

# In Da Boogie Down

Written by

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# IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

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## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

### **Characters**

Wilton Fernandez, 17

Carmen Fernandez, 40's

Pablo Fernandez, 40's

Yazmin Garcia, 17

Juliana Garcia, 30's

Walter Mercado, ageless soothsayer (voice only)

Maggie Carlsen, 30's

Jamal Faulkner, 17

Nicholas Soto, 40's

Byron Adler, 40's

Hotel Bartender, 30's

Armando Cruz, 22

Prison Security Guard

Dona Castro, 50's

Young man, 20's

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## SCENE 1

*Bronx, New York - Present day - 10pm*

*ARMANDO CRUZ and WILTON FERNANDEZ on the roof of a tenement building sharing a joint.*

**ARMANDO.** I swear on my mom's stone bro. What I be tellin' you is a true fact of life. I saw the fuckin' tip of the icepick peeking out of the dudes left ear. Shit was nasty.

**WILTON.** So, he dead, right?

**ARMANDO.** Not exactly.

**WILTON.** Fuck outta here.

**ARMANDO.** Yo let's just say the dudes one lucky motherfucker 'cause he was set and scheduled to be covered up in dirt. Like six feet under type of buried. You know what I'm sayin'?

**WILTON.** He done survived?

**ARMANDO.** Hell, yes indeed he did.

**WILTON.** Serious?

**ARMANDO.** Yo, Five-0 came and saved his little Mexican-chico ass.

**WILTON.** Damn.

**ARMANDO.** Yo you hear about what happened to my ace boon Papo?

**WILTON.** What happened?

**ARMANDO.** My boy done got himself clipped and shit.

**WILTON.** Yeah, yeah, I heard about it. Fucked up.

**ARMANDO.** He was playin' dice right in front of his crib. One of them inside type of jobs and shit. Got himself checkmated. I don't know by who, but you know for sure I'm gonna be findin' out soon enough and when I do, I'm gonna be doin' some serious big time punishin' you can believe that. Shit like this can make you tight.

**WILTON.** That's for damn sure.

**ARMANDO.** Como te gusta *La Dona Juana*?

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**WILTON.** It's nice.

**ARMANDO.** Long ass time your lungs ain't be feelin' that.

**WILTON.** Long ass time for sure.

**ARMANDO.** You lookin' strong bro. Lookin' all diesel and shit.

**WILTON.** Thank you.

**ARMANDO.** Yeah, I can see you been doin' da work, done lost your beechnut belly.

**WILTON.** Yo, I've been doin' nothin' for the past 2 1/2 years but reading, exercising and watchin' my back.

**ARMANDO.** You got plans bro? 'Cause I got me some plans.

**WILTON.** They just for yourself?

**ARMANDO.** That depends on you and how you feelin'.

**WILTON.** Oh yeah is that so?

**ARMANDO.** Yeah. So, tell me bro, how you feelin'?

**WILTON.** I ain't feelin' what you be wantin' me to be feelin'.

**ARMANDO.** How's that again?

**WILTON.** I'm tired bro.

**ARMANDO.** Tired?

**WILTON.** Yeah.

**ARMANDO.** Is that right?

**WILTON.** Yeah, bro.

**ARMANDO.** You bein' fuckin' serious with me?

**WILTON.** I am, bro. (*Armando pulls out a gun.*)

**ARMANDO.** You droppin' the motherfuckin' flag on me, checkin' yourself out, doin' the ghost, is that what I'm hearin' from you?

**WILTON.** It's not like how you sayin' it is.

**ARMANDO.** Motherfucker after all I've done for your sorry skinny ass. I made you a fuckin' man bro. I gave you those fuckin' balls you be wearin' and you know that shit's an eternal signed, sealed and delivered fact of your goddamn motherfuckin' life.

**WILTON.** I don't wanna have to be livin' like that kind of man no more. (*Armando offers Wilton the gun.*)

**ARMANDO.** Take it...take it.

**WILTON.** I can't be touching that.

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**ARMANDO.** You can't be smokin' that shit either. Take the motherfucker now. (*Wilton takes the gun.*)

**ARMANDO.** Feel that double device...yeah, that's right. Feel your heart dawg, shit be pumpin' blood inside you like a motherfucker. You feelin' that adrenaline rush real hard now. (*Wilton offers the gun back. Armando takes it from him in disgust.*)

**ARMANDO.** Fuckin' mama bicho...what am I gonna do with your ass, huh? (*Armando points the gun at Wilton.*) Tell me, do I exile you to the underground, cover your ass up in dirt and shit or do I cripple you a little bit? You got any suggestions, no?

**WILTON.** I just need to stop claimin' G. (*Armando lowers the gun to his side, puts it away.*)

**ARMANDO.** Who you gonna be dawg?

**WILTON.** I don't know.

**ARMANDO.** Those motherfuckin' tear drops on your neck means you forever linked to the M.P.B, da Monastery of The Precious Blood.

**WILTON.** I know.

**ARMANDO.** Shut the fuck up, you don't know shit about this here reality that you in. Let me tell you somethin' straight up, don't be confusin' this moment in time with no kind of blood transfusion. We like a cancer tumor. We'll always be on the inside of who you are till your last breath. Nobody done fucked with you while you were on the inside. I made sure of that.

**WILTON.** I appreciate it.

**ARMANDO.** It all comes down to represent, respect and recognize, you remember that shit.

**WILTON.** It ain't goin' nowhere.

**ARMANDO.** Good. You just need to keep rememberin' to make sure that it don't. (*Armando makes his way down the fire escape just as YAZMIN GARCIA is coming up.*)

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### SCENE 2

*Yazmin and Armando on the fire escape.*

**ARMANDO.** Ahhh shit, look what the night wind done just blew my way.

**YAZMIN.** What's up?

**ARMANDO.** Look at you girl, damn, you done got yourself a mad shape and shit since I last saw you.

**YAZMIN.** You seen my cuz around?

**ARMANDO.** He's upstairs gettin' himself rehabilitated. Why you bein' all stiff and shit. You just don't be findin' me charming no more?

**YAZMIN.** I never did. Can I get by now?

**ARMANDO.** Can I get by now? Look at you gettin' all brave and shit.

**YAZMIN.** Please.

**ARMANDO.** How come you and me ain't never hooked up?

**YAZMIN.** You just ain't never had the kind of bait that I like to be tastin', that's all what that's about.

**ARMANDO.** Saber tooth, damn.

**YAZMIN.** It's just how the world be spinnin'.

**ARMANDO.** You here now?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah.

**ARMANDO.** Your mom's still upstate.

**YAZMIN.** Yeah. Can I go now?

**ARMANDO.** You know I got a soft spot for you right? 'Cause if I didn't, you'd be layin' up cold at the bottom of these here steps. Know what I'm sayin'?

**YAZMIN.** I don't mean to be disrespectin' you and all, I just...

**ARMANDO.** Shit, you frontin' on me girl, that's what you're doin'. I love it. Don't nobody ever wanna be on their last string of hair with me, but you got yourself some serious ass spunk inside of you that's for damn sure. I gotta be watchin' myself with you. From now on I'm gonna be callin' you, Ms. Ballsier 'cause you got yourself quite a pair hangin' on yourself girl. It's cool. I like it. It's sexy. Tell me, you still sittin' in a classroom?

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**YAZMIN.** Yeah, you?

**ARMANDO.** Am I what?

**YAZMIN.** Doin' the classroom thing?

**ARMANDO.** Yo, open your eyes little girl 'cause I been done graduated.

**YAZMIN.** You graduated?

**ARMANDO.** That's right, what you're feastin' on is a workin' man. Whatchu be thinkin' about me? I ain't be bustin' my ass up and down this here food chain little girl to be no kind of vegetarian. Shit, I'm carnivorous. I got me three degrees and everything.

**YAZMIN.** How you be gettin' three degrees?

**ARMANDO.** I'm a phi beta kappa in stick-up, pick-up and terrorizing.

**YAZMIN.** Those ain't real degrees. (*Armando takes from his pocket a roll of bills.*)

**ARMANDO.** You see this batch I got in my hands; this is as real as it gets.

**YAZMIN.** It's dirty.

**ARMANDO.** It's green. That's all it ever needs to be.

**YAZMIN.** I need to go.

**ARMANDO.** I wanna show you my new tattoo.

**YAZMIN.** Why?

**ARMANDO.** Because I think you'd like it alright?

**YAZMIN.** Okay. (*Armando lifts up his shirt revealing a spider-web tattoo just above his beltline.*)

**ARMANDO.** It's cool right? You know what it means?

**YAZMIN.** No.

**ARMANDO.** It represents the captive one, the imprisonment of the prey. My struggles in life. The day-to-day heartbreak, like the kind you be giving me.

**YAZMIN.** I really need to get goin'.

**ARMANDO.** Un besito?

(*Yazmin goes to kiss Armando's cheek, but he gives her his lips. No words. Yazmin starts going up the fire escape as Armando starts going down. Yazmin stops, checks her phone.*)

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### SCENE 3

*Armando enters the third-floor window - Wilton's Apartment.*

**ARMANDO.** *Con permiso madrina. (CARMEN FERNANDEZ, Wilton's mother stands frozen in silence.)* You cooking? *(Carmen remains silent, her eyes locked on Armando.)* I like the smell of this house. It makes me remember those times when you and my moms be cookin' it up for the holidays. You remember those times, right?

**CARMEN.** She was a good woman.

**ARMANDO.** She was a good friend. Good friends be takin' care of each other. Just ask your little sister. *(Armando approaches, he grabs a spoon to sample the cooking. Carmen stops his hand.)*

**CARMEN.** I want you out of my house.

**ARMANDO.** Say what?

**CARMEN.** I don't want your poison to touch my son.

**ARMANDO.** Excuse you?

**CARMEN.** I want you to stay away from my...

**ARMANDO.** I HEARD YOU THE FIRST FUCKIN' TIME! *(Silence. Armando takes a spoonful of food.)* You still got the touch. Bendicion Dona Carmen. *(Armando exits through the front door of the apartment. Carmen quickly chain locks the door behind him. She sits down, crosses herself, begins to cry.)*

### SCENE 4

*Tenement Rooftop - Wilton leans over the edge of the roof looking down at the streets below.*

**WILTON.** *\*Prison is time/Es la hora de pensar/about making the right and being responsible for the wrong one/The only hard is in the head that waste time on the outside/The smoke in the lung/The corner/The laughter/The drink/The mind stays idle when it refuses to think/On the steps of a tenement/Tree kickin' it with the crew about how things are suppose to be done/There's no tellin' how much destruction can spread*

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*from an act of fun. (\*This poem represents Wilton's inner thoughts. Yazmin steps onto the roof, comes up behind Wilton. She takes in the aroma of what he is smoking.)*

**YAZMIN.** Aren't people like you suppose to be on some kind of probation plan or somethin' like that?

**WILTON.** I see my P.O. on Thursday. That gives me seventy-two hours to clear out my system with yodels, cheese doodles and diet doctor pepper.

**YAZMIN.** I don't wanna be worryin' about you cuz.

**WILTON.** I'm good. Besides there's no ghetto birds hovering over me. So, tell me what's up with you girl?

**YAZMIN.** Nuthin'. How about yourself?

**WILTON.** Just hangin' like you seein'. Gettin' use to not seein' any bars blockin' my view of the moon. I had forgotten how pretty a thing it was.

**YAZMIN.** What was it like for you?

**WILTON.** Isolating. How's your mom's doin' for herself?

**YAZMIN.** I guess she's doin' alright and all.

**WILTON.** You guess?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah.

**WILTON.** Fuck that. That's your mom's.

**YAZMIN.** I know who she is I don't need reminding.

**WILTON.** I'm just sayin' that's your mom's that's all. You see this here joint? *(Wilton holds up the joint he's been enjoying.)*

**WILTON.** Go on take a real good look at it. You lookin'?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah.

**WILTON.** This here's my final vice in life. My goodbye to what I was and my hello to who I am. Adios amigo. *(Wilton flicks the butt over the rooftop, watches it go down.)*

**YAZMIN.** What if I wanted a hit?

**WILTON.** You don't want any of that shit, that's a road you don't ever want to be crossin' over to. You don't be believin' me? Look at your mom's where she's at right now and then look over back to me and see where I've been at these last few years.

**YAZMIN.** Oh, please mister man, don't be gettin' all PSA on my ass too now. You startin' to sound like one of my counselors.

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**WILTON.** One of your counselors?

**YAZMIN.** That's right. I swear they be trippin' all over themselves behaving like they be understandin' what's dancin' inside of my head and shit.

**WILTON.** Personally, I don't be givin' a fuck whether you feel me or you don't, that's all on you.

**YAZMIN.** So, what are you gonna be doing with yourself now?

**WILTON.** Besides breathing free and fucking hard?

**YAZMIN.** You nasty.

**WILTON.** I'm just keepin' it real.

**YAZMIN.** I'm bein' serious.

**WILTON.** I'm bein' serious.

**YAZMIN.** You're trouble. (*Yazmin strolls over to the edge of the roof.*) They told me you hurt someone so bad that you changed they life forever.

**WILTON.** That's what I heard. So how you like livin' up in this here place?

**YAZMIN.** I don't know...I had me this dream that I was different.

**WILTON.** Different?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah, like, it was me in the dream and all, but also it wasn't too, you know? I mean people be always looking at me.

**WILTON.** That's because you're fine. You got Sazon girl.

**YAZMIN.** Nah, it ain't be like that all the time. They be hearin' how I talk, seein' how I dress. They be sizing me up and shit. Posting me up like I was a sign before they get to know who I am.

**WILTON.** I hear that.

**YAZMIN.** But in my dream, it wasn't like that at all. Like I was me right, but it was me with my hair all different. How I was speaking was different. Even my name was different.

**WILTON.** What was your name?

**YAZMIN.** Alexandra Raffaella Del Monte.

**WILTON.** Alexandra Raffaella Del Monte.

**YAZMIN.** That sounds fierce right?

**WILTON.** It does.

**YAZMIN.** Say it again.

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**WILTON.** Alexandra Raffaella Del Monte.

**YAZMIN.** You see how you be sayin' that name. How it be makin' you feel inside sayin' it?

**WILTON.** Yeah, I like how it be rollin' off my tongue and shit.

**YAZMIN.** A name like that ain't never been heard of around this here place that's for sure.

**WILTON.** Tru dat.

**YAZMIN.** But that's who I was in my dream. I was beautiful. I was special. I wasn't anybody's sign. My dream smelled nice too. It smelled just like the beach. You know I done had that dream three times already.

**WILTON.** That's cool.

**YAZMIN.** Nah, it's not cool, not really.

**WILTON.** Why not?

**YAZMIN.** 'Cause I keep waking up from it.

**WILTON.** Waking up can be a bitch.

**YAZMIN.** Were you ever scared?

**WILTON.** I'm a human being, right? I bleed too. Besides you know how the game is played.

**YAZMIN.** Yeah, I know your game.

**WILTON.** You're sayin' what I'm about is all just a show? That I'm a fake?

**YAZMIN.** No, I... (*Wilton suddenly grabs her.*)

**WILTON.** Let me show you some truth about myself little girl, because you obviously got me confused with one of your skinny ass neighborhood motherfuckin' boyfriends that ain't got no sense for nothin' and be dealin' ever so sweetly with that shit that be spewin' out of that trash-ass mouth of yours. Don't be closin' your eyes on me. Look at me and listen! I'll take out your stinkin' life in a heartbeat without sheddin' a single tear of regret. In fact, if I let my primal instincts take over your little bubble ass will be bouncin' off this here roof top in a blink. You understandin' me?

**YAZMIN.** I'm understandin'.

**WILTON.** And just to make double sure that we have complete clarity here with each other and I don't have to be repeatin' this kind of

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business. Know that my fuse always be lit, ready to strike. That's who I am. That's what I'm about. (*Wilton releases his grip.*) We square?

**YAZMIN.** We square.

**WILTON.** Familia, right?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah.

**WILTON.** Let me hear you say it.

**YAZMIN.** Familia.

**WILTON.** Alright then...sorry for the aggression, you know how it is.

**YAZMIN.** I do. I go me some of that aggression inside my own damn self.

**WILTON.** Do tell.

**YAZMIN.** Nah, some other time in the day. (*Yazmin starts to leave.*)

**WILTON.** Who you off to hook up with?

**YAZMIN.** Nobody.

**WILTON.** Yeah, right. Ain't it a school night?

**YAZMIN.** So?

**WILTON.** No judging, whoever it might be give them a good roll for me.

**YAZMIN.** You severely nasty.

**WILTON.** Yeah, that might be true, but you still love me.

**YAZMIN.** In your dreams cuz, in your dreams.

## SCENE 5

*Wilton's apartment - Carmen sits in the living room watching, The Walter Mercado Show*

**WALTER (O/S).** *"Mi sendero no es para mi, sino para los desafortunados. Mi corazon vela por ellos, los mas necesitados. Mi corazon llora. Humildemente me pongo a su servicio..."* (*Yazmin enters. Carmen gives her the evil eye.*)

**YAZMIN.** What? (*Carmen turns the volume down on the television program.*) What I do now?

**CARMEN.** Do you know what time it is? What were you doing all this time?

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**YAZMIN.** Nothin' like what you be thinkin' I be doin' that's for sure.

**CARMEN.** I don't believe you

**YAZMIN.** I was just hangin' downstairs with my girl Lizette.

**CARMEN.** Lizette who?

**YAZMIN.** Lizette Berrios. You be knowin' her. Damn, why you always gotta be all up in my details and shit anyways if you not gonna be believing me. Shit be agitatin' my nerves.

**CARMEN.** Watch how you talk in this house.

**YAZMIN.** Whatever.

**CARMEN.** No whatever. Mira, if you don't like it here, I can make a phone call to Titi Roza in Florida.

**YAZMIN.** Titi Roza?

**CARMEN.** That's right.

**YAZMIN.** But I want to be stayin' here.

**CARMEN.** I don't know about that mija, the way you're going, let me tell you, you're running out of domestic family members to stay with.

**YAZMIN.** This here's about Wilton bein' back and all so I gotta be leavin' now, right?

**CARMEN.** You got a passport?

**YAZMIN.** No.

**CARMEN.** I suggest you better think about getting one very soon then.

**YAZMIN.** Why I gotta be gettin' a passport for?

**CARMEN.** Because you need one to travel outside of the United States.

**YAZMIN.** Am I going somewhere?

**CARMEN.** If you keep doing whatever is the things that you think I think that you are doing, then you gonna have to go live with your father's family in the Dominican Republic.

**YAZMIN.** I'm sorry. Damn, I feel like I've been apologizin' since I got here.

**CARMEN.** Mira mija, I love your mother to death. I pray for her every day, pero you are pushing my last nerve to the edge of the cliff with your attitude.

**YAZMIN.** I said I was sorry.

**CARMEN.** You make it very hard to love you mija. Tienes habre?

**YAZMIN.** I already ate.

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**CARMEN.** What did you eat?

**YAZMIN.** Subway.

**CARMEN.** Subway? That's like Blimpie. That's not food, that's a snack.

**YAZMIN.** Subway's way better than Blimpie.

**CARMEN.** It's not better than my arroz con gandules. (*Yazmin runs into the kitchen, she lifts the lid off the pot.*) I made pasteles too. (*Yazmin begins to unwrap one of the pasteles. She points to the pot of arroz con gandules*)

**YAZMIN.** Can I have that tomorrow?

**CARMEN.** Bueno, if there is any left after your tio comes home.

**YAZMIN.** Save me some. Pretty please, please, please.

**CARMEN.** Ay bueno, now it's pretty please, please, please? You look so much like Juliana when she was your age. Mira, I know you don't like where she is, pero es la realidad de esta vida.

**YAZMIN.** I know it is.

**CARMEN.** I really wish you would come with me to see her; she misses you so very much.

**YAZMIN.** I have homework I need to be doin'.

**CARMEN.** That's good that you are doing your homework.

**YAZMIN.** You wanna do it for me?

**CARMEN.** No.

**YAZMIN.** I figured as much. (*Yazmin exits to her bedroom.*)

**CARMEN.** Buenas noches.

**YAZMIN.** Bendicion.

**CARMEN.** Que la Virgen te cuide. (*Carmen sits back down on the couch and turns up the volume on television.*)

**WALTER (O/S).** Naci bajo el sol de Piscis y la luna de Aries.

## **SCENE 6**

*Hotel Bar - West Harlem 11:30pm - BYRON ADLER sits at the bar, nursing his drink, talking to the BARTENDER.*

**BYRON.** She was fuckin' cheating on me. Can you believe that shit? Twelve fuckin' years of holy matrimony and she's getting butt fucked by

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our Guatemalan gardener, Alfonzo Espinoza from the tiny village of San Pedro La Laguna. But I got the last word. That's a fuckin' fact for sure. Fucking evil bitch. I hope sewer rats chew up what remains of that dried-up middle-aged cunt of hers till the end of days. You want to know some real truth though. The real fucked up thing about all of this? What really kills me about all this shit is the fact that he was a damn good gardener.

**BARTENDER.** Where'd you find this guy anyway?

**BYRON.** I didn't, my wife did.

**BARTENDER.** Oh.

**BYRON.** Yeah. He was very good. He used to always say to us in that Antonio Banderas Puss in Boots accents of his: *"My friends the confusion is understandable, especially to the untrained naked eye; for though the azalea plants and the rhododendron plants are related, and all azaleas are rhododendrons, you must always remember and never forget that not all rhododendrons are azaleas."*

**BARTENDER.** He seriously said that to you?

**BYRON.** Yep. I can still see the slight shiver it gave her. I remember she gave me a quick glance to see if I had noticed, but it was too late. The damage was done. Goose bumps don't lie.

**BARTENDER.** That's rough brother.

**BYRON.** I'm not your brother.

**BARTENDER.** Right. No offense.

**BYRON.** None taken.

**BARTENDER.** How's you find out about them?

**BYRON.** I came home early from work one day. I walked into our house. I went to the kitchen to make myself a sandwich and as I was deciding between salami or turkey breast, I heard them.

**BARTENDER.** You heard them?

**BYRON.** Upstairs in my bedroom. I heard them. They were fucking.

**BARTENDER.** No shit. You saw them?

**BYRON.** Yeah, I did. I went upstairs. The bedroom door was open for just a crack, but I could see them.

**BARTENDER.** Did they see you?

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**BYRON.** No, they were facing the headboard. He was fucking her from behind. She was enjoying it...a lot.

**BARTENDER.** Damn.

**BYRON.** I don't know how long I stood there watching...I heard her come. After that I stopped watching. I left the house.

**BARTENDER.** Where'd you go?

**BYRON.** I just walked...you know being betrayed in this way; it shakes up your whole world. The very foundation you stand upon disappears. It makes you want to turn off all the lights, grab a flashlight, a can of tuna and lock yourself inside a closet...this is gonna haunt me till I'm six feet under.

**BARTENDER.** I'm so sorry man.

**BYRON.** When I came back home that night we didn't speak. I couldn't look at her. Later that night I watched her as she slept all peaceful. My anger blinded me. I wanted to explode. I wanted to go back out, hunt down every woman that I came across and seduce them. I wanted to fuck them like her fucked her. Use them and when I was finished, beat them. I wanted to pound their flesh until it broke. I wanted to feel the flow of their blood on my knuckles.

**BARTENDER.** Jesus Christ.

**BYRON.** I have a girlfriend now...she's nice.

**BARTENDER.** That's cool. How'd you meet this girl?

**BYRON.** I was driving around the bad shit pit part of the South Bronx, looking to buy some property. Real estate's still good up there. It's a piece of serious shit area, but once that first Starbucks comes in fuhgeddaboutit. Anyway, one afternoon I'm up there driving along, looking for potential flips and I got hungry. I didn't feel like having any Puerto Rican food, so I went into one of those fast-food Martin Luther King fried chicken joints. I see this very pretty young Latina type girl working behind the counter. One of the customers that was ahead of me was giving her a hard time. The store's pimply face manager tried to intervene, but the guy brushed him off like a piece of dandruff flake. I stepped in. Put the guy in his place. long story short, introductions were made, she gave me a discount on the chicken, I got her number and the

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rest as they say is history. She's a good kid. She's been through a lot, a real tough life, worse than we ever had growing up.

**BARTENDER.** How old is this girl?

**BYRON.** She's legal. We like each other. I help her out whenever I can. You know, a few bucks here and there from time to time. Bottom line is, I'm happy with her and she's happy with me...yes siree-dee-dee, I'm doing good right now. I'm learning how to "work through things" as they say.

**BARTENDER.** That's good.

**BYRON.** I'm not stupid. I keep her at a safe distance. I don't let her get too close to what's left of my heart. I need time to heal. You know what I mean?

**BARTENDER.** I hear you.

**BYRON.** It's like this; I used to live for other people. That style of life is dead to me. As of right now and for the rest of my tomorrows I live for me and nobody else. If somebody doesn't like that, fuck'em. This is my life, my choices, my consequences. You wanna hear a joke?

**BARTENDER.** Sure.

**BYRON.** What do you get when you cross an onion with a donkey?

**BARTENDER.** I don't know.

**BYRON.** Well, to be honest with you most of the time you're gonna end up with just an onion with long ears, but every so often when all the stars are lined up just so, you get yourself a nice piece of ass that brings tears to your eyes.

## SCENE 7

*Wilton's Apartment - 1:00am - We hear the voice of Walter Mercado coming from the TV. We see Carmen asleep on the couch and PABLO FERNANDEZ, Wilton's father sits in the semi-lit kitchen finishing a plate of arroz con gandules.*

**WALTER (O/S).** *"Mi numero es el nueve..." (Wilton enters the apartment, he sees his mother asleep on the couch, he goes to her, gently kneels beside her, kisses her on the cheek. Pablo watches all this from*

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*the kitchen in silence.)"Ellos son los que me han facilitado ser anfitrión de este programa. (Wilton gently wakes his mother, takes her into his arms, leads her into the bedroom.) "Será un tiempo de integración uniendo las dos energías que llevamos adentro: El ying y el yang." (Pablo goes into the living room, turns off the television.)*

### SCENE 8

*Woman's Prison Visiting Room - the following day - upstate New York - 7:30am - Yazmin sits across from her mother, JULIANA GARCIA.*

**JULIANA.** How are you miija? (*Yazmin stays quiet.*) Look at you, my beautiful sapphire princess...Guess what? I've been going to the prison library. I've been going there a lot. They have so many books with thousands and thousands of words in them that I never heard of. At first all those different kind of words frightened me, but now not so much anymore. I'm meeting them halfway. You ever heard of this one word: Rudiment. It means imperfect beginning of something yet to develop. That's me all over. I'm yet to develop. You know part of my rudiment is that I'm gonna be taking the GED examination. Can you believe it? I'm gonna try and be a high school graduate, just like you're gonna be soon. Look at us; we're gonna be rudimenting together...how are you doing in school? I know it's been tough for you; you know that right...yeah, of course you do. I know that I can't be time traveling to change the things that have already happened. (*Yazmin stays quiet.*) But, when I get out, you and me, Yazmin are going to be learning to draw some very beautiful pictures for each other, and those colors miija, those colors that we both are gonna be using, let me you, they gonna be magical.

### SCENE 9

*Bus Stop – Yazmin waits at the bus stop after visiting with her mother.*

**YAZMIN.** *\*I'm more than what you see when you look at me/I'm a cyclone in a hurricane/Wrapped in an epiphany/I'm an understanding of*

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

*how I'm standing/A premonition of getting knocked off me and knowing exactly how I'm landing/I'm a hard formed shit storm and your umbrella ain't got no winds/I'm a light drizzle that can turn into 180 mile an hour winds/I'm a tsunami mommy; get your ducks in order/Cuz the darkness in me is darker than the deepest sea water/I'm an abyss, a deep seated emotionless pit of the things you're not willing to lose/I'm a distant fathomless monsoon that's willing to bruise. I'm a big cat in a dog fight/I'm a Bronx chica cornered in the dark of night. (\*This poem represents Yazmin's inner thoughts. The bus arrives. She steps inside.)*

### SCENE 10

*Wilton's Apartment – next day - 7:00am - Pablo and Carmen sit at the kitchen table having breakfast.*

**PABLO.** This whole goddamn situation has been una gran mierda. Nada cambia. Everything stays the same. I don't bust my ass day after day, every week, fifty, sixty, sometimes seventy hours of my life taken at the store to have to live this way.

**CARMEN.** Better we should have bought that property in Corozal.

**PABLO.** Tu y tu Corozal.

**CARMEN.** We wouldn't have to deal with all this mess hombre.

**PABLO.** You think?

**CARMEN.** Things would be very different for us if we were in Puerto Rico.

**PABLO.** Tu sabe, they have gangs in Puerto Rico too. Que, you think because they speak Spanish instead of English it makes a big difference? Listen to me, evil is evil no matter where you go. It is always there no matter what. That son-of-bitch puts a foot into my house? Aqui Armando no es un rey. El que manda solamente soy yo. No Yazmin, no Wilton, and especially no ese fucking diablo Armando. I'm tired of it all. You hear me?

**CARMEN.** I told him how things have to be. I was very clear. (*Pablo takes Carmen's hand.*)

**PABLO.** Yo no quiero mas problemas.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**CARMEN.** No mas. Te prometo.

**PABLO.** Donde esta Yazmin?

**CARMEN.** She went to see Juliana.

**PABLO.** Serious? De verdad?

**CARMEN.** Si.

**PABLO.** Well, it's about time. What's the matter with her coming home so late like she's been doing lately?

**CARMEN.** Es una teenager tu sabe.

**PABLO.** Teenager, she's turning into mother. It's bad enough that with her living here it was like living con una bomba, pero now, Jesus Christ, with Wilton here too, como now I have two bombas waiting to explode that I have to be worrying about. *(They both sit in silence. Carmen hears Wilton coming.)*

**CARMEN.** Que numero salio anoche?

**PABLO.** La bolita?

**CARMEN.** Tu sabes que eso es lo unico que yo juego.

**PABLO.** El ocho cuarenticinco.

**CARMEN.** Ay mama. Yo tenia el ocho cuarto seis.

**PABLO.** Tu vez? Tus vez como tu eres? Ese numero salio el martes atras y tu no queria jugarlo. Ahora sale el jodio numero otra vez y tu otra vez no lo juegas. La proxima vez tu me vas hacer caso proque ya tu vez que yo se estas cosas.

**CARMEN.** Mira no me jodas, o te voy a dar como pandereta de Pentecostal. *(Wilton enters.)*

**WILTON.** Morning.

**CARMEN.** You're up early?

**PABLO.** You have a job interview?

**WILTON.** Nah...I'm just still livin' on that prison clock.

**PABLO.** I have to go.

**CARMEN.** You haven't finished eating.

**PABLO.** It's inventory day. I'll get something to eat at the store.

**WILTON.** I can open for you if you'd like me to?

**PABLO.** What?

**WILTON.** I can open the store for you, this way you can chill and finish eating your breakfast in peace. It's the important meal of the day, right?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**PABLO.** I just said I'll eat something at the store. You don't listen?

**CARMEN.** Pablo!

**WILTON.** I heard you I just...

**PABLO.** You see what time it is?

**WILTON.** Yeah.

**PABLO.** While you were sleeping the store has been open for an hour!

**WILTON.** Why you being hostile like you are pop? (*Uncomfortable silence between them.*)

**PABLO.** I'll be home late. (*Pablo gets up. He exits the apartment slamming the door hard behind him.*)

**WILTON.** What's his problem now?

**CARMEN.** He's tired.

**WILTON.** He don't want me here?

**CARMEN.** You going to eat?

**WILTON.** Do you want me here?

**CARMEN.** This is your home.

**WILTON.** He sure don't make me feel like it. (*Carmen serves Wilton a plate of scrambled eggs and potatoes.*) I gotta say this beats the powdered eggs and dehydrated potato bullshit I've been eating lately.

**CARMEN.** That kind of talk is for outside, not here, not in this house. You hear me? Never in this house. No, me gusta.

**WILTON.** I understand. You know personally speaking, I'm seriously realizing that being away from the outside world the way that I was ain't really no excuse for my behavior and all, but I guess it's like one of my counselors on the inside use to be sayin' to us, that old habits be holdin' on to you longer than you wanna be holdin' on to them, so you always gotta be on the alert.

**CARMEN.** Food is better hot. Eat. (*Wilton bows his head, begins to pray. Carmen watches him for a moment, starts to clean the dirty pots and dishes in the sink.*)

**WILTON.** Can you like not be cleanin' right now?

**CARMEN.** I can't leave things dirty.

**WILTON.** I just want to talk to you.

**CARMEN.** What do you want?

**WILTON.** Why you gotta be so tense?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**CARMEN.** I have to clean.

**WILTON.** Stop! (*Wilton grabs Carmen by the arm. She pulls away.*)

**CARMEN.** Don't touch me! You don't ever put your hands on me, ever! You hear me. I don't care how tough you think you are. Esto no es la calle! Esto es mi casa. I'm your mother. You respect me.

**WILTON.** Sorry I didn't mean to be grabbing on you like that.

**CARMEN.** You know what you have done to me? What you put me through? I can't go to the supermarket or laundromat because of the way people look at me, because of you. Look at my hands, they're shaking. They don't stop shaking.

**WILTON.** I just wanted you to sit with me for a little bit like we used to.

**CARMEN.** I have to see a doctor now you know?

**WILTON.** What for?

**CARMEN.** He gives me medicina para mi nervos.

**WILTON.** Do I still scare you? (*There is a long uncomfortable silence between them.*) I know that I gave you and papi one of them forever type of hurts.

**CARMEN.** Por favor Wilton yo no puedo...

**WILTON.** No puedo what? I just got back, and you people are like...

**CARMEN.** Que?

**WILTON.** I just want to have everything nice and clean between us like the way it was before I turned stupid.

**CARMEN.** Mira, when I look at your face, I still see my baby, pero, when my eyes go away from your face...I see your neck. I see your arms. I see those tattoos. Those tattoos are a reminder to me of the ugliness. I wish they were invisible.

**WILTON.** What do you want me to do?

**CARMEN.** I don't know. I can't think right now.

**WILTON.** You want me to go out and get a butcher knife to slice myself up? (*Carmen stares at the tattoos that run up and down Wilton's neck.*)

**CARMEN.** I wish your skin was clean.

**WILTON.** I should take a walk. (*Wilton gets up to leave.*)

**CARMEN.** Where are you going?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**WILTON.** Out.

**CARMEN.** Out where?

**WILTON.** I just gotta do some thinkin', that's all.

**CARMEN.** What kind of thinking?

**WILTON.** Just thinkin' that's all.

**CARMEN.** Con Armando. That kind of thinking?

**WILTON.** What, why would you be thinkin' that? You think I'm stupid or something? You think I wanna be going back upstate?

**CARMEN.** I saw him.

**WILTON.** What?

**CARMEN.** He came into the house, though the window, from the roof. That's where you were right?

**WILTON.** I was there yeah, and so was he. But I swear to you we don't be walking down the same street together. We don't be doin' business like we used to no more. Those days are over with. That's the straight up truth.

**CARMEN.** Listen to me, I love you. No matter what you are, no matter what you did, I stay with the same love for you. It never stops. It never changes.

**WILTON.** Mami, I promise you that, that part of my life is over, done and buried. I swear to you it is...you need help with the dishes?

*(Carmen stays quiet.)* What is it?

**CARMEN.** Hijo, I don't believe I can survive losing you again.

**WILTON.** I ain't going nowhere. I swear to you I'm not.

**CARMEN.** Mira ten cuidado with your thinking, okay?

**WILTON.** I will.

**CARMEN.** Espera.

**WILTON.** What? *(Carmen goes to one of the kitchen cabinets. She takes out a bottle of Aqua Florida. She splashes some on Wilton.)* Ah come on mom please, this stuff stinks like for reals.

**CARMEN.** Shhh it's good for you. It keeps away the bad.

**WILTON.** Yeah, and everything else within a hundred yards of me.

**CARMEN.** Pero not the people who love you.

**WILTON.** Like papi?*(Carmen stays quiet.)* Yeah, I figured as much.  
*(Wilton turns to leave.)*

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**CARMEN.** Wilton... (*Wilton exits the apartment, closing the door behind him.*)

### **SCENE 11**

*John V. Lindsay Academy - 10:00am – Classroom - JAMAL FAULKNER and his teacher NICHOLAS SOTO are in mid conversation.*

**JAMAL.** Yo brother how much longer I gotta be stuck up here inside this place? I got things to do...this ain't right. You hearin' me? This ain't right. The way you're treating me is wrong. I'm nobody's prisoner. This ain't medieval times...you givin' me the silent treatment and all, and for what? This ain't right. All because of some bull ass offense that bothered nobody and was seen by no one and that you heard about from unreliable sources.

**NICHOLAS.** You're on report for harassment.

**JAMAL.** Oh my God. I ain't harass anybody, that's bullshit.

**NICHOLAS.** Jamal, they saw you grab the girl and pull her by the arm.

**JAMAL.** I didn't do no grabbing. Bunch of lies. Damn, besides I know the girl. It ain't like we strangers with each other and shit, that's wifey yo.

**NICHOLAS.** That's not what Ms. Perez said in her report. (*Nicholas goes over the report.*) Let's see what else she wrote here...oh look what we have here, it also states that you got all up in Ms. Perez's face too, even cursed her out. Nice work, Jamal.

**JAMAL.** Ms. Perez, come on, serious? Everybody knows she don't like me, it's no secret.

**NICHOLAS.** I didn't know that she doesn't, seriously?

**JAMAL.** Yeah man, seriously. She always got them vigilante eyes turned right at me whenever she looks my way.

**NICHOLAS.** Vigilante eyes.

**JAMAL.** Yeah, laser like and shit, scary.

**NICHOLAS.** She doesn't have vigilante eyes for you.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**JAMAL.** Yeah, alright, I got you, you just backin' her up on account of that she's a Rican just like you. I know how things be between ya'll mira, mira types.

**NICHOLAS.** You really wanna go there with me?

**JAMAL.** This is bullshit. Why you playin' with me, dawg? (*Lights switch*)

### SCENE 12

*Guidance Counselor's Office - 10:00am - Yazmin and the school's guidance counselor, MAGGIE CARLSEN are having an intense talk with each other.*

**YAZMIN.** This is total bullshit. I ain't playin' you Miss.

**MAGGIE.** So, let me get this straight, you're telling me that Cynthia Rodriquez's face just so happened to be turning the corner at the exact same time that your close fist was coming around on the opposite side? Is that what I'm hearing from you?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah, that's good.

**MAGGIE.** That's all you got to say for yourself?

**YAZMIN.** What else do want me to say, Miss? Yeah, that's how it went down. I was there. You weren't. It was just one of those things that happens that can't be explained in a normal way.

**MAGGIE.** Come again?

**YAZMIN.** Look Miss, it's like this, it's just like seein' a picture of the Virgin Mary in a cup of mashed potatoes and gravy at KFC. They both have to be experienced. It's like that. Period. End of story. Can I go now?

**MAGGIE.** Can I ask you something, Yazmin?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah.

**MAGGIE.** Serious question, do you see a sign that reads, "FOOL" hanging around my neck?

**YAZMIN.** Whatever Miss, you know what, just do what you gotta be doing because I'm just so tired of all this here bullshit.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**MAGGIE.** Ms. Perez also mentioned an incident between you and Jamal Faulkner.

**YAZMIN.** Incident? There was no incident between me and Jamal Miss. We just be bumpin' into each other that's all. Dats what couples in this here place be doin' all the time and shit with each other that's all that there's about.

**MAGGIE.** I gotta tell you, Yazmin I don't know exactly what it is that's bubbling inside of you, but you've been getting pretty confrontational lately and not only with your fellow students, but other teachers here as well.

**YAZMIN.** Whatever.

**MAGGIE.** What's this all about? Why are you feeling so confrontational?

**YAZMIN.** I don't know, I guess I got a lot going on around me to be confrontin' about.

**MAGGIE.** You want to tell me about it? (*Lights Switch. Classroom - Jamal and Nicholas as before.*)

**JAMAL.** Yo come the next bell I'm gonna be bookin' outta this here place like a shot in the dark, you see.

**NICHOLAS.** Is that right?

**JAMAL.** That's all I know and that's all I gotta say.

**NICHOLAS.** Where you gotta be?

**JAMAL.** I just gotta "Be" that's all I'm sayin', shot, you know that this here boy gotta keep the hustle flowin' just to make ends meet.

**NICHOLAS.** Right...I hear through the flow...

**JAMAL.** Through the flow? You funny.

**NICHOLAS.** I hear your old running mate just hit town. Still funny?

**JAMAL.** Yeah, alright, so? A lot of people be comin' into town this time of year. Come see a show. You know what I'm sayin'?

**NICHOLAS.** You still tryin' to be like him?

**JAMAL.** I ain't tryin' to be like no one but myself. It's like I done told you. I'm just tryin' to be.

**NICHOLAS.** Tryin' to be what, Jamal?

**JAMAL.** Relax yourself man I'm not into that type of game.

**NICHOLAS.** Gang life's a game to you?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**JAMAL.** I don't need to be hearin' this.

**NICHOLAS.** Maybe you need reminding.

**JAMAL.** Yo he wasn't a part of that gang back then that I was with. He was runnin' with a whole other type of crew.

**NICHOLAS.** Different toilet, same shit.

**JAMAL.** Look man as far as I know he's clean with all that nonsense.

**NICHOLAS.** Are you?

**JAMAL.** Am I what?

**NICHOLAS.** Clean of all the nonsense like you say.

**JAMAL.** Yeah man I am. I don't play in that park no more. Yo how come you don't be takin' yourself a nap like all them other teachers around this here place be doing?

**NICHOLAS.** Do I look like them?

**JAMAL.** Not really.

**NICHOLAS.** I'm not them. Besides what happens to you if I do start behavin' like the others?

**JAMAL.** What happens to me is gonna be happenin' to me no matter what you.

**NICHOLAS.** You think?

**JAMAL.** I know. Look man I seriously meant no disrespect to you, to the girl or Ms. Perez.

**NICHOLAS.** Look man get this straight, I don't care about your, "*I'm from the motherfuckin' hood and that's how I be rollin'*" nonsense; it's bullshit and worst of all it's boring. You can talk to me. Remember what you and I say here, stays here. Right?

**JAMAL.** You right. You been consistent.

**NICHOLAS.** What's goin' on between you and your girl, Yazmin?

**JAMAL.** It's just a passin' thing what's goin' on between us that's all, ain't no biggie.

**NICHOLAS.** What's the story then? (*Lights Switch - Guidance Counselor's Office - Yazmin and Maggie as before.*)

**YAZMIN.** You got the file right there on your desk miss...damn, what more do you need from me, to give you the answers?

**MAGGIE.** Okay, tell you what, let's you and I make a pact.

**YAZMIN.** Pact?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**MAGGIE.** That's right. From here on in, you and I are just going to speak the truth with each other and cut out the double talk, if that doesn't work out for you, then I'll just suspend you and you can just forget all about graduating. You want to graduate, don't you?

**YAZMIN.** I guess so.

**MAGGIE.** You guess so?

**YAZMIN.** I want to graduate.

**MAGGIE.** Better. Now tell me why you did it.?

**YAZMIN.** I told her ass to don't be testin' my patience 'cause I get tight and we gonna shake and bake, but she wouldn't listen. I kept telling her to stay out of my lane, but she kept on comin' in. She the hard-headed type; she don't be listening to nobody. I don't like her attitude either.

**MAGGIE.** You hit her because she doesn't listen, and you don't like her attitude?

**YAZMIN.** Pretty much.

**MAGGIE.** Right.

**YAZMIN.** You know what? Forget this show. This here is a waste of my time. Do us both a favor, sign the papers and give me my suspension now please while the weather is still nice outside.

**MAGGIE.** I'm not gonna do that.

**YAZMIN.** Why not?

**MAGGIE.** I want the whole story.

**YAZMIN.** I just told you.

**MAGGIE.** I want to know why it happened.

**YAZMIN.** It happened because she be trigg'in' all kinds of things inside of me miss.

**MAGGIE.** Like what things?

**YAZMIN.** Things.

**MAGGIE.** Come on Yazmin enough.

**YAZMIN.** She always be talkin' smack about herself, about how her life is all beautiful and shit and how she ain't got no jailbirds stuck in her family tree.

**MAGGIE.** She said that?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah, she did, so I told that bitch, excuse my French miss, but I told her don't be gettin' ideas about settin' foot on this

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

here patch of real estate unless you lookin' to be grilled as in fried up and burned to a crisp. You just don't be incinerating things like that about a person and don't expect to be retaliated on.

**MAGGIE.** I think the word that you were looking for was, insinuating.

**YAZMIN.** What?

**MAGGIE.** Insinuate, it means to convey indirectly.

**YAZMIN.** That's what I said.

**MAGGIE.** No, you said, incinerating, which means to burn to ash.

**YAZMIN.** You know what I be meaning. There was no call for you to be correcting me. I mean shit, it's still a wrong thing to be sayin' about a person, right?

**MAGGIE.** You're right it is.

**YAZMIN.** She knows about me.

**MAGGIE.** She does?

**YAZMIN.** It ain't no secret. But that don't give her no right to be labeling a person like that. I got family. I got a name. I don't come from no pieces of luggage...what? (*Lights Switch – Classroom - Jamal and Nicholas as before.*)

**JAMAL.** What?

**NICHOLAS.** Cut the reboppin' Jamal.

**JAMAL.** Reboppin'? You soundin' like you stuck in a time zone, grandpa. Speakin' some kind of George Jetson nonsense and shit.

**NICHOLAS.** You and I know that there's always a story when it comes to a girl.

**JAMAL.** She's confused that's all.

**NICHOLAS.** How so?

**JAMAL.** She's running around scared.

**NICHOLAS.** What's scaring her?

**JAMAL.** I don't know man. I'm just as confused about it all as much as she is. You know if I was still a pubbie I wouldn't have to be dealin' with this mess that I gotta be dealin' with.

**NICHOLAS.** What's confusing you?

**JAMAL.** The system bro. I gotta tell you man, this here place ain't turning out to be no real land of opportunity from where I'm standing.

**NICHOLAS.** Jamal, I've seen your grades. You will make it out of here.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**JAMAL.** You tell that to my mom's?

**NICHOLAS.** All the time.

**JAMAL.** She believe you?

**NICHOLAS.** Not a word.

**JAMAL.** Damn, I got her at home. I got you in here getting on my case, Ms. Perez with her evil vigilante eyes...you know man, sometimes livin' in this here place, you can't help yourself from thinkin' if you're gonna be gettin' a tomorrow.

**NICHOLAS.** You're here today.

**JAMAL.** Yeah, today's just today you know...tomorrow? Pop, pop, pop...end of story. You know what I'm sayin'?

**NICHOLAS.** Yeah...listen man do me a solid will you and try to stay out of trouble at least till morning.

**JAMAL.** I'll do my best my brother.

**NICHOLAS.** Do better.

**JAMAL.** Yo, can I borrow your car again?

**NICHOLAS.** Your mom?

**JAMAL.** Yeah. (*Nicholas flips Jamal his car keys.*) Thanks chief.

**NICHOLAS.** Don't forget to pull up your pants. (*Jamal does so while saluting Nicholas with his middle finger as the door closes behind him.*)

Forever the smart ass. (*Light Switch - Guidance Counselor's Office - Yazmin and Maggie as before.*)

**MAGGIE.** When was the last time you spoke or visited your mother?

**YAZMIN.** I went to see her this morning.

**MAGGIE.** That explains why you were late today, and a lot of other things; doesn't it?

**YAZMIN.** I guess.

**MAGGIE.** Your cousin Wilton's home.

**YAZMIN.** Yeah, so?

**MAGGIE.** How do you feel about that?

**YAZMIN.** I don't feel like nothing. It's his safe house not mine.

**MAGGIE.** I see. Let's get back to you mom, Juliana's her name, right? (*Yazmin stays quiet.*) What is it?

**YAZMIN.** It's just hard.

**MAGGIE.** What makes it hard?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**YAZMIN.** She be tellin' me about what she be doin' on the inside that I don't need to be hearin' about.

**MAGGIE.** Like what?

**YAZMIN.** I just need to breathe yo...can't anybody up in this here place understand that?

**MAGGIE.** I do.

**YAZMIN.** Every time I go see her; she looks older than the time before. I hate seeing her.

**MAGGIE.** Why hate?

**YAZMIN.** Because I only get to see her for three hours at a clip and in my reality those three hours feels like three seconds. I'm tired of that. You know there was this time when she went away...I was eleven...I didn't get to see her again till I was fifteen miss. (*Yazmin turns away, tries to compose herself.*)

**MAGGIE.** What is it?

**YAZMIN.** Nothin'.

**MAGGIE.** You can tell me.

**YAZMIN.** Things come up.

**MAGGIE.** Like what things?

**YAZMIN.** Like next week's her birthday, they don't even let me bring her flowers. It's crazy. It's like, I remember the first time that she went in I was like six years old. I didn't even know it was a jail that she was going to miss. She would always be tellin' me that she was going away on some kind of business trip and shit...it makes me feel all empty inside knowing she's all alone in a cell. I imagine seeing her dark eyes looking all sad up at the sky, counting the same stars that I be counting.

**MAGGIE.** You ever shared these feelings with her?

**YAZMIN.** I can't be doing that.

**MAGGIE.** Why not?

**YAZMIN.** Can't I just leave now?

**MAGGIE.** Not before you tell me why you wouldn't want to share these feelings with your mother.

**YAZMIN.** It's not a good thing miss.

**MAGGIE.** Why do you feel it wouldn't be a good thing?

**YAZMIN.** You just don't be understandin' miss.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**MAGGIE.** Then help me to understand, Yazmin.

**YAZMIN.** It's hard.

**MAGGIE.** I know.

**YAZMIN.** No, you don't. I'm her hope you know? That's right, I'm her only hope...me...ain't that a kick?

### SCENE 13

*Pablo's Bodega - Pablo is taking care of a YOUNG MAN new to the neighborhood as DONA CASTRO looks on.*

**YOUNG MAN.** Do you have any brie or epoissee de bourgogne?

**PABLO.** What?

**YOUNG MAN.** Brie or epoissee?

**PABLO.** What?

**DONA CASTRO.** Que, que?

**YOUNG MAN.** It's a cheese.

**PABLO.** Why didn't you say so in the first place?

**YOUNG MAN.** I did.

**PABLO.** I have American or Cheddar.

**YOUNG MAN.** I'll take the cheddar.

**DONA CASTRO.** Que carajo.

**PABLO.** Shhh.

**YOUNG MAN.** Can I also get less meat and more cheese please?

**PABLO.** You don't like meat?

**YOUNG MAN.** Not when it's like two pounds of it. *(Dona Castro and Pablo exchange glances.)* You have grey poupon mustard?

**PABLO.** I have this. *(Pablo holds up a jar of regular yellow mustard.)*

**YOUNG MAN.** Yellow mustard, yeah that's fine.

**DONA CASTRO.** Que mierda conyo.

**PABLO.** Callate vieja.

**DONA CASTRO.** Ay, dejame.

**YOUNG MAN.** You don't sell any other kind of snacks besides pork skins and plantain chips? I mean if you don't mind a little advice, you

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

should really think about looking into expanding perhaps the palate of your shelves. I'd come here more often.

**PABLO.** You work in the food business?

**YOUNG MAN.** No.

**PABLO.** Here's your sandwich. \$3.50, have a nice day.

**YOUNG MAN.** Grr-ra-see-us. (*The young man exits.*)

**DONA CASTRO.** Que pendejo.

**PABLO.** Asi es la vida. There's more like him coming.

**DONA CASTRO.** Como va todo con su familia?

**PABLO.** Tu sabes...como siempre, luchando.

**DONA CASTRO.** Contra quien, Wilton?

**PABLO.** Si.

**DONA CASTRO.** Ya lo sabia. Mira tu hijo was born con el mal de ojo, the evil eye. Yo soy Santera. I see these things. Mira, te voy a hacer una curadita y todo va a salir bien. No charge.

**PABLO.** Gracias Dona. (*Wilton enters. Dona Castro visibly tightens.*)

**WILTON.** Hola Dona Castro long time. (*Wilton goes to embrace her, she turns away from him, exits the store.*) What's her problem? (*Pablo opens up the inventory book.*) So, what's up pop?

**PABLO.** What are you doing here?

**WILTON.** I just wanted to see the store. It's been awhile you know? Yo you got a new display case, sweet.

**PABLO.** Yeah.

**WILTON.** It's nice. I like it. Looks up to date.

**PABLO.** What do you want?

**WILTON.** Relax yourself I'm not here to rob you. Just kidding, can I look around?

**PABLO.** Now?

**WILTON.** Yeah, can I? I mean if you don't want to, you feelin' comfortable about it, it's cool I understand.

**PABLO.** Do whatever you want. I have work to do.

**WILTON.** Inventory day, right?

**PABLO.** That's right.

**WILTON.** I don't mean to be disturbing you...you selling any organic stuff?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**PABLO.** What?

**WILTON.** Organic, it's like the new thing now. I be noticin' a lot of places around here are startin' to sell it. You know organic, things like tofu, multi-grain, brown rice, alfalfa, wheat germ, rice milk.

**PABLO.** Rice milk?

**WILTON.** Yeah.

**PABLO.** Arroz con leche?

**WILTON.** Very different.

**PABLO.** Is that what they gave you to eat?

**WILTON.** No.

**PABLO.** The people that come here are not looking for those things that you said.

**WILTON.** Well maybe then you should try it you know? Help them to learn to be expandin' themselves, you know what I mean?

**PABLO.** They're already expanded plenty.

**WILTON.** All I'm sayin' is the blanquitos that are movin' themselves around here love that kind of shi-stuff...I mean, I betcha that 7-11 down the street from here, that they buildin' I bet is gonna be selling some organic produce for sure.

**PABLO.** Good for them.

**WILTON.** Anyways I was just making a suggestion...oh man you still selling them Chunky bars? I used to love them. May I?

**PABLO.** Go ahead.

**WILTON.** Thank you.

**PABLO.** It's not organic.

**WILTON.** I don't care, it's a Chunky bar...damn, me being here with you like this, holding a Chunky bar, kinda reminds me of when I was a kid and I used to watch you play dominoes outside the store into the wee hours.

**PABLO.** You remember that?

**WILTON.** Yeah, I do.

**PABLO.** You were so little.

**WILTON.** I bet you thought I was gonna turn out to be some kind of jockey or something like that?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**PABLO.** I didn't believe you'd get to be that tall. We used to call you our monito pequeno.

**WILTON.** I'll always remember how you used to be sayin', "*Los dominoes so para los Boricua...*"

**WILTON/PABLO.** "*...como los arroz con pollo y gandules, parte de nuestra herencia cultural.*"

**WILTON.** And then you'd slam down that last chip and scream out...

**WILTON/PABLO.** "*DOMINAO! ULTIMA MANO!*"

**PABLO.** That was a long time ago.

**WILTON.** Yeah, it sure enough was. But to me, it feels like it was just like yesterday, couple of hours ago even.

**PABLO.** What do you want?

**WILTON.** I was hoping to get to talk to you for a little bit.

**PABLO.** We're talking now.

**WILTON.** Right...you right we are...I was just thinking about like maybe you teaching me about how to run this here business you know?

**PABLO.** Que, que?

**WILTON.** You see, I was figurin' why I gotta be bothering looking around at different places for a job that I ain't gonna be happy at, when I could just come here and work for you. Learn the ropes. I wanna help you.

**PABLO.** I have plenty of help.

**WILTON.** I wanna come work for you Papi. Keep it in the family like, you know?

**PABLO.** No. You didn't hear me?

**WILTON.** I heard you clearly.

**PABLO.** Good, now listen to me, I don't want to talk about this now, okay?

**WILTON.** I understand, but why don't you want me to come work for you?

**PABLO.** I said I don't want to talk about this now. What, you don't listen?

**WILTON.** I'm listening. I'm listenin' to you loud and clear.

**PABLO.** Good.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**WILTON.** What is it about me? (*Pablo quickly puts the "CLOSED" sign on the door.*) You don't trust me? You think I'm gonna be ripping you off or something like that? You know, you being my father an all, I didn't think you'd be like all the rest of the people around here, the way that they are when they be looking at me. All they be seeing is, el encarcelado.

**PABLO.** And whose fault is that?

**WILTON.** I ain't sayin' it's anybody's fault but mine. I ain't sayin' nothin' like that. I own my shit...You know I've never ask anything from you.

**PABLO.** No, but you took and took and took until you bled us dry. I don't know who this person was that did this disgusting thing, my son? No, it can't be. Not my son...but it was you who did it.

**WILTON.** You don't think I know what I put you and mami through?

**PABLO.** I don't know what you think. I don't even know if I care.

**WILTON.** Yeah, I got that part this morning, thank you very much.

**PABLO.** Enough! I have to finish my work. Go. (*Pablo grabs Wilton by the arm, tries to lead him out of the store. Wilton violently pulls away.*)

**WILTON.** Yo don't be fucking grabbin' on me like that!

(*Dead silence between them.*)

**PABLO.** I'll call the police.

**WILTON.** Do you hate me that much? (*Pablo stays silent.*) You know when I saw mami at the bus station I was so happy, but I didn't see you. I thought you'd gone to the bathroom or something. I was feeling good. I was feeling happy, real happy. It was the best day of my life. My family had come to welcome me back, to bring me back home. But you, you weren't in no bathroom. You just didn't bother to come.

**PABLO.** I was working.

**WILTON.** You're a heart killer you know that about yourself. All my life I've been running after you and all you've ever done is keep moving yourself further and further away from me.

**PABLO.** You hit that kid in the head with a BB gun. More than once. You just kept hitting him over the head, breaking the gun into little pieces, leaving a hole in the boy's head; my God, his brain was showing! Cono puneta! You even took his sneakers! Why?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**WILTON.** They fit.

**PABLO.** I don't want to hear this. I don't know who you are.

**WILTON.** You know me papi. You've know me since jump. I grew up in the streets papi. I live in the street. I even ran these streets. Respect and pride was what I wanted, fear and violence was how I got it. I was livin' life in my own zone. For the longest time papi my life was all about stickin' to the G code. I thought my crew was my family.

**PABLO.** Why would you believe something like that?

**WILTON.** Because they was showing me the love and respect that I wasn't getting from you.

**PABLO.** This is my fault?

**WILTON.** I ain't tryin' to say that.

**PABLO.** But you are saying it. You think I don't care for you? You think I don't care for my family?

**WILTON.** I wasn't tryin' to...

**PABLO.** SHUT UP! YOU SHUT UP. I talk now. You listen. I bust my ass for you. I work when I'm sick for you. I don't stay home and do nothing. All my life I work to make sure that you do better with your life and what do you give to me? You say to me that the gang was your family? Fuck you. I am the father. I come here, to this place, trying to understand things, fighting to support you. I don't have school. I wanted the best for you. I wanted you to be president. That sounds crazy to you right, no? Pero that's what I believed I can do for you. I didn't want to be like the other's going to these programs; looking for handouts...I am a man. I didn't care if I didn't eat or sleep. Mi primera responsabilidad es mi familia and whatever was left over was for me. That is how I live my life. Now get the fuck out of here.

**WILTON.** Please papi I need to be with my real family.

**PABLO.** They are out there! The street gangs, the ones you belonged to are still around like a pack of hungry dogs looking for more blood, your blood. You don't think I know what's going on in my house. You think I'm stupid. You think I'm un jibaro pendejo del campo. Mira conmigo no se juega.

**WILTON.** Nobody's callin' you anything close to that papi and nobody's tryin' to play you either, that's all in your mind. I'm no longer a part of

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

any gang, that's all dead to me now. All I'm doin' is being straight up with the T with you. What are you vibing on?

**PABLO.** The "T"? "Vibing"? You talk like un sucio dela calle. Is that how you talk when you're with Armando?

**WILTON.** We ain't in a conversational place with each other like that no more.

**PABLO.** You're a liar! You're back here for what? A couple of days now and look what you do, you go back stepping into the stink of the same old bullshit. Where's your head? I don't see it. Do you know where it is?

**WILTON.** I ain't lyin' to you. I don't know how many times I gotta be sayin' this to you until you be believin' my words.

**PABLO.** Armando came into my fucking home! (*Uncomfortable silence between them.*) That's right, MY house. That fucking cabron came into MY house!

**WILTON.** Papi...

**PABLO.** He ate MY food! Ese hijo de la gran mil puta! You tell me right here, right now the TRUTH! (*Wilton stays silent.*) I no longer have a son...I said it.

**WILTON.** I swear to Jesus Christ himself that I'm clean with all that.

**PABLO.** I don't believe you.

**WILTON.** Hear me out papi please.

**PABLO.** I have work to do.

**WILTON.** Please papi...please...when I was locked up, I prayed to God, like real hard with everything I got inside myself that he would bring me back home to you and mami. He did. I owe him for that. Papi please just give me a chance...let me come home completely...please. (*Pablo walks up to Wilton*)

**PABLO.** You see this? (*Pablo points to a scar above his left eyebrow.*) Abuelo gave this to me when I was sixteen.

**WILTON.** Is that what you want to do to me?

**PABLO.** No, there's been too much pain tonight. (*Pablo catches a familiar scent in the air coming from Wilton.*) La agua Florida?

**WILTON.** Yeah.

**PABLO.** Ay dios mio esa Carmen.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**WILTON.** I know.

**PABLO.** It's good stuff.

**WILTON.** That's what she tells me.

**PABLO.** Okay, listen to me, you be here at 7:00 sharp for training. Not a minute late. The store hours are 7:00 in the morning till 1:00 in the morning. That's seven days a week. Three different shifts, morning, noon and night. You pick one. You stick with it. No change.

**WILTON.** Yes sir, morning shift sir. No change.

**PABLO.** Good. This is a tough business. No time to play, much to learn. You want the job, yes, or no?

**WILTON.** Yeah, yeah, I want the job. How much?

**PABLO.** You want to get paid too?

**WILTON.** Yeah, I guess. It would be helpful.

**PABLO.** Cono carajo puneta!

**WILTON.** What, what I do now?

**PABLO.** It's \$250 a week plus you get to keep whatever tips you get from deliveries, okay? Take it or leave it.

**WILTON.** Yeah, okay. I'm takin' it. Thank you.

**PABLO.** Good.

**WILTON.** There's just one thing papi.

**PABLO.** Que, you already want a raise?

**WILTON.** No, no nothin' like that. It's just that I got this thing...

**PABLO.** What thing?

**WILTON.** I gotta go see my parole officer.

**PABLO.** Oh...when do you see him?

**WILTON.** I see Mr. Lopez on Thursday morning.

**PABLO.** Oh, you need company?

**WILTON.** What?

**PABLO.** I go with you.

**WILTON.** No, no I'll be alright. You ain't gotta be doin' that. Like I said I see in the morning, so I'll be late for work on that day.

**PABLO.** Okay.

**WILTON.** Cool.

**PABLO.** Don't make it a habit. You hear me?

**WILTON.** Yes sir. I mean, no sir it won't be no habit.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**PABLO.** Mira hijo, you sure you don't need someone to be with you when you see this Mr. Lopez? A character witness, tu sabe?

**WILTON.** No, no thank you again though. I swear it'll be cool. He's a good guy.

**PABLO.** Okay...mira you go home now. I have to work. (*Wilton turns to leave.*) Mira don't forget to turn the sign around.

**WILTON.** Right. I will.

**PABLO.** Mira, hijo.

**WILTON.** Yeah?

**PABLO.** Ten cuidado.

### SCENE 14

*Van Cortland Park - 3:30pm - Jamal sits on a bench waiting for Yazmin.*

**JAMAL.** *\*These Bronx street weep abandonment and fears/Steeped in the tears of the invincible invisible/Entering those double doors of surgery in critical/Let's paint a picture of optimism/Red, white's and blue hues/Let us all offer our veins to the drug and call it dues/Now we're in the money, Madison Avenue can see me from their window/I am the cost of it!/The hell between your home and office/But never underestimate a child's ability to survive/These Bronx streets are alive/And breathing and those whom it comforts sits seething/Desiring, conspiring to understand their life ain't never been theirs./This type of hurt don't just birth tears.../Mommy cooking hate in her gandules/Stray bullets are fate in the hood./A cold stare is always on the plate and it's all good.../If the dreams of the Bronx ever came to life the east river'll run red... (\*This poem represents Jamal's inner thoughts. Yazmin enters. Silence between them.)* Took your ass long enough to get here.

**YAZMIN.** Excuse you?

**JAMAL.** You heard me.

**YAZMIN.** Yeah. Excuse you?

**JAMAL.** Where you been all this time that I've been waiting?

**YAZMIN.** I could just walk away right now with that kind of talk.

**JAMAL.** Fine just walk away with yourself then.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**YAZMIN.** You want that?

**JAMAL.** You know you got my ass in trouble.

**YAZMIN.** That's what you be gettin' for grabbing on a person.

**JAMAL.** I wasn't even grabbin' on you. Damn you exaggerating the situation now.

**YAZMIN.** Ain't no exaggerating goin' on over here. You be grabbin' too friendly.

**JAMAL.** Oh, so now I be grabbing on you too friendly now?

**YAZMIN.** I wasn't feelin' it with you Jamal.

**JAMAL.** You weren't feelin' me?

**YAZMIN.** My head was in a different place this morning when you done seen me, that's all.

**JAMAL.** And now?

**YAZMIN.** I don't know.

**JAMAL.** You've been doing a lot of walking around with your back up and shit all the time now. What's the matter with you, what's going on?

**YAZMIN.** Ain't nothin' goin' on.

**JAMAL.** Nothin'?

**YAZMIN.** You heard my words.

**JAMAL.** Come here girl, talk to me. (*Jamal moves closer to Yazmin. He leans in to give her a kiss. She pulls away.*)

**YAZMIN.** Stop.

**JAMAL.** What, your head is still in a different place?

**YAZMIN.** I just don't want to be touched the way you be wanting to be touching me.

**JAMAL.** What's up, you don't be liking me no more?

**YAZMIN.** It's nothing like that.

**JAMAL.** What is it then?

**YAZMIN.** I just ain't in the right condition for that kind of playin'.

**JAMAL.** Talk to me Yaz.

**YAZMIN.** I have to go home.

**JAMAL.** Excuse you now?

**YAZMIN.** I want to go home.

**JAMAL.** Oh, so now you gotta go home?

**YAZMIN.** Yeah.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**JAMAL.** Whoa, hold up, am I missing something here?

**YAZMIN.** What do you mean?

**JAMAL.** I don't know, it's like I'm reading a book with a couple of chapters missing from the middle.

**YAZMIN.** You trying to read me?

**JAMAL.** No, what I'm sayin' is I don't know what this is.

**YAZMIN.** Well let me set you straight then my G, there nothin' missing here. What you're seeing is everything. We clear?

**JAMAL.** You sure about that now?

**YAZMIN.** I'm sure about that all the time.

**JAMAL.** Whatever, it's alright.

**YAZMIN.** What do you want from me? Damn, why everybody's always asking stuff from me.

**JAMAL.** I ain't asking anything from you. Hey, come on, truce alright, what's going on?

**YAZMIN.** I done told you nothin'. Damn you hard of hearing?

**JAMAL.** My hearings perfect and I see twenty-twenty, and you suck at lying.

**YAZMIN.** I ain't lying.

**JAMAL.** Bullshit. What did you come here for anyways if this is what you were gonna be presenting?

**YAZMIN.** I wanted to see you alright.

**JAMAL.** Like this?

**YAZMIN.** I'm stressed.

**JAMAL.** From what?

**YAZMIN.** From all over.

**JAMAL.** Pick a spot.

**YAZMIN.** I can't say.

**JAMAL.** Why not?

**YAZMIN.** I don't know.

**JAMAL.** Look at me.

**YAZMIN.** I'm sorry, I can't be doing this with you.

**JAMAL.** Can't be doing what?

**YAZMIN.** I gotta go home.

**JAMAL.** Look at me. (*Jamal reaches for her. Yazmin pulls away.*)

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**YAZMIN.** Don't be tryin' to be pullin' on me.  
**JAMAL.** Look at me then.  
**YAZMIN.** What do you want?  
**JAMAL.** I want you to look at me.  
**YAZMIN.** What the fuck for?  
**JAMAL.** What the fuck for? I want to see your eyes.  
**YAZMIN.** You've seen them before.  
**JAMAL.** Not like this.  
**YAZMIN.** What do you mean?  
**JAMAL.** Now I see.  
**YAZMIN.** What the fuck do you see?  
**JAMAL.** You seein' someone else.  
**YAZMIN.** What?  
**JAMAL.** You seein' another guy.  
**YAZMIN.** No.  
**JAMAL.** Look at me.  
**YAZMIN.** I told you no. What more you need me to be sayin'?  
**JAMAL.** How come you don't let me see your eyes when you say that?  
**YAZMIN.** Leave me alone.  
**JAMAL.** Look at me.  
**YAZMIN.** I don't want to.  
**JAMAL.** Why not?  
**YAZMIN.** I don't know.  
**JAMAL.** Yes, you do...Fuck...yes you do.  
**YAZMIN.** I'm sorry.  
**JAMAL.** Why?  
**YAZMIN.** I don't know.  
**JAMAL.** You don't know?  
**YAZMIN.** I'm sorry, Jamal.  
**JAMAL.** Shut up! Just, just shut the fuck up...  
**YAZMIN.** Jamal...  
**JAMAL.** Don't be speaking my name you betraying bitch.  
**YAZMIN.** I'm sorry.  
**JAMAL.** Who is it?  
**YAZMIN.** You don't know him.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**JAMAL.** I don't know him?

**YAZMIN.** He don't go to our school.

**JAMAL.** He from the neighborhood?

**YAZMIN.** No.

**JAMAL.** Where that motherfuckin' bitch from then, Brooklyn and shit?

**YAZMIN.** No, I don't know exactly.

**JAMAL.** You don't know exactly? Fuck me man...fuck...this is crazy shit your presenting. How can you be doin' this to us?

**YAZMIN.** I'm sorry.

**JAMAL.** You're sorry? Don't you fuckin' be feeling sorry for me. Fuck you. You hear me, FUCK YOU.

**YAZMIN.** Jamal, let me explain to you please...

**JAMAL.** Nah, nah you can't be comin' at me like you thinkin'. Bullshit with that let me explain routine. What the fuck is there to explain? Huh, tell that? Tell me what the fuck is there to explain? You just another squirrel bitch lookin' for some nuts.

**YAZMIN.** I ain't like that.

**JAMAL.** You ain't what, you ain't like what? I gave you my whole heart...my whole heart and you just dropped the shit into the sewer. You let the fuckin' rats chew it all up until there was nothin' left.

**YAZMIN.** I gave you my whole heart too.

**JAMAL.** But I didn't serve yours up to the fuckin' rats, did I? I can't believe this shit is happening. This can't be real. After all you and me have been through together. After all the shit we been through. Yazmin this is how you do me? Didn't you know that you and me had potential?

**YAZMIN.** Potential for what, Jamal? You, me and a baby being a section eight type of family?

**JAMAL.** We ain't always gotta be livin' the way we've been doin'. We can be better than that.

**YAZMIN.** Jamal...

**JAMAL.** If we could've just hung in there and weather the storms coming our way for just a little while longer, you and me could've been home free for sure.

**YAZMIN.** Home free for what?

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**JAMAL.** To be at a better place, look, just look at me please. I know where it is you're coming from.

**YAZMIN.** Do you?

**JAMAL.** Yeah, hell's yeah, I struggle with it each and every day, but Mr. Soto he says...

**YAZMIN.** You be listening to Mr. Soto?

**JAMAL.** Yeah.

**YAZMIN.** Why you be listening to anything he gotta be sayin'? he don't know nothing about us?

**JAMAL.** That's not true. He's a good man.

**YAZMIN.** Why? What makes him such a good man to you, on account that he was boning your sister back in the day?

**JAMAL.** Don't be saying things like that.

**YAZMIN.** It ain't true? He's nothin' more than another punch the clock teacher feeding you empty words of encouragement to justify cashing his paycheck so he could sleep all peaceful and shit with himself at night.

**JAMAL.** He ain't like that.

**YAZMIN.** You got your head stuck inside some funky-ass clouds, Jamal that's your problem.

**JAMAL.** That ain't so.

**YAZMIN.** Let me set you straight with some facts of life that you've been missing out on, people like us we're stuck in this here place for a reason. our world is between Cypress and Longwood Avenue. That's what we know. That's who we are. This is us. You hear me? This here street. This here bench. That burnt out dying building that they never come around to fix up, that's our heart. You and I are destined to be the child' that are left behind. get use to that motherfuckin' truth 'cause that's all there is and all that's gonna be. I walk on the earth. I sleep with one eye closed because I don't trust the lock on my door. I don't know where you walk. For most of my life I've been passed around from relative to relative like a bad check.

**JAMAL.** You know all I ever been askin' of you is to hold me like a conversation.

## IN DA BOOGIE DOWN

**YAZMIN.** I can't be communicatin' with you like that no more, Jamal. I'm sorry. It's the time for us to be best going click on each other.

**JAMAL.** I want to be your protector.

**YAZMIN.** Who's going to be protectin' you?

**JAMAL.** Don't be worrying yourself about who's gonna be protecting me.

**YAZMIN.** I can't be doin' that.

**JAMAL.** Why not?

**YAZMIN.** I like you too much. (*Yazmin kisses Jamal on the cheek. She walks away.*)

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