

THE SERVANT
BY
MARIA CROOKS

Characters:

Margaret: Canadian, Mid 30s early 40s

Richard: Canadian. Margaret's husband 40s

Juanita: Jamaican maid. Mid-30s

Johanna: English woman Mid 30's early 40s

Claire, American, Mid 30s or 40's (can be played by either the Margaret or Johanna actor)

Pastor Vincent: 30s-40's Claire's husband American probably southern. (can be played by the actor playing Richard if necessary)

Woman 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 as well as the policeman and the man on the street, may be voices only or played behind a scrim.

The time period of the play is from the late 1950s to the mid- 1960s and takes place in Canada and Kingston, Jamaica.

This play was workshopped in Calgary on Sunday May 11, 2014 with the following workshop cast:

MARGARET – Kirstie Gallant

RICHARD – John Moerschbacher

JUANITA – Naddine Madell-Morgan

JOHANNA – Kira Collins

CLAIRE – Laura Gillespie

PASTOR VINCENT – John Moerschbacher

STAGE DIRECTIONS – Helen Young

DRAMATURG – Caroline Russell-King

This play was produced by Urban Stories Theatre in Calgary, November 4-8, 2014, with the following cast and crew.

Celene Harder as Johanna

Kadra Yusuf as Juanita

Wendy Froberg as Margaret

Michael Badger as Richard

Jenna Leclaire as Claire

Greg Wilson as Pastor Vincent

Directed by Chelsey Fawcett

Stage Manager- Amanda Wheeler

Lighting Designer- Kelsey Miller

Sets and Costumes- Victoria Krawchuk

Sound Designer- Kyle Hinton

Producer- Helen Young

Dramaturg- Caroline Russell-King

A little axe can cut down a big tree – Jamaican proverb

For my mother Rosa.

(On the set there is a table and two chairs representing Johanna's kitchen. At the start of the play, Johanna is interviewing Juanita for a job as a house maid.)

Johanna: Mrs. Harrison says you are a good cook.

Juanita: Yes Mrs. Johanna I can cook really good.

Johanna: *(more to herself than to Juanita)*. What would a Canadian know about good cooking? She probably considers hot dogs and French fries haute cuisine.

Juanita: Beg pardon ma'am?

Johanna: Never mind. What sort of cuisine can you do?

Juanita: Cui, cui Cuisine ma'am?

Johanna: Yes, what kind of food do you cook? Tell me what you can cook.

Juanita: All kinds of food. I can cook rice and peas and chicken, jerk pork, green banana and mackerel, escoveich fish, curry goat, ackee and saltfish. Sweet potato pone, oxtail stew, fufu, fry plantain. Mrs. Margaret fambly really like Jamaican food. De chillren use to love when I cook ackee. Dey use to call it Jamaican eggs because when you cook ackee it look like scramble eggs. An' -

Johanna: Can you cook English cuis- English food?

Juanita: What kind of food is English food ma'am?

Johanna: Cottage pie, bangers and mash, beef Wellington, toad-in-a-hole, spotted dick. The children love spotted dick. Can you prepare that?

Juanita: Spottid wat?

Johanna: Dick! Spotted Dick! It's a pudding for Heaven's sake!

Juanita: Ooh, pudd'n, yes 'm I know how to mek pudd'n. We call it pone. I make a really nice sweet potato pone wid coconut milk an'-

Johanna: Have you ever worked for an English family before?

Juanita: No 'm. But I learn tings fas', fas'. You just need to show me one time and I can cook whatever you like. I been cooking from me eye deh a me knee.

Johanna: Good Heavens, what on earth are you talking about?

Juanita: Is a Jamaican saying ma'am. It mean dat I been cooking from I was a lickle chil' m'. From my eyes was at my knees. *(She mimes her eyes being at her knees. Johanna looks at her somewhat exasperated. She is not interested in the explanation.)*

Johanna: Janiter, can you read? *(She mispronounces Juanita's name.)*

Juanita: Yes Mrs. Johanna, I can read...

Johanna: Splendid. Then I'll give you some English recipes for you to cook from.

Juanita: Yes m'. Dat mean I get the de job?

Johanna: Yes. Your hours will be from 7 am to 8 pm. Monday to Friday and a half day on Saturdays. Can you start tomorrow?

Juanita: Yes m'. Tank you ma'am.

Johanna. Very well, I will see you tomorrow.

Juanita: Yes m' (*Juanita does not make any attempt to leave.*)

Johanna: That will be all.

Juanita: Yes m'.

Johanna: You may go now.

Juanita: Yes m'

Johanna: What are you waiting for?

Juanita: What about de pay ma'am?

Johanna: What about it?

Juanita: How much you pay ma'am?

Johanna: (*As if it is just one more thing to have to bother about.*) How much was Mrs. Harrison paying you?

Juanita: She pay 15 shillings a week, plus me bus fare.

Johanna: I'll pay you 12 shillings a week, but no bus fare. That's your responsibility.

Juanita: 12 shillings? But ma'am -

Johanna: 12 shillings. Take it or leave it. (*Juanita is not happy with the pay. She hesitates. Then she says*)

Juanita: Yes 'm. I'll take it.

(Lights fade and come up on a bedroom scene in a city in Canada. There are empty suitcases and boxes on the floor and on the bed. There are clothes shoes and purses strewn on the bed and on the floor. Margaret is searching frantically for something.)

Margaret: It's gotta be here. It just has to. Where the hell is it? God I hope I haven't lost it. Richard! Now let me think. Where did I put it? Richard! *(She searches some more, checking her purse, under the bed etc.)* RICHARD!

Richard: Yes dear.

Margaret: Didn't you hear me calling you?

Richard: I was checking on the kids. I didn't want to wake them. What are you doing? I thought you'd finished unpacking.

Margaret: I haven't seen my ring.

Richard: Your ring? You've got it on.

Margaret: Not my wedding ring. My pearl! Have you seen it?

Richard: No I haven't. Where did you put it?

Margaret: If I knew that I wouldn't be looking for it, now, would I?

Richard: Okay, okay, calm down. You know you mustn't get yourself flustered. It's got to be here. You sure you haven't unpacked it?

Margaret: No, I haven't.

(He looks through a jewelry box. They both look through the boxes and Margaret looks through the suitcases lying empty on the bed.)

Margaret: Oh, I hope it's not lost.

Richard: It's not lost. Look in your purse.

Margaret: I did already. It's not there. Look in your shaving kit.

Richard: Why would it be in my shaving kit? Did you put it there?

Margaret: No. I didn't put it there. Just look, okay? *(She goes through her coat pockets, opens drawers then sits down dejectedly on the bed.)*

Richard: It could be in one of the boxes downstairs.

Margaret: No. I looked through those already.

Richard: Okay. Try to think. When did you see it last?

Margaret: It was on my dressing table in the bedroom.

Richard: In Jamaica?

Margaret: No, in Timbuktuu. Of course in Jamaica.

Richard: I'm just trying to be helpful. No need to bite my head off. Just trying to jog your memory.

Margaret: My memory doesn't need jogging. I know very well it was on my dressing table and now I don't know where it is.

Richard: Well, you packed the things in the bedroom.

Margaret: Yes, I did. Me and Juani... *(she pauses and brings her hand to her mouth.)* Juanita helped me pack the things in the bedroom.

Richard: What are you thinking?

Margaret: I think she took it. I don't want to believe it, but where else could it be?

Richard: Maybe it never got packed. Maybe it was left behind.

Margaret: No, I went back through every room and made sure and there was nothing left behind. How could she have done it? After all we've done for her? We trusted her like one of the family. We didn't keep things under lock and key the way all the English do down there.

Richard: Hold on now. Don't go jumping to conclusions. Are you sure it's not here?

Margaret: Do you see it anywhere? I've turned this place upside down. It's not here. I think she took it. It couldn't be anyone else. It was there in the bedroom on the dresser while we were packing and now, it's not here. Oh, what a fool I was to trust her with something so precious to me. You know I was warned that they're all thieves. They smile to your face, but as soon as you turn your back -

Richard: She never stole anything from us before. She worked for us for two years and nothing ever went missing.

Margaret: No, but she saw her chance when we were leaving. She knew by the time we found out, it would be too late.

Richard: I just can't believe it ... She was just not that sort of person. If we can't find it I will buy you another one.

Margaret: I don't want another one. It's not a matter of buying another one! It was my mother's ring. It has a great deal of sentimental value for me. It's the only thing of hers I have left. *(She is almost weeping.)*

Richard: I'm sorry.

Margaret: It's my own damn fault. I should have known you can't trust those people.

Richard: Those people?

Margaret: Don't act so outraged. You know what I mean. Everybody warned me about them. Johanna and her friends keep everything under lock and key in their homes. They couldn't believe I had all our things out in the open. They warned me to keep our valuables locked away.

Richard: Well, that's how her lot are. They don't treat the natives of the country well. We're Canadians. I refuse to live like that, distrusting people just because they look different from us. We had no complaints all the time she worked for us. And she was so good with the kids. She was always ready with a smile and a helping hand.

Margaret: Yeah, well see what our good, trusting Canadian ways have got us?

Richard: Why don't you write to her? You could start off by saying Dear Juanita... (*Margaret gives him an outraged look*) What I mean is you don't want to start off by accusing her, but if you explain to her how important this ring is to you...

Margaret: What's the use? I'm sure she's sold it already. Either that or she's going to use it in some voodoo obeah ritual.

Richard: Why would she use it for an obeah ritual?

Margaret: Because that's what they do. Johanna says they take things and use them to cast spells on people.

Richard: Surely you don't believe that nonsense.

Margaret: Of course not. No, I think she's planning to sell it to pay for books for her precious Derek. That's all she ever talks about *Me son is going to be a dactah*. But it's her loss. I told her I would try to get her up here to work for us. Well she can forget about that now.

Richard: It just doesn't make any sense to me. Why would she jeopardize her relationship with us by stealing a stupid ring?

Margaret: I resent you calling my mother's ring stupid-

Richard: I didn't mean stupid.

Margaret: Well that's what you said-

Richard: I meant it in the sense that it isn't a very expensive item.

Margaret: I don't care about whether it was expensive or not.

Richard: I know. I know that it means a lot to you.

Margaret: She will make a lot of money selling it in Jamaica.

Richard: It just seems strange to me. She knew we planned to help her. I told her I'd get information on universities up here for Derek. I said I'd help as much as I could to get him into university. He could stay with us. He's bright and doing really well in school.

Margaret: You'll do nothing of the kind!

Richard: Well, I suppose not now if she really did steal the ring...

Margaret: Of course not now! I told her I would send clothes for the children from time to time. You know she has a million kids, all with different men. That's how they do it down there. Well, she and her children can go to hell for all I care.

Richard: Marge!

Margaret: I don't care, Richard. I am really angry. That damn nigg-

Richard: Marge! I know you're angry. I am upset, too, but I will not allow that kind of language. Get a hold of yourself.

Margaret: You're not the one whose mother is dead. That ring meant a lot to me.

Richard: I know. Tell you what. Let's go to bed now. We're both tired from all that travelling. Tomorrow, we'll go through the entire house and make sure the ring isn't here. Let's get some rest.

(Lights fade and come up on Juanita. She is sitting at one end of a table writing a letter. As she writes, she reads the letter aloud.)

Juanita: Dear Mrs. Margaret, I hope when dese few lines reaches you that dey will find you and de rest of de fambly in good health as it leave me at present. Tank God. I hope you and Mr. Richard is seckling down well. I did manage to get a job wid your frien' Mrs. Johanna and I want to tank you foh putting in a good word foh me. She not too bad to work foh but is not like working foh your fambly. It is the best fambly I evah work foh. You an' Mr. Richard treat me so good. Is a little different with Mrs. Johanna, but I am not complaining.

(Lights come up on Margaret. She is sitting on the opposite side of the same table also writing a letter.)

Margaret: Dear Johanna, We are back home and trying to get used to winter again. We all miss Jamaica tremendously. The children complain about the cold the most. They were so young when they left Canada, so this is all new to them. However we are settling in little by little.

Juanita: *(Continuing her letter.)* How the chillren liking deir new school? I really miss dem a lot. Lawd a miss dem. They is so polite and nice and well brought up. I pray foh dem every night and foh you and Mr. Richard too. My chillren dem is doing well. Derek is going into his las' year of high school soon and he is getting really good marks. Me so proud of him. He want to become a doctor if you remembah. Lawd, dat would be somet'ing. Me not even finish primary school and my son dreaming of turning doctor. Well, I don't know how dat goin' happen, but I put my trus' in de Lawd. Before you leave Jamaica, you say that you was goin' to try to see if you could get me to come up dere as a domestic to work foh you. Dat would help me out so much especially wid Derek's schooling as he only have a half scholarship.

Margaret: I know that you hired Juanita on my recommendation so I must apologize to you. I really feel quite awful about this. After I got to Canada, I discovered that she is not trustworthy at all.

Juanita: Girlie, my daughter who up here wid me in Kingston, is also doing well. She always asking after little Miss Gabby. She remembah how dey use to play togedah sometime when she come wid me to your house.

Margaret: I hesitated telling you but I think that as a friend I must warn you.

(Lights fade and come up on Juanita. The table and two chairs now represent Johanna's kitchen. She is wearing a cap and apron. We hear Johanna off stage calling for Juanita.)

Johanna: Guaniter! Guaniter! *(Johanna enters the kitchen)*

Juanita: You calling ma'am?

Johanna: Of course it's you I'm calling. That's your name isn't it?

Juanita: My name is Juanita -

Johanna: Why is there a bottle of white rum in Christopher's room? And why does he have a tree leaf tied to his forehead?

Juanita: Dis mawnin' when I got 'im up out a bed ma'am, he was coughing like 'im catching a col', and he say he have a little headache, so I just rub 'im down wid' some white rum and tie a lime leaf on his head to stop de headache. I just making a little ginger tea to give 'im now.

Johanna: You will do nothing of the kind. If he is catching a cold, then you give him an aspirin and don't ever put rum or lime leaves or any kind of leaf on him ever again. That's rubbish.

Juanita: Dose are home remedies ma'am. Dat's what we do here in Jamaica and it really work.

Johanna: Well, that's not what we do in England. These are English children. Don't forget that. And I want a word with you about something else. Samantha tells me that you've been telling her and Christopher about some things called duppies which I gather are ghosts and nasty stories.

Juanita: Nasty stories?

Johanna: Yes nasty stories about a spider-

Juanita: Oh! You mean *Anancy*. Oh yes *Bra Anancy* is a very tricky lickle spider. Chillren love dose stories.

Johanna. I don't care what it's called. I'll not have you telling the children these bizarre, foreign stories. I don't want their heads filled with all of that mumbo jumbo. Please tell them proper English stories like Snow white and the seven dwarfs, or Cinderella and Jack and the Bean stalk and such. Is that your child in the back garden playing with Sam?

Juanita: Yes ma'am. As today is Sat'day, I didn't want to leave her alone at home I don't have nobody to leave 'er wid.

Johanna: I don't want my children playing with, with... negro children. I don't want them catching anything.

Juanita: She used to play with Gabby and Tommy and Mrs. Margaret never min'. She don't have any sickness ma'am.

Johanna: I don't care what Margaret allowed at her home. This is my house and I don't want her playing with the children.

Juanita: I look after your children and I keep dem clean don't I? I keep my own chil' clean too.

Johanna: *(Just then the sound of little children laughing and giggling is heard. Humm, she looks clean enough and Samantha is enjoying herself. Very well, she may play with the children. But I will inspect her first when she comes. I want to make sure she doesn't have lice or yaws or anything. I don't want to seem difficult, but I need to be careful with the children's health. By the way, Mr. Stanley really liked the chicken run... what do you call it?*

Juanita: Oh, de chicken rundown. *(pronounced rundung)* He like it ma'am?

Johanna: Yes, he did. We all did. I'm pleased with your work so far. Things are working out well. Just please none of those Jamaican remedies for the children. Understood?

Juanita: Yes'm.

(The lights fade come up Margaret in the bedroom. She is reading a letter. Richard enters.

Margaret: Listen to this: *If you have a lickle time to look into that for me, I would glad. Please give my bes' to Mr. Richard and kiss lickle Gabby and lickle Tommy for me and tell them that I miss them so much. I hope when you get a little time, you will write. I would really like to hear how you all is settling down.*

Richard: Who's that from?

Margaret: Guess. Juanita. I just can't stand it. She's playing me for a fool. She blatantly steals from me and then pretends she's this sweet, kind, butter-wouldn't-melt-in-her-mouth person.

Richard: Just leave it OK. You don't know for sure she took it.

Margaret: I know she did. I hope she rots in hell.

Richard: Stop it Marge. It's beneath you to speak like this. I really don't like to see this side of your personality. It's so unbecoming.

Margaret: Unbecoming to be upset because the only item to remember my dear departed mother by has been stolen by a -

Richard: Why don't I tell you my good news? My promotion came through today.

Margaret: That's great news. Finally! Now I'll be able to get a designer to come in and do something with this place. I want to re-paper the walls, get new furniture, change the carpet. This promotion comes with a raise does it not?

Richard: Yes of course.

Margaret: Oh, I'm so excited. What's your new title?

Richard: Head of the Loans department for all of Canada. Your husband is a very important man, now.

Margaret: Well it's about time they recognized it.

Richard: I'd like us to go on a cruise with the kids. I know how much they'd like that. We can afford it now.

Margaret: That would be so nice. I've always wanted to go on a cruise.

Richard: It's my gift to you and the kids. I know it's been rough for you.

(Lights come up on Johanna. She reads a letter and keeps looking at Juanita who is busy in the kitchen. Finally she folds the letter, and moves toward Juanita).

Johanna: Joanita, Go pack up your things. I want you to leave immediately.

Juanita: Leave ma'am. What you mean leave?

Johanna: Exactly what I said. I want you to leave. I no longer want you working for me.

Juanita: But... but. I don't understand'.

Johanna: Here's some money in lieu of notice.

Juanita: In lu...? What dat mean?

Johanna: It means that I want you gone from here right away. I'm giving you one week's pay in place of notice.

Juanita: But why you lettin' me go? Did I do somet'ing wrong? Please, ma'am if I do somet'ing wrong, please tell me and I promise I won't do it again. I do everyt'ing you tell. I don' rub down the chillren with rum or tie lime leaf pon dem no more because you tell me not to do it. I don' tell dem no duppy stories nor nuttin'. I don' understand'. Please, ma'am. I need de work.

Johanna: It has nothing to do with that. I just don't want you here anymore.

Juanita: I taut I was doing a good job. Jobs hard to come by in Kingston.

Johanna: That's not my problem.

Juanita: Please ma'am, don't let me go. What is it I do wrong? Tell me and I promise I won't do it again.

Johanna: I don't want you here. I don't want a thief working for me.

Juanita: A tief? I don't tief notin' from you ma'am. You mean de dress I took? I taut you was throwing it away. I will bring it back.

Johanna: Dress? I don't know anything about any dress. I'm not going to discuss this with you any further.

Juanita: But you cyan' accuse me of stealing and just leave it at dat.

Johanna: I can do anything I want.

Juanita: But why? Wat I evah do to you dat you would want to treat me like dis? *(she falls to the floor at Johanna's feet)*. I have five chillren an' is me one. I don' have no husban'. My son, Derek, him almos' finish high school. I need to pay his school fees an' his books or 'he cyan' continue. Please ma'am, I beg you.

Johanna: *(She slams the money on a table and the coins fall at Juanita's feet)*. Take the money before I change my mind about it. Get your things and go.

Juanita: Can I at leas' wait and say good-bye to de chillren?

Johanna: No. I want you to leave now.

Juanita: Please ma'am, don't let me go.

Johanna: Get your things and go.

Juanita: *(Rising slowly from the floor.)* I want you to know something. I do my job to the bes' of my ability even doh you don' pay me right. I look afta your chillren like dey was my own. I clean an' scrub an' cook from mawning till night. *(Johanna starts to walk away and Juanita follows her)*. You is rich and white so you can treat me anyway you like. You tink my daughter have lice and yaws an' dat she dirty an' you say dose tings to my face. *(Juanita steps in front of her preventing her from leaving)*. You know how much dat hurt me? It hurt me to my soul. I coulda box you down when you say dat to me. *(Johanna looks alarmed and tries to get away but Juanita won't let her)* but I swallow my spittle because I need the job so I put up wid it. I have put up wid worse believe me. So I preten' I don' min'. To you, I an' my chillren and people like we is nobodys so you can say whatevah you like. You use my services an' when you feel like it, you jus' dash me away because you know dere is plenty odahs to come and tek your shit. You throw de money on de groun'. To you dis money is notin', jus'a few shillings you won't even miss. I will stoop down an' pick it up foh to me dis is everything. I have to put food on de table an' clothes on my chillren's backs. Somehow or odah, my son will finish school and one day he will be a doctor. I dream dat foh my boy an' neider you nor nobody can prevent dat from happenin'. *(Juanita steps aside and Johanna finally manages to get away looking really flustered and frightened)*.

Johanna: If you're not out of this house in five minutes I'll call the police.

(Juanita stoops down and picks up the money that has fallen to the floor. Lights fade on Johanna and Juanita and come up on Margaret and Richard who are in their bedroom packing for their cruise).

Margaret: I thought the day would never come. The children kept counting the months off on the calendar. They are so excited about this trip and so am I. Ha, ha. It's the kind of item that would have appeared in the society pages of the newspaper in Kingston: Canadian bank executive, Mr. Richard Harrison and his wife, Mrs. Richard Harrison departed today on a world cruise along with their children Thomas and Gabrielle. I really enjoyed our status in Jamaica.

Richard: We lived in a rather rarified atmosphere. That sort of thing can go to your head.

Margaret: I loved it.

Richard: I know you did but it is unreal. Most people don't live like that. It's not what we are used to. Besides it was mortifying to be surrounded by so much poverty and we the expatriates, living so high off the hog.

Margaret: Oh Richard you can be so moralising sometimes we didn't create the system. That's just how things are. The bible says we will always have the poor with us. I liked living like that. Here I have to carry my own groceries and cook and clean myself.

Richard: Well we said we would have sent for Jua-

Margaret: Don't you bring up that name to me. I'm in a good mood. Don't spoil it. Do you have space in your suitcase for my shoes? I seem to have run out of space. I know, I know, I'm trying to pack lightly, but I need to wear shoes on the cruise, don't I?

Richard: Of course you do. How many pairs is that now, 25?

Margaret: Oh come now. I am only taking, let's see ... five, no six, no seven. OK eight pairs.

Richard: Eight pairs of shoes for a ten day cruise?

Margaret: And your point is?

Richard: Nothing dear.

(She comes over to his suitcase and starts to re-arrange items in Richard's suitcase to make room for her shoes. As she is doing this, she feels something in his suitcase that is obstructing her. She feels around and then finds a zipper and unzips a hidden compartment of the suitcase. She takes out a small box wrapped and tied with string.)

Margaret: (Coyly) Richard, what's this?

Richard: Is this a trick question?

Margaret: Richard! I'm serious. What is it?

Richard: Well I could be wrong, but it looks like a box to me.

Margaret: Stop it. I know it's a box. What's *in* it?

Richard: I don't know.

Margaret: It was in your suitcase. How come you don't know?

Richard: I don't know. I don't know what half the things in my suitcase are. You keep putting your stuff in there.

Margaret: Well I didn't put this here. *(She begins to open the package. It is wrapped in several layers of paper and tied up with string. She takes out a box, opens it, removes some cotton that is covering the contents and then she gasps.)*

Margaret: It's my ring! Richard, it's my ring. It was in your suitcase all this time.

Richard: I thought you said you had searched everywhere.

Margaret: I didn't look in your suitcase. I thought you searched it.

Richard: I didn't even know that compartment was there.

Margaret: *(It dawns on her.)* Richard, Juanita put it there for me. Look how carefully she packed it. She knew how much this ring means to me. Oh God, and I thought she'd stolen it. I distrusted her even though she never gave me cause to. I am so-

Richard: Ashamed?

Margaret: Well, yes.

Richard: As you should be.

Margaret: I was too hasty. You're right. It's just that-

Richard: She's poor and Black therefore she's also a thief.

Margaret: Richard, that's not fair. I would have thought the same thing if she had been White.

Richard: Are you sure?

Margaret: Yes I'm sure.

Richard: You blamed her with such conviction. You didn't even bother to contact her to verify anything. I don't know. I think Johanna and her selfish, over-indulged set with their biases and cultural attitudes toward the people of the country started to influence you. I was beginning to notice it.

Margaret: What do you mean?

Richard: Oh just in the way you would speak to Juanita sometimes and I started noticing a sense of entitlement and superiority which was not a part of your nature before we moved there. I heard you begin to refer to her as “our girl”.

Margaret: But that’s what everyone calls their servant down there. Even the Jamaicans themselves-

Richard: That doesn’t mean that you had to follow suit. She’s about your age. It’s wrong to call her a girl.

Margaret: Well, I thought I treated her appropriately. I will write to Johanna.

Richard: Why Johanna? Why not write to Juanita. You have her address don’t you?

Margaret: No I don’t. I threw it out. I was so mad at her.

Richard: Well, you said she’s working for Johanna. You can write care of her. (*Margaret does not respond*). What’s wrong?

Margaret: I told Johanna about the ring. I told her Juanita had stolen it.

Richard: You did?

Margaret: Yes

Richard: And?

Margaret: And nothing.

Richard: Margaret.

Margaret: I think she may have fired her.

Richard: May have fired her?

Margaret: I think so. I... I don’t know for sure.

Richard: Did you tell her to fire her?

Margaret: I didn’t tell her to fire her. I just said that she may have stolen my ring.

Richard: You might as well have told her to fire her. That Johanna, she thinks she’s the Queen herself. She’s the worst example of colonial bigotry I’ve ever seen. Good on the Jamaicans for wanting to throw off colonial rule and become independent. Soon people like her will have to go back home to their bed-sits and cold water flats in London.

Margaret: Now look who’s being unkind. Anyway, don’t you think I feel bad about this? I’m not an ogre.

Richard: It's just that I'm disappointed in your behaviour.

Margaret: Don't beat up on me. I don't need you to add to how badly I feel.

(Lights go down and come back up on Juanita and a woman with a Jamaican accent. The woman stands at an open door and Juanita on the other side of the door.)

Woman 1: What do you want?

Juanita: My name is Juanita ma'am. I heard that you looking for a maid.

Woman 1: You can't come to the front. Go round to the back and I'll speak to you there.

Juanita: I did go to the back but there was some big dogs back there ma'am.

Woman 1: My dogs are harmless. They wouldn't hurt a fly. *(In the distance you can hear dogs barking and growling. The woman hesitates. Then she says grudgingly.)* Alright, come in don't dirty up the floor with you shoes. I need someone to do general house work and look after the children. Have you got experience?

Juanita: Yes m'

Woman 1: Let me see your reference.

Juanita: Ahm, dat is to say...

Woman 1: Well do you or don't you have a letter of reference?

Juanita: Well, no ma'am but...

Woman 1: I don't hire people off the street without a reference.

Juanita: But... but...

(She ushers her out and slams the door in Juanita's face. Lights fade and come up again. Juanita is talking to another prospective employer at the door.)

Juanita: I am a good worker ma'am... If you will jus' give me a chance *(The woman walks away and we hear the sound of a door slamming)* to prove meself. *Light fades and comes up again Juanita is speaking to another employer).*

Juanita: She accuse me of stealing but I nevah steal nothing from her. *(The woman slams the door and walks away. Light fades and come back up. Juanita is speaking to another employer).*

Juanita: I know to cook and look afta chill...

Woman 2: Do you have a reference?

Juanita: No ma'am but- *(Woman walks away and slams the door. Juanita once more is speaking to another employer who is standing on the porch of her house. The two chairs and an archway represent the porch.)*

Woman 3: You have no references but you want to be paid 15 shillings a week?

Juanita: Dat's what I was getting pay before.

Woman 3: Well I won't pay that for someone who has no references. For all I know you can't even cook.

Juanita: I can cook ma'am but I willing to work for less. How much you can pay?

Woman 3: Let me see the quality of your work first then I'll decide. Start Monday morning, 6 am sharp.

Juanita: Yes m'

(Lights fade and come back up. The woman in a chair on the porch.)

Woman 3: Yes what do you want?

Juanita: Is Sat'day afternoon ma'am. I leaving work now.

Woman 3: Have you finished all the work I gave you to do?

Juanita: Yes m', everything done. The dinner cook and it just need to warm up to serve.

Woman 3: I thought you were staying to do that.

Juanita: No ma'am. You say I can work half days on Sat'days.

Woman 3: Very well. I will see you next week. Come earlier on Monday morning. I have company coming and I would like the house to get a thorough cleaning. What are you waiting for?

Juanita: I don't get pay yet.

Woman: Oh that. Here it is. *(She hands her some money from her pocket.)*

Juanita: Is only five shillings here ma'am.

Woman: Yes, that's all I'm going to pay you. You're still in training. Your work is not up to par.

Juanita: In training? Not up to par? I been cooking an' cleaning foh years. I have a lot of experience.

Woman: Really? So where are your references? If you have so much experience, prove it.

Juanita: I prove it with my work. You have no complaints about how I do my work. I don't hear you complaining. I just see you piling on more and more work.

Woman 3: Because I haven't complained doesn't mean I was pleased with the work. I'm just going easy on you as you are still in training.

Juanita: What can I do with five shillings? Dat cyan pay foh not'ng.

Woman 3: I don't know what you expect.

Juanita: I expec' to get pay foh me work. Dat's what I expect.

Woman 3: Don't raise your voice to me. Who do you think you are?

Juanita: A human being just like youself.

Woman 3: You're a servant. Know your place. You mind sharp or you may even lose this job.

Juanita: Know my place? Dat's what people like you always telling people like me: know your place. Somehow my place is always at the bottom. Somehow my place is always to serve people like you foh little or not'ng. I don't want dis job. You don't want a maid; you want a slave. Look like you don't know slavery done long time.

Woman 3: So this is how you repay my kindness. We can't do anything for you people. You ungrateful lot. I hired you and took a chance on you out of the kindness of my heart and this is how you repay me.

Juanita: You didn't hire me out of no kindness. Is free labour you looking foh.

Woman 3: Get out. And if you think I'm going to give you a reference you're sadly mistaken.

Juanita: A reference from you? I would burn it. *(Juanita walks out, but outside she starts to cry. Lights fade and come back up. She is now speaking to another employer as the employer stands by a door.)*

Juanita: No, is not me write it ma'am. Is a real reference. Why it have so many spelling and grammatical mistake? I don't know- *(the woman slams the door. Juanita is alone on stage now. She looks around and then lifts the lid of a garbage can and takes out something which she begins to eat ravenously. The woman's voice calls out).*

Woman's voice: Hey you. Get away from there. I'll set my dogs on you if you don't leave the premises immediately.

(The sound of doors slamming reverberate over and over. Lights fade and come up again on Juanita crying silently in her one-room dwelling. She is kneeling between the two sleeping figures of her children Derek and Girlie. The children are represented by two blankets on the floor covering some rolled up clothes. She speaks to them as they sleep.)

Juanita: Me poor pickney them. Me cyan feed and look after you here. I don't have no money leff. I cyan keep you up here wid me any longer. I goin' have to sen' you both home to Mama in de country. But a promise I will sen foh you when I can see my way clear. Derek, my poor son. You almos' finish school and I know how much you want to continue you schooling and become a doctor. But poor people like we not suppose to have dose dreams. Dose dreams is foh white people in books. Our lot is to work hard fi bakra fi lickle or no pay an' when dem don't want you no more, dem trow you on the Dungle heap. Yes dem talking bout how Jamaica should get independence but what dat mean foh us? De same poverty. The same bad treatment, the same sufferation. What independence going do foh de likes of us? Girlie, me one and only girl chil'. I was hoping to give you a better life than the one I have but I fail you too. You cyan stay here wid me foh what I plan to do I don't want you see. I tried to find honest work but I cyan get not'ng'. I have to provide foh you chillren somehow. Don't hate me foh sending you away. Don't hate me foh what I goin' do.

(Lights come up on Margaret in her bedroom. She's sitting on the bed. She is reading a letter. Richard enters).

Margaret: This is from Johanna. She doesn't know where Juanita is.

Richard: So she did fire her.

Margaret: Yes. She let her go. She says she sent her yard boy to the tenement where she was living, since I sounded so anxious to find her, but he was told that she no longer lives there and no one knows where she went.

Richard: Poor woman. I wonder what has become of her.

Margaret: I think she will be OK. I'm sure she's managing just fine. She was managing before she came to work for us... I'm not her keeper.

(The following scene occurs behind a scrim. The very low and slow beat of a drum is heard. Juanita is standing by a garbage can on the street, almost hidden from view. A man approaches. From his unsteady gait it is evident that he is quite inebriated. He has almost gone by her without seeing her when Juanita speaks.)

Juanita: *(timidly)* Hello.

Man: What? Oh I didn't see you hiding in the corner. Listen honey if you want business you better stand where I can see you. You look like a ghost hiding in the corner.

Juanita: *(quietly.)* You, you want some company?

Man: What? Speak up.

Juanita: I was asking if you looking foh company.

Man: Yeah. I'm always looking for someone to pass the time with. *(He puts his arms around her and starts to kiss her and paw her.)*

Juanita: Not here. Come wid me.

Man: What's wrong with right here huh?

Juanita: No come wid me.

Man: I'm not going anywhere with you baby. You'll lure me into some hole and attack me. Have your brethren jump me. I may be drunk but I'm no fool. What I want we can do right here. *(He pulls a wallet from his pocket and throws some money on the ground).* You can pick 'em up while you're down there.

Juanita: (At first Juanita does not understand what he wants. She does not move. Then it dawns on her that he wants oral sex. She recoils from him.)

Juanita: No. I cyan do dat. God will strike me down dead if I do dat. Please sah. I will do anything else but don't ask me to do dat.

Man: Whaddaya mean you can't do that? You think you too good? Who do you think you are? The queen of Sheba? Ha Ha. This here's the Queen of Sheba. Pardon me your majesty and where is your crown if I may be so bold as to enquire? *(He grabs her around the neck and tries to push her to the ground. The drumming begins again. Very slowly at first one beat at a time.)* You goddam bitch. You do whatever I tell you to do!

Juanita: Lemme go you bastard!

Man: What did you call me? I could kill you right here and not a soul would give a damn about a piece of shit like you.

Juanita: Please, please let me go!

(They struggle some more. He throws her to the ground and starts punching her. The drumming gets louder and faster.)

Juanita: Please, I'll do whatever you want. Please don' kill me! Don't kill me!

Man: Now that's more like it. *(He stops hitting her and loosens his grip on her Juanita moves as if she is going to kneel then she grabs a rock and hits him on the knee cap. He falls and she attempts to run away but he grabs her arm. They struggle.)* You goddam black whore. I'm gonna kill you. *(Juanita hits him again. The man doubles over moaning. She gets free of him but just then the sound of a police whistle is heard. Juanita quickly runs off stage. The man begins to yell. Come back here you goddam black bitch. The man keeps yelling at the top of his lungs. Bitch! You goddam whore! (He shoves his wallet and the money in his pocket as the sound of police whistles get nearer and a police man, baton in hand appears. Stop that bitch. She attacked me and tried to kill me! The policeman runs up to the man on the ground).*

Police: You alright sah? What happen?

Man: Don't just stand there you goddam fool. Go after her. Go after that stupid bitch. She attacked me and, and stole my wallet!

(The police man begins to chase Juanita. The drumming has becomes more frantic as if imitating Juanita's panic. The police man looks for her, all the time blowing his whistle. He runs offstage in the same direction from which Juanita left. She appears onstage again from the opposite direction stealthily looking behind her. She crouches behind the door which has been set up to look like a wall as the policeman reappears and gets closer and closer to the door behind which she is hiding. He sees her. Frantically she tries to escape but it's too late, the policeman has seen her. He lunges at her, grabs her and hits her repeatedly with the baton. She falls unconscious to the ground. The drumming stops. The stage goes almost black.)

Margaret and Richard are asleep in bed. On Richard's sides of the bed there is a bedside lamp. The stage is in semi-darkness simulating a darkened bedroom at night. Juanita enters. A spotlight of hazy light follows her movements. She appears to be unaware of the sleeping couple in the bed. She is sweeping the floor etc. The room is very quiet except for the sound of Juanita quietly weeping as she works. Margaret wakes and sits up in bed having heard the crying. She peers through the darkness and becomes aware of the figure moving around in the room. She tries to alert Richard.)

Margaret: Richard! Richard! *(She shakes him and whispers his name.)* Richard for God's sake wake up there is somebody in the room.

Richard: Ummm.

Margaret: Richard wake up! *(Richard rolls over and continues sleeping. Margaret peers through the darkness at the moving figure.)* Juanita? Juanita is that, is that you?

Juanita: Yes m'

Margaret: What, what on earth are you doing here?

Juanita: I'm cleaning ma'am.

Margaret: Cleaning? At this hour?

Juanita: Yes m' I want to get an early start.

Margaret: Juanita: It's 3 o'clock in the morning.

Juanita: I was wondering why it look so dark.

Margaret: How did you get here anyway?

Juanita: Same as always. I took the bus part way and walk the rest o' the way.

Margaret: Bus? Walk? Juanita, this is Canada.

Juanita: You sure?

Margaret: Yes of course I'm sure. I live in Canada and you live in Jamaica.

Juanita: Oh, that's why it take me so long to get here this mawning.

Margaret: This doesn't make any sense. Why are you here? You don't work for us anymore. And why are you crying?

Juanita: Sufferation ma'am. Plenty sufferation.

Margaret: I'm sorry. I heard what happened to you. But I didn't tell Johanna to fire you

Juanita: No?

Margaret: No. I just told her...

Juanita: You told her what?

Margaret: Nothing

Juanita: You sure 'bout dat?

Margaret : Yes I'm sure. Are you calling me a liar?

Juanita: If the shoe fit.

Margaret: Look here Juanita you can't be here. This is Canada.

Juanita: So you say.

Margaret: I didn't tell Johanna -

Juanita: I know you told her I steal you ring.

Margaret: I... I... Did she tell you that?

Juanita: No, she didn't tell me. I know though. De spirits tell me. De spirits tell me everything.

Margaret : Spirits? Juanita look I could not find the ring. I thought maybe...

Juanita: Why you didn't write an' ask me? I woulda told you it was in the suitcase.

Margaret: Yes I found it-

Juanita: So why you tell Mrs. Johanna I steal it?

Margaret: Afterwards. I only found it afterwards. I'm sorry. I didn't know.

Juanita: *(She peers at her.)* You really don't look good. You sure you alright?

Margaret: No, I'm not alright. Why are you here in my house talking about spirits? How can you be here?

Juanita: *(Juanita sits at the foot of the bed.)* You do look a little piqued *(she pronounces it "peekED".)* What you need is some good Jamaican white rum. Rum good fe everting dat ails you. I tink I have some right here. *(She rummages through her basket of cleaning supplies.)* Oh no dis is bleach. You cyan drink dat. Dat woulda kill you foh sure. *(She laughs wickedly at her own joke.)* Heh, Heh. Alright how about some ginger tea. I brought some wid me. Ginger good fi everyting dat ails you.

Margaret: No, I don't want anything. Go away. I don't know how you got here but I want you gone.

Juanita: Just drink some of this tea. *(She hands her a cup.)*

Margaret: And then you'll go?

Juanita: *(She's toying with Margaret.)* As quick as you can say 1,2, 3. *(Margaret takes the cup from her and drinks.)*

Margaret: This doesn't taste like ginger tea.

Juanita: DRINK IT!

Margaret: What is it?

Juanita: It's a cup of tears.

Margaret: Tears!

Juanita: A cup of the tears that I been shedding because of you.

Margaret: Argh!!! Get away from me. You're trying to poison me! Argh!!! Richard! Richard! Help, she's trying to kill me!

Richard: Wha? Who? What's happening?

Margaret: Juanita, she's trying to kill me!

Richard: What's going on? *(He puts on the bedside lamp. Juanita has disappeared.)* There's no one here. You're having another one of your nightmares. I tell you Margaret, you have to go and see your doctor about this.

Margaret: It's not a nightmare I tell you. She was here. I even touched her. She gave me a cup of her tears.

Richard: A cup of what?

Margaret: Her tears. I tasted it Richard. It tasted like bitter tears.

Richard: Oh God, Marge. It was only a dream.

Margaret: Then how do you explain that the sheets are wet? It's her tears which I spilt when she tried to force me to drink them.

Richard: Marge look, it's the water from the glass you keep on your bedside table. You've spilt it all over the bed. *(He picks up a glass from among the sheets.)*

Margaret: Oh Richard, am I cracking up? I thought she was real. It all felt so real.

Richard: No, you're not cracking up. You're just feeling guilty because of what you said about her. It's your nerves acting up again. Look, tomorrow you call and make an appointment with the doctor. Will you do that?

Margaret: Yes, I will. I can't keep doing this night after night.

Richard: There's a good girl. Now let's get some sleep. I have to be up early tomorrow. Goodnight.

Margaret: Goodnight. *(She picks up the glass that was lying on the bed covers and replaces it on the night table beside her. As she does so her hand brushes something on the night stand. It's a piece of ginger root. She picks it up and smells it. Ginger. How did this piece of ginger get here? Agh! Richard Agh! The light fades.)*

The lights come up on Juanita who is sitting on the floor behind a door with bars in it representing a prison cell. She is dishevelled beaten up and crying. A door opens and a woman in a wheelchair enters the cell. Juanita does not appear to notice that she's no longer alone. In a soft voice the woman addresses her).

Claire: Juanita. *(Juanita does not look up).* Juanita my name is Claire Barton. I would like to talk with you. Is that alright? Juanita, I would like to help. I'm a pastor's wife. Is there any family you'd like me to contact on your behalf? *(Juanita does not answer and does not look up either.)* Any friends? Do you have a pastor or church member you would like to know where you are? *(Juanita still does not respond.)* Surely you must have someone who would be worried about you. What about your children? Do you have any?

Juanita: *(Looks up then).* Not my children. I don't want them to know anything about this.

Claire: Can you tell me what happened?

Juanita: What happened?

Claire: Yes. Why were you arrested? I want to hear your side of the story.

Juanita: Why you want to know?

Claire: I think I can help you. Tell me what happened.

Juanita: If I tell you how that going help me? What is it you want? I don't know you.

Claire: I will try to get you some help.

Juanita: Help. Why would a woman like you want to help a person like me? You just come here to look down on me and den you can go back and tell you rich friend dem bout the niegah woman and laugh.

Claire: No. I promise I'm not here to mock you or to look down on you. I belong to the Womens' Collective. I and the women from the collective visit prisons regularly to try and help women like you who find themselves in these circumstances. I promise you that I want to help Juanita. It's not right the way poor women like you are treated by the police. This man who has charged you, says that you lured him into a dark area and then attacked him and stole his money but when you were arrested there was no money on you. Did you steal his wallet?

Juanita: *(Juanita looks at Claire for a moment and then seems to decide that she has nothing to lose in confiding in her.)* No. I don't steal nothin' from 'im. He's the one who start beat me up. The drunk bastard. I just ran away as fas' as I could. I hit 'im wid a rock but dat was just to get away from him.

Claire: I'm going to get you legal help. We are going to charge him with assault. Look at your face and your clothes. It's obvious that he is the aggressor.

Juanita: I don't have no money fi no lawyer.

Claire: Don't you worry about that. Any legal fees will be taken care of by the Women's Collective of which I'm the president. Don't fret Juanita. I think that we will soon have you out of here.

(Claire turns in her wheel chair away from Juanita. The lights dim. She wheels her chair around to face Juanita. as the lights come up again. By this action, the audience should understand that she went away to do what she said she would for Juanita and now she is back.)

Claire: Get up Juanita. You are leaving.

Juanita: Leaving?

Claire: Yes you are free to go. When he heard that we were going to bring charges against him for assault he decided to drop the charges. We also threatened to lay a charge of police brutality against the police. They were very eager to drop the charges. They're like all bullies, they turn tail when you stand up to them.

Juanita: You sure? You sure I free to go?

Claire: Yes, I'm sure. They're all the same. They count on the woman having no resources, nobody to assist her. We see so many cases of women in your circumstances being assaulted, and the police do nothing to help them. They just take the man's word. That's why our work to assist poor women is so important. Now let's get you out of here. We can help you to find work. What kind of work do you do besides, besides this? Have you ever done any other kind of work?

Juanita: Oh yes. I work for many years as a cook and house maid but lately I couldn't find no work. Dis ting I was doing is not someting I want to do.

Claire: *(Looks at Juanita for a long time without speaking then she says)* Come with me. I have an idea. I need someone to help with cooking and taking care of my husband and my two boys. The work is not hard Juanita. I will pay you well for your work. What do you say?

Juanita: I don't have no references ma'am.

Claire: Don't worry about that. I have a hunch that this will work out. I can tell a lot just by looking at you. *(Lights fade.)*

(A verandah scene again. The arches and chairs representing the verandah. A door leads into the interior of the house. Claire sits in her wheel chair, fanning herself. Juanita enters through the door carrying a tray on which there is a jug with ice, ginger beer and a glass. She sets it down on the table and pours out the drink into the glass.)

Claire: Thank you Juanita. It is so dreadfully hot. I look forward to my after-noon glass of ginger beer.

Juanita: Yes m'

Claire: *(Taking a long drink)* Uhhh. This is so refreshing. You make the best ginger beer I have ever tasted. How long has it been?

Juanita: How long?

Claire: Yes how long has it been since you've been with us?

Juanita: Almost two weeks.

Claire: Funny. It seems longer than that.

Juanita: Yes m'

Claire: To you too?

Juanita: No. I mean yes m'

Claire: *(laughing)* it's alright Juanita. You don't have to agree with everything I say.

Juanita: No ma'am. I mean yes ma'am. Sorry ma'am. *(she wipes her forehead with the back of her hand.)*

Claire: You must be feeling this heat too. Why don't you sit down and have some of this ginger beer with me? *(Juanita hesitates.)*

Juanita: Sit down?

Claire: Yes.

Juanita: Wid you ma'am?

Claire: Yes, go ahead and get a glass and come and sit with me. The work can wait. Besides if I know you, you've finished most of what needs doing. Am I right?

Juanita: Yes m'. I just have to make a snack foh de chillren when dey get home from school and start de dinner.

Claire: You've got lots of time. Get yourself a glass and come and sit for a while. *(Juanita goes in and returns with a glass. Claire pours out the ginger beer for her. Sit down. Juanita sits cautiously on the edge of the chair as if she's ready to bolt at the slightest provocation.)* Relax Juanita. I want you to feel comfortable working here. Listen, I've been able to arrange for you to move into a house that belongs to the church. It hasn't been used for years. It needs a bit of cleaning up and a few repairs but it's in decent condition. The Women's Collective will provide you with some used furniture and best of all you'll be able to send for your son so he can finish school. I know how much that has been weighing on your mind.

Juanita: Really ma'am?

Claire: Yes really. And the Women's Collective will help you with his school fees and books and uniform.

Juanita: You would do all dat foh me and my son?

Claire: Yes, really.

Juanita: Lawd, I feel like dis is a dream.

Claire: You're not dreaming. This is real.

Juanita: You don't know what dis means to me.

Claire: I can only imagine.

Juanita: Me heart break when I have to take my son out a school. De only dream, de only dream him evah have from him was a lickle boy is to become a doctor and I take dat dream away from him.

Claire: You did what you had to do Juanita. If he studies hard and passes his exams we will help him to go to University.

Juanita: Why you doing all a dis foh me?

Claire: Because I want to and I'm in a position where I can help. You know Juanita, when my husband was first posted to Jamaica, I wanted to leave immediately. I wasn't happy here. Everything was so different from what I knew. I felt very alone. My family was so far away. Here I was, married to a man I didn't know all that well, trying to deal with customs that were so different. But then little by little I realised that I could make a difference. You could say I found

my calling. I'm very passionate about my work with women. The realities of life for poor women here are very harsh. The lack of respect, the lack of common human decency, the exploitation. I believe we have to fight for women to be treated well. You have a right to have decent employment and good working conditions. You should be able to provide for your children. You should never have to accept anything less.

Juanita: That is easier said than done here Mrs. Claire.

Claire: I know that. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't try to bring about changes.

Juanita: You is one of a kind. Most people not like you. I've worked foh people who seem to tink I'm not a human being de way dey treat me. And de pay. Dey just pay you wat dem feel like paying you. And dem expect you to work from mawning till night. Most time you cyan even get a time off to visit you chillren. Sometimes you find a good family and you don't want to leave dem but many times I wonda wether de employer dem have de same blood running through deir body like meself. You really believe that change can come?

Claire: Yes I do. It's not easy but we can't give up. Even after the accident I decided to remain here... Sometimes it's still hard for me to believe I will never walk again... but I will never leave.

Juanita: I'm sorry.

Claire: Oh don't be. I'm learning to live with it. In the short time that you've been here you've been such a help. You know at first, Vincent was apprehensive about me hiring you but you mustn't mind him. He had a rough childhood – absent father, alcoholic mother. But somehow I knew that I was doing the right thing when I asked you to work for me. I was drawn to you from the moment I saw you. I'm a very good judge of character. Well, I have made some mistakes ... but that's another story. I just knew that you were trustworthy.

Juanita: Well ma'am, I tank you from the bottom of me heart foh the trust that you put in me an' I will never give you cause to regret helping me.

Claire: I know.

Juanita: Life been hard but when a door closes, another one open.

(Lights fade and come back up. It's the next day. Juanita is in the bedroom cleaning and dusting and making up the bed. She is humming and singing little bits of a song as she works. Pastor Vincent stands nearby. She is unaware of his presence so for a while he stands there without speaking just watching her as she works. She is standing between the bed and the dresser with no exit except by passing by the pastor. She looks up and is startled to see him there).

Juanita: Oh!

Pastor Vincent: I didn't mean to scare you.

Juanita: I didn't know anybody was home.

Pastor Vincent: I just came back to get some books I forgot to take with me this morning.

Juanita: I will get out of your way sah.

Pastor Vincent: No, you are not in my way. I was listening to you singing. You have a lovely voice. You should come to church. Maybe join the choir. Do you go to church?

Juanita: I used to go all the time but I stop go to church.

Pastor Vincent: Why's that?

Juanita: It just seem dat God stop hearing me.

Pastor Vincent: Oh Juanita, he never stops hearing. Believe me. Maybe you stopped listening to him.

Juanita: I don't know. It just seems as if my life was going from bad to worse.

Pastor Vincent: But not anymore I hope. You must come to church on Sunday.

Juanita: Yes sah

Pastor Vincent: How you settling in so far?

Juanita: Fine sah. I like de job.

Pastor Vincent: That's good to hear. So we are not working you too hard?

Juanita: No sah. This is easy work. Mrs. Claire very good to me. I haven't been so happy in a long time. Sometime I worry dat I'm too happy and someting going come an' spoil it.

Pastor Vincent: Now you mustn't think that. I'm very pleased that you're here helping out my wife. It hasn't been easy for her since the accident. It's been hard on us both. Things have not been the same between her and me. You know she blames me for what happened to her.

Juanita: No sah. I, I didn't know.

Pastor Vincent: Oh she says she doesn't but I know she does. I blame myself. If I hadn't been trying to overtake and driving so fast the accident would have never happened. But you see we were running late for church that Sunday morning. I wish I had that morning to do over again.

Juanita: I sorry sah.

Pastor Vincent: Things haven't been the same between us. I mean as husband and wife. I love my wife dearly. She's a beautiful woman, a lovely woman. We met when I was attending Bible College. She is from a rich family you know. I'm lucky she even agreed to marry me. Her family still hasn't accepted me. I don't think they ever will. Man she was lovely in those days, tall, athletic, elegant with a lovely mane of hair. A man could get lost in all that lovely hair. We

couldn't get enough of each other back then. But, in marriage things change... We haven't been intimate in the biblical sense in -

Juanita: I have some work to finish in de kitchen. Excuse me sah. *(She tries to get by the pastor, but he doesn't let her.)*

Pastor Vincent: No need to rush out Juanita. I'm enjoying talking with you.

Juanita: Yes sah excuse me sah but I have to get lunch ready foh Mrs. Claire.

Pastor Vincent: She's not coming home for lunch. She said she was spending the day at the Women's Collective.

Juanita: Oh... I taut I hear her say she was coming foh lunch.

Pastor Vincent: You heard wrong my dear. We can get a chance to know each other. *(He moves toward Juanita. The books he says he needs are behind her on the bedside table. As he passes her, he puts his hands around her waist and lets them linger on her.)* You're a nicely built woman Juanita. You Jamaican women have flesh on your bones. Now I see why Jamaican men like their women with some meat on them eh? Well I'd better get these books and be on my way. I have God's business to attend to. *(Lights fade.)*

It's Sunday morning. Pastor Vincent stands downstage centre. He has a bible in his hand. Juanita sits in a corner of the stage. There is a spot light on each of them. The last verse of a hymn is heard and then then fades away. The rest of the stage is in darkness).



"Trust and obey, for there's no other way

To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

(Pastor Vincent begins to speak. He is delivering a sermon in the style of southern preachers. The congregation is the audience.)

Pastor Vincent: This morning's sermon is on faithfulness in marriage. Do you struggle with temptation? Oscar Wilde once said that the best way to deal with temptation is to give in to it. Well that's one way to handle it but I don't recommend it. Satan will disguise himself and tempt you to do that which you know is wrong. It may feel good at first but we see around us the bitter fruit of unresisted temptation when fulfillment and love is not sought at home. Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled. The bible says that he who looks at a woman with lustful intent has committed adultery in his heart. This is hard to reckon with because many of us have been guilty of that sin. But the bible also says *(he reads from the bible)* First Corinthians, chapter 10 verse 13: *"God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."* So hearken to the word of God. Lean not unto your own understanding and with his constant and loving guidance we can all resist temptation. But to those of you who will not listen to His guidance, may the wrath of God rain upon you and

cast you into the deepest pit of despair. Beware the wrath of God. Can I hear an Amen!
Aaaymen! Thank you Jesus!

(The lights fade and comes up. Juanita is sitting on the porch of her new home humming to herself. She has a bowl in her lap and she is peeling some ginger. She sings and hums some bars of a song softly).



*Evenin' time,
Work is over now is evenin' time,
Wih deh walk pon mountain,
Deh walk pan mountain,
Deh walk pan mountain side.
Meck we cook wih bickle pan dih way,
Meck wih eat an sing,
Dance an play ring ding
Pan dih mountain side.*

(She hears footsteps and a figure appears from the darkness. She stops singing. It is Pastor Vincent. He is carrying his bible in his hand).

Juanita: Good evening Pastor Vincent. Is everything alright? Mrs. Claire she sick? She need me?

Pastor Vincent: Relax Juanita there is nothing wrong at home. I was just coming from visiting a church member who lives in the vicinity and I decided to drop in and see how you settling in the house.

Juanita: I settlin' in nicely I'm fixing it up nice.

Pastor Vincent: I'm sure you are. Is that ginger you got there?

Juanita: Yes sah, I just peeling some to make some preserve.

Pastor Vincent: I could smell it way down the bottom of the path. I love that smell. It takes me back to my childhood.

Juanita: I just plant some all 'round the back yard and under the front windows. Ginger good fe almost anything that ails you.

Pastor Vincent: I know. I'm from the south. My mother would make tea with it when we children were sick. It sounds like you're really making yourself at home. That's great Juanita.

Juanita: Oh yes sah. Dis place is so nice. I never have a place dis big and nice. I don't know how to tank Mrs. Claire and the church foh letting me have it

Pastor Vincent: Juanita, I'm glad that we're in a position to help you. This place was just sitting here not being used. Frankly it was becoming a big headache: birds nesting in the ceiling and people breaking in all the time and making a mess of the place. I'm hoping one day to turn it

into a little community centre, for the church and a place for us to hold meetings when we can get the money to fix it up. No, don't be alarmed that is not going to happen for now. Not for years. We don't have the money for such a venture. You and your children can feel safe that nobody's going to throw you out. I'm just happy that you can get good use out of it. So you feeling alright living here?

Juanita: Yes sah. I feel good living here.

Pastor Vincent: It sounds like you were in a rather precarious situation from what Claire told me.

Juanita: Sah?

Pastor Vincent: You couldn't find a job so you had to...

Juanita: I shame to talk about, about what I had to do.

Pastor Vincent: Don't be ashamed Juanita. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Juanita: Yes sah.

Pastor Vincent: So you settling in fine?

Juanita: Everyting is fine sah. Derek my eldes' son coming back in a week from country so that he can start back at school foh de new school year. He was out of school foh a little time but he is a bright boy. He will catch up with his lessons quick, quick. Dis is his las' year of high school an' I'm so glad he can get to finish. An' Mrs. Claire say I can also sen' foh Girlie to come. Girlie is my only daughta. I had was to send her and him to my modah in de country because I had no place foh dem here. But it hard on my modah you know. Dat's why I thank de lawd every day foh sending Mrs. Claire into my life. *Foh I was in prison and she came to me. Hungry, and she gave me something to eat; I was a stranger, and she invited Me in;*

Pastor Vincent: *naked, and I clothed you; Matthew 25: verses 35-40.* That's what we were put on earth for: to help each other. I'm glad that we were in a position to help you. So Derek this is the son that Claire says is planning to become a doctor?

Juanita: Yes sah. I feel really bad when he had was to drop out of school an' find work as a carpenter's assistant in de country. I don't make him know how bad de situation get here foh me. He's a good boy, a good son. I don't want him to think less of me. But I didn't know what else to do.

Pastor Vincent: I'm sure he will make a splendid doctor. Jamaica will soon be independent and the country needs bright young men like him. In the meantime you're here alone. You must feel lonely sometimes.

Juanita: Lonely? I don't have time to feel lonely sah. Dere is always something need doing.

Pastor Vincent: Yes of course. But you're still a young woman. You don't get lonely for male company?

Juanita: No sah. My aim now is to get my chillren dem educated so dey don't have to go through what I go through. Jamaica soon going to be a independent country as you say yourself and I want dem to grow up and take deir rightful place in deir country.

Pastor Vincent: You're a lovely woman Juanita. Any man would want to look at you. I would for example.

Juanita: I don't think you should be saying such tings sah.

Pastor Vincent: I know. You're right. What am I saying. I should get going...

Juanita: Yes. It getting late an' have to get up early in the mawnin'. *(She start to get up but the pastor who has been sitting on the step next to her, presses in closer preventing her from standing)*

Pastor Vincent: Juanita, it's just that you are you are so appealing to me. I can't seem to help myself. I don't lust after women who are not my wife. I'm a pastor.

Juanita: Yes you is a parson. You say on Sunday mawnin in church dat -

Pastor Vincent: I know what I said. But sometimes no matter how much we pray and fight, temptation wins. Since you come to work for us I find myself thinking about you. I've prayed long and hard about this Juanita believe me, but my flesh is weak. I didn't plan to come here this evening. I told myself I wouldn't but here I am. I'm beginning to believe Oscar Wilde was right.

Juanita: Parson Vincent Mrs. Claire is my frien'. I mean she not my frien' frien' she my employer but I care a lot for her. She been very good to me. You both been very good...

Pastor Vincent: And we will continue to be good to you.

Juanita: I don't want no trouble.

Pastor Vincent: There isn't going to be any trouble.

Juanita: Pastor Vincent please, I'm just trying to get myself back on my feet...

Pastor Vincent: Listen to me Juanita. There won't be any trouble. I assure you. I want to help you get back on your feet. You and your children.

Juanita: It don't look like dat to me. It look like you trying to push me back down.

Pastor Vincent: No Juanita. Look at me. We not so different you and me-

Juanita: Me an' you not alike at all.

Pastor Vincent: Believe it or not, we come from the same sort of background. I didn't always have a big house to live in and servants to cook and clean. My people are poor country folk just like you. I'm married to a high class woman now but once upon a time I was a poor country boy. Sometimes I just want to be with someone like you. Your skin is so soft and smooth and warm like velvet. Not cold-

Juanita: I don't want to listen to dis. Mrs. Claire is a lovely woman.

Pastor Vincent: Of course she is. I'm not saying she isn't. I would never do anything to hurt her.

Juanita: An' what you call dis?

Pastor Vincent: This won't hurt her because she doesn't know about it.

Juanita; But I know.

Pastor Vincent: You wouldn't tell her. I know you wouldn't want to hurt her.

Juanita: No but I don't want to deceive her either.

Pastor Vincent: This is not deception.

Juanita: What you call it then?

Pastor Vincent: I call it one hand washing the other. I help you and you help me.

Juanita: Is Mrs. Claire de one who help me with everyting.

Pastor Vincent: You don't seem to understand Juanita. I'm the pastor. If I hadn't agreed to any of this you wouldn't have got a single thing.

Juanita: Mrs. Claire... Mrs. Claire...

Pastor Vincent: Mrs. Claire this and Mrs. Claire that. I'm helping you. Look Juanita, you say that you are grateful. Well show *me* a little gratitude. That's all I'm asking for, a little gratitude. I wouldn't do anything to hurt Claire. It's just that well you know since the accident things haven't been the same. She was depressed for a long time. It has taken a very long time for her to get back her good spirits and Juanita you're helping her to do that. She really cares for you. She wouldn't want to lose you. This situation has been hard on me too. She has been keeping herself from me. I understand how she feels. Juanita, you wouldn't be hurting her. She will never know...

Juanita: I really care foh Mrs. Claire.

Pastor Vincent: This is just between me and you.

Juanita: Pastor Vincent-

Pastor Vincent: You've got a wonderful situation with us. You have an entire house for yourself and your children. Where else would you get such an opportunity?

Juanita: Pastor Vincent-

Pastor Vincent: You're beautiful, you know that?

Juanita: Please sah you're a man of God.

Pastor Vincent: This is not sinful Juanita. It's beautiful. A man and a woman who desire each other.

Juanita: I don't -

Pastor Vincent: It's ordained by God himself. I want to kiss you between those lovely breasts... No one will get hurt. I promise you. Think of Derek going to school. Do this for him.

Juanita: Pastor Vin-

Pastor Vincent: Shhh. It's going to be alright. *(He embraces she does she respond to his embrace, but she does not resist)* That's my girl. *(The same hymn that was playing in the church is heard as the pastor and Juanita enter the house. On the porch all that's left are the bible and next to it the bowl and the knife Juanita was using to peel the ginger.)*

Lights come upon Margaret in her bedroom. She's dressed in white and her hair is wrapped in a white scarf. She is kneeling on the floor before a lit candle. In her hand she has a bunch of green bushes tied together with string. Next to her on the floor is a bottle of rum and a bible. As if in a trance she rhythmically hits her body with the bushes while repeating the same word over and over like a chant.

Margaret: Kayassimo, Kayassimo, Kayassimo, Kayassimo. *(After a while, puts down the bushes and rises from the floor and picks up the bible and the bottle of rum. She walks downstage from the bed still in a trance-like state, and sprinkles some of the rum on the floor.)* Kayassimo! Kayassimo! Kayassimo mama. *(The chant is louder now. She holds the bible and the bottle aloft and spins around, the white dress billowing around her.)* Kayassimo! Kayassimo! Kayassimo mama! *(The actress should demonstrate that she is not sure how to perform the ritual and is having to concentrate to do the actions. She should look ridiculous and pathetic at the same time. While she has been doing this, Richard enters and stares with incredulity at her. Margaret is unaware of his presence. She goes to another part of the stage and sprinkles rum on the floor as before. It should appear that she is attempting to go to the four corners of the bedroom to sprinkle the rum.)* Kayassimo! Kayassimo! *(She holds the bible and bottle aloft and begins to spin. She stops mid spin becoming aware that Richard is in the room.)*

Richard: Marge what on earth are you doing?

Margaret: Nothing.

Richard: Nothing? Marge, you're dressed like an escapee from a pack of tarot cards and shouting gibberish in the middle of our bedroom. I wouldn't exactly say that's nothing.

Margaret: I'm removing the spell.

Richard: Spe- What are you talking about?

Margaret: The spell! The spell! The spell Richard! She's cast a spell on this house, on me!

Richard: Who? What spell? Who has cast a spell on you?

Margaret: Juanita. She has put obeah on me.

Richard: Obeah?

Margaret: Yes obeah! Jamaican voodoo. You've heard of obeah!

Richard: Of course I've heard of obeah. Jamaicans are obsessed with it. But why do you think... You don't believe in that black magic nonsense.

Margaret: I didn't before but now I do. How else do you explain the strange things that have been happening to me? The apparitions, the sounds I hear in the middle of the night?

Richard: Marge, those are nightmares. I've told you to see a doctor.

Margaret: I've seen a doctor several times.

Richard: A psychiatrist.

Marge: You think I'm crazy.

Richard: I think that you're ... stressed. Where did you get all this? Who told you to do this?

Margaret: She's a Jamaican obeah woman. I saw her ad in the paper. It said that she can remove spells. When I talked to her she understood exactly what I am going through. She even described some of the things I've been experiencing without me even telling her.

Richard: Marge honey, come here. *(Marge goes toward him and he embraces her. He sniffs around her neck and chest area.)* You smell of garlic.

Margaret: It's my guzu.

Richard: Your what?

Margaret: My guzu. The obeah woman gave it to me to ward off evil spirits. I have to wear it under my clothes all the time.

Richard: *(As if speaking to a child.)* Marge none of this is real. You know it don't you? *(She nods, her head on his shoulder. She appears to relax.)*

Margaret: I don't want to believe in it. But what can I do? How do you explain the things that have been happening to me? I saw her in the house again two nights ago. I didn't tell you because I know you would be upset and you wouldn't believe me anyway.

Richard: *(Still holding her.)* Everything's going to be alright. I promise. I'm here. Together we will find you the help you need. We will go together to the doctor and we are going to ask him to refer you to a counsellor or a psychiatrist. Will you agree to do that?

Margaret: Yes.

Richard: That's my girl. *(There is the sound of a bird cawing.)*

Margaret: What was that?

Richard: What?

Margaret: Didn't you hear it? A bird cawing.

Richard: No, I didn't hear anything. *(Suddenly there is a loud thud.)*

Margaret: A crow! A black crow just flew into the window. Aghhh!

Richard: Will this ever end?

(The lights go almost black.) Lights come up. Claire is sitting in her wheelchair on the verandah reading. The door opens behind her and Juanita enters carrying a tray with a jug of ginger beer and a glass. She looks sad and doesn't say anything. She places the jug and glass on the table and turns to go).

Claire: Juanita, aren't you having a glass with me today either?

Juanita: No ma'am

Claire: Why, what's the matter?

Juanita: Notin's de matter ma' am. I have plenty of work to do inside

Claire: The work can wait. Go get yourself a glass and come and sit with me a while. I so look forward to our after-noon chats.

Juanita: I cyan sit down today ma'am.

Claire: But why?

Juanita and Claire: Plenty of work.

Claire: Yes you told me that already and I don't believe you. Something's wrong. I know there is. These past few days you've been so quiet. I don't hear you singing like you used to. You've hardly said a word all week. Now sit down please. Let's talk.

Juanita : (Juanita sits. She has her hands in her lap. Head down. She does not look at Claire). I really don't have anything to say m'. A really jus' want to get back to me work.

Claire: Is it the boys? Are they misbehaving? Tell me. I will give them a talking to. They can be so boisterous sometimes but they are good boys Juanita. They really like you. Are they not minding you?

Juanita: *(wiping her eyes)* No ma'am. De boys is fine. De boys is just fine.

Claire: Is it me? Did I say something to hurt you? Believe me if I did say something wrong I'm really sorry. The last thing I want to do is to hurt you. You have been so good for me, for my family.

(Juanita shakes her head)

Claire: It's not something I said, not something the boys did. Is it Vincent? He can be so unthinking sometimes. Did he say something stupid to you?

Juanita: I have to go inside now ma'am.

Claire: Is it to do with your children? Are they alright?

Juanita: No ma'am, they's fine.

Claire: Has Derek come back from the country yet?

Juanita: No ma'am.

Claire: Juanita, what are you waiting for? School starts next week and he has to get registered. Come on you can't leave this to the last minute. When is he coming?

Juanita: I don't know ma'am.

Claire: You don't know! Juanita, this isn't like you to not know. All you've been telling me about is how Derek will be coming back so he can finish his last year of school and now you're saying you don't know when's he coming? Juanita, you crying?

Juanita: No ma'am. I jus' get some dus' in me eyes dat's all.

Claire: You are crying. Oh my God! Juanita what is it?

(Just then Pastor Vincent enters. Goes over to Claire and kisses her. He does not look at Juanita).

Pastor Vincent: Hello sweetheart.

Claire: Hi Vin. You're home early.

Pastor Vincent: What. You not happy to see me home?

Claire: Of course I am. I just didn't expect you home now.

Pastor Vincent: I decided to leave the office early today. The two meetings planned for the after-noon got cancelled so I decided to come home so I can spend the after-noon with my best girl.

Claire: *(Juanita starts to leave) Juanita. (Although she's addressing Juanita, she does not take her eyes off Vincent.)*

Juanita: Yes m'?

Claire: Let's talk later OK?

(Juanita does not respond and exits)

Pastor Vincent: Something wrong?

Claire: I don't know. She's been acting strangely of late.

Pastor Vincent: Strangely. What you mean strangely. What she been saying to you?

Claire: What do you mean?

Pastor Vincent: Well you say she been saying things to you.

Claire: I didn't say she was saying anything to me. In fact, that is the problem-

Pastor Vincent: Problem. What do you mean by problem?

Claire: What is the matter with you? Will you let me finish? Lately she has been very... very moody. She's not her usual self you know. She hardly says anything and now she says-

Pastor Vincent: What's she been saying?

Claire: Well she says she doesn't know when Derek is coming back. I mean she has been so happy about him returning. Can hardly talk of anything else and now it's as if she doesn't care. I don't know what's going on. Haven't you noticed anything?

Pastor Vincent: Me. Why would I notice what the maid is doing or not doing?

Claire: Vincent. That's rather unkind.

Pastor Vincent: Honey, I have lots of things on my mind. I don't go around noticing things like that. I leave household matters to you.

Claire: Do you?

Pastor Vincent: Yes, I do. What you trying to say?

Claire: Nothing. Anyway Juanita's case is different. I mean her circumstances were pretty dire –

Pastor Vincent: Claire, their circumstances are all pretty dire. She's no exception.

Claire: I know that. But I care for her and I feel responsible for her.

Pastor Vincent: How about feeling responsible for me sometimes.

Claire: What's that supposed to mean?

Pastor Vincent: That I need some caring from you too. Sometimes I feel that you shut me out.

Claire: I don't shut you out.

Pastor Vincent: I'm telling you how I feel Claire. Between your work at the Collective, the children, and you rescuing women off the street I feel that I come in dead last in your plans sometimes.

Claire: That's not true. You're my husband. I care for you.

Pastor Vincent: So why do I feel I always have to compete to get your attention?

Claire: You don't have to compete for my attention. I'm sorry that you feel that way. I am attentive to you and your needs.

Pastor Vincent: Really? When was the last time we made love?

Claire: Oh Vincent, don't bring that up now.

Pastor Vincent: When is a good time to bring it up?

Claire: It's the middle of the after-noon for Heaven's sake.

Pastor Vincent: So when is a good time to bring it up? If I bring it up at night, you have a headache. If I bring it up in the morning, you're too busy. Look, my meetings weren't cancelled this afternoon. I cancelled them because, well I was thinking about you all day and I just wanted to come home so we could spend some time together alone.

Claire: We're not alone. Juanita's here.

Pastor Vincent: She won't bother us. We'll go upstairs. Come on Baby, how about making love in the afternoon. (*He whispers in her ear.*)

We kissed and laid,
by noontime's hour,
our love was made. *(He gets close to her and attempts to kiss her. She pulls away.)*

Claire: Oh Vincent stop it please.

Pastor Vincent: See what I mean. Why are you always so cold? No wonder I have to-

Claire: No wonder you have to what?

Pastor Vincent: Nothing

Claire: No wonder you have to what Vincent?

Pastor Vincent: Nothing! Nothing, Claire. It's obvious I'm not wanted around here. I'm going back to work.

(He gets up abruptly and exits.)

(Lights fade and come back up on Juanita. She is outside her home sitting on the porch, peeling ginger in a bowl. Pastor Vincent enters. He has one hand behind his back carrying something.)

Pastor Vincent: Evening Juanita.

Juanita: *(without looking up.)* Evening. *(she keeps peeling the ginger.)*

Pastor Vincent: I brought a present for you. *(She does not respond.)* Don't you want to know what it is? *(She does not speak.)* What's the matter? You not feeling well? I brought you something to brighten you up. Look. *(He presents her with a bunch of red roses. Juanita takes them from him but does not look at them. She just places them on the floor beside her and goes back to peeling the ginger.)* Don't you like flowers? Every woman likes flowers especially roses. Come now. How about a little smile? What's the matter? I bring you flowers and you don't even look at them.

Juanita: I didn't ask for no roses.

Pastor Vincent: You don't like roses? Which flowers do you prefer? I'll get them for you next time. *(Juanita does not respond.)* Juanita, I'm speaking to you. I left a meeting of the church elders early so that I could come be with you. The least you could do is look at me. How about a smile huh?

Juanita: I didn't ask you to come.

Pastor Vincent: Why you behaving like this? All this moodiness? What's the matter? Claire has noticed it and it's making her suspicious. What's wrong?

Juanita: What's wrong?

Pastor Vincent: Yes, What's wrong? I'm concerned.

Juanita: What's wrong? You asking me what's wrong?

Pastor Vincent: Yes, I want to know. I care about you, you know.

Juanita: You sleeping wid me on the side, it not right.

Pastor Vincent: That's what's disturbing you? Juanita, don't be disturbed. This isn't sinful. I have prayed and prayed about it and finally I understand what God wants. He wants me to be happy in order for me to do his work. Don't you see? This makes me happy. You make me happy so this is God's will.

Juanita: It is not *my* will.

Pastor Vincent: Surely this is not offensive to you. A woman like you.

Juanita: A woman like me?

Pastor Vincent: Yes. I don't want to hurt your feelings but you were selling your body on the street before we rescued you. Now *that*, God does not approve of.

Juanita: I did what I had to do to survive. I didn't make up no excuses like you to defend my actions. God want you to be happy. What about me and what I want? What about Mrs. Claire?

Pastor Vincent: You leave Claire out of this. Look, I am trying to make you happy. I bring you flowers and you don't even appreciate it.

Juanita: Flowers. You think I want flowers?

Pastor Vincent: Well what do you want then? Money? You want me to pay, when I've given you an entire house to live in?

Juanita: I want you to leave me alone.

Pastor Vincent: Why? Don't you like me a little? Don't you like living in this nice big place?

Juanita: I deceive Mrs. Claire. De one person who go out of her way to help me and dis is how I repay her - because of you!

Pastor Vincent: I didn't come here to quarrel with you. (*He tries to puts his arms around her.*) Come on, let's go inside. *He looks at his watch*) I don't want to get home too late.

Juanita: Let me go.

Pastor Vincent: (*cajoling*) Juanita come on behave.

Juanita: I don't want to do dis.

Pastor Vincent: Juanita what's gotten into you? Why are you behaving like this? We have an understanding.

Juanita: We have a understanding? I don't have no understanding wid you. I nevah have no understanding wid you. You come here and impose youself on me. Is dat what you call understanding? To come here an' force youself on me because me poor an' black and have nobody to defen' me?

Pastor Vincent: *(still trying to embrace her)*. Oh come on Juanita. Stop this nonsense. You know what side your bread is buttered.

Juanita: Mrs. Claire's the one dat fin' me. She's de one who offer me a job. She de one who arrange for me to get dis house.

Pastor Vincent: And none of it would have happened if I did not agree. Now cut this out and stop pretending that you're so virtuous. We both know what you are. This is the best you'll ever have it and you know it. Where can you go from here? Back on the street?

Juanita: *(Angry now.)* I tol' you to get off me an' I mean it. *(She grabs the knife and goes after him menacingly.)*

Pastor Vincent: What do you think you're doing!

Juanita: If you don't get away from me, so help me God. All my life people been betraying me and I come to expec' it. But you, a man of God. A man of God. You is just a wotliss dirty minded preacher man.

Pastor Vincent: I don't know what's gotten into you. But you better come to your senses or else.

Juanita: Get out!

Pastor Vincent: *(Backing away)* I don't believe it. Who the hell do you think you are?

Juanita: *(Advancing with the knife.)* Get out

Pastor Vincent: You're making a big mistake my girl. A big mistake!

Juanita: Is what me doing? Lawd what about Derek schooling? I won't be able keep the job or de house. I cyant lose dis opportunity. Pastor Vincent! I don't know what come over me. I'm sorry.

Pastor Vincent: What?

Juanita; I sorry for what I say. I didn't mean it

Pastor Vincent: You didn't mean it?

Juanita: No I didn't mean it. I'm sorry. You want to go inside? Come.

Pastor Vincent: You must think I'm crazy.

Juanita: What! No I don't think you crazy. Come, come inside. I will do whatever you like.

Pastor Vincent: You think for one moment that I would trust you now? I thought you were a nice gentle lady but you're a, a virago! How do I know you won't slit my throat in one of your mad bouts?

Juanita: No I wouldn't do dat. *(She drops the knife she still has in her hand.)*

Pastor Vincent: You've burnt your bridges with me. You had better clear out of here by morning.

Juanita: Pastor Vincent: I cyan go. I need de job, de house. Derek-

Pastor Vincent: You stupid woman. You should have thought of that when you were getting on your high horse. I want you gone by morning.

Juanita: But, but –

Pastor Vincent: By morning!

Juanita: But what about Mrs. Claire? She will wonder why I leave. She will think I'm ungrateful.

Pastor Vincent: Don't worry about Claire. You will not be the first maid who has left without giving notice.

Juanita: I don't have nowhere to go. No money.

Pastor Vincent: *(Takes out his wallet, and hands her a bank note.)* Here's 10 pounds. You can't say I'm not a kind man. Now pack your belongings and go. *He walks away. Lights fade and come up again. It's morning of the next day. Juanita tiptoes unto the verandah with a letter in one hand and a small suitcase in the other. She leaves it on the table and starts to tiptoe away when Claire enters.)*

Claire: Juanita: What's going on, why are you here so early. Where are you going? What's this letter about? *(She picks up the letter opens it and begins to read.)*

Juanita: I have to go ma'am –

Claire: *(Still reading the letter.)* Wait. *(At that moment Pastor Vincent enters and sees Juanita.)*

Pastor Vincent: What's she doing here?

Claire: What?

Pastor Vincent: *(to Juanita.)* Get out!

Claire: Vincent, What's the matter with you?

Pastor Vincent: *(Noticing the letter in Claire's hands.)* What's that?

Claire: It's letter from Juanita telling me-

Pastor Vincent: *(lunges at her in a desperate attempt to try to get the letter away from Claire.)*
Don't read that!

Claire: What are you doing?

Pastor Vincent: Don't read that letter. That woman is crazy. You hear me? Don't believe a word she says. Not one word. She is a liar. I told you not to hire her. Claire I swear to you I never laid a finger on her. Why would I be lusting after a whore when I have my lovely wife? I don't have to go outside our marriage to be with a woman. I have you. My love. My sweetest love. *(He falls on his knees before her and kisses her hands, her feet anything he can reach).* You believe me don't you darling?

Claire: *(Coldly)* Why should I believe you?

Pastor Vincent: Because I'm your husband and a pastor. Why would you take the word of a, a, servant above mine?

Claire: Why indeed. See for yourself. *(She hands the letter to him).*

Pastor Vincent: Dear Mrs. Claire. It is with deep, deep regret that I'm writing to let you know that due to some circumstances I have to leave right away. I sorry to not give you any notice. Please don't think me ungrateful for I appreciate everything you do for me. I so sorry to leave you like this. Please don't think badly of me for I truly love and respect you. Juanita.

(He stops reading and looks up at Juanita in anguish. Juanita, suitcase in hand begins to walk away. Claire raises her hand as if to stop her or to say goodbye. Juanita looks at Claire, then walks away. Light fades.)

Lights come up again. Two people representing the church's board of directors sit at a table. Behind them at an angle stands Claire and behind her at an angle stands Juanita. A contrite Pastor Vincent stands before the board members.

Church Board Member: Pastor Vincent, the board members of the church have long heard rumours of your immoral behaviour inflicted not only on some women of the church but also on poor and vulnerable servant women who have had the misfortune of working in your household. After a thorough, investigation and inquiry by this board during which we heard testimonies from many of these women, most moving and distressing of all coming from Miss. Juanita Brown who is present at this inquiry today, we the Board of Directors find you guilty of abuse of power and of sexual improprieties. You sir have disgraced this church, humiliated your wife and victimized women. Our Lord is a loving and forgiving God and we hope for your sake that he will forgive you, but you will no longer represent this congregation. You are dismissed from this church and may you never darken its doors again.

Pastor Vincent: *(tearfully)* I have sinned. I ask God to use His precious blood to cleanse my sins until they are in the seas of His forgetfulness, not to be remembered against me anymore. I ask

that you find it in your hearts to forgive my transgressions against our church's holy teachings and give me a second chance. (*The board members turn their backs on him.*)

Pastor Vincent: (*Still in tears approaches Claire.*) Claire, my one and only love, I have sinned against you and deserve your condemnation. But my life isn't worth living without you. I beg you please find it in your heart to forgive me and take me back.

(*Claire turns her back to him. He then turns toward Juanita, just as he is about to speak to her, Juanita, with a disdainful look on her face, turns her back on him. The lights dim.*)

The lights come up again. Juanita sits by a basket containing ginger cakes and sweets. Behind her is a sign that reads "Juanita's Ginger Beer, Cakes, and Preserves" It's a bustling market and the sound of people laughing and talking can be heard. She appears self-assured and happy as she calls out to passersby.)

Juanita: Ginger beer, Ginger cakes, preserves and sweets, nice and spicy, all home-made. Come get them before they all gone. Fresh ginger cakes. Hey young miss in the lime green and purple. Yes you. You look so pretty and nice. How about a nice ginger cake for you Sunday evening tea? Ginger cakes and preserves. (*She repeats this slogan or versions of it as the lights dim and come up again. Now Juanita is standing with the basket on her head. On the far side of the stage a woman is sitting at a table. Juanita walks towards her with assurance swaying her hips. The basket on her head. She lifts the basket from her head and places it on the table.*)

Woman 5: (*Outraged.*) Yes. What do you want?

Juanita: I come to pay me son school fees. His name is Derek and he coming back to finish high school. (*She pulls a wad of bank notes from her apron pocket and lays it on the desk. She picks up the basket and places it on her head once more and walks away from the table with swinging hips and a steady stride. Lights fade.*)

Curtain