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### The role of Nina in Diana Son's Satellites: a production thesis in acting

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THE ROLE OF NINA IN DIANA SON'S *SATELLITES*:  
A PRODUCTION THESIS IN ACTING

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Fine Arts

in

The Department of Theatre

by  
Jessica Wu  
B.A., Western Washington University, 2005  
May 2009

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## CAST AND CREW CREDITS

SATELLITES was produced by Swine Palace (Michael Tick, Artistic Director; Kristin Sosnowsky, Managing Director) in Baton Rouge, opening on February 6, 2009. It was directed by Michael Tick; the set design was by John Raley; the costume design was by Robin McGee; the lighting design was by Ken White; the sound design was by E.J. Cho; the production stage manager was Karli Henderson; the assistant stage manager was Bradley Sanchez; and assistant directors were Femi Euba and Ailene Stokes.

NINA.....Jessica Wu

MILES.....Yohance Myles

ERIC..... Nick Rhoton, Joshua Ryan Dawes (understudy)

KIT.....Michele Guidry, Natalie Mejer (understudy)

MRS. CHAE.....Virginia Wing

REGGIE.....James Edward Lee

WALTER.....Kenneth De Abrew

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the role of Nina in Swine Palace's 2009 production of Diana Son's *Satellites*. The play investigates themes dealing with interracial relationships, major life transitions, and parenthood. Included in this study are a character autobiography written from the actor's interpretation of the role, the actor's journal, and a detailed account of the in rehearsal and performance process. In addition, this study includes production photos, reviews, a working copy of the script scored for subtext/inner life, objectives, and tactics, and an interview with the playwright.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores my experiences developing the role of Nina in the Swine Palace production of Diana Son's *Satellites*. Nina and Miles are an interracial couple (Nina, a Korean American, and Miles, an African American raised by white parents) who have recently had their first baby, Hannah. When the play opens, Nina and Miles are moving out of their Manhattan apartment to the security of a brownstone, located in a gentrifying Brooklyn neighborhood. Soon after they move, reality sets in when a rock is thrown through their window and shatters the comfort zones of their new home. As a result, both characters are forced to face their personal histories and the contrasts they feel because of their racial identities. As the play develops, we see Nina and Miles struggle to hold on to their ideas of "family." My exploration of the role of Nina addresses my own personal experiences as an Asian American raised in the Pacific Northwest, and how Nina's stories and my own at times intersect. As such, my interpretation of Nina is both factual and fictional.

*Satellites* opened in Baton Rouge on February 6, 2009, for a three-week run. The cast included Yohance Myles as Miles; Michele Guidry as Kit; Nick Rhoton as Eric; Virginia Wing as Mrs. Chae; James Edward Lee as Reggie; and Kenneth De Abrew as Walter.

*Satellites* premiered at the Public Theatre in New York on June 18, 2006. Ben Brantly, *The New York Times*' chief theatre reviewer, described it as a "tough-minded, softhearted and very likable new play...[with] characters [who] exist in a convincing state of explosive prickliness throughout." Michael Greif, who also helped bring Son's *Stop Kiss* into fruition also at the Public Theatre, directed the production starring Sandra Oh and Kevin Carrol in the roles of Nina and Miles (both of whom had also appeared in the Public Theatre's production of *Stop Kiss*). Other cast members included Clarke Thorell, Johanna Day, Satya Lee, Ron Cephas Jones, and Ron Brice. The set was designed by Mark Wendland; costumes designed by Miranda

Hoffman; sound effects designed by Walter Trarbach and Tony Smolenski IV; music composed by Michael Friedman; and lighting designed by Kenneth Posner.<sup>1</sup>

Son, a Korean American, was born and raised in Dover, Delaware. She attended New York University, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Dramatic writing. In addition to her wildly popular *Stop Kiss*, she has written *R.A.W ('Cause I'm a Woman)*. She is currently working in Los Angeles as a writer and as an Executive Producer for the TV drama, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*.

In an online article from *Theatre Mania*, columnist Dan Bacalzo interviewed Son shortly after the New York production of *Satellites* opened. Son recounts:

Sandra [Oh] told me, 'I think you've been surprised by how single-mindedly devoted to your son you've been... When you're in a rehearsal room with a play, you love every minute of it. I think that must feel threatening to the mother in you because, since you had your son, you haven't really let anything compete with that.' I felt very liberated; no one had said that to me before. So, I thought maybe I should write a play about how a working mother tries to engage in her work while remaining devoted to her child. (Bacalzo)

I also had the opportunity to interview Diana Son in New York during the 2008 winter holidays. We met at Le Pain Quotidian Bakery and Cafe on Broadway and 11<sup>th</sup> on December 31, where we discussed her process in creating *Satellites*, especially the roles of Nina and Miles:

I guess I was telling [Sandra Oh] that for the first time I was feeling like I was not ready to commit myself to a new play because it's a big commitment to write a play. For me, it's really like having a relationship, and so when my son was so young, I felt like I couldn't really start and develop a relationship with somebody else. Because the commitment isn't just the writing time— it's your walking around with what's in your head, you know? And I remember Sandra said that it had surprised her how sort of single-mindedly devoted I had become to my son. (Son, Dec. 31, 2008)

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<sup>1</sup> The only other professional production of *Satellites* was performed at the Aurora Theatre in Berkeley, California, January 6 –March 2, 2008. Julie Oda played Nina, and Michael Gene Sullivan performed the role of Miles.



During the interview, Son clarified that Nina was by no means autobiographical, but that she did share similar qualities with her. She also stressed that *Satellites* wasn't a play about racism. However, it seemed to me somewhat difficult to neglect that racism wasn't a part of both Nina and Miles' environment, as Son explains:

[Miles is] an American equivalent to Nina—which is somebody who's also completely disconnected from their ethnic legacy... because when you have a child you totally start thinking about: what am I passing on? Right? I think both of them feel inadequate. They both feel like "I don't have anything in my history that I can pass on to my child." I thought of Nina and Miles as very much together... [It] was how they related to each other. (Son, Dec. 31, 2008)

*Satellites* is a story about a couple detached from their cultural roots. Both Nina and Miles grapple with their past in order to make sense of the future they want for their baby. Nina tries to contact something long forgotten about her Korean heritage, and Miles tries to get in touch with a Black culture that he is completely removed from. This creates an interesting dynamic in their relationship, because historically there have been tensions between the Black and Korean communities in New York, which Son addressed in our interview:

I cannot write about that conflict with knowledge since I didn't grow up with it. I only became aware of it... So I didn't feel like I could write about it with authority, really. It also pains me and I feel like if I read about it then I would have to write about it, and [racism] would have to be what the play was about. (Son, Dec 31, 2008)

In an effort to understand what they are passing on to their baby daughter, Nina looks to Mrs. Chae, an older Korean woman hired as their nanny; Miles looks to Reggie, an older Black neighbor. The convention of having Mrs. Chae and Reggie in the play is explained by Son:

These two characters... actively [impose] on Nina and Miles in every sense of, "oh this is how you would do things," or "this is what I would assume from you based on what we share." And Nina and Miles have to react to that by wanting to stay connected... But confronted with this traditional expectation I think

leaves them [feeling] very alienated—and also inadequate. I'm sure that you've even experienced this—you can reject the traditional assumptions people make of you, and yet still at the same time feel like you're not living up to something. (Son, Dec. 31, 2008)

That Son should bring up this cultural dilemma is significant for this is something that I share with the playwright, which makes the role of Nina so much more significant for me to explore. This thesis is a personal exploration of my Asian American identity and how these experiences help me create the role of Nina.

## INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT

December 31, 2008

New York, NY

**Wu:** So what was the experience like creating the character of Nina, and how much of that is autobiographical?

**Son:** Well, there was a little bit of a story that when I was in Los Angeles for work, and when my oldest son was about two or three, I met up with my friend, Sandra Oh, who was filming *Sideways*. I was there on work. I worked for *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* for five years, and I guess I was telling her that for the first time I was feeling like I was not ready to commit myself to a new play because it's a big commitment to write a play. For me, it's really like having a relationship, and so when my son was so young, I felt like I couldn't really start and develop a relationship with somebody else. Because the commitment isn't just the writing time—it's your walking around with what's in your head, you know? And I remember Sandra said that it had surprised her how sort of single-mindedly devoted I had become to my son. After he was born, she was, you know...she thought of me as someone who was so engaged in my work and that I had put so much of myself through my work. I love the process. I love the personal. I love the tech, everything, you know? I love the relationship with the actors. I have a good relationship with a number of actors—it's always a very positive process for me. It's not like I needed to take a break.

I had my son shortly...I got pregnant a year after *Stop Kiss*, and during that year I started working for TV. So I didn't start another play. It's like I did *Stop Kiss*, I worked for a TV show, and then I got pregnant, and then I had the baby and didn't write a play for three years. Then Sandra said *this* and I felt very liberated. I felt a kind of elation that one feels when somebody is recognizing you, and somebody really sees you. I thought: you know what? I do love to be

engaged. As a playwright, I do love the process and I had really been just focusing on my son. I found it just exciting, and...I just thought that set me in motion. And I had this basic idea anyways—for *Satellites*—the idea of this couple moving into a gentrified neighborhood. So I just started.

I can't think of Nina as being autobiographical because I don't think I could have written a word if I ever thought I was writing myself. I mean Nina and I share some qualities, like, you know I am disconnected from my Korean background in a very literal way that is similar to Nina. You know I don't speak it. My parents—we didn't celebrate Korean holidays, and we didn't take off our shoes when we walked into the house. My mom would come home from work and make chicken casserole, spaghetti and meatballs, and fried chicken. Then when my dad would come home from work, she would make Korean food for her and my dad. So Nina and I definitely share that.

**Wu:** So she kept the Korean side separate from how she wanted to raise her children?

**Son:** It was very conscious and so Nina and I had that in common. But you know, Miles—I created Miles entirely. Did I mention [that] my husband is not actually African American? He's not a reluctant father. He's home with the kids while I'm out...while I'm here. What I wanted [for Miles] was, I think, an American equivalent to Nina—which is somebody who's also completely disconnected from their ethnic legacy...because when you have a child you totally start thinking about: what am I passing on? Right?

I think both of them feel inadequate. They both feel like "I don't have anything in my history that I can pass on to my child." So, how do I try to reconnect with my history, or what can I do, right? So that was my gift to those two characters. I thought of Nina and Miles as very much together. You know what I mean, right? I know you're more interested in Nina, but it was how they related to each other.

**Wu:** Well, that brings me to my next question. Why did you specifically choose the racial relationships that you had in the play?

**Son:** Because Mile's character—he's American. I wanted him to be American and yet [be] disconnected from his heritage. I didn't want it to be another identifiably ethnic heritage, so you know, I chose him to be African American.

**Wu:** So then I guess having characters like Mrs. Chae and Reggie was to remind them of where they're supposed to be coming from?

**Son:** Yeah. They're kind of stereotypical or traditional. Both Mrs. Chae and Reggie represent a traditional character. I wanted these two characters to actively [impose] on Nina and Miles in every sense of, "oh this is how you would do things," or "this is what I would assume from you based on what we share." And Nina and Miles have to react to that by wanting to stay connected. In some way, even Miles wants to be connected to Reggie. But Nina certainly wants to connect to Mrs. Chae, obviously. But confronted with this traditional expectation I think leaves them [feeling] very alienated—and also inadequate. I'm sure that you've even experienced this. You can reject the traditional assumptions people make of you, and yet still at the same time feel like you're not living up to something.

**Wu:** Why did you make the choice to pair Nina, a Korean American, with a Black American?

**Son:** Well, you know, I wanted them to live in a gentrifying neighborhood, which in most cases right now is Brooklyn—you know it's traditionally African American neighborhoods that are being colonized by affluent middle-class white—mostly white, but also I do see a number of Asian Americans. There are certain mixed-race couples like myself and my husband, and I thought that would be potent. Certainly very helpful for Miles' character because, you know, he's thinking: "Ok, here I am, for the first time, living in a black neighborhood as a black man, but people are assuming things about the way I was raised—who I am now, and the culture that I

come from—based on the fact that I’m black, but actually I grew up in a white environment.” So this is in fact a very alien experience for Miles. I wanted him to have something to be actively in conflict with.

I’ll tell you the truth. It was really more in service with Miles than it was for Nina. I just chose not to (in the play) dig up the history of conflict between Asian Americans and African Americans. I mean, there’s something unstated in Nina’s background. There’s a kind of glancing reference to it at the end where she’s furious at Mrs. Chae, and she says “my mother was never like that.” I think that’s something that I probably assumed about Nina’s background that I didn’t specifically state—which was part of *my* background.

I grew up in Dover, Delaware. I grew up in a very mixed neighborhood. It was probably, I’d say 40% black and 60% white. My first friends were black, and my teachers and the administrators in my school...the assistant vice principal and people in positions of power in my childhood were black. So my family never experienced that sort of, “ooh, Blacks and Asians don’t get along,” which is not to say that I wouldn’t get teased sometimes at the mall. But I would more likely be teased by white red-necks than I would by African Americans. But for me, I cannot write about that conflict with knowledge since I didn’t grow up with it. I only became aware of it (tensions between Blacks and Koreans) after I came to New York and read about the LA riots. So I didn’t feel like I could write about it with authority, really. It also pains me and I feel like if I read about it then I would have to write about it, and [racism] would have to be what the play was about. It feels too deep and complicated to be *a* story line, not *the* story line.

**Wu:** So what would you consider *the* story line?

**Son:** Gifted parents disconnected from their roots, trying to figure out what it is that they can pass on of value to their child. And confronting their feelings of inadequateness—deficiency.

**Wu:** And what do you think Nina’s journey is?

**Son:** Well, in having Mrs. Chae she is trying—she is groping, really...when you have a baby...my mother had a stroke when I was 18...so she was severely disabled for most of my life...and died recently...but, one unexpected need I had after I had my son, was I wanted someone to take care of me. This is the hardest. This is the most physically demanding...this is the most physically, emotionally, psychologically demanding experience I've *ever* had in my life. I am literally waking up every hour and a half to nurse my baby. He nurses from half an hour to an hour. He is literally *draining* me. I'm psychotically sleep deprived, physically drained, and I'm in love with my baby and I want to give him—oh, he can have it all! But I have to feel like I don't have anything left to give, and you really want your mommy. You know, you really want somebody who's going to sweep in and say, "I'll take the baby. You, take a nap. And I'll cook dinner, and if you feel like you're gonna cry, because it's so much, and you're so overwhelmed... you can lie in my lap." And if you're a mother, you just get like, "oh, I have these feelings, and there's nobody to hear me," then you kind of need your husband. Because you know, your husband's your partner, and what you really want is somebody who is a power, who has a power over you...what was the question...? Mrs. Chae? Oh! Nina's journey...yes, so she tries to basically hire her mother, and I think what she finds out in the end is you can't!

Nobody [can] fulfill the role of mother. In fact, you know your mother can't even fulfill the role of mother. I mean, I didn't have my mother around doing those things, but people who did have their mom around—their mothers would drive them crazy! Because at the same time they want their mommy to do those things they also feel like, "I'm not a baby! I'm—look at me, I'm a mother! I can take care of my[self]!" So, it's kind of an impossible need. I suppose some women actually do have really great experience with this. Their mom comes, they take care of them, and they leave. But even my mother-in-law was totally willing to do all of that stuff, and I felt like "no, this is my experience. I'm becoming a mother now." You know what I mean?

“This is about me being able to do all those things, thank you...but I don’t need you.” But she would have probably moved in and done nothing.

It is an impossible role to fill though, that perfect mother who is going to mother you as you become a mother. And so, if you add into Nina’s association of her mother being this sort of dispenser of her Korean heritage, you know, she hires Mrs. Chae to do that. To speak Korean to the baby and to cook Korean food for them and all this stuff, only to discover that Mrs. Chae is human and has flaws that she finds intolerable—as she would have with her own ethnic mother. I mean, Mrs. Chae does have that sort of like, “Oh! But Miles, he’s so clean,” which I think is a very typical Korean assumption.

**Wu:** Is there a specific reason why Nina only mentions her father once?

**Son:** I think that he’s around. I mean, occasionally dad’s are bearers of history. My husband’s father was a very involved father, but I think if he asked him right now, “Oh gosh dad, was I a picky eater?” He wouldn’t know! You know what I mean? I really think the mom, in most cases, the mom is the font of history—she is the memory.

**Wu:** So what was the experience then, for yourself, being a new mother and trying to be a working professional at the same time?

**Son:** It was very hard with my oldest son, but it’s much easier with the three of them. My twins are still tiny; they’re two. I’m just more comfortable with it. I mean, my oldest is almost 8. I’m sort of more comfortable. They’ll be fine. I’m still very involved. Music class with them, you know, and all this stuff, but also I still work. I mean, I am the primary bread winner in my family. My husband’s more of a house husband. Different than Miles—it’s by choice—so he’s pretty confident and comfortable in that role. I’m confident in my role because I manage to also spend a lot of time with the kids.

**Wu:** What would Nina consider herself? A mother or a working professional?



**Son:** I would think of Nina as a typical working mom, really. Except that by putting her office in her house, we get to see more clearly or to dramatize more easily, the conflict of being a mother and a working professional. I mean every mom that I know—that doesn't stay at home—that wants to spend time with their kids [has] to go to work. They find expression through their work; find creativity through their work, but want to be out of there the minute they can. Doesn't want to fucking have to go to dinner Saturday night with their clients from out of town; doesn't want to work past five. Wants to get home in time to catch the kids a good two or three hours before they go to bed, and have dinner with the kids, and do the homework, and do the bedtime thing, you know?

So, there is no balance, you just have to decide whether you're going to evaluate it on a day-to-day balance. Ok, I did it. Today I did it. I took my kids to swimming class, then I went to work, then I came home in time to put them to bed. Great! I did it all. Or, you know, you're going to have one of those days where you're on deadline or whatever, and you're gone from the house from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., and you didn't get to see your kids at all. You're just going to have to write it off. Ok, that was today, you know. And then next week I'm going to take a day off and I'm going spend it all with the kids. You know what I mean? So you're never really...you're never balancing the scales, you're just...keeping the balls in the air.

**Wu:** How much did Sandra Oh help to contribute to the character in the process?

**Son:** She thought a lot about her sister. She has an older sister who has two kids. She had been very close with her sister and her nieces; she basically thought she was channeling Grace. A lot of what I wrote about Nina she saw played out as her sister. I assumed basically that anybody who was a working mom could relate to Nina, whether as an actor or as an audience member. But, I mean it was a very collaborative process...I've worked with Sandra before. I've worked with Kevin Carroll before, who played Miles; both were in *Stop Kiss*. Johanna Day, who played

Kit was with us through many workshops of the play, and Michael Gripe, the director, I've worked with before.

So...it was a really great creative, open process. I was always very excited to hear when an actor would chime in with, "Oh gosh! I could totally relate to that, or I totally observe that in my own family, and this is what happened." So that that's much easier for me to think, "Yes! Great! Bring that to it." Or you know I might even change a line or something to make that be part of the character's experience. Because, like I said, I can't think that [up] by myself. But I do think of the character as my creation. I really think [Nina] is a yummy role. Aside from her ethnicity, [she] thinks: "how do I be a working mom, and a loving and involved mother, but also, somebody who not only needs to work because that's where I find myself creatively." But also, in Nina's structure, you know she's thinking, "I also have the *burden* of being the primary bread winner." I also chose that, again, not for autobiographical reasons, because at the time I was writing *Satellites*, my husband was working full-time. It's a very modern situation. I do try to write really modern things.

**Wu:** Getting to see [interracial couples, especially] Asian Americans in this light will be very interesting [for our audiences], because they haven't really been exposed to that sort of diversity.

**Son:** I take that for granted! I take the fact that Nina is Korean American and her husband is African American, and that race is not an issue in their relationship. I take that for granted. I think certainly, a part of their attraction must have been a sense of alienation from the culture that their faces are expressions of, but also, I think they could relate to each other as people of color. I think that they could relate to each other as people who could make comments about other Asian Americans when Nina was around, because they thought, "oh, I'm not talking about you." And I'm sure that Miles had that same experience, too.

So, I think that for me their ethnicities and their disconnection from their histories propelled them together, rather than brought any turmoil to their courtship. Really, I am much more interested in telling stories in which the fact that one character comes from this—an Asian American background, and another character has an African American background—that *that* becomes something they have in common, not in conflict.

## NINA'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I am a first generation born Korean American. My parents probably came with the influx of Korean immigrants in pursuit of higher education in the mid-1960s. They most likely met at some Asian International Student Club mixer, where they found themselves along with a handful of other Korean students, forming their own little friend base because they had a common language and culture that they shared. After my parents completed their education, my father sought his career in something practical that employed, and had opportunities for promotion; perhaps engineering, accounting, or dentistry. My mother pursued something softer such as textile design, nursing, or a career requiring client (or customer) support. Eventually, they settled down to become an American family, setting up camp somewhere in the Northeast in some small, middle-class suburb of Pittsburgh or Philadelphia.

My parents worked through hard times to make sure our family would never go without, and they raised their only daughter to appreciate the value of money. We lived a very comfortable, middle-class, suburban life from their careful savings. I received a strong education—private schools up until high school. If there was one thing my parents *did* spend their money on, it was my education. They supported me through Columbia, where I received my Bachelors in Architecture, and where I later obtained a scholarship for the Master of Architectural Design Program, class of 2005.

Since my parents moved to this country for their own education (something I don't think they would have easily obtained had they stayed in Korea), they always stressed the importance of a good education. Although their plans for my education were well intended, one thing I don't think they realized is that they encouraged me to attend schools that were primarily upper class. As such, there was very little diversity with the majority of the student body being suburban white kids. In my junior high school, there were two other ethnic students in my class, one of

them a Filipino boy named Bayani. I was the only Korean American. In my high school, there was even less diversity, and by the time I was a senior, I was the only Asian girl. As I grew older, I perceived that others were noticing more differences between me and them. I didn't understand it, because I ate the same things, enjoyed the same sports, watched the same TV, and received the same education. In my mind, I felt and acted like everyone else, but somehow I was aware that I was different, even if I didn't always feel it. At Missy Townsend's eighth birthday party, all the girls received sparkly pink sunglasses as party favors. They wore them all day, but I couldn't get mine to stay on my face because my nose wasn't pointed enough, so they slipped down. I ended up walking away from that party with the boys' favor: a fake mustache. It's not that these kids were cruel, or made a point to humiliate me—although I would later learn that some did behind my back. It was the little things that set me apart from the others that made me conscious of my differences at a young age.

I never had to endure the degree of racism that my parents' generation had, but the kids I grew up with found their own way to make fun of me. Whether it was the slant in my eyes or my choppy, wiry hair, they made jokes and sang leering songs. They even drew caricatures of what I looked like to them. The kids that picked on me thought they were so clever, but they never knew the extent of the damage they caused. They would egg each other on, yet say that they were my friends. Not wanting to be excluded anymore, I eventually learned to laugh along with them. I made fun of what I was by laughing at their jokes with them. Eventually, I developed a sordid brand of humor towards myself.

For many years, I blamed my parents for what I was—how others saw me. For example, the boys that I dated in high school were more attracted to the idea of *what* I was, rather than *who* I was. They had this overly sexualized idea about dating an Asian female, and the expectation for me to fulfill all the traits that stereotype entailed was all they wanted. My mother

had always told me to lower my voice, or to smile sweetly so that people would think that I was pleasant. She taught me how to stand in a certain way so that I would appear more attractive. She had raised me in the same way that she had been raised in her own mother's house, in a time and place where the women really were expected to act that way. However, I always felt that I had to adhere to those rules as an American. I did not feel exotic, demure, rare, or submissive, like a delicate Asian blossom. I hated being trapped in that stereotype. As I grew older, I began to recognize that she was raising me to become what society had expected me to become.

After a while I revolted against my cultural expectations. I began to take on an aggressive persona as a way to test my boyfriends' attraction to me. In the end, I'd scare them away mostly because they couldn't handle me. I'd act the complete opposite of what they expected of me just to prove a point. I'd belch, slouch, laugh loudly, say profanities, scrape my knees, tell offensive jokes...pretty much act as unabashedly unladylike as possible. I strove to become the anti-Asian female. Perhaps the reason I've become such a blatantly crass and outspoken person because of that expectation. Also, I'm highly competitive, and want people to know that I'm not weak, but capable, aggressive, and confident.

Miles was the only person who stuck by me, seeing past all of my weaknesses. He knew the pain that getting labeled leaves you with. I think my mother saw that in him, and eventually appreciated who he had become for me. My mother always spoke highly of him, even though my father merely grunted his displeasure at my choice, he knew he had no say in the matter. If I wasn't going to marry a Korean man, then he might approve of a man with any Asian background, or a Caucasian, but certainly not a Black man. Unfortunately my father was one of those Korean immigrants that could not see past color. At least he'd never admit to it. He tolerated my choice to be with Miles for my sake and for my mother's sake. However, as Miles and I grew closer, my father grew to appreciate Miles on his own terms.

My mother was always so kind and smart. She understood my struggles with my peers and tried to help me overcome them as much as she could. She wanted me to live the American dream—and with Miles she saw that he could take me there. He was respectable towards my parents, and I was in love with him for that. Many times I'd bring a guy home and he'd feel completely alienated by the cultural strangeness of a Korean American home, but Miles accepted everything we threw at him. He even tried kimchee when my mother offered it to him. He was always so eager to immerse himself into who I was, and where I came from. He was there for me, especially when my mother died in 1999 after a short battle with breast cancer. My father was devastated. After my mother's death, he stopped being as involved in my life as he had been when she was around. Perhaps having me around only reminded him of the wife he lost. He became distant and strange—kind of like an uncle. He remarried a white woman from Chicago in 2004, and eventually moved over there to be with his new family. Luckily I had Miles to see me through those times, especially when we got closer to having the baby. I missed my mom so much—probably more than I had ever missed anyone in my life. I had so many questions for her because I didn't know what to expect, and I was scared. I wanted so badly to be able to pass on my Korean legacy to my daughter, but because I had denied my cultural traditions in my adolescence, by the time I reached adulthood I didn't have much of a perspective left. I wasn't going to get the answers from my father. He was hesitant to become involved in Hannah's life. Although I had hoped that as his first grandchild she'd grow on him, I don't think that he could see past the fact that she was Korean and Black. It hurt me to know that that was his reason for being distant, but deep down I knew that he had a fondness for her.

#### Nina's Relationship with Miles

What I love about Miles is the way he indulges in the moments when he can catch me at being wrong. I also adore the way he plays along with me, and the millions of inside jokes that

we share. He understands my moods, and he knows how to bypass them. He challenges my way of thinking, and he often lets me be right. He lets me win and he usually lets me have my way in the end. What's most important is that he needs me as much as I need him. We are each other's biggest fans. We know that together we're an unstoppable team that can overcome most adversity. We want to shine new insight on what it means to be an American. Together we are unstoppable.

I met Miles my junior year in a music appreciation class, winter of 1998. We were both twenty-two. We had just finished the first month of our senior year when I learned that my mother had died. Miles and I had only been together for about eight months. I had no clue how to handle my mother's death, and with no guidance from my father I felt helplessly inadequate. Miles understood, however, and instead of keeping his distance, he reached out for me even more than I could have imagined. He provided me with somewhere to belong, especially when I felt like I had no where else to turn to. He went from being just 'another guy' that I was dating to my best friend. He was someone who made me feel whole again. In short, he gave me the time, patience and the love that I needed.

Miles and I were still together by the time I graduated with my Bachelors degree in 2000, and so we decided to move into a Manhattan apartment near the university. Miles found a fairly steady job for a dot com company. I applied to Columbia's Graduate Architectural Design Program and was accepted for their 2005 class. Fortunately, I secured a decent scholarship, and Miles helped to take care of the rest. He helped me through graduate school and supported me until my practice took off. After graduate school, he proposed, and we were married shortly thereafter. We agreed that neither of us would give up our careers and that if we had a baby, we would make it work. There was nothing we hid from each other; no major decisions were made without consulting each other.



After we were married, we decided to stay in our small apartment, but when we found out that I was pregnant, we began looking for houses in the area. (We had agreed not to raise a baby in an apartment. Also, our one-bedroom apartment was not big enough for the two of us.) We resisted moving to Brooklyn for as long as we could, but in the end it really was the best deal that we could secure. We picked a brownstone in a neighborhood on Rosa Parks Boulevard that was in the early stages of gentrifying. Miles, who had scrimped and saved all his life, cashed in all his savings and stock options for our down payment. We wanted a house in a mostly black community so that Hannah wouldn't have to feel or experience the same brand of prejudice that Miles and I had to endure.

Hannah Rose was born on September 7, 2008. Bringing her into the world was the best thing that had ever happened to me. I had a small human being who depended on me one hundred percent, and I wanted to be able to pass our culture down to her. Whether she chose to reject this culture or not, I still wanted to provide her with a choice. If I failed her in any way, I would not forgive myself. The only other person who was capable of fulfilling all my expectations for my baby was my husband.

### Nina's Relationship with Kit

Kit and I met while I was an undergraduate student at Columbia. She was a graduate teaching assistant and I was a sophomore in an Introduction to Architectural Design class. She's the person who had inspired me to pursue architecture. We became good friends, and eventually she became like a sister to me. She gave me the guidance and the encouragement that I needed to succeed in a competitive department. She always challenged my competitive side, and by my senior year (her final year of graduate school) we became roommates. By that time Kit had shown me what an architectural graduate education would provide, I was already making plans to attend Columbia's Graduate Architectural Design Program. After I finished with my

Bachelor's Degree, I was hired (with Kit's assistance) as an intern at Kevin Kennon Architects, an up-and-coming firm in New York. For two years I did whatever my superiors, including Kit, asked of me. I'd assist them with projects, gather research, work on detailing models, cut shapes, get coffee, and other menial tasks. The important thing was that I was working alongside professionals who would later hire me once I completed the Columbia program.

While Miles was making his way in his career, Kit was always there for me, especially when he wasn't. Kit and I grew even closer after I joined Kevin Kennon Architects. We would find ourselves at the closest bar after work gossiping about office politics. After years of working together on small projects for the company where we grew tired of being the only women—doing twice the work and only getting half the recognition—we decided to join forces to become the new unstoppable female force in architectural design.

The jobs were slow at first, but in 2007 our practice began to really take off. At first we worked in the residential market doing mostly renovations to old houses, but eventually we moved to upscale residential work in historic neighborhoods. The projects came in steadily, and the money was good. However, we had always talked of making a name for ourselves in the high-end corporate and commercial market, so that is what we pursued. Eventually, Kit found the Barcelona Arts Center Design Competition in an architectural magazine. When she first brought it to me, I remember thinking, “this is it.” If we won, we could finally gain the reputation we'd need to succeed in the market we wanted. Not only would our ambitions transform into a beautiful building, but we'd also be able to secure offers to build schools, libraries, corporate buildings, and museums. We would immortalize our visions by changing the landscapes of cities one building at a time. But in order to win this competition, we needed to finish a model, and for us to do that, I needed to focus on the work. However, with the pressure

of my baby's constant need for my attention, I often lost focus, something Kit (still single at forty and childless) didn't understand.

I thought that I could manage the Manhattan/Brooklyn transition with no problem, but when we moved the office to my basement (so that I could continue to work after the baby arrived), I didn't expect that my focus and intentions would change so much. Although I wanted to aspire towards the architectural greatness that we had set out to become, I had more immediate needs to attend to. I sympathized with Kit, especially as she was about to turn forty, a very sensitive issue for her. I understood better than anyone why she needed to win at all costs. Kit looked at her work as if it was her children, and I understood. Architecture was her only outlet for expression, and this art center was her dream. I felt the same way too, but once I had my baby, the projects were not as important. I still loved designing, but I had different priorities. I looked to my work as a paycheck.

#### Nina's Relationship with Eric

There was always something about Miles' brother that unsettled me. His behavior reminded me of the boys who gave me hell in junior and senior high school. It was a lame excuse to hate him, but he reinforced my perceptions of him time and time again. He would boast about his highly elaborate encounters when traveling abroad, but we knew that he was exaggerating. He never took ownership for his actions and was always looking to place the blame. He was nothing but big talk, and rarely followed through with anything. His lying was rampant; even if someone depended on him for a favor, odds were he'd let them down. Once I caught him stealing out of my wallet. He didn't care about anyone unless he could get something out of them.

Eric was the reason I almost lost Miles once, and I would not let him come between us again. Although he claimed to want to start a business to help Miles find employment, all he

really cared about was himself. Often Miles would try and convince me that my instincts were wrong, but in the end, Eric would always prove my suspicions were correct. I wanted to like him for Hannah and Mile's sake, but that was not easy.

#### Nina's Relationship with Mrs. Chae

Mrs. Chae represents everything Korean that I had wanted to hand down to my daughter, but when I lost my mother in my early twenties, I stopped connecting with my Korean culture and traditions. I never fully grasped that side of me. When my father remarried a white woman, I felt like my Korean heritage had become increasingly absent. I had no one to learn from. Miles understood my struggles and did whatever he could to make me comfortable, but even he couldn't teach me what I needed to know.

After the baby was born, I was hormonal, emotional, and completely overwhelmed. There was so much pressure for me to deal with, but my body was exhausted. People warned me of what to expect after the baby was born, but no matter how much I prepared, I never expected that the baby would require so much of me. I had this helpless life form that literally sucked the energy out of me every hour. I stayed up every night trying to figure out why my baby wouldn't stop crying. I changed her, rocked her, fed her, sang to her...everything I could think of, but I still couldn't make her stop. Sometimes I simply surrendered myself and cried along with her.

Sometimes I felt like the baby cried because I wasn't Korean enough to know how she needed to be nurtured—as if there was a secret code or password in Korean that automatically made her stop. I wanted my mommy more than ever because I feared that Hannah would grow up to resent me because I didn't have the answers that she needed. I couldn't handle the pressure of the baby, our single income, the competition, and my needy husband. I yearned for someone to take care of me so that I could take care of everything else. When I met Mrs. Chae, she was an immediate relief. She had the answers that I needed, and she was willing to help me understand

my Korean heritage, which I so desperately wanted to pass on to Hannah. She knew exactly what my baby required to be happy, and she provided me with all the comforts of a mother. In my desperate need for a mother, I ignored the fact that Mrs. Chae came from completely different circumstances. Since my mother had worked with so many types of people, she learned early on that people come from different places. With that understanding, she didn't see race as a threat but as a circumstance, and everyone loved my mother for that.

Mrs. Chae had a different kind of American experience, however, and that poisoned the way she looked at people. At the time, I didn't understand that it was a cultural difference. I only saw it as racist. Although I wanted my daughter to be raised Korean *and* American, the more I got to know Mrs. Chae, I realized that her Korean version of the American lifestyle was very different from that of my mother's. The more Mrs. Chae ingratiated herself into our family, the more my thirst for Korean traditions blinded me from what she really was. When I learned she had lied about her daughter, I realized that she was only reinforcing the negative Korean stereotype that I strove so hard to break away from.

#### Nina's Relationship with Reggie

I liked Reggie from the start. He reminded me of the neighbors I knew back in Pennsylvania. I never felt threatened by him. I knew Miles had his suspicions, but I liked Reggie in spite of Miles' assumptions on his character. I felt like Miles overreacted towards Reggie's persistent nature. Having grown up in a white household in a white neighborhood, I think that Miles never had enough exposure to or *any* insight for what it meant to be African American. He had been operating from his adoptive parents' biased views. However, I saw Reggie as a survivor. Miles only saw him as a threat to our household, but I understood Reggie's pride as a family man. Although he wasn't an educated man, he had street smarts that helped his family remain in that neighborhood for a long time.

I saw Reggie as a man willing to compromise his pride and take whatever means he could to provide for his family. He had a vulnerability about him, which he overcompensated for with his persistence. He wasn't just hustling on the corner; he was a business man in his own regards, and as such he had a code he worked by. He would never take handouts. Every penny he earned, he earned conducting business transactions, and I respected him for that enormously. I secretly wished Miles would catch on to Reggie's familial devotion and get over his own pride. I respected Reggie's incredible amount of resilience over the decades living in the neighborhood, and the lengths he would go to for his family. No matter what his circumstances were, he found a way to make them work in his favor. He'd seen the neighborhood through many transitions, and he tried to hold on to what he had, including his home in an increasingly gentrified neighborhood that threatened his way of life.

## ANALYSIS OF TEXT

### What I Say About Myself:

#### Scene 1, pp. 7-9

- “I’m such a fucking—Mommy didn’t mean that, Mommy wasn’t shaking you, Mommy was...vibrating you—”
- “I can’t speak Korean so she’s not going to hear it from me.”
- “I’ll kill you, motherfucker.”
- “We’ve outgrown this apartment, this whole neighborhood.”
- “We are never singing that song to her again.”

#### Scene 2, pp. 9-14

- “Well, I’ve been putting everything exactly where it’s gonna go.”
- “You know we won’t. Half of these boxes are going to be sitting in our living room for the next year and a half because we’re not going to have the time or energy to move them later.”
- “No, we’re not. We’ll get used to them being there. We’ll put things on them, like our feet when we’re sitting on the sofa. Or our drinks, they’ll become end tables. We’ll choose the pain
- t color for the walls by whether or not it matches the boxes.”
- “I bought us your first trash can on my thirtieth birthday because I couldn’t stand it anymore.”
- “I’m not pushing *myself*, Miles.”
- “There’s no one else to help us. We’ve burned through all the friends who offered to...Let’s just finish. After I’m done here I need to go downstairs and help Kit work on the site plan.”

- “I’m sorry...honey, it’s just...these aren’t mine anymore.”
- “I can’t believe I just told you everything I have to do tonight, and you want to have sex?”
- “I’m going to work all day tomorrow.”
- “Yes, Mrs. Tillman...no, I wasn’t at the jobsite today, but Kit was...”
- “What are we supposed to do with a fucking hole in our window for three fucking weeks?”

Scene 3, pp. 14-19

- “I’ll call Frankie, but if this guy’s in the neighborhood...I’m just saying let’s get a price from him.”
- “I was giving voice to her thoughts”
- “I wanted to get a head start before she showed up.”

Scene 4, pp. 19-22

- “I didn’t expect to have to go back to work so soon. The good thing is I get to work at home...and I have to start working after only six weeks.”
- “Actually, we just liked the name.”
- “I do know *one word*. I know “*hana*.” Actually, I can count to ten, my parents did teach me that. I just don’t know how to say...eleven or twelve. I don’t know any Korean lullabies, or how to say koochie koo—”

Scene 5, pp. 23-26

- “A green and yellow receiving blanket. It was mine when I was a baby. I have this picture of my mother holding me in it...”
- (Re: “ignorant, tantrum-throwing rich people”) “Me too. I just want to be one.”



- “Being a mother has given me superhero powers.”
- “I read it and tested it. And her crying—it triggers my milk. I was in the bathroom yesterday and she started crying, and milk shot out of my nipples. Smacked right into the back of the door. Sometimes my milk attacks her.”
- “I couldn’t stand up—”
- “Any woman who has a planned C-section is a fucking moron.”
- “I don’t want him getting too comfortable. I don’t want him to be here at all.”
- “This is our space, Miles, and I don’t want anyone else down here.”

Scene 6, pp. 26-30

- “Miles, we make fun of your brother and his ridiculous schemes.”
- “I don’t trust your brother, Miles. I’m sorry, but I don’t.”
- “Man, I haven’t had home-cooked Korean food in a long, long—”
- “I love kimchee. But I used to have to sneak it because my mom wouldn’t let me eat it. She’d say, ‘You’ll never have an American boyfriend.’”
- “That’s all we had where I grew up.”
- “I don’t think she knew I’d live in a place where I could speak Korean every day. Where every time my local Korean deli gets a new cashier, I have to explain on, I’m not Japanese, I’m Korean, I just can’t talk to you.”
- “We’re still trying to figure things out ourselves and...I just need to put my family first.”

Scene 8, pp. 32-37

- “I completely lost track of time—”
- “Ok, what do you want me to do? Do you want me to throw you a party?”
- “My body was skinny but my cheeks clocked in at about a pound each.”

- “I’m dying to eat it but I can’t move my hands until the glue—”
- “Gosh, I really appreciate this but...”
- “I am so embarrassed, Miles.”
- “No I don’t want it anymore. Do me a favor and throw it away.”

Scene 9, pp. 37-41

- “I can’t take it on, Miles. I can’t have one more thing on my back.”
- “What bothers me the most, Miles, is that we’ve always laughed at your brother...together, we’ve indulged him, we’d listen to his stories and wink wink at each other knowing that it was all a big show...but now I look over at you and you’re rapt.”
- “We’re your family now”

Scene 10, pp. 42-45

- “It won’t take that long, I’m not going to hold out for a Korean woman. I’ll take anyone who isn’t going to poison my baby with racist thoughts.
- “I’m not. I know that as sure as someday Hannah’s going to fall off her bike and scrape her knee, that someone is going to call her a chink, and a nigger—”
- “I can’t stop it from happening to me as a grown woman. Last month I was standing in the front lawn of my childhood home, where I used to play cowboys and Indians, and ride my banana seat Schwinn, and some teenager shouted from a car, “Go back to Vietnam.”
- “My whole bright idea about hiring a Korean nanny was to give Hannah a reason to be proud to be Korean. I thought that if she could, I don’t know, speak the language, have some sense of belonging—it would help those names bounce off of her. We had the same reasons for wanting to raise Hannah in a mostly black neighborhood.”
- “No, we’re not, we’re failing in every way...I see how hard you’re working and I’m

trying my best—I know I’m not pulling my weight—but I swear I am giving this *everything* I have left. And all I ask from Miles, all I want him to do...is to be in it with me.

- “But instead, he wants to know when we’re going to start having sex again. And I can’t—I swear, Kit, I don’t have anything left to give.”
- “No, it’s totally my fault. I can’t believe I forgot to show up for your fortieth birthday—”
- “I shouldn’t have done that. It’s just—I never...it’s like this feral—this animal drive to take care of my daughter. I can’t even apologize for it, it fucking feels right.”
- “I want to work. I don’t want to be a stay-at-home mom. I know it doesn’t add up, OK? But I still love my work.”
- “I designed the plans with you. I did my share until the baby was born...I’m getting that job back, Kit.”
- “I need you to take Hannah right now.”

Scene 11, pp. 46-48

- “Miles, I want to fire Mrs. Chae this afternoon.”

Scene 12, pp. 48-53

- “I know people like you...It makes me mad, it makes me ashamed of being Korean, fucking racists.”
- “I want you to...I want you to defend me...Don’t fucking apologize for me.”
- “Not to apologize, I want you to—Christ, if you think I’m being unreasonable—”
- “Then, fucking...hold me or something.”
- “So, making all the money for the family doesn’t qualify me for a hug?”

- “Because I’m tired of having to tiptoe around your ego. My work is totally stressful, I’m not giving the baby the time I want—but at the end of the day, I don’t get to vent to you. If I say anything about the pressure that is fucking crushing me, you think I’m trying to make you feel bad.
- “I’m not counting money, I could give a shit about the money
- “You’re blaming me because we have a healthy, beautiful baby.?”
- “I had this perfect, precious baby and all anyone wants to do is blame me for how she’s changed our lives. What was so good about them before?”

#### What Others Say About Me:

##### Scene 1, pp. 7-9

- Miles: “Remember when we used to make fun of our friends who moved to Brooklyn?”

##### Scene 2, pp. 9-14

- Miles: “You shouldn’t be doing all this. You need to stop pushing yourself so much.”
- Miles: “You should just...take it easy, you know? Relax a little.”
- Miles: “*I don’t know*. Just take the baby upstairs, OK? Her first word’s gonna be fuck if Nina keeps—“

##### Scene 3, pp. 14-19

- Miles: “I thought you would want to use Frankie again.”
- Eric: “You, on the other hand, seem to have turned into a completely different person.”  
Didn’t I just hear you talking baby talk?”

##### Scene 4, pp. 19-22

- Mrs. C: “You take care of baby, your mommy supposed to talk care of you.”
- Mrs. C: “I think maybe you name her Hannah because she’s first born.”

- Mrs. C: “Because when you tell me you don’t speak one word of Korean, I think you don’t speak one word.”

Scene 5, pp. 23-26

- Kit: “You’re saying you can hear them two floors above? I can’t hear anything.”
- Kit: “No, Nina, concentrate. We blew the first two months of our deadline already.”
- Kit: “I like the image of the doctor grabbing your intestines by the handful and piling them on your stomach, then shoving them back in after she gets the baby out. You know, I think you’ve broken some kind of secret code of silence by telling me the details of your horrible birth experience.”

Scene 6, pp. 26-30

- Miles: “How can you talk that way about my brother?”
- Mrs. C: “This way you can work and I can keep Hannah while I do laundry.”
- Mrs. C: “Your mommy want you to have American boyfriend?”
- Mrs. C: “You work hard all day. You spend evening with Hannah instead of cook, clean and do laundry.”

Scene 7, pp. 30-32

- Kit: “Well, she said she didn’t want anyone else down here anymore.”
- Eric: “I just wonder if Miles leans on Nina too much. If she ends up holding him back.”
- Kit: “I’ve watched Nina and Miles for a long time. They try to pass the power back and forth between them, but one person always ends up holding the ball.”

Scene 8, pp. 32-37

- Kit: “With you constantly checking your watch, worried that your breasts are gonna explode?”

- Kit: “I thought you liked your in-laws—”
- Kit: “...you don’t really have Korean friends...”

Scene 9, pp. 37-41

- Miles: “Nina’s done this hundreds of times before. Not just once in her mother’s house.”
- Miles: “Oh, Nina’s your hero now?”
- Miles: “I’ve been telling you since the minute I met you that she’s an architect. But you keep treating her like she doesn’t know anything.”

Scene 10, pp. 42-45

- Kit: “Look, you guys are making great choices for her—”
- Kit: “When we’re in Barcelona, I’m gonna take you to this fantastic little tapas place I read about. We’ll eat little plates of fried octopus eyes and beef snout on toast while we watch them build our building. We’re going to make the deadline...”
- Kit: “All I want from you, Nina, is for you to do your work. Fucking do your work. I can’t finish this model by myself, not with less than six weeks left. I waited for you, Nina, I could’ve started two months ago without you, but you told me to wait.”
- Kit: “So you shouldn’t be trying to work.”
- Kit: “Look, Nina, you’re a good mom...And I—I don’t think women should have children if they’re not going to be like you.”
- Kit: “Between Mrs. Tillman’s unreasonable demands and your constant distractions, we’re way behind already...That’s nice of you to finally offer, but Mrs. Tillman isn’t going to call today because I told her we quit.”
- Kit: “We split the money but I do all the work”

Scene 12, pp. 48-53

- Mrs. C: (*In Korean*) “Nina, you’re such a good girl, hm?”
- Mrs. C: “You are good girl, such a good mommy, hm? Best mommy.”
- Miles: “Oh, I get it. I get it now, Nina. It’s like you hired Mrs. Chae to be your mom. And you’re firing her because she’s not.”
- Mrs. C: “She is working very hard.”
- Miles: “You’re not making me want to hold you.”
- Miles: “This is obviously about the money, you resent me for not being able to provide for my daughter.
- Miles: “you deal with this, Nina...”

# PHYSICAL SCORE

SCENE 1	Subtext/Inner Life	Objective	Tactics
<p>NINA: OK, sweetie it's OK. I'm trying, I'm trying—  <i>(harder crying)</i></p> <p>NINA: I'm sorry it hurts so much—You know, if only it were this hard for adults to fart, riding the subway would be a much pleasanter—  <i>(We hear the tiny pop of a baby passing a puff of gas.)</i></p> <p>NINA: You did it! Oh, I'm so happy for you! My little champion! <i>(give encouraging little shake)</i>  <i>(The baby starts to cry again)</i></p> <p>NINA: Holy shit, don't shake the baby. I'm such a fucking— Mommy didn't mean that, Mommy wasn't shaking you, Mommy was...vibrating you—</p> <p>MILES: I can't believe I didn't hear you guys, I was out cold. Did she want to nurse?</p> <p>NINA: No, she wanted to watch <i>The Godfather</i>. Did you know that <i>The Godfather</i> is on every night? On different channels at the same time. If you turn on the TV after midnight, you have not choice but to watch <i>The Godfather</i>.</p> <p>MILES: You want to watch it now?</p> <p>NINA: Why don't you take the baby, so I can go back to bed.  <i>(The baby starts to cry harder)</i></p> <p>NINA: Look at her, Miles, chocolate skin, almond eyes...she's the best of both of us.</p>	<p>Please stop crying...what am I not doing that's keeping you in pain? I've tried all my tricks already what do you want a joke?</p> <p>Thank god! I <i>can</i> do this!</p> <p>Stupid, stupid, Nina. People go to jail for shit like this, that's not what I was doing.</p> <p>You love <i>The Godfather</i>. If you take the baby, you can watch it all night if you like.</p> <p>I can't leave her like this. This screaming thing is supposed to be a good thing.</p>	<p>To pacify.</p> <p>To recruit.</p>	<p>Hum, shush, bounce, rock, burp, joke, encourage, celebrate, shake, pet, and coddle.</p> <p>Entice, negotiate, bargain, trick, flatter, tease, push, compare, egg on, teach, threaten, uplift, evaluate, and hearten.</p>



MILES: ...I hope so.			
NINA: What do you think about hiring a Korean woman to be her nanny? So she could speak Korean to her.	Would you let me raise our baby to be Korean? She needs to know where she's from.		
MILES: Uh, OK. I didn't know you—			
NINA: I just started thinking about it. I can't speak Korean so she's not going to hear it from me.	I can't teach her, but I can hire someone who can.		
MILES: Alright, sounds like a good idea. You want to take her? I think she wants—			
NINA: Why don't you try singing a song? Like a lullaby or something.	Don't you dare give up that easily, Miles.		
MILES: ( <i>Sings.</i> ) "The eensy-weensy spider went up the water—"			
NINA: That's not soothing.			
MILES: Aw, come on, man.			
NINA: Fucking asshole. My baby has gas, man, I'll kill you motherfucker.			
MILES: Hopefully we'll close on the house next month, and finally be able to move in.			
NINA: It's impossible to have a baby in this cramped little tenement. We've outgrown this apartment, this whole neighborhood.	We're growing up. I can't believe this is the next step we're supposed to take.		
MILES: Remember when we used to make fun of our friends who moved to Brooklyn?			
NINA: They're laughing at us now. Still as much as we paid, it'll be worth it.	I hope you're not as scared as I am about moving.		
( <i>Baby wails</i> )			
MILES: You'd better take her.			
NINA: What should I sing?	Please help me with this.		
MILES: ( <i>Sings.</i> ) "Hush little			

<p>baby—”</p> <p>MILES and NINA: “Don’t say a word, Papa’s gonna buy you a mocking bird...”</p> <p>MILES: “If that—”</p> <p>NINA: “When that—”</p> <p>MILES and NINA: “...mockingbird won’t sing, Papa’s gonna buy you a— ”</p> <p>NINA: I can look up the words, I found this website that has the lyrics to all the—</p> <p>MILES: (<i>Sings.</i>) “Rock-a-bye—”</p> <p>MILES and NINA: “—baby on the treetop. When the wind blows, the cradle will rock. When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall—”</p> <p>MILES: “And down will come baby, cradle and all.”</p> <p>NINA: We are never singing that song to her again.</p> <p>MILES: Why not?</p> <p>NINA: The baby falls, Miles, the baby falls and the cradle falls on top of it. What kind of lullaby is that?</p>	<p>I used to know... maybe Miles knows and I’ll fake it.</p> <p>No? Ok, well, we can learn.</p> <p>It’s working! Wait a minute... “the cradle will <i>fall</i>”?</p> <p>This song is sick and wrong.</p> <p>Who would think this an appropriate song to sing to a baby?!</p>		
SCENE 2			
<p>NINA: I just got her down. Miles, that box belongs in the kitchen. It says “Kitchen” on it.</p> <p>MILES: It doesn’t matter. I’ve been putting things wherever there’s room.</p> <p>NINA: Well, I’ve been putting things exactly where it’s gonna go—</p> <p>MILES: But I haven’t. We’ll deal with it later.</p> <p>NINA: You know we won’t. Half of these boxes are going to be</p>	<p>The baby’s finally sleeping. What are you doing? Why make this harder for me?</p> <p>I thought we talked about how we’re going to do this.</p> <p>We made a deal that we’re going to try a new</p>	To micromanage.	Correct, exemplify, categorize, flirt, tickle, reminisce, nag, joke, guilt. nuzzle, beg, complain, and reason.

sitting in our living room for the next year and a half because we're not going to have the time or energy to move them later.

MILES: We'll move them tomorrow. Or next week...or next month, it doesn't—

NINA: No, we're not. We'll get used to them being there. We'll put things on them, like our feet when we're sitting on the sofa. Or our drinks, they'll become end tables. We'll chose the paint color for the walls by whether or not they match the boxes. You know we will.

MILES: No, we won't.

NINA: How many years did we use a plastic shopping bag hanging on the front doorknob as a garbage can? Seven years. I bought us our first trash can on my thirtieth birthday because I couldn't stand it anymore. Miles, please, let's just move the goddamn box to the kitchen. I need to finish here and go downstairs to—

MILES: Stop bossing me around.

NINA: (*Lifts box.*) Ow, motherfuck.

MILES: Honey...you shouldn't be doing all this. You need to stop pushing yourself so much.

NINA: I'm not pushing *myself*, Miles.

MILES: So, what—I am?

NINA: There's no one else to help us. We've burned through all the friends who offered to...let's just finish. After I'm done here, I have to go downstairs and help Kit

approach, and if we are to succeed, we need to do things right from the start.

You know us, I know us. We aren't habitual neat freaks, we're lazy slobs. Remember how our old place got to be such a mess? I do.

We can't fall back to our old habits. I need your help. Work doesn't just stop here for me, so you better pull your weight.

I'm bossing you? Ok, fine, I'll do it. Pain, incredible pain!

There's only you and me, and the baby now. I have enough to hold me back, please help me a little here, so I can focus on

work on the site plan. MILES: You're gonna work tonight? NINA: Kit's been carrying my weight for the past month. She's been working on the Tillman job and on the Barcelona competition. Not to mention she set up the whole office by herself. MILES: Yeah, well, Kit can do that. She has the time. You should just...take it easy, you know? Relax a little. Hey! NINA: I'm sorry...honey, it's just...these aren't mine anymore. MILES: Nina, I've been keeping it all to myself here for the past four months. NINA: What're you—counting? MILES: C'mon, the baby's asleep. NINA: I can't believe I just told you everything I have to do tonight and you want to have sex? MILES: Yes, I want to have sex! Remember sex? It's how we made the baby and got ourselves into this mess in the first place. NINA: That's seductive. MILES: I'll get the rest of the boxes myself. You just...relax. NINA: I don't have time to— MILES: You need to— NINA: I'm not relaxing!— ERIC: Two fucking guys just chased me for four blocks. They took my ipod and backpack, they had a gun! NINA: Eric! Where did you— MILES: Are you OK? You want me to call the cops? ERIC: Yeah, no, it's OK, I just—	bigger things.  I can't keep using this as an excuse. I want Kit to know that our work is important.  Are you kidding?! These are the baby's only source of nutrition. They're not <i>yours</i> for pleasure anymore, they're painful.  Oh good, you're using sex against me. No. Sex doesn't sound good, it sounds painful. You're being so selfish.  You fucking moron. We didn't make a mess, we made a baby. You just blew any chance you had.  We've no time to do this.  What the fuck is going on...?	To repel.	Avoid, slap, scold, shove, resist, and distract.
		To regroup.	Juggle, wrap my brain around, approach, and gather facts.

<p>MILES: Where was this?</p> <p>ERIC: Like a block from the subway, by the projects. All of a sudden, these two (.) guys came up from behind me and ripped my ipod out of my pocket—</p> <p>MILES: Did they get your wallet?</p> <p>ERIC: No, I have a hole in my pocket so it drops down into the lining of my coat. They grabbed my backpack, and then I just...took off. I just kept running until I saw Rosa Parks Avenue.</p> <p>NINA: How'd you know how to get here?</p> <p>MILES: You want a glass of water or something? A beer?</p> <p>ERIC: In a minute, I just—Hi, how are you?</p> <p>(<i>He hugs NINA.</i>)</p> <p>NINA: I'm fine.</p> <p>MILES: I thought you were in Malaysia,</p> <p>ERIC: I just got off the plane. I'm fucking lagged.</p> <p>NINA: Where are your bags?</p> <p>ERIC: I put them in mini-storage near the airport. Get a load of this place. What's the deal?</p> <p>MILES: ...This is...our house.</p> <p>ERIC: This is outrageous, man, your other apartment was like a dorm room. How many floors is this?</p> <p>NINA: Four. We converted the garden level into an office for me and Kit so, we're only living on this floor and the one above.</p> <p>ERIC: That where the bedrooms are?</p> <p>NINA: Yes.</p>	<p>Did they follow you here? Are they out there now?</p> <p>How did you know that we'd be here today?</p> <p>That is very uncharacteristic of you. I could be wrong, but maybe you've changed.</p> <p>To dodge.</p> <p>It's big for the three of us, but I've utilized the spaces to accommodate my life.</p> <p>Why is that important?</p>	<p>Grin and bear it, state facts, head off, startle, and stop them.</p>
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<p>ERIC: So how many bedrooms are there?</p> <p>NINA: Three. We use the third as a family office.</p> <p>MILES: <i>My</i> office.</p> <p>ERIC: Sweet, man. Mom and Dad said it was nice but I didn't expect it would be like this.</p> <p>MILES: Why, what'd they say?</p> <p>ERIC: Don't sweat it, Miles, they liked it. They were just more into the baby. Where'd you put the baby?</p> <p>NINA: She's upstairs sleeping.</p> <p>ERIC: Can I get a peek at her?</p> <p>MILES: Sure.</p> <p>NINA: I don't think that's a good idea.</p> <p>ERIC: How old is she, a month?</p> <p>MILES: Six weeks.</p> <p>ERIC: Is she sleeping through the night?</p> <p>NINA: No!</p> <p>MILES: The baby gets up every couple hours to nurse. Nina's up all night.</p> <p>ERIC: I noticed the moving van out front. You guys need a hand?</p> <p>MILES: You don't have to, man, you must be exhausted.</p> <p>ERIC: Getting mugged got me pumped. Let's do it, man.</p> <p>KIT: Your pizza came, they ran the bell downstairs.</p> <p>MILES: Let's eat something first. Kit, you've met my brother before, haven't you? Eric?</p> <p>KIT: Not yet, but I've heard the stories.</p> <p>ERIC: Uh-oh...</p> <p>KIT: You've been bitten by a</p>	<p>I finally got her sleeping, don't go up there.</p> <p>Wake her and I'll kill you!</p> <p>Crap, Kit paid for the pizza.</p> <p>I wanted to at least pay for her dinner since she is working late.</p>	<p>To halt.</p> <p>To appease.</p>	<p>Threaten, flex, shoot to kill, mock, joke, and play.</p> <p>Apologize, make it up, help, answer, and excuse.</p>
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<p>rattlesnake and lived to tell the tale, and you sold the Dalai Lama a laptop.</p> <p>ERIC: His Holiness is addicted to Tetris.</p> <p>KIT: Nina, I've started regarding the site plan.</p> <p>NINA: I told you I'd pitch in with that.</p> <p>KIT: We've got to finish this by tonight. We should be cutting out shapes for the model by tomorrow.</p> <p>NINA: We will. I'm going to work all day tomorrow.</p> <p>ERIC: Are you guys doing a charette?</p> <p>MILES: Listen to you and your "charette."</p> <p>ERIC: Just because I didn't go to <i>Columbia</i>, like some of us in this room—</p> <p>MILES: All of us, actually.</p> <p>NINA: (<i>Phone rings.</i>) Audrey Tillman.</p> <p>KIT: Whys' she calling <i>you</i>?</p> <p>NINA: Hello? Yes, Mrs. Tillman...no, I wasn't at the jobsite today, but Kit was—No, the carpenters are going to fill that in...It's going to look exactly like we discussed. Oh, yes, thank you. She's six weeks old, she's just starting to—I'll make sure Kit takes a look tomorrow morning. Thank you, Mrs. Till—</p> <p>KIT: Why didn't she call me? I'm the one whose been holding her shriveled little liver-spotted hand for the past two months—</p> <p>(<i>The baby starts crying upstairs.</i>)</p> <p>NINA: You guys, go ahead, eat.</p>	<p>I didn't think unpacking would take me that long.</p> <p>I'll make it up to you.</p> <p>What did Kit do to make Mrs. Tillman call <i>me</i>?</p> <p>Ok, what is it this time? No, I didn't make it out there, Kit said everything was going to be fine...No, that's supposed to happen, you ignoramus. Oh, you're calling me about my baby!...no, you're just being a passive aggressive bitch.</p> <p>(At attention) Sorry, duty</p>			
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<p>I'll bring her down when I'm done nursing her. (<i>NINA exits.</i>)</p> <p>KIT: I guess I'll be working by myself after all.</p> <p>ERIC: Here you go. So, do you live in Brooklyn too?</p> <p>KIT: Ha! Thanks. Noooo. Look, Brooklyn's great, it's beautiful <i>and</i> cheaper, but...I want to be able to drop off my dry cleaning, go to a gallery opening, see an eight-hour Hungarian movie, then drink overpriced green apple martinis—all within a block of my house.</p> <p>ERIC: That's what's great about New York, right?</p> <p>MILES: What the—</p> <p>ERIC: Shit, man—</p> <p>KIT: It's a rock. Someone just threw a rock at your window.</p> <p>MILES: Why would someone do that?</p> <p>ERIC: You've got a stereo, TV, all kinds of computer equipment...people in this neighborhood probably saw all that gear and thought Puffy was moving in.</p> <p>KIT: Or, maybe they weren't trying to steal anything. Maybe they were just trying to send you a message. Want me to call 911?</p> <p>NINA: Miles? What was that, what broke? (<i>NINA enters from stairs.</i>)</p> <p>MILES: Stay upstairs, honey. There's broken glass down here.</p> <p>NINA: Fucking motherfucker. Who broke my window?</p> <p>MILES: I'm checking it out, don't</p>	<p>calls. Don't wait for me.</p>		
<p>NINA: Miles? What was that, what broke? (<i>NINA enters from stairs.</i>)</p> <p>MILES: Stay upstairs, honey. There's broken glass down here.</p> <p>NINA: Fucking motherfucker. Who broke my window?</p> <p>MILES: I'm checking it out, don't</p>	<p>Did you let Eric break something valuable?!</p> <p>HOLY SHIT!! WHY? On our first night here?</p>	<p>To Investigate.</p>	<p>Survey, question, alarm, bark, demand, point, blame, snap fingers, and stare down.</p>



<p>worry. Go back upstairs where it's safe.</p> <p>NINA: It's going to take weeks to get a fucking replacement glass. What are we going to do with a fucking hole in our house for three fucking weeks?</p> <p>MILES: <i>I don't know.</i> Just take the baby upstairs, OK? Her first word's gonna be fuck if Nina keeps—</p> <p>NINA: What?</p> <p>MILES: Just please take the baby upstairs. (<i>NINA exits.</i>)</p>	<p>I have enough distractions, I don't want to have to deal with what this might turn into.</p> <p>Say it. I dare you, what were you going to say?</p>		
SCENE 3			
<p>(<i>Miles and Reggie</i>)...</p> <p>REGGIE: Listen, man, you don't know me. But, I'm telling you, I lived on this block for—matter of fact, I was born on this block. I'm forty-two years old—I got three grown kids, they live with their moms, but everybody 'round here know Reggie. If you need something, I'm your boy.</p> <p>NINA: Miles, you take the baby. Kit's gonna be here any—Hi, I'm Nina.</p> <p>REGGIE: Alright.</p> <p>MILES: This is Reggie, he lives across the street.</p> <p>REGGIE: Like I said, you make up your mind, you come to me.</p> <p>MILES: Oh, I should tell you, Reggie mentioned that he, uh, he has a glazier that he recommends.</p> <p>NINA: He's done work for you?</p> <p>REGGIE: Mm-hm</p> <p>NINA: Do you have his card or can you give me his phone</p>	<p>Miles, I need your help.</p> <p>You're offering us help?</p>	To direct.	Exemplify, conduct, instruct, order, mirror, and reflect.

number?			
MILES: I thought you would want to use Frankie again.			
NINA: I'll call Frankie, but if this guy's in the neighborhood—	This could make our lives easier.		
REGGIE: I gotta talk to this—			
Hey, Mo! You need to settle up with me, son. <i>(To Miles.)</i> Look, I'm a go get my boy's card and you talk to him. Whatever you want, he'll do it.			
NINA: Thanks, Reggie. <i>(To Miles.)</i> I don't know what kind of work this guy does, I'm just saying, let's get a price from him.			
MILES: Doesn't it seem weird to you, this guy who's always hanging out on the corner, coming up first thing in the morning, telling us, "I got this guy who can fix that for you..."			
NINA: So?			
MILES: And where were those guys last night? They're always out there, doing whatever they're doing, <i>selling</i> whatever they're selling, but last night—they're not out there. Where were they?			
NINA: What—you think Reggie or one of those guys broke the glass?...I don't think Reggie did it. Why would he do it?	You are jumping to conclusions. He's offering to help his neighbor...		
MILES: Maybe he gets a fee. Whenever Reggie finds some sucker to give this guy business—			
NINA: And what's the deal with your brother? He tell you how long he's going to stay?	Time to change the subject. Your brother's acting strange.	To distract.	Swerve, blind-side, entertain, joke, make faces, giggle, and redirect.
MILES: No. But he usually stays a week or two—you have a problem with that?			

<p>NINA: Look, she's dreaming. Look at how her expression changes every couple seconds. Flowers...car alarms...mmm, Mommy's nipples...</p> <p>ERIC: Alright, let me see her. She's beautiful</p> <p>NINA: She's the perfect mix of both of us, don't you think?</p> <p>ERIC: She's herself. You, on the other hand, seem to have turned into a completely different person. Didn't I just hear you talking baby talk?</p> <p>NINA: I was giving voice to her thoughts.</p> <p>ERIC: Can I hold her?</p> <p>MILES: Of course, man.</p> <p>NINA: Just—make sure you support her neck.</p> <p>ERIC: Ohmigod, it's so much responsibility. If I don't hold her right, her neck will break off.</p> <p>MILES: Hang on a second, let me take a picture of you two.</p> <p>NINA: Miles, don't put him on the spot.</p> <p>ERIC: I don't mind.</p> <p>NINA: Shit, Kit's here. I wanted to get a head start before she showed up. Miles, take the baby.</p> <p>MILES: Eric's got her.</p> <p>NINA: You said you'd watch the baby today— (MILES and ERIC)...</p>	<p>Let's focus on something that makes us happy.</p> <p>See? People <i>can</i> change.</p> <p>I'm taking a big step with you, Eric. Please don't drop my baby.</p> <p>You're being genuine. You <i>have</i> changed, Eric. I need you to help me, Miles.</p> <p>Don't you dare cop out on me.</p>	<p>To entrust.</p>	<p>Risk, support, simplify, hand over, give space, protect, deflect, and adjust.</p>
SCENE 4			
<p>NINA: I didn't expect to have to go back to work so soon. The good thing is I get to work at home—unlike other working mothers who have to go to their</p>	<p>My work is very important to me. I'm trying to find the medium, and making some compromises</p>	<p>To impress.</p>	<p>Strut, flaunt, puff up, compare, relate with her, humble, and</p>

<p>midtown [offices]—  MRS. CHAE: Yes, I know. My daughter is lawyer and she [works]—  NINA: But, most working mothers get three months maternity leave, and I have to start working after only six weeks. My partner and I have made it to the finals in a major design [competition]—  MRS. CHAE: These days woman <i>has</i> to work. My daughter says—  NINA: —A major design competition for a new arts center in Barcelona. Arts Center in Barcelona. It's an international competition and only four groups made it to the final. It's an honor and a huge—Anyway, the deadline is in six weeks so that's why I need a nanny to start right away—  MRS. CHAE: Can I hold her?  NINA: Yes, of course, just—be careful of her [neck]—  MRS. CHAE: I know...I know...<i>(In Korean "Oh, look at you, you're such a pretty girl.")</i>  Your mommy and daddy must be very happy.  NINA: I think my dad liked her, it's hard to tell.  MRS. CHAE: But your mommy, she was so proud.  NINA: No, Mommy's dead.  MRS. CHAE: Tsk tsk tsk. You take care of baby, your mommy supposed to take care of you.  NINA: She's smiling at you.  MRS. CHAE: Babies love me.  And I love babies too. The family</p>	<p>now...</p> <p>But my job isn't just any job, this is my passion, and I work hard and take pride to someday create my legacy...</p> <p>A legacy that will become a landmark internationally. It's very competitive and we've proved ourselves good enough to make it to the finals... but you don't care, you're only here to be a nanny...</p> <p>I'm being rude, you need to interact with the Baby...</p> <p>He doesn't take my calls very often.</p> <p>This would all be different. You wouldn't be here if she was still alive.</p> <p>I think you could fill her shoes.</p>	<p>To acquaint.</p>	<p>empathize.</p> <p>Interview, listen, smile, familiarize,</p>
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<p>I work for before? Husband got a new job in Ohio. They ask me to move with them, “Please, nanny, come with us.” But I cannot go. I have my family here. I have grandson, did you know?</p> <p>NINA: Oh, how old is he?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: My daughter, she work at big law firm, they have daycare center in building. I told my daughter, “I quit my job to take care of him, he’s my grandson.” But she say, “Mommy, don’t be selfish, I want him near me.”</p> <p>NINA: Her name is Hannah, did I tell you?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: I think maybe you name her Hannnah because she is first one born.</p> <p>NINA: Actually, we just like the name. And it’s HA-nah, not huh-NAH. That would be weird, wouldn’t it? Naming her “number one”?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: You know Huh-nah?</p> <p>NINA: <i>Hana, tul, set...</i></p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Oh. Because when you tell me you don’t speak one word of Korean, I think you don’t speak one word.</p> <p>NINA: I do know <i>one word</i>. I know “<i>hana</i>.” Actually, I can count to ten, my parents <i>did</i> teach me that. I just don’t know how to say...eleven or twelve. I don’t know any Korean lullabies, or how to say “koochie koo—”</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: (<i>Singing lullaby in Korean.</i>) Your mommy sang this</p>	<p>Well, tell me a bit about yourself.</p> <p>I hadn’t thought of that.</p> <p>I hope I’m pronouncing it correctly...</p> <p>That’s really all I know, and I don’t think that counts as Korean.</p> <p>That’s beautiful. Sometimes I don’t realize</p>	<p>facilitate, clarify, mind manners, and welcome.</p>
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to you.	how much I miss my		
NINA: Yes, I think she did.	mom until something like		
MRS. CHAE: She has the curly	that triggers it.		
hair.			
NINA: Yes, from my husband.	Thank God! A change in		
I'm thrilled.	subject.		
MRS. CHAE: She looks			
like...your husband?			
NINA: I don't know. My family			
thinks she looks like my husband			
and my husband's family thinks			
she looks like me.			
MRS. CHAE: Your husband...he			
is...architect too?			
NINA: No, he's uh...he's a	I don't know if you'd		
computer guy.	understand the technical		
MILES: I'm sorry I'm late, the	name...		
interview went long—			
NINA: So, it must've gone well.	Any good news?		
Do you think you got the—			
MILES: I'll...tell you later. Hi,			
I'm Miles.			
NINA: Oh, uh, Miles, this is Mrs.			
Chae. Mrs. Chae this is my			
husband Miles.			
MRS. CHAE: Congratulations.	Isn't she great, Miles?		
She is beautiful baby.			
MILES: Thank you, thank you.			
MRS. CHAE: So, you don't mind?			
Nina says she want the Korean			
nanny to speak Korean to Hannah.			
You don't worry?			
MILES: No, I—I think it's be			
great. I think it'd be wonderful for			
Hannah to understand Korean.			
You thought I might be worried?			
MRS. CHAE: Maybe some			
American parent don't want the			
child to get confused or			
handicapped.			
MILES: No, no, I think it's one-			

<p>hundred-percent a good thing.  MRS. CHAE: She is lucky baby.  MILES: Hey, why don't I take a picture of you three together?  NINA: Um...Miles? It's a little premature—  MILES: It'll be nice. That's great.  NINA: Thank you for your time. Let me walk you to the door.  MRS. CHAE: Should I call you tomorrow?  NINA: I'll call you, thank you.  MILES: You guys look great together!</p>	<p>Isn't <i>he</i> great?</p>		
<p>NINA: Oh, hi Reggie. Come on in.  REGGIE: Check this out, man. I just bought it for fifty bucks, I sell it to you for seventy-five.  MILES: Where did you get that?  REGGIE: I told you, I bought it. I see you got a hook where one used to be. All you got to do is slip it on. You got a ladder?  MILES: Listen, Reggie, thanks, but, we don't want to buy that.  REGGIE: It ain't gone be that hard, here—I could probably reach it like this.  MILES: Can you get down, please? You're stepping on some fragile electronic equipment.  REGGIE: You got computer stuff in here?  MILES: Can you just get down?  REGGIE: So, I talked to my boy over at glassworks, I told him it was a eighty-inch window and he says he can do it for fifteen hundred dollars.  NINA: Oh. Did you get his card?  'Cause I should talk to him about</p>	<p>Where did you come from, Reggie?</p> <p>That is a piece of junk, I think you found it, or got ripped off.</p> <p>Give him a second, he's trying to conduct business.</p> <p>Miles, at least be polite.</p> <p>I need to jump on this opportunity.</p>	<p>To bypass.</p>	<p>To assuage, encourage, listen, mediate, side-step, circumvent, detour, stifle, and distract.</p>

<p>some details.</p> <p>REGGIE: I got his card, I got his card, here—But if you want to pull the trigger on this, tell <i>me</i>. I'll set it up for you. Even with my fee, you ain't paying what you'd pay if you walked in there yourself.</p> <p>MILES: Your fee. That's part of the fifteen hundred.</p> <p>REGGIE: Oh, shit. You still got that old fridge? That ugly ass fridge been here since the seventies.</p> <p>MILES: Do you mind?</p> <p>REGGIE: You know, I been in your house before. Yeah, I been in here before. Had some <i>good</i> time up in here, man. The night of the blackout, 1977, city was coal-black. People were running around crazy, smashing store windows, grabbing up anything they could get—bananas, turntables, diapers...Me and my friends climbed through that window, lay down on our backs, and looked straight up, man, saw stars we never get to see—the constellations. Aquila the eagle; Cygnus the swan; Hercules the warrior—he took on the labors, man. He brought down the lion, the hydra, Cerberus, himself. After the riots is when the monsters took over this neighborhood—drug dealers, gangs, robbers. Hercules should've stuck around, we coulda used him. But when the power came back on, all the stars faded away.</p>	<p>Miles! Who cares?</p> <p>I'm sorry the neighborhood is changing, Reggie. I'm sorry we're a part of the problem. Poor Reggie: living in the past, going no further than this street, but somehow you make it work. You've survived all these years. Teach us how.</p>		
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NINA: I hear her. Being a mother has given me superhero powers. And Hannah can smell me from twenty feet away.	Just because you can't hear doesn't mean she isn't. Mothers have bonds with their babies.		
KIT: You measured?			
NINA: I read it and tested it. And her crying—it triggers my milk. I was standing in the bathroom yesterday, and she started crying, and milk shot out of my nipples. Smacked right into the back of the door. Sometimes my milk attacks her.	No, dumbass, I just made that up. I can tell because I'm lactating. It happens all the time. That's how I know.		
<i>(We hear Hannah crying.)</i>	See?! I'm not lying, am I. She needs me.		
KIT: No, Nina, concentrate. We blew the first two months of our deadline already. We have six weeks to do what all our competitors had four months to do. I didn't mean blow.			
NINA: I couldn't stand up—	Thanks for having sympathy for me.		
KIT: I know, honey.	You think I wanted things to unravel like this?!		
NINA: Any woman who has a planned C-section is a fucking moron.			
KIT: I like the image of the doctor grabbing your intestines by the handful and piling them on your stomach, then shoving them back in after she gets the baby out. You know, I think you've broken some kind of sacred code of silence by telling me the details of your horrible birth experience.			
NINA: Are you afraid to have a baby now?	Ha. Nice save.		
KIT: Hell yeah! Not that it's an option right—			
ERIC: Thanks for letting me borrow these, Miles made a spare set for me.	Why do you keep showing up at the most inopportune times, Eric?		

<p>KIT: No problem.</p> <p>ERIC: Hey, you know that radio station you told me about? I tuned into it this morning. They play some great music.</p> <p>KIT: I figured since you lost your ipod...</p> <p>ERIC: I appreciate it. Well, I'll leave you gals to your work.</p> <p>NINA: What the [fuck] was that about? You loaned him your keys?</p> <p>KIT: Yeah. What's wrong with that?</p> <p>NINA: I don't want him getting too comfortable. I don't want him to be here at all. Eric is not the kind of person Miles should get into business with.</p> <p>KIT: Why not?</p> <p>NINA: He's never done anything legit, he's never had a proper job...and he's never been able to commit to a relationship.</p> <p>KIT: That was unsolicited.</p> <p>NINA: Stream of consciousness. The thing is, I think Miles is using Eric and this business as a way of avoiding having to spend time with the baby.</p> <p>KIT: If you think that there's some guy out there who's going to do more than what Miles is doin...you're nuts.</p> <p>NINA: Fucking Joe.</p> <p>KIT: You think Joe's a shit because he wouldn't marry me after six years, but I think Joe's normal. Every guy in the world is like Joe. You've had it lucky Nina, you don't know—</p> <p>NINA: How hard it is out there?</p>	<p>You horny little flirt!</p> <p>Eric doesn't need more reasons to stick around.</p> <p>He's a bum with a bad reputation.</p> <p>I'm just trying to protect you from him. I'm trying to protect my household from him.</p> <p>Don't try to turn this around on me.</p> <p>Are you kidding?! I miss</p>	<p>To prevent.</p>	<p>Repel, keep away, warn, alarm, repulse, ward off, stop, protect, shock, awaken, and commiserate.</p>
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<p>It's hard in here. This is hard.</p> <p>KIT: Last night I went to a Salvadoran restaurant with this guy. I kept telling him in a nice way "It's not <i>El Salvadorean</i> food. It's Salvadoran." But all night he kept saying "I've never had El Salvadorean food before," "I have to tell my friends I went to an El Salvadorean restaurant."</p> <p>NINA: Sounds like another online loser. Where was the restaurant?</p> <p>KIT: Deepest Queens. To get there we had to take the Z train. The Z train to Jamaica Center. Then we had to walk twelve blocks to get to this little piece of shit restaurant that served the most heavenly pupusas made on the planet.</p> <p>NINA: You bring some back for me?</p> <p>KIT: No. Hot off the griddle—the crust was crisp and toothsome and when you bit into them the cheese and pork oozed—</p> <p>NINA: Stop—</p> <p>KIT: They're not going to be as good cold, but—</p> <p>MILES: Nina, have you seen my camcorder?</p> <p>MINA: What? No.</p> <p>MILES: I know I put it on the bookshelf yesterday but now I can't find it. I wanted to shoot some video of Hannah on her first day with Mrs. Chae.</p> <p>NINA: You know what, Miles, there's a new rule. I want you to spread the word that this office is off limits to anyone who doesn't work here.</p>	<p>single life. It was easy to make decisions that only affected me.</p> <p>You certainly can pick them, can't you Kit? That sounds miserable, Kit. How do you keep doing this?</p> <p>Why are you down here? This better not become a normal thing, coming downstairs to ask me questions constantly. See, Kit notices. Ladies are working; you belong upstairs.</p>	<p>To prohibit.</p>	<p>Keep out, rule out, control, punish, deny, exclude, shoo away, and enforce.</p>
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MILES: What—?			
NINA: We're on a serious deadline here.	I can't have any more distractions.		
KIT: Yes, and it's ticking away every minute that you stand there arguing with your [husband]—			
MILES: This office is part of <i>my house</i> , Nina—			
NINA: Our house. But, Kit and I pay rent here.	That is <i>our</i> space. This is <i>my</i> space.		
MILES: You have to throw that in my face?			
NINA: This is our space, Miles, and I don't want anyone else down here.	Get out.		
MILES: This is bullshit—			
NINA: Except Hannah and Mrs. Chae! They're still allowed to [come]—			
KIT: ( <i>Into phone.</i> ) Hello? What?! Javier, I told you twice before I left last night those pipes had to be flush with the I-beams—Alright, look, just tell Mrs. Tillman to put her ass on ice, I'll be there in an hour. I'll take a cab, but I'm in fucking Brooklyn.	Ok, focus Nina...		
NINA: Want me to call a car service?			
KIT: I'm already doing it. ( <i>Into phone.</i> ) Yeah, can I get a car at 127 Rosa Parks Avenue? Thanks.			
NINA: I'll finish the shapes for the foundation by the time you—			
MRS. CHAE: I'm sorry, Nina, I try give her pacifier, I try my finger, I play nice music—			
NINA: Can you take her for a walk outside? Could you try that?	See, Kit?! I can stay focused on my work.		
MRS. CHAE: OK, yes, OK. I'm sorry I interrupt—			

<p>NINA: It's OK.</p> <p>KIT: That's my car. If you finish the layers by the time I get back, we might be able to stay on schedule.</p> <p><i>(Nina watches Kit leave, hesitates, then exits upstairs.)</i></p>	<p>I'm sorry Kit. She needs me more.</p>		
<p>SCENE 6</p>			
<p><i>(Reggie and Miles in)...</i></p> <p>REGGIE: We done did this in my mom's house in the eighties, man, I'm telling you—you gone need some help. Pulling that old stuff off piece by piece—ain't nothing for that but a pry bar. I don't <i>mind</i> an honest day's work. You hire some guy in the phone book, he gone charge you two bills a day. I'll do it for half.</p> <p>NINA: What's this—you bought tiles? How much did they cost?</p> <p>MILES: Here you go, man, thanks.</p> <p>REGGIE: That's alright. We do it another way.</p> <p>MILES: Eric paid for the tiles, says it's his housewarming gift to us.</p> <p>NINA: Miles, take the baby. You haven't held her since yesterday.</p> <p>MILES: I don't want to wake her.</p> <p>NINA: What about your interview this morning?</p> <p>MILES: I went. Look, I got those tiles that you circled in the catalog—</p> <p>NINA: Miles, how'd it go?</p> <p>MILES: I don't want to take a job that I'm going to resent going to every day. You know what I really</p>	<p>We agreed not to spend without consulting each other.</p> <p>Help me out a little, Miles.</p>	<p>To assist.</p>	<p>Request, rally, support, and partner.</p>

<p>want to do.</p> <p>NINA: Open a store with your brother? Miles, we make fun of your brother and his ridiculous schemes.</p> <p>MILES: This isn't a scheme, it's a good idea.</p> <p>NINA: I don't trust your brother, Miles. I'm sorry, but I don't. He doesn't have the experience—</p> <p>MILES: He has tons of experience!</p> <p>NINA: He's never opened a business here. He just goes to these Western-worshipping little Asian countries with his all-American good looks and he bamboozles them. He sells them shit.</p> <p>MILES: How can you talk like that about my brother?</p> <p>NINA: You don't need your brother. If you really want to start a business, then why don't you start something yourself?</p> <p>MILES: Start a business—what business, with what? I don't have any ideas—</p> <p>NINA: Look at what Reggie does, Reggie doesn't have anything but he's out on that street corner, paying attention to what's going on, looking for opportunities—</p> <p>MILES: I'm not one of the guys on the corner, Nina. Are you telling me to stand on the corner with the rest of the unemployed black guys?</p> <p>NINA: <i>No</i>.</p> <p>MILES: This store is my idea. It's how I want to present myself to</p>	<p>Why are you wasting your time?</p> <p>I don't want you wasting time with your brother.</p> <p>He thinks he's doing business, but he's just tricking uninformed foreigners with his American charm.</p> <p>You don't need to stoop that low; you can do this by yourself like you always do.</p> <p>Reggie jumps on any opportunity for a job that he can get. You have so many more opportunities, why can't you take one of those.</p> <p>I didn't mean it like that. You need to have a place in the community before</p>	<p>To foil.</p>	<p>Rub raw, unveil, speak, truth, demand, outwit, scratch, halt, and disenchant.</p>
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the community. A lot of families living in these brownstones, they stayed committed to the community during the rough times. And now people like us are moving in and I want to be connected to their history. I don't want to be the intruder. I want to bring something.	you can present yourself. If you don't help with our financial situation, then we're not going to have a place at all.		
NINA and MILES: Good morning, Mrs. Chae.	I hope she didn't hear all that.		
MRS. CHAE: She's asleep? You give me whole sling. This way you can work and I can keep Hannah while I do laundry. Yours too.	Thank you! Finally, someone who <i>wants</i> to help!		
NINA: Oh, you don't have to do that.			
MRS. CHAE: I do this for my daughter.			
NINA: Huh...Do you...cook for her too?	What else are you willing to do...?	To reconnect.	Bring out, elicit, request, bond, inhale, and reminisce.
MILES: Nina—			
MRS. CHAE: Yes, of course. She and husband spend every weekend at my home. I cook lots of food— <i>chap chae, bulgogi, kimchee chigae</i> —then Sunday, pack it up and they take home.			
NINA: Man, I haven't had home cooked Korean food in a long, long—			
MRS. CHAE: You like Koran food? Even the stinky kimchee?			
NINA: I love kimchee. But I would have to sneak it because my mom wouldn't let me eat it. She'd say "You'll never have an American boyfriend."	I don't think it stinks.		
MILES: Unless he eats kimchee too. Let me get you something for that.	Let's not bring back <i>that</i> memory, Miles. Help Mrs. Chae.		



MRS. CHAE: Your mommy want you to have American boyfriend?			
NINA: That's all we had where I grew up. Except for this one Filipino boy.	She wanted the American dream for me.		
MRS. CHAE: I see. That's why she don't teach you the Korean language.			
NINA: I don't think she knew I'd live in a place where I could speak it every day. Where every time my local Korean deli gets a new cashier, I have to explain no, I'm not Japanese, I'm Korean, I just can't speak to you.	I wish she had. It's embarrassing now when I do encounter other Korean Americans.		
MRS. CHAE: If you want, I teach you Korean words I speak to Hannah.			
NINA: Yes.			
MRS. CHAE: That way you both learn together. And maybe someday I make kimchee for you. You work hard all day. You spend evening with Hannah instead of cook, clean and do laundry, eh? Hannah misses the mommy.	You are a Godsend.		
NINA: Do you think? Like, too much?	You don't think I'm neglecting my baby, do you?		
MRS. CHAE: She love the mommy and daddy. She talk about you all the time.			
MILES: Here you go, you can put things in here.			
MRS. CHAE: Oh, thank you Miles. Such a good husband, hm? My husband, he never touch the laundry, never change the diaper, but Miles...he does so much.	Miles, what are you so willing to help her out, when I'm the one who really needs it?		
MILES: You need a hand with that, man?			
NINA: What's going on, Eric?	Eric, you are invading	To fend off.	Deflect, resist,

<p>ERIC: Miles was running out of clothes that fit me. Plus it was costing me twenty-one bucks a day to keep this stuff in storage.</p> <p>NINA: You took all this to Malaysia?</p> <p>ERIC: I was there for three months. I wanted to have my options.</p> <p>MILES: I don't know if all that's gonna fit in the upstairs office.</p> <p>ERIC: What about the basement? I don't need to put my hands on all this stuff every day. A bunch of these bags can go downstairs.</p> <p>NINA: How long do you plan on staying here, if you don't mind my asking?</p> <p>ERIC: Getting a store off the ground will take months, maybe a year. But, I don't have to stay here the whole time—</p> <p>MILES: Where else are you going to stay?</p> <p>ERIC: I can get a sublet—</p> <p>NINA: It's just that we're still trying to get settled here—</p> <p>MILES: I don't want you to do that, man. You're family.</p> <p>NINA: Miles—</p> <p>MILES: I asked him to stay here and help me launch the business. The least we can do is offer him a place to stay. We have the room—</p> <p>NINA: No, we don't. That's supposed to be our office—</p> <p>MILES: You have your office downstairs. The upstairs is my office and I say Eric is welcome to stay.</p> <p>ERIC: I'm sorry, Nina, if I'd</p>	<p>my space.</p> <p>You impose yourself on my home, and now you want to impose on my workplace?! When are you leaving?</p> <p>How am I supposed to start a family with you fucking things up for us?</p> <p>Can we discuss this first? You invited him without consulting with me first? Who's side are you taking?</p>	<p>protect against, defend, militarize, win over, question, disarm, and, deactivate.</p>
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<p>known you were against me staying here, I wouldn'ta brought all my [shit]—</p> <p>NINA: This isn't personal, Eric, you just happen to have shown up at a time when we're...we're still trying to figure things out ourselves and...I just need to put my family first.</p> <p>MILES: Eric <i>is</i> family. Come on, man, let's get these things upstairs.</p>	<p>You have unsettled my house, you have infiltrated my work, and now you've brain-washed my husband. I want you out. I don't know you anymore. I thought we were a team.</p>		
SCENE 7			
(KIT and ERIC)...			
SCENE 8			
<p>NINA: Your birthday already? What's today's date?</p> <p>KIT: The third.</p> <p>NINA: I completely lost track of time—OK, Thursday, your birthday. Is it—...are you gonna be [forty?]</p> <p>KIT: Let's not touch on that.</p> <p>NINA: OK. OK, what do you want to do? Do you want me to throw you a party?</p> <p>KIT: (<i>Roof.</i>) Press down harder on this side.</p> <p>NINA: Dinner with a bunch of our friends?</p> <p>KIT: No.</p> <p>NINA: Kit, you gotta ring it in. Your fortieth—</p> <p>KIT: Do not speak the number.</p> <p>NINA: You can't do nothing.</p> <p>KIT: I don't want to do nothing. I want to go out to a nice, quiet dinner, just you and me. We can go to that new French place on DeKalb. It's close enough to here, you can be home in time to nurse</p>	<p>Let's have some fun for a change.</p> <p>Why aren't you more excited?</p> <p>Don't be like one of <i>those</i> women.</p>	<p>To reignite.</p>	<p>Fire up, rev up, inspire, ignite, and trigger.</p>

<p>Hannah.</p> <p>NINA: You sure you don't want to go somewhere fabulous in Manhattan?</p> <p>KIT: With you constantly checking your watch, worried that your breasts are going to explode?</p> <p>NINA: I guess you're right.</p> <p>KIT: So, Hannah being such a big baby and all, I was wondering—were you a big baby?</p> <p>NINA: From the neck up. My body was skinny but my cheeks clocked in at about a pound each.</p> <p>KIT: Miles must have been a big baby, then, huh?</p> <p>NINA: Mm...no.</p> <p>KIT: Have you ever seen pictures of him as a baby?</p> <p>NINA: I have a picture of him when he was about one year old in my desk.</p> <p>KIT: Can I see it?</p> <p>NINA: Uh...sure. It's in my top drawer.</p> <p>KIT: Well. Looks like a perfectly healthy one-year-old to me. Perfectly healthy.</p> <p>NINA: Actually, a normal one-year-old should weigh about twenty pounds and Miles only weighed seventeen.</p> <p>KIT: Tell me more.</p> <p>NINA: His mom said he was a fussy eater—</p> <p>KIT: ...Right.</p> <p>NINA: He wouldn't drink milk or eat cheese which are good sources of fat.</p> <p>KIT: That makes sense.</p> <p>NINA: Plus he was addicted to</p>	<p>Don't discount your birthday for my sake.</p> <p>I can't let her know Miles' secret.</p> <p>You're awfully interested in Miles' past all of a sudden... Do you know something you're not supposed to know?</p> <p>Ok, you want to play this game?</p> <p>You found out about Miles' past, and the only other people who knew about that is Eric, his parents, and myself.</p>	<p>To probe.</p>	<p>Inspect, pull information, dissect, detonate, and interrogate.</p>
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<p>heroine for the first two months of his—</p> <p>KIT: Yes!</p> <p>NINA: You're in love with Eric! He told you about Miles. That's Miles' big secret.</p> <p>KIT: It came up in conversation.</p> <p>NINA: Pillow talk.</p> <p>KIT: Eric and I haven't even gone out yet, let alone sleep together.</p> <p>NINA: Don't trust him, Kit.</p> <p>KIT: What do you resent so much about Eric? Has he ever hurt you or Miles?</p> <p>NINA: He's never there when it counts, you know, he didn't even come to our wedding. Then out of nowhere, he just swoops in and inserts himself into our lives.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Lunch time for the hard working woman.</p> <p>NINA: What is that? Seaweed soup?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: <i>Mi yuk guk</i>. I write it down for you. Very good for the mommy after delivering the baby, because it has iron and protein. Good for you now because of the breastfeeding. You need strength.</p> <p>NINA: Thank you! I'll have it as soon as—</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Good for you too, because it also helps to make the baby.</p> <p>KIT: Hmmmm...Thanks...</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Your husband don't want the children?</p> <p>KIT: My husband...uh uh, he says he's not ready.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: You cannot wait for him. The man is never ready for</p>	<p>I KNEW IT! You slept with Eric and he told you our secrets!</p> <p>He can't be trusted. He will hurt you.</p> <p>Thank God! A distraction!</p> <p>Just be polite and eat the soup, Kit.</p> <p>I can't believe you're just going to lie.</p>	<p>To reclaim.</p>	<p>Ally, expose, try, slap, deny, stroke, entreat, make-up, dare, challenge, request, and salvage.</p>
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<p>the children, he is still his mommy's baby. But, having the child will make him a man.</p> <p>NINA: You can still eat it, Kit, the soup won't impregnate you.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: If you like, I teach you how to make it.</p> <p>NINA: God, I would love that. Would you mind moving that a little closer to me?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Of course.</p> <p>NINA: Mm, smells fantastic. I'm dying to eat it but I can't move my hands until the glue—</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: (<i>In Korean.</i>) Eat well.</p> <p>NINA: Oh, gosh, um—Mm, that's delicious.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Soon it will be Hannah's <i>paek il</i>. We must have a big party.</p> <p>NINA: <i>Paek il</i>? What's that?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: <i>Paek il</i> is for one hundredth day because back in old times, when a baby did not die by one hundred days, we have a big party. We say now she will live long life.</p> <p>KIT: Where's Miles' camera when you need it?</p> <p>NINA: Gosh, I really appreciate this but...you don't have to feed me.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: It's OK. Hannah is sleeping and I am in the way upstairs. Miles and his brother are working so hard.</p> <p>NINA: Eric's helping? That's a shock.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Yes. They are working together.</p>	<p>Why can't you just put away your cultural and political differences?</p> <p>See? I can. I want to know about this culture.</p> <p>You want to feed me?</p> <p>I'm embarrassed.</p>			
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<p>NINA: I thought he was going to the realtors—wait a second. Who do you mean by Miles’ brother?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: The man, his brother. The one who’s helping him.</p> <p>NINA: Is he black?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Yes.</p> <p>NINA: That’s not Miles’ brother.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Oh—</p> <p>NINA: You met his brother. Eric. Eric’s his brother. Reggie’s...just some <i>guy</i> who lives on our street.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Oh, I see...Miles is adopted?</p> <p>NINA: Yes.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Oh...(Tsk tsk tsk.) Such nice parents.</p> <p>NINA: ...They’re nice because they’re white people who adopted a little black baby?</p> <p>KIT: Mmmm, Mrs. Chae, this is good. What kind of seaweed is this?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: We call it mi yuk.</p> <p>NINA: Because actually, I think Miles’ parents were (.) they did things that were kind of...like raising him in an all-white neighborhood, sending him to schools where he was the only black kid—</p> <p>KIT: I thought you liked your in-laws—</p> <p>NINA: Miles was teased a lot. The reason he’ll be emotionally enslaved to Eric for the rest of his life is because Eric would beat the shit out of kids who picked on him.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: But Miles grew up</p>	<p>Please don’t prove my suspicions right.</p> <p>I really didn’t want to deal with this.</p> <p>All black people don’t have to be related.</p> <p>What the fuck. You think white people always do the right thing?</p> <p>Don’t you dare try to head me off, Kit.</p> <p>Miles’ parents’ act of charity did more damage to him than good. They messed him up.</p> <p>He was subjected to more racism than any child should have to go through, and Eric protected him. That’s why Eric is still here.</p>	<p>To confront.</p>	<p>Probe, rub, rebuke, scold, cut, shame, censor, tackle, cold-shoulder, destabilize, sabotage, and squeal.</p>
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so nice. Clean and smart, handsome.			
NINA: Did you just say [clean]—	You fucking racist.		
KIT: Mrs. Chae, you mentioned your daughter has a child Hannah's age. Maybe he and Hannah can have a playdate! It'd be good for Hannah to have another kid she can speak Korean to because...you don't really have Korean friends...	Don't you dare try to turn the conversation now, Kit...		
MRS. CHAE: I don't think—			
NINA: What—you're afraid your daughter won't let him come because Hannah's black?	You really are afraid of Hannah and Miles!		
KIT: Nina—			
MRS. CHAE: Hannah is not black. If you look at her, maybe you cannot tell. People cannot tell the daddy is black. She is just beautiful baby.	How dare you deny my family. You really are a stranger.		
MILES: Nina, I've got to use your computer for a minute.	Why do you have to do this <i>now</i> , Miles?		
NINA: Why can't you use your computer upstairs?		To destabilize.	Sabotage, tattle, nag, weaken, hold responsible, strike, and beat.
MILES: I told Reggie I was going to the hardware store to get something. I hid a little webcam so I can watch him. Mrs. Chae, do you mind staying down here for a few minutes?			
KIT: Watch him do what?			
MILES: Steal from me.			
MRS. CHAE: <i>Aigu.</i>			
NINA: Miles, you have no reason to think that Reggie stole your—	You're acting racist now?!		
MILES: The man openly offered to sell me stolen goods, Nina. This is what he does. He insinuates himself into people's homes, and then he takes things he can sell.	How dare you suspect Reggie, because he's Black.		



<p>The gentrification of this neighborhood is probably the best thing to happen to him in years. See that—look, he’s looking in one of our boxes. I put my portable DVD player in there on purpose.</p> <p>NINA: This is wrong. I’m going upstairs to tell him—</p> <p>KIT: Nina, don’t let go of that—</p> <p>MILES: Nina, stay. I want to catch him.</p> <p>NINA: You’ve set up a trap.</p> <p>KIT: Look at it this way. If he doesn’t take anything, you’ll have won.</p> <p>NINA: You approve of this?</p> <p>KIT: No, I think it’s sick but I admit it’s pulled me in.</p> <p>MILES: He’s looking around...he’s walking toward my ipod...he’s picking up a pry bar— And...he’s pulling up the linoleum off the kitchen floor.</p> <p>NINA: I am so embarrassed, Miles.</p> <p>MILES: Well, someone took my camcorder.</p> <p>NINA: You should go up there and apologize.</p> <p>MILES: I’m not going to apologize. But I will let him keep working for us. And keep my eye on him.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Can I...go upstairs now?</p> <p>NINA: Yes.</p> <p>KIT: Do you want...me to feed you the soup?</p> <p>NINA: No, I don’t want it anymore. Do me a favor and throw</p>	<p>What is wrong with people? How have you all lost faith in good people?</p> <p>Now you’re on their side?</p> <p>Congrats, Miles, you’re a racist.</p> <p>Stop it...</p> <p>I can’t handle any of this. I want to start over.</p>		
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it away.			
SCENE 9			
<p>(MILES and REGGIE; ERIC enters and exits)...</p> <p>REGGIE: Mommy, look at this here. How this looks? You walk into the room, you see one solid line. That's the way to do it.</p> <p>NINA: You're...right, Reggie. That is...a way to do it. But—</p> <p>REGGIE: You hear that? She said I'm right. She said I'm right and she know more about this than you. But you din't never said nothing like that.</p> <p>MILES: Oh, Nina's your hero now?</p> <p>NINA: Miles—</p> <p>MILES: I've been telling you since the minute I met you that she's an architect. But you keep treating her like she doesn't know anything.</p> <p>REGGIE: Is that true? That ain't true. You the one who act like I don't know anything. I done did this before and you ain't. But you gotta be like one of them new niggas who always think—</p> <p>(The baby starts crying upstairs.)</p> <p>MILES: No, man. No. I'm not any kind of nigger. You hear me?</p> <p>REGGIE: Man, I ain't mean it like that. Over here when somebody says new nigga we mean somebody who turn they nose up at something 'cause it ain't new or good enough—</p> <p>MILES: I don't care what you say it means, man. I don't wan to hear it in my house.</p>	<p>That's not the way to do tiles. Miles, why didn't you show Reggie how to do it?</p> <p>Why do you always have to turn things around on Reggie?</p> <p>I need to stay with Miles right now. Calm down. You don't know what he might be capable of.</p> <p>Ok, you're both calming down? I need to take care of my baby.</p>	To defuse.	Calm, soothe, support, test, flatter, defend, reinforce, and guard.

<p><i>(The baby's cries become jagged and intense.)</i></p> <p><i>(Miles and Reggie)...</i></p> <p>REGGIE: I gotta go check on my girl, wake her ass up otherwise she ain't gone get to work—</p> <p>NINA: Miles, is everything OK?</p> <p>MILES: Where's Mrs. Chae?</p> <p>Why isn't she here taking care of the baby?</p> <p>NINA: I told her to come in a little later this morning. I think we have a problem.</p> <p>MILES: What're you talking about? She seems to be working out great.</p> <p>ERIC: This is fucked up, man. This is out of line, this is fucked up.</p> <p>MILES: What's going on, man?</p> <p>ERIC: My ringgits are gone.</p> <p>MILES and NINA: What?</p> <p>ERIC: I hid the money in here—I folded these up and put them underneath the mattress in the sofa bed. I figured we were all family here.</p> <p>MILES: Man, what is going on around here?</p> <p>ERIC: You got a lot of new people coming in and out of this house. The tenant passes by all our bedrooms to get to his floor. He's got a lock on his door to his apartment, but all our rooms are wide open. Maybe he took your camcorder. What do you know about that guy?</p> <p>MILES: Not much.</p> <p>ERIC: If you ask me—you guys need to close ranks. Clean house.</p>	<p>Please still be alive.</p> <p>Mrs. Chae is a threat to this household.</p> <p>ERIC! Why do you always have to butt in?!</p> <p>To uncover.</p> <p>Shame, bare, expose, catch in the act, and sniff out.</p>		
<p>Can you focus on the real problem?</p> <p>Who are you to come in here and start passing judgment on our choices?</p> <p>No. Walter is not going anywhere. He is a decent</p>			

<p>How much is he paying in rent?</p> <p>NINA: Twelve hundred a month.</p> <p>ERIC: I could pay that. Or close to that. I've got some money in the bank, plus I've build in salaries for me and you in the business proposal.</p> <p>MILES: We can't just kick him out, we gave him a two year lease.</p> <p>ERIC: I should be part of this community too. It'll be good for the profile of the business.</p> <p>MILES: We'll see what we can do to make that happen, man.</p> <p>NINA: We will?</p> <p>ERIC: Let me go upstairs and have another look.</p> <p>NINA: We need twelve hundred for that upstairs apartment. I cannot meet our mortgage payment without—I can't take it on, Miles. I can't have one more thing on my back.</p> <p>MILES: It's not going to be on your back. Eric said he's going to pay rent.</p> <p>NINA: No, he's not. Eric came here with the intention of getting us to give him a free place to live.</p> <p>MILES: He came to meet the baby.</p> <p>NINA: We haven't seen or heard from him in months—</p> <p>MILES: He just got off a plane.</p> <p>NINA: Then on the day we move in he shows up at our doorstep with no place to live. He comes up with this business idea, says he's got the money to get it started, gets you all riled up about it, then all of a sudden—the money's</p>	<p>person. <i>You</i> need to go.</p> <p>Fuck you, Eric. You are still full of shit, and making up stories. I was wrong. You haven't changed.</p> <p>Oh no...Now I get what this is about.</p> <p>I'm a part of this problem now?</p> <p>Whatever he offers, we need that money. I don't care if he's family. We will literally be kicked to the streets without it.</p> <p>Bullshit. This is another one of his cock and bull stories.</p> <p>That's just a ruse to get in the door.</p> <p>He's really got you <i>that</i> fooled? Look at the facts, it's too good to be true, and you know it, you just won't admit it yet. He's lying to him, and you're falling for it</p>	<p>To resuscitate.</p>	<p>Bend, push, coax, disgust, insult, stroke, pump, unmask, revive, expose, and beg.</p>
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gone. He never had the money, Miles.	because you want		
MILES: You never saw it, but I saw it.	to believe him. He's pulled another con on you, his <i>own</i> brother, just like he does to all those other suckers who fall for him. He's sucked you so far in that you've forgotten <i>us</i> . I we are supposed to be in this together. We were an unstoppable team, but now your brother is driving us further and further away. I need you more than ever. You are going through a tough, transition in your life, and I'm your life partner. Let me help you through this, and the three of us can tackle all this together.		
NINA: He probably bought it at a party store with a pack of tropical drink umbrellas. What bothers me the most, Miles, is that we've always laughed at your brother...together, we've indulged him, we'd listen to his stories and wink wink at each other knowing that it was all a big show...but now I look over at you, and you're rapt. You're like a kid listening to his con man uncle and hanging on every word.			
MILES: You think I'm that stupid?			
NINA: I think you're...vulnerable, I think you're groping for something to hold on to, someone...and you've latched onto your brother instead of me and Hannah. We're your family now.			
MILES: No, she only cries harder.			
NINA: Only when she senses your fear. Just focus on how much you love her, and she'll calm down.	Why are you resisting us.		
MILES: You know she's going to reject me.			
NINA: No, she won't.	Your baby needs you.		
MILES: She only wants you. I don't have anything she needs.			
NINA: Miles, take her—	I need you to help me.		
MILES: No, you want to me fail. You want me to.	Please don't make me do this by myself. Don't walk out on us. I won't survive without you.		
NINA: It's OK, sweetie, Daddy loves you. Of course Daddy loves you.			

SCENE 10			
<p>KIT: Nina, you can't take time away from work to look for a new nanny. I won't let you</p> <p>NINA: It won't take that long. I'm not going to hold out for a Korean woman. I'll take anyone who isn't going to poison my baby with racist thoughts.</p> <p>KIT: You're blowing this whole thing out of proportion.</p> <p>NINA: I'm not. I know as sure as someday Hannah's going to fall off her bike and scrape her knee, that someone is going to call her a chink and a nigger—</p> <p>KIT: Cover her ears!</p> <p>NINA: I can't stop it. I can't protect her from it—I can't stop it from happening to me as a grown woman. Last month I was standing in the front lawn of my childhood home, where I used to play cowboys and Indians, and ride my banana seat Schwinn, and some teenager shouted from a car, "Go back to Vietnam—"</p> <p>KIT: It's horrible, it's embarrassing, but I still think that's completely different from what Mrs. Chae—</p> <p>NINA: My whole bright idea about hiring a Korean nanny was to give Hannah a reason to be proud to be Korean. I thought if she could, I don't know, speak the language, have some sense of belonging—it would help those names bounce off of her. We had the same reasons for wanting to raise Hannah in a mostly black</p>	<p>Please don't start on me again, Kit. I just want to find some source of security.</p> <p>She's going to encounter it eventually. I've passed down circumstances she can't escape from.</p> <p>There's no escape from it. No matter how much we try to pretend we're all equal, we're not. There will always be bigots out there trying to put us in our place because they don't want to accept that we're like them.</p> <p>I didn't want her to go through the pain I did. I wanted her to belong to some part of who she was. My mother tried to raise me American, but Americans won't accept me as one of them, and I don't know what it is to be Korean, so I'm not</p>	To implore.	Supplicate, touch, press, turn, inform, connect, reach, and back-pedal.

neighborhood.

KIT: Look, you guys are making great choices for her—

NINA: No, we're not, we're failing in every way. The Korean nanny's denying her blackness, the black neighbors are throwing rocks through our window...Miles won't hold our baby and...I see how hard you're working and I'm trying my best—I know I'm not pulling my weight—but I swear I am giving this *everything* I have left. And all I ask from Miles, all I want him to do...is to be in it with me.

KIT: Hey—

NINA: But instead, he wants to know when we're going to start having sex again. And I can't—I swear, Kit, I don't have anything left to give.

KIT: When we're in Barcelona, I'm gonna take you to this fantastic little tapas place I read about. We'll eat little pieces of fried octopus eyes and beef snout on toast while we watch them build our building. We're going to make the deadline, I'll make sure of it.

NINA: Eric tell you about the missing money?

KIT: I heard about it.

NINA: What do you think? Do you think someone really stole it?

KIT: I think it's a ghost. I think that first night when your window got smashed, the ghost of all the neglected communities past—who couldn't get the city to fix their

that either.

I don't know what I am, and it hurts.

Nothing is turning out the way we planned. The only thing that I thought was secure and solid in my life was my marriage, and now that's failing me. I can't do this all by myself. I need Miles to help me, so I can help everyone else.

All Miles can think about is what's in it for him—it's like Eric's brain washed him with his beliefs.

Hannah, will you forgive your poor misunderstood mother for raising you in an unforgiving world? I'm sorry I brought you this on you. We'll make it work. You and me, we can do it.

I shut you out Kit, and you're trying to be supportive. I'm sorry.

<p>sidewalks, or keep their electricity going on hot days, left alone provide them with a local source of organic half-and-half—wafted in here and is trying to spook you into leaving.</p> <p>NINA: What’s this?</p> <p>KIT: it has the restaurant’s name and address on DeKalb. The food was good, you and Miles should go there some time.</p> <p>NINA: What? Ohmigod. Oh please God, please please please let it not be—</p> <p>KIT: It’s new, so it’s not that crowded yet. They let me sit for a while.</p> <p>NINA: You waited for me? Why didn’t you call?</p> <p>KIT: I have some dignity, you know.</p> <p>NINA: Why didn’t you remind me during the day!</p> <p>KIT: Just, let it pass, Nina.</p> <p>NINA: No, it’s totally my fault. I can’t believe I forgot to show up to your fortieth birthday—</p> <p>KIT: Just stop talking about it, OK? I don’t care that you didn’t show up, I don’t care. I ate dinner, went to a bar, fucked a guy in the bathroom—it was perfect. The best birthday ever. All I want from you, Nina, is for you to do your work. Fucking do your work. I can’t finish this model by myself, not with less than six weeks left. I waited for you, Nina, I could’ve started two months ago without you, but you told me to wait.</p> <p>NINA: I shouldn’t have done that.</p>	<p>How could I fuck up again?!</p> <p>Why did you let me get away with this? What are you trying to prove?</p> <p>Ok, I’ll admit it. I fucked up, can you blame me?! I’m the worst person of the century.</p> <p>Oh Jesus, Kit, you have to use that against me? Thanks for really rubbing my nose in how much I ruined your birthday. How much I’m ruining your life. What about <i>mine</i>?!</p> <p>You don’t get it, Kit.</p>	<p>To apologize.</p>	<p>Recover, mend, back pedal, atone, solicit, repent, ingratiate, and grovel.</p>
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It's just—I never...it's like this feral—this animal drive to take care of my daughter. I can't even apologize for it, it fucking feels right.

KIT: So you shouldn't be trying to work.

NINA: I want to work. I don't want to be a stay-at-home mom. I know it doesn't add up, OK? But I still love my work.

KIT: Look, Nina, you're a good mom—my mom, she took Dexatrim when she was pregnant with me because she didn't want to get fat. And I—I don't think women should have children if they're not going to be like you. But this work is all I have and I fucking want to win this competition.

NINA: I do too.

KIT: Don't say that.

NINA: I know it doesn't make sense—

KIT: Nina, I'm forty years old, I already don't have what I thought I would have by now but I know I can make beautiful buildings. It's not fucking fair for you to hold me back. Between Mrs. Tillman's unreasonable demands and your constant distractions, we're way behind already.

NINA: I'll take care of Mrs. Tillman.

KIT: No, you won't.

NINA: When she calls today, tell her I'll meet her at the house.

KIT: That's nice of you to finally offer, but Mrs. Tillman isn't going

This is the only outlet I have left, Kit. Don't act like I didn't work hard to get this far because I didn't care enough. Now you want to make it all about how sad you are with your life. Go throw yourself a fucking pity party, Kit.

Ok, I'll pull it together, if it means *that* much to you.

<p>to call today because I told her we quit.</p> <p>NINA: What—?</p> <p>KIT: This morning, she insisted I go all the way to the Upper East Side to show me some dust from the living room had “penetrated” her bedroom. And I just—I fucking had it.</p> <p>NINA: You quit—you—...you quit before she finished paying us?</p> <p>KIT: Now we can focus on the model.</p> <p>NINA: Kit—how could you do that to me?</p> <p>KIT: We need to concentrate on the model.</p> <p>NINA: Mrs. Tillman is my livelihood. That money is what my family lives on.</p> <p>KIT: We split the money but I do all the work.</p> <p>NINA: I designed the plans with you. I did my share until the baby was born. Mrs. Chae? I’m going to apologize to Mrs. Tillman.</p> <p>KIT: Go ahead.</p> <p>NINA: Mrs. Chae! I’m getting this job back, Kit.</p> <p>KIT: Fine, <i>you</i> can run up there every time a nail gets hammered in crooked.</p> <p>NINA: Mrs. <i>Chae!</i></p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Sorry, Nina, I could not hear you.</p> <p>NINA: I need you to take Hannah right now.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Yes, yes, I will take. (<i>In Korean.</i>) It’s ok, baby, Mommy is very busy so Grandma will take care of you.</p>	<p>You are such a selfish bitch. This is what we do. We make sure that our clients are satisfied. We listen to their grievances. You couldn’t handle it because you’re so concerned about yourself that you didn’t consider what that job meant to me?! You have <i>royally</i> fucked us over. Not just me, but my baby as well, and no one messes with my baby.</p> <p>Where the fuck are you?</p> <p>I have an emergency.</p> <p>Whoa...I recognize that word...</p>	<p>To retaliate.</p>	<p>Battle, spar, box, wrangle, shake, slap, bash, scrap, challenge, attack, claw, and shoot.</p>
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<p>NINA: What did you just say?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Mh?</p> <p>NINA: What did you just say to her?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: I say you are very busy, so I will take her upstairs—</p> <p>NINA: Did you call yourself “<i>halmoni</i>”?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: ...Yes?</p> <p>NINA: Grandma?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: In Korean language, a child will call any woman my age—</p> <p>NINA: When I come back, we need to talk.</p> <p>(NINA exits; KIT and ERIC)</p>	<p>Who do you think you are, bitch?</p>		
SCENE 11			
<p>(MILES and ERIC)...</p> <p>ERIC: You did. Why don’t you think you’re history enough for Hannah?</p> <p>NINA: You found the camcorder.</p> <p>MILES: ...Yeah.</p> <p>NINA: Where was it?</p> <p>MILES: ...Where I put it.</p> <p>ERIC: I’m gonna go to this meeting, man.</p> <p>NINA: Miles, I want to fire Mrs. Chae this afternoon.</p> <p>ERIC: Catch up with me if you can...</p>	<p>Eric, what are you trying now?</p> <p>I knew it. I was right about Reggie, and I’m right about Eric and Mrs. Chae. I lost our income, we can’t afford our nanny anymore. Please, can’t you see I need your help?</p>	<p>To invalidate.</p>	<p>Shame, reveal, expose, quash, and discredit.</p>
SCENE 12			
<p>(MILES and MRS. CHAE)...</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: (In Korean.) Nina, you’re such a good girl, hm? Give me another chance, I’ll do everything right.</p> <p>NINA: I don’t. Understand you.</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: You are good girl, such a good mommy, hm? Best</p>	<p>Why are you still here?</p> <p>Where is this coming from? Why am I hearing</p>		

<p>mommy. My daughter, she hire the British nanny to take care of my grandson. She tell me she don't want Mommy to take care of grandson. She don't want grandson to speak the bad English like mommy. Kyung Soon say when she was little girl, she speak the English like Mommy, go to school and say "preejing," it's "preejing" outside. And children laugh laugh.</p> <p>NINA: ...Pleasing?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: So cold, it's preejing and Kyung Soon come home and say, "Mommy, you are dummy. You are such dummy!"</p> <p>MILES: ...Kids...</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: So, she hire another nanny, not me. British nanny take care of my grandson.</p> <p>NINA: You said your daughter has her son in daycare at her firm?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Now I am telling you. British nanny comes at seven o'clock in morning, she stay until eight o'clock at night. Then, Tibetan nanny comes on weekend, so Kyung Soon and husband can play golf.</p> <p>MILES: She has two nannies?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: Yes.</p> <p>MILES: That's a lot of nannies.</p> <p>NINA: So...you've been lying about all of that?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: I tell you the truth now. Before, I wanted you to hire me, I see nice family, two good parents—happy baby...I wanted to be in this house, I wanted to be in this family...</p>	<p>this now for the first time? It's people like you who've set the stereotype that I have to deal with.</p> <p>You didn't tell me that during your interview. Whoa! This is a completely different story than what you told me.</p> <p>Now? <i>Now</i>, you're willing to tell me? When were you planning to do this if your circumstances were different?</p>	<p>To duel.</p>	<p>Shame, "point a finger", get even, and dishonor.</p>
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<p>MILES: Nina, maybe firing her isn't the right thing to do.</p> <p>NINA: I know people like you. Some of my mom's friends, they came to this country in the sixties, white people taunted them, told them their food stank, their faces were flat, called them gook, chink, chingaling—</p> <p>MILES: Whoa—</p> <p>NINA: Made them feel like shit for what, for walking down the street, for sending their kids to school, for starting a business. For that they were beaten up, their stores got vandalized, right?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: ... Yes. My husband and I had gift store in Yonkers. Somebody paint all over the windows.</p> <p>NINA: So what did you do?</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: We cleaned the windows. My husband and I scrubbed the paint off with our hands—</p> <p>NINA: You went looking for someone you could feel superior to. And you picked black people.</p> <p>MILES: Nina, I think you need—you need to take a step back.</p> <p>NINA: It makes me mad, it makes me ashamed of being Korean, fucking racists.</p> <p>MILES: Mrs. Chae is new to this country, she's from another generation... I don't like what she said to Hannah but I don't think she's a racist—</p> <p>NINA: Bullshit. My mom was all those things and she never said anything like that. Even in that</p>	<p>I've seen this before. I've dealt with this, and I know how to deal with you. You think you're the poor victim of racism and hate crimes, and the only solution you could find was to find someone else to take your heat. You have no idea about the history of this country—the struggles we've all made, Blacks included. You can't think for yourself, so you let the dominant culture think for you, and you agreed that Black people are the problem. No. The problem is <i>you</i>.</p> <p>Maybe this is why my mother chose to raise me American. So she could protect me from all of this.</p>	<p>To charge.</p>	<p>Accuse, try, blame, regret, dispose of, contrast, judge, stab, degrade, disassociate, terminate, and regret.</p>
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<p>shitty little town we lived in. Mrs. Chae is from Queens, she has no excuse.</p> <p>MILES: Well, she'll learn—</p> <p>NINA: Who taught my mom—nobody. It was in her heart.</p> <p>MILES: Oh, I get it. I get it now, Nina. It's like you hired Mrs. Chae to be your mom. And you're firing her because she's not.</p> <p>NINA: Geezus, Miles, is it too much to ask you to take my side?</p> <p>MILES: Side—!? What do you want this to be, Nina?</p> <p>NINA: I want you to...I want you to defend me.</p> <p>MILES: Nobody's attacking <i>you</i>!</p> <p>NINA: That's not the point.</p> <p>MILES: Excuse her, Mrs. Chae, Nina's under a tremendous amount of pressure—</p> <p>MRS. CHAE: She is working very hard.</p> <p>NINA: Don't fucking apologize for me.</p> <p>MILES: You just said you wanted me—</p> <p>NINA: Not to apologize, I want you to—Christ, if you think I'm being unreasonable—</p> <p>MILES: Yes!</p> <p>NINA: Then, fucking...hold me or something.</p> <p>MILES: You're not making me want to hold you.</p> <p>NINA: I have to do something—?</p> <p>MILES: Well, you're not making me feel like it—</p> <p>NINA: So, making all the money for the family doesn't qualify me for a hug?</p>	<p>You've completely abandoned me, haven't you? You're supposed be on my team, we're supposed to be supportive of one another's dreams, ideas and insecurities. Instead, you're just turning it around on me. I can't take anymore, Miles! If you can't take care of me, then I <i>am</i> going to <i>fail</i>. Don't you see? This isn't about you or me, or any selfish gain. It's about taking care of our family. I literally cannot live without you.</p> <p>OH, FUCK YOU! Why can't you see the sacrifices I've made for you and your child?! Do something for a change...</p>	<p>To champion.</p>	<p>Spite, attack, turn against, kick, rally, burden, pressure, harass, blame, plead, bruise, wound, and smother.</p>
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MILES: Why d’you—Why d’you have to say that?

NINA: Because I’m tired of having to tiptoe around your ego. My work is totally stressful, I’m not giving the baby the time I want—but at the end of the day, I don’t get to vent to you. If I say anything about the pressure that is fucking crushing me—you think I’m trying to make you feel bad.

MILES: So, what, you’re discounting the fact that most of the down payment for this house came from cashing in my stock options?

NINA: I’m not counting money, I could give a shit about the money—

MILES: This is obviously about the money, you resent me for not being able to provide for my daughter. Look at this house—it’s crumbling down around us. We can’t afford to fix it, we can’t afford to live in it. This is no way to raise a baby. We never should have...we were not ready to have a baby.

KIT: Is everything OK?

NINA: You’re blaming me because we have a healthy, beautiful baby?

MILES: No, I’m blaming you because we have a baby that I don’t deserve.

NINA: She needs you to love her, Miles.

MILES: It’s not enough.

REGGIE: Hey yo, son, I got the guys with the glass, they gonna

You really have no clue the lengths I’ll go for you, do you? You can’t even do one small thing for yourself, because you’re so insecure about yourself that all you care to do is play “office” with your brother.

This is about you and me. I need you more than ever, and you’ve checked out of our relationship. If you think this is all my fault, why did you let yourself go this far with me? Obviously you’re regretting me and the choices we’ve made. I thought you could protect me.

install it.			
NINA: Now? They were supposed to have come at two, here they are at six-thirty.	Why do you choose <i>this</i> moment to tell me? This is not the time.		
MRS. CHAE: That's Korean time.	Oh, shut up.		
MILES: You deal with this, Nina, I'm—			
NINA: You're what? Fuck him, man, fuck all of you. I had this perfect, precious baby and all anyone wants to do is blame me for how she's changed our lives. Of course she's changed our lives. What was so fucking good about them before?	You're what? Leaving us? Divorcing me? Leaving your baby fatherless? I had thought having a baby was the natural progression. It was supposed to bring us closer. This doesn't feel like a family. Damn it, Reggie, you're still here? I'm sorry you had to get involved.		
REGGIE: Yo, mommy, they gone have to take the rest of that old glass out first. So I'm'a have to put some drop cloth down there so you don't get no glass shards on the floor.			
NINA: OK, Reggie.	Keep it together, Nina...		
REGGIE: I'm'a go to the hardware store, so, you gone have to hit me so I can get the drop cloth.	I have to give you money...?		
NINA: Here.			
REGGIE: I'm'a need sixty.			
NINA: Sixty dollars for drop cloth?			
REGGIE: OK, forty.			
NINA: I don't have forty dollars, Reggie.			
KIT: I have forty dollars. Oh, no, I don't.			
NINA: Do you have any money?	I can't believe I'm asking <i>you</i> for this.		
MRS. CHAE: Sorry.	I can't handle this anymore. I don't want to handle this anymore.		
NINA: Just—fuck it, Reggie.	Who said I always have		
REGGIE: Alright, thirty dollars, I'll get the cheap stuff.			
NINA: Forget it—forget the whole			



<p>thing. Tell the guys they have to come back another—(<i>Crash.</i>)  Goddamnit!—  REGGIE: What the fuck! Stupid motherfucker!  NINA: (<i>Releases a sound—something between a growl and a war cry.</i>)  (<i>Sound of Hannah crying.</i>)  NINA: I'll get her.  MILES: I got her. (<i>Singing.</i>)  "Hush little baby, don't say a word. Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird. If that mockingbird won't sing, Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring." You want me to teach you the rest of the words?  NINA: Yes.  MILES: (<i>Sings.</i>) "If that diamond ring turns brass."  NINA: (<i>Sings.</i>) "Turns brass."  MILES: (<i>Sings.</i>) "Papa's gonna buy you a looking-glass."  NINA: (<i>Sings.</i>) "—looking-glass."  MILES: (<i>Sings.</i>) "If that looking-glass gets broke—"  NINA: She's looking at you.  MILES: She likes my voice.  NINA: Yes.  MILES: And she likes the way I'm holding her. See? She stopped crying when I pressed her against my chest.  NINA: She can feel your heartbeat.  MILES: With her feet? Now she can hear.  NINA: You know what I think this hole in our window's for?  MILES: No, what?  NINA: To let out all the dust and</p>	<p>to be the one in charge?  No! I can't do this. I failed my child. I've failed my mother.</p> <p>Hannah's in trouble!?  No, hungry. I'll take care of <i>my</i> baby, interloper. I can't believe it. It's you!  Thank you! I knew you'd come back to me! You do love her! You love me!  You made her stop crying!  Show me how you did it.</p> <p>I knew you had to love her. How could you not?  You really have a way with her.</p> <p>Maybe everything's supposed to happen out of control for a reason...  So we can stand back and</p>	<p>To unite.</p>	<p>Bond, flatter, flirt, tickle, embrace, comfort, adore, cling, kiss, hug, and love.</p>
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ghosts that have been trapped in here. MILES: There's too many old stories floating around. NINA: It's our house now.	look at what really is there, and appreciate it for what it is, and move on. We are a family now.		
END OF PLAY			

## REHEARSAL JOURNAL

**1/5/09** – Meet and Greet and First Read-Through.

One topic that keeps coming to mind from our discussion after the initial read through is who is withholding, and who is being set up? All the characters, with the exception of Nina, are withholding some information that they are afraid to express. Miles doesn't openly admit that he's afraid of being alienated from Nina because of the baby. Mrs. Chae withholds the truth of her daughter's denial of her until the end. Kit, after a long argument, admits that she feels like she's missing a lot of opportunities because of Nina. Eric sets everyone up to become part of his master plan. Reggie, however, withholds a softness that makes him vulnerable, and he's afraid to let others see that side of him (probably the reason why he gets so defensive). Another huge discussion that surfaced was about the racial issues between Nina and Mrs. Chae. Also, we never really know what issues there are between Mrs. Chae and her daughter. The playwright certainly hints at racial tensions between Mrs. Chae and her Yuppie Korean American daughter.

As a Chinese-American, I grew up in a similar situation to Nina. My mother's second language is English, there were many times in my adolescence when I felt like I was being held back because of my ethnicity and my inability to communicate to her exactly how I felt. I blamed my mother at times, because of the cultural and generational distance between the two of us. As I grew older, I learned that my mother, the matriarch, was (and still is) the keeper of our family traditions. She's the one who reminded us of Chinese New Year, and made sure we wore charms to bless us with health and longevity. When my sister was recently married to a Caucasian man, she wanted a traditional Chinese tea ceremony along with the Catholic wedding ceremony. My mother, grandmother, and all my old Chinese aunties gathered to help us with this old tradition. My sister was dressed all in red silk. She and her husband drank tea with the older couples who blessed them, and showered my sister with gifts of gold jewelry for luck.

Since my sister's wedding, I have been trying to learn who I am, where I come from, and what such traditions mean to me. As a woman, I realize that it will be my responsibility one day to hold on to these traditions and pass them down to my own children. My mother and I are still learning to allay our differences, and trying to gain a better understanding of each other as adults. That is a challenge, however, because I'm learning about a cultural history that seems so alien to me. I am an American woman: loud, brash, crass, bawdy, and extravagant—very different from the feminine virtues of a good Chinese daughter.

During the read-through I discovered that, as Nina, my connection to Miles was a lot deeper than I had originally thought. We've both had the same experiences growing up. We were both raised in predominantly white neighborhoods by parents that didn't necessarily embrace our ethnicity, choosing instead to assimilate us into the dominant culture. Even though we've both experienced the standard white suburban-American upbringing as everyone else around us, we were still made to feel different just because of the way we appeared on the outside.

Other discoveries that I made included the frustration of dealing with one problem at a time, and not letting the pressure of the baby become the center of all the scenes. On a scale from one to ten, I started the read-through at seven, but found that by the fourth scene I had no where else to go. Initially I made the choice to whine about my circumstances, but soon discovered that Nina was actually evaluating her and Mile's current state; they had grown up and outgrown their "twenty-something" lifestyle in Manhattan. They now had their careers, each other, and a baby. Their obvious next step was to move out of the city and into a house.

#### **1/6/09 – Continuing Read-Through/Table Session, Scenes Two and Three**

My journey, as Nina, was to discover how much she could tolerate before she finally exploded. She is a lot stronger and tougher than one would think. In staging the first scene inside the house (scene two), most of my explorations were about how I negotiated the space, and how

I'd use the boxes in the scene. Since Nina is a control freak, who needs order and structure, (she's an architect) she rarely finds herself sitting probably because the moment she sits, she'll crash from exhaustion. She needs to keep moving in order to maintain her momentum. The one time that she does sit in this scene is when Miles takes advantage of her exhaustion, and attempts to coerce her into having sex. When she drops her guard for one second, Miles repels her off the couch by making a pass at her; this action gets her back in motion. It is at this point that Eric enters, and Nina retreats to the kitchen to get away from both of them.

Eric leaves a bad taste in Nina's mouth for she suspects that he is up to something bad. However, when she first meets Reggie, she is completely receptive to him. I can't decide if she's receptive to Reggie because of Miles' initial suspicions towards him, or if she just wants to prove that she's always right. There are times, however, when she does relent like when Miles asks her to go back upstairs because of the broken glass. One thing is certain, Nina chooses her battles!

#### **1/7/09 – Blocking Scenes One and Four; Reviewing Scene Three**

In scene one the playwright introduces Nina as a new mother with a two-week-old baby. This scene is going to be a huge challenge for me, because I haven't had much baby experience. I need to establish the convention of the baby as I'm the only person on stage at the top of the show. I must relate to an inanimate object as if it were alive and responding. I hope that spending time with JP Bray's (a graduate student colleague) one-month-old child will shed some light on parenting. Perhaps this experience will also allow me to find the physical life necessary to endow the fake baby with a real life. Regardless, I feel as if the first scene is more or less a prologue, with the show beginning in scene two.

#### **1/8/09 – Blocking Scenes Five and Six**

Today we began staging scenes five and six. Scene five was the most difficult to block thus far. Sightlines have been a problem in the past for table scenes in the Reilly Theatre (with its

three-quarter round stage), and the location of the office for scene five is downstage left of the Brooklyn brownstone. The office contains a large worktable, which is central to all the scenes in that space. For that reason, a majority of today's rehearsal was spent trying not to get lost on stage. Today was also problematic because I was struggling with lines.

Scene five is the first scene where we see how Nina and Kit interact without the guys around. We get to see how they negotiate their personal and professional relationships. Nina begins to get a sense of Kit's nagging need to succeed in the Barcelona Art Center Competition. (Kit is that single friend that constantly complains about how miserable her single life has become.) When Eric enters, that's the last straw for Nina. How can Kit be so gracious towards him when he is obviously so unwelcome in Nina's house? This is also the first time in the play where Nina struggles with her separation from Hannah.

In scene six Nina finally expresses to Miles exactly how she feels towards Eric. She even considers Reggie as a better influence on Miles than Eric is. Nina slowly begins to feel Miles turning on her. Eric is a bad influence; he's irresponsible, uses poor judgment, cares only for himself, gets himself into trouble and somehow gets off the hook for it every time. Eric works hard to make sure that he will be taken care of, and that really irks Nina, because she spreads herself so thin working like hell, and nothing seems to fall into place for her. With Mrs. Chae's entrance before Eric's invasion, Nina finds an ally, and some relief before she loses it again.

#### **1/9/09 – Staging Scenes Eight, Nine and Ten**

While out for a drink after rehearsal, Michele Guidry, (the actress playing Kit, and someone who has adequate baby experience) reminds me that when I hold Hannah I'm holding a living, breathing human being in its most vulnerable state. As such, I need to become more aware of this on stage. Hopefully this will feel more natural when I get the real prop baby, instead of the rehearsal baby. Once the sound of the baby crying is introduced, scene nine will

make more sense. In these scenes, Nina is torn between standing by her husband and answering the call of her baby. The moment that is extremely powerful for me is when Nina chooses the baby and Miles walks out on them. I'm not quite sure why. It could be because I have an amazing scene partner (Miles, played by Yohance Myles), or because I really do feel a connection to Nina's overwhelming responsibility and abandonment. At this moment, Nina tries to regain Miles' allegiance from Eric, but by the end of the scene ends up losing it.

Scene eight is probably the easiest scene (for me) to block despite the presence of the table. Thanks to the playwright, Nina is a fixed figure in the scene, while everybody else orbits around her. In this scene the audience finally sees Nina doing her work—something she's been trying to do the entire show. We get a visual sense that progress is happening in their work. Nina's head is finally on straight, but not for long as her circumstances quickly snow-ball out of control. When Mrs. Chea says "you cannot really tell if Hannah looks black," Nina's alarms go off. Also at that moment, Miles enters with the plan to set up a trap for Reggie in an attempt to prove that all black people steal and are dishonest.

In scene nine, I feel torn between Miles' need for my support and the baby's cries. When Eric enters, I feel like I am being ambushed from two sides by rebel forces trying to overthrow me. I played with being trapped in the middle of the room. Scene ten is when Nina begins to feel overwhelmed by all the events that have come up. By then, the baby has left her so overly hormonal and emotional. She finally realizes that she really *can't* do this by herself. She really needs her partner—not necessarily Kit, but Miles, her partner in life. She *needs* him to "be in it with [her]" not "in it" with Eric.

**1/10/09** – Work/Run-Through of Scenes One through Ten, and Restaging Scene Ten.

This evening's rehearsal was the first time I felt the progression of events, even though we stopped often. I finally felt Nina's pressure building on top of her, so that by the time I got to

scene ten, I understood Nina's need for an emotional release. I felt the progression of everybody turning on her in some way, and I also felt the importance of her relationship with Hannah. Since everybody seems to be at odds with her, Nina turns to Hannah for her unconditional love.

#### **1/12/09 – Stage and Work Scenes Six, Eleven, Twelve**

In reworking parts of scene six, I can consistently find interesting tensions between Eric and Nina. Nick Rhoton, as Eric, really adds a lot to this dynamic because he offers a character that is snide, self-righteous, and resistant. He deliberately pulls Miles out of his rightful responsibilities. His character is such that I wouldn't get along with him in real life because he imposes and unsettles me. Although Miles constantly sidesteps Nina's requests to help her with the baby, he finds other ways of making his unemployed time useful. He installs the tiles with Reggie, composes a business plan with Eric, and helps Mrs. Chae with the laundry. What he doesn't do is help Nina with the baby. It's as if Eric has brain-washed him against her requests. I feel like Eric is deliberately does this to Nina as a power play. However, because Nina wants Miles to be on her side, she humors his Eric, but each time he shoots her down, it provides her (and me) with even more reasons to dislike him.

The trap of scene twelve is that Nina reaches her breaking point. She takes out her frustration by starting to hit the window, but as there is no glass in our production, we had several options to consider. The director's original intention was to suspend time and movement when the glass breaks (in this scene and scene two). To support this choice, he sought to conceptualize the moment with frozen action supported by sound and light. Without the technical aspects in rehearsal, however, these moments were extremely difficult to realize. We tried this idea, but I found that as I built the intensity the freeze killed the momentum of the scene. We next tried the sequence in real time, but as I was about to hit the glass, the baby's cries jarred me



back into “reality.” Eventually this was the solution for the evening, and for the realized production.

In the last scene, the emotional journey that Nina takes (and the fights she picks with everyone else on stage,) was especially draining for me, especially after running it over and over. I soon realized that if I were going to have enough stamina to get through the last scene, I couldn’t allow myself to run out of steam in the prior scenes. I eventually built up to the last scene, which made the final moment more significant. If I had exploded over and over again, it wouldn’t have been as effective. When we see the pressure cooker building steam throughout the entire show, the final moment will have greater impact when we see the top explode off completely.

#### **1/14/09 – Work Scenes Eleven and Twelve**

We fixed the staging problems in scene twelve from the night before. Most of the problems had to do with the beginning of the scene between Mrs. Chae, Miles, and Nina. For example, it occurred to me that I had no clue as to why I entered the room in the first place. Obviously Nina had wanted to avoid confrontation with Mrs. Chae after firing her, and as such, it seemed almost ridiculous that she would enter the scene at all. The solution was simple: We decided that she was thirsty and needed to cross to the refrigerator for a bottle of water. In crossing upstage from the table to the sink, it also opened up the scene for Mrs. Chae and her lengthy monologue about her daughter. In addition, it left me in a powerful position to accuse and defend.

#### **1/15/09 – First Run-Through with Notes.**

Tonight’s rehearsal was very rough. For our first run-through of the entire show I mostly regurgitated lines as did everyone else on stage with me. I didn’t warm up so I was unfocused. It also didn’t help that we had our teachers as our first audience. Most of the notes I received had to

do with line specificity and delivery, which was undoubtedly because I was still unfamiliar with my lines.

At this rehearsal, we worked scene one on top of a large platform that had originally been designed for the New York City (or Manhattan) apartment. It was the first time that we had had that opportunity. Given the height, space, and distance from the audience, however, this scene was simply unfocused. Lines were delivered too fast, we weren't really listening to each other, and I was playing Nina too bitchy. As Joanna Battles (our vocal coach) pointed out, "*we want to like her.*"

In scene two, I rushed the whole first half with Miles, and as such, I lost sight of the thought process and the discoveries in the moment. I knew I needed to spend more time with the script to really identify the individual beats within each line, and the vocal builds. I needed to know why I was saying those words at that time. When Eric made his first entrance, there needed to be more of a reaction to his sudden presence; first, because we're not expecting him to show up; second, because we hadn't seen this guy for years. However, because he is a part of Nina's family, she welcomes him to her new home for Miles' sake.

Another general note that I received was that vocally I tended to go into my upper register, causing me to use a chirpier, higher voice. As a result, I was having difficulty achieving (or playing) her maturity. To compensate, I made Nina vocally too strong, blowing past my scene partners in an attempt to use a strong, confident voice to represent Nina's age. Such was not the problem with scene three.

I realized that I needed to look at the intention behind my lines because there was way too much rushing going on between my conversations with Mrs. Chae in scene four. I think that I also needed to look at the interruption of lines as a change of tactics in trying to communicate with her. When Mrs. Chae calls the baby "*hana*," I correct her, but when she calls her that a

second time, I had to take notice. In my mind it made sense because of her dialect. (My own mother has difficulty saying certain words and names because of the way her articulators developed from making the Chinese sounds. To this day, she can't properly say the word "coin." It always comes out as "corn.")

In scene five, Nina confides to Kit that Miles's allegiance seems to be turning towards Eric. The tone is reminiscent of women talking about their periods to their best friends. Nina can't express this to Miles because he's a guy and may not understand the changes in her body. It's the same reason he doesn't understand why Nina's not ready to have sex again.

In scene six, Nina as a Korean American is racially offended that Eric takes advantage of Asians, who he believes are more gullible, and less informed: he "bamboozles" them by tricking them into thinking Caucasian Americans are superior to all other races. In *Intraethnic, Interracial, and Interethnic Marriages among Korean American Women*, an essay written by Gin Young Pang, I read that Korean parents whose children wish to marry interracially prefer their children to marry Whites (the dominant race) before any other races (aside from other Koreans or Asian Americans).<sup>2</sup> Throughout rehearsals I couldn't let go of this fact.

For scene eight, I need to take time to process what Kit's saying to me and interpret what those intentions are telling me, especially when she's trying to uncover the truth about Miles' origins. During the confrontation with Mrs. Chae, I need to identify the tactics Nina uses against her, and allow them to change the vocal quality of each line. The same goes with scene nine. This is the scene where Nina really tries to tell Miles the truth about Eric in order to win him back. There needs to be a softer approach to her argument in general if for no other reason than she needs him on her side. The last thing she wants to do is scare him away.

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<sup>2</sup> This essay was found in a collection of essays titled *Korean-American Women: From Traditional to Modern Feminism*. Edited by Young I. Song and Ailee Moon.

In scene ten, Nina and Kit's professional and personal relationship begins to fall apart. The scene begins with Nina breast feeding (not an easy task with a fake baby and no real-life experience) and upset that so much has gone wrong. Although there is a strong emotional intensity in this scene, there also needs to be an awareness that a baby is in my arms. I also need to be careful not to turn Nina into a little girl whining to her friend. As a "30-something", she must handle her problems accordingly. The reason she addresses her personal problems to Kit is because she seeks a solution, and some emotional support.

Scene twelve is dangerous for me because I allow Nina to become so irritated that I get too emotional too soon; the whole house goes up in flames before the glass even breaks. I need to rhetorically analyze the offensive lines I say to Mrs. Chae. I need to concentrate on how and why I'm delivering them to her; what are the lists, how am I coloring the words, and what is the overall affect I want out of my argument? After I blow up at Miles, I need to try to bring it back down, and reason with him because I need him to be on my side.

### **1/15/09 – Second Run-through**

The run was much better tonight. The pace seemed a lot slower today, because *everybody* took the time to really listen to each other and themselves. I think the director generally liked the work, but I think he preferred us to pick up the pace. I found myself really responding to Eric in a different light. Overall we were both much more agreeable in our attempt to like each other better.

Now that we are becoming more familiar with the progression of the scenes, and the overall arc of the show, we can begin to pay more attention to the details. I think that's what the director was looking for at tonight's rehearsal. That said, scene one is still very awkward, because we are so far from the audience. So much of what we do on that elevated platform is lost. The space is small which forces us to be in closer contact. Because of the height, I have no

idea how we sound. I tried to negotiate this new space and the fake baby, but without the baby sounds I found that the rhythms of the first scene made little sense.

For scene two, I took the note on Eric's initial entrance but the reaction still needs to be bigger. Nick tried a new approach to Eric which really made our first moment of contact less awkward. I responded really well to the new, likeable Eric. It's too early for me to hate him by scene three, because he hasn't really given me much of a reason to pass judgment yet. I was given the note to have more fun with Eric on the line, "I was giving voice to her thoughts." I will continue to experiment with colorizing each of those words. In scene five, I need to be more loveable towards Kit. I should experiment with laughing, joking, and having more fun while we work. I need to play with the "super hero power" and find a sound and gesture.

#### **1/16/09 – Rework Scenes One and Two**

Major changes were made tonight. First, the entire Manhattan apartment looming above the set was cut, and the scene was moved to the floor, downstage of the house. With no props or furniture, the convention of the apartment will now be established through lighting. It was awkward negotiating in this "new" space, but still better than our previous situation. It allowed the intimacy of the scene to be played in contrast to project it over a large space.

#### **1/18/09 – Discoveries on Nina and Miles**

Nina and Miles are equal so they can't function without the other. Nina needs Miles just as much as he needs her, but when Miles starts leaning on people other than Nina, she begins to feel as if a part of herself has deserted her. As new parents in a new environment, they now need each other more than ever, but as Miles begins to crack under the pressure, he emotionally abandons Nina. Nina may seem to be the power force in control of the family, and as such she really needs Miles to take care of her so she can take care of everyone else. This is especially difficult, however, given that Kit abandons her, Mrs. Chae lies, and the baby has constant

demands. Since the baby is a new variable in Nina and Miles's lives they need to know how to negotiate their "new" relationship while balancing the other demands in their lives, which appears to orbit around them. Nina orbits around Miles and the baby orbits around her. It may seem like Nina does all the work for the family, but Miles is the one in control; he keeps Nina in orbit so that she can operate properly and do all the things necessary for her to keep their lives in order. Without him she is capable of spiraling out of control.

The love Nina has for Hannah is the one of the few joys she has while Miles remains preoccupied with Eric. Since she has so much love for her baby, she compromises some of her relationship with Miles because she wants to give it all to her daughter (which is probably why Miles begins to lean on his brother). For this reason she explains to Kit her diminished love for Miles. She even states, "I have nothing left to give."

In Nina's final monologue in scene twelve, I finally know why she's saying these things and to whom she is saying them. I understand fully how Miles has abandoned his responsibility to me and the baby. When I address everyone on stage it is because they are all staring at me and complicating my circumstances even further. I address Mrs. Chae because she doesn't consider my mixed blood Korean baby to be "clean." I address Kit when she complains that my attention has turned from our work to my daughter. Finally I address Reggie because his history with my house makes it even harder for it to become mine. Ironically he's the only person I can't legitimately be mad at because he's done nothing but offer to help me.

### **1/19/09 – Run-through**

Today I was invited to meet with JP Bray, a Ph.D. student in our department and his six-month-old baby. The experience provided me with a lot to think about while handling the fake baby during the rehearsal tonight. (Obviously, the fake baby doesn't respond the way I need it to, but the time that I spent with JP Bray's baby was truly valuable in tonight's rehearsal.)

Tonight I found many new things in Nina's relationship with Miles. For example, in the first scene, I nagged him about the boxes because in my mind we made a deal to move on beyond our old Manhattan lifestyle.

## **1/25/09 – Scene Two**

Scene two is the biggest challenge for me right now as this scene establishes the world of the play: who these people are, how much they afford to gain, and how far they have to fall by the end of the play. One of the hardest moments comes at the very beginning of this scene when Nina has an exchange with Miles about the boxes. Several things need to be accomplished in the first couple of lines. They provide the exposition that tells us what to expect from their relationship and how they deal with each other. They also show Nina's human and comic side. Because she is the protagonist, it's important that she's likeable. At the same time, she picks on Miles in such a way that we see how much control she needs. When is she "sugar-coating" and controlling her emotions? When is she genuine?

What worked for me in this scene tonight was when I slowed down and approached Miles with more ease, tiredness, and humor. By taking more time with the delivery, I made discoveries that connected my thoughts. For example, when Miles tried to coerce me into having sex with him, I was firm, but not quite so angry. To support this ease in our relationship later in the scene, the director had me play with a spray bottle which I turned into a gun to threaten Miles and Eric on the line, "I don't think that's a good idea." This action required some work so that it didn't read as contrived or anticipated.

Yohance made an adjustment tonight when we confronted one another in scene nine. What started as a scene about yelling became a scene about hurt—a very powerfully genuine and subtle hurt that added a completely contrasting texture to all the yelling that had been going on.

This change invited some emotional adjustments, but I think Yohance and I worked well off each other. I'm confident that we will continue to make discoveries in this scene.

**1/29/09 – Run-Through**

For the most part, I found many new discoveries in the tempo and vocal intensity with microphones and the sounds of the crying baby. Adding the sounds of the baby brought a completely new character into each scene, which took a lot longer to adjust to than I had originally thought. For example, if the baby cooed or screamed, I had to acknowledge. I had to find the physical place where the sound of the baby lived in my body. I needed to not only discover intellectual responses to the baby's cries, but also the physical responses.



## CONCLUSION

The biggest challenge I encountered writing this thesis was my reluctance to personally address the racial issues that Nina faced. When I first read the play, I imagined a modern Asian American female who struggled under a tremendous amount of responsibilities, while bombarded by racial issues. Diana Son admitted that *Satellites* wasn't intended to be a play about racism, but since I couldn't connect to Nina from a new-mother perspective, I connected to her from a cultural perspective. I didn't think that this would be a difficult role because I knew what it was like to be an Asian American female dealing with lots of pressure. I researched Korean women in America and read articles about interracial coupling, identity crises, and the difficult assimilation (often physically and psychologically damaging) of Korean women into the mainstream culture. I connected emotionally with the content because I identified so strongly with the women in these articles, and how their stories related to the play. I had never tackled a role that struck so close to home emotionally, and I had never known what it really meant to bring 'myself' to a role so strongly.

When I interviewed Diana Son, my attention was primarily focused on the character of Nina. I didn't anticipate, however, how much Son had to say about Miles as well. I wanted to understand the contexts in which she had created Nina. In Nina's journal I wrote a fictional account about a Korean woman at odds with her past due to her circumstances (professional, familial, personal, and intrapersonal). However, when I brought these choices to the stage, the note I received night after night was that I wasn't being specific enough with the intention behind what I was saying. In the beginning stages of the rehearsal process, I approached the character of Nina as a very intense and overwhelmed woman. Most of my focus was directed towards the relationship between Nina and her baby, and how the problems orbited around her new circumstances. After our final dress rehearsal, however, a professor of mine asked me why Nina

married Miles in the first place because he felt that there wasn't any love in their relationship. I had focused so much on Nina's steady decline, and all the problems surrounding her, that I had ignored the love in each scene. Perhaps that was why Son couldn't talk about Nina without talking about Miles. *Satellites* isn't a story about a woman at odds with her place in the world, but a story about a couple who need each other's love to survive. After that realization, an avenue of new questions opened up for me. What did Nina and Miles like about each other? How had they grown together? Why did they need each other? What did they see worth fighting for in their relationship? Because Nina and Miles don't have fully defined histories, they discovered that through each other that they could create their own history together. If their relationship was an equation, they would be the balanced parts; if one part of the equation was canceled out, the other half would be canceled out too. Certainly Nina could not survive without Miles.

As part of the rehearsal process, Yohance and I played with many moments on stage. We teased, flirted, joked, and shared secrets as if we had a language all our own. We found so much joy in Nina and Miles' relationship that it seemed almost impossible for our (their) relationship to crumble apart. One evening while working on scene ten, the director asked me about the images that came to mind when Nina recalled the memories from her childhood. I repeated the choices I had prepared as my character work, but he said the choices still weren't specific enough to *me*. He told me to trust that my own history was also Nina's, and whatever images or memories I experienced, Nina has experienced too. So, I focused on my family's first house, eating popsicles on the front lawn, sledding down the driveway, my first Huffy mountain bike, my carnation pink helmet, the girls I played with in the neighborhood, and the clubs we invented. I took great care in specifically painting these pictures for audiences to see. It was important for me to tell my own story so that others might understand the pain of being denied an identity. In

my own search for identity, I have never truly felt American because America wasn't ready to see me as one of their own. I have also felt estranged from my Chinese heritage because I don't speak the language or understand the traditions. Similarly, Nina's experience with her identity didn't allow her to feel like an American. Because she couldn't relate to her Korean heritage, she defined herself on her own terms—just like I had. Nina, like me, became untraditional, open, honest, abrasive, playful, and competitive.

Once all of the production elements were on stage, I was able to find the honesty in Nina. I was proud of how she continued to grow throughout the run. My most significant encounter with Nina happened on opening night, when my parents attended the show. They sat in the audience, and when they saw Nina struggle with her internalized racism, they saw me, their Chinese American daughter, and all of the struggles with my identity that they witnessed during childhood. Suddenly I was aware of the impact Nina's words must have had on them. On that night, my parents became a physical projection of Nina's parents, and they witnessed together her struggle against everything from which they had tried to protect me. My parents wanted to provide me with everything that Nina's parents had wanted for her. After Opening Night, the show embodied a completely new context for me.

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## APPENDIX A - PRODUCTION PHOTOS



Nina and Hannah interviewing Mrs. Chae in scene four. (Photo by Eddy Perez)



Miles arguing with Nina in scene six. (Photo by Eddy Perez)



In the office with Kit, Mrs. Chae, and Nina in scene eight. (Photo by Eddy Perez)



Nina and Hannah reunite with Miles in scene twelve, while Kit and Mrs. Chae look on. (Photo by Eddy Perez)

## APPENDIX B – PUBLICITY ARTICLE

### *THE ADVOCATE*

Swine Palace Production 'A Story About, Well, Life'

- By ROBIN MILLER
- arts writer
- Published: Feb 1, 2009 - UPDATED: 12:05 a.m.

“Hey Michael, hold my baby.”

The voice belongs to Jessica Wu, calling from the opposite side of what will be a Brooklyn brownstone.

It’s a work in progress, empty walls that will soon be home to Miles and Nina. And their baby.

And Wu plays Nina in this story called *Satellites*, an American of Korean descent who grew up in an all-white neighborhood. Wu will later say that she connects with Nina, because she, too, grew up in a similar situation.

But she’ll also say she hasn’t yet experienced Nina’s status of motherhood. Which is probably why the baby is extra baggage at the moment — baggage that Michael Tick will have to take on while Wu runs backstage.

So, “Hey Michael, hold my baby.”

“Will do,” Tick said, reaching for the infant.

Well, the doll that serves as the infant.

“Oh, this one is ugly,” he said, glancing into the doll’s face. “You should see the doll we’ll be using for the show. It’s much prettier.”

“Look,” a crew member yelled out. “He holds it like a professional.”

Tick looks up, smiles and tucks the doll beneath his arm.

“This is how I used to carry my daughter,” he said, never missing a beat.

But when taking all into consideration, the doll beneath Tick’s arm — the baby — is the character that will be affected most when the final line is uttered in *Satellites*.

Tick is directing this Swine Palace production of playwright Diana Son’s 2006 play that explores race, culture and the struggle to balance work and life. The play opens Thursday, Feb. 5, at the Reilly Theatre on the LSU campus and continues to Feb. 22.

The story sounds pretty heavy, doesn't it?

"Well, it's not really," Tick said. "There's no gloom and doom at the end, and the play has its funny parts. It's just a story about, well, life."

The life of Miles, a young black man played by Yohance Myles, and his Korean American wife Nina. Miles, like Nina, grew up in an ethnically different environment, having been adopted by a Caucasian couple as an infant.

"And that's why the two connect," Wu said. "They are both detached from their cultures and the traditions from those cultures. And being of Chinese descent, I can relate. I grew up in Seattle, and I don't speak Chinese. I don't observe the traditions of my culture, but now I'm wishing that I had that."

Satellites premiered at The Public Theatre in New York. The story begins in Miles' and Nina's Manhattan apartment in a predominantly white neighborhood. But things change when they move to a predominantly black neighborhood.

Suddenly, their identities aren't neatly defined. Miles realizes this upon meeting Reggie, played by New York actor James Edward Lee. Nina's realization comes when hiring the Korean nanny Mrs. Chae, played by Virginia Wing, also of New York.

"We're an equity theater, so we cast out of New York," marketing director Vastine Stabler said. "These are two great actors."

Wing actually shares Wu's Chinese background.

"So, I had to learn to do a Korean accent," she said, laughing. "In New York, there's so much conflict between Koreans and blacks, because a lot of Koreans own stores in black neighborhoods. My character isn't biased, but she says things in such a way that the young woman she's working for takes them as racially biased."

It's just a matter of cultural differences, and Nina and Miles realize their world has changed when a brick is thrown through their bay window during their welcome party to the neighborhood. The hole it creates opens up the house to a string of unexpected problems and the couple discovers a world in which tradition, social order and economic and sexual boundaries are always changing and moving.

Who are they to trust among these new strangers? How can they continue relating to their old friends? And what about their new baby, a daughter?

She's to grow up in a world that's unfamiliar to her parents who are unable to pass along their own cultures' traditions.

"It's hard for Nina," Wu said. "Miles is drifting away from her as he discovers his own culture, and she feels so isolated."



Son, by the way, also is author of the play *Stop Kiss*, as well as a writer and co-executive producer of the television series *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*.

In previous interviews, she said she titled the play *Satellites* because the characters are free-floating. Satellites are small entities that orbit larger entities, but the characters lack the larger entity, the defining part of their lives.

So, the satellites in this story end up colliding.

“Miles sees a different kind of black man in my character,” James Edward Lee said. “I play Reggie, and Reggie grew up in this neighborhood. Miles is unsure of his background, and suddenly he meets Reggie, who is secure in his identity as a black man. And Miles is intrigued.”

Reggie is also Lee’s first character in his first play in Louisiana.

“No. I haven’t even worked in a production in New Orleans,” Lee said. “Baton Rouge is my first, and I have to say, I love it down here. The hospitality isn’t a myth — it’s true. Everyone’s been so great.”

Lee learned about *Swine Palace* through a college professor’s friend long before he was chosen to play Reggie. He’d initially tried out for a part in *Swine Palace*’s 2004 production of August Wilson’s *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* but was deemed too young for the part.

“But they kept me in mind,” Lee said. “And when this part came up, they called me.”

Lee likes Reggie. Now, he’s not saying Reggie is a sainted character; the guy has his flaws.

“Reggie likes people,” Lee said. “He might see what he can get out of them, but a lot of times it’s to be around them. And he doesn’t care if he aggravates them as long as he can be around them. I’ve come in contact with people like this, and they’re generally harmless.”

Lee fixes his eyes on the set. This is home. The stage, that is. It doesn’t matter where the stage is located, and it doesn’t matter what character he may be playing.

He almost gave it up one time. He’d taken board exams to become a teacher but returned to the stage upon receiving a call from a college professor.

“He said, ‘What are you doing?’” Lee said. “He said, ‘You’re an actor, and you’re good at it. So go act.’”

Wing, meantime, also is an actor returning to the stage after an absence. She’s originally from the Mississippi Delta and lived in California for a while.

Then she found herself in a single mom situation, rearing two children on her own. That took precedence over acting.

“But I’ve returned to it, and I love it,” Wing said.

She's since appeared in some off Broadway productions, as well as plays in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Milwaukee, Wis.

"I think this play is very relevant to the times," she said. "There are so many interracial children these days, and that's our hope in the world. Both of my grandchildren are interracial, and they're so beautiful."

And Wing's character Mrs. Chae sees beauty not only in the baby she's hired to care for, but in Nina and Miles themselves.

"There's just a gap between Nina and Mrs. Chae," Wing said.

Wu returns from backstage and collects her baby from Tick. She's in her third and final year in the LSU Department of Theatre's master of fine arts program, and this is her big role.

Meaning, the starring role in her LSU career. Audience members may remember her in Hair and High School Musical.

But this is her spotlight.

"I'll be graduating in the spring," she said. "And I'm happy to get to star in Diana Son's play."

It's a play Tick learned about through a New York Times review when the play opened in The Public Theatre in 2006. He didn't see a performance, but was intrigued by the story.

"I liked Diana Son's first play, and I thought Satellites would be something we could cast at LSU with the graduate students we have in our program," Tick said. "And we would be able to stage it in our space."

The presidential campaign also was a factor in Tick's decision to put Satellites on the schedule.

"During the whole presidential campaign, I wanted to find a play that dealt with racial themes in America and what it means to be an American," Tick said. "I contacted Diana Son's agent, and Diana Son sent us the most recent rehearsal draft."

Meaning the play hadn't yet been published. Meaning the Swine Palace production would be one of the first venues to host this story.

"Then I saw a copy of it in the Drama Bookshop in New York, so it had been published after that," Tick said. "And we were able to get the rights. And we're the third theater company that will perform this play."

He pauses.

"We're one of only three theater companies to do this so far," Tick said, emphasizing his point. "That's pretty significant for Swine Palace."

But in the end, you have to wonder. With all the soul searching and self-discovery that takes place in Satellites, what will the world be like for Miles' and Nina's daughter?

Wu stands onstage, cuddling the dolls in her arms, not daring to let go.

And somehow you know everything will be OK.

**CAST:** Joshua Dawes, understudy for Eric; Kenneth De Abrew, Walter; Michele Guidry, Kit; James Edward Lee, Reggie; Natalie Meyer, understudy for Kit; Yohance Myles, Miles; Nick Rhoton, Eric; Virginia Wing, Mrs. Chae; Jessica Wu, Nina

**ARTISTIC STAFF:** Michael Tick, director; John Raley, set designer; Jim Bussolati, props master; Ken White, lighting designer; Robin McGee, costumer designer; E.J. Cho, sound designer; Joanna Battles, vocal coach; David Coley, dramaturg

**PRODUCTION STAFF:** Jim Murphy, production manager; Pat Acampora, master electrician; Wayne Parmley, assistant technical director; Ginger Robertson, costume director; [sic] Lisa Davis, stage manager\*

**STAGE AND MANAGEMENT STAFF:** Karli Henderson, stage manager; Bradley Sanchez, assistant stage manager

**ADMINISTRATION:** Michael Tick, producing artistic director; [sic] Kristin Sosnowsky, marketing director; Vastine Stabler, marketing director; Sarah Smith, company manager\*\*

\*Lisa Davis served as Wardrobe Supervisor and is the LSU Costume Shop Manager.

\*\*Kristin Sosnowsky is the Managing Director of Swine Palace.

## APPENDIX C – PRODUCTION REVIEWS

### *THE ADVOCATE*

#### Acting, Tight Dialogue Make ‘Satellites’ Fly

- By Ed Cullen
- Advocate staff writer
- Published: Feb 11, 2009 - Page: 1E - UPDATED: 12:15 a.m.

You’ll like “Satellites” more if you know nothing about it. So, stop reading.

For those of you who don’t want to like the play more, Diana Son, a writer/producer on “Law and Order: Criminal Intent,” has been called her generation’s Neil Simon. She’s not, just as George Carlin wasn’t HIS generation’s Mark Twain. Apples and kumquats.

Nor do I find Son’s play, “Satellites,” a study of “big-city identity crisis,” as one reviewer called it, or an understanding of what it’s like to be a hyphen American. In “Satellites,” directed by Michael Tick, the hyphenated ones are a Korean American architect; her husband, an out-of-work, dot-com producer who’s African American; an older across-the- street neighbor, black, who pre-dates hyphens and a past middle-aged Korean nanny who’ll happily die just plain Korean.

Oh, the Arican American dot-com guy’s brother is white. Long story. The actor who plays the brother looks Irish or Austrian.

The reason you should see “Satellites” is for its tight dialogue and acting that includes experienced theater students and equity actors. Without the playbill, you’d be guessing who’s student and who’s pro. Virginia Wing, who plays the nanny, Mrs. Chae, could be a “nontraditional student” finally going for that MFA in theater.

Jessica Wu (Nina), a veteran of the LSU boards, could have stepped in for Sandra Oh, who opened “Satellites” at The Public Theater in New York. Nina has her office in the Brooklyn brownstone she and her husband are renovating and living in with their baby and a growing list of newcomers.

Yohance Myles, who plays the husband, Miles, (that’s right) is another LSU actor we’ve enjoyed watching learn his craft.

Eric, Miles’ brother, is played by Nick Rhoton. Rhoton has either done his time as a writer of “business plans” or he’s roomed with several career business plan writers.

Kit, Nina’s partner in a two-woman architecture firm on the brownstone’s bottom floor, is played by equity actor Michele Guidry who could try out for LSU cheerleader once she can yell in a mouse’s voice, “Gay Taygers” (Go Tigers).

Wing, as Mrs. Chae, pours more plaster into the stereotype of Korean grandmother. “Mother” in Korean is pronounced “Mommy.”

Equity actor James Edward Lee plays across-the-street neighbor Reggie, old school black man to Miles’ call me Miles, call me brother but do NOT “call me nigger in my own house.”

Lee is the keel in this slim sloop of a show. Look for Walter, played by Kenneth De Abrew. He’s right there.

John Raley’s set is functional with clear sight lines. It could be the inside of a brownstone at 127 Rose Parks Ave., Brooklyn, or it could be one of the bigger houses on East State Street before the place was turned into 12 apartments.

When the angst mist dissipates in what might be called a Neil Simon ending, “Satellites” is as much about differences in generations as it is the differences within the same hyphen American cultures.

What this show needs is a big audience participation hug in which we all give each other standing ovations while yelling in unison in mouse voices, “Americans unite, say no to hyphens.”

#### *TIGER WEEKLY*

#### ‘Satellites’ Tells Heartfelt Tale, Explores Social Issues

By Joshua Davidson

After opening last week at the Reilly Theatre, ‘Satellites’ will be running through February 22.

It’s hard to convince people, especially students, to see a play without being forced to do so for a class. However, this play is different. It has something that many people can relate to; plus, it has profanity.

“Satellites,” a dramatic comedy written by playwright Diana Son, is centered on an interracial marriage between a Korean American woman named Nina and an African American man named Miles who have recently had a baby and are soon to experience the issues that follow.

The acting in “Satellites” was carried by a nice performance by the two leads, Yohance Myles and Jessica Wu.

Myles, who has been in other notable Swine Palace plays such as King Hedley and most recently High School Musical, plays the husband in “Satellites.” Wu, who plays Nina, gives a performance that is, at times, a bit shaky, as her vulgar use of obscenities often comes without warning.

The dialogue of the play seems a bit over the top in attempts to get cheap laughs from the students in attendance. However, the audience can overlook this since the strong plot line is controlled through the questions of identity, racial stereotypes and sexual boundaries that the family encounters.

“Satellites” is an accurate portrayal of a family feeling out of place in the world in many different respects. The setting of Brooklyn works great with the plot of the story and the actual set was very much believable, as it lured the audience into this compelling story.

At first glance, the stage, which was set up like a run down inner-city home, was reminiscent of a college apartment. However, once the story gains momentum, it becomes clear that this is an old “brown brick” home located on Rosa Parks Street in Brooklyn, New York.

Aside from the main characters, there are several supporting players in “Satellites.” The role of Miles’ brother, Eric, is played by Nick Rhoton, and the ever-so humorous Reggie is played by James Edward Lee, who portrays a perfect example of an average street hustler from New York.

These two characters inject a jolt of humor into the play that keeps the enactment funny even when things are being turned upside down in the family’s life.

Diana Son’s vision of the play was put to life by director Michael Tick in this heartfelt rendition at Reilly Theatre.

“Satellites” is easy to follow through its two-hour duration and should be an instant success around campus once people start to hear about it.

## VITA

Jessica Wu was born in Bellevue, Washington in April 1983, and raised in Kirkland, Washington. She graduated from Lake Washington High School in 2001. She attended Western Washington University, and graduated in December 2005 with her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre. In fall 2006, she began her candidacy for a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

In June 2007, Jessica traveled to China with Swine Palace's first touring production of Wendy Wasserstein's *The Heidi Chronicles*. In spring 2008, she traveled to Vancouver, B.C. to attend Canada's National Voice Intensive, a five week intensive vocal workshop based on Kristin Linklater's technique. Jessica will graduate from LSU in spring 2009.