SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an *excerpt* from a Samuel French title.

This sample is for perusal only and may not be used for performance purposes.

You may not download, print, or distribute this excerpt.

We highly recommend purchasing a copy of the title before considering for performance.

For more information about licensing or about purchasing a play or musical, please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.com
www.samuelfrench.co.uk

SF PERUSALS

Stick Fly

by Lydia R. Diamond

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

SAMUELFRENCH.COM
SAMUELFRENCH-LONDON.CO.UK

Copyright © 2013 by Lydia R. Diamond
All Rights Reserved.

Artwork designed by Melissa Wagner-O'Malley,
courtesy of Huntington Theatre Company

STICK FLY is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-70092-7

www.SamuelFrench.com
www.SamuelFrench-London.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA
Info@SamuelFrench.com
1-866-598-8449

UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE
Plays@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk
020-7255-4302

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French, depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *STICK FLY* may not be licensed by Samuel French in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Samuel French office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *STICK FLY* is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play(s) does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to Samuel French before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Samuel French.

No one shall make any changes in this title(s) for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall upload this title(s), or part of this title(s), to any social media websites.

For all enquiries regarding motion picture, television, and other media rights, please contact Samuel French.

MUSIC USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for all music clearances and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Samuel French, against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of music by licensees. Please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

OPENING NIGHT: DECEMBER 8, 2011

CORT THEATRE

138 West 48th Street

A Shubert Organization Theatre

Philip J. Smith, *Chairman* **Robert E. Wankel,** *President*

NELLE NUGENT ALICIA KEYS SAMUEL NAPPI REUBEN CANNON
CHARLES SALAMENO HUNTINGTON THEATRE COMPANY DAN FRISHWASSER CATHERINE SCHREIBER
JAY H. HARRIS/JOSEPH SIROLA DAVEED D. FRAZIER/MARK THOMPSON SHARON A. CARR/PATRICIA R. KLAUSNER/RICK DANZANSKY

in association with

KENNETH TEATON CATO AND NICOLE JUNE/MATTHEW AND SHAWNA WATLEY
HOWARD KAGAN ERIC FALKENSTEIN

present

DULÉ HILL MEKHI PHIFER TRACIE THOMS and RUBEN SANTIAGO-HUDSON

in

STICK FLY

by

LYDIA R. DIAMOND

also starring

ROSIE BENTON CONDOLA RASHAD

Original Music
ALICIA KEYS

Scenic Design	Costume Design	Lighting Design	Sound Design
DAVID GALLO	REGGIE RAY	BEVERLY EMMONS	PETER FITZGERALD

Advertising & Marketing	Website & Social Media	Casting	Production Stage Manager
aka	BAY BRIDGE PRODUCTIONS	MELCAP CASTING	ROBERT BENNETT

Associate Producers	Production Management	Press Representative	General Manager
SARAHBETH GROSSMAN MICHAEL MASO ERIKA ROSE	AURORA PRODUCTIONS	BONEAU/BRYAN-BROWN	PETER BOGYO

Directed By
KENNY LEON

STICK FLY was developed in part at Chicago Dramatists and originally produced by Congo Square Theatre and subsequently produced by McCarter Theatre Center. A further developmental production directed by Kenny Leon was produced jointly by Arena Stage and the Huntington Theatre Company.

The Producers wish to express their appreciation to Theatre Development Fund for its support of this production.

STICK FLY was developed in part by Chicago Dramatists and originally premiered with Congo Square Theatre Company in Chicago, IL on March 23, 2006. The production was directed by Chuck Smith, with set design by Dustin Efird, costume design by Christine Pascual, lighting design Alex Seiler, sound design by Joe Plummer, and properties design by Joanna Iwanicka. The Artistic Director was Derrick Sanders, and the Stage Manager was Edward D. Richardson. The cast was as follows:

TAYLOR. . . . . Ann Joseph
KENT (SPOON). . . . . Daniel J. Bryant
CHERYL . . . . . Ericka Ratcliff
FLIP . . . . . Aaron Todd Douglas
JOE LEVAY (DAD) . . . . . Phillip Edward Van Lear
KIMBER. . . . . Anne Roche

STICK FLY opened with the McCarter Theatre Center at the Berlind Theatre, by special arrangement with Bruce Ostler, Bret Adams Ltd, on September 7, 2007 in Princeton, NJ. The production was directed by Shirley Jo Finney, with set design by Felix E. Cochren, costume design by Karen Perry, lighting design, and soundscape by Darron L. West. The Managing Director was Jeffrey Woodward, and the Stage Manager was Cheryl Mintz. The cast was as follows:

TAYLOR. . . . . Michole Briana White
KENT (SPOON). . . . . Kevin T. Carroll
CHERYL. . . . . Julia Pace Mitchell
FLIP . . . . . Javon Johnson
JOE LEVAY (DAD) . . . . . John Wesley
KIMBER. . . . . Monette Magrath

STICK FLY opened with Arena Stage in Washington, DC, in collaboration with the Huntington Theatre Company, on January 7, 2010. The production was directed by Kenny Leon, with set design by David Gallo, costume design by Reggie Ray, lighting design by Allen Lee Hughes, and sound design by Timothy J. Thompson. The Artistic Director was Molly Smith, and the Managing Director was Edgar Doble. The Stage Manager was Angelita Thomas.

TAYLOR. . . . . Nikkole Salter
KENT (SPOON). . . . . Jason Dirden
CHERYL. . . . . Amber Iman
FLIP . . . . . Billy Eugene Jones
JOE LEVAY (DAD) . . . . . Wendell W. Wright
KIMBER. . . . . Rosie Benton

STICK FLY opened with the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston, MA, in collaboration with Arena Stage, on February 19, 2010. The production was directed by Kenny Leon, with set design by David Gallo, costume design by Reggie Ray, lighting design by Allen Lee Hughes, and sound design by Timothy J. Thompson. The Artistic Director was Peter Dubois, and the Managing Director was Michael Maso. The Stage Manager was Josiane M. Lemieux.

TAYLOR. . . . . Nikkole Salter
KENT (SPOON). . . . . Jason Dirden
CHERYL. . . . . Amber Iman
FLIP . . . . . Billy Eugene Jones
JOE LEVAY (DAD) . . . . . Wendell W. Wright
KIMBER. . . . . Rosie Benton

CHARACTERS

KENT (SPOON) - 31, youngest son of the LeVay family. He has grown up with an artistic disposition in a family of doctors and lawyers. Though financially privileged, he has struggled to find his place in life and with his family

TAYLOR - 27, Daughter from an earlier marriage of renowned, recently deceased, public intellectual, James Bradley Scott. She was raised by a single mother college professor. Though she carries his name, and so has had entrée to some social privileges, her father was not a part of her life. She also has gone without financially.

CHERYL - 18, The daughter of the family maid. Pretty, bright, always well-intentioned. Cheryl has always had a crush on Flip.

FLIP - 36, oldest son of LeVay family. The "golden boy" who, with some compromises, has fallen in line with his father's expectations. He is an incorrigible ladies man.

JOE LEVAY (DAD) - 58, LeVay patriarch. He is a well-intentioned man, who rules his family with a firm, loving hand. He, like Flip, has always had a way with women.

KIMBER - 32, White. Kimber is an intelligent woman with a quick wit and sincere warmth. Unlike Taylor, her social status matches that of the LeVays, with of course, the undeniable privilege of whiteness. Of this she is aware, and on some level appalled.

TIME

2005

SETTING

Martha's Vineyard, Edgartown

ACT I

Scene 1

(Curtains rise to reveal the dissected front half of a two story, Victorian Martha's Vineyard Mansion. The décor is tasteful, casual, comfortable and extraordinarily expensive in its utter lack of pretension. This house defines comfort – smooth, well-worn leathers, cashmere throws, rustic aged wood, books, books, books, and more books.)

(The living room is dark, shutters closed, fabric covers the furniture. The kitchen curtains are open, lights on. A purse and jacket are draped over a chair. An impressive pile of boxes and shopping bags of groceries takes up a quarter of the counter space and floor beneath it. Someone has begun putting away groceries and abandoned the job.)

*(***CHERYL** *enters from upstairs to the soundtrack of an iPod. Occasionally she sings. She's the picture of youth and resentful efficiency. She opens curtains whenever she passes a window. Occasionally she cannot help but dance to the jam blasting in her ears. She carries a large wicker basket into which she throws the sheets covering the furniture as she removes them.)*

*(***CHERYL** *exits into the house with the basket. Offstage a car pulls into a gravel driveway. Car doors open and close.)*

(Through the windows we see and hear **KENT***, weighed down with expensive, modest luggage, followed by* **TAYLOR** *in cut-off jeans, faded t-shirt and bandanna. She carries a large, well-worn duffel bag. They laugh*

and talk. **TAYLOR** *opens the door, steps over the luggage and into the house. Taking it all in.)*

TAYLOR. Wow. *(beat)* Holy…wow.

*(***KENT** *enters.)*

This is all yours?

KENT. My family's…

TAYLOR. All that, all this, around the drive, and that little house?

KENT. That's the guesthouse.

TAYLOR. Wow. O.K. Well, I was gonna marry you for love. But now maybe I'll have to marry you for money.

KENT. I thought you said yes so we could to sleep together at family reunions.

TAYLOR. Only my mother is so provincial.

KENT. Honey Bee, that's not provincial, that's Black.

*(***TAYLOR** *explores the room for a moment. She checks out the family pictures in small frames on the tables… pointing to a painting…)*

TAYLOR. Spoon. Spoon, honey…is this a real Romare–

KENT. Bearden. Yes.

TAYLOR. And that's a real—

KENT. Uh huh.

TAYLOR. And…this one…

KENT. Yes.

TAYLOR. Oh my God.

KENT. Mom's classy. French, Italian, Swahili. Undergrad Art History, Masters Child Development, MFA interdisciplinary arts integration, all so she could be here with warm cookies when we got home from school.

TAYLOR. Should I be intimidated?

KENT. Absolutely.

*(***TAYLOR** *approaches an impressive display of butterflies and beetles mounted in a framed glass case.)*

TAYLOR. You didn't tell me. Someone's a collector?

KENT. What?

TAYLOR. The butterflies…

KENT. Aesthetic. Mom's only relationship with bugs is through the exterminator. She has him on speed dial. Called him once because there were too many ants… outside.

TAYLOR. *(crosses to family pictures)* Oh…these are amazing. Wow. Look how beautiful the clothes are…and the people. Who is this… ?

KENT. Grandma LeVay, Dad's mom, we lost her ten years ago…oh…and this is Great Great Great Grandfather Whitcomb. The Great Sea Captain.

TAYLOR. I've seen this picture before….

KENT. Yeah, in your dad's book…

TAYLOR. Of course…

KENT. He was never a slave…he was a shipper,

TAYLOR. Of what…

KENT. We don't talk about that. Anyway he saved the mayor's son from a boating accident. As a reward the mayor gave him this land on which he built this house, making the Whitcombs the first blacks to own land anywhere on the Vineyard.

TAYLOR. Wow. It's beautiful. *(beat)* I'm nervous. Now I'm really nervous.

KENT. Why?

TAYLOR. I'm supposed to be. You're bringing home your fiancée.

*(***KENT** *walks to her and pulls her into a comfortable embrace.)*

KENT. You're adorable. They'll love you. Let me show you around before you unpack your nets and jars.

*(***KENT** *picks her up and throws her onto the sofa.)*

This, my love, is the family sofa.

(A playful embrace turns into a genuine moment of groping and passion. **KENT** *unzips* **TAYLOR***'s pants. She slowly, but firmly moves away.* **KENT** *won't be discouraged.)*

KENT. You know Ma's gonna have us in separate rooms.

TAYLOR. That's so Black of her.

KENT. Honey Bee, give me a little sugar.

(The kiss gets dangerous.)

TAYLOR. O.K., O.K. I'm not having your mom walk in on me with my ass up in the air like some kind of bad urban legend or something.

KENT. Fine, I'll feed my other carnal needs.

*(***KENT** *makes his way to the kitchen.)*

I wonder if Ms. Ellie left food.

*(***KENT** *kisses* **TAYLOR** *on the cheek and bounds through the swinging door. Surveying the groceries, he searches through the bags, finds cookies, and munches while he begins to put away the provisions.)*

(In living room: **TAYLOR** *zips her pants and begins moving suitcases to the bottom of the staircase.)*

*(***CHERYL** *enters from upstage right dragging the basket now overflowing with sheets.* **TAYLOR** *is startled.)*

TAYLOR. Oh…oh.

CHERYL. Sorry.

TAYLOR. You startled me.

CHERYL. Oh God, Hi….uhgghhh…I'm not ready. I thought Flip said evening. This is afternoon. Where is he?

*(***CHERYL***'s said all of this while struggling with the basket across the room and backing through the swinging kitchen door.)*

(In kitchen: **KENT** *helps her set down the basket and embraces her.)*

CHERYL. Kent!

KENT. Look at you! You're all grown up! You start college yet?

CHERYL. Uh-uh. Oh, oh…so that must be your woman out there? She cute.

KENT. I think so.

CHERYL. I'm so behind. You caught the first ferry? Mama makes it look easy.

*(***CHERYL** *begins putting away the remainder of the groceries.)*

Hopefully I start school next winter. Momma's sick, so you gotta settle for me. *(beat)* But that's aw-ite 'cause I always did like coming up here.

*(***KENT** *helps* **CHERYL** *put away groceries…they've done this together before…)*

Depending on how mama's doing I might be able to fit in a class or two in the fall…

(In living room: **TAYLOR** *crosses to doorway to pick up bags.* **FLIP** *enters front door.)*

FLIP. Oh, hi…

*(***TAYLOR** *turns around. Both are shocked.)*

TAYLOR. Harold?

FLIP. Flip. Please.

(In kitchen:)

KENT. …You know where?…

CHERYL. I'm still waiting to hear. I applied everywhere… I wanna stay near mama though, maybe NYU, Columbia…Princeton's kinda far….

(In living room:)

TAYLOR. Flip. *(beat)* He's talked about you. But I didn't put it together.

FLIP. Yeah, I heard he had a girl…it didn't even occur to me.

TAYLOR. Taylor…

FLIP. I know.

(In kitchen:)

KENT. You'll probably have your pick…

CHERYL. Well, I don't like to brag…

(In living room:)

TAYLOR. Yeah. O.K..

FLIP. All right then.

*(***TAYLOR** *and* **FLIP** *speak simultaneously.)*

TAYLOR. Well, it's good to see you.

FLIP. What you been up to?

(End of simultaneously dialogue.)

*(***TAYLOR** *moves in for a hug,* **FLIP** *a shake…they fumble and eventually settle on an awkward half-embrace.)*

(In kitchen:)

CHERYL. You staying long?

KENT. Few weeks, if Ma and Taylor hit it off.

CHERYL. Should be fun watching Mrs. LeVay put her through her paces.

KENT. Ma'll like her.

(In living room:)

FLIP. So, where's my bro?

TAYLOR. He's in the kitchen with…?

(In kitchen:)

CHERYL. Oh…you can hand me that…

(In living room:)

FLIP. Ms. Ellie?

TAYLOR. I don't know?

FLIP. Large, pleasant, older black lady?

TAYLOR. No, no. Pretty, young. Nice. She was already here.

FLIP. Kimber beat me?

TAYLOR. Spoon said you were in Aspen.

FLIP. Spoon?

TAYLOR. Kent. I'm sorry, pet name. Yeah, I thought you two were coming up later.

FLIP. I cut it short.

(A burst of laughter comes from kitchen where **KENT** *tosses* **CHERYL** *corn, which she deposits in fridge.)*

I had to fly back for an emergency. Kimber got here too early. I wanted time to smooth the way, you know.

TAYLOR. *(beat)* No. *(beat)* She said we got here too early.

FLIP. *(heading toward the kitchen)* She did, did she?

*(***TAYLOR** *follows.* **FLIP** *enters kitchen:)*

FLIP. Honey, you weren't supposed to come for another…

KENT. Honey?

CHERYL. Hey!

FLIP. Cheryl! Look at you, all grown up.

(He hugs her. We see that **CHERYL** *carries an intense and painful crush for* **FLIP**.*)*

CHERYL. Yeah, well, you know I'll be going to college. Gonna load up the science on the front end so I can go pre-med. *(awkward beat)* Like you were, when you went, to college.

FLIP. A long time ago. *(hugging* **KENT***)* Hey man, met your girl. You coulda done worse. *(beat – looks around expectantly)* So what did you do with her?

KENT. What?

*(***TAYLOR** *enters the kitchen.)*

FLIP. Your girl said my girl was in the kitchen.

TAYLOR. Oh, I thought she was…I'm confused.

FLIP. Naw…my girl's still where I left her. I have a little ground-laying to do with the folks first.

TAYLOR. *(to* **CHERYL***)* Then you are?

CHERYL. Oh, Cheryl. I'm working for the LeVays.

KENT. Cheryl's mom, Ms. Ellie has helped Mom for years… but now she's all grown up.

CHERYL. *(grinning at* **FLIP***)* I am.

TAYLOR. Oh…you're the maid.

(Awkward silence. **CHERYL** *runs water in the sink and deposits several live lobsters.* **TAYLOR** *helps put food away.)*

TAYLOR. *(to* **CHERYL***)* Where do the grits go?

CHERYL. We keep the dry-goods in the fridge…it's so humid here, things get kind of…

TAYLOR. *(to* **KENT***)* What did he mean, ground-laying?

KENT. Yeah, Flip's girl is a little melanin-challenged.

CHERYL. Melanin challenged?

KENT. She's, of the other persuasion…

TAYLOR. Not in the tribe, huh?

FLIP. She's cool. *(to* **TAYLOR***)* Studies race dynamics in inner-city schools.

TAYLOR. As opposed to the outer city?

CHERYL. *(just getting it)* Oh, she white?

KENT & FLIP. She's Italian.

KENT. So, this is Taylor.

FLIP. Yeah…we go way back.

*(***FLIP** *and* **TAYLOR** *exchange a look, which* **CHERYL** *catches…)*

KENT. Yeah?

TAYLOR. No.

FLIP. Yeah, all the way back to the living room.

TAYLOR. It's nice to *(beat)* meet you.

(They shake hands.)

*(***FLIP***'s phone rings.)*

FLIP. Hold on…*(looks at I.D.)* I don't answer it on vacation.

CHERYL. What about your patients?

*(***FLIP** *pushes a couple of buttons, starts to put phone in pocket.)*

KENT. Ohhh…nice. You got one…

FLIP. Oh yeah…my assistant stood in line for twelve hours.

KENT. Sweet…sexy…

FLIP. Damn straight…

CHERYL. *(to* **TAYLOR** *who's holding a big box of oatmeal)* Oh, you can leave the oatmeal on the counter, we go through it pretty fast. *(to* **FLIP***)* Flip, you never liked White girls.

FLIP. She's Italian.

KENT. *(to* **CHERYL***)* Where are Mom and Dad? I thought they were supposed to be here—

CHERYL. *(to* **FLIP***)* Dr. LeVay got called into an emergency… they should be here early tomorrow. You want me to make dinner?

KENT. Naw, thanks, I think I'll show Taylor around… you wanna come Flip?

FLIP. I'm cool. I'll stay here and help our girl with the house.

*(***KENT** *and* **TAYLOR** *exit the kitchen while* **CHERYL** *puts away groceries and* **FLIP** *watches.)*

(In living room:)

KENT. So, what's first?

TAYLOR. I don't know…whatever you wanna do. You could show me the ocean.

KENT. You've seen oceans. We could go down to the wharf…

TAYLOR. The wharf?

KENT. Town. Look around, lots of shops and galleries…

TAYLOR. I've seen towns.

KENT. Maybe I should show you my room.

TAYLOR. I've seen rooms.

KENT. Maybe there's something in my room you've seen before, that you'd like to see again?

TAYLOR. Flip's girlfriend is white?

KENT. *(laughing)* No. She's Italian.

TAYLOR. Will your folks disapprove?

KENT. Naw, that's what I'm here for.

TAYLOR. That doesn't bode well for me.

KENT. No, it's not like that…they'll love you. Dad'll think you're too good for me.

TAYLOR. Well, I am. *(beat)* You brought the hard copy of your manuscript, right?

KENT. Yeah.

TAYLOR. You'll show it to them?

KENT. If I feel like it.

TAYLOR. What does that mean?

KENT. It means, if I feel like it…

(Lights fade as they make their way upstairs.)

Scene 2

(Late evening, same day.)

*(***FLIP***,* **KENT***, and* **TAYLOR** *lounge in living room. They're playing Trivial Pursuit.* **CHERYL** *clears take-out Chinese from the coffee table, and works in the kitchen.)*

FLIP. …This little blonde salesgirl, she's just on me. So I say, look, I've traveled all over the world, I'm a doctor damnit, why you wanna sweat me like that…

TAYLOR. Stop talking, maybe he'll take his turn.

FLIP. I'm just saying. What the hell am I going to steal from Pottery Barn, like…

CHERYL. You could put a candle in your pocket or something.

FLIP. That was rhetorical, Cheryl. *(to* **KENT***)* Go.

KENT. What's green?

TAYLOR. You know that.

FLIP. You're sure you won't play, Cheryl?

CHERYL. I'm saying, they shouldn't follow you around because you're a person.

FLIP. What?

CHERYL. You shouldn't be harassed because you're human.

KENT. *(to* **FLIP***)* What's green?

FLIP. *(to* **KENT***)* Come on… *(to* **CHERYL***)* Like I said, not just a person, a well-dressed, well-read, well-traveled person.

KENT. So remind me. What's green?

TAYLOR. You know that…

CHERYL. So they should follow around a guy who works for, say, the phone company, just not you? *(exiting to kitchen)* Green is Science and Nature.

TAYLOR. Cheryl's right. That's classist. Now play.

FLIP. Why are we doing this?

KENT & TAYLOR. Quality family time.

FLIP. Oh please. *(to kitchen)* Stop working and come on and play Cheryl…You'll be busy enough when Mom and Dad get here.

TAYLOR. You can take my place and I'll finish up the dishes.

CHERYL. *(poking head through door)* I hate that game. Besides, if your folks came and I was…

TAYLOR. Really I don't mind.

*(***TAYLOR** *begins clearing dishes.* **CHERYL** *takes them from her.)*

CHERYL. It's fine. Really. It's my job.

*(***CHERYL** *exits to kitchen.)*

TAYLOR. I was just trying to help.

FLIP. Now who's holding things up? Play, so we can finish the damn game.

TAYLOR. I like the game. You would too if you were invested in winning.

FLIP. Yeah bro, where's your fighting spirit?

KENT. It's trivia…Trivial Pursuit. The pursuit of things trivial. Implicit in the name is the reason for my lack of investment.

FLIP. That's not implicit, that's intrinsic…intrinsic to the name…

TAYLOR. Inherent.

FLIP & KENT. No.

TAYLOR. It's entertainment.

KENT. Jesus, fine. Green, for a piece of pie.

TAYLOR. What Russian physiologist went to the dogs to write Conditioned Reflexes? You always get the easy ones.

KENT. Pavlov.

TAYLOR. I need a first name.

KENT. That's ridiculous.

TAYLOR. No, it's the rules.

FLIP. She's right.

KENT. I don't want to play.

TAYLOR. Oh my God. You suck.

*(***CHERYL** *enters with a pitcher of lemonade and glasses.)*

CHERYL. Ivan. Ivan Pavlov. *(beat)* What? I can't know that?

KENT. So here, you win the pie.

CHERYL. *(to* **FLIP***)* Here Flip, you can have it.

KENT. Come on Cheryl, have a little fun…

CHERYL. I can't play with you guys like that this summer. Mom isn't here, I have work to do.

*(***CHERYL** *exits to kitchen,* **KENT** *follows her to grab another beer from fridge.)*

TAYLOR. Fine. *(to* **FLIP***)* Your turn.

CHERYL. *(as* **FLIP** *rolls, to* **KENT***)* She's a little serious about this, isn't she?

TAYLOR. *(yelling toward kitchen)* Hurry up, honey! You're missing my brilliance. *(to* **FLIP***)* History…O.K. What South Vietnamese President was assassinated by his generals in 1963?

FLIP. Let me read that.

TAYLOR. You can't do that.

*(***KENT** *returns from kitchen, with new bottle.)*

FLIP. I get South Vietnamese President, he gets Pavlov.

DAD. *(entering from study)* Ngo Dinh Diem.

KENT. Dad!

DAD. Yes sir. The South Vietnamese president. I met his brother in '72.

FLIP. You made it.

DAD. Sons. You know, a little known thing about Ngo Dinh…

KENT. We didn't hear you drive up…

DAD. Oh, I flew in, had the shuttle drop me off at the end of the drive.

FLIP. You didn't bring the car?

DAD. Your mom's bringing it tomorrow…

FLIP. Tomorrow? I don't understand?

DAD. So, little known fact about Ngo Dinh…

TAYLOR. Dr. LeVay…So nice to meet you…I'm…

DAD. I'm sorry…going on like that. *(to* **FLIP** *– assuming* **TAYLOR** *is his guest)* Flip, you weren't going to introduce us?

KENT. No. Dad, this is Taylor. Taylor Bradley Scott. Beautiful, isn't she…

TAYLOR. *(to* **KENT***)* You didn't tell them about me?

DAD. Oh. *(momentarily confused, he's assumed* **TAYLOR***'s with* **FLIP***…)* O.K. *(assessing her)* Nice. *(to* **KENT***)* Well done. Ms. Bradley Scott… *(***DAD** *has recovered.)* Beautiful doesn't do this exceptional creature justice. It's an honor, my dear.

KENT. Dad…I mentioned Taylor…my fiancée…her father was…

*(***DAD** *kisses her hand, and bows with a flourish.* **KENT** *and* **FLIP** *exchange a knowing look. He's always had a way with the ladies.)*

DAD. Of course….James Bradley Scott…yes, of course… Well, again, so nice to meet you…

TAYLOR. Dr. LeVay.

DAD. Too formal. *(beat)* Dad would be weird, huh? How 'bout you call me Joseph?

TAYLOR. O.K. Dr. *(beat)* Sir…uh, Joseph.

DAD. Your dad was a great man. Great man. I just regret I didn't have the opportunity to know him.

TAYLOR. Yeah, yeah, I regret that too.

DAD. It's been a year now? So sorry for your loss. Grief's a bitch, huh?

TAYLOR. Guess so.

DAD. Which was my favorite, you boys remember, I made you read it and write a report one summer, *(searching on shelf for book)* Oh yeah, um, it's right there, right there…oh yeah, "*The Bonds of Intellectual Freedom*".

TAYLOR. That's a lot of people's favorite. *(to* **FLIP** *and* **KENT***)* Are we playing or not guys?

DAD. Won him a Pulitzer, didn't it?

TAYLOR. His second. So, whose turn?

DAD. Kickin' their asses, I see.

TAYLOR. Yes, sir. But it's no fun, they don't want to play.

DAD. Because you're kickin' their asses.

TAYLOR. I'm trying.

*(***CHERYL** *enters, drying her hands on a dishtowel.)*

DAD. Cheryl! As I live and breathe. This is not the little girl I saw last year, surely not. Boys, there's a ravishing young woman toiling away in our kitchen.

CHERYL. Hi Dr. LeVay. Mom said you'd know. Wasn't Mrs. LeVay supposed to tell you? Mom's sick.

DAD. Still?

CHERYL. Again.

DAD. I'm sorry to hear that, please give her my best.

CHERYL. I came up Thursday. Where is Mrs. LeVay?

DAD. I'm sure we're in good hands.

CHERYL. Can I fix you something?

DAD. That'd be great. You know what I like.

CHERYL. On black or white rye?

DAD. Let's keep it black. Extra mustard, O.K.

CHERYL. I know.

*(***CHERYL** *exits to kitchen.)*

FLIP. So…where's Ma?

DAD. Your mom and I would have driven up tomorrow, but she thought she might have morning meetings–

FLIP. So she told you to just go ahead?

KENT. You just left? You couldn't wait for her?…

FLIP. *(trying to save* **KENT** *from himself)* Hey, hey, hey…

DAD. *(to* **KENT***)* What?

TAYLOR. Dr. LeVay, the house is beautiful.

DAD. *(to* **KENT***)* So, what's up with you? Found a career you want to stick with for five minutes?

KENT. Flip has a friend joining him. You should ask him about her…

DAD. So, you're going to support your beautiful wife writing books now, I hear.

TAYLOR. Spoon is very talented. And I'm supporting myself just fine. You really should read his –

DAD. Spoon?

TAYLOR. Oh, my nickname for him. He brought the manuscript –

KENT. Taylor, don't…

DAD. That's sweet, flatware. So son, you're a very talented fiction writer for whom I paid to get a law degree, a business degree, and a Masters in sociology.

TAYLOR. Spoon just got a publisher.

DAD. Random House? Dell?

KENT. It's a small, reputable house…

DAD. Oh. Small…

KENT. Reputable…

TAYLOR. Maybe Spoo…Kent told you? I'm doing a post-doc at Johns Hopkins. Entomology.

FLIP. Dad. You've only been here ten minutes, lighten up. I read the novel, it's good. Come on, let's get you some food.

*(***FLIP** *and* **DAD** *enter kitchen, where* **CHERYL** *has set the table, and is preparing an elaborate sandwich.)*

CHERYL. Oh…Flip. Can I make you one too?

FLIP. No Thanks. I'm cool. Gotta watch my girlish figure.

CHERYL. You're funny.

(In living room:)

TAYLOR. That was intense.

KENT. Not even. That was mild.

TAYLOR. You're shrinking.

KENT. I'm fine.

(In kitchen:)

DAD. Pickles.

CHERYL. Yes, sir, I know.

(In living room:)

TAYLOR. Please don't let him turn you into a thirteen year-old. I like you grown up.

KENT. That's what parents do.

TAYLOR. Parents who are around, I guess.

(In kitchen:)

DAD. The beef is shaved,

DAD & CHERYL. not sliced –

CHERYL. Right.

(In living room:)

TAYLOR. You didn't tell them I was coming?

KENT. It's not that deep. Really. I told Ma. She probably decided to let Dad meet you…he's hard on me…it would have been a thing. More of what you just saw, you know.

TAYLOR. *(cuddling on sofa)* So, you wanna keep playing, I'm just a piece of pie away from victory?

KENT. No…No, please don't make me play…

*(***TAYLOR** *kisses* **KENT**.*)*

TAYLOR. You're a good man Kent LeVay. And you're a fine writer. The world will know it.

KENT. Let's go upstairs. You can remind me how grown up I am.

TAYLOR. *(as they cross to stairs)* Well, how grown up you wanna be?

KENT. How grown up you wanna make me feel?

(They exit up stairs.)

(In kitchen:)

DAD. So, you have a guest coming, huh? An important one?

FLIP. A friend, Dad.

*(***CHERYL** *moves closer, unnoticed.)*

DAD. You don't usually bring your friends around when we're all here.

FLIP. She's cool. Met her at the practice. Came in yelling at me about her mother's lift. Said I was taking advantage. She was right.

DAD. Met your mom under similar circumstances.

CHERYL. Well, if that'll be all?

DAD. Have you heard this story, Cheryl?

CHERYL. Every anniversary, every birthday, every thanksgiving. So, I'll just be in the…

*(***CHERYL** *grabs phone and escapes to living room. She dials.)*

(In kitchen:)

FLIP. We've all heard this story, Dad….

DAD. One of those brown bag cotillions.

(In living room, picking up bottles, on phone:)

CHERYL. Hey, Ma….

(In kitchen:)

FLIP. Yeah, you've told us…

DAD. You know, they'd hold the bag up to your face,

FLIP. Many times…

DAD. …run the comb through your hair and if the comb can't get through, or the bag's lighter than you, well…

DAD & FLIP. clearly you're at the wrong party.

(In living room:)

CHERYL. …it moved to your…? *(beat, she sits)* Wait wait wait….Pancreas?

(In kitchen:)

DAD. So I fail on both sides, and I'll never forget, this…

DAD & FLIP. …yellow-wasted girl in an ugly ass bright pink dress…

DAD. …is saying, I'm sorry Dr. LeVay, but uh, I'm not allowed, you understand…And just then, this beautiful woman,

FLIP. In a blue dress with long brown curls and grey eyes…

DAD. Let me tell the story!

(In living room:)

CHERYL. I should come home… *(beat)* Yes, Ma'am.

(In kitchen:)

DAD. This beautiful woman walks in. *(referring to sandwich)* This is delicious… *(noticing she's not there, yelling)* Cheryl!

(In living room:)

CHERYL. Hold on, Ma…

(In kitchen:)

DAD. Cheryl!

(In living room:)

CHERYL. O.K., so you gone be O.K.?

DAD. Cheryl!

CHERYL. O.K. *(beat)* Love you too. *(runs to kitchen)* Sir?

DAD. This is delicious. Thank you.

CHERYL. Welcome…

(Enters living room…half-heartedly straightening up. She notices James Bradley Scott's novel on the coffee table, reads the jacket description, flips through it, reads for a second, puts it down and exits toward back.)

(In kitchen:)

DAD. Where was I?

FLIP. Beautiful woman walks in…

DAD. And she says, Dr. LeVay, I read about you in last month's *Harvard Review,* and I cannot believe you're going to just stand there and let this bitch turn you away, I would have danced with you…and she went on and on.

*(***DAD** *pauses dramatically.)*

FLIP. Fine. *(beat)* Did you get in?

DAD. Hell no. But I got your mother's name and number.

DAD & FLIP. And the rest is history.

FLIP. So, my friend is Italian.

DAD. You mean, she's White.

FLIP. She's Italian.

DAD. Oh, well. 'She here?

FLIP. She's coming tomorrow.

DAD. *(amused)* Wanted to lay the groundwork with your mom, huh?

FLIP. Well, with both of you. I just thought it would be good if you know.

DAD. You sound like you're embarrassed.

FLIP. No, just, aware. Mom's gonna freak, isn't she?

DAD. Hard to say…She's got some other stuff on her mind.

FLIP. 'She alright?

DAD. Yeah, you know women. You been to visit this girl's people?

FLIP. Only the artist aunt in the city. We'll drive over in a few weeks. They're in Kenny.

DAD. Bunk Port? Oh. O.K. I'm sure they'll be happy to see you.

FLIP. Seriously Dad, what's up with Mom?

DAD. Why you ask?

FLIP. Just not like her to get here after us. She lives for this.

DAD. I told you, she has meetings.

FLIP. Yeah, O.K.

*(***FLIP** *gets up to leave.)*

Hey Dad, take it easy on Kent, alright.

DAD. I don't know what you're talking about.

FLIP. Sure you do.

*(***KENT** *has entered unseen, with his manuscript as* **DAD** *is speaking.)*

DAD. The boy's a fuck up. Hey…I don't set unreasonably high standards. But I've given you boys everything. There's no need for floundering.

KENT. Just came down for some milk. Seems if we can't all live up to the high standards you set, at least we can watch our calcium intake.

FLIP. That's what I'm talking about, Dad. It's harsh.

KENT. I don't need you to defend me.

FLIP. You don't. That's funny. O.K. Then I'm out.

*(***FLIP** *exits.)*

KENT. *(pulling manuscript out of his pocket)* I've been wanting to talk with you about something.

DAD. What, you're starting dental school next fall?

KENT. No. I just thought I could show you…

DAD. Look son. Flip's right, that was harsh, I'm sorry. But I swear I don't know what to do with you.

KENT. Do with me?

DAD. It's time to step up. You're about to have a wife, God help you. Maybe start a family? You can't be out there like you've been, trying to find yourself and what not. It's not about you anymore. *(pulling out his blackberry)* I'll help you. *(scrolling through his address book)* Figure out what you want to do with your life and get back to me…I'll make some calls. But I'm not entertaining this mess about now I'm a writer…damn boy…man up. Get a job. *(beat)* You have something to say?

KENT. *(pocketing his manuscript)* No, sir.

DAD. I didn't think so.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 3

(Later, same evening.)

*(***CHERYL** *is speaking quietly on the phone.)*

CHERYL. …I don't make waffles. Ma…Ma! It's not efficient. There's a kitchen full of food…I used your list…yeah. But I got some other stuff. I hear you, but, *(beat)* but *(beat)* uh huh. Yes, ma'am. Listen Ma…there's like a b'jillian kinds of cereal, granola, yogurt, whole milk, 2%, soy, heavy cream, raspberries, strawberries, bagels, lox…

*(***DAD** *enters and begins rummaging through cabinets in kitchen.)*

O.K. Ma, I've gotta go. Yeah, yes, ma'am, but really, I have to go…uh huh. *(long pause)* ask, "If there's anything he wants to say…", about what Ma? Fine. I'll ask, but I don't understand. O.K. Love you too. Feel better all right. Bye. *(to* **DAD***)* Sorry about that.

DAD. Oh, no problem.. I was just –

CHERYL. Looking for something to eat?

DAD. Right.

CHERYL. What do you have a taste for? I could whip something up.

DAD. Not sure…

CHERYL. Sandwich?

DAD. Maybe…

CHERYL. Soup?

DAD. I don't know…

CHERYL. *(playful)* Maybe there's something specific you were looking for?

DAD. Like what?

CHERYL. I don't know. Maybe something you were saving for a special occasion?

DAD. Like?

CHERYL. Caviar?

DAD. Have you ever known me to eat anything raw, Ellie?

CHERYL. Cheryl.

DAD. Of course.

CHERYL. I think what you're looking for is behind the flour bin.

DAD. You think, huh?

CHERYL. I thought it was Mom's.

DAD. Behind the flour bin, you say?

CHERYL. Yes sir.

DAD. Then I guess you know what else I need.

*(***CHERYL** *points to a cabinet near the refrigerator.)*

*(***DAD** *pulls out hot sauce.)*

*(***CHERYL** *reaches behind the flour bin and pulls out a large jar of pickled pigs feet.)*

DAD. Pickled Pigs feet.

CHERYL. Can I get you a bowl?

DAD. No, I'm good now. Thank you dear.

*(***CHERYL** *begins to shuck the corn.)*

Would you like to join me?

CHERYL. Oh God no! *(beat)* Thank you, sir.

DAD. That's funny. Too good for the finer things, huh?

CHERYL. No, it's just….

DAD. Your mother likes them cold you know.

CHERYL. Yes sir. I've had them before. When I was too young to know better.

DAD. Yeah, my kids won't touch them either. That's why I have to hide them. Or I'll never hear the end of it.

*(***CHERYL** *brushes silk from corn.* **DAD** *eats, then:)*

So how is Ellie?

CHERYL. Well, she pretty sick.

DAD. You told me. I thought they were supposed to have gotten it all…

CHERYL. Yeah, I thought so too.

DAD. Well, it's very nice of you to fill in.

CHERYL. Oh, of course.

DAD. You talk to Mrs. LeVay?

CHERYL. This morning. But that was Mom on the phone just now.

DAD. What'd she have to say?

CHERYL. Mom?

DAD. Mrs. LeVay.

CHERYL. She said I shouldn't let you eat cheese… reminded me to make sure Juan turns over the compost…Flip's allergic to nuts, but I knew that…

DAD. Just, if you needed to talk about anything.

CHERYL. O.K. Sure. *(beat)* I'm struggling with which school would be best for science…or if I should do a liberal arts thing my first year…

DAD. Just if you needed to…

CHERYL. Right. Of course. I'm sorry. Yes. No, it's good. Well, Mom did tell me to ask you if…

*(***TAYLOR** *enters in P.J.s and robe.)*

TAYLOR. Dr. LeVay.

DAD. Joseph.

TAYLOR. Right. Hi Cheryl. Um, Spoon asked me to grab him some milk, I was just…

CHERYL. I'll get it.

*(***CHERYL** *starts to get glasses down.)*

TAYLOR. Oh, just tell me where things are. I'm perfectly capable.

CHERYL. Didn't think you weren't "capable", just thought you wanted some milk. Fine, glasses up there. Milk in the fridge.

*(***TAYLOR** *takes down two glasses and pours milk while* **DAD** *and* **CHERYL** *continue to talk.)*

DAD. So, about the house…

CHERYL. O.K., Mrs. LeVay asked me to make her a list of repairs for contractors. *(She walks to a list on the fridge.)* So far I have gutters, the light fixture in the upstairs bathroom, some loose latticework under the porch. Oh, and the storm windows and shutters.

DAD. I could have the boys do that.

CHERYL. O.K. Should I cross it off?

DAD. Leave it on.

CHERYL. O.K. then.

DAD. Great.

*(***CHERYL** *has finished shucking and rinses off corn and puts it in the fridge while* **DAD** *eats.)*

CHERYL. So yeah, Mom said to ask you…I don't know like, if there's something you want to say to me…

DAD. No dear.

CHERYL. I don't know…I didn't quite understand… something you might want to say…

DAD. No.

CHERYL. O.K…but Mama said…

DAD. I said no. Don't you have something to do?

*(***CHERYL** *exits to living room. After a moment of idle dusting,* **CHERYL** *sees Dr. Bradley Scott's book, curls up on a chair and reads in the glow of a lamp.)*

TAYLOR. Milk?

DAD. What? No. Thank you.

TAYLOR. Gets a little cool here at night, huh?

DAD. Yes. Yes it is. A little cool.

*(***KENT** *enters…)*

KENT. Baby, what's taking you…Oh, Dad. Found the pigs feet I see. *(to* **TAYLOR***)* You've been down here forever, bed's getting cold.

DAD. Taylor's still trying to ingratiate herself…that takes a little time.

*(***DAD** *screws the lid on his Pigs Feet and takes them with him.)*

DAD. *(cont.)* Well I'm off, see you kids later.

*(***DAD** *exits.)*

TAYLOR. What's up with your dad and Cheryl?

KENT. What?

TAYLOR. I don't know, they just did the weirdest dance…

KENT. Dancing?

TAYLOR. Noooo…Just weird, I don't know.

KENT. You haven't figured out yet that my family's weird? Wait 'till Mom gets here, they'll snap back in line. Can I read a re-write?

*(***KENT** *pulls some pages from his back pocket, they settle in at the table.)*

(In living room: **CHERYL** *continues reading in her small pool of light, she is thoroughly engrossed.…)*

See, I wanted the confrontation with Michael and his dad to be subtle…it can't be histrionic, or it's cheap… O.K…here it is… *(reading)* "It was in his father's brow. A measured crease that was always present, but deepened, not with concern as one would expect, but whenever the conversation shifted from him. Michael saw the shadow in that furrow grow darker, and he knew that soon his opening would have passed… It was not possible to express displeasure, even uncertainty in his father's presence, but a certain amount of honesty was required…a certain kind of communication, a language that played out in anecdotes and connotations, might…"

(Lights fade as **KENT** *reads.)*

Scene 4

(Following morning. Morning lights filter in through windows. In living room, **CHERYL** *cleans the mess from the night before. Putting away Trivial Pursuit board, placing glasses on tray, etc.)*

(The following is a highly choreographed dance of territory, class, and duty.)

*(***TAYLOR** *enters kitchen from outside with a net and a jar over which is a piece of paper. Setting the jar on the island, paper side down, she finds honey in the cabinet. She carefully spoons a teaspoon onto the counter next to the jar, slides the paper out from beneath, and slides the jar on top of the honey. She looks for a long time and then, very slowly removes the jar. A fly remains on the counter.* **TAYLOR** *slowly kneels, so that her head is level with the counter and observes the fly on the honey.)*

*(***CHERYL** *enters, unobserved, with a stack of dishes, places them on the counter…grabs a flyswatter from a hook and unceremoniously swats* **TAYLOR***'s fly.)*

TAYLOR. What'd you do that for?

CHERYL. What? *(noticing sticky mess)* What the hell?…

TAYLOR. Didn't you see that I was…

CHERYL. You were? …Is this honey?

TAYLOR. Observing. The fly…

CHERYL. The fly? You put honey on the table? *(beat)* To observe the…O.K., O.K. I, I didn't know. I'm sorry. *(beat)* Why?

TAYLOR. It's what I do. Your specimens up here are a little different than the ones I see everyday.

CHERYL. Specimens?

TAYLOR. Insects. I study them. The household fly mostly, but I collect, whatever, you know.

CHERYL. Sure. *(pause)* You always get up this early?

TAYLOR. The earlier the better.

CHERYL. I read your dad's book last night.

TAYLOR. Really? The whole thing?

CHERYL. What? You're surprised?

TAYLOR. No. It's just so long. *(beat)* And dense.

CHERYL. I thought it was good. He was pretty radical, huh?

TAYLOR. I guess. In his way.

CHERYL. I liked what he was saying about the economic ramifications of the slave trade…*(beat)* …and how he makes it so specific…*(beat)* and traces the debt from shippers to traders to banks…*(pause)* You read it, right?

TAYLOR. Of course.

(She has. She has read all of her father's books.)

(beat) (beat) (beat) (beat)

CHERYL. Well, what's your favorite part?

TAYLOR. Let me help you clean up this mess.

CHERYL. It's fine.

TAYLOR. I could start in on the dishes then, or….

CHERYL. No, thank you.

TAYLOR. I don't mind, really.

CHERYL. I said no thanks.

TAYLOR. Sorry. *(beat)* Do you get the paper here?

CHERYL. Yeah.

TAYLOR. Where?

CHERYL. What?

TAYLOR. The paper. Where do I get it?

CHERYL. It's on the porch if it came yet. Do you want me to…

TAYLOR. No, thanks. Thanks.

CHERYL. Sure.

*(***TAYLOR** *exits to porch.* **CHERYL** *loads dishwasher.* **TAYLOR** *re-enters loaded down with a huge stack of papers.)*

TAYLOR. Wow. Dr. LeVay gets everything.

CHERYL. Yeah, we call and have them start up a couple of weeks before they get here. He gets nervous if they're not waiting for him.

TAYLOR. Do you think he'd mind if I started in on them.

CHERYL. No.

TAYLOR. O.K. then. If I can't help clean up this mess… *(silence)* I'll just. O.K.

*(***TAYLOR** *fans papers out on island.)*

Do you mind if I put on a pot of coffee?

CHERYL. I'll do it. I usually wait until the first person gets up.

TAYLOR. I can do it.

CHERYL. That's o.k.

TAYLOR. I don't mind.

CHERYL. De-caf or regular?

TAYLOR. Whatever's easiest.

CHERYL. You've made coffee before, right?

TAYLOR. Sure.

CHERYL. So you know one is the same as the other, right.

TAYLOR. I'm sorry. Regular. I'll just take the papers, I'll just…O.K. then… yeah…O.K.

*(***TAYLOR** *backs out of the kitchen with her papers.* **CHERYL** *puts the coffee on and begins making breakfast.)*

*(***TAYLOR** *settles on couch and sorts papers, removing coverings, placing them in order in individual piles.)*

(This goes on for some time. All is quiet. Just when the lack of action is unnerving, we are startled by a loud knock on the door. **CHERYL** *starts for it, but before she enters living room* **TAYLOR** *says:)*

TAYLOR. I've got it.

(She opens door. **KIMBER** *stands on other side looking appropriately casual, but notably put together; in stark contrast to* **TAYLOR***'s cut-offs, bra-less, faded tank top, and bandanna.)*

TAYLOR. Oh, hello.

KIMBER. Hi. This is 2020 Brayburry isn't it?

TAYLOR. I don't know? There's no sign? *(She pokes her head out of door.)*

KIMBER. Couldn't find it, no.

TAYLOR. This is the LeVay residence.

KIMBER. Good, good. I'm in the right place. Hi, I'm Kimber Davies. Flip's friend.

TAYLOR. Of course. He told us about you. That you were coming. Come in. Here, let me help with your…

KIMBER. You must be Cheryl, Flip's told me about you. Congratulations, about graduating…

TAYLOR. No. Taylor. Spoon, Kent. Harold, Flip's brother's fiancée.

KIMBER. I'm sorry. So nice to meet you.

TAYLOR. I thought you'd have an accent.

KIMBER. What?

TAYLOR. Oh. Anyway, I'm up before everyone and I was feeling a little…you know, like the new girl. I usually clean when I want to fit in, but that's Cheryl's job, so, I'm, I'm a little lost.

KIMBER. O.K. *(pause)* So, uh…Is Flip here?

TAYLOR. I think they're all still asleep. We could wake them up, or…

*(***KIMBER** *puts her suitcase by the stairs.)*

KIMBER. I can wait it out. Is there coffee?

TAYLOR. *(crossing toward kitchen with* **KIMBER***…)* Yes…you can have regular or decaf as both are very easy to make….

(As they enter kitchen, **KENT** *and* **FLIP** *bound down the stairs, both in boxers and t-shirts.)*

KENT. What's the hurry, man?

(In kitchen:)

TAYLOR. Cheryl, this is Kimber.

(In living room:)

FLIP. I thought I heard the door.

KENT. So?

(In kitchen:)

KIMBER. Hi, Cheryl.

(In living room:)

FLIP. Can't run interference from the bedroom.

(In kitchen:)

TAYLOR. Cheryl, this is Kimber.

KIMBER. Flip's told me so much about….

CHERYL. Coffee's ready. Grapefruit's in the fridge.

FLIP. *(entering with* **KENT***)* You made it. *(They hug.)*

CHERYL. I better go get the…

*(***CHERYL** *exits toward her bedroom while* **TAYLOR** *pulls mugs out of cabinet and pours.)*

FLIP. Were the directions O.K., baby?

KIMBER. Oh fine. It was a long flight, bad air, you know, over the mountains.

FLIP. Poor baby…

KIMBER. Hey…nice shirt…

FLIP. This girl I know got it for me…

KIMBER. She has good taste…

FLIP. Yes, you do…

KENT. Buorngiorno, Bella!

KIMBER. Oh, O.K. then. Bourngiorno.

FLIP. I'm sorry I haven't made introductions. Kimber this is…

KIMBER. You're Kent. Of course. Nice to meet you. I enjoyed your book.

KENT. You let her read it without asking…

FLIP. You've met Taylor then…

TAYLOR. Yeah. Yeah. We go way back. Coffee?

*(***DAD** *enters kitchen…)*

DAD. Cheryl, you know who messed with my papers?

FLIP. Dad.

DAD. *(seeing* **KIMBER***)* Oh, Buongiorno Bella, Signorina. Benvenuto a casa nostra. La tua bellezza e' piu' grande dei tutti fiori nel mondo…

(Lights fade.)

Scene 5

(Later that evening.)

*(***TAYLOR**, **KENT**, **FLIP**, **KIMBER**, *and* **DAD** *lounge in living room. Lobster carcasses litter the coffee table. Drunken laughter fills the room.)*

KIMBER. Oh my God…Stop…Stop…

TAYLOR. I could eat Lobster everyday…

KENT. You can….

TAYLOR. It's so good….

FLIP. Anything's good when you dip it in melted butter…

DAD. Taylor, you were telling us about…

FLIP. Yes…Taylor, please regale us with more amusing anecdotes…

TAYLOR. Have I been talking too much… It doesn't matter….

DAD. Your Junior year…

*(***TAYLOR** *looks at* **KENT**…*)*

KENT. You don't have to…

TAYLOR. My Junior year, college….

KIMBER. I'm sorry to interrupt, he really told you guys that I'm Italian?

TAYLOR. Yeah. But you are, right?

KIMBER. No. Straight-up Wasp.

FLIP. Your Aunt has a pasta maker…

KENT. Let it go man, you're busted.

FLIP. Mom would kick our asses if she saw us.

KENT. We eat at the dining room table.

FLIP. She flips out if you eat so much as a bologney sandwich on the couch.

DAD. And watch yourself, it'll be my ass if you leave crumbs.

KIMBER. Kent, I've been wanting to tell you how much I really enjoyed your novel.

TAYLOR. That's right, you read it.

*(***CHERYL** *enters, clearing the table as conversation continues.)*

KIMBER. Yeah, it was really good.

*(***CHERYL** *removes* **KENT***'s plate.)*

KENT. *(to* **KIMBER***)* Thank you.

KIMBER & CHERYL. You're welcome.

CHERYL. Oh.

KIMBER. It reminded me of some of my own family dynamics.

TAYLOR. Really?

CHERYL. There's a banana pudding if anyone's interested?

DAD. Oh God Bless you, Cheryl.

KIMBER. A good writer communicates across worlds by effectively communicating the specificity of his own world.

TAYLOR. I think the strength is in how universal the story is…

KENT. No Taylor, I think she's right. It's only universal because I'm specific about the characters, the relationships…

TAYLOR. *(to* **KIMBER***)* You were a lit major?

CHERYL. So, you all want dessert?

FLIP. Yes, thanks, Cheryl.

*(***CHERYL** *exits.)*

KIMBER. Political Science with a focus on African American Studies undergrad… My dissertation was on achievement gap issues…I'm just saying, I was moved. I'm the youngest too…

DAD. So, we're talking about Kent's book? I thought Taylor was saying something about…

KENT. That youngest child thing is a trip, isn't it!?

KIMBER. Oh God, yes. But also, your imagery is amazing, really out of this world, and the ease with which you segue from one setting to the next. And the landscape, like a metaphor for the fragile state of Michael's psyche.

DAD. Well, since we haven't all read it, perhaps we can talk about something…

KENT. I don't know if I'd call it fragile. I think he's stronger than you might…

KIMBER. Absolutely, I misspoke, he's terribly strong. But there's a vulnerability that's so attractive…

TAYLOR. Attractive?

KIMBER. Appealing.

TAYLOR. Appealing.

KIMBER. Is there a lot of you in Michael?…

KENT. Well, certainly the "appealing" parts.

*(***KENT** *and* **KIMBER** *share a laugh.* **FLIP** *puts his arm around* **KIMBER** *possessively.)*

FLIP. Yeah…so, this is nice. Dad, where the hell is Mom. This is crazy…

KENT. Wasn't she coming this morning?

FLIP. I'm calling, where's my phone?…

*(***FLIP** *looks for his cell phone.)*

It's upstairs. Kimber, could you run up and…

DAD. *(to* **KIMBER***)* Sit.

(She sits.)

(to **FLIP** *and* **KENT***)* Don't disturb your mother…for years you guys get here whenever the hell it works with your schedule…you can't afford her that much latitude? *(to* **TAYLOR***)* Taylor, you started a story that we so rudely interrupted…

TAYLOR. What?

DAD. Your Junior year…

*(***CHERYL** *returns with a tray of dessert dishes. She dishes out the pudding and serves it as the conversation continues.)*

TAYLOR. I don't know…It's not such a big deal. Well, I sat down to play a game of solitaire and I didn't stop for the rest of the semester.

KIMBER. Cards?

TAYLOR. No.

KENT. Computer. It was the first semester of her junior year and…

TAYLOR. And I used my work study money to get this cute little laptop and it came with Solitaire.

KIMBER. But you graduated early, right?

KENT. She did, and with honors. You don't have to go into this honey.

KIMBER. Then I don't get it, what was the problem?

TAYLOR. It's not a problem, really. I'm not ashamed. I had a Women's Studies class that morning. One of these really intimate little, what do they call them, a little honors seminar. We were so liberal and smart. It was like eight white girls named Becky… *(to* **KIMBER***)* No offense I'm sure they had different names.

KIMBER. None taken.

TAYLOR. …and a gay white guy and this quiet little Asian girl and me. And they're talking about Weber's *(pronounced* "VAY-BER"*)* theories on social dominance and they've built this hypothetical utopian society…

FLIP. Oh yeah, "Economy and Society"…

TAYLOR. Wow, O.K. So, *(to* **FLIP***)* unlike anything Weber could have conceived of, this society would have no men, and so would be perfect. I look over at Tofer,

KIMBER. Tofer?

TAYLOR. The gay white guy. And I'm waiting for him to say something…but we've all had enough psych to know what happens to the power dynamics when you're the only one.

KIMBER. Yeah.

*(***CHERYL** *hands* **TAYLOR** *her bowl;* **TAYLOR** *over-thanks her.)*

TAYLOR. Thank you, Cheryl. So, Tofer's quiet. And I say, "Is your utopia free of color distinctions." And I'm careful not to look at the Asian girl.

DAD. Fucked 'em up, hey?

KENT. Dad.

DAD. What. She fucked 'em up.

KIMBER. Woman.

TAYLOR. What?

KIMBER. The Asian "woman."

TAYLOR. Fine, I'm careful not to look at the Asian woman, because I don't know, I don't want to assume that she's got a similar world view.

FLIP. I've dated Asian girls. They're down.

KIMBER. Women.

TAYLOR. It's all relative. From where I sit the bulk of the racial stuff they get is that people assume they're smart, guys want to date them, and they fit all of the shoes on the sales rack.

KIMBER. Well, as long as there's no hypocrisy in your lamentations.

FLIP. No no Baby, that's not hypocrisy, that's straight up racism.

TAYLOR. And one of the Beckys says, "Like, what do you mean, color distinctions." And I look at the professor, with her pageboy-Birkenstock-unshaved ass, and she's not giving it up. So I'm on. And I explain that not only is it problematic that we haven't stopped to consider racial tensions in our now female-dominated society, but we haven't even begun to consider class.

FLIP. I'm not sure that class matters.

TAYLOR. Of course class matters.

DAD. Dear, I'm sure your mamma raised you better than that. This house has been full of octaroons and quadroons for three generations and you think our loving white neighbors wouldn't rather we move over to the bluffs with the other Negros? Cheryl, could you top me off please dear?

*(***CHERYL** *pours him more wine.)*

You can just leave the bottle…thanks.

TAYLOR. That's not my point.

FLIP. Well, I haven't noticed it matters so much how much money you have, if you're a nigger folks gonna see a nigger. Don't you think, Cheryl?

*(***CHERYL** *doesn't have time to answer.)*

KIMBER. But surely money creates a social buffer?

DAD. Taylor was talking.

FLIP. Taylor is always talking.

DAD. I want to know. What happened?

TAYLOR. Really, it's hard to remember, it's all sort of blurred together,

FLIP. Like she hasn't told this a million times…

TAYLOR. Fine. So one of the Becky's gets quite hostile, and then just downright ignorant, and eventually she was saying that if it was a Utopian society there would be only one dominant race, and the teacher is agreeing and I'm trying to show them that this would not be a Utopian society, that this would be the Third Reich… and the Asian girl is saying it's just for purposes of discussion, but she's clearly very upset. But this is the kicker, I get a call from the professor the next day. She'd like to apologize for letting things get out of control. She's pretty sure that at some point things may have become racist, and I say, I think it started when you decided to teach a class called feminist voices of the 20th century and include no women of color.

KIMBER. That's awful.

TAYLOR. Well, she explains there really aren't women of color accepted in the canon of hard feminist discourse.

KIMBER. What about Bell Hooks?

TAYLOR. That's what I said!

*(***KIMBER** *goes for hi-five,* **TAYLOR** *leaves her hanging.)*

And then she misquotes my Dad back to me as if he would support such nonsense. He would, but still, she doesn't know that.

(The telephone rings.)

TAYLOR. I can wait, if you need to….

DAD. Cheryl' get it.

(In kitchen:)

CHERYL. Hello…oh… sure, one second…

(In living room.)

DAD. Go on.

TAYLOR. I guess it was the last straw or something. That was it. I'd been fighting pretty much the same battle since high school.

KIMBER. Seems you would have learned to put in perspective.

TAYLOR. Perspective? I was tired. I was supposed to be getting an education, but instead, I'm teaching cultural sensitivity 101 every time I turn around, and have been since like, third grade. So I go home and take a shower and turn on my little laptop, and it's so pretty and I select Vegas style…and I play and sleep and occasionally eat and I don't stop playing.

*(***CHERYL** *pokes her head out of kitchen.)*

CHERYL. Dr. LeVay, it's Mrs. LeVay…

DAD. Tell her I'll call her back.

CHERYL. She says it's…

DAD. What did I say, Cheryl?

CHERYL. Yes sir.

*(***CHERYL** *exits.)*

KENT. Dad!

DAD. What?

*(***FLIP** *and* **KENT** *exchange a look, this is strange behavior from* **DAD**.*)*

FLIP. So you're saying white, feminist discourse precipitated a nervous breakdown?

KIMBER. Flip.

KENT. She's just telling you what happened to…

DAD. I think she's saying the white people drove her out of her ravin-ass mind.

*(***CHERYL** *enters again, continues clearing off table, pouring coffee or some such…)*

TAYLOR. Yes Dr. LeVay, the white people finally drove me crazy. But I didn't know I was crazy, I thought I was just really liking solitaire. Didn't matter I was a straight A student. No one missed me, the only raisin in the oatmeal, the only speck of nutmeg on the egg nog.

KIMBER. Maybe they were grateful for your absence. *(beat)* I don't mean that badly.

TAYLOR. Sure you do.

KIMBER. No, no, all I'm saying, really, is that it's hard to have someone rubbing your nose in your own bullshit all the time. It sounds like you can be relentless.

TAYLOR. I don't know. I think you can be relentless and keep chipping away at the bullshit, or you can be passive and confused and lose your mind.

FLIP. You lost it anyway.

KIMBER. Flip.

FLIP. Stop "Flipping" me. This is ridiculous, and we're indulging her. Come on, we all went to good schools.

TAYLOR. By good you mean white?

FLIP. There were Black folks like me at Exeter and Harvard.

TAYLOR. That was my problem. The black folks at Harvard were like you.

FLIP. What?

TAYLOR. Come on. I couldn't have hung out with your crowd. You were flying to Aspen for the weekend and driving around in SUV's and shit.

FLIP. I had Dad's old Saab.

TAYLOR. Oh, well then.

KENT. Cheryl.

*(***CHERYL** *is caught off guard.)*

CHERYL. Oh…Coffee?

*(***CHERYL** *collects wine glasses.)*

KENT. No thank you. But Cheryl, you went to a nice school.

DAD. Cheryl had a scholarship at the best high school in Manhattan.

TAYLOR. That must have been a trip.

CHERYL. It was alright. The classes were amazing.

TAYLOR. Didn't you feel, out of place?

CHERYL. Why?

TAYLOR. It just seems like it would be a difficult transition.

CHERYL. From what? I went to grade school. School is school.

KIMBER. Did you have friends?

CHERYL. I wasn't trying to have friends. I didn't want to be friends with them people. I just wanted to get good grades so I could get a scholarship to college.

DAD. A black girl with a diploma from that school can go anywhere.

KIMBER. Here's what I don't get Taylor…I mean, I work with Black and Latino kids in the inner-city…

TAYLOR. I know you didn't just…

KENT. Honey…Come on….

KIMBER. That was my dissertation, around inequalities in education. Anyway, I have a hard time feeling sorry for you, daughter of a famous intellectual.

TAYLOR. Just by birth, he got a new family.

KIMBER. Anyway, I swear, some of the places these kids live, it's like a third world country…

TAYLOR. And I guess you saw plenty of those in the peace corps after you bummed around Europe.

KENT. Taylor…

TAYLOR. *(to* **KENT***)* What?! She doesn't know me… *(to* **KIMBER***)* You don't know me…

FLIP. *(to* **KENT***)* Can you shut her up…

KIMBER. *(to* **FLIP***)* That's O.K. honey. I'm O.K. *(to* **TAYLOR***)* Yes, so you know me well. Yes, Europe – Peace Corps. And so help me here, there you were, at this privileged institution, with your famous dad and your new laptop to soothe yourself, and you're upset because some stupid sorority chicks are mean to you?

KENT. *(under his breath)* Oh God….

CHERYL. Seems like a fair question. *(long pause)* So, I'm gonna…O.K.… there's coffee, decaf and regular, in the kitchen.

*(***CHERYL** *stops before getting to the kitchen, now interested in* **TAYLOR***'s tirade.)*

TAYLOR. No Kimber. I was upset because people like you can't see it. Your inner-city kids aren't supposed to succeed…As long as they can stay ignorant and dependent on you, they won't have to mess up the white spaces. They let one or two of us in who've had enough privilege to almost play the game. Just enough to make us think we're special. It's a grand mindfuck. Then Kimmy here goes slummin' for five minutes and knows all about it.

(to **KIMBER***)* You can kiss my black ass is what you can do with your "I'm such a Godamn saint inner fuckin sanctum of rebellious white liberal" bullshit. Don't you ever come at me like that. You need to get your white ass out of my world, or keep your hippie drivel to your own damn self…

(mumbling to herself) Fuckin' I'll show dad what happens if he won't notice me… I'm too deep for cotillions, I'll fuck black and show them all bitch….

(Long…long…long pause. **TAYLOR** *has risen and stands facing a room of shocked faces. Her bravado melts into shame. She rallies.)*

O.K. Did I say that out loud?

(long pause)

FINISH READING THIS SCRIPT

Visit our website to purchase the full script or to explore other titles.

www.samuelfrench.com
www.samuelfrench.co.uk

To stay up to date on all that we are doing, follow us on social media:



*Titles for licensing are subject to availability depending on your territory.

SF PERUSALS