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To Emma Jordan,

*Thank you for the challenge,
thank you for the inspiration
and thank you for letting me be myself
again.*

—Robert Alexander

Cast of Characters

THOMAS DUMAS, Brother from another planet. A man without a penis. Late 20s or early 30s. Doubles as DAVID and REGGIE WILLIAMS in the second act.

NAVA DUMAS, Thomas's bride and Lava's mother. Roughly the same age as THOMAS. Plays the adult LAVA in the second act.

HENRY, NAVA'S second husband and LAVA'S stepfather. 30 years old. Doubles as HOWARD in the second act.

LAVA DUMAS, Part human, part alien. Telepathic. A most precocious 10-year-old. Mature for her age in every sense of the word. Her mental telepathy makes up for the fact that she is a girl born without a vagina.

ASIA SIMONE, 30 years old or there about. LAVA'S best friend in the second act.

All of the characters are African American.

Setting

The past. A period covering from 1964 to 1995. The first act takes place in Baltimore, MD—but it could be any blue collar town in America. The second act takes place in Washington, D.C.

Production Notes

The play will require a serviceable unit set that can suggest multiple locations, from a hotel bridal suite, to a middle class home, to a bar with a pool table, in Washington, D.C., to LAVA's modest apartment. The more non-realistic the set, the better.

FREAK OF NATURE

AN EROTIC FABLE FOR THE STAGE

by Robert Alexander

A Prologue from the Past; A Prelude to the Future

(TIME: November 1964. The Weekend before the election.)

(AT RISE: lights discover a young black couple as they cross the threshold into the bridal suite. The groom proudly carries his bride into the room, and places her gently at the foot of the king size bed. A table with covered food, and fancy linen has been placed in the room, by room service before the couple enter. Their unpacked suitcases sit in a corner of the room.)

DUMAS. *(Entering:)* I love you.

NAVA. I love you more. *(Beat.)* I hoped you mailed in your absentee ballot.

DUMAS. Shhhh. Don't talk about that now.

NAVA. But Goldwater is a menace—a threat to everything we've been working for.

DUMAS. If the pollsters are right, he doesn't stand a snowball's chance in hell against Johnson.

NAVA. But what if they're wrong? What if there's this great white silent majority that votes against our man?

DUMAS. How can you think of politics on our wedding night?

NAVA. You knew I was a serious girl when you met me.

DUMAS. But do you always have to be so serious?

NAVA. I'm just nervous.

DUMAS. Nervous about what?

NAVA. You know—

DUMAS. No. I don't know. I'm not a mind reader.

NAVA. You know—I'm nervous about this—us—everything and nothing, but mainly I'm nervous about, well, you know. Will it hurt? Will I bleed? Will, will—you be disappointed. Will you still—still want me—when we're done.

DUMAS. I think I'll trade you in for a newer model.

NAVA. Be serious.

DUMAS. I am being serious.

NAVA. I guess it's no big deal to you. But I've been a virgin all my life. And tonight—that is being altered. I am being altered.

DUMAS. Will you try to relax?

NAVA. How can I?

DUMAS. Just trust me. I won't hurt you.

NAVA. That's easy for you to say. You get to have all the pleasure, while I get all the blame and shame.

DUMAS. We just got married. Where's the shame in that? *(BEAT.)* Just try to relax.

NAVA. I can't.

DUMAS. Try!!

NAVA. It's hopeless.

DUMAS. We don't have to do anything tonight. We've got the rest of our lives.

NAVA. But we have to make it official.

DUMAS. Make what official?

NAVA. The marriage. We have to do it—you know—consummate-to make it official.

DUMAS. Consummate what?

NAVA. I might as well be a brave girl and get it over with. Call room service and order a bottle of whiskey. Maybe, if I get drunk, that will numb the pain.

DUMAS. Would you stop? You're making me nervous.

NAVA. Why should you be nervous?

DUMAS. I know even less than you do. And I'm in no hurry. All I know is that I love you.

NAVA. If you love me—give it to me now—and let's get this over with.

(NAVA aggressively pulls DUMAS toward her, and unzips his fly, with his back facing the audience. She sits on the edge of the bed staring at his crotch with a blank expression.)

NAVA. Oh my God. Oh my God.

DUMAS. What? What?

NAVA. *(Incredulous:)* You don't have a penis.

DUMAS. What?

NAVA. All this time—I've been worried—and you don't even have a penis. No penis...no pubic hair. There's nothing there, except a blank space.

DUMAS. You don't have to stare.

NAVA. How do you go to the bathroom—if you don't have a penis?

DUMAS. I don't.

NAVA. What?

DUMAS. I don't go to the bathroom.

NAVA. How come you never told me?

DUMAS. That I don't go to the bathroom?

NAVA. How come you never told me that you don't have a penis?

DUMAS. You never asked. (*Beat.*) What's the big deal? Why are you upset?

NAVA. Do you think I would've married you—had I known—had I known— Do you think I would've married you?

DUMAS. I hope so. I certainly hope so.

NAVA. Get away from me!

DUMAS. Why are you so upset?

NAVA. Stay away from me! This is what I get! This is what I get! For waiting. For waiting. This is what I get. For waiting. For saving it. I get a man with no penis. A man with no genitals. We must, we must, we must get this annulled.

DUMAS. Don't you—don't you—love me?

NAVA. I thought I did. But I don't know how I can now.

DUMAS. Didn't you fall in love with my mind? My heart?

NAVA. Stay away from me. Get away from me.

DUMAS. Why did you marry me?

NAVA. Hell if I know why?

DUMAS. You married me, because you love me.

NAVA. Don't confuse me. Don't put words in my head!

DUMAS. Admit it—admit it to yourself. You love me. You love me right?

NAVA. You know how much I want to have a baby. I wanted to have a family. I wanted to have your baby.

DUMAS. Yeah. And? So, what's changed?

NAVA. How can I have a baby—if you don't have reproductive organs? You deceived me! You lied to me!

DUMAS. How did I lie to you?

NAVA. You led me to believe you wanted a family too. You lied! You did a bait and switch. Oh God. I shoulda known all those times

we slow danced—I didn't feel a bulge. All those times we dipped—we did the slow grind and I felt nothing. I should've known...I should've known. I mean, I thought—I wondered—maybe I didn't excite you—maybe I didn't turn you on. Or maybe you were such a gentleman—that you didn't allow yourself to be turned on. But never in my wildest dreams...

DUMAS. Don't you love me anyway?

NAVA. I'm so confused.

DUMAS. Can't you love me anyway?

(NAVA hits DUMAS.)

NAVA. I hate you! I love you! I don't know.

DUMAS. Please take off your veil. *(He helps remove her veil:)* Let me comb your hair. *(He finds a comb and sits behind her on the bed:)* I love combing your hair.

NAVA. Don't be nice to me. I'm mad at you.

DUMAS. *(As he combs her hair:)* Don't be mad at me. We can still have a baby.

NAVA. I don't want to adopt. I want to make a baby.

DUMAS. It's not impossible.

NAVA. It is impossible.

DUMAS. You have to trust me.

NAVA. How can I trust you?

DUMAS. Just try to relax. Your hair sends static through the comb—when you don't relax. All that anger you feel. Let it go.

NAVA. How can I let it go? I'm mad at you.

DUMAS. Why are you mad at me?

NAVA. Because you're a freak. A man without a penis. Isn't that the kind of information you'd tell a girl you're dating? Especially one who may be serious about you?

DUMAS. Is that all a man is to you? A penis?

NAVA. No.

DUMAS. Have you forgotten? You proposed to me. You asked me to marry you.

NAVA. I know.

DUMAS. Beyond your desire to reproduce—why did you want to be with me?

NAVA. Because you're sweet. Gentle. I love the way you comb my hair.

DUMAS. I love combing it. It's so long, so beautiful. Even on the humid days, when your curls are tight. I love running my fingers through your naps.

NAVA. I love you running your fingers through my naps. You take my mind away. When you're gentle like this. My head doesn't hurt as much.

DUMAS. I live to run my fingers through your hair. I love brushing your hair. Combing your hair. Braiding your hair. I love greasing your hair. I love washing your hair. Drying your hair. Straightening your hair. But most of all, most of all—I love smelling your hair and just running my fingers through your hair. Does that make me crazy?

NAVA. No.

DUMAS. Does that make me a freak?

NAVA. No. It makes you special.

DUMAS. Do you want me to make love to you?

NAVA. What? Huh?

DUMAS. Do you want me to make love to you?

NAVA. Yes. Sure. But how?

DUMAS. Just relax. And give your mind to me. Let's take off your shoes first.

(DUMAS gently helps NAVA take off her shoes.)

NAVA. Oh God. I've been dying to get my feet out of these shoes.

DUMAS. Let's take off those stockings, so I can touch your bare feet with my hands.

NAVA. Yes. I'm dying to get out of these stockings and this girdle too. And this dress. And this damn, obnoxious white dress.

(DUMAS opens one of the suitcases and pulls out a fancy silk robe for NAVA to slip into. And he finds a plastic bottle of lotion for her feet.)

DUMAS. I want you to lay down and be perfectly still.

(NAVA lays down on the bed, and DUMAS, takes her feet into his hands. He slowly, sensuously takes the lotion, warms it in the palms of his hands, and he gently rubs her feet with the lotion, massaging her tired feet.)

DUMAS. How does that feel?

NAVA. It feels wonderful.

(DUMAS engages in a freestyle word association, creating a tapestry, a bridge of words and images for NAVA to cross as he slowly, massages her feet. Her feet and his hands, almost become one, united in a moment of tenderness.)

DUMAS. Close your eyes, and let the sound of my voice surround you. My voice is a guiding light, guiding you from a valley of anxiety and dread. *(Beat.)* I love your feet. I adore your feet. But the skin on the bottom is hard and calloused, from too many miles of walking and marching, in the streets with Dr. King and all the others. These poor dog tired feet, have carried you from church to church and from door to door, trying to encourage poor colored folks to vote. No wonder they are so tired from walking and marching and never being loved. Your feet, deserve to be loved as much as you deserve to be loved. You see, there are many pressure points on your feet, that connect to the rest of your body—the rest of your being. This is for your heart. Your heart is heavy. I wish I could peel away all the years from your feet and give you back your heart. I will give you my heart beat and let it beat like a drum inside of you. Can you accept this from me?

NAVA. Yes. Yes.

DUMAS. And what about your lungs?

NAVA. Can't hardly breathe.

DUMAS. (*Massages another part of her foot:*) How's that? Is that better?

NAVA. Oh yea...yes. I can breathe now.

DUMAS. Do you feel me inside of you?

NAVA. Yes. Yes. Oh God. Yes!

(DUMAS massages her ankles. NAVA squirms on the bed, writhing in intense pleasure.)

NAVA. I feel like a river...an ocean between my legs.

DUMAS. So you do feel me inside of you?

NAVA. Yes! Yes! Oh God—yes! It feels wonderful. I feel you—penetrating me. How is that possible?

DUMAS. I know and understand—your mind. Do you want me to unlock it for you?

NAVA. Yes! Yes!

DUMAS. I will walk on fire to reach your mind.

NAVA. Yes! Walk!

DUMAS. Do you trust me?!

NAVA. I trust you.

DUMAS. Do you trust me with your mind?

NAVA. (*Writhing with pleasure:*) Yes! Yes! I trust you! I trust you!

DUMAS. Understand, that your mind is a temple—where all things are possible. Your mind is the only penis you need, to make you climb the wall—to make your water fall. Your mind is a rocket launcher—so go ahead and touch yourself. Don't be afraid to touch yourself. My hand and your hand is the same hand.

(NAVA begins to touch herself, slowly, erotically.)

DUMAS. Do you love me?

NAVA. Of course I love you.

DUMAS. If you love me—if you really, really love me—try not to be afraid of what I'm about to say to you. Nava—my love, I come from another planet, many galaxies away. I came here on a mission, a mission of discovery, but something went wrong and I was left behind. My face—this face—is not my real face, but a face, I gave myself to blend in unnoticed. I found your people—the coloreds in the south. I did my best, to learn your ways and all your customs, so that I could fit in undetected.

NAVA. What are you saying?

DUMAS. This earth is just a pit stop, between heaven and hell. Heaven is where you come from and hell is what you go through to find your way back home again. But when I'm with you—everything is magic and light.

NAVA. I wanna know more about the place you came from.

DUMAS. Where I'm from, the air is red, the trees, grow upside down, under the ground. Dirt is blue, the ocean orange. The fish live in the ground, and birds don't have wings. They fly backwards, upside down, at the speed of light. Potatoes fall from the sky when it rains. And the people—we cry, only when we're happy, and we cry when we make love. And we make love with our minds, as we send out waves of pleasure and passion in quiet rays of fire and heat to the people we love. We copulate from the center of our brains. We can do it standing up in a crowded room, or laying down at the bottom of a pool. If you let me—if you can trust me, if you will allow me to turn your clock forward about a hundred thousand years, then you will experience an orgasm so intense, you will feel yourself levitate—your whole world will vibrate. Your toes will curl. Butter will come out of your pores. Your eyelids will flip back. The sun will burn through the trees as the light brightens your face and you will soak me inside of your syrup and you will drink me into your pores, and I will ejaculate you with a pleasure so profound, we will both rise from the ground, as I drink up all your fears and catch all your tears. Inside our pleasure dome, I will

mold you and hold you, as our love between the sheets, ends the war in the streets. Are you ready to come to that special place?

NAVA. Yes! Yes! *(BEAT.)* Oh God! My toes are curling!!

DUMAS. Are you ready to climb the wall and walk on the ceiling?

NAVA. Yes! With you—I'll do anything. Just free me! Free me!

(DUMAS moves behind NAVA on the bed, and puts his hands on both sides of her head, sending an intense telepathic energy to the pressure points at both her temples.)

DUMAS. Don't be afraid of me.

NAVA. You have to stop! Stop! I can't take anymore!

DUMAS. Don't be afraid to let the pleasure sweep through you! I'm in your bed and in your head, and this is as good as it gets.

NAVA. *(Screams:)* Oh God. I'm going to explode. Oh God! This is it! This is the most pleasure I've ever felt in my life.

(NAVA, doubles over in both pain and pleasure. She buries her face in a pillow, crying and laughing all at once.)

DUMAS. Are you okay?

NAVA. I'm great!

(DUMAS goes over to the table and picks up a ripe mango. he starts peeling it and slicing it.)

DUMAS. I wanna feed you.

NAVA. I'm not hungry. I'm already full.

DUMAS. I want you to taste this mango.

NAVA. Mangoes in November? What the hell? Why not?

(DUMAS takes the mango and dips it in chocolate syrup.)

NAVA. What are you doing?

DUMAS. I'm dipping the mango in chocolate, so that I can pleasure you with a food taboo, like taking something already naturally

sweet and making it sweeter—like dipping grapes in honey, strawberries in sugar—peaches in cream.

(DUMAS puts a piece of chocolate covered mango in his mouth, but he does not bite it. He offers the mango in his mouth to NAVA, in a kiss. a sweet, chocolate covered mango kiss. They kiss passionately. DUMAS, brings a plate full of sliced mangoes over to the bed, and they both sit back down at the foot of the bed, feeding each other mangoes and exchanging, wild, passionate mango kisses, each passing each other little pieces of mango back and forth, from mouth, to mouth. Then DUMAS, takes a piece of the fruit, and slowly, rubs it across NAVA's face. Then he takes his tongue and slowly, kisses her face, kissing her eyelids, her nose, then her neck—the nape of her neck and then her collar bone. NAVA sighs and moans.)

NAVA. Oh God. Oh. Ah. I'm gonna come again. Oh yes! Yes!

(Just as NAVA falls back on the bed, writhing intensely with pleasure, the door to their room, swings open wide, and an intense light shines into the room. DUMAS, rises in a trance and walks toward the light.)

DUMAS. Nava...Nava—

NAVA. What's the matter Thomas?

DUMAS. They found me—

NAVA. *(Overlap:)* Who?

DUMAS. They've come for me.

NAVA. Who? Who?

DUMAS. I can't help it—

NAVA. Help what?

DUMAS. I must leave you—

NAVA. Don't—

DUMAS. *(Overlap:)* It can't be helped. They are calling me back—

NAVA. *(Overlap:)* No! No!

DUMAS. They are pulling me back!

NAVA. No! No!

DUMAS. I must go now.

NAVA. Don't leave me Thomas Dumas! You can't leave me!

DUMAS. I'm sorry. I never thought they would come back. But—

(THOMAS DUMAS is pulled into the light by a powerful force. he goes through the door, swallowed by the light. the door closes fast and hard behind him. NAVA runs to the door, and tries to open it, but she can't pull the door open. She slumps to the ground, crying, pounding the door with her tiny balled fists.)

(Black Out.)

(End of prologue.)

ACT I

Scene 1

(Years Later. AUGUST 10, 1975. We hear a thunderstorm raging, and yet the sun is still shining through the window. HENRY, a black man in his thirties, stares at the TV with a blank expression. NAVA yells from the kitchen.)

NAVA. *(Offstage:)* Henry...please come and help me.

HENRY. Damn this rain! The Orioles were suppose to play.

NAVA. *(Offstage:)* Stop being a slug and help me.

HENRY. Wait until a commercial, woman.

(LAVA, a little pistol of girl, skips into the room, wearing a white frilly dress.)

LAVA. Daddy. You shouldn't watch TV during a thunderstorm. A bolt of lightning could come right through the TV and put a hole in your chest.

HENRY. Who told you that?

LAVA. Mommy did.

(LAVA turns off the TV.)

HENRY. Hey! I was watching that.

LAVA. Shhhhh.

(Sound cue: we hear a big thunderclap striking outside.)

LAVA. You hear that? That was God talking. He's mad at all you sinners.

HENRY. I'm warning you. Turn it back on. Now!!

(We hear more thunder in the background.)

LAVA. See—see there? God don't like no ugly.

HENRY. Then he must really hate you.

LAVA. Mommy—Daddy called me ugly.

HENRY. I'm not your daddy.

LAVA. So! So! You've got to put up with me, anyway.

(LAVA plops in HENRY's lap and starts sucking her thumb. HENRY rejects the girl, pushing her off of him. She falls on the floor hard, as NAVA enters with a birthday cake. There are ten candles on the cake.)

NAVA. What are you doing, Hank?

LAVA. *(Crying:)* Daddy hurt me.

HENRY. I'm not furniture and I'm not your daddy. Your daddy ran out on you. Don't confuse me with that low life creep.

LAVA. You're the creep. Mama—he's being mean to me—again.

(LAVA puts her thumb back in her mouth.)

NAVA. What's gotten into you Hank?

HENRY. She had no business turning off the TV.

NAVA. You're a bigger child than she is.

HENRY. She shouldn't mess with me. And neither should you.

NAVA. Is that a threat? *(Silence/beat.)* Lava, honey. Could you go to your room for a few minutes? I need to talk to Henry, alone.

LAVA. But Mommy—

NAVA. Please dear. We just need a moment— Okay? Now give Mommy some sugar.

(LAVA kisses NAVA—a small peck on the side of her face. NAVA pulls LAVA toward her and gives her a big hug. A beat passes then, LAVA pulls away.)

LAVA. That's enough, mommy.

(LAVA sticks her tongue out at HENRY and makes a face, then she puts her thumb back in her mouth and marches offstage, stomping her feet as she exits. A beat passes, before NAVA finally speaks to HENRY.)

NAVA. Why are you being so hostile to my daughter?

HENRY. Why did you marry me?

NAVA. I'm the one asking the questions.

HENRY. If you loved me—you would've taken my name. If you loved me—you'd give me children of my own.

NAVA. Is that what this—

HENRY. (*Overlap:*) We've been together seven years—seven years and you still haven't made good on your promise. The problem is—you still in love with a man who deserted you. Keeping his name. Still got his pictures hanging in the house.

NAVA. He's my baby girl's daddy—

HENRY. Your baby girl ain't a baby no more. You keep his pictures up just to torture me.

NAVA. This is my house and I can do what I like.

HENRY. Don't start with that my house crap—

NAVA. I had this house before I met you.

HENRY. So what? I bring plenty money into this house. I puts plenty food on the table.

NAVA. I was doing just fine on my own. Remember now—it was you who came after me. You hunted me down. You came up from Georgia looking for me. Said you had a crush on me since high school. I barely remembered you—

HENRY. But you let me in yo' life anyway. Why?

NAVA. My baby girl needed a daddy.

HENRY. And what did you need? (*HENRY comes to NAVA and places his hands on her. She shrinks away at his touch.*) I don't know how you had that baby—'cause you was still a virgin, the first time I entered you. The way you bled—

NAVA. You hurt me—

HENRY. You was so tight and closed up—I had to hurt you to open you up.

NAVA. It was horrible.

HENRY. But it ain't so horrible now— Is it? *(Beat.)* How did you really get that girl? You adopted her right?

NAVA. Henry—we've been over this before—

HENRY. Was it—was it witchcraft? Magic? She just-she just appeared out of the air—like magic?

NAVA. Why are you so cruel to me?

HENRY. Because you like it. You like it when I'm mean to you. And besides—I'm the one who made a real woman out of you. Now, come over here. We got some time, before the party starts. We can go into the bedroom right now—and start making that family you promised me.

(HENRY starts kissing NAVA on her neck, as a big bolt of lightning strikes outside, close to the house, causing the lights to flicker off and on and off, and then on again. LAVA runs into the room, screaming.)

LAVA. Mommy—Daddy! I'm scared!!

(LAVA squeezes in between HENRY and NAVA, trying to embrace them both. NAVA embraces LAVA, but HENRY pulls away, and crosses back to his easy chair.)

NAVA. You have a family Hank. When are you gonna learn to accept the family you already have?

HENRY. I want more. I want to see my face in the little faces that beam up at me.

(Sound cue: we hear more thunder in the background. LAVA goes to the window, looking out, still sucking her thumb.)

LAVA. *(With her thumb in her mouth:)* Look Mommy! It's—

NAVA. Take your thumb out of your mouth and speak clear. I toldchu 'bout that!

(LAVA takes her thumb out of her mouth.)

LAVA. Mommy, Mommy. It's pouring down rain and the sun is still shining.

NAVA. That's 'cause the devil's beating his wife.

HENRY. He's beating his stepdaughter too.

NAVA. You like playing the villain—don't you? Mr. Bad. Are we suppose to be afraid of you? Well I'm not afraid. Today—my daughter—your step daughter—our daughter turned ten today. Her friends are coming over for a party. If you are gonna sit here and sulk—then we've got a problem. Now either you help us or go and see one of your Poker Buddies. Or better yet—go see one of your whores.

HENRY. I ain't going nowhere in that rain.

NAVA. You ain't staying here. Not with that attitude.

HENRY. Oh no. We'll see.

(HENRY picks up the remote control and flips the TV back on. He stares at the TV for a few beats. LAVA continues staring out the window.)

LAVA. What time is it, Mommy?

(NAVA glances at her wrist watch.)

NAVA. Two fifteen.

LAVA. We told everybody—2 o'clock—didn't we?

NAVA. Yes we did.

LAVA. Then—then where is everybody?

NAVA. Maybe—the storm held them up. You just have to be patient.

LAVA. Okay, Mommy? *(Puts her thumb back in her mouth. a beat passes, she tries to talk with her thumb still in her mouth:)* Mommy—do you—

NAVA. Take that thumb outcho mouth. I can't understand a word you're saying.

(LAVA takes her thumb out of her mouth.)

LAVA. Do you love me, Mommy?

NAVA. Of course I do.

LAVA. Do you wish you didn't have me?

NAVA. What would my life be without you?

LAVA. Daddy wishes you didn't have me.

NAVA. No he doesn't.

LAVA. He doesn't like me.

NAVA. Yes he—

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* He wishes I was dead—

NAVA. *(Overlap:)* No he does—

LAVA. He wishes I was never born.

NAVA. Don't be silly.

LAVA. He hates me. I can tell.

NAVA. He doesn't hate you. Hank tell her you don't hate her.

(Sound cue: we hear a huge thunderclap. Again, the lights flicker off and on and then the stage goes completely black.)

LAVA. I'm scared, Mommy.

NAVA. I better find the candles.

LAVA. Why don't you light the candles on the cake?

NAVA. Okay. But I still need—

HENRY. *(Overlap:)* Just light the cake—woman.

(NAVA fumbles for the matches in the dark. She strikes a match, and slowly lights the candles on the cake. The room gets a little brighter, with each small birthday candle that gets lit.)

LAVA. No one's coming to my party.

NAVA. It's the storm, baby—and it's still early.

LAVA. No one likes me. No one wants to play with me or be my friend. Amy used to be my friend, but even she doesn't like me anymore.

NAVA. That's not true.

LAVA. It is true. Everybody's scared of me. At school they call me a freak.

NAVA. Oh honey.

(NAVA embraces LAVA.)

LAVA. *(Crying:)* Everybody makes fun of me—nobody likes me. Everyone thinks—I'm strange.

HENRY. You are strange.

LAVA. *(Cries:)* See? I toldchu he hates me?

NAVA. Take it back, Hank!

HENRY. Hey! I was just joking!

NAVA. Take it back.

HENRY. Lava—honey. Daddy didn't mean that. I didn't mean that.

LAVA. Why did you say it? *(Puts her thumb back in her mouth.)*

HENRY. I'm sorry. Come here and sit on my lap.

LAVA. No!!

HENRY. Please. Don't make daddy beg.

(LAVA takes her thumb out of her mouth.)

LAVA. You're not my daddy. You said it yourself. You're not my daddy. *(Beat.)*

HENRY. But I wanna be your daddy.

LAVA. No you don't. You hate me.

HENRY. I'll try to do better—okay? Look. I don't need both of y'all mad at me. I'm sorry. I said I'm sorry. Okay? Now come and sit on my lap. Please. *(Beat.)* Nava, make her sit on my lap.

NAVA. Honey. It's okay. You can go and sit on Daddy's lap.

LAVA. I'm only doing it, 'cause Mommy told me to.

(LAVA climbs on HENRY's lap, and sticks her thumb back in her mouth. She straddles HENRY's leg, facing him, as NAVA goes off-stage to the kitchen.)

HENRY. Whatchu got in that thumb that's so good?

LAVA. Chocolate, silly. Wanna taste?

HENRY. You really like sucking yo' thumb—don'tcha'?

LAVA. I love putting things in my mouth, Daddy.

(LAVA slowly, sensuously in a subtle manner, rocks back and forth on HENRY's leg, as she moves her thumb back and forth in her mouth, suggestively. LAVA looks HENRY right in the eye, almost daring him to follow the rhythm of her movement. This goes on for several beats. NAVA re-enters, suddenly with two large candles. HENRY jumps to his feet, startled, almost making LAVA fall.)

NAVA. What's going on?

HENRY. *(Embarrassed:)* Nothing.

LAVA. We were just listening to the storm, Mommy.

(NAVA looks at them, curiously, then she places the two large candles on the table, next to the cake. She lights them. The room gets a little brighter. LAVA doesn't take her eyes off of HENRY, making him nervous.)

NAVA. Honey. Do you want to blow out the candles on your birthday cake? The icing is about to melt.

LAVA. I don't care if that cake burns.

NAVA. Honey. What's the matter?

LAVA. No one is coming to my party.

NAVA. Please—honey. Blow out the candles and make a wish.

LAVA. No.

NAVA. Please.

(LAVA stomps toward the cake and blows out all the candles.)

LAVA. I wish you were dead, Mommy. How's that for a wish?

(The telephone rings. LAVA runs to answer it.)

LAVA. Hello. Hello. They hung up

(LAVA hangs up the phone, as NAVA and HENRY, just stare at each other. A beat passes. NAVA shrugs at HENRY, and blows out the larger candles.)

(Black Out.)

(End of Scene.)

Scene 2

(Lights discover NAVA and HENRY in the middle of an argument.)

NAVA. What's her name, Hank?

HENRY. Woman—I don't know whatchu talking 'bout—

NAVA. You know damn well what I'm talkin' 'bout.

HENRY. Evidently you don't know my character. I would never do—

NAVA. *(Overlap:)* Stop lying!

HENRY. *(Overlap:)* —the things I've been—

NAVA. *(Overlap:)* You bald face liar.

HENRY. *(Overlap:)* —accused of doing—

NAVA. *(Overlap:)* Liar—liar!!

HENRY. I've got no reason—

NAVA. *(Overlap:)* What's her name?

HENRY. *(Overlap:)* To hide anything from you.

NAVA. I'm tired of this.

HENRY. (*Overlap:*) I'm tired of it too.

NAVA. I'm tired of the phone calls—

HENRY. (*Overlap:*) Me too!

NAVA. (*Overlap:*) I'm tired of the hang ups.

HENRY. (*Overlap:*) You're on a roll now—

NAVA. (*Overlap:*) I'm tired of you coming home drunk—

HENRY. (*Overlap:*) I'm tired too—

NAVA. (*Overlap:*) Smelling like booze and cheap perfume.

HENRY. (*Overlap:*) I hate coming back here.

NAVA. We can fix it so—you never have to come here again.

HENRY. I'll leave right now!

NAVA. Go ahead! Leave! What's stopping you?!

(NAVA and HENRY go into a freeze, as LAVA enters.)

LAVA. (*Entering:*) My mother and Henry fight constantly. Almost every night. Especially when he's been drinking. Henry hates living here. He has other places he could live. He wants to leave. But I won't let him. I make him stay. Maybe to torture him. Maybe to torture myself. So I keep him here, in this cave of loathing...I keep him here to keep my mother company...I keep him here...in constant struggle with my mother...I keep him here. Because, I don't know what else to do with him. You see, I have the power to reach inside of his mind...to penetrate his thoughts, to rob him of his will. I keep him here—locked in a cold war with my mother—trapped in this house of lies and trickery. I keep him here, because he's familiar and I'm afraid of change. Even if change was good—I'd still be afraid of it.

(NAVA and HENRY come out of their freeze, noticing LAVA.)

NAVA. See Hank—you did it again. You woke up Lava. What's the matter, baby?

LAVA. I can't sleep, Mommy.

NAVA. You want Mommy to come and tuck you in?

LAVA. I want a bowl of ice cream. A big bowl of chocolate ice cream.

NAVA. But it's too late for ice cream.

LAVA. I want it anyway.

NAVA. *(A beat.)* Okay.

HENRY. You're spoiling that child.

LAVA. Shut up and sit down, Hank.

HENRY. *(A beat.)* Okay.

(HENRY sits, while NAVA goes off to get ice cream.)

LAVA. You see, my mind—is stronger than theirs. I use my mind—to get what I want. I didn't always know I had this power. Maybe it was a month after I turned ten—that I realized I had a gift—a special gift. The ability to enter minds—to read other people's thoughts. To alter things. To empty their heads—and fill them with thoughts of my own. To break people down, and rob them of the desires and their will.

(NAVA re-enters with a big bowl of chocolate ice cream.)

LAVA. Thank you, Mommy. You're too kind. Now go and sit next to Daddy.

(NAVA goes and sits next to HENRY. They go into a freeze. LAVA eats the ice cream savoring the taste, as she addresses the audience.)

LAVA. My mother and my stepfather deserve each other. They both come and go, with their little lies, their little deceptions, their thoughtless infidelities. Neither has a clue or the desire, to make the other happy. So they suffer in silence. They live double lives—away from this house—away from each other. They always think of leaving—but they never leave. They always come back—'cause I always bring them back. Life here, is at a standstill, because I have the power to make time stand still. See?

(LAVA takes the spoon she was eating with and she makes it stand straight up in the air. As the spoon hangs in the air, LAVA goes and sits on HENRY's lap.)

LAVA. Henry hates it when I climb on his lap—his big, fat, cushy lap. He loves it and he hates it. I make him nervous, 'cause he knows that he wants me and there's nothing he can do about it. I've robbed him of his will to resist me. You see—I'm different from other girls. At school—they make fun of me. They laugh and make fun of me and call me a freak. Behind my back, they whisper back and forth, making fun of me—they whisper when I pass them in the hall way or in the cafeteria—they are always whispering, "There's the freak. There's the girl who was born without a vagina."

(The spoon falls to the floor.)

LAVA. Some of the girls—some of the older girls at the school, some of the twelve year olds—are already beginning to bleed—beginning to drop period blood between their legs—stopping the flow of blood with gigantic sanitary napkins—that I've been told feel like walking around with a loaf of bread between your legs—just to stop the flow of a little blood. I will never know what that feels like—the warm, damp flow of blood between my legs. Nor will I ever know—what it feels like to hold a man there. Lost. Lost inside of me. I wish I had a hole—where men could bury themselves, lose themselves inside of me and never want to come out. A hole they could crawl inside. My hole—a warm soft juicy place—a place to take them in—suck them in, a safe place—a crawl space—where they could hide from themselves and hide from the world. A warm, good place—they would never want to leave.

LAVA. I envy my mother. She has a hole, she invites men to enter. She has a hole—therefore she is whole. *(Beat.)* Henry, doesn't know it, but he really belongs to me. I'm the one who keeps him here. *(She re-adjusts herself upon his lap.)* I love, Henry. I love him and I hate him. I love him, because he's strong—he's beautiful. *(She gives him a peck on his cheek.)* But I hate him, because he's weak—boring. He possesses a piddly little mind, filled with piddly little thoughts. I hate little men with little minds. All of them bore me. Maybe I should take Henry from my mother. Sometimes, I do want him all to myself. I hate having to share him. But if I took him from her,

and I could, I know I could, that would devastate Mom. If I did that, she would hate me forever. Even though she doesn't love him—she would hate me anyway—for being a fast little tart. Maybe I should break them up. Make him leave her for another. Sometimes their fights entertain me...sometimes their fights bore me. Lately, mostly they just bore me. I've seen it all before. The same old thing. There is nothing new for them to fight about. I never want to be like them. Losers. Both of them. They deserve each other.

(NAVA and HENRY come out of their freeze.)

NAVA. Lava—baby...what are you still doing up?

LAVA. I'm sleepy, Mommy. *(Puts her thumb in her mouth:)* Tell me—*(Takes the thumb out of her mouth:)* Tuck me in, Mommy and tell me a bedtime story.

HENRY. I'll tuck her in.

LAVA. No—Mommy—Mommy. I want Mommy. You're boring, Daddy. I've heard all your stories. *(Puts her thumb back in her mouth.)*

HENRY. And you're ten going on fifty. *(Under his breath:)* You little slut.

(NAVA exits carrying LAVA in her arms. LAVA stares at HENRY and sticks out her tongue, as the lights slowly fade to black.)

(End of Scene.)

Scene 3

(A single spot discovers NAVA, sitting alone in a chair.)

NAVA. As a child—as a teenager—I used to masturbate. I used to masturbate a lot and make myself come. Sometimes, I would put a pillow between my legs and slowly rock back and forth while sucking my thumb. But more often—when I was home alone, and had no fear of being caught—I would take my fingers and slowly stroke my clit—daydreaming about movie stars. Political leaders. Strong noble men. *(Slowly, she touches herself, masturbating, not in a graphic manner, but stylized.)* I was in love with Sidney Poitier for the

longest. And of course James Dean. And the singer, Tom Jones and oh God—let's not forget Little Anthony of Little Anthony and the Imperials. And the captain of the football team at school. And Mr. Rayborn. My math teacher. And God—oh God—how I loved Cassius Clay. Cassius was my biggest fantasy—followed by Dr. King, then Jesse Jackson and Julian Bond. Young sweet baby faced Julian Bond, with that powerful speaking voice that betrayed the innocence of his face. I got hot and bothered just listening to him as he talked—I would look into his mouth and look into his eyes, and just melt. And then, for the longest time, I had a thing for that thug, that big brute, Sonny Liston. He was so tragic, had such sad eyes—I wanted to snuggle with him—protect him and be protected inside his massive muscular arms. I knew he was bad news—mob-connected. Clay called him a big ugly bear, but I wanted him anyway.

But now, when I masturbate—I am only thinking of him.

(THOMAS DUMAS, suddenly appears hanging onto a rope, high above the stage, amongst the stars, amongst the lights on the lighting grid. He slowly descends the rope, but he stops midway, suspended above the stage. Her masturbation becomes more intense.)

NAVA. When I'm with Henry—I am thinking of him. When I am with another lover—I am thinking of him. I am always thinking of him. The lover who got away. The man who first touched me. The lover who reached my insides first, and stirred something deep in my soul, only to abandon me—to leave me behind, here, on this earth—in endless misery.

I look for him everywhere I go. I look for him in the eyes of each stranger who passes me in the street. I am always looking for him—Thomas Dumas, the only man I will ever love.

I see his face in my daughter's face. I see his eyes in her wide bright eyes. I hear his voice in her voice. Her voice tortures me—it strikes a chord that leaves me in pain. I remember his hands caressing my feet—his hands stroking my hair—as only he could. *(Beat.)*

(LAVA enters suddenly, without warning.)

LAVA. Mother—what are you doing?

NAVA. (*Embarrassed:*) Lava—you startled me—

LAVA. Don't be embarrassed—

NAVA. Why aren't you in school?

LAVA. You summoned me here.

NAVA. No I didn't—

LAVA. Yes. You did.

NAVA. Why didn't you knock?

LAVA. Don't be embarrassed. Continue doing what you were doing.

NAVA. (*Frustrated:*) Didn't I lock the door?

LAVA. No. It was open.

NAVA. I'm sure the door was locked.

LAVA. No—

NAVA. (*Overlap:*) It is always locked when—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) You're thinking of him? You were thinking of him again.

NAVA. (*Overlap:*) You have no right—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) I have every right—

NAVA. (*Overlap:*) —to barge into my thoughts—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) I have every right—

NAVA. —rummaging through my mind—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) We have no secrets, mother—

NAVA. (*Overlap:*) —trespassing in my brain—

LAVA. Mommy. We have no secrets—you and I. Face it, Mommy. (*Points to THOMAS DUMAS on the rope:*) My father is beyond your reach. You can't have him. He will never walk this earth again. He will never fall back to earth. You will have to make do—with me.

(LAVA stands behind NAVA and places her hands on her mother's temples. As she slowly begins to massage NAVA's temples, THOMAS DUMAS, slowly begins to climb back up the rope, disappearing amongst the lights.)

LAVA. I can make you feel what he made you feel—if only you would let me.

NAVA. Please, bring him back.

LAVA. No.

NAVA. Please, stop torturing me.

LAVA. But, I love you, Mommy.

NAVA. If you love me bring him back.

LAVA. Sorry. I just can't do that. Besides—he's too good for you.

NAVA. Take your hands off of me!

(NAVA struggles to free herself from LAVA, but she can't. LAVA continues to press her hands against her mother's temples, boring deeper and deeper into her brain.)

LAVA. I ate your uterus—when you carried me inside of you. I devoured all that was you and left you barren. I made it so, that you could never have another, after having me. Was I being cruel—heartless, for excavating your insides? I don't think so. I think I did the world a favor. I know I did you a favor. When I looked at your maps—the geography of you—you were such a disgusting shapeless mass—with no rhyme and no reason—what else could I do? Except glow like molten ash—inside of you, leaving you charred, empty, infertile. Sure, men would come and do their deed—plant their seed, but nothing would ever take, nothing would ever spring to life.

There would be no more life—after me.

(A rope drops down from the grid, for LAVA. LAVA latches onto the rope, and it slowly begins to pull her up. NAVA stands in disbelief.)

NAVA. Lava—where—where are you going?

LAVA. I'm going to be with Daddy—with my Daddy—amongst the stars.

NAVA. But why?

LAVA. Why not? Who else will want me, mother? No boy...no man will ever want me. What boy could want me like this? Look at me. Look at me mother. I'm a freak...a girl without a vagina. I'm deformed. Grotesque. No man will love me. Only he could love me. Only my daddy could love me. And you know deep down inside—I'm doomed—I'm doomed—I'm doomed to always be—a daddy's girl. *(Beat.)* Daddy's—little girl.

(LAVA puts her thumb in her mouth, as the rope slowly continues to pull her up. she disappears amongst the lights.)

(BLACK OUT.)

End of Act I

ACT II

Scene 1

(AUGUST 10, 1995. Washington, D.C. A bar.)

(AT RISE: Lights discover LAVA and her friend ASIA, having a birthday drink. The actress who played NAVA in the first act, now plays the adult LAVA. Two young men, HOWARD and DAVID, are playing pool in the background. upstage, left.)

ASIA. *(Raising her glass:)* Here's to you, Lava—the last of the vampire sluts. Happy Birthday.

(Their glasses clink.)

ASIA. So, how does it feel to be dirty thirty?

LAVA. Ask me again in three months. *(Beat.)* I detest birthdays.

ASIA. Why?

LAVA. They remind me that life sucks. I'm getting old and I still don't have a man.

ASIA. 'Cause you wolf them down and spit them out at the speed of light. You barely slow down—to savor the taste.

LAVA. *(Burps:)* I'm still savoring...*(Burps again.)*...my last victim. *(Searches her purse:)* You gotta toothpick. I need a toothpick.

ASIA. You need to see your dentist.

LAVA. It's his flesh that's lodged between my teeth.

(LAVA finds a toothpick and picks her teeth with a cynical smile on her face.)

ASIA. And I thought I was jaded.

LAVA. I don't hate birthdays per se—I just hate my birthday and I hate being born in the summer. August sucks. I remember my tenth birthday.

(A single spot discovers YOUNG LAVA, in another part of the stage, sitting all alone on a chair, wearing a white frilly dress. She is sucking her thumb, and restlessly swinging her feet, back and forth)

as she nervously squirms about in the chair.)

LAVA. My mother and I rose early that day and cleaned the house. Getting things ready for an all girl birthday party. I had invited several girls from school, but none of them came. No one showed up. There was an awful thunderstorm that day. An electrical storm, that knocked out the power. Half of Baltimore was pitched in darkness, right when the party was to happen. To this day, I never knew—was it the storm or was it me—that kept them away. I sat in my room, waiting in the darkness. I waited and waited. Hours went by. And the lights came back on. Still no one came and no one called. That fall, when school started back up—I saw all of the girls I had invited. But no one said anything. No one asked about my party and no one explained why they didn't come. And I didn't ask. I just played it off, like it was no big deal. But it was a big deal. I never tried to give another party after that. I just couldn't bear to have my feelings hurt again—by no one—showing up.

(The spot goes down on YOUNG LAVA.)

ASIA. Damn, you're gloomy. No wonder nobody came.

LAVA. Shut up. *(Laughs.)*

ASIA. Let's have another drink. A double for you.

LAVA. I'm not done with this one yet.

ASIA. Then hurry up. Drink it—don't sip it. You know, devour it—like you do the men in your life.

(LAVA notices the two men playing pool, looking in their direction.)

LAVA. Check out the two cuties—they're looking this way—

ASIA. Victims? Or victimizers?

LAVA. *(Sucks her teeth:)* Definitely—victims.

ASIA. Oh shit. Here they come now.

LAVA. Be cool. Be cool.

ASIA. Let me talk for a change.

(HOWARD and DAVID, approach ASIA and NAVA.)

HOWARD. What are you ladies drinking?

ASIA. Whatever you're buying.

HOWARD. I'm Howard. This is my friend, David.

(ASIA shakes hands with the two men.)

ASIA. Hello, Howard. David.

(HOWARD and DAVID extend their hands for LAVA to shake, but she ignores them, and leaves them hanging.)

ASIA. Don't mind her. She's shy.

HOWARD. Oh? I see.

ASIA. So what do you fellas do—when you're not trying to pick up women in bars?

HOWARD. David here—is an obstetrician—

DAVID. I'm a doctor—

ASIA. *(Overlap:)* I'm not stupid. I know what an obstetrician is!

LAVA. *(Whispers in ASIA's ear:)* Victim—

(ASIA and LAVA snicker, while HOWARD and DAVID look at each other, befuddled. ASIA and LAVA lean on each other, in a friendly sort of way that makes the two men even more uncomfortable.)

ASIA. So, what do you do—Howard?

HOWARD. I'm a lawyer.

ASIA. *(Under her breath:)* Not another one—

HOWARD. *(Overlap:)* In the Justice Department. Way down, the food chain—in the Justice Department.

DAVID. Way, way, way, way, down—

HOWARD. *(Overlap:)* —the food chain in the Justice Department.

ASIA. You said that. *(Beat.)* So tell me, Howard—Janet Reno. In or out? *(Beat.)* I say in. What do you say?

HOWARD. Does it matter?

ASIA. Good gossip always matters in this town. *(Beat.)* In or out?
(Beat.)

LAVA. *(Burps:)* Excuse me.

(ASIA and LAVA laugh in a touchy feely manner, and yet the men persist in hanging around, yet not knowing, why they want to hang around.)

ASIA. So Howard—Did you hear the one about Vince Foster?

HOWARD. *(Overlap:)* No—

ASIA. *(Overlap:)* He did himself in because Hillary dumped him for Janet Reno—

HOWARD. *(Overlap:)* I hadn't heard that one—

ASIA. That's because I just made it up, silly— Now go and freshen up our drinks.

LAVA. *(Burps:)* Excuse me...indigestion from my last victim.

(ASIA hands HOWARD two empty glasses.)

ASIA. Well, just don't stand there. Tell the bartender, we'll have the usual—

HOWARD. I know you. I know your face. You—you wouldn't be at the Justice Department—would you?

ASIA. Georgetown. I was in the class behind you at Georgetown.

HOWARD. That's where I know you from. I knew I knew you.

ASIA. You don't know me. Besides—in law school—you were too stuck on yourself to even speak.

HOWARD. I'm talking to you now.

ASIA. That's because the word, "PUSSY" is flashing on my forehead in big neon lights. Now be gone and get our drinks. Two Bloody Marys. Two very Bloody Marys.

HOWARD. Why are you being a bitch?

ASIA. Am I being a bitch? No—I think it's payback—that's a bitch— What do you think? Mr. Justice Department. Get our drinks please. My throat is getting parched. *(Beat.)* Go on. Be gone.

(HOWARD hesitates for a beat and exits with the two empty glasses.)

ASIA. So David. Where do you know him from?

DAVID. We—we were room mates at Penn. That's—that's where, where I did my undergrad—you know. *(Looks down and away:)* So-so-so what kind of law do you practice?

ASIA. Practice is for neophytes. Right now—I'm Lava's agent. Do you like Lava, David? I think she likes you.

DAVID. Lava? Her name is—Lava. Like in volcano? Like in eruption.

ASIA. Yeah. Lava. Like in destruction...devastation. And my name is Asia. Like in a continent—far, far, away. You told us your name without asking us our names, because all you saw was pussy. And we all know pussy has no name—besides pussy. Am I right? David.

DAVID. Look—

ASIA. *(Overlap:)* No. You look. You came over here and told us what you do—like we're supposed to be impressed. You didn't ask what we do. I mean—pussy doesn't have to do a thing, except be there—just be there when you need it. Right? David.

DAVID. What's with you? Why are you so angry?

ASIA. Me? Angry? What would make you think I'm angry?

DAVID. And how come she doesn't talk? *(Points to LAVA.)*

LAVA. Mama said not to talk with food in your mouth.

DAVID. Is that what Mama said?

LAVA. I ate her uterus—when I was born.

(LAVA opens her mouth wide, revealing she has food in her mouth, blood on her lips.)

DAVID. *(Covers his eyes:)* Oh—Gross.

(HOWARD *re-enters with two Bloody Marys.*)

HOWARD. What happened?

DAVID. You've got to get me away from this freak show.

ASIA. You can't leave. We're just getting started.

LAVA. Mama said not to chew with your mouth open.

HOWARD. Here are your drinks. Two Bloody Marys.

DAVID. Come on man. Let's go.

LAVA. No stay. I forbid you to go. Don't you want to celebrate my birthday? Come on and have a birthday drink with me.

DAVID. One drink. But that's it.

LAVA. One drink? We can't stop at just one drink. I'm in your life now. So sit down. Relax. Tell me more about yourself. David.

DAVID. Where do you want me to begin?

LAVA. At the beginning. Where are you from?

DAVID. Cleveland.

LAVA. You're a long way from Cleveland.

DAVID. What about you? Where are you from?

LAVA. Baltimore.

DAVID. Sounds depressing.

LAVA. No more depressing than Cleveland.

DAVID. (*Beat.*) So—so what do you do?

LAVA. I'm a school teacher. (*HOWARD and DAVID look at each other for a beat.*) But don't let my occupation fool ya.

DAVID. What do you teach?

LAVA. Sorcery and witch craft. (*Beat.*) Naw. I teach math. Really. Is that too much of a stretch for you?

DAVID. At this point—I'll believe almost anything. So, where do you teach this math?

LAVA. At Sidwell Friends.

DAVID. Oh? Rich kids.

LAVA. The children of the elite...and powerful.

ASIA. And where do you do your doctoring? Dr. David, or is it Dr. Do-Little?

DAVID. It's Dr. Singleton. I'm still doing my residency at G.W.

ASIA. And then what?

DAVID. I may join an established practice or I may start my own. Actually, the idea of working for myself appeals to me.

ASIA. Does it now?

LAVA. *(To DAVID:)* You can't decide which one of us you want.

DAVID. *(Bewildered:)* What?

LAVA. You can't make up your mind—

ASIA. Let us make up your mind for you.

(LAVA and ASIA french kiss for three beats.)

ASIA. Have you decided yet—

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* Which one of us you want to go home with—

HOWARD. What would it take to get both of you?

ASIA. Howard—you have no chance—

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* At either one of us—

ASIA. *(Overlap:)* Zero! Zip! Nada!

LAVA & ASIA. *(Together:)* David is the one we want.

DAVID. *(Gulps:)* Are you like some kinda tag team?

ASIA. Sometimes.

LAVA. You boys—want to shoot a game of pool?

DAVID. *(Nervous:)* To see which one I go home with?

LAVA & ASIA. *(Together:)* Can't we just shoot for fun?

HOWARD. I'm out of here!

LAVA. Don't leave, Howard.

DAVID. Yeah—man. Stick around.

HOWARD. Why?

LAVA. Because I said so.

ASIA. Rack 'em, Howard. And I'll bust.

(HOWARD goes to the pool table and begins to rack the balls.)

HOWARD. I'll hang for one game. But then I'm gone.

ASIA. Relax Howard— *(Grabs a pool stick.)*

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* The night is still young.

HOWARD. But I've got to go to work in the morning.

ASIA. The Justice Department will manage.

LAVA. Even if you're not there.

ASIA. *(Cueing up:)* Come on, Howard. Play me. Let's see what you've got.

(HOWARD and DAVID look at each other and shrug, even more confused than before, as ASIA takes aim at the cue ball and lets it rip, sending the poolballs scitter scattering. The pool game will become the secondary action as DAVID saunters toward LAVA, to talk.)

DAVID. Is my boy being hustled?

LAVA. By Asia? It's strictly amateur night.

DAVID. So—what's the story with you?

LAVA. Do I have to have a story?

DAVID. Everyone has a story.

LAVA. Then you go first.

DAVID. My story is not that interesting. I grew up on the Eastside of Cleveland. Normal family...normal values. Kinda boring really.

LAVA. Why did you want to be a doctor?

DAVID. I don't know. My father's a doctor. It was already in the cards—that I'd be a doctor too.

LAVA. Sounds to me—like you've got a borderline personality.

DAVID. What would make you say that?

LAVA. You became a doctor because your father is a doctor. It doesn't sound like you gave it a lot of thought. Seems like, what you became was already decided for you—by somebody else.

DAVID. How could you say that?

LAVA. You said it. I just picked up on it.

DAVID. Are you some kind of mind reader?

LAVA. I could be.

DAVID. Then what am I thinking now?

LAVA. You wanna nail me...but you're scared.

DAVID. You can read that?

LAVA. It's kinda obvious.

DAVID. You're the most arrogant woman I've ever met.

LAVA. I'm flattered.

DAVID. There's something sinister about you—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) But you can't quite put your finger on it.

DAVID. You see—I'm good at reading people too.

LAVA. Then I guess I've met my match.

DAVID. If I went with my instincts—I'd leave right now, and I wouldn't look back or think twice about leaving you here.

LAVA. But you can't leave—can you? You're incapacitated, 'cause you know I'm in your life now—and you can't get away, no matter what your instincts say.

DAVID. Like I said—you're the most arrogant woman I've ever met.

LAVA. Thank you.

DAVID. Something ain't right here.

LAVA. Give it a little time—maybe you could make it right.

DAVID. What is it that you're not telling me?

LAVA. What do you need to know?

DAVID. Who hurt you? *(Beat.)* How did you become so cynical?

LAVA. In this town—cynicism replaced politics a long time ago.

DAVID. That's a bullshit answer and you know it.

LAVA. There's a four letter word that describes my character. I'm a slut and I'm proud of it. Now what else do you need to know, Dr. David?

DAVID. What's this thing between you and Asia?

LAVA. Look—David. Let's get the ground rules straight right off the bat. This is my game. I'm in charge here. The only rule is there are no rules. There are no boundaries, save for the ceiling on your imagination. Anything goes. I'm not for the timid or the weak at heart. Only brave souls dance with me. And I've been around the block enough times to know a good parking space when I've found one—

DAVID. *(Overlap:)* Who said you could park here?

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* I've seen more dicks in my life than you'll ever see...probably more pussy too. I never hurt no one who didn't deserve it. And I know how to burn rubber—from a bad situation. I'll never claim to be God's gift to man, but I promise you this much—once I get inside of your head—you will be altered, that's for sure. Get with me, and you'll never be the same again. *(Beat.)* So you tell me—are you still interested? Or are you still scared?

DAVID. I think I could use another drink. What about you?

LAVA. Don't change the subject. *(Beat.)* It's your move.

DAVID. I think you already know the answer. But let me warn you, Lava. I believe in safety first—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) Are you a Boy Scout or a Campfire Girl?

DAVID. Nobody's gonna burn rubber on me.

LAVA. You've got to risk something to play the game. Like any ride in the amusement park—on any given day—an accident, could occur. This could be the ride of your life. Or your biggest let down. That's the chance, you gotta take.

DAVID. Like I said—I believe in safety first, and I will protect myself at any cost.

LAVA. Of course. Self preservation is only natural. (*holds up her empty glass:*) Would you be so kind?

(*DAVID takes her empty glass.*)

DAVID. That was a Bloody Mary—right?

(*LAVA nods yes. DAVID speaks to HOWARD and ASIA:*)

DAVID. I'm going to the bar. Y'all need anything?

HOWARD. Something to get her foot out of my butt. She's schooling me!!

DAVID. I hope you didn't bet the house. (*Exits.*)

LAVA. How you doing, girlfriend?

ASIA. Great. Howard's not so bad after all.

(*ASIA squeezes HOWARD's butt in a playful, flirty manner.*)

LAVA. I see. (*Beat.*) So do you know where this train is going?

ASIA. No idea...no idea at all. Let's just play it loose, okay and see what happens. Okay?

HOWARD. If you want something to happen, you gotta make things happen.

ASIA. Thank you for the insight, Howie.

(HOWARD snuggles behind ASIA, rubbing his crotch against her butt.)

ASIA. *(Offended:)* You can look, but don't touch.

HOWARD. I thought you were warming up to me.

ASIA. *(To LAVA:)* I'm bored with these dick and pussy games. Here. You play him.

(ASIA hands LAVA the cue stick. HOWARD grabs ASIA's arm.)

HOWARD. Stop being a cunt!

ASIA. If you stop being a dick, I'll consider it— Now let go of my arm.

(HOWARD holds on to her arm for two more beats, before he releases her.)

LAVA. *(Coy:)* Well—once again—we've been reduced—to being our body parts.

HOWARD. Later for you.

ASIA. Never for you.

(HOWARD begins his exit, as DAVID re-enters with drinks.)

DAVID. Hey! Howard! What's wrong? Where you going?

HOWARD. Later for these bitches. *(Exits.)*

DAVID. *(Calling HOWARD:)* Racquetball? Tomorrow. After work?

HOWARD. *(Offstage:)* Whatever...

DAVID. *(A beat.)* What just happened here?

ASIA. Your boy is a little bitch. That's why he was dismissed.

(DAVID hands LAVA her drink. LAVA takes a sip and sets it down. ASIA notices he has another Bloody Mary.)

ASIA. Is that for me? *(Takes the drink:)* You're too kind.

LAVA. Come on, David. Rack 'Em and I'll bust.

(As DAVID racks the pool balls, LAVA puts chalk on her cue stick in a somewhat erotic manner.)

LAVA. *(As she chalks her stick:)* I see you, David. Still at war with yourself...asking yourself...should I stay or should I go? You're thinking to yourself—these bitches are crazy. And you're right. Trust your instincts on that one, David. What you don't understand—is why you haven't left already. Could it be—could it be—the power of the pussy that got you so intrigued?

(LAVA sends the cue ball flying off the table, missing everything. DAVID has to duck. He retrieves the cue ball.)

LAVA. *(Coy:)* Loops. I missed.

(LAVA and ASIA, laugh hard, giving each other a high five.)

DAVID. I guess it's my turn now.

(LAVA and ASIA laugh to themselves, as DAVID cues up his shot.)

DAVID. What's so funny?

LAVA. Nothing honey—

DAVID. Then why you laughing? Are you laughing at me?

LAVA. We just laughing to ourselves.

(DAVID takes his shot, getting a couple of balls in. He cues up for a second shot.)

DAVID. This is a sick game you're playing. You don't know who you're messing with.

LAVA. Why do you have to sound so menacing, David? We're just two girls, out to have a little fun. Is that okay with you?

DAVID. Just as long as your fun, ain't at my expense—

LAVA. Look at you—shooting balls into a hole—using a big stick. There must be a metaphor here somewhere. *(ASIA snickers.)* Lots of—heavy handed symbolism in this game of pool. Wouldn't you say, David? You're a man—a real man. And like any man—who

claims to be a real man—you're all about the pussy. Getting as much as you can. Right, David?

DAVID. I'm different.

LAVA. Sure you are.

(DAVID tries to take another shot, but LAVA takes her cue stick and changes the flight of the ball, blocking his shot, stopping the game. She pushes some of the balls aside, clearing a space for herself on the pool table. She climbs and stands on top of the table, still holding her cue stick in her hand. DAVID just stares at her stunned.)

LAVA. You wanna nail me—don't chug? You wanna fuck me now more than ever. *(Beat.)* You don't have to answer. I already know the answer. Just like I know why you haven't already left. You've been through every name—every woman in your little black book more than once. Am I right, Doctor Dave?

DAVID. You don't know me.

LAVA. Sure I do. I know all about you.

DAVID. You don't know anything.

LAVA. I know you inside out—upside down—

DAVID. This is abusive. I'm leaving.

(DAVID starts to leave, but his body betrays him, something is pulling him back. Something keeps him from leaving.)

LAVA. You can't leave. I'm not done with you yet. Now sit!

(DAVID sits, as he is told.)

DAVID. I don't deserve this.

LAVA. Yeah, you do. Doctor...David.

ASIA. Lava—let him go.

LAVA. You shut up!

ASIA. It ain't funny anymore.

LAVA. It never was funny.

ASIA. He's more trouble than it's worth.

LAVA. Getting his semen is always worth it. And he's the one I want. Now sit down, Asia—before I sit you down.

DAVID. Will someone clue me in?

LAVA. You can't move. Can ya? *(Beat.)* You came to this bar tonight, 'cause you wanted something new—something strange. Something freaky leaky! So you came into this bar and you stumbled into my life and now you don't know what to do about it. Do ya? Well—I'm gonna grant you your wish. You're gonna get something strange, different and freaky. Come here! *(Beat.)* Now!

(DAVID rises from his seat against his will. LAVA takes DAVID's hands, placing one on her stomach, and one on her crotch. His hands stay there, while ASIA joins in, grabbing the pool stick. ASIA slowly, erotically mimes, giving the pool stick a hand job, then masturbating with it, in rhythm to LAVA's words, held under the same spell, that has a grip on DAVID. LAVA places her hands, on DAVID's temples.)

LAVA. David. I want you to go with me—let your mind and spirit flow with me, grow with me. I would love to give you some pussy—but I ain't got none to give ya. Like a song without a beat, a body without a clock, a soul without a mind, I was born—missing parts. I was born—incomplete. But I can LOVE you—in your mind...make love to you—right between your ears—if you let me. And I promise not to hurt you. I just want you to injaculate me—with your sperm. And injaculate me with your thoughts. And injaculate me with your pulse. And injaculate me with your anger and injaculate me with your pain. And injaculate me with your heartbeat. And I'll be satisfied. More than satisfied. And so will you—if you don't put any borders on your imagination.

(A light discovers YOUNG LAVA suspended on a rope, up in the lighting grid, high above the stage. The rope slowly allows her to descend toward the stage, as DAVID and ASIA, become more enraptured with LAVA's words and her telepathy. The two LAVAS exchange overlapping lines to tell a story.)

LAVA. As a young girl—

YOUNG LAVA. (*Overlap:*) I was a gifted child.

LAVA. Growing up way too fast.

YOUNG LAVA. My parents didn't know what to do with me.

LAVA. They were always trying to reign me in—make me conform to their idea of normal.

LAVA & YOUNG LAVA. (*Together:*) I was always putting my thumb in my mouth. I just like putting things in my mouth.

LAVA. After my thumb—came Popsicles...I was especially fond of Popsicles. I have—whatchued call—an oral fixation.

YOUNG LAVA. Mama was always trying to get me to take my thumb out of my mouth.

LAVA. My stepfather said I'd grow up to be a slut if I didn't change my ways.

YOUNG LAVA. The first time he called me a slut was when I was seven—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) 'Cause I kissed a boy at the playground.

YOUNG LAVA. Then he called me a slut again when I was ten.

LAVA. 'Cause he didn't like the way I was sitting on his lap.

YOUNG LAVA. I think he liked it. I know he liked it.

LAVA. Pretty soon—I didn't care if he called me a slut.

YOUNG LAVA. So I decided to be a slut in training—

LAVA. 'Cause from what I could see—

LAVA & YOUNG LAVA. (*Together:*) It was the sluts who were having all the fun.

(YOUNG LAVA reaches the floor and exits, sucking her thumb.)

LAVA. By the time I was in high school—I had whatchued call-a reputation—for giving blow jobs in the backseat of parked cars. Why did I do it? I did it because I liked it. I liked putting dicks in my mouth. Big ones, small ones and everything in between—I loved the texture...the way they felt in my mouth. And I especially

liked seeing them spring to life, standing erect, expanding, growing in dimension to the tip of my tongue and the magic power of my mouth. Seeing them grow—I felt my power. But most of all—I liked it when they exploded in my mouth. Launching, spitting, spurting, gushing out that creamy, milky, sticky gooey semen and I would swallow it—'cause I loved it. I swallowed it, 'cause their semen was as good as gold, and as smooth as milk. I loved slurping them down and drinking them dry, leaving them spent and keeping their minds off the pussy... 'cause I didn't have one.

(LAVA comes down off the pool table and she makes DAVID lean back against the pool table as she kneels down, and puts her face right at DAVID's crotch and unzips his fly. The lights get dim, as ASIA exits and we suddenly find ourselves back in a Baltimore of the distant past.)

LAVA. When I was sixteen, late one night after a party, I was giving Reggie Williams—the captain of the basketball team, a blow job—right in the living room—when my stepfather walked in—drunk.

(The actor who was playing HOWARD now re-enters as HENRY. The lights get brighter, as HENRY enters the scene. The actor playing DAVID becomes REGGIE WILLIAMS.)

HENRY. *(Entering:)* What the hell is going on here?

LAVA. *(Panic:)* Nothing daddy!

REGGIE. *(Overlap:)* Nothing sir.

(REGGIE zips up his pants.)

HENRY. Nothing? Then whatchu doing with yo' fly open if nothing's going on? Where's yo' mama, girl?

LAVA. *(Nervous:)* I don't know—she's not here!

HENRY. Well...you two are gonna stay here until she gets here. Then we gonna git to the bottom of what's going on here.

LAVA. *(To the audience:)* As I was standing there, all nervous, and shit—something, came over me. I just snapped and I yelled at my

stepfather. *(To HENRY:)* We don't have to wait for my mama. I was giving him a blow job!

HENRY. What? What did you say?

LAVA. I said I was giving him a blow job. When I'm done with him...do you want one too?

HENRY. What the fuck...what the fuck?

(HENRY raises his hand in slow time, to strike LAVA.)

LAVA. *(To the audience:)* I don't know what made me say it. I was tired of being good girl...a good girl, born into a bad situation. When I saw his hand—raise up to hit me—I used my mind and I froze him right in place.

HENRY. *(Unable to move:)* What the hell—

LAVA. *(To the audience:)* Then I went off on him. Screaming. Yelling. Cursing up a storm about anything and everything. But mainly—I remember saying— *(To HENRY:)* I was giving him a blow job and I ain't apologizing for it. It's my mouth. Can't I do what I want with it? This is my mind and my body, ain't I got the right to do with it as I please?!

HENRY. But you're just 16. And you still under my roof.

LAVA. Fuck that! You wouldn't be saying that—if I was a boy. *(to the audience:)* Then I just took my mind...I used my power to erase his mind and I pushed him away. *(LAVA raises her hands, pointing at HENRY, she uses telepathy to send him away.)* And I sent him out the house, back into the night. I sent him right on back to wherever it was—he just came from. I knew from that moment on—my stepfather would never want to lock horns with me again.

(As HENRY exits in a trance, the lights shift back to a bar in D.C. in 1995. As REGGIE becomes DAVID again, ASIA slowly re-enters in a trance.)

LAVA. *(To the audience:)* Basically—I'm a loner. A loner by design and a loner by nature. When I feel like prowling the streets or vamping in bars, sometimes I pull Asia to me, just for effect...or to run interference. Sometimes I let her pick up the leftovers I leave

behind...the people who get devastated, abandoned...discarded like wreckage. She's a real good scavenger. She only goes for the good leftovers and all the rest—she leaves behind. Sometimes I pull her to me, when I'm lonely and just need company and when she's getting on my nerves, I make her leave, and she goes away quietly. That's just the way it is 'tween me and her. That's just the way it is with me and everybody. Especially men. I pull them to me when I need them.

(LAVA raises her hand toward DAVID and he comes over to her. DAVID and LAVA kiss passionately for several beats.)

LAVA. *(To the audience:)* And I send them away—when I've got no further use for them. *(To DAVID:)* I'm done with you for now, David. You can go now.

DAVID. Can I see you again?

LAVA. Maybe. *(Beat.)* But if you don't—have a nice life, anyway.

(LAVA raises her hands and sends DAVID away. He slowly exits in a stylized trance, as ASIA comes over to the pool table and stands next to LAVA.)

LAVA. *(To ASIA:)* You rack 'em and I'll bust 'em.

(The lights slowly fade on ASIA as she's racking up the pool balls. LAVA stares at the audience, putting chalk on the cue stick, smiling, her most seductive smile.)

(Black Out.)

(End of scene.)

Scene 2

(Lights rise on LAVA's apartment, two hours later, that same evening. LAVA is in a robe, applying cold cream to her face. She hums "Happy Birthday" to herself. THOMAS DUMAS, suddenly appears in a light. LAVA is so lost in her thoughts, that she doesn't notice she is no longer alone. Several beats pass, LAVA still hums to herself. THOMAS DUMAS, finally speaks, breaking the silence.)

DUMAS. You really take your nightly ritual seriously?

LAVA. *(Shocked/scared:)* Who are you? What are you doing here?

DUMAS. I'm always here. Whether you notice me or not.

LAVA. Get out you creep! Before I call security. I'll have you arrested—if you don't leave now!

DUMAS. You have your mother's fire—that's for sure.

LAVA. Who are you?

DUMAS. And you've got my eyes.

LAVA. What do you want with me?

DUMAS. I just want you to be happy.

LAVA. Who are you?

DUMAS. You know who I am.

LAVA. Stop playing games with me.

DUMAS. Like the games you play—with everyone who comes into your life.

LAVA. You must leave now!

DUMAS. Why do you torture yourself—by making your life so hard?

LAVA. I'm calling the police.

(LAVA reaches for the phone, but the phone moves away from her.)

DUMAS. I've been watching you, for a long time.

LAVA. Get out!

DUMAS. You sabotage every chance for love that comes your way.

LAVA. I'm not playing with you.

(LAVA reaches for the phone again and it moves away from her.)

DUMAS. And God forbid if someone should fall in love with you.

LAVA. Please leave.

DUMAS. I've seen you. I know how you work.

LAVA. Please leave now.

DUMAS. You lure them in, only to push them away.

LAVA. Please go.

DUMAS. You always push them away.

LAVA. I can't help it—

DUMAS. *(Overlap:)* Even the ones who are good for you.

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* I know! I'm a bad person.

DUMAS. *(Overlap:)* You push them away!

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* I don't mean to, but I'm afraid—

DUMAS. "Use once and destroy!" That's your motto. That's your method of making sure no one ever gets near—your heart.

LAVA. I get scared. I don't want anybody to hurt me. No one can hurt me.

DUMAS. And so you hurt them first—with all your little mind fuck games.

LAVA. *(Crying:)* How do you know?

DUMAS. I've seen you. I've watched you. I've seen you take a hundred to your bed and a hundred to your bosom, and yet, you always end up—alone.

LAVA. If you've seen me—why won't you help me?

DUMAS. How could I help you?

LAVA. Make me stop. Make me stop being a slut.

DUMAS. How could I do that?

LAVA. Please, Daddy. Just make me stop.

DUMAS. When you want to stop—you'll make yourself stop.

(The light around DUMAS becomes more intense.)

LAVA. Why won't you help me?!

DUMAS. I just did.

LAVA. Please Daddy! Don't leave! Don't leave me here!

DUMAS. I'm always here. And I'm always watching. *(Beat.)* Just remember—you get—what you give.

(The light around THOMAS DUMAS grows more intense, as he disappears, swallowed by the light.)

LAVA. Please, Daddy! Stay!! Don't leave me here all alone!

(The telephone rings, several times. LAVA ignores the phone, sobbing as the lights fade to darkness.)

(End of scene.)

Scene 3

(One month later. A dim light discovers, a slightly drunk LAVA entering her apartment. She turns on a lamp and the lights expand. She lingers, leaning her back against the wall. The apartment door remains open. LAVA looks out the door with a coy smile on her face.)

LAVA. You can come in David. I won't bite you.

(DAVID sticks his head into her space, lingering by the door.)

DAVID. You promise?

LAVA. I promise nothing—except you'll never be bored.

DAVID. Thank you for seeing me tonight.

LAVA. Excuse me.

DAVID. Thank you for going out with me.

LAVA. Why are you thanking me?

DAVID. You didn't have to go out with me.

LAVA. I know that.

DAVID. But you went out with me anyway.

LAVA. I know that.

DAVID. Since we met, I've done nothing but think of you.

LAVA. Are you gonna come in or not?

(After a beat, DAVID enters the apartment.)

DAVID. Nice place.

LAVA. You are so lame.

DAVID. Sometimes.

LAVA. Stop talking and come here. *(Beat.)*

(After a beat, DAVID approaches LAVA, slowly. She grabs him by his clothes and aggressively pulls him toward her. They kiss, for several beats, with her back pressed to the wall.)

LAVA. *(Reflective:)* That was sweet...nice. A nice sweet kiss. Nice is good—sometimes. I had a nice time this evening. Dinner was great. I love Ethiopian food. I just love eating—with my hands. *(Beat.)*

DAVID. For almost a month—I lived in fear. I lived in fear of never seeing you again. What made you change your mind?

LAVA. Change my mind about what?

DAVID. About going out with me. Seeing me again.

LAVA. I don't know. I guess I found your persistence attractive.

DAVID. I think you were just playing hard to get.

LAVA. I don't play hard at anything. This is my life and it's not a game.

DAVID. You still haven't told me. What made you change your mind?

LAVA. There's a thin line between persistence and being annoying. Make sure you never cross that line with me.

DAVID. Is that a threat or a warning?

LAVA. Take it any way you want to. *(Beat.)* Now sit. Relax—while I take this dress off.

(LAVA claps her hands twice, and a haunting, mesmerizing jazz track plays in the background. Steve Coleman meets Ornette Coleman. LAVA exits. DAVID sits for a moment, but gets up, moved by the music, he wanders around the room, inspecting the various signs of LAVA's life. He glances at books, family photos. He thumbs through her CD collection, such as it is, trying to discover anything to demystify her mystery. He does this for several beats, before LAVA finally re-appears dressed in a sheer white flowing dress, that is as revealing as it is protective. She is carrying a basket of rose petals, which she places on the floor, next to her bare feet. DAVID does not hear her when she reappears. She watches him, thumbing through her CDs for a couple of beats before she finally speaks.)

LAVA. My CD collection is so limited.

DAVID. *(Overlap:)* You startled me.

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* Limited by funds...a lack of funds. Hopefully not limited by a lack of imagination.

DAVID. *(Waving a CD:)* Lee Morgan..."Search for a New Land." This is a classic. Classical jazz at it's best.

LAVA. *(Overlap:)* I love the classics.

DAVID. *(Excited:)* Joni Mitchell does Mingus...Miles Davis..."Kind of Blue."

LAVA. Miles definitely had his moments.

DAVID. Who's this..."Tricky?" I never heard of...Tricky.

LAVA. From "Kind of Blue" to kinda new...all that music speaks to my soul.

(DAVID holds up the "tricky" CD.)

DAVID. I want to hear this.

LAVA. I'll play it for you later if you dare to stick around. There's one question I need you to answer for me. Why do you want to be in my life?

DAVID. I don't know. You've been haunting my head, since that night in the bar—shooting pool and shooting the shit. I just couldn't stop thinking about you. So I kept calling and calling. It was like an obsession.

LAVA. How did you get my number? I'm not even listed.

DAVID. Howard hunted down Asia—through the Georgetown Law Center Alumni Directory. It was Asia who gave me your number. Are you mad at me for doing that?

LAVA. I'm kinda flattered you went through so much trouble.

DAVID. It was no trouble at all.

LAVA. You know I'm kinda different—

DAVID. (*Overlap:*) I know—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) I'm not like other girls—

DAVID. I know—I know. None of that matters. I just wanna be with you.

LAVA. But why?

DAVID. To feel...to experience...to grow.

LAVA. You could do that with anyone.

DAVID. No one ever made me feel what you made me feel that night—in that bar. I want to catch that feeling and capture it and put it in a bottle and hold it to a light—and see what it reveals. Each time I look at it...I know it will reveal something new, something fresh, something that will never grow stale. Something I will never get tired of or grow bored with, nor will ever take for granted. I know that you can do that for me. I knew it, I felt it that night. You were right. I was altered. I was forever altered. You did something, nobody ever did before.

LAVA. And what was that?

DAVID. You made me cry inside. *(Beat.)* I thought I was devoid of feelings and you made me feel. And it was so real—it was unreal. I didn't know where I was...what planet I was on. Jupiter or Venus? Heaven or Hell? I didn't know and I didn't care...all I knew, was I didn't want it to end. I want to feel that feeling, again. I want to live in perpetual rapture. Morning, noon and night—I wanna be at your side. With you—I know I can make it. Without you—I'll fall. I'll turn into nothing. I will vanish, like a scream turned into a whisper, for love is a vapor that sometimes evaporates. *(Beat.)*

LAVA. You talk pretty good, but you talk too much. You seem to be forgetting—I'm in charge. Now take your shirt off.

(DAVID does what he is told.)

DAVID. My shirt is off.

LAVA. Every new love must begin with a healing ritual—an inspection of all our scars. Every scar, has a story. Like the one on your forearm—what's the story behind that?

DAVID. That one? Some fullback dug his cleats into my arms, heading toward the end zone. I had been clipped and was already laid out, face first, eating mud. We lost the City Championship by three points that day.

LAVA. Take your pants off.

(Once again, DAVID does as he is told. He stands there in boxer shorts.)

LAVA. Now your legs—very nice. Very nice indeed. Good muscle tone. Good definition. You must work out on a Stairmaster?

DAVID. No time—and frankly—no need.

LAVA. Oh? You just got it like that?

DAVID. Yeah. I just got it like that.

LAVA. So what's that scar on your knee?

DAVID. Oh that's nothing. That little thing is so old—I forgot it was there. I ran into a cocktail table horsing around with my little brother.

LAVA. Liar!

DAVID. It's the truth.

LAVA. Liar! I say that scar is relatively new—

DAVID. What about you?

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) We're still talking 'bout you—

DAVID. (*Overlap:*) What's that scar on your forehead? You think combing your hair in a bang can hide that?

LAVA. You first, then me. Speak!

DAVID. You're getting hostile.

LAVA. 'Cause you're lying to me. That scar on your knee has girlfriend written all over it.

DAVID. How do you know?

LAVA. 'Cause I know. (*Beat.*)

DAVID. Two years ago—

LAVA. (*Overlap:*) I knew it—

DAVID. (*Overlap:*) My last year of Med School. I was at a bus stop—waiting for the bus home—when this car pulls up. This nice Lexus, stops at a red light right in front of the bus stop. I look into the car and I see my girlfriend—my fiancée, Faye, riding shotgun with some guy—some older guy, has his hands all in her hair, stroking her hair, just chatting up a storm, while bobbing their heads to some music. Before I know it, I'm standing in front of the car, and I'm screaming at my woman, "What the fuck are you doing in this car, with this guy, with his paws all over you?!" The light turns green, and the car starts inching forward, just daring me to stand there. So I throw myself on the hood of the car, and I'm screaming at the top of my lungs at this woman I thought I really knew and loved. I'm just screaming and screaming, banging and banging my balled up fists on the hood of that car. And so the car takes off through the intersection really fast, with me hanging on for dear life. I mean this old fart is gunning it! Flooring it! Doing highway speeds in a residential neighborhood. I can see and hear

my girlfriend, screaming, crying, terror is on her face. But the old fart is just laughing as he guns it. Then all of a sudden, he slams on the brakes. And I go tumbling to the pavement, hard, scraping my knee and my elbow—which you missed. I was lucky...very lucky—that I walked away—alive. No broken bones. Just a few scratches and some bruises. (*Beat.*)

LAVA. Do you still love her?

DAVID. Can we change the subject?

LAVA. Do you—still love her?

DAVID. I try not to think about her. But thinking about her-sometimes it just can't be helped.

LAVA. Do you still talk to her?

DAVID. After that run in—we met once—to break off our engagement face to face, to give it some kind of closure. That was her word, not mine. She ripped out my heart. How d'ya...how d'ya close up your chest when your heart's been ripped out?

LAVA. Are you still in touch with her?

DAVID. I don't know where the hell she is. The last phone number I've got on her...it don't...it don't work anymore.

LAVA. Do you miss her?

DAVID. No. Yes. Of course I miss her.

LAVA. So, you still think of her?

DAVID. In my mind—I just want her to be dead. Maybe it wouldn't hurt as much—if she was dead.

LAVA. So...you're still in love with her?

DAVID. I used to love her.

LAVA. But you had to kill her?

DAVID. At least in my mind—I did. (*Beat.*) That's enough about me and my pain. What about you and your scars?

LAVA. I have a litany of scars—a cloak, I wear like a dress. Most of my scars are invisible. But I know they are there.

DAVID. The one on your forehead. What's the story behind that?

LAVA. It's a birthmark.

DAVID. A birthmark?

LAVA. From a policeman's night stick.

DAVID. You had a run in with the law?

LAVA. Doesn't everybody? Can we change the subject now?

DAVID. No. I told you my story—you tell me yours.

LAVA. Like I said—I've got too many scars, with too many stories. I'll bore you with that stuff some other time. But right now—I wanna put my hands on your skin...your soft smooth skin, is smooth like butter. So soft, so smooth, you must make a lotta girls jealous, Doctor Dave—to have skin like that.

DAVID. Look—I'm tired. Perhaps I should leave now.

(DAVID picks up his clothes off the floor, to put them back on, But LAVA stops him, and knocks his clothes out of his hands.)

LAVA. I'm tired too. I'm really tired of running through men. You seem like the type of man, I should take my time with and really get to know. You don't really want to leave—do ya?

DAVID. No.

LAVA. Good.

(LAVA picks up the basket of rose petals, and begins to sprinkle them on the floor. Lights come up on a bed, in the same area of the stage where the pool table was in the previous scene.)

LAVA. Follow me David—to another time and place. A place where rules are bent and lines are crossed, where fantasy has a way of blurring reality. Walk with me, on a rose petal path to my bedroom. My bed, our bed is a magic carpet, transporting us to a magic land of a thousand dances, where one woman and one man get a

thousand chances to celebrate one love. Do you wanna go to that place?

DAVID. Yes. Yes.

LAVA. Then follow me and I will take you there.

(DAVID walks behind LAVA on the rose petal path to her bedroom. LAVA spreads rose petals on the bed and lays down on the bed.)

LAVA. Right now, now I feel like cotton candy. I'm pink, soft, gooey and sweet...sweet enough to eat. Do you wanna eat me?

DAVID. Yes. Yes.

LAVA. Can you find me? Do you see me? I'm in a cotton candy forest—full of cotton candy trees...pink fluffy trees without a pattern. I'm a pink fluffy tree, just ripe enough for eating, blended in with all the other trees. Can you find me? Do you see me? Can you smell me? Can you hear me? Follow the sound of my voice, and find me, and touch me and heal me and hold me. Do you see me?

DAVID. Yes. I see you.

LAVA. Then come to me. And hold me.

(DAVID comes to LAVA, and sits next to her upon her bed. They embrace and kiss.)

LAVA. You're like a piece of caramel on pink satin sheets. Your skin is so smooth, so glossy, my fingertips want to explode from touching your skin. Your nipples—look delectable.

(LAVA takes her tongue and licks DAVID's nipples.)

LAVA. Aw—looka there. Your nipples are getting hard.

DAVID. I wanna breast feed you. Do you want me to breast feed you?

LAVA. Yes. Feed me...feed me. I'm hungry and thirsty for everything you've got.

DAVID. Come on. Suck my nipple. Suck harder. The woman in me wants to feed the man in you.

LAVA. And the man in me—wants to fuck the woman in you.

DAVID. No. No. Don't fuck me. Make love to me.

LAVA. You're right. You are so very right, David. How much sport fucking can a girl really do in one life? Tonight—I want a love that is real. Something I can feel in every fiber of my being.

DAVID. The woman in me—wants to feed you and nurture you.

LAVA. And I wanna protect you in a warm safe place.

(LAVA takes DAVID's nipple into her mouth and sucks hard, as if he was the woman, for several beats.)

DAVID. Is it safe to be in love with you?

LAVA. Of course it's safe.

(DAVID lays on his back and puts his legs around LAVA, as if he were the woman. And she slowly humps him, like a man.)

DAVID. Good. Then let me open up for you like a flower. Smell me and touch my petals. I wanna open up—like a woman...like a river, a river of love you can swim in. I want you to swim inside my pleasure...find my golden treasure.

LAVA. You are candy in my mouth.

DAVID. Eat my milky way...and my almond joy.

LAVA. You and I...we are perfect together.

DAVID. We each complete the other.

LAVA. I end where you begin...

DAVID. And I begin where you end—

LAVA. We belong together—you and I.

DAVID. I can love you like a woman and I can love you like a man.

LAVA. And I can love you like a man—and I can love you like a woman.

DAVID. You like being the boy.

LAVA. And you like being the girl.

DAVID. Sometimes...I like being as soft as a flower.

LAVA. And sometimes, I like being as hard as a rock. But right now—I'm in full bloom, just like cotton candy. I exist in no particular season, for no particular reason, other than to be relished and eaten by you. So eat me...eat me 'til your stomach is full and your heart is content, and you are so satisfied, that you fall asleep, spent, empty—in need of rest.

DAVID. Then take me. Take me. Take my member into your hands...into your mouth. Do what you've gotta do, but make me come.

LAVA. Make you come?

DAVID. Give me a hand job—a blow job. Yo' job is to make me come!

LAVA. My job?

(DAVID lays on his back in LAVA's bed.)

DAVID. Come on bitch and put me in your mouth! *(A beat passes.)*

LAVA. Get out! Get yo' clothes and leave!

DAVID. Leave?! What?! What did I do?

LAVA. You ruined...the moment.

DAVID. I what?!

LAVA. You ruined the moment. You're just like any other guy.

DAVID. I'm sorry I used the "B" word, but I thought you said there were no rules.

LAVA. All you want is a good blow job!

DAVID. What's wrong with that?!

LAVA. You are so typical—it makes my heart sick! Get out!

DAVID. Hey—I was just trying to play along in your thing. In your trip...your fantasy.

LAVA. But you still had your own agenda—you're so goal oriented.

DAVID. You started this. I tried to leave—but you made me stay.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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