

Bellywoman Bangarang

Sistren Theatre Collective



The **Sistren Theatre Collective** was founded in 1977 by a group of mainly working-class women from Kingston's inner city and a drama tutor at the Jamaica School of Drama. The names of the founding women were Afolashade (Pauline Crawford), Lorna Burrell, Beverly Elliot, Rebecca Knowles, Honor Ford-Smith, Lillian Foster, Barbara Gayle, Beverly Hanson, Vivette Lewis, Jasmin Smith, Cerene Stephenson, Myrtle Thompson, and Jerline Todd.

Initially, the women began exploring their experiences in collaborative drama workshops, supported by the JSD where the Jamaican poet and director Dennis Scott was then principal. They began presenting plays based on these collaborative workshops in professional theatres in Kingston. The goal of Sistren's work as they expressed it then was "to analyse and comment on the role of women in Jamaican society through theatre, to organize ourselves into a self-reliant co-operative enterprise and to take drama to working-class communities." By 1981 Sistren had evolved into a professional theatre group

touring widely both regionally and internationally. It had won national and international awards for its work and had also expanded to become a full time women's cultural organization running a popular education program for women in both rural communities and Kingston's inner city, a newsmagazine and a screen printing business. The organization carried out research with and about women and collaborated with other women's organizations and individuals to advance questions affecting women in the region. In 1989 they were instrumental in winning national recognition for Amy Bailey and May Farquharson, two early nationalist feminists who fought for political rights for women in Jamaica. They published *Lionheart Gal: Lifestories of Jamaican Women*, a collection of autobiographical oral/scribal accounts about Jamaican women's lives (Women's Press, 1986 and Sister Vision, 1987) and in 2001 "QPH," their play about the death by fire of indigent elder women in an Kingston almshouse (directed and scripted by Hertencer Lindsay), appeared in *Postcolonial Plays: an anthology* edited by Helen Gilbert (Routledge). At the millennium, Sistren continues to run a program of workshops from their base in Kingston.

Introduction

The play "Bellywoman Bangarang" was the first full length play created by Sistren. In its earliest version, directed and scripted by Honor Ford-Smith in 1978 "Bellywoman" played to full houses in Kingston's Barn Theatre and received rave reviews. The play was hailed as a breakthrough in theatre by one critic. Audiences were scandalized, titilated and profoundly moved by the presentation of teenage mothering, rape and masculinity. Influenced by the minimalist, less is more approach of the group of directors based at the School of Drama at the time, the play was staged on a bare stage with few props and minimal costume changes. The production was accompanied throughout by drums. Inevitably, some critics found the play too expressionistic and others expressed the view that it was too concerned with issues of sexuality and gender when it should have been focussed on class. The JBC, at the time the only national television station, invited the group to perform a scene for broadcast and then, fearing a public outcry, refused to air the scene in which a young woman is scolded about her first period. Nevertheless, the play won an award for the best project to encourage the role of women in development in the Americas from the women's arm of the Organization of American States (the CIM) and it also received a medal for the best experimental production of the year in Jamaica from the Jamaica Festival Commission.

A second production of the play was mounted in 1982 under the direction of Rawle Gibbons who approached the script by challenging the actors to move beyond their experience and treat the work as a dramatic exercise that forced them to confront questions of character and performance as if they were encountering and having to interpret themselves and their lives for the first time. His production saw some changes to the script, the addition of the strike motif, some expansion of the storyline and the song at the end. The second production of "Bellywoman" in 1982 toured in Jamaica as well as overseas in England and Holland. Critics predictably admired the polished stark production created by Gibbons, although the actors themselves missed some of the extended ritual scenes and private jokes that had been part of the therapeutic dimension of their earlier script. Several of the passages cut for the second production have been re-integrated into the present script or reproduced in appendices. By the

time of the second production Sistren had become adept at manipulating the techniques that earlier productions had pioneered—male impersonations, switching between naturalistic and ritual styles, the multiple use of a few props as symbolic and ever transforming resources.

Locally Sistren had also developed a political profile as a socialist and pro-woman group and by the time of the second production of "Bellywoman," the group was identified as "radical" by comparison to the ultra-conservative forces which then constituted the state. Government and media officials made efforts to censor the work of the group demanding scripts and squelching video recordings of QPH underway in 1981. The group was asked to leave the Jamaica School of Drama. While many supported the group during this period, Sistren was also dubbed "anti-man" by others. It was accused of promoting homosexuality by some at home, while some feminists abroad lambasted it for remaining silent and not doing enough on issues of homophobia. Still others disapproved of the mixed racial and class composition of the group which had by then expanded beyond its original composition to include new members from diverse origins. By 1982, popular style was also in transition from the overtly resistant sacred/secular black aesthetic of the seventies to the overtly sexual and flashy style emerging in the dance hall.

These factors may help explain why during the 1982 run of "Bellywoman" the actresses were sometimes threatened and bullied by men in the audience. At one particularly violent incident at a performance at the Strand in Montego Bay, some audience members pelted the stage with orange skins, juice boxes and other debris. They booed and cheered at the rapists in the play's starkest scene as a way of expressing their disagreement with the play's statement. Armed leaders from the community surrounding the theatre began threatening the actresses backstage and boasting about their record as veterans of electoral wars. The actresses bravely continued to perform till the end, facing down the hostilities, though one actress was rumoured to have secreted a switch blade under her costume as she went out on stage for the final scene. Afterwards, one gang leader in a discussion with Ford-Smith attempting to cool down the argument while the tour bus was being packed, announced "When we go a theatre we no waan see old box pan stage. We no waan see pickni a carry water;

we see dat everyday. We waan see boss a chase secretary and wi waan see the real real bed."

Incidents like these resulted in a shift in Sistren's policy toward a stronger focus on particular target audiences, community education in collaboration with community groups and a deeper discussion of the issues behind the representational strategies. After one such performance in a rural community in the Blue Mountains, one little girl in a discussion on the play commented "what me get from di play is dat dem a sey we woman musn't be licky licky. An a dat me like."

RC and HFS

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All applications regarding performing rights of this play or any part of it should be addressed to Sistren Theatre Collective c/o The Caribbean Writer, University of the Virgin Islands, RR 02, Box 10,000, Kingshill, St. Croix, USVI 00850.

**First Production
Cast and Co-creators**

Didi. Beverly Elliot
Didi's mother. Beverly Hanson
Marie. Rebecca Knowles
Gloria. Barbara Gayle
Gloria's Mother. Lana Finikin
Yvonne. Afolashade (Pauline Crawford)
Goddy. Lillian Foster
Patsy/Dennis. Vivette Lewis
Aunt May. Cerine Stephenson
Miss Freeman. Beverly Hanson
Chorus. Myrtle Thompson, Jerline Todd, Lorna Burrell Haslam
Director and Scriptwriter. Honor Ford-Smith

This script of *Bellywoman Bangarang* was edited by Rhonda Cobham and the music annotated by Buelah Brown.

Characters

Didi
Didi Mother
Marie
Gloria
Gloria's Mother
Yvonne
Goddy
Patsy
Dennis
Aunt May
Miss Freeman

Setting

The set suggests a yard, either in rural Jamaica or Kingston. Props, which will be needed during the course of the play, can be hung on a bamboo fence, which surrounds three sides of the stage. They consist of a bathpan, a grip and aprons on a clothesline. Blocks, also made from bamboo, suggest furniture or walls. All other elements of the environment are created by the actors' bodies. On stage left and stage right there are two aprons. A bamboo bridge runs down the aisle of the theatre to a small raised circular platform in the center of the audience.

Prologue

[*Drumbeat. As the chorus begins their chant from both sides of the stage, Didi enters, her body contracting in time to the rhythm of the chant.*]

Voices 1: So what we a go do?
Voices 2: Bound dem fi pay we
Bound dem fi pay we.
Voices 1: So what we a go do den?
Voices 2: We work haffi feed, di whole a we family
We work haffi feed, di whole a we family.
Voices 1: So what we a go do den?
Voices 2: Mek dem understand seh we serious
Mek dem understand seh we serious.
Voices 1: So what we fi do?
Voices 2: We nah lose we work
We nah lose we work.
Voices 1: Lead a demonstration!
Voices 2: Go pon go slow!
Voices 1: Lead a demonstration!
Voices 2: We nah strike!
Voices 1: Lead a demonstration!
All: Strike! Strike! Strike!

[*As the chant ends Didi rests against the wall, doubled over in pain.*]

ACT I Scene I

[Enter Nurses 1 and 2. They help Didi to lie down.]

Nurse 1: If you follow this place you don't get any rest at all. Is it true the doctors might support us?

Nurse 2: Their representatives were at the meeting.

Nurse 1: The labour ward is almost full.

Nurse 2: We'll have to let some stay in the waiting room.

Nurse 1: What a hard time you have with your baby-father. You sen him to call di taxi. He don't even pay you di compliment of coming back.

Didi: And a neva have no money, Nurse.

Nurse 2: Why weren't you at the meeting?

Nurse 1: I told you I'm not sure we should. . .

Didi: Ay! It a come! Di pain.

Nurse 2: Breathe deep dear and hold on. I've worked here fifteen years and I can't afford my rent. Last week the bursar from my daughter's school called me in, wanted to know how come I hadn't paid the fees. My dear, I can't afford to do charity work anymore.

Nurse 1: Aren't you afraid. . . [Exit Nurses 1 & 2. Nurses 3 & 4 enter with Gloria.]

Nurse 3: How much longer are they going to take? We've voted twice!

Nurse 4: What you say?

Nurse 3: Strike.

Nurse 4: Me too.

Nurse 3: Too damn cautious. That's what's wrong with them. Can't come together and take a strong stand.

Nurse 4: They believe all that nonsense the Minister said about the blessings of a woman's caring hand.

Nurse 3: I'd like to see him say that and take home my salary.

Nurse 4: Or sit in Casualty for hours.

Nurse 3: Under the "Emergencies Only" sign. [They giggle to Gloria.] Who have you been fighting?

Gloria: Nobody.

Nurse 3: The ambulance brought her in. She's been in Casualty for ages. Last night a mother held out her dead child to me. She'd been waiting six hours for attention.

Nurse 4: The whole damn service sector should go out with us secretaries, waitresses and teachers.

Gloria: How long will it take?

Nurse 4: A birth can take a long time.

Nurse 3: Let's hope we get somewhere before then. [Exit Nurse 3 & 4. Nurse 1 & 2 enter with Marie.]

Nurse 2: They make you so mad. Everybody else has the right to strike. The moment we make a murmur, you hear we have a duty to human life. Why they don't tell that to the police when they get trigger-happy or to the gunmen at election time?

Nurse 1: To make us feel guilty.

Nurse 2: They like to think we have men to support us. That way they can pay us less [To Marie.]. This one's high risk. They've got to start recognising us.

Nurse 1: You should be in school. I don't know why you young girls have to band down your belly with the girdle. Yuh don't know it will hurt you?

Nurse 2: If you didn't want to have the baby, why did you get pregnant?

Marie: Is accident, Nurse.

Nurse 2: Next time you better be more careful when you dealing with a man. I saw one the other day at the age of fifteen having her second child. [Exit Nurses 1 and 2, Nurses 3 and 4 enter with Yvonne.]

Nurse 3: Just relax, dear. The doctor will be here soon.

- Yvonne: I don't waan stay here.
 Nurse 4: Just relax, dear.
 Yvonne: I waan go home to. . .
 Nurse 4: [To Didi.] Move over, dear. You're having a little company. We've run out of beds.
 Yvonne: I waan mi own bed.
 Nurse 3: What is going to happen to these women, I just don't know. [Enter Nurse 1.]
 Nurse 1: The meeting is starting, the Minister's sent a representative. You're wanted down there. I'll do your chart notes for you and meet you there in a bit. [Nurse 3 hands her the chart and exits, followed by Nurse 4.]
 Good luck, it'll be a struggle. [Reads from chart.]
 Marie Brown. Domestic servant. Age 16. Rock Castle P.O. First pregnancy. No prenatal care. Extreme swelling of feet, low blood pressure. Needs careful observation. [Enter Masked Figure who stands behind Marie.]
 Gloria Samuels. Unemployed. Age 18. 13 Lawes Avenue, Kingston 13. First pregnancy. Labour induced as a result of fight. Seven months pregnant. Bottle wounds on head and neck. [Enter Second Masked Figure who stands behind Gloria.]
 Yvonne Scott. Unemployed. Age 14. No address given. She claims her godmother threw her things out in the street and told her not to come back. [Enter Third Masked Figure who stands behind Yvonne.]
 Didi: Didi Allen. Unemployed. Age 16. 26 Scarface Pathway, Concrete Jungle.
 Lord God! I would neva mek dis happen to mi again.
 Yvonne: Mi back gwine tear off. Why woman haffi suffer so?
 Didi: I wonder if is dis Mama did haffi go through? Lord, Nurse—di pain!

- Nurse 1: We can't do any more for you yet. Try humming a little song. [Nurse 1 moves to exit and removes Nurse's cap. She puts on mask and stands behind Didi.]
 Gloria: I wish I could go back to pickney days. [Drumbeat. The Masked Figures begin to play a children's "clap hands" game. They teach the women to sing and play. The women join in the game, becoming children dancing, skipping and singing.]
 All: Hands of the eighty-five,
 And mi say gonna guess,
 Mi say names of girls,
 Mi say one a piece,
 Mi say no repeat,
 Mi say no hesitation.
 Mi say maddas,
 Mi say sistren,
 Mi say nieces too.
 Mi say higglers,
 Mi say barmaids,
 Mi say dancers too.
 Secretary, teller,
 Cashier, and office maid,
 Helper and mistress,
 Actress and waitress,
 Poetess and teacher,
 Florist, designer,
 Conductress, leggo gal,
 Rebel gal and daughter,
 Chuckiboo and fly-by-night,
 Bombastical-Basoon. [Repeat chorus.]
 All: Didi, Yvonne, Gloria, Marie, Didi, Yvonne,
 Gloria, Marie, Didi, Yvonne, Gloria, Marie,
 Didi!
 [All exit, except Didi.]

ACT I Scene II

[Enter Mama, lies down, Didi approaches her with nightie over her arm.]

Didi: Mama I finish.
 Mama: Mek I see it. Not so bad. Put it in di grip.
 Didi: Di one Granny, she see mi a press mi grandfaada khaki pants and she say it have two seam and carry it go put it inna water.
 Mama: Mind how yuh talk yuh grandmadda. Is she alone help mi. Is she gwine haffi help yuh when mi gone. Now listen, every day yuh walk go down a Montego Bay Market to yuh Granny. She will give yuh food. Come straight home, and cook di dinner fi di rest a pickney dem.
 Didi: Yes, Mama.
 Mama: No figat fi feed di chicken-dem in di morning. Tie dis headdress fi mi.
 Didi: Mama?
 Mama: What?
 Didi: Mek mi go, nuh?
 Mama: Hook mi dress back.
 Didi: Mama. . .
 Mama: After yuh have di whole heap a dirty clothes fi wash!
 Didi: Mama, smaddy else cyaan wash di clothes?
 Mama: Dem too small. Dem cyaan help mi.
 Didi: Everything is Didi come do dis, Didi come do dat.
 Mama: If I could a do better, I would a do better.
 Didi: Tomorrow is Saturday. Mi will wash di clothes tomorrow.
 Mama: Chuh! When I send yuh, yuh end up down a Barnett River wid di whole heap a boys dem yuh one as gal.
 Didi: Is lie dem tell pon mi.
 Mama: Sometime is di last shilling I have and I give yuh it fi buy lunch school, and hear what yuh do. . .go down a Barnett River.

Didi: Today a Sports Day. Mi suppose fi run inna di relay.
 Mama: Tek off di uniform.
 Didi: Who tell yuh mi go down a Barnett River?
 Mama: Yuh granmadda see yuh.
 Didi: She drink rum and tell lie too much.
 Mama: Just no bodder talk seh Granny lie. Yuh is one a di most dishonest pickney round here.
 Didi: Mi ever tief anyting from yuh, Mama?
 Mama: Don't back answer mi. Yuh tink because yuh bigger dan mi yuh can back answer mi?
 Didi: See it dere though. Mi bredda and sister go a school, and mi mus stay at home and look after dem.
 Mama: Stop di cow bawlin, or mi gwine give yuh sinting fi cry for. Come on. Bring di grip.
 Didi: Yuh wicked. Tru yuh ignorant yuh waan mi fi come like yuh.
 Mama: Yuh shut up yuh mouth.
 Didi: Mi waan go a school.
 Mama: Oh God. [Quietly.]
 Didi: Mi waan go a school.
 Mama: Stop yuh noise. Mi no have no lunch money fi give yuh. [Pause.] Come here. Yuh figat seh a mi and yuh used to buy banana, cut it up and sell it just fi we survive. Sometime hours beat, mi deh-deh a bake commmeal pudding, potato pudding fi carry go sell. Who used to help mi?
 Didi: Mi, Mama.
 Mama: Yuh figat yuh faada deh a town how much years now and not even send treepence come give mi?
 Didi: Mi know but mi waan fi. . .
 Mama: Day in, day out, mi soak mi hand inna water just fi yuh. Mi working regular now. Is just fi overcome di sickness inna mi hand. Tings start fi get better. You a fi mi. Lean pon mi, mi big gal. If mi know seh yuh a look after di pickney dem, mi will rest alright. When mi

come back and start work again, yuh can go a school. Di bus going up. Hear it?
 Didi: When yuh coming back from hospital?
 Mama: I don't know.
 Didi: Mama, Mama.
 Mama: What?
 Didi: Di rest a dem pickney say dem gwine cut off yuh hand, fi better it. Is true?
 Mama: Come on child. Mind di bus leave mi.
 [They exit.]

ACT I Scene III

[Enter Marie with imaginary companion and slightly battered white doll.]

Marie: Come nuh Mary, mind yuh pretty dress catch pon di bush. Celeste, mek mi comb yuh hair. . .Come from di tree root, Mary. Duppy live deh and him no have no head. Him will carry you way. Ready? All right. Go to Mary, Celeste. Stand up. "Listen ye the word of the Lord, thy rock and thy Salvation. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth thy children."
 [Off stage.] Marie!
 Marie: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband. . .and he shall rule over thee."
 Cherry: Marie. Weh yuh is? [Enters.]
 Marie: [Whispers.] Mary, give mi Celeste. Dem nah go married we, we nah go do like mama.
 Cherry: Marie.
 Marie: Shhh. Dem nah go rule we. . .
 Cherry: [Enters.] Ah! I catch yuh.
 Marie: Leggo mi hand.
 Cherry: Who yuh playing wid?
 Marie: Nobody. I was reading di Bible.
 Cherry: Yuh neva hear mi was calling yuh?
 Marie: Yes.
 Cherry: So why yuh never answer?
 Marie: [Shurges.]

Cherry: Yuh hear seh Madda Ursie dead?
 Marie: Yes.
 Cherry: Dem a keep set-up fi her tonight. Everybody going. Yuh can come?
 [Shakes her head.]
 Marie: Why?
 Cherry: Yuh know why.
 Marie: Weh she is?
 Cherry: She gone to church.
 Marie: So you can come play hopscotch wid me.
 Cherry: Me cyaan leave di yard because she soon come.
 Marie: Den yuh no can play here. . .play before me.
 [Marie starts the game.]
 Cherry: You out.
 Marie: Me no out.
 Cherry: You out because you foot touch di line.
 Marie: Me foot no touch di line. Das why me no like play wid you because you too tief.
 Cherry: A cause yuh cyaan play because Miss Liz-Ann coop yuh up.
 Marie: She don't coop me up, cause me no fowl.
 Cherry: She coop you up! It come like slavery yuh gawn in wid Miss Liz-Ann. She not even 'low you fi go lean up on di fence so. An you fraid fi her. Like how yuh fraid fi ask her bout tonight.
 Marie: Mi cyaan ask her, mi cyaan ask big people no question. If she even talk an mi hear, mi haffi do like mi no hear.
 Cherry: Madda Ursie did love yuh.
 Marie: So what? She done dead already.
 Cherry: Somebody else like yuh.
 Marie: Who?
 Cherry: If yuh don't come, Ah gwine send him fi yuh.
 Marie: Who?
 Cherry: Tief way and come a Madda and mi will tell yuh.
 Marie: No.

Cherry: Fraidy puss! Fraidy puss! Mi gwine mek him come tief yuh way.

Marie: Miss Liz-Ann soon come.

Cherry: If Winston come, Miss Liz-Ann cyaan do notten.

Marie: Is yuh bredda who like mi?

Cherry: Is him send mi come.

Marie: Winston dat stab di boy inna him head and send him go a hospital?

Cherry: Because di boy did say him tief, and him no tief.

Marie: Mi no chat to murderer.

Cherry: Yuh know what dem pickney say bout yuh?

Marie: What?

Cherry: When dem tell mi. . .mi frighten.

Marie: What?

Cherry: Come a Madda and mi will tell yuh. [*Takes the doll.*]

Marie: Gimme her!

Cherry: Yuh too big fi play wid dolly.

Marie: Yuh too black and ugly. Gimme! Das why Miss Liz-Ann no mek mi play wid yuh. All yuh have is chigger! Yuh have lice. Yuh knatty head favour a dry up piece of ole rag.

Cherry: Yuh tink tall hair is anyting? Yuh madda was a miserable Ole Hige. Das why yuh faada beat her till she run way and go a Kingston.

Marie: Who say dat?

Cherry: Everybody know seh a so it go. Nobody no want yuh. Das why dem leave yuh wid Miss Liz-Ann.

Marie: Shut yuh mouth. [*Searches for a stone, then throws it at Cherry.*]

Cherry: Ah gwine tell Winston! Ah gwine tell him yuh lick mi pon mi head wid a big stone. Ah gwine mek him come deal wid yuh. Here, tek yuh dolly. [*Throws down Marie's doll and exits.*]

Marie: Come Mary! Come Celeste! Come! We gwine go inside and lock di door.

ACT I Scene IV

[*Enter Gloria who begins vigorously cleaning the floor with a coconut brush.*]

Gloria's Mama: [*Offstage.*] Gloria! Gloria! [*Enters.*] Gloria! Answer mi nuh gal. . .Is yuh I talking to. Gloria! Das what mi cyaan tek wid di lickle gal. When mi talk to her she won't answer mi. Stop deh man. Who send you over hair-dresser shop go put up hairstyle? Get up! When you go put up hairstyle, who a go pay for? Answer mi! [*Pulls Gloria up and hits her three or four times.*]

Gloria: Mama! Mi neva know she would a charge yuh.

G's Mama: Anybody hear mi trial!

Gloria: Tru yuh and she is such good friend, and yuh even have di same name. Mama, is only five shilling.

G's Mama: Lickle gal, what mek yuh wicked so? If I even go over dere and she run di straightening comb through mi head front is thirty shillings she charge me. But Jesus Christ! Mind I kill yuh in here, gal. [*Pushes Gloria onto the floor.*]

Gloria: Mama! Yuh a go beat mi fi dat?

G's Mama: Mek mi pack out dem two piece a sinting mi carry from Mr. Foot backyard because if I continue argue wid yuh I gwine kill yuh. When mi haffi inna dat deh backyard up in Constant Spring, all when 9 o'clock mi just mean fi start work. As baby bawl mi haffi get up and go look pon it. An a ongle three pound ten a week dem a pay mi.

Gloria: But Mama, mi no see Miss Jones round di front do like yuh. Yuh ketch di first bus Monday morning time and di last bus a Saturday night time fi come home to we. Miss Jones go work a morning and come home to her pickney dem in di evening.

G's Mama: Miss Jones work is a different work dan mine. She go work eight till four. My own is stop pon premises. Where yuh go wid di hair style?

Gloria: Down a di fair a school, Mama.

G's Mama: Who and yuh go down dere?

Gloria: Mi one, Mama.

G's Mama: Suppose mi ask teacher and teacher tell mi a yuh and smaddy.

Gloria: Teacher never see mi, Mama.

G's Mama: Yuh did ask mi if yuh could a go?

Gloria: Mama, all di while fair down a school and when mi ask yuh if mi can go, dat day yuh find a whole heap a work fi give mi fi do, and no care how mi do it good, yuh beat mi and say mi no do it good, and yuh no send mi.

G's Mama: Den yuh no mus learn di right way? Where yuh get clothes?

Gloria: Mi bredda dem. . .[Pause.]

G's Mama: Mi say which part yuh find yuh clothes?

Gloria: Mi bredda dem have one key. . .Mama, mi cyaan tell yuh, mama.

G's Mama: Talk, pickney! Where dem get key?

Gloria: Is not your key, Mama. Is one bull key. Dem say it open any lock.

G's Mama: Lord have mercy! Dem give it to yuh?

Gloria: When dem a sleep mi tek it out a dem pocket and mi try it inna di bureau drawer and it open, and mi get di frock fi wear. But, Mama, mi couldn't go a fair naked!

G's Mama: See it dere now! Police soon start look fi yuh and yuh bredda dem and call yuh tief. Das why mi can never be interested inna yuh, lickle gal, for instead yuh better, yuh worse. Just come out a mi sight and go away. [Pause.]

Gloria: Mama! Mama! Answer mi nuh. Das what I don't like wid Mama. When yuh talk to her she don't answer yuh.

G's Mama: Talk! Mi have ears hole. Mi a hear.

Gloria: Mama, mi do someting good today. Mama, mi draw out all di furniture dem, clean dem, mi polish and shine out di place, and mi clean all di verandah too, Mama.

G's Mama: Fi once yuh do someting good, eeh lickle gal? What mek yuh won't hear when mi talk to yuh? Look how yuh face lickle bit and pretty and nice eeh. [Sits down and motions Gloria to sit beside her.]

From di odder day mi have sinting fi tell yuh, but tru yuh so bad mi wouldn't even belch it mek yuh hear. I have an intention. I want to go away. I get out some a di papers dem. Turn round, I talking to yuh. Some alright but some a give mi lickle problem. As soon as mi get through, mi will go up and send fi yuh, for mi cyaan tek di life out here no more, God know.

Gloria: Den Mama, if when yuh deh yah yuh catch di first bus a Monday morning time and di last bus a Saturday night time come home to we, when yuh gawn we nah go see yuh again?

G's Mama: Mi will send fi yuh, lickle gal.

Gloria: Where you going, Mama?

G's Mama: America.

Gloria: Den, is what yuh tek go America, Mama?

G's Mama: Plane. . .Where yuh going?

Gloria: Yuh a go America? Well, when yuh gawn America mi have somewhere fi go too. [Exits.]

G's Mama: Lickle gal, come back here! [Exits following Gloria.]

ACT I Scene V

[Enter Goddy, singing a hymn. She settles herself after a moment, sewing.]

- Yvonne: [Off stage.] Mi a go inna di house go see if mi see it. [Enters and crosses in front of Goffy who grabs her.]
- Goddy: Come here to me! Who and you outside there talking?
- Yvonne: Oh! Me and Susie, Goddy.
- Goddy: Which Susie that?
- Yvonne: Di lickle gal dat live over di road.
- Goddy: Let me see what she looks like. Oh, that little girl. Now, Yvonne, you know that I don't like to see you standing up at the gate talking. So you know what you do for me? Go invite your friend inside and both of you sit on the verandah and talk.
- Yvonne: She not gwine want to come in here, maam. She don't like come into stranger yard.
- Goddy: What you mean by that? You see any monkey in here?
- Yvonne: No, maam. Dem send her out and she stop and call me to tell me something.
- Goddy: Then if she has time to stand up out there and talk, might as well she come in and sit down.
- Yvonne: She no want to come in here, maam, because she mussy all fraid of di dog, too.
- Goddy: That is no excuse, Yvonne. Where are you to hold the dog? You know. . .as a matter of fact. . .I don't want any security guard at the gate.
- Yvonne: She is not a security guard, Goddy.
- Goddy: There must be something that you two girls have talking that you don't want me to hear.
- Yvonne: No, maam. . .We not talking anyting. She just don't want to come in.
- Goddy: [Sits Yvonne down.] Yvonne, you know that I am a church woman, and also a woman of principle and respect. Now suppose

- Leaderess should be coming on and see you hitching up at the gate talking. What do you believe she would think of me?
- Yvonne: Leaderess couldn't think anyting bad of yuh, Goddy. Because if she pass me and Susie out there is only nice things she'd a hear we talk.
- Goddy: You know what you do for me? Just tell her to leave my gate. Tell her to leave my gate, at once.
- Yvonne: Mi must tell mi friend fi go way, maam? Chuh! [Rises.]
- Goddy: Is kiss you kiss you teeth?
- Yvonne: No, maam.
- Goddy: But merciful Father! Wait, Yvonne, what is this on the chair? It seems as if somebody get cut. Look around there for me. I wonder if my eyes fooling me. Let me put on my glasses, something is wrong somewhere. I will soon solve this problem. Search yourself there, Yvonne. You get any cut?
- Yvonne: No, Goddy.
- Goddy: I don't get any either. . .Come here a little. You better come around here. I feel more or less is you this thing coming from.
- Yvonne: Mi, Goddy? I just tell you I don't get any cut, maam.
- Goddy: Now just raise your skirt there for me. Why are you getting so jumpy? What you think under there that I don't know? Come on!
- Yvonne: But, Goddy, why you want to see under mi skirt?
- Goddy: See it there! It's worse now. See it?
- Yvonne: Is what, Goddy? After me don't know is what, maam?
- Goddy: Ah, that is why you are to calm yourself down and let me explain to you, for you must remember that eyelash is older than beard. Come around here. This is called your monthly cycle. You are now unclean, dirty.

- Yvonne: But mi cyaan unclean, Goddy, is before me go talk to Susie, mi bathe.
- Goddy: That might be so, girl, but you are now turning into womanhood.
- Yvonne: Big woman, Goddy?
- Goddy: I don't mean a full grown woman. But at this stage you can have a baby any time.
- Yvonne: Real, real baby, Goddy?
- Goddy: Yes, a real baby. But see yah now, mi know what gwine happen. All di worries in di world mine come down on mi. But, gal, I have news fi yuh! If yuh go out on di street wid yuh flighty self and mek any of dem runted-tail boy out deh trouble yuh and give yuh di real, real baby, if yuh ever hitch up out a gate till any a dem do yuh someting, den, gal, yuh gwine puke.
- Yvonne: Den is what dem mine do fi mek mi puke, maam?
- Goddy: Look here, gal! Facety and fresh! Come on and let me show you how to fix up yourself before we go to church.
[*They exit.*]

ACT II Scene I

[*Enter Masked Chorus. Skipping. They freeze in positions emphasizing their developing bodies. Didi enters cautiously, she searches each member of the chorus, until she discovers someone with a fork. She takes it.*]

- Didi: I find it!
[*Chorus makes mocking gestures outlining breasts, hips, hair. They exit.*]
- Didi: Is all right. None a dem not here, come.
[*Jasmine and Patsy enter cautiously.*]
- Jasmine: Yuh sure?
- Didi: She nah reach home till all nine o'clock.
- Patsy: She a work again wid di bad hand?
- Didi: Long time. Cyaan do better. . . See di fork here. Yuh waan mango?

- Jasmine: Where yuh get so much mango?
- Didi: Mama say mi must carry dem up a Roseland a one fair skin lady. Di one weh get di work a Airport fi her.
- Jasmine: Den yuh nah carry dem?
- Didi: Mi cyaan stand fi go up dere. Dem always mek mi go a di back, and give mi water fi drink outa one condense can. Mi cyaan even peep inna di house fi see how it stay. And Mama pick out di best mango give dem. Is not di woman a go eat di mango. Is di pickney dem. Ah carrying a feelings fi dem, yuh see. Dem love dress up demself and come a Montego Bay come show off.
- Patsy: [*Heats fork and starts straightening Didi's hair.*] Mek mi tell yuh what yuh do.
- Didi: Ouch! Tek time, for yuh burn mi pon mi ears de odder day and mi madda quarrel seh mi too lickle.
- Patsy: When yuh go up dere, run through some macca and scrape up di whole a yuh hands and feet. Yuh know di ticky-ticky macca behind cli busstop? Run through it. When yuh come home tell yuh madda cow run yuh down.
- Didi: A true. Mi gwine say a Marse James cow. Dem gal pickney, no walk go a school. Inna car dem pass mi pon di road. Dat time mi just a come back wid water fi full di drum pan. By di time mi reach school, teacher just ready fi beat mi.
- Jasmine: Dem still a beat in Senior School?
- Didi: If dem not beating mi, dem only a send mi inna di kitchen fi fix lunch and help wash plate.
- Jasmine: It looking nice, though. Patsy, yuh should be a hairdresser when yuh grow big.
- Didi: Mi would a like turn mechanic.
- Jasmine: Woman cyaan be mechanic.
- Didi: Why?

Jasmine: Me no know. Hey, Didi, is all dem breed a brassiere your madda wear?
 Didi: Put it down. Come out a mi madda tings.
 Jasmine: Di odder day, mi did round di bottom a di yard a play wid mi friend, and we hear [*breathes heavily*] inna di house.
 Didi: A wha?
 Patsy: Mussy donkey a bray.
 Jasmine: A di house it did a come from. On topa dat we hear sinting go screecky, screecky, screecky. And di house just a go so. . .
 Didi: What? Breeze a blow it?
 Jasmine: Mi ask dem a what, dem say gwaan go look. Guess what mi see?
 Didi: What?
 Jasmine: . . . Mi cyaan tell yuh.
 Didi: Duppy?
 Jasmine: Di man pon top a di woman.
 Patsy: A what dem did a do?
 Didi: A slackness.
 Patsy: A hook dem did a hook.
 Didi: Yuh know Neita?
 Patsy: Di woman yuh madda bring come fi look bout di house?
 Didi: Yes. More time mi big bredda come in a day time and waan carry Neita inna di house. Like how we siddung now, him woulda send me go a shop. One time me reach back before him done do what him did a do. When mi open di door me see me bredda pon top a her, and she lay dung a sew same way.
 Jasmine & Patsy: A sew?
 Didi: Ouch!
 Patsy: Sorry.
 Didi: Yuh burn me pon me ears, yuh know.
 Jasmine: Mi ask mi madda bout it. But she ongle laugh. Yuh madda say anyting to yuh?
 Didi: No!
 Patsy: Dem say mi can have baby now.
 Didi: How?

Patsy: Mi no sure.
 Didi: Yuh'd a like fi have one?
 Patsy: Mus! If is even one.
 Didi: Why?
 Jasmine: How yuh mean why?
 Patsy: Den mi no woman? Mi not a mule.
 Didi: Den if yuh no have baby, yuh no woman?
 Patsy: Yes.
 Jasmine: Yuh no waan fi have baby now, Didi?
 Didi: Mi no waan do like mi madda, das all mi know. Mi nah inna no struggle fi find food fi give no baby. A woman one mi see bear certain burden—Rahtid! Ouch!
 Jasmine: She burn out a piece a yuh hair. [*Gets up and goes to mirror.*]
 Didi: See yah gal! Put down di fork.
 Patsy: Sorry.
 Didi: Mi say fi put it down. Mi will go long wid mi hair same way. Mi no waan no bun-up head. Mek it stay natural.
 Jasmine: Look! My titty dem a get big. [*Puts on Mother's brassiere.*]
 Didi: Hair a grow under my arm.
 Jasmine: Patsy, how comes yuh no waan fi show?
 Patsy: Den mi no mus.
 Didi: Come mek we lift her up and look under her dress. [*They struggle.*]
 Voices: Didi! Didi! Didi! Didi!
 Didi: Jesus Christ, Mama a come! Hide! [*They hide.*]
 [*Drums up. Enter Marie, Yvonne, Gloria & Masked Chorus. All try to hide their bodies behind bits of furniture, hiding from each other and themselves. Some select the same hiding places. They turn into each other and become women examining their reflections in the mirror very critically. Each of the principal characters is reflected by a masked character.*]
 Yvonne: Mi gosh, mi no like mi colour at all. Is how mi black so? Mi wonder if a because Goddy keep mi inna di room so much mi tek di colour of di house.

Didi: Kiss mi neck. Look pon mi finger dem. Mi file dem, mi polish dem, mi down to wear ring pon dem, but dem still remain di same ginger root.

Gloria: Knock-knee gal, knock-knee gal, everywhere mi go dem just a talk bout knock-knee gal. Dem mussy stay far and fling on mi foot. Mi do it all so, turn it round so, all exercise it so, and see dere, di knee dem can neither seven nor eleven.

Marie: All di ask mi a ask Miss Liz-Ann a how mi lean so, she say a so mi born. But mi no believe her, a di whole heap a beating she used to give mi when mi small lean mi up so. Yuh see when she send mi a dressmaker, she no bodder wid no measurement. She just look pon mi and say gwaan. True mi no have no shape.

Yvonne: Mi no like mi belly at all. Mi belly too big and hang over. When mi go a store and see all dem sexy blouse fi tie up here so, mi cyaan buy it at all. Mi belly too big.

Marie: When mi look pon mi toe and see how dem short and hook up and everybody else own tall and pretty, God know mi'd a chop dem off and fling dem way.

Gloria: Look pon mi pretty lickle face weh mi get, an look pon mi nose, it favour any funk.

Didi: Lawd! Koo pon mi forehead. If mi even go a river wid dem boy di lease lickle mistake mi mek hear dem: "Buck, buck! Cunny buck buck!" When dem nah say buck buck, hear dem, "Moon pon stick!"

All: Moon pon stick! Moon pon stick! Moon pon stick!

[Enter Miss Freeman. Her attention is attracted by a sound. She gets a block, climbs up on it to look over a fence. She is much amused by what she sees.]

Miss Freeman: Oh! A so it go! Hmmm! *[Laughs.]* Goddy! Goddy! Goddy! Whoo, Goddy!

Goddy: Who a call me?

Miss Freeman: Mi, maam! Miss Freeman. Run, come ya lickle bit. . .

Goddy: What going on there. Who yuh looking at?

Miss Freeman: Come up here! Look out deh so.

Goddy: Stop! But no two people out dere a gwaan like. . . But wait! A one man and one woman. *[Laughs.]* A who dem?

Miss Freeman: Yvonne.

Goddy: Yvonne! My Yvonne?

Miss Freeman: And her spouse.

Goddy: Den is when Yvonne leave out a di house?

Miss Freeman: Look deh. Hug up. Dem all a hug up tight.

Goddy: What is dis pon mi!

Miss Freeman: All a kiss. Yuh no see?

Goddy: Stop! But wait, look pon lickle Yvonne weh gwaan like she a saint and watch yab, Yvonne a big smaddy.

Miss Freeman: Di boy boot shine, though. Him have on white shirt and neck tie.

Goddy: Den a who him?

Miss Freeman: Is Parson son.

Goddy: She gone inna good family though. All di same Miss Freeman, mi really nah waan nothing happen to Yvonne. Den Miss Freeman, how yuh a gwaan so, like yuh in league wid it.

Miss Freeman: Billfold! Him gawn inna billfold. Him all a tek out money.

Goddy: Den which part she a go stay and spend di money?

Miss Freeman: A mi yuh a ask dat? Watch deh! A screw she a screw! Wait, di money mussy no nuff. . .

Goddy: Miss Freeman, yuh see and know how mi try wid Yvonne. Di gal get opportunity fi go High School, what poor mi never get. Even yuh di odder day say how yuh admire Yvonne in her school uniform.

Miss Freeman: A true yuh know. Look deh! Wait, di boy a friend her up back.

Goddy: Wait lickle. . . how dem so close. . . What dem really doing?

Miss Freeman: Watch deh! Love birds! What is dis!
 Goddy: Me Jesus. A wah dis a go on in front a mi?
 Mi feel weak and nervous. I wonder if
 Yvonne know seh mi see her.

Miss Freeman: Romance!
 Goddy: Miss Freeman, yuh have pickney too, no
 maam?

Miss Freeman: An mi yuh a ask. No di same ting did hap-
 pen to yuh? What yuh madda did do?
 Goddy: Yvonne! Yuh lickle wretch, come inside
 here. *[Exits.]*

Miss Freeman: Pass di ball and di ball gone round.
*[Enter Chorus, skipping around in a circle and singing. As the
 game gets faster each of the principle characters is caught in
 the centre of the circle.]*²

Chorus: Pass di ball and di ball gone round
 Mawga Nanny show mi how di ball gawn
 round.
 Play ball, play ball, play ball, play
 Mawga Nanny show mi how di ball gawn
 round.

Boy: *[Whistles off.]* Yuh Granny come from mar-
 ket. Yuh madda gawn a bed?

Didi: *[From inside circle.]* Mama tek way all mi
 clothes. Mi cyaan come.

Boy: Yuh mus can come, man!

Didi: Is Granny ole frock mi have on. Mama just
 done murder mi. She beat mi till she same
 one bawl eye water.

Boy: Everybody a wait pon yuh, man. Chuh!
 Dem beat yuh today, tomorrow, yuh gwaan
 same way.

Didi: But it frowsy.

Boy: No matter, man. Flag it out and come down
 a mi yard mek we press it, wid di self heater
 iron. Yuh can wear one a mi shirt.

Didi: Suppose dem find mi?

Boy: Dem nah go find yuh. When yuh reach
 home just clear straight through di house
 and go a church.

Didi: Granny always a force mi fi tek communion.
 But mi no understand notten about it.

Boy: No swallow it or it will choke yuh. Worse like
 how we a sinner. Come on, dem waiting.

Chorus: *[Skipping.]* Pass di ball and di ball gawn
 round.
[Repeat three times. Marie inside circle.]

Winston: Ssst, sst, sexy. Where yuh going?
 Marie: *[Ignores him.]* Church.
 Winston: Chat to I no! *[Tries to touch her.]*
 Marie: *[Silence.]*
 Winston: Hey, red skin gal! Yuh face tough like any
 Spanish Town handcuff and yuh foot big
 and flat. Not a man I know would come
 near yuh much less deal wid yuh. Lickle
 country whore—just wait! Yuh tink yuh too
 nice to chat to I man? Just wait. Yuh better
 pray God I don't ketch yuh.

Marie: Watch ya, man—leave mi alone.

Chorus: Pass di ball and di ball gawn round
[Repeat three times. Gloria in the centre of the circle.]

Paul: *[Pulls up in car and blows horn.]* Where di
 dawta going?

Gloria: Mi madda send mi a shop.
 Paul: Pretty smile and ting! Gemini deh a Love
 Shack tonight. Yuh waan step wid I?

Gloria: *[Giggles.]* Mi cyaan come.
 Paul: Den which part di dawta desire fi go? Look
 pan I man criss-criss Austin car. I man will
 carry di dawta wheresoever di dawta desire
 to go.

Gloria: *[Giggles.]* Mama up a yard. She nah go
 mek mi go.

Paul: Tell mi someting? Yuh fraid a yuh madda? I
 man gwine tief a frock and carry it come fi
 yuh tonight and den we step. Seen!

Gloria: Mi madda send mi a shop.
 Chorus: Pass di ball and di ball gawn round.
[Repeat three times. Didi in the centre of the circle.]

Didi: Patsy! Patsy-oh!
 Patsy: A who dat a call mi name so?

Didi: Come ya man, quick! A weh yuh a go Patsy?

Patsy: Mi a go a town, man.

Didi: Rahtid! Patsy, mi have one lickle problem. Ah it mi call yuh fi see if yuh can help mi solve.

Patsy: What kind a problem?

Didi: Yuh cyaan see? Koo mi eye.

Patsy: Rahtid! A who chop yuh so, Didi?

Didi: Mama cook lickle stew-peas di odder night and say mi fi wash di plate dem. And mi jus go put one a di pot fi soak. Patsy, mi inna mi deep sleep an mi only feel when sinting gimme one bitch lick over mi eye.

Patsy: A yuh a di biggest gal inna di yard?

Didi: Patsy, yuh know seh a seven a we. But a mi one. Everyting a Didi come do dis, Didi come do dat.

Patsy: Den she nah learn fi her boy pickney dem fi do notten?

Didi: No bodder call fi dem name at all. . .Yuh waan see she send mi fi her pardner money and mi. . .

Patsy: [Moves to Didi.] How much?

Didi: Ten pound. . .Chuh! No count it man. Gimme back.

Patsy: So what yuh a go do now?

Didi: Mi no know. Das why mi call yuh.

Patsy: Well, right now yuh see, di only ting mi can tell yuh is dis. Tek di pardner money and mek we bolt go a town.

Didi: Town! Patsy!

Patsy: Yuh no have no family a town?

Didi: Mi faada deh a town yes. But mi not even sure bout where him live.

Patsy: Chuh man, no bodder worry bout dat. When we go a town we will ask one policeman. Him will direct we.

Didi: So, Patsy, yuh tink mi a idiot?

Patsy: Wid what?

Didi: How yuh expect seh after mi tief Mama ten

pound mi must go a town go ask policeman fi address.

Patsy: Yuh a go tell di policeman seh yuh tief yuh Mama ten pound?

Didi: No man, a nah so mi mean, man. Mi mean to say from him look pon mi from mi foot come straight up to mi head, him a go see seh mi a tief.

Patsy: Den di tief and di ten pound print out pon yuh? Watch ya man, mi haffi go ketch di diesel. So yuh see if yuh a come, just mek haste.

Didi: All right. Wait. No lef me.

Chorus: [Chanting rhythmically, surrounding the four girls.] Bull inna di pen and him cyaan come out! [Repeat three times.]

Girls: [Inside circle.] And what kind a pen dis? [Chorus member becomes Didi's Mother.]

Didi's Mother: Punishment Pen! Imagine! From morning I give yuh di few lickle plates and di pots fi wash and up to now yuh cyaan do dem. Just come outa mi sight and go do what I tell yuh. [Pushes Didi.]

Chorus: [Chanting rhythmically.] A bull inna di pen and him cyaan come out! [Repeat three times.]

Girls: [Inside circle.] And what kind a pen dis? [Chorus member becomes Shopkeeper.]

Shopkeeper: Run-All-About Pen! Mi cyaan trust yuh notten more. Tell yuh madda fi send di money she owe mi for mi want it fi buy goods fi put inna mi shop. And don't come back without it.

Chorus: [Chanting rhythmically.] A bull inna di pen and him cyaan come out! [Repeat three times.]

Girls: And a what kind a pen dis? [Chorus member becomes Parson.]

Parson: Church Pen! [Blesses child.] Oh Lord protect this child. Help her to walk in the path of thy commandment. Honour thy father

and thy mother. Help her to flee fornication for fornication is sin.

Chorus: A bull inna di pen and him cyaan come out!
[Repeat three times]

Girls: And a what kind a pen dis? [Chorus member becomes School Teacher.]

Teacher: School Pen! [Writes on board.] Tell your mother to buy a pair of crepe and put it on your foot when she send you to school. I can't have barefoot children in my school.

Chorus: And a bull inna di pen and him cyaan come out! [Repeat three times, getting faster. Chorus encircles Didi again as if in a ring game.] Run, Didi, run! Yuh madda a come! [Sings several times getting faster. Didi tries to break out of the circle twice. On the third time, Didi breaks out of the circle. Chorus forms a train puffing and blowing.]

Patsy: Come on man. . . Look how yuh big and slobber. Yuh couldn't fix up yuh self better dan so? Den a so yuh a go a town barefoot? Yuh no have no slippers fi put on?

Didi: But mi no have no shoes, Patsy.

Patsy: Weh yuh money deh? Gimme it. For yuh look like yuh'd a give di man pon di diesel di whole a it. Hold dis. Dis a fi-yuh fare. Mi a keep di rest.

Didi: Patsy. . .

Patsy: Turn round. Out deh so di diesel a come from. Straight out deh.

Didi: Patsy, a outa Mama ten pound yuh a go pay fi-yuh fare?

Patsy: Look! Look di diesel.

Didi: Patsy, member when we go a town yuh have fi-mi money.

Patsy: Shut yuh mouth, man
[The diesel arrives, made up of the Chorus. Didi and Patsy jump on. It is rather like a children's game of train. Chorus crosses the bridge and deposits Didi in the central area and exits. Street noises off. Didi looks lost.]
[Blackout.]

ACT III Scene I

Chorus: [Off, singing.] Those whose sign is Aries skip around. [Repeat.]
Tra la la la la la
Tra la la la La la la
Those whose sign is Aries skip around.

[Enter Aunty May. Searches for her slipper. She looks under the bed and finds Gloria cowering there.]

Aunty: Lawd have mercy! Gloria what yuh doing under di bed? Gloria what happen to yuh? What yuh and yuh madda have? Gloria how yuh trembling so? Talk to mi, nuh! Talk to yuh Aunty, mi love.

Gloria: Aunty. . . [Pause.]

Aunty: Eeeh hee?

Gloria: After yuh see mi. . . [Pause.]

Aunty: Talk, mi love.

Gloria: She say mi fi go sew on button pon Paul and Uton shirt, yuh see, and send dem a Sunday school and. . . Aunty, mi neva move off quick time. . . She say mi suck mi teeth, but Aunty, mi never suck mi teeth. And, Aunty, yuh know what she do?

Aunty: What?

Gloria: She tek. . . she tek di whole pan a hot water and throw it after mi, Aunty.

Aunty: Lawd mi God and King! Yuh madda yuh a talk?

Gloria: Aunty, yuh know di kerosene pan dat she scald her clothes inna? Is dat Mama throw After mi, Aunty.

Aunty: Gloria, come.

Gloria: No, Aunty, no.

Aunty: Gloria, yuh inna mi house. She cyaan do yuh a ting. Yuh come.

Gloria: No, Aunty.

[Enter Gloria's Mama. Pause. Slowly Aunty May sits on the bed and arranges the bedclothes to cover Gloria.]

Gloria's Mama: Is so it go! Anytime she do anyting wrong—she run come down here come hide and yuh hide her.

Aunty: Who yuh talking bout? [*Calls.*]

G's Mama: Gloria! Gloria!

Aunty: What yuh doing, Alice?

G's Mama: I looking for Gloria.

Aunty: She don't come down yah from morning.

G's Mama: Yuh mek mi find her, den yuh will know. Gloria!

Aunty: How much time mi fi tell yuh di one word. She don't come down here from morning.

G's Mama: So, which part else she haffi go? [*Pushes Aunty out of her way.*]

Aunty: But see yah? What happen to yuh, maam.

G's Mama: Notten happen! Yuh see sinting happen?

Aunty: Tek yuh time. . . What do yuh so? Yuh cyaan relax yuhself. Di two a we are sisters and yuh wouldn't even come down di yard at evening time and mek we talk.

G's Mama: Talk about what?

Aunty: Anyting. Life.

G's Mama: [*Laughs mockingly.*] When since all yuh a talk bout life?

Aunty: What do yuh so, Alice? Stand up and talk to mi.

G's Mama: Gimme pass!

Aunty: What Gloria do yuh? We a sista. Mi fi tell yuh mi problem, and yuh fi tell mi yuh own. Di two a we have di same madda. We mus haffi help we one anodder.

G's Mama: Mi talk to her dis morning, tell her to go put on button pon her bredda dem shirt, send dem a Sunday school. She kiss her teeth and cuss mi. Mi owna gal pickney cuss bad word after mi. A fi-mi her. A mi bring her come ya and mi nah mek she rule mi. Awo!

Aunty: Mi understand, mi love. As soon as she come down here mu will talk to her. Yuh don't worry yuhself.

G's Mama: Yuh better try and talk to her. Mi no know what mi a go up deh go do di way how mi tired!

Aunty: Mek mi tell yuh someting.

G's Mama: What?

Aunty: A no everyting di gal do yuh must run her down and beat her. Some a di time yuh can tek her, call her in yuh room and coax her till yuh get her inna yuh hand. Teach her wrong from right. A so mi did haffi do fi-mi dem, or else mi no know how in di heaven's name mi'd a deal wid dem.

G's Mama: Mi no know weh fi do. Because mi love her, mi show her every lickle ting inna life just fi mek she understand, and instead a she better, she worse. Is mi one, and di four pound a week mi a get cyaan stretch fi feed dem, neva mind fi buy clothes fi dem. Just as cheap mi mek dem stray and galang and no bodder wid dem.

Aunty: No worry yuhself over a ting. As soon as she come down here I gwine deal wid her. Yuh know Ken bring a half bale of rice come down here fi mi, and di pickney dem not eating it. I don't know who him bring it for, and him carry three chickens. I gwine give yuh some a di rice, and I gwine give yuh one a di chicken, and yuh go up go cookdinner fi dem pickney.

G's Mama: Thanks.

Aunty: Is di least mi can do. [*Exits.*]

G's Mama: May?

Aunty: Eeh hee.

G's Mama: If I could just get through wid mi papers fi go way a Foreign, or if mi could a find smaddy fi sponsor mi.

[*Gloria slaps her leg to kill a mosquito, Gloria's Mama finds her and pulls her out. She starts beating Gloria. Gloria begins to cry.*]

Gloria: Aunty! Aunty!

Aunty: [*Enters.*] Jesus Christ! Let her go!

[There is a struggle as Auntie tries to protect Gloria from her Mama who is trying to beat her. Most of the blows reach Auntie. Finally Auntie pushes Mama hard. Mama falls.]

G's Mama: A so it go. Is always so it go. Di least lickle ting, she tell mi bout Auntie. Auntie dis, Auntie dat, and she run come down yah and yuh hide her. I did plan seh when mi go away yuh did a go keep her. Well, since is yuh she love, yuh better start from now. Because if she come back up dere, I gwine kill her and charge fi murder. Keep her. And I hope when I gawn she bite off yuh ears.

[Exits.]

[Gloria dances off.]

Chorus: [Off sings.]

Skengeh! Skengeh! Skengeh!
Those whose sign is Libra skip around
Those whose sign is Libra skip around
Skengeh! Skengeh! Skengeh!
Those whose sign is Libra skip around.

ACT III Scene II

[Lights up. Enter Didi, stage left in shorts. She begins sweeping. Enter Dennis, a mechanic, slightly dread.]

Dennis: What happen? Yuh dream bout I man last night?
Didi: Yuh must be tink mi frighten!
Dennis: Yuh no glad fi see I?
Didi: Mi neva see yuh yesterday?
Dennis: Den yuh cyaan too tired fi see yuh lover.
Didi: Chuh!
Dennis: What happen? Coming like yuh no like see I.
Didi: But yuh should a deh a yuh work. Weh yuh a do yah?
Dennis: Tru I man love yuh, I man just tek I lunch time and come step beside yuh. How yuh a go on so? Yuh no love see I?
Didi: Yuh should a spend yuh lunch time having lunch.

Dennis: But, wait, yuh look nice inna di shorts, though. Yuh fi wear shorts all di while.
Didi: Tru mi a country gal yuh no expect mi fi wear shorts.
Dennis: Yuh know di odder day I man bredda give I some shorts, and if I did know yuh did wear shorts, I would a carry two come give yuh.
Didi: No sorry fi mi at all.
Dennis: How yuh mean sorry fi yuh? What do dis gal? All di while woman spoil demself. When people love oonoo and deal good wid oonoo, oonoo gwaan like oonoo a idiot.
Didi: Yuh mussy tink love a belly full.
Dennis: But see yah! Come off a dem tings deh! Ey! I man waan carry di dawta go a show tonight. Yuh waan step wid I?
Didi: Show?
Dennis: Yes, man. We a go a State.
Didi: Yuh gwine to United States?
Dennis: Yuh never hear bout State yet? State Theatre?
Didi: Someweh name so?
Dennis: Watch yah man! Das why I man a show yuh seh yuh haffi just team up wid I. Seen? Cause, right now mi no waan hear seh yuh go outa street and talk all dem tings deh, cause man and man will hear yuh talk, and feel seh yuh is a lickle idiot. Mi as man waan come deal wid yuh and waan show yuh certain tings and yuh a gwaan like. . .
Didi: So, in odder words, yuh waan come say mi look like idiot.
Dennis: Come here, man.
Didi: Mi haffi tidy di house yuh know.
Dennis: Watch yah, man, smile pon mi, no! Gimme some a di lunch no.
Didi: No food nah deh yah. From morning mi no eat notten. Yuh better dan mi.
Dennis: What mek yuh look pon I man so? Yuh scorn I?
Didi: No, a yuh gansy mi a admire.

- Dennis: See it? See how yuh show off. Yuh well and love I. And yuh gwaan like yuh no love I.
- Didi: Mi neva say mi love yuh. Mi say mi love yuh gansy. But yuh facety, eeh?
- Dennis: Who yuh a call facety?
- Didi: Mi neither a deh wid yuh, nor nobody, for mi hear seh all man a jinnal.
- Dennis: Yuh see mi look like jinnal? Jinnal man don't go dung in di grease and work like I man. Look pon I man hand dem. Yuh don't see how mi work hard. Yuh mus be gentle when yuh dealing wid a man.
- Didi: Den mi no handle yuh gentle?
- Dennis: Mek I ask you someting. I man a di first bredda you ever deal wid?
- Didi: Gwaan back a yuh work. Mi haffi tidy di house before Papa come.
- Dennis: I man waan carry di dawta pon a trodition yuh waan see. I man waan spend some of I money wid di dawta. Come, we go over Miss Mary go buy some lunch?
- Didi: Mi fi walk pon street wid yuh?
- Dennis: [*Holds her and slaps money on her leg.*] Den yuh no look sexy and ting.
- Didi: Mi cyaan go pon street inna shorts. [*Pushes him away.*]
- Dennis: No bodder wid dem tings deh, man! [*Grabs her again.*]
- Didi: Lord, behave yuhself, man! No touch mi, man.
- Dennis: What mek yuh a go on like yuh fool-fool so? [*As they exit, he pinches her bottom.*]

ACT III Scene III

[*Cherry on stage with her baby. Enter Marie.*]

- Marie: Yuh send call mi?
- Cherry: Come look pon di baby fi mi. Mi a go a di post office.
- Marie: I cyaan stay long. Church start six o'clock.

- Cherry: I will come by den. Just help mi out. Nobody else no deh yah fi mi ask. [*Pause.*] What happen? Mi do yuh anyting? Like yuh no waan come over yah.
- Marie: Where yuh bredda?
- Cherry: Mi no watchman fi mi bredda. Neither him a mamparlour man.
- Marie: Yuh know if him is here or in town?
- Cherry: Neither where him gawn or when him coming. Why?
- Marie: Notten.
- Cherry: Yuh get di job?
- Maire: Yeah. Mi suppose to start next week.
- Cherry: In Kingston?
- Marie: Yeah. Is stop pon premises.
- Cherry: So yuh soon gawn?
- Marie: Friday. Tank God. Lock di door when yuh come out.
- Cherry: Fraidy puss, fraidy puss.
- Maire: People no haffi afraid fi lock door.
- Cherry: Yuh no waan cool breeze?
- Marie: No. Just lock di door.
- Cherry: People deh bout. If anyting just call. When yuh finish feed him, put him on yuh shoulder and burp him.
- Marie: Him sweet, eeh?
- Cherry: Later.
- [*Cherry exits, slamming door. Marie picks up the baby. There is a moment of exchange between her and the child. Almost a clichè picture of the happy young mother and child, an image of a black Madonna singing a lullaby which is echoed by the voices of the other women off. Alternatively all the women can appear on stage.*]
- Marie: [*Sings to baby.*]
 Done baby done cry
 Yuh madda gawn a mountain
 Done baby done cry
 Yuh madda gawn a mountain.
- Sweetie water never dry,
 Yuh drink it out a fountain

Sweet water never dry,
Yuh drink it out a fountain. [Repeat.]

[While singing, Marie crosses the bamboo bridge to the central area where she puts the baby on a chair. Immediately the singing grows loud and discordant. The women at the windows and exits cover their faces with newspaper which they tear again and again. There is screaming and banging on the sides of the theatre walls so that the whole building seems to shake. The drums increase their rhythm. Two men appear with stockinged faces behind Marie. Another enters slowly over the main stage, also with stocking mask. He moves like a mechanised boxer down the bamboo ramp. The first two struggle with Marie who has picked up the baby again.]

Marie: Winston, Winston is yuh?
How yuh get in here?
Oh mi God, no touch mi!
No! No!

[They lift her till she hangs on the beams overhead. They stretch her legs apart, one on each of their shoulders. The Boxer aims his blows between her legs, the speed and rhythm increasing. After the climax, there is silence. Marie falls to the floor. The Boxer retreats. The other two men take the baby from her, reach for he stuffed cushion hanging above their heads and tie it around her waist. She vomits and begins slowly to exit toward the main stage, as if to go to the bus stop. The Masked Figures become the figures of Parson, Teacher, Didi's Mother, and Shopkeeper, as in the "Pass the Ball" game. Marie goes to one Masked Figure who pushes her away. She goes to another who turns his back on her. To a third who also turns her back. She goes to the fourth figure who comes towards her laughing. All Masked Figures come together in centre stage laughing and menacing her as if they were one.]

Masked Figures: Dutty gal
Old whore
Yuh did like it
Leggo gal
Ole pasart
A weh yuh used to.
A riddlle like dis

A riddle like dat
Guess I dis riddle
And perhaps not.

Bathe she no bathe
Water a wash her
Darkness she see.

A riddle like dis, etc.

Sick she sick
Notten she eat
Water come from her mouth.

A riddle like dis; etc.

Lazy she lazy
Rest she want rest
All night she sleep
All day she snore.
[They exit.]

ACT III Scene IV

Goddy: [Entering.] Yvonne! Yvonne!
Yvonne: Yes, Goddy. [Gets up quickly off the floor and straightens clothes.]
Goddy: You sleeping again, girl?
Yvonne: Yes, Goddy.
Goddy: I notice all of a sudden, your eyes get pale. You get lazy, lazy, and you just putting on a whole heap of extra weight.
Yvonne: Goddy, I must put on weight, because I am eating plenty lately.
Goddy: No argue wid mi. Facety and fresh. If yuh did ever know di dream I get fi yuh di odder night, yuh wouldn't stand up dere and argue wid mi so.
Yvonne: Dream, Goddy? What kind of dream?

Goddy: Oh! Yuh get frighten now, but pray to God a no so it go.

Yvonne: No, Goddy. Mi no frighten, but mi would a like fi know wah kind a dream.

Goddy: I dream di odder night seh I see yuh wid a big belly, an yuh ban it down.

Yvonne: But Goddy. . .dat deh dream dem cyaan go fi mi. And dream no must come true.

Goddy: I hope so.

Yvonne: Is exactly so, Goddy.

Goddy: Ay sir! All the same you know Yvonne, I still can't feel good into my mind. Come let us have a good chat. Now my love, you know Goddy love you with all her heart. All that I have is yours. Look how long you mother dead and leave you, an you don't have a soul else but me. You fi tell me everything that happen to you, my love. Don't care how bad it is. Goddy is understanding. I'm also a loving Goddy, and you know that. Come mi love. Tell me when last you see you period.

Yvonne: Mi see it every month, Goddy.

Goddy: I don't believe you, Yvonne. You can't fool me. Remember that eyelash is older than beard. Remember I was young like you, and I'm also a woman like you. As a matter of fact, what happen to you here now, worse than that did happen to me. I know these boys out a street, I know how dem ginnalish, and yuh, lickle young gal, how yuh giddy-headed! Tell me the truth, I'm not going to beat you, darling. Just tell me, tell Goddy everything. Somebody trouble you?

Yvonne: Nobody no trouble mi, Goddy.

Goddy: Yvonne, nobody no trouble yuh?

Yvonne: No, Goddy.

Goddy: Yvonne, somebody trouble yuh.

Yvonne: No, Goddy.

Goddy: Yvonne, look at me. Remember your loving sweet Goddy. Look at me. Look at the nice

dress you wearing. Look at the big house that you living in. You going hide things from me? Tell Goddy the truth. Somebody trouble you?

Yvonne: Nobody no trouble mi, maam.

Goddy: Dear heart. Is Goddy talking to you. I'm pleading to you because I don't want nothing bad to happen to you. I don't have to go and tell the neighbors about anything. Just tell it to me, it is your secret and my secret. You know Goddy will keep the secret. Tell me, somebody trouble yuh.

Yvonne: Yuh gwine keep mi secret, Goddy?

Goddy: Yes, mi love, yes.

Yvonne: Mi can tell yuh everyting?

Goddy: Everything, darling, everything.

Yvonne: Goddy, it no mek sense mi hide anyting from yuh.

Goddy: Yes, mi love.

Yvonne: Goddy, yuh member when yuh did send mi over a Miss Freeman yard?

Goddy: Yes. . .Oh, yes!

Yvonne: Well, one a di boy did down dere. . .

Goddy: Hmmm. Which boy dat?

Yvonne: Di rain did set up Goddy, and him say mi fi go shut Miss Freeman window fi him.

Goddy: Which one a dem?

Yvonne: But him say Miss Freeman say him no fi go inna her house. Dat is why him really send mi fi go shut di window. And Goddy. . .

Goddy: Hmmm. Wait deb lickle bit, which boy dat?

Yvonne: Him say mi must shut di window for him. When mi reach di doorway and mi go in. . .before mi even go right inna di room, Goddy, mi sense a shadow behind mi.

Goddy: Yes.

Yvonne: Mi still go toward di window fi go shut it.

Goddy: Hmmm. Which one 'a di boy dem? Yuh don't know him?

Yvonne: One of di boy dem, Goddy. . .him, him. . .
. come behind mi.

Goddy: Hmmmmmmrmmm.

Yvonne: Him. . .him grab mi from backways.

Goddy: What him do?

Yvonne: Him throw mi down pon di bed.

Goddy: Which boy? Tell mi which one?

Yvonne: Teddy, and him. . .

Goddy: What yuh say?

Yvonne: But, Goddy, yuh should a know. . .

Goddy: Which a di Teddy? Teddy who live a Miss
Doris backyard?

Yvonne: But, Goddy, yuh must know mi a good,
good girl.

Goddy: Teddy who cyaan even change him pants
good? Pulp-eye Teddy. Gal, pack up yuh
tings and. . . [They move to main stage.]

Yvonne: Is Teddy yuh fi blame, maam.

[Chorus enters. They begin to gather up shoes from behind
the boxes.]

Woman 1: One-crepe Paul?

Woman 2: Blind-eye Brown?

Woman 3: Lean-neck Loxy?

Woman 1: Patch-behind John?

Woman 2: Pick-pocket George?

Goddy: Dis one-pants boy, mi no know weh him
come from!

Woman 3: Cast-eye Lennox?

Woman 4: Dis ganja eye shine?

Woman 1: Dis long-lip Lippy?

Woman 2: Dis big-nose John?

Woman 3: Dis patch-batty Cyril?

Woman 4: Yuh waan Teddy bear! See di Teddy bear
deh.

Woman 1: Three months worth of books mi walk fi find,
tek dem and come out.

Woman 2: Yuh say yuh waan jacks? See jacks here?
Tek dem and go on.

Woman 3: See di piano here dat yuh grandfaada buy fi
yuh, tek it and come out.

Woman 4: See di school bag here mi buy fi yuh, bout
yuh waan school bag. Tek it and come out.

Woman 1: When mi tink di gal in here watching T.V.,
every night she out a street. Just tek dis and
go on.

Woman 2: Look how far mi walk fi get geometry set.
See it here! Tek it and come out.

Woman 3: Is yuh say yuh waan turn artist. Mi walk up
and down fi get di crayon dem and is dis yuh
come off to. Tek it and go on.

Woman 4: See di rocking chair dat yuh granmadda
bring from Panama. Tek it and come out.

Woman 1: When mi a buy frock is quarter dozen mi
buy. Dis is di tanks mi get. Tek it and come
out.

Woman 2: Bout yuh waan cosmetic to beautificate yuh-
self, eeh, gal! Not even dat yuh look pon.
Tek it and come out.

Goddy: See di bank book here. Tek it and come out.

Chorus: Yuh get yuh belly swell
So no come back yah
Yuh get yuh belly swell
So no come back yah.
Gal pack up your tings
And go through di door
Gal pack up your tings
And go through di door
Mi say to pack.

[Yvonne exits, then the four Women and Goddy comfort each
other as they exit.]

ACT III Scene V

Woman 1: 56 Old Hope Road. 96 Mountain View
Avenue. 70 Buntley Lane.

Woman 2: 25 New Haven Road. 7 Disappointment
Lane. 20 Hopefield Lane.

Woman 3: 75 1/2 Learn Your Lesson Avenue. 18
Difficult Road. 6 Harvey Road.

[Enter Didi stage right with cushion around her waist. She
begins sweeping. She hears a knocking.]

Didi: Who dat? Who dat?
 Didi's Mama: [*Enters.*] How yuh could a ask a who dat, Didi? A mi.
 Didi: Oh! Mama! What yuh doing here now, Mama? How Granny? How yuh bad hand? Answer mi no, Mama, what yuh a look for so? Mama. . .
 D's Mama: Yuh have di heart fi ask mi what mi a look for? Mi a look for mi ten pound and mi one brassiere weh mi waan fi wear go a church.
 Didi: Mama, tek time talk. A tenement yard mi live inna. Papa say him will give yuh back di ten pound fi mi.
 D's Mama: Den, if when yuh did deh a country him never send not even farden come give mi den, weh him gwine get ten pound from fi give mi now.
 Didi: Him working now, Mama.
 D's Mama: [*Kisses her teeth.*]
 Didi: Mama, yuh waan someting fi drink? Only water deh yah.
 D's Mama: Bring it. I only hope it will cool down mi heart.
 Didi: Here is di water, Mama.
 D's Mama: [*Takes careful look at Didi.*] Didi, what yuh do wid mi ten pound? Yuh no have notten leave out a di money?
 Didi: Mama, di money done from mi deh pon di diesel.
 D's Mama: Pon di diesel. Do what?
 Didi: Mama, mi did kind a hungry and mi buy two beer and two cigarette, and mi friend gawn wid di rest a di change inna her pocket.
 D's Mama: Wait! Turn round lickle bit.
 Didi: So, Mama?
 D's Mama: Yuh back part. Yuh back part I waan see.
 Didi: Oh, mi back?
 D's Mama: But Didi, how yuh look so? Yuh look like yuh sick.
 Didi: Awo. Yes, Mama, mi did have Hong Kong flu.

D's Mama: Hong Kong flu! Den is Hong Kong flu mek yuh so fat?
 Didi: Mama, is a sickness weh go right over town and di people dem say when yuh have it, it mek yuh extra large.
 D's Mama: Missis, dat look like yuh young inspregnant to me.
 Didi: Pregnant, Mama? Mind yuh eye a fool yuh.
 D's Mama: But look pon yuh wid yuh lickle shallow brains a try fi turn mi inna idiot. Is how much pickney I have.
 Didi: A seven a we, Mama.
 D's Mama: So yuh tink mi no know what mi a say. Missis, yuh have young stomach dere.
 Didi: But, Mama, mi always have mi stomach.
 D's Mama: Mi say yuh pregnant, and mi waan know is which boy do yuh so. As a matter a fact yuh have something fi tell mi and I waan hear it right now.
 Didi: Mama, mi no know weh fi start.
 D's Mama: Start from di top.
 Didi: Mama, when yuh come dis morning, yuh did pass di stop light out a di corner? Wid one gas station on di odder side?
 D's Mama: Den what gas station haffi do wid dis?
 Didi: Yuh did see it, Mama?
 D's Mama: I think so.
 Didi: Mama, mi did stand up out a di gate and mi see one boy. Him walk from di gas station and him come over to mi and him say, "*Morning.*" And, Mama, mi say morning back. And him say, "Yuh look fat and nice." And mi say thanks, and him say, "Don't say thanks yet. I waan take yuh to lunch."
 D's Mama: So, Didi, yuh come a town come look boyfriend?
 Didi: Mi never did a look boyfriend, Mama. Mi did only a look di lunch.
 D's Mama: Everything in life yuh haffi pay for.
 Didi: Him go buy di lunch, Mama. And when mi look is rice and peas and oxtail.

D's Mama: What him name?
 Didi: Him name Dennis.
 D's Mama: Dennis? Dennis what?
 Didi: Just Dennis, Mama.
 D's Mama: Oh! So when di baby born, yuh a go register it Dennis Just-Dennis? Is where him live?
 Didi: Mi no know where him live, mi only know where him work.
 D's Mama: Den if yuh no know where him live and yuh no know weh him name, how yuh gwine manage? Look how yuh stay!
 Didi: Mama, like how mi nah deh a country again, yuh can tek my own put inna fi-mi space a country.
 D's Mama: Yuh tink a so it go? Is not so I know it go. I waan fi know how I can see Mr. Dennis Just-Dennis, fi talk to him.
 Didi: Yuh can just walk go over di gas station, Mama.
 D's Mama: Mi? Fi go over gas station? What mek yuh cyaan go?
 Didi: Mama, when yuh did stay so yuh did hate Papa?
 D's Mama: What a piece of freshness. Not because you pregnant yuh a figat yuhself.
 Didi: A no fresh mi fresh, Mama, I only waan know if yuh did hate Papa too, cause mi no like Dennis again.
 D's Mama: Mi dear, yuh dislike him at a bad time.
 Didi: No care how mi hungry, mi hide from him. Mi no waan him see mi. [*Starts to cry.*] Mi lock up inna di house. Him no do mi notten. Mi just no like him again, Mama.
 D's Mama: Hush!
 Didi: Why, Mama? Why? Mi hate him and him carry di lunch di same way.
 D's Mama: Chuh! Yuh give trouble, suh. Yuh run way from mi and yuh Granny, turn woman. A drink and a smoke, till dem all tief yuh. Missis, yuh dreams dash a ground. Tell yuh weh yuh do. We going over deh go talk to

him. Das all we can do for now. The three of us. . .going to talk about di past and what is to come. Yuh can't haul up in here like a lickle shamey dog. Yuh are my big daughter. Come. Wipe yuh face and come.

ACT III Scene VI

[*Enter Chorus of four women.*]

Chorus: 72c Revelation Road
 14 Love Sweets Way
 15 Mistake Pathway
 6 Never-Do-It-Again Lane.

[*Enter Gloria searching for an address.*]

Gloria: Good morning, lady, beg yuh lickle ice water.

Woman 1: Mi no have no fridge and di pipe water hot.

Gloria: Mi no want no pipe water. Lady, yuh see a young gentleman just lately move on here by di name a Paul? Him have a white Austin car.

Woman 2: One stoosh Austin car? Yes, mi dear. Mi see him all di while. Him used to check di dawta dem inna di yard, but dem things happen from three weeks ago. Di boy move. [*Gloria moves off.*] All right, mi gwine try fi help yuh. Go down di crescent, turn left, knock pon di third gate from di corner. 12 Upper Deck Road.

Gloria: Tanks, lady.

Chorus: 10 Long Lane
 16 Pick Pocket Pathway
 18 Hard Life Road
 10 Sorrow Street.

Gloria: [*Knocks on Woman 3's shoulder.*] Morning, lady. Lady, yuh know a young gentleman move on here by di name a Paul?

Woman 3: No, mi dear. Sorry. Excuse mi, mi cyaan help yuh at all.

[*Gloria goes back to Woman 1.*]

Woman 1: Yuh again? Yuh no find Paul yet?

Gloria: Lady, tek yuh time wid mi nuh. Yuh no see mi condition. A mi baby faada. Yuh could a give mi di address one more time. Look like mi miss di direction.

Woman 1: Go down to di crescent, turn left, knock pon di third gate from di corner, and try yuh best no come back here.

Gloria: Tank yuh, lady. [*Goes back to Woman 3.*] One lady tell mi seh a in yah Paul live.

Woman 3: Mi no know no Paul, a Rooster mi know.

Gloria: Den if is even Rooster, call him fi mi nuh.

Woman 3: Mi, mi love? Go call him yuhself.

Gloria: A yuh boyfriend?

Woman 3: If is even so, no big ting. As a matter of fact, mi no waan no lightpost a mi gate. Beg yuh move.

Gloria: All right, mi will wait. . . [*Sees Paul in a window.*] Paul! Paul! Mi know yuh in deh. Come out! Mi come fi find out how di lying-in ticket a buy. How clothes fi di baby and mi self a buy? Is not mi one mek dis big belly. It no just come so. It tek work, and a whole heap more work haffi do before dis pickney can have a healthy life. And is not mi one gwine do it. Widout mi no get some good argument from yuh, mi nah move from here tonight. Mi prefer have di baby right here so. Mi nah go inna hospital go mek di shame come down pon mi one. Mi a go be di last woman yuh do so.

Chorus: Chuh!

Gloria: Mi nah deal wid yuh. A mi youth inna my belly mi a defend.

Chorus: Awo!

Gloria: Yuh working! Mi not working. So how yuh expect mi mind pickney?

Chorus: No true!

Gloria: Mi waan di land missis give yuh notice. Yuh cyaan live someweh and mi live noweh.

Chorus: Seeing, star!

Gloria: Yuh sweetheart dem in dere. Line dem up one-one and mek mi tell dem how yuh treat woman. For if a so yuh do mi, a same way yuh a go do dem too.

Chorus: Chuck it pon him, star.

Gloria: Come out! Come face mi, boy.

Woman 1: Drape up di boy and box him!

Woman 2: Karate di boy under him seed bag!

Woman 3: Fling a stone inna him eye!

Woman 4: Leggo five out a yuh ten finger inna di boy face!

Woman 1: Mi will help yuh! Mi will help yuh!

Woman 2: Acid di boy!

Woman 3: Buck di boy!

Woman 1: Slap him in him ears temple! Him a jester!

Woman 4: Wait deh! A bottle dat?

Woman 2: Look out!
[*Gloria is hit and she collapses.*]

Woman 3: Look, blood.
[*Chorus makes the sound of a siren. Drums up.*]

Chorus: [*On stage.*]
Riddle I dis
Riddle I dat
Guess I dis riddle
And perhaps not.

Jackfruit deh pon mi body
Pumpkin deh deh too.

Riddle I dis, riddle I dat, etc.

River run red
River run dry
Spring come after.

Riddle I dis, riddle I dat, etc.
Tender cup cake
Wid di cherry pon top
Rising slowly
Wid juice soon pop.

Riddle I dis, riddle I dat, etc.

Trouble fi mi
 Trouble fi yuh
 Yuh cliff run dry.

Riddle I dis, riddle I dat, etc.
 Yuh wear di pants
 Mi wear di shirt
 Chemies come after.

[Blackout. Drum rhythm intensifies.]

ACT III Scene VII

[The hospital. All members are in original positions. Didi humming "Wha Mek You Plant di Pole Inna Mi Yard."]

Marie: [Contracting in agony.] Nurse! Nurse! Help mi! Call di Nurse fi mi.
 Didi: Marie? Yuh airight? Nurse! Nurse!
 Gloria: Stop di noise. Mi head hurting mi.
 Yvonne: Didi, how yuh calling di Nurse, and yuh know dem deh pon strike? Only we one in here.
 Didi: Come, we go help her.
 Yvonne: Mi no know notten bout baby. Ask Gloria.
 Didi: Gloria, mi no know what fi do. Come show mi.
 Gloria: Yuh hear mi a ward maid or mi a Nurse in yah? Mi nah move from yah. Next ting mi do sinting wrong.
 Marie: [Groans loudly.]
 Didi: Marie! What do yuh? Lie down. Try fi lie down. A mi one here wid yuh. Mi. Didi. Di rest of den fraid, but mi will try and help yuh. [To others.] A di four a we in yah. All a we a go through di same pain. Suppose she was yuh? Yuh would a waan help too. [Marie

contracts in agony again.] All right, Marie, hush. [Didi sings.]

Madda, di great stone got to move
 Madda, di great stone got to move
 Madda, di great stone
 Di stone of Babylon
 Madda, di great stone got to move.
 [Marie cries out while Didi still sings.]

Gloria: Yvonne, come.
 Yvonne: What we can do? We no know notten.
 Gloria: We gwine haffi find out fi weself. Come.
 [They cross to stage right and begin helping Marie to give birth.]
 Gloria: Breathe, Marie. Breathe.
 Didi: Breathe, Marie. All a we a here. We not leaving yuh. [Marie squats. All breathe together and perform birth dance.]

[Off stage.]
 Chorus: So what we a go do den?
 Voices 1: Bound dem fi pay we!
 Voices 2: So what we a go do?
 Voices 1: Mek dem understand seh we serious.
 Voices 2: So what we fi do now?
 All: Fight fi we right, fight fi we right, Fight, fight, fight.

[All the mothers make a final "Aaah" sound as if giving birth. After a pause, the humming of "Madda di great stone" begins again. The three mothers wipe Marie's forehead and sit, nursing their babies. Didi crosses down the stage.]

Didi: When yuh finish drink eyewater fi breakfast, lunch and dinner, yuh eyes dry like cane trash and clear like river water. Mama bring mi come. Is she mi did know as di one dat feed mi, clothes mi, love mi. It did seem like she cause all mi problems. Tru mi couldn't go a school, and she overwork mi inna di yard. Mi run way from her to town, to mi faada. Inna di tenement yard tings get worse. Is like all di experience dat mi pass

through, is dem bring mi come. Is dem is mi madda.

Now my child is born. Him come off a my navel string, but him belongs to all a we. And fi-him labour just begin.

[The three mothers wipe Marie's forehead. Nurse 1 enters.]

Nurse: [To Marie.] Are you all right, Marie?
 Marie: Hmhmhmhmhm.
 Yvonne: She still a little weak, but we a tek care a her.
 Nurse: Good! Yvonne Scott?
 Yvonne: Yes.
 Nurse: A lady by the name of Goddy sent these for you.
 Yvonne: Tanks Nurse. Dem pretty, eeh?
 Didi: Nurse, di strike over?
 Nurse 1: Yes.
 Didi: Mi hope yuh get what yuh ask dem for.
 Nurse 1: We got a few points sorted out but we have plenty more to fight for. It will be a long struggle before we have a decent health service.
 Didi: We will support yuh, Nurse.
 Nurse 1: [Laughs.] Thanks, dear. [Exits.]
 Didi: Marie, tek dese.
 Marie: Is what?
 Didi: Baby clothes. Mi have plenty. Yuh tek dese.
 Marie: Thanks, Didi.
 [Enter Nurse 2.]
 Nurse 2: Good morning. Now let's see. [Examines chart notes.] Marie Brown—You have a little girl—her weight is six pounds.
 Gloria Smauels—You have a little girl—she weighs five pounds.
 Didi Allen—You have a big boy—ten pounds.
 Yvonne Scott—You have a little boy—his weight is five pounds. He has a mole on his tummy.
 Yvonne: Like mi, Nurse.
 Nurse 2: You are all being discharged this morning. As soon as you're ready, you can go. The

way out is, go down the corridor and turn left. . .

Marie: Thank yuh, Nurse. We know our way from here.

[Enter all the company.]

Chorus: [Singing.]
 Come forward, mothers
 Come forward, fathers
 Sisters and brothers
 We know our way from here.

We have conquered frustration
 We have conquered tribulation
 Through all our ups and downs
 We've learned our lessons well.

Sistren and Brethren
 Teenagers too
 Nurses and doctors
 We know our way from here.

Join hands together
 Helping one another
 Working together
 On our way from here.

Come forward, mothers
 Come forward, fathers
 Working together
 On our way from here.

THE END