

# ***LAST NIGHT AND THE NIGHT BEFORE***

**Audience Outreach Packet**

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Compiled by Noah Ezell, Dramaturg

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## LETTER FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Dear CofC Cast and Crew of *Last Night and the Night Before*,

First, it was SUCH a pleasure meeting the design team over FaceTime a few weeks ago. I just loved seeing all of your bright beautiful faces and am excited by how the world of this show is coming together! You all are so wonderful and creative. I know it's gonna shine! Thank you!



Secondly, for my actors who I have yet to meet. I cannot wait to meet you. I am thrilled to have you bring this show to life. Breathing these folks into existence. Walking in their shoes. Feeling them from the inside out. It's yours now...

The most wonderful part of the rehearsal process, for me, is always the first day. There is so much possibility in the air. Hearts and minds are open. We come into the space not only holding the enormity of our own experience but, also with the desire to hold each other's experience. A family begins to take shape as our journey on this complicated road to production begins.

Family. That is what's truly at the core of this play. Family, in my version of the word, equals love. Every action, every argument, every decision (especially those decisions to leave) that the McCloud family makes is based on love. And the thing that I adore about this family is that they are extraordinarily ordinary. Even in the poetry. Even in the sacrifice. They are folks you see every day. They are my people and they are yours. Their language sounds like the music of the Low Country itself. Their dreams and fears are ones we all share. I am so excited that this play is being produced by people I consider family. And in a place I consider home. I know that all of your individual experiences of family and place will help bring the McClouds to life beyond what I might have even imagined. And if you keep all of your choices love-centered...you will undoubtedly unlock who the McClouds are. But...love has blind spots. And love means having to hurt people you care about sometimes. And...love also means understanding the difference between it and codependency. This is a grown-up play.

This is not only a play about what defines a family, but also about how familial love is tested. We have a real opportunity to reveal what is complex and challenging about the dynamics of motherhood, fatherhood, queerness and a child coming into her own. That requires a level of bravery for which the theater is uniquely equipped. Everyone in this play makes a decision that is emotionally brutal to watch. Even Sam. The story centers on what is best for this child and the often gut-wrenching, clumsy choices adults make when they finally consider the real needs of this child. They give her room as she makes her own space to create her own piece of poetry in the world. That takes the strength of family. So, this play requires the level of care and sensitivity in its execution that I know you all have gained from your professors just as I did 20 years ago as a student at CofC. The kind of care and sensitivity that I experienced on stage with Nakeisha as an actor. You all are in good hands.

This play was written squarely from my heart. It moves within a cyclical landscape. We discover the world gradually and with a grounded intensity. With humor and heart. Don't shy away from the humor and please do not shy away from the heart. Also, don't shy away from what is specifically black about this piece and what is specifically feminine about it. It is meant to be both.

Finally, yes, this is my heart play. So, I want to thank you for lending yours to it as well. I want to thank you for your generosity. I want to thank your openness. I want to thank you for your bravery. I want to thank you for allowing yourselves to remain as curious as you all are on this first day through to your final days with the show. And I especially want to thank you for taking on this piece as a family.

Happy first day of rehearsal. Know that I will make myself available to answer any questions you might have.

You all are a beautiful light to me and I am so grateful to you.

With So Much Love,

Donnetta



## IN DEPTH ON SAM’S HAND GAMES

Before I get into the nitty gritty of the history of these hand games, I think it’s imperative to note that most (if not all) of these hand games are in some way rooted in the experience of African and Black Americans throughout history. Though they’ve been appropriated and adopted by different groups in America, that doesn’t erase the significance of understanding the contextual history of these games and their importance in and development out of communities of color. Ok, onto some background:

### **Pgs. 4-5 – Miss Mary Mack**

Possible Origin:

The first surfacing of this hand game in writing was quite a long time ago! It originally showed up in an 1888 book by Henry Carrington Bolton called *The Counting Out Rhymes of Children*. According to a popular origin theory, this hand game may have begun in reference to the USS Merrimack, “a Union ship that fought Confederate forces during the Civil War.”

The ship was “black with silver rivets” which is reflected in the lines of the clapping game. The theory posits that “*Miss Mary Mack* began as a slave children’s clapping game encoded with references to freedom,” further connecting the hand game to abolitionist efforts of the Union and its ship, the USS Merrimack. Nowadays, this hand game is widely known and has been called “the most common hand-clapping game in the English-speaking world.”



Figure 1: Miss Mary Mack Audio. Scan this by holding your phone’s camera over the QR code with the camera application open and clicking the link that appears at the top of the screen.

### **Pgs. 5, 41, 51-53, and 65-66 – I Like Coffee (and Others)**

\*Note – while the stanzas in the above pages appear broken up throughout the play text, they are each part of a larger rhyme game that is often mixed, matched, amalgamated, and edited by the children playing it depending on the context of play

Possible Origin:



Figure 2: I Got the Rhythm

There is very little information I could find on the origins of this hand game, but, as noted above, the component parts are portions of a larger rhyme family. The individual rhymes can be recited alone but are generally coupled with other rhymes like the ones seen throughout the play. This particular family of hand games has a long, largely undocumented history. The earliest documented example of portions of the rhyme family occurred on June 29, 1869 in the *Evening Gazette* in Port Jervis, New York. Portions were also included in an 1888 book collection of children’s games by anthropologist W. H. Babcock entitled *Games of Washington Children*. However, these original versions did not include the racialized portions of the rhyme that Sam uses (i.e. “I like a black boy and he likes me...”). It seems that the rhyme developed its racialized elements in the United States in and around the 1960s-1970s as a reflection on the racial tensions in American society. These tensions began surfacing in schoolyards due to integration and likely influenced the rhyme. It appears that different versions of the rhyme switch the race and genders of the individuals in the rhyme depending upon the identities of those saying it, making each stanza and the game as a whole highly contextual.



Figure 4: Down, Down Baby by the Rollercoaster Audio



Figure 5: Doctor, Doctor Audio

**Pg. 23 – Danky, Dank**

Possible Origin:

While no exact matches to this rhyme surfaced in my research, I was able to find a few rhymes that included references to both pigs and corn that could be either linked to or inspiration for the rhyme in the play, though this is all dramaturgical conjecture. The first reference I found comes from a journal article from 1934 in *The Journal of American Folklore* published by the American Folklore Society. The article titled “Nursery Rhymes and Game-Songs from Georgia” by Mellinger E. Henry offers several examples of various rhymes and games originating in



Figure 6: Danky, Dank Audio

Georgia, like the title suggests. One in particular mentions both pigs and corn and, according to Henry “was communicated as ‘An Old Slavery Song.’ However, it is a version of the nursery rhyme “This Pig Went to the Barn.”” It was recorded in Lithonia, Georgia and transcribed as follows:

This little pig said, ‘He’s gonna steal some corn.’  
This little pig said, ‘Where from?’  
This little pig said, ‘Out of massa’s barn.’  
This little pig said, ‘If you do, I’ll tell.’  
This little pig said, ‘Iwee, Iwee, Iwee,  
I can’t get over the door sill.

Another potential option was recorded in the same journal and seems to have some connection to the previous rhyme, but with some obvious changes. These changes include the changing of several lines and the omission of the tropified and racist words in the original like “massa.” It appeared in a collection of children’s rhymes published in 1928 called *Mother Goose’s Book of Nursery Rhymes and Songs* on page 108. That rhyme appeared in the book like this:

1. This little pig went to the barn.
2. This little pig ate all the corn
3. This said he would tell
4. This said he wasn’t well
5. This went week! week! week! all over the door sill.

The origins of this little pig rhyme seem to have simply begun as a children’s rhyme as they played with their hands and feet. The first full version of the basic rhyme was published in “1760 in ‘The Famous Tommy Thumb’s Little Story-Book.’ The ‘This little piggy went to the market’ line was recorded before in an older nursery rhymes collection from 1728.” Over time, the line “little piggy,” referring to toes, shifted and referenced “little pigs” by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Pgs. 67-68 – Ain't Yo Mama Pretty**

Possible Origin:

This rhyme also has very little historical documentation of its origin. In fact, many searches only lead to forums of adults reminiscing on their use of this rhyme as children. However, one *possible* (I say possible with the recognition that this is simply an educated guess on behalf of your dramaturg) origin of this rhyme is in the game “The Dozens.” The Dozens is a game of insults in which two contestants hurl insults back at one another until one gives up. These insults are often centered around physical features, intelligence, sexuality, and a player’s family – specifically their mother. It is thought that “yo mama” jokes arose from The Dozens, and The Dozens is often incorrectly referred to as simply “yo mama jokes.” It is also worth noting that The Dozens is sometimes played in the form of rhyme. Therefore, if there is any connection between The Dozens and the rhyme game Sam plays, it likely arose from the game’s focus on insulting another player’s mother and the rhyming form it sometimes takes. In addition, it appears that this rhyme was particularly popular in the 90s based on anecdotal reports, but its use still continues to the present day. There are slight variations on the rhyme depending on the locational context and the individual stating the rhyme.



*Figure 7: Ain't Yo Mama Pretty Audio*

**Pgs. 103-105 – Sophisticated Lady**

Possible Origin:

One potential origin theory of this rhyme comes from an amateur ethnomusicologist who supposes that the game was potentially inspired by the 1977 pop song “Sophisticated Lady” by Natalie Cole. The song, which follows a similar rhyme pattern to that of the game, could have been adapted and changed by children on schoolyards during play. Because of the general lack of information about this hand game, it is likely that “Sophisticated Lady” is



*Figure 8: Sophisticated Lady Audio*

more of a niche game that is less widely known than “Miss Mary Mack,” for instance. While it has been played on playgrounds historically, it may have fallen out of favor or may be more regional and, therefore, less widespread than some of the others in the play.

**Pgs. 108-110 – Walk Tall Little Girl**

After researching this rhyme, I was unable to find any sort of information about origin or even anecdotal reports of this rhyme’s use. It seems that this was a rhyme created by Donnetta specifically for this play! How cool!



*Figure 9: Walk Tall Little Girl Audio*

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## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

### General Addiction Info

Addiction is defined as “a psychological and physical inability to stop consuming a chemical, drug, activity, or substance, even though it is causing psychological and physical harm.” Addiction is an all-encompassing word referring to an incapability to cease



partaking in certain activities. The broader concept of addiction can be broken down into behavioral addictions like eating or gambling or substance dependence like heroin or cocaine abuse.

### What are some overarching symptoms of drug addiction?

- Uncontrollably seeking drugs
- Uncontrollably engaging in harmful levels of habit-forming behavior
- Neglecting or losing interest in activities that do not involve the harmful substance or behavior
- Relationship difficulties, which often involve lashing out at people who identify the dependency
- An inability to stop using a drug, though it may be causing health problems or person problems, such as issues with employment or relationships
- Hiding substances or behaviors and otherwise exercising secrecy, for example, refusing to explain injuries that occurred while under the influence
- Profound changes in appearance, including a noticeable abandonment of hygiene
- Increased risk-taking, both to access the substance or activity and while using it or engaging in it

### Opioid and Heroin Use

Addiction can begin as a result of taking medications, a major factor in the development of the opioid epidemic that kills 115 people every day in the United States. We can see this in *Last Night and the Night Before* in Act 1 Scene 7 when Rachel mentions her mother’s use of pain pills, explaining that Monique was taught to escape from

the troubles of life through this. This can lead one to postulate that Monique's heroine dependence originated through her mother's own addiction to pain pills. In fact, looking at data from 2002 to 2012, "the incidence of heroin initiation was 19 times higher among those who reported prior nonmedical

pain reliever use than those who did not." The main sources of introduction to nonmedical use of opioid pain killers are "family, friends, or personal prescriptions." Opioid pain killers and heroin are connected through their similar chemical makeup. Because of this similar makeup, heroin can produce effects mimicking those of prescription opioids. Heroin is also cheaper and easier to get than prescription opioids, often serving as a motivation for individuals addiction to prescriptions to switch to heroin. Therefore, Monique's addiction follows a pattern similar to other drug abusers. It is important to note that for many users, heroin is more about avoiding or numbing pain rather than feeling good. Self-medication seems to be the primary motive in long-term heroin use.

#### Heroin Induced Behaviors:

- Shortness of breath
- Dry mouth
- Sudden changes in behavior or actions
- Disorientation
- Cycles of hyper-alertness followed by suddenly nodding off
- Droopy appearance, as if extremities are heavy
- Incoherent speech
- Avoiding eye contact
- Wearing long pants or long sleeves to hide needle marks
- Runny nose
- Skin picking

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#### Sources:

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## WHAT'S UP WITH THE MOON?

### Yoruba Influences

Moon imagery appears consistently throughout the play. This is potentially most notable in Act 1 Scene 4 when Reggie makes Monique apologize to the moon. Why exactly does he do this? Well, this sense of superstition could potentially be influenced by the Yoruba tradition, which was



transported to America during the Atlantic slave trade. As the tradition dispersed throughout the Americas, it became contextualized within the various new places it surfaced. In many places, it was mixed with Catholicism as a way for individuals to protect themselves from forced assimilation. This syncretism allowed individuals to



incorporate their own religious beliefs and methodologies into the Judeo-Christian belief system that was being forced upon them. Yoruba began to flourish and develop in new ways across the continent and later became ingrained in various locational and cultural contexts as both downright religious devotion as well as folklore and superstition.

### **Yemoja, Goddess of the Moon and Seas**

Because of Yoruba's influence, Reggie's superstitions about the moon and their



connection to Monique, an expectant mother in many of the scenes where it is mentioned, might potentially be linked to the Yoruba goddess Yemoja. Yemoja is a widely revered goddess in the tradition and is “a major water deity” and the patron goddess of pregnant women. Interestingly, in some diaspora communities, Yemoja has developed associations with the moon. This association likely arose from her connection to motherhood and water, which have both been historically linked with the moon in various religious systems. She is depicted in many different forms such as a warrior

named Ogunte, a deaf woman associated with still waters named Asesu, an underwater assassin called Okoto, an incomprehensibly beautiful being named Ashaba, and more. The fact that she



appears as several different avatars further connects her to the moon as these forms mimic the moon’s various phases. In her most common form, Yemoja is portrayed as a mermaid. As a patron deity of pregnant women and a supervisor of all motherly duties and activities, Yemoja is believed to have had an integral hand in the creation of human beings. According to legend, her “first gift to her beloved humans was a sea shell in which her voice could always be heard,” (i.e. the sound of the ocean you hear when you put your ear up to a shell). Additionally, during celebrations in her honor, devotees often offer gifts including letters “set adrift in the moonlit sea.” As a goddess of water, she is “temperamental and can be soothing or unpredictably violent,” relating to the intensely ambiguous nature of water as both a source of healing and ferocity. Although she does

not easily get angered, when she does she can be quite destructive (like flood waters and turbulent rivers). Therefore, Reggie's superstitions about the moon and his request that expectant Monique apologize to it may have something to do with Yemoja's status as both a goddess of pregnant women and a sometimes unpredictable and violent moon goddess. Also, Yemoja's gift to humans, the sea shell with her voice, could also be connected to Monique's gift of her poems to Sam and her desire that Sam could find her mother's voice in them.

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## RACHEL AND THE PROFESSOR'S LADDER OF SUCCESS

### Becoming a Professor

In the play, Rachel is a college professor.

Her career path might look something like this. The basic requirements to becoming a professor are acquiring an undergraduate degree as well as a terminal degree in a specific topic.

Generally, a doctorate degree is the

terminal degree professors get, however, in certain fields like the arts, a terminal degree might be a Master's. Once an individual has obtained their terminal degree (which can often take upwards of 6 or 7 years), they can begin applying for jobs at a university. For an individual seeking to make a long-term career out of academia, their goal is likely to acquire a tenure track position with the objective of eventually gaining full tenure.

Tenure is “an indefinite academic appointment that can be terminated only for cause or under extraordinary circumstances.” Basically, a person with tenure is *really* hard to fire, effectively providing the individual with job security. The purpose of tenure is to defend the principle of academic freedom allowing individuals of a variety of backgrounds and views to express their academic perspectives and research without fear of job termination.



### The Ladder of Success

So here's the basic structure of a tenure track position:

- 1) Assistant professor – typically entry-level for tenure track positions

- 2) Associate professor – a mid-level, usually tenured, faculty member
- 3) Professor or full professor – the destination of the tenure track position and the end of the line of promotion other than distinguished professorship
- 4) Distinguished, endowed, or university professor – a title for a professor who has provided some sort of substantial contribution to their field or who has accomplished something noteworthy

Other positions within the academic hierarchy are research associate, lecturer, instructor, or visiting professor which are generally not tenure track positions and are of lower rank than tenure track. Another position outside of the regular hierarchy is that of the adjunct professor,



which is reserved for individuals who do not work full-time in academia.

**Sources:**  
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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic\\_tenure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_tenure)



## NADIMA AND THE REALTOR'S LADDER OF SUCCESS

### Becoming a Realtor

To understand Nadima's work as a realtor, it is beneficial to grasp the broader world of the real estate profession. For Nadima to have become a real estate agent in New York City, she had to qualify for and complete 5 main criteria:

1. She had to be at least 18 years of age
2. She had to register and complete the 75 hours of required education
3. She had to find a New York State licensed real estate broker to sponsor her (I'll get into what a broker is later)
4. She had to schedule and take the New York Real Estate Salesperson Licensing Exam and pass with 70% or higher
5. She had to apply for her New York Real Estate Salesperson license



### The Ladder of Success

After completing these steps, Nadima could officially work as a real estate agent in New York City. As a starting agent, she could have chosen to work as either a free lance agent or to join a brokerage. Within these categories, there are four major designations for real



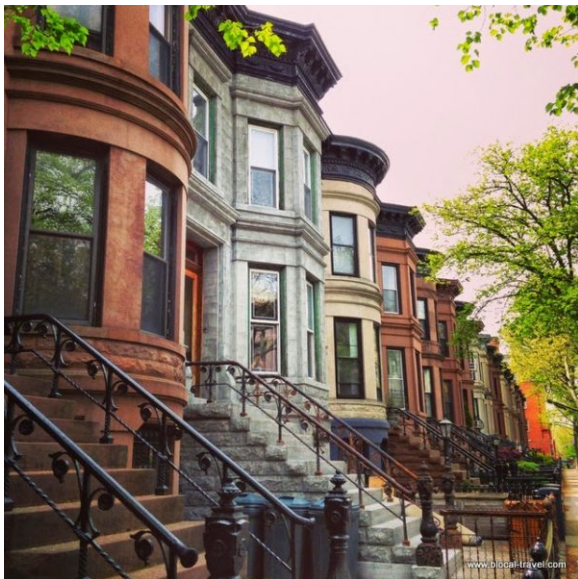
estate agents depending on the role they play with clients. These are:

1. Listing Agent - represents a homeowner in the sale of their home
2. Buyer's agent – represents homebuyers in their search for and purchase of a home

3. Dual agent – represents both the buyer and the seller in a real estate transaction
4. Transaction agent – serves as an impartial facilitator throughout a real estate transaction when the agent doesn't represent the buyer or the seller



Agents have the potential to specialize in various areas, as well. For example, an agent could work with residential real estate, or they could move into commercial real estate which allows them to earn more money. However, in commercial real estate, the risk is higher so more specialized training is beneficial. Additionally, agents can specialize in niche markets allowing them to become the go-to agent for that market. An example of a niche market agent would be someone who sells beach properties, farm land, affordable housing, etc.

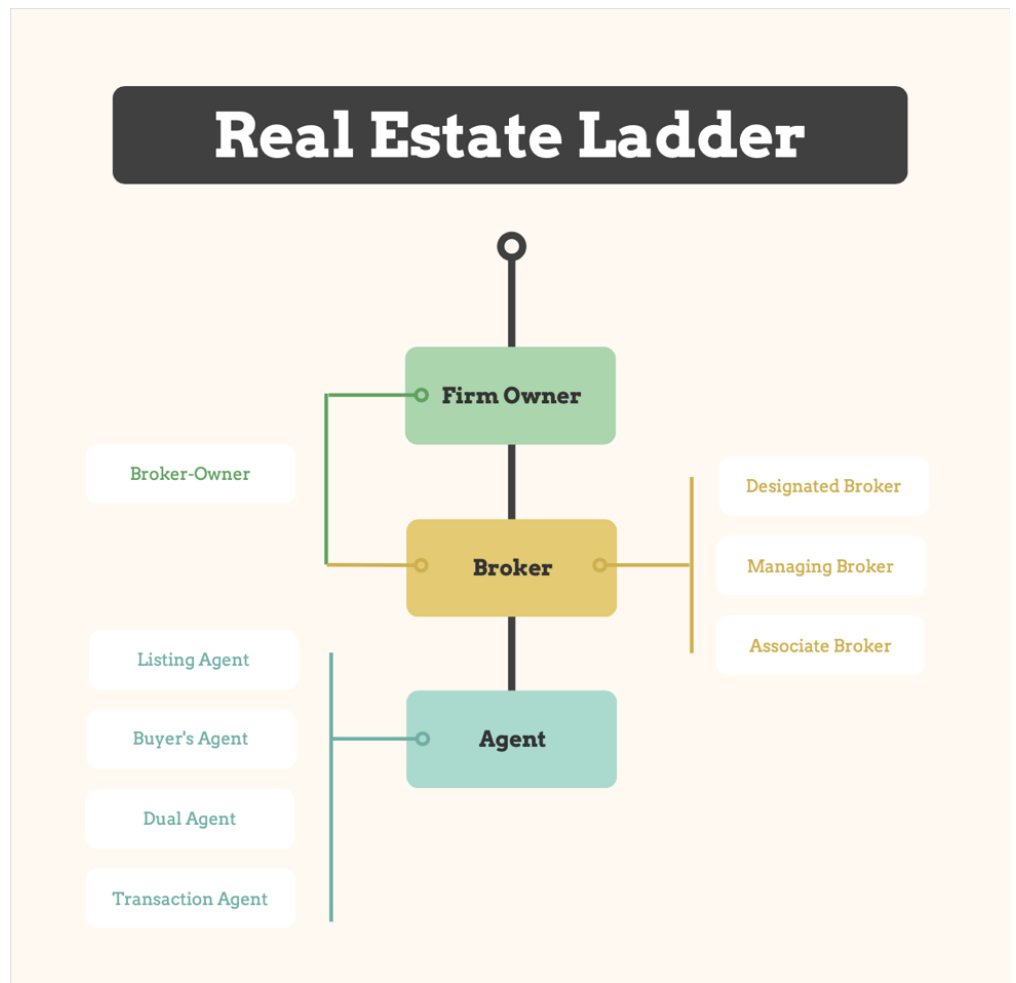


If Nadima wanted to climb the employment ladder within real estate, she could become a broker, the next step up from an agent. A broker is someone who negotiates, arranges, and oversees real estate transactions and may also own or run brokerages. These are different from agents who simply rent, buy, or sell property on behalf of clients. Brokers can either work within a firm or own their own firm. If they own their own firm, they are referred to as a “broker-owner.”

There are 3 major types of real estate brokers:

- 1) Designated broker – oversees and manages an agency and its agents and takes legal responsibility for all transactions that agents working under them complete
- 2) Managing broker – manages a group of agents or brokers. Sometimes a designated broker also serves as a managing broker

- 3) Associate broker – real estate agents who have met state requirements to become a licensed real estate broker, which includes completing coursework, work experience requirements, and completing the state broker licensing exam



After a broker, the next and final step for Nadima would be to become an owner of a firm or brokerage.

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<https://fitsmallbusiness.com/real-estate-agent-vs-broker/>

## Wanna Get Involved?

Check out some of these organizations to get involved with in response to the play! Just scan the QR codes beside the logo to look at the organization's website.





## Glossary

### **Pg. 3 – Brownstone**

The word Brownstone refers to a type of townhouse often seen in New York City neighborhoods, especially in Brooklyn. Because of the iconic nature of the homes, brownstone, the type of material used to build Brownstone townhouses, eventually became synonymous with the houses themselves. “These homes began to be renovated by artists, academics, and other well-educated professionals in the 1980s as individuals moved from Manhattan to Brooklyn.” This gentrification, although lowering crime rates, displaced populations and skyrocketed rent rates. “One important typical architectural detail of brownstones in New York City is the stoop, a steep staircase rising from the street to the entrance on what amounts to almost the second-floor level.” (Wikipedia and Blocal-Travel.com)



*Figure 10: A Brooklyn Style Brownstone*

### **Pg. 3 – Gullah**

The Gullah people are “African Americans who live in the Lowcountry region of the U.S. states of Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina, in both the coastal plain and the Sea Islands. They developed a creole language, the Gullah language, and a culture rich in African influences that makes them distinctive among African Americans.” A creole language is one developed through mixing other languages over a short period of time. It is thought that “Gullah developed in rice fields during the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a result of contact between colonial varieties of English and the language of African slaves.” Because of the many distinct languages originating in



*Figure 11: A Video Depicting a Poem Spoken in Both Gullah and English.*

Africa and spoken by slaves, these individuals “appropriated English as a common language” which was “modified and influenced by the [typically West or Central] African languages they originally spoke.” Additionally, “the Gullah language likely developed separately, or distinctly, from African American English and varieties of English spoken in the South.” (Britannica and Wikipedia)

**Pg. 5 – Calypso**

“Calypso is a style of Afro-Caribbean music that originated in Trinidad and Tobago during the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century [...] It is characterized by highly rhythmic and harmonic vocals.” These songs have their roots in kaisos, a form of music originating in West Africa, and were performed by a griot, or storyteller “offering social commentary through praise, satire or lament.” The kaisos eventually evolved into calypsos which were originally performed in a call-and-response format by a calypsonian, a calypso singer. With their historical roots in satire and lament, the lyrics in calypso songs often serve as both a means of spreading news as well as nuanced political commentary on intense themes like poverty, racial issues, sexual exploitation, and militarism. Since Trinidad gained sovereignty in 1962, “calypsonians have affiliated with political parties and their figureheads.” Interestingly, though the form has its origins in the Caribbean isles, “the first identifiably calypso genre song was recorded in 1912, by Lovey’s String Band while visiting New York City.” Calypso began to reach worldwide popularity in the 1930s and has influenced the development of other musical genres. (BBC and Wikipedia)



*Figure 12: An Example of a Calypso Song by Famous Calypsonian Attila the Hun*

**Pg. 6 – Bougie**

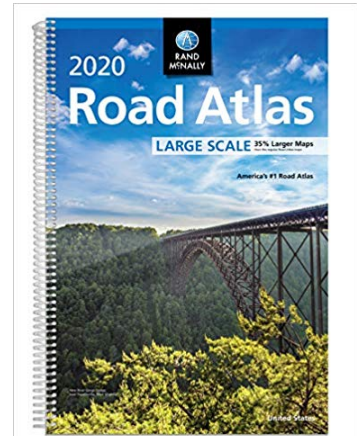
“Exhibiting qualities attributed to the middle class, especially pretentiousness or conventionality.” (Google Dictionary)

**Pg. 7 – Accosted**

“To confront boldly” or “to approach, especially with a greeting, question, or remark.”  
(Dictionary.com)

**Pg. 14 – Rand McNally**

“Rand McNally is an American technology and publishing company that provides mapping software and hardware for consumer electronics, commercial transportation, and education markets.” The historic company, which publishes maps and atlases, developed “the U.S. Highway number system in 1917” and launched “the first Road Atlas in 1924.” (randmcnally.com and Wikipedia)



*Figure 13: The Rand McNally 2020 Road Atlas*

**Pg. 18 – The Blue Room**

The Blue Room is an existing entertainment and event venue located in Statesboro, Georgia. However, since The Blue Room in Statesboro opened in 2018 and the play was written before that, it is probable that The Blue Room mentioned in the script is a fictionalized location. The context of its use within the script suggests that, rather than an entertainment venue, The Blue Room in the world of *Last Night and the Night Before* is more of a bar or dive. (exploregeorgia.com)

**Pg. 19 – Lock-Step**

Lock-step is US idiom that references “close adherence to and emulation of another’s actions.” When two things move in lock-step, they are dependent upon one another in such a way that if one changes, the other one changes as well. Its use as an idiom is sometimes has pejorative overtones. The term was traditionally associated with the military as it was “a mode of marching in step by a body of persons going one after another as closely as possible,” often used in drilling soldiers. (Merriam-Webster, Google Dictionary, and Wikipedia)



*Figure 14: Soldiers Marching in Lock-Step*

**Pg. 24 – Tittybones**

The word tittybones is a euphemistic reference to an individual’s breasts.

**Pg. 25 – Monthly**

Similarly to tittybones, in the context of the script the word monthly is a euphemistic reference to a person’s period.

**Pg. 28 – Canvas Bag**

Canvas is “an extremely durable plain-woven fabric used for making...items for which sturdiness is required.” Historically made from hemp, modern canvas is a mixture of several materials like cotton, linen, and PVC. A canvas bag, then, is a bag made from canvas material. Canvas bags typically resemble a typical tote bag. (Wikipedia)



*Figure 15: A Basic Canvas Bag*



**Pg. 30 – Faye Dunaway**

Faye Dunaway is an American actress whose career has spanned over 50 years beginning on Broadway and then moving to film and television. She is known for being quite protective of her private life as she rarely gives interviews and makes few public appearances. She has received several major award nominations and wins including an Academy Award, an Emmy, and three Golden Globes. In a controversial portrayal, Dunaway depicted the role of Joan Crawford in the 1981 film *Mommie Dearest*, which portrayed Crawford, a notable actress, as a mother who abused her children for fame. (Wikipedia)



Figure 16: Faye Dunaway

**Pg. 30 – Joan Crawford**

Joan Crawford was an American television and film actress. Her career began as a dancer and then moved to Broadway and later into film and television. Crawford was known for playing “hard-working young women who found romance and success.” She eventually became an extremely prominent star in Hollywood and won several major awards including an Academy Award and a Golden Globe. In 1978, Crawford’s adoptive daughter Christina published a book entitled *Mommie Dearest* which claimed that Joan was emotionally and physically abusive. However, the book was denounced by many of Crawford’s family and friends. The 1978 book was the basis for the 1981 film in which Faye Dunaway starred as Joan. (Wikipedia)



Figure 17: Joan Crawford

**Pg. 30 – Mommie Dearest**

See Faye Dunaway and Joan Crawford

**Pg. 31 – Canarsie**

Canarsie (pronounced ka-NAR-see) “is a neighborhood in the southeastern portion of the borough of Brooklyn, in New York City.” Named after a “phonetic interpretation of a word in the Lenape language for ‘fenced land’ or ‘fort,’ Canarsie has had a long and varied history. From serving as a fishing village in the 1800s, to a location where Southern Italians and Jews settled in the 1920s, to a “hotbed for Mafia activity from the 1970s to the 1990s,” the neighborhood is old and longstanding. Today, “Canarsie’s population is mostly non-white because of a large West Indian immigration” as well as a “national urban phenomenon called ‘white flight,’” which saw “much of Canarsie’s white population [leave] for Staten Island, Long Island, and Queens” in the 1990s. (urbanareas.net)



Figure 18: "Mommie Dearest" Release Poster



Figure 19: The Location of Canarsie within the Broader New York Landscape

**Pg. 32 – Now and Later**

Now and Later are a type of fruit flavored taffy candy introduced in 1962 by the Phoenix Candy Company in Brooklyn, New York City. “Each Now and Later bar consist[s] of several individually wrapped taffy squares.” The name was chosen to “suggest to customers that they eat some of the taffy squares in the bar right away and save the rest for another occasion.” (OldTimeCandy.com and Wikipedia)



*Figure 20: A Now and Later Bar*

**Pg. 32 – Barcelona**

Barcelona is a city in Spain and the capital of the autonomous province Catalonia. It is the major Mediterranean port of Spain and is “famed for its individuality, cultural interest, and physical beauty.” It is known for being an artistic, intellectual, and cultural center and was once called the “Paris of Spain” by Hans Christian Andersen. Barcelona is located on a plain that faces the Mediterranean and a semicircle of mountains. Its climate is protected by the semicircle of mountains which keeps harsh cold winds out of the city. (Britannica)



Figure 21: The Location of Barcelona Within Spain



**Pg. 32 – Sicily**

Sicily is an island off the coast of southern Italy and is “the largest and one of the most densely populated islands in the Mediterranean Sea.” The island is an autonomous region of Italy and is about 100 miles from northern Africa, specifically Tunisia. The capital of Sicily is Palermo. It has been inhabited for around 10,000 years by various groups and its “location at the center of the Mediterranean has made [it] a crossroads of history, a pawn of conquest and empire, and a melting pot for a dozen or more ethnic groups whose warriors or merchants sought its shores.” It is mostly mountainous and has intense seismic and volcanic activity. Its climate is subtropical and Mediterranean. (Britannica)



Figure 22: The Location of Sicily

**Fig. 32 – Riis Beach**

Riis beach, located in New York, is actually a group of “14 bays numbered east-to-west on the Atlantic coast.” These beaches are a part of Jacob Riis Park, “a seaside park at the southwestern end of the Rockaway Peninsula in the New York City borough of Queens.” “The main beach occupies the western half of the park, or Bays 6 through 14...” “The main beach features a distinctive crescent shape opening towards the Atlantic Ocean.” Historically, bay 1 has been “considered the “adult” section of the beach” and was “popular among the gay community, as well as nudists.” (Wikipedia)

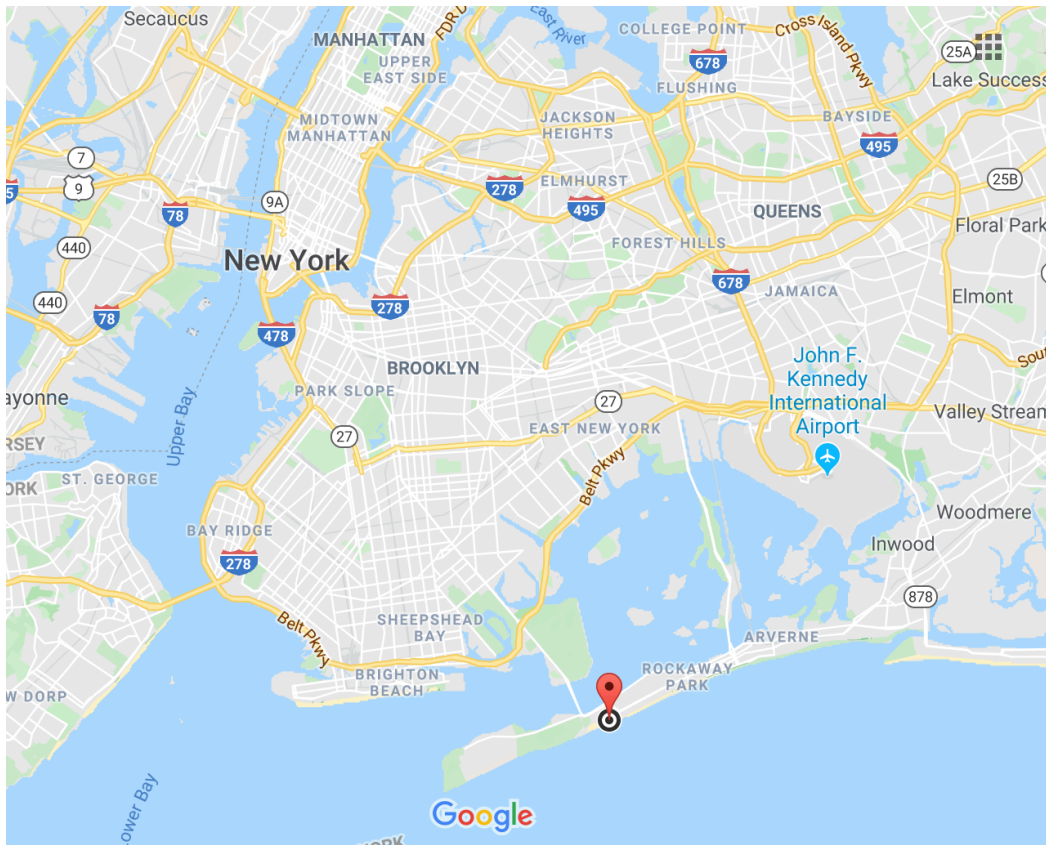


Figure 23: Location of Riis Beach

**Pg. 33 – Bike Week**

Bike week, or Daytona Beach Bike Week, “is a motorcycle event and rally held annually in Daytona Beach, Florida. Approximately 500,000 people make their way to the rally area for the 10-day event. The festivities include motorcycle racing, concerts, parties, and street festivals. The event is usually held on the first full week of March...” It originally started in January of 1937 as the Daytona 200 race and, after a break during World War II, resumed and gained popularity until it reached its modern fame. (Wikipedia)

**Pg. 33 – Bronner Brothers**

Bronner Brothers is “the nation’s largest professional trade show dedicated to multicultural beauty.” The show’s goal is to “help inspire, educate and elevate cosmetology professionals, students, and the multicultural beauty industry.” The trade show includes classes, exhibitors, special events, and more. “As of 2015, the Bronner Bros. International Beauty Show was the largest gathering of multicultural beauty professionals in the U.S., pulling in 22,000 attendees and 300 exhibitors.” The trade show occurs at the Georgia World Congress Center located in Atlanta, Georgia. (Bronnerbros.com and Wikipedia)

**Pg. 33 – Essence Fest**

Essence Fest is “an annual music festival which started in 1995 as a one-time event to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Essence*” magazine. “It is the largest event celebrating African-American culture and music in the United States,” and it has been hosted in New Orleans, Louisiana since 1994. In addition to the concert series, the festival offers comedy shows, live podcasts, fashion shows, beauty shows, a marketplace for black owned brands, and a wellness series. (Essence.com and Wikipedia)

**Pg. 35 – Needle Tracks**

Needle tracks are “areas of discoloration along a vein which was damaged due to injecting drugs intravenously. Track marks are often noticeable along the forearms, where visible veins are present [...]. Track marks can appear as puncture wounds or as discolored and scarred veins.” They may also resemble “small holes in the skin.” Fresh puncture marks from recent drug use appear bright red or pink and are likely “covered by a scab or new scar tissue. Older track marks can look like white or light pink healed scars.” (TheRecoveryVillage.com)



Figure 24: Example of Track Marks on an Individual's Arm

**Pg. 36 – Bulldagger**

“*Bulldagger* is pejorative slang for a very masculine lesbian, which often carries a more racialized meaning than its synonyms *bulldyke*, *bulldiker*, and *diesel dyke*. Bulldaggers are associated with physical strength, sexual prowess, emotional reserve, and butch chivalry. The term has roots in African-American communities of the early twentieth century, especially with 1920s Harlem where sexual and gender mores were more flexible. [...] Despite tolerant recognition in 1920s Harlem, bulldagger became an increasingly homophobic and racist expression used to disparage empowered, butch, or openly lesbian African-American women.” The term’s origins are uncertain and, therefore, scholars have provided a variety of potential linguistic roots. (Encyclopedia.com)

**Pg. 42 – “Into You” by Fabolous and Ashanti**

“Into You” is a 2003 R&B song featured on Fabolous’ second album *Street Dreams*. The song reached number 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 and is “based on singer Tamia’s 1998 single ‘So Into You.’” The original version, which featured Ashanti’s vocals, was reworked for commercial/radio edit release incorporating Tamia as the featured artist. The song is also on Tamia’s 2004 album *More*.



Figure 25: "Into You" by Fabolous and Ashanti

**Pg. 45 – Griot**

A Griot is a “West African troubadour-historian” who is “a member of a class of traveling poets, musicians, and storytellers.” “The griot profession is hereditary and has long been a part of West African culture. The griot’s role has traditionally been to preserve the genealogies, historical narratives, and oral traditions of their people; praise songs are also part of the griot’s repertoire. Many griots play the kora, a long-necked harp lute with 21 strings. In addition to serving as the primary storytellers of their people, griots have also served as advisers and diplomats.” (Britannica and Google Dictionary)

**Pg. 46 – “This Christmas” by Donny Hathaway**

“This Christmas’ is a song by American soul musician Donny Hathaway released in 1970” that had little success upon original release. However, “the song gained renewed interest when it was included in 1991 on Acto Records’ revised edition of their 1968 *Soul Christmas* compilation album and has since become a modern Christmas standard, with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers reporting that it was the 30<sup>th</sup> most-performed holiday song of all time.” (Wikipedia)



Figure 26: "This Christmas" by Donny Hathaway

**Pg. 51 – “Winter Wonderland” by Aretha Franklin**

Aretha Franklin recorded a cover of the Christmas classic “Winter Wonderland” for the expanded edition of her 1964 album *Runnin’ Out of Fools*. The song was originally written in 1934 by Felix Bernard and Richard B. Smith. (Wikipedia and Amazon Music)



*Figure 27: Aretha Franklin's Cover of "Winter Wonderland"*

**Pg. 51 – Inebriated**

To be inebriated means to be “drunk” or “intoxicated.” (Dictionary.com)

**Pg. 57 – Power Play Song**

Though I could not find an exact definition of power play song, I found that a power play is a term used in sports that “is commonly applied to the state of advantage the unpenalized team enjoys during [the time after a rules infraction in which the number of players on the field of play is temporarily reduced for the penalized team].” The power play song, then, is the song that is played during this time. It can be inferred based on context that the power play song on the radio in Act 1 Scene 7 refers to a song on the radio that boosts morale for listeners and is associated with winning, being on top, and success. (Wikipedia)

**Pg. 62 – Nikki Giovanni**

Nikki Giovanni is “an American poet, writer, commentator, activist, and educator.” She is one of the world’s most well-known poets and has authored numerous children’s books and poetry collections. She has received a considerable number of awards along with “twenty honorary degrees from national colleges and universities.” Her writings “ranged from calls for black power to poems for children and intimate personal statements.” Her early works were “urgently revolutionary.” However, her works in the 1970s focused on “loneliness, thwarted hopes, and the theme of family affection,” but she has often returned to political concerns in other works. She currently works as a distinguished professor at Virginia Tech. (Britannica, Poets.org, and Wikipedia)



Figure 28: Nikki Giovanni

**Pg. 91 – Amtrak**

Amtrak, or the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, is a “passenger railroad service that provides medium- and long-distance intercity service in the contiguous United States and to nine Canadian cities.” The national network of rail lines includes connections to “46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian provinces” with 21,000 route miles. The corporation was founded in 1971, and its name is an amalgamation of the words America and track. (Amtrak.com and Wikipedia)

**Pg. 91 – Greyhound**

Greyhound is “an intercity bus common carrier serving over 3,800 destinations across North America. The company’s first route began in Hibbing, Minnesota in 1914, and the company adopted the name *Greyhound* in 1929. [...] Greyhound and its sister companies in FirstGroup America are the largest motorcoach operators in the United States and Canada.” It operates “123 routes,” and its “scheduled services compete with the private automobile, low-cost airlines, Amtrak, and other intercity coach bus services.” (Wikipedia)