



# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

(A Musical in One Act)

Book and lyrics by  
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Music by

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# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## **CAST**

**BILLEY.....Black slave, 40, very intelligent.**

**BELUAH.....Black slave, 35, warm.**

**BLUE.....Black slave, 40, strong, nice.**

**CARIE (played by Beulah) Black and beautiful, 35.**

**BLUE 4<sup>th</sup> (played by Blue) Black and intelligent, 40.**



# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## SONGS 🎵

**I'M TIRED (Beulah).....1-1-4**  
**EV'RYTHING'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT(Billey).....1-1-8**  
**PREACHER MAN(Beulah & Billey).....1-1-11**  
**I CAN'T WAIT (Beulah).....1-2-19**  
**The FIRST THING I DO (Billey).....1-2-22**  
**WHEN I SEE YOU (Billey).....1-3-28**  
**SURE COULD USE SOME HELP (Blue).....1-3-31**  
**NOTHIN' I COULD DO (Beulah).....1-4-35**  
**RICH AS A SONOFABITCH (Blue).....1-5-39**  
**PREACHER MAN (Underscored).....1-5-40**  
**I'M TIRED (Underscored).....1-5-40**  
**AT LAST WE ARE A FAMILY (Billey & Beula).....1-6-42**  
**KING HUTU'S DEAD (Billey & Beulah).....1-7-47**  
**IT'S GOT TO BE (Billey & Beulah).....1-8-51**  
**AT LAST We ARE A FAMILY (ALL).....1-8-52**  
**RICH AS A SONOFABITCH (Underscored).....1-9-57**  
**EV'RYTHIN'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT (Underscored).....1-9-57**  
**OUR HISTORY (Carie & Blue 4th.....1-9-58**

**PROLOGUE**

**BLUE the 4<sup>th</sup> is wearing a dashiki and is drinking and holding a bunch of letters. He is confident and smiling.**

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell you a story about my great, great grand father, Blue Abu and his best friend Billey who were slaves way back when this here government thought it was cool to beat and whip us like we was dirt, called us nigras, which soon became niggers, a word which most of us abhor, and said it was written in our Constitution.. Those guy sure were turkeys, weren't they? My name is Blue Abu the 4<sup>th</sup> and the play you are about to see, according to my beautiful wife Carie Rachel, is merely a figment of my exuberant and illustrious imagination. Hey man, I calls 'em as I sees 'em and don't believe Carie, she's a writer. Although what is about to unfold I sincerely believe is the unadulterated truth, but she says I always exaggerate. There she goes again. Do you believe her? Man, that woman is sure hard to love, know what I mean? Now if I was you I wouldn't pay her no mind because she's a writer and you know how writers like to exaggerate, and she never hears me saying that she exaggerates. The woman doesn't learn. According to the letters I read what you are about to see and hear according to Billey and Beulah, who Billey

**(Waves letters.)**

married and was madly in love with, this is what was written in these here letters. Now I'm sure you're gonna find it difficult to believe how my people use to be treated, being we just elected Barach Obama as President of these here United States, but let me tell you, back in 1821 it was a bitch and we use to get whipped and spit on and sleep in the stables with the horses. Only the homeless are the blameless. Who is saved and who is saving?\_Now sit back, relax and enjoy this powerful play and dig the groovy music. And if you want to sigh, hum along and clap, go right ahead. We all free, remember, 'cause this is America, land of the brave and the free.

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## ACT I

### Scene 1

A kitchen with a large, brick fireplace.  
A table with wooden chairs. BEULAH is  
cooking as BILLEY, dressed in suit and  
tie, enters carrying some wood.

1831.  
VIRGINIA

**BILLEY**

**(Proud.)**

I brought you some wood, not that it's my job, 'cause I am Mr. Madison's butler, but I thought my woman could use some warmin' up, know what I mean, good lookin'?

**BEULAH**

Thanks for the warmin' up Billey, but I can't be your woman no more. I just can't.

**BILLEY**

It's because you hate the way I dress, ain't it?

**BEULAH**

You dress like them *pickaninny* white men. Even though you try to talk like em', you're  
**(Sings.)**  
not a white man, you're a slave like me  
.

**I'M TIRED**

You may not get whipped, beat, or spit on.  
Sleep in a stable with the horses like me.  
Can't you see?  
You're no better or no worse.  
Seems this life of mine's been cursed.

It seems I ain't got much to live for.  
It's 'cause I got so much on my mind  
Is you blind?  
Why ain't you cryin' like me,  
N' will we ever be free?

I'm tired of bein' used.  
 Tired of bein' abused.  
 I'm tired of bein' a slave.  
 Think it's time for my grave.

I can't remember since when we been took.  
 It seems I've been dyin' all these years.  
 Dry my tears.  
 Sweet Lord, if it wasn't for you  
 I don't know what I would do.

I'm tired of bein' used.  
 Tired of bein' abused.  
 I'm tired of bein' a slave.  
 Think it's time for my grave.

### **BILLEY**

(Sniffs.)

You're tired, huh? Ooh, wee, sure smells 'good.' Whatcho cookin', Oohlah?

### **BEULAH**

Oohlah, my butt. We ain't in my Africa anymore, in case you ain't noticed Billey. So, I would 'preciate you not calling me Oohlah. Because of you screamin' my name, *OOHLAH, OOHLAH* like some wild hyena, when I got off the ship, mister wise-ass, dressed like a white man, they called me Oohlah. But I'm smart, maybe not as smart as you, but, I told 'em my name's Beulah, not Oohlah. Thought I trick 'em, n' I did.

### **BILLEY**

(Chants.)

You may have tricked them, but woman I still love the sound of your name. *OOHLAH, OOHLAH, OOHLAH*. Always have, always will, n' I don't understand how you can still miss your Africa with all the good things happenin' here.

### **BEULAH**

(Vocal click.)

All the 'good' things happenin', Billey Krickik, you call being a slave, bein' killed, mutilated n' spit on good? Now tell me the truth, when we were home, do you really think our good King Hutu did the same things to us, well, do you?

### **BILLEY**

You know how I felt about that no-good bastard. All he did was use and abuse all of us. Especially my father; Makin' him dig 14 hours a day in them mines. He killed my father, my both uncles, n' Nyesua, God knows how many other men, may they rest in peace. 'N how many wives did your *good* King Hutu have, 20, 30, you tell me all those women, including your baby sister weren't part of his concubine? They were his slaves, damn it! Guess, we ain't much different than them ole Jews in Israel, are we? They were slaves

too, n' had a Pharaoh that punished them like our masters... Ain't much difference, is there? Your *good* King Hutu ever do you, Oohlah? Come on, you can tell me.

**BEULAH**

I ain't tellin' you nothin', monkey face. *Xhasa*, you an angry man.

**BILLEY**

**(Produces book.)**

You calling me *Xhasa* an angry man. Okay, what's this word...? Think... Mag... Magni... Magnifi... Think.

**BEULAH**

Magnificent? Damn, ain'tcho got any easier words?

**BILLEY**

I told you, you are magnificent. Now, what's this?

**BEULAH**

Joy... joy...

**BILLEY**

Say it... Joy...

**BEULAH**

Joyous? What are you so joyous about n' you ain't my teacher, so stop bein' so joyous. Joyous my ass!

**BILLEY**

That's why you got to feel sorry for all those dumb nigras that went back. 'Specially the women, most of them can't read as good as you. If they think it's bad over here, wait'll

**(Laughs.)**

they go home. Ha, ha, they didn't go home, they went to *Liberia*. Man, don't they understand that's it up to us to fight against slavery. If we don't do it, who will? That's because most of those dumb-ass bastards never even read the Constitution. "*We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect...*"

**BEULAH**

...More perfect my ass! I ain't never read no white man's Constitution n' I never will. *She-eet*, I don't even know how to read, n' don't you tell anyone, you hear?

**BILLEY**

**(Puts wood in stove.)**

Best not tell Mr. Madison that you don't know how to read that good. There, you'll be

**(Laughs.)**

warmer now, you happy Oohlah? Hey, Oohlah, Beulah, that rhymes, don't it. I'm sure you know what the ACS means, don'tcha, *The American Colonization Society*, n' I'm

sure an intelligent woman like you knows what the ACS calls their new homeland, Liberia, which means freedom in the ole country. I'm gonna fight with Mr. Madison n' his friends for my *freedom* right here, here's where I, where you, where we all belong, in the good ole US of A. I ain't going back, hell no. Now tell me the truth, bet you don't know how they got Liberia, do you?

**BEULAH**

No, but I'm sure you're gonna tell me.

**BILLEY**

Damn right, I'm gonna tell you. How else are you gonna learn, unless I teach you. Ya see, they bought this land on the west coast of 'your Africa' way back in 1821. Bought, what bought, they stole it. Heard there was this guy named Lt. Robert Stockton who 'persuaded' n' let me tell you, he sure knew how to 'persuade' all right. The man put a gun to the head of this King Peter n' *persuaded* him to sell Cape Montserado. King Peter n' some of those other dumb-ass kings agreed to sell them all that land for 500 bars of tobacco, three barrels of rum, five casks of gun powder, five skinny umbrellas, ten iron pots n' ten pairs of shoes. Imagine, a whole freakin' country for *diddly squat*. I bet your King Hutu was one of those suckers. I know he was. Lord how I pray he was. As much as you hate Mr. Madison, I hated your damn King Hutu.

**BEULAH**

You sure know how to tell stories Billey. Do you actually think I believe all the bull you keep tellin' me? N' our master, your supposed white friend, Mr. Madison don't pay no mind to me, except when he wants *SOME*... After... all he seems to be interested in, is not his wife, or anything else, but that damn American Colonization Society of his. Seems that fool would like to send us all back to Africa, so he wouldn't have to look at us, n' that includes you. He'd like that, wouldn't he? Guess I would like that too. Get him off my freakin' back, I would.

**BILLEY**

Don't you understand, the man's our savior, Oohlah. He's doing everything he can to put an end to slavery. Lucky for us, he's got some important friends that are tryin' to help. I met some of them, so I know they are real *important*.

**BEULAH**

You know what you can do with his *important* friends, n' he's only doin' it, 'cause his beautiful wife, Miss Dolly Todd's makin' him. Ya see, she told me that her parents, who were Quakers, freed their slaves a long time ago, so she grew up being anti-slavery. You, don't really think that this anti-slavery bull is all your James Madison's idea, do you? Hell no, Miss Dolly told me about this ole ship owner, named somethin', Cuffee. A way back, he took 38 of our brothers n' sisters to Freetown, in Sierra Leone. Cuffee was brown, like me n' you. I'm tellin' you, that's where it all began, with a brown man who 'really' cared. We're the only ones that care n' as far as your Mr. Madison is concerned, he can kiss my brown anti-slavery ass for all I care.

**BILLEY**

Did you say Freetown? Why, that ain't far from where we come from, Oohlah.

**BEULAH**

Want a taste of this chicken stew, you know-it-all, true-blue, American fool?

**BILLEY**

(Sings.)

I'd like me a taste of somethin' else, Oohlah.

**EV'RYTHING'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT**

Oohlah, don't you know I love you.

Oohlah, you're the apple of my eye.

All I ever think's about you.

Without you woman I'd rather die.

Child I want you to be my bride.

All the girls we have will look like you.

As long as you are by my side.

There ain't nothin' this man can't do.

I'm gonna love you 'til the sun don't shine .

Take care of you n' we'll drink sweet wine.

As long as you'll be mine.

Ev'rything's gonna turn out fine.

Oohlah, please come take all of me.

Oohlah, I'm gonna touch your soul.

Beautiful you sure are pretty.

I promise that you'll never be cold.

I'm gonna love you 'til the sun don't shine .

Take care of you n' drink sweet wine.

As long as you'll be mine.

Ev'rything's gonna turn out fine.

So, how come me 'n you ain't been getting' it on lately, woman? Don't you know your man still has needs?

**BEULAH**

My ass has needs too, n' you may have thought you were my man, but you was wrong.

N' you may have parked your little pony in my stable, once-in-awhile, but you were never 'my' man, no way. Anyway, I'm just too tired, beside, all you ever do is talk about your freakin' James Madison. I hate that man. If you only knew why, you'd hate him too... The man's a low-life, damn fornicatin' hypocrite. He talks about the ACS freeing

us brown folk, ain't me 'n you his slaves? How come he don't free us? I've been tellin' you, he ain't no different than the rest of those white, rapin' slavers.

**BILLEY**

Him n' my man Quincy Adams, may be white, hey, not everybody's lucky like me n' you to be born brown n' beautiful, so I feel sorry for them, I really do, but I swear on Nyesua, God, the All Mighty, that includin' his good friend, James Monroe, they're all tryin' to free us. They got to, because they are great Americans.

**(BEULAH sits, gasps and holds head. BILLEY rushes to BEULAH.)**

**BILLEY**

What's wrong, Oohlah, what's the matter?

**BEULAH**

Don't rightly know. It happened yesterday for the first time. I got sorta weak, felt faint n' hot all over, like I do now.

**BILLEY**

If I was you, I'd go see a doctor *real fast*.

**BEULAH**

What doctor's gonna see me?

**BILLEY**

Bet if you told Mr. Madison how you feel, he'd get you a doctor.

**BEULAH**

Tell him, I ain't tellin' that sucker nothin'! Shoo, I jes send my poor dreams to the dark side of the moon.

**(WE hear a knock on door.)**

**BEULAH (cont'd)**

Miss Dolly told me, she n' her husband were going to Philadelphia. Wonder who that could be?

**(BILLEY opens door and BLUE enters with tattered shirt and in pain.)**

**BEULAH**

Blue, I can smell your whippin', what happened? Don't tell me, not again?

**BLUE**

Seems like my master likes whippin' me, don't he? You should've seen him laughin'. Guess that's why he keeps doin' it, likes laughin'. Never mind about me, how you doin' woman?

**BEULAH**

Ain't feelin' too good, now, tell me how you really doin', Blue?

**BLUE**

Even though he makes me pick tobacco 'til I can't stand no more, I'm hurtin' real bad, 'n I'm tired Beulah, real tired. First day I had off in maybe a week, so, I figured I'd come over here for some conversation, a good meal and a taste like I always do. But that's okay, if you don't feel that good, I'll come back another time.

**BEULAH**

Hush your mouth Blue. Ole Beulah ain't that sick that she can't patch n' feed her good friend. Besides, Billey's mouth's a waterin' too. N' since the Madison's are gone for the weekend, just set yourself on down n' I'll fix you both a plate of the best chicken stew you ever ate. Made some chitlins and collard greens, too. Now take off your shirt n' let me take a look.

**(BEULAH rises and gets some rags and medicine and dresses BLUE's back.)**

**BEULAH Cont'd)**

There, feel any better?

**BLUE**

A whole lot Beulah, thank you.

**BEULAH**

Now, I'm gonna fix my two favorite men some food. Do you both some good.

**(BEULAH goes and fixes two plates.)**

**BILLEY**

Hey Blue, you hear what ole Ben Franklin once did in Congress?

**BLUE**

I ain't heard nothin'. How 'm I supposed to hear, I don't work for no politician like you... So, whatcho waitin' for, you gonna tell me or what, Billey?

**BILLEY**

I just heard my man, Ben Franklin once petitioned Congress to '*manumit*' slavery. Hallelujah Nyesua, for the '*manumit*.'

**BLUE**

*Manu* what? What the heck is *manu*...?

**BILLEY**

It's *manumit* and it means to abolish slavery and the slave trade. We gonna be free, Blue,  
**(Flaps arms ala bird.)**  
 free as a bird and I'm sure gonna like it.

**BLUE**

You really believe that your Congress is gonna *manumit* us? Ya know what Billey, when this brown ass of mine ain't whipped, 'cause my slaver feels like whippin' me, n' spittin' on me, laughin', n' I don't have to pick tobacco from sunrise to sunset; When my little babies can have some decent clothes n' food to eat n' go to school, when my woman can have a doctor treat her cough, that's when I'll believe that we been *manumitted*. Not 'til then brother, not 'til then.

**BEULAH**

**(From the stove.)**

He sure can tell some tall stories, can't he Blue?

**BLUE**

Shoulda been a preacher. The man shoulda been a preacher.

**BEULAH and BLUE**

**(🎵 Sings together.)**

**PREACHER MAN**

Amen for the preacher man.  
 Nyesua, praise be the Lord.  
 Amen for the Preacher man.  
 With Billey you can't be bored.

**BEULAH**

The man knows lots of stories.

**BLUE**

He sure can spin them tales.

**BEULAH**

He'll bring you mornin' glories.

**BLUE**

N' tell you to lift them bales.

**BEULAH**

Recites the constitution.

**BLUE**

Forgot that he's brown.

**BEULAH**

He got this resolution.

**BLUE**

That you got to get down.

**BEULAH and BLUE**

Amen for the preacher man.

Nyesua, praise be the Lord.

Amen for the Preacher man.

With Billey you can't be bored.

Amen for the preacher man, Amen for the preacherman, Amen!

**BEULAH**

**(Serving.)**

A plate for the preacher man, n' a plate for Blue.

**BILLEY**

Ain't you eatin' Oohlah?

**BEULAH**

I really ain't hungry, in fact I think I'm gonna lay down, don't feel that good. Now,  
**(Exits.)**  
there's plenty more, so you make sure you help yourself.

**BLUE**

She sure don't look good to me, Billey.

**BILLEY**

She sure don't. Ain't nothin' me or you can do, except havin' a taste, you ready?

**BLUE**

Ready, why in hell do you think I come by? Sure I'm ready. Now, since you live here, n' you know where your master keeps all the good stuff, whyn't you serve me a big one like you always do, n' then you can tell me all the stories you want, Mr. Teacher.

**BILLEY**

Might as well, seems I can use a taste, too.

**(BILLEY opens closet and returns with bottle and two glasses.)**

**BLUE**

Is you just gonna look at it or are you gonna pour? N' fill mine to the top, who knows how long I'm gonna have to wait for the next taste.

**(BILLEY fills both glasses and gives one to**

**BILLEY**

**(Toasts.)**

To your health, my good man.

**BLUE**

**(Toasts.)**

Never mind me, to Beulah's health.

**BILLEY**

Yeah, to my sweet lady's health.

**(Both drink. BILLEY shows book.)**

**BILLEY (cont'd)**

Blue, you remember, what's this word?

**BLUE**

Cat, that's easy, man n' C n' K sometimes sound the same, don't they, Mr. Teacher?

**BILLEY**

That's right, that's right!

**BLUE**

Told you I could read, didn't I, ugly?

**BILLEY**

You sure can, brother. Ya know, I don't know what it is, Oohlah's been my woman for more than 25 years, since we were teenagers in the ole country, n' now, she don't want to have anything to do with me. How come, what's wrong, what did I do? Tell me, what did I do?

**BLUE**

I can't say for sure, but maybe it's because you think so much of your Mr. Madison. Is it 'cause he schooled you n' learned you all them big words, is that why you like him so much? N' even though you read all them books, well I can read n' write some too, but that don't make your brown ass white. You ain't better, no way.

**BILLEY**

Man, you've been jealous of me since we met.

**BLUE**

Me jealous, I got three girls n' whatcho got? You ain't even got a wife, n' even though your master, Mr. Madison don't whip you n' Beulah, she don't like him, 'cause he's a damn slaver like my slaver, they're all alike.

**BILLEY**

No he ain't Blue, no he ain't. He may have fifteen slaves, but he don't want them. He told me, that he has to keep them, because he don't want no trouble for his wife, but that don't stop him from fightin' for our freedom. He told me this here story that happened a long time ago. I think he said it happened in 1737, in the court of Oyer and Terminer, yeah, that's when it happened. Seems they thought that this slave named Peter was guilty of '*murthering*' his master, n' hanged his ass, *whap*, just like that, they cut his head off n' put it on a pole for all to see. Man, they came from miles around to see it.

**(Sort of sings.)**

'*They was havin' a party.*' I ain't sure that Mr. Madison ever saw the head on the pole but, he must have heard about it, 'cause a little while later the creek was renamed Negro-head Run. See you're lucky, all they do is whip you, but they hanged that poor

**(Laughs.)**

sonofabitches ass. Can't you see how lucky you are?

**BLUE**

Yeah, I'm sure lucky all right. Ooh, my back sure hurts, but that is some story Billey. Damn, you sure can spin 'em, can't you...

**BILLEY**

You like it?

**BLUE**

Like it, I love it. I can't wait to go back 'n tell my Emma Mae. *Shee-eet*, I'm gonna tell

**(Drinks.)**

ev'rybody while I'm pickin'. Us slaves got to pick no matter what, lest we be killed. Ain't it somethin' how the Lord made me the slavee, and the white folks the

**(Laughs.)**

slavers. Sure wish the foot was on the other shoe, I mean, wish the shoe was on the other foot n' if it was, I'd be the meanest slaver there ever was, n' I'd whip those white bastards 'til they couldn't take it no more, n' then I'd laugh.

**BILLEY**

Not me brother, not me. N' if you like that story, I got more. A whole lot more.

**BLUE**

**(Finishes drink.)**

How in the hell do you know all these things, n' how can you remember all them names, 'n places, 'n dates Mr. Teacher?

**BILLEY**

Because I listen to ev'rything Mr. Madison and all his intelligent friends tell me. 'N I can remember everything I hear, because Nyesua, the good Lord wants me to, that's why I'm so smart, dummy.

**BLUE**

Yeah, you smart alright. Before you continue, how's about a refill, Mr. Genius?

**BILLEY**

You finished already? I ain't even started.

**BLUE**

You may think you're smarter 'cause you can remember ev'rythin', but you sure ain't  
**(Laughs lifts glass and laughs.)**  
better, 'cause you can't keep up to me when it counts, can you?

**BILLEY**

**(Fills Blue's glass.)**

Maybe I can't Blue, maybe I can't.

**BLUE**

**(Toasts – drinks.)**

You better hurry, or you'll never catch up to me. Okay, now you can tell me another one of your stories, but make it short and snappy 'cause my back's sure's a hurtin'.

**(We hear the underscoring of “EV’RYTHING’S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT.”)**

**BILLEY**

**(Drinks)**

Now this one's real sad. Mr. Madison told me his father told him this story when he was much younger. It happened I believe in 1745. This brown slave, she was a woman named Eve, was burned to death for poisoning her master. I think his name was Peter Montague. Heard Thomas Chew, sheriff n' great-uncle of Mr. Madison carried out the burning, 'n I believe this dastardly act had a profound effect on Mr. Madison n' his parents. Could be that's why they became so anti-slavery.

**BLUE**

**(Drunk.)**

Damn, that's the two most depressin' stories I ever heard. That's it, I had enough.

**BILLEY**

Enough?! Why, I ain't even started yet. Now, I'm gonna tell you about Liberia, how it started n' its people. They say one of the first tribes was called the Krus, who used to help Europeans sail the Ocean. Man, they sure knew how to sail. There was this guy named Tuwely Jeh. Say he was from this proud family of tribal rulers. His people called themselves Webbos. One time, when Jeh returned to Monrovia, he found that his son n' a whole mess of boys were captured n' sold as slaves. Some folks say that's when slavery started in Liberia.

**BLUE**

Damn, that's also depressin' ... I had enough of depressin'.

**BILLEY**

Hold on, hold on, you ain't heard nothin' yet. Now, I'm gonna tell you how it all started. Awhile back, on February 4, in 1820, this big ship, 2,000 ton frigate called the Elizabeth, which took criminals n' manumitted slaves, that's freed Brown men to Liberia, remember? 'cause America wanted to get rid of us. Seems this General Harper gave it, its name and called it's capitol, Monrovia after one of our Presidents, James Monroe. They had lots of browns to send, because at the end of 1820 there were a million n' a half slaves n' only ten million white Americans. At the time we were more than ten-to-one,`

**BLUE**

Ain't you got some stories that are happy?

**BILLEY**

I suppose I do... Let's see... Seems the happiest I ever was, was when my father, my mother n' all my uncles used to fuss over me... Ooh wee, did they fuss. Took me fishin, huntin', taught me how to carve out a canoe, catch butterflies. My father told me the secret of bein' happy is learnin'. Always learn, he told me. Ain't supposed I stopped... When I was about sixteen, I met Oohlah n' I fell in love with her the minute I laid eyes -on her beautiful face. She was n' still is '*so beautiful*', ain't she?... N' let me tell you, she loved me too Blue, she really did. We used to walk along the big river holdin' hands n' dreamin' about us gettin' married n' havin' a family. My mother sure loved her n' so did my father. They wanted us to get married right away, but Oohlah said it best that we wait. Seems I'm still waitin', don't it? She sure was somethin'. There was a time she used to say that I was the smartest person she ever met, n' now, now she puts me down for bein' so smart. I can't help it Blue, I swear to Nyesua, God, that I wish I wasn't such a know-it-all, but what can I do? We been here goin' on 24 years n' I still know ev'rythin'. Man, Prometheus stole fir from the Gods and was punished. BLUE, tell you the truth, I wish I was as smart as you, instead of bein' so good lookin'.

**BILLEY**

Are you sayin' you're better lookin' than me, turkey?

**BLUE**

**(Laughs.)**

I calls 'em as I sees 'em. But listen brother, even though you think you're smarter,  
**(Laughs.)**  
you're still ugly. Damn, is you ugly, ugly.

**End of Scene 1**

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## **ACT I**

### **Scene 2**

**A month later.**

**BEULAH is cooking as BILLEY smiling, enters with flowers.**

**BILLEY**

How ya doin' Oohlah? Picked these flowers, 'cause I thought they looked almost as good as you.

**BEULAH**

**(Takes and smells flowers.)**

Why thank you Billey, that is the sweetest thing. I do declare, you do love me, don't you?

**BILLEY**

More than anything. See, love can only be when there is equality.

**BEULAH**

Go on, you must say that to all the girls.

**BILLEY**

Beulah, you're the only girl I see, that I dream about, that I want, that I need.

**BEULAH**

Did I hear you call me Beulah, Billey?

**BILLEY**

I'll call you whatever you want, as long as you take me back. I need you Beulah. My sweet Lord knows how much I need you. Why else do you think I keep comin' around to see you? I do it, because I want you to see, that you mean more to me than anything.

**BEULAH**

Even more than that no good, fornicatin', Mr. Madison?

**BILLEY**

Well...

**BEULAH**

WELL?!

**BILLEY**

**(Laughs.)**

I'm only kiddin', of course you mean more to me than Mr. Madison. Why girl, you mean more to me than anybody in the whole world. I love you woman, I love you.

**BEULAH**

Are you sure?

**BILLEY**

Why don't you come on over here and give Billey a kiss like you use to, n' I'll show you how much you mean to me girl.

**BEULAH**

Well, I don't know...

**(BILLEY goes to BEULAH and THEY kiss.)**

**BILLEY**

Now, tell me you don't know.

**BEULAH**

Oh, Billey, Billey, Billey, you sure are somethin'.

**BILLEY**

**(Sort of laughs.)**

Ain't that the truth.

**BEULAH**

N' you ain't got no humility!

**BILLEY**

How can a man as smart as me have humility? They say, 'He who laughs, loves, and he

**(Laughs.)**

who loves always laughs.' 'Leave the dead bury the dead.'

**BEULAH**

**(Vocal click.)**

Billey Krickik, you're gonna be the death of me.

**BILLEY**

Now tell me, is you my woman or is you my woman, woman?

**BEULAH**

I wish I could, but I can't.

**BILLEY**

YOU CAN'T, why can't you?!

**BEULAH****(Sings.)****I CAN'T**

I can't, don't ask me no more.  
 I better not n' that's for sure.  
 It's a secret I can't say.  
 A dark secret that won't go away.  
 You'll find out soon enough.  
 This life sure can get tough.  
 I can't, don't ask me no more.

Ev'ryday I'm dyin'.  
 That's why I keep sighin'.  
 Sweetheart can't you see,  
 This pain is killin' me.

It's hard, don't know what to do.  
 It's somthin' that I can't tell you.  
 I'm sure that you'd start to cry.  
 N' I swear it ain't no lie.  
 Nyesua please help me.  
 Dear Lord please set me free.  
 It's hard, I don't know what to do.

Ev'ryday I'm dyin'.  
 That's why I keep sighin'.  
 Sweetheart can't you see  
 This pain is killin' me.  
 Please, don't ask me no more.

**BILLEY**

Please don't cry Oohlah, I mean Beulah, I can't take seein' you cry.

**BEULAH****(Touches Billey, endearingly.)**

Oh Billey, if you only knew.

**BILLEY****(Embraces Beulah.)**

So, why don't you tell me, n' then I'll know, won't I?

**BEULAH**

I'm sure he'd kill me and anyone that knew, that's why I can't tell you, my sweet

**(Vocal click)**

Billey Krickik... I'm afeard.

**BILLEY**

You don't have to be afraid of anyone. Just tell me who he is n' I'll kill him before he touches you again. Just tell me who he is... You called me sweet, didn't you?

**BEULAH**

I've loved you from the moment I saw you.

**BILLEY**

Ain't that something? I loved you the moment I saw you and it ain't serendipity, sweetheart, the Good Lord meant for us to be together, always.

**BEULAH**

**(Sobs.)**

Don't I know.

**BILLEY**

The Madison's ain't around, right?

**BEULAH**

Went to Boston. Won't be back 'til Thursday.

**BILLEY**

I thought that's what he told me. Since they ain't around, how's about me n' my woman havin' a little taste?

**BEULAH**

I really shouldn't, drinkin' ain't good for my...

**BILLEY**

Drinkin' ain't good for your what?

**BEULAH**

For... for my health, it's my health, you know I ain't been feelin' too good.

**BILLEY**

Why my grandpa used to say, "*Drinkin' was the best thing for a man's health...*" Trust me woman, let's just have one, just a little one, Oohlah.

**BEULAH**

**(Vocal click.)**

Well, I guess a little one can't hurt. Alright, Billey Krickik, let's have a little one n' be done with it.

**(BILLEY hurries to cabinet. Gets a bottle and two glasses, returns and pours. Then gives drink to BEULAH.)**

**BILLEY**

**(Toasts.)**

To your health, Oohlah, I drink to your health n' may we always be together.

**BEULAH**

Why thank you Billey. I guess if it wasn't for me, you'd still be home, a free man on the Ivory Coast. I'm sorry, I couldn't help it Billey, it wasn't my fault.

**BILLEY**

Of course it wasn't your fault, so stop blamin' yourself, woman... It was fate. Remember it like it was yesterday. I was walkin' with my mother along the ocean, when I spotted those white slavers marchin' you n' a whole mess of our people toward their big ship. I told my Mama that I had to save you. She cried that I shouldn't. She tried to stop me. I started running and wavin' my big knife, screamin,' *"LEAVE MY OOHLAH ALONE. LEAVE MY OOHLAH ALONE! OOHLAH, OOHLAH, I'M COMIN'!"* Just as I got close enough to see your beautiful face, some guy hit me across my head with the butt of his rifle. When I came to, I was on the boat with you comin' to America... 24 years ago, seems like yesterday, don't it?

**BEULAH**

Oh, Billey, it's all my fault that you're a slave like me, I'm so sorry, so sorry.

**BILLEY**

I'm with you, ain't I? Nothin' to be sorry for, now drink up girl, 'cause time's a wastin'.

**(Drinks entire glass.)**

Wooo, this is some powerful whiskey. I want you to drink the whole thing like me, woman.

**BEULAH**

**(Laughs and drinks all.)**

You mean like this.

**BILLEY**

I knew there was a reason why I fell in love with you.

**(Brazen, BEULAH refills glasses.)**

**BEULAH**

Well, whatcho lookin at boy, we ain't getting' any younger n' times a wastin'.

**(THEY both laugh and consume entire drink. BILLEY refills glasses, they both and touch each other amorously and drink. THEY are becoming stoned. After a beat, they look into each other's eyes, kiss, and start to undress, as lights fade. After a beat, lights flicker and come on, as Billey, wearing long-johns, and Beulah in nightgown, ♪ Sings.)**

**The FIRST THING I DO****BILLEY**

The first thing I do, when I make love to you,  
Is thank Nyesua, Lord for giving me you,  
And I know one day, we will have a little boy,  
I'll praise Nyesua, for giving me such joy.

**BEULAH**

'N when I get cold, its you who'll warm my soul.  
'N I ask my Lord that, with you I will grow old.  
'N I'm gonna dance, the day I am your wife  
Hear the birds 'n the bees, ev'ryday of our life.

**BILLEY and BEULAH**

I need you more everyday.  
I want you 'til my hair turns gray.  
Please show me the way and kiss me ev'ryday.

**BILLEY**

The first thing I do,  
Is thank Nyesua,  
And I know one day,  
I'll praise Nyesua,

**BEULAH**

when I make love to you,  
Lord for giving me you,  
We'll have a little girl,  
For being in my world.

**BILLEY and BEULAH**

I need you more everyday.  
Stay with you 'til my hair turns gray.  
Please show me the way and kiss me ev'ryday.

**BILLEY**

The first thing I do,  
Is thank Nyesua,  
And I know one day,  
I'll praise Nyesua,

**BEULAH**

When I make love to you,  
Lord for giving me you,  
We'll have a little girl,  
For being in my world.

**End of Scene 2**

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## **ACT I**

### **Scene 3**

**Two months later.**

**BEULAH, a little heavier is cutting vegetables and humming to herself. After a beat, BILLEY enters.**

**BILLEY**

Mornin' Beulah.

**BEULAH**

Mornin' Billey.

**BILLEY**

You sure look good, good lookin'. In fact, you look delicious, now that you finally gained a couple of pounds, you're lookin' more chipper than ever. Never seen you look better or happier. What is it woman, gonna tell me your secret?

**BEULAH**

**(Laughs.)**

Surprised you noticed, now that you're so busy in charge of all us slaves. How's it feel to be our master?

**BILLEY**

Master, what kind of Master, woman, I'm still his butler, seems Mr. Madison just put me charge of all our people, 'cause he said I was the smartest n' I'd make a better foreman than the sucker he had. Said, I was someone he could trust, n' count on, n' what did I do? Didn't I get Sunday off for ev'rybody? That's the first time in history that a slave has Sunday off, woman. Sunday off, n' I did it, didn't I?

**BEULAH**

N' don't think we ain't beholdin' to ya.

**BILLEY**

Since you're beholdin to me, how's about a little kiss? Sure could use one, so come on.

**BEULAH**

Billey!

**BILLEY**

Why not? The Madison's went to Washington, who's gonna see, who's gonna know?

**BEULAH**

I'll know, n' besides, I just ain't in the mood to be touched. Not now.

**BILLEY**

You ain't been in the mood for *nothin'*. How come? Don't you remember when we had a taste a couple of months ago n' did it right here on the floor, 'n you said you'd always loved me. Forget already? Ain't we been together since we were teenagers? You used to say you loved me. I thought you'd love me even more, now. What happened Oohlah, I mean Beulah.

**BEULAH**

What's wrong with you, why is you so insecure? A woman gets tired of havin' to say

**(Vocal click.)**

she constantly loves her man. Billey Krickik, I love you, always have. Even though I don't, n' won't sleep with you anymore, 'cause I can't, not when I'm... 'Cause I'm... I love you, so get it in that thick, intelligent skull of yours, n' leave me be in peace.

**BILLEY**

All right woman, but I don't understand, I just don't understand.

**BEULAH**

How could you? There ain't a man alive, that ever lived that understands what a woman feels like when she's... Whyn't you leave, n' come back for supper in awhile?

**BILLEY**

**(Exits – laughs.)**

Suppose I should go see the ACS, n' I do have a some of chores that need tendin' to, so,  
**(Shows and points to book)**  
guess, I'll see you later, Oohlah. Loves you woman, I really do, but before I go, what's this word...? Gor... Gor.

**BEULAH**

**(Unsure.)**

Gor what?

**BILLEY**

Gorgeous, like you woman, you're gorgeous. Ooh we, are you gorgeous. Pretty as the prettiest rose and you know flowers need the sun to grow and you are sure growin' more beautiful every day and you know flowers need the sun to grow and the night to rest like them religious Jews rest on their Sabbath, woman.

**BEULAH**

You got to be crazy.

**BILLEY**

**(Points.)**

Now, tell me what this word is?

**BEULAH**

Mama, it's Mama, right? That's too simple.

**BILLEY**

It sure is Mama, it sure is, n' I'm real proud of you. Well, guess I'll see you around

**(Laughs, exits)**

*Mama?* Loves you Mama.

**(BEULAH smiles and starts humming again. After a long beat, there is a knock on the door and BLUE enters all cut up and hysterical.)**

**BEULAH**

Oh Blue, not again... He whipped you again. Let me get some fixins', I'll be right back.

**(BEULAH goes to get stuff.)**

**BLUE**

Forget about my back. They took my woman Beulah, they took my babies! I looked all

**(Sobs.)**

over for them, but they ain't nowhere to be seen. They're plumb gone, disappeared.

**BEULAH**

Now, take off your shirt, n' let me take a look. We'll get to your family soon enough.

**(BLUE takes off shirt and BEULAH dabs medicine.)**

**BEULAH (cont'd)**

Now, hold on there. Don't you fret 'bout your family. They probably went for a walk or went to visit someone. They'll be back, Blue. Don't they always come back?

**BLUE**

**(Sobs.)**

They won't be back Beulah, I just know it, I just know it.

**BEULAH**

And, how do you know it?

**BLUE**

For the past couple of weeks, Jethro Cunningham the 3<sup>rd</sup>, my white master's been warnin' me about not pickin' enough tobacco. Said he was sick-n'-tired of me wastin' my time, thinkin' about my sick wife n' three daughters, said if I don't start pickin' more, he'd get rid of 'em real fast. That's what he did Beulah, he got rid of 'em like he said he would. I

know he did, I just know he did... Maybe he killed them, threw 'em down some gully, or maybe he burned them, n' my Emma Mae was so afeared of fire... I'm gonna kill that rat bastard, I'm gonna murder that sonofabitch! I'm gonna steal me a rifle and blow his head off for burnin' my family, n' then I'm gonna burn him.

**BEULAH**

You ain't gonna do nothin'. What happens when you go home n' Emma Mae n' your girls are there, still gonna burn your white master? Now, you get a hold of yourself. Set on down, n' I'll get you a taste of what you like, 'n I bet you forget about ev'rythin', like you always do, real soon. N' then, we'll have some supper when Billey comes, n' ev'rythin' will be just fine, just fine.

**BLUE**

Sure hope you're right, Beulah, 'cause I don't think I could live without my family. Don't 'spect I'd want to. But I just got to tell you somethin' woman. I hate slavers with a passion! Why I'd cut their throat, I'd cut their balls off, I'd burn their ass like they always burn me, n' then I'd whip 'em. I'd whip 'em 'til they screamed like they made me scream, n' then I'd kill 'em, ev'ry last one of 'em. Ev'ryone n' then I'd laugh.

**(BEULAH gets bottle, returns, pours drink and gives it to BLUE.)**

**BEULAH**

Here, now hush your mouth. Revenge is a only a fools quarry. Don't you be no fool.

**(BLUE gulps entire glass.)**

**BEULAH (cont'd)**

Feel a little better?

**BLUE**

Not really, even though you got *Gei-xa*, the magic woman.

**BEULAH**

Have another, I'm sure you will.

**(BLUE pours another and sips it.)**

**BLUE**

Ya know Beulah, you're the best friend I ever had. Always patchin' me up, n' feedin' me. Don't rightly know what I'd do without you.

**BEULAH**

I do it, 'cause I understand, mister... I may not get whipped, but let me tell you, worse happens to me, a whole lot worse, only my sweet Nyesua knows how bad.

**BLUE**

I'm sure sorry to hear that, but ya know Beulah, I still think you're getting' prettier ev'rytime I see you. Ooh wee, you sure look good, woman.

**BEULAH**

Will you please stop it, you're getting' to sound more n' more like Billey. Guess the whiskey's getting' to ya, ain't it?

**BLUE**

Maybe just a touch, but, I mean it Beulah. Now that you ain't so skinny, you just seem a whole lot prettier n' happy. Wanna tell me your secret, woman? Sure would like to get some of what you got. Come on, tell me, 'cause Blue sure would like to be happy too.

**BEULAH**

I wish I could, but I'm afeared if I told you, you might be in a whole mess of trouble. Your life would be in more danger than it is, includin' mine.

**BLUE**

My life in danger? A big guy like me can take of himself. Why, Blue ain't afeared of no man, brown or white.

**BEULAH**

Wish I could say the same.

**BLUE**

Now, you listen woman, long as I'm around, you don't have to be afeared of nobody. Now, you gonna tell me, or what?

**BEULAH**

Do you swear on Jah God that you won't tell a soul, n' I mean, not a soul.

**BLUE**

I swear on my mother's grave, so help me. I'm awaitin,' Beulah, Blue's awaitin'.

**BEULAH**

**(Sort of whispers.)**

I'm pregnant; Three months.

**BLUE**

**(Excited.)**

You're pregnant! Well, glory be, how wonderful! Bet Billey must sure feel like some lucky guy. I can't wait to talk to him about it. Teach him how to be a good father.

**BEULAH**

**(Stern.)**

You promised you wouldn't say a word to no one, n' that means Billey.

**(BILLEY opens door and enters carrying something.)**

**BILLEY**

Why, if it ain't my two favorite people. How ya doin' Oohlah, see you been whipped again, aintcha Blue?

**BEULAH**

Fine.

**BLUE**

Sure have.

**BILLEY**

Sorry about that, Blue... Gotcha a present for your birthday, Beulah.

**BEULAH**

Today ain't my birthday, wise guy. My birthday's April 6<sup>th</sup>.

**BILLEY**

**(Sings.)**

**WHEN I SEE YOU**

Even though it ain't your birthday.  
To me it's your birthday.  
Ev'ryday's your birthday, when I see you, when I see you.

You are my favorite flower.  
Need you ev'ry hour.  
You're my April shower when I see you, when I see you.

I'm gonna love you.  
Got to hold you in my arms.  
Sweet as honeydew,  
I'm hypnotized by your charms.  
'N what I miss, is to be kissed,  
When I see you, when I see you.

For you I'd walk a mile.  
'Cause I have to see you smile.  
I feel like a child when I see you, when I see you.

I'm gonna to love you.  
Got to hold you in my arms.  
Sweet as honeydew  
I'm hypnotized by your charms.  
'N what I miss, is to be kissed,  
When I see you, when I see you.

Did you say April 6<sup>th</sup>? Looks like I'm a little early, don't it, but just to show you how

**(Gives present.)**

much I love you woman, here's somethin' I had made 'specially for my favorite girl,

**(Bows.)**

even though it ain't your birthday. Happy birthday, sweetheart.

**BEULAH**

**(Takes present and looks at it.)**

You are the strangest n' most thoughtful man I ever met.

**BLUE**

Don't just look at it girl, open it, let's see what the genius got you.

**(BEULAH opens present and is awed by a beautiful apron.)**

**BEULAH**

An apron. How beautiful Billey.

**BILLEY**

Had it made 'specially for you. One side it says Beulah 'n turn it over girl...

**BEULAH**

**(Looks at other side.)**

...And this side it says Oohlah.

**(Excited, Beulah puts apron on and dances.)**

**BEULAH (cont'd)**

It's so pretty, I ain't never takin' it off. Oh Billey, you are so sweet.

**BILLEY**

If I'm so sweet, how's about a little kiss?

**BEULAH**

It would be my pleasure.

**(BEULAH and BILLEY kiss.)**

**BLUE**

With all this kissin' goin' on, I think we should celebrate. How's about you havin' a taste with me, Mr. Wise-ass?

**BILLEY**

Sounds good to me, Mr. Envious.

**(BLUE pours and gives glass to BILLEY. BILLEY, in good spirits, toasts.)**

**BILLEY (cont'd)**

To my favorite girl, n' my best friend, cheers!

**BLUE**

Now, ain't you gonna tell him the good news, Beulah?

**BILLEY**

Sure could use some good news.

**BEULAH**

Blue...?!!!

**BLUE**

**(Realizing he made a mistake, he mopes)**

I'm sorry Beulah, I'm real sorry...

**BEULAH**

You best be sorry, now, hush your mouth like I told you!

**BILLEY**

You can tell me, Blue, what kinda good news you talkin' about?

**BLUE**

**(Emotional.)**

I'm afeared bad news, my family's gone Billey, my family's gone.

**BILLEY**

I know.

**BLUE**

YOU KNOW?! HOW IN THE HELL DO YOU KNOW?!

**BILLEY**

Just came back from the ACS. They were havin' a party, 'cause they just sent a ship to Liberia with lots of our people... I happened to see the passenger list and...

**BLUE**

AND WHAT?!

**BILLEY**

Emma Mae n' your three girls names were on it.

**BLUE**

Emma Mae, my three girls goin' to Africa without me...? Oh, my sweet Nyesua. How can that be, how could they do that to Blue?

**BILLEY**

I asked the man in charge n' he told me, that he thinks someone bribed the captain to get them on.

**BLUE**

Someone my ass, it was my white slaver, Jethro Cunningham the 3<sup>rd</sup>, n' I'm gonna kill him real good! Cut his throat, cut his balls off!

**BILLY**

I'm real sorry Blue, real sorry.

**(BLUE starts to cry.)**

**BEULAH**

I know how you feel Blue, n' my heartbreaks for you, but what can we do? Seems the good Lord has other ideas. His will be done, ain't that what we say?

**BILLEY**

Never mind about His will. How'd you like to see your family again, Blue?

**BLUE**

Don't play with my mind, Billey.

**BILLEY**

I ain't playin' with your mind, I was just thinkin'... Suppose I ask Mr. Madison to get someone to sneak you on the next ship to Liberia. It ain't leavin' for another month, but, what's a month.

**BEULAH**

In a month, you'll be back with your girls, Blue. Say yes, say yes.

**BLUE**

**(Drinks and Sings.)**

Liberia...?

**SURE COULD USE SOME HELP**

How m' I gonna take care of my family?  
They'll need food, they'll need clothes.  
A Papa got to take care of his family.  
Ev'rybody knows.

I'm afeared, what kinda work am I gonna do?  
Liberia's far away.  
See over here, I always had the both of you.  
'Spect it's time to pray.

God, help Blue make it through the night.  
Sweet Lord, I sure could use some help.  
I can't count on myself.  
I need *You* to make things all right.

For my pretty, little girls will there be a school?  
Doctor for Emma's cough.  
Don't want them to grow up like me some big fool.  
Sleep on a bed that's soft.

God, help Blue make it through the night.  
Sweet Lord, I sure could use some help.  
I can't count on myself.  
I need *You* to make things all right.

**BILLEY**

Whatcho worryin' about? You know about plantin', n' farmin' don'tcha? I hear they give you ten acres, n' the land's real fertile. Why a smart man like you could go into business, start a farm. Why, in no time, I bet you'll become a rich man. Why I can see it all now, livin' in some mansion over lookin' the ocean, 100 people workin' for you, more money than you can spend, be easy as pie, think about it.

**BLUE**

**(Crying.)**

I can't think about it, Billey, I can't think about it, all I can think of is my...

**BILLEY**

If you thinkin' 'bout and seeing your family's shadows, man that's good, 'cause shadows are mem'ries of the past. 'N what color is hope? What color is love? What color is yo' dreams? Man, the only thing you know is what you don't know. 'cause behind timeless time, a placeless place, a Godless God is that silence is silence. Amen

**End of Scene 3**

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## ACT I

### Scene 4

Seven months later

A crib is in the corner of the kitchen.  
BEULAH is wearing apron and humming  
a lullaby and cooking. She goes to crib,  
smiles at baby and then kisses it.  
BILLEY pushes open door and rushes in.

**BILLEY**

He did it, the damn fool did it!

**BEULAH**

What damn fool, did what?

**BILLEY**

Blue, the damn fool killed his slaver.

**BEULAH**

What, how can you be so sure?

**BILLEY**

I ain't so sure, but the sheriff is. Told me he found Jethro Cunningham the 3<sup>rd</sup> all cut up. Said his throat was slit wide open, his balls were cut off, n' he was burned almost beyond recognition." Death comes to flowers as it comes to all things.

**BEULAH**

What makes the sheriff think it's Blue?

**BILLEY**

Said that dumb ass sonofabitch was tellin' ev'rybody that he was gonna do exactly what happened to the slaver.

**BEULAH**

Oh, Nyesua, my sweet Lord, what's gonna happen to Blue?

**BILLEY**

When they catch him, this time they ain't just gonna whip him, they're gonna hang his ass from the highest tree, n' then they'll probably cut his head off n' hang it in the center of town like they always do. Looks like they is gonna have a party, don't it?

**BEULAH**

You can't let 'em, Billey, you just can't. Can't you get someone to sneak him on the next boat to Liberia? Oh, you just got to, please, pretty please.

**BILLEY**

I don't even know where he is, how can I sneak him on the next boat? I suppose I could try 'n bribe the captain, but with what?

**BEULAH**

What happens if you tell the captain that you know all about the bribes he's been takin', 'n if he don't smuggle Blue out of the country, you're gonna turn him over to the authorities, n' send his ass to jail. Tell him he'll get 20 years!

**BILLEY**

Hmmm... That's a real good idea. Let me think about how I'm going to approach him.

**(Goes over to baby.)**

You sure have a mighty nice baby boy, Oohlah, mighty nice, n' cute too.

**BEULAH**

Glad you think so.

**BILLEY**

Good lookin' little cuss, ain't he?

**BEULAH**

He is cute, ain't he?

**BILLEY**

Looks just like you, 'cept for his green eyes. Where'd he get them green eyes?

**BEULAH**

Ain't that somethin' how the good Lord works in funny ways.

**BILLEY**

Funny ways my ass! Mr. Madison's the only person I ever saw with eyes that green in these parts. Did he do you, Oohlah, is this his son? TELL ME, YOU GOT TO TELL ME!

**BEULAH**

He'll kill me if I accuse him of fatherin' my baby, he'll kill me for sure.

**BILLEY**

Why, I'm gonna go n' tell him right now what I think of him, n' then I'm gonna knock him up-side his head. Maybe I should cut his throat, cut his balls off like Blue. Yeah, that's what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna get him.

**BEULAH**

Oh, please don't do anything. If something happens to you, to me, what's gonna happen to Joshua. Who's goin' to look after him? You can't tell your Mr. Madison or anybody what he did to me, not as long as we're slaves. Promise you won't say anything... N' besides, Joshua needs a father to love him, teach him things like your father taught you. Don't you want to be his father, Billey? He needs you, I need you... Please...

**BILLEY**

Then he did, didn't he...? How could you let him? He's a white man, a white man!

**BEULAH**

**(Crying)**

I didn't let him, he made me...

**BILLEY**

How could he make you? You wanted him, didn't you? Well, I don't want you! I never  
**(Exits and slams door)**  
have, never!

**BEULAH**

**(Gets bottle, drinks and (Sings in tears.)**

**NOTHIN' I COULD DO**

Billey, don't leave me.  
I never wanted anyone but you.  
You accused me.  
But, there was nothin' I could do.

How am I gonna raise my boy?  
Who's gonna teach him to be smart?  
You always was my pride n' joy.  
I always had you in my heart.

Who am I gonna kiss tonight?  
Who's gonna make sweet love to me?  
You made the wrong turn out all right.  
I thought you were my destiny.

Billey, don't leave me.  
I never wanted anyone but you.  
You accused me.  
But, there was nothin' I could do.

Don't you understand you're my man.  
 You give me peace, one of a kind.  
 You make me do all that I can.  
 Yes you are always on my mind.  
 You make me laugh when I am sad.  
 It's up to you to cheer me up.  
 You always say things ain't that bad.  
 You are the joy that fills my cup.

Billey, don't leave me.  
 I never wanted anyone but you.  
 You accused me.  
 But, there was nothin' I could do.

**(Cries)**

Billey I need you... I love you... Oh, Billey come back, please come back.

**(Lights go off and on. BEULAH's head is on table as BILLEY enters wearing work clothes.)**

**BILLEY**

You know I couldn't leave you for more than hour, 'cause I love you woman.

**BEULAH**

Oh Billey, you've come back...

**BILLEY**

Of course I've come back. Did you think I could stay away from you n' Joshua?

**BEULAH**

Thank you Nyesua, my sweet Lord for givin' me my Billey, back... Billey, where's your shirt n' tie, your britches n' jacket?

**BILLEY**

I got to thinkin' about what you said about that no good bastard, n' I realized that I'm just a grain of sand on this giant beach of humanity. I ain't no better than you or anybody, so I *thanked* that fornicatin' mother for givin' me the opportunity to be his butler, but after due consideration, I told him I'd prefer to live with n' dress like my people, n' no, I didn't say anythin' about him fatherin' my Joshua.

**BEULAH**

Why thank you sweetheart, now, please let me explain, so you understand. That white Master of ours threatened to give me to one of those other mean slavers, worse'n Blue's unless I... He promised that he'd beat me 'til I couldn't stand, then he'd tell his slaver to get ten of his men to rape me in the fields, n' then they'd probably kill me like they did all those other women. He said he loved me as he was... n' that I had to say I loved him... I wanted to die, I wanted to die 'cause I loved only you Billey, only you.

**BILLEY**

**(Embraces Beulah.)**

Oh, sweetheart, you trusted him, n' I trusted him too. Like a blind fool I believed him.

**BEULAH**

You ain't the only one that believed him. Seems all of your Americans trusted n' believed him. They elected his as President, didn't they?

**BILLEY**

Why didn't you tell me? If he was still alive, I would've told Thomas Jefferson.

**BEULAH**

THOMAS JEFFERSON?! Why he should rot in hell! He wasn't no different. I hear he fathered 10, 12 black children that are runnin' around, n' he never even said they was his. They're all alike, ev'ryone of 'em, n' I hate 'em.

**(There is a faint knock on the a door. BILLEY opens it and BLUE, all sweated and nervous sneaks in.)**

**BLUE**

**(Whispers.)**

Is the Madisons here?

**BEULAH**

Went to Boston, Blue. How are you? Where you been, where you been?

**BLUE**

Been runnin' for my life, 'cause I'm afeared.

**BILLEY**

Did you hear about your white master?

**BLUE**

I heard about it all right. That's why I'm runnin'. Heard the sheriff's after me.

**BILLEY**

Why'd you do it, Blue?

**BLUE**

I didn't do nothin', Billey, swear on my mother's grave, but, I sure wanted too.

**BILLEY**

You were goin' around tellin' ev'ryone that you were gonna cut his throat, cut his balls off, n' that's exactly what happened. Now the sucker's dead'rn a doornail.

**BLUE**

Billey, I swear I didn't do it. I snooped around 'n I found out that Leroy's the one who did it. See, Cunningham was on his ass too. he was on ev'rybody's ass n' that sucker Leroy did what I said I was gonna do, 'cause he knew they'd blame me.

**BEULAH**

Who told you?

**BLUE**

I'm sworn to secrecy, Beulah, I can't right say.

**BEULAH**

You better say, or they're gonna hang your ass, n' then you won't be able to say nothin'..

**BLUE**

The only reason Luann told me was because, Leroy near killed her when he was drunker'n a skunk, but she made me promise. Even showed me the knife n' kerosene he used.

**BILLEY**

Where's it now.

**BLUE**

Said she buried it under the big oak.

**BILLEY**

Bet you'd like to go Liberia to see your family now, wouldn't you?

**BLUE**

Oh, Billey, I sure would. I miss my Emma Mae n' my girls more'n anything.

**BEULAH**

N' I'm sure you ain't a hankerin' to be hung, neither.

**BLUE**

I don't want my head cut off like in that story you told me Billey. You just got to save me, please save me Billey.

**BILLEY**

I'll try, I'll sure try. *O feditse dintwa. Le malswenych*: Do away with war and troubles. If a blind man leads a blind man they both fall in the ditch. A river under a river is where you'll find your peace of mind, brother

**End of Scene 4**

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## ACT I

### Scene 5

**Four years later.**

**BLUE'S ornate living room in Liberia. Eclectic and expensive, there are African masks, palm fronds, a tiger head, beautiful furniture and a magnificent grandfather clock. Drinking, Blue, wearing costly robe is pacing and is pretty loaded.**

### BLUE

**(Loud.)**

BEULAH, where's my fried bananas?! Damn you girl, I told you I want my fried bananas ready n' waitin' for me by four o'clock! What is goin' on in that mind of

**(Brandishes whip)**

yours? Is you thinkin' 'bout your man n' family? Don't make me whip you again. You know how I hate whippin' you... BILLEY, my shoes shined yet, n' what about my pants, is they pressed or is you daydreamin again?! Well, is you, ain't one beatin' enough? Why do you constantly make me beat you, why, can you tell me why? Ain't I tryin' to teach you readin' 'n writin', ain't that good enough for ya...?

**(Aside, laughs.)**

Ha, ha, I named my slaves after my two best friends. This way, even though they ain't here, in my heart n' mind they is here... Sure miss 'em.

**(Drinks, laughs sardonically and 🍷 Sings.)**

### RICH AS A SONOFABITCH

I never dreamed I'd be a slaver.  
All I prayed for was to be free.  
How come my people call me master.  
Don't they know I'm just little ole me.

My children got ev'rythin' they need.  
My woman ain't coughin' no more.  
I taught my people to lay seed.  
I got ev'rythin' that's for sure.

Blue's rich as a sonofabitch.  
 But I need my friends what I wish.  
 Got more liquor than I can drink.  
 N' my life sure can't be more pink.

Billey, Beulah, come on over here.  
 Man I got more than I can use.  
 Please, won't you let me spread some of this cheer.  
 How'd you like to go on a cruise?

Blue's rich as a sonofabitch.  
 But I need my friends what I wish.  
 Got more liquor than I can drink.  
 N' my life sure can't be more pink.

That Billey sure loved Beulah... Ha, ha, I can still hear him call her Oohlah just to tease her, OOHLAH, OOHLAH. The man sure knew how to tease, n' could he talk. Ain't

**(WE hear the underscoring of "PREACHER MAN.")**

heard me no stories like he used to tell. Preacher man sure could tell some tall tales. Never really got to tell him how much I 'preciated him savin' my ass by sneakin' me on that ship. I sure owe that man. Been four years. Four years, since I seen 'em. A lot sure happened. Like you said Billey, I became one of the richest men in Liberia, 'n it was, just like you said, easy as pie. They gimme some land when I came here, n' I started

**(Drinks.)**

growin' tobacco. They ain't never had tobacco, so I started makin' some real money, 'cause all these fools love chewin' n' smokin' tobacco. Hear they bought this country for some tobacco, ain't that somethin'? The way things been goin', I might own this whole damn country myself, n' it's all because of my main-man, Billey. Wonder if he ever got Luann to snitch on Leroy? Knowin' him, I know he did. *She-eet*, I remember when I hired me one, two, had ten nigras workin' for me in six months. Bought some more land, 'n hired some more nigras, then I bought a 1000 acres, 'n I got to thinkin', why hire when I can have slaves, so, I fired ev'rybody n' got me a 250 slaves. Ya see here, most people ain't got what to eat, so when I offered them food n' a bed, why I had more slaves than I knew what to do with... 'Magine me a slaver...? N' a damn good one too. This

**(Brandishes whip. Underscoring ends.)**

here whip says I'm a good slaver... Wonder how my best friend Beulah's doin'? Suppose I should write her a letter. Sure been a long time since I said hello...

**(Sits at desk, picks up pen and paper, we will hear what he writes as underscoring of "I'M TIRED" begins.)**

Dear Beulah, hope you n' your little boy is doin' fine. Sure had pretty green eyes n' he was real cute... Never quite figured out how a brown baby could get green eyes. I know it's been a long time since I wrote you. Yeah, I know I ain't never wrote you 'n I'm real sorry, 'cause woman, I sure miss you. The reason I ain't wrote is, I been too busy makin' all kinds money. That's right, your Blue is stinkin' rich. Seems my Emma Mae ain't coughin' no more n' she learned how to spend my money real good. Like it's goin' outa style. My girls are growin' like wild flowers. Missy's 12, Lucy's 11, n' little Colie's 10. Been thinkin' 'bout havin' another, but Emma Mae don't want to hear it. How's my

main-man Billey doin'? Tell him I miss drinkin' with him n' 'specially you. Sure wish the both of you would come see me. Show you a good time, I will. With all the money I got, I'd gladly pay for the two of you to come visit. That's why I'm sendin' you some money; to come see me. See, I got the biggest house with eight bedrooms over lookin' the ocean. It's mighty pretty, that's why I want ya to come. Hope I see you real soon.

**(Loud.)**

Love Blue... Emma, is that you sneakin' 'round in my house again? Whatcho buy this Time woman, whatcho buy, n' don't tell me you need it, you can't need ev'rythin'... Go on, go on 'bout your business, I'm 'bout finished writin' a letter. You'll show me later, that's right later, woman!

**End of Scene 5**

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## **ACT I**

### **Scene 6**

**One month later.**

**Kitchen. BILLEY finishes reading letter.**

**BILLEY**

'Bout time, that illiterate sonofagun wrote us, don't you think, Mama? Knew he could read a little, but didn't believe he could really write.

**BEULAH**

**(Shows money.)**

I've been tellin' you, you ain't the only one with smarts, anyway, sure is good hearin' from him, n' he sent us all this money.

**BILLEY**

How much did he send?

**BEULAH**

\$500.

**BILLEY**

\$500?!! Holy smokes, that sure is a lotta... Imagine Blue makin' all that money?

**BEULAH**

You said he would n' he did.

**BILLEY**

I said a lot of things.

**BEULAH**

**(Vocal click.)**

You sure did, Billey Krickik, you sure did.

**(BILLEY and BEULAH 🎵 Sing.)**

**AT LAST WE ARE A FAMILY**

**BILLEY**

I said you would be my woman, lady.

**BEULAH**

We got married, like you said we should.

**BILLEY**

Respectable woman that has a baby,

**BEULAH and BILLEY**

Should be married, so glad we could.

**BEULAH**

God gave me my Joshua,  
For a father as sweet as you.

**BILLEY**

I love that little Joshua.  
Because he's a part of you.

**BEULAH and BILLEY**

At last we are a family.  
To cherish and to hold.  
We'll dance and sing forever more,  
And laugh as we grow old.

**BEULAH**

Billey Krickik you're ev'rything to me.

**BILLEY**

Beulah, Oohla, mine 'til stars won't shine

**BEULAH**

Together for eternity.

**BILLEY**

'Cause I'll be your n' you'll be mine.

**BEULAH**

God gave me my Joshua.  
For a father as sweet as you.

**BILLEY**

I love that little Joshua.  
Because he's a part of you.

**BEULAH and BILLEY**

At last we are a family.  
 To cherish and to hold.  
 We'll dance and sing forever more,  
 And laugh as we grow old.

**BEULAH****(Vocal click.)**

Thank you Billey Krickik for bein' the father *our* boy Joshua needs, n' a better father I don't think there is. Teachin' him to do 'ritmatic, tryin' to teach him how to read. Why, I 'spect him to be as smart as you.

**BILLEY**

I expect him to be even smarter, 'cause look at his mother, the most beautiful and smartest woman there is.

**BEULAH**

Why thank you sweetheart, but we know who's got the brains in this family, don't we?

**BILLEY****(Sort of laughs.)**

Shhh, don't tell anybody. Imagine Blue with all that money. Ain't that somethin'?

**BEULAH**

'N a slaver no less. Remember how he said he hated bein' whipped?

**BILLEY**

It's funny how things work out. I can still hear him say, "*Funny how I am the slavee 'n the white folks the slaver.*" Guess he ain't no *slavee* no more, no he ain't.

**(Laughs.)****BEULAH**

Guess when you believe in Nyesua, God, things work out, don't they? Joshua got you as *his* father, didn't he, n' what could be better?

**BILLEY**

He got me alright, 'cause I am raising him, even though he got green eyes, 'cause it don't matter to me, it really don't.

**(THEY look at each other then kiss.)****BEULAH**

Whyn't you write Blue back? Sure would be nice.

**BILLEY**

Soon as you get me a pen n' paper I will.

**(BEULAH gets pen and paper and Billey glances over letter.)**

**BEULAH**

Here, now start writin', 'n make sure you tell him about *your* son.

**(We will hear BILLEY say what he writes, as WE hear underscoring of  
"WHEN I SEE YOU.")**

**BILLEY**

To my best friend, Blue. Sure was good hearin' from you, even though it took you four years, ass-hole. Bet you miss hearin' my stories, don'tcha, ugly? I sure miss tellin' them to you, especially havin' a taste with you. Ain't got nobody I want to drink with, maybe that's why I miss you. Thank Nyesua, our sweet Lord, you ain't a wanted man no more. Seems Luann must've gotten real pissed at Leroy, 'cause she told the sheriff, even gave him the evidence n' they hung Leroy's ass, n' yeah, they cut his ugly head off n' hung it in the center of town, like they always do. Seems the sheriff sure feels sorry he accused you n' all. How's it feel havin' the foot on the other shoe, Mr. Slaver? I remember you sayin' that like it was yesterday. My boy Joshua is a mighty fine boy, n' real smart. Thanks to Nyesua, me n' Beulah got hitched right after little Joshua was born. As you know, I love that woman more'n anything. Glad you're so busy makin' all kinds of money, n' I'm glad your Emma Mae is spendin' it, 'cause you deserve it. Glad Missy, Lucy n' little Colie are doin' good. "*You got to make sure n' educate them, education is the secret to happiness,*" that's what my father used to say, n' who's happier than me? Hate to tell you this, but my exPresident n' supposed friend, Mr. Madison n' his green eyes passed. Don't expect I'll miss him that much, unfortunately, I expect most black folks do, 'cause they think he was their best friend, except me n' Beulah. Maybe one day I'll tell you about him. In his will, like he said he would, he freed me, Beulah n' all his slaves. Miss Polly let me n' Oohlah stay on, but me n' Oohlah are lookin' for our own place. Anyway, I miss your ugly face, ugly. Yeah, we miss you, so keep in touch, Billy n' Oohlah

**End of Scene 6**

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## **ACT I**

### **Scene 7**

15 years later.

Bedroom of Beulah's home.  
Having just finished reading a letter.  
"The FIRST THING I DO," underscored.

**BEULAH**

How many years it been since we seen Blue?

**BILLEY**

Must be close to 20, wouldn't you say?

**BEULAH**

Must be, Joshua just turned 20, didn't he?

**BILLEY**

Let me tell you Oolah, a lot sure has happened since Blue 'n his family went to Liberia. Britain was threatenin' to take over Liberia, because it was a financial burden on the ACS, n' they figured, nobody would give a hoot about a poor country. America washed its hands, because it couldn't afford to put any more money in it. Come 1846, the ACS ordered, 'n I mean ordered Liberia to claim it's independence, because they were out of money too... I wonder with all that happened, how my man's doin'?

**BEULAH**

You, should be doin' so good. Accordin' to this here letter, he's a millionaire livin' in Monrovia n' thinkin' 'bout runnin' for President.

**BILLEY**

I bet that ole drunk could be President, if he wanted too, but I'm sure he's too rich to be bothered. Presidents can't be rich, can they?

**BEULAH**

Are you kiddin'? Most of the Presidents in this here country are rich. Ya got to be rich

**(Laughs.)**

in order to become Predident. I 'spect that's why you ain't become President. Ya know, now that Joshua's all grow'd up, whyn't me n' you go to Liberia? Do us some good.

**BILLEY**

Why not, what else we doin', 'cept pickin' on, n' makin' each other nervous, n' beside,  
wouldn't you like to visit our homeland? We could take a trip there, it ain't that far.

(Underscoring ends. BEALAH and BILLEY  Sing.)

**KING HUTU'S DEAD****BEULAH**

You really want to go back to Africa?  
Oh, how exciting',  
Sure sounds invitin'.

**BILLEY**

N' don't it seem like the perfect time?  
So let's have a toast,  
To the Ivory coast.

We ain't never had a vacation since we married.  
So, lets go, 'cause,  
King Hutu's dead 'n buried.  
'N let make merry, 'cause,  
King Hutu's dead 'n buried

**BEUALAH and BILLEY (Sing and dance)**

We ain't never had a vacation since we married.  
So, lets go, 'cause,  
King Hutu's dead 'n buried.  
'N let make merry, 'cause,  
King Hutu's dead 'n buried

**(End of song.)**

**BEULAH**

'N I deserve it, 'cause I'm the one that carried...

**BILLEY and BEULAH**

...Our baby.

**BILLEY**

N' I'm glad.

**BEULAH**

You comin'?

**BILLEY**

Of course I'm comin', you think I'd let you out my sight, a fine lookin' woman like you.

**BEULAH**

Joshua'll be fine. He's away at college, besides, he's a grown man. He don't need me or you, so, let's pack our things, n' mosey on down the road. Sure would like to see my Mama. Must be near 85, bless her soul, n' Blue's girls must be darn near grown women by now, 'n now that you can read 'n write almost as good as me, why don't you write him a letter n' tell him we're comin' to visit him.

**BEULAH**

I'd rather surprise him, wouldn't you? 'N since it's decided, how about a taste to

**(Vocal click.)**

celebrate our vacation, Billey Krickik?

**BILLEY**

Don't mind if we do, n' how's about...?

**BEULAH**

First let's have a taste n' then we'll get to your how's about.

**(BEULAH goes to get the booze, as BILLEY pulls down the sheets from the bed and pats it like he's ready.)**

**End of Scene 7**

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## ACT I

### Scene 8

1851

**Blue's lavish living room overlooking the ocean in Liberia. Ornate in décor, there is an old grandfather clock. BLUE is drinking and pacing, when suddenly we hear a knock and BLUE opens door and is flabbergasted to find BEULAH and BILLEY.**

### **BEULAH and BILLEY**

SURPRISE, SURPRISE!

#### **BLUE**

Oh, my sweet Lord Nyesua, I don't believe my eyes. Is that really you?

#### **BILLEY**

**(Laughing.)**

Well, it ain't the sheriff. Now, put 'em up there, you're under arrest!

**(The Three of them jump and hug.)**

#### **BLUE**

Why in the hell didn't you tell me you were comin'?

#### **BEULAH**

'Cause we wanted to surprise you, you ole coot. Now give your best friend a hug n' kiss like you supposed to.

**(BLUE lifts BEULAH and hugs her.)**

#### **BILLEY**

Where's Emma Mae, n' where's those beautiful girls of yours, where are they?

#### **BLUE**

Emma Mae, the girls, n' all their children went home to Sierra Leone for vacation. Went to see her parents. If you would've told me, maybe they wouldn't have gone, turkey.

**BEULAH**

Did you say your girls have children? My Lord, I must be getting' older.

**BLUE**

Lucy's got two boys n' Colie's pregnant.

**BEULAH**

N' what about Missy?

**BLUE**

Thanks to that pushy, white woman of yours, Susan B Anthony, she runs all my business, n' real good too. Seems Missy ain't got no time for marriage or children.

**BILLEY**

All your businesses, how many do you got?

**BLUE**

There's the cigarette business. Missy's got over 300 people workin' for her, n' then there's the chewin' tobacco, over 150, n' now she's thinkin' 'bout openin' a theatre. That girl is sure some businesswoman. Takes after her ole man, wouldn't you say?

**BILLEY**

Looks like my man sure did okay for himself, this is the most beautiful place I ever saw.

**BLUE**

Glad you like it brother. Ain't too bad for a guy that ain't as smart as you, but I didn't do a thing 'cept make the money, Emma Mae fixed it all up. She sure knows how to spend, don't she?

**BEULAH**

**(Gives package.)**

I just can't hold this no longer. Here Blue, thought you might like these.

**BLUE**

**(Takes package)**

You shouldn't have brought me no present.

**BEULAH**

It ain't no present, it's all the letters you sent us, nigh on 20 years worth.

**BLUE**

**(Presses package to heart)**

I can't believe it girl, I saved all the letters you n' Billey wrote me too.

**BEULAH**

YOU DID?!

**BILLEY**

Looks like we're birds of a feather, don't it?

**BLUE**

More like family, wouldn't you say, more like family.

**(BLUE goes to grandfather clock, opens small, hidden draw and bares letter.)**

**BLUE (cont'd)**

Here's all the letters you sent me. I read them whenever I get lonely... That's right Billey, you ain't the only one that can read... I kinda hid them, 'cause when the kids were growin' up, I didn't want them to mess with the 'em. Even though they're all grown up, I still hide 'em. Creature of habit, wouldn't you say?

**BILLEY**

You ain't the only one. Now, give your man a hug, Blue, give your man a hug.

**(BLUE and BILLEY embrace.)**

**BLUE**

N' I'm still better lookin' than you ugly.

**(HOLDING hands ALL  Sing IT'S GOT TO BE.)**

**BILLEY**

Looks like we've been writin' for a long time.

**BLUE**

Kinds eased my mine.

**BEULAH**

'N it sure felt fine

**BILLEY**

Looks like we're finally back together.

**BLUE**

It can't be better.

**BEULAH**

We're back together.

**(ALL sing AT LAST )**

**ALL**

We've always been a family.  
Through all eternity,  
It's got to be, it's got to be.

We used to laugh, n' used to cry.  
N' that ain't no lie.  
It's 'til we die, us 'til we die.

**BILLEY**

N' how does it feel with all that money?

**BLUE**

Ev'rythin' looks sunny.

**BEULAH**

It sure sounds funny.

**ALL**

We've always been a family.  
Through all eternity,  
It's got to be, it's got to be.

We used to laugh, n' used to cry.  
N' that ain't no lie.  
It's 'til we die, us 'til we die.

**BILLEY**

Been readin' about your country, Blue. Mighty proud brother, mighty proud. Copied the US of A to a T. Flags the same color as ours, a constitution, a President elected by the people, Senate, House of Representatives, Judiciary. Only thing I see as unfair is, only blacks can become citizens, n' own property, we call that the spoils system.

**BLUE**

Spoils my ass, I call that sucker bein' a damn crook.

**BILLEY**

Heard slavery's finally been outlawed.

**BLUE**

**(Brandishes a whip.)**  
It sure is, n' I'm glad too.

**BEULAH**

Well, what about your slaves?

**BLUE**

**(Flaps arms)**

They ain't my slaves no more, they is free as a bird, as my man Billey used to say.  
Anyway, lemme show you to your room.

**BILLEY**

The room can wait, don't we get a taste, what are you the only one that's drinkin'?

**BLUE**

Ooh we, I sure am sorry, let me get you both a taste.

**(BLUE rushes and gets bottle, glasses and pours.)**

**BEULAH**

What shall we toast to?

**BILLEY**

To our friendship...

**BLUE**

May it last forever.

**BEULAH**

**(Emotional, holds letters to heart.)**

'N the letters, can't forget the letters.

**ALL**

**THE LETTERS!**

**End of Scene 8**

# ***SLEEP in the STABLES***

## ACT I

### Scene 9

150 years later.

NOW.

**BLUE'S old living room with the same ocean view, only the furniture is updated. The old grandfather clock is prominent. BLUE the 4<sup>th</sup>, the great, great grandson is drinking. His very attractive wife, CARIE is wearing very chic, alluring clothing.**

**CARIE**

Haven't you had enough?

**BLUE**

I never have enough. It runs in my family, in case you forgot, *mamsoille*.

**CARIE**

How can I forget, I live with you, remember?

**BLUE**

For your edification Carie Rachel, everything we have, this magnificent home, all the businesses, the theater, the millions, I owe to Blue, my great, great grandfather, who I am named after, in case thou hath forgotten.

**CARIE**

He was also a drunk in case you forgot, *hath*.

**BLUE**

And so was my great grandfather and of course my beloved father, Blue Abu the 111. One could say drunks run in my family, one could say.

**CARIE**

One does say and it's nothing to brag about, Blue Abu the 4<sup>th</sup>.

**BLUE**

In case *you* forgot, my beloved ancestors started free enterprise here. They introduced tobacco, *way* back in the 1800s, and they opened the first theater in this country. My family, it is written is the backbone, the spine of our beloved Liberia.

**CARIE**

So, what happened to your backbone, Mr. Architect?

**BLUE**

What is it with you, why are you always so dissatisfied, *mon cheri*? You have everything a black, fair hair maiden could desire. What exactly is bugging you, what doth thou want?

**CARIE**

I want to leave this God forsaken country. I can't stand the boredom, the monotony, the dictators.

**BLUE**

Dictators, what, dictators are you referring to, *mamsoile*?

**CARIE**

I've grown up with, before and after Samuel K. Doe. There's always been dictators, always, for as long as I can remember there's been dictators, forever and anon. This freakin' country has always had the *Supreme ruler*... And what about the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, are they any different? Haven't they raped, and what haven't they taken from us? I want to get out of here and breathe some fresh, free air, I want to live, I want to go to New York, San Francisco, anywhere, people will appreciate and understand my writing.

**BLUE**

You're writing, may I remind you are figments of your vivid imagination and I hate to tell you this, but not all Liberians are illiterate. And from what I hear, these days' lots of Americans don't or can't read, so there.

**CARIE**

That's what you say. And look at you, dressed like some Zulu witch doctor. This is the the twenty-first Century, damn it!. The millennium, in case you forgot. Armani makes beautiful men clothing. Why don't you have one of his suits? Why, why, why?

**BLUE**

Because I am black and proud to dress like an African. I wear what has been worn  
**(Laughs and prances like monkey.)**  
throughout time and memoriam *Uhgamoogahmoogah*.

**CARIE**

*Uhgamoogahmoogah* yourself.

**BLUE**

**(Sort of smiles.)**

You know, I'm in the mood for a little *Uhgamoogahmoogah* myself.

**CARIE**

You can forget it.

**BLUE**

**(Sings)**

*“Gimme a little kiss, will ya huh? What are you gonna miss, will ya huh?”*

**CARIE**

Blue, it’s three o’clock in the afternoon. What are you crazy?

**BLUE**

What can I tell you, I’m a drunk not to mention a sex maniac. One out-of-two ain’t bad, is it?

**CARIE**

You are incorrigible, but, cute, if I may say so.

**BLUE**

Does that mean...?

**CARIE**

Maybe later and I mean much later.

**(BLUE approaches grandfather clock and rubs it.)**

**BLUE**

Do you have any idea how old this beautiful clock is?

**CARIE**

No, but I’m sure you’re going to tell me.

**BLUE**

I was told, that my great, great grandfather, Blue Abu the first, the one that I’m named after, bought it for my great, great grandmother Emma Mae’s birthday the first year they moved here. Think he loved my grandma as much as I love you. Is that possible?

**(With much admiration, BLUE touches clock and discovers a hidden compartment.)**

**BLUE (cont’d)**

**(Looks inside clock and discovers letters.)**

CARIE RACHEL! Look what I just found; a secret compartment... Oh. my God, look at all these letters, there’s tons of them.

**CARIE**

Did you say letters?

**BLUE**

They look like they're a 100 years old, maybe more and there's millions of them.

**CARIE**

Let me see, let me see.

**(CARIE and BLUE are astounded. BOTH look at the letters.)**

**BLUE**

They're written by Grandpa Blue...

**CARIE**

And by somebody named Beulah and Billey.

**(Anxious, THEY both read letters.)**

**CARIE (cont'd)**

It seems Beulah and Billey were your Grandpa's best friends. Oh, Blue, it's wonderful...

**(WE hear the underscoring of "RICH AS A SONOFABITCH.")**

**BLUE**

Yeah, seems they lived in Virginia, That's where Grandpa came from, well, not really, he came from Sierra Leone. Wait'll you hear this one; Dear Beulah, hope you n' your little boy is doin' fine. Sure had pretty green eyes n' he was real cute... I know it's been a long time since I wrote you. Yeah, I know I ain't never wrote you 'n I'm sorry, because woman, I sure miss you... I wonder how a black slave got green eyes in those days?

**CARIE**

And they certainly didn't speak the King's English my my drunken and horny husband.

**BLUE**

*Touche.* That's what I like about you sweetheart, you calls 'em as you sees 'em.

**CARIE**

Always.

**(Underscoring ends and EV'RYTHING'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT BEGINS.)**

**CARIE**

...These letters are fantastic. Unbelievable. Oh, my God, they must be over 150 years old, Listen to this one, It's unbelievable; To my best friend, Blue, Sure was good hearin' from you, even though it took you four years, ass-hole. Bet you miss hearin' my stories, don'tcha, ugly? I sure miss tellin' them to you, especially havin' a taste with you. Ain't

got nobody I want to drink with, maybe that's why I miss you...? Charming, these letters are simply charming, I love them.

**BLUE**

...Still think my Grandpa was only a drunk.

**CARIE**

I love your Grandpa... I love these letters. They belong in a museum. Imagine, the history of slavery, *Our* history. Oh, Blue.

(CARIE and BLUE 🎷 Sing.)

**Our History**

**CARIE (cont'd)**

Do all you can .  
Sisters and brothers.

**BLUE**

A family of man.  
We all need our mothers.

**CARIE**

Just turn to God.  
Get down on your knees.

**BLUE**

Nothing will be hard.  
Pray the blind man sees.

**CARIE**

Our history goes back to ancient times.  
King Yoruba, Fon and Solomon mines.

**BLUE**

The lost tribe, Lions of Judah looked like us.  
Abraham, King Tut turned to dust.

**CARIE**

In the beginning ev'ryone was brown.  
Remember all those hippies who got down.

**BLUE**

And they all had long, nappy hair.  
They smoked their jive and didn't care.

**CARIE**

Then Martin Luther took us for a walk.  
I have a dream, the man could talk.

**BLUE**

Remember the Viet Nam war?  
Our brothers lost their lives that's for sure.

**BLUE and CARIE**

Do all you can.  
Sisters and brothers.  
A family of man.  
We all need our mothers.

Just turn to God.  
Get down on your knees.  
Nothing will be hard.  
Pray the blind man sees.

Do all you can.  
Sisters and brothers.  
A family of man.  
We all need our mothers.

Just turn to God.  
Get down on your knees.  
Nothing will be hard.  
Pray the blind man sees.

**BLUE**

I bet you could write a book about my old grandpa and his friends.

**CARIE**

I bet I could and I think it would be wonderful, maybe a best seller.

**BLUE**

What about New York, what about all these dictators?

**CARIE**

What about New York and exactly what dictators are you talking about?

**BLUE**

Got a title?

**CARIE**

How does *Sleep in the Stables* sound?

**The End**