

ACT I

SCENE 1 LATE FRIDAY NIGHT

*(Lights up on the front porch.)*

TREY, an African American man in his mid-30's, stands on the top step of the porch with his back to the audience. He is dressed in a suit, with his tie undone, and is carrying a suitcase. He slowly turns to the audience, puts the suitcase down, and looks out. After a few seconds, a wry smile descends across his face, and he chuckles to himself. He then reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out an airplane sized bottle of Jack Daniels. He downs the bottle, and shakes his head in disbelief. We hear a cell phone ringing. Trey pulls a phone from his pocket. He looks at the number calling, and answers the phone.

TREY

I'm outside...Outside the house...No, really, I'm on the porch. I'll be right-

Trey hangs up the phone. Moments later a light pops on in the hallway of Trey's house, followed by a porch light. LINDSEY, a light skinned African American woman in her mid-thirties, opens the front door and walks out onto the porch.

LINDSEY

When did you get here?

TREY

Cab just dropped me off.

LINDSEY

Why didn't you call me when your plane landed?

TREY

I didn't want to wake you.

LINDSEY

Like I'd be able to sleep tonight. So?

TREY

So what?

LINDSEY

Are you seriously asking me that? Were you able to wrap up an agreement or what?

TREY

Neatly in a bow.

LINDSEY

So things went as expected? The bank will-

TREY

Baby, can we please not do this tonight?

LINDSEY

I just need to know-

TREY

Lindsey, it's a done deal.

LINDSEY

Trey, you're going to have to give me a little more information than that.

TREY

I know, I know, you're right; and I promise tomorrow, I will fill you in on every minute detail. But right now, can we just, I don't know, keep each other company. I missed you.

Trey kisses Lindsey; she smiles.

LINDSEY

I missed you too.

TREY

I would have never known.

LINDSEY

I'm sorry; it was just so nerve-racking having all of that hanging over our heads.

TREY

I know.

Trey takes a seat on the stairs; Lindsey sits next to him.

LINDSEY

Are you hungry?

TREY

I'm starving; any food in the house?

LINDSEY

There's a pecan pie.

TREY

You baked a pie?

LINDSEY

No, a lady named Elouise dropped it off. She said she used to bake them for you when you were little, and that you loved them.

TREY

As hungry as I am, I'm going to love it tonight.

LINDSEY

What are you doing out here?

TREY

Just thinking.

LINDSEY

It's a nice night; the rain this week really cooled things down.

TREY

Yeah, cool enough to drive the mosquitos away.

LINDSEY

I can't wait for you to see the house; I'm just about finished painting.

TREY

I don't plan on us being here very long; I don't know why you're doing all of that work.

LINDSEY

I wanted to fix the place up for the time we are here.

TREY

I don't even know why you came down here; I can't imagine the appeal of this place.

LINDSEY

Subletting makes more sense financially; you know that. Which reminds me, has the listing been posted?

TREY

I took care of it.

LINDSEY

We're offering a year lease, right?

TREY

If necessary, but I was hoping to find someone willing to go month to month.

LINDSEY

Trey, I thought we decided it was best to get someone in there for a year; that way we're guaranteed of having the extra money coming in.

TREY

Don't worry about money, we'll be fine. James and I just need to get things moving down here.

LINDSEY

I've been thinking about that.

TREY

And?

LINDSEY

I don't know if it's such a good idea.

TREY

What are you talking about?

LINDSEY

Trey, I'm not sure-

TREY

In less than five years this project could get us back on track; with the hit we've taken, that's nothing short of a miracle. Baby, I can make this work; trust me.

Trey takes Lindsey's hands; squeezing them in hopes of convincing her. Lindsey nods her head in agreement; Trey kisses her, and then puts his arm around her. The two both look out into the night, sitting quietly for a few moments.

TREY

Funny.

LINDSEY

What?

TREY

When I left for college, I swore I was saying goodbye to this city forever.

LINDSEY

It must be nice though, being back home.

TREY

Nothing I see around here makes me think of the word home. As far as I'm concerned, this is just a place I used to live.

LINDSEY

Home is not something you see, Baby; it's something you feel.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

END SCENE 1.

SCENE 2 SATURDAY MORNING

*(Lights up on both homes and the porch. We see the walls of Trey's home have been freshly painted, and the dining table and chairs are covered with a painting cloth. There is a step ladder near the upstage wall next to an open can of paint and a brush. Chris's home is immaculate.)*

CHRIS, an African American man in his late 30's dressed in a work jumpsuit, is seated on the porch reading a paper and drinking coffee. He wears a smile of deep contentment. A newspaper sits on the stairs next to him. After a few moments, MALIKA, a dark skinned African American woman in her late 30's dressed in a nurse's outfit, enters the porch from the house, and takes a seat next to him on the steps.

MALIKA

It's a beautiful day.

CHRIS

'Bout time; ain't seen the sun in two weeks.

MALIKA

Yeah, I guess so. You want some more breakfast.

CHRIS

No indeed; all I need now is my coffee.

Chris sips from his coffee.

MALIKA

I don't know how you expect to drink that stuff and sleep.

CHRIS

I ain't goin' to sleep; I'm go'n get on top of this grass 'fore that rain come back.

MALIKA

Do you have to do that today, Chris. This your first day off in the past month.

CHRIS

You know I don't like to let that grass get too long; make the block look bad.

MALIKA

Ms. Washington was talkin' 'bout how high her grass was yesterday. You know if it get over an inch she start worryin' 'bout snakes.

CHRIS

Where in the world that woman think a snake go'n come in her yard from?

MALIKA

No use tryin' to tell her different; bless her soul.

CHRIS

She don't need to worry though, 'cause I'm go'n take care all these yards this mornin'.

MALIKA

(playfully) And don't forget when you get to her house, you need to use her husbands' lawn mower so it won't go to waste.

CHRIS

That man been dead almost ten years, and that lawn mower she got over there died at least five years 'fore he did.

Malika and Chris both laugh.

MALIKA

That old woman is somethin' else.

CHRIS

Been that way her whole life.

MALIKA

I'm happy she came back home though; I really did miss her.

CHRIS

You know Ms. Washington was comin' back home sooner or later; hell, she ain't want leave to begin with.

MALIKA

Yeah, what's that second line song she was singin' to everybody right 'fore the storm?

CHRIS

(singing) I'll be right here when the mornin' come,

CHRIS & MALIKA

(singing) Be right here, I ain't go'n run.

MALIKA

I tell you the truth, she is kicks! Well, let me get in here and finish gettin' ready for work. Remind me not to take any more Saturday shifts; I hate havin' to work on the weekend.

CHRIS

I done told you 'bout takin' on all them extra hours.

MALIKA

Look who talkin'. You get some sleep when you finish cuttin' grass, okay. I don't want you lyin' in there on the sofa watchin' basketball all day.

CHRIS

Alright.

Malika kisses Chris, takes cup, and walks back toward the house.

MALIKA

I should be back by six to get the food ready for tonight.

Malika reaches for the door, but it swings open, and LOU, an African American man in his late 30's, dressed in jeans and a New Orleans Saints jersey or t-shirt, exits the house. He is eating a biscuit and holding a cup of coffee.

LOU

Who dat good people?

MALIKA

Lou, when you go'n stop with all that Saints' nonsense?

LOU

Superbowl champs, Baby! Black and Gold for the next year!

MALIKA

And didn't I tell you 'bout jumpin' that fence in the back yard and walkin' up in my house uninvited.

LOU

And didn't I tell you it's quicker than makin' the block; besides, the back door was unlocked.

MALIKA

What that got to do with anything?

LOU

In this neighborhood a unlocked door is an invitation.

MALIKA

Who invited you to help yourself to my food?

LOU

They got 'bout a dozen biscuits back there; less you startin' a mornin' breakfast program for the neighborhood, you ain't go'n miss this one lil' biscuit I took.

MALIKA

You pushin' your luck, Lou; that's all I'm gonna say, you pushin' your luck.

LOU

Come on now, Malika; how you go'n play your boy? You know I'm just messin' with you.

Lou attempts to hug Malika, who laughs, and pushes him away.

MALIKA

Get off me fool. And don't leave this house with my cup.

Malika exits. Lou laughs, and walks over taking a seat next to Chris.

LOU

You still on them dogs, huh?

CHRIS

Ended last night; seven to seven for thirty days.

LOU

Man, that plant go'n kill you.

CHRIS

I was out of work for close to four years, I'm go'n get mine while the gettin' is good.

LOU

I don't blame you; know you makin' that crazy paper.

CHRIS

I keep tellin' you, you need to come on out there and try to get on with me.

LOU

Nah, Bro, I'm go'n stay right there at Winn Dixie where I can set my own schedule; them dogs ain't for me. I can't sleep in the day.

CHRIS

Ain't that bad once you get used to it.

LOU

What you still doin' up anyway?

CHRIS

Had breakfast with Malika, and I can't sleep on no full stomach. Besides, I want cut that grass down 'fore I go to bed. All that rain we done had got it growin' like wild fire.

LOU

Tell me 'bout it; I'm headed over there by Mama right now to do the same thing. I just stop by here to see if we was still on for Spades tonight.

CHRIS

Damn straight, Malika makin' a pot of red beans and everything. You ain't go'n fake is you?

Lou

Nah, nah. Hey, check out Cheeky.

Lou stands and points out to the street.



LOU

That's that new Camaro. Damn that thing is bad!

CHRIS

Still ain't got nothin' on a Mustang.

LOU

Man, what you talkin' 'bout? Zero to sixty in 4.9 seconds, Pimp. Mustang can't touch that. That's my car right there.

CHRIS

Only one true muscle car ever made, and that's a Mustang. That is, and always will be my car.

LOU

You sound like your daddy. You know what I can't figure out? How Cheeky get that Camaro; that nigger ain't never got no job.

CHRIS

Boy, you better watch your mouth 'fore Malika hear you; know she don't allow nobody to use that word.

Lou laughs.

LOU

For real, right.

CHRIS

And I heard Cheeky done gone into the pharmaceutical industry.

LOU

Stop lyin'.

CHRIS

How else he go'n afford that car?

LOU

He ain't sellin' that stuff in the neighborhood, is he?

CHRIS

He say he just 'round here to visit his mama.

LOU

What? You asked him 'bout it?

CHRIS

Damn straight I did; told him his mama finally livin' in peace, he ought'a want to keep it that way.

Lindsey enters the dining room of Trey's house carrying a bucket of water. She is dressed in old clothes that are



JACKIE ALEXANDER  
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sprinkled with paint; there are also specs of paint on her face and arms. She puts the bucket down and pulls the cover off the dining room table and chairs. She then picks up a paint brush washing it out in a bucket of water, after which she starts tidying up the room. She is singing *Beim Schlafengehen*. Lou and Chris turn and look back toward the house; they both laugh.

CHRIS

There she go; our very own Leontyne Price.

LOU

Who?

CHRIS

Leontyne Price; you know, the Opera singer.

Lou thinks for a second, but the name does not register.

CHRIS

Never mind.

LOU

She sound pretty good; don't have no idea what she singin' 'bout though.

CHRIS

Who does? I don't know how anybody can like that stuff.

LOU

T-Money must like it.

CHRIS

That's cause he think he supposed to like it. His country ass don't know what she singin' 'bout either.

LOU

Don't be talkin' 'bout my boy like that, you know T-Money big time now.

CHRIS

Yeah, he big time alright; big time right back here in the bottom with the rest of us.

LOU

Man wanted to come home, ain't nothin' wrong with that.

CHRIS

Ain't no way in the world Trey left New York and came back here 'cause he wanted to; I can tell you that sure as I'm sittin' here. Trey don't consider himself one of us no more.