

**Not For Me**

Play in One Act

By

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**CAST:** The Voice – Gender neutral African-American

**TIME:** Now

**SETTING:** Bare stage.

*(Slowly Lights FADE DOWN. Out of the blackness a voice can barely be heard)*

### THE VOICE

They... Write... They write. They are writing. They are writing, right? They are writing. They are writing songs. They are writing songs of love. They are writing songs of love but not for me. For you... For them... This is why we must get up. Get on... Get out of here. Quickly! Quietly! Before it's too late. Before we are unable to move... Trapped... Unable to break up... Unable to break free... Break away... From them or this place!

*(The dialogue becomes audible)*

They are writing. They are writing. They are writing, I tell you. They are writing songs of love. Just not for me. They are writing. They are writing. Writing me out! Erasing me out! Eradicating me and my kind and the proof of our existence... The eradication of we... Out of sight... Out of mind... Out of the future... Having been sent tripping aimlessly towards the infinite black hole. Towards the dark abyss where we can be seen breaking into tiny particles of dust as we come to crash against the jagged edges of their imagination. Unfounded... Unclaimed... Unloved... Having been abandoned too rot far off on some distant shore. No..!!!!

*(Pause)*

What shall we do? Who shall we follow? We... Maybe we should run? But where..? Where could we run to? Who on earth would have us? Did not the rock cry out there's no hiding place down here? They... They are writing songs of love I tell you... But not for us! Me... *(Pause)* Must we forever wander unwanted? Must we always be the ones banished to our rooms? Have we not earned our right to be seated at the table? No... *(Pause)* I fear we must go... We must get on. We must get out... Here... Before we find ourselves stuck forever in the realm of the unfounded... The unclaimed... The unknown... Looked upon always as the oddity in the room... Unloved... I... We must go... We must steal... Steal away... Quietly! Stealing away, but where and to whom? To Jesus? No... We must get up... Get on... Get out of here, alone. Quickly! Quietly! Before it is too late...

## THE VOICE con't

We most get on somewhere, anywhere but here. Move... Keep moving. Eyes down. Don't look... Up. Don't look into their faces. Eyes down... That's it! That's it, mustn't let on. Just move... Move on. Walk... On... Straighten up... Quiet! Move away... Quiet! Shoooo! Come on now... You can do it. That's it, walk... Straighten up... Keep walking... Walking as if we were indeed going somewhere... As if we were going anywhere... Nowhere... Shoooo! Quiet! Walk away. Steady as you go. That's it! Mustn't let on... Mustn't give ourselves away... Eyes down... Don't look... Up... Into the faces as they come towards us. Just move... Move out of their way. Not too fast. Slowly! Move on... Don't look... Up... Slowly! Towards! Eyes down... Must not let on... Mustn't mumble a word... Mustn't look! Quiet please! Shoooo! That's it... That's the ticket. No! Talk... No talking... Not to them. Not to yourself. Not to anyone. Mustn't let on... Mustn't let them hear... Mustn't let them know about me. Us... Mustn't let them know about the voice inside of you. Inside your head... They don't understand. They won't understand. That! Us! You!

*(Cries out)*

No..!!!!

*(Pause)*

Quiet! Listen... Shoooo! Listen please! Quiet I say... What are you stupid or something? Steal away... Quietly! Steal away. Let's move. Move on. Ok? Somewhere... Anywhere... Just... Move... Move away from them. Don't look... Up... There. Their looking... Their looking at us... Are you happy now? Shoooo! Pipe down... Steady yourself and keep moving. Keep moving... Anywhere, somewhere... Keeping moving... Come on... We need to get out of here... We need to get out of here quickly but not too fast. You can do it. There we go, slowly... Keep moving... That's the ticket! Ok... We've gotta go... Now! Run!!!

*(The sound of cars blowing their horns can be heard as the VOICE crosses the intersection)*

Steal away.... Quietly! Quickly get a move on... Keep moving. Keep moving... Across... There... Careful, mustn't let on. Watch out for cars. Traffic... Careful... Careful as you go... Keep moving!

*(Pauses)*

Stop it I say! Stop that grinning you fool. What are you stupid or something? Quiet down... Be still... Be still I tell you. Good... Good... There you go.

*(All grows quiet again)*

THE VOICE con't

There... We've made it Now let's go...Steal... Steal away. Quickly... Quietly... Eyes down... Mouth shut... Don't look... Don't look up... Just go... Go quickly... Anywhere... Somewhere... Steal away... Not looking.... Away... Go... Before... Come... Before they come... The police... They are coming... Coming because someone has made a call about us... A call... About suspicious... A suspicious black (*interject gender*)... Wandering about the neighborhood. Surely they are not taking about me..? Us..? Quiet... Get a move on... Why can't you just move on?

*(Pause)*

I'm afraid... We should go... Let us go... Before they come... The police... I'm afraid someone has made a call about us. A suspicious black (*interject gender*)... Who..? Me? I? Us..? And no one asks if we come in peace or in harmony. We who have come looking not for trouble but tin... Yes, we've come looking for tin. Tin cans to trade in for coins. But no asks us what we are doing here. Instead, they have called the police fearing for their own safety. Surely they will come and I am afraid. We should keep moving. Don't look... Up. Don't look into their faces. Eyes down... That's it! That's It! Mustn't let on... Just move... Move on. Move on quietly... How can I... We... Be quiet? I wish they would get their stories straight. There is a suspicious looking brown man wandering about the neighborhood. That is why they are writing. Forever writing songs that make the brown eyes blues. They are writing songs of love while I wander about the neighborhood, talking... Talking to myself. Telling myself to come on... Don't let on... Don't let them see that we know they are afraid... Afraid of us... Afraid of me... Afraid of what we might do. They don't understand. They won't try to understand... And whatever we do, we mustn't let on that we're afraid. Because they shoot niggers here... So let us go... Move on... Before it is too late... Before the sun goes down... Before one of them decided to crack open our skull like a hardboiled egg. Crack it open, just to see what's inside of it or worst, decide to use my body as a punching bag or for target practice? After all, they shoot niggers here, don't they? Yes. They do. So come on... Let's go... Move on... Quickly! Quietly! Eyes down. Don't look... Up... But steal... Steal... Steal away into the quiet of the night. Down... Down... Where the bushes serve to conceal the tired naked body? Move... Keep moving and praying... Praying to God that our feet won't fail us. Now, that we have established the fact, that they most definitely shoot niggers here. But where is here? Where is there? Shoooo!

*(Sings)*

Steal away... Steal away... Steal away home. For I ain't got long to stay here.

## THE VOICE con't

Where is here? There? Me? Where can I go too? When it feels like We...I... Us are trapped. Me... Trapped in a nightmare... This nightmare of sorts that has no beginning or end... Having been born here but not from here... No, I... Me... We... Whom they never let forget that we're not from here, having convinced themselves that they belong here. Having conveniently forgot that they too are not from here. But where is here? Where exactly is this place... The room... Where once did roam deer and buffalo abundantly. Native Americans too... I... Me... We... Can you imagine what is must be like to not be you..? But us! I! We! To never really know where you are from or where you're going too. To be expected to act as is it didn't... As if it doesn't... Hurt! Having too filter ones emotions in a way that doesn't come across as threatening or ungrateful to be here. Having to speak in a nonchalant tone about the fact they brought us here not in first class but in in chains? Here... In this place! In this white house! In this white room! There is no air... Stop... Look... No... Don't look up... Don't let on that you know that they care not for you. That they would rather not see you... Us... No... Don't let on that we know they have called the police. Just go... Eyes down... Chin up... Let us not make a fuss they would tell us. Just move. Can't you just move on. (*Pause*) How..? How can we... I... Who was stolen from my port of origin... What of this crime against humanity? What of us..? Surely they dare not say that we have not the information in order to bring about justice? And yet we are expected to shuffle along quietly knowing that no one has paid for what was done to us... For what is still being done to us. The writing of us! The erasing of us! The eradication of us... Out of sight... Out of mind... Out of their future... The constant exclusion of us when it comes to creating equal visual representation. We who are invisible.... On their televisions... In their movies... Their books... We who are not real to them... A haunting... Merely apparitions from their past. ...And around their table's family members still call us niggers and no one comes to our defense. So tell me, why should it be we that must keep walking, when it was we who were stolen? Taken away from our friends and families... When it was we chained and thrown into the hull of their ships. I tell you I won't move! I tell you I won't look away! Besides, how can I move? How can I move from this place in which they have brought me... I... We who were stolen from our ports of origin. I will not move for the sun has indeed set and it is too late, far too late to speak of returning me. The lamp's light has burned too low to make out from whom or where we were taken from? How can they expect us to move from this place? Having been forced to till and carry upon our backs the wild and overgrown harvest of this countries legacy of racial madness for years? A madness that follows us about day in and day out... Move! But where..? Where to move too? I am not from here. Yet my passport says that I was born here... In this place... This white house... This white room... Therein lays the problem. So let them call the police. We have done nothing wrong here... Let them call the police. We are the victim here. We who have been kidnaped... Yes... I... Us... We...

## THE VOICE con't

*(Cries Out)*

Help! Somebody! Anybody Help!

*(Pause)*

No one stirs. Look how they act as if they heard not our screams... They are wishing we would go away. Surely the police will be here soon. Stop! Don't let on that we know that they know we are afraid. Afraid that they clocked us the minute we hit the gate. Waiting... Watching our every move as we wander about. They have called the police for sure. Telling them to be on the lookout for me... Any one that they feel does not belong here. They are passing judgement in the name of their God. Vengefully wandering about in search of anyone who is different... In search of anyone who dares to serve as a challenge to their beliefs.

*(Lets out a maniacal laugh)*

Stop...Stop that! ...Stop that grinning. What are you stupid or something? For Christ sakes you want to get us thrown in jail knowing that they have a thousand and one unwritten reasons to make us invisible? Now move! Go on... Move... Quickly! Walk... Slowly... That's it... Keep walking Do not go gently into this goodnight.

*(Sings line again)*

Steal away. Steal away. Steal away home, for we ain't got time to stay here.

Just move along. Don't look at their faces... Don't let on... That's it. Just keep moving... Keep moving... Come on. Eyes down... Chin up. Hurry... Hurry up and get out of here because they have calling the police. Called the police to come and take me... We... Us to be crucified... Now move before it is too late. They're just waiting. Watching for one wrong move... So come on now... Back straight... Eyes down... Mustn't let on... Just... Just...

*(Pause)*

Good evening officer... No I don't live around here. I was just passing through... Looking for... What do you need me to stop for? I told you I was just passing through. Is there anything wrong with that? No, I just want to go home now... Is there anything wrong with that? What do you mean you need to see my ID. Is there something wrong? Am I being accused of something? If not I would like to go home now. I'm not afraid of anything. I just want to go home. Why? Why?

## THE VOICE con't

Because... Because... They are writing... They are writing... They are writing songs of love but not for me or anyone that looks like me... But they are wrong... Because you see, when I was young I held a crayon up to my skin one night. Imagine my surprise when I discover that I was not black but brown. How funny they should label me black because I am not black just as they are not white. I am brown... Yes, that is what I am. I am brown... Just as they are not white... I am a brown that comes in a wide range of hues... Call me chocolate, sometimes caramel. Even a shade of blue... Indigo, peacock, denim, midnight even, but never black! So you might want to tell them that there is a suspicious looking brown man wandering through their neighborhood. Then again I guess it doesn't matter. But it should count for something... Shouldn't it? Accuracy that is... The power of walking in one's truth... But then again, one could guess it doesn't really matter. After all, they are writing songs of love but not for me or anyone that looks like me. Then again, maybe it's because of my hair that they are not writing songs of love for me? My hair which I think is very beautiful. My hair, which can be black; Dusty brown even, but never blond or red like theirs. But then again, they not write some about my dreamy brown eyes. Always about blue ones.

*(A police siren is heard coming closer. It stops.  
A car door is heard opening and the police  
Radio is quietly audible in the background)*

No, who am I fooling? We all know they refuse to write songs of love because my skin refuses to blend into the nothingness of their world. Look... There.... Coming... Standing around watching... They are proud. They are calling themselves heroes. They have once more been successful in removing the likes of me... Us... I... I must go. I mustn't let on... Just move... Move on. Get on... Get out of here. Quickly! Quietly! Before it's too late. Before I are unable to move... Trapped... Unable to break up... Unable to break free... Break away... From them or this place! Tripping aimlessly towards the black hole. Towards the dark abyss where I can be seen breaking into tiny particles of dust as I crash against the jagged edges of their imagination. Unfounded... Unclaimed... Unloved... Abandoned too rot here on this distant shore. No..! Please! Don't!

*(Cries out as a scuffle is heard)*

Stop! Stop! You're hurting me! You're hurting me!

*(Pauses)*

Steal... Steal... Steal away. Eyes down. Don't look... Up. Don't look at their faces. That's it! That's it! Mustn't let on... Just move... Move on. Not to slow... Mustn't let on...

## THE VOICE con't

*(In the blackness, the police car door closes)*

Mustn't mumble a word... ... Not to them. Not to yourself... Not to anyone. Quiet now! Quiet now... Shoooo! Can't... Mustn't... They... They are writing. They are writing songs... Writing songs of love but not for me. For you! For them! This is why... Here... Quickly! Quietly! Before... Unable... Move... Trapped...

*(In the blackness, the police car speeds away as the siren grows more and more distant)*

*(Lights FADE UP)*

THE END