



New Orleans Script

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N' ORLEANS

The Storyville Musical

by:

TONI MORRISON

with

DONALD MCKAYLE

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CAST

JOHNNY: Handsome trawler - mid-thirties - hardworking, but loves a good time

CALLY: Johnny's wife (nee Calla Lily) - submissive - lovely and girlish - later, transformed into a very adept woman

BEAU: Son of Johnny and Cally - 14 to 16 years old - a young musician about to discover that fact

ANA LA PREMIER: A fatally attractive madam - the first to have a high class Black house of prostitution

JESSICA FIVE: (aka MADAM FIVE, JESSIE FIVE) A powerful, mysterious eccentric "voodoo" woman who loves the number five and all its configurations

FAYE and ELISE: Cally's sisters - daily communicants - proud of their holiness and self-flagellation

SATAN: An outrageously beautiful gambler and card shark - operates a cotch house attached to, and under the protection of, La Premier's establishment - he is seductive, touchy and violent

SWEET JUSTICE: A cheerful, highspirited thief and veteran of the Spanish American War who plies his trade as though it were a divine mission to rearrange objects - does business all over New Orleans, but is most welcome in the District

CLARENCE DEAL: An excellent all around musician who plays nightly in La Premier's house - about twenty-five years old - very savvy, generous, wide spirited, at ease with himself and very clear about his music

COBALT BLUE: Cook-laundress - about 60 years old - maternal and feisty - cares for the trick babies

KNOCKOUT: (aka BELLE FLEUR) A former crib whore - recently chosen by La Premier to work in her house - seventeen - pretty, ignorant and charming.

CAST - cont'd

PROSTITUTES: Vary in age from 16 to 30 - each a distinctive "personality" from elegant to funky to sullen - all merry and seductive

GLORIA MOON (aka **MOUTH**)

LURLEEN PRICE (aka COPPERBOTTOM)

ROCHELLE LA FORTE (aka RAT)

ADELLA WESTWOOD (aka DOLLAR BILL)

PATRICIA DIAMOND (aka BAD BLOOD)

VESUVIUS

TRICK BABIES: Very young girls - eight or nine years - born to prostitutes living with La Premier - fathers unknown and unsought. These children are still playing with dolls but know no other life than the sporting one - guilelessly sexual

TRAWLERS: Friends and co-workers of Johnny - live in Algiers as Johnny does

Geneva: Friend of Cally's

TRAWLERS' WIVES: Cally's neighbors in Algiers

OTHERS: TOURIST COUPLES

POLICE

VENDORS

MUSICIANS (including a teenage spasm band, second liners, etc.)

SPORTS

ACT 1, Scene 1

New Orleans: fall of 1917. Curtain opens on sound of a horn pervading set. Lights come up on sideview of a flight of porch steps. Underneath is a teenaged boy, Beau. He is practicing his horn. The music he plays is distinctly New Orleans--traditional. As he plays other music comes in and stage is slowly lit revealing the docks which front the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico. It is just before sunrise and in this darkness the figures are lit only at their edges. No one moves. Then, along with the music, they begin to: a shake here, a step there, a gesture over there. . . building until there is a loud cry and, along with the sunrise, the shrimp TRAWLERS are seen arriving. Now everything is animated: the music is infectious, the movements festive--energetic with no mistaking that what they are doing is work. When the TRAWLERS disembark, they handle expertly and gracefully their nets and their catch. The catch is good, so the mood is joyful.

One of the trawlers is handed a banjo. He is JOHNNY, and he plays a lively tune for the crowd, some of whom dance and some of whom continue their work rhythmically. There are VENDORS, IDLERS, CHILDREN, TOURISTS, POLICE, WOMEN with baskets and MEN with carts. At the end of this performance, at the last strum of Johnny's banjo, everybody freezes. For a beat or two it is deeply still. Everyone turns in one direction. A tap, as of a walking stick, is heard. (This complicated tapping rhythm dominates the tuba sound and beat of La Premier's theme song.) There are whispers throughout the crowd of "La Premier, La Premier!", interspersed through the music and dance of LA PREMIER's entrance.

Throughout her dance the following libretto is heard, ^{sung} ~~spoken~~ by various characters in the crowd:

Lyrics ©1982 by Toni Morrison

CHILDREN:

HERE COMES THE LADY WITH THE SILVER

ON HER CANE

MY MAMA WON'T LET ME SAY HER NAME

LA PREMIER, LA PREMIER

GET ON BACK TO WHERE YOU LAY

LA PREMIER

GET ON BACK TO WHERE YOU LAY

1112
MEN:

THE FIRST COLORED MADAM IN NEW ORLEANS
WHO WITH A STREET WALKER'S TRADE BECAME

A WOMAN OF MEANS

THEY SAY HER UNDERWEAR IS SILK

THEY SAY SHE BATHES IN ASSES MILK

THEY SAY HER BED IS RED AND GOLD

THEY SAY HER HEART IS ICE-HOUSE COLD

THE FIRST NEGRO WOMAN IN THE WHOLE WIDE

SOUTH

TO UPLIFT THE RACE WITH A CLASSY PLEASURE

HOUSE.

THEY SAY HER BACK IS SMOOTH AS SILK

THEY SAY SHE SOAKS HER THIGHS IN MILK

THEY SAY HER NAVAL'S A BUTTON OF GOLD

I KNOW HER HEART IS ICE-HOUSE COLD.

WOMEN:

IS THAT DRESS SATIN?

LOOK AT THAT CANE

A NASTY WOMAN IS A TERRIBLE THING

WHAT KIND OF BIRD GROW THEM FEATHERS?

LOOK AT HER GLOVES

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL HAT

I'D KILL MYSELF BEFORE I'D LIVE LIKE THAT.

LOOK AT THE HEELS ON THEM SHOES
MONEY IN HER PURSE
DIAMONDS IN HER EARS
HER MISERABLE LIFE WILL BRING YOU TO TEARS

MEN:
LOOK AT HER LIPS
OH LORD THOSE EYES

WOMEN:
A LOW DOWN WOMAN I DO DESPISE

MEN:
LITTY BITTY WAIST
POMPADOUR HAIR

WOMEN:
A FALLEN SISTER IS A MOTHER'S DESPAIR.

CHILDREN:
LOOK AT THE LADY WITH THE SILVER ON HER
CANE

MY MAMA WON'T LET ME SAY HER NAME.

LA PREMIER, LA PREMIER

GET ON BACK TO WHERE YOU LAY.

(LA PREMIER's response to this lust, envy and outrage is an arrogant and seductive dance challenge^ging JOHNNY (to which~~he~~ he is forced to respond) that ends with her touching JOHNNY with the tip of her walking stick and then strokes the stick suggestively.)

JOHNNY: (Ignoring the stick) Well, well. Look what the canal threw up. You in a respectable neighborhood, girl. You lost or something?

LA PREMIER: Not at all. I just thought I'd take a look at what the sea got that I don't.

JOHNNY: What does the sea have that you don't?

LA PREMIER: (Suggestively.) Oh, I don't know. A fish maybe. A big handsome fish that don't mind getting caught.

JOHNNY: You can't catch no fish unless you got the right equipment. Must be something wrong with your net.

LA PREMIER: Then I came to the right place, didn't I? If my net needs fixing, who else but a trawler would know how to mend it?

JOHNNY: (Laughing.) Get on way from here. I got work to do.

LA PREMIER: What work? Shrimps all packed.

JOHNNY: You don't know nothing about day people's work, do you? I don't just trawl. If I did that, me and my family, we'd starve. I do all kinds of work: haul a little, dig a little, clean up a little--

LA PREMIER: Don't you play none?

JOHNNY: Play?

LA PREMIER: The banjo, I mean.

JOHNNY: Oh, that ain't nothing.

LA PREMIER: It is so something. A man like you shouldn't be hauling, digging and cleaning nothing. Look here. (She touches one of his hands with her stick.)

JOHNNY: What? (He jerks his hand away.)

LA PREMIER: You messing them up. A musician shouldn't mess up his hands. His hands is his instrument. I wish I had somebody to play the banjo in my place. (Using her stick like a banjo.)

JOHNNY: Picking a banjo don't feed nobody. Work pays money.

LA PREMIER: Crayfish is three cents a pound.

JOHNNY: I don't owe nobody. We make out all right.

LA PREMIER: A good musician in the District makes fifty, a hundred dollars a week.

JOHNNY: Go on way from here.

LA PREMIER: You don't believe it? Come home with me and see for yourself. I got the only house in the District where men your color are welcome. I'd pay good money for a good man. But I wouldn't want a musician, no matter how pretty he was, that didn't take care of his instrument. It's precious, you know. And you ought to take better care of it. If I was your woman, I'd make sure you took care of it. I'd rub it, clean it, pat it. Keep it in perfect working condition. So you could play with it. Know what I mean? And make us some music.

JOHNNY: I know all about you and your house. I got a house too and a wife inside it. She takes care of the things I need.

LA PREMIER: If she lets you get up in the middle of the night and go shrimping, she ain't taking care of your instrument.

JOHNNY: Hey, woman. Watch yourself.

LA PREMIER: I'd much rather watch you. I've seen you before, you know, picking strings. You're good. Real good. Come on home with me. I'd pay you anything you could spend. Don't you want to be my (pause) partner?

JOHNNY: You really are the devil. You want me to leave my wife and son and move into some nasty house with you? You as bad as they say.

LA PREMIER: Um hm. As bad as they say and as good as they say. Think about it. 200 North Basin Street. You'll recognize the house. The shutters are wide open and wild red. They don't call me LA PREMIER for nothing--I'm not just the First--I'm also the last. Remember, my shutters are wide open. (Makes a gesture of open legs.)

LA PREMIER taps off stage, but the sound of her tapping rhythm stays. JOHNNY starts to walk away, but stops to listen to her rhythm. It gets louder and louder. He begins to move to it, does a step or two, struggles to maintain his own beat, but finally surrenders to hers and exits to the original tap of La Premier's walking stick.

Scene dissolves and comes up with solo sound of Beau's musical instrument in background of the front room of Cally's house.

ACT 1, Scene 2

The front room of Cally's house. A typical shotgun lay out with a large front room which leads to a bedroom which leads into a kitchen which leads into the back yard which one can see into from the front door (which is to say that one can fire a shotgun through the front door and hit somebody out the back door). A curtainless window is open in the front room. CALLY (Calla Lily) is listless, unfocused, almost dotty with grief. She is a lovely, lithe woman in her thirties. A veil of submissive femininity and frailty hides the adult inside her that has never been allowed to encouraged to appear. She has been married since she was sixteen and finds life without her husband (Johnny) unimaginable (literally) and impossible. Now he has been gone for two weeks and she is deeply blue. This blue mood is pervasive as she goes about her chores in a desultory way. She is primarily trying to stretch some curtains on a frame stretcher. A basket of limp damp ones is at her feet and they are very much like the way she feels. The curtains keep popping away from the pins and drooping down the frame. As Calley fumbles with curtains, GENEVA, a trawler's wife, looks in window.

GENEVA Oooo. You in there, yeah? Cally? Girl, what on earth do you think you doing? What kind of curtain stretching is that? Hold it. Just hold it.

(She walks around set to front door, talking all the while.)

Beat me, Jesus, for crying out loud. Everybody on this street is crazy. Children back talking, old people *Sour*, married folks splitting like seams.

(Comes in the door and looks around)

(Shaking her head) Do *Lard*, remember me. I thought the war was in France.

CALLY: They keep falling down.

GENEVA: I guess so. Whole house is falling down. You included.

CALLY: I don't feel so good. I'm tired all the time and I ache.

GENEVA: Where you ache? Head?

(Cally nods as Geneva touches her forehead.)

GENEVA: Arms?

(Cally nods.)

GENEVA: Knees too, yeah?

(Cally nods.)

GENEVA: Then stay off them. It's your heart that has the real ache and prayin won't fix that.

CALLY: Well what am I supposed to do?

GENEVA: I told you what to do.

CALLY: I can't do that.

GENEVA: (shrugs feigning indifference.) You sure used to keep a nice house. So neat and pretty. Never thought I'd see the day you'd be stretchin curtains inside while the sun's outside. And in the parlor too. (Slyly) I saw her.

CALLY: You went there?

GENEVA: She said yes, Cally.

CALLY: I told you not to.

GENEVA: She'll see you tonight.

CALLY: But I told you--

GENEVA: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. But no. Here's the address. (Tries to hand her a slip of paper.)

CALLY: (Jumps back) Take that away from me.

GENEVA: She can do it, Cally. Have him back--on all fours.

CALLY: I don't want him on all fours.

GENEVA: Eating out of your hand.

CALLY: (repulsed) Ohh.

GENEVA: Grinning all over himself. Might even sweep up this floor.

CALLY: Geneva, would you stop!

GENEVA: He might be tired though. Have to lie down and take himself a nap first. A nice, long nap. In your bed. (Sighs.)

CALLY: I don't want a tricked man.

GENEVA: You worry me. He was tricked into leaving. He can be tricked into coming back.

CALLY: He has to want to come back.

GENEVA: (Laughing) So trick him into wanting to. She has the power, Cally. Real power, and, girl, we need all the power we can get.

(Cally turns away)

GENEVA Okay, okay, I'm gone. I have to get back anyhow. But just in case, here's the address. (Puts it on curtain stretcher.)

CALLY: I wouldn't even know what to say. I'd have to tell her-- everything.

GENEVA: No you wouldn't. Besides she knows everything. Just tell her where the ache is, yeah? (Exits out the door still talking.) Madame Five will do the rest. She'll have him back in here sweetheart before he knows what hit him. Cryin his heart out, begging for a chance to clean the floor--wash the dishes. (Pokes her head through the window) But first he's gonna want a nice long nap. In the bed. (Winks and exits.)

Cally waves her away and tries again to pin curtains on stretcher. Takes address and shoves it in her pocket. Sings WOMAN WORN ONCE

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

| | |
|--------|--|
| CALLY: | WOMAN: SLIGHTLY FRAYED |
| | WOMAN: HANDMADE |
| | GOT MY GOING-OUT-OF-BUSINESS SIGN UP |
| | BECAUSE MY MAN HAS GONE AND MADE HIS MIND UP |
| | WOMAN WOMAN |
| | WOMAN: WORN ONCE |
| | WOMAN: HARDLY USED |
| | WOMAN: LIKE NEW |
| | HE TOOK AN ADVERTISEMENT PUT IN THE PAPER |

124
"USED MERCHANDISE ON SALE" FOR

WOMAN WOMAN

WOMAN: WORN ONCE

A BIT SOILED: NEVER SPOILED

NOT YOUNG: BUT STILL RUNS

STEP THIS WAY, SIR: TERMS ARRANGED FOR

WOMAN: WORN ONCE

WOMAN: SECOND HAND

WOMAN: ON DEMAND

VACANT PROPERTY; WILL BUILD TO SUIT

THE LEASE EXPIRED; HE WON'T RENEW

WOMAN WOMAN

WOMAN: WORN ONCE

WOMAN: MARKED DOWN

WOMAN: HEART SOUND

EXAMINE CAREFULLY THIS FIRST RATE BARGAIN

BUY THESE GOODS BEFORE THE RUMMAGE SALE ENDS

WOMAN WOMAN

WOMAN: WORN ONCE

GUARANTEED: HIGHLY TRAINED

EASY TERMS; WILL TRADE

LOW DOWN PAYMENT WHEN YOU TAKE THIS

WOMAN: WORN ONCE

(At the end of her song her son, BEAU, enters through the door, breathlessly.)

BEAU: Ma. ¹Pray too much.

CALLY: Beau. You started me, baby.

BEAU: (Looking around at the room that is in disarray, then at her.) You still moping.

CALLY: No, I'm not. I'm fine, baby.

(BEAU sniffs into the air.)

CALLY: Oh! The red beans! (She runs out.)

BEAU: (Shouting after her.) Jesus, Ma. You burning everything. I used to run home to eat your cooking. Now if you don't burn the pot, you forget to light the fire under it.

(He picks up curtains from the floor and through a portion of the following scene is straightening up the house.)

BEAU: Ain't nobody dead, you know. Two weeks now and you still acting like you at a wake. Life goes on, Ma. Just because he ran off, don't mean we have to lie down and die.

CALLY: (Returning.) I'm sorry, baby. I'll make a little tomato gravy for the rice. Will that be okay?

BEAU: Some Sunday dinner--rice and gravy.

CALLY: You have to forgive me, Beau. My mind is so full.

BEAU: With what Ma? Your mind ain't full of my dinner. It ain't full of cleaning house. Look at these curtains. They ain't on your mind. You didn't even go to mass. I never knew you to miss mass.

CALLY: (rubs her knees.) I know.

BEAU: What's the matter?

CALLY: My knees hurt me.

BEAU: You pray too much.

CALLY: Maybe I do. Maybe I do.

BEAU: Never did me any good. Waste of time if you ask me . . .

CALLY: Beau!

BEAU: (Shrugs) Last time anybody answered a prayer¹ for me was when daddy forgot to wind the clock and didn't know what time I got home. Remember that?

CALLY: I remember. You were 12. He bought you that horn for your birthday. And you went off to play it with that Spasm Band.

BEAU: I put the band together that same day. First thing I knew it was way past midnight. I thought he's gonna kill me sure.

CALLY: He didn't forget the clock, Beau. He just didn't want to spoil it for you--it was your birthday. He wanted you to be happy. (She breaks down.)

(Beau looks up.)

BEAU: Ma. Come on.

CALLY: He's got to come back. I can't keep on like this: taking money from my sisters and food from the neighbors. What about next week and the week after?

BEAU: Is that all you worrying 'bout? Money? I can work. Let me out of that simple school, and I can make as much money as he ever did.

CALLY: It's not just that.

BEAU: He left us, Ma. Not just you. He left me too. We'll get along. We don't need him.

CALLY: I need him.

BEAU: No, you don't. This stuff you feel--it'll pass. I know you're lonely, Ma, but it'll pass. Just wait.

CALLY: But it's Sunday. He ought to be sitting in that chair right about now.

"It's Sunday"

Lyrics ©1982 by Toni Morrison

| | |
|--------|--|
| CALLY: | DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IT'S SUNDAY HE'D BE SITTING IN THAT CHAIR NOW |
| BEAU: | I can sit in his chair. |
| CALLY: | DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IT'S SUNDAY HE'D BE WANTING A COOL BEER NOW |
| BEAU: | I can drink his beer. |
| CALLY: | I CAN'T HELP IT IF IT'S SUNDAY A WOMAN'S HEART CAN BREAK BY MONDAY THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE DAY HE'D COME BRAID MY HAIR |

BEAU:

But I'm still here.

CALLY:

CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IT'S SUNDAY

HE'D BE STRUMMING ME A TUNE NOW

Beau:

I can play his song.

CALLY:

HOW COME HE DON'T KNOW IT'S SUNDAY

I'D BE DANCING ROUND THIS ROOM NOW

(She begins to dance.)

BEAU:

Don't dance alone.

CALLY:

I CAN'T HELP IT IF IT'S SUNDAY

A WOMAN'S HEART CAN BREAK BY MONDAY

THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE DAY

HE'D COME TAKE MY HAND

(They dance.)

CALLY:

I'M SO LONELY WHEN IT'S SUNDAY

A WOMAN'S HEART CAN BREAK BY MONDAY

THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE ONE DAY

HE'D COME TAKE MY HAND

FAYE: So we want you and Beau to move in with us.

ELISE: Pack your bags and--move in with us?

BEAU: Thanks, Aunt Faye, Aunt Elise, but we can manage. I'm going to find me some work.

FAYE: Work?

ELISE: Work?

Faye: You supposed to be going to high school.

ELISE: Don't you want to graduate from high school?

CALLY: It's all right. It's ~~really~~ really all right. I appreciate your offer, but don't worry. Johnny's coming back and everything's gonna be like it was.

FAYE: Oh Lord.

ELISE: Oh Lord.

BEAU: Oh shoot.

CALLY: He will. I know how to get him to come back.

BEAU: Stop it, Ma. Will you talk to her, Aunt Faye, she's getting ready to do something crazy.

FAYE: You buy you a pistol?

ELISE: Or a long sharp knife?

CALLY: No. No.

BEAU: Tell 'em. Tell 'em where you going tonight.

CALLY: I just can't get down on my knees no more.

(FAYE and ELISE cross themselves.)

CALLY: I lit candles.

(FAYE and ELISE cross themselves.)

CALLY: I prayed.

(FAYE and ELISE cross themselves.)

CALLY: I need a bigger, stronger power.

(FAYE and ELISE cross themselves three times.)

CALLY: I'm going to see Madam Jessica Five.

(FAYE and ELISE scream and throw up their hands to ward off the evil that comes from the sound of her name.)

(Jessica Five's music begins here.)

FAYE: Have mercy. A witch.

ELISE: Have mercy. A bitch.

FAYE: A fake.

ELISE: A snake.

FAYE: Oh God. Voodoo.

ELISE: Oh God. Hoodoo.

FAYE: Oh Lord. Satan.

ELISE: Oh Lord. Matin'

FAYE: Wild raves.

ELISE: Evil graves.

FAYE: Magic potions.

ELISE: Sexy lotions.

FAYE: Horse*s manes.

ELISE: Baby brains.

FAYE: Powers of darkness.

ELISE: Naked starkness

FAYE: Moral ruins

ELISE: Nasty doin's.

FAYE: Filth and sin there.

ELISE: (To Faye.) Have you been there?

FAYE: ~~(To Elise.)~~ Why you witch!

ELISE: (To Faye.) Oh you bitch!

FAYE: (To Elise.) You old fake!

ELISE: (To Faye.) You old snake!

FAYE and ELISE: (To each other--exiting) Have mercy, have mercy, have mercy
on you!

(Scene changes to Jessica Five's house with appropriate music.)

ACT 1, Scene 3

Jessica Five's house. Same layout as Cally's, but full of the signs and materials of the spiritual profession. CALLY sits on a stool. JESSICA FIVE sits above her on a kind of flowered throne, and after suitable dramatic gestures and pyrotechnics and the drinking of rum--which CALLY must ~~px~~ partake of as well, JESSICA FIVE speaks.

JESSICA FIVE: So, You want him back.

CALLY: Yes, ma'am, I do.

JESSICA FIVE: No substitute will do?

CALLY: Not for me, Madam Five. I have to have him. I have to.

JESSICA FIVE: You will have to bring me certain things.

CALLY: What things?

JESSICA FIVE: Depends on the Five
I might need the hair from his head.
I might need the wax from his ears.
I might even need a blind man's tears.

CALLY: Please help me. I'll bring you anything you need.
Anything. I have to have him--

JESSICA FIVE: Sssssh, I hear them.

CALLY: Who?

JESSICA FIVE: The Five. I can feel them: Wind. Water. Fire. Earth.
And the unknown Element
Consider here this poor weak child
Gather in her spirit mild
Pity her broken woman's heart
And your secrets now to me impart.

(She listens and groans.)

Get me five nail clippings
All from his left hand
Your morning water
And your wedding band.

Bring me the clothes he
Wore next to his skin
Bring me his picture
And a long hat pin.

CALLY: But he's gone, Madame Five. How can I get nail clippings and underwear and--

JESSICA FIVE: Send for them. Send somebody that loves you. Somebody you trust. And somebody who's fast on his feet.

CALLY: Beau! I'll have to send my son, Beau.

JESSICA FIVE: Then bring all those things here to me and he will be back in your bed in five days.

CALLY: Oh Madam Five, thank you. Thank you.

JESSICA FIVE: Ssssh. Just don't forget to thank the Five. The best way to thank the Five is with another five.

CALLY: I will. Oh thank you, Madam Five. (She exits).

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Jessica Five sings "A Woman Like Me"

"A Woman Like Me"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

JESSICA FIVE:

OH WHAT A FINGER BREAKER THIS LIFE CAN BE
WHAT WOULD PEOPLE DO WITHOUT A WOMAN

LIKE ME

A WOMAN LIKE ME

A WOMAN LIKE ME

AN INTELLIGENT, CLEVER WOMAN LIKE ME

FEATHERS, BEADS AND PROPERTY DEEDS

DROUGHT, FLOOD AND ANIMAL BLOOD

OH A WOMAN LIKE ME

A WOMAN LIKE ME

AN INTELLIGENT, CLEVER WOMAN LIKE ME

JESSICA FIVE:

CAT'S BALLS

RAG DOLLS

GRIS-GRIS DUST

LODESTONES

CHICKEN BONES

AND TRAIN TRACK RUST

OH WHAT A FINGER BREAKER THIS LIFE CAN BE
WHAT WOULD PEOPLE DO WITHOUT A WOMAN

LIKE ME

A WOMAN LIKE ME

A WOMAN LIKE ME

AN INTELLIGENT, CLEVER WOMAN LIKE ME

ACT I, Scene 4

home made instruments:

Beau's SPASM BAND is rehearsing. Four teenagers with ~~home~~, percussion, strings, etc. BEAU is leading them. They play a rousing tune. When the music ends they are very pleased with themselves.

BANDMEMBER 1: All right! Solid!

BANDMEMBER 2: That's it. Let's go. It's almost noon.

BEAU: Listen you all--

BANDMEMBER 1: Hurry up, Beau. Those tips ain't gonna wait.

BANDMEMBER 3: Yeah, man, hustle it. White folks crawling all over the place, pockets so heavy with change they be walking bowlegged.

BEAU: Wait. Listen. I didn't tell you before, but I can't play downtown today.

BANDMEMBER 1: What? How come?

BEAU: I gotta go do something for my mother.

BANDMEMBER 3: (teasing.) Ooooo. Beau's mama want him home.

BEAU: Quit it, man.

BANDMEMBER 3: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Come on, Beau. You bring her home the kind of money we got last Saturday, she'll forgive you.

BEAU: No, I promised. This is something more important than money.

BANDMEMBER 1: (To another member.) You know something more important than money?

BANDMEMBER 3: Yeah, more money.

BANDMEMBER 2: You the lead, Beau. We can't do nothing without you.

BEAU: You all go on. Maybe I can get back before you through.

BANDMEMBER 3: Where you going?

BEAU: I gotta go to the District.

MEMBERS 1,2&3: The District! So long. Nice knowing you, man. Yeah, come back and see us some time. Wanna leave me your horn?

BEAU: Aw quit it. What's the matter with you?

BANDMEMBER 1: Ain't nothing the matter with us, but something's sure gonna be the matter with you.

BANDMEMBER 2: Yeah. Next time we see you, you be an old man.

BEAU: I'll be back in a hour.

BANDMEMBER 1: You crazy? You go in the District, you never coming out. Crib women eat you alive, boy.

(Dream figures appear.)

(Voices of crib whores sucking their thumbs and dressed as Baby Dolls)

CRIB WOMEN: I got sugar in my bowl, little Beau.
I got honey in my bowl, little Beau.
I got cream in my bowl, little Beau
I got some peaches in my bowl, little Beau.

(They undulate toward him.)

Wanna little sugar, Beau. It's sweet.
How 'bout a little honey, Beau. It's smooth.
Try a little cream, Beau. It's thick.
Have some of my peaches, Beau. They real juicy.

BANDMEMBER 2: You be crawling on all fours.

BANDMEMBER 3: Howling like a dog.

BANDMEMBER 1: Slobbering at the mouth.

BANDMEMBER 2: Grunting like a hog.

BANDMEMBER 1: People who go in there don't come back out. And if they do, they never the same again.

BANDMEMBER 2: They got crazy juice and funny cigarettes and they give you dream powder.

(Dream pusher forces Beau to inhale drug)

BANDMEMBER 3: They got men in there shoot you cause they don't like the color of your tie. ~~xxxxxxx~~

BANDMEMBER 1: Or the way your shoes squeak.

(Dream man shoots another. Police take away corpse.)

(Bandmembers laugh and exit.)

BANDMEMBER 2: They got ~~xxx~~ your daddy and now they gonna keep you.

BANDMEMBER 1: Melt you like butter on a hot skillet.

BANDMEMBER 3: Truss you like a chicken.

BANDMEMBER 1: Split you so wide open you think you a twin.

BEAU: Get on out of here. Nobody gonna mess with me. I know
how to take care of myself. You hear? You hear me?

VOICES OF PROSTITUTES: We hear you.

(Scene changes. Lights, backdrop etc. PROSTITUTES appear surreally
seductive and each one comes forward to sing her own publicity.)

"Gloria Moon"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

GLORIA MOON:

MY TABLE'S ALL LAID

MY PUDDING'S ALL MADE

YOU'LL SHINE

WHEN YOU DINE WITH MISS MOON

MY MENU'S COMPLETE

MY LIQUOR IS SWEET

JUST BRING YOUR CUP

SO YOU CAN SUP FROM MY SPOON

WHEN YOU DINE WITH MISS MOON

MISS GLORIA MOON

"Lurleen Price"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

1.4:4

LURLEEN PRICE:

NOTHING'S QUITE LIKE A LITTLE CLASSY VICE
IN THE COMPANY OF A GIRL THIS NICE
WHEN YOU ASK FOR A CRUMB, I GIVE YOU A SLICE
WHAT THEY DO ONCE, I DO TWICE
IF YOU COME UP WITH LURLEEN'S PRICE

"Rochelle La Fort"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

ROCHELLE LA FORT:

I ONCE HELD COURT
IN OLD NEWPORT
IN OLD NEWPORT
I'M JUST THE RIGHT SORT
FOR A LITTLE NIGHT SPORT
A LITTLE SHADY
BUT STILL A LADY
TAKE ME
MAKE ME
I'LL EVEN LET YOU SAVE ME
PROVIDED YOU WILL PAY ME
TO BE ROCHELLE LA 1a 1a FORT
FROM OLD NEWPORT

"Patricia Diamond"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

PATRICIA DIAMOND:

I'M PATRICIA DIAMOND
AND I'M A SHY ONE
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN FIND ONE
ONE LIKE ME, GO AHEAD AND TRY ONE
YOU'LL COME BACK TO BUY ONE
ONE MINUTE FROM ME THE SHY ONE
YOU'LL COME BACK TO BUY ONE HOT
HOT MINUTE WITH ME

"Adella Westwood"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

ADELLA WESTWOOD:

Miss Adella
I'M MISS ADELLA WESTWOOD
GENTS ALL SAY I'M VERY GOOD
I'D BE BETTER IF I COULD
FIND A MAN WHO THINKS I SHOULD
HAVE A CHANCE TO SHOW
SHOW WHAT I CAN DO
TO MAKE HIM LOVE WHAT HE DON'T WANT TO

1.4.6

"Vesuvius"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

VESUVIUS:

THEY CALL ME VESUVIUS

I GOT LAVA ENOUGH FOR THE TWO OF US

MY VOLCANO NEVER COOLS

IN MY OVEN AIN'T NO RULES

I'LL COOK A LITTLE STEW FOR YOU

THERE AIN'T NOTHING I WON'T DO FOR YOU

WHEN MY DAMPER'S UP

I GOT A HEALING TOUCH

I DON'T USE MY GOOFY DUST

COME ON AND COOK WITH VESUVIUS

AND I GOT LAVA ENOUGH FOR THE TWO OF US

(They all sing MY HOUSE as they try to seduce BEAU who struggles mightily against them.)

"My House"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

ALL:

DADDY DO, DADDY DO, DADDY DO, DADDY DO

COME TO MY HOUSE

JUST KNOCK ON THE DOOR

YOU NEVER GONNA WANT TO GO HOME NO MORE

COME TO MY PLACE

KICK DOWN THE DOOR

I'LL HAVE YOU GRINNING BEFORE THE KNOB

HITS THE FLOOR

ALL:

I'LL HOLD YOU
ENFOLD YOU
TAKE YOU IN MY ARMS
I'LL NURSE YOU
IMMERSE YOU
SHOW YOU ALL MY CHARMS
SEDUCE YOU
REDUCE YOU
TIE YOU UP IN KNOTS
MANIPULATE YOU
COPULATE YOU
PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS
COME TO MY HOUSE
PULL DOWN THE SHADE
TAKE YOUR SHOES OFF, BABY, YOU GOT IT MADE
GET IN MY BED
THROW AWAY THE KEY
YOU AIN'T GONNA GET AWAY FROM ME

(Beau struggles for mastery, escape and loses both in his dream.)



ACT ONE, Scene 5

Bedroom of ANA LA PREMIER. JOHNNY is on her big brass bed. To the music of "Petite Fleur" they do an intimate dance which consists of her trying to get dressed as he tries to hinder her by undoing what she has done. Finally she has everything on but one shoe, which he holds away from her.

ANA: Give it to me.

JOHNNY: Come get it.

ANA: You know I got to have it.

JOHNNY: Can't wait?

ANA: It's getting late, Johnny, I need it.

JOHNNY: You got everything you need.

ANA: Put it on me--oo.

JOHNNY: Hurt?

ANA: Mmm. Feels good.

JOHNNY: I can't find the hole.

ANA: There it is.

JOHNNY: I know, but I can't get it in.

ANA: Pull the tongue out. All the way out.

JOHNNY: Now what?

ANA: Now push it (back) in.

JOHNNY: It's all the way in.

ANA: Yes. I can tell.

JOHNNY: How's it feel?

ANA: Feels like what it was made for.

(He reaches for her. She dodges him.)

JOHNNY: Come back quick.

ANA: My walking stick.

JOHNNY: Don't stay.

ANA: I may.

JOHNNY: I'll come get you.

ANA: You won't have to.

(She exits with tapping stick)
Lights out.

LA FEMME: (To the Flashy girl.) There you are. Good God, what kind of get-up is that, child? If you're going to work for us you have to take that mess off your face. (Stripes.) And the dress, and those shoes. This is a house, darling, not a crib. Now? Silk wall paper, velvet sofas, chandeliers all the way from New York. The you who come here have time as well as money to spend. (She is rearranging her, rearranging her clothes to nearly underwear and a robe.) They don't want a woman to look like what she is. They want dolls, ladies, school girls, none if they can get 'em. You have to look delicious, not eaten. Now then and meet my girls. If you have any questions questions they'll help you. Girls! Girls! Let me introduce you to Knockout, who also will be known as Mr. Let us think. Belle Fleur.

(They each greet Knockout according to the style of each one's personality.)

Knockout, this is Miss Thing, whom we advertise as Gloria Moon. Superbottle, known as Larleen Price; that or Rochelle La Porte; Dollar Bill called Adella Greenwood and Red Blood otherwise Patricia Diamond; and the famous Vesuvius.

Knockout: (to Vesuvius.) Now come you don't have two names?

VESUVIUS: I play one game, I got one name.

(Laughs.)

DOLLAR BILL: Ask her what game it is.

VESUVIUS: You forgot how to stick your mouth when it's empty?

ANA: Cut that out. I'm trying to explain to this child about her class; you all are and you're making me out a liar. (To Knockout.) Don't get them any mind. They're showing off for you. (Continues rearranging her.)

ACT I, Scene 6

Ana La Premier's parlor. It is late afternoon and everyone is getting ready for the evening. The place is bustling with TRADESPEOPLE, PROSTITUTES in dishabille, a BABY is crying, a ~~gxxx~~ fight or two breaks out between the girls, the TRICK BABIES are underfoot, and the COOK-LAUNDRESS is carrying towels and grumbling. Through it all LA PREMIER is managerial, serene. And CLARENCE DEAL, the musician, provides the music and an easy masculine touch.

The scene may open with music like the "Twelfth Street Rag," and the movement of the people prior to dialogue might be like that of an early silent movie: jerky, fast. One young GIRL, in very cheap and flashy clothes, stands apart. LA PREMIER enters.

LA PREMIER: (To the flashy girl.) There you are. Good God. What kind of get-up is that, child? If you're going to work for me you have to take that mess off your face. (Wipes.) And ~~tht~~ dress, and those shoes. This is a house, darling, not a crib. See? Silk wall paper, velvet sofas, chandeliers all the ~~a~~ way from New York. The men who come here have time as well as money to spend. (She is undressing her, rearranging her clothes to mostly underwear and a robe.) They don't want a woman to look like ~~wht~~ what she is. They want dolls, ladies, school girls, nuns if they can get 'em. You have to look delicious, not eaten. Now come and meet my girls. If you have any ~~quaskinx~~ questions they'll help you. Girls! Girls! Let me introduce you to Knockout, who also will be known as ah, let me think. Belle Fleur.

(They each greet Knockout according to the style of each one's personality.)

Knockout, this is Miss Thing, whom we advertise as Gloria Moon. Copperbottom, known as Lurleen Price; Rat or Rochelle La Forte; Dollar Bill called Adella Westwood and Bad Blood otherwise Patricia Diamond; and the famous Vesuvius.

Knockout: (to Vesuvius.) How come you don't have two names?

VESUVIUS: I play one game, I got one name.

(Laughter.)

DOLLAR BILL: Ask her what game it is.

VESUVIUS: You g forgot how to close your mouth when it's empty?

ANA: Cut that out. I'm trying to explain to this child about how classy you all are and you're making me out a liar. (To Knockout) Don't pay them any mind. They're showing off for you. (Finishes rearranging her.)

KNOCKOUT: Now what do I do?

LA PREMIER: Now you take a basin and water up to your room. Cobalt! Cobalt! Bring her fresh towels.

(COBALT BLUE, the cook-laundress stops what she is doing to ~~gmk~~ go get towels.)

LA PREMIER: A fresh towel for each trick, Knockout, remember that. Now sprinkle a little potash--just a few drops in the water and throw the water out as soon as you finish, so your customer can see you pour fresh water for him. You've been working a crib, so I know you're quick. But here, fifteen minutes is the limit. The absolute limit. If he wants more he pays more. And if he gives you any lip--call me. And keep a little lye under the bed just in case!

KNOCKOUT: Lye? What kinds of mens come here?

LA PREMIER: The kind that has five dollars. You can read his money but not his mind.

RAT: Especially those white college boys, and look out for them Nordic Negroes too.

BAD BLOOD: And the preachers and the farmers, and the undertakers and the police.

DOLLAR BILL: What's the matter with the police? All they do is talk all the time.

BAD BLOOD: But they want to talk with their mouth full.

RAT: The easiest ones don't come through that door (pointing to the front door). They come from that door (pointing to Satan's Hole).

KNOCKOUT: What's in there?

LA PREMIER: That's Satan's Hole. You'll meet him soon enough. Satan's the man who runs the games in here. Cotch, craps, mostly. He sells everybhhing but what you sell.

VESUVIUS: But look out or he'll sell that too.

KNOCKOUT: Why they call him Satan?

COPPERBOTTOM: Cause he's so pretty he looks like the devil.

(CLARENCE DEAL enters.)

KNOCKOUT: Who's that?

LA PREMIER: That's Clarence Deal, the Professor. The best piano man and all around musician in town. If he ever leaves me, I might have to close my doors. How are you, Clarence?

CLARENCE: Hello Ana (They kiss.) Good evening, you gorgeous evening ladies. Want me to make it easy for you? Greasy for you with some pretty noise for the boys? 'He sits down at the piano and plays over the keys.)

(COPPERBOTTOM comes over to the piano.)

CLARENCE: What you want, Copperbottom? A little shuffle? (plays and sings.) A little syncopated melody? (Plays and sings.) What about a good old cakewalk? (Plays and sings.)

KNOCKOUT: What about a little blues?

CLARENCE: Blues? Can't play no blues in here. Customers don't want to be blue, they want to be red hot! (Plays and sings.)

LA PREMIER: Mouth, you have to share you room with Knockout. Bad Blood, you show her how to work the string.

BAD BLOOD: Okay (yawning) Come on, Sweetheart. (Showing her the knots, etc.) I don't know why they love it so, but they do.

(WINE ~~XXXXX~~ SELLER enters with a barrel over his shoulder.)

LA PREMIER: Who told you you could come in the front door?

WINE SELLER: I can't get my wagon in no courtyard.

LA PREMIER: Bring it to the back or leave it in the street. Only my creditors come in the front. My debtors go to the back.

(He goes back out.)

LA PREMIER: What's the commotion?

(The TRICK BABIES pull at her skirt.)

LA PREMIER: What do you all want?

A TRICK BABY: ~~Mama said xxxx~~ Mama said you was going to auction us.

A TRICK BABY: Yeah, you promised!

LA PREMIER: Not yet, sweetheart. Soon. Now go play in the kitchen.

A TRICK BABY: Cobalt say not to.

LA PREMIER: Well go on out ~~to~~ in the courtyard for a while.

(COBALT BLUE comes in with a FISHMONGER.)

COBALT BLUE: He trying to give me some day old fish.

FISHMONGER: I caught that fish today.

LA PREMIER: (Smelling the fish.) Well they died yesterday. Get out the way.

(SATAN comes through the room holding a knife around the throat of a GAMBLER. He ~~x~~ walks him through and throws him out of the door. No one pays any ~~xxx~~ attention (except KNOCKOUT). On the way back ~~thxg~~ through, he pauses to look in the mirror and fix his hair, tie, adjust cuffs, etc. Then takes out his fingernail and exits filing his nails.)

LA PREMIER: Dollar Bill, put more water in your drink. He's supposed to get drunk; you supposed to stay sober, all right? Blood, those stockings don't match each ~~xxx~~ other.

BAD BLOOD: I can't find a match. Bill stole my new ones.

DOLLAR BILL: She a lying whore. Ret stole 'em.

BAD BLOOD: You another!

(DOLLAR BILL slaps BAD BLOOD. BAD BLOOD pushes DOLLAR BILL.)

TRICK BABY 1: She hit my Mama!

Trick BABY 2: She pushed my Mama!

LA PREMIER: Stop it! (Uses her walking stick to get attention and to separate the girls.) Blood, here's six dollars. Get another pair. Bill, put your fingers to better use.

(SWEET JUSTICE comes in through the door with an armful of clothes.)

GIRLS: (Running toward him.) Hey Sweet! Sweet! (They shriek with delight.)

(He shows his wares and collects their money which they pull from various places on their person.)

GIRLS: Oh, Sweet Justice, we sure love you!

SWEET JUSTICE sings "Sweet Justice."

1.6-5

"Sweet Justice"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

SWEET JUSTICE:

EVERYBODY LOVES JUSTICE, SWEET JUSTICE

BUT MERCY IS WHAT THEY NEED

MERCY JUSTICE MERCY JUSTICE

A REDNECK DROPPED ME TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA
TO FIND HIM SOME PEARLS IN THE SAND

HE MADE ME DIVE WHILE HE STOOD ON THE DECK
RUBBING HIS GREEDY HANDS

OH I FOUND HIM SOME REAL NICE PEARLS ALL RIGHT
ALL LAID OUT IN A ROW

I POINTED OUT JUST WHERE THEY WERE

SO HE'D KNOW WHERE TO GO

HE JUMPED IN THE WATER, I JUMPED OUT

SO I WOULDN'T HAVE TO SEE (THE SORROWFUL

LOOK ON HIS FACE

THOSE PEARLS WERE A KILLER SHARK'S TEETH

HE HOLLARED, "JUSTICE, SWEET JUSTICE"

BUT MERCY WAS WHAT HE NEED

EVERYBODY LOVES JUSTICE SWEET JUSTICE

BUT MERCY IS WHAT THEY NEED

I JOINED MY BUDDIES IN THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

SWEET JUSTICE:

AND CLIMBED UP SAN JUAN HILL

TEDDY SAID "BOYS RIGHT OVER THE TOP IS

A MIGHTY LOT OF PEONS TO KILL

SO LOOK ALIVE BOYS, AIM YOUR SHOT, LET'S

SHOW EM WHAT WE CAN DO

I WANT EVERY MAN TO LOOK ALIVE UNTIL THE

BATTLE IS THROUGH"

I LISTENED REAL CLOSE TO WHAT HE SAID

AND IT SOUNDED PRETTY GOOD TO ME

I TOOK MY FEET BACK DOWN THAT HILL

LIKE A CONVICT JUST LET FREE

WHEN THE SMOKE DIED DOWN, AND THE MOON

CAME UP

THAT "LOOK ALIVE" MAN WAS ME

TEDDY HOLLERED, "JUSTICE, COME BACK HERE,

JUSTICE"

BUT MERCY IS WHAT I NEED

EVERYBODY LOVES JUSTICE, SWEET JUSTICE

BUT MERCY IS WHAT THEY NEED--MERCY!

MY WOMAN TOOK A SHINE TO MY BEST FRIEND

AND THREW HER FEMALE NET

PUT A RED SILK RIBBON IN HER HAIR

AND PERFUME ALL OVER HER NECK

SWEET JUSTICE:

SHE TIPPED ON OUT SMELLING LIKE A CAKE

AND DIDN'T COME BACK TIL DAWN

SHE SAID, "OH LORD, WHAT'S GOING ON

WHAT'S THAT BEHIND YOUR BACK"

I SAID, "I LOVE TO SMELL THAT PERFUME

SO I'M GONNA CUT IT RIGHT OFF YOUR NECK"

SHE HOLLERED, "JUSTICE DON'T GIMME NO

JUSTICE

MERCY IS WHAT I NEED"

SWEET JUSTICE

MERCY

JUSTICE

MERCY

JUSTICE

I RISK MY LIFE ALL OVER THIS TOWN

TO STEAL THESE PRETTY THINGS

BRACELETS AND DRESSES AND OPERA HOSE

RIBBONS AND DIAMOND RINGS

I GOT WATCHES AND SHAWLS AND BLOOMERS FOR ALL

SHOES AND SATIN CHEMISE

YOU HAGGLE, YOU FUSS, YOU CHEAT ALTHOUGH

YOU KNOW I'M AN HONEST THIEF

I LIKE TO GET KILLED GETTING THESE THINGS

MY PROFESSION IS A DANGEROUS ONE

BUT WHEN AT LAST YOU MADE YOUR CHOICE AND

DRESSED FROM TOE TO CHIN

1.6.8

SWEET JUSTICE:

YOU CLIMB THOSE ^ASTIRS, GO TO WORK,

AND TAKE EM ALL OFF AGAIN

AND YOU CALL THAT JUSTICE, SWEET,

SWEET JUSTICE

BUT MERCY--

I'M TALKING ABOUT MERCY

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT KIND OF MERCY

WHEN NO ONE CAN HELP YOU

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

DOWN ON YOUR KNEES

I MEAN WHAT I SAY

WHEN I SAY

MERCY IS WHAT I NEED

EVERYBODY LOVES JUSTICE

GIRLS: (Pulling on an item of clothing.)

MOUTH: He said that was for me.

RAT: I don't care what he said.

COPPERBOTTOM: She lying. I heard him.

LA PREMIER: Girls! Give me that!

(A fight breaks out. The clock strikes six o'clock. LA PREMIER waves her walking stick and in a flash the house is ready for business--with CLARENCE DEAL holding forth.)

[N.B. The calm should reign for a moment otherwise scene is too busy too long.]

(There is a knock at the door. LA PREMIER opens it. It is BEAU.)

VESUVIUS: Well, well looka here.

BILL: Hi Sweetie.

RAT: Ain't he cute?

COPPERBOTTOM: Wanna dance?

LA PREMIER: What's your name, Sugar?

BEAU: My name's Beau.

LA PREMIER: You sure are.

BEAU: I came here to see my father.

LA PREMIER: ~~Yauxwhetx~~ Your what? You mean--

(JOHNNY enters. He is beautifully dressed now.)

LA PREMIER: Johnny, you have a visitor.

JOHNNY: Beau!
(To LA PREMIER) What you let him in here for?

LA PREMIER: My doors don't have no locks.

JOHNNY: Well get some.

BEAU: I have to talk to you, Daddy. In private.

1.6:11

LA PREMIER: You all hush.

CLARENCE: Come on, Knockout. Tell me what would you do with your new little engine.

KNOCKOUT: I quit all this mess.

CLARENCE: No, you wouldn't. You'd do more of the same.

KNOCKOUT: Uh uh

(Clarence sings) "More ~~same~~ of the Same"

"More of the Same"

Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

CLARENCE:

IF YOU HAD IT LIKE YOU WANTED IT

WHAT WOULD IT BE?

IF YOU COULD DO ANYTHING THAT YOU WANTED TO

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

IF YOU COULD HAVE WHAT YOU SAW IN A CRYSTAL

BALL

WHAT WOULD YOU SEE?

IF YOU COULD GET ONE WITH^S FROM A WISHING WELL

WHAT WOULD IT BE?

MISS THING:

FIND ME A NICE OLD GENTLEMAN EAGER TO

GIVE ME HIS NAME

AND AFTER WE GET MARRIED, DISH HIM UP

MORE OF THE SAME

COPPERBOTTOM:

GO TO NEW YORK CITY, DANCE MY WAY TO FAME

AND WHEN THE SHOW IS OVER, SHIMMY ROUND

MORE OF THE SAME

GIRLS:

IF I COULD HAVE IT
IF I COULD DO IT
IF I COULD SEE IT
IF I COULD GET IT
WHAT WOULD IT BE, OH, OH, OH
I DON'T HAVE NO HESITATION

LORD I GOT ANTICIPATION

IF I COULD HAVE IT
IF I COULD DO IT
IF I COULD SEE IT
IF I COULD GET IT
IF I HAD IT OH

THAT'S WHAT IT WOULD BE

RAT:

GET MY OLD MAN OUT OF JAIL
SAY "JUDGE, I'VE TO BLAME"
TUCK HIM 'NEATH MY SHEETS
SENTENCE HIM TO MORE OF THE SAME

BAD BLOOD:

BUY MYSELF AN ERMINE COAT, PROTECT ME FROM
THE RAIN
WHEN THE SUN COMES OUT, SHINE ON MORE OF
THE SAME

DOLLAR BILL:

GET ME A CLAW FOOT, WHITE BATHTUB, AND
A CASE OF GOOD CHAMPAGNE
STRIP TO THE SKIN, SINK ON IN AND DREAM
ABOUT MORE OF THE SAME

VESUVIUS

BUY A YELLOW DEU^SENBERG, FASTER THAN A

TRAIN

PUT MY BABY IN THE RUMBLE SEAT AND RUMBLE

UP MORE OF THE SAME

GIRLS:

WHEN I HAVE IT

WHEN I DO IT

WHEN I SEE IT

WHEN I GET IT

IT WILL BE OH, OH, OH

CAN'T YOU FEEL THE SWEET SENSATION

DON'T FORGET MY REPUTATION

I'M GONNA HAVE IT

I'M GONNA DO IT

I'M GONNA SEE IT

I'M GONNA GET IT

WHEN I GET IT

THAT'S WHAT IT WILL BE

MORE OF THE SAME

(Exit laughing. All but Knockout and Clarence)

CLARENCE:

What's the matter honey?

KNOCKOUT:

Oh I don't know.

(Knockout with Clarence sings "First.")

"First"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

KNOCKOUT WITH CLARENCE:

FIRST, I'D TRY LOVE
ALTHOUGH I'VE NEVER HEARD THE WORD
REFERRED TO
WHISPERED TO
ME
FIRST, I'D TRY LOVE
SO WHEN WINTER COMES
AND SUNDOWN BECOMES MY TIME OF DAY
IF ANYBODY ASKS
I CAN SAY, I CAN SAY
FIRST, I TRIED LOVE

act I, Scene 7

La Premier's bedroom

Johnny: Here. Take this. That's fifty dollars there and if you need some more--

Beau: That's not what I came all the way over here for.

Johnny (Quietly) I know you didn't. (Walks to French windows which look out on the courtyard)

[While his back is turned, Beau opens a bureau drawer]

Johnny (Turning around) Look, Beau, I can't explain it. I just can't explain it to you Maybe when you're older you'll understand.

Beau: Suppose I don't get no older.

Johnny: Don't talk crazy.

Beau I mean it. Talk to me like I was going to die tomorrow. What would you say to me now, if you knew this way my last day?

Johnny I'd tell you that--that I (stops) that I ain't a bad man. And that your mother is

] a good woman.

Beau: Uh huh.

Johnny: Look, Beau, I got married when I was sixteen Your mother too. Life just came down on me

Every ni

Every nickel took a gallon of sweat to get, and still it wasn't enough. I never saw nothing of this life. Nothing. I never had no--fun. .

Beau: You call this fun?

Johnny: Well, sometimes maybe not, but look.
 (Shows his shirt) Silk! And looka here
 (Opens a closet It's full of suits etc.)
 Ever see anything like that? (Opens a drawer
 than pulls out several pairs of shoes.)

Beau: No. I guess not (He steals an undergarment)

Johnny: Now I'm going to keep on taking care of you
 and your mama. Don't think I ain't. I mean
 to send you all something long before now, but
 I didn't know what the weather was like back
 home.

Beau: Weather's fine back home. Keep your silk
 shirts, hear. And your spats. We don't
 need nothing from you. I just came cause
 Ma asked me to look in on you and see
] how you was doing. Now I can tell her you doing fine.
 Pimping agress with you.

Johnny: Don't talk to me like that

Beau: Oh, sorry, Daddy . I forgot where I was.

Johnny: You get out of my face, and don't never
 let me catch you back inhere.

Beau: Be a pleasure.

Johnny: I don't have to explain nothing to you, YOU
 hear?

[Satan knocks on the door, opens it and leans there listening
 for a moment, clipping his nails.]

Satan: Hey, Johnny. I got a heavy game starting.
 You in or you not in?

Johnny: I'm in. I'm in. (To Beau) You remember what
 I said now. I'll break your back if I catch
 you in here again.

Satan: (To Beau) See you later.
Beau: No you won't.
Satan: (Turning back to Beau) Satan sees everybody later.
Or sooner. (Pulls out his switchblade. Beau jumps
back when he sees it)
Satan: Don't be scared.
[Satan sings "Satan's Song"]

"Satan's Song"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------------|
| SATAN: | SATAN AIN'T VILE |
| | I JUST GOT STYLE |
| | SATAN AIN'T ROUGH |
| | I JUST CUT MY STUFF |
| | SATAN AIN'T MEAN |
| | I JUST SO CLEAN |
| | ASK ANY FOOL IF SATAN'S CRUEL |
| | AND YOU'LL HEAR HIM SAY |
| | SATAN GETS HIS WAY |
| | FROM SIDEWALK TRAMPS |
| | TO SOCIETY VAMPS |
| | SATAN GETS HIS WAY |
| | SATAN GETS HIS WAY |
| | ASK THE CHUMPS WHO ARE BREATHING DIRT |

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SATAN:

CAUSE I GOT MY FEELINGS HURT

IF SATAN GETS HIS WAY

OH SATAN GETS HIS WAY

ASK THE PIMPS LOCKED IN JAIL

ASK THE WOMEN OUT ON BAIL

IF SATAN GOT HIS WAY

OH YEAH, SATAN GETS HIS WAY.

MY MOTHER NEVER UNDERSTOOD MY SMILE

MY MOTHER NEVER 'PRECIATED MY STYLE

I TOLD HER SHE HURT ME

ASKING HER BABY BOY NOT TO ENJOY HIS TOY

I GOT A TASTE FOR THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE

BUT I CAN GET WILD IF YOU MESS WITH

MY STYLE

SATAN SHO LIKES HIS STYLE!

Satan exits after his song and dance. Beau starts to leave, snaps his fingers and remembers. Turns around and collects the fingernails that Satan has dropped. He carefully places them in his pocket and is about to leave again when he hears, coming through the door that Satan has left open, music that Clarence Deal is playing. "Sweet Substitute". The music is so beautiful and so unlike any he has heard before that he is transfixed. The music begins to manipulate him in, out and around the doorframe, very much like the movements he experienced with the women he had fantasized. He is utterly seduced, utterly while Clarence plays on in the spotlight.

ACT I, Scene 8

The courtyard.

COBALT BLUE:

(Putting the CHILDREN to work on the peas.)
All I got to do, and now I got to watch
you all too. You getting too big to put
down and too little to stay up.

A TRICK BABY:

How come they never let us stay for the
party?

COBALT BLUE:

Calm yourself. Pretty soon you'll be the
party.

A TRICK BABY:

how soon is soon?

COBALT BLUE:

What's the matter with you all? You can't
wait, can you?

A TRICK BABY:

I can do all that stuff the grown-up girls
do.

COBALT BLUE:

Grown-ups? Girl, your mama ain't much
older'n you are.

A TRICK BABY:

How old is my daddy?

COBALT BLUE:

Your guess is as good as mine.

A TRICK BABY:

Guess, Cobalt, guess!

COBALT BLUE:

Oh, somewhere between fifteen and eighty.
A tall short white black man in a sailor
suit who come from a poor rich family that
lived in Texas and Baton Rouge selling in-
surance on horseback in the navy.

A TRICK BABY:

Did he like my mama?

COBALT BLUE:

Did he like her? Oh, baby, he loved her and ~~oh~~,
she loved him. Nothing in this world could
separate 'em, for, good Lord, a whole twenty
minutes, maybe more!

A TRICK BABY:

How come he leave her?

COBALT BLUE:

That's the way it is, darling. That's al-
ways the way it is.

TRICK BABY:

Can't you follow where he go?

COBALT BLUE:

You poor little ignorant things. If they ever do close down the District like they keep sayin' I suspect it'll be mercy in disguise. Much as it's going to hurt me and everybody else in here makin' good money for a change, it might do you all a favor.

TRICK BABY:

Are they closing down our house?

COBALT BLUE:

There's some talk ~~like always~~. Not just this house, baby, the whole neighborhood.

TRICK BABY:

How come?

COBALT BLUE:

Beats me. Some old white man named Storey figured out a way to keep sportin' people -- that's them -- away from other people.

UND

TRICK BABY:

What other people?

COBALT BLUE:

(Laughs.) North Basin and Iberville ain't the whole world darlin'. There's a great big city out there. It's got gardens and levees and schoolhouses and markets. Talk about pretty! You'll see it maybe one of these days. Nothing but flowers.

A TRICK BABY:

We got flowers. (Runs to one of the potted plants in the courtyard.)

COBALT BLUE:

~~That's true.~~ ^{Yeah,} We do. But when I get to thinking in a memory kind of way it seems like flowers were prettier and smelled better to me when I was a girl. But I guess every old woman sitting around shelling peas thinks things was prettier when they was young. But, oh my Lord, you should have seen it when I was a girl. Way back, I'm talking about 1850. That really was something. And before that, when my mama was a girl. I used to hear her talk about New Orleans then. Now that was way, way back. 1792. You know what she told me? When the river was high you could look up and see tall white ships sailing in the sky. The Mississippi River is higher than the ground down here, so if you stood in a certain place at evening, you could see them

OW

SALT BLUE:

floating -- just like clouds. And Indians swarmed all over the levee selling herbs and pots and cloths. And plantation owners in white suits came in carriages to buy dresses and diamonds for their wives. English wasn't even a little language then. If you walked around you'd hear Spanish, Portuguese, German, Italian and French mostly of course. But almost no English. She say Africans walked all over this town in their own clothes. Their own clothes -- from Africa. They was slaves from Santo Domingo and Africa, but they didn't wear those old missionary dresses and pants. And they didn't wear no tied up shoes. Oh no. They had robes in Sapphire blue and green and yellow the color of butter. And not only did they wear their own clothes, they spoke their own language and used their own true names. You know there were places in the city and right outside of it where no white man could set foot and expect to come out alive. African places. And sometimes at night or on Sunday -- that was the free day for slaves -- they would go into the very middle of town, to a big square and they'd have drums and flutes and rattling things. And right there under a sky full of stars they'd dance and dance and dance. (She drifts off in memory.)

HUND

TRICK BABY:

We got dancing.

SALT BLUE:

That stuff? Shoot. I mean real dancing. Where whole lines of men and whole lines of women would talk to the ground with their feet. People come from all over just to see. They still dance there and people still come to see them, but the way she told it, it was better then. Just like I'm telling you it was better when I was little. Flowers. Nothing but flowers, and ~~big white houses~~ and the cabins, where we lived -- well nothing much to them, I can tell you, but everywhere we looked -- flowers and mimosa trees and birds like you can't find nowhere anymore.

-DW

TRICK BABY:

What kind of house you all have?

SALT BLUE:

One room. Sitting up on some bricks. Holes in the floor so when we scrubbed we could just pour the water right through to the

1.8.4

"New Orleans"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

COBALT: NEW ORLEANS, NEW ORLEANS
YOU'RE THE MUSIC SONGS PICK TO SING
THE FLOWERS WILD ROSES CHOOSE TO BREATHE
YOU'RE THE TIDES, RIVERS WANT TO SWIM
THE LIGHT, THAT LIGHT ITSELF WANTS TO SEE
AND WHEN THE MOON GOT TIRED OF GOING ROUND AND ROUND
AND ROUND
IT DREAMED UP NEW ORLEANS
NEW ORLEANS, NEW ORLEANS
YOU'RE THE FEELING LOVE WANTS TO FEEL
THE FIRE FLAMES WANT TO BURN
YOU'RE THE BREEZE THE WIND WANTS TO RIDE
THE COLOR LEAVES WANT TO TURN
AND WHEN PROUD BIRDS OF PASSION SEARCHED THE RAINBOW
FOR A HOME
THEY SETTLED DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS
LET ME TELL YOU 'BOUT NEW ORLEANS
LET ME HEAR YOU SAY NEW ORLEANS
SING A SONG ABOUT NEW ORLEANS

"Daddy"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

TRICK BABIES:

WHO'S MY DADDY

WHERE'S MY DADDY

MISS YOU DADDY

KISS YOU DADDY

LOVE YOU DADDY

NEED YOU DADDY

OH MY DADDY

LET'S PLAY DADDY

PLEASE STAY DADDY

DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS

COBALT:

WHAT'S THE MATTER, DADDY

CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE

YOUR TRAIN DON'T RUN

DOWN THIS WAY

WHAT'S THE MATTER, DADDY

YOU LOST YOUR TICKET

YOU COULDN'T STICK IT

ONE MORE TIME

YOU COULDN'T ~~STAY~~ STAY

YOU WOULDN'T STAY

WAY DOWN HERE IN NEW ORLEANS

COBALT:

LET ME TELL ~~YOU~~ SOMETHING, DADDY

~~YOU~~ FORGOT YOUR ADDRESS

YOU GOT IN SOME MESS

WITH ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE

WE'LL BUY YOU A MAP

PUT YOUR FINGER ON IT

PUSH IT DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

AND STOP DOGGONE IT

YOU IN NEW ORLEANS

OH YES THAT'S NEW, NEW ORLEANS

COBALT AND TRICK BABIES: WAY DOWN

WAY DOWN

COME ON DADDY

COME ON WAY, WAY DOWN

LOW DOWN, BREAK DOWN

STOMP DOWN TO NEW ORLEANS

NO WE AIN'T GOOD LOOKING

WE BUILT FOR SPEED

WE GOT EVERYTHING A SWEET PAPA NEED

MY SUGAR'S SWEET, OH YEAH AND SO ^YIS

MY MEAT

THE ONLY WAY YOU EVER GONNA GET YOU

A PIECE

COBALT AND TRICK BABIES: IS IF YOU GET DOWN

WAY DOWN

WAY DOWN TO NEW ORLEANS

WHO'S MY DADDY

WHERE'S MY DADDY

HELLO DADDY

GOODBYE DADDY

MISS YOU DADDY

KISS YOU DADDY

HOLD ME DADDY

SCOLD ME DADDY

LET'S PLAY DADDY

PLEASE STAY X DADDY

DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS

ACT I, Scene 9

Jessica Five's house. SHE is seated on her flowered throne. her body sways in small continuous circles as she moans. her guttural sounds are echoed by the four DRUMMERS that flank her. Intermittently the moaning resolves into a clicking of her teeth as she draws in a deep breath. This sound is re-enforced by a seemingly GIANT figure that dominates the space behind her, towering above her throne and wielding a giant rattle. She lifts a bottle of rum to her lips, coughs a hot breath and hands it to CALLY who takes a quick sip and hands it back. JESSIE smiles as CALLY pats her chest, shuts her eyelids and sucks in a mouthful of cooling air. Then JESSIE extends her hands to CALLY and repeats:

JESSICA FIVE: The nail clippings
 All from his left hand
 Your morning water
 Your wedding band

 The clothes he wore
 Next to his skin
 his picture
 A long hat pin

CALLY delivers the items as JESSIE requests them. JESSIE flourishes open a red kerchief and drops the nail clippings into it. She places the picture wrapped in the underwear over the clippings, gathers the corners of the kerchief together, weaving them through the wedding band. CALLY takes the hat pin from her hat, uncovering her head, and hands the pin to JESSIE who pierces the kerchief with it and begins to sing in a sustained obligato, spiraling up the scale. She bends CALLY backward, placing the gris-gris on her groin, sprinkling it with a few drops of the morning water Cally has brought to her in a small jar.

At this moment, the drums strike up the ceremonial rhythm and JESSIE commences to sing a voodoo chant which is answered antiphonally by the five male MUSICIANS. She calls forth the ELEMENTS:

JESSICA FIVE: ...Wind...Water...Fire...Earth

Each element is a female celebrant who cleverly manipulates five props: various fans for wind; liquid filled gourds for water; candles for fire; sprigs and branches of healing plants for earth.

THEY dance and join into the antiphonal singing, placing their props on CALLY's body. JESSIE draws herself up on the seat of her throne and stands as the throne revolves to reveal...

JESSICA FIVE: The Unknown Element.

...a huge black doll. Around her rotund figure she wears a dress covered with cabalistic signs and elements. A necklace comprised of snake vertebrae ending in a silver encased alligator's fang hangs from her plump and neckless shoulders. From her perch, JESSIE sprinkles the gathering with rum and finishes by placing the bottle to the lips of the huge black doll.

A strange hissing seems to come from the black GODDESS as her head turns completely to reveal the black tignon-tied head of the fifth CELEBRANT singing. JESSIE begins to shiver. A SERPENT emerges from the black skirts. The UNKNOWN ELEMENT's voice rises, octave upon octave, as the SNAKE rises upright, balancing on its narrow tail. It falls suddenly to the ground and with it, the four ELEMENTS drop to the floor writhing, hissing and crying strangely.

The SNAKE retraces its path under the voluminous skirts and a DANCING FIGURE emerges slowly, transformed into the serpent god, Zombi. He slithers over the supine ELEMENTS, speaking and singing hissing syllabants until he reaches CALLY.

Within THEIR dance, he coils his serpentine torso about her and then lifts her. The CELEBRANTS circle about the duo. As the ritual climaxes, CALLY is dropped to the floor; the ZOMBI disappears from where he came; the throne revolves to once again reveal JESSIE seated. The drums and the dance crescendo.

JESSICA FIVE: In five days he will be back in your bed.

ACT I: CURTAIN

Act II, Scene I

Satan's Hole. This is the gambling house attached to Le Premier's establishment which is operated by Satan under the aegis and protection of Le Premier. What Le Premier's parlor is to catering to the luxurious tastes of men looking for pleasure in comfort, Satan's Hole is just the opposite in catering to the taste of men for starkness, ruggedness, the absence of ~~any~~ ^{all} in their search for treasure. Satan's place contains nothing superfluous: in it is the atmosphere of the pump with the possibility of violence and huge satisfaction going hand in hand. A low table furnishes Satan's establishment and it is here that the games are played. The entrance to Satan's domain is directly opposite of the gambling table and as the players enter through it, light pours in, illuminating the darkened room. This particular portal gives the gambling den joint its name. It is round and unusually low causing one to bend almost enough to gain entry and exit. This also makes a speedy departure most difficult.

As the curtain rises a downspout like Satan standing at the table. He accompanies the stealthy entrance of the gamblers. Among them are Sweet Justice and Johnny. The moment which causes lightness in as the players draw chairs up to the table Satan separates the deck of cards. Dealing from the bottom he announces--

ACT II

SATAN: Low Catch--Call your bets.

Ex

PLAYER number 1: Two bits.

PLAYER number 2: Four bits.

Player number 3: Six bits.

(One of the gamblers is Johnny who barely peeks at his cards--as do the other men. They place their bets on the table. Satan turns to Johnny)

JOHNNY: I might bet and I might die.

SATAN: I might call you if you die.

(Johnny places his bet)

JOHNNY: A dollar.

(Another round is dealt. All men stay in the game. The hands are spread, Johnny being the next to last to put down and at that point he is high man)

JOHNNY: Leggo! (He shows three cards of the same suit)

SATAN: (Groggling head) See a Tiger! (Opening three aces)
Touch 3. 4.

Act II, Scene I

Satan's Hole. This is the gambling house attached to La Premier's establishment which is operated by Satan under the aegis and protection ~~of~~ of La M Premier. What ~~XX~~ La Premier's parlor is in catering to the luxurious taste of men looking for pleasure in comfort, Satan's Hole is just ~~xx~~ the opposite in catering to the taste of men for starkness, ruggedness, the absence of ~~frill~~ in their search for treasure. Satan's place contains nothing superfluous; in it is the atmosphere of the hunt--with the possibility of violence and huge satisfaction going hand in hand. A lone table furnishes Satan's establishment and it is here that the games are played. The entrance to Satan's domain is directly upcenter of the gambling table and as the players enter through it, light pours in, illuminating the darkened reaches. This particular portal gives the gambling ~~join~~ joint its name. It is round and unusually low causing one to bend--almost crouch to gain entry ~~xxxx~~ or exit. This also makes a ~~d~~ speedy departure most difficult.

As the curtain rises a downspot hits Satan standing at the table. Music accompanies the stealthy entrance of the gamblers. Among them are Sweet Justice and Johnny. The masculine dance which ensues tightens in as the players draw chairs up to the table and Satan separates the deck of cards. Dealing from the bottom he announces--

SATAN: Low Cotch--Call your bets.

~~Rx~~

PLAYERS~~XX~~ number 1: Two Bits.

PLAYER number 2: Four bits.

Player number 3: Six bits.

(One of the gamblers is Johnny who barely peeks at his cards--as do the other men. They place their bets on the table. Satan turns to Johnny)

JOHNNY: I might bet and I might dis.

SATAN: I might call you if you dis.

(Johnny places his bet)

JOHNNY: A dollar.

(Another round is dealt. All men stay in the game. The hands are spread, Johnny being the next to last to put down and at this point he is high man).

JOHNNY: Legae! (He shows three cards of the same suit)

SATAN: (Topping him) Got a Tiger! (Opening three sixes)
Cotch 3 6.

Among the onlookers is Sweet Justice who has been taking side bets on the players

SWEET JUSTICE (to Johnny) I thought you had a tiger swinging by by tail.

(Johnny pushes back his chair and rises from the table. Sweet Justice turns to Satan)

Cotch 3 6.
This fool is rich.

(Satan rises abruptly from the table, pulls a rope from underneath tossing one end of it directly at Sweet Justice who catches it as the others rise and clear the area. The two men lean in toward each other and stretch the rope tautly across the table in a practiced motion as the arena is prepared for the next game.)

SATAN: Come in you all. Get your money down. One dollar in the center will get you a poor boy sandwich. Who's coming out?

(Satan places the ante and the dice on the table. Johnny picks them up.)

In contrast to the quietness of the cotch game, the craps game becomes highly vocal and Sweet Justice's side racket is going real strong as Johnny strains his luck one more time.

(Johnny blows on the dice and is about to throw them when the second shooter in line calls out to Satan.)

SHOOTER 2: Stop the first one, stickman, then let him go. As long as he shake em up.

SATAN: Shake em up? What you think I got that rope across table for? Throw the dice man.

SHOOTER 2: Satan must be scared of his money. Got a rope in the middle of the table a ~~half-inch~~ ^{inch} thick and still scared somebody's gonna win.

SWEET JUSTICE: A jealous man can't work and a scared man can't gamble.

JOHNNY: Damn right he scared, and he got reason to be. Don't make me no difference. I'll shake 'em up, on the bottom, on the top and throw 'em cross the street. (He throws) Roll Flo. Stretch out 'little sisters.

SATAN: He threw six. What you six for? Get your bets down and drop them quarters in the bag. Speak on that six, shooter, they crying for you all around the table.

SHOOTER 3 What you six for? Anybody, what he six for? Ten dollars and quarter he don't six.

SWEET JUSTICE: That's a bet. Six easy as sex. Put your money down. Mine's down there. (To Johnny) Kill him shooter, kill him.

SHOOTER 3: (To ~~Sww~~ Sweet Justice) I got four dollars say he don't six.

SWEET JUSTICE: I got your four. Throw up a quarter.

SHOOTER # 3: I ain't got no change.

SATAN: We got ~~your drawers, xxxxxx~~ ~~change~~ change for your drawers, man.

JOHNNY: Look down, rider spot me in the dark. When I call these dice, break a rich man's heart Six! (he throws)

SATAN: He drew eight. Six the point. You want change, man, we can change your mind, else you betting \$3.75 over there.

JOHNNY: Box cars don't carry no freight. (He throws)

SATAN: He threw ten. Looking for six. Six is the man. Cash money is the plan. (Johnny throws.) Five looking for six.

JOHNNY: Come on six. Bless yourself six. Just two little rows of rabbit shit. S-I-X. (He throws)

SATAN: ~~NH~~ Nine looking for six. Six on the bottom, sweating hard cause the dice got 'em. (Johnny throws) Ten looking for six.

JOHNNY: Little Joe Little Joe, everywhere this poor man go (Johnny throws)

SATAN: Oh! Oh! A fair seven! He throwed seven you all. Get them quarters, bagman. Next shooter. Put your troubles in the center.

JOHNNY: Well that about taps me out.

~~XXXX~~

SWEET JUSTICE: (Paying up) Bad enough to lose, but to lose to the ugly hurts.

SATAN: Who's ugly? I'm the prettiest thing you ever saw in your life. Your woman don't look good as me. Your mama neither.

SWEET JUSTICE: Don't you dip your lip on my family.

SATAN: Shoot, Sweet or hit the street. You ~~have been~~ been betting a half hour and ain't touched the dice yet. If you want that joker who's sleepin with your woman to eat today-- you ought to play the dice.

SWEET JUSTICE: I can't understand it. They got free schools and ignorant black boys. Didn't you all hear me tell him to lay off my family? Why can't he understand that? Maybe I'll have to use another language since he can't understand English. (menacingly)

SATAN: You gonna make me mess up a brand new razor. If you think I'm foolin--say the word and ~~xxxx~~ I'll cut you every way but loose.

SWEET JUSTICE: Get out of my face murder-mouth. You don't phase me no more than a lamppost. You lift one ~~xxx~~ finger for that razor and I'll split ~~xxx~~ your skull like a hog's ~~xxxx~~ hoof.

JOHNNY: Come on. Don't bring all of that in here. People trying to make some money in here and both of you interfering.

SWEET JUSTICE: I fight ~~wherxxx~~ wherever I get mad at, I don't care if it's the courthouse steps.

SATAN: You ain't gonna live to see a courthouse cause I'm gonna ship you straight to the cemetery.

SWEET JUSTICE: Too bad about some people. You have to smack them in the head ~~h~~ with a broad ax before they get the message.

(Sweet and Satan stalk while others talk to divert them.)

SHOOTER 2: You know it's amazing how some cats keep their cool. Now me, I get mad, I can't talk I can't think. I just babble. Nothing I say makes sense. And that makes me madder than whatever it was I was mad about. Then I get physical.

JOHNNY: Well you must be mad most of the time cause you ain't never made sense to me. (stepping between Satan and Sweet Justice)

~~JOHNNY~~ Both of you all said too much about the other. What you say we leave it right there?

SWEET JUSTICE: Yeah, you right. Because I ain't never been this close to killing somebody and didn't as I am right now.

SATAN: Don't ~~xx~~ let me stop you. Only reason I hesitated is cause cuttin the ~~stxxx~~ stink off you mess up my new blade.

SWEET JUSTICE: Better keep it new then. The minute I see it I'm gonna blast you till my sleeves catch on fire.

SATAN: Come on, let's see whose elevator goes to the top floor.

(they pull out their weapons)

Cobalt enters, backing in through the hole and turns to display a tray loaded ~~wi~~ down with platefuls of stuffed crayfish. She cuts right through the violence about ~~the~~^{to} erupt, hawking her wares. Cobalt ~~enters x "ho k k k k k" x~~

Act II, Scene 2

Courtyard of Ana La Premeir's house.

Johnny enters, disconsolate. He sees his banjo (or guitar) lying, discarded, somewhere in the garden. He picks it up and strums a little and then sings "Longshot Gambler"

"Longshot Gambler"

Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

JOHNNY:

I DEAL THE CARDS, THEN PICK THEM UP
SPREAD THEM IN MY FINGERS LIKE A FAN
I PLAY THE JACK, TO HOLD THE QUEEN
HIT THE DEUCE WITH A TRES IF I CAN
DON'T LOOK IN MY PALM
WHERE THE LINES ARE RUNNING OUT EVERYDAY
THE MESSAGE THERE IS CLEAR AND CALM
THE GAME'S A GAME UNTIL YOU PAY
I'M A LONGSHOT GAMBLER
A LONGSHOT GAMBLER
AIN'T NO FUTURE IN MY HAND
BROKEN LINES RUNNING CROSS MY HAND
DAMN THIS HAND
SEE MY LUCK HEADIN' FOR THE DOOR
LOST SO MUCH CAN'T LOSE NO MORE

JOHNNY:

Ooooh-----

PLACE THE BET, TOOK A CHANCE, ooh

LOOKING FOR A STREAK OF LUCK , ooh

SHOT THE DICE

NOT ONCE BUT TWICE

LORD DON'T LET ME

LOSE TOO MUCH

DON'T OPEN MY PALM

WHERE THE LIVES ARE RUNNING OUT EVERYDAY

THE MESSAGE THERE IS CLEAR AND CALM

THE GAME'S A GAME UNTIL YOU PAY

I'M A LONGSHOT GAMBLER

A LONGSHOT GAMBLER

XN CAN'T SEE NO FUTURE IN MY HAND

Ana enters and notices how melancholy he looks.

Ana:

Somebody dead?

Johnny:

Huh? Oh. No. I was just---

Ana:

Just what?

Johnny

Thinking.

Ana:

Tell me about it

Johnny:

Now, Ana. Let's get out now. Everybody says they're going to close the District. If they don't do it this year, they'll do it next. We can take what we have, go off somewhere: Jackson, Atlanta, anywhere. We'll buy a house and live like normal people. Just the two of us. I'll go to work again.

Ana: Something else is bothering you. Not all
that talk about closing down the District.
Somebody's always trying to close it, or
move it, or own it. It won't happen, I'm
telling you, and if it does, it'll just crop
up somewhere else. Now come over here and
tell me what's really on your mind.

Johnny: I can't be just a fancy man.

Ana: You telling me you want to leave here?

Johnny: No, no. I never thought I'd hear myself
say it, but--I want to work.

Ana: You do work.

Johnny: I mean real work.

Ana: Come on, baby. You hardly made a quarter
out of that river. What are you trying to
tell me? You tired of silk shirts and spats
on your shoes? You not tired of Ana, are
you?

Johnny: How could I be?

Ana: Then what is it?

Johnny: I don't like to see you smiling at other men
Customers.

Ana: You don't have to have customers, do you?

Johnny: Ana, you can do anything, anything. You're
good with figures, people like you, you
know how to make a business work. You
don't have to stay in this place.

Ana: This place is mine, Johnny. I own it. I
came up like those trick babies with nothing
but a doll and a pair of drawers. The
drawers I threw away, but the doll I kept.
To remind mind. Now I'm the Madam; I'm
the Boss. You want me to give that up?
So I can stay home and cook your meals?

Johnny: You don't have to cook my meals. You can go
into another business. Buy a restaurant, or
a-a-

Ana: A what?
 Johnny: You like this business, don't you?
 Ana: It's my life.
 Johnny: You can change it.
 Ana: I can't. I can't live any other way.
 Johnny: Why? Why can't you?

Ana sings "I Prefer the Pleasure"

Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison

ANA:

I PREFER TO RESIST AN UNEVENTFUL LIFE
 NO BUTTER CHURNING, BISCUITS BURNING, MELON RINDS
 NO BABY BLANKETS HANGING OUT ON MY LINE
 NO KITCHEN GARDEN IN THE REAR
 I BEG TO DECLINE A HUMDRUM LIFE
 AVOID THE MILKIN AND THE QUILTIN STUFFED IN CHINKS
 NO DIRTY DISHES WAITIN FOR ME IN MY SINK
 OLD YARD DOG LYING NEAR
 SOME WOMEN ARE CONTENT WITH WHAT THEY FIND
 BUT I REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF MY MIND
 I CHOOSE TO AVOID A TREADMILL LIFE
 NO ROCKING CHAIR, SILVERED HAIR ON MY HEAD
 NO HEATED WATER BOTTLES WARMING UP MY BED
 NO CARPET SLIPPERS ON THE FLOOR
 I STAND ALOOF FROM A MUNDANE LIFE
 NO SPINNING WHEEL, NO FISHING REED ON MY PORCH

22:5

ANA:

NO STANDING BY THE WINDOW WITH A LIGHTED TORCH

NO HONEY SUCKLE ROUND MY DOOR

SOME WOMEN ARE CONTENT WITH A GREAT DEAL LESS

BUT I REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF MY FLESH

Ana and Johnny exit. She with her tapping sick; he entag^Aled in her rhythm.

Beau enters the courtyard with his horn. He looks around carefully and then sits for a moment. Begins to try out a note of^t two--to get some one's attention. Nothing happ^enes. He tries again. Nothing. He waits. Clarence pokes his head out of a window. Beau does not see him. Clarence leaves and returns with his own instrument. Plays a phrase. Beau jumps and turns around. Clarence plays another. Beau answers with his own horn. Thier "con-versation" continues until it becomes a duet. All Others come into the courtyard and enjoy the music. At the end they applaud,

Clarence: Well, how bout that. Ain't he something?

Beau Will you teach me?

Clarence You like music, huh?

Beau I don't just like it, it make^s my blood go.

Clarence No kidding? You mean it's like a part of you that was there before you ~~was~~^{were}--a part of your self that stood on the road and waited for you to find it, and be it?

Beau Yeah. Yeah. That's it.

CLARENCE: You mean you rely on it, to help you know what you think and what you feel when there's no other way to know it?

BEAU: Yeah, that's right. That's just how it is.

CLARENCE: Well, if that's the case I have to warn you. Music is like a tree. When you climb all the way up into it, ~~xx~~ as high as you can go, there ain't no way to get back down.

BEAU: I don't want to get back down.

CLARENCE: Some men get up in that tree and get strung out. The music leaves them and they just fall right out.

BEAU: I have to play, Mr. Deal. I have to.

CLARENCE: Okay, okay, okay, but let me tell you something else before you start thinking it's all gravy. Everybody ain't wild about this music. Some people hate exactly what you love. They think it's the devil's own ~~kim~~ tune. Preach sermons against it even. But if you ~~xxxxx~~ serious, and you look serious to me, you can't pay it no mind.

BEAU: How could anybody hate it?

CLARENCE (playing) Because it makes them think and feel things they don't want to think or feel. Now in here, everybody's loose. They ain't scared. You know what I mean. And for Negroes, well it's a way of ~~dealing~~, dealing with the hurt. Not ~~deaxxxxx~~ denying it, but dealing with it in a way that keeps us men. Cause for us things don't never get no better. And a little pretty noise is the only way to make it through. I call it noise, but you know what it is? A weapon. A secret weapon. They can't kill a man's music and they can't kill a man who knows that. ~~It's what you send to your friend if he was in trouble and there was no way to get help. It's the way we talk about what's inside.~~

BEAU: Just teach me, Mr. Deal. Teach me.

(JOHNNY enters with ANA)

JOHNNY: ~~THE~~ What is this?
(To BEAU.) You back in here? I thought I told you never ~~xx~~ to come back in here!

~~CLARENCE~~

CLARENCE: Come on, Johnny. Let him stay, the boy is--

JOHNNY: Over my dead body.

*Some people think
it's enterainment
but it's not*

CLARENCE: Hey! Hey! No cause for alarm. Let him. He can come here early, in the afternoon, before the rough trade starts. I'll play with him for an hour or two, and see that he gets home myself, okay?

JOHNNY: I don't want him here early or late. He's ~~still a kid~~, Clarence. Nothing but a baby.

TRICK BABIES: What you say? Nothing but a baby?

JOHNNY: You heard me.

A TRICK BABY: He's older than me and I'm here.

JOHNNY (To Ana) Will you get these children away from me?

JOHNNY: I don't need no lessons on how to raise my own son. And if I do, this would be the last place I'd come to get 'em. Nobody in this house ever raised nothing--or lived in a real home or--afraid of where his thoughts are leading him.

BEAU: It's all right, Johnny. I don't want to live here. I just want to feel free.

JOHNNY: Nothing from you. I don't want to hear nothing out of you. You ought to be home.

BEAU: I ought to be home? Doing what? Taking care of you? If I'm old enough to do your job at home, that I'm old enough to do what I please.

ALL: Tell him about it! I'll say!

BEAU: Besides, what's age got to do with it anyway? When you were my age you were married! That was important to you, well this is important to me. (Picks up beer and blows around Johnny)

ALL: (Laughing and over-answering Beau. Johnny is speechless.)

Beau sings a reprise of "What's the Matter Baby?" (See previous page)



COBALT: Maybe you should be away from them.

ANA: Calm down, Johnny. If he's a musician there's nothing you can do about that and nobody can teach him better than Clarence. Look, I know what you're feeling--I know--

JOHNNY: Nobody knows what I'm feeling!

SATAN: Jealous, is what you feeling.

VESUVIUS: You mean evil.

COBALT: Shame is what he ought to be feeling.

CLARENCE: I don't get it. You ought feel proud man. 'Stead you trying to cut him down.

JOHNNY: I don't need no lessons on how to raise my own son. And if I did this would be the last place I'd come to get 'em. Nobody in this house ever raised nothing--or lived in a real home or--(stops--afraid of where his thoughts are leading him.)

BEAU: It's all right, ~~Miss~~ ^{Miss Ann} Daddy, I don't want to live here. I just want Mr. Deal to--

JOHNNY: Nothing from you. I don't want to hear nothing out of you. You ought to be home.

BEAU: I ought to be home? Doing what? Taking care of mama? If I'm old enough to do your job at home then I'm old enough to do what I please.

ALL: Tell him about it! I'll say!

BEAU: Besides, what's age got to do with it anyway? When you were my age you were married! That was important to you; well this is important to me. (Picks up horn and blows around Johnny)

ALL: (Laughing and ~~REXX~~ encouraging Beau. Johnny is speechless.)

Beau sings a reprise of "What's the Matter Daddy?" (~~and then on phone~~)

"Daddy" Reprise

Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

BEAU:

WHAT'S THE MATTER, DADDY?

SOMETHING STUCK IN YOUR CRAW

OR WHY IS YOUR JAW

HANGING ON YOUR CHEST

SO WHAT'S THE MATTER, DADDY

YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT

YOU COULDN'T TAKE IT

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN

YOU COULDN'T STAY--

YOU DIDN'T STAY

WAY CROSS TOWN IN NEW ORLEANS

TELL ME SOMETHING, DADDY

FORGET YOUR ADDRESS?

YOU GOT IN SOME MESS

AND LEFT YOUR WIFE

BUY YOU A MULE

PUT YOUR BOTTOM ON IT

RIDE IT TO THE OLD CANAL

AND JUMP, DOGGONE IT

GET CROSSTOWN

WAY CROSS NEW ORLEANS

WAY CROSS, WAY CROSS, WAY CROSS

XOXOXOXOX

Trick Babies

2. 2:10

Trick Babies
~~BEAU~~
And Beau

GO ON, DADDY

WAY CROSS NEW ORLEANS

YOU SO GOODLOOKING

YOU BUILT FOR SPEED

YOU GOT EVERYTHING A GOOD M WOMAN NEED

NOTHING TO FEAR

HIS DUTY'S CLEAR

BEAU'S THE ONE WHO REALLY GOT A RIGHT TO

BE HERE

SO YOU GET WAY CROSS,

WAY CROSS

WAY CROSS TO NEW ORLEANS

ACT II, Scene 3

Gally's living room. Three women friends, WIVES OF THE TRAWLERS are assembled. ~~A~~ FOURTH enters.

Geneva
FOURTH-WOMAN: Is she dead?

FIRST WOMAN: You hush! No, she ain't dead. She's lying down in her bed trying to get a little peace and quiet. Her sisters are in there with her now.

Geneva
FOURTH-WOMAN: I heard she was dead or dying or asleep or something.

SECOND WOMAN: It's a long way from sleep to dying.

Geneva
FOURTH-WOMAN: Maybe not as long as you think.

FIRST WOMAN: Will you hush? The girl is tired is all.

THIRD WOMAN: Three days in the bed is a mighty lot of tired.

Geneva
FOURTH-WOMAN: Three days? Where's that boy of hers?

THIRD WOMAN: I heard he been sneaking in and out of the District too. *Just like Beau.*

Geneva
FOURTH-WOMAN: Oh my Lord. These men! Soon's they get old enough to buckle their own belt they go find some place they can unbuckle it.

FIRST WOMAN: That's not it. he's taking music lessons over in there.

Geneva
FOURTH-WOMAN: Oh yeah? Who's teaching?

FIRST WOMAN: Clarence Deal. You know. Mary Deal's oldest son.

THIRD WOMAN: Oh yes. I know him. That whole family plays music. They say he's awful good.

SECOND WOMAN: I don't care how good he is. Beau shouldn't stay away from home so much. his mama needs him.

FIRST WOMAN: her sister's see after her.

SECOND WOMAN:

Them two? Good God. If I ever get sick please don't let them stand at my bedside. I believe I'd just as soon pass on.

Geneva

FOURTH-WOMAN:

What I want to know is what got her down so? Look like she was doing fine a few days back: cleaned this house from roof to floor.

FIRST WOMAN:

That was right after she went to see Jessie Five.

Geneva

FOURTH WOMAN:

So? *Don't I know it?*

FIRST WOMAN:

So. Jessie Five said five days. In five days he be back and --

Geneva

FOURTH-WOMAN:

And nothing happened?

FIRST WOMAN:

Not a thing. And it's the seventh day.

Geneva

THIRD-WOMAN:

I can't believe that. Jessie Five's stuff always works.

SECOND WOMAN:

Well what she gonna do. Stay in bed forever?

Geneva

FOURTH-WOMAN:

Let me tell you women something. Some men are hard, you hear. Hard, and anybody unlucky enough to get that kind is in trouble, deep trouble. Trouble even Jessie Five can't fix. Don't nothing work on that kind but a steel mind and an iron fist. Listen here. (She sings "They Got to Get it, Bring it and Put it Right here.")

Geneva

FOURTH-WOMAN:

I'VE HAD A MAN FOR FIFTEEN YEARS
GIVE HIM HIS ROOM AND BOARD
ONCE HE WAS LIKE A CADILLAC
NOW HE'S LIKE AN OLD WORN OUT FORD
HE NEVER BROUGHT ME A LOUSY DIME
AND PUT IT IN MY HAND
SO THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES FROM NOW ON
ACCORDING TO MY PLAN



Geneva
FOURTH WOMAN:

HE'S GOT TO GET IT, BRING IT, AND PUT IT
RIGHT HERE

ON' ELSE HE'S GONNA KEEP IT OUT THERE

IF HE MUST STEAL IT, BEG IT, OR BORROW IT
SOMEWHERE

LONG AS HE GETS IT, I DON'T CARE

I'M TIRED OF BUYING PORK CHOPS TO GREASE
HIS FAT LIPS

AND HE'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER PLACE FOR TO
PARK HIS OLD HIPS

HE MUST GET IT, BRING IT, AND PUT IT RIGHT
HERE

ON' ELSE HE'S GONNA KEEP IT OUT THERE

THE BEE GETS THE HONEY AND BRINGS IT TO
THE COMB

ELSE HE'S KICKED OUT OF HIS HOME SWEET HOME
TO SHOW YOU THEY BRINGS IT WATCH THE DOG
AND THE CAT

EVERYTHING EVEN BRINGS IT FROM A MULE TO A
GNAT

THE ROOSTER GETS THE WORM AND BRINGS IT TO
THE HEN

THAT OUGHT TO BE A TIP TO ALL THEM NO GOOD MEN

THE GROUND HOG EVEN BRINGS IT AND PUTS IT
IN HIS HOLE

SO MY MAN IS GOT TO BRING IT DOGGONE HIS SOUL
HE'S GOT TO GET IT, BRING IT, AND PUT IT
RIGHT HERE

ON' ELSE HE'S GONNA KEEP IT OUT THERE

IF HE MUST STEAL IT, BEG IT, OR BORROW IT
SOMEWHERE

LONG AS HE GETS IT (CHILE), I DON'T CARE

I'M GONNA TELL HIM LIKE THE CHINAMAN

WHEN YOU DON'T BRINGUM CHECK

YOU DON'T GETUM LAUNDRY

IF YOU BREAKUM DAMN NECK

YOU GOT TO GET IT, BRING IT, AND PUT IT
RIGHT HERE

ON' ELSE YOU GONNA KEEP IT OUT THERE

(CALLY enters in her slip rushing behind ELISE and FAYE whom she is forcing toward the front door.)

CALLY: Out! Out!

FAYE: ...And he'll never be nothing.

ELISE: Never. Nothing.

Geneva
~~FOURTH WOMAN:~~ I thought you said she was sick.

FAYE: You can't get water from a stone.

ELISE: Or blood from a turnip.

CALLY: If you want to help me then help me, but don't come in here signifying on me and my son and my husband!

FAYE: You're going to be sorry.

ELISE: You're going to need us.

CALLY: I don't need you as much as you need me. You need to pity somebody, you need to feel better than somebody. I believe you're glad he left me because it makes you feel good and holy. You can't help me because you don't know what I feel. You never loved nobody. Out! Get out!

(SISTERS exit - CALLY paces -- furious.)

FIRST WOMAN: Come on, honey.

SECOND WOMAN: It's going to be all right. Poor Cally.

CALLY: Get away from me! Get away. I'm sick of all that. "It's gonna be all right." It ain't gonna be all right. It's never gonna be all right. I'm sorry. I know you mean well, but I can't take any more "Poor Cally, Poor little Cally." I'm sick to death of it. I'm not poor little Cally. I'm Calla Lily, you hear? Calla Lily and Calla Lily is not a little girl. She's a woman.

Geneva
~~FOURTH WOMAN:~~ The girl is gone. There's a grown up woman standing here.

CALLY: Nobody's gonna just take my man from me.
Nobody. You got that?

FIRST WOMAN: I got it.

CALLY: You got it?

SECOND WOMAN: I got it, girl.

CALLY: And you? You got it?

THIRD WOMAN: We got it.

CALLY: Okay! Now! Battle stations!

Geneva
 FOURTH WOMAN: What you gonna do?

CALLY: I'm gonna take what is mine.

FIRST WOMAN: Oh Lord.

CALLY: I'm gonna hold what I have.

Geneva
 SECOND WOMAN: Praise His name.

CALLY: I'm going in there and snatch him out by
 the scruff of his neck if I have to.

THIRD WOMAN: Sweet Jesus.

CALLY: I'll pull him out by his ankles if I have to.

Second
 FOURTH WOMAN: Save us.

CALLY: And I need shoes!

ALL: Amen.

Geneva
 FOURTH WOMAN: I got some shoes.

CALLY: Get 'em.

THIRD WOMAN: I got some real pretty stockings.

CALLY: Get 'em.

SECOND WOMAN: (To FIRST WOMAN.) Didn't that woman whose
 house you clean give you a dress?

FIRST WOMAN: Sure did. Got a grease spot on it.

CALLY: Get it, girl.

ALL: Get it, girl.

Get it, girl.

Get it, girl.

(The phrase "Get it, girl" is -

at first, a reference to go get the clothes.

then, as repeated, becomes a rhythmic chant to Cally as they dress her, fix her hair and she becomes glamorous in a loud tacky raiment.

then, the phrase becomes a chorus for themselves as well as Cally, as she struts around completely dressed

then, as she exits, it becomes a battle cry.)

SINGLE VOICE: (After a huge swell of voices saying "Get it, girl.") Get him, girl. Get him!

ACT II, Scene 4

La Premier's parlor.

CLARENCE DEAL is at the piano. BEAU is near him playing occasional riff. A crowd is watching the Naked Dance: HOUSE WOMEN, ANA, JOHNNY, JOHNS -- black and white -- in Navy uniforms, business suits, white planter's suits, TRICK BABIES. POLICEMEN, etc.

Toward the end of this dance, CALLY enters. She is in some disarray -- hat wrongly tipped, sash loose perhaps. When she sees the woman dancing naked, she opens her mouth and covers and uncovers her eyes. Before she can register fully what she sees, a SAILOR puts his arm around her and kisses her neck.

As the dance is completed, there is riotous uproar of applause and calls. CALLY struggles free of the SAILOR and bumps into two TRICK BABIES, dressed only in woman's panties of the day and holding dolls. A MAN picks one of the TRICK BABIES up high in the air. A PROSTITUTE snatches the CHILD down, slaps the MAN and sends the two CHILDREN off.

All the while CALLY is surrounded by COUPLES and TRIPLES dancing, fondling one another. SATAN comes over and lifts the hem of her dress. She is fighting him off when SOMEBODY breaks a bottle over ANOTHER's head. There is a lull while a FEW watch the hit MAN slump to the floor. A THIRD MAN punches the HIPPER. ANA sallies over to see what is going on. JOHNNY follows her and pulls the fighting MEN apart.

Into the space (in movement as well as visual space.) CALLY spies ANA and JOHNNY. He starts. BEAU see her too and calls "Ma!" The music stops as EVERYBODY stares at her. CALLY is thoroughly non-plussed. Hurt, angry, completely out of her element.

Into the silence ANA saunters forward with her walking stick and teases CALLY with it. CALLY trips and stumbles before the stick. BEAU darts forward but is held back by CLARENCE who shakes his head as if to say "This is not your affair." JOHNNY moves in to take Ana's stick away. They stand for a moment and look into each other's eyes holding onto the stick. JOHNNY's grasp is firm. ANA begins to stroke the stick up and down, up and down suggestively. JOHNNY's hold on the stick loosens and the stick wavers.

CALLY, outrage surfacing, kicks JOHNNY in the shins. The CROWD ooo's. JOHNNY, surprised, lets go. CALLY dances around and with him, with some aggression and then turns to ANA. ANA enters with confident aggression. the two WOMEN then dance competitively. It ends with a "draw."

JOHNNY hands ANA her walking stick if the stick is not used in the dance. He comes to CALLY and tries to take her by the arm outside to the courtyard. She resists. He prevails. CROWD picks up its activity but soundlessly and increasingly darkened until CALLY and JOHNNY are alone in courtyard.

ACT II, Scene 5

The Courtyard.

JOHNNY starts to say something -- walks away a step or two.
CALLY stands still saying nothing. She is flushed and beautiful and standing very tall. JOHNNY turns back to look at her.

JOHNNY: You look different.
CALLY: You look the same.
JOHNNY: You're not the woman I left.
CALLY: You're not the man I loved..
JOHNNY: The woman I left wore braids in her hair.
CALLY: The man I loved braided it for me.
JOHNNY: I kinda like it this way. (He reaches to touch her hair.)

(CALLY moves away.)

JOHNNY: Cally.
CALLY: Calla Lily! *[She begins to cry]*
JOHNNY: Calla Lily? *(he sings "Calla Lily.")*

Johnny sings "Calla Lilly.")

Lyrics c 1982 by Toni Morrison

11.5: 2

"Calla Lily"

Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

JOHNNY:

CALLA LILY DON'T CRY

LORD KNOWS I'VE BEEN STONE BLIND

I KNOW THAT I DON'T DESERVE THE FAVOR

TO BE EVEN STANDING IN YOUR SHADE, GIRL

CALLA LILY DON'T CRY

HEAR ME WHEN I SAY MY

LOVE FOR YOU IS REAL BUT IT NEEDS GUARDING

I HAVE SERVED MY TIME GRANT ME A PARDON

FORGET I FORGOT YOU'RE MY GIRL

JUST LET ME GET CLOSE TO MY GIRL

TAKE ME BACK AND I WON'T NEVER LEAVE YOU

CAUSE YOU'RE MY GIRL

(They dance.)

(Johnny takes the piano and they exit.)

(CALLY sings "It's Sunday", JOHNNY joins her.)

"It's Sunday" Reprise. Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

CALLY:

ALL I KNOW IS THAT IT'S SUNDAY
I'D BE RESTING IN MY BED NOW

JOHNNY:

Let me make your bed.

CALLY:

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IT'S SUNDAY
I MIGHT LIKE SOME LEMONADE NOW

JOHNNY:

Let me squeeze your lemons.

CALLY:

HOW COME YOU DON'T KNOW IT'S SUNDAY?
A WOMAN'S HEART CAN BREAK BY MONDAY
THIS SHOULD BE THE ONE DAY
YOU'D UNBRAID MY HAIR

JOHNNY:

OH BABE I KNOW IT'S SUNDAY
LET ME STRUM US UP A TUNE NOW
I REMEMBER HOW ON SUNDAY
WE'D BE DANCING IN OUR ROOM NOW

I FEEL LUCKY WHEN IT'S SUNDAY
LET'S NOT PUT IT OFF TILL MONDAY
I CAN'T WAIT NOT EVEN ONE DAY
TO GET 'WAY FROM HERE

(They dance.)

BOTH:

I'M SO LUCKY THAT IT'S SUNDAY
CAUSE WHEN WE WAKE UP ON MONDAY
WE ARE GOIN' TO BE A LONG WAY
A LONG WAY FROM HERE

(JOHNNY takes the banjo and they exit.)

ACT II, Scene 6

Parlor of Ana La Premier's house. SWEET JUSTICE enters with a carton full of opera stockings. He is anxiously looking around.

SWEET JUSTICE: Where's everybody?

(COBALT BLUE enters.)

COBALT BLUE: Sleep. What you think?

SWEET JUSTICE: Ana?

COBALT BLUE: Sleep, I told you. It's twelve noon.

SWEET JUSTICE: Well, wake her up.

COBALT BLUE: Not me.

SWEET JUSTICE: Well somebody better.

COBALT BLUE: You want to leave 'em? You know she'll pay you exactly what you ask.

SWEET JUSTICE: I ain't asking you to wake somebody out of a sleep just to buy some stockings. I got some information, woman.

COBALT BLUE: You always do.

SWEET JUSTICE: I mean real information.

COBALT BLUE: Graveyard?

SWEET JUSTICE: Graveyard if she don't get up.

COBALT BLUE: You better not be fooling nobody.

SWEET JUSTICE: Hurry up, girl and go wake the lady.

(COBALT exits. SWEET JUSTICE opens his carton and examines the hose. SATAN comes in.)

SATAN: You got my money?

SWEET JUSTICE: I told you, man. *I wasn't playin', so I ain't payin'.* It wasn't me.
 SATAN: *You let him say you stole the house and,* It was you. I need my money.
 SWEET JUSTICE: You need a suitcase.
 SATAN: What's that supposed to mean?
 SWEET JUSTICE: Never mind. You'll find out.

(Enter ANA LA PREMIER.)

LA PREMIER: This better be good. Never felt worse in my life.
 SWEET JUSTICE: Well, you gonna feel worse than that before you feel better.
 SATAN: Spit it out, man. Stop cock teasin!
 SWEET JUSTICE: Why don't you get out of my face?
 LA PREMIER: Quit! What you wake me for?
 SWEET JUSTICE: (Whispering.) They did it! You all said they wouldn't, but they did. And Mayor Behman can't do a thing about it.

(Two GIRLS come down the stairs with a JOHN.)

LA PREMIER: (To the JOHN.) Charge?

(HE nods, (tying his tie and yawning.))

JOHN: Gawd, what time is it?
 LA PREMIER: (To SWEET JUSTICE.) Can't do a thing about what?
 SWEET JUSTICE: The Navy, that's who. This place is over!
 COBALT BLUE: Oh Lord.
 LA PREMIER: You know what you're talking about?

COBALT BLUE: I'm too old to go looking for another job.

SATAN: He's lying.

SWEET JUSTICE: The City Council just met this morning. I'm telling you. The Navy say if the city don't close the District down, they will. You got till midnight the twelfth. They moving out of the Arlington and Mahogany Hall now. As we speak!

(CLARENCE and BEAU enter with their instruments.)

CLARENCE: What's going on?

(Two more GIRLS enter down the staircase: KNOCKOUT and VESUVIUS.)

VESUVIUS: What's all the racket? People trying to sleep.

SWEET JUSTICE: They shutting it down!

LA PREMIER: (Stunned.) It's true then.

(Some general moans of outrage and confusion.)

KNOCKOUT: You mean I got to go back to a crib? I don't even know where my baby doll dress is.

SWEET JUSTICE: No, fool. If they ain't gonna be no whore houses, you know they ain't gonna be no cribs. No saloons either and (To SATAN.) no gambling.

SATAN: All they can do is make it illegal. They can't make it unpopular.

(KNOCKOUT is crying.)

VESUVIUS: Shut up!

(Other GIRLS enter, a FEW gather in clusters whispering.)

COBALT BLUE: I'm too old to go looking for another job.

11.6.41

Insert Act II, Scene 6 page 14 (of original script)

Cobalt: What you gonna do Ana?

Ana: (Standing) First I'm going to comb my hair. Then I'm going to get dressed. Then I'm going to the bank. Who do they think they are? Who do they think we are? Who do they think I am? This is my world they are fooling with. I live on this planet too. Change my life? Mess in my dreams? I'll be damned! The pot-bellied apes! I do more for this town than the whole fleet! Crackers! Bastards! Hypocrites! God, what I wouldn't give for a stick of dynamite. I'd sink the whole navy. Blow the Gulf of Mississippⁱ all the way back to Canada! Those dirty, rotten lying hogs! Close the district, huh? With a piece of paper, Hah! I'll show them how to close a district. Tell everybody La Premier is having a party. What's the date, November 30? On November 30--costumes, masks, food, liquor on the house. And when I close^a a district, believe me, it's going to stay closed! Music Clarence. Pull it out, sweet heart, Pull it all the way out!

[La Premier exits and Clarence begins to play with Beau accompanying him. The music swells to a surreal and sensuous dance of costumed and masked party-goers (including all of the identifiable members of the House as well as Johns and others). They chant a song that "lays claim to" the excitement and imaginative license that the District offers. The song is "addressed" to the audience.]

11.6.5

"This Piece of Planet"
Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

This piece of planet is mine
I don't want your kind
It stimulates my mind
To know th^at I can find
Day~~time~~, night~~time~~, any time
This piece of planet ^{is} ~~that's~~ mine.
It stimulates my mind.

Following the Masked dance, the party becomes normal level background activity. During the dialogue below, Satan and Sweet Justice are continuing their argument.

(CLARENCE starts to play the piano -- a very lively tune. The GIRLS dance with each other and the two or three MEN there. THEY drink and chat and laugh with the white SAILORS who enter a few minutes later during the dialogue below. Also during the dialogue below, SATAN and SWEET JUSTICE are arguing.)

BEAU: (To CLARENCE.) Why you grinning? You glad the District is closing?

CLARENCE: I ain't glad, exactly. But in a way, I guess I am.

BEAU: (Accusingly.) You going North, ain't you?

CLARENCE: Gotta do it. I told you, Beau, you have to move if you want to keep up with the music.

BEAU: Take me with you.

CLARENCE: I can't do that. Your daddy would kill me.

BEAU: He have to catch me first.

CLARENCE: Well, let me get situated up there, and maybe I'll send for you.

11.6.6

BEAU: You won't.

CLARENCE: Yes, I will. Just wait. You'll get a letter from me at the Royal Gardens in Chicago or the Deluxe Hotel or the Dreamland. All my buddies are up there. All the boys: Mutt Carey, Sugar Johnny, Tubby, George Baquet, Lawrence Duke, Roy Palmer, Freddie Keppard, Tig Chambers, Kid Ory, Joe Oliver, Tony Jackson, Minor Hall. They got a Chicago style and a New York style and a Kansas City style. Now all of it comes from right here, but you got to move with the music.

(Now the argument between SWEET JUSTICE and SATAN is physical. While CLARENCE is playing various styles and talking about his buddies up North, SATAN grabs SWEET JUSTICE's arm. SWEET JUSTICE jerks away. SATAN pulls a knife. SWEET runs. SATAN throws the knife and hits CLARENCE between his shoulder blades just as he is saying:

CLARENCE: My bag is packed and I'm ready to -- (Falls sideways in his chair.)

(Screams. The JOHNS run out immediately. BEAU grabs CLARENCE by the shoulders. EVERYBODY is still. Then, ANA rushes toward CLARENCE.)

LA PREMIER: Call the doctor! Run! Sweet, you go. Now! Satan get out of here.

(SATAN runs out.)

LA PREMIER: Oh Clarence. You of all people.

(CLARENCE coughs.)

CLARENCE. Take it out. Somebody take that nigger's steel out of my back.

(Nobody moves. Then BEAU does it. Bracing himself, he pulls it out. Some blood flows. He looks at his hands. ANA takes the knife from him and gives it to COBALT who drops it in her apron. BEAU holds CLARENCE in a sitting position.)

CLARENCE: Well you baptized now, Beau, in the blood of a musician who never left town.

BEAU: The doctor is coming.

CLARENCE: Tell Freddie and Joe I was on my way, but was -- unavoidably detained. Tell em, Beau. Tell Kid Ory boxcars don't carry freight. NO/

You go, in my place, hear me? Tell em I sent you. But when you go, don't stay long. Keep moving. The music gotta keep moving. And don't write it down. If you write it down it'll freeze to death. Keep it moving: Kansas, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Detroit, New York. Move it, Beau. All the boys gonna need some real pretty noise. (He dies.)

(BEAU lets CLARENCE's head gently rest on the back of the chair. Then he picks up his horn. SOMEBODY sobs.)

BEAU: Sssh. Let's have a little noise for the boy. (He plays "Sweet Substitute" solo.)

(Into the silence at the end of this solo, there is a loud knocking at the door.)

11.7.1

Act II, Scene 7: Outside the cemetery

Lights up on Vesuvius wearing a mourning veil. She is one of a group of mourners. She sings an epitaph--a vocal statement of ~~XXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ "Clarence's Theme" interspersed with Beau's horn playing.

"A Little Noise for the Boys"

Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

ALL THE BEST OF WHAT HE WAS
HE GAVE IT TO HIS FRIENDS
WHEN TROUBLE CAME AND MOVED ON IN
AND HELP HAD GONE AWAY
TO THIS DAY I CAN'T EXPLAIN
HOW THAT INSIDE PAIN
COULD MELT RIGHT DOWN
WHEN HE SAT DOWN
AND PLAYED HIS MELLOW TUNES
A LITTLE NOISE FOR THE BOYS
A LITTLE NOISE FOR THE BOYS

WE CAN DEAL WITH THE HURTIN' IF WE'RE

CERTAIN

THE MUSIC WOULDN'T COULDN'T EVER DIE

A LITTLE NOISE FOR THE BOYS

A LITTLE NOISE FOR THE BOYS

11.7.2

HE COULD DEAL WITH ANY HURT
THIS OLD WORLD COULD INVENT
BECAUSE THE MUSIC IS WHAT MADE HIM A MAN
HE COULD DEAL WITH ANY HURT
THIS OLD WORLD COULD INVENT
BECAUSE THE MUSIC IS WHAT KEPT HIM A

MAN

As the cortege carrying the funeral bier passes Vesuvius lowers her veil and followers. Beau brings up the rear. The last notes of his horn trail off into the darkness.

AU REVOIR FRIENDS I'VE HAD A
BALL OLD FRIENDS KEEPING MY
SHUTTERS WIDE OPEN FOR YOU
AU REVOIR FRIENDS TAKE IT FROM
ME OLD FRIENDS THERE'LL NEVER
BE NIGHTS WILDER WITH STARS
NO TEARS, GIRL NO DIAMOND
GLEAM IN EYES THAT HAVE SEEN
KINGDOMS OTHERS NEVER
DREAMED. WE'VE HAD A
GREAT TIME FRIENDS AND SINCE IT'S
GONE MY FRIENDS WHY NOT SAY
BOH SOIN LONELINESS GOOD
EVENING LONELINESS ON
AU REVOIR LOVE I'VE HAD A
BALL MY LOVE, AU REVOIR

ACT II, Scene 7

ANA LA PREMIER ^{Removes her mourning hat and veil.} is standing in her bedroom. The huge brass bed with red satin pillows and spread is disassembled: head board and foot lying against the wall. Trunks are being wheeled out by two MOVERS. There is a tall mirror and a washstand, an armoire, a chaise lounge. All of this is being moved out. Next to the French doors is a brightly painted wooden chest. SHE moves toward it, kneels, unlocks it and examines the contents: a jewel box, some items of clothing, an album of photographs, a couple of pillows, some lace and finally a doll.

Outside the French doors MEN are pounding wooden slats against the glass. As they cover the doors, the light from the courtyard disappears. When the view is completely blocked out, ANA "sees" a variety of ghost MEN who come in to dance with her, toast her, give her presents. JOHNNY comes in with his banjo and SHE twirls her stick for him. Each of these MEN fade and ANA, watching them go, sings "Au Revoir, Bon Soir.")

"Au Revoir, Bon Soir" Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

ANA:

AU REVOIR FRIENDS I'VE HAD A
BALL OLD FRIENDS KEEPING MY
SHUTTERS WIDE OPEN FOR YOU
AU REVOIR FRIENDS TAKE IT FROM
ME OLD FRIENDS THERE'LL NEVER
BE NIGHTS WILDER WITH STARS
NO TEARS, GIRL NO DIAMOND
GLEAM IN EYES THAT HAVE SEEN
KINGDOMS OTHERS NEVER
DREAMED. WE'VE HAD A
GREAT TIME FRIENDS AND SINCE IT'S
GONE MY FRIENDS WHY NOT SAY
BON SOIR LONELINESS GOOD
EVENING LONELINESS OH
AU REVOIR LOVE I'VE HAD A
BALL MY LOVE, AU REVOIR

Act II, Scene 9

Docks. Full cast (minus Clarence) is in attendance at send-off for Beau who is going upriver to take music to larger audience and join those musicians as Clarence had wished to do. The mood is celebratory--a higher note of joy than first dock scene, done in the style of a New Orleans parade--~~every~~ everyone dancing and singing. Beau will mount the ramp to the wonderful river boat, ~~ad~~ and from that height he continues the following song with company.

"Thank you"

Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison

BEAU: (to Cally) GOT DOWN FROM MY MOTHER'S KNEE
 THANK YOU I'M A MAN
 STANDING ON MY OWN TWO FEET
 THANK YOU I'M A MAN
 (to Johnny) GOT A GIFT FROM MY OLD MAN
 THANK YOU I'M A MAN
 MAKING IT NOW WITH MY OWN HAND
 THANK YOU I'M A MAN
 (to Ana's girls)
 SWAM THE RIVER GOT TO SHORE
 RIVER WON'T SOAK MY HEAD NO MORE
 PEOPLE: OH BEAU, BEAU YOU A MAN
 BEAU: THANK YOU, THANK YOU I'M A MAN
 PEOPLE: OH BEAU, BEAU YOU A MAN
 BEAU: THANK YOU, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN

(To Satan)

MET A GAMBLER, EVIL AS SIN

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

TAUGHT ME HOW TO SAVE MY SKIN

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

(To Sweet Justice)

WATCHED A THIEF FINGERS SO LIGHT

BEAU:

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

KEPT MY POCKETS BUTTONED UPTIGHT

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

(to Ana)

HERE'S THAT LADY WITH THE DAZZLING SMILE

PEOPLE:

LA PREMIER, LA PREMIER

BEAU:

TOOK THE TOWN AND GAVE IT STYLE

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

(to Jessie Five)

IN TROUBLED TIMES WHEN LIFE IS *sour*

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

GO TO THE WOMAN WITH THE CONJURE POWER

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

)to the town)

I LIVED ON THE SHIP, WORKED WITH THE CREW

GONNA LEAVE THIS HARBOR, WON'T LEAVE YOU

PEOPLE:

OH LOOK AT BEAU

BEAU

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN

PEOPLE: HE'S A MAN, HE'S A MAN

LOOK AT BEAU, LOOK AT BEAU

BEAU: THANK YOU, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN

PEOPLE: LOOK AT BEAU, LOOK AT BEAU

BEAU: THANK YOU, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN

(For Clarence) HEARD A NOTE PLAYED SO SWEET

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

STOLE MY HEART AND MOVED MY FEET

THANK YOU I'M A MAN

GOT MY MUSIC FROM THAT MAN

TAKE IT NOW ALL OVER THIS LAND

PEOPLE: OVER THIS LAND, OVER THIS LAND

TAKE IT NOW ALL OVER THIS LAND

OVER THIS LAND, OVER THIS LAND

SPREAD NEW ORLEANS ~~ON~~ ALL OVER THIS LAND

COBALT: LET ME TELL YOU 'BOUT NEW ORLEANS

PEOPLE: OVER THIS LAND, OVER THIS LAND

SPREAD NEW ORLEANS ALL OVER THIS LAND

COBALT: SING A SONG ABOUT NEW ORLEANS

PEOPLE OVER THIS LAND, OVER THIS LAND

SING NEW ORLEANS ALL OVER THIS LAND

COBALT: LET ME HEAR YOU SAY NEW ORLEANS

PEOPLE: NEW ORLEANS, NEWORLEANS

THANK YOU, THANK YOU NEW ORLEANS,

NEW ORLEANS, NEW ORLEANS

THANK YOU, THANK YOU NEW ORLEANS

ETC.

NEW ORLEANS