin' the Do.
Just shake your body like you know you should.

Now go and hit
a corner for me.
Now hit three more.
Make it kind of nasty.

Now move it smooth
work it nice and slow.
Or you'll be comin' back
askin for more.

Doin' the Do.
Don't be gentle go 'head and git rough.
Doin' the Do.
Just don't stop just cause you git enough.

Doin' the Do.
Go on and jook to the funky beat.
Doin' the Do.
Go on and jook and generate some heat.

Now ladies shimmy.
Let down your hair.
Ain't nobody lookin.
Don't nobody care.

The groove is cookin'
are you feelin' all right?
Just keep it movin'
work that body tonight.

Doin' the Do
I want to see you git soakin' wet.
Doin' the Do
Keep it goin' you ain't finished yet.

Doin' the Do
I want to see you workin' it real hard.
Doin' the Do
I want to see you tearin' up this yard.

Girl you late.
Where it is that you been?
Come join the line
before the party ends.

Last call before
the song is through.
Shake that thang.
Show me what you can do.

Doin' the Do.
Don't be sorry if you miss your chance.
Doin' the Do.
Come on sister help me do my dance.

Doin' the Do.
Before it's over it will make you jump.
Doin' the Do.
Just git on up and just gyrate that rump.

I know y'all feelin'
kind of tired and hot.
If you can't hang
then you in the wrong spot.

Sweat is pourin'
and I know you can't see.
Just kick your leg
like a funky old flea.

Doin' the Do.
Don't worry 'bout whatever you should.
Doin' the Do.
I want to see you rock this neighborhood.

Doin' the Do.
Your Ma ain't here and I ain't gonna tell.
Doin' the Do.
The coast is clear. Let me hear y'all yell.

(Patrons yell and cheer. The Boys and others rush to Cat and congratulate her. Mojo watches.)

STERLING: Cat. That was tough.

JESSE: Yeah Cat. Out of sight.

MOJO: Yeah baby. That was nice. Now let me buy you that drink. Let's go. 'Cuse us.

(He takes her by the arm and pulls her along. Cat resists.)

CAT: What? Wait a minute.

STERLING: What you think you doin'?

MOJO: This none of your business boy. Just stay out of it. Understand?

CAT: Let me go.

MOJO: It's all right baby. Come on.

(He pulls her along.)

CAT: Let me go.

STERLING: Hey. You heard the lady.

MOJO: It ain't no problem.

(He releases Cat and swings at Sterling.)

CAT: Sterling.

DUKE: Watch out.

STERLING: What?

(Sterling gets hit and staggers. Duke grabs Mojo and they struggle.)

DUKE: You can't do that to my brother.

MOJO: Don't worry. I got enough for all y'all.

CAT: Duke.

(Jesse jumps on Mojo and rides his back. Mojo spins around to shake him off. They bump into other Patrons who join the fight.)

PATRONS: Don't be pushin' me. Watch out. I don't play that. Hey. Ouch. You asked for it.

STERLING: Hey. Wait a minute.

JESSE: Who you think you pullin' on like that. Cat's a lady.

MOJO: You need to mind your own business. You'll learn after I finish with you.

JESSE: We'll see about that.

(He mauls Mojo's head with his knuckles and Mojo runs wild.)

MOJO: Ow. Quit molin' my head.

(He stumbles through club and bumps into other Patrons. The fight becomes a melee.)

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) What's that? What's goin' on?

BOUNCER: (off-stage) What's the problem in there? Y'all stop that. You hear?

SISTER PHULLIPS: (off-stage) They fightin'. They fightin'. I told you. I told you. Nothin' but a den of iniquity. Come on y'all. The Lord is callin' us. Now is the time to move. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

(The Church Members enter and cross. They carry their signs. Sister Phullips pushes Loula along.)

CHURCH MEMBERS: Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Come on Loula. It's time to act.

LOULA: What you doin'?

SISTER PHULLIPS: Now is the time Sister Ferguson. The Lord is callin'. It's time to put that devil down.

LOULA: But.

CHURCH MEMBERS: Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

LOULA: Wait. Wait a minute.

(The Church Members push their way into the club.)

CHURCH MEMBERS: Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

LOULA: Good Lord.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Have mercy. Just look.

MC: (off-stage) Ladies and gentlemen. Ladies and gentlemen. Please calm down. Please calm. Hey wait a minute. You must not know who I am? (a punch is heard)

(The Church Members march and fight rages around them.)

CHURCH MEMBERS: Down with the devil. Up with the Lord. Down with the devil. Up with the Lord.

(A Man runs into a Church Member.)

BROTHER BENNETT: Hey. Now you wait just a dog-gone minute.

(He grabs the Man and pushes him out of the way.)

BROTHER BENNETT: You just watch where you goin'.

SISTER PHULLIPS: That's tellin' him brother.

(Another Man runs into him and pushes him into the fight.)

BROTHER BENNETT: Hey. You wait a dog gone minute son.

(He joins the fight.)

BROTHER MITCHELL: Brother Bennett. Brother Bennett.
(someone punches him) Hey. (he joins the fight)

LOULA: Sweet Jesus. We got to git out of here.

(Sister Phullips shadow punches.)

LOULA: Come on.

(They turn to leave. Sterling stumbles out of the melee and faces Loula.)

STERLING: Mama?

LOULA: Sterling?

(He is pulled back into the fight.)

SISTER PHULLIPS: Whatn't that Sterling?

LOULA: Come on sister.

(Jesse stumbles out of the fight and stares Loula.)

JESSE: Mama?

LOULA: Jesse?

(A siren sounds in the distance and gets louder. The fight rages.)

SISTER PHULLIPS: Whatn't that Jesse?

LOULA: Come on sister. We got to git out of here. It sound like the police comin'.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Police?

(Everyone pauses and listens to the siren. Patrons rush for the door and the fight continues. The siren gets louder and a police light flashes on stage. Cat stumbles through.)

CAT: Git back. Let me out of here. Let me out. Duke.
(She pushes people out of the way and faces Loula.)

CAT: Loula?

LOULA: Cat?

(Duke rushes in behind her.)

LOULA: Duke?

DUKE: Mama?

SISTER PHULLIPS: Whatn't that

SHERIFF: (off-stage) This the police. Everyone is under arrest.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Arrest?

SHERIFF: (off-stage) I repeat everyone is under arrest. Stop the fighting. Y'all hear. Stop the fighting.

SISTER PHULLIPS: Arrest. I can't be under no arrest. I'm the mother of the church. Let me out of here.

(She pushes. The Sheriff and Guard enter and push all back inside. Cat grabs Duke from the crowd.)

CAT: Duke. Come on. This way.

(She pulls him and they move to the back of the crowd.)

DUKE: Mama. Sterling. Jesse.

CAT: Come on. We gotta git before they see us.

MOJO: Cat. Where you goin'? Wait up.

(Cat and Duke exit. Things settle. The police light flashes and the siren winds down.)

SHERIFF: All right. That's better. Y'all just quiet on down. It's gonna be long night.

(Light out.)

Scene 4: HOME - SUNDAY Afternoon

(Lights up on the inside of the house.)

LOULA: (off-stage) I don't want to hear no more about it. Now git on out of here before I git my switch.

(A door slams and Ludiwici enters the stage in a huff. She stomps to the TV and turns it on loud. She drops to the floor and watches it.)

LOULA: (off-stage) Ludiwici. Ludiwici Ferguson. Cut out that foolishness and cut down that TV. You here?

(The TV plays loudly and Ludiwici watches. A door opens and Loula enters and walks to Ludiwici.)

LOULA: You hear me girl? You gonna git beat yet. Cut that TV off.

LUDIWICI: But Mama I

(Loula shuts off the TV.)

LOULA: But Mama nothin'. Git on outside.

LUDIWICI: I wanna watch some TV.

LOULA: I said go outside. I'm tired of you children talkin' back. Tryin' to tell me what to do. You think you grown too? Well you ain't too grown to git whipped.

LUDIWICI: Mama

LOULA: Git on outside I said.

(Loula searches for her switch. Ludiwici rises reluctantly.)

LOULA: Listenin' to that child. Knowed I shouldn't have let that Cat stay here. And I should've left that dog gone TV in the store too. Lord have mercy.

(Ludiwici kicks her feet and crosses.)

LUDIWICI: I don't ever git to do what I want.

LOULA: I got somethin' to fix them draggin' feet.

(Ludiwici crosses quicker.)

LOULA: That's better. Just git on outside and quit sassin' me. Look like I'm gonna have to lay the law down with everybody.

LUDIWICI: One of these days I'm gonna do what I want.

(She exits and a door slams.)

LOULA: Lord have mercy. (she crosses) Sterling. Jesse. Duke. Y'all come on in here. Y'all hear me? Git on in here.

(She pauses and takes a breath. She clasps her hands together and glances around the room. She stares at the pictures of her children. The Boys enter.)

DUKE: Yes ma'am?

JESSE: Ma'am?

STERLING: You want us?

(She turns away, touched with pain. She composes herself and a stern expression comes over her.)

LOULA: Y'all just sit on down. I got somethin' to say. I don't rightly know how to say it. I ain't never had to talk to y'all like this before. But y'all ain't never done what you did yesterday. Y'all done lost your mind? The trouble at the movie house. Then last night. What on earth was you thinkin' 'bout? How could you shame me like that?

DUKE: Mama we didn't mean to

LOULA: Just hush. It wasn't enough to be fightin' and carryin' on at the movie house. Y'all had to keep goin'. Y'all knew how I felt about that club openin' up down from the church. How could you disgrace me like that?

JESSE: Mama that's not what we

LOULA: I said hush. Y'all know better. Y'all wasn't raised in the streets. Y'all know better. I raised y'all Christian In a Christian home. Why y'all do this to me?

STERLING: Mama let us explain. It's not what you think.

LOULA: Don't be tellin' me what I think. You ain't got nothin' to say. That's the problem. I been lettin' y'all say too much. Well y'all gonna listen now.

JESSE: Mama please. We sorry. We didn't mean to hurt you. We never would. But it's somethin' we had to do.

LOULA: You ain't had to do nothin' 'cept embarrass me. That's all right. I got what y'all need. I ain't had to beat y'all in a long time. But it ain't too late.

JESSE: You got to understand Mama. We wasn't at the club just to be there. We was there to sing.

LOULA: What? You mean to tell me y'all was singin' in that club? Lord have mercy. Y'all ain't got what little bit of sense I thought you had. Is y'all done lost your mind? Singin' in some ole jook joint?

STERLING: It's what we want to do. It's what the Lord

LOULA: Don't you be usin' the Lord's name talkin' 'bout some ole club tryin' to justify what you did. It's blasphemy.

STERLING: Mama it's just what

DUKE: You done said enough. Just leave well enough alone.

STERLING: Don't be tellin' me.

LOULA: I'm tellin' you all. Just hush. I ain't asked y'all to say nothin'. I don't even know what to think. Here I'm hardly able to look y'all in the face. I could've beat y'all down last night. Beat y'all down.

(She cries and Duke crosses to her.)

DUKE: Mama.

LOULA: No. Just git on away. I don't want to hear it. I done heard enough.

DUKE: I hope you satisfied. See how much happiness your big dreams bringin'?

STERLING: Don't start.

DUKE: Y'all done started it. All that big talk. Big this. Big that.

STERLING: Shut up.

LOULA: (softly) Y'all hush.

STERLING: Nobody told you to come. We was fine. Matter of fact I wished you didn't. You just go on and join your stupid army. We'll be fine.

(They all look at him.)

LOULA: What was that?

DUKE: Nothin' Mama. He just runnin' his mouth. Like always. But I can fix that.

LOULA: You ain't fixin' nothin'. What's that you said?

STERLING: Nothin' Mama. Nothin'.

LOULA: No it ain't. You thinkin' 'bout joinin' the army boy? Well you can just forgit that. I ain't gonna hear it. You boys just set on breakin' my heart. Why? Why Lord? Why?

JESSE: Mama Sterling just runnin' his mouth. He don't know what he talkin' 'bout. Tell her Sterling.

STERLING: I didn't mean nothin'.

LOULA: All right then. I don't want to hear no more 'bout it. Ain't none of y'all goin' nowhere. Y'all gonna have plenty to do 'round here.

(The Boys drop their heads frustrated.)

LOULA: That's right. That's the best thing for y'all anyway. Ain't gonna be no beatin'. Just some good hard work.

(The Boys become restless.)

JESSE: Mama we got to talk.

LOULA: Talkin' ain't gonna do no good now.

JESSE: Mama there's somethin' we got to tell you.

LOULA: What you got to say?

JESSE: Mama we want to be singers.

LOULA: You can sing. All day and night while you doin' your chores.

STERLING: We want to be professional. We want to sing with a band. We want to make records.

LOULA: What you talkin' 'bout? A band? What kind of band? Y'all just need to forgit that foolishness.

JESSE: You don't understand. That's why we was at the club.

LOULA: Lord don't start with that club again.

STERLING: Mama we want to go to the city and be real singers. We want to make it big.

LOULA: Boy is you crazy? I done told you ain't none of y'all goin' nowhere.

STERLING: We called Uncle Tip and Aunt Ella. They said we could stay with them till we git a job and git on our feet.

JESSE: Sterling.

LOULA: What? What you say?

STERLING: We asked

LOULA: I heard you. Y'all keep playin' with me. Maybe a good beatin' might help.

STERLING: It don't matter.

LOULA: It don't matter? It don't matter do it? I done told you 'bout sassin' me boy.

STERLING: I'm not sassin' you Mama. I tellin' the truth. Tell her Jesse. Go on Jesse. Tell her.

JESSE: He's tellin' the truth Mama. We asked them.

LOULA: What?

JESSE: It's somethin' we got to do. It's somethin' we got to try.

LOULA: It's nonsense. It don't matter who you asked. Y'all ain't goin' nowhere.

STERLING: But Mama we got to.

LOULA: I said y'all ain't goin' nowhere. Now I don't want to hear no more.

STERLING: Mama you got to

LOULA: (she slaps him) Just hush.

(There is quiet.)

LOULA: I done heard enough. Y'all done said enough. Talkin' crazy 'bout leavin'.

JESSE: Mama please. We ain't tryin' to hurt you. It's just somethin' we got to do.

DUKE: Don't you understand? Just forgit it. Forgit it.

STERLING: No. You forgit it if that's what you want to do. But don't be tellin' us.

DUKE: She don't want to hear no more. Y'all sound like a broke record.

STERLING: Just stay out of it. It's none of your business no way. You done made your choice. At least we tryin' to be honest. What about you?

DUKE: Why don't you be quiet.

STERLING: Why? So Mama can think I'm some kind of angel like you? You ain't no better than us. You just ain't told her the truth.

DUKE: You just won't listen.

STERLING: Why don't you tell her? Go ahead and tell her.

DUKE: I told you to shut up.

(He lunges at Sterling and they fight.)

LOULA: Duke. Sterling. Y'all quit it. Quit it.

STERLING: Go ahead. Tell her. Tell her.

LOULA: What's goin' on? Why y'all fightin' like that? Duke. Sterling. What y'all talkin' 'bout?

DUKE: Nothin' Mama.

STERLING: Tell her.

LOULA: Tell me what?

STERLING: What you waitin' on?

DUKE: All right. I'm sorry Mama. To have to tell you like this. I guess I should've said somethin' before now.

LOULA: Said what?

DUKE: Sterling was tellin' the truth. I joined the army. I'm leavin' next week.

LOULA: What? I'm tired of playin' with y'all. Go git my belt.

DUKE: It's the truth Mama. I'm really goin'.

(She stares at him.)

DUKE: I hope you satisfied.

LOULA: I don't know what think. I guess you tellin' the truth. What I'm supposed to do? What you want me to say? You know how I feel. It ain't enough I lost your daddy. Now you wanna go. You didn't even ask me nothin' 'bout it. You don't care how I feel?

DUKE: It ain't that Mama. I knew you'd say no. I didn't want to hurt you. But it's somethin' I gotta do.

LOULA: You sound just like your brothers. Ain't none of y'all got any sense.

DUKE: Mama just understand. There's nothin' for me here in Crossway. I'll spend the rest of my life down at Thunderbird's garage and never do nothin' else.

LOULA: What else you wanna do?

DUKE: I don't know. But I gotta see what's out there. I got to try and find out whatever it is.

LOULA: You been dreamin' too. What's the matter with y'all? Why y'all talkin' like this. Y'all just tryin' to git back at me. Y'all don't care about me.

JESSE: It's not that Mama. It's just that now's the time.

STERLING: It's time for us to git out in the world. We grown Mama.

LOULA: You ain't grown. You don't know nothin' 'bout bein' grown. You wish you was grown. You don't know what grown is. You think runnin' the streets, fightin' and chasin' after girls is bein' grown? You think causin' me heartache is bein' grown? That's some grown.

MUSICAL NUMBER: "GROWN"

I'm tired of your sass.
Just mind and hold your tongue.
You're gonna hear me now.
I've only just begun.

The things you say ain't right
And I don't like your tone.
Don't care for what you say
About you bein' grown.

You ain't grown
Just because you big and standin' there tall.
You ain't grown
Just because you think that you know it all.

You ain't grown.
You better stop with these things that you boast.
You ain't grown.
You better stop and listen real close.

Tried to do some good.
Made sure y'all went to church.
But where did I go wrong?
Cause all I git is hurt.

For you I did provide
Things the best I could.
Guess it just wasn't enough.
Guess it didn't do no good.

You think you grown
And can do whatever you please.
You think you grown,
But there's more to life than a set of car keys.

You think you grown,

But in my house you got rules to obey.
You think you grown,
But in here you will do what I say.

Please you got to listen.
Let us try to explain.
We didn't mean to bring
All this trouble and pain.

We didn't mean to cause
You any misery.
We tried to do what's best
For what we want to be.

We're grown
Enough to know the best you did give.
We're grown
And you're the reason that we're here and we live.

But we're grown
Enough to do the things that we must.
And we're grown
Enough to hope that in us you still trust.

Don't think that we don't care
Or don't appreciate.
Though we never said before
We hope it's not too late.

Thank you for what you did.
No mother could do more.
But it's time we start to do
What God put us down here for.

Because we're grown.
Now's our chance to do what our hearts tell.
Because we're grown.
It's time to move to bust out the shell.

Because we're grown
And can no longer to your skirt cleave.
Because we're grown
And so we know someday we must leave.

I've heard about enough.
Should last me for years.
But keep your words a comin'
I got plenty more tears.

Just don't know what to do.
Don't want to hear no more.
Just leave well enough alone
Or just git on out my door.

You think you grown,
But now you hush with your words soundin' so wise.
Cause you ain't grown
And I'm still able to whip your grown backside.

You think you grown.
Well I don't care. Let me make myself clear.
You may be grown,
But you will mind as long as you live here.

JESSE: Mama we didn't mean to upset you.

LOULA: Just go.

STERLING: Mama we ain't tryin' to hurt you. Please believe us. We love you.

LOULA: Git out. Go on. Y'all done said enough.

(The Boys exit. Loula glances around the room. She crosses to the Boys' trophies and touches them. She goes to a piece of art done by Ludiwici and touches it. She goes to the pictures and touches them gently.)

LOULA: My babies. My precious babies.

(She starts to sob.)

LOULA: Sweet Jesus. Don't take my babies away. Please Jesus. Don't take my babies away from me.

(She sobs then pulls herself together.)

LOULA: It'll be all right Loula. Just give it to the Lord. Give it to the Lord. They just talkin'. That's all. They ain't goin' nowhere. They ain't big enough yet. I still got to look after them. They'll see. If they go they'll be back. They'll come back to they Mama. Then everything'll be fine. I just got to trust the Lord. That's all. I got to trust the Lord.

(She breakdown and falls to her knees and prays.)

LOULA: Sweet Jesus. If you never heard me before I'm askin' you to hear me now. I need you Lord. I need you. I need your patience and wisdom Lord. I need your strength. Just tell me what to do and it will be done. If you want me to let go Lord I'll let go. If you want me to hold on Lord I'll hold tight. Just show me Lord and Thy will be done. Amen.

(She rises and looks at the pictures.)

LOULA: My babies. My beautiful babies. I always tired to do the right thing. I know I wasn't always easy. But I loved you. I loved you with all my heart. I tried to do the best I could for you. The best I could.

MUSICAL NUMBER: "THE BEST FOR YOU"

Gave what I could.
All I was able.
Clothes on your back.
Food on the table.

Made sure that you had
All that you needed.
But what was the use?
Now I feel cheated.

I thought it was
The best for you.
I tried to do
The best for you.

I wanted just
The best for you.
And nothing but
The best for you.

You had to run.
You had to hurry.
I let you go.
I didn't worry.

Would be there when
You tripped you fell.
To pick you up

And make you well.

I hoped it was
The best for you.
I prayed it was
The best for you.

I made it be
The best for you.
My all and nothing
Less for you.

I made you work
To make you strong.
Was it too much?
Did I do wrong?

I made you straight
For when you lied.
Because you were
My joy and pride.

I knew it was
The best for you.
I didn't want
No mess from you.

I had to do
The best for you.
Cause nothing but
The best would do.

So now I must
Let you roam.
But never fear
You have a home.

Your room I'll keep.
Your place to rest.
For you are mine.
You are the best.

It all was for
The best for you.
I made it be
The best for you.

I'll always give
The best to you.
I'll always be
The best for you.

(She holds the pictures tight then returns them back into place. She crosses and lights out.)

Scene 5: ROAD - SUNDAY Early Evening

(Cat enters stage and carries luggage.)

LUDIWICI: (off-stage) Cat. Cat wait up. Wait for me.

(Ludiwici enters and catches her breath. Cat stops and puts down her luggage. She sighs.)

CAT: What is it now? Did I forgit somethin' else?

LUDIWICI: No'am.

CAT: There you go. Hurry up now. I got a bus to catch.

LUDIWICI: Cat please don't go. Please don't.

(They embrace and Ludiwici weeps.)

CAT: Hush now. We done been all through this. You keep cryin' you gonna dry up and shrivel out. Hush.

(She holds Ludiwici.)

CAT: You got to be strong.

LUDIWICI: I don't want to be strong.

CAT: But you got to. You got to help your Mama. You got to be there for her.

LUDIWICI: I don't wanna. I don't wanna help her. She's makin' you go.

CAT: Hush. It's for the best. It's time. I done overstayed my welcome anyway.

LUDIWICI: No you ain't Cat. We still got things to do.

CAT: What we got to do?

LUDIWICI: We didn't spend no time together. Just you and me.

CAT: You startin' to sound like somebody else.

LUDIWICI: Who?

CAT: It don't matter. We went shoppin' together. We went to the movies. We had fun together didn't we?

LUDIWICI: But we got more stuff to do. You even said. What about the TV? You said we was goin' to stay up all night and watch together. You promised.

CAT: Chile the TV go off at midnight. And you'd been fast asleep by then anyway.

LUDIWICI: So. You promised.

CAT: I'm sorry Ludiwici. Sometimes it's like that. Sometimes you got to break promises. You can't always have things your way.

LUDIWICI: But you promised.

CAT: Sh. You got to listen. I got to go.

LUDIWICI: I don't care. I want you to stay. So we can be together. And live happy ever after.

CAT: Happy ever after? Girl what you talkin' 'bout? That's just in fairy tales. Ain't no such a thing for real.

LUDIWICI: But if you believe

CAT: It takes more than just believin'.

LUDIWICI: But Reverend Kelley say if you want something good to happen you got to start by believin'. Inside. Inside your heart. I'm believin' in my heart you gonna stay with me forever.

(Cat is touched, but holds firm.)

CAT: Girl you talkin' nonsense. You just tryin' to git me upset. Where's my cigarettes?

LUDIWICI: Please Cat. Stay. We can talk to Mama. We can tell her

CAT: Child just stop.
LUDIWICI: We'll tell her you won't cause no more trouble.

CAT: Hush before I find me a switch. Listen at me.
You got me talkin' like I'm your Mama.

LUDIWICI: You can be my Mama. I can come with you. I'll be your little girl.

CAT: There you go. Talkin' crazy. Just like when I got here. From now on you better listen to your Mama and don't talk to no strangers.

LUDIWICI: You ain't no stranger.

CAT: You just mind. I got to git movin'. Now git on back to the house.

LUDIWICI: Cat please. Please don't go. (she falls to her knees and cries) I'll die. Please. Please. I'll die.

CAT: Oh stop being such a baby. Carryin' on like this out in the street. Your Mama's gonna hear you.

(Ludiwici cries. Cat watches and understands. She comforts her and Ludiwici calms.)

CAT: There now. You feel better?

LUDIWICI: No.

CAT: I usually feel better after a good cry. Like a burden's been lifted.

LUDIWICI: Cat.

CAT: Don't start back up now. You done done enough cryin' for everyone in Crossway.

LUDIWICI: You don't care. You don't understand. You make fun of me like everyone else. I hate you. I hope I don't ever see you again.

(She turns and crosses.)

CAT: Ludiwici. Come here. I'm about tired of your temper tantrums. I said come here.

(Ludiwici stands with her back to Cat.)

CAT: You know what your Mama said 'bout mindin' your elders?

LUDIWICI: You said you wasn't no elder.

CAT: Don't be tellin' me what I said. Come here.

(Ludiwici crosses to her.)

CAT: I don't know what you tryin' to pull, but I ain't got the time. My bus'll be here any minute. Lord knows if I miss it they might just run me out of town.

LUDIWICI: So.

CAT: So? That's what you want anyway? Ain't it? You want me to miss my bus so you can go cryin' back to your Mama for her to let me stay.

LUDIWICI: So.

CAT: Girl you pitiful.

LUDIWICI: No I'm not. Cat please don't go.

CAT: Girl listen. I got to go. Like I said it's time. Like when your Reverend talk about a time for all things.

LUDIWICI: It ain't time.

CAT: Everything's gonna be fine. You got to stay here. Who gonna help your Mama when your brothers leave.

LUDIWICI: I don't care.

CAT: Well you better care. And you better stop talkin' like that. I will git a switch. All your Mama's done for you. You ought to be shame.

LUDIWICI: (mumbling) I ain't.

CAT: What was that?

LUDIWICI: Nothin'.

CAT: I thought so. You need to stay with your Mama. So y'all can be there for each other.

LUDIWICI: Why?

CAT: (shaking head) Girl. Look at you. Your legs gittin' long. Your chest startin' to pop out.

(Ludiwici looks down startled and covers herself.)

CAT: And the little boys startin' to look at you too.

LUDIWICI: No they ain't.

CAT: Yes they is. And you know it. What's that Washington boy's name?

LUDIWICI: I don't know?

CAT: Huh. You will. And before too long too. You better. He's cute.

(Ludiwici blushes.)

CAT: Your Mama got to teach you 'bout courtin' and all 'bout bein' a woman.

LUDIWICI: You can teach me.

CAT: No I can't. I ain't ready yet. Ain't ever gonna be ready for that. You got to let her finish what she done started. You think you know everything, but you still need her. You always will.

LUDIWICI: (mumbling) No I won't.

CAT: Say what?

LUDIWICI: Nothin'.

CAT: You better listen chile. They'll come a day when Mama won't be there. That's why you better stay with her long as you can.

LUDIWICI: But I want to stay with you.

CAT: Listen Ludiwici. Y'all like that pomade your Mama be usin' on heads. Y'all got to stick together. Through thick and thin. Good and bad. Y'all family. You got to stay with your Mama. Stay together as long as possible.

LUDIWICI: But what about us Cat?

CAT: I know honey. But that's all a part of it. Growin' up. Makin' friends. Losin' friends. Gittin' a boyfriend.

LUDIWICI: I don't want no boyfriend. I want you. So we can live happy ever after.

CAT: There you go.

LUDIWICI: What?

CAT: Talkin' 'bout happy endings and fairy tales. Ain't nobody ever told you ain't no such a thing as a fairy tale.

LUDIWICI: No.

CAT: Your Mama ain't told you 'bout Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny?

LUDIWICI: Told me what?

CAT: Well. Maybe she will one day. It ain't my place.

LUDIWICI: No Cat. You can tell me.

CAT: I don't know.

LUDIWICI: Please Cat. Please.

CAT: Well. All I got to say is ain't no such a thing as a fairy tale. Ain't no such a thing as a happy endin'. And nothin' lasts forever. Nothin'.

LUDIWICI: But

CAT: Don't worry honey. Everything'll be fine. It's all about growin' up Ludiwici. You'll see.

(Ludiwici weeps.)

CAT: Come here girl. You know how I feel about you. My heart's breakin' too. You just want to see me cryin' too. I don't want to leave, but I got to.

LUDIWICI: You don't got to. You don't got to do nothin'.

CAT: Hush now. You know I got to go. It don't make no sense right now. It might not ever. But when you grown maybe you'll understand.

LUDIWICI: I don't want to understand. I don't want to be grown. I want you to be with me so we can live happy ever after.

CAT: There you go. Ain't you heard nothin' I done said?

MUSICAL NUMBER: "WHAT'S A HAPPY EVER AFTER?"

The stories that they told
When you was just a tot
I know you cherished much
To you they meant a lot.

I used to be like you.
I thought my prince would come
To sweep me off my feet.
Yep I was pretty dumb.

So follow my advice.
Don't be a fool like me.
Just listen and be wise
And the better off you'll be.

What's a happy endin'?
For us there ain't no thing.
What's a happy ever after?
Somethin' meant for kings.

What's a happy endin'?
To me it is much more.
What's a happy ever after?
What I been waitin' for.

Just leave your Cinderella
Right there on the shelf.
You got better things to do
So go on and mind yourself.

Snow White and Mother Goose
And all those nursery rhymes
Just ain't the way it is.
They worth about a dime.

So find another book
A little bit more real.
Forgit the poppycock
And much better off you'll feel.

What's a happy endin'?
That's somethin' I don't see.
What's a happy ever after?
You know it ain't free.

What's a happy endin'?
Somethin' that would be nice.
What's a happy ever after?
It's worth whatever price.

All I want is for you to stay
And spend a little time.
To be with you for awhile
And know that you're all mine.

To dance and have some fun.
To run and skip and play.
Is that askin' for too much
Before you go away?

Maybe it was too much
To hope for happiness.
I need a falling star
To help we git my wish.

What's a happy endin'?
A bright and sunny day.
What's a happy ever after?
It could be if you would stay.

What's a happy endin'?
It's something we could touch.
What's a happy ever after?
To me it means so much.

Not all you say is bad.
It's makes a little sense.
You might not be all wrong.
You got me sittin' on the fence.

Still it's time for me to go,
But I never will forgit
The good times that we had
And the times you pitched your fits.

But deep inside remember
That no matter where
Our footsteps may lead us
For you I'll always care.

What's a happy endin'?
More than a fairy tale.
What's a happy ever after?
Somethin' that won't fail.

What's a happy endin'?
Somethin' to hold to tight.
What's a happy ever after?
It's right here in sight.

What's a happy endin'?
No better place to be.
What's a happy ever after?
Right here for you and me.

(Off-stage the bus engine and breaks are heard as it arrives. The horn sounds. Cat hugs Ludiwici.)

CAT: I love you girl.

(She releases her and quickly grabs her luggage and rushes off-stage. Ludiwici stands frozen as the bus engine revs. Headlights flash across the stage. Ludiwici turns with them and faces the audience. She waves and trots to the edge of the stage following the bus.)

LUDIWICI: Bye Cat. Bye. I love you too. Bye. I'll always remember you Cat. Bye.

(The bus engine grow fainter. Ludiwici wipes tears and waves.)

LUDIWICI: I love you Cat. I'll always love you.

(She waves.)

LOULA: (off-stage) Ludiwici. You git away from that highway and come on back home. Ludiwici. You hear?

LUDIWICI: Yes Mama. I'm comin'. I'm comin' Mama.

(She runs off urgently and lights out.)

THE END