

UNBREAKABLE BOND

By

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Inspired by some true events

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FADE IN:

INT. THE ALLEY - NIGHT

CLOSE UP - REGINA'S BODY

Lying on the cold ground on her stomach naked, surrounded by trash is the once beautiful brown skin woman in her late-twenties, REGINA.

Her hair is soaked in blood. Bruises, scrapes and various cut marks are placed on her body. Whoever did this put her through the ringer.

BACK TO THE SCENE

On the bottom right hand corner.

SUPERIMPOSE: DETROIT, MICHIGAN 1990

Forensic Officers are examining the scene and taking pictures.

Indistinct chatter from the police car radios, Officers and people from the neighborhood can be heard.

Focusing on the people gossiping, we hear they're not surprised about the murder. Some are even happy she's dead.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

People in your life distribute knowledge involving love and pain. You can't relish in love without knowing you'll embrace some pain. Why does life play this cruel game with your emotions? Even better...why would you allow the feeling of pain in your life, just so you can bathe in the warmth of love? I'll start from the beginning.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. THE PARK - AFTERNOON

On the bottom right hand corner.

SUPERIMPOSE: DETROIT, MICHIGAN 1985

It's a clear blue sky. A slight breeze is circulating, taking a touch of the heat down.

The adorable brown skin five-year-old YOUNG LATRICE is playing in the sandbox.

She's wearing a cute T-Shirt and shorts with her hair in two ponytails, placing some sand in her bucket. The loner is playing alone, but she's having fun.

Children are enjoying themselves laughing, running around.

Sitting off to the side on a bench are her parents THOMAS and Regina.

The happily married couple are wearing warm attire.

He's sober at the moment, but you can tell how the alcohol is taking a toll. Thomas is dark skin, short and chubby, but he's adorable.

Coming across the field is YOUNG ANTOINE, also five-years old. He's brown skin with a small strawberry blonde Afro, wearing a T-Shirt and shorts.

Accompanying him are his parents TIONNA and JUSTIN wearing matching white outfits.

Tionna is a beautiful light skin woman with flowing long hair and a well-sculpted body.

Justin is a flashy pretty boy that's light skinned, with hazel eyes.

Young Antoine runs past Young Latrice, and then he stops. He looks back at her smiling with a crush, slowly going back stepping into the sandbox.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Hi.

Young Latrice continues playing, paying him no attention.

Young Antoine just smiles, taking a few steps closer towards her.

YOUNG ANTOINE (CONT'D)

Can I play with you? My name is Antoine.

She stops placing sand in her bucket to look up at him, and she catches the same feelings he has.

YOUNG LATRICE

I'm Latrice.

(Chuckles)

You have some funny colored hair.

Young Antoine laughs, rubbing his hand across his Afro.

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Laughs)

I think so, too.

Young Antoine takes a seat by her, and the two begin talking and playing.

While Regina and Thomas sit amazed, Tionna and Justin come down looking with the same shocked expression.

Regina notices the two, which causes her to stand up.

We can tell Thomas and Justin truly don't care about the moment from eye contact, but Thomas stands up, and Justin moves closer to Tionna to prevent an awkward moment, or argument.

REGINA

Hello, my name is Regina. And this is my husband, Thomas.

TIONNA

It's a pleasure to meet you. My name is Tionna and this is my husband, Justin.

REGINA

Is that your son playing with our daughter?

TIONNA

Yes, that's my son, Antoine.

REGINA

He's a handsome young man. I'm amazed our daughter Latrice is playing with him, considering she loves being alone.

TIONNA

Antoine is the same way.

REGINA

Hopefully they can continue playing

with each other.

TIONNA

I don't see why not. We can exchange numbers and talk about it.

REGINA

That sounds great.

While the women get to know each other, Justin and Thomas slide off so they can talk.

THOMAS

What's going on with you?

JUSTIN

Nothing much, man. I'm happy my lil man made a friend.

THOMAS

That's how I feel about my daughter.

THOMAS AND JUSTIN POV

We see Young Antoine and Young Latrice playing in the sandbox for a few seconds before getting out, running off to play.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

That's how we met. When you're a child, you have no idea why you're attracted to someone. As you grow older. You realize attraction is created from what you deal with on a daily basis.

CUT TO:

INT. JUSTIN'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

We see Young Antoine sitting in the passenger seat of Justin's fully loaded black Expedition with the window down, parked in front of a store.

He's playing with a handheld game.

Taking a break from playing the game, he looks around the slum area watching the homeless drunks harass people coming out of the store, and the female prostitutes searching for clients.

Justin comes out of the store, and following behind him is an

attractive brown skin woman wearing skimpy shorts and a halter top looking no older than twenty-one.

The woman hands Justin some folded up money.

Justin gives her a kiss on the cheek, followed by slapping her ass as she walks off.

He makes his way to the truck getting in, placing the money in his pocket before turning his attention to Young Antoine.

JUSTIN

You see your daddy working?

Young Antoine looks at his father confused.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Working?

JUSTIN

Hustling comes with pimpin' hoes.  
Don't you ever give a bitch your  
attention if she's not offering  
something more than pussy. Understand?

Still in a state of confusion. Young Antoine loves his father, so he just gives a slight smile, nodding his head in agreement.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I guess so.

Justin pulls out a lighter and cigarette, laughing, placing it in his mouth, lighting it.

JUSTIN

(Cool exhale)

Wait till you get older.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

My pops had no respect for women.

(Scoffs)

The love he showed my mother was mediocre at best. Trice dad on the other hand...it puzzled me why her mom stayed.

CUT TO:

INT. REGINA'S CAR - AFTERNOON

The car is parked in the full parking lot of the grocery store.

Regina is sitting in the driver seat of her white Neon, while Young Latrice sits in the back.

Both of them are waiting for Thomas to finish loading the groceries in the trunk.

The trunk is heard slammed shut.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. THE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Thomas is seen standing behind the car, taking a sip from his flask.

Other customers coming out of the store who see him, shake their heads.

Thomas scoffs, making his way to the passenger door getting in.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. REGINA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Regina turns looking at him disgusted, and then looks forward.

With sweat glistening from his forehead, Thomas pulls out the flask, and takes another sip.

Remaining calm, Regina looks back at Young Latrice showing a warm loving smile.

REGINA

Are you helping mommy make dinner?

Young Latrice looks at her smiling.

YOUNG LATRICE

Yes.

Thomas wipes the residue from his mouth, placing the flask away.

THOMAS

Let me ask you something.

Regina looks at him batting her eyes.

REGINA

What?

THOMAS

You're not cheating on me, are you?

She rolls her eyes, sighing deep.

REGINA

Leave that drink alone.

As he rubs his chin in thought, he begins laughing.

THOMAS

Leave the drinks alone? Can you explain the condoms I found?

REGINA

Why would there be condoms in the house, and we never used them? Maybe you were using `em with your other bitch.

THOMAS

(Laughs)

That's funny. You get one chance to tell me who you've been fuckin'.

Regina rolls her eyes, and then starts the car.

REGINA

I don't have time for yo shit. You know what you do, so--.

Thomas grabs her tight around the throat making her grab at his hand, while she gasps.

Young Latrice jumps back in her seat terrified.

Thomas is enjoying the sounds of Regina gasping as he leans in her face with a serious expression.

THOMAS

You're accusing me of cheating, and you sell pussy? Did you really think I didn't know?



He squeezes tighter making it harder for her to breathe.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

The next time I ask you this question...just admit you're a whore.

Keeping his grip on her throat, he taps her hard on the side of the face three times before releasing her.

Young Latrice continues watching in fear.

Thomas leans back, pulling his flask out, taking a deep swig.

Regina sits crying holding her throat.

Once he's finished, he turns to look at Young Latrice.

Liquor residue is falling from his bottom lip, the same as the sweat on his face.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

The same thing will happen to you if you end up whoring like your mother.

Focusing back on Regina, he shoves her head.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Get us home. I'm hungry.

With no further words, Regina pulls out of the parking lot.

CLOSE UP - YOUNG LATRICE FACE

Young Latrice is silent with tears in her eyes, tired of seeing her father abuse and degrade her mother.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

As you can see, our lives are somewhat similar. The only difference is my mother didn't get abused, and she had no idea about my father's pimpin'. Funny how life guides you unexpectedly to the one who needs you, and you need them.

(Sighs)

The violence and disrespect was never shown at gatherings. Five years later...me and Trice are still good friends.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. REGINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Streetlights brighten up the common urban neighborhood, where Regina's brick house single home is the third house from the corner.

Regina's car is parked in the driveway. Two white plastic chairs are on the porch, and in the patch of grass surrounded by dirt in front of the house is an old rusty chair.

Young Antoine's ten-speed rests on the kickstand beside the house.

Young Antoine and Young Latrice are wearing shorts and T-Shirts sitting on the steps laughing and talking.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

By this time our parents let us chill till a certain time, since we didn't live far from each other. So every other weekend, I'd hang with Trice keeping her mind off her fucked up parents.

YOUNG ANTOINE

It's about time I head home.

YOUNG LATRICE

(Snickers)

You're scared of what daddy might say?

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Chuckles)

Why? We both know what my daddy would do to him.

YOUNG LATRICE

Yeah. Your daddy is tough.

YOUNG ANTOINE

He's something. Will you be okay?

She looks back at the house, and then looks at him sighing.

YOUNG LATRICE

Yeah. Mama is sleeping. When he gets home, I'll be asleep.

YOUNG ANTOINE

If you need me, call. I'll try to keep the phone as long as I can.

YOUNG LATRICE

I know. I'm glad you're my friend.

He looks at her with a statement in his smile just in case the words he's about to say doesn't reassure her.

YOUNG ANTOINE

As long as I'm alive, I'll always be here for you.

His words make her blush.

Moisture fills her eyes, stepping into him for a kiss.

This is something he yearns for inside, but his mind won't allow the desires to follow through, quickly turning his head before her lips connect with his.

Baffled by his actions, she gently grabs his chin making him look into her eyes filled with love.

YOUNG LATRICE

What's wrong?

He bites down on his lip, shaking his head. Not disappointed, but more so sad he can't follow through with the love she has for him.

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Low tone)

You're my friend.

YOUNG LATRICE

Friends can kiss, right?

YOUNG ANTOINE

No.

YOUNG LATRICE

Why?

YOUNG ANTOINE

The type of kiss you want could ruin our friendship.

YOUNG LATRICE

I don't think so.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Trice--.

The conversation is cut short by the loud music blasting from the beige Cherokee pulling up in front of the house.

Young Antoine stares at the Jeep confused.

Young Latrice already knows what's about to go down, sighing, shaking her head.

YOUNG ANTOINE (CONT'D)

Who is this?

She lowers her head ashamed.

YOUNG LATRICE

He's here for my mother.

Stepping from the Cherokee dressed like a thug wearing sagging jeans and a wife beater smoking a blunt is DONALD, early-twenties.

His dark brown muscular skin is tatted up. Taking a pull from the blunt arrogantly, he makes his way towards the porch.

He stops in front of Young Latrice taking another pull as he smiles at her.

DONALD

You might look colder than your mama  
when you get older.

Shame spreads across Young Latrice's face, lowering her head.

Young Antoine balls up his fists, breathing hard, instantly offended seeing his best friend disrespected.

Donald looks at him laughing, taking a pull from the blunt, flicking the ashes to the side.

DONALD (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you doing?

YOUNG ANTOINE

You disrespected my friend.

She grabs Young Antoine's wrist trying to calm him down.

YOUNG LATRICE

It's okay. It doesn't bother me.

Young Antoine snatches his arm away, keeping his fist balled, staring at Donald.

YOUNG ANTOINE

It's not okay! If you let people  
disrespect you now, it'll never stop.

(To Donald)

I need you to apologize.

Taking one last pull, Donald puts the blunt out, placing it  
in his pocket, looking at Young Antoine laughing.

DONALD

Calm down lil nigga before you get  
that ass beat.

YOUNG ANTOINE

That could be true. If you don't  
apologize, I'll find out.

DONALD

(Laughs)

You'll find out? Boy--.

Young Antoine swings with all his might connecting with  
Donald's jaw, immediately following it up with another punch,  
but Donald eats the punches, hitting Young Antoine in the  
stomach folding him over damn near ready to throw up.

While Young Antoine is folded over, Donald hits him with a  
hard right knocking him to the ground.

Young Latrice gets ready to help, and Donald looks at her,  
cocking his fist back, but it doesn't scare her from taking a  
swing.

Instead of punching her, he shoves her hard to the ground,  
and then he focuses back on Young Antoine still on the ground  
trying to catch a breath.

Donald begins stomping Young Antoine like he's a grown man,  
enjoying his moans of pain.

Young Latrice gets up trying to help again, and again, Donald  
shoves her to the ground.

Tired of stomping on Young Antoine, Donald walks over and  
grabs the rusty chair.

Walking back over to Young Antoine, he raises the chair ready  
to smash his head in, and that's when Regina comes running  
out the house in her nightgown.

She rushes over to Donald grabbing his arm, and he looks at

her ready to attack, but instead he lowers the chair.

REGINA

What the fuck are you doing?!

DONALD

The lil motherfucker hit me like a grown ass man! So, I beat his ass like a grown ass man.

Young Latrice sits up on the ground.

Young Antoine is still on the ground with blood coming from his mouth, moaning in pain.

YOUNG LATRICE

Mama, Antoine was only--.

Regina turns around furious, staring at Young Latrice.

REGINA

You shut up! I keep telling you to leave his ass alone because he's trouble!

YOUNG LATRICE

But, mama--.

REGINA

Mama my ass! Get up and get in the house! I'll deal with you after my company leaves.

Donald is looking down at Young Antoine with a slight smirk, while Regina grabs his hand affectionately.

REGINA (CONT'D)

(To Donald)

You ready, baby?

Donald looks at her smiling, giving her a kiss on the cheek, grabbing her ass.

DONALD

You know it, baby.

Regina gives him another kiss, and then focuses on Young Latrice still sitting on the ground crying looking over at Young Antoine moaning in pain.

REGINA

Get this boy away from my house, and  
bring ya ass in.

Regina walks back in the house.

Donald looks back at Young Antoine, and then Young Latrice.

DONALD

You better get a real man, and stop  
fuckin` with these soft niggas.

Donald laughs as he goes into the house.

Young Latrice rushes over to Young Antoine trying to comfort  
him, caressing his face looking at the blood coming from his  
mouth and nose.

YOUNG LATRICE

Are you okay?

Despite being in pain, Young Antoine licks the blood from his  
mouth, looking at her smiling.

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Moaning)

I'll be okay.

He stands to his feet dusting off.

She stands up and holds his hand.

YOUNG LATRICE

Are you sure?

YOUNG ANTOINE

Nothing a hot bath and ice won't fix.  
Will you be okay?

Young Latrice takes a deep breath looking at the house, and  
then back at Young Antoine trying not to cry.

YOUNG LATRICE

(Somber tone)

Yeah. I'll listen to some music as  
always. It doesn't bother me like when  
it first started.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Well, don't end up like her.

YOUNG LATRICE

I won't.

He places a hand of security to the side of her face, gently caressing it.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I'm serious. I love you.

He gives her a kiss on the cheek, and then slowly walks over to his bike holding his ribs.

He gets on his bike and rides off.

CLOSE UP - YOUNG LATRICE FACE

Young Latrice stands with tears coming down her face watching him pedal off down the street. For once in her life, she can actually say there's someone who truly loves her.

BACK TO THE SCENE

She smiles, taking a deep breath before walking in the house without a care about her mother sleeping with another man.

CUT TO:

INT. TIONNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Antoine comes into the house holding his side, closing the door behind him.

Walking through the nicely furnished living room with pictures of him on the glass tables, he pauses staring at one picture.

YOUNG ANTOINE'S POV

It's a picture of him and Young Latrice at the park eating ice cream enjoying each other's company.

BACK TO THE SCENE

The bruises on his face makes it hard for him to smile, but he manages to crack one, before making his way into the kitchen.

Inside the kitchen, the dishes are put away in the rack. A cordless phone is resting on the charger on the black counter matching the stove, microwave and refrigerator.



Someone left their plate on the table with the silverware to the side and an empty glass.

Young Antoine walks over to the refrigerator opening the door, grabbing a cold bottle of water.

Closing the door, he places the bottle to his cheek wincing, embracing the coolness soothing the pain.

TIONNA (O.S.)  
Antoine, is that you?

YOUNG ANTOINE  
Yeah.

TIONNA (O.S.)  
Your dinner is in the microwave.

YOUNG ANTOINE  
Okay.

Keeping the bottle to his cheek, he goes over to the microwave opening it and inside lies his dinner, which is macaroni, green beans, mashed potatoes and a fried pork chop.

Not feeling up to eating, he closes the microwave, and then walks over to the table taking a seat, lowering his head.

Tionna comes to the doorway wearing her black silk robe staring at Young Antoine with his head down.

TIONNA  
What's wrong?

Young Antoine keeps his head down with the bottle pressed against his face.

YOUNG ANTOINE  
Nothing.

TIONNA  
Nothing? What's with the bottle?

Walking over to the table, she takes a seat next to him.

Looking at him concerned as any mother should and would be, she gently places her hand on the back of his head.

He cringes from the pain.

Tionna knows someone hurt her son, but she also knows she

can't outright ask because he'll shut down.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

You wanna tell me what happened?

YOUNG ANTOINE

No.

TIONNA

Look at me.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I don't want you seeing my face like this.

TIONNA

My son is handsome no matter what.  
Look at me.

Placing the bottle down, he slowly lifts his head.

Seeing the bruises on his face, busted lip and swollen eye, she reaches for his face, and he turns his head.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Who did this to you?

YOUNG ANTOINE

I was protecting Trice.

TIONNA

Did a kid do this?

YOUNG ANTOINE

No. Some guy her mother messes around with.

TIONNA

Okay? And he put his hands on you because?

YOUNG ANTOINE

You told me to never let her get disrespected. He said something wrong, so we got into it.

Instantly upset, she slams her fist on the table.

TIONNA

Goddamn it.

Getting up from the table, she makes her way over to the phone picking it up prepared to dial.

Young Antoine rushes over to her.

YOUNG ANTOINE

What are you doing?

TIONNA

I'm about to give that bitch a piece of my mind. You don't let your random fuck buddies put hands on my child, and he was protecting yours. Fuck that.

YOUNG ANTOINE

And cussing her out will do what?

Tionna stands silent, tapping the phone on her palm looking at him with a straight face.

TIONNA

You're absolutely right. Beating the bitch ass is much better.

She's ready to walk out the kitchen. Young Antoine is doing his best to calm her down, and that's when the front door is heard opened then closed.

In walks Justin flashy as usual wearing a black wife beater with the shorts to match smoking a cigarette, holding a pint of cognac that's almost gone.

Tionna looks over at him, and a sly smile spreads on her face.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Good thing you're here. Let me go change and we can roll.

Justin takes a pull from his cigarette looking at her confused.

JUSTIN

What?

TIONNA

Let me go change into my whoop ass gear, and we can roll. What part of that didn't you understand?

JUSTIN

Who are you trying to fuck up?

Tionna is pissed, slanting her eyebrows down, gritting her teeth, pointing at Young Antoine.

TIONNA

Are you blind? Do you not see his face?

Justin takes a sip from the bottle, followed by a pull from his cigarette looking at Young Antoine.

Young Antoine is sitting in silence, hoping the talk between his parents ends on a good note.

JUSTIN

Somebody tore his ass up?

Tionna places her hands on her hips, seconds away from going off.

TIONNA

He got his ass beat by a grown ass man defending Latrice.

JUSTIN

Latrice fuck with older dudes?

TIONNA

Don't be fuckin' stupid. One of her mama's random fuck buddies did this to our son. Why are we still standing here having this conversation, and not at the bitch doorstep?!

Justin swallows the last bit of cognac, taking one last pull from his cigarette, putting the butt in the bottle, placing it on the counter.

JUSTIN

Let him take the ass beating like a man. But if it makes you feel better, I'll address her tomorrow.

Tionna cocks her head to the side, raising her eyebrow.

TIONNA

Run that by me again.

JUSTIN

When I see her tomorrow, I'll talk  
about it.

She calmly makes her way over to him staring directly in his  
eyes.

TIONNA

Why would you see her tomorrow?

Young Antoine sees the tension building, and stands up at the  
table.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Mama--.

TIONNA

Stay out of this.  
(To Justin)  
Answer my question.

Justin sways his head side to side, chuckling under his  
breath.

JUSTIN

Get outta my face.

TIONNA

I'm not in your face, yet. But if the  
next words coming from your mouth  
don't answer my question, I will.

Justin's look turns serious.

JUSTIN

Get the fuck on with this tough shit.

Young Antoine stands silent on edge.

Tionna smirks, and before Justin can blink, she grabs the  
empty bottle and smacks him across the face, shattering it,  
followed by a strong left.

She's ready to hit him with a right, but he quickly gains  
focus hitting her dead square in the mouth, knocking her to  
the floor.

Justin gets ready to stomp her, but she's right back on her  
feet swinging, trying her best to knock him out.

Fed up with trying to legit knock her out, Justin grabs her

by the waist slamming her hard on the table, after which, he grabs her tight by the throat holding her down.

Young Antoine rushes over to Justin hitting him in the ribs, and ends up getting backhanded into the refrigerator.

Keeping his hand around Tionna's throat, Justin looks back at Young Antoine on the floor holding his head moaning in pain.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Don't you ever run up on me, nigga!  
Wait till I get done with this bitch!  
Yo ass next!

Focusing back on Tionna, he slings her to the floor.

Young Antoine gets up running from the kitchen, while Justin stands over Tionna watching her try to catch a breath as the blood comes from her mouth.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I'll see the bitch tomorrow because  
she owes me some pussy. Yeah, I'm  
fucking that loose hoe because some of  
the profit she makes from hoein' comes  
to me. Now you know.

He laughs before kicking her in the stomach.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TIONNA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is clean and elegant with a nice spread on the king size bed. Designer clothes are seen hanging in the closet, and there's a floor model television.

Young Antoine runs over to the nightstand, opening the drawer, tossing papers out so he can obtain his mother's nine-millimeter.

He hears his mother's screams coming from the kitchen, and quickly rushes back to help her.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

YOUNG ANTOINE'S POV

He sees Justin down on one knee repeatedly hitting Tionna in

the face.

Looking at his mother's bloody face and eyes closed, Young Antoine cocks the gun aiming at Justin.

Justin looks up smiling, gently slapping Tionna so she can open her eyes.

Tionna's face is bloody and swollen. She turns her head, barely able to open her eyes seeing her son aiming a gun at Justin.

JUSTIN

Look at the big man.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Young Antoine's face is red with tears flowing from his eyes gripping the gun with both of his trembling hands.

Justin laughs standing to his feet, cracking his neck and blood stained knuckles.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Bitches shouldn't play with guns. Now if you don't--.

BANG!!! Justin looks down at his stomach where the bullet entered, and then he looks at Young Antoine shocked he actually shot him.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I can't believe--.

Young Antoine shoots him six more times, and Justin hits against the counter, slowly sliding down to the floor staring at Young Antoine.

Falling over on his side dying slowly, he remains with the same shocked expression.

Tionna inches away from Justin's dead body, barely able to keep her eyes open, looking at her son still aiming at Justin's body wide-eyed, shocked he killed his father.

Reaching Young Antoine, Tionna looks in his eyes, grabbing the gun.

TIONNA

Baby, give me the gun.

Young Antoine doesn't respond or loosen his grip.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Baby, it's okay. Give mommy the gun.

He comes back to reality breathing hard, slowly loosening up his grip allowing Tionna to take the gun.

She places the gun to the side on the floor.

As he looks at his mother, he comes from the trance and hugs her tight, letting his tears soak her robe as she holds him.

Slowly letting him go, she looks at him wiping the tears from his eyes.

YOUNG ANTOINE

(Trembling voice)

I--I had too.

TIONNA

I know.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I couldn't let him beat you.

TIONNA

You did what was right. Now...I need something from you.

YOUNG ANTOINE

What?

TIONNA

I need you to go to your aunt's house, but don't tell her what happened.

YOUNG ANTOINE

Huh? Why do I--.

TIONNA

Just listen to me. I won't have my only child spend the rest of his life behind bars. I'll die before I let that happen.

YOUNG ANTOINE

...But I did it. You always told me to accept punishment if I did something wrong. This is something I have to accept.



TIONNA

I won't let you accept it. You protected your mother, and that's what matters. Just...just do what I told you.

They hug, breaking down crying, neither wanting to let the other go.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Don't worry about me. Mommy will always love her big man.

Knowing this could possibly be the last time he'll hold his mother, he gives her a kiss on the cheek, pulling away wiping the tears from her eyes, while she wipes the tears from his.

YOUNG ANTOINE

I love you.

TIONNA

I'll always love you. And remember what I'm about to tell you. Men show their emotions through actions, not tears. Shed tears for lost loved ones. Not for doing what you had to do.  
(Sniffles)  
Now, go.

Young Antoine stands there for a few more seconds getting a good visual of his mother, giving her one last kiss on the cheek before making his way out the kitchen.

Tionna continues kneeling on the ground crying, picking up the gun hearing the front door open and then closed.

She looks back at Justin's dead body smiling, slowly standing to her feet.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. TIONNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Neighbors are outside worried after hearing the gunshots.

Young Antoine comes from the porch of the ranch style house making his way to the side of the house getting his bike, hopping on riding off.

Just as he gets in front of the house, he hears a gunshot.

The neighbors quickly rush over to the house banging on the door.

He wants to see what happened, but his mother's words keep replaying in his head causing him to keep pedaling forward.

CUT TO:

INT. LATRICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her room is well-organized.

Young Latrice is sitting on the bed skimming through a fashion magazine with her headphones on.

Reaching the end of the book, she puts it down and takes her headphones off, smacking her lips for taste because she's thirsty.

Standing up ready to leave the room, she pauses when she hears an argument going on outside.

Walking over to the open window, she moves the curtain looking outside.

YOUNG LATRICE POV

She sees Thomas and Regina arguing standing beside Donald's running Cherokee.

Thomas is drunk, barely able to stand straight.

THOMAS

You're in my goddamn house fuckin' other niggas, and my daughter is in there?! I guess you'll be happy if she turns out to be a hoe like you!

REGINA

First off, I ain't no motherfuckin' hoe! I'm doing whatever the fuck I wanna do just like you!

THOMAS

Nasty ass, bitch!

REGINA

That's all you can say?! You beat my ass whenever you feel like it and fuck other bitches, but I'm a hoe?! I'm a bitch?! What the fuck does that make

you?!

Thomas slants his eyebrows down, balling his fist ready to hit her, but then he looks at Donald inside the car.

Unsure if Donald will get out and help her, Thomas backs down, breathing hard.

THOMAS

Get the fuck away from my house.

Regina breaks out laughing, clapping her hands.

Thomas turns his back, and starts walking away.

REGINA

For somebody to claim he's a man,  
you're acting like a weak bitch right  
now.

He stops, turning around, eyeing her down.

She doesn't blink, staring directly back at him, not budging.

REGINA (CONT'D)

I thought so. Let me tell you one more  
thing. If my daughter turns out doing  
exactly what we do, blame yourself.  
You let her see how men should treat  
women. Yes, she knows what I do, so I  
know my part in it. You on the other  
hand...

(Sighs deep)

Once upon a time, you were a man. Now  
you're a washed up drunk, only able to  
run off at the mouth and beat women.  
Nice job of being a role model to our  
daughter.

She walks up to him, patting him on the shoulder, laughing before walking back to the jeep, getting in.

Thomas stands silent, pissed off watching the jeep pull off.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Young Latrice stands with glossy eyes, ashamed these are the people she calls her parents.

Hearing the front door open and slammed shut, she quickly gets back in bed pretending she's asleep.

We can hear his loud footsteps coming up the stairs stopping at Young Latrice bedroom.

He opens the door with force, slamming it against the wall.

Thomas stands in the door staring at her, appearing as if he's ready to beat her ass.

THOMAS

I know you're not asleep! Did you hear what that bitch you call a mother said? Of course you did. Bitches hear everything.

Walking over to the bed, he turns his head to the side, spitting, and then stares down at Young Latrice not moving.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You look just like her, so I know you'll be doing the same thing. And you know what?

With a sinister smile, he quickly grabs Young Latrice by the arms, scaring her half to death, leaning down in her face.

Her eyes are wide with fear, and her body is shaking.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'll be right here to beat and degrade you like the whore you are.

He leans down, giving her a kiss on the forehead.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Go to sleep...before I beat the whore out of you now.

Slowly, he releases her arms with the same sinister smile.

Young Latrice continues staring at him in fear, watching him make his way to the door.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I knew I should've made her get an abortion.

He walks out slamming the door behind him.

Staring at the door shedding tears of fear and shame, Young Latrice doesn't blink or move, listening to Thomas footsteps walking away, praying he doesn't come back.

Turning on her side, she opens the drawer on her nightstand, reaching in grabbing her diary and pen.

Opening the book, she begins writing the horror she just experienced letting her tears blot the pages.

EXT. THE ALLEY - TWO HOURS LATER

Trash blows along the filthy alley as Homeless people further down towards the end of the alley search through the trash for food.

The random coughs and mumbling from the homeless people are heard.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 1 and YOUNG GANGSTER # 2, both of them seventeen-years-old come walking from the other end of the alley wearing all-red, smoking and shaking spray paint cans looking at the graffiti on the walls, trying to find a good spot to place their mark.

You can tell Young gangster # 2 is nervous because of the area they're in, but he won't let Young gangster # 1 notice it.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 2

Man, let's hurry up and do this.

Young gangster #1 takes a pull from his cigarette, looking at Young gangster #2 disappointed he came with him.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 1

What are you scared of?

YOUNG GANGSTER # 2

I ain't scared of shit. I just wanna hurry up so we can bounce.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 1

Nigga, you scared. It's cool.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 2

Fuck you.

The two continue walking down the alley.

Young gangster # 1 spots some gang graffiti on the wall they should cross out.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 1

Let's get that shit over there.

YOUNG GANGSTER #2

What?

Young gangster # 1 is looking at what would appear to be a mural dedicated to someone who was killed.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 1

This shit right here.

Young gangster # 2 gets nervous, taking one last pull from his cigarette, tossing it to the side.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 2

Let's tag something else.

Young gangster # 1 snatches Young gangster # 2 can from his hand, shoving him to the side.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 1

Scary ass. Wait till we get back in the hood. I'm telling everybody--

A speeding vehicle is heard, and then it comes to a quick stop.

The two quickly hide behind a dumpster, making sure they can't be seen.

A door is heard opening, followed by a loud thud.

The door is heard closing, and now we see a van speeding off down the alley.

They wait a few more seconds before coming from behind the dumpster.

Young gangster #2 looks around paranoid, while Young gangster # 1 is looking down the alley to see what made the loud thud.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 2

Let's get the fuck from over here.

YOUNG GANGSTER # 1

Hold up. Don't you wanna see what they dumped?

YOUNG GANGSTER # 2

Hell no. I'm getting the fuck on.

Young gangster # 2 takes off in the direction the van went.

Young gangster # 1 brushes him off making his way down to the spot where the van stopped.

As he gets closer to the spot, he steps back scared, covering his mouth from hurling before taking off trying to catch up with Young gangster # 1.

CLOSE UP - REGINA'S BODY

We see Regina's body as we did in the beginning of the movie.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Life plays a twisted game. The night I killed my father, Trice's mother was found raped and murdered. Trice thinks the dude who beat my ass killed her, but the murderer was never found. This night created two paths for us to choose from.

FADE TO BLACK:

THREE YEARS LATER

INT. TAY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Weed smoke lingers in the air as rap music plays throughout the messy trap house.

Antoine has gained some weight, and his hair has grown.

He's sitting at the table covered with money, crack, weed, liquor bottles and cups.

Some older guys and GUY # 1, mid-twenties a tall dark skin guy is sitting at the table.

Antoine, only wearing his pants looks at his cousin TAY mid-twenties standing over the stove with his back turned.

Tay is slim but on the muscular side and dark skin with no shirt on wearing jeans, showing off his body covered with tattoos.

Guy # 1 is staring at Antoine with hate in his eyes, taking a sip from his cup, trying to understand why Tay has him in the spot.

TAY

Once you do this shit, ain't no turning back.

Antoine cracks his neck, sucking his teeth.

ANTOINE

Not trying to brag because I'm not happy with the outcome. But aside from you, I'm the only real killer in the room.

Antoine scoffs, and then downs his cup.

Guy # 1 takes a pull from his blunt looking at Antoine sideways.

GUY # 1

What the fuck are you talking bout, lil nigga?

With a stoneface, Antoine looks at Guy # 1 cracking the knuckles on his right hand by balling his fist.

ANTOINE

You heard what the fuck I said. Should I be scared?

Guy # 1 goes to reach under his shirt, and Antoine stands up prepared to rush him, but the other guys at the table break it up.

Tay still has his back turned to them.

TAY

Both of y'all shut the fuck up, and calm down.

(To Antoine)

Are you using ice?

Antoine takes his seat keeping his eyes locked on Guy #1.

ANTOINE

I don't need ice.

Tay turns around holding a hot butter knife making his way towards Antoine.

TAY

Suit yourself.

He places the hot knife on Antoine's right arm.

Antoine bites down on his lip, but doesn't scream.



CUT TO:

INT. LATRICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Latrice is sitting on her bed wearing black jogging pants and a T-Shirt crying, holding a roll of tissue.

As she rocks back and forth, Thomas comes into the room holding a pair of blood stained panties.

Latrice looks up at him with teary-eyes, and Thomas just stares at her.

THOMAS

Looks like your period started. It won't be long now. You better find out what you need to do, and how you'll take care of that problem. More importantly, you need to invest in condoms. I'm not watching any of your whore babies.

He throws the panties at her, and then turns his back.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Learn how to hide your shit better if you don't want anybody finding out.

(Sighs)

You're just as sloppy as your mother.

He walks out slamming the door.

Latrice sits on the bed crying, lowering her head.

BLACK SCREEN:

INT. THE SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Now at age seventeen.

Latrice is walking down the crowded hallway wearing something fitted, heading towards her locker.

Loud talking and laughter is heard from the students fooling around in the hallway, or walking up and down the halls.

When she reaches the locker, she opens it, getting some books out.

Closing the locker, there stands TRAVIS. A tall light skin pretty boy wearing some flashy clothes grinning ear to ear.

Latrice looks at him trying not to blush, but his good looks make it hard.

TRAVIS

What's going on, baby?

LATRICE

I'm your baby, now?

TRAVIS

You've always been my baby. Everybody knows who I'm trying to get at.

LATRICE

Uh huh. What do you want?

TRAVIS

I was wondering if...

Travis eyes get wide, lowering his head, sighing, causing Latrice to look at him confused.

LATRICE

What's wrong?

Travis keeps his head down.

TRAVIS

...Look.

LATRICE POV

Antoine is coming down the hall wearing a Blue shirt and jeans making his way towards her, giving everybody a play he walks past.

BACK TO THE SCENE

He reaches Latrice and wraps an arm around her, giving her a kiss on the cheek, causing her to blush.

ANTOINE

What's up?

LATRICE

Why didn't I see you this morning in class?

ANTOINE

I didn't get much sleep last night.

Antoine looks at Travis with his head still down, and then looks at Latrice.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)  
What's wrong with ya boy?

Travis lifts his head with a mean mug.

TRAVIS  
I can speak for myself.

Antoine cocks his head to the side.

ANTOINE  
I didn't say you couldn't.

TRAVIS  
If you're questioning something about me, speak to me.

Antoine moves Latrice to the side, stepping up in Travis face.

ANTOINE  
Stand behind ya feelings, nigga.

Everybody stops thinking it's about to be a fight, but Latrice quickly gets between them defusing the situation.

A thunderous boo is heard, and everybody starts walking off.

Antoine and Travis continue griming each other.

LATRICE  
Look, don't start--.

ANTOINE  
Get yo ass to class, and stop fuckin' with lames. Do you need me and Drew to give you a ride home?

Latrice just shakes her head.

LATRICE  
I'm good.

ANTOINE  
I'll holla at you later.

Antoine mugs Travis as he walks off.

Travis watches Antoine walk off, and then turns his attention to Latrice.

TRAVIS  
What's wrong with that nigga?

LATRICE  
He's basically been there for me my whole life. He makes sure I'm safe.

TRAVIS  
He gon' fuck around and get his ass beat.

Latrice catches herself from laughing, and Travis becomes more upset.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
What's so funny?

LATRICE  
Leave that alone. What did you wanna talk about?

The students start clearing out as the bell rings.

TRAVIS  
The shit we talked about on the phone.

Latrice blushes stepping into him, grabbing his crotch.

LATRICE  
Let's go.

Travis cracks a smile, but then he looks around, unsure if Antoine is still around.

TRAVIS  
What about ya boy?

Turning her back, she reaches back grabbing him by the belt.

LATRICE  
Keep your mouth shut and he won't know.

Travis has a big smile on his face as the two walk off.

CUT TO:

INT. TAY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tay and Antoine are sitting in Tay's old-school Jet-black Monte Carlo across the street from the spot drinking and smoking.

TAY

After I make this move tonight, cuz.  
We gon' be straight.

ANTOINE

You've been saying that shit all year.  
I'll believe it when I see it.

Tay takes a pull from the blunt, following it with a sip from his cup.

TAY

Watch what I tell ya.

ANTOINE

Can you hurry this shit up?

TAY

(Laughs)

Hurry up? Nigga, you act like you got something else to do.

ANTOINE

I do.

TAY

What? Check on Trice?

Antoine takes a sip from his cup giving him the finger.

TAY (CONT'D)

(Laughs)

Sit and be pissed all you want.

Tay takes one last pull from the blunt and then places it down in the ashtray before getting out of the car.

Antoine picks up the blunt taking a hit, leaning back in his seat watching Tay walk across the street to the house that looks abandoned with a big vacant lot next to it.

Gunshots go off which makes Antoine drop the blunt stunned, reaching on the side of his seat for his gun before getting out of the car.

Guy # 1 and two other guys come running out the house down to Tay moving around in pain.

They aim down at him ready to shoot, and Antoine opens fire causing them to duck and return fire.

Antoine ducks behind the car as the glass from the bullets shattering the windows fall on him.

The three quickly get up making their way to an old-school Honda getting in.

Antoine comes from behind the car shooting, just as the car takes off.

Antoine stands in the middle of the street pissed off he didn't hit anybody.

He turns his attention to his cousin, running over to him, dropping down to one knee.

Tay has blood coming from his mouth and chest, struggling to catch a breath.

ANTOINE

Just breathe. Breathe, you'll be okay.

TAY

...That--that bitch ass nigga...set me up.

Those were the last words coming from Tay's mouth.

Tears are falling from Antoine's eyes onto his cousin's face, grabbing the back of his head, placing his forehead against his, trying to deal with the pain.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Needless to say. The nigga who killed my cousin ended up dead. The cards dealt to me and Trice could've been played differently, but this is what fate wanted us to embrace. Now that we're all caught up...here's where we stand now.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. WOMEN'S PRISON - AFTERNOON

Indistinct trash talking is heard from the inmates echoing

throughout the prison.

Tionna, now covered with tattoos. She has her feet on the bottom bunk doing push-ups, breathing hard, covered with sweat.

Anger etches her face going hard non-stop.

Taking a break, she stands up wiping the sweat from her face, looking at the wall with pictures of Young Antoine, reminiscing on the last time she saw her son.

Walking to the wall, she places her fingertips on a picture of him and her when he was baby, and you can tell by the way her fingers move across the picture she hates the fact she can't be with her son.

Closing her eyes ready to cry, a guard comes to her cell.

GUARD

You got a visitor, Tionna.

As the cell door opens, she takes a deep breath looking towards the open cell in confusion, wondering who would possibly be there to see her.

Working her shoulders out as if she's about to fight, Tionna stares at the picture one last time cracking a slight smile, wiping the tear that was about to fall from her eye before walking out the cell.

Tionna and the guard make their way to the visiting room.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE VISITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Antoine is sitting at the booth with the phone already up to his ear and his head down. He's wearing a blue wife beater with his hair in cornrows.

When Tionna comes up to the booth, her heart drops seeing her son.

She quickly takes her seat, picking up the phone, placing it to her ear.

TIONNA

Hey, baby.

ANTOINE

(Low tone)

Hi, ma.

TIONNA

What's wrong? Why do you have your head down?

ANTOINE

No reason.

TIONNA

Are you scared to look me in the eyes?

ANTOINE

...I'm not scared. I'm ashamed.

She eyes over his tattoos and brand on his arm.

TIONNA

Reading the story on your body, you can't be too ashamed.

ANTOINE

I'm ashamed--.

TIONNA

Before you say another word, look me in the eyes.

ANTOINE

...I can't.

TIONNA

I haven't seen my only child in years. Either you look me in the eyes or this conversation is over.

Antoine snuffles, slowly raising his head looking at his mother with glossy red eyes.

Tionna cracks a slight smile.

TIONNA (CONT'D)

Why does my big man have tears in his eyes?

Antoine doesn't respond wiping his eyes, seeing his mother is still just as beautiful as he remembers.



TIONNA (CONT'D)

I remember my son being tough. What were the last words I told you?

ANTOINE

That was then.

TIONNA

What's so different now?

ANTOINE

...The woman I love is behind bars.

TIONNA

My body is behind bars. My love and spirit is always with you.

ANTOINE

That's not the same, ma.

TIONNA

Is that what you're ashamed about?

ANTOINE

No. I'm ashamed of myself.

TIONNA

Antoine...this had to be done. I have no regrets.

ANTOINE

...I do.

TIONNA

How's Latrice?

ANTOINE

Aside from when I wrote to tell you about her mother getting murdered, she's okay.

TIONNA

Be ashamed if you let her become her mother. I'm comfortable in my situation, so there should be no guilt in your heart. I'll always love you.

The words touch his heart as the tears fall from his eyes, wishing he could give his mother a hug.

ANTOINE

I love you, too.

Tionna looks back at the Guard, and then Antoine.

TIONNA

My time is almost up. Come back and see me again. Do you remember what I told you?

ANTOINE

I will. And yes, I remember.

TIONNA

Son, stop crying. You only shed tears for lost loved ones. Not for doing what you had to do. I love you.

Wiping the tears from her eyes, she places the phone back on the hook looking at her son one last time before standing up walking away.

Antoine wipes his tears still holding the receiver, savoring the words from his mother.

CUT TO:

INT. REGINA'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

The blinds over the sink are open so the sun can come in.

Music is heard coming from the radio sitting on the counter.

The floor is clean, and the wooden table is set up for when Latrice and Thomas have dinner.

Latrice is standing over the sink washing dishes wearing a tank top and some shorts with her hair in a ponytail.

You can see she's having a good day from the smile on her face, and the way she's nodding her head.

Finishing up with the last few dishes placing them in the rack, she walks over to the refrigerator covered with pictures of her mother and the obituary.

She places a hand on the obituary closing her eyes thinking back on the fun times she had with her mother.

Feeling refreshed, she opens the refrigerator, grabbing two packs of steak and then closes the door.

Walking back over to the sink, she opens the steaks, and then grabs a cutting board.

Ready to season and tenderize the meat, Thomas comes into the kitchen wearing his chef uniform, pausing, staring at her.

Latrice looks at him smiling.

LATRICE

Are you ready to eat?

Thomas stares at her for a few more seconds sucking his teeth before walking over to the refrigerator.

THOMAS

What are you trying to make?

Hurt her father would speak to her that way, she places her hands on the counter taking a deep breath trying not to cry.

Thomas grabs a beer from the refrigerator placing it on the table, and then he reaches back in grabbing a cold water bottle.

Opening the water, he turns looking at her taking a sip.

Keeping her back to him, she takes another deep breath before responding.

LATRICE

I'm making steak and mashed potatoes with a salad.

THOMAS

Something basic just like your mother.

He looks back at the pictures of Regina on the refrigerator and snatches the obituary down.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I wonder if you picked up the rest of her traits.

He scoffs, and then tosses the obituary on the floor.

Fed up with the way he's talking to her, she slams her fist on the counter, turning around looking at him.

LATRICE

Why do you talk to me that way? Why do you disrespect me every single day?

THOMAS

(Laughs)

Disrespect you?

(Sips)

You disrespect yourself by being a whore. Blame yourself for your actions.

LATRICE

You're my fuckin' father! The man that's supposed to guide me through this fucked up world. What kind of man, or father figure are you? Don't you think it's fucked up how you treat me?

He's silent, lowering his head ashamed.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

I don't mean to disrespect you by cussing, but this has to end. I'm your daughter, and I love you. All I want is for my father to show me the same love.

Her lips tremble, closing her eyes letting the tears fall.

Lifting his head seeing his child crying, the guilt surges through his body walking towards her.

With a deep sigh, he places a hand on her shoulder.

THOMAS

I'm sorry.

The tears continue pouring from her eyes, lifting her head, sniffing.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I shouldn't take my anger out on you. From here on out...I'll never disrespect you again.

He gives her a warming fatherly smile.

Just as she gets ready to smile, he slaps her so hard it almost slams her head into the sink.

His face is etched with pure hate, grabbing her by the arm, slinging her to the floor.

Latrice lies on the floor on her side crying, covering her face feeling disgraced.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Whores love talking, knowing they're only worth a few pumps by any man who sees fit.

He pours the rest of the water on her, and then slings the bottle down on her head.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'm sure you love this by more than one man at the same time. Get your dirty ass up and make dinner.

Stepping over her as if she's a piece of shit, Thomas grabs his beer from the table and then walks out the kitchen.

Slowly sitting up on her knees, Latrice whimpers, wiping the water from her face.

Standing to her feet, she grabs her phone from the counter continuing to cry as she makes a call.

She tries gathering herself before the person on the other end answers.

JASON (V.O.)

What up?

LATRICE

What are you doing?

JASON (V.O.)

Shit, chillin' with my boys. What's going on?

LATRICE

Are y'all drinking?

JASON (V.O.)

Yeah, and we can get some more. Are you coming out?

LATRICE

Come pick me up.

JASON (V.O.)

What are we doing?

LATRICE

Let me get a few drinks first, and  
then we can talk about it.

JASON (V.O.)

Be there in twenty.

She hangs up sniffing, rubbing the side of her face.

Knowing what Jason has in mind, she sucks it up as a benefit  
to block out what she just experienced.

She walks out of the kitchen so she can go get ready.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BLOCK - NIGHT

Loud music is coming from the cars parked in front of the  
spot that could use a new paint job, along with the stairs  
getting repaired.

People are standing on the sidewalk drinking, smoking and  
talking shit having a good time.

Some people are off to the side rapping, while others are  
shooting dice.

Sitting on the porch laughing, drinking and smoking are some  
more people, where we see liquor bottles and beer cans  
resting off to the side.

Among the people is Antoine's friend DREW, early-twenties.  
He's brown skin, short and stocky.

Antoine is standing by the door smoking a cigarette, holding  
a cup of liquor laughing at the conversation going on.

Antoine's hair is down resting on his shoulders giving him a  
seductive look going along with his white wife beater and  
jeans.

Also sitting on the porch is ANDRE, dark skin and lanky,  
known for starting shit, but never gets involved until the  
end.

He's smoking a blunt, laughing with everyone else.

ANTOINE

It's more niggas than hoes out here.  
What type of shit is this?

DREW

What? You don't see all those bitches  
down there?

Antoine takes a sip from his cup looking down at the girls  
smoking and drinking dancing up on guys.

Some of them are sandwiched between two guys getting groped,  
and some of them are down on their knees sticking their  
tongues out in front of guys leaning up against cars.

Antoine looks back at Drew and scoffs.

ANTOINE

All I see is runners. Knock ya self  
out with them infected bitches.

Drew laughs, taking a sip.

DREW

Pussy is pussy. That's what they made  
condoms for.

ANTOINE

Bitches burn through those.

Andre takes a pull from his blunt holding the smoke in.

ANDRE

(Slow exhale)

Drew, you know what type of girls this  
nigga like.

Antoine and Drew turn looking at him.

ANTOINE

What type?

ANDRE

The ones like your girl, Trice.

ANTOINE

And what type is that?

ANDRE

You know.

ANTOINE

Nah fam, I don't. I need you to tell  
me.

ANDRE

Hoes needing protection by niggas like you.

Everybody on the porch breaks out laughing.

Drew takes a sip from his cup trying not to laugh.

Antoine stares dead at Andre sucking his teeth, balling his fist.

ANTOINE

Hoes needing protection?

ANDRE

(Laughs)

Hell yeah. You might as well call your flag a cape the way you fly to save that hoe.

Everybody continues laughing.

Antoine sips his cup preparing to hit Andre dead in the mouth, and that's when his phone rings.

He continues pondering on hitting him, pulling his flip phone out answering, keeping his eyes locked on Andre.

ANTOINE

(Into the phone)

Hello.

The person on the other end can barely be heard from all the laughter and talking on the porch.

Antoine moves down from the porch.

ANDRE

There he goes. That must be her calling.

Antoine looks back at the porch nodding his head before focusing back on the phone call, walking a little ways down the street.

ANTOINE

(Into the phone)

I'm sorry, can you speak up?

WARDEN (V.O.)

This is the warden of the prison



facility. Is this Antoine Pryce?

ANTOINE  
(Into the phone)  
This is him.

WARDEN (V.O.)  
I'm calling about your mother, Tionna.

ANTOINE  
(Into the phone)  
I was there earlier. Is she okay?

WARDEN (V.O.)  
I don't know how to tell you this.

ANTOINE  
(Into the phone)  
Tell me what?

WARDEN (V.O.)  
Your mother was found murdered in the  
shower.

ANTOINE  
(Into the phone)  
...What?

WARDEN (V.O.)  
We don't know who committed the crime,  
but we're--.

The phone falls from his hand.

Antoine's eyes are wide, and his expression shows disbelief breathing shallowly as everything around him goes mute.

Drew is laughing, taking a sip from his cup, until he looks at the sidewalk seeing Antoine frozen.

Worried about his friend, he gets up from the porch walking down to him, shaking his arm.

Antoine is still frozen, not responding.

DREW  
Cuz? Cuz, you good?

Antoine doesn't blink or budge because Drew's words aren't registering with him, still thinking about the heartbreaking news he just heard.

DREW (CONT'D)

What the fuck is wrong with you, cuz?

Andre takes a sip from his cup laughing, looking down at Antoine and Drew.

ANDRE

He gotta go defend the hoe.

Drew gets upset looking back at Andre.

DREW

Why would you say some bullshit like that?

ANDRE

Come on fam, you know that shit true. She's a hoe, and he protects that bitch with his life. He ain't even fuckin' the bitch.

DREW

Man, you fucked up.

ANDRE

You know I'm right. That's yo nigga, so you'll side with him regardless.

Antoine comes from his trance still showing no expression.

He looks at Drew and taps him on the chest, releasing a soft chuckle.

Drew looks at Antoine confused.

DREW

What's up? Who was on the phone?

ANTOINE

I'm good. It was her just like the homie said. And, he's right. I need to stop defending a hoe.

Drew looks at Antoine confused because he would never agree with Latrice getting disrespected.

DREW

Are you serious?

ANTOINE

Yeah.

DREW

You never let anybody talk about  
Trice.

Antoine smiles, patting Drew on the shoulder.

ANTOINE

Fam makes a point. I'm feeling what he  
said, so let's just drink.

Antoine walks on the porch, and grabs another cup, picking up  
the fifth of gin beginning to pour.

ANDRE

I'm glad you came to your senses. Stop  
protecting a bitch--.

Antoine grips the bottle tight, turning around smacking Andre  
across the face, shattering it, knocking him off the porch.

Everyone stops what they're doing, focusing on Antoine  
holding the neck end of the shattered bottle, making his way  
down to Andre.

Andre is on the ground moaning in pain with blood dripping  
from the right side of his face.

Tossing the glass to the side, Antoine kicks him a few times  
in the face before grabbing him by the collar dragging him to  
the side of the house, so he can bang his head against the  
bricks.

Everybody rushes over watching the beating, cheering the  
fight on.

When Antoine lets him go, Andre's face is covered with blood,  
and from the looks of it, he's not breathing.

Just as Antoine gets ready to grab a brick and smash his face  
in, Drew rushes over grabbing him.

DREW

Cuz, calm the fuck down!

Antoine stares at Andre with hate in his eyes.

DREW (CONT'D)

What the fuck is wrong with you?

Antoine shoves through Drew, walking over to the garbage can  
grabbing it, rolling it back over to Andre's unconscious

body.

Everybody continues watching as Antoine places the can down on the side, and opens the lid.

He grabs Andre by the ankles, and slowly places him inside.

Once he's inside, Antoine sits the can back up, closing the lid.

Everyone laughs.

Drew stares at Antoine like he's crazy, and Antoine is looking at him as if he did nothing wrong.

ANTOINE

What?

DREW

What? You possibly killed this nigga,  
and you talking about what?

Antoine steps into Drew.

Drew gets into a fighting stance, not sure what Antoine might do.

ANTOINE

The woman who gave me life was  
murdered today. Do you think I give a  
fuck about this bitch ass nigga life?

Antoine kicks the can, knocking it over.

Everybody goes silent, slowly moving back.

Drew's face drops, now understanding the rage inside of Antoine.

DREW

I didn't--.

ANTOINE

Of course you didn't. That's why this  
bitch is in the garbage. Find  
something to do with him.

Antoine turns his back and starts walking away.

Everybody steps to the side.

DREW

Cuz.

Antoine continues walking, not looking back.

Drew shakes his head looking at the tilted over garbage can seeing Andre's bloody face, and his body twitching just enough to let people know he's alive.

Now finding humor in the situation, Drew laughs, walking back on the porch.

CUT TO:

EXT. REGINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Antoine is sitting on the porch smoking a cigarette with his head down, frustrated about the death of his mother and the fact Latrice isn't home.

A tan old-school Caprice with tinted windows pulls up.

Antoine looks up with his red eyes taking a pull from his cigarette, watching Latrice get out of the car.

Throwing his cigarette to the side, he rushes over grabbing her by the arm before she can close the door.

She looks at him terrified, confused why he's so angry.

ANTOINE

Who the fuck is this?

LATRICE

Antoine--.

JASON (O.S.)

Who the fuck is this nigga?!

Antoine moves Latrice to the side looking in the car.

ANTOINE

Mind yo motherfuckin' business, bitch!

Slamming the door, Antoine grabs Latrice by the arm, pulling her to the porch.

JASON, mid-twenties, tall, muscular and dark skin gets out of the car wearing a T-Shirt and shorts making his way towards the house.

Antoine turns to look at him.

JASON  
Who the fuck--?

Antoine pulls a nine-millimeter from under his beater aiming at him.

Jason puts his hands up in fear, slowly stepping back.

ANTOINE  
Get yo happy I got some pussy weak ass  
back in the car, bitch!

Antoine lets off three shots in the air.

Jason quickly runs back to his car, peeling off into the night.

Antoine fires a few more shots before focusing his attention back on Latrice.

She's staring at him in fear for her life because she's never seen this side of him.

Just as he gets ready to speak, Thomas rushes out the house in a wife beater and jeans holding a bottle of whiskey.

Antoine aims the gun at him, and Thomas freezes, putting his hands in the air.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)  
Take yo bitch ass back in the house!  
It's because of you she's out here  
hoeing! And if you call the police,  
when I get out, I'm shooting this  
bitch up!

Thomas runs back in the house.

Placing the gun back under his beater, he looks at Latrice.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)  
Who the fuck was that nigga?!

Her voice trembles the exact way her body is trembling.

LATRICE  
Just somebody I know.

ANTOINE  
Somebody you know, or somebody you  
fuckin'?

LATRICE  
He's somebody--.

ANTOINE  
You're fuckin'! That nigga was right.  
Why do I bother helping you and you're  
a hoe?

He turns his back walking away, and she runs up grabbing his  
arm making him turn around.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)  
Don't fuckin' touch me?!

LATRICE  
What is wrong with you?

ANTOINE  
Aside from the shit you do? I can't  
uphold my mother's last words because  
you're a hoe.

Although she's offended, Latrice is focused on what he said  
about his mother looking at the pain in his eyes.

LATRICE  
Her last words?

ANTOINE  
After seeing my mother earlier, she  
was murdered tonight. My mother is  
dead, and she wanted me to make sure  
you don't turn out like your mother.  
I'm pissed at myself for thinking I  
could do it.

Latrice grabs his hand, and he gets ready to snatch away, but  
she holds it tighter.

LATRICE  
Listen to me. I'm nothing like my  
mother.

He quickly snatches away.

ANTOINE  
The nigga that just left wasn't your

man. No nigga you fucked with was your man. The only difference between you and her is she got paid for it.

With tears building in her eyes, she hauls back and slaps the shit out of him.

LATRICE

I know you're in pain. But don't you dare disrespect me or my mother! You have no idea what type of abuse I go through from my father! Yes, I fuck niggas! It helps me block out what he says.

Antoine looks at her rubbing his cheek, shaking his head disappointed.

ANTOINE

So...doing exactly what he labels you as is the right thing to do?

With a straight face, she looks him dead in his eyes.

LATRICE

Yup.

Raising his eyebrow, shrugging his shoulders, he releases a low chuckle.

ANTOINE

That makes a lot of sense.

LATRICE

Fuck you, Antoine.

ANTOINE

No, Trice. Fuck you.

He turns his back and starts walking away.

LATRICE

Fuck you! Who do you think you are coming over here judging somebody! You're not perfect!

Antoine continues walking.

ANTOINE

Don't get raped and end up like your mother.



Heated with anger, she grabs some rocks and throws them at him.

One of the rocks hits him, but he keeps walking.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

Hoes are always doing some shit behind your back.

CLOSE UP - LATRICE FACE

Latrice stands with tears coming down her face.

ANTOINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Maybe what I said was wrong. Maybe it'll help in days to come. Either way...if it's meant for us to remain friends, we'll get over it like everything else. If not...a good friendship just faded to black.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. THE CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

The sky is gray with a nice breeze blowing, indicating a chance of rain. Silence cloaks the area, allowing the people scattered about to mourn their lost loved ones in peace.

Antoine is wearing a T-shirt and jeans holding a bottle of cognac standing over his mother's black ground headstone with her picture engraved on it.

There's no emotion on his face staring at the picture.

The crisp breeze blows past, and yet he doesn't blink or show any sign of emotion, continuing to stare.

Moistening his lips, he strokes down his goatee as a soft sigh comes from his mouth.

Latrice walks up in a normal shirt and jeans standing beside him, placing her hand on his shoulder.

Antoine remains focused staring at the headstone.

LATRICE

Are you okay?

ANTOINE

...What are you doing here?

LATRICE  
Auntie told me I could find you here.  
Your pain is my pain.

ANTOINE  
Not in this case.

LATRICE  
What?

ANTOINE  
She's dead because of me.

LATRICE  
What happened to her has nothing to do  
with you.

ANTOINE  
(Deep sigh)  
...You think so?

LATRICE  
Yes. Cruel people murdered your  
mother, not you.

Placing the bottle down, he goes in his pocket pulling out a pack of cigarettes, opening the box, pulling a cigarette out and his blue lighter.

Placing the pack back, he places the one he pulled out in his mouth, lighting it, taking a calm pull shaking his head, still avoiding eye contact with Latrice.

ANTOINE  
Trice...how long have we been friends?

LATRICE  
We had an unbreakable bond from day  
one.

ANTOINE  
We never hid secrets from each other.  
We were always there for each other.

LATRICE  
Right.

ANTOINE  
Well...this is something I have to  
keep from you.

LATRICE

What is it?

He takes a pull, shaking his head because he wants to tell her, but he's not certain how she'll view him after the fact.

ANTOINE

I can't tell you, Trice.

Concerned about the secret her only real friend is keeping, she steps in front of him.

Antoine remains with his head down.

LATRICE

As much as we've been through together, have I ever looked at you different?

Taking a pull from his cigarette, he exhales the smoke sighing, knowing in his mind this could possibly change their relationship.

ANTOINE

You know why she went to jail, right?

LATRICE

She murdered your father because of the abuse.

ANTOINE

...She didn't do it.

LATRICE

What?

ANTOINE

Remember the night I fought ol boy your mom was messing around with?

LATRICE

Yeah.

ANTOINE

When I got home...my mother and father got into it. I tried pulling him off, but it didn't work. I sat inches away watching the blood and tears roll down my mother's face with each punch he landed. In my mind, I decided there was only one way I could stop him.

LATRICE

Antoine--.

ANTOINE

I ran and grabbed my mother's gun.  
When I came back, he looked me dead in  
the eyes and laughed. He said "Bitches  
shouldn't play with guns."

(Takes a pull)

That was the first and last time I was  
ever called a bitch.

Latrice is silent, unable to form the right words to respond.

Antoine takes another pull, finally looking up at Latrice  
with sorrow in his eyes.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

So, like I said. She's dead because of  
me.

He snuffles, taking a pull.

LATRICE

She made a choice. She wanted her son  
to live life free instead of behind  
bars. Any mother would've done the  
same.

Antoine takes his last pull, flicking the cigarette to the  
side.

ANTOINE

I'll take jail instead of looking at  
the earth my mother is under. There's  
no reason for me to love, or live  
anymore.

He lowers his head, and the tears start falling.

The pain in Latrice is unbearable seeing her best friend  
crying for the first time.

Stepping into him, she embraces him with a loving hug,  
rubbing his back.

LATRICE

You still have me. I'll always be here  
for you.

No longer able to hold back the pain, he breaks down crying,

holding her tight.

As the rain begins pouring down, he doesn't let her go because she's the only woman left in the world he'll forever love.

Slowly letting her go, they look into each other's eyes holding hands as the tears mix with the rain showing genuine love.

He rubs his thumb across her cheek, slowly moving in for a kiss.

Before his lips connect with hers, she closes her eyes ready to enjoy the moment she's been wanting since they were kids.

Holding each other like lovers, they kiss passionately.

When they pull away, both of them are in bliss, finally understanding why the reason their bond is so strong.

ANTOINE

Go wait in the car with Drew.

With a smile, she rubs her hand across his face before walking off.

Antoine turns his head watching her walk away. A slight smile cracks the side of his mouth looking back at the headstone.

Taking a seat on the ground, he opens the bottle taking a sip.

He wipes the residue, swallowing, rubbing his hand across the headstone.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

I know you said your decision was for the best...but I can't sleep knowing it's my fault you're dead. Wherever you are. Please, forgive me.

He takes another sip from the bottle, and then places it to the side, wiping the tears and rain from his face.

Lying down on the ground on his side, he stares at the headstone, rubbing his hand across it in a loving manner, trying to grasp the fact he'll never see his mother again.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

I hope you're truly with me. I love

you.

He stays on the ground as the rain pours down, and the tears pour down his face, keeping his hand on the headstone as if he can feel his mother holding his hand.

ANTOINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They say love hurts more than death because the loss of a loved one is death. A soul taken away is replaced with another. A part of me wishes I could be Trice's man, but...I know it can never be. All I can do is what my mother asked, and make sure she's safe.

INT. THE HOTEL - NIGHT

A porno is playing on the wall flat screen on mute. A half bottle of Hennessy is on the counter next to two red cups.

Male and women's clothing are on the floor.

The sound of the headboard knocking against the wall is heard, along with loud moans coming from a man.

On the bed glistening with sweat putting power behind each stroke is a brown skin man in his mid-thirties named KEVIN.

He has Latrice bent over gripping hold tight to her thighs as if he's clinging for dear life.

With her head turned to the side, the expression shows she wishes he would hurry up and finish.

Closing her eyes biting her lip, she slides her head side to side on the pillow.

KEVIN

This is some good pussy.

She squeezes her eyes tight, and tears of shame flow.

Kevin's moans become louder and his movement becomes faster, releasing a loud orgasmic moan.

The sweat drips from his face onto her back, gaining his composure rolling over to the side.

She lies silent on her stomach shaking her head, dreading she's become the exact thing she hated about her mother.

Kevin lies grinning, wiping the sweat from his face, breathing heavily.

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
That shit was good.

She doesn't respond, sitting up grabbing her bra from the floor placing it on.

He turns on his side placing his fingertips to her back gliding them down.

She jumps, turning to look at him as if something eerie crawled on her.

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
What's wrong?

She stands up placing her panties on.

LATRICE  
I need to get going.

KEVIN  
When are we doing this again?

Placing her pants on, she looks around for her shirt paying him no attention.

LATRICE  
Who said we're doing it again?

Finding her shirt, she places it on walking towards the door.

Kevin sits up with an attitude.

KEVIN  
Like that?

LATRICE  
I'm out.

KEVIN  
Fuck you, bitch! You were only good  
for a nut.

Opening the door pausing, she turns around looking at him.

LATRICE  
And you still wanna fuck this bitch. I  
can't say fuckin' you was worth the

time, but make sure you tell your wife you fucked a bitch that can get her husband off better than she can.

Releasing a low chuckle, she walks out the room.

Kevin sits on the bed looking dumb, rubbing his wedding ring with sorrow.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Coming from the room of the rundown looking motel with the lights dimming in and out on the vacancy sign, Latrice takes a deep breath making her way through the parking lot heading to the street.

As she walks down the empty street barely lit by streetlights and the breeze massaging her back, she comes to a stop at a bus booth, walking in taking a seat.

Her breathing indicates she wants to break down crying, feeling ashamed of yet another pointless sexual encounter causing the empty hole in her heart to grow deeper.

Gaining a grip, she looks around the area hearing loud talking.

LATRICE POV

She sees four boys standing by a gas station.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Taking another deep breath, she pulls her phone out looking at the screen seeing four missed calls from Antoine.

Knowing he's about to give her the third-degree, she braces for his words calling him back.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

What the hell were you doing?!

LATRICE

I was busy.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

You were busy for four hours?

LATRICE

Do we have to do this, now?



ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Hell yeah!

LATRICE  
This was something I had to do.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Where yo ass at?

LATRICE  
Waiting on the bus, praying these loud  
ass niggas don't come over here.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Hurry up and get that ass home.

LATRICE  
Okay, daddy.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Just get home safe. Can you do that  
for me?

LATRICE  
Don't I always?

TEENAGE BOY (O.S.)  
Look at that bitch over there!

Latrice shakes her head, sighing, looking towards the gas station seeing the boys focusing their attention her way.

LATRICE  
Here we go.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
What?

Latrice stands up coming out of the booth keeping her eyes on the boys approaching her.

LATRICE  
Here they come.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
You need to move.

LATRICE  
I'm good.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Get up and move.

LATRICE  
Being overprotective over the phone  
won't help in this situation.

Now we see Travis, two other boys and MARCUS. He's short and dark skin with a stocky build. A cigarette hangs from his mouth staring at Latrice with bad intentions.

Latrice looks back seeing the headlights from the bus a few streets down.

Turning back to face the group, she sighs deep.

TRAVIS  
Oh, this Latrice freak ass.

Latrice stares at Marcus with daggers in her eyes.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
What's going on? Why did you get  
quiet?

LATRICE  
I'll call you when I get on the bus.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Trice!

She hangs up, placing the phone back in her pocket.

MARCUS  
Since you know her, can you tell me if  
the pussy is good?

TRAVIS  
The pussy is good. Trice, let my man  
get some of that.

LATRICE  
Fuck you, nigga! I don't know why I  
fucked with you in the first place.

TRAVIS  
Bitch, are you giving up the pussy or  
what?

LATRICE  
Fuck you bum ass niggas!

Marcus takes one more pull from his cigarette before flicking it to the side, placing his hand under his shirt grabbing the handle of a nine-millimeter.

MARCUS

Bitch, make me...

The bus pulls up, opening the doors and she quickly hops on.

Before the doors close, Marcus slaps her hard on the ass making her stumble forward.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I'll see you again, you freak bitch!

The bus pulls off.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BUS - CONTINUOUS

The faint laughter of the boys can still be heard indistinctly, until they cross a few streets.

The BUS DRIVER looks at Latrice concerned as she swipes her card.

BUS DRIVER

Are you okay?

Latrice looks at him trying to hold back the pain from getting slapped on the ass, and how embarrassing it was.

LATRICE

I'll be fine.

Towards the back of the bus is a BAG LADY wearing flea market clothes with her purse beside her gazing out the window.

Latrice takes a seat in the back sighing, placing her hands over her face.

The Bag lady turns looking at her, sensing the pain becoming concerned, slowly extending her hand.

Latrice pulls her hands down, and when she sees the lady about to touch her, she jumps back.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

Don't touch me.

The Bag lady pulls her hand back, offended by the way Latrice reacted.

BAG LADY

I wasn't about to do you harm, dear. I just noticed you're--.

LATRICE

How about you mind your own business? Notice that.

BAG LADY

I wanted to give you some advice so you don't end up like me.

LATRICE

I highly doubt I end up like you.

BAG LADY

I hope not.

Completely disrespecting the Bag lady's concern, Latrice pulls out her phone and begins to text.

The Bag lady goes in her purse scrambling around for a few seconds, before pulling out a card, staring at it in-love.

BAG LADY (CONT'D)

If you don't mind, I'd like to give you something.

Latrice looks at the filth under her nails, and the beat up condition her hands are in, and it causes her to scrunch up her face.

LATRICE

You expect me to take something from your hand?

The Bag lady sighs, placing the card beside Latrice's leg.

The Bag lady turns looking out the window, reaching up pulling the cord ringing the bell.

She looks back at Latrice still texting, shaking her head disappointed.

BAG LADY

My appearance is the reason why you're acting this way, I know. But if you take a look at the card, it'll help

you be a better woman in life.

(Sighs)

Take a look at me. I wish I would've stayed with the person who gave me the card, instead of doing exactly what you're doing now.

Latrice looks at her and scoffs, returning back to her text message.

LATRICE

I hear you talking.

BAG LADY

Don't be so cold, dear.

LATRICE

You should keep the card your boyfriend gave you.

BAG LADY

I wish I could go back and accept his proposal.

LATRICE

Well, I don't know what to tell you. I don't need help with my life.

The bus comes to a stop, and The Bag lady gets up walking to the door, turning to look at Latrice one last time.

BAG LADY

Don't wait till it's too late to change.

The Bag lady makes her way off the bus, and the bus pulls off.

Using her eyes, Latrice looks at the card hesitant to pick it up, but curiosity gets the best of her.

Before she can get a chance to read what the card says, her phone goes off.

It's a text from Antoine.

INSERT PHONE SCREEN

On some real shit, you need to hurry up and call me.

BACK TO THE SCENE

She places her phone down, turning her attention back to the card.

INSERT CARD

The essence of a woman is signified by a rose. Once it's uprooted, it still needs nurturing, or it will die. You're my rose...I'll never let you die.

BACK TO THE SCENE

She stares at the card as if she's trying to decipher what it means, but in the back of her mind she's registering what the Bag lady meant.

Placing the card in her pocket, she pulls her earbuds out connecting them to her phone listening to music.

CUT TO:

INT. REGINA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The house is clean spick and span, with everything arranged perfect on the tables.

Thomas is sitting on the sofa in a suit watching the basketball game drinking a beer, sucking his teeth, turning his head looking at the front door every few seconds.

Looking at his expression, you can tell he can't wait for Latrice to walk through the door so he can say some hateful words towards her.

Latrice comes in closing the door behind her, taking her earbuds out ready to go upstairs.

Thomas turns looking at her, taking a sip from his beer.

THOMAS

Where have you been?

LATRICE

I was studying at the library. I couldn't get a ride home, so I had to catch the bus.

Taking a sip from his beer, he stares at her, seeing through her lie.

THOMAS

And I'm supposed to believe that?

LATRICE  
Why wouldn't you?

Focusing his attention back to the game, he takes another sip, sucking his teeth.

THOMAS  
Go about ya business. You're a whore  
like your mother.

LATRICE  
(Sighs)  
Don't you think that's getting old?

Thomas takes another sip from his beer, keeping his eyes locked on the screen.

THOMAS  
Not if you're running up a millage  
with random men.

Tears instantly form in her eyes looking at the man she calls her father who looks at her as nothing more than a common prostitute on the street.

Her mouth motions the words she wants to say, but they don't come out, quickly running upstairs to her room.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LATRICE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Turning the lights on, we see her room is still clean and organized.

With tears lacing her face, she walks over to the bed taking a seat, breathing heavy with anger.

She opens the drawer on her nightstand reaching inside grabbing the same diary she had when she was younger, along with a pen.

Opening the diary, she looks at the pages written about her sexual encounters.

Her tears blot the pages adding Kevin to the list.

Flipping through a few pages, she comes to the section dedicated to her mother.

As she sits writing with tears staining the pages, her phone

rings.

Pulling the phone from her pocket, she sees Antoine's name.

She answers sniffing, wiping the tears from her eyes.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Where are you?

LATRICE  
I'm at home.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Why are you crying?

LATRICE  
I don't care to talk about it.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Is he fuckin' with you?

She bursts into tears.

We can hear Antoine's heavy breathing on the other end.

ANTOINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Don't waste tears on his useless ass.

LATRICE  
(Crying)  
He treats me like these niggas.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Don't worry about it. You'll be okay  
once you leave for college.

LATRICE  
I wanna know why he doesn't love me?  
I'm his only child, and he shows me no  
love.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
It's because of what your mom was  
doing, and he knows you're on the same  
path. He knows since he was always  
cheating and beating her ass, he drove  
her to that life. And now, he's doing  
the same thing with you. Crazy part  
about it all...he still loves your mom  
and you, despite all his bullshit.



LATRICE

But why treat me this way?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Reverse psychology. Treating you like shit should prevent you from being like your mother. I don't think he understands it's making things worse.

LATRICE

That's so stupid.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

A lot of shit in life is stupid. You either let it trip you up holding you down, or step over it.

She cracks a smile, wiping her eyes.

LATRICE

I'm glad I have you.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

You know we go back to blowing bubbles and eating peanut butter and jelly sammiches.

She laughs.

ANTOINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What was that shit at the bus stop about?

LATRICE

Travis was with his boys frontin'.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

What happened?

LATRICE

I guess one of them was about to pull a gun on me. The bus pulled up, and before the door closed he slapped me on the ass, talking about how he'll see me again.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

That's why I be tellin' you to stop fuckin' around with these niggas.

LATRICE

Do I really have to hear this shit  
now?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

You already know what's up, so don't  
even act that way.

LATRICE

I need to ask you something.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

What?

LATRICE

This lady on the bus gave me a card,  
and I wanted to know--?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

What kind of card?

LATRICE

If you'd let me finish, you'll know.  
She gave me the card, and I wanted to  
know what you think it means.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

What does it say?

She goes in her pocket pulling out the card.

LATRICE

The essence of a woman is signified by  
a rose. Once it's uprooted, it still  
needs nurturing, or it will die.  
You're my rose...I'll never let you die.

She sits waiting for his response in an awkward silence for a  
moment, and then Antoine clears his throat.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Why did she give it to you?

LATRICE

She said she didn't want me turning  
out like her.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

I see. Well, yeah, I know what it  
means.

LATRICE

Are you gonna tell me?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

It's something I've been tellin' you  
for years.

LATRICE

You tell me a lot of things.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

I know. I'm glad you made it home  
safe.

LATRICE

(Laughs)

Wow. What about the answer?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Maybe I'll tell you tomorrow. I love  
you.

He hangs up.

She sits holding the card and phone smiling before placing  
them on the bed.

Picking up her diary, she flips all the way to the end.

INSERT DIARY

We see a picture of her and Antoine when they were kids  
sitting on her front porch. Some words are written underneath  
the picture.

BACK TO THE SCENE

A smile comes across her face beginning to write.

INT. THE LUNCHROOM - AFTERNOON

The room is filled with students standing in line getting  
their lunches, and sitting at tables eating and talking.

Latrice is sitting at a table by herself with her lunch  
placed to the side, hard at work on some overdue homework.

Antoine comes into the room wearing a blue wife beater and  
Khakis.

As he walks to the line for his lunch, everybody he passes

sticks their hand out for a play, and he gives them one.

Travis comes over to Latrice's table taking a seat across from her.

She continues writing, not paying attention that he's sitting there.

He takes her pen from her, and she exhales sharply looking up at him.

LATRICE  
Can I help you?

TRAVIS  
That's fucked up how you did my boy.

LATRICE  
What's your point?

Antoine is standing in line getting his lunch laughing with the person in front of him, when ARNOLD, a tall brown skin geek comes up tapping him on the shoulder.

Antoine turns to look at him.

ANTOINE  
What's up?

ARNOLD  
You see Travis over there bothering Trice?

ANTOINE'S POV

He sees Travis and Latrice having somewhat of a heated conversation.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Antoine shakes his head, putting his lunch down.

ANTOINE  
Here we go with this shit.

Latrice pulls another pen out focusing back on her work, paying Travis no attention.

TRAVIS  
Trice, on some real shit. What's up with some head? We can slide off and

get it poppin'.

She looks up from her book pissed off, throwing her pen in his face.

LATRICE

Get the fuck away from me!

People stop what they're doing looking at the two expecting a fight to break out.

TRAVIS

Well, once a hoe, always a hoe!

He grabs her arm trying to snatch her across the table, and she struggles trying to break the grasp.

The students stand up, instigating the fight getting loud.

Antoine makes haste through the chanting students reaching Travis, grabbing him by the shoulder turning him around.

Fed up with being scared of Antoine, Travis shoves him.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

What the fuck is yo problem, nigga?!

Antoine hits him in the face making his head turn, and Travis quickly recovers throwing a punch back.

Travis and Antoine are brawling in the middle of the lunchroom, while the students cheer it on.

Latrice grabs two of her textbooks gripping them tight, rushing over behind Travis clocking him upside the head.

Antoine catches him with a right, knocking him to the floor.

Travis tries getting up, but Antoine kicks him hard across the face.

The students cheer on the fight as Antoine stomps Travis.

Tired of stomping on him, Antoine moves some of the students out the way, grabbing a chair by the legs.

He comes back over to Travis ready to smash his head in, and security grabs him, taking the chair away.

Antoine tries breaking free as security drags him out the room.

While the students continue cheering, other guards help Travis to his feet.

Blood is coming from his mouth trying to stand straight, but he's dazed.

The students start simmering down.

Latrice cracks a slight smirk going back to her table.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Students are coming out of the building, and chatter is heard.

Latrice comes out smiling about Antoine beating up Travis, making her way to the sidewalk.

Arnold comes running up beside her.

Continuing walking, she turns her head looking at him, and then she looks back forward.

ARNOLD

Hey, Trice.

LATRICE

What's up?

ARNOLD

Are you okay?

LATRICE

Why wouldn't I be okay?

ARNOLD

I was making sure you're okay after the whole thing in the lunchroom.

LATRICE

I'm already over it.

ARNOLD

I like how you hit him upside the head. He didn't see it coming.

She stops walking and he stops looking at her smiling.

LATRICE

What do you want, Arnold?

ARNOLD

...Can I have a dance with you, if you come to the party tonight?

LATRICE

What party?

ARNOLD

Brandy is having a house party.  
Everybody in school knows about it.

Nodding her head side to side pondering on the idea of coming to the party, she slightly smiles.

LATRICE

I'll think about it.

ARNOLD

You'll think about dancing with me?

She releases a sarcastic laugh, patting him on the shoulder.

LATRICE

If that makes you feel comfortable,  
yes.

ARNOLD

Really?

She laughs walking off.

Arnold stands blushing, happy he might have a chance with Latrice if she comes.

INT. LATRICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Latrice is sitting on her bed reading a book with some takeout food on the bed beside her.

The aura in the room has her at peace, nodding her head to the music playing on low.

Her phone rings, and she picks it up from the nightstand seeing Antoine calling.

She answers with a smile.

LATRICE

You okay?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Yeah, you know me.

LATRICE

You like how I hit him upside his  
shit?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Thanks.

LATRICE

You know I'll do anything for you like  
you'd do anything for me. Even though  
I know you were probably like why did  
she do that?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Nah, he can throw, I give him that.

LATRICE

Okay.

ANTOINE (V.O.)

Listen, I meant to give you something.

LATRICE

What's that?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

The meaning to what you asked me last  
night.

LATRICE

Why don't you just tell me?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

You'll get a better understanding if  
you read it.

LATRICE

Are you coming to the party?

ANTOINE (V.O.)

What party?

LATRICE

That cheerleader chick Brandy is  
having a party tonight.



ANTOINE (V.O.)  
I don't do house parties.

LATRICE  
(Laughs)  
Will you stop being a pussy, and come on.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
(Laughs)  
Fuck you, no.

LATRICE  
Well, how else--.

Thomas bursts in the room drinking whiskey straight from the bottle.

THOMAS  
Who are you talking to?

Latrice looks at him sighing, shaking her head.

LATRICE  
I'll call you back.

ANTOINE (V.O.)  
Remember what I told you.

LATRICE  
I know. I'll call you back.

Thomas takes a step forward, taking a sip from the bottle.

THOMAS  
I asked you a question, whore.

Latrice places her phone in her pocket staring at her father remembering the words Antoine told her, not allowing his words to get to her.

LATRICE  
You like calling me that, don't you?

His face becomes etched with anger walking towards her, taking a sip from the bottle.

THOMAS  
Are you getting smart?

LATRICE

Call it asking a truthful question.

THOMAS

Open your smart-ass mouth again and see what it gets you.

She stands up smiling, placing her hands on her hips.

LATRICE

You're pathetic. I see why mama--.

He slaps her on the bed.

THOMAS

Just like your goddamn mother, the bitch!

She sits stunned rubbing her cheek before looking at him smiling.

LATRICE

You belittle people because you know you ain't shit. YES, mama was a hoe and I'm not far off. But now...I understand why you don't love me. So you can call me whatever you want, or even hit me again.

He balls his fist tight ready to hit her, but he can't.

THOMAS

You want me to hit you because that's all you're worth.

LATRICE

Oh, no. I know who I am, and what I'm worth now.

THOMAS

I told you--.

LATRICE

I hope the guilt of making your daughter a hoe eats away at you just like the death of mama.

She stands up giving him a kiss on the cheek before making her way towards the door.

Feeling ashamed, he lowers his head clearing his throat.

THOMAS

Latrice...let me say one thing.

She stops, but doesn't turn around.

LATRICE

What?

THOMAS

I love you.

LATRICE

(Dry laugh)

You love putting me down, so you can feel somewhat like a man. That time is over, little boy.

She walks out the room.

Thomas takes a seat on the bed, taking a sip from the bottle, lowering his head.

Reaching over, opening the drawer on the nightstand, he reaches in and takes the diary out.

Opening the book reading the first few pages, tears build in his eyes taking another sip, now realizing he made his daughter go down the same path his wife was on.

CUT TO:

INT. BRANDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is filled with people dancing and drinking, listening to the music playing.

From the layout of the room, you can tell Brandy's parents have money.

Latrice comes into the house walking through the crowded room.

The ones who notice her turn their nose up staring at her.

Arnold is off in the corner trying to talk to a female.

The female looks at him laughing before walking off.

Latrice walks up behind him tapping him on the shoulder.

Arnold turns around with a big smile.

ARNOLD  
I'm glad you could make it.

LATRICE  
Why is that?

ARNOLD  
I can get my dance.

She stares at him doing her best holding back from laughing.

LATRICE  
Right. Before we do that, where's the drinks?

ARNOLD  
In the back.

LATRICE  
Let me throw a few back, and then we can dance.

ARNOLD  
Bet.

Latrice walks off laughing, making her way through the people in the room.

Arnold stands blushing, turning his attention to talk to another female, and she looks at him shaking her head no.

As Latrice gets closer to the kitchen, she sets a foot in, and then she pauses with a look of fear.

LATRICE POV

Travis and Marcus are standing by the sink, drinking and smoking.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Latrice quickly turns around making her way back to the front.

Marcus takes a sip from his cup catching a quick glance, but he's not certain if it was her.

Travis, swollen face and busted lip is taking a sip from his cup looking at the other girls in the room.

Marcus taps him on the shoulder.

MARCUS  
I think I just saw that freak bitch.

Travis takes another sip.

TRAVIS  
Who?

MARCUS  
The bitch from the bus stop.

Travis looks around the room.

TRAVIS  
Where did she go?

MARCUS  
Let's go see.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BRANDY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Latrice is scrambling through the people on the stairs making out, heading straight to the bathroom, running in locking the door.

She takes a seat on the tub scared, rocking back and forth, pulling out her phone quickly calling Antoine.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DREW'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Rap music is playing.

Drew takes one last pull from the blunt before passing it to Antoine.

Antoine takes the blunt, taking a hard pull, exhaling slowly, nodding his head to the music.

DREW  
You think it'll be some bad bitches here?

ANTOINE  
Cheerleaders keep bad bitches around.  
But that's not why I decided to come.

DREW

That's real shit looking out for your girl the way you do.

Antoine takes a pull, and then passes it back to Drew.

ANTOINE

That's not my girl. I made a promise with my mother I'll never break.

Drew takes a pull laughing under his breath.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

DREW

Niggas never admit when they're in-love.

ANTOINE

Shut the fuck up.

Antoine's phone vibrates on his lap. When he looks down, he sees Latrice's name.

Drew takes another pull.

DREW

(Laughs)  
Speaking of yo boo.

ANTOINE

Fuck you.

Antoine turns the music down before answering the phone.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

Are you at the party?

LATRICE (V.O.)

(Whispering)  
How far away are you?

ANTOINE

About five or ten minutes away. Why are you whispering?

LATRICE (V.O.)

Travis and that dude I told you about are here.

ANTOINE

Fuck. Where are you now?

LATRICE (V.O.)

Scared as shit in the bathroom.

ANTOINE

Stay right there. I'm on the way.

Antoine hangs up, slinging the phone down.

DREW

What's up?

ANTOINE

Hurry up and get us there.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BRANDY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

After searching the basement and in front of the house, Marcus and Travis come back into the house upset.

Travis taps Marcus on the shoulder pointing at Arnold still attempting to get down with a female.

The two make their way towards him.

Travis grabs Arnold by the shoulder, turning him around.

Arnold stares at Travis ready to fight, and then he looks at Marcus using his eyes signaling him to look down, seeing he's holding the handle of the gun under his shirt.

Arnold's eyes get wide, taking a step back.

TRAVIS

Where did that bitch go?

Marcus pulls the nine-millimeter from his pants, holding it down in front him.

Arnold is in fear for his life.

ARNOLD

I think she went upstairs. Chill with that gun shit, Bro.

MARCUS

Shut the fuck up, nigga.

Marcus places the gun back under his shirt, and the two make their way upstairs.

Arnold stands grabbing at his chest breathing deep with fear outlining his eyes.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Latrice is still sitting on the tub rocking back and forth scared, holding her phone tight, praying Antoine will arrive soon.

There's a knock on the door.

She looks over at the door.

LATRICE  
I'm using it.

There's another knock at the door that makes her nervous, standing to her feet clinching the phone.

LATRICE (CONT'D)  
I said--.

Travis kicks the door in and because the music is loud, her screams go unheard.

Travis rushes in covering her mouth, and Marcus follows behind, closing the door.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Travis throws her down on the floor, holding her down by the arms, while Marcus holds her legs down.

Latrice screams in fear trying to break free.

MARCUS  
I told you I was coming back for this  
pussy.

Travis releases one of her arms, and slaps her hard across the face.

INTERCUT WITH:



INT. BRANDY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Antoine and Drew storm in the house shoving people out the way looking for Latrice.

The ones who were pushed have attitudes, but they can tell by the way Antoine is acting it's best to leave him alone.

Coming back into the living room, Antoine sees Arnold off to the side pointing upstairs.

Antoine and Drew dash for the stairs.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Latrice is on the floor crying with blood coming from her nose and mouth, stripped of her pants.

Marcus is aggressively fingering her, making sure she suffers before they rape her.

Travis stands up over her head unbuckling his pants.

TRAVIS

Time to collect on the head you owe  
me, bitch.

Just as he gets ready to drop his pants, Antoine kicks the door in knocking Marcus over to the side.

Drew lunges in, and grabs Travis by the head, slamming him face first against the wall.

Latrice quickly grabs her pants moving out the way.

Marcus tries getting up, but Antoine quickly grabs him, and the two begin tussling, spilling out the room.

Drew continues holding Travis by the head, now slamming his face in the mirror cracking it, staining the glass with his blood.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. THE STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Meanwhile, Antoine and Marcus are trying to overpower each other, and end up tumbling down the stairs.

They crash at the bottom, and the music comes to a stop.

The two quickly get back to their feet fighting.

Latrice comes running down the stairs standing to the side with everyone else watching the fight.

Marcus gets enough space from Antoine going for his gun, and that's when Drew flies down the stairs tackling him before he can get his hand on the handle.

BRANDY, the sexy brown skin petite cheerleader is off in the corner on the phone with the police, while everybody else continues cheering on Antoine and Drew stomping Marcus.

They stop stomping him, and then they grab Marcus by the arms dragging him outside, causing everyone to follow.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. BRANDY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Outside, the quiet suburban neighborhood is disrupted by the cheers of the people at the party watching Drew and Antoine drag Marcus into the street, dropping him under a streetlight, beginning to stomp him again.

Latrice runs out the house over to Antoine grabbing his arm.

He turns looking at her with his face covered in sweat and hate in his eyes, until he sees it's her.

Grabbing her tight in a hug, he gives her a kiss on the cheek.

Drew stops stomping Marcus looking around the area hearing the sound of police sirens in the distance.

DREW

We need to go, cuz.

Antoine turns to look at him.

ANTOINE

You go. I have to make sure she's good.

Drew runs to his royal blue old-school Monte Carlo with blue tinted windows getting in, starting it up, turning around driving the opposite way down the street.

The lights from the police cars can be seen drawing near as Antoine walks Latrice over to the sidewalk.

The people on the porch continue watching, waiting to see what'll happen next.

Stopping on the sidewalk, Antoine cuffs Latrice's face looking into her tear filled eyes.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

You okay?

LATRICE

...Thank you.

ANTOINE

This is why I don't do house parties.  
The shit never turns out good.

Everybody is watching the police draw near, but nobody is watching Marcus slowly turning on his side, pulling his nine-millimeter out.

Antoine continues cuffing Latrice's face staring in her eyes...and then he leans in giving her a passionate kiss.

He pulls back, staring at her smiling.

Latrice is smiling, staring into Antoine's eyes.

They hold hands in-love as the couple they should have been from the beginning.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

With every breath I take. You'll never--.

MARCUS (O.S.)

Bitch ass nigga!

Antoine turns around seeing Marcus up on his feet with blood spilling from his face aiming his gun.

Thinking about Latrice's safety first, Antoine stands in front of her just as Marcus opens fire, hitting him once in the chest and twice in the stomach, causing him to fall back into Latrice.

They both hit the ground.

The people on the porch rush back in the house.

The police pull up getting out with guns drawn, and Marcus turns looking at them with insanity in his eyes aiming the gun.

That's the last thing he sees as the police open fire, dropping him dead.

Latrice is crying holding Antoine in her arms as he spits up blood.

But despite how much pain he's in, he still holds a smile looking into her eyes.

LATRICE

You'll be okay. Just lay here in my arms.

ANTOINE

You...you know me.

He spits up blood, and she wipes it away.

Police officers come over trying to tend to him, and she waves her hand for them to move.

Antoine goes in his pocket, and pulls out a piece of folded up paper staining it with his blood, extending it to her.

She takes the paper, placing it in her pocket.

ANTOINE (CONT'D)

That's the answer.

LATRICE

I don't care about that. I need you to relax.

He smiles at her before spitting to the side.

ANTOINE

You need to care because you need to understand. Don't worry about me. I'll always...

He turns his head, and blood spills from his mouth.

She tries shaking him, but it does no good.

The scream she releases sends chills up the spines of everyone in the area as she holds Antoine tight.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRANDY'S HOUSE - AN HOUR LATER

Coroners are placing the body bags filled with Antoine and Marcus bodies in the van closing the door.

Travis is sitting in the back of a squad car looking pitiful with bits of glass still stuck in his bloody face.

The coroner van and squad car with Travis in the back pulls off.

Latrice is standing to the side on the sidewalk in a daze, unable to grasp her best friend is dead.

She's looking at the bloodstained note Antoine gave her.

The OFFICER comes over standing in front of her recognizing the pain she's going through, but he still has to do his job.

OFFICER

Are you okay?

Keeping her eyes locked on the note, she snuffles.

LATRICE

...I'll be fine.

OFFICER

Are you sure? I know you saw your boyfriend--.

LATRICE

He wasn't my boyfriend.

She looks up at him with her tear filled red eyes.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

But he should've been. Please, just leave me alone.

With nothing more to say, Officer turns his attention to the people on the porch standing in silence, horrified from what they witnessed.

OFFICER

Everybody, pack it up. The party is over.

Officer walks back to the squad car, getting in sitting with

his partner for a few minutes before pulling off.

Latrice is still stunned looking at the blood on her clothes, believing it's her fault Antoine is dead.

Shaking her head, taking a deep breath, she turns her attention to the people on the porch.

LATRICE

All of you think I'm a hoe, and I can accept that. Yet, all of you fuck and suck whoever. The only difference is I put my business out there, and I'm fine with that. You niggas label me a nasty hoe, not knowing if the bitch you kiss has another man's dick on her lips.

She looks down at the blood on her clothes and laughs before looking back at them.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

The man I lost tonight. My best friend, who should've been my man. He made me realize what I'm really worth as a person.

It appears she wants to break down crying, but she maintains, taking a step towards the porch.

Everyone is nervous because they don't know what to expect.

LATRICE (CONT'D)

Continue calling me a hoe because I accept it proudly. I'm a hoe that's seen the light. Sadly, none of you can say that because you judge before judging yourself. But you know deep down inside, you're worse of a hoe than me.

Latrice stares them down.

They all look at each other registering the truth she spoke.

With a new found confidence in her life, she walks away with pride, no longer feeling the shame she once had.

Coming to a stop under a streetlight a few blocks away from the house, she goes in her pocket retrieving the bloody note.

Taking a deep breath, she rubs her thumb across the blood in sorrow, slowly opening the note.

INSERT THE NOTE

ANTOINE (V.O.)

A woman's life is layered like rose petals, trying her best to uphold beauty without them falling. The thorns prevent people from harming her. The stem is her strength and longevity, signifying she can go the whole nine yards with the proper nourishment. You signify the rose, and no matter what, I'll always keep you strong. You're my best friend. My heart. I love you for who you really are. Always and forever, you'll be my rose. I love you.

BACK TO THE SCENE

Words can't explain her emotions placing the note tight against her heart, doing her best to hold back the tears.

An old-school red Cadillac pulls up on the side of the street.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE age sixteen, brown skin wearing a skirt and halter top comes out the passenger door.

Closing the door, she leans back in the car, and when she stands straight, we see her placing a wad of money between her breasts.

Latrice looks at her shaking her head, watching Young prostitute placing some gum in her mouth before looking her way.

Young prostitute comes up to Latrice.

She shows a look of concern staring at the tears coming from Latrice's eyes.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE

What's wrong?

Latrice sucks up her tears, folding the note, placing it back in her pocket.

LATRICE  
(Sniffling)  
...Nothing. Not anymore.

YOUNG PROSTITUTE  
You wanna come with me and make this  
money?

Latrice sighs deep, patting her on the shoulder.

LATRICE  
Find someone to nourish you for  
growth. You're a beautiful rose that  
should know your worth.

Latrice wipes the tears from her eyes, smiling, walking off.

Young prostitute spits her gum to the side letting the words  
Latrice said sink in, watching her walk off.

FADE TO BLACK:

"The source of life should be cherished because without  
women, there would be no life."

~Bernard Mersier~

END CREDITS