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BAALZEBUB

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Rachel Atkins



Baalzebub

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Cast & Characters

11+ actors

Rayyan (Ray): The leader

Princess: The brains/conscience

Blessing: The good girl

Raja: The mean girl

Juno: The leader of the boyah gang

Diamond: A boyah

Ali: A boyah

Sam: Isis's twin, a follower

Isis: Sam's twin, a follower

Baby: A young'un

Sister: A young'un

May be played by one or more actors using a language other than spoken English. If played by multiple actors, lines should be repeated in the additional language.

Man: A wounded adult male soldier

May be seen onstage, or we may hear his voice only (live or recorded). If these options aren't possible, his lines should be divided, sentence by sentence, among all other actors except Blessing. These actors should be seen onstage when speaking as the Man.

Setting & Time

Contemporary or futuristic. A deserted refugee camp in an isolated region of an active war zone: the interior of the camp hospital tent and an area just beyond the camp's fence.

**A group of little boys... are more like
scaled-down society than a group of little girls would be.**

William Golding, author of *Lord of the Flies*

Author's Notes

The corresponding characters from *Lord of the Flies* are:

Rayyan (Ray): *Ralph*

Princess: *Piggy*

Blessing: *Simon*

Raja: *Roger*

Juno: *Jack*

Sam, Isis's twin: *Sam*

Isis, Sam's twin: *Eric*

All uses of non-traditional grammar and language are intentional character choices.

The song/chant can use any kind of upbeat melody or rhythm. It may be set to a known song or chant, or can be invented.

The word “witch” can be replaced with the word “bitch,” if appropriate to the production setting.

Options for Sister:

- If there are multiple actors cast as Sister and speaking different languages, each language should be spoken separately, in any order. English does not need to be spoken first.
- If using sign language, signing may happen simultaneously with spoken lines, or it may be separate.
- You may cast only one actor and replace all or some of the English lines with another language, playing the character as bilingual.
- Line translations should be as direct as possible.
- Other characters should interact with Sister as if they understand everything she says, even when speaking another language.

Options for the Man:

1. Played by a male actor, seen onstage.
2. Played by a male actor without being seen onstage. His voice may be live or recorded.
3. Played by the existing cast, except Blessing. Dialogue should be divided among all or most other actors, sentence by sentence (not line by line). These actors should be seen by the audience whenever speaking as the Man.
4. A full-length production may choose to omit the character of the Man entirely and use the one-act version of these scenes.

Scene 1: BEGINNING

Main hospital tent of a deserted refugee camp. Debris scattered around, everything in disarray—a place people left in a hurry. The play may begin with the sounds of war: shooting, explosions, etc. RAY enters in silence, creeping onstage warily.

RAY: Hello? ... Is anyone there? ... Is anyone else there?

PRINCESS: *(hidden)* Is it safe?

RAY: *(startled)* Who's there?

PRINCESS: *(hidden)* Is it safe to come out?

RAY: I don't know. I'm out.

PRINCESS: *(hidden)* I ain't coming out anywhere til I know what it's safe.

RAY: Seems safe enough right now. It's quiet, at least.

PRINCESS: Is it just you, then?

RAY: I guess.

PRINCESS: *(coming out from hiding)* So much noise! I couldn't believe it. But they're coming back, aren't they?

RAY: I guess.

PRINCESS: They said they was coming right back. The last bus.

RAY: But then there was all that noise outside the fence.

PRINCESS: Shooting.

RAY: Bombing, maybe.

PRINCESS: We can't be the only two left, can we?

RAY: No. There was a whole busload of us, remember?

PRINCESS: But then the noise—how long ago did the noise stop?

RAY: Seems like an awful long time now.

PRINCESS: I usually wait at least two hours before I come out after noise like that. That's what my auntie says to do. But I think I maybe fell asleep for a bit and then I got no way to tell the time anyhow.

RAY: It's been hours. Look at the sun. It was morning when they started the evacuation, and now the sun's going down.

PRINCESS: The sun! Sure enough. Good thinking. That's smart. You're smart. What's your name?

RAY: Rayyan.

PRINCESS: Rayyan. Oh, so you must be from—

RAY: You can call me Ray.

Beat, silence as PRINCESS waits.

PRINCESS: Didja want to know *my* name, then?

RAY: If you like.

PRINCESS: It's Princess.

RAY: (*laughing*) Princess! Is it really?

PRINCESS: True story, that.

RAY: What's a princess doing in a refugee camp?

PRINCESS: My auntie says it was my mum's wishful thinking.

RAY: (*agreeing*) Yeah, no kidding.

PRINCESS: (*insulted*) Well, you don't have to say it like *that*!

Beat.

RAY: I wonder where all the rest of them went.

PRINCESS: We might should ought to find 'em. Only I don't exactly fancy creeping round this camp all by myself— (*hears a noise, stops, scared*) What's that?

RAY: Who's there?

They discover BABY, hiding in, behind or under something.

PRINCESS: Well, hello. It's all right. Nothing to be scared of. Come on out of there, why don't you?

BABY: No bad men?

PRINCESS: No bad men, no bad men at all. Just me 'n Rayyan here, right, Ray?

RAY: That's right, you're OK, now.

PRINCESS: What's your name? (*BABY shrugs*) Well, you've got a name, of course. Everyone's got a name.

RAY: Hers is Princess.

BABY laughs.

PRINCESS: Oh look, we got a little laugh. You think my name is funny, do you? Don't you see me wearing my beautiful crown? (*modeling*)

BABY laughs.

PRINCESS: There we go. So what do your people call you? You can tell me.

BABY: Can't remember.

PRINCESS: Can't remember!

BABY: No.

PRINCESS: You want us to guess? (*BABY nods*) OK...

RAY: Charlotte. (*BABY shakes head*) Chandra. (*BABY shakes head*) Conchita. (*BABY shakes head*) Cuckoo!

BABY: No.

PRINCESS: Jojo. Bobo. Beebee.

BABY: Baby!

RAY: Baby?

BABY: Baby.

PRINCESS: All right, then. Ray, this here is Baby. So we got Rayyan, and Princess, and Baby.

SAM & ISIS enter cautiously. They speak as if they are of one mind.

SAM: We heard people.

ISIS: Voices.

SAM: We weren't sure—

ISIS: Should we—?

SAM: Could we—?

ISIS: We were hiding.

SAM: We ran away.

ISIS: We got scared.

SAM: Not scared so much, just—

ISIS: Careful.

SAM & ISIS: Is it safe now?

RAY: Far as we can tell.

PRINCESS: Twins?

SAM & ISIS nod.

SAM: I'm Sam. She's Isis.

ISIS: She's Sam. I'm Isis.

PRINCESS: Sam, Isis.

SAM: No—

ISIS: Other way.

PRINCESS: (*trying to get them straight*) Sam-n-Isis, Sam-n-Isis—

RAY: Salmonis! So we've got a princess, a baby, and now some kind of fish disease?

SAM & ISIS: (*overlapping*) Hey!

PRINCESS: Now, she's just joshing you, isn't that right, Ray? Besides, I s'pose you're thinking of salmonella anyways. That's a whole 'nother thing.

BABY: (*holding out a box from where she had been hiding*) Hey. Look at this.

PRINCESS: What's that you've got, Baby? (*to SAM & ISIS*) This here is Baby. (*to BABY*) Bring it to me, Baby. Let Princess see.

BABY: It's a whistle.

PRINCESS: (*looking at BABY through binoculars*) Sure enough, it is. And wouldja get a gander at these fancy specs!

RAY: It's some kind of emergency kit, that's what it is. Whistle, binoculars, matches—

PRINCESS: Well, that's lucky! Them things might come in handy. Here, Ray, now we got something. You blow on this whistle and that'll call the others.

RAY: Why me?

PRINCESS: Why not? Look at you, Ray. You just, you got something about you.

RAY: I do?

PRINCESS: Sure enough. People will listen to you.

SAM: But what about—

ISIS: The noise?

PRINCESS: It'll be all right. We gotta do something, and look, we got five of us already. There must be more. You call them, Ray.

RAY blows whistle, first tentatively, then with more force.

BABY: Too loud!

PRINCESS: Nothing to be scared of, Baby. That's just Rayyan calling the rest of our friends to us. Don't you want to see the rest of our friends?

BABY: No.

RAY: *(offering whistle to BABY)* You wanna try?

BABY: No!

PRINCESS: How about we sing a song while Ray whistles? That will make us feel brave for sure. Everyone knows this song, right? *(singing/chanting, beckoning to others to join in)* Baby, we got Baby here, she is super keen! Give that girl a shiny crown and she can be the queen!

RAY whistles to the beat as others sing/chant and clap the rhythm in some kind of hand clap game. It's a song they all know and enjoy. Singing helps them forget, momentarily, makes them feel better, less scared.

ALL: *(singing)* Baby, Baby, yeah, we got Baby! Baby, Baby, yeah, we got Baby!

RAY gives a louder blast on the whistle.

PRINCESS: (*singing*) Ray, we got Ray here. Isn't she the best? Put 'er on a wedding cake and she can wear the vest!

ALL: (*singing*) Ray, Ray, yeah, we got Ray! Ray, Ray, yeah, we got Ray!

RAY gives a louder blast on the whistle.

PRINCESS: (*singing*) We got Sam-n-Isis here. Ain't those two supreme? Everybody wants a Sam-n-Isis on their team!

ALL: (*singing*) Sam-n-Isis, Sam-n-Isis, we got Sam-n-Isis! Sam-n-Isis, Sam-n-Isis, we got Sam-n-Isis!

OTHERS start to enter during the song, cautiously, from different areas. As each new girl enters, she is welcomed into the song by the rest. RAY continues to blow the whistle. BABY, SAM & ISIS keep the rhythm as PRINCESS asks each girl her name, so the questions become part of the song. OTHERS join in singing as they arrive.

PRINCESS: What's your name?

BLESSING: Blessing.

PRINCESS: Blessing!

ALL: (*singing*) Blessing, Blessing, yeah, we got Blessing! Blessing, Blessing, yeah, we got Blessing!

RAY gives a louder blast on the whistle.

PRINCESS: What's your name?

SISTER: Sister.

PRINCESS: Sister!

ALL: (*singing*) Sister, Sister, yeah, we got Sister! Sister, Sister, yeah, we got Sister!

If there are non-English speakers, PRINCESS asks for their names. The song continues until interrupted by JUNO.

JUNO: (*entering with ALI & DIAMOND*) What the devil is going on here?

ALL stop singing abruptly. RAJA enters during the following, unnoticed by the rest of the group.

BABY & SISTER: Bad men!

PRINCESS: Don't be scared, now. These ain't men. These ain't even boys.

SISTER: They look like boys.

BABY: (*to PRINCESS*) How do you know?

ALI: Yeah, how do you know?

PRINCESS: 'Cause the boys was the very first ones to leave this camp here, remember? Back when the fighting started.

SAM: They took the men and boys to fight—

ISIS: And left the girls behind.

PRINCESS: Besides, I know me a bacha posh when I see one. Or—three.

BABY: (*whispering*) What's a bacha posh?

RAY: They might call them pesar posh where you come from.

BABY shakes head.

SAM: Izak?

ISIS: Maha mundi?

BABY: No.

BLESSING: Alakaana?

BABY: No.

RAY: Guevedoces?

BABY: No.

PRINCESS: Machihembras?

BABY: No.

JUNO: Nonbinary.

ALI: Transgender.

DIAMOND: Genderfluid.

BABY: No.

JUNO: Well, we go by boyah.

JUNO, ALI & DIAMOND: Boyah!

PRINCESS: (*to BABY*) They started out with girl parts but now it's more like they're boys, kind of. It's complicated.

BABY: OK.

JUNO: So where's the man with the whistle?

RAY: There's no man. Only me.

JUNO: Then who's in charge?

RAY: No one, I guess.

DIAMOND: No men?

RAY: No.

ALI: No aid workers?

PRINCESS: No.

DIAMOND: No grown-ups at all?

RAY: No.

JUNO: So we're the only ones here?

PRINCESS: Seems like.

BABY: Where did they all go?

PRINCESS: They got evacuated.

SISTER: They left us behind.

DIAMOND: Without even one grown-up to look after us?

JUNO: Since when did a grown-up ever look after *us*?

RAY: There was that one nurse who was supposed to stay, remember?

ALI: If she was still here, wouldn't she have come when she heard that whistle?

BLESSING: Maybe she got scared too.

SAM: Maybe they didn't want to leave any aid workers behind if there was danger—

ISIS: Maybe she got herself evacuated after all.

PRINCESS: Well, and no matter if she did, because we're all of us gonna get evacuated out of here too, right quick. They're gonna bring that bus back for us anytime now, that's what they said.

So we should probably be making a list of all our names up in here, so we can keep track of everyone. I'm pretty good at remembering—

RAJA: You're talking too much. (*ALL stop and look at RAJA.*)

RAY: What's your name?

RAJA: Raja.

BABY & SISTER: (*start to sing, then see it's not a good idea and trail off*)
Raja, Raja, yeah, we got Raja...

JUNO: I'm Juno. And this is my gang.

PRINCESS: Don't they got their own names?

JUNO: (*gesturing for ALI & DIAMOND to answer*) Go on.

ALI: I'm Ali.

DIAMOND: I'm Diamond.

RAY: So this is good, I think. If this is everyone who's left, we should all be here, ready to go as soon as they come back.

SAM: Except what if they don't?

ISIS: What if nobody knows we're still here?

RAY: They just had to unload the bus and then it was coming right back for us.

PRINCESS: It's a long, long drive from anywhere to this place.

ALI: You drove?

RAY: Well, she *is* a princess.

PRINCESS: No, I never did drive here, I'm talking about the bus—

DIAMOND: We walked to get here. For days and days.

SAM & ISIS: Us too.

BLESSING: But then there was the shooting.

SISTER: Explosions.

DIAMOND: We could hear it.

RAJA: We all heard it.

SAM: We saw it, off in the distance—

ISIS: That's why we hid.

RAY: They said they were coming back.

BABY: But what if they forgot?

SAM: What if the bus got bombed?

ISIS: Or hit a land mine?

JUNO: There aren't supposed to be land mines around here anymore.

PRINCESS: But there might could still be old ones, buried, that they can't find, remember? That's what they said, the people who ran this camp, be careful, they said, don't go outside the fence. That's why I don't fancy—

SAM: What if the ones who were supposed to come back and get us—

ISIS: Were the ones who got exploded?

ALI: They could all be dead.

BABY: They're dead?

BLESSING: We don't know they're dead.

SISTER: I want to go home.

RAJA: What home? There's no such thing as home for people like us.

PRINCESS: Now, then, there's no need to talk like that—

RAJA: Like what? That's just the truth. If any of us had a home, we wouldn't be here, would we?

JUNO: I wouldn't.

ALI: Me neither.

RAJA: None of us got homes, that's why we're in this nothing place, this camp so deep in the middle of nowhere it hasn't even got a name.

SISTER: I want my mama.

BLESSING: So do we all.

RAJA: None of us got mamas either.

SAM & ISIS: We've got a dad.

BABY: You do?

SISTER: Where?

SAM: Somewhere.

ISIS: He's in the army.

DIAMOND: Which one?

SAM: We're—

ISIS: Not sure.

PRINCESS: Seems like they all turn out to be the same after a while.

ALL: (*overlapping, nodding, agreeing*) Yeah. / That's true. / etc.

RAJA: Well, my dad is dead, *and* my mam.

BABY: My mama's not dead! I just—don't know where she is.

RAJA: Then she's probably dead.

PRINCESS: Now, then—

RAJA: What do you want? That's truth too.

SISTER: So we're all alone?

BABY: Are we all going to die?

ALL: (*overlapping, panicked, arguing*) What's going to happen to us? /
What are we going to do? / We're going to die! / No, we're not! /
etc.

RAY: (*interrupting*) Listen! I know everyone's scared.

JUNO: Speak for yourself.

RAY: Sure, I'm scared. Who wouldn't be? Left here by ourselves?

JUNO: Exactly. No one to bother us. No one to hurt us.

BLESSING: No one to protect us.

ALL: So we protect ourselves.

RAY: Right. Look, we may be in the middle of nowhere, but we're safe. We've got that big fence all around the camp. The gate is locked—they locked it when they left. We can't get out, but no one else can get in.

BABY: Not even animals?

SISTER: Beasts?

DIAMOND: There are no beasts.

BABY: How do you know? Might be hyenas out there.

SISTER: Or wolves.

BABY: Hyenas will attack children.

SAM: Tigers?

ISIS: Or bobcats?

BLESSING: Or men.

PRINCESS: Yes, men. Men would be the worst beast of all.

Beat as ALL consider this.

RAY: Anyway. I don't think we should worry about any beasts. No one ever heard of any kind of beasts here before, did they?

ALL: (*overlapping, shaking heads*) No. / I haven't. / Uh uh. / etc.

RAY: So we just need to stay calm, and be patient, and wait til they come back for us.

JUNO: Isn't that what girls always have to do? Be quiet, be patient, wait—

RAJA: You have a better idea?

ALL: We might!

DIAMOND: Yeah, we might!

BLESSING: We can't go out *there*, can we?

RAY: No, we don't want to go out there. That's dangerous.

PRINCESS: So we got no other choice then, but to stay put right here where we're at.

BLESSING: Someone will come.

SISTER: When?

BLESSING: I don't know.

DIAMOND: It might be a while.

RAY: It might. But until then, we can—take care of each other, like Juno says.

SAM: How are we going to survive?

ISIS: Yeah, food, and water, and—

BLESSING: There's a well.

RAY: That's right! We can get water from the well. And look around here, there's some bags of rice, and blankets—

DIAMOND: What if there's not enough to go around?

RAY: We'll share. We'll figure it out.

PRINCESS: Seems like we might could ought to have one of us in charge.

DIAMOND: A president.

BABY: Girls can't be president. Can they?

ALL: A chief!

JUNO: I should be chief. I already got a gang. I know how to be in charge.

RAJA: Let's have a vote.

BABY: Girls can't vote neither.

DIAMOND: Not anymore.

RAY: Well, there's only girls here, right?

ALL: And boyah.

RAY: Right. So if we're not the ones who vote, who will?

JUNO: Good point.

RAY: What if...what if this is a place where we can do and be anything we want? Where anyone can be chief. Or president.

BLESSING: And everyone gets a vote?

RAY: No matter who they are.

ALL: (*overlapping, excited*) Yeah! / Yes! / Cool! / Everyone can vote! / etc.

SAM: Her with the whistle, Ray—

ISIS: Ray should be chief!

RAY: Me?

JUNO: All she did was blow the whistle.

SISTER: Yes, Ray!

BABY: Rayyan for chief!

PRINCESS: (to RAY) I told you, didn't I? You just got something about you, Rayyan.

RAY: OK, well, anyone else? (*no response*) So let's have a vote. Who wants Juno for chief? (*JUNO, ALI & DIAMOND, maybe RAJA raise hands*) Who wants me? (*ALL OTHERS raise hands*)

JUNO: I guess you're chief, then.

RAY: All right. But your gang belongs to you, of course.

ALI: We can be the army!

DIAMOND: Yeah, like guards.

RAJA: Or hunters.

RAY: Juno's in charge. What do you want them to be?

JUNO: Soldiers. We're in the middle of a war zone, aren't we? Girls need protection.

RAJA: Sometimes girls need protection *from* soldiers.

JUNO: Not from *my* soldiers.

RAY: All right now, listen, everyone. I'm the chief, but we're all in this together. We don't know how long we might be here, but the good thing is...everything here belongs to us! We can imagine it's like we're on a deserted island.

PRINCESS: Yes! Like in a book, like them old timey stories that one aid worker used to read sometimes, remember?

SAM: *Treasure Island!*

ISIS: *Swiss Family Robinson!*

RAY: Yes! This can be our island, and we can look after ourselves until they come back for us.

JUNO: What makes you so sure they're coming back?

PRINCESS: Of course she's sure. She's chief, ain't she?

RAJA: For like a minute.

DIAMOND: Maybe we should make some kind of rescue signal.

ALL: We should light a fire! Put up smoke signals!

BLESSING: Except—what if it's not the aid workers who see the smoke?

BABY: What if it's the bad men?

SISTER: The ones with the guns?

SAM: The ones who take girls—

ISIS: The ones who don't care.

RAY: Probably better not to call attention to ourselves with a fire. We don't want the wrong people to find us. Only the good people.

PRINCESS: And *they* already know we're here.

RAY: For all we know, they're just waiting til daylight. They could be back first thing in the morning!

PRINCESS: They said they was coming right back.

DIAMOND: Grown-ups don't always do what they say they're going to do.

PRINCESS: Well, these ain't any ordinary kind of grown-up. These are—humanitarians.

ALL: They're what?

PRINCESS: They're not devils. They're do-gooders.

RAY: What about...has anyone got a mobile?

SISTER: A phone?

ALL: (*sarcastically*) Oh, sure, I got a whole bunch of phones, right here in my big suitcase with all the rest of my important stuff.

DIAMOND: Oh yeah, me too!

JUNO: You see any cell towers out here?

RAY: No, but that doesn't mean—

RAJA: Oh, please.

PRINCESS: I do. I got a phone.

ALL: (*overlapping*) What! / You do? / Really? / How? / Where is it? / Let me see! / etc.

PRINCESS: My mum give it to me. She said if ever we was to get separated, to hold tight and she'd call on it to find me.

RAJA: And how many years ago was that?

PRINCESS: Just 'cause I ain't never seen her in a long time, she might could still call!

BLESSING: (*comforting*) Of course she could.

PRINCESS: Mostly, though, there's no kind of signal in this place. We're too far away from everything.

ALI: Like Juno said!

JUNO: (*taking phone*) Give it here, your highness. (*hands to DIAMOND to check*)

PRINCESS: Be careful!

DIAMOND: No signal.

JUNO: Told you.

PRINCESS: Every once in a while, when the wind blows a certain way and you stand in just the right spot, it gets a signal.

DIAMOND: Which spot is the right spot?

PRINCESS: The problem is, it don't always seem to be the same spot, exactly.

RAJA: (*sarcastically*) That's helpful.

RAY: It's OK. We can find a spot, and then we can call for help.

PRINCESS: No, no, except it's not the kind of phone *makes* calls. It can only get the call from my mum.

JUNO: So her majesty's mobile is worthless. What's the point, then?
(*tosses phone back to PRINCESS*)

SAM: But if the phone connects to a signal—

ISIS: They can know we're out here.

BABY: Who?

SISTER: Grown-ups?

DIAMOND: How can they know?

SAM: They just—do.

ISIS: We saw it once—

SAM & ISIS: In a film.

BABY: You've seen a film?

PRINCESS: I got no charger for it anymore, so we got to save the battery. No messing around with it.

BLESSING: What if—we could find another?

RAJA: Another mobile?

BLESSING: Or a charger? Or—I don't know. There's stuff here that people left behind.

ALL: Who had anything to leave behind?

DIAMOND: Is there a computer?

JUNO: Are you joking?

DIAMOND: To send a rescue message.

PRINCESS: There ain't no computers here. No computers, no electricity, no internet.

JUNO: Right. They took away everything *valuable* on the first bus.

RAJA: But still, it's true that some people had things.

BLESSING: The aid workers had things.

RAY: Yes! Look around this tent even.

PRINCESS: And wasn't it just mad crazy during the evacuation? How the aid workers kept shouting—

ALL: (*overlapping*) No room! No room!

RAY: Right, so things probably got dropped. Or forgot. We could... find what's been left and bring it all here. This tent, this should be our place.

PRINCESS: It's the best tent. Bigger than the rest.

BLESSING: Far from the fence.

RAY: This is good! Instead of being scared, we can be strong and smart and figure stuff out together. We can decide how we want to live while we're waiting. 'Cause it might be very soon, but it might be a while—just a little while.

PRINCESS: We gotta have rules.

JUNO: Rules and obey them. We're not savages. We've got to do the right things.

RAY: Yes! One rule should be, when I blow the whistle, everyone comes. So we can have meetings. Agreed?

ALL: (*overlapping*) Agreed! / Yes! / OK! / etc.

RAY: And—during a meeting, whoever holds the whistle gets to speak.

Whistle is passed from speaker to speaker during the following, until it gets back to RAY.

PRINCESS: Like a talking stick.

RAY: Right. Everyone else has to listen.

BABY: We take turns.

BLESSING: We share.

SISTER: Like school.

DIAMOND: I've never been to school.

PRINCESS: We can have a school! I mean, if we're here longer than—

RAY: We should search the camp now, before it gets dark. Look for anything that will be useful. Food, water bottles, flashlights, clothes. I bet there's all kinds of stuff around.

PRINCESS: By ourselves?

RAY: No, go in pairs or teams so you have a buddy and don't get lost. I'll blow the whistle when it's time to come back. Remember, this is a good island. And until they come to get us, we'll be OK.

RAJA: Maybe we can even have some fun.

SISTER: Fun?

RAY: Fun! Yes, why not, right?

ALL: (*overlapping, excited, hopeful*) Fun! / We could have fun! / Play games! / Sing! / etc.

JUNO: OK, everyone, let's go. Get to work!

RAY blows whistle. ALL pair up and exit.

ALL: (*singing, happy, excited*) Ray, we got Ray here! Isn't she the best? Give the girl a whistle and she can rule the rest! Ray, Ray, yeah, we got Ray! Ray, Ray, yeah, we got Ray!

Transition: ALL bring on a variety of supplies, transforming the space into their home base. A list of rules and a work chart are posted, written on a sheet, chalk on the wall or some other makeshift way, using both pictures and words to accommodate those who can't read. Some add or change clothing items, change hair, etc. ALL may work together on a collective task, like something to fix the tent, until most get distracted or tired and go off to do something else, except for RAY & BLESSING, who continue to work. Sense of time passing.

Scene 2: MIDDLE

PRINCESS is teaching a lesson to SAM, ISIS, BABY, & SISTER. RAY & BLESSING may enter and exit throughout, bringing in buckets of water.

PRINCESS: All right now, this is what teachers call the alphabet. (*SISTER raises her hand*) I know there, Sister, some of our folk got different alphabets back where we come from, but this is the one the aid workers left us, so this is the one we'll use, fair enough?

SISTER: OK.

PRINCESS: The alphabet is what we call letters we use to spell the words we know. If you can learn your letters, pretty soon you won't need me to read to you anymore, 'cause you'll be able to do it all by yourselves. Won't that be something?

RAJA enters, watching school from a distance, sometimes throwing pebbles or doing something else to distract the students.

BABY: I already know some letters!

PRINCESS: Well, aren't you a clever clogs! Which ones?

BABY: U-N-H-C-R.

RAJA: 'Course you know *those* letters, everyone knows *those*, that's cheating!

PRINCESS: Now hold on, that ain't cheating, that's observant, that's what that is, because them letters are put on just about everything in this whole camp! (*indicating boxes or other supplies labeled UNHCR*) So you *all* know them, don't you?

SISTER: What do they spell?

PRINCESS: They don't spell nothing. They stand for something.

SISTER: For what?

PRINCESS: United Nations... Something Something Refugees.

BABY: What's Something Something mean?

RAJA: Means her majesty doesn't know what H and C stand for.

SAM & ISIS: (*to RAJA*) Do *you* know?

RAJA: *I'm* not the teacher.

PRINCESS: No matter. Let's us figure it out together. That H, that makes a "huh" sound. You try. (*ALL sound out "H"*) Good! What're some words that start with that sound?

ALL think.

SAM: Happy!

ISIS: Hope!

RAJA: Hopeless.

PRINCESS: All right, now, C, that makes a "cuh." (*ALL sound out "C"*)

RAJA: Can't. Cow.

PRINCESS: How 'bout "cooperate?"

SISTER: Cook!

BABY: I'm hungry.

PRINCESS: Hungry—that's an "H" word!

BABY: Whose turn is it to cook today?

SAM & ISIS: Ours.

BABY & SISTER: (*overlapping, excited*) Yes! / Good!

DIAMOND & ALI cross through; DIAMOND sees school and stops to listen. JUNO enters to the side and

gestures to them. ALL tries to get DIAMOND to come too, then gives up and exits alone to JUNO.

PRINCESS: All right, but it's not mealtime yet, it's still school time. So what are some words that might could go together with a "huh" and a "cuh?"

Beat as ALL think.

SAM: Help—

ISIS: Coming?

Beat as ALL reflect on that idea for a moment.

BABY: Do you think they forgot about us? The—humanitarians?

PRINCESS: Humanitarians—"H!"

RAJA: They probably just decided a bunch of girls weren't worth the trouble.

SISTER: Is that true?

PRINCESS: No, of course not! Let's keep on going with this here alphabet. I bet you know some other letters.

BABY: My brainpan hurts from so much learning.

SISTER: Mine too.

PRINCESS: Come on, now, I know you can do it. Try!

ALL think.

DIAMOND: (*tentatively*) S-O-S?

PRINCESS: Letter S, letter O. That's real good, Diamond! Another one that *stands* for something, don't spell it.

SISTER: What does S-O-S stand for?

RAJA: (*sneaking up to scare BABY & SISTER*) Mayday, mayday! Save our souls!

PRINCESS: (*interrupting RAJA*) All right, I s'pose that's enough alphabet for now—how about I do some reading?

SAM, ISIS, BABY, & SISTER: (*overlapping*) Yes! / Read! / Yes, please!

PRINCESS: Well, look at this, today we got this wonderful fine CARE pamphlet that's about money. We could all use to learn about that, right? You try to follow along with the words while I read.

(reads, holding the pamphlet up like a picture book) “Women produce half the world’s food, put in two-thirds of the world’s working hours, and yet make only ten percent of the world’s income.” (stops) Look at that, halves and percents. We’re learning maths here too!

PRINCESS continues reading quietly as focus shifts to JUNO & ALI entering to side of tent, trying to signal for DIAMOND to join them without anyone else seeing. Her reading should overlap or continue underneath ALI, DIAMOND and JUNO’s dialogue.

ALI: Psst! Diamond! Diamond!

DIAMOND: I’m in school!

PRINCESS: ...“That’s not just disheartening, it’s unjust...”

JUNO: Diamond, come on! We need you, now! All hands on deck!

ALI: All soldiers on duty!

PRINCESS: ...“Child marriage is a gross human rights violation that keeps girls out of school...”

DIAMOND: What for?

JUNO: Just come on!

DIAMOND: But I want to hear!

PRINCESS: ...“endangers their health, and sentences them to a lifetime of poverty...”

JUNO: Hear what? That pamphlet? Forget it. We’ve got more important things to do.

ALI: More interesting things! Come on, already!

DIAMOND goes to join them. RAJA eavesdrops.

PRINCESS: ...“CARE works to save lives and achieve social justice. We put women and girls at the center...”

DIAMOND: I thought you were on lookout.

JUNO: We’re going hunting!

DIAMOND: Again?

JUNO: We want meat!

PRINCESS: ...“We believe in the equal value of every human being...”

ALL: What, you’re gonna be like a girl and complain we never get anything when we hunt?

DIAMOND: No!

JUNO: It’s gonna be different. I’m on to something this time. Come on!

JUNO, ALI & DIAMOND exit. RAJA watches them go. Shift focus to PRINCESS, finishing reading. RAY & BLESSING enter and pause to listen.

PRINCESS: (reading) ...“When you empower a girl or woman, she becomes a catalyst for positive change whose success benefits everyone around her.” (dramatically, as if she’s been reading a story) The End! (SAM, ISIS, BABY, & SISTER applaud) Wasn’t we lucky these pamphlets got left behind for reading?

RAJA: It would’ve been better if they were some actual storybooks. When are you all gonna get tired of hearing those things out over and over again?

PRINCESS: Them pamphlets got some important ideas in them, Raja.

BLESSING: I like the part about positive change.

RAY: Positive change would be everyone doing their chores.

PRINCESS: OK, class, you heard the chief. Time for chores. Check the work chart if you can’t remember what your job is today.

BABY, SISTER, SAM & ISIS: (chorusing) Thank you for teaching us, Princess!

PRINCESS: Well, ain’t that politeness, just like in a real school! You are most very welcome, class!

ALL disperse to doing chores, either onstage or exiting. If onstage, RAJA does something to deter others who are working more diligently. Shift focus to JUNO, ALI & DIAMOND outside the tent.

DIAMOND: We’re kind of—out of bounds, out this far, aren’t we?

ALL: Scared?

DIAMOND: No...

JUNO: There’s no point in hunting if we don’t go to where the prey is. I’ve been scouting around out here—

DIAMOND: Scouting for what?

JUNO: Jackrabbits, or mongoose, or—anything! I was tracking.

ALI: You know how to do that?

JUNO: Looking for scat.

DIAMOND: Scat? That's gross.

ALI: By yourself?

JUNO: You've gotta do that alone. Quiet. Sneaky. And then I saw something—there, look!

ALI: An old, knocked over dumpster?

JUNO: I think it's more than that. Come on, we've gotta get closer.

DIAMOND: But it's on the other side of the fence.

JUNO: That's why I needed the whole army. See how the barbed wire is coming loose here? If one of us holds it back, someone else can slip through.

DIAMOND: But what if—the rule is—there could be land mines, couldn't there?

ALI: Scared?

DIAMOND: No! (*they take turns holding up the wire and slipping through*)
Whoa. Feels strange to be out here.

ALI: It's just the other side of the fence. We're practically still in the camp.

JUNO: (*inspecting the trap*) I was right! I see how this works, look!
Someone made this into a trap!

DIAMOND: What kind of trap?

JUNO: For hunting, of course. They used this log to hold the lid up, with this rope tied to it like this. Then when the animal goes inside, slam!

ALI: Slam!

JUNO: You pull the rope and the lid falls and traps the animal inside.
This is boss! We could really catch something good with this thing!

ALI: We could catch some meat!

DIAMOND: But how do we get the animal to go inside?

ALI: We need something to use for bait, to lure it in.

JUNO: Right. We'll have to go back to the tent and get something.

DIAMOND: Ray's not gonna like it.

ALI: Who cares?

JUNO: She'll like it when we have something good to eat at mealtime!

DIAMOND: It's probably just about mealtime right now. Maybe we'd better get back? *(moving back toward fence)*

JUNO: *(still inspecting trap, entranced by it)* I guess...

ALI: *(climbing through fence with DIAMOND)* Should we tell them right away, or wait til we catch something?

JUNO: *(still distracted, focused on trap)* Yeah, OK. So boss...

DIAMOND: Juno! What are you doing?

ALI: Are you coming with us or not?

JUNO: Yeah, yeah. *(joins them on other side of the fence)* We'll get some bait and come back first thing in the morning. Early, right as it's getting light. That'll be when the animals are out. *(suddenly freezes, in a harsh whisper)* Stop!

DIAMOND: *(whispering)* What's wrong? *(JUNO gestures & points silently)* Is that really—?

ALI: *(whispering)* A bird? No way!

JUNO: *(gesturing for silence, whispering)* It's our prey! Don't scare it. Give me the net. *(ALI gives JUNO the net)* Move slow. Surround it. *(They all surround the bird)* I'll throw it over its head on three. Ready...? *(Gestures a 1-2-3 count, then throws net over bird. ALI & DIAMOND grab the other sides of the net to hold it down.)* Yes!

ALI: We got it! We really got it this time!

DIAMOND: *(struggling)* It's angry!

JUNO: Don't you dare let it get away!

ALI: Now what do we do?

JUNO: We've got to kill it.

DIAMOND: How?

JUNO: Grab it and snap its neck.

ALI: I can't get a grip on it.

DIAMOND: Me neither!

JUNO: I got it, I'm gonna do it, force it over this direction.

ALI: It's gonna get away!

JUNO: No, it's not! Hold the legs down! (*grabs bird through net and snaps neck, killing it*)

DIAMOND: Whoa.

ALI: You did it! You killed it!

JUNO: We're real hunters now!

ALI: We got meat!

DIAMOND: We really got meat!

JUNO, ALI & DIAMOND: Boyah!

JUNO: Come on, let's go show the others.

ALI: Wait'll they see!

DIAMOND: They won't believe it!

JUNO: I can't wait to see the looks on their faces. This'll show them what we can do.

ALI: Meat!

DIAMOND: Yeah!

BOYAH (JUNO and her gang) sing as they exit.

BOYAH: Meat, meat, yeah, we got meat! Meat, meat, yeah, we got meat!

Shift focus: RAY & BLESSING enter the tent, carrying buckets of water. They're tired; they've been working hard.

RAY: (to BLESSING) I told you! They weren't on lookout duty, they're not in here—where else could Juno and the rest of them be?

BLESSING: (*shrugs*) You know how they are.

RAY: What's the point of making a work chart if everyone doesn't follow it?

BLESSING: Think this'll be enough water for the night, or should I go back for more before it gets dark?

RAY: Aren't your arms tired?

BLESSING: I don't mind.

RAY: I'd say it's enough, long as nobody's hankering for a *bathe*.
(*BLESSING laughs*) You ever taken a proper bath? (*BLESSING shakes her head*) In a clean, white tub, with hot water and bubbles up to your nose?

BLESSING: Never.

RAY: It's just about heaven, that's what that is.

BLESSING: You'll have a bath like that again.

RAY: How do you know? (*joking*) Got a rescue bus parked somewhere?

BLESSING shakes her head. PRINCESS, RAJA, BABY, SISTER, SAM & ISIS enter from chores, if offstage. SAM & ISIS are carrying a cooking pot.

SAM: Ray? Should you blow the whistle?

ISIS: It's time to eat and not everyone's here.

RAY: Where are the soldiers, does anyone know?

RAJA: They— (*stops herself*) no.

PRINCESS: Diamond was here for school a bit, but then—I don't know. We ain't seen Juno nor Ali at all.

RAY: They know they're supposed to be here. Let's just start.

PRINCESS: OK, everyone, you heard the chief. It's mealtime!

ALL: (*gathering for meal, singing*) Sam-n-Isis, Sam-n-Isis, cooking up a dish! Making us the finest meal that you could ever wish! Sam-n-Isis, Sam-n-Isis, we got Sam-n-Isis! Sam-n-Isis, Sam-n-Isis, we got Sam-n-Isis!

SAM & ISIS dish up and pass around food.

RAJA: Hardly seems worth singing about when it's just the same no-flavor rice and bits every day.

BLESSING: But enough for all of us to have something to eat every single day. That's better than we used to get when the camp was full.

RAJA: (*sarcastically*) That's looking on the bright side, Little Mary Sunshine!

PRINCESS: Why you got to tease folk like that, Raja?

RAJA: Why do *you* got to stick your nose into everyone else's business, Your Majesty?

PRINCESS: The rules says, be kind, and name-calling ain't kind! (*looking around for support*) Is it?

BLESSING: No.

RAY: No, but—

PRINCESS: It's mean, is what it is. And there ain't no need for meanness. Not on this here good island.

RAJA: I'm just being honest. Isn't it better to say it right out than act all sweet to your face but talk about you behind your back?

PRINCESS: Do-As-You-Would-Be-Done-By, that's what my auntie says.

RAJA: What makes you think I'm not?

SAM & ISIS: Ahem, ahem!

RAY: OK. What if we just hear the menu for now, and talk about this later? Can we, Princess?

PRINCESS: All right. Only because I'm hungry too.

SAM: Today's meal features the freshest of fish—

PRINCESS: But I still say it ain't right!

ISIS: Caught just this morning from deep in the Arafura Sea.

BABY: Is that a real place?

SAM: Who's the cooks of this meal—?

ISIS: You or us?

BABY: Sorry, chefs, you are.

SAM: As we were saying.

ISIS: Warm, soft, white bread.

SISTER: *White bread?*

SAM: Just out of the oven—

BLESSING: With butter?

ISIS: Well, of course, as much butter as you want.

PRINCESS: Oh, could you pass me some of that delicious butter, please, Miss Blessing?

BLESSING: Why, certainly, Miss Princess, here you go.

SAM: Don't forget to eat your vegetables!

ISIS: Grown from seeds in our very own garden.

BABY: Carrots!

SISTER: Potatoes!

RAY: Spinach!

SAM: Everything seasoned with our very special blend of savory herbs—

ISIS: And spices.

BLESSING: Cinnamon!

RAY: Cardamom!

PRINCESS: Cumin!

SISTER: Chili pepper!

ALL pause, sigh.

BLESSING: Aren't Sam-n-Isis the very best cooks?

PRINCESS: They do imagine the most wonderful foods I ever have heard of.

BABY: I wish they were the chefs every day!

JUNO: *(running in with ALI & DIAMOND)* Ray! Ray! Look what we got!

RAY: Where have you been?

DIAMOND: You started eating without us?

JUNO: Never mind that—

ALL: Yeah, never mind. You're not gonna believe this!

RAY: You were on lookout duty! It's on the chart!

JUNO: Never mind, I tell you, look at this! Just look! (*holds up dead bird*)

Beat as ALL look.

PRINCESS: A pigeon?

BLESSING: It's a dove.

JUNO: It's meat!

SISTER: Meat?

DIAMOND: We caught it!

ALI: We used a net!

JUNO: Then I snapped its neck!

RAJA: You killed it?

BLESSING: Doves are birds of peace.

JUNO: (*to SAM & ISIS*) Here—this'll make for a *good* dinner, for a change!

PRINCESS: My auntie says, God sends meat and the Devil sends cooks.

RAJA: We've gotta hear from your auntie again too?

PRINCESS: Now you wanna trash talk my auntie? I tell you, it ain't right, you Raja—

SAM: We don't know how to cook a bird.

ALI: You've gotta pluck off the feathers. Same as you'd do for a chicken.

ISIS: We never had chicken.

JUNO: Do I have to take care of everything? Give it here. I'll do it. (*to BOYAH*) Build up the cooking fire, and find some sticks. We'll roast it.

ALI & DIAMOND assist as JUNO hacks the bird apart and cooks it during the following. RAJA may also try to help.

RAY: This isn't how we're supposed to do things. This isn't what we decided.

SAM: We were going to serve dessert.

SISTER: Dessert?

BLESSING: (*explaining*) Sweets.

ISIS: Ice cream. In cones.

BABY: (*disbelieving*) What?

SAM: It's cold and creamy. You hold it and lick around the sides so it doesn't melt.

ISIS: Like this. (*showing*) Then you eat the cone too. Try it!

ALL except BOYAH & RAJA pretend to eat ice cream cones.

SISTER: I never had a dessert before.

BABY: Me neither.

SAM: We saw it once—

ISIS: In a film.

PRINCESS: You know, I read me a story once where if a boy didn't finish eating his supper, he got no dessert.

SISTER: I don't understand.

BABY: Why didn't he finish?

PRINCESS: I don't rightly know. I s'pose he didn't like it, maybe? Or he wasn't hungry?

SAM: Imagine not being hungry enough to finish supper.

ISIS: Or only choosing to eat what you like?

BLESSING: Imagine not being hungry.

PRINCESS: No, it don't make no sense at all, do it?

JUNO: Well, would you rather have pretend dessert, or real meat?

DIAMOND: Yeah, because listen to what else! We found something out there.

ALL: That's right. A trap.

RAJA: A trap? Like—?

ALL: An animal trap!

JUNO: So next time, it won't be just a little scrap of bird like this for each of us. We're gonna be able to hunt a *real* animal now.

BLESSING: What kind of animal?

RAY: I haven't seen any trap. Where is it?

JUNO: Over on the north side. Just on the edge of the fence.

RAY: Not on the outside?

JUNO: There's a place where the barbed wire is come loose.

RAY: We agreed not to go over to that side. It's too far. It's not safe.

ALI: We know how to be careful. We're soldiers.

PRINCESS: Not real soldiers.

DIAMOND: Close enough.

JUNO: Think about it! We might catch a hare, or a fox, or—

BABY: Can we eat a fox?

RAJA: We can eat anything.

PRINCESS: I remember people used to say there was wild boar roaming around that part of camp at night. They was scared to go out after dark for fear of running into one. Them things got tusks!

SISTER: Beasts?

DIAMOND: Wild boar's not beasts. They're like pig. Pork!

ALI: I bet that's what they were using that trap for!

PRINCESS: Pigs is scavengers. They eat garbage and junk and everything nasty. Then you eat the pig and it's like you eat all that other nasty stuff too.

JUNO: This is boar. Boar's different.

PRINCESS: King of pests, that's what my auntie calls them. Lord of the flies!

RAJA: Look who's talking. Princess of the flies!

PRINCESS: I am not! How many times I gotta say, there ain't no good comes of speaking to folk like that. Don't you never listen to what grown-ups tell you? The golden law?

BLESSING: Treat others as you wish to be treated yourself.

PRINCESS: That's right! Dharma!

JUNO: Oh, never mind your stinking golden dharma. Listen. We just need something to use as bait.

ALI: Something to attract the animals.

DIAMOND: Something they'll want to eat.

RAY: We don't have any food to spare.

RAJA: You could use a young'un.

BABY & SISTER: (*overlapping*) No!

RAJA: Everyone's supposed to help somehow around here, aren't they?

BLESSING: That's not funny. (*to BABY & SISTER*) She doesn't mean it.

RAY: All right, say you do trap a boar in there, then what?

DIAMOND: We grab it!

ALI: Kill it!

JUNO: Cut its throat!

PRINCESS: You know how to do that proper? Like a butcher?
Because—

JUNO: We figured out everything else so far. We can do it.

PRINCESS: But you might could catch something way worse dangerous, you know. Some wild critter, something that could hurt you.

SAM: A cheetah?

ISIS: A crocodile?

RAJA: A Tasmanian devil!

SISTER: A devil?

JUNO: No matter. We just kill that too. Watch, we can show you.
(*looks around group*) We need someone to be the prey. Come on!

RAJA: I'll do it. (*steps forward, snorts, paws ground like an animal*)

JUNO: So we circle all around it. (*gestures to ALI & DIAMOND to circle around RAJA*) We close in tight.

ALI: It might try to get away!

RAJA squeals and tries to escape, but is blocked.

DIAMOND: Make a ring!

The demonstration turns into a game. BABY, SISTER, SAM & ISIS make an outer circle, cheering and laughing, pretending to grab for RAJA as she mock rushes toward them, making animal sounds. PRINCESS, RAY & BLESSING watch.

BABY: Through here!

SISTER: This way!

SAM: Get it by the snout!

ISIS: Catch its tail!

JUNO, ALI & DIAMOND move in and around RAJA, getting more and more menacing.

DIAMOND: Grab it!

ALL except PRINCESS, RAY & BLESSING catch and hold RAJA down.

JUNO: Kill it!

ALI: Cut its throat!

JUNO: Who's the Tasmanian devil now?

RAJA: Let go! You're hurting!

BLESSING: Stop!

RAY blows whistle. ALL let go of RAJA and back away, out of breath, some nervous laughter.

BABY: That was a good game!

PRINCESS: Some game!

JUNO: Well, you wanted to know. That's how we'd do it. In a real hunt.

DIAMOND: Except in a real hunt, the prey would be dead by now.

RAY blows whistle again.

JUNO: What are you blowing the whistle for again?

ALI: Yeah, we heard you the first time.

RAY: Because I'm calling a meeting.

JUNO: Here we go. We were just in the middle of doing something real. Why've you got to go and spoil it?

RAJA: So much for having fun.

ALI: It was just a game!

PRINCESS: If Ray says we need a meeting—

JUNO: Oh, meetings, meetings. Don't we love a meeting? Talk, talk, talk!

DIAMOND: Girls talk too much.

ALI: They gossip.

PRINCESS: A meeting ain't gossip! It's business!

JUNO: Let me tell you something. You know why girls talk so much? Because they're not allowed to go out and *do* things.

RAJA: Like hunt.

ALI: Or fish, or swim, or climb, or run—

DIAMOND: Yeah. So they just keep on talking.

RAY: Now listen! That's not what this is about. We decided, didn't we, about the way things would be? How to live together, look after each other, so it would all be fair and good and safe. So we could do what we like, but also what needs doing.

ALI: Cooking and cleaning?

RAY: Yes, sometimes.

JUNO: What if we don't all agree with you anymore?

PRINCESS: But she's chief.

RAJA: Just because someone's chief doesn't mean they know best about everything.

JUNO: Haven't we had enough of being bossed around by people who think they're higher or better or—

RAY: But I don't!

BLESSING: She's just trying to make things work for everyone.

DIAMOND: But what if the same things don't work for everyone?

PRINCESS: Food to eat, water to drink, shelter over your head when you sleep? What don't work for you of them things?

RAY: The point is, you were supposed to be on lookout duty. We've only found that one spot where the phone sometimes works. Watching the phone, and looking out for someone coming so we can be rescued—that's the most important job.

ALI: The most boring job.

SAM: You won't think that—

ISIS: When we're getting rescued.

JUNO: One day's not going to make a difference.

RAY: But it could!

ALI: We needed the whole army for the hunt.

PRINCESS: To catch one little bird?

JUNO: I can't believe you. Are you complaining when me and my hunters just got you meat? Real meat! Here! Here! (*Tearing off bits of meat and distributing; ALL grab it hungrily and eat.*)

BABY & SISTER: (*overlapping*) Meat!

JUNO: Go on, eat it! Your mouth's too full for whingeing and whining now, isn't it? And next time it will be more than just one little bird, I promise you that!

RAY: The meat is good, Juno. Thank you. We appreciate it, don't we?

ALL: (*agreeing, overlapping*) Yeah. / Yes. / We do. / etc.

RAY: But while you were out hunting, the phone could have rung! Or someone might have been driving by out there, and you missed them.

JUNO: It's a waste of time.

RAJA: (*to PRINCESS*) If your mum hasn't called you by now—

PRINCESS: You be quiet about my mum, please!

DIAMOND: And how much longer do you think the battery is gonna last, anyway?

JUNO: We don't need a call or a lookout! We can take care of ourselves, remember? We don't need anyone else.

BLESSING: Don't you care about being rescued?

JUNO: Not really.

RAY: How can you say that?

JUNO: Now that we got a trap—now that we can really hunt—

RAY: But what happens when we run out of other kinds of supplies?

ALL: We get more.

RAY: From where? There's nothing else out there for miles!

DIAMOND: We can learn to—make stuff we need.

SISTER: Forever?

ALL: Why not?

PRINCESS: We couldn't no way make *everything* we need.

RAJA: Why not? We figured out the tampon problem, didn't we? (*ALL laugh*) If we can do that...

BLESSING: But nothing here was meant to be permanent. It's only a temporary camp.

PRINCESS: It's being stuck in limbo, this place. Them church people said limbo is the edge of hell, remember? You want to stay on the edge of hell for the rest of your lives?

SISTER: No!

RAY: (*to PRINCESS*) You're not helping.

BABY: What happens when we grow up?

JUNO: You think it would be better to grow up out there? Think about what that life was like for all of us.

DIAMOND: All the things girls can't do.

RAJA: All the things they make us do.

ALL: And what do you think happens to us boyah if we go back out there?

JUNO: This is our chance here, don't you see that?

RAY: *Here?* No.

JUNO: So you sit around like good little girls waiting to be rescued and then what? Someone finally comes along and takes you away. Where to? Another camp, same as this one. An orphanage. Or out on the streets. And that's if you're lucky. If you're not, and the wrong people get here first, then it's even worse.

BABY: The bad men?

ALI: Kidnapping. Torture.

RAJA: Slavery.

DIAMOND: Rape.

RAJA: If you're not dead by the time those men are done with you, you'll wish you were.

SISTER: (*afraid*) No!

BLESSING: Please, stop—! (*goes to comfort SISTER*)

SISTER: (*to BLESSING*) The bad men—the bad men did things to me.

PRINCESS: (*to RAJA*) Now look what you gone and did. Can't you just be nice?

RAJA: Why should I be nice if I don't feel like it? Why are people always telling me to be nice?

JUNO: No one tells boys to be nice.

SISTER: (*to BLESSING*) They made me—they hurt me—

BLESSING: It's all right. You don't have to talk about it.

JUNO: Isn't that just like *them*? Silencing her?

PRINCESS: She's only saying she don't have to talk about bad things if it makes her upset.

JUNO: But she should be upset! You don't want to admit it? Don't want to think about it? Bury your heads in the sand, fine. But I'm not going to pretend. I know why we got left behind.

SISTER: Why?

JUNO: Because we don't matter to them. We're the expendable ones.

BABY: What does that mean?

RAJA: It means no one cares what happens to a bunch of girls.

DIAMOND: Girls are just property. And not even property that's valuable.

JUNO: Think about your own families, if you had any. If you can remember them. Who did all the work? Who did all the crying?

DIAMOND: Your mama. Your aunties. Your sisters.

ALI: You.

JUNO: The men use their power to take whatever they want. (*Demonstrates: JUNO plays the man, directing ALI & DIAMOND to play the women serving him.*) Look. Men sit back on their soft, comfortable cushions and get served—and the women aren't just supposed to be happy to serve them, but to never want anything for themselves except their leftovers.

ALI & DIAMOND revolt against JUNO in the game.

ALI: We don't want leftovers!

DIAMOND: We want our own!

JUNO: (*to RAY*) Come on. You can't tell me you've never thought about this. All the double standards. (*to ALI & DIAMOND*) Am I right?

ALI: Girls are "bossy," boys "take charge."

DIAMOND: Girls are "shrill," boys are "commanding."

SISTER: People use bad words for girls.

JUNO: Slut!

DIAMOND: Skank!

ALI: Whore!

BOYAH: Witch!

RAJA: And something worse than *witch*, too.

JUNO: When I'm a boy, nobody speaks to me like that.

RAJA: Men are sons of— you know what. Sons of *women*.

SAM: So the worst thing you can call a girl is—

ISIS: A girl?

Beat as ALL consider this.

BLESSING: Where I come from, a man can steal a girl if she's walking alone, and then she has to marry him. It happened to my cousin. So I make sure to never be out alone.

ALL: (*agreeing, overlapping*) Yeah. / Me too. / That's right. / etc.

SAM: Girls get married off for money—

ISIS: Or cattle, or goats.

DIAMOND: Like they *are* cattle or goats.

PRINCESS: But here in camp there was lady nurses and doctors and teachers, remember? Speaking up and getting respected about all kinds of things.

BLESSING: I remember. I never saw that anywhere before.

DIAMOND: Because they had an education. That's the difference. They went to school and learned how to do all that.

SAM: If we weren't finished with morning chores by the time school started—

ISIS: We weren't allowed to go.

RAJA: Even if you don't go to school, girls are smarter than boys anyway, because anything boys can do, girls can do, too.

DIAMOND: That's right. Like hunting or building stuff.

ALI: Or being men. Like us.

RAJA: But the work that *women* do? Cooking or sewing or taking care of babies? Men can't do any of that.

ALL laugh at the idea of men doing women's work.

ALI: But they don't have to. They've got male privilege!

BABY: What's that?

RAJA: It's nobody telling you to act different than you want to act.

JUNO: It's getting everything better just because you're a man.

DIAMOND: Boys get choices.

ALI: Boys get respect.

BABY: Do you wish you'd been born a boy?

ALI: No way.

DIAMOND: I don't want to be a boy. Boys who do all those bad things to girls?

ALL: It's the boys and the men who create all the conflicts in the world.

JUNO: See, we know what it's like to be boys and men. But they know nothing about us. So we have the most power of all, only *they* have no idea.

BABY: But what are you, then?

DIAMOND: *This* is what we are. Boyah.

ALL: And we don't want to change.

JUNO: We want to be something else, something different. We want to be our own thing.

BLESSING: And never fit in anywhere?

DIAMOND: Better to live outside of society than to be someone's slave.

JUNO: In other places, it's not like this, you know. No one says you can't do something just because you're a girl. Girls are the same as boys. Equal.

SISTER: Where?

PRINCESS: Just because they say that's how it is in those places don't mean it's true.

RAY: It doesn't matter how it is in other places, if that's not how it is here.

JUNO: But that's what I'm saying! We're the ones in charge here. Here, on our good island, we can make it be however we want!

RAY: Right—that's where all this started, remember? This meeting is supposed to be about our society, here, now. How we live together. The rules we made.

JUNO: You can't make us follow your rules.

RAY: *My* rules? What are you talking about? They're *our* rules—for the good of the community. For everyone.

BLESSING: Yes. We all agreed.

SAM: Do your chores.

ISIS: Pick up after yourself.

SISTER: Share.

BABY: Listen to each other.

BLESSING: Be kind.

RAY: Which one of those is so bad?

ALI: We've changed our minds.

PRINCESS: You can't just change your mind about—society!

JUNO: We want to make our own rules.

RAY: Well, sure, wouldn't everyone like to just do whatever they want and not have to think about anyone or anything else?

RAJA: That's what men do.

PRINCESS: That don't make it right, do it?

RAY: Girls take care of each other. Don't they? It's not fair for you to go off and do what you want, only work when you feel like it. Not when the rest of us can't.

ALI: Why not? Who's stopping you?

RAY: Because—if we all did that, everything would fall apart.

JUNO: So what?

RAY: Remember how it all worked in the beginning? I don't understand why things are breaking up.

DIAMOND: It's not our fault!

RAY: Isn't it?

BLESSING: No. (*ALL stop and look at her*) It's because— (*stops*)

RAY: Go on, Blessing.

BLESSING: It's because of the fear. Some people getting afraid.

RAJA: Who's afraid?

ALI: Afraid of what?

DIAMOND: I'm not afraid!

BLESSING: Afraid of...

The following is an outburst, overlapping.

BABY: There's something very bad out there!

SISTER: I heard it!

SAM & ISIS: Noises!

BABY: It sneaks around at night!

SISTER: It sneaks in through the fence!

BABY: It spies on us!

SAM: What if it wants to hurt us?

ISIS: What if it wants to eat us?

SISTER: A monster!

BABY: A creature!

SISTER: A devil!

BABY: A beast!

SAM & ISIS: Baalzebub!

JUNO: (*stopping the outburst*) Beast, devil, my foot! It's just your imaginations.

BLESSING: Some of the young'uns have been having nightmares.

PRINCESS: As if the beast was real.

RAY: As if this wasn't a good island.

RAJA: You're just a lot of stinking cry-babies.

JUNO: Fear can't hurt you or eat you or spy on you any more than a nightmare can. It's all in your heads. There aren't any beasts to be afraid of. You can go ahead and be scared because you're scaredy-cats—but there is no beast.

SAM: You don't know that for sure.

ISIS: You can't know for sure.

PRINCESS: 'Course there isn't any beast. There isn't nothing to be afraid of!

BLESSING: Except people.

RAY: Now listen. Everyone gets scared, sometimes, even me. If we all just talk about what you're afraid of, we can decide there's nothing to it.

RAJA: Maybe it's time *some* people shut their yaps and leave deciding things to the rest of us.

JUNO: She's right about one thing. There is no beast. No monsters or creatures or devils. There's no beasts out there but men.

ALI: Men are beasts!

BABY: Not my papa.

SISTER: Or mine.

JUNO: *All* men are beasts! Because even the good ones don't do anything to change things.

ALI: And the men out *there*? The soldiers? All they do is fight and kill.

RAJA: War.

DIAMOND: That's what makes them beasts.

JUNO: So if any of *those* beasts come along, me and my army will kill them too, just like we'll kill anything else we hunt!

BLESSING: But that's murder.

JUNO: It's self-defense, if they want to kill us first.

DIAMOND: And sooner or later, they all want to kill us somehow.

RAY: But that's worse than breaking the rules. That's breaking the law.

JUNO: Who made up the law?

RAJA: Men!

BOYAH: Beasts!

RAY: I think we should have a rule—

ALI: Rules, rules—all you care about are rules!

PRINCESS: Because rules are all we've got! Without rules, we ain't nothing but savages. We got no control, no order.

JUNO: Well, sucks to your stinking order, I say. I'm done with order and I'm done with rules!

BLESSING: Please, can't we stop fighting—?

JUNO: (*quoting dramatically*) “I want to do as I please, and be strong and brave and free. I want to ride the wind and walk the waves!”

ALI: (*quoting dramatically*) “Slay the dragons! Drive away the enemy!”

DIAMOND: (*quoting dramatically*) “Why should I bow my head and serve? I will never be the concubine of whatever man who tries to take me!”

JUNO: See? You should have elected *me* chief, not her! You’re afraid? My army will protect you. You’re hungry? I got you meat, and I can get more. So who’s going to join *my* tribe? You? You? (*looks at RAJA*) We won’t tell you to be nice or to behave. (*to ALL*) Isn’t that what you want? Freedom, instead of rules and more rules? Now *my* gang is going hunting, and anyone who wants to should come along! Let’s go! (*exits with ALI & DIAMOND, followed by RAJA*)

RAY: (*calling after JUNO as they exit*) But why does it have to be one or the other?

PRINCESS: Them wasn’t even their own words, you know. That’s Lady Triêu (*pronounced “true”*) they was quoting. She was a warrior in olden times. I read me about her in a book once.

RAY: Why can’t we be brave and strong, *and* have rules?

PRINCESS: Seems like we should be—I guess I just don’t know how.

BABY: Now what’s going to happen?

SAM: Caught between the devil—

ISIS: And the deep blue sea.

SISTER: I’ve never seen the sea.

RAY: Maybe I should give up being chief. Let Juno be in charge.

PRINCESS: Better the devil you know, my auntie used to say.

BLESSING: You’re still chief, Ray. They can’t change that.

RAY: Can’t they?

PRINCESS: You just never mind them boyah. We can do all right without them. (*to OTHERS*) Can’t we, now? Remember our song? (*starts singing, encouraging the others to join in.*) Ray, we got Ray here!...

ALL: (*singing, building in confidence*) ...Isn’t she the best? Give the girl a whistle and she can rule the rest!

While the girls sing, the BOYAH & RAJA enter to outside the tent, also singing, so that the two songs intermingle as one group enters and the other exits.

ALL: *(singing as they exit)*

Ray, Ray, yeah, we got Ray!

Ray, Ray, yeah, we got Ray!

BOYAH: *(singing as they enter)*

Boyah, boyah, yeah, we are boyah!

Boyah, boyah, yeah, we are boyah!

During the following, BOYAH help RAJA transform herself, adjusting her hair/clothes to look more like a boyah. They may have some kind of ritual.

RAJA: Can I really just decide to become a boyah?

ALI: If you want to, why not?

RAJA: But how?

JUNO: In my family, we didn't have any brothers, so being boyah is tradition. First it was my older sister, but when she started showing too much for working in our family's shop *(gestures to breasts, OTHERS laugh)* she had to go back to being a girl, so I took her place.

ALI: They told my mother if she had a son in the house, she'd have better luck getting pregnant with a real one. So she asked me, "What if I said you could look like a boy, and dress like a boy, and do more fun things like boys do?"

DIAMOND: I didn't want to do it in the beginning. I'd put on my girl clothes again as soon as I got home. Until I realized, there's so much more to it than how you look. A girl is a target. A boy is—free.

JUNO: You can't even imagine what life is like on the other side until you've tried it.

RAJA: Like what else?

DIAMOND: Laughing out loud and not caring who hears or sees.

JUNO, ALI & DIAMOND laugh loudly and showily.

ALI: *(making and holding eye contact with RAJA)* Looking people in the eye instead of always looking down. *(RAJA looks away)*

JUNO: Speaking up without being afraid—and being listened to. Wherever you go, no one questions you. And whatever you want, you just ask for it.

RAJA: Straight out?

JUNO: And you get it!

RAJA: But what happens when, you know...? (*gesturing to her body*)

ALL: I've been like this for so long, nothing in me feels like a girl. So I'm never turning into a woman.

DIAMOND: Not if it means I have to be quiet and submissive and only do what my husband says. Forced to get married to some old man and start having babies?

JUNO: I don't know how anyone can turn back. Why would you choose to be a second-class citizen when you can choose—this? (*They move away from RAJA, now looking like a boyah*)

RAJA: I always wondered. But I didn't know—that I could be something different. That I could have the power. That I could change.

JUNO: Well, you can.

DIAMOND: So what do you think?

ALL: Ready to go hunting?

JUNO: Ready to live like you want to live? Make your own rules?

DIAMOND: Ready to be free, like a boyah?

RAJA: Yes. Yes, I'm ready!

BOYAH: (*chanting as they exit*)

Kill the pig! Kill the men! Cut his throat! Bash them in!

Boyah, boyah, yeah, we are boyah!

Boyah, boyah, yeah, we are boyah!

Scene 3: END

BLESSING enters, picks up phone and binoculars to take lookout post. A wounded soldier, the MAN, staggers out on the other side of the fence—or maybe we only hear his movement or breathing. If played by other actors, they should be visible, perhaps

surrounding BLESSING around the edges of the playing area. BLESSING sees the MAN, but is not afraid.

BLESSING: I see you, Mr. Man.

MAN: I see you too.

BLESSING: What are you doing out there all by yourself?

MAN: I could ask you the same thing.

BLESSING: I just needed some peace.

MAN: No peace in this world. Haven't you learned that by now?

BLESSING: Just—to come out here where it might be quiet, where I might be alone for a minute.

MAN: Alone? Alone from who? (*BLESSING shakes her head*) That camp's supposed to be empty. Who do you want to be alone from?

RAJA & JUNO enter, preparing to go hunting, interrupting the MAN. If other actors are playing the MAN, they disappear. BLESSING tries to hide the binoculars or pretend she was looking in a different direction.

RAJA: (*snatching binoculars from BLESSING*) Give us those, Blessing. We need them for the hunt.

JUNO: I don't know why you're bothering. You know there's nothing to see out there.

BLESSING: (*reaching for binoculars*) But I'm supposed to—

RAJA holds BLESSING back. ALI & DIAMOND enter, interrupting BLESSING, now followed by BABY & SISTER.

ALI, DIAMOND, RAJA, BABY & SISTER: (*chanting/singing*) Kill the pig!
Kill the men! Cut his throat! Bash them in!
Boyah, boyah, yeah, we are boyah!
Boyah, boyah, yeah, we are boyah!

JUNO: Halt!

ALI, DIAMOND & RAJA: Hail to the chief!

ALI & DIAMOND prod BABY & SISTER.

BABY & SISTER: Hail to the chief!

JUNO: Good. You made the right choice, you young'uns. Joining my tribe.

ALL: Juno's a proper chief. Not like Ray.

RAJA: Who wants to be part of a pack of dumb, scared girls when you could be boyah?

BABY: Look! Up in the cloud, do you see that?

SISTER: A rainbow!

BABY: I heard that if a girl crosses under a rainbow, she can turn into a boy.

JUNO: Who told you that?

SISTER: Is it true?

DIAMOND: I heard it too—I mean, when I was younger.

SISTER: Should we try?

BABY: (to DIAMOND) Did you?

DIAMOND: (*conspiratorially*) I could never get close enough.

JUNO: Come on, let's go! Rainbows are kid's stuff. We've got meat to kill!

PRINCESS: (*entering*) Blessing, I come out here to spell you, Ray says—all right, now, what's this going on here?

RAJA: Mind your own business, *Princess*!

PRINCESS: You can't have those! Them binoculars are the lookout specs.

ALL: Not anymore!

PRINCESS: It's the rule!

JUNO: We already told you, sucks to your stinking rules!

ALL: Yeah, you're not *our* royal highness—!

PRINCESS: I'm telling Ray. She'll call a meeting. (*calling off*) Ray!

RAJA: A meeting? Ha!

DIAMOND: Ray's not our chief anymore. We got a new chief!

JUNO: That's right. This is a new tribe, and I'm their chief. (to *BABY & SISTER*) Tell her.

BABY: Yes. This is a new tribe.

SISTER: And Juno's chief.

JUNO: See?

PRINCESS: You young'uns have joined the army too? (*calling off*) Ray! Ray, come quick!

RAJA: In *this* tribe, we hunt and have fun and do whatever we want!

RAY: (*entering, followed by SAM & ISIS*) What is this? What's going on?

PRINCESS: They defected, that's what's going on! They—seceded. And they took the binoculars from Blessing what's supposed to be for the lookout!

RAY: Now wait a minute, you can't—that's not right!

PRINCESS: You see? You gotta give those back.

DIAMOND: (*looking beyond fence toward the MAN*) Wait a minute. Look! Do you see that?

SISTER: See what?

BABY: Is it the rainbow?

DIAMOND: No, there's something moving out there.

JUNO: (*gesturing for the binoculars*) Let me see.

BLESSING: Don't—!

DIAMOND: (*interrupting*) Look!

SAM & ISIS: Is it an animal?

BABY: It's a monster!

BLESSING: It's not a monster—

SISTER: (*interrupting*) A devil!

BABY: A beast!

SAM & ISIS: Baalzebub!

BLESSING: It's not, it's—

DIAMOND: (*interrupting*) It's a person!

JUNO: It's a man.

RAY: Why is he on the ground like that?

BLESSING: Something's wrong with him.

SAM: He's coming toward us.

ISIS: He's crawling. Slow.

RAY: Why would he be crawling?

BLESSING: He might be hurt. Or starving. Or dying of thirst.

SAM: Or trying to sneak up on us—

ISIS: Like the beast.

BLESSING: We need to help him.

RAJA: Are you crazy?

SISTER: We need to hide.

BABY: Men aren't safe.

SISTER: What if he's a soldier?

ALL: How do we know which side he's on?

DIAMOND: There's no way to tell the good ones from the bad ones.

JUNO: He might only be pretending he's hurt.

PRINCESS: Why would he do that?

JUNO: To get in.

RAJA: Then he can try to have his way with us.

PRINCESS: But he doesn't know who's here. He doesn't know who we are. For all he knows—

BABY: (*interrupting*) It's not safe!

SISTER: What if he gets in?

PRINCESS: That opening in the fence.

RAY: You see? This is why I didn't want anyone going out there, not to hunt, not for anything. If there was no way to get through the fence, we wouldn't have to worry about him finding the way in.

PRINCESS: Let's just don't let him see us. Don't let him know there's any of us inside here.

RAJA: How long do you think that will work?

PRINCESS: Maybe then he won't try to get in.

JUNO: There's nothing else out there. Nowhere else to go. He's going to try to get in.

DIAMOND: We can't hide from him forever.

JUNO: Boyah don't hide. We'll take care of him. We'll show him! This is a job for hunters. For the army!

RAY: But look at how he's moving. He can't hurt anyone. He must be sick, or hurt himself.

SAM: He's stopped.

ISIS: He's seen us.

BLESSING: Someone's got to go out there. Someone's got to help him.

ALI: Someone's got to get him before he gets us.

RAY: No!

RAJA: So you think we should just do nothing?

RAY: What if we did? Not help, not hurt, just—leave him be?

RAJA: And what, cross our fingers and hope he dies out there? That's the same as waiting for him to come in here and do whatever he wants to us.

PRINCESS: You don't wish death on another person.

RAJA: Better him than us.

PRINCESS: That's bad juju, that is.

JUNO: Well, what's *your* grand idea, Your Majesty?

PRINCESS: Honest, I don't rightly know what we might should ought to do. On the one hand, my auntie says, if you see a jackal in your neighbor's garden, you drive it out, 'cause you might want the same done for you one day.

RAJA: You're talking too much again.

PRINCESS: (*pointedly ignoring RAJA*) But the other hand says—

BLESSING: She who injures another, injures herself.

PRINCESS: Right, see? Dharma and the golden law.

RAY: Maybe we should talk to him? Try?

JUNO: When has any good ever come from talking to a grown-up?

BLESSING: I can do it.

RAY: You?

BLESSING: I can talk to him.

RAJA: And say what?

BLESSING: I don't know. I guess it depends on what he says to me.

JUNO: I don't know what all this is about talking. We'll have to kill him.
Like a beast.

RAY: But—you can't do that. That's murder!

JUNO: That's the only way to keep everyone safe.

RAY: You can't go out there. No one can. I—I forbid it.

JUNO: You're not the boss of me anymore. I have my own tribe now,
remember? Who's with me?

BOYAH: Hail to the chief!

BOYAH prod BABY & SISTER.

BABY & SISTER: Hail to the chief!

JUNO: We'll use our power! We'll do our chant! We'll make the kill!
Ready, tribe?

RAY: No! Juno, you can't—!

BOYAH: The Chief has spoken!

JUNO: Kill the man!

BOYAH: Kill the man!

RAY: (*overlapping BOYAH*) Stop!

JUNO: Kill the devil!

BOYAH: Kill the devil!

PRINCESS: (*overlapping BOYAH*) This ain't right!



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