

THE STRANGE DESTINY OF MR. & MRS. WALLACE

A Play in Two Acts
by
Jean Louis Bourdon

Translated from French to English
by Charles E. Boragi

A Comical Tragedy
For my friend Claude Chanaud

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NICOLE : Upper middle class “Southern Belle” of today’s Alabamian Petite Bourgeoisie. Pretty, capricious, vindictive and domineering. Age 40-60

JOHN : Middle-aged Southern businessman and head of the Ku Klux Klan pushed by his wife Nicole to confront the hidden secrets of his inner being. Age 45 - 60

TERRY: Nicole’s younger brother. Straightforward and Cartesian. Age 25 - 40

SETTING

Vast living room reminiscent of the stoic atmosphere of pre-civil war Alabama..

TIME

The present.

SETTING

A prestigious living room in a small town of Alabama. The furniture is of quality, though of a rural style. Hung on the wall are ancient portraits in beautiful frames and a portrait of Mr.& Mrs. Wallace accompanied by two other men. Two civil war scene paintings are on the wall. On the left (garden) side, front stage in front of the bathroom door is a glass showcase exposing a collection of vintage miniature cars. Over the glass showcase, hung on the wall is a collection of ancient pistols. Right (courtyard) front stage is a small home bar. An old piano is further back right (courtyard side) against the wall next to a sash window. In middle of the back of the stage is an ancient renaissance style console. On top of the console are posed framed family photographs, vases and trinkets. In the middle of the stage a sofa is positioned on a slant, on its right (courtyard) side front stage side an easy chair is seared close to the sofa which gives “L” form seating. A small coffee table is positioned in front of the sofa. A small entrance closet is in the back of the stage, garden side between the kitchen door and the street door (invisible) which is in the back of the stage garden side. Between the street door (back garden side) and the bathroom door is a small pedestal table upon which is a vase filled with flowers, above on the wall is a portrait of a woman. The bedroom door is between the bar and the piano, courtyard side.

Act One, Scene One

I-1

Only shadows are apparent on the dimly lit stage. Dogs are barking and howling into the dark of the night. Off in the distance, probably coming from a neighbor's house, a babies crying seems to silence the dog's howling at regular intervals. After a few seconds we hear a car who's headlights glow onto the stage through the windows behind. We hear the slam of the car door and the voice of a woman outside.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I'm going to make some sleepy time herbal tea and straight to bed we go! What did you lose?

MAN'S VOICE: Do you have the keys?

WOMAN'S VOICE: No I do not have the keys, honey! You know very well, I never have the keys. Don't forget this is your mother's house, your dear beloved mother...

MAN'S VOICE (*Interrupting her*): Come on Nicole, not tonight...please!

WOMAN'S VOICE (*A slight pause*): Well, is it for today, or tomorrow?

MAN'S VOICE: Damn it, it where the hell did I put them?

WOMAN'S VOICE : We're going to freeze to death out here!

MAN'S VOICE: Here they are, I've got them!

WOMAN'S VOICE: Well it's about time!

The stage lights go on and the couple walks in and takes off their coats.

THE MAN: Put some crackers with the tea, you know the one's I like!

THE WOMAN: I'll bring you the whole package! (*She goes straight to the kitchen that is situated in the back of the stage, garden side. The man sits down in the armchair in the living room and picks up a newspaper that's on the coffee table.*)

WOMAN'S VOICE: I'm sure that Terry passed by! I told him to bring it this morning but you just can't count on him...It's no use, with him it's always the same, now I understand why Barbara left him, impatient as she is you just don't have to wonder why, he really must have drove her up a wall. Oh yeah, did I tell you she called!

(*Short silence*) Honey do you hear me? (*Short lapse of time*)

Since you don't drink anymore your as deaf as a doorknob!

THE MAN (*Annoyed*): So, what about Barbara?

WOMAN'S VOICE: She called just before you came in, she is staying with her mother; can you imagine staying with her mother at her age! I tried to calm her down but you know what she's like. I warned her when they met; "it's not going to last between you two." I've got intuition about those kinds of things. Didn't I tell you honey? When a woman has more character than her husband the only thing that will stop her from leaving is a husband doesn't have any at all. Unfortunately that's not the case with Terry, he doesn't have much character but just enough to ignite a powder keg. That's the problem. He's wacky. My brother is wacky!

Good lord when you have gold in your hands the way he does you have no right to screw up your household. Wacky I tell you! Even though I told him to bring it this morning he didn't.

"Promise!" he said, "I'll bring it to you" he said that no later than yesterday. "The day after tomorrow I swear". It's been over a month that he's got me on a wild goose chase with this story! First he was sick, after that he didn't have the time, then it was because of his separation! I found the time to buy the cat litter, the basket and the whole kit and caboodle! How did I do all that I'd love to see that little pet! "When are you bringing it!" I said, "what are you waiting for? For her to die of old age or what!" You know what he answered? Hey honey, you know what Terry answered?

THE MAN (*Still reading his newspaper, annoyed.*): What?

WOMAN'S VOICE: "I've got more important things to do!" That's what he said! Really shamelessly rude! Then I told him... "What do you do that keeps you so busy besides getting drunk in all the bars and motels in the area you little pig you! If you think that's the way your going to get your wife back you've got to be dreaming!" Broken pipes, squeaky faucets to fix, busted washers, leaky bathtubs, they're to be repaired from morning to night, from the beginning to the end of the year! They don't get repaired just to go out and have a good time! They get repaired to make a decent living and save money on the side! Not to screw around with the depraved and hard up for new sensations!"

THE MAN (*Leaving his reading*): By the way, when is he coming to fix the bathtub?
(*The woman comes out of the kitchen with a tray that she puts on the coffee table.*)

THE WOMAN: It's precisely what I'm telling you. It's just like with the cat; how am I supposed to know? (*The man drinks his tea as the woman goes back to the kitchen.*)

WOMAN'S VOICE: I don't know if we'll ever be able to count on him, he's a real good for nothing, that's all he is! (*The woman comes back with a bag of garbage.*)

THE WOMAN: With all that's going on I forgot to take out the garbage. He's driving me crazy!
(*She goes out and after a second or so, we hear a little noise coming in from outside, she comes back into the house. She is carrying a bundles wrapped in a cloth. Her face has changed she's almost pallid.. She advances slowly towards her husband who was reabsorbed in his newspaper*)

and she stops in front of him.)

(Short pause)

THE MAN *(Raising his eyes towards her):* What do you have there ? *(She doesn't answer)* What is it?

THE WOMAN *(She stammers):* I found it outside in the garbage.

THE MAN *(Going back into his newspaper):* I told you he would end up bringing it.

THE WOMAN *(She does not move...light silence):* It's not a cat, John.

THE MAN *(Raising his eyes up towards his wife again):* What is it if not a cat, a dog?

THE WOMAN: No John.

THE MAN: So what is it?

THE WOMAN: A...

THE MAN: A what? Damn it!

THE WOMAN: A baby!

THE MAN *(Not understanding very well, he repeats):* ... A baby?

THE WOMAN: A human baby!

THE MAN: A human baby ? *(He stands up, she moves over.)*
Let me see that ! *(He opens the cloth, dumbstruck.)* Almighty God!

THE WOMAN *(She starts talking quickly as if panicked.):* I found it in the garbage.
She was put on the vegetable peelings. I was completely dumbstruck and then she looked at me with those little eyes and smiled!

THE MAN *(Still dumbfounded):* A nigger!

THE WOMAN: Yes a little negro! Very tiny! Just a little bit bigger than a small cat!

THE MAN *(with a very serious air, as if his wife committed a sacrilege. looking panic stricken.):*
Put that back where you found it!

THE WOMAN: But a baby John a little baby! And with the cold!

THE MAN *(Same acting):* I don't want that ...that thing in the house!

THE WOMAN *(She starts to shake, gets jumpy and hysterical):* I can't John, I can't!
I can not do that! Do you realize what you're asking me to do?

THE MAN (*Same acting*): Give it to me!

THE WOMAN (*She steps back as if panicked*): No John, no, its not been there for a long time its still warm, someone put it there not even a half an hour ago; do you realize not even a half an hour!

THE MAN (*Same acting*): Advancing towards her, please calm down! And give me that baby!

THE WOMAN: Never John, never! You'll never get this baby!

THE MAN (*Panic stricken and very upset*): Excuse me, you're going to give me that baby right away, Nicole! She runs to the other side of the sofa.

THE WOMAN: Never in a lifetime! You know how miserable I was with our child!

THE MAN (*Same acting*): There is no comparison. Give me that baby right away!
(*They're turning around the sofa... ..they stop*)

THE WOMAN: Since the loss of our little girl I never held a baby in my arms!

THE MAN (*Same acting*): Stop with that Nicole, our little girl as you say was not a baby! Please I don't want to talk about that again!

THE WOMAN: What do you mean she wasn't a baby?

THE MAN: No Nicole, it wasn't even a fetus!

THE WOMAN: It wasn't even a fetus?

THE MAN: Hardly the beginning of becoming an embryo! A miscarriage is what you had... a miscarriage not a baby! So please be nice!

THE WOMAN: Sylvia was a miscarriage?

THE MAN: I know it wasn't easy for you but you've chosen the wrong moment!

THE WOMAN (*Getting upset*): Sylvia was not a baby, John? Is that what you're saying?

THE MAN (*Very annoyed and worried*): Okay! If you want, it was a baby, alright? Now in the meantime put that baby right back where you found it, somebody might have put it there for a few minutes for who knows what reason!

THE WOMAN: In a garbage can?

THE MAN: I don't want any problems Nicole, if the person comes back in five minutes and does not find the baby what do you think is going to happen, can you tell me?
(*She doesn't answer*) I am talking to you!

THE WOMAN (*Blowing her top*): I will not put this baby in the garbage can! Do you hear me?

(She goes off into the kitchen.) I'm going to give her the milk I bought for the cat, then I'm going to give her a nice warm bath, and then dress her with the underwear that I bought for Sylvia; and then tonight I'm going to sleep with her and neither you or anyone else can stop me from doing so! Have I made myself well understood, John?

(She stares him in the eyes and seems very determined)

Do you understand ? Have I made myself clear? *(Very light silence)*

That's more like it, because if not I'm going to mow down this whole fucking town.

We got a deal? Have I made myself understood John?

(She leaves the scene and the man turns slowly towards the public, his face pallid)

LIGHTS OFF

A few seconds later the couple is sitting on the sofa, she has the baby in her arms and is giving her a baby bottle.

JOHN: Those people are there for that honey!

NICOLE: What's going to happen to her?

JOHN : They are professionals!

NICOLE: What will happen to her in an orphanage?

JOHN: They'll find her a family.

NICOLE : Not tomorrow John ! Please!

JOHN: You promised Nicole! Remember? Only one night! It's not good to go back on your word! You know that Nicole, right?

NICOLE: Two days honey...Just only two days!

JOHN: You know very well that it's not possible and the little one probably needs some medical attention.

NICOLE : Please !

JOHN *(Cold and convincing):* There will be no black baby in this house Nicole! Do you understand me?

NICOLE: Did you hear that? She just gave her little burp!

(The man seems haggard as he picks up the telephone and starts dialing a number)

Who are you calling John at this time of the night? You won't get anyone, everyone sleeps at night! It is not the right time to call people! Did you see that she gave us a little smile! Look! *(The man puts the telephone back down on the coffee table. He seems to be in complete despair.)* To-

morrow I'll go and by her some clothes!

JOHN : Out of the question, tomorrow we are taking the baby down to the sheriff's office !

NICOLE (*Towards the baby*): Don't listen to him my little treasure, tomorrow mamma Nicole is going to buy you some cute little clothes!

(*John gets up completely irritated and goes towards the front of the stage courtyard side as if he was evaluating the situation*): Only two days John, enough time to buy her a few little dresses and overcome the stress of her adventure...is that okay with you John?

(*He doesn't answer and then the women violently screams.*)

Otherwise I'm really going to mess you up real badunderstand Johnny?

JOHN (*Towards his wife sitting on the sofa*): What was that you said Nicole?

She gets up and passes quickly in front of him with the baby and goes into the bedroom.

What did you just say Nicole? (*She comes out of the bedroom without the baby and quickly goes towards the kitchen*) Come over here I am talking to you god damn it!

NICOLE (*Stops in front of the kitchen door*): What? (*They go towards the armchair*)

JOHN: What did you just say?

NICOLE: When was that?

JOHN: Don't start in Nicole I'm in a very bad mood!

NICOLE: I don't remember!

JOHN: You don't remember?

NICOLE: No, oh yeah I said do you understand Johnny?

JOHN: Before that what did you say?

NICOLE: Before what?

JOHN (*Loud and clear*): Before, "do you understand John", you said something that I didn't like at all!

NICOLE: Is that so John?

JOHN (*Same acting*) Be careful!

NICOLE (*Very provocative*): Be careful or what, you're goanna to go wacky?

(*She gets closer to him*) Are you going to hit me John? Is that it, you want, to beat your wife now John? (*she gets even closer to him*) You want to let off some steam John?

You want to affirm your virility? Don't hold back John, hit me go ahead, hit me just to see what it's like! (*Upset she goes back into the kitchen*)

JOHN (*Raising his voice after a very heavy silence*): Stop all of this right now, your little game is really getting on my nerves! Do you hear me?

VOICE OF NICOLE (*From the kitchen*): Yes John I am not deaf! You don't have to scream like a stuck pig! (*After a few minutes, John goes to the bar serves himself a whisky and sits down on the sofa.*)

VOICE OF NICOLE (*After a long silence she is on the verge of crying*): Your wife is a good for nothing, a real idiot not even able to have a baby! Talk about the ideal couple! We are not representative of the good white Anglo-Saxon American society, John! (*She comes out in front of the kitchen door.*) We are really bums!

(*John doesn't answer but one can feel how fed up he is...slight pause.*)

Oh yeh I remember now! (*As she goes towards the sofa*)

NICOLE: I said if not I was going to really mess you up! That's what I said John! Is that okay with you John? (*He sits down apparently demolished*): Here are your little cookies, she puts them on the coffee table. (*She goes to sit down in the armchair.*)

A short silence ...She looks at John and says) You've gone back to drinking whisky?

JOHN: Leave me alone, I'm thinking!

NICOLE: When you used to be drunk all the time you were much funnier John!

JOHN: I stopped drinking, don't you remember? Just a little shot of whiskey to calm me down.

VOICE OF NICOLE: A little drink once in a while can't hurt. It seems to make you nicer!

JOHN: Don't you remember what the Doctor said?

NICOLE: About what, John?

JOHN (*Very annoyed*): Stop Calling me John all the time, it's getting on my nerves!

NICOLE: And how do you want me to call you? My nasty fat little pig?

JOHN: Come on stop Nicole, I'm tired.

NICOLE: Just two or three days, no more, please!

JOHN: Now just stop this stupid little game right now, I've had enough Nicole!

NICOLE: It's not a stupid little game. It's important for me! I am a mother! A mother that never had a chance to have a baby! Can you imagine? A mother without a baby! What a joke. Do you have any idea of what I went through? How much I suffered! Come on tell me! No! You don't have the faintest idea! A mother without a baby is like the ocean without water, a forest without trees, John it just doesn't make any sense! Just let me keep this little baby for a few days and we will be like a real family!

JOHN: We can not do that! We can't keep a baby that does not belong to us!

It's impossible Nicole! Totally impossible! (*On the verge of crying, Nicole goes into the bedroom*)

Tomorrow morning I'll call Ted and this little Negro will be better off in an orphanage or who knows where! *(We hear Nicole crying)* Stop Nicole, please, don't start up!

NICOLE *(She comes back from the bedroom and sits on the sofa.):*

You don't have a heart! Do you realize that? How can you talk about a little baby like that? Before we give her up we have to take care of her! It's our duty, John, our duty!

JOHN: It is not our baby, it's a black baby that must have parents!

NICOLE: It does not belong to anyone anymore! It was in the garbage, our garbage can, on our peelings!

JOHN: Exactly! It's a crime to put a baby in a garbage can! Even a black baby!

Do you want to be an accomplice to that? Do you want to go to jail? Is that what you want Nicole, to go to jail? Do you want our name to be spread all over the front page of the newspapers? "Mr. & Mrs. Wallace kidnapped a baby!...and the mother, not to be investigated is not going to say that she put the baby in our garbage can! Just imagine! She'll go and tell all those warped newspaper reporters that we kidnapped her child! That's what she'll go and say! I might be a leader of the Ku Klux Klan but I am not a baby kidnapper Nicole, no more than I am a fool!

NICOLE: Sometimes I wonder! *(John looks at Nicole sternly a slight pause and then all of a sudden very determined.)* Everything in my garbage belongs to me!

If someone put a baby in our garbage can, it was for us to take care of it!

JOHN: Or... to get us into trouble! Can you understand that?

NICOLE *(Looking at him harshly):* It's a liver in you have in your chest John, a liver of a mean little pig that doesn't even beat!

JOHN *(Bluntly):* Maybe people are already looking for it! Have you thought of that ? Think a little for once in your life!

NICOLE: Right now I just can't stop thinking. You don't have a heart John, that's right where it's at ! Let me tell you something you are going to have to change things!

JOHN: To change what, Nicole?

NICOLE: Everything!

JOHN: And if not?

NICOLE: If not your going to end up transforming yourself completely into a stone, into a statue with a flock of pigeons coming to shit on your head!

JOHN: Come back down to earth, in the name of God!

NICOLE: The baby has been sent to us by God!

JOHN: God does not send babies into peoples garbage cans!

NICOLE: Oh yes ! If he couldn't do otherwise ! It's a test, that's what he sent us, a test!

JOHN: In a garbage can?

NICOLE: Perfectly!

JOHN: You should go up to sleep instead of saying all kinds of crazy things ! Tomorrow we are taking it to the sheriff! And that's that !

NICOLE: Please honey, God had pity on me, he knew we couldn't have a baby so he sent us this little girl!

JOHN (*Exploding*): Keep quiet Nicole that's enough, shut up! Please!
(*She gets up and pouts front stage courtyard side*)

NICOLE: You can't face the truth John, that's the problem!

JOHN: It is a black baby, in the name of God ! A little nigger who has nothing to do in the house of a leader of an organization like ours!

NICOLE (*Very determined turns towards John*): So what ? A baby is a baby! That's what counts John and a baby shouldn't be thrown into the street like a bag of garbage. She doesn't care if your from the Ku Klux Klan she doesn't care at all, get it?

JOHN: Well I give a damn!
(*She goes to the bedroom and reappears at the door right away, towards John.*)

NICOLE'S VOICE: Now I remember what the doctor said! He said that you can't even have one drink! But nobody knows you like me, my little pig, you can still get drunk for centuries and you'll still be around to drive me nuts! (*She goes back to the bedroom slamming the door.*)

LIGHTS OFF

The next morning, Nicole is in the living room armchair giving a baby bottle to the infant. John still dressed, clothes all shuffled, stretched out on the sofa sound asleep. He's snoring. A bottle of whiskey is empty on the table.

NICOLE (*Kind of noisy*): Drink it all Noemi. You like that, don't you Noemi. That's a pretty name for a little treasure like you. You have to recharge your batteries my little angel. After that, we are going shopping. I am going to buy you some baby food, baby food with all kinds of good things in it!

(*John seems to be waking up and turns over in the sofa.*)

Yes your smiling at Mommy, yes you are! Some porridge that's what you want, some real good porridge? Oh yes!

(*The telephone rings, John still half asleep answers, irritated, Nicole is playing noisily with the baby*)

JOHN: Hello! Yes...no I can't tonight ...I have a little problem to take care of. Because of Nicole. (*He cannot hear very well.*)

Yes I'll be at the meeting the twelfth. What? Oh yes, okay, okay, we'll see about that later, yes the twelfth no matter what I'll call you before. Yeh, sure, okay, that's it.

(He looks at Nicole very annoyed and hangs up.)

NICOLE: Who was that? Was that Broocken?

JOHN: No it was not Broocken!

NICOLE: Who was it If it wasn't Broocken?

(John doesn't seem to want to talk.)

JOHN: It was Broocken!

NICOLE: What are you scheming again? *(A short lull.)* I never liked that guy, especially since that they he beat up that kid from New York who had enough guts to open his mouth in defense of that little black boy. I don't even know if that kid survived, the FBI never found out!

JOHN: There were never any witnesses.

NICOLE: What about me? I'm not a witness?

JOHN: You are my wife!

NICOLE: Never the less if I wasn't your wife only God knows what they would have done to me!

JOHN: They wouldn't have done anything!

NICOLE *(After a few seconds):* And her, Allison it's not the same she's a nice woman!

JOHN: So then, you see everthing is not negative!

(After a few seconds.)

NICOLE: I'd like to go and buy a few things.

JOHN: Seriously...If you want to, but I would like that we drop off the little one...you know where!

NICOLE: Do know how she woke me up this morning? I slept real well this morning because last night I fell asleep very late watching over this little treasure. I woke up with something stuck to my breast, it was Noemi!

She was sucking on my breast the poor little thing, she was as hungry as a wolf, I had this little doll sucking on my breast...Can you imagine? And you just can't imagine what that did to me. I am a mother, that's a sensation that a never knew! I love that, my friend.

JOHN *(He sits up surprised):* You never called me your friend!

NICOLE: What? What's the difference? My friend, John, it's the same. What's important is that we can count on each other, right?

JOHN *(Sitting in the armchair):* We should take this child Ted's! Please!

NICOLE (*Getting upset all of a sudden*): Over my dead body! That's right, do you understand? Yesterday I asked you to give me a few days. Do I have to put a bullet in my head to make you understand?

JOHN (*Flabbergasted*): Do you realize what you're saying?

NICOLE: Yes, I realise, you are going to have to leave me a little more time to get used to that decision. First I want to get this baby into good shape, then we can go to Ted's or anywhere else you want to. Then we'll take the necessary steps to adopt her.

JOHN (*Jumps up to a stand*): But why?

NICOLE: You very well understood, John, to adopt her!

JOHN: To adopt her?

NICOLE: Yes, my friend!

JOHN: You want to adopt this little Negress?

NICOLE : Yes, what is so extraordinary about that?
(*He sits back down demolished.*)

JOHN: You've really gone crazy! But we can not adopt a black child, Nicole, we are members of the Ku Klux Klan.

NICOLE: You are a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

JOHN: Yes, but you've been with me for twenty year!

NICOLE: Twenty one, John!

JOHN: Twenty one years, you only know our people!

NICOLE: And who's fault is that?

JOHN: What do you mean who's fault is that?

NICOLE: With you I never had the right to meet normal people!

JOHN; What do you mean by that, normal people?

NICOLE: Yes, people who are not from the Klan!

JOHN: So our people are not normal people for you!

NICOLE: Sure, without a doubt. What do I know? One thing is sure they are a bunch of real racists!

JOHN (*Disconcerted*): That's normal, if not they wouldn't be in the Klan!

NICOLE : The difference between you and me is that I am not a racist!

JOHN: You can go and say that to whoever you want, nobody will believe you!

NICOLE: Yes, yes you know that I am not a racist!

JOHN: Yes I know, and sometimes I ask myself what the hell am I doing with you?

NICOLE: It's a question that I ask myself too. I have nothing against the blacks, or the Latinos either or who knows who. I never was against races from anywhere. I never really understood that whole game and frankly I had enough, more than enough!

JOHN: That's really something else!

NICOLE: You know what I think? All of this is completely stupid, as if we were still in the fifties, your little war against all of those poor people is a thing of the past, John!

JOHN: The past? Are you kidding! We are right back into the middle of it all again! A big percentage of whites are racists! The same thing with the blacks! And for the others it's the same! It's the same everywhere, in Europe or elsewhere. Forty million Americans support us Nicole! More and more people are joining us!

NICOLE: It's nothing to brag about!

JOHN: No body is bragging. That's the way it is! It's a historical truth! The whites are superior and that's that!

NICOLE: Are you kidding, the truth is that we even have a black President ! It's just to say, very superior, right!

JOHN: Not for much longer!
(They look at each other)

NICOLE: What?

JOHN: The way things are going, he won't be President for a very long time!

NICOLE: What do you mean not for a very long time? What are you saying? What are you going to do ?

JOHN: Us nothing, we're not going to do anything!

NICOLE: Then why are you saying that?

JOHN: Because never in history has a President in exercise received so many death threats! Just a premonition, that's all!

NICOLE: A premonition planned in advance right!

JOHN: There are rumors going around everywhere! It's even in the newspapers. Anyway something is going on, it will have nothing to do with us! It will come from somewhere else. There are just a lot of people that are fed up and they just want to put things to an end, that's all there is to it!

NICOLE: Nevertheless we have an inferior black President, that's strange, don't you think so!

JOHN: A half-breed.

NICOLE: What?

JOHN: He is a half-breed!

NICOLE: Yes, right, bi-racial!

JOHN: It's even worse!

NICOLE: Why John? Why? Why do you say that?

JOHN (*Impatient*): Come on Nicole!

NICOLE: Because races shouldn't mix? Is that it? Is that what you want to say? If the good Lord let different races mix, it's without a doubt that he wanted that way, right? You don't believe that? Otherwise he would have arranged things to make it impossible, so that it couldn't fit right! He would have made walls high as the skies, so that the different races couldn't meet. Or just in case he would have made sure that the ovule and the spermatozoide would have dug trenches three yards long and couldn't even calculate the distance! It's a central question that you should examine, my little buddy!

JOHN: A freak of nature, that's all!

NICOLE You're the freak of nature!
(*He looks at her violently.*)

JOHN: Give me a drink!

NICOLE: At this time of the day?

JOHN: Mind your own business!

NICOLE: Suit yourself, only if that could give you a little more heart!
(*She gets up and goes to the bar to serve him, still with the baby in her arms, she comes back and puts the drink on the coffee table.*)

There you go honey, I gave you a double. (*She sits down in the armchair*)

JOHN: A double?

NICOLE: To hell with the doctor, John! (*He drinks as she watches him curiously.*)
You know I'm going to be frank with you, I liked you better before!

JOHN: Before? Before what?

NICOLE: When you were young, when you were drunk all the time. Really John!

JOHN: How about that? And why is that?

NICOLE: You were almost excusable, you had the alcohol and youth for you!
But now at your age and sober.....sometimes you disgust me, honestly!

JOHN (*Angry*): What does that mean?

NICOLE: You understand very well! In those days you were already a racist, like a lot of guys from around here, but you were a young and unconscious racist, almost nice, even if people say that nice racists do not exist, I know that they do! I thought you were irresistible, John, I don't know more honest, more crazy, more unpredictable, more surprising, I think that even at this time and day, if we were not in this environment you would agree to keep the little one. Maybe!

JOHN: Don't talk crazy!

NICOLE: Yeah I must admit that drunkenness and youth fit you much better. Me as well!

JOHN: I can't recognise you any more. You've got to be kidding! This little baby is making your head spin!

NICOLE: I want to adopt her!

JOHN: No, Nicole!

NICOLE: We'll see about that! Your friend the Judge could help us out with that!

JOHN: I hope you're joking!

NICOLE: Not at all!

JOHN: You want me to go and see one of the great thinkers of the movement to help us adopt a baby of a race that he loathes? Do you realise what you are saying, Nicole? You have really lost all your common sense!

NICOLE: On the contrary, what if I rediscovered it!
(*Silence as they look at each other.*)

JOHN: Once and for all we can not adopt that baby! The movement will never accept that, and let me remind you that the social services do investigate on all adoptions in our country and they rarely place little blacks with whites from the Ku Klux Klan, can you imagine? I don't even think that ever happened!

NICOLE: If we can't adopt her, then I am going to resign! I promise you that! But only then!

JOHN: You would resign?

NICOLE: Yes under the circumstances. Meanwhile this little treasure is my daughter!

JOHN: She is not your girl!

NICOLE: Alright, if I can adopt her she will be my daughter!

JOHN: As long as I'm alive she will not be your daughter!

NICOLE: That is what we are going to see!

JOHN: Alright Nicole, alright. Try to adopt her if you want, but meanwhile we have to go to the Sheriff's office, as soon as possible!

NICOLE: Not before she is totally fit!

JOHN (*Exasperated.*): And just when do you think she will be fit?

NICOLE; Not before next week!

JOHN (*Springs up to a stand.*): What? (*Hopeless, he goes up to the front of the stage, garden side as if he was gazing through a bay window.*)

All of this city's high society knows or suspects that I am a member of the Klan !

(*Towards Nicole*) Don't you get the picture Nicole? You didn't go completely crazy in just two days? (*to himself*) It can't be true ! He looks outside and then turns towards Nicole, you want a

baby is that what you really want?

(He turns and sits rapidly on the sofa.)

Alright we are going to adopt a baby if we can't have one otherwise, but a white one!

A white baby !

NICOLE: You never wanted to adopt a baby, all of this is your fault!

JOHN: Now I want to, now I agree. Let's adopt a baby!

NICOLE: Now it's me who doesn't want to!

JOHN: What? Why that, Nicole???

NICOLE: I don't like whites! I don't like superior races!

JOHN: What? What are you talking about? You're white yourself!

NICOLE: I don't like myself! I don't like myself anymore!

JOHN: What are you trying to say?

NICOLE: That means I'm no better than you! I just opened my eyes, and it hurts; it's sad to have waited all this time to begin to see the truth, it's as if I was born yesterday, John before that I was vegetating in my nothingness! We are no better than animals John. Is it our conscience that makes us bad or our conscience with the intelligence we think we have?

JOHN: You're really messed up in the head lately. You can believe me.

NICOLE: No John! Nothing's wrong anymore! I don't want a white baby! This is the one I want!

JOHN *(Very annoyed moves in between the coffee table and where he was before.):*

You've really decided to spoil my life right up to the bitter end! What does she have that's better than the others? Do you want to tell me ?!

(She does not answer, determined) I am talking to you!

NICOLE: Exactly! She has nothing less! The baby starts crying again. Are you happy? You got what you wanted! What a disgrace, John!

(He goes straight to the bar.) Make a little Princess that's not even a year old cry!

You should be ashamed of yourself, John! *(John seems demolished and goes and pours himself a drink and comes back to sit down, bottle in hand.)*

JOHN *(Very annoyed):* Do you want my friends to go to war with me? Is that what you want?

NICOLE: If they declare war on you, that means they are not your friends!

JOHN *(Very annoyed.):* Do you want me to have a pile of problems stacked higher than that cottonwood tree that's out there a few feet from our window?

NICOLE: You don't like cottonwood trees now! You don't like the way they look either? Is that it? That's a rip off John, too easy!

(She gets up and goes to the kitchen with the baby in her arms. John watches her walk away.)

JOHN (*upset*): Damn it! Why do I lug that baby around with you every time you get up?

NICOLE: Don't want you to touch my girl!
(She leaves.)

JOHN: Your brother is going to be happy to find out that he has a niece, you sure can believe me!

NICOLE'S VOICE (*From the kitchen.*): I don't give a shit about my brother when it comes to matters like this, John!

JOHN: Better and better! (*Drinking*) If you persist in this madness, you don't have the slightest idea of what kind of a big mess you are getting us into!

NICOLE: Maybe you think it's better that I leave home!

JOHN: I see that we are still playing the same tune.
(Serious lull of silence)

If there's no other way we are going to have to take that path!

(She comes slowly back into the living room and stops by the sofa behind John's back.)

NICOLE (*Worried*): What path, John?

JOHN: Well, the one of you proposed!

NICOLE (*She moves into the middle of the sofa and the armchair.*)
What proposition, John?

JOHN: The one about you leaving home!

NICOLE: Are you serious?

JOHN: We can't go on!

NICOLE: You want to throw me out?

JOHN: It wasn't my idea!

NICOLE: You're ready to leave me for that?

JOHN: Yes, because I don't want to see us ending up in the morgue, just imagine!

NICOLE - You're saying that as a joke, right?

JOHN; Do I look like I'm joking? (*She goes off quickly to the bedroom, comes back without the*

baby, and sits down on the sofa.)

NICOLE (*hysterical*): Who went to Montgomery to look for me? Huh? Who wanted me to come here to live with him? Me or You? I was alright over there, I wasn't bothering anybody, and nobody was hassling me! I was happy!

JOHN: You were a prostitute! That what bothered me!

NICOLE: So what? I had the right! After what happened here, I had the right to do whatever I wanted! The love of my life was dead, what else could I do? And I wanted to see something different than this godforsaken place!

JOHN: You've got to be kidding!

NICOLE: John was in love, he couldn't stand the idea of anyone else laying a hand on me! And when John is in love you better not upset him!

JOHN: Yes! it's true I was in love!

NICOLE: Even when you were just a little kid you used to stick to me like a leech!
Like a dirty little pig. You were always in love, you were always in love with me, John!
Non-stop, all the time, not a minute of peace!

JOHN - Yeah! That always was my problem! For the better and especially for the worst!

NICOLE - Who's fault was that?

JOHN: Mea Culpa!

NICOLE: I often miss Floyd! You can't imagine how much! At least he never bothered me!

JOHN (*Jealous and upset*): He was an evil bastard! He was a dirty pervert, who used you and nobody in the district misses him!

NICOLE: Yes I know, he might have been a bastard, but he wasn't a racist. He didn't give a damn about blacks and foreigners! He would have let me adopt the baby! Even if he didn't give a damn about her! And you and your buddies went and killed him on me!

JOHN: He killed himself, Nicole and you know very well! Nobody killed that bastard! It was an accident! A simple hunting accident, just like the ones that happen every day, all around the world, witnessed by so many people!

NICOLE: My ass! In any case you really arranged everything right! Admit it!

JOHN: I was absent that day!

NICOLE: Yeah! But your buddies were there!

JOHN (*Impatient*): It's ancient history Nicole! Just forget it!

NICOLE: How can I forget? You never forget something like that! After that it was our infant, my poor little Sylvia and... *(She's on the verge of shedding tears.)*

I want to die, to die John, I want to die honey! I want to crawl into a hole

(He approaches and kisses her, she cries.)

JOHN: Come on, come on honey and calm down, please! I beg you, try! Get a hold of yourself! Don't cry anymore, don't cry anymore! Forgive me sweetheart, forgive me!

(She continues to cry. He seems very embarrassed. He touches her. She gets up all of a sudden and goes into the bedroom to cry. John has a drink. We can hear her crying....short pause.)

Okay were going to keep her for few days, your right, we're going to buy her clothes and anything else you want, I promise you, honey , don't cry anymore!

(She cries for another few second then Nicole enters the living room with a lively pace and sits down in the armchair.)

NICOLE *(Enthusiastic):* Yes I want you to do that for me, sweetheart! We're going to buy her a bunch of clothes, pretty shoes so that her cute little feet don't get damaged, then a...

JOHN: Okay, if you want, a chain for example, a nice little gold chain!

NICOLE: No John not a chain, certainly not a chain! What do have in your head, she can strangle herself with a chain!

JOHN: Oh of course...your right! Rather a bracelet, that's it, a bracelet is better!

NICOLE: No I don't like that either John! No bracelet for my little treasure, earrings, that's it, pretty little golden earrings, that what she needs!

JOHN: Whatever you want sweetheart! Then we'll go and drop her off at the sheriff's office, okay? A nice foster family can take care of her! People that are bl...black people like her she'll be alright. She won't feel out of place!

NICOLE *(Dumbstruck):* What did you say, John?

JOHN *(Surprised.):* What?

NICOLE *(Interrupting him.):* Do you find her out of place? Do you find her out of place when she looks at me and smiles at me the way she is doing right now?

JOHN: I ...that is not what I...

NICOLE *(Cutting in):* I don't find her out of place at all.

JOHN *(Resuming):* All right, Nicole, but only a few days.

NICOLE: Until Wednesday.

JOHN: Tuesday!

NICOLE: Wednesday!

JOHN: Okay, okay, all right, I'll go with that but only to Wednesday not a day more, okay sweetheart? You promise me?

NICOLE: Thanks honey I promise you. Wednesday night!

JOHN: I prefer Wednesday morning.

NICOLE: Night!

JOHN: Okay, okay Wednesday night last call.

NICOLE: Midnight!

JOHN: At six o'clock, Nicole.

NICOLE: at midnight!!!

JOHN: Here the sheriff's office closes at six o'clock.

NICOLE: We'll have them open it!

JOHN: Eight o'clock latest deadline, we can't do better sweetheart. (*Short silence.*)

NICOLE: All right nine o'clock Wednesday!

JOHN: Nine o'clock?

NICOLE: Yes, nine o'clock, not a minute less!

JOHN: Okay nine o'clock, not a minute more!

NICOLE: But up until then you give me your word of

JOHN (*He continues.*): ...Husband.

NICOLE: If you wish John...husband.

Give me your word of honor as a husband that you're not going to bother me anymore and let me enjoy the company of my little girl with out you making any wisecracks. Alright?

JOHN: Promise!

NICOLE: Very well. Now you're going to go shopping for the baby. You're going to move your backside for our little treasure. I prepared a list for you that's on the kitchen table. We'll see about the clothes and the jewelery later. Anyway, I'd rather buy those things myself!

JOHN: I'm going to freshen up a little.

NICOLE: That's it, go freshen up, that wouldn't hurt at all.
(After a glance at his wife and gets up, demolished, looking very tired, John goes towards the bathroom and exits.)

NICOLE *(To the baby):* Finally we're alone at last! Now don't get upset Noemi. Don't you worry. Mamma Nicole will be able to adopt you. I give you my word. Give Mamma a little smile. Yes, that's a real pretty little smile that is. Ga, Ga, Goo, Ga!

LIGHTS OFF

The same day, after dinner. Nicole is wiping off the table. Plates are in a stack topped by the cutlery. John is in the armchair.

NICOLE *(Watching the baby on the sofa.):* Look, she's falling asleep. I'll be right back, I'll put her to her to sleep.
(Nicole takes the baby to the bedroom, John downs his glass and serves himself another one. Nicole comes back.)

She's sleeping like a log...this little one is not difficult at all. I've never seen a baby cry so little. A true gift of nature! *(She picks up the plates and cutlery, leaving the glasses and goes towards the kitchen...she exits.)*

NICOLE'S VOICE: Saturday we'll go to town, I really have to buy her some clothes. I almost don't have anything left for her to wear.

JOHN: You'll go to town all alone. I don't want you to bring her with you. I'll take care of her.

NICOLE: Are you afraid of gossip, John?

JOHN: Yes, perfectly. I am afraid. and not only about gossip!

NICOLE'S VOICE: We're going to have to talk about that.
(She comes back into the living room.)

Your friends are really nice people, charming. *(She sits down in the sofa.)*

They are really very nice, you see. *(She serves herself a whiskey.)*

But,...but, if we were black or even dark complexioned it wouldn't be sure that we'd find them so nice any more. If we were black or dark complexioned, John!

JOHN: Or traitors to the cause!

NICOLE: What?

JOHN: Black or dark or traitors to the cause. That is what we will be tomorrow if you continue with this madness.

NICOLE: What cause, John? Which cause do you want to talk about?

JOHN: Come on, Nicole!

NICOLE: You want to talk about the kind that consists of abusing or assassinating people because you don't like the way they look? Just because they don't have the same color of skin as you? Is that your cause?

JOHN: Enough, I tell you! I'm not in the mood.

NICOLE: You are an immigrant in this country too! Except for the Indians, who we treated the same way, we are all immigrants, John. that yoy shouldn't forget. my good man. but the cause, the real one, the just one that doesn't consist of getting pleasure out of the suffering of others but to reach out to give them a hand when they are in despair, that cause you have betrayed for far too long, my little pig. No John there is nothing left for you to betray, to be done, that's already been done.

JOHN (*Annoyed*): I see very well what you are getting to but...we had an agreement about something, did you already forget?

NICOLE: Anyway if I'm able or not to adopt this little one you are going to have to change your attitude. Being part of the Klan with a little black girl. I just want to ask you just what do you think what we are going to look like?

JOHN (*Seriously.*): That's what I think too. (*Short pause.*)
Some very ugly things are ging to happen, honey. You don't quite the Klan like you quit a church choir.

NICOLE: Then, we can live separately. I can move into the city with Noemi in a small apartment and we can see each other on the week-ends.

JOHN: The week-ends?

NICOLE: Yes.

JOHN: In secret?

NICOLE: Why in secret? We'll ask the police to protect us.
To patrol the area.

JOHN: Patrol?

NICOLE: Yes.

JOHN: What kind of patrol?

NICOLE: Well, the police!

JOHN: The police?

NICOLE: That right!

JOHN: And then we'd have no more problems.

NICOLE: Exactly.

JOHN (*Seriously*): That's not the way it works, Nicole.

NICOLE: You do have friends in the police, isn't that right? Stan and Nick are your friends aren't they? And you know other too, right?

JOHN: If I quit the Klan they won't be my friends anymore.

NICOLE: If I'm able to adopt Noemi that's the way we're going to do it. Otherwise I will go and live on the other side of the country. this time I am serious, John.

JOHN: I'm tired of this whole story.

NICOLE: Your not the only one that's tired.

JOHN: Only yesterday they were very good, nice and all of a sudden we come back home now they've become the dregs of society. Is that it?

NICOLE: Yes, that's about it.

JOHN: So I am part of the dregs of society.

NICOLE (*Serious.*): The idea of that scares me, John. I don't know why but all of a sudden I find that very ugly. I never thought these things over before. It's strange isn't it, don't you think so? Yes this little one really woke something up in me.

JOHN (*Upset all of a sudden.*): Then you're just going to have to get out of here, Nicole because she hasn't awakened anything in me, that's the way it is and don't ask me why!!

LIGHTS OFF
INTERMISSION

ACT II

It is the evening. John is alone on the sofa, he looks completely drunk. He serves himself some whiskey, he makes drunken disarticulate gestures.

NICOLE'S VOICE (*From the bedroom*): Are you coming to bed?

JOHN: I want to drink!

NICOLE'S VOICE: You don't have empty out the whole bar, John!

JOHN: I'm in my house here and I do what I want to!

NICOLE'S VOICE: You know what he sais the doctor, you nice little doctor that finds you all that you want to have.

JOHN: Him too, he can go and fuck himself!

NICOLE'S VOICE: You have a problem? Is that it? If you hav a problem honey you know you can talk to me about it.

JOHN: Leave me alone!

NICOLE'S VOICE: What is your problem?

JOHN: Shit!

NICOLE'S VOICE: you have to talk about things my good man. It's not good to hold back your frustrations, you're going to brake out in a rash.
(*John awkwardly gives her "the arm" in the clumsy way drunkards do.*)

NICOLE (*Comes to the door*): Well, are you going to spit out your venom?

JOHN: You know very well what my problem is. You know my fucking problem perfectly well, moron!

NICOLE: Finally, when I think it over you should stick to drinking water, as you get older you've got nasty alcohol, I can see that drinking does n't suit you any more. That is the real problem. (*She disappears into the bedroom.*)

JOHN: That is not my problem, my problem is that little negress that we have in this house. that's where my problem is!

NICOLE'S VOICE: You are becoming vulgar, John.

JOHN: Yeah, yeah, I'm becoming vulgar and it's only the beginning.
(*She's goes into the living room but stays near the door.*)

NICOLE: Martin Luther king had dreams, you and him, you are having a nightmare.

JOHN (*Annoyed*): Look where that got him the dreams of that negro.
They didn't do him any good. (*Upset she returns to the bedroom.*)

Yes I had a nightmare, and you know why, because you're such an idiot that you don't even understand a problem when it's staring you right in the eye.

(*She reappears at the living room door.*)

NICOLE: Oh yes, I understand, I understand very well, all too well. But I'd rather die my head held high, than live with a bag over it. I don't want a God damned bag over my head anymore, do you understand? I want my brain to breath. I want to be able to be myself, even if it's only for a few seconds. I want to live at last, instead of dying eternally. This life is more morbid than the day after the bomb hit Hiroshima, colder than a corpse. I have to redicover the authenticity of my first hours, my first day. That's what I need. That is the urgent necessity that I have. (*Light silence.*)
You understand that, you poor bastard!

(*She goes back to the bedroom.*)

JOHN(*Drunk.*): Poor bastard ...yourself!

NICOLE: You're just a dirty little egoiste.

JOHN: I'm out of ice!

NICOLE'S VOICE (*Annoyed, she sings back her answer.*): I don't give a damn!!!

JOHN: We're dead, Nicole, mummified, pulverized...do you understand that, you nigger lover!
(*She goes into the doorway and "moons" him.*)

NICOLE (*Noisily*): That's great, that's really great.
(*The baby starts crying.*)

NICOLE: There you go, are you happy now? You woke up the baby, she's squealing like a hog!
(*She goes back to the bedroom.*)

JOHN: She should go and sleep somewhere else. (*She rushes back into the living room doorway.*)

NICOLE; Asshole! (*Then hurries back into the bedroom.*)

JOHN(*He gets up and goes to the bedroom doorway and then back towards the courtyard side, very provocative*): I am in my house and I do what I want, and if I want to scream, I'll scream.
Ahhhahhhahaa!

NICOLE'S VOICE: That's it scream, vomit out the beast that's inside you! Go ahead, keep it up!

JOHN (*Who looks more drunk than before.*): Ahahahaha!

NICOLE'S VOICE: Stop all this ruckus immediately.

(He starts dancing a ridiculous dance.)

JOHN: Ahahahaha! (*Nicole returns to the doorway. She watches him dance, he really looks ridiculous. At first he doesn't notice that Nicole is watching him, then he does and stops right away, kind of embarrassed.*)

NICOLE: What are you doing? Have you gone crazy?
(*John, embarrassed moves his hand over his head to show her he was only dancing.*):
Do you want me to call an ambulance?

JOHN: I'm dancing. Is that against the law?

NICOLE: Now you have convulsions?

JOHN: I'm doing the death dance.

NICOLE: It's not the right time. (*She goes back to the bedroom.*)

JOHN (*Very loud.*): In my house I do what I want. I am in my house do you hear? I do what I want!

NICOLE'S VOICE: Yes we know that you are at home. In your dear little loving mommy's house.

JOHN: Perfectly.
(*She comes back to the living room doorway.*)

NICOLE: If she had kicked your ass more often, we wouldn't be where we are today.

JOHN: Leave mamma alone.
(*He towards the picture of his mother that's over a pedestal that has a bouquet of flowers on it.*)

NICOLE: You never did anything on your own, that's the problem. Now you're lost, that's the truth. (*She goes back to the bedroom.*)

JOHN: Mamma has nothing to do with that.

NICOLE: Your whole life you only followed he, me too by the way. But for me it's over.

JOHN: My mother was a saint.

NICOLE'S VOICE: Bullshit, a real hick of the deep south petite bourgeoisie, domineering, religious and well embedded in her snobby cruelty. That's for sure!
(*She comes back into the bedroom doorway*)

NICOLE: I can't blame you, but you have to face the facts, your mother was not a good woman.

JOHN: Shut up!

NICOLE: A despising and scornful woman, that was your sweet little mamma. but you just can't face the truth ,John.

JOHN: Shut up!

NICOLE: A real pit-bull disguised as a poodle. That's what she was. If she was still alive we wouldn't be together. Remember that, John!

JOHN: That's alright.

(Talking to himself out loud.) Yes, I really wish I could go back into the past. I really would have loved that mamma had never left.

NICOLE*(After a short silence.):* You have a short memory my little pig. If she didn't have such a peaceful death only God knows what would have happened to her.

JOHN *(Exploding.):* I don't want to hear anything. I don't want to hear anything anymore! Keep quiet! Shut up! Get lost. Get out with your little Negress. You hear me? Get out of here! Get out my house!

NICOLE: You're really pathetic. Just like a nasty little pig under the butcher's meat grinder. It's really hurts to ssee you. you're really a poor bum. I'd be better off back in bed.

JOHN: That's it, get lost, leave me alone.

(Nicole goes back to the bedroom, he reserves himself spilling half of it on the side. Very drunk and obstinate.)

That's it beat it . Yeh, scram, go fly a kite, go chase your own shadow. There won't be no negresse in John Wallace's house. No negresse here, here we are white, as white as snow, period,...get, lost. !

(Waving strange gestures upwards towards the heavens.)

10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1 ...vroom...blast off!

LIGHTS OFF

The next day, late in the morning, the man is seated in the armchair, he's reading the newspaper, and drinking herbal tea. he seems to have a headache, he turns a page and the noise seems instigate the babies crying.

John *(Abruptly.):* Shhhh! *(The crying stops. He turns another page and the crying starts again.)* Shhhh!

(The crying stops, he shakes the pages on purpose to see if the baby has calmed down. the baby

does not react. He starts reading again and turns a page and then the crying starts up again.)

JOHN *(Gets up.):* We keep quite!

(When the baby sees John and laughs. John sits down and the baby starts to cry. John gets up and the baby laughs. John makes believe he's going to sit down and the baby cries again, he stands up.) You're really a joker aren't you! *(The baby laughs even more, he takes her in his arms apparently without emotion.)*

You're a real funny one aren't you, Hahn! If you think you're going to get me because you're no bigger than a baby duckling with a smile that's three miles long, you're mistaken baby, okay, anyway John can't keep you here, you can always try to make me laugh or coax me up it won't work, you're wasting your time, kid. *(The baby laughs.)*

No, that won't work! While you're at it do me a little favor, okay? Stop charming Nicole, you are driving her nuts, okay? This whole thing is going to bring on a heap of problems, honey. Yep, big stack of problems going a mile high!

(The baby laughs again after a few seconds.) Ah your yawning, you're tired, that's it go to sleep, things will be better that way. *(He delicately lays her back into her cradle, which indicates that she is asleep. He tip toes his way back to the sofa and after a long gaze on the baby, he slowly picks up the newspaper and resumes his reading.)*

LIGHTS OFF

A little bit later, John is still reading. The door opens, Nicole comes in and takes off her coat.

NICOLE: I didn't find what I wanted. Klaus was closed. So, I'll go back tomorrow.
(She carries shopping bag into the kitchen.)

NICOLE: How's the baby?

JOHN: Nicole...

NICOLE: Terry came by, right? I thought I saw his car on the way in.

JOHN: No, Terry didn't pass by.
(She comes back into the living room, goes to the bar and serves herself a drink.)

NICOLE: I went to Norman's for the bathtub, if we count on Terry we're not about to take a good bath, I'm telling you!
(She looks at the sofa and around the room, downs her drink and hurries off to the bedroom. She

comes back to the doorway.) Where did you put the baby, John?

JOHN: There were a bunch of blacks prowling around the house a little while ago.

NICOLE: So, probably just folks taking a walk. Where is the baby?

JOHN: No honey they were not people just taking a walk. They were looking for something.

NICOLE (*Seriously.*): Will you tell me where the baby is?

JOHN: You don't listen when you're talked to. I told you that a bunch of people were prowling around the house.

NICOLE: Yes it's undertood, so what?

JOHN: So what so I called Ted because of those, because of those niggers.

NICOLE (*Very seriously.*) You called Ted?

JOHN: Yes!

NICOLE (*Same acting.*): And then?

JOHN: So then....he saw the baby. (*She looks at him harshly.*)

NICOLE (*Panicked.*): What are you trying to tellme?

JOHN: You know very well what I am trying to tell you.
(*Heavy silence.*)

NICOLE (*Panicky and angry.*): Call him right away and tell him to bring her back immediately!

JOHN: I can't it's to late.

JOHN: It's too late now, he can't bring her back.
(*She runs into the bedroom and after a few seconds comes back with a gun in her hand.*)

NICOLE (*Very mechanically.*): You call that bastard right away, you are his boss, he will do whatever you tell him. (*She throws the telephone at him.*)
Right away John, or I swear, you'll be sorry!

JOHN (*Serious and not very reassured*): What are you going to do, shoot me? Come on honey put down that gun.

NICOLE (*Very determined.*): I'm not going to shoot hyou John, not unless you come close to me, I'm going to do better than that if you don't call that bastard right away, or I'm going to call the F.B.I., the newspapers and the whole kit and caboodle and I will tell all of those wonderful people a story that's twenty years long really just might interest them a whole lot! Especially lately. I think that you're all going to find yourself in shit up to your necks, my little buddy! I swear to God John I will do it! Call him! Call that son of a bitch right away! Right away! Hurry up!

(They look at each other, short silence, then he goes to the phone and dials a number.)

JOHN *(Hesitating a little.):* Hello Ted? It's me, yes...no, bring back the baby...no I'll explain later. *(He listens, and after a few seconds, with firmity.)* No, go and get her and bring her here right away, do what I told you to do. Okay? Okay, I'm waiting for you. *(Short silence, he hangs up.)* He's bring her back, now you can put down the gun.

NICOLE: I will put down the gun when she gets here!

LIGHTS OFF

When the lights come back on Nicole is still with the gun. She is siting on the sofa and he is in the armchair.

JOHN: Good God what do you expect? to go unnoticed with this kid?
(He drinks.) It's not going to be easy, you an believe me! Somebody's going to end up asking you what's going on. It might be when you stop off in a motel, nobody going to want to rent out a room to a white woman with a little black baby that's not even a year old, without knoing the story,Nicole, nobody! Imagine that you do get by for a while, at that young age babies get sick a lot, what are you going to do when you have to go to the doctors, what are you going to do? What will you say to the Doctor? Because he's going to ask for records too, Nicole. What will you say? That you don't have her health reports or health certificates because you found her in a garbage can? Or, you got her as a gift for birthday? What are you going to say then, Nicole? Are you going let her die the first time she gets sick, I don't know how you're going to be able to work things out.

NICOLE: Certificates and records are no problem. I know where to get them made.

JOHN: You got us into one big mess!

NICOLE: All of this is your fault. It's your fault!

JOHN: No Nicole it's not me. It's you and you alone that got us into this situation.
(Short silence and calm.)

It's not to late to turn baack the clocks, honey.

NICOLE *(Very determined.):* Oh yes it's too late. You don't know to what point it is. But it is never to late to change,never. To do that you can't be blind you have to open your eyes and look at yourself and see how you really are and get rid of all of your sick obsessions that you and your friends have.

That's what got us into this situation, John. Your ignorance. Your incapacity to see life the way it is. Do you realize, John that you are black, of black origin?

JOHN: I am originally black?

NICCOLE; perfectly John you are a negro, an X negro chasing himself. I saw that in a magazine. You really got to be stupid. don't you think so?

JOHN: Now I've heard it all, better off dead than hearing that.

NICOLE: Do you want to pass your whole life locked up as tight as a clam. Is that it? Only the truth can make us happy John. I just started to understand it. You're not God. You're no different than the others. Your ancestors were just like the others. They came here from Africa, we all came from Africa. they stayed there for a long time, a bunch of centuries, before trying their luck somewhere else. But believe me their skin was black, as black as Ebony; like humanities first woman, yes John, you are as black as the inside of an asshole. yes I read that in a scientific revue, I read that in a science book written by a scientist who wasn't only preoccupied by only himself, but others, the world, all of humanity.

JOHN: That's no proof. Other scientists will say the opposite, that the climate was not the same in that era. And that the first man was white. Who holds the truth?

NICOLE: It's like talking to a wall. In any case that child taught me a whole lot of things. the first thing was that I never loved you. Do you realize that, John? I thought I loved you, but I never did love you. I was dead. And she pulled me out of my lithargie, she revived me.

(A car parking in front of the house can be heard, John's face seems decomposed.)

Go outside, I don't want to see that dirty bastard. Tell him what ever you want, I don't give a damn what you say, just bring back the child.

(John goes outside, Nicole goes to the window and watches. After a while the car leaves and John comes in with the child that is crying.)

Put her on the sofa. *(John obeys, Nicole goes to the baby who stops crying.)*

You are going to sleep here; I am going to sleep with the baby, and we will leave tomorrow morning.

LIGHTS OFF

The next end late morning, John is sleeping in the armchair, a young man about thirty-five years old rapidly enters the living room without knocking on the door.

THE YOUNG MAN: Hi! I couldn't pass by the last few days.

(He goes straight to the bar.)

JOHN *(Jumps awake, interrupting him.):* Shhh! You're waking up the whole house.

THE YOUNG MAN: What? Nicole is still asleep at*(He takes a quick look at his watch.)* at almost twelve o'clock!

JOHN: No, Nicole went out.

THE YOUNG MAN: Who then am I going to wake up in the house?

JOHN: Don't worry.

THE YOUNG MAN: Why are you talking with such a low voice?
(Staring at him.): Is something wrong?

JOHN: No nothing's wrong, just lower your voice, alright?
(He goes towards the sofa with the glass and the bottle of whiskey.)

TERRY: You're connected with God, is that it? What's your story?
(We hear a little sneeze.): What was that?

JOHN: It was nothing. You should come back in about an hour, your sister will be there.
(He comes and sits on the sofa and puts the bottle of whiskey on the table.)
Another sneeze!

TERRY: Did you hear that? Now, I wasn't dreaming, this time.

JOHN: Where's that?

TERRY: You didn't hear that? Like a sneeze. What is that sneezing in your house?

JOHN: I don't know.

TERRY: You don't know. Do you have mice? I didn't know that they sneezed... mice.
(He looks at him for a few seconds.)

Well anyway, that's not what I wanted to talk to you about. I've been whooping it up for the last few days, you wouldn't believe it.. Finally I forgot about the cat. Did she get upset?

JOHN: No, not at all.

TERRY *(He looks at John.):* Really? That's strange.
(He continues his story.)

No matter what, with Barbara, it's really finished. I met someone. When you see her you're going to hallucinate. this time I hit the jackpot. Well... I think, finally. A French woman!

JOHN: Very happy for you.

TERRY: Yeh! But not just any French-woman...a Bordelaise from a big family. You know Bordeaux? The city of wine.

JOHN: Who are you taking me for, Terry?

TERRY: Her father has vineyards, one of the best in Bordeaux. You wouldn't believe it, at the wine show, a wine, top grade quality. We're goanna guzzle it throw down the hatch and fill up our tanks. On top of that she is so beautiful and such a great piece of ass. You can't imagine. So beautiful it'll make you cry.

JOHN: Watch out, Terry, when they're too beautiful, sometimes that happens. I know what I'm talking about.

TERRY: No, that's not what I wanted to say. What I wanted to tell you, is that...
(*A new sneeze.*) ...that (*He stops.*) - You heard that, this time!

JOHN: What now?

TERRY: I'm not crazy. (*Terry gets up and goes behind the sofa.*)
I really heard a sneeze, damn it. It came from over here.

(*John gets up also to stop him to get closer to the bedroom. Terry gets closer to the bedroom door.*)

JOHN (*Puts himself partiely in front of the door.*) - Forget it she is sleeping.

TERRY (*In a pretty loud voice.*): Who's that! Who's sleeping!

JOHN: Lower your voice. You are going to wake her up.

TERRY (*Forcing his way by more or less.*); Let me see God damn it!

JOHN: No, I went through hell to get her to sleep.
(*Terry kind of pushes his way through and goes into the bedroom, John follows.*)

TERRY'S VOICE: Holy shit what's that?

JOHN'S VOICE: A little girl.

TERRY'S VOICE: But she's black, this kid.

JOHN: You think so?

TERRY'S VOICE: Are you kidding, do I think so? What are you doing with a little Coon in your house?

JOHN'S VOICE: A Coon ?, I didn't notice.

TERRY'S VOICE: What are taking John?

JOHN'S VOICE: Nothin! What do you think I'm taking.

TERRY'S VOICE: Are you okay?

JOHN'S VOICE: Yes. Very just fine.

TERRY'S VOICE: It doesn't seem so. Give me that little negresse.

JOHN'S VOICE: You're going to hurt her.

(John rushes out of the bedroom and goes behind the sofa. Terry come out to the bedroom doorway.)

TERRY *(Puzzled.):* What am I going to do to her?

JOHN: You don't know how to carry a baby...you might make her fall.

TERRY *(Same acting):* I might make her fall?

JOHN: You don't carry a baby any old way, she's fragile. One arm around her and the other under her butt, to have a good hold, otherwise she might fall, and that, that would be a real catastrophe.

TERRY: Are you sure that you are okay, John?

JOHN *(Seriously.)* Are you happy now? You woke her up!
(He goes to sit down on the sofa, the baby in his arms.)

You should be ashamed of yourself, Terry, waking up a baby that's not even a year old! Really...

TERRY *(Flabbergasted, he goes up to the back of the armchair.):* But what is going on here, am I really in John Wallace's house? Where is Nicole?

JOHN: She went out to buy a few things.

TERRY: What things?

JOHN: It's none of your business.

TERRY *(Same acting.):* And where does this baby come from?

JOHN: What do you mean, where does she come from?

TERRY: Yes I am asking you. Where does she come from?

JOHN: You want to know where she comes from?

TERRY: Yes, if that doesn't bother you.
(He sits down in the armchair.)

JOHN *(Who apparently does not to want to answer the question.)*
And why would that bother me?

TERRY: Well me, I don't know?

JOHN *(Same acting.):* What do you mean, you don't know?

TERRY: What the hell is going on here. You kidnapped her?

JOHN: What?

TERRY: Okay, I get it, shit, I'm really stupid when I think about it! You kidnapped her, she's the daughter of the President of the Congo, or someplace like that, right John? Since when do you kidnap little Negresses? And how come I haven't been informed?

JOHN: She is not really a little Negress!

TERRY: I assure you it is a little Negress. Put on your glasses. Blacker than that does not exist.

JOHN: In any case, we did not kidnap her.

TERRY: You did not kidnap her?

JOHN: No!

TERRY: So, what are you doing with that, if you didn't kidnap it. Where did you find it?

JOHN: In a garbage can!

TERRY: In a garbage can? What do you mean, in a garbage can?

JOHN: Well, yes a garbage can. thje one that's in front of the house.

TERRY: Are you making a fool out of me?

JOHN (*Seriously.*): Not at all. People through away anything nowadays, throw a little baby girl in the garbage is proof enough that the word's gone crazy.

(*The baby laughs*) Look, she's laughing, you woke her up, and her, she's laughing!

TERRY: Holy shit, if only our friends could see you now, they too, would die laughing, believe me, to coin a phrase. Who the hell put this little negress in your garbage can?

JOHN: How can I know? People?

TERRY: Negroes?

JOHN: Or evil intentioned people.

TERRY: That what I said, those Negroes. The Negroes or some other sons of a bitches!

JOHN (*Impatient.*): You know Terry, you should come back later, there's been some great transformations made here lately and...

TERRY: Great transaformations?

JOHN: That's right, great transformations.

TERRY: What kind of transformations?

JOHN: No later than this evening,...

TERRY (*Insisting.*): What kind of great transformations?

JOHN: Your sister will explain.

TERRY: No you tell me. You had an argument, is that it? You had a big fight?

JOHN: On the contrary, on the contrary.

TERRY: How's that, on the contrary? What are you talking to me about?

JOHN: We had a big discussion this evening and we are taking new initiatives, we are starting all over again on a new basis, Terry, that's all.

TERRY: That's all? What kind of basis? What initiative?

JOHN: Your sister is an exceptional woman and I never realized it.

TERRY: What's going on? It has something to do with that little Negress? Is that it?

JOHN: Pretty much so. I think we could say that.

Nicole comes into the house.

NICOLE: Ah you're here, just at the right moment.

(She puts down a baby car-seat in the entrance.)

TERRY: Hi little sister! So just like that, you found a little Negresse in your garbage can?

NICOLE: Mind your own business. *(she goes towards the bedroom.)*

TERRY: What is this mess?

NICOLE: It's for my daughter.

(She goes off into the bedroom.)

TERRY: Your daughter? What daughter? Since when do you have a daughter?

NICOLE: Since three days, Terry!

TERRY *(Skeptical.):* Don't tell me you're talking about...that?

NICOLE *(Dryly.):* She has a name. Noemi, is what she's called. Alright! You're going to have to get used to it.

TERRY *(Towards John.):* What do you mean, get used to it? What's this bullshit, John?

JOHN: It's no bullshit...her name is Noemi

(She comes back and puts her coat in the entrance closet.)

NICOLE: And if that doesn't suit you, it's the same.

TERRY *(He looks at her surprised.):* You're going to keep this baby?

(They all look at each other.)

JOHN: And why not?

(Nicole looks at John)

NICOLE: Yes, why not, do you have something to say?

JOHN *(Towards Terry.):* Is that a problem for you?

TERRY *(He looks puzzled.):* Me?

(Silence.) - Me? I don't give a damn. But I think that it's going to be a problem for you. Because, up on top I do not know how they are going to take this thing.

JOHN: You should shut up, Terry!

NICOLE (*While going back to the bedroom.*) You don't have to go yelling it all around, Ted already knows, that enough already.

TERRY: You've told Ted?
(*She goes back into the bedroom.*)

NICOLE: It is not me who did, that you can believe.

JOHN: Anyway, not a word about this whole thing. It's well understood?

TERRY: Alright, I'm not an idiot! I don't feel like committing suicide by tell our buddies that you're raising a herd.
(*Nicole comes backing a rage*)

NICOLE: A what? - (*She grabs him by the collar of his shirt.*)
What did you say Terry? Take that back, right away!

JOHN (*He separates them.*): Come on, calm down! We calm down!
(*Terry seems to be impressed by his sister, who apparently has the upper hand on him. She goes back to the bedroom.*)

TERRY (*Stunned and upset.*): You're completely berserk, you old hag! She almost tore my shirt, a three hundred dollar shirt, you're really a nut-job, little sister!
(*Terry to John.*) - What's gotten into her?

JOHN: Sit down for two minute, here, have another drink. Calm down!
(*He serves Terry.*)

TERRY: What's going on in this joint? Have you all gone completely crazy, or what?

JOHN: Your sister has decided to adopt this little baby. I tried too talk her out of it, believe me.

TERRY (*Worried.*): Adopt a little negresse? It's completely crazy! We're going to get our balls cut off!

JOHN: Maybe so. Maybe so, if we don't do the right thing.

TERRY (*Same acting.*): Even the Zulus are goanna want to skin you alive. this storie's going to make hay in the newspapers. You better believe me, John. "Presumed head of the Ku Klux Klan and his wife adopt a black baby, after finding it in their garbage can." Never seen something like that before. We're going to have all the hardcore members of the movement on our ass. There's no escaping that.

JOHN: I know.

TERRY: We are dead, dude.

JOHN: Not unless we drop everything and get very far away from here.

TERRY (*Flabbergasted.*): You are ready to abandon everything?

JOHN: Yes I am ready.

TERRY: You can't.

JOHN: No one can stop me.

TERRY: You're dreaming. You're a leader. A mastermind. You'll never be able to leave. They will not let you do that. No matter where you go, they will find you! It's not as if you were an enemy, John, enemies, critics, inquisitors, they have millions in front of them every day. but a friend, John, a friend, a member, an insider, a leader on top of that, who betrays his own side, that is something else. It's a whole different game.

JOHN: I know, I know, but we are going to do what we have to do.

TERRY: Throw her out! Send her to Washington, to New York, or I don't know where. Her alone with the baby, they won't do anything to her.

JOHN: You know that I'm incapable of doing that. And then...

TERRY: And then, what?

JOHN (*Short pause*): I don't know...I...I think that I'm starting to soften a little...you know.

TERRY: No, I don't understand, explain to me.

JOHN: Lately I've been think about all of that...and...it's all become useless...I...I'm not as motivated as I used to be...I feel that...everything is falling apart Terry.
(*Short silence*)

TERRY: What are you trying to say? go ahead I'm listening!

JOHN: The little baby opened her eyes, and I...don't know much anymore what to think, you understand? (*Short silence*) - I don't know how all of this happened. Today, I'm asking myself all kinds of questions...

TERRY: Questions?

JOHN: Your sister made me think things over, something happened in my head...and...I am not a kid anymore, and...

TERRY (*Interrupting*): What are you taling about? You got ber4ainwashed, or what? It's Nicole who stuffed your head, is that it? You're going straight up shit's creek, John!

JOHN: I'm fed up. I've had enough!

TERRY: I don't underdstand anything. I do not understand. You are going to throw you're whole life away for a little Negress?

JOHN: I'm putting an end to all of this, Terry, all of this bullshit! it's not only the kid, it does't mean anything to me any more...Nicle is right, we talked it over all night long...

TERRY (*Stupified*): Wooah!

JOHN: You have to start by learning, Terry.

TERRY: Learning? Learning what?

JOHN: Learning...that is the key.

TERRY: The key? The key to what?

JOHN...The key to it all...to learn to love one another. learn to love one another for the right rea-

sons.

TERRY: For the right reasons?

JOHN: Yes Terry, and for the right reasons...and to put yourself in the other's place.

TERRY: Put yourself in the other's place ?

JOHN (*Very seriously.*): Yeah!...Yes...I swear that it makes you think. If we learn to put ourselves in the other one's place, really in his place, under his skin, in his soul, feel his joy, his pains, the way we feel our own, we'd live... maybe...in another world, Terry. Yes, but we never learned to put ourselves in the place of others. We are empty of the others conscience. That is our tragedy. It is all about that, the discussion I had with your sister last night.

TERRY (*Stunned*): Holy shit!
(*Short silence and they look at each other.*)

JOHN: We are going to leave this house, leave this country. If you want you can come with us.

TERRY: That's nice, that.

JOHN: I have enough money on the side to live anywhere in the world, up into the end of our days.

TERRY: Dead, we won't need any money, John.

JOHN; the world is big, Terry, it's not that easy to find anyone.

TERRY: What if I, I don't feel like leaving?

JOHN: There is no hope left here.

TERRY: Speak for yourself. I'm just fine here. It is here my country. The most beautiful place in the world.

JOHN: If that's the way you want it. It's you're right,if you don't want to leave you can have the house, it's yours.

TERRY (*Sarcastic.*): That's nice, that.

NICOLE (*She come back out of the bedroom.*): Terry, you're going to mind the baby,do you hear me?

(*Towards John.*) - Here, I took the picture. (*She hands him the camera.*)

JOHN: You took several?

NICOLE: It's done I told you. (*Towards Terry.*) We can trust you,Terry?

TERRY: About what?

NICOLE: Just for enough time to go and have few papers done for the baby. I can count on you?

TERRY: Don't you think that you're exaggerating, little sister?

NICOLE: It will only take one hour. She's sleeping, you only have to wait.

TERRY: And if somebody comes?
(*She's going ton put on her coat*)

NICOLE: Nobody will come. You do not open the door. Don't let anybody into the house. That's all I ask you.

TERRY: It's already too much.

NICOLE: You understand Terry? When I say nobody, it's nobody! Okay?

TERRY: I'm not deaf?

JOHN: We're counting on you.

TERRY: Yes, okay!
(John gets up goes to the closet and gets his jacket.)

NICOLE: Close and lock the door behind us.
(She leaves)

TERRY: And how! And most of all, come back as quick as you can. Okay?

JOHN: We make a quick round trip.
(He leaves too...Terry looks their way, looking deceived and disappointed.)

LIGHTS OFF

Faint lights, Terry is sleeping, he's snoring. A glass and a bottle of whiskey is on the floor with little mianature cars which indicates that Terry played with them and that a lot of time has passed by. Outside it is almost nightfall. After a moment we hear a rock break a window. Terry is jolted awake. He ducks not to be seen from the outside.

VOICE OUTSIDE: Hey, Terry, we know you're inside there, son. Come out of there and everything will go alright. You hear? This is Ted out here. Come out with the baby. Just a little routine control, Terry.
(Someone tries to open the door that is locked...a short pause.)

Open that god damned door!

(Terry seems panicky, he is looking towards the bedroom door and seems to be praying so that the baby would not wake up.)

TED'S VOICE: You're wrong my little buddy, to take risks for them. You are really making a very big mistake, you know why? Because, John and Nicole won't be coming home...they had a little accident.
(Behind Ted we hear snickering... A short wait...as if Ted was waiting for a reaction.)

I don't know how or why but while leaving their appointment their car went on fire, Terry, like a

real moving torch. Nothing but a cloud of ashes. it's stupid, isn't that so? A bunch of Negros, without a doubt.

(We hear snickering behind Sheriff Ted...short pause.)

That's what happens when you want to act like nasty people, son.(Short silence.)

TED'S VOICE: Take a look out the window. *(Light silence. Ted's voice... seems to be talking to a colleague, Terry hides away from the window away. Slight pause.)*

OTHER VOICE (To Ted.): I don't see anything. I think he went out for a while. We can wait for him inside, until he comes back, Chief.

TED'S VOICE: No, there's too many people walking around here.
(The sound of footsteps leaving.)

We'll come back a little bit later, in the dark all cats are gray. I want to see you here in an hour, and don't forget to pick up Broocken on the way over.

OTHER VOICE: Alright, chief, but what if he isn't there?

TED'S VOICE: Then, we'll come back tomorrow morning.

OTHER VOICE: Tomorrow morning,? But he won't be there anymore tomorrow morning, Chief.

TED'S VOICE: Not if we come at the break of day, Nick.

NICK'S VOICE: And what if he's already gone?

TED'S VOICE: Then you'll have to find him for me somewhere else.

NICK'S VOICE: Yes Chief, I 'll find him, I will find him!

TED'S VOICE (Leaving): I really count on that, Nick, I really count on that.

Everyone starts to leave, Terry doesn't move, he looks panic stricken. After a while we hear the baby crying, Terry gets up and cautiously looks out the window. The way he reacts, shows that he understands that they have left. He gently wipes his frown as if he had sweated. We hear the baby crying, he hurries to the bar, serves himself a scotch and and downs it "bottoms up", then he stands immobile for a moment, as if he was thinking of what he was going to do...the babies crying is louder and louder and more and more desperate.

He goes into the bathroom and comes out with a traveling bag, he empties the contents of the showcase where the collection of miniature cars are, plus those still on the floor, takes two small paintings that are on the wall, putss them in the bag with a few other trinkets. He gets his jacket and goes outside with the bag neglecting to close the door behind himself. We can hear the baby crying for a few moments.

LIGHTS OFF

Same lighting. A woman appears at the door, she is in a pitiful state, apparently slightly burnt and haggard, she is bleeding from a wound on her frown. We can hardly recognise Nicole, she comes in without closing the door behind herself.

NICOLE (*Panic-stricken.*): Terry!! Terry!! They killed John!! - (*Towards the kitchen.*)
Terry!! - (*She returns to the entrance door.*)

NICOLE: Terry, where are you?
(*She walks on broken glass, the baby is crying. She runs to the bedroom, when she gets there, we hear her crying from joy.*)

NICOLE'S VOICE: You're there my love!
(*The baby starts to cry.*)

Don't cry my angel! I came back to get you; those bastards killed your father and now they're after us! Don't cry my treasure. You're hungry, I know, I'm gonna to make you a nice little baby bottle. Yes were coming down.

(*She comes back with the baby. She goes to the telephone, picks up the telephone, dials a number, then shakes the phone as if the line wasn't responding, she presses on the buttons and realizes that there's no dial tone. She hangs up annoyed. She sits down on the sofa with the baby in her arms.*)

We'll leave at dawn, mamma Nicole is so tired. So tired! We're going to stay here tonight, and if one of those dirty bums shows the point of their nose, I have what I need to welcome them, believe me, my little baby. Believe me mamma Nicole is won't let them do a thing!

(*She goes to the front door before calling outside.*)

Terry?! Where are you damn it...Terry?!

(*The baby starts crying again, then going towards the kitchen.*)

Let's go make that baby bottle.

NICOLE'S VOICE (*She talks very quickly.*)

Don't worry, honey, mamma Nicole will never leave you, never, you hear, tomorrow morning we're going to leave this place and never coming back, we're going to Saint Louis, my sweetheart. Far away from here. Mamma Nicole will find a job over there, anything. Don't you worry about that, honey. Mamma Nicole knows how to, do everything, meanwhile don't be afraid, believe me nobody will come and bother you here. (*Laughs of the baby.*)

NICOLE: Yes, my angel! *(After a musical interlude, she comes back with the baby into the living room.)*

NICOLE: It's horrible, sweetheart, John exploded like a watermelon, yep, a watermelon, I never saw that before. They were shooting at us, those bastards were shooting at us, they were shooting at us like rabbits. I didn't have the time to see who it was. John exploded and then there was this fire, the heat was horrible, after that I don't remember anything, I was head over heels in a ditch, and then I heard an enormous explosion, boom!, boom!, boom!! Lights everywhere, like a fire-work display, it was magnificent to see, it was fantastic, after that I guess I fell asleep. When I woke up I went on to the road. Then I crossed this truck driver. Well I think he was a truck driver, he said "you look shocked" he said. - *(As if she was sitting next to him she looks at him.)* No I'm not shocked, what makes you say that? With all that I've seen in my life, I swear to you there is plenty to be shocked about, dear sir. And to end it all my husband explodes ten inches away from me, yes I find that shocking, Sir! Very shocking. Did you ever see someone explode? It is very impressing, believe me.

All of those guys shooting all over th place. I'll get over it, I'll get over it, I just need a little bit of time. And then I have my little girl who's waiting for me, you understand. my sweet little baby counts on me, I'm going to hve to take care of her, you see? I've got enough there to change my state of mind. But to do that I really have to get back on my feet, right away.

I know that you can understand that. no sir I cannot I have so much to do, I don't have time to be in shock, dear Sir, don't have the time. Then he made me get out of the truck, pretty fast I don't think that he believed my story; I continued on foot, I walked for a long time and I ended up finding the house. Can you imagine honey? And now I am here. I am here with you and we're going to leave. We're going to ship off, put a final cross on this Godforsaken place! We are going to leave sweetheart, leave. We'll be better off somewhere else, here there's nothing left to do, there's nothing left to do, honey, except to have problems. Poor John. I wonder where he went that idiot? Terry!

(She screams one last time.)

Terry! Maybe before we leave we'll hear from him. A good for nothing. Where have you gone my good man, out again with one of your sluts. You have a wife my good man, don't you forget it, if you wnt to go somewhere else, there are hookers for that, the streets are filled with them. And the advantage with them is it only lasts a few minutes, not all night long, yes, the streets are filled with them, you got to stop Terry, you got to stop with those whores that shake their asses and make you shoot your load. No, no Terry, that's not worth a dime, dear buddy.

Come on honey we're going to have a good night's sleep tomorrow's another day.

(She gets up and goes to the bedroom, we hear the baby laugh.)

NICOLE'S VOICE: Yes honey. Tomorrow I'll dress you with the last of Sylvia's clothes. Yes, laugh sweetheart, laugh and make fun of all of those ugly little pigs. They're not worth a dime, my

baby, not worth a dime.! All the same. nothing but a liver in their chest that doesn't even beat!

Ending theme music.

LIGHTS OFF
THE END