

AFTER THE WAR

By Philip Kan Gotanda

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AFTER THE WAR

CHARACTERS –

CHESTER/CHET MONKAWA - Nisei. 2nd generation Japanese American. Mid-30's. Runs the Monkawa Rooming House in Japanese Town. Chet was a rising jazz musician before the War. Still has a musician's look and feel, a hip-ness. Hair semi-slicked back with a hint of a ducktail.

EARL T. WORTHING - African American. Mid 40's. Came from the South during the War to work on the docks. Lives with his 11-year-old daughter, Berniece, and his newly arrived sister-in-law, Leona Hitchings.

LILLIAN OKAMURA – Nisei. Attractive, late 20's-early 30's. Was engaged to Chet's younger brother, Tadashi. Daughter of San Joaquin Valley truck farmers. Recently begun work at the Monkawa Rooming House.

MARY-LOUISE TUCKER – Caucasian, late 20's to early 30's, pretty. She is world weary. Originally from Oklahoma. She lives in the last room down the hall with her brother. Works at a taxi-dance hall.

MR. OJI - Nisei. Mid-30's. Career bachelor. Educated, oddball. Accountant, presently unemployed. Boarder.

LEONA HITCHINGS - African American woman in her early 40's. Proud, self-educated with an air of importance. Older sister of Earl Worthing's young estranged wife. Recently arrived from Mississippi to help take care of Earl and her sister's child.

OLGA MIKHOELS – Early to mid 20's, Russian Jew from Novosibirsk. Came to San Francisco by way of Yokohama, Japan. Pretty, ambitious, survivor. Works and boards at the Monkawa Rooming House. Feisty.

BENJI TUCKER - Caucasian. Brother of Mary-Louise. Mary-Louise takes care of him.

MR. GOTO - 50-ish, Issei-Nisei. Businessman. Lives in Japanese Town.

Place & Time – Japanese Town, San Francisco, around 1948

ACT ONE --

1. Day One. Monkawa Rooming House. Mid-afternoon.

(The parlor. An Obutsudan -Buddhist Shrine - sits on a stand. On it, a PHOTO of a young soldier with a Black Ribbon tied around it.

LILLIAN OKAMURA is prepping irises for the Shrine as CHET, EARL, BENJI enter carrying a bulky CRATE. Cumbersome. LILLIAN joins them, still holding several stems)

BENJI TUCKER: Television! Television! Miss Lillian, television!

LILLIAN OKAMURA: What in heaven's sake --

CHET MONKAWA: I won it Lillian!

LILLIAN: Calm down, Benji.

CHET: (to Benji) Go get a crowbar.

EARL WORTHING: He one lucky son-of-a-bitch.

LILLIAN: You won a television?

CHET: A raffle at J. Fields Department Store.

LILLIAN: You went into J. Fields?

EARL: Mrs. Teraoka tell me they ignore her she went to buy shoes for a funeral.

LILLIAN: They don't like Japanese.

CHET: That's why I asked Mr. Gotelli at the market go in and buy the raffle ticket for me. He's Italian but he's not dark so he don't look Italian.

EARL: You shoulda seen their faces.

CHET: They don't like Buddhaheads there and they sure as hell don't give brand spankin' new televisions to 'em.

EARL: Get a load of this --

(Chet and Earl pull out a Television console).

CHET: It's a Philco Model.

LILLIAN: (amazed) So this is television.

EARL: I was gonna wait outside but Chet dragged me in.

CHET: They was expecting some all American guy with his family, got a reporter there from the Call Bulletin.

EARL: Photographer, too.

CHET: Gonna make a big to-do about it. And I come strollin' in Japanese-as-Japanese-can-be. Not only that but with my fine associate, Earl T. Worthing.

EARL: One big, shiny Negro.

LILLIAN: You two together are trouble. Mutt and Jeff.

CHET: They didn't want to give us the Television.

EARL: They don't want to take our pictures neither -- then Chet start jawin' at the newspaper man --

CHET: I started talking to the reporter, showed him the winning ticket, manager kept saying, 'There must be some mistake', grab the ticket away from me, calling out the numbers. That pissed me off - I told the reporter I got cheated out of 3 years of my life in those damn Relocation Camps, now J. Fields gonna cheat me out of Television, too?

LILLIAN: You said that to them Chester?

EARL: Chet do that, yeah he do that. They got nervous Chet goin' on and on, told us to take the Television and go.

LILLIAN: (putting packing paper back into box) I'd watch out for him Mr. Worthing, he's a bad influence.

EARL: I know, I know.

CHET: Hey, come on --

(Benji grabs the box)

LILLIAN: (to Chet) I'll have him put it in the back?

CHET: Yeah.

LILLIAN: (Leading him) Benji...

EARL: See, my Mama like you. She wanna buy that piece of meat, White butcher tryin' to sell her this piece of meat, she don't budge - Pa, Sis, me, gettin' all red - she not budgin' 'til she get that piece. I'm like my Pa. Don't make no trouble, go along to get along.

(OLGA MIKHOELS enters carrying a laundry basket)

CHET: Bet they don't have no big stores like J. Fields in Hattiesburg.

EARL: Nah, Mama would love it - got everythin' in there, soup to nuts. I'm glad I come out here, though, like 'Frisco, 'specially this here neighborhood.

LILLIAN: (returning) Japanese Town.

EARL: We on the edge of Fillmore, too, lotta Colored folks still here. That's why I come over this side after the docks went bust in Richmond. I find me a job.

OLGA MIKHOELS: Nan desu ka? ((What is it?))

CHET: Television.

EARL: (turning to leave) Well, I'm goin' –

CHET: How much I owe you?

EARL: No, no, I'm good.

CHET: (Puts a few bills in his hand) Take it --

EARL: I'll come help set up this afternoon.

(Earl exits)

CHET: Television.

OLGA: (repeating) Tell-ee-voshun. Do suro no?

CHET: No more Japanese, Olga.

OLGA: 'What does it do?' - telleevoshun?

CHET: (to Lillian) Folks sit down, we relax, we all watch it together. This is where the pictures coming out. It's got a 10-inch picture window. Night club acts, famous people singing --

OLGA: (to Benji) What you look at? Why he look?

BENJI: (holding out a photograph) Wanna see my picture? They taking pictures up and down Buchanan. I'm in front of the -- (cont.)

OLGA: (overlap) I kick you --

LILLIAN: (overlap) Chester.

BENJI: -- Boarding House. See, they took it before and give it to me, see?

CHET: (to Benji) We'll look at it, later - Go clean the paintbrushes for tomorrow. And we'll need a screw driver.

(Benji exits)

LILLIAN: Olga, can you get Chester a screwdriver?

OLGA: (exiting) 'Scaa-reew drii-verr...' 'Scaa-reew drii-verr...'

LILLIAN: How long has Mr. Worthing been out of work?

CHET: He'll find something, Earl's a good worker. He'll get us the rent steady.

LILLIAN: Mr. Oji's cute. He always leaves crisp bills folded neatly in an envelope. A week ahead of time.

OLGA: I found!

(Olga returns with a hammer)

CHET: No. (miming) Screwdriver. Sca-reww Drii-verr.

OLGA: (turning to leave) Scaa-reww drii-verr --

LILLIAN: Olga, I noticed you didn't get the curtains from Mr. Oji's room.

OLGA: (to Chet) You tell me, hmm, how you say?... (Japanese) hairenai ((don't go in)).

CHET: I know I said that, never mind. Take the curtains down. And wash them, too. When you're done with Oji's room, would you go clean the back alley - the hobos been sleeping back there again.

OLGA: I have guest.

CHET: Oh, okay. Benji and I'll take care of it. (to Lillian) She has a guest.

LILLIAN: (nodding) hmm, a guest...

(Olga exits.)

Cross fade to....

2. Mary-Louise's Room. Afternoon. Same Day.

(Mary-Louise's room. MARY-LOUISE TUCKER looks through a grocery bag. Earl watches her. Benji off to the side)

EARL: You can have a barbecue with those chops. Sammy Gee, butcher over at the market, give 'em to me. Leftovers, nice and fatty, you slice 'em up, cook 'em with some greens, go longer that way.

(Mary-Louise doesn't say anything. Puts the things back)

EARL: Notice you was low on milk. I get that for you next time.

MARY-LOUISE: Benji likes milk, don't you. (ruffles his hair)

BENJI: Can I go to the movies?

EARL: Benji, put it in the ice box for your sister --

(Earl gives Benji the bag. Mary-Louise looking in her purse)

EARL: Here. What you gonna see?

BENJI: (leaving) Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein.

(Earl closes the door)

EARL: Gonna give him nightmares.

MARY-LOUISE TUCKER: What'd you do to get all this? You ain't working. Give the Chinaman a blow job?

(Earl moves in behind her and tries to snuggle)

EARL: 'Cause I'm a nice guy -- Hmm, somethin' 'bout the way a woman smell --

(Mary-Louise moves away to pour herself some water from a pitcher --)

EARL: How come you got to say words like that? Such a pretty mouth, makin' nasty words come out?

MARY-LOUISE: I didn't hear you complain when I was doin' those words last night -
-

(Mary-Louise takes a sip of water)

MARY-LOUISE: Leona's gonna be wonderin' where her little boy is.

EARL: She don't have a chain on me. She's my sister-in-law, she watches out for me.

MARY-LOUISE: She's got you wrapped around her fingers.

EARL: She watches out for me and Berniece. That's why she come out to be with us.

MARY-LOUISE: Leona come out here to watch over you, not Berniece. You think I'm crazy. She's what, 40 or so?

EARL: I don't know, few years younger than me.

MARY-LOUISE: Woman gets that old, they start to see what's there and what ain't there. She looks up ahead and the only thing she sees is you. You ain't Gary Cooper but you're a man.

EARL: She's my sister, Jesus.

MARY-LOUISE: Sister-in-law. Besides, don't matter when you get desperate. And Leona don't know a thing about girls. Berniece's gonna need someone teach her how to watch out for those older boys...

(Mary-Louise moves in close to Earl and flirts. Earl pulls away)

EARL: Mr. Monkawa? Some fellas tell me used to play jazz. I ain't believe it so I ask him come with me to Jack's Tavern. No matter what I say, he won't go. Finally I say, "I knew Orientals can't play no jazz". He turn around, look at me, "Come on!" I still don't believe it we go in. Soon as he hear the music something 'bout him different. Then Chet see who playin' and he drag me right up to the bandstand. They start talkin' that jazz lingo - "You cats this, you cats that - where your ax, Chet?" --

MARY-LOUISE: You told me you don't go out to places like that, got a little girl take care of, can't be caddin' around like them other fools.

EARL: Everybody want somethin' they can't have Mary-Louise. I told you that. Give it time. Things come when God good 'n ready to give 'em to us.

MARY-LOUISE: Every time a woman want something, man say God don't want you to have it but when he want something, fuck godliness - 'spread your legs woman, give it to me now'.

EARL: I ain't sayin' that --

MARY-LOUISE: I give up something once -- I'm holding on to it this time. You ain't making me do anything I don't wanna do.

EARL: I'm not tryin' to make you do anything -

MARY-LOUISE: I can be a good Mama and I can be a good Mama to Berniece, I can, I can Earl.

EARL: Never said you can't Mary-Louise

(They study each other)

MARY-LOUISE: Make me happy, Earl?

EARL: I try...

(He moves in close and puts his arms around her waist. They begin to kiss hungrily)

-- Cross-fade to --

3. Communal Kitchen. Afternoon. Same day.

(Lillian in half-light attending to the Shrine)

(Communal Kitchen. Chet finds LEONA HITCHINGS, Earl's sister-in-law. A handsome African American woman of 40-something. Holds herself upright. Air of dignity about her)

CHET: Have you seen Earl?

LEONA HITCHINGS: He's not around.

CHET: You're his sister in law?

LEONA: Leona Hitchings.

CHET: I saw him earlier. He was supposed to help me up on the roof.

LEONA: He goes out, he doesn't tell me anything.

CHET: Well, do you expect him back soon?

LEONA: I'm not his keeper, Mr. Monkawa.

CHET: (turning to leave) Tell Earl I'm looking for him...

LEONA: Would you like some coffee?

CHET: No, that's alright. (beat) Okay, sure.

LEONA: I'd have to make it. From scratch.

CHET: No, that's okay, then.

LEONA: We're not going to pay extra.

CHET: Excuse me?

LEONA: If that's what you're driving at. Because I moved in. There's nothing in the agreement that says there's an extra charge for someone else moving in. Also, the Teraoka's had their nephew stay with them for 5 months. You didn't charge them extra, I know because I asked Mrs. Teraoka before they moved next door. We're not going to pay extra. If that's what you came to talk to Earl about. That's why, isn't it?

CHET: No.

(Chet exits. Leona watches him leave)

-- Cross-fade to --

4. Parlor. Later that same day.

(Room Keys on the wall. Lillian Okamura takes a KEY, carefully wraps it in a clean white paper. Then opens a magazine and sets it between the pages. MR. GOTO enters. Goto is a businessman, a community leader)

LILLIAN: (noticing and greeting him) Goto-san --

Everything is prepared for you. The whiskey is there. Canadian Club as you requested.

(awkward beat, Goto waiting)

MR. GOTO: (nodding) The key...

LILLIAN: (remembering) Oh. ((in Japanese)) Gomen na sai.

(Lillian hurries to get the magazine. Mr. Goto studies her)

MR. GOTO: Are you working here? For Chester? He's not his brother Tad and he never will be.

LILLIAN: We're all struggling to get back on our feet, Goto-san. Chester's not the only one.

MR. GOTO: Don't take his side, Lilli-chan. You better think about yourself.

LILLIAN: We all have our shames. (beat) Your key.

(Hands Goto the magazine with the hidden key. Leona enters from kitchen, walking past Lillian and Goto and exits upstairs)

MR. GOTO: I got the loan for Chester's Mama. Before she got sick. I would have never done that for Chester. Especially the way he runs it. All the other Japanese businesses got rid of anyone that didn't belong here. (referring to Leona) Those are the people that don't pay rent anyway.

LILLIAN: Chester will get them to pay. Is that all?

(Mr. Goto studies her, then exits up the stairs. Coming down the stairs is MR. OJI. Goto turns his face away as he passes.)

Lillian is returning to work when Mr. Oji enters. Oji's a funny looking man, almost Chaplin-like. He wears a worn, yet maintained dark suit, white shirt and dark tie. On his head sits a beret, the type Japanese artists wore during the 30's. He has a moustache wears round-framed glasses. Fastidious)

LILLIAN: Oh, you're back, Mr. Oji. I hope the bus ride was good...

(she looks for his key and notices it's not there)

MR. OJI: I have my key.

LILLIAN: Is there something I can do for you?

MR. OJI: Yes.

(silence. Mr. Oji glances inside)

LILLIAN: (trying to read him) Would you like to come in?

MR. OJI: Yes.

(Mr. Oji walks right into the parlor, Lillian surprised)

LILLIAN: How did the job interview go?

MR. OJI: They didn't want me.

LILLIAN: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

MR. OJI: So was I.

LILLIAN: I'm sure there'll be other jobs. You'll find one.

MR. OJI: Someone's been in my room.

LILLIAN: Yes, the maid had to go in and change your curtains. We did everyone else's a while ago. You were the only one left.

MR. OJI: I don't like people in my room.

LILLIAN: Mr. Monkawa's trying to make improvements on the place --

MR. OJI: I have a way of doing things. Everything in its place. All my books and letters. Just so and if things get disturbed... I don't like it.

LILLIAN: I apologize Mr. Oji. It won't happen again.

MR. OJI: Here.

(Hands her a neatly wrapped box)

MR. OJI: It's manju ((pastry)). From Sacramento. Made by the Ozawa family. You've heard of their manju?

LILLIAN: (nodding) Un-huh.

MR. OJI: They make the best. They're well-known for it. I used to do their books. I got it for you.

LILLIAN: Well. Thank you.

MR. OJI: And you can give one to Mr. Monkawa, too, if you think he needs to eat one.

LILLIAN: Would you like some tea? I was heating some water?

MR. OJI: Thank you.

(Lillian withdraws and pours hot water into a tea pot)

MR. OJI: (calling) Nothing is missing.

LILLIAN: What?

MR. OJI: In my room. Nothing is missing.

(Takes a beat for Lillian to get his implication)

LILLIAN: Good. I'm relieved.

(Chet enters with Benji. Chet has a gunny sack of bottles. Benji holds old discarded clothes)

CHET: (Calling from the door) Lillian? You see Earl?

LILLIAN: No.

BENJI: What I do with this?

CHET: We'll burn it –

LILLIAN: (calling) Would you and Benji like some manju? Mr. Oji brought some.

CHET: (withdrawing) Maybe, later – Hey Oji, we had to go into your room. (to Benji) Hold it away from you, Benji, it's dirty --

(Lillian returns with a tray of two tea cups, pot and manju)

LILLIAN: We'll let the tea sit. Did you ever end up seeing that girl again? The one you went to see the movie with?

MR. OJI: No.

LILLIAN: Oh. Mrs. Okubo going to introduce you to anymore girls?

MR. OJI: No.

LILLIAN: She seems to have the knack. She prides herself on never failing to find a match.

MR. OJI: Mrs. Okubo talks too much.

LILLIAN: Oh. How will you meet someone then?

MR. OJI: Miss Okamura? Who are we fooling here? Look at me. I'm a homely man. Even my mother used to tell me that. I don't have a job, I have no friends and I'm boring. Can you think of one good reason why any girl would marry me? Don't you think it's cruel to try and make me think otherwise? (beat) May I have a green one?

LILLIAN: What?

MR. OJI: A green manju. I like the green ones.

(Lillian puts a manju on a small plate. She begins to pour tea into cups)

MR. OJI: You're attractive. Attractive people don't understand what it's like to be homely. They think by telling lies to the person, they're helping him. They're only helping themselves, really. It makes them feel better because they know there's no hope and that all they can do is make the homely person believe otherwise to give

him relief from his lonely life for however short a time. And so, they feel good. A good Samaritan. Their good deed done.

LILLIAN: I just asked if you were seeing any more girls.

MR. OJI: I know. And, I know.

LILLIAN: Are you always this obnoxious Mr. Oji?

(Mr. Oji doesn't know how to respond)

LILLIAN: You're not unattractive Mr. Oji. You dress homely, you act homely, and maybe your mother told you you were, but you're not homely. You've just let yourself believe you are.

MR. OJI: Do you find me attractive?

(Lillian does not know how to answer this)

MR. OJI: I rest my case.

LILLIAN: All right. Yes. Yes, I do --

(Olga, the Russian girl, enters, embarrassed. Olga goes to Lillian and whispers something to her)

LILLIAN: (listening) For heaven's sake. That man...

(Lillian withdrawing to the kitchen)

LILLIAN: Oh, Mr. Oji. This is Olga Mikhoels. She just arrived here from Yokohama. She helps out around here. There're lots of Russians in Yokohama. This is Mr. Oji, he's in 2-B.

OLGA: How do you do?

LILLIAN: (from kitchen) All I have is peanuts.

OLGA: (referring to Mr. Oji) He let no people in room?

LILLIAN: Yes.

OLGA: (to Mr. Oji) You leave - umm, kitanai ((dirty)) sheets folded door no soto ni.

MR. OJI: 'Outside my door.'

OLGA: Yes, like new at store.

MR. OJI: (embarrassed) Yes. That's me.

OLGA: (bowing) Yoroshiku, Mr. Oji. ((Russian)) Kak deyelash? ((How do you do?))

MR. OJI: (confused) Excuse me?

OLGA: Govorish po Ruski? ((You speak Russian?))

MR. OJI: What?

LILLIAN: I don't think Mr. Oji speaks Russian --

OLGA: You have Russian books in room. I see. Gorky, Dostoevsky...

LILLIAN: She didn't go snooping or anything like that Mr. Oji --

MR. OJI: I'm studying.

OLGA: (slowly, in Russian) Govorish po Ruski?

(Pause. Mr. Oji thinking)

MR. OJI: Malo (a little, in Russian), sukoshi.((in Japanese, making a gesture to indicate his meaning))

(Mr. Oji and Olga share a moment)

LILLIAN: (ushering her out) Olga, he's waiting, he's gonna get mad...

OLGA: Okay, okay - (exiting with peanuts) I have to go. Sorry I go into room.

-- Cross-fade to --

6. Day Two. Backyard. Early Morning.

(Outside the Boarding House. Chet sits on back porch as Earl enters)

CHET: Where were you yesterday?

EARL: I had some business to attend to.

CHET: Yeah?

EARL: Hey, I thought the fellas was pullin' my leg when they said you know the musicians at Jack's.

CHET: Saunders King, some of the others.

EARL: I know Nisei and Coloreds know each other, go to church at the Sutter Street Y, I know that. I just never heard no Oriental playing jazz is all --

CHET: You thought I was an Indian.

EARL: Hell, I never even met one of you till I come out here.

(Lillian enters)

EARL: Morning, Miss Okamura.

LILLIAN: Morning, Mr. Worthing.

EARL: 'Sides I ate your damn raw fish, Mister.

CHET: (to Lillian) Can you believe he fell for it?

EARL: Miss Okamura, was he lyin' 'bout the raw fish, he say you all eat it.

CHET: You think we eat live fish, all jumpin' around in our mouths --

LILLIAN: He's teasing you - we eat it. We really do eat it.

EARL: I get you for that one. Hell, I tried that bug juice you throw on everything.

LILLIAN: It's called, shoyu.

EARL: I show you what --

(starts playfully boxing with Chet, they go at it --)

CHET: I tried your damn catfish - I throw 'em away --

EARL: You liked 'em.

CHET: Trash fish --

EARL: Don't be lyin', you ate your fill. Fact you ate so much, pastor told me not to bring you back next year's fry.

(Chet retrieves the television antenna from the porch)

LILLIAN: You two, just like my brothers - I'll set some beers out for you and Mr. Worthing.

CHET: Call him Earl, he won't throw a fit. Let's do this. Benji, get the tool box.

(Chet and Earl tie Japanese style worker headbands to their heads. They begin to carry the antenna to the roof)

EARL: Talked to some of my old crew from the docks.

CHET: What they say?

EARL: They all tryin'. Addie Clay got picked up over this side the Bay but she the only one.

CHET: My sister said they might be hiring down in San Pedro.

EARL: Maybe I start lookin' out of town, need to get me somethin' steady. 'Durin' the War, Kaiser got four shipyards runnin', we was crankin' out Victory and Liberty ships 30 days start to finish - Ready?

CHET: Yeah.

CHET: (calling down) Lillian, get Olga.

LILLIAN: Olga! (knocks on Olga's door)

OLGA: (entering the office where Oji is waiting by the television) Mr. Oji? Ruski, hanashimasu?

MR. OJI: Hello Olga. Malo. Malo.

(-- Benji climbs up the fire escape with the tool box.

In the parlor Lillian, Olga, and Mr. Oji stare at the small TV screen--)

LILLIAN: (to Olga) Go check with Chet. (to Mr. Oji) It's been warming up.

OLGA: (exiting) You have nice tie.

CHET: (calling) Olga, how's it looking? Benji?

BENJI: (clinging to the porch railing. To Olga) 'How's it looking?'

(Olga's relays the message inside)

OLGA: 'How-zeet cooking'?

(Lillian looks at Olga)

LILLIAN: What did they say?

OLGA: (calling to Benji) 'What did they say!'

BENJI: It's too high, too high...

OLGA: (to Benji) Strosna! ((Be Careful!))

LILLIAN: (to Olga) A bit more. Tell him to turn it more.

EARL: I'm gonna need a cold one after this...

CHET: Benji, what'd they say?

OLGA: (to Benji) 'Turn it more!'

BENJI: (to Chet) 'Turn it more!'

(Chet and Earl turn the Antennae)

LILLIAN: Ah-ah - that's good, right there, right there!

(sounds of a television broadcast)

CHET: (to Benji) How's it looking now?

OLGA: (to Benji) 'Right there, right there!'

CHET: Benji? Ask them how the picture looks.

(Benji's confused)

OLGA: 'Right there, right there!'

BENJI: 'Right there, right there!'

CHET: (calling down) All right?

BENJI: All right?

OLGA: All right?

LILLIAN: All right!

(We hear the Brillcream jingle. They all watch the TV with fascination.)

-- Cross-fade to --

7. Back porch. Late Afternoon. Same Day.

(Chet climbs down and joins Earl on the back porch. During Earl's monologue, Chet crosses to the office and puts a 78 RECORD on and then returns to the back porch)

EARL: -- But Indians ain't afraid of heights, know that? That's why they get work on all the bridges. They mated with the Nephelim. Bible say Nephelim the angels that lived among men long ago. Indians mated with these angels and that's why they ain't afraid to work close to the sky. How 'bout playing something easy on the ear. Nat King Cole, Perry Como –

CHET: Perry Como? Perry Como? Come on, Earl --

EARL: I like Perry Como. What? A Colored man can't like Perry Como?

CHET: Plantation Club over here on Post, used to be a Japanese restaurant, maybe we can go? Ella goes there after her gig at the Fairmont. They jam.

EARL: What's this? First you ain't wanna go to no jazz clubs, now you gonna start draggin' me to all of 'em? (beat) I seen how you change when you 'round that music. Like somethin' come over you. We walk in, you Japanese. I turn around, suddenly you a colored man.

CHET: A musician.

EARL: An oriental colored man.

CHET: Just a musician, a musician. (beat) Things changing. Young turks coming in from outta town – less structure, more soloing. It's tougher, meaner – lot more dope around.

EARL: I keep my distance from that business.

(Chet is into the music. Earl watches him)

EARL: How come you don't play no more?

(Chet sips her beer)

CHET: Let me ask you something.

EARL: Shoot.

CHET: You think only Colored man can play jazz?

EARL: (thinking) Colored man play jazz, don't mean jazz Colored.

(beat)

CHET: I played for a couple years. After Camp.

EARL: Where'd you do that?

CHET: Chicago.

EARL: My cousin Avery live there - that where the Camp at?

CHET: Nah. I was up near the Oregon border, place called Tule Lake. They took me outta one camp, threw me in there cause I was causing trouble.

EARL: They shoulda never put you in that Tule Lake place, Chet.

CHET: You don't know what I did.

EARL: Don't matter, don't matter. All you folks shoulda never been took to Camps and you shoulda never been put into that Tule Lake place. I don't even need to know why and I understand. Man don't need to have a reason, he change the rules to suit hisself then say it's for everybody's good, like hell. 'Specially when it come to war time. Civil War, my great grandpa fought, hell who wants to be a slave? 'Sides we gonna get 40 acres and a mule. See my 40 acres? See my mule? First World War. 'Course they want the Colored man, who's gonna do all the dirty work. Okay, we go, America gonna finally give us our due. We fight, we do the dirty work and we die. What we got to show for it? Our very own graveyard on the other side of the fence where the weeds growin'. This War? Where my pretty backyard with the swimmin' pool? Where the hell my martini? Ship yards close down 'cause we won the war but guess who the first one lose his job? Over one year now Earl T. Worthing ain't found steady work. All us Colored folks losin' jobs, no wonder the music gettin' meaner.

CHET: What happened to go along to get along?

EARL: I got some of my mama's blood in me. I just know I don't care what you did, I don't need to know, I understand.

CHET: Okay, you understand.

(They knock beers in agreement)

EARL: And you understand me, maybe not before but once you got put in those Camps you know. You see. We both lookin' at the same thing and it from the outside lookin' in.

(Chet gets another beer from the ice box and they enter the kitchen)

CHET: How are things with you and your sister-in-law?

EARL: Leona?

CHET: She visiting? Or is she visiting?

EARL: Nah, nah, she my wife's older sister. She good with the baby. Berniece gettin' to be a young

lady. When I go in her bedroom now? I knock on the door. Hell, she only 11, what the hell I'm doin'.

CHET: Berniece growin' up Earl, everyone can see that. You sensin' that, too.

EARL: Oh, don't say that, that's a whole can of worms. I got trouble just puttin' food on the table, she ain't even askin' for new dresses yet.

CHET: You need a woman to help you out. Leona's right there.

EARL: Yeah, she right there but maybe she not the one I wanna be next to right now.

CHET: (studying Earl) You got something on the side you ain't telling me?

EARL: What about you? I seen you lookin' at Miss Okamura. She fine.

(Chet glances over and we see Lillian working over a tomato crate in the backyard. Prepping the soil and planting)

CHET: She was brother's girlfriend.

EARL: Your brother's gone and she still here. You don't like hearin' it but that's the way it is. 'Sides, why she choose to work here? I seen her lookin' at you. She lookin' real hard --

-- Cross-fade to --

8. Backyard. Later. Same day.

(Chet crosses to Lillian)

CHET: Can I help you?

LILLIAN: Okay.

(Lillian notices what Chet's doing)

LILLIAN: You didn't grow up on a farm, did you?

CHET: Nah, I'm a city boy.

(Chet settles back and watches her)

CHET: You like boxing.

LILLIAN: Says who?

CHET: You marked the Louis-Walcott fight on the television sheet.

LILLIAN: Okay. I like boxing. Some boys don't know how to take it.

CHET: A Nisei girl likes boxing, huh?

LILLIAN: I started going to matches when I was a little girl, my Dad would take my 3 brothers and I'd tag along. One of the Filipino workers had a Cousin, Small Montana.

CHET: I heard of him, a flyweight.

LILLIAN: He fought Speedy Dado. Two popular Filipino fighters - the workers went nuts. We crammed into the back of Dad's old truck and drove all the way to Stockton to see the fight. Speedy wasn't. Small Montana by decision in 10. (Lillian works) You played with Lionel Hampton's Band in Chicago.

CHET: How'd you know?

LILLIAN: Everybody knew. A Japanese playing in Lionel Hampton's band?

CHET: When I started you couldn't play with the White groups. The Colored musicians took me in, like Hamp and some other groups. I trusted them for that. That's what you do when you play, you trust each other. Show up with your chops. Add to the brew. Make it tastier.

Lillian: Sounds like you're making something to eat. (beat) I heard you play once.

CHET: In Chicago?

LILLIAN: In Oakland, before the War. You were in a group called the Down Beats -

CHET: (embarrassed) Oh, man --

LILLIAN: It was a small club on 7th Street. Tad took me.

CHET: He never said anything.

LILLIAN: I made him take me. I was curious to see the bad brother. I think he was jealous.

CHET: What'd you think of the music?

LILLIAN: I didn't understand it.

CHET: (shrugs) It wasn't that good anyway. Not till I got to Chicago. I went there after they let me out of Tule Lake. Got a cheap room on the Southside. For 6 months I holed up and just blew and blew. Gonna play so damn good no one'd care what the hell I was.

(awkward beat)

LILLIAN: I'm planting eggplant. When they grow I'll make tsukemono.

CHET: You and your mom make the best pickles. Tad said that.

LILLIAN: We have a secret. The water we use for the nuka? We boil it with a seaweed from my Mom's village in Hiroshima.

CHET: Add to the brew. Make it tastier.

LILLIAN: Yeah...

(They watch each other for a beat)

LILLIAN: The sun's moving. I'm done for today.

CHET: I'll get it.

LILLIAN: I'll see you tomorrow.

(They get up and together, begin moving the crate.)

Mary Louise enters smoking a joint on the second story of the fire escape.

(Chet glances up at Mary-Louise, who looks down at him)

-- Cross-fade to --

(Mary-Louise seated with her legs in Benji's lap. He massages her feet)

MARY-LOUISE: Five hours on my feet in those goddamn heels – you don't know how good this feels.

(Benji smiles at Mary-Louise who strokes his head affectionately)

MARY-LOUISE: Nobody's gonna hurt you. Chet'll watch out for us.

BENJI: Maybe I have to take care of us now.

MARY-LOUISE: I put four bits on the dresser – Buy a loaf of bread and eggs for tonight, shouldn't be more than forty cents. Bring home the change, okay Benji?

BENJI: Un-huh. We still got pork chops in the icebox.

MARY-LOUISE: You go ahead and eat 'em before they go bad. Put the other food on the second shelf in the kitchen, all the way to the right, okay? Don't get it mixed up with other folks', I don't wanna have to fight with that Leona woman.

BENJI: (nodding, massaging) You got small feet. Like a little girl's.

MARY-LOUISE: Everything else grew up 'cept them. Pa said Mama had small feet.

BENJI: I miss Mama.

MARY-Louise: You remember her, huh?

BENJI: Papa wouldn't let Mama dance.

MARY-LOUISE: God wouldn't like it.

BENJI: I run down Bush to Fillmore, then up to North Beach, back down Grant and cut over to Buchanan --

(takes an apple out, offering it to Mary-Louise who shakes her head)

BENJI: -- From Mr. Luchessi. Gravenstine (takes a big bite) 'Chinese taking over Little Italy', he says -- (cont.)

BENJI: -- Mrs. Yee says Italians should kiss their ass 'cause they gave 'em noodles.

MARY-LOUISE: Everybody talks to Benji.

(Benji takes out his photo)

BENJI: The men still taking pictures.

(Showing it to Mary-Louise)

MARY-LOUISE: Don't bother them none.

BENJI: Look where I'm at. See the Monkawa sign in back of me?

MARY-LOUISE: Don't bother them none, you hear me? You don't know what they're taking them pictures for.

BENJI: (referring to the reefer) Can I try?

(Mary-Louise ignores his question. She exhales and she nods to the smoke)

MARY-LOUISE: Okay, what's this one?

(Benji stares at the blossoming smoke)

BENJI: Hmm, I dunno.

MARY-LOUISE: A snail - see the kind of round hump...

BENJI: A snail?

MARY-LOUISE: Now it's a cinnamon roll coming apart - like when you tear it open and butter it -

BENJI: Yeah? I like cinnamon rolls.

(Benji imagines taking a piece of the smoke cinnamon roll and eating it)

MARY-LOUISE: (watching him) I wish I could fix you.

BENJI: 'Mean make my head good?

MARY-LOUISE: Nah, your head is good. Make you better looking. So you can get yourself a pretty girl to marry.

BENJI: I don't want nobody to marry you --

(Chester calls from the hallway)

CHET: Mary-Louise, you out there?

(Mary-Louise puts the reefer out and quickly primps herself)

MARY-LOUISE: Yeah ---

(Chester enters)

BENJI: Hi Chet.

(Mary-Louise and Chester look at each other)

CHET: Benji, would you go clean up in the alley?

MARY-LOUISE: No, you stay here Benji.

(Chet flips Benji a nickel. Benji ignores Mary-Louise and hurries off.)

CHET: How you been?

MARY-LOUISE: You care?

CHET: We haven't seen much of you.

MARY-LOUISE: I use the back stairs. That's why you put us back here, isn't it? So I wouldn't bump into anyone.

CHET: I thought I'd check in on you. Are you doing all right?

MARY-LOUISE: Me and Benji are good, we get by. You like that woman? Miss Okamura? That your type now?

CHET: I let you stay here, Mary-Louise.

(Mary-Louise watches him for a beat. Then, slowly, she moves her face close to Chet and begins to smell him)

MARY-LOUISE: You smell like you been working hard. The way you used to smell when you come back from playing all night --

CHET: (tempted, pushes her away) Mary-Louise...

MARY-LOUISE: She's not your type if you ask me.

CHET: Don't say anything to her about us.

MARY-LOUISE: Might spoil a good thing?

CHET: What we had wasn't good Mary-Louise, you know that.

MARY-LOUISE: She know you was an addict?

(Chet watches her for a beat, then exits)

MARY-LOUISE: (calling after) We had something Chester. Only you didn't want it.

-- Cross-fade to--

10. Kitchen. Early Evening. Same day.

(Leona has dinner prepared for Earl. She's covered the plate with a hand towel to keep a fly away. Earl enters)

EARL: Whooo, what's this?

LEONA: Berniece is out playing. I got supper for you. Cooked up turnip greens with some pigtales. Sweet potatoe pie you like.

EARL: Now this feel like home. I like it, I like it Leona.

(Earl sits and bows his head. Leona follows suit)

EARL: Amen.

(Earl digs in. Leona grabs his coat to hang it up)

LEONA: When I have more time I'll cook up some collards for us.

EARL: (eating) I hear they're hirin' down at San Pedro. Thinkin' maybe I should go down there see what's goin' on. Maybe you can see after Bernice if I do.

LEONA: You're not going to let them force us out, are you? They can't. As long as we pay the rent, they can't kick us out. We were here before them and then they get let out and come back here and force all us colored folks out. No sir, it's not going to happen. And they can't charge us more for me staying here. I talked to Mr. Monkawa and told him.

EARL: You talked to Chet?

LEONA: I checked with the Teraoka's and he didn't charge them for their nephew, so he can't charge us. We talked a little.

EARL: I wish you wouldn't a done that.

LEONA: What? Someone's got to talk to them, you won't.

EARL: I said I'd take care of it. (beat) They was here before us. They was Leona. All over here, up and down Webster and Fillmore, too, even over South Park. Before the War they owned the whole kit 'n caboodle - Japanese Town - businesses, shops, houses - they got kicked out and put in those places way out there.

LEONA: And then they come back, after they lose the war and what happens? After they lose the war and we won, all us Colored folks get thrown out and all these Japs get to move in. That's just like it always is but that doesn't mean it's right. (shaking her head) Un-uh. We got a little girl to think of and we shouldn't be moving all over.

EARL: Don't call 'em Japs. They aren't Japanese.

LEONA: What are they then?

EARL: Well, they aren't Japs, okay.

LEONA: You could have fooled me. They speak Japanese, they eat Japanese, they look Japanese, they kick-us-out-and-move-in Japanese - I think they're Japanese.

EARL: They just got back from being locked up --

LEONA: It doesn't matter things like this, everybody got some pain they have to live with. Lord knows, no one's got more pain than Colored folk. That includes your Jap-- "oriental" friends. So they been locked up for 3, 4 years? So what? That ain't pain. I got a life time of pain. 3, 4 years - that's a walk in the woods compared to our pain. Japs don't know nothing about pain --

EARL: Leona? You can think and feel anything you want. But when you in this place, you don't say that word. You just like them fools out front of the Fish Bowl, yellin' things at Chet. All this none of your business anyway. You just visitin'.

LEONA: Visitin'?

EARL: I can take care of Berniece myself.

LEONA: How you gonna do that? You don't even have a job.

EARL: I took care of her before, I can do it now.

LEONA: (crossing to the back porch to discard Earl's leftovers) Yeah but Bessie's back in Mississippi and left you with Berniece.

EARL: (following her) Let's not talk about Bessie, okay?

LEONA: She always was no good. Ever since we were little girls. And she always had an eye for the boys. All the boys, that's the problem. So she a little pretty, she has the morals of a stray cat. Boy's always like that when a girl's a little light-skinned. Don't matter if she act like a tramp.

EARL: That's enough Leona.

LEONA: Why do you defend her, she run off on you and your little girl? Well, didn't she?

EARL: Shut up! (silence) Please. I heard enough. This is my place. She's my wife. She run off on me.

(Earl exits. Leona returns to the kitchen)

-- Cross-fade to--

11. Parlor. Evening. Same day.

(Olga and Mr. Oji are seated at a table having tea. A Japanese tea-pot and two cups sit in front of them. They are reading Chekov from Russian and English books)

MR. OJI: -- What is samovar?

OLGA: It's... hmm... It is tea pot.

MR. OJI: A tea pot, like --

(pointing to the Japanese one)

OLGA: Oh, no, no, bigger. Made of... Me-tal? Metal?

(Olga mimes the shape and opening the spigot)

MR. OJI: It's that big?

OLGA: Yes. And... how you say... tokubetsu na toki ni (Japanese) --

MR. OJI: Special times?

OLGA: Special, yes - special times, I wear pretty dress, brothers wear pretty dress --

MR. OJI: Suits? Men wear suits.

OLGA: Brothers wear pretty suits...

MR. OJI: Yes.

OLGA: We sit at table with Mama and Papa. Like... big people. Katyia bring tea and kolache ((Russian, cakes))...

(The memory is painful for Olga)

OLGA: (holds up Mr. Oji's hat) Boshi? ((Hat in Japanese))

MR. OJI: (nodding) Boshi.

OLGA: (teaching Mr. Oji) "Shapka" ((in Russian)).

MR. OJI: (repeats in Russian) "Shapka".

(Mr. Oji takes the hat)

MR. OJI: (teaching Olga) "Hat" ((in English))

OLGA: "Hat"

MR. OJI: Chapeau.

(Olga is confused)

MR. OJI: That's French.

OLGA: You know French, too?

MR. OJI: Un peu. A little. Are there many Russians in Yokohama?

OLGA: Not so much now. I come from Novosibirsk. Many come from there to Yokohama.

(in the background we see Benji in half light putting a woman's shoe in front of Olga's door)

MR. OJI: How long did you stay there?

OLGA: Almost year.

MR. OJI: I've never been to Japan. Did you like Yokohama?

OLGA: I did not go to Yokohama to like.

MR. OJI: How did you end up coming here?

OLGA: My uncle has friend here. He make it so I come to San Francisco.

MR. OJI: Mr. Goto your uncle's friend?

OLGA: Yes.

(Awkward beat)

OLGA: How come you not marry?

MR. OJI: You talked to Lillian?

OLGA: Hai((yes)), of course.

MR. OJI: You know then.

OLGA: No. I do not know.

MR. OJI: No one wants to marry me.

OLGA: Why not Mr. Oji?

MR. OJI: I'm not a good catch.

OLGA: What's, 'Good catch'?

MR. OJI: Umm.

OLGA: Oh - Catch, like in sakana?

MR. OJI: Yes, fish.

OLGA: Naru-hodo - I see, I see. But Mr. Oji is good fish, yes? Education, read book, speak many language?

MR. OJI: Yes. I am a good fish.

OLGA: I think so. Mr. Oji a good fish to catch.

-- Cross-fade to --

12. Front Stoop. Early Evening. Same day.

(Lillian alone. Chester enters)

CHET: Lillian? Weren't you going back to your cousin's? What is it?

LILLIAN: I just ran into my parents. They were in town doing errands.

CHET: How are they?

LILLIAN: My father still won't talk to me. Not since camp. My mother tries to get him to but he refuses.

(Lillian breaks down. Chet is unsure what to do)

CHET: Why? What happened?

(Lillian continues to cry)

CHET: Lillian? I'll walk you back to your cousin's--

(Lillian doesn't move. Chet studies her)

CHET: You wanna stay here? I can clean out the storage room on the second floor.

(silence)

LILLIAN: Thank you.

(Chet watches her move to the steps)

CHET: People will talk.

(They study each other)

LILLIAN: (starts up the stairs) I'll get the bucket and mop out...

(Chet watches her go. He withdraws into the Office, pulling the curtains closed)

-- Cross-fade to --

17. Day Three. Hallway. Early Morning.

(Mary-Louise enters down the hallway from work. Olga pursues her with a shoe)

OLGA: Shoe? Yours?

(Olga holds out the shoe)

MARY-LOUISE: Where'd you get it?

OLGA: Find it.

MARY-LOUISE: Where?

OLGA: My door, I find.

MARY-LOUISE: I don't understand?

OLGA: He put there.

(Mary-Louise understands and takes the shoe)

MARY-LOUISE: He didn't mean anything by it.

OLGA: I don't like him do that.

MARY-LOUISE: He's harmless. He does things like this now and then but he doesn't mean anything --

OLGA: I don't want him put things at my door.

MARY-LOUISE: He's still a little boy.

OLGA: He scare me.

MARY-LOUISE: Okay, okay, I'll talk to him.

(Pause. Olga doesn't leave. Mary-Louise isn't sure what she wants)

MARY-LOUISE: Yeah?

OLGA: You work at Dance Palace. Yes?

MARY-LOUISE: Yeah.

OLGA: Pay good?

MARY-LOUISE: Okay.

OLGA: How I get job there?

MARY-LOUISE: You work here.

OLGA: Not enough.

MARY-LOUISE: It's never enough.

OLGA: I can dance.

MARY-LOUISE: So?

(Beat)

OLGA: (more emphatically) I can dance.

(pause. Mary-Louise looks at her)

MARY-LOUISE: Yeah? Okay. Go 'head.

OLGA: What mean?

MARY-LOUISE: Show me. Go 'head and dance for me.

OLGA: (confused) Yeah but, where is music?

MARY-LOUISE: You said you can dance. So go 'head and dance. Show me. Show me!

(silence. Olga hums and starts to move awkwardly around. Mary-Louise begins to leave. Olga stops, humiliated.)

OLGA: Why you mean to me?

MARY-LOUISE: I dance with music, I dance without music. I dance when I can't fool myself what I do has anything to do with dancing. (beat) You think I'm being mean to you?

(silence. They look at each other. Then Olga moves forward and grabs Mary-Louise forcefully, begins to hum a tune loudly and dance with Mary-Louise. It is awkward and at first a test of wills with Olga forcing Mary-Louise to move with her and Mary-Louise caught off guard by this bold move and unsure what to make of Olga. Olga is determined and senses Mary-Louise's acceptance of her and starts to go with Mary-Louise, letting her lead. They dance and exit down the hall)

13. Parlor. Early Morning. Same Day.

(Chet enters from the office, opening the curtains. Mr. Goto arrives carrying a large box)

CHET: (noticing Goto) Goto.

MR. GOTO: (surprised) Chester. I didn't notice you.

CHET: I can understand that. You're a busy man.

MR. GOTO: So how are you?

CHET: All right. How are things with you?

MR. GOTO: Businesses are going good. I'm re-opening the Kokusai Movie House, should be safe now. My wife's been complaining, she wants to see Japanese movies again."

CHET: We used to go before the war.

MR. GOTO: Reverend Sasaki said your brother's 5th year Memorial Service is soon. Is your mama coming up for it?

CHET: Her health's not too good. My sister doesn't think it's a good idea.

(Mr. Goto goes to the Shrine with Tadashi's photo and bows)

MR. GOTO: I'm sorry your brother died over in Italy. Tadashi was a good kid.

CHET: Yeah, well...

MR. GOTO: I told your mama how I feel about you and the other No-No Boys. But the War's over and Tadashi's Memorial Service is coming up. Let's let the wounds heal --

CHET: I've been back 6 months and you finally come around and tell me that?

MR. GOTO: You have balls, Chester. I always liked that about you. That's why I couldn't understand you throwing in with them.

CHET: A lotta guys signed no-no --

MR. GOTO: A lotta boys signed yes-yes, fought for this country and got their heads blown off while you sat on your fat ass --

CHET: They dumped me in Tule Lake, what the hell was I supposed to do? And then I come back here and everyone treats me like the enemy.

(Chet crosses to sweep the front stoop. Goto pursues him.)

MR. GOTO: And why shouldn't we? You No-No Boys made it hard for everyone. 442nd, 100th Battalion, your brother - giving up their lives to show we're loyal --
(cont.)

CHET: (overlapping) I never said anything against them --

MR. GOTO: (cont.) -- and here you punks come along refusing to fight, thumbing your nose at the country - how many more boys had to die because of you? And now you come back here --

CHET: (overlapping) I was trying to say something, stand up to this government --

MR. GOTO: (cont) -- and expect everyone to welcome you with open arms. Why the hell should we, Chester? Why the hell should we? Your brother made up for your shame. He made it right. So let it be. Tadashi was a war hero.

(Lillian meets Mr. Goto leaving. She's carrying a load of packaged, laundered towels and sheets)

LILLIAN: Goto-san.

MR. GOTO: (looking at the receipt) I charge 3 times that for everybody else's laundry. (referring to the case) I brought a phonograph player for Olga.

(Mr. Goto exits upstairs. Chet helps Lillian with the laundry. Chet goes back to sweeping.)

LILLIAN: Chester? You should be more careful what you say to Goto-san. He owns the mortgage. People respect him --

CHET: He buys them just like everything else in Japanese Town.

(Mr. Goto returns from upstairs and exits out the front door, past Lillian and Chet.)

LILLIAN: I've been going over the books. What should we do about Earl?

CHET: I hear Steuben's Garage is looking for someone. (entering the back into the house, to the parlor. Lillian follows.) Who gives a damn about Goto and those other jerks? I'm walking down Buchanan - Sam, Harry, Eto, guys I grew up with won't look at me - Eto spit in my face. He spit in my face. I'm rotting in Camp and I get some paper shoved at me - 'I swear my allegiance to this country and I'll fight for it'. Those two questions I sign, "No, no" - I'm an American, why the hell I got to say I'm something I already know I am? And I'm supposed to go out and die defending this country while it's got everybody I know locked up? What happened to our rights? Doesn't anyone care? Is the Constitution just a piece of paper, it means nothing? The President can sign another piece of paper and just like that we're not citizens anymore, you can do whatever the hell you want to us? What was done to us was wrong. All of it. It was wrong then and it's wrong now. And I don't care what Goto, the government or anybody thinks, I'll sign any goddamn questionnaire, I'll yell it at Roosevelt, I'll scream it at Earl S. Warren - No, no, no, no! Because it matters. Because it has to matter.

-- Cross-fade to --

14. Mary-Louise's Room. Early Evening. Same day.

(Mary-Louise's room. Earl Worthing)

MARY-LOUISE: I'm supposed to hold your hand every time you get in a fight with that woman?

EARL: Comin' over has nothin' to do with her.

MARY-LOUISE: You don't think she'll figure it out.

EARL: Benji's invited, you just go along as his sister. (beat) I'm just askin' if you wanna go downstairs to Chet's with me.

(Mary-Louise is silent)

EARL: You wanna come or what?

MARY-LOUISE: You gotta wife back in Mississippi, her sister -- (cont.)

EARL: (overlapping) She gone --

MARY-LOUISE: -- lives with you - I don't know what I'm doing anymore. What the hell I'm doing with you?

(pause)

MARY-LOUISE: Why do I let you see me?

EARL: I never asked you to let me do nothin'. You done it all on your own.

MARY-LOUISE: It's supposed to be good for me now. I see pictures in the magazines, all the nice things happening to folks. You can make a cake right out of the box now - don't have to spoon out the flour, measure the baking soda, it's all done for you. In the box. And they got cheeses in individual slices so you can make sandwiches, just peel 'em off. That's nice. That's pretty. So where's my share of it? Huh? The War's over. Supposed to be good times now. Where's mine?

EARL: Don't change for folks like you and me.

MARY-LOUISE: I'm like you? Is that it? I mean, what does that make me?

EARL: 'What does that make you'? Why's it got to be about you? What does that make me? (beat) People got needs - needs ain't got no rhyme or reason why two folks come together.

MARY-LOUISE: (motioning to the room) Earl, look around you. You know what we got here? I mean really got? See that? See the bed? That's what we got. Not before and not after. This. Right now. Here. So don't go on and on about these plans - how we're going here and going there --

EARL: Why you do this? Huh? I thought what we got somethin' good. Why you gotta make it into somethin' ugly and dirty - You gotta make up -- (cont.)

MARY-LOUISE: (overlapping) I'm not, I'm not - I'm just trying to get a handle on what we're doing --

EARL: (cont.) -- some kind of badness so you don't have to deal with what's really goin' on? It is what it is woman. If you want somethin' better you go on ahead and get it.

MARY-LOUISE: Maybe I will.

EARL: What's that supposed to mean?

MARY-LOUISE: There're men out there who want me.

EARL: Yeah, like who? Like who, Mary-Louise?

(pause)

MARY-LOUISE: I'm tired of being hurt, Earl. I don't wanna do that no more. I need taking care of.

EARL: I ain't gonna hurt you, Mary-Louise. Just don't give me no reason to doubt you.

-- Cross-fade to --

15. Parlor. Early Evening. Same Day.

(Lillian and Olga are setting out food and decorations for the Television party.
Music plays on the radio)

OLGA: Where put this?

LILLIAN: Anywhere.

OLGA: We do this in Novosibirsk for Succoth.

LILLIAN: What's suc-coth?

OLGA: Um, how to say, religion day for Jews.

LILLIAN: This is not a religion day. I want the place nice for Chester's Television party. (holding the gun out to Olga) Put this away.

OLGA: Televooshen party is good. All party is good.

LILLIAN: I notice you and Mr. Oji are spending time together.

OLGA: We are friends. I like Mr. Oji.

LILLIAN: You should watch out, Olga. Mr. Goto can be very mean.

OLGA: (testily) I told you Mr. Oji and me friends. That's all.

(Lillian looks at her)

LILLIAN: All right Olga.

OLGA: And Goto-san buy me my own phonograph.

(Lillian shrugs and returns to the preparations)

OLGA: You suppose to marry Chester's brother. He was fee-ahn-say.

LILLIAN: Who told you that?

OLGA: Goto-san.

LILLIAN: Goto should keep his nose out of my business.

(awkward beat)

OLGA: What was he like?

LILLIAN: (continues working) Tadashi was fun. Good looking.

OLGA: Did you love him?

LILLIAN: (nodding) Un-huh. But he was a mama's boy.

OLGA: What's mama's boy?

LILLIAN: The mother doted on him, spoiled him. He was her favorite.

OLGA: What about Chester?

LILLIAN: He wasn't a mama's boy. He had a mind of his own. Always did exactly what he wanted.

OLGA: You love Chester?

(Lillian looks at Olga. DON'T FENCE ME IN comes on the radio)

LILLIAN: (listening) We used to dance to this in Camp, thought it was funny. You try to make things normal. Go to dances, have boyfriends... Chester? I don't know.

(Mr. Goto enters)

OLGA: (exiting) Sorry --

LILLIAN: Olga?

OLGA: (calling back) I forget, I have guest --

(Lillian goes back to work as Mr. Oji appears from the back)

MR. OJI: I keep my watch 20 minutes fast.

LILLIAN: Oh, Mr. Oji. Come in.

(Chet enters from outside with a bag of doughnuts and beer)

CHET: (noticing the spread) Lillian, I told folks to come and see television...

LILLIAN: You can't offer them doughnuts and beer.

CHET: I like doughnuts, what's wrong with doughnuts?

LILLIAN: You want a night club atmosphere, folks sitting around, enjoying themselves.

CHET: Okay, but they don't serve sushi at the Plantation Club --

LILLIAN: I want to do this for you, Chester, let me do this for you.

(beat. They study each other)

LILLIAN: (back to work) I know how to take care of things. Mom and I cooked for my Dad, three brothers and table full of workers every day.

MR. OJI: (calling over) I tried your manju. It's not as good as the Ozawa's manju I brought from Sacramento. They still pound it by hand.

CHET: (grabbing a beer) Manju's manju, Oji. Where's Olga? She should be helping.

LILLIAN: She's got a guest.

MR. OJI: (miffed at Chet's curt response) I saw a television in the Emporium window. Have you seen it Mr. Monkawa? It's bigger than yours. (beat) Is Miss Mikhoels coming?

(Benji and Mary-Louise Tucker arrive. Chet sees them)

CHET: (to Mr. Oji) I don't think so.

LILLIAN: Hello Benji.

BENJI: Where's television?

CHET: We'll get it later, Benji. Have some doughnuts.

LILLIAN: Miss Tucker.

MARY-LOUISE: (to Lillian) Hello. Miss Okamura.

LILLIAN: What a surprise to see you.

MARY-LOUISE: I take the back stairs, I work late. Hello Chet.

CHET: We hardly see you, where you been?

MARY-LOUISE: I was telling Miss Okamura, I come in the back way, I don't want to disturb nobody. You look good Chet. You been all right?

CHET: No complaints.

MARY-LOUISE: Staying out of trouble?

BENJI: I was scared to go up there but I did anyway.

CHET: You did a good job Benji.

LILLIAN: I don't know why Chester thinks people want to see his television.

MARY-LOUISE: I never seen one before 'cept in pictures. I'm excited to see it.

MR. OJI: They have one in the Emporium store window - you can stand outside and watch it. It's bigger --

EARL: (calling) Chet?

(Earl enters with Leona)

CHET: Hey Earl. Glad you could make it.

EARL: Chet, hello Miss Okamura - This is my sister-in-law, Leona Hitchings.

CHET: We know each other, hello. This is Lillian Okamura - Lillian, Leona -- What was it? Hitch--

LEONA: (nodding) Leona Hitchings.

(Lillian nods to her. Earl notices Mary-Louise)

CHET: Come on in - ever seen Television?

LEONA: Ask him - go 'head, ask him --

EARL: She's fine, I know my own girl --

LEONA: Go ahead and ask him...

(Beat)

EARL: Chet, you know Doc Matsumoto?

CHET: Yeah?

EARL: Think he'd see Berniece?

CHET: She sick?

EARL: No. But just in case.

LEONA: Haven't been here long enough to know a Colored doctor --

EARL: Think you could ask him?

CHET: You can go there. Just bring Berniece and sit down in the waiting room with everybody else. Doc'll take you in the order you come in. Get there early, you right in, get there late, you go in late.

LEONA: He speak English?

CHET: (nodding) 'Cept for that Hawaiian accent.

LEONA: He charge extra for colored folks?

EARL: Leona.

LILLIAN: Doc Matsumoto's a good man.

LEONA: We don't know that.

CHET: Charge you what he charges everybody else. And if you bring a homemade pie, canned peaches, he'll knock off a few dollars.

EARL: You satisfied now?

CHET: Berniece okay?

EARL: She's fine, this is a just-in-case.

LILLIAN: (to Leona) Nothing wrong with just-in-case, when it comes to a child.

(Leona and Lillian exchange a look and exit to the kitchen)

CHET: (to Earl) Schlitz?

(Chet gets Earl a beer from the parlor)

(Mary-Louise sits down next to Mr. Oji. He moves away a bit)

MARY-LOUISE: I ain't got germs, you know.

MR. OJI: Hello. My name is George Oji.

MARY-LOUISE: Mary-Louise Tucker.

MR. OJI: I'm from Puget Sound.

MARY-LOUISE: I'm from Oklahoma. Now I'm from down the hall.

MR. OJI: I'm an accountant.

MARY-LOUISE: (not sure what to say) I'm an Okie.

(Shift focus. Background action: Mr. Oji and Mary-Louise talk. Oji goes to get punch for Mary-Louise)

LILLIAN: -- And where is the girl?

EARL: Berniece is over the Teraoka's.

LILLIAN: Oh, you should have brought her. She could see television.

LEONA: Berniece is friends with the daughter.

LILLIAN: (to Chet) How come you didn't invite them? We could all watch Television together.

MR. OJI: (calling over) Miss Okamura, did you crush fresh strawberries in the punch?

(Benji reaches in and takes one in each hand and stuffs it into his mouth)

MARY-LOUISE: Your manners, Benji, jeez...

LILLIAN: Yes, got some at Uoki-Sakai's Market, they looked better this time – Mr. Worthing, Miss Hitchings, have you met Benji's sister, Mary Louise Tucker?

EARL: Nice to meet you Miss Tucker.

LEONA: We've had dealings in the kitchen.

MARY-LOUISE: Those were my eggs. Nice to meet you.

LILLIAN: And this is Mr. George Oji.

MR. OJI: From Puget Sound.

EARL: Yeah, we've seen each other in the hallway --

MR. OJI: How do you do...

EARL: Earl Worthing.

MR. OJI: Mr. Worthing.

EARL: Leona Hitchings, my sister-in-law...

MR. OJI: How do you do Miss Hitchings.

LEONA: It's impolite not to take your hat off inside a building. I passed you in the hallway and you still had your hat on.

(Awkward beat. Mr. Oji doesn't know what to say)

(Benji crosses to Leona)

BENJI: I smell pie when you cook in the kitchen. Can I have some?

(Benji stands in front of Leona waiting)

LEONA: Hand pies. Apple. I got some in the other room. C'mon.

(Oji, Chet, Earl and Mary-Louise are left in the parlor)

EARL: (to Mary-Louise) How long you been stayin' here now?

MARY-LOUISE: A few months. I pretty much stick to myself.

EARL: I think I seen you gettin' your keys...

(Leona watches Earl and Mary-Louise.

(Mr. Goto and Olga burst in from upstairs. They've both been drinking. Goto is loudly singing, shigin, a form of traditional Japanese singing)

OLGA: Hello? I want to see Televoshon. I make him come. Is it okay?

(Mr. Goto continues to sing and dance --)

LILLIAN: (surprised) Everyone, this is Mr. Goto. He owns the Goto Cleaners and several other businesses in Japanese Town --

MR. GOTO: I'm teaching her Japanese singing. My Mama used to sing Shigin – (back to singing)

OLGA: (when singing ends) My uncle in Russia does business with Goto-san. My uncle make Goto-san promise learn me how to get started in America.

MR. GOTO: You remember Yasuda's Udon-ya on Webster? I was telling Olga how I got Old Man Yasuda to let me use it from midnight on, made it into a gambling house. During the day, noodles, at night cards and liquor. Pretty soon I forced the Old Man out, had it going 24 hours a day, noodles and whiskey. I'm gonna be like Togo Shima, the Potato King, grew potatoes up and down the San Joaquin Valley --

LILLIAN: Get him something to put in his stomach. Would you like something to eat Goto-san?

OLGA: Goto-san say it damn easy to make money here. I wanna do like Goto-san.

CHET: As long as some poor sap's got to lose it. You cheat your own people and you're proud of it. All I did was disagree.

(Silence. Chet and Mr. Goto stare at each other)

LILLIAN: Chester? Are we ready? Television? Maybe we should warm it up now? Chester?

CHET: What time is it?

LILLIAN: I don't know -- almost 7:30.

CHET: (moving to check on the television) Okay, yeah...

(Mr. Goto approaches Chet)

MR. GOTO: Old Man Yasuda's place was fulla rats, I cleaned it up, Chester. I let Harry O'Connell of City Hall play poker there and win so the Police make sure our stores don't get defaced. And I lent your family the money to buy this place back - a little respect, Chester Monkawa. A little respect.

(Mr. Goto walks away. Earl crosses to Chet)

EARL: You okay?

CHET: Yeah. (beat) Alright, here we go. (uncovers television) Turn it up Benji! (The sounds of the television intrude. We hear music and singing. Dig You Later)

LILLIAN: Okay, everyone find a seat. The show's beginning.

EARL: What is it?

CHET: This is supposed to be a good show to watch -- The Chesterfield Supper Club. With Perry Como?

EARL: Perry Como? He's on television?

CHET: The only Negro in the entire world like Perry Como --

(we hear Perry Como singing)

Earl: Hey if an Oriental can play jazz, then a Colored man -- (continue)

(Chet starts to sing along with Perry)

Earl: -- can like Perry Como. (noticing) You know this, you know this --

CHET: -- Hey, this Como cat sold 2 Million 78's, I gotta know what he's up to --

EARL: -- You like Perry Como, you been lyin' --

(Earl and Chet punch each other playfully and sing along with Perry Como. Having fun --)

(They all watch television)

-- Earl downs his beer then takes Leona and pulls her out to dance --

-- Chet goes to Lillian and they begin to dance --

-- Oji and Olga enjoy television together. Mr. Goto pulls Olga away to dance --

-- Mary-Louise tries to get Benji to dance but he follows Olga and Goto down the hall. Mary-Louise watches the two couples dancing. She returns to watching the television with Oji --

-- Earl crosses to Mary-Louise --

-- A bunny hop forms and Lillian joins in as it moves into the office --

-- Chet moves to Mary-Louise and pulls her into a dance --

-- Oji crosses to the hallway --

-- Leona, Lillian, Goto, Olga and Benji continue to dance --

-- Earl takes a look at Chet and Mary-Louise dancing, then exits out the front door --

Chet and Mary-Louise pull in tight and continue to dance.

Fade to black.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO --

(Parlor. Later that same night. Chet is slowly coming down the stairs into the parlor. Buttoning his shirt. Benji is sitting on the floor in front of the television light. We hear the signal tone)

CHET: Benji? What are you looking at?

BENJI: It's a picture of an Indian. I'm waiting for him to move.

CHET: I don't think he's going to.

(Chet turns off the television)

BENJI: Can I go up now?

CHET: Yeah. Go on up to bed, Benji.

(Benji exits. Chet opens his duffle and takes out a small whiskey bottle. Lillian enters down the stairs and watches him. Chet sees her)

CHET: Lillian.

LILLIAN: I couldn't sleep, thought I'd clean up. (entering) It was fun tonight. Did you have a good time?

CHET: Un-huh.

LILLIAN: (smiling) Earl and Perry Como. (beat. Watching him) Can I have a drink?

(Chet looks around for a glass. Lillian takes one from the punch bowl tray. Chet pours Lillian a shot)

LILLIAN: Is it okay to be drinking?

CHET: I'm good, Lillian.

(Lillian watches him down a healthy slug)

LILLIAN: You sure?

CHET: I can handle it now. I can.

LILLIAN: We heard a lot of rumors.

CHET: I did a lot of things in Chicago. Getting out of Tule Lake I was kinda crazy. But the music scene was out of this world.

LILLIAN: Why did you quit?

(Chet takes a sip)

CHET: My bandmates. I'm playing side by side with them night after night. I'm waiting for my solo. I keep waiting for my solo. Everybody else takes one. (beat) I'm supposed to tell a Colored man who's stepped on all his life, he's stepping on me?

I got all this craziness in me I can't tell they look at me I'm a horn player or a Jap to them. It made me sick to think that. The whole thing, sick to my stomach.

(Earl enters)

EARL: Chet. Miss Okamura.

CHET: You still up, huh?

LILLIAN: I'll clean this up.

Earl: I'll help.

LILLIAN: No, no.

CHET: Don't worry about it Earl --

EARL: (picking up things) You folks keep things tucked away. So nobody have to feel put down. I know it bugs Leona but I like that. Not all showy. That's a kind of grace.

LILLIAN: Thank you, Earl.

EARL: I come into your house.

LILLIAN: Well. Goodnight.

(goes up the stairs)

EARL: You and Miss Tucker dancin' up a storm. Where'd you learn to dance like that?

CHET: You play in clubs, you pick it up.

EARL: She pretty, ain't she?

CHET: Who?

EARL: Miss Tucker.

CHET: I guess so.

(Chet and Earl continue to clean up)

-- Cross-fade to --

18. Day Four. Kitchen and Back Porch. Early Morning.

(Mary-Louise pours Benji a glass of milk. Leona enters. Mary-Louise avoids her, goes to put away the milk. She runs into Chet on the back porch)

CHET: Mary-Louise.

MARY-LOUISE: Chet. How you feeling?

CHET: Okay. How 'bout you?

MARY-LOUISE: I'm all right.

(pause)

CHET: Last night. It's not gonna work.

(beat)

MARY-LOUISE: I know that.

(Mary-Louise moves away)

CHET: Mary-Louise? Back in Chicago. I know you didn't want to go through with it. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

(Mary-Louise is overcome and exits. Benji hears her go, crosses to the porch. Remains, fidgeting)

CHET: Benji.

BENJI: I like you better. I told Mary-Louise that.

CHET: Yeah?

BENJI: Earl brings pork chops over.

CHET: He what?

(Benji doesn't respond)

CHET: Does Earl come by your place a lot?

BENJI: Un-huh. If he marries Mary-Louise, maybe I have to go, huh?

(pause)

CHET: I don't know, Benji.

(Chet exits)

-- Cross-fade to --

21. Office. Morning. Same day.

(Lillian sitting at the office table. Leona enters)

LEONA: (motioning) See how I wrapped it in clean paper. Crisp new bills, had to go to the bank to get them. Mrs. Teraoka explained things to me. Your ways aren't so special folks can't understand.

LILLIAN: (not sure what to do) All right. Well...

LEONA: Aren't you going to count it?

LILLIAN: (being Nisei polite) I wasn't planning to, no.

LEONA: Yes you were, just going to wait till you closed the door. Think somehow that'll spare my feelings. I don't understand you people. I know what you're going to do, you know what you're going to do, so do it. Don't worry about me. Go ahead. Count it..

(Lillian hesitates, then starts to count)

LEONA: It's for this month's rent. I picked up odd jobs.

(Lillian checks the books)

LILLIAN: What about the last two months?

LEONA: Last two months? (beat) I guess we'll have to talk about that. Find a common solution.

LILLIAN: What does Earl think?

LEONA: I can handle these matters.

LILLIAN: Yes, but Chester said he talked to Earl --

LEONA: Miss Okamura, I don't need a man to manage my affairs.

(Lillian studies Leona)

LILLIAN: Okay. All right.

(Leona sits at the table)

LEONA: You said something when we came over to see television. 'Nothing wrong with just in case when it comes to a child'. That talk about a child didn't go by unnoticed.

LILLIAN: Yes?

LEONA: I got the feeling you might understand the situation we have here you being sensitive to a child's needs. Berniece can't be without a place to stay.

(Lillian doesn't respond)

LEONA: And with us being the only Colored folks left in the boarding house when Colored people used to run the place --

LILLIAN: Chester's family had to borrow money to get this place back --

LEONA: From Coloreds.

(pause)

LILLIAN: Miss Hitchings, we need the money.

LEONA: I see. (getting up) Well, you really don't understand the situation.

LILLIAN: You think we're doing this because you're not Japanese. So it happens you're not, it's got nothing to do with us needing the rent.

LEONA: You don't know what I'm thinking, believe me, you haven't a clue.

LILLIAN: Then tell me, tell me Miss Hitchings.

LEONA: You think it just happens to be that way. For Coloreds it can't be like that because when bad stuff happens, you don't just see what's happening to you right then, you see back to your mother, grandmother, great grandmother. You got a memory of things doesn't even belong to you but connected to you. And you know it didn't just happen. What happened before and now is all connected.

LILLIAN: I think I do understand Miss Hitchings, bad things have happened to us, too --

LEONA: No, no - I been through that with Earl, he got no sense of what it means to be Colored, and neither do you.

LILLIAN: And you have no sense of what it means to be Japanese in this country. You don't know about me --

LEONA: I do know about you --

LILLIAN: You don't know about me. I listened to you, I gave you that courtesy. (pause) Okay. We don't know each other. But we're under one roof now and we both want the same thing. You want to pay the rent, I want you to pay the rent. I know you'll find a job ---

LEONA: I'll find permanent work.

LILLIAN: And you can pay a little extra with each month until you make it up.

LEONA: That's a beginning.

LILLIAN: Yeah, maybe it is...

(They watch each other warily. They shake hands)

-- Cross-fade to --

20. Front stoop. Same Day.

CHET: What are your plans?

EARL: What you mean?

CHET: You know. Sticking around, moving on...

EARL: I don't know, why?

CHET: Nothing.

EARL: And why you send me over to Steuben's? Huh? What was that about? That's bull shit...

CHET: You talked to the Old Man, I talked to Alex, the son --

EARL: No way they gonna hire me - Bunch of god damn peckerwoods...

(Mr. Oji strolls by whistling - tips his hat to them and enters the boarding house)

EARL: This anything about talkin' to Leona?

CHET: What? (understands, shakes his head) Un-uh.

EARL: I wish you wouldn't talk to her when I'm not around.

CHET: I was trying to find you.

EARL: I know that but you don't have to talk to her.

CHET: You told me you were gonna help out, where were you, huh?

EARL: I had business. You say anything about the rent? You know, being late?

CHET: No.

EARL: 'Cause I'll get it to you, I always do.

CHET: I know that, Earl.

EARL: Good, 'cause you know my word is good.

(no response)

EARL: I don't appreciate you comin' around thinkin' I can't when I can.

CHET: Hey, you told me you'd be there - I was looking for you. And did I say, 'Where's the rent, Earl?' Lillian's doing the books now - nobody else is even late. And Leona wanted to talk. She thought I was coming to raise the rent 'cause she's staying here. Hey, what you wanna do is your own goddamn business, just don't waste my time telling me you're gonna be there when you got other things on your mind.

EARL: What's that supposed to mean?

CHET: You know what I mean.

EARL: No, I don't.

CHET: I hear you been sneakin' over to see Benji's sister. You wanna spend your money on that, that's your own business.

EARL: Yeah, that's right, it's my own business.

CHET: But don't be complainin' to me 'cause you can't pay me my rent – which by the way I'm lettin' you slide by on – and you gotta lie to your sister-in-law and then I get blamed for all of this?

EARL: Who told you?

(Chester turns to leave)

EARL: It's not what you think. It's not.

CHET: Yeah...

(Chet exits. Earl watches Chet leave)

-- Cross-fade to --

20A. Office. Continuous Time.

(Mr. Goto enters the office and approaches Lillian)

MR. GOTO: Lillian?

LILLIAN: Goto-san --

(she quickly picks up an envelope and offers it to Mr. Goto)

LILLIAN: For this month.

(Goto takes it and appears embarrassed)

LILLIAN: Yes?

MR. GOTO: I want to buy a present.

LILLIAN: For your wife?

(awkward silence)

MR. GOTO: I was thinking a dress.

(beat)

LILLIAN: That would be nice.

MR. GOTO: You think so?

(Lillian studies Mr. Goto)

LILLIAN: Make sure you know her size. If she's feeling in a young mood, buy her something with brighter colors.

(Goto nods and turns to leave)

LILLIAN: Goto-san, can't you let Chester alone? We got put in Camp because of Pearl Harbor, that's how this mess started, Chester had nothing to do with that --

MR. GOTO: Lillian? We didn't get put in Camp because of Pearl Harbor. We got put away because we were too good growing potatoes. (beat) I'll think about Chester.

(Goto exits and Lillian goes back to the office)

-- Cross-fade to --

22. Backyard. Early evening. Same Day.

(Olga's Phonograph is playing. Mr. Oji and Olga are dancing to the music. They've become fairly proficient. Japanese tea pot and cups, along with Russian pastries sit on a tray. They end with a fancy flourish. Olga is quite delighted with herself)

OLGA: I'm pretty good, now, yes?

MR. OJI: (turning down the phonograph) You must be practicing.

OLGA: Let's eat...

(They begin to eat)

MR. OJI: You like these?

OLGA: Yes. Very. Where do you find?

MR. OJI: In the Richmond District on Balboa Street, there's a shop, Cinderellas. Your uncle didn't tell you about it? We'll take the bus there, a few Russian shops....

OLGA: Please, samovar.

(Mr. Oji hands her the teapot. Watches her for a beat)

OJI: Olga?

OLGA: Yeah?

(Pause)

OJI: What do you think of me?

OLGA: What do you mean, 'think of you'?

MR. OJI: Do you like me?

OLGA: Yes.

(beat)

MR. OJI: Why do you like me?

OLGA: We talk things I like to talk.

MR. OJI: Just that?

OLGA: Why do you say, 'just that'?

(beat)

MR. OJI: Nothing special?

(pause)

OLGA: My life... Hmm, how do I say... I come from far away, I have no more nothing. Family, all no more by Stalinists because we are, hmm, cosmopolitans. You

want me to feel something special. I cannot...how do you say...afford special. I make do. Make do enough. Make do all I want for now.

(Mr. Oji tries to mask his disappointment. He pours tea for Olga. She watches him)

OLGA: Your room? How come you don't let people go in?

MR. OJI: I don't. That's just the way I am.

OLGA: You have big secret. Hiding elephant in there?

MR. OJI: No, no. My room... I like things in their place.

OLGA: If someone go in Mr. Oji's room, it is special, yes? Yes?

MR. OJI: Yes...

OLGA: Good. Good. Maybe some time. I want special.

(Mr. Oji sips his tea and watches Olga munching on a pastry)

OLGA: You want to dance again? Make me happy?

(Turns the music up. They begin to dance.)

Mr. Oji and Olga fade to half-light --

-- Cross-fade to --

23. Alley. Continuous Time.

(Back alley. Mary-Louise returning from work, wearing Earl's coat. Earl pursues her. Mr. Oji & Olga continue dancing. In their own world.)

EARL: -- Who else coulda told Chet?

MARY-LOUISE: Benji wouldn't say anything - 'sides, why do you care if Chet knows?

EARL: Because I don't like other people knowin' my business if I don't tell 'em myself.

(Mary-Louise is fed up and tries to push by)

EARL: (grabbing her) I'm talkin' to you woman.

(Earl and Mary-Louise notice Mr. Oji and Olga looking at them. Mary-Louise pushes by Earl. Oji and Olga decide they should exit into the house)

MARY-LOUISE: You're ashamed of us, aren't you?

EARL: No.

MARY-LOUISE: That why I can't meet your daughter?

EARL: No - why you bringin' this up now? What I'm talkin' about is if Chet tell Lillian and then she tell Leona - Lillian been talkin' to Leona, did you know that? - and then if Leona find out--

MARY-LOUISE: Stop talking, Earl -

(She pulls him towards the porch, throws off his coat)

EARL: (looking around) What you doin'? Jeez...

MARY-LOUISE: Come on, come on Earl. Let's dance. Like them two did.

EARL: What? You don't know what you doin'.

MARY-LOUISE: You want me, dance with me.

EARL: You think this is a game - you know what they do, people see me touchin' you in public?

MARY-LOUISE: We can do this, we can do this, just you and me, Earl --

EARL: And what about Benji, you think about him? We all gonna get it, Mary-Louise. You, me and Benji.

(Mary-Louise watches him, pulls away)

EARL: You don't know woman, you don't know. Cops beat Billy T. for walkin' down Fillmore with that Irish gal. And I ain't just talkin' White folks, Colored folks ain't kinder when it come to this kind of thing...

(Mary-Louise looks at Earl)

MARY-LOUISE: Don't matter. Me and Benji don't need you after all.

(Mary-Louise walks away, leaving Earl alone)

-- Cross-fade to --

24. Buddhist Service. Day Five.

(we hear Buddhist CHANTING and BELL TONES. Let this fill the scene. Mournful, haunting, transporting. This is the Memorial service for Chester's brother, Tadashi.

Chet and Lillian lit in pool of light. They stand with their heads bowed and hands together in gassho ((Buddhist prayer)). They finish. Bow.

Isolated in a corridor of light. As they cross to the boarding house, Lillian bows and Chet nods to other guests. Lillian is upset, Chet uncomfortable)

25. Day Five. Parlor. Dusk.

(Chet and Lillian enter the Parlor)

CHET: Did your Dad talk to you?

LILLIAN: No.

CHET: It was nice of them to come.

(no response)

CHET: I talked to Hank. He's the oldest?

LILLIAN: What did he tell you?

CHET: He asked how you were doing. (beat) I thought the Reverend gave a nice sermon. I just wish I coulda understood it.

LILLIAN: (smiling) Your Japanese that bad?

CHET: I worked at it.

LILLIAN: I'm sorry Tad's friends still won't talk to you.

CHET: We shouldn't have gone together. Maybe it isn't a good idea you staying here.

(Lillian doesn't respond)

CHET: People talk around here. Your Mom and Dad. I don't want to do that to your family.

LILLIAN: I don't care.

CHET: (picking up photo) You don't need my shame. I killed Tad, Lillian.

LILLIAN: Why do you keep saying that?

CHET: Everyone keeps telling me –

LILLIAN: You didn't kill your brother.

CHET: It's what Goto and the others are saying. 'He went to make up for my shame'...

LILLIAN: You had nothing to do with it!

(beat)

LILLIAN: I got pregnant. That's why he enlisted. He was running away.

CHET: What are you talking about?

LILLIAN: I was so mad I prayed I'd lose the baby, God must of heard because I lost it soon after.

CHET: I don't understand, you got -- what? He ran away, why would Tad run away?

LILLIAN: He couldn't face up to his responsibilities, he was afraid what your mother would say --

CHET: Yeah but he went and got himself killed --

LILLIAN: Yes, yes, he did, and no matter how much I hate the reasons, it was his choice, his choice. Not mine, not yours. We can't carry that for him Chester. He wasn't a hero. Far from it.

CHESTER: Don't say that.

LILLIAN: What was he then? Face up to it Chester, I sure as hell had to. You talk about your shame, what about my shame? Knocked up, stuck in Camp, everybody's into everybody's business, my family... And Tad runs off, just ups and runs off like a coward.

CHESTER: Don't say that! (pause) I didn't know.

(Lillian composing herself)

LILLIAN: And now that you do?

CHESTER: I believed in this country. I did, Lillian. I mean, who wouldn't? Mom and Pop come here, can't speak the language, don't know the customs and it welcomes them. Sure it's not all fun and games but it's a helluva lot better than eating grubs in the boondocks of Hiroshima. They work hard, get a boarding house and they prosper. They're happy. Boy's Day, Obon dancing, New Year's we pound mochi -- And me? I'm diggin' it. Tad and me go to the movies Saturday morning see what Buster Crabbe is up to, then sneak into Seal Stadium to watch the DiMaggio brothers. About the 7th inning we get hungry so we high tail over to Black Point, we trap crabs off the pier and bring it all home so Mom can cook them up and we all sit around the table, stuffing our faces. Tad and me use our fingers dipping the meat in butter and shoyu. We eat 3 bowls each of hot, steamy rice and we feast and feast till Tad and me, we can't move, Pop has to loosen his belt and Mom laughs and laughs...

Now Tad's dead. This country thinks I'm a criminal, my own people think I'm a traitor.

LILLIAN: You stood up for something, Chester. You've got nothing you have to prove. You've got nothing you have to earn to belong here.

CHET: If they woulda just said that, I woulda gone in a heart beat.

(pause)

CHET: I wouldn't have left you alone, Lillian.

(Chet touches Lillian's face. They walk into the office together. Chet shuts the curtains)

-- Cross-fade to --

28. Front of House. Late evening. Same day.

(Mr. Oji enters bringing flowers when Olga comes down the stairs with Goto. Mr. Oji hides in a doorway. Goto gives Olga some extra money and exits. Olga turns and sees Mr. Oji)

MR. OJI: I was bringing you some flowers. Here.

(Oji hands Olga the flowers. Olga takes them, upset)

MR. OJI: Do you like them? Do you like some other kind? I can bring those --

OLGA: You see me with Goto-san. You know.

MR. OJI: Whatever you do is your business.

OLGA: That's right. It's my business.

(awkward beat. Oji motions to the flowers)

MR. OJI: They're camellias. I thought you might like them. They're bright and full. They remind me of you.

(Olga doesn't respond, clutches the flowers. Mr. Oji turns to leave)

OLGA: My uncle? The Russian one?

MR. OJI: Yes?

OLGA: He is not uncle.

MR. OJI: Oh...

OLGA: And Goto-san? He is friend of uncle who is not really uncle.

MR. OJI: What does that have to do with you?

OLGA: Why you ask questions? This part of lesson now? (beat) I owe crook uncle money. Crook uncle owe Goto-san money. So crook uncle give me to Goto-san to pay off his money.

MR. OJI: How could he - I don't understand --

OLGA: Now I owe Goto-san the money I owe to my uncle.

MR. OJI: How much do you owe him?

OLGA: (sharply) None of your business.

(silence)

OLGA: I do many things to get here. But I...hmm...choose to do them. Me. Nobody else.

MR. OJI: I have money --

OLGA: I pay debt off to Goto-san. I pay. I have to for me.

(awkward silence)

OLGA: (quietly) I would like to come into Mr. Oji's room. I want special.

(pause. Mr. Oji and Olga exit upstairs)

-- Cross-fade to --

(Lillian and Chet emerge and look at the night. Blanket wrapped around them)

LILLIAN: Say my name.

(Chet isn't sure what she wants)

CHET: Lillian.

(She smiles)

LILLIAN: I like that.

(Chet turns to her)

CHET: Lillian.

LILLIAN: Gives me goose bumps. (looks back at him) Chet.

(Chet smiles at Lillian)

CHET: I used to think anything Japanese was uncool. Speaking it, eating it, being it. Jazz was cool. Maybe I wasn't good enough. My playing.

LILLIAN: Maybe you weren't colored enough.

(Chet watches her)

CHET: I don't know anymore.

LILLIAN: That's a good place to start.

(Chet puts his arm around Lillian and they go back into his room)

27. Day Six. Parlor. Morning.

(Chet emerges from the office with his trumpet in a sack. He's gotten out of bed - tank top, bare feet. Lillian is still asleep in the office. He quietly puts on his shirt and shoes, goes out front door, carrying his horn. Benji is sitting on the front stoop and Chet ruffles his hair as he passes.)

26. Parlor. Continuous time.

(Earl exits the house and finds Benji)

BENJI: Earl.

EARL: You tell Chet about me and your sister?

(pause)

BENJI: No.

EARL: Who else did you tell? (beat) Benji, you tell anybody else?

(no response)

EARL: Why I wastin' time on you.

BENJI: You gonna bring more pork chops by?

(Earl gives up and starts to walk away)

BENJI: Maybe Mary-Louise told Chet.

EARL: Why would she do that?

(Pause)

BENJI: Chicago.

EARL: Yeah, 'Chicago', what?

BENJI: She knows Chet in Chicago.

EARL: She knows Chet in Chicago...

(Earl enters the house)

--Cross-fade to--

30. Parlor. Continuous Time.

(Lillian emerges from the office in her slip)

LILLIAN: (looking around) Chester?

(Earl runs into Lillian, who covers herself)

EARL: (noticing) Excuse me, sorry, Miss Okamura...

LILLIAN: Mr. Worthing...

(awkward beat)

EARL: Is Chet in his room?

LILLIAN: No. Can I help you with anything?

(pause)

EARL: Did Chet know Miss Tucker in Chicago?

(beat)

LILLIAN: Why?

(Earl studies her)

EARL: Seeing how things are, maybe it don't matter.

(Earl exits. Lillian watches him for a beat, then goes upstairs.)

-- Cross-fade to --

31A. Kitchen. Continuous Time.

(Leona returns from work, passing by Lillian as she exits up the stairs in her slip. Leona crosses through the hallway into the kitchen. She immediately puts her money into her JAR in the cupboard. Earl watches from the back porch. He enters into the kitchen.)

EARL: Leona?

LEONA: Earl, you're up.

EARL: Can I have some water?

LEONA: Sure Earl. Something wrong?

(Leona pours some water and gives it to him. She watches him)

EARL: Berniece over at Teraoka's?

LEONA: (nodding) Un-huh. I'll get her when supper is ready.

(Leona studies him)

LEONA: I got a letter from my Mama. Said the summer's a bad one. She had to move all the okra she put up last year over to Mrs. Shepherd's cellar. Keep it from spoiling.

EARL: Mrs. Shepherd still alive?

LEONA: (smiling) Yeah, barely.

(share a quiet laugh)

EARL: Anything about Bessie?

(pause)

LEONA: No, but about your sister. She's expecting again.

EARL: Yeah?

LEONA: Everybody thinks it's a girl 'cause all she wants is watermelon and ice cream.

EARL: I know she been wanting one.

(Leona picks up Earl's jacket to hang it up when she notices a smell. She sniffs the jacket. It's the smell of perfume. She hangs up his jacket. She watches him for a beat)

LEONA: You rest. I gotta run to the store. I'm gonna make us a peach cobbler. You just set for a while...

(Leona grabs her purse and leaves. Earl remains, thinking)

-- Cross-fade to --

(Chet lit in a spot light with his horn. We don't know where he is. There is an echo)

CHET: Hey! (echoes) Hey! (echoes) Stinks like piss in here! (echoes) This used to be my house! (echoes) My house! (echoes) Make me sound like Ziggy Elman! (echoes)

(brings the horn up and fingers it)

CHET: Come on baby, let's see we still know them ingredients...

(Brings the horn up to his lips. Black out)

32. Mary-Louise's room. Early Evening. Same Day.

(Benji pulling Lillian into his and Mary-Louise's room)

BENJI: Come on! Come on! --

(Mary-Louise is throwing up into a wastebasket. Lillian smells a glass of water and is repulsed by the strong odor)

LILLIAN: What'd you drink?

MARY-LOUISE: (puking) I'm all right Benji, I'm all right --

BENJI: I couldn't find Chet.

LILLIAN: (to Benji) Get a glass of water. And some clean towels.

(Benji doesn't move)

MARY-LOUISE: Go.

(Benji unfreezes and exits)

LILLIAN: Oh, jeez, the water...

(Lillian gets the pitcher and pours water for Mary-Louise, who sits back exhausted. The worst is over. Lillian hands the glass of water to Mary-Louise who sips)

MARY-LOUISE: I feel like I've puked my guts out.

(referring to the wastebasket, joking) Are they in there?

LILLIAN: You should go to the hospital.

MARY-LOUISE: Nah, I'm okay, now.

LILLIAN: At least let's get Doc Matsumoto here.

MARY-LOUISE: No, I'm fine...

(Benji runs in with towels. Lillian takes one and starts to wipe Mary-Louise's face)

MARY-LOUISE: (takes the towel) I can do it myself...

LILLIAN: (to Benji) Go get Doc Matsumoto. You know where his office is?

MARY-LOUISE: You know, Ando's Fish Store? On top of it...

(Benji is reluctant to leave)

It's okay, go, go...

(Benji leaves. Mary sits back exhausted. They look at each other for a bit)

MARY-LOUISE: Thanks for coming. You're wondering why I'd do something like this...

LILLIAN: I'm sure you have your reasons.

MARY-LOUISE: This isn't the first time. I've done it before.

LILLIAN: Why do you want to kill yourself?

MARY-LOUISE: No - see, that's it.

LILLIAN: What do you mean?

MARY-LOUISE: I'm pregnant. That's what I'm trying to kill.

(silence)

I don't think I did any damage. It was a half-ass try anyway, I hardly used any bleach.

LILLIAN: Who's the father?

(Mary-Louise doesn't respond)

LILLIAN: I know you knew Chester in Chicago.

(Mary-Louise watches her)

MARY-LOUISE: You ever hear Chet play? There's a recording he made with Lionel Hampton in Chicago. Listen to it. (beat) It's Earl. The father.

LILLIAN: Earl? Earl Worthing? Does he know?

MARY-LOUISE: (shaking his head) Un-uh.

LILLIAN: You don't know how lucky you are.

MARY-LOUISE: What? I'm pregnant, not married and the father's a nigger - I'm lucky?

(silence)

LILLIAN: When you gonna tell him?

(no response)

LILLIAN: How you feeling? Want to throw-up more?

MARY-LOUISE: No, no, I'm fine - you can go. It was only baking soda and a little bleach.

LILLIAN: You're blessed.

(pause)

MARY-LOUISE: Funny thing is, I want the baby.

(Lillian watches her for a beat, then exits)

-- Cross-fade to --

33. Office. Continuous Time.

(Olga enters. She snips a bud from a bouquet of flowers and places it in her hair. Olga exits back into her room.)

Lillian enters from Mary-Louise's room to the Office. She sees Chet's duffle bag and looks inside. She finds the Lionel Hampton LP and looks at it. She puts the RECORD on the phonograph. It's Chet's solo and it's fiery and full of blood. Lillian listens, eyes closed, absorbing his music.

Leona Hitchings enters the office and watches Lillian. Lillian notices her and turns off the phonograph)

33A. Office. Continuous Time.

LEONA: (referring to the music) That's nice. (Leona hands some money to Lillian)
It's just a little. But like you said, "something".

LILLIAN: I hear you're working at the Fish Bowl.

LEONA: Part time.

LILLIAN: It's still work.

LEONA: Yes. It is.

LILLIAN: (referring to the bills) Not wrapped this time.

LEONA: Business is business. No use pretending otherwise.

(Lillian nods)

LILLIAN: Berniece is good?

LEONA: We're all good. Earl will find work soon and we'll get you the rent steady.

(Nothing more to say. Leona starts to leave then turns back, hesitates)

LILLIAN: Miss Hitchings?

LEONA: You know Benji's sister? That girl?

LILLIAN: Yes?

LEONA: Does Earl know her?

(beat)

LILLIAN: I believe he might.

(pause)

LEONA: All right...

(Leona turns and leaves)

-- Cross-fade to --

34. Backyard. Evening. Same Day.

(Olga leaving out back door for the Golden Gate Dance Palace where she now works. She wears Goto's dress)

(Mr. Goto appears)

MR. GOTO: Where're you going?

OLGA: I get job. I go to Dance Palace.

MR. GOTO: (touching her dress) How can you do that? You go dancing with other men.

OLGA: So? This America. You tell me. I can do anything I want –

(Mr. Goto strikes her hard across the face. Olga pulls herself away. Lillian crosses to back door and listens, unseen)

MR. GOTO: You don't talk, you don't dance, you don't see anyone. Unless I say so.

OLGA: You know nothing. You're such big man. He tell me, he tell me.

MR. GOTO: Who are you talking about?

OLGA: Mr. O'Connell-san. Your friend who knows mayor. Yeah, he come to dance with me. He say you don't know.

(pause)

MR. GOTO: Don't know what?

OLGA: Japanese Town, your precious Nihon Machi – the City tear down. All this, the City tear down and make like new. That's why they take picture. And you don't know.

(Olga runs into the boarding house past Lillian. Mr. Goto turns and sees Lillian has heard everything. He exits. Lillian enters the kitchen)

-- Cross-fade to --

Scene 35. 2nd Story porch. Evening. Continuous time.

(Earl and Mary-Louise on the second story of the fire escape)

EARL: I'm not ashamed of you Mary-Louise.

MARY-LOUISE: You want Leona and you want me, too. You can't have it both ways.

EARL: It's not about Leona, I don't want her. It's about you, Mary-Louise. Just you.

(Earl takes a wad of bills and holds it out to her)

MARY-LOUISE: Where'd you get all that money?

EARL: Don't worry, it's all right. This'll buy you a lot of pork chops. Keep you and Benji in good stead for a while.

(Mary-Louise takes the money)

EARL: We go down to Los Angeles, I get me a job at the docks, visit Hollywood...

MARY-LOUISE: I wouldn't mind going there. Hollywood.

EARL: See some movie stars, huh.

MARY-LOUISE: So when we going Earl? You, me and Benji. When we going?

(beat)

EARL: Tomorrow. We go tomorrow.

MARY-LOUISE: How we gonna get there?

EARL: Bus. (plucks a few bills from her hand) I go down to the bus station and get us some tickets right now.

(Earl exits)

-- Cross-fade to --

Scene 37. Back porch. Evening. Continuous Time.

(Chester returns to the boarding house, with his trumpet and a paper bag. Lillian enters.)

LILLIAN: Chester.

CHET: Doughnuts! (tosses the bag to Lillian) Golden Gate Park, you know that walk-way under 10th Avenue? (holds up his horn) I been blowin' in there. I still got some chops. The Town Club here on Sutter – it's small they have jam sessions on Sunday I can get my feet wet. Why don't you come with me?

LILLIAN: I'd like that. (beat) You've been gone all afternoon.

CHET: I needed to get out, walk around. What's-a- matter?

LILLIAN: I think you should go see Mary-Louise.

CHET: Why? Something happen?

LILLIAN: You should go see her, Chester.

(Chet exits)

--Cross-fade to --

37A. Kitchen.

(Leona returns to the Kitchen. Benji enters.)

LEONA: What do you want?

BENJI: Can I have a hand pie? Can I have some for my sister, too.

LEONA: (looking around) Go out to the porch. I'll get some for your sister, too.

(Leona goes to put some change in her money Jar. All her money is gone. Leona crosses to the porch)

LEONA: Benji?

BENJI: Mary-Louise gonna have a baby. What's going to happen to me?

LEONA: I don't know, Benji. I don't know.

(She stares at Benji. Benji exits. Leona crosses to the kitchen and sits down in front of her empty jar. Waits)

37C. Back Porch. Evening. Same day.

(Olga exits the back door carrying a suitcase. Oji descends the back stairs in his bathrobe, holding a teapot. He sees her)

MR. OJI: Olga?

OLGA: I have to go.

MR. OJI: Where are you going?

OLGA: Russian boy. From village near mine. I get married. Gyorgi just come on boat.

MR. OJI: What? I don't understand.

OLGA: I don't like you. I pretend.

MR. OJI: What? Why are you saying this?

OLGA: All the time I pretend Mr. Oji --

(Olga tries to push past Oji. He stops her and notices a bruise on her face)

MR. OJI: What happened?

(Olga is silent, Mr. Oji understands. He touches the bruise, then leans in and gently kisses it)

MR. OJI: Go. (Olga hesitates) Go!

(She relents and runs away. Oji watches her disappear. He exits upstairs)

Cross-fade to –

37B. Kitchen. Evening. Continuous Time.

(Earl moves through the hallway passed the kitchen. Leona sees him. Earl enters)

LEONA: Where's my money? Earl?

EARL: I pay you back, Leona. I left my I-owe-you.

LEONA: You give it to that White girl?

EARL: You know my word is good. I pay you back every cent I took.

LEONA: Your mama say, 'Leona, go help my boy, Earl, with his little girl. He still waiting for Bessie to come back but she already with another man.' I didn't tell you that right off out of respect for you --

EARL: I don't wanna get into Bessie right now Leona, now ain't the time to be talkin' 'bout --

LEONA: Out of respect for your manhood and then you treat me like this, steal my money and give it to your whore --

EARL: I said I pay you back Leona --

LEONA: You wanna be with those other folks so much you blind to what they doing to you.

EARL: What you mean?

LEONA: Nobody gonna watch out for you 'cept your own kind. Your mama understand that 'bout you that's why she said, 'Go. Be with my boy'...(pause) Just a small piece, that's all I want. I don't need all of you, that'd be selfish, a woman like me understands that. Just a small piece to take care of, cook for, hold me. Why do you look for it somewhere else like that White girl? I'm right here. The same flesh and blood as my sister. Why can't you give me that, huh? Why can't you look at me like that woman?

EARL: You don't know nothin' 'bout Mary-Louise --

LEONA: She's pregnant, I know that.

(beat)

(Earl turns to go)

LEONA: (calling after) Go see your whore and get my money back!

-- Cross-fade to --

38. Mary-Louise's Room. Chet and Mary-Louise sit on the bed. Evening. Continuous Time.

CHET: I know, I know, Mary-Louise --

MARY-LOUISE: I wanted that baby.

(silence)

CHET: You pregnant by Earl?

MARY-LOUISE: I'm keeping this one --

(Earl bursts in, sees the two of them together)

EARL: What's he doing here? Mary-Louise? What's he doing here?

MARY-LOUISE: We had some things to discuss –

EARL: Yeah, like what?

CHET: It's got nothing to do with you.

EARL: What you mean, 'nothin' to do with me'?

CHET: It's between Mary-Louise and me, it's none of your business.

EARL: Like hell it ain't none of my business.

MARY-LOUISE: It happened a long time ago, Earl, --

EARL: See, see, I knew about you two, I knew, but I let it go, I let it go -- (cont)

MARY-LOUISE: (overlapping) There's nothing going on--

(Benji appears, watches, agitated)

EARL: -- but now I'm thinkin' maybe you two been shackin' up all along, playin' me like a fool --

CHET: What the hell you talking about --

(Earl getting in Chet's face)

EARL: I know about Chicago, I know about Chicago, Benji told me you been sneakin' in here behind my back.

CHET: What the hell you talking about, Earl?

(Earl and Chet begin to tangle up)

MARY-LOUISE: (trying to break it up) Stop it, stop it

BENJI: I never said nothing! I never said nothing!

(Benji exits)

CHET: You the one sneaking around, you the one sneaking around --

EARL: What, you protectin' her ass now? Want it all for yourself --

MARY-Louise: Earl, Earl, it's not like that, it's not like that --

CHET: Man, what the hell's wrong with you --

EARL: You pregnant, ain't you, you pregnant - I know, I know and why ain't you told me? Huh? What, what, this Chet's baby? That - (cont.)

MARY-LOUISE: Earl? Earl? --

EARL: (cont.) -- why you been keepin' it a secret 'tween you and him?

CHET: It's your baby.

EARL: How the hell I know that? Who else you -- (cont.)

MARY-LOUISE: (overlapping) It's your baby --

EARL: -- had in your bed? Nigger --

CHET: Earl, Earl, it's your baby -

EARL: -- always get the left-overs don't he Mary-Louise --

(Earl has grabbed Mary-Louise and is shaking her. Chet trying to break it up)

CHET: Earl! Earl! Stop it, stop it, man! Earl!

(Benji appears with a shotgun)

BENJI: Don't touch Mary-Louise. Don't you hit – (cont.)

MARY-LOUISE: (overlapping) Benji, Benji, what are you doing?

CHET: (overlapping) Easy, easy Benji. Put it down, put it down...

EARL: What? What? You gonna shoot me?

BENJI: (cont.) -- her. Don't you hit her. Nobody hurt my sister.

(Chet grabs the gun away from Benji and Earl goes after Benji)

MARY-LOUISE: Leave him alone! Earl!

CHET: Earl! Earl! --

(Lillian appears)

LILLIAN: I'm gonna call the police!

CHET: We don't need the police. Take Mary-Louise and Benji downstairs. Go. Go Lillian.

(Lillian exits with Mary-Louise and Benji)

(Earl stares at the shotgun.)

EARL: 3 years they lock you up. And now you standin' there defendin' that White boy over me.

CHET: It's got nothing to do with the boy's race --

EARL: It's all got to do with race. Everything's 'bout race. What they done to you they been doin' to us for a long time, can't you see that? We on the same side of the fence. (beat) But maybe you know that. Maybe that's what this all about.

CHET: What are you saying Earl?

EARL: I ask myself what you doin' on that side of the door holdin' a gun in my face and now I think I know, Leona right all along.

CHET: Earl, what's wrong with you? Don't measure me like White folks.

EARL: You got the gun, you the landlord, well?

CHET: If it's not Colored it's gotta be White? Is that it?

EARL: 'Cause that's all there is as far as I know.

CHET: Look at me. Look at me, Earl. I'm standing right here. Can't you see me?
Look. Look.

(beat)

EARL: I'm a Colored man, Chester. That's all I know.

38A. Visual montage. Out of Time.

(Chet takes his horn to the roof and plays. It's a haunting, simple horn solo.

Mary-Louise in her room packing. Oji sitting in the kitchen with his tea-pot. Goto entering the front door. Lillian on the back porch listening. Each hears Chet's music in their own time, in their own way)

-- Cross-fade to --

39. Day Seven. Parlor. Morning.

(Goto sits in the parlor holding a gift. Chet enters from the roof.)

MR. GOTO: Where's Olga?

CHET: She's gone.

(Goto looks back at Olga's room)

MR. GOTO: I could have given her anything. Anything.

CHET: Let her go Goto-san.

(Goto is silent)

MR. GOTO: If you see her, tell her she was right about the photographs.

(Goto looks around at the rooming house)

MR. GOTO: I like what you've done to the place. Your mama would be proud. The Housing Commission calls it blight. Blight. It's all coming down. This country... And we aren't even growing potatoes. We aren't even growing potatoes.

(Mr. Goto exits)

-- Mary-Louise and Benji enter from the back with suitcases. Mary-Louise gives Chet her room key. Benji and Mary-Louise leave the boarding house. Chet stands in the parlor --

-- Leona appears at the top of the stairs and watches --

-- Earl appears and stops Mary-Louise on the front stoop. Mary-Louise and Earl look at each other. Mary-Louise hands Earl the money. He places it back into her hand then enters the house and exits up the front steps past Leona --

-- Lillian enters the front stoop area --

-- Benji hands his photograph to Lillian --

LILLIAN: It's you in front of the Rooming House...

(Benji takes Mary-Louise's hand and they exit. Lillian enters the house)

(Earl descends the stairs with a duffle bag. He speaks to Leona and Chet)

EARL: I'm going down to San Pedro, get work. I'll send you the money I owe you.

CHET: Forget it.

EARL: I'll send you the money.

CHET: All right.

EARL: I don't know you. You don't know me. And we'll leave it at that.

(beat)

CHET: We'll leave it at that.

(Earl turns to Leona on the stairs)

EARL: I know Bernice in good hands, Leona.

(Earl exits.

Lillian and Leona exchange looks.

Leona withdraws up the stairs.

Lillian holds Benji's photograph and considers giving it to Chet.

Mr. Oji passes by. Mr. Oji is oddly formal again, as he was in the beginning)

LILLIAN: Mr. Oji.

(Mr. Oji nods stiffly and exits upstairs. Chester and Lillian watch Mr. Oji exit.)

(Lillian hands Chet the photograph)

LILLIAN: Do you know what this means?

(Chet nods. Lillian takes off her coat and approaches Chet)

LILLIAN: I heard you playing. (pause) You're not bad, Chet Monkawa. You're not bad.

CHET: I have my moments.

LILLIAN: We'll find you a place to play.

(Begin a slow fade to black --)

(OPTIONAL: above them, the following --

Post Script: In 1948, the city of San Francisco ordered photographs taken of Buildings ear-marked for eminent Domain seizure. In 1950, 6 years after the last Internment Camp was closed, the first notices for eviction in Japanese Town and Western Addition went up. By 1960 a large area through the heart of those neighborhoods would be demolished. A Japanese Corporation would build the Kintetsu Mall.

(Fade to black)

END OF PLAY.

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