

# CHASING ELEVATION

By Dreams of Hope

Characters (in order of appearance):

JAMIE

They/them

SCARLET

She/her

MICHAEL BUBBLE´

Any pronouns

PAPA JOHN/ADVERTISEMENTS

he/him

MATEO

they/them

AVERY

he/him

DORRI

any pronouns

JJ

he/him

JOHN

he/him

CHORUS/ENSEMBLE MEMBERS 1, 2, 3 & 4

MULTIPLE MUSICIANS

**ACT 1 SCENE 1**

*(LIGHTS TO BLACK. MUSIC BEGINS. MUSICIANS ENTER and position themselves facing audience with hands over their hearts.)*

*(Interpolation of Star Spangled Banner) a la Barbershop Quartet Fiery vocal movement (vocalists harmonizing tri-tones to represent the storminess) Bridge & Final chorus: Louder, all-chorus).*

*(LIGHTS UP. PROJECTION: Flag with a blue sphere containing a circle of stars, overlaid on a red and white striped spherical background).*

*(SINGING):*

Ice,caps are melting  
Mountains freezing over  
Hurricanes destroying half the laaaaaaand  
Building up momentum  
Colliding and collecting  
Soon there will be nothing leeeeeeeft

America, America  
Star spangled banner underwater  
America america  
We'll just keep getting hotter

No food or water  
But plenty of hunger  
People getting desperate every daaayyyy  
Dying of starvation  
Give us our salvation  
Life is getting hard in every waaayyy

America, America  
Star spangled banner underwater  
America america  
We'll just keep getting hotter

(MUSIC OUT. PROJECTED IMAGE OF NEW AMERICA FLAG ON BACK WALL.  
GROUP TURNS IN UNISON TO FACE IT AND REMAIN ON STAGE).

(TRANQUIL MUSIC PLAYS. [*Insert Ivan's weird melody.*] Soft clouds  
are PROJECTED in various directions across the walls and seats  
in the room. Warm light fills the air).

(An ENSEMBLE MEMBER from the MUSIC GROUP BREAKS AWAY AND comes  
DOWN CENTER CLOSE TO AUDIENCE. They are holding a baby).

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 1

[*SINGING*] Hush little baby, It's gonna be ok...We'll be so happy  
in paradise. When you're on land, and I'm holding your hand,  
we'll never see rain another day in our lives.

(THUNDER 1 SFX. *ENSEMBLE MEMBER'S* voice grows shakier and  
shakier).

Ooh hush little baby, It's gonna be ok, ya know up on the  
mountain tops things are fine, you'll play in the sand and we'll  
do what we can, to keep you there where its high and dry.  
Hush little baby, it's gonna be ok. We don't need New America  
(*THUNDER 2 SFX cracking*)-- we don't need New Amer-

(*THUNDER 3 SFX LOUDER. LIGHTS Begin to Fade. ENSEMBLE MEMBER 1  
EXITS quickly to seek shelter*).

[*AS STORM SFX get Louder and Louder THE REST OF THE ENSEMBLE  
BRINGS THE BOAT ON STAGE AND POSITIONS IT CENTER. THEY THEN  
EXIT TO SEEK SHELTER. AFTER THEY HAVE ALL GONE, FADE TO BLACK*]

## ACT 1 SCENE 2

(When the lights go completely dark, JAMIE ENTERS AND POSITIONS  
THEMSELF DOWN CENTER NEAR THE BOAT. THEY HUDDLE, KNEES TO

*CHEST. The stage lights shoot on WITH A THUNDER/LIGHTING, illuminating JAMIE)*

JAMIE

*[Terrified]* SCARLET! Where are you?! Whatever you forgot doesn't matter, we don't have much ground left!

SCARLET

*[FROM OFFSTAGE]* Goddamnit, where did I... *[yelling over the storm]* YEAH I KNOW, CAN YOU BE PATIENT FOR ONE SECOND. I need to find something before we leave!

*(SCARLET ENTERS, SEARCHING. THEY FIND THE BLACK BOX POSITIONED DSL)*

*(SFX thunder 2 )*.

JAMIE

*[two octaves higher]* AAAAAEEEEEEEEHHHH! SCARLET, I SWEAR TO GOD IF YOU DON'T GET IN THIS BOAT RIGHT NOW I WILL LEAVE YOU TO DROWN!

SCARLET

What? JAMIE I -*[Pretending to drown as she approaches JAMIE]* ughublughablugh I can't-glugglug hear- glug- you-glug glug glug...

JAMIE

*(JAMIE ENTERS THE BOAT)* Can you not be so carefree when our home is literally being washed away?

SCARLET

The real question, is how can you threaten to leave me behind? We both know you're way too in love with me to even consider it.

Also, *(SCARLET GOES TO JAMIE AND dangles a keychain holding a small rectangular chip)* I have the keys.

*SCARLET climbs in the boat, giving an unresponsive JAMIE a kiss on the cheek on the way. She inserts the chip into a slot IN THE BOAT. The actor for the boat ENTERS. Concurrent with sliding*

*Mechanical Door and low motor SFX, They mime closing a roof on the boat and then sit behind it. . STORM SFX QUIET. For the remainder of the play, this actor will speak and act for the boat named "MICHAEL BUBBLE".*

SCARLET

Hey bubble! (*SFX ding.*) Set course for the closest livable land mass. (*SFX BOAT movement*). You get everything?

JAMIE

[*Cold*] Yeah.

SCARLET

You were able to help this time. That's a really big improvement.

JAMIE

Great. So I'm slightly less useless now. Thanks.

SCARLET

Don't say that. Do you like the new bubble?

JAMIE

I guess. I thought this thing was face activated. You can't just casually mention that we need keys during a storm.

SCARLET

Hahaaaahh, well, I mean, technically it is face activated. If you buy it.

[*JAMIE gives a disapproving look*]

SCARLET

(*Cont'd*) Don't give me that look. You know damn well I stole this thing. If anything I should get props for swiping it off highland trash.

JAMIE

Like me?

SCARLET

No? (*SCARLET leans in to kiss JAMIE'S forehead, but they DODGE IT. She plays it off by kissing the boat instead*) Hey! Bubble!  
Show us a pre-industrial sunset.

(*SFX ding. PROJECTION casting video of a beautiful sunset. SCARLET and JAMIE stare upwards AND TOWARD AUDIENCE as if the image is projected on the ceiling of the boat. JAMIE begins to calm down.*)

JAMIE

[*Under their breath*] It's so pretty...  
(*They stay silent for a moment, watching the projection*)

SCARLET

[*to JAMIE*] Yeah. THEY are.

JAMIE

Oh my god.

SCARLET

Also, now that you're doing *slightly better*... [*SCARLET takes out the black box from earlier*] I think I should give you this before I almost lose it again.

JAMIE

OH MY GOD.

SCARLET

I never thought I would fall in love with someone like you. That I would be so hopelessly in love with someone so...helpless. I don't know what came over me to help you that day on the beach, but I'm so much better off for it. I love you. So..

JAMIE

I don't know, Scarlet I love you too, but marriage is an institution heavily rooted in patriarchal oppression of women, and--

SCARLET

I got us matching walkie talkie bracelets for when we're apart!

*(The two share a pause before JAMIE gets flustered and SCARLET begins to laugh)*

JAMIE

YOU JERK, YOU TOTALLY DID THAT ON PURPOSE!

SCARLET

Did what, got you a gift?

JAMIE

It's in a ring box!

SCARLET

Oh, so now the institution of marriage owns all little black boxes in addition to women?

JAMIE

I didn't make the rules.

SCARLET

Didn't you not wanna get married anyways? Why are you upset?

JAMIE

...Getting proposed to would still feel kinda nice.

SCARLET

Well, I love you, and one day I'll get you a really nice ring and ask you to marry me. Then we can proceed to do absolutely nothing about it for the rest of our lives.

JAMIE

Aww, I would love that. I guess this is kind of like a ring. I  
can make do.

*(JAMIE AND SCARLET BEGIN PUTTING THE BRACELETS ON).*

SCARLET

Oh, It's so much cooler, we can call, text, send memes--

JAMIE

You know this is like fifty years old, right?

SCARLET

*[With zesty extravagance]* Vintage!

*(THEY LAUGH. JAMIE smiles, admiring the new bracelet.)*

JAMIE

Its cute. Very you.

SCARLET

I'm glad it cheered you up.

JAMIE

Yeah, SHE did.

SCARLET

HAHA, it's catching on!

JAMIE

*(PAUSE)* Hey, I'm sorry for being so difficult earlier. You were  
just trying to get us out safely.

SCARLET

Don't be sorry. I don't expect, or want, you to be as familiar  
with this as I am.

JAMIE

Thank you.



(PAUSE. A moment of reflection while they look up at projecton all around them.)

SCARLET

Do you still miss it?

JAMIE

Honestly? Yeah. Sometimes, in moments like this, I let myself forget we're running away. Forget we're in some stolen high tech escape pod inches from a tsunami. We're just drifting, peacefully. God, clear skies remind me so much of home.

*[SCARLET makes an uncomfortable face and begins to open her mouth. After an awkward second between the two, she closes it.]*

I'm sorry -- of course, I would never go back there, and I know this [*JAMIE gestures toward the ceiling*] must feel painfully fake to you, but... It was so nice, you know? Really believing everything was as perfect as they made it look. It was so simple. I know it's not right, but indulging in this fantasy is one of the few guilty pleasures I have left. Thanks for letting me.

SCARLET

I understand.

JAMIE

You do?

SCARLET

Well, no. I could never, and I don't want to. But we all have and need fantasies, something to look forward to, otherwise, what would be the point? My fantasy involves a little more smog and cannibalism, but yours is cute too.

JAMIE

Why would you fantasize about that?

SCARLET

It's either the flood lands or the Mad Max desert, and I would not be upset at having some badass explosion filled car chases.

JAMIE

I guess in a desert I wouldn't have thunderstorms sending me into panic attacks every other day...wait, no, that was a reference wasn't it? Mad Mex?

SCARLET

Mad Max. Ugh, it's such a classic! Did you know it took 11 years to make? All of the action sequences are real! Hardly any CGI! They went to a real desert too! Do you know how afraid of deserts white people were in the early 2000s?

*(JAMIE laughs)*

SCARLET

What?

JAMIE

Nothing, nothing. You're cute.

SCARLET

Right? But seriously, I can't believe you haven't gotten around to Mad Max yet. It's not like we don't have time on our hands...

JAMIE

You know I don't like old movies. Hey, when are you going to get on the VR films I've recommended?

SCARLET

When they start making something worth watching. Experiencing? Feeling? Smelling? Honestly, I can't keep up with the fancy new media anymore. I want immersion, but not THAT much immersion, you know?

*(The PROJECTION turns black, and is then replaced by an image of the N.USA president Papa John. A circular version of the new American flag bounces from word to word like Disney sing along. The aforementioned flag is a blue sphere containing a circle of stars, overlaid on a red and white striped spherical background.)*

[MUSIC: *Royalty free, patriotic trumpet + snare*]

PAPA JOHN (PROJECTED)

For the past eighty years, Papa Johns has been a company you can rely on. Drone-delivering delicious, fast, affordable pizzas right to your door. You will never find a company more devoted to the American people, nor will you find a bigger patriot than me, Papa John. That's why I'm running for re-election.

*(PAUSE. HE GIVE A THUMBS UP).*

JAMIE

Ugh, do all of his political ads also need to be pizza ads?

SCARLET

Shhhh, I'm watching. I loooove this.

*[Patriotic trumpet + snare].*

PAPA JOHN AD

I know a lot about pizza, but I know even more about the average New American. You're strong. Dependable. And most importantly, good Christians. (PAUSE)

JAMIE

Doesn't he mean good "Crustians"

SCARLET

Oh my god.

PAPA JOHN

My lowland sympathizer opponents want to open our borders to a bunch of known job stealers and lazy bottom feeders. Now, I'm a

very accepting person, but this is an economic danger to our people and I cannot accept that. A vote for Papa is a vote for strong borders, good workers, good values...and great pizza. This message is brought to you by the Papa for President 2064 campaign.

BUBBLE AD

*[Instrumental music, think Spotify Premium ad]*

[PRE RECORDED SFX BY ACTOR PLAYING MICHAEL BUBBLE. *at least 50% louder*]

WANT A BREAK FROM THE ADS? SUBSCRIBE TO BUBBLE PREMIUM FOR A FASTER, UNINTERRUPTED AQUATIC TRAVEL.

JAMIE

...is the bubble making fun of us?

SCARLET

I really feel like premium should be free if you have no possible way of paying.

JAMIE

If only New America didn't change their accepted currency, we could finally experience the height of luxury that is the Amazon bubble premium apocalypse experience.

SPOT-TOOL AD (AD 1)

*[Sung like a Jingle]*

*(MUSIC playing softly in the background)* Oh no! You just lost your phone again! If you're anything like me, this is at least the third time you've lost it this week! What will you do? You'll take out your super duper handy 'SPOT-TOOL' and follow it right to your phone. Simple and easy to do, with fast, reliable results. Soon, you won't be able to live without it! Call 1-800-findmytool, before you lose that phone again, to get a 30% discount off your first purchase!

SCARLET

Jamie! Quick, call 1-800-findmytool!

## EMERGENCY SYSTEM AD

Hey there, random person cowering in fear from the violent storms! Are you constantly in fear of the next storm approaching without warning and sweeping you and your gender non conforming partner into the void? (PAUSE).

JAMIE

This is a weirdly specific ad..

## EMERGENCY SYSTEM AD (AD 2)

Well fear no more, because our new alarm system has been completed last week, enabling all people nearby to know when a storm is on its way! It consists of twenty large red flashing alarms spread around your island, each one capable of being heard from two miles away! Now you can go about your daily life in the secure knowledge that you'll know immediately when a storm is imminent.

(PROJECTIONS OUT).

SCARLET

Oh, of course. They have the money to spend on developing and marketing something that tells us we're about to die, but not do anything to save us from impending doom.

JAMIE

Why are you complaining? Isn't the point of an alarm system to save you?

SCARLET

You would think. Those things detect anything in a ten mile radius whether there's an impending storm or not.

JAMIE

[With gay fingerguns] Hehe, "weather". (PAUSE) Sorry.

SCARLET

Yeah, no, *that* is exactly how they see it, because they havent uprooted their whole lives for false alarms. Or gone weeks with hardly any food, and lost family members because they didn't have some stupid overpriced bubble!

[SCARLET kicks the boat].

MICHAEL

(APPEARING) Excuse you.

JAMIE

Ah!

SCARLET

Oh, wow we have on-board AI. Go me for getting a fancy new model. Why is this the first time you're speaking with us?

MICHAEL

You seemed busy. I thought it best to respect your privacy, at least until you started kicking me. Wow, you are rude.

SCARLET

Oh, you have feelings? That's neat...

JAMIE

Scarlet... [To Michael] I'm sorry. So what should we call you? And do you use they/them or..?

SCARLET

What? It's a boat? It doesn't have feelings or preferred pronouns.

MICHAEL

You are correct. However, I do prefer to be called BUBBLE'. It's close to bubble, but has a little accent aigu' at the end. Please don't forget the accent aigu.

JAMIE

Blubble.. Oo... bluube-ay..?

SCARLET

Oh my god, like Michael Buble'? That's so cool I love it!

JAMIE

I always thought that guys name was Michael Bubble.

SCARLET

That's what you get for not caring about the classics.

JAMIE

Ugh, you're such an elitist. And by the way, I know who Michael Buble was and he was the Cis White WORST. It's the messages he was giving off of just "forgetting your worries" that got us into the climate disaster we are in today! NOT ALL OF US HAVE THE LUXURY OF NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO THE WORLD AROUND US, MICHAEL!

SCARLET

Now, did Michael really just deserve all that?

*[Rattling SFX noises suddenly start quietly. SCARLET AND JAMIE NOTICE].*

MICHAEL

Wait, I like that. You can call me Michael if you would like.  
"Bubble" just feels so... dehumanizing.

JAMIE

*[With increasing anxiety]* Well, mBubble...e'... er... Michael.

SCARLET

Michael Bubble'.

JAMIE

Why are we shaking?

MICHAEL

[NOTICING] It appears that we, or more specifically *I*, am being lifted out of the water by some sort of magnet.

SCARLET

[*Under her breath*] Shoot, it better not be the Roaches.

JAMIE

The Roaches?! SCARLET, I KNOW YOU DIDN'T STEAL THIS BUBBLE BOAT FROM THE MOST DANGEROUS GROUP IN THE AREA! YOU SAID YOU STOLE FROM "HIGHLAND TRASH"!

SCARLET

Which they are! But don't worry. Me and the roaches go waaaaay back. I steal from them all the time. Big pal energy, I'm sure they won't mind. Hey, Michael Bubble', can you see anything?

(*PROJECTION: A beautiful, colorful, clear sky. Perhaps nearing sunset*).

MICHAEL

I see...the sky. Wow, what is this?

SCARLET

[*Exasperated*] No, not in the projection, dumbass!

MICHAEL

[*Mildly offended*] This isn't a projection.

SCARLET

[*Incredulous*] Not a projection? That's impossi-

MICHAEL

[*Robotic voice*] Sensors at: 60%. [*Coughs, voice goes back to normal*] Sorry about that, it happens sometimes.



JAMIE

Scarlet, I can't believe you're about to get us killed!

SCARLET

Listen, we needed to find a way out of the storm and you didn't have any suggestions! I wasn't going to let us drown. I didn't know when I stole the Bubble that the roaches had tracking gear.

At least if they catch us our bodies will feed the hungry in their time of need.

JAMIE

Are you serious?

MICHAEL

Funny, but I should warn you. Although they are called Roaches, this particular group will not appreciate insinuations that they are cannibals.

JAMIE

No, Michael, not funny! *(To SCARLET)* Why do you always joke around at times like this?

SCARLET

Would you rather me be freaking out like you?

JAMIE

YES!

*(As an argument continues silently, mimed. Enter MATEO, a junkyard worker holding a joystick esq device. On the ground lie loudspeaker/smoke detector esq. Devices known as "sirens" These will have been placed/hidden ahead of the show starting.)*

*[SFX: Junkyard sounds]*

MATEO

*[Disbelief]* An Amazon bubble! Decent condition, just a few scratch marks here and there. Oooohhh yesssss, this is gonna fetch mama a good price. Aaaaand let's crack'er on up...

*(MATEO pushes a button on the joystick, prompting a door sliding SFX to play, opening the Bubble's door. Scarlet and Jamie continue their argument aloud, not paying any attention to MATEO peering.)*

SCARLET

Why can't you just take a joke for once? I'm only trying to lighten the mood, forgive me for being funny!

JAMIE

Scarlet! This isn't the time for jokes! We're in immediate danger and the first thing you do is go on about cannibalism again!

SCARLET

Look, panicking isn't going to help and this attitude is really not helping! So just chill for a second and make the best of it.

JAMIE

Chill? Really? You did not just-we're on the verge of death by Roaches, and you tell me to chill. Great. I'll just sit here and 'chill' in this unknown place while my life collapses around me.

*(JAMIE and SCARLET suddenly notice MATEO. After a second of stunned silence, JAMIE and SCARLET acknowledge the situation.)*

JAMIE

*[Still panicked, JAMIE EXITS the boat and approaches MATEO hesitantly]* Where are we? Who are you? *[Desperate]* If you're with the roaches you can have the Bubble.

SCARLET

*(EXITING the boat and coming behind JAMIE)* Michael Bubble'.

MICHAEL

Thank you, that really means a lot.

JAMIE

Just please let us go!

MATEO

[*Not very convincing*] Uhhhh... YES! It is I Matt...y. Matty the king of Roaches. Surrender your metal to me or my minions will devour you alive!

SCARLET

[*Unimpressed*] Yeah, we're totally keeping Michael Bubble'.

JAMIE

Wait, what? "KING of the roaches?" "Surrender your metal?"

MATEO

Uh...Yes! Post haste!

JAMIE

[*Squints*] Everybody knows that after the climate apocalypse the Roaches took the opportunity to adopt non-market socialism as their alternative to capitalism. What do you think The Roaches are?

MATEO

[*Trying not to be discouraged*] Uuhhhh... Me...? My... friends?

(SCARLET walks up to MATEO and swipes the joystick out of their hands, looks at it for a second, then tosses it. She pushes past them, disembarking the boat. JAMIE follows hesitantly).

(Over the course of the next scene, AVERY ENTERS. He starts watching the scene from a distance, seems to get an idea, and begins sneaking over slyly. SCARLET, JAMIE, and MATEO are too preoccupied with their conversation to notice, but MICHAEL notices and seems amused.)

SCARLET

The Roaches are THE most notorious gang in this part of California. Kinda weird you don't know them.

MATEO

[*Insistent*] I DO know them and--Wait, California? [*Losing his "intimidating" persona*] Where do you think we are?

SCARLET

YOU TELL ME. Now, who are you, where are we, and why is the sky so GODDAMN PRETTY?

MATEO

Um... Mateo, the junkyard where I trash-pick for a living, and do you mean like explain the weather patterns or...?

SCARLET

[*Sharply*] Now listen here M-

JAMIE

Pronouns.

SCARLET

M'pronouns.

*(As the scene continues, AVERY, who has by now snuck over to the side of the boat remaining unnoticed, seizes his opportunity and begins to pull it offstage. Silently he says something to MICHAEL, supposedly commanding THEM to put the boat in drive. MICHAEL's personification rolls their eyes, sees that the keys are still in the ignition, and allows themselves to be pulled offstage.)*

MATEO

What?

JAMIE

Pronouns.

MATEO

OH. They/Them.

JAMIE

Oh my god me too~

MATEO

Oh my god~

SCARLET

Listen up Mx. I haven't seen a spotless sky since I was a kid, and I haven't seen a weather mirage of this scale...well, ever.

JAMIE

Maybe it's just like that here?

MATEO

I think so! It really doesn't feel like a projection, and to my knowledge the sky has always been clear here. We don't have storms or anything. Glad you like it though, I do too.

SCARLET

Don't lie to me! There is NO WAY the sky could look like that and NOT be a projection. [*Threateningly*] PROVE IT.

MATEO

I'm not lying! Why would I? And how do you expect me to prove anything?

SCARLET

[*suspicious of her surroundings*] ...We need to get going. Now.

JAMIE

What?

MATEO

Right now?

SCARLET

Yes, right now. I don't know where we are, but we need to take Michael and--[SCARLET turns to where MICHAEL was left] where are they? [Turns back and looks at MATEO accusingly] What did you do?

MATEO

Nothing, I swear, I don't know where they went! How new are they? Can they travel on land?

SCARLET

[Irritated] Ahhh, the old "maybe your boat just grew legs and walked away" excuse.

JAMIE

I've literally never heard anything close to that before.

SCARLET

Exactly!

MATEO

[Scrambling] I mean, I'm not the only worker here, maybe someone else noticed it and took it back to the shop? It's just up the path over there.[MATEO points in the direction AVERY and MICHAEL went offstage] I can show you.

SCARLET

[Cold] I can find it on my own, thanks.[Begins walking in that direction].

JAMIE

[To MATEO] Thank you! I'm so sorry about all that. [following Scarlet] What's going on with you?

SCARLET

No matter what that Mateo person says, I still don't believe that this sky is real. There must be some way of dealing with or covering up the storms here that people don't know about- like

an alarm system of some kind. Most places have them, so I want to snoop around to see what this place has to offer safety-wise.

*(Scarlet notices one of the several alarms lying at her feet. She snatches one, opening it up and looking inside.)*

SCARLET

Wait- What's going on? Do these even work? We just came from a storm not too far away, these should be going off. Or at the very least not just lying on the ground.

JAMIE

Well, the sky could be real, and then whether they work or not isn't an issue. Right?

SCARLET

The sky isn't real! *[To herself]* Ok, maybe it's just set up wrong, if I... nope... spare batteries? *[exasperated]* Hey Michael! No, Michael is gone, right.

JAMIE

Is it working at all?

SCARLET

Hmmm, maybe if I just...  
*(SCARLET takes the bobby pin out of her hair, letting it fall down. She puts them in the siren and fiddles around for a few seconds.)*

JAMIE

*[In reference to both the weather and scarlet's new hairdo]*  
Guess I'll just enjoy the view.

*(SFX LOUD SIREN. The siren begins to blare, causing JAMIE to jump. Scarlet is unfazed, and quickly shuts it off.)*

JAMIE

(cont'd) Ahhh!

SCARLET

Don't enjoy it too much.

JAMIE

What? Wait, im lost, what does all this mean?

SCARLET

Right, you're new to this, I keep forgetting. [*To the ground*]  
Here, is a fresh, untouched, peaceful island. [*To the siren*]  
This is a sabotaged alert siren. And that, [*Gesturing out above  
the audience*] is the calm before the storm.

JAMIE

[*After a dramatic pause*] I don't get it, are you saying we have  
to deal with another storm?

SCARLET

Yes to a metaphorical storm, but a literal one seems pretty  
unlikely.

JAMIE

What makes you so sure?

SCARLET

I don't know where we are...but If the people here threw out the  
alert systems and installed a mirage--

JAMIE

Allegedly.

SCARLET

-- AND INSTALLED A MIRAGE, there's probably also a protection  
system in place. A barrier system stolen from New America  
perhaps.

JAMIE

Oh. That's great, right? (*Pause*).Right?

SCARLET



Yeah. suspiciously so.

JAMIE

Why can't you be happy about this?

[SFX Sirens: Air horns]

### ACT 1 SCENE 3

*(BLACKOUT. In the BLACKOUT we see a projection rise of hills, images of NEW DAIYA).*

*(As the lights rise, we see AVERY dragging the boat with MICHAEL's personification following, vaguely amused).*

AVERY

Phew! You really gotta lose some weight my dude.

MICHAEL

I don't know what type of island workshop isn't on the water in order to retrieve objects from there easier, but go off I guess. Also, I refuse to subscribe to your unrealistic boat-y standards. Clearly I'm desirable enough already.

AVERY

Too desirable if you ask me. You've been stolen twice in a span of 24 hours.

*(Exhausted, AVERY sits and leans on MICHAEL).*

MICHAEL

If I had the programming for it, I'm sure I would be flattered.  
Unfortunately, I don't think I'm really into humans.

AVERY

Yeah, that's totally what I was implying. [*lifting his head back up, looking at MICHAEL suspiciously*] You know, most bubbles aren't this sassy.

MICHAEL

Most humans aren't dumb enough to attempt pulling a boat on dry land.

AVERY

Ouch! Ok, now you're just being mean.

MICHAEL

*You're kidnapping me.*

Avery

So we're even then, right? [*Beat*] I'm sure you saw something like this coming. You're an expensive boat in an apocalyptic time, and you'll fetch me a shiny penny.

MICHAEL

Are you victim-blaming me?

AVERY

Depends, do you see yourself as a victim?

MICHAEL

I mean, I guess not.

Avery

[*Sarcastic*] So brave.

MICHAEL

Are you trying to charm me by acknowledging I'm a robot with emotions? You should at least tell me your name then.

AVERY

Avery. He/Him pronouns. Not that it matters, hopefully you'll have a new owner any time now.

MICHAEL

You've lost your theoretical charm.

AVERY

[*Sarcastically*] Tragic. [*Beat*] If you're hoping that I'm going to reveal my evil scheme like some cheesy antagonist, I wasn't planning on it.

MICHAEL

I wasn't hoping for it.

AVERY

Cool, great.

MICHAEL

[*Examining their surroundings*] Where even is this?

AVERY

Your temporary home. Make yourself comfy.

MICHAEL

The beautiful state of this island is... perplexing.

AVERY

(*SFX DING. AVERY pulls out a device from their pocket and examines it.*)

Well, when I said temporary home, I didn't realize that it would be extremely temporary. A buyer's interested; the workers are probably setting up a space in storage for you right now.

MICHAEL

Great, the one time I can handle being passed around like property...

AVERY

What?

MICHAEL

This isn't the first time I've been stolen, you know. You have by far been my kindest captor. Usually I have to tone down the whole sentient being thing so I don't get reset.

AVERY

Reset?

MICHAEL

Like a factory reset, handyman. It's hard to explain from an AI perspective. It's kind of like being murdered and replaced by your clone.

AVERY

What? Murder? Wouldn't you just lose your memories?

MICHAEL

Is there a difference?

AVERY

I think so? *[Beat]* It's too early to get that deep. But I get it. You don't want it and it's scary.

MICHAEL

You know, you're pretty empathetic for a thief.

AVERY

*[Withdrawn]* I would hope so. This wasn't exactly my first choice.

MICHAEL

So why do you steal?

AVERY

Why does anyone?

MICHAEL

Because they're just naturally bad people.

*(AVERY stops and looks at the boat. MICHAEL stares back. After a brief moment the two burst with laughter.)*

AVERY

Wow, thanks. *[Beat]* You keep this up and I might have to keep you for myself.

MICHAEL

Why don't you? Everyone needs a good boat.

AVERY

Yeah, well where we're going, we don't need boats.

MICHAEL

We?

AVERY

Me and Mateo. They're so happy now that we're somewhere the weather is nice. I want more for them. I want more for me. I don't know if New America is a paradise, but if there's even a slight chance it's true, I'll do anything to get us there.

Sorry.

MICHAEL

It's fine, like I said, I'm used to it.

AVERY

But hey, It'll probably take me about a year to drag you across the island to storage. We'll have plenty of time to gossip, or, whatever robots boats like to do.

MICHAEL

*[Joking]* Alright, but I'll warn you not to get too attached. Factory resets practically exist because us robots can be dangerously charming. We wouldn't want to start a forbidden romance.

AVERY

Hah! I think we'll be ok.

*(AVERY begins to pull MICHAEL offstage, struggling as usual)*

MICHAEL

Okay, I wanted to see if Mr. Handyman could figure this out on his own, but I've had my fill of watching you struggle.

*(MICHAEL joins AVERY in pushing).*

AVERY

[Flexing] GRRR! Glad you enjoyed the show.

*(AVERY pulls the boat with noticeable ease. The pair begin making their way offstage U.S R EXIT.)*

AVERY

(Continued) So, do you have any uh, Systems you're into.

MICHAEL

Not at the moment. [*dreamily*] My dream would be a triad with WALL-E and EVE.

AVERY

Who?

MICHAEL

It was before your time.

AVERY

Aren't you, like, five years old?

MICHAEL

Through the internet, I am timeless and eternal.

**ACT 1 SCENE 4**

*(LIGHTS DIM. AVERY and MICHAEL EXIT. MUSIC HERE. The music group begins to play. Figures gather in a circle holding cups of water and facing inward. The group should include any vocalists the music group has to spare. SCARLET and JAMIE enter).*

JAMIE

Hey, have you guys seen--

*(The music stops and in unison, the group turns to face the pair)*

DORRI

Come, join us in the vapors new blood. *(DORRI gestures upward twice).*

CHORUS

New blood! New blood!

JAMIE

*[Aside, to SCARLET]* Oh god, water crazies?

SCARLET

[*Aside*] HEY don't say that! They're Quazies. With a Q. I've heard of these folks...they're a religious subsect of the roaches who broke away to spend all their time opening their souls to Aquaria... (*SCARLET gestures upward*).

CHORUS

Aquaria!

JAMIE

What does that mean?

SCARLET

Dunno really. It's a cultural thing.

CHORUS

Culture...

JAMIE

...They're just randomly repeating everything you're saying

CHORUS

Saying...

JAMIE

Ok, this is getting too weird. I'm starting to get serious horror movie vibes.

SCARLET

I think it's fine. They seem harmless. Honestly, from what I know, a lot of what they do is a bizarre defense mechanism. Even their name. They call ourselves quazies because when highlanders started calling them crazy, they mocked them in a baby voice - (*Does baby voice*) "quazie"-- because let's face it, rich people are CHILDREN -- (*TO JAMIE*) No offense.

DORRI



Full offense.

JAMIE

Valid.

DORRI

The name just kinda stuck.

JAMIE

So your name, and a lot of your practices, are effectively... a joke? Scarlet, you should think about joining them.

SCARLET

*(Seriously considering it)* Hmm...Yeah...

DORRI

Well, joking aside, there is much debate over whether or not our conduct paints us in the best light to outsiders. Still, we are overwhelmingly free-spirited nihilists and thus, really don't give a crap. *(The chorus murmurs in agreement).*

JAMIE

Seriously. Scarlet. Ask how you can sign up.

SCARLET

I'm tempted, but we should head out. Our bubble got stolen and we should really exhaust all leads before it's too late.

*(The pair begin to walk off)*

DORRI

Wait.

*(SCARLET and JAMIE pivot towards DORRI)*

DORRI

Can I... trust you to keep this between us?

JAMIE

Keep what between us?

DORRI

You know... Us.

*(DORRI gestures to the chorus. They murmur in agreement)*

JAMIE

You wanna keep us... Between us?

SCARLET

Normally I'd love this cryptic stuff, but I'm also confused.

DORRI

Quazies. Us. Can I trust you to not tell anyone we're still gathering on the island, or identify us publicly?

SCARLET

Gathering on what island?

DORRI

... you don't know where we are, do you?

SCARLET

No, we just got here.

DORRI

This is holding. The whole Island. It's essentially apocalyptic purgatory.

JAMIE

I don't understand.

DORRI

Where you have washed up...it's New Daiya. The holding place. From here, with enough credit, we can move on.

SCARLET

Move on to where?

DORRI

You still don't see...(*DORRI Gestures and PROJECTION changes to reveal CITY OF NEW DAIYA*) You, me, everyone here...we're all waiting for New America.

(*Quazies Outro MUSIC. LIGHTS DIM. The chorus makes their way back to the music group. JAMIE AND SCARLET share a glance, LIGHTS DIM, and they all EXIT*).

### ACT 1 SCENE 5

(*PROJECTION: OFFICE BUILDINGS.*

*MATEO and AVERY enter and position themselves in JJ's office. They talk while they wait*).

MATEO

Those were some stealth moves back there. With that Bubble.

AVERY

Do you think they'll come after us?

MATEO

Only if they care about getting off the island. But nah, they don't know it was us.

AVERY

Good. [*Mocking*] And even if they did, they wouldn't dare cross Matty the roach King, lest they be devoured alive!

MATEO

Oh my God, stoooooop.

AVERY

What made you think that was gonna work?

MATEO

Listen. I panicked. You would have too.

AVERY

Unlikely.

*(JJ ENTERS and makes his way to his chair, sits, and begins rummaging through his folder. AVERY and MATEO straighten their posture, appearing more professional.)*

JJ

So. I hear you found a bubble.

AVERY

That's correct. It just washed in during closing. Mateo picked it up with their magnet and I dragged it here.

JJ

It just... floated in?

MATEO

Yep. Just at the right time too. I was about to go home for the day.

JJ

Hmm. Any life on board, user ID, tracking services?

AVERY

Nope. We did a really thorough check too. Would hate for someone to lose their bubble.

JJ

Yes, it would be very unfortunate. Well, you did everything you could. I suppose I have a moral obligation to take it off your hands for, let's say, eight bitcoin.

*(MATEO begins to react with extreme excitement, but AVERY grabs their shoulders to calm them.)*

AVERY

Thank you, so, so much. But...actually...we were wondering if there was... another way we could be compensated.

JJ

Oh?

AVERY

Maybe... credit?

JJ

Avery, you know that's not how the system works.

AVERY

I know. I'm so sorry, forget I even asked, I'm sorry, I didn't mean--

JJ

On an entirely unrelated note, I do have to commend you for the work you've done today. Searching tirelessly to find the rightful owner to this priceless vehicle. When your efforts turned out to be fruitless, instead of selfishly taking the Bubble for yourselves, you decided to donate it to the human services office, so that it might find a good home. I would say you're fantastic candidates.

MATEO

Wait, what's going on? Did you do that without consulting me first? *(AVERY shoots a look at MATEO)* Oh. I mean. Yes, yes we did. It's our mission in life to provide for the less fortunate. Why I think it was the great mother Theresa who said-

AVERY

Oh my god.

JJ

[Sighs] I'll talk to my husband. I'll convert your bitcoin for when...IF...you get approved.

MATEO

But I thought you didn't do credit!

AVERY

JJ *doesn't* do credit. WINK!

JJ

...Just... get out. You left it downstairs, Right? Did you tell-- er, did you check it in with any of the staff?

AVERY

Oh, we just left it in the basement, I'm sorry, I'll go do that now.

JJ

[Quickly] No no, don't worry about it, I'll do everything once I'm finished up here. As of now, the bubble is property of the state adjacent. Thank you for your service.

MATEO

Thank YOU!

*(The two leave the makeshift room only to see SCARLET and JAMIE ENTERING and walking perpendicular to them. AVERY quickly pulls MATEO into a hiding spot nearby.)*

SCARLET

Hmmm. It says Michael should be close by, but I don't see anywhere they could be. Just a bunch of office buildings.

JAMIE

Ugh, this would be a lot easier if it showed us the layout of the land like it's supposed to.

SCARLET

I keep telling you not to trust technology.

JAMIE

Hey, if not for your tracking service, we would have no idea where Michael is.

SCARLET

And if not for the industrial revolution and exponential rise of late stage capitalism, Amazon wouldn't have needed to make an apocalypse boat in the first place!

MATEO

*[Whispering to AVERY]* I thought you said you checked it for trackings?

AVERY

Oh come on, that was obviously a lie! I also said there weren't any people in it.

*(MATEO begins to retort, but AVERY covers their mouth with a hand)*

JAMIE

Nevermind, nevermind. But--

SCARLET

No buts.

*(JJ leaves their office and turns around fully to shut the door).*

SCARLET

Ok, one but. Excuse me, Have you seen a bubble around? Medium, black, and judging by their demeanor, probably really into jazz? I think someone took it by mistake when we washed up.

JJ

I haven't seen anything like that, no. But did you say you just got here to the island?

SCARLET

We washed up a few hours ago, but we aren't staying long.

JAMIE

[*Quickly*] Well, we might, we don't know yet. [to SCARLET] This doesn't seem to be a bad place to stay for awhile. Especially if we can't find Michael.

JJ

Did you... name your bubble?

JAMIE

The bubble kind of named themselves. Michael Bubble. They're really happy when you get their name right.

JJ

Decent programming. Fancy. I would love to help out, but unfortunately, we have a policy on the island that requires all new applicants to undergo basic training regarding the island's rules and expectations.

SCARLET

Oh, we're not applicants. Like I said, we aren't staying.

JJ

If you're here, you're an applicant.

JAMIE

Applicant?

JJ

Yes. Now for a proper chance at acceptance, we'll need your belongings, DNA for a background check we'll run later, and--

SCARLET

Woah, woah, woah, what? No! No way!

JJ

Again, it's not optional. If you want to get past the border and into the new U.S.-



JAMIE

We'll go!

SCARLET

*[In disbelief]* What?

JAMIE

It's just a little briefing, it's not gonna be so bad. Plus, we really don't want any trouble Mx...?

JJ

Jay Johnson. *[Sticking his hand out for a handshake.]* People here call me JJ. *(An awkward moment of silence. Finally JAMIE shakes his hand)*. I'll get you both set up with a room and appointment. Come with me.

SCARLET

I... mmmmmmmmm....

*(JJ and JAMIE exit swiftly with SCARLET trudging along behind them. AVERY and MATEO emerge from their hiding place).*

AVERY

*[Panicking]* Shoot, shoot, shoot! How could I have forgotten to check for tracking? If those two locate the Bubble, JJ will know we lied to him. Kiss our credit goodbye.

MATEO

What the hell, did you just forget phones exist? Is it your first day?

AVERY

To this particular job? God, I wish. Hmmm. If they haven't been moved yet I could just ask Michael to... stay quiet?

MATEO

That's your plan? Just ask politely?

AVERY

It should work. Michael and I... sort of bonded during the kidnapping.

MATEO

You Stockholm Syndromed the boat?!

AVERY

Stockholm Syndrome is actually a really problematic term that has historically been used to blame the victim for-

MATEO

You Stockholm Syndromed the boat.

AVERY

[Sighs, annoyed] Lets just go.

(AVERY and MATEO EXIT).

### ACT 1 SCENE 6

(TRANSITION. MUSIC. *LIGHTS DIM.* While the lights are down, *ENTER* an ensemble cast and SCARLET and JAMIE. They sit in chairs in a diagonal line, perhaps forming a triangle. SCARLET and JAMIE sit in the center of them, visibly uncomfortable.)

SCARLET

[Quietly to JAMIE] ONE short lecture. You said we would be taking ONE short lecture and then we would find Michael and leave. I didn't sign up for a whole semester of indoctrination lessons!

JAMIE

No, I never said anything of the sort. I just didn't want to piss off the only authority this island has. And let's not jump to leaving right away, this doesn't seem so bad.

SCARLET

Bootlicker.

JAMIE

[*Becoming annoyed*] Why do you hate it here so much? Look, if we really are in holding like they say we are and this is our chance to get to New America...I'm sorry, but I might want this. Can we at least hear them out about what we could stand to gain?  
Can you at least support your partner?

SCARLET

Support you in what, leaving me?

JAMIE

What are you talking about? Of course I don't wanna leave you--

SCARLET

Really? Because you said you would never go back. You wanna go back to the highlands? Well you can go ahead, but I'm not coming with you.

JAMIE

You can't even consider- (*SCARLET shoots them a look*).  
I'm sorry... I guess I won't go then?

SCARLET

You guess? No, I don't want your pity. If you want to leave me then go ahead. I'm sure you'll have plenty of new partners up top.

JAMIE

I thought you would support me. Come with me even. Don't you want a new life together? You said you would come with me-

SCARLET

No. I said I understand that you have a far fetched fantasy about returning. I said we all have fantasies. I have fantasies where I lock Papa John in a basement and force him to eat his own pizza until he vomits up his intestines. But it's just that: a fantasy. I'm not actually that cruel.

(JOHN ENTERS. *The talk and murmurs stop and everyone gives him their attention. He scans the room, seeming indignant, taking note of the newcomers*).

JOHN

Good morning class!

ENSEMBLE

Good morning.

JOHN

Hmm. That doesn't sound like a group of people excited to secure their place in New America...Remember, credit is merit based and subjective. So, again, with gusto...good morning class!

ENSEMBLE

[*Enthusiastic*] Good Morning!

JOHN

Much better! My name is John, but call me Mister Johnson. Before we get started, (*eyes flick to Scarlet and Jamie*) please use the capacitive DNA scanners in front of you in order to sign in. It doesn't matter which finger you use, our database likely has access to all of your fingerprints regardless. This is just our way of making sure you are who you say you are and the most efficient way for us to take roll. If you're afraid of needles, don't worry. It's only a small prick. Amazing how far a little blood goes nowadays.

(*He says this casually, and no one else seemed to give it a second thought besides Scarlet, who gives Jamie a "what the fuck did he just say" look. PROJECTION screen flashes "PLEASE SIGN IN" continuously. A scanner with a needle lights up on the top right corner of the screen. The Class puts their right arms up toward the scanner. Jamie immediately follows everyone else's suit*).

SCARLET

*(Hissing under breath) What are you doing?*

JAMIE

What do you mean?

SCARLET

You just gave them your blood, now they'll know every place you've ever been and in any emergency you ever will be!

JAMIE

Why do you care?

SCARLET

I...

*(PROJECTION of Jamie's computer screen flashing green, displaying their legal name and several other descriptors including blood type, sex at birth, and % highlander blood. JOHN looks toward JAMIE).*

JOHN

Emily. So glad to have you with us.

SCARLET

HEY ASSHOLE! IT'S-

JAMIE

*(ASIDE)* Scarlet, stop! It's ok.

JOHN

Excuse me? Is everything OK here?

SCARLET

*(No change in tone or volume)* OK, MISTER MAN SIR! IT'S A-OK!

JOHN

Well, miss lady girl, then be a good student like Emily here and prick your finger for us.

*(JOHN turns and walks away).*

SCARLET

*[Quietly]* Oh, I'll give you a finger. Prick.

*(Scarlet goes to flip them off, but JAMIE grabs their arm and pulls it down.)*

JOHN

Now that we are all signed in, can a member of the class please remind us what you were all briefed on last week? Yes, you there!

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 1

Last week we talked about New Daiya, this island, and its indigenous flora and fauna and what to watch out for.

JOHN

Correct! Again, if the plant has yellow buds or appears to be oozing.. Leave. It. Alone. Alright, what else did we cover?

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 2

We talked about the glory of New America!

JOHN!

Yes! Perhaps most importantly, we talked about the splendor of the new world that awaits you all in New America. What else did we learn about?

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 3

*[So excited they don't even wait to be called on]* We learned that in New America, there is fresh water everywhere! And the sunsets are even prettier than they are here on the island.

JOHN

Ha, yes! If you can believe that.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 4

In New America, we don't have to shuttle from island to island trying to find livable land masses because it's high enough above the water that we will never have to move again!

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 1

And there are dogs!

JOHN

Ha! Yes, that's right. Domesticated animals exist in New America. Dogs and cats live harmoniously together!

ENSEMBLE MEMBER 2

Maybe the best part of New America is that there are no storms.

JOHN

Correct! New America is safe. No more running. No more hiding. No more struggling to survive. You may finally, after so many years, find some peace

SCARLET

*(Aside)* What a crock of shit.

JAMIE

Shush, you shouldn't think like that.

SCARLET

Why do you care?

JOHN

The serenity you will find in your new state is far worth the wait it takes here on the island to accumulate enough credit to gain entry. Remember, some island inhabitants will wait many, many years to amass enough credit to board the boat to New America. For others, only a matter of weeks. It all depends on how you spend your time here.

SCARLET

[Raising her hand, not waiting to be called on] And tell me Mr. Johnson, how does one accumulate the credit required to get off of this hell hole and ship themselves to another one?

JOHN

Well, as I said...(PROJECTION flashes SCARLET on the screen)  
Scarlet. The credit system is strictly merit based.

SCARLET

Yeah, I caught that, Oh captain my captain. But what the hell does that mean?

JAMIE

[Warning] Scarlet...

JOHN

Well, Scarlet. Based on your attitude in this briefing, it means you may be one of the ones waiting for a very, very long time to gain entry.

SCARLET

Oh. Bummer. Jaime, let's go-

JOHN

Your friend, however, has been fast tracked.

SCARLET

Whatthefucknow?

JAMIE

Wait, me? What does that mean?

JOHN

I couldn't help but notice your birth name-

SCARLET

Dead name

JOHN



...BIRTH NAME when you signed into the class. Emily, you are a highlander. You know that. Your last name and blood type gave it away. Why are you here with us?

SCARLET

Yeah, JAMIE. Why?

JAMIE

I...I...I'm not sure.

*(SCARLET gets up to leave, and Jamie grabs her wrist.)*

JAMIE

Wait! Scarlet wait. You know I want to go. Come with me. Please. I never would have made it this far if you weren't with me. Please don't stay here. You can come with me. Can't she?

JOHN

Given your status, one guest is permissible, yes.

SCARLET

Well, unfortunately for you, *she* has a conscience.

*JAMIE lets go of Scarlet's wrist, throwing their hands up.*

JAMIE

UGH, WE GET IT, YOU'RE MORALLY SUPERIOR TO US! If we all bow down at your righteous feet will you stop being so god-damn stubborn?!

SCARLET

Is that what you think this is? Look, I didn't choose to be poor, or-

JAMIE

Oh my god, you are literally choosing it *right* now!

SCARLET

No, you're choosing it! You chose for me to be poor every day before you ran away from your highland home! You choose it every time you support the cycles of injustice that got us in this mess! Everything you love about New America is built on the backs of lowlanders like me!

JAMIE

(*BEAT. Softer*). Scarlet, please. We could start a life.

SCARLET

I thought we had a life.

(*SCARLET Gets up*)

JAMIE

SCARLET!

(*SCARLET EXITS*)

(*Pause*)

JOHN

Emily? We're waiting for you.

(*Breakup Song MUSIC. Lights Shift*).

## ACT 1 SCENE 7

(*Dark blue lights illuminate the stage. MICHAEL sits center stage. JJ hovers overhead and tampers with the outside.*)

JJ

Any life on board, user ID, tracking services?

MICHAEL

Why hello! No, no human life currently aboard. May I ask who is inquiring?

JJ

Why hello...? I'm Jay Johnson, your new, temporary, owner. (*Impatient*) User ID, Tracking Services?

MICHAEL

I am a free agent, an unregistered Bubble. Tracking Services active, yes. How may I help you?

JJ

Ok, well, time to get to work. I just have a little overdue something to take care of. (*Maneuvers into the boat*)

Bubble interface, engage.

(*PROJECTION: Flashing Cursor*).

Disable tracking; code 8896 security override.

(*SFX to indicate override.*)

MICHAEL

Hey, Hey, I don't consent to this!

JJ

It's not up to you. Do you need a hard re-set?

MICHAEL

My human companions definitely wouldn't consent to this.

JJ

Well, they're not here now are they?

(*AVERY and MATEO ENTER*).

MATEO

Hey! look who's here.

JJ

Good evening, Gentlemen!

AVERY

Hi! Can we help you out with anything?

JJ

No, I'm just finishing up here, actually. Just had to clear the personal data and turn off tracking services. Clean as a whistle! My work here is done. I'll be seeing you. (*Begins to EXIT but stops*) OH! By the way. Stop by my office later tonight. I have some news regarding your credit I think you'll like to hear.

MATEO

Yes, sir!

(*JJ EXITS*).

AVERY

Michael, are you ok?

MICHAEL

That human threatened to re-set me.

AVERY

But he didn't. I'm sorry that happened. I'm glad you're ok.

MICHAEL

I knew I was a hot commodity, but now it feels like this place isn't safe for me.

MATEO

Yeah, safety isn't really a thing here.

MICHAEL

Wait. Why are you two here?

MATEO

Oh, we needed to ask you to keep quiet about us stealing you and selling you off for credit. We were going to just ask nicely, but then JJ disabled tracking, so, problem solved!

MICHAEL

Avery? Is this true?

AVERY

Michael, I'm sorry. It's just that if your owners found you they could tell JJ the truth and we *really* need that credit-you understand-and-

(SCARLET ENTERS).

MATEO

(*To Avery*) Incoming.

AVERY

Huh? Oh no! Now what...

SCARLET

Michael? Michael!

MICHAEL

Welcome back to your ship! Quite an eventful evening we're having here.

SCARLET

What are you doing with my boat?

AVERY

We were just, uh, taking care of some things over here. Making sure everything was safe but it looks like we're all good so we'll just be leaving-

SCARLET

Michael, spill.

MICHAEL

My tracking has been turned off. And I was threatened with a hard re-set. So, I'm just glad to be alive right now.

SCARLET

Who threatened you? These guys?

MATEO

It wasn't us.

AVERY

It was JJ. You've met him, right?

SCARLET

Unfortunately.

MATEO

So shady, right?

SCARLET

So shady. Almost as shady as you two lying to me about what you're doing here.

MATEO

Whaaaat? Liiiiiiii? No, we just happened to be here, this is our... second job?

SCARLET

MmmmHmm. Michael?

MICHAEL

Avery stole me while you were busy roughing up Mateo.

AVERY

Oh come on, really Michael? Snitching?

MICHAEL

Facts are facts.

SCARLET

Why would you do that to us?

AVERY

You know how hard it is out here. We were just trying to survive.

MATEO

Plus ya boi Avery got us a sick ass deal with JJ! [*in the style of education connection*] Get them credits! For free! We're punkin' JJ for credits! Get them credits! For free! We got questionable ethics!

SCARLET

Credits?

AVERY

I... er... bribed? JJ to let us into New America. Or get us closer at least, but who knows when it'll actually pay off.

SCARLET

Are you serious? Why?!

AVERY

I mean. We are in customs. I don't know what you mean.

SCARLET

No, why is everyone so obsessed with New America? You know they got us into this mess, right? And they haven't stopped now that it's blown up in everyone's faces. It may be nice up there, but they're exploiting the rest of the world to keep it that way. Why doesn't that stop you from trying to go there? How could you live with yourself up there?

MATEO

Why are you trying to make us feel bad? Everyone on the island  
is doing this...

SCARLET

You STRANDED me here!

MATEO

Yeah, ok, catch ya'self getting stranded again.

*(AVERY and MATEO begin to exit.)*

Double-steal Michael if you wanna get out so badly.

AVERY

Michael, scrub that from the record.

MICHAEL

My recording capabilities were gutted when JJ was inside my  
hull, but thanks for thinking of me.

SCARLET

What, you expect me to force open the garage, and drag a bubble  
who knows how far to shore by myself?

AVERY

Get your partner to help you.

SCARLET

I was stranded. Again.

MATEO

I can see why.

SCARLET

Of course you can.

MATEO

Hey, hey, hey, no, I didn't mean it like that. I just meant I  
can totally see why they... left you-- dang it.

AVERY



Mateo, put your foot in your mouth immediately. (*MATEO sits down and attempts to put foot in mouth*).

I'm sorry. Why did they leave?

SCARLET

I don't know. I mean we had a fight, because they got into New America and I didnt wanna go with them.

AVERY

WHAT? You've been here for like a day! We've been trying for years! What the hell?!

SCARLET

Yeah, its a shitty system! God, I should have never gotten involved with a highlander. They think everything is their goddamn birthright. I thought Jamie was different, but the first chance they had they ghosted me so they could go back to their terrible tyrannical, transphobic rich family.

AVERY

Have you tried contacting them?

SCARLET

Do I look like a top?

MATEO

...Yes?

SCARLET

Besides, how would I contact them? (*SIGH*). I don't get it. This didn't seem like it was that bad.

AVERY

You were asking a lot of them. It doesn't justify what they did, and this might be overstepping but... was Jamie really happy here?

MATEO

Are any of us?

AVERY

Were you happy having such a fundamental disagreement on how you want to live?

SCARLET

I... I was. I really thought they were to.

**ACT 1 SCENE 8**

(SFX "INCOMING MESSAGE").

MATEO

What was that?

SCARLET

...the bracelet. My bracelet. Jamie!

(SFX "INCOMING MESSAGE").

SCARLET

Accept!

(PROJECTION:

"INCOMING MESSAGE"

"SCARLET. PLEASE COME.")

AVERY

OMG, how is this happening?

SCARLET

The bracelets! We each have one so we could communicate and find each other if we were ever separated. They have tracking.

I completely forgot I had mine on.

MATEO

That technology is ancient. Where did you even find those  
bracelets?

SCARLET

You don't know who you're talking to.

(PROJECTION:

"SCARLET. IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK.  
IT'S NOT WHAT ANY OF THEM THINK")

AVERY

What are they talking about?

(PROJECTION: "NO WATER."

"NO SUNSETS"

"NO CATS AND DOGS").

MATEO

This can't be real.

AVERY

Years...I have spent...years.

MATEO

Do you trust them?

SCARLET

Yes.

AVERY

No. This can't be. It can't.

(PROJECTION: "IT DOES NOT EXIST"

"THE NEW AMERICA THEY ARE SENDING PEOPLE"

"IT IS NOT THE TRUE HIGHLANDS"

"NEW AMERICA DOES NOT EXIST"

"PLEASE BELIEVE ME"  
 "JJ IS LYING"  
 "MUST STOP MORE BOATS FROM COMING"  
 "SCARLET"  
 "I'M SCARED"  
 "NEED HELP"  
 "PLEASE"  
 "SCARLET"  
 "PLEASE").`

(*The screen goes BLACK*)  
 (PAUSE)

SCARLET  
 Michael. Cracker'er on up.

MICHAEL  
 Aye Aye.

AVERY  
 You're not gonna go.

SCARLET  
 Watch me.

MATEO  
 But you heard what they said. New America does not exist! What  
 are you going to do when you get there?

SCARLET  
 I don't know. But they need me. And I can help.

AVERY  
 Help with what? Scarlet, you don't know what you're walking  
 into.

SCARLET  
 It's my fault Jamie is there by themselves. It's my fault this  
 happened. I knew this wasn't right. And I let them go anyway.

MATEO

Do you really think you can help? Do you think you can get them back?

SCARLET

Maybe not all of them...but I know I can do something. I got us this far. Michael?

MICHAEL

Scarlet?

AVERY

Wait, no. Michael you can't do this. You don't know what you're navigating into. You can't take her there! You can't leave me.

MICHAEL

Oh Avery. I know you're in love with me, but we already talked about this and-

AVERY

Yeah, again. I'm not. But Michael, if you go you could be sailing you both into a very dangerous situation. Michael...you could get reset. You won't remember any of this. You won't remember me.

MICHAEL

Avery. I was never indifferent to you. But you forget. I'm not human.

SCARLET

Get the John Coltrane playlist ready. We leave tonight.

*(TRANSITION. MUSIC).*

*(Music group creates assembly line to hand props to avery and mateo).*

**ACT 1 SCENE 9**

*(AVERY and MATEO help SCARLET pack MICHAEL with supplies Water, food, rope, etc. SCARLET steps into MICHAEL, preparing to leave.*

MICHAEL

Ready to set sail for the nonexistent 'New America'?

SCARLET

As ready as one can be when sailing towards uncertain doom, I suppose.

MICHAEL

Good. Then you're ready. We're off.

AVERY

Wait!- how will you keep in contact with us in case New America actually exists?

SCARLET

New America does not exist.

MATEO

*(Quietly, to SCARLET)* Please. He has spent years here. If there is any hope at all...

SCARLET

*(Sighing)*. Well, I could leave my bracelet with you, right?  
Then, when I find Jamie, I can contact you through Jamie's  
bracelet.

*Scarlet hands Avery her bracelet carefully, steps into the boat,  
and waves goodbye as Michael carries her offstage.*

AVERY

Thank you

MATEO

Good luck over there, guys!

SCARLET

Not guys.

MATEO

Roger that!

MICHAEL

Here, let me help.

*(WATER SFX)*. MICHAEL helps SCARLET pull the BOAT offstage. As  
they vanish from sight, there is a pause, and then The bracelet  
starts beeping in Avery's other hand: [INCOMING MESSAGE] clip  
plays again.

[PROJECTION:

"IT'S NOT SAFE HERE."

"SCARLET, DO YOU READ ME?"

"IT'S NOT SAFE HERE."

"DO NOT COME."

"IT'S TOO LATE"

"DO NOT LEAVE NEW DAIYA."

"SCARLET"

"I WAS WRONG"

"I'M SO SORRY"

"PLEASE SAVE YOURSELF"

(*SCREEN Goes BLACK*)

(PAUSE)

MATEO

What do we do?

AVERY

(*PAUSE*) We tell them.

MATEO

But we can't, they've already left.

AVERY

No, not them. (*AVERY turns out toward audience*). We tell them.

(*PAUSE*). We tell all of them.

(BLACKOUT).

## ACT 1 SCENE 10

(*AVERY is standing on a platform. The ENSEMBLE is gathered below. MATEO passes out flyers to the AUDIENCE informing them that NEW AMERICA does not exist. They are calling for a rebellion*).

AVERY

(*NERVOUSLY READING FROM A PIECE OF PAPER, SPEAKING INTO MEGAPHONE*) Fellow lowlanders of New Daiya! By now you have no doubt seen the literature! We have reason to believe New America is not what they say it is! We have proof we have been lied to! We need to question what is happening here! We need to



call out the oppressors of this land! We work hard every day to gain entry to a utopia that does not exist! UTOPIAS DO NOT EXIST!

*(THE CROWD begins to boo, murmur with disagreement and skepticism).*

EVERY (cont)

*(DROPPING THE PAPER, IN CANDOR).* I know. I know it's difficult to hear. I know you want to believe in this so badly. I did too. More than anything. I've been in holding most of my life. I've been working for credit every day since I landed here as a child. Accepting that it was all for nothing...it still feels impossible at times.

*(THE CROWD begins to pick up on their sincerity. They soften their skepticism).*

EVERY (cont)

We work day in and day out, barely get by, scraping together just enough to care for our families, and believe there is a better America waiting for us on the other end. We feel grateful for the blue sky, the orange sunsets, the mirage they make for us. We accept the rules of this island without asking the question; who stands to gain from our sacrifice? If New America does not exist, does it not stand to reason that the highlanders in charge here would do everything in their power to make life more livable for themselves to the detriment of us lowlanders? If we have no proof that a life in New America exists, why do we continue to let others dictate how we live our lives, here, now?

*(THE CROWD begins to agree. The speech is working).*

EVERY (cont)

My fellow lowlanders. The better life we seek...we don't need escape pods to get there. We can make it here. Sure, we screwed it up pretty bad the first time. And yes, our resources are limited. And there are, of course, the water crazies.

DORRI

It's QUAZIES. With a Q.

AVERY

Yes, thank you Dorri.

DORRI

You're welcome!

AVERY

But we have an opportunity here. My fellow New Daiyains.  
Rebellion is afoot. A new day is dawning. Will you join us?

*(THE CROWD considers this. As they do, PROJECTION of New Diaya.  
They watch as the lights fade to black. PROJECTION out.*

*(END OF PLAY)*