

POLE DANCER

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Big Woman – a sister to the family having the family reunion.

Street women: homeless.

Keeps a PO Box. Received invitation to attend the family reunion.

She waits until the post office near closing, so not to get glares and stares.

She enters and get the invitation. Reads the invitation and as she walks out of the door, holds it to her chest, looks up at heaven and smiles.

People watching her- in the post office, sitting in their cars outside and walking down street- wondered at her site what she could be smiling about. She, still smiling, walked passed the stares and glares.

A three year old boy was walking with his mother (holding his hand) looked at her, smiled and said hello. She looked down at the child and belted a thunderous hello to the child, as his mother pulled him towards the post office door.

She thought to herself, when was the last time she saw her little one?

And sadness overcame her and she began to cry. A thirtyish man saw her crying and asked why she was crying and handed her a folded dollar bill. She would not take it but kept walking towards the woods. The man continued to watch her. She left their belongings there until she came from the post office. (Before the post office workers told her not to come in if she brought her stuff because of the smell.

Fearing that her stuff would be stolen, as so often before, she rarely went to the post office.

As she entered the woods, her mind now on whether her stuff and personal belongings were still there.

Sobbing, she sees her stuff and briefly looked into the bag to see if her belongings were still inside. Being satisfied, she sits down and holding the family reunion invitation, bitterly sobs. Knowing she can't go to the reunion, she can't be seen in her shape, she can't afford it, and above that, she can't let her son see his disgusting mamma.

Reaching into her bag; she pulls out a plastic sandwich bag and looking at the picture, she gently runs her fingers over the face of a bright eyed boy with a million dollar smile. She holds the picture close to her heart and begins to sob silently with so much anguish of heart.

While she cried herself to sleep, the man from the post office goes to a diner next to the post office and purchased a rib and chicken combo dinner.

The cooks tell him, "You've got to be mighty hungry for all of this good food."

MAN smiles at the cook.

Says thanks and pay him.

COOK – Smiles and shaking his head, returns to his grill.

The man, not knowing if the woman was still in the woods or not. He walks cautiously and when he heard her whimpering, he knew she was okay. He said “hello” but she was in a deep and sorrowful sleep. He bowed his head (as if he felt her pain). Placing the food and napkins a few steps away, so when she awake she would not step on it or knock it over.

The man gets up and leaves, looking back only once.

Then he heard the bag open. He smiles (not turning back around) and get into his car and leaves.

The woman was asleep until he approached. She had learned over the years not to move. If someone thinks she is asleep or died, it is best. She had been raped and attacked twice (when she moved or attempted to get up).

She took the ribs and chicken and put her nose into the bag inhaling the most wonderful smell of hickory.

Closing her eyes, she exhaled deeply.

Then she tore open the bag and couldn’t decide whether to eat the chicken, or ribs.

She put both to her mouth and said, “I can’t decide! I can’t decide. Let’s be democratic. Oh!, forget that and then took a big bite of both. Sitting on the damp ground and rocking from side to side and rolling her eyes around and patting her feet. All she could think as she watched the man pull out of the post office was “bless you and thank you.”

Then looking over at the bag, she realizes she had barbeque sauce.

Grabbing the sauce, she dipped her ribs in and then her chicken, eating both she thought she had created divinity.

### THE CHURCH GOING MAN

TRAVIS – Oldest.

Begins at evening time.

He walked into a lobby with a soiled electrician's uniform on.

He is tired.

He pulled a double – trying to help cover for his drug addict friend (who really needs the job).

He goes to his locker and pulls out his lunch pail.

He sniffs and realizes the tuna sandwich he had carried to work two days ago was no good.

He's hungry.

He pulls his pockets out and only has 32 cents. He says "damn."

Then immediately says forgive me Lord.

He looks back behind him at the empty snack bar area at the vending machines. He looks to the right and left and down the hall, then he tips into the snack bar room and was about to shake the vending machine (having his strong, dirty hands on each side) when he glanced through the glass of the vending machine and saw a hidden camera. He pretended he was putting the 32 cents in the machine and he pressed a number and nothing came out.

Then he said, "what's wrong with this machine?"

He got his 32 cents and walked out of the snack bar area and towards his locker.

After 5:30 pm. He returns to his locker and see's a note sticking out. The manager wanted to see him. All he could think about was the vending machine.

As he begins to walk towards the manager's office, all he could think was, he didn't steal anything. And he couldn't even think to say a prayer.

His heart pounding and he becoming more nervous as he approached the office area. He walked through the door and the white secretary looks at him.

He, being very nervous, slightly held the note up, and said, "He wants to see me."

The secretary said, "Sit down."

He, being a large man, sat down on the leather sofa, it sank a little and he quickly cut his eyes at the secretary, who was looking at him under eyed. He tried to smile, but the secretary turned her eyes back to the work on her desk.

He looked at the clock on the wall; it was 5:45 pm. He thought, what's really going on? He doesn't pay for overtime, and I didn't steal anything from the vending machine.

Then the manager's door opened.

The manager and head of security stepped out of the office.

The man, sitting on the couch face changed and his eyes bucking, and his heart beating extremely fast, caused his mouth to fly open. The secretary sits up straight and stares at him. So does the manager and the security officer.

The manager said "Travis."

Travis struggles to get off the sofa. He looks at the secretary, who is shaking her head and rolling her eyes up in disgust.

He stands up and said, "Yes sir."

The manager said, "You're fired."

Travis said, "Fired"

With a bewildered look he said, "Why? Not because of the vending machine. I did not take anything."

The security guard looked at him very hard and cold.

The manager said, "What vending machine?"

Travis stuttered and slightly turned with his hands up in a questioning position.

He couldn't speak.

The secretary was looking at him long and hard.

The Manager said, "You're fired, now get out of here. Clean your locker out and your paycheck will be mailed to you in a week."

The manager turns to the security guard and says, "Take this nigger out of here."

The secretary looks up at the manager in shock.

The security guard puts his hand on his gun and said, "Let's go."

Travis, in total shock with his hands still up could still hear the word nigger.

The security guard walks toward Travis and stands in his face and says, "Let's go."

Travis suddenly hits the security guard with his big fist and knocks him down on to his knees and he passes out.

The secretary and the manager look on in total surprise.

Then Travis looks at the manager and says, "Nigger?"

The manager whose eyes are enlarged and knees buckled, turns to run into his office, but Travis was on him.

Travis caught him by the throat, throws him down and began banging his head on the carpeted floor.

At that time, other office employees and the owner ran in and finally pulled

Travis' body and hand from the manager's throat.

The owner screaming and demanding Travis leave.



Telling the secretary to call the police.

The manager sitting on the floor, trying to catch his breath.

The secretary, who was already standing up said to Travis, "Go!"

Travis – still hearing the word "Nigger" says, "No one calls me a Nigger."

The owner, who is kneeling on the floor next to the manager, turns and looks at Travis.

The office personnel/staff, some kneeling on the floor by the manager and other standing around, all turned and looked at Travis.

Travis eyes still set on the manager.

Then the staff turns slowly and looks at the manager.

The security guard comes to and crawls until he was able to stand up and pulls his gun and places it in Travis back side.

Travis says, "If you want to live you better put it down"

Then slowly turns and looks at the security guard.

The security guard puts the gun down.

Travis then turns and walks out.

The Owner tells the secretary, "Put the phone down".

(She did not call the police.)

She was pretending she was on hold.

All the time, Travis was on top of the manager and banging his head on the floor, he was saying “NOT NOW JESUS. He called me a Nigger. NOT NOW JESUS, I’ll talk to you later. No Lord, I’ll forgive him – when I finish. Because JESUS, this hater belongs to me right now. “

The secretary and staff were looking around the room to see who Travis was talking to.

By the time Travis got to his locker, people were standing in the corridors.

He passed them.

He did not look at them nor spoke to them.

(But, with strength and dignity went to his locker, cleaned it out and walked passed the crowded hall).

Total silence fell on his fellow co-workers.

Travis walked out the glass door, the crowd in the hall looking after him and the crowd in the office looking out the window.

Travis began to walk home.

(Because he had 32 cents and he couldn’t catch the bus.)

One of his nosey male co-workers broke out of the crowd and ran down the sidewalk and caught Travis as he was about to cross the street.

Looking at Travis said, “Man you are alright. Take care.”

Travis turned and looked at the co-worker with so much power and strength the young man’s knees buckled.

Travis crossed the street and walked the miles home.

For the walk home, Travis had reverted back to all those years he was in prison, from his youth – 19 to 45 (last year 45). He remembered how he had to fight to keep his life and how he finally found JESUS, who saved his life. When the name JESUS entered into his thought. His hard look began to melt and he realized he was at the door to his run-down apartment.

He put the key into the door and turned it and entered into the apartment (not turning on a light) and sat on his broken down sofa (leaning forward) with his hands on his knees in total darkness and quietness until the early dawn.

As Travis sat in total darkness and quietness (because he had been in solitary confinement much of those twenty-six years), a small green light flickered, it finally caught Travis' attention. He turns slowly and looks – it was his computer letting him know he had mail.

He sat there for some time.

Then he got up and walked over to the computer and sitting down, he turns on the lamp. He loved his computer and spent all his money making sure he had the best server, etc. No one would ever guess – looking at him that he was a “wiz” at the computer. He touched his monitor and smiled.

He logged on and read his e-mails. When he got to the last e-mail and saw the address, he was shocked. It was from his youngest sister, the one who hated

him the most. He started to delete it, but quickly saved it. He opened the e-mail and there it was, an invitation to the family re-union.

He erased it.

Turned around, got out of the chair and walked back to the sofa and took his position on the sofa. But this time, he was not sitting in total darkness, nor total quietness. He could hear life outside his door. He could hear the kids walking to school. He could hear people at the bus stop waiting for the bus. He could hear the cat and dog next door fighting. But he sat there.

### THE MBA GRADUATE

#### BRILLIANT YOUNGEST CHILD, 28 YEARS OLD

She was two when her brother Travis was sent to prison for life without parole for armed robbery and murder. She was the baby of the family and didn't know him.

All she knew when she started school, a lot of the kids didn't want to play with her because her brother was very bad.

As a child, she would stand at the swing in the school play yard and wondered why the kids didn't like her. She remembered all the fights she lost because the kids would jump her because her brother killed their cousin or brother.

She grew to hate Travis with intensity because she didn't know him. But what he did destroyed her life.

She would run from school (every day) because the kids would jump her after school. She hid in the library until it was time for her mother to get off the bus from work.

The librarian told her she could not hide in there. She could only be there if she was using the facility.

So from seven years old until she tested to go to high school early, she would run to the library and study and read for five years.

For her to go to high school at 12 years old was a GOD send. Because she didn't know how many more fights and gang beatings she could endure.

Her mother was hesitant because she would be the youngest child in the neighborhood high school.

But she told her mother after a very bad gang beating with a busted eye and swollen lips and her hair pulled out.

She said "I will not go to school if I had to go to the neighborhood school with bigger kids that would beat me down." Lying on the floor balled over and holding her stomach, she cried out with pain and anguish of soul.

Her mother, standing over her and showing her no love, nor mercy, turns and walks away. (But what she didn't know was her mother had been jumped on and beaten many times and even stabbed once because people hated Travis for killing that other gang member in a drug war.)

As she lay on the floor crying from her pains, she sees her mother walks away from her, goes into the kitchen and turns on the stove to begin to cook.

All she could think looking at her mother was "She's crazy."

The next day when she went to school and then the library, the librarian who had watched her over the years saw how badly she was beaten this time. The librarian goes into her office and comes out with a brochure and puts it into her face and said, “Huh” (not Here).

She sitting at the table all bent over from pain and embarrassment, slowly looked up at the brochure which said “Program for Gifted Children.”

She looked up at the librarian hoping to see some type of kindness, but didn’t.

The librarian walked away and slammed her glass office door, to let her know she still didn’t like her.

She read the brochure and completed the application. She went to the counter and asked the other librarian for a postage stamp (because she had no money).

The librarian – saying nothing – turning to see where the other librarian was, put it in the stack of other mail to go out. The girl was surprised at her act of goodness and walked away, with the other librarian working at her desk.

A car horn blows and she jumps – realizing the traffic light is green, she pulls out into the street with her 500 Mercedes. Then, she begins to wonder what could have caused her to remember all those bad things. She glances in her mirror and looks at the four-year old in his car seat.

When they arrive at a newly constructed home and gets out of the car, a middle-aged couple comes out and greets her and the four year old.

She stands and looks at the house and says – “Great house.”

The couple looks at her and says “Yeah, right.”

They enter the house and she looks around and says "Nice."

The four-year old says "Can I go play?"

The middle aged woman says to her husband, "Take him out in the back and play ball."

The man says "Okay."

After the tour, the two women entered into the kitchen and the younger woman asked the older woman if she needed help.

The older woman began to look around and said, "Everything is prepared."

The next scene,

The younger woman told the older woman about her episode of her past while she was sitting at the traffic light. The man walks into the kitchen with the four-year old. And he listens, looks at his wife and gets water for him and the four-year old.

He turns and walks out of the kitchen, looking at his wife.

She looks at him.

The younger woman looks at both of them, then at the woman and says, "What?"

The older woman puts the food on the cart and rolls it into the dining room.

Older Woman tells her husband, "Call everyone for dinner."

The man walks to the steps that leads upstairs and yells, "Dinner!"

He opens the door to the basement and is met by blasting music and say lowly, "Dinner."

The four-year old walks over and was peeping down the stairs said, "Who's that?" The man pulls the four-year old by the arm and said, "Come on little man, let's eat."

The four-year old begin walking away and looking back at the basement door.

As they got to the stairs a teenage girl comes down and seeing the four-year old hits him hard on the head and calls him a, "Squirt".

The four-year old begins to cry.

The man tells her, "Don't do that."

The younger woman puts down the silverware and picks up the four-year old and tells the teenage girl, "Don't hurt him anymore."

The married couple standing and looking in shock.

The teenage girl said, "Why? You don't care about him. All you care about is his money."

The younger woman looks on in shock.

The married couple not saying anything, nor disciplining the teenager.

The teenager, popping her gum and rolling her eyes and snapping her neck, looked at the married couple and pulled out a chair and sat.

Then the basement door opened and two young men, both in their early twenties, emerged, unkempt and dirty. They walked into the dining room and the older man looked at them and turned and went to his seat – his wife looking at her husband.



Then down the stairs came another young woman on a cell phone - ignoring everybody, because she was obnoxious, thinking she was too cute and important.

The four-year old was still crying.

She turns and while she was on the phone yells at him, "SHUT UP!".

The younger woman says, "You don't talk to him like that."

And they began a word fight.

The four-year old said "Mama, let's go."

Everyone stopped.

The man stopped getting his food.

The younger two men (who were walking towards the food stopped). The bad girl chewing the gum stopped chewing the gum. The obnoxious girl on the cell phone mouth flew opened.

The older woman yelled "Everybody sit down. Not another word from any of you."

NEXT SCENE:

They ate dinner in silence

The married couple in bed and talking in the background, but you could not hear what they are saying because of the blasting music from the basement.

Across town the younger woman standing in front of full view picture window with a glass of white wine. She looks out at the night sky from her penthouse apartment. Scene fades to show the four-year old boy standing behind her in his doorway in his pajamas with his teddy bear in his arms.

He says, "Mama, I can't go to sleep."

The young woman closes her eyes.

She takes a deep breath and turns around and tells the four-year old, "Its okay, go to bed now."

The younger woman knew the four-year old couldn't go to sleep because of the way he was treated earlier that day.

How well she knew the feeling.

The older woman called the younger woman to the house the next day.

Not apologizing for the behavior of her family, but said she and her husband was thinking about a family reunion.

### MEDICAL DOCTOR

The 33 years old, the knee baby, medical doctor.

Naturalist married to an older woman (40 years old with two children (ages 2 and 3 years old)).

The wife, pregnant with a set of twins.

The luxury car winds around the curve of the country club and in the distance was a Bob-In-The-Box.

The 2 year old points saying "Look mama!" and begin to try and sing the Bob-In-The Box song.

The father talking on his cell phone looks back at his son and smiles, not really realizing what he was saying.

The mother, with a scared look on her face, turns and looks back at the 2 year old and puts her finger up to her mouth and says, "Shush. Daddy's on the phone."

The 2 year old and the 3 year old looks at mommy and says, "Our secret."

The daddy kinds of blinks, but don't respond because he is dictating medications for his patients who had surgery that day.

The mother looks at the daddy and smiles nervously.

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The car stops in front of the country club resort. Where the mother eagerly jumps out and looks at the tire.

The husband doesn't look at her.

He gets out and began to get the 2 year old out because he is sitting behind the daddy.

The mother sees the daddy attempting to get the 2 year old out of the child seat and he was having difficulty with the belt.

The mother yells, "Stop!"

The daddy stopped and looked at her.

The two year old looks at her.

She says, "I'll get it dear. You have to be gentle."

The couple next to them was also getting out of the car and the man looked at the scene.

His wife looks at him

And she told her husband, "Pick up the luggage and come into the hotel lobby."

The wife thinking he is looking at the other woman's rear.

The mommy got the 2 year old out of his car seat and told the daddy to take him inside and register and she'll get the 3 year old.

The man from the other couple was watching.

As he stepped up to get out of the driveway, he missed the step and nearly fell.

When the daddy passed by with the 2 year old, the other man turns and walks quickly over to the car with the woman and 3 year old, as she was lifting him out of his seat.

The man says, "11:00 am. By the pond. I know. Bring the stuff."

The mommy stands in shock.

The daddy coming out of the lobby.

Seeing the two from the lobby looks at the man as they pass each other.

The daddy asks the mother, "Do you know him."

She says "No."

She hands the daddy the 3 year old.

She, tells the valet, "I'll park the car, take the luggage into the lobby."

The valet took the luggage inside.

The next morning, after yoga and breakfast of tofu, all the top doctors and surgeons were going to a seminar.

The daddy was a bit nervous because the CEOs of some of the most prestigious medical facilities were there and he wanted to leave a very good impression on them.

The mommy was a bit nervous and jumpy.

He looked at her and asked, "Are you well?"

She said, "Yes".

He kissed his sons and left the suite to go to the all-day seminars.

The mother pulls out his golf bag and then the children's double stroller. She dressed the boys and then herself.

She put the boys in the stroller and was exiting the suite, when she was having difficulty maneuvering and pushing the stroller.

In the meantime, the daddy was sitting and enjoying a lecture on natural healing .

The wife (of the other man) entered and sat across the aisle.

Then her husband head passed the window behind the podium.

She looked and blinked.

A few minutes later then the other woman's head passed by the same window.

The daddy recognized the top of her head.

He looked around and no one seems to notice.

The other man's wife looked around and no one seemed to notice.

Then she thought how he was looking at the pregnant woman's rear yesterday.

The daddy thought about the man must have said something to his wife yesterday.

So both the husband and wife jumped up at the same time, nearly bumping into each other.

They said, "Pardon me."

They both began to look around to see where their spouses had gone.

They went on separate paths.

Having searched every inch of the resort, they both ended their search at the last place – the wading pond.

When they both began to descend the stairway, they heard sounds of ecstasy, moaning and groaning.

Then the daddy heard the voice of his wife said, “This is great! Better than my husband.”

Then the other doctor’s husband said, “How Sweet it tis!”.

Neither doctor could move any further.

They could not take another step.

The doctors still did not look at each other.

Their hearts began to sink, when the moans and groans continued, they instantaneously mustered the strength and ran around the corner.

The daddy in total shock dropped to his knees and the other doctor stood with her hand over her mouth and one hand over her eyes.

### THE SCENE

The mommy is sitting eating ribs.

The daddy is lying on the blanket eating buttermilk fried chicken.

And tossing his dog a chicken leg.

His 18-month old boy is sitting with his face in the blue berry pie.

The mommy’s 2 and 3-year olds were eating hot dogs.

All at once everyone looked at each other in total silence (including the 2 and 3 year olds and the 18 month baby lifted up his blueberry stain face).

Then they continued to eat.

The daddy finally stands up and says to his wife, "What are you doing?"

The mommy turns and says, "Having a hell of a good picnic."

Then her sons say, "Mommy, mommy, can we have ice cream?"

The daddy stutter, "Ice cream?"

The mother pulls the pail out of the pond and begin to scoop the ice cream.

The daddy looks in total shock.

The other doctor looks at her husband and 18-month old.

She says, "What do you have to say about this?"

He holds his finger up as he is sitting up.

He belches and to her shock look and says, "Damn good chicken."

She throws her hands up over her cheeks with her mouth opened.

The daddy peeping around to see if anyone is near says, "Please stop and clean this up."

Then he was about to walk away and a thought came to him.

He stops and turns to his wife and says, "The car seats? You smuggled the food in the babies' car seats. My God! My God!"

The wife turns looking at him and says, "Since you are having a coronary, and the ice cream under the front tire!"

The daddy said, "That's why you jumped out of the car and immediately began looking at the tire. My God, my God!"



The wife said, "It is not the end of the world or our marriage? Is it?"

The daddy standing in total disbelief of the scene.

The other doctor turns to him as he begins to walk away and says, "Please do not say anything because I am up for nomination for the healthy eating commission."

He couldn't think to comprehend what she was saying.

He just continued to walk.

The doctor's husband looked up at her from his half eaten ice cream cone and said, "That's my girl! Don't let nothing get in the way of her career advancement".

He gives her a thumb up as he belches and turns his head scouring the picnic blanket for what he wanted next.

His wife looks at him and then the mommy and turns and walk away looking and peeping to make sure no one saw her.

She saw some colleagues walking towards the path to the wading pond. She waves at them and walks fast towards them and touching their elbows diverted them away from the wading pond and began her campaign speech.

She looked back over her shoulder towards the wading pond and thought, "My God. I am Safe."

Because she knew her husband would spill the beans, if caught by other doctors.

The daddy tossed and turned and couldn't sleep the whole weekend.

All he could think about was the scene with ribs and ice cream.

His children had a wonderful time.

His wife was content.

But watching her husband.

He picks up his golf bag to put it in the trunk and it smelled like barbeque sauce.

The wife standing and looking at her husband read his thoughts.

She said, "Yes, the ribs."

He looked at her and threw the clubs and bag into the trunk.

The other couple was packing and leaving.

The man waved at the mommy and the 2 and 3 year olds.

His wife was standing and being congratulated on her election to the prestigious governor's board on healthy eating.

The daddy drove most of the distance home in total silence.

Then nodding his head said, "That's what he was talking about."

The wife fearing to look at her husband said, "What?"

He said Jason was singing the clown -in-the-box song because you had been taking them there."

The wife could take no more.

She begin to say clown-in-the -box, Pizza Mania, The Cave and when you work late, I would fire up the grill and have hot dogs and hamburgers. And don't forget the fries and sodas."

The husband began to swirl his head from side to side saying, "No, no, no."

And the 2 and 3 year olds began to sign the clown-in-the-box song.

The daddy had to pull the car over and compose himself before he continued to drive.

The kids yelled, "Mommy, daddy threw up."

The mommy sitting up in her seat to see.

She said, "He'll be alright, especially when he realizes he threw up on his brand new car."

He gets into the car and says, "This has affected our relationship, our marriage."

The mommy turns and looks at him and says, "What!" Some ribs and fried chicken!"

The husband replies, "NO – THE DISHONESTY."

Mommy yells, "Dishonesty!" Dishonesty! Look, I have been faithful to you. I keep your house, I gave you beautiful children. I go to work and keep your secrets about that family of yours. I have never violated my vows, to you. The only thing that I don't do is completely buy into this totally healthy nut lifestyle. And while we are getting this all out ..."

Daddy yells, "Let's stop the children are crying."

Mommy said, "To hell with that. The best sex was when my stomach was full. Not with your children, but with chitterlings or fried catfish or collard greens."

Daddy – Turning and looking at her in complete shock.

Mommy said, "Yeah baby, you loved it all."

Daddy said, "I told you I wanted a completely healthy lifestyle because I have too many relatives who have diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease."

Mommy said, "What does that have to do with my sometimes wanting more?"

Looking at her husband devilishly.

Daddy – Turns and looks at her, as they pull up in front of their gorgeous modern ranch style house.

He gets out the car and easily un-belts the 2 year old and just began to shake his head.

As the wife is looking at him, she gets the 3 year old out the car.

The husband said, “I’ll get the stuff out of the car later.”

She walks to the front door.

He unlocks the door.

Turns off the alarm.

He goes to the table in the hall and begins to go through the mail the house keeper left.

The wife takes the 2 and 3 year olds upstairs to give them a bath and put them to bed.

She looks back at her husband who is looking at her and stands and looks until they go to the nursery.

Later that night – he not being able to sleep, gets up and goes to his study.

He looks over patients’ files.

He then reads his mail – even the junk mail to keep from thinking about his wife.

Then he decides to go on the computer to look for a divorce attorney.

But as he got started on his search, he saw he had an e-mail.

He read all 106 e-mails.

As the sun began to peak through the blinds, then he got the last e-mail from his younger sister about the family reunion.

He deletes it.

His wife standing behind, approaches him and begins to rub his neck, and leaning over his head, said, "I'm sorry. If you want to end our marriage over ribs, go ahead."

Coldly, she kissed him on his head and walks back towards the bedroom.

He could not believe how cold she was.

He turns and watches her out of sight and until the bedroom door closes.

CON ARTIST – 3<sup>RD</sup> CHILD

### Scene Opens

Martin is at a Putt Putt Golf Course and talking business on a pinktooth.

He and his friend/co-worker were playing.

Martin was on a conference call with his boss, and a business associate.

They asked Martin for a breakdown of some information on a spreadsheet.

He looked confused and said, Damn.”

Then he tells his friend to run and get the information (which they did not have).

Martin wanted to go to the next area of discussion when the boss heard the same noise/grass cutter, on his Bluetooth that he heard on Martin’s pinktooth.

Martin was still playing Putt-Putt with his friend and kept talking about the information.

He stops every few minutes and tells the co-worker – (not that, go and get the other spreadsheet.”

The coworker kept saying, “what spreadsheet,” and went back to playing Putt Putt Golf.

Then the boss began to look around.

Finally he saw Martin and the co-worker playing Putt Putt Golf at the same course he was.

The boss took a ball and using his club, he swung hard – sending the balls near them.

Martin and his friend were saying what is going on with all these balls?

Somebody don’t know how to play; they laugh.

At that time, a ball hits him on the jaw and he bends down in pain.

And his friend, turning from a swing was about to ask, what was wrong with him, until he was hit on the stomach.

They said together, "Damn."

Bending over they saw continuous golf balls coming, placing them under attack.

They looking through the golf balls realized it was their boss.

They ducked their heads and began to run to get to the company's car.

In their haste to leave, they ran over the clown statue.

Their boss, looking on in anger, yelled, "You're fired."

The friend/co-worker said, yelling out of the window, "Who, him?"

The boss yelled, "Both of you!"

Martin tried to start the car, but it would not start.

The boss was running up a small hill with his golf club in his hand.

They were racing, trying to get the car started before he got there, but couldn't.

Then they got out and began to run.

As they were placing their chicken orders at the drive through window, the manager came to the window and said, "You'll can't walk up in front of these cars and place an order."

Martin said, "Why not?"

Manager said, "Because it's a drive thru."

Friend looking and said, "We had a car, but it was wrecked – don't that count for something?"

Manager said, "Come inside to place an order or leave."

Martin throwing his hand up says, "Shucks man, why you're gonna do a brother like that?"

Manager walks away from the window.

### Scene

Martin and friend walking down the street eating their chicken.

Martin said, "Hey, what you're gonna do for the rest of the day?"

Friend said, "I don't know – maybe shoot some hoops" What you gonna do?

Martin said, "Probably go and hang out at the bowling alley and holler at the honey that gives the shoes."

### Scene

Martin leaving the bowling alley.

And next opening his apartment door.

Standing in the doorway, he slips on the light, and says, "Damn."

He turns around and hollers out the door and said, "What you come back for, you got everything the last two times? What you left the pillows for?"

People passing on the street, looking up at him.

Martin began to curse and said, "Incompetent @\$%^&\*()."

He slams shut his door and sits on the sofa pillows the thieves left.



### Scene

Next morning – midday, Martin awakes to bamming (loud knocking) on his front door.

It was the friend from Putt Putt.

Martin said, "What the hell do you want?"

Friend said, "You know we don't have a job."

Martin said, "Yea, so what?"

Friend said, "I figure we need to go to the unemployment office."

Martin's face changed to disbelief.

He said, "I never drew unemployment and I ain't going to draw it now."

Friend said, "Well, what're you going to?"

### Scene

Martin was out on the street with an island outfit on and trying to sell fake music, photos and tee-shirts.

Then he saw an unmarked police car turn the corner.

He jumps up trying to gather his wares but threw his hands up and left them on the sidewalk as he ran through the alley to escape from being caught.

### Scene

Martin on the bus trying to sell incense and oils.

The bus police grabs him for pan handling.

The police was hauling Martin off the bus he stepped on a blind woman's foot.

She said, “Damn. No respect for the blind. Who stepped on my foot?”

The police said, “I did not. Sit there and be quiet.”

The blind woman took her cane and hit the police extremely hard in the back, which caused the cop to turn and weaken his grip on Martin.

The people on the bus began to laugh.

Martin struggling, got free while the police pant’s pocket was caught on the handicap seat.

Martin fled and hid out in the laundry mat until nightfall.

He sat between the washers, as people stared at him.

Martin said, “What ya’ll looking at? You never seen a brother hide out before?”

Peeping around the corner of the washer – observing, the bus cops now searching for him.

He sat on the floor for hours after the cops had gone.

He thought about his days playing little league football.

Then his graduation from high school. How he wanted to be somebody so badly and shake that bad image left by his older brother.

All that motivated him to do was not getting killed, in that old neighborhood.

That’s why he left home at 12 and never returned.

And on his great aunt’s death bed, he promised her he would get the high school diploma and make it.

Now, the cold hard reality hits him, while he is sitting on the floor. He gets up, shakes his body and legs, and walks home.

### Scene

The next day.

Martin is standing and knocking on a door

It's his friend and co-worker's door.

Martin said, "Put on some clothes man and let's go."

Friend came out of the use and locked the door.

Martin looked with a questioning look and said, "What is that about," with his hands out.

Friend said, "I want people to at least think I got something in there."

Martin said, "For what? For them to break in and find out ain't nothing in there and they wasted time for nothing? Then you will have a price on your head."

Friend said, "Come on man. Where are we going? Down to the cemetery and holler at the honey with the shovel, or to the post office?"

Martin interjected before his friend completed the sentence.

Friend said, "Nall man! What then?"

### Scene

They are standing in the library in front of the computer.

Martin said, "We're gonna look for us a job."

Friend looking around said, "Yeah man, you go right ahead, I think, observing all the women present, I'm gong to start at the periodicals and move on up."

Martin turns to say, "Yeah, that's good" until he realizes his friend is talking about all the women."

Martin begins checking on jobs and wrote a list.

Then he checked his personal emails.

Responding to some and deleting most.

Then he sees the e-mail from his younger sister.

He starts not to open it, but gives in and when he finished reading it, he deleted it and he began to think.

He went to his friend, hit on the shoulder while he was talking to the women in a book club.

Martin said, "Let's go."

Friend said, "You go ahead; I'm understanding what women need."

Martin said, "Let's go and find a job. Does that book tell you how to do that?"

Friend turning and looking embarrassed at the women said, "See ya'll later."

Friend said, "Why you had to do that Martin?"

Martin said, "Because I need a legitimate job to earn money. I'm going to my family reunion and I have 30 days to pay up."

Friend said, "I thought you hated your family."

Martin said, "I do."

Friend said, "So?"

Martin said, "Some of them got money."

Friend smiling said, "I know what you're up to."

Scene

Martin and friend passing out leaflets for a hot dog and soda.

Scene Washing cars at the corner (counting his money – disgusted because it is not enough).

Scene

Walking dogs and cats.

Scene

Walking kids to and from school.

Martin and his friend sit down in the pillows on the floor.

They count the last dollar and smiles.

He has enough to go to the reunion.

Martin and his friend jump up and began to dance.

Martin said, "Revenge, how sweet it is."

## BOAT DOCK

### SCENE:

Morning, gray overcast sky.

The eldest sister, her husband and their four children arrive.

They're looking up at the hugeness of the boat.

Both daughters on their cell phones.

The eldest son with shorts hanging down and extra large sweatshirt and a Pod.

The next son with headphones and a gold tooth walking and holding his large pants in the crouch, to keep them from falling down.

The father with his sunglasses and Polo Shirt.

The mother and father standing and talking loudly to get attention.

Mother said, "This ship isn't as big as the other ones we've traveled on, Is it dear?"

Father said, "Well, I don't think so."

As they turned and continued their comparisons to other cruise ships.

A younger couple (white, 30'ish) had walked up.

The white couple looked at the couple's children.

The older sister and husband attempted to introduce their children, when the two boys walked away and said nothing.

The twenty-one year old daughter (on the phone) snarled and stepped forward to not be disturbed.

The 16-year old threw up her hands as to say "a holler," but don't disturb.

The white couple looked at the children, then at the parents (who made no attempt to discipline them).

They said to the older couple, "Have a good cruise. We'll be seeing you."

They hurried to board the ship.

The older sister and her husband wanted to be the first to arrive to have one up on everybody.

And they did not believe no one was going to attend, but maybe the younger sister.

The younger sister made all the arrangements.

The date, the ship, the price and the itinerary.

She e-mailed all the others, because she didn't have anyone's address except the other sister.

Because no one responded, she was sure only she and the older sister would show up, and she wasn't sure if she would.

She left the door open for her not going by saying she may have to do an audit that could go into the first of the cruise.

But, she really didn't want the 4-year old to be around the children and be tormented by them any more.

She thought about the times the older sister's boys had picked up the 4-year old when he was 2 and 3 years and thrown him between them like a sack of potatoes and the baby was screaming and crying for help and no one moved, not the mother or the father who was sitting there looking at TV, nor the nasty daughters.

She would stand and have no feelings towards this baby (because he was not human to her, only a piece of flesh – her other sister's flesh at that).

Then the boys would not catch him and he would fall on the floor and lay there in pain and crying and no one would attempt to pick up this baby.

Especially, not Loretta, the adopted mom. Twice she had to take him to the emergency room for broken arms.

The day care provided was paid extra when he came with black eyes and busted lips and scratches and bruises all over him.

The first time the boys started to physically abuse the boy was when he was two. The oldest boy kicked him so hard in between his legs that the baby screamed for nearly two hours.

And the 16 year old walked over and told him to shut up and the baby didn't hear because he was in such pain.



She bent over him and the adopted mother and the 16 year old's mother were sitting at the table.

They turned to look (because they thought she was going to pick him up), then she kicked him in his stomach.

The baby continued to holler.

The boys laughing said, "Just kill the little bitch."

Then the doorbell rang and it was the police.

The police heard the cries of the baby and knew the child was hurt.

The daddy at the door telling the police he was spoiled and crying because he wanted his way.

The police looked at him and told them to open the door, because he wanted to see the child.

Then the mother jumped up out of fear and grabbed the baby off the floor and began to cuddle him.

She, pushing her boys and the girl to go up stairs.

Loretta – the younger sister, sitting still because now she doesn't know what to do.

The police said neighbors called and complained.

They said every time that woman in the Mercedes came over with the little boy, they (the people in the house hurt him and they could hear the baby for hours crying and how they couldn't take it anymore).

The police told the oldest sister to hand him the baby, because he saw the baby was in extreme pain.

The oldest sister wouldn't because she knew her precious children would go to jail.

The police became angry and wrote up a report.

And told them to take the baby to the hospital immediately.

They said he was crying because he wanted something but agreed to take the baby to the hospital which they didn't do.

The police officer checked all the local hospitals and did not find where the baby was taken to the hospital.

Because Loretta had taken him home and called one of her friends who was a doctor.

When he examined the still screaming baby, he told her the baby may be permanently damaged because his testicles were busted.

Loretta – showing no love, nor concern, asked him if he could give the baby something to stop him from crying.

The doctor – looked at her coldness and said, "Why do you have this baby? It is obvious you don't love him, nor care for him. You actually hate this baby. No one in their right mind would allow anyone to beat and torture another person the way you do this child. Loretta, I once had feelings for you. I will help this baby, not for you, but because you don't deserve anything good. But I will tell you this, I will monitor this child and if he get a cold or sniffles from you not putting a hat on his head in the rain or a scarf on him in the winter, or poison ivy, or even bug bites in the summer, I WILL KILL YOU myself!"

Loretta – stiff as an ironing board, still emotionless and heartless, until she heard the last sentence, couldn't compose herself, but held her stomach and her knees giving away, let out a very deep breath.

The doctor standing looking at her with the most evil look humanly imaginable.

He attended the baby for weeks.

Each day after work, he would look to see if the baby was being feed and bathed.

The baby miraculously was healed.

The third week, the doctor was walking out of Loretta's door, as she stood holding the knob, not looking at him, because she feared him.

He stood there and looked at her for a long time (she not looking up at him).

He said, "I won't be back, but remember what I said."

Loretta, not having the courage to look at him tried to glance at his face and his eyes, but couldn't, but she knew her life was now over.

## MONIQUE POLE DANCER

Monique has veered from her normal path this day.

She hadn't had food in more than a week.

She knew it was time for the week-end parting when she looked across the freeway and saw a liquor store.

As she began to cross the expressway, she began to smell food and knew if she continued, she might get fed.

When she saw the make-shift food stand, before she could cross the street, the owner began to yell and scream at her saying, "Get, don't you come over here. I'll kill you if you bring your nasty filthy self over here."

Everyone on the sidewalks stopped and began to stare at her.

She felt like an animal.

Her heart breaks.

She bowed her head in shame.

Looking up, hoping someone would show some kindness.

Then she felt something on her head.

The owner of the make-shift food stand had come out – he and his skinny black alcoholic friend and were throwing rocks at her across the street.

Some of the people laughed.

Some looked and did nothing and some just shook their heads.

She didn't know if they shook their heads at her in shame or in disgust or disappointment with the bad treatment by the owner.

Then she felt a thump over her right eye.

He had hit her with a piece of cement block and he and his skinny black friend began to laugh along with some clowns on the street.

Then she began to cry and felt the liquid began to run down her face and onto her lips and tongue.

She realized it was her blood.

The pole dancers were leaving the club where they worked.

And they stared.

A couple of them stared and laughed.

One of them just looked as she was entering the passenger side of a car.

The one entering the driver's side said, "What are you doing just standing there and letting that nigger hit you for? At least run!"

At that time, the owner, his friend and a few others had picked up handfuls of rocks and running across the street began throwing at her, as she was listening to the pole dancers.

She began to try to duck and her tears from embarrassment and pain grew.

The security guy from the liquor store (trying to impress the pole dancers, ran to the corner), and said, "Stopped."

Only after the pole dancer left her car and ran to the end of the driveway and began yelling and throwing her hands up saying, "You niggers, stop it. What ya'll gonna to stone her, like they did with Jesus?"

Some of the other pole dancers had gotten out of the cars and were standing on the parking lot with the security guard.

And one had driven to the end of the parking lot and said to her, "What's wrong Amber?"

That must be really hitting home. And she and the others in the car began to laugh and sped away.

She turned and rolled her eyes at them.

The pole dancer that was ridding with her standing with one leg in the car and one leg on the ground.

Then the security guard said, "Hey, leave her alone."

The owner and his friend and the others said, "What are you going to do, call the police?"

Security guy called 911.

The other people on the sidewalk began to yell at the owner and his friends.

"What's wrong with ya'll! You see she's homeless and then you gonna mistreat her."

A lady with a couple of young kids said, "I won't ever stop at your stand again. Is that stand legal?"

The owner and his group turning and looking at the crowd gathering against him, threw his hands up – dropping the rocks and going back to his stand.

Then he heard police sirens.

The car pulled up and out stepped the same policeman that was called to Sarah's house (eldest sister) to see about the abuse of the four year old.

He stepped out and looked at the crowd and then he spotted the homeless lady the call in about.

The people started yelling, telling the police they were throwing and hitting the woman.

A woman said, "Is that stand legal? Whose land is that stand on? Does he have a license to run it?"

Then the owner began to cower down and say, "Sir, good evening officer, how you doing?"

The others with the owner began to yell at the woman to shut up.

The policeman turned and yelled at them to, "Shut up now before I call for backup."

They instantly shut up.

The officer walked across the street and the pole dancer and her rider were standing at the end of the driveway.

Monique wanted to run.

But was too afraid.

Then she turned and began to run, the pole dancer yelled to her not to run away, but she did.

The officer told the security guy he couldn't do anything if she didn't press charges.

As they talk they watched her run down an alley next to the expressway.

The owner smiling and snickering looking across the street and at his stand at the opposing crowd.

Then the police officer looked back at him, when the woman said again, "Ask him to show you his license."

The police officer walked back across the street.

The owner instantly stopped grinning.

The police officer said, "Show me your business license."

The owner faints.

The crowd bust out in laughter.

The woman said, "That's what you get for burning my hot dog."

She turned and walked away with the young kids.

The pole dancers leave.

The ambulance arrives and by that time, the owner had come to and was sitting on the step of his stand.

The police wrote a citation to the owner and left.

Later that night, Monique returned to pick up her stuff, but it was gone - all of it – even her baby's picture.

She begins to cry deeply.

The other pole dancers from earlier that day were leaving.

She saw the homeless woman and told her she moved her stuff behind the guard shed at the strip club.

The pole dancer told her, "Don't live like this. Here, take this \$50.00 dollars."

She handed her a fifty- dollar bill.

And the pole dancer looked to the sky because drops of rain began to hit her in the face.



She turns and walked to her car.

Then it began to rain harder, and Monique looked up.

Her eyes fixed on the sign for "Amateur Night."

Then she stared at the \$50.00 bill.

#### NEXT SCENE

She sneaked into the locker room (but really was allowed in by the janitor who had witnessed the foolishness earlier that day).

She looked around and found the showers.

#### NEXT SCENE

Music and loud talking.

She looked out the curtain when the man standing directing the women, looked at her and laughed.

The pole dancers coming back and recognizing her was surprised and began to give her pointers: (1) That run if they get ugly." (2) Don't give up anything less they pay." (3) Be yourself and let the music control you." (4) Let nothing stop you from making your money, girl, "now go!"

The crowd was larger and rowdier because it was half price night.

In walks the eldest sister's twenty something sons with a gang.

The man from the post office and the police officer were entering also.

## NEXT SCENE

Monique goes out onto the stage and it was complete silence, even the music stopped.

She becomes very nervous, wanting to walk away, or to run, but the pole dancer kept saying, "Don't."

One of the pole dancers walked over to the D.J. and slaps him against his head and said, "Fool, put the music on."

He jumps and began to search for music when he thought, "She just slapped me. I know that so and so didn't slap me."

Like she could hear his thoughts.

She said, "If you don't put some music on now - #\$\$%^&\*() that's okay, I'll do it."

She puts the music on and Monique began to dance.

One man said, "If I wanted to see this, I could have stayed home."

Another man yelled, "I'll pay you to get off the stage."

The police officer and post office guy walked from the bar to see what the fuss was, and booing was about, while they were talking about their upcoming trip.

The post office guy focuses on the stage and turns his head from side to side to see if he could make out the familiar face.

Monique whimpers and turns to leave when one man walks up and throws \$5.00 onto the stage.

The pole dancers look and tell her, "Work it!"

She looking down at the \$5.00 could only think about her million dollar smile baby.

The manager was about to tell her to get off when she said, "If you want me off, you got to pay more than that."

Then she began to dance and break dance and pole dance.

One man said, "I'm about to lose all those hot wings."

The men at the table with him looking at him, pushed their chairs away from the table.

Her nephews sitting laughing and booing, began to blink and one said, "You know who she looks like?"

They both turned and looked at each other.

They didn't say anything.

One man said, "No more pork. That's more ham than I ever want."

The men began to walk up and put money on the stage for her to get off.

But she began to get into music.

When she finally drowns them out, she heard her voice within her and began to sing the song.

Her song, her music.

And then the audience began to feel the rhythm of the music and began to cheer her.

The pole dancers look on from behind, saying. "Yeah girl."

As they watched the audience catches on.

But as she was sliding down the pole, her eyes caught the eyes of the post office guy.

(And the camera zooms in on his face), when he recognizes her and jumps up and leave.

The police officer turns and follows.

Catching him by the arm in the entry way says, "What's up?"

Post office guy turns and swings his leg.

And shrugs his shoulder and say, "Let's go."

The police officer stands and looks after his baby brother and stands for a moment and walks to the car.

And hearing applause inside for Monique, leaves.

Monique leaves the stage after picking up her money.

The pole dancers said, "Congratulations, you did good honey."

Monique was exhilarated to be on stage to hear music, her music, her words. To be among humans again.

The manager came back and said, "You won the contest, here's you \$150.00."

Monique grabbing the money and holding it up to her nose and deeply inhaling the scent.

Everyone looking at her.

They left and gave her a moment to herself, as she began to cry uncontrollably.

She gathered her things.

Knowing the janitor allowed her to slip in and shower and cleanup up before anyone arrived.

She handed him a "\$100.00 bill.

He looked at her and said, "Thanks, but no thanks. That's your money, you earned it. Every bit. I saw how you were treated earlier today and I said God, if I ever have a chance to help her or anybody, I want to."

She cried and patted him on his cheek and left.

She is walking down the street allowed her tears to mix with the heavy rain.

And she cried out loudly.

Not as the times in the past, but as a cry of cleansing.

A cry of reversal.

She walked pass an abandoned movie theater and thought she could lay under the entrance to keep from getting pneumonia.

She sits and then laid her head on her stuff and fell asleep.

The next morning the rain was a drizzle.

She could bear a drizzle.

She walked through the woods to the drug store and looking around thought it was safe to see if her earnings were still in her bag.

They were, she counted and recounted.

And leaning over began to wail.

### SCENE

The natural doctor was standing in his kitchen talking on the telephone about playing golf with some of the doctors who were at the resort seminar last month.

The 2 and 3 year olds run in and the mother enters, walking behind them.

The husband smiles at his boys as they run and jump into their chairs for breakfast.

The housekeeper, standing at the counter, preparing their breakfast, cuts her eyes at the daddy because she knew he draws up whenever the mother is around.

Then the mother enters into the kitchen and they make eye contact but does not acknowledge one another.

The father continues the conversation and quickly hangs up the phone.

He looks at his wife who was hot and looks at his sons because he knew that meant he had to take them to day care.

The housekeeper, watching the two because if the daddy doesn't take them to day care, that means she had to baby sit all day. And she just couldn't endure another day with the boys and all the chores she had to do.

The daddy says to the mommy, who had on an open robe and opening the refrigerator, "I guess you don't feel well again and I have to take the kids to day care?"

Mother no response.

Daddy stands and looks at her because she never had ignored him before and couldn't think of a smart response.

Mother opens a can soda and stares at him, as if she was enjoying a contraband.

The housekeeper couldn't take the tension.

She dropped and broke one of the boys' plates.

He began to cry because that was his favorite action figure plate.

The mother looks at the father and tilts her head for him to see about his son.

Daddy turns around and touches his son on the head and told him he would buy him another plate.

At hearing that, the other son knocks his plate off the table and breaks it and begins to cry.

The father looks in surprise, and then the two boys began to laugh.

The housekeeper as she finished cleaning up the plate she broke, exhales loudly as she passes by the mother who rolls her eyes at her.

The housekeeper walks over and cleans up the second broken plate.

The mother still leaning on the refrigerator and enjoying her soda suddenly puts down the soda and runs into the hallway bathroom.

The daddy hardly noticed because he was talking to his sons.

Because he moved out of the master bedroom and was sleeping in another bedroom.

The housekeeper went to check on the mommy and began to yell and call the doctor.

He jumps and runs into the bathroom and when he reaches the bathroom (slow motion), he sees his pregnant wife lying on the floor, bleeding from the mouth.

He rushes to her, but she's gone.

He holds her in his arms and begins to scream.

The housekeeper screaming.

The boys get down and run into the bathroom and wanted to see mommy and daddy.

The gardener hearing the screams, began to bang on the door and finally the housekeeper opens the door.

He rushes in and sees the scene, runs and calls 911.



## SCENE

At his crowded house with many friends, after her funeral service.

One of his co-workers walks up to him and rubs his shoulder and tells him how sorry she is and kisses him on his cheek.

The housekeeper rolls her eyes at her as she passes by the housekeeper.

The housekeeper turns and walks behind the woman as she walks into the solarium to join other mourners.

The housekeeper says, "You know she and her babies aren't even cold yet."

The co-worker turns to the housekeeper and say, "Keep your mouth, if you want to continue working here."

Others looking on heard the whole conversation and were appalled at the co-worker.

Later that night, one of the babies began to cry and scream out for his mommy.

The daddy, who was lying in the master bedroom on his wife's side of the bed, jumps and run into the boys' room and almost collides with the housekeeper who asked him if she could move in until he gets himself together.

The daddy turns on the lights and grabs his boy out of the bed and begins to cry and kiss his son and say, "Everything will be okay."

Really talking to himself, trying to ensure himself.

The other boy waking up began to cry also for his mommy.

The father walks over, and with his strong arm picks up his other son and all three standing and crying.

The housekeeper looking on and covering her mouth with her hand to keep from sobering out aloud.

The daddy began to say, "Baby, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. If I knew it would end like this, I would have let everything go and just loved you. My stubbornness, my stubbornness. My God! My God! Forgive me for I killed my wife. The only love of my life. I killed her and my babies."

He fell to his knees.

The housekeeper rushed to him while he and his boys were crying.

She throws her arms around them and says, "I love you, your wife and your beautiful children. You argued like any couple. Everyone argues, teeth and tongue fall out."

He says, "Not to death! Not to death!"

Housekeeper said, "No one knew she had the aneurism. She knew the love you had for her and the boys. She watched you all the time. I believe she knew you would be alright without her."

He looks at the housekeeper in his sobering.

He shakes his head and says, "Just a stupid thing to fight about."

Housekeeper said, "She stayed with you because of her love for you and your love for her. Remember that."

A week later the daddy had taken some time off to get settled.

He passes by the bathroom, with the boys, where his wife died and he quickly glances and moves quickly into the kitchen and the housekeeper saw him and continued to set the table with the boys sitting in their chairs.

The daddy being quiet and reserved and not talking to the boys who were talking to him about where mommy was.

The father didn't even hear him because all he could think about was the last argument they had at the resort.

The two year old climbs out of his seat and said, "I know where mommy is."

And the three year old followed and they ran into the hallway and stood in the bathroom and began to cry because mommy was not there.

The father still reflecting over the last argument didn't see the boys.

The housekeeper standing by the table said, "Sir, your boys."

The father coming out of a daze.

Looks at her and turns and see his babies crying for their mother, bolster from the table and runs to them kneeling down and holding them.

He told them, "Mommy is gone to live with Jesus. He wants you to know she is great."

The boys looking at the daddy said, "Mommy is great?"

He said, "Yes."

Daddy said, "Now what would mommy tell you?"

The three year old said, "Sit and eat."

Daddy said, "Let's go."

The boys ran into the kitchen and sat down.

The housekeeper was serving their food.

When the daddy says out loud, "I'm going to sell the house."

The housekeeper drops the spoon and spilling oatmeal over the three year old's mat.

She turns and looks at the daddy.

The three year old says, "My food!"

The two year old laughs, and turns to his daddy and says, "Sell. What's that?"

Daddy tells him, "We'll leave this house and find another one."

The three year old said, "What about mommy?"

The daddy looks at the three year old and stunned said, "What are you saying?"

The three year old said, "Mommy is here. I don't want to leave her alone."

The two year old said, "Right" nodding his head with approval.

The daddy let the boys go and play in the solarium, while he checked his e-mails.

He hadn't checked them in nearly two weeks.

He went through all his condolences and replied.

He received an e-mail from his co-worker which he felt was entirely inappropriate and deleted it.

Looking out at his boys.

He says, "Baby, I will not disappoint you again. I'll be the best daddy for them and will not let any woman separate the three of us."

He bursts into tears.

He composes himself and gets to the last e-mail.

An e-mail from the con-artist brother.

He was about to delete it before reading it, but he thought about his wife and how important family was to her.

He read the e-mail and was shocked at the graciousness of the conman about the death of his wife (which he had read from the society page).

He reminded the brother about the family reunion if he wanted to come.

Then his doorbell rang and he was about to answer until the housekeeper went to the door.

When the housekeeper opened the door, she took a step back.

The daddy noticed and was hesitant to get up.

He stuttered and said, "Who?"

Before he could finish his sentence, the housekeeper turns and looks at him and walks away.

In walks his wife's mother and father with their servants.

He stands up and his face shows his wonderment.

The boys heard the doorbell and were ran into the house.

They saw their grandparents and their aunt Margaret, began to sing, "Hello!"

Her parents turned to the boys and kissed them.

The daddy peeping around them at the servants who were bringing in a lot of luggage.

The grandfather looks back at the servants and then turns back and looks at him and says, "We'll be staying for a while to help you out with the boys."

And the daddy looking at his wife's sister who only knew how to shop and party.

And said, "Her?"

The granddaddy said, "Oh, she's for decoration" and laughed.

Then the daddy quickly thinking said, "We'll going to my family's reunion."

Everything stopped.

The grandmother said, "What! Those people?!"

Daddy said, "You are welcome to join us."

CON-MAN

He caught the bus and rode overnight to get to the boat.

Martin had to travel as cheap as possible.

He went to the bridal shop and rented a tux and patent leather loafers.

He went to the barber school for a student to give him a hair cut, trim his facial hair and sideburns.

When he arrived home, he saw the hair cut was wrong.

One sideburn was longer than the other side and wider.

He had to even and shape everything up.

Martin went to the department store and asked for samples of men cologne.

He paid for his cruise and had just enough money for the bus ticket and the tux rental.

The day before he left for the cruise, he was at the library on the computer and off and on nearly all day.

He would look at the librarian.

The librarian was watching him.

He sat at the table and worked all day.

Martin would get up and stretch.

He would look at the vending machines and say, "Na'll, I ain't got no money."

Finally, he put his pen down and grinned to himself.

The librarian watching.

In comes his friend, loud and obnoxious as usual.

He looks at the librarian and says, "How're you doing this evening?"

She smiles and blushes.

Martin looks at them.

When the friend finally comes to the table Martin says, "What's going on?"

Friend, "I got a thang for Ms. Jones. "

Martin looks back and forth between the two of them and says, "Damn."

His friend looking at the papers on the table, and says, "I see you got everything mapped out. I wish I could be there to see this man. This is going to be great!

It's brilliant."

Martin smiling to himself.

He put all his belongings into the tuxedo rental bag.

He slept all the way on the bus.

And when he arrived at the bus depot, he went outside and caught the city bus that dropped him off a block from the docks.

When he turned around, he was standing on the pier looking at the gray sky over the boats and the beginning of the ocean.

He had never been this close to the water and the boats.

He began to say, "Whoa."

Then he realized he had to get down to the docks.

He found the boat and as he was standing looking up at it, he saw who he thought was his younger sister walking up with a little boy.



He stood and stared until they reached where he was standing.

The little boy was whining and looking.

The little boy was looking at the water around the boat and how big the boat was.

The younger sister was holding the little boy by the hand.

Not paying the little toddler any attention but standing and looking up at the very large boat.

He turns and looks at his younger sister squarely in the face and then at the little boy.

She not even noticing the stranger, her brother.

He says, "Well damn Loretta, what you acting like this for?"

Loretta coming out of her daze, slowly turns and looks at him.

He looks at her peculiarly and says, "What in hell is on your mind that you don't know me, your own brother?"

The little boy looking up at Martin.

Loretta says, "What? Who? Oh hello."

She takes the boy by the hand and began to walk away.

Martin turns and looks at her and says "What!"

The little boy looking back at him helplessly.

Martin walks up and stands in front of her and stoops down looking at the little boy.

He says, "I'm you Uncle Martin. "I'm your mama's brother."

Looking up at Loretta with a very mean look.

The little boy looks up and says, "Mama, he's your brother?"

The little boy asks with a questioning look.

Martin says, "Damn."

Loretta looks at the little boy then her brother.

She says, "Yes. He is your mama's brother."

She removes her sunglasses and rolls her eyes at her brother and began to walk away.

Martin, still stooping down, waves as she and the little boy are walking away.

The little boy gives him that million dollar smile.

Martin turns his head and says, "Damn, this is crazy. It's going to be much harder than I thought."

As he is stooping down, his sister Monique was standing by the cab stand and saw her baby boy and she saw him when he flashed that million dollar smile.

Her heart broke.

She stood across the pier and cried for a very long time.

She wanted to leave, but thought of how she got the money to make the cruise kept flashing in her mind.

She kept hearing the pole dancers say, "Don't run. Don't run."

She ran her whole life.

The moment she finished high school, she walked across the stage and kept going.

She made her mama proud because her four eldest kids finished high school, not many parents/mamas could say that in the neighborhood.

She left home that day like the two before her and vowed never to return.

Monique loved her men folks.

She didn't care whose men, married men, single men, loud men, card playing men.

She loved to hang out in those smoky juke joint places.

Where they served alcohol to the under aged.

She would wake up in a room with different men every time she went.

Some were abusive and some were treacherous.

Monique didn't care because it gave her freedom.

She was the owner's best customer because she would draw the men, who bought the liquor.

She would go to these places to run away from home.

A home that had no peace, no love, no money.

When she really needed shoes or a dress for the prom or graduation or her hair done, she would go to the juke joints.

Monique knew she would give the men a good time and they would get her what she needed.

Her mother hated it.

Monique even had some old men coming to her house.

And her mother was appalled.

Her mother kept saying to her, "All I want you to do is to finish high school."

Her mother didn't think she could do any better.

She was so disappointed with her mama.

When she reached the age of fourteen ran away.

And found herself singing at those places.

When she was younger, she would go to church every Sunday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Saturday.

She would go to church every time it opened just to get away from home.

Then one of the old deacons in the church, who had been watching her lustfully - whispered and told her to meet him at Ms. Hattie's.

She met him there.

She left before choir rehearsal was over, so not to be missed by her mother.

She met him there and he took advantaged of her and threatened her by saying he would tell her mother. Then finally after two years of his abuse he died, sitting her free.

She loved singing.

It set her mind free.

She began to write poetry of her life and had music in her head but didn't know how to write it on paper.

Monique started dating the older men who played at the juke joints and was the reason for many of the fights between the men.

Her mother heard of it and was disgusted.

Her mother told her at her graduation, "You are now free to be. You can be a great singer. You can be an actress you now have one of the things you need in this life – a diploma. I do love you. I want you to stop running."

The whistle of the boat blew which startled her and she looks in astonishment at the boat and realizes she had been standing there for a long time.

The words of her mother, "Stop running," were ringing in her ears.

She picked up her duffle bag and began to run for the boat.

Running across the pier she stumbles.

Then nearly runs over an employee.

She leaps over a dog and finally reaches the board of the ship.

The captain and crew looking on.

She reaches them out of breath more so from the thought of breaking free to see her baby boy than being overly exhausted from the track to the boat.

They told her to go inside and she would be told her room assignment.

She walks up to the deck and is pleasantly greeted.

She felt overwhelmed.

Monique looked at how the people were dressed and touched her jacket looking down at what she had on.

She was ashamed.

She got on the elevator and was going down to her room.

Monique caught a reflection of her hair and was feeling down.

When she arrived at the room her brother Martin was already there.

He opened the door.

The two stood there a very time long in silence.

The porter tries to pass by them to place her duffle bag in the cabin.

The captain, who had been watching them before they boarded, stood in the background.

Monique began to whimper.

Martin steps aside.

She finally walks in the cabin.

The captain leaves.

Inside the cabin, they stand.

Monique is standing sideways.

Martin is standing at the door.

Finally, a knock on the door.

Martin looking at his sister.

Monique jumped at the knock.

Martin opens the door.

It was Travis.

Nothing was said.

Travis looks at Martin and walks inside.

Martin looks at his brother.

Then Travis walks over to Monique and stands in front of her.

He looks at her.

Monique fearfully looks up at him.

Travis, not saying anything, kisses her on the forehead, as he had done her whole life.

She stands and silently cry.

Tears falling down.

Martin standing at the door with his forehead leaning on the door before turning and saying, "I got the lower bunk."

Because Travis was sitting on the bed.

Travis gets up and sits in the chair.

They are frozen in time.

## CABIN SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

### SCENE

During the past three days, Monique slept on the top bunk.

Martin slept on the bottom.

Travis slept on the bunk on the opposite wall.

The first night and every night Monique would toss and turn and her bunk would shake.

Martin couldn't get any sleep because he was afraid her bed would fall on him.

All through the night each time Monique moved Martin would jump.

Travis pretending to be asleep would laugh silently.

Because he was used to lying still and not getting any sleep.

Travis would think about how he got his money, for the trip.

He made a list and wrote down everything he needed.

Then he went and stood on the corner of new construction sites and across the street from construction suppliers.

He copied and posted signs for computer tutoring and repair.

Travis washed cars.

He worked hard for those 309 days.

All the moving Monique did could not disturb his peace.



But he was disturbed by her talking and crying in her sleep.

He heard her every night replay the tragic and horror of losing her baby boy and her life.

Martin heard her tears and her anguish.

He laid there thinking.

The first morning, Martin jumps up and runs to the bathroom.

(Travis looks at Martin, who had thrown his legs on the floor and was sitting on his bunk.)

Monique was getting down from her bunk.

Travis knew why Martin had jumped and ran to the bathroom.

First, then Travis said, "Ladies first."

Martin looks hard at Travis.

Monique smiles and passes her brothers saying, "Morning."

Monique goes into the bathroom.

Martin turns and points and says to Travis, "Hey man, should she use the bathroom first? She's homeless and we don't know what she got."

Monique heard her brother's comments and began her whining.

Martin and Travis heard her.

Travis looking at Martin said, "Sit your narrow butt down."

Martin sits across, on his bunk, in front of Travis.

They stare at each other.

Martin not saying anything.

Then Martin gets up and began to pace up and down the floor.

Travis sits still and then slowly turns and looks at Martin.

Martin looks at Travis and throws his hands up in a questioning mode.

Travis looks at Martin and turns his head.

Martin mumbles, "Like you all hard and . . . "

Monique emerges from the bathroom and Travis pushes Martin aside to use it.

Martin gets angry.

Monique is dressed and just stands there.

Martin mouthing silently at Travis.

He looks at Monique standing there with the same clothes on she wore onboard and all day yesterday.

Martin says, "What are you standing there for?"

Monique said, "I want to eat."

Martin said, "Then, go eat. Don't you have something else to wear?"

Monique said, "No."

She puts down her makeup case and pajamas in the closet.

And walks out the door.

She stands at the door holding onto the frame and sobs.

The purser and another guest walking behind saw her.

The purser asks if she was "okay."

Monique said, "Yes."

And they walk away from her.

She wandered upstairs into the dining room.

She saw her baby passed by with her sister Loretta.

She drops her plate onto the floor breaking it.

The custodian comes over to help her.

Monique is holding her stomach (which is in knots).

She stumbles out of the dining room and follows them.

Loretta takes the little boy to the kids play area and leaves him.

Monique hides in the doorway while her sister leaves.

Monique tips to the kids play area and looks until she catches the sight of her little boy playing with the ship employee.

But he looks sad to her.

He's dressed well.

The purser who saw her drop her plate stands back and watches her.

She stands there until she couldn't take it anymore.

She holding her hand over her mouth, bolster out of the area.

The purser looking on curiously, walks up and looks into the play area sees the little boy.

And stands there thinking and turns and looks in the direction Monique ran.

By that time Travis and Martin were entering the hallway when they saw Monique run.

And the purser going to look in the play area.

They entered the dinning room.

Martin sporting a bruised eye.

After Monique left the room, Travis exited the bathroom and hitting Martin once and knocking him down said, "What's wrong with you man? Can't you see? Can't you see?"

Martin said, "The only thing I can see out of my one eye is you on top of me."

Travis getting off Martin said, "She's hurting man."

Martin lying on the floor and shaking his head from side-to-side.

Travis said, "Are you alright?"

Martin still lying on the floor, zooming (shaking) his head from side-to-side, says, "How is it that a murderer can say someone is hurting? Was that drug dealer hurting when you. . ."

Before Martin could finish his sentence he passes out.

Travis stood over his brother and bending down picks him up and sits him on the floor.

Holding him on his shoulders until he became conscious.

Martin comes to and says, "What the . . . did you hit me?"

Attempting to swing at Travis.

Martin says, "You wait. When you won't expect anything."

Travis said, "Yeah, that's your trademark."

Martin looks up at his brother and blinks wondering, if he knew.

Travis said, "Let's eat."

Martin mumbling, goes into the bathroom for a few minutes, still thinking, if Travis could possibly know. He emerges with a T-shirt on and pants.

Travis says, "Nigger, put on a shirt and button it up."

Martin looks at his brother and mumbles, "I don't know who he thinks he's talking to."

Travis does not respond.

He learned over the years, don't respond to everything. Pick your battles.

They go upstairs and as they enter the hallway they see Monique standing outside the children's play area.

They knew it was the kids play area because they could hear the screams.

Martin was about to yell at her, but she ran away.

And they saw the purser walk over to look in the play area.

They entered the dining room.

Martin leaning over the table eating his breakfast, winking and smiling at the ladies at the next table over.

Travis, placing his napkin on his lap began to eat his breakfast.

Martin looks at him and says, "What's that about?"

Travis said, "Etiquette."

Martin looks at him and turns his attention back to the women at the other table.

The purser and the security guard walk over to their table, obscuring Martin's view of the ladies.

Martin looks up and says, "You're blocking my view."

The security guard says, "Your swollen eye is."

Travis sits there and looking at them.

The purser sits down and says, "We don't want any trouble on this cruise."

Looking at both of them.

Travis quiet, but trying to think what they were talking about.

Martin says, "What are you talking about?"

Purser, "The lady sharing your cabin – her crying outside your room and she crying at the kids play area."

Martin said, "Well, yeah."

Security said, "We won't have any trouble."

The purser stood.

He and the security man walked away.

Travis glares at his brother.

Martin looking at his brother is thinking, "Does he know?"

Monique sat outside the kids play area every day for three days.

It was her routine.

She watched her son smile, play, run, fall.

The purser and security were watching.

When Loretta would come and get him (after their excursions on-shore), Monique would hide so she wouldn't be seen.

Every day she wore the same clothes.

And the same outfit at evening.

The third night, Monique was tossing and turning, crying in her sleep.

Martin had become delirious not having any sleep but the cat naps he took during the day.

And when he was finally about to fall asleep, a large object passed his bed and fell onto the floor with a loud thump.

It was Monique.

Martin sits straight up in the bed and being delirious, yells, "Tsunami!"

Travis turns the overhead bed light on and looks on the floor at Monique who was snoring.

He looked at Martin who was delirious and sitting up in his bunk.

Travis heard a knock at the door and he went to the door, stepping over Monique.

It was the purser, the security guard and the previous male guest.

The security steps pass Travis (who was sanding there in his tee-shirt and under shorts.)

Then the purser and male guest steps in.

Seeing the scene, they step back out.

Martin, sitting in the bed is hitting the bed and saying, "I got to get some sleep."

Falling back onto the bed, hits his head on the wall and began to curse.

Travis, steps outside the cabin and tells them, "We are here for a family reunion.

Our family has a lot of problems, some will be worked out, some won't"

(That's when Martin falls backward and hits his head and began to curse (not audible).

Travis tells them they worked hard to get there and that Monique's child was taken by the other sisters, along with her songs. And maybe they can at least let her see her son."

Because every day, Travis and Martin would sit behind Monique and watch her watch her son.

Then Martin would slip away.

And Travis would sit and wonder at his brother's exit.

Travis re-enters the cabin.

Take the blanket off Monique's bunk and places it on her.

He looks at Martin.

He sits on his bed for a moment and then lies down and cuts off the light.

During the night, a shadow passes by the door, and stops and slips an envelope under the door.

Travis sits up and turns on the light, sees the envelope, and lies back down.

The next morning, after they all had awakened, Monique went into the bathroom.

Travis walks over to pick up the envelope, but Martin sees it and rushes and grabs it.

Travis said, "Who is it for?"

Martin turns and couldn't think of a lie quick enough, just stands there.

Then Monique exits the bathroom.

Travis said, "Give it to her."

Monique looks.

Martin hands her the envelope.

She said, "What's this? Who is this from?"

Thinking it was about her baby boy she says, "Is it about my baby?"

Then she saw the word 'spa'.

Monique said "Spa?"

Travis said, "It was slipped under the door, is there a note?"



Monique said, "No."

Martin standing with a fickle look. Thinking how much the spa could have been for.

Travis reading Martin's thoughts, says to Monique, "Go and enjoy yourself."

Monique holds the envelope to her chest. Tearing up and mouth quivering.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> DAY OF FAMILY REUNION

##### SCENE

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the family reunion.

No one has seen anyone else.

Monique nearly misses the spa and boutique treat because she was sitting and watching her baby.

Martin had disappeared again.

The captain is watching.

## SCENE

The boat docks.

Martin reappears and walks and stands next to Travis who was leaning on the rail, waiting to see if their doctor brother would come.

As they were standing there, Martin told Travis, their brother's wife had previously died three weeks before and he may not come.

Travis is stunned.

He in silence turns and looks at Martin in slow motion.

Martin looks away and felt the uncomfortable heat from Travis' stare.

Martin shrugs his neck and takes a step to the side and eventually leans on the rail next to Travis.

Monique gets up and walks to the rail a little distance from them.

As they turned to watch the people boarding, a black limousine pulls up with flags.

Out step the ambassador and his wife, then their daughter.

Martin looking at the daughter yelling, "Oh wee, I'd like to get..."

Travis yelled, "Shut up!"

The captain and crew looking at them.

Martin caught the stares of the crew.

He swallowed hard and turned around.

Then steps out their baby brother holding his two babies in his arms.

Both their mouths dropped opened so did Monique's who recognized her brother from the cover of the Black Wealth and Success magazine.

Travis, who rarely said anything in unison with Martin said, "Damn."

Looking at each other.

Monique at the other rail said, "Damn."

And began to tell the people, "That's my baby brother yall. "Yeah, that's my baby brother. Where's his wife? Ms. Thang-a-lang?"

Monique yelling to Travis and Martin, "Where's Ms. Thang Ya'll?"

Martin slaps his hands down for her to shut up.

The captain and crew looking at them.

Then the captain says something to one of the crew members.

He walks over to Monique and tells her to be quiet!!!

Monique in shock and couldn't mutter a word, turns away from the crew member and mumbles to herself.

The passengers next to her "giggling."

Martin and Travis look on.

The crew member was approaching them.

Martin said, "Don't you stop here. You best keep on going."

Travis not saying anything but gave the crew member a glare.

He walked pass them back to the captain, who was watching the fiasco.

The baby brother with his two babies in his arms, looked up at the enormity of the ship.

And thinking back at the conversations he and his wife had about taking the boys on a boat trip.

He said out softly, "I'll take them next year."

The father-in-law heard him and pretended that he didn't.

The servants took the luggage to the boat, and as he walked around the limousine and looked up again, he saw his two brothers and fanning the crowd.

He saw Monique.

Monique waved, but looked at the captain who was looking at her and didn't yell to her brother.

She said, "Acting like you don't see me waving at you."

He was good at ignoring his family.

He thought about how he would ignore them when he would stand in front of the TV and wouldn't move.

And they knew they better not touch mama's baby.

He would ignore them when he was at the playground or riding his bike.

And they would get into trouble with mama.

He smiled to himself.

Martin looking on said, “Look at him with that same smile – when we would have been beaten by mama for something he did. Man. . .”

Travis looked at Martin.

Martin shuts up.

Monique passes by running to go and greet her brother.

They both follow her with their heads down.

Martin said, “Where’s that fool going to?”

The captain watched them.

The ambassador, wife and daughter boarded, then their baby brother and his sons.

She runs pass everybody and was about to be blocked by the same crew member, when she gave him a look and held her arms wide open for her brother.

Who passes by her.

And his sons are looking around at her from the back of their daddy’s head.

The ambassador, etc., are looking.

Then she turns about to cry but runs and slaps him on the back of the head.

His head buckles.

The captain and crew, ambassador and family gasped.

Martin and Travis look on.

Martin’s mouth flies open and he says, “They gonna put us off the ship.”

Travis said, “Boat.”

Martin looks at Travis he said, "Now you correcting my phonics."

Morris Chestnut continues and greets the captain and crew.

He then turns and smiles at Monique (whose heart was crushed.)

Then she smiles.

The captain and crew and the ambassador and his family smiles nervously.

Then Martin smiles and says unexpectedly, "It's on".

And realizing he spoke out loud, pretended he didn't say anything, cutting his eyes at Travis to see if he had heard him.

Travis heard him but didn't blink.

Monique ran and gave her brother a big bear hug.

And his boys were asking, "Who's that?" Who's that daddy?"

He turns and tells them, "This is my sister, just like you two are brothers."

The two year old looking says, "We don't have a sister."

Monique belts out a laugh.

Then she looks and says, "Where's that Ms. Thang- a-lang of a wife?"

Not noticing his face and the faces of the ambassador and his family.

She continued, "I saw ya'll and her sophisticated self on the cover of Black Wealth and Success."

Then the two-year old said, "Mommy is with Jesus."

Monique laughed.

Then she looked at her brother who walked away.

She was shocked.

The ambassador stepped up to her and said, "My daughter passed away three weeks ago."

Monique in shock could not move or say anything.

The little boys looking back at her and then at their daddy laying their heads on his shoulders, to comfort him, patting him on the back.

Her baby brother passes his brothers without a word.

Martin tries to wave at him, but to no avail.

Monique finally goes inside and to the spa and boutique.

Martin disappears.

Travis cuts his eyes and he remains on the deck most of the day.

Later that evening, as Travis was still sitting on the deck, he saw Loretta and Sarah (eldest sister) and her husband come aboard apparently from a shore excursion.

As they were walking across the deck, the baby brother was strolling around the deck.

They barely missed each other.

The baby brother strolls over to the table where Travis is sitting, looks down at him.

Travis slowly looks up at him.

Travis said, "I'm sorry about your wife."

The baby brother says nothing.

His baby brother motions at the chair – which means could he sit?

Travis motion to the chair for him to sit.

He sits but is extremely uncomfortable.

He swirls, he squirms.

He suddenly gets up and with hand gestures he just couldn't do it.

The baby brother walks away.

Travis says, "Are you coming to the dinner tonight?"

The baby brother slightly looking back, kept walking.

Travis said, "You'll enjoy it."



7:00 PM

Travis enters the cabin and sees a serious and fidgety Martin who was so busy and talking to himself that he did not hear Travis enter.

Martin would read one sheet of paper and took up as if he was memorizing it.

Then he would say, "Na'll, that ain't right."

He then picked up another note card and smile to himself and shaking his head for yes.

He had already showered and had on his underwear.

Travis is just puzzled by Martin's behavior.

He knows whatever he is doing is bad and will permanently destroy the family.

Martin catches a glimpse of Travis and turns suddenly and says, "How long have you been standing there?"

Travis plays it off.

He said, "What? I just walked in. You need to go into the bathroom and get dressed before I go in."

Martin looking concerned and really trying to interpret Travis' facial expression.

They heard a knock on the door.

Travis looks at Martin who was walking to the door in his underwear.

Looking back at Travis and keeping eye contact because Travis had moved between the beds pretending getting his stuff to go into the bathroom but trying to catch a glimpse of what Martin was doing.

When Martin turned the doorknob, he was still looking Travis in the eyes, then he looked quickly at the door.

It was the purser who stepped into the cabin with Monique on his arms.

She slowly stepped in and was ashamed at first.

Then Martin said, "Damn."

Travis looks at his sister and says, "You're beautiful."

The purser slowly backs out the room and closes the door.

Travis gets a look at Martin's papers and gasped.

Then Martin says (not seeing Travis leaving his papers), "I guess I better go and check things out for the dinner."

He goes quickly to his bed and looks at the papers then back at Travis who was talking to Monique.

Martin said, "Very rough, hey man," looking at Travis.

He said, "Did you sneak my papers?"

Travis turning back around continued to talk to Monique.

Martin walks up behind Travis and says, "Did you read my papers?"

Travis said, "Step back, Monique."

Monique steps all the way back to the wall.

Martin gets up in Travis's face and before another word was spoken Martin making Travis think he would not hit him (to let his guard down) punches Travis extremely hard in his gut.

And says, "That's for my swollen eye. Nigger, did you read my papers?"

Monique standing back in shock says, "Don't fight, please don't . . ."

Before she could say anything else, Travis had caught Martin by the throat and had him swinging in the air.

Martin trying to pry his brother's hands from his neck. His feet swinging in the air.

Travis said, "Yeah, I'm hard! Yeah, I read that evil you concocted over there.

You better not! You better not!"

Monique looking at Martin's bed and the papers that were on it.

Martin said, "If I do? You can't tell me what to do," gasping for air.

Travis still holding him up in the air, began to tighten his grip on Martin's throat.

Monique realizing he might just kill Martin began to say, "Please Travis, let him go. Please, you just got out. Please! Please."

Travis throws Martin against the wall and he falls onto the floor.

Then Monique begins kicking Martin.

Then she runs and grabs the papers and Travis tells her not to read it, but she did.

Martin still shaking and gasping for air.

Looking at his sister's face.

By her facial expression, she was reading the part about her son.

She looked at Martin.

Martin still sitting on the floor, eyes bucked when he saw her charging at him.

Attempting to get up but couldn't.

Travis caught her just before she really kicked him.

And he held her while she sobbed.

Then she sits in the chair and become quiet.

Martin and Travis looking at her, then each other thinking maybe she has had a nervous breakdown.

She looks at the wall clock, 7:49 pm.

She looks at Travis and said, "You've got 10 minutes to get dressed and escort me to the dinning room."

Travis not knowing what to do, slowly turns to walk to the bathroom, when she yells, "Now!"

Travis flies into the bathroom not looking back.

Martin still sitting on the floor didn't want to look at her, but slightly turns his eyes.

She was looking at him.

She said, "Were you really going to do this evil?"

Martin still sitting on the floor, and cutting his eyes at her said, "Yes."

She walks slowly over to him and bends down, looking at him and softly smiles and he letting down his guard a little

She butts him in his head with her head.

Martin screaming and Travis ran out of the bathroom, half-dressed.

Saw Martin holding his head and Monique bending down.

Travis says, "Monique, what did you do to him?"

Monique said, "Nothing."

Passing by Travis to go into the bathroom to fix her dress and makeup.

Travis watching her pass him.

Martin yelled again and said to Travis, "She butted me with that 10-ton head of hers." Oh my God."

Martin was gasping for air said, "I can't see! I can't breathe, I'm dying."

Travis rushes to his brother and picks him off the floor and began to walk him.

Monique peeping at the scene from the bathroom.

She mumbling said, "You don't know who you're messing with boy. That's right!

The queen is back!"

She began to dance.

Travis holding a bent over Martin, both looked at her in the bathroom.

Monique said, "Don't look at me, get dressed. Now! We got a show to go to."

Martin and Travis exit the cabin behind a lavishly dressed Monique.

The previous male guest walks behind them entering the elevator also, looks at Monique from the top to bottom and says, "You're one fine woman."

Monique said, "Thank you darling."

The male guest smiles.

Travis and Martin look at each other and as they are exiting, Martin said, "Whatever happens it's on your head. Now I can't predict what's going to happen."

Travis stops in his steps and looks at Martin in disbelief.

Monique calls, "Come on boys."

Martin walking looking back at Travis.

Puts his hand up to his head saying Monique was crazy.

Travis kind of thought so, with a frightful look on his face.

Martin motioning to him to step up because he was not going to be alone with Monique.

## THE DINING ROOM

The three enter the dining room.

A brother on each arm of Monique.

The captain and other diners look.

The ambassador and his family were being seated at the captain's table.

They walked pass to the next table and not even looking up at the people standing before them.

Monique's little boy said, "Hello!" And then flashed a smile.

Monique's heart break.

Loretta looking up in shock at the three misfits.

All that came into her head was the lion, tin man and the scare crow.

No mind, no brain, no guts.

She snarled and continued to look over the menu.

The older sister gasped as she half-way looked up.

Her husband said, "Well the murdered, the whore and the thief."

Their children laugh.

The captain's table heard it.

Martin said, "You shouldn't be talking about yourself like that man."

Monique eyes welling up with tears as she looked at her baby boy.

The purser came by and told them to sit.

He offered Monique a seat across from the boy.

Travis took the seat in front of his sister's husband.

Martin sat next to the little boy so he could be close to Loretta.

The little boy all dressed up in a dinner suit with a white jacket said, "Who are you?"

Monique, taking her napkin and placing it in her lap said, "I'm your mommy."

Loretta jumps up and says, "How dare you!"

The little boy turns his head to look at Loretta, then he looks at Monique.

Monique smiling at the little boy and turns and coldly looks at Loretta and says, "I dare!"

The male guest sitting at a table over, moved his table directly next to theirs and looked at the two men (the police officer and the guy from the post office) who were also taking it all in.

Then the people clicked in the mind of the police officer as all three men were looking at Loretta's physique.

Then the police officer looked at the little boy, then said, "Damn!"

His brother, the guy from the post office said, "What?"

The police officer said, "It's the family I told you about and how they had hurt the little baby boy."

His brother turned around and then focused on Monique's face and told his brother, "That's the homeless lady and she was the one at the strip club."

The male guest leaning all over and his elbow falling off the table, caught the attention of the men.

He attempted to sit up dignified but looked at the little boy.

His mind went back to his childhood and how it felt to be abused.



The men, police officer and guy from the post office, looked at the male guest and asked him if he was alright.

He waited a minute and said, "Yes."

At that time the baby brother walked to the table unnoticed by all of them but having caught the comments among his sisters.

He said, "Good evening."

Looking at the little boy.

He stooped down and said, "I have two little boys. Would you like to play with them tomorrow?"

The little boy looking with excited wonderment said, "Yes."

The little boy said, "No one likes me."

And puts his head down.

Monique looks up at Loretta and said, "That's the last time you will ever stand."

Loretta said, "You're threatening me?" Come on David, let's go."

David began to get out of the chair.

Loretta snarls with a half-grin, especially seeing Monique is hurt.

The elder sister and her family laughing.

The baby brother still stooping down by David looked up at Loretta and said, "Sit your ass down. David, come and sit by me. I like you little man."

David said, "You do?"

He takes the baby brother out reached arms and jumps down from the table and walks around the table.

The baby brother sits the boy next to Monique and he sits next to the con-artist brother.

The male guest nods his head and says, "Smooth."

The man from the post office said, "I like that."

He to the waiter, "Salad please."

The police officer, looks at his postal worker brother and the male guest and said, "You can eat at a time like this?"

Post office guy said, "This time, next time, that time any time."

Then he places his order for dinner.

Monique smiles.

The little boy said, "You're my mommy?"

Monique said, "Yeah", rubbing his head.

She said, "All of your life."

The eldest sister's sons said – "We saw you at the strip club, looking like a fool."

Monique still smiling and rubbing her little boy's head said, "I got the dollar you had."

Martin smiles halfway looking between his sister and the nephew.

Loretta slowly sits.

As the male guest, the police officer and the post office guy watched Loretta's rear end.

The waiter approached and began to take their orders.

He got to David, and he yells, "Hot dog."

Loretta rolls her eyes, "He's been with you for all of two minutes and see what has happened."

Martin said, "Shut your happy @\$%^&\*( up."

Loretta slams her napkin down in her plate and said, "Who do you think you are? You can't talk to me that way."

Martin said, "I just did."

He turns and smiles at the waiter, who was shaking with nerves.

Martin said, "Rib eye steak and double bake potato."

The baby brother looking at Loretta, told the waiter, "Make mine a hot dog also."

The waiter said, "Very good," cutting his eyes at the captain and speeds away, rolling his eyes in his head.

Travis looks at him.

Loretta was sitting and seething and looking at Monique with such hatred, yells out, "I hate you!"

The baby brother talking to David and Monique.

Looks at Loretta and says, "Didn't someone tell you before to shut up?"

Martin eating his salad says, "Yeah. You have another outburst, I'm going to ask for your removal."

Lifting his head up like a sob.

She turns and looks at him.

Then the oldest sister's oldest daughter said, "What are they doing here?"

The baby brother said, "Are you retarded? We've been here for the last 20 minutes."

The father says, "Don't you talk to my daughter like that."

The baby brother said, "You can jump and defend that disgusting 20-year old girl, but you didn't say or do anything when all of you physically abused this baby boy."

Sarah, the eldest sister said, "What are you talking about? I don't know what you are talking about."

Martin said, "Damn! I thought I was the only one who knew about that."

Monique barely could look up and said, "Please, I can't, not now."

David said, "They hurt me all the time" pouting and holding his head down.

The captain and all the immediate tables heard the little boy.

Loretta sitting and fuming in hatred for Monique and her family didn't hear

David's comments.

The eldest sister's younger girl said, "You haven't felt anything yet."

The baby brother looks at the girl and says, "You haven't felt anything yet. If you put your hands on him again!"

## DINING ROOM CONTINUED

Travis and Sarah's (eldest sister) husband were eyeing each other during this fiasco.

Travis sitting, eating his shrimp, like a true gentleman, looks around the entire table and continues to eat.

Thinking, "What a messed up family."

The male guest returns from a phone call and leans over to the brothers at the next table and says, "Anything happened while I was away?"

Police officer leans over, "No. I just hope they get that boy back because I know what they did."

Martin heard the comments but continued to eat his steak.

He said, "Travis, how is your shrimp?"

Travis, about to take a bite was amazed and startled nearly dropped his food.

He said, "Fine. Thanks for asking. And your rib-eye?"

Martin said, "Superb!"

Monique still pampering and talking to her son, says, "I'm going to get you back and I promise you no one will ever hurt you again."

Sarah said, "Just how do you think you're going to get him back? You're unfit."

Loretta said, "That's right."

(Loretta, a little off her guards.)

Sarah said, "We proved it in court and we'll prove it again. You're unfit and incompetent. My God, you're homeless."

Travis said, "She's homeless because you two thieves stole all her earthly belongings and her child."

Sarah's husband said, "What does a jail bird has to do with this family matter?"

Travis said, "I may have been a jail bird, and served time for my crime, but you are a criminal and a hood and thief and your time is for all eternity."

Sarah said, "Oh, so you got religion since you been in prison?"

Loretta said to Monique, "You will never get your son back, nor your music.

Never. I have all the resources and I hold all the cards. You won't be able to love and protect your own flesh. And I will make sure I bury you this time. You loser!"

Monique mind could not think about anything but escape. She jumps up and runs out of the dining room.

Sarah and her family and Loretta laugh a sinister laugh.

David said, "Mommy, mommy don't leave me."

He begins to cry and then jumps and runs.

The male guest gets up and exists to follow Monique;

He didn't see David when he left.

But the guy from the post office did, he jumps to follow the little boy.

The baby brother gets up to go after David.

## SCENE

Monique standing at the rail with a foot on the rail crying.

The male guest walks up to the rail.

He leans on the rail.

Looks down at the ocean and the blackness of it.

Monique did not see him.

She climbs another rail.

The male guest looks back towards the deck.

He says, "What are you doing? You know you're a big girl and would make a mighty big splash."

Monique climbs another rail.

The male guest said, "Would you want your son to always be marked by seeing his mommy die?"

Monique still in her daze, looks at the male guest.

He nods his head and she turns to see her four year old boy standing and looking at her.

Monique said, "Get him away from here."

David said, "Mommy, mommy, do you want me?"

Crying he said, "I don't want to go with them."

The post office guy holding David by the shoulders.

Monique gets down and turns and walks to David.

Getting on her knees, holds her son.

The baby brother standing in the background, returns to the dining room.

The male guest re-enters the lobby and gets on the elevator with other guests.

The guests on the elevator began to sniff and frown, holding their noses.

They all quickly exit on the next floor.

The male guest standing dignified and says, "Like they never smelled shit before."

He exits the elevator and other guests entered the elevator and sniffing and fanning.

The male guest goes to his cabin.

Monique, David and the post office guy sit outside and talk for a few minutes, with ship security watching.

The purser who was sent out when Monique rushed out, to observe.

Returned and whispered his report in the captain's ear.

The ambassador and family watching.

Finally, Monique enters and the post office guy seats Monique and David at their seats.

His brother was watching in surprise.

The post office guy relays the entire scene to his brother who was appalled.

The male guest re-enters with a new Tuxedo on.

The brothers say, "Hey, you changed?"

The male guest said, "Yeah man, I felt like getting a little fresh."

Some of the guests on the elevator were whispering and talking about the male guest.

He turned and raised his glass to them.



### DINING ROOM CONFESSIONS

Loretta, sneering at Monique and her son.

Travis said to Loretta, "Let it go baby girl."

Loretta slowly turns to Travis and says, "What? (with a lot of attitude.)"

Travis said, "I said, let it go."

Loretta stands up and walks (all of the men watching her rear-end) and gets into Travis' face.

Her sister's Sarah family laughing.

The whole dining room quiet.

Loretta screaming at Travis, “How dare you sit and say anything to me? I hate you Travis. You marked me. You ruined my life. The kids hated me and called me names and beat me down every day. And mommy was no-good. Because all she cared about was her murderous son. That was locked up. I hate you Travis. I never knew you, but you caused all of our lives to go to hell. The scars I had to bear on my body. My hair pulled out by the root. Busted lips, swollen eyes and bruised stomach. And do you know the worst part Travis? (Very bold and rough with malice.) Not having any love. Voice cracking. Not at home, not in the streets and not with strangers. The library was my solace. My safety net. Many days for five years. Crying uncontrollably, the gangs would wait outside or come inside the library and beat me up because of you Travis. I had no one to turn to for help. Not a hug, a kiss on the forehead or a word of encouragement or to help me run. Because Sarah married and moved away. She wouldn’t come back to visit nor would she let me spend the night or weekend with her. Monique who I thought would be my friend was a slut and running, (some of the male guests peeping, trying to see which one was Monique) from one married man to the next. The only thing Monique cared about, walking to Monique, was getting drunk and getting laid. Then Martin, con-man...”

Martin who swallows hard and turns his head to keep from making eye contact with Loretta, hoping she would not say anything to him.

Loretta said, “Haven’t got a dime. He got a game. He would swindle every penny from any body. He doesn’t care.”

Loretta bending down in Travis' face said, "You left home and did not care how we were doing. Because you couldn't swindle us for anything because we didn't have nothing. And you never gave anything to us. The few times you came, you stole from us. You stole our bread, the very food we had to eat and for a week, we had nothing."

Martin turns and was about to say something when the baby brother throws up his hand to say it was true.

Martin sits with his head down.

Loretta said, "When that mommy of yours died you came to the funeral asking where the burial policy was and did any body bake a banana pudding cake."

Martin very nervous and clearing his throat said low, "Because it was my favorite. I needed something to console me."

Monique oblivious to them because she was cuddling her baby boy.

Loretta said, "How did you get the money for this trip? You conned somebody out of their money? The only reason you could come is if you thought you would hit pay dirt. You got some kind of scheme going on. You can't let this opportunity pass you by."

Martin shakes himself and says, "Go on now, just stop."

He catches his elder sister and her family laughing.

Then Loretta turns to the baby brother and said, "Oh, I kept the best for last.

Mommy's beautiful and smart baby boy."

He Smiles.

Loretta slaps him hard and un-expectantly and Martin jumps as if he felt it and was holding his jaw and said, "Damn."

Cutting his eyes at Loretta hoping she would forget he was sitting there.

He said to himself, "Because I have to take her down."

In his imagination, he thought about how he would do it, and was smiling.

Sarah and her family laughing.

Sarah's sons getting up from the table ran out the dining room laughing.

The captain and his table appalled.

Travis stands.

The baby brother holds his hand up for Travis to stop.

Loretta continues, "You had to leave me with that insane woman. You turned twelve and went to that military school. And I cried after you every night and with the beatings at school and home. (They all looked). Yes and home were unbearable. All I could think was where's my baby brother? Daydreaming before I fell unconscious, you would come and save me and smile and take me away. But you never came back. I had to endure HELL!!!"

Yelling in his face, "Hell!! Yes, Hell!!!"

The baby boy gets up to reach for Loretta, but she pulls back.

Looking with venom at Monique.

Loretta said, "Come on David, let's go."

Monique began to cry.

David began to cry.

David said, "Mommy."

Loretta goes and pulls him by the arm and snatches him away from Monique.

No one moves.

David crying and looking back at Monique.

Martin said, "Monique, if you don't go and get your son and stop crying about everything, I will help make sure you never get him."

Monique crying, looking at Martin.

Martin very slowly and his anger rising at Monique said, "You hear your own child crying for you and you are so selfish and expect somebody else to get him for you. You don't want to do anything. You want to receive and receive and receive.

Loretta is right about one thing, You have not guts!"

Monique continues crying.

Martin said, "You just heard about how bad mama was (to most except for the baby brother) and how she hurt and ruined a whole lot of lives and you are gonna just sit here and do nothing about your own flesh and blood?"

Sarah laughing said, "I guess you don't have your baby boy after all."

Bucking her eyes and making faces at Monique.

She said, "I know homeless people/street people have difficulty with emotions.

Travis said, "My God Monique, you gonna let that take your son?"

Loretta reveling in the moment of seeing Monique destroyed.

Travis sitting and not believing Monique.

The baby brother shaking his head.

Sarah's oldest daughter said, "Look at the little bitch."

As Loretta was passing by them with the screaming baby.

She hits him hard on his head.

Monique sits there as her child scream from pain.

The captain stands up and orders Loretta and the oldest daughter to be arrested for child abuse.

And he tells the purser to take the child to the infirmary.

The baby brother gets up and walks away.

Monique still crying, looking down.

Martin looks at Monique and shakes his head.

He says, "You are truly pathetic."

The older sister and husband jump and tell the captain not to arrest their daughter, that was the way she played with the boy.

The captain said, "By physical abuse?"

He waved for security and put them under restriction.

Travis sits amazed at the ignorance level of his family.

He says, "Everyone sit. Captain, can they sit for a very few minutes?"

Captain said, "For a few minutes."

Travis said, "May I hold David?"

David stopped crying.

Travis said, "It's no need for you and your mama to be crying. You mama is kind of sick. Not physical – the kind of sick when people don't treat you good."

David said, "Will I get sick?"

Travis said, "No. I will make sure you don't."

David said, "My head hurt."

He begins to cry again.

Travis holding him and rubbing his head.

He said, "The doctor is going to check your head and make sure ever thing is great!"

The word "great" caught the baby brother's attention.

Knowing the word was used by his wife to let the children know, everything was good.

Travis said, "Monique, I know you love David. I know when Sarah (and he laughs at the biblical name given to her) and Loretta stole David and your music, you were destroyed. They said you were incompetent to get to your music, not your son. And they have treated him horribly. Look at me Monique! I will not have you looking down."

Monique slowly looks up at him.

Travis said, "Now stop! So, you can hear me!"

His voice sharp and un-apologizing, "You come and stay with me. And David."

David pointing to himself said, "Me?"

Travis kissed him on the top of his head and said, "Yes, you David. David is a name of a truly smart and brave boy, just like you. You will not live with Loretta again."

Loretta said, "You can't do that. I have court papers."

Travis said, "You'll be in jail for child abuse and child neglect. You have no options, but to do two to three years in prison."

Loretta not even realizing the severity of the situation was finally hit and nearly collapses.

Travis said to Loretta, "If you sign papers giving David back to Monique, maybe the felony charges can be dropped and you can get probation."

The caption flinches.

Loretta said, "I can't go to jail. I have money. I have a business."

And before she could continue, the baby brother holds up his finger and says, "Had a business."

Loretta says, "What are you talking about?"

The baby brother said, "I'm your silent partner. You see my wife was the business whiz and she followed your career. When you looked for a partner, my wife, God blessed her soul, established me as your business partner because she knew you would make us a lot of money."

The ambassador smiled at the thought of his daughter's brilliant business sense.

The baby brother said, "You either sign the papers little sis or go to jail and I pull the money out of your business and foreclose on your home. Oh, we own your mortgage company. You really should have read the article in Black Wealth and Success."

Loretta was limp and weak.

She couldn't think about anything but her money, then her freedom.

Martin said, "And the music?"

Sarah said, "You ain't got nothing to do with that."



Martin said, "The hell I don't. While you and your husband were stealing every dime from everybody's insurance policies and ripping off your co-workers and having the exorcist kids one, two, three and four, I wrote the physical songs on paper and collected them for Monique.

Sarah said, "If you did, why didn't you say something before now?"

She gesturing as if she had made a great point.

Her husband and children looking on, smiling.

Martin bows his head and looks down and says, "Because I didn't want to be a part of such an evil plan, I felt Monique should have stopped depending on everybody to help her and stood up on her own two feet. Just as now she's sitting, but everybody else is taking care of her business."

Martin looks to Monique and said, "What's wrong with you?"

The baby brother said, "She needs help Martin, and we'll get her the help she needs."

Monique said, "Thanks!"

David sitting in Travis' lap and enjoying the love and safety of his arms, smiles.

Martin said to his baby brother, "You are a fine one to talk."

The baby brother said, "What?"

Martin said, "You got married. Didn't say anything. You had kids. Didn't say anything. You wife passed, didn't say anything. After mama died, you cut yourself out of the family. You no longer belong."

Sarah said, "Who wants to be around you?"

Then all of them started fussing at her at one time.

Travis said, "You and your husband have stolen from everybody."

Sarah said, "I didn't steal from you because your never had anything."

Travis stands holding David in his arms.

He said, "There's a lot you'll don't know about me. I killed another gang member during a drug war. I turned to the gang because mama couldn't get a job because she didn't have a high school diploma. That's why she made each of us get one. I got out with my diploma and tried and tried to get a job. Even cleaning up messes, but no one would hire a skinny black kid to do anything. So, I went out in the streets against everything that was in me. Just like you Martin. I decided to join the gang."

Martin mumbling, "Not like me", and sipping some beverage.

Travis said, "I decided to join because you needed shoes for the track team Martin."

Martin stops drinking as if he was thinking.

Travis said, "Sarah, you needed a dress for the prom and earring, shoes and a bag. The dress was green olive with silver sequins with silver earrings. Shoes and bag to match. And you baby brother because you needed that fee to register in that program for gifted children. And of course to feed ya'll and keep a roof over year heads. I hated what I was doing and I hated what I had become. But because I loved all of you, I wanted you to have and then do better than me. I served time for the murder I committed. It wasn't justified because he was a member of another gang.

But during all those years in prison, when all of you had turned your backs on me and cut one out of all your lives, I could count on mommy to keep me up on family. I am truly sorry Loretta that you hate me for destroying your life. But you look pretty good to me baby sister.”

Men at the other table said, “Me too.”

Travis continued, “You thought you were dumb and couldn’t learn. But all that time studying and reading in the library pushed you to be the extremely smart woman you are today.”

Travis said, “Martin you thought you would be killed out of revenge against me. You made a commonsense decision to leave home. You used your wits to stay alive and without joining a gang. That is brilliant and shows entrepreneurship and survival skills. Not bad for a skinny kid who loved track!”

He said to the baby brother, “You were not only mama’s pride and joy, but mines also. Your smile and how smart you were – we were amazed and knew you would do well.”

The baby brother whose name is Morris, smiles.

Sarah said, “What?”

Travis said, “Sarah I watched you everyday while you were on this ship. I was hoping to see some kind of remorse, or human like feeling.”

Sarah turning her head saying, “Huh?”

Travis said, “I know you all don’t know anything about me. The few times mama came to visit, I regretted not...”

They all looked, because she never told them, nor even had the money to visit him.

He said, "...being smart like ya'll."

Sarah still making faces.

Travis said, "She told me all the awards ya'll were getting and how she was keeping scrap books. So, when she died, I asked Morris to get them and keep them for me. And I brought the six scrap books with me onboard.

Sarah said, "Six? You got one?"

Her husband and children laughing.

Travis said, "Sarah, a biblical name of promise. I know you call the police on me and turned me in to get the reward money that was offered. Martin, I knew you were with the other gang that night, because I saw you run and jump the fence in your track shoes I bought. I never told mama because she did not want you in the gang and truly I did not want you in them. You set me up to be killed Martin. I know you didn't realize that was what they had in mind."

Martin realizing and thought, "He knew all these years. I was the one who set up my own brother."

Martin begins to cry saying, "I'm sorry."

Travis said, "Loretta, you will give Monique back her child, music and all you have stolen from her. Monique maybe you will never return to be homeless after this night."

Morris grins and holds his head down.

Travis said, "Sarah, you need what I found in prison."

Sarah said, "What a bitch?!"

Travis said, "Jesus. All those days in solitary confinement, nothing to see, nothing to do or read. I prayed. And I prayed and I prayed. Then finally peace came to me. I was able to go online and get a degree in computer science. And a trade in electrically wiring. To have something to fall back on if I was not hired because I was an ex-con. Every day in prison was time served for my crimes against society. But Jesus released me and said paid in full. I'm condemned by no man or woman Loretta. I'll make it and have a bright light."

Hugging David, he said, "And I will do everything to see you grow up in Jesus. I could have gone to another city or state, but I choose home. Sarah, you have a little time to get yourself straight with Jesus. He is the only one who can set you free and heal your broken spirit. For you don't want death to catch you."

At the hearing, the word 'death', Sarah sits still.

Making no facial expressions, nor making smart comments. She sat.

Travis looks at her and his broken family and sits down still holding and hugging David.

Sarah now bowing her head, slowly raises her head then her body out of the chair.

Her husband grabbing her hand as to say, sit.

She looks at her husband and says, "Shush."

She can barely look up and says, "All the evil you said I did is true. And a lot more you don't know about. I'm sorry Monique. I'm so very sorry David for all the times I hurt you and my family hurt you. I don't deserve to be forgiven."

David said, "I forgive you."

Sarah said, "I have been weighted in the balances and have been found wanting.

All my sins breaking up are laid before you all. I have not been a good sister, wife, mother or person. I have less than 6 months to live."

Dropping lifeless into her seat, her children quiet.

Martin looking at his watch to start the count down.

Morris catches him and Martin turns his head.

Travis said, "All your sins are forgiven through Jesus. Ask Him and He will show you the way."

Sarah said, "I just don't know how to."

Travis said, "He will guide you every step. All you say is, Jesus help me and forgive me of my sins. Make me your child and vessel. In Jesus name."

David repeating everything with his head bowed.

The whole family, the male guest, the brothers and others joined in the prayer.

Martin sitting with his head slightly bowed but watching everyone else.

Morris slightly bowed head and watching Martin.

Travis said, "Come on David, you're staying with us."

David throws his arms up in the air says, "Yeah."

Morris says, "Let's take him to the infirmary first."

Travis nods to Martin.

Martin looks at Monique who was just sitting.

Martin says, "Damn. Come on Monique, let's go to the cabin."

Monique said, "I want to dance."

Martin said, "You ain't dancing tonight."

Captain said, "She can dance with me and I'll make sure she'll be safe."

Travis walks over with David and Monique kisses her son on the head.

Loretta says, "Well, I'll get his stuff and bring it to you."

Martin said, "Hell no. You and the queen of the damn are going to jail and the only time you get out is when you sign the paper. But the queen will be there."

They all split from the table. They go their separate ways.

Martin splurges and go to the bar where he is jointed by the male guest Terrance and the brothers who played cards and drank the whole night.

Monique danced the night away with the captain.

Morris went to his cabin.

He opened the door and sat on his deck sideways. So, he could look at the sky and his sons at the same time.

Travis spent the night in the infirmary with David as they waited for test results (ordered by Morris).

Loretta and the queen of the damn sat in jail all night.

Sarah and her family were only allowed to go to the dinning rooms.

None of the common areas with the other guests.

### THE NEXT MORNING

The next morning everyone was wandering back to their cabins.

Monique walking with the captain who placed his jacket on her to keep her warm.

They had danced and drank champagne and sat and talked until the sun begin to rise and pierce the darkness.

They stood and watched the beauty of the dawning of a new day.

A day that never existed before.

Monique inhaling the fresh ocean air and enjoying the company of a real man, said, "Thank you for the spa and boutique treat."

Captain looking in surprise said, "You are very welcome."

The captain looking at Monique said, "You are going to have to make some decisions."

Monique said, "About what?"

Looking at the captain with goo goo eyes.



Enjoying the moment as with an old friend.

Captain said, "Medical help. A job. A place to stay. The care of David."

Before he could continue, Monique put her hand over his lips. Then slowly bent over and kissed him gently on the lips.

The captain lost in the moment, said, "An attorney, child advocate."

They both burst out in laughter.

Captain said, "Thanks for the kiss, but you know there can be nothing between us but friendship."

Monique said, "I know," stomping her feet.

She said, "A girl gotta try."

Captain said, "I am going to hold your niece in confinement until we dock and hand her over to the local authorities."

Monique was about to say, "Would?"

Captain said, "No. Now Loretta is a little different (because she didn't commit the crime against your son, but she did put him in harm's way. I don't like to see children abused."

Monique drifting out to sea.

Captain said, "Stay with me Monique."

Monique turns and faces the captain leaning on the rail next to him.

Captain said, "Loretta has the legal right to take David from the ship and keep him until you go to court."

Morris was jogging around the deck when both the captain and Monique looked at him.

He saw them looking at him and decided whatever it was, he wanted no part.

When he got close to them, he sped up.

Monique said, "Come back here."

Morris didn't look back.

Morris thought, "Maybe it was something since the captain was involved. If they are there when I go back, I'll stop."

At that time, he bumped into his co-worker.

He blinked and looked at her and said, "I'm sorry for running into you."

Because he didn't see her.

Co-worker said, "That's perfectly ok. I didn't know you were cruising."

Morris said, "Well, I'm here with my family."

Co-worker said, "Oh well, I heard about it."

Morris said, "Oh, well, great running into you. I have to go."

Co-worker, "Let me run with you."

Morris said, "Sure."

Ambassador and wife coming from stretching stood and watched the co-worker.

They walked away silently.

Monique and the captain also watching.

Then Martin in the doorway (coming from the bar, observed the co-worker and smiled.)

Martin walked out and looking at the co-worker said, "Hey honey. How you doing?"

Morris looked at Martin with disgust.

Then stops and says, "Melody, my brother Martin."

And jogs away.

She turns to look at Morris but he's gone.

She backs up and looks at Martin and says, "Toddles."

Martin said, "Don't toddles me. Stay away from him. Toddles that."

Co-worker snaps her head and continues her jog trying to catch Morris who was talking to the captain and Monique.

Co-worker stopping saying, "Pardon me, but are we going to continue our jog?"

Monique said, "Girl, ain't my baby brother fine, and single, but he's not for you!

Now, take your skinny butt on."

The ambassador and wife smiled.

His wife says, "We can invite her to dinner dear."

He opening the door for his wife, says, "An informal dinner – perhaps?"

The co-worker rolls her eyes at Monique and sneer her lip and pats Morris on the arm and said, "I'll see you later."

Morris, Monique and the captain continued their conversation.

Martin and his drunken pals from the night before, wander to their cabins.

Martin falls asleep across the bed.

Travis receives a good report from the doctor about David.

The doctor explains his physical examination of David and the old scars and bruises and about his testicles.

The doctor said he believes David will be fine.

Travis sickened by the physical saw David peeping at him like he was wondering if Travis was going to leave him or get him.

Travis looks at David and says, "Come on, let's go to breakfast."

David burst into a big grin and David said, "Yippy."

All the worry on the face of the baby was gone.

All Travis could think was how can someone do this to a baby?

He picks up David and said, "What you wanna eat?"

David said, "Pancakes and syrup."

Travis said, "You mean pancakes with syrup?"

David said, "Nope, pancakes and lots of syrup."

Travis belted out a hearty laugh.

The doctor told Travis that was fine and laugh as Travis and David exited the infirmary.

Travis put David on his shoulders and went to the desk and told the purser he needed David's stuff out of Loretta's room.

The purser was escorting them when David yelled, "Pancakes and syrup."

As Travis looking at the purser, the purser said, "Come back after you eat breakfast."

Travis said, "Thanks."

Travis and David feasted on pancakes, syrup and juice.

Where they were joined by Monique who relished the moment.

The captain bid her bye and went his way.

Travis speaking by nodding at the captain.

Morris and his boys entered the dinning room and they were running.

Until Morris calls them to him and takes them by the hand and walks them to the table where Travis, David and Monique were dining.

Morris introduced the boys and said, "This is your uncle Travis and your aunt Monique..."

Before he could introduce David, David said, "I'm David. Want some pancakes?"

The boys looking and licking their tongues.

Morris was about to say no.

He thought about his wife and said, "Why not? "Boys, sit here and talk to David and then I will take you to your grandparents."

The boys laughed and talked with David.

David looked at Travis and said, "They like me."

Monique whimpered.

Morris, approaching, heard David. And said, "I like you too David."

David said, "Really?"

Morris said, "Yeah. Ask uncle Travis and your mommy if you can go eat with us?"

David turns and looks at Monique.

Monique smiles, nodding her head for yes.

David runs over to the grandparents' table and sit and play and talk while the boys ate their pancakes.

The ambassador and family were very gracious and kind towards David.

Travis tells Monique, "I'm gong to Loretta's cabin to get some of David's stuff. I may just get all of it."

Travis pushes his chair back from the table and looks at Monique and says, "What are you going to do?"

Monique said, "Sleep."

Travis goes to the desk and gets the purser.

Monique wanders to the cabin and finds a snoring Martin.

She undresses and showers and falls asleep.

The captain showers and changes into a fresh clean uniform.

He has a meeting in his office to discuss the events of last evening and what he was going to do about it.

In the meantime, the eldest sister and family went to the jail to visit her eldest daughter.

The eldest daughter was a nervous wreck.

She was sitting in the middle of the bed with the holding cell uniform on.

She was in one cell and Loretta in the other.

They were separated after being in the cell for no more than thirty minutes.

They jumped on each other and fought until they were parted.

Loretta could not take the niece's cursing and demanding her cell phone back.

Loretta said, "What?! What are you fussing about them taking away your cell phone? Who are you going to talk to in jail on a ship? You need to worry about your freedom!"

Niece said, "Look bitch, if it weren't for you, I wouldn't be here."

Loretta getting off the bed and walking to the front of the cell, says to the jailor, "I've been here for a long time. I want my one phone call. I know that much" with her arms folded in her evening gown.

Jailor looking at her in astonishment.

He said, "I just put you in there twenty three minutes ago. You have twenty four hours to go."

And before he said anything else, the niece walked up and was standing by Loretta.

Loretta letting out a deafening scream, frightened the jailor who jumps out of his seat nearly falling.

The security runs in and seeing Loretta screaming like a lunatic, thought she had been severely injured.

The security turned and looked at the clock.

One of the security said, "Madam, be quiet. You haven't been booked yet."

Loretta's scream went into high gear.

Her niece standing by her jumps when she first started.

But then ignored Loretta saying to the security, "I need my cell phone. I'm not going to listen to this all night. Give my cell phone! I want my cell phone."

Loretta still screaming.

The security looking at her said to the niece – "No cell phone."

And again to Loretta, "Madam, be quiet."

Loretta got worse and louder.

The niece started her yelling for her cell phone again.

The security pulled out his taser and told the niece to get away from the bars and sit down.

She slowly moved back after she stuck her tongue out at the security and made finger gestures.

When he came closer to the cell with the taser.

The niece sat on the bed.

Loretta, still holding onto the bars and screaming.

He told the jailer to call for a sedative.

He turned to Loretta looking at her as if she had lost her mind, and said, "If you do not stop, I will give you a shot that will calm you down."

Loretta began to throw up over the security, over the floor and the cell.

Niece said, "I ain't gonna be in here with this shit, especially without my phone."

Loretta continues throwing up.

They take them out of that soiled cell and put them into another.



Loretta passes out.

She comes to at the voice of her niece.

The niece said, "Wake up bitch! Get me my cell phone."

The jailor and security were talking.

Loretta realizing she was still in jail, began to scream again.

The niece walks over and punches her in the face.

Loretta throws her hands up for defense, the security rushes to the cell to stop the niece, by that time Loretta was coming off the bunk and she and the niece began to throw punches.

The security and the jailor separate them and hands them their jail suits to put on.

Loretta looking at hers began to scream and cry.

The niece said, 'I aint wearing this shit.' And throws it back to the jailor.

The jailor said, "It's not an option!"

Loretta with her designer outfit on just slouched to the floor.

She wailed for hours, in her designer outfit.

Loretta and the niece were so disturbing; the jailor and the security turned out the lights and left locking the door behind them.

When they did that, then the niece begin to scream and cry because she had a phobia about a dark room.

They returned the next morning with the captain and Morris..

When they walked into the room, they walked in slow motion and turning and looking shocked.

Niece is sitting in a fetal position on the floor.

And Loretta had crawled under the bunk.

The crew didn't know if they had nervous breakdowns or whether they were in shock.

They called them several times Loretta and the niece did not answer.

Morris stooping down at the cell where Loretta was; saying, "Loretta, come from underneath the bed."

He was very forceful and Loretta didn't move.

He had them to open the cell and he peeped to see if she was alive.

They moved the cot from over her.

She frightened them because she was lying with her face on the floor, eyes opened and mouth opened with her hair caught on a spring of the cot.

Until they unloosened her hair.

Morris did not know what to think.

He kept calling her until she shifted her eyes and looked at him.

He almost felt sorry for her.

The captain was relieved because he did not want to report and explain a death or a nervous breakdown.

Morris said, "Loretta, you have to get use to this, because I'm pressing charges against you for slapping me."

Loretta was emotionless and just laid there.

Morris truly feeling sorry for her.

He knew what he had to do.

He gets up and walks out.

The security and the captain follow.

Morris signs the papers while Loretta lies on the cold dirty floor in her designer outfit.

Only her eyes shift as Morris signs the papers and walks out.

They go to the niece, who has began to rock and suck her thumb.

The captain says, "That's not good, call the doctor."

The eldest sister and family were escorted by security to breakfast where many guests were whispering and staring.

They quickly ate and were allowed to visit their daughter.

When they saw her in the condition she was in – the boys said, "Oh, shucks."

The younger daughter ran out.

The older sister looks around and sees Loretta still on the floor and lifeless.

Sarah yelling to the jailor.

The security who escorted them is looking on in horror.

She said, "What - - could you have done to them? Look at them!"

Her words become more labored.

She collapses and her husband catches her.

The jailor stomps his feet and the security calls for the doctor.

## THE ELDEST SISTER

The eldest sister is recuperating in their cabin.

Her sons are watching television.

The youngest daughter is on the phone and her husband is on the computer.

No one was observing her when she attempted to sit up in the bed.

She struggled for a while and was finally able to call her husband who was slow to get up.

The children did not miss a beat, they continued like she didn't exist.

Before her husband finally got up from the computer, he exhaled.

When he came to snatch her up in the bed, she looked up at him and said, "You won't have to do this long."

He bowed his head in shame.

She looked at her children and cried with such remorse, at the mess she made.

She told her husband, "I hate my life, my children and you. I should have stopped and looked at me, at my life. Maybe if I would not have been such a fake, my children would not be so evil. I hate the way we all treated little David. He was just a baby and we beat him and abused him. Why? Nothing but the devil. We were powerless to stop, to change. Suppose we had killed him or paralyzed that baby."

Her children turning around to look at their mother as she boo hooed.

She said, very weak and lifting her head up, "You'll got to change. I'm sorry I was not a good Christian mother. I took ya'll to church to show off your clothes and toys. That's not what church is for; it is a place to meet God. Please my children, turn your life over to Jesus. Don't be like me."

The room was silent.

## SCENE

The scene goes to the jail.

The two are still in their positions, no change.

The doctor gave both shots and it made them more zoned out.

The staff didn't know what to do.

Morris walks in and Loretta is still lying on the floor.

He looks at the captain who walked in with him.

Morris goes into the cell with Loretta.

Stooping down, he calls her several times by her name.

Then finally her eyes flutter and focus on him.

He looks at her and breathed very hard.

He says, "Loretta, I do not want it to be like this. I am willing to drop the charges against you and give you your freedom back, if you will sign papers giving David his freedom. Give him back to Monique. And give Monique the right to her music."

At that time Loretta jumps up like a mad woman and began to scream, scaring Morris, who falls backward towards the jailor and captain.

Morris stands up.

He looks Loretta in her eyes and says, "Shut up!!! NOW!! If you do continue, I have the legal authority to have you committed to a mental hospital and take over all your affairs."

Loretta stopped and stared at her brother.

Morris said, "Loretta, your insanity is over. Sign the papers and you can have your freedom and your money. But as you say your money and your freedom. Make no mistakes Loretta, I will leave you to rot. And take David so you will have no grounds for the music. Loretta, you have enough money. You have a life you can make beautiful. Please, please, please turn your life over to God. You have a right to a new beginning – a new life."

Loretta standing looking like a mad woman with hair standing up over her head and ruined makeup, stared at her big brother that she used to worship, and love.

Loretta said, "Morris, I believe you are tricking me."

Morris kept his face straight.

Loretta said, "Where's the paper?"

The captain hands the papers to Loretta, who sits on the cot and reads line to line, over and over again.

Morris is getting nervous but doesn't change his stance.

Loretta looking up from Morris to the captain, to the jailer and security.

Then she looks over at her niece who was not looking dazed and confused but holding on to the bars watching, hoping she would get her freedom also.

Loretta signs the papers.

Stands up.

Stares very hard at Morris.

Then the captain says, "This way."

He looked back at Morris as he escorted Loretta out of her cell.

The jailor gives her a bag and for her to claim her belongings.

Loretta walks out with the security escorting her to her cabin.

She looks long and hard at her beloved brother who was still standing in her cell.

Then he heard a thump.

It was his niece who had passed out.

The jailor rushes over to aide her.

Then Morris steps out of Loretta's cell and watches her out of the door.

The jailer says, "Doctor, can you help?"

Morris rushes to check his niece.

The captain says, "I don't know what to do about her."

Morris checking his niece asked her a few questions.

He sat her on the bunk and walked out.

Morris said, "She's pregnant."



The jailor dropped his keys.

The captain looks scared.

He walks outside with Morris and says, "What kind of family do you have? You mean that evil child is pregnant with a child?"

Morris said, "Disheartening, isn't it?"

Captain thinking, says, "I will let her out for the rest of the trip, but with restrictions with her family. No shore excursions. And she has to see the psychiatrist every day. I will file the report with the land authorities and let them take her from there.

Morris said, "Great plan."

Captain looks at Morris and walks away shaking his head.

Morris heard him saying, "Good God, another one."

Monique and Martin were sleep and snoring in rhythm when Travis and David came in.

They both laughed.

Travis putting his finger up and David putting his finger up as to say, be quiet.

The tipped in the room and then Travis spring on Martin, waking him up.

Martin trying to go back to sleep said, "Man, what are you doing? Go."

He heard Monique snoring.

Travis and David laughing, they had become the best of friends in a few hours.

There was a knock at the door, when Travis and David went to answer Martin, quickly kicked Monique's bunk.

Monique waking up from the kick.

Morris steps in and tells them Loretta signed papers to permanently give custody of David to Monique. Along with her music.

Monique saying, "Oh my God, Oh, my God."

She jumps out of bed and falls on Martin who was bending over on his bunk.

She landed on Martin's back.

Martin screaming with staggered breath, "Get off, get it off!"

Morris and Travis rushes to help the struggling Monique to get off Martin's back.

David begins to laugh.

Monique reaches for the papers.

Morris had three copies made. He kept one, gave one to Monique and one to Martin who was still lying on the floor.

Travis said to Morris, "Why to Martin and not to me?"

Morris said, "Big brother..."

Patting Travis him on the shoulder, you have proven your love for David. For all of us. You will do right by David and Monique. Maybe Martin needs to learn to be more responsible for others."

Travis smiles and says, "Thank you. That means a lot coming from you."

Monique says, "David, this paper says you stay with mommy."

David said, "Forever?"

Monique said, "Forever."

David said, "And uncle Travis?"

Monique said, "Yes and especially Uncle Travis."

David said, "Can we put it in a frame?"

Monique said "Of course."

Travis jumps and says, "I forgot in the midst of this mad family."

He goes to the closet and pulls out his duffle bag.

He unzips it and hands Monique, Morris and Martin (who was struggling to get up), their scrap books.

Travis also takes out his.

Morris sits in a chair.

Monique and David lay on Travis bunk.

Martin sits on the floor and Travis sits on the foot of Martin's bed.

They all opened the scrap books at the same time and begin to wonder through the pages. \*\*\*\*\*

### CON-MAN

He caught the bus and rode overnight to get to the boat.

Martin had to travel as cheap as possible.

He went to the bridal shop and rented a tux and patent leather loafers.

He went to the barber school for a student to give him a hair cut, trim his facial hair and sideburns.

When he arrived home, he saw the hair cut was wrong.

One sideburn was longer than the other side and wider.

He had to even and shape everything up.

Martin went to the department store and asked for samples of men cologne.

He paid for his cruise and had just enough money for the bus ticket and the tux rental.

The day before he left for the cruise, he was at the library on the computer and off and on nearly all day.

He would look at the librarian.

The librarian was watching him.

He sat at the table and worked all day.

Martin would get up and stretch.

He would look at the vending machines and say, "Na'll, I ain't got no money."

Finally, he put his pen down and grinned to himself.

The librarian watching.

In comes his friend, loud and obnoxious as usual.

He looks at the librarian and says, "How're you doing this evening?"

She smiles and blushes.

Martin looks at them.

When the friend finally comes to the table Martin says, "What's going on?"

Friend, "I got a thang for Ms. Jones. "

Martin looks back and forth between the two of them and says, "Damn."

His friend looking at the papers on the table, and says, "I see you got everything mapped out. I wish I could be there to see this man. This is going to be great!

It's brilliant."

Martin smiling to himself.

He put all his belongings into the tuxedo rental bag.

He slept all the way on the bus.

And when he arrived at the bus depot, he went outside and caught the city bus that dropped him off a block from the docks.

When he turned around, he was standing on the pier looking at the gray sky over the boats and the beginning of the ocean.

He had never been this close to the water and the boats.

He began to say, "Whoa."

Then he realized he had to get down to the docks.

He found the boat and as he was standing looking up at it, he saw who he thought was his younger sister walking up with a little boy.

He stood and stared until they reached where he was standing.

The little boy was whining and looking.

The little boy was looking at the water around the boat and how big the boat was.

The younger sister was holding the little boy by the hand.

Not paying the little toddler any attention but standing and looking up at the very large boat.

He turns and looks at his younger sister squarely in the face and then at the little boy.

She not even noticing the stranger, her brother.

He says, "Well damn Loretta, what you acting like this for?"

Loretta coming out of her daze, slowly turns and looks at him.

He looks at her peculiarly and says, "What in hell is on your mind that you don't know me, your own brother?"

The little boy looking up at Martin.

Loretta says, "What? Who? Oh hello."

She takes the boy by the hand and began to walk away.

Martin turns and looks at her and says "What!"

The little boy looking back at him helplessly.

Martin walks up and stands in front of her and stoops down looking at the little boy.

He says, "I'm you Uncle Martin. "I'm your mama's brother."

Looking up at Loretta with a very mean look.

The little boy looks up and says, "Mama, he's your brother?"

The little boy asks with a questioning look.

Martin says, "Damn."

Loretta looks at the little boy then her brother.

She says, "Yes. He is your mama's brother."

She removes her sunglasses and rolls her eyes at her brother and began to walk away.

Martin, still stooping down, waves as she and the little boy are walking away.

The little boy gives him that million dollar smile.

Martin turns his head and says, "Damn, this is crazy. It's going to be much harder than I thought."

As he is stooping down, his sister Monique was standing by the cab stand and saw her baby boy and she saw him when he flashed that million dollar smile. Her heart broke.

She stood across the pier and cried for a very long time.

She wanted to leave, but thought of how she got the money to make the cruise kept flashing in her mind.

She kept hearing the pole dancers say, "Don't run. Don't run."

She ran her whole life.

The moment she finished high school, she walked across the stage and kept going.

She made her mama proud because her four eldest kids finished high school, not many parents/mamas could say that in the neighborhood.

She left home that day like the two before her and vowed never to return.

Monique loved her men folks.

She didn't care whose men, married men, single men, loud men, card playing men.

She loved to hang out in those smoky juke joint places.

Where they served alcohol to the under aged.

She would wake up in a room with different men every time she went.

Some were abusive and some were treacherous.



Monique didn't care because it gave her freedom.

She was the owner's best customer because she would draw the men, who bought the liquor.

She would go to these places to run away from home.

A home that had no peace, no love, no money.

When she really needed shoes or a dress for the prom or graduation or her hair done, she would go to the juke joints.

Monique knew she would give the men a good time and they would get her what she needed.

Her mother hated it.

Monique even had some old men coming to her house.

And her mother was appalled.

Her mother kept saying to her, "All I want you to do is to finish high school."

Her mother didn't think she could do any better.

She was so disappointed with her mama.

When she reached the age of fourteen ran away.

And found herself singing at those places.

When she was younger, she would go to church every Sunday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Saturday.

She would go to church every time it opened just to get away from home.

Then one of the old deacons in the church, who had been watching her lustfully - whispered and told her to meet him at Ms. Hattie's.

She met him there.

She left before choir rehearsal was over, so not to be missed by her mother.

She met him there and he took advantage of her and threatened her by saying he would tell her mother. Then finally after two years of his abuse he died, setting her free.

She loved singing.

It set her mind free.

She began to write poetry of her life and had music in her head but didn't know how to write it on paper.

Monique started dating the older men who played at the juke joints and was the reason for many of the fights between the men.

Her mother heard of it and was disgusted.

Her mother told her at her graduation, "You are now free to be. You can be a great singer. You can be an actress you now have one of the things you need in this life – a diploma. I do love you. I want you to stop running."

The whistle of the boat blew which startled her and she looks in astonishment at the boat and realizes she had been standing there for a long time.

The words of her mother, "Stop running," were ringing in her ears.

She picked up her duffle bag and began to run for the boat.

Running across the pier she stumbles.

Then nearly runs over an employee.

She leaps over a dog and finally reaches the board of the ship.

The captain and crew looking on.

She reaches them out of breath more so from the thought of breaking free to see her baby boy than being overly exhausted from the track to the boat.

They told her to go inside and she would be told her room assignment.

She walks up to the deck and is pleasantly greeted.

She felt overwhelmed.

Monique looked at how the people were dressed and touched her jacket looking down at what she had on.

She was ashamed.

She got on the elevator and was going down to her room.

Monique caught a reflection of her hair and was feeling down.

When she arrived at the room her brother Martin was already there.

He opened the door.

The two stood there a very time long in silence.

The porter tries to pass by them to place her duffle bag in the cabin.

The captain, who had been watching them before they boarded, stood in the background.

Monique began to whimper.

Martin steps aside.

She finally walks in the cabin.

The captain leaves.

Inside the cabin, they stand.

Monique is standing sideways.

Martin is standing at the door.

Finally, a knock on the door.

Martin looking at his sister.

Monique jumped at the knock.

Martin opens the door.

It was Travis.

Nothing was said.

Travis looks at Martin and walks inside.

Martin looks at his brother.

Then Travis walks over to Monique and stands in front of her.

He looks at her.

Monique fearfully looks up at him.

Travis, not saying anything, kisses her on the forehead, as he had done her whole life.

She stands and silently cry.

Tears falling down.

Martin standing at the door with his forehead leaning on the door before turning and saying, "I got the lower bunk."

Because Travis was sitting on the bed.

Travis gets up and sits in the chair.

They are frozen in time.

### CABIN SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

#### SCENE

During the past three days, Monique slept on the top bunk.

Martin slept on the bottom.

Travis slept on the bunk on the opposite wall.

The first night and every night Monique would toss and turn and her bunk would shake.

Martin couldn't get any sleep because he was afraid her bed would fall on him.

All through the night each time Monique moved Martin would jump.

Travis pretending to be asleep would laugh silently.

Because he was used to lying still and not getting any sleep.

Travis would think about how he got his money, for the trip.

He made a list and wrote down everything he needed.

Then he went and stood on the corner of new construction sites and across the street from construction suppliers.

He copied and posted signs for computer tutoring and repair.

Travis washed cars.

He worked hard for those 309 days.

All the moving Monique did could not disturb his peace.

But he was disturbed by her talking and crying in her sleep.

He heard her every night replay the tragic and horror of losing her baby boy and her life.

Martin heard her tears and her anguish.

He laid there thinking.

The first morning, Martin jumps up and runs to the bathroom.

(Travis looks at Martin, who had thrown his legs on the floor and was sitting on his bunk.)

Monique was getting down from her bunk.

Travis knew why Martin had jumped and ran to the bathroom.

First, then Travis said, "Ladies first."

Martin looks hard at Travis.

Monique smiles and passes her brothers saying, "Morning."

Monique goes into the bathroom.

Martin turns and points and says to Travis, "Hey man, should she use the bathroom first? She's homeless and we don't know what she got."

Monique heard her brother's comments and began her whining.

Martin and Travis heard her.

Travis looking at Martin said, "Sit your narrow butt down."

Martin sits across, on his bunk, in front of Travis.

They stare at each other.

Martin not saying anything.

Then Martin gets up and began to pace up and down the floor.

Travis sits still and then slowly turns and looks at Martin.

Martin looks at Travis and throws his hands up in a questioning mode.

Travis looks at Martin and turns his head.

Martin mumbles, "Like you all hard and . . . "

Monique emerges from the bathroom and Travis pushes Martin aside to use it.

Martin gets angry.

Monique is dressed and just stands there.

Martin mouthing silently at Travis.

He looks at Monique standing there with the same clothes on she wore onboard and all day yesterday.

Martin says, "What are you standing there for?"

Monique said, "I want to eat."

Martin said, "Then, go eat. Don't you have something else to wear?"

Monique said, "No."

She puts down her makeup case and pajamas in the closet.

And walks out the door.

She stands at the door holding onto the frame and sobs.

The purser and another guest walking behind saw her.

The purser asks if she was “okay.”

Monique said, “Yes.”

And they walk away from her.

She wandered upstairs into the dining room.

She saw her baby passed by with her sister Loretta.

She drops her plate onto the floor breaking it.

The custodian comes over to help her.

Monique is holding her stomach (which is in knots).

She stumbles out of the dining room and follows them.

Loretta takes the little boy to the kids play area and leaves him.

Monique hides in the doorway while her sister leaves.

Monique tips to the kids play area and looks until she catches the sight of her little boy playing with the ship employee.

But he looks sad to her.

He’s dressed well.

The purser who saw her drop her plate stands back and watches her.

She stands there until she couldn’t take it anymore.

She holding her hand over her mouth, bolster out of the area.

The purser looking on curiously, walks up and looks into the play area sees the little boy.

And stands there thinking and turns and looks in the direction Monique ran.



By that time Travis and Martin were entering the hallway when they saw Monique run.

And the purser going to look in the play area.

They entered the dinning room.

Martin sporting a bruised eye.

After Monique left the room, Travis exited the bathroom and hitting Martin once and knocking him down said, "What's wrong with you man? Can't you see? Can't you see?"

Martin said, "The only thing I can see out of my one eye is you on top of me."

Travis getting off Martin said, "She's hurting man."

Martin lying on the floor and shaking his head from side-to-side.

Travis said, "Are you alright?"

Martin still lying on the floor, zooming (shaking) his head from side-to-side, says, "How is it that a murderer can say someone is hurting? Was that drug dealer hurting when you. . ."

Before Martin could finish his sentence he passes out.

Travis stood over his brother and bending down picks him up and sits him on the floor.

Holding him on his shoulders until he became conscious.

Martin comes to and says, "What the . . . did you hit me?"

Attempting to swing at Travis.

Martin says, "You wait. When you won't expect anything."

Travis said, "Yeah, that's your trademark."

Martin looks up at his brother and blinks wondering, if he knew.

Travis said, "Let's eat."

Martin mumbling, goes into the bathroom for a few minutes, still thinking, if Travis could possibly know. He emerges with a T-shirt on and pants.

Travis says, "Nigger, put on a shirt and button it up."

Martin looks at his brother and mumbles, "I don't know who he thinks he's talking to."

Travis does not respond.

He learned over the years, don't respond to everything. Pick your battles.

They go upstairs and as they enter the hallway they see Monique standing outside the children's play area.

They knew it was the kids play area because they could hear the screams.

Martin was about to yell at her, but she ran away.

And they saw the purser walk over to look in the play area.

They entered the dining room.

Martin leaning over the table eating his breakfast, winking and smiling at the ladies at the next table over.

Travis, placing his napkin on his lap began to eat his breakfast.

Martin looks at him and says, "What's that about?"

Travis said, "Etiquette."

Martin looks at him and turns his attention back to the women at the other table.

The purser and the security guard walk over to their table, obscuring Martin's view of the ladies.

Martin looks up and says, "You're blocking my view."

The security guard says, "Your swollen eye is."

Travis sits there and looking at them.

The purser sits down and says, "We don't want any trouble on this cruise."

Looking at both of them.

Travis quiet, but trying to think what they were talking about.

Martin says, "What are you talking about?"

Purser, "The lady sharing your cabin – her crying outside your room and she crying at the kids play area."

Martin said, "Well, yeah."

Security said, "We won't have any trouble."

The purser stood.

He and the security man walked away.

Travis glares at his brother.

Martin looking at his brother is thinking, "Does he know?"

Monique sat outside the kids play area every day for three days.

It was her routine.

She watched her son smile, play, run, fall.

The purser and security were watching.

When Loretta would come and get him (after their excursions on-shore), Monique would hide so she wouldn't be seen.

Every day she wore the same clothes.

And the same outfit at evening.

The third night, Monique was tossing and turning, crying in her sleep.

Martin had become delirious not having any sleep but the cat naps he took during the day.

And when he was finally about to fall asleep, a large object passed his bed and fell onto the floor with a loud thump.

It was Monique.

Martin sits straight up in the bed and being delirious, yells, "Tsunami!"

Travis turns the overhead bed light on and looks on the floor at Monique who was snoring.

He looked at Martin who was delirious and sitting up in his bunk.

Travis heard a knock at the door and he went to the door, stepping over Monique.

It was the purser, the security guard and the previous male guest.

The security steps pass Travis (who was sanding there in his tee-shirt and under shorts.)

Then the purser and male guest steps in.

Seeing the scene, they step back out.

Martin, sitting in the bed is hitting the bed and saying, "I got to get some sleep."

Falling back onto the bed, hits his head on the wall and began to curse.

Travis, steps outside the cabin and tells them, "We are here for a family reunion.

Our family has a lot of problems, some will be worked out, some won't"

(That's when Martin falls backward and hits his head and began to curse (not audible).

Travis tells them they worked hard to get there and that Monique's child was taken by the other sisters, along with her songs. And maybe they can at least let her see her son."

Because every day, Travis and Martin would sit behind Monique and watch her watch her son.

Then Martin would slip away.

And Travis would sit and wonder at his brother's exit.

Travis re-enters the cabin.

Take the blanket off Monique's bunk and places it on her.

He looks at Martin.

He sits on his bed for a moment and then lies down and cuts off the light.

During the night, a shadow passes by the door, and stops and slips an envelope under the door.

Travis sits up and turns on the light, sees the envelope, and lies back down.

The next morning, after they all had awakened, Monique went into the bathroom.

Travis walks over to pick up the envelope, but Martin sees it and rushes and grabs it.

Travis said, "Who is it for?"

Martin turns and couldn't think of a lie quick enough, just stands there.

Then Monique exits the bathroom.

Travis said, "Give it to her."

Monique looks.

Martin hands her the envelope.

She said, "What's this? Who is this from?"

Thinking it was about her baby boy she says, "Is it about my baby?"

Then she saw the word 'spa'.

Monique said "Spa?"

Travis said, "It was slipped under the door, is there a note?"

Monique said, "No."

Martin standing with a fickle look. Thinking how much the spa could have been for.

Travis reading Martin's thoughts, says to Monique, "Go and enjoy yourself."

Monique holds the envelope to her chest. Tearing up and mouth quivering.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> DAY OF FAMILY REUNION

SCENE

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the family reunion.

No one has seen anyone else.

Monique nearly misses the spa and boutique treat because she was sitting and watching her baby.

Martin had disappeared again.

The captain is watching.

## SCENE

The boat docks.

Martin reappears and walks and stands next to Travis who was leaning on the rail, waiting to see if their doctor brother would come.

As they were standing there, Martin told Travis, their brother's wife had previously died three weeks before and he may not come.

Travis is stunned.

He in silence turns and looks at Martin in slow motion.

Martin looks away and felt the uncomfortable heat from Travis' stare.

Martin shrugs his neck and takes a step to the side and eventually leans on the rail next to Travis.

Monique gets up and walks to the rail a little distance from them.

As they turned to watch the people boarding, a black limousine pulls up with flags.

Out step the ambassador and his wife, then their daughter.

Martin looking at the daughter yelling, "Oh wee, I'd like to get..."

Travis yelled, "Shut up!"

The captain and crew looking at them.

Martin caught the stares of the crew.

He swallowed hard and turned around.

Then steps out their baby brother holding his two babies in his arms.

Both their mouths dropped opened so did Monique's who recognized her brother from the cover of the Black Wealth and Success magazine.

Travis, who rarely said anything in unison with Martin said, "Damn."

Looking at each other.

Monique at the other rail said, "Damn."

And began to tell the people, "That's my baby brother yall. "Yeah, that's my baby brother. Where's his wife? Ms. Thang-a-lang?"

Monique yelling to Travis and Martin, "Where's Ms. Thang Ya'll?"

Martin slaps his hands down for her to shut up.

The captain and crew looking at them.

Then the captain says something to one of the crew members.

He walks over to Monique and tells her to be quiet!!!

Monique in shock and couldn't mutter a word, turns away from the crew member and mumbles to herself.

The passengers next to her "giggling."

Martin and Travis look on.



The crew member was approaching them.

Martin said, "Don't you stop here. You best keep on going."

Travis not saying anything but gave the crew member a glare.

He walked pass them back to the captain, who was watching the fiasco.

The baby brother with his two babies in his arms, looked up at the enormity of the ship.

And thinking back at the conversations he and his wife had about taking the boys on a boat trip.

He said out softly, "I'll take them next year."

The father-in-law heard him and pretended that he didn't.

The servants took the luggage to the boat, and as he walked around the limousine and looked up again, he saw his two brothers and fanning the crowd.

He saw Monique.

Monique waved, but looked at the captain who was looking at her and didn't yell to her brother.

She said, "Acting like you don't see me waving at you."

He was good at ignoring his family.

He thought about how he would ignore them when he would stand in front of the TV and wouldn't move.

And they knew they better not touch mama's baby.

He would ignore them when he was at the playground or riding his bike.

And they would get into trouble with mama.

He smiled to himself.

Martin looking on said, “Look at him with that same smile – when we would have been beaten by mama for something he did. Man. . .”

Travis looked at Martin.

Martin shuts up.

Monique passes by running to go and greet her brother.

They both follow her with their heads down.

Martin said, “Where’s that fool going to?”

The captain watched them.

The ambassador, wife and daughter boarded, then their baby brother and his sons.

She runs pass everybody and was about to be blocked by the same crew member, when she gave him a look and held her arms wide open for her brother.

Who passes by her.

And his sons are looking around at her from the back of their daddy’s head.

The ambassador, etc., are looking.

Then she turns about to cry but runs and slaps him on the back of the head.

His head buckles.

The captain and crew, ambassador and family gasped.

Martin and Travis look on.

Martin's mouth flies open and he says, "They gonna put us off the ship."

Travis said, "Boat."

Martin looks at Travis he said, "Now you correcting my phonics."

Morris Chestnut continues and greets the captain and crew.

He then turns and smiles at Monique (whose heart was crushed.)

Then she smiles.

The captain and crew and the ambassador and his family smiles nervously.

Then Martin smiles and says unexpectedly, "It's on".

And realizing he spoke out loud, pretended he didn't say anything, cutting his eyes at Travis to see if he had heard him.

Travis heard him but didn't blink.

Monique ran and gave her brother a big bear hug.

And his boys were asking, "Who's that?" Who's that daddy?"

He turns and tells them, "This is my sister, just like you two are brothers."

The two year old looking says, "We don't have a sister."

Monique belts out a laugh.

Then she looks and says, "Where's that Ms. Thang- a-lang of a wife?"

Not noticing his face and the faces of the ambassador and his family.

She continued, "I saw ya'll and her sophisticated self on the cover of Black Wealth and Success."

Then the two-year old said, "Mommy is with Jesus."

Monique laughed.

Then she looked at her brother who walked away.

She was shocked.

The ambassador stepped up to her and said, "My daughter passed away three weeks ago."

Monique in shock could not move or say anything.

The little boys looking back at her and then at their daddy laying their heads on his shoulders, to comfort him, patting him on the back.

Her baby brother passes his brothers without a word.

Martin tries to wave at him, but to no avail.

Monique finally goes inside and to the spa and boutique.

Martin disappears.

Travis cuts his eyes and he remains on the deck most of the day.

Later that evening, as Travis was still sitting on the deck, he saw Loretta and Sarah (eldest sister) and her husband come aboard apparently from a shore excursion.

As they were walking across the deck, the baby brother was strolling around the deck.

They barely missed each other.

The baby brother strolls over to the table where Travis is sitting, looks down at him.

Travis slowly looks up at him.

Travis said, "I'm sorry about your wife."

The baby brother says nothing.

His baby brother motions at the chair – which means could he sit?

Travis motion to the chair for him to sit.

He sits but is extremely uncomfortable.

He swirls, he squirms.

He suddenly gets up and with hand gestures he just couldn't do it.

The baby brother walks away.

Travis says, "Are you coming to the dinner tonight?"

The baby brother slightly looking back, kept walking.

Travis said, "You'll enjoy it."

7:00 PM

Travis enters the cabin and sees a serious and fidgety Martin who was so busy and talking to himself that he did not hear Travis enter.

Martin would read one sheet of paper and took up as if he was memorizing it.

Then he would say, "Na'll, that ain't right."

He then picked up another note card and smile to himself and shaking his head for yes.

He had already showered and had on his underwear.

Travis is just puzzled by Martin's behavior.

He knows whatever he is doing is bad and will permanently destroy the family.

Martin catches a glimpse of Travis and turns suddenly and says, "How long have you been standing there?"

Travis plays it off.

He said, "What? I just walked in. You need to go into the bathroom and get dressed before I go in."

Martin looking concerned and really trying to interpret Travis' facial expression.

They heard a knock on the door.

Travis looks at Martin who was walking to the door in his underwear.

Looking back at Travis and keeping eye contact because Travis had moved between the beds pretending getting his stuff to go into the bathroom but trying to catch a glimpse of what Martin was doing.

When Martin turned the doorknob, he was still looking Travis in the eyes, then he looked quickly at the door.

It was the purser who stepped into the cabin with Monique on his arms.

She slowly stepped in and was ashamed at first.

Then Martin said, "Damn."

Travis looks at his sister and says, "You're beautiful."

The purser slowly backs out the room and closes the door.

Travis gets a look at Martin's papers and gasped.

Then Martin says (not seeing Travis leaving his papers), "I guess I better go and check things out for the dinner."

He goes quickly to his bed and looks at the papers then back at Travis who was talking to Monique.

Martin said, "Very rough, hey man," looking at Travis.

He said, "Did you sneak my papers?"

Travis turning back around continued to talk to Monique.

Martin walks up behind Travis and says, "Did you read my papers?"

Travis said, "Step back, Monique."

Monique steps all the way back to the wall.

Martin gets up in Travis's face and before another word was spoken Martin making Travis think he would not hit him (to let his guard down) punches Travis extremely hard in his gut.

And says, "That's for my swollen eye. Nigger, did you read my papers?"

Monique standing back in shock says, "Don't fight, please don't . . ."

Before she could say anything else, Travis had caught Martin by the throat and had him swinging in the air.

Martin trying to pry his brother's hands from his neck. His feet swinging in the air.

Travis said, "Yeah, I'm hard! Yeah, I read that evil you concocted over there.

You better not! You better not!"

Monique looking at Martin's bed and the papers that were on it.

Martin said, "If I do? You can't tell me what to do," gasping for air.

Travis still holding him up in the air, began to tighten his grip on Martin's throat.

Monique realizing he might just kill Martin began to say, "Please Travis, let him go. Please, you just got out. Please! Please."

Travis throws Martin against the wall and he falls onto the floor.

Then Monique begins kicking Martin.



Then she runs and grabs the papers and Travis tells her not to read it, but she did.

Martin still shaking and gasping for air.

Looking at his sister's face.

By her facial expression, she was reading the part about her son.

She looked at Martin.

Martin still sitting on the floor, eyes bucked when he saw her charging at him.

Attempting to get up but couldn't.

Travis caught her just before she really kicked him.

And he held her while she sobbed.

Then she sits in the chair and become quiet.

Martin and Travis looking at her, then each other thinking maybe she has had a nervous breakdown.

She looks at the wall clock, 7:49 pm.

She looks at Travis and said, "You've got 10 minutes to get dressed and escort me to the dinning room."

Travis not knowing what to do, slowly turns to walk to the bathroom, when she yells, "Now!"

Travis flies into the bathroom not looking back.

Martin still sitting on the floor didn't want to look at her, but slightly turns his eyes.

She was looking at him.

She said, "Were you really going to do this evil?"

Martin still sitting on the floor, and cutting his eyes at her said, "Yes."

She walks slowly over to him and bends down, looking at him and softly smiles  
and he letting down his guard a little

She butts him in his head with her head.

Martin screaming and Travis ran out of the bathroom, half-dressed.

Saw Martin holding his head and Monique bending down.

Travis says, "Monique, what did you do to him?"

Monique said, "Nothing."

Passing by Travis to go into the bathroom to fix her dress and makeup.

Travis watching her pass him.

Martin yelled again and said to Travis, "She butted me with that 10-ton head of hers." Oh my God."

Martin was gasping for air said, "I can't see! I can't breathe, I'm dying."

Travis rushes to his brother and picks him off the floor and began to walk him.

Monique peeping at the scene from the bathroom.

She mumbling said, "You don't know who you're messing with boy. That's right!

The queen is back!"

She began to dance.

Travis holding a bent over Martin, both looked at her in the bathroom.

Monique said, "Don't look at me, get dressed. Now! We got a show to go to."

Martin and Travis exit the cabin behind a lavishly dressed Monique.

The previous male guest walks behind them entering the elevator also, looks at

Monique from the top to bottom and says, "You're one fine woman."

Monique said, "Thank you darling."

The male guest smiles.

Travis and Martin look at each other and as they are exiting, Martin said, "Whatever happens it's on your head. Now I can't predict what's going to happen."

Travis stops in his steps and looks at Martin in disbelief.

Monique calls, "Come on boys."

Martin walking looking back at Travis.

Puts his hand up to his head saying Monique was crazy.

Travis kid of thought so, with a frightful look on his face.

Martin motioning to him to step up because he was not going to be alone with Monique.

### THE DINING ROOM

The three enter the dining room.

A brother on each arm of Monique.

The captain and other diners look.

The ambassador and his family were being seated at the captain's table.

They walked pass to the next table and not even looking up at the people standing before them.

Monique's little boy said, "Hello!" And then flashed a smile.

Monique's heart break.

Loretta looking up in shock at the three misfits.

All that came into her head was the lion, tin man and the scare crow.

No mind, no brain, no guts.

She snarled and continued to look over the menu.

The older sister gasped as she half-way looked up.

Her husband said, "Well the murdered, the whore and the thief."

Their children laugh.

The captain's table heard it.

Martin said, "You shouldn't be talking about yourself like that man."

Monique eyes welling up with tears as she looked at her baby boy.

The purser came by and told them to sit.

He offered Monique a seat across from the boy.

Travis took the seat in front of his sister's husband.

Martin sat next to the little boy so he could be close to Loretta.

The little boy all dressed up in a dinner suit with a white jacket said, "Who are you?"

Monique, taking her napkin and placing it in her lap said, "I'm your mommy."

Loretta jumps up and says, "How dare you!"

The little boy turns his head to look at Loretta, then he looks at Monique.

Monique smiling at the little boy and turns and coldly looks at Loretta and says, "I dare!"

The male guest sitting at a table over, moved his table directly next to theirs and looked at the two men (the police officer and the guy from the post office) who were also taking it all in.

Then the people clicked in the mind of the police officer as all three men were looking at Loretta's physique.

Then the police officer looked at the little boy, then said, "Damn!"

His brother, the guy from the post office said, "What?"

The police officer said, "It's the family I told you about and how they had hurt the little baby boy."

His brother turned around and then focused on Monique's face and told his brother, "That's the homeless lady and she was the one at the strip club."

The male guest leaning all over and his elbow falling off the table, caught the attention of the men.

He attempted to sit up dignified but looked at the little boy.

His mind went back to his childhood and how it felt to be abused.

The men, police officer and guy from the post office, looked at the male guest and asked him if he was alright.

He waited a minute and said, "Yes."

At that time the baby brother walked to the table unnoticed by all of them but having caught the comments among his sisters.

He said, "Good evening."

Looking at the little boy.

He stooped down and said, "I have two little boys. Would you like to play with them tomorrow?"

The little boy looking with excited wonderment said, "Yes."

The little boy said, "No one likes me."

And puts his head down.

Monique looks up at Loretta and said, "That's the last time you will ever stand."

Loretta said, "You're threatening me?" Come on David, let's go."

David began to get out of the chair.

Loretta snarls with a half-grin, especially seeing Monique is hurt.

The elder sister and her family laughing.

The baby brother still stooping down by David looked up at Loretta and said, "Sit your ass down. David, come and sit by me. I like you little man."

David said, "You do?"

He takes the baby brother out reached arms and jumps down from the table and walks around the table.

The baby brother sits the boy next to Monique and he sits next to the con-artist brother.

The male guest nods his head and says, "Smooth."

The man from the post office said, "I like that."

He to the waiter, "Salad please."

The police officer, looks at his postal worker brother and the male guest and said, "You can eat at a time like this?"

Post office guy said, "This time, next time, that time any time."

Then he places his order for dinner.

Monique smiles.

The little boy said, "You're my mommy?"

Monique said, "Yeah", rubbing his head.

She said, "All of your life."

The eldest sister's sons said – "We saw you at the strip club, looking like a fool."

Monique still smiling and rubbing her little boy's head said, "I got the dollar you had."

Martin smiles halfway looking between his sister and the nephew.

Loretta slowly sits.

As the male guest, the police officer and the post office guy watched Loretta's rear end.

The waiter approached and began to take their orders.

He got to David, and he yells, "Hot dog."

Loretta rolls her eyes, "He's been with you for all of two minutes and see what has happened."

Martin said, "Shut your happy @\$%^&\*( up."

Loretta slams her napkin down in her plate and said, "Who do you think you are? You can't talk to me that way."

Martin said, "I just did."

He turns and smiles at the waiter, who was shaking with nerves.

Martin said, "Rib eye steak and double bake potato."

The baby brother looking at Loretta, told the waiter, "Make mines a hot dog also."

The waiter said, "Very good," cutting his eyes at the captain and speeds away, rolling his eyes in his head.

Travis looks at him.

Loretta was sitting and seething and looking at Monique with such hatred, yells out, "I hate you!"

The baby brother talking to David and Monique.

Looks at Loretta and says, "Didn't someone tell you before to shut up?"

Martin eating his salad says, "Yeah. You have another outburst, I'm going to ask for your removal."

Lifting his head up like a sob.



She turns and looks at him.

Then the oldest sister's oldest daughter said, "What are they doing here?"

The baby brother said, "Are you retarded? We've been here for the last 20 minutes."

The father says, "Don't you talk to my daughter like that."

The baby brother said, "You can jump and defend that disgusting 20-year old girl, but you didn't say or do anything when all of you physically abused this baby boy."

Sarah, the eldest sister said, "What are you talking about? I don't know what you are talking about."

Martin said, "Damn! I thought I was the only one who knew about that."

Monique barely could look up and said, "Please, I can't, not now."

David said, "They hurt me all the time" pouting and holding his head down.

The captain and all the immediate tables heard the little boy.

Loretta sitting and fuming in hatred for Monique and her family didn't hear

David's comments.

The eldest sister's younger girl said, "You haven't felt anything yet."

The baby brother looks at the girl and says, "You haven't felt anything yet. If you put your hands on him again!"

### DINING ROOM CONTINUED

Travis and Sarah's (eldest sister) husband were eyeing each other during this fiasco.

Travis sitting, eating his shrimp, like a true gentleman, looks around the entire table and continues to eat.

Thinking, "What a messed up family."

The male guest returns from a phone call and leans over to the brothers at the next table and says, "Anything happened while I was away?"

Police officer leans over, "No. I just hope they get that boy back because I know what they did."

Martin heard the comments but continued to eat his steak.

He said, "Travis, how is your shrimp?"

Travis, about to take a bite was amazed and startled nearly dropped his food.

He said, "Fine. Thanks for asking. And your rib-eye?"

Martin said, "Superb!"

Monique still pampering and talking to her son, says, "I'm going to get you back and I promise you no one will ever hurt you again."

Sarah said, "Just how do you think you're going to get him back? You're unfit."

Loretta said, "That's right."

(Loretta, a little off her guards.)

Sarah said, "We proved it in court and we'll prove it again. You're unfit and incompetent. My God, you're homeless."

Travis said, "She's homeless because you two thieves stole all her earthly belongings and her child."

Sarah's husband said, "What does a jail bird has to do with this family matter?"

Travis said, "I may have been a jail bird, and served time for my crime, but you are a criminal and a hood and thief and your time is for all eternity."

Sarah said, "Oh, so you got religion since you been in prison?"

Loretta said to Monique, "You will never get your son back, nor your music.

Never. I have all the resources and I hold all the cards. You won't be able to love and protect your own flesh. And I will make sure I bury you this time. You loser!"

Monique mind could not think about anything but escape. She jumps up and runs out of the dining room.

Sarah and her family and Loretta laugh a sinister laugh.

David said, "Mommy, mommy don't leave me."

He begins to cry and then jumps and runs.

The male guest gets up and exists to follow Monique;

He didn't see David when he left.

But the guy from the post office did, he jumps to follow the little boy.

The baby brother gets up to go after David.

## SCENE

Monique standing at the rail with a foot on the rail crying.

The male guest walks up to the rail.

He leans on the rail.

Looks down at the ocean and the blackness of it.

Monique did not see him.

She climbs another rail.

The male guest looks back towards the deck.

He says, "What are you doing? You know you're a big girl and would make a mighty big splash."

Monique climbs another rail.

The male guest said, "Would you want your son to always be marked by seeing his mommy die?"

Monique still in her daze, looks at the male guest.

He nods his head and she turns to see her four year old boy standing and looking at her.

Monique said, "Get him away from here."

David said, "Mommy, mommy, do you want me?"

Crying he said, "I don't want to go with them."

The post office guy holding David by the shoulders.

Monique gets down and turns and walks to David.

Getting on her knees, holds her son.

The baby brother standing in the background, returns to the dining room.

The male guest re-enters the lobby and gets on the elevator with other guests.

The guests on the elevator began to sniff and frown, holding their noses.

They all quickly exit on the next floor.

The male guest standing dignified and says, "Like they never smelled shit before."

He exists the elevator and other guests entered the elevator and sniffing and fanning.

The male guest goes to his cabin.

Monique, David and the post office guy sit outside and talk for a few minutes, with ship security watching.

The purser who was sent out when Monique rushed out, to observe.

Returned and whispered his report in the captain's ear.

The ambassador and family watching.

Finally, Monique enters and the post office guy seats Monique and David at their seats.

His brother was watching in surprise.

The post office guy relays the entire scene to his brother who was appalled.

The male guest re-enters with a new Tuxedo on.

The brothers say, "Hey, you changed?"

The male guest said, "Yeah man, I felt like getting a little fresh."

Some of the guests on the elevator were whispering and talking about the male guest.

He turned and raised his glass to them.

### DINING ROOM CONFESSIONS

Loretta, sneering at Monique and her son.

Travis said to Loretta, "Let it go baby girl."

Loretta slowly turns to Travis and says, "What? (with a lot of attitude.)"

Travis said, "I said, let it go."

Loretta stands up and walks (all of the men watching her rear-end) and gets into Travis' face.

Her sister's Sarah family laughing.

The whole dining room quiet.

Loretta screaming at Travis, "How dare you sit and say anything to me? I hate you Travis. You marked me. You ruined my life. The kids hated me and called me names and beat me down every day. And mommy was no-good. Because all she cared about was her murderous son. That was locked up. I hate you Travis. I never knew you, but you caused all of our lives to go to hell. The scars I had to bear on my body. My hair pulled out by the root. Busted lips, swollen eyes and bruised stomach. And do you know the worst part Travis? (Very bold and rough with malice.) Not having any love. Voice cracking. Not at home, not in the streets and not with strangers. The library was my solace. My safety net. Many days for five years. Crying uncontrollably, the gangs would wait outside or come inside the library and beat me up because of you Travis. I had no one to turn to for help. Not a hug, a kiss on the forehead or a word of encouragement or to help me run. Because Sarah married and moved away. She wouldn't come back to visit nor would she let me spend the night or weekend with her. Monique who I thought would be my friend was a slut and running, (some of the male guests peeping, trying to see which one was Monique) from one married man to the next. The only thing Monique cared about, walking to Monique, was getting drunk and getting laid. Then Martin, con-man..."

Martin who swallows hard and turns his head to keep from making eye contact with Loretta, hoping she would not say anything to him.

Loretta said, "Haven't got a dime. He got a game. He would swindle every penny from any body. He doesn't care."

Loretta bending down in Travis' face said, "You left home and did not care how we were doing. Because you couldn't swindle us for anything because we didn't have nothing. And you never gave anything to us. The few times you came, you stole from us. You stole our bread, the very food we had to eat and for a week, we had nothing."

Martin turns and was about to say something when the baby brother throws up his hand to say it was true.

Martin sits with his head down.

Loretta said, "When that mommy of yours died you came to the funeral asking where the burial policy was and did any body bake a banana pudding cake."

Martin very nervous and clearing his throat said low, "Because it was my favorite. I needed something to console me."

Monique oblivious to them because she was cuddling her baby boy.

Loretta said, "How did you get the money for this trip? You conned somebody out of their money? The only reason you could come is if you thought you would hit pay dirt. You got some kind of scheme going on. You can't let this opportunity pass you by."

Martin shakes himself and says, "Go on now, just stop."

He catches his elder sister and her family laughing.



Then Loretta turns to the baby brother and said, "Oh, I kept the best for last. Mommy's beautiful and smart baby boy."

He Smiles.

Loretta slaps him hard and un-expectantly and Martin jumps as if he felt it and was holding his jaw and said, "Damn."

Cutting his eyes at Loretta hoping she would forget he was sitting there.

He said to himself, "Because I have to take her down."

In his imagination, he thought about how he would do it, and was smiling.

Sarah and her family laughing.

Sarah's sons getting up from the table ran out the dining room laughing.

The captain and his table appalled.

Travis stands.

The baby brother holds his hand up for Travis to stop.

Loretta continues, "You had to leave me with that insane woman. You turned twelve and went to that military school. And I cried after you every night and with the beatings at school and home. (They all looked). Yes and home were unbearable. All I could think was where's my baby brother? Daydreaming before I fell unconscious, you would come and save me and smile and take me away. But you never came back. I had to endure HELL!!!"

Yelling in his face, "Hell!!! Yes, Hell!!!"

The baby boy gets up to reach for Loretta, but she pulls back.

Looking with venom at Monique.

Loretta said, "Come on David, let's go."

Monique began to cry.

David began to cry.

David said, "Mommy."

Loretta goes and pulls him by the arm and snatches him away from Monique.

No one moves.

David crying and looking back at Monique.

Martin said, "Monique, if you don't go and get your son and stop crying about everything, I will help make sure you never get him."

Monique crying, looking at Martin.

Martin very slowly and his anger rising at Monique said, "You hear your own child crying for you and you are so selfish and expect somebody else to get him for you. You don't want to do anything. You want to receive and receive and receive.

Loretta is right about one thing, You have not guts!"

Monique continues crying.

Martin said, "You just heard about how bad mama was (to most except for the baby brother) and how she hurt and ruined a whole lot of lives and you are gonna just sit here and do nothing about your own flesh and blood?"

Sarah laughing said, "I guess you don't have your baby boy after all."

Bucking her eyes and making faces at Monique.

She said, "I know homeless people/street people have difficulty with emotions.

Travis said, "My God Monique, you gonna let that take your son?"

Loretta reveling in the moment of seeing Monique destroyed.

Travis sitting and not believing Monique.

The baby brother shaking his head.

Sarah's oldest daughter said, "Look at the little bitch."

As Loretta was passing by them with the screaming baby.

She hits him hard on his head.

Monique sits there as her child scream from pain.

The captain stands up and orders Loretta and the oldest daughter to be arrested for child abuse.

And he tells the purser to take the child to the infirmary.

The baby brother gets up and walks away.

Monique still crying, looking down.

Martin looks at Monique and shakes his head.

He says, "You are truly pathetic."

The older sister and husband jump and tell the captain not to arrest their daughter, that was the way she played with the boy.

The captain said, "By physical abuse?"

He waved for security and put them under restriction.

Travis sits amazed at the ignorance level of his family.

He says, "Everyone sit. Captain, can they sit for a very few minutes?"

Captain said, "For a few minutes."

Travis said, "May I hold David?"

David stopped crying.

Travis said, "It's no need for you and your mama to be crying. You mama is kind of sick. Not physical – the kind of sick when people don't treat you good."

David said, "Will I get sick?"

Travis said, "No. I will make sure you don't."

David said, "My head hurt."

He begins to cry again.

Travis holding him and rubbing his head.

He said, "The doctor is going to check your head and make sure ever thing is great!"

The word "great" caught the baby brother's attention.

Knowing the word was used by his wife to let the children know, everything was good.

Travis said, "Monique, I know you love David. I know when Sarah (and he laughs at the biblical name given to her) and Loretta stole David and your music, you were destroyed. They said you were incompetent to get to your music, not your son. And they have treated him horribly. Look at me Monique! I will not have you looking down."

Monique slowly looks up at him.

Travis said, "Now stop! So, you can hear me!"

His voice sharp and un-apologizing, "You come and stay with me. And David."

David pointing to himself said, "Me?"

Travis kissed him on the top of his head and said, "Yes, you David. David is a name of a truly smart and brave boy, just like you. You will not live with Loretta again."

Loretta said, "You can't do that. I have court papers."

Travis said, "You'll be in jail for child abuse and child neglect. You have no options, but to do two to three years in prison."

Loretta not even realizing the severity of the situation was finally hit and nearly collapses.

Travis said to Loretta, "If you sign papers giving David back to Monique, maybe the felony charges can be dropped and you can get probation."

The caption flinches.

Loretta said, "I can't go to jail. I have money. I have a business."

And before she could continue, the baby brother holds up his finger and says, "Had a business."

Loretta says, "What are you talking about?"

The baby brother said, "I'm your silent partner. You see my wife was the business whiz and she followed your career. When you looked for a partner, my wife, God blessed her soul, established me as your business partner because she knew you would make us a lot of money."

The ambassador smiled at the thought of his daughter's brilliant business sense.

The baby brother said, "You either sign the papers little sis or go to jail and I pull the money out of your business and foreclose on your home. Oh, we own your mortgage company. You really should have read the article in Black Wealth and Success."

Loretta was limp and weak.

She couldn't think about anything but her money, then her freedom.

Martin said, "And the music?"

Sarah said, "You ain't got nothing to do with that."

Martin said, "The hell I don't. While you and your husband were stealing every dime from everybody's insurance policies and ripping off your co-workers and having the exorcist kids one, two, three and four, I wrote the physical songs on paper and collected them for Monique.

Sarah said, "If you did, why didn't you say something before now?"

She gesturing as if she had made a great point.

Her husband and children looking on, smiling.

Martin bows his head and looks down and says, "Because I didn't want to be a part of such an evil plan, I felt Monique should have stopped depending on everybody to help her and stood up on her own two feet. Just as now she's sitting, but everybody else is taking care of her business."

Martin looks to Monique and said, "What's wrong with you?"

The baby brother said, "She needs help Martin, and we'll get her the help she needs."

Monique said, "Thanks!"

David sitting in Travis' lap and enjoying the love and safety of his arms, smiles.

Martin said to his baby brother, "You are a fine one to talk."

The baby brother said, "What?"

Martin said, "You got married. Didn't say anything. You had kids. Didn't say anything. You wife passed, didn't say anything. After mama died, you cut yourself out of the family. You no longer belong."

Sarah said, "Who wants to be around you?"

Then all of them started fussing at her at one time.

Travis said, "You and your husband have stolen from everybody."

Sarah said, "I didn't steal from you because your never had anything."

Travis stands holding David in his arms.

He said, "There's a lot you'll don't know about me. I killed another gang member during a drug war. I turned to the gang because mama couldn't get a job because she didn't have a high school diploma. That's why she made each of us get one. I got out with my diploma and tried and tried to get a job. Even cleaning up messes, but no one would hire a skinny black kid to do anything. So, I went out in the streets against everything that was in me. Just like you Martin. I decided to join the gang."

Martin mumbling, "Not like me", and sipping some beverage.

Travis said, "I decided to join because you needed shoes for the track team Martin."

Martin stops drinking as if he was thinking.

Travis said, "Sarah, you needed a dress for the prom and earring, shoes and a bag. The dress was green olive with silver sequins with silver earrings. Shoes and bag to match. And you baby brother because you needed that fee to register in that program for gifted children. And of course to feed ya'll and keep a roof over year heads. I hated what I was doing and I hated what I had become. But because I loved all of you, I wanted you to have and then do better than me.

I served time for the murder I committed. It wasn't justified because he was a member of another gang.

But during all those years in prison, when all of you had turned your backs on me and cut one out of all your lives, I could count on mommy to keep me up on family. I am truly sorry Loretta that you hate me for destroying your life. But you look pretty good to me baby sister."

Men at the other table said, "Me too."

Travis continued, "You thought you were dumb and couldn't learn. But all that time studying and reading in the library pushed you to be the extremely smart woman you are today."

Travis said, "Martin you thought you would be killed out of revenge against me. You made a commonsense decision to leave home. You used your wits to stay alive and without joining a gang. That is brilliant and shows entrepreneurship and survival skills. Not bad for a skinny kid who loved track!"

He said to the baby brother, "You were not only mama's pride and joy, but mines also. Your smile and how smart you were – we were amazed and knew you would do well."

The baby brother whose name is Morris, smiles.

Sarah said, "What?"

Travis said, "Sarah I watched you everyday while you were on this ship. I was hoping to see some kind of remorse, or human like feeling."

Sarah turning her head saying, "Huh?"



Travis said, "I know you all don't know anything about me. The few times mama came to visit, I regretted not..."

They all looked, because she never told them, nor even had the money to visit him.

He said, "...being smart like ya'll."

Sarah still making faces.

Travis said, "She told me all the awards ya'll were getting and how she was keeping scrap books. So, when she died, I asked Morris to get them and keep them for me. And I brought the six scrap books with me onboard.

Sarah said, "Six? You got one?"

Her husband and children laughing.

Travis said, "Sarah, a biblical name of promise. I know you call the police on me and turned me in to get the reward money that was offered. Martin, I knew you were with the other gang that night, because I saw you run and jump the fence in your track shoes I bought. I never told mama because she did not want you in the gang and truly I did not want you in them. You set me up to be killed Martin. I know you didn't realize that was what they had in mind."

Martin realizing and thought, "He knew all these years. I was the one who set up my own brother."

Martin begins to cry saying, "I'm sorry."

Travis said, "Loretta, you will give Monique back her child, music and all you have stolen from her. Monique maybe you will never return to be homeless after this night."

Morris grins and holds his head down.

Travis said, "Sarah, you need what I found in prison."

Sarah said, "What a bitch?!"

Travis said, "Jesus. All those days in solitary confinement, nothing to see, nothing to do or read. I prayed. And I prayed and I prayed. Then finally peace came to me. I was able to go online and get a degree in computer science. And a trade in electrically wiring. To have something to fall back on if I was not hired because I was an ex-con. Every day in prison was time served for my crimes against society. But Jesus released me and said paid in full. I'm condemned by no man or woman Loretta. I'll make it and have a bright light."

Hugging David, he said, "And I will do everything to see you grow up in Jesus. I could have gone to another city or state, but I choose home. Sarah, you have a little time to get yourself straight with Jesus. He is the only one who can set you free and heal your broken spirit. For you don't want death to catch you."

At the hearing, the word 'death', Sarah sits still.

Making no facial expressions, nor making smart comments. She sat.

Travis looks at her and his broken family and sits down still holding and hugging David.

Sarah now bowing her head, slowly raises her head then her body out of the chair.

Her husband grabbing her hand as to say, sit.

She looks at her husband and says, "Shush."

She can barely look up and says, "All the evil you said I did is true. And a lot more you don't know about. I'm sorry Monique. I'm so very sorry David for all the times I hurt you and my family hurt you. I don't deserve to be forgiven."

David said, "I forgive you."

Sarah said, "I have been weighted in the balances and have been found wanting. All my sins breaking up are laid before you all. I have not been a good sister, wife, mother or person. I have less than 6 months to live."

Dropping lifeless into her seat, her children quiet.

Martin looking at his watch to start the count down.

Morris catches him and Martin turns his head.

Travis said, "All your sins are forgiven through Jesus. Ask Him and He will show you the way."

Sarah said, "I just don't know how to."

Travis said, "He will guide you every step. All you say is, Jesus help me and forgive me of my sins. Make me your child and vessel. In Jesus name."

David repeating everything with his head bowed.

The whole family, the male guest, the brothers and others joined in the prayer.

Martin sitting with his head slightly bowed but watching everyone else.

Morris slightly bowed head and watching Martin.

Travis said, "Come on David, you're staying with us."

David throws his arms up in the air says, "Yeah."

Morris says, "Let's take him to the infirmary first."

Travis nods to Martin.

Martin looks at Monique who was just sitting.

Martin says, "Damn. Come on Monique, let's go to the cabin."

Monique said, "I want to dance."

Martin said, "You ain't dancing tonight."

Captain said, "She can dance with me and I'll make sure she'll be safe."

Travis walks over with David and Monique kisses her son on the head.

Loretta says, "Well, I'll get his stuff and bring it to you."

Martin said, "Hell no. You and the queen of the damn are going to jail and the only time you get out is when you sign the paper. But the queen will be there."

They all split from the table. They go their separate ways.

Martin splurges and go to the bar where he is jointed by the male guest Terrance and the brothers who played cards and drank the whole night.

Monique danced the night away with the captain.

Morris went to his cabin.

He opened the door and sat on his deck sideways. So, he could look at the sky and his sons at the same time.

Travis spent the night in the infirmary with David as they waited for test results (ordered by Morris).

Loretta and the queen of the damn sat in jail all night.

Sarah and her family were only allowed to go to the dinning rooms.

None of the common areas with the other guests.

### THE NEXT MORNING

The next morning everyone was wandering back to their cabins.

Monique walking with the captain who placed his jacket on her to keep her warm.

They had danced and drank champagne and sat and talked until the sun begin to rise and pierce the darkness.

They stood and watched the beauty of the dawning of a new day.

A day that never existed before.

Monique inhaling the fresh ocean air and enjoying the company of a real man, said, "Thank you for the spa and boutique treat."

Captain looking in surprise said, "You are very welcome."

The captain looking at Monique said, "You are going to have to make some decisions."

Monique said, "About what?"

Looking at the captain with goo goo eyes.

Enjoying the moment as with an old friend.

Captain said, "Medical help. A job. A place to stay. The care of David."

Before he could continue, Monique put her hand over his lips. Then slowly bent over and kissed him gently on the lips.

The captain lost in the moment, said, "An attorney, child advocate."

They both burst out in laughter.

Captain said, "Thanks for the kiss, but you know there can be nothing between us but friendship."

Monique said, "I know," stomping her feet.

She said, "A girl gotta try."

Captain said, "I am going to hold your niece in confinement until we dock and hand her over to the local authorities."

Monique was about to say, "Would?"

Captain said, "No. Now Loretta is a little different (because she didn't commit the crime against your son, but she did put him in harm's way. I don't like to see children abused."

Monique drifting out to sea.

Captain said, "Stay with me Monique."

Monique turns and faces the captain leaning on the rail next to him.

Captain said, "Loretta has the legal right to take David from the ship and keep him until you go to court."

Morris was jogging around the deck when both the captain and Monique looked at him.

He saw them looking at him and decided whatever it was, he wanted no part.

When he got close to them, he sped up.

Monique said, "Come back here."

Morris didn't look back.

Morris thought, "Maybe it was something since the captain was involved. If they are there when I go back, I'll stop."

At that time, he bumped into his co-worker.

He blinked and looked at her and said, "I'm sorry for running into you."

Because he didn't see her.

Co-worker said, "That's perfectly ok. I didn't know you were cruising."

Morris said, "Well, I'm here with my family."

Co-worker said, "Oh well, I heard about it."

Morris said, "Oh, well, great running into you. I have to go."

Co-worker, "Let me run with you."

Morris said, "Sure."

Ambassador and wife coming from stretching stood and watched the co-worker.

They walked away silently.

Monique and the captain also watching.

Then Martin in the doorway (coming from the bar, observed the co-worker and smiled.)

Martin walked out and looking at the co-worker said, "Hey honey. How you doing?"

Morris looked at Martin with disgust.

Then stops and says, "Melody, my brother Martin."

And jogs away.

She turns to look at Morris but he's gone.

She backs up and looks at Martin and says, "Toddles."

Martin said, "Don't toddles me. Stay away from him. Toddles that."

Co-worker snaps her head and continues her jog trying to catch Morris who was talking to the captain and Monique.

Co-worker stopping saying, "Pardon me, but are we going to continue our jog?"

Monique said, "Girl, ain't my baby brother fine, and single, but he's not for you! Now, take your skinny butt on."

The ambassador and wife smiled.

His wife says, "We can invite her to dinner dear."

He opening the door for his wife, says, "An informal dinner – perhaps?"

The co-worker rolls her eyes at Monique and sneer her lip and pats Morris on the arm and said, "I'll see you later."

Morris, Monique and the captain continued their conversation.

Martin and his drunken pals from the night before, wander to their cabins.

Martin falls asleep across the bed.



Travis receives a good report from the doctor about David.

The doctor explains his physical examination of David and the old scars and bruises and about his testicles.

The doctor said he believes David will be fine.

Travis sickened by the physical saw David peeping at him like he was wondering if Travis was going to leave him or get him.

Travis looks at David and says, "Come on, let's go to breakfast."

David burst into a big grin and David said, "Yippy."

All the worry on the face of the baby was gone.

All Travis could think was how can someone do this to a baby?

He picks up David and said, "What you wanna eat?"

David said, "Pancakes and syrup."

Travis said, "You mean pancakes with syrup?"

David said, "Nope, pancakes and lots of syrup."

Travis belted out a hearty laugh.

The doctor told Travis that was fine and laugh as Travis and David exited the infirmary.

Travis put David on his shoulders and went to the desk and told the purser he needed David's stuff out of Loretta's room.

The purser was escorting them when David yelled, "Pancakes and syrup."

As Travis looking at the purser, the purser said, "Come back after you eat breakfast."

Travis said, "Thanks."

Travis and David feasted on pancakes, syrup and juice.

Where they were joined by Monique who relished the moment.

The captain bid her bye and went his way.

Travis speaking by nodding at the captain.

Morris and his boys entered the dinning room and they were running.

Until Morris calls them to him and takes them by the hand and walks them to the table where Travis, David and Monique were dining.

Morris introduced the boys and said, "This is your uncle Travis and your aunt Monique..."

Before he could introduce David, David said, "I'm David. Want some pancakes?"

The boys looking and licking their tongues.

Morris was about to say no.

He thought about his wife and said, "Why not? "Boys, sit here and talk to David and then I will take you to your grandparents."

The boys laughed and talked with David.

David looked at Travis and said, "They like me."

Monique whimpered.

Morris, approaching, heard David. And said, "I like you too David."

David said, "Really?"

Morris said, "Yeah. Ask uncle Travis and your mommy if you can go eat with us?"

David turns and looks at Monique.

Monique smiles, nodding her head for yes.

David runs over to the grandparents' table and sit and play and talk while the boys ate their pancakes.

The ambassador and family were very gracious and kind towards David.

Travis tells Monique, "I'm gong to Loretta's cabin to get some of David's stuff. I may just get all of it."

Travis pushes his chair back from the table and looks at Monique and says, "What are you going to do?"

Monique said, "Sleep."

Travis goes to the desk and gets the purser.

Monique wanders to the cabin and finds a snoring Martin.

She undresses and showers and falls asleep.

The captain showers and changes into a fresh clean uniform.

He has a meeting in his office to discuss the events of last evening and what he was going to do about it.

In the meantime, the eldest sister and family went to the jail to visit her eldest daughter.

The eldest daughter was a nervous wreck.

She was sitting in the middle of the bed with the holding cell uniform on.

She was in one cell and Loretta in the other.

They were separated after being in the cell for no more than thirty minutes.

They jumped on each other and fought until they were parted.

Loretta could not take the niece's cursing and demanding her cell phone back.

Loretta said, "What?! What are you fussing about them taking away your cell phone? Who are you going to talk to in jail on a ship? You need to worry about your freedom!"

Niece said, "Look bitch, if it weren't for you, I wouldn't be here."

Loretta getting off the bed and walking to the front of the cell, says to the jailor, "I've been here for a long time. I want my one phone call. I know that much" with her arms folded in her evening gown.

Jailor looking at her in astonishment.

He said, "I just put you in there twenty three minutes ago. You have twenty four hours to go."

And before he said anything else, the niece walked up and was standing by Loretta.

Loretta letting out a deafening scream, frightened the jailor who jumps out of his seat nearly falling.

The security runs in and seeing Loretta screaming like a lunatic, thought she had been severely injured.

The security turned and looked at the clock.

One of the security said, "Madam, be quiet. You haven't been booked yet."

Loretta's scream went into high gear.

Her niece standing by her jumps when she first started.

But then ignored Loretta saying to the security, "I need my cell phone. I'm not going to listen to this all night. Give my cell phone! I want my cell phone."

Loretta still screaming.

The security looking at her said to the niece – "No cell phone."

And again to Loretta, "Madam, be quiet."

Loretta got worse and louder.

The niece started her yelling for her cell phone again.

The security pulled out his taser and told the niece to get away from the bars and sit down.

She slowly moved back after she stuck her tongue out at the security and made finger gestures.

When he came closer to the cell with the taser.

The niece sat on the bed.

Loretta, still holding onto the bars and screaming.

He told the jailer to call for a sedative.

He turned to Loretta looking at her as if she had lost her mind, and said, "If you do not stop, I will give you a shot that will calm you down."

Loretta began to throw up over the security, over the floor and the cell.

Niece said, "I ain't gonna be in here with this shit, especially without my phone."

Loretta continues throwing up.

They take them out of that soiled cell and put them into another.

Loretta passes out.

She comes to at the voice of her niece.

The niece said, "Wake up bitch! Get me my cell phone."

The jailor and security were talking.

Loretta realizing she was still in jail, began to scream again.

The niece walks over and punches her in the face.

Loretta throws her hands up for defense, the security rushes to the cell to stop the niece, by that time Loretta was coming off the bunk and she and the niece began to throw punches.

The security and the jailor separate them and hands them their jail suits to put on.

Loretta looking at hers began to scream and cry.

The niece said, 'I aint wearing this shit.' And throws it back to the jailor.

The jailor said, "It's not an option!"

Loretta with her designer outfit on just slouched to the floor.

She waited for hours, in her designer outfit.

Loretta and the niece were so disturbing; the jailor and the security turned out the lights and left locking the door behind them.

When they did that, then the niece began to scream and cry because she had a phobia about a dark room.

They returned the next morning with the captain and Morris..

When they walked into the room, they walked in slow motion and turning and looking shocked.

Niece is sitting in a fetal position on the floor.

And Loretta had crawled under the bunk.

The crew didn't know if they had nervous breakdowns or whether they were in shock.

They called them several times Loretta and the niece did not answer.

Morris stooping down at the cell where Loretta was; saying, "Loretta, come from underneath the bed."

He was very forceful and Loretta didn't move.

He had them to open the cell and he peeped to see if she was alive.

They moved the cot from over her.

She frightened them because she was lying with her face on the floor, eyes opened and mouth opened with her hair caught on a spring of the cot.

Until they unloosened her hair.

Morris did not know what to think.

He kept calling her until she shifted her eyes and looked at him.

He almost felt sorry for her.

The captain was relieved because he did not want to report and explain a death or a nervous breakdown.

Morris said, "Loretta, you have to get use to this, because I'm pressing charges against you for slapping me."

Loretta was emotionless and just laid there.

Morris truly feeling sorry for her.

He knew what he had to do.

He gets up and walks out.

The security and the captain follow.

Morris signs the papers while Loretta lies on the cold dirty floor in her designer outfit.

Only her eyes shift as Morris signs the papers and walks out.

They go to the niece, who has began to rock and suck her thumb.

The captain says, "That's not good, call the doctor."

The eldest sister and family were escorted by security to breakfast where many guests were whispering and staring.

They quickly ate and were allowed to visit their daughter.

When they saw her in the condition she was in – the boys said, "Oh, shucks."

The younger daughter ran out.

The older sister looks around and sees Loretta still on the floor and lifeless.



Sarah yelling to the jailor.

The security who escorted them is looking on in horror.

She said, "What - - could you have done to them? Look at them!"

Her words become more labored.

She collapses and her husband catches her.

The jailor stomps his feet and the security calls for the doctor.

## THE ELDEST SISTER

The eldest sister is recuperating in their cabin.

Her sons are watching television.

The youngest daughter is on the phone and her husband is on the computer.

No one was observing her when she attempted to sit up in the bed.

She struggled for a while and was finally able to call her husband who was slow to get up.

The children did not miss a beat, they continued like she didn't exist.

Before her husband finally got up from the computer, he exhaled.

When he came to snatch her up in the bed, she looked up at him and said, "You won't have to do this long."

He bowed his head in shame.

She looked at her children and cried with such remorse, at the mess she made.

She told her husband, "I hate my life, my children and you. I should have stopped and looked at me, at my life. Maybe if I would not have been such a fake, my children would not be so evil. I hate the way we all treated little David. He was just a baby and we beat him and abused him. Why? Nothing but the devil. We were powerless to stop, to change. Suppose we had killed him or paralyzed that baby."

Her children turning around to look at their mother as she boo hooed.

She said, very weak and lifting her head up, "You'll got to change. I'm sorry I was not a good Christian mother. I took ya'll to church to show off your clothes and toys. That's not what church is for; it is a place to meet God. Please my children, turn your life over to Jesus. Don't be like me."

The room was silent.

## SCENE

The scene goes to the jail.

The two are still in their positions, no change.

The doctor gave both shots and it made them more zoned out.

The staff didn't know what to do.

Morris walks in and Loretta is still lying on the floor.

He looks at the captain who walked in with him.

Morris goes into the cell with Loretta.

Stooping down, he calls her several times by her name.

Then finally her eyes flutter and focus on him.

He looks at her and breathed very hard.

He says, "Loretta, I do not want it to be like this. I am willing to drop the charges against you and give you your freedom back, if you will sign papers giving David

his freedom. Give him back to Monique. And give Monique the right to her music.”

At that time Loretta jumps up like a mad woman and began to scream, scaring Morris, who falls backward towards the jailor and captain.

Morris stands up.

He looks Loretta in her eyes and says, “Shut up!!! NOW!! If you do continue, I have the legal authority to have you committed to a mental hospital and take over all your affairs.”

Loretta stopped and stared at her brother.

Morris said, “Loretta, your insanity is over. Sign the papers and you can have your freedom and your money. But as you say your money and your freedom. Make no mistakes Loretta, I will leave you to rot. And take David so you will have no grounds for the music. Loretta, you have enough money. You have a life you can make beautiful. Please, please, please turn your life over to God. You have a right to a new beginning – a new life.”

Loretta standing looking like a mad woman with hair standing up over her head and ruined makeup, stared at her big brother that she used to worship, and love.

Loretta said, “Morris, I believe you are tricking me.”

Morris kept his face straight.

Loretta said, “Where’s the paper?”

The captain hands the papers to Loretta, who sits on the cot and reads line to line, over and over again.

Morris is getting nervous but doesn't change his stance.

Loretta looking up from Morris to the captain, to the jailer and security.

Then she looks over at her niece who was not looking dazed and confused but holding on to the bars watching, hoping she would get her freedom also.

Loretta signs the papers.

Stands up.

Stares very hard at Morris.

Then the captain says, "This way."

He looked back at Morris as he escorted Loretta out of her cell.

The jailor gives her a bag and for her to claim her belongings.

Loretta walks out with the security escorting her to her cabin.

She looks long and hard at her beloved brother who was still standing in her cell.

Then he heard a thump.

It was his niece who had passed out.

The jailor rushes over to aide her.

Then Morris steps out of Loretta's cell and watches her out of the door.

The jailer says, "Doctor, can you help?"

Morris rushes to check his niece.

The captain says, "I don't know what to do about her."

Morris checking his niece asked her a few questions.

He sat her on the bunk and walked out.

Morris said, "She's pregnant."

The jailor dropped his keys.

The captain looks scared.

He walks outside with Morris and says, "What kind of family do you have? You mean that evil child is pregnant with a child?"

Morris said, "Disheartening, isn't it?"

Captain thinking, says, "I will let her out for the rest of the trip, but with restrictions with her family. No shore excursions. And she has to see the psychiatrist every day. I will file the report with the land authorities and let them take her from there.

Morris said, "Great plan."

Captain looks at Morris and walks away shaking his head.

Morris heard him saying, "Good God, another one."

Monique and Martin were sleep and snoring in rhythm when Travis and David came in.

They both laughed.

Travis putting his finger up and David putting his finger up as to say, be quiet.

The tipped in the room and then Travis spring on Martin, waking him up.

Martin trying to go back to sleep said, "Man, what are you doing? Go."

He heard Monique snoring.

Travis and David laughing, they had become the best of friends in a few hours.

There was a knock at the door, when Travis and David went to answer Martin, quickly kicked Monique's bunk.

Monique waking up from the kick.

Morris steps in and tells them Loretta signed papers to permanently give custody of David to Monique. Along with her music.

Monique saying, "Oh my God, Oh, my God."

She jumps out of bed and falls on Martin who was bending over on his bunk.

She landed on Martin's back.

Martin screaming with staggered breath, "Get off, get it off!"

Morris and Travis rushes to help the struggling Monique to get off Martin's back.

David begins to laugh.

Monique reaches for the papers.

Morris had three copies made. He kept one, gave one to Monique and one to Martin who was still lying on the floor.

Travis said to Morris, "Why to Martin and not to me?"

Morris said, "Big brother..."

Patting Travis him on the shoulder, you have proven your love for David. For all of us. You will do right by David and Monique. Maybe Martin needs to learn to be more responsible for others."

Travis smiles and says, "Thank you. That means a lot coming from you."

Monique says, "David, this paper says you stay with mommy."

David said, "Forever?"

Monique said, "Forever."

David said, "And uncle Travis?"

Monique said, "Yes and especially Uncle Travis."

David said, "Can we put it in a frame?"

Monique said "Of course."

Travis jumps and says, "I forgot in the midst of this mad family."

He goes to the closet and pulls out his duffle bag.

He unzips it and hands Monique, Morris and Martin (who was struggling to get up), their scrap books.

Travis also takes out his.

Morris sits in a chair.

Monique and David lay on Travis bunk.

Martin sits on the floor and Travis sits on the foot of Martin's bed.

They all opened the scrap books at the same time and begin to wonder through the pages. \*\*\*\*\*