



New Orleans Script

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Citation Information

Morrison, Toni. 1931-

New Orleans Script

1 folder

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Date Rendered: 2019-09-05 01:30:36 PM UTC

Available Online at: <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/r207tt94s>

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7/6/82

(28)

June, 1982

185

RECEIVED SEP 30 1993

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RICHARD G. GREEN
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LE ADDRESS
OI, NEWYORK

September 15, 1993

Ms. Toni Morrison
Princeton University
70 Washington Road
Princeton, NJ 08544

Dear Toni:

I am moving into smaller space on the 21st floor of this building, and I am thinning out various files.

I find that I have four bound copies of the script for STORYVILLE (N'ORLEANS) as well as a photocopy of one. I am enclosing all of them. I used a couple of these for copyright registration.

All the best.

Sincerely yours,

Rich

RICHARD G. GREEN

RGG:wtr
Encs.

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GREEN & HILLMAN

~~Kevin Gebhard~~

~~225 Central Park West~~

~~New York, New York 10024~~

1270 Av of Americas

New York, N.Y. 10020

office copy - as deposited w/ © office
7/6/82

(28)

June, 1982

NEW ORLEANS

The Storyville Musical

by

TONI MORRISON

with

DONALD MCKAYLE

Copyright © 1982 by: Toni Morrison with Donald McKayle

GREEN + HILLMAN

~~Kevin Gebhard~~

~~225 Central Park West~~

~~New York, New York 10024~~

1270 Av of Americas

New York, N.Y. 10020

CAST

(In Order of Appearance)

JOHNNY	
ANA LA PREMIER	
CALLY (nee CALLA LILY)	Johnny
GENEVA	Company
BEAU	
FAYE	Ly's and Johnny's House
ELISE	
JESSICA FIVE (aka MADAM FIVE, JESSIE FIVE)	
SPASM BAND MEMBER 1	
SPASM BAND MEMBER 2	
SPASM BAND MEMBER 3	Jessica Five &
KNOCKOUT (aka BELLE FLEUR)	The Five
MOUTH (aka GLORIA MOON)	
COPPERBOTTOM (aka LURLEEN PRICE)	Scene 4
RAT (aka ROCHELLE LA FORTE)	Spasm Band
BAD BLOOD (aka PATRICIA DIAMOND)	Beau &
DOLLAR BILL (aka ADELLA WESTWOOD)	Company
VESUVIUS	Mouth
COBALT BLUE	Copperbottom
CLARANCE DEAL	Rat
TRICK BABY 1	Bad Blood
TRICK BABY 2	Dollar Bill
SATAN	Vesuvius
SWEET JUSTICE	La Premier's Girls
SHOOTER 2	
SHOOTER 3	
FRIEND 1	La Premier &
FRIEND 2	Johnny
FRIEND 3	
Let Me Introduce You	La Premier & Girls
An Entertainment	Clarence
SWEET JUSTICE	Sweet Justice
WIFE OF THE KING	La Premier's Girls
FINISH	Knockout
Scene 7 - Ana's Bedroom	
SATAN'S SONG	Satan
IS HE SURE	Clarence
Clarence's Theme	Clarence
Scene 8 - Ana's Courtyard	
NEW ORLEANS	Cobalt Blue
DADDY	Cobalt Blue &
	Trick Babies
Scene 9 - Jessica Five's House	
Woods Ceremony	Jessica Five, Cally,
	The Five, Zoshi,
	Celebrates

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

Overture

Scene 1 - The Docks

RIVER ARE YOU MY LADY..... Johnny
LA PREMIER..... Company

Scene 2 - Cally's and Johnny's House

WOMAN WORN ONCE..... Cally
IT'S SUNDAY..... Cally

Scene 3 - Jessica Five's House

A WOMAN LIKE ME..... Jessica Five &
The Five

Scene 4 - Spasm Band Headquarters

Rehearsal..... Beau &
Spasm Band
Beau's Fantasy..... Beau &
Company
GLORIA MOON..... Mouth
LURLEEN PRICE..... Copperbottom
ROCHELLE LA FORT..... Rat
PATRICIA DIAMOND..... Bad Blood
ADELLA WESTWOOD..... Dollar Bill
VESUVIUS..... Vesuvius
MY HOUSE..... La Premier's Girls

Scene 5 - Ana's Bedroom

Bedtime..... La Premier &
Johnny

Scene 6 - Ana's Parlor

Let Me Introduce You..... La Premier
& Girls
An Entertainment..... Clarence
SWEET JUSTICE..... Sweet Justice
MORE OF THE SAME..... La Premier's Girls
FIRST..... Knockout

Scene 7 - Ana's Bedroom

SATAN'S SONG..... Satan
IN MY SOUND..... Clarence
Clarence's Theme..... Clarence

Scene 8 - Ana's Courtyard

NEW ORLEANS..... Cobalt Blue
DADDY..... Cobalt Blue &
Trick Babies

Scene 9 - Jessica Five's House

Voodoo Ceremony..... Jessica Five, Cally,
The Five, Zombi,
Celebrants

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT II

Entr'acte

- Scene 1 - Satan's Hole
The Game..... Satan, Johnny,
Sweet Justice,
Gamblers
- Scene 2 - Ana's Courtyard
LONGSHOT GAMBLER..... Johnny
I PREFER THE PLEASURE..... La Premier
Clarence's Theme..... Beau & Clarence
Reprise: DADDY..... Beau, Cobalt Blue &
Trick Babies
- Scene 3 - Cally's and Johnny's House
WE BEEN MAMA..... Geneva & Friends
GET IT..... Cally & Friends
- Scene 4 - Ana's Parlor
Naked Dance..... Copperbottom
Duel..... La Premier & Cally
- Scene 5 - Ana's Courtyard
CALLA LILY..... Johnny
Reprise: IT'S SUNDAY..... Cally & Johnny
- Scene 6 - Ana's Parlor
THIS PIECE OF PLANET..... La Premier & Masquers
Reprise: Clarence's Theme..... Beau
- Scene 7 - Outside the Cemetery
EPITAPH..... Vesuvius
- Scene 8 - Ana's Bedroom
AU REVOIR, BON SOIR..... La Premier
- Scene 9 - The Docks
THANK YOU..... Beau, Cobalt Blue &
Company

(Lyrics © 1992 by Todd Norrison)

JOHNNY

WHER ARE YOU MY LADY

WHEN AM SOME HOW FOR DREAMING

THE FUTURE THAT YOU ARE SCREAMING

I CAN'T KEEP ON PRETENDING

YOUR THE FRUIT OF LABOR

OPEN UP. SHOW ME YOUR FAVORS

ACT IScene 1

New Orleans: fall of 1917.

Curtain opens on 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 accompanies himself singing a lively tune for the CROWD. There are VENDORS, IDLERS, CHILDREN, TOURISTS, POLICE, WOMEN with baskets and MEN with carts.

The song grows into a flirtatious romp as JOHNNY engages, first the CHILDREN in dance, then ONE of the MATRONS, and finishes with TWO YOUNG GIRLS in a foray of swirling skirts and laughter.

"RIVER ARE YOU MY LADY"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

JOHNNY

RIVER ARE YOU MY LADY
GIVE ME SOME HOPE FOR DREAMING
WHAT FUTURE THAT YOU ARE SCHEMING

I CAN'T KEEP ON PRETENDING
VIRTUE'S THE FRUIT OF LABOR
OPEN UP. SHOW ME YOUR FAVORS

1-1-1A

JOHNNY (Continued)

IF I PLUMB FORBIDDEN WATERS
YOU KNOW IT'S NOT TO STEAL YOUR DAUGHTERS
RIVER ARE YOU MY LADY

LET'S SEE THE PEARLS YOU'RE HIDING
FILL UP MY NET TONIGHT PLEASE
PLEASE RIVER, PLEASE BE MY LADY

(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.

THE FIRST NEGRO WOMAN IN THE WHOLE WIDE SOUTH
TO UNLIFT THE RACE WITH A GLASSY PLEASURE HOUSE
THEY SAY HER BACK IS SMOOTH AS SILK
THEY SAY SHE SOAKS HER THIGHS IN MILK
THEY SAY HER HAIR'S A TUTION OF GOLD
I KNOW HER HEART IS ICE-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 THOSE SHOES
MONEY IN HER POSE
DIAMONDS IN HER EARS
HER MISERABLE LIFE WILL BRING YOU TO TEARS

MEN

LOOK AT HER LIPS
OH LORD THOSE EYES

WOMEN

A LEV VINE WOMAN I DO DESPISE

(CONTINUED)

Throughout her dance the following
libretto is sung by various CHARACTERS
in the CROWD:

"LA PREMIER"

(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

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 NAVEL'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 challenging JOHNNY
that ends with her touching JOHNNY
with the tip of her walking stick
and then stroking the stick
suggestively)

JOHNNY

(Ignoring the stick)

Well, well. Look what the Mississippi 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.

1-1-4

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

LA PREMIER (Continued)

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 Offstage, 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)

ACT I

Scene 2

Algiers: a modest all black neighborhood, a detached part of New Orleans separated from the French Quarter by the Mississippi River and separated from Storyville by an age old difference in values.

The front room of CALLY's and JOHNNY's house. A typical shotgun layout 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 or 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 CALLY 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)

GENEVA (Continued)

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 Lord, 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 (Continued)

Arms?

(CALLY nods)

GENEVA (Continued)

Knees too, yeah?

(CALLY nods)

GENEVA (Continued)

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.

1-2-8

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.

1-2-10

CALLY (Continued)

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.

CALLY

Beau. You startled 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.

1-2-11

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

BEAU (Continued)

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 prayer for me was when Daddy
forgot to wind the clock and didn't know what time I got home.
Remember that?

1-2-12

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 (Continued)

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 (Continued)

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

(THEY stop. CALLY lets her hand drop
from BEAU's)

BEAU

Ma, I'm telling you. It's going to be all right.

1-2-14

CALLY

(Straightening)

I know it is because I'm going to make it all right. Eight o'clock tonight -- I'm going to make it all right.

BEAU

What you gonna do?

CALLY

Geneva said she'd see me.

BEAU

Who?

CALLY

Geneva says it works, that she's got the power.

(Enter FAYE and ELISE, CALLY's sisters)

FAYE & ELISE

(From outside)

Power? Power? Who's got power?

BEAU

It's Aunt Faye and Aunt Elise.

CALLY

Oh Lord.

FAYE

We brought some gumbo.

ELISE

And a loaf of fresh bread.

FAYE

We know you hungry.

ELISE

With nothing to eat.

FAYE

How come you weren't in church?

ELISE

Everybody noticed.

FAYE

Last Sunday either.

ELISE

As I recall.

1-2-15

FAYE

And your hair's a mess.

ELISE

Your dress is too.

FAYE

That hound bring the rent?

ELISE

Or a bite to eat?

CALLY

Oh, please. Things are bad enough without that.

FAYE

They gonna put you out of here, you don't pay the rent.

ELISE

Out in the street if you don't pay the rent.

FAYE

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

ELISE

Pack your bags and -- move in with us?

BEAU (Continued)

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

FAYE

Work?

ELISE

Work?

FAYE (Continued)

You supposed to be going to high school.

ELISE

Don't you want to graduate from high school?

CALLY (Continued)

It's all right. It's 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. A witch.

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 (Continued)

I lit candles.

(FAYE and ELISE cross themselves)

CALLY (Continued)

I prayed.

(FAYE and ELISE cross themselves)

CALLY (Continued)

I need a bigger, stronger power.

(FAYE and ELISE cross themselves three times)

CALLY (Continued)

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.

1-2-17

Have mercy. A bitch.	ELISE
A fake.	FAYE
A snake.	ELISE
Oh God. Voodoo.	FAYE
Oh God. Hoodoo.	ELISE
Oh Lord. Satan.	FAYE
Oh Lord. Matin'.	ELISE
Wild raves.	FAYE
Evil graves.	ELISE
Magic potions.	FAYE
Sexy lotions.	ELISE
Horses' manes.	FAYE
Baby brains.	ELISE
Powers of darkness.	FAYE
Naked starkness.	ELISE
Moral ruins.	FAYE
Nasty doin's.	ELISE
Filth and sin there.	FAYE

1-2-18

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 & ELISE

(To EACH OTHER -- exiting)
Have mercy, have mercy, have mercy on you!

(Scene changes to JESSICA FIVE's house with appropriate music)

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

Enough, I hear that.

CALLY

Who?

JESSICA FIVE

The Five. I can fool them: Wind. Water. Fire. Earth.
And the Unknown Element.

1-3-19

ACT I (Continued)

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 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.

JESSICA FIVE (Continued)

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.)

JESSICA FIVE sings "A WOMAN LIKE ME"
in antiphony with THE FIVE)

"A WOMAN LIKE ME"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

JESSICA FIVE

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

JESSICA FIVE (Continued)

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

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

1-4-22

ACT I

Scene 4

BEAU's SPASM BAND is rehearsing:
THREE TEENAGERS play homemade
instruments: percussion, strings,
etc., and BEAU, playing horn, leads.
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

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.

1-4-23

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.

(BEAU's imagination takes over.
CRIB WHORE sucking her thumb and
dressed as Baby Doll appears)

KNOCKOUT

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.

(SHE undulates 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.

1-4-24

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.

(BEAU's imagination transforms his friends. 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.

BANDMEMBER 1

Or the way your shoes squeak.

(MAN shoots another. POLICE take away corpse. BEAU returns momentarily to reality)

BANDMEMBER 2

They got 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.

(BANDMEMBERS laugh and exit)

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 © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

MOUTH

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 © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

COPPERBOTTOM

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 © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

RAT

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 la la FORT
FROM OLD NEWPORT

"PATRICIA DIAMOND"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

BAD BLOOD

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 © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

DOLLAR BILL

I'M MISS ADELLA 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

"VESUVIUS"

(Lyrics © 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 © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

ALL

DADDY DO, DADDY DO, DADDY DO, DADDY DO
COME TO MY HOUSE

1-4-27

ALL (Continued)

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

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 NEVER GONNA GET AWAY FROM ME

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

1-5-28

ACT I

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.

LA PREMIER

Give it to me.

JOHNNY

Come get it.

LA PREMIER

You know I got to have it.

JOHNNY

Can't wait?

LA PREMIER

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

JOHNNY

You got everything you need.

LA PREMIER

Put it on me -- oo.

JOHNNY

Hurt?

LA PREMIER

Mmm. Feels good.

JOHNNY

I can't find the hole.

LA PREMIER

There it is.

JOHNNY

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

LA PREMIER

Pull the tongue out. All the way out.

1-5-29

Now what?

JOHNNY

Now push it (back) in.

LA PREMIER

It's all the way in.

JOHNNY

Yes. I can tell.

LA PREMIER

How's it feel?

JOHNNY

Feels like what it was made for.

LA PREMIER

(HE reaches for her. SHE dodges him)

Come back quick.

JOHNNY

My walking stick.

LA PREMIER

Don't stay.

JOHNNY

I may.

LA PREMIER

I'll come get you.

JOHNNY

You won't have to.

LA PREMIER

(SHE exits with tapping stick.)

Lights out)

(THEY EACH greet KNOCKOUT according to the style of EACH ONE's personality)

LA PREMIER (Continued)

Knockout, this is Mouth, whom we advertise as Gloria Moon.

1-6-30

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 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 that dress, and those shoes. This is a house, darling, not a crib. See? Silk wall paper, velvet sofas, chandeliers all the 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 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 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)

LA PREMIER (Continued)

Knockout, this is Mouth, whom we advertise as Gloria Moon.

1-6-31

LA PREMIER (Continued)

Copperbottom, known as Lurleen Price; Rat or Rochelle La Fort; 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 forgot how to close your mouth when it's empty?

LA PREMIER

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 go get towels)

LA PREMIER (Continued)

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.

1-6-32

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 everything 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)

CLARENCE (Continued)

Good evening, you gorgeous evening ladies. Want me to make it

1-6-33

CLARENCE (Continued)

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 (Continued)

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 your 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 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 (Continued)

What's the commotion?

(The TRICK BABIES pull at her skirt)

1-6-34

LA PREMIER (Continued)

What do you all want?

TRICK BABY 1

Mama said you was going to auction us.

TRICK BABY 2

Yeah, you promised!

LA PREMIER

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

TRICK BABY 1

Cobalt say not to.

LA PREMIER

Well go on out in the courtyard for a while.

(COBALT BLUE comes in with a FISH-
MONGER)

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 walks him through and throws him
out of the door. No one pays any
attention [except KNOCKOUT]. On the
way back through, HE pauses to look
in the mirror and fix his hair, tie,
adjust cuffs, etc. Then takes out
his fingernail file 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 other.

BAD BLOOD

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

DOLLAR BILL

She a lying whore. Rat stole 'em.

1-6-35

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)

Oh, Sweet Justice, we sure love you!

(SWEET JUSTICE sings:)

"SWEET JUSTICE"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

SWEET JUSTICE

EVERYBODY LOVES JUSTICE, SWEET JUSTICE
BUT MERCY IS WHAT THEY NEED

LA PREMIER'S GIRLS

MERCY JUSTICE MERCY JUSTICE

SWEET 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

SWEET JUSTICE (Continued)

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 HOLLERED, "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
 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
 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"

LA PREMIER'S GIRLS

SWEET JUSTICE
 MERCY JUSTICE MERCY JUSTICE

SWEET JUSTICE

I RISK MY LIFE ALL OVER THIS TOWN
 TO STEAL THESE PRETTY THINGS
 BRACELETS AND DRESSES AND OPERA HOSE
 RIBBONS AND DIAMOND RINGS

SWEET JUSTICE (Continued)

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
 YOU CLIMB THOSE STAIRS, GO TO WORK,
 AND TAKE EM ALL OFF AGAIN
 AND YOU CALL THAT JUSTICE, SWEET,
 SWEET JUSTICE
 JUSTICE, 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

(MOUTH and RAT 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. Calm reigns for
 a moment, then there is a knock
 at the door. LA PREMIER opens
 it. It is BEAU)

VESUVIUS

Well, well looka here.

1-6-38

Hi Sweetie.

DOLLAR BILL

Ain't he cute?

RAT

Wanna dance?

COPPERBOTTOM

What's your name, Sugar?

LA PREMIER

My name's Beau.

BEAU

You sure are.

LA PREMIER

I came here to see my father.

BEAU

Your what? You mean --

LA PREMIER

(JOHNNY enters. HE is beautifully dressed now)

Johnny, you have a visitor.

LA PREMIER (Continued)

Beau!

JOHNNY

(To LA PREMIER)
What you let him in here for?

My doors don't have no locks.

LA PREMIER

Well get some.

JOHNNY

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

BEAU

This ain't no place for no talk.

JOHNNY

I got to. You owe me that.

BEAU

Go on, Johnny. Go talk to him. Use our -- my -- room.

LA PREMIER

1-6-39

VESUVIUS

(To BEAU)

And when you get through you can use my room, sweet stuff.

(JOHNNY throws a fake punch at her)

JOHNNY

Watch your filthy mouth!

(To BEAU)

All right. But make it short.

(HE walks into the room which HE shares with LA PREMIER. BEAU accompanies him, walking backwards, looking at the WOMEN.

A JOHN enters)

LA PREMIER

(To the TRICK BABIES)

Shoo! Shoo! Cobalt! Come get these children.

COBALT BLUE

I have to shell these peas, Ana. I don't have time to --

LA PREMIER

Shell them outside in the courtyard.

(Other JOHNS are entering; CLARENCE is playing and the GIRLS are being selected, selecting, etc. COBALT leaves with the TRICK BABIES in tow, carrying her bowl of peas)

CLARENCE

(To LA PREMIER)

Is he all right?

LA PREMIER

Johnny? Of course he's all right. Why?

CLARENCE

He's used to sweating in the day and resting at night. He can't change his clock just because you tightening the main-spring. It ain't natural -- you can change a man's mind, but you can't change his clock.

LA PREMIER

I don't want to change his clock. I just want it to tick in my bed.

KNOCKOUT

If he was my man, I wouldn't care what time he ticked, or where, long as I could oil his springs.

1-6-40

RAT

You telling me there's some oil in that little bitty can?
(Hits her behind)

KNOCKOUT

It may not be much, but at least my engine's new.

RAT

It better be new. It sure ain't got no power.

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 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 WISH FROM A WISHING WELL
WHAT WOULD IT BE?

MOUTH

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 DEUSENBERG, 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

1-6-42

(Exit laughing. ALL but KNOCKOUT
and CLARENCE)

CLARENCE

What's the matter, honey?

KNOCKOUT

Oh I don't know.

(KNOCKOUT sings "FIRST" with
CLARENCE accompanying her on
the piano)

"FIRST"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

KNOCKOUT (Continued)

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

1-7-43

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 (Continued)

(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 was 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 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.

1-7-44

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 then 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 agrees 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 in here.

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?

1-7-45

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.

(Exits)

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 (Continued)

Don't be scared.

(SATAN sings:)

"SATAN'S SONG"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

SATAN (Continued)

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
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

1-7-46

SATAN (Continued)

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 leading to the parlor, CLARENCE DEAL, singing and playing. HE sings "IN MY SOUND" and finishes with "CLARENCE'S THEME." The music is so beautiful and so unlike any BEAU has heard before that HE is transfixed. The music and the words begin to manipulate BEAU very much like the movements HE experienced with the women he fantasized. Framed in the opened doorway, HE is utterly seduced)

"IN MY SOUND"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

CLARENCE

HERE, IN MY SOUND
IS A ROOM FOR YOU
DROP YOUR LONGING BESIDE ME

HERE, IN MY SOUND
IS A LETTER FOR YOU
READ IT BY THE LIGHT INSIDE ME

WHAT YOU FEEL IS NOT COMPLEX
THE CLOSER YOU GET
TO MY SOUND: LOST IS FOUND;
SUFFERING WILL DIE
MY, OH MY
MY SOUND IS A ROOM WITH A VIEW
WAITING JUST FOR YOU

HERE IN MY SOUND
IS A PLACE FOR YOU
SPACE FOR YOU BESIDE ME

HERE IN MY SOUND, IN MY SOUND
LOVE IS GENTLE TO YOU
UNFOLD YOUR FOLDED HEART
ABIDE IN ME

1-8-47

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.

TRICK BABY 1

How come they never let us stay for the party?

COBALT BLUE

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

TRICK BABY 2

How soon is soon?

COBALT BLUE

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

TRICK BABY 1

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.

TRICK BABY 2

How old is my daddy?

COBALT BLUE

Your guess is as good as mine.

TRICK BABY 2

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 insurance on horseback in the navy.

TRICK BABY 2

Did he like my mama?

COBALT BLUE

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

TRICK BABY 2

How come he leave her?

COBALT BLUE

That's the way it is, darling. That's always the way it is.

TRICK BABY 2

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 1

Are they closing down our house?

COBALT BLUE

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

TRICK BABY 2

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.

TRICK BABY 1

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.

TRICK BABY 1

We got flowers.

(Runs to one of the potted plants in the courtyard)

COBALT BLUE

Yeah, we do. But it seems like flowers were prettier when I was a little 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. And before that, when my mama was a girl. I used to hear her talk about New Orleans

COBALT BLUE (Continued)

then. Now that was way, way back. 1792. 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 floating -- just like clouds. And Indians swarmed all over the levee selling herbs and pots and cloth. 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)

TRICK BABY 2

We got dancing.

COBALT 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. Everywhere we looked -- flowers and mimosa trees and birds like you can't find nowhere anymore.

(COBALT BLUE sings:)

"NEW ORLEANS"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

COBALT BLUE (Continued)

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

1-8-50

COBALT BLUE (Continued)

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

(TRICK BABIES and COBALT BLUE
sing:)

"DADDY"

(Lyrics © 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 BLUE

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
YOU WOULDN'T STAY
WAY DOWN HERE IN NEW ORLEANS

TELL ME SOMETHING, DADDY
FORGOT YOUR ADDRESS
YOU GOT IN SOME MESS
WITH ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE
WELL BUY YOU A MAP
PUT YOUR FINGER ON IT
PUSH IT DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

1-8-51

COBALT BLUE (Continued)

AND STOP DOGGONE IT
YOU IN NEW ORLEANS
OH YES THAT'S NEW, NEW ORLEANS

COBALT BLUE & 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'S
MY MEAT
THE ONLY WAY YOU EVER GONNA GET YOU
A PIECE
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 DADDY
DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS

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 colgate, spiraling up the scale. SHE bends CALLY backward, placing the girl-girl on her groin.

1-9-52

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 who flank her. Intermittently the moaning resolves into a clicking of her teeth as SHE draws in a deep breath. This sound is reinforced 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 (Continued)

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,

1-9-53

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 (Continued)

... 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 (Continued)

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.

1-9-54

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 (Continued)

In five days he will be back in your bed.

ACT I CURTAIN

As the curtain rises a downspot hits SATAN standing at the table. Music accompanies the stately 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:

Low Deck -- Call your bets.

Two bits.

Four bits.

PLAYER 1

PLAYER 2

ACT IIScene 1

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 LA PREMIER. What LA PREMIER's parlor is in catering to the luxurious taste 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 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 Up Center of the gambling table and as the GAMBLERS enter through it, light pours in, illuminating the darkened reaches. This particular portal gives the gambling joint its name. It is round and unusually low causing one to bend, almost crouch, to gain entry or exit. This also makes a 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.

PLAYER 1

Two bits.

PLAYER 2

Four bits.

PLAYER 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 (Continued)

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 the tail.

(JOHNNY pushes back his chair and rises from the table. SWEET JUSTICE turns to SATAN)

SWEET JUSTICE (Continued)

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 an 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.

2-1-4

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 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 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

Boxcars 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)

SATAN (Continued)

Five looking for six.

JOHNNY

Come on six. Bless yourself six. Just two little rows of rabbit shit. S-I-X.

(HE throws)

SATAN

Nine looking for six. Six on the bottom, sweating hard cause the dice got 'em.

2-1-5

(JOHNNY throws)

SATAN (Continued)

Ten looking for six.

JOHNNY

Little Joe Little Joe, everywhere this poor man go.
(HE throws)

SATAN

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

JOHNNY

Well that about taps me out.

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 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 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 finger for that razor and I'll split your skull like a hog's 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.

2-1-6

SWEET JUSTICE

I fight 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 with a broad ax before they get the message.

(SWEET JUSTICE 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)

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 let me stop you. Only reason I hesitated is cause cuttin' the 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 BLUE enters, backing in
through the hole and turns to
display a tray loaded down with
platefuls of stuffed crayfish.
SHE cuts right through the violence
about to erupt, hawking her wares)

COBALT BLUE

Crayfish! Get Cobalt's good hot crayfish! Look out, I'm comin' through.

2-1-7

JOHNNY

Get out of here, Cobalt.

COBALT BLUE

Man, don't tell me when to jump and don't tell me how high.

(Notices the drawn weapons)

Put that mess down and buy some dinner. I have to make a living, too.

(Selecting dinners from the tray)

Here you go. Two quarters. You gonna love it. Stuffed by a woman with love in her heart. Two quarters. Knock 'em together, back to back. Crayfish so fresh it don't know it's cooked.

(The MEN pounce upon the food with the same relish THEY exhibited for the fight. JOHNNY leaves in disgust and confusion. SATAN and SWEET JUSTICE are the last holdouts for the feast. THEY continue their steady approach. COBALT slams the almost empty tray down on the table and stepping between them thrusts two plates in their faces)

COBALT BLUE (Continued)

Here, Sweet. This is yours. No sense going to hell on an empty stomach. Satan, come on. I cooked 'em just like you like it -- hot as hellfire.

(The music returns to the stealthy feel of the scene's beginning as the MEN dance their exits leaving COBALT between the two ADVERSARIES who take the proffered plates and bite down hard on the delectable morsels. As the lights dim JOHNNY enters Downstage. We fade on SATAN's Hole)

DON'T OPEN MY EYES
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
CAN'T SEE NO FUTURE IN MY HAND

(LA PREMIER enters and notices how
melancholy HE looks)

2-2-8

ACT II

Scene 2

Courtyard of ANA LA PREMIER's house.
JOHNNY enters, disconsolate. HE sees
his banjo (or guitar) lying, dis-
carded, somewhere in the garden. HE
picks it up and strums a little and
then sings:

"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
PLACE THE BET, TOOK A CHANCE
LOOKING FOR A STREAK OF LUCK
SHOT THE DICE
NOT ONCE BUT TWICE
LORD DON'T LET ME
LOSE TOO MUCH

DON'T OPEN 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
CAN'T SEE NO FUTURE IN MY HAND

(LA PREMIER enters and notices how
melancholy HE looks)

2-2-9

LA PREMIER

Somebody dead?

JOHNNY

Huh? Oh. No. I was just --

LA PREMIER

Just what?

JOHNNY

Thinking.

LA PREMIER

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.

LA PREMIER

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.

LA PREMIER

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.

LA PREMIER

You do work.

JOHNNY

I mean real work.

LA PREMIER

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?

2-2-10

LA PREMIER

Then what is it?

JOHNNY

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

LA PREMIER

Customers.

JOHNNY

You don't have to have customers, do you? 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.

LA PREMIER

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 me. 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 --

LA PREMIER

A what?

JOHNNY

You like this business, don't you?

LA PREMIER

It's my life.

JOHNNY

You can change it.

LA PREMIER

I can't. I can't live any other way.

JOHNNY

Why? Why can't you?

(LA PREMIER sings:)

"I PREFER THE PLEASURE"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

LA PREMIER

I PREFER TO RESIST AN UNEVENTFUL LIFE
NO BUTTER CHURNING, BISCUITS BURNING, MELON RINDS

2-2-11

LA PREMIER (Continued)

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 REEL ON MY PORCH
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

(LA PREMIER and JOHNNY exit. SHE
with her tapping stick; HE entangled
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 or two -- to get
someone's attention. Nothing happens.
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. Their
"conversation" 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?

2-2-12

BEAU

I don't just like it, it makes my blood go.

CLARENCE

No kidding? You mean it's like a part of you that was there before you 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, 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 tune. Preach sermons against it even. But if you 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 denying it, but dealing with it in a way that keeps us men. It's the way we talk about what's inside. Cause for us things don't never get no better. And a little pretty noise is the

2-2-13

CLARENCE (Continued)

only way to make it through. I call it noise, but you know what it is? A weapon. Some people think it's entertainment but it's a secret weapon. They can't kill a man's music and they can't kill a man who knows that.

BEAU

Just teach me, Mr. Deal. Teach me.

(JOHNNY enters with LA PREMIER)

JOHNNY

What is this?

(To BEAU)

You back in here? I thought I told you never to come back in here!

CLARENCE

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

JOHNNY

Over my dead body.

CLARENCE

Hey! Hey! No cause for alarm. Let him stay. 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 not a man, Clarence. Nothing but a baby.

TRICK BABIES

What you say? Nothing but a baby?

JOHNNY

You heard me.

TRICK BABY 1

He's older than me and I'm here.

JOHNNY

(To LA PREMIER)

Will you get these children away from me?

COBALT BLUE

Maybe you should be away from them.

LA PREMIER

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 --

2-2-14

JOHNNY

Nobody knows what I'm feeling!

SATAN

Jealous. is what you feeling.

VESUVIUS

You mean evil.

COBALT BLUE

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. LA PREMIER gestures)

BEAU

It's all right, Miss Ana. 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 encouraging

BEAU. JOHNNY is speechless.

BEAU, TRICK BABIES and COBALT BLUE
sing a reprise of:)

"DADDY" (Reprise)

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

2-2-15

BEAU

WHAT'S THE MATTER, DADDY?
SOMETHING STUCK IN YOUR CRAW
OR WHY IS YOUR JAW
HANGING ON YOUR CHEST
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
FORGOT YOUR ADDRESS?
YOU GOT IN SOME MESS
AND LEFT YOUR WIFE

TRICK BABIES

BUY YOU A MULE
PUT YOUR BOTTOM ON IT
RIDE IT TO THE MISSISSIPPI
AND JUMP, DOGGONE IT
GET CROSSTOWN
WAY CROSS NEW ORLEANS

TRICK BABIES & BEAU

WAY CROSS
WAY CROSS
GO ON DADDY
WAY, WAY CROSS
CRISS CROSS, RUN CROSS
SKIP CROSS NEW ORLEANS

COBALT BLUE

YOU SO GOOD LOOKING
YOU BUILT FOR SPEED
YOU GOT EVERYTHING A GOOD 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,

TOGETHER

WAY CROSS
WAY CROSS NEW ORLEANS

ACT II

Scene 3

CALLY's and JOHNNY's livingroom.
Three woman FRIENDS, wives of the
trawlers, are assembled. GENEVA
enters.

GENEVA

Is she dead?

FRIEND 1

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

I heard she was dead or dying or asleep or something.

FRIEND 2

It's a long way from sleep to dying.

GENEVA

Maybe not as long as you think.

FRIEND 1

Will you hush? The girl is tired is all.

FRIEND 3

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

GENEVA

Three days? Where's that boy of hers?

FRIEND 3

I heard he been sneaking in and out of the District too.
Just like his daddy.

GENEVA

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.

FRIEND 1

That's not it. He's taking music lessons over in there.

GENEVA

Oh yeah? Who's teaching?

FRIEND 1

Clarence Deal. You know. Mary Deal's oldest son.

2-3-17

FRIEND 3

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

FRIEND 2

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

FRIEND 1

Her sisters see after her.

FRIEND 2

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

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.

FRIEND 1

That was right after she went to see Jessie Five.

GENEVA

Don't I know it?

FRIEND 1

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

GENEVA

And nothing happened?

FRIEND 1

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

GENEVA

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

FRIEND 2

Well what she gonna do? Stay in bed forever?

GENEVA

Let me tell you women something. Being married is hard, you hear? Hard.

(GENEVA and FRIENDS sing "WE BEEN MAMA")

"WE BEEN MAMA"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

WE BEEN WIVES ALL OUR LIVES
WE BEEN MAMA
WE ARE AUNTIE, WE ARE SIS
HAND ME THAT -- GIVE ME THIS

(CONTINUED)

2-3-18

BY THE TIME THE SUN COMES UP
STARING INTO COFFEE CUPS
JUST ABOUT TO
FIGURE HOW TO
WALK ON WATER ONE MORE DAY
SEE A WALL WE MAKE A WAY

WE BEEN WIVES ALL OUR LIVES
WE BEEN MAMA
WE BEEN WIVES ALL OUR LIVES
WITNESS TO OTHER FOLKS' DRAMA
ALTO SONG IN OTHER FOLKS' HARMONY
WE BEEN WIVES ALL OUR LIVES
WE BEEN MAMA

WE BEEN WIVES ALL OUR LIVES
WE BEEN MAMA
ARE YOU SICK, ARE YOU BLUE
LET ME KNOW, I'LL CRAWL TO YOU

BY THE TIME THE MOON COMES ROUND
FORE WE SMOOTH THE PILLOW DOWN
WE STILL GOT TO
FIGURE HOW TO
WALK ON WATER ONE MORE DAY
SEE A WALL WE MAKE A WAY

WE BEEN WIVES ALL OUR LIVES
WE BEEN MAMA
WE BEEN WIVES ALL OUR LIVES
WITNESS TO OTHER FOLKS' DRAMA
THE HA-HA-HA IN OTHER FOLKS' COMEDY
WE BEEN WIVES ALL OUR LIVES
WE BEEN MAMA

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

(CONTINUED)

2-3-19

CALLY

Out! Out!

FAYE

... And he'll never be nothing.

ELISE

Never. Nothing.

GENEVA

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)

FRIEND 1

Come on, honey.

FRIEND 2

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.

2-3-20

GENEVA

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?

FRIEND 1

I got it.

CALLY

You got it?

FRIEND 2

I got it, girl.

CALLY

And you? You got it?

FRIEND 3

We got it.

CALLY

Okay! Now! Battle stations!

GENEVA

What you gonna do?

CALLY

I'm gonna take what is mine.

FRIEND 1

Oh Lord.

CALLY

I'm gonna hold what I have.

GENEVA

Praise His name.

CALLY

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

FRIEND 3

Sweet Jesus.

CALLY

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

FRIEND 2

Save us.

2-3-21

And I need shoes!

CALLY

Amen.

ALL

I got some shoes.

GENEVA

Get 'em.

CALLY

I got some real pretty stockings.

FRIEND 3

Get 'em.

CALLY

FRIEND 2

(To FRIEND 1)

Didn't that woman whose house you clean give you a dress?

FRIEND 1

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!

2-4-22

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, LA PREMIER, 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 HITTER. LA PREMIER 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 LA PREMIER and JOHNNY. HE starts. BEAU sees her too and calls "Ma!" The

2-4-23

music stops as EVERYBODY stares at her. CALLY is thoroughly non-plussed. Hurt, angry, completely out of her element.

Into the silence LA PREMIER 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 LA PREMIER's stick away. THEY stand for a moment and look into each other's eyes holding onto the stick. JOHNNY's grasp is firm. LA PREMIER 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 LA PREMIER. LA PREMIER enters with confident aggression. The TWO WOMEN then dance competitively. It ends with a "draw."

JOHNNY hands LA PREMIER 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 is soundlessly and increasingly darkened until CALLY and JOHNNY are alone in courtyard.

(SHE begins to cry. HE sings:)

"CALLA LILY"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

JOHNNY (Continued)

CALLA LILY DON'T CRY
LORD KNOWS I'VE BEEN STONE BLIND

2-5-24

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 (Continued)

Cally.

CALLY

Calla Lily!

JOHNNY

Calla Lily?

(SHE begins to cry. HE sings:)

"CALLA LILY"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

JOHNNY (Continued)

CALLA LILY DON'T CRY

LORD KNOWS I'VE BEEN STONE BLIND

2-5-25

JOHNNY (Continued)

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

(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)

2-5-26

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)

SWEET JUSTICE

Where's everybody?

(COBALT BLUE enters)

COBALT BLUE

Sleep. What you think?

SWEET JUSTICE

Ass?

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.

2-6-27

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.

2-6-28

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'.

SATAN

You bet in my house, you pay off the house and 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
the Mayor can't do a thing about it.

(TWO GIRLS come down the stairs with
a JOHN)

2-6-29

JOHN

(Tying his tie and yawning)

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?

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

2-6-30

SWEET JUSTICE (Continued)

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. What you gonna
do, Ana?

LA PREMIER

(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 district, believe me, it's going to stay closed! Music,
Clarence. Pull it out, sweetheart. 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 MASQUED
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)

2-6-31

"THIS PIECE OF PLANET"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

LA PREMIER & MASQUERS

THIS PIECE OF PLANET IS MINE
I DON'T WANT YOUR KIND
IT STIMULATES MY MIND
TO KNOW THAT I CAN FIND
DAY, NIGHT, ANY TIME
THIS PIECE OF PLANET IS MINE
IT STIMULATES MY MIND

(Following the masqued 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.

2-6-32

CLARENCE

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

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, and nothing's gonna stop me now.

(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 (Continued)

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, LA PREMIER rushes toward CLARENCE)

LA PREMIER

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

(SATAN runs out)

LA PREMIER (Continued)

Oh Clarence. You of all people.

(CLARENCE coughs)

CLARENCE

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

2-6-33

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

CLARENCE (Continued)

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 no freight.

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 "CLARENCE'S THEME" solo.)

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

(As the COFFIN carrying the funeral
passages, VERVIVUS lowers her veil
and follows. BEAU brings up the rear.
The last notes of his horn trail off
into the darkness)

2-7-34

ACT II

Scene 7

Lights up on VESUVIUS wearing a mourning veil. SHE is one of a GROUP of MOURNERS. SHE sings an epitaph -- a vocal statement of "CLARENCE'S THEME" interspersed with BEAU's horn playing.

"EPITAPH"

(Lyrics (c) 1982 by Toni Morrison)

VESUVIUS

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

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 follows. BEAU brings up the rear. The last notes of his horn trail off into the darkness)

2-8-35

ACT II

Scene 8

ANA LA PREMIER enters her bedroom. Removes her mourning hat and veil. 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, LA PREMIER "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 LA PREMIER, watching them go, sings:

"AU REVOIR, BON SOIR"

(Lyrics © 1982 by Toni Morrison)

LA PREMIER
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

2-8-36

LA PREMIER (Continued)

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

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 -- EVERYONE dancing
and singing. BEAU will mount the
ramp to the wonderful river boat, and
from that height HE continues the
following song with COMEY and COMPANY.

"THANK YOU"

(Lyrics © 1962 by Toni Morrison)

BEAU

(To CARRY)

GOT DOWN FROM MY MOTHER'S TREE
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 LA PREMIER'S GIRLS)

SWAN THE RIVER GOT TO SHORE
RIVER WON'T SOAK MY HEAD NO MORE

COMPANY

OH BEAU, BEAU YOU A MAN

BEAU

THANK YOU, THANK YOU I'M A MAN

COMPANY

OH BEAU, BEAU YOU A MAN

BEAU

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN

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 -- EVERYONE dancing and singing. BEAU will mount the ramp to the wonderful river boat, and from that height HE continues the following song with COBALT and 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 LA PREMIER'S GIRLS)

SWAM THE RIVER GOT TO SHORE
RIVER WON'T SOAK MY HEAD NO MORE

COMPANY

OH BEAU, BEAU YOU A MAN

BEAU

THANK YOU, THANK YOU I'M A MAN

COMPANY

OH BEAU, BEAU YOU A MAN

BEAU

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN

2-9-38

BEAU (Continued)

(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
THANK YOU I'M A MAN
KEPT MY POCKETS BUTTONED UP TIGHT
THANK YOU I'M A MAN

(To LA PREMIER)

HERE'S THAT LADY WITH THE DAZZLING SMILE

COMPANY

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, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN
GO TO THE WOMAN WITH THE CONJURE POWER

COMPANY

OH LOOK AT BEAU, LOOK AT BEAU

BEAU

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN

COMPANY

HE'S A MAN, HE'S A MAN
LOOK AT BEAU, LOOK AT BEAU

BEAU

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, I'M A MAN

COMPANY

LOOK AT BEAU, LOOK AT BEAU

BEAU

THANK YOU, 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

(For CLARENCE)

HEARD A NOTE PLAYED SO SWEET
THANK YOU I'M A MAN

2-9-39

BEAU (Continued)
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

COMPANY
OVER THIS LAND, OVER THIS LAND
TAKE IT NOW ALL OVER THIS LAND
OVER THIS LAND, OVER THIS LAND
SPREAD NEW ORLEANS ALL OVER THIS LAND

COBALT BLUE
LET ME TELL YOU 'BOUT NEW ORLEANS

COMPANY
OVER THIS LAND, OVER THIS LAND
SPREAD NEW ORLEANS ALL OVER THIS LAND

COBALT BLUE
SING A SONG ABOUT NEW ORLEANS

COMPANY
OVER THIS LAND, OVER THIS LAND
SING NEW ORLEANS ALL OVER THIS LAND

COBALT BLUE
LET ME HEAR YOU SAY NEW ORLEANS

COMPANY
NEW ORLEANS, NEW ORLEANS
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, NEW ORLEANS
NEW ORLEANS, NEW ORLEANS
THANK YOU, THANK YOU, NEW ORLEANS

(Etc.)

NEW ORLEANS

THE END

