

ACT I

SCENE 1 DAWN

(Lights up on the pier. Only the porch screen door is closed.)

The Reverend Charles Dupree, a handsome African American man in his late fifties, sits relaxed in a lawn chair on the pier fishing. A tackle box and cooler sit on the pier next to his chair. He is dressed in a flannel shirt and jeans.

REV. DUPREE

(singing) Walkin' along, whistlin' a song,
Bare foot and fancy free
A big riverboat, passin' us by,
She's headed for New Orleans
There she goes, disappearin' around the bend
Roll on Mississippi, you make me feel like a child again
Cool river breeze, like...

Rev. Dupree hums to himself in an attempt to remember the lyrics.

REV. DUPREE

Cool river breeze, like...

Rev. Dupree hums again trying to remember the lyrics; he is becoming frustrated. There is a pull on the fishing line. Rev. Dupree sits up quickly in his chair, tightly grasping the fishing reel.

REV. DUPREE

Oh yeah, come to Papa.

Rev. Dupree struggles with the reel for a few moments, and then without warning, the line snaps back out of the water. Rev. Dupree reels in the line, and examines the end of it; he smiles.

REV. DUPREE

You win this time 'round, Mr. Morris, but don't get too comfortable; 'cause Dupree ain't goin' out without a fight.

Rev. Dupree stands from the chair, yelling out over the lake.

REV. DUPREE

You hear me, Mr. Morris! Dupree ain't goin' out without a fight!

Rev. Dupree laughs to himself, and then looks skyward and smiles.

REV. DUPREE

Them words go for you too.

Rev. Dupree examines the sky; as if in a staring contest with God. After a few moments, satisfied his point has been made, he sits back in the chair and picks up the tackle box. He opens the box, looks in, but then freezes. He stares blankly into the tackle box. Miriam, an African American woman in her mid-fifties, enters from the kitchen and flips on a light switch; we see someone asleep on the couch, but cannot make out who it is. Miriam is dressed in a robe, and carrying a coffee pot, which she places on the table. She then walks over to the screen door, opens it, and yells out to Rev. Dupree.

MIRIAM

Charles, come on in and wash up; breakfast is just about ready.

The person on the couch stirs, putting a pillow over their head. Rev. Dupree looks back at Miriam.

REV. DUPREE

Alright.

Miriam closes the porch door, and walks back into the kitchen. Rev. Dupree returns his attention to the tackle box, once again staring blankly into it. He then turns his attention to the fishing reel, examining it. After a few seconds, he closes the tackle box and places it and the fishing reel down on the pier. He looks out onto the water, lost in thought.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK

END SCENE 1.

SCENE 2 LATER THAT MORNING

(Lights up on the living/dining area.)

Kenny, an African American man in his late twenties, lays across the couch texting on an I-Phone. He is dressed in basketball shorts, a tank top, and sneakers. A fork and an empty plate, a half-filled glass of orange juice, and a napkin sit on the coffee table. Miriam enters from the stairs, putting on earrings. She walks over to the mirror fixing her earrings and adjusting her clothes.

MIRIAM

Kenny, get up and go get dressed; your brother will be here any minute.

KENNY

Get dressed? Where we goin'?

MIRIAM

We're not goin' anywhere; you just need to put some clothes on. I don't want Brendan bringin' that girl in here to find you runnin' 'round with no clothes on.

KENNY

Ain't she African? She ought'a be used to that sort of thing.

Kenny laughs. Miriam walks over to the sofa looking down at him.

MIRIAM

Don't you dare embarrass me with ignorant comments like that when Olu gets here.

KENNY

I'm just playin' around.

Kenny stands from the sofa, and arches his back.

KENNY

This thing ain't no good for sleepin'.

MIRIAM

Why didn't you sleep on the sofa bed in the study?

KENNY

It ain't much better. Besides, the question is, why I couldn't sleep in the real bed upstairs no more?

MIRIAM

I fixed up that room for Olu yesterday, and I don't want you messin' it up again.

KENNY

Daddy go'n let her and Brendan sleep together?

MIRIAM

Nobody said anything about them sleepin' together. Take these dishes into the kitchen and wash them.

Miriam hands Kenny the dishes, and starts straightening up the room.

KENNY

So that mean me and Brendan go'n both have to sleep on that sofa bed?

MIRIAM

Unless one of you wants to sleep out here again.

KENNY

No, no, I ain't sleepin' on this thing again; fool 'round and not be able to walk the next day.

MIRIAM

Then the sofa bed it is.

KENNY

How you expect two grown men to sleep on that thing?

REV. DUPREE

You can sleep out there on the porch if you like.

Rev. Dupree has stepped into the room from the hallway;
he heads for the porch door.

MIRIAM

Charles where are you goin'? And why haven't you changed?

REV. DUPREE

I'm goin' back to fishin'. And what I got to change for?

MIRIAM

Brendan will be here any minute.

REV. DUPREE

What that got to do with me fishin', or what I'm wearin'?

MIRIAM

You haven't seen the boy in over two years; you should be here to greet him, and you should look decent when you do.

REV. DUPREE

First off, Junior chose not to come home in all that time; that was his decision, not mine. And second of all, I ain't go'n be nowhere but out back; all you got to do is stick your head out the door and let me know when he get here.

MIRIAM

But what about your clothes?

REV. DUPREE

This my house; I'm go'n wear what I want. Besides, ain't nothin' wrong with what I got on.

MIRIAM

But you'll be smellin' of fish when they get here.

KENNY

Gotta catch a fish for that to happen.

Reverend Dupree shoots Kenny a threatening look; Kenny quickly turns away.

MIRIAM

That's not the proper way to be introduced to your future daughter-in-law.

REV. DUPREE

And a couple of months before the weddin' ain't the proper time to be introduced to her either.

Rev. Dupree continues to the porch door, and opens it, before turning back.

REV. DUPREE

You call me when they get here, I'll come on in and say hello.

Rev. Dupree exits into the back yard.

KENNY

This here go'n be an interestin' Christmas.

Kenny exits into the kitchen with the dishes. Miriam looks after Rev. Dupree for a few moments, and then returns to straightening up the living room. Rev. Dupree walks out onto the pier, takes a seat in his chair, and picks up his fishing reel.

REV. DUPREE

(yelling out over the water) I'm back, Mr. Morris; me and you got some unfinished business.

Rev. Dupree pulls back his reel, and hurls it forward, but the line does not release. He looks at the reel thinking to himself for a few moments, and then pulls the line back, before hurling it forward again; same result. Frustrated, he stands from the chair, examining the fishing reel.

REV. DUPREE

What is wrong with this thing?

Rev. Dupree looks out over the water, as if hearing something.

REV. DUPREE

I hear you! I hear you laughin', Mr. Morris! But I'm comin' for you! You better believe I'm comin' for you!

Rev. Dupree yanks the reel back, and once again hurls it forward, but the line once again does not release. Having heard the yelling, Miriam rushes to the back door, and walks outside.

Charles what are you doin?
MIRIAM

Damn piece of garbage!
REV. DUPREE

Rev. Dupree tosses the fishing reel out into the water, and then yells out.
REV. DUPREE

Don't think you go'n get away that easy! No sir, Dupree ain't goin' out without a fight.
Rev. Durpee turns and heads back in the house, brushing past Miriam; she follows him.

What is wrong with you?
MIRIAM

A man can't live this way!
REV. DUPREE

Rev. Dupree storms into the house, and walks over to the hall closet and opens it. Not finding what he is looking for, he starts pulling items from the closet tossing them onto the living room floor. Kenny enters from the kitchen.

What's goin' on in here?
KENNY

Your father's upset about somethin'.
MIRIAM

Rev. Dupree turns to face Kenny.
REV. DUPREE

Where is it?
KENNY

Huh?
REV. DUPREE

You know what I'm talkin' 'bout; where is it?
KENNY

Daddy, I ain't got no idea what you talkin' bout? What you lookin' for?
REV. DUPREE

Boy don't lie to me!

KENNY

Just calm down, and tell me what you lookin' for.

Rev. Dupree goes to answer, but then freezes. He thinks for a moment.

REV. DUPREE

Never mind; it don't make no difference.

Rev. Dupree exits upstairs. Kenny and Miriam look after him for a few moments; stunned.

KENNY

You know...

MIRIAM

Don't say it.

KENNY

Stayin' locked away out here in these woods ain't helpin' matters either.

MIRIAM

He's not ready to face people.

KENNY

Time ain't go'n help when it come to that.

MIRIAM

You know your father; it will be in his time, or it won't be at all.

KENNY

Daddy ain't got control when it come to this here thing; the sooner he face that, the better. It ain't go'n change nothin', but it might make things easier; 'specially on you.

MIRIAM

I'll be fine, and so will your father; he just needs some time. Now help me get all this stuff back in the closet.

Miriam and Kenny start picking up the objects Rev. Dupree has thrown from the closet, and putting them back in their proper place. The front door opens. Brendan (Junior), an African American man in his early thirties, and Olu, an African woman in her late twenties, enter the house. They are each carrying laptop bags and small carry-on size luggage bags.

BRENDAN

Little late in the year for spring cleaning, huh?

Miriam squeals in excitement at the site of her son, and rushes over to him.

MIRIAM

Brendan! My baby is home!

BRENDAN

Hey, Ma.

Brendan and Miriam hug tightly.

KENNY

What's up, Big City?

BRENDAN

You the world traveler!

Brendan and Kenny shake hands and hug. Brendan takes Olu by the hand, before introducing her.

BRENDAN

Ma, Kenny, I'd like to introduce you to my fiancée, Olufunmilayo Ali. Olu, this is my mother Miriam Dupree, and my brother Kenny.

Miriam exhales heavily, covering her face to fight back the tears.

OLU

Very nice to meet you.

Olu extends her hand to Miriam, but Miriam throws her arms around Olu, hugging her tightly.

MIRIAM

Handshakes will not do.

Miriam hugs Olu tightly, and then holds her back at arm's length taking her in.

MIRIAM

Lovely, simply lovely; it is so nice to meet you!

Miriam hugs Olu tightly again, then, suddenly remembering.

MIRIAM

The ring, let me see the ring.

Olu holds our her hand.

MIRIAM

It's beautiful; oh, I've waited so long for this day.

Miriam hugs Olu once again.

KENNY

Alright, Ma, let the girl breathe.

MIRIAM

This is my son, Kenny.

KENNY

Brendan done already introduce me, Ma. (to Olu) How you doin' sis?

Kenny hugs Olu.

KENNY

Now let me check it out.

Kenny examines the ring, and then turns back to Brandon.

KENNY

Not bad, Bro, not bad at all.

Everyone laughs.

OLU

I am happy we are finally able to meet; I seem to be out of town every time you visit New York.

KENNY

I think Brendan plan it that way.

BRENDAN

Like I have any idea when you're going to show up.

KENNY

(to Olu) See he always was a little scared of competition; and he know I be bringin' the heat when it come to the ladies.

BRENDAN

Shut-up fool.

Kenny laughs, and hugs Olu hello.

MIRIAM

Come, come sit down.

Miriam leads Brendan and Olu over to the sofa.

BRENDAN

Where's Daddy?

MIRIAM

He's upstairs cleanin' up; he was out fishin' earlier. He'll be down in a few minutes.

Brendan looks over at Kenny, who shakes his head in dismay. Olu and Brendan take a seat on the sofa; Miriam takes a seat in the side chair, and Kenny pulls over a chair from the breakfast table.

MIRIAM

Kenny take their bags up to their room, and let your father know Brendan and Olu are here.

BRENDAN

Ma, we can take care of the bags, and there's no need to rush Daddy; I'm sure he'll be down when he's ready.

MIRIAM

Okay, well, can I get you something to drink, are you hungry.

BRENDAN

No, we're fine.

MIRIAM

So, how was your flight in.

BRENDAN

Nothing short of a miracle considering it's two days before Christmas.

OLU

Yes, no line at check-in, or security; flight left on time, and arrived early.

MIRIAM

Did you have any traffic gettin' out to the house.

Kenny laughs.

KENNY

Traffic? Who the hell comin' out here this time of year?

MIRIAM

Watch your language, Kenny.

BRENDAN

No, the highways were pretty empty.

MIRIAM

That's good; I want you guys to do nothin' but relax on this trip.