

# CLARA'S HEART

Screenplay by Mark Medoff

*Based on the novel by Joseph Olsan*

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ALL BLACK  
TITLE SEQUENCE

SOUND OF HUMMING AND OF MAGAZINE PAGES BEING TURNED. Then the pages stop turning, the humming stops, and we HEAR ONLY BREATHING as we

FADE IN  
TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED

CLOSE ON BLANKET, SOMEONE HUNCHED BENEATH IT...as FROM ELSEWHERE IN THE HOUSE WE HEAR A WOMAN SCREAM. A Playboy magazine squirts onto the floor as DAVID HART, a stocky twelve year old in glasses, battles from under the blanket--startled, guilty, and, as THE WOMAN SCREAMS AGAIN, most of all now, frightened.

FAST FADE OUT  
TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUES as we HEAR a RABBI CHANTING THE KADDISH and  
FADE IN on  
EXT CEMETERY DAY

EARLY SPRING. David with his parents, LEONA and BILL HART, walking away from the miniature coffin of his infant sister. His mother weeps, his father holds her. Though with them, David seems separate. The door of the limousine is held open and David tries to press his lips to his mother's cheek, but she twists her head away and ducks into the car. His father pats David on the head and David turns to stare back at the gravesite.

FADE OUT  
END TITLE SEQUENCE  
FADE IN  
EXT HART HOME DAY

LATE SPRING. A foreboding looking BABYSITTER, GLYNNIS, behind him, David watches his mother, pale and woozy, hanging on to his father, get into a cab as the CABBIE puts the last of the luggage into the trunk. His father, looking weary but wearing a silly-looking straw hat, turns tiredly to David...

BILL  
Lay off the cookies and sugar  
coated glop, whudduya say, pal.

David nods and his father disappears into the cab. As the taxi whisks his parents away from David and the somber looking Glynnis, David lifts a small farewell.

IN THE KITCHEN

Baseball game on the kitchen TV. David studies the contents of the refrigerator as Glynnis enters, stares at him. Guiltily,

David closes the frig.

INT HALLWAY DAY

David at the door to his parent's bedroom. He walks down the hall to a closed bedroom door. Opens it. We SEE the deceased infant's room, still completely intact. David closes the door and goes into

HIS BEDROOM

He turns on his air conditioner and puts on a parka. Sits with his butterfly collection, opens the glass frame, and fingers the tiger-swallowtails and the mourning cloaks. The powder of butterfly wings smudges his fingers and he smells the sweet must. He turns to look at something else. Crosses the room and almost reluctantly takes from hiding the current Playboy. Opens it to the centerfold, stares, hesitates...then closes the door to his room IN OUR FACE.

EXT JAMAICA DAY - CLOSE ON GOLF BALL

The ball is driven INTO THE SUN. PULLBACK. Bill playing with ANOTHER MAN, LEO. THE FLIGHT OF THE BALL PANS us TOWARD A HOTEL. From Rye, New York to the tropics. From silence to an ISLAND SONG.

NT HOTEL CORRIDOR DAY

CLARA MAYFIELD, SINGING A CAPPELLA THE SAME SONG, pushes her maid's cart to the door of 835. From within the room we HEAR WATER RUNNING.

CLARA  
'Ello, clack clack. Step  
about, maid is here.

Ignoring the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door, she uses her passkey.

INT HART HOTEL ROOM DAY

The curtains are pulled shut, billowing softly with the trade winds. The room is a mess. Pastel-colored golf shirts are strewn across the antique dresser, bottles of cosmetics clutter the vanity table. Clara looks at the two brass-framed pictures of a little boy and a baby on the cosmetics stand. She knocks on the bathroom door.

CLARA  
Maid is here.

LEONA (O.C.)  
Come back later. There's  
nothing for you to do now.

CLARA  
But you have your Do Not  
Disturb our dere from morning  
till night.  
(No answer)  
At least let me part de  
curtains.

LEONA (O.C.)  
Please, no. Just leave them.

Defiantly Clara draws back the curtains and flings open the  
shutters.

LEONA (O.C.)  
Excuse me, are you still here?  
Hello..?

CLARA  
Hold on, coming...  
(Under her breath)  
...you ras.

LEONA (O.C.)  
I have a shaver in that case  
on the vanity table. Could  
you bring it to me?

CLARA  
Yes, m'am.

She picks it up, opens the bathroom door.

THE BATHROOM has a head of steaming clinging to the ceiling.  
Leona sodden in the murky remains of a bubble bath. She appears  
to have bruises below her eyes. Clara takes her in, then looks  
discreetly away.

LEONA  
Thank you. I missed a spot  
yesterday.

Leona reaches woozily for the razor, lifts a leg to the lip of  
the tub.

CLARA  
What's de difference if ya  
got a hairy place if you stay  
in de room all de day? Listen

CLARA (Con't)  
to me: If ya take ya worries  
with you, dem will dig their  
roots into new soil same as de  
old. You must bust up de gloomy.

Leona stares at Clara, then makes a move to get out of the tub.  
Can't. Clara reaches for her robe, helps Leona.

IN THE BEDROOM Leona is startled to find that Clara has ignored  
her wishes and opened the curtains. She looks at the black  
woman; Clara looks right back. Leona deflects her eyes to the  
window, takes in the beautiful view. Then turns impulsively to  
Clara.

LEONA  
I'm hungry.

CLARA  
Yes?

LEONA  
Yes. I haven't eaten a thing  
all day.

CLARA  
How bout I will order you some-  
thing special.

Clara dials. Behind her, Leona watches curiously.

CLARA  
'Ello, tell de super is Clara  
Mayfield calling from eight-  
thirty-five. Tell him send up  
a traditional with a side order of  
chocho. Wait, you have toto  
down dere?...Don't tell me it's  
not for guest. I have someone  
dat grew up in Jamaica longing  
fe eat it. She want to taste  
her childhood.

Clara winks at Leona. A small smile graces Leona's lips.

BACK ON THE GOLF COURSE

Bill and Leo on the eleventh green. Bill lining up his putt.

BILL  
Think, we better pass, Leo.  
My wife's still not feeling  
all that well.

Bill steps over his putt.

LEO  
How bout you 'n me pop out  
alone then?

BILL  
No, I don't think so. I'm  
scheduled for nursing duty  
this evening.

He strokes the putt with just enough resentment...

LEO  
Dive, ball, dive.

...that the ball rolls eight feet past the hole.

BILL  
Christ.

#### IN THE ROOM

Leona watches as Clara takes the tray at the door and shoos away  
the curious WAITER. She sets the food out.

LEONA  
That looks like scrambled eggs.

CLARA  
No, sir. Taste it and den say  
dat.

Clara pulls a chair out. Leona sits and takes a small forkful.

LEONA  
This is wonderful.

CLARA  
Good cigar!

LEONA  
What spices are in it?

CLARA  
Secret spices. Tastes of  
another life.

Leona takes big bites.

CLARA  
Would taste even better if  
you could get in downtown Port  
Antonio. Ingredients fresher  
and they specialize.

LEONA  
Maybe one day I'll hire a  
driver and go see the town.

CLARA  
Bus runs by de hotel every  
hour. You don't need a car  
and driver. Only a few cents  
and ya feet. Now I have to go.

Leona seems disappointed.

LEONA  
Of course. You've been very  
kind, Clara.

CLARA  
(Heading for the  
door)  
How difficult is it to be kind  
to people?

At the door she turns back to Leona.

CLARA  
You go and bust up de gloomy.

And she's gone, leaving Leona looking after her.

INT HOTEL HALLWAY DAY

THE NEXT DAY. Dressed, her movements free of medication, Leona  
closes the door to her room. An ELDERLY MAID in hotel uniform  
pushes a cart of linens.

LEONA  
Is Clara Mayfield working on  
another floor today?

ELDERLY MAID  
That is no business of yours.  
We have rules about fraternizing  
wid maids.

LEONA  
I was just curious to know if  
she was here.

The maid is silent.

LEONA  
Are you going to tell me?

ELDERLY MAID  
Even fallen angels have days  
off.

The Elderly Maid pushes her cart away from a baffled Leona.

EXT HOTEL ROADWAY DAY

A red double-decker diesel bus approaches. Leona, waiting alone,  
flags it.

IN THE BUS

Leona is the only white person. THE JAMAICANS look at her with a  
mixture of curiosity and scorn.

EXT PORT ANTONIO MARKET DAY

Drawn by the shrill cries of MERCHANTS, Leona inspects bolts of  
bright colored cloth, straw dolls and hats and calypso figures.  
The heat is oppressive; Leona's blouse is drenched. She strolls  
through the stalls of outdoor BUTCHERS, looking at meat carcasses  
offered on hooks. MONGERS hold up wicker baskets full of fish.  
She stops where a BUXOM WOMAN with hoop earrings vends pork jerky  
from a barrel. Helping the woman is a BONY TWELVE YEAR OLD GIRL  
with fervent eyes, whose red pinafore is torn.

LEONA  
Could I try a piece, please?

The Buxom Woman scornfully hands her a piece. Leona hands the  
woman a dollar. The woman hands the dollar to the child to make  
change. Leona tastes the jerky as she waits. By the look on her  
face, it's too salty for her. The Buxom Woman seems pleased.

LEONA  
I was wondering if you might  
know of someone in Port Antonio.

BUXOM WOMAN  
Can try me, I suppose.

LEONA  
I was wondering if you know  
Clara Mayfield.

The Monger glances away nervously.

LITTLE GIRL  
She looking Clara Mayfield.

BUXOM WOMAN  
Shut up ya mouth.  
(To Leona)  
If you seeking advice, she no  
longer advise. Seek a gypsy.

LEONA  
I'm sorry..?

BUXOM WOMAN  
How you get her name?

LEONA  
I met her at my hotel.

LITTLE GIRL  
Momma, don't you hear de song?  
"To de hotel angel fall..."

BUXOM WOMAN  
Phillippa, don't be rude.

LITTLE GIRL  
"High as Babylon, but she do  
fall..."

BUXOM WOMAN  
If you continue like dat, you  
will see what happen.

LITTLE GIRL  
Clara Mayfield was de muddar  
of a cliff boy that jump right  
off into hell.

BUXOM WOMAN  
Phillippa..!

LITTLE GIRL  
But before him jump, him do  
shame.

BUXOM WOMAN  
(Swiping at the  
Little Girl)  
What I tell you!

The angry Monger grabs her daughter, but the child wrenches away, in the process knocking over a metal cashbox, sending coins scattering on the ground.

BUXOM WOMAN  
Ah, ya devil child, ya like  
to make me crazy!

The Little Girl scampers off.

BUXOM WOMAN  
Come back here, ya devil's  
child!  
(To Leona)  
You leave me! If you must,  
ya ask elsewhere!

INT THE HART'S HOTEL ROOM DAY

Clara pulls the coverlet tightly over the hotel bed. Leona watches.

CLARA  
I certainly wish I could  
have known you'd be in town.  
I would have arranged to  
meet you.

LEONA  
On your day off?

CLARA  
How much trouble could dat  
be?

LOUD RAPPING AT THE DOOR. Muttering something unintelligible to the WAITER, Clara takes the tea tray and sets it on a bureau. Into a china pot, she begins measuring dark tea.

LEONA  
Did you stay home yesterday?

CLARA  
Just quiet. Writing letters  
to friends in Brooklyn.

LEONA  
Brooklyn?

CLARA  
Can't ya tell by me accent  
me come from Brooklyn?

Leona LAUGHS. Clara goes outside to her linen cart.

CLARA  
One friend has hairdressing  
parlor in Flatbush. Other  
friends work dere.

She returns with a brown paper parcel.

CLARA  
I brought a bakery bun you  
should try. How about we  
have our tea on de terrace?

Leona gets up to follow.

LEONA  
You don't care if they see  
you having tea with me?

CLARA  
Let them discharge me. I  
lived through worse dan dat.

Leona follows Clara out into the sunlight of...

#### THE TERRACE

...where Clara pours tea daintily and cuts the bun into slices  
and puts them on a plate.

CLARA  
I can see, Mrs. Hart, even  
feeling better you are just  
as gloomy as before. We must  
do something about dis. No one  
like to be around someone dat  
only cast shadows.

LEONA  
You're married, aren't you,  
Clara?

CLARA  
Yes.

LEONA  
Does your husband work in  
town?

(When Clara gazes  
blankly at her)  
I'm being too inquisitive.

CLARA  
No....My husband is working out  
de country just now. In Cuba.

LEONA  
So you're alone right now.

CLARA  
By circumstance. Despite any-  
thing, though, I don't allow  
myself to be regretful. Just  
can't live so. Your husband is  
in de Cuba of de golf course.  
Listen na, maybe if ya truly  
bust up de gloomy, he would  
come back from dat exile, yeah?

LEONA  
My two-month old daughter died  
in her crib three months ago.

CLARA  
Didn't know de fact, but me  
knew the substance. Dem we  
lose, Mrs. Hart, are buried  
first in de ground. But they  
cannot rest until we bury dem  
here.

(She touches Leona's  
head, takes her hand)  
And until we do dat, we punish  
and even kill a little bit all  
dem dat survive the one dat  
die.

They turn to the DOOR OPENING as Bill enters, holding a cluster  
of hibiscus blooms before him. And sees his wife on the terrace  
having tea with a hotel maid, who's holding her hand. It's a  
moment before Leona can tear her focus from Clara, as if she's  
magnetized to her. And now she ignites a blazing smile--the first  
we've seen--when she manages to focus on Bill.

LEONA  
Oh, Bill, come meet the most  
wonderful person!

EXT HART HOME DAY

A limousine pulls up and two people in white linen get out. David watches from the window. He glimpses someone in the backseat and charges downstairs.

INT FOYER DAY

In the open door his parents enfold him. Through the tangle of their arms he sees a red knitted coat. His parents step apart.

LEONA

David, I want you to meet  
Clara. She's going to be  
living with us from now on.

Clara touches his shoulder. She has a knot of silver bangles on her wrist and her fingers are filled with gold rings. David pulls back.

CLARA

Don't be 'fraid a me, boy.  
Me not gwan gnam a bite o'  
you. Unless ya don't behave.

LEONA

Come on, Clara, let me show  
you to your room.

As Leona lifts Clara's bulging luggage and heads upstairs, Clara takes the bag from her.

CLARA

No, Mrs. Hart, please, you  
let me.

DAVID

You're always gonna have some-  
one take care of me now, aren't  
you, so you won't have to.

BILL

Nonsense.

DAVID

Why's she gonna live with us?

LEONA

Because we need help.

DAVID

Dad, I really don't want her  
here, please.

BILL  
But your mother does, Dave.

DAVID  
Then I'll make her leave!

LEONA  
David, what kind of behavior  
is this?

CLARA  
Is all right, I understand de  
little boy. But little boy,  
listen.

She steps close to David, who tries to stand firm in her face,  
though he tilts away just slightly.

CLARA  
Nobody make me do what I  
don't want to, so ya best  
aim ya meanness elsewhere.

She winks at him and heads upstairs, HUMMING A TUNE.

THROUGH HIS DOORWAY AT CLARA'S ROOM

Trying to be cool and covert about it, David lounges on his bed  
watching Clara unpack her exotic-looking dresses and hang them in  
the closet. She glances down the hallway at him.

CLARA  
But come over if ya must.  
Don't maraud down dere in ya  
room.

David strolls out of his room and into her doorway.

DAVID  
She's not well, ya know--my  
mother.

CLARA  
(Laughing)  
You saying only a crazy woman  
bring home a crazier woman.

DAVID  
You're not in charge of me,  
ya know.

CLARA  
Life is de worst when one  
person must be burden wid  
de charge of another.

DAVID  
I still don't want you here.

CLARA  
Dat is clear. So let us move  
on to oddar subjects.

DAVID  
Why do you talk so weird?

CLARA  
You don't hear weird talking  
yet. Wait till I talk so deep  
bad you think you are in a  
nightmare. Come in here and  
smell dis.

DAVID  
No.

CLARA  
Good. I really didn't want  
you to.

DAVID  
What is it?

CLARA  
Bay rum. When ya sick, is  
good for fever.

DAVID  
Sounds like a lotta Jamaican  
voodoo crap to me.

On the dresser she puts an ivory cameo picture of her husband.  
Then, as she pulls something from her luggage, David reels back,  
frightened. A black, hairy thing is in Clara's hand.

CLARA  
Cha, man, don't be a bebe.  
What ya see is only one of  
me wigs....Look 'pon me, darling.

David levels his eyes at her.

CLARA  
Don't fear so many things.

DAVID  
You're saying I'm afraid of a  
wig?

CLARA  
Sshh, don't always talk; some-  
times only listen. Me na  
frighten of anything. Certainly  
not you. Best we become part  
of de other. Only dere, maybe,  
is hope fe either of us.

DAVID  
Listen, I'm real sorry, but  
you're really not winning me  
over.

CLARA  
Well, dat is de best I can do  
for today, so you go now.

She presses his chest gently with a finger, backing him up just  
enough so she can close her door in his face.

NEXT CLARA'S ROOM NIGHT

Through her window, we WATCH as Clara finishes writing a letter,  
seals it; gets a small red suitcase from under her bed; puts the  
sealed envelope into the suitcase; returns the suitcase under the  
bed. Sits on the bed in her aloneness a moment, then slips under  
the covers and TURNS OUT THE LIGHT, her body turned away from THE  
WINDOW where, as the light goes out we SEE DAVID IN THE TREE,  
watching, eating from a box of cookies squeezed under one arm.

INT STAIRWELL DAY

THE SOUND OF CLATTERING POTS AND A SONG, "Chi chi buddo," BEING  
SUNG by Clara as David loiters in the back stairwell above the  
kitchen. A DOOR CLOSES and David descends on silent feet, slides  
in his socks across the floor to the pot on the stove. He's just  
cracked the lid when Clara appears from the laundry room.

CLARA  
Get ya duhty hands out dere!

David drops the lid as Leona comes into the kitchen.

LEONA  
I hope they like the ackee  
as much as I do.

DAVID

Hate to tell ya this, guys,  
but it strongly resembles baby  
puke.

CLARA

Has some of dat in it, absolutely.  
Ya very observant.

(To Leona)

Some toto is in de oven. I  
make it for de little boy.

DAVID

Now she's trying to win me  
with totos--whatever they are.  
And I'm not a little boy, okay?

CLARA

You act like little boy--  
perhaps is dat confuse me.

BILL

(Entering)

You look like you've been eat-  
ing okay while we were gone,  
Big Boy.

He pinches David's stomach--who glances at Clara, who misses  
nothing.

BILL

You need exercise. I don't  
want you sitting around like  
you did last summer. Try out  
for the swim team at the club.  
I think you might make it this  
year.

DAVID

I could've made it last year.

BILL

Then why didn't you?

DAVID

Because I was too nervous when  
I hadda race all those other  
guys.

BILL

But that's precisely what it's  
all about.

Clara take a large cookie sheet from the oven.

BILL  
What are those?

CLARA  
Totos. Coconut and raisin  
cookies. I made them for you.

She puts them back in the oven.

BILL  
That's very nice of you, but  
I don't eat sweets and David  
shouldn't have any, period.  
He has to wear huskies as it is.

DAVID  
I do not!

CLARA  
A toto or two won't kill him.  
I will keep an eye on de balance  
'tween exercise and gluttony.

Bill stares at Clara a moment--was that insolence?--then sticks  
his finger toward the pot of ackee simmering on the stove.

CLARA  
(A warning)  
Ut!

A beat, then Bill pokes his finger in the pot, tastes.

LEONA  
It's ackee--whudduya think?

Bill wipes his finger on a dish towel, shrugs. David, faced with  
what he sees as three bad choices, aligns himself beside his  
father, staring at Clara. Who begins to SING "Chi chi buddo"  
again.

INT LAUNDRY ROOM DAY

SEVERAL DAYS LATER. Clara ironing, Leona sitting on the counter.

LEONA  
He's a maritime lawyer, always  
going away, like he is today.  
I was always alone. But the  
irony is that for the longest  
longest time I didn't want  
children.

CLARA  
Ya like de being alone?

LEONA  
I hate it.

CLARA  
But ya like de feeling sorry  
for yaself.

Leona looks at her a long moment.

LEONA  
Maybe.

CLARA  
And so?

LEONA  
So the year I turned thirty,  
I felt certain Bill was fooling  
around, and I decided--

CLARA  
Ya decide instead of ya  
confront de man, ya become  
pregnant.

LEONA  
That's one way to look at it,  
I guess.

CLARA  
Ya must fight for what ya  
want. Ya can't expect oddar  
people to be what ya want dem  
to be if ya don't tell dem and  
dey happen to be oddarwise dis-  
posed--as is usually de case  
wid mens.

LEONA  
It's not easy to stand up to  
a strong man.

CLARA  
Many things are na easy.  
Only thing dat is truly easy  
is piss and moan, Poor me,  
I got no control over me life.  
Poor, poor me.

IN THE KITCHEN

David comes in the back door, school bag in hand. There's one toto on the table on a plate. He looks at it a moment, then shrugs and takes it. Bill comes quickly downstairs, suitcase and valpack in hand.

BILL  
Hey, Big Boy, how was school?

DAVID  
Fine. Where ya goin?

BILL  
Vancouver?

DAVID  
How come?

BILL  
How come? How come ya think?

He sticks his head into the laundry room.

BILL  
Shirts, I need shirts.

CLARA  
What do ya call dose?

Clara indicates a half dozen folded shirts. Bill takes them INTO THE KITCHEN to his suitcase, selects three.

BILL  
You didn't starch them.

CLARA  
But of course not. Shouldn't starch.

BILL  
(To Leona)  
Didn't you tell her I like my shirts heavily starched.

CLARA  
She told me, but I tell her dat soon it ruin all ya handmade shirts.

BILL  
It doesn't ruin them. And if it does, I'll get new ones.

CLARA

You give me a chance to show  
you dat careful ironing can  
give ya de same feel as  
starch--ya shirts last for  
years and ya spend de money  
ya save on golf balls.

Bill stares at Clara, Leona and David stare at Bill. Clara  
doesn't seem to know anything at all is going on.

BILL

Fine.

Amazed that his father gave in, David looks at Clara. Bill  
closes his suitcase. Leona follows into the kitchen. David  
hangs in the laundry room doorway, glancing from Clara to his  
father. Bill kisses Leona as Clara comes into the kitchen.

BILL

See you Friday.

CLARA

Not so fast. Also, I would  
like to paint me room.

Clara opens the back door for Bill and holds his valpack.

BILL

(A beat)

Fine.

He reaches for the valpack. She draws it back.

CLARA

And as I am only one person,  
get rid of twin beds and have  
one double bed.

BILL

(A beat)

Fine.

She hands him the valpack, picks a piece of lint off his jacket,  
and he's out the door. Clara turns to look at Leona and  
David...and smile, launching into "Chi chi buddo" and  
disappearing into the Laundry Room, leaving Leona to smile at  
David--who chomps down on the toto he's been holding all the  
while.

EXT JUNIOR HIGH DAY

KIDS comes out in groups. David comes out alone. ALAN LIPSKY raps him on the head. With him is a lovely RED-HAIRED GIRL.

LIPSKY  
Hart the Fart!

SEVERAL GUYS with Lipsky make FLATULENT SOUNDS, LAUGH, continue on as David unlocks his bike, looks embarrassedly after the boys...and at the Red-Haired Girl, who glances back at him.

INT CLARA'S ROOM DAY

The SOUND of David storming up the steps. Clara, on a ladder, deftly finishing the upper trim work with a paint brush. He flies past her room, slams his door. She looks after him a moment.

DAVID'S ROOM

David digs a box of Wheat Thins out from the bottom of his polo shirt drawer. Then Clara's in his doorway.

CLARA  
What's de mattun?

DAVID  
Nothing.

CLARA  
Look like nothing.

DAVID  
You wouldn't understand.

CLARA  
Probably not. A little boy's problems are so mysterious.

DAVID  
Would you go away, please.  
(When she doesn't  
move)  
I asked you politely.

CLARA  
Was only pretend polite. Let  
me guess de agony ya bring wid  
you home from school....You!

She slaps the box of Wheat Thins out of his hand, grabs his gut in her fists.

CLARA  
De agony is you! To be de  
person ya want, you must stop  
de eating all day long and ya  
must torture yaself, not always  
indulge and pity and shoot of  
ya mouth.

Stung, David defiantly takes a fistful of Wheat Thins and stuffs them in his mouth. Clara walks out of his room and in her absence, he stares after her, his mouth full and twisted.

INT KITCHEN DAY

Leona and David seated at the kitchen table, Leona serving, Clara bringing the last dish from the stove.

LEONA  
Clara, do you miss your  
husband--him, his person,  
his presence?

CLARA  
But of course.

DAVID  
So how come you're away  
from each other?

CLARA  
Because a lot of money is  
to be made where he is work-  
ing on de naval base in  
Guantanamo Bay.

DAVID  
You got kids?

CLARA  
No.

David catches his mother flicking her eyes oddly at Clara; catches Clara catching the odd look from Leona.

DAVID  
Good thing--you'd probably  
drive 'em berserko.

CLARA  
Don't ya talk like ya know  
me. Ya don't.

Clara sits, begins to fill her plate, pulls herself in. Leona shakes her head at David, suggesting he leave her alone.

DAVID  
You miss Dad when he's gone?

Leona takes just too long to respond.

LEONA  
Of course.

INT STAIRS NIGHT

Clara heads upstairs with David's laundry. IN THE HALLWAY David is visible in his room doing homework. As Clara approaches she hears something behind the closed door to Edith's room as she's about to pass it. Opens the door.

EDITH'S ROOM

Leona in the dimly lit nursery refolding Edith's rompers and stacking them in the closet. Leona freezes in the act.

LEONA  
I'm just seeing what's here  
so I can...have a garage sale  
or...

She doesn't finish the feeble excuse.

CLARA  
So: time to dismantle de  
nursery, Mrs. Hart.

Leona collapses in SOBS. Clara leads her out of the nursery, past David (who's come from his room) to the master bedroom. David's guilt is writ large on his face as they pass him.

IN THE MASTER BEDROOM she makes Leona lie down. Clara sits on the edge of the bed and HUMS a gloomy lullaby. She strokes Leona's brow. The sobbing stops, Leona's breathing settles.

And IN THE HALLWAY David hunkers against the wall, wondering if his mother will ever get well and ever love him again.

INT NURSERY DAY

David and Clara have taken apart the crib. Clara is briskly stuffing the last pile of Edith's clothing in boxes. David is more slowly putting the last stuffed animals into a plastic garbage bag. Haunted by the room, by Edith, David holds the last animal, unaware of Clara's eyes on him

CLARA  
Chuck in de bag.

DAVID  
Maybé wé should keep one.

CLARA  
Why? Ya think ya need a  
token of someone to be haunted  
by dem de rest of ya life?

She reaches for the animal; but he continues to stare at it, as if the memory of Edith somehow resides in it.

CLARA  
Was not ya fault she die.

His eyes snap to hers: How did she know?

CLARA  
Was not ya fault.

And now she snatches the animal from him...stuffs it in the bag.

EXT GARAGE DAY

A GOODWILL INDUSTRIES DRIVER puts the last of the stuff into the truck, mounts his cab, and pulls away. David and Clara turn to the house. And SEE Leona watching with raccoon eyes FROM A WINDOW.

IN THE KITCHEN a medicated Leona pours herself some bourbon as David and Clara enter. She trills her fingers at them.

DAVID  
I thought you were better,  
Mom. You seemed better.

Leona moves in slow motion to a cupboard and promptly sends pots and pans clattering. David gets down to help her pick them up.

CLARA  
Jesus, love, how you pulling  
up de place so?

LEONA  
I wanna do something nice  
for him--for David. I'm  
going to bake for him.

CLARA  
Somber all day and den get  
a cookin spirit. Might just  
wake ya up. Use de nutrasweet  
though, darling, not de sugar.

Leona goes erratically about gathering what she needs.

LEONA  
Clara...

CLARA  
What?

LEONA  
Clara...

CLARA  
Yes, I said what--I'm listen-  
ing. Now don't get me stink  
up today. Say what you want  
to say.

LEONA  
I dream of Edith; she always  
drowns and I fail to save her.

CLARA  
Ah, dat's good. Because the  
gypsies tell us when ya dream  
something repeatedly, usually  
means the opposite of what ya  
dream might come true--in other  
words, probably you'll have  
another child.

Leona stops her erratic preparations, fixes Clara.

LEONA  
I don't want any more children.  
That's the last thing I want.

Clara glances at David. Indeed, the words sting him. Leona  
misses it, dumps a whole package of chocolate bits in the  
direction of a Tupperware dish, spilling a number onto the  
counter.

DAVID  
I have homework.

He goes, Leona totally unmindful of his exit. But we'll SEE that  
he goes only part way up the BACK STAIRS, stopping to eavesdrop.

LEONA  
Oh, I have such a headache.

CLARA  
You deserve it.

LEONA  
What did you say?

CLARA  
Nothing, darling, you mistake  
heavy breathing for words.  
I will fix it--ya headache.

Clara takes the bourbon from Leona's hand, sits her down. Opens the cupboard where all the herbs are, begins to mix this and that into a glass of orange juice as...

CLARA  
Listen to me, Mrs. Hart: A  
child is a woman's greatest  
miracle. Be amazed dat a boy  
has come from ya woman's body.  
Pour ya soul into him.

LEONA  
But I'm so afraid, Clara.  
What if I lose him?

ON THE STAIRS, David is almost impelled to call out to his mother, to fly, alive, into her arms...but doesn't trust the impulse and stays put.

CLARA  
Darling, fear is life. But  
if ya start neglecting ya  
living child, only ruin will  
come from ya neglect.

LEONA  
I'm trying to tell you I have  
trouble!

CLARA  
Then you must go into yaself  
and learn why! Then it cert-  
ainly shall change.

The intensity of Clara's words force Leona to focus fully on her. Clara hands her the liquid concoction.

LEONA  
What is it?

CLARA  
Never mind.

INT LECTURE HALL DAY

We are on a good looking man of 45, PETER THURMOND. We'll PAN AWAY FROM HIM to a packed hall of MOSTLY WOMEN, finally locating Leona.

PETER  
Listen to me now! Hear me!  
You may not, cannot, must not delude yourselves that you are responsible for each other's happiness. It's quasi-Christian bullshit! Oh, you can't try to diminish someone else's happiness because you're not happy, but you're no more responsible for making your mates and children and relatives and buddies happy than they are for your unhappiness.

We've COME IN CLOSE ON LEONA. Who's mesmerized.

INT GRAND CENTRAL STATION DAY

Leona enters the Oyster Bar, carrying a book by Peter Thurmond under her arm.

INT OYSTER BAR

Coming down the stairs, overlooking the smaller room of tables, she glimpses something and comes to a stop, damning up bodies behind her.

WHAT SHE SEES is Bill at a table with an ORIENTAL WOMAN smoking a long cigaret. After several moments of uncertainty, Leona moves to their table, her gaze on the pretty Oriental woman...who senses the approach. Bill, sensing his lunch date's preoccupation, turns.

BILL  
Hi, honey.

LEONA  
What a coincidence. Is this...  
an occasion?

BILL  
You remember Ching. I introduced you at the Italian Trade Commission's Christmas party.

LEONA  
I'm sorry, I don't.

CHING  
Hello, Mrs. Hart. Nice to see you again.

BILL  
What brings you to the city?

Leona only smiles, shrugs, vaguely indicates the book.

BILL  
Have you had lunch?

LEONA  
Yes. Yes, I have. In fact, I'm just about to catch a train. I'll see you at home.  
(Facing Ching)  
I really don't recall meeting you. Which surprises me. I think I'd remember such a pretty face.

She leaves quickly, leaving Bill and Ching looking after her.

EXT TRAIN DAY

The train flies across the countryside. THROUGH A WINDOW we SEE Leona, statue-like in her stillness.

INSIDE THE TRAIN

She stares ahead, the book, Generation of the Spirit, on her lap, an average-looking MALE COMMUTER beside her. Seeming to merely adjust her position, she shifts so that her leg touches his. The Male Commuter moves his leg, thinking the contact accidental. But she subtly puts her leg in contact with his again. He glances at her only with his eyes. He doesn't move; she doesn't move. And now, as he turns to speak, to make his move...Leona, confused, unwilling to follow through on what's she started, picks up the Peter Thurmond book, opens it and turns away. Her disspirited REFLECTION comes back at us, her eyes slammed shut, her breath coming quickly.

INT DAVID'S ROOM NIGHT

CLOSE ON HIM, his breath coming quickly. He's listening to the sound of his parents' voices coming through the heating duct in his wall.

LEONA (O.C.)  
It's not just the baby, it's  
not just Edith, let's stop  
blaming everything on Edith!

BILL  
Good! Fine! Then what?  
Whudduya wanna dump every-  
thing on now?

LEONA  
(Overlapping)  
It's not even the other women!

BILL (O.C.)  
Other women?

LEONA (O.C.)  
(Overlapping)  
It's not any one thing!

BILL  
What other women?

IN BILL AND LEONA'S BEDROOM

Leona's in bed. Folded over her belly is Generation of the Spirit, Peter Thurmond's picture prominent on the back cover.

LEONA  
Oh, Bill, I don't have  
names.

BILL  
Yeah, well I want names!

LEONA  
I just know they exist and  
have for years. But Clara's  
made me see it's not just  
any one thing--

BILL  
Ah, the great Clara's behind  
this!

LEONA

The worst of it is that we  
aren't friends anymore.

BILL

The great Clara says we're  
not friends anymore.

LEONA

Right.

BILL

Well, the great Clara can  
go fuck herself--whudduya  
thinka that?

LEONA

There was a time when we  
were each other's best  
friend...

BILL

Bullshit.

LEONA

...when we were truly inter-  
ested in each other...

BILL

Never.

LEONA

...when we shared the present  
and dreams of a future. But  
now we only share a past.

Furious, combative, he stares silently at her.

LEONA

We have to do something about  
it. This. Us.

He hears her clearly, but he's too angry and frustrated to act  
reconstructively.

BILL

Do something about yourself.  
Do something about yourself.  
Don't redesign me.

IN DAVID

He stares at the heating duct.

ON HIS PARENTS

They stare irresolutely at each other and away.

INT LIBRARY DAY

David goes through his father's desk, not looking for anything in particular, just snooping. The DOORBELL. Obviously anticipating it, David jumps up, goes into...

THE FOYER

...where he lurks behind an archway as Clara opens the door. A Rye taxi pulls away, having deposited BLANCHE LOUDON, wearing regal looking rhinestone eye glasses. The two women embrace.

CLARA

Mu dear, ya look like a girl!

BLANCHE

Cha, man, ya too lie!

Blanche whirls into the house, glances jealously over the foyer and dining room as if they're nothing in particular, spotting David, who pulls back out of sight.

CLARA

Ya like to see mu house?

BLANCHE

Na. House is a house. We go to ya bedroom.

Clara leads the way UP THE STAIRS. David peeks around the archway. Blanche indicates his presence with a nod of her head at Clara--who looks down at him but keeps going.

CLARA

Dere be de torment of me existence. David.

He stares belligerently up at her.

BLANCHE

How old are ya, boy?

DAVID

Me na know. We na have birthday in dis house. Where ya live, a Brooklyn, Bronx, Miahmi?

Blanche and Clara jam to a stop, their heads jerk around in unison, Blanche's eyes blinking with fright. Fascinated, Clara just stares.

BLANCHE  
But stop. So rude. Don't  
you talk dat way! Where  
him learn patois?

CLARA  
Only one place me can think.

BLANCHE  
You mustn't talk like dat.  
Only low-class people talk  
like dat.

Clara holds the door to her room open for Blanche as she stares curiously down on David...then closes the door more or less in his face.

DAVID  
(To himself)  
Me na low-class. Me na  
nothing. Me dumb-dumb. Me  
dork. Me dodo.

Within the room there is THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER.

INT KITCHEN DAY

MORNING. Leona in her robe, hard at work. Clara watching dubiously, dressed in a blue serge suit, wearing her braided wig, an overnight bag and her small red suitcase close by.

CLARA  
A change of diet don't mean  
de same as a change of  
attitude.

LEONA  
Come on, don't mock me. A  
diet can be changed quickly,  
a personality transplant  
takes longer.

CLARA  
What is dat ya mashing up?

LEONA  
You'll laugh at me.

CLARA

I won't.

LEONA

This is a sunblock made of  
olive oil and yeast.

And Clara LAUGHS.

CLARA

Excuse me, dat was a mistake  
laugh, totally unintentional.

David and Bill enter in sailing clothes as Leona brings a wicker  
serving pot of rice to the table. David and Bill look at each  
other.

DAVID

Rice for breakfast?

LEONA

With steamed vegetables.

DAVID

For breakfast?

LEONA

I told you I was going to  
try some dietary experiments,  
everybody said okay.

DAVID

I didn't know you meant rice  
and vegetables for breakfast.

LEONA

I'm sure I'll get tired of  
it within a week or two--  
just indulge me for now.

She serves the rice and vegetables. David slants his eyes.

DAVID

(SINGING)

"Me na fool, fool Chinee man.  
Me na come from foreign land"--

CLARA

Where ya learning dat song  
now?

DAVID

I don't know. Around.

CLARA  
I don't want ya singing de  
songs of me homeland when ya  
wish me was dere and not here.

DAVID  
Excuse me.

CLARA  
Next thing ya know, I begin  
to think ya liking me.

CAR HORN OUTSIDE.

CLARA  
Taxi here. Goodbye, every-  
body. Sweet weekend. Don't  
get indigestion.

She grabs her overnight and her red suitcase and goes out the door. Leona determinedly serves herself a double portion of rice and vegetables. David and his father lock eyes. She smiles at them.

EXT LONG ISLAND SOUND DAY - THE DOCK

Bill, David, Leona climb into the Sunfish.

DAVID  
Lemme take the helm, Dad.

BILL  
No, I think I better take  
her out.

Leona takes a plastic bottle filled with lotion from her straw bag. Rubs the mixture over her hands, reaches for David, who shies away.

DAVID  
What's that?

LEONA  
Natural sunscreen.

DAVID  
Smells like an Italian  
restaurant.

BILL  
Cast off.

David does as Bill takes the mainsheet. David sits dejectedly as his father guides the sailboat out.

BILL  
What's the purpose of a sun-  
screen?

LEONA  
It blocks the sun from tan-  
ning. Tanning isn't good for  
the skin.

BILL  
You mean you're not going to  
get a suntan in the summers  
anymore?

LEONA  
Hard to say, have to see.

She smiles, then turns her back on him, dangles her fingers into the water. A chill takes Bill.

BILL  
David, toss me my wind-  
breaker.

Just as the windbreaker is changing hands, the wind shifts and the boom swings.

BILL  
Watch your heads!

Everybody ducks and the garment is swept into the water. David begins to peel down to his bathing suit.

DAVID  
Just come about, stay in  
the wind, and I'll swim  
after it.

BILL  
Isn't it a little too cold?

DAVID  
Na.

BILL  
All right, go ahead.

David takes off his glasses and dives in and Bill steers the boat into the wind and sculls the rudder. David sprints back to the windbreaker. He treads water while looping one of the sleeves

through his bathing suit. With the windbreaker trailing like a loose towline, he starts back.

LEONA  
Jesus, he can really swim.

BILL  
He'll make the swim team  
this year, he loses some of  
that gut.

LEONA  
Just don't push him.

BILL  
What's your point?

LEONA  
The reason he didn't make  
it last year was his fear of  
what you'd say if he didn't.

BILL  
I don't think that's true.

LEONA  
It's probably not then.

Leona looks off toward the faint shoreline of Long Island. Bill is about to attack when suddenly David rises proudly from the Sound, spilling water and body into the boat, neither his father nor his mother attentive to his deed, he instantly sensing why they're not.

EXT NEWPORT MANSION DAY

They glide up to the dock on a run. PEOPLE roaming the vast lawns and formal gardens turn to stare, a few APPLAUDING when the boat makes a perfect kiss up to the dock. David and Bill cast the moorings and step ashore, standing together in a self-conscious huddle, staring at the gathering of middle-class people.

LEONA  
I'm gonna scout around.

She goes off. Someone hands Bill a flyer.

DAVID  
What's it say?

BILL

For the bargain rate of 25  
bucks a head we're going  
to have a noontday macrobiotic  
feast and then hear Dr. Peter  
Thurmond, author and professor  
of philosophy and religion at  
Columbia University, lecture  
on "Self and the Role of the  
Irreligious Spirit."

DAVID

One of my favoritie spirits.

BILL

We're being supportive.

DAVID

I know, I can tell.

THE LAWN - LATER

Bill asleep in the sun as a BOY and GIRL, both much chunkier than  
David, approach. In the b.g. we SEE AND HEAR PETER THURMOND.

LESLIE

Hi, I'm Leslie and this is  
my brother, Scott.

DAVID

Hi, I'm David.

SCOTT

My sister thinks you're cute.  
But I think you look like a  
real nerd.

LESLIE

Why don't you come with me,  
Dave.

DAVID

Come with you where?

She nods vaguely toward the trees. He looks there.

DAVID

What're we gonna do?

LESLIE

Come and see.

DAVID  
Na, I don't think so. I'm  
this man's bodyguard and--

She tosses her head toward the trees.

LESLIE  
Come on, Dave.

DAVID  
Na.

She nods insistently, glances meaningfully toward the trees.

LESLIE  
(To Scott)  
You stay here.  
(To David)  
Come on, Dave. Come with  
me.

David lets her take his hand. He glances back at his sleeping father and the obedient Scott as Leslie trundles him into A GROVE OF OAK TREES...where they come to a HALF-CAVED IN STRUCTURE that looks like an evil cottage from a fairy tale. Leslie pries open a broken window and tries to climb inside.

LESLIE  
Grab my tush and shove.

A beat. Then David tries as discreetly as possible to grab her tush and shove. She disappears over the edge with a crash. Peter is just BARELY AUDIBLE still in the b.g. Leslie reappears.

LESLIE  
Come on, don't be chicken.

David follows, trying to scale the opening coolly, but not quite managing.

INSIDE the sun shimmers in THE DUSTY ROOM, where there are three rusted lawn chairs and a table. Leslie gazes at David, her tawny eyes caught in a glimmer of sunlight.

LESLIE  
C'mere, cutey.

Slowly, David advances to her. FROM CLOSE we can't see exactly what Leslie does to him, but by the look on his face we assume he is being touched sexually by a female for the first time.

N THE LAWN

Peter Thurmond's speech builds to a peak, Leona raptly attentive.

PETER

Where are you now? Where are  
you living? In the past or  
in the future? Why is the  
present always some leper of  
time and place and circumstance?  
Live in the present! Live in  
the present! Come on, say it  
with me:

IN THE HALF CAVED-IN STRUCTURE

David's panting matches the rhythm of Peter's speech. In the  
distance now we HEAR...

VOICES (O.C.)

Live in the present! Live in  
the present! Live in the  
present!

...the rhythm building with David's breathing. And abruptly  
Leslie stops.

DAVID

Whudduya doin'?

LESLIE

Whudduya think?

DAVID

Don't stop!

LESLIE

Yep.

DAVID

No!

LESLIE

That's it.

DAVID

Please!

LESLIE

That's all she wrote.

She disappears from the FRAME, leaving David staring agitatedly  
into the space she occupied a moment ago.

VOICES (O.C.)  
Live in the present! Live  
in the present!

DAVID AND LESLIE EMERGE FROM THE OAK TREES and we HEAR APPLAUSE at the end of Peter's speech and Bill looks groggily at David approaching with a chubby girl, who veers away and is joined by an equally chubby boy.

BILL  
Where ya been, Big Boy?

His head reeling, David points vaguely nowhere, stands goggle-eyed.

LUNCH ON THE LAWN

Mounds of vegetables--in broth, stir-fried, ratatouille style. And grains--bulgar wheat and brown rice with soybeans and raisins. Leona in line, within herself, fixed on Peter Thurmond in the distance.

SERVER  
(To those in line)  
It's all vegetarian, everybody.  
No meat in anything.

ON DAVID AND BILL

They sit by the dock, eating potato chips, Velveeta cheese, and Wonder bread.

DAVID  
How much longer do we have  
to stay?

BILL  
Your mother wants to stay for  
the group discussions. Not  
too many of those potato chips.

DAVID  
If you didn't want me to have  
them, you shouldn't've had  
me bring 'em.

BILL  
Everything in moderation, though,  
pal, that's the trick.

DAVID  
Can I ask Mom if we can leave?

BILL  
Don't make it sound like my  
idea.

DAVID  
I'll say I'm sick.

BILL  
Good thinking.

David moves through groups of picknickers. He spies his mother holding a plate of untouched food, talking to Peter Thurmond. Something strikes David as he studies the two of them together and he slows his walk and his mother spots him.

LEONA  
Hello, David. This is  
Peter Thurmond, who spoke  
this morning.

DAVID  
Yes, I enjoyed your talk very  
much.

PETER  
Thank you, David. Appreciate  
it. Most people your age  
think I'm fulla shit.

DAVID  
Really? Not me, sir, uh-uh.  
Mom, Dad and I want to sail  
home now. Can you get a ride  
with someone?

LEONA  
It's the wrong time to be  
asking me this, David.

PETER  
Don't be silly, Leona, that's  
all right. Let them go.

David catches Peter touching his mother's arm for emphasis. The gesture bothers David; his mother seems to realize this because she moves her arm away...

LEONA  
All right, go on, I'll see  
you at home.

PETER  
Nice to meet you, David.

Now, though, David is suddenly reluctant to go.

LEONA  
Really. Go on.

MOVING TO HIS FATHER, David glances back.

DAVID  
It's okay, we can go.

BILL  
Really? What'd she say?

DAVID  
That we can go. That man  
she's talking to--that's  
Peter Thurmond.  
(Then just assuming  
it's true)  
He'll bring her home.

BILL  
Let's blow this joint.

EXT HARBOR DAY

David has the helm, his father's attention fixed on the horizon.

INT DAVID'S ROOM DAY

A SOAP OPERA ON TV. David restless behind his Playboy. SOUND OF CLARA'S SHOWER TURNING ON. A beat. David hides the Playboy.

CLARA'S BATHROOM. The door opens a crack. FROM DAVID'S POV we can SEE through the steamed glass cubicle Clara showering. His breathing intensifies. A PHONE RINGS, startling him. HE CLOSES THE DOOR.

ON CLARA

Her eyes full of soap, she turns an ear to the SOUND. But when her eyes are clear and she peers through the glass she sees nothing.

INT KITCHEN DAY

MORNING. Clara over the classifieds as David comes down the back stairs. Seeing him, she starts his breakfast. He looks at the circles on the paper.

DAVID  
what're ya doin? Ya leavin?

CLARA  
You think I would want to  
make you dat happy? Going  
to rent me an apartment.

DAVID  
why?

CLARA  
So when I escape dis place  
on de weekends I have some-  
place to stay instead of wid  
friends. And when me husband  
come up, he has a place to  
stay while I'm working.

DAVID  
when's he coming?

CLARA  
Not positive for sure yet.  
The letters, ya know, back  
and forth, back and forth.

Something about what's she's said, the way she's said it, makes David stare at her, makes her deflect her gaze from his with a CHORUS of "Chi chi buddo" as Bill enters.

BILL  
Eat up, my boy, eat up. The  
moment is upon us.

CLARA  
Don't be giving de boy de  
diarrhea before he even  
arrive at de event.

David and Bill fix her. She turns her back, begins to SING again.

EXT COUNTRY CLUB DAY

Bill turns his Lincoln through the tall stone gates onto a straight two-mile drive lined with oak trees, Leona beside him, David in the back. Bill stops and FROM A DISTANCE we WATCH him and David and Leona get out. Leona gets in the back, David into the driver's seat, Bill shotgun.

## INSIDE THE LINCOLN

David carefully drives the big car down the tree-lined entryway, the three of them silent and vigilant.

## IN THE CLUB PARKING LOT

David parks smoothly between the parallel lines of an empty space. A virtually unified sigh of relief.

BILL

Good job!

LEONA

Well done, darling!

His father puts an arm around David's shoulders and they head for the clubhouse.

## THE POOL

The swimming tryouts. David on the line, in his tee-shirt, looking myopic without his glasses. Beside him Alan Lipsky. On the other side of him, one of Lipsky's Friends. In the crowd of PARENTS AND SIBLINGS, the Red-Haired Girl. The COACH calling the swimmers to their marks. In the Crowd, Bill catching David's eye and miming that he should take the tee-shirt off; David shakes his head emphatically no.

LIPSKY

(To David)

Leave some water in the pool  
when ya do your famous imitation  
of a whale hittin the water,  
rotundo. 'Kay?

## CLOSE ON DAVID

From pain to anger to determination as he steps to his mark and responds to the Coach's call that the swimmer's "get set." And then the crack of the pistol and David is airborne.

## THE RACE

It's once down the fifty meter pool. David falls behind off the start...but battles and gains on the leader, Lipsky, runs abreast of him through the middle of the race...then fades badly as Lipsky and three others beat him, Lipsky's friend just nosing David out. Bill, who has walked the length of the pool, calling encouragement until David starts to fade, fades himself toward the back of the crowd of cheering parents, past Leona, and we CUT HARPLY to

INT LINCOLN DAY

Dressed, David's hair wet and combed slick, peering from the backseat at the backs of his parents' heads.

DAVID  
When did you decide this?

BILL  
Last night.

DAVID  
Why didn't you tell me before?

LEONA  
We thought it best to wait  
until after the tryouts.

DAVID  
Who am I going to live with?

LEONA  
Me.

BILL  
But you'll come into the city  
and stay with me weekends.

DAVID  
How could you let me drive  
the car up to the club this  
morning and then tell me this?

EXT HART HOUSE DAY

The car pulls into the driveway and stops. David bolts and heads for The Sound. AT THE KITCHEN WINDOW, Clara sees him run by.

WE FOLLOW David to the boathouse. Panting he stares across the seemingly endless Sound. Suddenly he kicks off his shoes, tears off his shirt and pants. He steps into the lip of the Sound in his underwear, hesitates, then dives in.

And swims. He WATCHES THE MURKY BOTTOM turn dark and shafts of sunlight plumb deep into the water. When he breathes on the right side, he SEES THE VICARAGE AND TUDOR MANSIONS that command the shoreline gradually shrinking away. He swims past Lightnings and catamarans at their moorings. PEOPLE scrubbing the hulls of their boats pause to stare at this brave swimmer.

His breathing becomes labored and he begins to feel stabbingches in his arms. Then in the middle of a stroke he GASPS, realizing he's very frightened. He freezes.

DAVID  
Help!...Help me!

But his voice doesn't carry and the swells fill his mouth. He's dizzy, seems ready to give up. But then something tells him to turn on his back and FOCUS ON THE BEAUTIFUL CLOUDS crossing above, and after a few moments, he turns on his stomach and does an easy crawl stroke toward the shore. Then he begins to sprint, trying to outdistance the fear.

When he gets to land, he crawls unsteadily onto the shoals, panting. And when he stands up, THERE'S CLARA, waiting, looking at him with great compassion. She holds out a hand to him.

FADE OUT

FADE IN  
INT KITCHEN DAY

Clara, wearing her day-off wig, spooning condensed milk into her coffee, her red suitcase beside her, as David comes down the back stairs in tennis shorts and a torn tee-shirt. He's tan and appears a little leaner.

CLARA  
You not going dressed to see  
my friends like dat.

DAVID  
It's not.

CLARA  
Don't care. If dis is some  
new person you trying to  
be cause you the victim of  
a broken home, it only getting  
my stink up.

Leona enters, looking tranquil.

LEONA  
Hi, honey, ready to go?

CLARA  
No, he is not. You, go change  
ya clothes.

David exits, leaving Leona and Clara in an awkward silence.

LEONA  
You must be making the 10:10.

CLARA

If de taxi would get here.

LEONA

You know how much I appreciate this.

CLARA

I'm glad to do it. For him.

LEONA

Well, it makes it easier for me too.

CLARA

He can't concern wid what makes it easier fe you dat have all de choices. He must concern for him dat don't.

LEONA

Then take good care of him.

CLARA

Of course. I'm sure him will have a delightful weekend--his foddar moving to his new apartment, his muddar fumigating de remains from de family home, and him wid a stranger in de jungle of Brooklyn.

LEONA

You're the one who urged me to change my life.

CLARA

Next time I be sure to be more specific about what is permissible. Mrs. Hart, ya own happiness can never be as important as dat of de child's until he grow to be a man.

LEONA

Well, I don't happen to think the two are mutually exclusive. I think if I'm happier, he'll be happier..

CLARA

No.

Clara and Leona stare at each other...and we HEAR the TAXI HORN.

EXT DRIVEWAY DAY

A re-dressed David and Clara get into the taxi; as it backs out of the driveway, a SMALL MOVING VAN pulls up. As the taxi pulls away, a DRIVER hops out of the van and heads for the Hart's front door. David peers through the back window of the taxi.

EXT STATION DAY

At the newsstand, Clara picks up a National Enquirer. David reaches for the current issue of Hustler, but Clara snatches it from him and returns it to its place, then takes him by the elbow. He pulls free.

INT TRAIN DAY

They sit tightly together, Clara's soft flesh jiggling against David's, he conscious of her, she absorbed in her National Enquirer, her lips moving faintly as she follows the printed words. David stares past her now at the burned-out tenements of the Bronx.

EXT BROOKLYN DAY

Clara and David emerge from underground to a dense, two- and three- story suburban Brooklyn. David stares about him like a tourist.

DAVID  
I've never been to Brooklyn  
before.

CLARA  
Gwan!

DAVID  
Really.

They cross the street to an old white stucco building. At the ground level is a black script sign that reads "Blanche's Beauty." The window glass has been hit with a rock; shards fan out into a glittery spider's web. They enter the shop.

INT BLANCHE'S DAY

There's immediate commotion. "Miss Clara! Miss Clara!" cry a HALF DOZEN HAIRDRESSERS as they crowd into the anteroom of the salon. The Ladies all wear identical floral smocks, and some have teased bouffant hairdos.

FELICIA  
You bring him after all!

CLARA  
David, meet Felicia, Lydia,  
Bobs, and Doris Williams.  
Where Blanche is?

LYDIA  
Wid customer.

David's the only white person. They pass a glass display case, two gashed vinyl chairs beside a chipped glass coffee table covered with back issues of magazines. The wallpaper matches the smocks. SEVERAL CUSTOMERS are lying half-reclined in retractable chairs, their hair sticking straight out in identical disarray. The beauticians get back to work with hot combs and hair-straightening creams.

CLARA  
Blanche, you remember me  
David. Him asking for hot  
comb this afternoon.

DAVID  
Oh yeah--right.

BLANCHE  
Ya lost some weight since  
I see you at de house.

CLARA  
Don't I tell you him grow-  
ing wid hair under de arms  
and all dat.

DAVID  
Oh, great!

BLANCHE  
Could still lost some.

Blanche grabs David's gut; he tries to pull away. Blanche takes his shoulders and begins shaking him.

BLANCHE  
I should be slapping ya back-  
side fe all de trouble you  
give my Clara.

DAVID  
Sweet darling, dat is another  
child ya talking about. Cha,  
man, I give de woman nothing  
but joy now.

The action comes to a dead stop, the girls looking at David in  
amazement. Blanche chuckles, cuffs David on the shoulder.

CLARA  
Can me help it if him clever  
as de devil?

Lydia clenches her fists, gyrating her hips back and forth.

DORIS  
(Clapping her hands)  
Lift it up, baby, lift up ya  
beef!

BLANCHE  
All right, stop de ramping  
now.  
(To Clara)  
What we gwan do here today?

Clara drops her red suitcase, reaches up to unpin the braid-wig,  
holds it in her hand like a captive snake.

BLANCHE  
Take this, na, Felicia.

Felicia walks over from her unoccupied station, takes the braid  
and sets it down on a plastic marbelized counter. Clara,  
meanwhile, digs in her suitcase for her beehive wig.

BLANCHE  
You want us to groom both  
'o dem?

David is trying to hide his amusement.

BLANCHE  
What is troubling him?

CLARA  
Him always get funny over  
me wigs. All right, you, I  
arrange for Blanche to cut  
ya hair now.

DAVID  
Forget it.

CLARA  
You hair too long and well  
want it cut.

DAVID  
Forget it!

CLARA  
Listen me. If ya don't sit  
down and let she cut ya hair,  
I putting ya back onto de  
train.

DAVID  
That's blackmail!

BLANCHE  
Miss Clara, if him so reluctant,  
let him stay.

CLARA  
No, sir, I even tell his  
muddar. Am I going to  
disappoint dat dear woman?

Blanche casts David a look that says it isn't worth arguing with Clara when her mind is set on something. Afraid to confront her further, David sits with regret. Clara moves to Felicia's sink, sticks her head underwater. Then there's a LOUD HOOT as DORA CAMBRIDGE enters, followed by a lanky BLACK MAN. Both sleek and sleekly dressed.

FELICIA  
Hello, Dora.

DORIS  
What gwan?

Dora has fixed her attention on David as she wends her way toward Blanche's station. The Black Man hangs at the door.

DORA  
So where you get this white  
charge?

DAVID  
She get me from church bazaar.  
He was left in de manger.

DORA  
Jesus, Father.

BLANCHE  
Is Clara's boy.

DORA  
Where she is?

BLANCHE  
See her dere.

Dora turns to where Clara's head is tilted back into the sink, her hair saturated with suds. Dora moves close to David.

DORA  
So, Clara's boy, did she  
tell you bout Ralfie?

BLANCHE  
What trouble you trying to  
concoct today? If you must  
talk so, come fe me to do  
ya hair another day!

DORA  
I got me appointment today.

BLANCHE  
Ya early!

DORA  
I wait!

Sensing David is about to ask who Ralfie is, Blanche puts a hand over his mouth.

BLANCHE  
Forget what she say, child.  
She know what time Clara come,  
so she come to juke her.  
(To Dora)  
If she knew you talk this,  
she'd tump you to ya grave.

DORA  
Me na 'fraid of her.

BLANCHE  
You a professional liar.

Clara sees Dora using two fingers to imitate scissors, hacking away at her own hair to indicate what Blanche should do to David.

CLARA  
You know something, Dora  
Cambridge? Ya sense of  
humor is about as foul as  
ya crotch.

The Black Man at the door steps toward them. Eyes go there.

CLARA  
Can't imagine which one 'o  
ya carryin on wid such a  
pimp.

Dora turns her back, grabs her man and walks out.

BLACK MAN  
Wha' she call me?

Clara sits back in Felicia's chair. Felicia goes to work. And Blanche opens up one of her marbelized drawers and brings out a stack of girlie magazines. David's eyes open wide.

BLANCHE  
Mind Clara don't see dem.  
Don't want to cause no  
distress.

She thrusts them into David's hands. Cautiously he opens one...as the haircut begins.

EXT BLANCHE'S DAY

David and Clara exit, both neatly coiffed. David charges a window to check out his semi-punk haircut.

DAVID  
I look like a complete geek!

CLARA  
I personally feel it looking  
lovely.

DAVID  
I look like a punk rocker!

CLARA  
I personally find it most  
stunning.

Down the street, Clara SEES Dora and the Black Man, kissing  
teeply.

CLARA

Stay here.

Clara approaches the Cadillac. David follows at a distance behind Clara.

CLARA

Can't even wait to get him into ya house, you must pulling him up into de alley.

BLACK MAN

Shut your face!

CLARA

You come shut it for me.

David can't believe she's challenging this guy.

DORA

Leave her. She's liable to do something.

BLACK MAN

Sheeit.

The Black Man stalks Clara.

CLARA

She right to tell you not to mess wid me. Let her tell you what I did people like her in Jamaica. What I did her.

David doesn't know what to do.

DORA

Bundy, I said to leave her! Listen to me when I talking.

The man stops while Clara clenches her fists. He opens the car door. Dora gets in. The Black Man gets in and they drive away. When Clara turns to watch them go, she sees David.

CLARA

Didn't I tell you stay back?

DAVID

I was afraid something was going to happen.

CLARA  
And so if something happen,  
what you would do to stop it?

DAVID  
I'd kick him in the balls.

CLARA  
(Managing to laugh)  
Perfectly right!

EXT CLARA'S NEIGHBORHOOD DAY

They're passing a cemetery as the shadows of afternoon thicken into DUSK.

DAVID  
Who's this Ralfie guy she  
mentioned?

Clara stops, takes David firmly by the shoulders.

CLARA  
So already she start. Let  
me warn ya something. If  
you ever try to discuss me  
business wid any o' dem, I  
will punish you deep bad.

She quickens her steps. He runs to catch up. Notices the cemetery for the first time. Takes it in.

DAVID  
I've never seen such a big  
graveyard before.

CLARA  
Remind a person to make de  
most of life.

DAVID  
I hope you don't live too  
close to it.

She nods toward the building on the far side of the cemetery. David looks at it, at the cemetery, at Clara.

INT CLARA'S APARTMENT DAY

We're CLOSE ON DAVID, his eyes wide in wonder.

DAVID  
It's...it's Jamaica.

FROM ANOTHER ANGLE now we SEE a living area and sleeping alcove that are divided by a narrow kitchen. Unlike Clara's room in Rye, the apartment brims with souvenirs. Every available space on the countertops and bureau is covered with beaded trinkets, carved wooden boxes and figures, silver hairpins. David turns to look at her, a smile slashing his face.

DAVID

It's you!

He begins to pass reverently through. He picks up a carved figure.

DAVID

What's this?

CLARA

When obeah be juking you,  
you use to reverse de juke.

DAVID

Obeah's bad, huh?

CLARA

Obeah is de evil dat others  
make on us...or dat we make  
on ourself.

He continues on his tour, touching and picking up and putting on bracelets and necklaces.

DAVID

Do you wish you had a job in  
Brooklyn so you could live  
here all the time?

CLARA

On de long train I often ask  
myself.

DAVID

(Concerned)

And?

CLARA

You must be careful not to  
sound like you care.

(She smiles at him)

Brooklyn recalls too much  
Port Antonio, too many people  
know me from de past.

DAVID  
Why did you get so upset  
when I asked about that guy  
Ralfie?

CLARA  
You too damn nosy.

DAVID  
Am I?

A beat. She goes to the window, overlooking the cemetery.

CLARA  
What a life this turned out  
to be.

DAVID  
What do you mean?

He follows her. She looks him dead in the eyes.

CLARA  
Ralfie was my son.

DAVID  
I thought you didn't have any  
children.

CLARA  
I don't--no more.

DAVID  
You mean he's not alive?

She nods.

DAVID  
Oh.



Impulsively <sup>S</sup>he puts an arm around him.

FROM OUTSIDE we look at these two people, black and white, in a sea of windows, staring across acres of death, her head pressed to his shoulder.

INT CLARA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

David sleeps on the sofa. FLICKERING LIGHT dances across his face. OUTSIDE IN THE CEMETERY A VOICE SCREAMS IN FEAR. And he awakens. The windows are open. An ELECTRIC FAN WHIRS close by. The FLICKERING LIGHT draws his eyes TOWARD THE KITCHEN. Making as little noise as possible, he creeps toward the light,

stumbling over Clara's red suitcase, which is lying open in the middle of the floor. In the DIM LIGHT, he can make out several bundles of aerograms inside. Three of these letters are opened up until they become a single sheet of paper. David continues to creep toward the kitchen. He sees quivering shadows and then makes out her face bathed in yellow light.

Clara has lighted a green coil made from a pulp of crushed straw. Three stubby votive candles flicker next to it. The obeah figure stands on the table. From a cupboard above the refrigerator she takes a small amber bottle and unscrews a dropper. She squeezes drops of fluid over the candles, which flare dramatically. Then she pinches the burning orange center of the coil until she winces in pain. She grabs a washcloth and presses it to her forehead. Her cheeks are moist with tears. A bottle of dark rum sits open on the table. She takes a long swallow from a glass.

DAVID

Clara...

CLARA

(Blowing out the  
candles)

What ya doing up?

DAVID

I couldn't sleep.

A letter lies on the counter next to the candles.

DAVID

What were you doing?

CLARA

(As though hypnotized)

He have things in me mind  
juking me so till me can't  
sleep.

DAVID

What things?

CLARA

Private things.

DAVID

(The coil)

What's that for?

CLARA

Old Jamaican remedy for head-  
ache. Go back to ya bed  
now, David.

She takes another swallow of the rum. Sees him staring.

CLARA  
Other old Jamaican remedy  
for headache. Don't ya  
start monitor me excesses,  
detective. Go!

On his way back to bed, David stares for a moment at the LETTERS, then back at Clara slumped at the table. He gets into the bed, pulls the sheet up, and seeks understanding in the ceiling where SHADOWS FROM THE CEMETERY play, and from where VOICES CRY OUT.

EXT HART HOUSE DAY

Leona is staring myopically out the kitchen window as Clara and David get out of a cab. David hesitates a moment. Clara urges him gently toward the house.

IN THE KITCHEN Leona is busily cooking, her eyes bright and alive.

LEONA  
Did you have a good weekend?

David nods, looks distantly toward his father's library.

LEONA  
I like your haircut.

DAVID  
Ya do?

CLARA  
Ya see?

LEONA  
I'm making you lasagna and  
steamed asparagus.

He nods agains, walks out of the kitchen.

THE DOORWAY TO HIS FATHER'S LIBRARY. David steps into it. What he sees makes him momentarily close his eyes. And now WE SEE that the shelves, once lined with his father's books, are empty. The antique writing desk is gone; there are brands on the carpeting where its legs rested. David snaps on a small lamp that sits on the floor, fishes a scrap of paper from his pocket and dials. A WOMAN answers.

WOMAN (V.O.)  
Hello.

DAVID  
I'm sorry, I must have the  
wrong number.

WOMAN (V.O.)  
Whom did you want?

DAVID  
I'm trying to reach a William  
Hart.

WOMAN (V.O.)  
He's here, hold on.

He HEARS the phone being muffled. He GROANS.

BILL (V.O.)  
David?

DAVID  
Who answered the phone?

BILL (V.O.)  
That's Deena. My decorator.

DAVID  
Weren't you expecting me to  
call?

BILL (V.O.)  
Of course I was.

DAVID  
Then why did you have that  
lady answer?

BILL (V.O.)  
Because I was on the ladder  
trying to hang some drapes.

DAVID  
Your decorator is there on a  
Sunday night?

BILL (V.O.)  
I needed help, David.

DAVID  
Come on, Dad, gime a break.

BILL (V.O.)  
Okay. Okay, Dave, it's  
hard for me to be here by  
myself.

DAVID  
But is she just the decorator?

BILL (V.O.)  
Yes, that's all she is.  
Listen, you'll see what  
she's done when you come  
see me next weekend.

DAVID  
I have to go see you?

BILL (V.O.)  
Don't you think it'd be  
easier than my coming up  
to the house?  
(When David is  
silent)  
There's more to do in the  
city, anyway. Huh?

David runs his fingers over an empty book shelf.

BILL  
Dave..?

EXT THE SOUND DAY

David dives in. FROM SOMEONE'S POV we WATCH him swim strongly  
toward the far shore. FROM ANOTHER ANGLE we SEE both Leona, from  
her bedroom window, and Clara, from the kitchen bay window,  
watching him.

EXT BILL'S APARTMENT HOUSE DAY

Through the doors we SEE David at the reception desk, the DOORMAN  
on the house phone. INSIDE THE LOBBY we can see David is upset.

DAVID  
But I'm his son. Didn't he  
tell you I was coming, for  
Godsake?

DOORMAN  
Take just a second....Yes,  
Mr. Hart--young man here  
says he's your son....Yessir,  
fine.

DOORMAN (Con't)  
(Hanging up)

All right, 16-G, you can go  
up.

DAVID  
Oh, great, thanks.

THE DOOR OF BILL'S APARTMENT OPENS and Bill stands there in  
totally different attire--the business and golf clothes replaced  
by black slacks and a black silk shirt with subtle polka dots.

BILL  
Hey--hi!

DAVID  
Hi.

BILL  
Come on in!

DAVID  
Okay.

David ENTERS THE APARTMENT to find the place modern and  
gemoetric, unlike the antique mood of the Rye house.

DAVID  
Everything's so different.

BILL  
Yep. Where'd you get that  
haircut?

DAVID  
This great place in Brooklyn.

BILL  
Brooklyn?

DAVID  
What's wrong with it?

BILL  
Little severe, don't you  
think?

DAVID  
I like it. You have dand-  
ruff on your shirt.

BILL  
What?

Bill cranes his neck, swipes almost frantically at his collar.

BILL  
Never had dandruff in my  
life.

DAVID  
Yeah, well, you got it now.

There is a partial VIEW OF THE EAST RIVER through a clutter of other buildings. The windows, though, have no drapes.

DAVID  
What happened to the drapes?

BILL  
They're in the bedroom.  
(When David nods  
stiffly)  
You didn't believe me, did  
you?

DAVID  
I did and I didn't.

They LOOK INTO THE BEDROOM--which David merely leans into.

BILL  
That's real fur--the bedspread.

DAVID  
Must've been expensive.

BILL  
I can afford it.

Bill leads the way through the kitchen to THE GUEST BEDROOM. A magnificent six-foot Prussian toy soldier stands in one corner.

DAVID  
That's really beautiful.

BILL  
I got it for you. This is  
your room. I hope you'll  
stay the night.

DAVID  
I didn't bring anything.

BILL  
I have everything you need.  
Look in those drawers.

David opens drawers. They're full of clothes.

DAVID  
How did you know my size?

BILL  
Your mom told me.  
(A beat)  
Want a beer?

DAVID  
A beer?

BILL  
Don't question me at every  
turn. I feel as strange as  
you do. You'll be thirteen  
in a few months. I had my  
first beer at thirteen, okay?

DAVID  
So okay, I'll have a beer.

IN THE KITCHEN Bill pops two cans of beer, hands one to David.  
They clink their cans together and David takes a sip.

DAVID  
(Cool)  
Tastes like buffalo snot.

He takes a gutsy belt this time.

INT IL CORNUTO RESTAURANT DAY

Dressed in sharp, preppy clothes, David follows his father into  
the elegant restaurant. The restaurant is about half-filled.  
The MAITRE 'D greets BILL by name, leads them to a table. A  
slow-moving WAITER brings menus. David takes a look.

DAVID  
It's in Italian.

BILL  
(To the waiter)  
My son is from the suburbs.

David cringes.

BILL  
I think I'll have oysters  
on the half shell. And then  
the veal chop. Know what  
you want?

DAVID  
You have to tell me what  
there is first.

The waiter RATTLES OFF A LIST. The third item is Scampi. As the  
waiter babbles monotonously onward...

BILL  
What about the scampi? You  
love shrimp.

DAVID  
Fine.

The waiter recedes.

BILL  
That haircut is really remark-  
able. Maybe we should take  
you to my barber and see if  
he can fix it up.

DAVID  
Mom and I like it the way it  
is, thanks.

Now there's a blond woman (DEENA) standing at the table, touching  
Bill's shoulder.

DEENA  
Ciao, Bill. Hello, David.

Confused, David accepts her offered hand. She has a faint  
foreign accent.

BILL  
David, meet Deena.

David throws a murderous look at his father as he holds a chair  
for Deena and she sits.

BILL  
How bout having some dinner  
with us?

DEENA  
I'm just going to stay a few  
minutes. How do you like your  
father's apartment?

DAVID  
It's okay, I guess. How much  
did that bedspread cost?

DEENA  
It was very expensive.

DAVID  
I think he should get rid of  
it.

DEENA  
Why?

DAVID  
It's so goddamn ostentatious.

A beat. Then Deena rises, extending her hand again.

DEENA  
Well, enjoy your dinner, it  
was nice to meet you.

She tugs at the lapel of Bill's silk shirt, rearranging it to her  
liking, kisses him on the cheek.

DEENA  
I'll see you tomorrow.

She disappears into the depths of the restaurant. The waiter  
arrives with Bill's oysters. Bill stares at David's lowered  
head.

BILL  
That was nice.

DAVID  
Yeah, really impressive  
performance....She really  
likes you, doesn't she?

BILL  
Why not? I'm not such a  
bad guy--am I?

DAVID  
God, Dad, you and Mom just  
got separated--I don't have  
to know you already have  
someone else.

A beat. Bill holds an oyster toward David.

BILL  
Here, try one.

David shakes his head. The candle on the table is doing strange  
things to his father's face, like the votive candles did to  
Clara's.

BILL  
At least I'm not trying to  
hide from you who I'm seeing.

DAVID  
What are you talking about?

BILL  
I'm talking about that your  
mother is carrying on with  
somebody.

The news seems to resound from every corner of the restaurant.

DAVID  
(Whispering)  
Mom has a boyfriend?

BILL  
(Nodding)  
The great philosopher we  
heard that Saturday.

DAVID  
Peter Thurmond.

BILL  
But it's good. She deserves  
to be happy.

DAVID  
So, in other words, you and  
Mom, you and Mom deserve to  
be happy.

(Nodding)  
Sounds right, makes sense.

INT HART HOUSE NIGHT

David finds his mother in the master bedroom reading a thick paperback, looking owlsh in a pair of large round reading glasses as she highlights paragraphs with a yellow marker. She looks up at him.

LEONA  
Your father called after you  
left, guilty as hell.

DAVID  
I'm glad you're keeping in  
close contact.

LEONA  
He had no right to tell you  
something that was my  
responsibility.

DAVID  
When would you have gotten  
around to telling me, ya  
figure?

LEONA  
When I figured out how I  
wanted to explain it.

DAVID  
How bout just jump in now  
and do the best ya can.

LEONA  
Peter is making a lot of  
things fall into place for  
me, David.

DAVID  
What does that mean?

LEONA  
It means I feel I have to  
put all my energy into trying  
to help myself right now before  
I can help anyone else.

DAVID  
That sounds so selfish.

LEONA  
We're all selfish in this  
family, darling....David, I'm  
doing the best I can. And  
I love you. I do.

David nods, turns away from the doorway, walks down THE HALL.  
He's about to pass Edith's door, but he stops. Opens the door  
and steps into EDITH'S ROOM with its few scant pieces of  
furniture covered with sheets.

#### THE DINING ROOM

David sits at a window waiting...and when the taxi turns into the  
driveway and its lights hit him, he jumps up and heads through  
THE KITCHEN to the back door, which he throws open. Clara enters  
laden with her red suitcase and several shopping bags. He tries  
to take the red suitcase, but she holds onto that and thrusts the  
shopping bags at him and they head UP THE BACKSTAIRS.

DAVID  
How was your weekend?

CLARA  
Lovely. Good labrishing. We  
girls can get fast, let me  
tell you.

DAVID  
Who came over?

CLARA  
Blanche, Lydia, Bobs and  
meself.

They stop at the landing outside Clara's door. She drops the  
suitcase, rooting through her handbag for the key to her room.

DAVID  
Since when do you lock your  
door?

CLARA  
Since I decide.

DAVID  
But why?

CLARA  
Me have some rubies in dere  
protecting fe a friend.

She opens the door and switches on the light.

IN THE BEDROOM

CLARA  
How was it at ya father?

DAVID  
That's what I want to talk  
to you about.

CLARA  
Let's go to de kitchen and  
put up some tea for me. You  
want cocoa?

DAVID  
Wouldn't touch it. I drink  
beer now.

IN THE KITCHEN

Over tea and cocoa, Clara taking off her shoes.

DAVID  
I mean, aren't they supposed  
to keep up appearances or some-  
thing for a child's benefit?

CLARA  
De desperate have no rules,  
man.

Leona, dressed simply but sensually, enters the kitchen.

LEONA  
I'm off.

DAVID  
To where?

LEONA  
Peter's speaking in White  
Plains.

David follows her to the back door.

LEONA  
I'll see you for breakfast.

She kisses him and is gone.

DAVID  
Doesn't seem too desperate  
to me.

CLARA  
Is all camouflage, darling,  
all done wid clever make-up.  
Ay, me two-cent tootsies are  
killing me.

She begins rubbing her feet.

DAVID  
Here, lemme rub 'em for ya.

She watches him as he sits and, somewhat hesitantly, begins to  
rub her feet and toes.

DAVID  
What's in that red suitcase?

CLARA  
What red suitcase?

DAVID  
De one ya keep under ya bed,  
darling, and take a Brooklyn  
wid ya.

CLARA  
None of ya business. Me  
room is me privacy.

He moves up to her calf.

DAVID  
How come you don't have hair  
on your legs?

CLARA  
Dey are naturally hairless.

His hand ventures a bit higher and Clara yanks her leg away.

CLARA  
Don't you touch me like dat!

DAVID  
Like how?

CLARA  
You leave off my person!

She grabs the nearest weapon, a National Enquirer, and slams him on the nose.

DAVID  
Whát'd I do?

CLARA  
Why you not respect me,  
child?

She has a wild yet defeated look on her face we've never seen before. David's nose burns. His eyes brim with tears.

DAVID  
I'm sorry. I didn't know  
it would upset you.

CLARA  
You must never do dat to  
me again. Ya hear what I  
telling you?

DAVID  
Okay, okay.

CLARA  
Get to ya room now.

#### HIS ROOM

LATER. His air conditioner on high, David in his parka in bed, several of his butterflies lined up on his chest. His door opens.

CLARA  
Ya supper's ready. Go and  
eat.

DAVID  
I'm not hungry. Besides I'm  
a fat slob.

CLARA  
Am I supposed to feel sorry  
for ya now? Huh? Fat little  
boy wid his butterflies?

(A beat)

In Jamaica, ya know, fat means  
ya rich and have plenty girl-  
friends.

DAVID  
Then I should go there.

CLARA  
No. You must learn to live  
here. But not to touch a  
lady when it don't be asked  
of ya.

He turns away--angry and embarrassed.

CLARA  
Fine. Excuse me for trying  
to display human compassion.  
Get it from ya dead moths.

She slams the door now, leaving him alone. He angrily sweeps the  
butterflies off his chest.

DAVID  
Clara!

A beat. She opens the door again.

CLARA  
What?

For a moment he doesn't respond.

DAVID  
Why did Edith have to die  
and screw everything up?

CLARA  
Dem dat die do not make de  
agony and de strangeness of  
life. De living do dat.

DAVID  
Figured you'd say that.

CLARA  
Den why did ya ask?

He shrugs, presses his face into his pillow. She sits on the bed  
beside him.

CLARA  
Look 'pon me, David.

He looks up at her. She takes his face in her hands.

CLARA  
Know dis. Know dat you can  
depend on me..

DAVID

Always?

CLARA

Always is much longer dan  
you will not need me.

She smiles.

EXT COUNTRY CLUB POOL DAY

Lipsky bursts from the water, victorious from a practice heat,  
spots David watching the team practice from a distance.

LIPSKY

Hart the Fart! Hear your  
ole man's on the loose.  
Maybe he'll fix ya up with  
some Manhattan hot pants.  
Careful ya don't get herpes.

OTHERS LAUGH, UNLEASH FLATULENT SOUNDS as behind David, Leona  
comes out of the locker room, hears the end of this. The  
Red-Haired Girl and LIPSKY'S OLDER BROTHER AND GIRLFRIEND on  
nearby lounges. Leona follows David's gaze to the Red-haired  
Girl, senses his longing.

LEONA

I'm ready.

They start away.

LEONA

I could talk to Coach Stillson,  
see if he'd let you practice  
with the team.

DAVID

Only guys who made the team  
should practice with them.

LEONA

But you've improved so much  
since the tryouts.

DAVID

How do you know?

LEONA

I watch you swimming in the  
Sound every morning. I can  
tell.

DAVID  
Really?

She nods, stops.

LEONA  
Let me talk to him.

He wants it...but shakes his head.

EXT VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT DAY

David and Leona seated, waiting. The place virtually empty.

DAVID  
This is really a great time  
to eat--middle of the afternoon.  
And vegetarian too. Mm.

LEONA  
Peter has papers to correct  
and lectures to prepare. He  
likes to eat early so he can  
work late. Ah..!

Peter approaches. He kisses Leona on the lips. She tries to act  
casual, though she stiffens slightly. He offers David a hand.

PETER  
Hello, David, it's good to  
see you again.

David shakes, deflecting his eyes from Peter's.

PETER  
I've been looking forward  
to this.

DAVID  
Oh, I have too.

PETER  
I hope you'll just relax  
with me.

DAVID  
Oh, I will. I am.

PETER  
What I mean is you don't  
have to be polite to me  
until you feel I've earned  
it....And I'll do the same.

A beat: David lifts his eyes to Peter's--with interest.

SAME LATER

Over the end of their meal. They have the place to themselves.

DAVID

I don't get it. The guy  
keeps rolling the boulder  
up the mountain even though  
he knows it's going to roll  
back down.

LEONA

What Peter's saying, darling,  
is Sisyphus is condemned to  
roll the boulder up the mountain--  
he has no choice--but what's  
important is that he commits  
every fiber of his being to  
the enterprise anyway.

DAVID

Even knowing he'll never do  
it? How come?

LEONA

Because it's the effort, David,  
that gives meaning to life.

DAVID

(To Peter)

Is that right?

PETER

Yep.

DAVID

You make all of this up?

PETER

No. A French philosopher/  
writer named Camus made it up.  
I've just had the good sense  
to steal it.

WAITRESS

Can I get dessert for anyone?

PETER

David? They have wonderful  
carrot cake.

DAVID  
(A beat)

No, no dessert for me, thanks.

EXT HART HOUSE DAY

Leona pulls INTO THE DRIVEWAY. Clara is at the mailbox, comes toward them. David opens his door, gets out, but his mother doesn't turn the car off or get out. He ducks his head back IN.

DAVID  
What're ya doin?

LEONA  
I'm going to spend the night  
at Peter's.

DAVID  
What? Why? I mean, you're  
not divorced. I mean that's  
not legal, is it?

LEONA  
My separation agreement with  
your father permits me to  
have a friend stay over in  
the house once a week. I  
don't feel comfortable doing  
that yet. I'll be home  
probably before you get up  
in the morning....All right?

A beat.

DAVID  
Sure.

David's hurries toward the house, leaving Leona facing Clara across the yard. Conflicted, in pain, Leona backs down the driveway.

INT LEONA'S BEDROOM DAY

David stands in his parents' room, looks at the bed, bends to it to sniff it; then sits at his mother's vanity table, opens one of her expensive moisture jellies and dabs it on his face Indian-fashion, then does the same with a lipstick...as Clara enters behind him.

CLARA  
Ya know she na want ya to  
trouble her things.

DAVID  
Me na trouble her things.

She takes a tissue and begins to clean his face. He puts his hands on her waist.

DAVID  
Clara...

CLARA  
Dat is my name.

DAVID  
Will I be like your son  
now?

Clara shakes her head, moans, pulls out of his touch.

CLARA  
David, dis is not good.

DAVID  
But you are my friend, right.

CLARA  
Of course. But, David, girls,  
dey don't interest you as yet?

DAVID  
It's not that they don't  
interest me. I don't interest  
them.

CLARA  
Probably dey will start in  
to be interest in you in de  
fall.

DAVID  
You swear?

CLARA  
But of course.

PHONE RINGS. David goes to his mother's night stand and answers it. Clara follows, continuing to clean his face.

DAVID  
Hello....Hi, Dad....Oh, just  
hangin out with Clara, puttin  
on Mom's cosmetics, stuff like  
that.

CLARA  
(Whispering)  
Ya devil child!

DAVID  
Come on, Dad, get serious, of  
course I'm kidding....Oh....On  
sure--no problem.... Sure.  
No, listen, have a nice trip....  
Sure, talk to ya then. Bye.

He hangs up.

CLARA  
To where is he going now? De  
moon?

DAVID  
Australia.

CLARA  
Ah--farder dan de moon!

DAVID  
I can na go stay wi' him  
next weekend in his cool  
bachelor pad. Cha, man,  
dat really breaks me heart.

He looks at his smeared red and white face in the mirror.

DAVID  
Next fall. Absolutely.

EXT THE SOUND DAY

David sprinting strongly for the shore, staggering panting onto  
the shore. He gabs his towel, begins to clear his eyes. As his  
vision clears, he SEES the Red-Haired Girl walking her dog past  
him. She glances at him, does a double take.

DAVID  
Hi.

RED-HAIRED GIRL  
Hello, David.

A beat. He takes a step or two over the pebbles after her.

DAVID  
I didn't know you lived  
around here..

RED-HAIRED GIRL

Yes, we just recently moved.

She starts to stop, but somehow doesn't, and continues on with her dog. He calls after her...

DAVID

Well, welcome to the neighborhood!

She tosses her head, smiles.

DAVID

(Burying his head;  
to himself)

God! "Welcome to the neighborhood." You idiot!

He stares after her...and she glances back at him again, the smile still there.

EXT SUBWAY ENTRANCE DAY

Clara and David emerge. David takes a deep breath.

EXT CEMETERY NIGHT

Looking across the graveyard at Clara's window.

IN CLARA'S APARTMENT, she's ready to leave.

CLARA

If de phone ring, mind you  
don't talk patois.

DAVID

Come on, lemme go with you.

CLARA

No. You come wid me to me  
apartment, fine. But still  
I am allowed to go wid my  
friends. Alone. Read a book.

DAVID

Pretty please.

CLARA

No!

and she's gone. The apartment is stifflingly hot. David rummages in a closet and comes out with an old metal fan. He

ugs it in. The blades whirl for a few seconds--during which  
time he fixes on Clara's red suitcase in a corner--and then  
suddenly the LIGHTS go off.

DAVID

Great.

He finds the circuit box in a KITCHEN cupboard and switches the  
circuit breaker on again. He goes behind the refrigerator, yanks  
out the plug. The refrigerator grinds into silence. He returns  
to the fan, switching it on high. To the SOUND OF THE FAN, he  
CHANTS the one phrase of Gypsy he knows and sits to read what we  
SEE now is Camus' The Stranger.

DAVID

Na sa ru, ka ku, ma ma tu.  
So deese is Brooklyn. Me  
na like Brooklyn. Brooklyn  
have bad ways. Gypsies.  
Obeah.

The PHONE RINGS. He picks it up...

DAVID

'ello, dis be de home of  
Clara Mayfield, yes.

...and, after a beat, hears a DIAL TONE. He hangs up. The PHONE  
RINGS again. He picks it up...

DAVID

Hello.

...and, after a beat, hears a DIAL TONE again. He hangs up.

DAVID

Na sa ru, ka ku, ma ma tu.

EXT CEMETERY NIGHT

PANNING TO THE STOOP OF CLARA'S BUILDING, we SEE David sitting on  
the stoop not reading The Stranger. REGGAE MUSIC from a nearby  
BOOM BOX fills the street, JAMAICANS fill other stoops, SINGING,  
DANCING, hanging out. PASSERSBY look curiously at the white boy.  
He's startled by a hand on his shoulder. He jumps.

OORA

You mustn't frighten of me.  
Must be she tell you bad  
about me.

DAVID

Actually, she na tell me  
nothing at all, darling. I  
wish she do. Me na like  
being in de dark.

DORA

Mm. All ya need to know den  
is dis: Where Mayfield go,  
death and obean follow.

A beat. She's very close. He manufactures a YAWN, stretches,  
and starts to get up.

DAVID

Welp, think I'll head upstairs  
and--

But Dora stops him firmly.

DORA

Not yet.

DAVID

What the hell, I got time.

DORA

Did Clara told you bout  
Ralfie?

DAVID

Tell ya da truth, darling, I  
don't see that's any of ya  
dunty business.

DORA

I know she don't tell ya.

DAVID

She did tell me. Now what  
do you think of dat?

He starts away again, this time moving forcefully out from under  
her hand.

DORA

She couldn't tell you de  
whole story.

David stops, whirls around.

DAVID  
Hey, look, whuddu you care,  
anyway, hun?

DORA  
Me have reasons to care.

David is too caught up in this to leave now.

DORA  
You must ask her bout Ralfie.  
You must certainly ask her.

David watches Dora head for the Black Man's Cadillac at the curb.

DAVID  
(Calling after Dora)  
You fulla shit like me  
can't tell you! Her is  
goodness! You should well  
want to give her ya best  
wish!

Around him, JAMAICANS stare as Dora shuts the door and the car  
pulls away.

INT CLARA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

David sleeps on the love seat. DISTANT MUSIC. The FAN WHIRS  
noisily.

CLARA (O.C.)  
Jesus Christ!

David jolts awake. Clara is standing IN THE KITCHEN, staring  
down accusingly at the linoleum floor.

CLARA  
Why de ras you take de plug  
out? De whole freezer melt  
away! Ice cream nastyng de  
floor! Put de plug back in!

David leaps up, steps over the spill, stooping to plug the  
refrigerator back in; it starts up with a fierce rattling.

DAVID  
I had to go outside! I was  
burning up and the phone  
kept ringing, these voices  
were threatening me!

CLARA  
What dem say?

DAVID  
They said they were gonna  
"juke me up."

CLARA  
You mean to say was Jamaicans  
talking?

DAVID  
Who else jukes people up?

CLARA  
(Indicating the  
floor)  
Clean it up now.

David grabs a sponge and sprays it with some Fantastik.

CLARA  
If you think ya coming back  
wid me to Brooklyn again, ya  
have an oddar guess coming.

DAVID  
I had to put the fan on. I'm  
a white guy, I'm not used to  
the tropics. I was burnin up,  
I told ya.

CLARA  
Think of it like a steam bath--  
ya lose some weight.

DAVID  
I'm losing weight! I've lost  
weight!

CLARA  
Yes, of course. I shouldn't  
say dat.

She quiets, squats beside him on the floor, draws two fingers  
along his cheek, shakes her head.

CLARA  
You get to know somebody a  
certain way and dem change  
quick and fast. Soon you'll  
be turning to a man. Won't  
have no-use for me.

DAVID  
That's not true.

Seemingly disturbed by their proximity, she steps away. He continues to clean the mess.

DAVID  
Clara, does obean have any-  
thing do with why you hate  
Dora?

CLARA  
Who tell you we hate each  
oddar?

DAVID  
Gimme a break.

Clara peers out the window toward the Verrazano Bridge. WATER  
HISSES through the exposed pipes.

CLARA  
As children we catch a fight.

Someone above begins STOMPING TO LOUD MUSIC. Clara grabs a mop,  
knocks the ceiling with the handle. The MUSIC IS TURNED DOWN.

CLARA  
Dora 'tacking Chinee merchant  
terrible nasty. Chinee! Quaa!  
Pongie pong! You no good!  
Chinee woman!...I tell her  
can't treat people dat way,  
make me want to cry; I tell  
her we mustn't add to de  
awfulness of de world, tell  
her apologize; but Dora won't.  
Don't know how, but I start  
punching her face till I  
see her nose is broken and  
part of tooth is lying on  
her bloody tongue....I just  
forget myself.

DAVID  
So she never forgave you for  
it.

CLARA  
She always do things to get  
me back.

DAVID  
Like what?

CLARA  
Enough said for one night.

Above the MUSIC BECOMES LOUD again, the STOMPING RESUMES...but Clara doesn't seem to notice.

INT CLARA'S CHURCH DAY - SUNDAY MORNING

HUNDREDS OF JAMAICANS throng the nave, and David is the only white person. A VERY MYSTICAL HIGH MASS is in progress as they enter and Clara leads him to a wall where scores of candles are placed in ascending rows. She genuflects, rises to light a candle far away from the cluster of those already burning.

CLARA  
(whispering)  
God, let him have his soul  
in repose.

She WHISPERS the words again, her eyes clouding, David trying to appear as if he's not listening. Then she says it once again, inaudibly.

THE PEWS

Clara and David sharing a prayer book during a HYMN. Clara's lovely voice rises above the rest, flourishing with its own melodious conviction. People sitting near turn to admire her. David crosses himself whenever she does, feeling exhilarated and guilty. The HYMN ends and people move forward for communion.

CLARA  
Wait here.

She goes forward...and David sneaks up behind her and stands silent in line. She turns to discover him. THEY WHISPER.

CLARA  
Go sit down!

DAVID  
Please, I wanna do it too.

CLARA  
If ya parents found out,  
they'd shit up themselves.

DAVID  
Who's gonna tell 'em?

SOMEONE

Sshh!

Clara looks around to see who dares tell her how to act.

DAVID

When I'm here, I feel like  
I'm Christian.

CLARA

I said go sit ya backside  
down in de pew!

David doesn't budge...and Clara finally turns her back on him. She kneels before the PRIEST, takes the wafer on her tongue. Her eyelids flutter with feeling as she drinks from her disposable cup of wine. She then hurries away and David steps into her place, fixing his eyes on the black face hemmed in white garments. The Priest whispers sibilantly in Latin, placing the wafer on his tongue, offering a sip from a plastic chalice.

DAVID

(Quietly to Priest)  
Good cigar!

NEXT THE CHURCH DAY

David tails Clara outside.

CLARA

Boy, you really know how  
to get me stink up. Don't  
know why ya can't listen  
to me when I request. You  
just like ya muddar.

He doubles over, as if she's just shot him in the gut.

DAVID

No, no, not like me muddar.

CLARA

David, God is not for play-  
ing wid. God is big guns!

DAVID

Okay, fine, I was gonna convert  
for you, but forget it. It  
tasted lousy anyway.

He can't hide a smile. They stop momentarily at a red light and David SEES a GROUP OF JAMAICANS obviously pointing at Clara and talking about her. One of them throws a hex sign at her just as

The light changes and Clara whacks David playfully on the butt to go.

INT CLARA'S ROOM (HART HOUSE) DAY

All is still--or seems to be--until we SEE DAVID'S FACE rise outside her window.

OUTSIDE HER WINDOW, David is in the tree. Perilously, he reaches for her window, almost falls, hangs on. He manages to shove the window open, thinks about it a moment, then makes his move, leaping from the branch to the window, catching the eave as he lands on the sill, teetering dangerously, then flipping...

INTO THE ROOM. He stands, his breath explosive, getting himself under control. And now he searches Clara's underwear drawer, fingering her brassieres and polyester panties; smells a pair. In another drawer, he fingers an apricot silk nightgown pinned with a piece of paper that says, "In case of hospital." Then he rummages into her night table...until he finds the suitcase key. The envelope enclosing it is weighed down with all sorts of manicuring implements and he carefully keeps them in the same positions. He drops to the floor and we SEE him from the OPPOSITE SIDE of Clara's bed, looking underneath across the her red suitcase. Which he grabs. And opens guiltily on the bed.

BUNDLES OF AEROGRAMS BOUND IN BLUE RIBBON. Most have been sent to Clara Mayfield, 376 Orchard Lane, Port Antonio. Three stacks have been set apart. Curiously they're addressed to Manny Mayfield, United States Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and each has been stamped "Return to Sender."

Guiltily he puts the letters down, goes to the window. LOW TIDE ON THE SOUND. Suddenly he turns back to the letters, grabs up one of the Manny Mayfield bundles as we DISSOLVE TO

SAME LATER

Sitting on the floor, he's lost in the letters. We HEAR the KEY IN THE LOCK before he does. Then when he does, it's too late, and he's barely begun to restore order before she's in the room. She SCREAMS and tears spring instantly to her eyes.

DAVID

I had to know. There're so many things.

CLARA

Such a dreadful pity ya life come down to this. Ya act like a desperate old man, helpless in love with some young woman.

We SEE Leona, alerted by the SCREAM, hurry into the doorway.

CLARA  
Must be ya parents gone cause  
dis putrid selfishness. If  
dem attended ya properly,  
ya wouldn't be up to dis  
devil work. Get out of my  
room now. Ga scam.

Agonizing, David turns for the door and SEES his mother, tears in her eyes. He goes past her, leaving Leona eye to eye with Clara.

INT KITCHEN DAY

David hunkers into a doorway, his mother opening a bottle of mineral water.

DAVID  
Where is she?

Leona pours mineral water over ice.

LEONA  
I gave her money to see a  
movie.

David plops down in one of the wooden ice-cream-parlor chairs.

LEONA  
I can't understand it. You've  
always respected your father  
and my things.

DAVID  
You have to get her to for-  
give me.

LEONA  
How do I do that, David?

DAVID  
I don't know--tell her I'm  
sick.

LEONA  
Oh, David, she knows every-  
thing about you.

DAVID  
So don't I have the right to  
know about her then?

She reaches for him; he shies back. They stare at each other, each consumed by fears.

EXT THE SOUND DAY

MORNING. David sprints powerfully for shore. Emerges, standing waist high, panting not from fatigue but from fury. HE LOOKS ONE WAY, THEN THE OTHER. ON A DISTANT DOCK, barely recognizable, the Red-Haired Girl seems to be looking this way.

INT KITCHEN DAY

His towel wrapped around him, he enters the kitchen. Clara ignores him, the National Enquirer in front of her face. He goes into the refrigerator, bangs around it conspicuously. Nothing.

DAVID  
Please talk to me.

CLARA  
You ras. Me won't talk  
till ya ready for Bellevue.

Clara sucks air through her teeth, ruffles her newspaper, puts it between them.

CLARA  
Take de vacuum and go 'n  
clean ya room.

Angrily, he charges up the stairs.

IN HIS ROOM, he shoves his door closed, plugs in and turns on the Electrolux. He's about to change the small corner-cleaning attachment to the floor attachment when his finger gets sucked into the opening. He plays his finger into the opening a couple of times, then runs the nozzle along his cheek. The hose draws part of his mouth inside it and with his tongue he feels the opening. Then he begins to run the nozzle over his arms and thighs, and then between his legs. His eyes close and he falls back on the bed, OUT OF FRAME, and we HEAR HIM GASP.

INT CLARA'S ROOM DAY

She watches "The Raging Tide" and irons, the door open.

DOWNSTAIRS IN THE LIBRARY David picks up his father's phone, punches onto one of the several lines and dials.

CLARA'S ROOM

PHONE RINGS. It ring five times before she answers gruffly.

CLARA  
'Ello, Hart residence.

DAVID/CLARA - ALTERNATELY

David speaks in a high, squeaky Jamaican voice.

DAVID  
Clara, hi, is me, Blossom.

CLARA  
Blossie Chatelaine, wha happen? Me was longing to hear from you.

DAVID  
Haven't seen ya out a church lately. How ya been?

CLARA  
Well, Blossom, me life up here getting from bad to worse.

DAVID  
Wha happen?

CLARA  
De child get nasty. Go through me personal.

DAVID  
No! A lie ya tell.

CLARA  
And to think him don't even satisfy wid dat. Him must dress up in me frock. Done his hair in me turbans and den spray his stinking self wid 'Touch of Fire.'

DAVID  
(Himself)  
I did not!

CLARA  
Me know it was you from de start. Ya devil child. Ya must take me for a fool!

BELOW, David HEARS a dialtone and Clara's unamused laughter.

NEXT COUNTRY CLUB PATIO DAY.

Leona, Peter, and David eating. Some CURIOUS EYES on them. A banner prominently displayed urges: "SIGN UP NOW!!! JULY 4th SWIM MEET!! ALL AGES!!" At a distant table, the inevitable Lipsky Gang, Alan jousting flirtatiously with the Redhead, his Brother's Girlfriend clinging to Lipsky's Brother who is taking their check from a WAITRESS.

Leona leans in close to David.

LEONA

Peter and I are concerned about you, David. Neither of us thinks it's healthy that you don't have friends your own age.

PETER

If you did, David, this difficulty with Clara wouldn't pose such a--

DAVID

You told him about Clara and me?

PETER

David, I want to be your friend, I want you to be able to talk with me just as if I were your--

Bill comes onto the patio with THREE OTHER GOLFERS, spots them.

DAVID

Oh my God, it's Dad.

BILL

Hi there. Hate for people to think we're not an amicable version of the nuclear family.

He and Leona kiss cheeks fairly easily.

LEONA

Bill, I don't believe you've met Peter Thurmond.

BILL

No, I don't believe I have. Peter.

PETER  
Nice to see you, Bill.

LEONA  
We didn't know you were back  
from Australia.

BILL  
Just back yesterday.  
(To David)  
Was gonna call you later  
today. Wanna have lunch  
with the guys and me?

LEONA  
We invited David to lunch  
with us.

PETER  
We thought he could make  
my first visit to the club  
easier by showing me the ins  
and outs of the buffet line.

BILL  
He's the guy for the job.

LEONA  
He's just having a salad, Bill.

BILL  
Sorry, that didn't come out  
quite right.

DAVID  
Forget it.

BILL  
Right. Well, enjoy lunch.

Bill nods and heads for a table...as Lipsky and Friends pass.  
Lipsky knuckles David's head. David leaps to his feet.

DAVID  
Don't frig me around, ya ras!  
Ga clear off, ya toot mum and  
baggai!

David DIVES into the middle of the Boys. A FIGHT ensues. Peter,  
Bill, and SEVERAL OTHER PARENTS break the fight up. David comes  
out of the fight with a bloody nose, Bill dragging him away as he  
cries to get back at Alan.

ON THEM CLOSE, we see that Bill is more than a little impressed at his son's aggressiveness.

BILL

Hey, hey, easy now, easy.  
Don't do it like that, son.

(Nodding at the  
pool)

Do it there, Big Boy.

And the father takes a handkerchief to the son's nose. But David tears away and runs for the parking lot, almost bowling over the Red-Haired Girl as he makes his break.

ON THE TREE-LINED DRIVE away from the club, Bill's new two-door Mercedes convertible and Peter's Volvo drive slowly, Bill, Peter, and Leona looking this way and that for David, Leona CALLING HIS NAME. Finally, we SEE him jogging for home along the edge of the trees. Bill pulls up next to him.

BILL

Come on, pal, get in, come  
home with me.

DAVID

I'd rather go home to Clara.

BILL

Heard she's not talkin to  
ya.

DAVID

I'd still rather be where  
she is.

BILL

(A beat)

Fine.

Bill pulls away angrily. An exasperated but controlled Leona steps out of Peter's car.

EXT NIGHT PATIO

From here, Clara can SEE David at the water's edge, still and fixed on the lights of some distance home.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

We HEAR BILL'S VOICE before we SEE that we're  
INT KITCHEN DAY

Clara is dicing new potatoes and onions and raw beef for a stew.  
Bill and Leona are arguing as if she weren't there. During the  
scene we'll SEE DAVID eavesdropping halfway up the BACK STAIRS.

BILL

You haven't been living at  
home regularly for weeks and  
it's suddenly dawned on you  
that staying out so much might  
not be the proper thing to do  
to a kid who's become dependent  
on a black woman who's not  
speaking to him, so to make  
up for it, you want to put  
him in therapy?

LEONA

Look, this is not a discussion  
about my living arrangements.  
I see David plenty.

BILL

Don't you think putting him  
in therapy is going to make  
him feel even more separate?

LEONA

If I thought that, I wouldn't  
be doing it, Bill, now would I?

A beat.

BILL

You want me to pay for the  
treatment, I assume.

LEONA

I want your support, Bill,  
not your money.

BILL

I really wish I could believe  
that.

CLARA

I can't believe you send a  
little child to a psychiatrist.

LEONA

A psychologist, Clara.

BILL

Stay out of this, Clara.

CLARA

(Chopping with vigor)

Mrs. Hart, I know you too well.  
You interest in a new mess for  
yaself. If you want twist up  
ya brain, that is fine. But  
leave the child out of it.

LEONA

Don't talk to me that way.

CLARA

Don't tell me how to talk to  
you. I am not ya child. In  
Jamaica we have expression:

BILL

Nobody gives a damn about your  
Jamaican expressions!

CLARA

The higher the monkey climbs,  
the more he exposes. Ya  
understand what dat mean?

Leona shakes her head irascibly. Bill yanks open the  
refrigerator.

CLARA

Nice thing about a child  
is his ignorance. Finished  
off.

Clara dusts her hands, returns to her chopping. Bill slams the  
refrigerator.

BILL

Ah, we can talk again then?

From his hiding place we HEAR...

DAVID

But what's wrong with me?

BILL

Terrific.

FROM THE BACK STAIRS we SEE Bill and Leona move into view.

LEONA  
There's nothing wrong with  
you. Psychologists don't  
deal in right or wrong.

DAVID  
But I don't want to see a  
psychologist.

LEONA  
He'll help you, darling.

DAVID  
Will he get Clara to talk to  
me again?

LEONA  
He might help you understand  
why you feel like disregarding  
her privacy.

DAVID  
I respect Clara's privacy--you  
don't understand.

LEONA  
Maybe I don't. But hopefully  
Dr. Stevens will.

DAVID  
Dad..?

BILL  
Hell, I don't know. Give it  
a chance.

DAVID  
They'll make fun of me at the  
club. I'll lose all my friends.

LEONA  
What friends? That's part  
of the problem, David.

BILL  
Don't worry, pal, nobody'll  
find out.

DAVID  
You mean you don't want me  
to go, but you can't stop  
her from sending me?

BILL  
I could try, but it would  
cause a lot of problems.

DAVID  
Like what?

BILL  
People go to court over these  
kinds of disagreements. For  
the time being, just try it.  
There's always the possibility  
your mother won't like him.

Suddenly Clara is between David and his parents on the stairs.

CLARA  
Go. Go to ya separate lives.  
Him will go to de doctor.

BILL  
I really resent your partic-  
ipation in this, Clara.

CLARA  
Den fire me.

LEONA  
He's not firing anybody.

Clara turns her back on Bill and Leona and holds out a hand to  
David as she ascends the stairs.

CLARA  
You come wid me.

David looks at Clara, at his parents...and takes her hand. Bill  
and Leona watch them go away.

IN CLARA'S BEDROOM they sit on her bed, his hands clasped in  
hers.

CLARA  
David, darling, listen me.  
Your brain don't have no  
more difficulties than oddar  
children.

DAVID  
Then what's wrong with me?

CLARA  
Ya muddar's wrong wid you;  
ya foddar's wrong wid you.

Her fingers trace his palm.

CLARA  
Just as I suspect.

DAVID  
What?

CLARA  
Two o' us knowed each oddar  
from a past life.

DAVID  
Really, we did? Where?

She stares at him a long moment, then...

CLARA  
In Bavaria it was.

This sends David into peals of laughter.

DAVID  
Ya mean you was de snow maiden  
and me was ya prince consort?

CLARA  
Unfortunately, I see something  
later on. I see years of  
torment.

DAVID  
How do you know?

CLARA  
Hand tells me. But listen  
now. Must remember dat love  
always give way to sad. But  
you must love when love come,  
not stop even when love go.  
Must always remember what it  
was when it was in flower.

David looks at Clara. Her eyes lock to his. She returns his  
hand to him.

INT DR. STEVENS' WAITING ROOM DAY

A book-lined room. David waiting alone. He reaches up and pulls down a book called Sexual Behavior. Opens it and is delighted to discover a series of graphic sexual pictures. Looks around, thinks about it a moment, then carefully, quietly tears several pictures out and returns the book quickly to its place as he HEARS movement within the office. He sits and covers the erection in his pants casually with arms draped across his lap. DR. STEVENS opens the door. A smiling Leona steps out of the office and a smiling Dr. Stevens beckons.

DR. STEVENS  
David, come in, please.

Stuffing his hands deep in his pockets, David heads for the door.

IN DR. STEVENS' OFFICE David faces the psychologist across a desk. Dr. Stevens is lighting his pipe.

DAVID  
But I don't even know you.

DR. STEVENS  
Exactly. We have to get to know each other.

DAVID  
But I don't discuss this stuff with friends. I don't even discuss it with myself.

DR. STEVENS  
Don't be afraid. Tell me what else you and Clara do together. Talk, spend the weekends in Brooklyn--what else?

Feeling somehow accused of some wrongdoing, David's demeanor changes just perceptibly and he decides to wing it.

DAVID  
You won't tell my father?

DR. STEVENS  
Certainly not.

DAVID  
Clara and I throw darts at pictures of him.

DR. STEVENS

You throw darts at pictures  
of your father?

DAVID

Yeah, see he has this pile  
of old eight by tens when  
he had a mustache--they're  
worthless; we use 'em for  
a dart board.

DR. STEVENS

I take it then that you're  
not that crazy about your  
father.

DAVID

Well, you gotta admit he and  
my mother are a little weird.

DR. STEVENS

Weird in what way?

DAVID

You really wanna hear this?

DR. STEVENS

Please.

DAVID

Well, you see, when Bill gets  
home from work, he and Leona  
get dressed up.

DR. STEVENS

How do you mean?

DAVID

Leona dresses up like Bill  
and Bill dresses up like Leona.

DR. STEVENS

Could you be a little more  
specific?

DAVID

Well, she gets into his golf-  
ing clothes, and he puts on  
her mink and stockings. Then  
he starts acting like her.  
He waves his hands, like this,  
you know, and serves her a drink.

DR. STEVENS  
How could you know this, David,  
unless you saw it?

DAVID  
I've never seen them. I've  
just figured it out. There  
were clues. Over a long period  
of time. But then Clara saw  
them once by accident. It was  
a Saturday morning and I was  
at a friend's house. They  
thought she'd gone to Brooklyn,  
but she hadn't left yet. They  
did it with their door open.

DR. STEVENS  
Clara told you she saw?

DAVID  
No. But I overheard a  
telephone conversation she  
had with her friend Blossom.

DR. STEVENS  
David, are you being truthful  
with me?

DAVID  
Why would I lie?

IN THE WAITING ROOM Dr. Stevens' door opens and David steps out.

DR. STEVENS  
David, why don't you sit down  
a minute. Mrs. Hart, could I  
see you a moment?

INT LEONA'S CAR DAY

LATE AFTERNOON ON THE SAW MILL RIVER PARKWAY. They fly past  
other cars. She's driving somewhat recklessly.

LEONA  
But why? Why?

DAVID  
Because I didn't wanna be  
there.

LEONA  
Then you should've discussed  
it with me.

DAVID  
You wouldn't listen.

LEONA  
How do you know?

DAVID  
Just takin a wild guess.

LEONA  
Where did you get all that  
filth?

DAVID  
Made it up.

She elbows him, sweeps her right hand at his face. The car swerves dangerously. Her shoulders shake and she begins to laugh, to laugh until she cries. She has to pull over to the shoulder. She pulls him to her, yet there's something antiseptic in the embrace and on David's part even a reluctance to be embraced.

INT KITCHEN NIGHT

Clara sitting at the kitchen table, SINGING "Chi chi buddo" and reading the Enquirer when they enter. David rolls his eyes and hits the stairs. Leona turns to Clara.

LEONA  
You're not going to believe  
this. Then again, maybe  
you will.

CLARA  
What, darling?

ON THE STAIRS, David creeps soundlessly back down to he can hear the scene IN THE KITCHEN.

LEONA  
I told Dr. Stevens David  
isn't coming back.

CLARA  
Him is healed so fast. Praise  
Jesus! I was so afraid we  
all catch de sickness dat  
afflict his brain.

Leona persists despite Clara's sarcasm and watches her closely.

LEONA

He told Dr. Stevens some outrageous lies about Bill and me.

CLARA

No, Mrs. Hart. I don't believe! Don't say no more, you'll get me too upset.

LEONA

Dr. Stevens suggested you're a bad influence on David and I should let you go.

CLARA

Him should go suck his balls. What did you tell him back?

LEONA

(A beat)

I told him not to tell me how to run my life.

CLARA

Good! Such people need somebody to show dem where to get off at. And you are just de person to do de telling.

In his hiding place, David is about to convulse in laughter. A CAR HORN OUTSIDE.

LEONA

It's Peter. I'm sorry, I have to go.

CLARA

Darling, don't apologize. Such an experience--you need a nice dinner and some rest.

SOUND OF WILD LAUGHTER V.O. Leona's insulted countenance and then we're...

IN CLARA'S ROOM. David and Clara convulsed. Clara, her iron suspended in air. David on the bed, legs waving.

CLARA

Ya too lie! Hiiii! Shame on you, man. What else you tell him?

DAVID  
I spoke patois for him.

CLARA  
No, you don't.

DAVID  
I just sang him "Donkey City."

CLARA  
But you don't sing him de  
part I taught--"Me gone down  
to Donkey City to circumcise  
my kitty"--do you?

DAVID  
But that's the best part.

CLARA  
You running a joke wid me,  
right?

David nods. Clara grabs a pair of scissors and begins shearing the air before his face. He rolls out of the way; she chases him; he grabs her hand; they wrestle to the floor, her wrists locked in his fists, him rolling over on top of her, straddling her, looking down, her pinned beneath him. Something dark and distant clouds her face.

CLARA  
All right, dat is enough.  
Up, please. Get up.

Sensing she's disturbed, he gets up quickly. She straightens her clothes and for a moment there's a pall in the room.

CLARA  
Ya know what I am hankering  
for?

DAVID  
What?

CLARA  
Some ice cream. But we  
got none in de house. Me  
would drive us quick and  
fast to a place could fix  
de hunger but me don't  
have America license.

DAVID  
We don't have a car anyway.

CLARA  
Peter come to get her. Her car is in de garage. Don't ya father used to take you driving?

DAVID  
What if a policeman stops us?

CLARA  
How dem gwan see who driving at night? If police stop us, can always said on de way to hospital, dat me get heart attack or burst appendix.

DAVID  
Na, I can't do it, I'm too scared.

CLARA  
Of course. De boy dat swim all summer, dat juke de psychiatrist, dat de girls fall on in de next school, is too afraid. Eh-nen.

EXT GARAGE NIGHT

TAIL LIGHTS. Then the car lurches down the driveway. Stops with a jolt, slips into drive, and leaps forward.

IN THE CAR

Inspired to this daring, David concentrates fiercely.

CLARA  
Better not run dis car so slow. Police surely will notice if you drive so.

David squeezes the gas pedal down and the speedometer inches up.

CLARA  
Too fast now. Mind dat car!

DAVID  
You're making me nervous!

She silences herself. He concentrates. In control. He puts his

elbow cockily out the window and the other across the back of her seat. She smiles.

EXT ICE CREAM PARLOR NIGHT

A CROWD OF PATRONS milling about. A convertible sits double-parked at the curb, the Red-Haired Girl on the crown of the back seat, darting her tongue at an ice-cream cone. Next to her is Alan Lipsky. At the wheel is Lipsky's Brother, next to him his Girlfriend.

BROTHER'S GIRLFRIEND  
Look at David Hart!

LIPSKY  
Pansy! What the hell are you doin? We'll call the cops on ya!

DAVID  
Let's go to another ice cream parlor.

CLARA  
Me don't want no oddar ice cream.

DAVID  
But that's Lipsky and his brother.

CLARA  
Dat is de beloved Lipsky?

A car several spaces ahead pulls out.

CLARA  
Take dat space.

DAVID  
I haven't parallel parked before.

CLARA  
So in thirty seconds you will not have to ever say dat again.

David pulls well forward of the space and then slips the car into reverse and drives tentatively backward.

CLARA  
Start cutting de wheel.

He veers into the space too sharply.

LIPSKY'S BROTHER  
You better quit while you're  
ahead, Hart!

CLARA  
Pull ahead and try again.

Lipsky's Brother pulls forward and blocks David's way.

DAVID  
They're blocking me.

CLARA  
Dem will move.

With great reluctance, David backs up.

LIPSKY'S BROTHER  
Watch out!

CLARA  
Keep it coming!

David misses the Lipsky car by inches and backs the car perfectly  
into the space.

CLARA  
Good cigar!

DAVID  
Let's get outta here!

CLARA  
Nobody scares you 'n me off.  
Dem is just children.

DAVID  
I could be dead tomorrow.

CLARA  
Den have a double scoop  
tonight.

They get out of the car and walk toward the ice cream parlor.

LIPSKY  
Look at Hart and his dumpy  
maid!

Clara whirls around, clenching her fists.

CLARA  
Dem don't know who dem is  
messing wid.

DAVID  
Let's just get our ice cream  
and get outta here.

IN THE ICE CREAM PARLOR Clara's mood immediately changes.

CLARA  
I think I will have two  
scoops of Mandarin Chocolate  
Sherbet. But I feel you  
should try Baseball Nut. I  
well want to taste dat.

DAVID  
I'm having one scoop of diet  
vanilla--in a cup.

She clucks her tongue, shakes her head in mock disappointment.

OUTSIDE THE PARLOR we watch them exit, holding their ice cream.  
Lipsky's Brother has pulled forward and has their car blocked.  
David and Clara approach the car.

LIPSKY  
Look at the fright wig she's  
wearing.

CLARA  
You get nasty wid de wrong  
person! Parrot shit is higher  
in God's order den you in ya  
banana car and your stinking  
women.

LIPSKY'S BROTHER  
And you're a goddamn monkey  
nigger!

Clara, holding her ice cream cone, moves toward their car until  
she stands next to Lipsky's Brother. David's so scared he's  
immobilized.

LIPSKY'S BROTHER  
Piss off.

Clara smoothly jams her ice cream cone into Lipsky's Brother's  
face. He yells in surprise. Lipsky and his Brother jump over  
the side of the car. Clara doesn't flinch. She calmly reaches

into her apron pocket and wields her scissors. Her eyes blaze.

CLARA

Yes, come on. Come right  
to me and see how I will  
cut you to ya balls.

The boys freeze. Lipsky glances at his Brother.

LIPSKY'S BROTHER

Leave her alone. She's nuts.

The two boys get back in the convertible and PEEL OUT. David  
stares at Clara--wondering just who and how many people she  
really is. Then he turns away and punches his mother's car.

CLARA

What is de matter?

DAVID

I didn't do anything..

CLARA

What should you have done?

DAVID

Something! I'm supposed to  
be the man. You did every-  
thing.

CLARA

Go to de swimming pool, tell  
the little son of a bitch to  
take his mark, den race him  
de length of de pool, and  
beat his ass.

DAVID

He's fast.

CLARA

So too are you fast.

DAVID

He's the best on the team.

CLARA

You are better.

DAVID

You don't know.

CLARA  
Den why you are eating diet  
vanilla? Ya shoulda had  
baseball nut like I told  
ya!

DAVID  
I think I broke my hand.

CLARA  
Good--dat would solve every-  
thing, wouldn't it? I hope  
you did.

She takes, examines it roughly. He YELPS.

EXT BACK OF HOUSE DAY

David sprints up from his daily swim in the Sound, pushing himself hard. Bursts INTO THE KITCHEN...and HEARS the SOUND OF CLARA'S SHOWER above. Takes several deep recovery breaths.

IN CLARA'S ROOM, he hunkers at the bathroom door, the door cracked but half an inch, watching Clara in the shower. THE SHOWER turns off. David dives into her closet, closes the door. Clara comes nude from the bathroom, drying herself with a large bath towel. Suddenly David strolls innocently out of the closet, his towel wrapped around his waist, the vacuum cleaner in hand. She SCREAMS, covers herself; but he gets a good eyeful before she disappears into the towel and he turns discreetly away, as if the last thing he'd want is to get a look at her naked.

DAVID  
Oh God, I'm sorry.

CLARA  
Wha'chu doin in here, man?

DAVID  
Just getting the vacuum so  
I can vacuum my room.

CLARA  
Ya too lie!

DAVID  
I'm trying to help you.

CLARA  
Ya vacuum ya room every day  
de last week.

DAVID

I think I'm allergic to dust.  
I like it clean.

CLARA

Go, get out of here.

And he's gone...INTO HIS ROOM. Where he plugs in and flips on the vacuum. CLOSE ON HIS FACE, we know where the nozzle goes by the fluttering of his eyelids. And now, FROM ANOTHER ANGLE, we SEE that it's his door that opens but half an inch.

INT KITCHEN DAY

David hunkers lazily over a carrot. Clara begins to take things out of the refrigerator for dinner.

CLARA

So, you get ya room cleaned?

DAVID

Uh-huh.

CLARA

God in heaven, for such a young boy, you do have a big bamboo!

DAVID

What are you talking about?

CLARA

Wait, you must take me for fool! Me was dere today watching de whole thing. From start of vacuuming to finish.

David lets out a HOWL.

CLARA

Me want to tell you something. In Jamaica we have belief: If too much of a man drop 'pon de floor, a devil can grow from it. Further on, ya thing might come right off if ya continue to stuff de Electrolux. And if ya thing don't break, de machine certainly will.

DAVID

You gonna tell my mother?

CLARA  
Ya muddar would certainly  
vex. Send ya to psychiatrist  
for de rest of ya life.

DAVID  
Do you think I'm crazy?

CLARA  
Yes, ya favor deep madness!  
(A beat)  
Ha! Me know somebody in  
Jamaica dat kept himself a  
goat, like you keep ya vacuum  
cleaner.

She finally lets the laughter out, disappears into the Laundry Room, leaving him to suffer his relief and humiliation alone. Her LAUGHTER, of course, continues to fill his ears. Then suddenly it stops and she leans INTO THE FRAME right behind him, bent to his ear, where she WHISPERS...

CLARA  
But don't ya peek on me body.  
Don't ya do dat. And neither  
will I look 'pon yours.

SOUND OF GOLF CLUB STRIKING BALL.

EXT DRIVING RANGE DAY

David following through on a swing, then looking at his father who waits with an anxious smile.

DAVID  
Go to private school where?

BILL  
In Manhattan.

DAVID  
I'd have to get up in the  
middle of the night to get  
there, wouldn't I?...what's  
going on, Dad?

BILL  
what's going on is...I'd like  
you to come live with me.

DAVID  
Are you joking?

BILL

I'm not happy with the way your mother is raising you. Her gone overnight all the time and your life revolving around a housekeeper.

DAVID

But I like my life.

BILL

Well, I don't. I'd never force you to live with me, okay? But listen to me. Eventually your mother'll have to sell the house.

DAVID

Why would she sell the house?

BILL

When the divorce is final, she'll only get a certain amount of money every month. It'll be extravagant to keep the place going just for you and Clara.

DAVID

But would Clara--

BILL

You're almost thirteen now. I'm sure Clara doesn't expect to be burdened with you the rest of her life.

DAVID

Burdened..?

Bill tees up another ball for David.

BILL

You picked up too soon on that last shot. Keep you head down on the follow through.

XT HART HOUSE DAY

ON THE BACK PATIO Peter and Leona sit side by side facing David.

cheese and vegetable platter sits on the small table between them. In the course of the scene we'll SEE CLARA WATCHING from the KITCHEN, her eyes hard and fixed.

LEONA

Peter has accepted a position in California, David. It's all very sudden, but we're leaving for Berkeley next month.

PETER

We'd like you come with us.

David stops nibbling a piece of sliced apple in mid-nibble.

LEONA

Listen to me....I had to choose and, as far as you're concerned, I'm selfish because I chose myself over you. And you're right to feel that way. I don't expect you to understand what I'm doing. But I hope one day--

DAVID

I don't wanna go with you. And I don't wanna live with my father. I want to live with Clara.

David backs away from them, tosses the piece of apple at the platter, and bolts into the house. Leona and Peter's eyes follow his flight and LAND ON CLARA. She comes out of the house.

CLARA

I know you think him now loves me more dan you. Not true. You used his love for me to justify going off wid ya friend.

LEONA

That's not fair.

CLARA

No? How do you know you can count dis man? My experience wid mens is dem must always betray.

PETER  
You don't know me, Clara.

CLARA  
I know men.  
(A beat)  
Mrs. Hart, is your extreme  
gat most vex me. Can't be  
sensible and stay near where  
de child grow up? Got to go  
to California and risk losing  
him forever....Sometimes I  
wish in a few seconds you  
could look over me whole life.  
Then ya'd know why you must  
hold on to ya child. Americans  
are always looking for a change.  
Everything grow old so fast and  
ya pitch it away. Car, house,  
family, love.

Peter takes Leona's hand in his, holds it reassuringly, and we're  
CLOSE ON ANOTHER SET OF HANDS--one pair black, the other white.

INT TRAIN DAY

David and Clara side by side, holding hands. There is silence  
but for the SOUND OF THE WHEELS under them. Then the SOUND OF A  
ROCKET WHISTLING INTO THE AIR.

EXT BLANCHE'S SALON DAY

THE ROCKET EXPLODES. FOURTH OF JULY DECORATIONS UP. In the  
distance, a few more FIREWORKS.

INT BLANCHE'S DAY

INSIDE, A MOB. Gas lanterns have been hung and a white banquet  
table laid with cornucopias of fruit.

Beside him, David feels Clara stiffen. She nudges him with her  
elbow. Dora is standing among the crowd.

CLARA  
Me tell Blanche not to  
invite her. I tell dem  
straight me na want her  
mucking around here. But  
dem don't listen.

Dora notices Clara glowering at her and purposefully turns away.

CLARA  
Perfectly right. Now she  
know she not wanted.

BLANCHE  
(Grabbing David)  
Come wid me. Me well want  
you to talk patois to some  
girls I know.

Blanche leads David across the room, David glancing at Cora, who  
it appears is smiling at him.

BLANCHE  
You sing "One Chinee Man"  
fe us.

IN THE BACK OF THE SALON LATER, a band is playing Jamaican tunes.  
People are dancing. David watches Clara from a distance, watches  
the deference that is shown her, yet at the same time notices a  
reserve. We've seen it before, in the beauty shop. IN THE  
DISTANCE, FIREWORKS LIGHT THE NIGHT.

And now Blanche drags Clara onto the dance floor and suddenly  
Clara is dancing by herself, her legs pumping out convoluted  
steps and spins. The Guests cheer. David is mesmerized. She  
does a rhythmic, bawdy dance called "Lift Up." Every eighth  
beat, she thrusts her pelvis forward and yells "Bam."

LYDIA  
Gwan, Clara, gwan, girl!  
Lift it up and around!

CLARA  
(A finger to the  
heavens)  
wait for me, Jesus, wait  
for me!

Her dance ends with a splash and APPLAUSE. Aroused, David starts  
for her, but Cora is suddenly standing in front of him.

DORA  
She certainly can dance,  
ya momma can.

DAVID  
She's not my momma.

DORA  
Den what she be, child, ya  
lover?

DAVID  
Get away from me.

DORA  
I want to tell ya something  
first.

She grabs David and pulls him INTO THE BATHROOM.

DAVID  
Let go of me! She doesn't  
want you to talk to me!

DORA  
Me want to tell you about  
Ralfie.  
(Pressing herself  
against him)  
About how her son Ralfie was  
foul and how him hurt us.

DAVID  
Clear off, you bloodcloth!

DORA  
Dem ugly words, dose words  
ya talking.

DAVID  
Let go of me!

Suddenly the BATHROOM DOOR OPENS and Dora turns and we SEE Clara.

CLARA  
Clear off me boy!

A hush veils the ROOM as Clara pulls David from the bathroom.

DORA  
Don't you call him ya boy.  
You don't have no boy. Ya  
boy is dead.

A collective GASP comes from the listening crowd.

CLARA  
That him dead is my business.

DORA  
Tell him why ya boy don't  
deserve to live.

CLARA  
Get outta here 'fore I pitch  
ya into a sleep you'll never  
wake from.

Dora grabs David again.

CLARA  
I kill ya if ya touch him!

With shocking speed, Clara punches Dora in the face. Dora pounces back and tries to scratch Clara, but Clara punches her again, this time knocking her to the floor. "Masse me God!" people cry. "Lord have mercy." Several men converge on Clara and pull her off.

CLARA  
Don't you desecrate my son!

Lydia is weeping hysterically, Doris trying to comfort her. Dora lies quietly on the floor.

DORA  
You must tell him what de  
truth. You know him has a  
right to know what de cliff  
boy do.

Blanche pulls Dora away to minister to her wounds.

BLANCHE  
Come wid me, girl, ya bleed-  
in all over me shop.

FIREWORKS explode. Clara brings David close. Nobody else moves.

CLARA  
I don't want responsible to  
learn you what pains people  
most in life. Why should you  
learn dat from me? When you  
get older, you'll realize  
knowing de full truth some-  
times a curse.

She starts to pull away, as if that's all she's got to say, but he doesn't let her go; he forces her attention back to him, to the raging question in his mind. A beat.

CLARA  
Ralfie was always excitable.  
Nervous stomach. Every little  
thing disturb it. Some days

CLARA (Con't)  
him don't eat. Things troubl-  
ing him dat priest, dat gypsy,  
dat doctor couldn't explain.  
Den when him was twenty-one,  
him think him in love wid  
Dora. For a while, Dora  
trifle wid him, she play wid  
my boy. I try to warn him,  
but him think him know more  
dan me. And when she bored  
wid trifling wid him heart,  
him suffer de agony of living  
death. Him wound his head  
wid black bandana, take a  
scythe, and go up high 'pon  
de cliff to shred bamboo grass.

DAVID  
This isn't what Dora was talk-  
ing about.

CLARA  
You're telling me de story?

DAVID  
You're not telling me! I know  
he did something.  
(To Lydia)  
what is it?  
(To Doris)  
what is it?

But neither Lydia nor Doris nor anyone else is about to speak.

CLARA  
Dey don't know! Don't be  
asking dem. Dat is all it  
is. I telling you.

DAVID  
Did he hurt somebody? Did  
he kill somebody?

CLARA  
No!

DAVID  
Did he try to kill Dora?

She suddenly throws a glass against the wall behind him. Then  
she throws herself into the bathroom, but before she can secure  
the door, David is IN THE BATHROOM with her, just the two of

am, the DOOR SLAMMED SHUT.

DAVID  
What did he do, Clara?

CLARA  
Him don't kill nobody.

DAVID  
Then what?

CLARA  
Nothing!

DAVID  
What did he do?

CLARA  
Him raped her and threw  
himself off de cliff into  
de sea!

Awestruck, David doesn't move. Clara sinks to the floor beside the commode.

CLARA  
You knew de rest. My husband couldn't take it. So him left me. And den I was shamed. People don't come to me again fe advice. I am maid in hotel until I am given de blessing of you.

Clara begins to weep and David takes her in his arms, holds her as FIREWORKS EXPLODE AND CASCAOE out the small, high bathroom window. And then he begins to kiss her forehead, to kiss her cheek, and then he turns her face toward him, her lips to his, and as his face moves toward hers, she suddenly clamps his hands in hers, freezing them both, a look of mortal terror in her eyes.

CLARA  
No, my David, oh no.

She hurls his hands away from her. Grabs for the door handle. Can't manage it. He grabs her.

DAVID  
Wait! I'm sorry! I don't  
know what happened!. I just--

hits him, thrusts his hands away. Rains blows on him..

DAVID  
I'm sorry.

He grabs for her, tries to stop the pummeling of her fists.

CLARA  
Don't touch me! Don't ya  
touch me!

DAVID  
All right, okay, I'm sorry,  
I'm sorry, I'm...

She shoves him against the wall in the cramped little bathroom, slams herself against the opposite wall, putting as much distance between them as possible.

CLARA  
Ya shut up! Ya shut up!  
Ya don't say nothing, ya  
only listen to me! Ya  
listen! Ya shut up and ya  
listen to me and den ya  
never speak to me again!  
Ya want dat ya should never  
speak to me again?

DAVID  
I have to know the truth.

She nods and nods. Her breath explodes out of her chest. Her eyes are wild and distant. He stares at her. Waits.

CLARA  
De foreman where Ralfie work  
as a bookkeeper calls to  
complain Ralfie returning  
very late from his lunch.  
I go look for him. Someone  
tell me see him out near  
Freemont Street. Dora Cambridge  
lives dere. I knock at de  
door. There is scuffling  
inside, den Ralfie runs from  
de backdoor into de alleyway.  
Inside I find what he has  
done to Dora. I ran after  
him. Him not run as strong  
as me and I catch him at de  
back of de alley. "Ya filthy  
wretch! Ya not mine anymore,  
ya devil child, ya disgrace  
me whole life!"

Clara relives it in the walls, disoriented, her face pulsing with terror.

CLARA

Suddenly him grabbed me arm. Me try to twist away. Him lash his fingers to me throat and me couldn't breath. He managed to bust me knees against his chest. But den was like we both were into a boat pitching dis way, dat way, and I see de sky rolling over me eyes. Me heart cry out, "Stop from now, Ralfie, what ya doing me? Stop it, child, stop it." But him don't and me watch the devil's violence break 'pon his face. Him force his way wid me. At first me telling meself, "Girl, ya only dreaming," and for a while it is like me did fall asleep. I think I am at de beach looking 'pon de combers breaking lovely and me see de porpoise winging through de water. But open me eyes and dere is Ralfie, looking down like him know me again, trying to say de simplest of all words. "Ma," him say. "Mama?" "Ralfie, dont ya know? Don't ya realize...is me!" But in him eyes me don't know what him know or what it is in me dat bore a child could want or need to do such a thing. And I don't know what else to say to him or him to me. And dat is when him went 'pon de cliff and me into shame fe all my life.

David stares at Clara and it's some moments before her eyes focus on him again. He reaches a loving hand toward her, but she holds up a hand of her own that warns him not to do it.

INT CLARA'S APARTMENT DAY

DAWN. David lies awake, his eyes fixed on the ceiling. Then Clara, completely composed, stands over him.

CLARA  
Time to go. It is ya  
Independence Day.

DAVID  
I'm not going.

CLARA  
Ya must.

DAVID  
It's just not important now.  
Don't you see?

CLARA  
No. I see just de opposite.  
Your present is ever so much  
more important dan my past.

She touches his cheek.

CLARA  
It is time now ya go and  
start in to be a man. But  
ya don't do it fe me, David,  
or fe dem. Ya do it only fe  
you.

He stares at her. He presses his hand to hers against his face.

EXT SWIMMING POOL DAY

WE PAN DOWN from the banner: "SIGN UP NOW!!! JULY 4th SWIM MEET!! ALL AGES!!" to BOYS ON THEIR MARK. Lipsky beside David, looking at him smugly, checking out David's more streamlined, shirtless torso. His cheering section of Bill and Deena, Leona and Peter in two little groups. The gun is in the air and FIRES. Lipsky takes an early lead, but the halfway mark David pulls even with him and then pulls away with a power that impresses the most jaded among the parents. At the end, Lipsky emerges from the water with a look of disbelief on his face. David meets his eyes, then lifts himself easily from the pool, coming up eye to eye with the Redhead. He locks eyes with her a moment then walks past her. He's intercepted by Coach Stillson.

COACH  
I want you on this team next  
summer, Hart.

DAVID  
Won't be living here next  
summer, Coach.

COACH  
Where ya gonna be?

David stares at the Coach, looks around at his approaching entourage--his mother and Peter, his father and Deena...and hurries past their outstretched arms and congratulations for the locker room. His father quickly follows.

IN THE SHOWER ROOM, David stands under the pounding water. Bill steps into the opening, clearly knocked out by what the kid did.

BILL  
God, I wish I had that on tape!

(David smiles)  
Listen, I got some really great news that I've been saving.

(When David doesn't respond)  
I got a commitment from a really fine private school for the fall. The only thing is, I have to give them a deposit within a coupla days or else you'll lose your spot.

David slaps at the tile, turns on his father.

DAVID  
Look, I'll decide, okay? But I won't decide now!

BILL  
(A beat)  
Fine. It can certainly wait a coupla days.

David turns his back, ducks under the water, closes his eyes.

EXT DAY HART HOUSE

David, Leona, and Peter pull into the driveway. Clara steps out of the house, stands at the back door. David emerges from the car. Their eyes lock.

DAVID  
No contest.

Clara smiles.

XT THE SOUND DAY

David and Clara walk the beach silently. Now David stops, faces her decisively, maturely.

DAVID

I understand why you lied to me. You were right not to tell me the truth. When I was younger, I never would have understood.

CLARA

Eh-nen.

DAVID

I've decided I'm going to live in New York, Clara.

CLARA

Ya going to live wid ya faddar just so to see me?

He nods decisively.

CLARA

As much as I love you--and in spite of what happen to me--I believe children bound to dere muddar. Is instinct dat goes beyond friendship, I'm afraid.

DAVID

You're more than my friend.

CLARA

No, dat is what I am, David. I am ya friend. And what nappen if me find five-day job makes me work weekends?

DAVID

I'll come to you after school. We'll--

She presses a finger to his lips, silencing him, sadly shakes her head, retracts the finger from his lips.

CLARA

Don't ya see? Our relationship is changing.

DAVID

Sure, it's changing, but  
it's also just becoming what  
it should be.

CLARA

No. Is just past all dat  
it ever could be, David.  
Not because ya try to kiss  
me, not because of what I  
tell ya, but because life is  
always change.

DAVID

So, what're you saying?

CLARA

You know what I am saying.

DAVID

Yeah, you're saying you're  
gonna be like my mother.  
You're gonna be like my  
mother and dump me when  
things get tough--that's  
what you're saying.

CLARA

You can't compare me wid ya  
muddar.

DAVID

No?

CLARA

No. She's blood, David. I'm  
just a black housekeeper dat  
love you.

DAVID

You're a liar! You're just  
looking to coo out! You  
just loved me 'cause you  
had no one else. Maybe that's  
what happened with Ralfie.  
Ya ever thinka that? Maybe  
he saw you were just a selfish  
pig, that you just cared about  
yourself, and that's why he did  
what he did to you!

COUPLE OF JOGGERS ON THE BEACH glance at them.

CLARA

You nasty, dunty child to  
call me selfish. You de one  
too selfish to see me have  
ya interest at heart.

DAVID

You made me love you! And  
now you're dumping me 'cause  
it got to be too much for ya!  
You'll get another job and  
never see me again! You'll  
just...you'll just be a nigger  
in the end!

Clara blinks perplexedly at him. He stares furiously at her.

INT DAVID'S ROOM NIGHT

SOUND OF HIS AIR CONDITIONER. David lies awake. LIGHTS FLASH on  
the ceiling. His eyes flick toward the window.

OUTSIDE, A RYE TAXI has pulled up. Clara, with her red suitcase,  
exits the house with Leona. Peter at a distance.

IN HIS BEDROOM, David wants to leap up, yet he stays put on the  
bed, his breath shallow and explosive.

OUTSIDE, Leona and Clara embrace.

CLARA

Goodbye, Mrs. Hart.

LEONA

Goodbye, Clara.

Clara murmurs to herself, a prayer perhaps, touches her breast  
with two fingers and then, kissing them, blesses the house.  
Leona closes her into the taxi. The taxi backs down the  
driveway. Clara stares fixedly ahead.

UPSTAIRS David lies unmoving, his breath coming in spurts.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT BROOKLYN DAY

EARLY SPRING, A YEAR LATER. David, his hair longish, his body  
lean, his glasses replaced by contact lenses, approaches a  
VICTORIAN HOUSE. He rings the bell. Inside he HEARS mutters of  
complaint before a dumpy, MIDDLE-AGED WHITE WOMAN opens the door.

WHITE WOMAN  
What is it?

DAVID  
I'd like to see Clara Mayfield.

A distrustful look crosses the white woman's face.

INT DRAWING ROOM DAY

Sunlight streaks through high stained glass windows. David waits. Behind him, Clara enters, stares at him a moment.

CLARA  
Son of a hoot. Must be  
ya lost twenty pounds in de  
last year.

He whirls around to stare at her.

DAVID  
Hi.

CLARA  
'Ello, David.

DAVID  
It's my spring break. I  
came to spend it with my dad,  
so I thought...  
(A beat)  
You're not mad I came?

CLARA  
Cha, man, somehow I did expect  
it. How ya get so small?

DAVID  
From lack of toto.

CLARA  
And de glasses gone. My my  
my.

A beat. They stare across the huge room at each other.

CLARA  
Come to de kitchen.

She turns and walks out of the drawing room. He follows.

HALLWAY

Clara points down the hallway to a room filled with sunlight. We SEE A MOTIONLESS BODY in a wheelchair facing out a bay window.

CLARA  
Dat's de crone.

DAVID  
The who?

CLARA  
De old lady I hired to take care of during de days.

DAVID  
An old lady? You mean there're no kids living here?

CLARA  
You think I'd break me backside to care fe some child again? Come fe de day, go home to me apartment at night. De perfect life.

IN THE KITCHEN

A stark room, without the warmth of the kitchen in the Hart house. David approaches the rolled-glass windows, whose imperfections blur the view of the scraggly, untended backyard.

CLARA  
It frighten me how older ya looking in so short a time. Ya jaw getting bold.

He turns to her, smiles at the praise, yet it makes him uncomfortable.

DAVID  
You still watch the soaps?

CLARA  
But of course. You?

David shakes his head no. A beat. They stare.

DAVID  
Clara...

CLARA  
Yes.

DAVID  
I wanted to write so many  
times. To apologize for  
what I said.

CLARA  
I know.

DAVID  
I was so angry at you for  
being right about everything.

CLARA  
I know.

DAVID  
And I wanted to tell you...  
I wanted to tell you I'm all  
right.

CLARA  
I am glad to know dat, David.

DAVID  
And...and to thank you, Clara.  
No matter what happens to me,  
you'll always be one of the  
most important people in my  
life.

CLARA  
Because you see, David, dere  
is a force in dis world dat  
bind us, a force so perfect  
dat it connect us closer dan  
blood.

A beat.

CLARA  
So, sit down, I will make  
you a lemonade, and you tell  
me bout ya muddar and Peter  
and de rice and de vegetables.

DAVID  
Well, I kinda hate to admit  
it, but they're all right.  
I kinda miss 'em.

ra laughs.