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Someday

Christa Lee Kreimendahl
University of Iowa

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SOMEDAY

by

Christa Lee Kreimendahl

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of
Fine Arts Degree in Theatre Arts (Playwriting)
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2013

Associate Professor Art Borreca: Thesis Supervisor

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Christa Lee Kreimendahl

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine
Arts degree in Theatre Arts (Playwriting) at the
May 2013 graduation.

Thesis Committee: _____

Art Borreca

Dare Clubb

Sydne Mahone

To You

Even so, there were times I saw freshness and beauty. I could smell the air, and I really loved rock 'n' roll. Tears were warm, and girls were beautiful, like dreams. I liked movie theaters, the darkness and intimacy, and I liked the deep, sad summer nights.

Haruki Murakami, *Dance Dance Dance*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A PREFACE TO SOMEDAY	vi
PLAY HISTORY	x
SETTINGS AND CHARACTERS.....	xi
SOMEDAY	1

A PREFACE TO SOMEDAY

In queer culture there's a long history of creating a chosen family, usually made up of friends pieced together. In many ways, Louisville is my chosen home and in it is my chosen family. After undergrad, I moved to Kentucky, first to Owsley County, which is at this moment the poorest county in the country. The New York Times recently did a photo journalistic piece titled, "Prom In The Poorest County in America." That county was Owsley. My time there impacted me more than any other geographical move. Eastern Kentucky has such a specific culture, and to my surprise it felt so natural to me, I understood it on a primal level. I felt at home for the first time in many years.

When I was preparing to move to Kentucky, mostly what I heard was stark warnings, "Kentucky? You're going to get gay bashed there" and "Please, be careful". This was far from what I experienced. Boonesville is the name of the town in Owsley County that I lived, and Boonesville is a very small town. Everyone knows everyone living there and the generations that have already passed. Families have their own houses and land plots on the same street as each other. There's just one of everything: one gas station, one doctor, one nursing home etc. Everyone knew I was queer, yet they embraced me. Never did I even get a sideways glance. For such a protective community, such a fearful community of any outsiders, to be taken in by them felt sincere and special. In retrospect, a part of their acceptance of me was most likely in my love for them, which might be rare from outsiders.

This was not the only way that Kentucky surprised me. In Louisville I found radical politics. A community of communists, anarchist queers living in communal

houses, a march for every social justice issue you can imagine, a monthly street corner vigil for Palestinian rights, the only abortion clinic in the state (which requires weekly volunteers to safely escort women into the clinic), poor whites and poor blacks in the same neighborhoods as each other, Centers for Social Justice and a rich history of radical politics. This is not to say that discrimination does not exist, racism, homophobia they are rampant, especially in a conservative state like Kentucky, but I have lived in supposed liberal states before, and never had I experienced such a fervor for politics and for human rights as I found in Kentucky. It surprised me, and I find that it's not well known. When most people think of Kentucky, or the south at large, they think white robes, ignorance, trailer parks, rednecks, gun-toting end of the worlders. However, I am intimate with a very different Kentucky, and I'm interested in telling that story. SOMEDAY is, in part, a reflection of the Louisville I know.

SOMEDAY is about an unconventional drag house. When I say unconventional I mean this in regard to the two white, cisgendered characters of Cement and Loretta. In a typical drag house, the family would consist of people of color and of a queered gender. Even a very queer drag family is queered in this play.

As a playwright interested in queering class, I chose to use a Drag Family, at the heart of this play, for many reasons. Drag Ball culture alerts us to the performance of class and status. In the Balls, there are categories for competition in which the performance of status are enacted. In the documentary *Paris is Burning*, it's pointed out that the enactment of status in a Drag Ball is a way for a group of disenfranchised people to say, "look how well I could fit into this world, if you would

just let me in.” Because I was so taken by this concept, I began to explore the initial idea for SOMEDAY, thinking about performance in gender and performance in status, and how these two relate to each other.

This family lives on the wrong side of the Ohio River floodwall. Once, after I lived in Louisville for many years, I was driving around, looking at all the shotgun houses for sale with a friend, and we drove through an area of Butcher Town that I’d never been in before. We ended on a street that crossed a giant opening in the floodwall. I’d never seen the floodwall before and didn’t even know that it existed. A goliath of cement blocks reaching upwards 10 feet high and as thick as two feet. There were houses and businesses on the river side of the wall, and it was clear that the wall had been built after the houses. This struck me. I wondered who had decided which houses were going to get to be on the safe side of the wall, and what it was like to live in a house walled off from the city and under threat of flood. The sharp increase in dilapidation of property on the river side of the wall, also made poignant the value of that property compared to the other side, and how did this reflect the value the city felt of the people and business’s that took up residence there.

SOMEDAY is about this family and their desire and need for dignity and belonging. They take performing *realness* to another level by preparing to give the performance of a lifetime at the Kentucky Derby. Sadie, the Drag Mother, teaches her children lessons in performing wealth. She prepares them for a single moment that she hopes will either change their lives or be enough to sustain them. The newest member of the family, Tea, doesn’t believe one moment is enough, and ultimately

troubles Sadie's dream for her children, by climbing over the floodwall to the other side. In doing so the family breaks apart. In the final moments of the play, Tea mirrors Paul Robeson's famous concert and sings over the wall to a broken Sadie. The song is a moment of hope, as well as a call to action. This is a family of people who are in many ways on the cusp or "almost" something more, but never quit reaching the next level. It's a play that explores "passing" not in terms of gender but in class. How does performance play a role in how we belong?

It began with the question: how is performing class dangerous? We understand that when a woman performs masculinity or a man performs femininity, this is often a dangerous performance. It calls into question the naturalness of gender. Does the performance of class function in the same way?

SOMEDAY deals with present class conflicts in America. Earlier in the life of the Occupy Movement House Speaker Nancy Pelosi commented that, the generation of the 1960's rejected the standard world and asked to be removed from it in order to create something else, but, in the occupy movement, this current generation asks instead, "let me in". SOMEDAY, lives inside this cry, "let me in".

PLAY HISTORY

The first draft of SOMEDAY was given a workshop in Austin Texas through the Iowa/Austin Exchange in January 2013. The exchange is a student run organization created by Gabrielle Reisman (MFA playwright, UT Austin) and myself.

SADIE	Isaac Gomez
TEA	Adrienne Dawes
CEMENT	Harrison Harvey
LORETTA	Nicole Gurgel
DIRECTOR	Will Davis
DRAMATURG	Jenni Page-White

The next draft of SOMEDAY was given a reading at the University of Iowa's New Play Festival in May of 2013.

SADIE	Mo Hill
TEA	Aneisa Hicks
CEMENT	Kevin Louis Cole
LORETTA	Sasha Hildebrand
DIRECTOR	Nathan Halvorson
DRAMATURG	Jenni Page-White

SETTINGS AND CHARACTERS

Setting

This play takes place in a vacant house lot in Louisville, KY (Butchertown) on the wrong side of the Ohio River Flood Wall.

Characters

- Sadie:** (A black cisman) Sadie is potentially in his 50's, but he'd never tell you the truth.
- Tea:** (A young black ciswoman) Tea is in their early twenties and very masculine in their performance. A little bolstering to make up for the curves.
- Cement:** (A white cisman) Cement in his late twenties early thirties. He is very typically working-class masculine in his gender performance. We might think he played well on a sports team in school.
- Loretta:** (A white ciswoman) Loretta is in her mid-thirties. She's very typically high feminine in her gender performance. She's a little banshee in her ways, she might be that woman poppin her gum.

SOMEDAY

The Set: *However we get this visually, the sense is that we're on a short block that has only two or three shotgun houses still standing. The block is made up mostly of empty house lots that still have the two or three cement steps that once led to a house. Behind this block is a giant cement floodwall. We should see part of, or the front perhaps, of a weathered shotgun house.*

At Rise: *Daylight. Softness. Sadie holds TEA's face under the water of a bucket. Cement and Loretta stand by, witnesses. TEA struggles some. This goes on for a little too long. Sadie let's TEA up.*

I See A Land Where The Children Are Free.

SADIE

That's it. Spit it out, honey.

Spit it *all* out.

That's all that stuff that was wantin to come out. That's the your family didn't want you. That's nobody wantin you. That's gettin kicked outta every place you thought was your home. That's all that. Spit it out.

On this day you was born anew. Born into the The House of River. A queen among queens. Baptized Tea River. When someone asks you "What's the Tea?" you're gonna say...

TEA

Me, honey.

SADIE

You.

TEA

Tea River.

SADIE

That's right. And before when someone would ask you, "what's the tea?" you had a long list.

TEA

Yeah.

SADIE

Yes. Drama with this person or that one, and couldn't you just get ten dollars, 50 more cents for the bus, and someone's sleepin in your spot, and couldn't you just catch a break? When all you really needed was what you now see around you.

SADIE (cont'd)

Your new family. Sister Cement, and Loretta, honorary Sister River, the only *female* more drag queen than Beyonce. And your new mother, honey, Sadie River.

When a child is born into the world there's a promise made. With the first breath we take, we hold in us the inherent expectation to be loved. To be cared for. To be nurtured. To have family joined by the thickness of our blood. But you and I know that isn't always the case.

TEA

No Ma'am.

SADIE

No. But today, with this second first breath, you are now by birthright, in possession of home, family and knowledge. But that isn't all.

Beat.

Because in this family we strive to make better. We are planning to rise above our status, our meager beginnings. And now you will walk to this land with us. The place where you are taught to stand up straight, where people look you right in eyes and shake your hand. Where people respect, and yes, often fear you. Through hard work, through education and practice we will all hold, if only for a single moment, the understanding of our full potential.

House of River is a home of wisdom.

This House does not compete in the balls. We live the ball. The plan is in place, the family is gathered. We are taking *realness* to another level.

Sadie snaps her fingers, maybe someone plays the piano. The music for Free To Be begins.

So listen to me when I say:

Singing.

There's a land that I see
Where the children are free
And I say, it ain't far
To this land from where we are
Take my hand come with me
Where the children are free
Come with me, take my hand
And we'll / live

CEMENT & LORETTA

A build with "live" this happens before every chorus.

ahhHHH...

EVERYONE BUT TEA

In a land where the river runs free
 In a land through the green country
 In a land to a shining sea
 And you and me are free to be you and me.

SADIE

Every boy in this land grows to be his own man

LORETTA

In this land, every girl grows to be her own woman

SADIE

Take my hand come with me
 Where the children are free
 Come with me, take my hand, and we'll run

EVERYONE BUT TEA

To a land where a river runs free
 To a land through the green country
 To a land to a shining sea
 To a land where the horses run free
 To a land where the children are free

TEA

And you and me are free to be.

SADIE

And you and me are free to be

TEA

And you and me are free to be, you and me

Sudden Blackout. Loretta styles Sadie's wig for her.

SADIE

Of the wig.
 Loretta!

LORETTA

I know, right? It's derby good.

SADIE

Yes, it is.
 Pin it tighter this time.

LORETTA
You always say that, then you bitch about it/

SADIE
So? Let me bitch.

LORETTA
Can you bitch to someone else this time?

SADIE
No, you're my lady friend, and I bitch to you.

LORETTA
Don't fuck up this wig.

SADIE
I'm not gonna / fuck up

LORETTA
I'm serious. It's your derby wig and I spent hours on it.

SADIE
Do I fuck shit up? Is that what I do?

LORETTA
Just be careful.

SADIE
Oh honey, stop. In a few weeks I will be wearin this wig, in it's perfect form, in a dining box above the finish line at the Kentucky Derby, thank you.

LORETTA
And I will have a hat that makes those other ladies weep.

SADIE
Cement, in a seersucker and Tea in masculine pastels.

LORETTA
Yeah... uhm, I'm still workin on the seersucker.

SADIE
What?

LORETTA
The material got... stolen.

SADIE
Who stole it?

LORETTA
The police.

SADIE
You better start sharin.

LORETTA
I got into a little trouble. It's no / big deal

SADIE
What kinda trouble?

LORETTA
It was nothin. Point is, I gotta go get some more. I'm behind schedule.

SADIE
Well, you better make it / happen

LORETTA
I will/

SADIE
Lord knows I did things that should make a mother blush to get us snuck into that box.
I can't send the children out into the world if they ain't lookin right.

LORETTA
It'll all be good.

SADIE
Now I know you like to cut corners.

LORETTA
What?

SADIE
Yes honey, I know. Don't play little miss innocent with me. You cut corners. But not this
time. I have designed these outfits for perfection. Chosen every detail.

Projection: moving water. A life raft.

Shit. That's my cue, zip me up.

*Loretta touches up the wig one last time. Sadie smacks her hands away and enters
the life raft. This is her show for us. Barely lit, Loretta works sewing a derby*

outfit all the while Sadie does her show. Over a loud speaker hear: "Sadie River, mother to the House of River." Or Sadie announces herself.

SADIE (Cont'd)

A drag house, honey. Yes.

What makes a mother? A mother protects her children. She will claw your motherfuckin eyes out, if you even look at her child wrong. She feeds them of her own body. She wipes their runny noses, teaches them the alphabet. How to tie their shoes, and dress themselves. She spansk *all* their little asses when they need it, and she kisses the booboo's. Yes, she kisses. All. Their. Wounds. Most importantly, she wishes to give them a life that is richer than her own. Because I understand this, in all of it's complexities. I am the mother. Not to be confused with a mammie, okay? No. Never.

The House of River is not your typical drag house. No, honey. You see a drag house performs in drag balls, and when they win, they become legendary.

I was raised in one. The House of LaShonte. In which I was rising to legend status. And what was my forte? Realness. I gave realness. When I performed Butch Queen, whether it be thug, pretty boy, town and country, school boy, or executive, the sisters said "Honey you was real as rain" And when I performed femme queen they said "Bitch, you were so fishie, I swore you had a pussy, and I wanted to eat it" That's what they said, no shade. No shade.

Me, being me, of course, giving all this realness, looked around and I thought... realness does not happen in a rental space, okay? No. Realness happens in the world. A ball is exactly that, a ball, a show, and a show is never real. But I wanted to *live* realness. I would say to you, honey I perform rich better than the rich... in a ball. Which made me powerful, until the ball was over. Because in the world, we were all just a bunch of cuntie fags. And for me, that will not do.

I left the House of LaShonte, and I bought a very real house. Between the floodwall and the Ohio River. Don't ask me how I came up with the money, because I'll never tell you. Some ignorant soul might say to me, "why you wanna live there? Don't you know a flood will come and sweep up your house? Then where will you be?" Then I will be dead. And I won't have to look at your raggedy face anymore. Oop!

All those motherfuckers thinking they are safe inside that wall are really in a cage. This bird you cannot cage. The House of River lives in the wild, we fly in the free.

And because of my very real house, the children came to me. They came with their very real booboo's needing my kisses and their asses needing a very real spanking. They needed a mother who would raise them with a dream. Give them hope. I knew I could do this. I could give them one day in which they would be respected and powerful. And sometimes one moment is enough to last a lifetime. One Spring Derby party, one chance. One. Single. Moment. That could change their lives. Of all of this dreaming, The House

of River was born. And I was born Sadie River. Sadie, because if my mother had been a very different kind of mother, her name might have been Sadie.

Drag Ball On The Lawn: *Prep School Realness*

SADIE

Welcome to Sadie River's Drag Ball On The Lawn. Where we are learning to create our look. Yes. Where do we begin? At the beginning.

Prep School! Into your drabs and your stockings. Yes. We are givin Prep School. The foundation for all things higher.

Tea enters giving "school boy".

Walk. Walk. Walk. Yes, honey. You are givin me *everything* I want. This is the bad boy. He got caught smokin in the bathroom, fighting in the yard and lookin up Sister Margaret's habit. We love us a bad boy, don't we ladies? Walk. Walk. Walk.

Loretta enters giving "school girl"

Okay! This prep school just got coed! And Ms. Loretta just got real. She one a those catholic school girls. You know the type. Walk. Walk. Walk. Givin you only sugar and spice and those things nice, but watch out! She got a blade under those pleats. Walk. Walk.

Cement enters giving "School boy"

Uh oh. What're we lookin at here? Walk. Walk. Walk. Walk. This is the big man on campus. That's right, he mighta forced himself on those girls at the dance but the rectory is named after his granddaddy. Voted most likely to succeed. Walk. Walk. Walk. Walk.

This brings us to the close of the look portion of the Ball On The Lawn. Because, here, we know that contrary to popular belief, the clothes do not make the man. Unless he lives only in a picture. We live in the world, and here you have to look, speak and act.

Therefore, prep school begins. Take out your pens and your paper. Class is in session.

I have decided to focus our lesson on public speaking. There may come a day when you will need to hold a press conference. In this press conference you may be required to defend yourself and your actions. You may need to spin whatever has been spun about you so that it travels in the right direction. So you can walk with your head held high.

Diction. Why is it important? Because you may look very pretty. You may be very put together. You may have all the right accessories. You may have a perfectly adequate vocabulary, but, honey, if people can't understand you, you're just gonna sound like a stupid hick. And nobody pays any mind to a stupid hick.

When you speak, always start slowly and carefully. Make sure the start and end of each word is crisp and avoid running the words together. Like so.

The Letter S:

Theophilus Thistler, the thistle sifter, in sifting a sieve of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb.

The Letter H:

How was Harry hastened so hurriedly from the hunt?

The Letter J:

James just jostled Jean gently. Jack the jailbird jacked a jeep.

The Letter C:

My cutlery cuts keenly and cleanly.

The Letter L:

Larry sent the latter a letter later.

The Letter P:

Peter piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.

If Peter piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,

Where's the peck of pickled peppers that Peter Piper picked?

Next class, you will each repeat these sentences aloud, in front of everyone.

Any questions?

LORETTA

I don't even know why *I* gotta learn this.

SADIE

Because you may need to hold a press conference.

LORETTA

I'm not holdin a press conference. I didn't even fuck him!

SADIE

What?

LORETTA

Nothin.

SADIE

Any other questions?

Silence.

Ring ring.

Music Lesson!

ALL

'I am the very pattern of a modern Major-General;
I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral;
I know the Kings of England, and I quote the fights historical,
From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical;

I'm very well acquainted too with matters mathematical,
I understand equations, both simple and quadratical,
About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot o' news,

With many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse.

I'm very good at integral and differential calculus,
I know the scientific names of beings animalculous,
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.'

SADIE

Very good!

TEA

So I been thinkin.

SADIE

Tea?

Beat.

TEA

Yes?

Beat.

SADIE

What is the proper procedure for asking a question?

Beat.

LORETTA

Raise your hand.

TEA

Oh!

Tea raises their hand.

SADIE

Acknowledging the raised hand.

Go on.

TEA

So I'm starin at this wall, right? And I'm thinkin maybe we can spin it so it spins in a different direction. Could hold a press conference about that.

SADIE

Excuse me? What's wrong with this wall?

TEA

So when they built that floodwall... seems like... maybe they tore down the houses that was there? Well, where did those people go live?

SADIE

"Where were those people relocated to?"

TEA

Yeah. Where?

SADIE

I don't know, but maybe that would be a good research project for you.

TEA

Just seems.

I just started thinkin. Maybe I don't like the way it feels? And most probably all those people didn't have a good end. And maybe this wall aughta more represent that, you know?

SADIE

No. I don't.

TEA

I'm tryna say... like... you know them murals up on crestview?

SADIE

And?

TEA

It's painted by all those little kids in the special school program. It's like... sad. Like a reminder that they was there and they had... dreams.

SADIE

This is how I spin it. We are in the wild. Between the gate and the river. That's where you and I / live.

TEA

I know that/

SADIE

Who is in the school boy outfit? Okay? Let's keep that real.

This wall, and those people, don't want your pity. And don't you pity yourself either. I'm gonna teach you.

Ring ring.

History Class!

Anyone ever tell you bout Paul Robeson?

TEA

No.

CEMENT

With pride.

He was a communist.

TEA

Just like us.

SADIE

Right.

So anyway, Paul Robeson said some shit against the government/

TEA

Like a terrorist/

SADIE

Anyway, so they got all pissed and took away his right to travel. But Paul Robeson was an artist and a singer. He sang songs like... shoot, sang songs - the man could sing like nobodies business, okay?

TEA

Okay.

SADIE

So it wasn't just travel overseas, the man couldn't even go to Mexico or Canada. Which was total bullshit. So Paul Robeson held a concert on the border. He stood on US soil and sang across the border to an audience in Canada. An act of defiance!

TEA
What'd he sing?

SADIE
Shoot, I don't know. You know Loretta?

LORETTA
I don't listen to that.

SADIE
Cement?

CEMENT
Nope.

SADIE
Nope, but you missin the point.

TEA
I think the song he sang is important.
You know what I'm sayin?

SADIE
You missin the point.

TEA
I need to know what song he sang.

SADIE
Why don't you google it?

TEA
Exiting.
I will/

SADIE
Not now! You missin the point! Hey!

Silence.

CEMENT
I got your point.

SADIE
You know what I'm sayin.

CEMENT

Yeah, Paul Robeson.

They watch the road. A car drives by slow enough that we can watch them watching it pass. Tea enters.

TEA

Every Time I Feel The Spirit!

He sang it from the back of a flatbed truck!

SADIE

Okay, but you missin the point.

Listen, the reason I'm sayin this story to you is because Paul Robeson didn't rock back and forth and wail over shit. He fuckin raised his voice loud enough to carry across a border, that's what I'm sayin. That's what *we* are, an act of defiance.

TEA

You think I should sing across the wall?

SADIE

That's a floodwall, okay? It ain't a wall wall.

CEMENT

It's still a wall.

LORETTA

It *is* still a wall.

Silence.

SADIE

Anymore questions?

Tea and Cement raise their hands.

Ring ring.

Physical Education!

Everyone gets up and changes like they were at their lockers in the gym room. Sadie changes offstage. Through the course of this "Mean Girls" scene they all change into tennis outfits.

TEA

To the audience.

Changin in the locker room with these two was like leavin the real world and entering girl world. And girl world, has a lot of rules.

LORETTA

You can't wear a tanktop two days in a row, and you can only wear your hair in a pony tail once a week.

CEMENT

So I guess... you picked today.

LORETTA

Oh, and we only wear jeans or track pants on Fridays. If you break any of these rules, you can't sit with us at lunch. Not just you, any of us. Okay, look, if I was wearing jeans today I would be sitting with the art freaks. Oh, and we always vote before we ask someone to sit with us, because you have to be considerate of the rest of the group.

CEMENT

I mean you wouldn't buy a skirt without asking your friends first if it looked good on you.

TEA

I wouldn't?

CEMENT

Right.

LORETTA

Right.

Sadie enters in a tennis outfit, but she has a whistle.

SADIE

Being Al Pacino from "Any Given Sunday"

I don't know what to say... really.

Three minutes... to the biggest battle of our lives. All comes down to today.

Now either we heal... as a team, or we're gonna crumble.

Inch by inch, play by play, till we're finished.

We're in hell right now, gentleman. Believe me. And... we can stay here and get the shit kicked out of us or... we can fight our way back... into the light. We can climb our way out of hell.

They mumble in agreement.

One inch at a time. Now I can't do it for ya. I'm too old. I look around, I see these young faces and I think... I mean... I made every wrong choice a middle-aged queen can make... I pissed away all my money, believe it or not. I chased off anyone who's ever loved me. And lately, I can't even stand the face I see in the mirror.

You know when you get old in life, things get taken away from ya. That's a part of life. But you only learn that when ya start losin stuff. Ya find out life's a game of inches. So's tennis. Cause in either game, life or tennis, the margin of error is so small. I mean one half a step too late or too early you don't quite make it. One half a second too slow or too fast you don't quite catch it. The inches we need are everywhere around us.

"Hell yeah"

They're in every break of the game, every minute, every second.

They clap, mumble approval.

On this team, we fight for that inch. On this team we tear ourselves and everyone around us to pieces for that inch. We claw with our fingernails for that inch! Because we know, when we add up all those inches, that's gonna make the fuckin difference between winnin and losin!

Between Livin and dyin!

I'll tell ya what, in any fight, it's that guy whose willin to die whose gonna win that inch. And I know, if I'm gonna have any life anymore it's because I'm still willin to live and die for that inch. BECAUSE that's what livin is! The six inches in front of your face! Now I can't make ya do it. Ya gotta look at the guy next to ya, look into his eyes. Now I think you're gonna see a guy who will go to that inch with ya. You're gonna see a guy who will sacrifice himself for this team, cause he knows, when it comes down to it, you're gonna do the same for him. That's a team gentleman. AND either we heal now as a team or we will die as individuals.

That's partner tennis guys. That's all it is. Now. What're you gonna do?

Rowdy crowd. They all run out of the locker room in slow motion.

Graduation music plays.

Tea stays behind, looking at their diploma. Loretta enters with Tea's outfit somewhat put together, but the seams haven't been sewn yet.

LORETTA

Are you comin so I can fit you?

TEA

Yeah, yeah.

LORETTA

What're you doin'?

TEA

Nothin.

I just never had a diploma before.

LORETTA

Next thing you know you'll be havin a job. Hold still.

Loretta starts to fit Tea.

TEA

Like Cement.

LORETTA

Hopefully you'll like your job.

TEA

Then I'd be a *man*.

LORETTA

You would, huh?

TEA

You better believe if I had a job I'd be so happy to go to it. I'd go every mornin and I wouldn't never be late. City of Louisville'd give me a... plaque and shit. A watch! They'd give me a gold watch when I retired. It'd be engraved with somethin like, "John Henry was a steal drivin man, but Tea was a garbage pickin machine".

LORETTA

What?? Lord.

TEA

Psh. You know it's true.

Now that I got an address, and a degree, I might just get two jobs.

LORETTA

Did you just look me up and down?

TEA

What? No.

LORETTA

Oh, so you *weren't* just checkin out my titties?

TEA

No! Damn.

LORETTA

You ain't gotta be shy.

TEA

I was just... I wasn't.

LORETTA

I ain't like those people hangin on the dragons, I don't wanna fuck you.

TEA

Well, good. I don't wanna fuck you either.

LORETTA

Oh my god. You *stone* wanna fuck me. Like right now.

TEA
What?

LORETTA
You know how I know that?

TEA
How do you know what you think you know that ain't true?

LORETTA
Cause you want someone to make you feel like a man, and you know I can.

Silence.

TEA
Please.

LORETTA
That's right, you'll be askin me, sayin, "please"

TEA
What?

The music from the seduction scene in "The Graduate" plays.

LORETTA
Being Mrs. Robinson.
May I ask you a question?
Whatta you think of me?

TEA
Whatta you mean?

LORETTA
You've known me nearly all your life. You must've formed some kind of an opinion of me.

TEA
Well, I always thought that you were a very nice person.

LORETTA
Did you know I was an alcoholic?

TEA
What?

LORETTA
Did you know that?

TEA
Look, I think I should be going.

LORETTA
Sit down, Tea.

TEA
Mrs. Loretta, if you don't mind me saying so, this conversation is getting a little strange.
Now I'm sure that Mr. Loretta will be here any minute now/

LORETTA
No/

TEA
What/

LORETTA
My husband will be back quite late. He should be gone for several hours.

TEA
Oh my god.

LORETTA
Pardon?

TEA
Oh no, Mrs Loretta, Oh no.

LORETTA
What's wrong?

TEA
Mrs. Loretta, you didn't think – I mean you didn't expect/

LORETTA
What?

TEA
I mean you didn't really think I'd do something like that.
Nervous laugh.

LORETTA
Like what?

TEA
Whatta ya think?

LORETTA
Laughs.
Well, I don't know.

TEA
For Godsake Mrs. Loretta. Here we are. You got me into your house. Ya give me a drink, ya put on music, now ya start openin up your personal life to me and tell me your husband won't be home for hours.

LORETTA
So?

TEA
Mrs. Loretta, you're tryna seduce me, aren't you?

LORETTA
Laughing.
My head changes lives, honey.
Silence.
I know how you want me to do.
Silence.
I'ma show you how a real woman does.
You want me down on my knees?
She does.
I'm down on my knees.
She starts to undo TEA's belt.

TEA
Wait.

LORETTA
Don't worry. This ain't nothin.
I'ma show you what you been missin. What all them little girls cain't give you cause they don't know how.

TEA
Wait. Loretta.
I said wait!

LORETTA
What?

TEA
It ain't like that with us.

LORETTA
I said it wasn't nothin. I ain't askin you to wife me or somethin.

TEA
I don't think about you like that.

LORETTA
Fine. Whatever.

TEA
Man.
Tea walks into the house, or offstage.

LORETTA
You ain't gotta leave? You don't have to walk-Tea? It's no big deal!

Silence.

Drag ball On The Lawn: *Executive Realness*

SADIE
On a cheap mic coming through an old boom box.

Executive Realness! Get into your suits and your wing tips. Are you today's CEO or yesterday's failed politician? Bring it, honey. There's no time for shy in today's business world.

Tea enters in a suit.

Yes! Walk. Walk. Walk. Streamline. Big shoulders. Why are you adjusting yourself? This is Executive not Banshee, baby. Business men don't adjust themselves in public. They do it under their desks. That's it. Walk. Walk. Walk. You on the front cover of Forbes now. La Forbes. La Forbes. Would you give this man access to your bank account? La Forbes. La Forbes. La Forbes, Forbes, Forbes.

Cement Walks.

Walk. Walk. Walk. Is this today's CEO? I think SO. Ladies, I don't know about you but my stocks are risin by the second. Yes, honey. Yes, honey. GQ. GQ. GQ. GQ. Walk. He about to head Humana. That's it. Runnin the Yum Center. GQ. GQ. GQ. GQ, GQ, GQ. What do you think? Is this man drivin a Beamer, a Mercedes or a Bentley? Walk. Walk.

Loretta Walks.

Mr. Loretta! Givin us Male Executive. Walk. Walk. Walk. Walk. Honey those double D's are outta control! Somebody get Mr. Loretta some duct tape. Emergency 911. Get

this man an ace bandage. He got him some man boobs that could blind a bitch. Lord! Honey! No. No. No. No. No. No.

LORETTA

I can't help it if I'm blessed, upwardly.

SADIE

This is you cuttin corners, honey! Duct tape, ace bandage, take care of your cleavage! This is executive realness, the keyword here is realness.

LORETTA

I'm sorry but there's just no keepin em down.

SADIE

Ugh. Excuse me? Yes there is.

LORETTA

I can't breath and... it's painful.

SADIE

Look, you want to participate in this family? You got to do some drag. You can't just be all fishie twenty four seven. No pain no gain. Get in the house, I'm gonna to teach you.

Cement and Tea are alone, they look each other up and down. This is masculine prowess.

TEA

So.

CEMENT

So.

TEA

So.

They each pull up a chair, face the street in faded metal lawn chairs. This feels like maybe they are one-upping each other.

CEMENT

So Horton, well let's just say he gave a consecutive glimpse to the fourth mark.

TEA

Of course Horton did. The fourth mark is a pefundry of mishap and a consecutive glimpse is just the right call for a situation of that nature.

CEMENT

Agreed. I know when my stocks are runnin the gamut, I take a similar stance.

TEA

Runnin the gamut is never an even keel when it comes to your stocks.

CEMENT

We cannot afford to allow our portfolios to doseydo.

TEA

Men like us, livin the great white way, have got to keep an even keel. Portfolios, stocks, market crashes, housin booms, steaks, bailouts, 401 K's, it's all got to be kept at an even keel.

CEMENT

One has to balance the checkbook. So to speak.

TEA

Hear, hear, to balancin our checkbooks.

CEMENT

Cigar?

TEA

You're a good man.

These are single black & mild's or swisher sweets that have to be unwrapped from their plastic packages.

CEMENT

Well, I always say, as hard as we work keepin all a our money from runnin the gamut, we've got to also treat ourselves.

TEA

Life is in the luxuries.

They smoke. It's luxurious.

CEMENT

Thomas has decided on Yale.

TEA

Yale? I thought he was gonna be a Harvard man, just like his father.

CEMENT

No. He's got a touch a his mother's liberal flair.

TEA

Liberal flair is never good for an even keel.

CEMENT

Men like us have to keep the keel even. Cause when that ship rolls in, as ships often do for men like us, we've got to be ready.

TEA

Business men have to raise the canvas, sail the luxury yacht towards all of our good fortune.

CEMENT

Business men have to handle their business.

TEA

To handlin our business.

They smoke. It's luxurious.

CEMENT

When that call comes in we've got to be ready.

TEA

Men like us have to pick up the phone.

Sadie enters dragging Loretta with her. Tea and Cement stand up.

CEMENT

Sir, sir, sir, good to see you sir.

TEA

Sir, sir, good to see you sir.

SADIE

Gentleman, gentleman, please, sit. I am not your boss. Light me one of those cigars, will you?

Cement pops a cigar in his mouth and both try to light it for him.

All three smoke and it's luxurious.

Tea? What's the word?

TEA

I'm kinda hungry.

Actin rich is makin me hungry.

SADIE

Act? We don't act here. We live how we expect to live, and in that way we prepare for our chance.

TEA
Preparin makes me hungry.

SADIE
That's how you know you're doin it right.
Cement, how's your mind treatin you?

CEMENT
I'm feelin tip top.

SADIE
That's fine, fine. Cause you start back up at your job tomorrow.

CEMENT
Yeah.

SADIE
You'll be makin that money again. Get your teeth fixed.
Silence. Sadie's cigar has gone out.
A light, please?
Cement sits very still and blank. TEA lights Sadie's cigar.

TEA
Looks like your call came in. You'll be sailin on to your fortune.
Silence. The blood drains out of Cements face.

CEMENT
I'm fine.

SADIE
Of course you are.

CEMENT
Yeah.

SADIE
Lights Cement's cigar for him.
You deserve to enjoy it. You earned that fat paycheck.

TEA
How's that? What work.

SADIE
Don't you worry, Tea someday you're gonna get it too.

You see this man (cement)? Got the look. Got the trainin. But when I met him he was livin on the streets.

CEMENT
Not really.

SADIE
In a half-way house, excuse me. But he worked real hard – how long was you there?

CEMENT
A long time.

SADIE
But then he got his GED, his education. Moved up. Got a good job. Changed his life.

CEMENT
Life started changin.

SADIE
Now he can hold his head up high, a man amongst men.

TEA
That's what I am. A specimen. A man amongst men.
Loretta makes some strange breathing sounds.
You okay Loretta?

LORETTA
Fine.

SADIE
Mr. Loretta's lookin right, huh?

TEA
I guess.
You a little red in the face.

LORETTA
That's cause I can't fuckin breathe.

SADIE
Why do all the white children have to whine so much?
Look, one foot in front of the other. It's what makes great men, great.

TEA
A great man's gotta be great!

SADIE

Hear, hear.

Silence.

And how is a man of our world great? He don't let a job, or an ace bandage, no matter how tight it is, ever break him.

LORETTA

Yeah, look. I ain't cut out for the CEO world. I gotta get this fuckin thing off. I can't breathe!

Loretta exits.

CEMENT

Hear, hear!

TEA

Not me. I'm the kinda man who breaks the job. You know what I'm sayin? Work it so hard I break it.

CEMENT

You ain't even got a job-

SADIE

Don't stress about it.

CEMENT

- I collect garbage.

SADIE

That's right, you collect garbage... and you'll bring home that paycheck. And you're gonna do it better than anyone else.
Like this.

Sadie snaps her fingers. Projection: Stogie garbage cans.

Lights up and the three are wearing, or still putting on, full body jumpers as do garbage men. This feels vaudevillian. A straight man act between Sadie and Tea, one that Cement is not participating in.

SADIE (Cont'd)

Nothin smells sweeter than food rot on your fingertips, right?

He nudges cement "right? Right?"

TEA

Oh boy! I know that's right/

SADIE
You know that's right/

TEA
I know/

SADIE
It's right/

TEA
It's so right, sometimes I/

SADIE
Yeah?

TEA
Sometimes I/

SADIE
Yeah?

TEA
Sometimes I/

SADIE
Tell it!

TEA
Sometimes I like to just sit and smell em/

SADIE
Oh yeah, yeah/

TEA
Yeah, sometimes I like to come home from work. I don't wash my hands/

SADIE
Don't wash em/

TEA
Nope/

SADIE
Nope/

TEA

Nope I just smell em/

SADIE

That's just one a the perks!

TEA

I tell you what I found in the trash up on Highland?

SADIE

Nope. What'd you find?

TEA

A dead cat.

SADIE

Shit.

TEA

Dead like all nine lives run out/

SADIE

You say all nine?

TEA

All nine.

SADIE

Shit.

TEA

Yeah and by the looks a the plastic bag, the thing was/

SADIE

Was what?

TEA

The thing was/

SADIE

Was what/

TEA

Cat was alive when they put it in there.

SADIE
Oh shit!

TEA
Yeah/

SADIE
You find all kinda things out about people by what they throw away.

TEA
Find out they donate to the SPCA but then... they put the kitten/

SADIE
Put it right in the bag/

TEA
Right in the bag/

SADIE
Right in the bag and they close it up/

TEA
Into the garbage/

SADIE
Toss it right in there. Don't want it!

TEA
Don't want it at all/

SADIE
People got secrets.
One a the reasons I like collectin garbage. I know more about this city than anyone else.
You gotta sift through the trash/

TEA
With your fingertips/

SADIE
Dig right in there with your fingertips
if you wanna find the truth.
Don't you think so, Cement?
Cement is silent.

TEA
Truth!

Find things I want too/

SADIE
Right?

TEA
I'm tellin you, things I want/

SADIE
Like that coffee table we got. Folks throw things out that are still good/

TEA
Things still new/

SADIE
They just decide they wanna redecorate/

TEA
Might find somethin that's worth a whole lotta money.
Make you rich... like that.

SADIE
Well, Tea, you remember that movie LaBamba.

TEA
Sure, sure, I remember. LaBamba.

SADIE
Well you remember/

TEA
I remember/

SADIE
You remember. Richie Vallins brother found all those cartoon animation cells. In the trash/

TEA
When they were garbage men/

SADIE
Almost changed his life, cause he could draw.

TEA
He could draw/

SADIE
Boy could draw/

TEA
Yeah, and if he hadn't been in the shadow of his famous brother/

SADIE
Hidden in the shadow. The wind beneath his wings/

TEA
He mighta made somethin of himself.

SADIE
He *woulda* made somethin of himself/

TEA
He wouldn't a got drunk/

SADIE
Woulda put the cork in the jug/

TEA
Wouldn't a beat up his wife. Mighta made somethin of himself/

SADIE
Mighta been the next Walt Disney.

TEA
That could happen to us.

SADIE
Could happen to you, Cement.
Silence.
I bet you found all kinda things in the garbage?

CEMENT
I guess.

SADIE
Well?

CEMENT
Found a metal lawn couch, got some money for it at the scrap yard. That was good.

SADIE

Hell yeah. You know I always say/

TEA

You say a lot/

SADIE

I say a lot/

TEA

You do/

SADIE

I do, but this is some special knowledge I'm about to pass on/

TEA

Pass it to me/

SADIE

You got your glove ready?

TEA

Pass it to me/

SADIE

You ready?

TEA

I'ma catch it. Pass it to me/

SADIE

If it's in someone's yard...

TEA

Yeah, yeah.

SADIE

And they ain't nailed it down...

TEA

Pass it to me.

SADIE

It's free game *and*... it's goin to the scrapyard!

TEA
Scrapyard! Money in my pocket/

CEMENT
Lots of shit. Needles, vomit, diapers, things I don't even know what I'm lookin at. Things I don't even wanna know what I'm lookin at. You just close your eyes and throw the bags and stuff in the truck. Hope nothin don't stick threw your gloves and into your skin.

Silence.

SADIE
That's why we a special breed. Not everyone can handle dealin in the waste of livin. You know I always say, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. That is, if you let it.

CEMENT
It's not about the job!

Cement walks offstage. They watch him leave.

TEA
What's up with him?

Beat.

SADIE
Nevermind him. Let's talk about you.

TEA
Me?

SADIE
Yeah, you. Rule number one, everyone is self-sufficient. So how are you contributing?

TEA
Oh. You mean like a job? I'm ready for a job.

SADIE
Let's start at the beginning.
What do you want to be when you grow up?

TEA
Oh shit. I don't know.

SADIE
If you could do, be anything.

TEA
Anything?
Silence.
I don't know.

SADIE
Not ever, like when you were a kid?
Like me, when I was a kid I wanted to be a fashion designer.

TEA
That'd be cool. Have your own line, with your name on it.

SADIE
Yeah, so what about you?

TEA
I'd take that.

SADIE
No, not mine, but yours. You gotta have your own.
Beat.
Cause you see, when we go to that party, and you introduce yourself, you can do it as anyone you want. That way, you start to be to the world what you wanna be, and maybe, you might just get that.
Isn't there something you like doin'? Or somethin that you're good at?

TEA
Well.
In the 5th grade one of my drawings won an award. Like all the schools put together, my drawing won.

SADIE
So you wanna be an artist? We can work with that.

TEA
Not really. I mean I haven't drawn since. I don't know if I even like it.

SADIE
You won an award and so you stopped?

TEA
Nah. My mom ripped all my drawings up. I just never made another one after.

SADIE
Okay. So what else you got then?

TEA

I don't know. Shit. I don't care.

SADIE

This is gonna take some serious strategizin.

TEA

Strategizin?

SADIE

Of the presidential variety.

*They take off their jumpers. Projection: Oval Office.
Sadie pins a presidential pin on TEA and then one on himself.*

TEA

So what're we gonna do?

SADIE

Well, I've listened to all my advisors and...

Loretta enters wearing a "Jackie-O" inspired outfit. She has a paper bag over her head. They watch her. She sits.

Why does my first-lady have a bag over her head?

LORETTA

I don't want anyone to recognize me.

TEA

You could suffocate.

SADIE

Honey, you're an international icon.

He takes the bag off her head. She's wearing a "Jackie-O" style hat.

People are gonna recognize you with or without a bag on your head.

Look, Bobby and I were about to discuss a national crisis. Unemployment.

TEA

Taking the Bobby Kennedy cue. Advising the president.

It's so bad people can't even afford to buy a cah, nevahmind pahk it.

SADIE

To Loretta, relaying the advisement.

Folks can't even pahk they cahs.

TEA

It's wicked bad.

SADIE

To Loretta.

Wicked bad.

LORETTA

Don't let me stop you.

Silence.

I've just been scandalized, that's all.

SADIE

How have you been scandalized?

LORETTA

No, you have a national crisis to deal with. Don't worry about me.

She puts the bag back on her head.

I'll be fine.

SADIE

This is me, come on now.

He takes the bag back off. They stare at each other.

LORETTA

Your face always makes me say things I don't want to.

TEA

Of Loretta. Of a sexual nature.

And you got me thinkin things / I

Sadie and Loretta eye Tea "What?"

I mean... cause, cause you're the first lady and all.

They move on but still "Huh? Whatever."

Loretta pulls a Louisville Crime Times newspaper from her bag.

LORETTA

To Sadie.

Page 5.

SADIE

You paid a dollar for this?

LORETTA

Just look. Page 5.

Projection: a page from Louisville Crime Times depicting a mock game called Prostitute Spin A Rama, featuring photos of people recently arrested for prostitution.

SADIE
Loretta!

LORETTA
It was stupid.

SADIE
You was prost /!

LORETTA
Shh!

SADIE
Beat. In a lower voice.
You took money for sex?

LORETTA
It was a mistake.

SADIE
We don't whore ourselves.

LORETTA
I was talkin to this guy.

TEA
What guy?

They ignore Tea.

LORETTA
I was into him.

SADIE
Oh my / god

LORETTA
I was into him!

TEA
You want me to find this guy? I'll find this guy.

They ignore Tea.

LORETTA

He was sweet. He was bein kind to me.

TEA

Oooh, I will find him.

LORETTA

I'd already decided, I was gonna hook up with him. Then he asked me about money.

SADIE

Shit.

LORETTA

Right? First, you know, I was offended. I mean, do I look like a fuckin street walker? Is that what I look like?

Does she?

Then I was like, Loretta, you need the fuckin money, and you were gonna give it away anyway. You need the fuckin money, why should you give it away for nothin? You need the fuckin money. So I took it. It was stupid.

SADIE

Yeah, it was stupid.

LORETTA

Sadie! You supposed to make me feel better.

SADIE

Well, it *was* stupid. What if someone see's this? What if someone recognizes you? They might not even let us in the door. We can just forget about the Derby.

LORETTA

Rich people don't read this.

SADIE

Of course they do! Who do you think this is for? This trash, keeps the trash in their place, you get me?

From offstage we hear Cement punching a wall, maybe he lets out a primal guttural scream.

SADIE

Excuse me. I'm gonna go deal with this. Tea, you're in charge in my absence.

TEA
You mean I'm president?

SADIE
If that's what you want.

LORETTA
What about/

SADIE
Exiting.
If I don't deal with this we might all be sellin our asses.

TEA
Looking around at their new kingdom.
Well...

LORETTA
Dismissing Tea's new power.
Lord.
She puts the bag back over her head.
Tea looks around. Snaps their finger. Projection: The Berlin Wall.

Ich Bin Ein Berliner

TEA
This is highly presidential.
Before I was the President, I was just an actor. They gave me the script and I become whatever the words were. I could embody nearly any character. That was my gift, my training. Through this, I came to realize that what divides us, as a people, as a country, in the world is not defined by anything other than our performance. Each and every one of us wants to strive for something more. We want to break through that ceiling, we want to have a little more than what we were born with, we want to become great and do great things in the world. I tell you this today, on this day I say to you... if we can perform the role well enough, than we can make believers out of non-believers. We can break borders, enter new territory, not only personally but as a community, as a world united. The walls will come tumbling down, or we will dismantle them one solid brick at a time! So I say to you,

"Mr. Gorbachov, take *down* this wall!"

LORETTA
Oh my god, Tea!
She rips her bag off.
Don't be qoutin Ronald Regan in my presence.

TEA

What's wrong with Ronald Regan.

LORETTA

Pretty much everything. Trickle down. You know what happens when shit trickles down? By the time shit trickles down to the bottom it's pretty much nothin. What if you was thirsty, and I said to you, "Tea, you can have some a my orange drink... *after* it trickles down the mouth of six other people" you wouldn't like that, would you?

TEA

That's disgustin.

LORETTA

That's Ronald Regan.

TEA

You shouldn't drink orange drink it's like all high fructose corn syrup.

LORETTA

You know what? There's alotta other things that will kill me first.

TEA

Yeah, especially with what you're doin.

LORETTA

I don't trick, okay? I took the fuckin money, but I didn't even fuck him, okay?

TEA

It's a slippery slope.

LORETTA

You speakin from experience?

Silence.

Tea! Well, well.

TEA

We all have our pasts, Loretta. What? You ain't better than me.

LORETTA

I been cast in a game called prostitute Spin A Rama.
I'm just surprised is all, cause I didn't think you had that in you.

TEA

Everyone's got that in them.

Nobody put in the right circumstances wouldn't go there. I believe that.

LORETTA
You probably right.

TEA
I know I am.

Silence.

LORETTA
Oh no.

TEA
What?

LORETTA
One a your legs is longer than the other.

TEA
No it ain't!

LORETTA
Yes it is. Get over here.

TEA
My legs are the same.

LORETTA
I have an eye for this shit. Get over here. I need to remeasure you.

Loretta gets out her tape and starts measuring Tea.

LORETTA
Yup. Like a half an inch.

TEA
What? That's messed up.

LORETTA
Lotta people have one leg longer than the other.

Silence.

So... how much did you charge?

TEA
You did not just ask me that.

LORETTA

Yes, I did.

Come on. Tell me.

TEA

You just wanna know if you got offered more than me.

LORETTA

Hadn't even crossed my mind.

TEA

Bullshit.

LORETTA

Fine. Don't tell me.

TEA

I'm the president now. I'm the JFK.

LORETTA

Sure you are. Hold still.

TEA

I ever tell you about the day I decided to become president?

LORETTA

Nope.

TEA

I met this lady once. She was like wearin this nice business type suit and shit.

LORETTA

Hold still, you are like – man.

TEA

Woke up in the bushes one mornin, cause that's where I was livin, I mean sorta.

Whatever. Got in a fight. Had blood caked on my face, this disgustin taste in my mouth.

So I went to this convenience store. I was go into the bathroom and wash up. So I got some alkaseltzer and mouthwash.

LORETTA

That's so gross.

TEA

I popped a couple alkaseltzers, tried to wash it down with the mouth rinse. Only my throat was all closed up, so the alkaseltzer just kinda foamin up and spillin all down my mouth mixin with the blood and all.

LORETTA

Ew. lord.

TEBAG

Well, before I could get to the bathroom, the people started tellin me to get out the store. All I could do in tryna explain myself was mumble. So foams all pourin out, like I got rabies or somethin.

I get to a public restroom by Slugger Field and wash all the shit off my face. Then I just sat myself down on this bench at the Waterfront, feelin like I was just about the nastiest piece a shit ever.

LORETTA

I hear that.

TEA

This woman sat by me, this woman in her suit. I was kinda embrassed bout myself, but I talked with her. Noddin my head sayin Mhmm. She was sayin how back in the day, Louisville was like the Riviera of the south. And you know, all them new fancy restaurants? But that maybe that wasn't really the best thing for all the people. She said a lotta people are poor, and where do we fit in this New Riviera? I didn't have much to say on this, but I thought she was nice to be talkin to me when I smelt the way I did. Then when she was leavin she pressed tight to me. All I could think about was how I musta smelt. But then... it lasted *so* long, that I just ended up forgettin myself and feelin her. That woman doin that. Well that was like about dignity, right? She gave me that. And this newspaper, well... it's doin the opposite. You know?

Beat.

LORETTA

Good thing for me my dignity doesn't rest in how other people see me.

TEA

Of course not.

LORETTA

Nope.

Silence.

TEA

So... you ever think about what you wanna be if you could be anything?

LORETTA

Sadie ask you?

TEA

Yeah, but I don't know. That's weird, huh?

LORETTA

Probably a lotta people don't really know.

TEA

Do you?

Know?

LORETTA

I wanted to have my own business. Had lots of ideas, kept em in a notebook and everything.

TEA

Like how you make clothes? Is that your business?

LORETTA

I guess it is now.

You know I got my business degree, got my Associates from the community college.

TEA

No! You got a degree?

LORETTA

That's all in the past. I'm doin somethin different now. You know I could walk into any situation right now, any kinda people, and I could work that. I could be a part of that. Not many people can say that.

TEA

I'm sorry you got put inside that newspaper.

LORETTA

Nobody reads that trash anyway.

Nobody that's important.

TEA

You got a little makeup on your face.

LORETTA
Yeah, I put it on.

TEA
No I mean. Right here.

TEA wipes it off.

LORETTA
Oh. Thanks.

TEA
Before I come here, I been around with other drag houses. I was around, and they would fuck me, but nobody would ever let me in. And I can vogue, okay? I mean maybe that's what I'll be... like the vogue version of Paul Robeson. Like vogue right across that wall. I can vogue like – I'm good.

LORETTA
Yeah, I seen you.

TEA
You know sometimes you think, these motherfuckers are wantin to fuck me, so that must mean they want me. Like all of me. You'd think I would've known better.

LORETTA
It happens.

TEA
People still talk about Sadie in the scene. So I heard about him before I met him. Heard about how he was basically like forget you to the whole scene, sayin how it wasn't real. They said he was still up at the Connection doin his tired performance. After that lady hugged me like that, I went to Connections to watch the drag show, to just be around and be okay.

Prejection: Water. Sadie in a life raft. She performs Pink Floyd's "Mother". They watch her.

That's where I found him.
I'd never seen somethin so real.

LORETTA
Yeah.

TEA
He never tried to fuck me.

LORETTA
Yeah.

They watch her for a moment longer, then dimly lit as earlier, Loretta sews Tea's outfit.

SADIE

Her show for us.

How a woman like me keeps her dignity. I have to take this back to when.. To when I was a child, I say child because when you are my age, anything under thirty is child. When I was this age, I had a man.

Ugh. Too much green. Too much green eye shadow and you look like a whore. That's the one rule of my life. Don't look like a whore. Sexy... but not a whore.

So this man. When he visited me, I was as glamorous as I am now, only my skin... was taught yet soft. People said I glowed. Funny. That's reserved for pregnant women. It was as if I was always pregnant. Somewhere inside a me I had that desire, but of course...

I used to think that desire for child was so great that it was the cause of that certain glow.

This man had hands that could not not touch. So I would smack his hands. Cause I was always... a lady. Some ladies don't like their dicks. But I've never hated mine. However... when you are a child like me, you sometimes do conceal. This is before you hear about other girls. The ones who appear in dumpsters and parks. The ones whose dignity, whose secret was stolen from them, and then their thieves did not like... the goods. Did not like what those goods said about that thief.

That's the thing, isn't it? We only care about what things say about who we are. No one else. I believe this man and his hands knew *exactly* who I was. But that's the other thing about us people. When we don't like a thing about ourselves we lie to ourselves about it. We conceal, pretend it isn't true. We are stubborn that way.

Now my mother, who I adored. I viewed her as a queen among subjects. Dirty, ragged, desperate subjects. Hungry and clawing their way up a pile of filth that just kept dirtying their faces and giving out under them so they'd slide back to the bottom. Not my mother. No. She'd put on her sexy shoes, fix her hair and strut around the bottom of the pile. Ruling. Never clawing. And if she saw me clawing, honey, she would smack my hands. Desperate is a dirty habit. And habits like people are hard to break, stubborn. The best way to cure a habit is through violence... don't you know this? It is the only way to bring peace. Because for most of us... when we desire something we will not easily give up on it.

This man desired my goods, like a thief. He was willing to break important things in order to get it. But he didn't like what that desire said about him. I knew this. So I would smack his hands and then I would give him my coy face so he wouldn't run away. So he would know that I wanted him too. However, when you are a girl like me... it doesn't take long to discover that if you play both sides of the fence, you'll just end up with a

post *right up your ass*. When this happened... I set to destroy him. Because some times peace cannot be achieved, a desire cannot be broken, with a slap; some times it requires a blade.

When I die... someone. I don't know who, but there will be someone, who goes through my things. Sorts, sells, or gives away all of my belongings. Inside my closet they will find a trunk with a lock on it. They will break that lock. Open my trunk. A waft of high lavender will spill out. There, like a fetus curled in a womb, will be this man. A safety pin with a note stuck through his shirt. The note has only one sentence, "This motherfucker tried to rob me."

Loretta takes Sadie's wig and dress off through the start of the following.

Family Meeting, Huxstable Style

SADIE

A good single mother, has to also be a good daddy, don't you think so?

LORETTA

She gotta be.

SADIE

I think we need to hold a family meetin. The children are gettin so buck. Cement's goin through somethin. Tea's all over the damn place. You are a tabloid scandal.

Loretta opens her mouth to defend herself.

Don't even.

I feel the dream slippin through my fingers.

LORETTA

You always think it's slippin through your fingers.

SADIE

Dreams are like that. I almost had this, on accident. I tell you that?

LORETTA

Almost had what?

SADIE

I was at the Derby, Lord like over 10 years ago. Somehow, I don't even remember now, but I got into a crowd and ended up mixin with the high society, out on the first turn. Oooh, I thought I was really in it. Chattin up so and so Ms Thing. We was really goin on. Just bullshittin, then she says to me, "Oh and can you please refill my Mint Julep, thank you honey." Bitch hands me her glass.

LORETTA
What??

SADIE
Yes she did. I was like, what the fuck just happened? Starin at this glass.

LORETTA
What'd you do?

SADIE
I walked back to the infield where some drunk boys were racing each other across the top of the port o potties. That brought me to my senses, I did not belong in the infield. I decided one day I would be at that party and no one would question my presence. Then I drank the rest of her mint julep. Shit, I was gonna let it go to waste.

Look, I know I'm hard on you sometimes, but you been like a sister to me. I need your help with this.

LORETTA
It'll work out.

SADIE
It ain't like I am askin for a fuckin movement. The days of poor people askin for what they deserve is over. I'm askin for one single fuckin moment. One night where we can all get a little taste of some life we mighta had under different circumstances.

LORETTA
We have our in. You got the guy to sneak us in. We're gonna be in it, and how bad could they fuck it up?

SADIE
You don't understand.

LORETTA
What?

SADIE
We have to pass.

LORETTA
Well, the outfits are gonna be / right.

Sadie puts on 80's style jeans and Howard University Sweatshirt.

SADIE
It's more than the outfit, you know that. I got to raise these children all over again.

LORETTA
Step up the trainin.

SADIE
Being Bill Cosby.
Clair?

LORETTA
Being Clair Cosby.
Yes, Cliff.

SADIE
I told Vanessa to get all the children downstairs. We're gonna have a meeting.

LORETTA
Now?

SADIE
Yes.

Tea and Cement enter. Cement is wearing his work clothes.

TEA
Dad, whatever it is I didn't do it.

Canned laughter.

SADIE
No no no, this has nothing to do with what you did.

CEMENT
Well if this is about the family vacation, I have a few ideas.

SADIE
It is not about the vacation.

TEA
Then what it is?

SADIE
I waaant you all to knooow, that if any of you have aaaanny concerns about whhaaat we're about to do. That you feeeel freeee, no matter hooow bad, you think it is, to come to your mother or me.

CEMENT
Okay.

TEA
Okay.

Tea and Cement spring up to leave. Canned laughter.

SADIE
No no no. Wait a minute. Sit down.

TEA
Isn't the talk over?

SADIE
No, the talk isn't over. I was hoping that this would be the beginning of a discussion.

TEA
About what?

SADIE
About what I just said.

CEMENT
I like what you just said.

TEA
Yeah Dad, I thought you said it very well.

Canned laughter.

SADIE
I'm not asking for a critique of what I just said.

LORETTA
What your father probably wants to know is how you *feel* about what he said.

TEA
We feel good about it.

Tea and Cement spring up to leave. Canned laughter.

LORETTA
Come on guys sit down. Come on now. Sit down. This is serious now.

SADIE
Yes, this is serious. Becaaaause we are going to enter into a woorld that most of you have never been in! Do you understand me?
We are going to put on our spring outfits/

LORETTA

Our *best* Spring outfits.

SADIE

Our *best* spring outfits! And in-fil-trate the most expensive party in this city. Some of you might have some feeelings about this.

LORETTA

Your father and I want to know that you feel you can really come to us.

CEMENT

Yeah.

TEA

Yeah.

SADIE

About anything?

CEMENT

Yeah.

TEA

Yeah.

Canned laughter.

SADIE

Alright, alright let me give you an example. Leets say, one of you became pregnant.

CEMENT

Dad!

SADIE

No, no I'm serious.

TEA

Laughing, looking at Cement.

I know it's not me!

Canned laughter.

SADIE

Okay, let's say it *is* you! (tea)

TEA

Me??

SADIE

Let's say that you are pregnant. Now, what are you going to do?

Beat. Canned laughter.

TEA

Well, first...

I'd want to find out who did it.

Canned laughter.

SADIE

Okay. Okay.

Okay.

Okay let's say you didn't find out. What would you do?

TEA

I guess I'd be scared, right?

CEMENT

Definitely.

TEA

Well Dad, if I was scared I'd probably talk to a friend first.

SADIE

If you were pregnant, you would talk to a Cockroach?

TEA

You said to be honest.

SADIE

I know I said be honest, but I am just amazed that you would go to a Cockroach before you went to us.

TEA

I'd be afraid you'd get mad.

SADIE

Mad! I wouldn't get mad.

Tea and Cement laugh.

What? If I said I wouldn't get mad I wouldn't get mad.

LORETTA

It's important to us that you come to us.

SADIE

Sit up there and tell me, I'd get mad.

LORETTA

We all need to be on board.

SADIE

I know when I'd get mad and I wouldn't get mad.

CEMENT

You say that now but that's because it hasn't happened yet.

SADIE

I wouldn't get mad!

CEMENT

Okay, let me give *you* an example then.

SADIE

Okay, come on with it.

CEMENT

Alright. Well, let's say. You saw. Tea, use the salad fork in the steak.

Beat. Sadie is pissed. Canned laughter.

SADIE

Okay.

They laugh knowing she is obviously pissed.

No, no no. Okay. I would feel comfortable... saying to Tea. Didn't I teach you what fork to use where? Did I not teach you that? Did you not learn that very simple thing?

TEA

Exiting.

I got the stupid fork thing down! God damn, chill out.

LORETTA

Going after Tea.

Hold on now. Don't just run off!

SADIE

I tell you what, trainin is gettin stepped up this afternoon. Ya'll gotta work harder.

CEMENT

The following is serious, earnest and thoughtful. A real father son moment.

Dad. I thought about what you said, and I see your point.

SADIE

Thank you, Theo.

Sadie shakes his hand.

Thank you.

CEMENT

But. I have a point too.

SADIE

Make your point.

CEMENT

You're a doctor and mom's a lawyer. And you're both successful and everything, and that's great. But maybe... I was born to be a regular person. And have a regular life. If you weren't a doctor, I wouldn't love you any less. Because you're my dad. And so... instead actin disappointed. Because I'm not like you. Maybe you can just accept me for who I am, and love me anyway. Because I'm your son.

Sound of an audience clapping. Long silence.

SADIE

Cement?

That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard! In my life!

Canned laughter.

It's no wonder you get D's in everything. Now you are afraid to try.

Now I am tellin you, you are going to try as. Hard. As. You. Can. And you're gonna do it because I said so. I am your father. I brought you into this world and I'll take you out.

Beat.

Son, come over here. Come here. I just want you to do you best.

You got a "poor mentality" you know what that means?

CEMENT

No.

SADIE

That means you think you are poor.

CEMENT

I am poor.

SADIE

Do you wanna be you're whole life?

CEMENT

I guess not.

SADIE

Then you gotta stop thinkin like you are. That's what this is all about. Changin your mind and changin your life.

CEMENT

But this is who I am. I'm not that, that's what I'm sayin.

SADIE

You choose now. Right now. From this moment on.

That's what I'm givin you.

When we grow up we put away childish things, and when we rise in status we put away the past.

CEMENT

I didn't go to prep school.

SADIE

You're also not the type to have a steady job either, but now you do.

CEMENT

I might just be an old dog.

SADIE

You ever tried to get one a your friends to stop fuckin their lives up? To get that they were better than that?

CEMENT

Yeah sure.

SADIE

And when they didn't believe you, that hurt you didn't it? Maybe you should consider how we might feel, if you say we are lyin about your worth.

That's what you're doing right now.

Cause I'm lookin at you and I am seein all of you and I am sayin you're worth more than you think you are. That you deserve to have that job, nice things, wear nice clothes have good shoes.

You sayin you don't? That I'm lyin?

You see what I'm sayin?

CEMENT

Yeah.

SADIE

Exiting.

You are gonna wear me out!

Cement sits down to put his work shoes on. Tea enters wearing the exact same outfit as Cement.

TEA

Whatta you think?

CEMENT

Bout your outfit?

TEA

Yeah. About my outfit.

CEMENT

Looks right.

TEA

I think it looks more than right. I look good. This thing like hides all the right things and accentuates all the other right things. It's tough.

CEMENT

Yeah.

TEA

You think you could get me a job... at your place?

CEMENT

I don't know, maybe. They ain't hirin much and it's the city, so you gotta have your real high school or get a GED or somethin.

TEA

Oh.

Silence.

Why are you shakin?

CEMENT

I ain't shakin.

TEA

Yeah you are.

You got some kinda nervous condition?

CEMENT

No. I just ain't feelin right.

TEA

Well don't breath on me! I don't want what you got.

CEMENT

I ain't sick. Cept maybe in the head.

TEA

I don't want your crazy either.

CEMENT

I'm just sayin that cause sometimes I think I'd rather be out there.

TEA

You are sick in the head.

CEMENT

You don't understand.

TEA

What are you talkin about. I lived out there.

CEMENT

Not as long as me though.

TEA

Whatever.

CEMENT

It's true, shit. I knew what to do. I figured that out. Where to get my meals, where to sleep, how to spot a thief. I had a routine. I understood it. Now I'm just. And this Derby thing. I thought I could learn but I'm. Well whatever.

TEA

You ever go to the church on the south side?

CEMENT

The mission? Yeah, of course. You?

TEA

Those are some crazy fuckers in there.

CEMENT

Yeah, yeah. They feared me though.

TEA
You?

CEMENT
Hell yeah. When people act crazy you just gotta act crazier. I would bark and snarl like a dog. Get right up in their faces snarlin, jumpin up on chairs, howlin to the ceilin. People would give me their biscuits just get me outta their face.

TEA
Oh shit. Biscuits the best part.

CEMENT
I know.
I went down there yesterday, thought it'd make me feel better, but everything was different. I was different, I guess. I ended up leavin before I even ate, got to work early.

I mean, what're you supposed to do when everyone's bein normal? Standin around talkin about their wives and their baby's momma, and about bein a dad, and goin grocery shoppin. How are you supposed to be then?

TEA
Just pretend, I guess.

CEMENT
Pretend to be a dad?

TEA
Yeah, like if you imagined one, what he might be.

CEMENT
Yeah.
Silence.
So?

TEA
Oh. You wanna hear my imaginary Daddy?

CEMENT
Yeah.

TEA
Maybe I never really thought much about that.
Silence.
Uh. Well. I guess he'd get up in the mornin and put his work clothes on.

CEMENT

Check.

TEA

He'd eat bacon. Lots of bacon, like a heapin pilin greasy plate of bacon. Glass of OJ.

CEMENT

Okay.

TEA

He wouldn't hardly say nothin. But he'd punch me in the arm on his way out. And I'd think he was real steady, cause he'd never say much of anythin.

CEMENT

The strong silent type.

TEA

Right.

There'd be two paper-bag lunches on the counter just waitin.

One for him and one for me.

He'd go to work every mornin, and I'd go to school every mornin.

In his bag he'd have two sandwiches and mines would have one.

When I was at my desk I'd know he'd be sweatin.

When I was eatin my lunch, he'd be eatin his, all the time never sayin nothin.

I'd get home, throw my bag down,
open the fridge and there'd be plastic containers with leftovers,
a package of hamburg,
a gallon of milk, and cans of soda, and
I'd know why.

He'd get home, put his bag down and sit in his favorite chair. The nasty one that no one else ever dare sit in.

The TV would be on, and I'd hand him the remote.

I'd just watch him, and he'd never say nothin. He'd just always be there, that same way.

Silence.

Cement gets up to go to work. He punches TEA on the arm before he exits.

Time passes.

Sadie and Loretta enter. Loretta is carrying a table and has a basket or something that holds all of the supplies.

SADIE

It's dinnertime on Millionaire's Row!

Loretta flings open the plastic fold-up table.

And what is important about dinnertime?

TEA
Eatin!

Loretta flings open and spreads the table cloth.

SADIE
No, honey. Not eating. In fact you should always eat very little.

TEA
Even when I'm hungry?

SADIE
Especially when you're hungry.

Loretta sets the table. Plastic cups, utensils and plates.

Rich people have a philosophy, and we are goin to imbibe this philosophy. I will say it only once. "You can never be too rich or too thin." Write it down.

The table is set and they all sit.

The basics. What ya momma woulda taught you: No Elbows on the table, No eatin with your fingers, No reachin, Napkin on the lap, half unfolded for lunch and fully unfolded for dinner.

Ahm. Is this lunchtime? No. I said this was dinner. Dinner, honey. Unfold that napkin. All. The. Way.

TEA
Where's the food?

SADIE
Dinner is not about eatin. Didn't I say that?

LORETTA
It's about charmin.

SADIE
Charming! Thank you. Yes, we're going to learn about charming. There are many ways to charm. Now you might be thinkin to yourself. Well, since I'm poor they're gonna think my accent is charmin, they're goin to think the way I hold my fork wrong is charmin, the way I wipe my mouth with my sleeve is charmin. That might be true, at first. But when that good payin position opens up in the family business, you think they're gonna think of you for the job?

TEA
Nope.

LORETTA
Hell no.

SADIE
Hell no! In fact, what you will become instead, brings me to this next lesson. The most effective way to charm. Through your very witty stories. Very witty stories.

You find yourself among the fortunate few and you hear them blah blah this, oh haha that one. And isn't that a very funny story. Oh blah blah and haha you're so charming. Oh my he's very witty.

And you lookin around goin, how do they know what to say? Do they have these perfect witty stories in pen on their arm? Up their sleeves? I went a long time in silence. Smiling and hahaing. Watching. Then I would go home, think and read. Yes, I read.

I found the answer. *Passion and Prejudice: A Family Memoir* by Ms. Sallie Bingham. Yes, of the Louisville Bingham heiress, Sallie Bingham. In this book she tells us that, when you are at the dinner table, the most important thing you must be is charming, and you must prove your charm through your witty stories. Of which, apparently you would grow up honing. It's like this... practice makes perfect.
Let us begin.

LORETTA

Well. Earlier today I/

SADIE

Haha!

She waves for Tea to join in.

SADIE

Haha!

TEA

Haha!

LORETTA

This is a very witty story. So earlier today, I tried to give Tea a blow job and/

TEA

Whoa!

SADIE

Tea honey, you never interrupt a witty story before it gets witty. That's like faux pas number one.

TEA

But she/

SADIE

Ah! No.

TEA

But she/

SADIE

Ah! No.

To Loretta.

Go on.

LORETTA

And it was really smooth. I was really smooth, you know?

SADIE

Yes.

LORETTA

Had the right words, the right moves, doin my thing.

SADIE

What'd they do?

TEA

Seriously?

LORETTA

Well they ran away! Right up in the house.

SADIE

Haha!

Motions for Tea to join in.

SADIE

Haha!

TEA

Haha?

LORETTA

Shock! I was shocked! I tell you.

SADIE

Haha! Of course you were, honey.

It's gonna be hard to top that one. Tea?

TEA

Oh yeah, I got a story.

SADIE

Go on.

TEA

So earlier today, Loretta tried to give me a blow job.

Tea motions for everyone to laugh. They don't.

SADIE

No, honey. You don't get to tell us when it's witty. Your audience will decide.
Go on.

TEA

So I was like "It's not like that with us".

Tea waits for the laugh. It doesn't happen.

Cause I thought maybe... just maybe we could like each other in more ways.

Silence.

SADIE

Okay/

LORETTA

Look, I gotta test out the goods. You know what I'm sayin'?

TEA

Maybe my goods. And maybe your goods is more than just your wet pussy/

SADIE

Whoa! Okay okay. Stop. Just stop.

Tea. We're gonna need to work on your very witty story. Not so very witty.

Cement enters. He's home from work.

But right now...

Come over here and take your place at the table. We are doing charm.

CEMENT

Where's the food?

TEA

That's what I'm sayin.

SADIE

Wait?

Is it five o'clock already?

CEMENT

We got out early.

Silence. Everyone looks at Sadie.

SADIE

I see.

Silence.

Well. We are doing charmin. Do you have a witty story for us?

CEMENT

No.

SADIE

Maybe you could come up with one.

CEMENT

I don't think so.

SADIE

Try.

CEMENT

I don't want to, alright?

Silence. Sadie stands up from the table.

SADIE

Fine.

But know this. As long as you are able bodied, you *will* escort me to the party, like you promised you would. Whether that means I have to drag you there.

Sadie returns to her house.

I will have this.

CEMENT

Sadie, hold on.

Cement follows her.

LORETTA

And for your information, I know I have more to offer than a wet pussy.

TEA

Look, I just / thought

LORETTA

For someone who has lived a life, you have a lot to learn.

TEA

Why you gotta lead with the sex?

LORETTA

I like sex.

TEA
Well, I'm sick of it.

LORETTA
That's sad.

TEA
I might not have a real degree but I'm not stupid.

LORETTA
I don't think you're stupid.

TEA
Then why can't we start with that?

LORETTA
Look, I was just tryna have fun. Don't get all cra.

Blackout.

Drag Ball On The Lawn: *Derby Realness*

Sadie presses play on her boombox. It's something classical and upbeat.

SADIE
In her microphone, as a sports announcer.

The Kentucky Derby. The oldest, continuously held sports event in America. It's the 141st run for the roses. And perhaps, among its entries is the horse America has been waiting for since the 70's, the decade which produced that last triple crown winners.

The temperature is in the 80's and the track is lightenin fast.

Here from Louisville Kentucky on the first Saturday in may. It's the dateline for the most famous two minutes in sports. Two minutes of racing over a mile and a quarter, in a setting as historic and evocative as baseball in the Bronx, football in south bend. Two minutes that the great novelist John Steinbeck, in attendance here some 40 years ago, called, "an emotion, a turbulence, an explosion. One of the most beautiful and satisfying things I have ever experienced."

The twin spires of Churchill Downs preside over this celebration of spring that is Kentucky Derby Day. Millionares row is packed with big money players, while down at the grandstands novices and racing fans alike line up at the windows.

All in search of a winner.

Welcome to the Kentucky Derby.

The horses are led from the stalls. The jockies all get a leg up.

And the horses head for the racetrack, and that magical time when we all become Kentuckians, if just for a moment.

Loretta sounds a horn the old trumpet sound of a hunt.

SADIE

Ladies and gentleman the management and staff of Churchill Downs proudly presents the 141st running of the Kentucky Derby. At this time please rise for My Old Kentucky Home as played by the University of Louisville band.

Sadie takes her cassette tape out and flips it over to the other side. While a classical version of my old Kentucky homes plays, and perhaps the sound of a large crowd singing along,

Sadie announces this Drag Ball as if it is the parade of horses.

SADIE

And here is Ms. Loretta. Right now, sitting pretty at a 3-1 odds. Past achievements include an associates degree in business and most currently an online job entering medical bills. It's ladies hats that are shining today, and Ms. Loretta might be the brightest star. With colors to rival the jockie's silks.

Next in the saddle is Tea. A crowd favorite here at the 141 Kentucky Derby. Most noted for their smash vogue performance in 2008. Tea can be spotted from afar in their Spring pastels. A handsome docker inspired ensemble.

Here is Cement. Wearing one of the most recognized derby outfits, the male seersucker suit, standing ten hands high. He's been known to fall short when the race get's tight. Let's hope he can pick up the pace this afternoon.

And that is the field for the Kentucky Derby.

At the home stretch. The field measuring 12 hundred and 34 feet and a half, can often get the best of an otherwise outstanding thoroughbred. In minutes we will find out who can withstand the long, grueling drive to the wire. For their moment in the sun.

The Children Are Breaking

Cement, in a seersucker suit, gets a ladder from the side of the house and puts it up to the wall. He gets a cement block with a rope tied through it. He climbs up the wall and puts the block on it. The rope hangs down to the bottom. He lays down under the block, and pulls the rope. The block comes down and hits his leg. He screams. He checks the leg, gets up and can still walk. It's not broken. He puts the block back up on the wall. Lays back down. This time it's much much harder to pull the rope. He does. It comes down and hits his leg. He screams, checks, it's still not broken. Shit.

Tea enters. Dressed in their derby outfit.

TEA
Cement! You okay?

CEMENT
No.

TEA
What happened?

CEMENT
It's what didn't happen.

TEA
You layin in the dirt and grass in your seersucker suit! Oh man, Sadie's gonna be so pissed.
I'm gonna get her.

CEMENT
No! No, don't.

Pause.

TEA
Okay.

Silence.

CEMENT
Why don't you just take a photograph.

TEA
Hey, I'm just tryna figure out what's goin on.

CEMENT
What's it look like is goin on?

TEA
Well I don't know, you layin on the ground, lookin like your hurt. We supposed to be gettin ready for the party.

CEMENT
I ain't hurt enough.

TEA
What?

CEMENT
Just don't say nothin, okay?

TEA
I don't even know what I'm not supposed to be sayin.

CEMENT
I can't be your daddy, okay?
Silence.
I gotta break my leg.

TEA
What?

CEMENT
It's the only way out. I gotta break somethin. It's gotta be real. Like somethin you can see.

TEA
You ain't gotta do all that.

CEMENT
Oh yes I do.
You don't know nothin-you got no one dependin on you. You've only lived one kinda way. You ain't had to live a new way. So stop lookin at me like that.

TEA
I ain't lookin at you no kinda way.

CEMENT
I gotta break it.
Silence.
I need your help.

TEA
Oh hell no.

CEMENT
You gotta help me.

TEA
Why would I help you break your leg?

CEMENT

Cause you care.

TEA

That doesn't make sense.

Come on now, get up.

CEMENT

Cause I'm the whole reason you're here.

TEA

I can't break your leg. I can't.

CEMENT

What if I was dyin, sufferin, would you put me out of my misery?

TEA

I don't know.

CEMENT

You'd let me suffer?

TEA

I can't say, cause this isn't that situation.

CEMENT

For me it is.

TEA

You're not dyin.

CEMENT

For me it is.

TEA

I can't stomach that.

CEMENT

Tea.

TEA

Don't Tea me.

CEMENT

I brought you here. I helped you.

Your shoes was put together with duct tape. You wanted to meet Sadie, and I introduced you.

TEA
Yeah, I appreciate/

CEMENT
You owe me.
And I never asked you for nothin.

TEA
Look you're gonna have to figure / somethin

CEMENT
I never asked you for nothin.
I would do this for you. I would do this for you.
Silence.
Just don't look.

TEA
Hell no!

CEMENT
This the kinda man you are?

TEA
Excuse me?

CEMENT
You the kinda man who can't stomach this?

TEA
What's that got to do with it.

CEMENT
I hoisted that block up there and smashed it on my own leg. That's the kinda man I am.
What about you?

TEA
Oh, you think I don't have it in me? Is that what you think?

CEMENT
That's what you're showin me.

TEA
You don't think I could drop that block on your damn leg if I wanted to?

CEMENT
I don't know.

TEA
You don't think I am made of that stuff?

CEMENT
Why don't you prove it. Why don't you put all a that big talk to some action. Why don't you show me what kinda stuff you're made of.

TEA
Oh I'm gonna show you.
Starts to climb the ladder.
To theirsself
Oh my god.
But just so you know... this is fucked up. This is so fucked up.
You're gonna owe me.

CEMENT
That's fine. I will owe you.

TEA
Aw fuck!

CEMENT
What?

TEA
Aw man!

CEMENT
What?

TEA
My pants. I ripped my fuckin pants. Aw / man

CEMENT
You can fix / that

TEA
You shutup. This is like the nicest outfit I ever had. Aw man.

Tea reaches the top, with the cement block. Looks down at Cement.

TEA

Oh man.

CEMENT
That looks about right.
Close your eyes.

TEA
I ain't gotta close my eyes!

Tea drops the cement block. It breaks Cement's leg. He screams.

TEA
I'm not comin down there.

CEMENT
Through pain.
That's okay. It's okay.

TEA
You need to go to the hospital.

CEMENT
My cell phones in my jacket over there by the house.

TEA
I'm not comin down there.

CEMENT
Well I can't get it myself.

TEA
I ain't comin down.

CEMENT
You could just close your eyes.

TEA
No.

CEMENT
Then I guess I'll just lay here till I get gangrene and die.

TEA
Guess you will.

CEMENT
Come on Tea.

TEA
No.

CEMENT
What are you scared of?

TEA
I ain't scared. I just don't wanna see.

CEMENT
I said you could close your eyes.

TEA
Even if my eyes were closed I'd still know. I'd still know.

Silence.

CEMENT
What's it look like from up there?

TEA
Well, the houses over there are much nicer. There's more grass too, and it's been watered.

CEMENT
And the river? Can you see the river?

TEA
Yeah.
My fuckin pants man.

CEMENT
I always like to look at the river. Makes me feel like I ain't trapped.

TEA
The river is disgustin. You can't swim in it and you can't eat any of the fish from it.

CEMENT
I eat the fish from it.

TEA
Maybe that's what's wrong with your head.

CEMENT
Maybe.

Silence.

TEA
I'm not comin down there.

CEMENT
I know.

TEA
So what, you're just gonna lay there?

CEMENT
Yeah. Soemthin will happen.

TEA
Whatta you mean?

CEMENT
Well somethin always happens, if you wait long enough. I'm not gonna lay here forever, some things gonna happen.

Are you gonna sit up there forever?

TEA
I don't know what I'm gonna do.
I could do anything. I mean really the skies the limit. If I can dream it, I can be it.

CEMENT
That's what they say.

TEA
Anything could happen.
You ask yourself from a year ago, if you thought you'd be layin on the ground having just broken your own leg, would you think that could happen?

CEMENT
Nope.

TEA
No.

TEA
Well, I don't know what someday is gonna bring me.

The way I was dressed though, looked like it was gonna bring me something.

CEMENT
It still could.

TEA
Maybe.

CEMENT
What do you think that might be?

TEA
I don't know. That's what I'm sayin.

CEMENT
Something always comes.

TEA
I heard people say, someday, someday I'm gonna...
And they say that till someday never comes.

CEMENT
Some times it don't, I guess.

TEA
And you know what else? Maybe one moment isn't enough. Maybe I don't think that's enough. I mean... Paul Robeson didn't sing that song for one moment. That's what I've been thinkin. I mean he sang that song to light a fire that would spread out.
Maybe you gotta just do some thing.

CEMENT
Eventually you gotta do some thing, that's for sure. Eventually I gotta get myself to the hospital.

TEA
Takes the ladder from one side of the wall and puts it on the other.
Like maybe you just gotta decide that if you're dressed like someone who makes decisions, you aughtta make some decisions.

CEMENT
Where you goin Tea?

TEA

I don't know, but I'm gonna do something on the other side. Right now, I'm thinkin I'm gonna do something on the other side. Right now, I'm thinkin someday is on the other side.

TEA climbs down the wall. Exits.

CEMENT

Hold on a second. Tea! Tea! Tea!

Shit.

Sadie and Loretta enter in their fabulous and outlandish female derby outfits.

SADIE

Why is my son laying below the wall like Humpty Dumpty?

LORETTA

To Cement.

Why is the Queen's son laying below the wall like Humpty Dumpty?

CEMENT

I can't move.

SADIE

And in your suit? Get the fuck up.

LORETTA

The Queen's son says he's can't move.

SADIE

Why?

LORETTA

To Cement.

Why?

TEA

Because I hurt myself

LORETTA

Because of / he hurt

SADIE

What's wrong with you?

CEMENT

I broke my leg.

Sadie sits down in one of the lawn chairs, her throne. Her back is to Cement.

LORETTA

He should probably go to the hospital.

CEMENT

Yeah.

SADIE

Quiet!

Long Silence.

You did this to yourself, didn't you?

CEMENT

It was an accident.

SADIE

Liar! And you didn't get out of work early, either.

CEMENT

It was an accident.

SADIE

I know when you're lyin. Don't lie to me. It's an act punishable by abandonment.

CEMENT

I had to.

SADIE

You had to.

I saw this day comin. I saw it.

Everything turns to shit, but it always happens. Doesn't it?

It doesn't matter how good of a mother you are, because the sins of the father flow in the blood, don't they?

CEMENT

Everything's gonna be okay / now.

SADIE

Where is Tea?

CEMENT

They left.

SADIE

Left?! To where?

CEMENT

They're gone. But Sadie I / want

SADIE

Gone? On today. Tea just left?

CEMENT

Yeah / but I

SADIE

No! No.

You are gonna get up, right now. You are gonna drag yourself if you have to.

CEMENT

I can't.

Sadie tries to pull Cement up off the ground.

SADIE

This family is not going to fall apart. We don't break, you understand me. Get your sorry ass up.

CEMENT

I can't.

LORETTA

He should really go to the hospital. We can go / without them

Sadie falls backwards into the wet dirt. Her dress is ruined.

SADIE

Oh my god.

She rips her wig off and throws it in the dirt.

You son of a bitch!

*Loretta dives to save the wig like she's going for home plate in a baseball game.
The front of her dress is ripped and dirtied.*

CEMENT

I told you I can't get up.

SADIE

You tryna rob me? I will-Loretta!

CEMENT

It's not my fault I told you I couldn't get up.

LORETTA

The wig. The wig is fine. I got it.

SADIE
Your dress, honey.

Cement starts to laugh.

SADIE
Quiet! You think this is funny?
Silence.

You wanted to know the way out. You said you wanted to be somethin more, and that you didn't know how, that you'd been on your own strugglin and strivin.

And I understood that, cause I'd done the same thing in my life. Along the way there had been people who reached out their hand to me. The difference between me and you, is that I took that hand.

Maybe you say to me that I should have patience. That a queen should rule with patience. Maybe that's true. Or maybe it's time she rule with the guillotine. Maybe it's time she asked all those poor children why they don't just eat cake.

From now on, you can find your own way.

Sadie exits. Loretta follows her.
Silence.

How A Diva Bitch Falls Apart: Or Loretta Holds A Press Conference.

Sadie is absent in her presence. Loretta finishes a few stiches on a gown.

LORETTA
Why don't you take off that robe and try this on?

SADIE
No.

LORETTA
I need to check the hem.

SADIE
Can't you see I'm sittin here? I'm not movin.

LORETTA
Sadie doesn't sit in a chair. She gets up and she puts her fuckin gown on.

SADIE

I said no. Why don't you go somewhere?

LORETTA

You can't do this.
We don't break.

SADIE

Look, we might not break but sometimes we fall apart. Every diva bitch falls apart sometimes. That's what makes a diva a diva.

LORETTA

Okay, but you done fell apart and now you gotta get it together, cause you got to perform tonight.

SADIE

I ain't goin back to that raggedy ass club.
I'm not puttin on a show. Don't you get it?

LORETTA

No, I don't get it.

SADIE

Well, I don't have it in me to explain it to you.

LORETTA

You'll feel better if you let me fix your wig.

SADIE

Will you get out of here.
Leave my damn wig alone.

LORETTA

It's all messed up.

SADIE

You stop to think, maybe I like it like that?
You stop to think, maybe that's the expression of who I am right now?
Maybe I'm butch queen first time in drags at a ball. Can't put the wig on right. Got the eyeliner all crooked. Got paddin in the bra, but the titties don't match.
Maybe I'm startin over, you ever stop to think that?

LORETTA

Fine.

SADIE

Fine.

Silence.

LORETTA

I don't know what kinda life you think you're startin if this is how it begins, but okay.

SADIE

Excuse me?

I think you need to stop, and take a look at your own damn self.

I started at the bottom, no less a mess than what you see before you. I made somethin. I thought I was achievin somethin here. I was wrong. Now I gotta start from scratch. So don't start thinkin you got some wisdom to pass down. You got your own shit to deal with and I'm through with it.

LORETTA

You sayin your through with me?

SADIE

I'm sayin I need some peace and quiet-Yes! I'm sayin I need you to go.

LORETTA

For real? You're kickin me out?

SADIE

Sometime a fresh start means a clean break. I need all of you out. Out.

Loretta, a moment. She takes a slow walk off.

SADIE

How a diva bitch falls apart.

It isn't pretty, honey. No. It's all things ugly.

There is a phrase. A phrase about a woman scorned. Well, let me tell you right now. A woman scorned has nothin on a mother worn. A worn out mother. With her saggin titties, all stretched, restretched and sucked dry of milk.

When a diva bitch falls apart, it is the full expression of a heart slit open. She bleeds all over everybody and everything. She does not put her wig on.

However. Underneath all that blood and caked on foundation. Every diva bitch knows that, even after her children have abandoned her, leaving her legacy to rot. Someday, something will remind her. She'll put the pieces back together.

This is how a diva bitch falls apart.

Go. Get out of here. Leave me. Just leave me! I will scream until the neighbors call the police.

Silence.

I'm goin down to the river. I'm gonna wash you off of me! I'm gonna wash all a you right off a me! I have all of you under my skin! You're under my skin!

Sadie goes down to the river. Sadie waist deep in water. She stops. Police lights. Siren. It passes by.

Faintly, we hear a voice from the other side of the wall. It gets louder. It's Tea, singing Paul Robeson's version of "Every Time I Feel The Spirit"

SADIE

Tea?

Silence. We hear Tea singing.

Tea, is that you?

Sadie leaves the water for the wall.

Tea?

Tea's voice fades in the distance.

A moment.

Sadie puts her wig on.

It's perfect.

Aaaaand they're off! Song And A Prayers comes out on the outside. Here comes Triumph not far behind New Millennium. And it is Song And A Prayer to lead the way, Sadie right there with em. New Millennium behind in fourth. And it's a break up five lengths now. A break of six to stretch winning long shots. The opening half-mile was the fastest in Derby History! 44 and 4/5 seconds! Song And A Prayer's pace is blistering down! With 4 and half furlongs left Song And A Prayers leads by a length, New Millenium in third now and Sadie in good striking distance on the inside as the field rounds the far turn, and they're surging at the top of the stretch! New Millenniums come away with the lead, 3 quarters and 109 and 1, record time here at the derby, at the top of the stretch and it is New Millenium who's pulled out in front, here comes Song And A Prayer under a heavy drive on the pilot side, New Millenium not today, one furlong left, here comes Saaaadiee, who's switch to the lead, she's pulling away! She's pulling away by 1 she's pulling away by 2 she's pulling away by 3! Sadie River! Has won! The Kentucky Derby!

Blackout. End of play.