

# Niggas in Paris

(or Les Rêveurs)

A Comedy in Two Acts

**By: Willie E. Jones III**

## CHARACTERS

Aaliyah - Singer/Songwriter

Dominique - Basketball Player

Jazmin - Actor

Marquis - Painter

Terrell - Rapper

Tiara - finding herself

Yolanda - Marquis' mother

## ACT ONE

### THE IDEA

*(TIARA's apartment. AALIYAH enters with two suitcases, a large backpack, and two large purses. TIARA is sitting on the couch.)*

AALIYAH

Ok so I need to stay here now cuz my daddy kicked me out the house cuz I was my fuckin my step uncle - who still lives wit us cuz my step mom still live wit us even though she and my daddy divorced - and now I ain't got no place to go and you're like a sister to me so I know you gon' say yes but imma ask anyway cuz I'm polite.

TIARA

Hell nah.

AALIYAH

Bitch why not!?

TIARA

First of all, cuz you didn't even ask even though you said you would. Second of all, cuz I can't support you and Dominique. And third of all, how the hell did you get in my apartment?

AALIYAH

First off, you right - can I please stay here? Second off, I didn't ask you to support me, I asked you to house me. And third off, cause I made a copy of your key last time I stayed over.

TIARA

Firstly, lemme answer that later. Secondly, oh you got a job now? And thirdly, bitch you made a copy of my key and ain't tell me?

AALIYAH

One, ok but I need an answer today. Two, don't worry bout how I make my money. And three, yes I did, and it's too late to be gettin mad about it now.

TIARA

Uno, how long you tryna stay? Dos, fine but don't be bringing no drama to my house. And tres, that don't change the fact you basically committed a crime.

AALIYAH

For starters, I'm only tryna stay a few months...maybe a year. Main course, you live in a apartment, not a house - but either way I ain't gon' bring no drama. And dessert, do somethin bout it then, damn.

TIARA

*(puts up one finger - the middle finger)* Fine, that'll work. *(puts up a second finger)* Whatever, I believe you. *(puts up a third finger)* I mean you gon be livin here anyway so you might as well just keep it.

AALIYAH

Good. Good. And right.

TIARA

*(beat)* So you gon give me a proper greeting or not? *(they hug)*

AALIYAH

I really appreciate this forreal. Thank you.

TIARA

Girl we're close as fuck. You're like family, this ain't nothin.

AALIYAH

You right.

TIARA

Speaking of family...why was you fuckin your uncle?

AALIYAH

Step uncle. Cuz he fine as fuck.

TIARA

Mm. Well don't fuck Dominique. He's my man.

AALIYAH  
No promises.

TIARA  
*(they both laugh)* Girl I'll kill you.

AALIYAH  
*(they both laugh)* Try me bitch.

TIARA  
*(they both laugh)*

AALIYAH  
*(they both laugh)*

TIARA  
So you'll be sleeping on the couch. Just keep your shit out the way.

AALIYAH  
Ok, imma go to the bathroom real quick. *(exits)*

*(MARQUIS enters.)*

MARQUIS  
Where's Dominique?

TIARA  
Hello to you too, nigga.

MARQUIS  
What's up. Where's Dominique at? Fuck.

TIARA  
What's wrong?

MARQUIS  
I've been having these migraines lately. Especially right before bed. It's weird.

TIARA

Wait a minute, how did you get in? Did Aaliyah leave the door unlocked?

MARQUIS

Nah, I made a copy of your key last time I stayed here.

TIARA

Why the fuck do niggas keep doin that?

MARQUIS

Where's Nique?

TIARA

I'll get him. *(yells out)* DOMINIQUE!

DOMINIQUE

*(offstage)* WHAT?

TIARA

Marquis is here!

DOMINIQUE

*(offstage)* Who!?

TIARA

*(sucks her teeth)* Mark!

DOMINIQUE

*(offstage)* Oh! What he want!?

TIARA

Nigga ion know! Bring yo ass out here and find out!

AALIYAH

*(offstage)* Hey Mark!

MARQUIS

Hey Aaliyah!

TIARA  
Dominique!

DOMINIQUE  
(*offstage*) I'm busy!

TIARA  
Nigga no you not!

DOMINIQUE  
(*offstage*) Yes I am!

TIARA  
Whatchu doin!?

DOMINIQUE  
(*offstage*) I'm playin 2k!

TIARA  
Nigga what!?

MARQUIS  
Tiara I can just...

TIARA  
Hold on Mark. Nigga you doin what!?

DOMINIQUE  
(*offstage*) I said I'm playin 2k!

TIARA  
Nigga pause it!

DOMINIQUE  
(*offstage*) I'm playin online!

AALIYAH  
(*offstage*) Girl you know how niggas are about 2k!

TIARA

I know! So damn stupid! Don't make me go back there!

MARQUIS

I can just go back there...

TIARA

Damn! You sorry at the game anyway.

*(Beat. DOMINIQUE enters.)*

DOMINIQUE

You forreal think I'm bad at 2k?

AALIYAH

*(offstage)* Tiara you know the quickest way to put a nigga in his feelings is to say he trash at 2k!

DOMINIQUE

The other day you told me I was the best nigga you ever seen play 2k.

TIARA

I wanted some dick.

DOMINIQUE

You used me for my body?

MARQUIS

Yo I need to...

DOMINIQUE

Is all I'm good for to you is sex?

AALIYAH

*(enters)* Now he's in his feelings. Tiara you know he's sensitive.

TIARA

Nique....



DOMINIQUE

*(goes to sit)* Nah! It's fine, it's good, it's straight. I guess all I'm good for is putting a ball through a hoop. You know. It's not like I'm going to Duke on a basketball scholarship. It's not like imma be a lottery pick in a year. It's not like...

MARQUIS

Yo! Nique! I need to talk to you.

DOMINIQUE

*(to TIARA)* Yeah! Imma talk with Mark, cause he don't use me for sex and say I'm trash at 2k.

MARQUIS

Yeah. I only say you trash at 2k. *(laughs. DOMINIQUE doesn't laugh)* I'm joking man. Look...

*(TERRELL enters.)*

TERRELL

Yo D Money where ya at!?

TIARA

Don't yall niggas know how to knock?

MARQUIS

I locked the door behind me.

TERRELL

*(to TIARA)* I just used the copy of your key I made last time I stayed.

DOMINIQUE

What's up Terrell?

TERRELL

I just finished the beat and verse for the last song on the tape. I wanna show it to you.

DOMINIQUE

Ight, just gimme a minute. Mark been tryna talk to me.

TERRELL

Nigga why sound so sad?

DOMINIQUE

I'm straight.

TERRELL

Aw hell. Tiara why you told him he bad at 2k? Is he just good sex to you?

TIARA

Nigga don't you start too.

TERRELL

I'm just sayin, you should know better. You know the nigga sensitive.

DOMINIQUE

I'm not sensitive!

TERRELL

Bruh. You basically wanted to make this mixtape Take Care part two.

DOMINIQUE

Nigga please.

TERRELL

You wrote a song called "Without Tears I'm a Nigga, With Tears I'm a Man".

DOMINIQUE

We cut it didn't we?

TERREL

Just sayin' my nigga.

DOMINIQUE

Yeah well you sayin' an awful lot.

AALIYAH

Yall! Marquis has been tryin to tell Dominique something! (to MARQUIS) Do you want us to leave?

MARQUIS

Nah. Y'all like family to me...and everybody here, so I might as well tell everybody now.

AALIYAH

Is everything ok?

TIARA

You dying?

DOMINIQUE

Your mom died?

TERRELL

You got somebody pregnant?

*JAZMIN enters.*

JAZMIN

Hey guys.

TIARA

What the fuck.

JAZMIN

The door was unlocked so I just walked in.

TIARA

*(to herself but out loud)* Oh good. I thought you was gon say...

JAZMIN

I forgot my copy of your key I made last time I stayed over.

TIARA

Well if a random person comes in in the middle of the night and kills me at least I'll know how they got in. After all, there are FOUR NIGGAS WHO HAVE COPIES OF MY KEY THAT I DIDN'T GIVE PERMISSION TO AND ANY ONE OF Y'ALL MO FOS CAN LOSE A KEY AND I. FUCKIN. DIE.

*(Beat.)*

MARQUIS

I flunked out of college and I'm going to Paris.

AALIYAH

*(beat)*

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

TIARA

*(beat)*

DOMINIQUE

*(beat)*

TERRELL

AHH HAHAAHAHAHAHA! Nigga what!?!

MARQUIS

I flunked out of college and I'm going to Paris.

TERRELL

Nigga you lyin.

MARQUIS

I'm serious.

TERRELL

Oh, I believe you flunked out, I was kinda expecting it. But nigga what makes you think you movin to Paris?

AALIYAH

How did you flunk out of school?

MARQUIS

I got straight A's and was on the Dean's List. What do you mean how'd I flunk out of school? I got F's.

TIARA

You're getting a degree in art. How the hell do you flunk outta that?

MARQUIS

I'm an artist with a mind that's how. I didn't like the shit they was teaching me so I stopped giving a fuck.

JAZMIN

That reminds me, your mom says to make sure to pack your paintings that you have stored in the attic.

TIARA

Why you visitin his momma?

JAZMIN

I wasn't. I was visiting him.

AALIYAH

Y'all fucked?

JAZMIN

He needed a distraction and I needed to rehearse for my next film.

DOMINIQUE

I thought you were done with porn.

JAZMIN

I have to pay for acting school. I'm in the transitioning stage of becoming an artist, it ain't cheap.

DOMINIQUE

Audition for plays.

JAZMIN

Mm yes. A black actress. Lots of roles for us.

AALIYAH

That's besides the point...

MARQUIS

The point is that I'm going to Paris. I belong there y'all. Picasso, Dali...I wanna be like them.

TIARA

Yeah but can you afford it?

MARQUIS

Fuck affording! I'm so tired of thinkin of money all the time. Yo I had offers to the top art programs in this fucking country and I couldn't go to any of them cause of money! I settled for community college and for two years I went to class everyday with niggas worse than me when I shoulda been in L.A. or Brooklyn becomin Basquiat. I just woke up one day and decided 'fuck it'. I'm going to Paris. White people have been doing it for years. Cole Porter, Hemmingway, F. Scott. So why can't I? What separates me? Y'all I'm special. Like, I'm not tryna to be cocky but I'm feelin myself. I already have paintings in local coffee shops. Yet I'm in fucking community college not doin nothin. So I'm going to Paris. The city of art and inspiration, and imma become a fucking legend.

TERRELL

I mean, that sounds nice my nigga. It's your life and I support you.

DOMINIQUE

Same bruh. You my nigga. Whatever you tryna do imma support.

TIARA

I mean, of course I support you. I just worry for you. I want you to be straight.

JAZMIN

Same.

TIARA

*(to JAZMIN)* How articulate.

AALIYAH

I'm with everyone else on this. As long as you're happy, we're happy. And if there's anything we can do to help you, I'm sure we'll do it.

TERRELL

I mean...

MARQUIS

I'm glad you said that Double A. Cuz... I want y'all to come with me.

*They all stare at MARQUIS.*

TERRELL

*(beat)*

DOMINIQUE

*(beat)*

TIARA

*(beat)*

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

AALIYAH

*(beat)*

TERRELL

Niggaaaaa...

DOMINIQUE

Nigga what?

TIARA

Go witchu where!?

JAZMIN

I'd need to think about it.

AALIYAH

...I mean...I'd go.

ALL EXCEPT AALIYAH AND MARQUIS

Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat??

TIARA

You ain't even heard the plan! Where y'all gon live? Whatch'all gon do? Work? School? Money? Like...

TERRELL

I'm a rapper. They don't listen to rap in Paris. I ain't gon be one a the GOATs makin hip hop in Paris.

DOMINIQUE

Y'all already know, there's no place else on Earth that can equal the NBA.

TIARA

That shit just don't sound affordable, I'm sorry. Where I'm gon work? Like, I got some money in my savings but that ain't gon be enough to live there.

JAZMIN

...shit you know what...fuck it I'll go.

ALL EXCEPT JAZMIN AND MARQUIS

Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaat!?

AALIYAH

*(still going)* ---aaaaaaaaaaat? Forreal?

JAZMIN

Why not? I may have better success there than here. I love acting, I just wanna do it. Don't matter where. And because of their hygiene over there, it'll force me to stop doing porn.

TERRELL

*(to audience)* Not that there's anything wrong doing porn.

AALIYAH

*(to audience)* Not at all.

DOMINIQUE

*(to audience)* No judgement zone.



TIARA

(*to audience*) Do what makes you happy.

MARQUIS

(*to audience*) Forreal. (*to ALL*) Guys I'm not *moving* there. I'm just going for a bit.

TERRELL

How long?

MARQUIS

Prolly just for the summer. Just get some summer inspiration you know. Grow, take chances, experience shit. Maybe take some private lessons. I just need to show that I can be like the greats. Bein artistically free can apply to niggas too.

TERRELL and DOMINIQUE

...Ight I'll go.

ALL THE WOMEN

Whaaaaaat?

DOMINIQUE

I just want a summer vaca. I can work on my game in Paris.

TERRELL

(*to DOMINIQUE*) But D Money think about it...our next mixtape can be named...

TIARA

Don't say it...

TERRELL

"The Paris Playas".

TIARA

Oh thank God.

TERRELL

Nah it's gon be "Niggas in Paris".

TIARA

Fuck.

TERRELL

Think about it D Money. Our next tape will be flame as fuck. Songs about the travel, the city, the experiences. Shit. It'll be fucking great. Think of the flame verses and themes...we'll be so unique. How many niggas make mixtapes inspired by and made in Paris?

TIARA

You're not gonna cum, are you?

MARQUIS

No. But are you gonna come? Eh, eh?

TIARA

*(gives him a Look)*

MARQUIS

C'mon T. You steady tryna find yoself. Come to Paris wit us. If shit gets tough for you financially we'll all chip in to help. We family. We ain't gon let you struggle over there.

TIARA

Y'all let me struggle here!

TERRELL

We ain't invite you here.

TIARA

Nigga shut the fuck up.

MARQUIS

C'mon T. You've been tellin us you've been tryna find yoself for a minute now. You can over there. And you can legally drink over there! You can explore more. A change of scenery may be what you need. What if you can find something over there than you can bring back here and your life is changed?

TIARA

And if it ain't?

MARQUIS

Then you can say you went to Paris. How many niggas can say that?

TIARA

...fine.

ALL EXCEPT TIARA

Yay! Let's go! Good looks!

TIARA

Now how we gon get there? And where we gon stay?

MARQUIS

We're gonna stay at a cheap Airbnb. It's for three people so with all of us chipping in it'll be a helluva lot cheaper - we'll each just have to room with somebody. So Dominique and Tiara, y'all gon be roomin together.

TIARA

Awwwww!

DOMINIQUE

We gon be fuckin.

MARQUIS

Aaliyah, you and I are gon room together.

AALIYAH

*(lighting up)* Awwwww!

MARQUIS

We gon be fuckin. *(slight beat)* Just kidding. And, Terrell and Jazmin, y'all gon be roomin together.

JAZMIN

Aw.

TERRELL

We gon be fu...

JAZMIN

No we not you Soundcloud reject.

TERRELL

I ain't never been rejected from Soundcloud. I got over a thousand followers.

JAZMIN

Nigga you can't even afford Soundcloud plus. I ain't never seen a nigga with so many email accounts. You've had more trials than the Supreme Court.

TERREL

Aye, ain't nothing wrong with tryna save some money.

JAZMIN

Can't save what you don't have.

TERRELL

Shit, you'll see. The minute I become successful you'll be all over me.

JAZMIN

Hell yeah! But til then, you really ain't gettin none a this.

MARQUIS

Well now that that's settled. We better get to packin'.

TIARA

Hold up, nigga. How we gettin' there?

MARQUIS

Mhm. See, so, um. Y'all know how my cousin work for a cargo ship?

ALL

*(skeptical)* Yeeaaaahhh...

MARQUIS

Um, so, see. I talked to him about, you know, my plan and shit...and he's so supportive of

it, and like, he wanna help. So...so I accepted it.

AALIYAH

?

JAZMIN

?

TIARA

?

DOMINIQUE

?

TERRELL

?

TIARA

Nigga accepted what!?

MARQUIS

Accepted...his offer to...uh, travel to Paris via his cargo ship.

AALIYAH

*(beat)*

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

TIARA

*(beat)*

DOMINIQUE

*(beat)*

TERRELL

*(beat)*

MARQUIS

So...

TIARA

Nigga don't start, we ain't done yet.

*Collective beat.*

AALIYAH

...I mean, I don't mind.

TIARA

Bitch of course you don't.

MARQUIS

How bout the rest a y'all? Y'all still in?

DOMINIQUE

Nigga, where we gon sleep?

TERRELL

What we gon eat?

JAZMIN

Where we gon watch Tv?

ALL EXCEPT AALIYAH AND MARQUIS

Especially that one!

TIARA

I can't miss the offseason!

TERRELL

I can't miss the Yankees!

DOMINIQUE

I can't miss Love and Hip Hop!

TERRELL

Nigga really?

DOMINIQUE

What? They show the re-runs sometimes.

MARQUIS

We wouldn't be on the boat that long y'all. There'll be food on the boat – but BYOB and bring your own snacks. And we'd sleep in our sleeping bags. It'd be like camping. But on a boat.

TIARA

That sounds like ass.

AALIYAH

It could be fun!

TIARA

How?

JAZMIN

It'd be an adventure!

TIARA

Aw hell, not you too.

JAZMIN

It'd be like "Twelfth Night"! C'mon T. Aaliyah and I are down.

AALIYAH

Didn't the ship crash in "Twelfth Night"?

JAZMIN

*(to AALIYAH)* Not helping.

TERRELL

Fuck I guess I'm still down. It'll be good for the mixtape I guess.

DOMINIQUE

A vaca is a vaca.

TIARA

Fine. But my alcohol is my alcohol.

MARQUIS

*(leaving)* Good! I'm really glad guys. Thank y'all so much, I appreciate it. See y'all tomorrow at 1! I'll text y'all the address, bye!

ALL

Nigga wait! *(he re-enters)* What!?

MARQUIS

Shit y'all, didn't I mention? We gotta leave by 1 tomorrow.

TIARA

I think imma kill you.

TERRELL

Niggaaaaa.

MARQUIS

Y'all we cain't waste time! That's plenty of time to get your money situation straight. Say bye to your families, pack your shit, and there's that.

TIARA

First you drop this news on us, then you say we getting' there by cargo ship, and now you sayin we gotta have all our shit ready and put together by 1 pm tomorrow?

MARQUIS

... .. didn't I mention? We gotta leave by 1... a.m.

DOMINIQUE

NIGGA WHAT.

MARQUIS

Well see...



DOMINIQUE

Nah nigga! I cain't see. I cain't see nothin. Nada. I'm blind as fuck. I'm blinder than Stevie, Ray, and Bill Cosby. I'm so blind I see shit darker than you. Matter fact, my eyes gouged out. They just gone. Can't see nothing nigga. So whatever you bout to say, I can't fuckin see nohow.

TERRELL

Damn...is Bill Cosby really blind?

JAZMIN

Yeah forreal. Like, legally.

TIARA

*(to audience)* Talk about kharma.

AALIYAH

She's almost a bigger bitch than you! *(they both laugh)*

TIARA

*(they both laugh)*

AALIYAH

*(they both laugh)*

TIARA

*(they both laugh)*

AALIYAH AND TIARA

*(they stop laughing abruptly)*

*(slight beat.)*

MARQUIS

What I was gon say, was that there's another positive to this trip. It's partially a road trip! *(no reaction from the rest)* Cuz, cuz, as y'all know, it's a, uh, twelve hour drive to the dock from here. So we gotta get on the road by 1 a.m to get there by 1 p.m.

EVERYONE EXCEPT MARQUIS

*(Beat)*

JAZMIN

Nigga don'tchu ever plan another trip for us ever again.

TERRELL

Seconded.

MARQUIS

Guess that mean we adjourned. See y'all in ten hours! *(runs out and exits)*

AALIYAH

*(Beat)*

JAZMIN

*(Beat)*

TIARA

*(Beat)*

DOMINIQUE

*(Beat)*

TERRELL

*(Beat)*

AALIYAH

Imma go...see if he's ok...or needs help with anything... ... *(leaves)*

DOMINIQUE

Well, I better go start packing.

TERRELL

I'll come help. I can show you the rest of the tape too. *(DOMINIQUE and TERRELL leave)*

TIARA

Wanna come walk with me to the bank?

JAZMIN

We gettin food on the way?

TIARA

Bitch you know how we do. *(they get their purses and start to leave)* Nique we goin out  
I'll be back!

DOMINIQUE *(offstage)*

Bring me back something from Checkers please! Nuggets and a banana shake!

TIARA

I can't affo...

DOMINIQUE *(offstage)*

I put money in your account!

TIARA

Aw baby! I love you! Thank you!

DOMINIQUE *(offstage)*

No prolem bae!

*(The girls begin to exit again.)*

TERRELL *(offstage)*

Hey Jaz!?

JAZMIN

What nigga!?

TERRELL *(offstage)*

...if I give you a dollar and a quarter will you get me a large coke? Wit light ice?

JAZMIN

A large coke gon cost more than a dollar twenty five.

TERRELL *(offstage)*

I'll pay you back the difference!

JAZMIN

Nigga you ain't got fie dollas!?

TERRELL (*offstage*)

...nah not on me!

JAZMIN

Nigga forreal!?

TERRELL (*offstage*)

I'll pay you back damn!

JAZMIN

Fine whatever! But I'm chargin interest!

TERRELL

Well shit girl! I'm always interested in you! (*laughs*)

DOMINIQUE

(*laughs*)

JAZMIN

(*to TIARA*) I can't stand niggas.

TIARA

Just wait till you start fuckin him.

JAZMIN

Them. You mean, wait till I start fucking them, as in, niggas in general. Not fucking him, as in Terrell. Cuz that ain't happenin.

TIARA

Right, yeah. Mybad girl. (*JAZMIN leaves*) (*to audience, with a grin*) Nah I meant him, as in Terrell. That's what we call foreshadowing! (*exit*)

**BLACKOUT**

## THE FUGUE

*(DOMINIQUE's room. A mattress with some blankets on it. A basketball is on the floor. DOMINIQUE is playing 2k. TERRELL is sitting on the bed with his laptop in hand.)*

*(AALIYAH and MARQUIS sit DSL, facing the scene. TIARA and JAZMIN sit DSR, facing the scene. The lights are out on them.)*

DOMINIQUE

Can you believe Jaz fucked Mark? That's crazy. I guess she's done with her lesbian phase.

TERRELL

She's a female pornstar her career is a lesbian phase. *(laughs at himself)* You tryna hit this?  
*(offers him a hit)*

DOMINIQUE

Shit, hell yeah nigga, season's over. *(takes hit)*

*DOMINIQUE and TERRELL should continue to take hits and pass the joint throughout their scene.*

TERRELL

No but Jaz don't fuck chicks in her real life only for her job.

DOMINIQUE

I guess. It's just so weird she fucked Mark cuz...

TERRELL

Here listen to this. Ready?

*(getting up to rap for DOMINIQUE)*

*T Money on the mic so you know it's goin down  
I2 on the town shoot me down cuz I'm brown  
Blackness is magic say "o wow"  
Cuz I'm bringin this O town sound to foreground*

*Simple rhymes aside, now it's time, show off  
Nique on the track sayin "T go off"  
I'm empowered cuz*

*April showers is roarin makin this Taurus  
cross waters towards bein a May flower*

*So may flowers in you bud with buds in ya ear  
I bud like a studious student stud only grows with the years  
Old verses on old tapes brought the cheers  
And you'll be on yo feet for this tape of the year*

*I ain't gon disappear, I'm here for good  
I ain't goin nowhere, here for my hood  
A mercy drive nigga, repping, steppin to the plate  
Capisce?  
Now let me give the mic to my nigga Dominique*

*(he sits back down like nothing happened.)* So whatchu think?

DOMINIQUE

It's straight. It needs me on it though.

TERRELL

Well do you have a verse ready?

DOMINIQUE

Nigga I got a million verses ready.

TERRELL

Aight, let's hear it.

DOMINIQUE

Who?

TERRELL

Us. *(indicating the audience)* All of us.

DOMINIQUE

Shit they ain't that ready.

TERRELL

C'mon man. How are D Money and T Money gon take off, if D Money don't contribute.

DOMINIQUE

Nigga I contribute. We only need one more song to finish, damn. Chill. Gimme five minutes.

*(JAZMIN and TIARA with a bench or two chairs (whichever is most convenient). They have Checkers with them. They sit. It is very hot outside.)*

TIARA

I hope that money gets me through these next few months.

JAZMIN

Girl it will. And if it don't you know we gotcho back.

TIARA

I know, I just can't stand borrowing from people.

JAZMIN

Girl it ain't borrowing. We all know damn well we ain't gettin' none a that money back.

TIARA

Uh uh. Y'all getting that money back. I ain't tryna be in nobody debt.

JAZMIN

Girl chill. You ain't gon be in nobody debt. Now we family. This is somethin spontaneous and fun. It's somethinn a lotta black people don't do. Just make major life choices on a whim. Girl we choosing to live outside our box. We got some change and we gon live it up while we can. Shoot. White people do it all the time.

TIARA

You right about that.

JAZMIN

Plus this trip will be good for you. Not probably. Not maybe. Not kinda. Not sorta. Not kinda sorta. Not kinda sorta maybe. Not even surely. But definitely.

TIARA

You know those are all the same.

JAZMIN

This trip could help you find yourself.

TIARA

That'd be nice.

JAZMIN

Cause I cain't keep up witcho phases. It's a new one every other month.

TIARA

Girl you know damn well that ain't true.

JAZMIN

Oh it ain't? Did you or did you not go through a phase where you only wore green t-shirts for three months?

TIARA

Dominique and I started dating on St. Patrick's day. I was celebrating.

JAZMIN

Did you or did you not go through a phase where you beheaded chickens and then kept their bodies?

TIARA

That was not a phase! I was applying for a job as a butcher and needed practice.

JAMIN

So you kept the bodies?

TIARA

I had to have some kind a resume. Speaking of phases, are you over your lesbian phase?

JAZMIN

Girl I'm a pornstar. My career is a lesbian phase. *(JAZMIN laughs. As soon as JAZMIN says that, the lights go up on TERRELL, who also laughs. TIARA doesn't.) (JAZMIN stops laughing. When she stops laughing, so does TERRELL, at the same time.)*

TERRELL

Bruh, c'mon! I'm tryna finish and release this mixtape before we head off for Paris. So we need to finish this shit to-night.

DOMINIQUE



Aight bruh just lemme, FUCK! *(he throws his remote and gets up and starts throwing a tantrum while he says the following:)* MAN FUCK THIS FUCK ASS GAME BRUH THAT NIGGA WAS OPEN FROM THREE I WAS ONLY LIGHTLY CONTESTED AND YOU GON TELL A NIGGA THAT STEPH. FUCKIN. CURRY CAIN'T MAKE THAT SHOT. COME THE FUCK ON 2K! C'MOOOOOOOONNNN! *(he sits back down)* FUCK!

TERRELL

*(Beat)* So you good to work on the mixtape now?

DOMINIQUE

I need to pack. *(gets up and starts packing)*

TERRELL

Nigga pack what? All the clothes and shit you own is in that box.

DOMINIQUE

Yeah but I gotta put it in my suitcase. And I gotta fold the shit.

TERRELL

Well nigga hurry up.

DOMINIQUE

Bruh chill, we'll get the shit done tonight, don't worry.

TERRELL

I'm just saying bruh. This shit sounds nice. It could be big for us. Between both of our followers we should have more than enough views and listens for this to become a success on the cloud. I mean we could Post Malone this shit.

DOMINIQUE

I hear you bruh. Nobody wants this rappin shit to work out more than me. Well, you, but I'm second.

TERRELL

Why? You bout to be in the NBA in like, two years.

DOMINIQUE

One, because every nigga from the NBA who done tried to rap has not been successful, except like Shaq but that was based on a Kobe diss. And two, I wanna maximize my

money so I can give Tiara a better life.

TERRELL

Damn. You really feel for the bitch don't you.

DOMINIQUE

Love, nigga. It's ok for you to say love. A nigga can use the word and not be talkin bout a material object.

TERRELL

I don't mind that you say love. I mind that you always sound like Drake when you do. You always so, "I can see it in your eyes you're angry" What I'm sayin is to be more like Biggie. "Me and My Bitch". You feel me?

DOMINIQUE

How's this: me talkin like that gets me laid. How much pussy you get nigga?

TERRELL

I ain't got time for pussy. I'm on this grind nigga. I got a career to think about.

DOMINIQUE

Exactly. So hop off.

TERRELL

Man chill. I'm happy for y'all two.

DOMINIQUE

Yeah, man. Preciate it.

TERRELL

When y'all getting married?

DOMINIQUE

When she get pregnant.

TERRELL

Damn. Y'all tryna have a kid already?

DOMINIQUE

Haaaaiiiiilll no. The fuck we look like? Niggas who want responsibility? She tryna “find herself” and I sit at home all day and play 2k. Stay woke nigga.

TERRELL

So nigga whatchu mean “when she get pregnant”?

DOMINIQUE

As in, if the condom break or the Plan B don’t work or she stop taking the pill or Hell freezes over. Till then I ain’t tryna have no damn babies. And she ain’t neither.

TERRELL

So how y’all gon get married?

DOMINIQUE

That’s the point nigga. We ain’t if we can help it. Marriage is just a piece of paper. We can be devoted to each other for life and ain’t gotta buy rings, and have a wedding, and be legally committed, and, and, be called husband and wife...

TERRELL

You wanna get married don’t you?

JAZMIN

But forreal, I’m not actually into girls. That’s just my job.

TIARA

You got any sexy, buff , BLACK, pornstar men looking for a good time?

JAZMIN

Uh, no. I’m not really friends with anyone from work.

TIARA

You sure?

JAZMIN

Yeah, why?

TIARA

...just curious.

JAZMIN

You're dating Dominique.

TIARA

I know...

JAZMIN

You're in love with him.

TIARA

Fuck you.

JAZMIN

Tiara...

TIARA

Forget I asked.

JAZMIN

T, what's the problem?

TIARA

Nothin, I just don't like you judgin me when you out here -

JAZMIN

I'm not judging you....

TIARA

Aren't you a pornstar?

JAZMIN

What's that supposed to mean?

TIARA

You're judging me. But I'm not the one who fucks people for a living so twelve year old boys can masturbate to it.

JAZMIN

Be as hurtful as you want, but I'm not gonna help you cheat on Nique.

TIARA

Who said anything about me cheating?

JAZMIN

Then what are we talkin about?

TIARA

I don't know...

JAZMIN

Ok then, so check yaself. I mean have middle schoolers jacking off to me but at least I got a job.

TIARA

Bitch i'on need one. I got a mans to support me.

JAZMIN

One you just tried to...

TIARA

I ain't try nothin! It was just a question, like, damn.

JAZMIN

Ain'tchu and Nique bout to be in it for the long haul?

TIARA

*(beat)* I don't know.

DOMINIQUE

I wanna marry her so badly bruh.

TIARA

I just don't know. I feel like I'm in the middle of an open field with a bunch of roads leading everywhere and nowhere. It's paralyzing. I want to be with Nique but is it cuz i'on wanna be alone? Do I want an open relationship? I don't even know my passion. Ugh, fuck. It's hot.

TERRELL

Then just tell her.

DOMINIQUE

Haaaaiiiiilll no. I ain't bout to be no pussy ass nigga now.

TERRELL

Nigga wasn't you just tellin me I should do away with that hyper masculine shit?

DOMINIQUE

That shit was different. I can say I love her. But I'm not gon say I want marriage if she don't. That's too forward thinking for a FTN.

TERRELL

You're a disgrace to all FTNs. *(to audience)* Better known as : Forward Thikning Niggas. Known to white people as: a black Democrat.

DOMINIQUE

Nigga you know I ain't political.

TERRELL

I know.

DOMINIQUE

Shit. All I know is I want niggas to stop bein shot in cold blood.

TERRELL

Forreal.

*(The rest of the cast turns around.)*

ALL

*(to audience)* Forreal.

DOMINIQUE

I'on know man. I wanna marry her but she don't know what she want. She still "finding herself". For all I know she might be fuckin chicks.

TERRELL

Well shit, threesomes my nigga.

DOMINIQUE

You'd think right? Nah. Plus...i'on know. I'm not super sure I'd even want that.

TERRELL

Why not?

DOMINIQUE

I'on know. Just don't.

TERRELL

Look bruh, Tiara will come around. This trip may be good for her. She may find what she wants out of life – other than you – and then maybe she'll wanna settle down and put a ring on it.

DOMINIQUE

We'll see.

TERRELL

In the meantime, stop complaining!

DOMINIQUE

Oh mybad bro. What's up witchu?

*(The stage is bare except for a large blanket/comforter/bed sheet and a couple of pillows. MARQUIS and AALIYAH are clearly post coitus. They're both naked. The AC in the apartment is not working. It is very hot inside. Weed permeates the atmosphere.)*

MARQUIS

Damn girl. *(beat)* I need a hit. *(reaches for the bowl)*

AALIYAH

Um, excuse me? Did you ask before you went to take my weed?

MARQUIS

We was smokin it before we fucked.

AALIYAH

I'on care.

MARQUIS

Girl I'll getchu back, don't worry.

AALIYAH

Nigga don't get cocky...

MARQUIS

Too late. *(laughs)*

AALIYAH

*(laughs with him. Stops laughing)* Yeah, you ain't make me cum.

MARQUIS

Shiiit, it's cuz of this migraine...

AALIYAH

No excuses nigga.

MARQUIS

At least I'm good at...

AALIYAH

And you suck at 2k.

MARQUIS

*(hurt)* Ight there's no need to be petty.

AALIYAH

Please, fucking you was all about being petty.

MARQUIS

Whatchu mean?

AALIYAH

*(lying)* I'm getting back at Jaz.

MARQUIS

For what?



AALIYAH

No wonder you flunked out. For fuckin you, stupid!

MARQUIS

Oh shit Aaliyah that wudn't nothin. That was just sex.

AALIYAH

Yeah but...you know how I feel. Everybody does.

MARQUIS

Yeah but like...

AALIYAH

Including you.

MARQUIS

I'm sorry.

AALIYAH

That's original.

MARQUIS

Well shit I'on see why you so mad. You fucked your uncle.

AALIYAH

I was lonely and depressed.

MARQUIS

That's an excuse?

AALIYAH

It's better than your damn excuse.

MARQUIS

And what's my excuse?

AALIYAH

Horniness. Lack of emotional maturity. Poor judgement. Masculine shortcomings.

MARQUIS

...ok but that don't mean it ain't legit.

AALIYAH

Yes it does, Marquis.

MARQUIS

Ok but if you think about this, it's your fault.

AALIYAH

The fuck?

MARQUIS

You ain't never made a move.

AALIYAH

Nigga you've had feelings for a minute too.

MARQUIS

And?

AALIYAH

And? You was pose to man up and make the move.

MARQUIS

Double A. *(she ignores him)* Double A. C'mon, look, I'm sorry, ight. Why you gettin so mad?

AALIYAH

Cause I'm an idiot, that's why. I was the only person who was willin to follow you blindly on yo lil trip and then I find out you been fuckin' Jaz.

TIARA

You tryna git wit Terry?

JAZMIN

Ugh, don't call him that.

TIARA

What? Did I emasculate yo man?

JAZMIN

I would never get wit that nigga. He's one of those boys, who thinks that just because they have rhythm, can rhyme a little bit, and listens to hip hop, they can put their shitty music on SoundCloud or Spotify and shit. What they don't realize, is they're just some cliché niggas, who make shitty music that their dumb friends think is "fire", when really, I'd rather light myself on fire rather than listen to their unoriginal shitty ass raps. *(looks at the young men in the audience)*

TIARA

Didn't you buy his last mixtape?

JAZMIN

Ok but he's my friend.

TIARA

You sound very supportive.

JAZMIN

Shit, he shoulda paid me to listen to it.

TIARA

You said it was good.

JAZMIN

It was ight.

TIARA

Jaz that is your biggest problem – other than that you don't actually listen to jazz even though that's your nickname – but other than that, you're biggest problem is that you hate to admit shit you think would be embarrassing. Yet you fuck niggas for money for the world to see.

JAZMIN

Stop judging me T!

TIARA

It's just a little hypocritical.

JAZMIN

No ain't! Let me live my life, damn.

TIARA

Aight.

JAZMIN

I'm just a fantasy to them. All they expect from me is some sexy shit.

TIARA

Oh so havin a nigga is too real for you? Can't stand the expectations.

JAZMIN

If I was so into Terrell then why did I fuck Marquis today?

TIARA

Why did you?

JAZMIN

Does Terrell actually watch my shit?

TIARA

Yup. So why'd you fuck Marquis?

JAZMIN

Cuz I felt like.

TIARA

Yeah but you know Aaliyah been eyein that nigga for a minute now.

JAZMIN

I know.

TIARA

But you fucked him anyway.

JAZMIN

Yeah.

TIARA

Why would you do that?

TERRELL

I just wanna be considered a poet man. Like I love bein a rapper...but I wanna transcend the genre and build something bigger.

DOMINIQUE

*(playing video games, still attentive)* Oh yeah?

TERRELL

Yeah man. Like, when K Dot won the Pulitzer, i'on think people realized how big that is. That was a white panel of a white award recognizing hip hop as poetry. Recognizing it as art. I'm tryna be like that. Like a mixture of Langston Huges and Biggie Smalls, you feel?

DOMINIQUE

You got big dreams.

TERRELL

Yo I got *big* dreams. But fuck dreamin man. I got big *plans*. I don't like to call em dreams...that make em seem so far away. They're plans, meanin I'm working towards em. They possible.

DOMINIQUE

Yeah?

TERRELL

No flex bro. See I want my own label. I wanna be on top, you feel? But I wanna give power to the artists. I just want credit for finding them. Like a black Simon Cowell. Except less angry. Cuz, you know, *(looks to audience)* not all black people are angry.

ALL

*(to audience)* Forreal. *(all except TERRELL and DOMINIQUE leave)*

TERRELL

My success is also personal, you know?

DOMINIQUE

How so?

TERRELL

When my pops was shot I got so angry. There was a man who went to college, got a degree, and only had three baby mamas. I'm tryna show these crackas that niggas ain't just target practice. You know what I mean?

DOMINIQUE

Yes man I do. Damn, you starting to sound like Public Enemy and NWA mixed together. But you look like Flava Flav and Eazy E had a baby. Nigga clean yoself up. Get a social life. Go fuck a white girl.

TERRELL

Why a white girl?

DOMINIQUE

Cuz they ain't got no standards for niggas. They assume cuz you black, you fuck good. We exotic to them.

TERRELL

Forreal?

DOMINIQUE

Yeah nigga. White bitches drool over a nigga. Go test it out.

TERRELL

Nigga they ain't a car, you don't just test em' out. The fuck. Have more regard for them as human beings nigga, damn.

DOMINIQUE

Aw fuck, nigga. You into Jazmin ain'tchu?

TERRELL

Nigga what? How the fuck did you come to that conclusion?

DOMINIQUE

Cuz you the only nigga in the rap game who would turn down white pussy.

TERRELL

For Jazmin...I'd turn down anything. (*lights out on TERRELL and DOMINIQUE*)

JAZMIN

Terrell and I just wouldn't work.

TIARA

Y'all are a fucking match made in Heaven.

JAZMIN

If you say so.

TIARA

I mean you support all his shit. Listen to his music, do him favors when he asks.

JAZMIN

That's what friends do.

TIARA

He supports you too.

JAZMIN

Really?

TIARA

Yeah. He watches your videos all the time.

JAZMIN

Ew! ...you really think so?

TIARA

See, you care!

JAZMIN

Fuck you, no I don't! Forreal.

TIARA

Bitch...

MARQUIS  
Double A...

AALIYAH  
Don't call me that no more.

MARQUIS  
(beat) Lemme show you somethin. (gets up and gets a painting of his) I painted this for you.

AALIYAH  
(beat) Well fuck.

MARQUIS  
Aaliyah...Double A. You keep me goin. Whenever I'm in a rut, whenever I need a reason to keep goin, my mind always lands on you. I'm serious. No flex...

AALIYAH  
Nigga don't try and sweettalk me.

MARQUIS  
Nah, I'm being real. Look I ain't tell y'all, but during my worst moments in college... I was cuttin myself. I know, I know, niggas don't do that shit, but fuck, I did, ight? It ain't just some white boy shit, that shit is real. And, fuck. I'on know man, like, I couldn't go to Jaz wit that typa shit. I love Jaz an she my homie but that's not us...Nique and Terrell are my niggas but the fuck kinda man I'd be goin to other niggas bout problems like that? And Tiara is too intense for me.

AALIYAH  
So why you ain't come to me?

MARQUIS  
I wudn't gon bother you wit that. You was busy performin your songs an shit. Becomin' an R&B star. ...that beautiful voice.

AALIYAH  
Stop it...



MARQUIS

I mean it. When I was goin through that time, and I wasn't tryna talk to nobody, I put on your music. So, once I got outta that funk, to thank you, I painted you. Well, I painted you in a way that expressed what you meant to me.

AALIYAH

Fuck, Marquis.

MARQUIS

What?

AALIYAH

I can't fuckin' stay mad at you, that's what! Shit. I ain't tryna trust you wit my heart again, but like, damn. You know?

JAZMIN

I don't know. ...I guess because in that moment, I didn't really give a fuck. Like, she hasn't made a move and he hasn't said nothin; he certainly didn't in that moment. And like, I know they into each other but like shit, they ain't cuffed each other yet so Marquis was free to help me out.

TIARA

Aaliyah's probably hurt over it.

JAZMIN

Well fuck, Tiara, then she need to grow some fuckin balls and fuck him herself! Damn. Fuck this Girl Code shit. I was horny, he was horny mind. Why you don't ask him why he did it? Why is it that women get questioned to death on shit that happens when a nigga was also involved? Fuck how she feels about him. I'on give a fuck she's in love with him. Maybe that's why he ain't made no moves yet, cause she expect too much from him. He ain't expect nothing from me. He never does.

TIARA

Y'all fucked more than once?

JAZMIN

He don't expect nothin from me.

TIARA

Aaliyah knows.

JAZMIN

You don't get it...

TIARA

Jaz-

JAZMIN

*(agitated)* What?

TIARA

*(beat)* Let's go. *(JAZMIN and TIARA exit)*

AALIYAH

Why didn't you make a move before?

MARQUIS

You wanna know the truth?

AALIYAH

No I enjoy deceit and lies.

MARQUIS

*(chuckles)* It's cuz I was scared. And I know niggas ain't sposed to be scared and shit...and as sexy as I am, I know I'm sposed to be this womanizer – I mean, I am – but like, you know what I'm sayin. Like you ain't just a fuck to me. I vibe witchu. We can talk about music, art, history, life, food, sports. Like shit just flow when I'm witchu. I'm happier.

AALIYAH

So...what? You tryna have me as your girlfriend?

MARQUIS

*(optimistically)* I mean...

AALIYAH

Cuz I'm not sure I really...want that...right now.

MARQUIS

...Oh...

AALIYAH

I'd just prefer not to have labels. Not until we can both prove to each other that we're legit, you feel me?

MARQUIS

Yeah, yeah, of course, I understand.

AALIYAH

That don't mean keep fuckin Jaz though.

MARQUIS

That don't mean keep fuckin your uncle though.

AALIYAH

Ok, if Hamlet woulda tried it, maybe shit woulda gon down differently.

MARQUIS

See! See! That's the kinda heady joke that fills my heart with joy. Jaz don't make jokes like that.

AALIYAH

Marquis, you not using her are you?

MARQUIS

No more than she's using me.

AALIYAH

But you like it?

MARQUIS

*(beat)*

AALIYAH

Answer me.

MARQUIS

It's what I needed.

AALIYAH

You needed that as of today?

MARQUIS

Whatchu want me to say Double A? Shit changed from this morning. My dream is coming true. Tonight happened...I'm finding my happiness again.

AALIYAH

So...

MARQUIS

Jaz was a supplement for you. But ain't nothin like the real thing baby.

AALIYAH

I'm notchya baby.

MARQUIS

Not yet.

AALIYAH

Stop it.

*(Beat.)*

MARQUIS

Um, I just want you to know that, if we tryna get this to a place where we can go for the long haul, you gon have to take me at my best and my worst. I'm an artist, so...you know... I go through phases and shit.

AALIYAH

*(chuckling)* I understand.

MARQUIS

I know but like you're consistent. At your best and your worst you're still you. I'm tryna get to that point.

AALIYAH

Well, who or what you are to me at any given moment isn't your concern.

MARQUIS

Oh it ain't?

AALIYAH

Nope.

MARQUIS

Why not?

AALIYAH

Cuz I said so, nigga.

MARQUIS

Well now I'm curious.

AALIYAH

And?

MARQUIS

C'mon Double A, let me know. Let me know. What am I to you?

AALIYAH

At your worse?

MARQUIS

Yeah.

AALIYAH

You are a frustrating, passionate, brilliant, asshole.

MARQUIS

And what about at my best? Let me know. Let me know, how you feel.

AALIYAH

At your best...you are love.

*(They kiss. A slow fade to black as "At Your Best (You Are Love)" by Aaliyah plays.)*

**THE ROAD TRIP**

*(When the lights come back up, we see the crew sitting in the car. Each with their secrets. MARQUIS is driving. There is an awkward silence. The air of secrets permeates.)*

DOMINIQUE

So...How was everyone's night?

ALL EXCEPT DOMINIQUE

It was straight.

DOMINIQUE

Everyone sleep ok?

ALL EXCEPT DOMINIQUE

Mhm.

DOMINIQUE

Well that's good.

*(Silence.)*

DOMINIQUE

...may I ask a question?

MARQUIS

What's good?

DOMINIQUE

What the FUCK is goin on? Why its so damn quiet? We been in the car twenty minutes and ain't nobody said nothin. Not even no music playin. Can we at least get that? Some music?

MARQUIS

Yeah, sure Nique, mybad.

DOMINIQUE

Damn straight. *(MARQUIS reaches for the radio)* N...nigga whatchu doin'?

MARQUIS

I'm turnin on the radio.

DOMINIQUE

Huh!? Nigga you doin what!? The radio? The radio!? Nigga you better give me the aux. (*hands him the aux*) Who the fuck still listen to the radio.

JAZMIN

Are you puttin on the new mixtape?

DOMINIQUE

Nah. We havin a listenin party for that. This is the previous one.

AALIYAH

That's the one I recorded for, right?

DOMINIQUE

I'on remember. Terrell? Terrell? Yo Terrell!?

TERRELL

What, nigga? What?

DOMINIQUE

Nigga who...who THE FUCK you talkin to?

TERRELL

Bruh I'm in lyrics mode. The official start of the creation of the next tape started once the car pulled out. I'm the zone.

DOMINIQUE

Was Double A on the last tape or nah?

TERRELL

Yeah.

TIARA

(*to herself, loud enough for all to hear*) That explains why it's good.

TERRELL

Scuse me?

TIARA

What happened?

TERRELL

You sayin me and Nique ain't no good?

TIARA

Nah I...I'm just like, you know. I'm sayin she added an element y'all need. Or, rather, she, she added an element y'all ain't never had before.

JAZMIN

Talent?

TIARA

Nah, not talent...more like...she's the Lauryn Hill y'all need.

DOMINIQUE

*(laughs)* She just called you Pras!

TERRELL

Nigga please. I'm the Wyclef of this shit.

DOMINIQUE

Nig-ga, please. First of all, I got more talent than you. And secondly, unlike you, I'm actually Jamaican!

TERRELL

Oh really? That's nice. Considering Wyclef is FUCKIN HAITIAN.

TIARA

Well then neither of you can be Wyclef.

TERRELL

Exactly. Nationality cancels both of us out, so it comes down to talent, and with that in mind, I'm definitely the Wyclef of the group.

DOMINIQUE

Bruh, just stop. I've been layin down better verses than you since we were seniors in



middle school.

TERRELL

Ok, first of all, you dirty as fuck for using the term “senior in middle school”. That shit don’t even exist. Besides that, no you haven’t. Bruh I’ve been rappin and pennin gems since my dad died. My flow is better than yours, my lyrics are better than yours, and my beats are better than yours.

DOMINIQUE

Yeah but you can’t make no hook.

TERRELL

Shit nigga, so what?

JAZMIN

Yeah, forreal so what?

TIARA

Yeah babe I’m on their side – so what?

TERRELL

All dat mean, nigga, is that you’re Drake, and I’m Kendrick. You have some catchy lines and memorable hooks but all the substance and actual technique belongs to me.

DOMINIQUE

That also means I’m richer and get more pussy than you.

TIARA

Oh?

DOMINIQUE

...which I turn down. I just...turn down more than you.

TERRELL

So then you don’t get more pussy than me?

DOMINIQUE

No...I mean, that’s what it...may...come off like, but I...shit, you know...

TIARA

What he meant was that he turns down more pussy than you don't turn down.

DOMINIQUE

...nah baby I'm still confused.

JAZMIN

She's saying, for example, if Nique turns down twenty pussy in a week, and you, Terrell, only get 12 pussy that week, Nique still takes the dub.

MARQUIS

Shit I get it and I flunked out of college. That's a clear difference of ten pussy. *(parks the car)*

AALIYAH

*(beat)*

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

TIARA

*(beat)*

TERRELL

*(beat)*

DOMINIQUE

Nigga shutcho dumb ass up!

MARQUIS

Well fine, y'all gon have some time in the car without me. *(starts to get out of the car)*

TERRELL

Nigga where you goin?

MARQUIS

I gotta talk to my moms real quick.

TIARA

Well hurry the hell up. I'm tryna get to that boat on time.

MARQUIS

Bet. I'll be back.

*("Dear Mama", by Tupac starts to play as the stage shifts. The rest of the crew shift USR as MARQUIS stays center stage. Two chairs should remain. Let this transition be synchronized. The crew gets up and moves rhythmically and formally to their USR corner as MARQUIS prepares to knock on the door. He knocks on the door. A few moments pass. ALONDRA opens the door.)*

ALONDRA

What, boy?

MARQUIS

I gotta talk to you real quick.

ALONDRA

I'm busy.

MARQUIS

It's the middle of the night, what're you busy do...oh my god, that's disgusting mom.

ALONDRA

Boy you gone, I gotta have my fun.

MARQUIS

Well I cain't stay long anyway so I'll make it quick.

ALONDRA

That's what he said too.

MARQUIS

Huh?

ALONDRA

I said let's sit on the porch.

MARQUIS

I mean...these mosquitos ain't no joke tonight.

*(ALONDRA exits then re-enters a couple moments after with something in her hand.)*

ALONDRA

Here, spray some Off.

MARQUIS

Thanks.

ALONDRA

So what's wrong?

MARQUIS

I don't...

ALONDRA

Everybody else in the car?

MARQUIS

Yes.

ALONDRA

Tell em' I say hello. And tell Dominique to come by if he needs anything.

MARQUIS

Mom, no.

ALONDRA

I'm serious, tell them "hi" for me.

MARQUIS

I meant "no" to you sleeping with my friend.

ALONDRA

Fine, I'll do that one myself.

MARQUIS

Wha...

ALONDRA

Whatchu need to talk about?

MARQUIS

See...

ALONDRA

You packed the paintings from the attic?

MARQUIS

Yes. Mom...

ALONDRA

Don't ruin those. That's summa your best work.

MARQUIS

Preciate you mom.

ALONDRA

I teach you everything I know and you become better than me. Lil shit.

MARQUIS

I haven't heard that name in a minute.

ALONDRA

I figured I should stop calling you that once you turned sixteen.

MARQUIS

I mean, it's kinda endearing I guess.

ALONDRA

Alright boy, now whatchu want, you been distracting me this whole time from the point.

MARQUIS

I haven't said anything yet.

ALONDRA

That's the problem.

MARQUIS

I'm not sure about the trip anymore.

ALONDRA

Well after what happened yesterday afternoon I'd think so.

MARQUIS

That was nothing. That was just...

ALONDRA

Sinnin. Straight sinning. You know better.

MARQUIS

Ain'tchu got some dude lyin up in there?

ALONDRA

That's different, he's my future husband.

MARQUIS

But he ain't now.

ALONDRA

Potato potahto. Whatchu want son?

MARQUIS

Reassurance...again.

ALONDRA

Son, you're following your instincts. If it turns out to not be the best thing for you, it won't happen. But if it's meant to be, it will. God has a plan.

MARQUIS

Still, I got butterflies.

ALONDRA

Remember what I told you: butterflies in your stomach is just beauty flying around inside you. Your anxiety is like caterpillars, and once they become butterflies, then it's just excitement permeating through you.

MARQUIS

It feels more like moths.

ALONDRA

Yeah. Jazmin said you'd say that.

MARQUIS

Why did she say that...

ALONDRA

Cause I told her bout how you felt bout Aaliyah. What nice girl she is too. And she can sang.

MARQUIS

You weren't supposed to tell anybody!

ALONDRA

Well shit son, all ya friends already knew. You ain't subtle, boy.

MARQUIS

But why now? Before the trip?

ALONDRA

You smashed and dashed so I showed her some hospitality. By the way, never have sex in my house again while I'm home. Actually don't do it period but I know you will so just at least make sure I'm gone.

MARQUIS

She wasn't supposed to know.

ALONDRA

She was feelin kinda sick so I figured the news'd cheer her up.

MARQUIS

You think it'll still be fine?

ALONDRA

I'm sure of it. Look, just go do it. Now I gotta go.

MARQUIS

Maaaa!

ALONDRA

What!?

MARQUIS

This is not going as I expected. I thought you'd give me this great, sentimental speech that drew on your wisdom and experience. To make me feel secure.

ALONDRA

Hail no! Who I look like, Claire Huxtable? I don't care that much. Just come back alive. Follow your heart and be a positive in the world. Now let me be.

MARQUIS

What if I'm not even good enough?

ALONDRA

For which one?

MARQUIS

For which one what?

ALONDRA

For Aaliyah, or about the paintin stuff?

MARQUIS

The painting.

ALONDRA

Lemme give you some advice Faith Ringgold gave me once. "You can't sit around and wait for somebody to say who you are. You need to write it and paint it and do it."

MARQUIS

Mom, that's from azquotes.com, you have it hanging up on your bathroom mirror.

ALONDRA

Which means she's sayin it to me in spirit. The point is, you gotta go find who you are.

MARQUIS

You're right.



ALONDRA

And then go prove to yo deadbeat daddy that he shoulda stayed.

MARQUIS

Trust me, that motivation is always there.

ALONDRA

Listen to me. You're not a great athlete. You're not a great musician. You're not a great rapper. You're not a great singer, or actor.

MARQUIS

M – ma you're goin somewhere wit this right?

ALONDRA

Oh yeah, just gimme a minute. What I'm tryin to say is, you have no conventional talent.

MARQUIS

Yup, thank you.

ALONDRA

You have a unique talent. People that look like us aren't supposed to have the abilities we do. Painting. Who ever made it out the hood with a paintbrush?

MARQUIS

I can't think of any.

ALONDRA

"You either slangin' crack rock..."

MARQUIS

"...or you got a wicked jumpshot."

ALONDRA

I raised you well.

MARQUIS

All by yourself.

ALONDRA  
And the lord.

MARQUIS  
Amen.

ALONDRA  
Now go show the world you aren't just a great black painter. Show them you're a great painter.

MARQUIS  
Well, there's half of my nervousness.

ALONDRA  
The other half won't go away for a while son. Not until you and Aaliyah are dead. The butterflies never quite go away if it's any good.

MARQUIS  
Thanks mom.

ALONDRA  
Now go on. I'm done bein Maya Angelou.

MARQUIS  
Ight. Bye mom.

ALONDRA  
Love you, son.

MARQUIS  
Love you too mom. Oh, and tell my future stepdad I say "hi". Maybe I'll get to meet him.

ALONDRA  
I don't know. We'll see how round two goes! *(laughs and exits)*

MARQUIS  
I think imma throw up.

*(The car honks. AALIYAH is walking towards MARQUIS.)*

AALIYAH

Everything ok?

MARQUIS

Yeah. *(smiles)* Everything's great.

*(More honks.)*

AALIYAH

Let's get goin.

MARUIS

Let's. *(as he approaches the car)* Alright niggas! Let's go to Paris! *(to audience)* It's gon be good. *(he starts to shake)* Fuck my head...I...I...agh! I can see! I can see it! There it is...I see it...I...I see...I see the Eiffel tower! *(he falls)*

**BLACK OUT**

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

### THE BOAT TRIP

*(As the audience is returning from intermission, the cast, with their hands, limbs, and various props, make a simple, but bumpin hip-hop for TERRELL and DOMINIQUE - DSR - to rap over. The rap is a summary of what happened from when we left Act One until now: on the boat.)*

DOMINIQUE

*And we back y'all*

TERRELL

*Yes, yes, y'all*

DOMINIQUE

*And now with your permission*

TERRELL

*We gon letchall know what happened during intermission  
Hit it 'Nique!*

DOMINIQUE

*Yo*

*Here's a sweet sixteen*

*About 6 young niggas headed towards the sea*

*Marquis passed out, he was fine, then we left  
GPS didn't work, wrong turn, made a left  
There was a storm on the way, nearly crashed the car  
Meanwhile Marquis' mumblin' bout stars*

*We was late to the boat, on that CPT  
Had to work with the thunder, on that CP3  
Mark ain't said it'd be like this, shoulda CC'd me  
He hadn't modeled our success like the 3 Cs, see?*

TERRELL

*But we got on the boat, we was hungry as fuck  
Just to be told all the food was cold cuts*

*We was like “hold up”  
“This ain’t what we wanted to invest in  
To spend two weeks eatin from a delicatessen”*

*But alas our asses was caught within the weeds in the grasses  
Which ain’t always greener, homes  
We prolly shoulda stayed at home  
But now we’re here, stuck in our nets like Caris  
But we just a few days from being in Paris*

*(When the rap is over, the boys go join the rest of the crew. With the use of minimal props, the set of the cargo ship should be laid out. A few drama cubes and some sleeping bags should suffice. Sound effects would greatly help as well. The crew is all there - except DOMINIQUE and TIARA - spread across C stage.)*

*TIARA and DOMINIQUE enter.*

DOMINIQUE  
You could’ve killed me!

TIARA  
Don’t be such a pussy!

DOMINIQUE  
I could’ve died, T.

TERRELL  
What happened?

DOMINIQUE  
We’re at the front of the boat and I decide to get romantic...

ALL EXCEPT DOMINIQUE  
Ohhh.

DOMINIQUE  
I’m not done yet.

ALL EXCEPT DOMINIQUE

Oh.

DOMINIQUE

I decide to get romantic and I say, “Baby, let’s reenact Titanic.” I was feelin myself and the mood was right...Next thing I know, Tiara is trying to push me overboard! Tries to lift me over the front of the boat and starts saying “I’m the queen of the world!”

TIARA

Nigga you said you wanted to reenact Titanic.

DOMINIQUE

I meant the painting scene!

TIARA

That explains why you started taking off your clothes.

AALIYAH

T, you know the nigga can’t swim.

TERRELL

*(to audience)* But that don’t mean we all can’t!

ALL EXCEPT JAZMIN

Forreal.

*(They look at JAZMIN.)*

JAZMIN

I mean...that stereotype isn’t that inaccurate.

TIARA

Girl you better not Uncle Tom us.

JAZMIN

Just sayin. *(she runs US to throw up)*

TERRELL

Are you ok!?

TIARA

Jaz what's wrong?

JAZMIN

It must be motion sickness...

TERRELL

I didn't know you got motion sick.

JAZMIN

I usually don't. I'll be fine. Just let me sit. Don't make a big deal out of it.

MARQUIS

Wait a minute...the painting scene? I was lookin for my easel and canvases earlier. Nigga did you take my shit?

DOMINIQUE

I needed props.

MARQUIS

You better not have fucked nothin up!

DOMINIQUE

Don't worry it's all straight.

MARQUIS

Well where its at?

DOMINIQUE

The front of the boat.

MARQUIS

Nigga you ain't bring my shit back? What if it goes overboard!

DOMINIQUE

Aight bruh, damn, chill. It'll be fine.

AALIYAH

He's just been weird since his incident at his house, don't worry. *(to MARQUIS)* I'll go get them, ok babe?

MARQUIS

Yeah...yeah, thank you.

JAZMIN

I'll go with you, Aaliyah.

ALL EXCEPT JAZMIN

Whaaaaaaaaaat?

AALIYAH (cont.)

...aaaaaaaaaat? *(in the same pitch; fake)* I'd love the company!

*(AALIYAH and JAZMIN go DSL.)*

TERRELL

That'll be interesting.

MARQUIS

Fuck.

TERRELL

Bruh are you good?

MARQUIS

Yeah, yeah, I'm fine.

TIARA

He probly just need some food. D come with me to get some food. *(winks)*

DOMINIQUE

*(to audience)* Oh I'm hungry.

*(TIARA and DOMINIQUE go DSR.)*



TERRELL

What's a better name for a song, "Cargo Crap" or "Ship Shit"?

MARQUIS

I'on know.

TERRELL

C'mon bruh! I ain't been able to write shit since we've been on this boat.

MARQUIS

You'll be straight.

TERRELL

Yo what's up with you?

MARQUIS

I'm fucking shit up with Aaliyah.

TERRELL

How?

MARQUIS

We ain't even been on a date yet. I've been tryna think of creative things to do on the ship.

TERRELL

And?

MARQUIS

Dominique stole my idea!

TERRELL

You were gonna be the Jack to her Rose?

MARQUIS

Yeah!

TERRELL

That is beyond cliché.

MARQUIS

I know. My mind is...ugh. All I can think about is this idea for a painting I have. I knew this would happen.

TERRELL

Knew what would happen?

MARQUIS

That my art would get in the way.

TERRELL

Bruh consider yourself lucky. I'm supposed to be grindin on this mixtape this trip and haven't made a song since the car ride. I can't stop thinkin bout...uh, other shit that ain't pertinent at the moment.

MARQUIS

Oh my God. You got feelings for Jaz!

TERRELL

What, is there a sign tattooed on my head?

MARQUIS

Yo I always had a feeling you and her would be a thing.

TERRELL

Well shit nigga ain't nothin happened yet.

MARQUIS

But still, that's dope bruh. I didn't think you had it in you.

TERRELL

Had what in me?

MARQUIS

The capacity to love a female.

TERRELL

Woah, woah, woah. First off, I ain't say nothin bout love. And secondly, of course I have a capacity to love. I'm an artist.

MARQUIS

*(cheekily)* I mean...are you though?

TERRELL

Whatchu tryna say?

MARQUIS

I mean, hip-hop is cool and all. But like...you know...artist?

TERRELL

Is music art?

MARQUIS

Yeah.

TERRELL

Aight then, you pigmented Picasso, tighten up.

MARQUIS

But hip-hop ain't art bruh. It's not respected enough to be art.

TERRELL

The fuck? Yes it is. Hip-hop is modern poetry. It's storytelling. It's souls landing on a mic.

MARQUIS

It's ghetto bro. It's violent. Nothin but braggadocios.

TERRELL

How are you so closed minded? *That's* what the opposite of art is.

MARQUIS

Whatchu mean?

TERRELL

Our own community don't respect what's ours. We invented hip hop. It's ours, like jazz, and we treat it like it's nothin more than a quick fix. Some low brow shit. Stay woke nigga. See you live in a white art form. You have hurdles and you have to "transcend". Nigga I'm in our own art form. Or rather, a way of life - which hip-hop is. It's one of the few things white people have to transcend to get any respect in.

MARQUIS

For an artform to be an artform it has to be respected.

TERRELL

It is respected!

MARQUIS

Maybe the essence but not the form.

TERRELL

By who?

MARQUIS

The masses.

TERRELL

Oh, so white people.

MARQUIS

I mean...

TERRELL

Which is ironic, considering hip-hop is now the number one music genre in America.

White girls is dancin to our shit and white boys is rappin our lyrics, thinkin it's an excuse to say "nigga". *(to audience)* That shit ain't cool. Don't do it.

*(Lights come up DSL and DSR.)*

ALL EXCEPT TERRELL

*(to audience)* Forreal.

*(Lights go down DSL and DSR)*

TERRELL

*(getting emotional)* Rap is poetry. I know right now I'm just a rapper...but I'm gonna be a poet. One day. And I *will* be respect. And YOU will respect me, and what I do...

MARQUIS

I'm sorry bruh. I ain't mean to offend you, I ain't in my right mind.

TERRELL

It's cool...it's just...I don't know if I'll be a poet. I don't know if white people will ever accept me. I'll never win a fucking pulitzer.

MARQUIS

T, it's not the masses that make you a poet or an artist. You'll become a poet when people, or person, who matters most tells you that you are.

TERRELL

Yeah...anyway, you still havin shudders?

MARQUIS

Everynight.

TERRELL

Forreal?

MARQUIS

They scare the fuck outta Aaliyah.

TERRELL

When did these start?

MARQUIS

Since we started dating...since this trip started.

TERRELL

Are you sea sick?

MARQUIS

I feel sick right now...

TERRELL

Bro do you need...

*(MARQUIS starts shaking and pulsating.)*

TERRELL

Nigga what the fuck? What is it?

MARQUIS

My mind...

TERRELL

Whatchu mean?

MARQUIS

I can't get it out...

TERRELL

Get what out?

MARQUIS

*(suddenly)* Look! It's the Eiffel Tower. And under it is six stars. They're linked, chained together. They're dark colors. Maybe earth toned. Everything else is white. The white surrounds everything...it helps the stars stick out. And look! O look! Even though they're dark, they're bright. Sittin right under the Eiffel Tower, almost like it's protecting them. It could also be jailing them...what if they're caught? What if they're stuck? No! *(he falls)*

TERRELL

Marquis? Marquis!?

*(Lights out CS. Lights up DSL.)*

AALIYAH

You don't have to apologize.

JAZMIN

But I knew I was doin' wrong.

AALIYAH

Jaz it's good. It's not like me and him were dating or nothin.

JAZMIN

I know...

AALIYAH

...you ok Jaz?

JAZMIN

Yeah. The ocean mesmerizes me.

AALIYAH

It is beautiful.

JAZMIN

So many endless possibilities.

AALIYAH

Yeah.

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

AALIYAH

So like y'all only fucked once, right?

JAZMIN

Double A, I wasn't into him I just needed some dick and his was the most convenient.

AALIYAH

I know, I know. It's just...

JAZMIN

I'm jealous of you.

AALIYAH

...oh...Why?

JAZMIN

You have a man and you have a direction. You're assured and certain of your shit.

AALIYAH

What do you mean?

JAZMIN

Like your path. You're just goin for it. Mark, the singing.

AALIYAH

You don't wanna act anymore?

JAZMIN

I think so. I'm not sure.

AALIYAH

Why not?

JAZMIN

I don't know. It's so hard. Lookin the way I do and tryna act. And I fuckin suck.

AALIYAH

That's not true! I've seen your videos, you're better than a lot of professionals.

JAZMIN

I mean real acting. Which sucks because without that, I ain't got nothin.

AALIYAH

Bitch, you got us!

JAZMIN

But y'all got other shit. You got Marquis and T has Dominique and Terrell has his music. When I'm not fuckin...I'm empty.

AALIYAH

But you have all that sex appeal.

JAZMIN

I want substance.

AALIYAH

You got substance.

JAZMIN

Nah. When I'm not wit a nigga, I ain't shit forreal.

AALIYAH

Jaz you're an artist. It's not conventional but it is what it is. Embrace it and love it.



JAZMIN

I dunno. Like, when you're not with Mark, you make music, right?

AALIYAH

It's kinda sad actually. If I ain't wit Mark, I'm in the studio.

JAZMIN

To me that sounds like a dream.

AALIYAH

I just think you gotta give yourself some more time. That's what Paris will do for you!  
It'll open your eyes to so much.

JAZMIN

No one to share that with though.

AALIYAH

What about...

JAZMIN

Dominique?

AALIYAH

What?

JAZMIN

Oh...

AALIYAH

What about Dominique?

JAZMIN

I thought you knew...T is finna break up wit him.

AALIYAH

Damn girl. You like Nagasaki wit all the bombs you droppin.

*(Lights out DSL. Lights up DSR. DOMINIQUE and TIARA are having sex. Both facing the audience. After a moment or two TIARA starts to cry.)*

DOMINIQUE

Yo, can you wait a minute? Cryin is a huge turnoff.

TIARA

I gotta tell you something...

*(Lights out DSR. Lights up DSL.)*

JAZMIN

I dunno when.

AALIYAH

Poor Dominique.

JAZMIN

So I'm thinking I might swoop in.

AALIYAH

When?

JAZMIN

When she breaks up with him, that's when. Damn.

AALIYAH

You can't do that Jaz. That's against girl code.

JAZMIN

She don't want him. She asked me to set her up with any available pornstar friends I have.

AALIYAH

But still...

JAZMIN

I know Dominique, he's gonna be lookin for a rebound and I'm lookin for nigga like him.

AALIYAH

*You* are lookin for nigga like Nique?

JAZMIN

Why not?

AALIYAH

I don't believe that.

JAZMIN

Why not?

AALIYAH

You don't want Nique like that. You know that.

*(Lights down DSL. Lights up DSR.)*

DOMINIQUE

Great. A nigga just got dumped and told his dick ain't shit. I thought you loved this D?

TIARA

You or your...

DOMINIQUE

Me! I thought you loved ME. After all I've done?

TIARA

Dominique, I don't know who I am. I gotta find out. But I can't have you distracting me and limiting me. When we get to Paris I need to be completely free. To explore.

DOMINIQUE

Oh...so you just want a break. You'll take me back after the summer?

TIARA

Why would you want me back?

DOMINIQUE

Cause I love you.

TIARA

Fuck.

DOMINIQUE

Fuck is right, T. I'm hurt.

TIARA

Well man the fuck up!

DOMINIQUE

Why did you just fuck me?

TIARA

For the road.

DOMINIQUE

I ain't no fast food place, you can't have this dick to go.

TIARA

Too late. *(starts to exit)*

DOMINIQUE

But would you like to have this dick on the side?

TIARA

I don't even want the main course.

DOMINIQUE

Consider it an appetizer.

TIARA

I don't want a seat at the table.

DOMINIQUE

*(beat)*

TIARA

*(beat)*

DOMINIQUE

We're still on the sex metaphor, right?

TIARA

Dominique, I'm not going back home. I'm staying in Paris.

DOMINIQUE

Damn girl. You nagasaki wit all the bombs you droppin.

*(Lights up DSL. AALIYAH and DOMINIQUE give each other air high fives. Lights down DSL.)*

TIARA

I'm sorry. I think it's best. I've been considering this for a minute now...I thought maybe this trip could reassure me about you but I realized you'd only hold me back from exploring myself forreal forreal.

DOMINIQUE

So why move to Paris? You ain't got nuna your shit.

TIARA

I'll start anew.

DOMINIQUE

Does the crew know about this?

TIARA

Nah.

DOMINIQUE

*(beat)*

TIARA

*(beat)*

DOMINIQUE

I'll go.

*(Lights down DSL. Lights up DSL. TIARA enters.)*

TIARA

*(to JAZMIN)* I did it.

JAZMIN

Aw, you ok girl?

TIARA

*(hugs JAZMIN tightly)*

AALIYAH

It'll be ok T.

JAZMIN

Oh yeah, I told Aaliyah.

TIARA

I'on care. Everybody gon know soon enough.

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

AALIYAH

*(beat)*

TIARA

*(to JAZMIN)* Well, where does that leave us?

JAZMIN

I...I don't know.

*(Lights up CS. DSL goes into tableau.)*

TERRELL

Bro I'm so sorry to hear that.

MARQUIS

Yeah bruh, that's fucked.

DOMINIQUE

So...imma fuck the shit outta Jaz.

TERRELL

Wait, wait, nigga what?

DOMINIQUE

I gotta get over this.

TERRELL

Nigga really? You know how I feel about Jaz.

DOMINIQUE

I ain't tryna date her man, imma just fuck her.

TERRELL

Nigga the fuck you is! You selfish fuck!

DOMINIQUE

Nigga. Chill.

TERRELL

Fuck you, nigga. You ain't fuckin my girl.

DOMINIQUE

She ain't yours, nigga.

TERRELL

*(small shove)* Try me.

*(CS goes into tableau except MARQUIS, who looks over at DSL. DSL comes out of tableau.)*

JAZMIN

What about Dominique?

TIARA

He'll be straight. I just...I need something. You know what I mean? Not just sex but like...

JAZMIN

No I get it...I'm lost too.

AALIYAH

*(for JAZMIN's benefit)* The important thing is that nobody does anything rash.

TIARA

Like what?

JAZMIN

*(for AALIYAH's benefit)* Nothing. Nothing at all. *(beat)* I'm gonna go, I'll be right back.

AALIYAH

Where you goin'?

JAZMIN

Why you care?

AALIYAH

I'm just curious.

TIARA

What's all this animosity?

JAZMIN

There ain't none. Some people just need to mind they business.

AALIYAH

We're family. We ain't got no business.

JAZMIN

That's a fuckin lie.

TIARA

What's this all about?

JAZMIN

Nothin. Aaliyah, needs to just chill out before...

AALIYAH

Try me.



JAZMIN

Shit bitch you asked for it

*(CS comes out of tableau. DOMINIQUE and TERRELL are trading “fuck you”s. TIARA is separating JAZMIN and AALIYAH. It escalates to a point where DOMINIQUE goes to punch TERRELL. Right before the blow lands, everyone onstage except MARQUIS go into a tableau. The picture is DOMINIQUE and TERRELL in the midst of a fight, JAZMIN and AALIYAH in the midst of a fight, TIARA yelling. And MARQUIS is in the middle. He looks DSL, then he looks over to the fight tableau.)*

MARQUIS

Look out Paris. We bout to bring y’all some straight niggatry.

*(The hook to “Changes”, by Tupac, starts playing. A BLACKOUT immediately follows. After a few moments, this transition leads us into:)*

## **THE ARRIVAL**

*(The lights come on abruptly. The crew gets off the boat. The ensemble raps about their arrival.)*

MARQUIS

So this is the city of Paris!

DOMINIQUE

Yeah. Now am I in Paris. When I was at home, I was in a better place. Too late now...gotta make the best of it.

MARQUIS

Yes, do so, Dominique.

TERRELL

What do you say y’all, wanna fill em in on the summer?

AALIYAH

Let’s hit it!

*Beat drops.*

TERRELL

*Here we go yo*

*Here we go yo*

*So what, so what, so what's the scenario?*

MARQUIS

*So we arrive in the City of Lights*

TIARA

*I breathe in opportunity*

JAZMIN

*Reachin for new heights*

DOMINIQUE

*Hearts shattered*

AALIYAH

*Crew scattered*

MARQUIS

*Recovering from the fights*

TERRELL

*Tensions were high*

*So we got high and talked about it*

DOMINIQUE

*We hotboxed the the BnB*

TIARA

*And we ain't sorry bout it*

JAZMIN

*We talked it out*

DOMINIQUE

*Hearts broken*

TIARA

*Room assignments changed*

JAZMIN

*I roomed with T*

TERRELL

*D roomed with me*

MARQUIS

*It's time to make my name*

TERRELL

*Summer update!*

Everybody drop a fresh 16!

*Beat drops. The moment becomes a cypher. Whoever is rapping steps into the middle of the circle and the rest of the crew is surrounding them, hyping them up.*

MARQUIS

*I'll spit first (beat)*

*I was excited, delighted, ignited for my journey*

*I was stead and ready, fire in me burning*

*Could feel it in my bones that my tides were turning*

*In the mecca of art, it's prime for learning*

*I find the nearest studio and start taking lessons*

*Feel like Big Sean, I got blessings on blessings on blessings*

*Nah I ain't messin round, I'm the next Basquiat*

*Put a brush in my hand imma boss, we hot*

*Migraines ain't stop and I was still havin visions*

*Listen, I got a masterpiece comin y'all*

*It's like God rang my brain and I was pickin up the call*

*So long's I got a palette I can answer any challenge*

*So that should catch you up to where I is now*

*It's been a damn good summer, I can really say I'm proud*

*I'm still with Double A, she my pride and joy*

*As long as she my woman I'm proud to her boy*

AALIYAH

*Let me pick up on the beat cuz I'm slept on  
Wake up niggas, this the best song  
They ain't know I could flow  
I'm like Lauryn Hill 'cept I'm on time for the show*

*I did my thang, making music to be chillin to  
Divin in deep like a swimmer in swimmin pool  
Tracks to be droolin to, I'm coolin boo  
Ask any motherfucker I'm a bad bitch to run into  
I'm like the Marquis de Sade, I operate smooth  
Finding confidence is like the Sweetest Taboo  
Speaking of sweet - look at my newest tattoo  
Marquis said "imma match you" so he got a tatt too*

*I'm in love with that man, we got no plan  
But we don't mind  
Imma letchu know, don't tell him tho  
I got marriage in mind*

TERREL

*Uh, it's Terry on time  
Imma take some of yours so tune into my rhyme  
My god I'm sublime like a Jack Ripper crime  
Don't mind me, just braggin and showin my shine*

*Imma switch the flow don't mind  
Yeah  
Fuckin hoe on the low don't mind  
Yeah  
Paris girls are dimes  
Yeah  
But I wasn't satisfied  
Yeah*

*See, I worked on my tape like crazy, man  
You should hear my bars, they crazy, man*

*When I get in the zone, it's hazy man  
But suddenly I got lazy man*

*Beat*

*Ain't know what is was, what to do, who to go to  
I couldn't stop thinkin bout...well, you know who  
Love on brain makes an insane show too  
I never thought this'd be something I'd go through*

JAZMIN

My name is Jazmin and I cannot rhyme  
I'm so sorry for wasting your time  
I got cast in a cabaret  
And yeah...that's it...have a...nice day

DOMINIQUE

*I....*

*I...*

*Sad.*

*Beat. DOMINIQUE runs offstage.*

TIARA

Nique!

*TIARA runs after him.*

TERRELL

*Well that's our song  
And It ain't take long  
We had to catch y'all up on a awful lot  
Now we return to the actual plot*

**BLACKOUT.**

**THE FINAL DAY**

*(The previous song transitions into "Retrospect For Life" by Common. The song fades out. A moment of silence. Lights up. MARQUIS is staring at his painting. JAZMIN enters.)*

JAZMIN

Marquis when you bout to leave?

MARQUIS

In like, ten minutes. I'on know. Soon. Why, what's up?

JAZMIN

I'm pregnant. It's yours. I know it's yours because we didn't use a condom.

MARQUIS

Woah, woah, woah, please...hold up. Jaz you were a porn star. You fucked guys for a living. Condoms break, shit happens. Like, how are you sure it's mine.

JAZMIN

I hadn't done straight porn in a year before I fucked you.

MARQUIS

Fuck.

JAZMIN

You wanna keep it?

MARQUIS

I don't know.

JAZMIN

Well, I'll need an answer soon.

MARQUIS

Well, I need time to think.

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

MARQUIS

How long have you known you were pregnant?

JAZMIN

I'on know. Not too long.

MARQUIS

Are you coming back to the states?

JAZMIN

I'on know.

MARQUIS

Do you wanna keep it?

JAZMIN

I'on know.

MARQUIS

Well fuck Jaz, what do you know?

JAZMIN

Don't raise your voice at me, do you want the others to find out?

MARQUIS

I'm sorry I...

JAZMIN

I don't know if I could afford an abortion right now...

MARQUIS

How much is one?

JAZMIN

Anywhere from 350 to 1000.

MARQUIS

You got...

JAZMIN

I ain't got insurance.

MARQUIS

Fuck. I can take out of my savings a lil more.

JAZMIN

I don't know if I want to get this one.

MARQUIS

This one? Have you...?

JAZMIN

Doesn't matter.

MARQUIS

What about Aaliyah?

JAZMIN

Excuse me?

MARQUIS

- and my career may be takin off, and yours too -

JAZMIN

Bringin Aaliyah into this? Really? You fucked me willingly, remember?

MARQUIS

- plus who needs another black baby in this world, let's be real. I can't fear for my life and his...hers...

JAZMIN

*(starting to break)* I'm sorry.

MARQUIS

Aye, yo, nothin to be sorry for.

JAZMIN

It's just that...I know what you have planned tonight and, and...fuck.

MARQUIS

It's your body Jaz. Whatever you choose imma be supportive, but...you know.

JAZMIN



*(she nods)*

*(They are standing close now. This moment of silence makes one question whether or not they should be the ones together.)*

JAZMIN

Would you help raise it?

MARQUIS

...I think so.

JAZMIN

I mean...

MARQUIS

I mean, yes of course. It would just...*(starts feeling sick, holds his head)* Fuck!

JAZMIN

Shhh! Are you ok?

MARQUIS

Let's keep this between us. I gotta go.

JAZMIN

Can we talk bout it later?

MARQUIS

*(as he leaves)* Yeah.

*(MARQUIS exits. There is a brief and quick **BLACKOUT**.)*

*(The crew, except MARQUIS are onstage. They are in the Air B&B. Minimal set.*

*AALIYAH is cooking. TERRELL is on his laptop with beats over his head.*

*JAZMIN is memorizing lines. And TIARA is reading.)*

AALIYAH

*(singing "Lovin' You" by Minnie Riperton)*

TERRELL

I did it!

ALL

*(pays TERRELL no mind)*

TERRELL

I said, "I did it!"

DOMINIQUE AND TIARA

Yay.

TERRELL

Y'all I finished the mixtape. Ain'thall excited?

DOMINIQUE

No.

TERRELL

Nigga you just mad I kicked you off the project.

DOMINIQUE

Nigga you replaced me with Aaliyah! She can't even rap.

AALIYAH

Uh, correction, she can.

TERRELL

What can I say? Wyclef and Lauryn are better than Wyclef and Pras.

TIARA

I would be excited but this book is killin me right now. This shit is good.

AALIYAH

Whatchu readin?

TIARA

As You Like It.

ALL

Whaaaaaat!?

TIARA

I ain't tell y'all? I wanna be a lit teacher.

ALL EXCEPT DOMINIQUE

Congrats! That's great! Forreal?

DOMINIQUE

I'm proud of you.

TIARA

...thank you.

TERRELL

Yo Jaz, why don't we go and uh...not be apart of this awkward, intimate moment?

JAZMIN

Good idea.

*(DOMINIQUE and TIARA look at AALIYAH.)*

AALIYAH

Oh...I'll just put in my headphones. *(puts in headphones)*

DOMINIQUE

What made you wanna teach lit?

TIARA

I get to escape my world and go into others. Remember that coffee shop I spent all day at?

DOMINIQUE

Yeah.

TIARA

It was so quaint and niche. I really felt Parisian.

DOMINIQUE

Tiara, you were in a Starbucks.

TIARA

Yeah but that painting of The Louvre really set it apart. Anyway, next door, there was this bookshop. I said “fuck it” and I just went in. I ain’t had nothin else to do - that’s how you know it was God – and I started a book called Wuthering Heights. That shit was so damn romantic. I fell in love with falling in love. Then I fell in love with escaping. It was nice. So imma go to that community college near us when I get back.

DOMINIQUE

Wait, you’re coming back?

TIARA

Yeah. I like it here but...they don’t make food like we do. Don’t get me wrong this shit is good, but my mama’s cookin is *good*, you feel me?

DOMINIQUE

Yo mama’s cookin is *hood*, you feel me?

DOMINIQUE

That can’t be the only reason.

TIARA

I didn’t want you to be in the apartment alone.

DOMINIQUE

I wouldn’t be alone...

TIARA

Oh so what, we break up for like two minutes and now you gon parade hoes around in our apartment? The fuck, Dominique? I’m about to tell you I love you and wantchu back and shit and throw hoes in my face? Now let me tell you someth...

DOMINIQUE

I was talkin bout Terrell.

TIARA

Aoh.

DOMINIQUE

And I love you too.

TIARA

Dominique, I didn't realize...

DOMINIQUE

Let's skip the compelling monologue. I'm great. You're great. We're great. *(they kiss)*  
However, as an insurance policy...*(gives her a ring)* you gon wife me up or nah?

TIARA

*(squeals)* Yes!

DOMINIQUE

Damn. *(beat)* This feels really fuckin anticlimactic.

TIARA

"Love is merely a madness."

*(Lights off CS. Lights up DSL where JAZMIN and TERRELL are.)*

JAZMIN

It sounds pretty good.

TERRELL

Preciate you.

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

TERRELL

How's the lines coming?

JAZMIN

Oh they straight. It's not a huge part. Just a small role in a cabaret show.

TERRELL

That's still pretty exciting.

JAZMIN

Yeah...I think imma stay here.

TERRELL

In Paris?

JAZMIN

Yeah.

TERRELL

Oh, forreal?

JAZMIN

There's nothin at home keepin me there. Like I love y'all but I think imma have a good thing here.

TERRELL

Right, I feel you. *(beat)* What if you did have a reason to stay home?

JAZMIN

I don't know...I'd still stay here probably. I go back home and I'm gonna fall back into my old life. London is just a train ride away. I could build a resume here and then move to a bigger market. I dunno. Anything is possible for me...I love this atmosphere. It unleashes my inner romantic.

TERRELL

Does it?

JAZMIN

Yeah. I've even been reading those romance novels T been bringin in here. Stories of people in love. Doin romantic things. Raising families.

TERRELL

You make it sound like you want somebody to be yo baby daddy. *(chuckles)*

JAZMIN

*(chuckles)*

TERRELL

I wouldn't mind bein somebody daddy. I can makeup for the shit job mine did. I'd love to

be a dad someday. It'd be lit as hell. I just wouldn't be changin no dirty diapers. That shit is for the birds, you feel me? *(starts searching for something)*

JAZMIN

Wait, really?

TERRELL

Yeah I hate the smell. I can't even stand the smell of my own shit. That's why I wear a shirt over my head when I shit. And I always stock up on Febreeze.

JAZMIN

Wait, no...

TERRELL

Alright fine, it ain't Febreeze, it's the storebrand shit, but it still work.

JAZMIN

I meant about being a father.

TERRELL

Oh! Yeah. I'd be down.

JAZMIN

I've got something to tell you.

TERRELL

What?

JAZMIN

I'm... .. interested in being a mother too someday.

TERRELL

*(smiles)* That's what's up.

*(slight beat between them)*

JAZMIN

Enough about me. How's your label comin? This is like your sixth mixtape, the money must be rollin in.

TERRELL

*(chuckles)* You'd think so. Uh, the coupla performances I had here made some ok bank. And I have shit lined up back home, so if I go back I'm sure I'll make enough money to start the label in a year or two.

JAZMIN

If you go back?

TERRELL

Did I say "if"? I meant "when". I'm sure I said "when".

JAZMIN

*(beat)* I'm sorry I fucked Dominique.

TERRELL

Shit it's straight. Niggas gon be niggas. Even though he knew that I...discouraged that for reasons that don't matter. I just guess at the end of the day, he still just a nigga.

JAZMIN

I shouldn't've either. It was like when I fucked Marquis. Convenience. Although Marquis was much better.

TERRELL

I can't wait to tell Nique you said that.

JAZMIN

*(laughs)*

TERRELL

*(takes in her laugh)*

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

TERRELL

*(finds what he was looking for)*

JAZMIN



I'm gonna miss you.

TERRELL

*(beat)*

JAZMIN

*(beat)*

TERRELL

Uh...

*(JAZMIN goes into a tableau. ALONDRA appears as a spirit. A sort of subconscious in TERRELL's mind.)*

ALONDRA

Remember the advice Faith Ringgold gave me.

TERRELL

Ms. Jackson?

ALONDRA

Yes Terrell.

TERRELL

Why are you here?

ALONDRA

To help yo ass out. Remember the advice I gave you.

TERRELL

You never gave me any advice. That was Marquis.

ALONDRA

Nigga I know my own son. Now shut up and let me have this moment.

TERRELL

I'm sorry Ms. Jackson.

ALONDRA

This is a big moment. You can't fuck this up.

TERRELL

Thank you Ms. Jackson.

ALONDRA

Remember the advice I gave you on the porch.

TERRELL

Ms. Jackson, I apologize a trillion times but that was...

ALONDRA

Shut up. Don't be cute.

TERRELL

Yes ma'am.

ALONDRA

I know your home life never taught you how to love. But you can't put all of yourself into your art. You are more than a musician. You're a lover. Not a very good one, but you are. You're a capable boyfriend. Not very, but you'll do. Do you see what I mean?

TERRELL

I'm mediocre?

ALONDRA

Exactly. But Jazmin wants you anyway. Don't fuck it up. Ok baby? You're welcome.

TERRELL

Thanks?

*(ALONDRA exits. JAZMIN comes out of her tableau)*

JAZMIN

You ok?

TERRELL

Yeah it's just...it's like a butterfly nuttied in my intestines and made a buncha baby butterflies that are fuckin each other. Roughly.

JAZMIN

That was graphic.

TERRELL

*(rubbing his stomach)* Yeah...

JAZMIN

Do you need anything?

TERRELL

No. *(puts the ring away in his pocket. Goes to sit next to JAZMIN)*

JAZMIN

Ok. *(smiles at him)*

TERRELL

Actually, yes. *(pulls the ring back out)*

JAZMIN

Oh, ok.

TERRELL

Actually nevermind. *(starts to put the ring away)*

JAZMIN

Terrell!

TERRELL

Marry me *(takes out the ring)* I know this may be random, unexpected. But I've had feelings for you for a *minute*. Longer than I think I'm ready to admit. But you make me smile. You validate me. You challenge me. You just make me feel good, I can't explain it, I'm not a poet...

JAZMIN

Hey! *(beat. Takes his face in her hands)* You are a poet.

TERRELL

Can I kiss you?

JAZMIN

Please. *(kisses him)* I never thought I'd fuck you. *(the passion increases)*

TERRELL

I guess love just tend to come when you ain't expectin it.

*(Light up on TIARA CS.)*

TIARA

*(to audience)* I told y'all back in Act One. Just sayin.

*(Slow fade to **BLACK**. The lights immediately come back up. Time has passed.)*

AALIYAH

I'm starting to get worried.

TERRELL

I'm sure Mark is fine. You know these artsy fartsy competitions take forever and a day.

AALIYAH

Well it's takin too long.

TIARA

Are we not company enough?

AALIYAH

Me standin here cookin while y'all mofos fuck is not keepin me company.

JAZMIN

At least we were subtle about it! We were in our room.

TIARA

Oh, and we wasn't subtle?

AALIYAH

Havin sex on the couch in plain sight is not subtle.

DOMINIQUE

Well shit, we tried to be quiet.

AALIYAH

T yelling “oooooh baby I like it raw” is not quiet.

DOMINIQUE

I meant quiet by our standards.

AALIYAH

His celebration dinner is getting cold.

DOMINIQUE

Who the hell cooks a celebration dinner before they know if they need to celebrate? What if he lose? Then it’s just one giant kick in the face.

AALIYAH

Marquis won. I know he did. He walks with somethin to prove. He’s a hard worker. I mean he locked himself in our room for a week straight perfecting his work.

TERRELL

Hopefully he ain’t get mugged.

*(MARQUIS enters, hurt. He’s been beaten up. He drops when he enters. He’s shaking. The crew immediately helps him and sits him in a chair, CS.)*

AALIYAH

What happened!?

MARQUIS

I got mugged.

TERRELL

Mybad.

TIARA

Get him some water and a towel! *(JAZMIN goes)*

DOMINIQUE

Yo, who the fuck did this?

TERRELL

We on they ass.

JAZMIN

Here.

MARQUIS

Thanks, Jaz.

AALIYAH

Baby, what the fuck happened?

MARQUIS

I won the competition.

ALL

Congrats.

MARQUIS

Thanks. Anyway, so I go to get my prize. A check for ten thousand.

DOMINIQUE

Dollars?

MARQUIS

No, in clam shells, yes in dollars, nigga, what else would it be in?

DOMINIQUE

Oh, i'on know. Just checkin.

AALIYAH

So you got the money, then?

MARQUIS

I'm walkin out the museum and I'm on my way to the store to get some stuff. And outta nowhere, I'm being attacked by a groupa white guys. Americans. They were interns at this prestigious arts school in the states. I told the police I ain't wanna press charges.

TIARA

Why the fuck not?

MARQUIS

I don't feel well...

JAZMIN

There must be brain damage. Imma call the cops.

MARQUIS

*(suddenly)* I see it!...I see the Eiffel Tower with the six stars beneath it...

AALIYAH

What's happening?

TERRELL

Let him talk...

MARQUIS

They're not underneath it, they're shooting out of the top. Dark stars shooting towards a dark sky. But they're shining! Look, they're shining! The dark illuminating the dark. And nothing's surrounding them! No whiteness! Not even darkness now!

TERRELL

What is it?

MARQUIS

Nothing...they evaporated into the sky...the freedom...they're not anything now...which feels like everything. *(he falls)*

DOMINIQUE

Marquis just answer me this...Did you secure the bag?

MARQUIS

Yeah.

AALIYAH

Yeah you won the competition but look what...

MARQUIS

I had a vision while I was getting my ass kicked. Or rather, a revelation.

AALIYAH

What?

*(MARQUIS hands her a ring)*

DOMINIQUE

Yo, is that a ring?

TERRELL

No Dominique, it's a shiny pebble.

MARQUIS

You gon marry a nigga or nah?

JAZMIN

Damn, y'all niggas ain't got a lick a romance.

AALIYAH

Yes, of course.

TERRELL

Especially now that he's got ten g's.

DOMINIQUE

Damn, we all got cuffed.

JAZMIN

*(for MARQUIS)* Sometimes you gotta hold on to somethin. Some things are better kept.

MARQUIS

*(for JAZMIN)* Especially if you feel it's right.

TERRELL

Yup, and I'm hungry.



JAZMIN

Oh my gosh, guys, we're fucking thriving.

MARQUIS

It's what niggas do.

ALL INCLUDING ALONDRA

Forreal.

TIARA

Now let's begin these rites!

As we do trust they'll end, in true delight!

*(to audience)*...That's Shakespeare y'all!

*(“Niggas in Paris” immediately starts playing immediately after the:)*

**BLACKOUT**

**END OF PLAY**