

A father's love

Bernard Mersier

**Character breakdown: Characters can be doubled****Teenage Tiffany**

Sixteen-years-old, African-American. She's been a victim of molestation since she was a child, affecting her behavior in school, making people think she's easy to sleep with, having no idea how close she is to suicide.

**Michael**

Tiffany's pedophile father.

**Vivian**

Tiffany's naive mother, only focused on making sure Michael is satisfied.

**Teenage Bernard**

Sixteen-years-old, African-American. He's the new kid in school who recently moved from California. He has extreme anger issues because of what his father put his mother through.

**Francine**

Bernard's overprotecting mother, who would give her life for her son.

**Earl**

Bernard's drug addicted father.

**Kevin**

African-American. He's the school clown.

**Derrick**

African-American. He's the school bully.

**Officer****Narrator****Tiffany**

She no longer suffers from the pain in her past.

**Bernard**

After what he went through with Tiffany, he no longer has the anger issues he suffered from.

ACT IScene I

*On a silent night inside of a well put together room for a teenage girl. Cringed up under a blanket whimpering softly with tears coming from her eyes is TEENAGE TIFFANY. She was just raped by her father.*

*Her father MICHAEL is standing by the door zipping up his jeans satisfied.*

MICHAEL

This is so much easier than dealing with your mother.

*She buries her face in the pillow ashamed her father enjoys raping her every other night, and there's no one who she can share the horror with.*

VIVIAN

(Off stage)

Michael, are you on your way to bed?!

MICHAEL

In a second! I'm locking up the house!

VIVIAN

(Off stage)

Hurry up!

*Proud he's about to shower then engage in sexual activities with Vivian, he winks at Teenage Tiffany licking his lips.*

MICHAEL

Don't even think about trying to tell your mother. Because as long as I stay doing to her what I do to you, she'll never believe you. Besides...why would a father rape his own child?

*He walks off stage humming.*

*Lifting her head from the pillow with red eyes sniffing, she reaches on her nightstand for her diary and pen. Opening the book, a tear falls onto the page as she begins writing.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

How can a father take what's precious from his own

child? This isn't right, but who would believe me? God, please send me a sign. Your child can't endure this abuse much longer. Just send me a sign, so I know it'll be okay.

*Placing the diary back on the nightstand, she curls up under her blanket unable to sleep, unsure if he'll return.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene II**

*Francine and Teenage Bernard just moved into their new house. Down in the basement, TEENAGE BERNARD is covered in sweat wearing a pair of shorts, taking his aggression out on the punching bag. He takes a few more swings, and then takes a break.*

*Picking up his water bottle taking a sip, anger outlines his face breathing heavy, lowering his head.*

*FRANCINE comes downstairs wearing something casual, pausing at the bottom of the stairs looking at him.*

FRANCINE

Are you okay?

*Taking another sip from the bottle, he turns facing her, wiping the sweat from his face.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

...Why wouldn't I be okay?

FRANCINE

I'm glad you found another outlet to release your anger.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Ma, I don't have anger issues.

FRANCINE

Who do you expect to believe that lie?

*Placing the bottle down, he walks back to the punching bag cracking his knuckles, sucking his teeth.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

It's not a lie.

*Knowing her son better than he knows himself, she walks over to him placing a hand on his shoulder.*

FRANCINE

Son.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Ma, I'm okay. Just let me get back to my workout.

FRANCINE

Let it go. What happened in California has nothing to do with Detroit.

TEENAGE BERNARD

(Annoyed)

Why do you think there's something wrong?

FRANCINE

Look me in my eyes, and tell me you're okay?

*He turns around with his head down.*

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

Look at me.

TEENAGE BERNARD

(Sad)

Why?

FRANCINE

No matter what happened out there, I'm still the same woman who loves you, and would die for you at the drop of a dime.

*Slowly lifting his head, his tears fall to the floor looking in the eyes of his mother.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

...It wasn't right.

FRANCINE

I had to provide for my child. I have no regrets.

TEENAGE BERNARD

I understand. I just...I just hate the fact there was nothing I could do.

*Comforting her son because she feels his pain more than he does, she smiles giving him a kiss on the forehead.*

FRANCINE

You're doing something now. You're being strong for your mother.

*He blushes, turning his head to the side.*

TEENAGE BERNARD  
Okay.

FRANCINE  
Okay?

TEENAGE BERNARD  
Yeah, okay.

*She puts her hands up as if she's ready to box.*

FRANCINE  
Don't make me beat the brakes off you.

*He puts his hands up surrendering, taking a few steps back laughing.*

TEENAGE BERNARD  
Okay.

FRANCINE  
Are you ready for school?

TEENAGE BERNARD  
I guess.

FRANCINE  
You guess? Where's the positive attitude?

TEENAGE BERNARD  
Ma, you know as well as I do, it's about to be a bunch of pretend tough guys, and hot to trot---

*She places a finger to his lips.*

FRANCINE  
Hot to trot, what?

TEENAGE BERNARD  
...I'm sorry.

FRANCINE  
What did I tell you about women?

TEENAGE BERNARD  
Truth or lie you respect her because you don't know her.

FRANCINE  
That's my boy. Are you hungry?

TEENAGE BERNARD

I'll probably get something after my workout.

*She gives him a soft right hook to the jaw, and he turns his head smiling.*

FRANCINE

Work on that defense. If I was a man, I would've knocked you out.

TEENAGE BERNARD

A man wouldn't get that close.

*They give each other a hug, letting the other know no matter what they will always have each other.*

FRANCINE

Make sure. I'll make you something to eat and leave it on the table.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Thanks, ma.

*She hits him on the chin before walking off stage.*

*Engulfed by the love from his mother smiling, he focuses back on the punching bag throwing a few punches.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene III**

*Teenage Tiffany is wearing her school uniform sitting at the kitchen table with her head low, using her fork playing in the eggs on her plate.*

*Vivian is wearing something casual, placing Michael's breakfast on the table.*

*Michael comes into the room wearing a suit smiling ear to ear, taking a seat at the table.*

*Teenage Tiffany looks over at him, and a surge of fear hits her as Vivian gives him a kiss on the cheek.*

VIVIAN

Feeling good this morning?

MICHAEL

After a wonderful night, yes I am.

*Vivian blushes, hitting him lightly on the arm.*

VIVIAN

Don't talk like that in front of her.

*Teenage Tiffany drops her fork, standing up prepared to leave.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

I'll be leaving.

*Vivian looks over at her concerned.*

VIVIAN

You barely touched your food.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

I'll eat my lunch.

*Michael looks at her with a sly smile, winking his eye.*

MICHAEL

You should eat your food. You need your energy for the day.

*Teenage Tiffany runs off stage.*

*Michael takes a sip from his juice.*

VIVIAN

What has gotten into her?

MICHAEL

Maybe it's not what, but who?

VIVIAN

Shut your mouth. She's not doing that.

MICHAEL

You don't know what she's doing when we're not around.

VIVIAN

I know she's not doing that. She knows she can talk to me about anything.

*Michael takes a sip from his juice, followed by clearing his throat.*

MICHAEL

I need to get going.

*He stands up ready to walk away, and she grabs his arm.*

VIVIAN

Wait, before you go.

*He turns around giving her a kiss, pulling back smiling.*

MICHAEL

What?

VIVIAN

What do you have planned for tonight?

*Giving her another kiss, he stares at her with his bedroom eyes.*

MICHAEL

You'll find out.

*He makes his way off stage.*

*She stands blushing fanning herself, walking back over to the counter getting her plate.*

VIVIAN

That man can't get enough of my goodies.

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene IV**

*Teenage Bernard is standing by the front door wearing his school uniform aggravated.*

*Francine walks up wearing something casual, smiling.*

FRANCINE

What's wrong?

TEENAGE BERNARD

I don't wanna go.

FRANCINE

Here you go. Why are you so negative?

TEENAGE BERNARD

I'm not negative. I just don't wanna go.

FRANCINE

Why?

TEENAGE BERNARD

We should've stayed in California.

FRANCINE

You would prefer fighting your entire life, instead of moving away creating something better?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Yup.

FRANCINE

Did you go to sleep making yourself believe that?

*He lowers his head, sighing.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

Why do you even care?

*She places her hands on his shoulders.*

FRANCINE

Don't question why I care about anything going on with you. How can you say you have love for me, questioning why I care about you?

TEENAGE BERNARD

...I love you. I just---

FRANCINE

Then you should trust the decision I made.

TEENAGE BERNARD

I trust you.

FRANCINE

Learn to let go, Bernard. This is our chance at a new life, so why live in the past?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Because I know it'll come back around.

*She embraces him with a hug.*

FRANCINE

When you constantly think of negativity, it finds a way to you. Son...let California go.

TEENAGE BERNARD

(Crying)

It's hard, ma. It's hard letting go what you went through.

FRANCINE

My previous life was buried the day we moved. It won't remain buried if my son keeps relapsing.

*She releases him looking in his eyes.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

I'm sorry.

FRANCINE

Don't be sorry about how you feel. Just let the past go so you can live.

TEENAGE BERNARD

(Sniffling)

I can do that.

*She gives him a kiss on the cheek.*

FRANCINE

You never know. You might meet a girl you'll like.

TEENAGE BERNARD

I don't have time for girls.

FRANCINE

You better make time. A handsome man like you will have the girls all over him.

*Teenage Bernard looks at her laughing.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

Let's go.

*The two laugh making their way off stage.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene V**

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Despite his complaining earlier in the day, Teenage Bernard runs across Teenage Tiffany taking a liking to her, but he didn't get a chance to speak with her in class.

*Inside the lunchroom, Teenage Tiffany is sitting at a table alone eating her lunch, staring at the people looking at her shaking their heads. DERRICK is sitting at a table with some girls eating his lunch.*

*Teenage Bernard and KEVIN come on stage carrying their lunches, and Teenage Bernard has his eyes locked on Teenage Tiffany.*

KEVIN

You're gonna love it here. We got the best basketball team. The football team is okay, but you can help improve that.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Why is she sitting alone?

*Kevin looks around spotting Teenage Tiffany.*

KEVIN

Who, easy pickings?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Is that her name?

KEVIN

Her name is Tiffany.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Why do you call her easy pickings?

KEVIN

Three seconds alone with her, you'll be sleeping with her.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Have you got some from her?

KEVIN

No.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Then you shouldn't call her that. Now, why is she sitting alone?

KEVIN

The guys won't sit with her because just about everybody has already slept with her. The girls won't sit with her because she's a homewrecker.

TEENAGE BERNARD

All of this is facts?

KEVIN

Well...no, but---

TEENAGE BERNARD

I thought so. I'll sit with her.

KEVIN

What? Why? There's a table full of girls---

TEENAGE BERNARD

I'll talk with them later.

*Teenage Bernard makes his way over to Teenage Tiffany's table.*

*Kevin looks on confused, before going to take a seat with Derrick.*

*Teenage Bernard places his lunch down, taking a seat staring at her.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

How are you? I'm Bernard.

*She looks up at him trying not to blush.*

TEENAGE BERNARD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Did I say it in a different language?

TEENAGE TIFFANY

I'm Tiffany.

TEENAGE BERNARD

I know.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

So, if you knew---

TEENAGE BERNARD

I wanted to see if the voice matched the beauty.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Look at you, running some game.

TEENAGE BERNARD

If that's what you call telling the truth, then yes, I am.

*Teenage Tiffany laughs.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Boy, get outta here.

TEENAGE BERNARD

I'm serious.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Thank you for the compliment.

TEENAGE BERNARD

No need to thank me. I should thank you for speaking to me.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

I'm shocked you wanna talk to me. I'm sure you heard the stories.

TEENAGE BERNARD

That dude was trying to tell me some nonsense, but I wasn't listening.

*She lowers her head.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

(Ashamed)

It's true, to an extent.

*He grabs her hand, and she lifts her head.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

I'm not the one to judge. I wanna get to know you as a person.

*Derrick and Kevin make their way over to the table, stopping behind Teenage Bernard.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Are you serious?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Yes.

*He gets ready to kiss her hand.*

DERRICK

I wouldn't do that if I was you. You don't know how many loads she wiped off with that hand.

*Teenage Bernard turns his head, looking back confused.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

What?

DERRICK

You don't wanna taste the guys in the school, do you?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Considering I don't know who you are, I think you should leave.

DERRICK

Listen to me. You don't have to have one on one time with her. She'll do anything with anybody, in front of everybody.

*Teenage Bernard stands up getting in Derrick's face.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

I really don't care about what you're saying, so do me a favor, and leave.

DERRICK

You don't care about what I'm saying? Tiffany you better---

*Teenage Bernard grabs him by the collar, slamming him on the table, beginning to choke him.*

*Teenage Tiffany along with the other students stand up stunned.*

*Kevin tries pulling him off, but doesn't succeed.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

I told you to leave! You need to learn respect! I don't care what she does, if it's true or not! Learn

some respect!

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene VI**

*Teenage Bernard is sitting in the principal's office twiddling his thumbs, sighing softly.*

*Teenage Tiffany walks on stage taking a seat next to him.*

TEENAGE BERNARD  
You okay?

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
That was something different.

TEENAGE BERNARD  
I know, right? The first day of school, and I'm suspended.

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
I'm talking about you beating him up. Why did you do it?

TEENAGE BERNARD  
I'll tell you one day.

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
Why can't you tell me now?

TEENAGE BERNARD  
I need to know something.

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
What's that?

TEENAGE BERNARD  
Would you call me?

*She's silent for a moment.*

TEENAGE BERNARD (CONT'D)  
There it goes.

*She laughs shyly.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
I'm sorry. This is something different.

TEENAGE BERNARD  
Because nobody is man enough to approach you with

respect, and be real?

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Wow. I don't know what to say about you.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Say you'll accept my number.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

...And that's all you want?

TEENAGE BERNARD

I wanna get to know you for personal reasons. If you're talking about sex, that's the last thing on my mind.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

...You don't like girls?

TEENAGE BERNARD

I love girls.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

So, why---

TEENAGE BERNARD

You're more than a mattress.

*Speechless by his words, all she can do is stare at him.*

TEENAGE BERNARD (CONT'D)

Hand me your phone.

*She pulls her phone out handing it to him.*

*Francine walks on stage as he finishes placing his number in her phone, and then he hands it back, before looking at Francine.*

TEENAGE BERNARD (CONT'D)

I'll be with you in one second, ma.

FRANCINE

Okay.

*Francine walks off stage.*

*Teenage Tiffany is looking at his number confused.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

What does this mean?

TEENAGE BERNARD

It means what it says.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

...You're my man?

*He stands up.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

Think about it. You just remember you're more than a mattress.

*He walks off stage.*

*Thinking hard on what he said, and how he labeled himself in her phone, she places the phone in her pocket wishing what he said was true.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

I'm more than a mattress? I wish I could believe that.

**END OF THE SCENE**

ACT IScene VII

*Francine is sitting on the sofa in the living room drinking a cup of tea.*

*Teenage Bernard comes on stage taking a seat on the sofa.*

FRANCINE

How did you get into a fight the first day of school?

TEENAGE BERNARD

You know I have that issue with women being disrespected.

FRANCINE

Someone disrespected the girl sitting with you?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Yes. It made me think about...

*He puts his head down breathing heavily.*

FRANCINE

I keep telling you those days are gone. I'm no longer---

*There's a knock at the door.*

*Teenage Bernard gets up walking over to the door.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

Who is it?

EARL

(Off stage)

Can I come in?

*Teenage Bernard turns to look at Francine. Both of them are shocked from hearing the voice on the other side of the door.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

I know damn well.

*Teenage Bernard flings the door open grabbing EARL by the collar pulling him in the house, pinning him up against the wall. Earl is wearing*

*a wife beater and jeans.*

TEENAGE BERNARD (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing here?!

EARL

Son, let me---

TEENAGE BERNARD

I'm not letting you explain anything! I should kill you!

*Francine rushes over placing her hand on Teenage Bernard's shoulder.*

FRANCINE

He's not worth it.

TEENAGE BERNARD

We're not free!

FRANCINE

Let him say his peace, so we can finally be done with him.

*Teenage Bernard holds him for a few more seconds, before releasing him.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

Six minutes.

*Earl fixes his clothes, staring at his son proud he's no longer afraid of him.*

EARL

I can accept that.

*Teenage Bernard gets ready to swing, and Francine holds him back.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

You have no choice, but to accept it!

EARL

I know how you feel. You still need to understand I'm your father, and you should show me some respect.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Five minutes.

EARL

Fine. Fran, I'm truly sorry for what I put you through.

FRANCINE

These apologies hold no value. Continue, so we never have to deal with you again.

EARL

I respect that.

TEENAGE BERNARD

You respect that?! You have no idea what the word respect means! A man with respect wouldn't beat on his wife, causing her to turn tricks because his weak ass couldn't do for himself! A man with respect wouldn't beat on his son because he got his ass beat on the streets! You respect that?! Don't you dare use that word around me!

EARL

You're a better man than me. All of what you said is the truth.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Why are you here?

EARL

To hopefully rekindle the love my family had for me before things went bad.

TEENAGE BERNARD

(Laughs)

You had a drink or two before you came?

EARL

No drinks or drugs. I've been clean.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Then I suggest you confide in God. That's the only person who'll forgive you.

*Francine looks at Teenage Bernard.*

FRANCINE

Let me talk to him, alone.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Why? You know how he's cut? I'm not leaving you alone with him.

FRANCINE

I'm sure he won't do anything. Just give us five minutes, and he's gone.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Are you sure?

FRANCINE

Do this for your mother.

*Teenage Bernard looks at Earl dying to punch him in the mouth, but because he loves and respects his mother, it prevents him from doing it.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

Fine.

FRANCINE

It'll be okay.

*Teenage Bernard stares at Earl with a tight mean mug, sucking his teeth.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

And you call yourself a man?

*Teenage Bernard walks off stage.*

*Francine looks at Earl with a slight smirk.*

FRANCINE

Bernard isn't the little runt you used to beat on, so that's why I asked him to leave before he returned the favor.

EARL

My baby boy grew into a good man. His father was a stand up man before I got hooked on that stuff. But I'm a changed man now, and I need the love from my family to stay clean.

*He tries giving her a hug, and she quickly pulls her gun out.*

FRANCINE

Don't get close to me.

*He steps back with his hands up stunned by the fact she pulled a gun on him and by the look in her eyes, she's not afraid to use it.*

EARL

Whoa! When did you start carrying a gun?

FRANCINE

The blessed day I fully turned my back on you. I vowed I won't allow anyone else to do what you did to me.

EARL

(Sorrow)

I wish it didn't go down that way.

FRANCINE

You wish you didn't cause me to lose countless good jobs because of your insecurities? You wish I wasn't turning tricks, while you sat back getting drunk? You wish you didn't beat me every other day because you felt like it? You know what? I wish the first beating would've knocked some sense into my head right then and there. But at that point in my life I thought I needed a man, when in reality, all I needed was my son.

EARL

There's nothing I can say behind that.

FRANCINE

No.

EARL

I'll be on my way.

FRANCINE

Have a blessed life if that's the path you're on.

EARL

One last thing before I leave.

FRANCINE

What?

EARL

You can't tell me deep down inside, some part of you still doesn't love me.

FRANCINE

I love the man I married. You think about that and let it register as you walk out my door and my life.

*Earl doesn't respond, making his way off stage.*

*Taking a deep breath, she walks back to the sofa  
taking a seat placing the gun down beside her.*

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

Thank you Lord for helping me beat the demon that  
darkened my door.

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT I****Scene VIII**

*Teenage Tiffany is laid across her bed still wearing her school uniform. She grabs her diary and pen from the nightstand, opening it and beginning to write.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

I can't believe I met someone who views me for more than sex. Is this my blessing from God? If it is, thank you for answering my cries.

*Michael comes into the room smiling wearing a T-shirt and jeans, taking a sip from his whiskey, grabbing his crotch.*

MICHAEL

Mama's gone. You ready to give daddy some honey?

*She stands up.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

You stay away from me.

MICHAEL

What did you say?

TEENAGE TIFFANY

You heard me. You stay away from me.

*Nowhere near taking her seriously, he takes a sip from the bottle, laughing.*

MICHAEL

You think because you met this new boy he can save you? This is all you're good for. There's nothing special about you. You're a whore, and that's all you'll ever be. Now, get on the bed so daddy can give you some good-loving.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Never again will you touch me.

*She tries to walk out, and he places the bottle down grabbing her, slapping her across the face. The pain stings, but she refuses to cry standing her ground.*

MICHAEL

You disrespectful tramp! I don't know who you think you are, but you're still my personal tramp! Lay down---

*She kicks him between his legs, dropping him down to his knees, and while he's on his knees, she grabs the bottle hitting him over the head, knocking him to the floor.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

No man would enjoy doing what you've done to me for years to his own child! I hope the pain you're in continues, even while you burn in hell!

*She walks off stage.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**END OF ACT I**

**ACT II****Scene I**

*Teenage Bernard, Teenage Tiffany and Francine are sitting on the sofa.*

*Francine reaches on the table grabbing the box of tissues handing them to Teenage Tiffany.*

*She takes a tissue from the box wiping her eyes.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

(Sobbing)

Thanks for letting me come over.

TEENAGE BERNARD

You don't have to thank me.

FRANCINE

Calm down, honey.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

I still have to go home, and he'll be there.

FRANCINE

I'm trying to understand how your mother doesn't know what he's been doing to you.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

She's so caught up with him, she doesn't pay me attention. Even if I was to tell her, she wouldn't believe me.

FRANCINE

(Sighs)

I've been down that road. I know exactly how you feel.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

You do?

FRANCINE

When the people you love betray you, you grow a pain deep inside that hurts more than anything imaginable.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Why can't more people understand me the way you two do?

FRANCINE

Well, you have us now, and we won't judge. And if it makes you feel any better, you can look at me as your mother.

*Teenage Tiffany doesn't respond.*

*Francine gives her a hug and kiss on the cheek.*

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

I'll leave you two alone.

*Francine walks off stage.*

*Teenage Bernard scoots closer to her.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

I really do appreciate this.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Don't worry about it.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

God, I don't wanna go back to that house.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Who said you were going back tonight?

TEENAGE TIFFANY

What?

TEENAGE BERNARD

You can either sleep in my room, and I'll sleep down here. Or you can sleep down here, and I'll sleep in my room. Whatever you decide, you're staying here with us for the night.

*She doesn't respond.*

TEENAGE BERNARD (CONT'D)

(Laughs)

At least I know why you act shy, now.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Yeah. Can you tell me why you stood up for me?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Because of what my mother went through.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

What happened?

TEENAGE BERNARD

My father would always beat her in front of me, and had her turning tricks. It was all bad, so we had to move.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

That's the family matter you were talking about?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Yeah. Any man treating a woman like trash, but she's doing everything in her power so her family can survive, I consider you less of a man.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

That explains why you did it.

TEENAGE BERNARD

Listen. I'm about to make us something to eat. Figure out where you wanna sleep.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Can I ask you something?

TEENAGE BERNARD

What?

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Can you sleep with me? Not on something sexual, but hold me. I feel secure with you.

TEENAGE BERNARD

I can do that if it makes you happy.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Thank you for...

*He leans over giving her a kiss, and when he pulls back, she's in a state of awe.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

I told you, stop thanking me. Figure out where you want us to sleep, and I'll be back with the food.

*He walks off stage.*

*Closing her eyes, she puts her hands together to pray.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Lord, I thank you.

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT II****Scene II**

*While Teenage Tiffany sleeps, and Francine makes breakfast, Teenage Bernard is in front of the house raking the leaves with no shirt on.*

*He takes a break, wiping the sweat from his face.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

I'm almost done, ma!

FRANCINE

(Off stage)

When you get done, there's some food in the kitchen on the table!

*Michael slowly walks on stage wearing a T-shirt and jeans, making his way to Teenage Bernard holding a bat behind his back.*

MICHAEL

Are you Bernard Mersier?

*Teenage Bernard turns looking at him.*

TEENAGE BERNARD

Yeah. Who are you?

MICHAEL

Do you know Tiffany Dryer?

TEENAGE BERNARD

Yeah. But, you didn't answer my question. Wait a minute. You're---

*Michael quickly hits him in the stomach with the bat dropping him to his knees.*

*Michael then kicks him over to the floor and begins beating him with the bat.*

MICHAEL

You're the bastard who turned my personal tramp against me?! That's my honey you're trying to get!

*Teenage Bernard covers his head moaning in pain, while Michael beats him.*

*Francine runs out letting off a round in the air.*

*Michael stops beating him holding his hands up, but that doesn't stop her from shooting him in the leg.*

*He falls to the floor screaming, holding his leg in pain.*

*Francine rushes over to Teenage Bernard dropping to her knees shaking him, but he doesn't move.*

FRANCINE

Come on baby, get up! You're stronger than this!

*Teenage Tiffany comes running on stage screaming, rushing over to the two.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Oh my God!

FRANCINE

This clown hurt my baby!

*Teenage Tiffany looks down at Michael.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

You bastard!

*Francine looks up at her.*

FRANCINE

This is the man who did those things to you?

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Yes.

*Francine stands up taking aim on Michael.*

*Vivian and The OFFICER come on stage, and the Officer takes aim on Francine.*

OFFICER

Freeze!

*She keeps her aim on Michael.*

FRANCINE

I'm registered to carry a firearm!

OFFICER

I understand that, ma'am. I still need you to put the weapon down.

FRANCINE

Look at what he did to my only son! What would you do?!

OFFICER

Ma'am, I know how you feel, and I would do the same thing. Just listen. If you kill him now, it'll be cold-blooded murder. You'll never be able to see your son again.

*Teenage Tiffany grabs Francine's hand, lowering her arm.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY

He's not worth it.

*Francine drops the gun crying, and Teenage Tiffany gives her a hug.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

**ACT II****Scene III**

*Outside Teenage Bernard's hospital room, Teenage Tiffany stands by the door waiting for Francine to come out, praying Teenage Bernard is in good condition.*

*Francine comes out of the room wiping the tears from her eyes.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
How is he?

FRANCINE  
The doctors said he's doing fine, but he hasn't opened his eyes. I want my baby to open his eyes and talk to me.

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
He will, ma. He's a strong man. I'm blessed he came into my life.

*Vivian walks on stage.*

VIVIAN  
Are you okay?

*Teenage Tiffany and Francine turn to look at her.*

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
I'm not going back with you.

VIVIAN  
Baby, I had him arrested. As soon as he gets out of the hospital, he's going straight to jail. Why didn't you tell me?

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
You wouldn't have believed me if I told you.

VIVIAN  
That's not true. I would've---

TEENAGE TIFFANY  
Continued being his personal---

*Francine places a finger to Teenage Tiffany lips.*

FRANCINE

Go in the room with Bernard. I'll take care of this.

TEENAGE TIFFANY

Okay, ma.

*Teenage Tiffany walks in the room, and Francine walks over to Vivian.*

FRANCINE

So, you're supposedly the mother?

VIVIAN

(Attitude)

What are you talking about? I am her mother.

FRANCINE

No, you're a woman who was blessed with a child, and doesn't appreciate her. A real mother would've known something foul as that was being done to her daughter.

VIVIAN

You don't---

FRANCINE

I know you because I was like you. Do you know the real meaning behind having a child?

VIVIAN

To love and protect, letting no harm come their way.

FRANCINE

When did you lose the meaning?

*Vivian doesn't respond.*

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

Don't think I'm judging you because the good book says, "Don't judge until you judge yourself." Since I was like you, I can tell you what I'm saying. The only difference between us is the man in this hospital who defended your daughter. He made me realize one thing my mother told me. Do you wanna know what that is?

VIVIAN

What?

FRANCINE

Nothing comes before my child. I'll die for my child

before I let anything happen to him. You let that sit on your mind.

*Francine opens the door, and then turns around looking at Vivian.*

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

If my daughter wants to come back to you, she's more than welcome. But I highly doubt she wants to return to the woman who put a pedophile before her own flesh and blood.

*She walks into the room, closing the door behind her, leaving Vivian standing sobbing, shaking her head.*

**END OF THE SCENE**

ACT IIScene IV

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Ten years later, Tiffany is now a famous author standing in front of a crowd of people in an auditorium.

TIFFANY

That's how I overcame my issue, and was able to write my book, you're more than a mattress.

*The room applauds her.*

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Thank you. Now, I would like to bring out my mother.

Francine walks on stage wearing something casual, walking over to Tiffany giving her a hug.

FRANCINE

I would like to say, I was also a victim of beatings and rape and overcame the issues. With the help of the Lord and strength, you can overcome anything. But in my case, there's one more person who helped me realize things needed to change.

TIFFANY

I think I know who you're talking about.

FRANCINE

Of course you do.

TIFFANY

And I thank God, as well as you for bringing him into my life. Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to introduce you to my husband, Mr. Bernard Mersier.

*Bernard walks on stage wearing a white suit, giving Francine and Tiffany a hug and kiss.*

FRANCINE

This is the man who made me realize not only am I a woman who deserves respect, but I am also a mother.

TIFFANY

He's the man who got me out of the situation I was in. Without him, I don't think I would be alive.

BERNARD

You two are funny.

FRANCINE

He's still shy after all these years. He hates compliments on his good deeds, thinking he shouldn't smile.

TIFFANY

I know how to make him smile.

*Bernard looks at her laughing.*

BERNARD

Come on now.

TIFFANY

When we get home, you know what time it is.

*The people laugh.*

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

*(Speaking to the people)*

Always know you're more than what a person makes you out to be.

*The room applauds before walking off stage.*

FRANCINE

I'm proud of you.

TIFFANY

With the right guidance and people who love you, you can do anything.

FRANCINE

Now, who told you that?

BERNARD

I'm glad I'm the center of y'all conversation.

TIFFANY

You know you love it.

FRANCINE

I don't know why he's acting brand new.

BERNARD

What do you know about somebody acting brand new?

TIFFANY

What do you know about the brand new things I'm doing to you tonight?

FRANCINE

And on that note, I'm about to head home. Y'all some freaks.

BERNARD

I'm not the freak. It's your daughter in-law.

FRANCINE

Call me when you two get home.

*Francine walks off stage.*

TIFFANY

Well, Mr. Mersier? What do you want for dinner tonight, aside from me?

*Bernard doesn't respond.*

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Oh, you're acting like me now, getting silent?

BERNARD

I'm nothing like you. Thank---

*She grabs him by the head giving him a kiss, and when she pulls back, he looks at her smiling.*

TIFFANY

You know the rules. I love you.

BERNARD

I love you, too.

TIFFANY

Let's get home. One of your meals is hot and ready.

BERNARD

Here you go.

**END OF THE SCENE**

**END OF ACT II**

**THE END**