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Samuel French Acting Edition

Single Black Female

by Lisa B. Thompson

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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SINGLE BLACK FEMALE was first developed in workshop at the Brava Theater in San Francisco, California and Arturo Catricala directed its first stage reading at Brava Theater's Festival of New Plays on January 28, 1998.

SINGLE BLACK FEMALE received its world premiere at Theatre Rhinoceros (Adele Prandini, Artistic Director) in San Francisco, California on March 11, 1999. The performance was directed by Colman Domingo and the assistant director was Damon Vann, with scenic design by Maritza Perez, lighting design by Jason Fuges, costume design by Flynn DeMarco, sound design by Byron Mason and dramaturgy by Kim Euell. The cast was as follows:

- SBF 1**..... Tia Hunnicutt
- SBF 2**..... Comika Griffin

SINGLE BLACK FEMALE debuted in Los Angeles, California on March 25, 2004 at The Complex produced by the Cassandra Project (Tia Hunnicutt, Executive Director). The performance was directed by Colman Domingo, with production design was by Jamie Shaw; the lighting design was by Danny Schurr; the sound designer was Byron Mason; and the production stage manager was Ondina Dominguez. The cast was as follows:

- SBF 1**..... Tia Hunnicutt
- SBF 2**..... Caryn Ward

SINGLE BLACK FEMALE was originally produced in New York City by New Professional Theatre (Founder/Artistic Director, Sheila Kay Davis), 229 W. 42nd St. #501 New York, New York 10036, at the Peter Jay Sharp Theater on June 15, 2006. The performance was directed by Colman Domingo, with scene design by Scott Aronow, costume design by Raul Aktanov, lighting design by Russel Phillip Drapkin, and sound design by DJ Crystal Clear. The production manager was Andrew Ronan, and the assistant director was Corrine Neal. The cast was as follows:

- SBF 1**..... Riddick Marie
- SBF 2**..... Soara Joye Ross

SINGLE BLACK FEMALE had its off-Broadway debut at The Duke on 42nd Street produced by the New Professional Theatre (Founder/Artistic Director, Sheila Kay Davis) on June 13, 2008. The performance was directed by Colman Domingo, with scene design by Scott Aronow, costume design by Raul Aktanov, lighting design by Russel Phillip Drapkin, dramaturgy by Langdon Brown and sound design by DJ Crystal Clear. The production manager was Marisa Levy, and the assistant director was Martin Wilkins. The cast was as follows:

- SBF 1**..... Riddick Marie
- SBF 2**..... Soara Joye Ross

CHARACTERS

SBF 1 – A thirty-eight year-old African American woman. A mildly androgynous literature professor with dreadlocks, a bookish, style and clothing accented with “afrocentric” accessories. She wears clogs and eccentric eyeglasses.

SBF 2 – A thirty-five year-old African American woman. An attorney who sports a flowing perm or hair weave and wears high heels and sexy business suits. SBF 1’s best friend, confidante and alter ego.

SETTING

The present. A comfortable, yet stylish brownstone in Harlem, New York. The main room is furnished with chairs, a sofa, a television, stereo and a coffee table. The stage also has a walk-in closet and/or a dresser stocked with various props (glasses, clothing, hats, shoes, surgical gloves, etc.) to help create each vignette and character.

AUTHOR’S NOTES

Both actors should have very distinctive styles, personalities and physical traits. It is important that their clothing, hair, make-up, and speech patterns reflect their differences. Since they frequently portray different genders, races, and ages, the actors must be able to use their voices and bodies in a variety of ways.

Musical selections by female musicians and singers should be used to aid segues between scenes. There is the option of including video, voice-over audio and slides to add to the post-modern, fast-paced, surreal environment.

Additionally, the theater lobby ought to contain various SBF “artifacts”: a bookshelf with several books by African American novelists and theorists as well as a stack of popular women’s magazines and piles of CDs, a dresser with framed vintage family photographs; a chair with an old quilt and perhaps a bulletin board with take-out menus and credit card bills attached. There may also be artwork by black women artists.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Single Black Female benefitted from the support and talent of many generous souls as well as some wonderful institutions. I am also blessed with a loving family and an amazing circle of friends who have enthusiastically supported my writing career. For their part in helping me share this play with the world I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Ricardo Bracho, Brava! For Women in the Arts, Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas, Sheila Kay Davis, Valisa Dougherty, Tanya Mayo, Harry J. Elam, Jr., Kim Euell, Donald C. Farber, Comika Griffin, Victor Haseman, Tia Hunnicut, Christina Knight, Ade Makinde, Riddick Marie, Cherríe Moraga, New Professional Theatre, Valerie Smith, Theatre Rhinoceros, Soara Joye Ross, Caryn Ward and Martin Wilkins.

I am deeply indebted to the multi-talented Colman Domingo, who understood my vision of the play from the first page. Each production he directed benefitted from his honesty, rigor and outrageous sense of humor. The fact that we are kindred spirits is reflected in each performance.

Finally I must thank my father, Walter Thompson, Jr., who taught me to revere laughter's powerful song, and my mother, Herberdine Thompson, who introduced me to the splendor of the written word.

For my parents
Herberdine Thompson and Walter Thompson, Jr.

PROLOGUE.

SBF 1. We are often asked what SBF stands for. Those three letters represent many things.

SBF 2. Sistas black & free

SBF 1. Sincere blissful friend

SBF 2. Saucy brazen freak

SBF 1. Staying black forever

SBF 2. Soulful, bold & fierce

SBF 1. Sad blue funk

SBF 2. Sweet bangin' fuck

SBF 1 AND SBF 2. (*in unison*) We be

Us be

Single

Black

Female

SBF 1. Diva

SBF 2. Bitch

SBF 1. Goddess

SBF 2. And nobody wants to hear us. (*Beat*) You undoubtedly heard of the black male crisis—well, there is also a very serious crisis for the black woman.

SBF 1. (*begins a PowerPoint lecture*) The National Center for Health Statistics informs us that, “The marriage rate for white women is 76 percent higher than the rate for black women.”

SBF 2. Teach!

SBF 1. According to the U.S. Census, 41.9 percent of black women in America have NEVER been married.

SBF 2. Damn!

SBF 1. And 57 percent of black children reside in single-parent homes.

SBF 2. Now what if a sista has a college degree or two—

SBF 1. Or three? She's more likely to be hit by a meteor than find a husband!

SBF 2. What happens to the black family if we don't find love? What will happen to the African American legacy?

SBF 1. Tonight let us introduce you to the world of the single black female.

SBF 2. Wait! This ain't sex in the inner city! That's another show. Let's be more specific: welcome to the lives of single middle-class black women.

SBF 1. Remember Ellison's *Invisible Man*? Well, we are the invisible women. Black professional intellectual leftists with conservative fiscal ideologies—

SBF 2. Except for a sale at Barney's!

SBF 1. We're the New Negro African American Black Colored Girls who only consider therapy. And even though nobody wants to hear us—we are tired of being ignored! We will no longer be QUIET!

SBF 2. You're anything but quiet. Sullen, or remote when angry—but never...quiet!

SBF 1. You're right about that.

SBF 2. Still nobody wants to see us, let alone really think about us.

SBF 1. But it's about time we get some accurate press.

SBF 2. We must thank Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas for putting us on the map.

SBF 1. Right, before his dreadful Senate Confirmation Hearing nobody thought we existed.

SBF 2. We STILL believe you, Anita!

SBF 1. And now we have sweet little Condi Rice to thank for making us popular the world over.

SBF 2. Isn't she single, too? Maybe if the child could get her hair right!

SBF 1. Don't talk about Condi now! That might prove a little too dangerous.

SBF 2. True.

SBF 1. People, before Ms. Oprah Winfrey became a media icon the image of black womanhood was a bit stale and not very complex.

SBF 2. Yes, who can forget the long reign of Aunt Jemima, Sapphire, and Jezebel?

SBF 1. Now, we concede there were a few bright moments especially during the late twentieth century. The seventies gave us Julia—thank God for Lady Diahann Carroll. The eighties gave us attorney Claire Huxtable, a Cosby creation. But the nineties gave us—

SBF 2. —Thee supreme ringmaster, Jerry Springer!

SBF 1 & SBF 2. (*Ad-lib typical talk show guest fight scene complete with hysterical dialogue*)

SBF 2. We still haven't recovered from that hot ghetto mess. And we cannot neglect those hoochies shaking their rumps on BET.

(*SBF 2 does booty shake.*)

SBF 1. Why would anyone go on those shows? Dance in those videos? I can't understand it.

SBF 2. Now, we do get some occasional exposure to remind us that black middle-class women are part of the American dream.

SBF 1. But, even in the 21st Century the networks still won't cast a black woman as *The Bachelorette*. And no, *I Love NY* does not count!

SBF 2. That's because they believe no man would want us, even if we come with a million bucks! All we can get is *Flavor of Love!* Flavor Flav! That's some bullshit! No, we're not in style.

SBF 1. And we are not all the same, but we are looking for the same thing. To put it simply? Love. Unfortunately our generation is more single than double. This is her story and mine...and hers, and hers, and hers. (*Pause*) And maybe his too. Our story.

SBF 2. Well, at least what we are willing to share tonight.

SBF 1 AND SBF 2. (*In unison*) Come on in.

ACT ONE

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF AN SBF

SCENE ONE - IDENTITY

SBF 1. There are obvious signs if you get beyond the door.

SBF 2. Once invited inside her cozy home it's easy to detect.

SBF 1. You spot the kitchen and dining ware.

SBF 2. On her shelves sit numerous Pottery Barn ceramic bowls and serving platters of every hue.

SBF 1. Don't forget the stemware—

SBF 2. Champagne flutes for every celebration. Only the French do bubbly, right?

SBF 1. But thanks to Hip Hop, Cristal has gone so ghetto!

SBF 2. You are wrong for that. Old fashion high balls for a shot of Glenfiddich single malt after a long day in court.

SBF 1. Four martini glasses with pitcher.

SBF 2. Dry, very dry.

SBF 1. Wait! Don't forget those four jelly jars for the ethnic touch!

(Both laugh)

SBF 2. Damn! We sound like alcoholics.

SBF 1. A SBF typically owns an impressive collection of cookbooks.

SBF 2. As well as a healthy stack of take out menus for those nights she doesn't cook.

SBF 1. Like six out of seven nights? Please. Who has the time? I order Chinese or Thai take-out for those evenings in front of the HDTV. And, for those down home nights?

(Southern blues music starts to play.)

SBF 2. Amy Ruth's baby! Soul Fixins! AMEN!!!

SBF 1. For dessert? Red Velvet Cake.

SBF 2. Sock it to me!

SBF 1. SBFs also keep current subscriptions to *Essence*, *The Nation*, *Metropolitan Home*, and *Vibe*—

SBF 2. You read *Vibe*?

SBF 1. Oh yes, I must keep up with my students.

SBF 2. Clothing depends on whether she's an artsy boho—

SBF 1. —or a classy hoho?

SBF 2. Hey! Hey now! Watch it.

SBF 1. She's always well draped and politically—

SBF 2. And culturally—

SBF 1. —sophisticated. In the summer you'll find her at the Studio Museum of Harlem sporting flawless white linen.

SBF 2. She's got to have her kente clothe bumpin' in February for Negro History Month.

SBF 1. Must be head-to-toe in deep, dark chocolate for that night on the town. I read in *Vogue* that chocolate is the new black. Doesn't anybody realize that black folks have been chocolate for years?

SBF 2. Talk girl. By the time a SBF reaches about thirty years old, she's found her style—now she's just trying to find somebody to like her style.

SBF 1. Where to meet us?

(SBF 1 and SBF 2 start to fan themselves with local funeral home fans and mime greeting other parishioners)

SBF 2. At Abyssinian Baptist Church.

SBF 1. Or at Brooklyn Tabernacle's eleven am service. Amen!

(Sound of gospel music. SBF 1 and SBF 2 start to dance around like they have "got the Holy Ghost.")

SBF 2. Praise Jesus! Glory! Glory!

SBF 1. Wait! Who has all day to spend in church? It's the twenty-first century! This is not the south you know. We are in NEW YORK CITY!

SBF 2. You can also find us at the bank—

SBF 1. Telling the manager to go to hell.

SBF 2. Or at the video store. You can usually find several single black women deep in line on Friday and Saturday nights.

SBF 1. Lines? Please, I got Netflix! Yes, you can also find us at the stylist all day, any day.

SBF 2. No more beauty shop for me! I'm a spa girl. A facial every two weeks. A manicure and pedicure once a week, and an organic herbal seaweed body wrap at least once a month. It's the role of the black middle class to integrate.

SBF 1. The spas?

SBF 2. Yes, the revolution, one massage at a time. Each of us has a role. I'm doing my part. I love the look in the eyes of those old Upper East Side society matrons when they see my naked black ass sauntering towards the sauna.

SBF 1. Somehow I don't believe that's what Martin, Malcolm, nor Huey and Bobby had in mind.

SBF 2. (*quietly*) Don't judge, I'm just doing what I think is right. You know what Audre Lorde taught us: "the personal is political!" After all, we are all women who come from fine stock. Our mothers and grandmothers were strong black matriarchs.

SBF 1. Whom we've learned to forgive for not being stronger. Not to mention forgiving Daddy.

SBF 2. Hooray for therapy!

SBF 1. We are three paychecks away from being on welfare and two art openings away from being culturally insignificant.

SBF 2. We all have a constant preoccupation with our beehinds and hairlines.

SBF 1. We are mirrors for each other. (*Beat*) A typical SBF carries—

SBF 2. In her Marc Jacobs purse—

SBF 1. —or her Coach briefcase—

SBF 2. A healthy supply of that Mango body butter. Don't wanna sport ashy elbows.

SBF 1. She also needs stylish business cards and a trusty iPhone.

SBF 1. Don't forget the one thing she cannot leave home without—American Express!

SBF 2. Platinum. In case of depression, crack open wallet and spend, spend, spend!

SBF 1. In her closet a SBF can never have too many—

SBF 2. Seven jeans, or St. John suits.

SBF 1. During her lifetime a SBF can never have too many—

SBF 2. Dates

SBF 1. Stocks

SBF 2. Season tickets for the symphony

SBF 1. And flowers

SBF 2. Don't forget the condoms. These days it's BYO!

SBF 1. But a SBF better be careful if she has—

SBF 2. Too much weight. Too many wrinkles. Too much debt.

SBF 1. Or too much unresolved anger? Relax. Breathe, breathe, breathe.

SBF 2. Thank you, girl. After all being single is a middle class black thang! You need to understand.

SBF 1. Wait! Do you think looking for an appropriate partner is only a black middle-class woman's obsession? Why worry about what a person does for a living so long as they give you good lovin'?

SBF 2. Class makes us different. I can't really explain. You try.

SBF 1. Explain difference? Difference as defined by Derrida or Henry Louis Gates, Jr.?

SBF 2. Here we go! I don't want to deal with Gates. What do you think this is, the New Yorker? Are we on *Charlie Rose*? Turn the channel! This is our subconscious damn it!

SBF 1. Okay, you pick the theorist.

SBF 2. Let me tell you like my mother would. There is something wrong folks when both Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield were able to marry black women who have M.D.'s! Those women are medical doctors for God's sake!

As for me? I can't do the "he's a plumber why can't you love him" thing. I tried it several times. Don't hate me but my panties get moist when I weave my basket through the aisles of Whole Foods picking up organic cranberries and shiitake mushroom soup.

SBF 1. In the morning she brews a South American blend of coffee from Dean and DeLuca. Her last man? Bro went to heaven at the local 7-Eleven.

SBF 2. He grabbed a fast cup of joe from McDonald's with his Egg McMuffin. I wind down in the evening with a glass of pinot blanc and—

SBF 1. Didn't he think pinot blanc is a light skinned filipino?

SBF 2. The last one I dated woke up every morning to Three 6 Mafia's (*sings*) "You Know It's Hard Out Here For A Pimp."

SBF 1. Girl here likes the hopeful nuances of Rachmaninoff's Prelude No. 21 in B Minor. As for cuisine? I recall that boyfriend wrapped his lips around a fried chicken wang and could not let go!

SBF 2. I like turkey breast sliced thin on rye with a whisper of Dijon mustard.

SBF 1. She has to have her *Wall Street Journal* every morning. He reads the back of the cereal box!

SBF 2. And his idea of "must see TV?"

SBF 1. Cops!

SBF 2. My favorite show of all time? *The Sopranos*.

SBF 1. That was not TV—that was HBO!

SBF 2. My dream dinner is scallops and fettuccine in a white wine, garlic, and butter sauce. His dream? Fried chicken, black-eyed peas, cornbread, and greens.

SBF 1. Hold up! Wait! Wasn't that you at the family reunion chowing down on some pig's feet doused in hot sauce? We ain't got that much class or that much education. What about our people? Our community? Maybe that's why we're alone.

(SBF 1 and SBF 2 turn and look at a slide show of various black "family" photographs. The photos reflect diverse families: big and small, urban and suburban, gay, middle class and working class. Intermingled should be pictures of single women ending with a rapid succession of single women's photos until they are the last image. Lights fade down.)

SCENE TWO - RAPPIN'

(**SBF 2** window shopping at the Time Warner Center)

SBF 2. Brothas love to run game.

SBF 1. Yo! Yo! Shortie! Can I spit at you fo' a minute?

SBF 2. There are times when I want to say, NO! But if I do, they are guaranteed to say—

SBF 1. Fuck you then, bitch! You ain't all that. I didn't want to holla at you NO way. I was just trying to make you feel better you—

SBF 2. Fat, skinny, stupid, stuck-up, bald, weave-wearin'—

SBF 1. Stank ghetto hoe!

SBF 2. But they don't always come at you like that. Some men can be smooth.

SBF 1. Baby, you sure look good. I just wanted to tell you that. Have a wonderful day. (*wide grin*)

SBF 2. (*Blushing bashfully*) Thank you.

SBF 1. No, thank you, goddess. Your very presence has made me whole again. Besides, you remind me of my wife.

SBF 2. WHAT?

SBF 1. Would you like to join our family? What? You got a problem with polygamy? On the continent this is how the original black man gets down. What? Don't get sassy with me. The ratio is not in your favor my sista. Come on home to your African king.

SBF 2. Brotha, I'll pass on joining your harem. I doubt you can handle the women you've got now. (*Beat*) Don't get me wrong. There are times when I really want a man to rap to me.

(*catches the eye of an eligible bachelor*)

Hey.

(*to audience*) Oh my God, he's amazing!

SBF 1. (*as ideal man, polite but reserved*) Hello.

SBF 2. Don't we know each other?

SBF 1. No, I don't think—wait. Yes. It was at that conference in Seattle. That's right. Good to see you again. How's your work coming?

SBF 2. Work? Work is good, I—

SBF 1. Great. Well, that's my train. I really have to run. You take care now.

(Hurriedly walks off)

SBF 2. Wait! Wait! Damn, maybe I should have been more direct. "Hi, I'm looking for a husband. Please marry me!" My friends tell me I should try a more subdued, gentle approach. *(bats her eyes and speaks in a Southern accent)* Naive and charmin'. *(back to normal voice)* In fact, several of my girlfriends told me—

SBF 1. I will never get married! Never! Never! Never!

SBF 2. Or, I believe in serial monogamy.

SBF 1. I don't believe in the institution of marriage.

SBF 2. Marriage is stifling.

SBF 1. It oppresses the female gender!

SBF 2. Marriage is outdated; people should just live together.

SBF 1. I couldn't live with anyone.

(SBF 1 prances around dramatically)

I need my space, to live, breath, laugh, work, create—

(SBF 1 freezes mid-sentence)

SBF 2. I admit. For a long time I admired those women. I even envied their bold, carefree attitudes. I tried to emulate their style. Until? They get married. Invariably those are the ones who get hitched. None of them is even divorced yet, not that I'm waiting.

SBF 1. You know what they say, ambivalence pays.

SBF 2. If I knew then what I know now? I'd have traveled another route. More nonchalant.

SBF 1. Less honest?

SBF 2. No. I think it's important to be authentic. I believe at my age I need to put my cards on the table. After all, I'm not getting any younger.

(sound of clock ticking)

That ain't the Monday morning 6 am wake up call. I'm listening for the sound of my future husband.

SBF 1. Hey sexy, I like those lips.

SBF 2. Really, sugar, you haven't even seen them yet!

SBF 1. Woman, you sure look nice. Can I get me some of that?

SBF 2. Why would you say something like that to a stranger? On the street? At 11 am on a Tuesday? We've got a long way to go as a people.

SBF 1. Hey, can I just talk to you for a minute? Damn!

SBF 2. I was just going to ask you the same thing young man. Do you know your maker? Is Jehovah in your life?

SBF 1. Oh my God.

SBF 2. You see, going Evangelic on a man hasn't failed me yet. They all run for the hills.

SBF 1. Woman, are you nuts?

SBF 2. Yes, I am. You want to go out sometime? I like Italian!

SCENE THREE - SHOPPIN'

(**SBF 1** and **SBF 2** shopping at the Gap outlet in Woodbury Commons.)

SBF 1. Remember when the GAP sold Levi's?

SBF 2. Damn girl you are getting old!

SBF 1. Don't you mean we're getting old?

SBF 2. Look at that salesgirl. Every kid that works here has tan skin, naturally curly hair, low-cut jeans, and frosty blue eye shadow. Not everything needs to come back into style.

SBF 1. There's little Jennifer now in her too-tight T-shirt and those wedge shoes. She unleashes her insipid persona on everybody who crosses the store's threshold.

SBF 2. (*Vapid*) Hi, welcome to the GAP. I'm Jennifer. Can I help you?

SBF 1. She's like a dope pusher pushing organized nostalgia.

SBF 2. It's called leisure-wear for those "dress down" days at the office.

SBF 1. What is a gap? A gap is nothing, an erasure? A gap is a space waiting to be filled. An opening, absence, silence, emptiness, a fissure between all things relevant and—

SBF 2. A credit card.

SBF 1. Now Missy Elliot and LL Cool J pitch Doo Wop Hip Hop promoting Gap-style black culture. Is black culture a gap?

SBF 2. Let's not go down that road, Miss Professor. I want to discuss something really important like the mirrors the GAP uses.

SBF 1. Clearly Gestapo tactics. I look like a fat pig in those dressing rooms. I know I need to workout more, but damn!

SBF 2. Hey girl, don't worry about it, shopping is a sport. You've been to a sale at the Barney's Coop?

(**SBF 1** *nods.*)

All right then. Besides these clothes aren't made for our bodies. Those are for white girls. Hello? Mr. Designer man, we have had thighs, hips, and booty!

SBF 1. When I don't feel like being followed by some sales-girl, I shop online. One day my pleasure was ruined when I needed to confirm my order by phone. I got one of those "customer service" reps that spoke to me in a way that left a bad taste in my mouth.

SBF 2. You can't even hide in cyberspace! It's like they have a nigga detector on the phone! No matter how much education or money you have they still know.

SBF 1. They speak with such distaste and disrespect that it makes me want to—

SBF 1 AND 2. Go the fuck off!

SBF 1. They request my address and it's fine until I get to my zip code—

SBF 2. Hmm. Where is that?

SBF 1. Manhattan.

SBF 2. Yes, of course. But what part?

SBF 1. Harlem.

SBF 2. What did you say, ma'am?

SBF 1. My place is in Harlem.

SBF 2. I'm sorry, ma'am, I couldn't hear you. Did you say HARLEM?

SBF 1. Yes, yes I did. HARLEM! Bill Clinton? Sylvia's? You know, the Upper Upper West Side!

SBF 2. Can you hold please? Thank you. Call security, Marge. Must be a case of identity theft. This Negress is telling me she's lives in HARLEM...with Bill Clinton!

SBF 1. Thanks a lot. (*hangs up*) That always takes the fun out of my sprees. Being African American can be so inconvenient.

SBF 2. Remember that time when you had to call all your creditors because you didn't have enough money to pay bills and you had to ask for a payment plan?

SBF 1. I recall no such incident.

SBF 2. Well, I do honey. Remember we were still roommates back then.

SBF 1. Yes, and you encouraged me to get a little help.

SBF 2. I advised you to find some of those no good ex-boyfriends who owed you cash.

SBF 1. But thank you Jesus, I was bailed out by my true and powerful role model, an institution, a living-legend, Ms. Oprah—

SBF 2. (*as Oprah*) When we received your fax you confessed that you were desperate. You acknowledge that you have a problem, is that correct?

SBF 1. Yes, but I'm ready to start over.

SBF 2. I have a check for fifty-eight thousand, two hundred ninety five dollars and seventy-two cents. Oprah's Angel Network is giving you a new life, debt free.

SBF 1. (*rips the check from SBF 2's hands.*) Listen Oprah, I appreciate the bail out, but trust me I know deep in my heart that I will do this again. I love to shop and I won't stop for anyone. Not even you. That's my program.

SBF 2. You are such a shopaholic.

SBF 1. Don't talk about me Ms. DKNY.

SBF 2. I'm proud of myself. I know who I am and what I want without a doubt. Besides—

SBF 1 & SBF 2. (*in unison*) I can stop shopping at anytime. I just don't want to yet!

SBF 1. I am only shopping because I need to find something brutal for our twentieth college reunion.

SBF 2. Girl, how many kids DO you have?

SBF 1. That's a good one, but they always unleash their lethal question.

SBF 2. You haven't had children yet? You better get started. You're not getting any younger.

SBF 1. I smile. (*under her breath*) Asshole! No not yet, but Hannah, Amber, Megan, Kyle, Dylan, and Owen are just adorable. You look great. Call me!

SBF 2. Text me!

SBF 1. We will all get together real soon. We sat at that table and talked bad about EVERYBODY. Especially those AKAs.

SBF 1 & SBF 2. (*In unison*) Skee wee!

SBF 2. Look! That's Kelly!

SBF 1. Is she still writing for *Essence*?

SBF 2. Maybe she can do an article on you. West Coast scholar goes East Coast still looking for love.

SBF 1. Thanks. I won't hold my breath. Oh my God. That's Priscilla. Wave!

SBF 2. Wow, 5'6 and not an ounce over one hundred twenty-five pounds.

SBF 1. She does look great. At least I try to work-out— aerobics, spinning, yoga, Pilates and swimming—

SBF 2. Heifer, you do not swim. That thing is called a whirlpool!

SBF 1. Whatever.

SBF 2. Wait, didn't Priscilla marry that neurologist?

SBF 1. No, no, no. He's a novelist.

SBF 2. Hah! So she's broke!

SBF 1. Nope. He just had his third national bestseller. They own an apartment in the east village, a house in Santa Fe and ocean front property near Monterey.

SBF 2. Bitch!

(*both wave and smile*)

SBF 1. Oh, yes I'm fine. Things are great for us. I'm working out, when I can—

SBF 2. —and shopping.

SCENE FOUR - SISTERHOOD

(SBF 1 and SBF 2 compete for space to primp in the club's bathroom mirror.)

SBF 1. It's no secret. On some days I hate black women. We can be so damn EVIL! Just mean.

SBF 2. I particularly despise the way we turn up our lips, suck our teeth and roll our eyes.

SBF 1. E-V-I-L! Evil!

SBF 2. Tell it, girl.

SBF 1. One night after teaching I was standing in line at a sandwich shop on Astor Place and the sister ahead of me starts going off. Like she was crazed. Just tore back and off the chain! She told this poor woman.

SBF 2. Look! You needs to make sure my order is done right. And yo! Let me get some of them jal-e-peños with that!

SBF 1. I'm most embarrassed when other people of color witness or receive the brunt of these outbursts.

SBF 2. Senorita! Senorita! You needs to learn to speak American.

SBF 1. What are you doing? She's making our food fool—she's your sister in the struggle. Of course I don't say that to her face, she might beat me down, but I think it real loud. *(beat)* One weekend I saw an older black woman give a particularly gratifying performance. While walking down the street she stopped me dead in my tracks. She stood before me, serene and regal—this gray-haired angel.

SBF 2. Baby?

SBF 1. Yes, Ma'am?

SBF 2. You're not her. I thought you was her.

SBF 1. I'm sorry. Who?

SBF 2. That actress, the black woman with the hair. No. You're not her. You look just like her, but you're not as ugly as she is. Whoo-whoo.

- SBF 1.** You mean Whoopi Goldberg.
- SBF 2.** That's right. But you're not as ugly as her, but you do look just like her though.
- SBF 1.** Thanks, Ma'am. It never occurred to her that Whoopi is a beautiful black woman. No, that never occurred to her at all.
- SBF 2.** When people see us they assume—single, welfare, no education, and tons of babies. I'm not her.
- SBF 1.** We are all invisible to them and we don't even see each other.
- SBF 2.** I remember when I was the new sista at my firm. During my first day I was introduced to the staff. The senior partner made it a point to tell me a little something about every black woman who works there—all six of their four hundred thirty-two employees. I knew not one of them liked me.
- SBF 1.** Who does she think she is? That broad thinks she's cute. Hmm, she ain't all that. Bet she won't make partner!
- SBF 2.** That's not me.
- SBF 1.** Have you ever realized that there's a way that a black woman can say "girlfriend" that actually sounds nothing like a term of endearment.
- SBF 2.** That's because "girlfriend" is usually followed by "you need to..." or preceded by "excuse me" Or she'll say, "girlfriend, let me tell you—"
- SBF 1.** I just want to say—
- SBF 1 AND SBF 2.** Shut the fuck up, you EVIL bitch!
- SBF 2.** The last club I went to was 40/40, and let me tell you, I nearly started a riot. The woman's bathroom was crowded. So I rolled up on a sista who was standing in the mirror primping and just tightin' up her thang when I got bold and told her, "You look nice." She almost pissed on herself.
- SBF 1.** What?

SBF 2. Your outfit—it's really nice.

(a pause)

That dress becomes you.

(to audience) She just stood there looking. Then she moved away from the mirror and all her girls walked out behind her one by one by one. The bathroom was empty.

SBF 1. Quiet.

SBF 2. I stood there with my toes pinched in my high, high heels startled by my reflection in the mirror.

SBF 1. A black girl.

SBF 2. An African American queen.

SBF 1. A sista.

SBF 2. I kept looking for all that evil in my face and eyes. I stared for what seemed like hours. My trance broke when the black woman in the reflection blew a kiss to me from the mirror and softly whispered—

SBF 2 AND SBF 1. *(in unison)* I love your evil black bitch ass.

(SBF 1 & SBF 2 grab hands and begin dancing with each other to Cheryl Lynn's "Got to Be Real"™ as they clear the stage and their clothes for the next scene.)

*See Music Use Note on page 3

SCENE FIVE - COMPUTER LOVE

(Zapp's "Computer Love" plays while they are drinking coffee and working in Starbucks typing away on their Apple MacBooks.)

SBF 2. How can a woman find the love of her life using a cold piece of technology? How can you find passion through an inanimate object that crashes, freezes and God forbid—gives you a virus! Am I putting all my hopes and trust in a plastic box with mortarboards and computer chips? What have our lives come to?

SBF 1. Internet dating is cool, I'm telling you. Trust me.

SBF 2. What kind of self-respecting black man looks for a woman on the net? They don't need to use a computer. Brothas are the most desired piece of equipment on this planet! Everyone wants dark meat. Asians, Latinas, Afghanis... Black men are the hottest thing on God's green earth, and I believe that far, far away on a distant star in the galaxy, some purple women want them too. So what am I to do?

SBF 1. Just try it—it's not like men are lining up outside your door right now.

SBF 2. Nice. Okay. Okay. Which site?

SBF 1. I've done the research. The selection is overwhelming. I'm delirious about the plethora of choices. There's a site for every taste, category and proclivity. Of course, there is the tried and true, Match.com. That's where I posted my profile.

SBF 2. Anything promising?

SBF 1. Well, after I got past the dozens of profiles that made it clear that they were looking for anything BUT a black woman, I met a few interesting characters. Let me warn you I did unearth several crazies, but I can say this: it has been an amusing distraction from writing lectures and waiting around for the phone to ring. I'm still very hopeful. But we're here for you. Here is another site, The Right Stuff, for snobby singles who attended the Ivy League.

SBF 2. Hmm, what about eHarmony?

SBF 1. Have you seen their questionnaire? It's longer than *War and Peace*; we don't have that kinda time! Just try Match.com. You'll need an enticing screen name.

SBF 2. Single sista.

SBF 1. That's taken!

SBF 2. Of course. How about Diva?

SBF 1. Too predictable.

SBF 2. Cocoalawyer!

SBF 1. (*types*) Yes! We're in. Age range? Thirty-to-forty. Weight?

SBF 2. No, they don't. Those mothafuckas!

SBF 1. Calm down. Fit, a few pounds, or chunky monkey?

SBF 2. Fit!

SBF 1. Fit?

SBF 2. I said fit!

SBF 1. Okay, okay. What other essential info do you want to include?

SBF 2. Tell them I've got a New York mind, L.A. face, Oakland booty, and Vineyard cash! Sign me up for thirty days.

SBF 1. That's a bit too optimistic. How about one year?

SBF 2. A year of this? Remember, my clock is ticking!

SBF 1. Okay, how about six months?

SBF 2. That should be just enough time to find the love of my life.

SBF 1. What are you looking for?

SBF 2. Well, last time I checked Barack Obama was taken, so I'll take anybody breathing within a 500-mile radius; that ought to take care of the Tri-State Area, and most of the Eastern seaboard and Atlantic City too!

SBF 1. Come on. The point is to be more selective. We've already tried the "everybody" plan and that didn't quite work for the past thirty some odd years. We can do a search by age, race, education, weight, religion and location—

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