

IF IT'S MEANT TO BE

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ScreenwritersForHire.Com

Based on the book *If It's Meant to Be- The Life & Times of Shawne
Thomas Vol 1*

by Tre Keahey

OVER BLACK

There is a loud repetitive knock on the door. Footsteps approach and the door opens.

FADE IN:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

MRS. WARREN stands on the other side of the door looking at the muscular SHAWNE (13), looking like a full-grown teenager, in front of her door.

MRS. WARREN
(smiling)
Hi Shawne.

SHAWNE
Hello, Mrs. Warren. Is Kim home?

MRS. WARREN
No, she went over to Tamika's house. She left about two hours ago. She didn't tell me you were coming by.

SHAWNE
(disappointed)
Yeah, I know. I wanted to surprise her.

MRS. WARREN
(stands aside)
Well, come on in. I can call. I'm sure she'll come home. Are you thirsty?

SHAWNE
No, ma'am. I'm okay, thank you. I'm just gonna head over that way and surprise her.

MRS. WARREN
(nods)
Okay. How are your parents and sister?

SHAWNE
They're good.

MRS. WARREN
Tell them I said hello and we miss you guys being in the neighborhood.

SHAWNE

We miss being here, and I'll tell
them you asked about them.

Shawne takes some steps off the porch.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

I'll talk to you later, Mrs.
Warren.

He walks away.

MRS. WARREN

Take care, Shawne.

She closes the door.

EXT. TAMIKA'S PORCH - DAY

Shawne is some yards away from Tamika's house when he sees
TAMIKA (12) sitting on the porch with a BOY (13) sitting
between her legs. Tamika looks up and sees Shawne.

TAMIKA

(under her breath)
Oh boy! What's he doing here?

Shawne gets to the porch.

SHAWNE

(sarcastic)
Hello, Tamika Robinson.

Tamika rolls her eyes.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Is Kimberly Warren here?

TAMIKA

(fiddling with the boy's
hair)
Nope.

SHAWNE

Do you know where she is? Was she
here at all today?

The boy between Tamika's leg moves forward.

BOY

Aye, homie, she already said she
don't know, cuz.

Tamika grabs his shoulder and pulls him back. Shawne is bigger than him and his chances are slim if there's a fight.

SHAWNE
(smirking)
Hold your guard dog back, Tamika.

TAMIKA
Yeah, she was here earlier but left. I don't know where she went or if she's coming back today.

Shawne widens his eyes and then looks down the street. He sees KIM walking with another boy, KEVIN.

SHAWNE
(to himself)
What the heck!

He leaves Tamika on the porch and approaches Kim and Kevin on the street. Kevin is bigger than the first boy but still smaller than Shawne. Kim doesn't look surprised to see him.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)
(struggling to be calm)
Hey, Kim. Who's ya friend? Wait, let me guess. He's your cousin you told me about.

KEVIN
(steps forward, fist clenched)
Who's this buster, Kim?

SHAWNE
(clenches fist)
Buster? You know me, dude?

KIM
(yells)
Shawne, stop it!

SHAWNE
(confused)
Stop what? He walkin' up on me.

Kevin throws a sucker punch at Shawne, keeping himself far away from a retaliation. He swings a wild roundhouse hook at Shawne, but Shawne ducks and quickly catches him with a kidney shot. Kevin drops to his knees.

KIM
(yelling)
Dammit, Shawne!

SHAWNE

Dammit Shawne? You mean, dammit
Kim? What's this all about anyway?

Kim helps Kevin to his feet.

KIM

Kevin, go to Mika's house and wait
for me. Let me talk to him.

Kevin glares at Shawne.

SHAWNE

(returns the glare)
You don't want it.

KIM

(to Kevin)
Please? Just go. Let me handle
this.

Kevin nods and walks away.

KIM (CONT'D)

(to Shawne)
Come here.

Kim leads Shawne to a corner.

SHAWNE

What's going on? What's this all
about?

KIM

This is about me and needing
someone who can be here with me.

SHAWNE

Here I am. So what's the problem?

KIM

You just don't get it. Yeah, you're
here now, and not that I knew you
were coming, but what about
yesterday? Last week? Shawne, what
about tomorrow? When I need a
shoulder to cry on. When I wanna
talk about happy and good things
that happen to me. Where are you
then? An hour away, and longer if
you walkin' 'cause you ain't got a
car!

Kim breaks down in tears.

KIM (CONT'D)

Shawne, I just can't deal with a long-distance relationship anymore. We're too young to try to make this work. I've been seeing Kevin for a month now, and I really like him. Shawne, it's over between us.

Kim starts walking away.

SHAWNE

(cracking voice)

Kim, so what I have to say isn't important?

KIM

Yeah, it is. Just no longer with me.

She disappears around the corner. Shawne stands and watches her walk away. Tears well up in his eyes.

INT. AUNT SHERYL'S HOUSE - DAY

The phone is ringing and Shawne runs to the wall just before the kitchen.

SHAWNE

(yells out)

I got it!

He answers the call.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

(anxious)

Hello?

DEREK (V.O.)

(laughing)

Dang, homie. You still sittin' on that phone waitin' on it to hatch? She gone, dog. Let it go.

SHAWNE

(rolls his eyes)

Shut up, D. What's up.

DEREK (V.O.)

You, homie. That's what's up. The pretty boy with S on his chest is lettin' a female get him down in the dumps. Dude, you sprung and ain't even get none.

Derek laughs.

SHAWNE

You don't know what I got.

DEREK (V.O.)

Fool, I know you ain't get no booty from Kim.

SHAWNE

(laughs)

How you know?

DEREK (V.O.)

Because she cute and she can run fast. You remember when we would play hide-n-go-get-it? Nobody could catch her! Now if you was with ugly-behind Charmaine, I'd bet anything in the world you did it with her. She would fall down just so somebody would hump her.

SHAWNE

(laughs hard and relaxes)

Yeah, didn't you hump her a few times when we played?

DEREK (V.O.)

One time, man. We all did at least once. Anyways, you need to get out the house and out that funk you in. I'm headed to the arcade, you should roll wit me.

SHAWNE

(yawns and stretches)

Yeah, that's cool, but why always the arcade?

DEREK (V.O.)

That's where all the girlies be. D-Mack gotta be where the ladies be.

SHAWNE

More like D-Smack for all the trash you talk. I'll meet you there. I need to shower first.

DEREK (V.O.)

Do that. Get all that crybaby, funky wuss off you and meet me there. Later.

SHAWNE

Shut up, chump. I'll see you in a minute.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Shawne is dressed up and ready to open the door. AUNT SHERYL calls Shawne from the kitchen.

AUNT SHERYL

Shawne, come here for a second, suga.

Shawne turns around and walks to the kitchen.

SHAWNE

Yes?

AUNT SHERYL

Make sure you're back here by seven. Your father will be here. He needs to talk to you about some things. I'll let him go into the details, but would you want to stay here with us for a few weeks?

SHAWNE

Yes, I would. What about school though?

AUNT SHERYL

Like I said, baby, your father will talk to you tonight.

SHAWNE

Okay. I'm going to the arcade. I'll be back by then. Love you.

AUNT SHERYL

I love you too.

EXT. ARCADE - DAY

Shawne is crossing the street to the other side where the arcade entrance is.

FEMALE VOICE

(loud)

Hey, boy! Come here. Hey, boy!

Shawne looks toward the voice and sees JAZMIN, wearing a Carolina blue-and-white skirt set in front of a Kentucky Fried Chicken. She is gesturing for Shawne to come to her but he looks away and continues toward the arcade.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

DEREK JOHNSON is on the game closest to the window. Shawne stands behind him for a while and says nothing.

SHAWNE

You bossin' the game already, ain't you?

DEREK

(startled)

When you get here? You took long enough.

SHAWNE

(rolls eyes)

Anyways, what board you on?

DEREK

Fifth, and about to get my second extra. It's hard work being this good.

Shawne shakes his head and looks out of the window. He sees Jazmin walking with another girl, CRYSTAL.

SHAWNE

Dang! She fine!

Derek also looks out of the window and barely sees Jazmin and Crystal. He stops in the middle of his game.

DEREK

Move over. Let me see. Dude, they both fine!

Derek looks back and he is killed in his game.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Dang, see what you made me do?

SHAWNE

(distracted)

She was calling for me to come to her, but I didn't. Guess I messed that up.

DEREK
 Maybe not, Prettyboy. Look.

Derek points outside and Shawne sees Jazmin gesturing for him to come outside.

SHAWNE
 Man, she could be calling for you to come out there.

DEREK
 Well, let's see.
 (points to himself and mouths)
 Who me?

Jazmin and Crystal outside shake their heads. Derek points to Shawne and Jazmin nods.

DEREK (CONT'D)
 (slaps Shawne's back)
 There you go. A second chance to mess up a first impression.

SHAWNE
 (walking toward the door)
 Shut up, man!

DEREK
 Aye, see what's up wit her friend for me.

SHAWNE
 Aight, I got you.

EXT. CARPARK - DAY

Shawne stares at Jazmin for a while.

SHAWNE
 Hello.

CRYSTAL
 (smiling)
 Hi, I'm Crystal. This is my girl Jazmin.

JAZMIN
 Why didn't you come when I called you?

Shawne nods and smiles coyly.

SHAWNE

I don't know. I thought you were talking to someone else.

JAZMIN

Who? No one else was around. What's your name?

SHAWNE

Shawn, with a E, a silent E.

CRYSTAL

(cuts in)

Is that Derek Johnson in there?

SHAWNE

Yeah, that's him. You know my homeboy?

CRYSTAL

Yeah, I know he a low-down dirty dog.

(to Jazmin)

Don't dogs run in packs or pairs?

JAZMIN

(looks at Shawne)

Do they, Shawne with the silent E?

SHAWNE

(shrugs)

I don't know. I'm not a dog.

JAZMIN

How old are you?

SHAWNE

(studies her)

Fifteen.

JAZMIN

What school do you go to?

SHAWNE

(biting lips)

Revere.

JAZMIN

Do you have a girlfriend?

SHAWNE

Nope.

JAZMIN
 (unbelieving)
 Yeah, right.

SHAWNE
 For real, I don't. She broke up
 with me.

JAZMIN
 Walk me to the store across the
 street?

SHAWNE
 Okay.

JAZMIN
 (to Crystal)
 Crystal, we'll be back in a few.

CRYSTAL
 (points to a bench)
 Okay, I'll wait for you over there
 on the bench.

INT. STORE - DAY

Jazmin and Shawne walk into the store.

SHAWNE
 Where are you from? You don't sound
 like you're from LA.

JAZMIN
 Brooklyn.

SHAWNE
 For real? I'm from Jersey. Been
 here since I was five though.

JAZMIN
 Me and my mom moved here a year ago
 after she and my dad divorced.

SHAWNE
 You like it here?

JAZMIN
 (looks Shawne in the eyes)
 It's okay. But it looks like it may
 get better.

She finishes with a smile.

SHAWNE
So do you have a boyfriend?

JAZMIN
(hesitates)
Umm, no. No, I don't.

SHAWNE
You sure? You don't sound like you
are.

JAZMIN
I don't have one. Honestly, I'm not
allowed to have boyfriends. My mom
would kill me if she found out I
did. But I don't let that stop me.
I just don't have one now.

Shawne nods and smiles. They are close to a picture booth and
Jazmin notices it.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)
Shawne, take some pictures for me.

SHAWNE
Okay, but can we take some together
too?

JAZMIN
Sure.

They enter the booth and take a couple of shots individually
and then as a couple. They step out and Jazmin gives Shawne
two pictures; one of her and the other of the both of them.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)
Here, you keep these.

SHAWNE
(smiling)
We kinda look good together.

JAZMIN
Kinda?

SHAWNE
Naw, really good actually.

EXT. CARPARK - DAY

Jazmin and Shawne approach the carpark and sees Derek
standing in front of Crystal.

DEREK

Come on, girl, let me get them digits. How you figure you know anyway? You don't know me. You just stuck on yourself.

Crystal is looking away from him and then suddenly looks at him on his last statement.

CRYSTAL

(looks Derek in the eyes)
Derek Johnson. Revere Jr. High. You know Kesha?

DEREK

(shocked)
Yeah... yeah, that's my ex.

CRYSTAL

Hmmm, now that wouldn't have anything to do with Michele, would it?

Derek's head drops and he shakes his head.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Don't be ashamed now. Everybody in school already knows about you, Derek.

DEREK

You think you know, but you don't.

SHAWNE

(interrupts)
Aye, D, let me talk to you for a sec.

Derek follows Shawne to the side.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Don't trip off that, man. You know the truth on that situation.

DEREK

Yeah, but she said everybody in school knows about it.

SHAWNE

So? Tell her the truth?

DEREK

Naw, coz it won't do no good. Her mind is made up about me.

SHAWNE

I'm gonna walk them back to
Crystal's house. You rollin' wit
me?

DEREK

Hell, naw! I'm gonna play a few
more games, then I'll catch up wit
you back at the Gardens.

SHAWNE

Bet. I'll see you later.

They fist-bump. Derek returns to the arcade and Shawne goes
back to the girls.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Crystal walks ahead of Shawne and Jazmin, keeping herself
busy with looking at different shops while the new friends
talk.

SHAWNE

Where do you live?

JAZMIN

Over on West 20th. But I come to
Crystal's just about every weekend.
Where you stay at?

SHAWNE

LaBrea Gardens.

He looks at his feet and rolls his eyes.

EXT. CRYSTAL'S HOUSE - DAY

They arrive at the front of the house. Crystal looks back at
Jazmin and Shawne.

CRYSTAL

I'm going in to check my messages.

JAZMIN

All right. I'm gonna walk him down
the street. I'll be back in a few
minutes.

CRYSTAL

(nods)

It was nice to meet you, Shawne.

SHAWNE

It was good meeting you too,
Crystal.

Crystal enters the house, Shawne and Jazmin continue walking
down the street.

JAZMIN

So what do you like to do, Shawne?

SHAWNE

I just enjoy hanging out with Derek
and my other friends. And I play
football for the Baldwin Hills
Trojans.

JAZMIN

(smiling)

Oh yeah, what side of the bench do
you play?

SHAWNE

(laughs)

Ha-ha, you got the jokes. I play
quarterback. I'm the startin'
quarterback. Not to boast or brag,
but I got championship and MVP
trophies.

They laugh wholeheartedly.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Hey, Jaz I--

JAZMIN

(interrupts)

I like to be called that.

SHAWNE

(blushes)

I know you said you're not allowed
to have a boyfriend, but are you
looking for one?

JAZMIN

(stops walking)

Why? Are you asking me if you can
be my boyfriend?

SHAWNE

Yeah, I wanna be your boyfriend.
Can I be?

Jazmin looks at her watch, rolls her head like she's thinking, stomps her feet on the group and finally shrugs.

JAZMIN

(smiling)

Umm, I guess so, yeah... I'm not busy these days.

SHAWNE

(smiles)

Oh, you're not busy?

He grabs her waist and tickles her. Jazmin laughs very hard and pulls closer to him. She puts her arms around his neck.

Shawne smiles as he watches her lips twitch for a while before he presses forward. Jazmin looks from Shawne's eyes to his lips and licks her lips. Shawne goes all in and kisses her.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

(breaking the kiss)

I think I can really get used to this. Where have you been all my life?

Jazmin smiles as she nudges him in the belly. She rests her head on his arm.

JAZMIN

I gotta get back so Crystal's mom won't ask where I am. Gimme your number so I can call you. It won't be until Monday though.

Shawne taps his head frantically, trying to remember a number.

SHAWNE

It's 213-555-7528.

JAZMIN

(writing)

Okay, I got it.

They hug and kiss again.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

I better go. I'll call you Monday night, and see you next weekend. Right?

Shawne winks his left eye at her but says nothing.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)
Bye, Shawne with an E.

SHAWNE
(watching her walk away)
Bye, Jaz.

EXT. DEREK'S HOUSE - DAY

Derek and BRANDON sit on the stairs when Shawne shows up.

BRANDON
What's up, Shawne?

SHAWNE
I'm coolin'. What's up wit ya'll?

Derek glances at Shawne then looks at Brandon and shakes his head.

DEREK
(sighs)
Here we go again. Prettyboy Shawne
done fell head over heels in love
again.

Derek and Brandon laugh.

SHAWNE
Fool, how I'm gonna be in love, I
just met her? I ain't in love, I
like her.

DEREK
Dude, D-Mack's Book of Love, it
clearly states. To like a lot is
equivalent to loving a little bit.
And you like her a lot!

BRANDON
And a lil' bit of love is still
love. Right, D?

DEREK
Yup.

SHAWNE
It sounds more like D-Wackness to
me.

BRANDON
So who's this girl you met?

SHAWNE

Aye, dude, her name is Jazmin. She fine too, homie! Long hair, nice skin, soft lips--

DEREK

(cuts in)

You kissed her? You didn't kiss her!

SHAWNE

(rolls his eyes at Derek)
Tight body, sexy eyes.

BRANDON

Sexy eyes?

DEREK

Yeah, what makes eyes sexy?

Shawne is confused and bites his tongue for a while.

SHAWNE

I don't really know. They just look good on her.

DEREK

(laughing)

Hey, B, why we asking a virgin questions like this? He don't know the answers.

SHAWNE

Whoever said I was a virgin?

DEREK

(sarcastic)

Who you did the nasty with, Shawne?

SHAWNE

So because I don't tell you all my business, that makes me a virgin?

Derek and Brandon look at each and nod.

BRANDON

Yeah, that sounds about right to me.

SHAWNE

Brandon, who's even seen you with a girl? Get a hug or hold a hand before you start sayin' what sounds right.

Derek and Brandon laugh.

DEREK

Then set the record straight now.
You got some before, Shawne?

SHAWNE

(takes a deep breath)
No, but when I do, I'll know what
to do.

BRANDON

Yeah, right. How you know?

SHAWNE

Watch them. Listen to what they
like to hear, see, do, think, eat.
My cousin told me the ugliest dude
in a room can get the prettiest
girl in the room just by making the
room about her.

DEREK

(waves)
Man, I gots no time for all that.

SHAWNE

You will, watch. One day, some girl
is gonna walk into your life,
change everything you thinking
right now. You just bitter right
now because of the Kesha and
Michele saga.

Shawne and Brandon laugh.

DEREK

Oh that's messed up! Forget you,
punk!

BRANDON

(looking at his watch)
Oh, dude, it's six forty eight. I'm
missing the Lakers game. Gotta
watch Showtime in action! I'll
check ya'll out later.

DEREK

Later, B.

SHAWNE

See you later, homie.

Brandon leaves.

DEREK

Jazmin and Crystal, I never seen them girls around here before. I wanna know what she thinks she knows about me and that incident.

SHAWNE

Crystal goes to Revere with you.

DEREK

(grunts)

Man, she probably take those nerdy classes.

SHAWNE

I got a problem I need your help with.

DEREK

What?

SHAWNE

I told Jazmin I go to Revere. She's gonna have Crystal look for me.

DEREK

(laughs)

What! The choirboy lied.

SHAWNE

D, I had to. Told her I was fifteen and that I still stayed over here. You gotta back me up on this.

DEREK

Okay, I got you. And when I pull this off, you will owe me big time.

SHAWNE

Yeah, come through and I owe you.

DEREK

(loud)

Big!

SHAWNE

(rolls eyes)

Yeah, yeah... I'll owe you big.

INT. AUNT SHERYL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shawne walks into the house and his dad, VICTOR THOMAS, is watching the Lakers game.

SHAWNE

Hey, Dad.

VICTOR

(looks up at him)

Hey, Shawne.

Shawne sits next to his father.

SHAWNE

Who's winning?

VICTOR

Lakers up by eight.

Shawne grins.

INT. CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)

Victor drives and Shawne is in the passenger's seat, sulking.

VICTOR

Shawne, I know you wanted to stay, but we need to talk and get this process rolling. Your mother has been sick. We went to the doctor for tests to be done, and they...

He chokes and Shawne looks at him, confused.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

They found cancerous cells. Thankfully, it was detected in its early stages and treatable. She is having surgery this week. Your Mom and I discussed some things, and we feel it's best that we move back East to be closer to more family. How do you feel about that?

SHAWNE

Back to Jersey? That's fine. If it's what Mommy wants, so do I.

VICTOR

So here's the plan. She is going into the hospital on Thursday. After school on Friday, I'll bring you and your sister back to Aunt Sheryl's. You'll be there for several weeks.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

With me working the night shifts,
and your mother in the hospital
trying to recuperate, it would be
too much on you to take care of
Kayla and yourself.

SHAWNE

What about school?

VICTOR

I've talked with your principal and
teachers. They will send work home
with you on Friday to keep you
caught up.

SHAWNE

When are we leaving then?

VICTOR

April 8.

SHAWNE

(shocked)
A month?

VICTOR

Yeah. That's the earliest we could
leave.

Shawne sighs and looks out of the window.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Shawne dials a number on the phone and places the receiver to
his ear.

TIFFANY (V.O.)

Hello?

SHAWNE

Hey, Tiff, this Shawne. What you
doin'?

TIFFANY (V.O.)

I know who you are, big head. I'm
getting ready for school, what do
you want?

SHAWNE

Dang, I can't just call my favorite
cousin to say good morning?

TIFFANY (V.O.)
Oh, okay, good morning... bye.

SHAWNE
No, wait! Okay, I need a favor.

TIFFANY (V.O.)
What favor?

SHAWNE
Here's the deal. I met this girl
the other day--

TIFFANY (V.O.)
(cuts in)
What's her name?

SHAWNE
Jazmin--

TIFFANY (V.O.)
(cuts in)
Where she stay?

SHAWNE
Over on the West Side. Can I
finish?

TIFFANY (V.O.)
Well, hurry up.

SHAWNE
Anyways... she's gonna call there
for me tonight.

TIFFANY (V.O.)
Okay. Do you want me to just give
her your number?

SHAWNE
No! She thinks I live there. Tell
her I got in trouble at school, and
I'm on punishment until Friday.

There's a long pause.

TIFFANY (V.O.)
Okay. But let me ask you a
question. Do you like this girl?

SHAWNE
Yeah, why?

TIFFANY (V.O.)

Umm, lies only lead to more lies.
If you lied about where you live,
knowing you, you probably lied
about your age and where you go to
school.

SHAWNE

And more, but I'm gonna tell her
the truth on Friday. Please back me
on this.

TIFFANY (V.O.)

I will take care of it tonight, but
you better tell her the truth on
Friday or I'll find her and tell
her for you. Now go to school and
get educated.

SHAWNE

Thanks, Tiff.

He hangs up.

INT. LUNCH ROOM, SCHOOL - DAY

It is lunchtime and the students are in pairs, eating lunch
and enjoying their break. Crystal is walking across the lunch
room with TWO GIRLS when she sees Derek and Brandon on a
table. She approaches them.

DEREK

(sights Crystal)

Dang! Here comes Miss Princess
Missy.

BRANDON

And she looks hella good coming
too.

Crystal puts one hand on her waist as she looks down at
Derek.

CRYSTAL

Hello, D-Mack... D-Dog... whatever
name you go by. Where's your boy
at?

Brandon is nervous and avoids eye contact.

DEREK

Between the A and the T. Don't you snobby types know you don't end a sentence with a preposition?

CRYSTAL

Ooh... do you know where Shawne is at this time? What class he's in next period?

BRANDON

(cuts in)
Shawne don't--

DEREK

(interrupts him)
Don't come to school on Mondays. He, umm, he goes to physical therapy on Mondays.

CRYSTAL

Oh really? For what?

DEREK

A car accident he was in. Dude still ain't right.

CRYSTAL

(rolls her eyes)
You ain't right.

Crystal looks at Brandon and smiles at him.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

What's your name, cutie?

BRANDON

(stuttering)
Br-Br-Brandon.

Derek looks at Brandon and shakes his head. Crystal continues to smile and sits next to Brandon.

CRYSTAL

Where is Shawne at, Brandon?

She slowly places her hand on his.

BRANDON

(swallows)
He should be at... he should be at school.

CRYSTAL

What school does he go to?

DEREK

(interrupts)

All right. All right... Shawne moved a few months ago. He goes to school in Pomona now. You happy, girl? Dang!

CRYSTAL

No, I'm not happy. Why ya'll gotta lie? Is that all you do besides cheat?

DEREK

(raising his voice)

No! No, that's not all I do. I lied for my homeboy, and I will again if I need to. He had his reasons. But cheat? Girl, you don't know me! You don't know jack about me! You think you do over a stupid rumor? Get your facts first! Wit your lil' prissy ass!

He stands up and walks away. Brandon looks at the girl, confused. Crystal watches him walk away and sighs, regret on her face.

INT. GYM - DAY

Shawne enters the gym while a basketball game is going on. He looks at the spectator seat and soon finds Jazmin and Crystal. He makes his way to them and sits next to Jazmin.

SHAWNE

Hey, Crystal.

Crystal gives him a half smile and turns back to watch the game.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

(wary)

What's up, Jaz?

JAZMIN

(blunt)

I'm good.

They are quiet for a few minutes.

SHAWNE
Can we go outside and talk?

JAZMIN
You got somethin' you wanna tell me?

SHAWNE
(stuttering)
Som-somethin', like what?

Jazmin kisses her teeth and storms out of the gym, frustrated. Shawne follows her.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

SHAWNE
Hold up, Jaz.

Jazmin stops and looks at him.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)
Look, Shawne, I don't wanna play games. When I saw you last week from across the street. I thought you were cute, and after I walked and talked with you, getting to know you better, I was willing to risk whatever to get to know you better. So here, I'm gonna help you out a little, boy, and let's see what happens. Crystal saw Derek at school, but she didn't see you... would you like to take it from there?

SHAWNE (CONT'D)
(sighs deeply)
Okay... Jaz, sit down.

They both sit in swings.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)
A few months ago, my family moved to Pomona. I still come here almost every weekend. I obviously don't go to Paul Revere, and I'm not fifteen. I'll be fourteen in May.

JAZMIN
Now, how hard was that? Why did you feel like you needed to lie to me?

SHAWNE

You looked so good standing outside that window. I thought you were older than me, and the last girl that broke up with me did so because I lived so far away.

JAZMIN

Shawne, like I said, I see something in you. Don't mess up what could be with lies. Don't assume what happened to you over there will happen the same way over here.

SHAWNE

What could be? What you mean by that?

JAZMIN

My grandmother back in Brooklyn used to always tell my cousins to never hold on too tight to someone or too loose. What is meant for them will be for them. Hearing that so often I just would say, what could be, would be.

SHAWNE

Okay, so that's just like that saying, if it's meant to be, let it go...

JAZMIN

Yes. Be straight up with me, Shawne, okay?

Shawne nods.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

(smiling)

By the way, I'm older than you. I'll be fourteen in two weeks.

Shawne sighs, smiles and punches her lightly on the shoulder.

They stand up from the swings, hug and then kiss each other.

EXT/INT. CRYSTAL'S CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Shawne walks with CHRIS.

SHAWNE

I don't know what I should get her.

CHRIS

Get her some flowers, homie. What
it matter for real?

SHAWNE

Naw, dude, I gotta make it special,
a lasting impression.

CHRIS

Well, whatever, cuz. Hoes need to
be--

SHAWNE

(cuts in)

Hold up. You gotta chill wit that.
These are young ladies, not hoes.
Relax.

CHRIS

(rolls his eyes)

Yeah, yeah. I'm just sayin'.

CRYSTAL (O.S.)

(yells)

We're back here!

They make their way to the backyard where the clubhouse is.

Jazmin opens the door and smiles at Shawne.

SHAWNE

Hey, Jazzy. This is Chris. Chris,
this is my girl Jazmin and that's
Crystal.

Chris nods at Crystal when she waves at him. Jazmin looks
back at Crystal and signals her.

CRYSTAL

Umm, Chris, can you walk me to the
store, please?

CHRIS

Yeah, I can do that.

Crystal steps out and leads Chris away while Jazmin drags
Shawne into the clubhouse and shuts the door. She kisses his
cheeks, forehead, lips, and neck. Their kiss grows passionate
and Jazmin digs into Shawne's neck with her nails.

The sound of a car pulling into the driveway reaches them.

They break their kiss.

JAZMIN
 (peeping through the
 window)
 It's Crystal's mother. Duck down
 over there.

Shawne runs to a corner of the room and crouches. Jazmin looks out of the window for a while.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)
 Come on, and be quiet. Let's go to
 the park.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jazmin and Shawne are walking back from the park, quietly.

JAZMIN
 What's wrong? You've been really
 quiet since we went to the park.

Shawne stops walking and turns to see tears in Jazmin's eyes.

SHAWNE
 Jazzy, my mom is sick with cancer,
 and my parents have decided that we
 are moving back to Jersey.

Jazmin is shocked and all emotion is drained from her face.

She looks away and when she turns back tears fall from Shawne's eyes.

JAZMIN
 (stuttering)
 But... what about... when?

SHAWNE
 April 8.

JAZMIN
 April 8? That's like in two weeks
 from now! You can't stay with your
 aunt?

SHAWNE
 I thought about that, but I doubt
 if they will let me.

JAZMIN
(crying)
It's not fair!

JAZMIN (CONT'D)
We're so good together, and now you
gotta leave me.

SHAWNE
(hugs her)
I know it's not fair, but this
doesn't have to be the end.

He wipes her tears.

JAZMIN
What you mean?

SHAWNE
Let's make a pact. I'm going back
to Jersey. You have family in
Brooklyn. In five years, March 7,
1992 at ten p.m., we will meet at
the top of the Statue of Liberty.
We'll be old enough to continue our
relationship then.

JAZMIN
Okay, but what if--

Shawne puts his finger on her lips.

SHAWNE
No... just get there if you can.

Jazmin holds Shawne's hand and stretches to kiss him. She
removes one of the three chains on her neck and puts on
Shawne's neck.

JAZMIN
Keep this on until we reunite. I
don't care who we meet in this time
away, we will always be together.

They hug again.

INT. AUNT SHERYL'S HOUSE - DAY

Shawne walks into the living room as TIFFANY drops the
receiver. He is smiling and holding a box and a piece of
paper.

SHAWNE
 (gives Tiffany the paper)
 Here. What you think?

Tiffany takes it, reads it, rereads it, looks up at Shawne, and then reads it again.

TIFFANY
 You stole this?

SHAWNE
 What? No!

TIFFANY
 This is really, really good! No,
 this is beautiful!

SHAWNE
 You think so?

TIFFANY
 Yes. Now go rewrite it very neatly,
 put it in an envelope, and I'll
 wrap this up for you.

Tiffany dangles a big gold-link chain with a Superman charm on it.

SHAWNE
 (pleased)
 For real? Thanks, Tiff! I wish I
 knew sooner.

TIFFANY
 Oh, don't worry, I'll get that
 money back. I'm sure you went to
 the Swampmeet.

SHAWNE
 (laughs)
 Yup, the little Korean lady in the
 back in the left.

EXT. CRYSTAL'S HOUSE - DAY

As Shawne climbs the front porch, Crystal is coming out of the house.

SHAWNE
 Hey, Crystal?

CRYSTAL
(pity-faced)
Hey, Shawne. Jazmin didn't come
this weekend.

SHAWNE
Dang!

CRYSTAL
I'm sorry, Shawne. She couldn't
call because she's on punishment.

SHAWNE
(slumps on the stairs)
Man, I leave Wednesday.

CRYSTAL
Yeah, I know. She told me.

Shawne stares at the ground for a while but finally raises
his head.

SHAWNE
(hands over the envelope
and box)
Can you give this to her?

CRYSTAL
Yes, I sure will.

SHAWNE
And tell her not to forget the pact
cause I won't.

He hugs Crystal and walks away.

CRYSTAL
Hey, Shawne. She's gonna miss you.
I'm gonna miss your lyin' behind
too.

She laughs.

SHAWNE
(smiling)
I'll miss you too. Take care of
yourself and Jaz. Do me a favor.
Look out for my boy Derek too. He
not so bad. You'll see for
yourself.

CRYSTAL
Ha-ha... you got jokes.

SHAWNE

(loud)

Ya'll will be together soon enough!
I can see the future.

Crystal smiles and watches him walk away.

EXT/INT. AUNT SHERYL'S HOUSE - DAWN

There's a knock on the door. Shawne answers it and Derek stands outside in the early hours of the day.

SHAWNE

What's up, D? We about to leave.

Derek enters the house.

DEREK

I know. I wanted to come help you load up, and see you off.

Shawne and Derek carry the last luggage to the car.

DEREK (CONT'D)

I remember when we were six years old and you was sitting on the porch after you just moved over here. I asked you if you wanted to play freeze tag with us, and we been boys ever since. Same school. Stayin' the night over each other's house. You kept me out of a lot of stuff that could have gotten me into deep trouble. Like the time Big Mike wanted to beat me up for feelin' on his little sister's booty. You was gonna fight him wit me. He respected you for that.

SHAWNE

Yeah, you never tried touchin' her booty again either.

DEREK

No matter where you go, Shawne, you set. You will make friends. You're gonna play ball. Your future is set. What will I do or be if I'm not the sidekick to Shawne Thomas?

SHAWNE

D, you were never just my sidekick. We're friends. Best friends.

(MORE)

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

You've been there and had my back
just as much as I had yours.
Leaving Cali, the Gardens, all my
friends, and you... ain't easy to
do.

DEREK

Don't forget Jazmin.

SHAWNE

(laughs)

Yeah, her too. I know you don't
really know her and probably can't
stand Crystal, but I need you to
look out for her for me.

DEREK

Crystal makes me sick, but I'll do
my best for you. We gotta keep in
touch.

SHAWNE

(in heavy East Coast
accent)

For sure yo.

DEREK

(laughs, in West Coast
accent)

You mean, fa sho, homie.

They fist bump and hug.

SHAWNE

Gonna miss you, D.

DEREK

Me too.

Shawne enters the car where the rest of his family is waiting
for him.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Shawne and his new friend, ROMAN, are in the sneaker section
of the mall when Roman sees two girls, TASHA and ERICA.

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

ROMAN

(taps Shawne's shoulder)

Yo, you see what I see? Honies!

Shawne looks in the girls' direction.

SHAWNE
(nonchalant)
Yeah, they aaight.

ROMAN
Aaight? Yo, look again! Those are
dimes.

SHAWNE
Dimes?

ROMAN
(excited)
Yes, Dimes. You know, scale from
one to ten... those two are tens!

Roman makes eye contact with one of the girls who quickly turns away and whispers to her friend before they both keep staring at Roman and Shawne.

ROMAN (CONT'D)
That's our cue, Shawne, come on.
Follow my lead.

Roman goes first and Shawne grudgingly follows.

ROMAN (CONT'D)
Hello, ladies. How we doing today?
I'm Roman, and this is Cali-Boy.

SHAWNE
(interrupts)
Shawne.

ERICA
Hi. I'm Erica, and this is Tasha.

Erica smiles and teases Roman.

TASHA
Why they call you Cali-Boy? Are you
from Texas?

SHAWNE
Naw, only Roman the Great calls me
that. I used to live in LA.

TASHA
So is it like how they show on
television and in the movies? All
that gangbangin' and stuff.

SHAWNE

Uh, yeah, some parts. You gotta know where you are when wearing certain colors.

TASHA

(smiling)

So are you a Crip or Blood?

SHAWNE

(yelps)

I never banged. Do I look like a gangbanger?

TASHA

(looks him up and down)

Hmm, I don't know. I'm a sophomore at Lincoln High. Erica too.

SHAWNE

Y'all go to Lincoln... for real? Me and Ro will be there too when school starts back.

TASHA

I guess ya'll play football?

They nod.

TASHA (CONT'D)

So do you have a number I can contact you at? You know, should I feel you're deserving of a call from someone of my status, freshman.

SHAWNE

Oh, if I'm deserving? I see you're already prepared.

TASHA

You know you wanna give me your number.

SHAWNE

(writing his details on a paper)

Yeah, I do. When you gonna call me?

TASHA

It'll be a surprise. I know you of all people won't sit by the phone waiting too long, Mr. Cali-Boy QB.

SHAWNE
 (smiling)
 I'll talk to you soon.

TASHA
 (walking away)
 Perhaps.

INT. JAZMIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jazmin wakes up and the first thing she looks at is the Superman charm chain Shawne gave to her. She stares at it for a while and then grabs her phone to dial a number.

JAZMIN
 It's Friday night. Let's hangout.

CRYSTAL (V.O.)
 I was just about to call you and see if you wanted to go to the movies or skating.

JAZMIN
 World on Wheels.

CRYSTAL (V.O.)
 Okay, meet there at six tonight.

EXT. WORLD ON WHEELS - NIGHT

Crystal and Jazmin are further in the line when Chris and Derek arrive. Derek sees them first.

DEREK
 Damn. Why they gotta be here?

CHRIS
 Who you talkin about?

DEREK
 (points at Crystal)
 Them, well, her.

They line up directly behind the girls.

CHRIS
 What's up? How ya'll doin?

The girls turn back and do not recognize Chris at first.

Derek looks at the sky.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You don't remember me? Chris.
Shawne's homeboy. I met ya'll when
we went by your house with him
once.

CRYSTAL

(remembering)

Oh, okay. How you been?

DEREK

(interrupts)

I've been good. Thanks for askin'.

Jazmin bursts into laughter.

CRYSTAL

(snaps)

Wasn't nobody even talkin' to you.

DEREK

(mimicks Crystal)

Wasn't nobody even talkin' to you.

Jazmin looks away from the drama and catches Chris checking
her out. Their eyes lock and she blushes.

CHRIS

Aye, D, stall out with all that,
cuz.

DEREK

Man, naw! Every chance she gets,
she doggin' me out, callin' me out
my name. But if I were to call her
out of name, she'd be ready to call
up whatever gang of dudes she's
ridin' on to come smoke me!

CRYSTAL

(upset)

Who the hell you callin' a hoe! I
ain't no hoe!

She steps forward and stands in front of him, but Jazmin
grabs her arm and pulls her back.

JAZMIN

Derek, let me talk to you for a
minute.

Jazmin pulls Derek to a corner.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

I know I don't really know you that well, but you seem really cool. So imma talk to you like we been cool since the day we met. You was dead wrong for callin' my girl a hoe.

DEREK

(deep breath)

Yeah, you right. I was wrong. But hell, she been wrong too.

DEREK (CONT'D)

She always bringin' that situation up, and she don't even know the whole story.

JAZMIN

Yeah, she told me about the two girls that were friends that you messed with.

DEREK

That's not how it happened.

JAZMIN

(concerned)

Tell me what happened.

DEREK

What you heard?

JAZMIN

You and one of the girls was together, and you got caught in the bedroom of her best friend by your girlfriend.

DEREK

(laughs)

Wow. People, including Miss Goody Two-shoes, around there don't use common sense no more. Instead of defending or attacking, I'll ask you some questions and you judge the story and me.

(beat)

Kesha, my ex, her best friend, Michele, asked me to come by her house after school to discuss setting up a surprise party for Kesha.

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

Like ten minutes after I was there, Kesha just walks into the house and sees us at the dining room table, not her bedroom, fully clothed, on opposite sides of the table, and she starts trippin' on me. The whole time Michele ain't sayin' nothin'. If you were Kesha, would you be at school the next day with your best friend like nothin' happened? No one questioned that. Then a week later you got a new boyfriend? Jaz, that was her way to get with this new dude and make me look bad, so she wouldn't.

JAZMIN

You right. It don't add up. Why didn't you say something?

DEREK

Never felt the need to. People that know me, Shawne and my homeboys... they knew the truth. So that was all that mattered. In the end, she wanted someone else. It wouldn't have changed nothin'.

JAZMIN

Speaking of Shawne, you heard from your boy?

DEREK

(shakes his head)
Nope. Not since the day he left. Tiffany speaks to him all the time. She told me he has asked about us.

JAZMIN

You think she would give me his number or could you get it for me?

DEREK

(shrugs)
Yeah, I could do that. I'll get it this weekend. I need to call him too. He also told me to look out for you. So we homies now and I gotta watch your back. Let's go get in line so I could apologize to your girl.

JAZMIN

Let's go, homie.

They fist-bump and laugh.

INT. SHAWNE'S ROOM - DAY

Shawne is on his bed, watching television when his phone rings. He picks the call.

SHAWNE

Hello?

DEREK (V.O.)

(pretending)

Is this Shawne?

SHAWNE

Yeah. Who's this?

DEREK (V.O.)

Yo, we gonna keep in touch, writin' and callin' each other, and I need for you to look out for my girl.

SHAWNE

(laughing)

Still the jokester. How you been, D?

DEREK (V.O.)

You know me... just kickin' it. What about you? Still playin' ball?

SHAWNE

You know it. I got a shot to start varsity as a freshmen this season, but doubt I get it.

DEREK (V.O.)

You still be doubtin' your skills... I know how you played when we was growin' up, so I can only imagine now if you have the chance to start as a freshman... you only got better.

SHAWNE

I just try to stay low key and humble. When I get in between those white lines, it's a different story, I'm a different person. That's where all my confidence lies... right there.

DEREK (V.O.)

I hear you, homie. Look, you should be gettin' a call real soon.

SHAWNE

Who... Jazmin?

DEREK (V.O.)

I saw her at the skating rink and she asked about you.

SHAWNE

How is she?

DEREK (V.O.)

Dude, that girl still fine as hell! How you leave that? Oh well, finders keepers, losers weepers.

SHAWNE

Yo, don't play.

DEREK

(laughing)

I wouldn't do you like that, Prettyboy. She is still definitely into you. You want me to tell her you with somebody new?

SHAWNE

What? Why would you do that?

DEREK (V.O.)

Shawne, dude, ain't nobody stupid. You been gone for almost two years now. You startin' to wake up with that mornin' wood. You either got a girl chasin' after one, or you moved out there and switched up teams.

SHAWNE

D, just tell her I'm still here. And our pact is getting closer.

DEREK (V.O.)

You tell her all that yourself when you get that call, cuz. Other than that, you know I won't snitch on you. I got your back for life. I'm about to jet to the mall. I'll talk to you later, dude.

SHAWNE

Later days, bro, stay up.

Shawne hangs up.

INT. HALLWAY, SCHOOL - DAY

Students are walking along the hallway, stopping at their lockers to pick books and return books. Derek rests his body next to Crystal's locker and she looks at him weirdly.

DEREK

(passes her a piece of
paper)

DEREK (CONT'D)

Give that to your girl. Shawne will
be expecting her call.

Derek moves away from the locker and disappears among the crowd.

INT. SHAWNE'S ROOM - DAY

Shawne is on the phone with Tasha.

TASHA (V.O.)

Babe, don't worry about him or what
he says. He was only actin' tough
because his boys was there.

SHAWNE

Yeah, but I came off like a punk.
He made you look like a sloppy
seconds or somethin'... I didn't do
or say nothing about it.

TASHA (V.O.)

Well, there's a whole lot of sloppy
seconds and leftovers. We never did
nothin'.

SHAWNE

What? I thought--

TASHA (V.O.)

(cuts in)

Thought wrong, Shawne. It's gonna
be the right place. The right time.
With the right guy.

SHAWNE
When you get married?

TASHA (V.O.)
If that's when all my rights come
at the same time.

SHAWNE
I'll help you look for that timing,
location, and man if you want me
to.

TASHA (V.O.)
I kinda thought you already were
helping me look.

Shawne's phone chirps indicating another call.

SHAWNE
Hold on a second, baby.

He clicks onto the other call.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)
Hello?

A beat.

JAZMIN (V.O.)
Shawne... with the silent E?

Shawne sits up in bed.

SHAWNE
Jaz?

JAZMIN (V.O.)
I've missed you so much!

SHAWNE
I miss you too. How are you?

JAZMIN (V.O.)
Hearing your voice now, I'm better.

SHAWNE
Jazzy, hold on a second.

JAZMIN (V.O.)
Okay.

SHAWNE
(switches call)
Tash?

(MORE)

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

That's my aunt Sheryl, long distance. She's gotta talk to my mom.

TASHA (V.O.)

I thought your mom wasn't home yet.

SHAWNE

Huh? No, she got here a few minutes ago. I'll call you back in a bit.

TASHA (V.O.)

Okay. Talk to you later.

Shawne switches the call again.

JAZMIN (V.O.)

Was that your girlfriend?

SHAWNE

I thought you were my girlfriend. That was my boy Roman, we were talking about practice tomorrow. But enough about that. It's good to hear your voice. All that's missing is me walking down to Crystal's or the park to see you.

JAZMIN (V.O.)

I hate that I didn't get to see you before you left to say good-bye. I think about you every day. I read the poem and look at my chain around my neck in the mirror... then I cry most of the time because you're gone. Do you still wear my chain?

SHAWNE

(stands up and looks at it
in the mirror)
I never take it off.

JAZMIN (V.O.)

Listen, baby, I want you to write me every day and think about me every second.

SHAWNE

Okay. I will. And let's pray for each other to stay strong until we reunite.

JAZMIN (V.O.)
I love you, Shawne Thomas!

SHAWNE
I love you too, Jazzy Davis. Bye.

He hangs up.

INT. STREET - DAY

Shawne is walking with Tasha to see a movie. They are both quiet, but Shawne seems particularly distracted.

TASHA
(sighs)
What's going on with you, Shawne?
You've been very distant toward me lately. Ever since your aunt called that night a few weeks ago.

SHAWNE
Tasha, I'm cool.
(rolls eyes)
You know what? Maybe I have been trippin'. Ever since that encounter with Travis, I've been on the edge. At school, at practice, even with you. I'm sorry for that.

TASHA
Why didn't you talk to me?

Shawne shrugs.

TASHA (CONT'D)
Baby, we have to communicate with each other about anything.

SHAWNE
You're right. That's my fault.

He pulls Tasha into a hug.

TASHA
(hugs him tightly)
I love you, Shawne.

Shawne steps out of the hug and looks at Tasha.

SHAWNE
(solemn)
What?

TASHA

I do. I love you for who you are.
You have a beautiful heart, you're
modest, humble... I can go on.

SHAWNE

(looks around)

Then why do you stop? I love you
too. The day I met you, those Hazel
eyes mesmerized me. I couldn't deny
it. I want this to last a long,
long time. Forever, if that's a
time frame.

(sighs)

Whew! We good. Let's get to the
theatre. Roman and Erika are
waiting.

INT. THE DAVIS HOME - DAY

ANITA DAVIS, Jazmin's mom is in the living room, sorting
through a bundle of letters with similar envelopes.

JAZMIN (O.S.)

(shout)

Hey, Mommy, did I get any calls or
mails?

ANITA

Crystal called for you. Are you
expecting anything in particular as
far as mail?

JAZMIN (O.S.)

Nope. Nothing in particular. Excuse
me. I have to go be doing something
else.

Anita sits down and pulls a notepad from her book. Then she
starts writing.

INT. THE THOMAS' HOUSE - DAY

Shawne and Roman enter the house, sweaty and tired. MRS.
DEBRA THOMAS is watching TV in the living room at the time.

SHAWNE

Hey, Mom.

ROMAN

Hey, Mom.

DEBRA

Hi, boys. If you're hungry, there's burgers and fries on the stove. Wash your hands before you go in my kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Roman and Shawne are eating burgers and fries with cold Coca Cola. Debra walks into the kitchen carrying a large manila envelope.

DEBRA

(gives Shawne the envelope)

This came for you today.

SHAWNE

(confused)

Too soon for recruitment letters.

He rips the envelope and pieces of the letters and photos he has sent to Jazmin pour to the table. He is shocked and as he sorts through the mess, he finds one letter that's intact.

He reads it and stares disturbingly. He knocks the paper off the table and storms out of the room.

DEBRA

(shocked)

Boy, what the hell...

Debra picks up the letter and reads.

DEBRA (CONT'D)

Excuse us for a minute, Ro. I'm gonna go talk with him.

INT. SHAWNE'S ROOM - DAY

Debra knocks on the door and walks into the room. Shawne's back is turned to the door as he plays with his ball.

DEBRA

You wanna talk about it?

Shawne turns his chair around, exhales, and wipe his face.

SHAWNE

There was this girl I met before we moved back here... Ma, to me she was perfect.

(MORE)

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

We got along great, but you were sick, and we had to move.

DEBRA

What about Tasha?

SHAWNE

Mommy, this was before Tasha.

DEBRA

Listen to me, baby. You have to live for today. You can't change yesterday, and you don't know what tomorrow may bring. I'm sure Jazmin was, as you thought, a great girl. But, Shawne, you're still young.

SHAWNE

So you think I'm too young to know what love is or to be in love?

DEBRA

No. I didn't say that. I said you're still young. There's no age requirement to be in love. It's an emotion that only you will know when you feel it. And you'll learn the difficult task that if you love something, sometimes you have to let it go. Focus more on the present. Tasha doesn't deserve to not have all your attention because you're caught up in your past. Oh, and by the way, I would like to speak with this Jazmin girl's mother. What exactly is your own kind anyway? And ugly?

SHAWNE

Ma, don't worry about it. It's in the past... remember?

He smiles and Debra has no choice but to remain calm. She hugs him.

DEBRA

I love you, and I'm always here for you.

He collect the envelope from his mother.

SHAWNE

I love you too, Mom.

Debra leaves the room and Roman comes in a few minutes later.

ROMAN
Yo, you aight?

SHAWNE
Yeah, I'm good, Ro.

ROMAN
What's this all about?

SHAWNE
I never did tell you my story. Back in Cali, I had a girlfriend... I didn't know her that long, but I was big on her real quick.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)
Just before I moved, we made a pact to get back together in '92. But I hadn't heard from her since I left until a few weeks ago. And talkin to her, all these feelings came rushin' back. She was like, 'Write me every day,' so I did.

ROMAN
Shawne, what about Tasha?

SHAWNE
I know. I know. I got caught up in the moment. I'm done lookin' backward. Please, Ro, you can't tell Erika. Then Tasha will definitely find out.

ROMAN
This stays right here, bro.

They pound their fists. Shawne stashes the envelope in the bottom of his top dresser drawer and sighs.

SHAWNE
Just gotta put her outta my mind.

He takes off his neck chain and puts it in the envelope as well.

INT. COACH BROWN'S OFFICE - DAY

Shawn pokes his head in and knocks on the open door.

SHAWNE

Coach Brown, can I talk with you
for a minute?

COACH BROWN looks up from the files he is assessing.

COACH BROWN

Come on in here, son. My door is
always open to my players.

Shawne enters.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)

What's on your mind, Thomas? Close
the door.

He shuts the door.

SHAWNE

Well, Coach, it's like this... I
know you told me I would have a
fair and legit shot at starting at
QB this year...

COACH BROWN

Uh-huh, I did.

SHAWNE

But I think it would be best for me
as well as the team to let Travis
start and I learn from him as his
backup.

COACH BROWN

(suspicious, leans
forward)

Let me ask you, Thomas. What would
you learn from Dunbar? He has the
experience and he is a bit faster
than you. But reading defenses,
accuracy, arm strength, even with
his experience, you hold the upper
hand.

SHAWNE

I appreciate that, Coach.

COACH BROWN

(sighs)

Okay. You will backup Dunbar.
That's not a problem, but I think
there's more you're not telling me,
Thomas.

SHAWNE

Coach, this team looks to Travis as the leader. I don't wanna divide the team. I'd rather make a smooth transition when my time comes.

COACH BROWN

It took real maturity to do what you just did, Thomas. I commend you. Be ready for practice at four p.m. sharp, son.

SHAWNE

Yes sir.

They shake hands and Shawne leaves the office.

SAME SCENE - LATER

TRAVIS DUNBAR enters the office.

COACH BROWN

Dunbar, sit down. Have you decided on a college yet?

TRAVIS

I'm leaning towards Nebraska or Oklahoma. But I'm still undecided right now.

COACH BROWN

You do realize those are option running programs? You will have limited opportunities to show your capabilities in the passing game or your true leadership skills.

TRAVIS

I never looked at it from that standpoint, Coach. I'll keep that in mind.

He starts to get up.

COACH BROWN

Wait, hold on, there's more. I spoke with the freshman this morning. It seems that something or someone has influenced him to step aside and back you up this season. He said he would rather sit behind you and learn from you.

(MORE)

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
Any ideas on how he would come to that conclusion?

TRAVIS
No, Sir... did he say anything else?

COACH BROWN
Just that he doesn't want to divide the team. Travis, you were always gonna start, but I need you to know the special talent that is right behind you nipping at your heels. That kid will walk onto any university football field in the country as a college freshmen and be named the starter.

COACH BROWN (CONT'D)
But from this point and all season long, I expect you to take him under your wing and show him the way of Lion Pride. Now I can't make you like him, but he is your teammate. Your little brother. Welcome him into our home, son. I hope I made myself crystal clear. You know how I get when I have to repeat myself.

TRAVIS
I got his back 100 percent, Coach B.

EXT. SKATING RINK - NIGHT

Jazmin is frustrated and hisses multiple times. She checks her phone again when Chris walks by her.

JAZMIN
Chris?

Chris stops and looks back at her.

CHRIS
Umm, Jazmin right? What's up, girl?

JAZMIN
Nothin'. Just bored. Crystal can't make it tonight. They jammin' in there?

CHRIS
 (shrugs)
 I don't know. I wasn't in there.

Chris looks her up and down again and Jazmin fights to hold back her smile. Derek shows up on the other end that Chris was headed to initially.

DEREK
 Chris, hurry up. I gotta roll,
 homie.

He doesn't recognize Jazmin from the distance before he darts back into the corner.

CHRIS
 Can you wait right here a minute?
 I'll be right back.

Chris leaves and Jazmin waits, muttering to herself and trying to think quickly. Chris returns after a few minutes in a Honda Accord.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 (hanging out his head)
 You wanna take a ride? Maybe catch
 a movie?

JAZMIN
 I don't know, Chris. I gotta be
 right here by a quarter to midnight
 when my mom comes to get me.

CHRIS
 (smiles)
 Okay. I'll have you back here by
 eleven thirty eight.

JAZMIN
 (smiles back)
 All right.

INT. JAZMIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jazmin is nervous as she dials a number on the phone. Crystal answers the phone.

CRYSTAL (V.O.)
 What did you do last night?

JAZMIN

I'll tell you in a second. Let me ask you something. What do you think about Chris?

CRYSTAL (V.O.)

Chris who? Dude that know Shawne and Derek?

JAZMIN

Yeah. Didn't he try to talk to you?

CRYSTAL (V.O.)

When? The time we met him when we were in line at the rink? Either way, no, he didn't. And honestly, I don't think of him at all. Why?

JAZMIN

So would you be like mad if I told you I went to the movies with him last night?

CRYSTAL (V.O.)

I wouldn't be mad at you, but I would ask you, why? And what about Shawne? Aren't they friends?

JAZMIN

I don't know, Crys. He don't act like they ever were for real. But even you told me I need to move on.

CRYSTAL (V.O.)

I did, J, but that dude? I don't know. There's something different about him. But if you talk to him, it won't change us. I got your back.

JAZMIN

(happy)

Cool. Now get up, get dressed, and come get me. Let's go shopping.

INT. TASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Shawne and Tasha are kissing heavily.

TASHA

(panting breathlessly)

My mom won't be home before the game.

They kiss for a while more before Tasha looks at Shawne.

TASHA (CONT'D)

You seem uptight. I think you need
a pregame warm-up.

She bites Shawne's lower lip and he trembles. Tasha takes off her clothes and is left with her red and white laced bra and panties. She puts on a slow jam on the cassette and jumps on Shawne. They start kissing again.

SHAWNE

Tasha, I don't have any protection.

TASHA

I know.

She rolls over to her bedside, pulls out the drawer and takes a condom.

TASHA (CONT'D)

You just relax... now roll over.

Shawne lays on his chest while Tasha massages his back. She moves to biting his neck, ear, and running her nails down his waistline and hips.

She turns him over and Shawne sees her breast. He smiles and tries to unhook her bra but is unable to. Tasha tears the condom and wears it on him.

TASHA (CONT'D)

You need help?

SHAWNE

How do you do this?

TASHA

(smiling)

Babe, it's in the front on this
one.

SHAWNE

(feeling stupid)

Oh.

Shawne scoops her up and stays on top of her. He kisses all over her body and then sucks her breast. Tasha wraps her leg around his waist, high on ecstasy. She continues to grind her hips into his crotch.

TASHA

I want you... put it in me.

Shawne helps himself inside her.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 (hurting)
 Go slow... ouch!

SHAWNE
 I'm sorry. I'm trying to go slow.

He tries again and again until they are successful. He makes love to her until they are out of breath. Shawne squints his eyes as he feels himself ejaculating.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)
 (moaning)
 Ahhh!

TASHA
 (pushes him)
 Get up!

Shawne sits against the headboard and looks at the condom. It is broken.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 When did it break?

SHAWNE
 (pulling off the condom)
 I... I don't know. I think just now. I hope just now.

TASHA
 (grunts)
 Do you think any got inside of me?

SHAWNE
 (confused)
 I don't know... I don't think it did. But I can't say for sure.

INT. HALLWAY, SCHOOL - DAY

Shawne kisses Tasha and is heading to the football team's locker.

TASHA
 Shawn, wait... I gotta say this now or it'll eat me up all night. I love you, but I'm not ready to take care of a baby. If I am pregnant, we can't keep it.

SHAWNE
(anxious)
Tasha, can we please talk about
this later?

Tasha nods and watches Shawne walk down the hall and through
the door to the locker room.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Shawne bends his head between his laps.

ROMAN
Yo, you ready? It's game time, Big
Boyee!

SHAWNE
(slow)
Yeah... yeah, I'm ready.

ROMAN
What's up wit you? Ya head ain't
where it needs to be.

SHAWNE
Ro, I'm trying to, to get right...
I'll be back.

Shawne leaves the locker room for the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Shawne splashes water on his face and looks in the mirror.

Travis walks in and uses the urinal.

TRAVIS
When you get in there tonight,
always locate Tyrone Butts, number
56. He blitzes everybody down from
everywhere. He's a beast... loves
to hit.

Travis moves to the sink and washes his hands.

SHAWNE
What makes you so sure I'm gonna
play tonight? The tigers always
play us tough.

TRAVIS

You've played in every game so far, right?

SHAWNE

Yeah, but--

TRAVIS

Yeah but nothing. Tonight ain't no difference. You will see the field... I got a question for you, Shawne, keep it real wit me too. If you were me and could go to any college you choose... where would you go?

Shawne thinks for a while.

SHAWNE

Texas.

TRAVIS

Texas... why?

SHAWNE

Keep it real, right?

TRAVIS

Yes.

SHAWNE

Every year Texas has a big, strong O-line. Running backs that are elite and above-average receivers. You're at your best when you have all those components clicking. You are the fastest player in the state easily, and if defenses don't shadow you with a player, you will kill 'em wit your legs. If they shadow you, and you read it in pre-snap, you'll find the one-on-one coverage or the mismatch. I think you would have the most success at Texas doin' what you do best.

TRAVIS

Damn kid! You sure you're not a seasoned offensive coordinator? I'll keep that in mind though. Now get yourself game ready.

Travis pounds Shawne's shoulder pad.

INT. MALL - DAY

Jazmin and Chris are lovey-dovey as they walk from aisle to aisle. They are in the shoe isle when Jazmin sees a shoe she likes.

JAZMIN

(excited)

Ooh, Chris... do you like these? I like them a lot! Will you get them for me?

CHRIS

Damn girl! You see the price tag on these? That's a damn car note. Damn girl! You stay in my pockets! When will I see a tax refund on all this spending?

(Jazmin looks away)

Look, I don't mind spoilin' you wit things and takin' care of you. But I mean, damn, baby, I got needs and wants too. When you gonna start takin' care of me?

He pulls out a wad of notes and counts from it.

JAZMIN

I know you do, and I will. I just want everything to be right when we do.

She collects the money and smiles -- locks her hands with Chris as they continue looking. Derek shows up and nods at Chris. She pulls her hand from Chris.

DEREK

(confused)

What's up, Jaz?

JAZMIN

Hey, Derek.

CHRIS

(to Derek)

Lemme holla at you at sec, cuz.

(to Jazmin)

I'll be right back.

Chris and Derek take some steps away, their backs turned to Jazmin.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You handled that work?

Derek pulls out dollar notes and gives it to Chris.

DEREK
 (nodding towards Jazmin)
 Yeah. What's up with that? You
 messin' wit Shawne's--

CHRIS
 (cuts in, talks through
 clenched teeth)
 Shawne's what? Nigga, do you see
 Shawne ole punk ass anywhere around
 here? That's mine now, cuz! If you
 or Shawne got a problem with that,
 let me know.

DEREK
 (blankly)
 Naw, dog, I'm cool.

CHRIS
 Fuck outta my face.

Chris adjusts his shirt and his waistline shows a hidden gun.

He goes back to Jazmin.

JAZMIN
 What was that all about?

CHRIS
 Business.

JAZMIN
 Did he say something about Shawne?

CHRIS
 (snaps)
 Why the hell you concerned about
 him?

JAZMIN
 I'm not... I just...

CHRIS
 Then don't worry about what the
 hell he asked me. Now let's go!

Chris walks off leaving her to chase after him.

INT. THE THOMAS'S HOME - DAY

It is Christmas and the entire house is decorated to match the atmosphere. The doorbell rings. KAYLA, Shawne's sister, jumps up.

KAYLA

I got it!

She opens the door and it is TASHA and her mother, LINDA KEYES by the door.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas.

The family cheers and welcome each other.

INT. SHAWNE'S ROOM - DAY

Shawne and Tasha enter his room. They kiss.

SHAWNE

Merry Christmas.

He gives her two wrapped boxes. Tasha smiles as she opens the gift and the box. She brings out a chain.

TASHA

(wearing the chain and
blushing)

It's beautiful. Merry Christmas,
babe.

She gives Shawne his present. He opens it and sees an authentic signed Philadelphia Cunningham Jersey.

SHAWNE

(excited)

Thanks, baby! How did you get it
signed?

TASHA

(boasting)

I got my connects.

SHAWNE

(hugs her)

Thank you and your connects.

DEBRA (O.S.)

Shawne, come here for a minute,
honey.

Shawne is almost out of the door when Tasha speaks.

TASHA

Shawne, you got ten dollars? I made Kayla a bet that she would tell you what I got you. I lost, so I gotta pay up.

SHAWNE

Yeah, look in my top drawer.

He leaves the room. Tasha opens the drawer and takes the money. She sees an old picture of Shawne and she looks at it.

She continues to fumble through the drawer until she sees the large manila envelope.

TASHA

(to herself)

What's this?

She opens it and sees the pieces of letters and then a picture of Shawne and Jazmine together. She looks and sees an address behind.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Los Angeles? Who is this girl?

TASHA (CONT'D)

Is he? No. Chill, Tash. You're jumping to conclusions. He hasn't given you any reason to think he's cheated... has he?

She sees the letter that's still intact. She opens the letter to read but hears Shawne returning to the room. She jumps on the bed and hides the letter under the bed.

SHAWNE

What are you doing?

TASHA

(nervous)

Waitin' on you.

Shawn sees the open dresser drawer and closes it.

SHAWNE

Didn't your mama teach you to put things back the way you found them?

He lays on top of her.

TASHA

Shawne, get off. You're heavy.

Shawne stands up, confused.

SHAWNE

I was just playin wit you. Why you gotta get like that?

Jazmin says nothing and they remain in silence for a while.

TASHA

Turn the TV off. We need to talk.

Shawne doesn't comply.

TASHA (CONT'D)

(raises her voice)

I know you heard me, boy!

SHAWNE

Boy played on Tarzan. It's funny how I start watching TV and now you wanna talk. I got nothing to say. But you can talk, maybe I won't ignore you.

Tasha rolls her eyes, sits up behind Shawne and covers his eyes.

TASHA

You gonna ignore who?

SHAWNE

(squirms around)

Now you wanna play. Stop playin'.

Shawne frees himself and continues watching his TV. Tasha jumps down from the bed and stands in front of Shawne.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Move please.

Tasha moves aside and then straddles herself on him. Shawne stops fighting to get her off and Tasha kisses him on the neck and ear.

TASHA

You want me to move?

SHAWNE

(locks down her waist)

Naw, you good.

TASHA
 (kissing his face)
 Shawne... Have you ever cheated on
 me?

Shawne leans back and looks into her face.

SHAWNE
 Are you being serious? No... never
 have. Never even thought about it.
 Where did that come from anyway?

Tasha stares into Shawne's eyes and holds his gaze for a
 while.

TASHA
 Just a question out of curiosity. I
 mean, you're a Lincoln Lion
 football god. I know girls be
 throwin' it at y'all.

SHAWNE
 That don't mean I gotta try and
 catch what they throw. Everyone
 knows who my girl is. And that's
 how I like it.

Shawne hooks her arms and pulls her closer to him as they
 kiss. Their kiss gets deeper.

TASHA
 (breaks the kiss)
 Slow down. Easy, cowboy. One, our
 parents are a few steps away. Two,
 I have a visitor in town for the
 week. And three, our parents are a
 few steps away.

Shawne pulls away from her. Tasha smiles at him.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 Can you go get me something to
 drink?

SHAWNE
 (sighs)
 Yeah. What you want?

TASHA
 Water, please. Thank you.

She sits up and kisses him on the cheek. Shawne stands up
 from the bed and stretches. His arousal is visible through
 his pants.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 (points at the bulge in
 his pants)
 Fix that before you go out there.

Shawne quickly adjusts himself and leaves the room. As soon as he steps out, Tasha grabs the envelope from under the bed and replaces it in the drawer. She goes back to the bed and lets out a sigh of relief.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

It is a Friday afternoon and school is over. Jazmin steps out from the front door of the main entrance and sees Chris sitting in his car. The tinted windows are halfway down and the music in the car is loud. She enters the car.

INT. CHRIS'S CAR - DAY

Jazmin leans over to kiss Chris.

JAZMIN
 (fixing her seatbelt)
 What you do today?

CHRIS
 (rolls his head)
 Not much. Ran here, ran there. Just
 lil' things.

JAZMIN
 So what we doin' tonight?

CHRIS
 Relax, girl. Lemme handle this.

Chris smiles at her and pulls off.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A. INT. MALL - DAY

Chris picks out new outfit, shoes, and a new set of bra and panty while Jazmin follows him, smiling.

B. EXT./INT. SPA - DAY

Jazmin enters the spa with STORE ASSISTANTS carrying all her shopping bags for her.

She has a full body spa and massage session. Jazmin comes back outside looking flawless and glowing. She wears a black and blue sequin blouse and fitted jeans that show her curves.

Chris stands outside a stretch white limo. The CHAUFFEUR opens the door for them and they enter.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. LIMO - DAY

Jazmin looks around inside the Limo, surprised and excited.

JAZMIN

Chris, wow, baby! I didn't expect all this.

CHRIS

(smiling)
Let's go eat.

INT. SEAFOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Chris and Jazmin are in a reserved seat in the restaurant.

Chris picks a fresh lobster from the tank and Jazmin settles for crab legs. They both focus on eating and Jazmin steals glances at Chris repeatedly. She moves her seat closer to the table and takes off her shoe. Jazmin wears a coy smile as she places her foot in his crotch area and massages him from under the table.

JAZMIN

I'm ready tonight, baby. I don't wanna wait any longer. Tonight is perfect. My mom is out of town with her boyfriend for the weekend, and Crystal is at my house to cover for me. It gets no better.

CHRIS

And you sure you ready now?

Jazmin continues to massage Chris's crotch from beneath the table.

JAZMIN

What? You doubt I can handle it?
Baby, your wait is about to be worthwhile.

A WAITRESS comes to their table.

WAITRESS
Would you like some dessert?

JAZMIN
Yes, please, ice cream. Takeaway.

EXT/INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jazmin walks to the balcony from the room and looks around.

Chris walks out and holds her from behind. He grabs her ass with his hands. Jazmin inhales, pleased with the touch. She turns around and kisses him. Chris unbuttons her blouse and she steps out of her shoes. Together, they roll back into the room. Chris takes off her trousers and then discards of his own clothes as well. Jazmin watches him, fear gripping her for a few minutes but she shakes it off.

Chris gets on the bed and takes off Jazmin's panties. He kisses her navel and gently goes down on her.

As soon as he gets to her thighs and vagina, her eyes open wide with shock and pleasure. Chris comes back up to kiss her as he guides his penis into her.

JAZMIN
Wait! Chris, do you have a rubber?

CHRIS
(sucks teeth)
No. I forgot to get some. Damn.
I'll pull out.

JAZMIN
I don't know. I think we should use protection.

Chris stays on top of her, kissing her on the neck and slowly slipping into her.

CHRIS
(softly)
Come on, baby. I'll pull out.

JAZMIN
(yielding)
I don't think we should... Chris...
we need protection.

Chris continues to kiss her neck and go deeper into her. When he is all the way in, Jazmin lets out a yelp.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)
(pleasurable)

Uh!

Slowly, Chris makes love to her until he is about to climax.

He pulls out and comes on her stomach. Jazmin looks spent but happy as she smiles at Chris.

INT. LIMO - DAWN

The Limo pulls up in front of Jazmin's house. The clock on the dashboard reads 3am.

JAZMIN
(smiling)
This was the best night of my life,
Chris. I enjoyed every moment of
it.

Jazmin kisses him. Chris reaches to his side and hands Jazmin a small gift bag.

CHRIS
Here.

Jazmin opens it and pulls out a thick gold herringbone chain with Chris's name in diamonds.

JAZMIN
(excited)
I love it!

CHRIS
Good. Now you can take off that
lil' ass rope chain he gave you.

JAZMIN
Chris, don't trip. We just had a
really good time.

CHRIS
What does the S stand for anyway?
Shit? Take that shit off, and
everything will be cool.

Jazmin hesitates for a while but when she sees that Chris is serious, she takes off the chain from Shawne.

JAZMIN
You happy now? Good night.

Jazmin steps out of the car.

CHRIS
Call me tomorrow.

The limo drives off.

INT. JAZMIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jazmin enters the house and meets Crystal sleeping on the couch in the living room and the TV on. Jazmin shakes her awake.

JAZMIN
Crys. Crystal!

Crystal wakes up, stretches and yawns.

CRYSTAL
(groggily)
Hey... you finally home. How was everything?

JAZMIN
Well, let's see... we went shopping, was chauffeured in a limo, spent a few hours at the day spa, had a nice seafood dinner... then we got a room.

CRYSTAL
(shocked and wide awake)
No, you didn't! You gave him some?

JAZMIN
(nods)
I did.

CRYSTAL
Was it good?

JAZMIN
(smiling)
Not at first, but then, hell yeah!

CRYSTAL
(excited)
My girl! Welcome to womanhood. I told you after you get past that uncomfortable feeling of being so tight and havin' a rubber on, it can be a sensational feeling.

Jazmin's smile fades as Crystal continues to talk.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

(confused)

What did I say?

JAZMIN

(mutters)

He didn't use one. Forgot to get them.

CRYSTAL

He didn't use one what? J, tell me you didn't let that nigga run game on you talkin' about he forgot to get some? He took the time and spent the money on limos, day spas, hotels, food, and shopping but forgot to buy a two ninety nine box of three condoms?

JAZMIN

He said he would pull out, and he did.

CRYSTAL

(pissed)

Jaz, he can't pull out an STD! I'm tellin' you... I don't trust his ass! I don't know what it is... but I don't.

Crystal takes a deep breath.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Tonight is about you. I'm trippin'.

Jazmin give Crystal the gift bag and she pulls out the herringbone.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Wow. This is really nice. You darlin' Scarface.

JAZMIN

(unhappy)

He made me take off Shawne's.

CRYSTAL

I'll say this cause you my girl and I love you. Bigger ain't always better. Money can't buy you everything. Do you love him? Don't answer now. Think about it.

Jazmin stares at Crystal and then they hug. Jazmin is unhappy but she feels comforted in Crystal's arms.

EXT. TASHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A black limo pulls up in front of Tasha's house. The CHAUFFEUR comes down and opens the door. Shawne steps down in a black tuxedo, royal-blue cummerbund and bow tie, with matching shoes to go. A few other STUDENTS in the neighboring house scream and hoot.

STUDENTS
(scattered comments)
Shawne! You look dope! You're so handsome!

Shawne smiles as he looks at the door and his family is waiting for him. His dad winks at him.

VICTOR
You look almost as good as your old man, son.

Shawne smiles back at him.

KAYLA
My big brother is a heartthrob! Can I take a picture with you?

SHAWNE
Yeah, KayKay.

Kayla and Shawne pose in front of the house while their mom quickly takes a picture of them. Then his father takes a picture of him with his mother.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)
Where's Ms. Keyes?

DEBRA
She's inside with your date. Boy and does she look beautiful.

SHAWNE
(to himself)
Hold up, Shawne.

He goes back to the limousine and soon returns with a corsage and flower bouquets. He gives one each to his mother and sister, accompanied with a kiss on the cheek. Finally, he goes to the door and knocks.

LINDA, Tasha's mom, opens the door and her jaw drops.

LINDA
Oh my Lord!

Shawne gives Linda a bouquet and hugs her.

DEBRA
(entering the house)
Ain't he handsome?

LINDA
Yea, he is! Y'all come in. Tasha will be ready shortly. Debra, can you and Kayla help me with the finishing touches on her?

INT. TASHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Debra and Kayla follow Linda to Tasha's room. Linda knocks on the door before opening. Tasha looks back.

LINDA
Hun, you almost ready? The finest guy that's gonna be at the prom tonight is waiting in the living room for you.

KAYLA
You mean, the flyest. They don't say fine anymore.

DEBRA
Girl, hush.

TASHA
(excited)
Does he really look good?

LINDA
Baby, good ain't the word. You gotta see for yourself.

KAYLA
Tasha, make no mistakes about it. You're so gorgeous, you gonna make him look even better!

Tasha stands up and shows off her dress, a strapless royal-blue custom-made dress. She raises her head to show off how beautiful the makeup looks on her face and her captivating hazel eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Victor and Shawne are alone in the living room.

VICTOR

You know, prom night is the night most teenage pregnancies occur? You and Tasha have promising futures... you do understand what I'm saying to you son, right?

Victor gives Shawne a a three-pack condom box and Shawne takes it.

SHAWNE

Thanks, Pop. I got what you sayin'.

Victor also gives him two hundred dollars.

VICTOR

I know you worked hard to pay for all this tonight, but take this anyways. Just a little spending change, you know, just in case. Put them rubbers in your pocket. We don't need them asking questions. Hell, your mother still thinks you're her little baby boy wearing cowboy boots on the wrong feet in a diaper.

Father and son laugh. Tasha steps into the living room and Shawne's jaw drops. Tasha blushes and Shawne gawks as he gazes at her. He walks to Tasha and takes her left hand where he puts the corsage.

SHAWNE

You are so beautiful.

He kisses her on the cheek.

KAYLA

Aww, y'all so cute together.

SHAWNE

We better get goin'. The limo turns into a watermelon at four in the morning.

They all laugh while Debra and Linda exchange glances.

DEBRA

Two o'clock. And let's take some pictures before you leave.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Tasha and Shawne wave to their parents and Kayla as the limousine pulls away.

TASHA

(looking around the limo)
Baby, if our wedding is anything like today, we're gonna have to do it soon. This is nice.

SHAWNE

Slow down, babe.

TASHA

(rolls eyes)
I know. I know. You wanna make it in the NFL before we get married and have a family.

Shawne is quiet. Tasha looks at him.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Right?

SHAWNE

Tash, tonight is gonna be a memorable evening for you. Let's make memories for tonight.

Tasha sits up and faces Shawne.

TASHA

Do you love me?

SHAWNE

(sucks teeth)
Yeah, you know I do. What do you think?

TASHA

I think you do, but do you love me for a lifetime?

Shawne sighs. He wishes not to have the conversation.

SHAWNE

Alright, it is like this. I know numerous times we've talked about our future together, Tash. I love you now. I'll always love you, forever. But we're at a point in our lives where some big decisions are about to be made.

(MORE)

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

You're heading to Penn State in the summer, and I'll be here. Then next year I'll probably be at USC. I think we can endure a long-distance relationship, but we don't know for sure.

TASHA

Oh, so when did you decide you'll be going there to USC? You got offers from Penn State, Syracuse, and Michigan, and every other college. But suddenly now, you probably goin' to USC?

TASHA (CONT'D)

And you don't know for sure? What? You think I'll go out there and fall for an upperclassman on campus? Or do you think you'll get weak and give in to them damn groupies at school that can't wait 'til I'm not around?

SHAWNE

Wow! Are we really arguing on the way to your senior prom? but to answer your question. No... history.

TASHA

What?

SHAWNE

You learn from history so the same mistakes aren't made.

Tasha is speechless as she sits back and rolls away from Shawne.

MONTAGE - SCHOOL BALLROOM - NIGHT

A. Tasha and Shawne are on the same table but they are uninterested in talking to each other. They lock eyes a few times but they quickly look away.

B. It is time to dance. Shawne stands up and helps Tasha pull her seat back. They stand apart from each other and when they touch, it is standoffish.

C. Tasha and Shawne's friends approach them on the dancefloor and they are jovial but once the friends leave, they are cold to each other once again.

D. Tasha and Shawne return to their table. Shawne once again helps her with her chair before she sits down. They continue to ignore each other.

END OF MONTAGE

Everyone is having a good time as the HOST gets on the stage.

HOST

It is time to announce the Prom
King and Queen for this class.

The crowd cheer and clap.

HOST (CONT'D)

(looks at the paper he is
holding)

The 1991 senior class prom king
is... Andre Kelly!

The students applaud again.

ANDRE KELLY, a handsome and neatly dressed boy walks to the stage amidst the cheers and clap. He is crowned.

ANDRE

Thank you. Thank you.

HOST

And now, the 1991 senior class prom
queen is... Tasha Keys!

Tasha is lost in thought and doesn't hear the announcement until ERIKA taps her and points at the stage.

Tasha quickly goes to the stage and forces a smile as the tiara is placed on her head. She looks toward Shawne and sees that he is angry instead of being happy for her. Tasha stares blankly.

HOST (CONT'D)

It is now time for the the king and
queen to dance.

Andre takes Tasha's hand and leads her to the dancefloor. As the dance starts, Tasha looks at Andre and smiles at him in a flirty manner. Andre smiles back and immediately pulls her closer to himself. The rest of the room is staring at Shawne while this is happening.

Andre holds Tasha by the hips and she caresses the back of his neck. They lock eyes and Andre slowly moves his lips toward hers.

As their lips almost touch, Tasha turns away and looks toward Shawne but she only sees him walking out of the ballroom.

Tasha turns back to Andre and creates some distance between them as they continue to dance.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Shawne sits in the limo, fuming.

INT. SCHOOL BALLROOM - NIGHT

The dance has ended. Tasha goes around trying to find Shawne.

She asks a few people AD-LIB but no one knows his whereabouts.

Tasha finally goes back to the table. Erika and Roman are on the table and there is an awkward silence for a while.

ERIKA

(to Tasha)

What y'all wanna do after we leave here?

TASHA

(hunches her shoulder)

I don't know.

ROMAN

Tash, why you do my boy like that? Me and E know you were playin', but now everybody in school will be talkin' about that dance. If y'all beefin', keep that between y'all. I know he hurt. Hell, it hurt me to watch.

TASHA

You right, Ro. I should have handled things differently.

ROMAN

Go make things right. He's in the limo.

ERICA

(surprised)

You knew where he was all this time?

ROMAN

Of course, but I had to make sure she wasn't gonna leave wit Dre first.

TASHA

(stands up)

Thanks, Ro.

She touches his shoulder as she walks out.

EXT/INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Tasha walks to the limousine and taps on the window before opening the door. Shawne is sitting inside with a bottle of champagne.

TASHA

Can I come in? We need to talk.

Shawne looks at her, smirks and takes a drink from the bottle. Tasha enters the limousine.

TASHA (CONT'D)

When you start drinkin'?

SHAWNE

(slurring words)

Umm, the same day shortly after my girl started fuckin' around on me.

Tasha is caught off guard and offended by his statement but she keeps her cool.

TASHA

Why did you leave and not come back!

SHAWNE

I guess I was supposed to continue sitting there like a damn fool while everyone looked at me lookin' at my girl get her freak on with another dude on the dance floor.

TASHA

I was doing that to piss you off. I was wrong, and I apologise.

Shawne sets down the bottle and claps.

SHAWNE

You did a wonderful job at it too, goddammit! Cause I'm pissed the hell off! Damn, Tasha! It's like this now all because of that dumbass "do you love me?" argument earlier?

TASHA

(yelling)

You gonna stop all this yelling and cursing at me!

SHAWNE

You right. Fuck it. I don't even need to be talkin' to you right now.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

Shawne exits the limo and starts walking away. Tasha grabs his arm but he snatches it away. He approaches the stairs to the ballroom when he hears a car engine roar. He looks back and sees the limousine drive away with Tasha inside.

Roman watches from inside. He shakes his head and grabs Erika by the hand and they head out of the ballroom.

ROMAN

Shawne, what's the deal? What's up wit you?

Shawne sits down on the stairs.

SHAWNE

Man, I don't know. You know what I'm sayin? I'm just sick of stuff... you know what I mean? Like every time I turn around boom! And just be like... damn, again.

ERIKA

(confused)

Wha?

ROMAN

Yo. What are you talkin' about? You not makin' no sense.

SHAWNE

I'm talkin' about I don't got a girlfriend no more!

(MORE)

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Do y'all see the limo? No! Cause we done here. It's over, Ro!

Shawne rests on the steps and starts singing "How Do I Say Goodbye to Yesterday."

ERIKA

Ro, we need to get him home before people start coming out.

ROMAN

Yeah. Go get the car and pull up right here.

EXT. SHAWNE'S HOUSE - DAY

The limousine pulls into the driveway to Shawne's house. As Tasha walks toward the door, Kayla is walking out.

TASHA

Hey KayKay... who's home?

KAYLA

Nobody. Mommy and Daddy went to Grandma's and Shawne should be home soon. I was about to go to my friend's house, but I'll wait here with you if you want me to.

TASHA

No, you go on. Can you let me in, and I'll wait for him. I'm sure his room is junky and needs cleaning.

KAYLA

(rolls her eyes)
You know it is.
(gives Tasha a key)
Here. Just leave it on my dresser.
I'll see you later.

Tasha enters the house and drops the key on Kayla's dresser.

Tasha then goes to Shawne's room, turns on the stereo and changes into one of his jerseys. Tasha lies on the bed for a while before she finally goes to the dresser and takes out the envelope.

She pours the contents on the bed and starts going through it. She looks at the pictures and sees where Shawne and Jazmin are together. Then she starts looking through the strips of papers. She is able to make sense of some of the messages.

She sees one that says "March 7th, 1992, you..." and then another one that says "always be my girl. I'll wear your chain always." Tasha moves the contents around and sees the chain Shawne used to always wear when they started talking.

She sees Jazmin's mother's letter and her expression softens.

She hears the front door open and for a while she ignores it.

Immediately she realizes it might be Shawne, she tries to stand up but it is too late. Shawne walks into the room.

SHAWNE

(he sees what she is
doing)

That's what we doin' now?

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Go through stuff to keep the beef
goin'?

Tasha throws some of the letters in his face.

TASHA

What's this shit? You been hidin'
stuff from me!

SHAWNE

Tasha, that stuff is old.

TASHA

Shawne, we have been together since
May of '88. This stuff is
postmarked June '88. March, April,
May, June. We just started talkin',
but we were together!

Shawne sighs and sits down in a chair. He gestures for Tasha to sit and she sits on the bed.

SHAWNE

I don't wanna argue with you
anymore. So, without yellin',
anything you wanna know, I'll tell
you.

TASHA

I wanna know everything.

SHAWNE

So back in the day, just before we
moved back out here, I met this
girl... Jazmin. And much like you
and I did, we connected instantly.

(MORE)

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

We were young, and she wasn't allowed to have boyfriends, but she would be at her friend's house on weekends, and that's when we spent time together. Well, Mommy got sick, and we came back here. Before I left, she and I decided on March 7, 1992, to reunite at the top of the Statue of Liberty and be together again.

TASHA

(holding the chain)
And this chain?

SHAWNE

We exchanged necklaces, promising to never take them off until our reunion.

TASHA

The letters?

SHAWNE

She got my number from a friend. When she called, she asked me to write her everyday... So I did.

There is a long moment of deafening silence and tears roll down Tasha's eyes. She stares out the window.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Tasha, baby... it means nothing to me anymore... I-

TASHA

(cuts him off)
Stop it, Shawne! It means everything to you! It's your history. Remember? You've been dishonest with me since the day we met. There's a reason you kept this, this stuff all this time. If I wouldn't have found out about this now, you might have went to that damn reunion... kept your damn pact with her, all the while I'm at school being the loyal and loving girlfriend to ya ass!

SHAWNE

It's the past, Tasha. I promise. I took that chain off three years ago.

TASHA

Yeah, and filled your void of her
with me by givin' me the same gift
you got her!

Tasha pulls off the chain on her neck and throws it at
Shawne. She stands up and puts on her cloths, grabs her bag
and heads for the door.

SHAWNE

(following her and grabs
her arm)

Tasha, baby... no wait. We can work
this out. I messed up...

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

I was wrong. So wrong. But, baby,
we've come too far. Let's not give
up now.

Shawne is teary. He drops to his knees and holds her waist.

Tasha faces him, crying and stroking his hair.

TASHA

Shawne Thomas, I love you! Words
can't describe the love I feel for
you. From the moment I laid my eyes
on you, you had my heart. And the
way I feel, may never... will never
change. But like you said the other
day. History. And you want your
history to be your future. In order
for that to happen, your present
has to become your past, and no
matter how much I love you, I can't
be your second option. Goodbye
Shawne.

Tasha pulls herself away and leaves Shawne on the floor,
crying and calling for her to return.

INT. CAR - DAY

Crystal is driving while Jazmin is in the passenger's seat,
crying.

CRYSTAL

J, I know you got a lot to think
about, but we gotta decide on what
you're gonna do now.

JAZMIN

Crystal, I can't have a baby. I'll be two months pregnant soon. I need three hundred dollars now if I'm going to abort. And the longer I wait, the more costly it'll be.

CRYSTAL

Are you gonna tell Chris?

JAZMIN

I don't know. I know he wants a child, a son.

They arrive at Jazmin's and she is shaking with fear.

CRYSTAL

Jazmin, you gotta calm down. I'm here with you.

JAZMIN

I can't have a baby right now, Crystal. I can't.

CRYSTAL

Then here's what you do. Don't tell anyone. Ask Chris for money because yo wanna start buying books for college.

JAZMIN

I'll try.

CRYSTAL

It'll work. Stay at my house Friday. We'll go Saturday morning, rest on Sunday. All clear Monday.

JAZMIN

(nods)
Okay, I'll ask him.

INT. JAZMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Jazmin is on the phone.

JAZMIN

Hey, babe. Can you come over here soon? Thank you.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Jazmin opens the door and Chris enters.

CHRIS

What's up, girl? You know I got
business to handle, right?

Jazmin kisses him on the cheek.

JAZMIN

I know, but this is kinda important
to me. I need four hundred dollars.
I wanna start saving for my college
books.

CHRIS

Damn, Jazmin! College books cost
four hundred? Why you gotta get
them now?

JAZMIN

College is expensive and might cost
more later. But if I save up now,
then I'm ahead of the game.
Pleeeeeeease.

Jazmin runs her nails down his back and bites his neck.

CHRIS

When your mom's gettin' home?

JAZMIN

Later. Why? You still got that
business you need to handle?

CHRIS

It can wait. I gots some other
business to handle first.

Chris leads Jazmin toward her bedroom.

INT. CRYSTAL'S HOUSE - DAY

Jazmin is in Crystal's house but she isn't feeling fine. She
is curled up like a ball in excruciating pain.

CRYSTAL

I'm calling Dr. Jefferson's office
again. Sorry, Jaz.

JAZMIN

I feel like all my intestines are
being pulled.

Crystal drops the phone.

CRYSTAL

I'm still getting the answering
machine. I'm taking you to the
hospital, J.

JAZMIN

No! They'll contact my mom. No!
I'll tough it out until we go to
the clinic in the morning.

Crystal sits down beside her and pats her head.

CRYSTAL

Sorry, love.

SAME SCENE - NIGHT

Jaz wakes up in the middle of the night and finds herself in
a pool of blood. She shakes Crystal until she wakes up.

Crystal is shocked.

CRYSTAL

Jaz, I know you don't want me to,
but I gotta get my mom. She'll know
what to do.

INT. ER - NIGHT

Jazmin is wheeled into the ER with MS. WATTERS, Crystal's
mum, with her. Ms. Watters looks outside at Crystal.

MS. WATTERS

She just miscarried, but she will
be fine.

CRYSTAL

Hey, mum. Jazmin's mother can never
know about this.

MS. WATTERS

(sighs)
Okay. I understand.

She pulls the curtain shut.

EXT. SKATING RINK - DAY

Chris and Derek are in a corner of the skating rink drinking beer.

CHRIS
(frustrated)
Why my money keep comin' up short?

DEREK
Mines don't ever come up short,
cuz. I always give you what I owe
you. But if you always breakin'
Jazmin off witya bread... how you
don't see how you short?

Derek laughs at Chris.

DEREK (CONT'D)
You just gave her a hundred dollars
the other day right?

CHRIS
I gave her four hundred dollars the
other day so she could save up for
college books or some shit like
that.

DEREK
(stares at Chris)
Four hundred, not a hundred?

CHRIS
Yeah, nigga, damn. Why?

Derek bursts into a fit of laughter.

DEREK
And you believe that shit? Name me
one female, aside from Jazmin, of
course that wants to save up a
whole year in advance to some
college books? What school she
goin' to? What's her major?

Derek laughs even harder and Chris gets very annoyed.

DEREK (CONT'D)
C, where she at right now, hommie?

CHRIS
She home in bed. She don't feel
well. Nigga why? What is you
gettin' at?

DEREK

(laughing very hard)
 Okay. Okay. Okay. Let me break it
 down in simple math for you. Put
 one and one together, and it equals
 Jazmin getting pregnant. Divide
 four hundred dollars from your
 dumbass and that equals an
 abortion.

Derek continues to laugh and further infuriate Chris. Chris punches Derek in the jaw -- heavy.

CHRIS

(mimicking)
 Ha ha ha!

Derek is on the ground, holding his jaw.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So you think I'm a joke?

Chris brings out a 9mm Glock from his waist and stands over Derek, pointing the gun between his eyes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Jazmin killed my baby? She been
 playin' C-killla like a chump? Okay.

DEREK

Chris wait... no...

CHRIS

Shut the fuck up! You a joke
 anyway.

Chris smashes Derek in the eye with the butt of the gun.

Almost immediately, a police car drives up to them. Chris looks at the cop in the car and fires a shot toward him before taking off down the alley.

INT. CRYSTAL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jazmin and Crystal are in the living room, watching TV when a loud tapping on the window disturbs them.

CRYSTAL

(shocked)
 What's that?

Crystal goes toward the window and checks. As she opens the curtain, Chris jumps out from his hiding spot, startling her.

He motions for her to open the door and as soon as she does, he barges into the house and goes straight for Jazmin. He is breathing heavily.

JAZMIN

What are you doing here? Chris,
what's wrong?

CHRIS

I need to talk to you. Crystal, can
you excuse yourself?

Crystal looks at Jazmin and Jazmin nods her assent before Crystal leaves the room. Chris locks the door.

JAZMIN

Chris, what is wrong with you?

CHRIS

(sits on the bed)
Where you been?

Jazmin looks at him but says nothing.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Huh? Where the fuck you been? You
heard me! Because somebody told me
they saw you comin' out the goddamn
clinic yesterday?

Chris grabs Jazmin's throat and squeezes it.

JAZMIN

(gasping for air)
I... I had...

CHRIS

You gonna stop lying to me now! You
took my money and killed my baby? I
should kill you!

Chris lets go of her throat to get a better grip on it.

JAZMIN

(screams)
Crystal.

Crystal is outside the room and she picks her phone to dial 911. She tries to open the door but it is locked. She kicks the door and it flies open. Crystal runs toward Chris who is now on top of Jazmin. As she jumps on Chris, he uses his weight to hurl Crystal off him and she hits her head hard against the wall. She passes out. Chris grabs Jazmin by the wrists.

CHRIS
(deadly eyes)
You fucked up now!

He runs to the open window and jumps out into the darkness.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Crystal is standing by her locker. Derek walks toward her.

DEREK
Hey, good morning, Crystal. How are you?

CRYSTAL
(confused by his politeness)
Hey, I'm fine.

DEREK
Look, I know we haven't gotten along since the day we met, but I heard what happened with Chris, and I wanted to know if I could meet up with you and Jazmin and talk with y'all later.

CRYSTAL
Umm, yeah. We'll be at my house later today. You can stop by.

DEREK
(nods)
I'll be there.

Derek walks away and Crystal watches him.

CRYSTAL
(to herself)
Okay, who are you and what did you do with nasty-ass Derek?

Derek looks back and sees that Crystal is looking at him. He looks away.

DEREK
(mumbles)
Got her.

EXT. CRYSTAL'S HOUSE - LATER

Crystal and Jazmin sit on the porch as Derek drives up in his car, comes down and joins them.

DEREK

Hey, Jaz. Hey, Crystal.

CRYSTAL & JAZMIN

Hey.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

Derek, if you came to talk to me about or for Chris, forget it. I'm done. You'll be wasting time and breath.

DEREK

It's about him, but not for him. It's for me. I got a confession to make. Word got back to me that he snapped on y'all that night and it's my fault.

CRYSTAL

How is it your fault?

DEREK

That night we out and he was complainin' about his money not being right, so I started clownin' him about givin' all his money to you. So when he told me he gave you that money for college books, I started really baggin' on him, sayin' how you got an abortion, because who saves up for books for a year. When I said that, he socked me in the jaw, beat me down, shot at One Time when they pulled up, and ran off. I thought I was gonna die that night. But I never thought he would come at you like that. I had no idea what was really goin' on. I'm really sorry, and hope you will forgive me.

Jazmin stands up and hugs Derek.

JAZMIN

I don't blame you. Do you, Crys?

Crystal shakes her head.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

(shakes her head)

Chris is a maniac. I'm through with him.

DEREK

Me too. I haven't seen him since that night and I'm done with these streets too.

They are all quiet and staring at each other for a while.

CRYSTAL

Anything else?

DEREK

Yes. As a matter of fact there is. Some years back, you accused me of being a dog.

CRYSTAL

Yeah, I did... I'm sorry--

DEREK

(cuts in)

Hold on.

Jazmin smiles as she watches them.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Me and Kesha were together, but I saw a letter she wrote in class to another boy. Well, Michele found out that I saw the letter, and I'm guessin' they came up with a plan to get rid of me and save face for her. So Michele has me come to her house after school to talk about setting up a surprise party for Kesha.

CRYSTAL

(cuts in)

Derek, I know the story now. Jazmin told me. But why are you telling me this now?

DEREK

All these years I thought I couldn't stand you. I thought you was stuck up and on yourself. But the truth is, I think about you all the time. I like you, I wanna get to know you better.

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

And I want the opportunity to allow you to get to know me as well. The real Derek Johnson. And if that were to ever happen, you needed to know the truth about what really happened that day. I'm not asking you to answer me now, you may never answer it, but I put it out there. Hope to hear from you.

He gives Crystal a piece of paper with his number on it.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Enjoy the rest of your day.

Derek walks back to his car.

JAZMIN

(cheering)

That's my boy! He broke it down and left Crystal the Great speechless. So what you gonna do? The ball is in your court.

CRYSTAL

(smiles and shrugs,
looking at the number)

But he better stop walkin' away from me after speakin' like he the Mack.

JAZMIN

D-Mack.

The girls laugh.

INT. BUS - DAY

Shawne and Roman sit next to each other in a bus.

SHAWNE

You think she'll talk to me, Ro?

ROMAN

Shawne, look around this bus. You got your pick at any one, or even two of these girls. Not to mention the underclass shorties that are sweatin' you.

SHAWNE

You don't have these problems. Your girl stayed home this year to go wherever you go next year.

ROMAN

(jokingly)

Yeah, ya boy put that whip appeal on her. But on the real, Erika is my girl. You not with Tasha no more. The rules of loyalty and monogamy don't apply to you.

SHAWNE

(snaps fingers)

Four years. How she just let go just like that?

INT. DORM - DAY

Shawne and Roman follow another GIRL down the hallway and they stop in front of Room 212.

GIRL

This is her room.

The girl walks away.

SHAWNE

Hold on.

He takes a stick of gum from his pocket.

ROMAN

Ahh, Negro, please.

Roman knocks on the door but there's no answer. Shawne knocks it harder.

TASHA (O.S.)

Who is it?

SHAWNE

(disguises his voice)

Special delivery for Tasha Keyes.

As the door unlocks, Shawne steps to the side of the door, out of sight. Tasha opens the door and sees Roman. She is clutching to her satin robe.

TASHA

(confused and surprised)

Roman... what are you...?

Shawne steps in front of her and she's even more surprised.

TASHA (CONT'D)
 (dry and displeased)
 Shawne.

SHAWNE
 Hey, Tash. It's good to see you.

TASHA
 (looking away)
 Shawne... you shouldn't have come.

The door opens wider and a tall, dark-skinned, bald MAN in a towel stands next to her.

MAN
 (deep African dialect)
 Can we help you with something?

Shawne looks from the guy to Tasha and stares.

ROMAN
 Naw, my bad, partna. We at the
 wrong dorm. Let's roll, Cali.

Roman grabs Shawne and pulls him away. He continues to walk away even when he hears the door close.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Shawne taps a GUY sitting next to ASIA. He nods toward his empty seat beside Roman and the guy quickly moves there.

Shawne takes his place. Asia turns towards him and tucks her right leg under.

SHAWNE
 What's up, Asia.

ASIA
 Why it take you three years to
 speak to me, Shawne? We been in
 class. You seen me in the hallways,
 cheering for you at your games. I
 know you be seein' me looking at
 you. Don't you like lookin' at me?

Asia's miniskirt inches up as she readjusts herself, revealing some legs, then she opens up the legs.

SHAWNE

Yeah, I like what I see, Asia. You always been mad cool to me.

ASIA

(runs her nails up and down Shawne's bicep)
Just mad cool? You got a girlfriend, I forgot. Tasha, right? Don't she go to Penn State?

SHAWNE

We not together no more.

ASIA

Shawne, you don't have to lie to me. Remember, we just mad cool.

She let's her finger go down his chest and past his navel.

ASIA (CONT'D)

It's kinda hot in here. You might wanna take your jacket off.

She starts massaging between his legs. Shawne sits back and closes his eyes.

ASIA (CONT'D)

(whispers in his ear)
It's nice outside, but is it better inside? It feels like it would be. But what flava is it? Chocolate? Caramel? Don't answer. I'll find out for myself.

She kisses Shawne on the cheeks and then looks around the dark bus before putting her head down his jacket. Shawne's eyeballs roll backward but he tries to remain quiet.

INT. JAZMIN'S CAR - DAY

Jazmin looks in her side mirror and sees a suspicious black Chevy Blazer. She shakes it off and pulls up in front a a nail shop. The Blazer drives past her slowly and makes a right.

Crystal enters the car and Jazmin continues driving.

JAZMIN

Let me see your nails.

CRYSTAL
 (shows her nails)
 Where we goin'?

Jazmin looks in the rear view mirror. No Blazer.

JAZMIN
 To the mall. You know Derek works
 at Foot Locker now?

CRYSTAL
 I didn't know that.

JAZMIN
 Now you do.

EXT/INT. FOOT LOCKER - LATER

Jazmin parks the car and as they come down, she looks around for the Blazer but doesn't see it. Crystal sits on a bench in front of Foot Locker.

JAZMIN
 You comin' in?

CRYSTAL
 (shakes her head)
 Naw, I'll just sit here.

Jazmin goes in and talks to Derek. She points to Crystal sitting outside and they go to her.

DEREK
 What's up, Crystal? Come inside and
 pick out some shoes.

CRYSTAL
 I don't have the money to buy any
 right now.

DEREK
 So. Come inside anyway. I got you.

CRYSTAL
 (smirking)
 Didn't your mother tell you never to
 buy a girl shoes? She'll walk out
 your life in that same pair.

DEREK
 For that to happen, you'd have to
 be in my life first.

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

I don't remember you callin' me
after I gave you my number. That
makes us friends at the most,
right?

CRYSTAL

Yes, we are. I don't need any
tennis shoes, but I'll come inside.

INT. FOOD COURT - DAY

Jazmin, Crystal, and Derek are having lunch. Jazmin and Derek
wink at each other. A SHADOW watches them from a vantage
position.

JAZMIN

I gotta go to the bathroom. I'll be
right back.

CRYSTAL

I'll go with you.

JAZMIN

No. I'm good. It's just right
there. Keep Derek company.

Jazmin smiles slyly and walks away.

CRYSTAL

Ya'll think y'all slick.

DEREK

(smiling)
What?

The Shadow walks past Derek and Crystal, and follows Jazmin
to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jazmin is in one of the stalls when she hears the door open.

She finishes and comes out but sees no one. She also sees no
feet in the other stalls. As she washes her hand and turns to
grab a paper towel, she sees Chris. He stares at her blankly.

CHRIS

Hey, baby. Ain't you glad to see
your man?

JAZMIN

Why are you here, Chris? You can't be around me. And I'm not your baby!

CHRIS

Take it easy, Jazzy, I'm not gonna hurt you. If I wanted to, it would have been done already. I just wanted to see you up close. And make no mistake about it, you still my girl.

(strokes her hair)

You see, you took shit away from me I can't get back.

JAZMIN

I'll repay you your money and give you the chain back.

CHRIS

(evil demeanor)

What about my baby, goddammit!

He grabs her by the arm and pushes her against a stall door.

JAZMIN

(yells)

Chris! You're hurtin' me!

CHRIS

(squeezes her cheeks)

Shut the fuck up! I know your every move. I'm watching every step you take. You still belong to me and if I catch another nigga around you, both y'all gone before he even sniffs the kitty.

He lets go of her and walks out the bathroom. Jazmin slides to the floor and cries.

INT. LOCKER - NIGHT

Roman and Shawne are in the locker room, getting dressed for their party.

SHAWNE

Ro, we hadn't talked about this all year... where you goin' next year?

ROMAN

Honestly, I wanna go where you go. I feel unstoppable with you. But I know Erika wants to go to Miami. She got family, rich family, down there. We been talking about gettin' an apartment and engaged while we in school.

SHAWNE

Dude, Erika is your future. And Miami... you would kill 'em down there. It's time we make moves separately so when pro scouts come along, they don't knock us because it's unknown how we perform without the other.

Shawne pauses and looks at Roman who nods.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Might as well let you know I'm headed to SC, baby! Imma be a Trojan!

ROMAN

(shouts)

I knew it! Come along, we got a party to attend.

SHAWNE

Wit some real mature women and more of my friends.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

The celebration party is happening in the gym. Shawne gets a lot of attention and praises as well as questions. He takes control easily and enjoys the moment. Suddenly, he freezes when he looks across the room and sees Tasha. He excuses himself and goes to her. The music is loud so she leans towards his ear.

TASHA

Hi Shawne.

SHAWNE

How are you, Tasha?

TASHA

(unable to hear him)

Huh?

Shawne takes her by the hand to the back of the hallway where it is less noisy. Tasha hugs him and it lingers.

SHAWNE

How you been?

TASHA

(nervous and fidgeting)
Congratulations on the game tonight. Ba... Shawne, you were spectacular.

SHAWNE

(leans against the wall)
You were there?

TASHA

(nods)
I couldn't miss your final high school game.

TASHA (CONT'D)

I always knew you would end it with a state championship too. What school you goin' to next year?

SHAWNE

Yet to decide... final four - Michigan, USC, Miami, and... Penn State.

TASHA

How's your parents and Kayla?

SHAWNE

They're good. Kayla... the lil' dusty-ass boys startin' to come around chasin' after my baby sis. It pisses me off.

TASHA

I bet she is beautiful!

SHAWNE

I bet they miss you.

TASHA

Shawne, about that day at my dorm-

SHAWNE

(cuts in)
Naw, Tasha, you don't have to-

TASHA

(grabs his hand)

No, Shawne. Listen to me. You are the best thing that has ever come into my life. No one can or will ever change that. I know you never actually cheated on me, but you hurt me just the same by lying to me. That guy, Emmon, he was everything you weren't. At first I thought that was a good thing, but I quickly found out he wasn't for me. I just didn't want to be alone. And when you stood there at my door, so many emotions ran through me. I was happy to see you, scared because another man was there with me, afraid that you would flip out, and glad at the same time that you were hurt the way I was hurt by you.

Shawne's eyes are filled with tears.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Shawne, I will love you into another lifetime. But it could never be the way we once were.

SHAWNE

Tasha, baby, it can be better than before.

Tasha caresses his cheek and kisses him on the lips.

TASHA

(in his ears)

I needed to hear that. Maybe one day, Shawne Thomas.

She wipes a tear from his eyes and walks away.

SHAWNE

(mumbles and sighs)

Love you more.

INT. SHAWNE'S ROOM - DAY

Roman enters Shawne's room, jumps on the bed and shakes Shawne awake.

ROMAN
 (pulls the cover)
 Shawne! Wake up!

Shawne jumps up.

SHAWNE
 What the... You play too much.
 Payback is coming.

Shawne stretches and yawns.

ROMAN
 Man, get up. It's beautiful
 outside. Let's take a ride, go to
 the mall or somethin'.

SHAWNE
 Aiight, let me shower and get
 dressed.
 (thinks for a moment)
 Ain't something supposed to happen
 today?

ROMAN
 (shrugs)
 Not that I can think of.

SHAWNE
 Strange. It feels like it. I'll be
 back in a minute.

EXT. SHAWNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Shawne and Roman stand outside and make small talks. Shawne is distracted by the clear blue sky. His eyes drift to the New York skyline.

SHAWNE
 (realizing)
 The Statue of Liberty... Ro, what's
 today?

ROMAN
 Saturday.

SHAWNE
 The date. What's the date?

ROMAN
 Umm, the seventh. Why?

Shawne looks at his watch.

SHAWNE

It's 12:21. Yo we gotta get to the island as soon as possible!

Shawne jumps in Roman's car while Roman is in the driver's seat, ready to roll.

ROMAN

The Cali Girl from BK. I gotcha.

EXT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

Shawne steps onto the highest part of the statue. He looks around until he sees a GIRL holding a white rose and looking out at the skyline. He taps her shoulder.

SHAWNE

Jazmin?

The girl turns around. It isn't Jazmin.

GIRL

No.

SHAWNE

I'm sorry. Excuse me.

Shawne finds a place to sit and watches couples come and go, people make proposals.

The girl with the rose is approached by a GUY. She's happy to see him and she gives him the flower. The guy goes to his knees and presents her with a ring. As the sun begins to set, Shawne stands up and takes his leave. No sight of Jazmin.

INT. JAZMIN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jazmin is in her room, staring at the chain from Shawne, a picture of them and the calendar.

JAZMIN

(to herself)

Today was the day. What's he doin' right now?

(closes her eyes)

Lord, I come before you right now asking for Your Peace on Shawne's behalf. I know he thinks that I forgot the pact. I didn't.

(MORE)

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

Please God, show him a sign that I miss him and want to be with him one day soon. In Your Son's name, I pray... Amen.

She looks at the picture again.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

I wish this day never ended.

Jazmin wears the chain.

INT. SHAWNE'S ROOM - DAY

Shawne enters his room, sad at first and then angry.

SHAWNE

I don't care no more! She should have been there! Can't call her! Can't write her! I wasted my time chasin' a damn pipe dream!

He screams and throws the letters and everything in his top drawer all over his room.

He bangs his door shut and sits on the edge of his bed, breathing hard and angry. While covering his face, he sees something shiny on the floor. He picks it up and sees it is Jazmin's chain. He wears the chain as well.

LATER

Shawne is on his bed, lost in thought. Suddenly, he stands up, picks up a paper and pen and goes to his reading table to write. He pours out his heart as he writes.

SHAWNE (V.O.)

Dearest Jazmin, Hi. I know it's been a long time since we last spoke, and I can't make any excuses for not writing to you as I promised. So much has happened to me in the last five years. Some bad, but mostly good. I'm sure you've had some wonderful times as well. I went to the Statue of Liberty as promised. At first, I was upset you didn't show up. But I realized maybe you just weren't able to get there. It wasn't our time. I'm gonna keep this short.

(MORE)

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

I think of you quite often, and I hope this letter finds you in the best of health and spirits. You and your family are always in my prayers. You can beep me anytime at 201-555-3055. Hope to hear from you soon. Shawne

(with an E)

INT. JAZMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Jazmin's mother, Anita, sits in the living room with her daughter.

ANITA

Jazzy baby, I'm so proud of you. High school graduate with honors. Now UCLA to study law. But that boy... he's got you paranoid. You need to get away from here.

Anita gives Jazmin an envelope. Jazmin opens it and it contains a round-trip ticket to New York plus a thousand dollars in cash.

JAZMIN

(hugs her mother)

Thank you, Mommy. I need a break like you said.

ANITA

I know you do. A month in the Big Apple and back home.

Jazmin goes to her bedroom, joyous as she makes a call.

JAZMIN

(on the phone)

Girl, guess what? I just got a round-trip ticket to New York for a month.

(she squeals)

I want you to help me call Derek so he can get Shawne's address from Tiffany. Tell Derek to be discreet. I want it to be a surprise.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jazmin is in a bedroom specially prepared for her when her phone rings. She answers it.

ANITA (V.O.)
 Jazzy, how are you? Are you
 enjoying yourself?

JAZMIN
 I am, Mommy. Daddy's house is huge!
 Got to see all the family.

ANITA (V.O.)
 That's good, love. You got mail.

JAZMIN
 From where?

ANITA (V.O.)
 From UCLA, maybe your fall semester
 schedule. And from Shawne Thomas.

JAZMIN
 (exclaims)
 Shawne! Ohh, Mommy open and see if
 he left a number please?

ANITA (V.O.)
 Oh! He did. I'll text the number to
 you... who is this guy, Jaz?

JAZMIN
 An old friend. I'll explain when I
 get back.

ANITA (V.O.)
 Well, okay, I can hear the
 excitement in your voice. Night and
 day difference when Chris's name is
 brought up.

JAZMIN
 Bye, Mommy. I love you.

ANITA (V.O.)
 Love you too.

As soon as Jazmin drops the call, her mother's text enters
 with Shawne number. She quickly calls him, but he doesn't
 answer. She calls over and over again but no answer.

SAME SCENE - LATER

Jazmin goes to the living and sees her FATHER, relaxing.

JAZMIN

Daddy, can you take me to Jersey tomorrow?

FATHER

Jersey? For what?

JAZMIN

To see my friend, pleeease?

FATHER

Jaz, I'll be in meetings all day with clients tomorrow. But what I can do is take the subway into the office and leave the car with you.

JAZMIN

I don't know my way around Jersey.

FATHER

Who does? Get a map or have one of your cousins go with you.

EXT. SHAWNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jazmin is standing in front of Shawne's house with her cousin, JASON. She rings the doorbell and DEBRA answers the door.

DEBRA

Hello. Can I help you?

JAZMIN

Hi, is Shawne home?

DEBRA

No, he isn't. Whom shall I say stopped by?

JAZMIN

(disappointed)
My name is Jazmin.

DEBRA

(trying to remember)
Did you go to school with him?

JAZMIN

No, ma'am. I was a friend of his back in California.

DEBRA

Oh! Jazmin... Jazmin Davis, right?

JAZMIN
 (smiling)
 Yes. It's me.

DEBRA
 Please come on in.

INT. SHAWNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jazmin and Jason sit down with Debra.

DEBRA
 Jazmin, I'm sorry to tell you,
 honey, but Shawne went to Los
 Angeles on a campus visit just this
 morning.

JAZMIN
 (sighs)
 A day late and dollar short.

DEBRA
 I know. I'm sorry. But if you don't
 mind I'd like to talk with you for
 a bit. Would you like something to
 drink?

JASON
 Sure. Water, please.

DEBRA
 Kayla!

KAYLA
 (walks in)
 Yeah.

DEBRA
 KayKay, this is Jazmin, a friend of
 your brother's and her cousin
 Jason. Can you grab them some water
 from the fridge please?

KAYLA
 Jazmin from California?

JAZMIN
 Yes. You remember me?

KAYLA
 (stone-faced)
 I remember my brother crying when
 we left and I had to console him.

Kayla walks out. Debra lowers her head and the room gets very quiet. Kayla returns with the water.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

You had that lil' boy cryin' and whupped at thirteen!

(laughing)

Yeah, I remember when we met.

Kayla and Jazmin hug.

JAZMIN

You've gotten so big, I thought you were mad with me for a second there.

DEBRA

They both play those sarcastic mean-muggin' games when the other has company.

KAYLA

Momma, Shawne don't be playin' though.

Jazmin explores the house, the trophy case with many trophies and medals. Next are Shawne's pictures and there she sees the prom picture with Tasha.

DEBRA

Don't my baby look good in a tux?

Jazmin slides her thumb over Tasha and smiles.

JAZMIN

Yes, he does. From a cute boy to a handsome guy.

DEBRA

So, how did you and Shawne meet?

JAZMIN

Well, we met at the arcade when we were thirteen. At first, I thought maybe we would be the typical boyfriend/girlfriend couple, but he was far from typical, not just any average boy. I really, really liked him. But then, y'all moved away. So we decided we would reunite in March of this year, but I was still in LA.

(MORE)

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

Now I'm in Brooklyn for the month
visiting my father and family.
Coming to see him was definitely on
my priority list.

DEBRA

He hasn't let go of the possibility
of one day seeing you again. And
I'm sure you play a big reason in
why he's going to USC too.

JAZMIN

(excited)
He's going to SC?

DEBRA

Yep. Four year full scholarship.

Jazmin smiles.

EXT. JAZMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Shawne pulls into the driveway and sees another car there. He
comes down and rings the bell. No answer. He rings it again
and is turning away when the door opens.

ANITA

May I help you?

SHAWNE

Hello. Is Jazmin home?

ANITA

(straight-faced)
She is not. Whom might I say
stopped by?

SHAWNE

Oh, I apologize. I'm Shawne. Her
friend from-

ANITA

I know exactly who you are, Mr.
Thomas.

SHAWNE

(nods)
I'm sorry to bother you.

Shawne starts to walk away.

ANITA

No wait. Please come in.

INT. JAZMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Anita opens the door wider and Shawne goes in and follows her lead the rest of the way into the house nervously.

ANITA

Please have a seat. Would you like something to drink?

SHAWNE

(forces a smile)
No, thank you, ma'am.

ANITA

I know you're very nervous around me right now... I can't say that I blame you.

SHAWNE

Ms. Davis, excuse me for interrupting you, but I understand that you were protecting your daughter at the time. As a parent, a mother, that's your duty.

ANITA

But my words... I shouldn't have been so cruel and harsh. I'm sorry.

SHAWNE

Yes, some of those words tore me down, but I built up stronger afterwards. I forgave you a long time ago.

Shawne extends his hand and they shake.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

When will Jaz be back?

ANITA

Oh shoot! I forgot to tell you. She's in New York visiting her dad for three more weeks.

SHAWNE

(breathes out)
Ironic.

ANITA

How so?

SHAWNE

I'm here in LA speaking with her
mom...

ANITA

And she's probably made her way by
now, to Jersey, doing the same with
yours.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Shawne turns a corner on the street and bumps into Chris
although they don't recognize each other immediately.

CHRIS

Yo, cuz, watch ya step!

SHAWNE

Yo, my man, you need to be more
careful too.

Chris stares at Shawne.

CHRIS

Hold up. Is that my nigga Shawne?
What up, homie?

SHAWNE

Chris?

CHRIS

Yeah, cuz, it's me. What you doing
out here? And on this side of town.

SHAWNE

Getting ready for school. Then came
by to see Jaz.

CHRIS

Oh, so you kept in touch with her
all these years?

SHAWNE

(suspicious)
Naw, I hadn't.

CHRIS

So how she doin' now?

SHAWNE

(cautious)
Didn't see her. You seen Derek?

CHRIS

Not lately. Aiight then, cuz, my girl stay over this way too. I'm out.

Chris walks away very fast.

INT. JAZMIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shawne is back from helping Ms. Davis shop. The shopping bag is on the table when the doorbell rings.

ANITA

You can answer it. It's for you.

Shawne opens the door and right in front of him is Crystal and Derek.

DEREK

(surprised)

Shawne, answering the door? What is going on?

CRYSTAL

(teasing)

Did y'all miss each other?

Shawne and Derek hug each other tightly and then he hugs Crystal. They enter the house, immediately chatting.

SHAWNE

Okay, okay, so before anything else, when did this come about?

He gestures at Derek and Crystal together.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

Before you answer that, Crystal, it's okay, you can say, Shawne you told me so.

CRYSTAL

(laughs)

Shawne, you told me so.

DEREK

It's been a few months now. We takin' our time with it.

SHAWNE

(fist-bumps Derek)

Look at my boy D! Sounds like you growin' up.

EXT. JAZMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Derek and Shawne say their goodbyes and get in their cars.

They both arrive at the intersection close to the house.

Shawne goes as it turns yellow, but it turns red before Derek goes.

INT. DEREK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Derek waits for the light to change. Chris sits up from the back seat.

CHRIS

Fool, don't you know you should
always check the backseat before
gettin' in a car?

DEREK

(startled)
What the hell!

Chris pulls out his gun and loads a round into the chamber.

CHRIS

Relax, nigga. I'll be askin' the
questions. Lie to me and there
won't be no pistol whippin' this
time. What' he doin' back here?

DEREK

He's gettin' ready to go to school
out here.

CHRIS

You tell him about me and Jazmin?
(pushes the barrell to
Derek's head)
Did you?

DEREK

(yells)
No!

CHRIS

Good. Don't tell him shit! And he
better not get near her, or his
football career will be cut short
and your life over! You alive now
'cause I allow it. You make one
false move.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 (presses barrel against
 his temple)
 Bang, bang, nigga!

Chris jumps down from the car. Derek inhales, exhales, and speeds off.

INT. AUNT SHERYL'S HOUSE - DAWN

Shawne returns from hanging out with some of his friends at past midnight. As he enters the house, he meets Aunt Sheryl and Tiffany in the living room, crying. He is surprised.

AUNT SHERYL
 Shawne, baby...

Tiffany stands up and hugs Shawne.

AUNT SHERYL (CONT'D)
 Shawne... they were in a bad
 accident.

Shawne looks at Aunt Sheryl, not wanting to believe what he is hearing. His heart pounds heavily.

SHAWNE
 (swallow)
 Who?
 (voice cracking)
 Who?

AUNT SHERYL
 Grandma called us. A semi-truck
 jackknifed on the highway and the
 car was crushed. Your mom was
 airlifted to the hospital in
 critical condition.

SHAWNE
 Dad and Kayla?

Tiffany shakes her head and Shawne breaks down in tears.

INT. SHAWNE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Shawne lays in bed, unable to sleep. His phone rings but he doesn't pick. The phone continues to ring until Shawne answers it.

SHAWNE
 (low tone)
 Hello?
 (MORE)

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

(silence)

Hello?

TASHA (V.O.)

I'm at the corner... can I come over?

SHAWNE

Yeah. Sure.

Shawne wears a short and t-shirt. While he is wearing his house shoes, someone knocks and he opens the door. Tasha walks in and hugs Shawne. She's been crying.

TASHA

I'm sorry, baby.

Shawne leads her into his room and they sit on the bed.

SHAWNE

Erica told you?

TASHA

My mom called me. And I came as fast as I could to be with you.

Shawne stares at the ceiling.

SHAWNE

(cold)

And your man didn't mind you coming?

TASHA

(sighs)

Shawne, not now. They were my family too.

SHAWNE

(sighs)

You're right. They loved you like their own. I apologize.

TASHA

How do you feel?

SHAWNE

I feel like I lost everything. My parents. My lil' sis... you. I don't even wanna go to school now or ever pick up a football again.

TASHA

Shawne, you have to go to school.
Football is your life, your future.
Baby, your family is gone from
here, but you didn't lose them.
They live within you. They'll
always be right here.

She touches his chest.

SHAWNE

(rolls to his side to look
at her)
But you... I lost you too.

TASHA

Shawne, we chose life paths that
didn't include the other. At first,
it pissed me off. I felt as though
you used me to pass the time until
you found her again... but you
didn't. You truly loved me. And I
know you love me to this day with
your whole heart and soul.

SHAWNE

If you know this, why aren't we
together now?

TASHA

Because I love you. I loved you
enough to let you go.

SHAWNE

But here we are. We came back to
one another. So it's meant to be.

TASHA

But we're not back together because
of being in love. If I would have
fought to keep you as my man, and
won, I still lose. Do you know why?

SHAWNE

Because there's no closure between
she and I, and you would never have
my total heart.

TASHA

(sighs)
I couldn't have said it any better.

SHAWNE

So you believe you and I should be together, but you're telling me to be with Jazmin?

TASHA

No. You just said it. You need closure of that chapter in your life. You know what I am telling you?

SHAWNE

What?

TASHA

I'm telling my first love that I'll always love him and that I'm here for him in his time of need.

SHAWNE

Will you always?

TASHA

(smiles)
Forever.

SHAWNE

Can you hold him tonight so he can sleep?

Tasha kicks off her shoes and joins Shawne in bed. He rests his head between her breasts. He can hear her heart beating.

INT. ROMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Shawne is helping Roman pack for Miami.

SHAWNE

So you really would have stayed if I stayed?

ROMAN

Hell naw! That was some pysch 101. It worked too.

SHAWNE

I'm gonna miss you, Ro. See you in a national championship or in New York when you come in second place for the Heisman to me.

ROMAN

Just for that, when I win, I will
name you in my speech.

INT. SHAWNE'S ROOM - DAY

Shawne is on the phone for a long time. He dials one last
number. Jazmin answers the call.

SHAWNE

Hey, Jazzy.

JAZMIN (V.O.)

Shawne! I tried over and over to
contact you.

SHAWNE

I know. I stayed away from the
phone. So much was going on. I just
needed time to think and sort
things out. I'm sorry. I wasn't
trying to shut you out.

JAZMIN (V.O.)

I understand. It's okay. My mom
offers her condolences to you. We
all do. I got to see your sister
and meet your mother while I was
there. She was so sweet.

SHAWNE

Me and your mom were wondering that
while I was there. We sat and
talked. She was great.

JAZMIN (V.O.)

I hope there will be more times
like that with me included, of
course.

SHAWNE

That's why I'm calling you now.
I'll be there in two weeks for
good.

JAZMIN (V.O.)

(excited)
I can't wait, baby.

SHAWNE

I've missed you so much.

JAZMIN (V.O.)

I missed you too. There's so much I have to tell you, but I wanna be face-to-face.

SHAWNE

So do I. Jaz, it's been a long day. I gotta get some rest. Can you call Derek and let him know, I want you, him, and Crystal to pick me up on the twenty-fifth. I'll send the flight details to you.

JAZMIN

Okay, baby. Rest well.

The call ends. Shawne stares at the chain on his neck in the mirror.

INT. JAZMIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris breaks into Jazmin's House and while snooping around, he sees Shawne's flight details.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Shawne stands in front of the burial ground with three headstones for his father, mother, and Kayla.

EXT. STORE - DAY

Derek is inside his car in front of the store when Chris taps his window.

CHRIS

Get out here now.

Derek comes down from the car and Chris stands in his face.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You been in hidin' from me?

Derek says nothing.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Oh, okay, it's like that? Check this out, I know what's what already, so I ain't gonna kill you. But I wanna know what you know. Or I'll have to take something away you care about.

Chris stares into the store where Crystal is making purchases.

DEREK
Stall out, Chris.

CHRIS
Nigga, what?

Chris starts walking toward the store.

DEREK
Aaight damn! What?

CHRIS
(comes back)
What you know?

DEREK
He comes in tomorrow. I think at 2:20, landing.

CHRIS
You think? Try 12:30. That's your only slip up. Lie again, think again, and Crystal is gone. Make sure y'all be at the Gardens tomorrow by three. Don't get slick, nigga!

Chris disappears.

INT. ARRIVALS - DAY

Crystal and Jazmin are in front, waiting for the passengers to come out. Derek is looking around the airport, hoping to sight Chris, but he is unlucky. The gate opens and the passengers troop out. Jazmin and Crystal focus on making out Shawne.

CRYSTAL
(exclaims)
There he is!

Shawne looks across the hall and also sees Jazmin.

JAZMIN
Shawne!

Shawne moves toward her. As he walks past a row of seats, a hooded Chris stands up from one. He drops his hood and pulls a gun out. Shawne is smiling at Jazmin and from behind him, Chris is also smiling at Jazmin.

JAZMIN (CONT'D)

Chris, no!

DEREK & CRYSTAL

Shawne!

Chris fires the shot and hits Shawne in the left side of his back. Shawne hits the floor very hard.

In the midst of the pandemonium, people try to find a place to hide. Chris moves forward, ready to fire another shot into Shawne when TWO AIRPORT OFFICERS fire two shots that kill Chris immediately.

INT. SPORTS GYM - DAY

Shawne opens his eyes. His vision is hazy.

SHAWNE

Am I dead?

VICTOR (V.O.)

If you were, you wouldn't be asking, son.

SHAWNE

Dad?

VICTOR (V.O.)

It's me.

SHAWNE

Where are you?

KAYLA (V.O.)

Right here, big brother. Me, Mommy, and Daddy.

SHAWNE

I can't see you.

DEBRA (V.O.)

Look closer. Slowly. Concentrate.

Shawne looks intently and his family appears before him.

SHAWNE

How did I get here?

VICTOR

Get where, Shawne? You haven't gone anywhere.

SHAWNE
But the accident?

DEBRA
The accident only took our bodies,
but our souls are forever alive in
God's kingdom.

SHAWNE
So I'm in the Kingdom of heaven?

VICTOR
No, Shawne. You're alive.

KAYLA
Shawne, we live within you. Forever
in your heart.

SHAWNE
It's so lonely without y'all. I
just wanna be with you guys again.

VICTOR
No, Shawne. It's not your time. You
still have work to do. Lives to
touch.

DEBRA
Live your life to the fullest.
Greatness lies ahead of you, baby.
We're always right here with you.

SHAWNE
(understanding)
God kept me because my work isn't
done here, and my family will
forever dwell within me.
(smiling)
I love you so much.

VICTOR, DEBRA & KAYLA
We love you too.

They fade away.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Derek sits by the bedside talking to an unresponsive Shawne.

DEREK
This wasn't supposed to happen. Not
to you.

(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)

Ever since we were kids, if you were around, I knew everything would be okay. You had my back. And you kept me straight. But once you left, I was lost. I started hangin' wit Chris's dumbass, makin' that fast dough. It's my fault you in here right now. All I had to do was stand up to him. But he threatened to kill me, Jaz, and Crystal if I didn't tell him when you were comin'. Now I'd do anything to trade places with you. I should've been willin' to die for you... I know you would have.

(touches his chest)

I love you, homie. See you tomorrow.

Derek leaves the room. A few minutes later, Shawne begins to recover.

SHAWNE

(mumbles)

I love you too, D.

His eyes blink for a few seconds and then shut again. After a few minutes, he opens his eyes and looks around. He sees a NURSE and DOCTOR walk into the room.

NURSE

(checking his vitals)

Hello. You slept quite well.

DOCTOR

Hello, Shawne. Do you know where you are right now?

SHAWNE

I'm in a hospital.

DOCTOR

What's the last thing you recall.

SHAWNE

(closes his eyes)

Seeing Jazmin, then blacking out. What happened?

DOCTOR

Mr. Thomas, you were shot. When you fell, you hit your head pretty hard and fell conscious.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Derek looks up from his game and out of the window.

DEREK
Shawne, check this out.

Shawne looks out of the window and sees a Jazmin in a Carolina blue outfit gesturing for him to come out.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Wait a minute. Let's make sure
they're lookin' at us.
(points to himself)
Who me?

Jazmin shakes her head no and Crystal nods yes.

DEREK (CONT'D)
(points at Shawne)
Him?

Jazmin nods, excited.

EXT. ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

Derek and Shawne walk outside. Derek and Crystal hug and kiss each other. Shawne stands in front of Jazmin and gazes into her eyes.

SHAWNE
How you doin'? I'm Shawne... with
an E.

JAZMIN
(smiles)
Hi, I'm Jazmin.

SHAWNE
Hey, Jaz-

JAZMIN
I like the way you say my name.

SHAWNE
Do you have a man?

JAZMIN
Why, do you have a girl?

SHAWNE
I'm lookin' for one.

JAZMIN

(looks at her watch)
Well, I'm not too busy, I got a
little free time for you, I guess.

SHAWNE

You guess?

He pulls her closer and kisses her.

DEREK

Go get a room.

CRYSTAL

Come on, baby. Let's leave them
alone.

Crystal clutches Derek's arm and they walk toward the car.

JAZMIN

(looks at Shawne)
I love you, Shawne Thomas!

SHAWNE

I know you knew I was the guy of
your dreams the day you met me. I
heard it all, baby. And it's okay.
The past is the past. We're here
now.

Jazmin's eyes wells up.

SHAWNE (CONT'D)

(wipes her tears)
This right here... me and you...
its meant to be, most definitely!

Shawne takes her hand and kisses her. They walk toward the
car and their friends, smiling.

FADE OUT.