

Black Lives Murdered

By

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CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

ETNA:

A MIXED BLACK YOUNG WOMAN WHO OFTEN FEELS IN THE MIDDLE OF A VERY FINE LINE. SHE HAS TROUBLE ACKNOWLEDGING HER PRIVILEGE DUE TO BEING RELATED TO AS THE "TOKEN BLACK" IN HER WHITE FRIEND GROUPS AND EXPERIENCING RACISM HERSELF.

CLEO:

A BLACK WOMAN WHOSE BEEN TEACHING IN HER SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR OVER A DECADE. A LIGHT HEARTED, BOLD AND PROTECTIVE TEACHER FRIEND WHO IS OFTEN MISJUDGED FOR HER ROUGH APPEARANCE ON THE OUTSIDE.

NAMELESS:

A BLACK PERSON WITH NO NAME SPOKEN THROUGHOUT THE SHOW. GETS A RED OR WHITE CIRCLE ON THEIR SKIN EVERY TIME A BLACK PERSON IS SHOT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SHOW.

LILY SMITH:

PERSONALITY IS HEAVILY ATTACHED TO HER PARENTS AND IS SLOWLY CREATING HER OWN POLITICAL OPINIONS STARTING THE BEGINNING OF THE SHOW. HAS A CRUSH ON DARIUS.

DALE SMITH:

LILY'S FATHER. SAYS INAPPROPRIATE RACIAL COMMENTS SO MUCH THAT YOU'D THINK IT'S SUBCONSCIOUS. OBLIVIOUS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE SOCIAL WORLD, AND DOESN'T DO MUCH TO KNOW ABOUT IT.

CARLA SMITH:

LILY'S MOTHER AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHER. IN DENIAL ABOUT BEING RACIST AND CONSIDERS HERSELF AN ALLY. TENDS TO ARGUE WITH AND CORRECT DALE OFTEN. GENERALLY ANXIOUS THROUGHOUT LIFE IN WORRIES OF NOT KNOWING THE NEW, MOST ACCURATE INFORMATION.

DAVID:

CLASS CLOWN, DISTRUSTFUL OF CARLA SUBSTITUTING FOR MS. CLEO. TENDS TO STIR THE POT WITHIN THE CLASSROOM AND OPEN CONVERSATIONS. LIKES CHARITY.

CHARITY:

ONE OF THE CALMER KIDS. HIGHLY EMPATHETIC AND EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT, SHE PREFERS TO OBSERVE THAN REACT IMMEDIATELY IF AT ALL. THE ONLY PERSON SHE REACTS QUICKLY TO IS DAVID.

DARIUS:

TREASURER OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT AT HIS HIGH SCHOOL. HIGHLY ANALYTICAL AND RESPONSIBLE. TENDS TO CARE FOR OTHERS WHENEVER THE OPPORTUNITY ARRIVES. CURRENTLY A

FINALIST IN A POETRY CONTEST WITH THE PRIZE OF \$500 AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET PUBLISHED IN THE ORGANIZATIONS MAGAZINE.

PORTIA:

HEADSTRONG AND LOUD. TENDS TO SPEAK BEFORE THINKING AND PROTECTS CHARITY LIKE A SISTER. LOVES TO DEBATE AND TEST PEOPLE'S BOUNDARIES. HER BEING CURIOUS IS OFTEN SEEN AS ARGUMENTATIVE DUE TO HER "PHRASING". HAS AN ORAL FIXATION AND TROUBLE FOCUSING.

ACT 1SCENE 1:

LIGHTS UP INTO A HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM. THE TABLES LOOK WORN AND AS OLD; IF NOT OLDER THAN THE SCHOOL ITSELF. THE LIGHTING IS DIM AND MAY REMIND SOME OF A JANITOR'S OFFICE. IT'S STUFFY AND WARM IN THE ROOM AND MOST OF THE STUDENTS LOOK EXHAUSTED.

CLEO WALKS IN AND SETS A JOURNAL ON THE DESK. THE ROOM IS LAUGHING AND BUSTLING FULL OF JOY DESPITE THE POOR CONDITION OF THE ROOM.

MS. CLEO: OK. Let's get started class.

THE ROOM TAKES A SECOND TO QUIET DOWN, BUT WHEN THEY DO, CLEO HAS THEIR FULL ATTENTION.

MS. CLEO: I got some good news, and some bad news, what y'all wanna hear first?

THE CLASS GIVES MIXED ANSWERS, SOME PASSIONATELY ARGUING WITH OTHERS.

MS. CLEO: Ok ok ok, let's start with some good news.

DAVID GIVES CHARITY A TAUNT FOR WINNING THE RESPONSE, SHE RESPONDS WITH A FAKE PUNCH.

MS. CLEO: David don't start shit, I'm about to say the good news, drumroll please...

THE CLASS DRUMROLLS ON THEIR DESKS, CLEO DECIDING WHEN TO END IT BY CUTTING THROUGH THE AIR WITH BOTH HER HANDS SIMILARLY TO A CONDUCTOR.

MS. CLEO: I'm going on vacation!!

DAVID: FUCK!

CHARITY: Since when was that good news
Ms. Cleo?

PORTIA: Ain't no way she just said that

DARIUS: The hell's the bad news?

EVERYONE STARTS GROANING, PUTTING THEIR HEADS ON THEIR DESKS AND SHAKING
THEIR HEADS AT MS. CLEO IN A DISAPPROVING, YET PLAYFUL MANNER.

MS. CLEO: Wow, tough crowd. Y'all
really not gonna like the bad news then
so no drumroll, we're ripping off the
Band-Aid. You'll have a substitute for
a week who I don't know so I won't be
able to vouch for her. The principal
says she's good at what she does.

DAVID: Our principal white as hell Ms.
Cleo I don't trust his ass.

CHARITY & PORTIA: Clock it.

MS. CLEO: Don't worry it will only be a
week, don't I deserve a break guys?

DARIUS: We all do!

MS. CLEO: Man, y'all fake as hell. I
basically volunteer maybe I should just
fully quit.

CLASS: NONONONONO PLEASE DON'T

MS. CLEO: Mhmmmm, that's what I
thought. Now I'm gonna take my VERY
much needed vacation and y'all gonna
treat the substitute with respect,
right?

CLASS EXCEPT DAVID: Yes Ms. Cleo

MS. CLEO: David?

DAVID (looking off): Yeah, sure.

MS. CLEO: Darius, make sure he acts
right.

DARIUS: Got it.

MS. CLEO: Ok, let's get started with the actual work. Today we covering current events in the black community. This'll be an open discussion; the only requirement is that it has to affect the black community in some way. Any ideas?

The classroom light dims and shows THE SMITH'S HOUSE. The classroom is still in motion but inaudible while discussing current events within their community. CARLA is plating up dinner with DALE and LILY sitting at the table. The dinner is chicken breast and white rice. There are no seasonings on the table. CARLA finishes plating and puts them on the table before sitting down.

SCENE 1.2:

CARLA: Eat up!

LILY TAKES A BITE.

LILY: Hey mom, do you know where the ketchup or salt is?

CARLA: Oh yes let me go get them!

DALE: I understand the ketchup since that's usually out but since when did this need salt?

LILY: Since going to Darius's house.

CARLA: Why does that name sound familiar?

LILY: He goes to my school; you might have heard about him in teacher meetings.

DALE: Must be getting in trouble all the time.

LILY: Actually, he's on the student government as the treasurer and does a lot within the school, so I wouldn't be surprised if they were talking about giving him an award.

CARLA: I'm not usually part of those meetings since I help with the afterschool program with the middle-schoolers when that takes place, maybe he's in the class I'm substitute teaching for a week?

LILY: What class are you substituting? I know his schedule.

DALE: Why do you know his schedule, Lily?

LILY GETS SLIGHTLY ANNOYED AT HER DAD, DALE.

LILY: We were friends last year, so when the year started, we were comparing schedules to see how much we had in common.

DALE: Wasn't that Jerome?

CARLA & LILY: Who's Jerome?

DALE: Maybe it was Darius then...

AN AWKWARD PAUSE AS LILY SQUIRTS OUT THE LAST OF THE KETCHUP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SILENCE.

CARLA: Anyways. I'm substituting "*African American History*", but it's an elective so I'm not sure he'd take it. It's a pretty small class.

LILY: Oh, he's actually in that class!

CARLA: Oh wonderful! It'll be great to match a face to the name.

DALE GOES TO GRAB SECONDS OF THE CHICKEN AND RICE.

LILY: He's a great student so you shouldn't have much trouble in that class if the rest are similar to him.

CARLA SMILES

CARLA: That's good to hear. Let's clear our dishes if we're done eating.

LILY AND CARLA CLEAR OUT THEIR DISHES, DALE TAKES HIS HALF-EATEN PLATE WITH HIM AND CONTINUES EATING IT AS HE EXITS.

SCENE 2:

LIGHTS UP ON THE SAME CLASSROOM PREVIOUSLY SHOWN. THE STUDENTS ARE PLAYING HOT POTATO WITH A PIECE OF CRUMBLED PAPER, SITTING ON THEIR CHAIRS IN A WAY SO THAT THEY CAN ALL FACE EACH OTHER. ONLY PORTIA AND DAVID ARE LEFT SINCE IT'S THE LAST ROUND. THE POTATO ENDS ON EITHER ONE, BUT IT'S HARD TO TELL. THEY BOTH BEING COMPETITIVELY ARGUING WHO IT LANDED ON, MOSTLY OVERLAPPING WITH EACHOTHER.

DARIUS: Ok I say we settle this rock paper scissors, the good old way.

CHARITY: I agree.

PORTIA: Nah I won.

DAVID: You're delusional, it was extremely clear you lost.

NO ONE AGREES WITH DAVID AND IT'S OBVIOUS.

DARIUS: Anyways, both y'all come to the center and rock it out.

THEY BEGIN ROCK PAPER SCISSORS. AS THEY HIT THE LAST COUNT AND THROW THEIR CHOICES, CARLA SWINGS THE DOOR OPEN HARDER THAN SHE THOUGHT IT'D SWING, HITTING THE WALL EXTREMELY HARD MAKING PORTIA JUMP HAVING NOTHING THROWN OUT FOR THE BATTLE.

DAVID: She didn't throw anything out so I win!!

PORTIA: NAHH THAT WAS INTERFERENCE.

DARIUS NOTICES CARLA AND REALIZES SHE'S LILY'S MOTHER.

DARIUS: Ok well class is about to start so let's sit down.

CHARITY LOOKS AT DARIUS A LITTLE WEIRDLY SINCE HE'S ACTING SLIGHTLY DIFFERENCE. DAVID SITS AND TAUNTS PORTIA BY PUTTING AN L ON HIS FOREHEAD. PORTIA FEELS CHEATED

PORTIA: You son of a bitch I'mma get your ass next time.

CARLA (MS. SMITH): (CLEARS THROAT)
Language please.

PORTIA MEAN MUGS MS. SMITH AND SITS DOWN. PUTTING GUM IN HER MOUTH, MS. SMITH IS BUSY ORGANIZING HERSELF AS PORTIA DOES THIS.

MS. SMITH: Hello everyone! My name is
Ms. Smith-

DAVID INTERRUPTS

DAVID: (jokingly) It's the original
colonizer!

DARIUS SMACKS HIM IN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD AND SIGNALS TO SHUT UP. CHARITY
IS GROWING MORE CONCERNED OF DARIUS'S BEHAVIOR.

MS. SMITH: (Confused) Excuse me?

PORTIA: (*while she's chewing her gum*)
Smith. It's the name of a lot of black
families due to slavery.

MS. SMITH: Ah, well I can assure you
I'm not a slave owner.

SHE CHUCKLES JOKINGLY, NOBODY LAUGHS WITH HER SO SHE GETS BACK ON TOPIC AS
FAST AS POSSIBLE.

MS. SMITH: Anyways, your teacher, Ms.
Jackson, left few plans for me so it
should be a very relaxed week.

DAVID: Ms. Cleo's last name is
Jackson?! Moment of silence please.

CHARITY CHUCKLES

MS. SMITH: Since this is our first time
meeting each other and names seem to be
the beginning topic, why don't we all
share their name's and what it means in
the dictionary and what it means to
your family? Anyone like to start?

SILENCE AGAIN. DARIUS RAISES HIS HAND AFTER A BEAT.

MS. SMITH: Yes, go ahead!

DARIUS: I don't think we all know what
our names in the dictionary Ms. Smith,
could we take some time to look it up?

MS. SMITH: Oh, silly me. Yes of course,
let's all take a few minutes to
research our first and last names.

PORTIA RAISES HER HAND

MS. SMITH: Yes! what's up?

PORTIA: Can we also share nicknames we may have?

MS. SMITH: Of course!

AS THEY BEGIN TO LOOK UP THEIR NAMES, THE LIGHT DIMS AND THE CLASSROOM GOES MUTE ONCE AGAIN. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE LIGHTS UP TO DALE (MR. SMITH) TEACHING ENGLISH.

SCENE 2.1:

ETNA RAISES HER HAND

MR. SMITH: Yes, Edna?

ETNA: (quietly) Oh, it's Etna.

MR. SMITH: That's not what I asked. Why did you raise your hand?

ETNA: I was having trouble understanding why we're examining this speech in particular.

MR. SMITH: What's confusing about it?

ETNA: I mean, I understand we're trying to evaluate the structure of political writing, but I think using a speech that Trump used may not be the best choice.

MR. SMITH: Why?

ETNA: I think most of his speeches resemble previously pieces of media culture, and most of the facts stated were either disproved later or during the speech.

MR. SMITH: We're studying the structure, not the content itself Etnay.

ETNA: Right, but the material itself could be considered hurtful.

MR. SMITH: You think you're all that because you just transferred in, don't you?

ETNA: (strongly) No, I just wanted to bring something up that was of concern to me.

MR. SMITH: Ok, go bring it up with the principal then.

ETNA: Oh ok, when should I do that?

MR. SMITH: Right now, and tell him you got detention for being disruptive.

ETNA: But-

MR. SMITH: Right now, Ettie.

ETNA WALKS OUT TO HEAD TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE, ASHAMED. A LIGHT POPS UP SHOWING THAT LILY WAS ALSO IN THE CLASS AND AGREED WITH ETNA, BUT DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HELP. THE LIGHT BLACKS OUT AND BRIGHTENS BACK UP ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE.

SCENE 2.3:

MS. SMITH: Ok, are we all ready now?

EVERYONE NODS.

MS. SMITH: Anyone want to start?

DARIUS RAISES HIS HAND.

MS. SMITH: Go right ahead!

DARIUS: Well, my last name Williams apparently means "protector" which is rather hypocritical considering where it comes from, but my first name Darius means "Possessor of good" in the context of black people. But in terms of Persian and Greek origin, it means "maintains possessions well". I think my dad named me Darius because it sounded cool

MS. SMITH: Ooh, that's really interesting. I like how you separated the differences in origin. Who's next?

DAVID: You should go next Ms. Smith!

MS. SMITH: Alright!

EVERYONE'S SURPRISED SHE LISTENED AND AGREED SO EASILY. THEY SEEM TO OPEN UP A LITTLE BIT MORE.

MS. SMITH: Well, my last name Smith means "to smite, or strike" which really is not helpful with the previous colonizer allegations.

THE CLASS LAUGHS A LITTLE BIT WITH HER

But it does come from the job blacksmith which I find pretty interesting. As for my first name Carla, it means "free man" or in my case "free woman" since it's the feminine form of that. Which *really* isn't helping my case.

PORTIA SNORTS REALLY LOUD AND THEN COVERS HER MOUTH AS IF SHE'S TRYING NOT TO ENJOY HERSELF. MS. SMITH NOTICES THIS AND POINTS TO HER.

How about you next?

PORTIA: Well, my last name is Jones but I don't wanna know where that's from because we all know why it's in my name, as for Portia, it means "an offering" which is kind of crappy, but I like it because my mom says I'm named after the Porsche she did the deed in and it's a funny story.

THE ROOM GOES SILENT.

Also, because my taste is very expensive. She calls me Portie Pie for short and 'cause it's cute.

DAVID: Well damn. Wait why it spelled that way then...?

MS. SMITH: I can't believe she told you that...

PORTIA: My ma got some crazy stories, that one I had to torture out of her. Also shut your ass up David.

MS. SMITH: Wow, uhm anyone want to go next?

DAVID: (proudly) I will! My last name is McMillan, which means bald, and my first name David means Beloved which makes total sense.

PORTIA: I would've thought something closer to clown for you.

DAVID: You just mad you lost hot potato.

PORTIA: Shut your cheating ass up David

THE STAGE GOES MUTE AGAIN AS IT FADES TO COMPLETE BLACK, ENDING WITH THE CLASS IN A GOOD MOOD AS THE ACTUAL LESSON WAS ABOUT TO START.

SCENE 3

THE BELL RINGS TO SIGNAL THE CLASS PERIOD HAS ENDED. PORTIA AND DARIUS ARE STANDING NEXT TO DARIUS'S LOCKER. THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT DARIUS'S POETRY ENTRY. PORTIA'S CHEWING MORE GUM.

PORTIA: So, when am I gonna see what you wrote?

DARIUS: When I'm dead.

PORTIA: What if I die before you?

DARIUS: Not my problem.

PORTIA: You know when you win, I can just go buy the magazine it's published in.

DARIUS: *If.*

PORTIA: *WHEN.* Just you wait it's gonna manifest.

DARIUS: Since when did you believe in that shit?

PORTIA: Since I was born

BEAT. DARIUS DOESN'T BELIEVE HER

PORTIA: ... Since Thursday.

DARIUS: Portia, it's Friday.

PORTIA: Shut up nigga it's interesting.
I've been learning a lot more about it.

DARIUS: Wanna tell me on the way to the
bus stop?

PORTIA: Sure.

PORTIA NOTICES LILY HEADING THIS WAY, EYES DEAD ON AT DARIUS.

PORTIA: White girl incoming. What did
you do Darius?

DARIUS: It's not "White girl", that's
Lily and she's pretty cool. We both
share a common interest in Poetry and
her dad's an English teacher- actually
her mom is our substitute also!

PORTIA: You're kidding! Wait... Then does
that mean her dad is-

LILY: Hey Darius! Sorry was I
interrupting something?

DARIUS: No, you're fine! Portia here
was trying to torture my poetry
submission out of me.

LILY: Hi! I'm Lily.

*SHE EXTENDS HER HAND FOR A HANDSHAKE BUT PORTIA TRIES TO DAP HER UP
WITHOUT REALIZING. IT'S THE WORST HAND INTRODUCTION INTERACTION
IMAGINABLE. DARIUS LAUGHS.*

LILY: So, when are we seeing the piece?

PORTIA: When he dies apparently.

LILY: Darius, you know that's not
realistic if you wanna be a writer.

PORTIA: The money boy wants to be a
writer?

PORTIA SMILES AND PUNCHES HIS SHOULDER, DARIUS LIGHTLY PUSHES HER BACK

DARIUS: If all goes well, then yes. If not, I also enjoy a good finance sesh though.

PORTIA: You did not just say "sesh"

LILY: What's wrong with "sesh"?

DAVID ENTERS

DAVID: OOOoo Darius done lost his black card he's a white boy now.

DARIUS: Shut your stupid ass up David.

DAVID: You just mad you can't walk into no cookout no more.

DAVID AND PORTIA DAP EACH OTHER UP. DAVID GOES TO DAP OF DARIUS BUT AS DARIUS REACHES OUT DAVID RETRACTS AND BRUSHES HIS HAIR.

DAVID: David at your service, Madam.

LILY: I know you! My name's Lily.

DAVID: Oh, am I popular now? How do you know me; my stellar class participation? My field and track MVPOAT status?

LILY (whispering): MVPOAT?

PORTIA: Most Valuable Player of All Time... Don't worry he's delusional.

DAVID CONTINUES

DAVID: My future student government status which you're definitely voting for me? My comedy gold personality? My stunning handsome face? Or is it-

DARIUS: It's because you're black, David.

DAVID JOKINGLY POUTS, STARTING TO FAKE CRY WHILE SUCKING HIS LIP IN AND OUT LIKE A SICK PUPPY. AS HE'S DOING THIS, CHARITY APPEARS BEHIND HIM AND ONLY PORTIA NOTICES HER.

PORTIA & CHARITY: (Charity only) Mhmmm,
(Both) Clock it!

DAVID: It's the betrayal for me.

PORTIA: It's the future student government for me.

CHARITY: Oop.

LILY: I'll let you all hang out; I have something to ask you Darius so I'll text it to you!

DARIUS: Oh, ok!

PORTIA: Nuh uh uh, where you think you goin' white girl? We all heading to a cookout and you need some meat on you, and good meat too. Darius been tellin' me about that nasty ass chicken and white rice and it breaks my little black heart. You ain't got anything going on right?

LILY: Well, no but-

PORTIA: And your parents ain't strict right?

LILY: No b-

PORTIA: mm mm, no buts, you coming with us now and I'mma show you what chicken actually is.

PORTIA DRAGS LILY AWAY, THE REST OF THEM FOLLOWING BEHIND HER AND PLAYING AROUND.

SCENE 4:

THEY'RE AT PORTIA'S FAMILY COOKOUT. THERE ARE A BUNCH OF FOIL CONTAINERS AND THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF POTATO SALADS AMONG THE DISHES. SOME OF THE FOODS INCLUDE COLLARD GREENS, SWEET POTATO PIE, MAC N CHEESE, AND FRIED CHICKEN AMONG THE SALADS. THE MUSIC IS LOUD AT FIRST AND IT'S VERY HARD TO HEAR. PORTIA TRIES TO GET HER AUNT ATTENTION TO TURN THE MUSIC DOWN.

PORTIA: AUNTIE DEE!

NO RESPONSE, SHE REPEATS THIS LOUDER AND LOUDER UNTIL SHE ENDS UP SHAKING HER AUNT TO GET HER ATTENTION.

AUNTIE DEE: Wha?

PORTIA: TURN THE MUSIC DOWN I CAN'T
HEAR AND I BROUGHT FRIENDS

AUNT DEE SHUTS THE MUSIC DOWN WITH AN INTENSE AMOUNT OF FEAR IN HER EYES.

AUNTIE DEE: IT'S THE WORLDS END?! I
done knew it would happen soon but not
during my cookout. I didn't make my
oxtail dish; I want one more thing of
my oxtail dish I swear in Jesus' name-

PORTIA: No, I brought friends.

AUNTIE DEE TAKES THE LARGEST INHALE AND EXHALE.

AUNTIE DEE: (laughing) Ooooooh child I
misheard you. I thought the world was
ending.

PORTIA: We could tell Auntie Dee.

AUNTIE DEE: Well, who did you bring?!

PORTIA: Charity, David, Darius, and
this new white girl I met named Lily.
She seem cool but she's never had
seasoned chicken so I brought her to
try some.

AUNTIE DEE: What a kind soul you are
Portia, (to Lily) don't worry child you
gon' be alright once you get this
chicken. Now I have to go get some of
the sodas, your uncle left the cooler
in the garage so I'll be right back.

PORTIA: Ok Auntie, see you soon

AUNTIE DEE: See ya!

AUNTIE DEE EXITS.

THEY ALL SIT DOWN AT A RECTANGULAR PLASTIC TABLE WITH A DISPOSABLE CLOTH
OVER IT AFTER GETTING THEIR FOOD. PORTIA WAVES LILY TO SIT DOWN BEFORE
THEM AS SHE MAKES HER PLATE. SHE HANDS THE PLATE TO LILY AND IT LOOKS LIKE
A MOUNTAIN COMPARED TO THE OTHERS.

PORTIA: You got a lot of catching up to
do, so that's why you got a bit more.

LILY: A bit?

THEY ALL SHARE A LAUGH

DARIUS: Well, you better get started if you wanna leave on time.

CHARITY: How's she getting home?

LILY: Oh! One of my parents are gonna come pick me up. Speaking of which, how's my mom doing as the substitute?

THEY ALL GO DEAD SILENT.

LILY: Uh oh, how bad is it.

CHARITY: Well, it's not...

DARIUS: It's not terrible, it's just...

DAVID: (*Cackling*) The lesson plan left for her today was on how the N word gets used in our community versus outside of our community.

LILY: Oh. My. God. She didn't handle it well did she

PORTIA: (*impersonating Ms. Smith*) "As a wh-ite person, I do not feel comfortable leading the discussion, and I feel the class would agree since you are all

EVERYBODY JOINS IN

People of color, specifically of African-American descent."

PORTIA: It really didn't have to be that uncomfortable, honestly, she deserves an award for how "woke" she tries to be

DAVID: She is literally Ally™ of the century.

DARIUS: Come on guys, it wasn't that bad.

PORTIA: You're too nice Darius, it was awkkkkwardddd.

LILY: Actually, I kind of have a favor to ask about the class.

EVERYONE'S VERY CURIOUS ABOUT THE FAVOR.

DAVID: What is it madam?

PORTIA SMACKS THE BACK OF DAVIDS HEAD

PORTIA: If you don't stop calling her madam

DAVID: Like white girls any better (he sticks his tongue out)

PORTIA: You-!

CHARITY: What's the favor?

LILY: I know she's supposed to be teaching you guys about African-American history, but I was hoping you guys could teach her about the culture and get her more comfortable, kind of what you're doing with me and chicken right now!

PORTIA: Speaking of that chicken I know your ass didn't take a bite yet, we got it and we'll do it for you but you better chow down girl.

DAVID: (to Lily) if she dropped the white it means she's taken a liking to you (he covers before getting hit again)

PORTIA: (hits David) shut your ass up David.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH. LILY TAKES A SMALL BITE OF THE CHICKEN DRUM THAT PORTIA PICKED OUT FOR HER. EVERYONE IS SLIGHTLY NERVOUS THAT IS MIGHT BE TOO SPICY FOR HER EXCEPT PORTIA. LILY'S EYES LIGHT UP AS SHE NODS AGGRESSIVELY IN REGARDS TO THE CHICKEN.

PORTIA: See?! What I tell you about the Chicken.

DAVID: Once you go black, you can never go back.

CHARITY: That's not about chicken David.

DAVID: It's not?? Then what is it about.

PORTIA SLAPS HER FOREHEAD WHILE CHARITY LAYS HER HEAD DOWN IN EXHAUSTION

CHARITY: The sheer amount of stupidity one man can hold is crazy.

DAVID IS DUMBFOUNDED.

PORTIA: You know if she said it, you gotta be dumb as hell.

DARIUS: Clock it.

PORTIA THROWS A SINGLE FRY AT DARIUS

PORTIA: You know damn well that's not your phrase. Anyways, shall we eat?

THEY ALL NOD AND JOIN HANDS, PORTIA AND CHARITY GRABS LILY'S HANDS AND SIGNAL TO PUT HER HEAD DOWN AS THEY PRAY. IT FADES TO BLACK.

SCENE 5:

BACK AT LILY'S HOUSE; THIS TIME DALE AND LILY ARE ON THE COUCH WATCHING TV. CARLA IS OFF-STAGE IN THE KITCHEN. THE CHANNEL IS THE LOCAL NEWS AND LILY SEEMS MORE INTERESTED THAN DALE.

LILY: Dad?

DALE: Mm.

LILY: Did you really have to send that girl to the principal?

DALE: Yeah, she was being disruptive.

LILY: Not really, she was just asking a question.

DALE: I mean yeah, but she challenged me in front of the whole class.

LILY: Isn't that kind of her right as a student?

DALE: Definitely not. How am I gonna keep my respect if a little black girl who just transferred in is-

LILY: What did you just say dad?

DALE: She was challenging my position in the classroom.

LILY: No, I mean the black part.

DALE: Oh, that just slipped out.

LILY: I think you owe her an apology, especially if race was a part of the equation.

DALE: Were you thinking this during class?

LILY: Yeah, of course I was.

DALE: Then why didn't you help her?

THE LILY GOES SILENT.

DALE: You weren't worried about your own dad sending you to detention, right? You were worried about it being social suicide, and for that reason; you and I aren't that different in this situation. Once you stand up for her then I'll listen to your criticism.

LILY IS UPSET BUT CAN'T REFUTE WHAT HER DAD JUST SAID SINCE IT'S TRUE.
CARLA ENTERS HAPPY THAT SHE FINISHED CLEANING UP THE KITCHEN.

CARLA: What's going on in the news?

THE ROOM FADES TO BLACK, AS THIS HAPPENS, YOU CAN HEAR THE NEWS REPORTER TALKING ABOUT A BLACK PERSON GETTING SHOT BY THE COPS. IT FULLY CUTS OFF BEFORE IT CAN GO INTO DETAIL.

SCENE 6:

LIGHTS UP ON THE CLASSROOM. ETNA CHANGED ENGLISH PERIODS ALLOWING HER TO JOIN THIS ELECTIVE. SHE WALKS IN AS THE REST OF THE CLASS IS ALREADY SEATED BUT THE TEACHER STILL ISN'T THERE. IT'S THE SAME BRIGHT ENERGY AS ALWAYS. THEY DON'T NOTICE ETNA COME IN AT FIRST

DAVID: That's why y'all helping the white people silence our community. Let me speak or else

DARIUS: Shut your ass up David, that's gotta be the worst appeal I've ever heard for us telling you to be quiet.

CHARITY & PORTIA: Clock it.

CHARITY: What should we do the rest of the time we waiting?

PORTIA: We should go shopping online but y'all just buy me what I like

DAVID: The fuck?

PORTIA: What you saying you broke?

DAVID: You the one tryin' to mooch

ETNA: Is there anywhere I can sit?

EVERYONE'S SURPRISED OF ETNA'S PRESENCE IN THE ROOM.

DAVID: *(whispering loudly)* It's a ghost.

CHARITY FADE PUNCHES DAVID

PORTIA: Uhhhm, all the seats that aren't taken are free girl.

ETNA: Great, thanks.

PORTIA TAKES A PIECE OF GUM OUT OF HER PURSE AFTER INTENSELY SEARCHING FOR IT. THE AMOUNT OF JINGLING IN HER PURSE IS EXTREMELY NOTICABLE.

DAVID: I swear to God Portia if those were all quarters you better be buying me something

PORTIA: Yeah right, I would.

PORTIA STICKS THE GUM IN HER MOUTH, AS SHE DOES THIS ETNA SPEAKS UP.

ETNA: You shouldn't chew gum in class.

DAVID & DARIUS: Oooooo you're in trouble.

PORTIA: What's it to you bitch?

ETNA: (firmly) It's against the rules.

PORTIA: Not for me.

CARLA WALKS INTO THE CLASSROOM AND SETS UP, SHE NOTICES THE ENERGY IS SLIGHTLY OFF TODAY AND THINKS IT'S BECAUSE OF HOW CLASS ENDED LAST TIME. SHE HAS HER EAR TO THE CURRENT CONVERSATION IN CASE SHE CAN PICK UP ANY CLUES.

ETNA: You're not above the rules,
what's even your name?

PORTIA: You don't even know my name but
you tryin' to test me? Girl bye.

MS. SMITH: What seems to be the matter
here?

BEFORE PORTIA CAN SPEAK ETNA CUTS HER OFF.

ETNA: The girl I'm sitting behind is
chewing gum, which is against school
policy.

MS. SMITH LOOKS AT HER ATTENDANCE SHEET.

MS. SMITH: You're Etna, correct?

ETNA: Yes, miss.

MS. SMITH: Even though I am subbing;
this is my classroom for the time
being, and I can assure you I know
Portia chews gum during class. Not only
is the class ok with it and I am too,
but she has also been permitted to do
so.

PORTIA: IEP, bitch.

MS. SMITH: But Portia I do ask that you
treat her with respect despite what
just happened.

PORTIA: Ok, but I'm only agreeing
because you backed me up.

MS. SMITH: Ok, thank you Portia. Let's
get started now. As much as I want to
forget about last time, I would like to

apologize for over-generalizing last lesson.

DAVID: It wasn't over-generalizing, you just looked like you would keel over and die if you said something wrong.

THE OG CLASS (EVERYONE EXCLUDING ETNA) NODS AND SNAPS IN AGREEMENT.

MS. SMITH: Thank you for that, David. So, instead of a white woman trying to teach y'all about the culture my crew has actively tried to hide, I want you guys to show me the truth for the remainder of the week. Ms. Jackson is set to get back here Friday so I'll be ignoring her plans unfortunately and letting her know when she comes back to trade-off.

DARIUS: What do you mean teach you about our culture?

MS. SMITH: I don't even know where to start, but maybe I actually can use Ms. Jackson's plans. (She shuffles through them.) Ah! apparently there's a talent show she signed you all up for within the school and she wants you to share a piece of black culture through that. We can use this week to prepare them and I can learn on the way!

OG CLASS: She did what?!

ETNA: Am I also signed up for this?

MS. SMITH: Seeing as you just joined the class, you're the only one not assigned. So, I'll come up with something for you to do during these periods.

PORTIA: Darius, now seems like a really good time to show your Poetry piece.

DARIUS: Ain't no way I'm doing that.

CHARITY: What if I get sick the day of?

PORTIA: Actually, can I use my IEP to excuse my attendance Ms. Smith?

MS SMITH: Nope, your IEP doesn't cover that.

CHARITY: I told you a teacher other than Ms. Cleo would fully read it one day.

DAVID: It's ok guys I'll go on last so that you don't look as stupid trying to follow my amazingness.

OG CLASS (MINUS DAVID): Shut your ass up David!!

THE CLASSROOM IS IN COMPLETE DISARRAY OVER THIS. MS. SMITH TRIES TO GET THE CLASSROOMS ATTENTION BY CLAPPING AND THEN USING QUIET CAYOTE, BUT TO NO AVAIL. DARIUS SEES THIS AND DECIDES TO HELP OUT

DARIUS: (sing shouts) I LIKE THE WAY YOU WORK IT.

CLASS (including ETNA): (shouts back) NO DIGGITY!

THE CLASSROOM SEEMS TO GO BACK TO NORMAL AND HAVE JUST ENOUGH ATTENTION FOR MS. SMITH TO TALK AGAIN.

MS. SMITH: That was pretty cool... Thanks Darius

DARIUS: Anytime.

MS. SMITH: So y'all can either do it as a group, individually, or whichever way floats your boat from what I'm saying, and if Ms. Jackson likes the video I'm supposed to take, she'll give y'all her aunts cookie recipe.

DAVID: Oh bet.

PORTIA: Shit just got real guys we better lock in. What should we do?

THE CLASS BEGINS TO GO MUTE AS IT FADES TO BLACK. THE ENERGY ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE AS THEY SEEM TO BE TEACHING MS. SMITH NO DIGGITY.

SCENE 7:

DARIUS IS AT HIS LOCKER WITH LILY. HE'S RE-ORGANIZING IT TO MAXIMIZE EFFICENCY.

LILY: Why does it seem like you're always organizing your locker

DARIUS: Because I am, at least every Monday I am.

LILY: That's crazy, why so often?

DARIUS: I don't know, something about it is calming, it's like I'm organizing the new week with it.

LILY: That actually really cool.

DARIUS: So, what's up? I never got your text since Portia dragged you to the cookout, sorry about that by the way.

LILY: No need to be sorry that was the most fun I've had in a while! I've never seen such an intense game of spoons in my life.

DARIUS: That was intense?

LILY: Yeah, ours usually go something like:

A LIGHT POPS UP SHOWING THE SMITH HOUSEHOLD AND DIMMING ON DARIUS AND LILY JUST ENOUGH THAT YOU CAN STILL SEE THEIR FACIAL EXPRESSIONS. THERE'S A STAND-IN WITH A BIG PIECE OF PAPER TO REPRESENT LILY. IT FEELS LIKE A GAME OF BINGO IF A BUNCH OF SLOTHS PLAYED IT. WHEN CARLA GOES TO GRAB A SPOON, LILY GRABS IT RIGHT AFTER.

DALE: Damn it!

LIGHT GOES BACK TO DARIUS AND LILY.

DARIUS: Is that even spoons? Yesterday was hella chill, but usually it's something like:

A LIGHT POPS UP AGAIN, THIS TIME SHOWING THE AREA THAT THE COOKOUT TOOK PLACE AND A STAND-IN FOR DARIUS. TENSIONS ARE HIGH. THE MOMENT DAVID REACHES FOR A SPOON HE IMMEDIATELY GETS SMACKED IN THE HEAD AND TOSSED TO THE SIDE. AN UPROAR OF ENERGY AND CURSE WORDS ENSUE. AUNTIE DEE PUSHES PORTIA AND SHE FALLS OUT OF HER CHAIR WHILE CHARITY KARATE CHOPS DARIUS'S

HAND AWAY FROM A SPOON. ONE OF THE SPOONS FLIES OFF THE TABLE AND BOTH PORTIA AND DAVID RUN STRAIGHT FOR IT.

(while all of this is happening)

DARIUS: Son of a bitch!

CHARITY: Man, up nigga!

DAVID: OUT MY WAY BITCH

PORTIA: NAH YOU BETTER MOVE HOE.

AUNTIE DEE: Ah to be young and spry.

PORTIA AND DAVID ARE NOW TUG OF WARRING OVER THE SPOON

PORTIA: AUNTIE DEE, YOU LITERALLY JUST PUSHED ME OUT OF MY CHAIR!!

DAVID: UGHHHHHH

THEY BOTH LET OUT GUTTURAL NOISES TO GET MORE STRENGTH OVER THE SPOON. THE LIGHT SHUTS OFF, FOCUSING BACK ON DARIUS AND LILY.

LILY: I really wasn't expecting something so harsh to come out of Charity's mouth

DARIUS: Yeah... Don't let her fool you she has a mean karate chop.

LILY: Oh! But I actually wanted to ask if you'd wanna come over to my house today? I'll save you the pain of dinner, but my family is planning on playing uno and we'd love to have you join.

DARIUS: I'd love to! Just text me the address and time and I'll meet you there!

LILY: Sounds good! Our doorbell doesn't work and my parents don't hear well anyways, so I'll also give you the key location so that you can get in.

DARIUS LOOKS SLIGHTLY UNEASY ABOUT USING A KEY TO GET INTO LILLY'S HOUSE, BUT LILY AND DARIUS BOTH WAVE GOODBYE ANYWAYS AND EXIT IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.

PORTIA IS WALKING BY AND ETNA TRIES TO CATCH HER ATTENTION.

ETNA: Portia!

PORTIA: Hmm?

ETNA: I just wanted to apologize for earlier. I didn't mean to be rude about it I was just worried.

PORTIA: You transferred electives because you had to change English periods, right?

ETNA: How do you-

PORTIA: Lily was talking to me about a girl that got caught in her dad's racist wrath, so no worries. I know you were just trying to look out for me. Girls like us gotta stick together.

ETNA SIGHS IN RELIEF, THEY SEEM TO BE ON MUCH BETTER TERMS NOW. THEY BOTH EXIT IN THE SAME DIRECTION TO GET TO THE NEXT CLASS. THE END OF SCHOOL BELL RINGS.

SCENE 8:

AT THE SMITH'S HOUSE, DARIUS JOINS THEM FOR A GAME OF UNO. DALE WINS THE GAME AND EVERYONE LOOKS DEFEATED.

DALE: Booyah! 3rd win in a row, and what can y'all do about it?

CARLA: I need to buy another game... Or at least make some new rules...

DARIUS: Oh, I know some add-on rules if we want to try them.

CARLA & LILY: Please!

DARIUS: Ok, well 7's mean you choose who to switch decks with, and 0's...

THE LIGHT DIMS ON THEM AND THEY GO MUTE AS THE LIGHT FLASHES ON AN UNFAMILIAR HOUSE, SHOWING THE SILOHUEETTE OF ONE OF THE SMITH'S NEIGHBORS ON THE PHONE.

SMITH'S NEIGHBOR: Hello, 911? Yes, I would like to report a break-in... Yes, a black man who was wearing a bright red hoodie, it looked worn down. Please, I'm very worried about my neighbors. Are they home? Probably not if he just entered. No, I'm too scared to go check what if I die? He's definitely armed.

SOMEONE BANGS ON THE SMITH'S DOOR WHILE THEY'RE PLAYING UNO.

DARIUS: I can get it if you guys need more time to memorize the rules? It seems like a nice neighborhood so there shouldn't be anything to worry about.

DALE: Yeah, it's probably my package, and if I'm gonna win? Definitely.

DARIUS GOES OFF-STAGE TO ANSWER THE DOOR.

CARLA: Isn't he a sweet boy?

DALE: Absolutely, much sweeter than I expected.

LILY: I should follow him to the door, and dad you should be getting your own packages.

DALE: I wanna win!! Do you know how-

GUNSHOT. PAUSE. LILY GETS UP AND RUNS AS FAST AS SHE CAN OFF-STAGE TO THE FRONT DOOR. SHE LETS OUT A BLOODCURDLING SCREAM AS THE LIGHTS SHUT OFF.

END OF ACT 1