

# KISSING CHE

By

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## **Prologue**

1959: Castro overthrows Batista and takes control of Cuba.

In the late 1960's, because of "revolutionary social hygiene", Thousands of homosexuals were systematically rounded up and forced into hard labor in camps known as "Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción". Those that didn't die were continually harassed and prosecuted for the rest of their lives.

1980, Cuba: Fidel Castro opens the port of Mariel, causing a mass exodus of up to 125,000 Cuban political dissidents and criminals to flee to Florida, USA

2011, Cuba: Sex change operations are covered for every Cuban citizen under the Cuban National health care system.

## Cast list

**Reina:** Latino to play female. (50-60's) Speaks with an elegant Spanish accent with a Cuban dialect. Physically, he must be handsome with the echoes of a youthful beauty that one can imagine made him a gorgeous female impersonator. Though he can be very flamboyant he is very well grounded in his "womanhood". Once a beautiful drag queen diva, ("I turned kings into queens. I made straight men gay. And they loved me for it!") his health is rapidly deteriorating and he now looks at the demons of his past through the glasses of a Blanche DuBois. His open sexuality confronts Tamika's true repressed sexual identity.

**Tamika:** African-American nurse. (40's). Despite leading an unfulfilled life and unhappy marriage, she has a compassionate heart.

**Derek/Doctor:** African-American male. (50's) Blue-collar worker. Married for 15 years to Tamika. He is an everyday man working an everyday work week. Also doubles as a square doctor.

**Mirabella/Cuban Officer/Che** (20's) Latino male. Very "pretty". Could easily be seen as a gorgeous "woman". Naïve. A dreamer who believes in finding a straight man whom he could love deeply. Reina's best friend. Has a haunting quality. Also doubles as the Cuban Officer, (brutal and persecuting) and the ghost of Che Guevara.

**Cuban Showgirl/Head Nurse** (21 years old): Latina. Female or transgender female. Gorgeous. Also doubles as the role of Head Nurse, a no nonsense woman. Sharp wit and takes no bullshit from Reina.

Total actors: 5

Total characters: 9

## ACT ONE

### scene one

Spotlight on a gorgeous Cuban Woman in her early twenties. She is dressed as a 1950's Havana show-girl and alluringly sings the Cuban love ballad, "*Besume Mucho*".

The SPOTLIGHT WIDENS to REVEAL that she is singing to a MAN dressed in green army fatigues and wearing a beret seated in a chair with his BACK to the audience. Though we can't see the details of his face, we notice that he has a long unkempt beard.

The Cuban Woman shifts her hips seductively, teasing the man ever so closely. She leans into him, her lips inches from his.

He reaches out his hand and just as he's about to caress her- SPOTLIGHT to BLACK.

**scene two**

1984, Miami, Fla. It's been four years since the Mariel Boatlift from Cuba. "Careless Whisper" by Wham! was a hit song. "The Cosby Show" was the highest rated show on TV. Nuclear annihilation appeared to be on the horizon. "It's morning in America": It's the time for voting for Ronald Reagan and bumping lines of cocaine.

LIGHTS UP on a plainly furnished but immaculate living room of the Ponce De Leon Convalescent Home. On a small TV, President Reagan's inaugural speech is heard.

REINA, 60, who speaks with a Cuban accent and has a very flamboyant and dramatic flair, sits at a TV dinner table, in front of a plate of liver. He stares at it with a severe grimace.

Finally, he picks up a knife and fork and cuts into it. He lifts the piece of liver to his mouth. But his hands shake so much, that the liver falls off the fork and back onto the plate.

REINA  
(muttering)  
*Puñeta*

It takes him a few moments before he can regain his composure. Beginning again, and with great concentration he stabs the fork into the piece of liver loudly. Methodically, he raises it to his mouth and shoves it in...

The metallic taste causes his face to sour. His jaws clench tight. He tries to swallow but his gag reflex is too much and he spits the liver out with a fury.

Suddenly, he swipes the plate of liver off the table and it crashes loudly onto the floor.

Offstage we hear loud concerned voices.

A moment later, the HEAD NURSE enters. She is a blonde woman and speaks with a slight Floridian drawl.

HEAD NURSE  
(loud and fed up)  
Now what is all the fuss in here  
about?!

She looks around to see the mess on the floor. She turns an angry eye to Reina who ignores her presence.

HEAD NURSE  
 (shutting off the TV)  
 Explain yourself, Mr. Dominguez?

Reina doesn't respond.

HEAD NURSE  
 Don't make me ask again.

REINA  
 (with soft disgust)  
*Yo no quiero higado.*

HEAD NURSE  
 (folding her arms)  
 In Miami, we speak English, Mr.  
 Dominguez?

REINA  
 (loudly protesting)  
 I don't like liver. The taste of  
 blood reminds of that *cabrón*,  
 Castro!

HEAD NURSE  
 We serve you liver for a reason.

Reina gets up.

REINA  
*No lo quiero.* This food isn't fit  
 for a peasant.

He begins to walk off.

HEAD NURSE  
 Don't you turn your back on me!

REINA  
 (fighting)  
 I was not supposed to end here. *No  
 aqui!...*  
 (dreamy; dramatic)  
 It was supposed to end differently.  
*Gloriosamente.* In a villa, on the  
 coast in Ibiza. Or in a mansion in  
 Beverly Hills with a large swimming  
 pool filled with beautiful *cabana*  
 boys...

HEAD NURSE  
 (cold)  
 You done?

REINA  
 (dissing)  
 With you? **Sí!**

He begins to limp off.

HEAD NURSE  
 Where do you think you're hobbling  
 off to? I'm not finished with you,  
 Mr. Dominguez!

Reina ignores her.

HEAD NURSE  
 Mr. Dominguez?!

REINA  
 (stopping and turning  
 around)  
 First of all, *mamita*...  
 Please address me as, "Reina" or  
 "Mi Angel de las rosas". "Ms.  
 Dominguez" if you must!

HEAD NURSE  
 (final)  
Mister Dominguez!

REINA  
 And second of all, darling: I  
 don't hobble. I sashay.

HEAD NURSE  
 I swear, if I hear just one more  
 complaint from-

REINA  
 (dramatically indignant)  
 Oh, please! They have been  
 touching me with their eyes for  
 months. Ravaging me really. I  
 should be the one complaining!

HEAD NURSE  
 Stop molesting the male nurses!

REINA  
 Jesus, I'd have better luck trying  
 to teach a goat how to do the Conga  
 than for anyone to listen what I  
 have to-

HEAD NURSE

This is your last warning, you hear? The next time, your backside will be huggin' the pavement. We clear?

REINA

Ay, you are such a drama queen.

HEAD NURSE

Well, you finally got something right! I am the queen!  
(pointing a finger at him)  
The last time, hear?

REINA

(submissive)  
I'll be a a good girl.

NURSE DAVIES

(skeptical)  
Sugar, spice and everything nice, huh?

REINA

Don't forget, *fabulosa*.

TAMIKA (OFFSTAGE)

Mrs. Davies?! Mrs. Davies?!

NURSE DAVIES

(calling back)  
Yes! What is it?!

TAMIKA (OFFSTAGE)

Mrs. Davies?!

NURSE DAVIES

(calling back)  
I'm in the rec room!  
(to herself)  
I swear, that girl is more nervous than a Chihuahua.

TAMIKA enters.

TAMIKA

(relieved)  
Oh, there you are.

HEAD NURSE

Where have you been?

TAMIKA  
With Mrs. Wilkins.

HEAD NURSE  
And?

TAMIKA  
She won't eat. She hasn't eaten all day.

HEAD NURSE  
(sigh of exasperation)  
Fine. Just tell her-

TAMIKA  
Yes maam. I told her like you told me to, that St. Francis don't like a quitter, but she says she don't care what he thinks, on account of that she's not a Catholic no more.

HEAD NURSE  
Shoot, I swear that woman changes religions more times than I change my panties. Okay. I'll handle Mrs. Wilkins. In the meantime you can make yourself familiar with mister Dominguez.

The Head Nurse exits. Silence.

TAMIKA  
Hi, I'm-

REINA  
You're new here.

TAMIKA  
It shows that bad, huh?

Tamika cleans up the broken plate and liver.

TAMIKA  
Goodness. It's like a hurricane passed through here.

Beat.

REINA  
(sniffing at the air)  
The smell of this place...I don't know how you get used to it.

TAMIKA

It's not so terrible, really.

REINA

During the *revolución*. I smelled death. But in here, it smells like bread that is slowly becoming moldy...

TAMIKA

Huh? To me this place smells more like Pine-sol.

REINA

In here, *mami*...Death is turning me into a hustler. Hustling a man is one thing. But to hustle God?

(shaking his head)

*Coño*...Always trying to hustle God for another *jodido* second, another *jodido* minute, another *jodido* hour, another *jodido* day, *jodido* week, *jodido* month. Another...

(he exhales deeply)

But if a hustler is good? Really good, *tú sabes*? God will give him immortality...Do you believe that?

TAMIKA

No.

REINA

(playfully)

*Mierda*, neither do I. But every girl has got to have a dream.

TAMIKA

(amused)

Well I suppose so. I suppose so...

She goes to straighten up the rest of the room. Reina studies her.

REINA

Do you have an *esposo*?

TAMIKA

A what?

REINA

Are you married?

TAMIKA

Oh, yes. Yes, I am.

REINA

It's good to have a big strong man  
to hold you in his arms, no?

TAMIKA

(amused)

Can't argue with you there.

REINA

Is it a fairy tale marriage?

TAMIKA

Fairy tale?

REINA

Are you living happily ever after?

TAMIKA

(friendly)

Boy, you sure ask a lot of  
questions?

REINA

(proud)

I like to know who's taking care of  
me.

TAMIKA

Well, I guess that makes sense.

REINA

Sabes, I just realized that you  
never introduced yourself to me.

TAMIKA

I'm Tamika.

REINA

(easy sarcasm)

Tamika? Sounds like a dessert, no?  
Tapioca. Tamika. Tamika.  
Tapioca.

TAMIKA

I was named after my great  
grandmother.

REINA

And so do you have any little  
Tamika's or Tamiko's at home to  
suckle from your breasts?

TAMIKA  
 (embarrassed)  
 I'm sorry?

REINA  
 (looking her  
 over)  
*Sí, sí, sí.* You have good, big  
 hips. A *Cubana's* hips. Good hips  
 for spitting out the *niños*.

TAMIKA  
 (going back to cleaning)  
 Well, I don't have any.

REINA  
*Mi mama-*  
 (making the sign of the  
 cross)  
 -may that *gran puta* still be  
 burning in hell, told me that I  
 could never be a real woman, *nunca!*  
 Because, "A woman is only a woman,  
 when she knows what its like to  
 have a fetus punching around inside  
 her big, fat belly..."

TAMIKA  
 (trying to change the  
 subject)  
 So, so do you like it here?

REINA  
 (ignoring her)  
*Claro que no,* I could never bear  
 children, myself. For you see, my  
 womb?-

TAMIKA  
 (nervously ignoring him)  
 Because I think this is a very  
 nice place-

REINA  
 -Has turned into a tomb. Or is it  
 your womb that has turned into a  
 tomb?

TAMIKA  
 (shocked)  
 What did you say?

REINA

(unrelenting)

Or does your husband's hands turn to stone every time he tries to touch you?

TAMIKA

(bothered)

I don't believe that's any of your business.

REINA

(sadly shaking her head)

Oh, I know, *mija*. *Yo sé...yo sé,,* what happens to the woman when her husband no longer wants to make the *fuki-fuki* with her.

TAMIKA

(taken aback)

Excuse me?

REINA

Does she become a *tortillera*?  
A lesbian?

TAMIKA

You don't-You don't have no right to talk to me like this.

REINA

Does she find a new man? Or even better, does she become religious and fall in love with Jesus?  
Desiring only to wash men's feet...

TAMIKA

(upset)

Why are you saying this? Why?

REINA

Because isn't it obvious, *mija*?

(beat; dramatic)

I was one such woman!

Tamika and Reina stare at each other. Tears stream down Tamika's face. The Head Nurse re-enters.

HEAD NURSE

(oblivious)

Well, it's official: Mrs. Wilkins is now a Protestant.

(MORE)

HEAD NURSE (CONT'D)  
 (noticing Tamika)  
 What's wrong with you?

TAMIKA  
 (wiping away her  
 tears)  
 Oh, it's nothing.

HEAD NURSE  
 (turning angrily  
 to Reina)  
 You!

REINA  
 (innocently)  
 Who? Me?

HEAD NURSE  
 Yeah, I'm talking to you Chiquita  
 Banana.  
 (gestures to  
 Tamika)  
 He responsible for this?

TAMIKA  
 It's nothing.

HEAD NURSE  
 (glaring at Reina)  
 Nothing, huh?...  
 (to Tamika; angry)  
 Baggage?

TAMIKA  
 I'm sorry?

HEAD NURSE  
Baggage? Do you have any?  
 (clarifying)  
 Emotional problems, girl?

TAMIKA  
 (off-guard)  
 Oh no, ma'am.

HEAD NURSE  
 You sure now?

TAMIKA  
 Yes, ma'am.

HEAD NURSE  
 'Cause I ain't got no time to baby  
 sit any nurses now.

TAMIKA  
It won't happen again.

HEAD NURSE  
Good. Now follow me.

The Head Nurse leads Tamika offstage. Tamika glances back to see Reina staring at her.

**scene three**

Time: 1964

Place: Havana, Cuba

Reina, 30 years old, sits at a table. His face is bruised and bloodied. He wears an expensive red evening gown that is torn and dirtied. Note that the same actor will be portraying the role of the younger Reina.

A CUBAN OFFICER, early 50's, stands opposite of him. He wipes the sweat from his moustache with a handkerchief as he glares at Reina.

He leans over the table and slides a blank piece of paper and pen to him.

REINA

What are you expecting me to do with this?

OFFICER

Alleviate your guilt with it.

REINA

Of what guilt are you professing that I have?

OFFICER

Write down exactly where and who you have been associating yourself with. And the revolución will decide what crimes you are guilty of.

The officer steps to the side of Reina.

OFFICER

You have been charged with, "Public flaunting of your homosexual condition". How do you explain that?

REINA

I was just being myself?

Silence. The officer leans in close.

OFFICER

You're shivering.

REINA  
 (dramatically)  
 Oh you know, how a man in uniform  
 can have an affect on a woman?

OFFICER  
 I have studied many of you  
*maricónes* very well. Your vices?  
 Your immorality? I mean, in the  
 end, you are all imperialists.  
*Corruptores. Claro.* But it is you  
*travestidos* that intrigue me the  
 most. Your identity lost somewhere  
 between *chico* and *chica*...Ah,  
*pobracita*...

He slides his hand along Reina's cheek.

OFFICER  
 ...I would guess correctly, that  
 you are the, "taker"? *Así?*

REINA  
 (fanning himself)  
 That is not the language one should  
 use around a lady.

OFFICER  
 (backing off; amused)  
*Una mujer, are you?*

REINA  
*Claro.* I am just not at my best  
 right now.

The officer grins, he goes into a sack and pulls out a blonde  
 wig.

OFFICER  
 I believe this is what you meant,  
 no?

The officer laughs and tosses it to Reina.

OFFICER  
 What are you waiting for? Put it  
 on. Allow me to witness this  
*transformación?*

Reina smiles nervously.

REINA  
 Whatever you wish, *corazón*.

Reina turns his back to the audience as he adjusts the wig. Finished, he turns around.

OFFICER  
(studying)  
*Que linda?...* And as simple as that,  
you are a woman. *Maravillosa...*

The Officer steps to Reina.

REINA  
Call me... "Reina".

The Officer violently grabs the back of Reina's head and slams it down on the table holding him there. Still in his female persona, Reina, pleads with him.

REINA  
*Espérete, corazón!* There are other  
ways of doing this. There are  
other ways-

OFFICER  
(putting his finger across  
Reina's lips)  
Ssshhhhhhh!...

Beat; With his free hand the Officer unzips his pants.)

OFFICER  
Call me, *mi papito...*

Lights slowly to black.

**scene four**

We hear the sounds of a TV sitcom playing. DEREK, Tamika's husband, an African-American man, 50's, sits on the couch, his eyes glued to the TV which is represented by a simple wooden frame. He is the everyday man, numbed by an everyday work week.

TAMIKA (Offstage)  
(calling out)  
Hey baby?!

He belts out a laugh at the TV.

DEREK  
(calling off)  
Yeah, in here!

He lights up a weed pipe. Derek chuckles at the TV. She enters. They kiss each other.

DEREK  
So, how's the job?

TAMIKA  
Hard. Then again, what else was I expecting, right?

DEREK  
Well, I'm not saying we couldn't use the extra money, baby-

TAMIKA  
I'm not quitting.

DEREK  
Wasn't saying you should.

TAMIKA  
You inferred it.

DEREK  
(RE: "inferred")  
Guess I know I stepped in it when you start using the "big words".

TAMIKA  
Let's not start this evening off arguing.

DEREK  
We're not arguing.

TAMIKA  
 (avoiding)  
 Okay.

Tense moment. Derek goes back to watch TV. Tamika sits down on the couch and takes off her shoes.

TAMIKA  
 Geez am I beat...

DEREK  
 (beat; warming up)  
 Want me to rub your shoulders?

TAMIKA  
 It's my feet that's really killing me.

DEREK  
 (playfully declining)  
 I don't do feet. And I don't do windows.

TAMIKA  
 Please?

DEREK  
 (warmly)  
 Alright. Anything for my hardworking baby.

She leans back on the couch and he starts to massage her feet.

TAMIKA  
 (easy)  
 Ouch, not so hard.

DEREK  
 Sorry. It's been awhile.

(Rubbing.)

TAMIKA  
 A little more gentle.

DEREK  
 Alright, alright. I'm just gettin' warmed up.

TAMIKA  
 Get into the arches some more.

Derek massages her arches.

DEREK

(proud)

Now I got it. Bet you're feeling you're in heaven right about now, right?

TAMIKA

(bearing it)

Not what I'd call it.

DEREK

You kiddin? You used to melt like margarine when I'd rub your feet.

TAMIKA

Well it's-ouch!

DEREK

Just relax into it.

He tries again. It's not working. She pulls her feet away and sits up.

TAMIKA

Actually, I'm feeling much better.

DEREK

Come on, now? Let me have another shot?

TAMIKA

(gracious)

I'm fine. Thanks though.

DEREK

(indignant)

Alright.

He goes back to the TV, lighting up his weed.

DEREK

Oh hey?...got word that Sean and his woman are splittin' up.

TAMIKA

(stunned)

They're getting divorced?

DEREK

What's his woman's name again?

TAMIKA

(astonished)

...Lorraine.

DEREK  
Yeah, that's her.

DEREK  
(shaking his head)  
Moved to California. Never could  
understand why you both such was  
good friends, no how.

TAMIKA  
How you hear about it?

DEREK  
Eddie...I gotta say...she was one  
fine lookin', woman...Too fine  
lookin for his ass, anyway.

TAMIKA  
(softly)  
You thought she was beautiful?

DEREK  
Probably, got tired of all his  
Muslim speechifying. Mohammed this  
and Farrakhan that. No pork. No  
bourbon. No wonder she took it on  
the arches?

TAMIKA  
They were together for ten  
years....

DEREK  
You ever keep in touch with her?

TAMIKA  
(shaking her head)  
...No.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Ain't no wonder why she left him.  
Ain't that right baby?...

TAMIKA  
(staring off)  
No...Ain't no wonder at all...

**scene five**

Lights up on the convalescent home. Tamika tends to a sleeping INVALID in a wheelchair. Reina sits on the couch pretending to read a magazine.

TAMIKA

(to invalid)

Must be having real good dreams  
when you sleep so much eh, Mr.  
Porcher?

REINA

He can't hear you, *tu sabes?* You  
might as well be talking to a  
mummy.

TAMIKA

(to Reina)

I don't believe you've been invited  
into our conversation.

REINA

Fine! And just in case you were  
wondering...I'm not interested in  
being friends either.

TAMIKA

(to invalid)

Friends? Did you hear that Mr.  
Porcher? I don't think Mr.  
Dominguez even has any of those?

REINA

I have *muchos amigos*. *Muchos y  
muchos amigos!*

TAMIKA

(to invalid; rubbing it  
in)

I bet you have more friends than  
him? Don't you Mr. Porcher?

REINA

Honey, you'd have to go back to the  
time of the Pharaohs to find his  
last living *amigo*.

TAMIKA

You really dislike the other  
patients, don't you?

REINA

They have a word for them. It's called "ugly."

(wagging his finger)

And I no like the uglies, *mija*.  
No *senorita*. No *feas* for me.

TAMIKA

Everybody's 'fraid of bein' forgotten, Mr. Dominguez.

REINA

(very prideful)

I'll never be forgotten. *Nunca, nunca...*

TAMIKA

Unforgettable? That's what you are, huh?

REINA

*Famosa!* I used to be *muy famosa!*

TAMIKA

'Scuse me?

REINA

I was famous, darling.

TAMIKA

(skeptical)

Uh-huh.

She crosses the room.

REINA

What that primitive noise suppose to mean?

TAMIKA

(w/attitude)

"Uh-huh" means "Uh-huh".

Reina suddenly moans in pain. Tamika goes to attend him.

TAMIKA

Are you okay?

Reina shakes his head defiantly.

REINA

I'm fine.

TAMIKA  
Not from where I'm standing

REINA  
I said I'm fine!

Tamika notices Reina hasn't taken his medication that sits at the table.

TAMIKA  
I see you haven't been taking your meds?

REINA (CONT'D)  
You know what I miss most about not being sick? *Sueños...*

Tamika ignores him and attends to her patient.

REINA  
*Cubanos* are great dreamers. The trick is, no letting Castro find out what you dream about.  
(lost in his thoughts)  
My grandfather...Teofilo, the great *moreno* singer of *Guajira* music and the favorite son of *Changó* used to say, "it's our African blood chasing around in our heads that makes us dream so much."

TAMIKA  
And why's that?

REINA  
You never rest until you go back to the way it was.  
(beat)  
I don't dream so much no more.

TAMIKA  
Come to think of it...Neither do I...

Silence.

REINA  
About the other day?

TAMIKA  
I don't want to talk about it.

REINA

I'm sorry, Tamika. I no mean any of it!

TAMIKA

(curt)

I said forget it.

REINA

I can be such a ferocious kitty-cat sometimes. Let's make, how do you *gringos* say? A "fresh beginning?"

TAMIKA

(aside)

Fresh start?

(cold shoulder)

I don't think that's possible.

REINA

I can be a loyal friend. Please forgive me?

TAMIKA

I don't know if that's possible.

REINA

Of course you can, *mija*. Is that no what your church teaches?

TAMIKA

Shoot. I don't think even Jesus has enough Jesus in him to forgive what you said to me.

REINA

I promise I'll be the kindest friend you ever had...Cross my breasts and hope to die.

TAMIKA

Why would I want to be friends with you?

REINA

Us girls have to stick together.

TAMIKA

(dismissing)

We do, huh?

REINA

I'll even protect you from that mean nurse!

Silence. Tamika suddenly looks around and then leans into Reina as if confessing a secret.

TAMIKA  
She is kinda mean, don't you think?

REINA  
(crossing herself)  
Like the *el diablo* himself.

They both share a light moment.

TAMIKA  
(beat)  
Alright, I'll think about it.

Reina falls over herself in appreciation.

REINA  
Really?! Oh, *gracias, Corazón!*  
*Gracias!* You no regret it!

TAMIKA  
(charmed)  
I said I'll think about it, Reina!

A handsome MALE NURSE enters. Reina is instantly taken with the Male Nurse and never takes his eyes off him.

Tamika notices that Reina's eyes are drunk with lust.

TAMIKA  
What are you doing?

The Male Nurse pushes the other patient out of the room and exits. Reina watches after him.

REINA  
(beat)  
Abelando used to come into my aunt's bar in the evenings...so many hard muscles from working all those days in the fields. He would stare at her with those eyes. Those *ojos hermosos*...I was only eight years old but I could already see that she was the one responsible for the bulge that was happening in his pants...I would stand next to him with the smell of his African sweat...mixed with the dirt from the fields, his rum soaked breathe from his beautiful mouth...

TAMIKA

Lust is a sin.

REINA

But that's what makes it feel so good, *Corazón!*

TAMIKA

It goes against God, if you ask me?

REINA

(toying with her)

Tell me, Tamika?...Does my *maricón* ways bother you?

TAMIKA

I don't have a problem with you being gay. If that's what you're asking?

REINA

*Claro que, si!* What's not to like?

TAMIKA

We all make our choices in this life.

REINA

You think I'm going to hell don't you?

TAMIKA

It's not what I think that counts.

REINA

Ah...

(pointing upwards)

You meaning the big *jefe* up in the clouds?

TAMIKA

It's all in the scripture. Clear as daylight.

REINA

Ay! Sounds like your god has a big stick up his *culo*?!

TAMIKA

(shocked)

Excuse me?

REINA

I no mean in a good way, either!

TAMIKA  
Okay, this conversation is over.

REINA  
What I say?

TAMIKA  
You know exactly what!

REINA  
*Lo siento, mi amor.* I was just moving your funny bone.

TAMIKA  
Don't be fooling around about my Lord, you hear?

REINA  
Sí, sí, I hear, I hear. Tell you what? I'll make it up to you by sharing some gossip.

TAMIKA  
Not interested.

REINA  
Are you sure? It's very *caliente*.

TAMIKA  
It is, huh?

REINA  
Did you know that here is a celebrity gracing this mausoleum?

TAMIKA  
(intrigued)  
A celebrity? I knew Mr. Greene from room 15C was in the Lone Ranger once but I never knew-

REINA  
I was talking about **me!**

Sauntering across the stage

REINA  
Night after night, men threw lust and roses at my feet...I was Cuba's last famous drag queen!

Moving around the room like a seductress.

REINA (CONT'D)

...When I was on that stage?  
Dressed in my silk stockings that  
showed off my statuesque legs...A  
brassiere that cupped my ample  
breasts...

(tracing his finger down  
his thigh)

A dress slit down the side allowing  
for a peek at the black garter belt  
hugging my thigh...Ruby red  
lipstick that brought out the  
fullness of my lips. And finally,  
I wore a variety of wigs:  
Straight, jet black hair if they  
had a thirst for the erotic, far  
east. Curly, blonde if they were  
in the mood for something  
more...American.

(beat)

When I was on that stage, they all  
wanted me: Judges, doctors,  
millionaires and garbage men. The  
sane and the insane. Married men?  
Especially...All I had to do was  
open the door and they came  
stampeding in through like cattle.

(beat)

I turned Kings into Queens.  
And they begged me for it! They  
adored me for it!

Reina sits down exhausted. He wipes the sweat off his face.

REINA

What I miss most were the stares of  
men...Men, whom if you would prick,  
would bleed semen...

TAMIKA

(taken in)

Oh my...

REINA

(suddenly very inspired)

*Bueno!* Enough talking!

Walking excitedly around the room.

REINA

In case you want to bring the  
romance back into your marriage?  
Have some foreplay before the  
foreplay?

(MORE)

REINA (CONT'D)

Or even if you want another man to desire you? Lesson *numero uno*: Know how to move your *nalgas*.

TAMIKA

Beg your pardon?

REINA

Your *culo*! Your ass! *Coño*! Don't you no speak English?

Reina steps over to a radio and turns it on. He quickly dials through different channels, stopping at the sounds of salsa music.

REINA

*Sí*, that's the shit, baby.

Reina does a continuous dance move. He moves and shakes like a pro.

TAMIKA

(amazed)

Lord, what are you doing?

REINA

Living, baby. Living...Now your turn.

TAMIKA

No way, Jose. My body don't move like that.

REINA

(still moving)

Desire starts with the hips. *Mira*, it's always easy for a naturally beautiful woman to seduce a man. Why? Because beauty is for men without imagination. But?...*But* if you can make a man imagine?!... *Aye!* He will eat from a dog's bowl if you told him to. Now try.

TAMIKA

I don't want to have men eat from a dog's bowl!

REINA

(pulling her to him)

I said, try! Shake your peso maker!

Tamika takes a clumsy try at a dance move.

REINA  
Baby? This ain't the Hula-Hoop.

TAMIKA  
See, I told you. I just ain't-

REINA  
Put your *nalgas* into it. Like  
this...And then like that...

He dances, she follows, getting a bit better. Finally, she finally starts to get the hang of it.

REINA  
(clapping loudly)  
You got it, baby! *Fuerte! Fuerte!*

The salsa music's rhythm starts to hit stride!

TAMIKA  
I'm doing it!

They keep dancing faster and faster as the music tempo is really cooking. Suddenly, Reina is hit with a coughing attack. She eases him back onto the couch and shuts off the radio.

TAMIKA  
Enough for you, *Reina* of the  
*rhumba*.

REINA  
(resisting)  
*Coño*. I'm going to bring out the  
inner diva in you, even if it kills  
me.

He coughs some more.

TAMIKA  
Sit, *Reina*.

Reina lets Tamika help him to a chair.

REINA  
No worry. A little morphine and  
I'll be as good as a Spring  
chicken.

TAMIKA  
You outta your mind.

REINA

Or maybe some *cocaína*. But only just a little.

TAMIKA

-And your senses.

REINA

Dios mío. What I wouldn't do for some rum. Good *Cubano* rum...

TAMIKA

(spirit soaring)  
God, that was great! It made me feel so...so-

REINA

Desirable?

HEAD NURSE (OFFSTAGE)

Tamika?! Tamika?!

TAMIKA

(anxious)  
Oh, shoot, it's my boss.

HEAD NURSE (OFFSTAGE)

Tamika?!

TAMIKA

And it sounds like she's in gangsta mode. We'll talk later.

Tamika rushes off stage in a panic.

**scene six**

The lights come up on Tamika's living room. Derek sleeps soundly on the couch as the TV blares loudly.

Tamika enters wearing a bathrobe and carrying a portable cassette player. She sets it down and turns off the TV.

TAMIKA  
(gently shaking Derek)  
Baby? Baby?

DEREK  
(groggy)  
Damn. What time is it?

TAMIKA  
Nine-thirty.

DEREK  
Tsk. Then what you wakin me up  
for, baby?

He grabs the remote and turns the TV back on.

TAMIKA  
(shyly)  
I thought...maybe you might be more  
comfortable, you know...in bed?

DEREK  
Shoot, Tamika-

Tamika opens her robe and awkwardly lets it drop to the floor, revealing a sexy negligee.

DEREK  
(beat)  
Ah, I'm too tired for that, baby.  
I'm sorry. It's been a helluva  
day...

He fires up his pipe.

DEREK  
A helluva day...

She hits play on the portable cassette player and the song, "*Besame Mucho*" starts playing.

DEREK  
(RE: music)  
What in the hell is that?

TAMIKA  
(swaying)  
Mood music.

DEREK  
Why you movin around funny like  
that?

TAMIKA  
(sensually)  
Like what, baby?

DEREK  
You gonna get sea sick rocking side  
to side like that.

She seductively waves him over with her index finger.

TAMIKA  
Come here, big boy.

Derek steps over to the cassette player and shuts it off.

TAMIKA  
(hurt)  
What you do that for?

He plops back onto the couch.

DEREK  
Baby, I told you before, I'm tired.  
I worked three twelve hour days in  
a row.

TAMIKA  
I've worked four...It's just that's  
it been awhile since, since we  
shared company?

DEREK  
(exhaling)  
Alright, baby. I'm sorry. You're  
right. You're right.  
(he kisses her)  
I'll be up to bed in a few minutes.

He turns on the TV.

TAMIKA  
(noticing his lack of  
enthusiasm)  
Okay, baby.

She picks up her robe and begins to walk away. She stops and turns to see Derek watching TV. Suddenly angered, she steps to him, grabs the remote and turns off the TV.

DEREK  
What you do that for?

TAMIKA  
I wanna talk.

DEREK  
I was watching TV.

TAMIKA  
I want to talk about James.

Surprised, Derek remains quiet.

DEREK  
You what?

TAMIKA  
You married me.

DEREK  
Yes, I married you. We got  
married.

TAMIKA  
Because it was the right thing to  
do.

DEREK  
That's right.

TAMIKA  
Because it was the responsible  
thing to do.

DEREK  
Yes, we did the responsible  
thing...

TAMIKA  
Because you loved me?

DEREK  
We did what good Christian people  
should do.

TAMIKA  
We loved each other.

He gets up and walks away.

DEREK  
Why you rehashing all this now?

TAMIKA  
'Cause sometimes life needs to be rehashed.

DEREK  
(avoiding)  
We already talked this out a long time ago.

TAMIKA  
I need to be reminded.

DEREK  
It ain't nobody's fault what happened.

TAMIKA  
Remember what you said after I had the hysterectomy?

Derek doesn't respond.

TAMIKA  
You said, "I guess we ain't very lucky."

DEREK  
I also told you it don't matter to me.

TAMIKA  
Tell me that again, Derek?

DEREK  
What's the point of asking these questions, anyhow?!

TAMIKA  
I haveta know.

DEREK  
Now?! Now you gotta an itch to know?

TAMIKA

I gotta hear it from you that you  
woulda married me, pregnant or not?

DEREK

All this Monday morning  
quarterbacking!

TAMIKA

I can't-I can't keep going through  
this routine.

DEREK

What routine?

TAMIKA

This. This routine.

DEREK

We been doing this for years now.  
After this long it ain't a routine.  
It's life.

TAMIKA

Things need to change.

DEREK

Or what?

Tamika doesn't answer.

DEREK

Or what, Tamika?...Let's drop this  
all before we say some unfortunate  
things.

TAMIKA

I wanna talk this out.

DEREK

You wanna hear me tell you how much  
better our life mighta been if we  
got divorced at that time?

TAMIKA

No.

DEREK

How much the both of us regret not  
having the guts to start over then?  
You wanna talk about all that now?  
After all that time been passed by?

TAMIKA

No.

DEREK

What chance we got starting over  
out there now, huh?! Me, with my  
pot belly and hair falling out?

TAMIKA

I want to hear you tell me that you  
love me.

He steps to her and takes her in his arms.

DEREK

(tenderly)

I love you...We'll just keep doing  
what we been doing, baby. No use  
thinkin, "Coulda, woulda, shoulda."  
Look, we'll try harder in making it  
work.

She nods and holds him tight.

DEREK

And yeah, so you know? Know again?  
...I would have married you,  
Tamika. Pregnant or not.  
Understood?

He kisses her.

**scene seven**

Time: 1965; a year after the last flashback.

Place: Havana, Cuba

We hear the sounds of a packed bar: Music beneath people laughing and having a good time. Reina, dressed in a men's suit, stands with a drink in his hand. Mirabella, aka Pablito, dressed fashionably in men's clothes enters. He looks around and sees Reina.

MIRABELLA

Jesus. I'm so sorry I'm late,  
Reina.

REINA

You're just lucky I have the  
patience of a saint.

MIRABELLA

(overly-apologetic)  
Yo sé, yo sé...I'm impossible.

They kiss each other on the cheek.

MIRABELLA

Oh, please don't be cross with me.  
So? *¿Qué bola?*

REINA

Did you see that army of "Carmens"  
when you walked into the club?

MIRABELLA

Ay, and such ugly "Miranda"  
impersonators too. They look like  
a pack of *burros* with fruit on  
their heads.

REINA

Relax, *corazón*. Those *putas* are  
beneath you.

MIRABELLA

I can't help it. They are all so  
jealous of you!

REINA

Let those peasants have their dirt. Last night, after my show, Gabriela started snapping at me. Could you believe it?

MIRABELLA

Coño, is that *puta* still not over it?

REINA

Says I stole her *gringo* cowboy. "My own little John Wayne", she calls him.

MIRABELLA

(agreeing)

Mmmm-mmm.

REINA

To tell you the truth I can't get rid of him. But, that's a *gringo* for you: Always wanting to conquer someone or something.

MIRABELLA

Mmmm-mmm.

(looking offstage)

Oh. Speaking of which, here comes Gabriela now...

(They both look offstage as if addressing Gabriela.)

REINA

(to Gabriela; indignant)

What's that you barking out of your snout?...Well, honey? Maybe if you stopped prancing around in a mini-skirt you might be able to keep a man...*Si*, I see those legs! Unfortunately they are more suited to holding up a Steinway piano than enticing *un hombre*!

MIRABELLA

Mmmm-mmm. Tell it, *chica*!

REINA

(to Gabriela)

*Ahora*, keep walking and take your gorilla trainer with you.

MIRABELLA

(laughing)

That tongue of yours, *chica*...So do you mind telling me why you insisted we come here dressed like this?

REINA

I have to tell you something.

MIRABELLA

I mean, it feels so unnatural dressing as a man. It's so, so...

REINA

Masculine?

MIRABELLA

(correcting)

Boring. Like being at a costume ball without a costume.

REINA

Get used to it.

(looking him over)

Though I have to say I love how that *guayabera* looks on you.

MIRABELLA

Get used to it? Used to what?

(suddenly switching to  
*guayabera*)

Do you really love it? I was going for something *Mexicana*. *Dime*, does it bring out my inner Anthony Quinn?

REINA

(with dread)

The *Marica* sisters got picked up last night outside Joey Guapa's.

MIRABELLA

(dismissing)

Well, those *chicas* never met a *pinga* they didn't want to stroke.

REINA

I mean, by the *policia*.

MIRABELLA

*Claro que sí!* The *policía* pretend to arrest them and then drive them to the countryside where the *Marica* sisters let them have their way with them. It's a game they been playing for years now. You know that?

REINA

(serious)

It wasn't that kind of arrest...

Reina steps away.

MIRABELLA

(concerned)

*Cariño?*...What's the matter?

REINA

This is just the beginning.

MIRABELLA

What is?

REINA

Soon it will be a bad time to be a *maricón*.

MIRABELLA

How can you say that? I mean, look around, Reina.

REINA

I'm talking about persecution.

Mirabella looks at Reina very seriously for a long moment.

MIRABELLA

(laughing it off)

Oh, *por favor*...

REINA

Will you listen to me?

MIRABELLA

Who is going to do this, tell me that?

REINA

The party.

MIRABELLA

(getting upset)

¿Quién? Fidel would never allow such a thing. *La revolución* would never allow such a thing. *Nunca*. Besides, I hear from the other *chicas*, that his brother, Raul, is big *ganso* himself.

Reina grabs Mirabella.

REINA

(lowering his voice)

Who do you think is behind it, *estúpida*?

Beat. Mirabella becomes very nervous.

MIRABELLA

You shouldn't say such things...

REINA

What if it is true?

MIRABELLA

(glancing around)

Ssssh. That's treason to say such *mierda*. To even think it will get you shot.

REINA

I know this to be happening.

MIRABELLA

From who? Forget it I don't want to know.

REINA

An admirer. Judge Jerez...Have I ever misled you?

MIRABELLA

No.

REINA

Have I not taught you everything?

MIRABELLA

Yes, I have learned from a maestro.

REINA

*Cuidate*. Things are changing for the worse.

MIRABELLA

What are we going to do?

REINA

For now, we keep a low profile.

MIRABELLA

(indignant)

Low profile? Me? Hmmm! *Chica*, that's like asking Marilyn Monroe to stop looking so *fabulosa*.

REINA

(grabbing Mirabella)

You have to trust me on this!

MIRABELLA

You're scaring me, Reina.

REINA

Do you trust me?

MIRABELLA

*Claro*. You know I do...

REINA

Don't worry. I'll keep us safe.

MIRABELLA

I love you, Reina.

REINA

I love you too. *Con todo de mi corazón...*

Lights to black.

**scene eight**

Spotlight up on the Cuban Showgirl. Dressed in long flowing gown, she looks out to the audience.

The Cuban love ballad, "Toda Una Vida", ("A Lifetime"), sung by Omara Portuondo comes up loudly. The Cuban Showgirl lipsyncs with dramatic flair.

CUBAN SHOWGIRL

oda una vida,  
 Me estaría contigo  
 No me importa en que forma  
 Ni como, ni donde, pero junto a ti.  
 Toda una vida,  
 Te estaría mimando  
 Te estaría cuidando como cuido mi  
 vida que la vivo por ti.  
 No me cansaría de decirte siempre,  
 pero siempre, siempre, que eres en  
 mi vida ansiedad  
 angustia y desesperación.  
 Toda una vida,  
 Me estaría contigo  
 No me importa en que forma  
 Ni como, ni donde, pero junto a ti.  
 No me cansaría de decirte siempre,  
 pero siempre, siempre, que eres en  
 mi vida ansiedad  
 angustia y desesperación.  
 Toda una vida,  
 Me estaría contigo.  
 No me importa en que forma  
 Ni como, ni donde, pero junto a ti.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

"A lifetime,  
 I would be with you  
 I do not care in what way  
 or how, or where, but with you.  
 A lifetime,  
 I would be spoiling you I would  
 be taking care of you as I care for  
 my life that I live for you.  
 I wouldn't get tired of telling you  
 always, but always, always, that  
 you are in my life anxiety  
 anguish and despair.

(MORE)

## CUBAN SHOWGIRL (CONT'D)

A lifetime,  
I would be with you  
I don't care in what way  
Neither as, nor where, but with  
you."

Spotlight to black

**scene nine**

Reina sits in a bathtub as Tamika gives him a sponge bath.

TAMIKA  
So, who's Mirabella?

REINA  
Where you hear that name?

TAMIKA  
You repeated that name over and over in your sleep.

REINA  
I no remember.

TAMIKA  
I figure maybe it was town where you were from?

REINA  
I no remember.

TAMIKA  
Oh...So how's the water? Not too *caliente*?

REINA  
(suddenly cheerful)  
If a man was bathing me it would be just right.

TAMIKA  
I guess I'm going to have to do.

REINA  
The men nurses are scared of me. Like I am contagious.

TAMIKA  
I suppose you've had sex with lots of men, huh?

REINA  
(worried)  
My doctor has been asking me a lot of questions about my sex life.

TAMIKA

(comforting)

You relax now. Soon enough, you'll be as right as rain.

REINA

*¿Tú sabes? Mi papa* was a great lover of women. I get that power from him.

TAMIKA

He was real womanizer huh?

REINA

*Sí.* That until he gave mama syphilis. *¡Carajo!* You should seen her chase him through the streets with her machete.

TAMIKA

For real?!

REINA

He suffered from diabetes so his feet were always swollen. He didn't make it very far before he tripped over himself, fell into the street and got run over by a bus.

TAMIKA

(shaking her head sadly)

Lord what a shame.

REINA

...*mama* never married again.

TAMIKA

She still loved him, huh?

REINA

(shaking his head)

She got too fat. But men still wanted her...

TAMIKA

So then how come she never re-married?

REINA

In our *barrio*, most men were poor. And every *hombre* knew that they could not afford to support this woman with the insatiable appetite of a goat.

(MORE)

REINA (CONT'D)

(beat)

I think that's why she ate so much.  
So, the men would finally let her  
be a widow...

TAMIKA

(shaking her head sadly)

That's so romantic. Still loving  
your daddy after all that.

REINA

She was born from the tears of  
*Yemayá*. Cursed from the moment she  
was pulled from the womb.

TAMIKA

You were very close.

REINA

Until I was nine when *mama* caught  
me wearing women's clothes. She  
got so scared that I was turning  
into a *maricón* that she took me to  
a priest, praying that the Holy  
Ghost would chase the gay out of  
me.

TAMIKA

Well, we know how that worked out.

REINA

The priests could no understand how  
Jesus could walk on water but can  
no make a gay man straight? *Mama*  
finally get so desperate, she takes  
me to a priestess of *la Ocha* and  
gives me this potion to drink  
called, "Gay be gone."

TAMIKA

No go, huh?

REINA

*Chica!* It made me even more gay!

They share a moment in laughter.

REINA (CONT'D)

Had it, *mama* take me to see a  
*prostituta* with these large worn-  
down *tetas!* But I jump out of the  
window and run for my life. My  
*pinga* swinging in the wind...

TAMIKA

(amused)

You are scandalous, Reina!

REINA

And you? What scandalous things  
you have to tell me?

TAMIKA

(giggling)

Me?! I've never been the type of  
girl that men wanted to do  
scandalous things with.

REINA

*Morena*, please! They must have!

TAMIKA

(shaking her head)

Momma'd tell me, "Lord knows  
Tamika, you got plenty of inner  
beauty, little girl. But it's a  
darn shame none of that ever showed  
up on the outside. Darn shame."

REINA

Well, fuck her.

TAMIKA

(besides herself)

Reina?! That's my mother!

REINA

Then fuck her even more!  
You proved her wrong. You have a  
man, *si*?

TAMIKA

Yes, Derek. We met in the most  
romantic of ways.

REINA

Tell me?

TAMIKA

It was at Friday night bingo at my  
church.

REINA

(rolling his eyes)

You one *chica loca*, allright!

TAMIKA

You shush, now!

(going back to that old  
feeling)

I'm looking over my Bingo card and  
I glance up and see this man is  
giving me the eye. He's got a mushy  
nose and crooked hairline but no  
question about it: He's shooting  
me a smile. At the end of the night  
he walks up to me and asks if I  
want to grab some coffee and maybe  
some pie?

REINA

(sarcastic)

You're kidding?

TAMIKA

(nostalgic)

He was a real go getter...Two  
months later we were married.

REINA

He knock you up, eh?

TAMIKA

(blushing)

What?

REINA

You Jezebel!

TAMIKA

He was so charming, I couldn't  
resist.

REINA

And how old your baby now?

TAMIKA

What? He's not with us.

REINA

I no understand?...

Silence.

REINA (CONT'D)

(realizing)

Oh...

TAMIKA

God's taking good care of him, I'm sure.

REINA

And you never had another?

Tamika doesn't respond.

REINA (CONT'D)

What kind of *hombre* is that man of yours that he no give you many new babies?

TAMIKA

It wasn't his fault, Reina.

Silence.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Besides, who wants to have a child when the Ruskies could nuke us to smithereens any day now, right?...

Reina takes her hand and affectionately kisses it.

REINA

(beat)

Ay...What heartbroken women are we, eh *corazón*?

**Lights slowly to back**

**scene ten**

Time: 1965; flashback

Place : Havana, Cuba

Spotlight up on black stage. We hear the sounds of hooting and hollering. Long, ear piercing whistling are combined with taunts of, "*Oye, maricón!/Oye, faggot. Suck my pinga!*"

A moment after, Reina falls into the spotlight as if he was violently thrown. He struggles to one knee. His face bruised and dress stained with blood and in tatters. The unseen voices become louder and more violent.

Suddenly, Reina gets up defiantly and confronts the unseen voices.

REINA

(calling out violently)

You think you can destroy me! You  
can't! That's right! You hear me,  
*putos?!...Come here and I'll show*  
what a *maricón* I can really be !

Reina takes a wild swing at the voices but spins around and falls to the floor. We hear wild laughter and ear piercing whistles!

Spotlight on D.S.R. The same revolutionary man we saw in the opening scene stands staring at Reina, who lies motionless on the floor. He calls out to Reina. His voice is sweet and compassionate almost singing to him.

CHE

Reiiiiinaaaaaa?!  
Reinnnnnaaaaaaaaaa?!  
Reiiiiiiiiinnnaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

Reina doesn't move. Spotlight slowly to black.

**End of Act One**

**Act Two**

**scene one**

Spotlight up on Cuban Showgirl. She looks out to the audience.

The Cuban song, "Cuidado", ("Careful"), by Blanca Rosa Gil comes up loudly.

The Cuban Showgirl lipsynchs vivaciously to the audience.

CUBAN SHOWGIRL

*Cuidado, mucho cuidado  
que estas tomando  
por un rumbo equivocado  
cuidado, con tus mentiras  
que yo las puedo adivinar  
cuando me miras.  
Cuidado, mucho cuidado  
que estoy de vuelta  
cuando tu ni has comensado  
cuidado, no estoy tan ciego  
para dejarte continuar con este  
juego.  
Cuidado, cuando me tengas que dejar  
a un lado, piensa que el mundo  
seguira  
girando y alguna vez acabaras  
llorando  
Cuidado, porque a tu vida me  
tendras  
ligado, porque en tu mente yo  
estare  
presente porque al volver  
inclinaras  
la frente.*

(ENGLISH TRANSLATION):

Be careful, very careful  
that you are taking  
a wrong direction  
with your lies  
that I can guess  
when you look at me.  
Be careful, very careful  
that I am back  
when you have not even  
taken care, I am not so blind  
to let you continue with this game.  
Be careful,

(MORE)

CUBAN SHOWGIRL (CONT'D)  
when you have to leave me aside,  
think that the world will continue  
to spin and you will end up crying

Be careful,  
because you will be  
linked to your life,  
because in your mind I will be  
present because when you come back  
you will bow  
your forehead.

**scene two**

Derek lights a candle at a carefully set dinner table, giving it a romantic air. He checks it making sure he's crossed all his "t's" and dotted his "i's". Tamika walks in holding a bag.

TAMIKA  
(surprised)  
What's all this?

DEREK  
It's date night. Or did you think I'd forget?

TAMIKA  
I thought you'd forget.

DEREK  
Well I didn't. Your chair awaits you *ma cheri*.

TAMIKA  
(taken)  
My, isn't this so unexpected?

DEREK  
Very *enchanté*, wouldn't you say?

He kisses her sweetly on the lips. Tamika is enamored by it.

TAMIKA  
Yes, it's very *en-cha-n-té*.

DEREK  
Oh, and I got this...

He pulls out a bottle of champagne from bucket of ice.

TAMIKA  
Bubbly!

DEREK  
And it's pink.

TAMIKA  
Oooh. Well what you waiting for baby? Open it up.

The bottle opens with a loud pop and the cork goes flying! He pours two glasses.

DEREK  
What should we toast to?

TAMIKA  
(thinking)  
"The right here and now!"

DEREK  
(clueless but  
enthusiastic)  
Alright. To what you just said.

They clink their glasses and take a sip. She leans over to him and gives him a soft kiss on the lips.

TAMIKA  
I love this. Thank you.

DEREK  
Well, if you love this, you gonna love what's gonna happen later even more.

TAMIKA  
(blushing)  
Ooh, go on...I do like the sound of that?

DEREK  
(all charm)  
Oh, do you now?...

They both giggle like school children.

DEREK  
Shall we take a seat?

TAMIKA  
(sitting down)  
What are we having for dinner?

DEREK  
Your favorite.

TAMIKA  
Beef stroganoff?

DEREK  
Close. Momma's meatloaf.

TAMIKA  
Smells wonderful.

DEREK  
Baby, you notice anything different about me?

TAMIKA

(beat)  
Like what?

DEREK

Like what? Like it's been a week since I smoked any weed.

TAMIKA

(impressed)  
A week? That's amazing, but I never asked you to-

DEREK

Didn't have to. Figured that out on my own. Figured it would make you happy. Figured it would be good for both of us...

TAMIKA

Thank you. That is very thoughtful.

Silence.

DEREK

It's been a part of what I been realizing lately.

TAMIKA

Oh? Part of what?

DEREK

Part about what's happened to me. What's happened to me since the baby.

TAMIKA

I'm sorry for bringing that up last week.

DEREK

(toucher hand tenderly)  
Please let me finish...  
He was supposed to be our son. We spent months fixing up the apartment, getting ready for him.

...Those little tiny blue and white Adidas sneakers. Dreamin' about what it would be like playing ball with him?

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

Watchin' him get ready for the prom? College? All that feel good shit that happens to a parent. That happens to a parent that has been blessed...Then one day it's over. It's not going to happen. He ain't even lived one day except in your heart and mind...

(beat)

The thing is, Tamika...Our baby may have been born dead but you are still alive...How did I forget that?...I'm ashamed about that, and I want you to know that from here on out, I'm gonna be there for you. The good Lord only knows that I'm a lotta years late speaking my heart to you. But, but if you could ever forgive me?...

Moved, Tamika smiles. She leans into him and kisses him tenderly.

TAMIKA

I just did...

Lights slowly to black as they stare tearfully into each others eyes.

**scene three**

We hear the sound of President Reagan giving a press interview coming from the TV. Reina sits in a wheelchair, sleeping soundly. His appearance reflecting his rapidly deteriorating health. Tamika enters with a tray of medication and a glass of water. She notices a shoe box of photos lying next to him. She picks up a photo and examines it.

Reina wakes and sees Tamika.

TAMIKA

So these girls in the photo with  
you are all really fellas?

REINA

*Sí*, all of them. Except for  
Suzanna. She was half-man.

TAMIKA

Where are all your friends now?

Silence.

REINA

(switching subjects  
cheerfully)  
And you? You have many *amigas*  
here?

TAMIKA

I used to have a best friend.

REINA

Not no more?

TAMIKA

She got divorced...

REINA

(sensing Reina is  
bothered)  
What is it?

TAMIKA

I just, been wondering...how that  
happens to a marriage?...

Silence on that thought.

REINA  
 Maybe your friend is happier this way?

TAMIKA  
 Yeah maybe...

(She hands him a series of pills which he dutifully swallows.)

REINA  
 (disgusted)  
 Pills. Pills, pills *y aun mas* pills.

TAMIKA  
 It's good for you. Except for maybe a hallucination here and there.

REINA  
*Rojo...* I always look *muy fabulosa* in red.

TAMIKA  
 I bet you were stunning.

REINA  
 I wore it for him, *sabes?* It was his favorite color...

TAMIKA  
 Who?

REINA  
 I was just a young show girl in Mexico City. Just beginning to spread my wings.

TAMIKA  
 What were you doing there?

REINA  
 I was born in Mexico. So there I was...peacocking down the sidewalk, looking *fabulosa* in my summer dress and red Ferragamo heels. Suddenly I see him! Standing outside a cafe, looking bored as he was talking to a couple of beautiful girls. *Coño!* His face! Dark eyebrows. Black hair combed to the side. And his eyes. *Coño...* He looked over and stared at me.

(MORE)

REINA (CONT'D)

I stepped to him...my hips swaying  
from side to side.

TAMIKA

Go get him, Reina.

REINA

I stepped in between the two girls  
and told him the club where I was  
headlining, "a very special kind of  
show." He smiled at me ever so  
inquisitively and ask, "How  
special?"... "So special...", I  
say..."That it would make you never  
want to go back to the way you  
were..."

TAMIKA

(waiting)

And then what?

REINA

That was it. I walked away.

TAMIKA

You walked away?!

REINA

I always leave them wanting more.  
...After my show, I was having a  
glass of rum, and all of a sudden,  
I hear a man's voice whisper in my  
ear, "*convencerme de que me quede,  
mi amor*"...Convince me to stay, my  
love" I turn around and see *mi  
amor. Mi Ernesto*...  
He had this way of looking at me  
after we make love. Like the way a  
writer looks at a piece of paper  
when he's in the middle writing  
something beautiful.

TAMIKA

Sounds dreamy.

REINA

He was **Che Guevara!**

TAMIKA

Che? You mean, that guy with the  
beret and long black beard?

REINA

The very same one.

TAMIKA

How long were you lovers for?

REINA

A few days.

TAMIKA

A few days? That's it?

REINA

I watch from my balcony, with tears in my eyes, as he walks out of my life. I tried to forget him but I could not. So, I get on a ship to Cuba...

Silence.

TAMIKA

(impatient)

And what happened when he found you?

REINA

(beat; changing subjects)

*Y tu?* What love you have in your past?

TAMIKA

Me?

REINA

Love so *fuerte* that you chase it to the ends of the world?

TAMIKA

I told you before, I wasn't-

REINA

(finishing her thought)

-that kind of *chica*, I know. But I no buy it.

TAMIKA

It was so foolish...

REINA

Oh, now you definitely have to tell me!

TAMIKA

Just drop it.

REINA

It's good to remember what it was  
like to feel such joy.

Reina lovingly touches her hand.

REINA (CONT'D)

*Entiéndeme?*

TAMIKA

(beat)

We'd used to stay up late in bed.  
Dreaming about going away  
together...to California...we even  
traced our fingers down a map to  
this little town...Solana Beach...

REINA

Must be very special *hombre* to make  
you dream so good?

She laughs to herself in astonishment.

REINA (CONT'D)

What? Tell me...

TAMIKA

(beat)

When we was living in  
Topeka...Derek and me met another  
couple while bowling.

REINA

(disappointed)

I ask is for a love story and you  
talk to me about bowling?!

TAMIKA

(getting up)

You're right. It'll probably bore  
you.

REINA

Okay, okay! *Coño!* But this story  
better end with you touching more  
than a bowling bowl!

TAMIKA

You want me to tell this story or  
not?

Reina relents.

TAMIKA

(sitting back down)

Sean and Lorraine. They were really nice...We all became close ...One night I was at the store shopping for Derek's supper and who do I run into but Lorraine?...Well, we got around to talking...and then talking some more over drinks...it was fun. To be seen...You know what I mean?...We were walking together to our cars and I started to feel something?...And suddenly the strangest thing happened. She kisses me on my mouth...

REINA

Coño! You are filled with surprises aren't you, girl?!

TAMIKA

We made love that night. I never done that with a woman before...

REINA

How wonderful!

TAMIKA

As you could see, it didn't last.

REINA

Why not?

TAMIKA

We had this little joke that someday we would leave our husbands and be together. Could you believe that?

REINA

Sounds like a beautiful joke.

TAMIKA

...that's all it was.

REINA

What happened?

TAMIKA

It just all faded away.

REINA

You left her?

Silence.

REINA  
You loved her.

TAMIKA  
It was a sin for me to be with a woman.

REINA  
*Pobracita.* You were ashamed.

TAMIKA  
It was misguided. I was misguided.

REINA  
You meet the greatest love of your life and you walk away?

TAMIKA  
I was a married woman. I **am** a married-

REINA  
*Si!* You are married to the happiness of your husband over your own.

REINA  
You ran away from her because you felt ashamed.

TAMIKA  
(ignoring)  
With Derek, I have a history. A friendship. Fifteen years and Derek and me got-

REINA  
-Familiarity?

TAMIKA  
Intimacy. Now maybe it's an intimacy that you can't understand?

Reina takes a moment and shrugs it off.

REINA  
Sounds boring.

TAMIKA

Boring? Look what your life has gotten you? Nobody ever walks through those doors to visit you!

REINA

But no will ever accuse of me of ever being an imposter! Unlike a certain *lesbiana morena* I no name...

TAMIKA

Don't call me that.

REINA

(taunting)  
What? A lesbian?

TAMIKA

Yes, that. Because it isn't true!

REINA

Only gay for Lorraine are we?

TAMIKA

(getting up)  
I should have damn known better than to tell you about it.

Tamika's pager goes off again. She gets up.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

REINA

You can bet your *culo* that this conversation is no over!

TAMIKA

(final)  
Yes, it is! And if you ever dare throw that in my face I'll never speak to you again! We clear?!

Tamika shoots him a look before indignantly exiting the room.

REINA

(beat; thoughtfully to himself)  
Intimacy...

Reina watches what plays out next as another spotlight comes up on Derek sitting on the couch in front of the TV.

Tamika enters a moment later holding a bowl of popcorn.

TAMIKA  
Hey, baby?

Derek doesn't hear her. He is zoned out, watching TV.

TAMIKA  
You remember that patient I was  
telling you about? The man? Or  
should I say woman? Well, however  
you wanna describe her?

He ignores her and laughs at the TV.

TAMIKA  
(shyly)  
...Anyway, she was...So, she was  
telling me this story about-

DEREK  
Baby, can it wait until the  
commercial break?

TAMIKA  
(trying to hide her hurt)  
What?...oh sure...I'll just sit  
right...here...

She sits down next to him. He laughs out loud to the TV.  
Seemingly clueless to her existence.

Long silence. Tamika stares out. A look of depression fills  
her face.

DEREK  
(eyes on the TV)  
Oh hey?

TAMIKA  
(suddenly attentive)  
Yes, baby?

DEREK  
...Pass me the popcorn, will ya?

The smile drops from her face...She hands him the bowl and he  
takes it without looking at her.

Lights slowly fade to black as Tamika silently stares out  
from her despair.

Derek lights his pipe and takes a deep hit...

**scene four**

Reina sits on the couch, listening to some Cuban music coming from the radio. Appearing medicated, he coughs loudly from time to time. His health is degrading rapidly. CHE GUEVARA enters. He is attired in green military fatigues, beret and legendary beard.

CHE

(re: music)

You were always a sucker for Beny More. Me, I always liked Beny's *musica*. But not Fidel...He thought he was a counter-revolutionary. Then again Fidel thought everyone was a fucking counter-revolutionary...

REINA

Or a faggot?

CHE

(amused)

*Si*. "A counter-revolutionary, cock-sucking faggot."

REINA

You been *muerto* for so long...

CHE

Ah what is time when you're a fucking ghost, eh?

REINA

What is heaven like?

CHE

*No sé*. I refuse to go.

REINA

Even in death you still a revolutionary, eh *mi vida*?

CHE

I like it here in purgatory. Gives me lots of time to haunt Fidel in his dreams.

(beat)

*Es jodido*. *Es jodido* what he did to my beloved Cuba.

Pained, Che touches his stomach.

REINA

You okay?

CHE

*Sí, sí* I'm fine. When you're dead, your regrets like to stab you in the guts.

REINA

Regrets? What regrets could you possibly have?

CHE

Now you sound like one of those sheep who never knew me at all.

REINA

I know you best.

CHE

I was different then.

REINA

Can't have changed that much. Eh, *cariño*?

CHE

And your regrets?

REINA

(firm)  
Me? No. *Nada!*

CHE

*Es importante* to alleviate one's *pecados*.

REINA

Sins?! You never had no sins! They say you were responsible for the labor camps but I never believe them. No, *mi Ernesto*, I say!

CHE

Tsk, tsk, tsk. *Pobracita*. Don't you think it's time you start preparing?

REINA

Preparing? Preparing for what?

CHE

For your...

Che gestures having his throat slit.

REINA  
(turning away)  
I don't like you anymore!

CHE  
(lovingly)  
*¡Qué?! You adore me...*

REINA  
No, this is not the *hombre* I  
remember and loved.

CHE  
No?

REINA  
The Ernesto I remember had the face  
of a boy.

CHE  
Is that the only way you remember  
me?

REINA  
I want to remember you like  
before...

CHE  
(sweetly)  
And how was that, *mi vida*?

REINA  
(beat; with vulnerable  
eyes)  
*Desnudo...naked.*

Che takes off his shirt to reveal a tank top. Reina looks  
over his arms with inspiration.

CHE  
Like this?

Reina shakes his head. Che takes off his shoes and socks.

CHE  
Like this?

Reina shakes his head. Che takes off his pants. Now  
standing only in his tank top and underwear.

CHE  
 (smiling)  
 Or more like this?

He takes off his tank top and underwear. He presents himself to Reina, three fresh, bullet wounds mark his chest.

Reina takes it all in. He is breathless.

REINA  
*Que linda...* Even with your flesh  
 torn open, you are still so  
 beautiful, Ernesto. *Mi Ernesto...*

He signals Reina to approach him. Reina does so as if pulled by a magnet. He suddenly puts up his hand to stop.

REINA  
*¿Qué pasa?*

CHE  
 One last thing...

He pulls off his long hair and then his beard to REVEAL:

REINA  
 (taken aback)  
 Mirabella?

MIRABELLA  
*Claro...*

REINA  
 (scared)  
 What?!...What are you doing here?

MIRABELLA  
 (with a sweet smile)  
 Isn't it obvious, *mi amor*? I'm  
 here to torment you...

Blackout.

**scene five**

Spotlight up on the Cuban Showgirl. She is dressed in a red wig and elegant and sexy dress. She looks remarkably like Rita Hayworth.

The music of the Cuban love ballad, *Lagrimas Negras* (Black Tears) comes up.

She looks out to the audience and begins to lipsync a lively and passionate version of the song.

CUBAN SHOW GIRL

*Aunque tú me has echado en el  
abandono,  
aunque tú has muerto todas mis  
ilusiones,  
en vez de maldecirte con justo  
encono  
y en mis sueños te colmo,  
y en mis sueños te colmo  
de bendiciones.  
Sufro la inmensa pena de tu  
extravío,  
siento el dolor profundo de tu  
partida  
y lloro sin que sepas que el llanto  
mío  
tiene lágrimas negras,  
tiene lágrimas negras  
como mi vida.  
Que tu me quieres dejar,  
yo no quiero sufrir  
contigo me voy mi santa  
aunque me cueste morir. (bis)  
Un jardinero de amor, siembra una  
flor y se va.  
Otro viene y la cultiva, ¿de cuál  
de los dos será?  
Que tu me quieres dejar,  
yo no quiero sufrir  
contigo me voy mi santa  
aunque me cueste morir.  
Amada prenda querida, no puedo  
vivir sin verte, porque mi fin es  
quererte y amarte toda la vida.*

(ENGLISH TRANSLATION):

(MORE)

## CUBAN SHOW GIRL (CONT'D)

Although you have thrown me into  
abandonment,  
even though you have died all my  
illusions,  
instead of cursing you with just  
bitterness  
and in my dreams I fill you,  
and in my dreams I fill you  
with blessings.  
I suffer the immense sorrow of your  
exile,  
I feel the deep pain of your  
departure  
and I cry without you knowing that  
my crying  
has black tears, it  
has black tears  
like my life.  
That you want to leave  
me , I don't want to suffer  
with you, I leave my saint  
even if it costs me to die. (Bis)  
A gardener of love, sows a flower  
and leaves.  
Another comes and grows it, which  
of the two will it be?  
That you want to leave  
me , I don't want to suffer  
with you, I leave my saint  
even if it costs me to die.  
Beloved garment dear, I cannot live  
without seeing you, because my goal  
is to love you and love you all my  
life.)

Spotlight to black.

**scene six**

TIME: 1973; flashback

PLACE: Town, outside of Havana, Cuba

A large spotlight up on a bare stage.

MIRABELLA (OFFSTAGE)  
(loud whisper)  
Reina?! Reina?!  
(louder)  
Reina?!

REINA (OFFSTAGE)  
*Sí, callar, ya!*

Mirabella enters dressed casually in men's clothing. He skulks in the spotlight.

MIRABELLA  
Is that you?

REINA  
*Sí, idiota!*

MIRABELLA  
(loudly)  
Well, where are you *pendeja*?

Reina steps into the spotlight.

REINA  
*Coño!* You're speaking loud enough  
to wake Fidel himself!

MIRABELLA  
*Lo siento,* but I got scared, Reina.

They step to each other and hug each other.

REINA  
It's okay. It's okay...

MIRABELLA  
Did you hear about Fernanda? They  
arrested her and closed down Joey  
Guapa's!

REINA  
*Cálmate* Mirabella...

MIRABELLA

They are arresting anyone they suspect of being homosexual! *Dio míos* what are we going to do?

REINA

They don't know anything about you.

MIRABELLA

How do you know that?

REINA

I just do.

MIRABELLA

*Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción*, these camps where *maricóns* like us are forced to work, cutting the sugar cane fields until their back breaks.

REINA

You're exaggerating.

MIRABELLA

Exaggerating? Wake up, *por favor!* *Despierta* Reina! All my friends that I've been telling you about? All of them have been arrested or have disappeared.

REINA

Have you been doing what I told you to do?

MIRABELLA

*Sí*, But Cardenas is such a peasant town.

REINA

Maybe. But it's quiet. By the way? Have you been practicing?

MIRABELLA

I been trying...

REINA

Mirabella?

MIRABELLA

It's just not that easy to change my mannerisms. The way I say things! I've never been "masculine". *Mierda*, I am who I am!

REINA

You can do it. It's like performing.

Mirabella steps away. Long silence.

REINA

What is it?

MIRABELLA

(matter-of-factly)

They found Lucinda hanging in her room...dressed in her dead mother's wedding gown...

Reina steps to her and comforts her.

MIRABELLA

*Estados Unidos*...That's where I wish I could be...America. Have cocktails with Errol Flynn by his swimming pool. America, that's the only place left for people like us.

REINA

*Muchacha*? America says, "We'll take your tired and poor." Not "We'll take your tired and poor and your *hombres* who like to suck cock."

MIRABELLA

(brushing it off)

It's implied.

(beat)

That's where we're planning to escape to.

REINA

Escape? What are you talking about?

MIRABELLA

To Miami. It's in Florida. Which is in the *Estados Unidos*. It's already been set up.

REINA

What? How?

MIRABELLA

With my *novio*, Manolo.

REINA

Don't be *estúpida*. Nobody can leave the island.

MIRABELLA

Manolo can.

REINA

You never told me about him?

MIRABELLA

No. He swore me to secrecy. Says if anyone found out we would be sent off to the camps for sure.

REINA

*Espérate*. How could he get you out?

MIRABELLA

He works for the *politburo*.

REINA

The *politburo*?

MIRABELLA

And He just got promoted to the ambassador's cultural attache to Mexico.

REINA

*Seguro?*

MIRABELLA

Ahora Manolo says it's only a matter of time before he's assigned in Mexico City. And when that happens he'll bring me along as his assistant. And from there we go to Miami and live free. I really love him *tú sabes?* It's really true love this time.

REINA

(big smile)  
*Felicitaciones.*

MIRABELLA

Well, if it wasn't for his *padre* none of this could have happened.

REINA

How so?

MIRABELLA

Manolo's *padre* is a *general* after  
all...

REINA

And which *general* is that?

MIRABELLA

(stopping himself)  
I'm not supposed to say.

REINA

(throwing on guilt)  
Okay. No *problemo*. If you don't  
want to tell your best-

MIRABELLA

General Nuñez...Manolo says Fidel  
is going to soon announce his  
*Promoción*.

REINA

*Promoción? Promoción* to what?

MIRABELLA

And don't think I will forget you.  
Soon as I get to-

REINA

*Promocion* to what, Mirabella?

MIRABELLA

Party secretary...*Qué pasa*, Reina?

REINA

*Nada..es nada...*

Mirabella steps forward and looks out. Beat.

MIRABELLA

I wonder if it snows in Miami? I  
would like to know what snow feels  
like very much. I imagine it's  
lovely...

Mirabella continues to look out dreamily as Reina watches on.

**scene seven**

Spotlight up on Reina sitting on an examining table wearing a hospital gown. The textbook square of a DOCTOR, writes something down on a chart.

DOCTOR

So, when did you notice this sore?

REINA

Three days ago.

(touching his forehead)

I thought it was a big pimple.

DOCTOR

Well, it isn't a bad case of acne, that I can tell you. And the sore on your back?

REINA

(tired)

I told you already. Five days ago.

DOCTOR

And the?...

REINA

Cono! Do you know what's making me sick doctor? Questions! Always the same questions.

DOCTOR

Well, I wouldn't be a very good physician if I didn't ask a lot of questions.

REINA

How about a doctor with a lot of answers? Maybe you know one?

DOCTOR

Mr. Dominguez?

REINA

My name is Reina, *puto*.

DOCTOR

Yes, I'm sorry. Reina. I want you to relax and take a deep-

REINA

*Comomierda*.

DOCTOR  
-breath.

Reina inhales.

DOCTOR  
Very good. Now exhale.

Reina does so.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Excellent. Now just a few more questions.

REINA  
*Como no?*

DOCTOR  
Are you currently sexually active?

REINA  
Depends on what you're doing tonight, doctor.

The doctor coughs uncomfortably.

REINA (CONT'D)  
Oh, relax. Let's just say that currently, I am looking for my Prince Charming.

DOCTOR  
So, I would take that as a, "no"?

REINA  
*Correcto. Wait. Does, "Dancing with the Five Muchachos" count?*

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry?

REINA  
You know? *Bailando con los cinco muchachos?*

Lifting up his fist, Reina counts off his fingers one by one until it is an open palm.

REINA (CONT'D)  
One, two, three four, five.

DOCTOR  
Ah, I understand. No, masturbation  
doesn't count.

REINA  
Then "no" it is.

DOCTOR  
Now, how many men would you say  
that you've had sexual intercourse  
with?

REINA  
Do you have a calculator, doctor?

DOCTOR  
A simple estimate will suffice.

REINA  
(thinking)  
Including oral?

DOCTOR  
Actually, let's stick with sexual  
activity where penetration  
occurred.

REINA  
*Sabes*, I sure do miss a good Sunday  
morning blow job. How about you,  
good doctor?

DOCTOR  
We're discussing your sexual  
history, not mine.

REINA  
Well if you insist, *chico*. Where  
were we?

DOCTOR  
Penetration.

REINA  
*Asi*. Now do you mean penetration  
as a tops or bottoms?

DOCTOR  
I, I don't think I understand.

REINA  
You like baseball?

DOCTOR  
Well, I certainly do. I'm a huge-

REINA  
You have the pitcher and the  
catcher in baseball, *si*?

DOCTOR  
That's right.

REINA  
Well, it's the same thing in the  
gay world. Excepts sometimes, the  
pitcher also does the catching and  
the catcher sometimes like to do  
the pitching. Or they like to do  
both.

DOCTOR  
(coughing uncomfortably)  
I think I understand. Yes.

REINA  
Allow me to clarify. Bottoms means  
that you are the man who receives  
the other man's *pinga* in his *culo*.  
Tops is the man who puts his *pinga*  
into-

DOCTOR  
-the bottoms. I see...  
(writing; to himself)  
Fascinating.

REINA  
Now me. I'm a power bottom. And-

DOCTOR  
So, to answer your question, yes,  
include both kinds of penetration  
into your estimate.

REINA  
You don't have any homosexual  
friends, do you doctor?

DOCTOR  
I suspect some of the male nurses  
but no.

REINA  
Is it because you are a Republican?

DOCTOR  
My politics have nothing-

REINA  
*Sabes*, when I see how Republican men swoon over president Reagan? It reminds me how gay men obsess over Barbara Streisand. Isn't that funny?

DOCTOR  
I happen to think that Reagan is one of our country's greatest visionaries and-

REINA  
How far do you want to go back?

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry?

REINA  
My sexual history?

DOCTOR  
The last ten years.

REINA  
(thinking)  
A couple of thousand or so.

The doctor stares at Reina.

DOCTOR  
And how many would you say total over your lifetime?

REINA  
Oh...I stopped counting at a couple of thousand or so. Don't look so impressed, doctor. You're making me blush.

DOCTOR  
(writing)  
The last time you had intercourse?

REINA  
Longer than I care to remember.

DOCTOR  
Roughly?

REINA  
Not as I normally like it, no.

DOCTOR  
I meant, approximately?

REINA  
Oh. Six months.

DOCTOR  
Do you use a condom?

REINA  
*Nunca.* I enjoy gay sex the way God  
intended: *ala natural.*

DOCTOR  
You can get dressed now.

REINA  
Doctor?

DOCTOR  
Yes?

REINA  
If I went to Atlantic City right  
now, how lucky would I be?

DOCTOR  
I'm afraid, I-

REINA  
My percentage for winning? Would  
it be fifty-fifty? Forty-sixty?  
Twenty-eighty?

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry but until I know what  
we're dealing with I can't make a  
proper diagnosis.

REINA  
Is it cancer?

DOCTOR  
I'm go to have the nurse take some  
more blood samples. Get a count of  
your T-cells.

REINA  
Should I be scared, doctor?

DOCTOR

Don't worry. We'll find what ails  
you soon enough. It'll get better.  
You'll see...

The Doctor exits. Alone, Reina is struck with fear about his  
impending doom.

**scene eight**

Tamika sits on the couch.

DEREK (OFFSTAGE)  
(calling off)  
Tamika? Hey baby?...You home?...

Tamika doesn't respond. A moment later Derek enters cheerfully carrying some candy and a VHS cassette.

DEREK  
I picked up "Raiders of the Lost Ark".

He gives her a quick kiss on the cheek and steps to the TV.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
How was work?

She doesn't respond. Derek tries getting the VHS player to operate but is having problems. He's spots the suitcase.)

DEREK (CONT'D)  
What the hell's the matter with this thing?

TAMIKA  
(softly)  
Derek?

DEREK  
(annoyed)  
Hold on now. I just bought this player!

TAMIKA  
(softly pleading)  
Could you please just leave it alone for a minute?

DEREK  
Shoot. That's what I get for buying, "Made in Taiwan". Lord help us if this country ever stops making our own shit.

He pounds on the VHS player loudly.

TAMIKA  
Honey?

Derek ignores and continues to pound away on the machine.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)  
Please? Could you?-

DEREK  
Well, if you wanna watch the video  
I gotta fix-

TAMIKA  
Just stop!

Derek stops.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)  
I need to be honest with you about  
something.

DEREK  
(nervous)  
Okay...

Silence.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)  
(softly)  
I had an affair...

DEREK  
How's that?

TAMIKA  
I was seeing someone.

DEREK  
I know what an affair is girl!  
With who?

Tamika doesn't respond.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
I asked with who, damnit?!

TAMIKA  
Before I tell you, I need you to-

DEREK  
(suddenly realizing)  
Don't tell me it was with?..Don't  
tell you was with Sean?

TAMIKA  
No...

A look of relief falls over his face.

TAMIKA  
It was with Lorraine.

DEREK  
Lorraine?...Sean's ex? That  
Lorraine?!

TAMIKA  
Yes.

DEREK  
(still not believing)  
LORRAINE?!

TAMIKA  
I fell in love with her.

DEREK  
Nah, nah, nah! Women don't do  
that!

Silence.

TAMIKA  
We're not together anymore

DEREK  
You're broke up?

She nods her head.

DEREK  
How long that been for?

TAMIKA  
Since Topeka.

DEREK  
Hell...

TAMIKA  
Derek?

DEREK  
You ain't seen hide nor hair of her  
since? You're expecting me to  
believe that?

Silence.

TAMIKA  
Is the truth...

DEREK

The truth?...Has this turned to habit?

TAMIKA

What?

DEREK

A habit? There been other women you need to cop to me about.

TAMIKA

It's only ever been her.

DEREK

You know what this is, right? A sin!

(counting off)

Let's see, what we got?  
Homosexuality. Blasphemy.  
Adultery.

TAMIKA

Stop, please!

DEREK

What? Listing your sins?

TAMIKA

(correcting)

Shaming me.

DEREK

...You know? I could have cheated on you to? Had me a plethora of opportunities! A whole parade of women to be choosin' from! But I never did! And you know why?...My wedding vow I made to you. In front of God...

TAMIKA

You watched TV more than you ever watched me...

DEREK

That's not true.

Tamika stares him down.

DEREK

(relenting)

My folks watched TV together for sixty years...

TAMIKA  
 You spent more time with your weed  
 than you do talking with me?

DEREK  
 (beat; outraged)  
 Goddamn! My own wife a!-

He cuts himself off cold.

TAMIKA  
 (with difficulty)  
 Say it?...Go ahead, say it?...

DEREK  
 (beat; continuing)  
 ...A bull-dagger.

Tamika lets the possibility sink in.

DEREK  
 (inspired)  
 I'll try harder to make it work  
 this time!

TAMIKA  
 It's no use, baby. In the end, we  
 always go back to the way we were.

DEREK  
 I got an idea! We'll go see the  
 Deacon. He'll know how to fix  
 this. Us.

Tamika shakes her head sadly.

DEREK  
 What? You don't love me no more?  
 Is that it?

TAMIKA  
 Love you? You're my best friend.

She hugs him and he hold onto her passionately.

DEREK  
 I wasn't so unhappy, baby.

Tamika snaps to the truth and pulls away from him.

TAMIKA  
 I have to go.

DEREK

So this work now? You gonna just show up at her front door?

Tamika remains unsure.

DEREK

Just show up on her front door? You think she's been waiting for you like a Goddamn dog?!

Tamika looks pained.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Shit, she probably shacked up with some dude, right about now.

TAMIKA

I don't think so.

DEREK

(aggressive)

Maybe then she shacked-up with some other woman?

TAMIKA

(hurt)

Maybe.

DEREK

So, so, so, if she don't take you back you gonna go and find yourself another woman?

TAMIKA

Ain't thought about it.

DEREK

(beat; pained)

I just want to get this straight? You taking loneliness over me?

Beat; She steps to him and gives him a tender kiss on the lips.

DEREK (CONT'D)

What if it don't work out with her?

TAMIKA

I haven't even left the house yet.

DEREK

Yeah, I know but what if? You can come back, you hear?

Silence. She smiles sadly at him one last time. Wipes away her eyes and exits with her suitcase.

**scene nine**

Reina lies sleeping in a hospital bed. He is hooked up to a heart monitor and breathes through an oxygen mask. Tamika sleeps next to him in a chair.

Suddenly, he jolts violently awake. He pulls off his oxygen mask to reveal a face filled with dread.

Frantic he tries to sit up, but is too weak. He doesn't see Tamika.

REINA  
(loudly)  
Tamika?! Tamika?!

Tamika awakens and comforts him.

TAMIKA  
Shhhh. It's okay, I'm here.

REINA  
(in dread)  
I've been having such terrible  
dreams. *Terrible!*

TAMIKA  
Well, they're over now...

REINA  
I don't think I sleep more than an  
hour.

TAMIKA  
Are you kidding? You've been  
asleep for the last three days.

REINA  
*¿Tres días?*  
(looking around nervously)  
*¿Donde estoy?* I don't know this  
room.

TAMIKA  
Take it easy, Reina.

REINA  
Am I back in Havana?

TAMIKA  
You were moved from the home to  
Mercy hospital.

REINA

*¿Por qué?*

TAMIKA

You had an aneurysm.

REINA

A what?

TAMIKA

It's a bleeding in the head.

REINA

*Ay, dio...*

TAMIKA

I've been here with you waiting for you to wake up.

REINA

(holding on to her)

You're such a good *amiga*.

TAMIKA

I'm going to have to get the doctor.

REINA

*No, por favor.* Don't leave me alone.

TAMIKA

I'll be right back.

Tamika exits.

REINA

(calling after)

Tamika?!

Silence. Mirabella enters. He is naked as before but now his bullet wounds bleed profusely.

REINA

*¡Tú!*

MIRABELLA

You almost didn't make it.

REINA

Are you real?

Mirabella looks down at his bleeding wounds and wipes some blood with his finger.

MIRABELLA

Coño! Again with the bleeding. I  
no know how Jesus can stand it?!

REINA

It was those fucking *comunistas*  
who did that to all of you! *Los*  
*cabrones* Castro!

Tamika re-enters.

REINA

(to Tamika)  
Did you see him?

TAMIKA

Who?

Reina doesn't answer.

TAMIKA

The doctor should be here in a  
little while.

REINA

Do you believe in ghosts?

TAMIKA

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

REINA

What about the unholy ones?

(Mirabella enters.)

MIRABELLA

(to Reina)  
Who you calling, "unholy", *puto*?!

REINA

I look back to Cuba and I don't  
remember it that way at all. Not  
at all...I wish I could feel  
Ernesto in my arms one more time.

MIRABELLA

I never even believed that story to  
begin with!

REINA

You weren't there! It was love!  
It was love I tell you!

TAMIKA  
Who are you talking to?

REINA  
(to Mirabella)  
I never knew you would end up this way.

MIRABELLA  
(screaming)  
Liar!

TAMIKA  
What way, Reina?

REINA  
They don't know. They only accuse!

TAMIKA  
Accuse?

REINA  
(to Tamika)  
The first sign of the apocalypse began when you no hear the musicians playing their drums at night no more.

TAMIKA  
Apocalypse, what apocalypse?

REINA  
Castro's apocalypse! The second sign was when all the gorgeous drag queens that once peacocked down the Malecón were arrested. And beautiful men were made criminals for simply sucking cock!

Reina rises up exclamation. Tamika eases him back down.

TAMIKA  
Ssshhh. Lie back now.

REINA  
*En la noche...*In the night, the sounds of the executions...Gunfire. You go to bed imagining it only a matter of time before it be you standing against that wall.

MIRABELLA

(screaming)

We were all scared! You think that you the only one?!

REINA

(beat)

They put a *pistole* to my head and say I have a decision to make: Inform for the *revolución* or be executed. What was I suppose to do? I want to live!

TAMIKA

Calm down, Reina.

REINA

*Uno by uno...* all the *maricónes* begin to disappear. As if a plague were suddenly killing the gays. They send them to labor camps to cut the sugar canes. *Día y noche* they swing the machete like slaves. *Día y noche...*

TAMIKA

Oh, no, Reina...

REINA

I *informo y informo*. Lucy, Esmeralda, Josefina, Albina, Camille, Vanessa, Emilia, Beatrice. So so many...until I was the only one left.

TAMIKA

Mirabella wasn't the name of a town was it?

REINA

(shaking head; sobbing)

...I informed on her. Informed on her for a one way ticket to the *Estados Unidos*...I never think that Mirabella be harmed. I swear!

(to Mirabella)

I swear to you!

TAMIKA

But she was, wasn't she?

Reina looks deeply at Mirabella.

REINA  
(to Tamika)  
She was shot.

MIRABELLA  
Four and a half breathes and it was  
over.

Reina starts to sob and Tamika comforts him.

TAMIKA  
Ask for forgiveness.

REINA  
I no believe in God.

TAMIKA  
Then ask it from Mirabella.

REINA  
She won't believe me.

TAMIKA  
Then convince her.

REINA  
I can't...

TAMIKA  
Is there something more you'e not  
telling me?

Reina struggles to answer but continues to cry.

TAMIKA  
(comforting)  
Free yourself, Reina. Finally give  
yourself some peace of mind.

REINA  
My love affair with Che...I made it  
all up.

TAMIKA  
It was a lie? But why?

REINA  
To help me forget the horrible  
things I have done. To pretend I  
still know what it was like to love  
and be loved.

TAMIKA

Sshhhh. You need to rest,  
sweetheart.

REINA

Don't you see, *mi amor*? It was  
your love affair that was true all  
along. A love that still breathes  
inside you.

TAMIKA

I did it, by the way.

REINA

Did what?

TAMIKA

I've left Derek.

REINA

How wonderful!

Tamika appears pained.

REINA

Then why are you wasting time your  
time here with me?

TAMIKA

(avoiding)

You're sick. Now isn't the right  
time to-

REINA

Go find her.

TAMIKA

...What if this is all one big  
mistake?

REINA

Find her. After all, California is  
closer than Havana.

TAMIKA

Actually, it's further away.

REINA

*Coño, chica*. Go to her.

TAMIKA

She didn't invite me.

REINA  
She left her husband.

TAMIKA  
What if she's forgotten me?

REINA  
Simple. Make yourself remembered.

TAMIKA  
And if she says she doesn't love me anymore?

REINA  
Then you move on.

TAMIKA  
(worried)  
Alone?

REINA  
*Sí*, alone. But with so many new beautiful possibilities...

Beat. Reina is struck with a coughing fit. Tamika comforts him.

TAMIKA  
You need to rest.

REINA  
No. No, I'm okay.

She checks Reina's pulse.

TAMIKA  
Rest, *mi Reina*.

She looks back at the door.

REINA  
Go get the doctor.

TAMIKA  
I want to stay here with you.

REINA  
It's okay, *mi amor*...I'll still be here.

Reina caresses Tamika's face for a few moment.

She exits, leaving Reina alone with Mirabella.

REINA

Is that true what Tamika said?  
That you and the girls could  
forgive me?

MIRABELLA

(thinking)  
Hmmm. I suppose it's  
possibility...

REINA

Really? Do you really mean that?

MIRABELLA

(sing-song)  
An *ojo* for an *ojo*. An eye for an  
eye...

REINA

I don't understand.

MIRABELLA

Me and the girls died a violent  
death. Which means you must die a  
violent death.

REINA

But I'm dying as it is.

MIRABELLA

(cold)  
Talk to me when you're serious.  
But be quick, eh? At this rate  
your soul is going to burn in hell  
for eternity.  
(relishing the word)  
*E-tern-i-dad...*

REINA

(terrified)  
No, *por favor!*

MIRABELLA

Forgiveness must be earned, my dear  
Reina.

She starts to exit.

REINA

(blurting out)  
What if I killed myself?

Mirabella freezes.

MIRABELLA

Do I hear an offer?

REINA

Yes! Yes, I'll kill myself! Will I be forgiven then?

MIRABELLA

We're suffering, Reina. Me and all the girls. Proving that you are serious about being forgiven will end the reason why we must stay as ghosts. We suffer because you suffer. That's why ghosts exists. Because suffering exists. Why Jesus will always stay a ghost for as long as man exists...

REINA

Then I will end our suffering.

MIRABELLA

That's a good girl.

REINA

I'm scared shitless to die.

MIRABELLA

Sshhh. Death is a gift from God, *mi amor*. An act of mercy that frees us from the sins of this life.

REINA

And then I will be forgiven, right? We will find peace?

MIRABELLA

For forever and ever...I love you, *mi Reina*.

REINA

I love you too. *Con todo mi corazón...*

MIRABELLA

What do you say? Let's get on with it?

REINA

(nodding his head)  
Okay.

Mirabella steps to him with a plastic bag.

MIRABELLA

Let me help you.

REINA

(worried)

*Espérate.* I need to freshen up  
first, I must look a mess?...

MIRABELLA

(laughs)

Ah, Reina. No need to worry about  
that. The next life is all about  
inner-beauty...

Mirabella steps to Reina and begins to place the bag over  
Reina's head.

Blackout

**scene ten**

Spotlight on a gorgeous Cuban Woman in her early twenties. She is dressed as a 1950's Havana show-girl and alluringly lip-syncs the Cuban love ballad, "*Besume Mucho*".

The SPOTLIGHT WIDENS to REVEAL that she is singing to Tamika seated in a chair.

The Cuban Woman shifts her hips seductively, teasing her ever so closely. She leans into Tamika, their lips inches from each other.

Tamika reaches out her hand and just as she's about to caress her-SPOTLIGHT to BLACK.

**End of play**